

My personal view pertaining to architectural design and philosophy

Architectural Model exhibit
Pompidou Centre, Paris



Fig.88



Fig.90

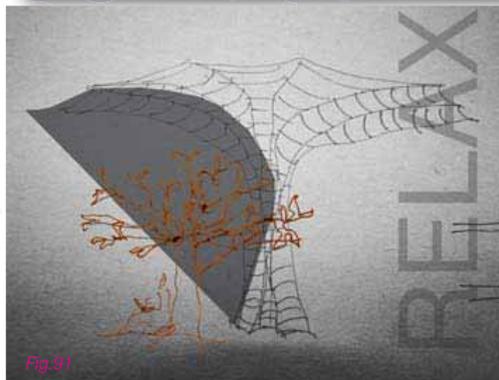


Fig.91

Social behaviour in cool space under tree



Fig.89



Fig.92

Fragment of activity being excavated

Place of dwelling vs Building

Place of dwelling

A dwelling is a description of a system of spaces and non-spaces or an organisation of places that facilitates human behaviour. It is associated with architectural fabric, but is not controlled by it as it is purely a series of places which together form a habitat or cave in which dwelling occurs. A habitat could be expressed in an architectural manner of which the expression is controlled by the architect or builder.

Dwelling is a humanistic act which is exercised in a defined space – it is essentially human behaviour. A dwelling is a place where a person belongs and where he or she finds 'home'/shelter or a social connection. It is a habitat for being, a vehicle for the telling of stories, a canvas for relaying societal myths a stage for the theatre of everyday life. (Frederick 2007, 84)

A dwelling has these characteristics:

- Systematic Spaces and non-spaces
- Facilitates dwelling
- Belonging
- Emotional reaction

This reaction is based on cognitive brain function. It is completely connected to a human's feelings: Joy, hate, sorrow, love, happiness, fear etc. It is defined by one's soul and being. It is not tangible or clear, but personal.

It is irrational and creative.

Building

A building is a human constructed structure that becomes a static place that contains spaces and non-spaces. A building is very dependent on its designers and engineers to be a tough and effective structure.

“A proper building is responsible to universal knowledge and is wholly honest in the expression of its functions and materials.”
(Frederick 2007, 84)

A building has these characteristics:

- Accessible
- Functional
- Safe/Secure
- Sustainable
- Cost effective
- Aesthetic
- Productive
- Historic

These characteristics are seen as the ingredients to a successful Whole Building.
(Prowler 2008)

A building is created on the reaction of sensation.

This reaction is based on experience and human awareness. The reaction is stimulated by the senses by physical nerves in your body.

This reaction is the most basic core of human nature as this awareness set one's mind on the real necessities of requirements.

It is rational and is the manner which prehistoric civilisations constructed their environments.



Lloyd's of London - Richard Rogers



Fig.93



Fig.94 Fig.95

Pompidou, Paris

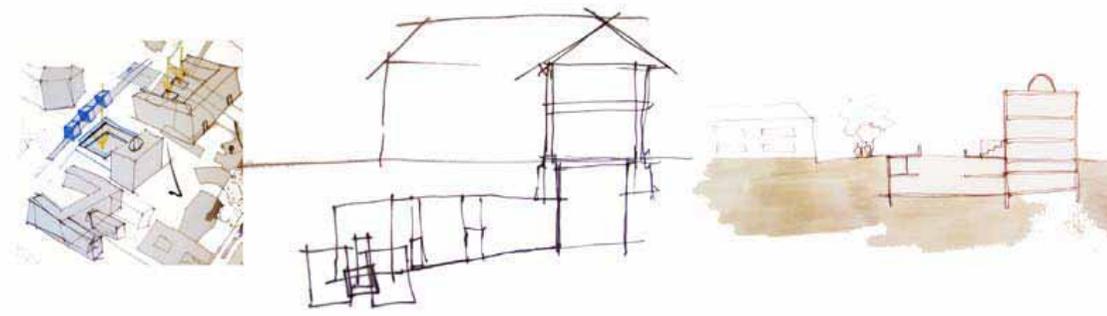


Fig.96

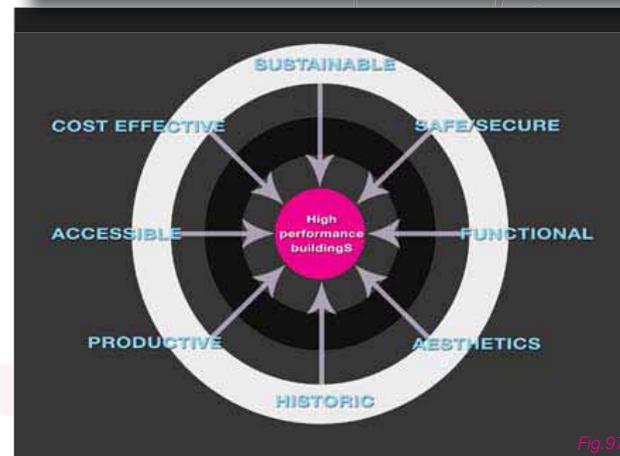
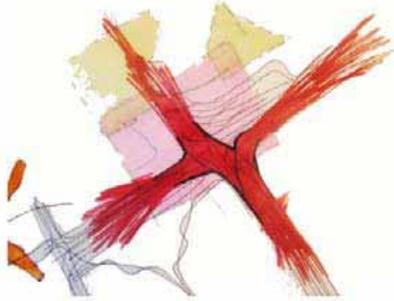


Fig.97



In reaction to increasingly emotional architectural solutions which seemingly excite our lives today – it has been decided to submerge the building into the ground, releasing it from ideas of building and iconic aesthetics. The purpose is to focus mainly on the use and function of the building and how the program should be organized to function successfully.

The structure must become a cave and not a building, bringing it closer to the ideal of dwelling. It must be hidden and should not become another iconic edificial expression on Campus.

Despite these views on architectural theory it is also a very logical and sensible solution to 'bury' a building:

- It minimises its impact on surrounding buildings and landscape.
- Heating and cooling costs can be largely reduced due to lack of exposed facades: energy efficiency. It reduces effects of noise and even vibration.
- With the limited access points around a subterranean building it becomes more secure against vandals, thieves and terrorists.
- Maintenance costs are reduced significantly due to less external surfaces that have to be repainted or cleaned due to weathering.
- Most importantly is the fact that it creates or preserves open spaces in dense areas. (Hall 2008)

"Like trees, cities have roots. The spaces, materialities, imaginaries, experiences and processes of cities delve deep into subterranean world as well as towering vertically into the sky. At a time when underground spaces are being bombed by terrorists, networked by infrastructure operators, colonised by the military, excavated ever-more deeply by engineers and planners, and stalked intensively by a whole range of fictional narratives, archaeologists, historians, subterranean explorers and tourist guides. It is time for the urban subterranean to emerge as more than an esoteric interest within urban studies... and the potential for constructing a more symmetrical view of the relations between the surface and the sub-surface ." (Graham 2005)

