FROM **ARRIVAL** TO **REVIVAL.**
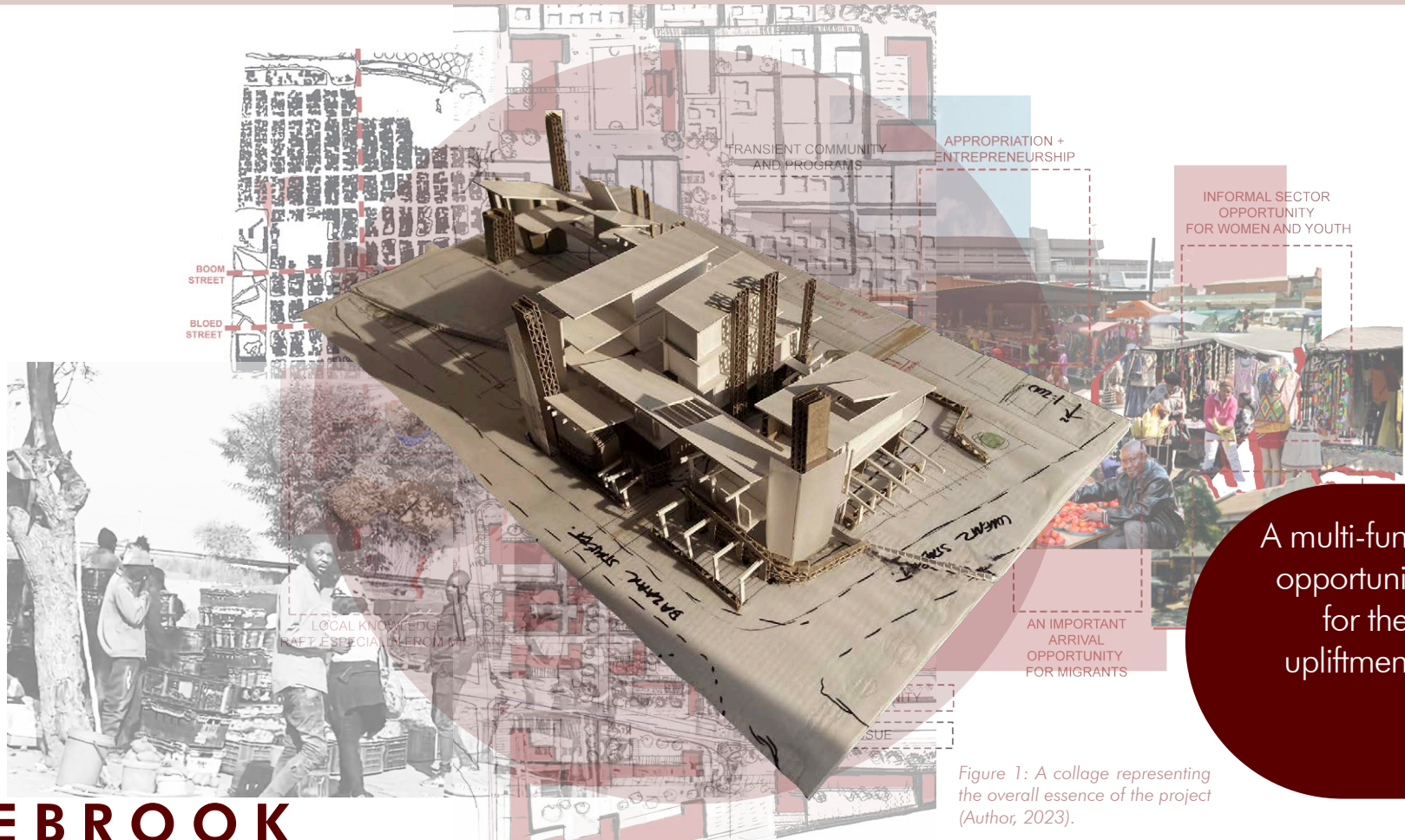
EXPLORING AN ARCHITECTURAL INTERVENTION FOR URBAN RESILIENCE IN MARABASTAD

MArch (Prof) University of Pretoria

DPD 801

TRANSIENT COMMUNITY AND PROGRAMS

APPROPRIATION + ENTREPRENEURSHIP

INFORMAL SECTOR OPPORTUNITY FOR WOMEN AND YOUTH

BOOM STREET

BLOED STREET

LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

AN IMPORTANT ARRIVAL OPPORTUNITY FOR MIGRANTS

A multi-functional centre for opportunity in Marabastad for the socio-economic upliftment of marginalised groups

Figure 1: A collage representing the overall essence of the project (Author, 2023).

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ABSTRACT.

TRANSIENT COMMUNITY AND PROGRAMS

APPROPRIATION + ENTREPRENEURSHIP

INFORMAL SECTOR OPPORTUNITY FOR WOMEN AND YOUTH

MONO-FUNCTIONALITY

LOCAL KNOWLEDGE AND CRAFT, ESPECIALLY FROM MIGRANTS

RICH CULTURE AND HISTORY

HOMLESSNESS, POVERTY, UNEMPLOYMENT, DECAY

AN IMPORTANT ARRIVAL OPPORTUNITY FOR MIGRANTS

PAST CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

OPPORTUNITY

ISSUE

Figure 2: Diagram illustrating the issues and opportunities present in Marabastad (Author, 2023).

ARRIVE.TRANSITION.THRIVE

Marabastad: "Tshwane's very own kasbah, a shabby pearl of the working class, and a rumpus hive of activity and contradictions"
-
Percy Mabandu

Designed as a multi-functional center for the assistance and support of both migrants and the existing informal traders in Marabastad, this project explores how architecture can foster a sense of community and define arrival.

Marabastad, situated in the north-west of inner-city Pretoria, is a dynamic urban environment characterized by its vibrant streets, rich diversity, and historical significance as a hub for migrants seeking a better life (Brandt, 2002). However, despite its vibrancy, the area faces numerous challenges, including poverty, unemployment, inequality, and decay. These issues have eroded its cultural significance and excluded marginalized groups, such as migrants, from realizing their full potential. Newcomers into Marabastad host a range of potential in terms of skills and knowledge systems. However, the current policies for the integration of migrants create many hindrances in their successful transition into society. When they arrive, they often lack the necessary resources and support to effectively transition into the community and break free from the "survivalist cycle".

This project, therefore, aims to harness the immense potential of Marabastad and its population to support existing networks and facilitate the successful integration of migrants into the community.

The project is strategically located at a prominent entrance point to Marabastad, focusing on promoting access and integration while addressing issues related to arrival and transition at various scales. The architectural design aims to facilitate the daily activities of Marabastad while providing spaces that fulfill basic needs in addition to offering longer-term support.

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ABSTRACT.

> "…But cynicism is one thing that doesn't live in Marabastad. Countless mothers and other breadwinners walk these streets with a riveting, hopeful resolve."
>
> -
> *Percy Mabandu*

ARRIVE.TRANSITION.THRIVE

Urban Approach
The project's urban strategy involves incorporating a range of activators into the current urban landscape to reconnect and reintegrate the fragmented urban fabric. The selected site serves as a point of anchorage, linking with existing hubs and entry points.

Programmatic Approach
The proposal for the site of focus offers a range of programs that support both existing informal traders, as well as the migrant population of Marabastad. These programs include trading and skills development facilities, a job center, assistance center for women and youth (in connection with the local NGO "Youth for Survival"), and integrated community gathering spaces.

Architectural Approach
The architectural approach revolves around defining arrival points and thresholds by emphasizing pedestrian-oriented design. The design incorporates layered facades, gradual interfaces, and permeability to foster a safe and welcoming community environment. Main pedestrian thoroughfares are seamlessly integrated into the design, emphasizing its contextual harmony. Careful consideration has been paid to the distinction between public and private spaces, especially at street edges. Public spaces are designed to facilitate social interactions between different user groups and celebrate everyday activities on an intimate scale. While, private spaces are protected at the core of the scheme, the prioritizing safety and security of the users.

Technological Approach
Material selection plays a crucial role in the project, with brick and mass timber chosen to balance traditional materiality with innovation and sustainability. The aim is to create dignified spaces that empower users, offering a balance between fixed spaces and flexible, appropriable spaces.

Overall, this project embodies the fine-grained spirit of Marabastad, acknowledging it's potential as an arrival city that fosters diverse communities and meaningful integration. It aligns with contemporary understandings of belonging, emphasizing that 'home' is built through social relationships rather than being tied to a specific place. Migrants' everyday practices play a significant role in feeling at home and integrating into the community (Sassen, 2016). The project seeks to create a safe and welcoming environment for cultural exchange and the sharing of knowledge systems while assisting the successful transition of migrants into society.

The value of this project therefore lies in not only addressing a globally prevalent subject of migration but, also leveraging the benefits of the well-established informal sector which already contributes greatly to the economy. Marabastad's migrant population encounters many daily challenges, especially women and youth. Therefore, encouraging interaction and cooperation between newcomers and existing residents can become mutually beneficial for both groups. By embracing the evolving concept of belonging and facilitating a sense of home (Combes, 2020), this project stands as a testament to the power of architecture to foster a sense of integration in a diverse urban community.
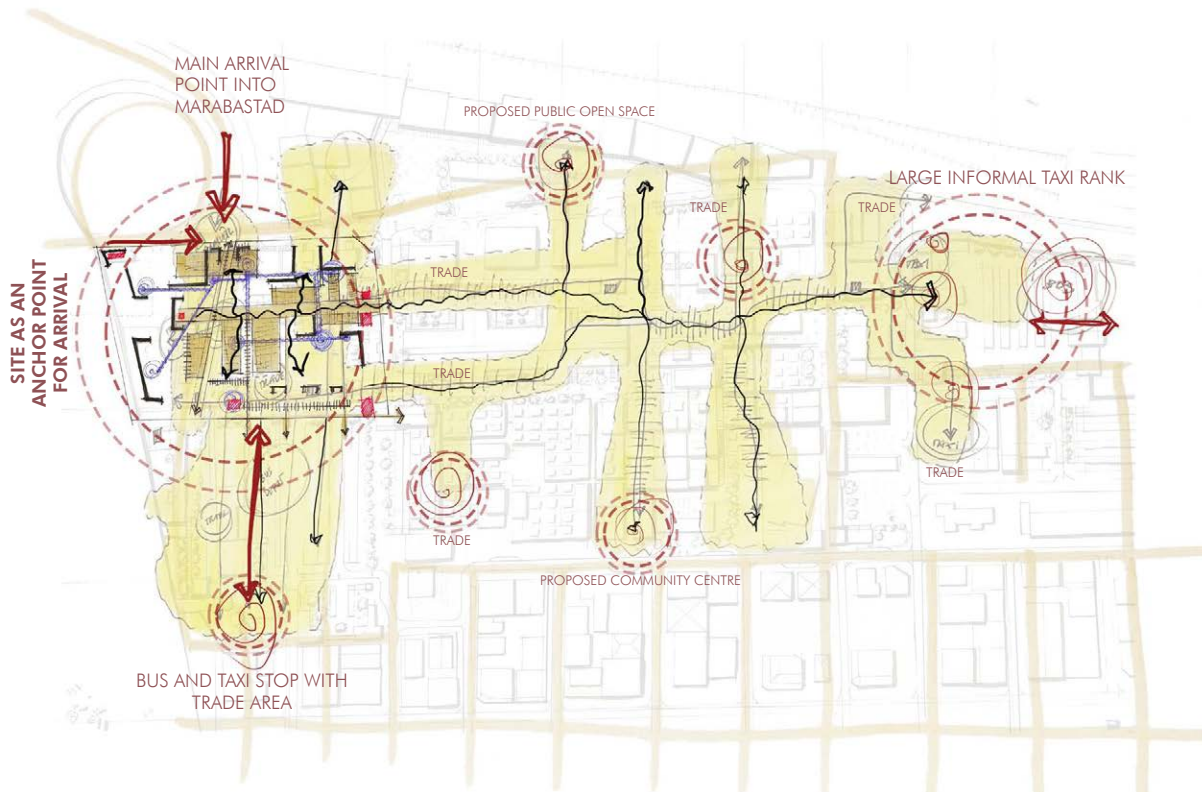
Figure 3:A parti diagram representing the urban intention of the scheme: reconnecting & reintegrating Marabastad through a series of urban activators for vibrancy & resilience (Author,2023).

Labels within diagram:
MAIN ARRIVAL POINT INTO MARABASTAD

PROPOSED PUBLIC OPEN SPACE

LARGE INFORMAL TAXI RANK

SITE AS AN ANCHOR POINT FOR ARRIVAL

TRADE

PROPOSED COMMUNITY CENTRE

BUS AND TAXI STOP WITH TRADE AREA

CONTENTS.

BACKGROUND.

MARABASTAD: HISTORY.CULTURE.VIBRANCY

Marabastad, located in northwest inner-city Pretoria, has endured neglect since its founding in 1867 (Brandt, 2002:226) (Clarke, 2008: 15). Apartheid policies in the 1940s led to forced removals, destroying large parts of the area, with black inhabitants moved to Mamelodi, the Coloured community to Eersterust, and the Indian community to Laudium (Brandt, 2002:226). In 1981, apartheid legislation gave rise to the Belle Ombre train station, providing segregated access for laborers from surrounding Bantustans and spurring the development of the associated bus and taxi networks, which remain pivotal today, linking Marabastad to peripheral townships. Given the non-operation of the train station, these networks are now essential and its users make up the main customer bases for the prominent informal sector (Brandt, 2002:226).

Historically, Marabastad has thrived as a center of diverse culture, offering a wide array of services to its community. However, its future role is uncertain, primarily serving as a transitional space to Pretoria's central business district (CBD). Over time, Marabastad's urban fabric has decayed, with the southern areas retaining some of the historic grid and buildings while the northern region remains disconnected. As a result, Marabastad's multi-functional quality has also decreased over time. Much of the residential and cultural programmes have been removed, further perpetuating the transient nature of the context with a lack of permanent anchor... ...munal resillience.

