

# A DISPLAY OF PUBLICNESS

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## **Project abstract**

The urban public spaces of the City of Tshwane are subject to severe exclusion of multiple types. The most prominent types are physical exclusion (barriers in public spaces), and socio-economic exclusion (spending-based access control). Exclusionary spatial measures and devices degrade the quality of public space and the nature of public activities therein.

The city block that houses the Ditsong National Museum of Cultural History in the City of Tshwane CBD is subject to both of these major types of exclusion. The site and the museum suffer from a lack of foot traffic and the public pedestrian users suffer from compromised urban movement routes around this block. It further exists as a huge mass impenetrable to all who cannot afford the entrance fee.

This project addresses the issue of accessibility on this site, and of museums at large, through the reimagining of its public interface. This is accomplished by cutting through the museum's south-eastern corner to create a meandering pedestrian thoroughfare to and from the taxi drop-off area. This new Pretoria arcade (North-South shortcut through superblock) becomes a boulevard populated with intimately scaled modules that are equipped for a variety of public activities. These modules equally prioritise the conveyance of cultural knowledge that perpetuate the museum programme, and the accommodation of general public life in the form of trading spaces, gathering spaces, restaurants, and basic services. The programme also includes a public art studio where users can spend time creating art to be displayed in the permeable and adaptable envelopes of the modular units.

The intervention acts as an urban scale, interactive art display showcasing the relationship between democratic public spaces and spatial democracy. This becomes a cost-free way for a public pedestrian user to gain information, voice opinions, and participate in the museum programme. The good quality public spaces and the cost-free museum exhibitions benefit the public, while the opportunity to host or sponsor a museum booth benefits the museums of Pretoria and Johannesburg. Lastly, the increase of foot traffic and the opportunity to open their programme to the public benefits the Ditsong Museum of Cultural History.

## **Project details**

<b>Title:</b>	<b>A display of publicness</b>
<b>Programme type:</b>	<b>Public space, adaptive reuse architecture, adaptive museum</b>
<b>Context:</b>	<b>Pretoria CBD, The Ditsong National Museum of Cultural History.</b>
<b>GPS coordinates:</b>	<b>25,753762°S; 28,184933°E</b>
<b>Departmental research field:</b>	<b>Architecture</b>
<b>Client:</b>	<b>City of Tshwane and Ditsong Museums of South Africa</b>
<b>Theoretical premise:</b>	<b>Inclusionary and democratic urban public space</b>

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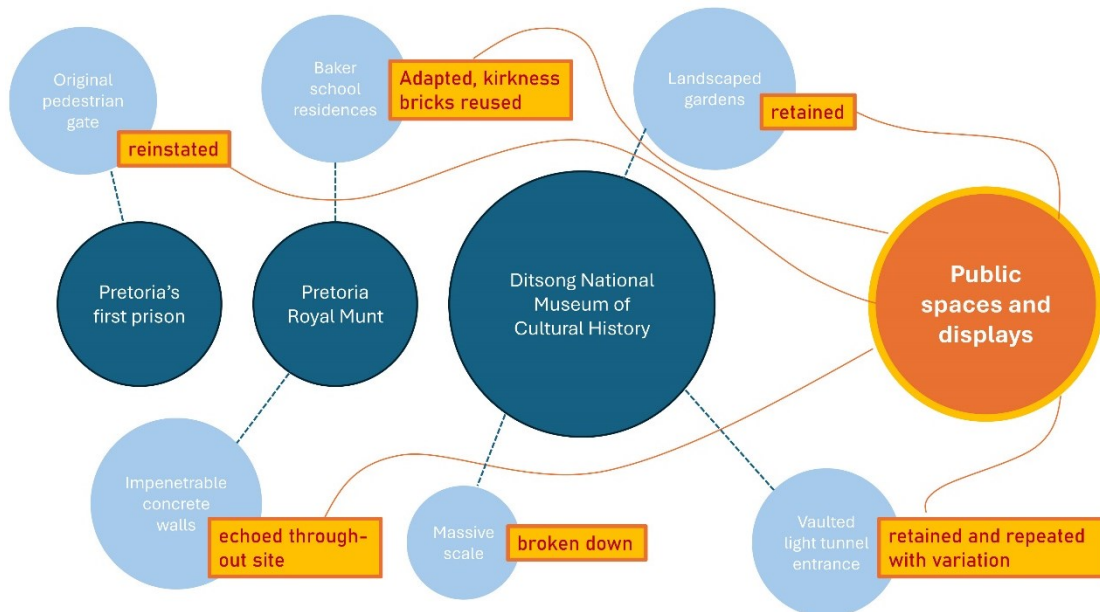
## 1. Project brief

The city of Tshwane has become riddled with exclusion of various types and degrees. Physical, economic, and programmatic exclusion prevent equitable access to democratic space and public information. The Ditsong National Museum of Cultural History fails to perform its duty of making knowledge available to a diverse public, just as the site that houses it fails to perform its duty as a public thoroughfare that allows for pedestrian access, lingering, and adaptable use. The public interface of urban architecture has the capacity to influence pedestrian behaviour (ref) and should be designed to benefit public well-being. The public interface of this existing museum perpetuates exclusion physically, economically, and programmatically.



**Figure 1:** Site in its context (Google Earth)

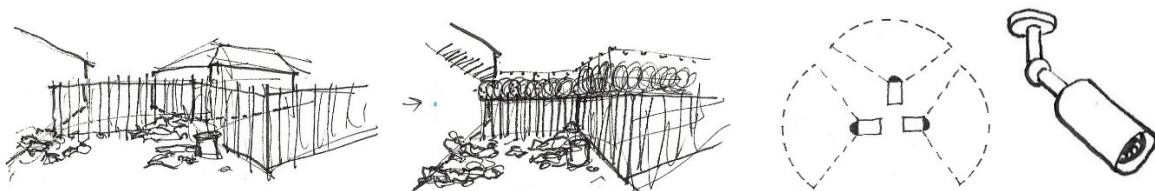
This project targets an urban superblock (**figure 1**) that is entirely fenced off, apart from a single, monitored vehicular entrance. The site's current programme – the museum of cultural history – forms part of the larger heritage narrative that the site enfolds. Its history as Pretoria's first prison, the Royal Mint that was also used for weapon manufacturing in war time, the Old Fire Station, and the two residences on site, all contribute to a rich cultural narrative (**figure 2**) that is not entirely reflected in the current manifestation of the museum. The architecture remains blunt and, even though the curated content of the museum pertains to South African cultural history, the manner in which this information is conveyed to the public is rooted in an outdated method of museum curatorship. The architecture exists in an authoritative stature while the programme is stuck in colonial roots – both of which are inherently exclusionary.



**Figure 2:** Heritage narrative on site and actions taken in this project

This design project addresses the following problem: the Ditsong National Museum of Cultural History, and South African museums at large, are inaccessible to a diverse public. This problem is approached by asking the following design question: How can the public interface of the Ditsong National Museum of Cultural History become an example of a radically inclusive reimagining of public museums in 21<sup>st</sup> century South Africa? The design resolution results in the concept: a display of publicness. This manifests as an adaptive reuse project that entails an assortment of public programmes intertwined with reimagined museum programmes, public services, and inclusionary movement routes.

The public interfaces of the existing museum building and the site that houses it are revived through the reversal of the existing exclusionary spatial measures and devices on site (**figure 3**). Amongst other results, one major consequence of this effort is the emergence of a thoroughfare through the superblock.



**Figure 3:** Two examples of exclusionary spatial measures and devices found on site: palisades that result in lost spaces (left), and active surveillance strategies (right).

The typical Pretoria arcade cuts superblocks in the North-South axis (figure 4) to assist pedestrians through the reduction in orthogonal distances and increase in safety measures against vehicular traffic. This project places great emphasis on this new thoroughfare (figure 5).

