

11 programmatic & conceptual approach

[a]

INITIAL INTUITIVE RESPONSE

The initial conceptual and programmatic response is based on the approach to existing activities as anchor points for intervention on the site. While the positions of the activities could change over time or as the site is developed and future programmes are added, the activities themselves serve as the starting points for possible incremental development aimed at addressing the needs of the inhabitants and integrating the site and community into its surroundings. This premise is taken through to subsequent iterations of the site vision.

A mixed-use, multi-layered approach to programme is suggested to integrate multiple groups of users – drawing in users from the surrounding educational, commercial and residential areas adjacent to the site – and to address multiple needs of the current inhabitants.

In order to mediate the various public and private programmes suggested, a progression of interlinking courtyards and gathering spaces is suggested, where thresholds between them are articulated to define the various spaces. These courtyard spaces are anchored by various existing and legitimised activities, as well as proposed new uses that further activate the spaces and address identified needs. A “drop-off” loop or slipway to the southern corner of the site is suggested to allow for pop-up events and a public transport drop-off point between the very busy roads.

Critique on the initial intuitive response:

The social and student housing programme does not necessarily serve the current inhabitants as they are unlikely to access these due to income limitations and their inability to meet other requirements such as legal documentation (Ntakirutimana 2015: 84-85). This would therefore result in the displacement of most of the current users of the site.

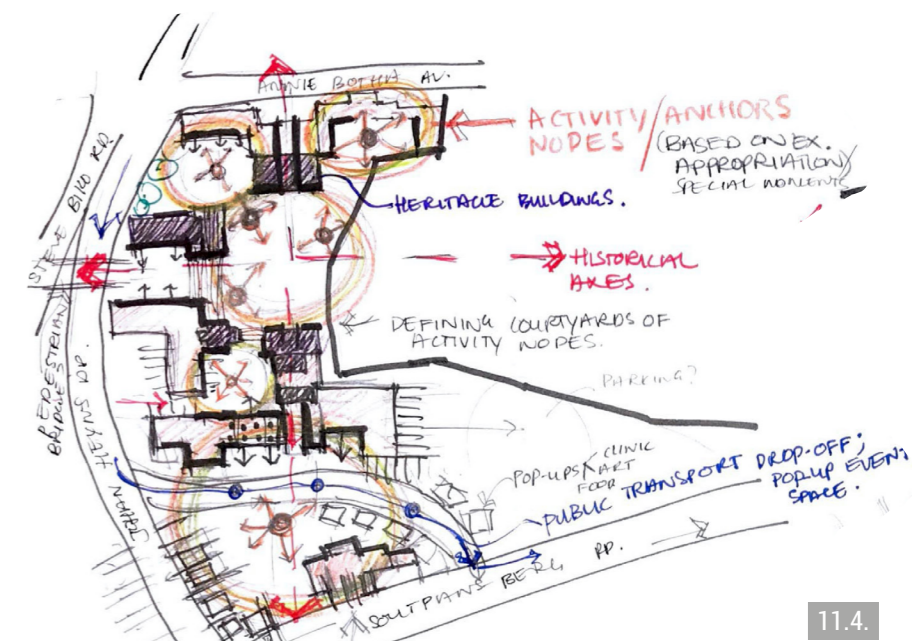
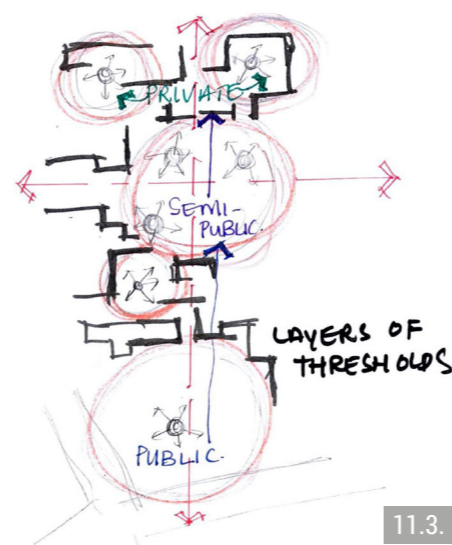
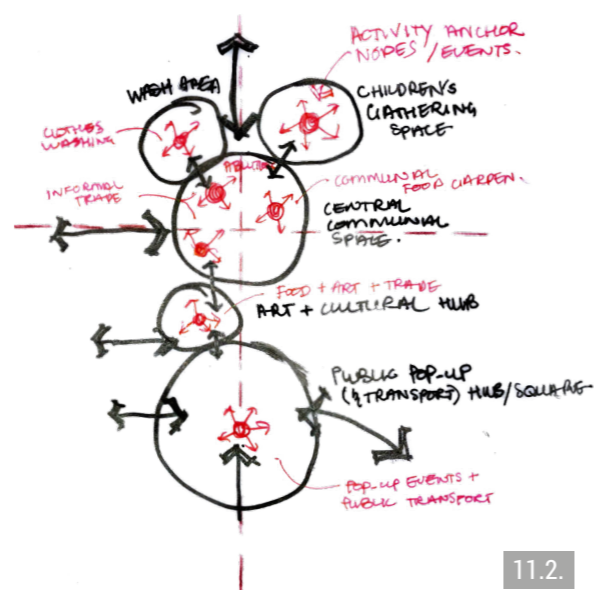
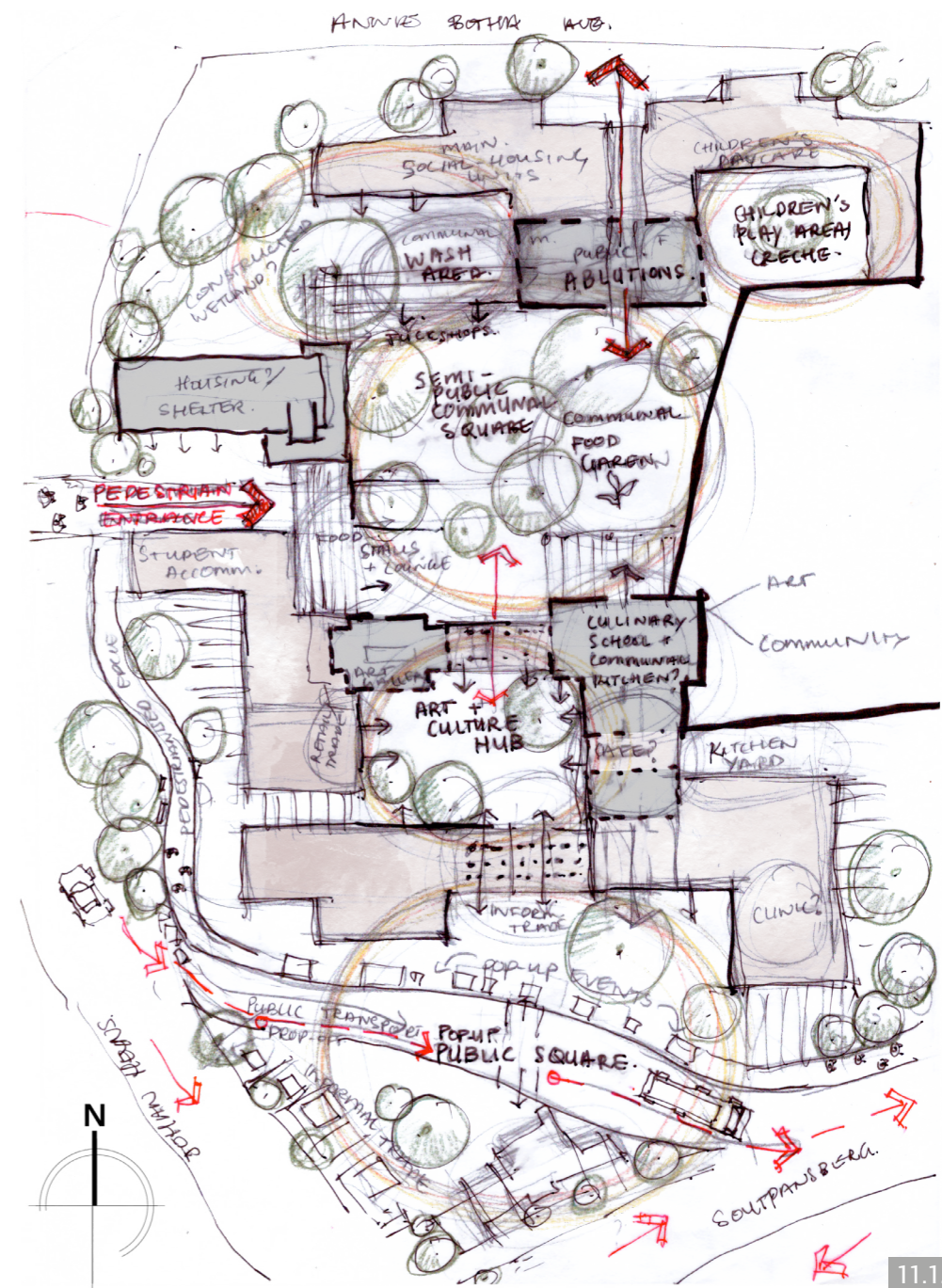
The various proposed programmes on site, although directly influenced by the existing informal appropriation and activities, lack an anchor programme and strategy. Furthermore, this exploration takes the form of a large permanent development, which is likely to require

