



CHAPTER 5

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The conceptual approach is an outcome of the investigations executed in the preceding chapters and aims to express an identity of the African Girl Child through the interior design of the Centre for the African GirlChild.

The client, user group and programme are deliberated upon. The proposed design intervention is introduced briefly; thereafter the design concept is argued and expanded upon.



5.2 USERGROUP

The user group for the centre will be primarily black African girls from/between the ages of 13 to 17. The male counterparts are also welcome to the centre to help foster a healthier relationship between the two sexes of African children and so helping them to grow in understanding each other.

The African Girl Child Centre will be open all day but will mainly be in use by the girl child after school hours or on weekends. During school hours the centre will be in use by the centre staff, NGO'S and the general public.

5.3 CLIENT

The clients for the centre will be organisations and businesses that will cater for the African girl child, offering her opportunities and empowering her in the process. The centre is to act as an interface that facilitates the transfer of information from the relevant parties to the African Girl Child.

The client body (figure 5.2) is to consist of:

- Department of Women, Children & People with Disabilities;
- Breakthrough;
- South African Girl Child Alliance;
- Girl Education Movement;
- Children's Movement South Africa;
- Businesses that would empower the African girl child;
- Girls not brides;
- Tshwane Leadership Foundation;
- Cell C Girl Child initiative; and,
- Zazi.

5.4 PROGRAMME

The programme for the African girl child (figure 5.4) is a phased, mixed use programme relating to the contextual allocation whilst providing innovative means of providing empowerment through interior design. The African Girl Child will be empowered in sectors such as business, science and technology and the creative arts. These sectors will fit into the play, work, and learn groupings of spaces.

“Half a mind is a terrible thing to waste” (STEAM not STEM 2015:1). STEAM encourages a well-rounded approach to education. STEAM not STEM (2015) states that STEM is based on skills generally using the left half of the brain and thus is logic driven. Much research and data show that activities like the Arts use the right side of the brain which supports and fosters creativity, and is essential to innovation. This approach ties into the informal cultural activities such as traditional food restaurants, tailoring shops and hair salons, which allow for the creation,

expression and consumption of culture. This is a step further in from the cultural museums within the precinct which do not allow the physical consumption or creation of culture. This offers the African girl child an opportunity to create and express her culture in a manner that is true to her.

The programme is to be rooted in the Arts as a means of creating a more public intervention that will announce new use, and offer many more opportunities of interaction which will lead to other interventions, namely; Science and Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (depicted in figure 5.5, 5.6 and 5.7)

The programme will encourage self-empowerment through creating and expressing an African aesthetic with which the African girl child can identify.

Public activities such as the restaurant, hair salon, auditorium, bookshop and library are located on the ground floor allowing for easy access and broader social interaction. The first floor is organised to have a quieter atmosphere with administration spaces, a dance studio, rehearsal rooms, a music studio and a multi-functional space that allows for flexibility of use.

5.5 BRANDING

The Centre for the African girl child is a space that allows her to be actively involved in her empowerment whilst providing a platform for her to showcase the fruits of her empowerment. The name chosen for the centre is Bonang, a Sotho word that means “to look, to behold” (African languages. 2015).

The logo draws inspiration from vibrant, geometric accents in African patterns (figure 5.8) and the dynamic circulation and forms that are to be introduced in the centre. This stylistic adaptation of the font is to be applied to the various identities of functions within the centre. As depicted in figure 5.8.



Figure 5.1 African geometric print (Design Inspiration 2015)

African girls between the ages of 13 to 17.



Figure 5.2. Students at a Protestant secondary school in Mbandaka, Congo (Elisofon 1972)

Figure 5.3. CLIENT BODY (Author 2015)

The client body is to consist of:

1. Department of Women, Children & People with Disabilities (Nelson Mandela Children's Fund 2013)
2. Breakthrough (PRWEB 2014)
3. South African Girl Child Alliance
4. Girl Education Movement (Girl Education Movement Uganda 2011)
5. Children's Movement South Africa
6. Businesses that would empower the African girl child
7. Girls not brides (Care 2014)
8. Tshwane Leadership Foundation (Tshwane Leadership Foundation 2015)
9. Cell C Girl Child initiative (Cell C 2015)
10. Zazi (Zazi 2015)



5.4.1 PROGRAMME FOR BONANG: CENTRE FOR THE AFRICAN GIRL CHILD

The programme for the African girl child is to be mixed use, relating to the contextual location whilst providing innovative means of providing empowerment through interior design. The African Girl Child is to be empowered in sectors such as Business, Science and Technology and the Creative arts. These sectors will fit into the play, work, learn grouping of spaces.

Half a mind is a terrible thing to waste

STEAM encourages a well rounded approach to education.

STEAM not STEM (2015) states that STEM is based on skills generally using the left half of the brain and thus is logic driven. Much research and data shows that activities like Arts, which uses the right side of the brain supports and fosters creativity, which is essential to innovation.

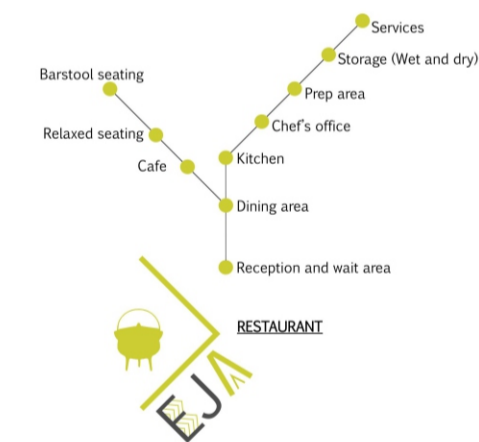
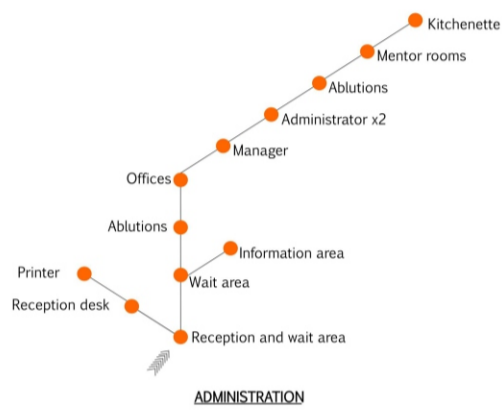
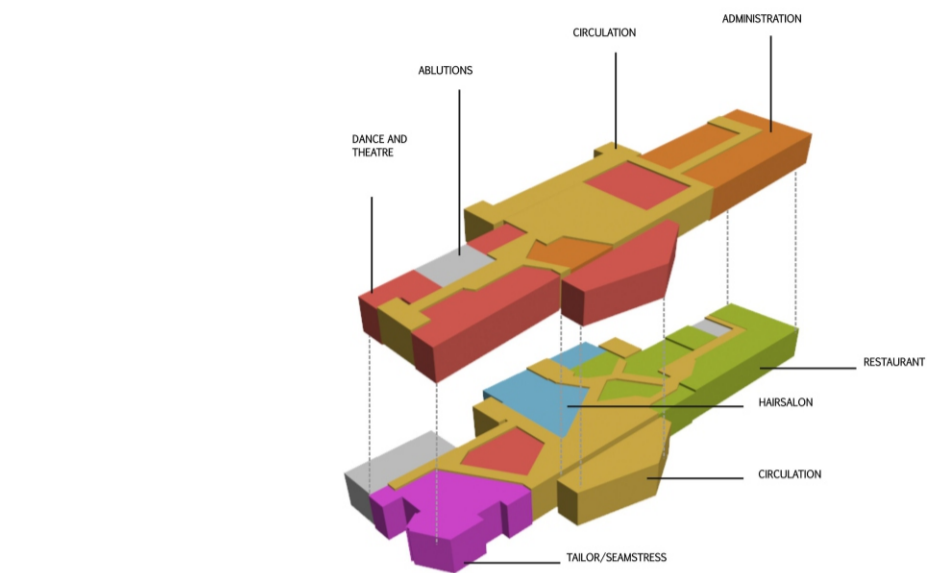
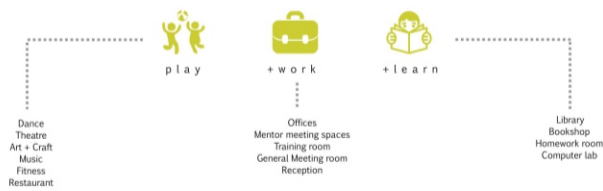


