



Design development and
approach to the Pretoria
Magistrates Court.

CHAPTER

Design

11.

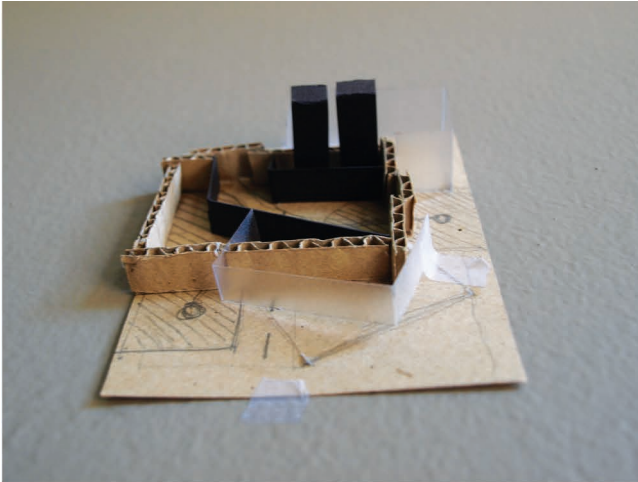


Figure 11_1 Concept model #1
(February 2016)

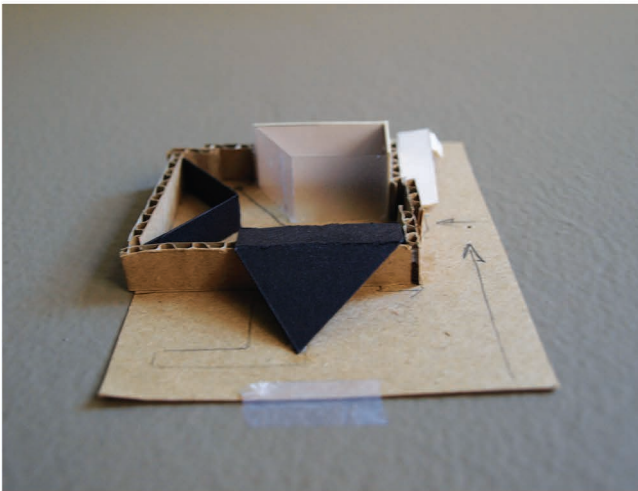


Figure 11_2 Concept model #2
(February 2016)

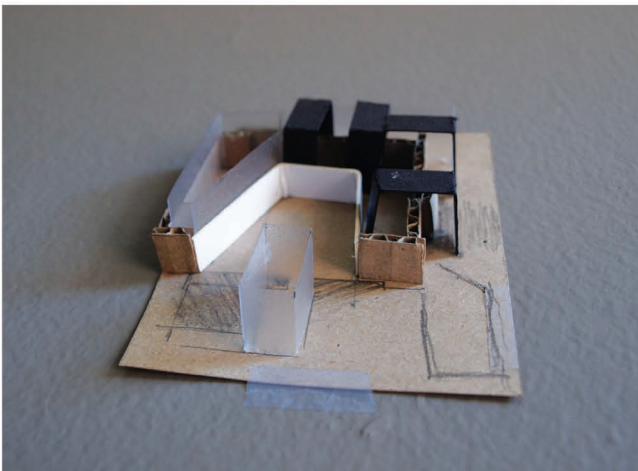


Figure 11_3 Concept model #3
(February 2016)

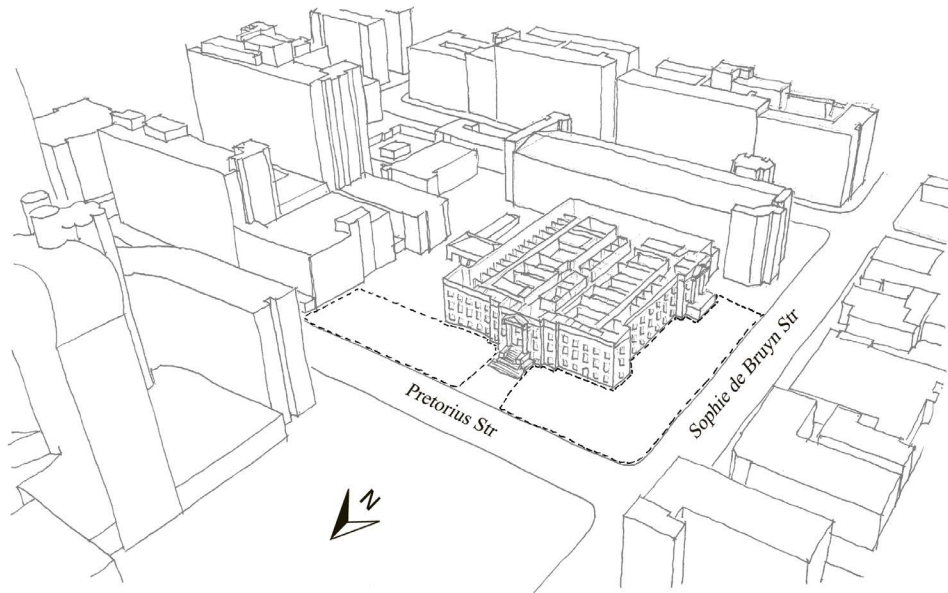


Figure 11_4 Area development

1. The first clear, and intuitively apparent, opportunity for intervention was the immediate space surrounding the building. Because of the classical nature of the design, the building was set back into the site; removed from the street and the surrounding context. This meant that the building made no contribution to the street edge or to the urban condition.

The space was later turned into a parking lot and a fence added all around the perimeter (dates unknown) which only exacerbated the problem.

Therefore the resolve of this designed moved to address these evidential problems by resolving to develop the parking space surrounding the building. Through this there is an opportunity to contribute to the street edge and the urban fabric, while bringing the building out of its classical isolation and adding needed floor space. The parking space lost during this development can be accommodated either in the Pretoria Central Police Station which is east of the site or directly across the road to the north which is currently an underutilised government parking space

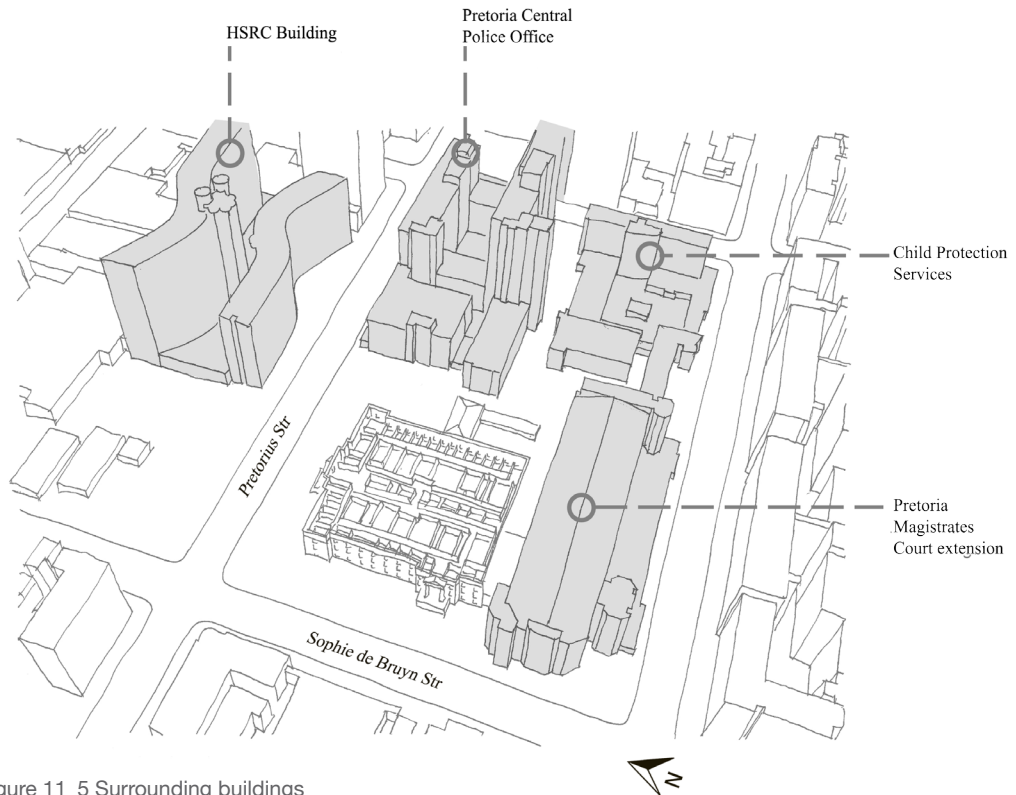


Figure 11_5 Surrounding buildings

2. Next the precinct was look at as a whole. To the south of the project site was the new magistrate's court which would accommodate criminal cases. To the east of the site is the Pretoria Central Police Station and south-east is Child Protection Services, also a police unit.

opportunity to open it up inwards to facilitate access. This meant the removal of boundary walls and the rerouting of some vehicular access as well as parking.

Thus this whole city block could operate as a coherent functioning precinct that promotes collaboration and public movement through the block. So as the court was extended outwards towards the street, there was an

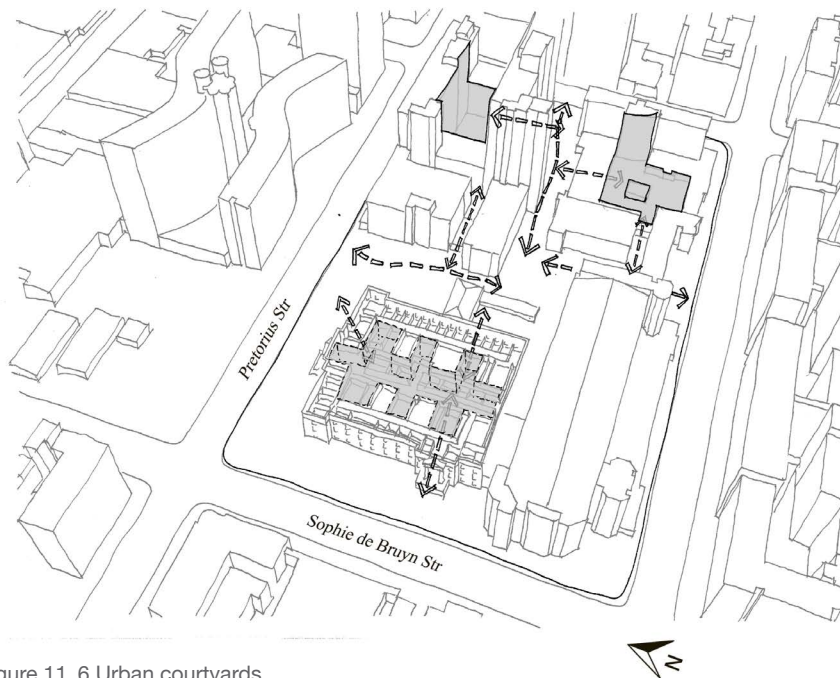


Figure 11_6 Urban courtyards

3. The next consideration was the repetition of inner building courtyards. As observed from above, the Pretoria Central Police Station is arranged around an internal courtyard and the buildings west of the Child Protection Services also formed a well-defined courtyard.

Thus the dissertation design aimed to create a inner building courtyard for the Pretoria Magistrate's Court. Through this intervention the design approach hoped to open up the building, undermine its solitary nature and

instil a new spatial quality which could be accessed by the entire precinct. This would also help in connecting the urban spaces the dissertation is aiming to create.

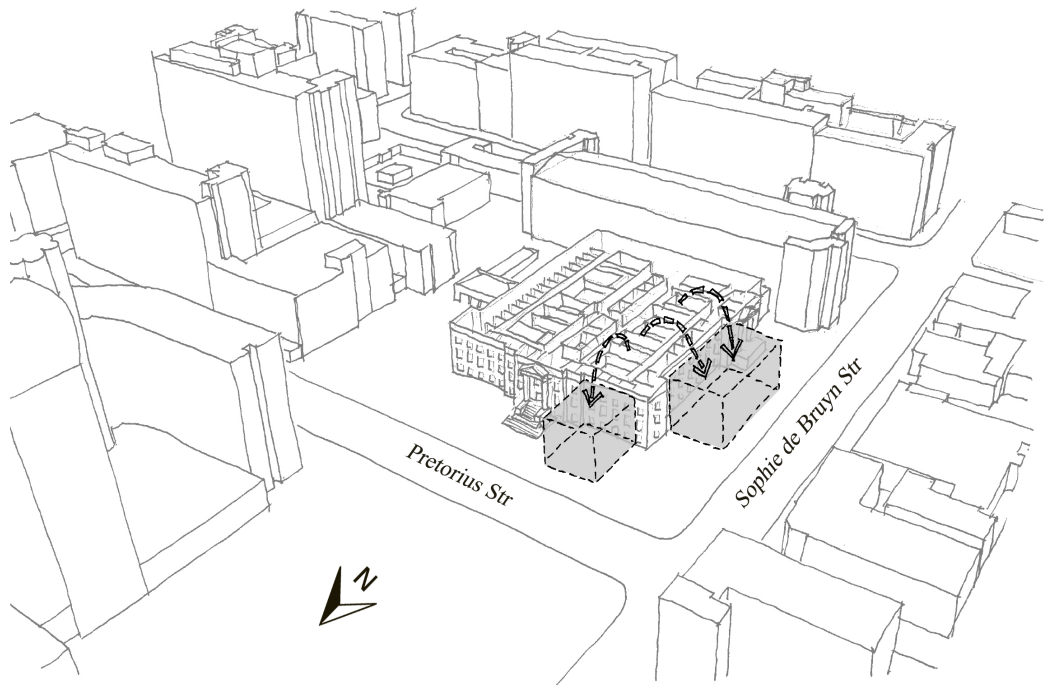


Figure 11_7 Public courts

4. Therefore, in order to facilitate the edge development of the parking lot and creating an inner building courtyard, the design opted to reorganise the spatial relations of the existing court building. The severe disruption came with the fire in 2010 and then the subsequent development of blackmold. As renovation is underway, there is an extensive intervention to remove the blackmold and all lead based paint and asbestos used in the original construction. Thus the existing structure can truly be seen as a ruin.

