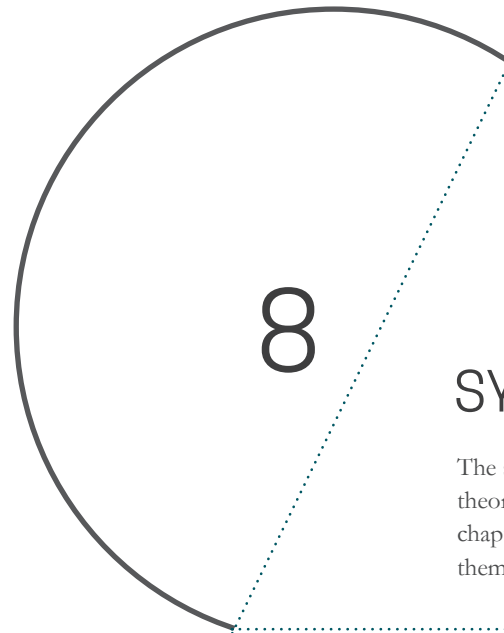




Figure 8: Double exposure (Demir 2014)



## SYMBIOSIS - PARK AND GALLERY

The significance of the site is established as well as the theoretical premise from which the park will be explored (in chapter 5) and a vision proposal will stem. These theoretical themes will be addressed in this chapter.

## 8.1. SITE VISION - ACHIEVING SYMBIOSIS

### Strategies for creating a relationship between JAG and the public realm

During the design process of the scheme, an attempt was made to bridge the gap between the hustle and bustle of the public park and the quiet solitude of the public institution. Through a series of interventions of spatial and structural upgrades, starting in the gallery through to the opposite side of the park, the scheme will establish a more creative identity in the area. This attempts to enhance the JAG's idea of making the park part of the network of creative hubs within Johannesburg's CBD.

By enhancing the various forms of memory programmes, the site vision aims to strengthen the notion of this heritage site becoming a memory box for Johannesburg. The proposed sequence of interventions will begin in JAG and gradually move through the park.

#### Starting within JAG

- **Relevant Upgrades and Repairs:** It must be noted that the gallery building requires major upgrades in terms of waterproofing and general maintenance as well as a drastic restructuring of its archive. It is suggested that the upgrades, as set out by the JDA and as mentioned by Antoinette Murdoch (2016) regarding general maintenance and the sensitive upgrading of certain spaces should continue. These suggested upgrades should be implemented especially for those spaces that are currently closed due to extensive water damage.
- **Adjusting the Entrance:** Once financing is arranged through channels mentioned in the open discussion documented in the unpublished book *Constructure – 100 Years of the JAG Building* and

its evolution of Space and Meaning, a few changes to the gallery entrance should take place (Murnik 2015). An appropriate suggestion is to introduce a direct bridging onto the entrance platform, ensuring that the walkway into the building is not hidden behind stone walls, but is rather seen directly from the park. This is a subtle and cost effective change that would open up the entrance to the park. Other alterations that were considered were possible changes to the copper roof structures and making a part of the basement open to the public who walk over the space.

- **Local Exhibition:** At the start of the project, the introduction of truly local art into the gallery could take place in the form of an open competition for artists within walking distance of the gallery to submit their portfolios for review by gallery curators. The pre-requisite is that the artists' portfolios need to be delivered on foot and by hand. The chosen finalists will have the chance to exhibit a few pieces within the gallery, forming an exhibition of and from the local context. After viewing these pieces the public may vote for the winners who will have the opportunity of a solo exhibition in the gallery. These types of events and competitions will raise awareness of the nature of the building and its contents to the immediate public through personal association\*. Hopefully the sparked interest in the community will increase as the net of the competition widens with each local exhibition.

\*This idea was presented to two staff members currently in the employ of JAG and was received with great enthusiasm. The idea was then carried over to Antoinette Murdoch (the curator) by Jo Burger (the librarian) for consideration.

- **Public Archive :**JAG's archive, which is currently spread across all the vacant spaces within the building, should be investigated and a newly dedicated archiving space should be introduced. The large basement is currently closed off to the public and is used as storage space for old furniture and equipment. Water tight archiving pods can be placed in the Meyer Pienaar basement allowing the public to view the pods along with digital projections of what is stored inside. In this way the public can get a glimpse of the artworks kept within. This solution would also encourage public interaction with art works that are currently not on display and entice people to visit again to view rotating exhibitions. The space, already prone to water infiltration, could be altered so to allow water in, placing the archive pods on pads with elevated walkways stretching between, allowing for a closer proximity between viewer and archive pod.

With the use of these pods the public will begin to understand the rituals of archiving as they see the staff working through the art pieces between exhibitions. This process will also expose the intricacies of the gallery as well as the abundance of unseen works to the public. An accessible and visible archive could become a learning space and a good example for students studying curatorship or archiving, establishing another addition to the scope of JAG's in-house programmes.

- **Artistic Theatre :** The theatre room in the South-West basement should be reopened and utilised for screenings of independent films, local music video releases and other digital media. These events could take place weekly or monthly, drawing a wider variety of film and digital enthusiasts to the gallery.

