06

c o n c e p t
d e v e l o p m e n t

The programmatic requirements are spatially accommodated through the lens of past power relationships on site in order to subvert such hierarchy through the reuse of the spaces. Therefore, the design and concept development begin with architectural theory that interrogates how social relationships are produced by spatial configurations.

Figure 147: Photograph of artwork on northern façade *(Author 2021)*

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ARCHITECTURAL & SPATIAL THEORY

The site is assessed and conceptualized through the architectural theory of the Social Logic of Space (Hillier, B. & Hanson, J. 1984). The premise of this theory is that the ordering of space is not a neutral, purely architectural act but that it is predominantly about the configurations or arrangement of the social relationships between people. "Spatial order is one of the most striking means by which we recognise the existence of the cultural differences between one social formation and another, that is, differences in the ways in which members of those societies live out and reproduce their social existence" (Hillier, B. & Hanson, J. 1984 :27) The following principles are used to articulate how social relationships between people are produced and reinforced through the configurations of different spaces.

Definitions (Hillier, B. & Hanson, J. 1984 :94):
Symmetry: "a to b with respect to c is the same as b to a with respect to c."
Asymmetry: "a to b with respect to c is not the same as b to a with respect to c."

Asymmetry is usually related to the notion of depth in space where each route from A to C requires one to pass through a third space, B (Hillier, B. & Hanson, J. 1984 :94).

Distributed: "more than one [independent] route from a to b."
Non-distributed: "if there is only one [independent route from a to b]."

Another layer of analysis is the spatial relationships between inhabitants of the space and visitors. Which is addressed through interfaces and boundaries in space.
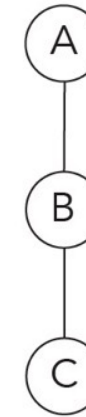
Definitions (Hillier, B. & Hanson, J. 1984 :184):
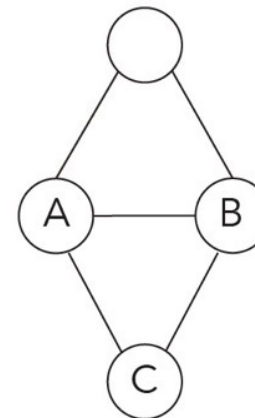Inhabitants: "those who do control the knowledge embodied in the building and its purposes. "
Visitors: "those who do not control the knowledge embodied in the building and its purposes."
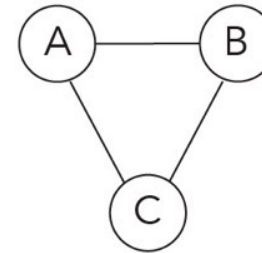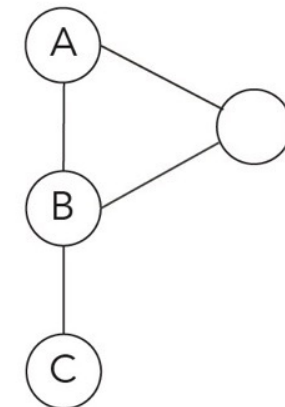

Symmetrical, non-distributed

Asymmetrical, non-distributed

Symmetrical, distributed

Asymmetrical, distributed

Figure 148: Symmetry, asymmetry, distributedness, non-distributedness (*Author 2021 adapted from Hillier, B. & Hanson, J. 1984 :94 *)   **74**

Site analysed in terms of theory

The site is analysed in terms of its historical, gendered and hierarchical functions between the former eating hall (A), Link area (B) and kitchen (C). The Eating hall was positioned at the most public entrance of the scheme. Behind this was the link area which held the back door entrance to the eating hall and which formed the only route to the kitchen. Sorghum beer was brewed by women in the kitchen to be served to men who consumed the beer in the eating hall (Whelan 2015:79).

This space was analysed in terms of the spatial theory of the Social Logical of Space (figure 149). This space can be classified as an asymmetrical relationship because the point between A to B in relation to C is different from the B to A in relation to C. Furthermore, this is a non-distributed relationship as there is only one route from A to C through the third space of the link area B. In this way, an asymmetrical, non-distributed relationship becomes one of power inequality and hierarchy between different social groups (men and women) and their respective uses of different spaces.

