Design Development

The design development will focus on the various responses to the issues presented earlier in this document, starting with the generic and working its way to specific design decisions. The development attempts to apply the theoretical framework to the project, while addressing contextual issues that rise from the history of the building as well as the urban framework. The development also attempts to address issues that arose from the programmatic intentions of the project as well as the conceptual intentions. Even though the document describes the process in a linear manner, it is worth noting that the design process often jumpes between the issues, even attempting to solve multiple issues simultaneously.

Figure 70: Scale 1-500 context model with concept maquette.

The design process focused mainly on the building of physical models and sometimes relied on quick sketches to aid the process. The project was explored at various scales, a scale 1-500 context model was made that allowed interventions to be placed in the context and tested. This scale resulted in models that were largely diagrammatic and focused mainly on contextual issues. A second context model was built at scale 1-200 that was used in a similar manner. This larger scale allowed models to become more complex and allowed a greater level of detail to be generated with each iteration. Only after a couple formal iterations, an attempt was made to generate sketch plans. These plans were then translated into maquettes and tested in context until an appropriate design solution was achieved.
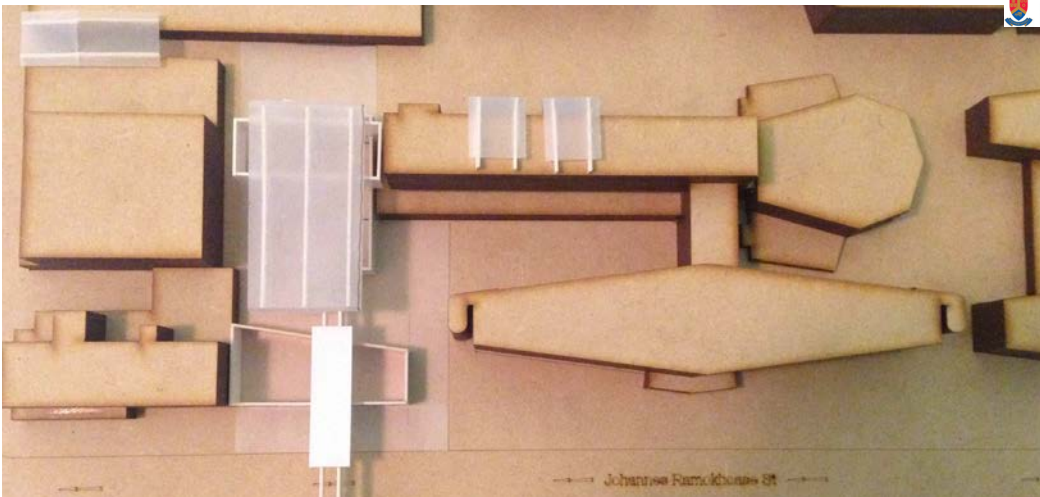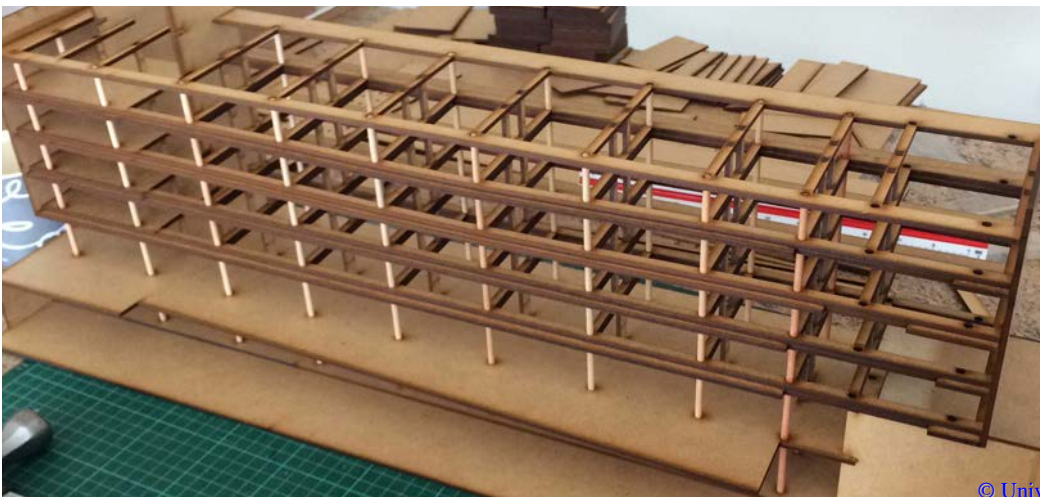

Figure 71: Scale 1-200 context model.