Figure 5.8. Programme distribution at Bonang (Author 2015)



PHASE 1: Arts and Cultural

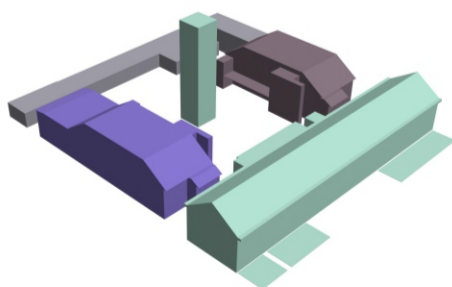
The intervention is to activate the building and build awareness to the general public, concerned organisations and specifically the African girl child about the centre. The chosen building for PHASE 1 was chosen due to its positioning on a more public road and a more frontal and direct entrance to the building.

PHASE 2: Science and Technology

This will build on to PHASE 1 and so broadening the range of interests for the African girl child. The phase will incorporate knowledge transfer spaces such as laboratories and house offices for professionals to work from so the girl child can be exposed to the career and trained in a hands on manner

PHASE 3: Engineering and Mathematics

The third phase will be of a more educational nature, offering a "clinic" for subjects that pertain to the Engineering and Mathematics field, allowing the girl to be a step ahead.



PHASED INTERVENTION

- PHASE 1
- PHASE 2
- PHASE 3
- STORAGE AND CARE TAKER

Figure 5.4. Phased intervention (Author 2015)

Figure 5.5. African girls dancing (Bare Threads 2012)



Figure 5.6. Young girl child in lab (Fablabtiggulio 2015)



Figure 5.7. Young girl child learning robotics (Fablabtiggulio 2015)



5.5 DESIGN INFLUENCES

5.5.1 Theoretical findings

The theoretical findings on African feminism highlighted that African feminism bears cultural awareness within its context. It does not seek to pull down the male gender but rather seeks to break down the mental and physical hold that has been instilled by a patriarchal, previously white supremacist culture. This brand of feminism is both strong and nurturing; it does not stick to traditional gender roles and instead embraces its strengths. This bold and daring character of African feminism will be incorporated when designing an intervention with the mind to introduce an African feminist use of the space.

5.5.2 Contextual findings

Profusion and variety of informal hair salons, restaurants and tailoring shops found within the immediate context is significant. Of importance to the African female community is the issue of hair. The hair salon becomes a monthly ritual that is introduced to the African girl child as soon as she becomes aware of her femininity or when her mother decides it is time.

Hair salons are a place of conversation, sharing anecdotes and transformation. The hairstyles that transform an African woman's hair vary in their technique and how they are applied to her hair; from a mixture to alter hair texture to temporarily attaching braids.

5.5.3 Conceptual approach

The conceptual approach for the intervention draws inspiration from the methods of alteration that black women will apply to their hair. The main forms of hair alteration and their level of alteration are discussed in figure 5.9.

The forms of hair alteration illustrate that there are differing levels of integration between the hair and the alteration. This aspect may be considered when designing the intervention and how it interacts with and integrates the existing host building.

These methods and their applications will be highlighted in Chapter 6 (Design development).

The ritual of hair alteration is also linked to Fred Scott's process of Stripping back (Chapter 2.2.2). The link is depicted in figure 5.10

The significance of hair and its treatment in the black African woman's community is documented as early as 15th Century Africa, "... hairstyles were used to indicate a person's marital status, age, religion, ethnic identity, wealth and rank within the community..." (Thompson 2009:1).

The alteration of hair is a means to change one's appearance but the ritual of visiting the hair salon is also about being part of a collective of women who go through this on a monthly or weekly basis, "...black hair is not just about hair it is about identity..." (Thompson 2009:4).

The design and interventions within Bonang are to instil pride in the African girl child with regards to her heritage, and as a black girl child, that the tripartite oppression she experiences are opportunities for her to engage her strengths and overcome the said oppressions by being actively involved in her empowerment.

Hair fixing methods, hair patterns and the deviation from the traditional African norms are major factors influencing the design of Bonang.

The following mood boards were developed as design generators for Bonang.

The initial mood board (Figure 5.11) was a variation of spaces and accessories that were envisioned as being applicable to the proudly African aesthetic that Bonang could embody. This mood board was not successful in that it did not address the African aesthetic as aptly as it could have.

The second mood board (Figure 5.12) selects fewer but more direct visuals that are a more appropriate to the vision for Bonang. Visuals that display pattern, hand crafts, beaded and woven elements appear. An image of the fire station is apparent in this mood board to keep in mind the contrast of the site to the new intended use.

