

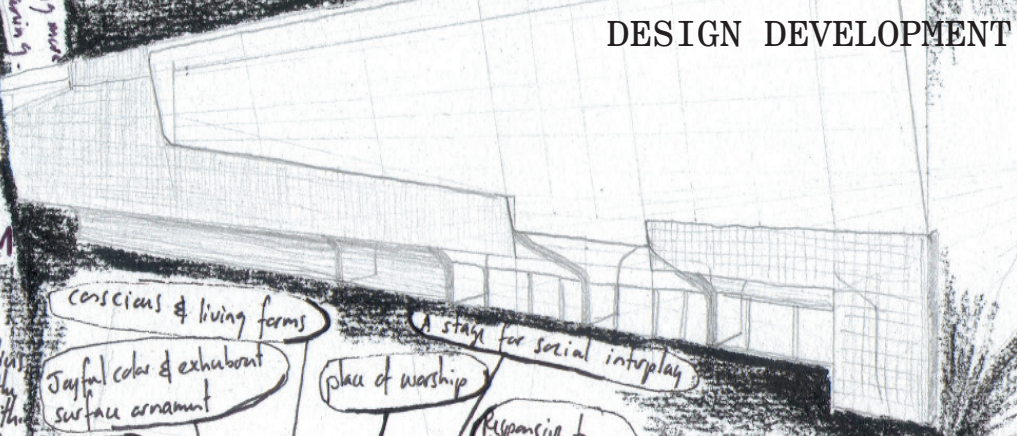
Building is:
 tool: functional

Work of Art: aesthetically pleasing
 functional in the African context
 place of worship
 Shelter from the elements
 A tool for protection that prolongs
 existence: education
 A stage for social interplay
 promote communion with ancestors &
 deities. | Responds to forces of Nature
 Building is an environment to live
 in and live with. Jean Paul
 Bourdieu.

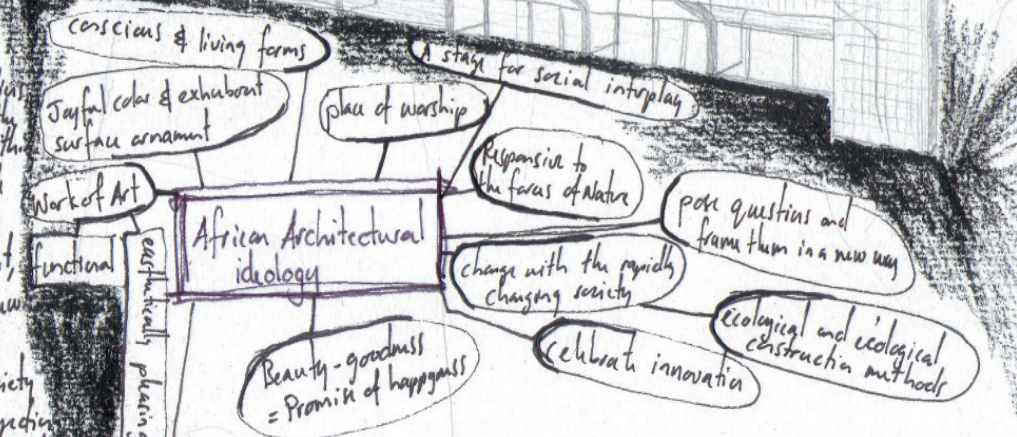
MYSTICAL PAN-AFRICANISM

Design: Designing National identity
 every design solution is an idealization
 of the political realm. multiple accretions
 Symbolic building: graving with the
 stature and the institution hand in
 it. | The building need not provide
 all the answers, but it must, to
 be effective means to enlighten
 Pose questions and frame them in a new
 way. If a building is able to change
 along with the rapidly changing society
 around it can it avoid being the projection
 of some frozen moment in a political and
 cultural history. If a building is too
 far abstracted from any known reference
 points, it may be resisted, resented, or
 worse still, ignored. The task is to a
 Rich Ambiguity so that the building
 nor be so neutral that it could
 exist ANYwhere.

conscious and living forms are enriched through joyful color and exuberant
 surface ornament which challenges viewers and passers by to celebrate innovation
 as a symbol of Africa's hybrid cultural identities. I deal in traditional
 exquisite sculptural forms, ecological and economical construction techniques, and community cohesion through a
 project's symbolism and its process. This architecture is an **BUILDING**
 amalgam. and
 a return to timeless traditions.

