



>>>4. Design development\_

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>>4.1 Introduction\_\_

In this section decisions made relating to the design development of the scheme will be explained. This will be entwined with an assortment of conjectural investigations that appear incoherent but ultimately reveal the significance of *authenticity* rather than *flexibility* in architecture. Although the investigation is directed to this, resolutions expected from its various parts is seen as important for several design decisions.

Initially the current state of architecture on an urban level will be investigated. Is the historic notion of the city still existing, or beyond repair?

The unpredictability and uncontrollability of the city, made more sinister through a newly defined Post Modernism, together with the way we experience time, calls for a new approach. This is unless we put all our faith in Kenneth Frampton's ideas of Critical Regionalism. Is it true that *buildings turn out better when they are not designed for a specific programme* [Christiaanse, 2000:79]? Can a new approach be based on a temporary, flexible, programmable architecture and

the *Field Conditions* set forth by Stan Allen [2004:24]? Or will this result in *bland buildings* [Christiaanse, 2000:79], *junkspace* [OMA, 1995] and *inauthentic design*? How should this be contested and what is the position of history? A solution based on sensory experiences and the activation of unprompted, spontaneous occurrences may hold the key. Is any of this even relevant for a project in Trevenna? All this and more in: *The Design Development\_\_*

>>4.2 The traditional notion of the city\_\_

The traditional notion of 'city' and the structure and form that should define it is made clear by Kevin Lynch in *Image of the City*, written more than 40 years ago. Lynch proposes 5 aspects that give stability to the general outlines to the city. These are nodes, districts, routes, landmarks and edges. Adding to this, he maintains that the city should be ever changing in details and will never have a final result, but only a continuous succession of phases [Lynch. 1960:2]. In *Finding Lost Space*, Trancik's theories also give us an understanding of what the city should be. In his figure ground theory,

he explains the spatial definition that is key in the city. He also addresses the relationship between public and private space. In his linkage theory he highlights the connective qualities of an urban settlement and how to relate buildings to spaces. In the place theory he discusses the importance of social responsiveness in order to change space into place with contextual meaning [Trancik, 1986]. All these characteristics are understood to give spatial structure to the city and ensure its success. However, in this century, the losing battle with the issue of quantity in light of examples of how in the last 20 years Lagos has grown from 2 to 15 million and Istanbul from 6 to 12 million people [OMA, 1995:961], raises new questions of the applicability of this model on such scales. This problem is not limited to cities of great scale, but the concern is imbedded in the speed with which any city can double its population, making the control of urbanism impossible. 'A perverse automatic pilot constantly outwits all attempts at capturing the city' [OMA, 1995:963]. Although cities may start with a master plan, they rapidly descend into a free-for-all in both planning and architecture. Cities inevitably decline into a Post-Modernism

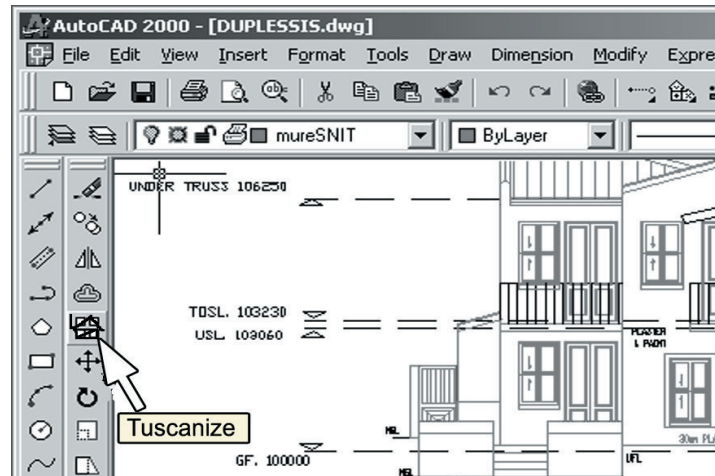


fig. 4.1 Post Modernism in Pretoria

where everything that doesn't work is replaced in a continuous cycle. This Post-Modernism is not a movement, but a new form of professionalism. It is a technical training that doesn't create knowledge or culture, but efficacy in applying a new streamlined dogma [OMA, 1995:847]. Instead of the consciousness that original Post-Modernism envisaged, it creates unconsciousness where the incessant

