

# The New City Hall. Oppositional Party Headquarters and Public Debate Arena



Figure 5.1 Pretoria City Hall (Hoffman 2017)

05

# Concept



## 5.1 - Introduction

For the purpose of the dissertation the New City Hall will play an important role in the political state of South Africa and its new capital city, as it would provide the public with a new platform for interaction with politics helping to develop a greater level of transparency within the government.

The necessity of a public platform for interaction becomes an important point when applying Lefebvre's Right to the City, in that the creation of urban space would see the reproduction of the social relations found in and around it (Purcell 2002:102). Lefebvre's Right to the City states that there are two core principles which apply to the public, the first being the right to participation, arguing that the public needs to participate in any discussions pertaining to the production of urban/public space (Purcell 2002), and the second being the right to appropriation which argues for physical access, occupation and use of urban/public spaces as well as the creation of new urban spaces (Purcell 2002).

Due to the increased focus on public interaction, more value is placed on defining and maintaining both a strong public interface and a hybridised

identity between the existing and the new, making sure to respect both for the heritage of the structure and its surroundings, as well as that of the people it is representing.

The New City Hall is intended to be positioned in the three-tier system of government and to be viewed as one down from that of Parliament. It will facilitate local government and use its inputs as a mandate towards addressing the provincial government and/or parliament, depending on the severity of the issue at hand.

Through its allocation to Pretoria City Hall, the headquarters is given a prominent seat in the new capital. It is intended that the involvement of the opposition parties will help elevate, reactivate and reconnect the city hall with the public, ultimately reinstating its original intention.

In order to determine the extent to which the parties would occupy the new building, it was important to specifically define which parties would be situated in the building, as well as to determine the extent of their following with regards to the number of seats they would have in parliament.

The parties included in the headquarters have been selected for their occupation of at least 1 seat in parliament. These include (News24 2014):

- The Democratic Alliance (DA) = 89 seats
- The Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) = 25 seats
- Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) = 10 seats
- National Freedom Party (NFP) = 6 seats
- United Democratic Movement (UDM) = 4 seats
- Freedom Front Plus (FFP) = 4 seats
- Congress of the People = 3 seats
- African Christian Democratic Party (ACOP) = 3 seats
- African Independent Congress = 3 seats
- Agang SA = 2 seats
- Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) = 1 seat
- African Peoples Convention = 1 seat

The postulated mandate for the New City Hall is:

The revitalisation and reconceptualization of Pretoria City hall as a civic centre to act as a mediating platform between politics, architecture and the public so as to facilitate opportunities for all to engage democratically with their city through its new political voice.