a large public or private investor to develop the entire site at once. This would mean that all current inhabitants would be displaced for a majority of the development and construction. Not only is this approach less sensitive to the immediate needs and appropriation of the current inhabitants, but it is also unlikely that they would ever benefit from this type of intervention once removed from the site.

The proposed entrance and main public space are currently positioned at a “dead” intersection of high vehicular traffic and lower pedestrian activity. Therefore, this would likely not be successful in activating the edges and integrating the site into its context as intended. The goal of activating this intersection hinges on completely changing the surrounding sites’ edges, pedestrianisation and activation, which is unlikely to succeed. Thus, it might be more successful to suggest the activation of the intersection further north for a public “square” where there is more existing pedestrian activity and permeability towards the western medical campus.

Fig. 11.1. Top right: Site plan iteration 1: the initial site vision sketch and suggested programmes (Author 2021).

Fig. 11.2–11.4. Bottom, left to right: Conceptual diagrams indicating the activity nodes as anchor points; progression of public to private spaces and layering thresholds; and the initial proposed site vision diagram (Author 2021).



[b]

SITE PROGRAMME & CLIENT

In response to the additional informants from the precedent analysis and stakeholder engagement, a mixed programme is suggested for this site with a focus on addressing multiple immediate and long-term needs of the inhabitants and other homeless people in the future, including basic daily needs, psychosocial, physical and economic support, and future employment and housing opportunities.

The mixed programme on the site consists of three programme strands: a social welfare programme, a public interface programme and an anchoring link between the two.

The social welfare programme is aimed at assisting and uplifting to the existing inhabitants and other homeless, vulnerable people in the area. This programme consists of transitional housing for the undocumented homeless (at first with a focus on accommodating the current inhabitants), including various social support services, such as social work, psychological counselling rooms, a medical clinic, pharmacy, legal aid, legal documentation assistance, a soup kitchen with flexible dining spaces (extending the function of the 1927 existing dining hall), flexible skills development workshop, and a children's day care also open to the public. The various support services will also be open to the public and walk-ins, thereby creating a secondary public interface, with a focus on social welfare functions. The transitional housing is focused on accommodating the undocumented homeless inhabitants who are in the process of obtaining legal documentation, employment and other related aspects in order to secure alternative permanent housing. As part of the transitional housing, communal wash areas will build on the existing "wash" activity on site. Furthermore, the day care builds on the "play" activity, while the accommodation units of the shelter build on and extend the "stay" activity.

The public interface programme aims to draw users from the surroundings into the site and integrate the existing inhabitants and previously marginalised groups into the surrounding communities. This programme consists of informal trading spaces, building on the existing tuck shops and "sell" activities – small retail spaces and vendors at the northern intersection and Annie Botha Avenue edge. As an anchor for this programme, an eatery or restaurant is proposed in the existing 1927 Lezard hostel, linked to a new greenhouse and nursery where various herbs and plants cultivated on site can be sold.