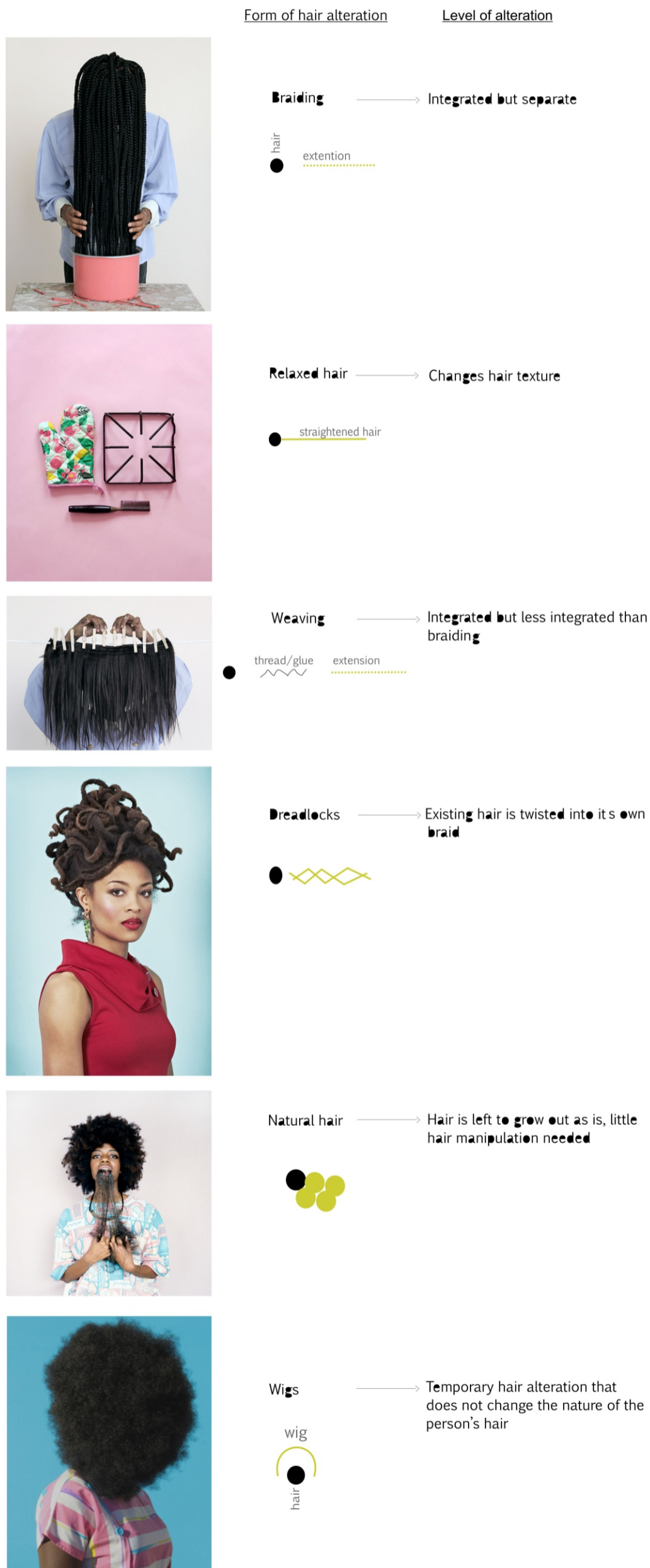


Figure 5.9: Forms of hair alteration (Author 2015)

INTERVENTIONIST A P P R O A C H

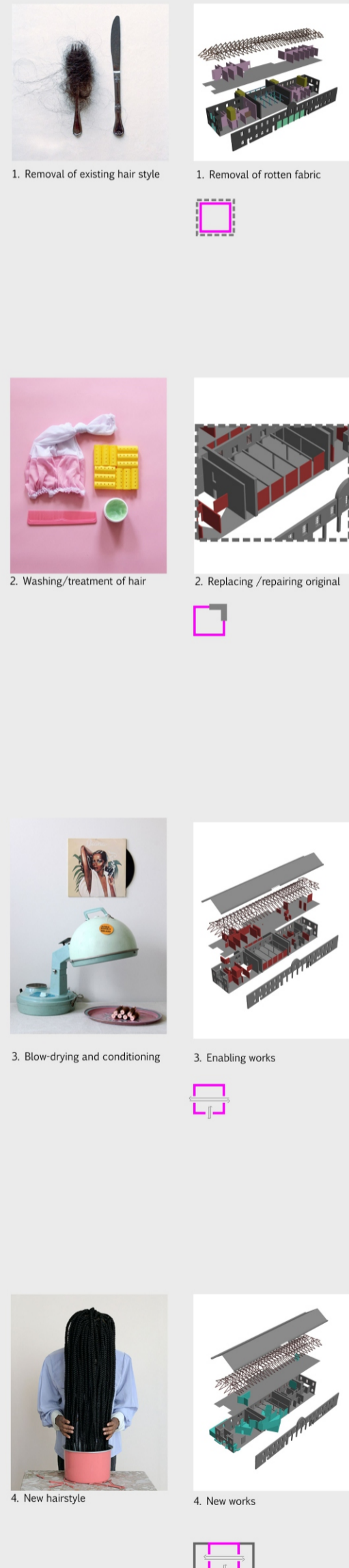
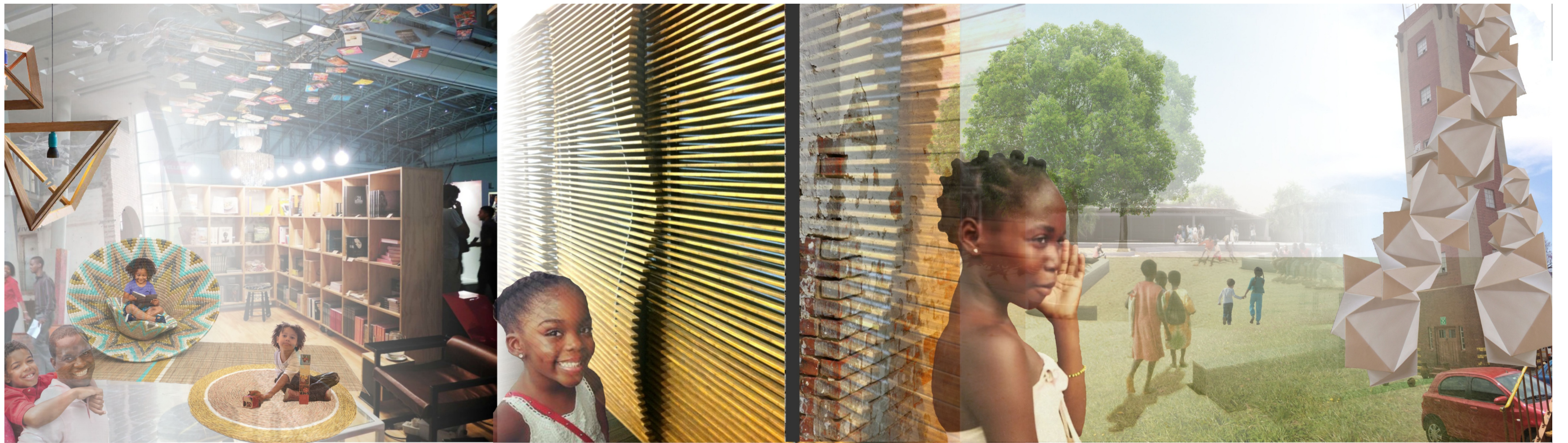


Figure 5.10: Stripping back interventionist approach (Author 2015)



Figure 5.11: Mood board June (Author 2015)





- 1. Afro bead pendant light (Mr Price Home 2015)
- 2. African basket wall decor (Shead 2015)
- 3. Sikholwani decor pots
- 4. Timber frame chair with basket weaving (Shead 2015)
- 5. African geometric print (Design Inspiration. 2015)



Figure 5.12: Mood board October (Author 2015)

5.6 PROPOSED INTERVENTION

The historical significance of the building can be found in both the tangible and intangible aspects of the building. The masculine history of the building gave rise to a contrasting new narrative of African feminism, which is to integrate with the host building, both tangibly and intangibly. The tangible will express the physical connection and transitions between the old and the new whilst the intangible expression looks at creating a programme that challenges the phrase “...Children should be seen and not heard...” (Festial 2015). At Bonang, the girls are encouraged to be seen and heard. The adaptive re-use of the building will be achieved by making use of Fred Scott's interventionist approach by removing rotten fabric, repairing original fabric, conducting enabling works such as demolition, and then installing the new works (Scott 2008:108).

