



figure 40:01  
Guests enjoying food  
in the 1987 film  
*Babettes Feast*



## DESIGN DISCOURSE AND DEVELOPMENT

*ALL: Double, double toil and trouble;  
Fire burn, and cauldron bubble.*

### *SECOND WITCH:*

*Fillet of a fenny snake  
In the cauldron boil and bake;  
Eye of newt, and toe of frog,  
Wool of bat, and tongue of dog,  
Adder's fork, and blind-worm's sting,  
Lizard's leg and howlet's wing,  
For a charm of powerful trouble,  
Like a hell-broth, boil and bubble*

*ALL: Double, double toil and trouble;  
Fire burn, and cauldron bubble.*

### *SECOND WITCH:*

*Cool it with a baboon's blood;  
Then the charm is firm and good.*

(Shakespeare: 2005:58)

**Babette's Menu:**



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA  
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YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

*Potage à la Tortue*

*Turtle Soup*

*Amontillado Sherry*

*Blini Demidoff au Caviar*

*Buckwheat cakes with caviar*

*Veuve Clicquot Champagne 1860*

*Caille en Sarcophage avec Sauce*

*Perigourdine*

*Quail in Puff Pastry Shell with Foie Grass  
and Truffle Sauce*

*Clos de Vougeot 1846*

*La Salade*

*Water*

*Les Fromages*

*Cheese and Fruit Selection*

*Port*

*Baba au Rhum avec les Figues*

*Rum Infused Yeast Cake with Dried Figs*

*Coffee*

(Friedman 2003:118)



figure 40:02  
Babette preparing a  
feast for her guests



The 1987 winner of the Best-Foreign Language Film Oscar, *Babette's Feast*, was originally written by Danish Isak Dinesen and directed by Gabriel Axel (Friedman 2003:116). It tells a story that compels us to meditate upon the needs of the flesh and the needs of the spirit. It is a story about poetry and the sensuality of food, accompanied by the psychology of people's preconceived ideas and of reconciliation.

After years of service to two Danish women who are carrying on their father's ministry in a remote fishing village, Babette, a French refugee, vows to prepare a French banquet for the sisters and other members of their religious sect, which has renounced all earthly pleasures. The church members agree to eat the food, but not to enjoy or praise it. Babette cooks up a masterpiece, making the kitchen her orchestra, the spoon her baton, and serves seven unpredictable, incredibly sensual dishes.

The guests are transformed, one by one. Their joy and surprise in Babette's feast awake their sensory pleasure and question their preconceived ideas of food and pleasures.



D. H. Lawrence states "it is our sixth sense. And it is a natural religious sense" (quoted in Lawrence 2001).

As, in the arts of gastronomy or music, the composer often uses particular forms and conventions to expand the literal meaning of his or her works, or to evoke emotional and sensual responses, so the poet uses devices such as assonance, alliteration, onomatopoeia and rhythm to achieve a musical or cohesive whole. Each word or note, or each painter's stroke of the brush forms part of a greater mosaic of little places of desire, which in totality creates a cuisine, a poem an artwork - a structure. In the world of the built and the unbuilt, we find ourselves in a confused situation. We want to make sense of what we experience around us, we want to determine the meaning (intended or unintended) of the built and the unbuildable. It seems that architecture can learn from the poet and chef in creating or encouraging desire.

The design approach of this project borrows much from Babette's culinary approach. Through designing a series of several unpredictable spaces that are nevertheless connected to one another, the project aims to construct a cohesive whole that speaks lovingly to all 'six' of the senses. Applying a series of spaces in such a way that the viewer experiences each space differently: an open space vs an enclosed one, symbolism vs symbols, the use of rhythm, light, nature and different materials, celebrating the different seasons, evoking the *six* senses. All this, a cocktail of elements that can be used to create delightful little pockets of desire along the way through the building, which the consumer experiences as a total cuisine.



A site filled with symbolic experience, to its surroundings and existing environment, bringing architecture, food and the sensory experience as close as possible to their audience and the imagination. It is for this reason that, although the building will read as a cookery school, unconsciously, through a series of individual spaces, it should be the individual's mind's eye, fantasies and dreams that experience the space. The built should not directly represent the world, but should rather let the fantasy, memories and imagination of an individual mind's eye create the sensory experience.

*Might I suggest an intimate bench under an existing tree, rich in its romantic simplicity. A table for a group built in an 'exhibition box' of steel and glass. Trees accidentally growing through the slab, as if in their natural setting. Triangular windows, which could be rather a frustrating surprise, forming a glass wall that flows into the city and towards the natural landscape to the north. Gardens that flow through pathways and penetrate into the main building, with bridges that lifts you from the natural ground. Structures randomly placed and styled, like dishes, framed by windows and highlighted by cornfields, sunflowers and the sent of herbs, all in an urban context.*

