

14

programme & typology

[a]

TRANSITIONAL HOUSING PROGRAMME

Transitional housing is a type of temporary, supportive housing for the homeless that serves as an intermediate step towards independent living, reintegration into society and permanent housing (Gaetz 2014: 86). It provides accommodation to those who “require a stable housing solution for a period of time before moving on to more permanent options” (Ukwazi 2017: 39). An important aspect of transitional housing is the provision of onsite psychosocial, physical and economic support and skills development services aimed to assist the residents on their move towards stability by addressing certain issues and challenges that have caused or perpetuated their homelessness (Gaetz 2014: 86, Ntakirutimana 2015: 144). Transitional housing is “more long-term, service intensive and private” than emergency housing and traditional homeless shelters (Gaetz 2014: 86). A mix of single and family rooms are provided for lengths of stay ranging from 3 months to 3 years (2014: 86).

Ukwazi (2017: 44-45) describes eight principles of transitional housing, which support the choice of this programme for Melgisedek and guide the design thereof. The five most applicable principles to the programme and design process include (2017: 44-45):

1. Dignified and of a good standard: To provide accommodation for single residents and families that respects their right to dignity and privacy. There should be a balance of shared and private spaces and facilities, contributing to a sense of safety, ownership and community.
2. A proactive holistic response in well-located areas: It should be located in urban nodes close to public services, transport and employment opportunities, and where development may lead to evictions.
3. Fair and affordable rent: Residents should pay an affordable rent that is proportional to their available income and not necessarily a fixed amount.
4. Assistance and social services: It should be clustered with social support services that assist tenants towards independence and accessing permanent housing.
5. Time bound: It should be provided for a limited time. However, this should allow tenants to move on to alternative housing through appropriate support, coordination and availability of well-located affordable housing.

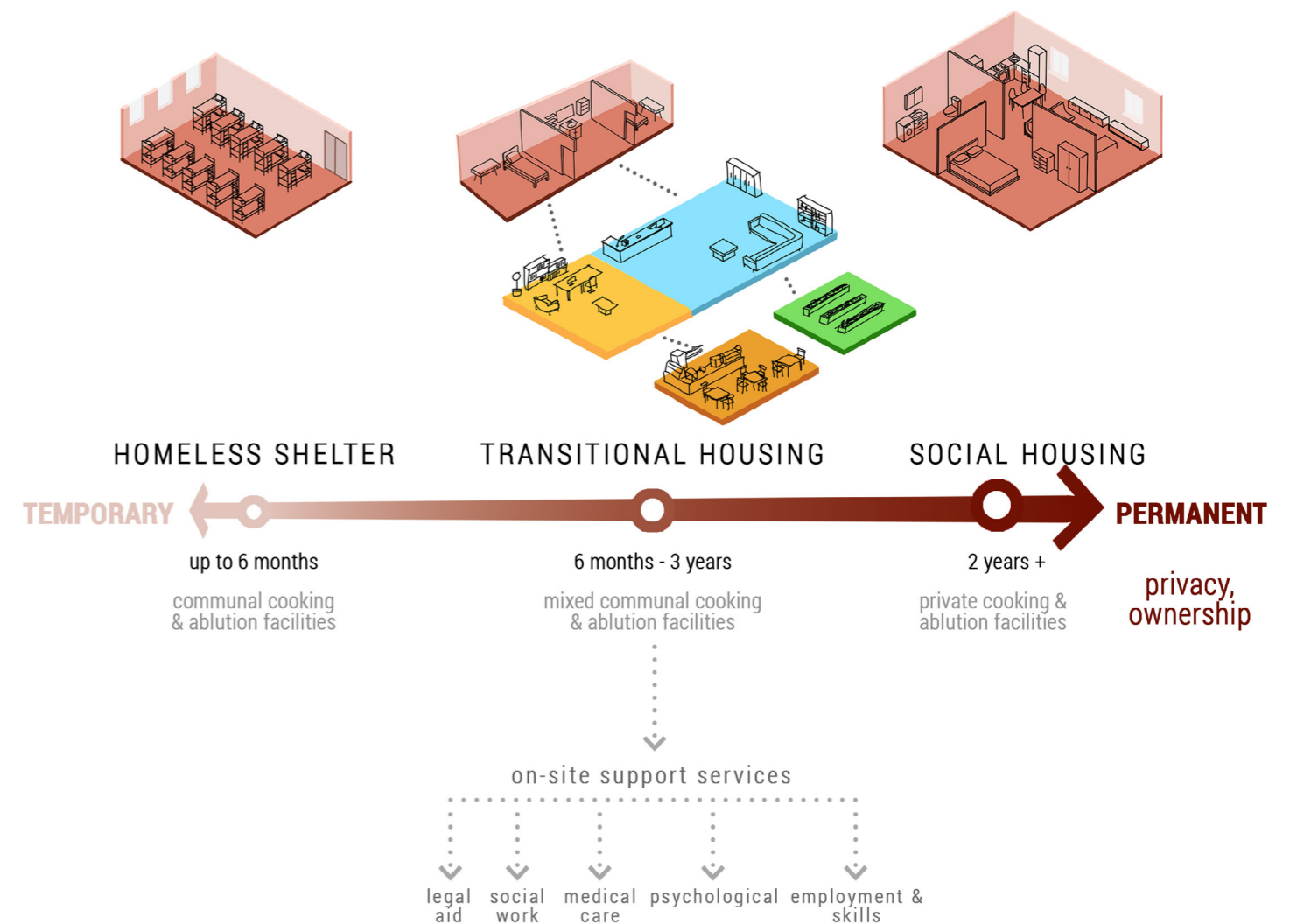
Lastly, Figure 14.1. compares transitional housing to homeless shelters and social housing in terms of length of stay (level of permanence); privacy and ownership; and provision of support services (Halverstadt 2019).

Homeless shelters tend to offer short-term stays (up to 6 months) in the form of shared dormitory-type accommodation with communal dining and ablution facilities. The goal is to provide immediate emergency shelter and possibly to link occupants with other support service partners (Halverstadt 2019). Rent is usually R0–R8 per night, per bed (Ntakirutimana 2015: 168).

Transitional housing provides a range of rooms from private to shared units with pockets of communal spaces and shared cooking and ablution facilities, offering more privacy and longer-term stay (up to 3 years) than homeless shelters. Therefore, there is more opportunity for appropriation and a sense

of ownership, and more time to engage with onsite support services (including social, medical, psychological, educational and financial services) (Halverstadt 2019). Rent is usually between R150–R300 per room, per month (Ntakirutimana 2015: 168) per month (Ntakirutima 2015: 168).

Social housing is usually government-subsidised, permanent, affordable housing where residents live independently and rent their own apartments (with private kitchens and bathrooms), usually for many years. Some social housing developments include student and commercial units, as well as certain public and social services (Halverstadt 2019). Rent is usually R1500–R3500 per apartment, per month (Ntakirutimana 2015: 168). In order to qualify for social housing, applicants must have valid IDs, earn a monthly income of above R1500, and may not have previously benefited from government housing subsidies (Ntakirutimana 2015: 84-85), therefore disqualifying many homeless persons.



14.1. Comparison between homeless shelters, transitional housing and social housing (Author 2021) adapted from Halverstadt (2019).

Fig. 13.4. Previous pages 84–85: “Scale of Permanence” as conceptual and design driver (Author 2021).

[b]

PROGRAMMATIC & TYPOLOGICAL PRECEDENTS

The following precedents have guided the spatial application of the transitional housing programme/typology, informing the functions and types of spaces, sizes, positioning and configurations required by this programme and its users.

Precedent 1 | Rainbow Apartments by Michael Maltzan

Location: Skid Row, Los Angeles, USA

Typology/Programme: 89 single-room units of permanent supportive housing

Status: Completed 2006

This project is an example of permanent supportive housing, which is a housing typology more common in the USA, aimed at providing fully subsidised, equipped and permanent accommodation, with onsite support services (social, medical and psychological care, education and job training, etc.) for chronically homeless persons living with disabilities (Halverstadt 2019, NAEH 2021). When considering the economy, it is unlikely that this exact typology would be feasible in South Africa. However, the types and configurations of spaces are still relevant to the transitional housing typology when considering the balance between privacy, ownership and shared community life.

One of the successes of the plan and programme is the balance between communal living spaces and personal privacy and using the supportive services as a buffer and transition between the ground floor public interface and the semi-public communal courtyard and private units on the first floor (Maltzan 2020)(Figure 14.4.). Additionally, communal interaction is encouraged while respecting the need for privacy through the semi-public courtyard surrounded by outdoor circulation, which allows residents to participate in the community simply by going to and from their private rooms (Matlzan 2020) (Figure 14.5.).