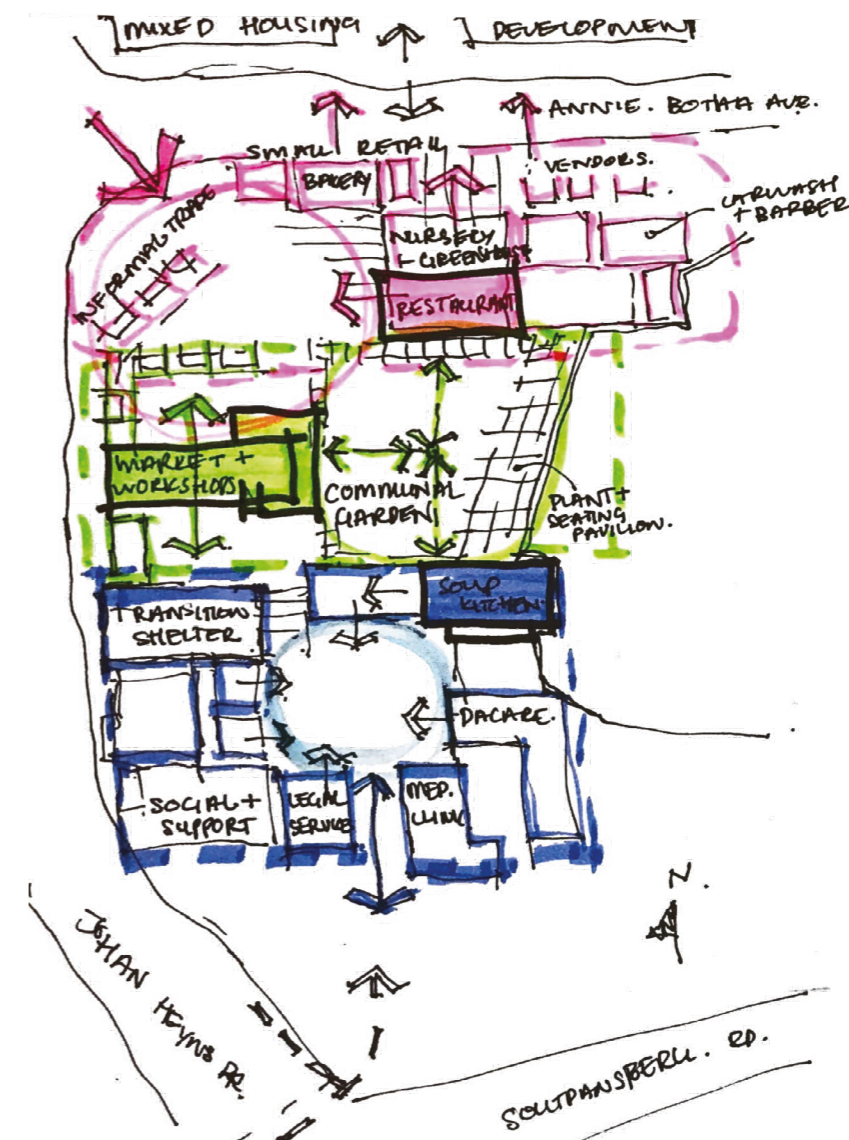
Additionally, a bakery and other small vendors such as a barbershop and car wash are envisioned to populate the public edge over time. All of these functions also offer additional income opportunities for the current inhabitants and the occupants of the transitional housing.

The linking programme builds on the existing "grow" activity of the communal gardens. As part of this programme and an anchoring activity/event for the site, the proposal is to consolidate the spaces and various functions through a central communal garden courtyard as a catalyst activity that links the social welfare and public interface programmes and stimulates future programmes. Various communal workshop spaces, sporadic farmers markets, informal trade, and public gathering and resting spaces will form part of this linking programme. The communal workshop spaces and an indoor market/exhibition space will occupy and open up the ground floor of the existing 1960s/70s building. The garden is envisioned to first serve the current inhabitants and stimulate informal trade of fresh produce and food products. As it grows and additional programmes are added incrementally, the garden will serve the soup kitchen, transitional housing, day care, workshops and farmers market. Finally, the garden will be extended by the greenhouse and nursery, serving the public and commercial functions of the restaurant, bakery and retail as part of the public interface.

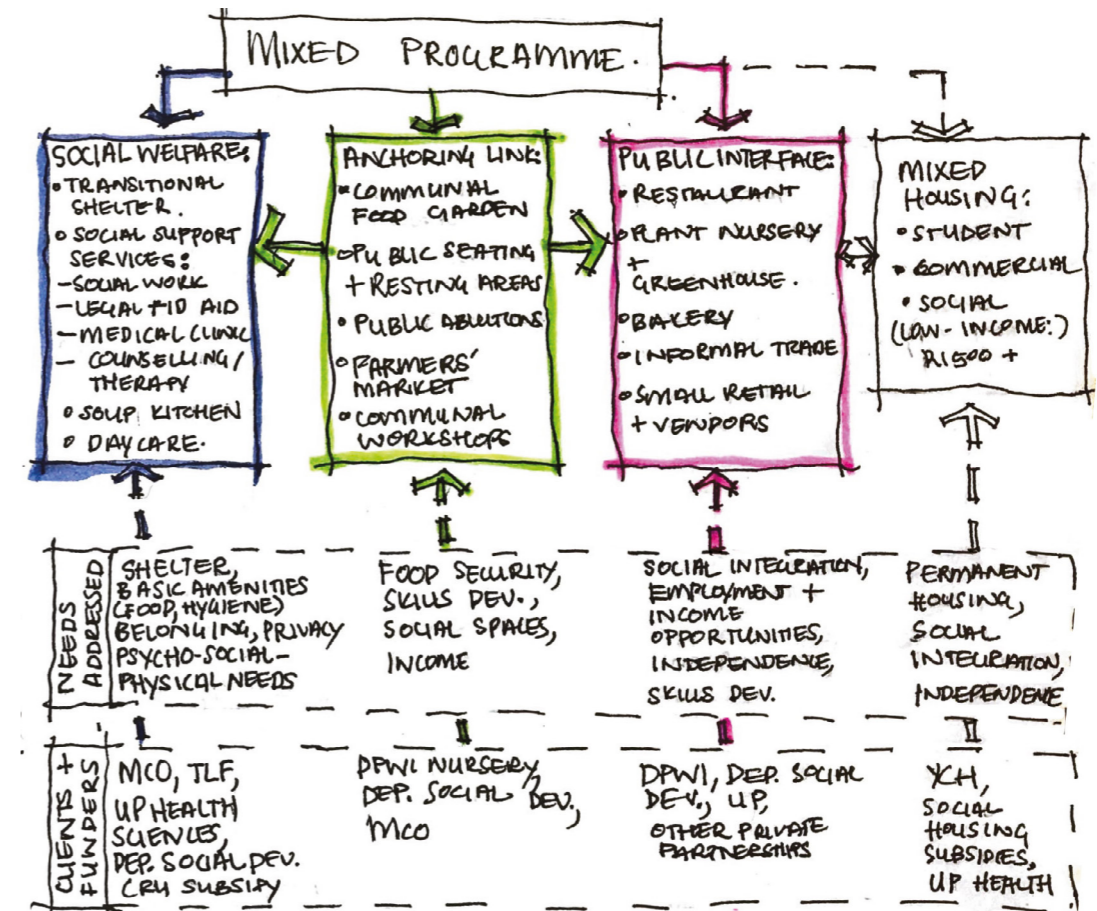
Lastly, the addition of a mixed housing development is proposed across the road on the currently empty plot of sports fields, as part of a larger urban vision to further activate the urban edge and intersection and to strengthen the dialogue between the programmes on the site and the surrounding sites. The goal for this housing is to include mixed student and commercial housing for UP medical students and staff from the nearby UP medical campus, hospitals and surrounding areas; and low-income social housing, which will also accommodate those from the transitional housing who have since obtained the necessary documentation and income through the support services to qualify for social housing. This development will, however, not be explored further in this dissertation.

