

propose

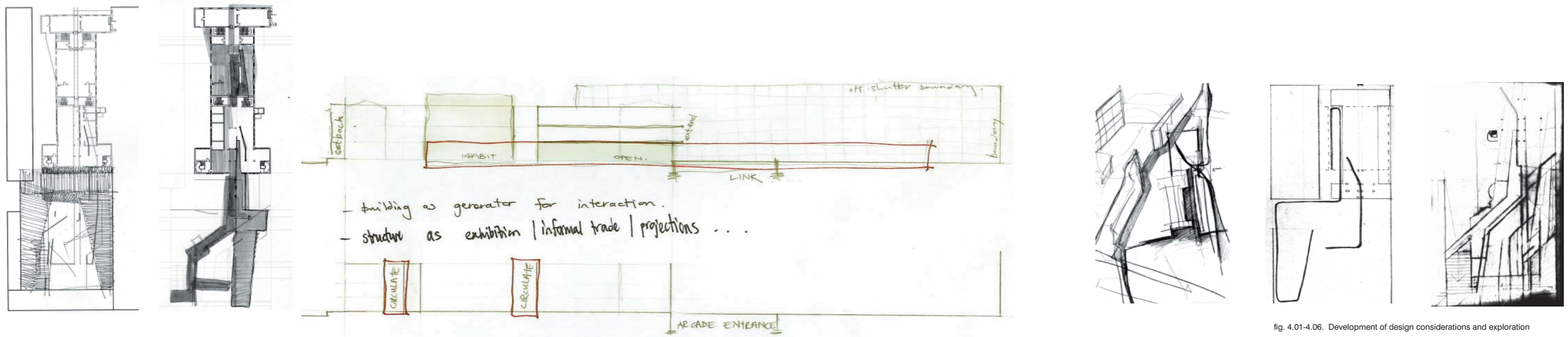


fig. 4.01-4.06. Development of design considerations and exploration

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

The study attempts to redefine the design process and to show that it can no longer be seen as a homogenous, linear system. It introduces inclusiveness in the design approach, together with an integration of construction, circulation and programme. Inclusiveness allows fragmentation to be absorbed into a coherent, continuous approach.

The design development manifests in three phases. Site investigation in phase one explores all possible expression of public presence without accepting or rejecting any possibilities. The main objective being to collect all fitting clues from the three sites in order to propose a design intervention on one of them. The clues include the present site characteristics, desired site criteria, activity and the desired impact and involvement on each site.

Site involvement is reduced in phase two to only one site. The programmatic proposal generated from the event matrix indicates that the intervention should be an infill of action, thought and emotion, in order to generate a successful public realm. Although the degree of presence varies, all three above activities are present on the site, and intention being to incorporate all three in the proposed design. The infill site is chosen for its unique characteristics, being an unnoticed mid city block whilst holding enormous potential to be more accessible and integrated into the public sphere. Its distinct characteristics of the unpredictable, accidental and unknown space, presented an opportunity of an infill of public presence on the site as a spontaneous activity.

Possible integration of the existing library building and surrounding fabric adds to the positive attributes of the site. New awareness and life can be inserted into the area through the integration of the existing. The adding of another layer of activity by responding to the existing contributes to the character of the city.

Programmatic development in phase two includes the manifestation of public space as an open platform to allow users to inscribe their own scenarios of occupation and identity through their interaction. Accommodation focuses on the practices of daily life, inviting society to use the area as an extension of their living room.

Phase three implements the desired characteristics in terms of the broad investigation, the programmatic response, and lastly the manifestation in tectonic expression. The approach to interpretation of the design, follows the interconnection and relatedness of characteristics and desired activity from all three sites. The interpretation of the series of designed spaces is linked by the guiding terms infill, insert and reroute.

The intervention can be described as an infill in the gap, extending and plugging (inserted) into the existing library building. The peripheral infill of the staircase blocks is inserted into the pan-handle and visually connects the intervention in the gap with the intervention in the building. Existing pedestrian presence in the arcade is rerouted through the site and into the building.

Approach to interpretation of the programme relates to the idea of a sequence of events, where the user becomes part of the activity. The programme is represented by events based on action, thought and emotion to improve the current urban condition.

Respectively action relates to pedestrian movement, involvement and re-use of the existing. It is expressed through the flexible areas for circulation and seating. Thought is concerned with information and the use of the memory of knowledge of the existing library. It is evident in the Knowledge Room intervention in the building. Lastly emotion responds to human interaction, present in the principal function of public space as space for social encounter.



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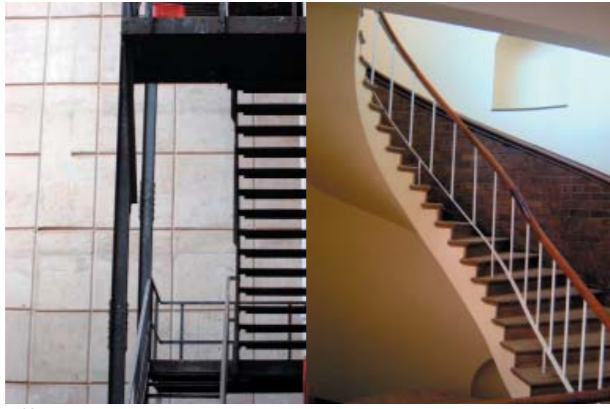
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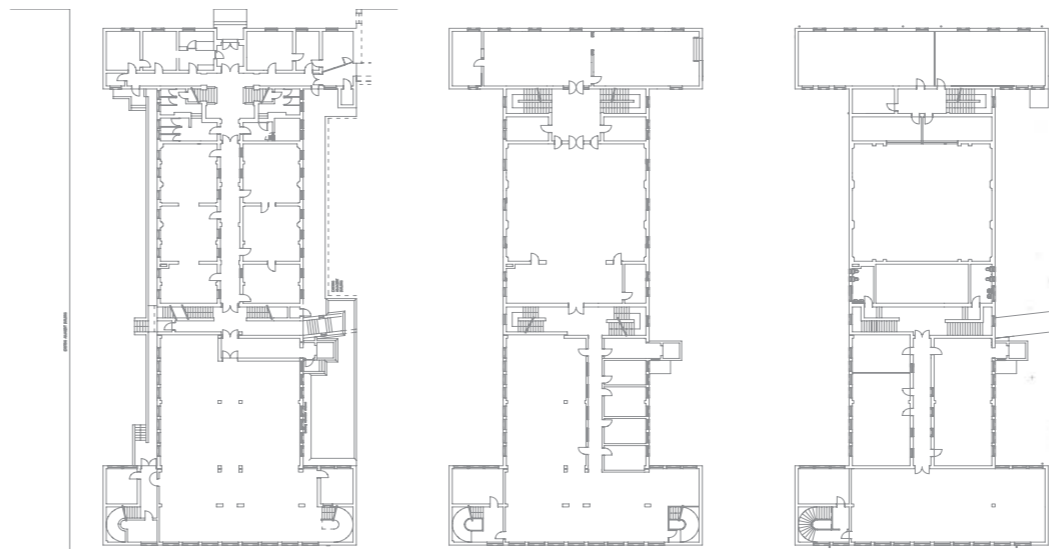


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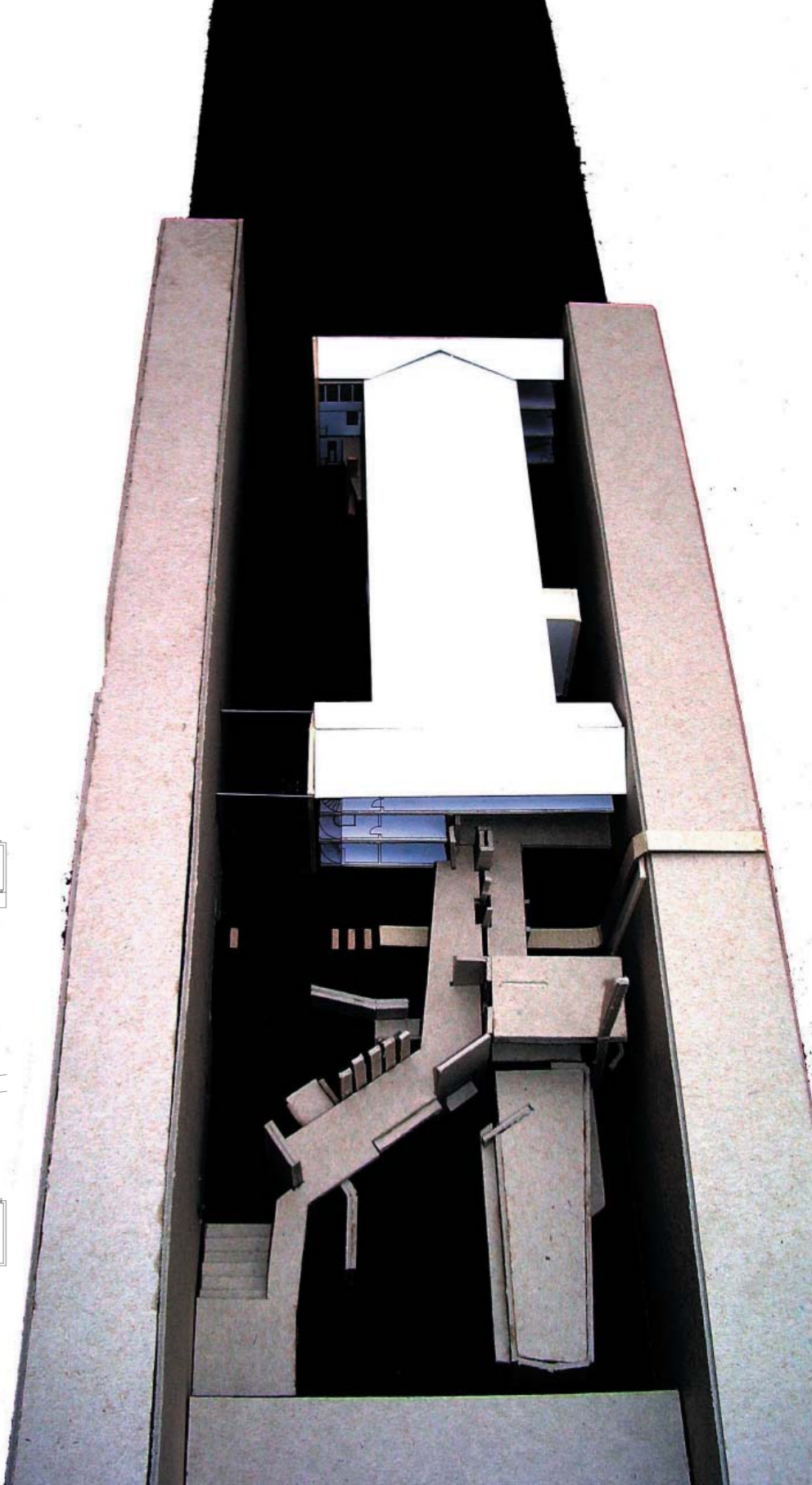


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fig. 4.07.- 4.09. Noordvaal thoroughfare
fig. 4.10.- 4.14. Surrounding fabric
fig. 4.15. Original floorplans of National Library of South Africa
fig. 4.16. Site model



4.15.