This space between the eating hall and kitchen is further explored through the visitor-inhabitant interface and relationship which is all about depth of movement and permeability into space (figure 150). In this space, the visitors as predominantly male workers in the city occupy the eating hall, a very shallow depth of the whole spatial relationship. Furthermore, the inhabitants as women brewing sorghum beer in the kitchen only interact with the men at the shallow depth of the eating hall instead of at the depth of the kitchen which further speaks of the hierarchical nature or lack of free movement across space. Exchange and encounter is not achieved between the inhabitants and visitors as this occurs merely at the shallow depth of the the eating hall.
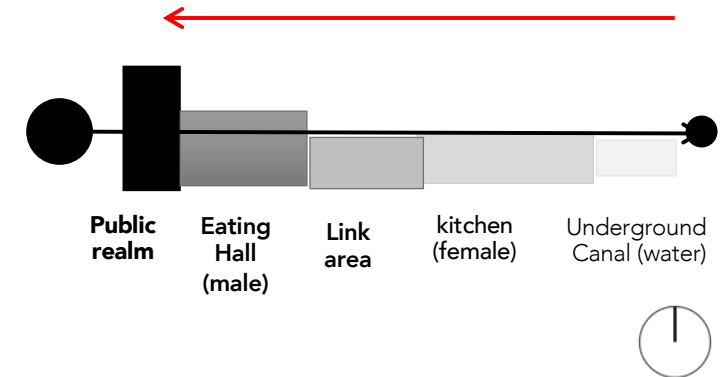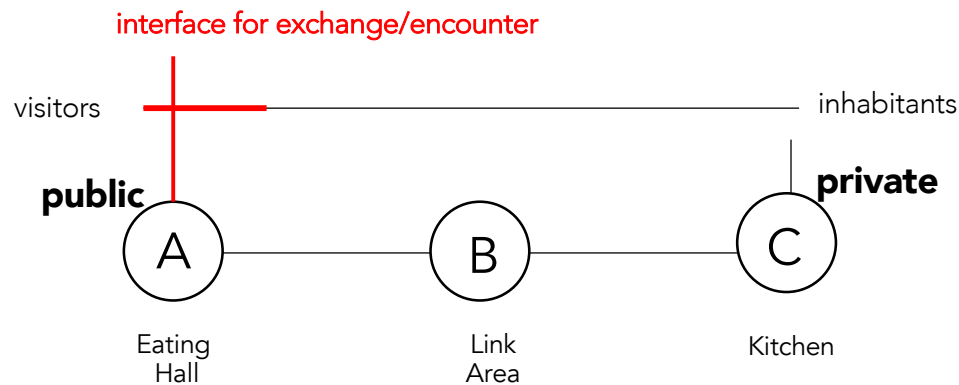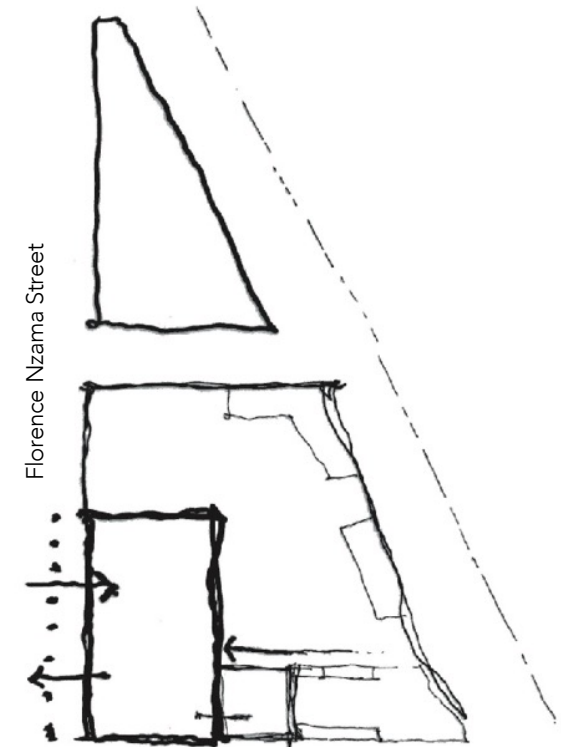

Figure 150: Existing spatial relationship of Rivertown Beerhall *(Author 2021)*

Figure 149: Gendered spaces: Rivertown Beerhall *(Author 2021)*

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As a response to the power dynamics, and hierarchy of the asymmetrical and non-distributed space, this theory offers an alternative to the configurations of space and their resultant social relationships which is referred to as "Reversed Buildings" (Hillier, B. & Hanson, J. 1984 :183-193).