*cycle of replacing allows for only enough retained history to keep the tourist amused. The historic image of 'the city' is now retained in clichéd and unnatural manifestations. This urbanization has modified the urban condition beyond recognition and is occurring to the extent that the historic notion of the 'city' no longer exists. The fact that urbanists looked to the classical city to deal with this may have been a fatal mistake, which disconnected them once and for all. They are now 'like doctors discussing the medical intricacies of an amputated limb' [OMA, 1995:963]. No credible alternative approach to urbanism has been developed and the only tool is that of reformulating the traditional city. According to Abraham Maslow: 'when the only tool you have is a hammer, every problem begins to resemble a nail.'*

*Certainly urbanism is not taking an aggressive position and this indecision is definitely the worst decision. In order to devise a way forward we must first re-evaluate the city. It is important to find out what the city is – instead of what it was or what it should be [OMA, 1995: 835].*

#### *>>4.3 What the city is\_\_*

*Time is nature's way of making sure not everything happens at once [Bouman, 1993: 13]. Nowadays this perception has changed and we now find ourselves within a culture of many times. According to Bouman [1993: 14], there exists a new 'flex' way of life where everything is simultaneous. Production, reproduction, work, relaxation and private life are everywhere at once. This result in a lack of synchronized time between people, prohibiting what Bouman calls Shared Time. The collective experiences lived through the media can never be concrete enough to achieve this shared time. The deficiency of shared time restricts the formation and reinforcement of communities [Bouman 19993: 14]. As time has accelerated and shared time is lost, the city has become a place of weak and distended sensations and instead of concentration and simultaneous presence, the city is now made up out of individual moments, spaced far apart [OMA 1995: 1250]. With a population all locked in their own rooms, there is an evacuation of the public realm, which now only accommodates the necessary movement of the car. We now all put together our own cities, according to the available transport options. It is a city configured by traffic*



flows, connections and intersections, rather than by formal, hierarchical, spatial structures [Boer, 1993: 30]. Boer describes this as the network city, which can still be legible. Its continuity does not correspond to the city's formal structure however and metropolises can now be understood through the logic offered by a metro system. The time attached to this organizes the city in a way that makes it comprehensible. Now, the spatial organization, functional access and programme of the network city, are generally no longer united [Boer, 1993: 30]. In the network the emphasis is on field rather than object. Interval, repetition and seriality are the key concepts. According to Stan Allen [2004:25] form still matters, but not so much the forms of things as the forms between things.

He maintains that the overall form is an elaboration of conditions established locally. Le Corbusier's Venice Hospital illustrates how a basic block of program is repeated and rotated to eventually form a horizontal field of blocks in which the unifying geometric is a result of the relationships between the individual parts. According to Allen [2004:25] one of the potentials of the field redefines the relation between figure and ground. The figure is not a demarcated object read against a stable field but is in fact moments of intensities within the field. These moments can manifest themselves as temporary spatial structures, like vortexes in a river, where their existence is nothing more than a bifurcation point reached by the field [river] itself; a provisional state of stability in a field that is far from equilibrium. The superposition of two or more regular fields may result in the emergence of unexpected effects that seems complex and irregular. Allen compares this to the figural moiré effect [2004:31], which in the urban context involves a thickening and intensification of experience at certain moments within the field of the city.