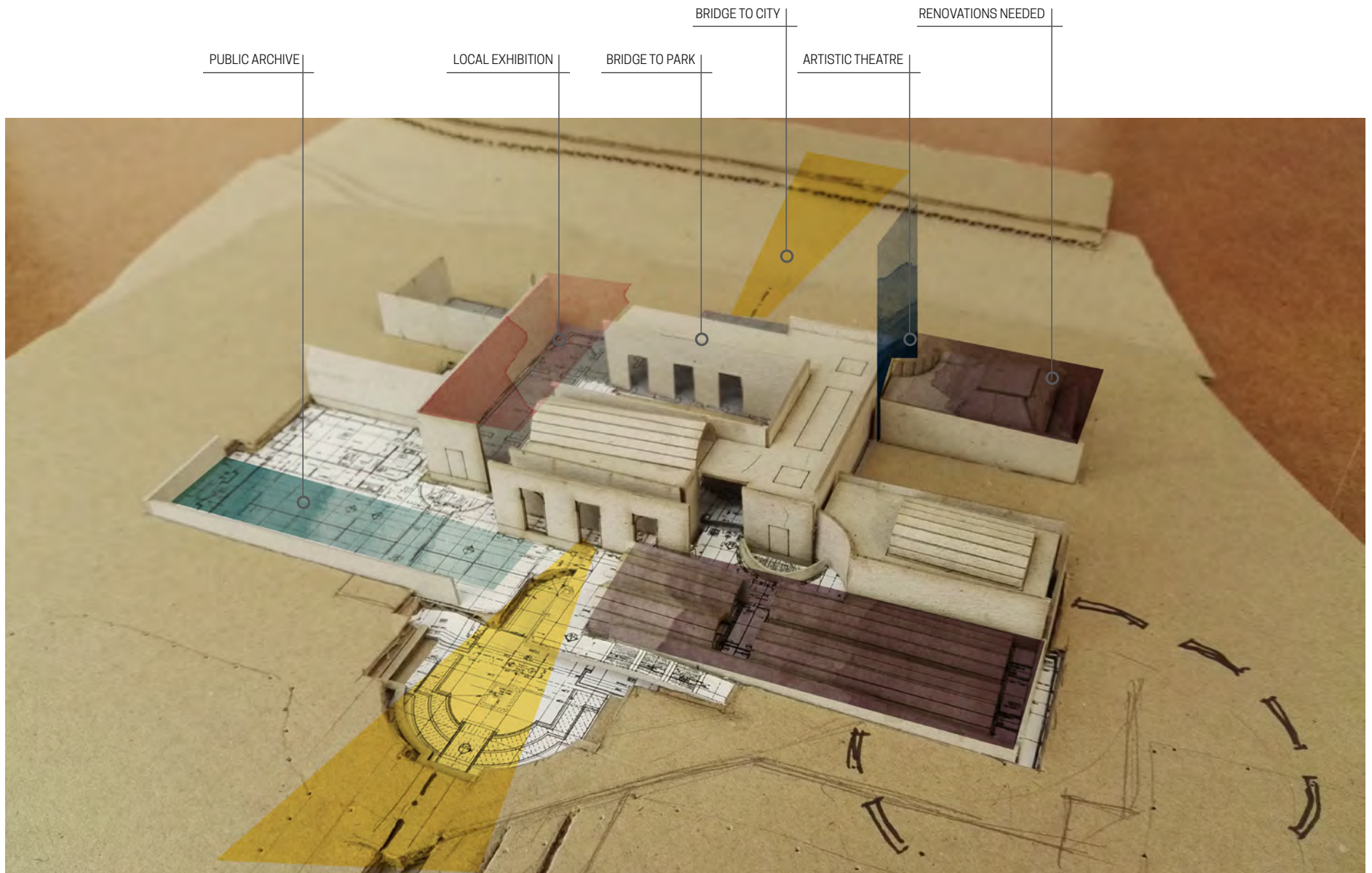


Figure 8.1: Model of JAG indicating external mass and internal floor plan. Diagram indicated positions for proposal strategies.

## 8.2. WRITTEN PARK PROPOSAL

### Spilling into the park

- **Yoga in the Park** - Currently, Yoga Works (Yoga Works, 2016), who have an on-going relationship with JAG, organise public events that occur in the gallery. The company organises yoga classes/sessions all over Johannesburg weekly from rooftops in Braamfontein to Emerentia Dam.
- The park could be promoted as a second venue in this precinct, offering opportunity for people not from the area to experience the park in large groups. If arranged with neighbourhood security beforehand, these events need not wait for upgraded infrastructure, but could take place as the site currently stands.
- Activities like these or aerobics, could take place in the park weekly and make use of the gallery courtyard when the weather may not allow for it. Similar events take place at the Union Buildings in Pretoria under the initiative of Floyd Mashego (Qukula, 2015), forming new interested parties in public open spaces.
- **Art Park** - The suggestion of Joubert Park becoming an Art Park, promoting exhibition and interaction with artworks that will be maintained and managed by the City of Johannesburg partnering with the Johannesburg Art Gallery, will be a beneficial one to the area. An exhibition park in the historic centre of Johannesburg will enhance the vision of the City of Johannesburg to develop public art in the city centre (JDA 2012). According to the JDA the introduction of appropriate public art helps to shift negative perceptions and is seen to be indicative of a healthy and well-functioning area (JDA 2012: 6)

### Case Study– Nirox Sculpture Park

The Nirox sculpture Park is situated in the Khatlhampi Private Reserve, 10 km from the Cradle of Humankind. It is a park that acts as an exhibition space for a variety of sculptural and digital interventions created by artists across Africa. Some of the pieces found here are permanent installations, either purchased by the owner or donated by the artists, while the others are temporary, being replaced with other artworks over time. Some of the artists showcased in the park have temporary residency on the grounds themselves as a sort of artists commune to promote artistic thought and production.

On the day I visited the site the first time there was an African Jazz festival being hosted. This event took place without any permanent infrastructure in terms of a stage or sound and the elevated seating area took the form of a grass covered berm which was a man-made addition to the undulating landscape. There were food stalls and seating areas erected to support this event and others. There are also events such as food and wine festivals that take place, ensuring the venue is active and thereby advertised to potential visitors. On days when the park is not hosting events, the park is open free-of-charge to the public.

This form of outdoor exhibition offers opportunity for a new form of experience and interaction as people move from installation to installation, discovering interesting open and enclosed spaces while recommending certain spots to passers-by. The only unfortunate fact is that the park is not easily accessible to the public who cannot travel the distance to the out-of-the-way venue.



Current page:



Opposite page:

Figure 8.3: Photographs of Floyd Mashego teaching aerobics at the Union Buildings. (Losi 2015)

Figure 8.2: Photograph of outdoor concert at the Nirox Sculpture Garden.





- **Recording Devices** – Devices that document the changes and variations in the park over time will allow the park itself, and the people within it, to be documented and form part of JAG’s archive. These devices should produce objects that encapsulate the otherwise intangible to be displayed in the gallery and the park. As a means of connecting JAG and the park, these devices can filtrate both realms, blurring the lines between them.

**Case study : Cities and Memory**

Cities and Memory is a project aimed at mapping the world through sound. The mapping is a way of recording the intangible aspects of cities of the world through sounds. On the website, to which anyone can upload recordings from around the world, there are also standard back tracks which one can overlay your recording onto to create a more accurate portrayal of the feeling of the place. The reason for this is that sometimes we feel differently in a space than what the sound can encapsulate so in order to better achieve the mapping of the intangible qualities of a place the recordings can be slightly manipulated to represent feeling.

- **Urban Archive** - A photographic archiving hub will be introduced to service and support the recording devices as well as the photographers of Joubert Park. This will take the form of a pavilion that will be accessible to the public and not detract from the movement across the site.

The hub will form an intermediary between the city

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**Figure 8.4:** Images of sculptures seen at the Nirox Sculpture Garden.

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**Figure 8.5:** Image of a projection pod in the landscape. (Architect and date unknown.)

and the park, establishing one of the park’s edges, protecting it from future encroachment.

- **Digital Display** – Digital display pods introduced into the park can act as extensions to the gallery’s exhibition spaces. These small exhibition spaces digitally project some of the collections found in JAG, making them more accessible to the users of the park. In this way the park users will become exposed and accustomed to the on-goings of JAG. More exhibitions will then be able to be displayed, some within JAG and some without. This will encourage visitors of JAG to venture into Joubert Park to view more exhibitions, increasing the exposure of the park

which would in turn create opportunities for local trade aimed at international and local visitors. These pods will be positioned along the major movement routes that run through the park.

**Case study : Urban Outdoor Cinema** (Architect and year unknown)

This project is a digital outdoor pod, housed in a green park. The pod is public yet gives the impression of being enclosed. In this instance it seems that the pod is being used for a lecture. Pods similar to these can be strewn across the park landscape, bringing images of the gallery to the public realm.





- **Central gathering space:** The central core of the park, once the foundation stone of the park taking the form of a fountain, now a void that has formed an informal rubbish collector. This space should be celebrated as pivotal to the park's use. The formation of a gathering space which does not hamper free movement or visual links across the site should be investigated. A submerged intervention is proposed, ensuring visual links across the site are not diminished, while still maintaining the formal axial layout of the park. The gathering space is set on a main pedestrian route, and should allow for direct movement but also encourage people to dwell and linger.

The comedians present on site, who currently use any form of elevated platform to draw crowds commuting from work in the afternoons, may utilise this space. In this way the space will accommodate the everyday nuances currently found on the site, while offering more opportunities for interaction, while slowing down the high traffic nature of the park.

### Case Study – Kensington Garden Pavilion

Herzog and de Meuron's serpentine pavilion in the Kensington Gardens is an example of a similar space within a park. The pavilion does not detract from the gallery building behind it and allows for an uninterrupted view across the park to the heritage building. The use of water in the scheme relates back to the traditional British garden but explores it in new ways.

The interesting forms present in the design were influenced by remnants of previous pavilions erected on the site. By using these remnants as informants, spaces for seating and socialising were created.