The design response is to move the current court spaces to the northern and western periphery. In doing so space is added, the wasted space currently used by parking is utilised and an opportunity is created to re- envision how the court functions and what it may become in future.

By displacing the courts to the outside of the current building, there is an attempt to democratise the spaces and open up the judicial process to the larger public.

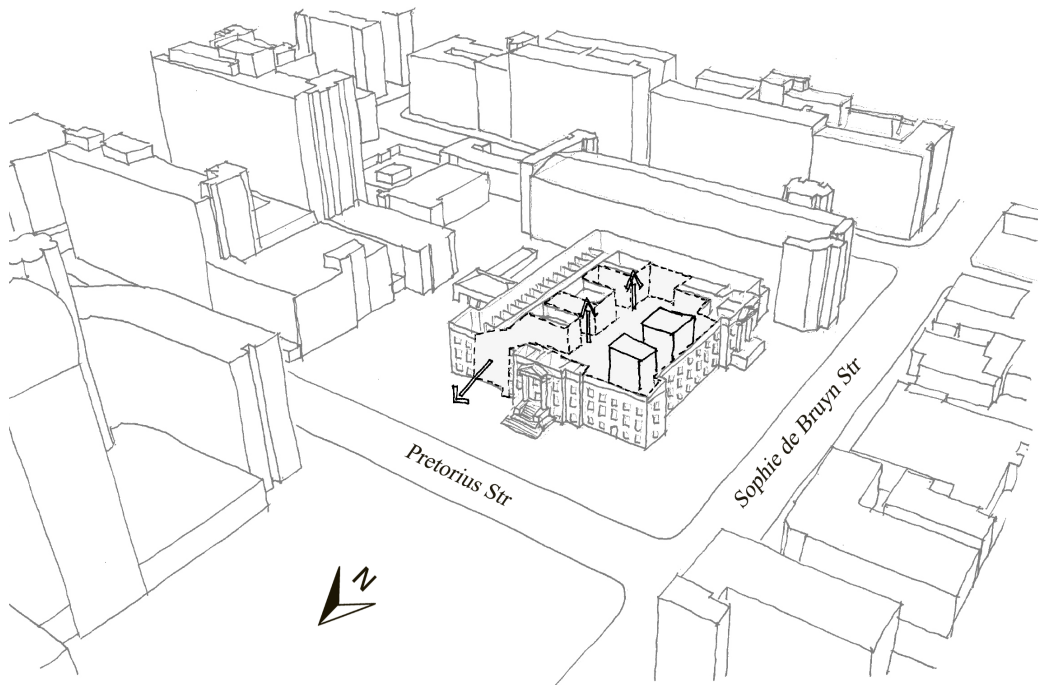


Figure 11_8 Building cut

5. In support of this spatial reorganisation and the creation of inner building courtyards, the floors supporting the circulation space on the second floor, as well as the service spaces in the middle of that circulation on the first and second floor will be removed.

This will create an open double volume circulation space which will start towards opening up the building and reorganising its functioning.

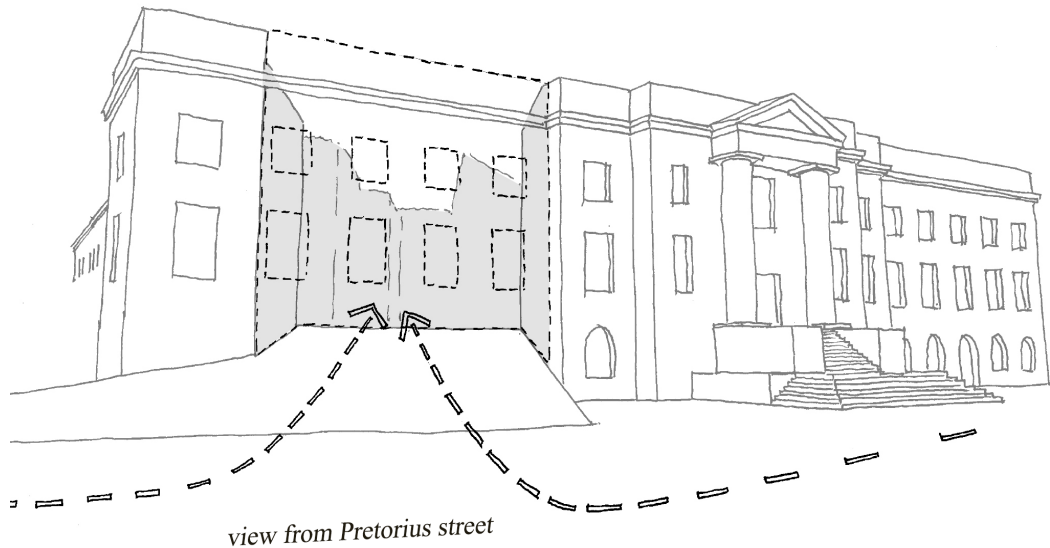


Figure 11_9 Facade cut

6. One of the main classical principals is the creation of a perfect world within a world, thereby isolating it from the surrounding context as not to be contaminated. Furthermore the ascending staircase is used to enter the building, ascending the plinth which forms the ground floor level and effectively treats it as a basement level. This device is used to create a sense of gravitas, but also to intimidate those who would wish to enter the building.

By subverting the staircase and creating a new broad entrance through the façade, accessibility is created in a natural flowing way without restrictions or intimidation. At the same time undermining the idea of a perfect symmetry on the northern façade and thereby drawing the building into its context and its context into the building.

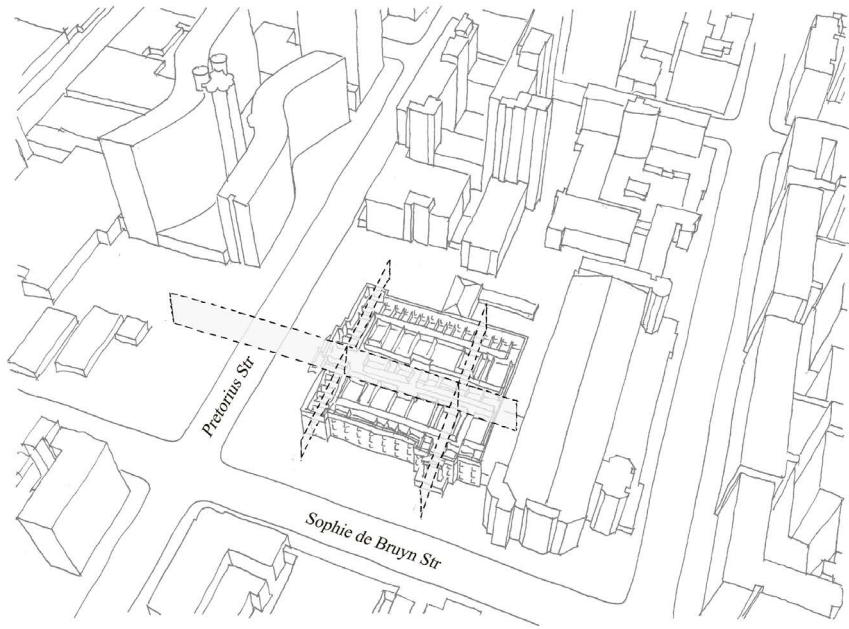


Figure 11_10 classical axis

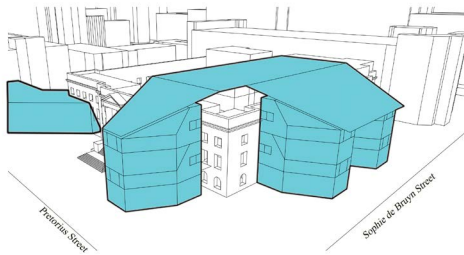


Figure 11_11 Iteration #1 (March 2016)

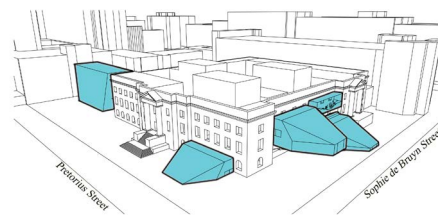
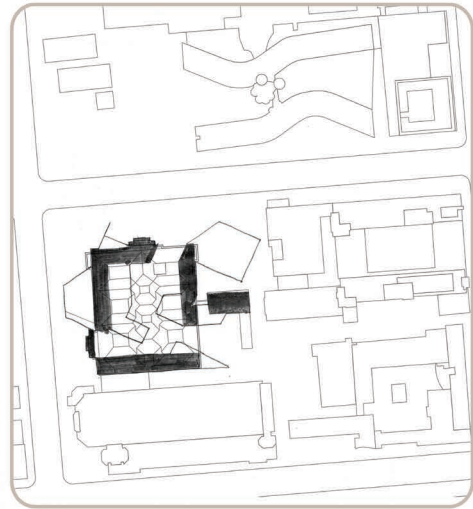
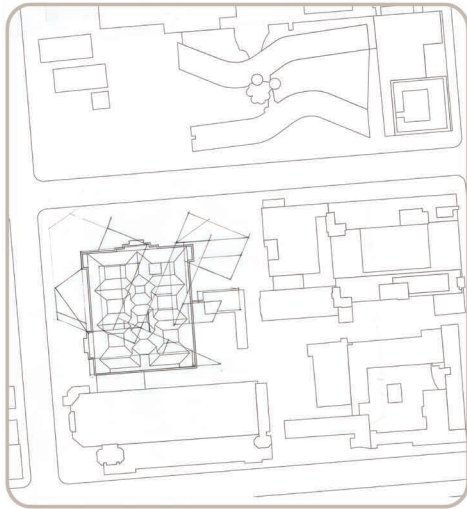
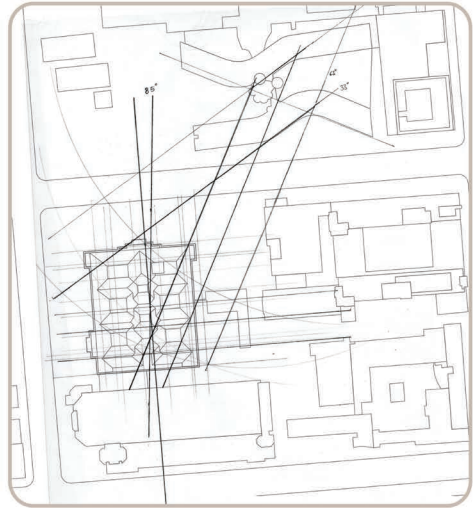
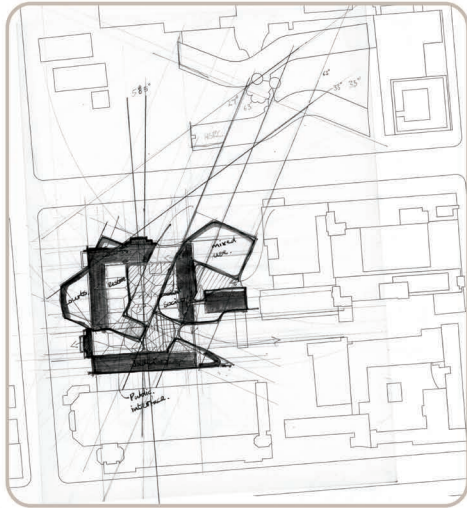


Figure 11_12 Iteration #2 (April 2016)

7. The original building was designed with a clear classical axis running east to west and north to south which dictated the spatial organisation and layout of the building. Because this formed an integral part of the classical nature of the building it warranted a direct response either to strengthen or undermine the principle.



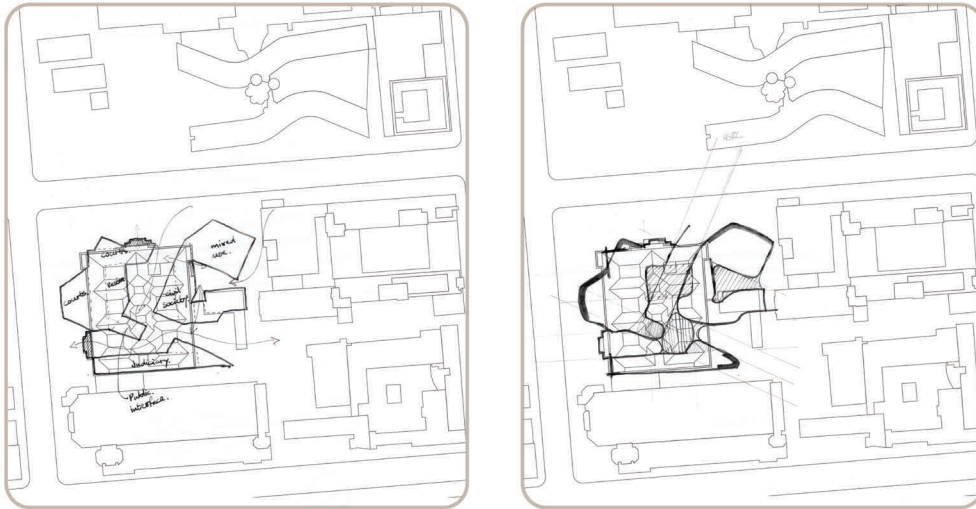


Figure 11_13 Development of cutting geometry (May 2016)

8. The cutting of the façade and the new access route created needed a guiding geometry to control and contain the intervention.