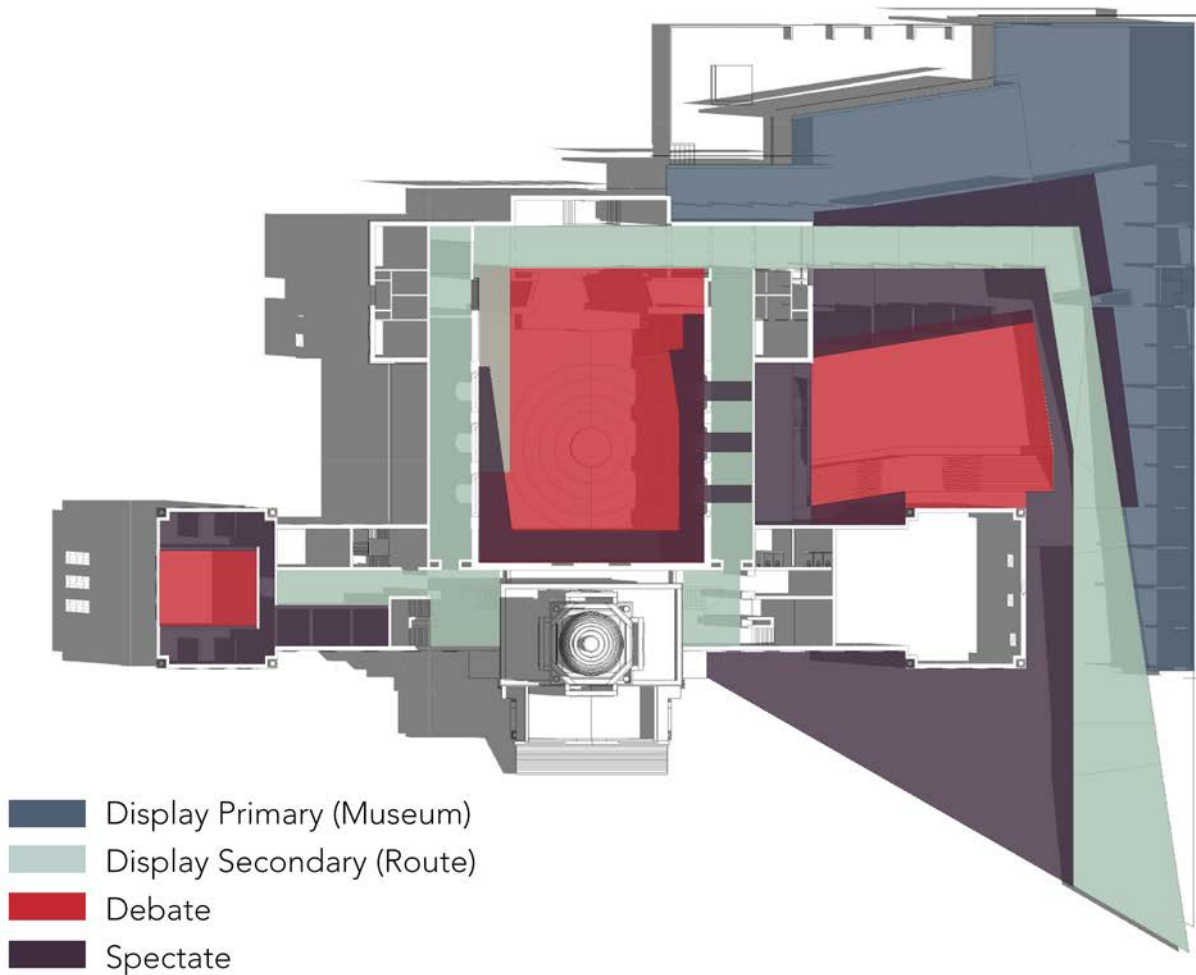
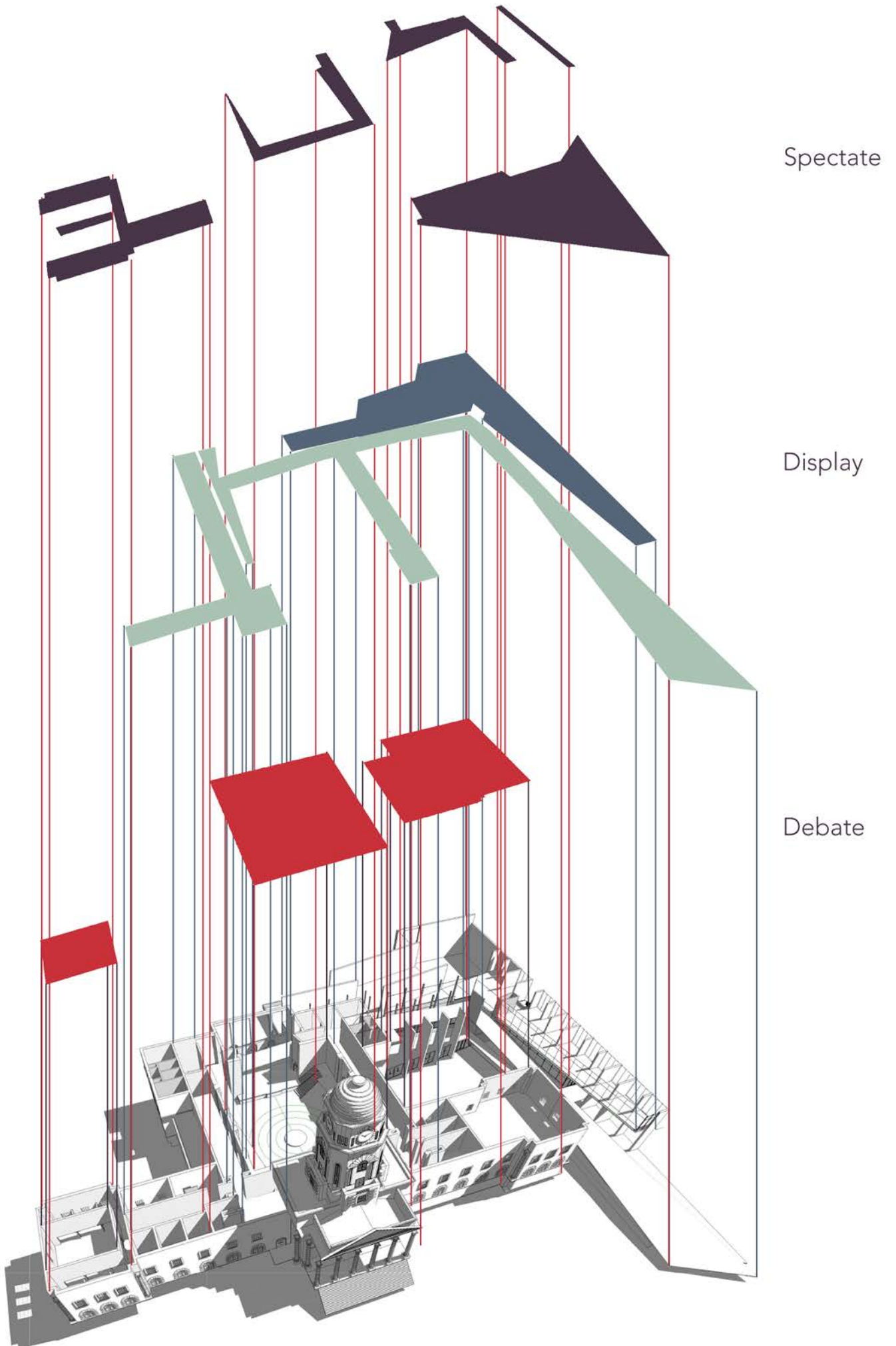
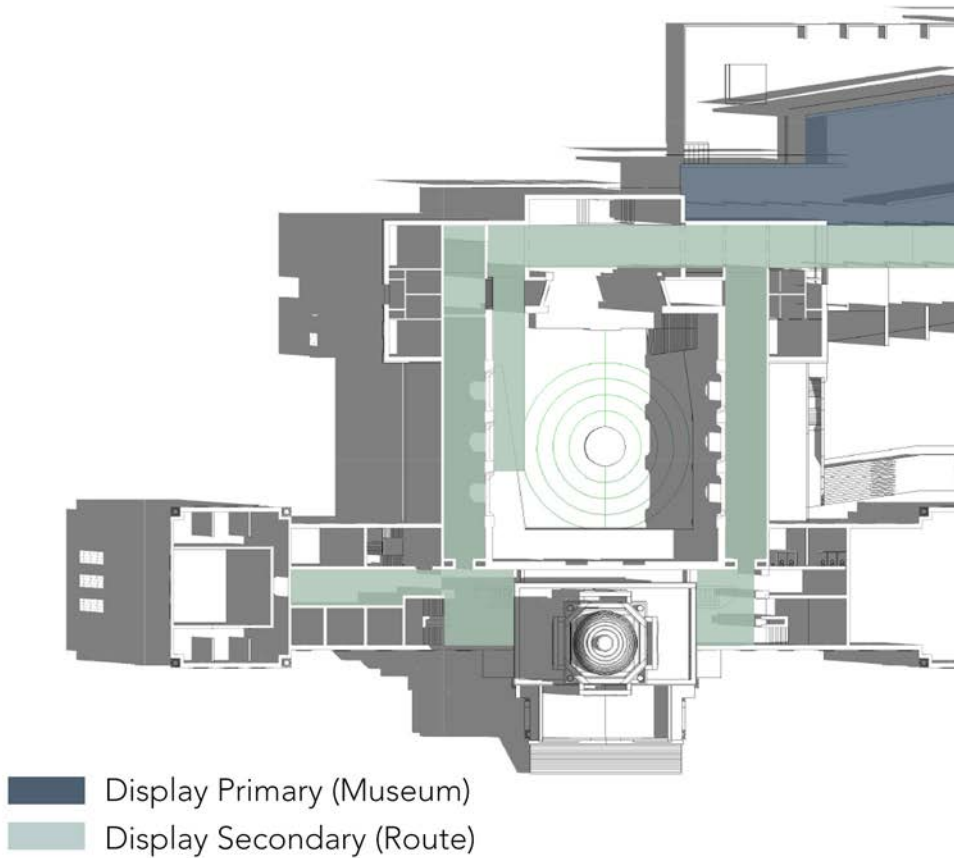


Figure 5.2 Above; Aerial of city hall and the overlay of functions (Author 2017)  
 Figure 5.3 Right; Layers of Display, Debate and Spectate (Author 2017)

## 5.2 - Functions: Display, Debate, Spectate

The design of the New City Hall is grounded in three core functions, i.e. Display, Debate and Spectate, which have been informed and developed through the application of the theoretical argument. The building programme has been organised to fit within each function. The value in organising the design along three functions is the strong overlay developed between them. No single function occurs without the participation, to varying extents, of the other two, allowing for a spatial manifestation of transparency and further strengthening the contribution made by the project as an important civic centre for the public, the city and the country.





