design development
Open extended business hours

Open 24 hours a day, seven days a week

FIG 7.1: Diagram of accommodation network
FIG 6.4: View of site

INFORMATION
TRANSPORT
TOUR AGENTS,
OPERATORS,
FACILITATOR
INTERNET
CAFÉ / RESTAURANT
RETAIL
EXHIBITIONS
TOILETS
LOCKERS
RETAIN
ACTIVITY
MAIN ENTRANCE
INTO SQUARE
NEEDS TO LINKS WITH OLD MINNAAR STREET HOUSE
NEEDS TO LINKS WITH OPEN WINDOW MUSEUM (OLD MINT BUILDING) AND AMPHITHEATER

MINNAAR STREET

BOSMAN STREET

most visible from street corner (coming from the station in the one way Bosman Street)

NEEDS TO LINKS WITH OLD VISAGIE STREET HOUSE

CUL-DE-SAC: ideal for bus pick-up points

7.2 THE CONCEPTUAL LAYOUT OF THE BUILDING

FIG 7.2: Floor plans of Old Fire Station building, indicating function zones

OFFICES
TOILETS
CONFERENCE HALL
ACCOMMODATION
ACCOMMODATION
INFORMATION
TRANSPORT
INTERNET
DEVICE
ACCOMMODATION

MINNAAR STREET
ground floor

BOSMAN STREET

ACCOMMODATION
ACCOMMODATION

CONVENTION ROOM

first floor
The existing site and buildings

- The Old Fire Station building is closed off from the activities in its surroundings. The walls and fences around the building are removed to create a connection between the activities on the site.
- The structures that were added onto the original Old Fire Station Building are demolished.
- Circulation spaces between the original structures are established.
- Opportunities to create new buildings that will be more supportive of the site and activities are incorporated with the new site layout.

Display corridors

- The original fire vehicle garages are re-used for the main entrance.
- Glass corridors connect the street with the activities inside.
- These corridors act as the main information exhibition areas.
- Different formats are used to provide information, for example digital projection, touch screens and displays.
- Wire frame images of the evolution of fire vehicles are graphically displayed on each glass panel to remind the user of the original function of the building.
CAFE, INTERNET, BOOKSHOP, TOILETS AND LOCKERS

These functions act as the main supporting elements of the Information Node.
The original entrance to the rooms is re-used.
Most of the original walls are demolished.
The original fireplaces are re-used as focal points.
The original patios are re-used for outside seating to enhance the activities on Minnaar Street.
The walkways are used as outside seating to enhance activity in the square.
The toilets and internet facilities are placed as loose standing elements in the space.

INFORMATION

The original entrance of the Old Fire Station Building is again utilized as the main entrance to the Information Node.
The internal walls and first floor are demolished to create a double volume open space.
The original layout of the walls is displayed graphically as a watermark on the floor.
The corner of the building is opened up with a new glass façade layer, to make the activities inside visible from the street.
A reception ‘box’ and staircase are placed inside this space as loose elements that connect with the first floor.
CONFERENCE FACILITIES AND OFFICES

The original hall is re-used as a conference facility. Double-volume skylight shafts are inserted through the roof and floor. These connect the ground floor activities (display corridors) and the first floor activities (conference hall) visually with each other, and also enhance the natural light quality of the spaces.

The original room layouts of the Old Fire Station building are re-used as offices, storage and toilet facilities.

RETAIL AND ENTERTAINMENT:

New shop fronts are created on the eastern and northern facades.

These new structures form a supporting layer of separate entrances and serve as marketing tools for each shop.

The Training Tower acts as an activity node in its own right, for example as a cocktail bar with seating.

The tower is emphasized with lighting and digital projection to create a dynamic landmark, visible from the street. A dynamic landmark, visible from the street.

FIG 7.7: Concept model of retail and entertainment

FIG 7.8: Concept model of the conference facilities and offices
The original layout of the rooms ideally lends itself to hotel accommodation.
Two of the original rooms are joined to form one new boutique-style hotel room.
New bathrooms are placed as loose elements, raised from the floor to accommodate services with minimum impact on the original building.
The main information reception area doubles up as the boutique hotel reception, with lounges at each wing entrance acting as security points for guests.
Skylight shafts enhance the natural light quality in the corridors to the rooms.