Three major interventions are highlighted as means of expression for the new narrative in the host building. The interventions are a new foyer that punctures out of the Old Pretoria Fire station visibly altering the existing conditions, a lecture auditorium which encourages conversations that are pertinent to the AGC to be held there, and a staircase that steps away from the conventional staircases that are already within the interior of the building.

The three interventions are all transitional spaces, the foyer and staircase representing physical space, whilst the auditorium focuses more on a mental transition.

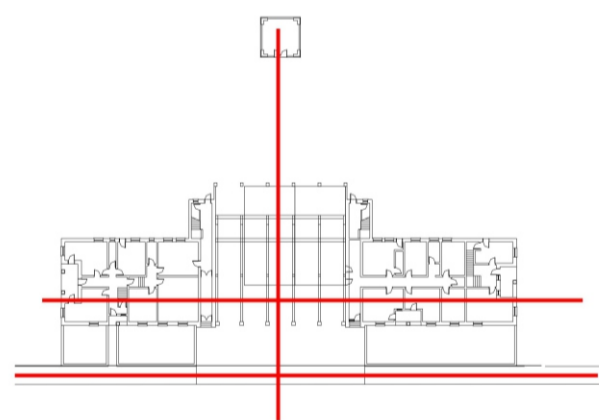
5.7 PLAN DEVELOPMENT

The site is currently accessed from Minaar Street for both private and public users; the new intervention proposes reinstating the original entrance way that is located on Bosman Street. This relocation of the main entrance will reactivate the façade and draw in more people.

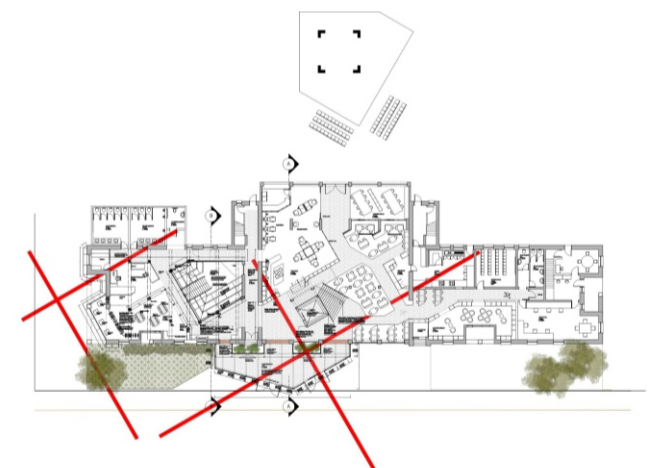
The existing circulation within the building is of a linear type with solid brick walls guiding the user through a maze of spaces that cannot be perceived from the outside. The closed, linear nature of the interior environment is to be challenged by introducing dynamic circulation routes through the interior environment, placing fewer limits on how the centre user moves through the spaces. Walls are to be demolished to make way for these activating circulation pathways. The pathways are inspired by informal foot paths that over time become a formalised route due to continuous use.

The circulation paths are arranged as a consequence of furniture arrangement and appear informal in nature as they do not relate to the rectangular geometry of the building.

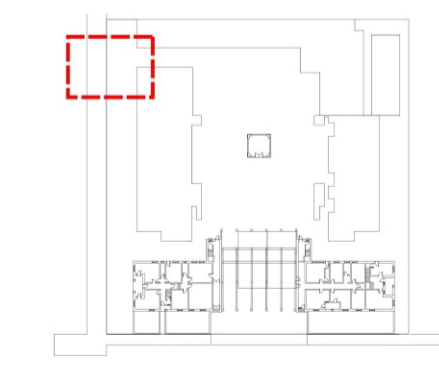
The deviation of circulation from the linear to dynamic is also a reference to African feminism and its divergence from a previously white, supremacist, patriarchal society.



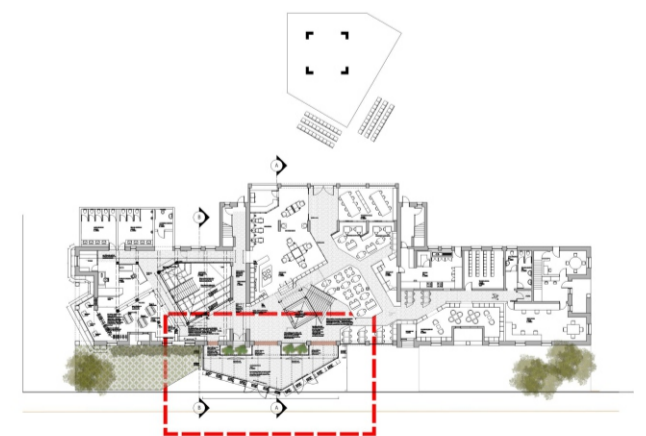
EXISTING CIRCULATION OF GROUND FLOOR PLAN



NEW CIRCULATION OF GROUND FLOOR PLAN



EXISTING ENTRANCE OF GROUND FLOOR PLAN



NEW ENTRANCE OF GROUND FLOOR PLAN

— Male —Western —Sexism

— Female —African —Empowerment

Figure 5.13: Existing and proposed entrance at circulation at OPFS (Author 2015)

5.7.1 Design draft– June 2015

The design of the floor plan at this stage (June 2015) sought to activate the façade by extending the foyer space out of the existing façade. This intervention (figure 5.14) was mimicked on the façade found on Minaar Street, extending the covered entrance and balcony. The central space in which the restaurant and hair salon are located is extended into the courtyard space. The extension of the building is intended to signify the African girl child making her mark and pushing boundaries within the city centre.

The chosen intervention was achieved by means of computer aided modeling of the building, whereby the scale of the intervention was tested against the existing facade of the building.