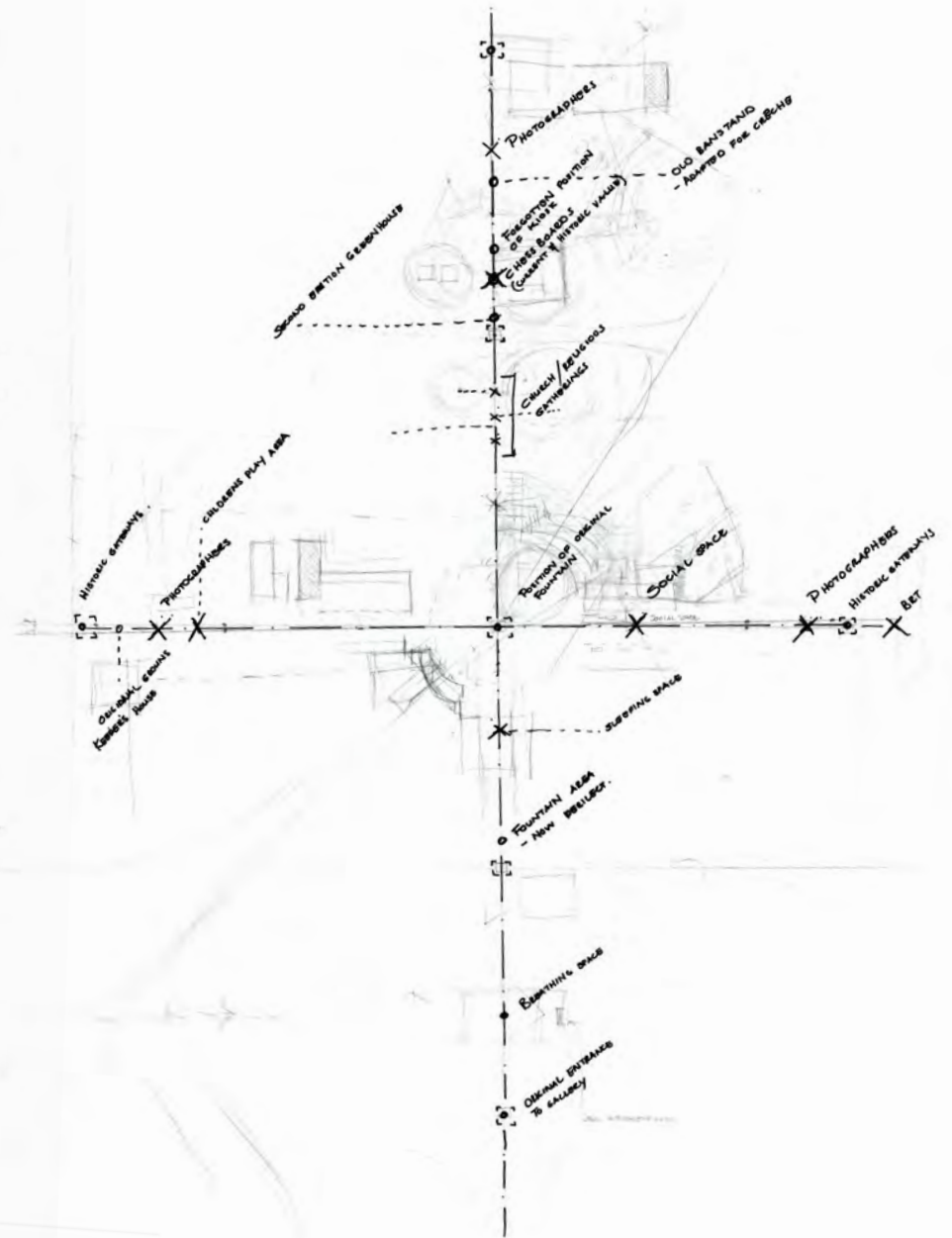
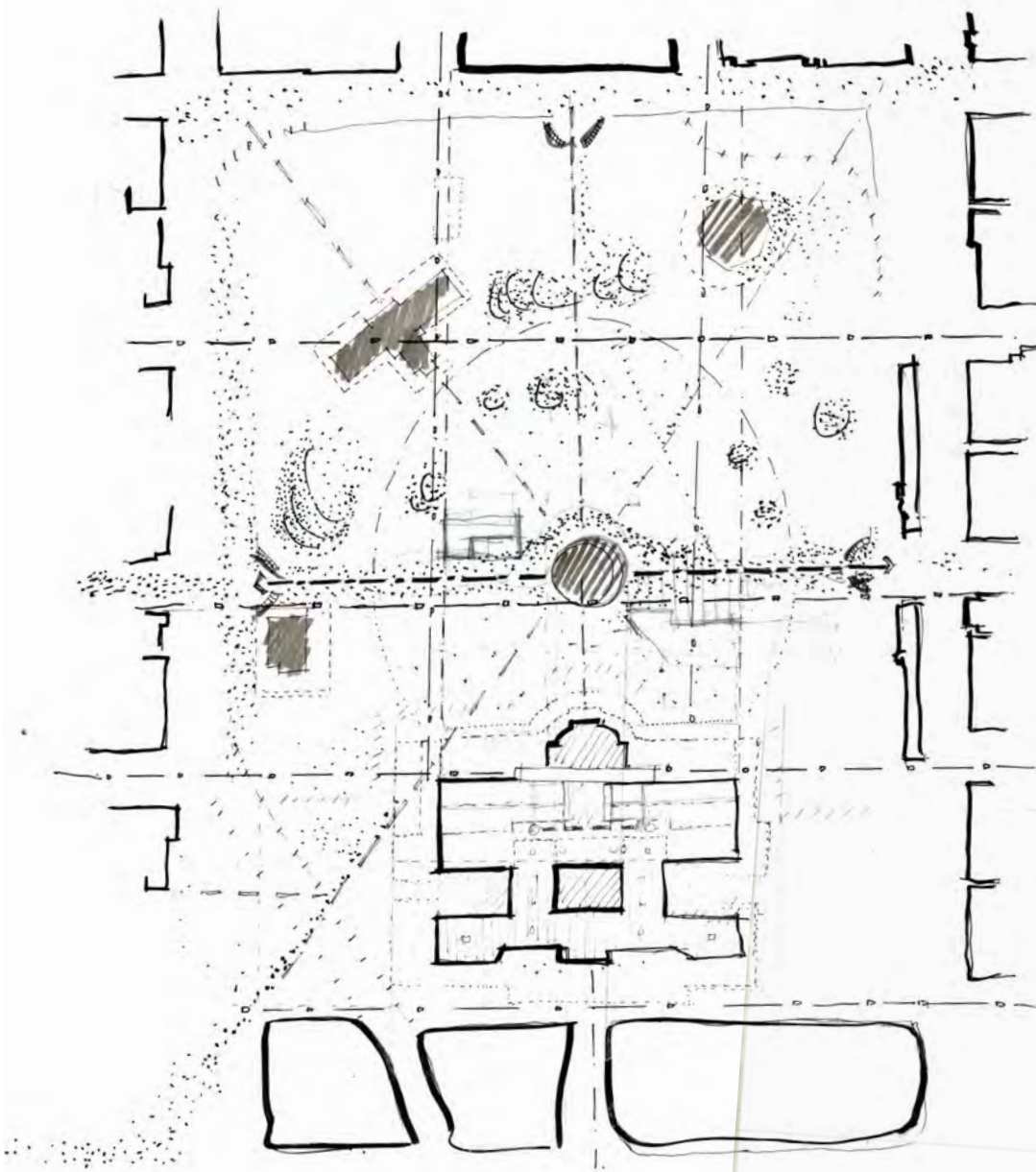
Themes of reflection, respect and social cohesion are present when regarding this pavilion.