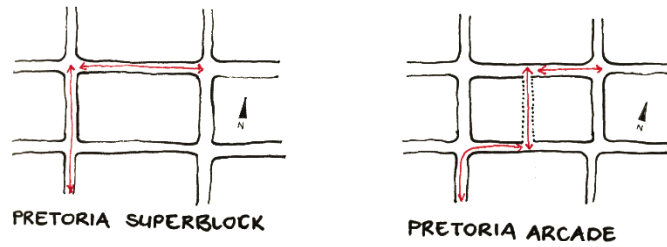


Figure 4: Typical Pretoria arcades

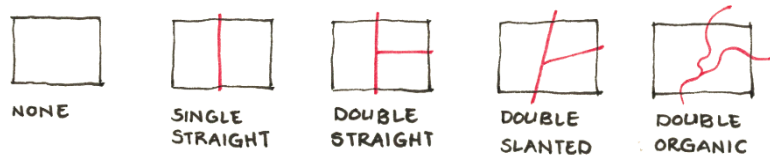


Figure 5: Design of the thoroughfare

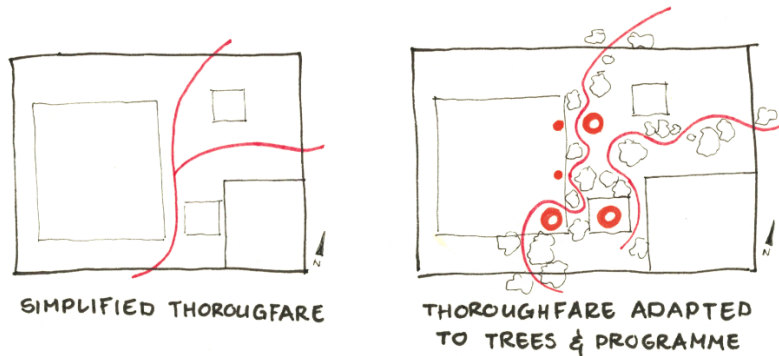


Figure 6: Movement routes sculpted around trees and programmatic zones

The thoroughfare route is designed to draw the public in and to adapt to various curated narrations of cultural history and a diverse set of public programmes. The main movement routes are accentuated for ease of wayfinding for public users with various different needs. They cut through the site from the taxi drop-off area at the Southern edge to both the existing museum entrance and school at the Northern edge, as well as the new bus stop and city hall on the and Western edge. The routes are formed around existing trees and intended programmatic zones (figure 6).

The primary programme is a collection of private and public programmes that help to make urban public spaces democratic. Although this project depicts only a single resolution to suit the requirements, using just one applicable set of programmes as a scenario, the site's programmes will change over time to keep up with the ever-shifting public urban needs. Such programmes include:

Programme type	Government	Museum	Small local businesses
Explored in this project scenario	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ablution facilities</li> <li>- Pharmacy / medical emergency services</li> <li>- Water fountains</li> <li>- Bus stop</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pop-up exhibitions</li> <li>- Restaurants</li> <li>- Public crafting studio</li> <li>- Event space</li> <li>- After-school care centre</li> <li>- Library</li> <li>- Amphitheatres</li> <li>- Reception</li> <li>- Storerooms, archives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fruit and vegetable vendors</li> <li>- Street food vendors</li> <li>- Hair and nail salons</li> <li>- Barbers</li> <li>- Cafés or bakeries</li> <li>- Craft stores</li> <li>- Clothing stores</li> <li>- Electronic stores</li> <li>- Laundromats</li> <li>- Car wash</li> <li>- Spice shop</li> </ul>
Not explored in this project scenario	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Phone-charging stations</li> <li>- Counselling unit</li> <li>- Voting station</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Radio station broadcasting room</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Halal delis</li> <li>- Woodwork shops</li> <li>- Plant nursery</li> </ul>

To accommodate as many of the predicted programmes as possible, different parts of the design need to adhere to different levels of permanence (**figure 7**). New programmes that relate closely to those regularly associated with

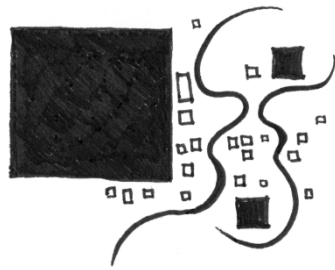


**Figure 7:** Scale and permanence of interventions follow expected user types

museums – like the library, restaurant, event space, and public art studios – become permanent new additions and adaptations to the site, while other programmes, that can expect a more fast-paced programme turnover, raise the need for a modular design resolution. Such modules should be equipped to house various formal and informal trading activities, while being entirely self-serviced. They should also be equipped to house a variety of pop-up museum exhibitions and participatory public artworks.

The site accommodates participatory design through the incorporation of artworks made by members of the public into the exterior walls of the modular system. These are crafted on site over time and are installed into the facades of various buildings (existing and new) on site as time passes. The participatory action challenges the attitude that the museum

currently conveys towards cultural history. It currently functions as a collection of artefacts from distant pasts taken from their contexts and placed into a locked-up vault only accessible to those who have the time, money, and knowledge to be interested in visiting them. Participatory artworks that end up on the public interfaces of public architecture become part of a new way in which the museum can display cultural history – by capturing the present moment through unfiltered voices.



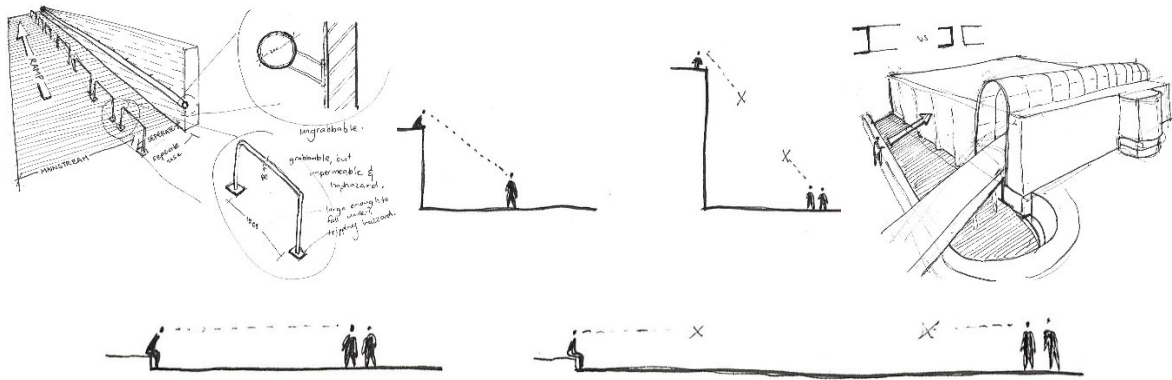
MASSING CONTRAST  
BETWEEN OLD & NEW

Figure 8: Scale and form of new juxtaposing to old

Other ways in which the project adopts an attitude toward the heritage on site (**figure 8**) involves the reduction of scale of public architecture. The small modules, and curved movement routes contrasts greatly to the monolithic language of the existing museum, while programmes like the new entrances to the existing museum and actions like the preservation of the existing entrance and the heritage residences on site remind users that the past should not be erased, but certainly revisited and reframed.

## 2. Design integration with theory

The mini dissertation that this design project ties into is titled *Exclusionary public interfaces in the City of Tshwane: two urban case studies*. The study documents exclusionary spatial measures and devices in urban public spaces and their impact on the publicness of those spaces. A contrast is highlighted between the case in Robert Sobukwe Street, Sunnyside, and the city block that houses the Ditsong National Museum of Cultural History, Pretoria CBD. While both cases suffer greatly under the impact of exclusionary spatial measures and devices, the public life of Robert Sobukwe Street seems to survive, while that adjacent to the Ditsong National Museum of Cultural History is smothered. Furthermore, the case in Robert Sobukwe Street is a palimpsest of various public interfaces and exclusionary spatial measures and devices, while that of the museum produces minimal public interface with near maximum exclusion. The irony is that the enclosed and monitored museum site is, in fact, a public area. But, even if one could dismiss the fences and security guards, the façade of the massive museum building itself becomes exclusionary – visually, programmatically, and financially (**figure 9**).



**Figure 9:** Examples of exclusionary spatial measures and devices found on site. Top left to right: exclusionary ramps, disconnected heights, distanced public interface. Bottom: disconnected interactions

The mini dissertation expands on the above-mentioned problems and theories before concluding that legal intervention is necessary to expand private responsibility to accommodate public needs, and to prohibit public architecture from being at all exclusionary. This project aims to act as an example of how the Ditsong Museum of Cultural History could become a true facilitator of spatial democracy, by allowing for good democratic space. The design is approached through analysis of the aspects of public interfaces outlined in the mini dissertation. The literature review summarises the responsibilities of the public interface of urban architecture, while the discussion defines the interface boundaries of the museum, its site, and explores their failures and successes in each of these responsibilities. The design aims to consider all of these aspects, and to address as many of them as possible.

The following responsibilities of the public interface of urban architecture are discussed in the mini dissertation, and considered in this design:

Category	Responsibility	Design response
Urban	Navigation (Kesici and Erkan 2023:69)	Beacons Overhead route markers Fence removal for ease of movement
Street	Form a humane streetscape (Asgarzadeh et al. 2012)	Respond to street edges Reflect contextual human-scale in new design Retain trees Prioritise pedestrians over vehicles Promote lingering

Envelope	Maximise public-private interaction (Zaera-Polo 2008)	Break open and expose more of the existing museum interior Add a variety of differently scaled outdoor modules Create opportunities for public participation Promote meandering Provide ample seating and resting areas Create multiple entry points
Envelope	Provide an accessible ground floor (Gehl 2010)	Keep most of the programme on ground floor Create more accessible routes to the existing first floor of the museum interior Ensure ground floor use is free of charge
Façade	Display design values in the main façade (Jürgenhake 2014)	Diminish the importance of original entrance Integrate displays of cultural history into the façade of the design
Façade	Become public art (Jürgenhake 2014)	Incorporate opportunities for informal and formal public artworks.
Façade	Be visually intriguing (Bond, 2017 and Florio, et al, 2023)	Utilise existing museum walls as a canvas to paste a new narrative onto. Position viewpoints deliberately

The museum site fails, at least to some degree, in all of the above-mentioned categories. Although this design project can outline and rectify many of these aspects, one of the main problems discussed in the mini dissertation remains unsolved: the lack of a thorough legislative framework that ensures that the public interfaces of urban buildings are well-defined and approved by the city council. This design project can solve all of the exclusionary issues that the site's public interface is currently experiencing, but only legal action will be able to keep it that way.