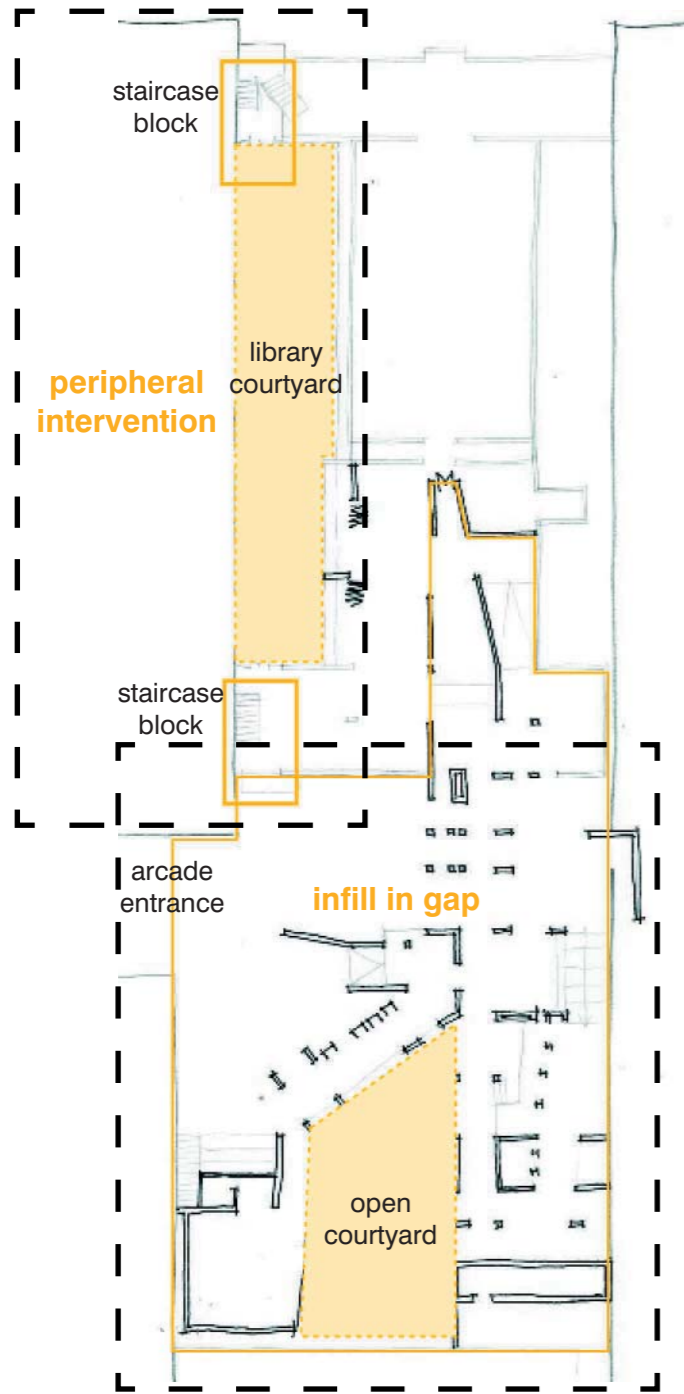


fig. 4.17. Intervention on ground level

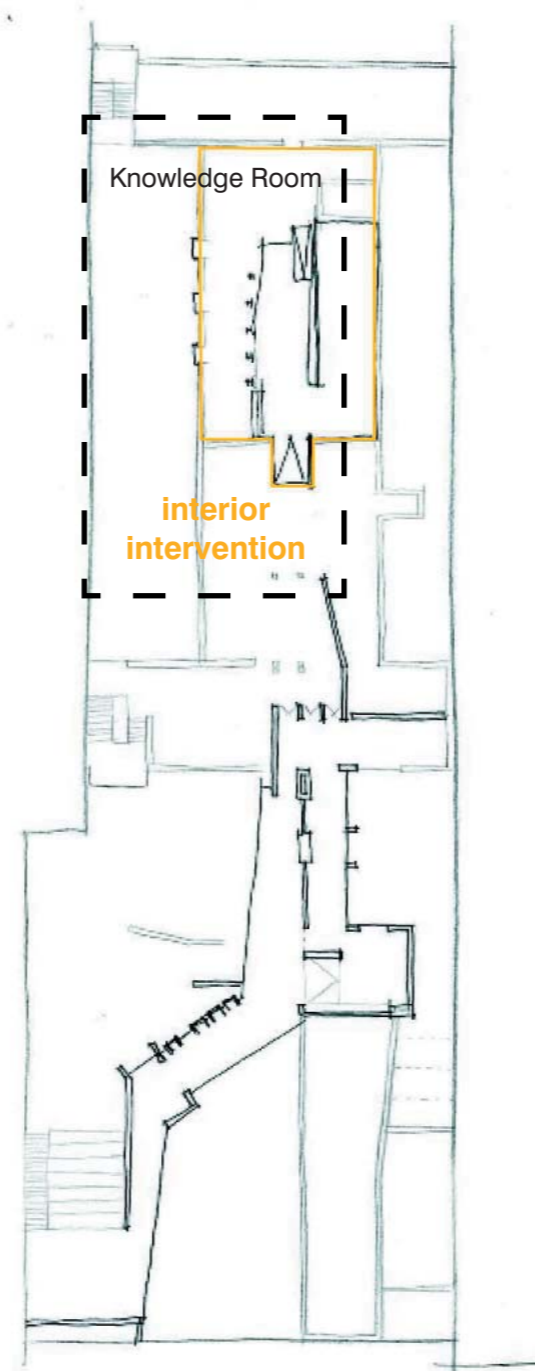


fig. 4.18. Intervention on first level

The design proposal deals with the design interpretation of a series of multi-faceted spaces. The proposed site is surrounded by walls, most notably the 12m off-shutter concrete basement wall of the Old Mutual Building. The design is respectful of the existing fabric. Intention not being to replace the existing, but creating a supportive background for human activities and perception. The design consists of layers of involvement placing greater importance on activity and engagement than structural significance.

The design consists of three core interventions. The first resides in the urban gap, the second alters an existing space in the library building, and the third locates on the side of the library building in the pan-handle. Related interventions allow fragmentation to be seen as part of an inclusive approach.

The infill structure in the gap has a distinct modesty of scale in relation to the existing built fabric on site. The intervention is perceived as an infill of utilitarian surfaces around an open courtyard. The composition of inhabitable surfaces connects the arcade with the void and the existing building, creating different route possibilities through the site. As one moves through the area towards the concrete boundary wall, the degree of exposure and activity reduces, generating a variety from public to less public spaces. The structure is not perceived as form, but as a process directing the visitor through the area, as it punches through the southern facade of the library building on ground and first floor level, providing public access to the previous inaccessible building.

Current operational layout of the library building is accepted, and interior intervention is concentrated in one selective area where the intervention changes the perception of the barrel vaulted volume of the library's Macfayden Hall. New composed elements propose a new identity and new use of the space.

Two transparent spatial closures define the peripheral interventions located in the pan-handle. These staircase blocks inserted on both ends of the pan-handle extend the available circulation space and create a private courtyard for library use. The interventions on the side of the building contribute to the cohesion of the other two interventions through support of the insertion in the gap and the completion of the involvement in the building.



fig. 4.19. Model of interior intervention on ground level



fig. 4.20. Model of interior intervention on first level

Layout and function

open courtyard

- > three courtyards varying in character
- > exposed to elements
- > seen as overflow spaces from other areas of site
- > provides informal seating

>> courtyard areas function as city rooms, inviting various interpretations of the space.

cafe/bar area

- > operation approached with great surety as tentative spaces, but with a variety of possibilities
- > kiosk, cafe, bar used as most probable tenants

>> rigid hard fibre provides the basic structure and services, presenting the opportunity for the user to interact and associate with useable levels

>> a source of economic opportunity through the integration of the programmes of the formal and informal economy.

Knowledge Room

- >> facilitation of electronic information retrieval and promotion of technology by means of interactive plasma screens and internet access
- >> functions as support system for library building

walkway

- > serves as a connection spine into the site, providing access to all areas
- > accessible on ground and first level
- > doubles as viewing platform, seating

>> the walkway ensures the usability of the area as an exterior social space, providing usable surfaces and linking the various functions.

ablution

- > accessible to all, safe and hygienic
- > maintained as communal facility
- employment opportunity
- > timber screen provides visual privacy

>> each individual toilet cubicle opens to a communal handwash area, providing sufficient ventilation and light. Partial visual connection to courtyard provides eyes on an otherwise dangerous area.

staircase blocks

- > vertical circulation in building
- > visual link to both street facade and courtyard area
- > source of light

>> the transparent elements announce an intervention from Vermeulen Street by connecting street activity to interior circulation.