Fig. 11.5. Top right: Site programme sketch (Author 2021).

Fig. 11.6. Bottom right: Diagram unpacking the site programme in relation to identified user needs and proposed clients and funders (Author 2021).



11.5.



11.6.

Client and funding

The project is envisioned as a phased, incremental intervention to be adapted as needs change and new functions are stimulated. The mixed programme calls for multiple clients and funders forming a public-private partnership (MCO 2020). The public funding and client will include the nearby Department of Public Works nursery (funding the communal garden, nursery and greenhouse functions), the Department of Social Development and the University of Pretoria's Faculty of Health Sciences, who is currently a stakeholder engaging with the site and will assist in the operations of the social and medical clinics with other relevant partners.

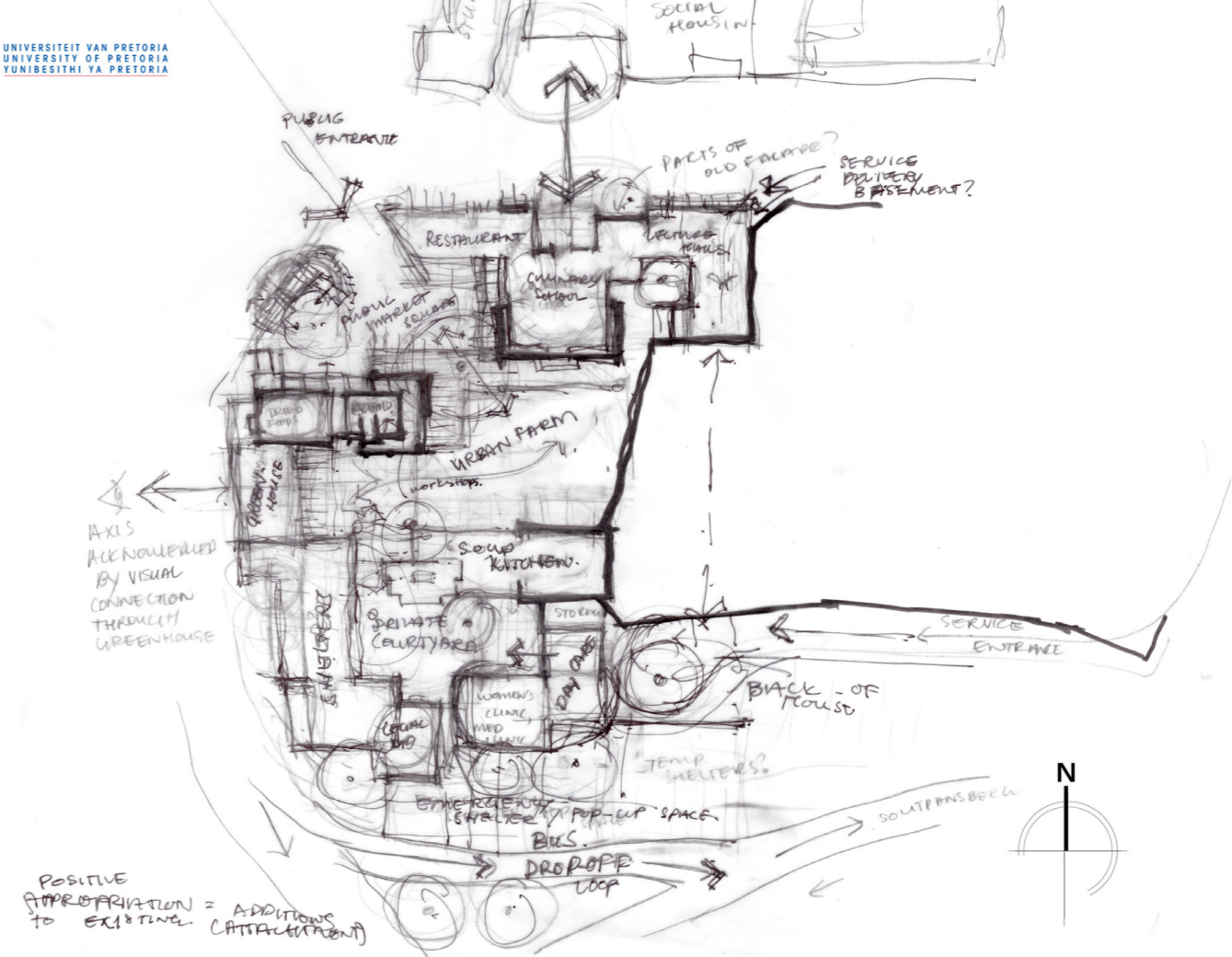
Additional funding could be applied for from the provisional government for an institutional housing subsidy and the CRU (Community Residential Units) subsidy to cover the transitional housing and support service funding (City of Johannesburg 2012: 54, Melgisedek Proposal 2019: 1). Private entities that will help fund and run various parts of the mixed programme include MCO and TLF (Tshwane Leadership Foundation). Finally, the mixed housing development proposed on the adjacent site will be funded by various social housing subsidies, grants and the UP Faculty of Health Sciences (Melgisedek Proposal 2019: 1) and will be run by Yeast City Housing.