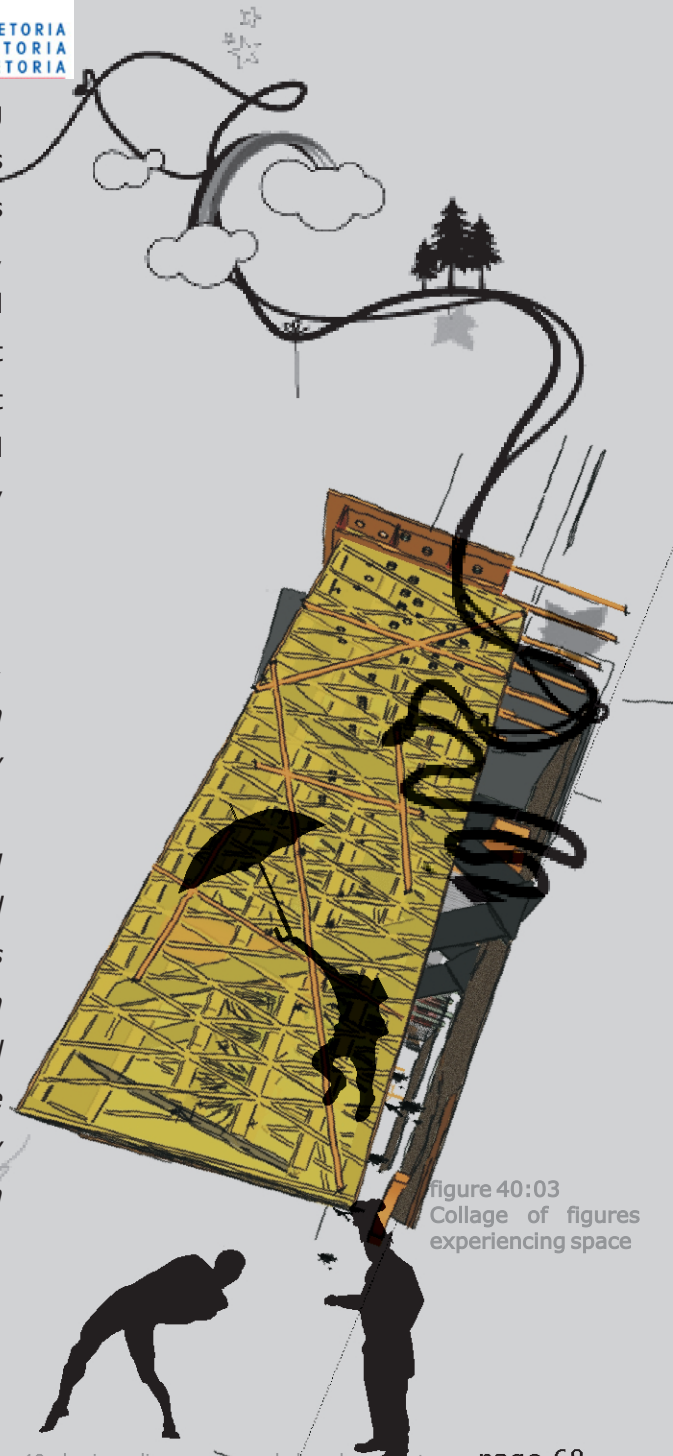


figure 40:03  
Collage of figures  
experiencing space

**the ingredients**

Boxes are highly variable receptacles of objects within. It is in this context that food can be celebrated as a performance medium. The production, the presentation, the consumption, and the disposal offer a stage on which food can become a theatrical exhibition of architecture. A column-free rectangular 'exhibition box' offers the culinary process a clean canvas for the preparation of meals and the production of space.

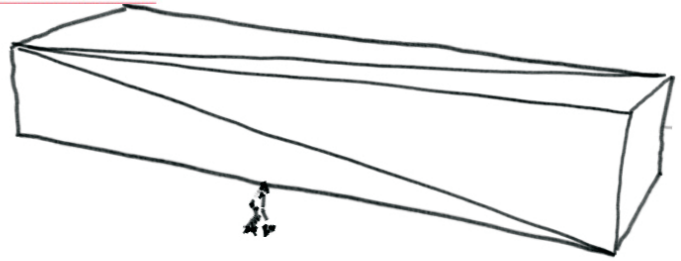


figure 40:04  
Concept 1: an Exhibition box displaying food

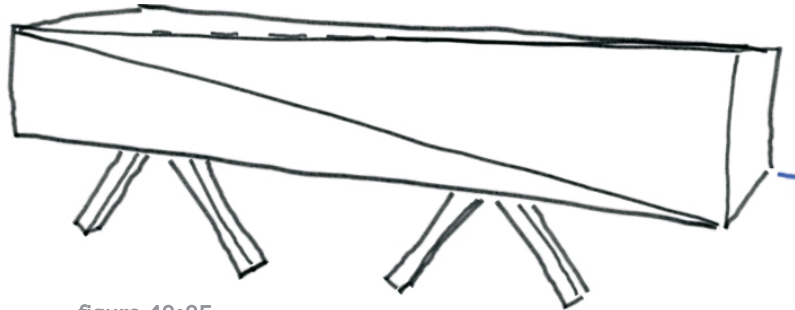


figure 40:05  
Concept 2: Lifting the box in the air

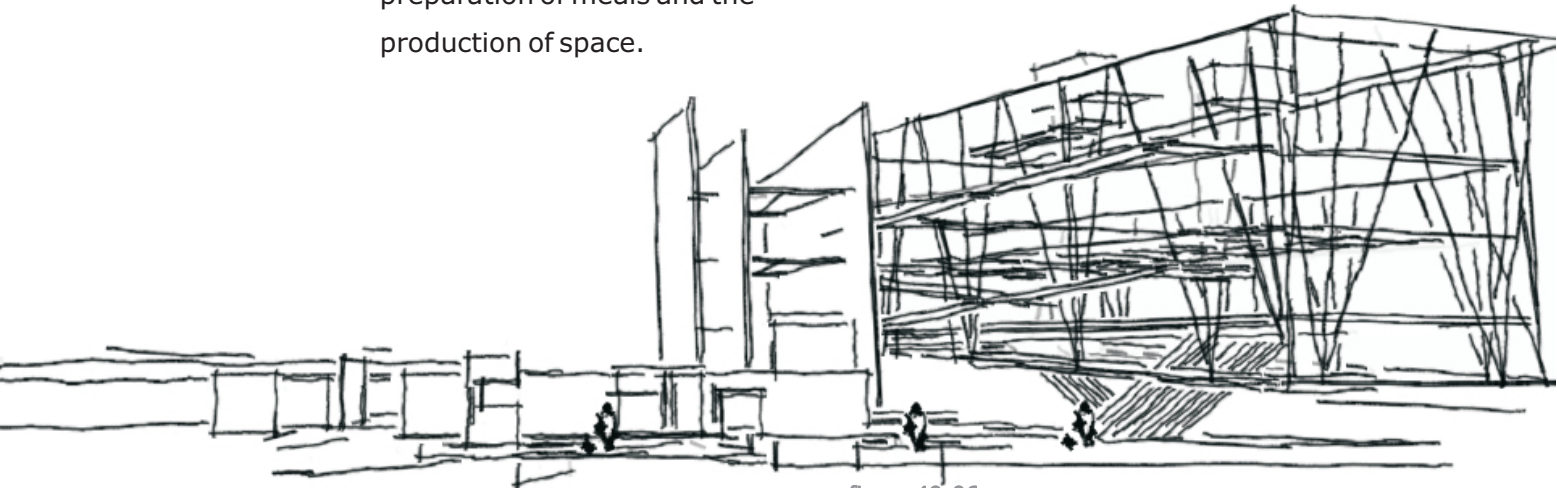


figure 40:06  
Concept 3: Exposing the functions within the box, with structural support at the base

