

S I T E S E L E C T I O N

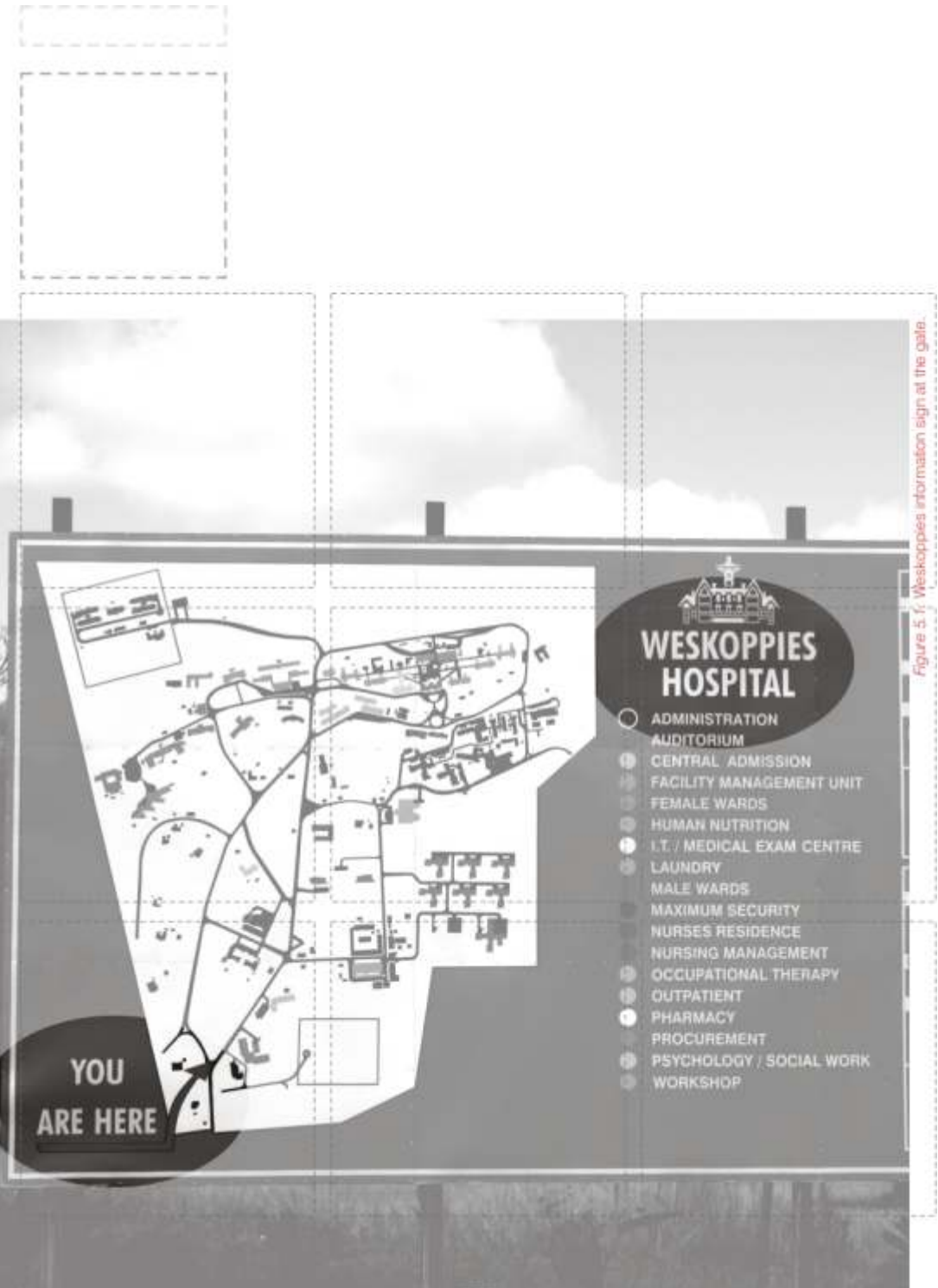


Figure 5.1: Weskoppies information sign at the gate.

## 4.1 Nature of the Problem

- The site should respond to the campus's need to link with the city.
- The site needs to address the establishment of an arrival node and enhance the sense of arrival on the campus.
- The site is situated on the threshold between the campus and the city and should be developed accordingly.
- The site is isolated and does not relate to any existing buildings directly.