Figure 72: Scale 1-100 structural model of C-Block.

Figure 73: Theoretical framework redevelopment strategy.

Response to theoretical framework

…"changing as much as necessary but as little as possible." (The Burra Charter. 1999:3)

This principle was the point of departure for the development of the design in terms of the theoretical framework. Each part of The Extramural Building was explored and defined in terms of the framework, resulting in a series of conservation and remodelling practice diagrams (Figure 73).

Block A requires remodelling in terms of The Building Within while its skin requires conservation in terms of restoration and reconstruction. Block B requires remodelling in terms of 'The Building Within while its skin requires reconstruction. Block C requires remodelling in terms of 'The Building Within' while its skin requires conservation in terms of restoration and reconstruction. A scale 1-100 model of Block C was built to illustrate the remodelling practice in terms of 'The Building Within', as well as its conservation in terms of the restoration and reconstruction of its skin. Block D requires remodelling in terms of 'The Building Within', however in this case the space plan is reconstructed instead of remodelled. The skin of Block D requires conservation largely in terms of restoration and some reconstruction. These strategies seem very similar at first glance, however, each one has a slight variation that addresses its specific challenges.

The most appropriate way to add additional space to meet the requirements of the Justice College is to introduce new fabric to the site. In terms of the Theoretical framework, this can be achieved by applying one of three remodelling strategies; 'The Building Above', 'The Building Alongside' or 'The Building Around'. The formal investigations on the context model revealed that 'The Building Around' was ultimately the most appropriate strategy for the project. The other strategies are not disregarded, and still play a role in the development of the site.

The combination of these strategies, firstly to engage with the existing and secondly to introduce the new fabric, result in a hybrid approach to reinterpret The Extramural Building.
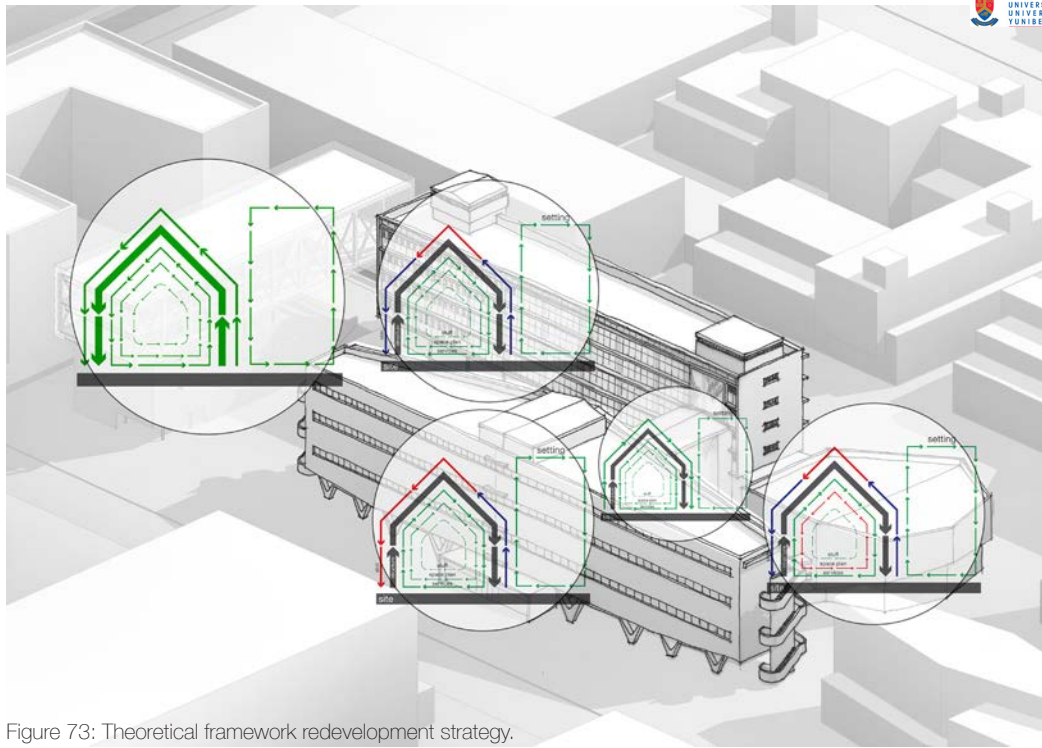
Figure 74: Block Framework indicating route, zones and interface.