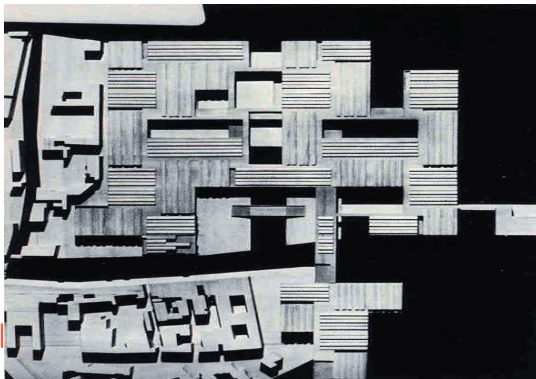


fig. 4.2

Le Corbusier, Venice Hospital

fig. 4.3



#### >>4.4 A New Urbanism\_

If there is to be a new urbanism, it will have to be based on the field or network idea of the city and not the spatial arrangement of permanent objects. It should enable fields to accommodate ever-changing processes that might not have a definitive form. The focus should be on creating potential for traverse fields to reach bifurcation points at seemingly random positions. This must facilitate the city to be filled with a spontaneous culture, which the city dweller creates. The new city should not be about the imposition of limits, but about expanding notions and denying boundaries [OMA, 1995:969]. Here it is maintained that since urbanism is out of control the ideology should be to accept what exists and to find a way of operating the inevitable. This may very well undermine the certainties of architecture, accompanied by its preoccupations with matter and substance [OMA, 1995:971]. Since we are not responsible, we have to become irresponsible [OMA, 1995: 971]. Now it is not so much a matter of constructing an immutable ideal model, as establishing the parameters according to which reality is manifested; intervening in the field in such a way that, without distorting the medium it is manifested

in a different way [Ortega, 2004:15]. The new institutions of the city will occur at moments of intensity, linked to the wider network of the urban field, and marked not by demarcating lines but by thickened surfaces [Allen, 2004:31]. Buildings can no longer be mere objects.

framework  
framework  
Proposed framework

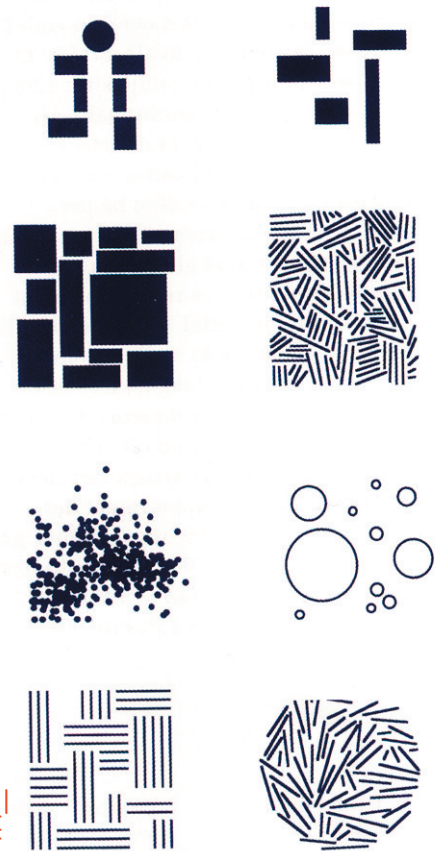
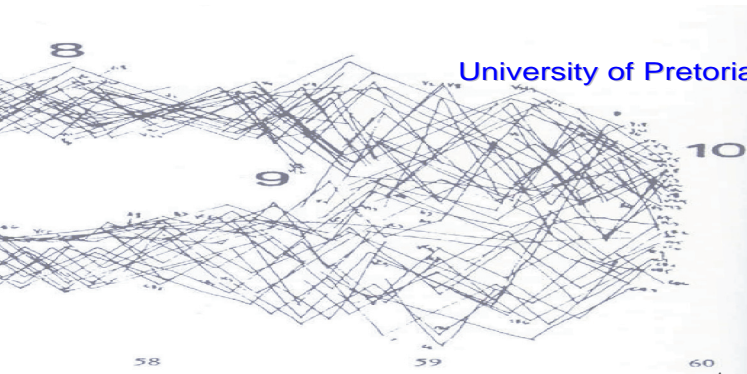


