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In the development of a framework, the guidelines of the Scoping Report (cf. p. 24-27) were followed as regards:

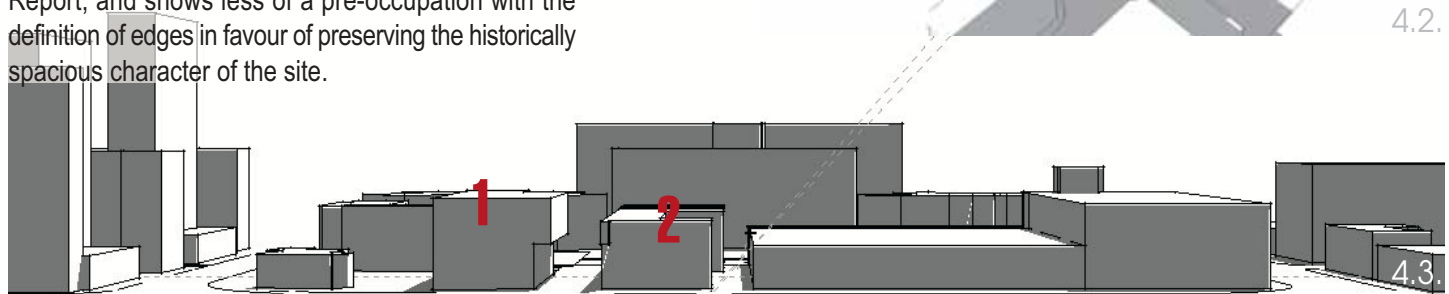
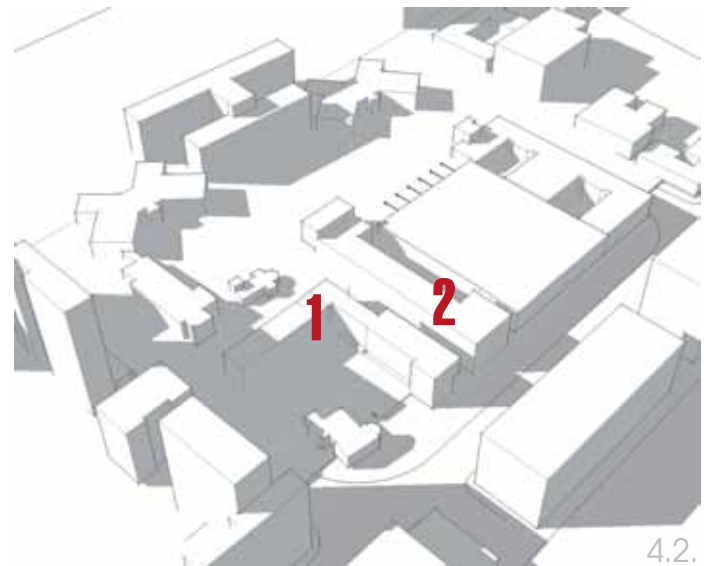
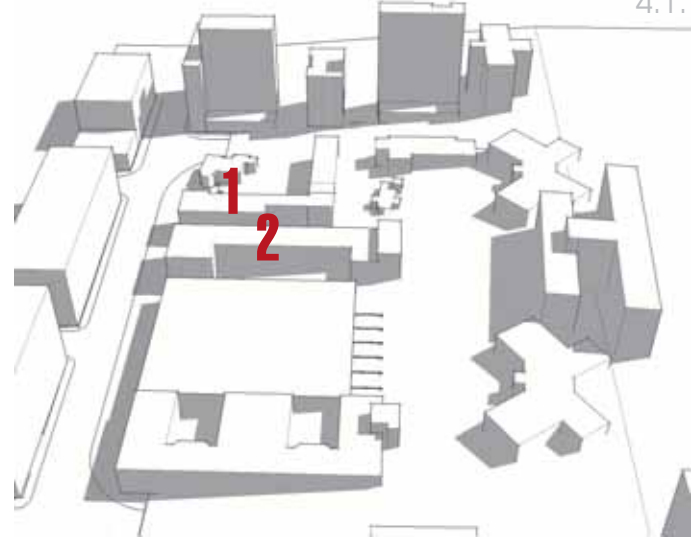
_the partial reinstatement of the street grid by the introduction of a new east-west vehicular connection and a new north-south pedestrian connection to increase accessibility and encourage pedestrian movement.

_an emphasis on active edges and the creation of a pedestrian-friendly environment

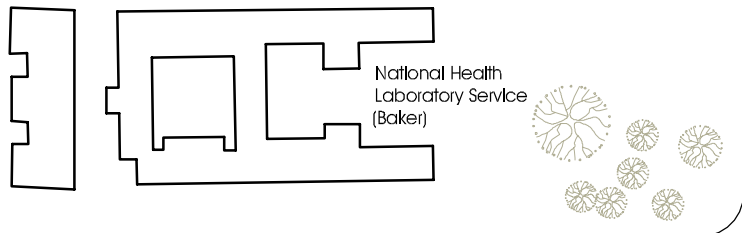
_the introduction of a mixed-use building on the site in question.

The site, being located right on the edge of the Health Precinct, represents a marginal position between the pocket of institutional land-use and Hillbrow proper, and is in this sense perhaps an especially appropriate address for the establishment of a Cultural Centre for the oft-marginalised foreign population. The introduction of a mixed-use building in a city block currently characterised by monofunctional health-related land-use could well spark the leap-frogging of functions across Smit Street and so stimulate further integration of the Health precinct with Hillbrow.

Within the dense and congested urban environment of Hillbrow, the spatially generous character of the site is a valuable commodity which is currently rendered worthless by its inaccessibility. The framework adds substantially less fabric than is proposed by the Scoping Report, and shows less of a pre-occupation with the definition of edges in favour of preserving the historically spacious character of the site.



4.1. Development of Urban Design Framework: bird's eye from east.
4.2. Development of Urban Design Framework: bird's eye from southwest.
4.3. Development of Urban Design Framework: South Elevation.



De Korte

Centralised Parking Development

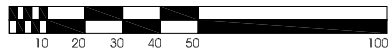
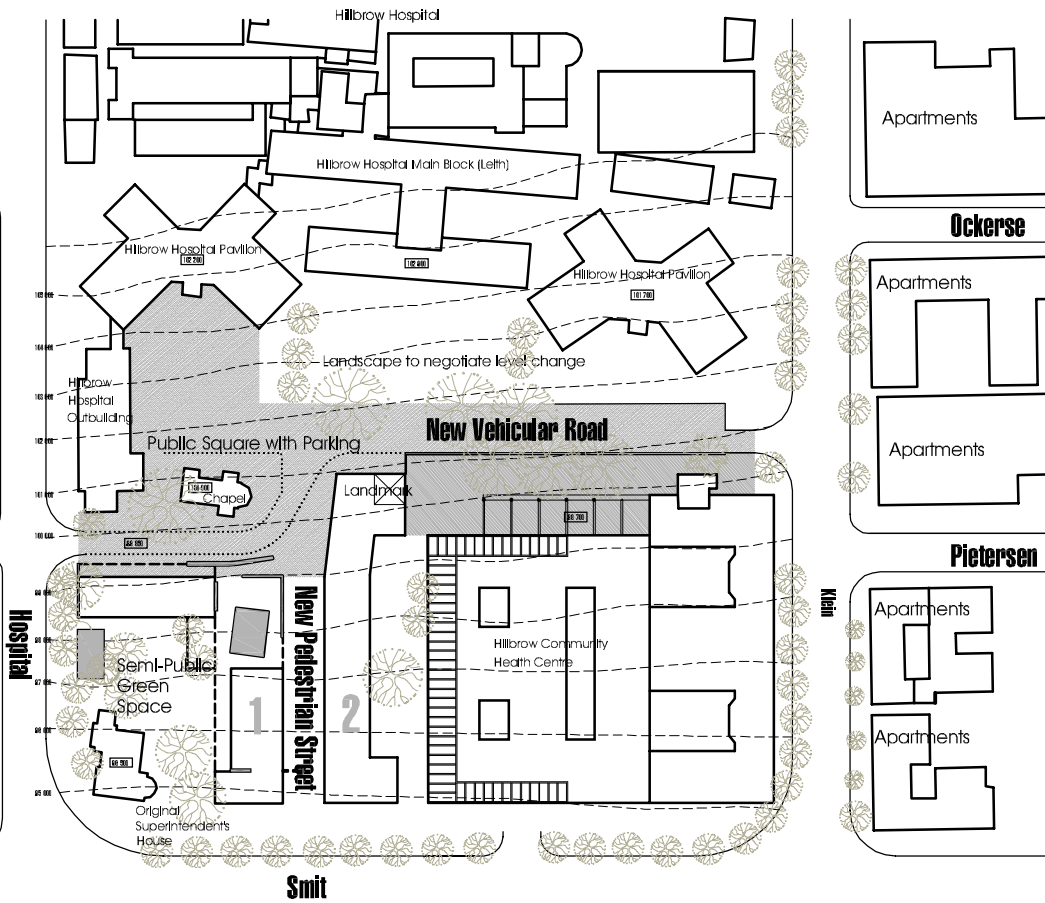
Apartments

Apartments

New Vehicular Road

Apartments

Apartments



A Cultural Centre for the Foreign Community, Hillbrow

Urban Design

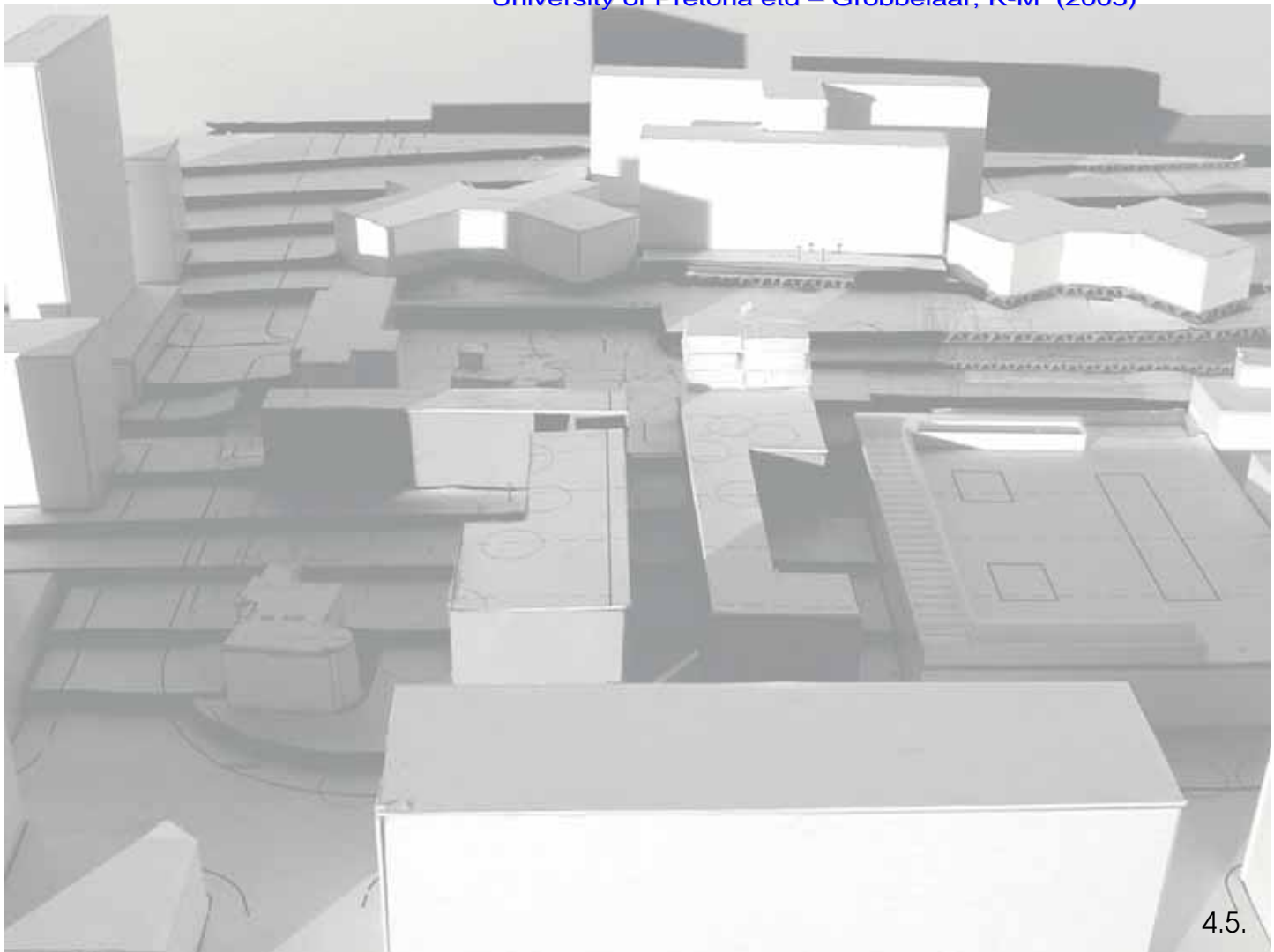


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Drawing 1/1

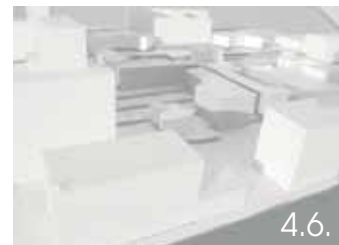
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Sheet 1/1