- open courtyard
- walkway
- ablution
- cafe/bar
- staircase blocks
- Knowledge Room

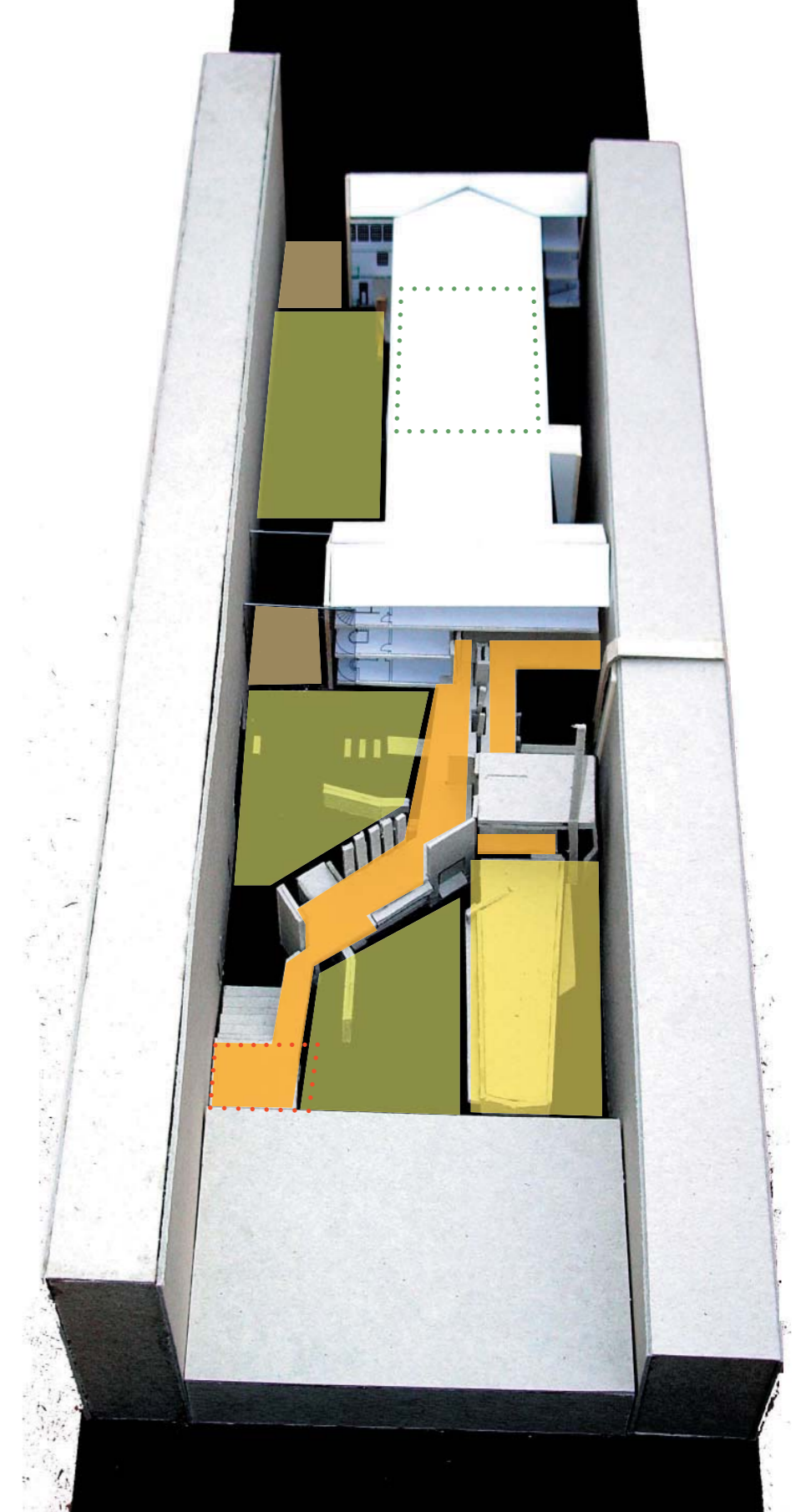
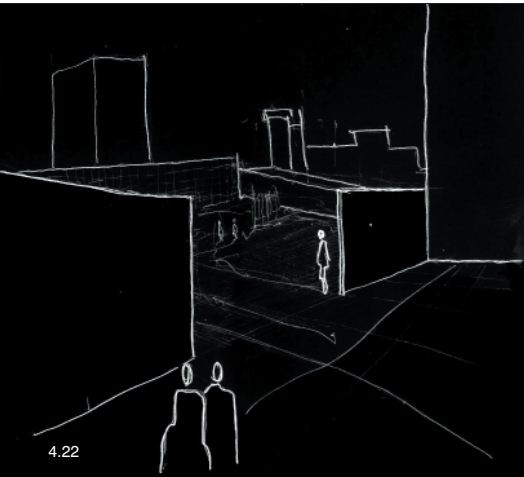


fig. 4.21. Model of programme massing

Experience of the designed spaces relies on movement and visual connection between them. A series of narrative journeys are used to illustrate the visiting experience.



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A trip through the Noordvaal Thoroughfare, past Robbies Take-Aways and the hairdresser, takes the visitor to the middle of the arcade. The ten meter gap in the western wall of the arcade announces the entrance to the area, extending onto the red brick paving of a public area.

Following the brushed off-shutter concrete walkway, it diagonally divides the site into two halves. Behind the walkway, a prominent off-shutter concrete boundary wall defines the eastern boundary. The pedestrian opening in the concrete wall provides access to the adjacent parking garage.

A stepped terrace meets the visitor turning to the right, providing seating and overlooking the public area at the entrance. The tiered seating rises to meet the accessible walkway roof, extending north towards the existing building on the first floor. An inserted wall cuts through the existing floor slab, connecting the ground and first floor entrances through a narrow slit cut into the slab adjacent to the inserted wall. During the day the western side of the building is subtly lit by daylight flooding through the inserted glass staircase blocks.



A skeletal steel and cast concrete staircase rises inside the light boxes. A protruding landing extends past the southern glazed facade, connecting the visitor with the public area one level below. In-between the glass boxes, a more private courtyard is shaped through the insertion of the two spatial closures. Both open up into the courtyard on ground floor. The threshold between the courtyard and the existing building is defined by a series of stackable glass doors opening onto two wide concrete steps. A concrete ramp provides alternative access to the courtyard area. Three protruding windows on the southern facade are the only visible sign of the intervention in the MacFadyen Hall.

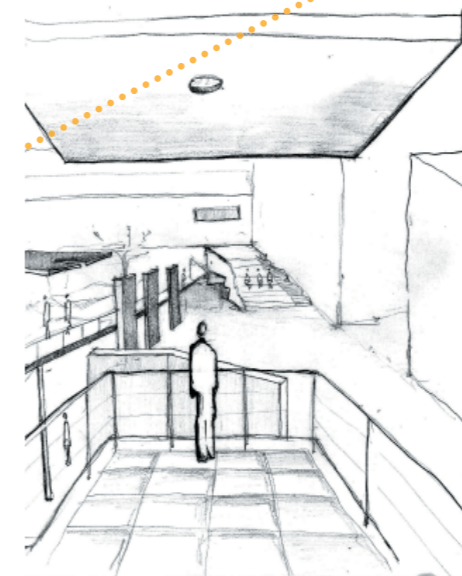


fig. 4.24. View from first floor balcony.

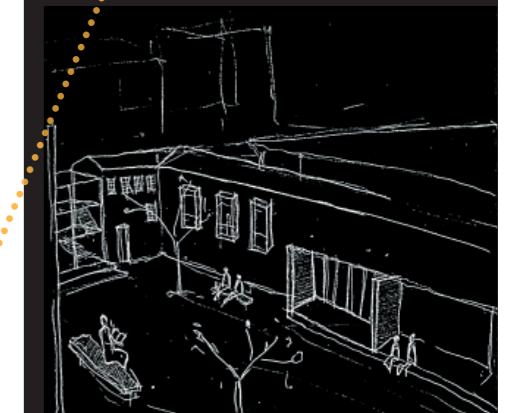
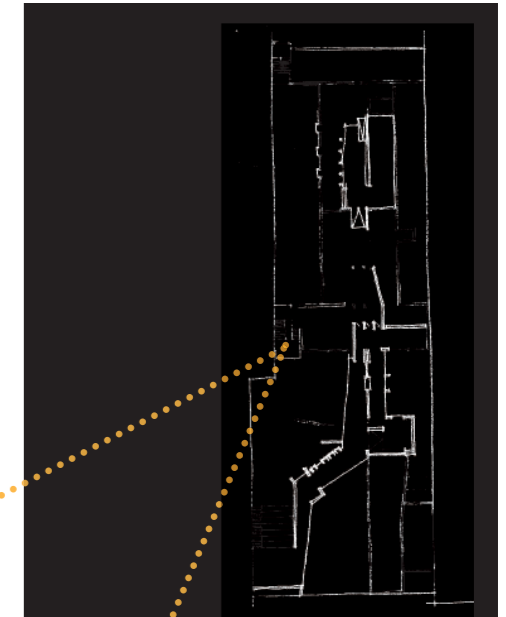


fig. 4.25. Library Courtyard.

Upon entering the Knowledge Room, the floor level rises with a raised timber floor to mark the circulation area. The level change slows the visitor down, creating the opportunity to engage with the activities in the room. In the morning, daylight floods through the eastern windows and is carried further into the area with white light reflecting fiberglass panels. A sequence of shaped polycarbonate screens in between the fiberglass panels lends a measure of intimacy to the room. A composition of elements structures the utility of the area to access the visitor in information retrieval. Visual connection to the library courtyard is through the protruding windows overlooking the area.

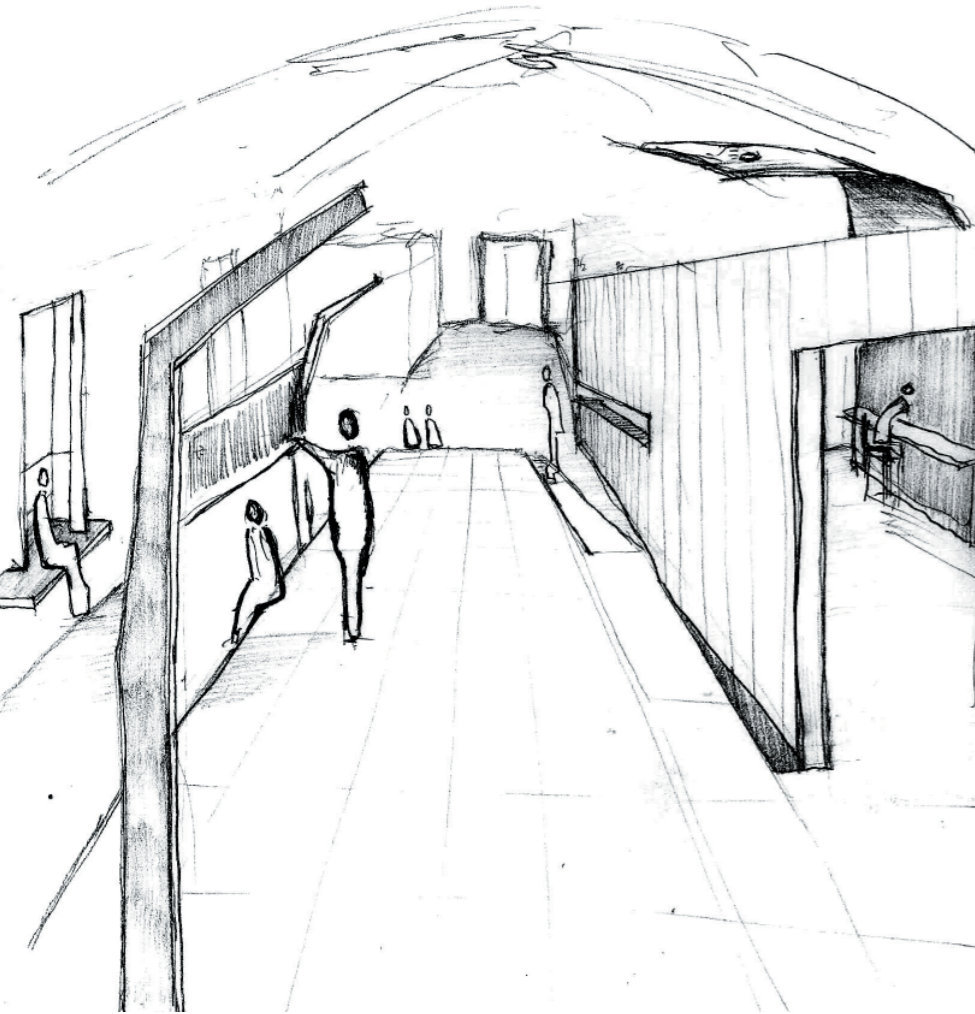


fig. 4.26. Interior view of the Knowledge Room.