### 3. Design intentions

The design aims to convert the site into a lively urban public space that is adaptable to its ever-changing context and user needs, in an effort to display the deeply interwoven connection between the public and the museum programme. This is achieved through the dismantling of the stark South-Eastern corner of the existing museum building (**figure 10**), and the addition of meandering routes that take users past and through museum exhibitions that have been uniquely curated for public outdoor use.

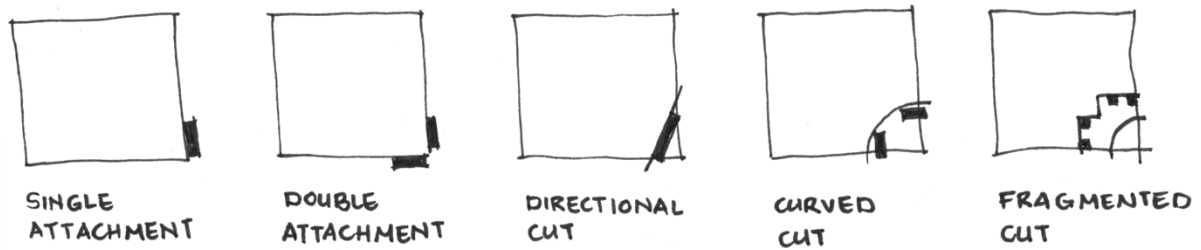


Figure 10: Strategies for dismantling the South-Eastern corner of the existing museum building

These routes pass the heritage buildings on site, which are dissected with new glass walls, and whose original Kirkness bricks are repurposed on site. The routes also pass many sets of trading or museum modules that are carefully organised across multiple programmatic zones. These zones include the public transport zones, the public art zone, the school zone, the museum market, the street market, and the events market (figure 11).

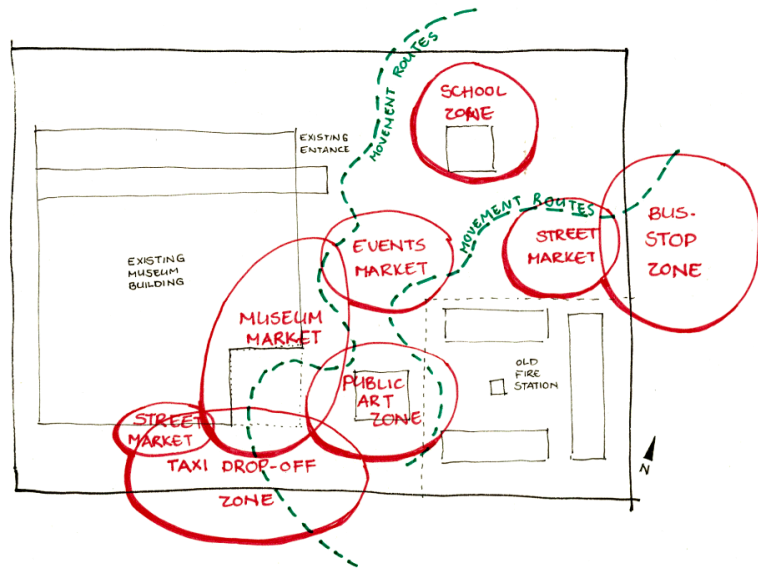


Figure 11: Site movement and zoning

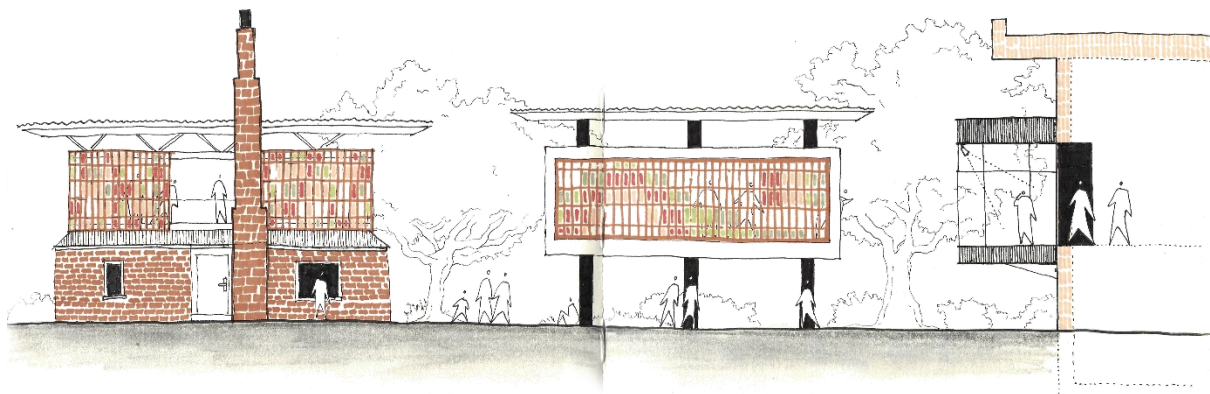
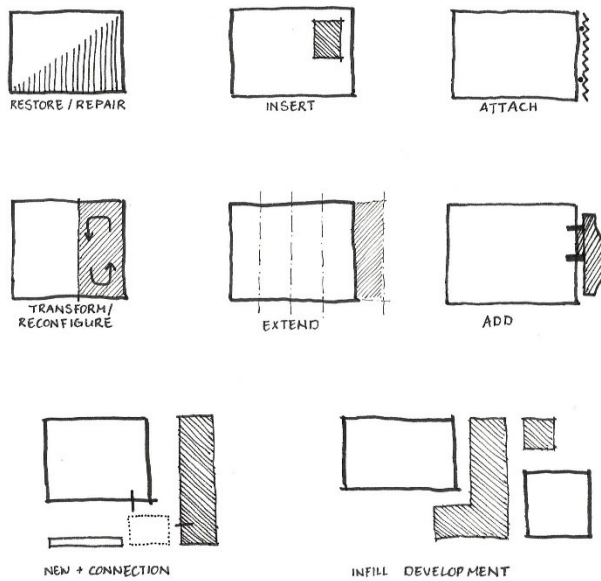


Figure 12: Relationship dynamic between user as viewer and user as exhibition

The architecture plays with the relationship between displays and the onlooker (figure 12) through materiality, lighting, and viewer positioning. Along a single movement route a user might at one point feel like an integral part of the art display, while at other points like an anonymous bystander.

The new architecture latches onto the existing museum parasitically, penetrating it at the South-Eastern edge, mounting it toward the existing entrance and removing itself from it otherwise.



Near the existing entrance, a new vertical circulation shaft services the new event space on first floor – which acts as another new entrance to the existing museum – as well as the library on the second floor – which acts as a billboard for any cultural events the museum might have planned. Other visual beacons that showcase the museum’s programme to the public include the Old Fire Station tower and the new lift shafts as projector-light beacons.

In summary, the design intends to create a series of interesting pockets along easy movement routes that equally serve people who linger and those who merely pass by. These pockets can easily be accumulated over time, rather than to be installed all at once (figure 13).

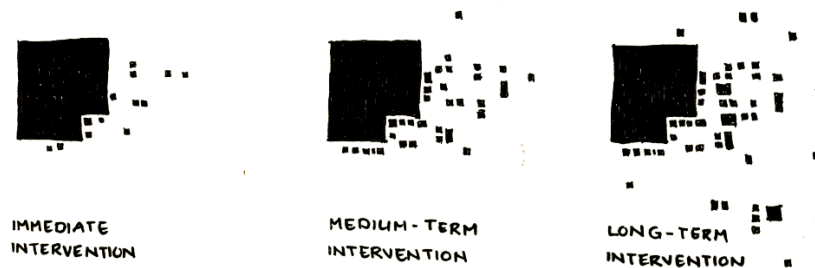


Figure 13: Gradual site densification over time

#### 4. Design development

The main critique on the physical manifestation of the existing museum building is seen in the concrete-roofed movement routes across site. Since the site's existing trees and heritage buildings are kept intact as far as possible, the meandering pedestrian movement routes are not mere orthogonal shortcuts like other Pretoria arcades. Rather, they meander through existing trees to emphasise that they are a later addition to an old site, and to contrast against the starkly rectilinear anatomy of the existing museum building. These meandering routes also respect other heritage buildings on site and completely avoid touching all but the main museum building - through which it contrastingly slices at the South-Eastern cut-out corner (figure 14).