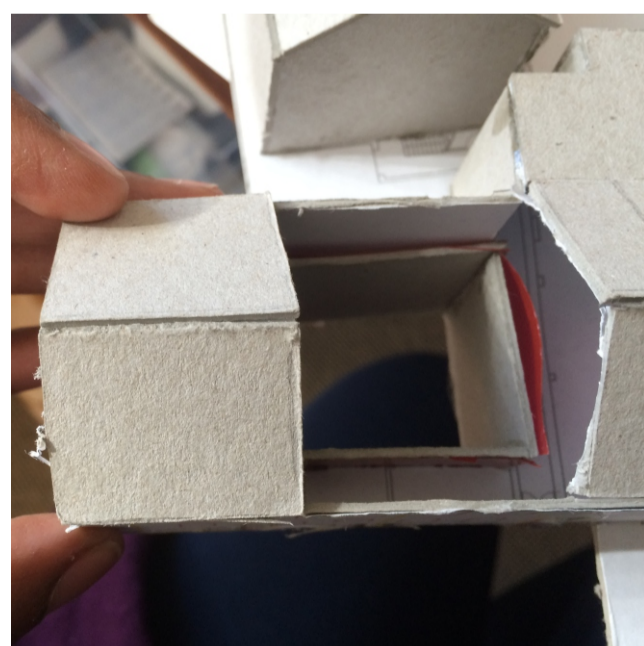
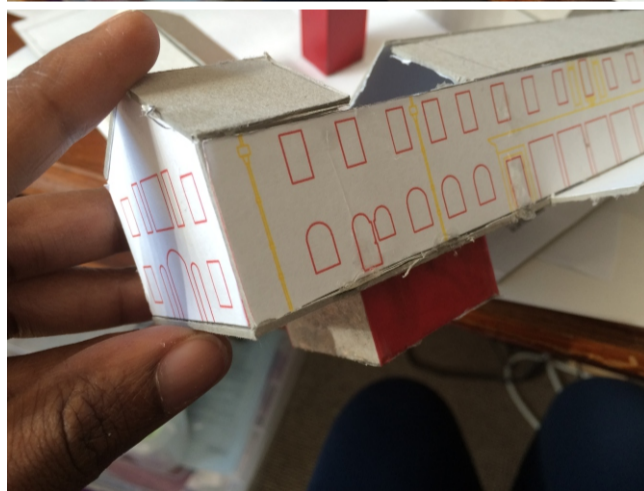
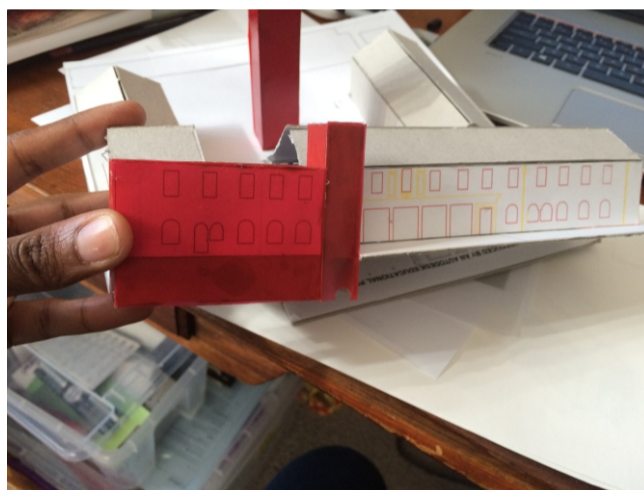
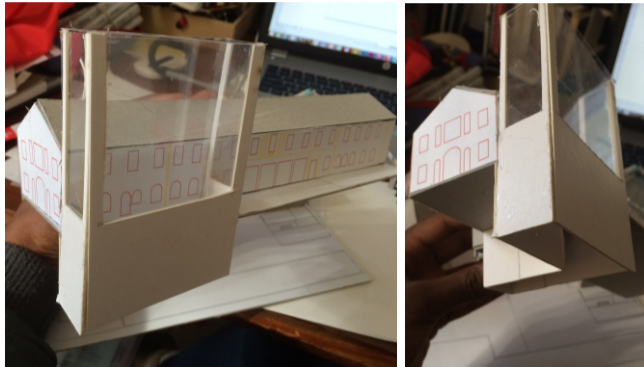
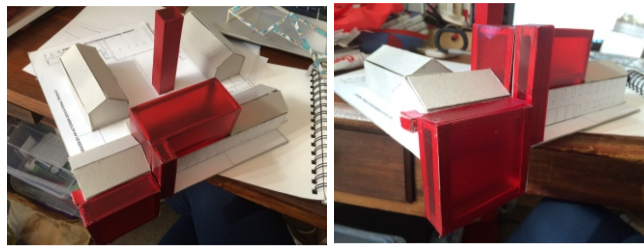
The second draft (figure 5.15) of the façade intervention was completed on computer in order to better observe the outcome. The first draft intervention was identified as being extreme in its scale and overpowering to the existing façade. The second draft for the façade redesign looks to refine and cut away at unnecessary additions to the floor space.

The structural columns underneath the new intervention are to mimic the African comb; they create seating area, a pause space within the city, and a place for conversation.

The intervention will represent African feminism and the “masculine” nature of the building being integrated with the new feminine use of the building to become a place of empowerment. The angular and slanted new intervention goes against the strictly vertical or horizontal planes of the existing building, given that it is bold in its newness, being integrated where it can, and creating new boundaries where possibility exists, thereby changing the footprint of the existing building and aiding in creating a footprint for the African girl child within the city.

Critique of design draft

The intervention was considered too overpowering and not sensitive to the heritage of the host building. The canopy of the façade intervention and the extension of the restaurant and hair salon into the courtyard were thought as being unnecessary since the host building already offered ample space for the new programme to be implemented.



1

The initial model was an extreme intervention that sought to scale the building up so that the tower did not overpower it.

2

On this model the existing basement level underneath the office is extended towards the street facade to create an auditorium on the inside of the building.

Black hair salons have music or an African movie playing which typically becomes background noise. The auditorium is to mimic this element in hair salons but in a formalised manner. The space could be for lectures.

3

On this model I looked at using the auditorium space but also trying to mimic the tower in the courtyard through the vertical circulation that I am introducing on the facade.

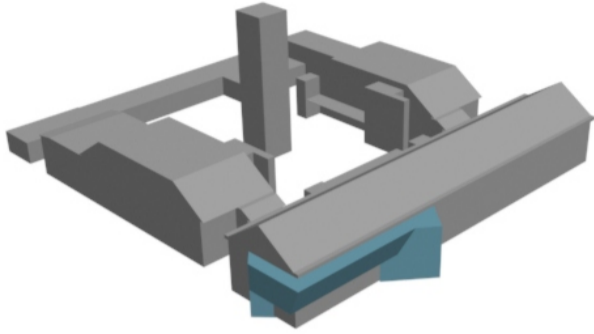
I also looked at making use of the landscape area on the front of the building on Bosman street and creating craft spaces (metal works, woodworking, beading, pottery etc that also relate to the materials that were found when a mine was discovered on site during renovations.



