



# 04

## Programme & Brief

Creativity is the ability to respond to all that goes on around us, to choose from the hundreds of possibilities of thought, feeling, action and reaction that arise within us, and to put these together in a unique response, expression, or message that carries movement, passion and meaning (Wilson, M., 1990:12).

# 4.1 State Theatre Extension

Falling into the collective body of the creative arts sector, theatre can be viewed as an expressive medium aimed at delivering a message or lesson. It has already been suggested that an investment in the creative sector can aid in the rejuvenation of inner city diversity. A new public extension to the State Theatre can start to operate in the public domain by framing social events and providing the necessary platform for participatory processes that will allow neglected groups to be active participants in this rejuvenation process. In this process, architects and planners can design more sustainable and appropriate responses. Additionally, an extension can take on an educational role for the development of theatre in the city centre.

## 4.1.1 Forum-based Theatre

A programme for extensions to the theatre firstly needs to deliver a publicly accessible model of theatre. Forum-based theatre will fill this role. An appropriate design response that deals with the specific functional and expressive needs of forum theatre will have to be investigated. Aspects of informality, activated envelope, public participation, and shared event space can be integrated to deliver a unique design response.

The theatre can also become the new venue for delivering the State Theatre's objective of showcasing new creative talent, and function as a general public space that fits into the collective continuum of public spaces. This latter aspect will be assessed in the following chapter.