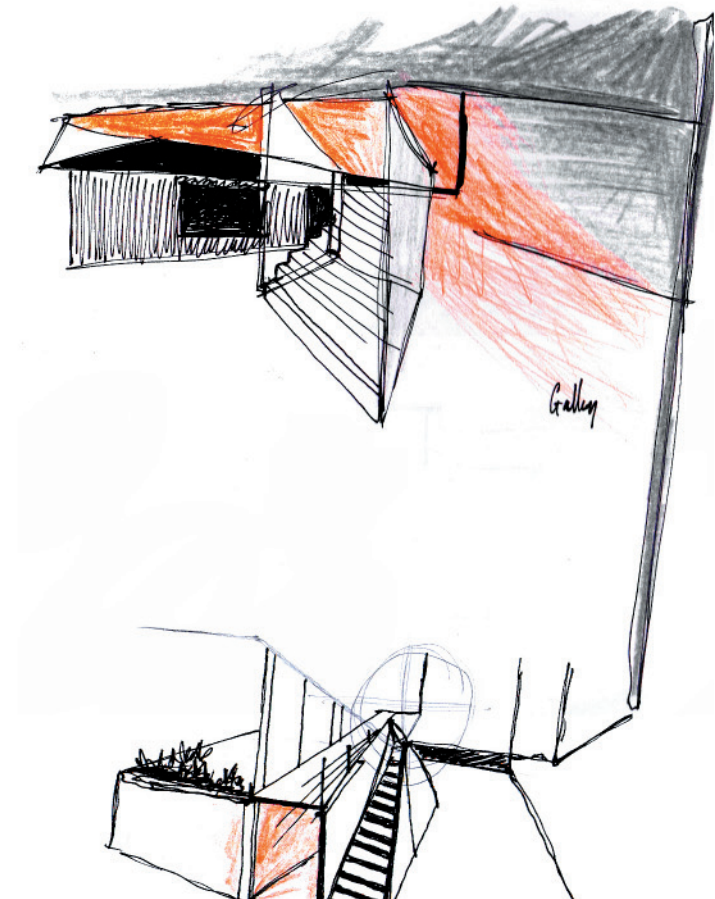
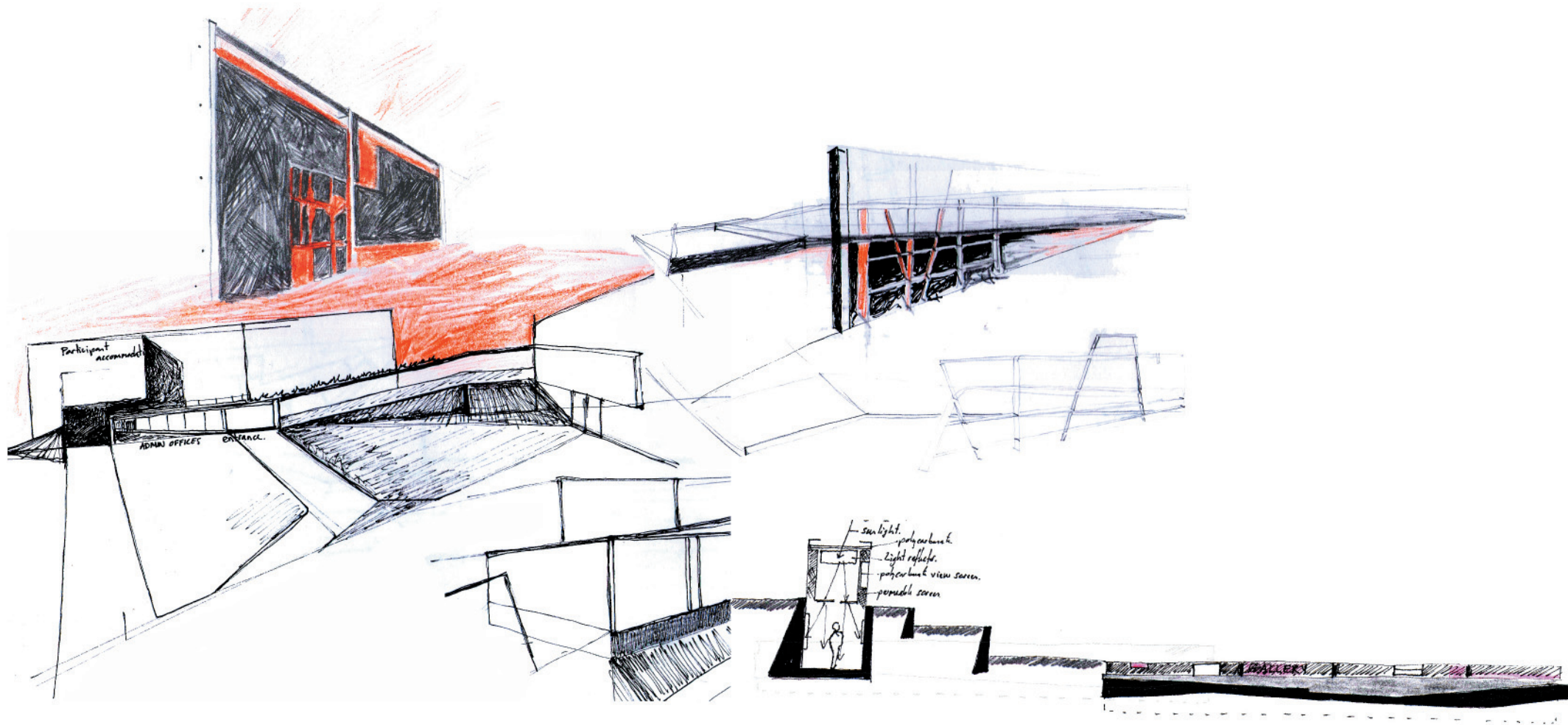


DESIGN DEVELOPMENT



African Art: functional & collective :: committed. they commit the person not
 just the individual, through the community -> techniques of essentialism
 uses materials that are at hand and the everyday things that
 make up the texture of his life, and rejects that which does not commit
 because it is without significance. In Africa, Art for Art's sake
 does not exist. Art is social. The African assimilates beauty to
 goodness, and especially to effectiveness: functional beauty - happiness

The African finds pleasure in becoming vitally acquainted with the
 world through things and by them.





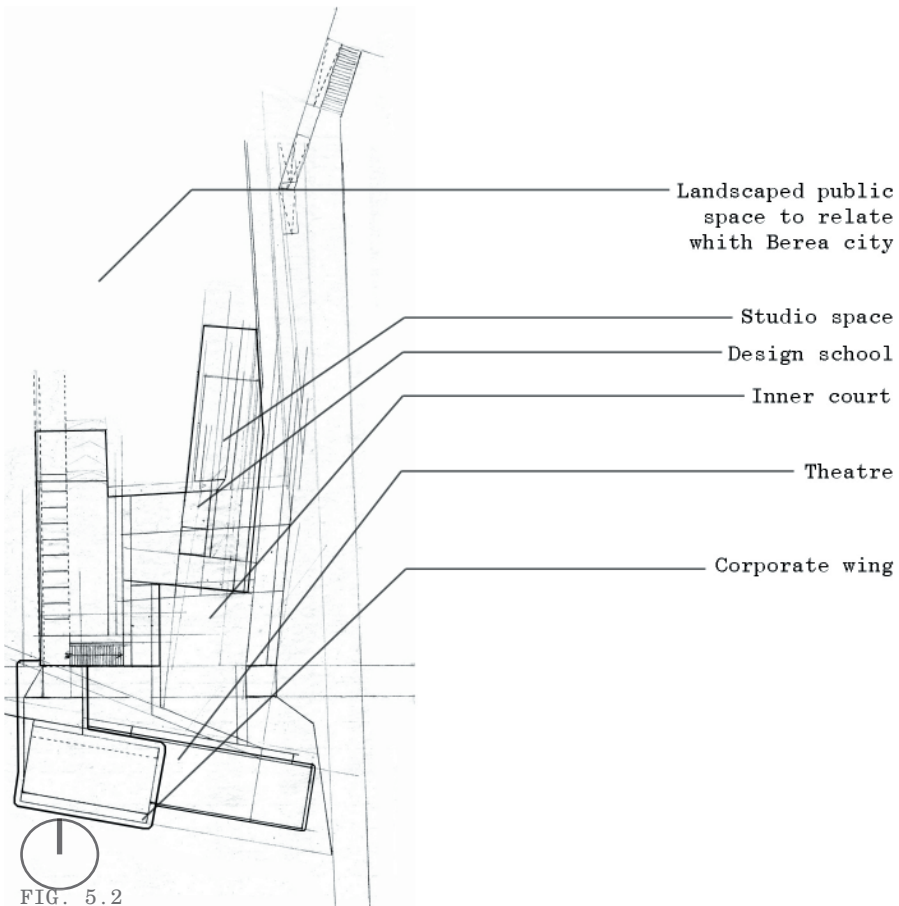


FIG. 5.2

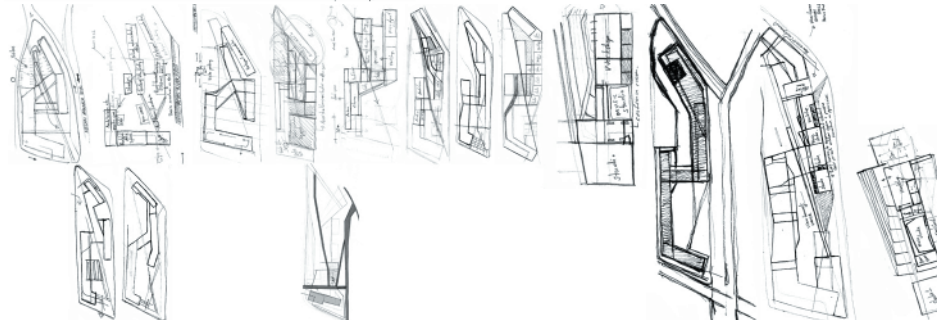


FIG. 5.3

THE FIST CONCEPT
 The site analysis established that the south western corner of the site would be the most suitable location for the proposed project to announce its function, the image façade. This became the departure point of the design, which grew systematically from there. An architecture that does not dominate the site and its context was a very important underlying design consideration throughout the entire design process. This concept was made manifest through the introduction of perforated copper cladding with a bluish-green patina, which, in effect, would allow the southern façade to melt in with the existing tree growth. Furthermore, the façade diverges away from the Railway road (diverges from the West

towards the East) to strengthen the effect of subtlety.