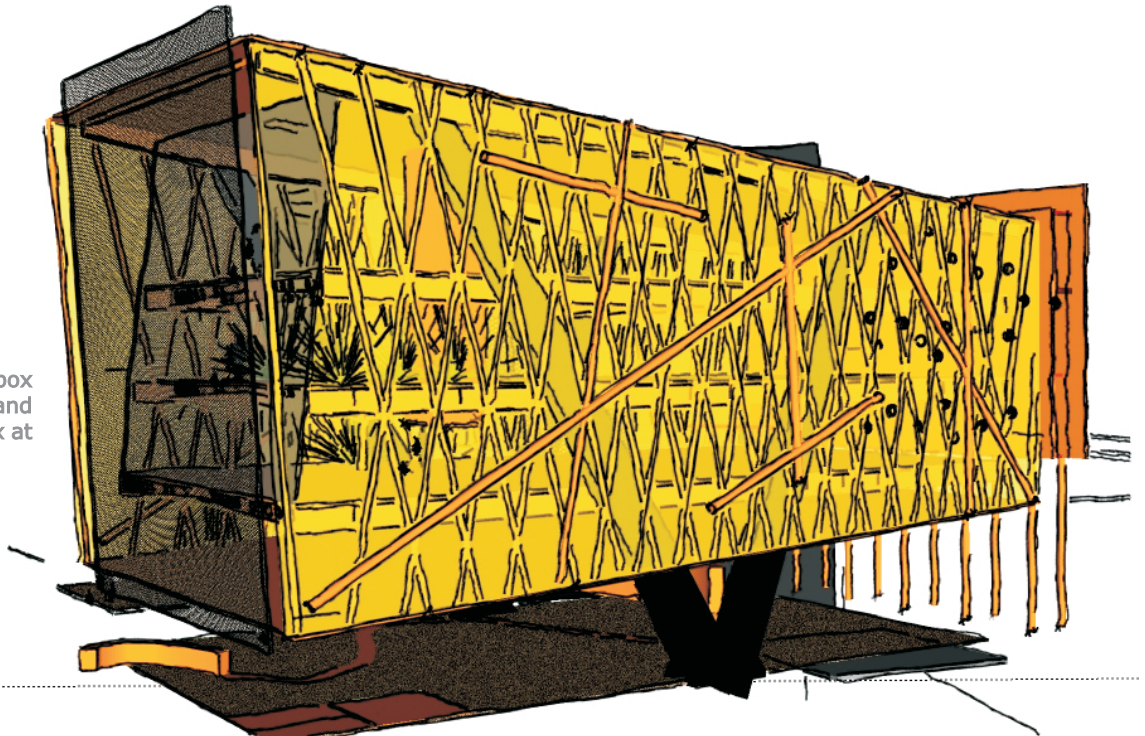


## Dancing Structure

"The silent space is the space not for the predator, it's for the terminator. Buildings want to act. They want to expose or deploy their own bodies" (Libeskind 2001:70). The sketches are thus based on a choreographer making art of structures, that are in movement, by exploring food as a structure of expression and social interaction. The sketches also explore the idea of 'dancing legs' as a medium for lifting the individual within the floating exhibition box from the ground, creating an elevated platform from which the senses can experience the city, food and, ultimately the structure.



figure 40:07  
Concept 4: Placing the box  
within another box and  
supporting the inner box at  
the roof





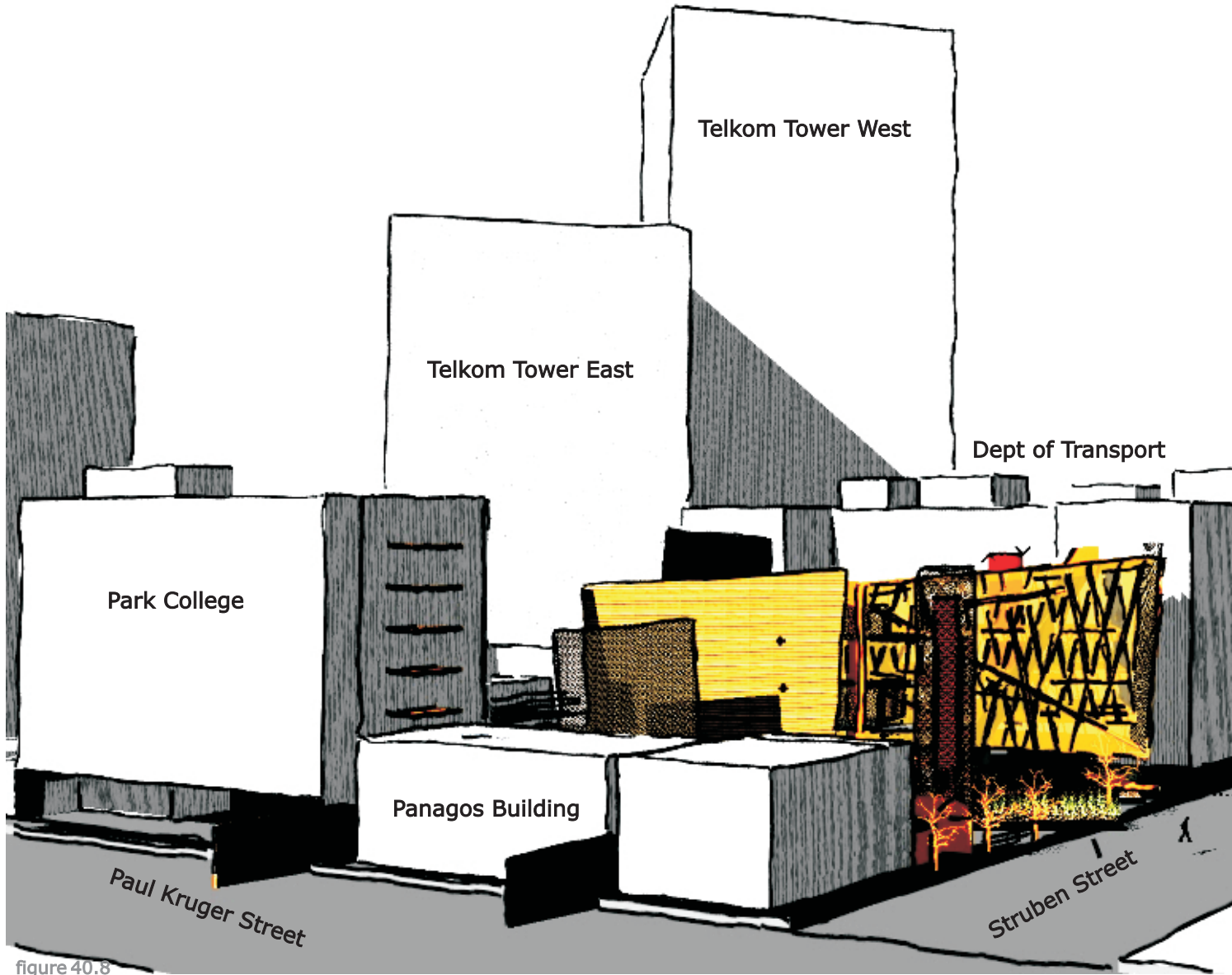
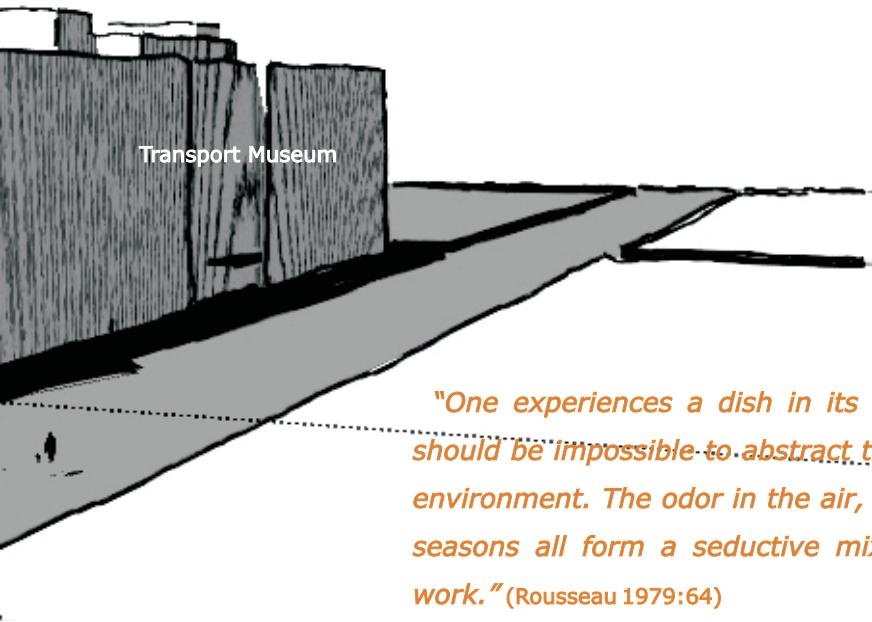


figure 40.8  
North-east perspective of cookery school  
and view of surrounding buildings

## Site approach and orientation

The building is positioned between the seven-story Department of Transport building and the group of two-story Panagos heritage buildings. It will be perceived by the motorist and pedestrian as a series of vertical and horizontal stacked layers projecting into the sky and over the road. The aim of these vertical and horizontal elements is to unsettle viewers' senses, and also to represent the different layers involved in the culinary and architectural processes.