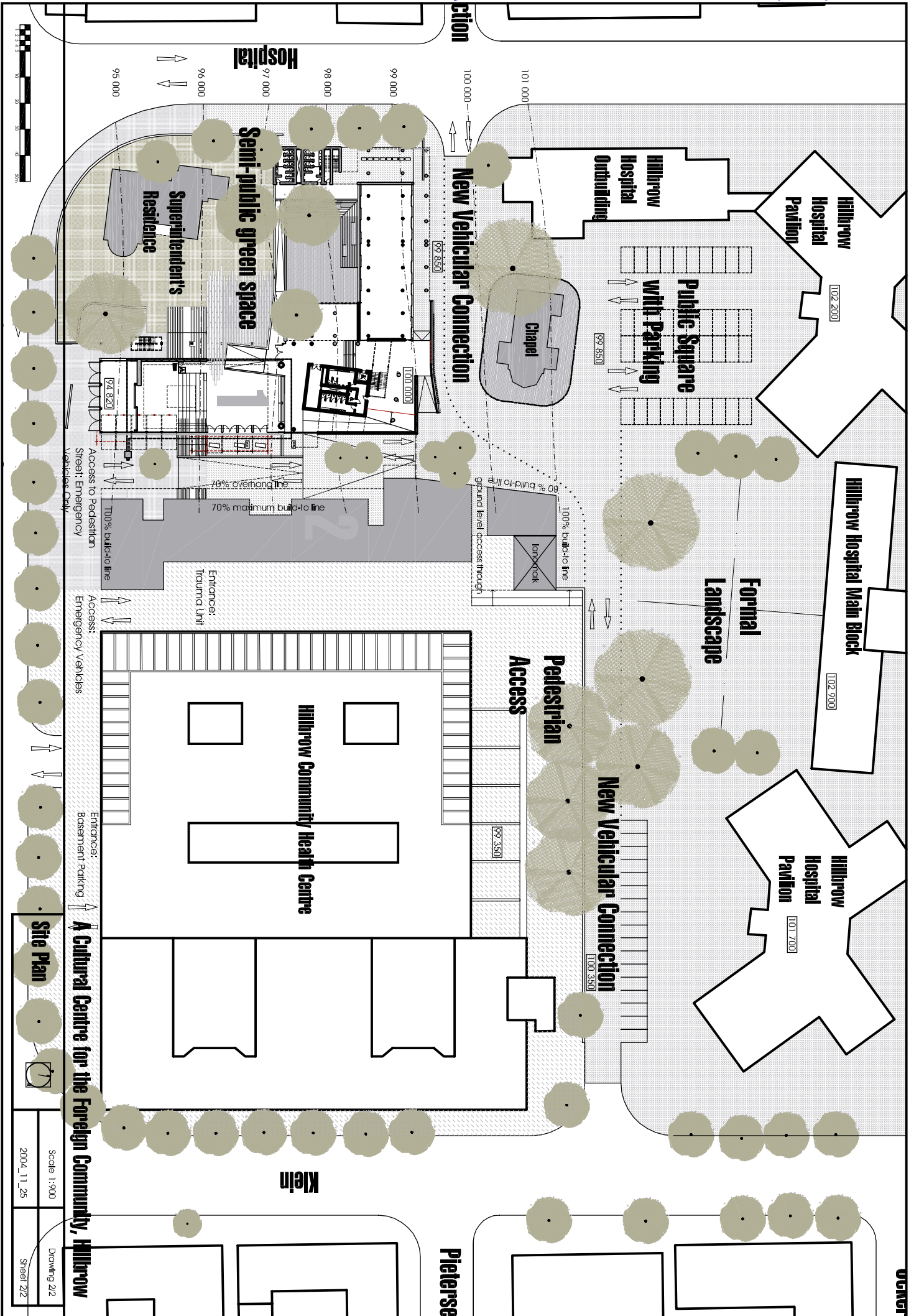
4.5.

The framework proposes the insertion of two pavilion buildings (fig. 4.1 - 4.3) as a contemporary addition to the richly layered urban fabric. In order to preserve the spatial character, the mass of the two new buildings is placed at a respectful distance from the historic volumes, while unbuilt edges of public spaces are completed with trees.



4.6.

4.5. Urban Design Framework Development Model: bird's eye from south.
4.6. Urban Design Framework Development Model: bird's eye from southwest.



Site Plan

A Cultural Centre for the Foreign Community, Hillrow

| | |
|-------------|------------|
| Scale 1:900 | Drawing 22 |
| 2004_11_25 | Sheet 22 |

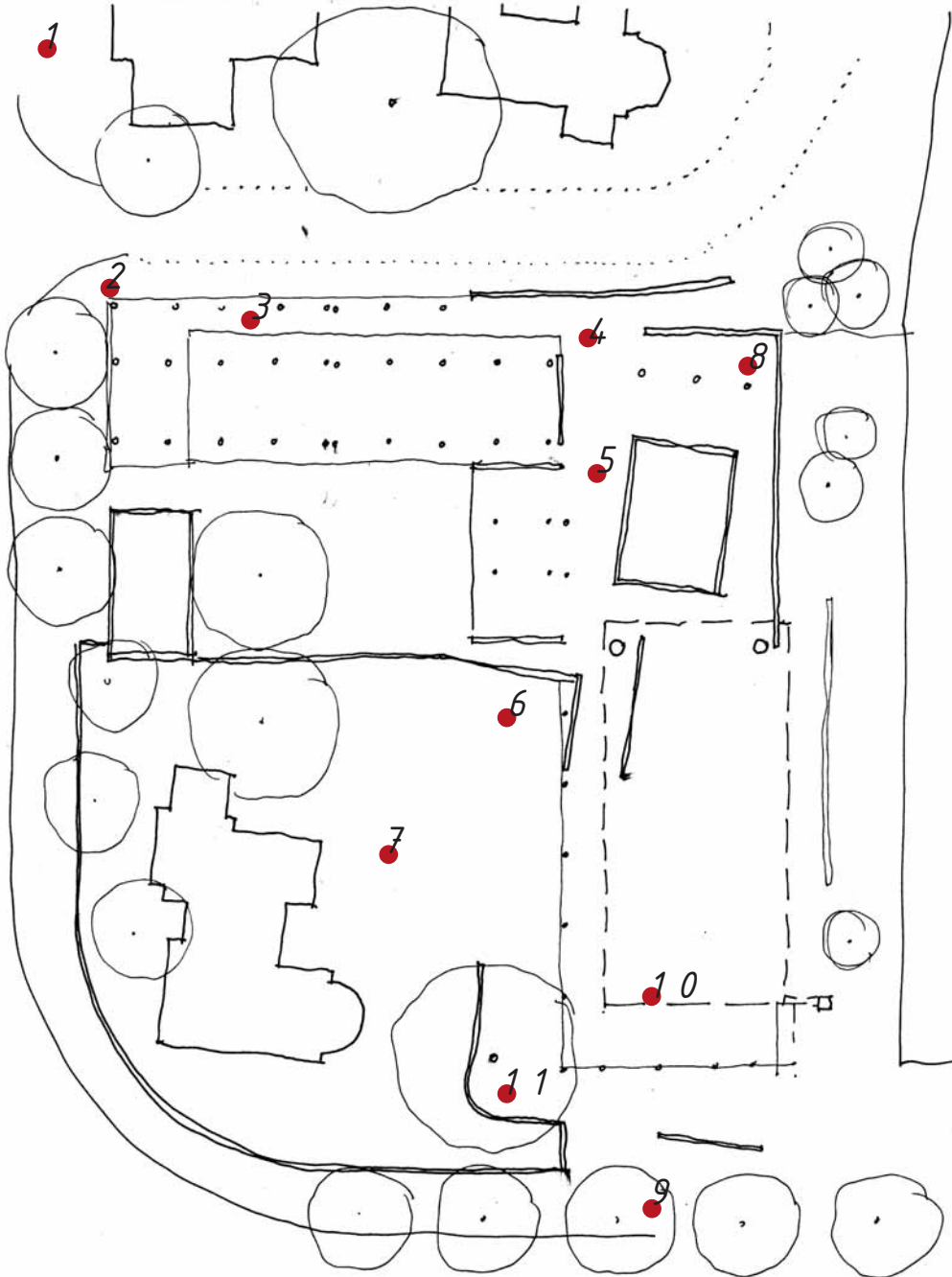
Refer to fig. 4.5. The insertion creates:

_a hard public landscape [3] around the Chapel and to the south of the Main Block, which becomes the formal centrepiece of this movement-oriented public space. While the combination of hospital buildings provides a strong sense of enclosure along the northwestern edge of the public space, the eastern edge is less defined. Trees are applied to mark the threshold between the 'square with chapel' and, in front of the Main Block, the formal landscape [4] which becomes a part of the grand streetscape along the new vehicular connection rather than an extension of the square. The Leith Building is thus once again placed on the street, and the formal landscape leading to its entrance provides adequate vantage distance as is required by the scale of this historic landmark. The square is a predominantly hard landscape, with the existing hedge serving to acknowledge the sacred character of the chapel, while the landmark element included in the framework fulfills the role of the campanile element on the prototype European square.

_a semi-public green space [5] around the historic Superintendent's Residence - a softer landscape which invites lingering and is guarded by a continuation of the existing red brick garden wall along the southwestern perimeter of the site.

A **seven degree rotation** is derived from the corresponding orientation of Leith's Main Block, the Chapel and the Superintendent's Residence – all of which are oriented exactly north and therefore at seven degrees from the predominant urban grid. The relationship between the two grids becomes an important generator of the plan form of the Cultural Centre; with the urban grid providing the datum whilst the historic grid generates slips which serve to preserve traces of a previous age in the new layer.

According to the Scoping Report, **parking** is to be provided in a centralised parking development in De Korte Street (fig 4.4). Additional parking is available on the public square; along Hospital - and Smit Street and the new vehicular street, and in the basement of the Hillbrow Community Health Centre. Considering the ready availability of public transport and the limited number of building occupants estimated to be in possession of a private vehicle, it is deemed unnecessary to provide additional parking on the site of the Centre itself. The Urban Design Framework thus provides for a truly pedestrian-oriented environment, with edge treatment determined by the scale and pace of pedestrians rather than vehicles. A six meter wide section of the pedestrian street is ramped to allow vehicular access for fire trucks, ambulances and delivery vehicles, with a series of removable bollards providing access control.



4.9.

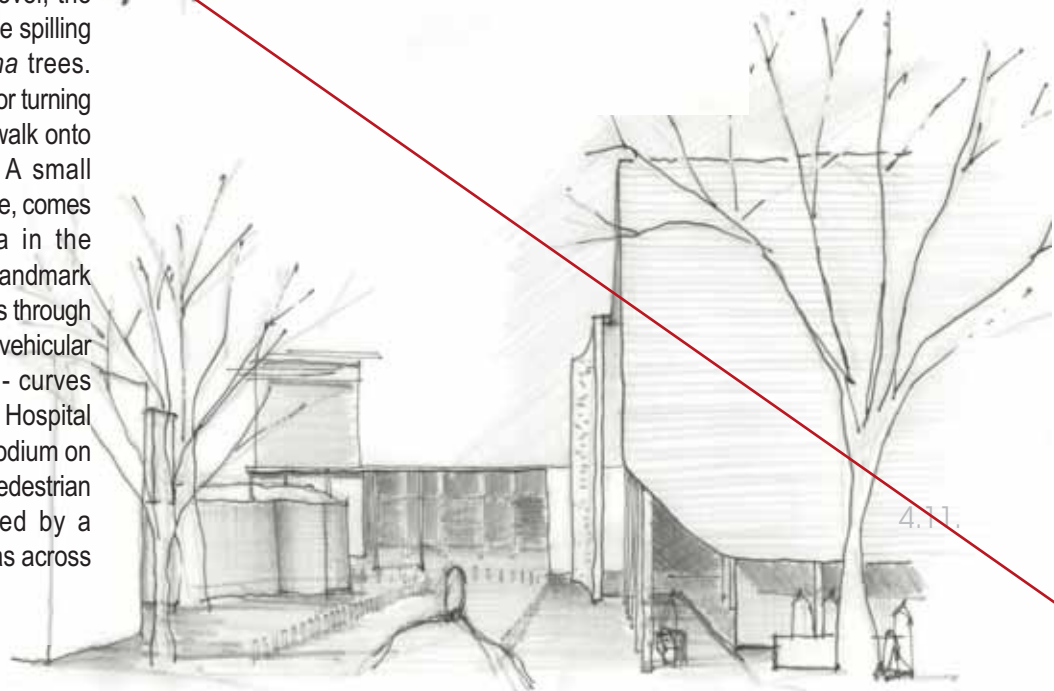
4.10.