For this the larger context was taken into consideration and it was decided to use the geometry of the HSRC building across the road to give the contextual geometry. This was appropriate for the following reasons:

1. The HSRC building in its own right is a Post-Modern response to the classical style and the drawing from its geometry would link

the two expressions in a continuation of that expression.

2. The use of the 64° or 26° derived from the HSRC building will orientate the newly defined entrance towards that building and re-establish a link with the city, which starts to define space, not only at a building level but also on an urban level.

3. This geometry can then be used to disrupt the current classical grid and redefine the additions and extensions without adhering to the old grid.

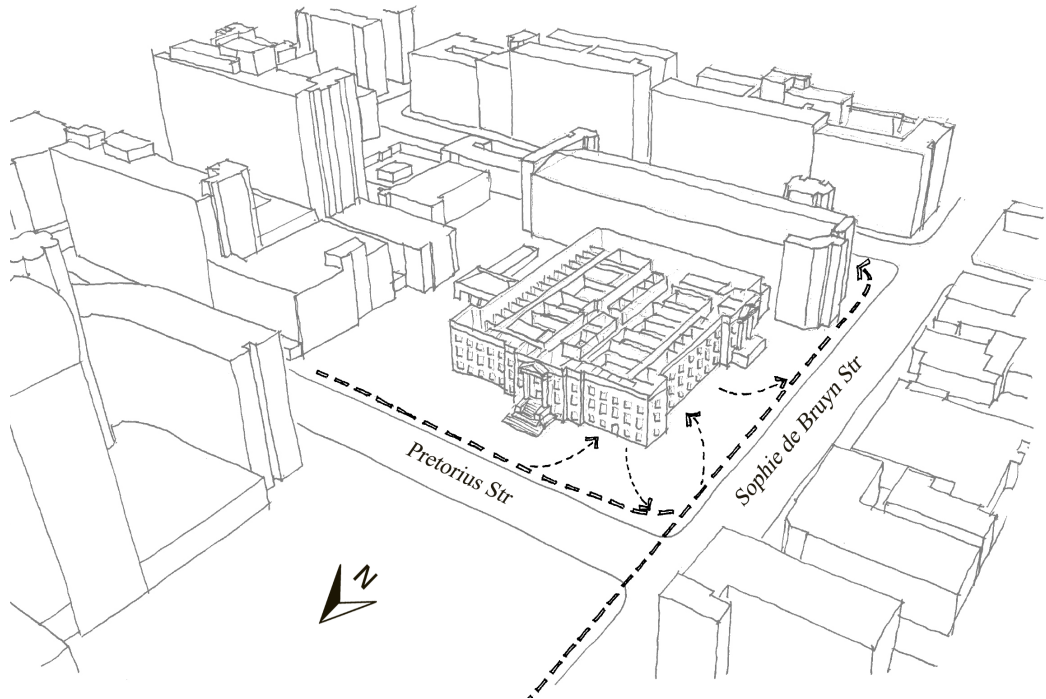
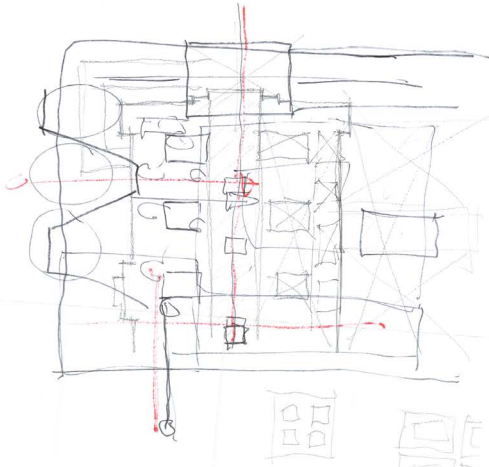


Figure 11_14 movement patterns around the site

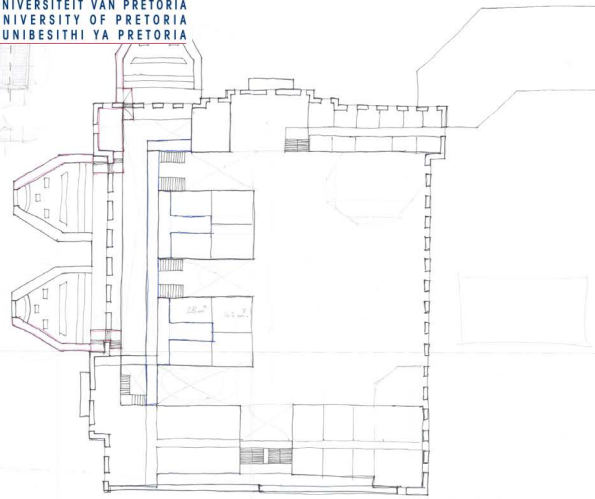
9. A ritual observed is that of lawyers and advocates walking along Sophie De Bruyn Street towards the new addition of the magistrates court to the south. This has created a very busy street edge and has resulted in some informal trading forming along this route.

With the additions of the courts to the west, the ground floor of the existing building will be transformed into commercial spaces, which can function independently from the court

rituals above but also support it if necessary. This intervention will aim to draw from the energy already present on the street and to create a multifunctional building which is reminiscent of the earlier manifestations of the courthouse typology.

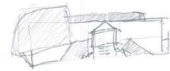


(February 2016)



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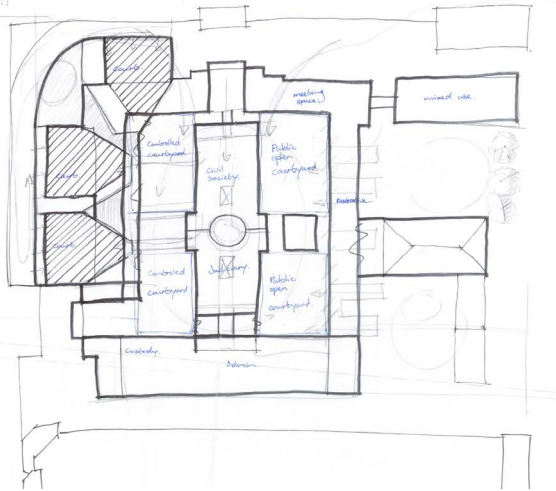
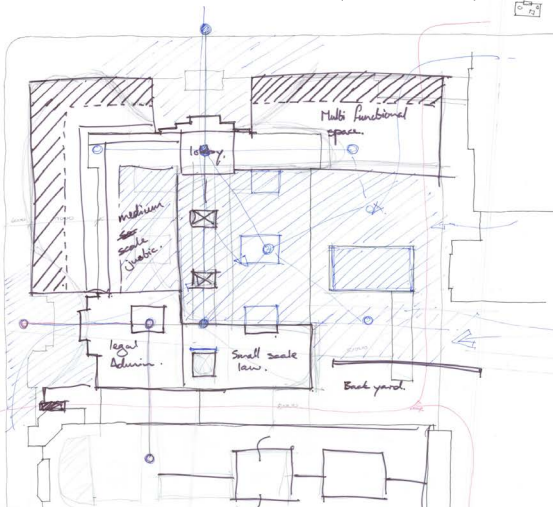


Figure 11_15 Design development #1

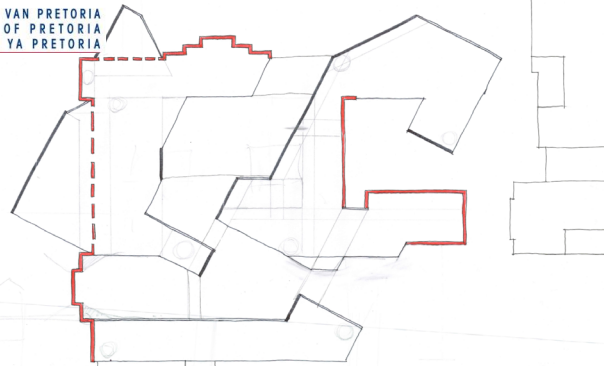
10. After the disruptive device was used to undermine the classical axis and determine the intervention, iteration needed to go through in order to find the right balance between intervention and preservation. The points of cutting was reduced and existing courtyards was used to guide intervention.

removed. In the facilitation of new circulation space and waiting areas the offices adjacent to the western façade was partially removed in order to create a spacious and well ventilated waiting area before the courts are approached, but enough fabric was retained in order not to destabilise the western facade.

It was decided that only old circulation and services was to be removed in order to create a newly defined circulation route. Thus as little as possible of the usable spaces was



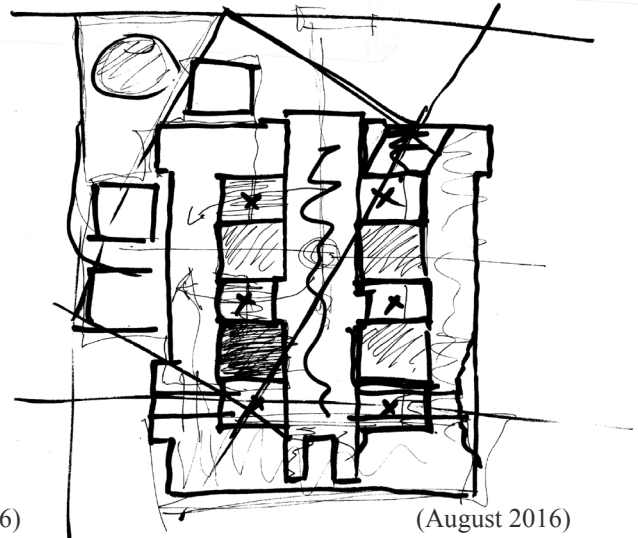
(April 2016)



(May 2016)



(July 2016)



(August 2016)

Figure 11_16 Design development #2

11. As the dissertation conserved most of the usable floor space, new opportunity was looked for to add new spaces for new processes. Thus two opportunities were identified.

Adding spaces onto the existing fabric but behind the high parapet would mean that more area is added without overpowering the façade. Secondly new spaces would be added into the existing courtyards, without disrupting the flow towards the courts.



Figure 11_17 Removal of built fabric

12. Although the built fabric behind the western façade is cleared, the façade itself is kept as a spatial mediator between old and new, between the public and the courts, and will facilitate the spatial organisation of the new addition towards the west.

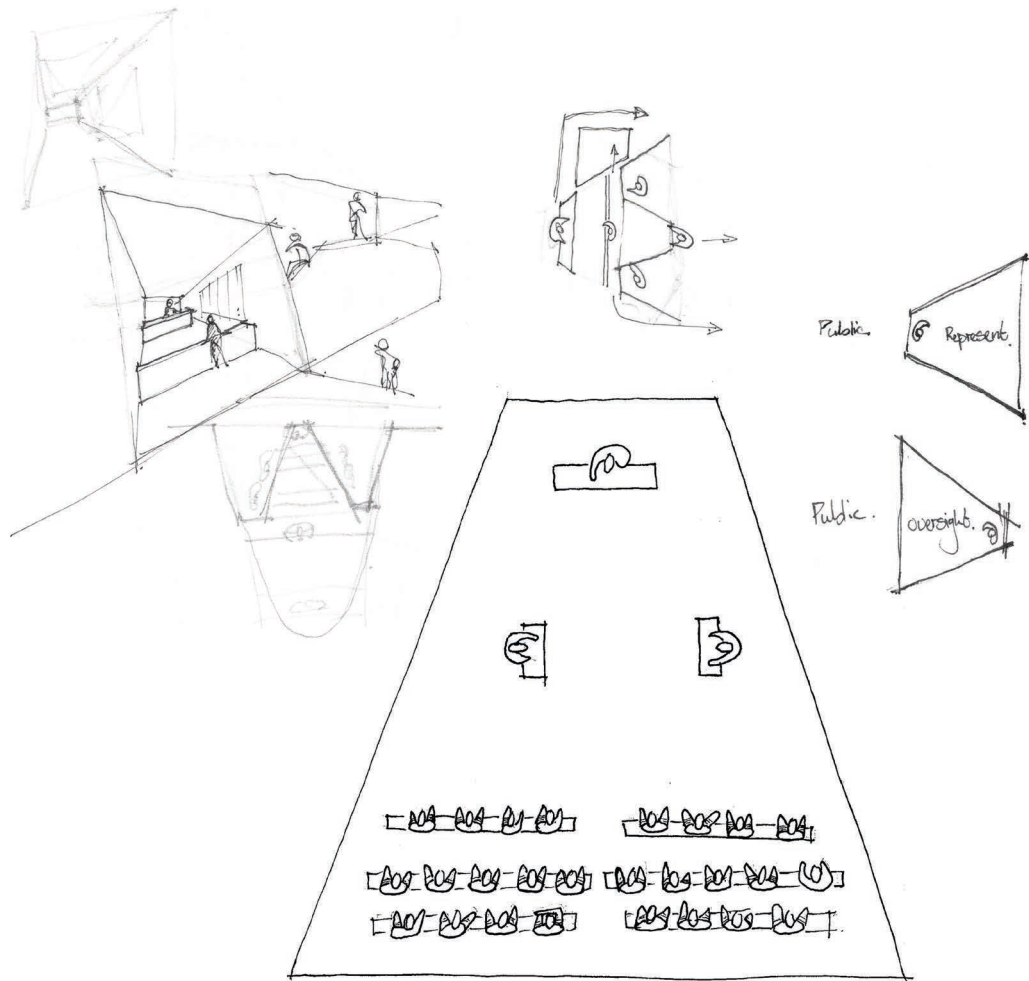


Figure 11_18 Trapezium form court

13. New court spaces are added towards the west and north. This is in order for the spaces surrounding the building to be used effectively and to remove the courts from their central enclosed position inside the court building and to place it on the sidewalk within the public domain.