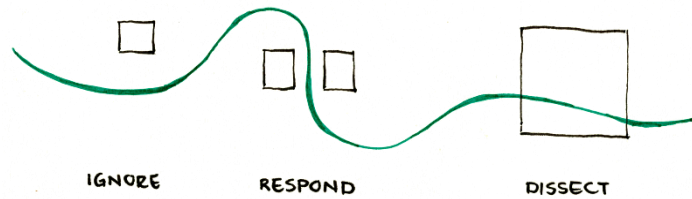


Figure 14: Methods of response to existing elements on site

Currently, users who intend to linger enter the site through the Northern gate and enter the museum through the existing museum entrance, while users who pass the site move to and from the Southern side of the site and do not enter the site at all. This dynamic is translated into the design resolution through the preservation of the Northern entrance as the formal museum entrance, but without the palisades and active security. The existing entrance remains aimed toward museumgoers, tourists, and otherwise existing user groups and therefore retains its existing scale (figure 15). The southern side, on the other hand, is



Figure 15: Basic form of new intervention, with large scale, permanent spaces grouped to existing Northern entrance (North indicated by orange arrow), and smaller scale, transient spaces grouped to the South.

reopened to an entirely new user group: those who do not intend to visit the site, but who would benefit from pedestrianised movement routes. The project develops this site edge on a human scale and the modular system becomes adaptable to the point where some modules can even be left entirely open for public use.

The human scale is showcased in the physical dimensions of the modules, while their distribution in relevance to the site speaks of their attitude toward the existing museum (figure 16). Modules that are attached to the existing building display a sense of connection to the museum's past and current state, while those that are completely withdrawn display deliberate independence and innovation. Further, the modules allow for more intimately scaled public courtyards that are framed by public art and grounded by old trees – all of which are aspects that could contribute to urban users' sense of belonging.

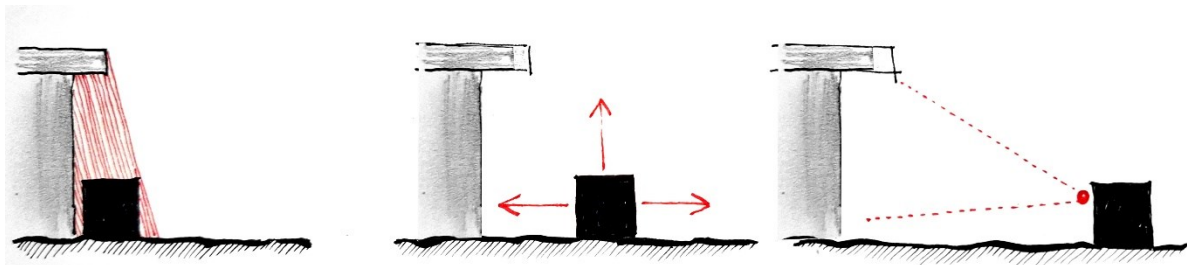


Figure 16: Modules' attitude toward the museum based on their positioning

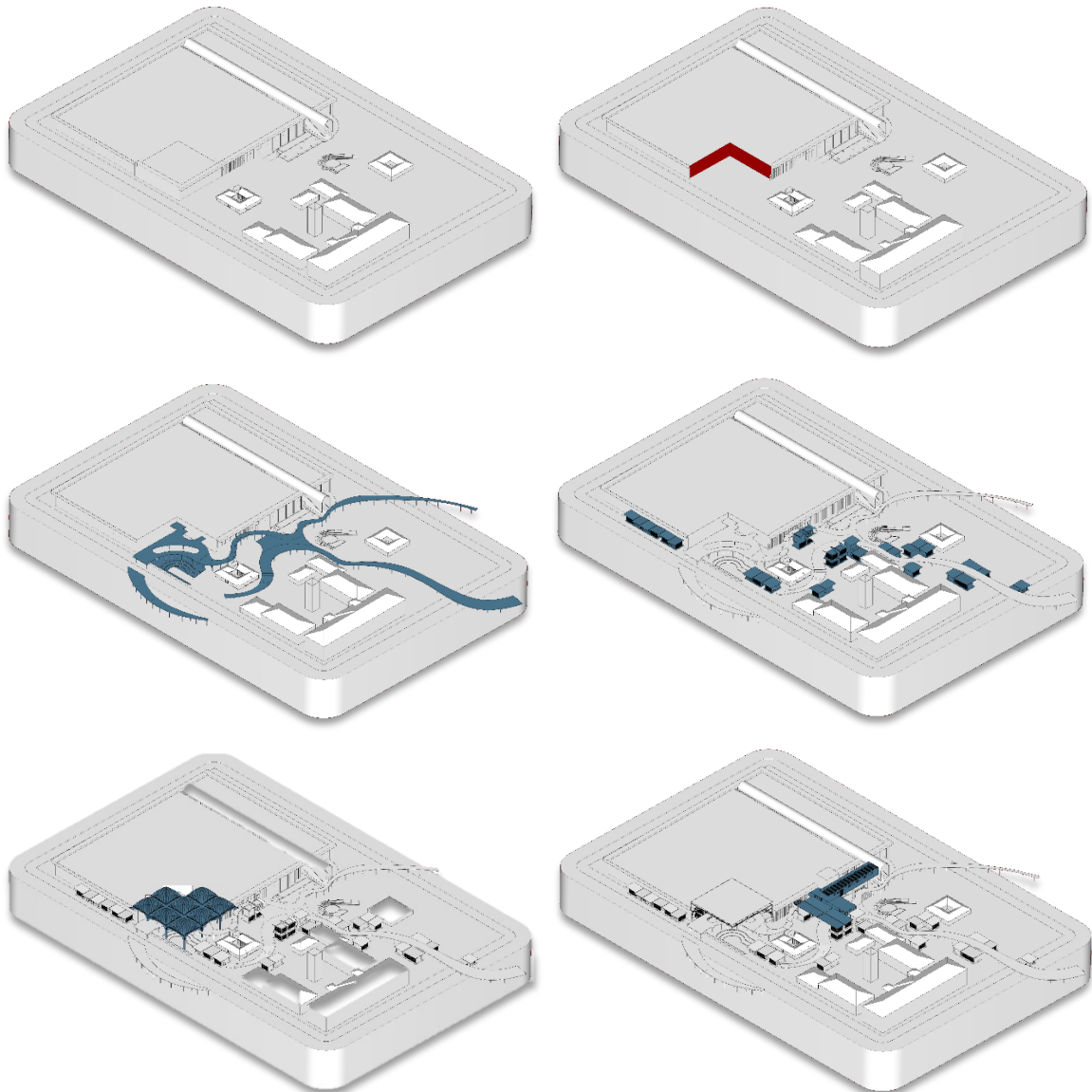
Lastly, the incorporation of a large arch into the design is a strong reference not only to the existing museum building, but to many other Gauteng museums who use large arches or vaults as features in their buildings (figure 17). The presence of an arch of proportions similar to these precedents shows the new intervention's respectful, yet stark, response to the old.



Figure 17: Large arch structures in existing Pretoria museums. From right to left: Whale installation at the Natural History Museum, existing entrance to the Cultural History Museum, steel vaulted courtyard at the Natural History Museum

## 5. Technical resolution

The final result of this intervention draws the public to and through the site through the incorporation of elevated concrete walkways that extend to the opposite side of all adjacent streets. These walkways – that act as accessible entry to the first floor, as well as wayfinding and shelter on ground floor – curve between existing trees to define new movement routes.

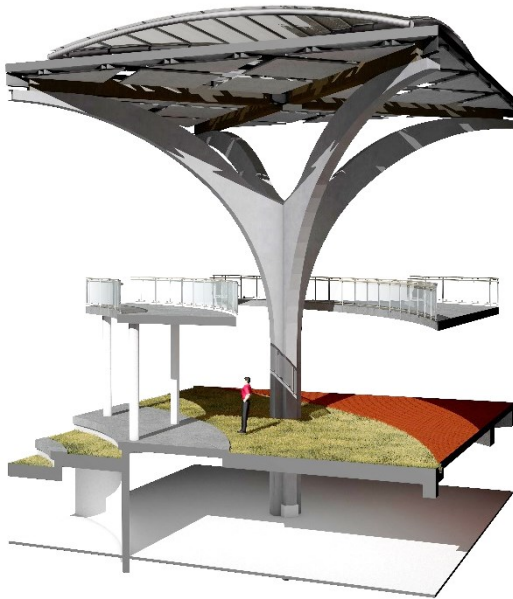


**Figure 18:** Development of intervention components onto the site

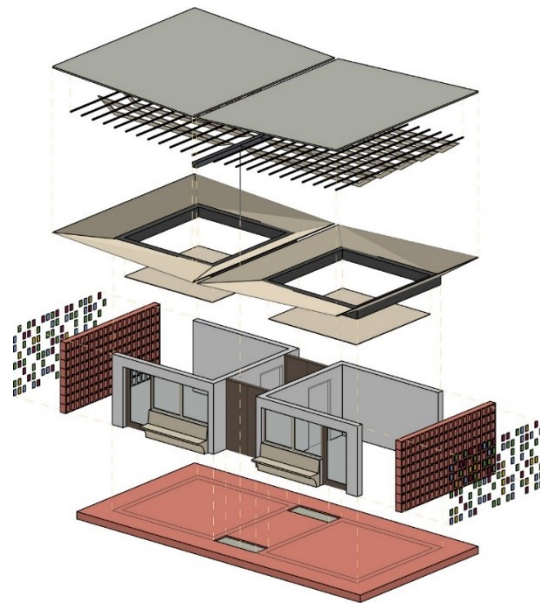
One walkway intersects the existing building on the South-Eastern corner, where the building is cut back and opened up vertically to increase its public-private interaction area. This intersection between old and new is facilitated through a spacious arched truss system that lifts the roof of this new public square to an open-air dimension, similar to that of the existing museum entrance, but with improved publicness.