A trip from Constitution Hill to the Cultural Centre takes the visitor past the western edge of the Hillbrow Hospital, currently a largely impenetrable and unintelligible collection of historic buildings and ramshackle additions in a state of general disrepair. Passing the De Korte Street turn-off to the right, Hospital Street starts dropping steeply towards the corner with Smit Street. Some distance further, a new vehicular road crosses Hospital Street, with the southeastern corner dominated by a blank end wall in timber off-shutter concrete. Corten-finished lettering reads:

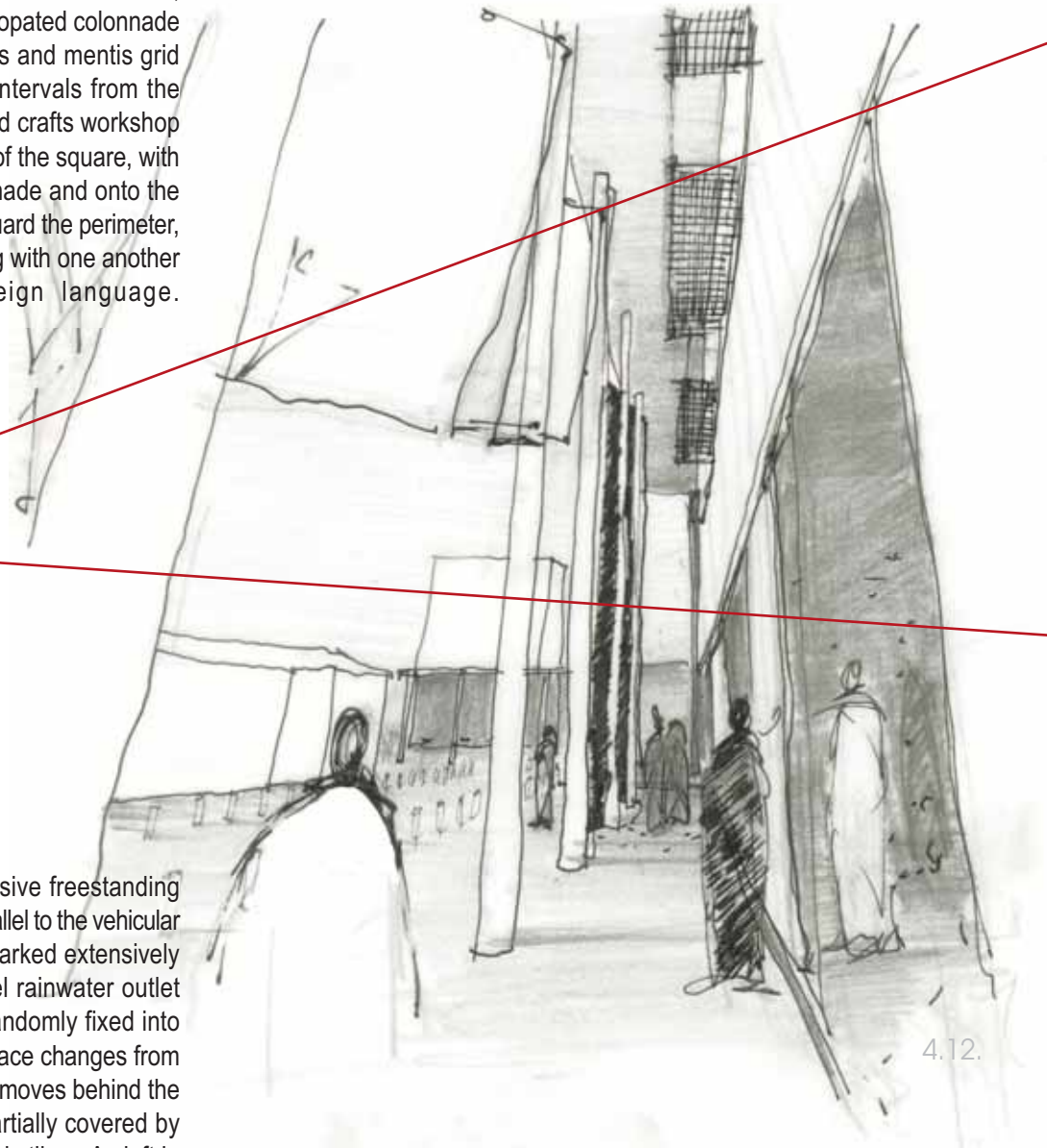
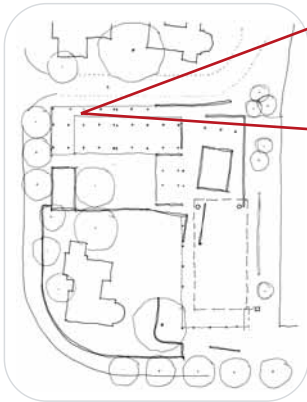
FOREIGN CULTURAL CENTRE
CENTRE CULTUREL POUR ÉTRANGERS
CENTRO DO CULTURA ESTRANGEIRO

A faintly reddish stain extends from below the lettering to the bottom edge of the wall. At ground level, the façade lifts to reveal an informal cooking space spilling onto the sidewalk under the *Celtis Africana* trees. Flavours of meat and corn rise to meet the visitor turning to the left and moving from the concrete sidewalk onto the red brick paving of a public square. A small sandstone chapel, guarded by a withered hedge, comes into view beneath a massive Jacaranda in the foreground. Behind the chapel, a prominent landmark element is visible, and the line of sight continues through a double-storey arcade towards the east. The vehicular circulation route - marked by bollards only - curves away across the square towards the Hillbrow Hospital Main Block (Leith 1936), which rises from a podium on the northern edge of the public open space. Pedestrian movement predominates, and is facilitated by a generous scattering of seats and shaded areas across the square.



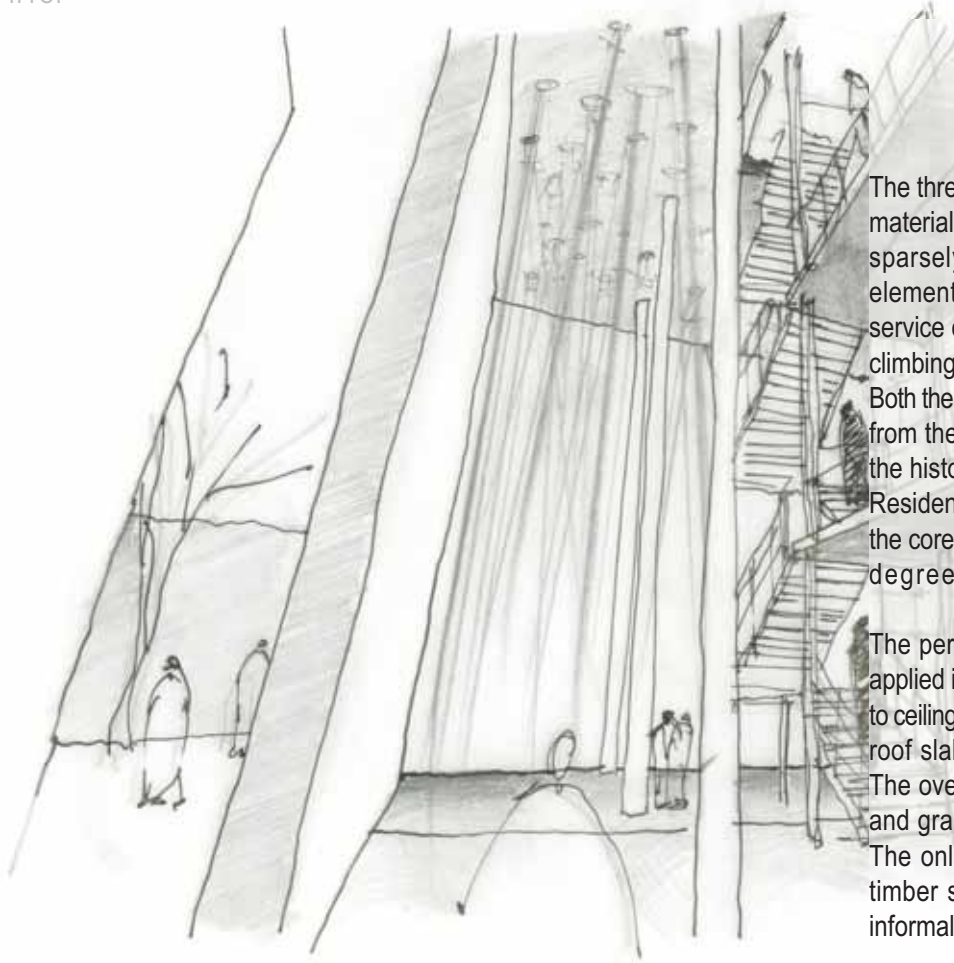
4.11.

Moving in an easterly direction and towards the Centre, the visitor slips into the slightly syncopated colonnade below a series of textile sunscreens and mentis grid balconies suspended at irregular intervals from the exposed concrete soffit. An arts and crafts workshop is located one step above the level of the square, with trade activity spilling into the colonnade and onto the square. Traders and craftspeople guard the perimeter, bartering with clients and conversing with one another in a blend of local and foreign language.



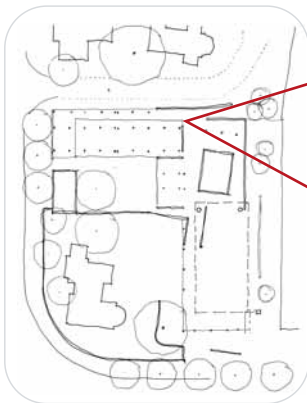
The colonnade slips behind a massive freestanding concrete wall, which curves away parallel to the vehicular movement. The exposed side is marked extensively by water released from a high-level rainwater outlet over a series of round steel bars randomly fixed into the concrete surface. The floor surface changes from brick to cool slate tiles as the visitor moves behind the wall, the interior face of which is partially covered by a vertical carpet of red glazed mosaic tiles. A cleft in the freestanding wall frames a last view of the chapel before the visitor enters the foyer.

4.13.