14.2. Photograph of courtyard and circulation (mmaltzan.com n.d.)



14.3. Photograph of southern (street) elevation (Maltzan 2020).



14.4. Groundfloor plan (Maltzan 2020) edited by Author (2021).



14.4. First floor plan (Maltzan 2020) edited by Author (2021).

Precedent 2 | University of Mpumalanga Student Residence by Cohen & Garson Architects

Location: Mbombela, Mpumalanga, South Africa

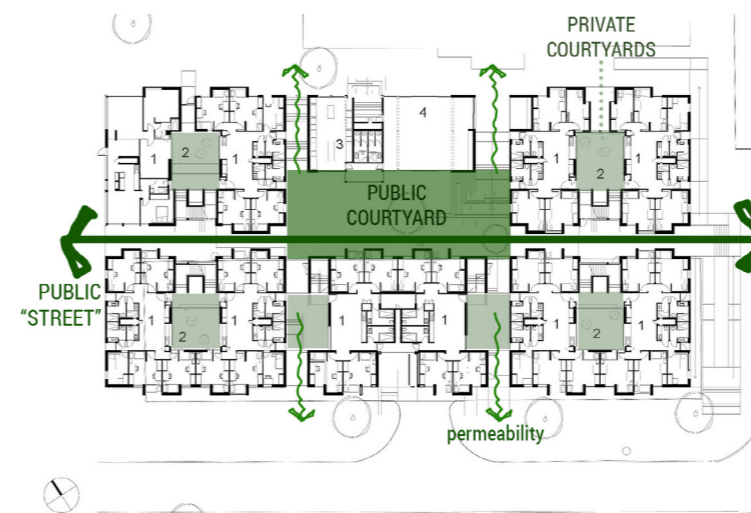
Typology/Programme: Student residence

Status: Completed 2015

This student residence typology functions similarly to transitional housing in that it accommodates residents temporarily in private rooms, with shared ablution and kitchen facilities, rendering the design and layout relevant

The most influential aspect of this precedent is the courtyard typology that creates “public and private common outdoor spaces” and intimate semi-public transitions between public spaces and the modular private rooms (Cohen and Garson 2016). These courtyard spaces encourage social interaction while respecting personal privacy. The courtyard typology also responds to the hot climate by allowing cross ventilation in all the rooms (Cohen and Garson 2016). The repeated modular rooms form modular cluster blocks separated by internal streets, creating permeability from the public realm and further encouraging communal interaction. There is also a sensitive progression from public to private spaces: from the public street edge, to the internal streets and public courtyard, to the intimate cluster courtyards and their common rooms, and finally to the private rooms (Figure 14.6.). The common room and kitchen spaces act as a threshold to the ablution cores, creating a sense of surveillance and safety around the ablution facilities (Figure 14.10.).

However, universal accessibility was not considered here, which is an important additional consideration for transitional housing for the homeless. Furthermore, the courtyards are quite small in proportion to the cluster blocks, limiting direct access to the courtyard and possibly the desire to linger.



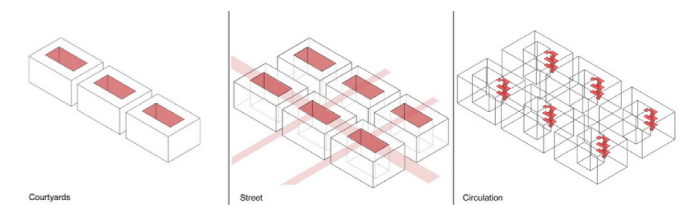
14.6. Upper ground floor plan (Cohen and Garson 2016) edited by Author (2021).



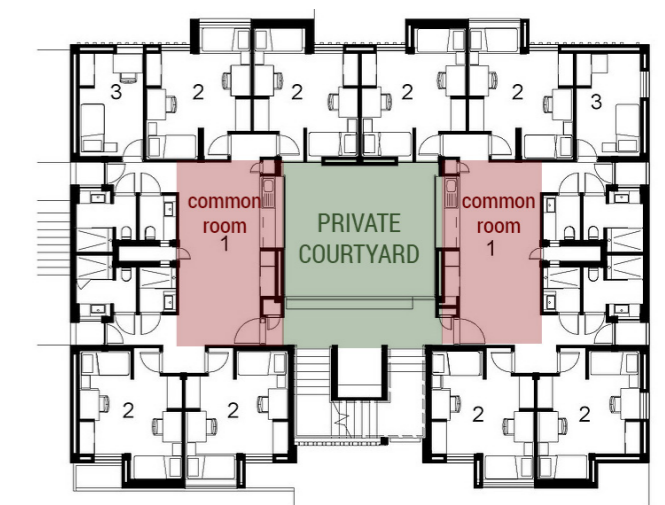
14.7. Photograph of UMP residence exterior (Cohen and Garson 2016).



14.8. Photograph of private courtyard (Cohen and Garson 2016).



14.9. Courtyards, street and circulation graphic (Cohen and Garson 2016).



Block Plan
1:200

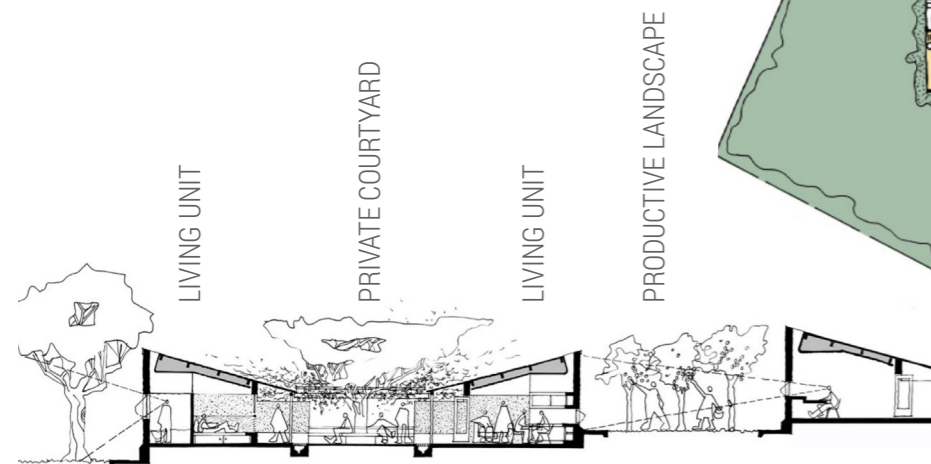
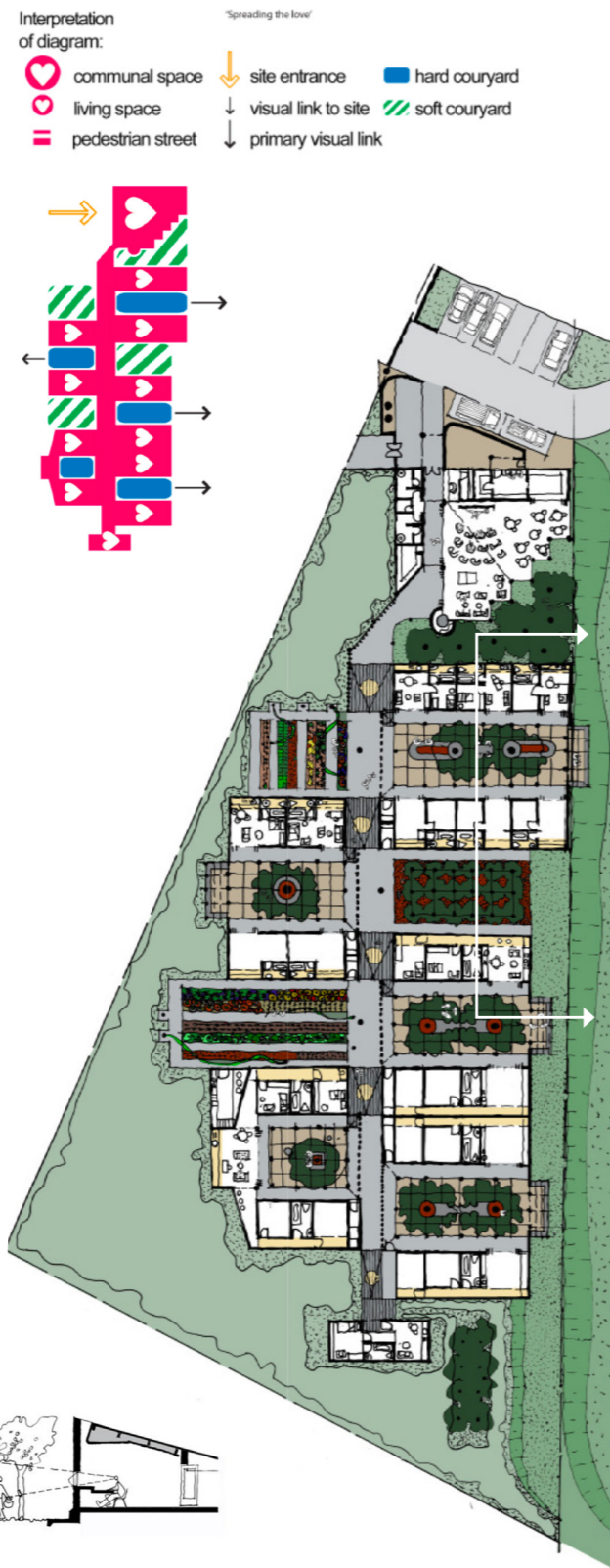
- 1 Student Common Room
- 2 Double Bedroom
- 3 Single Bedroom

14.10. Residential block floor plan (Cohen and Garson 2016) edited by Author (2021).

Precedent 3 | Transitional Living Centre by Noero Architects

Location: Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa
Typology/Programme: Transitional housing for people with disabilities
Status: Not built

Although never built, this is a local example of transitional housing that serves as a stepping stone for people with disabilities towards more independent living, with assistance in social, employment and life skills development and certain medical and psychological services (Climb Any Mountain 2013). The centre is aimed at providing dignity and independence, balanced by communal dependence and interaction (Noero Architects 2013). The residential clusters also follow an intimate courtyard typology with private courtyards surrounded by universally accessible accommodation and alternating communal productive courtyards between clusters. The courtyards act as communal spaces encouraging social interaction and communal activities.