fig. 4.4\_

Field conditions diagram



#### >>4.5 Flexibility\_

In this proposed urbanism and architecture the idea of re-use, flexibility and re-programmability becomes a central concern. This architecture should not be seen as completed when the design has been translated into material form. This should be its point of departure. *It should adopt the process of becoming as part of its meaning and be programmable and re-programmable.* [Bouman, 2004:18]. By forming the architecture within a directed field condition, connected to the city or the landscape, a space is left for the tactical improvisations of the future users. Stan Allen proposes a 'loose fit' between building and programme [Allen, 2004:34]. Michel Serres also reminds that static, accidents and disruptions will inevitably undermine any formal system defined by points and lines [Serres, 82:11]. This architecture should not be invested in stability and certainty, but should admit change and leave space for the uncertainty of the discussed field. In keeping with this, Charles Esche introduces his idea of 'guerrilla programs' [Esche, 2003:67]. These programmes would be provisional and informal and would stem from a notion that everything can and should be temporary. An architecture that works on the basis that everything

is fluid and will remain so is architecture of the flexible office and drive through restaurants [Bouman, 2004:18]. It is constructed from sliding walls, snap-on modules, system ceilings, multifunctional buildings and programmatic intensification. This flexibility considered necessary for cultural recycling, results in bland buildings [Christiaanse, 2000:79]. It is an architecture that has no intention of representing anything, but aims only to serve the evanescence of everyday idea, every programme and every life [Bouman, 2004:18]. This flexibility frequently takes on the form of the *Typical Plan* discussed by Rem Koolhaas in *S,M,L,XL*. Where all other architecture is about inclusion and accommodation, incident and event, *Typical Plan* is about exclusion, evacuation and non-event [OMA, 1995:344]. Where other architecture anticipates the future, *Typical Plan* keeps it open forever by making no choices. Koolhaas also warns that one should avoid the easy option of the featureless 'flexible' space, which he calls 'Junkspace'. These spaces are fundamentally generic rather than specific. The vacancy and sensory deprivation this inflicts on to the user is usually concealed within an even more inauthentic, themed skin. Junkspace is empty or filled with the inauthentic.

>>4.6 Authenticity\_\_

MERCE IBARZ in: In the city under construction;  
*'Recently Christine was talking a lot about the ugliness of new buildings and apartments, raging at the lack of balconies and façades with no relief. Today's repetitive minimum solutions seemed to her to be an anti-musical attack. Time and time again she would say how shapes and ornament have always formed part of buildings and urban development because they are the way in which architecture resembles music and, for people, a way of believing that we inhabit a space of our own, that each of us has our own personal tone or ballad or aria or blues. Or silence, a space between two musics; (...) of aluminum, a material without imprints (...) with the squat skyscrapers that had begun to proliferate in the city: you may well be light-filled and probably pleasant enough at first sight to the residents, visitors or purchasers and to office workers, but you are ugly to look at: you are conceived not to be looked at, you do not want*

*to be looked at, you want to be entered, you only want people to go in and out.'* [Ibarz, 2002]

In order to negate this sensory deprivation, which seems to curse all modern buildings [Sennet, 2004:134] and the flexible solution, we need to create collective experiences. Accommodating functions should not be the chief aim of the design, but consideration should also be given to the creation of shared time and collective experiences. Only then will the culture of change no longer appear as a permanent state of transition, but as a destination, and we can then repair the synchronicity that forms the foundation of social cohesion. [Bouman, 2004:18]. Cultural recycling can be successful in evading flexibility that results in bland buildings and their sensory deprivation. Christiaanse [2004:79] discusses how some converted buildings are the perfect accommodations for their new programmes. So perfect that a new building designed in accordance with a carefully prepared building programme would never have achieved a comparable character and quality. He maintains that the success of this form of cultural recycling is not only a result of the authenticity present in the historical component, but lies mainly in a strong architectonic character, a certain dimensional grandeur and buildings in the



form of spatial architectonic sculptures. The buildings then derive their appeal from the resistance the new user has to overcome. [Christiaanse, 2004:79]. The argument here is that buildings turn out better when they are designed without a programme, benefiting from cultural recycling even in their first carnation. Then the sometimes radical adjustment building and programme are obliged to make to one another results in an enormous release of energy [Christiaanse, 2004:79].