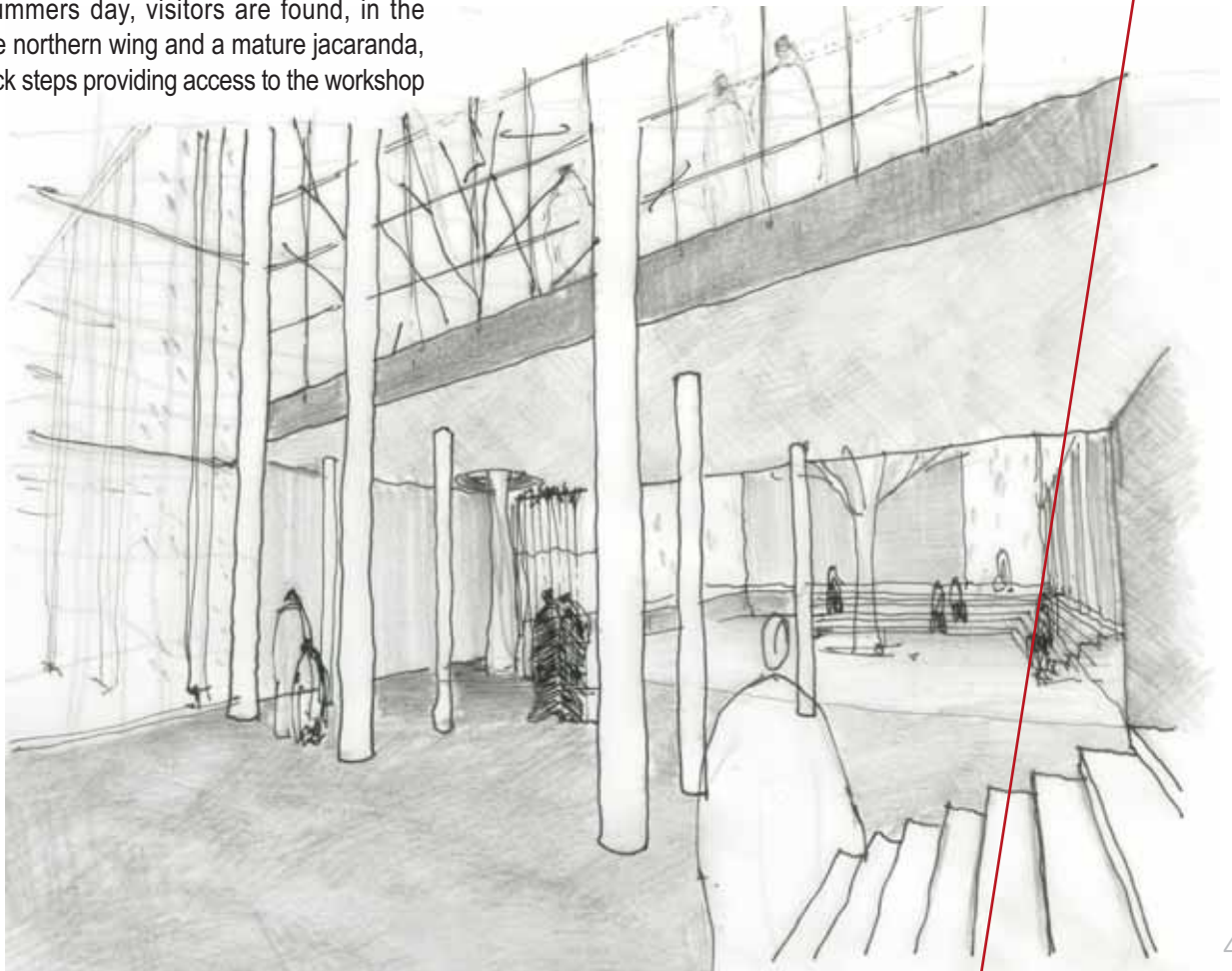
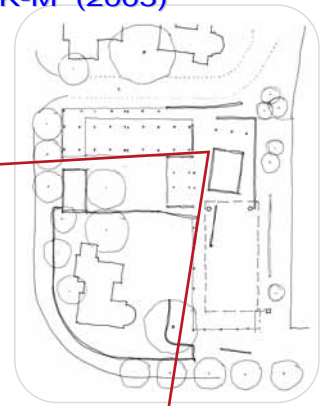
The threshold is marked by another change in flooring material - this time to a power-floated concrete screed sparsely inlaid with mosaic tiles. The dominant elements are the steel off-shutter finished concrete service core, and a skeletal timber and steel staircase climbing towards a glazed light box with corten ceiling. Both the core and staircase are rotated at seven degrees from the predominant grid to match the orientation of the historic Main Block, Chapel and Superintendent's Residence. Three columns, horizontally aligned with the core, are slanted at two degrees to echo the seven degree rotation in the vertical dimension.

The perimeter walls – with timber off-shutter pattern applied in a series of vertical carpets rather than a floor to ceiling finish - rise thirteen meters to meet the concrete roof slab floating above the top of the service core. The overbearing vertical dimension lends generosity and grandeur to the space, inviting visitors to linger. The only items of furniture are a number of mobile timber seats which allow the setting-up of different informal seating configurations.



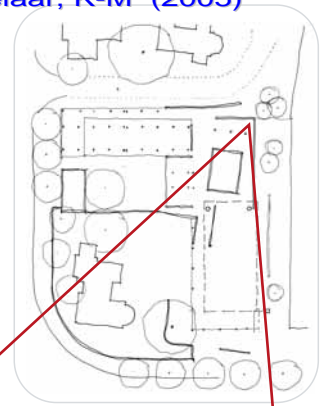
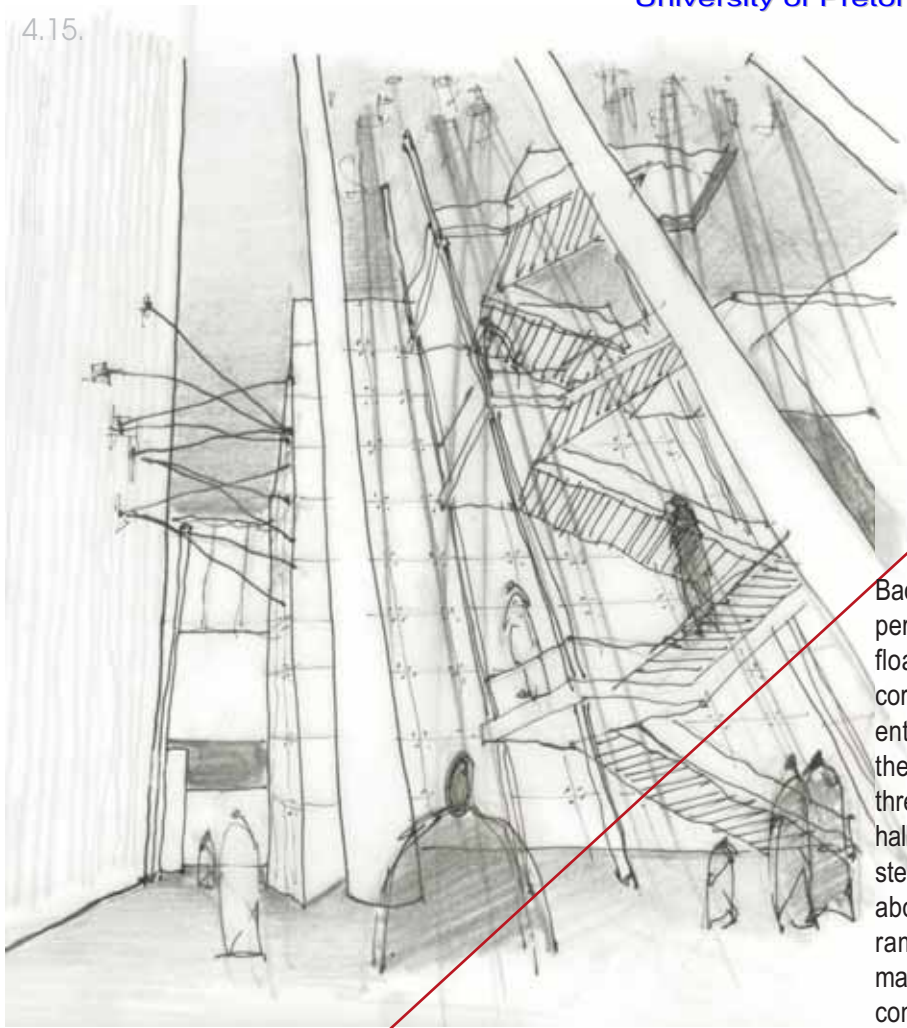
During the day, the foyer is subtly lit by daylight flooding through the light box. A series of clay pipes - the top ends sealed with plates of tinted glass - are cast into the roof slab at different angles and protrude to different lengths to create a multitude of faintly coloured light spots traveling over the surfaces of stone and concrete as the sun completes its daily cycle. At night, the foyer is softly lit by a series of tungsten halogen lights suspended between the columns to various levels in the bottom half of the space, while the upper volumes recede into darkness.

To the right of the core, a series of concrete stairs tumble into the slate-tiled café below. A jacaranda tree in the southwestern corner penetrates a roughly elliptical hole in the concrete roof slab - an opening readily permitting the occasional rainstorm into the restaurant space. The entire western façade slides away, allowing the dining area to spill unhindered onto the brick-paved terrace, which is partially enclosed by the red brick service core to the west and overlooked from the workshop to the north and the restaurant's sod roof terrace to the east. The terrace itself overlooks the garden and Superintendent's Residence to the south. On a hot summers day, visitors are found, in the shadow of the northern wing and a mature jacaranda, on the red brick steps providing access to the workshop level.



4.14.

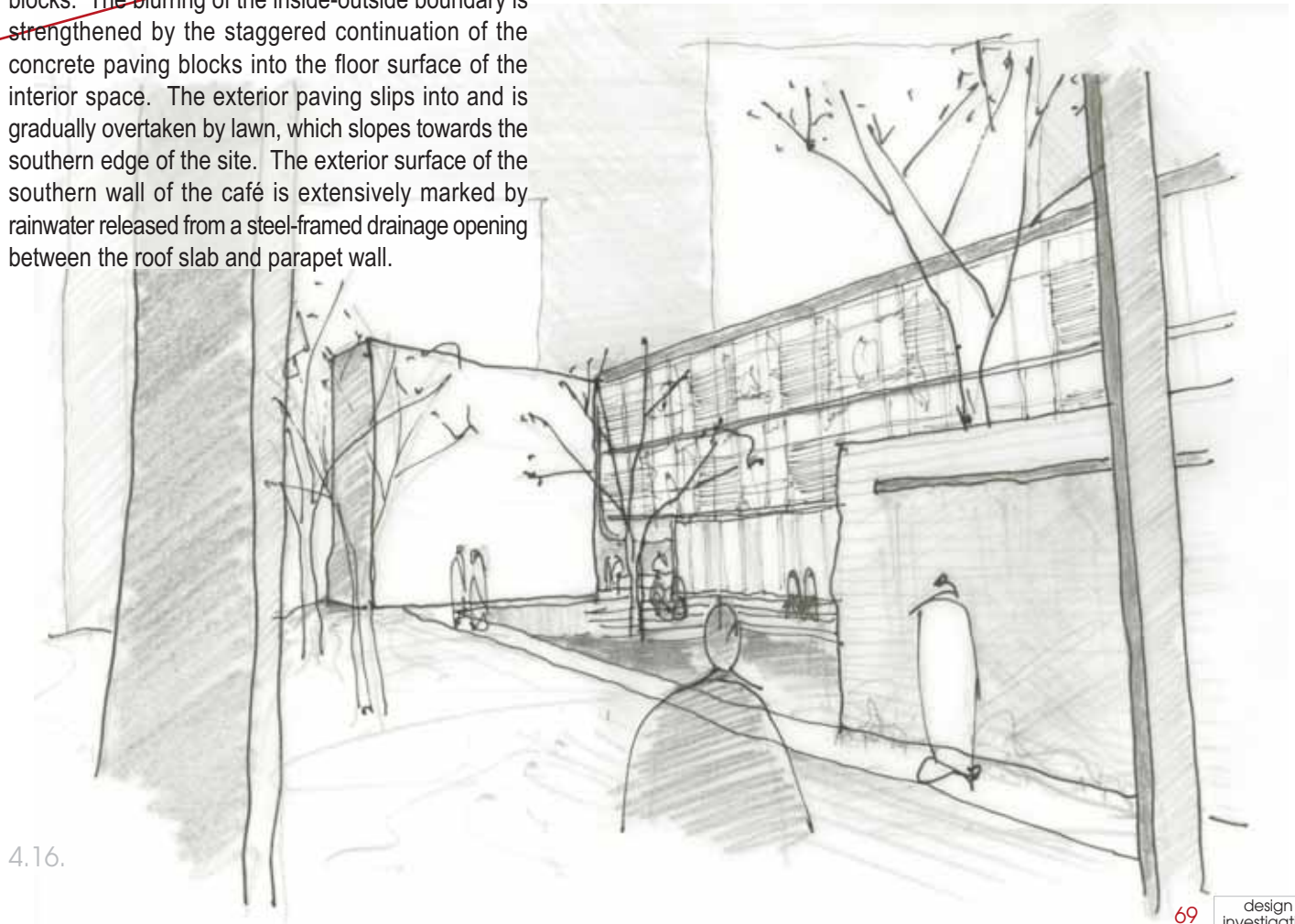
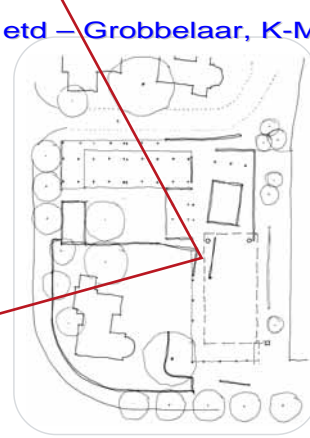
4.15.