The initial response to access focused on the visual axis towards the site along Railway Road in order to respond with Pretoria Station, as well as the proposed Gautrain station. The idea was to cut a two storey high six metre wide gap out of the building to strengthen this visual axis and to focus it on the inner court of the proposed project. The proposed main entrance was located on the southern façade to communicate with Railway Road and Nelson Mandela Boulevard alike. The southern wing of the building was to house the entrance foyer, office space, a theatre and the research centre's main studio space.

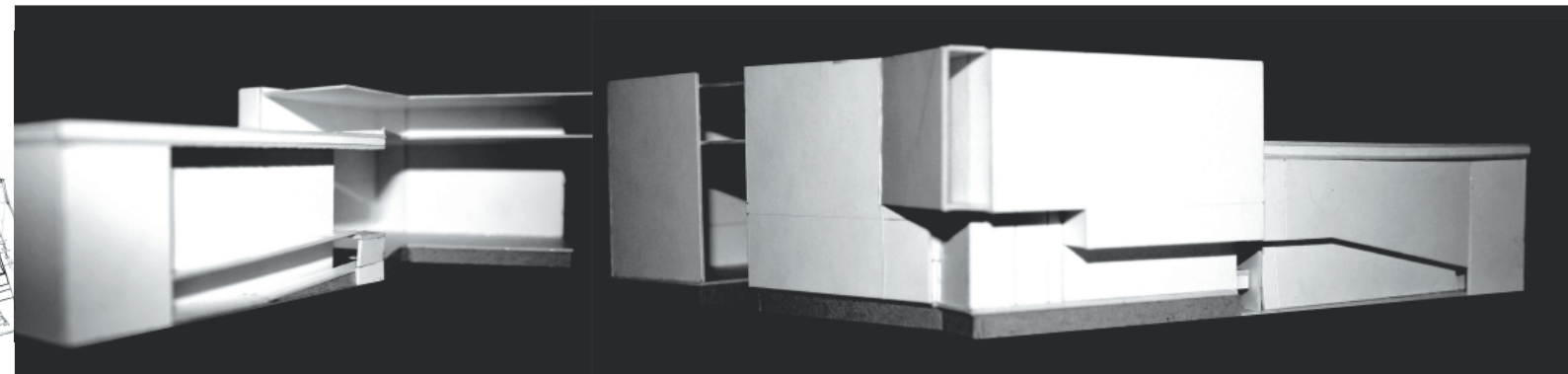
The theatre design component incorporated large glazed opening on the southern and elevations in order to communicate the African concept of a gathering under the trees to motorists driving along Railway Road and general public frequenting the open court respectively. Furthermore, the idea of a building that lives lightly on the land was exploited by recessing the glazed ground floor elevation under the perforated copper clad box, to emphasise the illusion that the solid form lightly levitates above the ground.

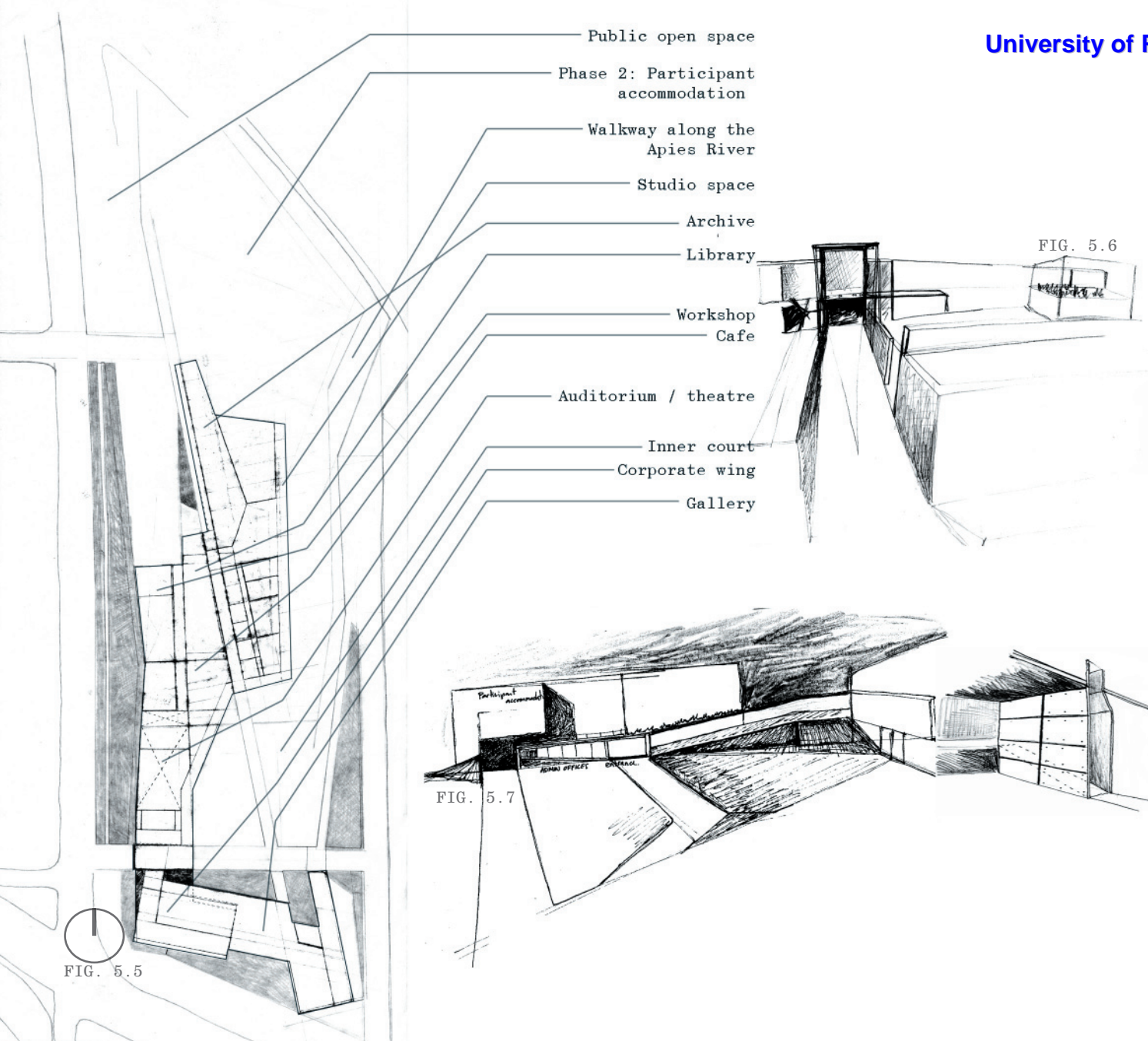
Critique on the first concept shed light on the fact that, apart from that the design only accommodated a third of the accommodation schedule, it sat awkwardly on one corner