## 4.2 Proposed Site

### 4.2.1 SITE SELECTION

The site was selected for the following reasons:

- It's strategic location in the gateway precinct.
- It's location in proximity to the auditorium and outpatient buildings.
- It's accessibility.
- The possibility of the development to act as a catalyst between the campus and the city and the community.



Figure 5.2: Site selection map

Scale: NOT TO SCALE

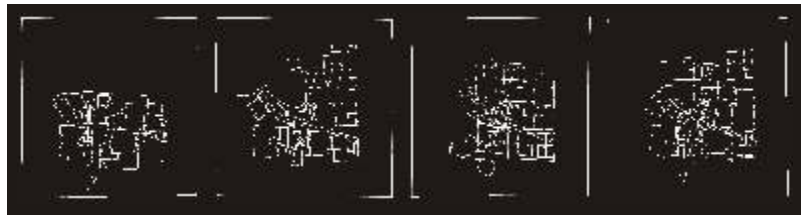


Figure 5.3: Study sketches

## 4.3 Integration with the City - Precedent

### 4.3.1 A CENTER FOR THE VISUAL ARTS, THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY COMPETITION - TROTT & BEAN, ARCHITECTS AND EISENMAN/ROBERTSON, ARCHITECTS

The project was an entry for the Ohio State University and entailed the design for a new center for the visual art at the gateway of the campus.

Peter Eisenman and the team won the competition in which, amongst others, Michael Graves competed. What gave Eisenman and the team the edge was a comprehensive understanding of the site, the needs of the students and community and the integration concept through which the project linked the community to the city. (Robertson 1984:113)

The proposal was underpinned by the following concepts:

- A sensitive approach to the significant history of the site and campus.
- Enhancing of the campus and its surroundings in a powerful, but not overpowering manner.
- The integration of the geometries of both the Columbus grid and the Oval, which is a green public place at the entrance of the campus.
- The celebration of the intersection of the two grids that symbolises the intersection of the arts with the community.
- The creation of architecture as an event, rather than a monumental “palace”. This gives importance to the place and not a single building.
- A solution that is at once a forceful presence and a delicate integration into the campus - a building that defines a new context and simultaneously defers to it and becomes part of it.



Figure 5.6: Model view



Fig. 5.3 Aerial indication position of site

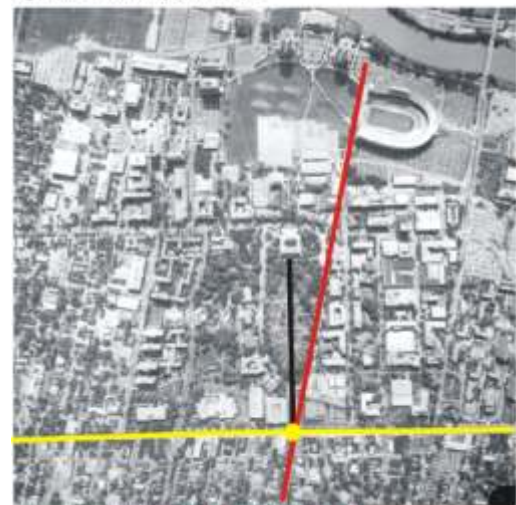


Figure 5.4: Extension of city grid into the campus.

### 4.3.2 LESSONS LEARNED

The project gives insight into issues that can be compared to those experienced on the site at Wekoppies.

Guidelines that can be derived from the precedent are the following:

- Integration of campus and city through the articulation of grids and pedestrian desire lines.
- The creation of a gateway in a subtle, unobtrusive fashion.
- The notion of capturing memory and thereby giving recognition to the context.
- The use of landscaping in articulating movement lines.



Figure 5.5: Lateral approach to Kimbell art museum from the south. The end vaults are left open as porticoes, hybrid elements that are as much landscape as architecture.

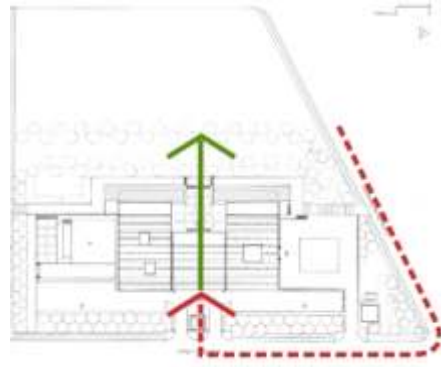


Figure 5.6: Plan of Kimbell art museum, indicating threshold concepts: distance between occupant and threshold object.