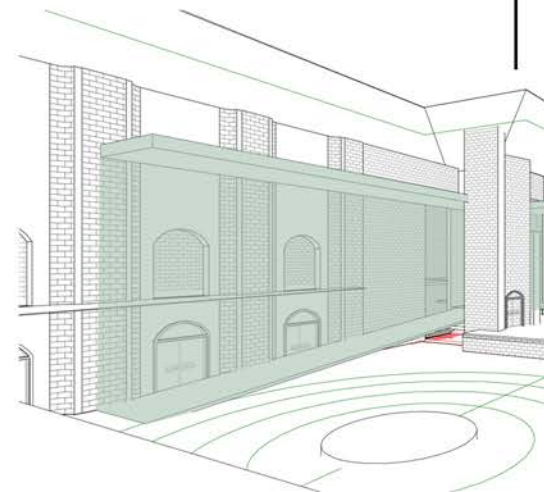
## 5.2.1 - Display

The past and present identity of our society, as perceived by those around us, is developed through how we display ourselves (Jarvis 2009). To display is to reveal. It is to express certain aspects of ourselves to those around us whereby our context or platform determines the appropriateness of what it is and how much it is that we wish to display.

Therefore, the act of Display deals with the issues of memory and the appropriation of space, as is made manifest in the control of public and private expression spaces at varying scales. These range from the largest scale of Pretorius Square, to the internal debate space of the main hall, to that of the smallest expression spaces between individuals through general circulation.

The proposed Museum of Democracy will contain the aspect of memory. Through memory, the architecture of the museum and its exhibitions is able to respect that which once was, using it as a signifier of the progress made by democracy. Display further embodies memory through the articulation of the knowledge gained of the existing in the structuring and ordering of the architecture.

Figure 5.4 Above; Aerial of city hall and the overlay of Display (Author 2017)  
 Figure 5.5 Right; Axo of city halls primary and secondary layers of Display (Author 2017)  
 Figure 5.6 Right Bottom; Perspectives indicating the overlay of Display into the debate arena and the overlay of the primary and secondary layers of Display along the protest route respectively. (Author 2017)