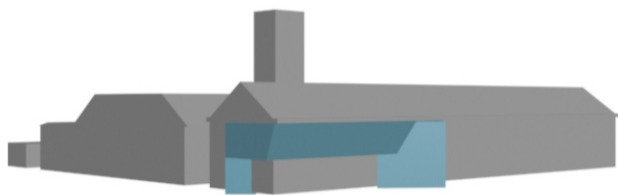
Figure 5.14: Draft 1 process models for the façade intervention (Author 2015)

FACADEINTERVENTIONMASSMODELS

Computer mass models were used as a quick means to investigate the effect of the intervention on the facade

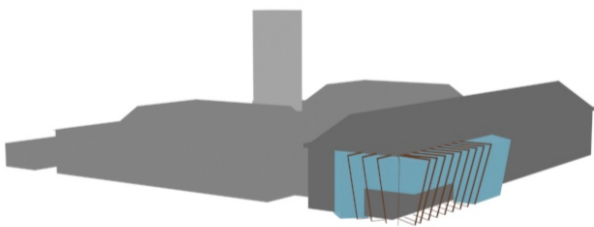


1

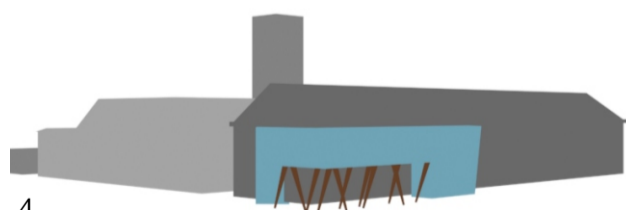


2

1&2: A wrap around intervention that appears on Minaar and Bosman streets.



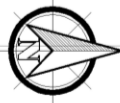
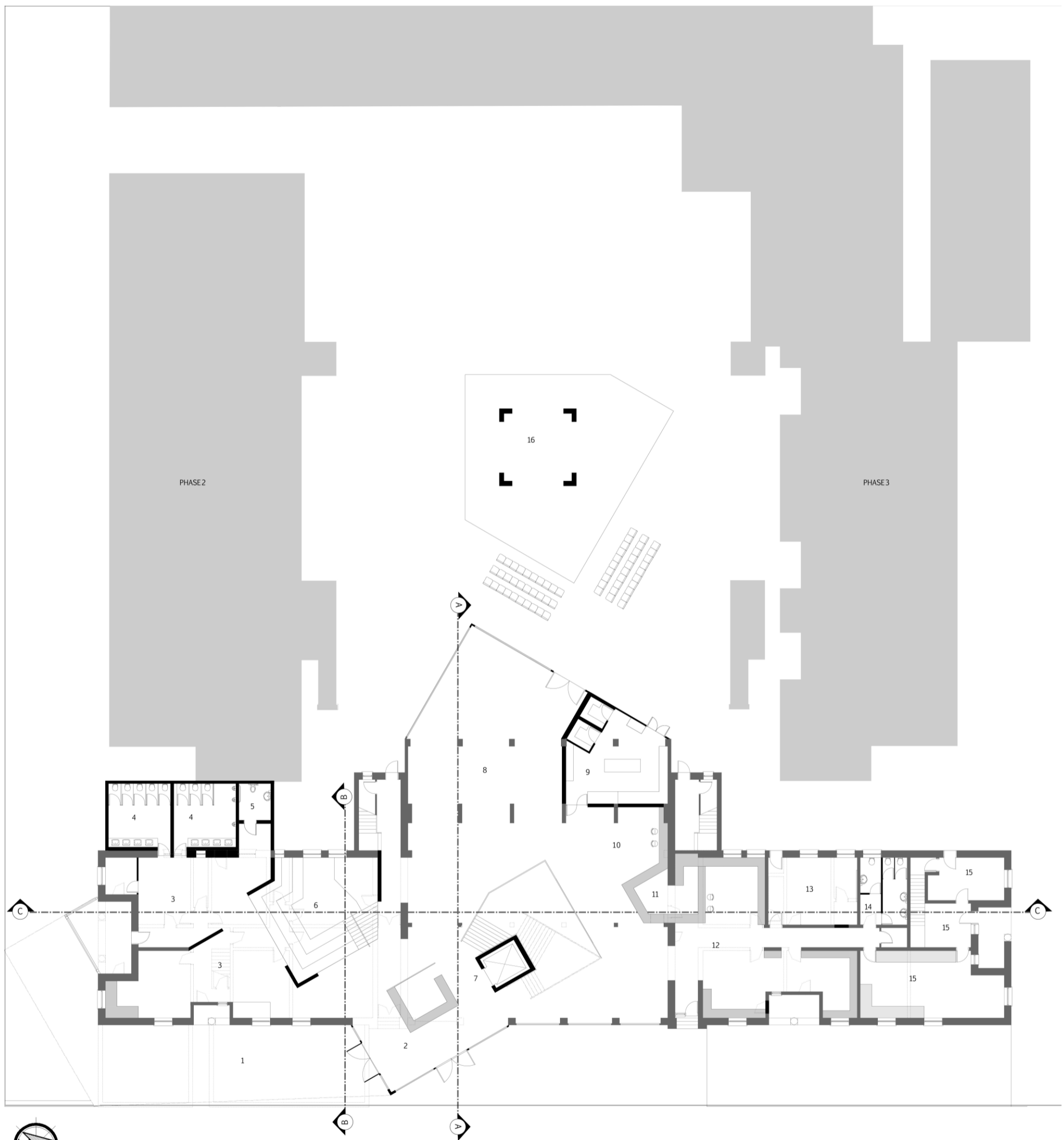
3



4

3&4: The intervention support structure was mass modeled which would incorporate a canopy, waiting space under the intervention.

Figure 5.15 Draft 2 process models for the façade intervention (Author 2015)



GROUND FLOOR PLAN
SCALE 1:100

LEGEND

1. Covered entrance way
2. Reception
3. Tailoring workshop
4. Male and female ablutions
5. Accessible abluion
6. Auditorium
7. Elevator
8. Hair and beauty workshop
9. Kitchen
10. Restaurant
11. Restaurant counter
12. Internet cafe and bookshop
13. Training workshop
14. Ablutions
15. Homework/ study rooms
16. Courtyard stage

- Existing walls
- Demolished
- Existing buildings on site

Figure 5.16: Ground floor plan- June 2015, not to scale (Author 2015)