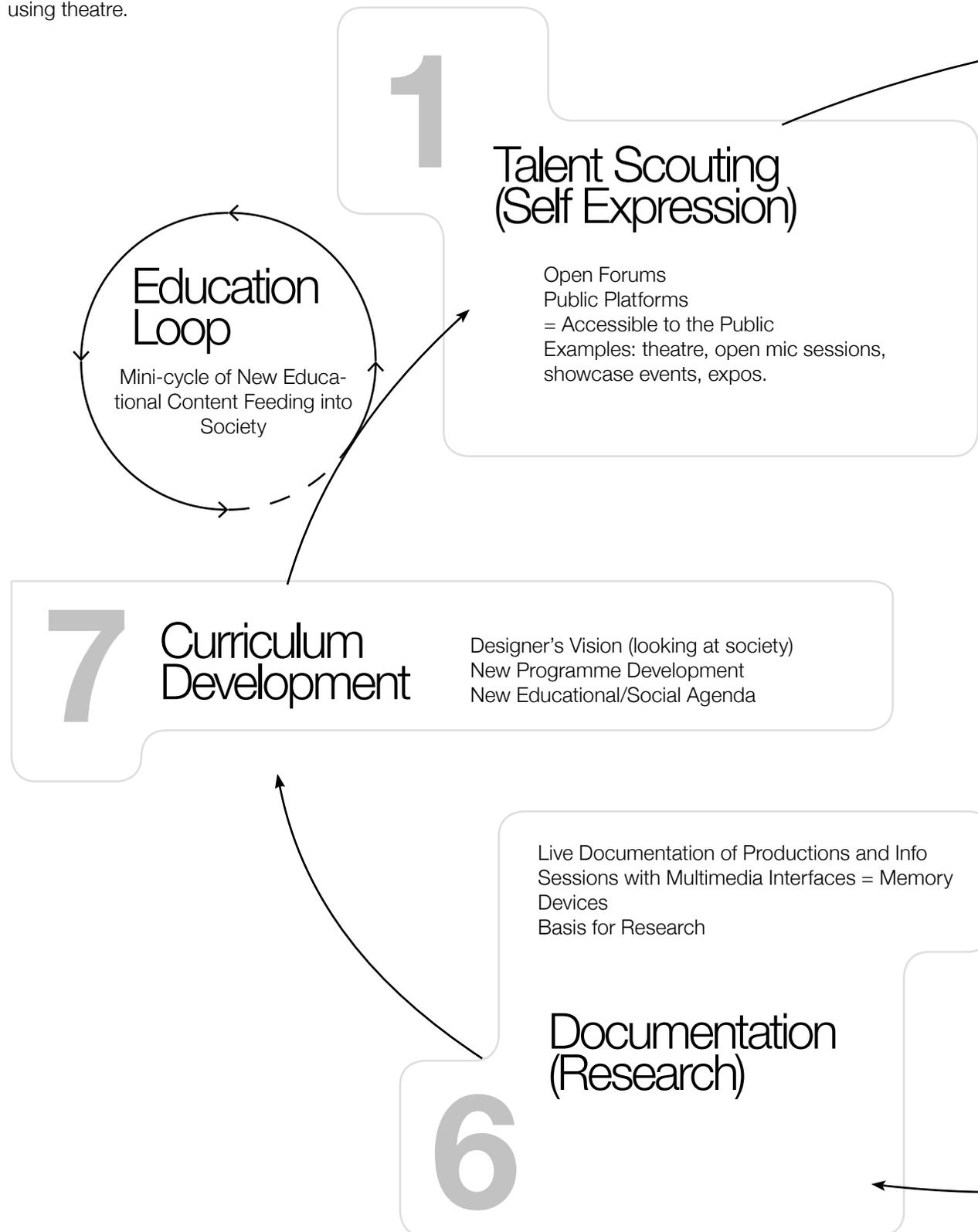
## 4.1.2 Theatre School

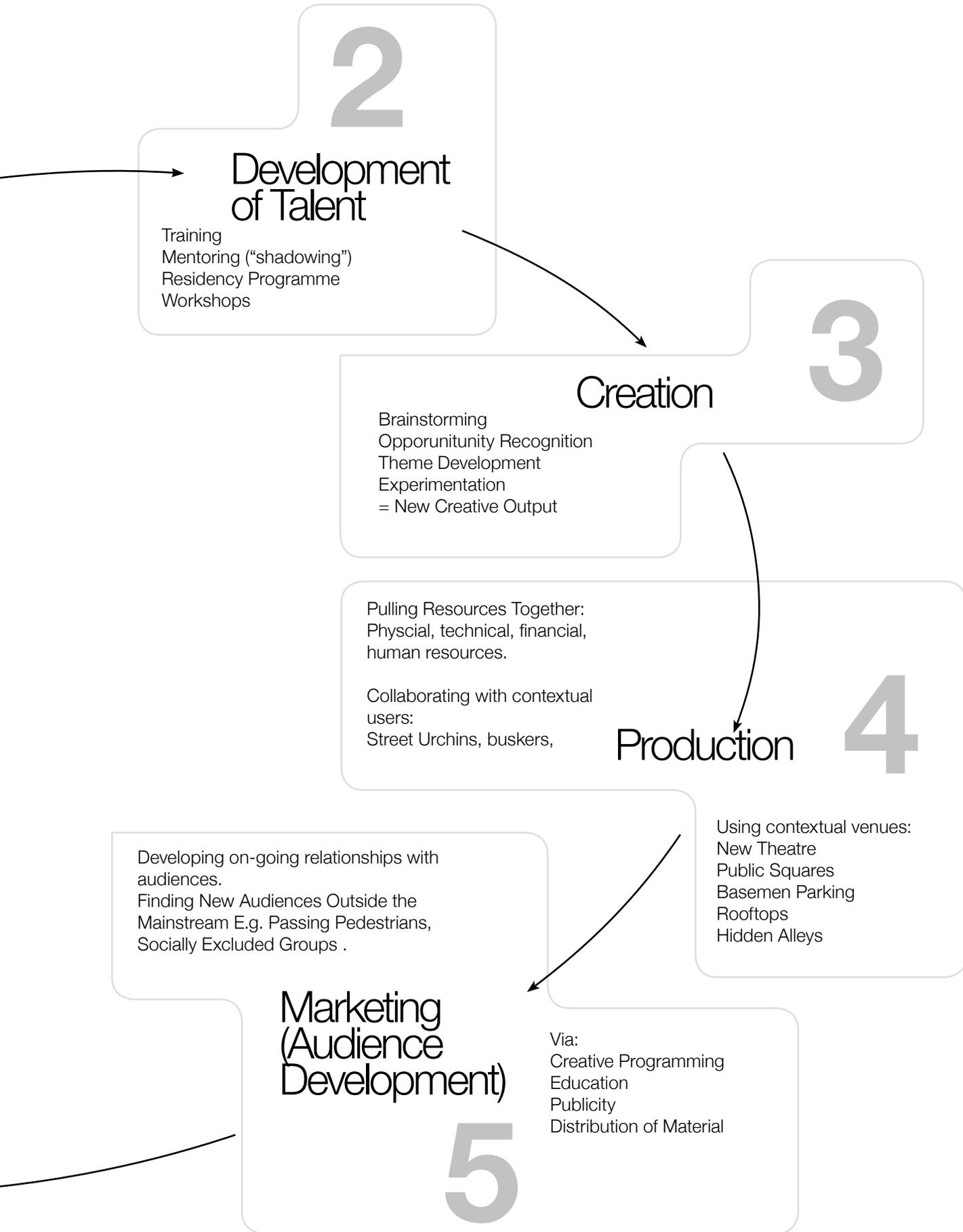
The State Theatre has identified the training of new theatre professionals as a primary developmental objective. The study proposes that an investigation be made into a new school for theatre professionals that will operate under a residency programme format. Apprentices will be enriched through various activities and skills development courses under the guidance of experienced mentors. The aforementioned design generators can begin to formalise the design of the new school, once again embodying the same principles of informality, social event spaces and participation, to mention a few.