'Reversed Buildings' involve the reversal of positions between the inhabitant and visitor (Hillier, B. & Hanson, J. 1984 :183-193). In this way, the spaces on site will be reorganised so that the visitor will occupy the former most private spaces and thus the deepest space of the current spatial relationship and the inhabitants will occupy the shallow depth of the former most public edge (hall 2) and be able to move freely in this zone. Through this reversal of positions between the visitor and inhabitant, true social exchange and subversion of power can occur.

Concept development in terms of theory:

In line with this spatial theory and the architectural intention to subvert power on site, the concept intends to reverse the historical power dynamics on site between the eating hall and the kitchen. The first articulation of the subversion of power is the extension of the previously most subservient space, the kitchen. Through the concept model (figure 151), the kitchen is now a linear space that stretches into the old eating hall, thus dismantling its former power by spatially manipulating it to fall behind the bakery. In this way, visitors are able to move freely throughout the depth of the plan as a way of learning about the bakery processes. On the contrary, the inhabitants, (now bakery staff) are able to freely move within the historical most public space, being the eating hall. Furthermore, a new additional building (D) on the site of the existing car rental is added to redistribute this relationship between the two spaces so that it is not a linear relationship between A and B , but rather a harmonious triangulated relationship towards a new independent building, the seed research centre (D) (figures 151-153).
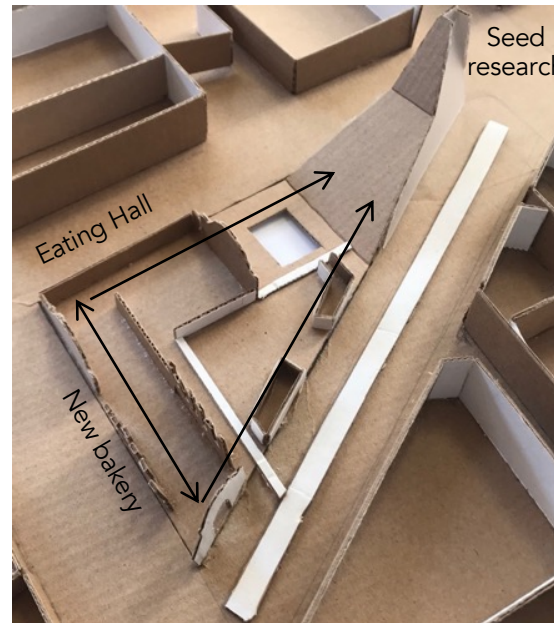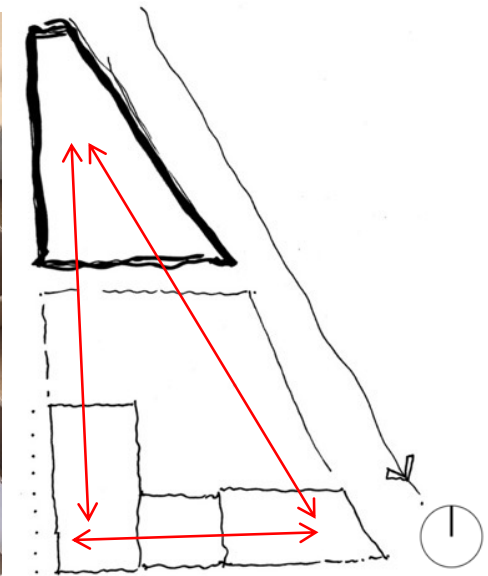

Figure 151: Concept maquette (*Author 2021*)