Back to the entrance, a freestanding concrete wall curves away from the arcade entrance guiding the visitor to the raised floor of the walkway. The covered walkway serves as a connection spine into the site. To the right, a row of public telephones are fixed to red mosaic columns. On the other side of the walkway the line of sight continues towards an open courtyard, scattered with seats and shaded areas. Moving across the courtyard towards the concrete boundary wall, the floor level rises to a series of useable surfaces designated as café territory. A variety of small metal tables and chairs provide adequate seating during the lunch hour rush.

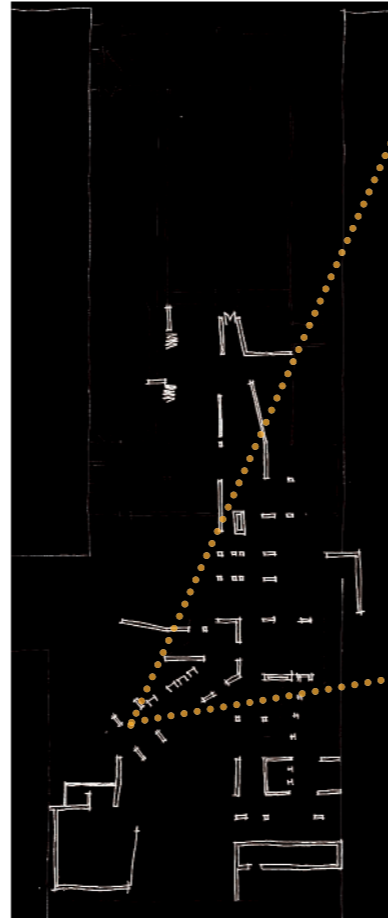


fig. 4.27. View of covered walkway and public phones.



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Approaching the library from Vermeulen Street, the visitor's first impression is of a protruding off-shutter concrete block at the bottom of the inserted glass facade. Recessed cast lettering announces the public intervention in the existing building. The skeletal staircase hovering inside, is visible from street level. The glass facade becomes a showcase for activity inside.

Towards the entrance, a number of visitors occupy the concrete bench on the sidewalk. Three concrete steps lead the visitor into the building, with the staircase to the right and the southern intervention clearly visible through the main corridor stretching to the back of the building.

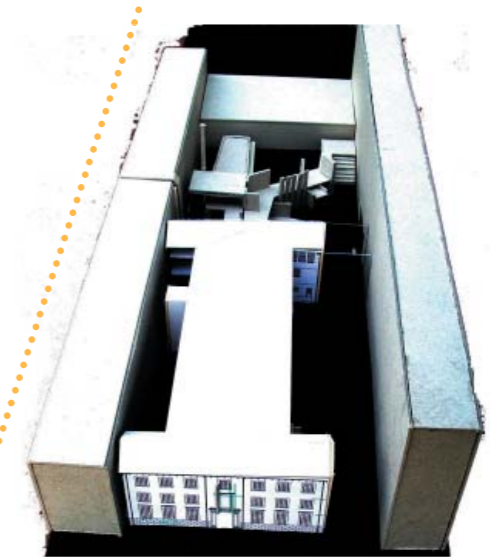
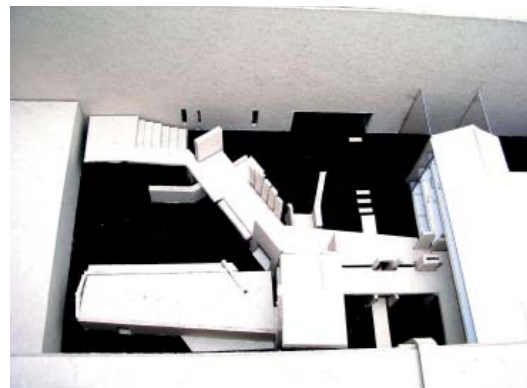


fig. 4.30. Concept Model of Vermeulen Street entrance.



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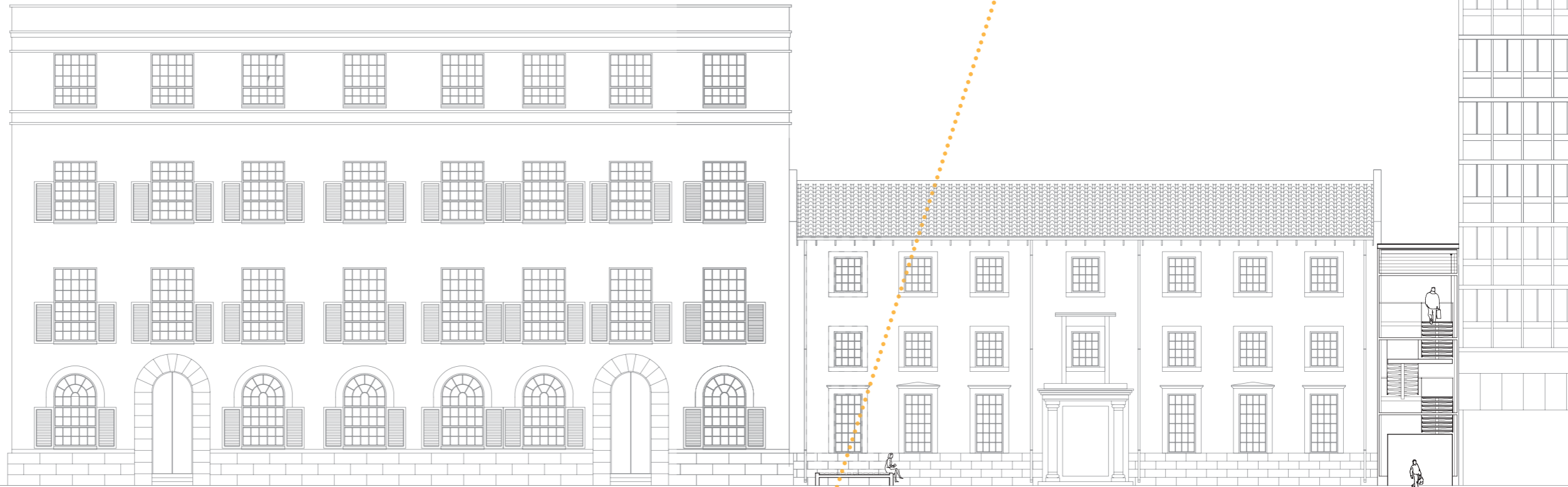
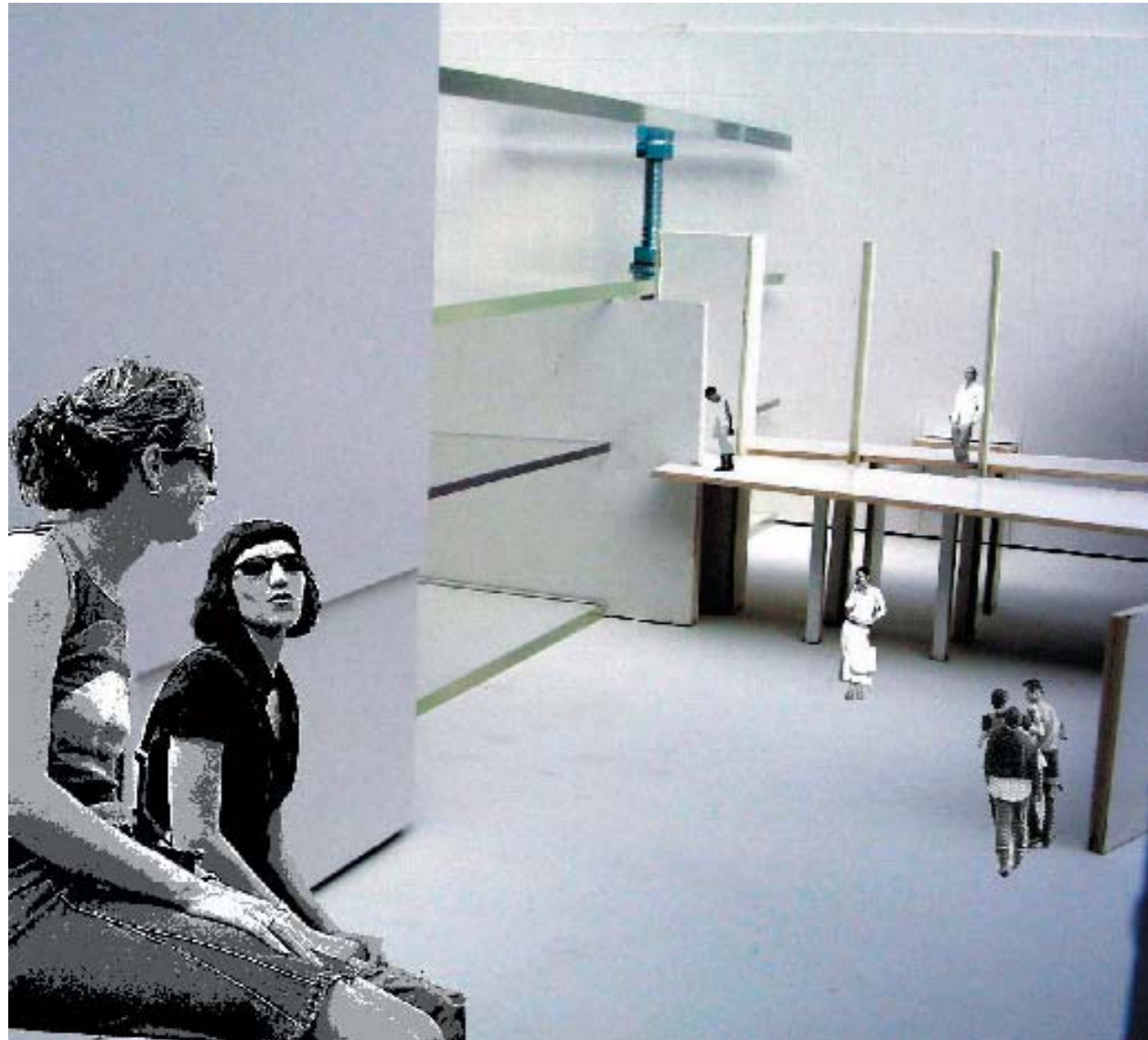