Legend:
- Pedestrian Route
- Public Space
- Sittable Space
- Trees
- Food
- Mobile Vendor
- Water

Labels:
- Workmen Comp Fund
- SAPS Criminal Record Centre
- Social Spine
- Centre for Constitutional Rights
- Justice College
- Road Accident Fund Centre

Response to historical context

"The ways in which an existing building has or has not acknowledged the requirements of its cultural context over time becomes the most important feature of the context for the remodeler." (Machado, 1976:49)

The theoretical framework provides a good start to engage with the existing building. The buildings abandonment speaks volumes of the way the building has acknowledged the cultural context it finds itself in. The building needs to reclaim its role in the city. The old cultural context was one of separation, notably present in the way the building steps away from the street and sits behind a fence to keep the public away. The new cultural context is one of inclusion and the building should reflect that. This is achieved by allowing the public to engage with the building by incorporating an open-air public lecture that continues a forgotten tradition of the Extramural Department.

Response to urban framework

The level of public engagement with the building is further explored by investigating the design in terms of the urban framework.

The framework introduces a path that allows the public to walk through the block and around the building, reinstating a modernist ideal that sees a building as an object in space. Two primary public spaces were identified in the block, a central space that sits north of C-Block and a courtyard nestled in-between A, B and C-Block. These two spaces function in different ways. The larger one sits in line with the proposed walkway, while the courtyard sits away from the street and is slightly obscured from view. The design developed in such a way to keep these spaces separate, in an attempt to enrich their individual qualities and implied spatial meanings. This allows the courtyard to become a bit more enclosed and protected, while lending a more social nature to the central public space.

Jacobs warns that adding walkways and arcades to big city blocks will not work if they are not properly activated (Jacobs, 1961: 179). Whyte's seven simple factors for successful social spaces provides some solutions to activate the walkway and adds to the design development of the setting. The connection to the street is dealt with by the walkway. Trees provide the walkway with shade. A variety of sittable space is provided; movable chairs in the courtyard, the low walls of planters in the central space and an abundance of stair seats provided by the public lecture hall. Food is introduced