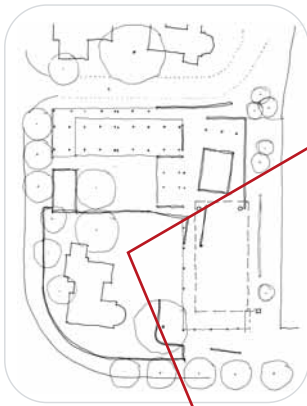
Back in the foyer, this time moving towards the eastern perimeter wall, the floor surface changes to a power-floated concrete screed gently dropping around the corner towards the multi-purpose hall. The visitor now enters the triple volume canyon, which widens from the narrow entry point to the point of exit onto the threshold level providing access to the multi-purpose hall and restaurant. A complex web of slender structural steel elements floats in the higher levels of the volume above the canyon floor. The threshold between the ramp and the multi-purpose hall is defined by two massive elliptical concrete columns supporting a tubular concrete structure hovering at first floor level over the otherwise column-free space.

A concrete ramp - again at a seven degree angle and penetrating the western curtain wall provides access to a multi-purpose surface which overlooks the performance area below. A gently curved plywood ceiling hovers over the space and drops sharply over the stage area to create an acoustically sound mini-theatre within the larger gathering space.

Access into the multi-purpose hall from the pedestrian street – situated one step above the interior floor level - is through a series of glass doors opening inwards onto the multi-purpose surface. The perimeter is marked by the overhang of the concrete box and a steel shading structure, and guarded by informal traders colonising the periphery. A series of glazed sliding doors along the western edge of the multi-purpose hall slide away to render the floor levels of the multi-purpose hall and the semi-public landscape a continuous surface, differentiated only by a change in flooring material from a power-floated concrete screed to concrete paving blocks. The blurring of the inside-outside boundary is strengthened by the staggered continuation of the concrete paving blocks into the floor surface of the interior space. The exterior paving slips into and is gradually overtaken by lawn, which slopes towards the southern edge of the site. The exterior surface of the southern wall of the café is extensively marked by rainwater released from a steel-framed drainage opening between the roof slab and parapet wall.



4.16.

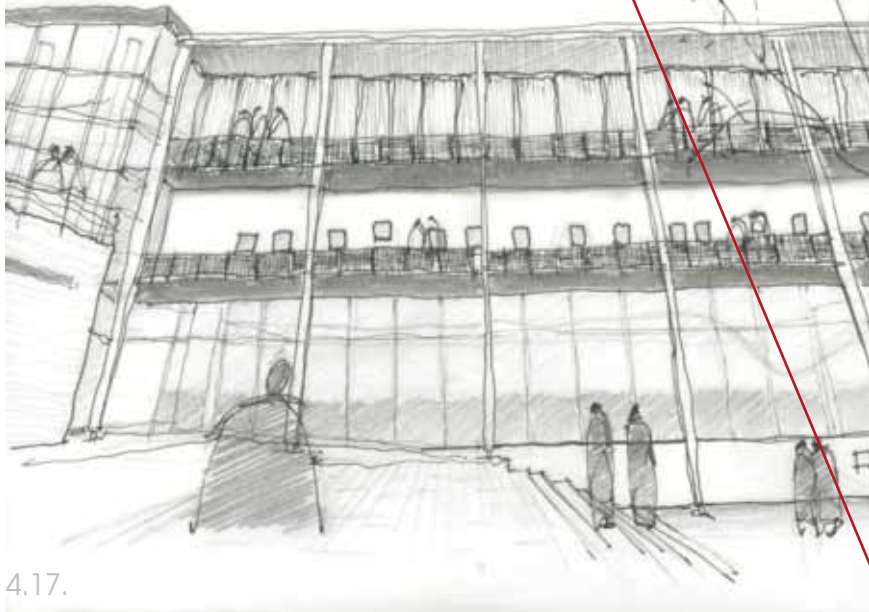


With the vantage distance provided by the garden, the western elevation clearly displays a three-tier construction: the column free and staggered plane of the ground floor level, the concrete volume - containing music studio space - hovering at first floor level and, at second floor level, the lighter steel structure of the dance studio. The steel cage wraps around the concrete box to contain a series of finely detailed timber walkways providing access to the studios while softening the

outline of the concrete 'music box'.

At night, the dark volume of the music studio floating over the brightly lit multi-purpose hall is interrupted only by a series of irregularly spaced concrete framed inset windows. The dance studio at second floor level becomes a lantern, with the silhouettes of dancers flitting to and fro behind the translucent polycarbonate skin. Occasionally, the dancers come into full view where the polycarbonate sliding panels have been slid aside.

Music spills from the dance studio into the pedestrian street to the east and the garden to the west to merge with the incessant noise of the surrounding urban environment. A low red brick wall marks the perimeter and proclaims the edge of the foreign territory, rendering the garden a semi-public space and a refuge for foreigners within the hostile urban surroundings.

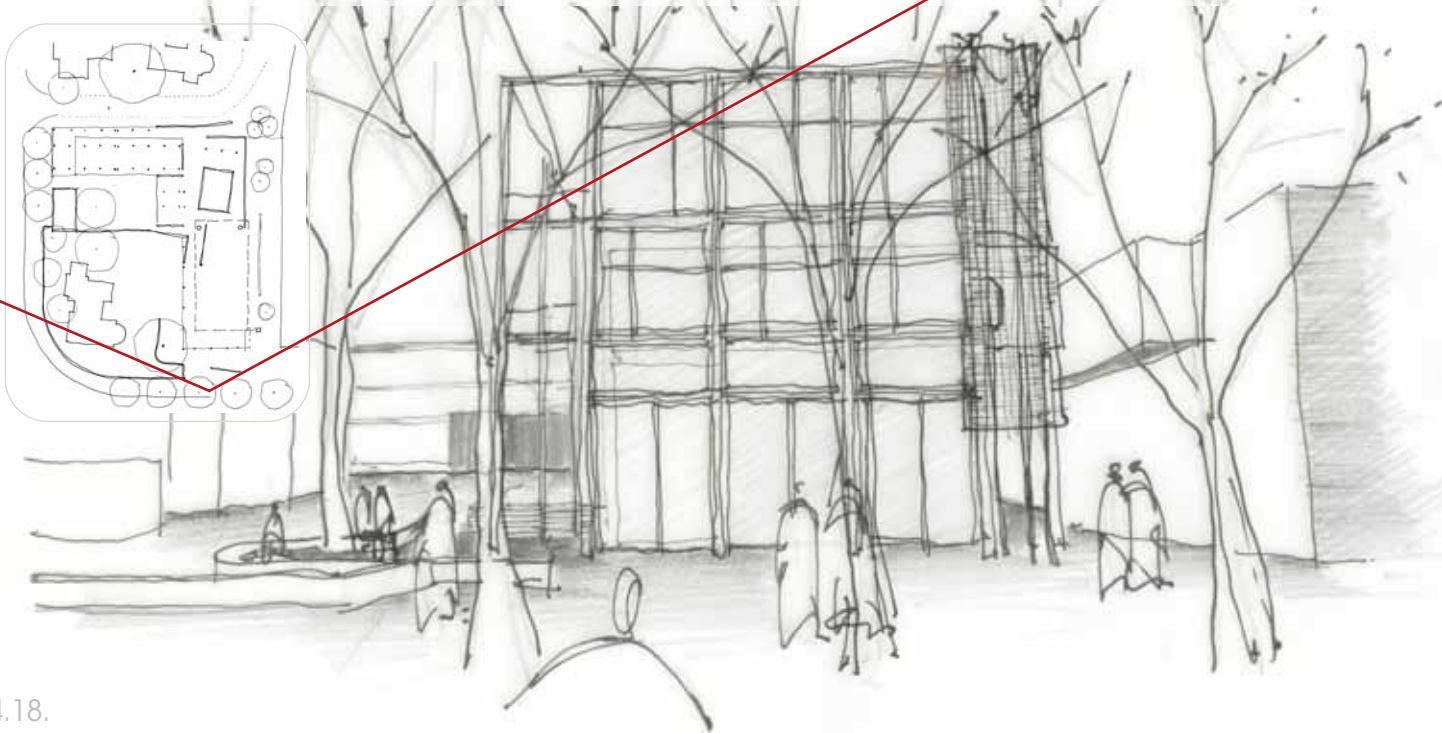


4.17.

Approaching the Centre from Joubert Park instead, the visitor's first impression is of a steel-framed and glazed curtain wall coming into view behind a row of mature London Plane street trees. The Centre is aligned with that of the Superintendent's Residence and the Hillbrow Polyclinic, thus being set back substantially from the street and providing adequate vantage distance from which to view a graphic continuously silk-screened onto the glazed sections of the curtain wall. The text and imagery frames – in both directions – views of artists occupying the studio spaces and visitors approaching the building from the south. The southern façade thus becomes a showcase for various aspects of the foreign cultures accommodated in the Centre. Apart from a perforated stainless steel sunscreen wrapped around the southeastern corner of the building, the southern façade is without protrusions or overhangs which would hamper the visual connection between the interior and exterior space.

The edges of a large concrete volume hovering at first floor level is visible behind the shallow membrane of studio space. A perforated beam protrudes from the eastern edge of the building and rests on a concrete pier to create an urban portal. The overhang of the proposed building east of the Centre completes the portal to the pedestrian street rising towards the public square north of the Centre.

Approaching the southern entrance, the sidewalk slopes gently towards the gallery space at ground level. A low red brick wall cuts across the public space at a seven degree angle and curves around the historic specimen of *Quercus rubra* located between the Centre and the original Superintendent's Residence. A number of informal traders gathered in the enclave beneath the historic tree guard access to the garden beyond while hawking a variety of everyday commodities to passersby.



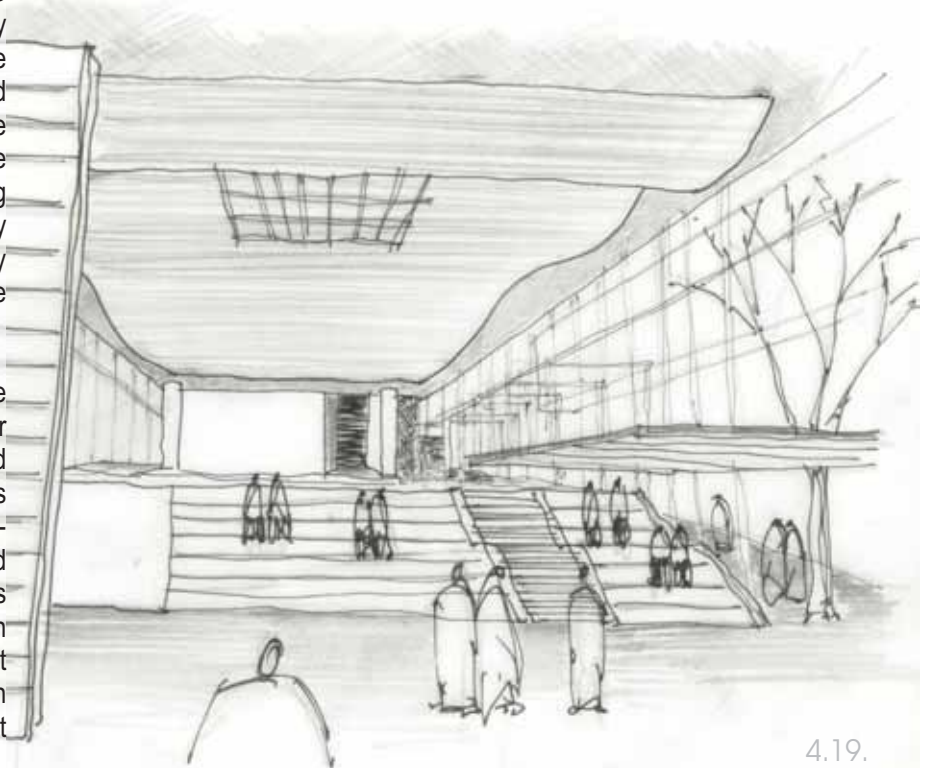
4.18.

The concrete floor surface of the sidewalk continues without level change into the gallery, the transition once again marked only by a change in flooring material, this time from concrete paving blocks to slate tiles. The southern foyer presents the most public interface of the building and is experienced as being as much a part of the streetscape as of the Centre itself. The uniform light quality of the interior space is essentially similar to that of the public space south of the building, thus strengthening the continuity between these domains. Entry is through a series of glass doors along the southern edge or – along the eastern perimeter – a series of red steel doors which pivot to create a horizontal plane hovering above ground level and thickening the threshold without hindering access. A series of glazed red tiles laid in the concrete floor mark the positions of the pivot door anchors to ensure public safety.