The study will attempt to investigate how these two programmes can function in a shared environment. The theatre school might start to utilise the forum space as a playground for experimenting with public forms of theatre. Part of the training could integrate forum theatre as a means of enabling student-to-public participation.

# 4.2 The Creative Arts Production Cycle

The following is an adaptation of UNESCO's arts production cycle, remodelled to suit a new public theatre and theatre school. It demonstrates a system for incubating creative projects using theatre.





## 4.3 Creative Programming

The various stages of the creative arts production cycle can form the basis for developing a spatial accommodation schedule for the proposed theatrical interface.

- 1 Talent Scouting (Self Expression)**

Large Adaptable Space for expos, Performance Spaces (platforms), Rehearsal Space, Public Amenities such as eating and drinking venues and sanitization.
- 2 Development of Talent**

Educational and Workshop spaces such as Class rooms, Lecture Halls, Information and Media Labs, as well as Rehearsal Space. Possible residences for permanent trainees and mentors with associated spaces.
- 3 Creation**

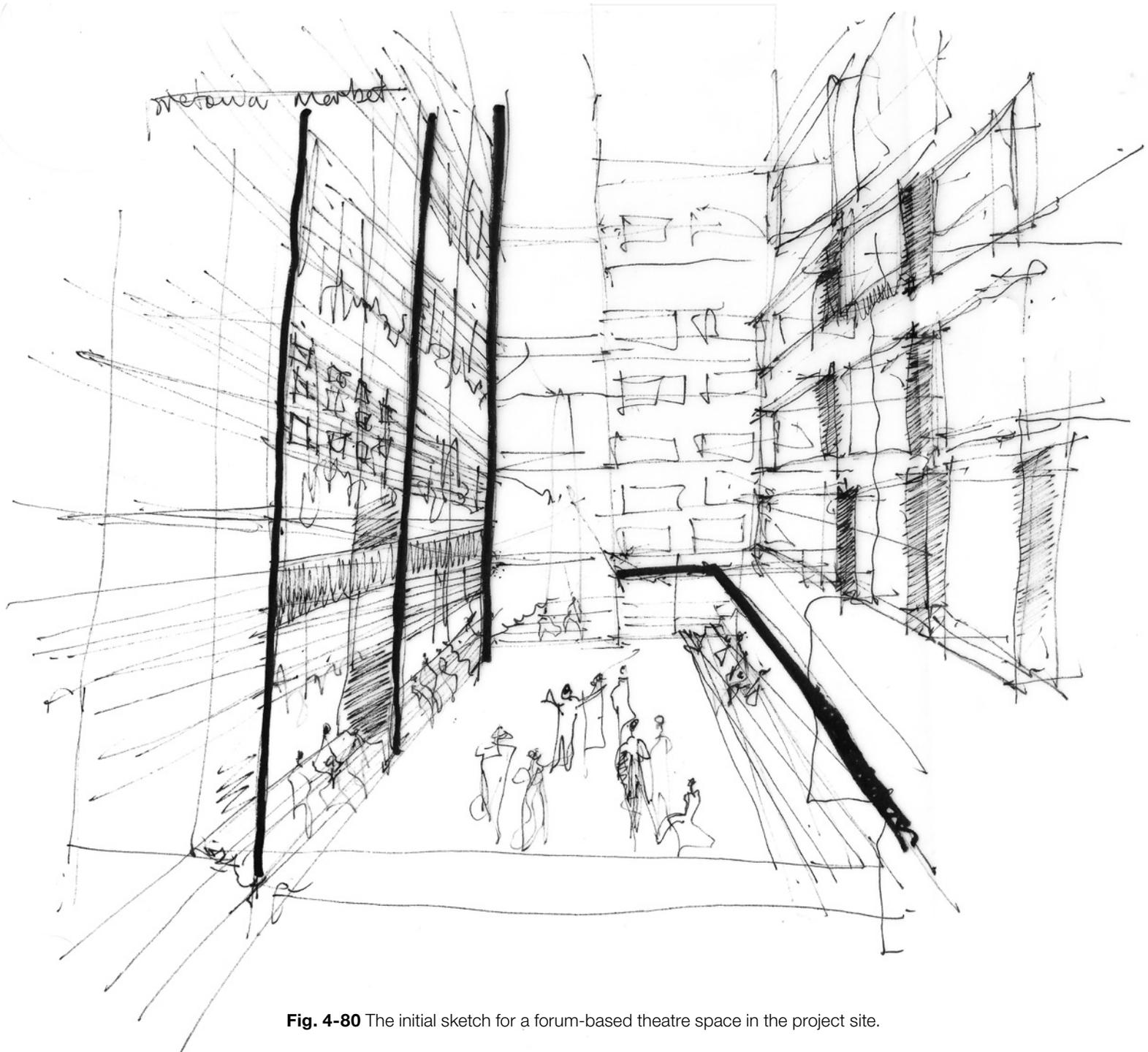
Workshop space such as Class rooms, Lecture Halls, Information and IT Labs, research library, as well as Rehearsal Space.
- 4 Production**