in two forms, the first as an extension of the social spine in the form of mobile food vendors. The ground floor of A and C-Block is reprogramed to provide restaurants and coffee shops and retail shops, activating the edges of the building and encourage the public to engage with the building and proposed walkway. Water is introduced in the form of drinking fountains. Finally the public lecture hall adds a dynamic component to the building and surrounding spaces through planned and spontaneous events. This event space is a way to stimulate Whyte's idea of triangulation (Figure 74).
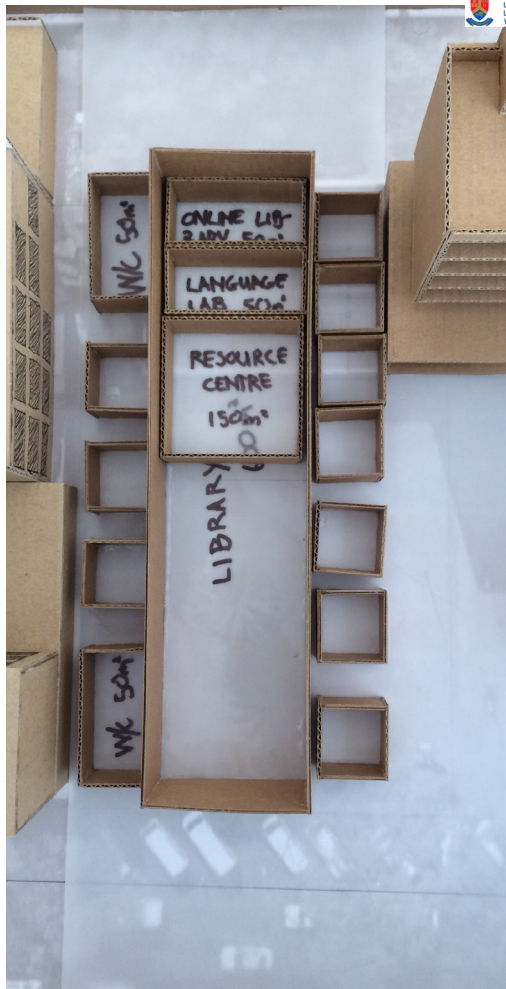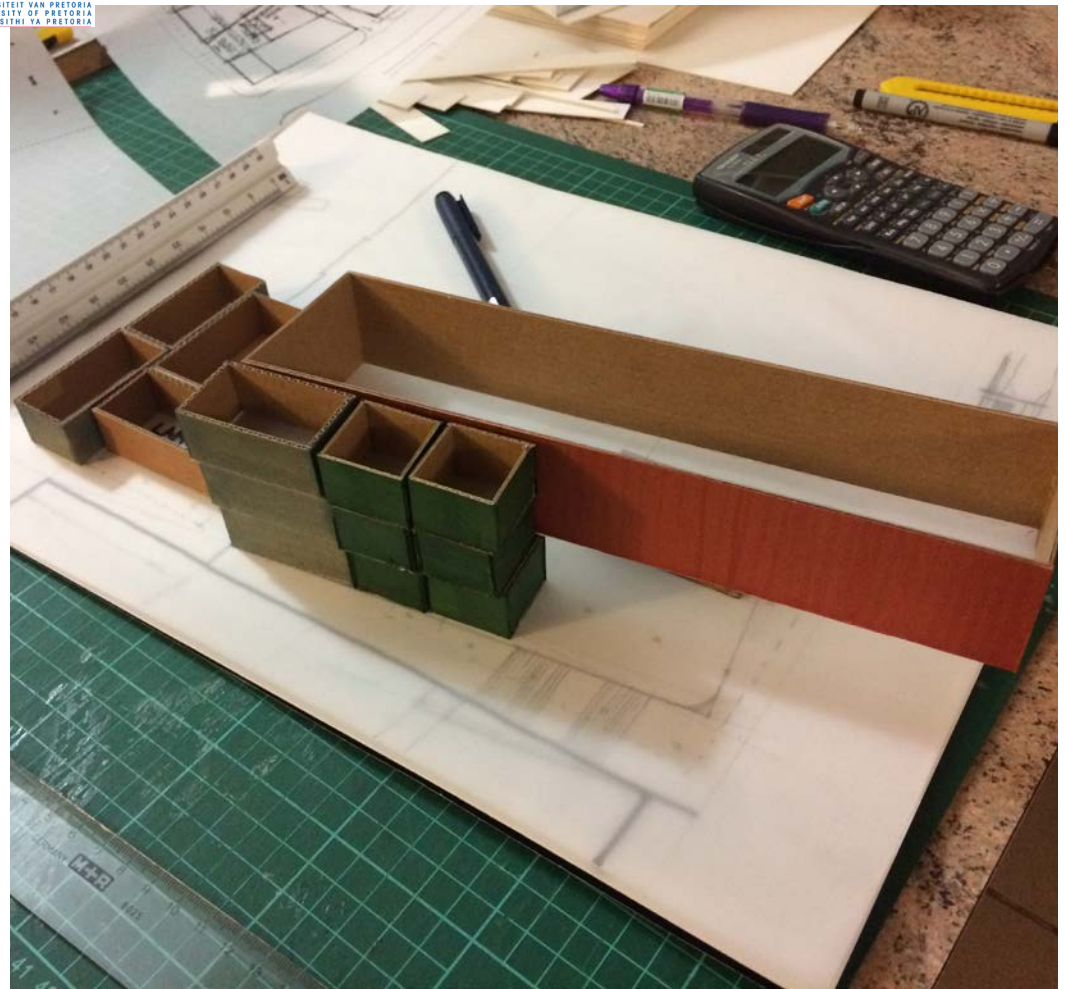
Figure 77: Alternative arrangements of programing maquette.