14.11. Section through private courtyard and living units (Noero Architects 2013).

14.12. Plan of the TLC in relation to the concept of communal and living spaces, hard and soft courtyards and visual links to the surroundings (Climb Any Mountain 2013).

All precedents incorporate courtyards that serve as semi-public social spaces, act as transitional spaces between public and private realms, and balance the need for communal interaction with the need for privacy and independence. This is also navigated by the balance of communal spaces and facilities with private living units. Additionally, designing modular units that can be repeated allows for various configurations while still creating a unified identity. Lastly, onsite support services can be used as spatial and programmatic thresholds between public interfaces and private living spaces, while serving residents and the public.

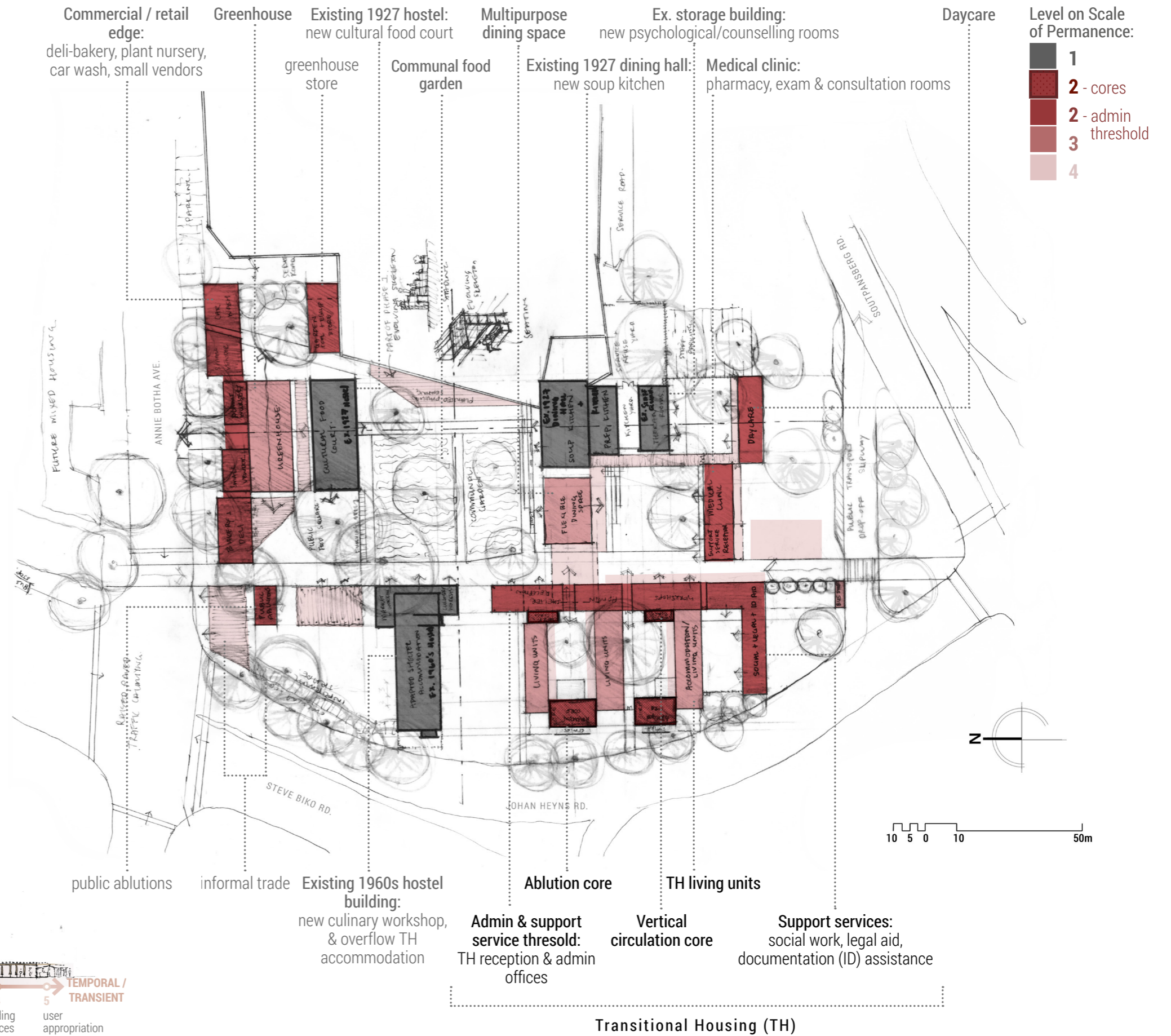
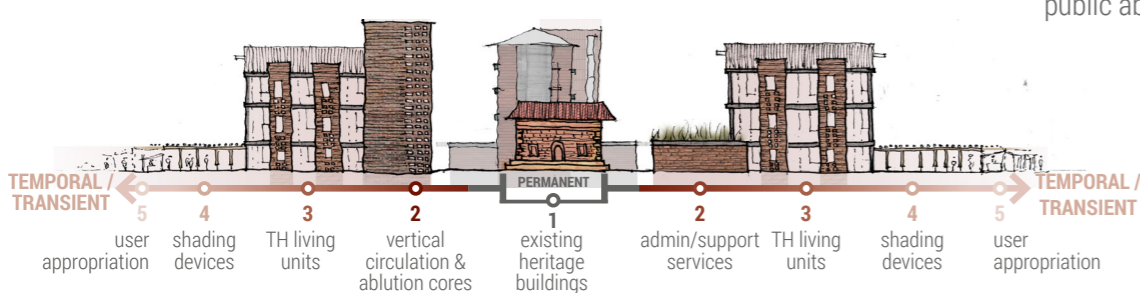
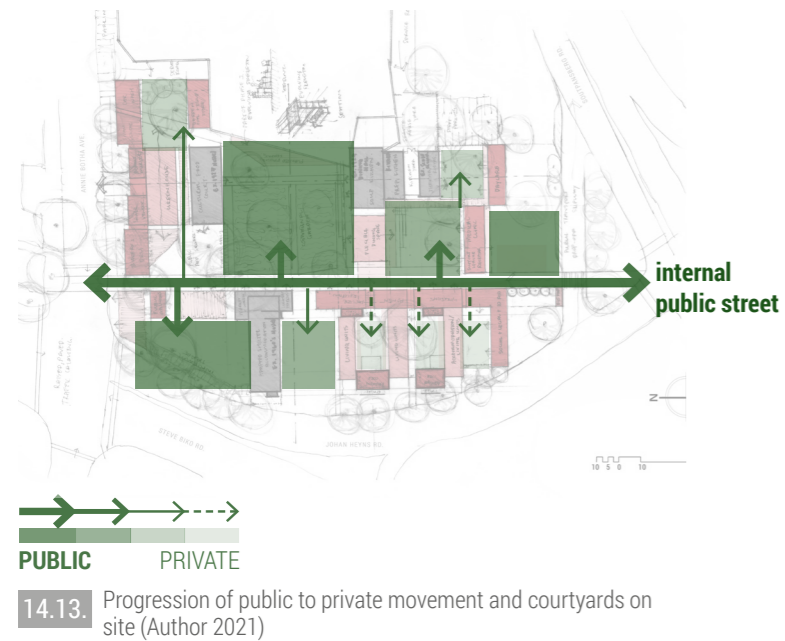
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[c]

RESULTANT PRODUCTS & ITERATIONS

The research on transitional housing and precedents guided the positioning of the various functions on the site, considering the hierarchy and progression of public to private spaces. The programmatic organisation also relates to the conceptual strategy of the scale of permanence, with certain spaces manifesting architecturally as more permanent, anchoring spaces and others as more flexible or tectonic spaces.

The programme was also compiled into an accommodation schedule (see Appendix 4) to guide the development of the plan. The various functions, sizes and programmatic requirements were interpreted and adapted from the research on transitional housing (Gaetz 2014, Halverstadt 2019, Ukwazi 2017), precedents, national building regulations (SANS2011) and shelter design guidelines (BCHousing 2017).