The success lies in the authenticity of the initial design which, paradoxically, dependability on the programme ensures.

In OMA's Netherlands Embassy in Berlin, Rem Koolhaas stipulates that the most important coherence is not formal but programmatic. The embassy clearly reflects some of his views on urbanism, especially context. As he commented on the generic cities and the non-space or junkspace interiors that accompany them, buildings are more able to disconnect from their realities, or try to make the best of them. In this project the emphasis is on disconnection. [Evans, 2004:31]. The route to and through the building is here called the 'trajectory'. In fighting junkspace, he takes the 'trajectory' as the key device for making space meaningful where it stimulates related and contrasting architectural rules. The workspaces

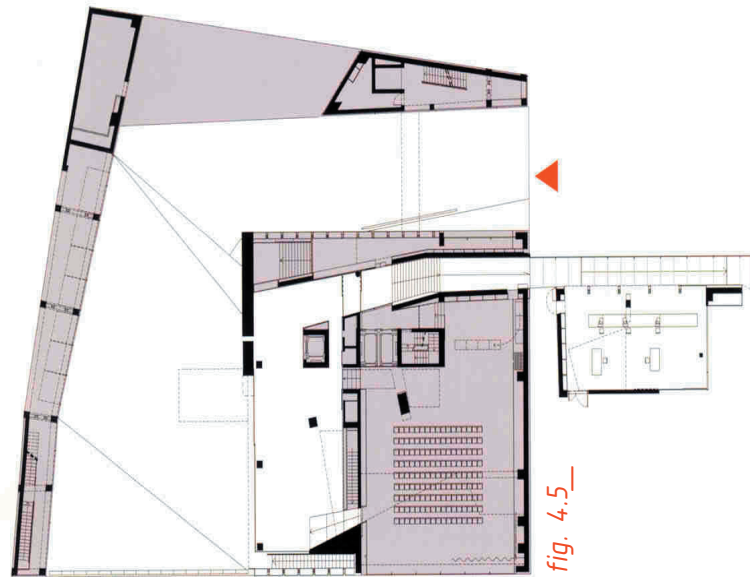


fig. 4.5

Netherlands Embassy in Berlin



fig. 4.6

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Proposed framework

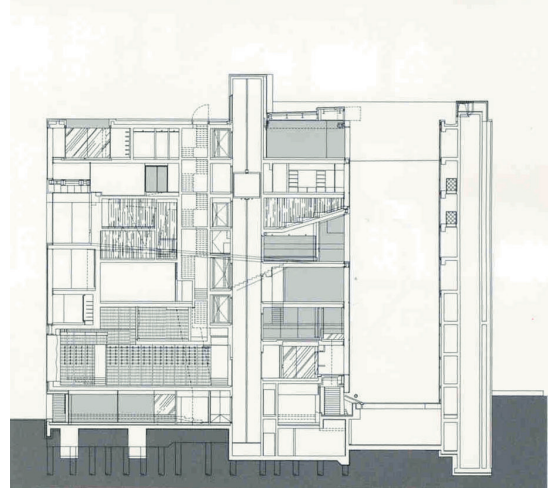


fig. 4.7

Netherlands Embassy in Berlin

*The frustration with the increasingly generic quality, even of our own once-specific cities, and with stasis in urban design is also represented in the work of Foreign Office Architects [Evans, 2004:37]. In the design for the BBC Music Centre, the ground melts into the building envelope and walls and floors are expressed as a seamless folded plane.*