Response to program development

The program of the existing building as well as the proposed Resource Centre was used to further the development of the design. This was explored in a spatial manner, aided by model building. Additional space requirements were identified, sized and translated into a maquette. This maquette allowed the organisation of the spaces to be tested within the context by stacking and arranging them in different ways. This process ultimately aided in the production of sketch plans.
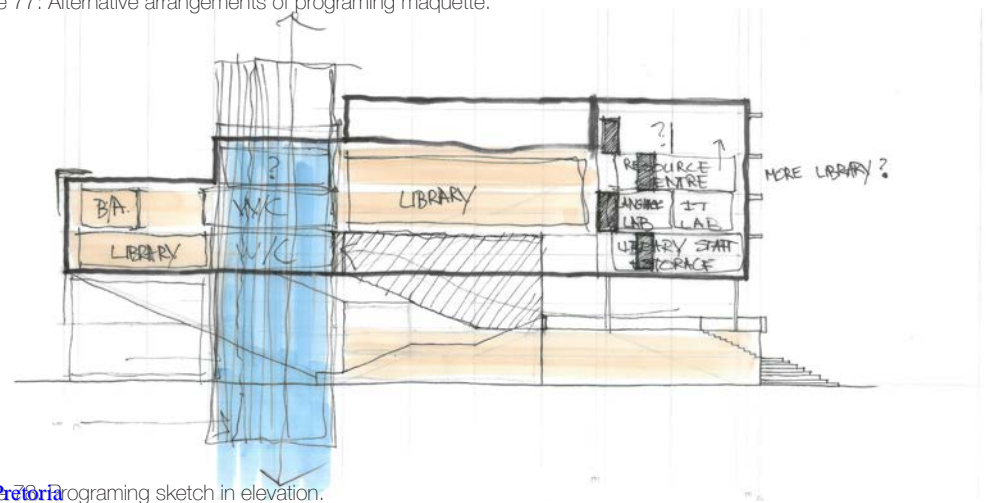
Figure 78: Programing sketch in elevation.

Response to concept development

The conceptual intention of the project is to explore architecture as an extension of the public realm, this manifested into the concept of the continuous urban surface.

The C-Block of the exiting building consists of a top, middle and bottom. The bottom is essentially a single story plinth with a balcony to the north and a walkway that overlooks the courtyard. A legal clinic is proposed for the first floor of the C-Block, in an attempt to mediate between private and public realms. In this regard it becomes important to integrate the urban surface with the plinth to allow the public access to this service. The continuous urban surface starts with this gesture, raising the public realm up with a set of steps and seats that face the northern walkway.

While ramps would have visually suited the concept the best, the choice was made to rather use stairs as a means to elevate the urban surface. While stairs don't constitute a physical barrier, it does provide some form of resistance and lends meaning to the space following it. It provides a simple threshold that indicates to the user that they are now entering a different space that requires an alternative set of social behaviours from them.