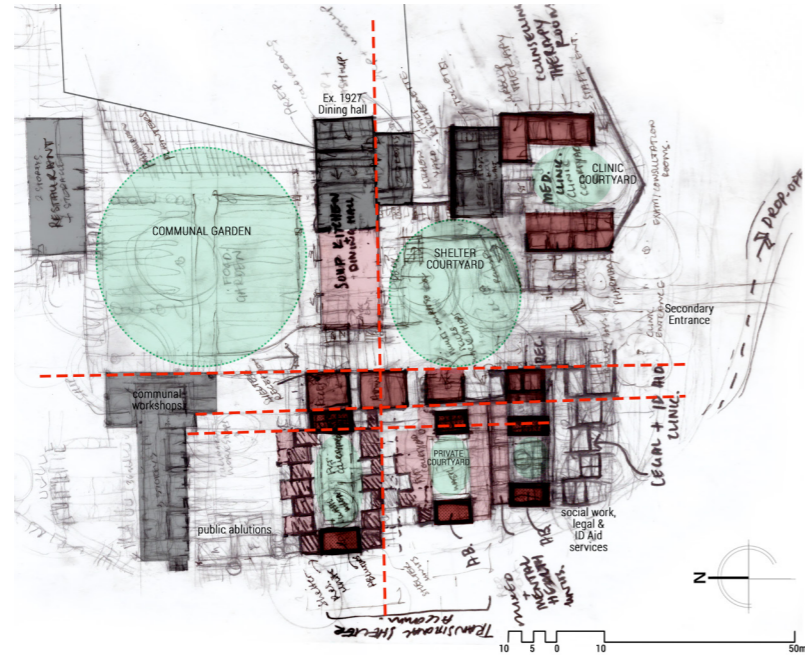
Iteration 1:

In developing the first plan iteration, the organisation and site layout of the various social welfare programmes were considered to define the interlinked courtyards of varying privacy as transitions between public and private functions (Figure 14.16.). At the transitional housing, stereotomic cores anchor the flanking living unit “legs”.

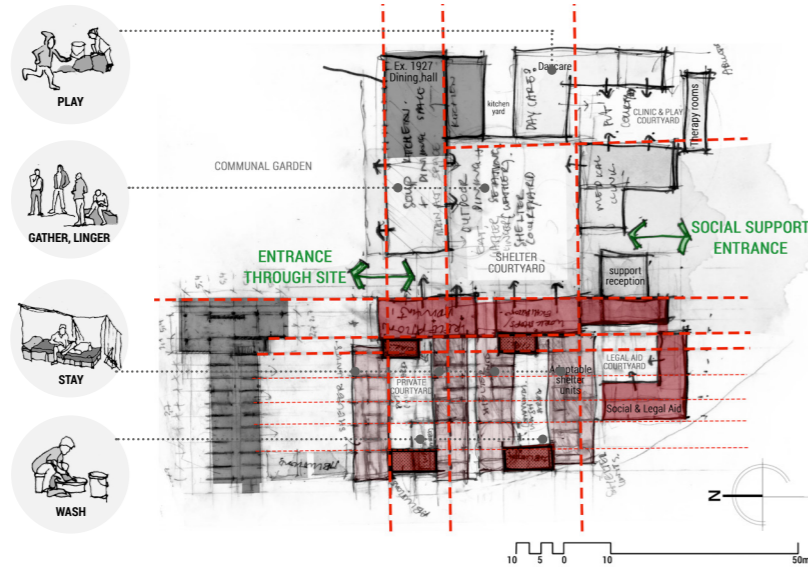
The spaces were then further defined according to their functions, levels of permanence and identified existing activities (such as communal wash spaces), and then ordered according to the grid and proportions of the existing buildings (Figure 14.17.).

Modular living units were then staggered along the grid to create flexible niches of privacy and permeability around the private courtyard (Figure 14.18.).

The first iteration shows more detailed layouts of the transitional housing units and courtyards, based on three living unit modules placed on the 3m by 3m grid (Figures 14.19. and 14.20.).



14.16. Process sketch 1 of Phase 2: Social Welfare Pocket (Author 2021).

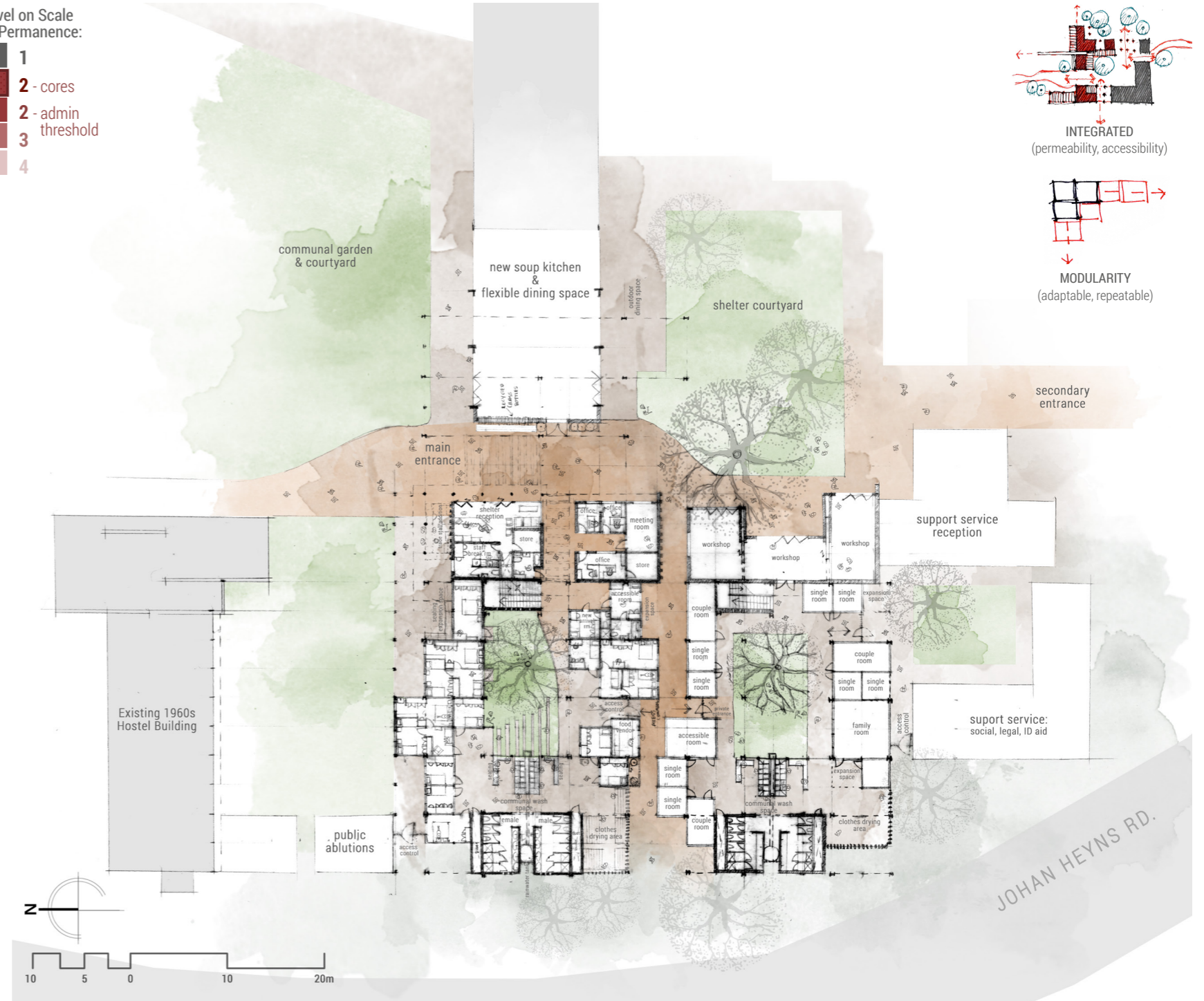


14.17. Process sketch 2 of Phase 2: Social Welfare Pocket (Author 2021).

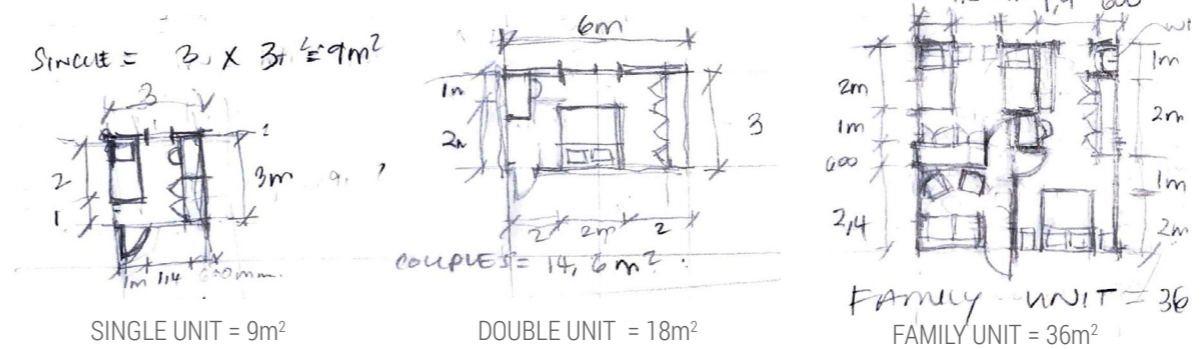


14.18. Process sketch 3 of Phase 2: Social Welfare Pocket (Author 2021).

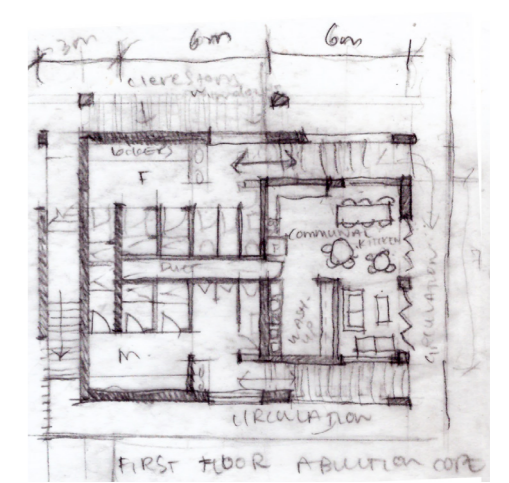
- Level on Scale of Permanence:
- 1
 - 2 - cores
 - 2 - admin threshold
 - 3
 - 4