*"One experiences a dish in its environment, it should be impossible to abstract the dish from its environment. The odor in the air, the taste of the seasons all form a seductive mix of the artists work." (Rousseau 1979:64)*



View of Wonderboom  
Nature Reserve hills



RESIDENTIAL  
N O D E S

STRUBEN STREET

TRANSPORTATION  
& COMMERCIAL NODES

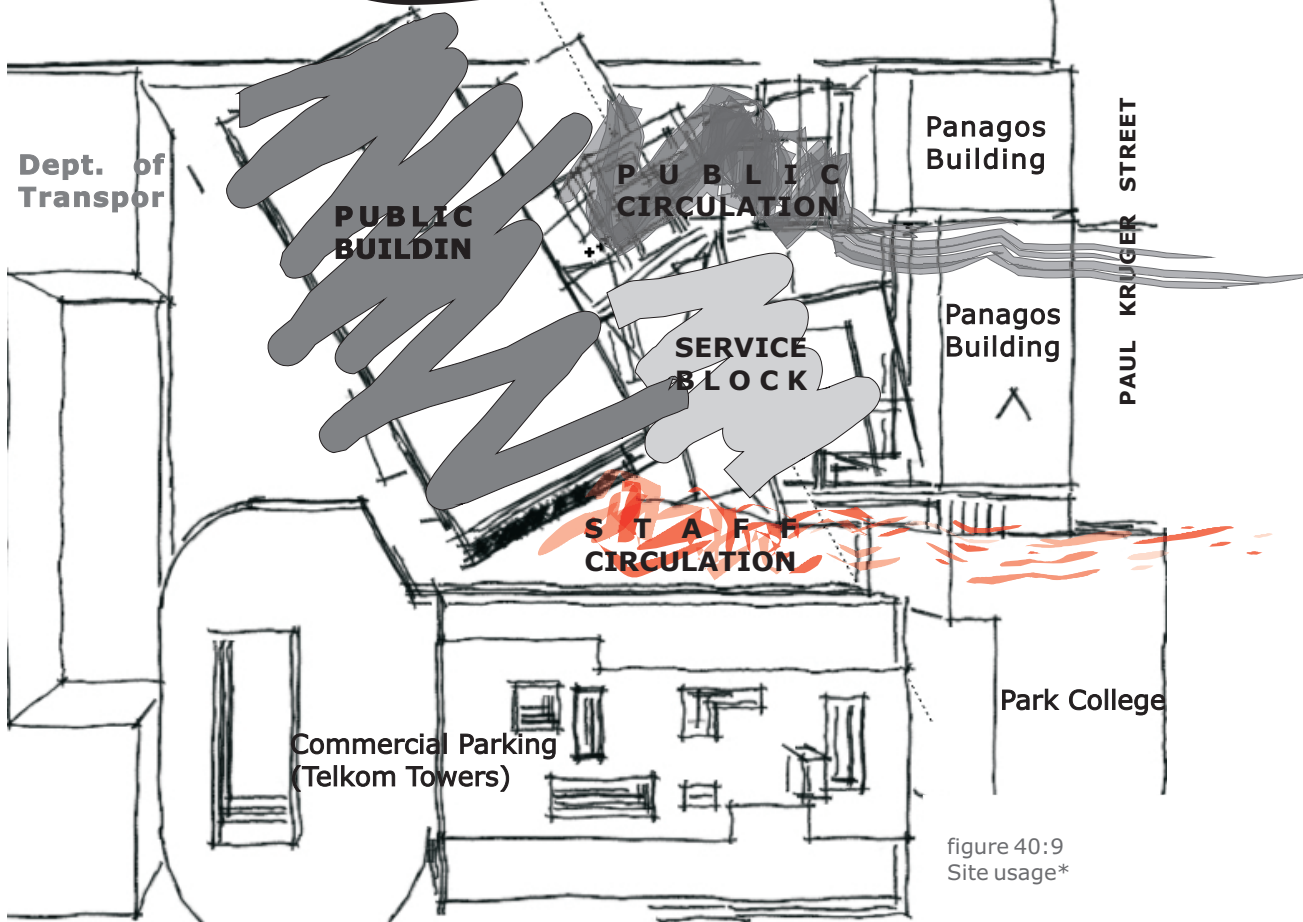


figure 40:9  
Site usage\*

## Site usage and definition

The site will be divided into public and service areas by a circulation tower. The transparent 'dancing' main building will serve as the exhibition box, connected to the vertical circulation tower and enclosed service building.

## Building orientation:

- Creating an intersection node for informing and interaction between the residential, commercial and transportation nodes
- Connecting the natural with the manmade
- Connecting main roads, existing alleyways and buildings with the exhibition box
- Announcing the destination with filtering layers of different architectural experiences and usages leading to the main building

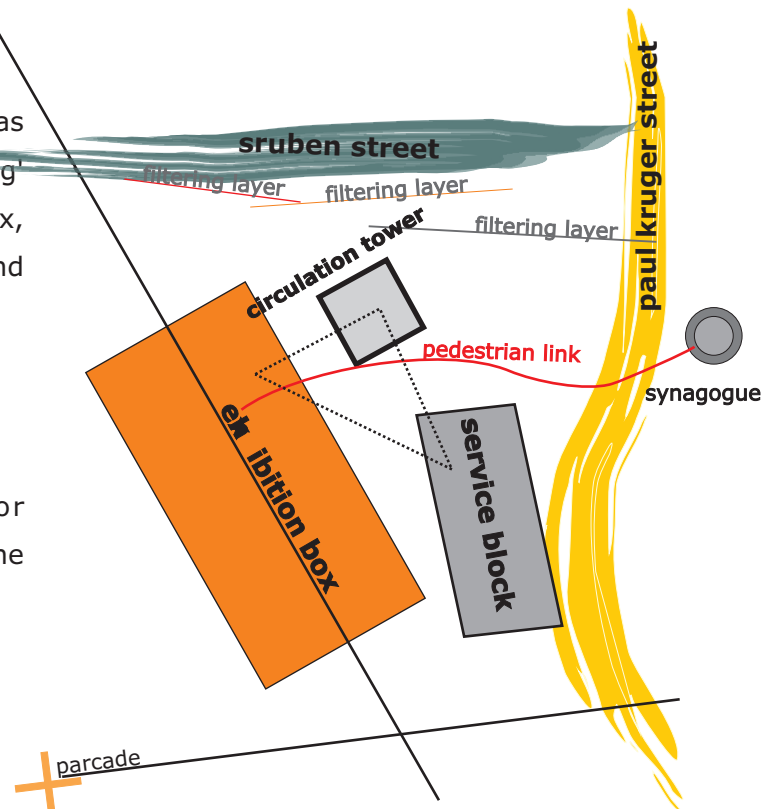


figure 40:10  
Site plan and  
orientation of  
buildings



figure 40:11  
00 Open-Air Level with  
unpredictable, individual  
spaces connecting to form a  
cohesive whole

## The Individual's Space

The individual's minds eye, fantasies and dreams interpret and experience space differently. A series of unpredictable spaces celebrating the culinary process, creating an opportunity where the individual can see, feel, hear talk and smell food. Food has become not only a powerful cultural expression, but also an alternative art form, serving as a theatrical stage where our senses can perform.