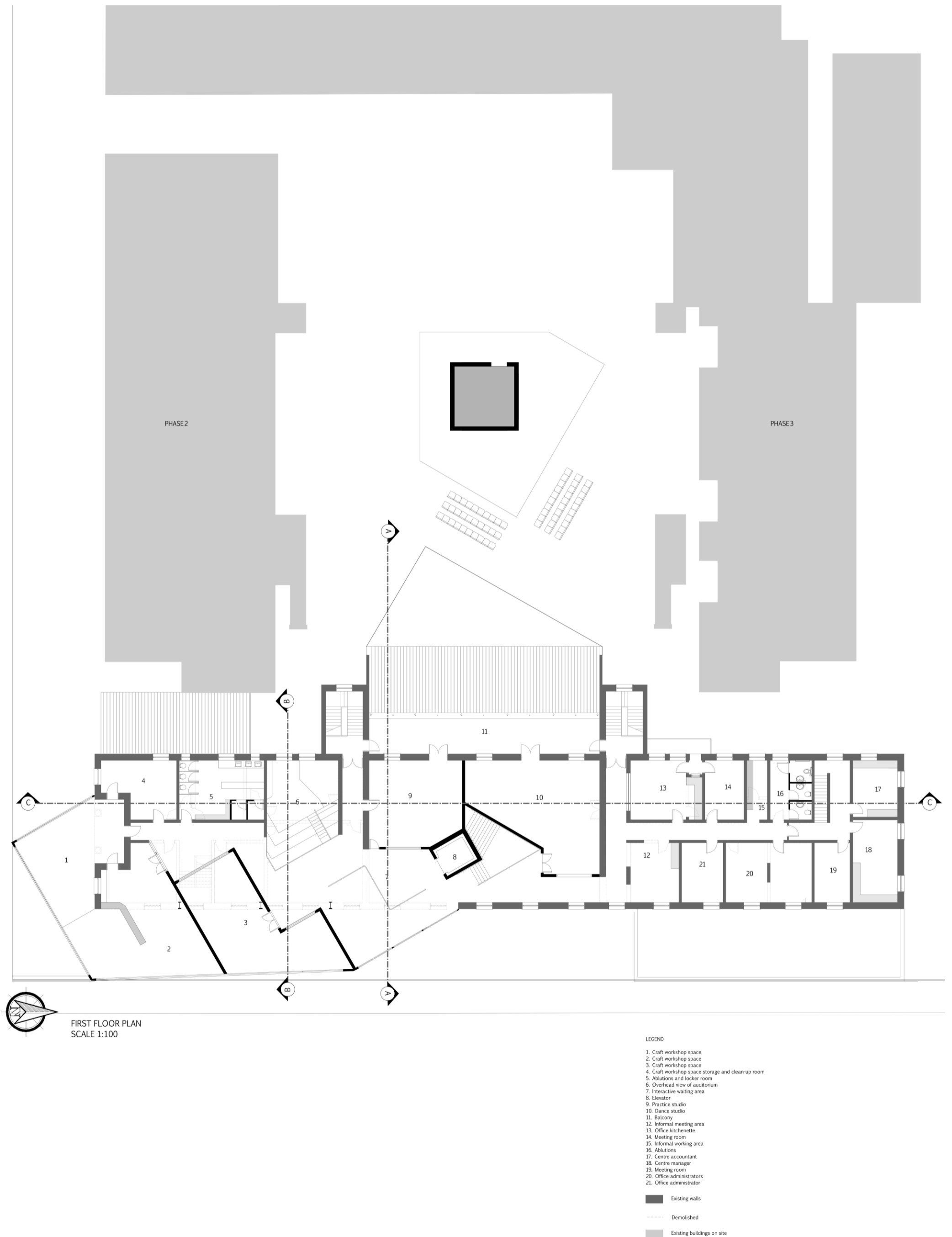


Figure 5.17: First floor plan- June 2015 , not to scale (Author 2015)

5.7.2 Design draft – October 2015

The design draft has developed into a more refined version of the previous document presented in June. The conceptual approach remains and is further improved upon by removing the canopy space that the façade intervention would create, instead extending it to become a foyer space on ground level whilst accommodating a multi-functional space on the floor above.

The original intervention had two doors with which to access the new entrance, leading into an open plan reception space. This has been developed to have three access routes that guide the user into the building by leading them to the auditorium, the main circulation (elevator and staircase) and towards the restaurant and bookstore.

The outward protrusion on the Minaar street façade has been redeveloped and manifests as an inward projection that opens up the corner of Minaar and Bosman Street. This deviation from the solid, impermeable façade allows an alternative view into Bonang, adding a layer of transparency, a peek into what the girls are busy with.

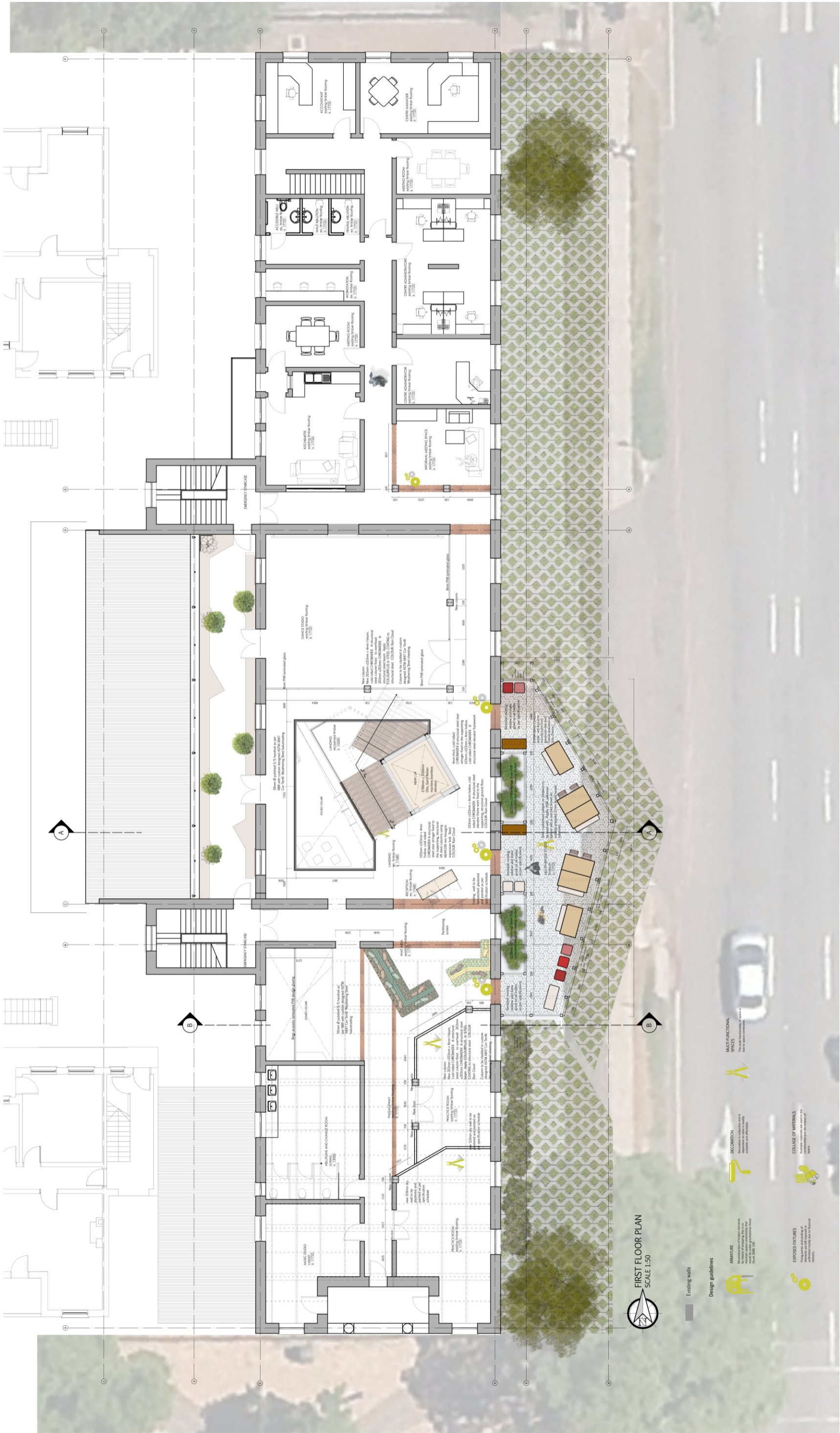
The auditorium initially intended to be a speaking and performance space was identified as being more apt if it were only a speaking auditorium. This changed the design of the auditorium that originally had railing height glazing all around to being fully glazed to allow only visual connection rather than an auditory connection with its surrounding uses and passers-by.