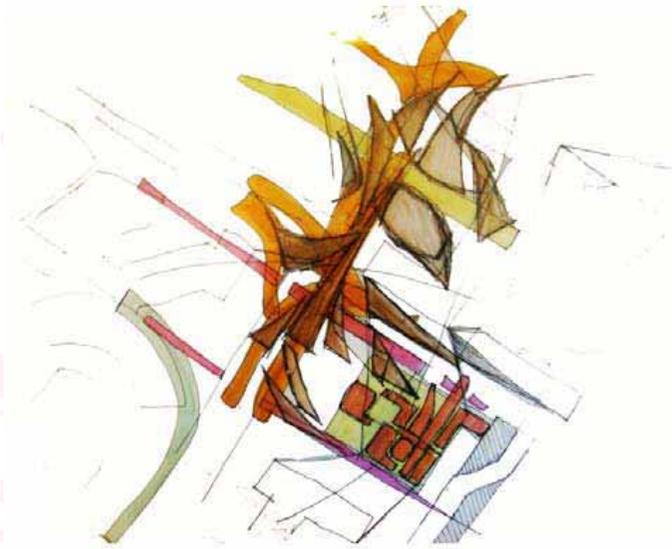


Fig.98

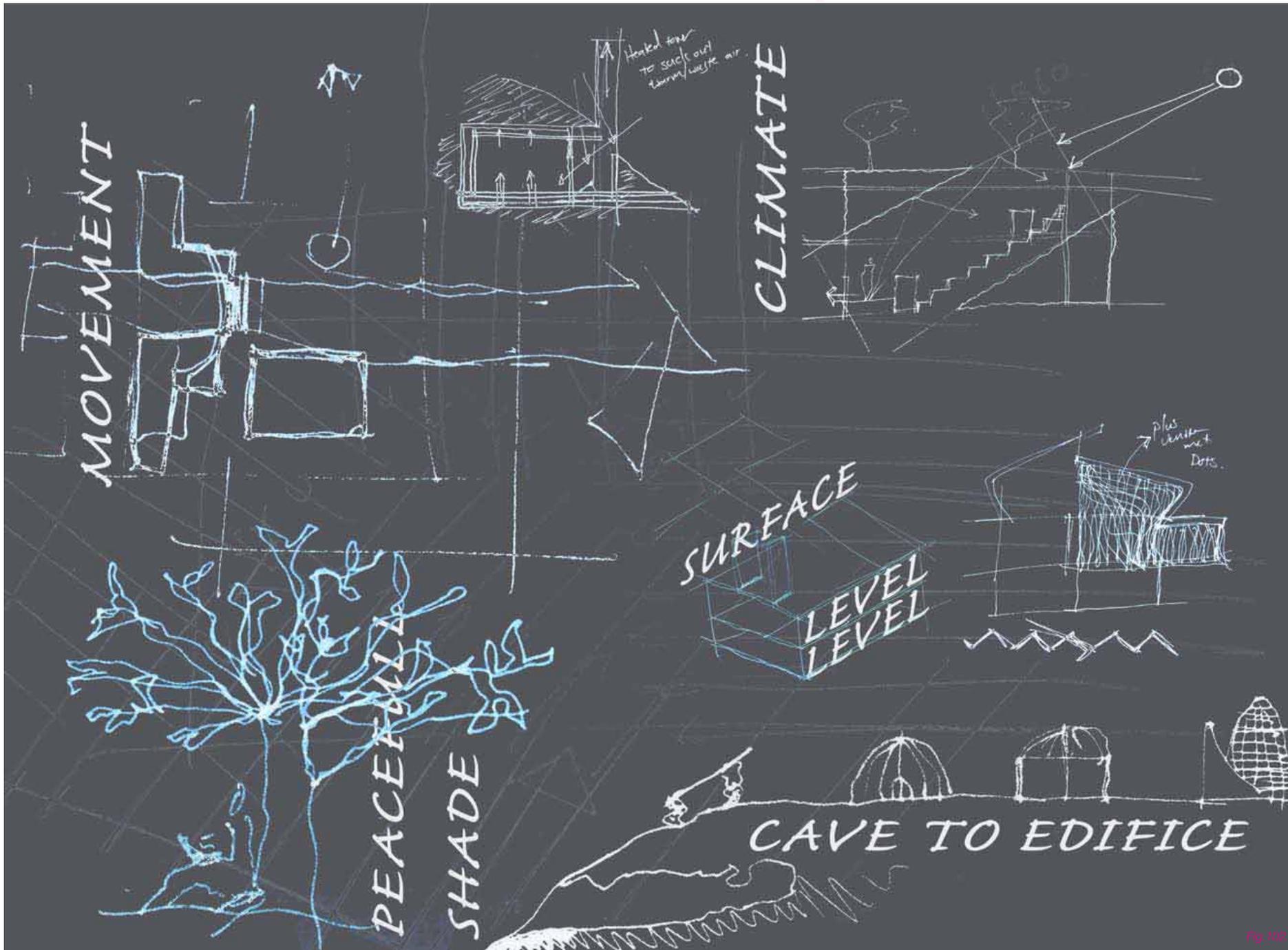
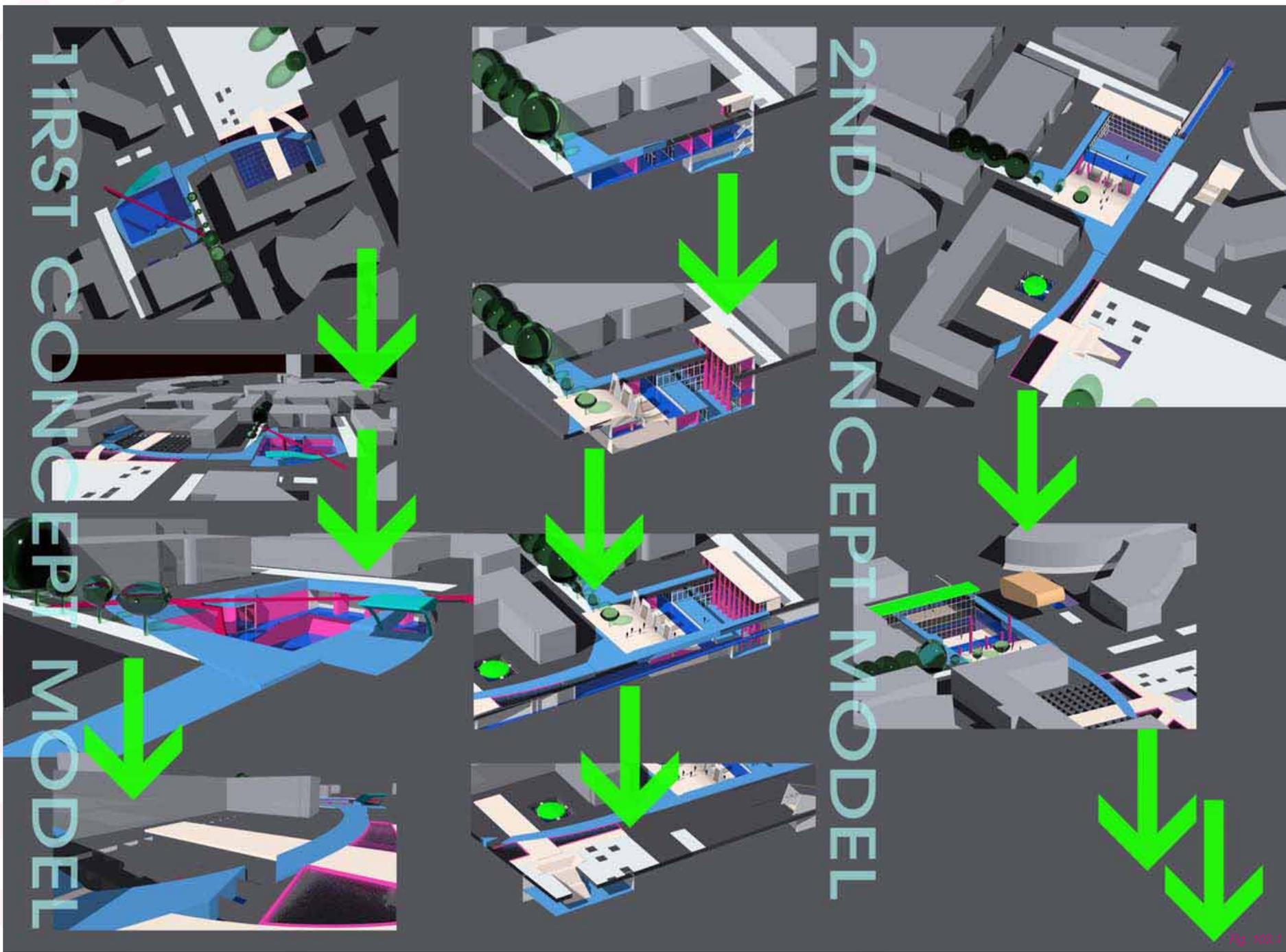