1. One is a visual hierarchy in the front of the court space, afforded to the magistrate.
2. The other is a spatial hierarchy in the back of the court, which is occupied by the public.

Thus two requirements of the court would be appeased.

The court spaces are laid out in a trapezium form. This allows for two hierarchies to develop:



Figure 11_19 Design development model A_1 (June 2016)

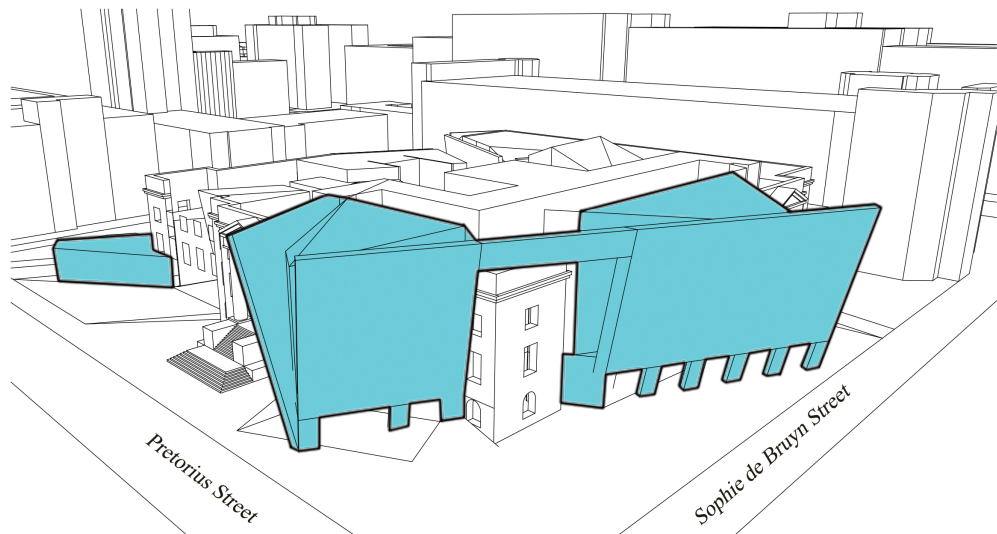


Figure 11_20 Iteration #3 (May 2016)

14. On the continuation of the cutting geometry used on the interior of the building a new screen is placed on the western façade. This is done in order to contain the new spaces created on the western side of the building as well as screening those spaces from the western sun. It also facilitates the movement of the judiciary into the building.



Figure 11_21 Design development model A_2 (June 2016)



Figure 11_22 Design development model A_3 (June 2016)

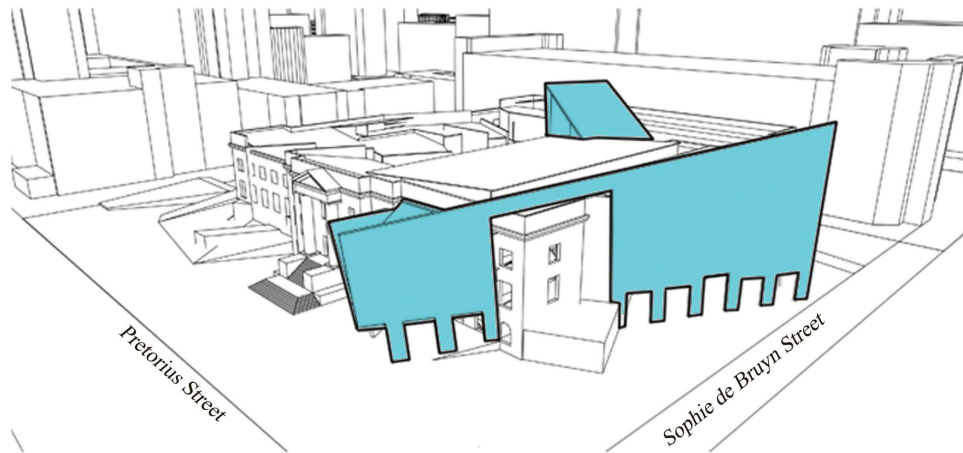


Figure 11_23 Iteration #4 (June 2016)

15. This new screen on the western façade, although conceptually well founded, became an overpowering element towards the old building. Thus it was decided to deduce the scale of the intervention and to submit all additions to the parapet of the old building, defined by the marble cornice running around the building. This became a design principle which was applied to all design interventions.

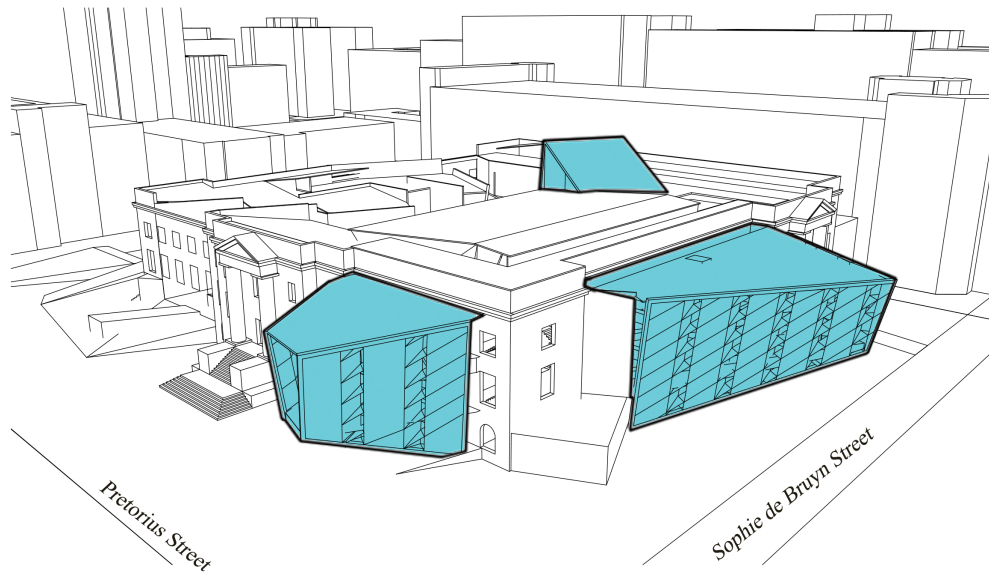


Figure 11_24 Iteration #5 (August 2016)

16. In the following iteration the screen was made permeable in order for the public to gain visual access to the spaces of the court and in order for the participants in the court process to have a visual link to the outside city. Furthermore because of the material removal from the existing building the option was explored to construct this western edition out of brick in order to reuse removed material.

17. In addition to lowering the scale of the intervention on the western and northern sides it was also decided to reduce the angle of the disruptive geometry to half of its original angle. Thus the new intervention will be ordered around the building at 13° instead of 26° off of the classical grid. This was in order to be more sensitive towards the overall grid of the city and to better relate to the surrounding urban context.



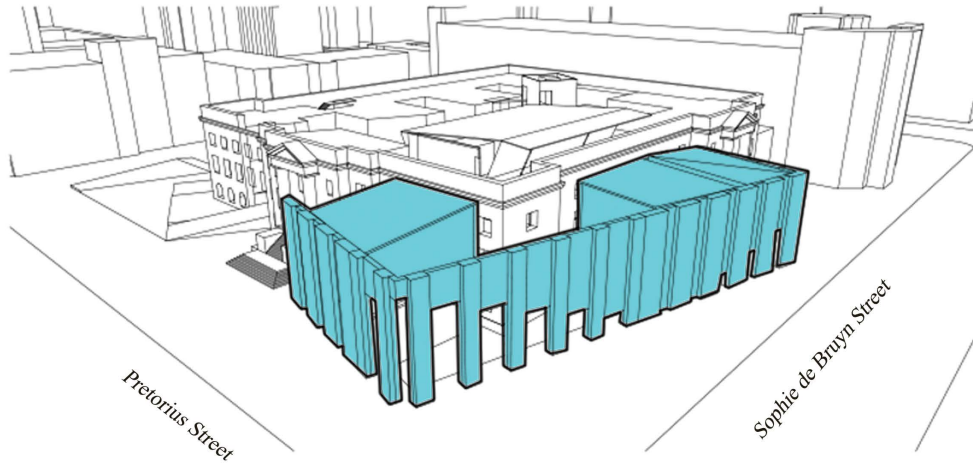


Figure 11_27 Iteration #6 (September 2016)

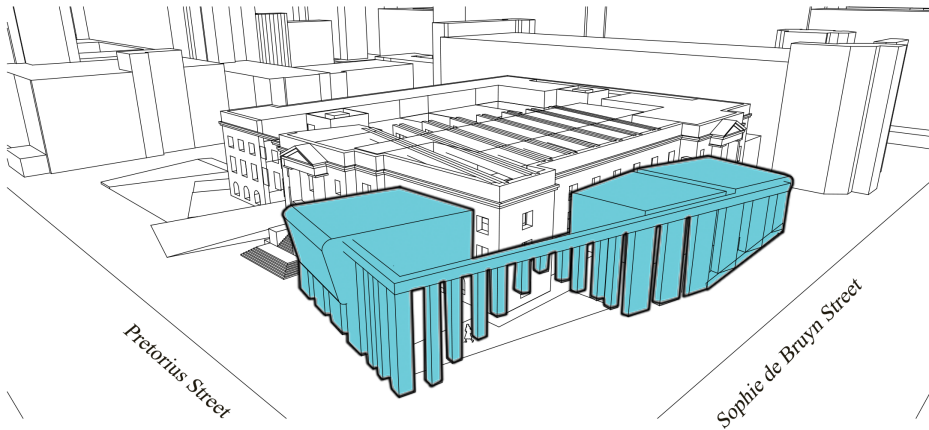


Figure 11_28 Iteration #7 (September 2016)

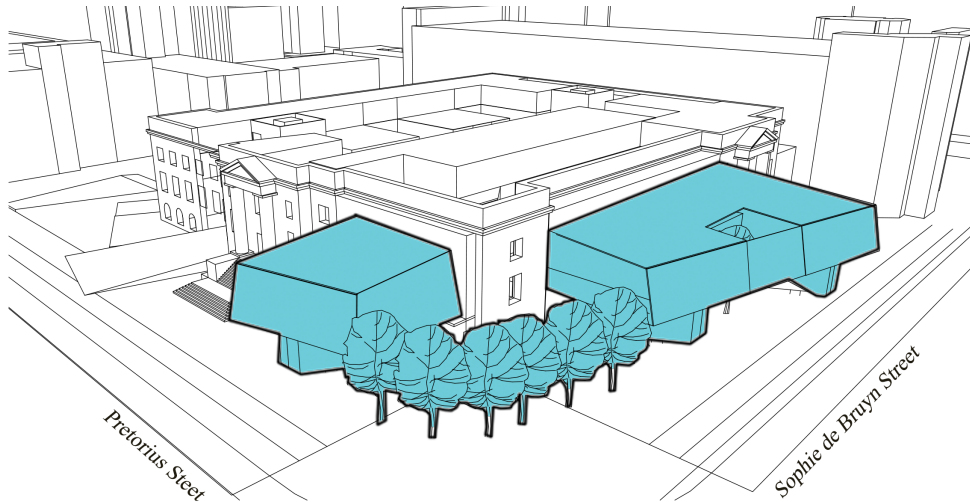


Figure 11_29 Iteration #8 (September 2016)

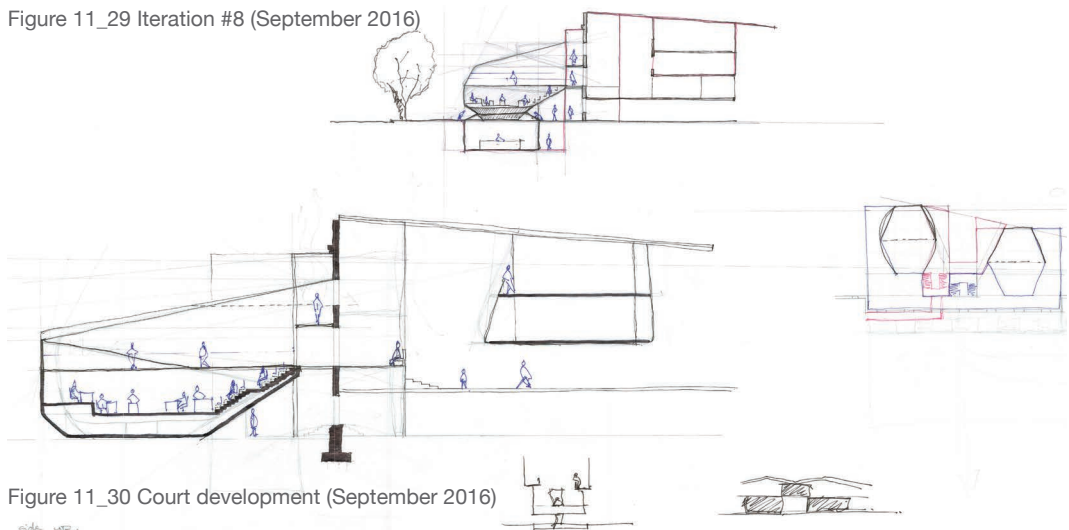


Figure 11_30 Court development (September 2016)

18. Although the initial intention of the project was to place the courts outside the building and into the public domain, this concept has not yet physically impacted on the design as the courts was suspended above the sidewalk circulation.

would be dropped down below the gallery space but into the sidewalk circulation. In doing so the court would become the mediation between an observant public, removed from the process and the participatory public which was directly part of the process.