Figure 4: Collage representing the rich history and cuture of Marabastad (Author, 2023).
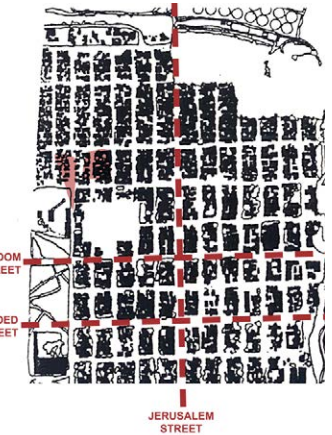
Figure 3:Marabastad in 1934: Fine-grained and the site was completely integrated into the urban fabric of Marabastad (Adapted from Aziz tayob Architects).
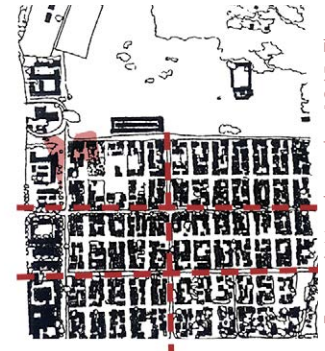
Figure 6:Marabastad in 1965. The beginnings of forced removals lead to destruction and separation of the urban fabri (Adapted from Aziz tayob Architects).
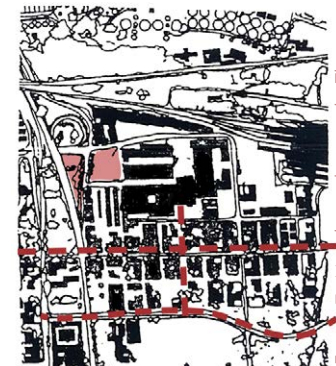
Figure 7: Marabastad currently. The site is isolated and surrounded by boundaries and buffer zones (Adapted from Aziz tayob Architects).

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BACKGROUND.

MARABASTAD: INNOVATION.ADAPTATION.FLEXIBILITY.

Presently, Marabastad has partially survived its historical destruction through adaptation, innovation, and flexibility, most notably in its thriving informal sector. However, despite housing a significant informal trading population, Marabastad remains one of the most underdeveloped areas in Tshwane (Moloto, 2022:51).

Both informal and formal retailers benefit from the continuous flow of people through Marabastad (Brandt, 2002:226). Nevertheless, the current conditions continue to deteriorate, jeopardizing Marabastad's long-term viability. To ensure its place within its context, Marabastad needs designated spaces that support its community and provide the resources for upliftment.

Figure 9:Image taken on site of the informal traders (Author, 2023).

Figure 10:Image taken on site of the informal traders (Author, 2023).

Figure 8: The focus site could act as an important anchor point in the larger framework for development (Author,2023).

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EMERGENCE

Emergent urbanism centers on the self-organization of cities and the everyday culture and events that occur within them. This concept aligns with the instances of adaptation and resilience seen in the informal trading networks of Marabastad (Olsson and Haas, 2013: 101) (Dovey, 2014).It is essential to acknowledge that the informal sector, provides significant opportunities for those who arrive in Marabastad and cannot, for a multitude of reasons, attain formal employment. Therefore, the design should facilitate these essential urban operations of emergence.

EMERGENT URBANISM

Focus: everyday culture and happenings of the city over solely physical features (Olsson and Haas, 2013: 101).
The self- organization of a city results in fast and slow processes or urban change at multiple scales (Dovey, 2014: 51).
Larger scale change can include traffic, gentrification, crime etc. Whereby thus becomes the parameters for small scale, fast change- incremental construction, local trade and production & micro politics (Dovey, 2014: 51).

EVERYDAY URBANISM

UNDERSTANDING PLACE

lived experience
CONTEXT
advocacy
PROCESS
human scaled
familiarity
PRODUCT
material & immaterial implication

REWORKING

RESISTANCE   RESILIENCE

Coe and Jordhus-Lier's forms of agency

PLACE ATTACHMENT
PLACE IDENTITY
SENSE OF PLACE
SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

ambiguous space
SPACE
zones of social transition

history & meaning   distinct

unofficial, informal, hidden/lost, marginalized urban sites

PLACE

spontaneous activation

URBAN HERITAGE
everyday culture
rooted in reality

INFORMAL SECTOR
-flexible, dynamic and adaptive Seymour (1992: 126) defines informality as an aspect of the economy that engages in productive, essential work without formal control systems, operating beyond

THE SPONTANEOUS CITY

vibrant
USER DRIVEN
mixed-use
SOCIAL ADDED VALUE
BALANCED, ORGANIC DEVELOPMENT

resilient

flexible
fixed

FUTURE PROOF

sustainable

OPENESS

SPONTANAITY   FLEXIBILITY

Core Principles

opportunity creation

LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

designing based on what is already there

EXISTING

RESULT:
URBAN REGENERATION, RESILLIENCE, LONGEVITY

Figure 11:A diagrammatic representation of the theoretical framework informing the development of the scheme (Author, 2023).

EVERYDAY

The principles of everyday urbanism are also pertinent to the project, which aims at social transformation by revitalizing informal, neglected, and marginalized urban sites, including those identified within this project (Olsson and Haas, 2013). The outcome is a human-scaled intervention with both tangible and intangible impacts, enriching a place's identity.

SPONTANAITY

This concept also intersects with the theory of the spontaneous city, which focuses on creating a resilient city through interventions that oscillate between fixed and flexible approaches to "future-proof" a city while still allowing for agency (Urhahn, 2023: Online).

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CONCEPT.

MARABASTAD: AN ARRIVAL CITY.

The notion of emergence is, therefore, closely tied to the theory of the arrival city. Saunders' (2011) arrival city theory characterizes urban areas where immigrants or migrants initially settle when they arrive in a city. Marabastad can be likened to an arrival city as urbanization prompts opportunistic migrants from rural peripheries to relocate to urban areas like Pretoria's CBD.

Figure 12: A diagrammatic representation of Marabastad as an arrival city, acknowledging its historical and current role in hosting a migrant population (Author, 2023).

Current policies for the integration of migrants create many hindrances in their successful transition into society. When they arrive, they often lack the necessary resources and support to effectively transition into the community and break free from the "survivalist cycle".

Consequently, self-employment opportunities arise in the informal sector, which is crucial for generating jobs in underdeveloped regions with high poverty and unemployment rates (Schnachtebeck, 2017:131).

This project therefore provides support, yet also explores how one can harness the existing knowledge and skills people bring with them.

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Figure 13: A diagrammatic representation of the migrants arrival and transition into Marabastad and it's informal sector (Author, 2023).

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CONTEXT.

IMPORTANT ARRIVAL POINTS

As mentioned above, Marabastad serves as a significant retail and transport node. However, it also hosts important arrival points for migrants through the Department of Home Affairs: Desmond Tutu Refugee Reception Centre, a social housing scheme, and the NGO "Youth for Survival." The Refugee Centre and the NGO are pertinent to this project as they link very closely with this scheme's programs.

"The history of Marabastad is about change, relocation and urbanization. It is a history of migrants, refugees, job-seekers, entrepreneurs and commuters seeking a new and better life and of people who became the unwilling subjects of a political ideology. Marabastad was once an expanding township on the edge of the city of Pretoria. It was inextricably linked to Pretoria but, at the same time, it was never allowed to be an integral part of the city. "

-JFC Clarke

Figure 14:A map illustrating any important points of arrival into Marabastad (Author, 2023).

SITE AS A POINT OF ARRIVAL

The site of focus has been selected as an important arrival point not only due to the direct access from Eskia Mpahlele, the Hercules train station, and the peripheral townships. It is also important historically as the first point of development of the original Marabastad settlement. The natural gateway formed in the ridges and the flow of the Apies River presumably informed the original settlement in this location. Today it is a prominent trading node and is located directly north of an informal taxi rank and bus depot as an additional point of arrival.
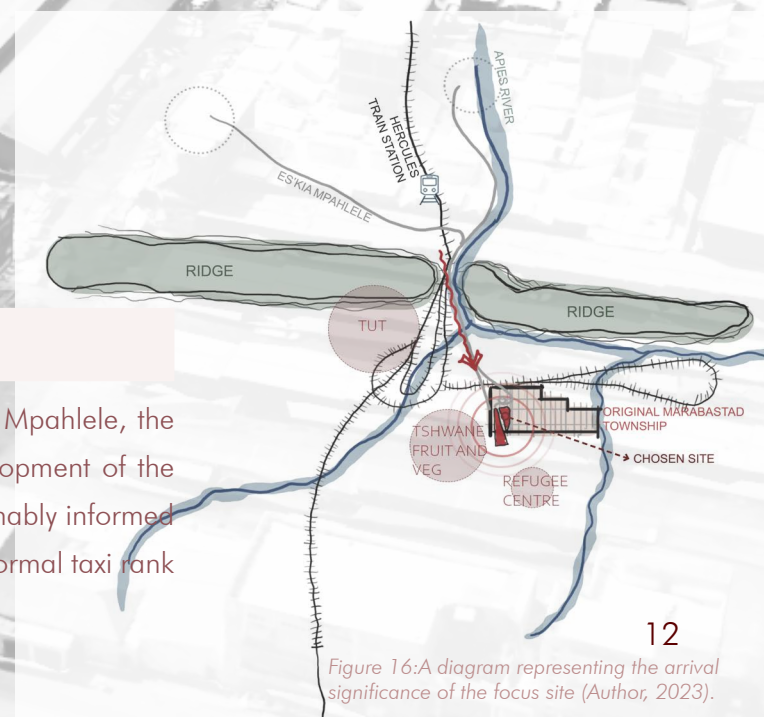
Figure 16:A diagram representing the arrival significance of the focus site (Author, 2023).

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INFORMANTS.

EXISTING NETWORKS

In addition to those institutions, significant informants for the development of this scheme included existing networks such as the trade and transport nodes or pedestrian movement. Vacant or underutilized sites that are not reaching their full potential could be developed in the urban framework. The high unemployment rate within the COT also acted as an informant of the scheme. Marabastad hosts 18% of Pretoria's informal trading (Moloto, 2022:51). This showcases the opportunity for employment within the sector and the high potential of economic contribution, given the correct training and skills development.

SAFETY

The lack of safe public space in Marabastad is also significant to note.
The population of Marabastad have noted safety concerns in the area (Pretoria News, 2016:Online). Traders are also fearful of getting robbed (Pretoria News, 2016:Online). Safety therfore becomes an important guiding principle, especially in the interface design of the project.

Figure 18: Safety explorations of the assistance centre interface design (Author, 2023).

Figure 17:A diagram layering the various informants and existing networks that guided the development of my scheme (Author, 2023).

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INFORMANTS.
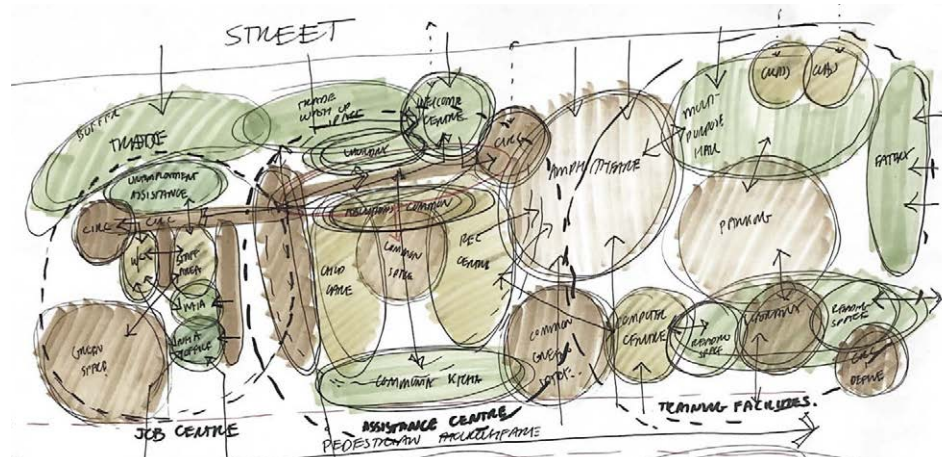
Figure 19: A bubble diagram assessing the interaction betweeen proposed programs on the site (Author, 2023).
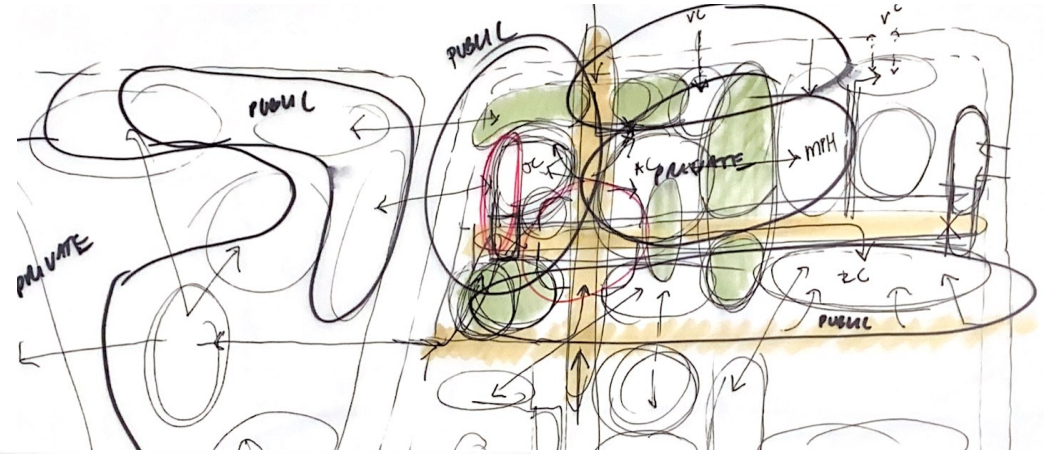
Figure 20: A bubble diagram assessing access onto site and public-private spaces (Author, 2023).
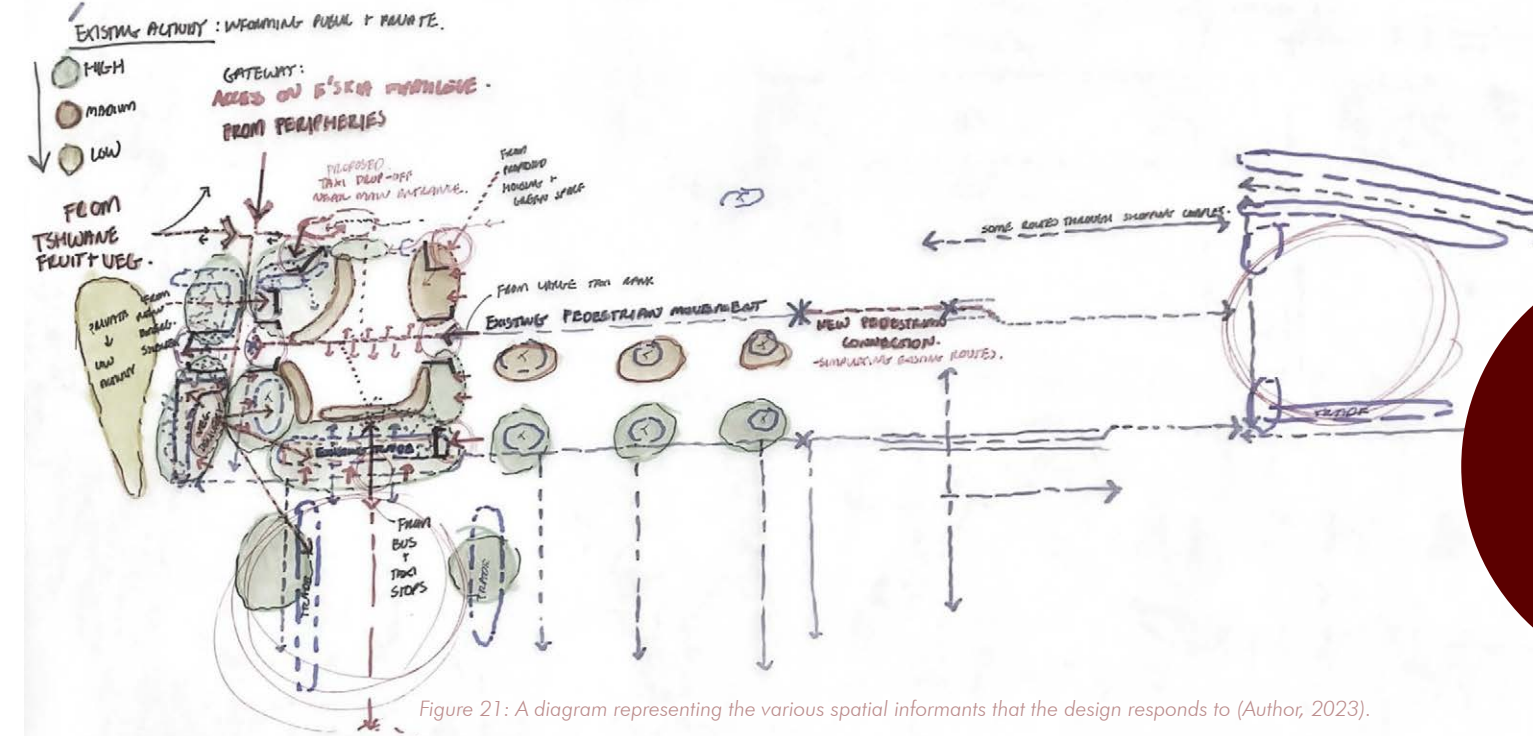
Figure 21: A diagram representing the various spatial informants that the design responds to (Author, 2023).