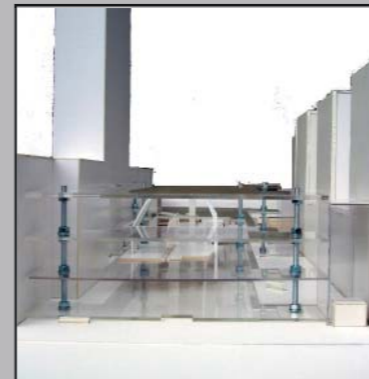
fig. 4.31. Vermeulen Street elevation.



perceive



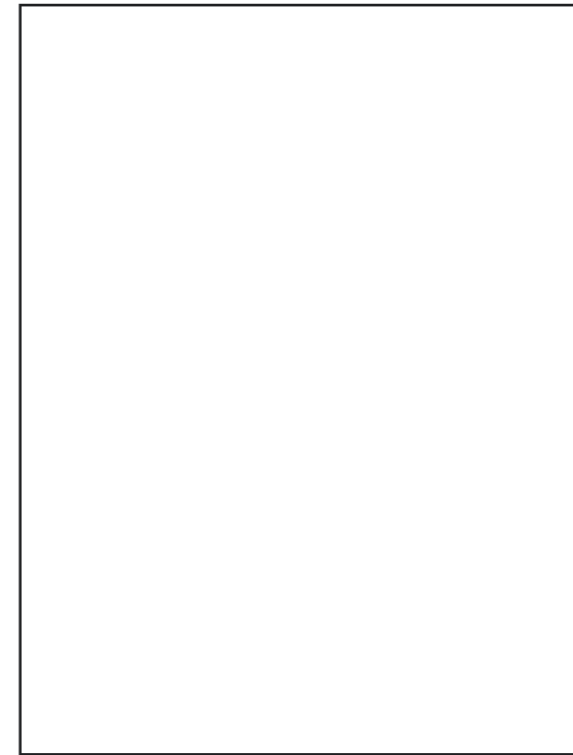
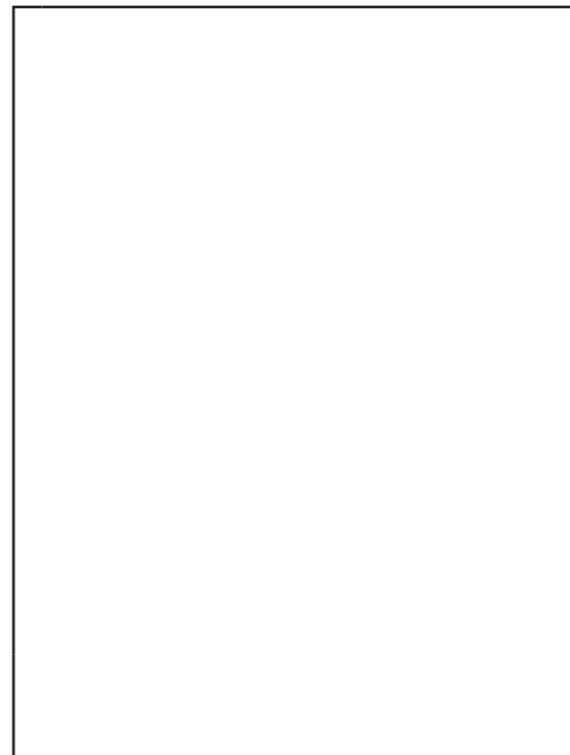
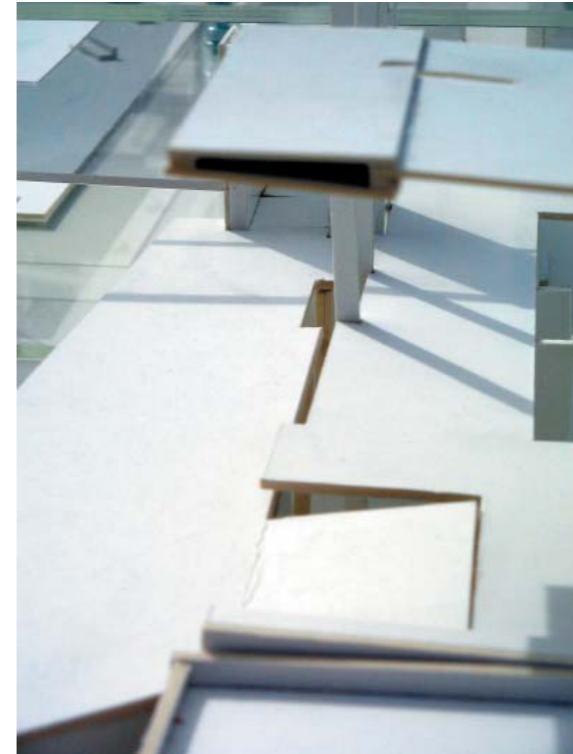
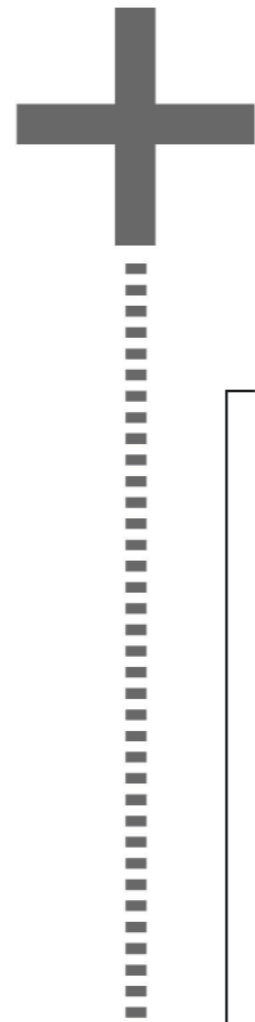
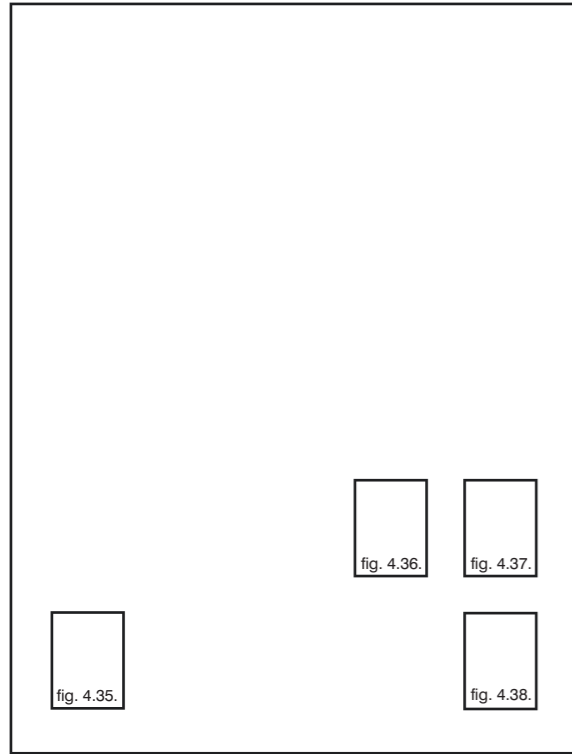
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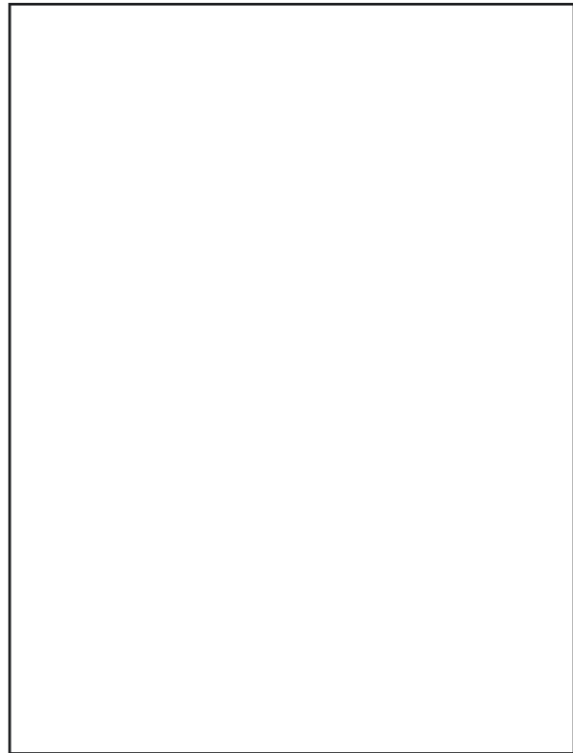
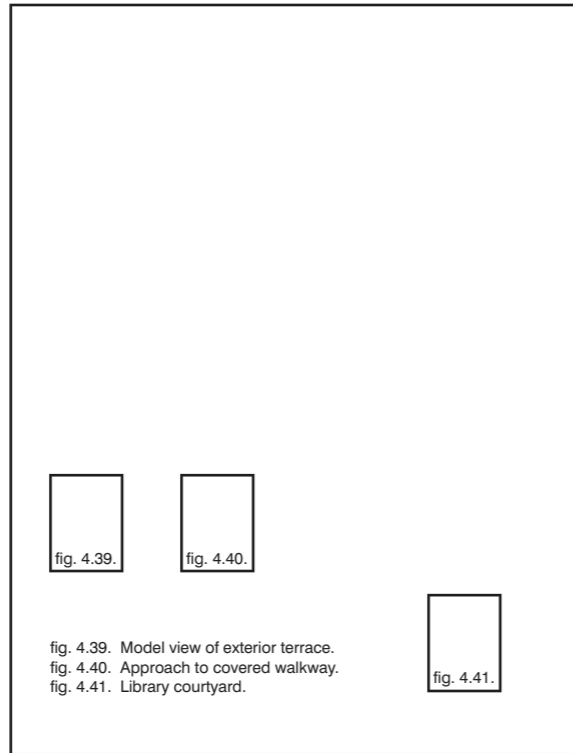
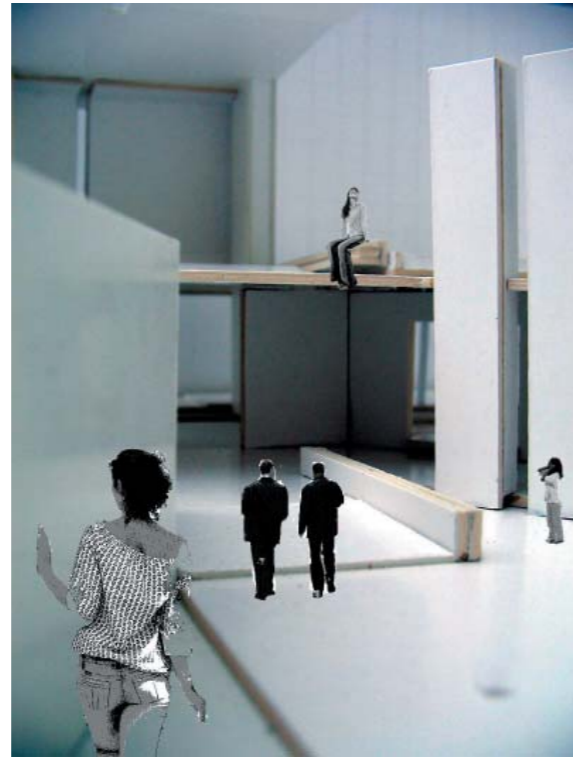