[c]

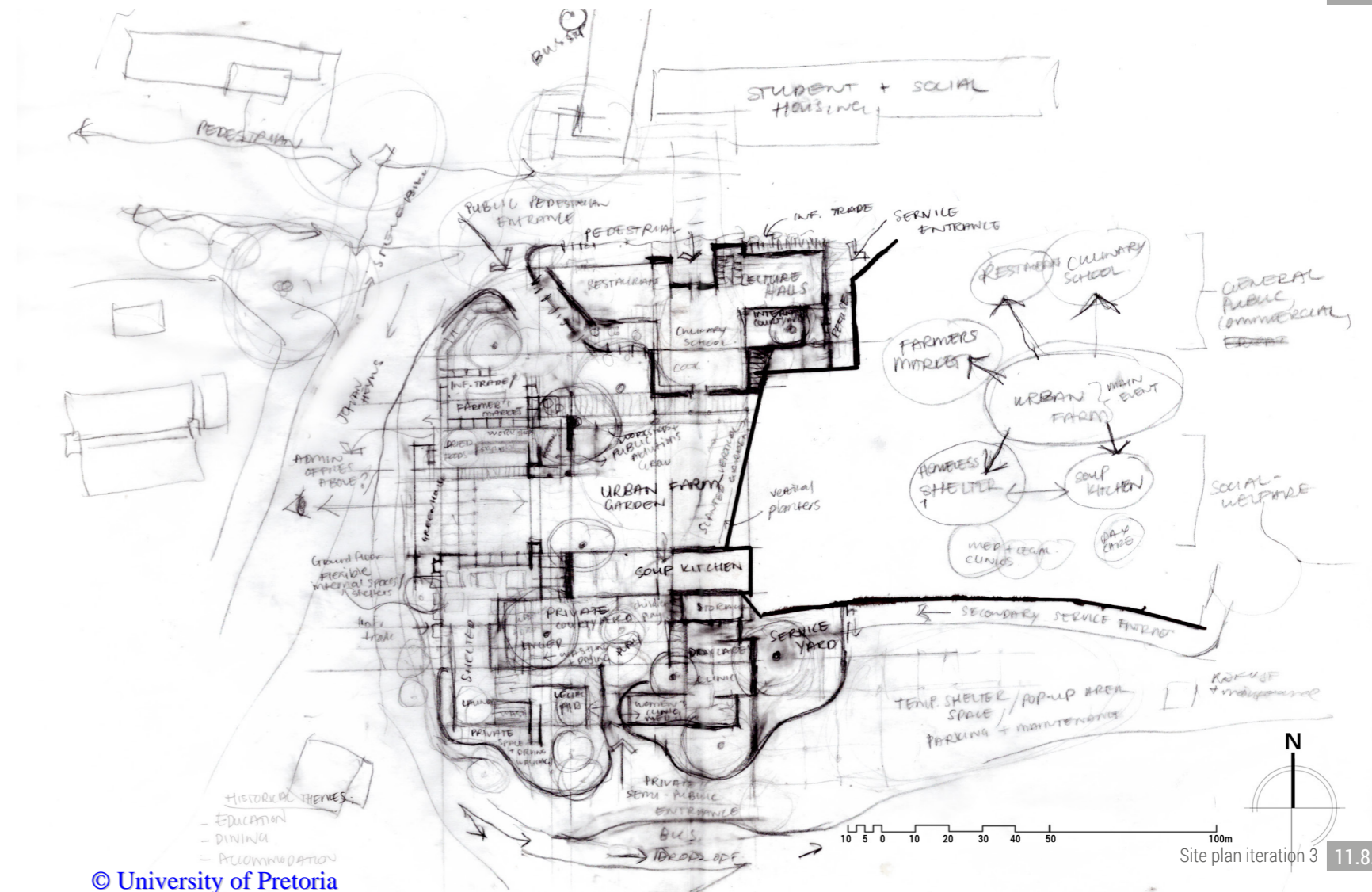
CONCEPTUAL STRATEGY: SITE VISION

Various parts of the mixed programme are implemented in an incremental, phased intervention strategy or site vision in order to approach the existing conditions of inhabitation and appropriation with sensitivity and to address various immediate and long-term needs appropriately. This strategy views the existing conditions, appropriation and activities as catalysts for the subsequent steps of intervention and development. Building on and guided by the ongoing processes of appropriation, this strategy acknowledges and embraces the inevitable transience and evolution of the site. Therefore, it serves as a possible conceptual prediction and framework within which the site can be developed. It must remain resilient and should be re-evaluated and adjusted throughout the design process and at the completion of each phase.

It will start with legitimising existing site activities and addressing basic quotidian and immediate needs of the inhabitants with small and adaptable interventions. Then,



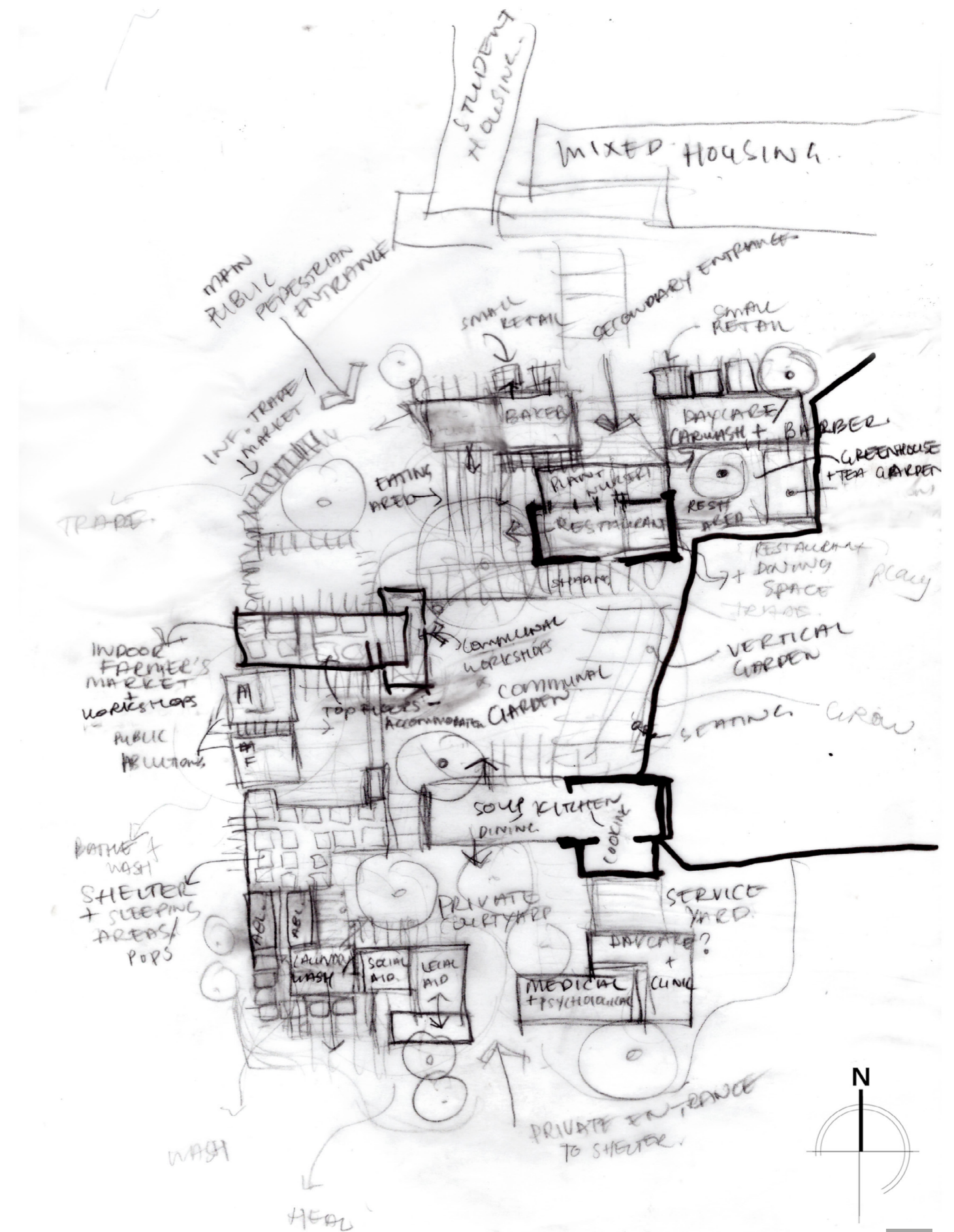
Site plan iteration 2 11.7.