of the site, under-utilising the extensive opportunities that the site offers. It also became clear that the building did not offer any response to the Apies River and in a sense ignored the importance of this natural element. Neither did the design offer any response to the existing Berea city and functioned as an isolated entity, removed from its context.

It also became clear that the design has not solved any accessibility issues related to the site. Accessibility was one of the major issues to be resolved because of the isolated nature of the site. This included vehicular and pedestrian accessibility.

It was decided that the proposed project should respond to Van der Walt Street and the Apies River alike. Van der Walt Street lacks character, and the design could define the street edge, enhancing the character of the area. Another important consideration should be to establish a pedestrian-friendly route along the Apies River. Furthermore, it was decided that the building should communicate with Nelson Mandela Boulevard in a more legible and direct manner than a subtle copper clad box, advertising the Communication Research Centre's purpose and importance.





THE SECOND CONCEPT

The second design concept proposes a much more extensive exploitation of the site and offers a much better response to the immediate context. The accommodation schedule informed the design to a much greater extent than the first concept.

The design responds to Van der Walt Street through adjusting the eastern façade in order to follow the street edge, but also recessing the façade to provide for a wide landscaped pavement. The proposed project provides an eastern street edge and, in effect, enhances the streetscape through enhancing the street form and the feeling of enclosure.

The design responds to the Apies River by means of establishing pedestrian access from the Van der Walt Street slipway onto the site along the Apies River culvert edge. This pedestrian route is linked to the inner court of the project by means of a 1:12 ramp that cuts up and into the terraced landscape. The tree shaded Apies River-edge walkway functions independently from the site, but the site can be accessed via the ramped walkway during public events.

Further context study revealed an important visual axis, which forms a strong visual connection link-

ing Berea Clubhouse, a historically significant building, and the site. This visual axis became an important form generator and functions as both an important movement axis and visual axis. The building's main entrance is located on this axis.

The building is divided into three different user components, namely the corporate wing (the southern section), the communication research centre (the northern section), the corporate - research centre interface (central section) and the research centre - public interface (central section). The zoning improves the legibility of the project and allows for the provision of semi-private, semi-public and public space. Furthermore, the zoning enhances the security of the building that is situated in public open space.

The Research Centre's studios are located on the northeastern section of the site and enhance security along the Apies River through providing passive surveillance. The public accessible functions are clustered together, excluding the exhibition space, and live out onto the open courtyard.

Critique on the second concept again raised questions regarding vehicular accessibility, and the proposed solution of parallel

parking along Van der Walt Street and Railway Road was rejected due to the negative results generated regarding visitor approach to the main entrance, along with the aesthetic eyesore of vehicles parked in front of the visually prominent southern façade.

The theatre/auditorium did not have adequate spill-out space, and it was recommended to combine the café and the auditorium spill-out spaces. The studios were also too far removed from the Apies River-edge walkway, and the semi-public space (accessible to participants of the Research Centre alone) provided in front of the studio space is to be scrapped.

Even though the design responded to the site, it still seemed too cluttered with a still conservative allocation of space to certain accommodated functions. The corporate entrance situated on Railway Street is to be scrapped and the main entrance moved to the northern section of the site in order to respond to the vehicular entrance to the site, Berea city and the movement/visual axis connecting Berea Park and the site.

The earlier proposed basement parking, an idea abandoned in an earlier phase, was to be reintroduced in order to accommodate corporate parking associated with the office space.