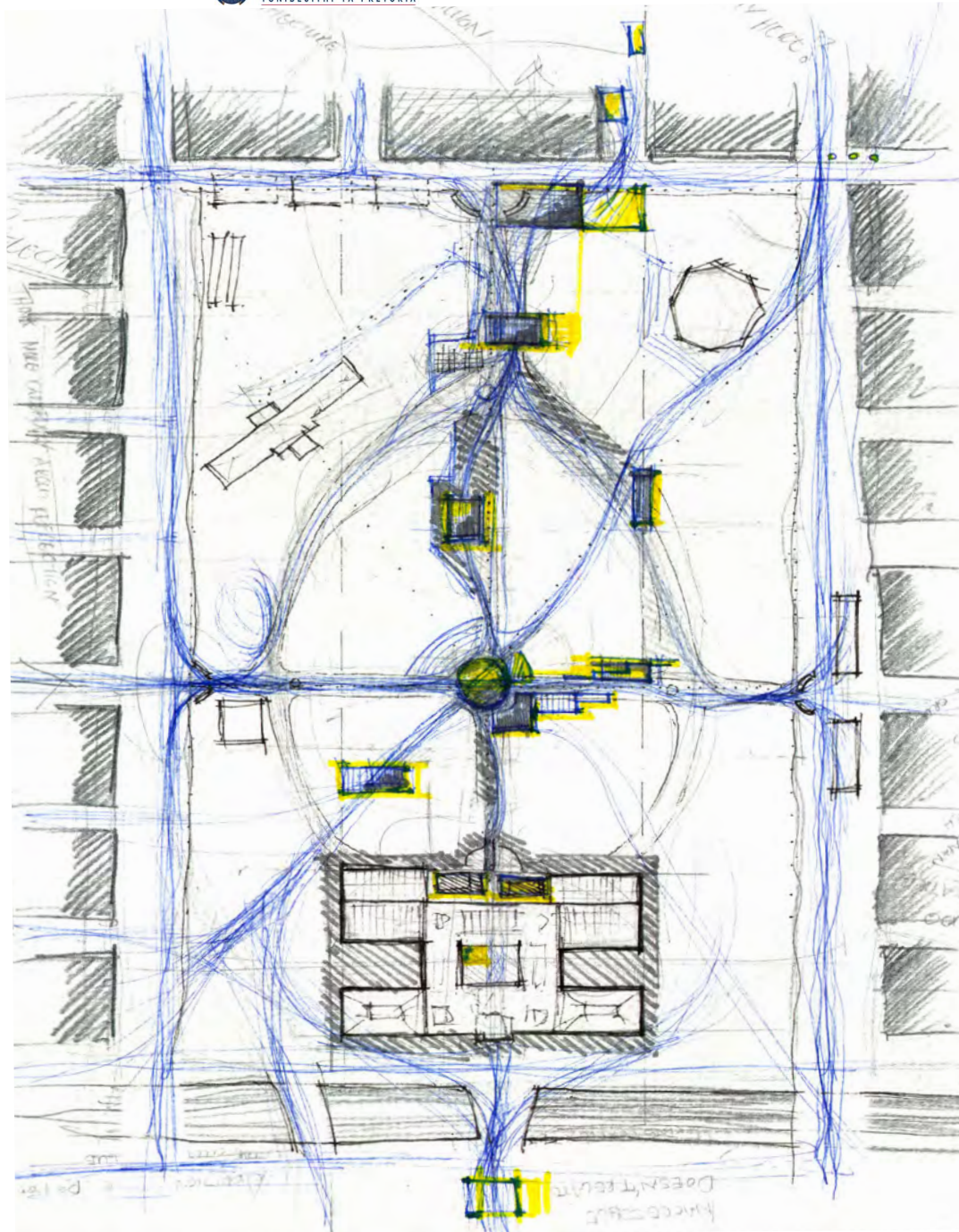
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Figure 8.6: Images of Herzog & de Meuron and Ai Weiwei's serpentine pavilion. (Baan Iwan 2012)



### 8.3. SITE ANALYSIS & PROPOSAL OF PLACE





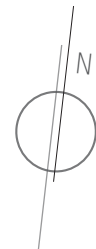
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Figure 8.7: Concept sketch of interventions on site.

Opposite page:





Figure 8.8: Mapping of existing energy on site.

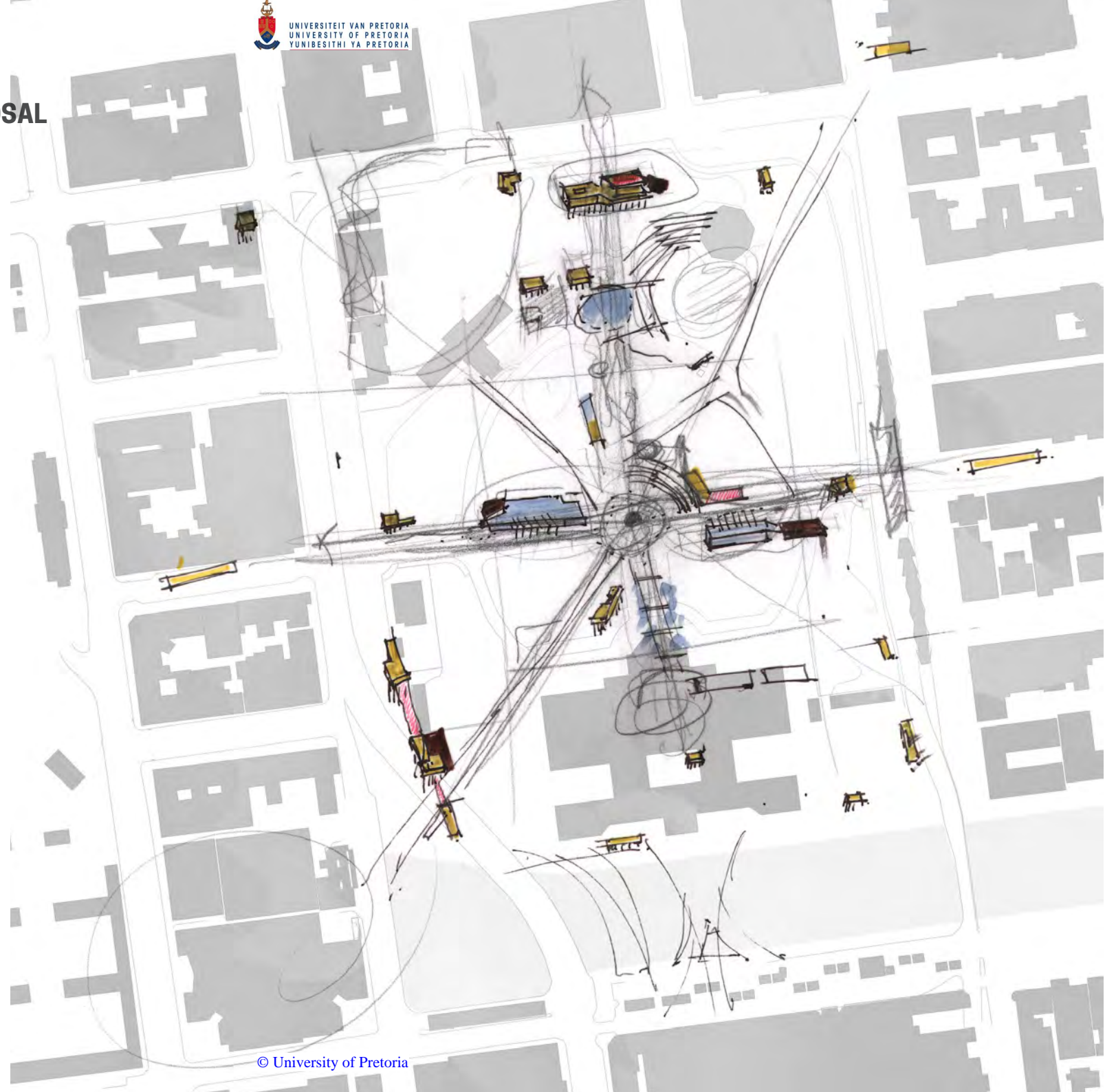
Figure 8.9: Points of interest along main axis of site.