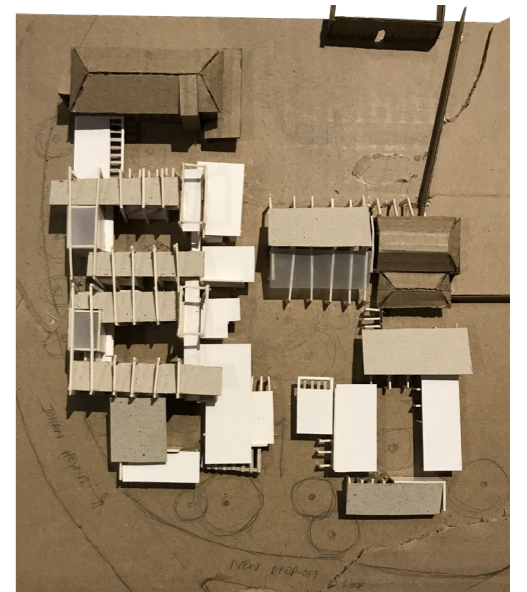
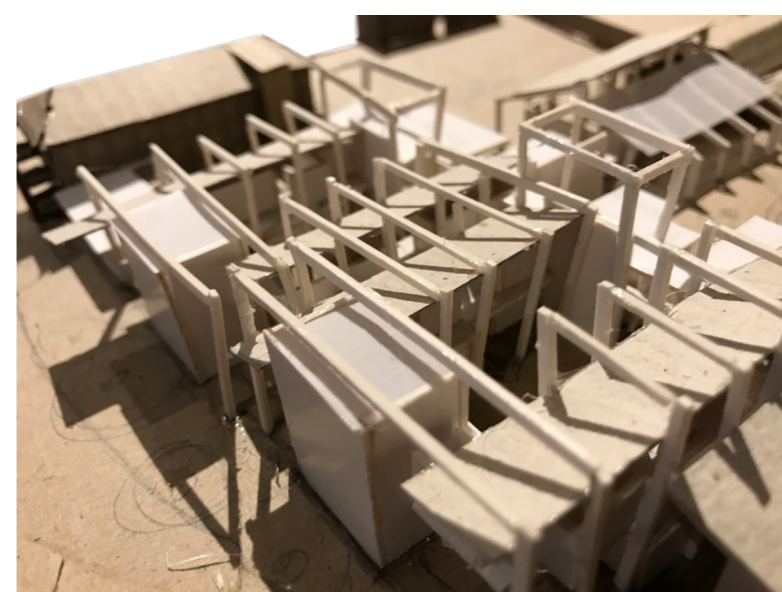
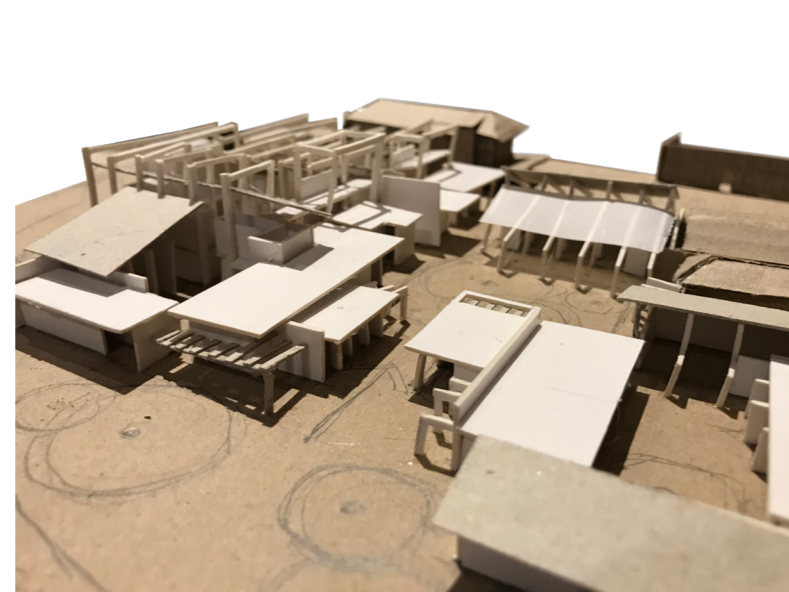
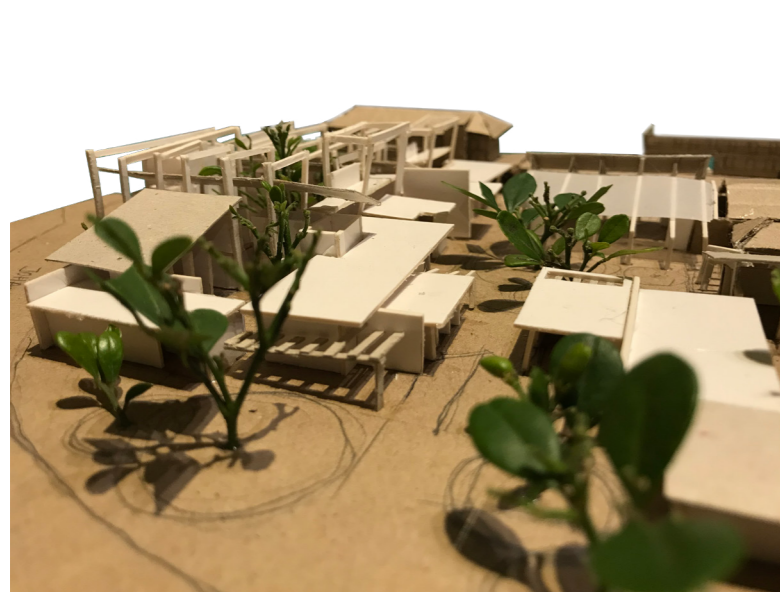
14.19. Ground floor plan of iteration 1 (Author 2021).



14.20. Single, double and family living unit modules (Author 2021).



14.21. Common room above communal wash area (Author 2021).



Photographs of Iteration 1 maquette (Author 2021). 14.22.

Iteration 2:

In the second iteration, courtyards are defined more successfully, and the transitional housing admin and support service functions are defined as a threshold to the more private living spaces and articulated as a continuous band that wraps around the housing, picking up on spatial and formal cues of the existing 1960s building's entrance space.

This iteration also shows a more direct response and consideration of the existing heritage buildings, respecting their proportions, axes and response to open spaces. The living unit modules are placed so that each unit receives northern light and cross ventilation, and to create more order to the overall form. A structural grid of 6m by 6m was chosen (as opposed to the previous 3m by 3m), liberating the interiors of spaces and allowing for more flexible "bays" of living units. The author began to explore materiality, roof form and spatial qualities (see Section A-A, Figure 4.24.), and then started to resolve the layouts of the spaces in more detail, in relation to the five levels of permanence.

The existing building interiors are adapted with sensitivity (changing the structure minimally), which represents the more permanent level (level 1) on the scale of permanence. The new circulation and ablution cores represent level 2, reading as stereotomic, vertically anchoring elements, while the admin/support service threshold (level 2) reads as a horizontally anchoring element. The transitional housing accommodation (level 3) is more flexible with lightweight partitions and modularity. The tectonic, lightweight pergolas and shading structures (level 4) bind the spaces together and articulate transition and circulation spaces. Lastly, expansion/slack space is provided at certain living unit modules to accommodate the most temporal spaces of user appropriation (level 5).