The staircase remained in its central location whilst its orientation and aesthetics were re-iterated to suit the new design language as per the mood board (figure 5.12). This will be discussed further in Chapter 6 (6.3)

The auditorium in section BB (figure 5.18) shows that the auditorium is sunken below the building's finished floor level. This was done to extend an existing basement level located in this part of the building and allow the AGC to have an impact on the building on all three levels as she fully occupies the spaces within Bonang. The AGC not only extends her boundaries in breadth (seen on plan) but also in depth (shown in section), which is symbolic of the inward and outward expansion she will experience and create in her life and ultimately in her community.



Figure 5.18: Ground and first floor plans- October 2015 (Author 2015)



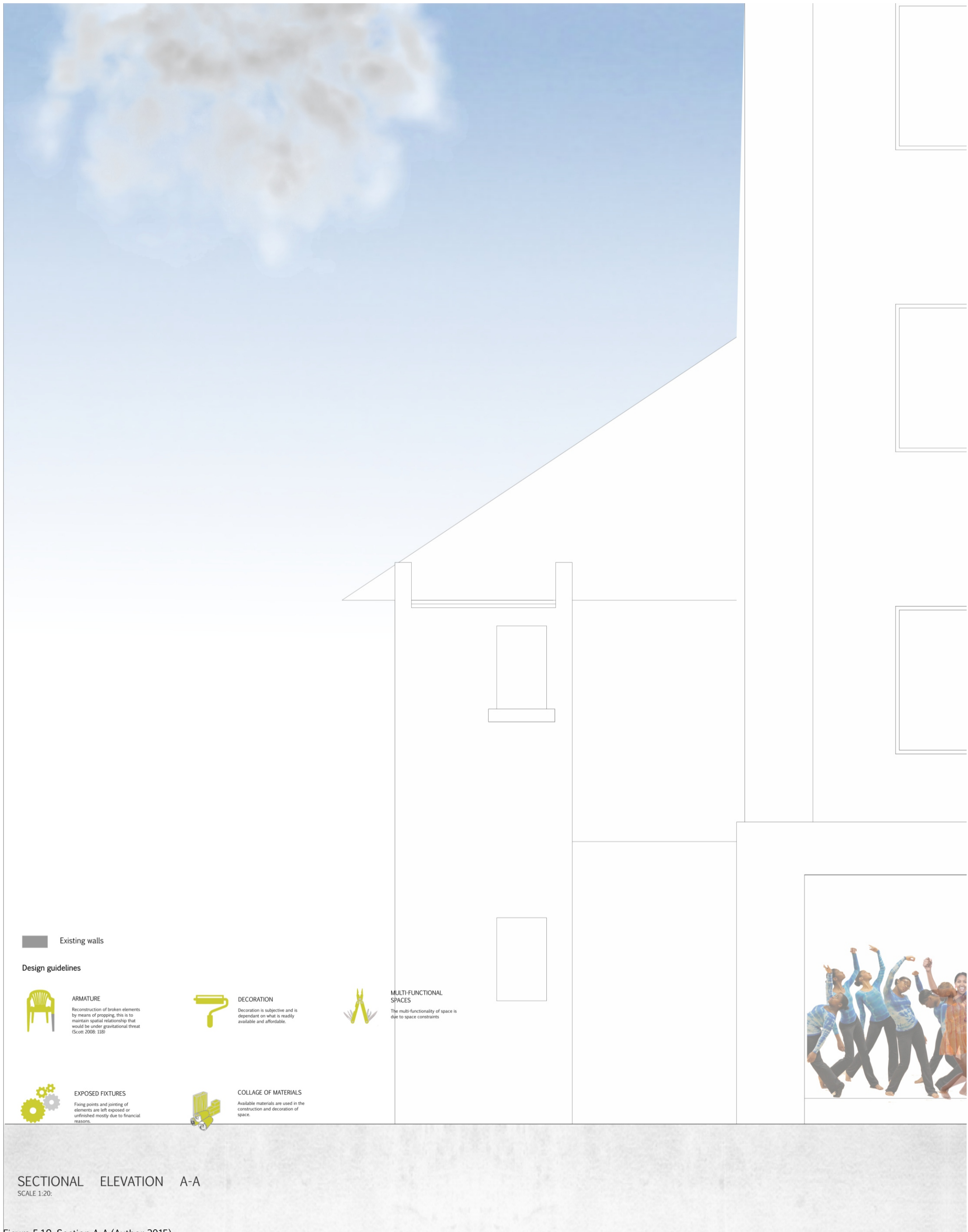


Figure 5.19: Section A-A (Author 2015)



Figure 5.19: Section A-A (Author 2015)



Figure 5.20: Section B-B (Author 2015)

5.8 CONCLUSION

The design development chapter offered a starting point for the design and aesthetic interpretation of African feminism in Bonang. Conceptual ideas such as the deviation from the linear circulation in the existing building, the re-interpretation of African patterns and materials were identified as well as the connection between black hair alteration methods and the interventionist approach. The proposed design seeks to instil pride in the AGC concerning her African heritage that she need not abandon it to succeed in a previously white, supremacist, patriarchal society. The re-iterative process of drawing plans and sections, building models and mood boards allows for a reflective outlook that peels away at any layers and design decisions that are no longer necessary. The design development process aided in the selection of 3 interventions will be further detailed in Chapter 6, Technical investigation.





CHAPTER 6