Fig.102



Behavioural Study

On campus students are doing the following actions:

- Sitting in a class or lecture.
- Meeting with a lecturer or tutor
- Doing research/studying in the library or study rooms
- Waiting for the next class to begin
- Visiting friends
- Having a break
- Most of the day on campus is spent waiting around or having lunch/snack breaks or stealing smoke breaks between classes.

Boukunde as an example of belonging

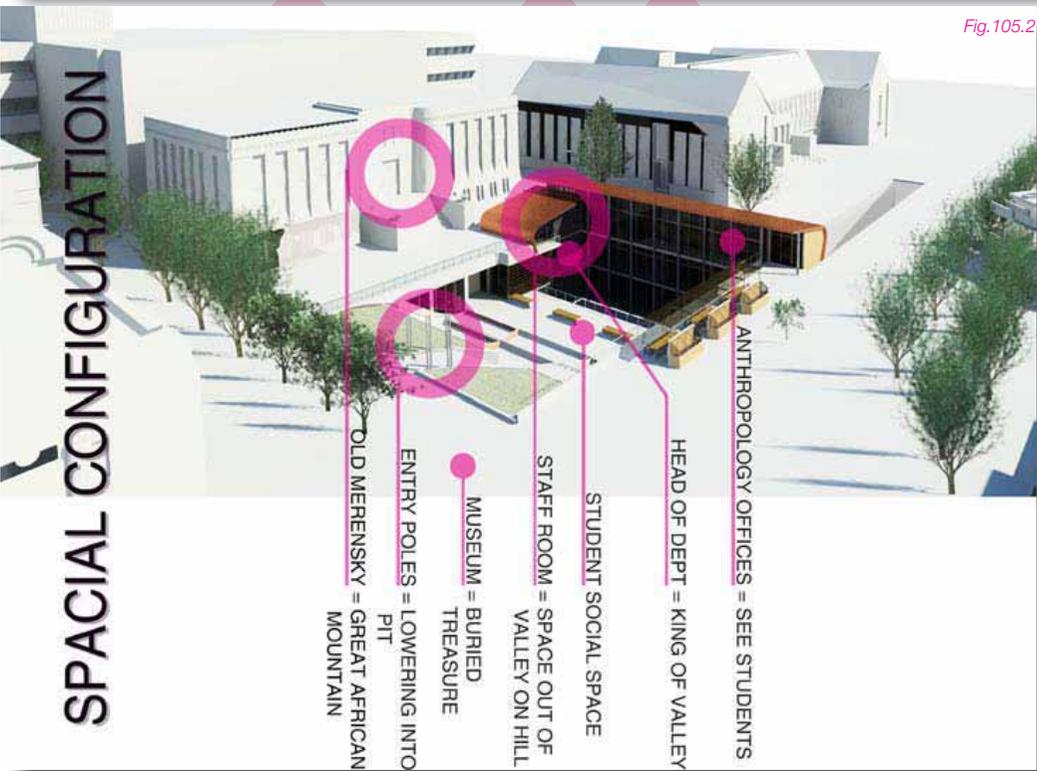
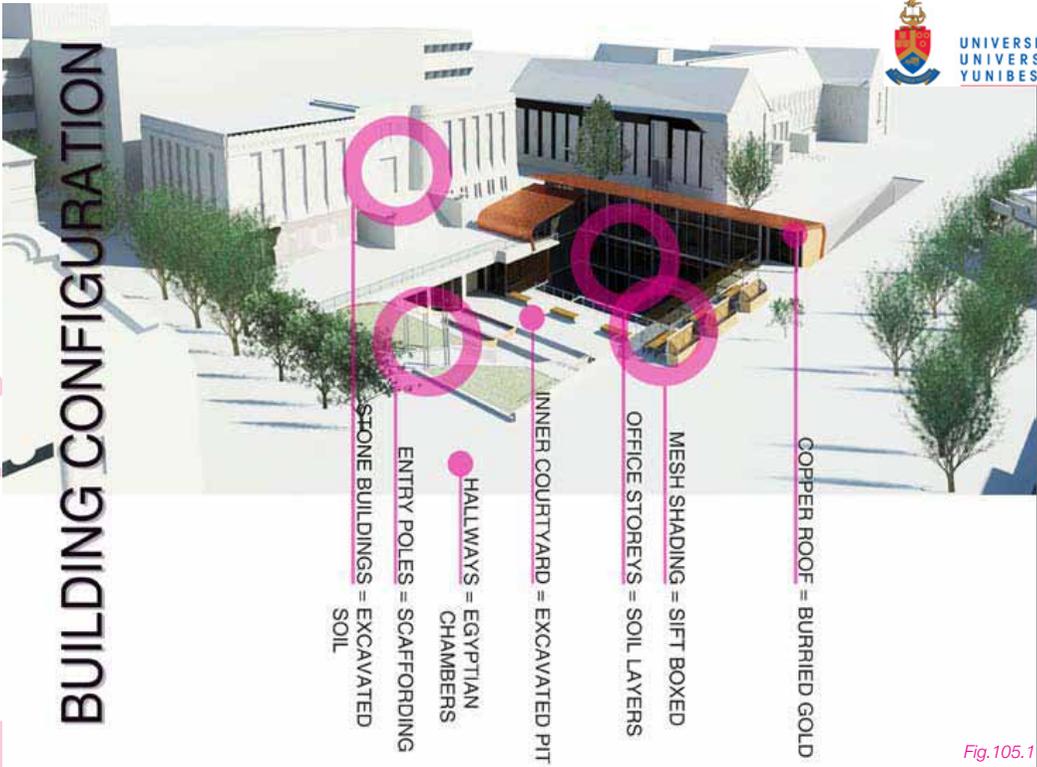
- In the Boukunde Building on campus, the Department of Architecture is housed. On each level in the building studios can be found. These studios are allocated to the different academic years and disciplines and are perfect examples of solutions to ideal behaviour-supportive spaces:
- These spaces are allocated to the students and become their 'home' for the year.
- It becomes their central point of reference to their environment on campus.
- It is a space of relaxing, working and pressure – all at the same time. It is a classroom at times, but is still remains a personal space for the students.
- Someone trying to find a student will always start looking in their studio.
- The student has his/her own corner where they have their own belong-

ings and personalised surroundings.