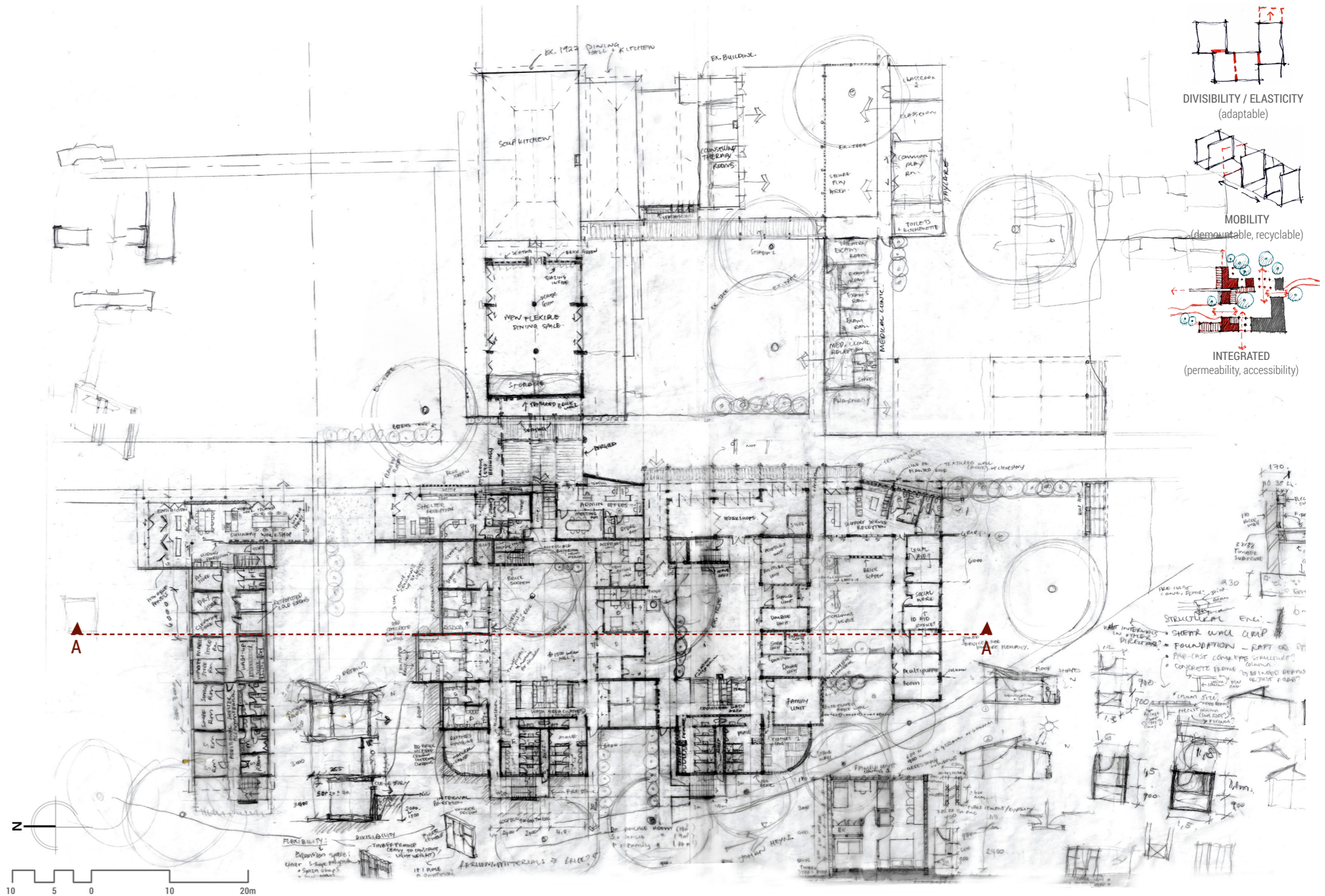


Fig.14.23. Top: Ground floor plan of iteration 2 (Author 2021).

Fig. 14.24. Bottom middle: Section A-A with "scale of permanence" colour shades (Author 2021).

Fig. 14.25. Bottom right: Site plan key (Author 2021).



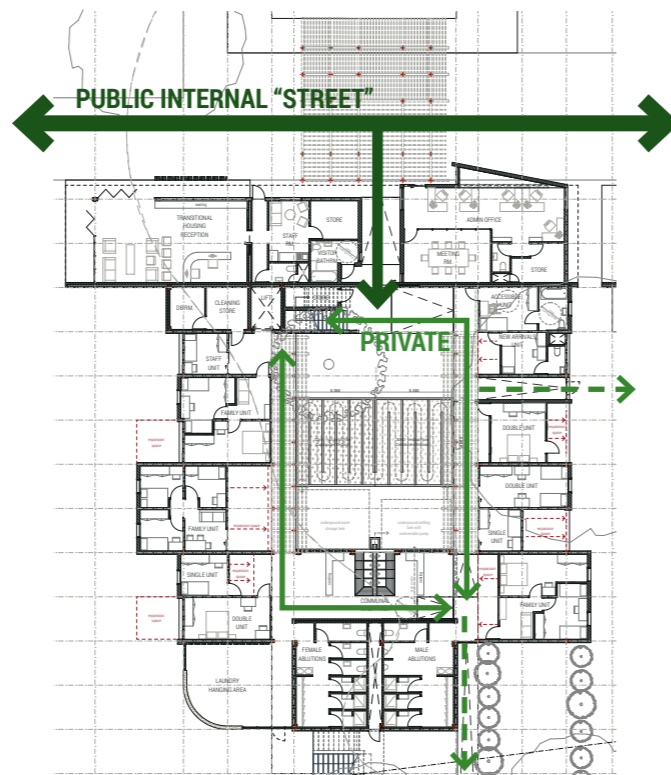
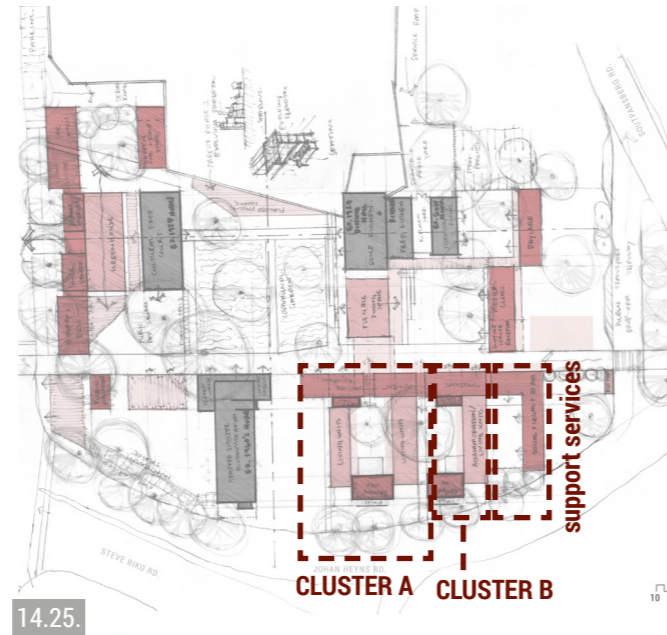
14.14. Scale of permanence key (Author 2021).

14.24. ex. 1970s hostel Transitional Housing Clusters

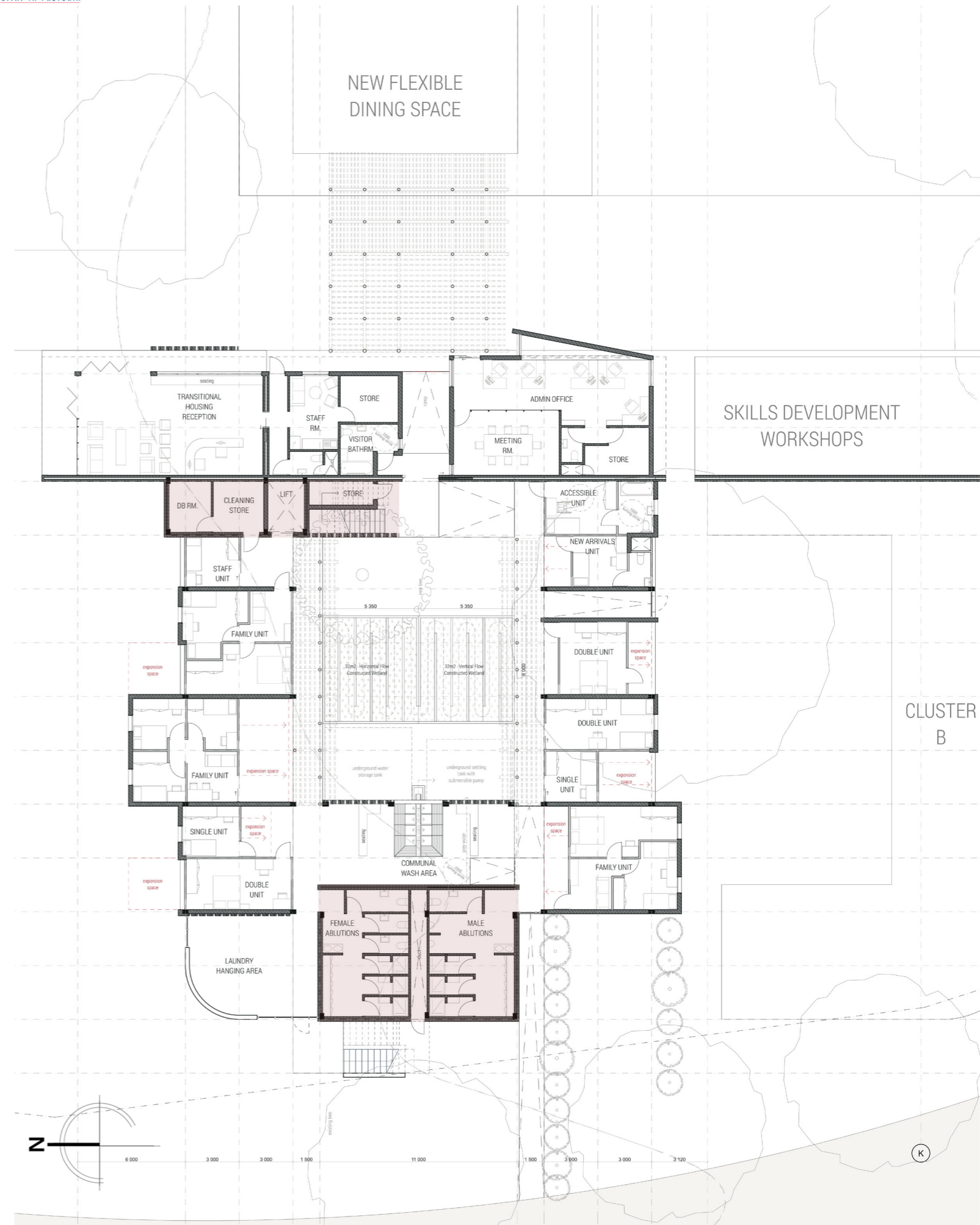
14.25.