## 8.4. ROUTE OF PARK PROPOSAL

### KEY

-  Surveillance
-  Capture/camera pods
-  Display pavilions
-  Support infrastructure, i.e. public ablutions



## Narrative of experience along the route of the proposed park

When visiting the Johannesburg Art Gallery from outside the Johannesburg CBD there is a series of interventions that one will find along the way that will complete the envisaged proposal for the park. The following is a narrative written about the journey through the site by someone familiar with the Johannesburg Art Gallery.

March 2019

*A trip to the Johannesburg Art Gallery will prove different to any gallery excursion before. On entering, as one always has, through the Lutyens' southern entrance you will be surprised to discover a pedestrian bridge leading over the railway right up to the steps of the gallery. For the first time you will be able to see the market on the southern side, quite a contrast from the palisade and shrubbery that formed its boundary before.*

*Entering, one sees a memorable space with its high vaulted ceilings and big timber doors. The visitor is left to wander through the old halls, through the breathing space of the courtyard until eventually coming across the stairs leading to the basement. Once here however, there is an unexpected surprise - a network of boxes and walkways, both of which appear to be floating over the original concrete floor of the Meyer Pienaar basement. The basement floor is covered with a thin layer of water that has, over time, seeped into the space. The once destructive and unwanted water now acts as a mirror, reflecting the roof, walkways and people moving across it.*

*Exploring this re-established space, one discovers the gallery archive stored in these room-sized boxes. Through transparent sides, one is able to see fragments of each painting, hanging in front of the next. Exposing the archive gives the visitor some insight as to the extent and size of the library of art, enticing visitors to frequent JAG and see more collections on display at various times.*

*Returning to the staircase you will notice the back-sides of the pods, clad with steel sheets printed with graphics of people and place – Joubert Park. The introduction of these images into the gallery space brings segments of the park into the gallery, allowing the viewer to experience and understand the functioning of the park.*

*The provocative imagery of the gallery's context entices the visitor to explore beyond the confines of the internal gallery spaces and into the public realm of Joubert Park.*

*The northern doors are open, and the entrance platform extends via a foot bridge into the heart of the park, accentuating the main axis that connects the gallery to the park.*

*On venturing into Joubert Park, one is presented with a multitude of intriguing moments and spaces starting with a central seating area occupied by weary travellers and an informal audience being entertained by a local comedian. Around spaces such as these are perched objects that appear to be silent and still sculptural pods.*

*Some of these pods are open to the public and house digital representations of the gallery and its contents – both human and non-living, a display of people interacting with the artworks inside. These displays to the users of the park form extensions of the gallery itself.*

*At the opposite end of the park one will reach the opposite side of the park where a large structure is perched above, forming social, exhibition and working spaces below. To the right the historic bandstand sits in contrast to the pod-like structures above, where a lunch time concert is underway, drawing an audience to its new amphitheatre, which leads to the access point of a pavilion.*

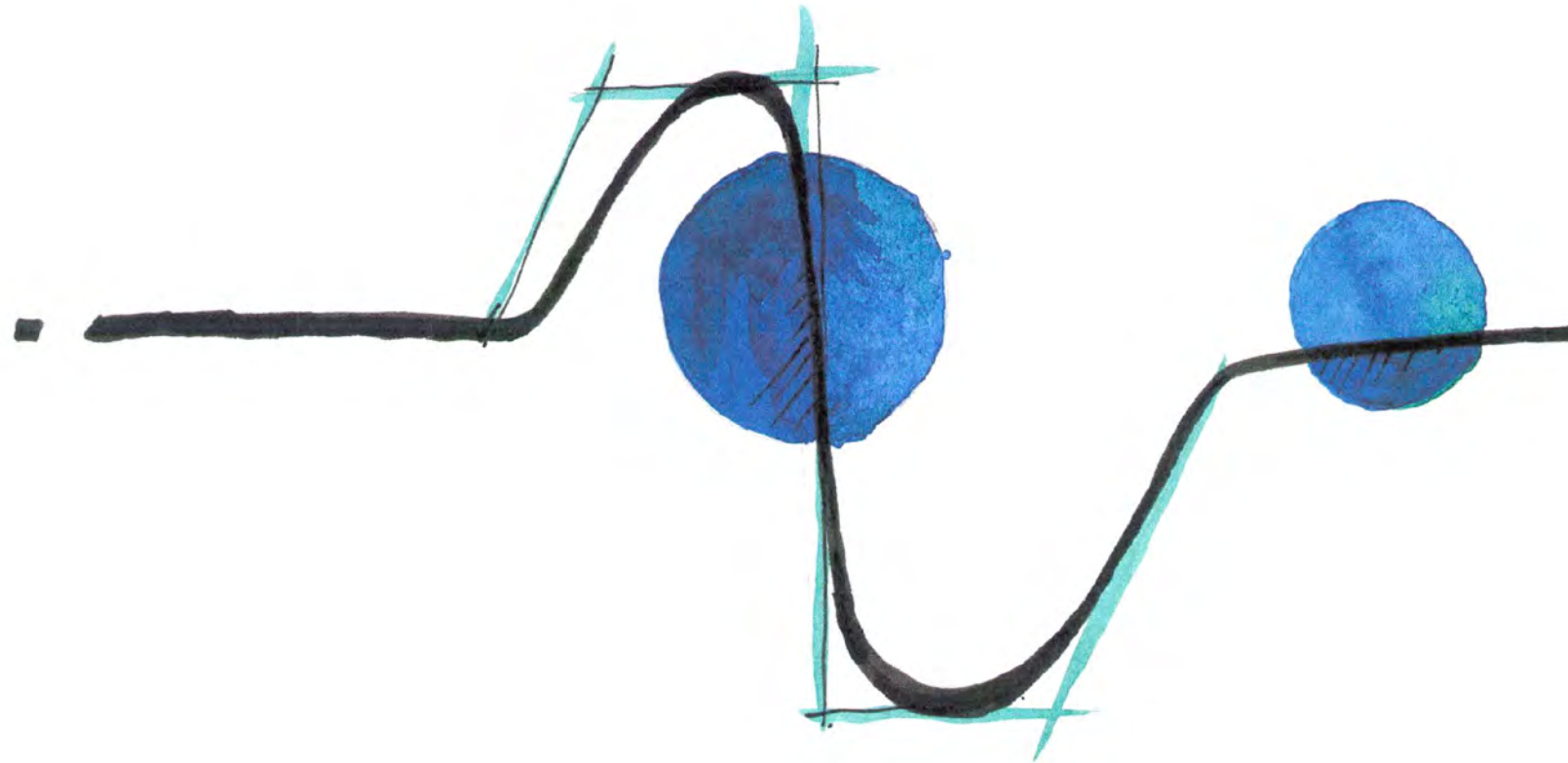
*People relax in the shadow of the pavilion, which hovers above the ground on steel columns. As you move along the length of it the structure almost appears to be moving, morphing into various forms. This is the photographers hub, an urban archive photographing moments in the park's activity.*