The plinth is viewed as a stage for a public lecture hall that continues the urban surface upwards with a set of stairs and seats. This allows the building itself to become a public platform for discussing, debating and disseminating matters of law, enriching the knowledge of both the public and the practitioners that use the facilities. This space flows into the Resource Centre and as a result changes in its characteristic. The circulation space of the building is viewed as an extension of the continuous surface, flowing around an atrium with a series of sittable staircases creating a vertical circulation core. This promotes interaction and chance encounters within the building, allowing the city's social spirit to penetrate into the building.
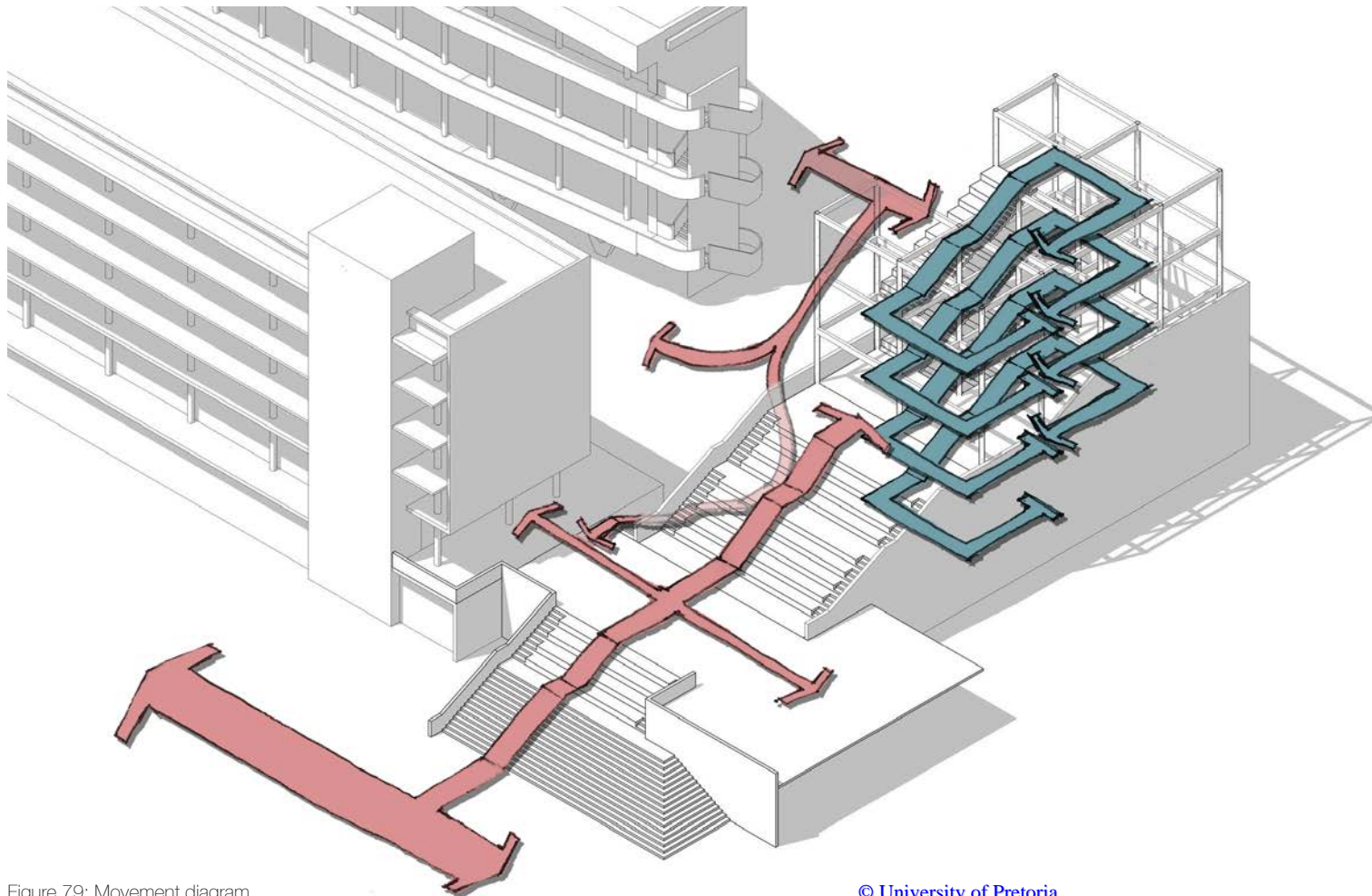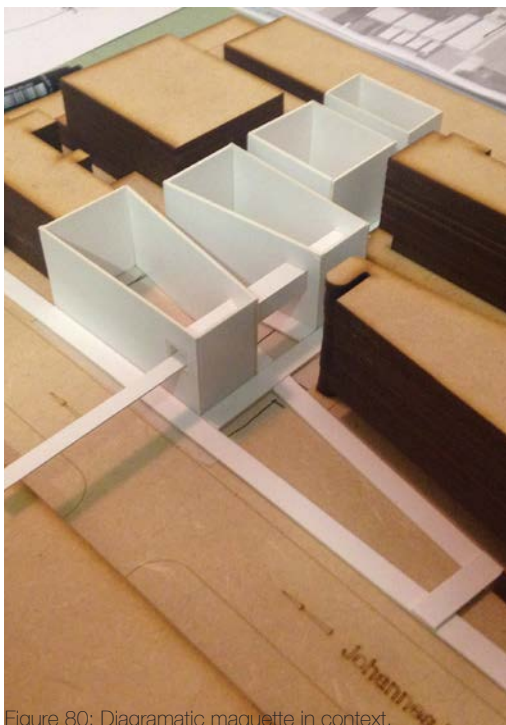