How can one design for the successful transition of migrants arriving in the city while supporting the existing opportunity within the informal sector?

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INFORMANTS.
STAKEHOLDERS AND USERS

STAKEHOLDERS: Informal traders, migrants, NGO: women and youth

In addition to the large amount of migrants arriving in Marabastad, a considerable portion of its informal sector comprises of women, while the youth unemployment rate remains notably high. Moreover, a significant proportion of the population lacks basic literacy skills or skills to develop their informal business (Seymour, 1992: 129). Current traders also require support when it comes to tasks like applying for licenses or legal advice (Seymour, 1992: 130).

HIERARCHY OF NEEDS

NGO: MIGRANT WOMEN AND YOUTH

-Ablutions

-Laundry facilities

-Short stay accomodation or transient shelter

-Literacy support facilities & business skills training

-Child care + rec. centre

-Safe spaces + privacy

CURRENT INFORMAL TRADERS ON SITE

-Trading space

-Ablutions

-Access to water and electricity

-Basic business skill training

-Trade license assistance and legal advise

ARRIVAL: TRANSPORT USERS AND OPERATORS

-Comfortable rest & waiting areas

-Possible short stay accomodation

-Ablutions

-Binding space for vehicles

-Washing spaces for vehicles

-Access to trader space

-Shade

-Public space

URBAN APPROACH

Figure 22: A hierarchical representation of the user groups of the scheme and their needs at both a site and urban scale (Author, 2023).

Figure 23: An earlier iteration of the general user journeys taken throughout the scheme (Author, 2023).
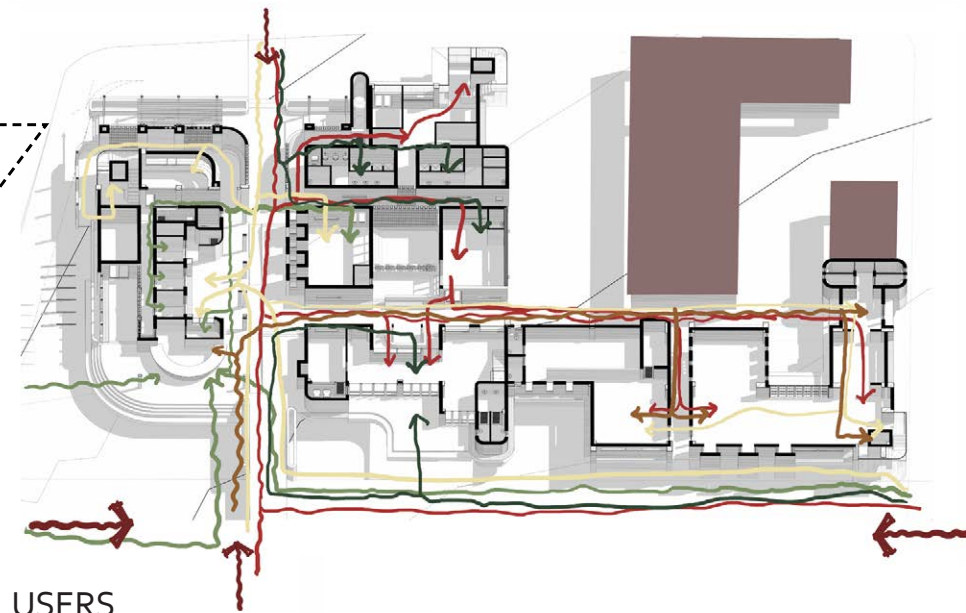
USERS

INFORMAL TRADER LOOKING FOR ASSISTANCE- LEGAL ADVICE, NHA TRADE LICENSES ETC.

UNEMPLOYED USER LOOKING FOR GUIDANCE, ADVICE AND ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS TRAINING

INFORMAL TRADER WANTING TO GROW BUSINESS BY LEARNING ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS

UNEMPLOYED WOMEN AND YOUTH ARRIVING IN MARABASTAD LOOKING FOR IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE AND ECONOMIC ESTABLISHMENT THROUGH ENTREPRENEURIAL TRAINING

PERSON IN NEED LOOKING FOR DAILY ASSISTANCE- FOOD, ABLUTIONS, LAUNDRY ETC.

APPROACH.

OVERALL INTENTION + BRIEF

Figure 24: The proposed urban vision of the scheme. This introduces a diversity of programs to address the community's needs and assist with the integration and reconnection of Marabastad's urban fabric (Author, 2023).

The intervention begins with an initial phased urban framework comprising of a connected network of activators placed in the landscape. The urban framework therefore allows for a holistic approach to the upliftment and revival of the context. The site of focus is then zoned to address the needs of migrants arriving in Marabastad and the existing traders on site. On that site, the focus areas are defined to the job center, assistance center for women and youth, and training facility. Informal trading space is integrated throughout the scheme based on where it already occurs. This particular focus has been selected as the project's goal is to equip users for long-term resilience and sustainability while providing initial immediate assistance. It seeks to offer programs that empower those arriving in Marabastad with the tools to transition beyond a survivalist mindset.

URBAN VISION

Figure 25: A 3-dimensional representation of the urban vision of the scheme (Author, 2023).

The primary focus of the urban framework is on revitalizing the northern part of Marabastad. There is a substantial amount of vacant or underutilized space within Marabastad that holds potential for future activation, reconnection, and reintegration. Many of these vacant spaces have been informally adapted by traders or taxis. The urban intervention therefore taps into these existing networks while bringing in some addtional supportive programs for activation.
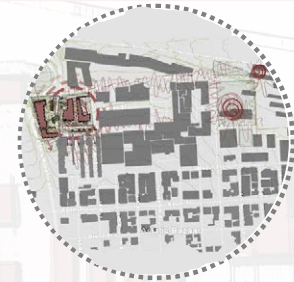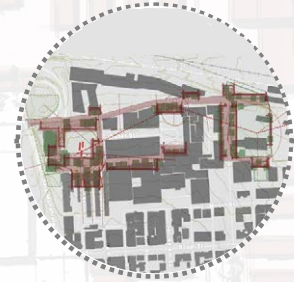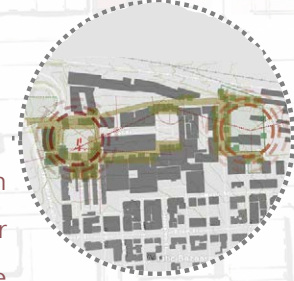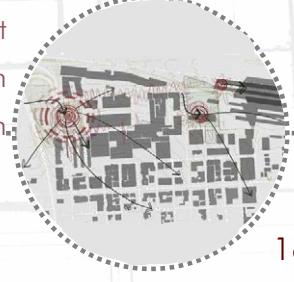
FOCUS SITE.

PROGRAM: TRANSITION.SUPPORT.OPPORTUNITY

Based off the informants, the projects programmatic development centers on the idea of transition once one arrives in Marabastad as a migrant seeking assistance and integrating it with the existing informal sector. The project offers immediate support, including a job center, an assistance center for women and youth, and short-term accommodation. It also includes long-term support services for individuals transitioning through the program, providing them with opportunities to enhance their existing skills and knowledge. These long-term facilities include a training center, a makerspace, and a resource center.The scheme additionally supports those who have arrived and trade within the informal sector by providing trade space and assistance (integrated with the job centre) and training for entrepreneurial growth. Communal gathering spaces have also been incoporated into the scheme as a method of facilitating social interactions between the various groups within Marabastad, this strengthens the sense of community and integration. This project therefore becomes an auxiliary support for existing institutions such as the Refugee reception centre and the NGO "Youth for Survival" which offers daily support to women and youth in need.
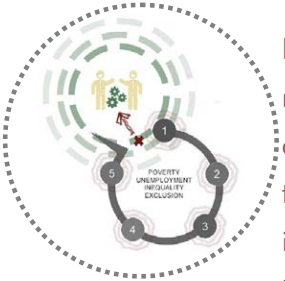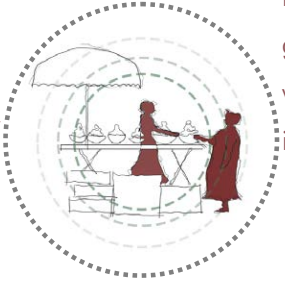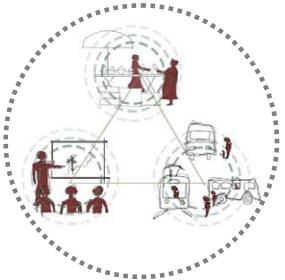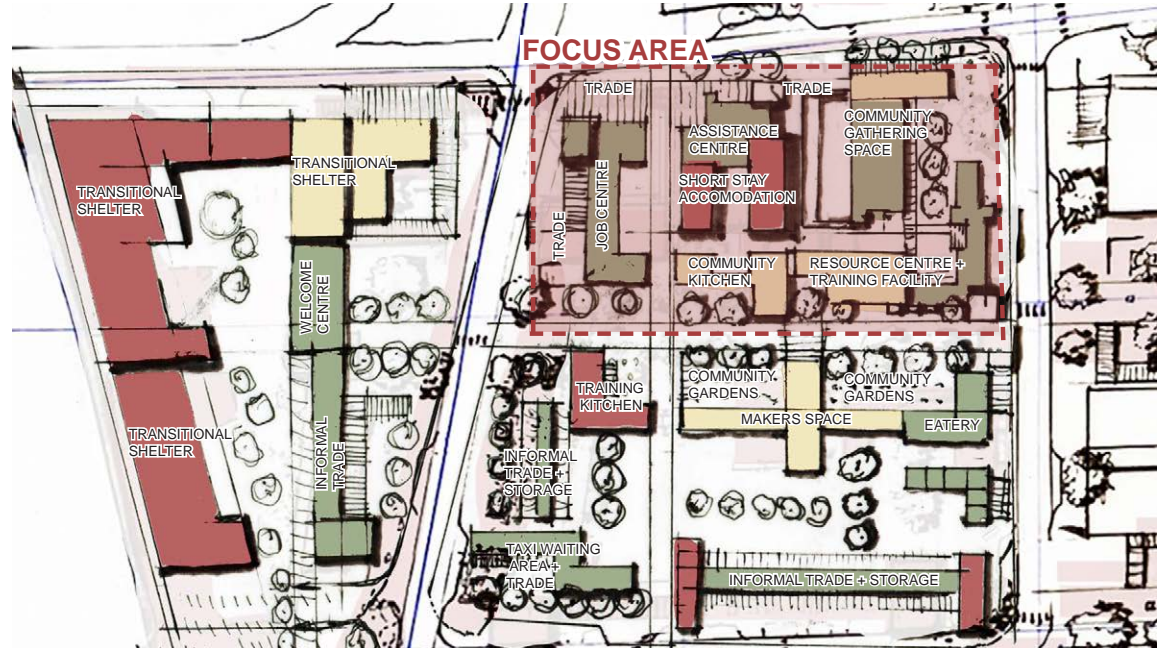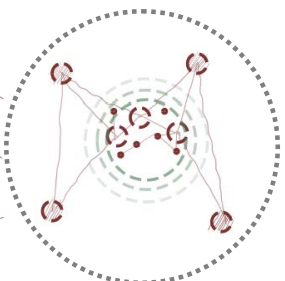
Figure 34: An ealier literation illustrating a diagrammatic representation of the site layout and intended focus area (Author, 2023).

SPATIAL+TECH. INTEGRATION.

THRESHOLD.TRANSITION.

As previously mentioned, the project is centered on the concept of transition, encompassing both conceptual, programmatic, and architectural applications. Consequently, thresholds and street interfaces hold significant importance in the technical development of the project. These principles align with key concepts associated with "transitional space" and "soft interfaces" (Al-Saaidy, 2022: 1260), which apply principles such as street visibility, material transparency, permeability, and building setback (Al-Saaidy, 2022: 1263). These principles additionally play a direct role in shaping the safety and perception of a building's interface.

Material transparency and permeable facades serve not only to establish gradual interfaces and foster inviting thresholds but also to enhance safety within the outdoor spaces, particularly during nighttime. To enhance visibility and safety after dark, vertical circulation elements have been enveloped in translucent materials, functioning as beacons within the landscape. This additionally aids in wayfinding and visibility.