Thus it was decided that the movement through the façade will still dictate the public circulation pattern and result in the entrance onto a public gallery before moving into the procedural court. Then the official court space

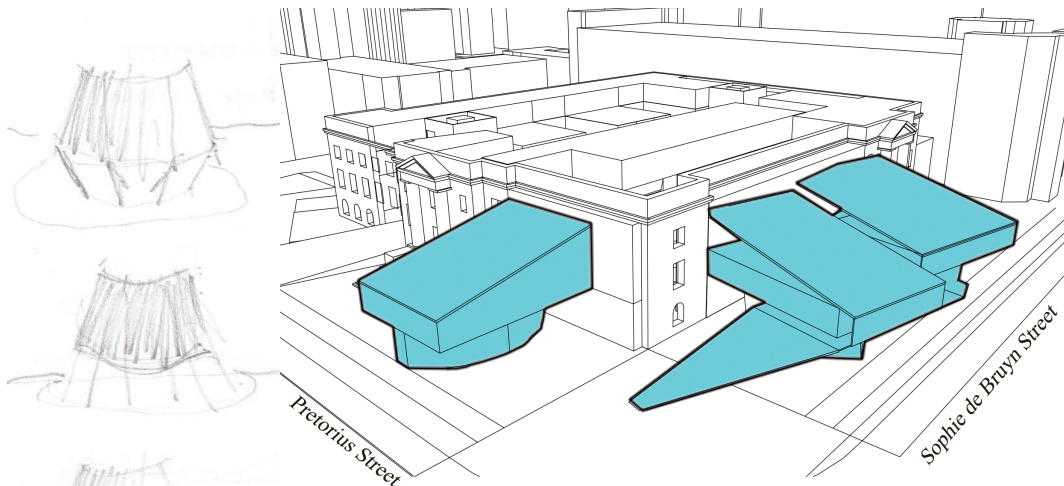


Figure 11_31 Iteration #9 (September 2016)

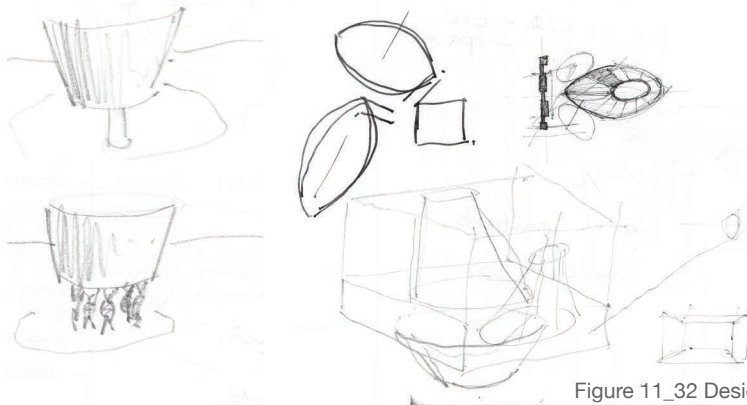


Figure 11_32 Design form (September 2016)

19. The original trapezium shape of the court would be retained but its edges would be rounded in order to appropriately soften its impact on the sidewalk circulation as well as avoiding to edition of competing angles which would challenge the classical grid and the disruptive geometry.

Furthermore the organic shape will allow the court edition to pull away from the existing court geometry and allow for the least amount of visual obstruction of the existing façade.

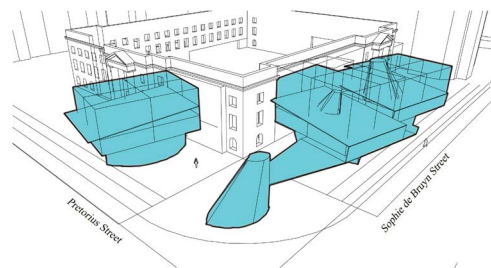


Figure 11_33 Iteration #10 (September 2016)

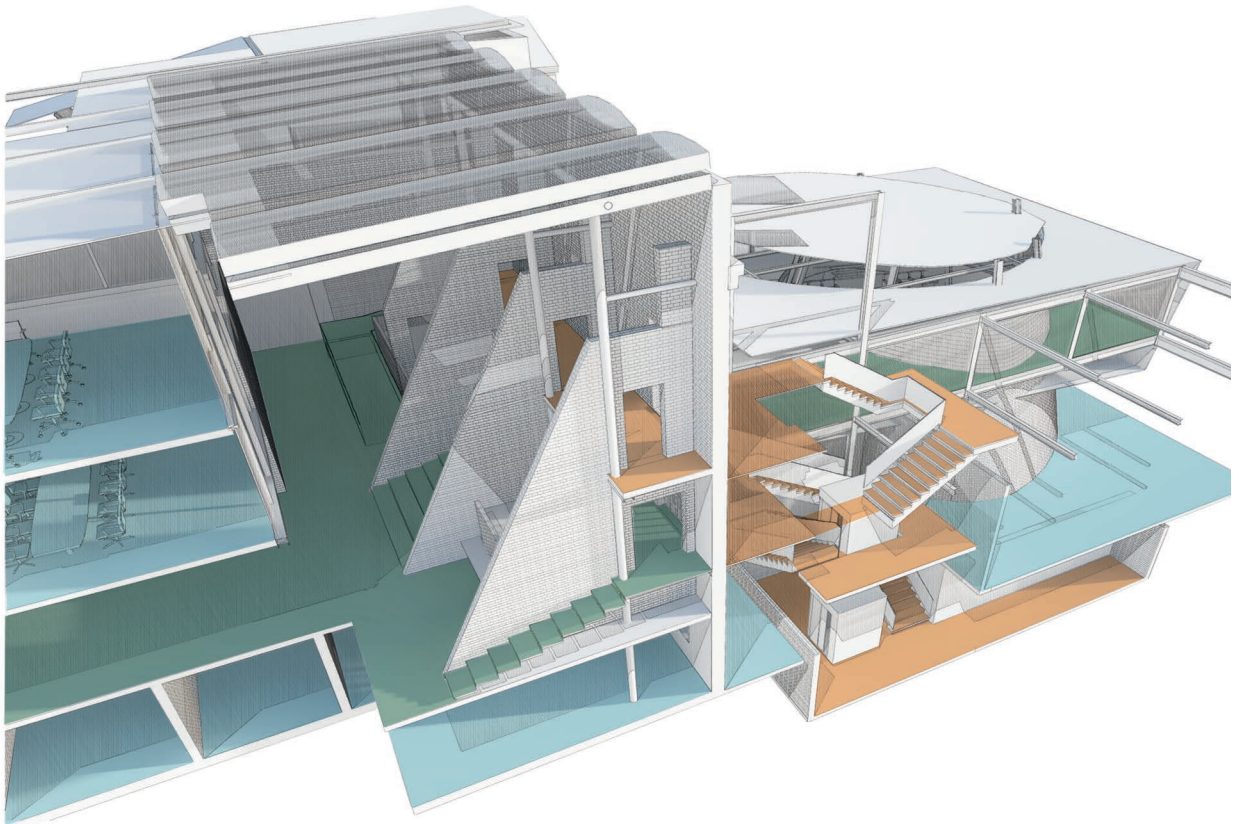


Figure 11_34 Public and judicial circulation.

20. Up until this point circulation of the magistrates has been facilitated in the junction between the northern and western façade.

This has meant that the judges had to move around the periphery of the courts to gain access to them and not cross public circulation.

In order to simplify the design the circulation was moved to the centre of the western façade on the exterior where construction would be less impactful on the existing building and so

that the circulation route of the magistrates could be reduced.

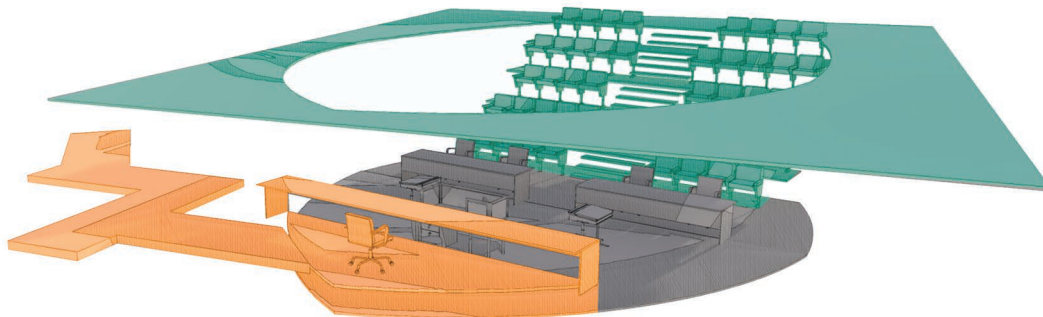
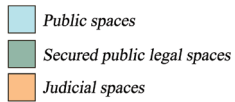


Figure 11_35 Court circulation

21. The above mentioned iteration also meant that the magistrate's position could be rotated so that they no longer face the existing building with their backs to the city, but now face the city with their backs to the existing court.

This allowed for the minimal visual disruption as the public moves in and out of the court as well as improves the acoustic solution of a doorless court.

Finally it allowed the public participating in the procedures to face the existing building and experience the full extent of the design intervention.



Figure 11_36 Court interior

22. In the final facilitation of this experience of the old and the new, the roof is slanted towards the west and opens up towards the existing building.

This assists in the shading of the northern and western sun while facilitating the view towards the heritage of the building.

The roof strategically frames specific elements while the translucent roof starts disintegrating towards the existing fabric.



Figure 11_37 perspective 1

Figure 11_38 perspective 2



CIRCULATION DIAGRAM

The following diagrams illustrates the various distinct spaces in the building. The spaces can be identified as:

Public spaces where the public can move freely without restrictions or limitations.

Secured public spaces where the public can move freely but has to submit themselves to a security check first. These spaces are directly related to the judicial spaces.

Judicial spaces is only accessible by the magistrates and supporting staff. Only people with appointments or special needs will be allowed access. This includes women and children that needs to testify via video link.

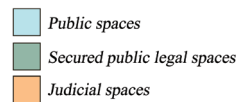
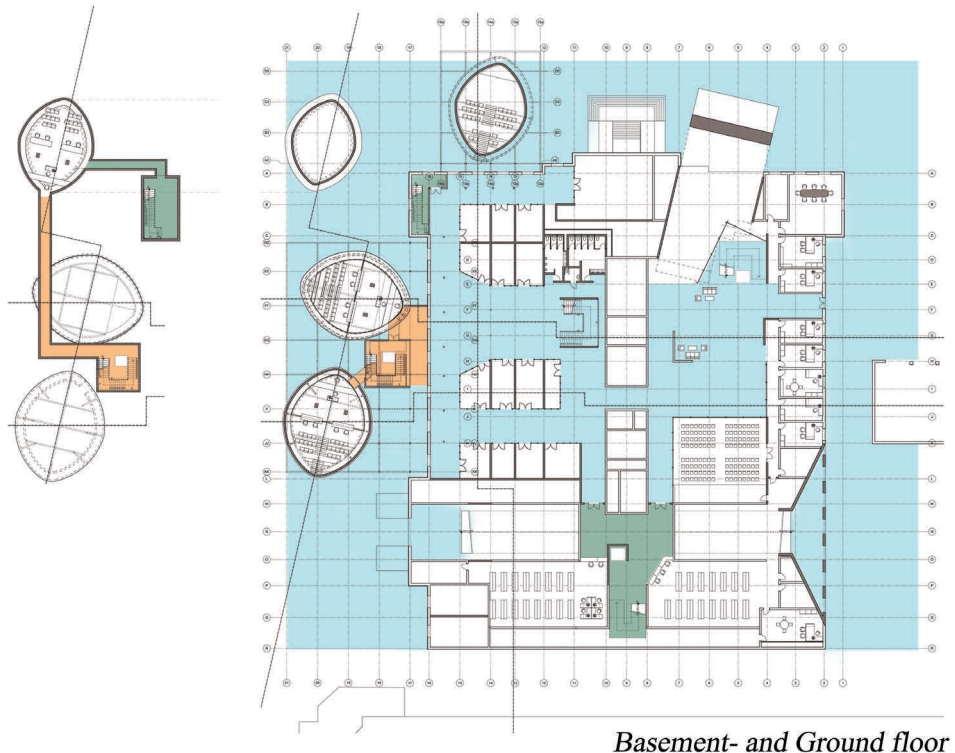
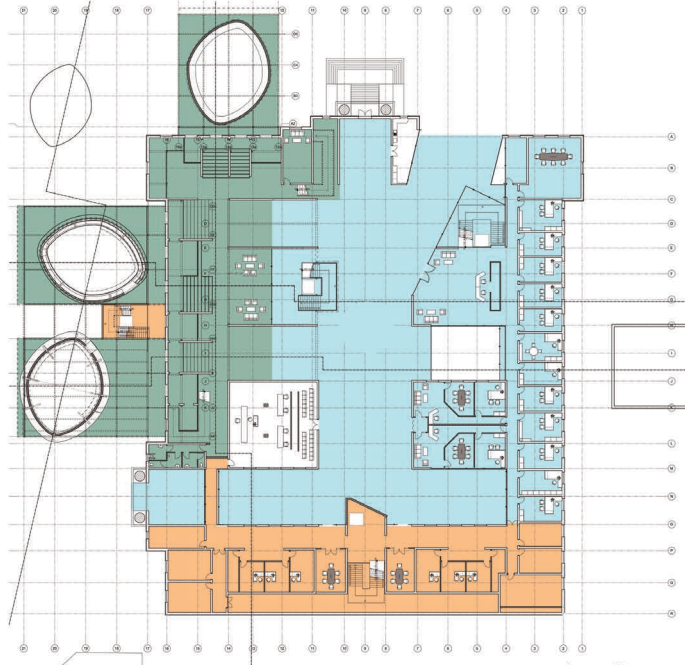
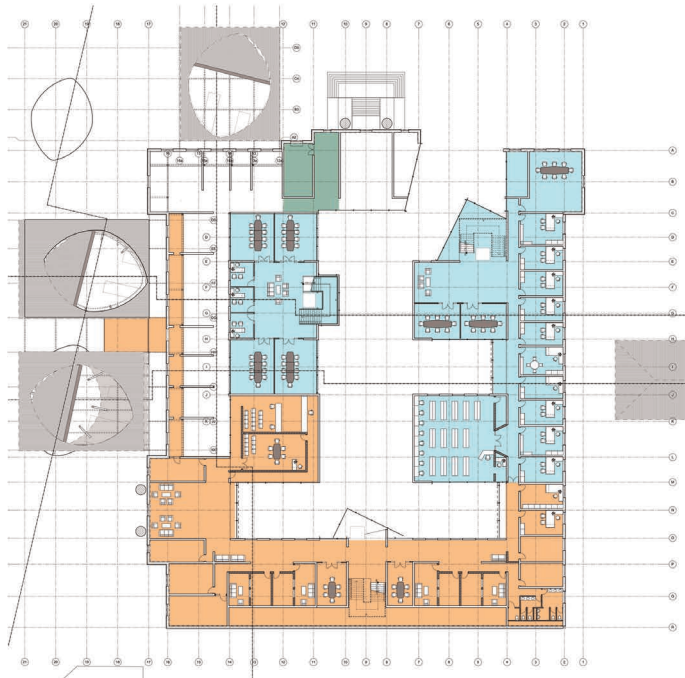