**Figure 19:** Section through the cut-out at the Sout-Eastern edge, showing new arch structure forming open-air quality at the new double volume public square



**Figure 20:** Tree-like structure forming a grid on public square



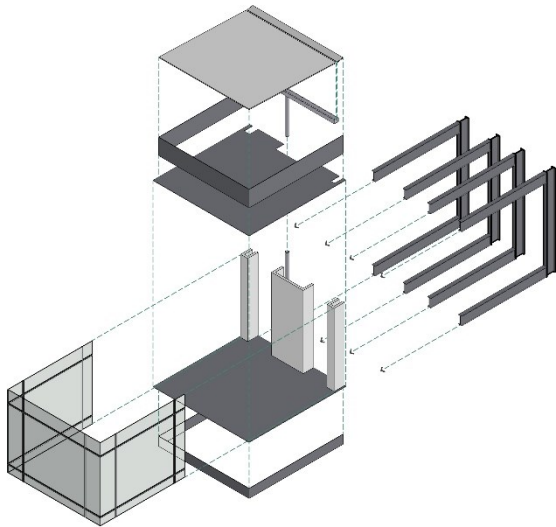
**Figure 21:** Exploded diagram of the typical single storey module. Size, orientation and assembly may differ.

The new open-air public square is composed of a series of tree-like arched structures that house public artworks (figure 20). This new open-air public square is populated with modular units (figure 21) in a 2m x 2m grid layout. Each unit is equipped with the following:

- One to two solid walls
- One wall that contains windows, an entrance door, and an external bench
- One to two double-skinned walls with a breeze block outer layer and a glass inner layer, to accommodate public participation
- One service wall, potentially with access to a service corridor
- Isolated roof that drains into service corridor

These modular units extend along the museum's Southern façade, as well as along the remainder of the concrete overhead walkways. They are coupled into pairs or groups of three

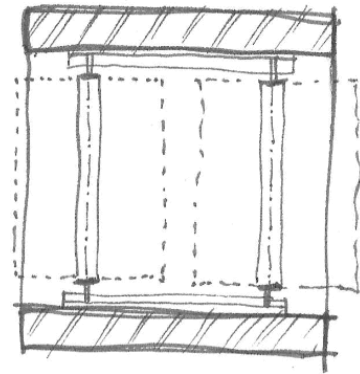
to share service corridors. These modules aim to unify the site's architectural language, while accommodating programmes of a diverse variety. Therefore, their placement on site, rather than their programmes, dictate movement, hierarchies, and zones.



The southern heritage residence is converted into a public participatory art studio, while the northern residence is converted into an after-school care centre. These interventions respect the heritage contained in the homes by intervening as little as possible, juxtaposing new with old, and reusing the Kirkness bricks as tiles in other areas.

Access to the first floor of the existing museum interior, as well as the newly added exterior first floor level, is made inclusive as one concrete walkway rises into a gradually sloped ramp. Some of the modules become double-storey interventions, where they also give pedestrian access to the upper level of the concrete walkways, the first floor of the existing museum, and the newly added event space. The event space is additionally serviced with an elevator that reaches the second-floor library addition.

While the modular units provide opportunities for public voices to be incorporated into the architecture, the library façade provides that opportunity to the museum curators. All exhibition space, albeit urban scale artworks, or traders' advertisements, is facilitated within the breeze block walls. These are equipped to accommodate artworks manufactured on site, or even removed tiles from the existing museum that have since been replaced. Such artworks, and the freedom of installation gives users agency over their environment, while removing any stigmas associated with the voicing of opinions onto public architecture.



## 6. Posters

# A DISPLAY OF PUBLICNESS

ARCHITECTURE EDUCATION VERSION

## ARTICULATING CULTURAL INCLUSIVITY AT THE DITSONG NATIONAL MUSEUM OF CULTURAL HISTORY



**CONTEXT** The city of Tshwane has become riddled with exclusion of various types and degrees. Physical, economic, and programmatic exclusion prevent the equitable access to both democratic space, and public information. The Ditsong National Museum of Cultural History fails to perform its duty of making knowledge available to a diverse public, just as the site that houses it fails to perform its duty as a public thoroughfare that allows for pedestrian access, lingering, and adaptable use. The public interface of urban architecture has the capacity to influence pedestrian behaviour and should be designed to benefit public well-being. The public interface of this existing museum perpetuates exclusion physically, economically, and programmatically.



PUBLIC PARTICIPATION & PUBLIC PROGRAMME  
BARA TRANSPORT FACILITY, DEPTLOOF

VIEW DEPENDENT PUBLIC ART  
APARTHEID MUSEUM, JOHANNESBURG

MUSEUM NARRATIVE TOLD BY PUBLIC  
MOTOR HISTORY MUSEUM, DOWD

**PROBLEM** Museums in Gauteng are inaccessible to a diverse public. Visitors need to pay to enter. They often don't know about the museums to begin with. Displays often still follow the colonialist tendency of placing objects in boxes and writing something on a plaque. This is not accessible to the visually impaired. Museums are usually fenced-off, limiting the public interface to the hostile site boundary. Museum architecture is often monumental, which can be uninviting to a diverse public. Museum programmes don't often have an outdoor, or public aspect. Museums don't often offer public participation. Museums (unwillingly and unknowingly) perpetuate an insider-outsider mentality between those who can afford to go to museums, and those who can't.



PUBLIC VOICES AMPLIFIED BY ARCHITECTURE

PUBLIC VOICES AMPLIFIED BY ARCHITECTURE  
MURKIN FOR GRAPE, AMSTERDAM

PAINTPISST & DENSED DIVERSITY

**QUESTION** How can a radically inclusive museum programme be exemplified in the public interface of the Ditsong National Museum of Cultural History?

**CONCEPT** A dissection of the existing museum to achieve a display of publicness

**EXECUTION** The public interface of the Ditsong National Museum of Cultural History is adapted into a public outdoor museum. It features displays of the museum's interior and pop-up exhibitions that become urban-scale participatory artworks. The site features a tile-making studio, from which mosaic pieces are produced to display public creations.



BUILDING BECOMES ART, ART BECOMES FRAME  
PROJECT MURKIN, AMSTERDAM



OPEN GROUND FLOOR WITH MOSAIC MURAL AS PUBLIC ART  
MURKIN FOR GRAPE, AMSTERDAM



ROOF BECOMES A DOUBLE SKIN  
DANSK BEKENDT, COPENHAGEN, DENMARK

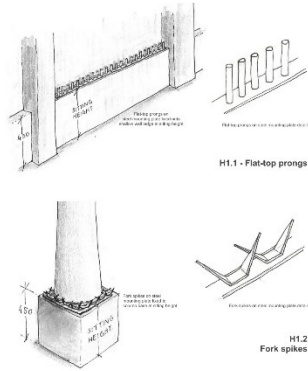


MODULAR & PARTICIPATORY SHELL

TYPICAL MUSEUM DISPLAY BOXES

## PROJECT OUTLINE AND PRECEDENT STUDIES

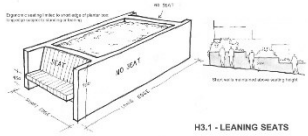
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MARCH 2016 FINAL EXAM  
28 NOVEMBER 2024



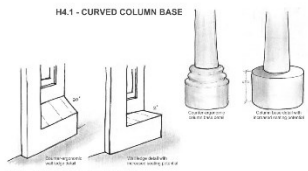
INSTANCE H1: ANTI-SITTING DEVICES  
CATEGORY: HOSTILE DESIGN



INSTANCE N5: LACK OF SEATING  
CATEGORY: NEGLIGENT DESIGN



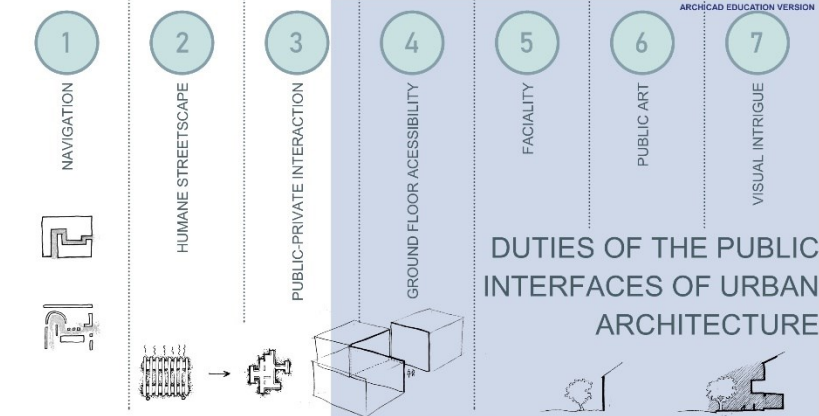
INSTANCE H3: UNCOMFORTABLE SEAT HEIGHTS  
CATEGORY: HOSTILE DESIGN



INSTANCE H4: COUNTER-ERGONOMIC INCLINES  
CATEGORY: HOSTILE DESIGN



INSTANCE H10: SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS  
CATEGORY: HOSTILE DESIGN



The mini dissertation that this design project first led to titled Exclusionary public interfaces in the City of Tshwane, two urban case studies. The study documents exclusionary spatial measures and devices in urban public spaces and their impact on the publicness of those spaces.