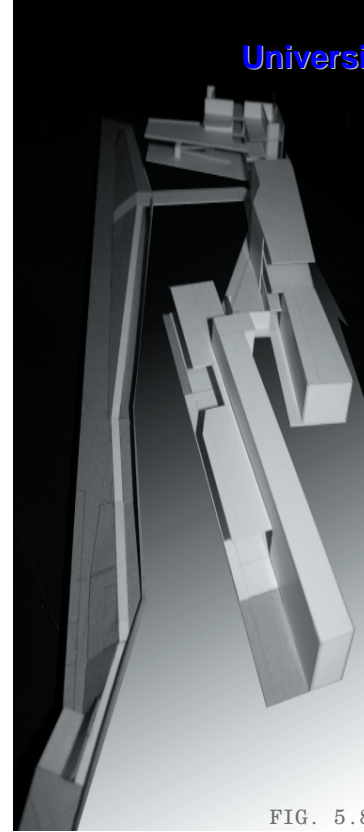


FIG. 5.8

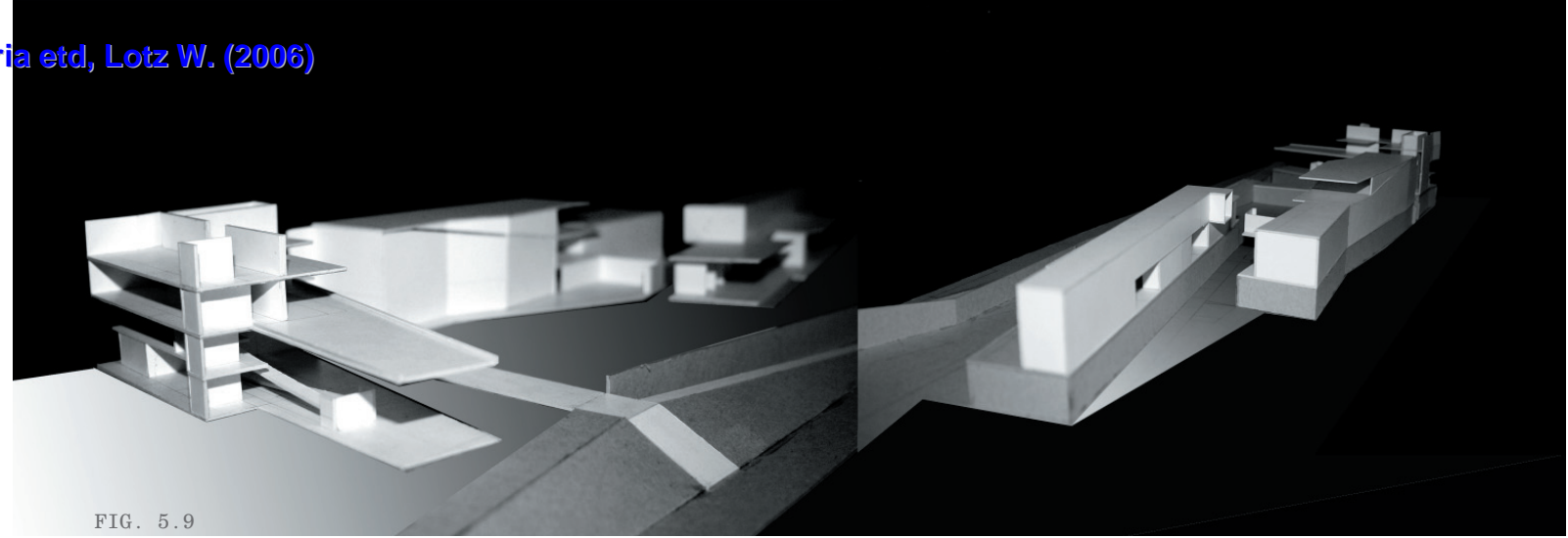


FIG. 5.9

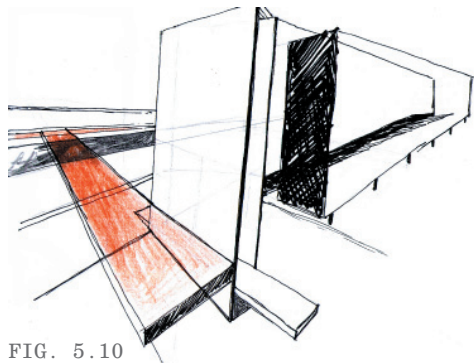


FIG. 5.10

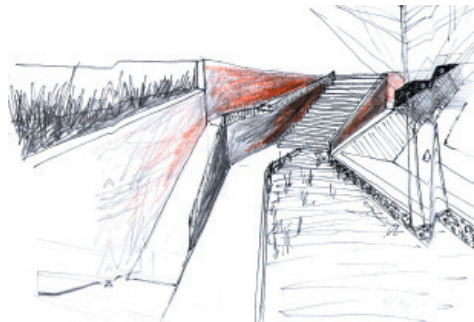


FIG. 5.11 Route along the Apies River

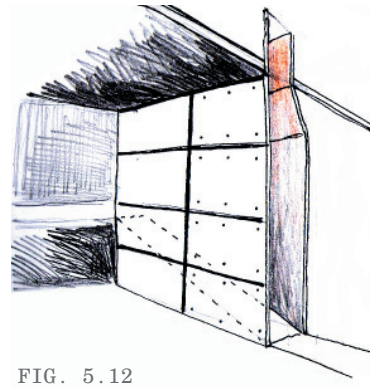


FIG. 5.12

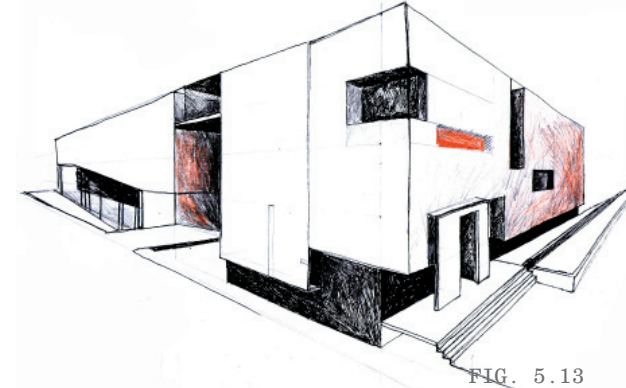


FIG. 5.13

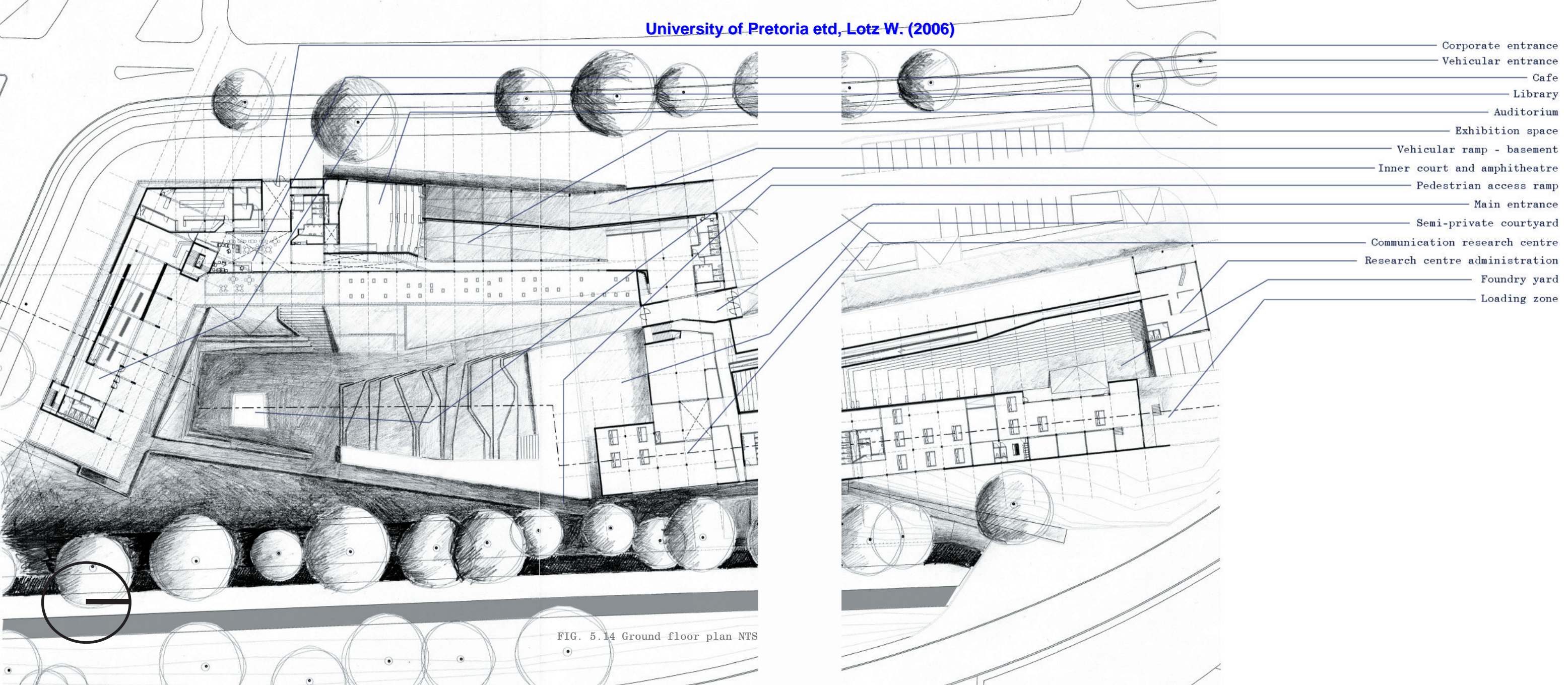


FIG. 5.14 Ground floor plan NTS

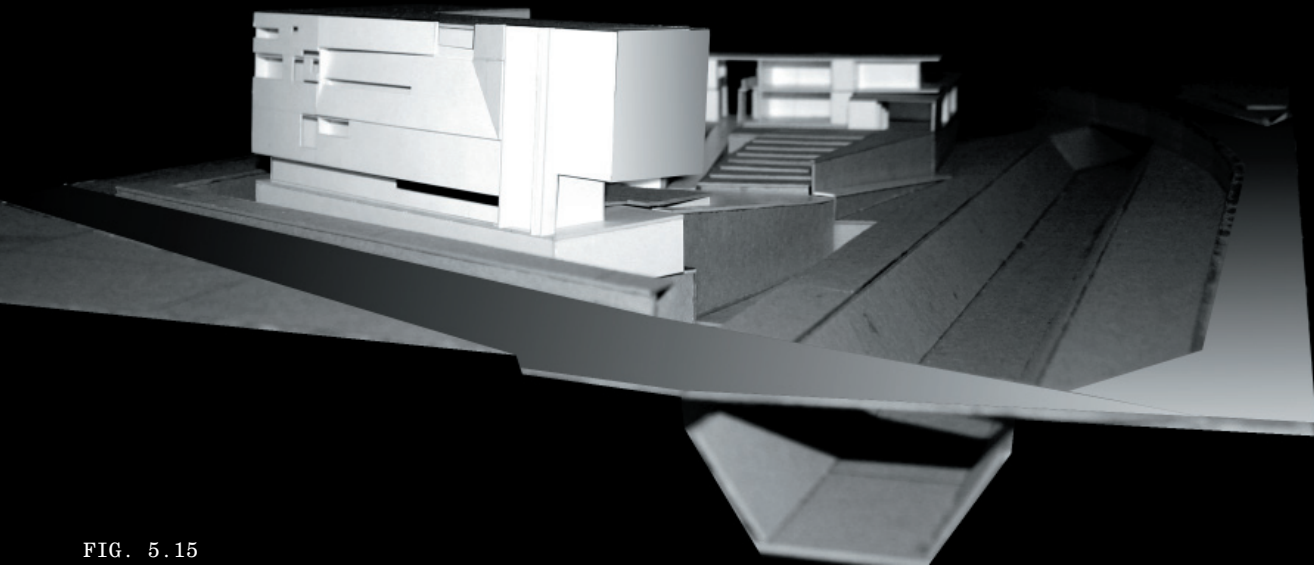


FIG. 5.15

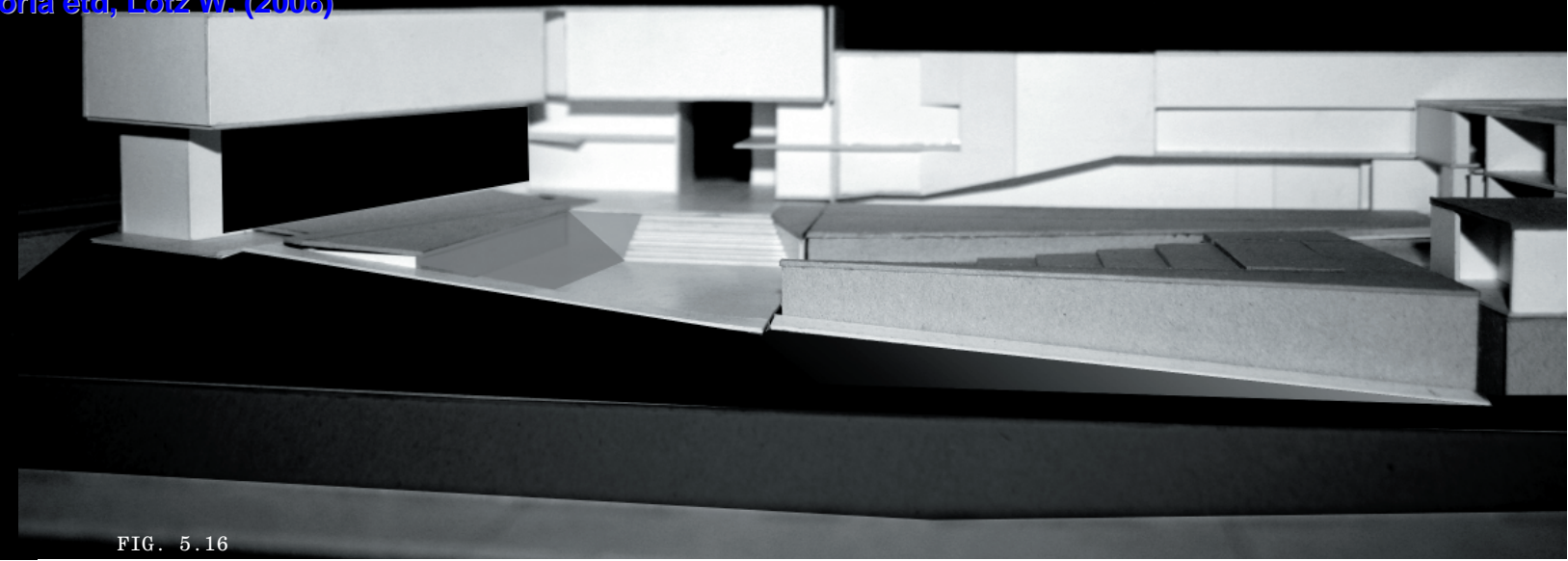


FIG. 5.16

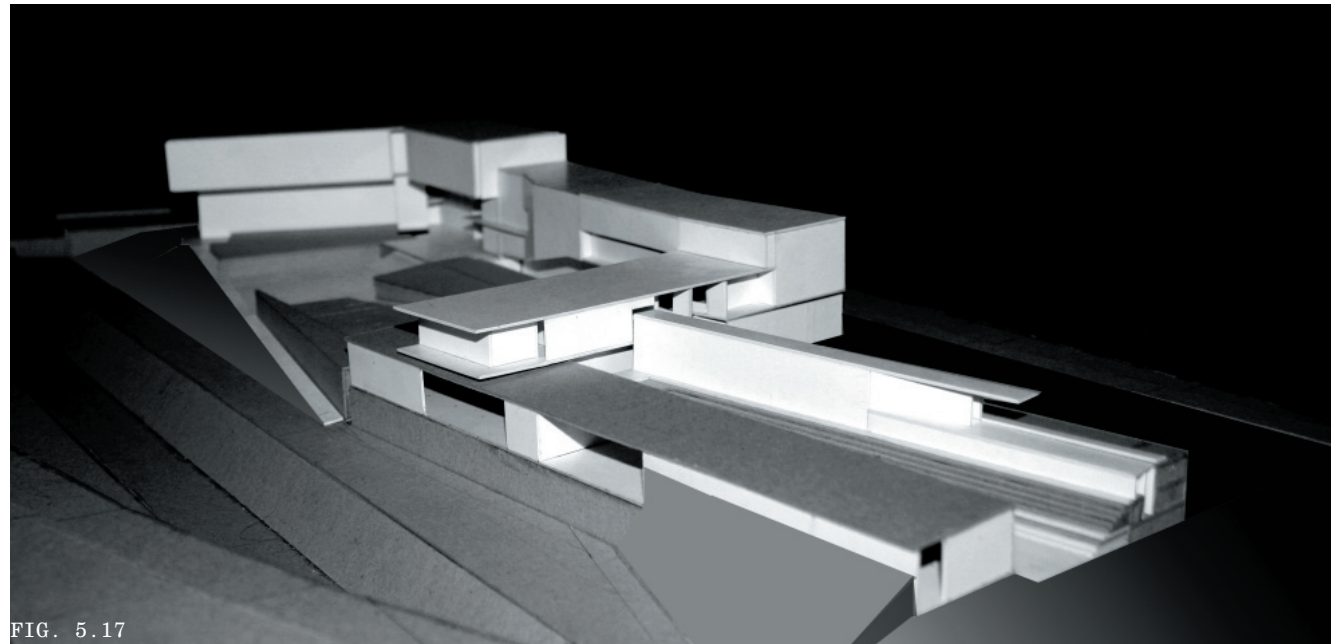


FIG. 5.17



FIG. 5.18 Public opinion. Tshwane.

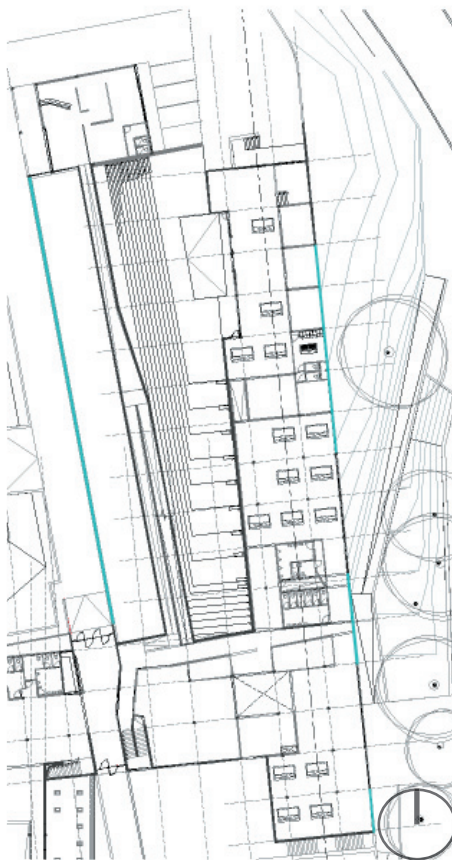


FIG. 5.19 Ground floor plan locating the expression walls.

The theoretical investigation concentrated on pinpointing the intersection between cultural identity and architecture in an attempt to formulate an architectural language that relates to the African and global contexts alike. This component of the design development will evaluate the practical implications of a hybrid architectural language, which forms an amalgam between a western architectural education and the concepts abstracted from an African philosophical approach. These abstract concepts include functional beauty, collective, responsive, adjustable, contextual, people-orientated and a spiritual response to the land.

PEOPLE SHOULD BE PUBLISHED

ARCHITECTURE REFLECTS SOCIETY