Figure 11_39 Building circulation





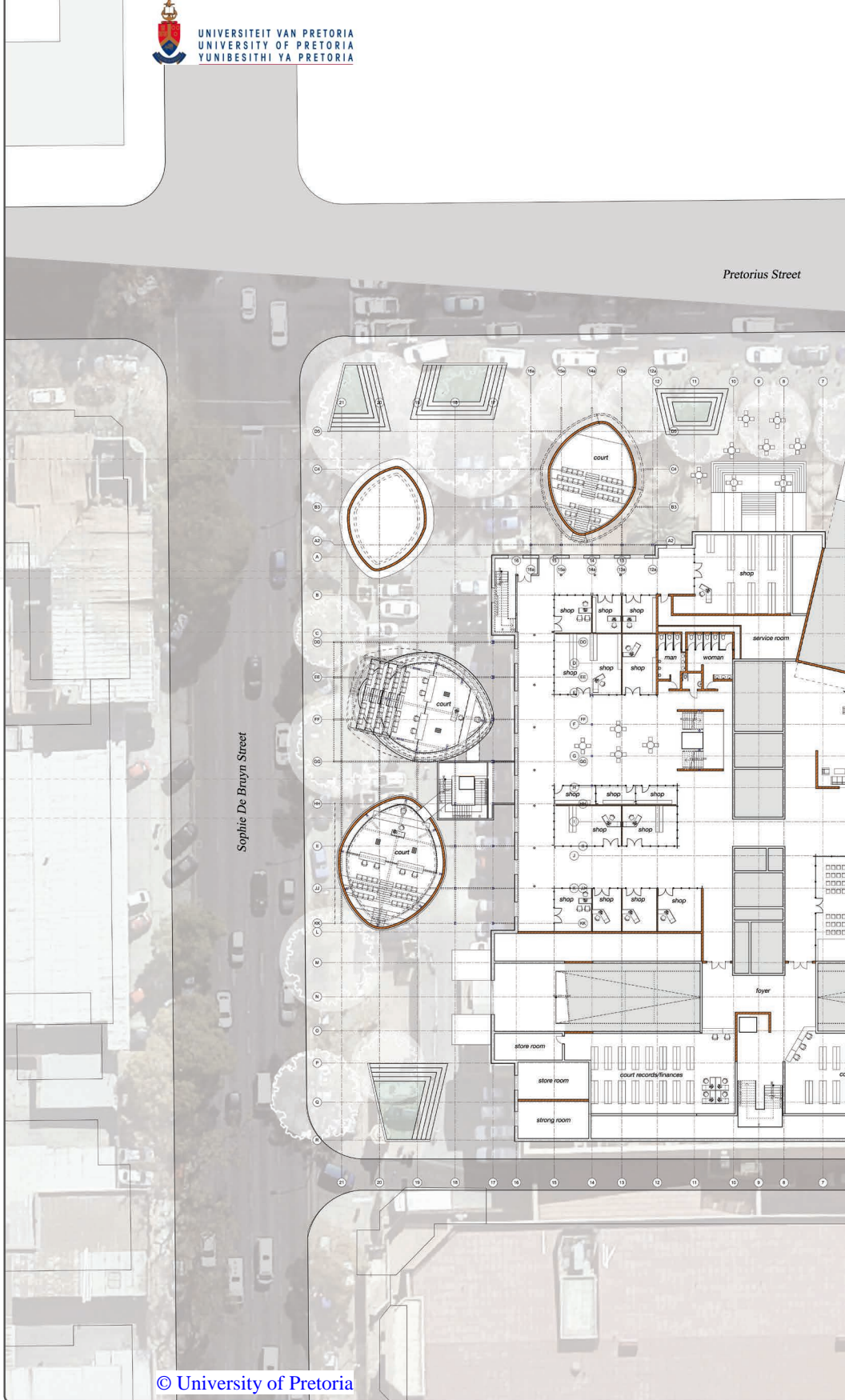
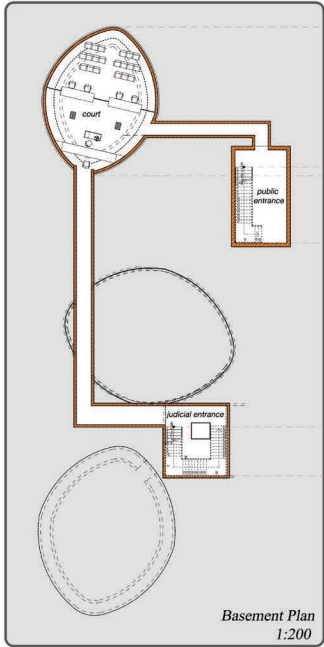
First floor



Second floor

Pretorius Street

Sophie De Bryn Street



Ground floor plan
1:200

This plans shows the court layouts on the western side of the building as well as the commercial ground floor and public ablution facilities.

The administrative wing is located on the southern side and east the public spaces for use by civil society is located.

The spaces are linked and circulation between them are unrestricted.

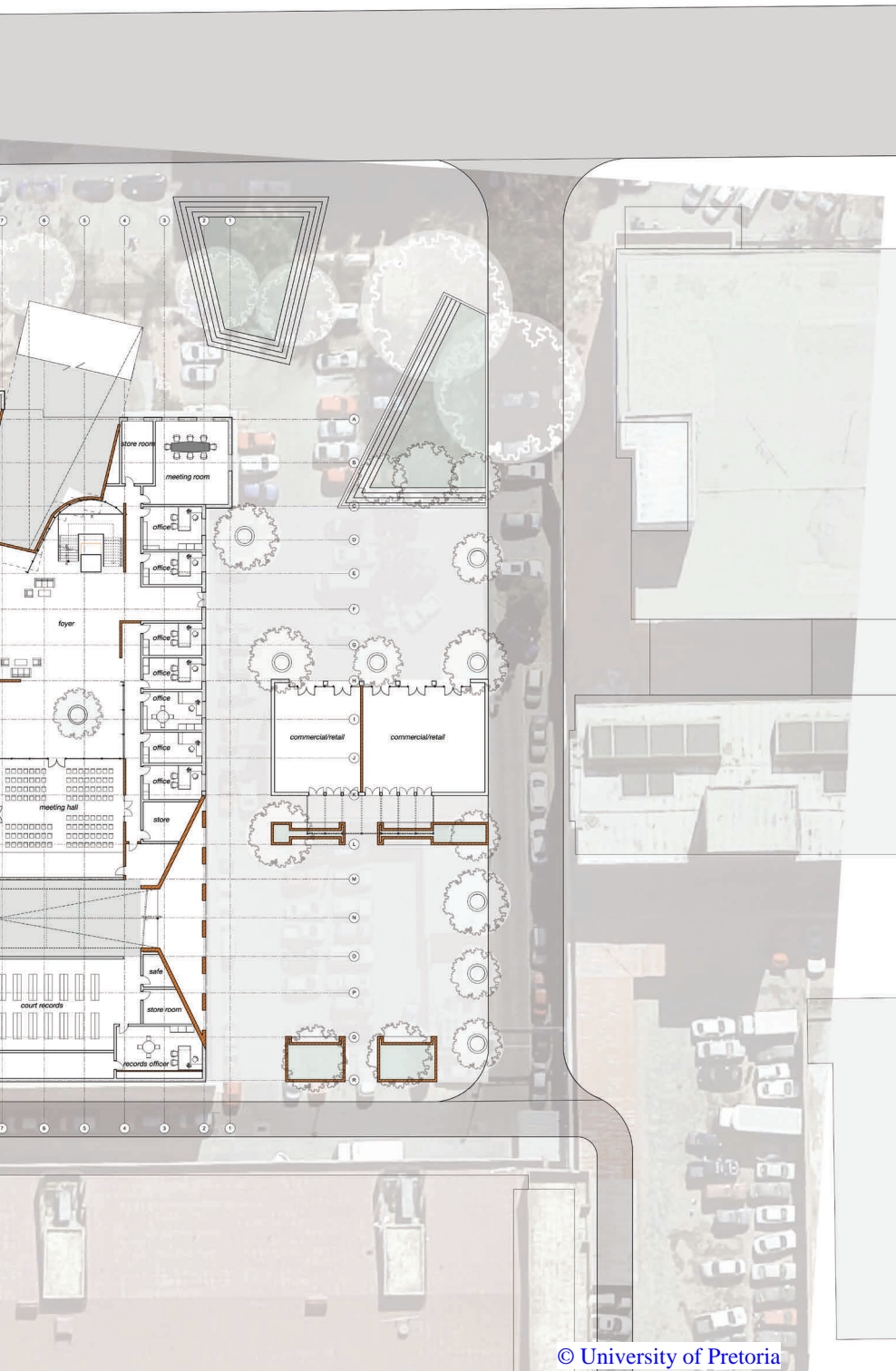
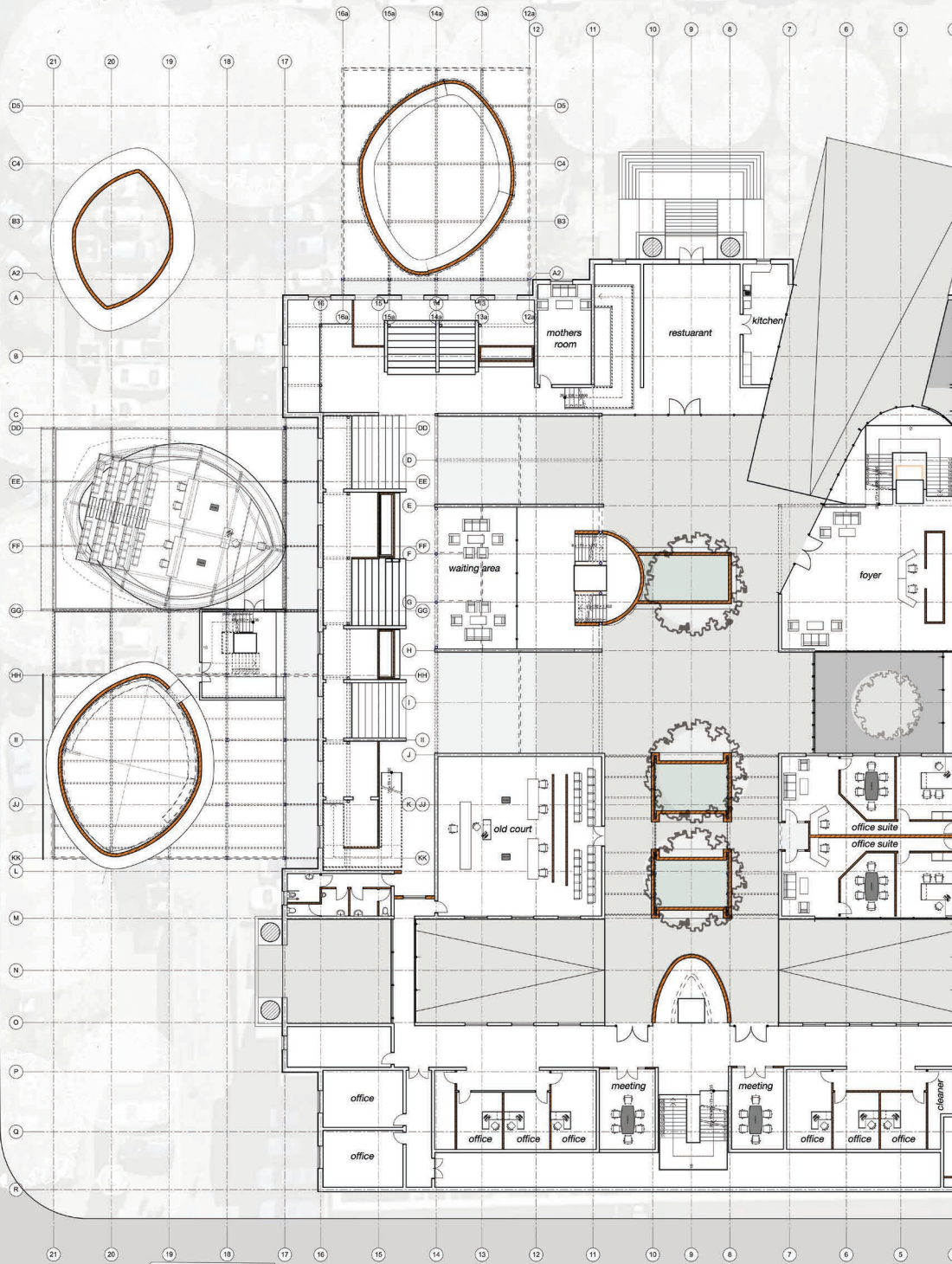