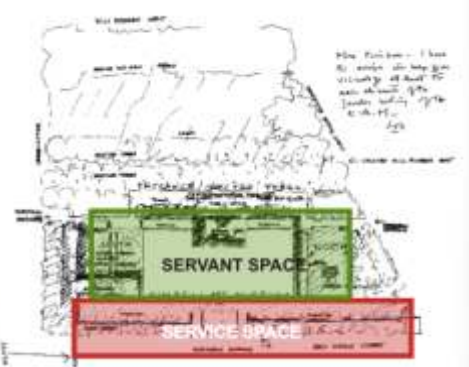


Figure 5.7: Kahn placed the service spaces at the vehicle access of the building, allowing the servant spaces to flow into the gardens (threshold space).

#### 4.4.1 THRESHOLD

There are two concepts particularly relevant to exploring the operation of a threshold:

- From psychology, the threshold as the point at which a stimulus is of sufficient intensity to begin to produce an effect, as in “threshold of consciousness” or “threshold of pain”.
- From ecology, the value of the edge between two ecosystems as the zone of highest exchange and diversity. In ecological terms, thresholds are the most important part of a system. The place where field meets forest is more important than either the field or the forest itself.

Thresholds are where transformations begin, where exchange between unlikely things occurs, and where identities are declared.

Thresholds hold the potential of an inclusive realm, where the introduction and maintenance of difference is possible. Unlike an idea of inclusion as “melting pot”, where identities are blurred to create a compromised whole, threshold as an operation entails the preservation of differences, as well as the creation of something new from their coexistence.

#### 4.4.2 PRINCIPLES THAT RELATE TO THRESHOLDS IN TERMS OF ARCHITECTURE INCLUDE:

- Because thresholds are the result of dynamic relations - in this case between the city and the campus, architecture and landscape, the community and the mentally ill - closure in terms of meaning and space is resisted.
- Hierarchy, reversal and deferral of passage and scale are some of the strategies that may contribute to a threshold's autonomy.
- The operation of threshold can provide a way to represent the identity of an institution or place in spatial terms, rather than relying on facade or other image-based means (as in the Kimbell Art Museum by Louis Kahn).
- A condition of distance between a threshold and its occupants can enable the occupants to confront and absorb the threshold from the outside, as object or image, prior to experiencing it spatially.

#### 4.4.3 KIMBELL ART MUSEUM - LOUIS KAHN

The Kimbell Art Museum owes its origin to the collection enthusiasm of Key Kimbell. Kahn was appointed in October 1966 to design the museum, located in Fort Worth, Texas. (Brawne 1992:4)

Threshold concepts that informed the building:

- The long dimension of the barrel vaults that form the building is parallel to the allees of trees and the contours, continuing the layered structure of the outdoor space.
- The main entrance is pedestrian, regulating automobile access from service spaces.
- The siting of a bosque of Yaupon trees immediately outside the main entrance, preventing full view of the building from a distance, is the first sign that the threshold is not a space merely to pass through.
- The entry is affirmed by the bosque containing the space through forming a visual screen.
- The space of the threshold, rather than the image of the facade is chosen to represent the institution.
- The threshold suggest a space of inhabitation through the modification of climate, the deep shade of the bosque, the reflection of water on the underside of the porticoes, and the sound of water cascading to the pools. What is typically a place of passage, becomes a place of rest.

#### 4.4.4 LESSONS LEARNED

- Physical distance induces a contemplative relationship with the threshold artifact that temporarily shifts emphasis and works to delay passage.
- Through the containment of the threshold space and the involvement of all senses, including the body through activity, threshold space can become a place and not merely a “passing through space”.
- The direct flow from servant space to threshold space forms a continuum of concept, allowing the occupant to grow accustomed to the threshold.