Moreover, the project integrates informants drawn from Marabastad, which is reflected in the design. For instance, the incorporation of overhangs along the street edge creates additional trading space. This is a direct response to the needs and preferences of the local community. Additionally, the scheme respects and adapts to the historical fine-grained and pedestrian nature of Marabastad, preserving its unique character through a permeable ground floor plane . Inspiration has also been taken from the textured facades of the culturally significant buildings of Marabastad. This has been emulated in this project through the use of brick patterning and screens.

WESTERN EDGE: FACADE LAYERING AND GRADUAL THRESHOLDS

Figure 35: A representational perspective of the layered access from the western edge (Author, 2023).

NORTH WESTERN CORNER: STREET EDGE DEFINITION AND ACTIVATION

Figure 36: A representational perspective of the street edge interaction on the north-western corner of the focus site (Author, 2023).

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SPATIAL+TECH. INTEGRATION.

UPSKILL.INNOVATE.ADAPT.

FIXED VS FLEXIBILE

The project adheres to the principle of fixed and flexible, mirroring the approach of the spontaneous city (Urhahn, 2023: Online). This approach is applied both spatially and technologically, with fixed-built forms shaping public spaces where spontanaity can thrive. From a technological standpoint, the design incorporates a solid, fixed masonry base that allows for flexible development above. Prefabricated upper floors enable adaptability, ease of constrction and flexibility over time, accommodating potential densification as the area's requirements evolve.

LOW TECH. VS HIGH TECH.

The material approach employed in the project combines high-tech and low-tech construction methods. Brick, a locally prominent and low-skill-required material, is used for the fixed components. In contrast, mass timber, crafted from recycled timber palettes, is employed for its prefabrication capabilities. This choice not only makes efficient and sustainable use of a readily available "waste product" found frequently on-site (due to deliveries to the informal traders) but also adds a distinctive character to the scheme. This innovative use of materials aims to diminish stigmas and communicate the idea that investment and innovation is deserved by everyone, regardless of their background. By incorporating both high-tech and low-tech elements, the project strives to achieve a balanced and inclusive architectural approach, respecting local traditions and promoting community involvement during construction where applicable, while speaking to the innovation that already exists in Marabastad.

Brick base
-Low tech
-Locally appropriate material
-Brick screens provide transparency, texture and act as gradual space dividers
-Brick acts as permanent shuttering for concrete support. Makes for simpler construction by low skilled local labour

CLT floor slabs
-Prefabricated- allowing for asssembly by lower skilled local labour
-Sustainable material choice
-Manufactured from recycled timber pallets found on and around site

Mass timber portal frame
-Prefabricated- allowing for asssembly by lower skilled local labour
-Allows for future flexibility

CLT wall panels
-Prefabricated- allowing for asssembly by lower skilled local labour
-Sustainable
-Flexible

Sheet metal roofing
-Low tech
-Locally appropriate material
-More flexible for future vertical growth

Overall structure
-Transparency for safety at night
-Windows on street edge- "passive surveillance"
-Steps down towards street edge
-Overhange emulating the local typology
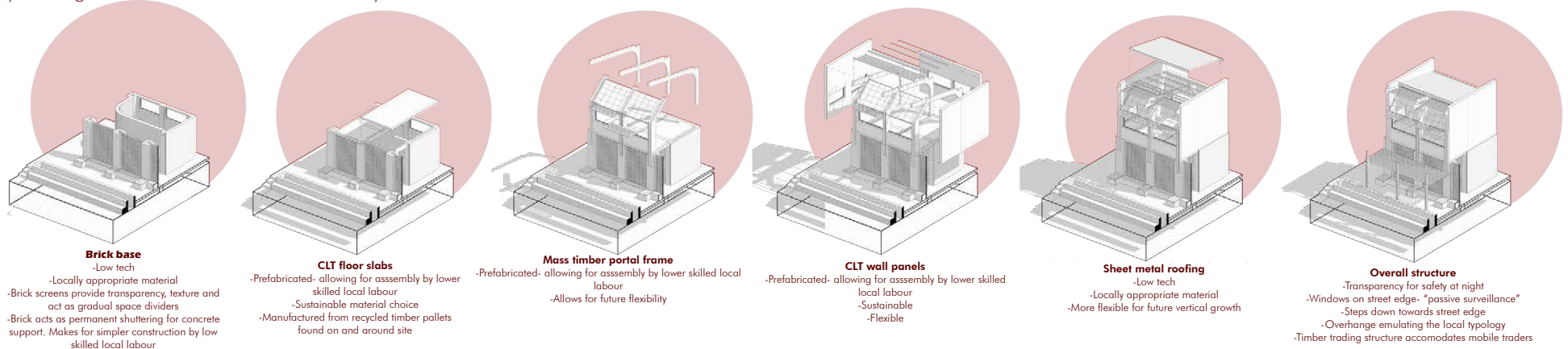-Timber trading structure accomodates mobile traders

Figure 37: A series of diagrams illustrating the phases of construction and assembly of the project. This showcases the fixed base of the building with flexible upper floors. Additionally, the combination of high-tech and low-tech construction is represented (Author, 2023).

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ITERATE.

OVERVIEW

As mentioned above, the design process has adopted a multi-scalar approach. Therefore, throughout the development of this project, there has been constant interchange between the urban scale, site scale and technological detail development. This has allowed for regular reflection between iterations to ensure the most appropriate solution both contextually and conceptually. After reflection, each iteration yielded a set of principles to contribute to the next iteration.

ITERATION 1: THE URBAN RESPONSE

The first approach to the project development looked at how one can shape safe public green space between the built form through the edge building and courtyard typology approach. Additionally, this iteration explored how one can formally define a main gateway into Marabastad. This iteration was performed on a macro-level, focusing mainly on the urban principles of the scheme.

Figure 38: Identifying underutilised or neglected sites as well as existing socio-economic systems to tap into (Author, 2023).
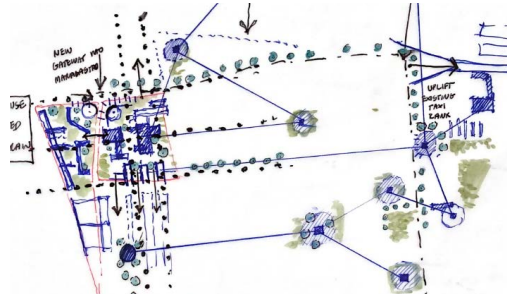
Figure 39: Formulating an initial urban response (Author, 2023).
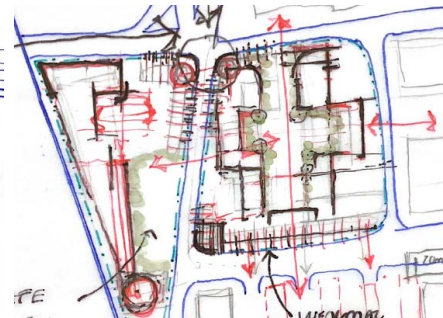
Figure 40: An intuitive exploration on shaping spaces on the focus site (Author, 2023).

Figure 41: First explorative, intuitive maquette(Author, 2023).

ITERATION 2

The next investigation looked at how to frame the specific points of arrival on the site. It also further developed links to the prominent public transport nodes around the site as those were identified as important arrival points. This iteration placed the street edge condition at the forefront to test building setback, programmatic layout based on access (public vs private), and the framing of axes.
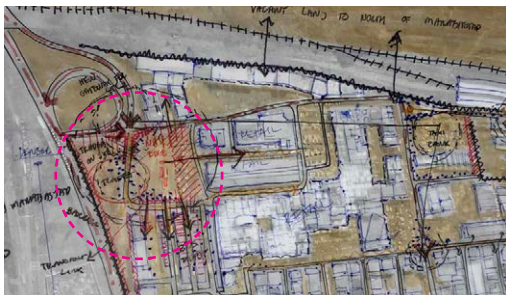
Figure 42: Identifying important areas of response on the site (Author, 2023).
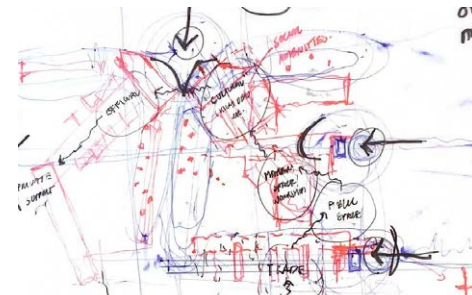
Figure 43: Diagrammatic exploration of framing points of arrival and important points of interface on the site (Author, 2023).
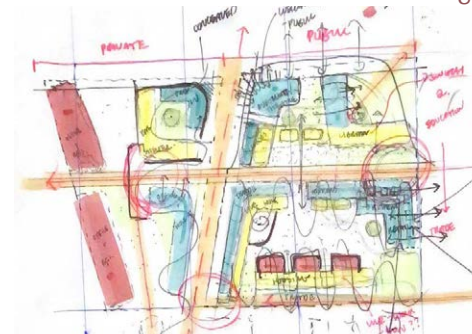
Figure 44: Framing and defining axes (Author, 2023).
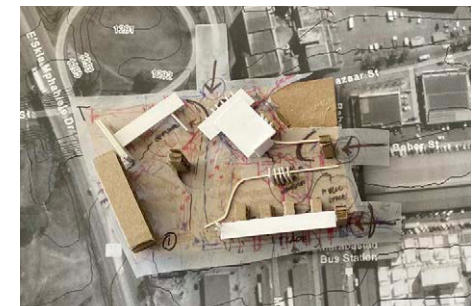
Figure 45: Maquette exploring street edge interaction (Author, 2023).

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ITERATION 3

The following iteration explored how one can bring a finer grain to the scheme by prioritising permeability and pedestrian movement. An investigation was also performed to discover how one can define public and private areas of the scheme. The idea of vertical landmarks in the landscape was also introduced in this iteration with the termination of axes also being explored.

Figure 46: Defining the various site programs and the urban response (Author, 2023).
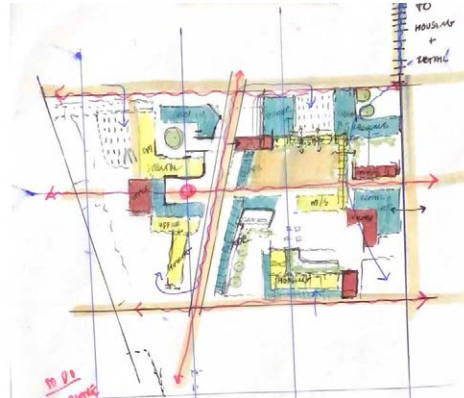
Figure 47: Massing exploring shaping private and public space(Author, 2023).
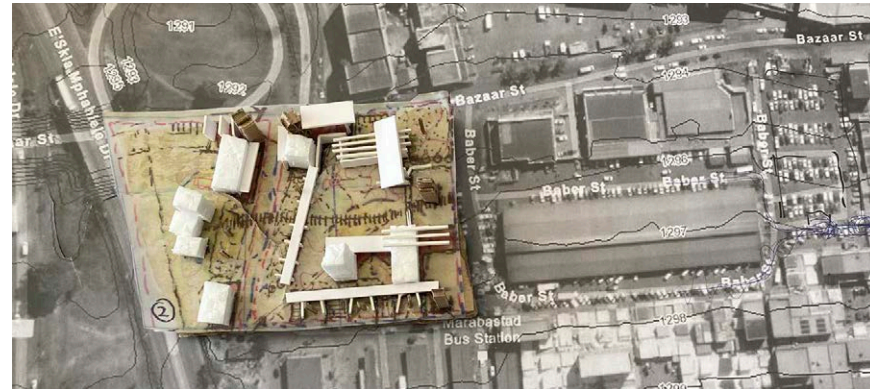
Figure 48: Maquette testing developing a finer grain to the scheme (Author, 2023).

ITERATION 4

This iteration looked at developing smaller pockets along a spinal development while developing a more seamless integration into the context and the proposed urban framework. This investigation also began to implement finer pedestrian connections between the programs to enhance programmatic linkages. The approach followed was to share common public spaces such as green space or circulation.
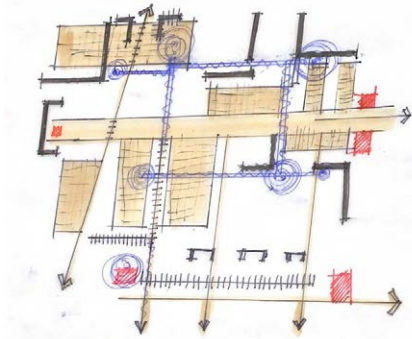
Figure 49: Shaping smaller spaces along a shared route (Author, 2023).

Figure 50: Developing finer pedestrian routes to connect the various programmes of the scheme(Author, 2023).
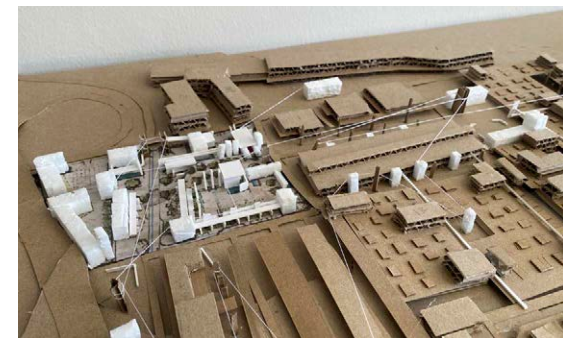
Figure 51: A maquette exploring integrating the site into its context on a finer scale. Additionally, exploring placing catalysts throughout the urban landscape.(Author, 2023).

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ITERATE.

ITERATION 5

The next stage of development included an experiment on how an angled built form can shape movement and define public open spaces. A closer look at technical and spatial integration was also performed through the development of a maquette at 1:250 scale and the development of a 1:20 detailed section of an important street interface. This maquette explored volume, initial material combinations, and street interfaces. Upon reflection, it was decided that this iteration could be refined and simplified to an extent in order to convey the essence of the project.

Figure 52: Detailed programmatic development and exploring how tilting the form could influence the design (Author, 2023).

Figure 53: A amquette exploring the form at a greater scale of 1:250 (Author, 2023).
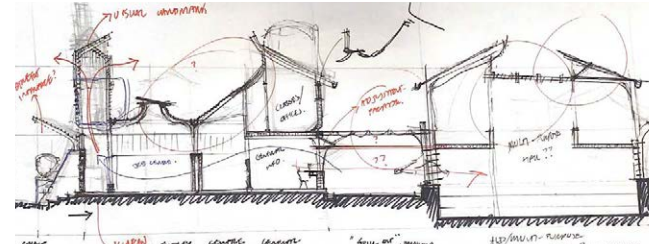
Figure 54: Exploring the different roof planes and spatial hierarchy (Author, 2023).