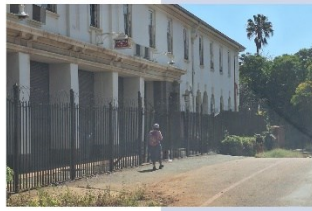
A contrast is highlighted between the case in Robert Sobukwe Street, Sunnyside, and the city block that houses the Ditongo National Museum of Cultural History, Pretoria CBD. While both cases suffer greatly under the impact of exclusionary spatial measures and devices, the public life of Robert Sobukwe Street seems to survive, while that adjacent to the Ditongo National Museum of Cultural History is smothered.

The irony is that the enclosed and monitored museum site is, in fact, a public area. But, even if one could dismiss the fences and security guards, the facade of the massive museum building itself becomes exclusionary - visually, programmatically, and financially.

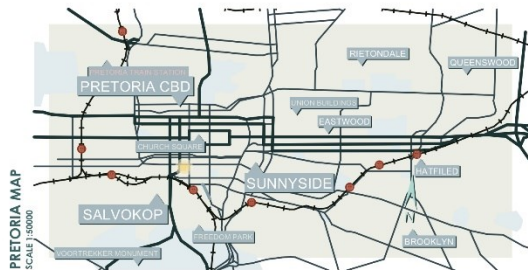
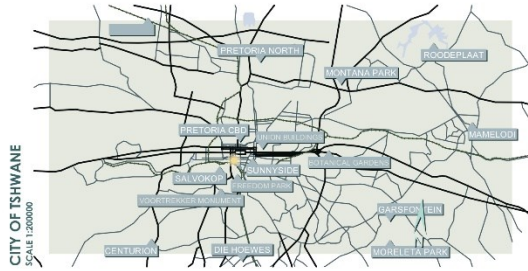
The mini dissertation expands on the above-mentioned problems and theories before concluding that legal intervention is necessary to expand private responsibility to accommodate public needs, and to prohibit public architecture from being at all exclusionary.

This project aims to act as an example of how the Ditongo Museum of Cultural History could become a true facilitator of spatial democracy, by allowing for good democratic space. The design is approached through analysis of the aspects of public interfaces outlined in the mini dissertation.

The literature review summarises the responsibilities of the public interface of urban architecture, while the discussion defines the interface boundaries of the museum, its site, and explores their failures and successes in each of those responsibilities. The design aims to consider all of these aspects, and to address as many of them as possible. The following responsibilities of the public interface of urban architecture are discussed in the mini dissertation, and considered in this design:



# EXCLUSIONARY SPATIAL MEASURES AND DEVICES - RESEARCH INTEGRATION



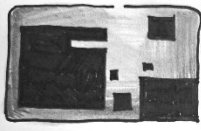
**URBAN INTEGRATION STRATEGY**  
ACCESS FROM THE PRETORIA TRAIN STATION

The site is connected to the Pretoria train station by opening the South-bordering site to pedestrians.

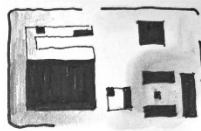
- WALKABILITY
- VISIBILITY
- INTRIGUE ALONG MOVEMENT ROUTES



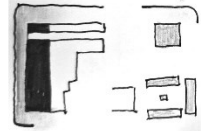
## SITE LOCATION - PRETORIA CBD



NOLI MAP 1: DEGREE OF PUBLICNESS OF EXISTING SITE



NOLI MAP 2: DEGREE OF PUBLICNESS OF PREVIOUS ITERATION



NOLI MAP 3: DEGREE OF PUBLICNESS OF FINAL DESIGN

The site is subject to a number of exclusionary spatial measures and devices.

- Fences and active security all around the entire site
- Pay-to-enter interior
- Hostile exclusion at the Southern side of the site
- Hidden interior programme

The strategy is to improve the degree of publicness on the site. Currently all public activity is limited to the street and some of the asphalt-public space in the gardens. The goal is to draw this throughout the site and to the interior.



# DITSONG NATIONAL MUSEUM OF CULTURAL HISTORY - SITE ANALYSIS

The design aims to convert the site into a lively urban public space that is adaptable to its ever-changing context and user needs, in an effort to display the deeply interwoven connection between the public and the museum programme.

This is achieved through the dismantling of the stark South-Eastern corner of the existing museum building, and the addition of meandering routes that take users past and through museum exhibitions that have been uniquely curated for public outdoor use.

These routes pass the heritage buildings on site, which are dissected with new glass walls, and whose original Kirkness bricks are repurposed on site.

The routes also pass many sets of trading or museum modules that are carefully organised across multiple programmatic zones. These zones include the public transport zones, the public art zone, the school zone, the museum market, the street market, and the events market.

The architecture plays with the relationship between displays and the onlooker through materiality, lighting, and viewer-positioning. Along a single movement route a user might at one point feel like an integral part of the art display, while at other points like an anonymous bystander.

The new architecture latches onto the existing museum parasitically, penetrating it at the South-Eastern edge, mounting it toward the existing entrance and removing itself from it otherwise.

Near the existing entrance, a new vertical circulation shaft services the new event space on first floor - which acts as another new entrance to the existing museum - as well as the library on the second floor - which acts as a billboard for any cultural events the museum might have planned.

Other visual beacons that showcase the museum's programme to the public include the Old Fire Station tower and the new lift shafts as projector-light beacons.

In summary, the design intends to create a series of interesting pockets along easy movement routes that equally serve people who linger and those who merely pass by. These pockets can easily be accumulated over time, rather than to be installed all at once.