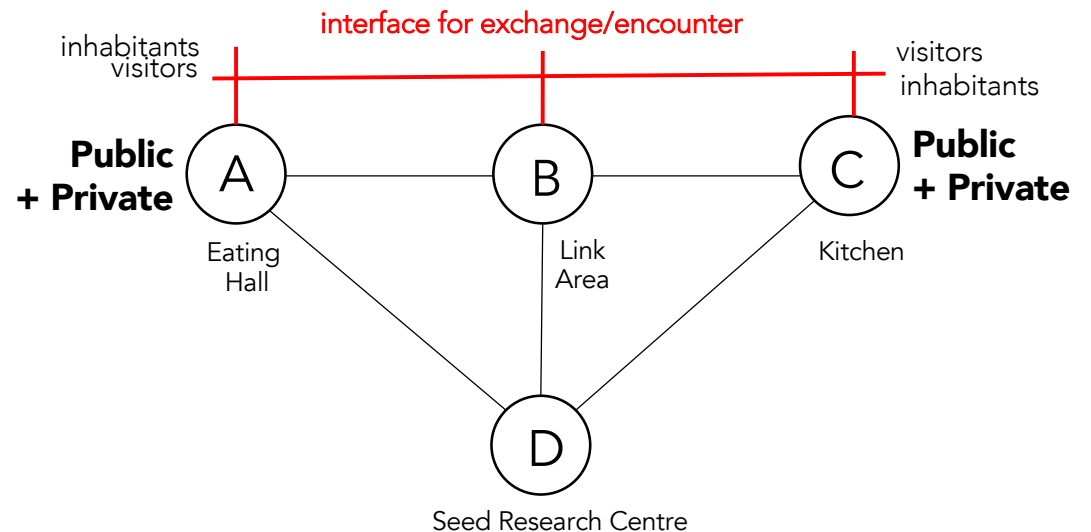Figure 152: New spatial concept diagram (*Author 2021*)

Figure 153: New spatial relationship of Rivertown Beerhall (*Author 2021*)

CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

The concept is further developed through a section of the seed research centre (building D). This conceptual section depicts how this independent new building can act to mediate between and the old existing heritage and new fabric. Furthermore this new building can potentially foster social exchange and movement across the site
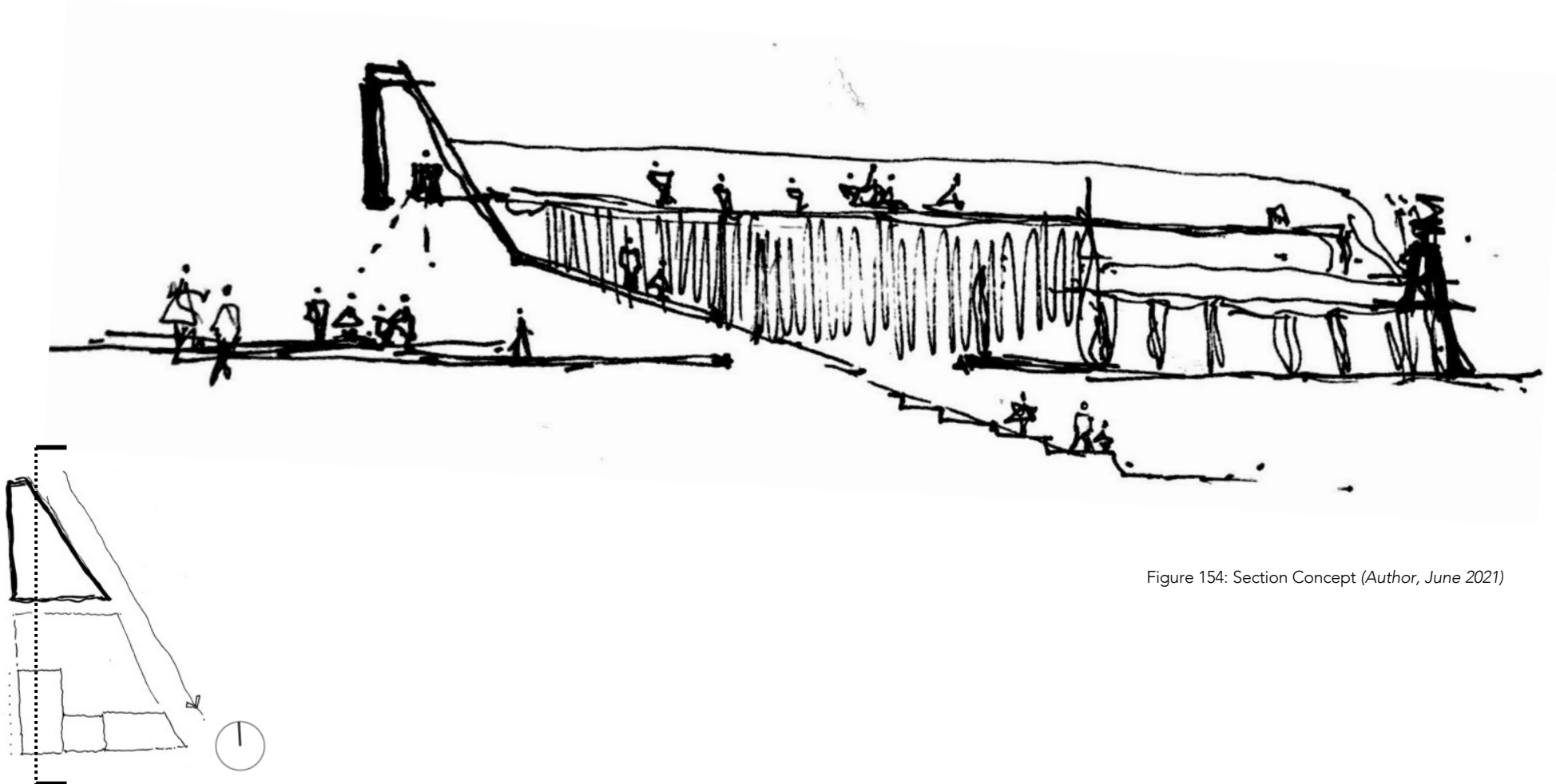