ITERATION 6

The process of refinement was instantiated in this iteration through the development of another maquette at a 1:200 scale. This maquette focussed on refining unnecessarily complex forms and spaces, such as the strong diagonal axis. More detailed floor plans and layout requirements were also developed with this iteration in order to fully grasp the programmatic requirements of the buildings. A constant revisiting of the initial technological and spatial intentions for this scheme informed the further distillation of this project for the final stages.
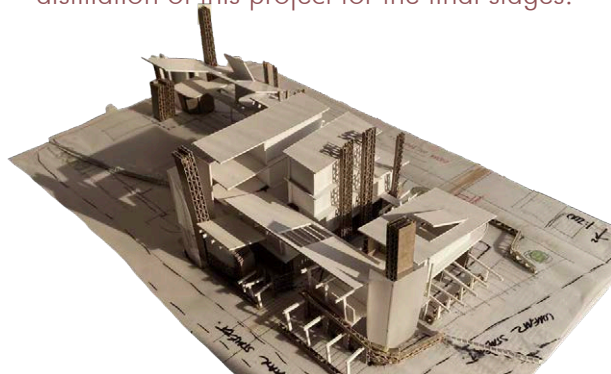
Figure 55: 1:200 Maquette exploring materiality and street interfaces (Author, 2023).
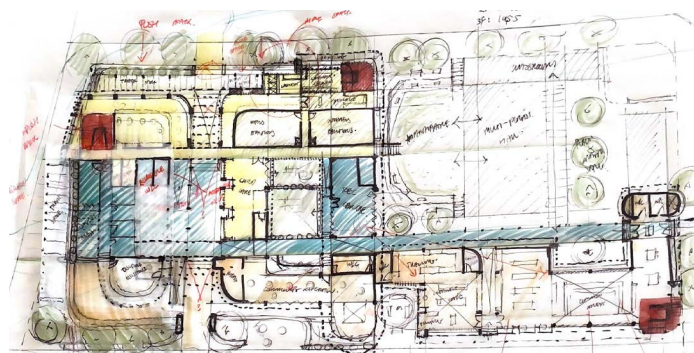
Figure 56: Floor plan development and initial spatial refinement (Author, 2023).

on A-A
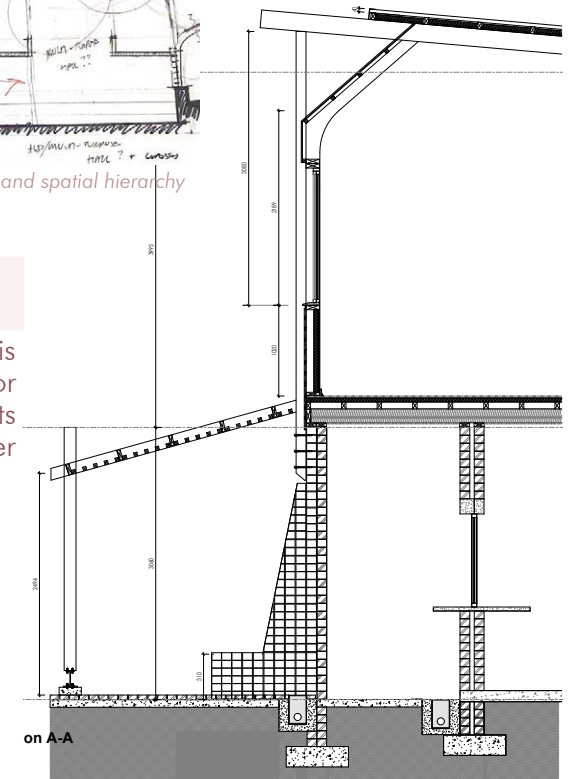
Figure 57: Developing the initial 1:20 edge section of the building (Author, 2023).

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ITERATE.

ITERATION 7

The final stages of iteration focused on the definition and further refinement of the project at a more detailed scale.
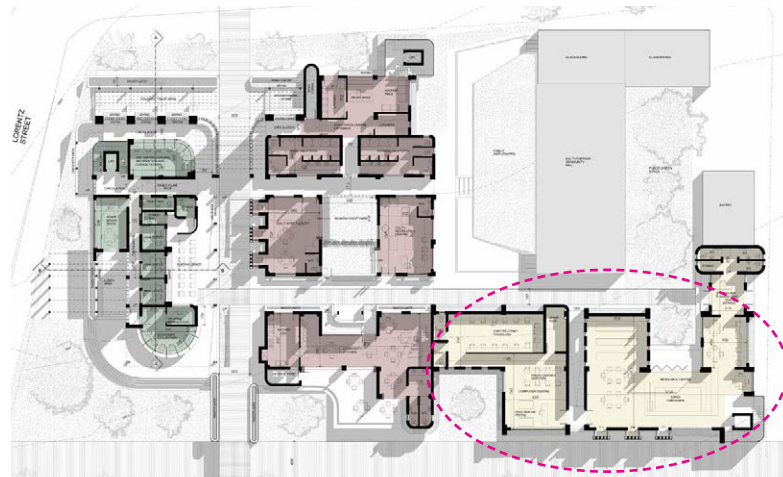
Figure 58: An iteration of the ground floor plan, indicating the area adjusted in the next iteraion (Author, 2023).
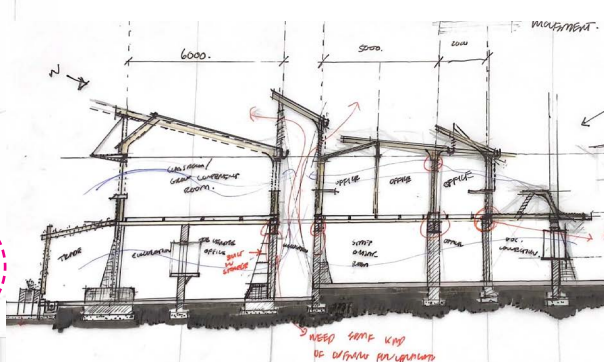
Figure 59: An iteration of thesectional development of the scheme (Author,
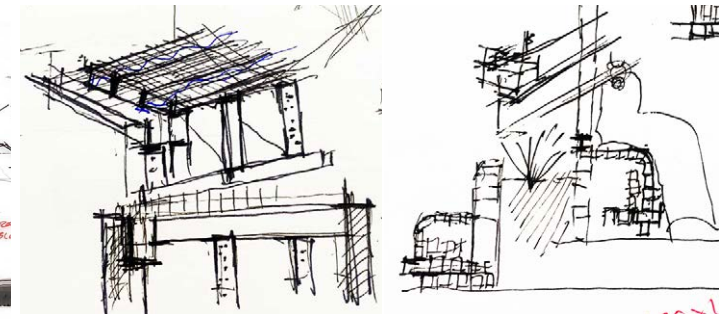
Figure 60: A series of technological sketches exploring various details in the project (Author, 2023).

ITERATION 8

At this point of devlopment the focus was placed on safety as a design informant as well as further defining the north-eastern edge of the site. This was in order to bring in another layer of social engagement and communal public spaces into the scheme.
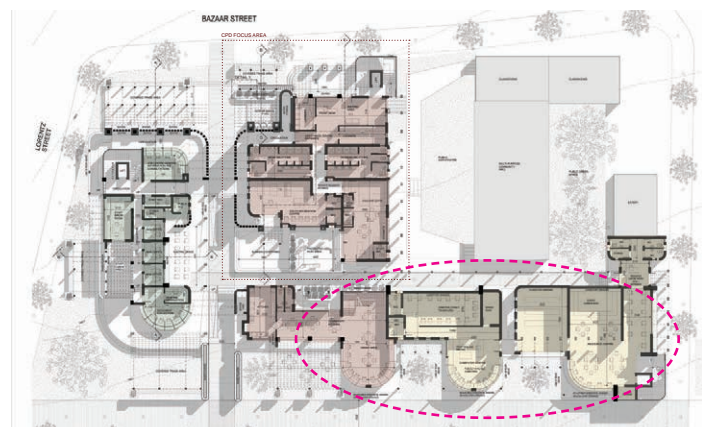
Figure 61: The next iteration of the ground floor plan, the north-eastern corner and highlighted area were refined for the final design (Author, 2023).
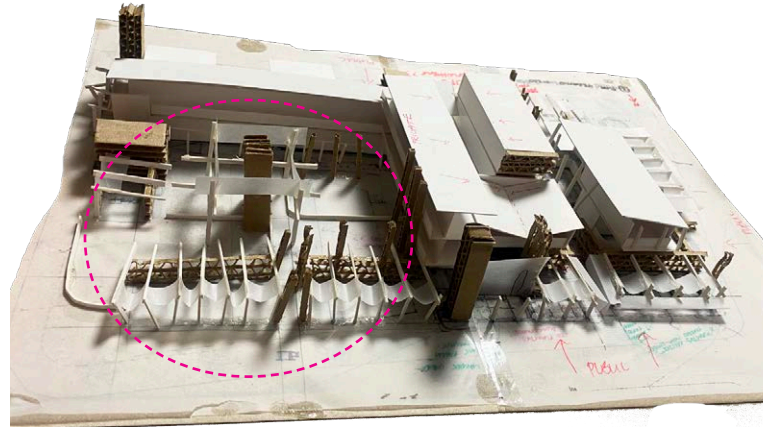
Figure 62: A maquette illustrating the exploration of the public gathering spaces on the north eastern edge of the site (Author, 2023).
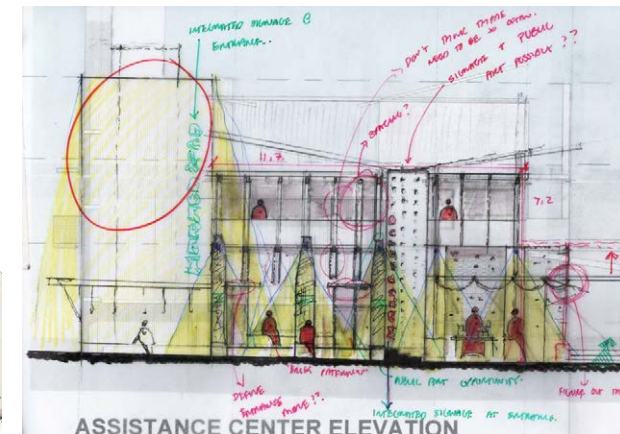
Figure 63: The northern assistance centre elevation with a focus on safety (Author, 2023).

OVERVIEW

This portion of the document aims to provide an initial glimpse into some of the final design outcome drawings.

THE GROUND FLOOR PLAN

Figure 64: A diagrammatic representation of the main programs illustrated in the scheme. (Author, 2023).

JOB CENTRE

ASSISTANCE CENTRE
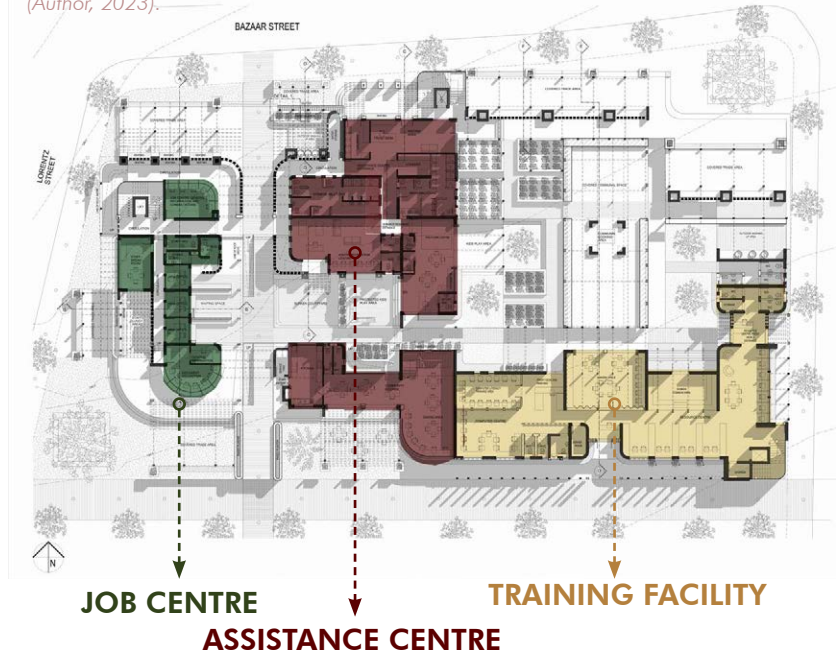
TRAINING FACILITY

The ground floor plan comprises three main areas with a variety of supportive areas: the job center, assistance center for women and youth, and the training and resource facility. These zones have been intentionally designed to accentuate key arrival points, connect to pedestrian pathways, and create a welcoming and accessible environment. The concept centers on the idea of transition, illustrating how one progresses from seeking employment to fulfilling basic needs and, finally, gaining the skills needed to integrate into society.

The job center is strategically placed at a street corner to ensure visibility upon entering Marabastad and easy access to informal trade spaces. The assistance center, managed by the local NGO "Youth for Survival," provides daily support to women and youth arriving in need of assistance. While maintaining a street presence for public awareness, it is slightly set back to ensure user privacy. Linked to the assistance center is the training facility, equipped with essential resources like a computer center and library, and is publically accessible. Both the training centre and assistance centre open up to communal open spaces to facilitate social interactions. Community gardens and cooking areas are interwoven with street edge trade to foster a sense of commmunity and encourage diversity.

As a whole, the design has taken an approach to have the built form wrapped in a layered interface to protect the more private core. The public spaces open up to the streets and the main thoroughfare to foster interaction and act as a buffer into private spaces.

CREATE GRADUAL, LAYERED THRESHOLDS THROUGH BOTH FORM AND MATERIALITY

BUILT CORES, ENVELOPED BY PERMEABLE, FLEXIBLE SPACE

SPACES OPEN UP ONTO MAIN PEDESTRIAN THOROUGHFARE

SOFT EDGES TO GUIDE MOVEMENT AND OPEN ONTO GREEN SPACE

BEACONS PLACED THROUGHOUT LANDSCAPE DEFINING IMPORTANT ARRIVAL POINTS

PRIVATE BUILT CORES SECURED IN PERMEABLE INTERFACES TO DEFINE PUBLIC & PRIVATE

Figure 65: A series of diagrams defining the main decisions and intentions considered while developing the ground floor plan. (Author, 2023).

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FINAL.