Informed by the theoretical investigation, the architectural language of the building to facilitate the Communication Research Centre has to communicate a reflection of society. Society, according to the Concise Oxford dictionary, means "the customs and organization of a civilised community". A society has a collective identity that defines it from other societies, which brings me to the question of which society's identity should be made manifest in the architecture? The first and most obvious answer would be the identity of the institution to occupy the building. The second and more daunting answer is a Pretoria identity, which (more specifically) is an African identity. The last-mentioned would be evaluated throughout the concept development in order to reach a conclusion.

The project consists of two distinctly different components,



FIG. 5.20



FIG. 5.21



FIG. 5.22

namely the Communication Research Centre and a corporate sector that consequently requires an architectural language that communicates both identities.

The architectural language of the Communication Research Centre reflects the fluctuating identities of the participants who immerse themselves in contemporary culture and is therefore ever changing. Subsequently, the architecture accommodates the expression of social identity by means of canvas walls. These initially blank canvasses are to be positioned in such a way as to visually intrigue pedestrians and motorists alike, moving along the Nelson Mandela Corridor (Fig.5.19). The canvass walls serve another important function in that it communicates the image of Pretoria to foreign/out-of-town visitors, as one of a culturally sensitive and enlightened society.



FIG. 5.23 Southern facade

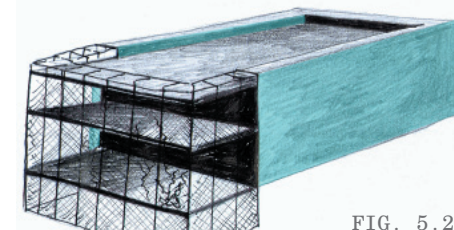
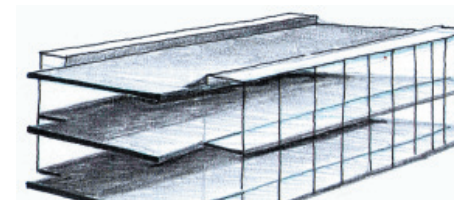
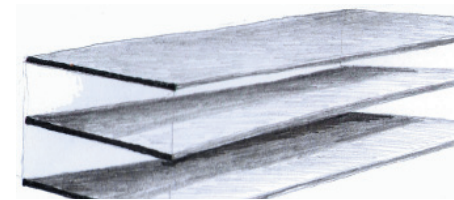


FIG. 5.24

The Communication Research Centre can be described as an identity reproduction machine to which the design responds by playing a game of reveal-and-conceal, allowing the visitor glimpses of its inner workings through openings of clarity cut out of massive concrete walls (FIG. 5.19). The purpose of these openings is to establish a direct relationship between the represented (the individual in and through the community) and the institution that visually makes manifest the city's identity.

The corporate component of the design emanates a different identity than the Communication Research Centre. A corporation, as an institution, is bound to rules and regulations and consequently much more static in comparison to the Communication Research Centre. The word corporation brings to mind something set in steel, sleek and shimmering. The corporate component of the building is a two-sto-

rey high, perforated copper clad box (FIG. 5.24). View holes are cut from the perforated copper screen in order to frame views of the Union Buildings, UNISA and Freedom Park from the interior (FIG. 5.23). The southern façade is the most prominent due to the fact that it is the first visible connection to the inner city from Fountains valley along Nelson Mandela Boulevard. The copper screen develops a bluish-green patina that melts in with the existing trees on the site, which partly conceal a third of the southern façade. Neon pink and yellow wall claddings behind the perforated copper screen allow the building to make a subtle statement without dominating the naturally green character of the site.