*These projects can be seen as pioneering new urban design, given the absence of a process for developing and implementing new visions [Evans, 2004:31]. Their success is not based on contextual response; rather redefining what context should be in the 'field'.*

*Although more interested in the question of representation than in the problem of systems, authenticity achieved through a response to context can oppose the placelessness and lack of meaning in Modern Architecture by using contextual forces to give a sense of place and*



fig. 4.8

BBC Music Centre

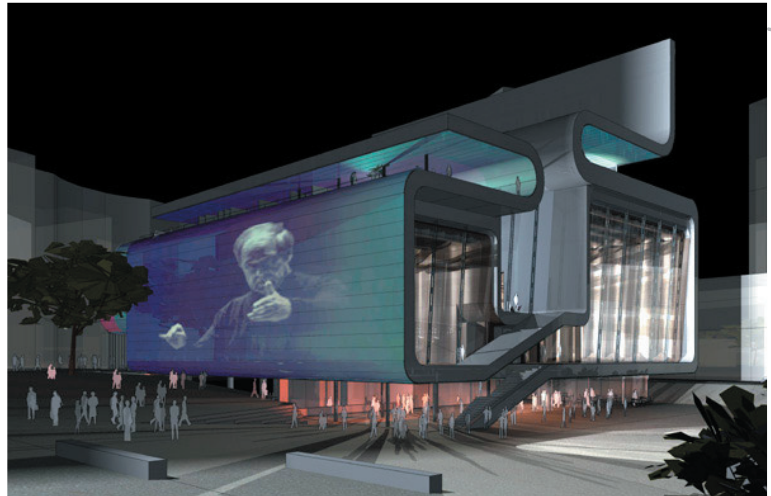


fig. 4.9

BBC Music Centre

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*meaning [Gilbert, 2003:2]. An ideology concerned with this is that of Critical Regionalism - although criticized as being an architecture that resists the pressures of the discussed 'field' and 'system city' [Patterson, 1995].*

*The aspects of a place should be expressed through a tectonic expression of the building or space. The tectonic is important in the perception of this built form, where the architecture should be one where the evidence of how it is made is seen and comprehended.*

*'It is the spirit which does not mask but unmask the true function of a thing, be it business, unionism, architecture, or love.'*

ARTHUR MILLER, *The Bored and the Violent.*

#### *>>4.7 Resolution\_\_*

*In keeping with the above-mentioned ideologies, the design was resolved to facilitate these in various manifestations, once it developed through the numerous paradoxes expected from the sometimes ethereal nature of the polemic.*

*Critical Regionalism need not directly draw from the context; rather elements can be stripped of their context and used in strange rather than familiar ways [Patterson, 1995]. Here the aim is to create awareness of a disruption and a loss of place that is already accomplished through reflection and self-evaluation.*

#### *Sensory Square\_\_*

*As mentioned, the space in front of the building would serve as a green space that is committed to decelerate time and enable collective experiences to occur. This will be through embracing sensory*

fig. 4.10\_



Jumping Field

experiences through temporary installations. These installations will not be restricted to the square but persist to the atrium and even building facades. Installations on the square would focus more on land art though. These installations would be commissioned to local artists, designers and landscape architects in an endeavor to support the local community. In keeping with the 'field' of the system city, an example of such an installation would be the *Jumping Field* of Tommi Gronlund and Petteri Nisunen. An essential characteristic of their work is the conception of matter as a dynamic element. There is no question of constructing an element. Movement that evolves, where they don't attempt to control the outcome, replaces form. [Calvillo, 2004:119].