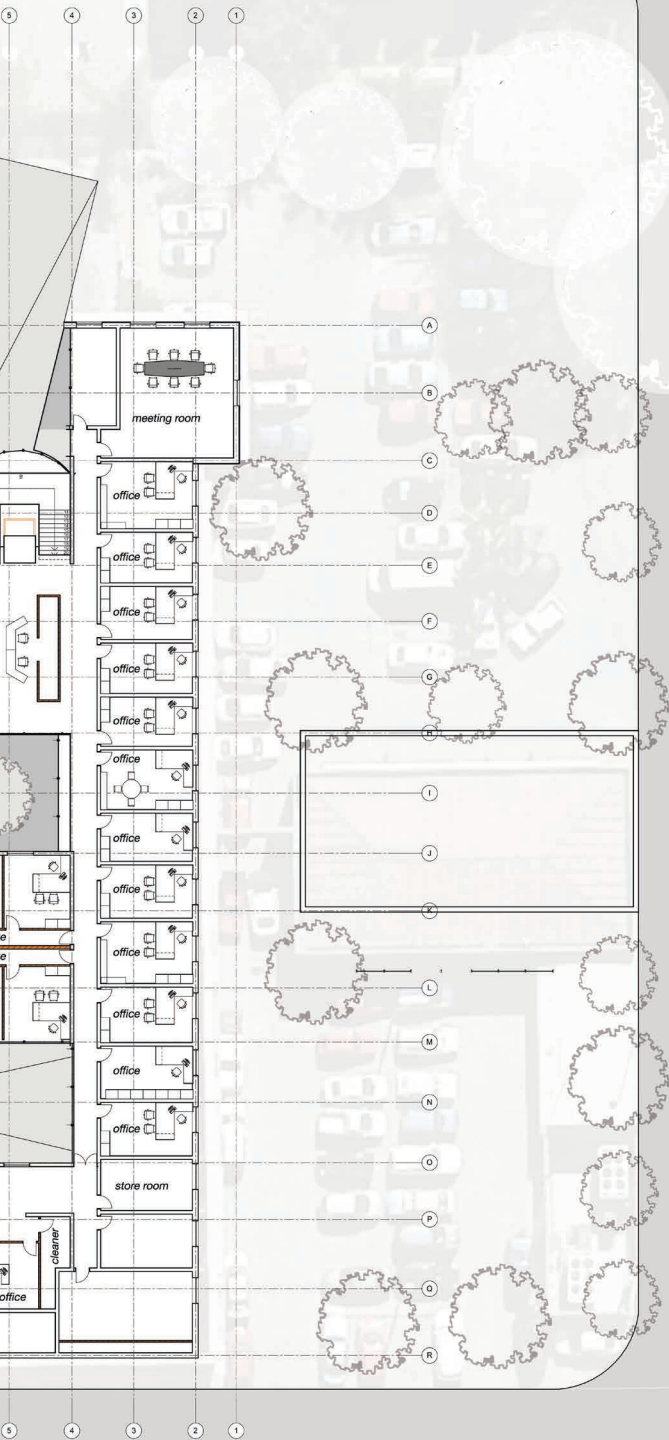
Figure 11_40 Ground floor plan



Sophie De Bruyn Street



First floor plan



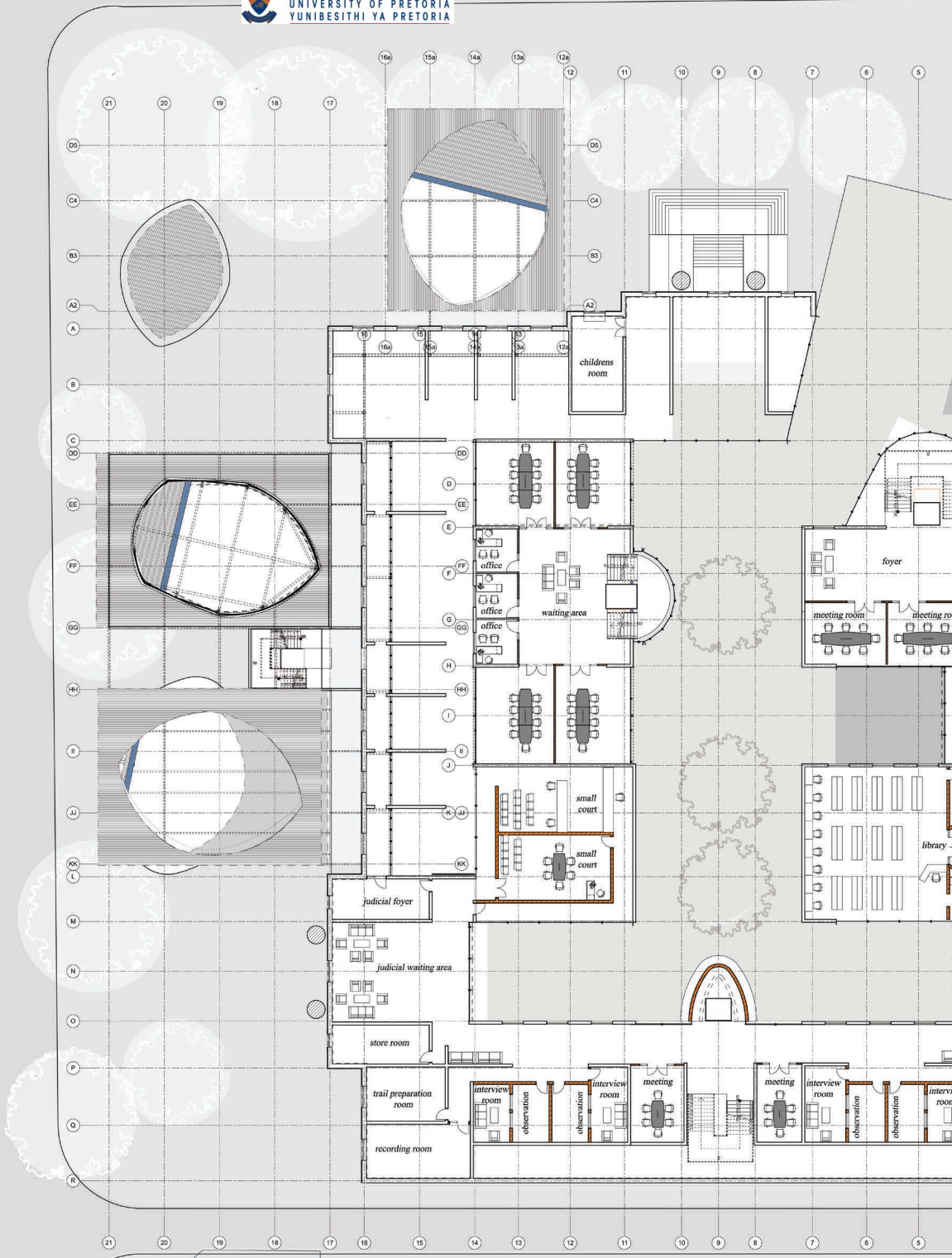
This plan shows the public courtyard in the middle of the building and the ramp that leads towards it. A staircase that leads to the innovative justice spaces is located in the courtyard.

To the eastern side is the main entrance to the legal centre and west the public starts to approach the foyer of the courtrooms.

South is the main entrance to the magistrates offices for the public.

Figure 11_41 First floor plan

Sophie De Bruyn Street



Second floor plan



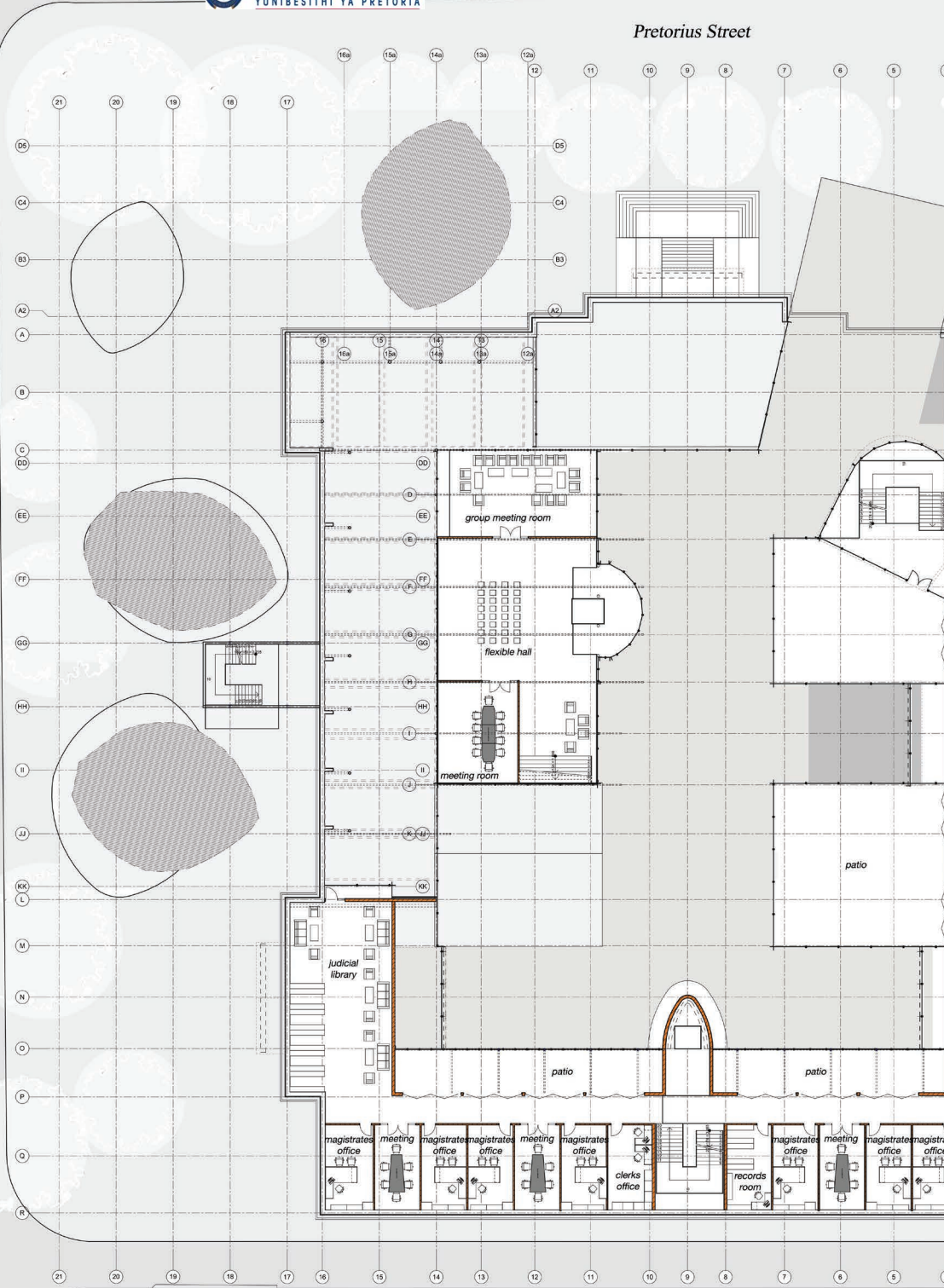
This plan shows the top floors of the innovative justice spaces that is situated on the western side, the judicial spaces south and the legal centre to the east.

This plan also shows the magistrates access from their offices to the courtrooms.