Adaptable theatre venue/s with client amenities (restaurant and bar), space for set production, rehearsal rooms, technical control rooms for light, sound and video production.
- 5 Marketing (Audience Development)**

Multimedia labs, broadcasting studios, art studios, spaces for sound recording/editing, and exhibition space, conference rooms, public amenities such as eating and drinking venues and cafes.
- 6 Documentation (Research)**

Archives for video and hardcopy storage, multimedia IT labs, broadcasting studio.
- 7 Curriculum Development**

Conference rooms, private offices, IT and media labs.



**Fig. 4-80** The initial sketch for a forum-based theatre space in the project site.

## 4.4 Case Study: The Market Theatre Laboratory

**Programme:** Drama school & Theatre Laboratory for aspirant theatre professionals.

**Funding source:** Grants from other institutions (Originally) Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), (Currently) Company initiated fundraisers and donations.

The market theatre laboratory is a learning space for young aspirant actors and playwrights located in Newtown, Johannesburg, and was set up in response to a need for developing talent and skills that would ensure the sustained “creation of new South African plays” (Cooke, V. Lab as Seedbed for New South African Plays).

The Laboratory was a product of its socioeconomic and political context.

Sibongiseni Mkhize, Former Chief Executive Officer  
The Market Theatre Foundation

In 1988, the Market Theatre laboratory was born out of a crisis to develop the Community Theatre sector. At that time, the natural flow of talent and creativity was being subverted by the race-based segregationist policies. The vision of the Market Theatre was to provide an experimental learning environment for talented young individuals hence the use of “laboratory” (Kani, 2011:n.d.). By placing young talent and experienced theatre professionals as mentors in a common environment, skills and knowledge transfer could be facilitated. This is similar to the creative learning processes encountered during the Cascoland festival event. The development of “self-efficacy” through skills training performs a pivotal role in ensuring the sustainability of the theatre arts industry.

A forum-based theatre in Pretoria, can provide a similar creative incubation of talent by involving professionals, students and public citizens in interactive theatre events. These interactions can be documented in order to develop curriculum for future learning.

# The Market Theatre Laboratory is more than just a well kept garden, it is a greenhouse for talent and innovations

Vanessa Cooke, Former Administrator, Market Theatre Lab.

## Performance and Theatre Skills Programme

To develop young theatre professionals, the Laboratory currently offers a two year programme with a strict enrollment and audition process which ensures that only the worthiest candidates are admitted. This is an important programme consideration due to the scarcity of resources available to the theatre sector. Funds are used to provide a sophisticated educative environment for transferring necessary skills.

## Fieldwork

The concept of fieldwork arose from the need to provide practitioners from Community Theatre projects with space to showcase their productions, and develop a professional environment for transferring skills (The Market Theatre, n.d.)

The main forms through which lab manages this is through the staging of festivals - the Community Theatre Festival and the Zwakala Festival.

## Programme Guidelines

The following is a list of likely spaces generated from the case study:

- A **Public theatre forum** with a focus on performance, public interaction, audience development and showcasing creative talents.
- Workshop space** for mentor/student interaction and the hosting of community development projects.
- Production labs** for set design and construction, lighting, sound and visual production, plus additional technical facilities.
- Rehearsal space** for students.
- Space for the **documentation and archiving** of produced and written works.
- Residential facilities** for students from communities and visiting mentors.

Incubation need not stop at the theatre arts, but could extend to other related disciplines such as dance, photography and art, thus calling for these associated spaces:

- Dance studios**
- Art studios**
- Exhibition Galleries**

The central theatre space could function as the arena for hosting theatre festivals that showcase and discover potential talents.