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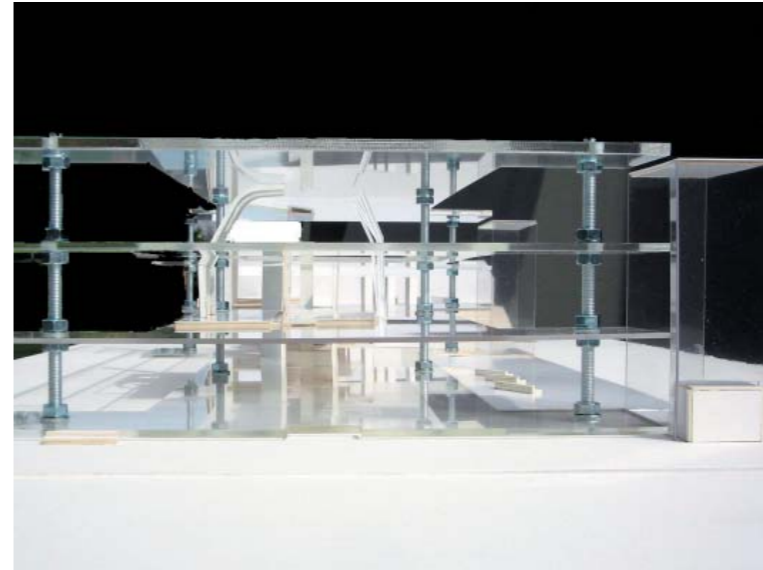
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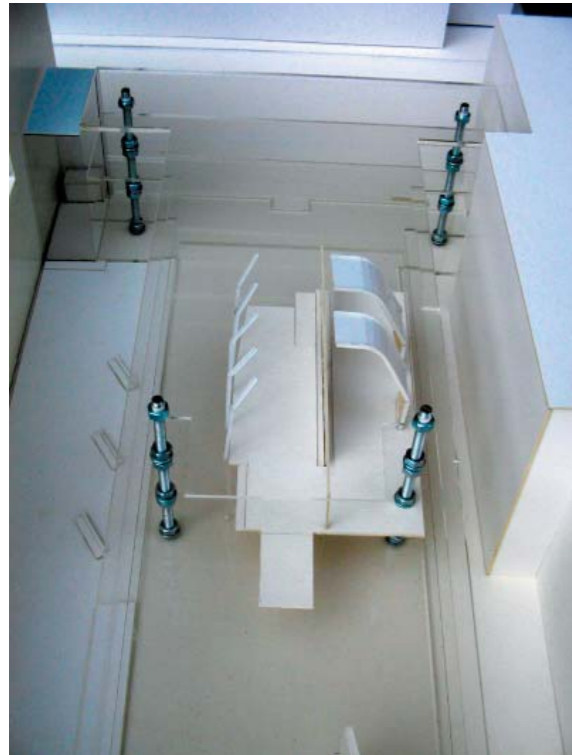


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fig. 4.42. Perspective view of final model.
fig. 4.43. Approach from Vermeulen Street; final model.
fig. 4.44. Approach from Vermeulen Street; final model.



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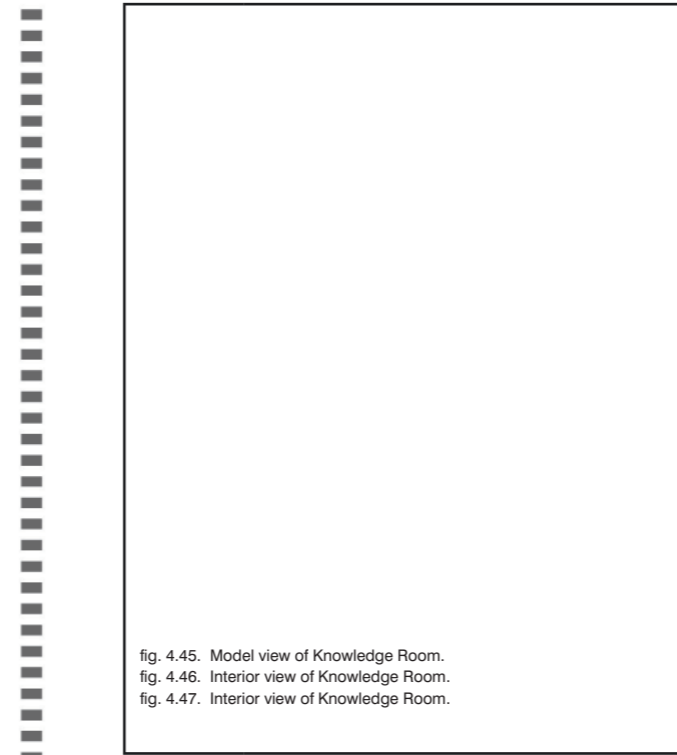


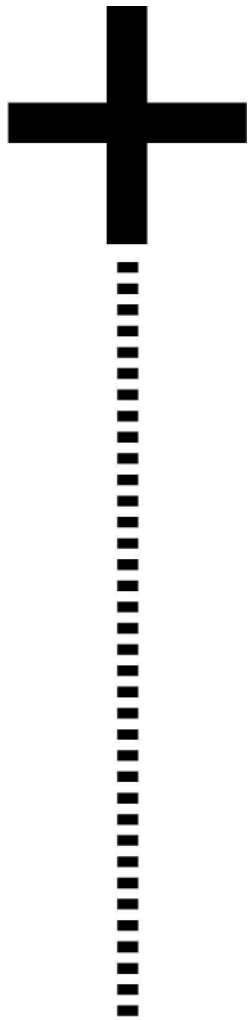
fig. 4.45. Model view of Knowledge Room.
fig. 4.46. Interior view of Knowledge Room.
fig. 4.47. Interior view of Knowledge Room.