## LOCAL BUSINESSES

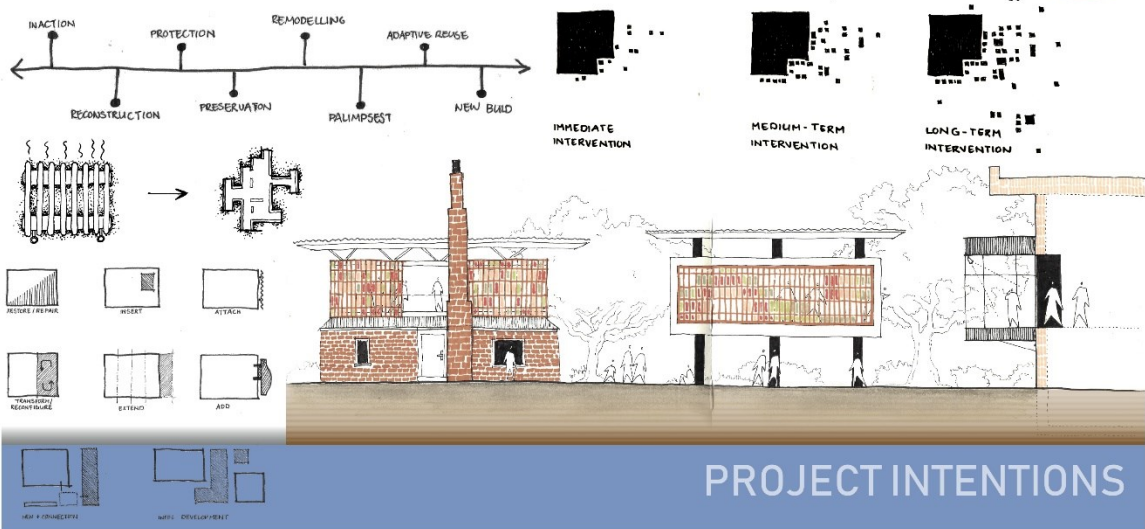
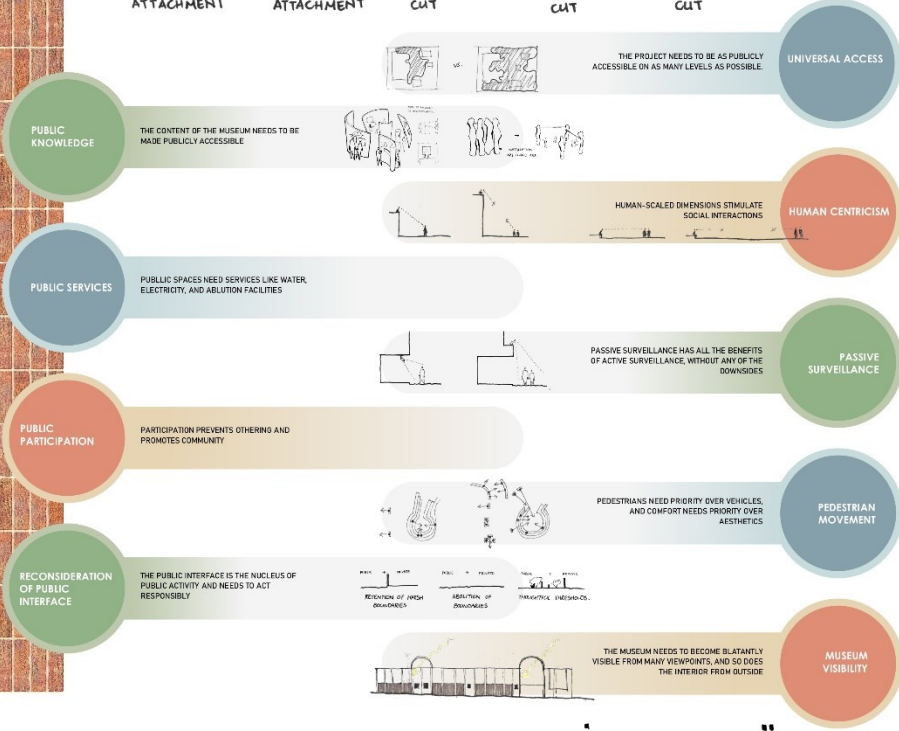
- COBBLER
- PLANT NURSERY
- TIMBER WORKSHOPS
- HALL & BELL
- SPICE SHOP
- CAR WASH
- LAUNDRY MAT
- ELECTRONIC STORE
- CLUB STORE
- CAFÉ STREET
- CAFES AND BAKERIES
- BARBERS
- HAIR AND NAIL SALONS
- STREET FOOD VENDORS
- FRUIT AND VEGETABLE VENDORS

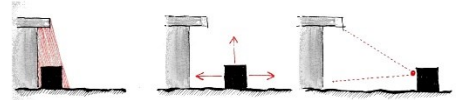
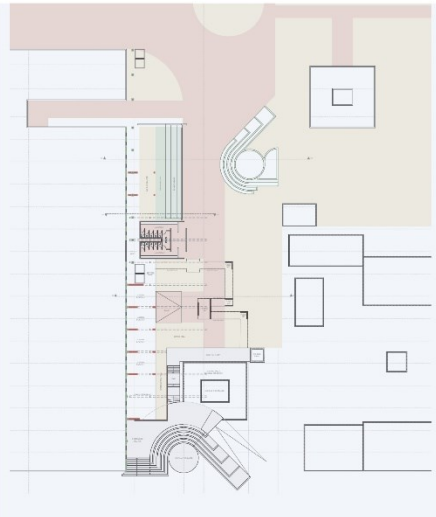
## MUSEUM

- PUBLIC ART
- PRIVATE OFFICES
- RADIO BROADCASTING STATION
- STORES AND ARCHIVES
- RECEPTION
- AMPHITHEATRE
- LIBRARY
- AFTER SCHOOL CARE CENTRE
- EVENT SPACE
- PUBLIC CRAFTING STUDIO
- RESTAURANTS
- POP-UP EXHIBITIONS

## GOVERNMENT

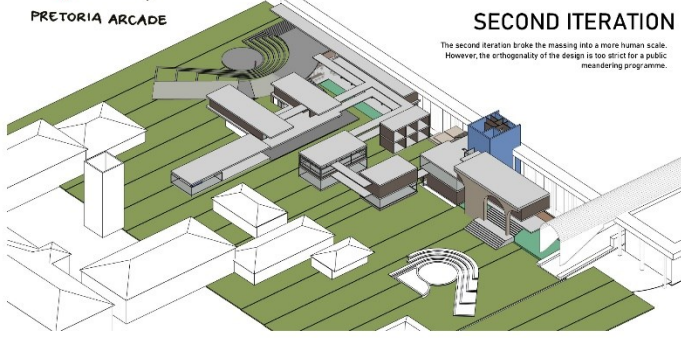
- PUBLIC PARKS
- LOCKER ROOMS
- VOTING STATION
- COUNSELLING UNIT
- PHONE CHARGING STATIONS
- BUS STOP
- WATER FOUNTAINS
- PHARMACY AND MEDICAL EMERGENCY SERVICES
- ABLUTION FACILITIES





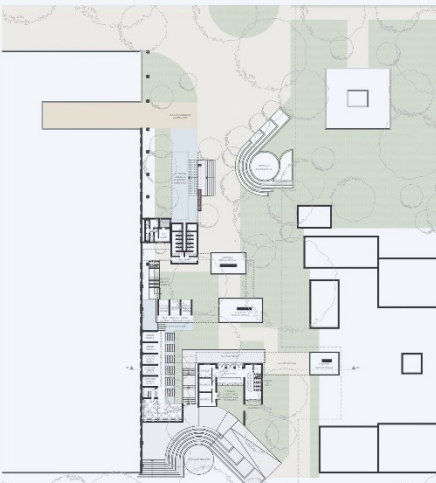
At first the design was approached as an extension of the current museum. This proves to be much too institutional for the site's public requirements.

**FIRST ITERATION**



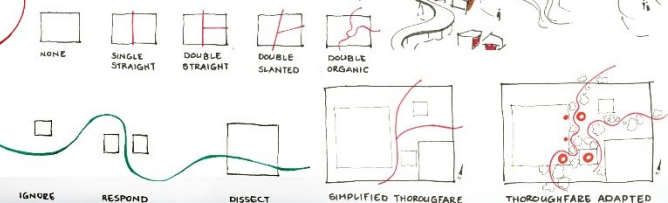
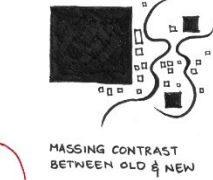
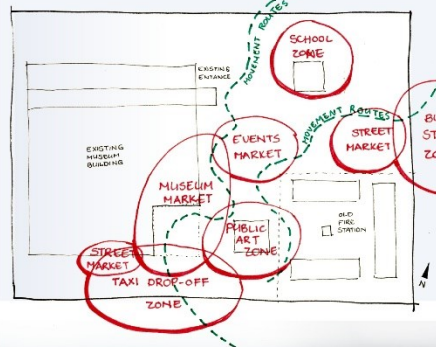
The second iteration broke the massing into a more human scale. However, the orthogonality of the design is too strict for a public meandering programme.

**SECOND ITERATION**

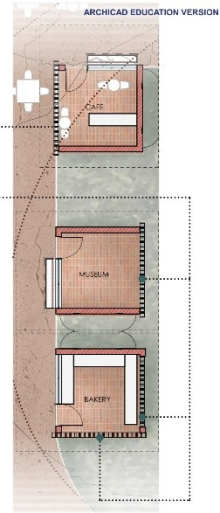
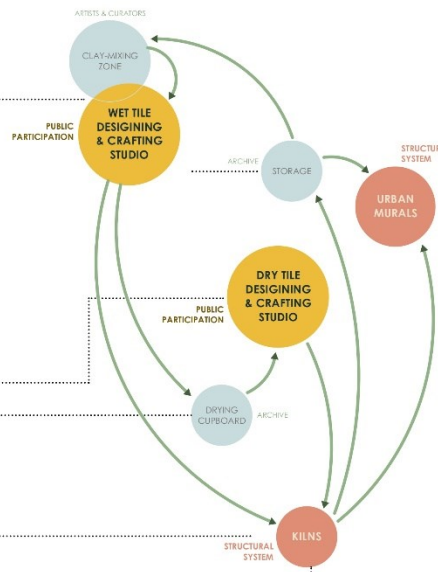
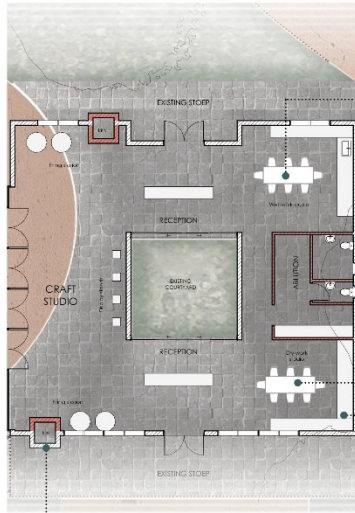


The final massing is a balance between organic shapes and orthogonal modules, combined to encourage both meandering and lingering. It also dissects the existing mass to form a new hierarchy.