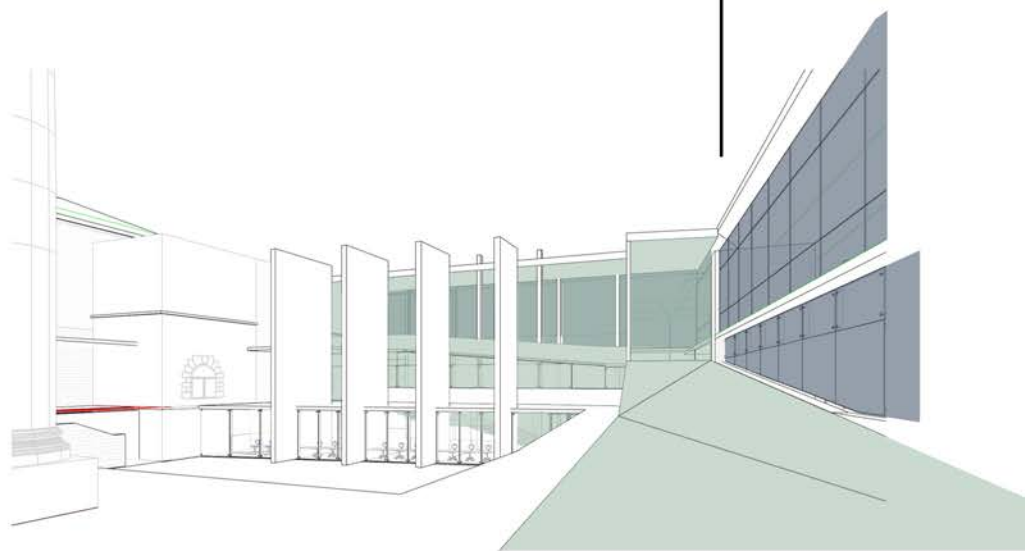
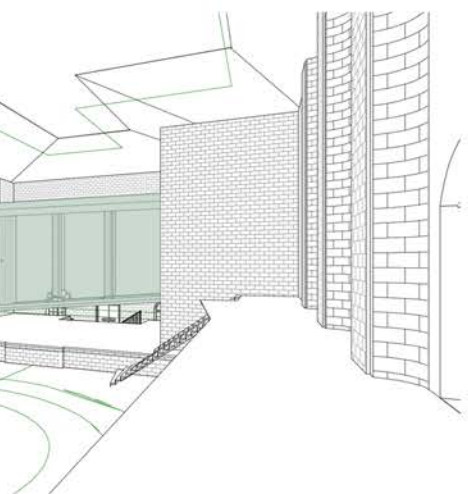
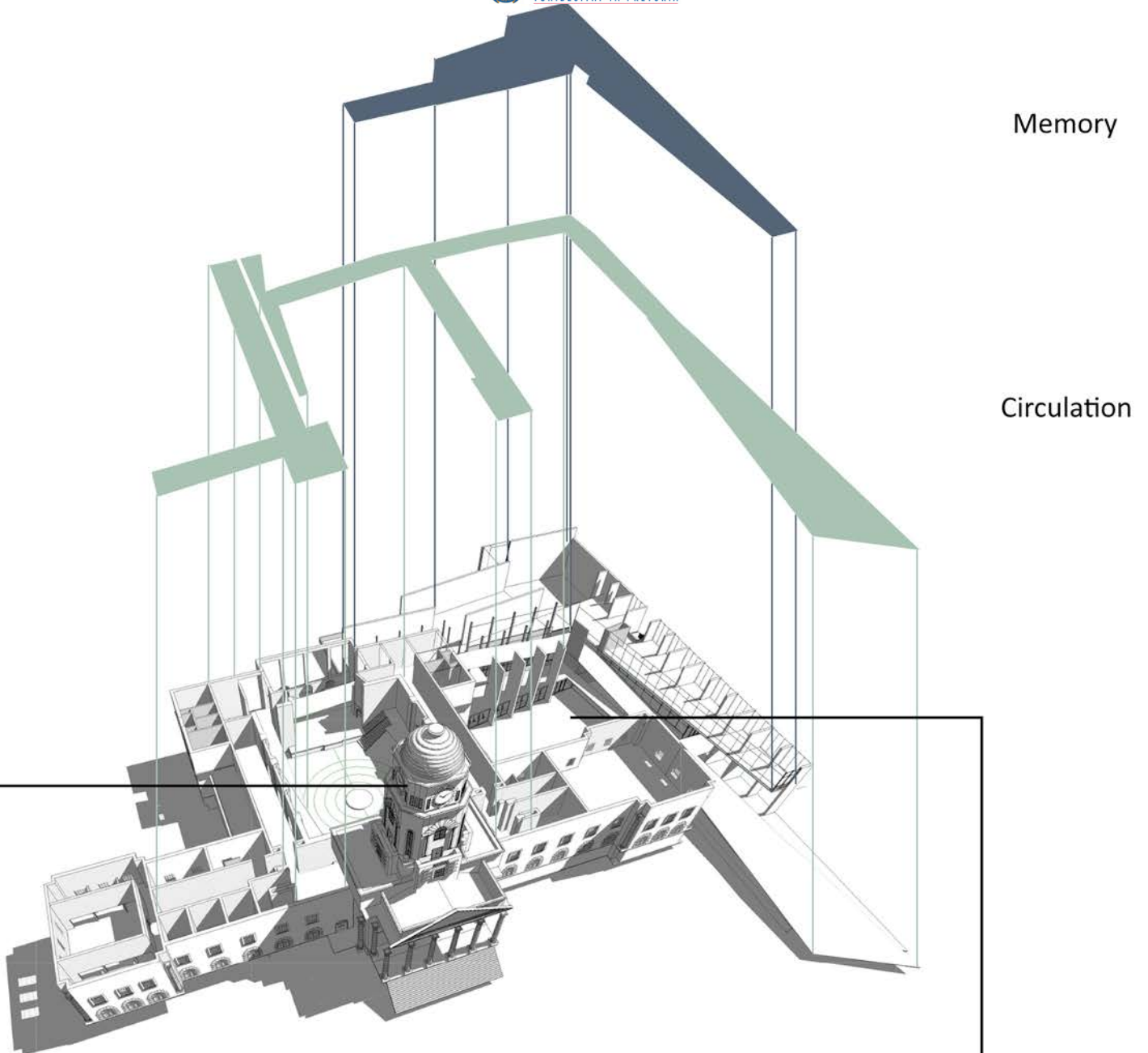
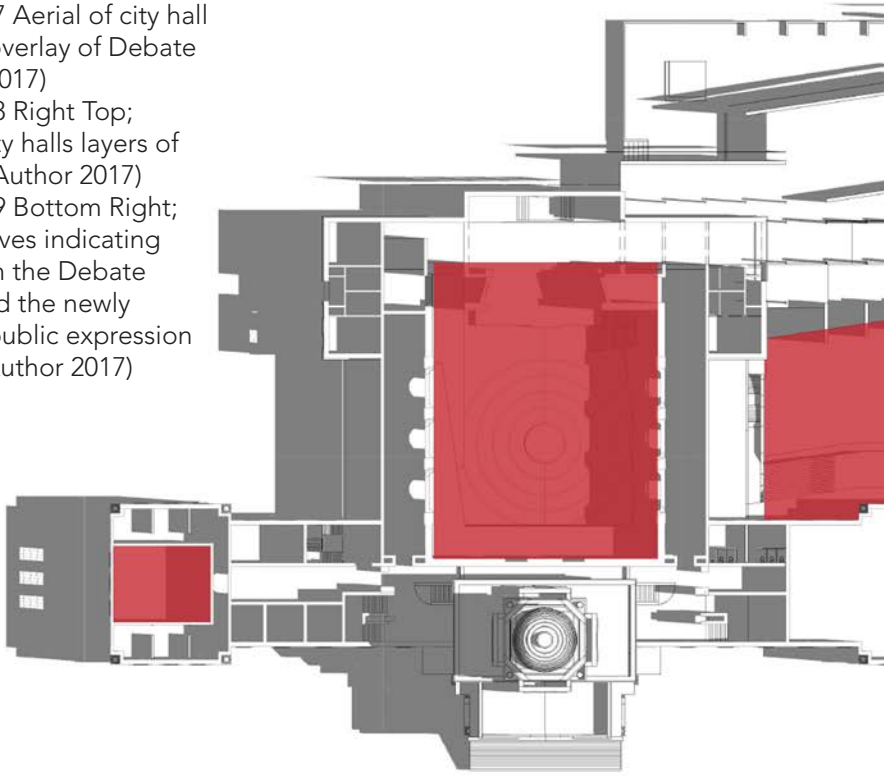




Figure 5.7 Aerial of city hall and the overlay of Debate (Author 2017)

Figure 5.8 Right Top; Axo of city halls layers of Debate (Author 2017)  
Figure 5.9 Bottom Right; Perspectives indicating Debate in the Debate Arena and the newly created public expression square (Author 2017)



 Debate

## 5.2.2 - Debate

### Debate

\ di-'bāt , dē- \

[noun] A formal discussion on a particular matter in a public meeting or legislative assembly, in which opposing arguments are put forward and which usually ends with a vote.

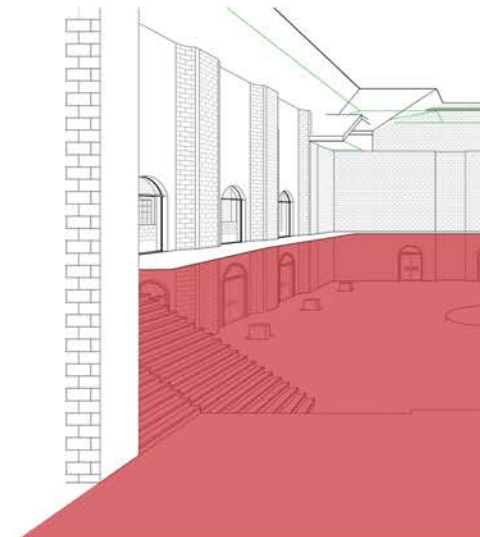
(Oxford Living Dictionaries 2017)

To debate is to argue, within space, different opinions, within space, regarding a specific issue. The act of debate does not solely refer to a verbal contestation of ideals. Therefore, it can also be perceived as spatial manifestations of tangible and intangible debate. Tangible debate can be witnessed through the materiality and ordering of architecture. Whereas intangible

debate can be witnessed through a change in the meaning and representation of the existing with the intention of creating a new identity.

Debate therefore deals with the issues of both verbal and architectural contestation. Central to the design is the Debate arena in the existing hall which acts as the main facilitator of Debate in which interaction between the public and political parties occurs at direct and indirect levels.