- The studios are used to sleep, eat, study and socialise in.
- It becomes the student's home on campus, a place of belonging.
- The studio atmosphere is supportive and creates a sense of community.

Examples of other study field groups:

- Engineers can find each other at the Steers, underneath the Aula, or on the steps in front of the Aula. They also meet up in the IT labs to work between classes.
- In the project the goal is to create spaces like the studios in Boukunde: to create places of belonging for the students of the new Archaeology and Anthropology Department. These spaces will not be part of the program and will not even be evident to a visitor, but will be shaped by behaviour and the directing of the behaviour.
- The main concept is to divide the building into two levels which separate the junior students and the senior students. Each will then have its own courtyard/outside space which becomes an outer-room with seating and shading where students will relax, socialise and discuss projects. Archaeology 'studios' in the open air – this also becomes symbolic as archaeologists work in the outside for a majority of their career.



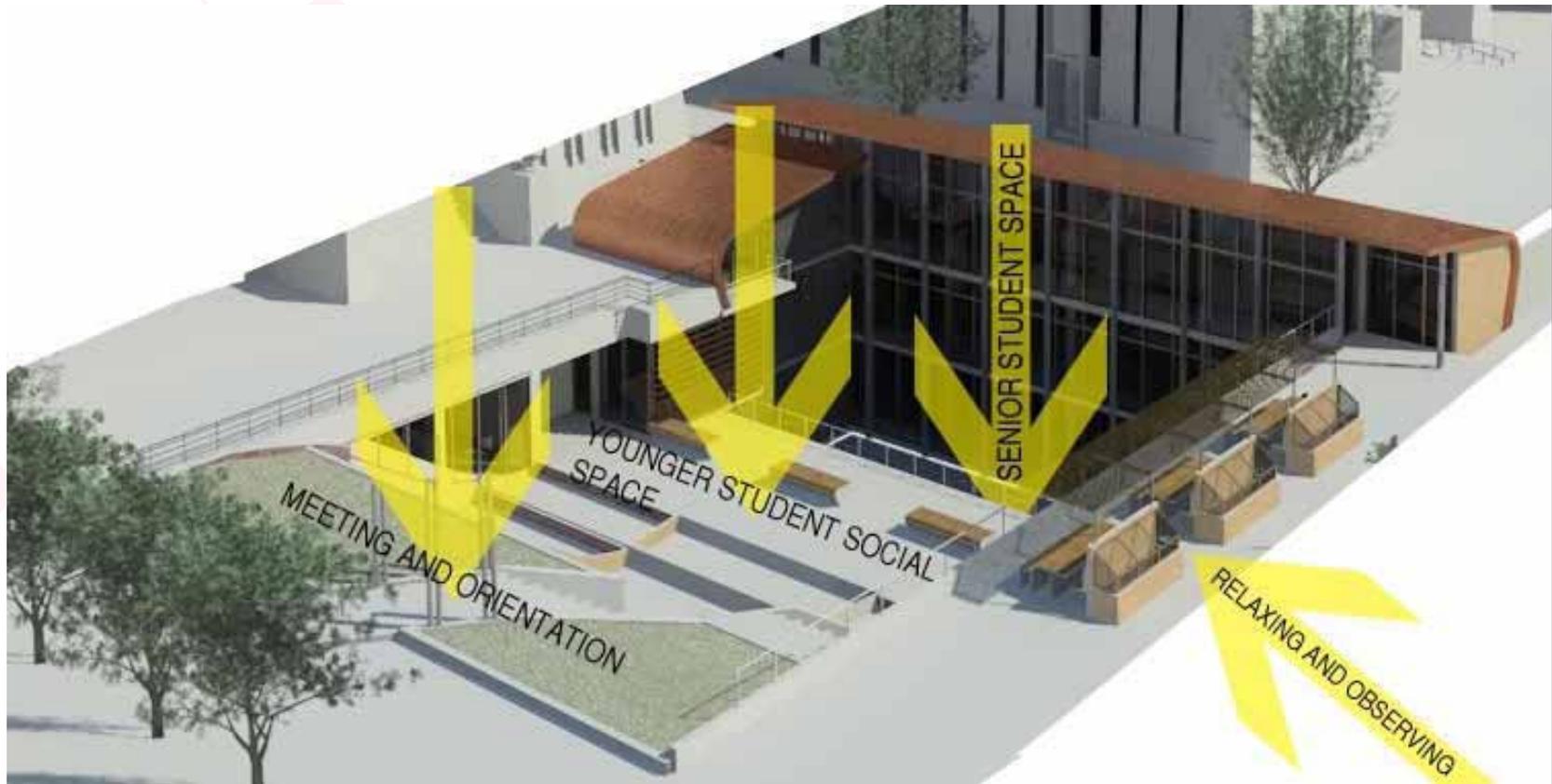
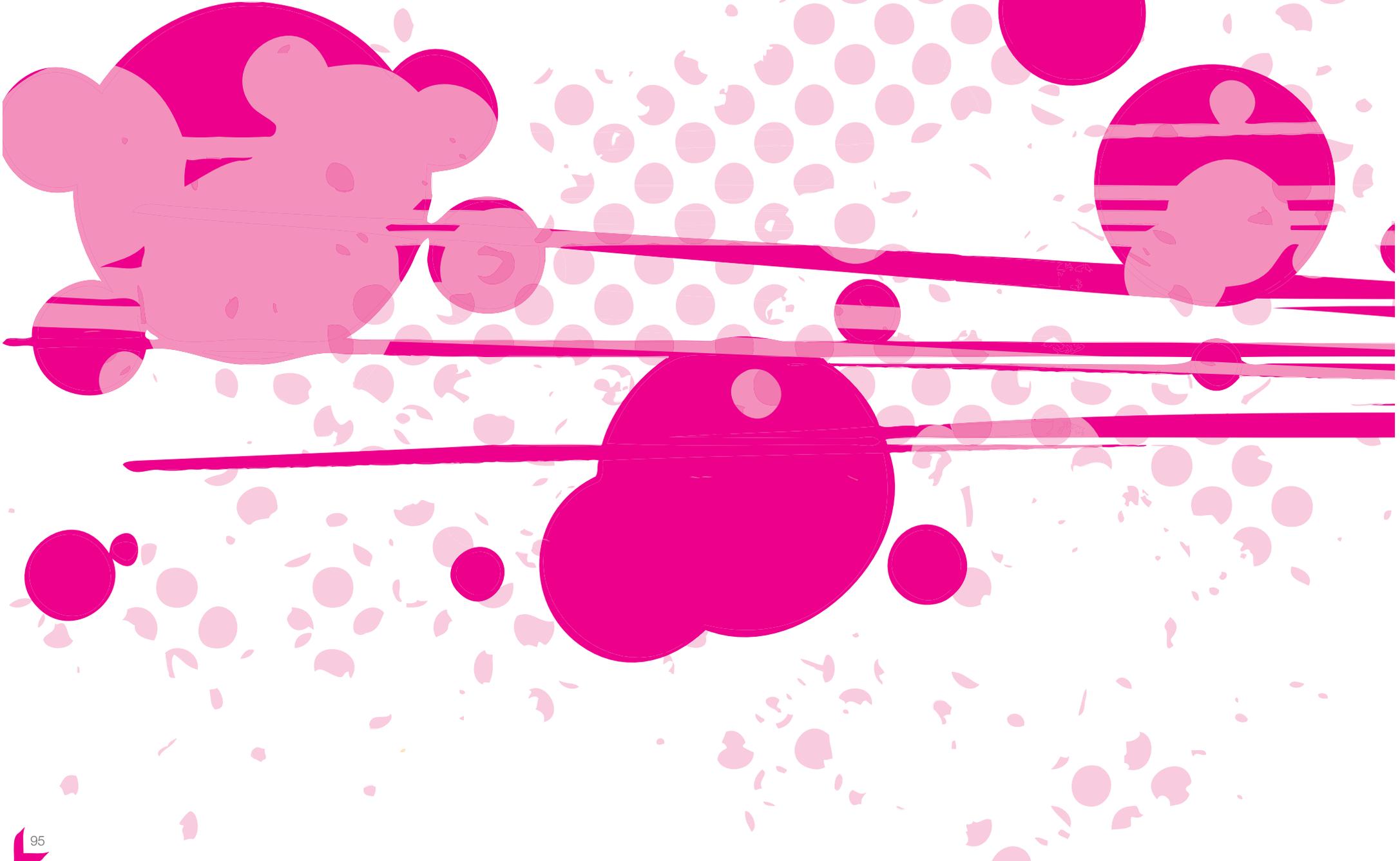