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fig. 4.11\_

Jumping Field

*For internal installations their LED-Field and Frequented Etherics, Spherics and Bars is here proposed as examples of how the changes, irregularities and accidents are embraced as the driving forces behind the emergence of form [Calvillo, 2004: 119].*

*Contrary to the Ceremonial Square, the Sensory Square does not rely on mass activity and retail for its success. Two spaces are for rent on the western façade, facing the square. One of these is a two level restaurant. An arcade continues from here towards the entrance of the centre.*

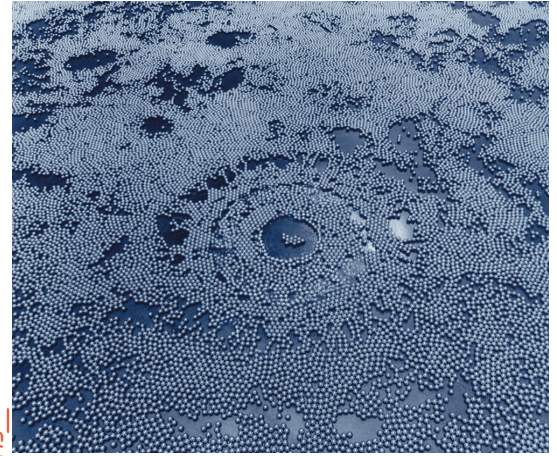


fig. 4.13

Frequented Etherics, Spherics and Bars

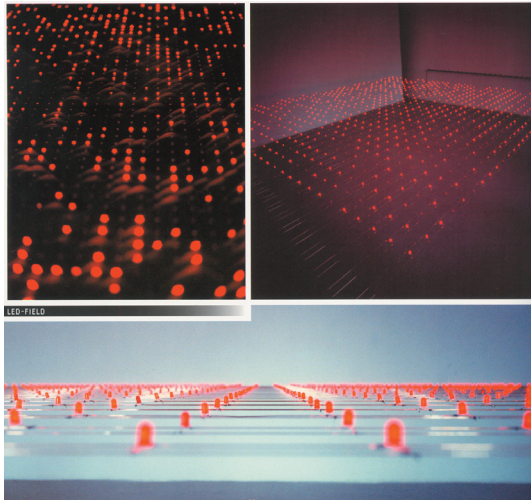


fig. 4.12

LED Field

### Atrium

*Since the Romans the atrium had been a hole in a house or a building that injects air –and the notion of the outside– into the center. Present atriums however, became containers of artificiality. The design strived to avoid this, making the atrium an extension of the urban and public realm, but security, climate and dust considerations required the opposite. The result was a guarded entrance, accommodating a vast openable, stackable glass doors. The threshold is blurred by means of numerous elements protruding through the 'entrance', which itself becomes a space of transition, rather than a door. The atrium allows for views through the main access of the building.*

*It is naturally lit with the help of glass curtain walls and a partially translucent roof. Its eastern façade does not house an entrance at present due to the lack of activity expected on Greef Street, but is easily connectable to future movement. The cafeteria will be openable to the street on the mezzanine level. A veldt grass strip that runs to the center further distorts the entrance. The shelter provided by the protruding auditorium is 'entered' before the atrium, which further exclude a single line of threshold. The line is now a dot.*

#### Wedge

*Seen as an important element of the design, the wedge on the northeastern part of the building also incorporates signage for the centre. The signage reinforces the verticality of the corner. Following the urban design principles, this corner is presented as a heavy anchor point of the building. This is achieved through the massing and materials. An opening on the first floor acts as access for changing the signage. In turn, the signage element blocks of the direct eastern sun. The balcony on the first floor acts as an additional breakout space for the conference room and allows for views to and from the street.*

#### Materials

*In an attempt to revive sensory experiences, the way in which we perceive materials is addressed. Focus on the tactile as well as the juxtapositioning of material will lead to a re-evaluation of the relationship between user and material.*

*In contrast with Modernism where the 'object' needs to be well maintained, here the architecture accommodates degradation and attrition. Corrosion and contamination give it more expression to allow for greater a greater sensory experience. This is evident on the northern façade where the off-shutter concrete is allowed to be stained by washed off corrosion. Selective segments will not have gutters at the top, but rather collect the water after it contaminated the concrete.*



fig. 4.14. \_

Stained concrete wall. (Herzog & De Meuron: Studio remy zaugg\_france)