A direct level of interaction would involve the expression of public opinion and unrest, which is directly facilitated through the functions of both Display and Spectate. Indirect interaction would involve the observation of Debate by the public which is



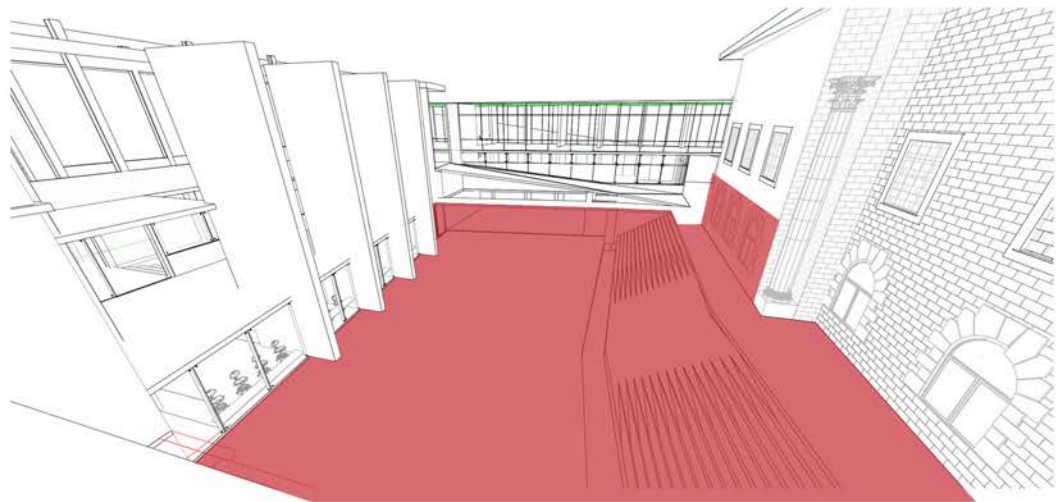
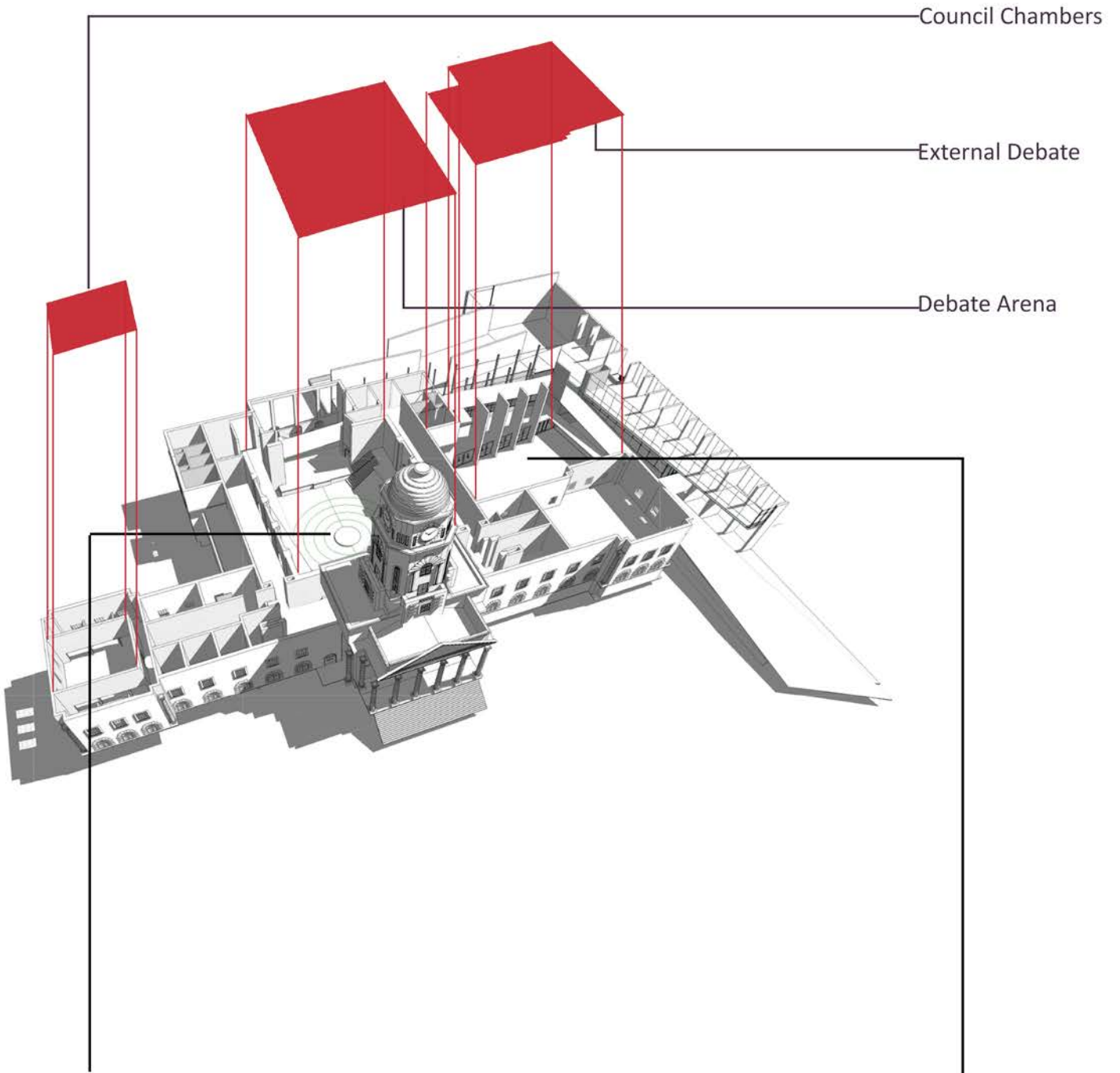
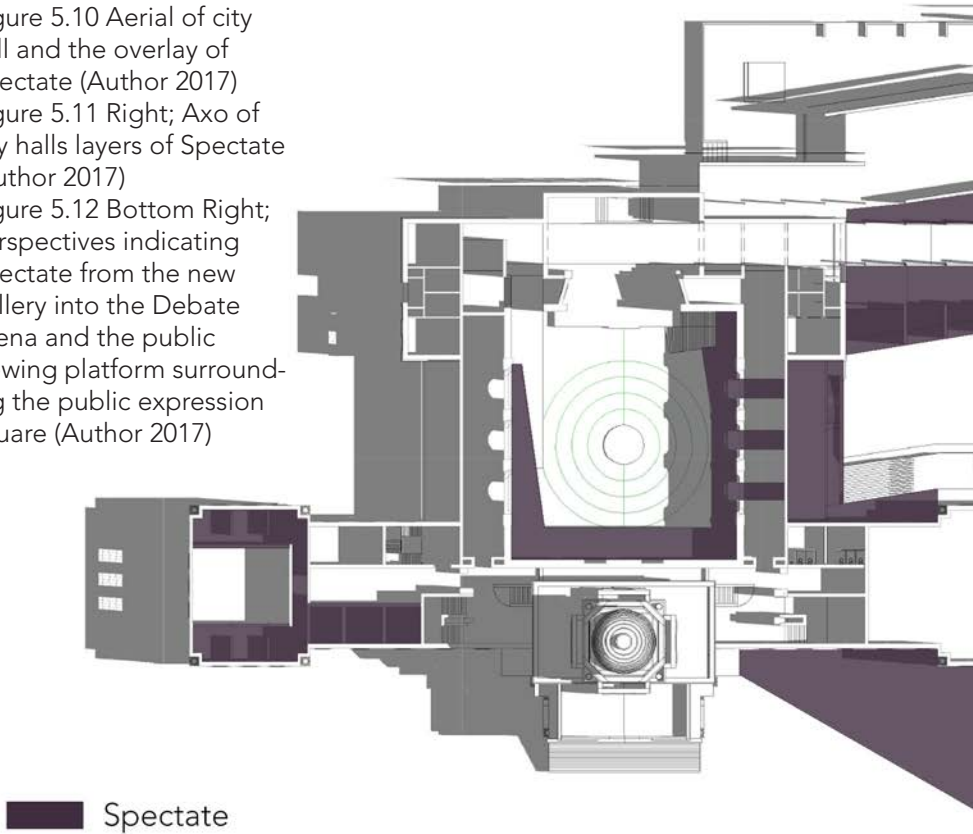