Fig. 103.2





“If you can’t explain your ideas to your grandmother in terms that she understands, you don’t know your subject well enough.”

Frederick 2007, 48

Symbolism

Symbolic meaning

Using symbolic meaning in design and architecture starts recognition by the user, consciously or subconsciously. It contributes to the users' environment and their feelings. It is very important that symbolic meaning and recognition in the built environment offer people the sense of belonging to a certain place. (Lang 1987, 203)

Architecture should be an expression of life and purpose. It is much more enjoyable if architecture becomes 'fun' for the designer, especially while designing a specific building like a Department for Archaeology and Anthropology – which is filled with symbolic meaning and imagery.

In the diagram the triangular relationship between the Symbol, Referent and Thought is shown. The Symbol represents the result of a cognitive process whereby an object acquires a connotation beyond its ordinary use. (Lang 1987, 204) The Referent is the object, which could be a material artefact, which conveys an expression or emotion that the designer is using to communicate to the user. The Thought or signified is the user or person whom perceives the object and connects the representation to a personal emotion or understanding. (Lang 1987, 204)

These headings are variables of symbolic arrangements identified by Lang:

1. Building Configuration
2. Spatial Configurations
3. Materials

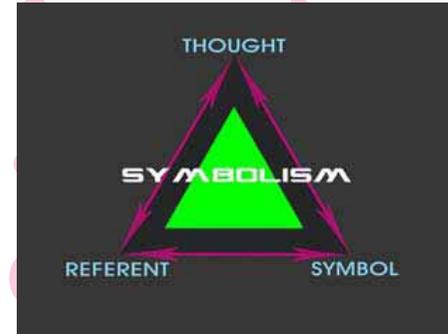


Fig.104.1

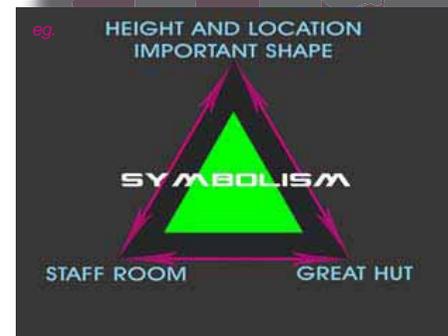


Fig.104.2

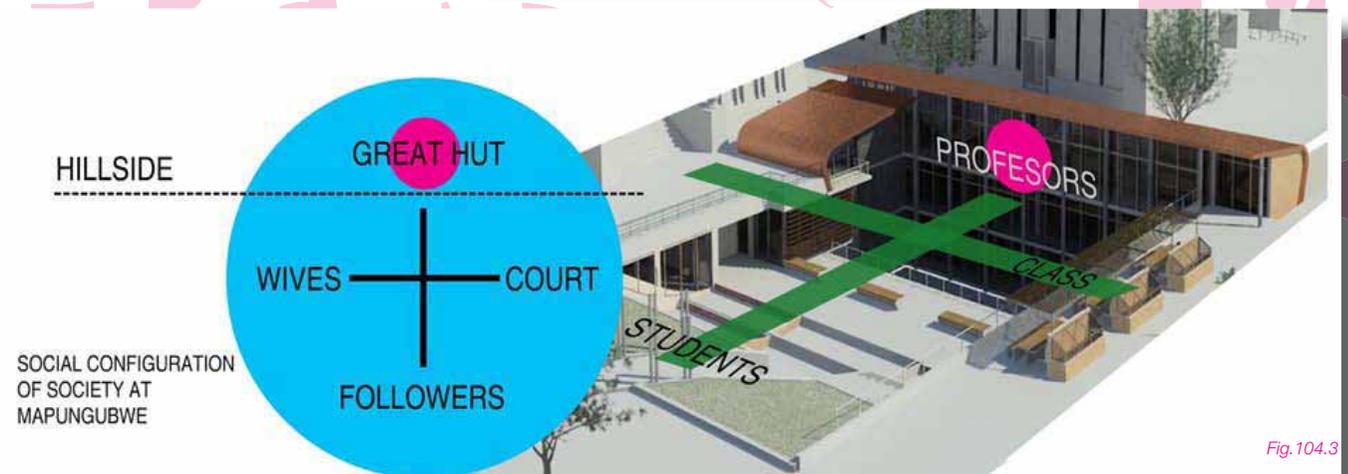


Fig.104.3

3-Dimensional exploration

Symmetry - axis



Fig. 106

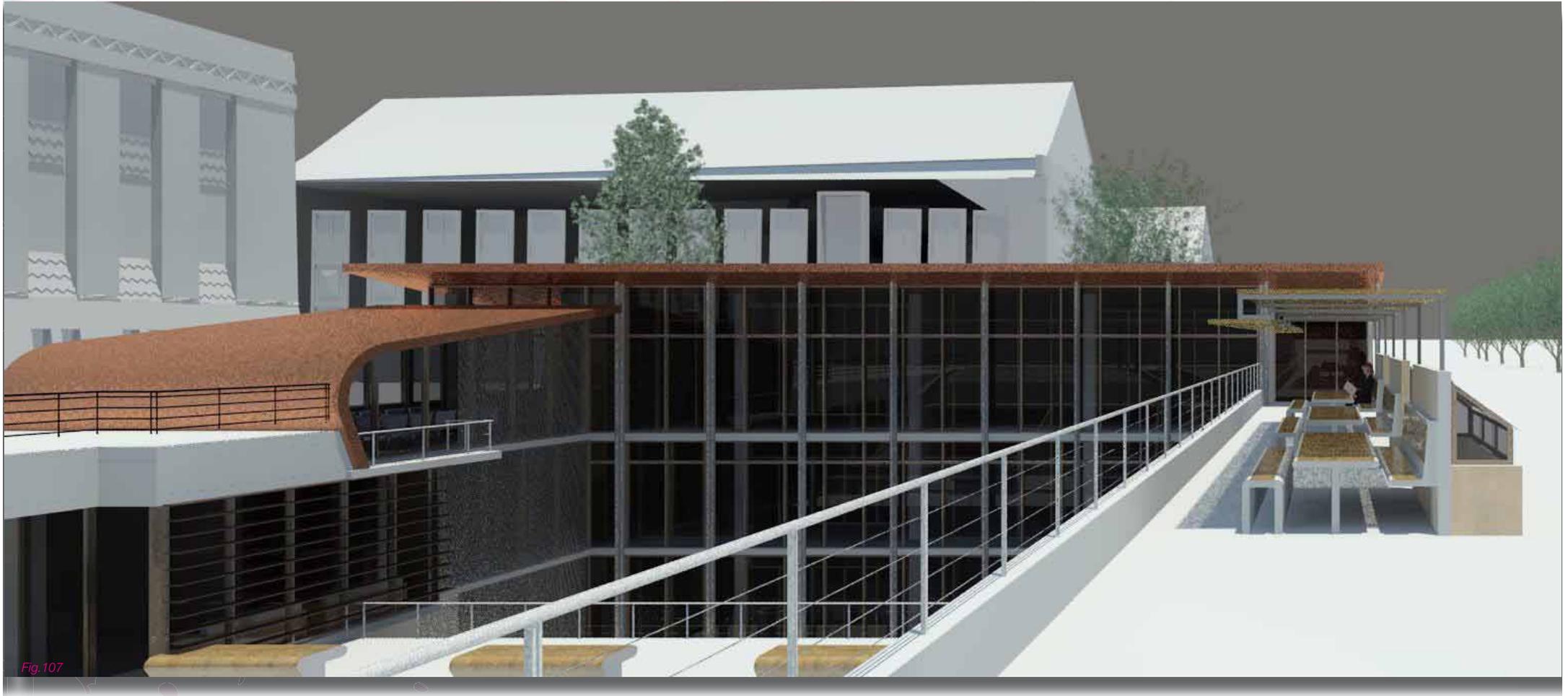


Fig. 107



Fig. 108



Fig. 109

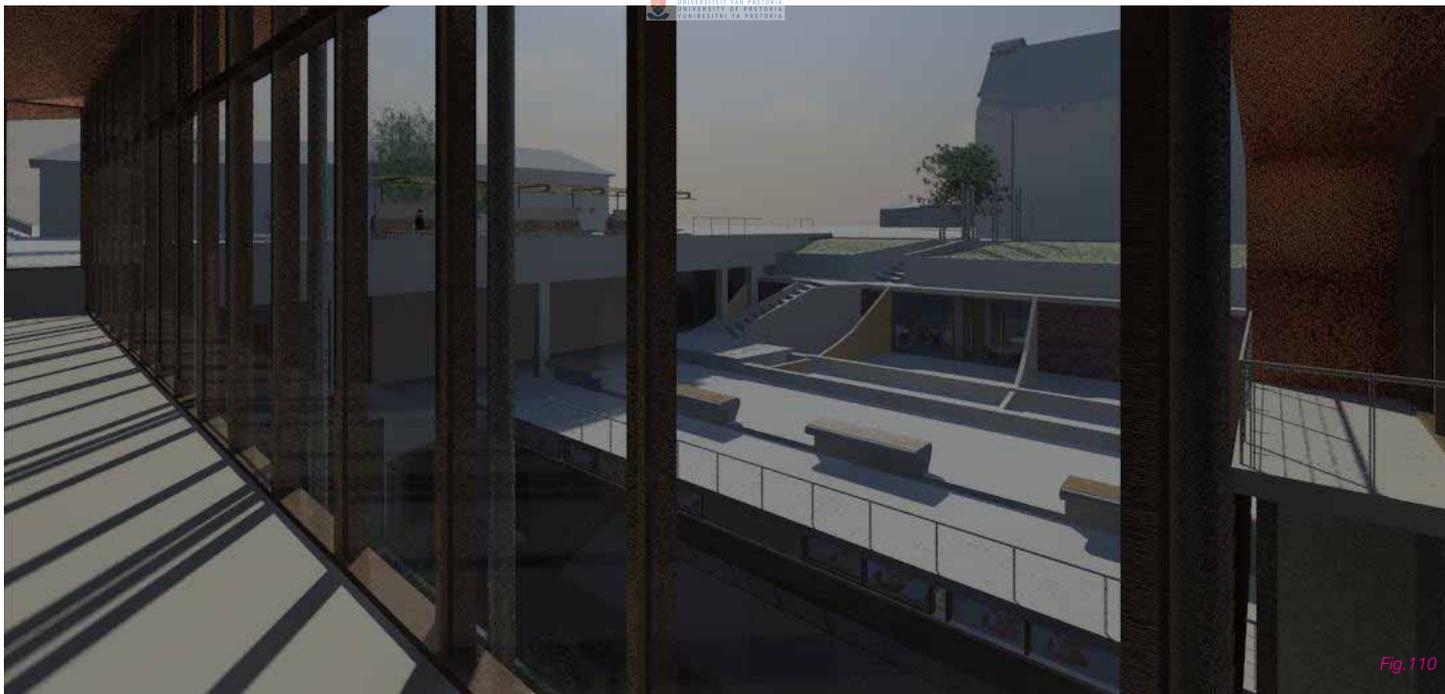


Fig.110



Fig.111

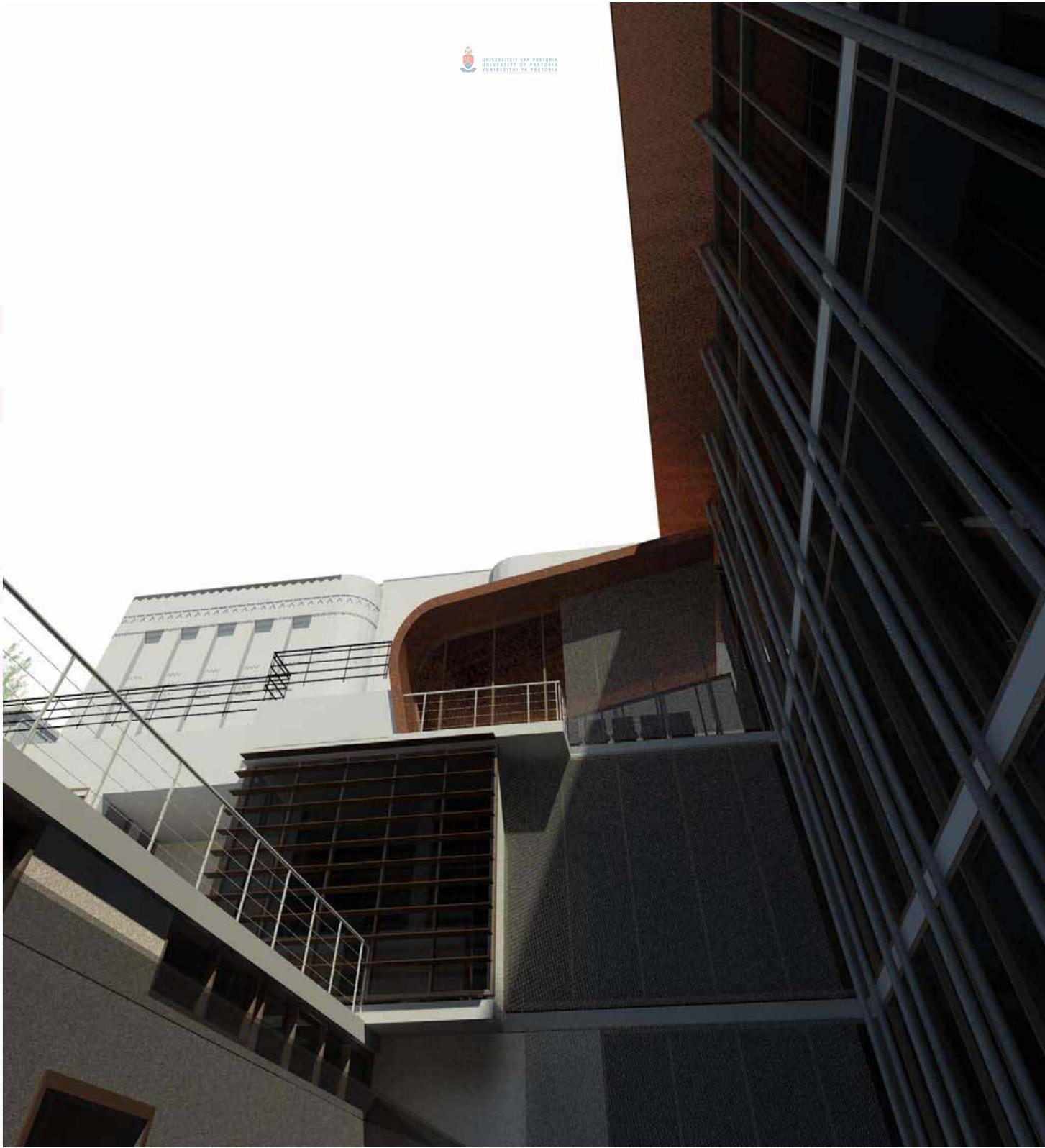
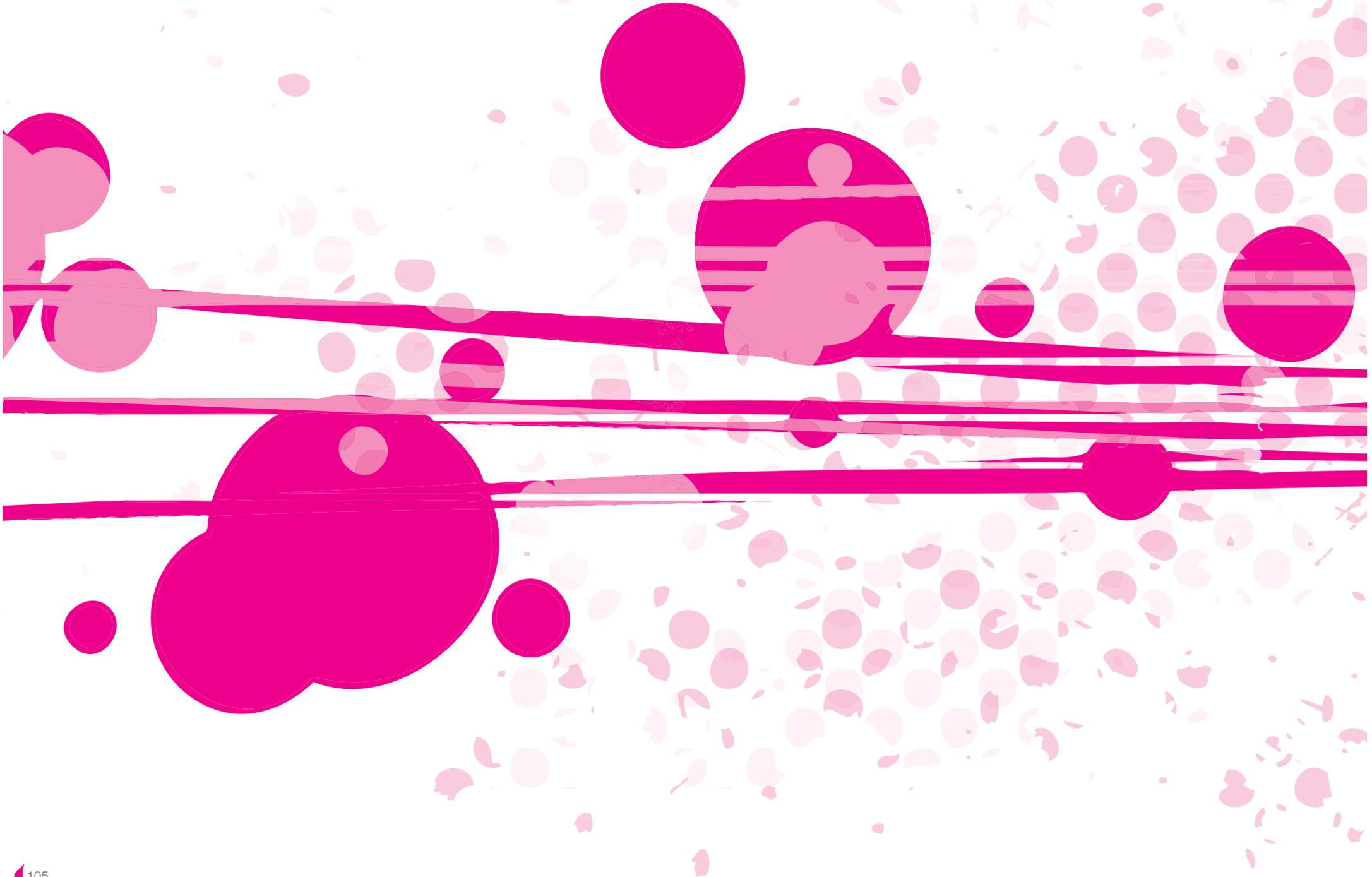


Fig.112





“On the ground surface, often monotonous, repetitive, and apparently blank, offering very little to the stranger, yet underneath, lies a fertile seed-bed of all sorts of unexpected cultural activities and manifestations.”