*To be continued....*

*\*Glubbegovic, R. from Friends of JAG, 2019*

## 8.5. CONCEPTUAL AND SPATIAL EXPLORATION OF PARK PROPOSAL

Conceptual diagram

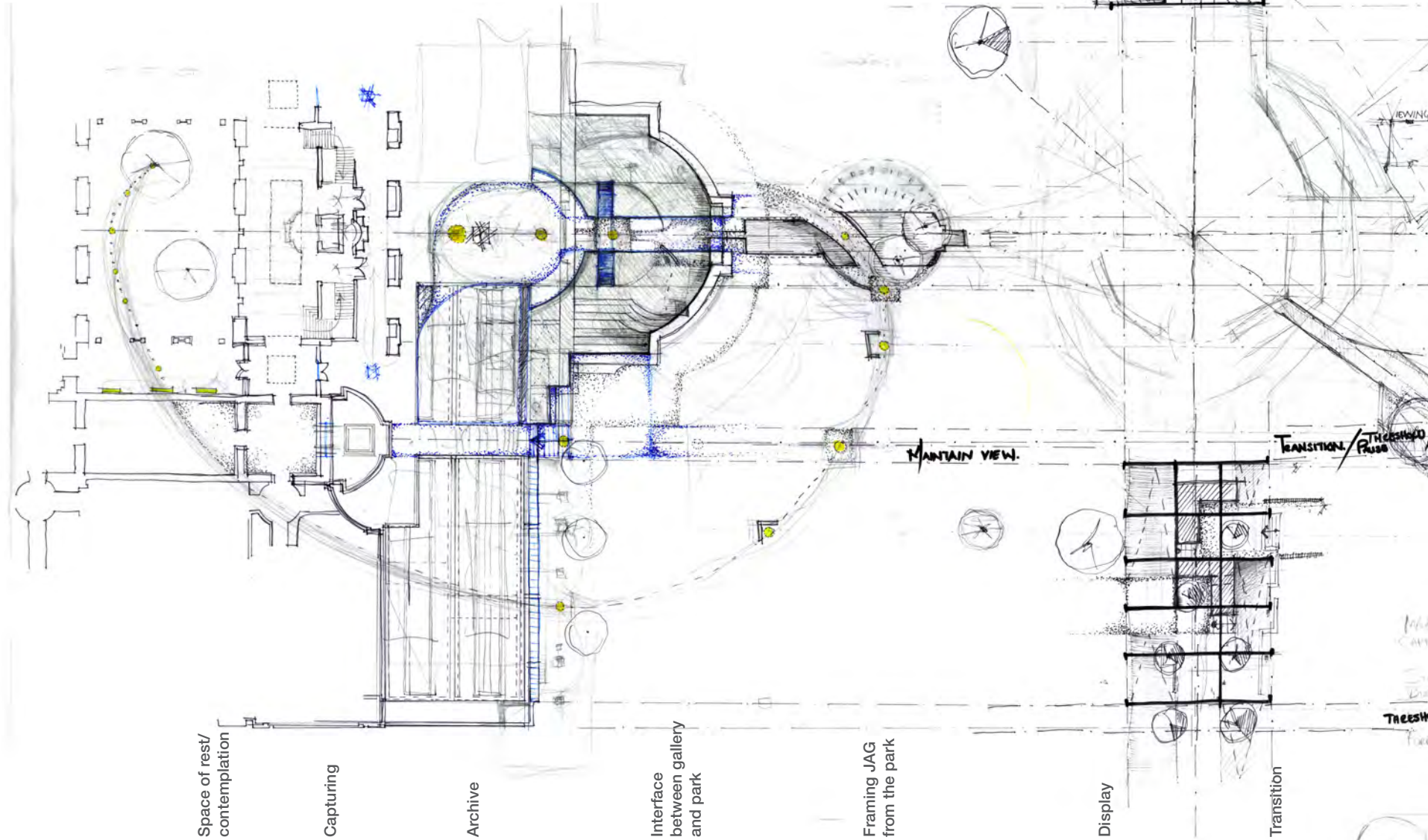




**Figure 8.10:** Concept diagram of nodes of memory along the main historic axis of the site.



# Sketches of park proposal



Existing interface opened to opposite side of railway tracks

Space of rest/contemplation

Capturing

Archive

Interface between gallery and park

Framing JAG from the park

Display

Transition

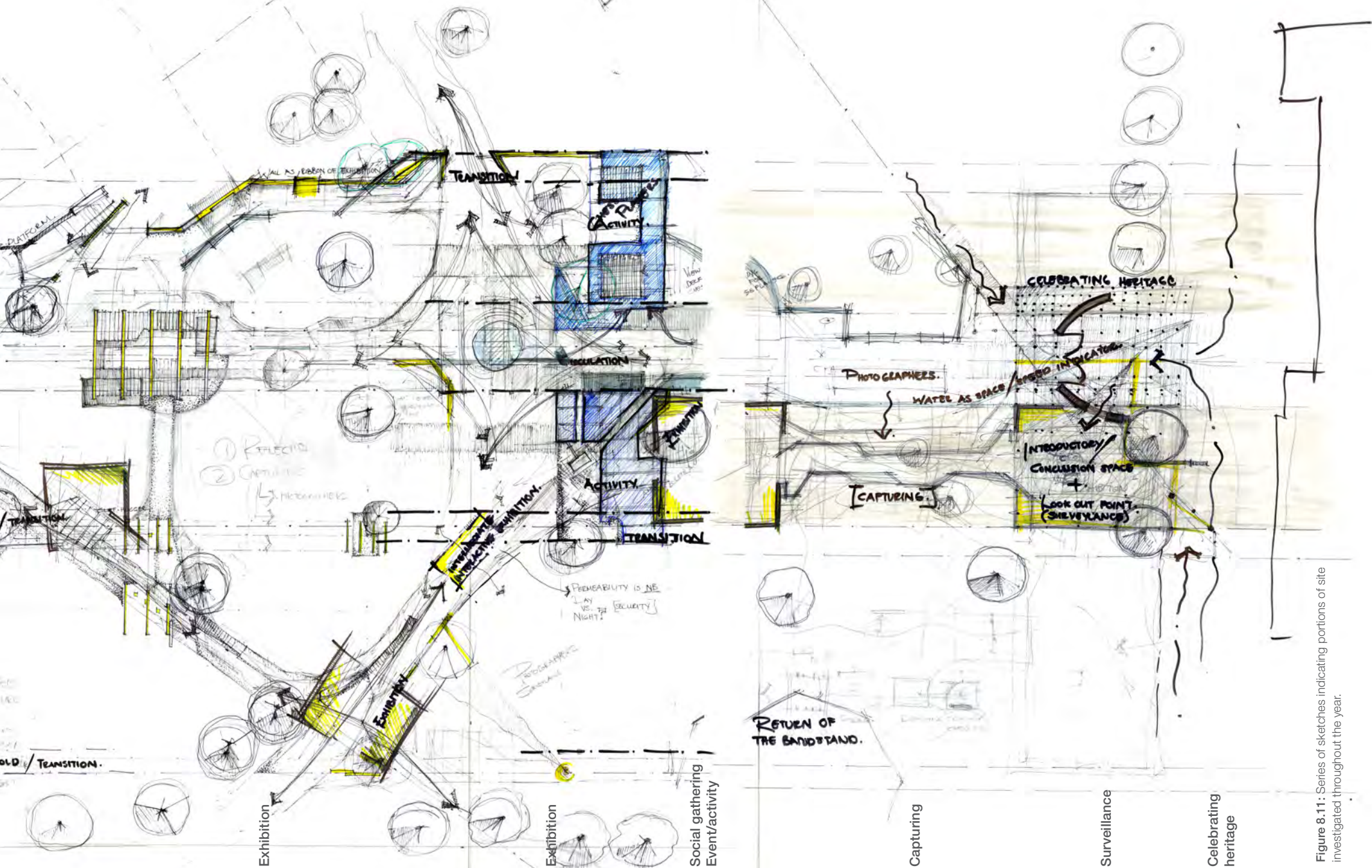
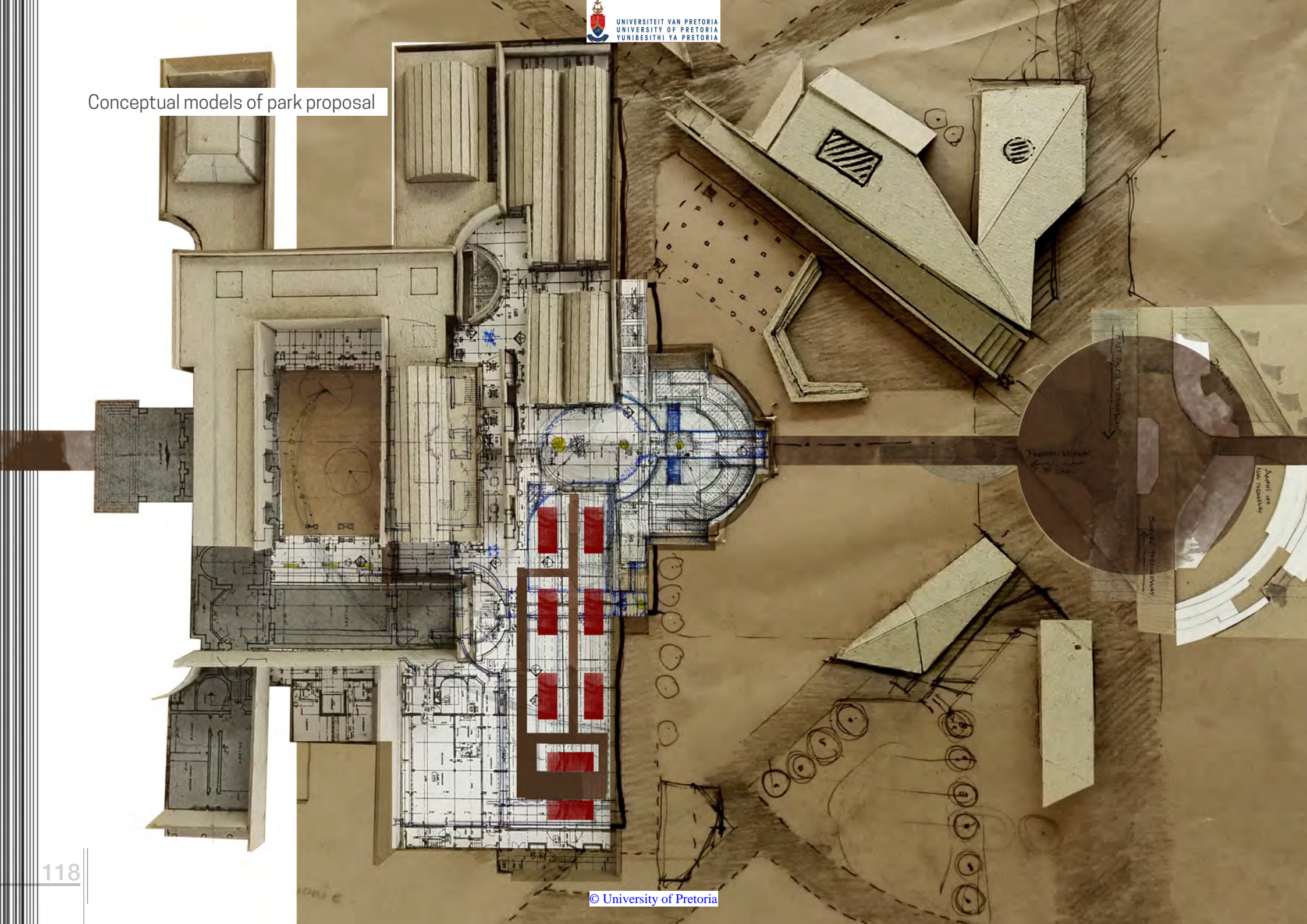