Figure 5.10 Aerial of city hall and the overlay of Spectate (Author 2017)  
Figure 5.11 Right; Axo of city halls layers of Spectate (Author 2017)  
Figure 5.12 Bottom Right; Perspectives indicating Spectate from the new gallery into the Debate Arena and the public viewing platform surrounding the public expression square (Author 2017)



### 5.2.3 - Spectate

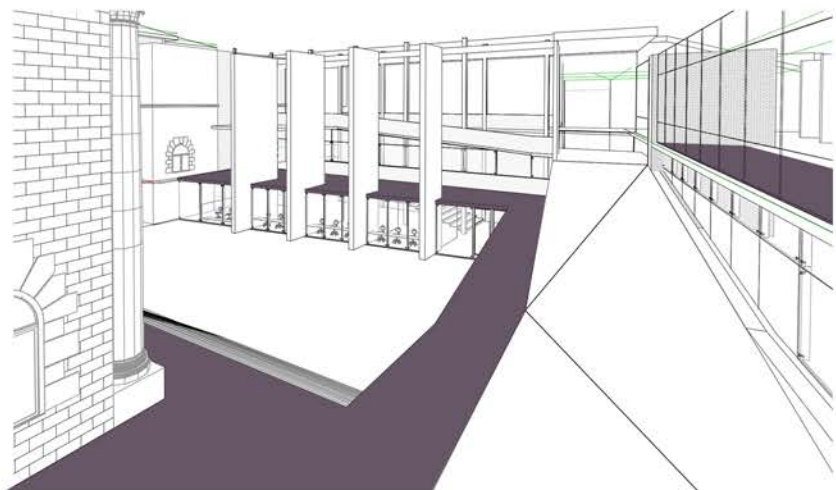
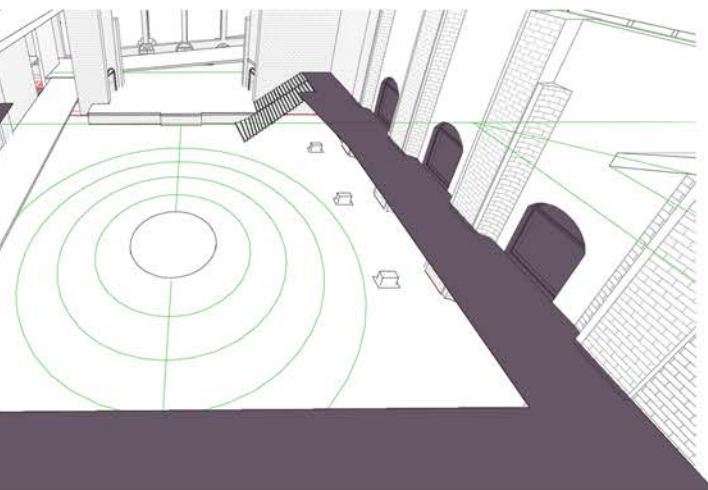
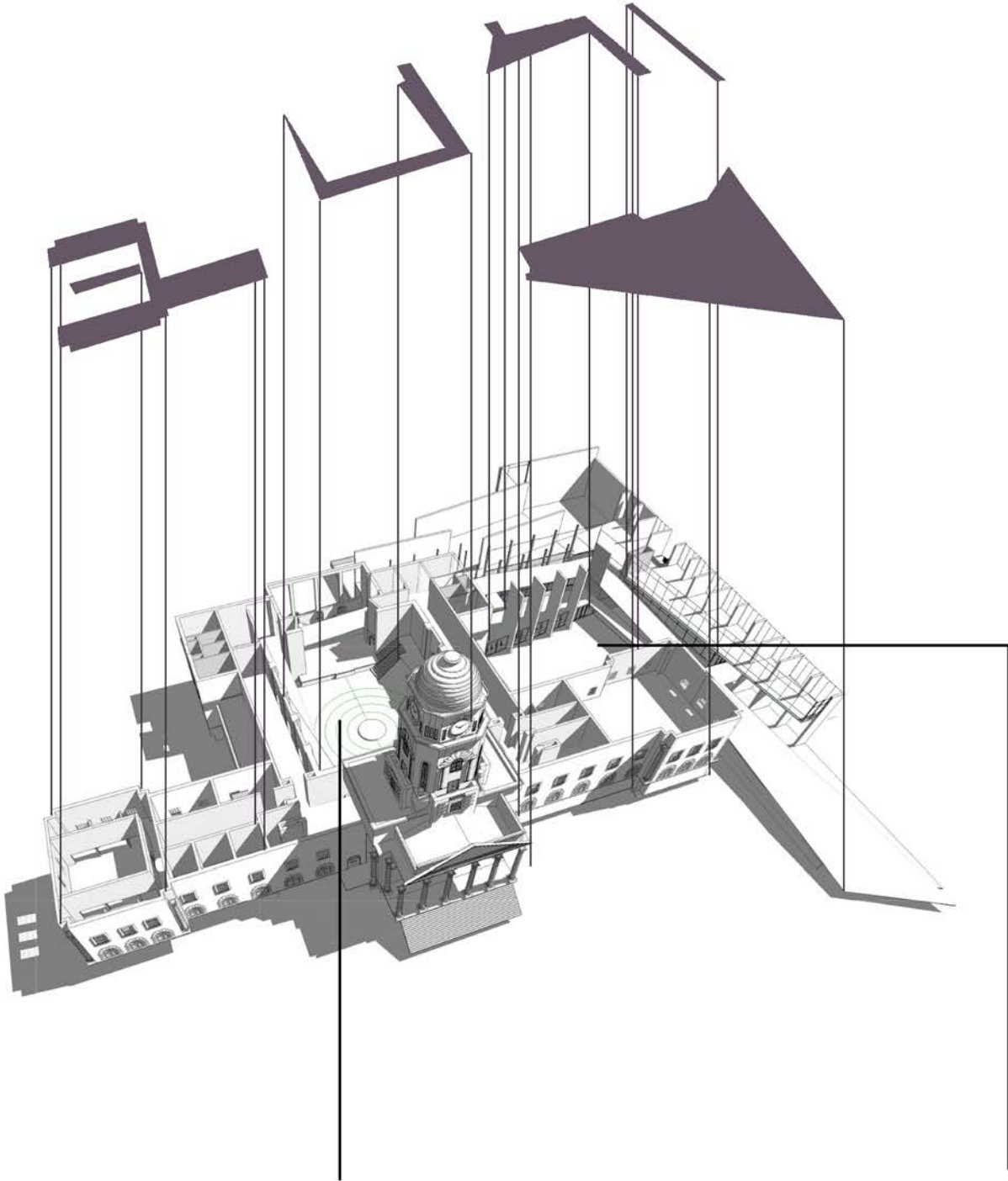
Very little in the world can happen without someone seeing it. To Spectate is to witness that which is happening around us to help us to inform ourselves when developing an opinion. The opinions of the members of society are important to the progress of democracy, and it is dangerous when an opinion is developed from a lack of information (Rajan 2017).