Iteration 3:

The third iteration shows further development and resolution of cluster A of the transitional housing, indicating wall materiality and thicknesses; detailed layouts and living unit configurations; the pergola/shading devices articulating transition and circulation spaces; and the proposed constructed wetland system in the private courtyard. Universal accessibility was considered in the design of ramped circulation routes, turning circles, accessible living units and the incorporation of an elevator in the anchoring vertical circulation core. The use of a thick cavity masonry wall as a spine that separates the reception and administration functions from the private courtyard and accommodation emphasises the admin/support service “band” as a buffer and threshold from the public street to the private courtyard and residential spaces.



14.26. Public and private circulation routes (Author 2021).



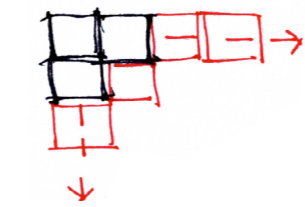
Ground floor plan of iteration 3 – Cluster A of transitional housing (Author 2021). 14.27.

[d]

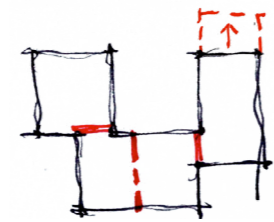
FLEXIBLE & USER-CENTRED SPACES: LIVING UNITS & THE COMMUNAL WASH AREA

The transitional housing living unit modules are designed to allow for various configurations. On the northern and southern external facades, 3-metre brick exterior walls are alternated with exterior lightweight infill panels to allow for flexibility. The living unit external walls facing the internal courtyard as well as the internal walls are lightweight partitions to allow for future additions or alterations. The brick infill between the columns provides a sense of permanence and stability, demarcating the 6-metre bays between which spaces are more flexible and temporal. The living unit modules include a 9m² single unit; a 18m² double unit for couples or two roommates; a 36m² family or four-person shared unit; a new arrival's unit with its own toilet; and a wheelchair accessible unit with accessible bathroom. The last two units are both positioned close to the cluster entrance.

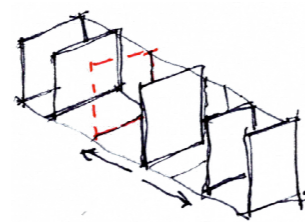
The communal wash area elevates the existing quotidian "wash" activity to an architecturally celebrated communal ritual and social gathering space. It anchors the courtyard and provides a sense of safety and surveillance as a threshold to the communal ablutions. This space acknowledges this existing activity as an important communal ritual, especially for woman, and references precedents from India and Morocco where the act of washing laundry is celebrated as ritual and a gathering space in historic architecture (Figures 14.35. - 14.36.).



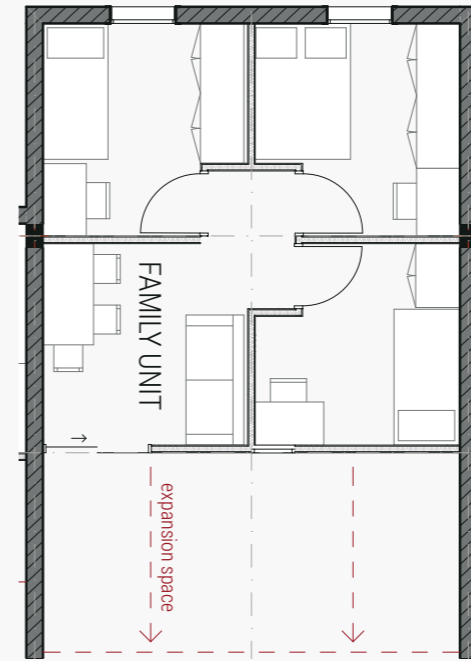
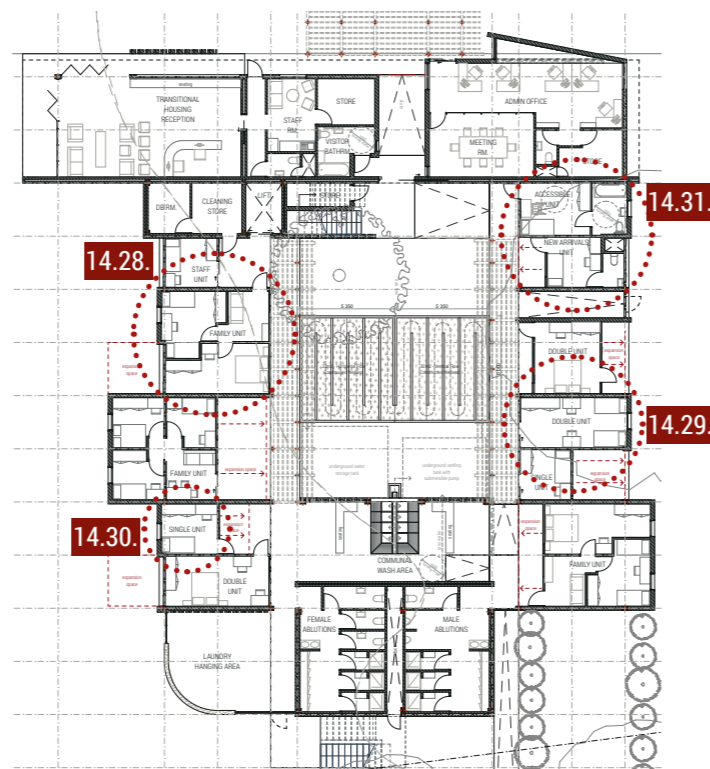
MODULARITY
(adaptable, repeatable)



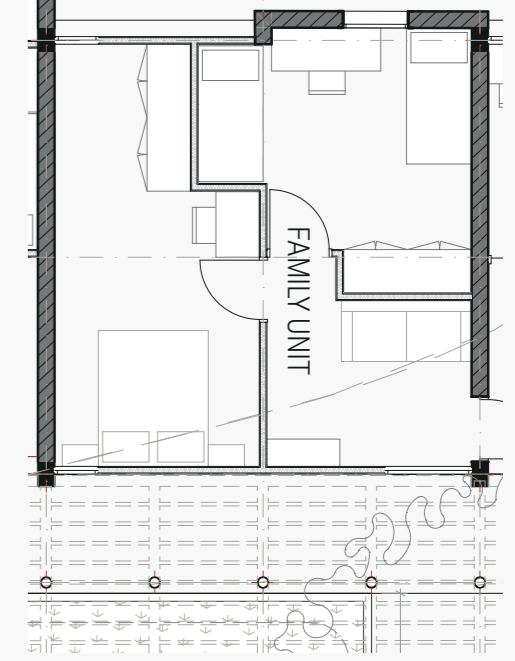
DIVISIBILITY / ELASTICITY
(adaptable)



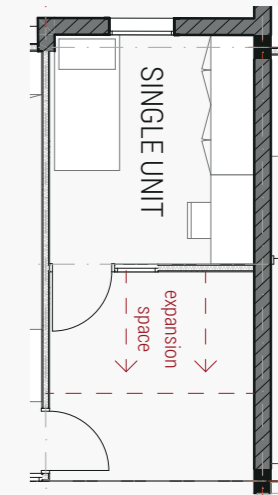
MOBILITY
(demountable, recyclable)



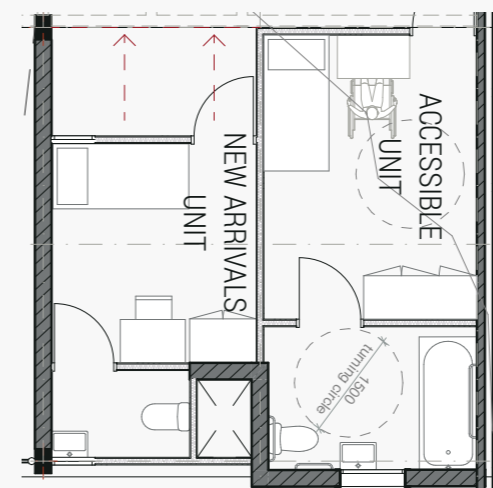
14.28. Various configurations of family/four-person shared unit (36m²) (Author 2021).