Figure 154: Section Concept *(Author, June 2021)*

Figure 155: Key plan *(Author 2021)*

CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

The concept was further developed through the exploration of different ways to connect the site form north (new) to south (existing heritage).

This exploration began by comparing and overlapping the programmatic concept on site with power as it previously existed and power as it has since changed as a result of the previous theory and concept development.

After further development, this resulted in a concept diagram that uses the manipulation of the canal edge with circulation elements to tie the two disparate sites together.
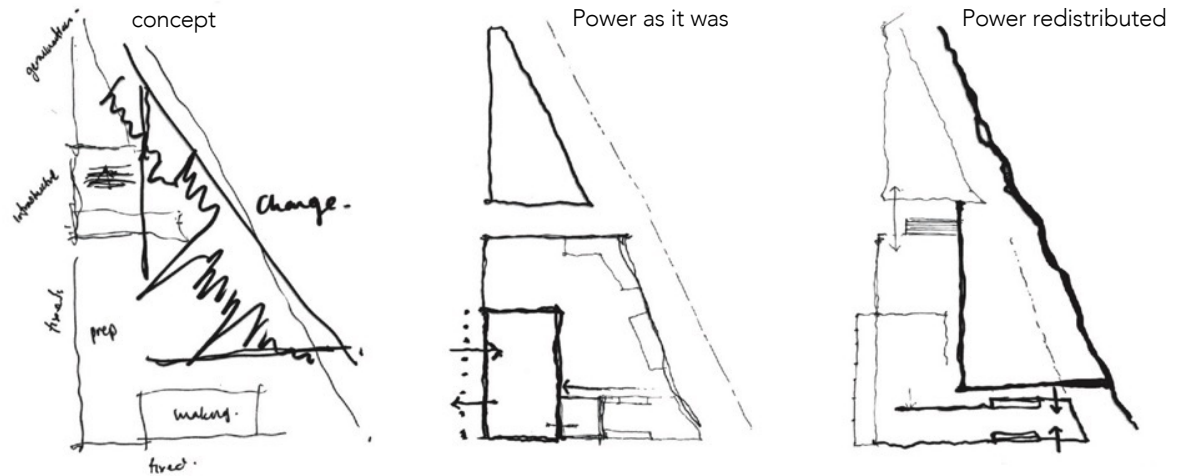