BAZAAR STREET

LORENTZ STREET
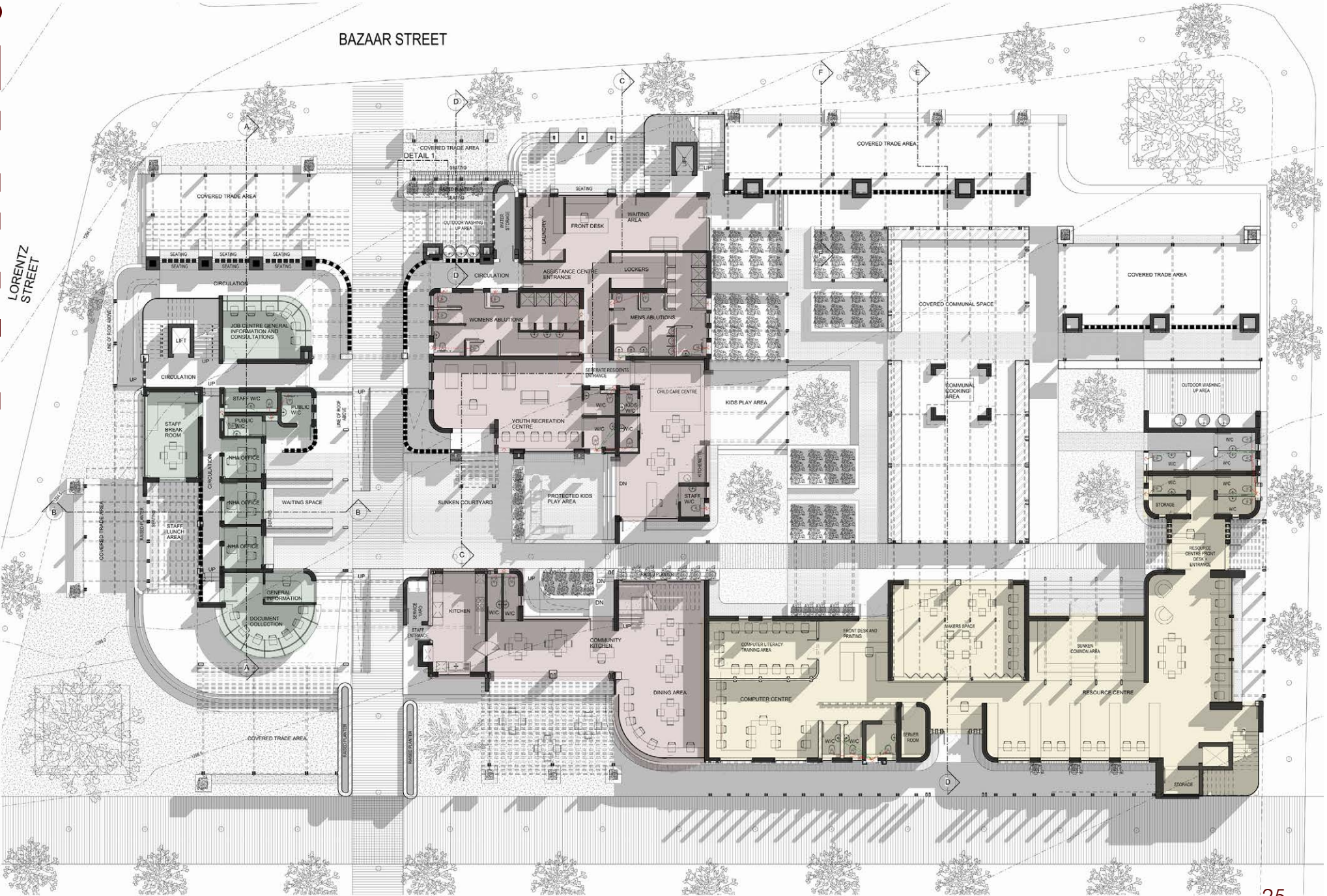
Figure 66: The ground floor plan of the scheme, illustrating the various programs in different colours (Author, 2023).

THE FIRST FLOOR PLAN

Moving to the first floor, the focus shifts to more private programs, including offices, short-stay accommodations, and classrooms for the training facility. The upper floors are constructed using CLT, with service cores made from brick.
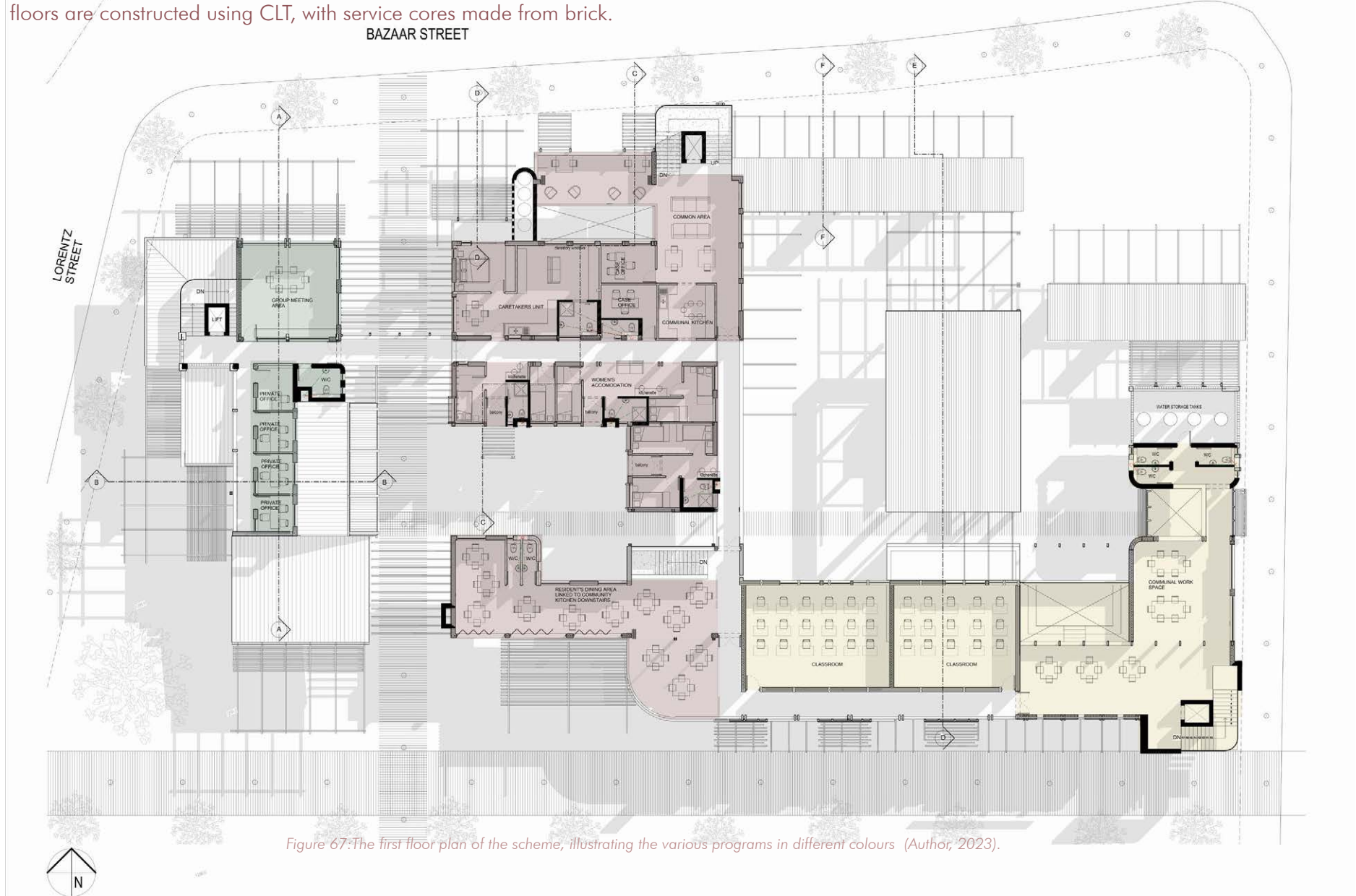
Figure 67:The first floor plan of the scheme, illustrating the various programs in different colours (Author, 2023).

FINAL.
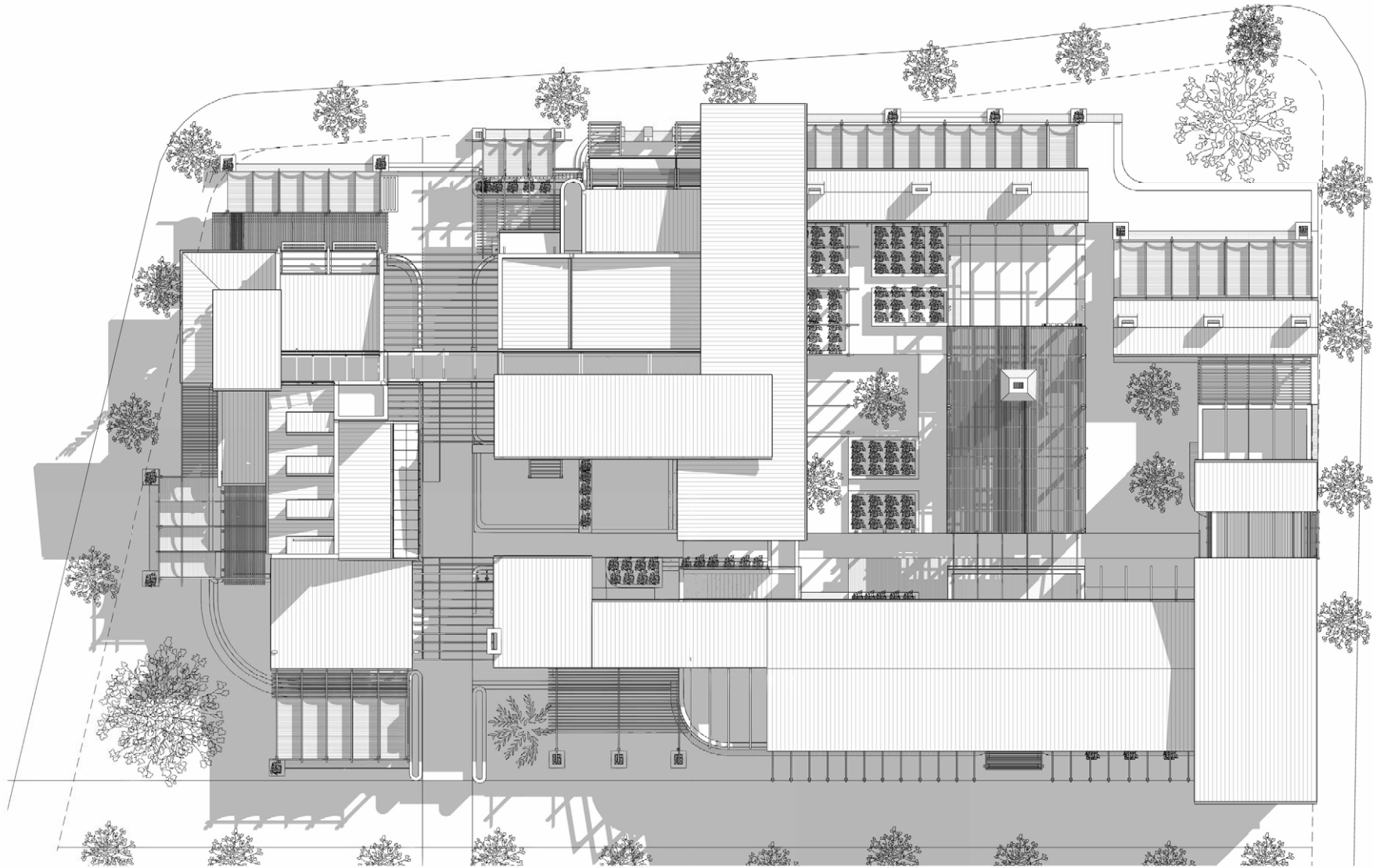
Figure 68: The roof plan of the scheme (Author, 2023).

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SECTION C-C THROUGH THE ASSISTANCE CENTRE

This section represents the main intentions of creating gradual transitions into the assistance center. It aims to use the roof as an element to distinguish and define the various programs of the scheme. Additionally, on the ground floor plane the continuation of materials and overhead planes create a gradual threshold into the space while still defining the entrances.

FINAL.

MEN'S SHORT STAY ACCOMMODATION

CIRCULATION

ASSITANCE COMMON AREA

CARE TAKER'S UNIT

BATHROOM

CIRCULATION

WOMEN'S SHORT STAY ACCOMMODATION

ASSITANCE CENTRE ENTRANCE

CIRCULATION

YOUTH RECREATION CENTRE

NGL
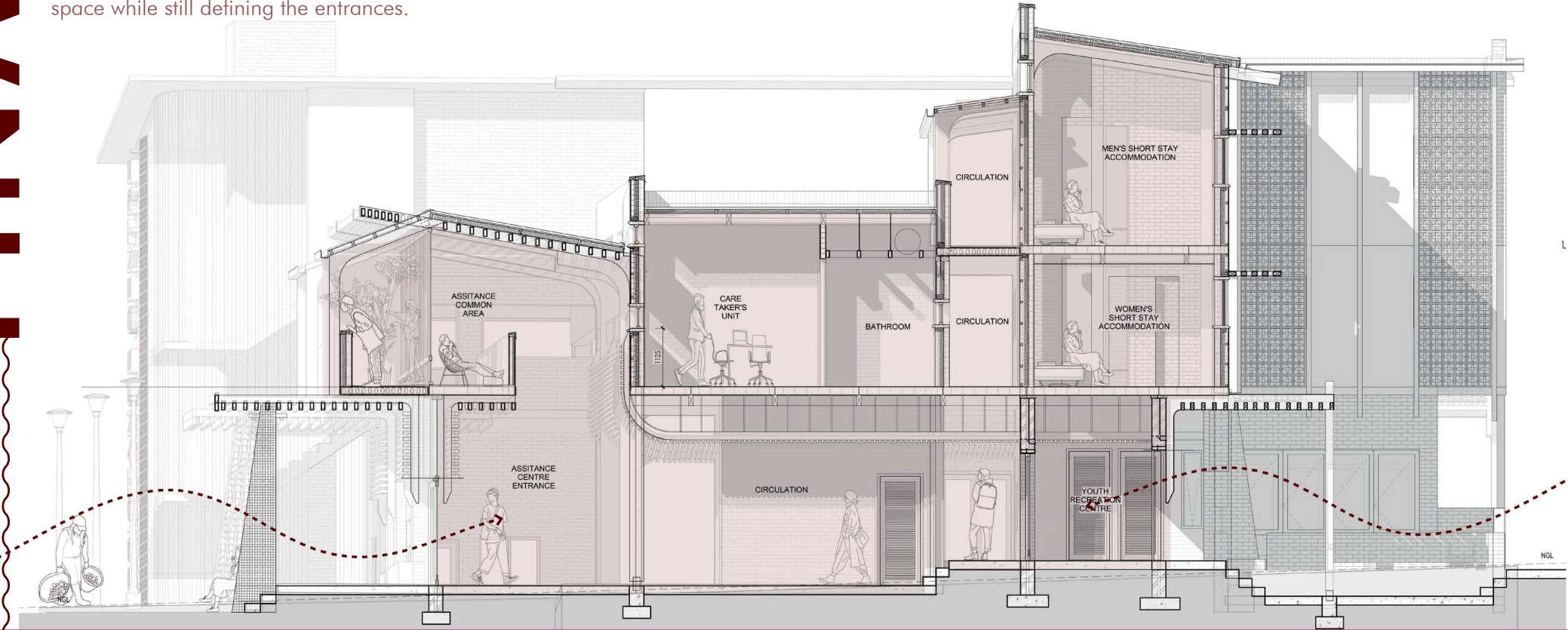
Figure 69: Section C-C through the assistance centre, illustrating the volumetric definition of programs (Author, 2023).