## 4.4 The Site as a Threshold – Precedents

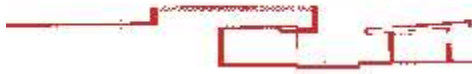


Figure 5.8: Section of pool complex

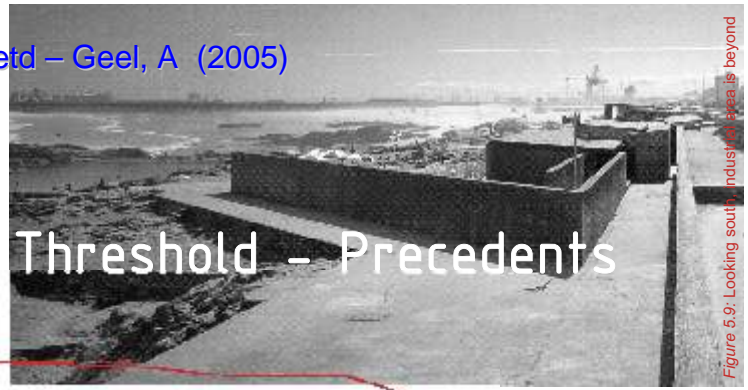


Figure 5.9: Looking south. Industry area is beyond

### 4.4.5 MUNICIPAL OCEAN SWIMMING POOL - ALVARO SIZA

The municipal ocean swimming pool complex is located on an exposed and rocky stretch of the Atlantic coast at Leça de Palmeira, Matushinos, Portugal. The project consist of two swimming pools: a rectangular one for adults at the shoreline, and a smaller semicircular one for children adjacent to a protected sand beach. Ramps and walkways connect the pools with sunbathing platforms, a café situated on a large terrace, changing facilities, and the coastal road.

Siza's architecture defines multiple thresholds between land and sea, constructed and natural, road and beach. This expansive site with its endless horizon and uncontrollable sea is made representable and inhabitable through the overlaying of scales of body, building and landscape. The project engages the regional scale of the rocky coastal landscape, but also represents smaller dimensions of human activity.

The architect transported town and coast into formal, spatial and material operations of threshold. While a functionally driven solution would merely have made it easier to pass from road to ocean, the project multiplies the layers of the site to make the passage through it more memorable.

The dialog between the road and the sea is facilitated through the use of architecture. Inland parallel layers of similarly dimensioned vertical and horizontal surfaces are formed - an architecture that allows itself to integrate with the road. These layers become progressively fragmented until the sea finally enters the form of the architecture.

The project is sited so that the roofs of the concrete building containing the checkroom, changing rooms, toilets and bar barely rise above the level of the road. This marks the beginning o a journey that heightens the transformation that occurs between the road and the water's edge.

Visitors penetrate the thickness of the linear concrete building in stages, alternating between dark and light, compression and release. As they descend the entry ramp, whose walls angle inward to create a forced perspective, visitors lose sight of the sea along a route where the program is discovered rather than announced.

Passing through the showers, visitors emerge finally onto a bridge, surrounded by animated swimmers and sunbathers, children running back and forth underneath, and the roaring presence of the panoramic horizon of the open ocean.

### 4.4.6 LESSONS LEARNED

- The site as a threshold becomes habitable through the overlay of scales.
- Spaces, forms and material can signify operation of threshold.
- Multiple layers of development makes the passage through the threshold an event.