Therefore, Spectate deals with the issues of transparency and the acquisition of knowledge, facilitated through the appropriation of platforms along the main protest route, whereby users are able to gain an understanding of their

surroundings, be that a social or physical understanding. The varied platforms would be informed by the function of Display and emphasised through Debate. Furthermore, the function of Spectate will be embodied in the junctions of the architecture so to help to clearly identify that which creates space.

Through the function of Spectate, the issue of transparency is supported in the definition and clarity emphasised between its elements. It looks at transparency at the macro scale of the Local Government Square down to the transparency of the physical junctions between materials.







## Programme

As suggested, democracy argues for a place in which the people are able to engage with the cultural, political and social activities of the city. Traditionally, the City Hall acted as the facilitator of these functions however, as established, Pretoria City Hall in its current state no longer facilitates these activities and therefore, the intention of the programme is its reactivation as a civic centre.

The New City hall is programmed on three levels, each being organised with a strong emphasis on public interaction as well as the integration of public, private and government. The levels are connected by three main routes which are manifestations of the multiple and varied routes taken to reach democracy.

Figure 5.13 Aerial with design master plan (Author 2017)





Figure 5.14 Level one; News, Knowledge and share (Author 2017)

## Level One: News, Knowledge and Sharing

Level One is mainly positioned in the new addition as well as the 'basement' edges on the northern side of city hall. It is focused around purely public activities and facilitates public interaction through its functions (Display). The purpose of Level One is to re-engage with members of the public so as to provide facilities that enable them at varying levels.

Symbolically Level One is representative of where the power and strength of a good democracy comes from its people.

The programmes found on level one include:

- A market space with market storage
- Public conference room
- Small lecture Hall
- Discussion corners
- News walk
- Male and female toilet facilities
- General storage