ENCLOSED, IMPOSING, INACTIVE
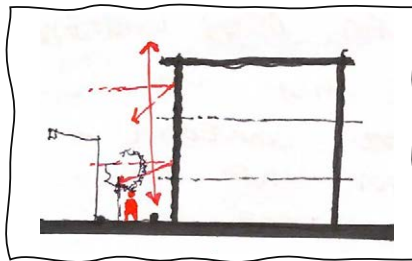
PEDESTRIAN SCALE, WELCOMING
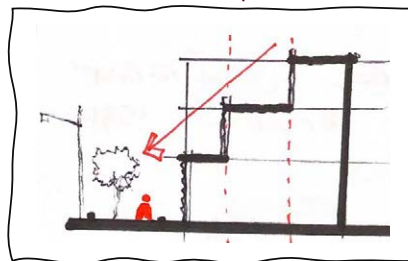
ACTIVATED, PERMEABLE, GRADUAL THRESHOLD
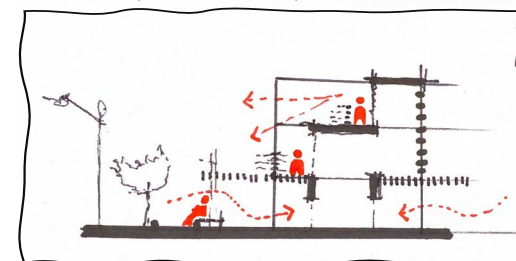
Figure 70: A series of diagrams illustrating the development of the section towards the street edge (Author, 2023).

NORTHERN ASSISTANCE CENTRE ELEVATION: SAFETY

This elevation placed emphasis on the performance assesment of the project with safety as a primary metric. An analysis and research phase was conducted in Marabastad, assessing interfaces and spaces that either promote or hinder safety to inform the design development. The primary design focus of this portion centers on the street interface of the assistance center, with a particular emphasis on creating a welcoming and secure environment. This focus is especially critical as these areas remain open 24 hours a day. The iterative design process was evaluated against various criteria, including passive surveillance (how to incorporate street activity to enhance a sense of safety), facade transparency (ensuring a welcoming and clearly defined entrance), gradual thresholds to define access and safe movement, and effective lighting.

Figure 70:The final street elevation of the assistance centre placing emphasis on safety, passive surveillance and activation (Author, 2023).
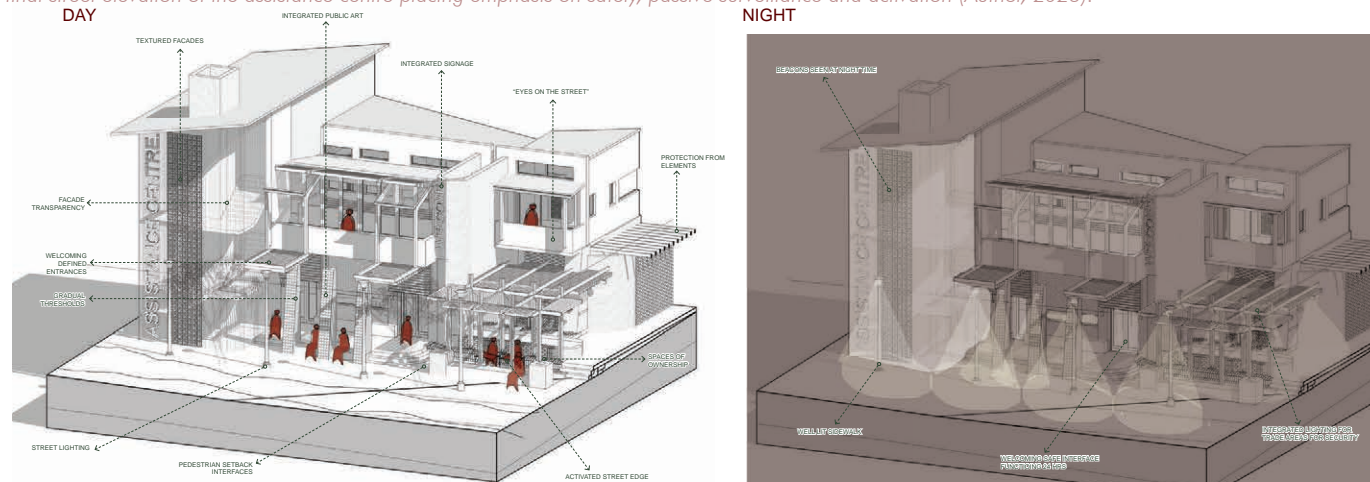
Figure 71:Diagrammatic representations of the final iteration of the assistance centre's street interface during the day and night (Author, 2023).

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SECTION D-D: THE TRADE AND WASH UP AREA

This detailed section explores the provision of facilities for informal traders, specifically focusing on a washing-up area. This element has been incorporated into a water catchment and recycling system, which filters and returns the water to the storage tanks. An essential aspect of this design was the gradual definition of the transition from the trading spaces to the washing area, creating a subtle separation of these zones.
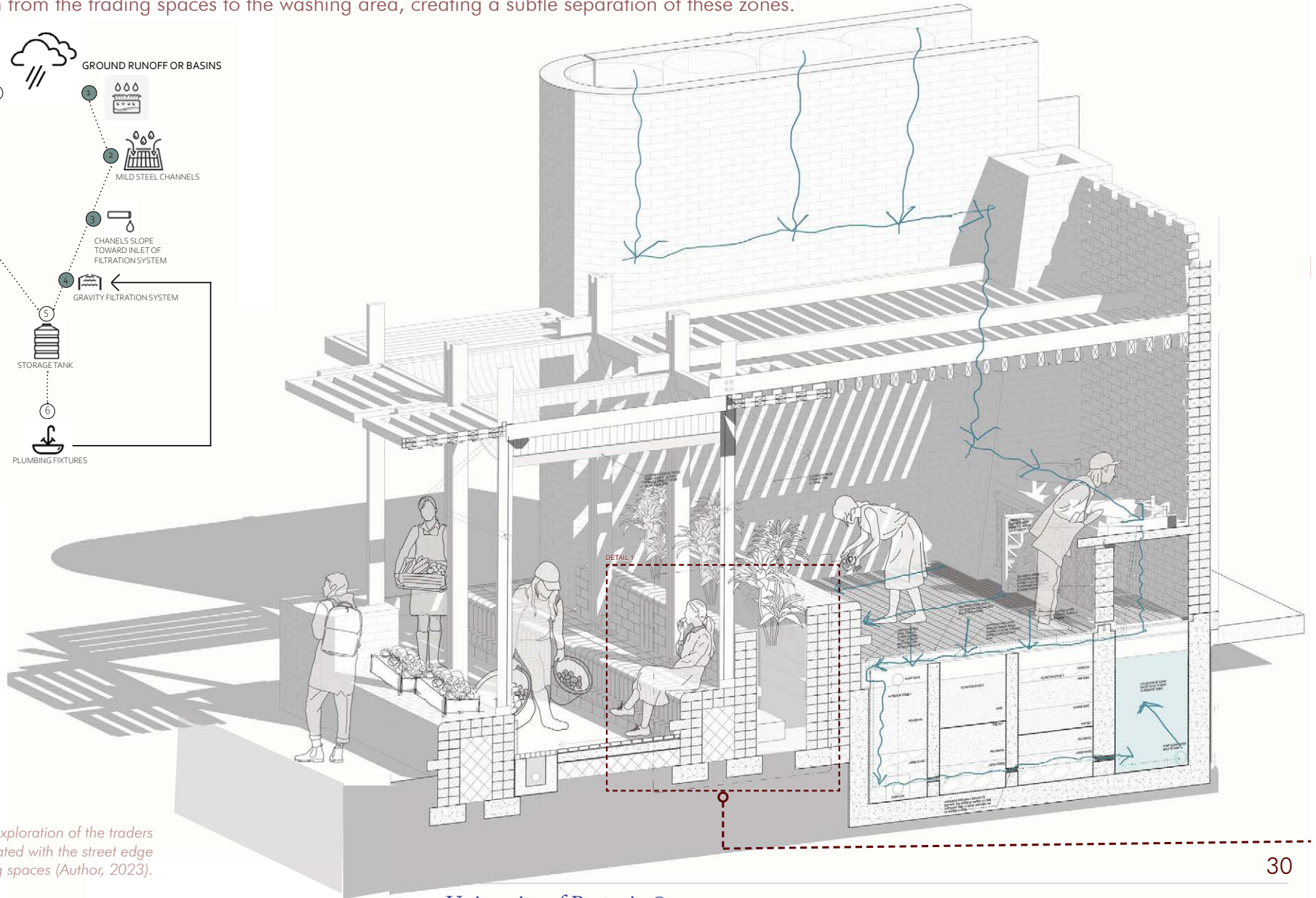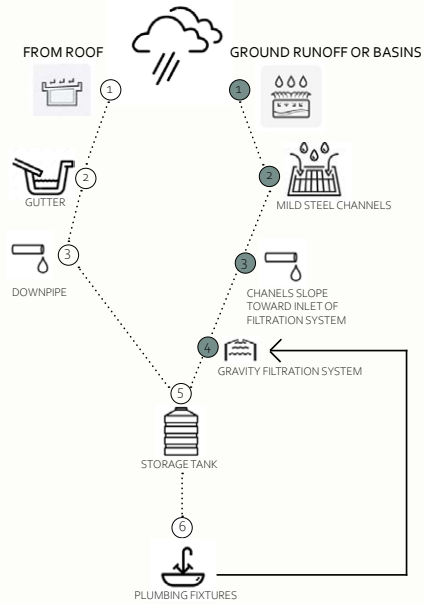
Figure 72: Detail exploration of the traders wah-up area integrated with the street edge trading spaces (Author, 2023).

REFLECT.

THE DESIGN PROCESS

Over the course of the year, through numerous iterations, this design has transformed into a complex intervention aimed at accommodating a diverse array of programs and considerations rooted in the existing context. A multitude of spatial arrangements were explored through these iterations to arrive at an outcome that strikes a harmonious balance between intricacy and sensitivity. The overall design process has entailed an ongoing feedback loop encompassing various scales, from the urban context down to the finer details. In essence, this journey has imparted the realization that the design process is far from linear; it is intricate, occasionally chaotic, and seemingly perpetual. Amid this intricacy, it remains imperative to maintain continuous reflection on the original design intent to prevent it from becoming obscured.

THE FINAL DESIGN OUTCOME

Overall, the ultimate design sought to balance architectural complexity and innovation while remaining sensitive to the local context. In its totality, the scheme seamlessly integrates with the surroundings and establishes connections within existing networks, particularly at the pedestrian and public realm levels. The end result is a multi-faceted intervention that speaks to the rich and diverse context in which it is embedded.

Figure 73: A explorative sketch representing the sceheme's connection to the urban fabric of Marabastad (Author, 2023).
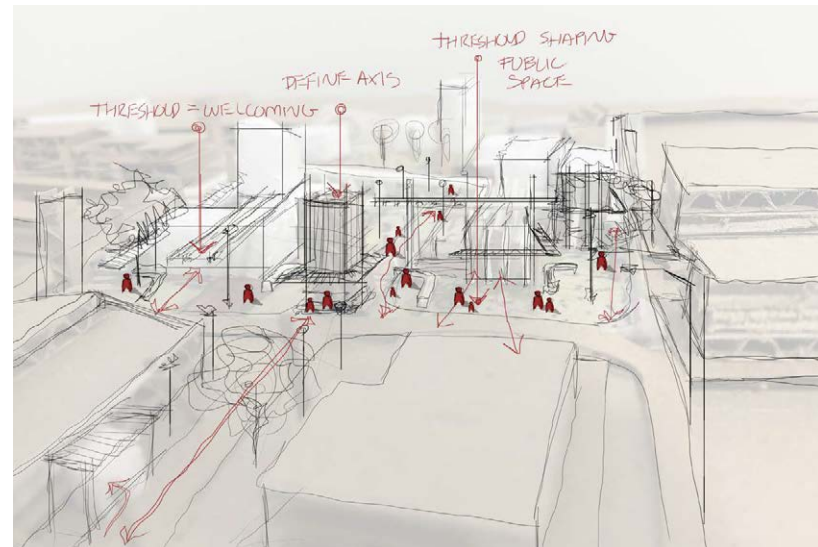
Figure 74: An initial explorative sketch of the maquatte in its context (Author, 2023).

REFLECT.

THE FINAL DESIGN OUTCOME

The initial objectives of the project were twofold: first, to create a space that enhances the existing networks, such as the informal sector, and second, to introduce a new layer of support for incoming migrants. In doing so, the project acknowledges the wealth of knowledge and skills that these newcomers bring with them. The final design successfully weaves itself into the context, functioning at both the site and broader urban scales, with a particular emphasis on pedestrian integration.

The design also strives to strike a balance between various dichotomies:

-It carefully navigates the boundary between the public and private realms, with a strong focus on thresholds and interfaces.

-It intentionally combines fixed and flexible elements through a blend of technology and spatial arrangements.

-It provides spaces of rubustness while still allowing for areas that can be adapted and appropriated.

Collectively, the final design aims to compliment the vibrancy and bustling urban life that characterizes Marabastad's unique essence.