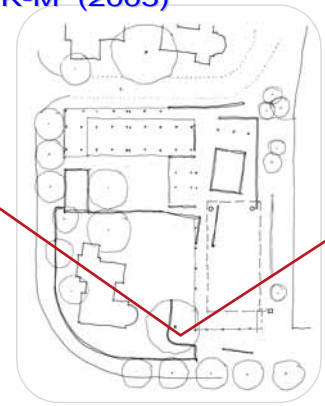
With both sets of doors in the open position, the boundary between interior and exterior effectively dissolves, allowing space to slip freely between the foyer and pedestrian street. The off-shutter finished concrete wall acting as structural support for the concrete volume overhead serves as anchoring element in the otherwise fluid space. A pair of corten-clad sliding stage doors closes the connection between the gallery and the multi-purpose hall beyond to render the gallery entirely part of the streetscape, or slip in front of the concrete wall to allow thoroughfare.

Upon entering the multi-purpose hall, the floor surface changes back to concrete, with a sprung timber floor inlaid to mark the 'stage' area. The floor rises in raked terraces to create an audience pavilion, with stairs along the eastern edge providing access to the multi-purpose surface. The sweeping curve of the plywood ceiling overhead ensures acoustical efficacy and lends a measure of intimacy to the mini-theatre. The eastern edge is glazed, with the last in the series of steel pivot doors allowing performances to spill into the pedestrian street and create the opportunity for interactive street theatre.



4.19.

Negotiating access past the traders beneath the oak tree instead, the journey leads into the western colonnade, with timber walkways overhead providing access to the music - and dance studios. A series of concrete framed inset windows in the red brick wall of the performance area provides framed views into the mini-theatre beyond. Moving over a patch of lawn and up a series of red brick stairs, the visitor reaches again the concrete-paved overflow space of the multi-purpose hall; whence ramps provide access to the café terrace and threshold level to complete the journey.



4.20.

programme

The L-shaped plan of the Cultural Centre is prescribed by the Urban Design Framework. The northern wing contains the majority of programmed spaces - offices and classrooms - with a semi-programmed workshop at ground level. The western portion of the ground floor plan is given back to the street and provided with gas cooking facilities to be used by informal traders. The southern wing contains a multi-purpose hall and gallery at ground floor level; and dance-, music - and art studios at first and second floor level. With the exception of the gallery space, which may be considered unprogrammed, the space contained in the southern wing is semi-programmed. The connecting element between the two wings contain an unprogrammed triple volume public foyer and a freestanding service core. A second service core on the western perimeter of the site services the northern wing.

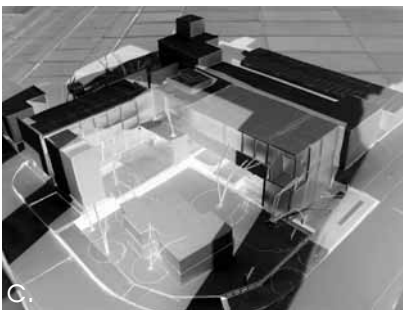
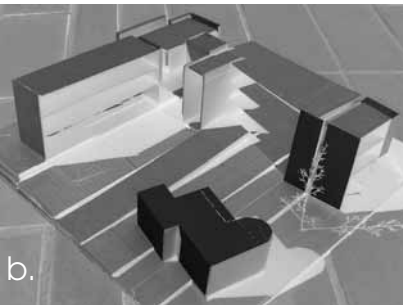
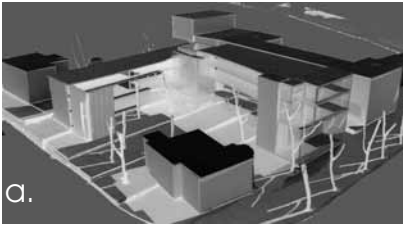
interstices

In keeping with the local patterns of informal trade - typically colonising sidewalks and street corners - a centralised 'destination' market is purposefully omitted.

Instead, the building edges are treated in such a manner as to encourage the growth of informal market places in the interstitial spaces along public circulation routes.

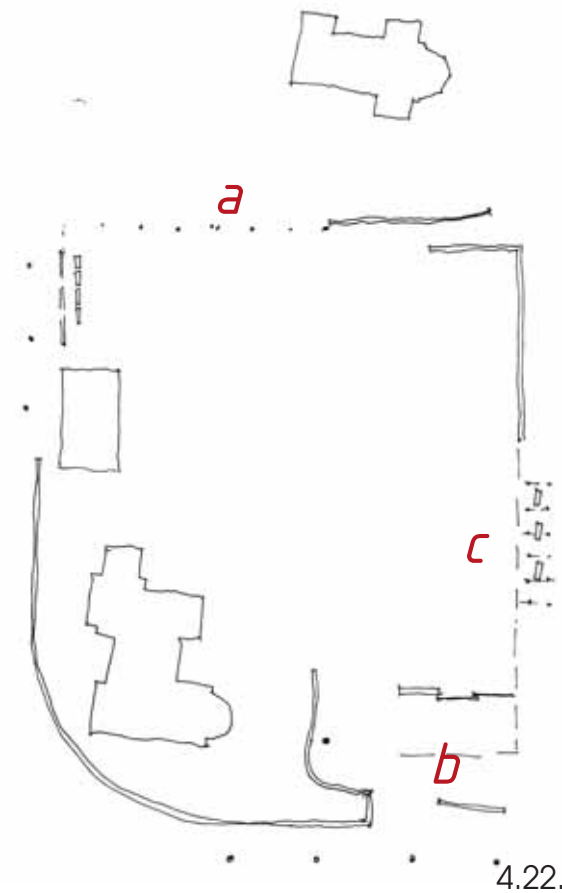
edge

The pavilion typology of the Centre requires that each of the six façades be activated in response to a different micro-context. While the Urban Design Framework requires active edges as a means of promoting security and a pedestrian-friendly environment, the Centre requires a 'boundary' to mark the perimeter of the foreign territory as has already been discussed (cf. p. 53). A solution is found in the creation of thick, flexible edges at the interface between the public - and semi-public domain. The edges are subtly marked by a

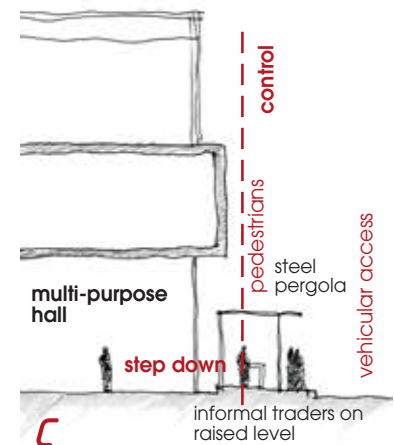
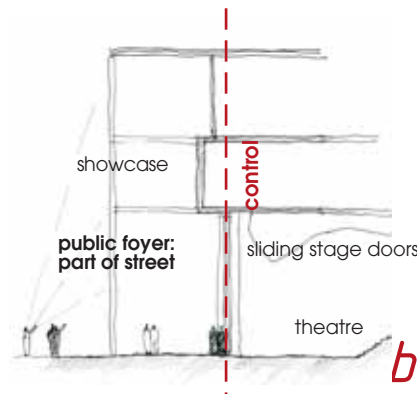
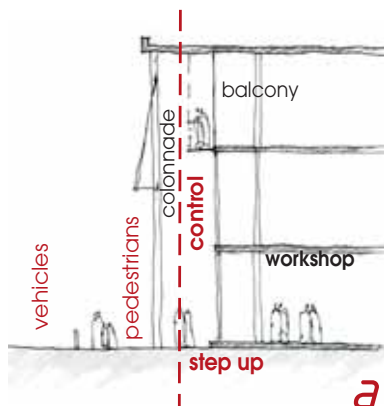


change in level or flooring material and, where direct access is allowed, contained beneath an overhang or within a colonnade to provide an incentive for its colonisation by informal traders. The threshold thus becomes the territory of the informal, characterised by a series of gradations in ownership; a series of micro-strongholds through which entry has to be negotiated. At the same time, the presence of traders along the building edges adds to the security of the surrounding streetscape. While colonisation starts at the edges, the plan does not limit the extent to which it can take place. The possibility exists that the entire ground floor be claimed by the informal.

Whereas the building shell is fixed and static, the edges are designed to permit the nomadic/informal to claim the periphery, to temporarily alter it and to subvert the hierarchical patterns of use. The informal is thus allowed to capitalise on formal activity, creating opportunities for individuals to survive by personal incentive. The network threads its way in and out of the hierarchy; the depth of its penetration into the formal system being determined by the power-relationship between the formal and informal at any given time.



4.22.



4.22. Diagrams illustrating perimeter of foreign territory and edge treatment.

robustness

The harsh character of the urban context of Hillbrow and the highly public nature of the Centre itself requires that building materials and construction be able to withstand high levels of abuse, especially at ground level.

southern wing

The ground plane of the southern wing largely follows the natural slope of the site, which descends around 5500 mm from the level of the square to that of Smit Street. The largest proportion of the level change is taken up by raked terraces effectively dividing the multi-purpose hall at ground floor level into a single large multi-purpose level and a smaller mini-theatre.

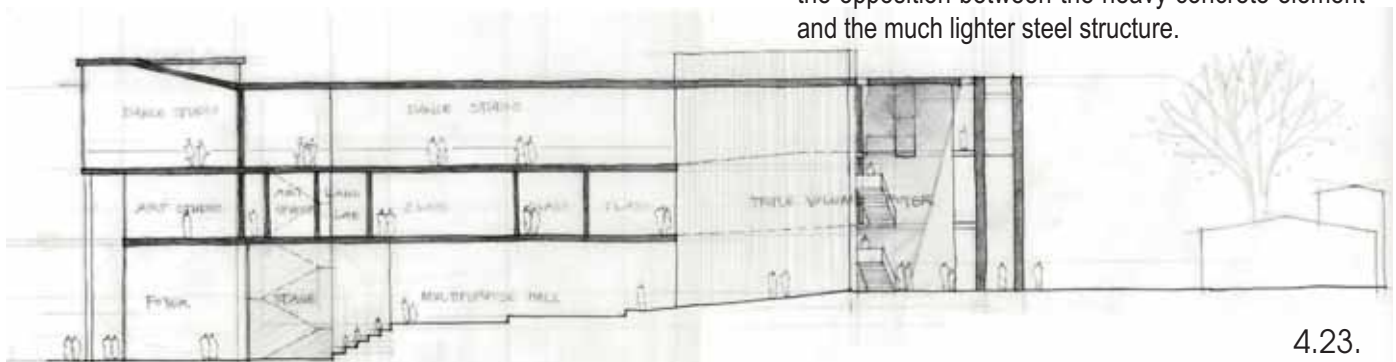
structure

The potential use of the multi-purpose hall for large public gatherings requires a column-free ground surface to avoid visual obstruction. This is achieved by the use of a post-tensioned tubular concrete structure at first floor level, with 340 mm post-tensioned floor- and roof slabs spanning between 400 mm -thick longitudinal walls acting as beams. The box-beam structure contains music studio space, which benefits from the insulative acoustic properties of concrete.

The 15 x 31 m tubular structure is supported on two massive elliptical concrete columns, which serve to articulate the threshold between the circulation space around the service core and the multi-purpose hall; a concrete wall defining the edge between the public gallery and the semi-public performance area; and a fourth concrete pier which is moved out of the continuous circulation route along the eastern perimeter of the building envelope and placed outside the building to become a part of the urban portal into the pedestrian street. The southern gable wall thus acts as a secondary beam.

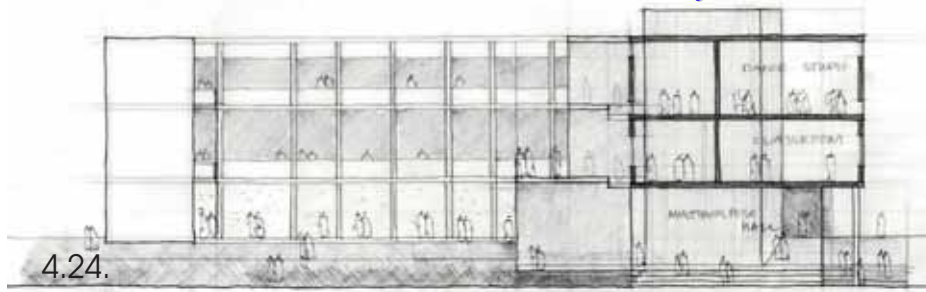
The music box is penetrated along its neutral axis by a series of double-glazed concrete framed inset windows which, by virtue of their irregularly spacing, add a measure of animation to the otherwise blank façade.