The design aims to construct a series of unpredictable spaces, forming a cohesive sensory experience, where the parallel between the preparation of meals and the production of space can be experienced.

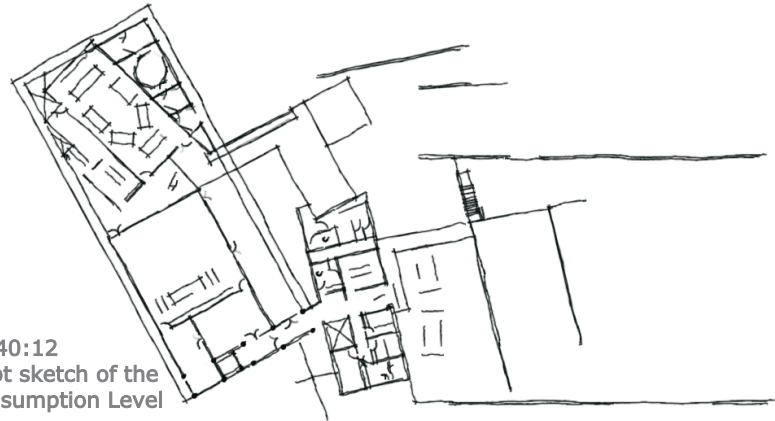


figure 40:12  
Concept sketch of the  
20 Consumption Level

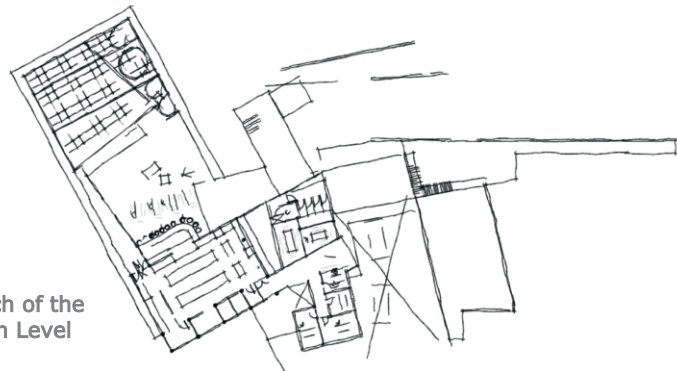


figure 40:13  
Concept sketch of the  
30 Preparation Level

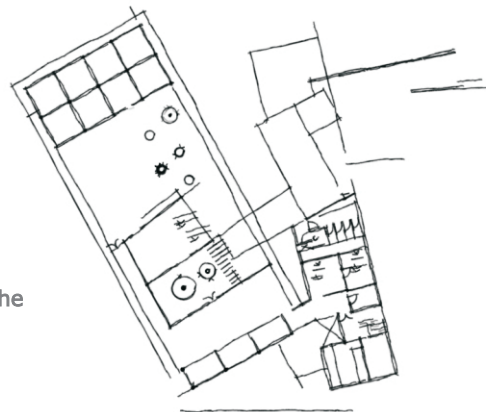


figure 40:14  
Concept sketch of the  
40 Arrivals Level

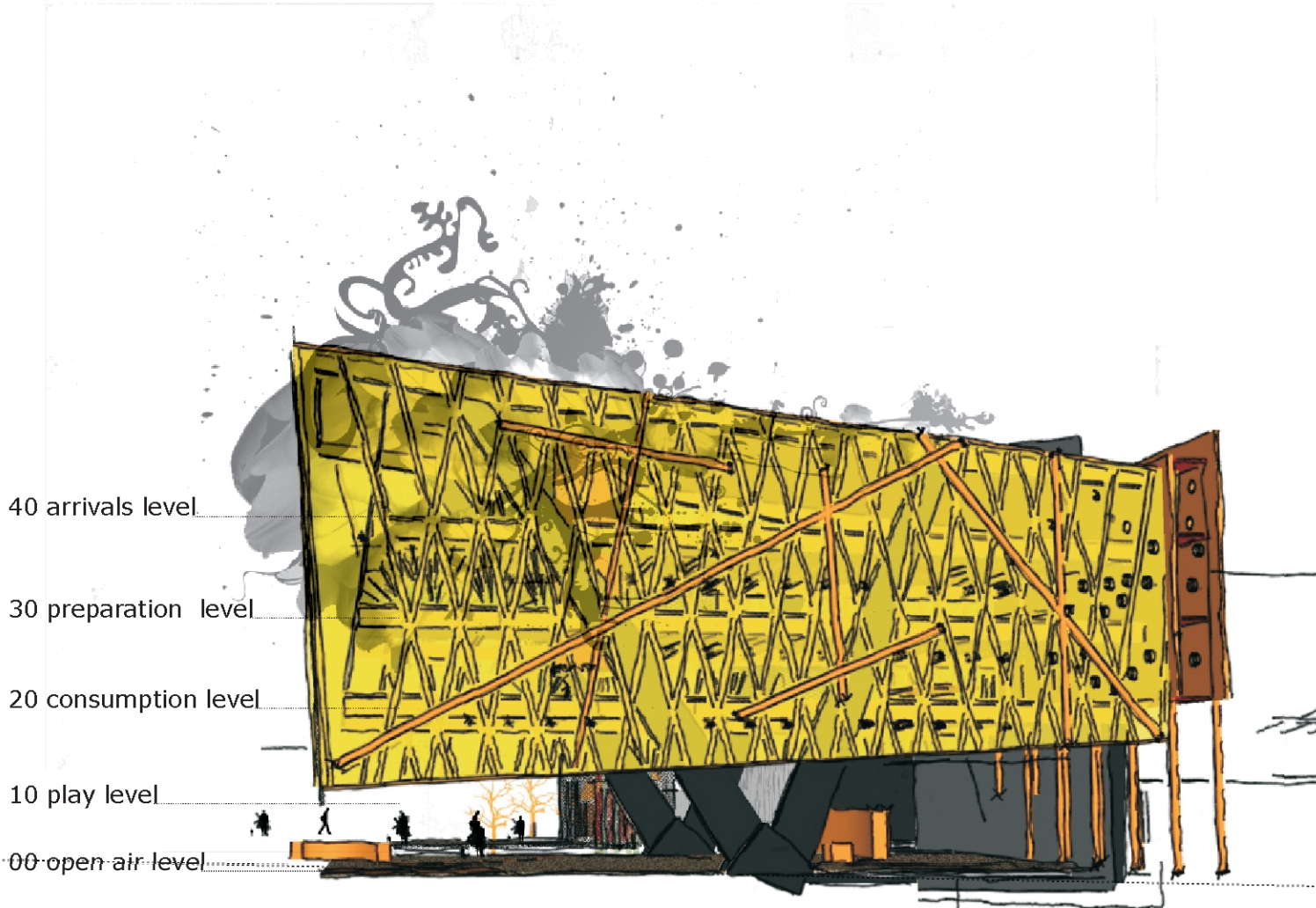


figure 40:15  
Western perspective of the  
exhibition box, showing the  
different levels