Clair Melhuish

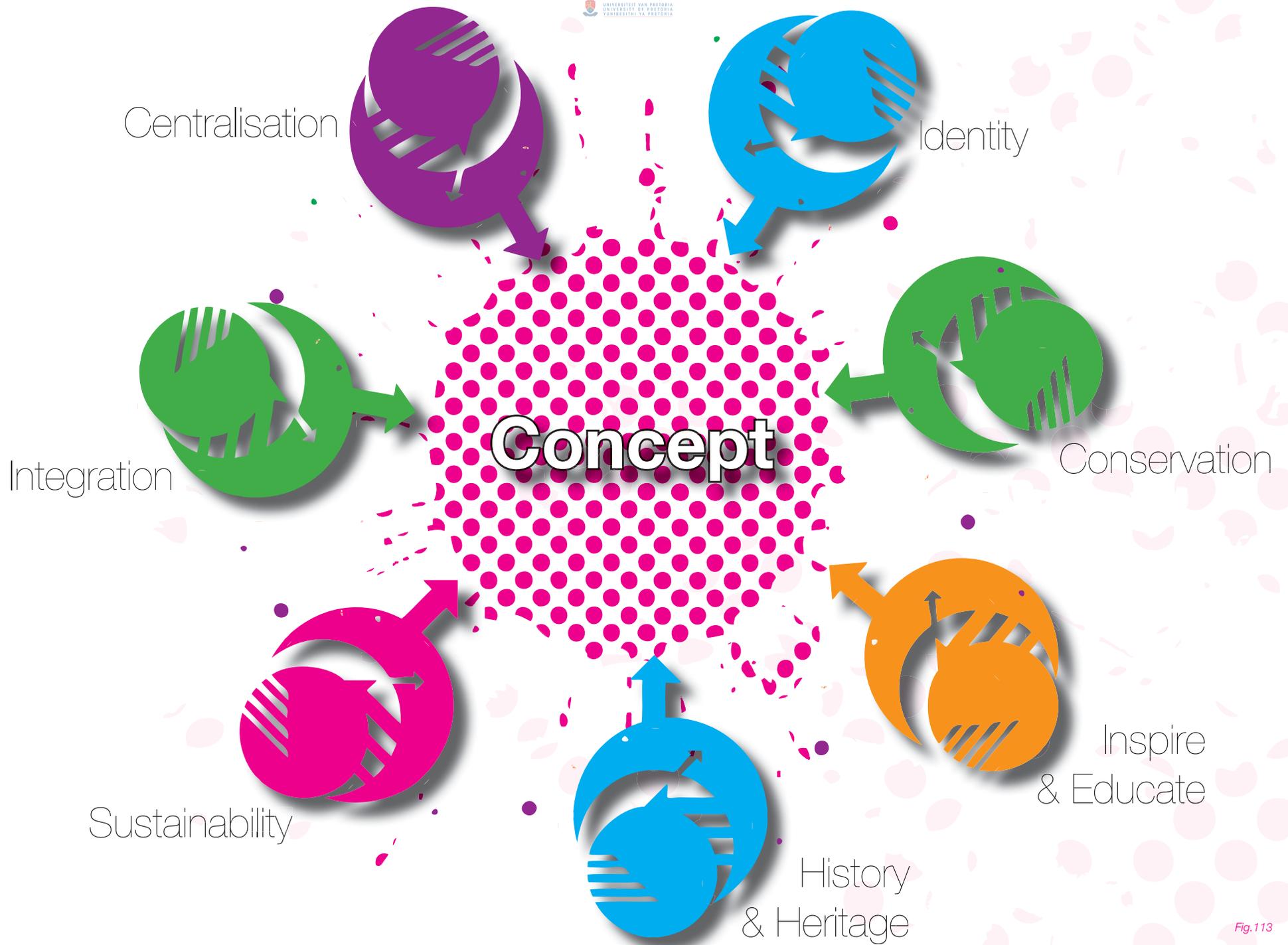
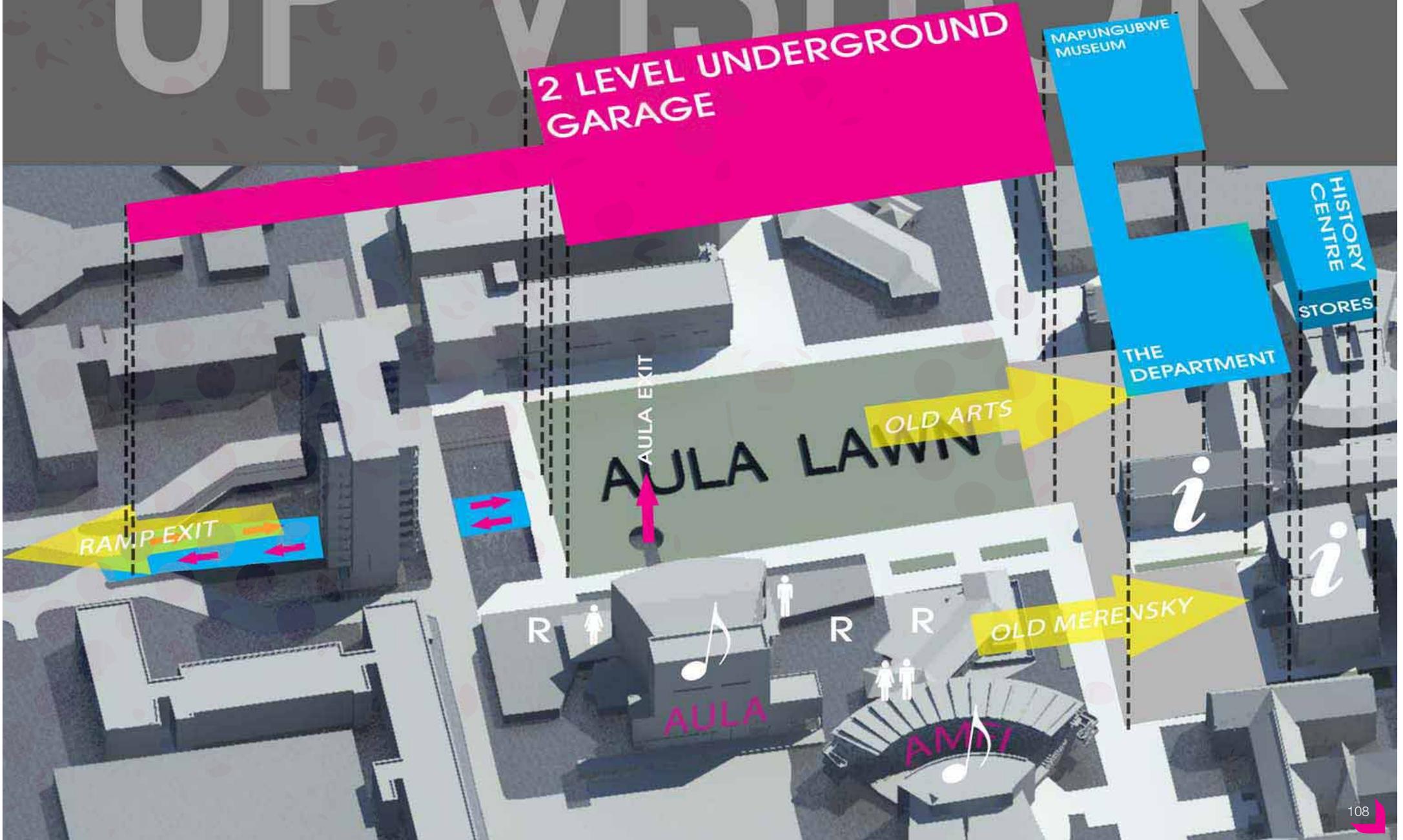


Fig.113

UP VISITOR



Capital Campaign

The Capital Campaign is a new endeavour the University is proposing for the management of the large collections of artefacts, art and sculptures it has displayed all over campus or in storage. The value of these objects are estimated to be in the multiple millions and need to be protected. Most of the valuable objects are not on display due to security and conservation concerns.

The Campaign is still in concept phase and specific details are still unclear. (At the time of interview with Sian Tiley-Nel and Gerhard de Kamper)

The proposal is to identify a site on University grounds, preferably in a more accessible and open space.

To this point a site on the LC de Villiers sports grounds have been proposed.

On this new site a new building will be erected which will then contain most of the University's collections of art and historic artefacts. It will also house all of the different curators and conservationists offices and other specific space requirements.

There will also be sufficient storage facilities for all objects not displayed.

The building will become a large integrated museum with amenities and group education facilities.⁶

Compare Project concepts:

Centralisation: not good
Integration: good
History and heritage: good/not good
Inspire and educate: good/not good
Conservation: not good
Sustainability: good
Identity: not good

The project sounds tempting because of the architectural possibilities of such an iconic building on such a natural landscape, but the fact of the matter is that most of the art and objects, that make campus such a beautiful place and the buildings so special, inspire hundreds of young people every day without them, or the curators, apparently realising it. The art and museums on campus make it an accessible asset which is rich and enjoyable.

6 - Interview with Gerhard de Kamper and Sian Tiley-Nel