Site plan iteration 3 11.8.

gradually, the following phases will focus on longer-term needs (formalising some of the previous interventions) and the integration with surrounding communities through additional programmes and development. The intensity and permanence of the interventions start with lighter, more temporal and sensitive insertions and gradually increase to more permanent, intensive interventions, but all balanced by a golden thread of flexibility and adaptability, giving the users agency to appropriate spaces over time.

Another consideration of the incremental strategy is the minimal displacement of current inhabitants, especially those who are unable to secure alternative means of income and housing. Carrying the project out in phases ensures that inhabitants remain housed in their current "homes" on site until the time comes for various existing buildings to be adapted or removed. At this point, some inhabitants may already have secured alternative income and improved housing through social support assistance and minor economic activities introduced in the first phases. During the first phase, an integrated approach supported by the Department of Social Development and TLF is suggested to assist in a minimal displacement plan (Melgisedek Proposal 2019: 5-6). From this point, gradually some of the existing inhabitants may be assisted in finding income and employment opportunities on and off site; be found to qualify for various social grants and alternative housing; or be offered placement in appropriate facilities. Those who are undocumented, unemployed and do not qualify for other forms of housing will be the first to receive accommodation in the transitional housing. Here, they can begin the process of obtaining legal status through the social, legal and documentation assistance on site until they qualify for alternative housing, such as the future proposed social housing units across Annie Botha Avenue.



Site plan iteration 4 11.9.

The three phases of the site strategy are conceptualised as follows:

Phase one: Temporal insertions

The purpose of this phase is to legitimise existing activities and address immediate needs on site with sensitive, acupuncture interventions. This phase is made up of three overlapping strategies:

The communal garden and courtyard (1):

The role of this aspect is to consolidate the existing communal gardens into one central garden, anchoring the site and central courtyard space. Minimal architectural intervention is required, save for the seating and shading elements of the next strategy, which further define the courtyard space.



The evolving spine (2):

An adaptable, lightweight structure, connecting and defining various spaces on site, is intended to morph throughout the site and over time. The role of this element is to accommodate, enable and facilitate the “sell”, “play”, “linger” and “grow” activities with adaptable spaces for informal trade, storage, seating, shading and climbing attachments for play areas. At the central courtyard, the evolving spine provides seating and planting space as part of a tectonic pavilion, as well as shading for circulation routes. Inhabitants can attach various materials, surfaces and inserts to further appropriate and define activities along the spine.