The design communicates both a strong corporate and yet an ever changing, playful identity of a culturally significant institution that does not attempt to dictate and over-power.

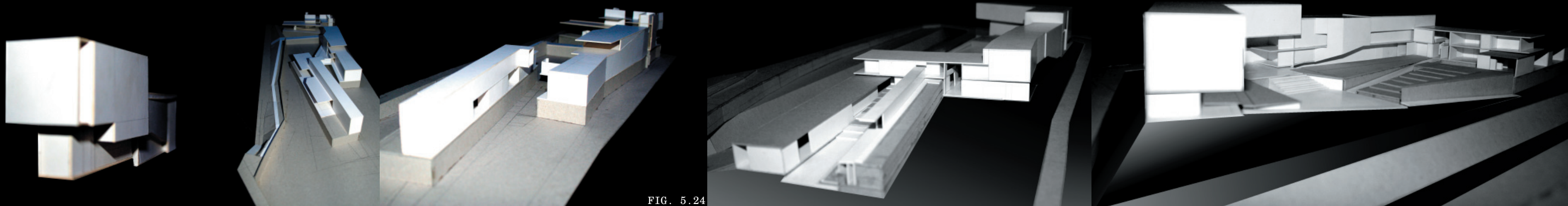


FIG. 5.24

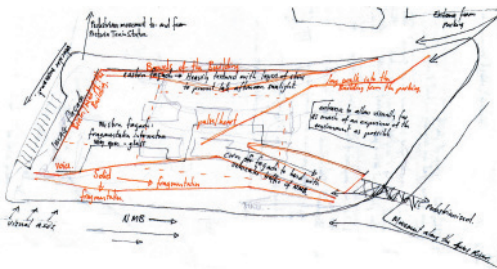


FIG. 5.25 Site development diagram

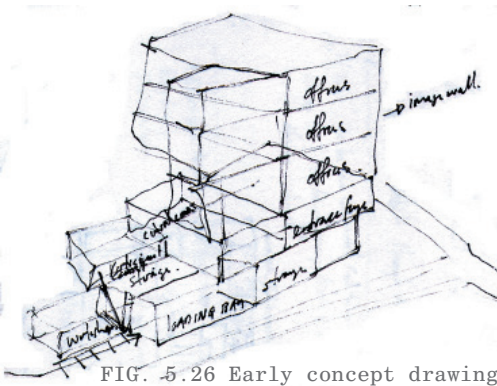


FIG. 5.26 Early concept drawing

FUNCTIONAL BEAUTY

The design can be characterised as sculpturally brutalistic. The program informed the sculptural features of the design; function-generated form. The design process started at a simple diagram, which led to an abstract form model according to which the design was generated from program.

The width of the building is determined in order to gain maximum results from passive ventilation and natural daylight. The perforated copper screen protects the eastern and northern façade of the corporate component of the building from direct radiation, with the previously mentioned canvass walls situated on the long Western and Eastern facades. The effect gained from the perforated copper screens will animate the interior and enrich the experience of space.

SPIRITUAL CONNECTION TO THE LAND

A spiritual connection with the site is established by means of natural light, natural vegetation, the way the building inhabits the site and the way the building makes reference to the original (historic) character of the site.

The perforated copper cladding makes reference to the green character of the site and the perforations are between the abstract and the naturalistic. It plays with the notion of the naturally occurring shadows found in the existing Acacia trees' canopy. The natural light passing through the perforated screens animates the interior in the same way that the shadows, cast by the trees, change as time passes during the daytime.

Natural daylight is introduced into the underground exhibition space through light wells, which along with the pattern cut plywood ceiling

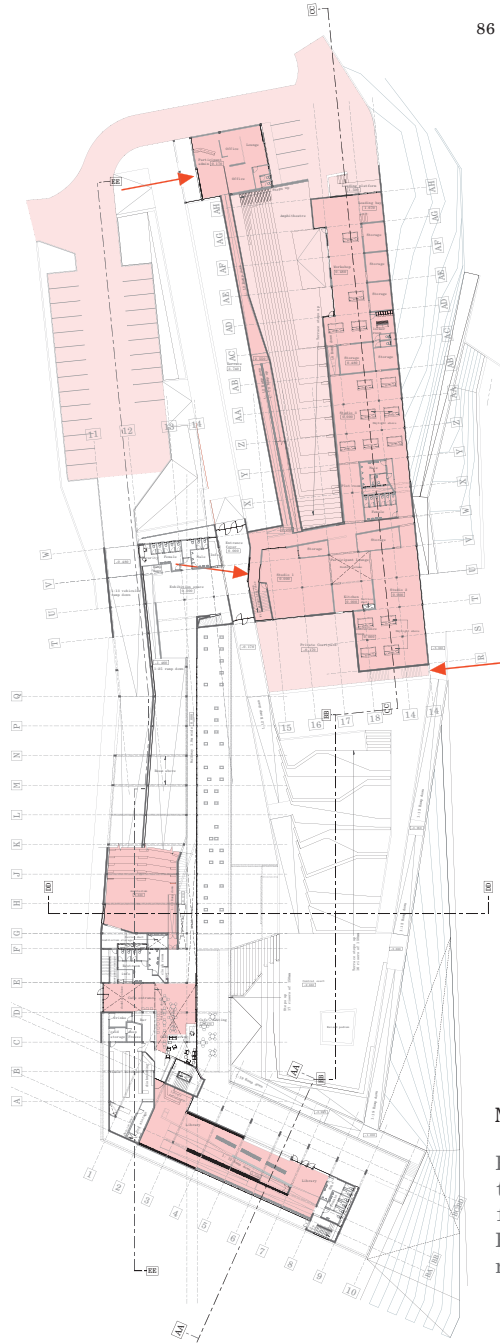
(illuminated from above) will result in a space of constantly shifting light, changing its mood along with the weather conditions. This establishes an emotional connection with the South African context.

The building lives lightly on the site in that it does not dominate, but rather coexist with, the site. The project retains all the existing trees on the site and utilises its dominating presence as place-making elements. The building al-

lows nature to grow over it, hiding the presence of the studios and workshop.

Historically the site was a place of social interaction, open to urban dwellers for recreational purposes. The design is more a building located in a public open space than allowing the general public to enter from time to time. This is a place for people to grow to love their identities, culture and knowledge.

The building does not employ mud brick walls, weaving basket pattern plaster reliefs or colourful geometric patterns to communicate an African identity. The design is based on abstract African architectural concepts made manifest in the building's relation to its site, the intended function of the Communication Research Centre, The building's sensitivity toward the site's existing vegetation and historically social significance and finally a reflection of the society that will occupy the building.



MOVEMENT DIAGRAMS

FIG. 5.28 (left) communication research centre. Ground floor plan. NTS

FIG. 5.29 Corporate component. Ground floor plan. NTS



MOVEMENT DIAGRAMS

FIG. 5.30 Open to general public. Ground floor plan. NTS

FIG. 5.31 Public and Research centre interface. Ground floor plan. NTS