NAVIGATING THE BOUNDARY BETWEEN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE
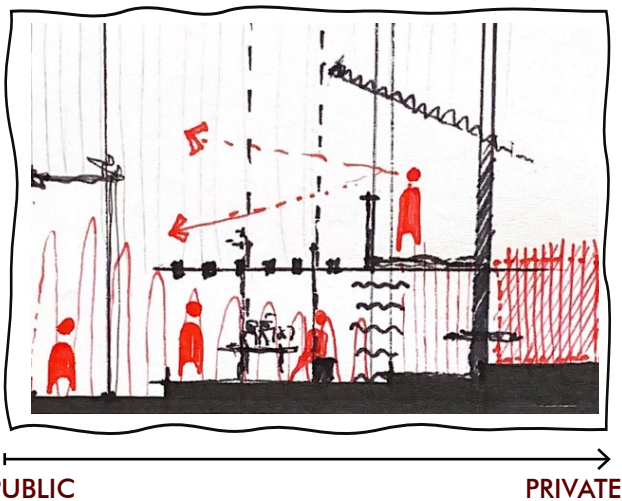
PUBLIC   PRIVATE

Figure 75: Diagram illustrating the design approach to defining public and private space (Author, 2023).

COMBINING FIXED AND FLEXIBLE SPACE AND TECHNOLOGY
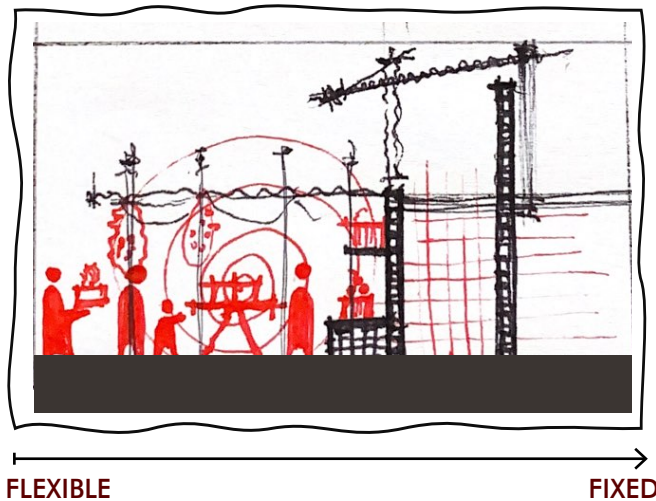
FLEXIBLE   FIXED

Figure 76: Diagram illustrating the design approach to providing fixed and flexible space (Author, 2023).

SPACES OF RUBUSTNESS SUPPORTING SPACES OF APPROPRIATION

ROBUST   ADAPTABLE
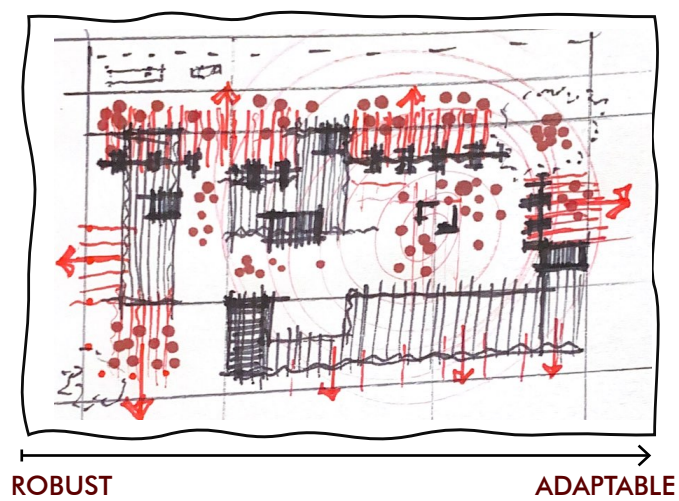
Figure 77: Diagram representing areas of rubustness which can support spaces of appropriation (Author, 2023).

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REFLECT.

THE FINAL DESIGN OUTCOME

Critical reflection of potential design alternatives remains an integral part of the ongoing design process. Upon careful reflection, certain aspects could warrant further development. An example of this lies in the roofscape. While the design drew from a range of pragmatic and technical considerations, there may be room to streamline the roof design. Nevertheless, it is essential to strike a balance, avoiding over-simplification that might detract from the project's overall impact . Presently, the roof plane plays a pivotal role in shaping dynamic spaces that influence the user experience throughout the entire scheme informed by movement, spatial hierarchy and lighting, yet it could be further refined. The emergence focused approach of the design process involves exploring a multiplicity of scenarios and possibilities. Following that approach, the technical resolutions of the roof invisioned multiple possibilities for resolution of overhead planes. However, if implemented such a project would need to undergo some refinement and simplification.
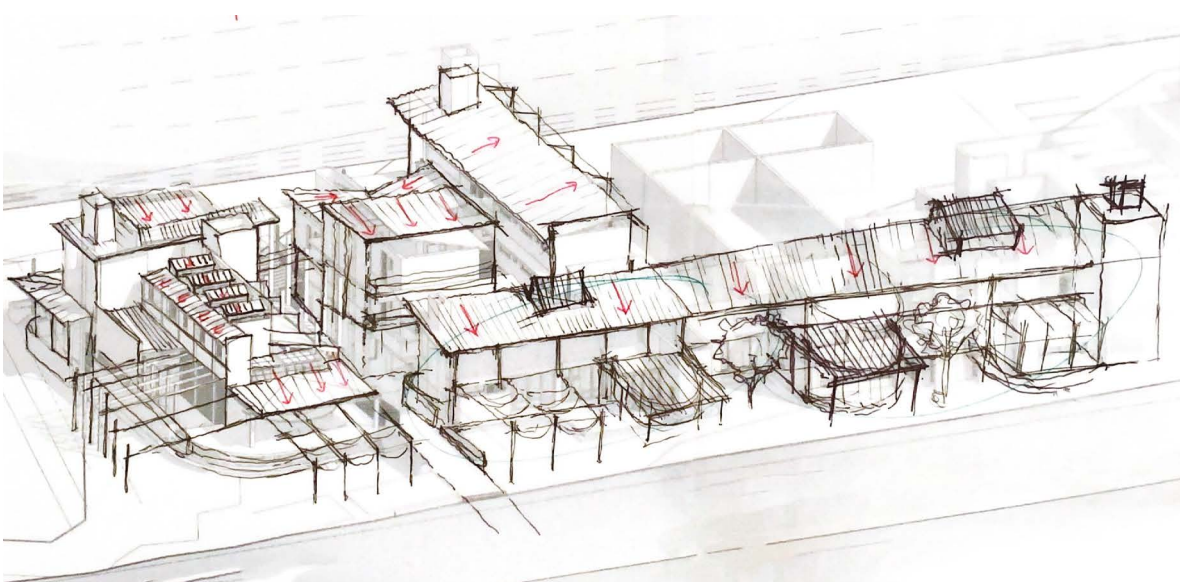
Figure 78: An earlier exploration of the roof scape of the scheme (Author, 2023).
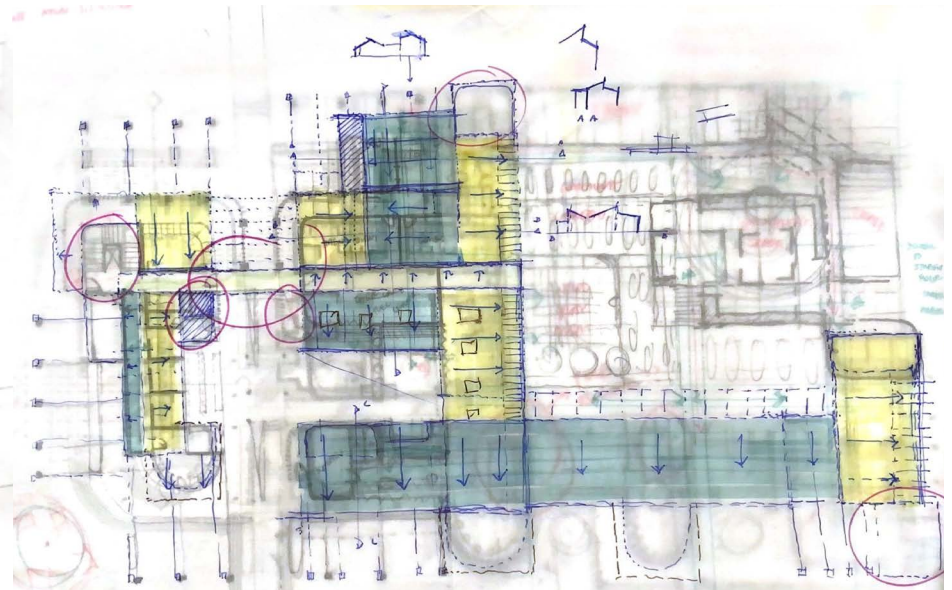
Figure 79: An iteration of the roof plan, attempting to consolidate it without removing imprtant elements from the design (Author, 2023).

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REFLECT.

THE VALUE OF THE PROJECT WITHIN THE DISCOURSE OF SOUTH AFRICAN ARCHITECTURE

This project aims to convey the value of architecture focussing on contexts that would benefit the most from it. Architecture has the potential to enhance culture, diversity and vibrancy, especially in areas where it already exists. It can tap into and enhance existing opportunities within a context while providing extra layers of support. This project aims to convey the idea that regardless of background, all users deserve spaces of dignity. Following the similar views of Joe Noero (2022), the most investment should go towards the most valuable community members, those who need it. Those who often go overlooked, deserve spaces that convey their value as vital contributors to the community, where they often cannot reach their full potential due to many socio-economic constraints. Within, South Africa, especially, there is a need for architectural projects which have an impact extending beyond the built form, it should be in tune with greater networks and begin to address many complex issues.

REFLECTION OF THE ARCHITECT'S POSITION + PERSONAL REFLEXIVITY

It's crucial to acknowledge that many of the challenges confronting South Africa cannot be solely resolved through architecture alone. Nevertheless, architecture can play a pivotal role by serving as a backdrop or facilitator in initiating efforts to address larger societal issues. Architects must maintain a keen awareness of their role and responsibilities within a given context.

However, it is equally important not to diminish the inherent value and vitality that already exists within a particular context. Additionally, I must reflect on my own position within this project. As a white, middle-class female, I may not fully comprehend all the daily hardships faced by many in contexts like Marabastad. Nonetheless, as an architect, I offer an alternative perspective and expertise that can help identify new avenues for support and enhancement, while attempting to understand the context in as much depth as possible.

Figure 80:A series of images taken on and around the site (Author, 2023).

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REFLECT.

OVERVIEW: MINI PROJECT 1

"Life is architecture and architecture is the mirror of life"- I.M. Pei

Architecture serves as a reflection of life and embodies the essence of a place. Architects act as mediators, navigating a web of variables while considering the users' spatial experiences. Through deep contextual understanding, architects can create enduring, environmentally responsive structures (socially, environmentally, economically). This approach acknowledges inhabitants as integral parts of a larger network, where architectural solutions contribute to its evolution.

Designers, as mediators, aim to enhance existing everyday life. They celebrate the intricacies of human existence, leaving a lasting, positive impact on an existing urban fabric.

This installation embodies these principles, addressing urban complexities and inequalities. It highlights the often-overlooked voices within vibrant social networks. Current power structures, driven by profit, often result in disconnected developments. By amplifying unheard voices, this installation unveils the genuine experiences and needs of city dwellers. Placing the viewer at the center reveals the designer's role as a mediator and connector. Conversely, 'ignorant development' on the other side of the installation underscores the disconnect from a place's identity. This installation prompts viewers to reconsider their roles within intricate social networks and raises awareness about urban issues and manifestations of inequality.

Figure 81: Image of the exhibition of the object of provocation (Author, 2023).
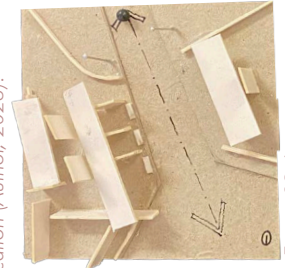
Figure 82: Intuitive maquette 1 (Author, 2023).
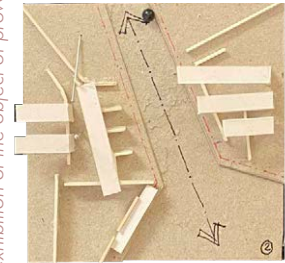
Figure 83: Intuitive maquette 2 (Author, 2023).
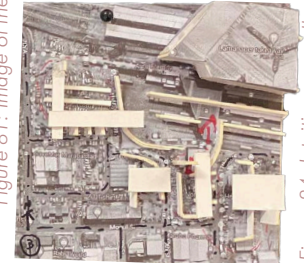
Figure 84: Intuitive maquette 3 (Author, 2023).

REFLECTION: THE IMPACT OF MINI PROJECT 1

This exploration assisted in informing the point of departure for my main project this year which focused on designing an architectural intervention that facilitates emergent urbanism, celebrates the happenings of everyday urban environments and assists marginalised groups that often go overlooked.

By drawing careful attention to existing networks and activities one can reach a design result that facilitates socio-economic upliftment within these areas and promotes reintegration and reconnection of fragmented areas. The goal is, thus, to provide users with the necessary skills and training to establish their own identity and contribution within the rich urban fabric of the city.

By focusing on the missing voices that often fall through the cracks, one can design appropriately, responding to the true needs of a population and reach an authentic, layered product rooted in context.

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CONCLUSION.

In conclusion, the project "Marabastad: From Arrival to Revival" is a dynamic multi-faceted center dedicated to aiding and uniting migrants and the existing informal traders of Marabastad. Marabastad is an urban tapestry defined by its lively streets, cultural diversity, and historical role as a hub for migrants seeking a better life. Yet, beneath this vibrancy, lie pressing challenges, including poverty, unemployment, inequality, and urban decay, which have eroded its cultural significance and marginalized various groups, particularly migrants.

Figure 85: Initial render of the job centre interface (Author, 2023).

As a response, this project prioritizes accessibility and integration while addressing arrival and transition at multiple scales. The architectural design not only caters to the daily needs of the community but also provides essential support. This project seeks to create a safe, welcoming, and integrated community. Its architectural approach emphasizes pedestrian-oriented design, promoting harmonious public and private spaces. It embodies the complex, diverse essence of Marabastad, recognizing its potential as an arrival city that fosters diverse communities and meaningful integration.

This project underscores the transformative potential of architecture in enriching culture, diversity, and community vibrancy, especially in existing contexts, offering spaces of dignity to all users. It serves as a testament to the enduring spirit of Marabastad, where countless individuals, despite their challenges, traverse its streets with unwavering hope and determination.

In summary, this year-long design process has resulted in an intricate intervention harmonizing architectural elements and the existing context. The final design successfully integrates, a balance between complexity and sensitivity, while prioritizing pedestrian integration. This project underscores the transformative potential of architecture in enriching culture, diversity, and community vibrancy, especially in existing contexts, offering spaces of dignity to all users. South African architecture needs projects like these, transcending the built form to address complex issues and synchronize with broader networks.

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