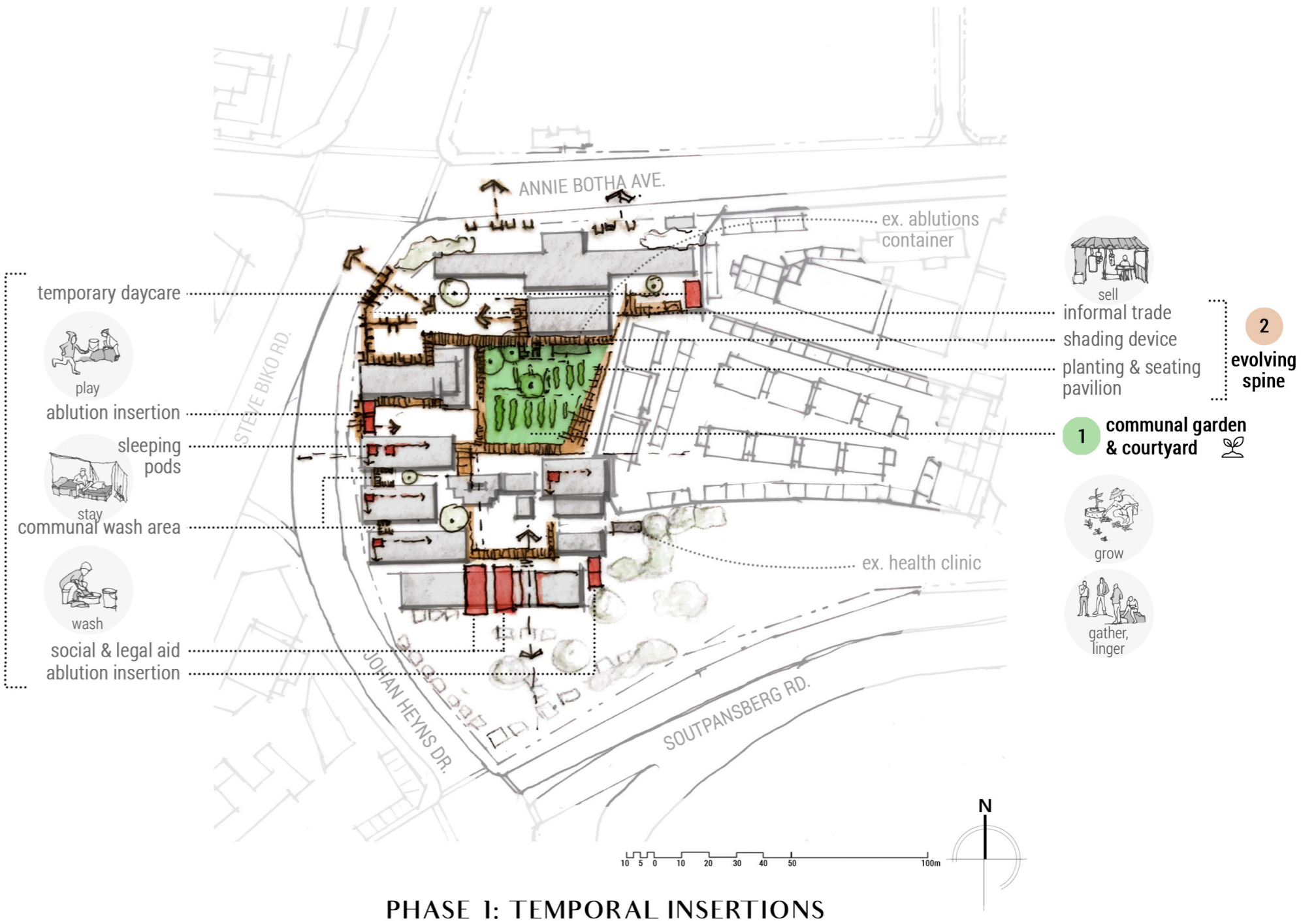


Temporary Insertions (3):

This strategy involves small insertions with the purpose to support and intervene, providing functions that address some of the immediate needs. Adding to the existing ablutions and medical clinic containers on site, the insertions include communal wash areas with water supply, additional ablutions, a social aid pod and a legal aid pod. Partitioned sleeping pods are also proposed to provide privacy in some of the occupied buildings. All of these insertions are envisioned as temporal additions that can be disassembled, expanded or repositioned on the site as the subsequent phases unfold.



3
temporary insertions



PHASE 1: TEMPORAL INSERTIONS

Phase two: Social welfare pocket

This phase further legitimises and crystallises some of the previous temporal insertions, as well as provides alternative shelter and support services for some of the inhabitants.

New soup kitchen (1):

The existing 1927 dining hall will be reprogrammed, adapted and extended into a soup kitchen and flexible dining hall. Food from the adjacent communal garden will be used in the soup kitchen to provide food for the vulnerable.



New transitional housing and support services (2):

This phase will form the focus area of further design development. With a focus on the undocumented homeless, a new transitional housing development is proposed as an anchor for the social welfare programme.



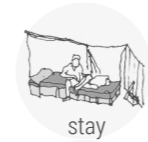
The transitional housing provides accommodation for those in the process of securing documentation, income and permanent housing. In transitional housing, more private and longer-term accommodation (6 months to 3 years) is provided than with standard homeless shelters, with emphasis on the various support services provided in conjunction (Ntakirutimana 2015: 144). The conceptual approach of flexible and adaptable spaces will guide the design of the residential units to allow for expansion and alteration over time. Various communal washing spaces will anchor intimate courtyards around which the residential units are arranged. Ablutions and the social aid, legal aid and medical clinic insertions will be expanded and formalised as part of the transitional housing. Moreover, the addition of a day care will expand on the "play" activity and will offer inhabitants and users from the surrounding areas a safe place to leave their children while they work during the day.

Adaptation of the 1960s/70s building (3):

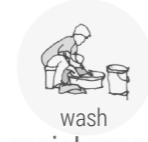
Lastly, the ground floor of the existing 1960s/70s building will be opened up and adapted to accommodate flexible spaces for communal workshops, informal trade and sporadic farmers markets that spill out either side of the building.