## From Plan to Section



The exhibition box will be divided into five levels, with layers of complexity rising with each floor:

- **00 Open-Air level:** A series of open-air eating areas aimed at the local businesspeople or the person en-route to the city and public transport nodes needing a quick bite and a relaxing seating area, with benches under trees, kiosks, small informal and semiformal restaurants, and platforms in different vegetation fields
- **10 Play level:** This level serves as a link to the Panagos heritage building via a roof garden
- **20 Consumption level:** Formal eating areas, a restaurant, a self-cooking area, a bar and lounges, as well as the main preparation kitchen, serving as a space for eating and for gaining entrepreneurial knowledge
- **30 Preparation level:** Cookery school classes and lecture halls for the theoretical and practical preparation of the production stage of the food cycle
- **40 Arrivals level:** A nursery level aimed at educating urban residents on the various stages of plant growing within the built environment

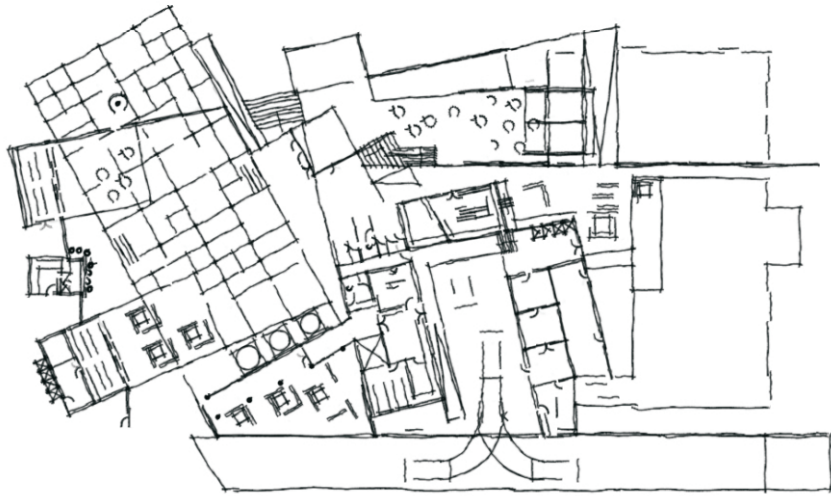
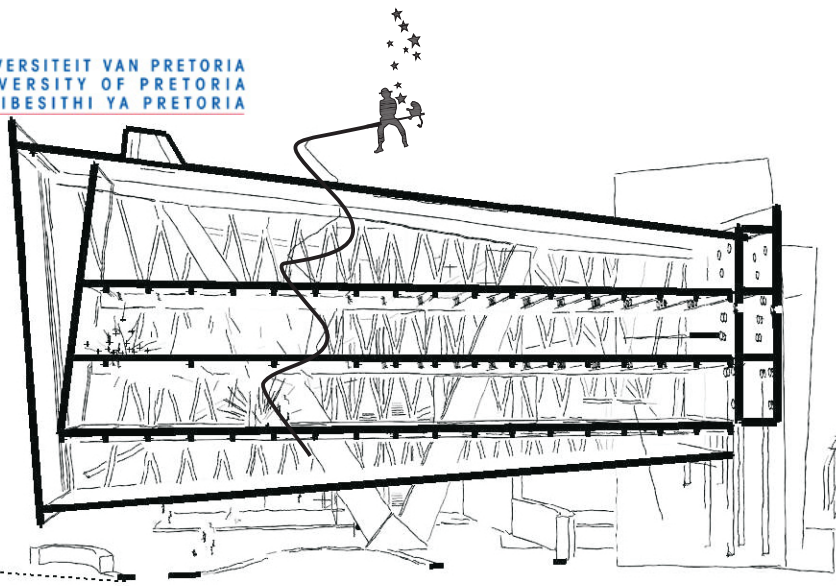


figure 40:16  
Concept sketches  
of section (above)  
and 00 Open Air  
Level (below).



## The Service Block

The service block will be divided into a visitor and a staff area. Separate circulation shafts and bridges leading to the exhibition box are also required for security reasons.

The northern side is allocated to the visitor, for its proximity to Struben Street and the proposed tram system and its abundant northern sunlight. The southern side is allocated to staff, for its proximity to the service yard and the existing servitude road leading to the parking garage.



figure 40:17  
North-east perspective of building, showing the different usages of the site

figure 40:18  
Northern perspective of building, showing the circulation tower with connecting bridges leading to the exhibition box

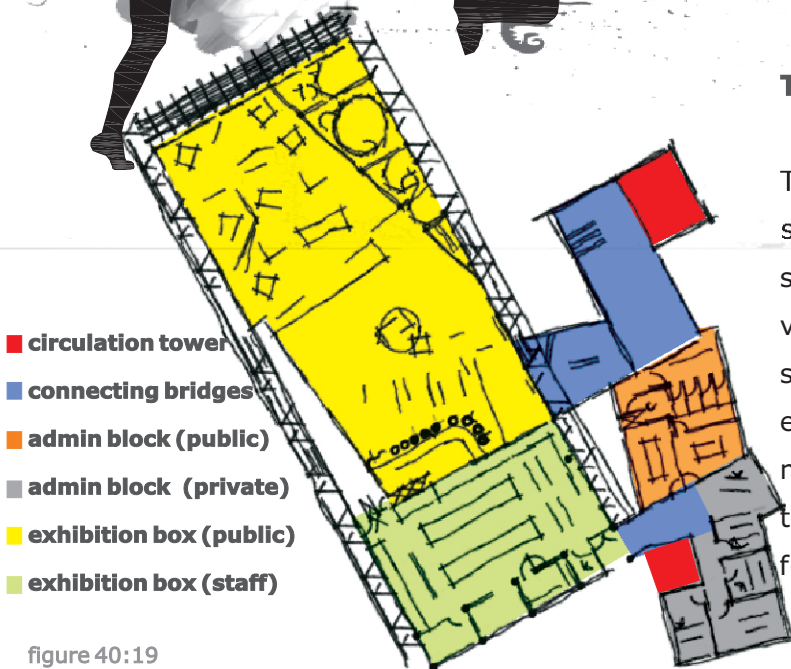


figure 40:19  
Basic layout of 20  
Consumption Level

### The Circulation Tower

The tallest building of the three, with emergency staircase wrapped around the red-painted lift shaft, has to announce the destination and vertical circulation to the visitor. The circulation shaft is oriented with a direct view towards the exhibition box, to announce the destination and minimize confusion. The orientation also aims to create a viewing platform, from which the functions within the exhibition box are displayed.



The exhibition box requires abundant natural ventilation and sunlight, and all events and functions within it had to be exposed and visible from street level.