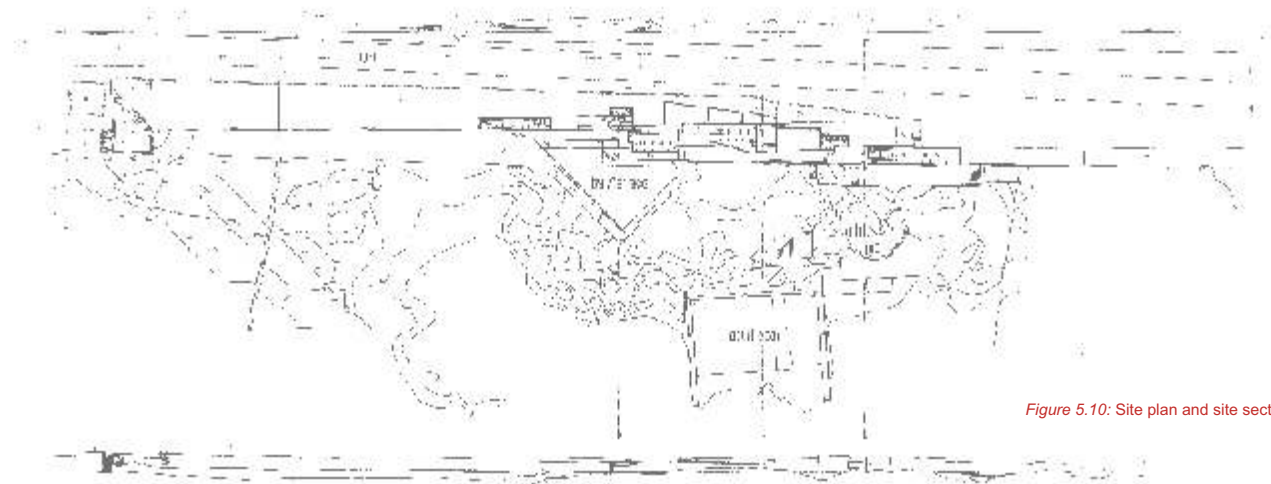


Figure 5.10: Site plan and site section

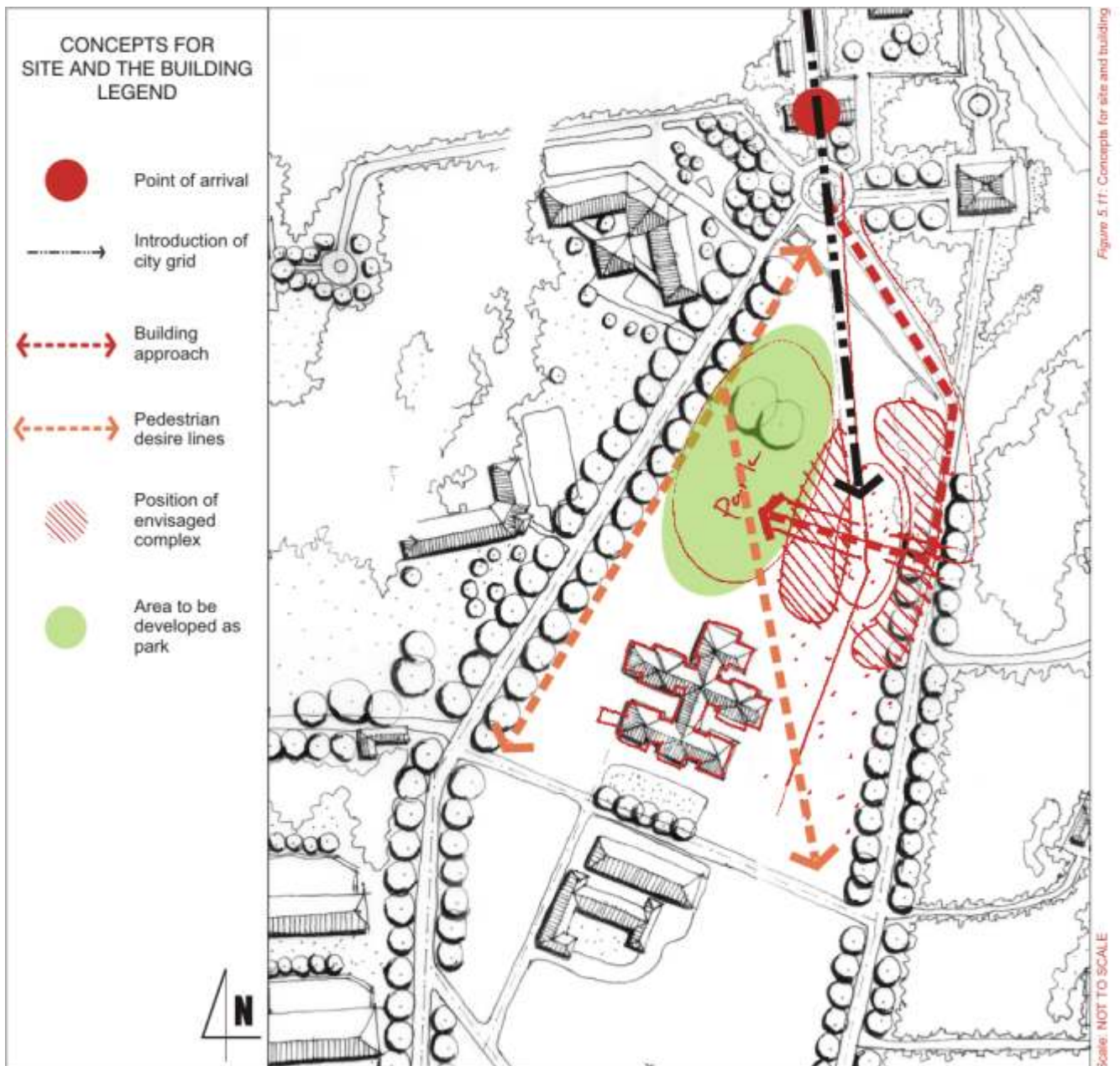
“...a dynamic sequence of spaces, rather than a monumental ‘place’”.

## 4.5 Conclusion

### 4.5.1 VISION FOR THE SITE

The intension of the development of the site would be to add an architecturally significant setting for the community treatment facility on the hospital grounds.