The new buildings are placed so as to accommodate supporting functions that could not be accommodated inside the original building.
The new buildings are seen as a new layer to complement the existing structures and to form an enclosed feeling away from the street.
Minnaar Street House is incorporated into the square’s activities by linking the old and new with walkways. The house is used as a restaurant for the public and boutique hotel guests. Catering for the function venue and conference facilities can be supported by the restaurant.
By placing the new correctly scaled structures strategically, a visual link with the African Window Museum and Visagie Street House is created. Access is made possible through the Bosman or Minnaar Street entrances to the Museum and Visagie Street House.
7.3 DESIGN STRATEGY

LAYERING:
The original building form and identity is preserved with only essential walls removed to accommodate new functions. New structures are layered onto the existing to create spaces for these functions. The primary function of information is layered by the secondary functions, creating a rich and diverse environment.

CONTAINED SPACES:
The concept of creating space within space is used as a design generator: smaller spaces are placed as loose objects inside the original building envelope. These objects accommodate the services of the different functions with minimum impact on the original structure. The ‘contained spaces’ are either hovering or cut into the original floor level to emphasize that they are detached from the original structure. When combined with lighting, the objects become elements floating in space.

OLD VERSUS NEW:
To easily differentiate between the existing and add-on structures, deliberately contrasting materials and construction technologies are used. Transparent and translucent materials create an architectural language of lightness, allowing the new structure to be sensitively inserted into the existing building. The outer skin of the building is punctured at critical points, allowing the glass insertions to reach out from within, giving a glimpse of the functions contained inside.

PLACEMAKING:
New structures are added to the existing to articulate both indoor and outdoor functional spaces. The perceived scale is reduced in certain areas to create human friendly spaces. The square’s ambiguous boundaries are completed to contain the public outdoor space and increase the sense of enclosure. The approach and circulation routes through the building are used as organizing devices linking functions and spaces. Various degrees of spatial and visual continuity between adjacent spaces are achieved through the treatment of the boundaries that both separate and bind them together.

1 Ching (1979:196)
FIG 7.11: Concept model of the site
Two portions of the building are chosen to be investigated for the design development of the Information Node.

These are the following:

**PORTION A: Information**

This portion includes the following:
- the glass facade
- the reception area with staircase
- interactive work stations and display
- information corridors
- the conference hall with skylight shafts.

**PORTION B: Café, internet facilities, bookshop, toilets and lockers.**

This portion includes the following:
- a cafe with outside seating
- interactive workstations
- a bookshop
- toilets
- lockers
- the boutique hotel lobby and rooms.
FIG 7.13: 3D model of Portion A – Information with reception
FIG 7.14: Reception counter and staircase
FIG 7.15: View of the Information when entering from the Minaar Street entrance
FIG 7.16: Reception counter with views to the Coffee Café and the training tower

FIG 7.17: Walkway with a view of the training tower

FIG 7.18: Walkway with a view of the conference hall
FIG 7.19: (top) Walkway with a view of the Minnaar Street entrance

FIG 7.20: Interactive workstations

FIG 7.21: (top) View from inside the reception

FIG 7.22: Information corridors with Minnaar Street House in the background
7.5 PORTION B

FIG 7.23:
3D model of Portion B – Ground floor: Internet and Coffee Café, Toilets and Lockers
FIG 7.24: 3D model of Portion B – First floor: Boutique hotel
FIG 7.25: Entrance to the Coffee Café and Bookshop

FIG 7.26: View towards the Coffee Café’s outside seating

FIG 7.27: Toilets and Bookshop
FIG 7.28: (top) Internet workstations and Toilets

FIG 7.29: Original fireplace with Internet workstations

FIG 7.30: (top) Coffee Café with counter seating

FIG 7.31: Coffee Café with a view towards the information