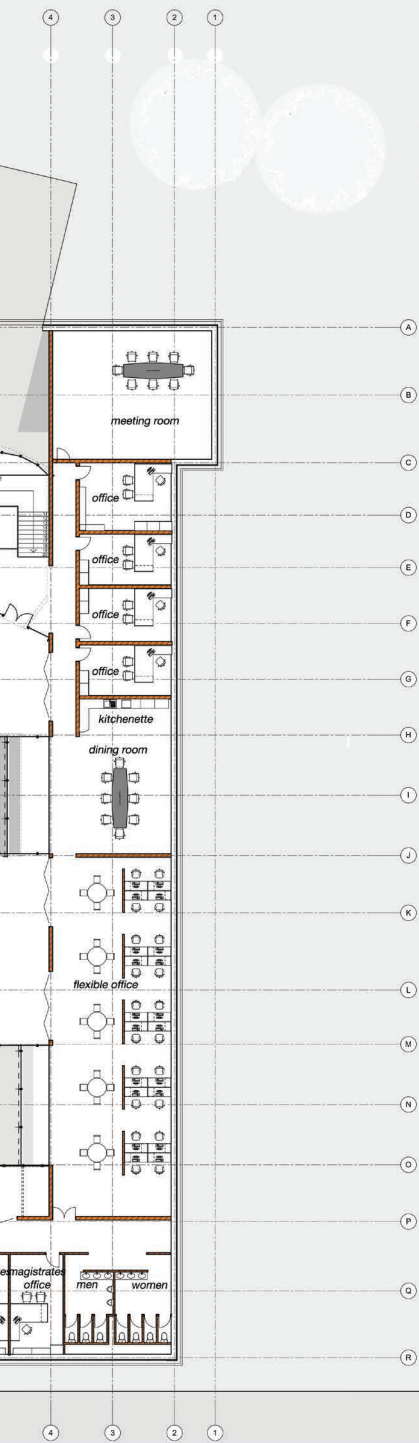
Figure 11_42 Second floor plan

Pretorius Street

Sophie De Bruyn Street



Third floor plan



Finally this plans shows the top floors of the legal centre to the east, the magistrates offices to the south and the innovative legal spaces to the west.

Figure 11_43 Third floor plan

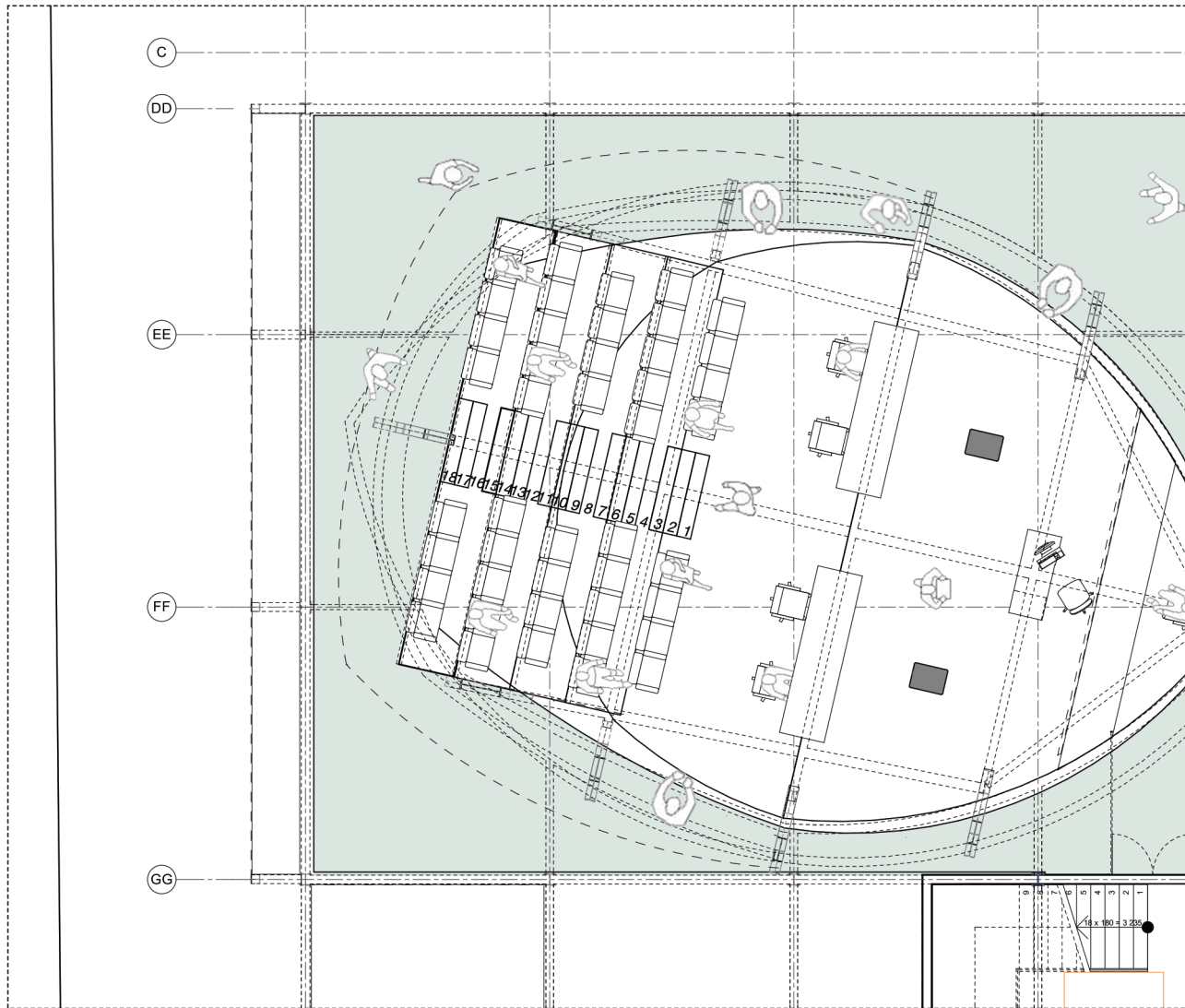
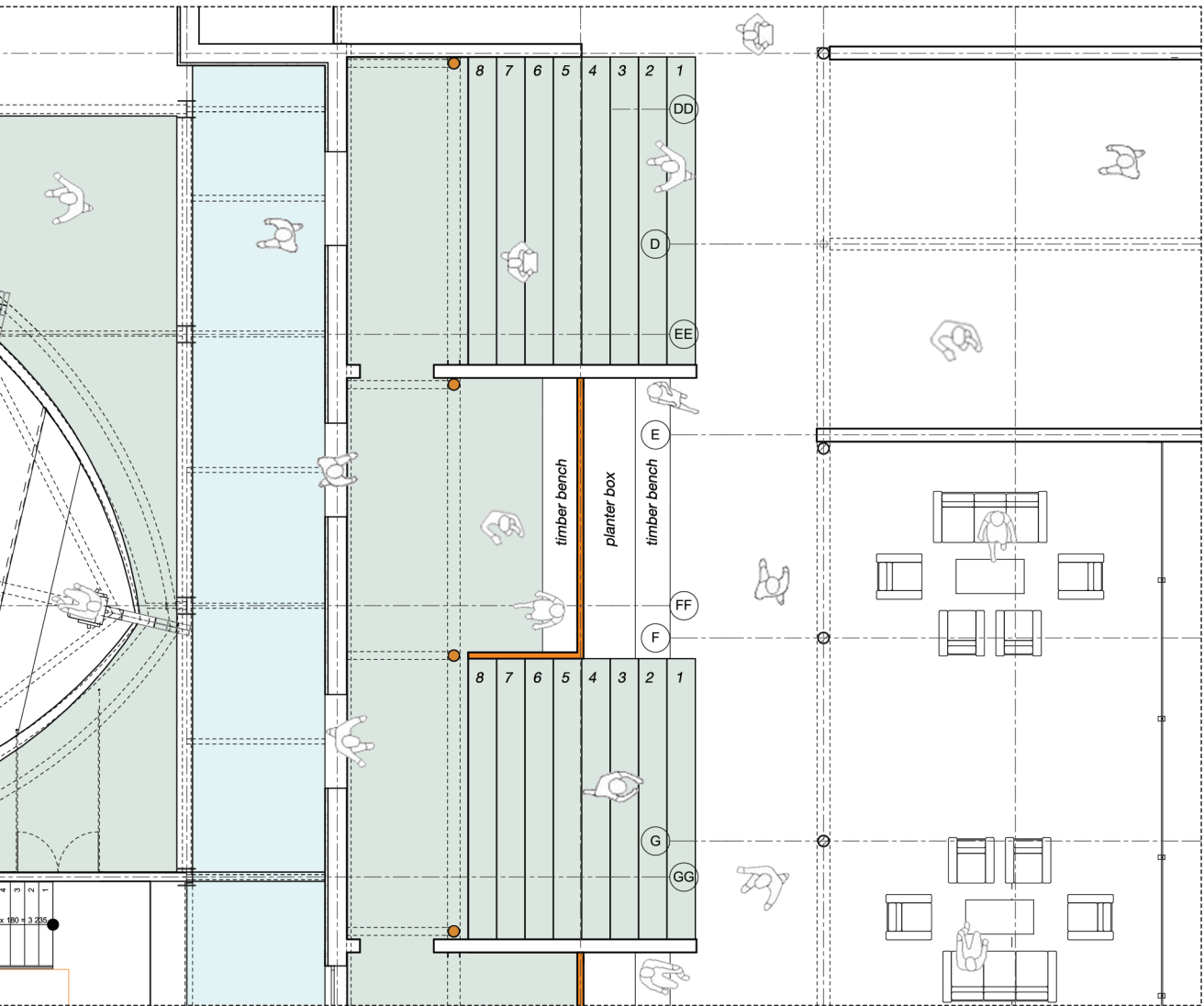


Figure 11_44 Court plan





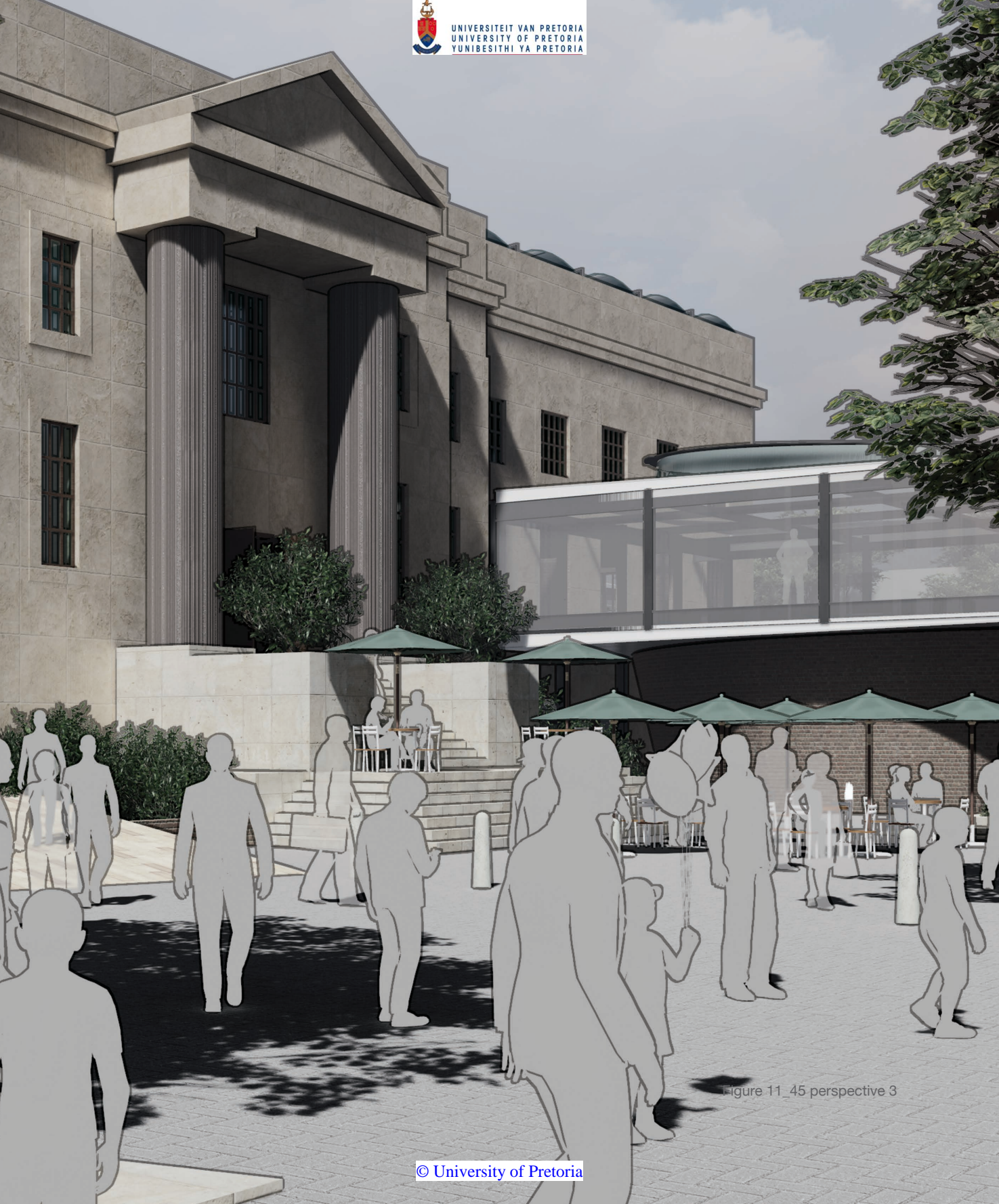


Figure 11_45 perspective 3





Figure 1.1_46 perspective 4