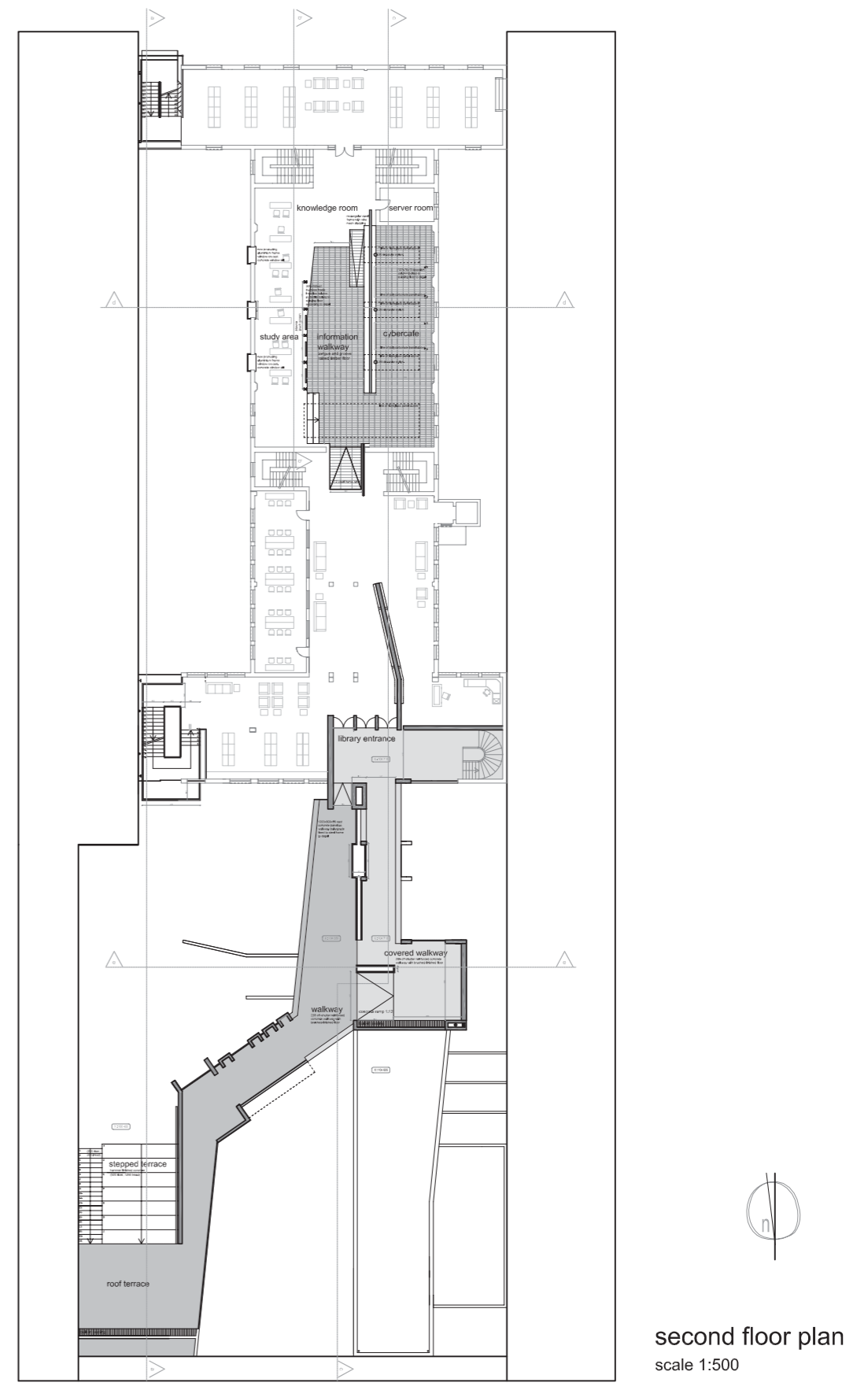
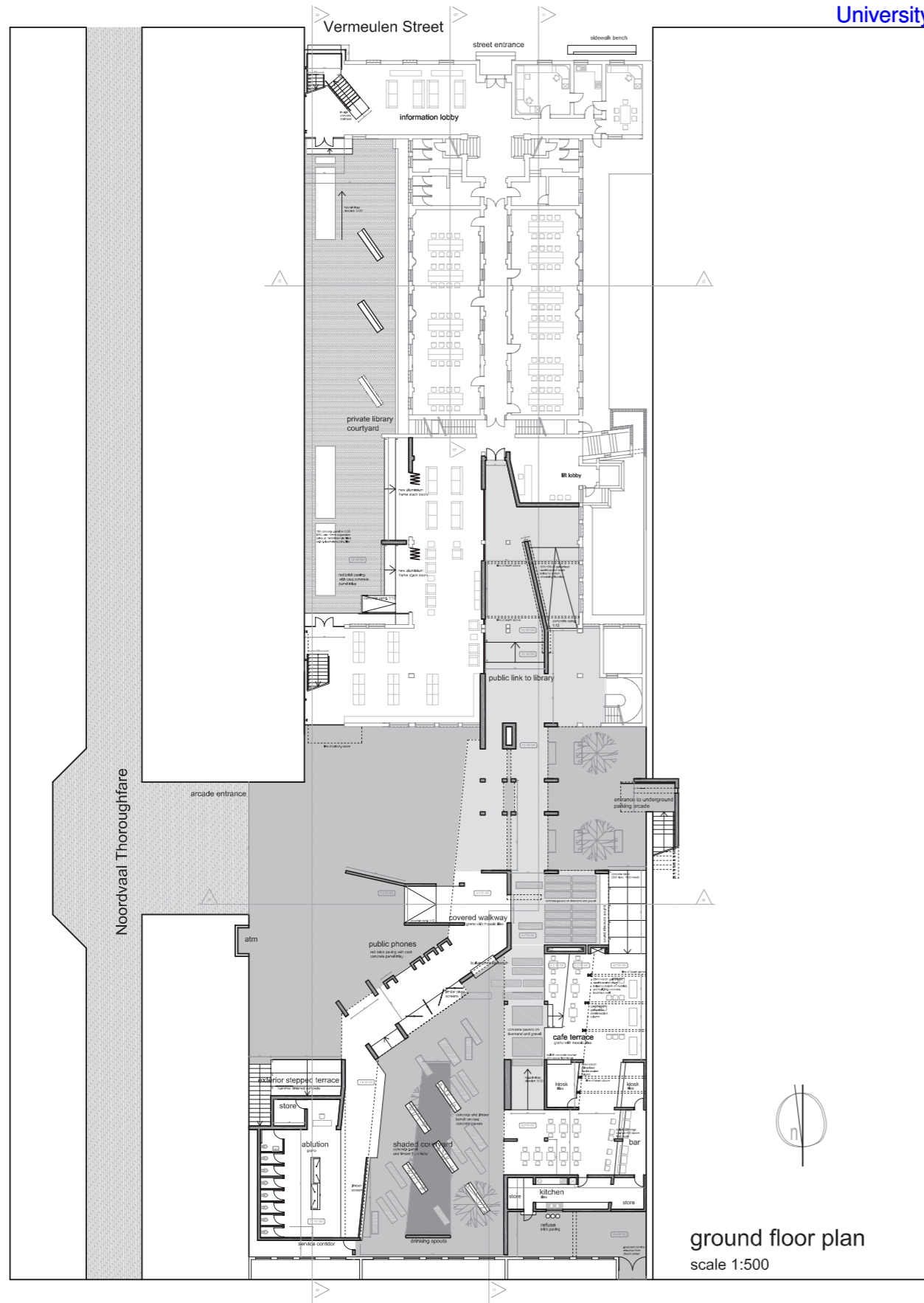
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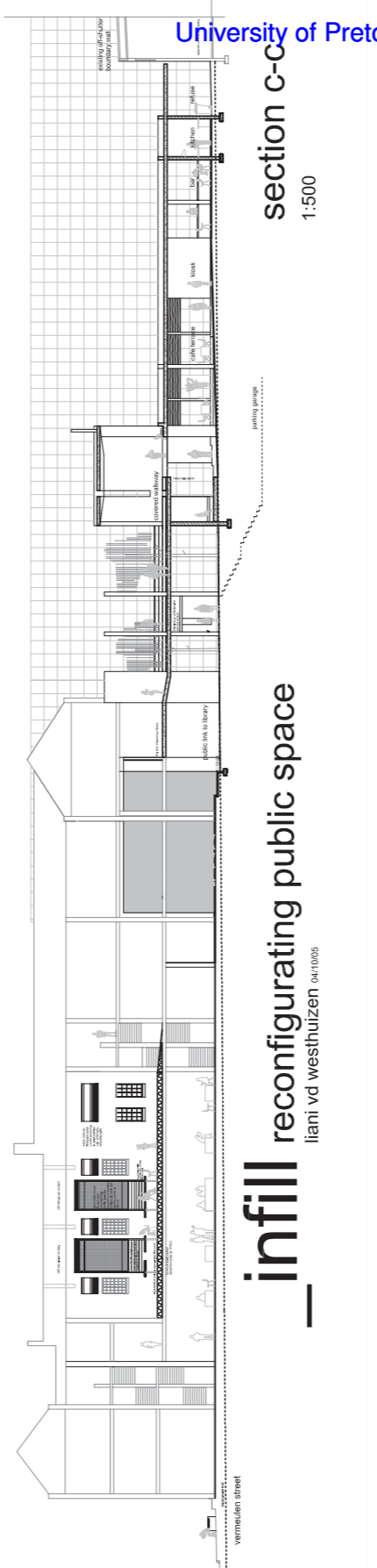
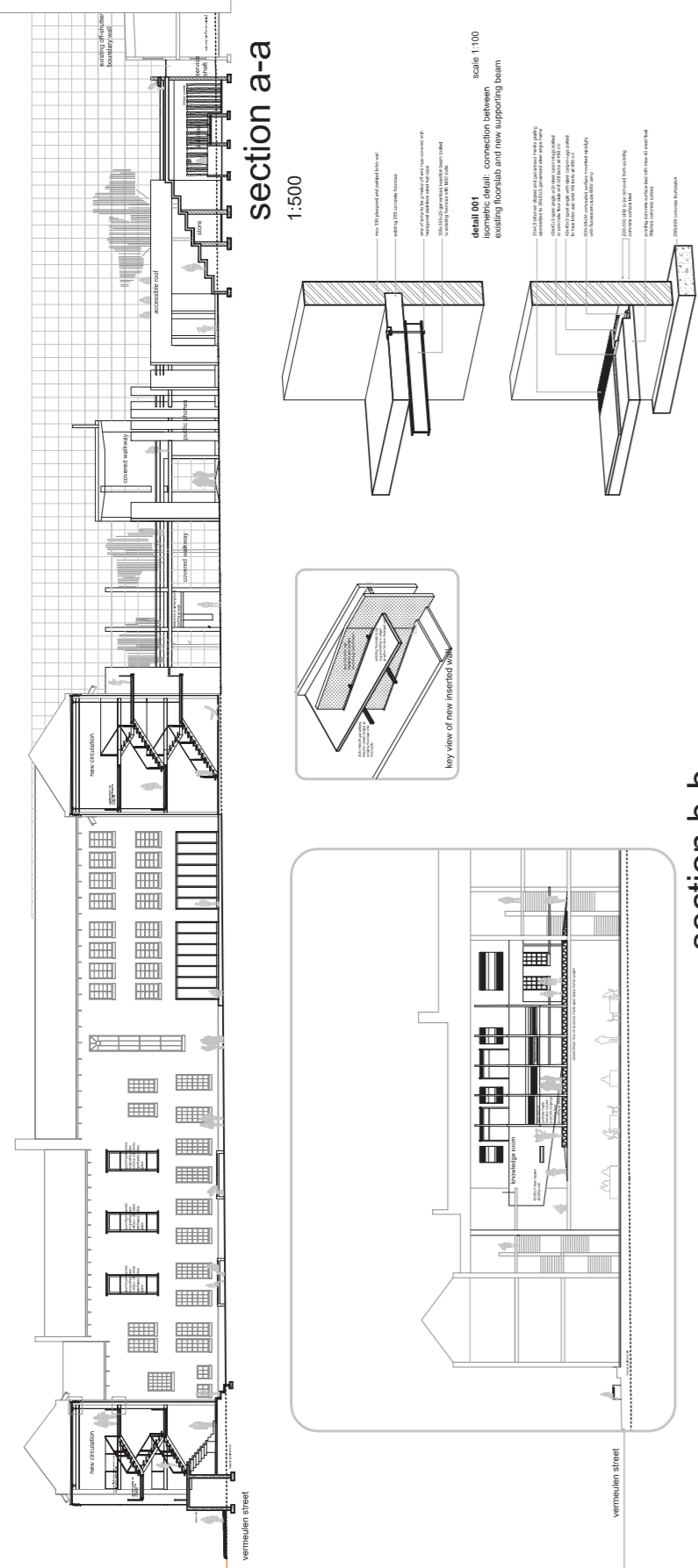