Figure 79: Movement diagram.
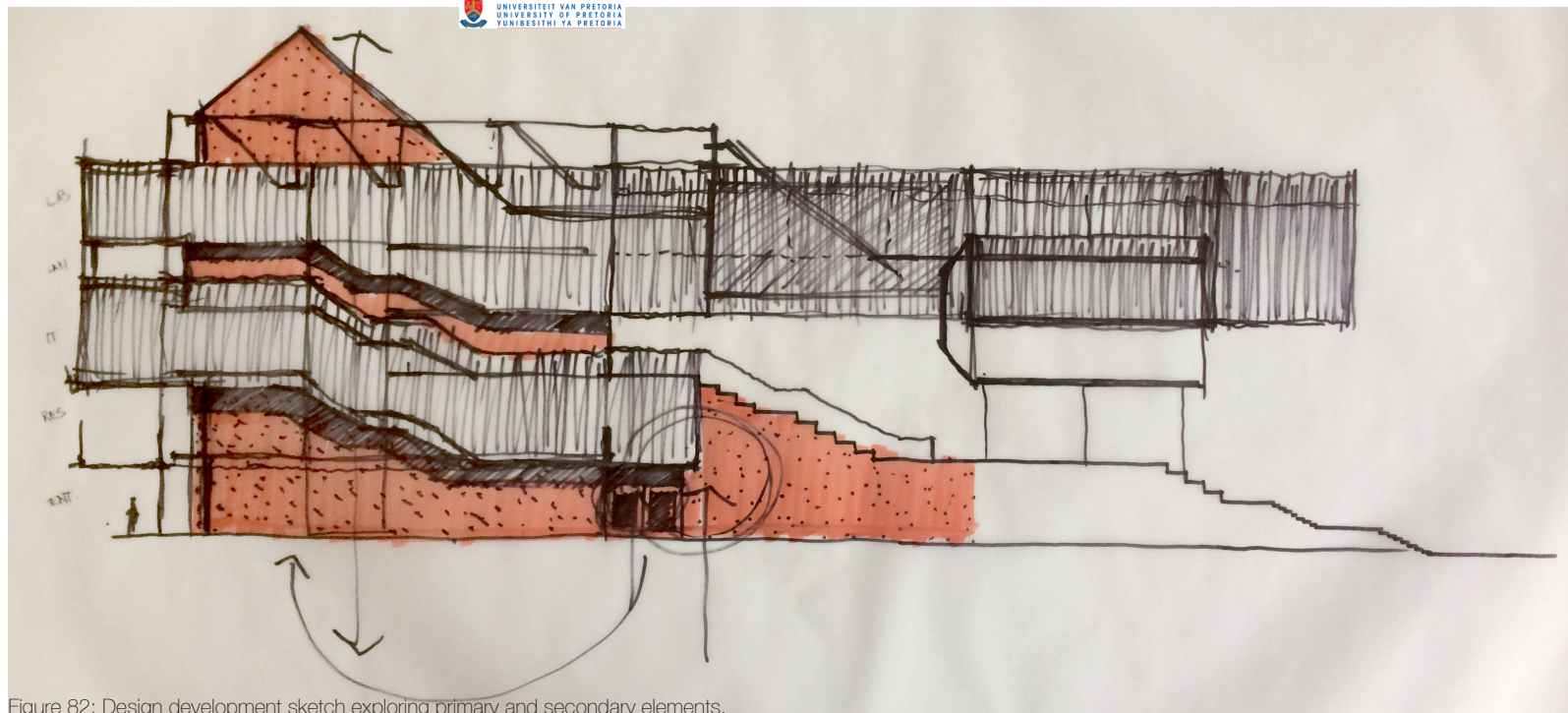
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Figure 80: Diagramatic maquette in context.

Figure 82: Design development sketch exploring primary and secondary elements.
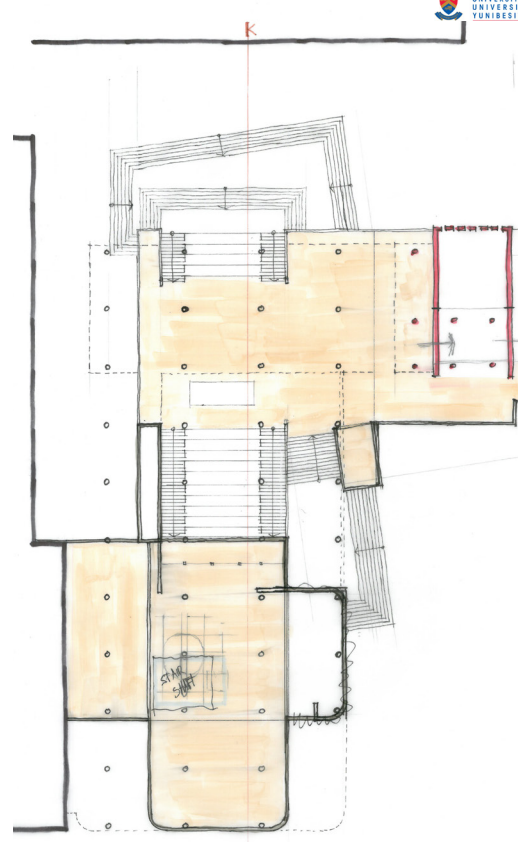