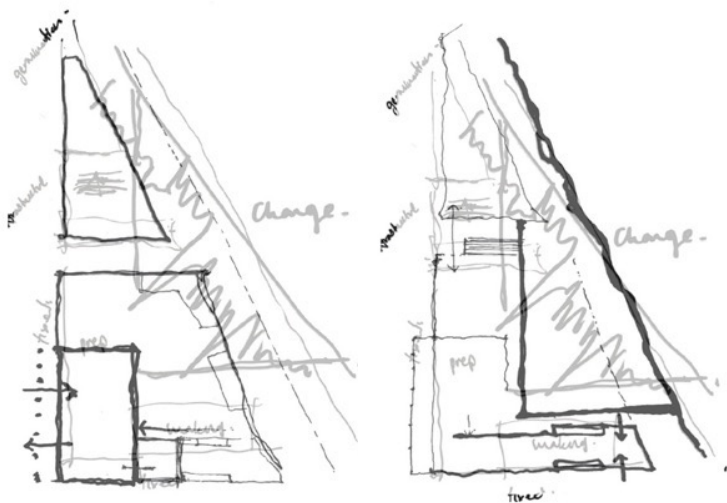Figure 156: Development of concept *(Author, June 2021)*

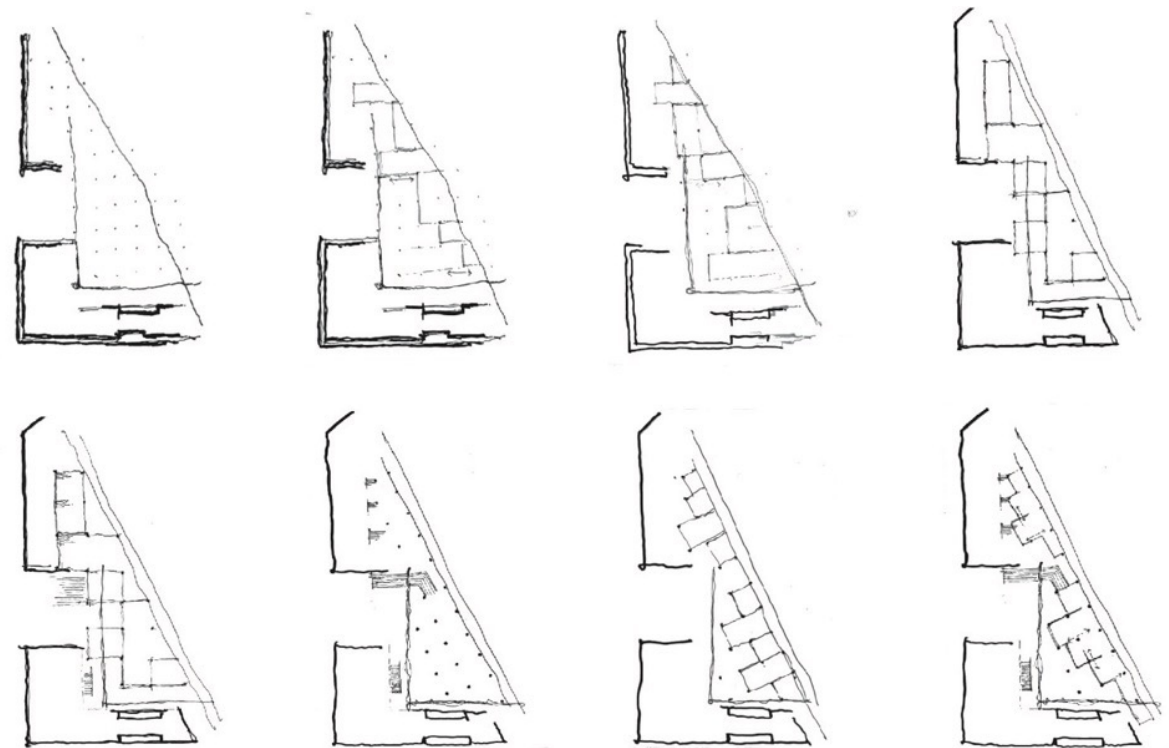
Figure 158: Power overlapped with concept *(Author, June 2021)*

Figure 157: Articulation of concept *(Author, June 2021)*

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