The music box supports a steel-framed structure which contains dance studio space at second floor level and folds around the southern and western edges of the music box to meet the rising ground level. The colonnade created between the western edge of the music box and the steel columns contains open walkways providing access to the music and dance studios, while the space between the southern edge of the box and the steel structure becomes a showcase for the Centre, with a public gallery at ground level and art studios at first - and second floor level. A light steel roof is provided over the steel structure to articulate the opposition between the heavy concrete element and the much lighter steel structure.



4.23.

4.23. Longitudinal section through southern wing 23_06.

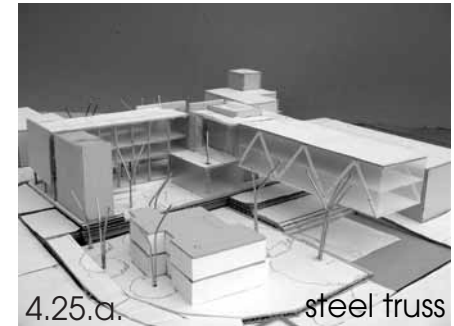


While the columns along the western periphery are spaced at intervals of 5,2 m to provide the southern wing with a slow and rhythmical modulation, the proportions and position of the music box are purposefully out of sync with the structural grid in an attempt strengthen the articulation of the box as an autonomous entity.

The post-tensioned concrete construction is an example of a what Balmond (cf. p. 112) calls a *considered unique path of structure*, which in this specific application is *more valid than the unquestioned assumption of a distributed solution, subdivided equally through a cross section or plan*. The application of the extraordinary structural solution is lent authenticity and validity by programmatic requirements; is not merely a quirky and contrived attempt at the literal expression of 'informality'. Its use is opportunistic; seizing local moment to make something of it, and in this sense conforms to the approach advocated by Balmond (Addendum C).

The structure becomes a generating path and a critical determinant of the building language. The combination of post-tensioned concrete and structural steel serves to create three levels of column-free space which provide a significant degree of flexibility and are excellently suited to accommodate the unpredictable patterns of use of the activities concerned.

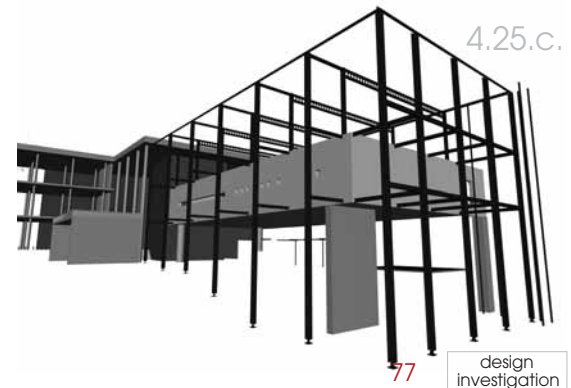
4.24. Transverse Section: Studios 23_06.
4.25 (a-c). Investigation: structural materials.



4.25.a. steel truss



concrete 4.25.b.



4.25.c.

ground floor

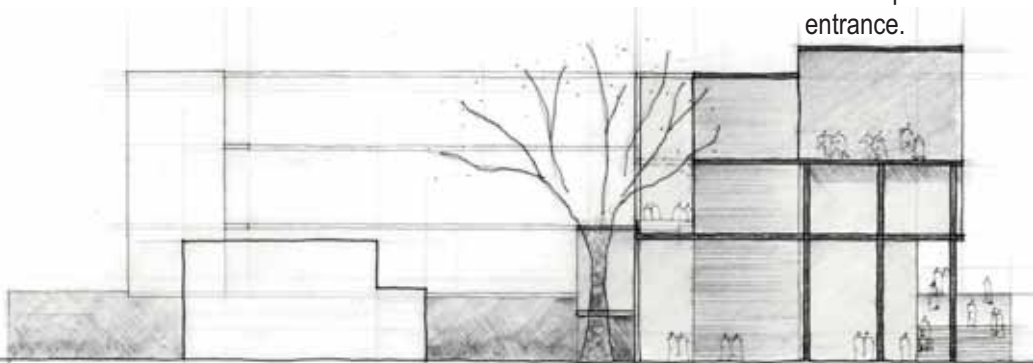
The southern edge of the semi-public domain is tentatively marked by a low brick wall cutting diagonally across the ramped approach to the building. The urban floor continues without level change from the sidewalk into the gallery, which acts as a secondary public entrance foyer and is used for the exhibition of the works of in-house artists and material produced by the Roll-back Xenophobia Campaign. Two large corten-clad sliding stage doors are provided between the gallery and the performance area beyond and provide a richly textured backdrop to the exhibition space. Another series of steel doors along the eastern edge pivot horizontally to allow direct access between the pedestrian street and the gallery. The stage doors, in the closed position, render the gallery entirely part of the streetscape and thus represent the real edge between the public and semi-public domain.

The use of steel pivot doors is continued along the eastern edge of the performance area to allow theatre performances to spill from the mini-theatre into the pedestrian street. The doors are clad in mild steel plate with galvanised and sprayed enamel finish providing an economical and hardwearing finish able to tolerate abuse without losing its aesthetic character and contributing to the semi-industrial quality of the southern wing.

With both the stage doors and the series of pivot doors along the eastern edge in the open position, the inside-outside boundary dissolves almost entirely. Space and activity flows freely between the foyer, performance area and pedestrian street beneath the canopy created by the horizontally suspended steel doors. The overflow facilitates the use of interactive street theatre as a tool to counter xenophobia.

The pedestrian street level follows that of the multi-purpose hall to allow the integration of inside/outside activity through a series of glazed doors opening onto the multi-purpose surface. The eastern edge (cf. fig. 4.22.c.) between the multi-purpose hall and pedestrian street is contained beneath the overhang of the concrete structure at first floor level and defined by a level change and the steel shading structure provided to shelter informal traders colonising the edge. The level of the pedestrian street is 150 mm above that of the multi-purpose hall, thus establishing a hierarchy which lends authority to the informal traders guarding the periphery at the higher level.

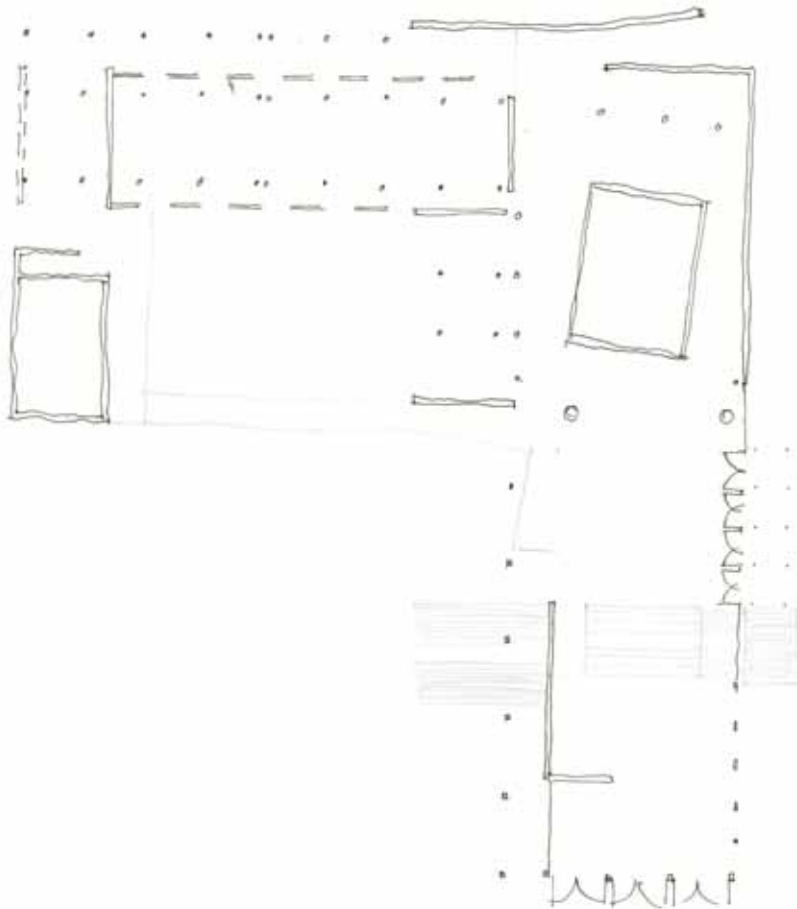
A profiled plywood ceiling is suspended from the soffit of the first floor slab - a dynamic and sculptural element lending a measure of intimacy to the mini-theatre while ensuring acoustical efficacy (cf. p. 92). With a series of sound-absorbent sliding panels between the mini-theatre and the remainder of the multi-purpose surface in the closed position, the mini-theatre can function as an independent unit accessed from the southern entrance.



4.26.

4.26. South Elevation 23_06.

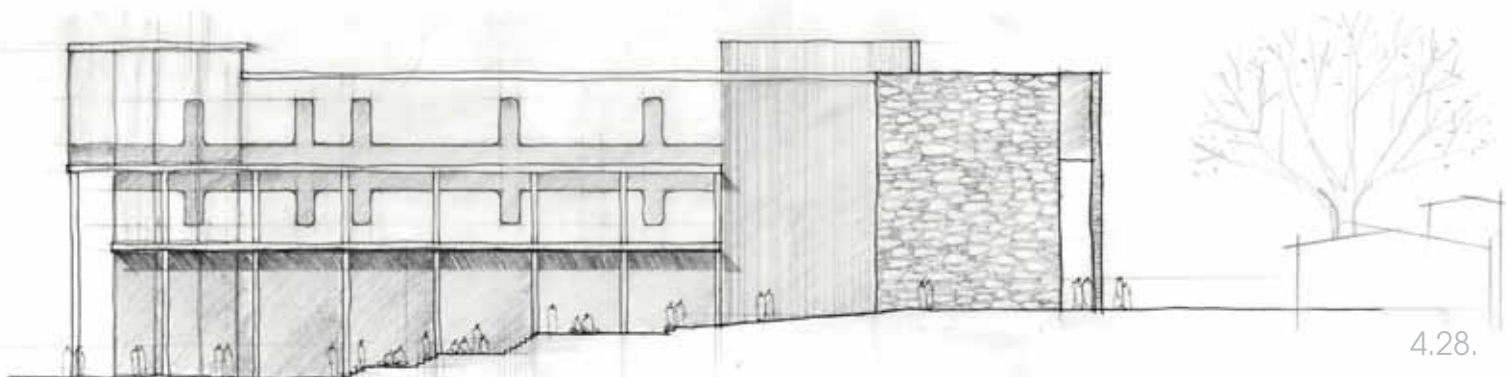
4.27.



The greater extent of the ground floor space is uniformly lit through extensively glazed curtain walls, the continuation of light quality between interior and exterior serving to strengthen the dissolution of inside-outside boundaries.

dance studio

A 13,5 meter clear span across the dance studio is achieved by the use of a 609 mm deep castellated steel I beam. Corrugated polycarbonate is used as cladding material. Despite the initial expense and high energy content, its use is considered appropriate by virtue of its lightness and integral stiffness, which eliminates the need for substructure in the panel construction. Also, recycling may redeem the initial energy cost. Two corrugated polycarbonate sheets are fixed to each other with purpose made stainless steel fasteners and slipped inside an aluminium frame to create light and highly mobile sliding panels. While the array of stainless steel fasteners add a dimension of intricacy and fine detail, the curiously soft and immaterial quality of polycarbonate contributes significantly to the articulation of the dance studio as a light volume on top of the much heavier concrete box, and especially so at night. The polycarbonate skin produces a uniform and gently diffused interior light quality. At night the studio becomes a translucent lantern on top of the dark volume of the music box, with the blurred silhouettes and projected shadows of the dancers providing animation.



4.28.

4.27. Diagram indicating dissolution of interior/ exterior boundary with ground floor level sliding doors in open position.