Figure 8.11: Series of sketches indicating portions of site investigated throughout the year.

Conceptual models of park proposal



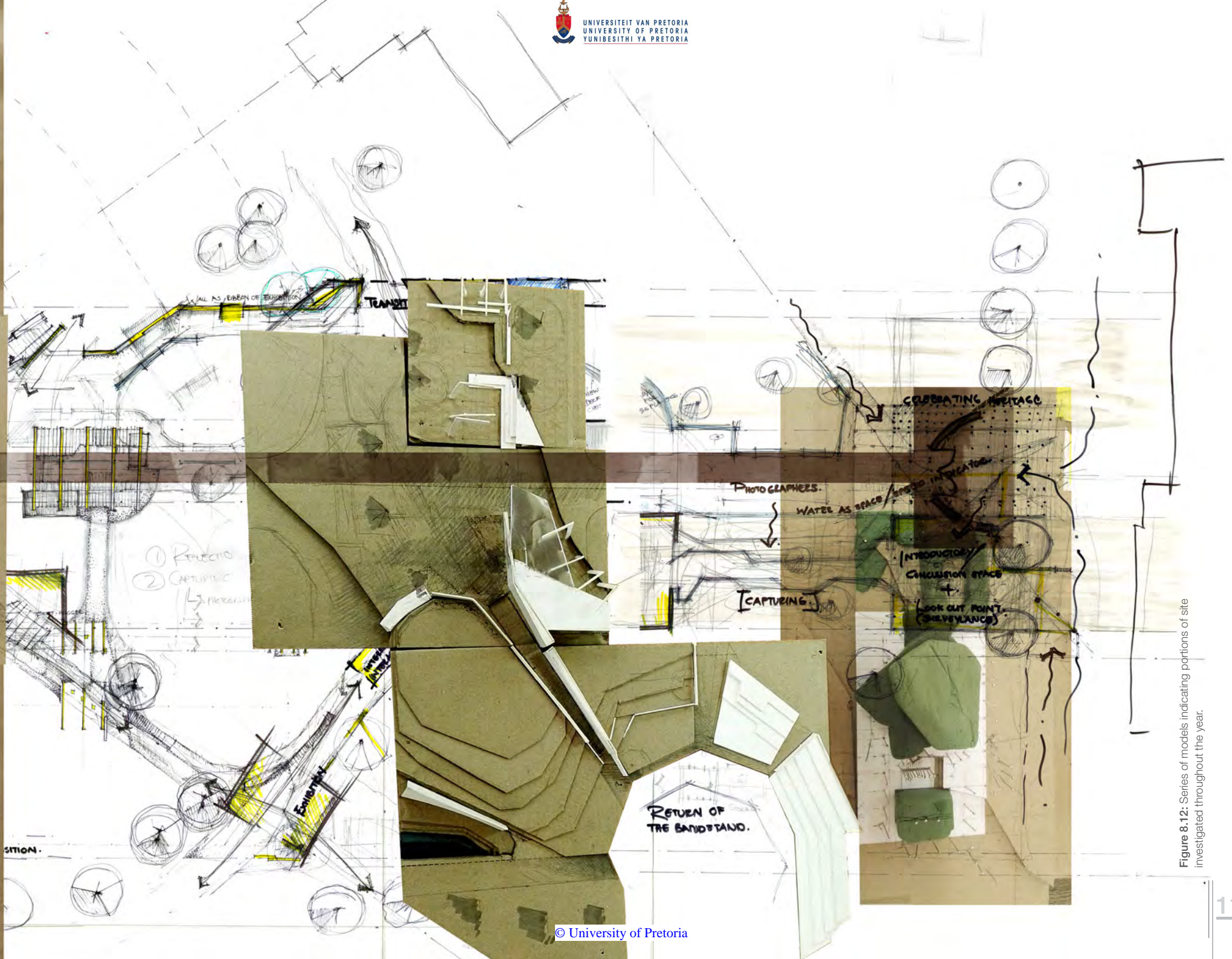
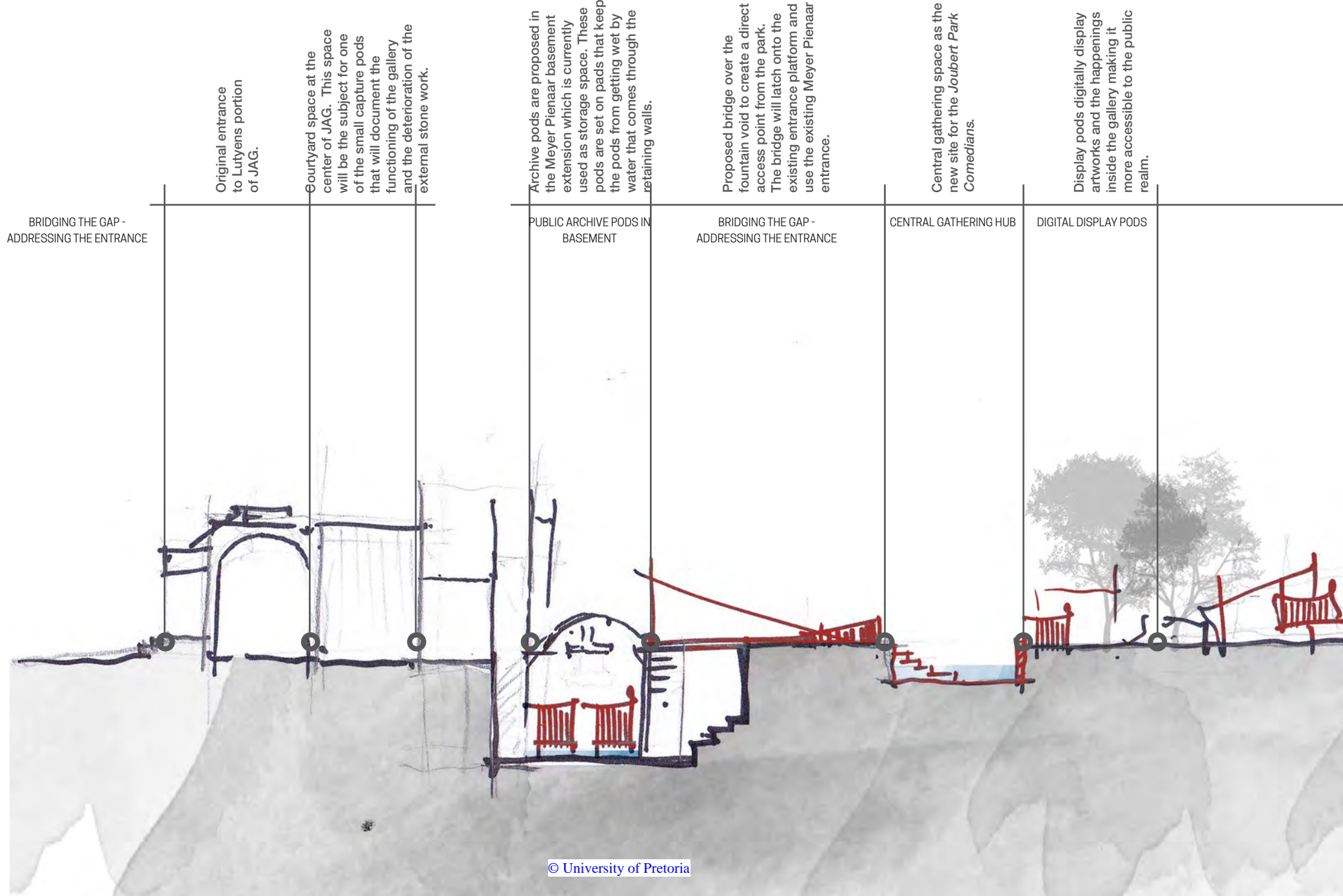