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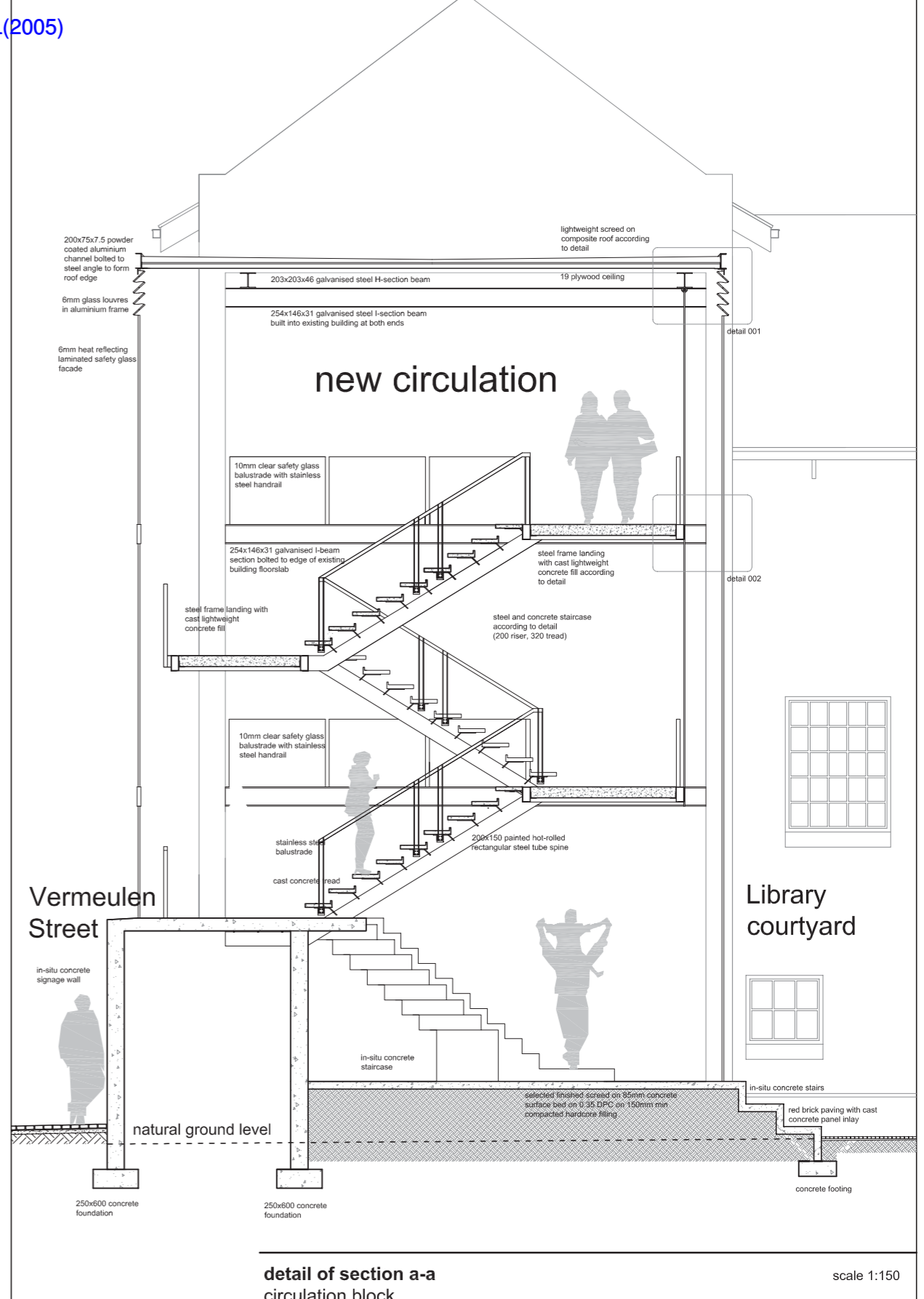


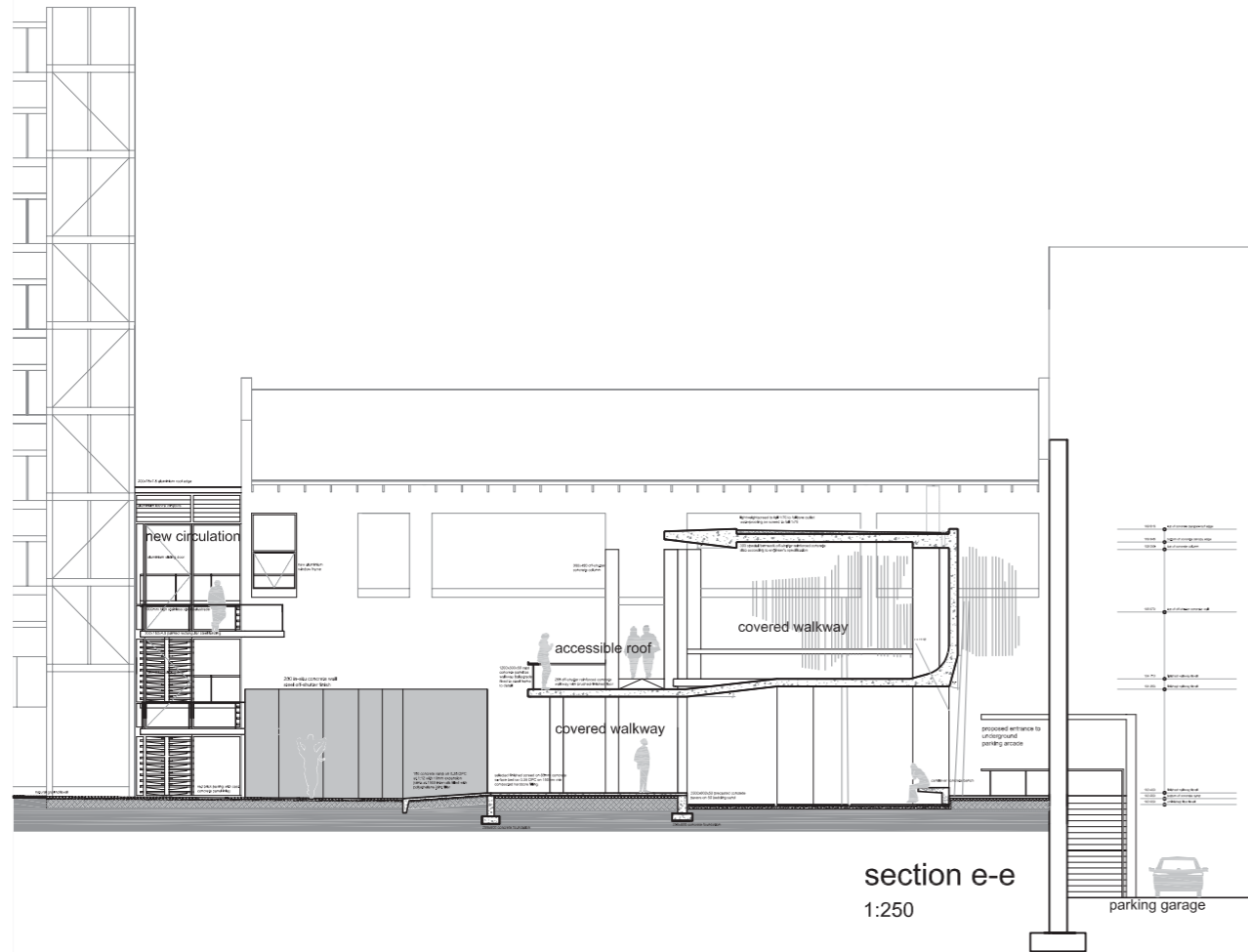
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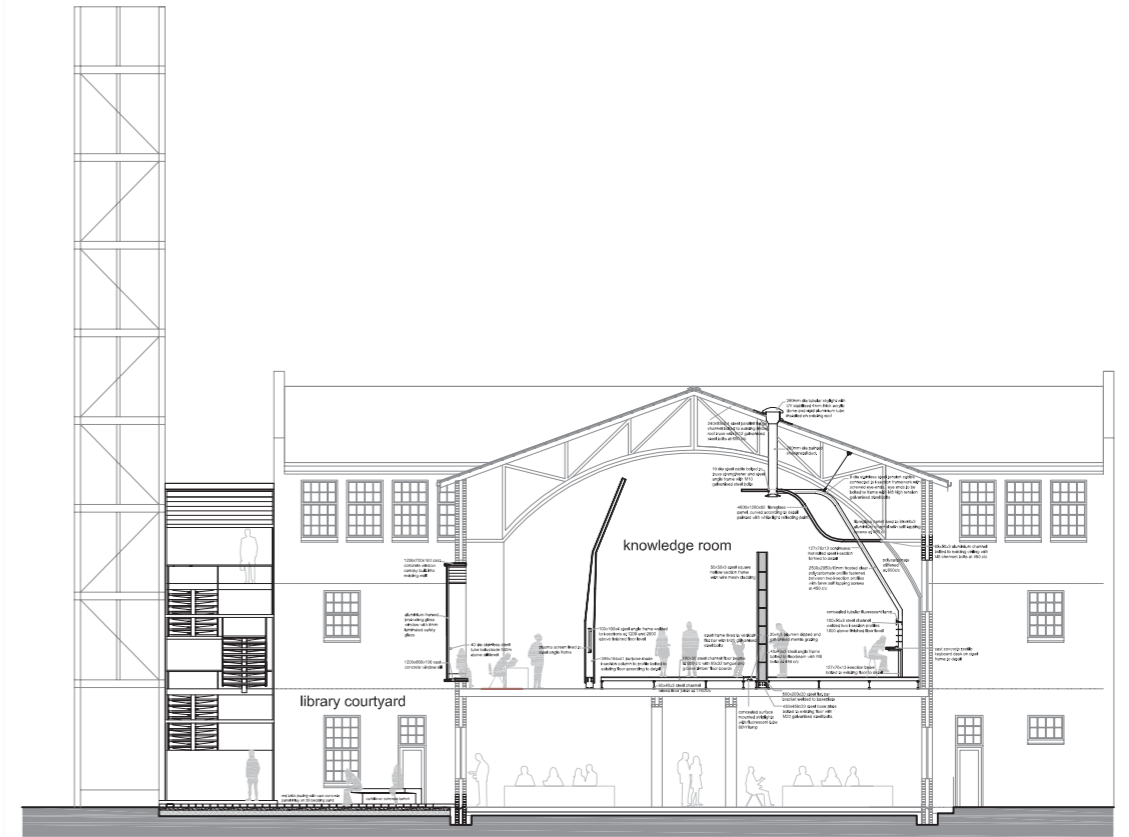


infill reconfiguring public space
liani vd westhuizen 04/10/05





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