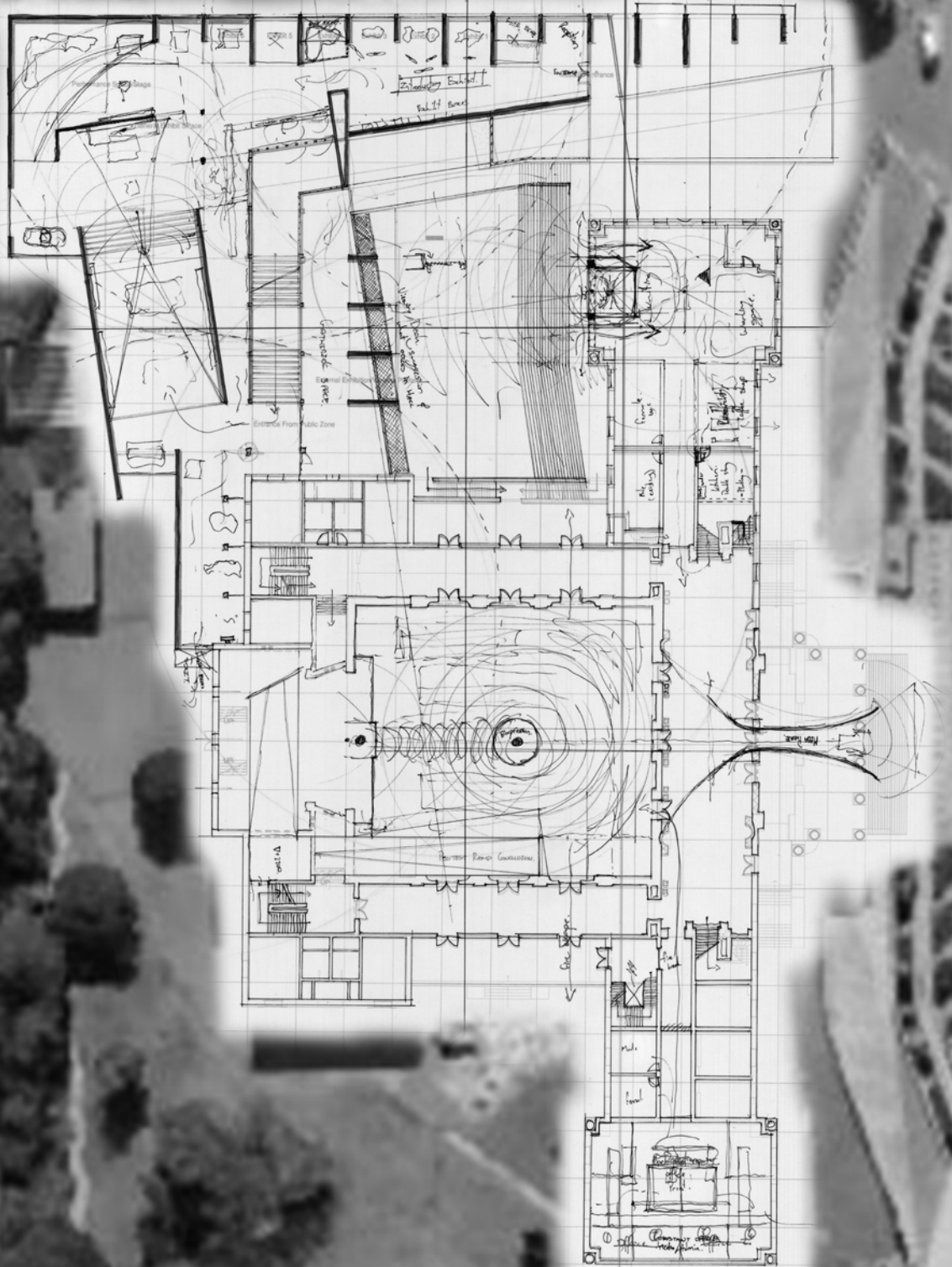


Figure 5.15 Level two; Museum, Debate and Express (Author 2017)

## Level Two: Museum, Debate and Express

The main intention of level Two/ground level of the City Hall is the interaction and participation of the public, which would occur in the most important space, the main hall to both the new and old structure. Hereby the process of democracy – an intangible idea – would become tangible. This sees the formation of the debate arena, providing a platform for interaction between opposition parties and the public, and which is facilitated through direct interaction (Display), expression and participation (Debate) and indirect interaction (Spectate).

The new structure would see expression and interaction of Display and Spectate through the formation of a Museum of Democracy, in which the fight for democracy would be illustrated.

The programmes found on level two include:

- Museum of Democracy
- Media House
- Entrance/Reception (original + new)
- Debate Arena/Hall
- Artist's rooms
- General storage
- Conference rooms
- Offices
- Male and female toilet facilities

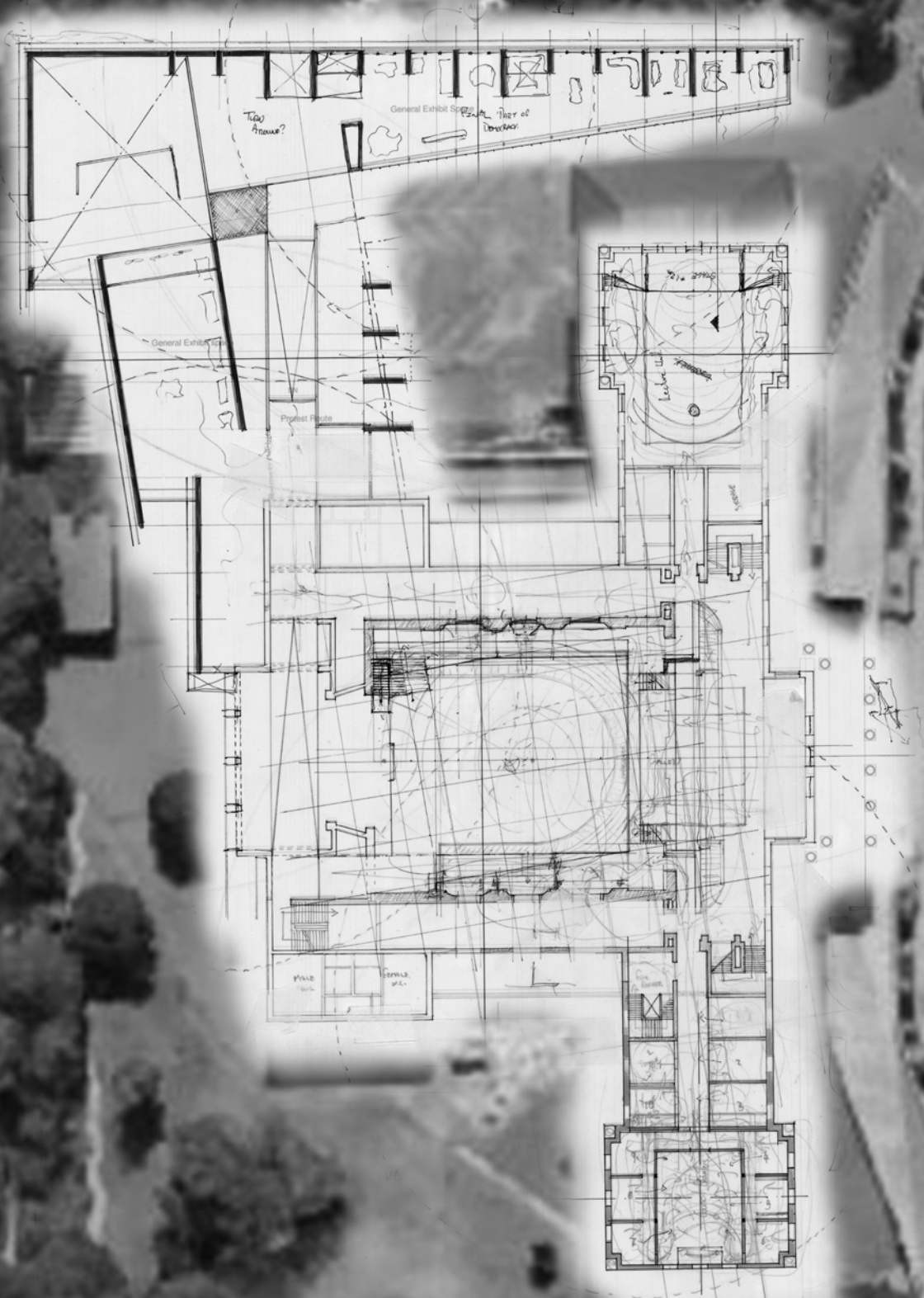


Figure 5.16 Level three; Political, Spectate and Learn (Author 2017)

### Level Three: Political, Spectate and Learn

Level Three sees the introduction of the political headquarters of the New City Hall. Situated in the southern wing, where the mayor's office was originally located, will be new offices for the leaders of the opposing political parties with at least one seat in the National Assembly.

Central to the level is the observation platform (Spectate) from which the public can view what is taking place in the debate arena. Lastly, the northern wing contains the addition of the new main lecture hall.

The programmes found on level Three include:

- Offices for leaders of political parties
- Council chambers
- Museum of Democracy
- Main lecture hall
- Lecture hall reception
- Discussion room
- Observation areas
- Storage
- Male and female toilet facilities