The Pretoria CBD climate is characterized by the generally high temperatures due to the thermal mass of the built up environment. Combined with local humidity and high afternoon temperatures this causes uncomfortable heat.

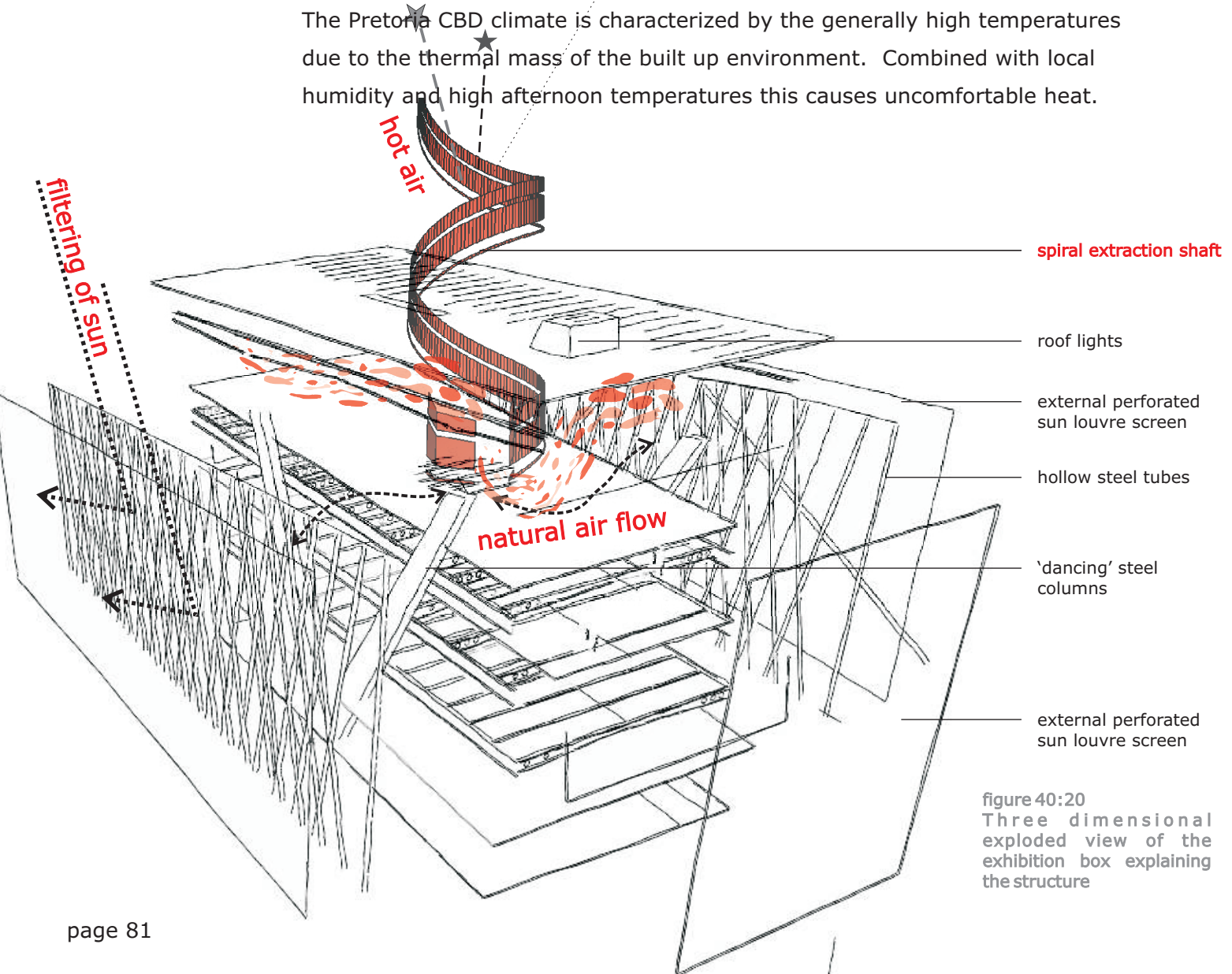
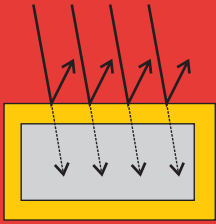
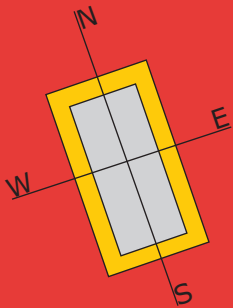


figure 40:20  
Three dimensional  
exploded view of the  
exhibition box explaining  
the structure



The first step in the design approach is to place the exhibition box within another box. The interior box will be framed by rectangular manually-operable aluminium window frames, allowing for natural ventilation. The exterior box will be covered with perforated sun louvre screens, filtering direct sunlight for interior comfort and energy savings whilst still allowing natural airflow to penetrate into the interior box.



The second step involves orienting the long sides to face east and west, with the smaller side of the rectangular exhibition box facing north. The building was selectively placed on the western edge of the site, so that all harsh western sunlight is screened by the seven-story Department of Transport building.



The structure is then lifted from the ground, allowing for holes to be punctured into the interior box's floor so that air can be extracted throughout the building.

figure 40:21  
Sketches  
explaining the  
building's  
climatic  
response



The nature of the programme of the building, a cookery school, creates another challenge: cooking. Hot air created by the processes and energy involved in cooking has to be extracted from the building. The solution is to place a vertical spiral extraction shaft in the centre of the building, with a network of horizontal ducts serving each floor and feeding the central spiral shaft with hot air to extract. During the cooler winter months, the effect of the spiral shaft could be reversed, using the hot air to warm the building with exposed flaps that are closed during the summer to extract the hot air.



Skylights in the roof allow for sunlight and natural air to filter into the interior of the arrivals level for the nursery.