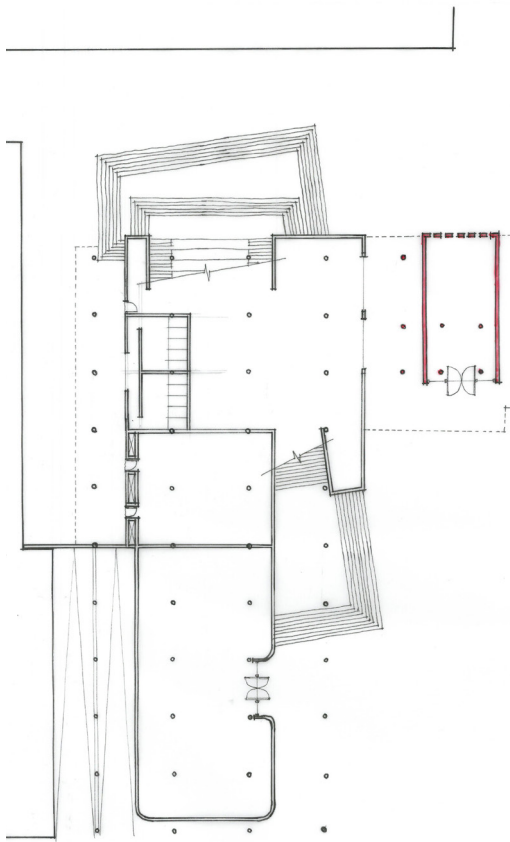Figure 81: Maquette adressing public space.

Figure 83: Massing maquette.

Figure 84: Maquette adressing covered public space

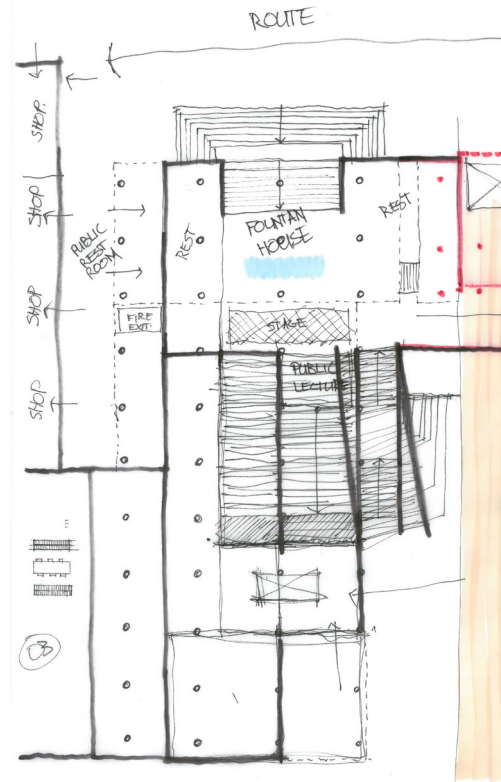Figure 85: Ground floor sketch plan.

Figure 86: First floor sketch plan

Figure 87: Development of first floor sketch plan.
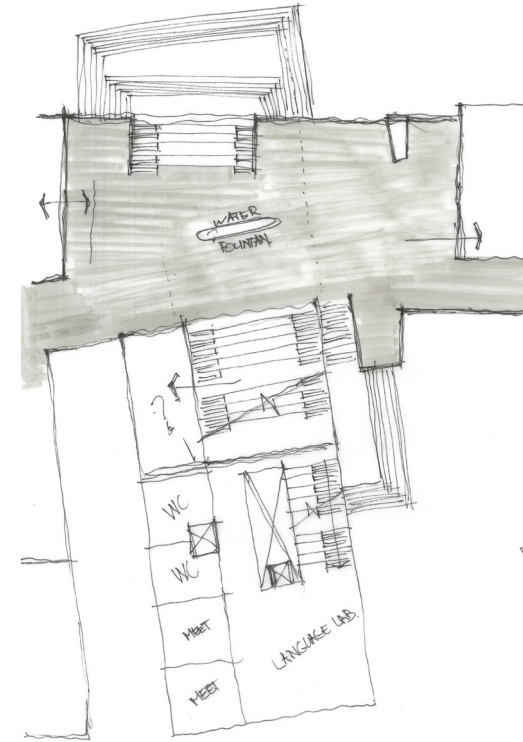
Figure 88: Diagramatic development of first floor layout.

The design development attempts to respond to the issues that rise from the theoretical framework, historic context, urban framework, programmatic intentions and conceptual idea. None of them can be viewed in isolation as they often overlap and influence one another. This was explored through a series of maquettes, in context and at a variety of scales, to find an appropriate design solution.