3 communal workshops & farmers market space



living units

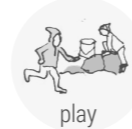


communal wash areas

social support services:
social, legal, ID aid

health clinic

daycare

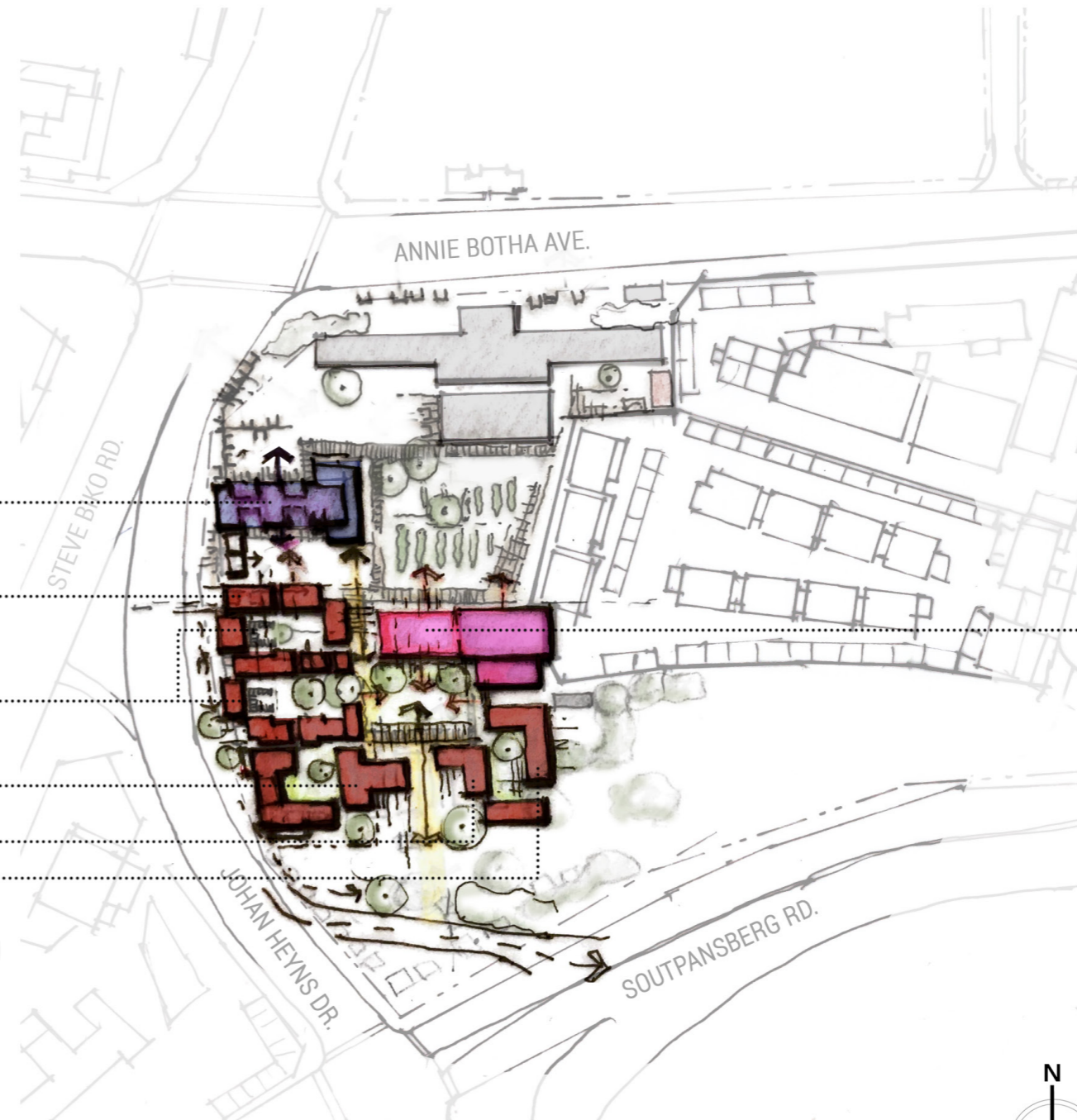


play

1 soup kitchen & flexible dining space



gather,
linger



PHASE 2: SOCIAL WELFARE POCKET

Phase three: Public interface

The aim of this phase is to (re)integrate the inhabitants and the site into the surrounding communities and spaces, while providing further long-term employment opportunities.

A new eatery (1) to occupy and adapt the existing 1927 Lezard hostel building and spill out onto the public exchange and gathering space at the north-western corner of the site.



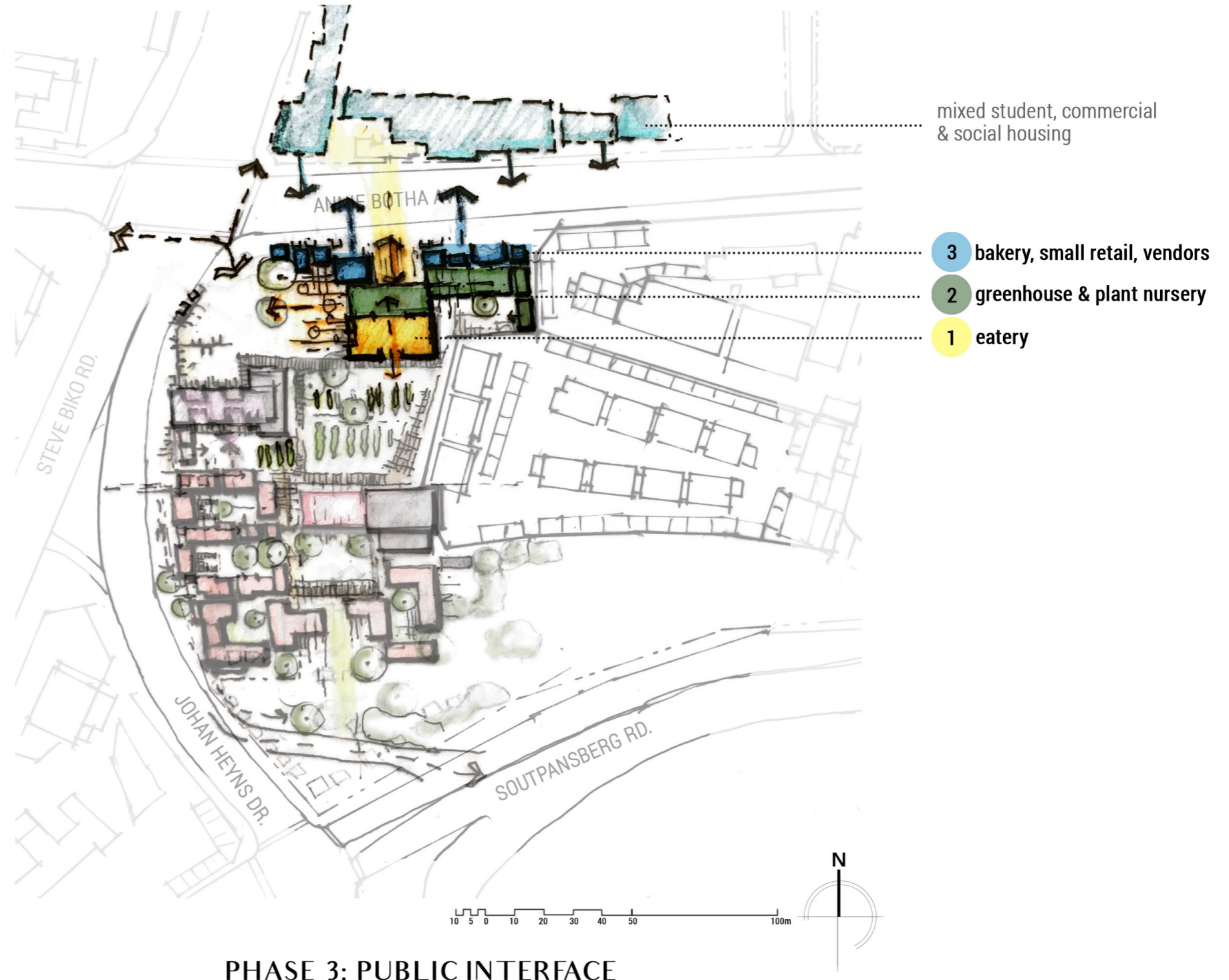
A new greenhouse and plant nursery (2) adjacent to and as an extension of the eatery towards the street edge, where plants can be sold and visitors can linger.



Additional small retail (3) shops, vendors and emerging uses along the northern street edge to further activate the public edge.



Finally, as mentioned previously, the mixed housing development on the site opposite Annie Botha Avenue is proposed as an additional phase in a larger vision of the area to further activate the public interface and dialogue between the two sites and the surrounding areas.



PHASE 3: PUBLIC INTERFACE