4.28. East Elevation 23_06.

east elevation

The eastern edge of the dance studio is screened from morning sun by a series of perforated stainless steel sunscreens, which are manually adjustable from inside the dance studio. Both the polycarbonate sliding panels and the sunscreens can be opened/closed in a number of different configurations, thereby lending the eastern elevation a layered and highly varied composition.

scale

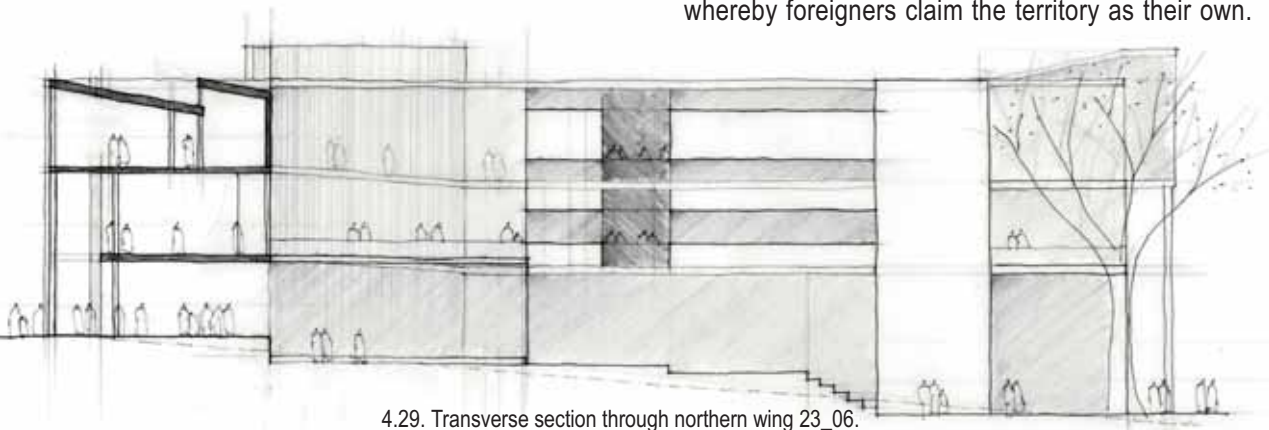
Since the site falls away towards the south, the scale of the building increases to one that lends the Centre significant civic presence on Smit Street. The scale relates directly with that of the eastern portion of the Community Health Centre, and competes with that of the apartment buildings on the opposite side of Smit Street without dwarfing the Superintendent's Residence in the manner of the high-rise buildings along the western edge of Hospital Street.

northern wing

The programmed spaces contained in the northern wing are suitably accommodated in the cellular spaces created by a concrete frame structure and dry wall partitions. A simple and economical concrete slab and column construction with flat concrete roof is thus provided. The scale of the northern wing is smaller than that of the southern wing and is determined by the hierarchical relationship between the buildings surrounding the public square. When the height-difference between the ground level of the Centre and the Hospital Pavilion on the opposite side of the square is taken into account, the scale of the building relates very closely with that of the Pavilion. The six-storey Leith building is dominant, while the Chapel by its nature remains an important place within the public space despite its smaller scale.

workshop

The structural system provides sufficient flexibility for the effective functioning of the ground-level workshop, which accommodates craftwork and light industrial activity. It is proposed that building elements such as the mosaic tiles be produced in the workshop by foreign residents of Hillbrow. Besides creating skills development - and short-term employment opportunities, such hand-made elements add greatly to the 'imperfect' and tactile quality of the Centre and facilitate the process whereby foreigners claim the territory as their own.



4.29.

threshold

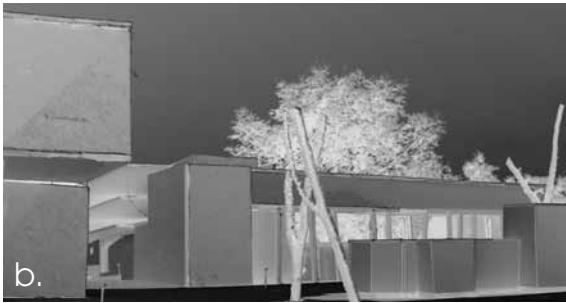
The threshold between the public and semi-public domain along the northern edge is defined by a 150mm level change and contained within a 3 meter wide public colonnade [fig. 4.22.a]. The northern edge of the workshop becomes trade space, which spills into the colonnade and onto the public square, with traders and craftsmen guarding the perimeter. A number of mentis grid balconies are suspended at irregular intervals from the exposed soffit of the concrete roof slab to provide rest areas for office second floor office workers, who provide a second series of eyes-on-the-street.

façade

The northern façade is reserved and makes no attempts at capturing the spotlight. Instead, it shows respect for the historical buildings surrounding the square as regards both scale and material use, and is simply enveloped by glazed curtain walls with timber louvre panels. Column spacing is accelerated from that of the southern wing to match the smaller scale of the northern wing. Off-beat pulses are introduced into the northernmost row of columns - a slightly playful gesture to disturb the rhythm and pace of the colonnade and provide animation. A series of adjustable/removable textile sunscreens are suspended between the concrete columns to provide further animation. It is proposed that the screens be painted by in-house artists and regularly replaced to become functional exhibition pieces of the Roll Back Xenophobia-Campaign.

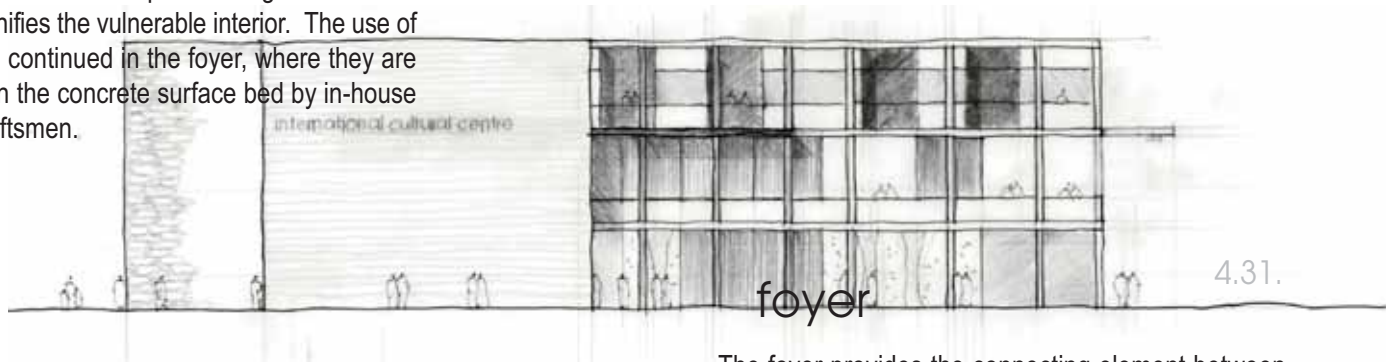
freestanding wall

The predominant feature of the northern elevation is a massive freestanding concrete wall which gently curves away from the entry point to the foyer to introduce a subtly dynamic element into the composition. A series of round steel bars of varying dimensions are randomly drilled into the concrete surface of the wall and epoxy-fixed to create a repellent, 'spiky' surface



which, metaphorically, guards the vulnerable constituency accommodated by the Centre. The steel rods will cause rainwater released from a high-level outlet to streak the concrete surface dramatically, while in time they may well rust away, leaving only the discoloured concrete surface as a record of time and circumstance.

The interior surface of the same wall is partially covered by a continuous vertical 'carpet' of red glazed mosaic tiles which signifies the vulnerable interior. The use of mosaic tiles is continued in the foyer, where they are sparsely laid in the concrete surface bed by in-house artists and craftsmen.



The foyer provides the connecting element between the two wings of the building and contains the primary public entrance to the Centre. It is entirely unprogrammed and may be used for exhibitions or events.

edge

The massive perimeter walls create a stark edge between the public and semi-public domain and provide a backdrop for the chapel as viewed from the north of the public square. By their scale, they lend the Centre the measure of civic presence it requires to stand its ground among the historic buildings surrounding the public square.

pivot

The concrete service core provides the pivot point in the connection between the two wings of the Centre. Its seven degree rotation from the grid - derived from the orientation of the historic buildings (cf. p. 61) - creates spatial tension in the circulation spaces



surrounding the core and leading from the northern to the southern wing.

A 200 mm opening between the top of the perimeter walls of the service core and the concrete roof slab, with supporting columns set back from the front edge of the walls, create the impression of the roof slab floating detached above the core and serves to articulate the core as an independent element.

slip

The three concrete columns in the central foyer space are slanted at two degrees to echo the horizontal rotation of the core in the vertical dimension. Their vertical rotation counteracts the directional movement suggested by their alignment on plan, serving to centre the space and invite visitors to linger.

The recurrent interplay of heavy - and light elements occurs once again in the opposition of the massive service core and the skeletal steel- and timber staircase rising three storeys towards a light box providing access to the roof.

light

The foyer is strongly interiorised and is lit almost entirely by roof lights. Apart from the glazed light box, a series of old-fashioned clay sewer pipes of varying dimensions and protruding to different lengths are cast into the concrete roof slab of the foyer at different angles, and sealed at their top ends with tinted plate glass and silicone. On a sunny day, these roof lights create a spectacle of coloured spotlights moving across the floor and wall surfaces of the otherwise dimly lit foyer.

By virtue of the predominant darkness, the beams of light entering through the pipes become individually discernable and dramatic elements. A series of low voltage tungsten halogen lamps with dimmer switches are suspended between the columns for nighttime- or

additional daytime lighting. At night, the upper volumes recede into darkness, and it is the acoustic quality of the space which reveals the actual volume.

A series of steel bracing rods tie the perimeter walls of the foyer to the internal core. The steel members - fixed in criss-cross fashion for the purpose of structural stability - create an intricate and seemingly random web floating at second floor level above the ramped circulation route leading to the multi-purpose hall.

tactility

Despite its bareness, the use of light, colour and texture, coupled with the aesthetics of randomness and the particular material quality of hand-made elements lends the foyer a richly tactile quality. Its spatial generosity serves to convey a sense of grandeur and slowness.

café and terrace

The café and terrace are located at the level of the threshold between the ramp leading from the entrance foyer and the multi-purpose hall itself. The café is an almost incidental space, partially slipped in beneath the ramped walkways connecting the two wings and accessible from the foyer, multi-purpose hall and the western colonnade. It is enclosed by a partial continuation of the first floor slab of the northern wing, which folds over to become the southern wall. The concrete roof is planted and provides an accessible roof terrace which is accessible from the first floor level in the northern wing. A series of timber-framed sliding doors allow the café to spill onto the terrace - a sheltered area enclosed by the workshop to the north, the café to the east and the external service core in red brick to the west; and overlooking the garden to the south.

4.30.

flexibility

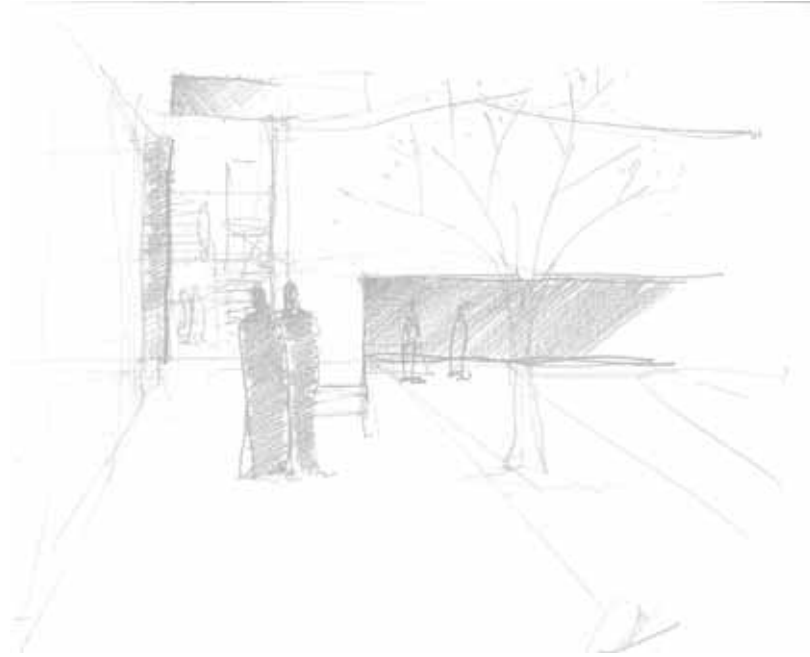
The potential for the reuse of the building shell is maximised by the grouping of service areas in one internal and one external core; and a structural system providing large open areas which may be subdivided at will by non-loadbearing partitions

hybridity

As a result a variety of structural systems, a relatively wide range of materials and the large variations in edge treatment, the character of the building tends towards hybridity. Such variations are informed throughout by programmatic requirements and/or micro-contextual conditions. Continuity is provided by the repeated application of extensively glazed curtain walls with timber louvres, and in the detailing of steel and timber elements throughout the building.

execution

The technical investigation includes references to a number of additional design considerations and should be read with the design investigation.



garden

The garden space around the Superintendent's Residence is simply landscaped around the existing trees. The low red brick garden wall around the southwestern perimeter of the site is continued around the garden to mark the edge of the foreign territory. The garden is thus rendered a semi-public domain, and the multi-purpose hall is allowed to spill unhindered into the garden space.