The development comprises of two main components: the building complex and the park. The social platform will be created by the site as a whole, since an attempt to create isolated buildings would fail to do what the center must achieve above all: project treatment and healing into the life of the campus and gather the community at large on many and diverse occasions.



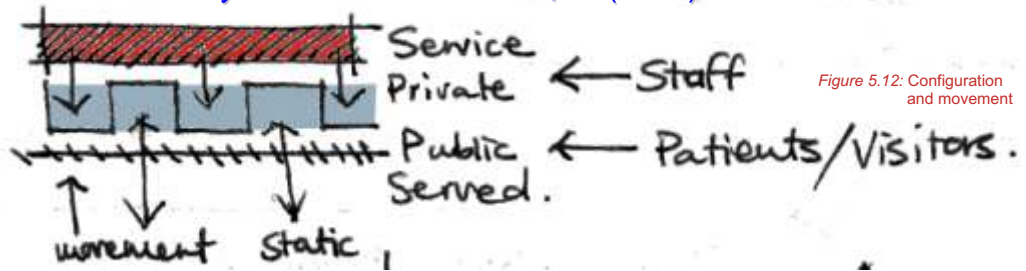


Figure 5.12: Configuration and movement

#### 4.5.2 INTEGRATION THROUGH INTRODUCTION OF CITY AND SITE GRID

The concept is the introduction of the geometry of the city grid into the new complex. The intersection created by the axes of the city grid and complex grid marks the formation of a platform for social integration.

The public green will define the intersection of the grids and thus symbolize the intersection of the treatment and wellness facility with the city - or an institution within the city.

#### 4.5.3 INTEGRATION THROUGH MOVEMENT LINES

The structuring of the building to accommodate movement lines integrates the building and the site into a continuous set of events. The building guides the pedestrian and welcomes him. The threshold is also strengthened and made identifiable through the structuring of its nature.

Movement through the complex implies a transparent process which challenges the concept of the traditional institutional building.

#### 4.5.4 POINT OF ARRIVAL/ BUILDING APPROACH AND SERVICE AND SERVED SPACES

The roundabout approach to the building increases the sense of threshold and at the same time allows the viewer to comprehend the threshold object before entering.

The different routes for vehicles and pedestrians allow the pedestrian to gain direct access to the served spaces and the parking to become part of the service space.

#### 4.5.5 SERVICE AND SERVED

A stronger continuity of space from the buildings to the threshold space, the park, can be achieved by placing the served spaces in direct relation to the public green. This will locate service areas to the back of the complex, which form an edge to the street and a buffer between the vehicular movement and the served spaces.

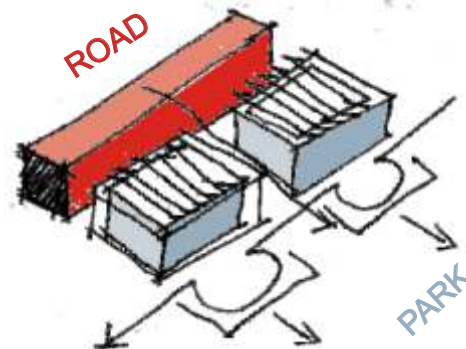
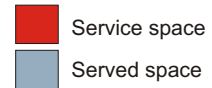


Figure 5.13: Service and served spaces

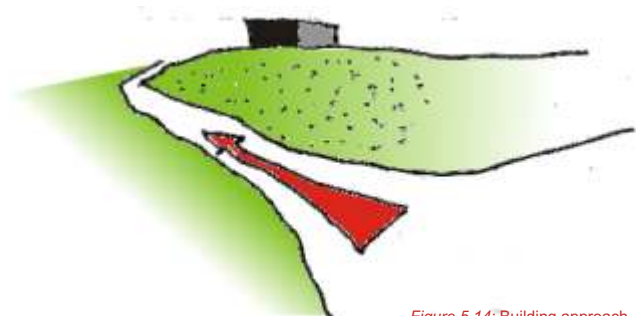


Figure 5.14: Building approach

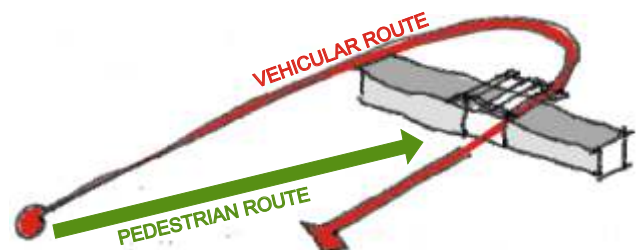


Figure 5.15: Building approach