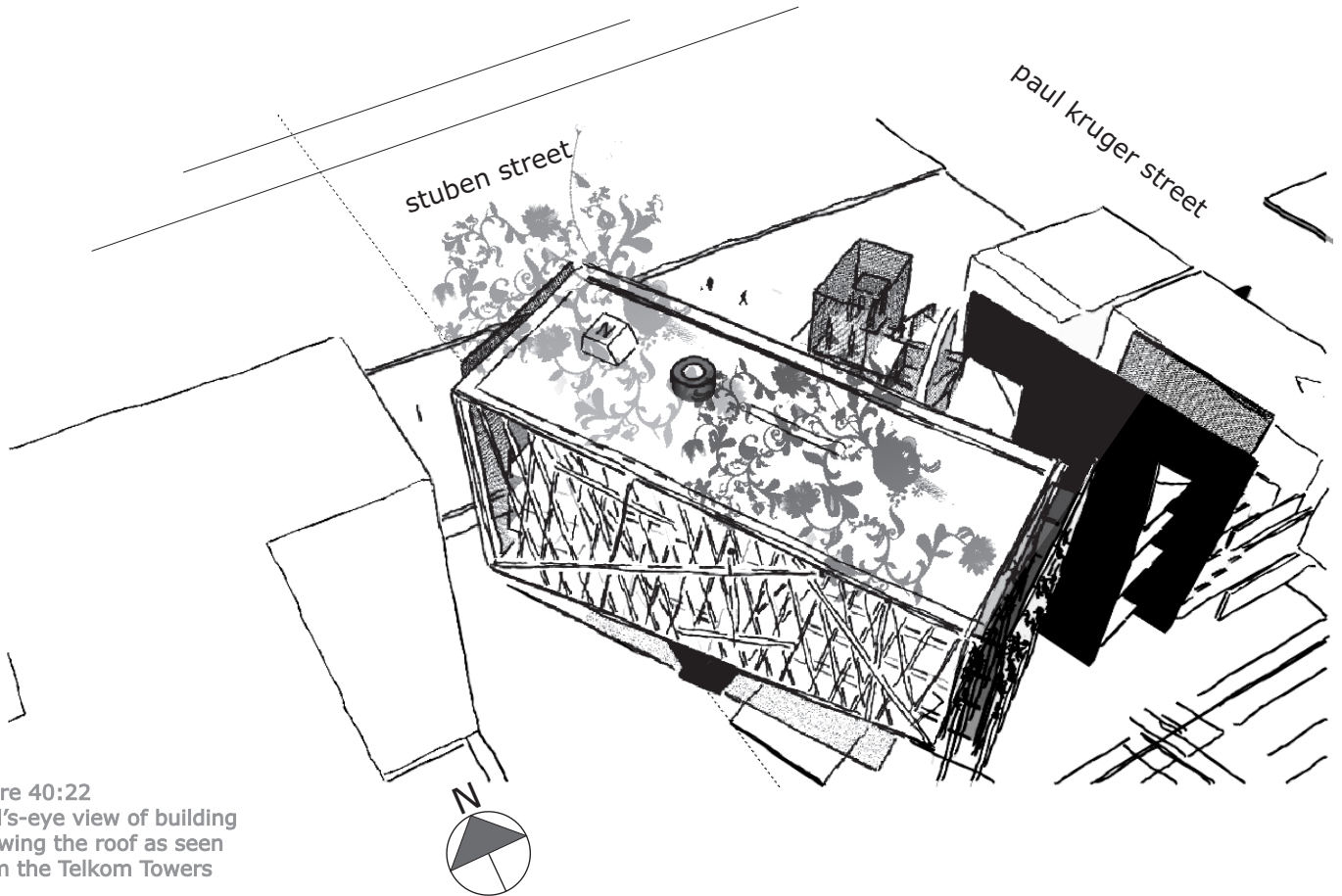


figure 40:22  
Bird's-eye view of building  
showing the roof as seen  
from the Telkom Towers

## The Roof

It is important to note that the site is located in the CBD of Pretoria, which is characterized by highrise buildings. It is located on the same block as the Telkom Towers, which consist of seventeen and twenty-eight storeys respectively. The roof thus becomes an important space that people can enjoy from the neighboring buildings. It is a concrete slab cut through by the spiral ventilation shaft. The space is further emphasized by the skylights that form exhibition boxes for the functions within. The concrete form work of the roof is also landscaped with flowing curves, forming shadow lines and patterns.

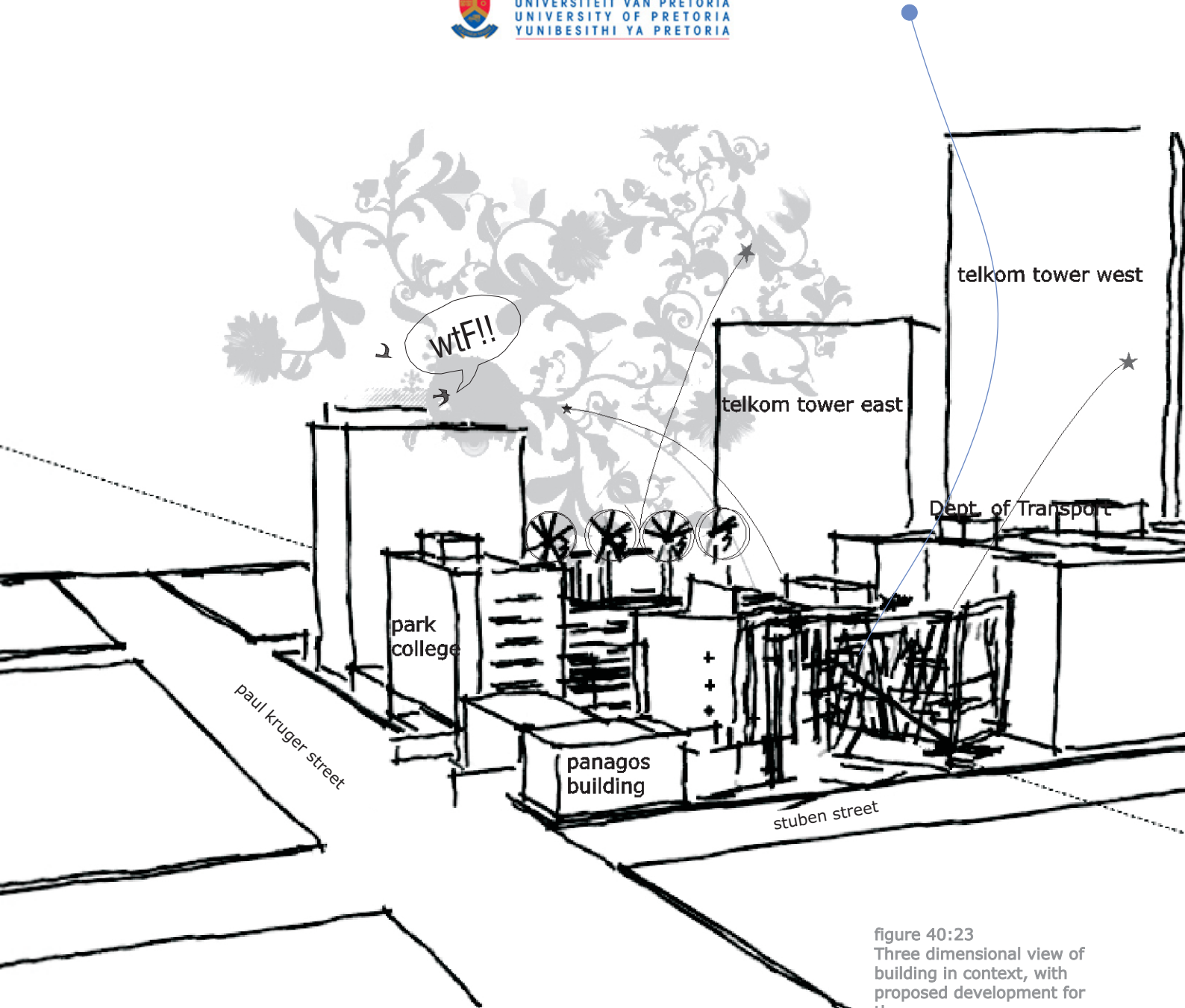


figure 40:23  
Three dimensional view of  
building in context, with  
proposed development for  
the area



## The Future

Ultimately, if the building succeeds as an exhibition space for urban food production and consumption, the existing five-storey parking garage directly behind the proposed site could be converted into a five-level stacked urban agriculture exhibition, showcasing urban farming and the use of renewable clean sources generated for the site and the city.