Figure 8.12: Series of models indicating portions of site investigated throughout the year.

# Proposed section through Joubert Park



Original entrance to Lutyens portion of JAG.

Courtyard space at the center of JAG. This space will be the subject for one of the small capture pods that will document the functioning of the gallery and the deterioration of the external stone work.

Archive pods are proposed in the Meyer Pienaar basement extension which is currently used as storage space. These pods are set on pads that keep the pods from getting wet by the water that comes through the retaining walls.

Proposed bridge over the fountain void to create a direct access point from the park. The bridge will latch onto the existing entrance platform and use the existing Meyer Pienaar entrance.

Central gathering space as the new site for the *Joubert Park Comedians*.

Display pods digitally display artworks and the happenings inside the gallery making it more accessible to the public realm.

BRIDGING THE GAP - ADDRESSING THE ENTRANCE

PUBLIC ARCHIVE PODS IN BASEMENT

BRIDGING THE GAP - ADDRESSING THE ENTRANCE

CENTRAL GATHERING HUB

DIGITAL DISPLAY PODS

Loose capture pods distributed throughout the park to capture certain areas such as the children's' play area and the main pedestrian route.

Surveillance look-out point for photographers and public.

Urban archive hub for photographers to document the changes in the identity of the park and surrounding city fabric.

RECORDING/DOCUMENTING DEVICES

VIEWING PLATFORM

URBAN ARCHIVE

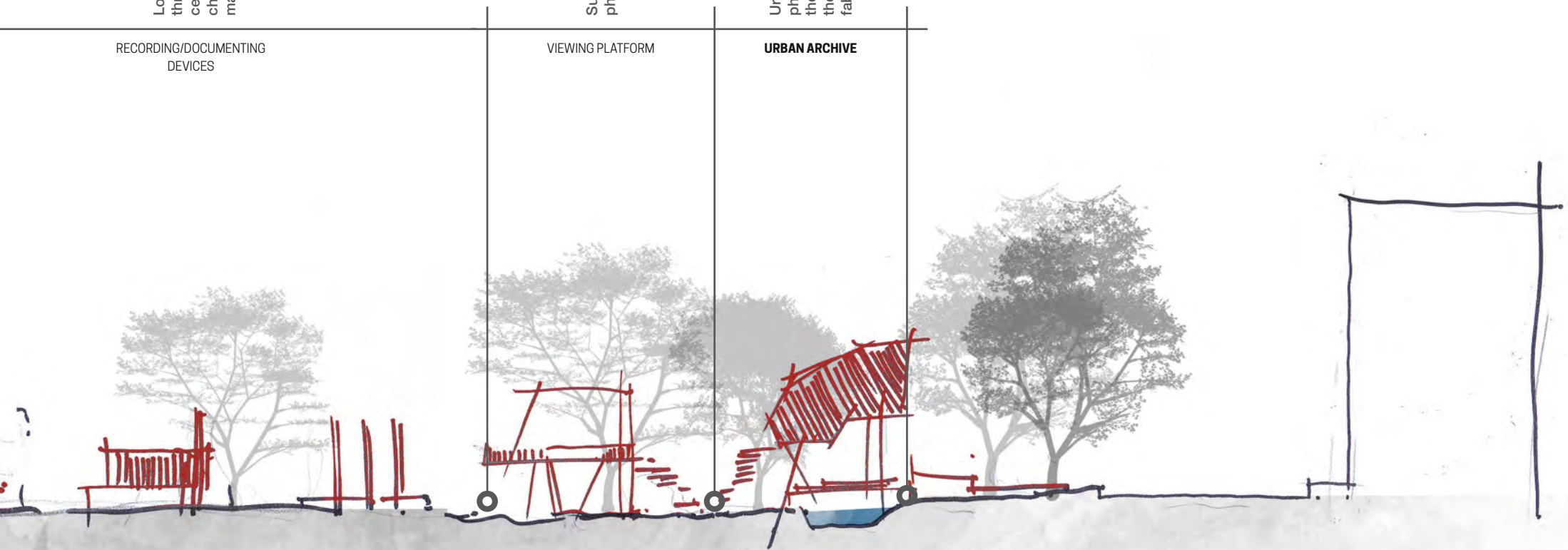


Figure 8.13: Conceptual section through park with various proposed functions indicated