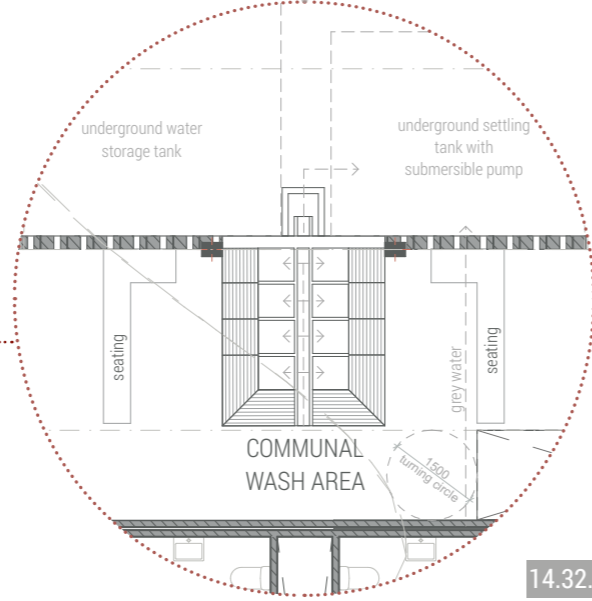
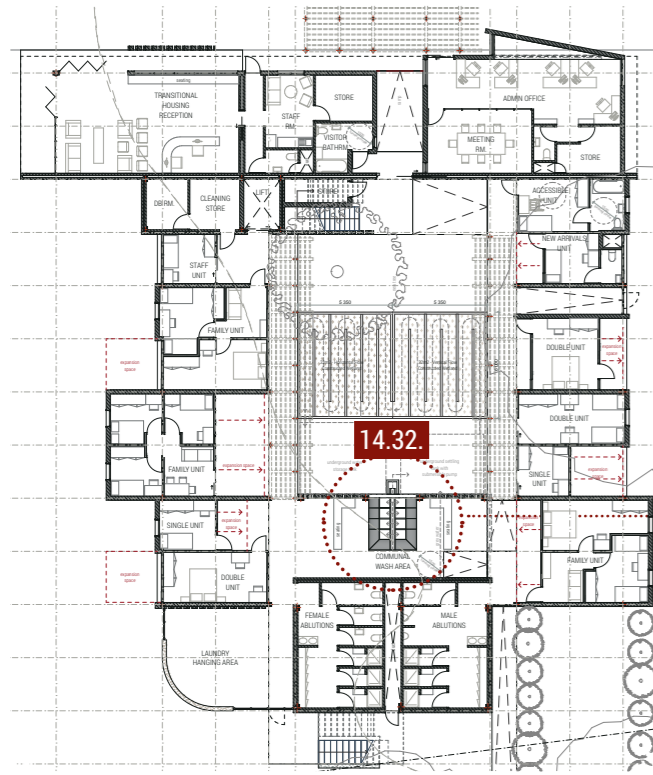
14.29. Various configurations of double unit (18m²) (Author 2021).



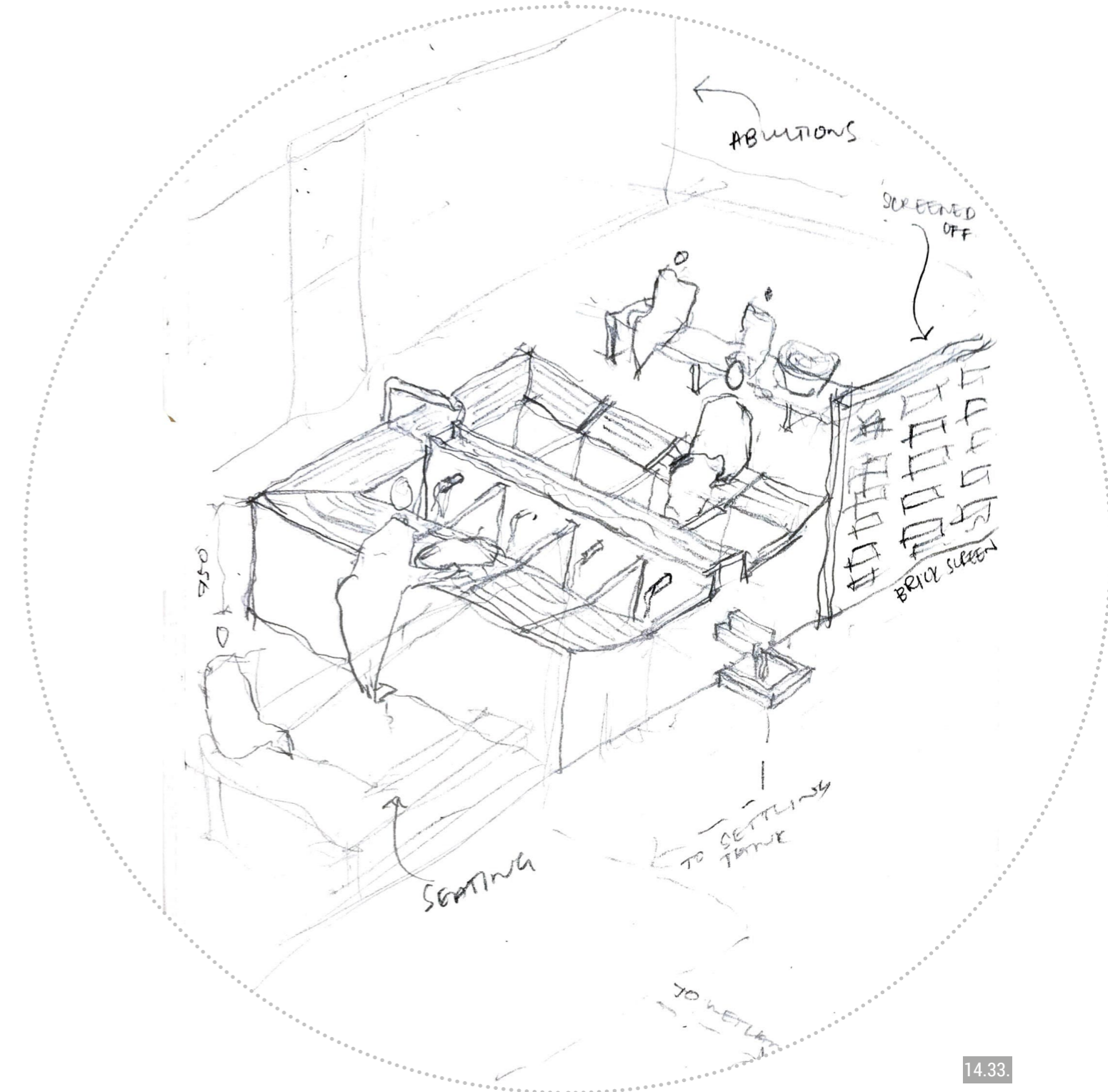
14.30. Single unit (9m²) with expansion space (Author 2021).



14.31. Universally accessible unit and New arrivals unit (Author 2021).

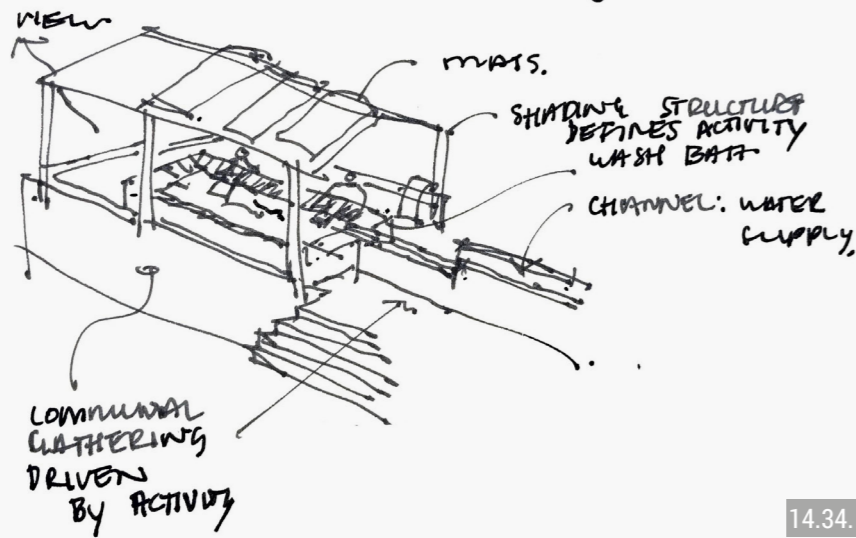


14.32.



14.33.

COMMUNAL HAND-WASHING SPACES
& CHEFCHOAOUEN WASHING PLACE



14.34.



14.35.



14.36.

Fig.14.32. Top left, page 104: Plan of iteration 3 communal wash area (Author 2021).
Fig. 14.33. Bottom, page 105: Communal wash area sketch (Author 2021).
Fig. 14.34. Middle left, page 104: Sketch of Chefchoaouen communal laundry (Author 2021).
Fig. 14.35. Bottom left, page 104: Chefchoaouen communal laundry, Morocco (Heppner 2016).
Fig. 14.36. Bottom right, page 104: Indian communal handwashing space (Thomashoff 2019).