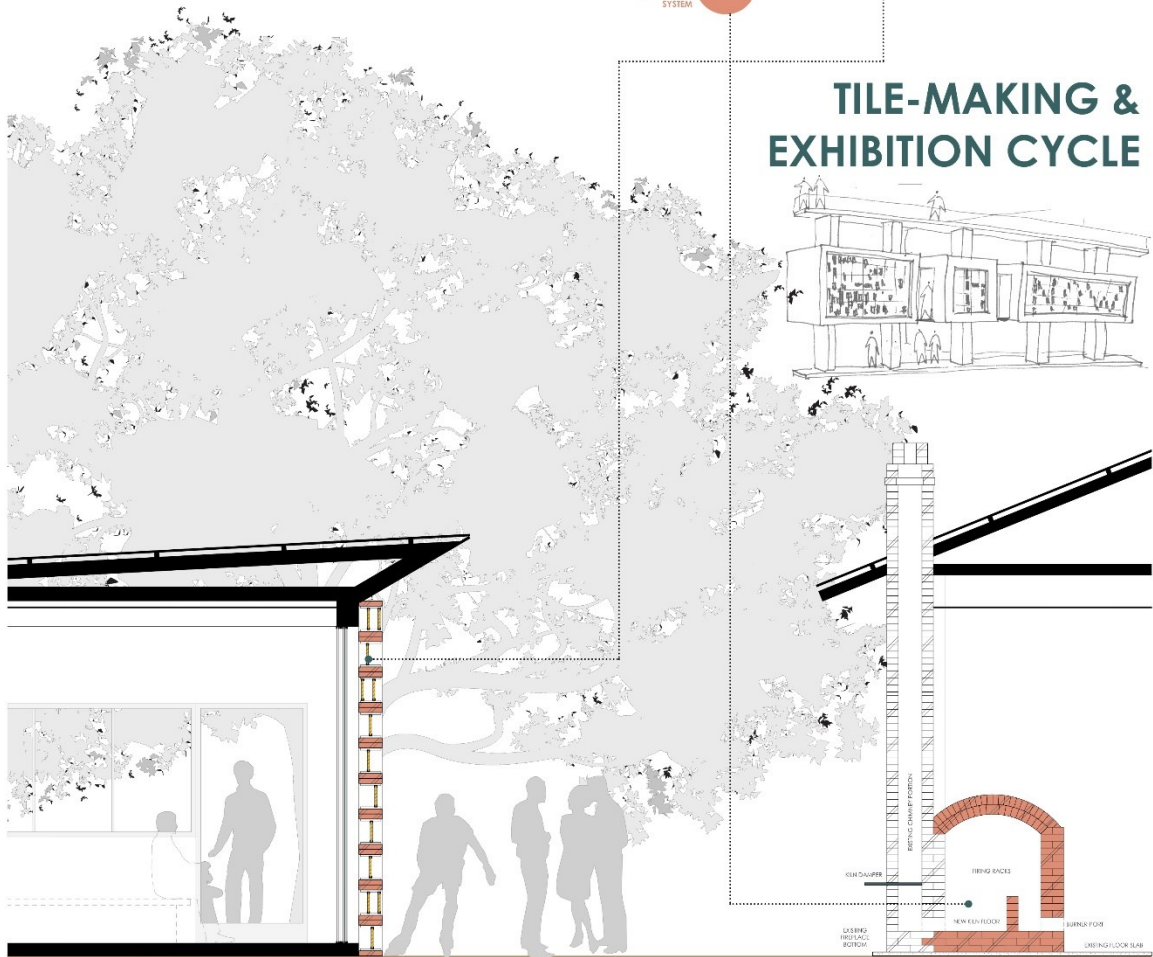
**MASSING AND ZONING FOR FINAL ITERATION**



**ZONING AND ITERATION**



## TILE-MAKING & EXHIBITION CYCLE

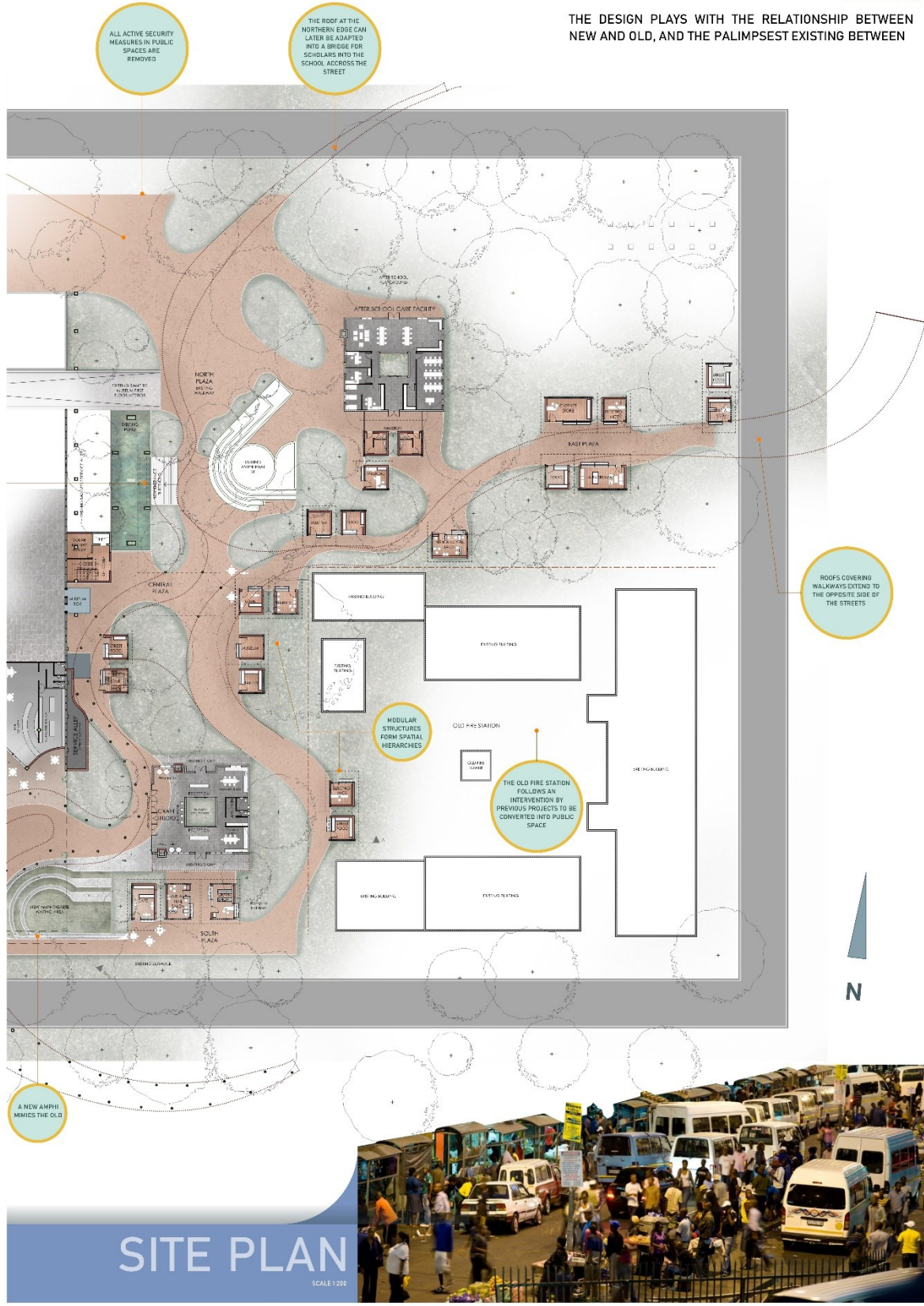


MUSEUM MODULE SECTION  
SCALE 1:20

KILN SECTION  
SCALE 1:20

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

THE DESIGN PLAYS WITH THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NEW AND OLD, AND THE PALIMPSEST EXISTING BETWEEN

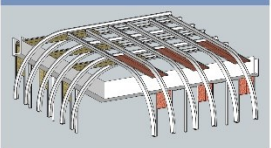




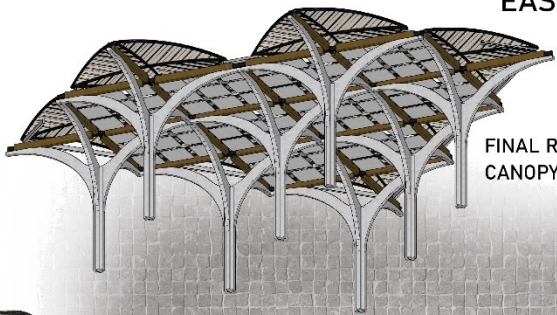


- WALKWAYS THAT CROSS THE STREET
- DISSECTED SOUTHERN CORNER WITH NEW CANOPY
- MODULES IN SECTION
- SLOW THRESHOLD INTO EVENT SPACE
- NEW LIBRARY
- EXISTING MUSEUM ENTRANCE

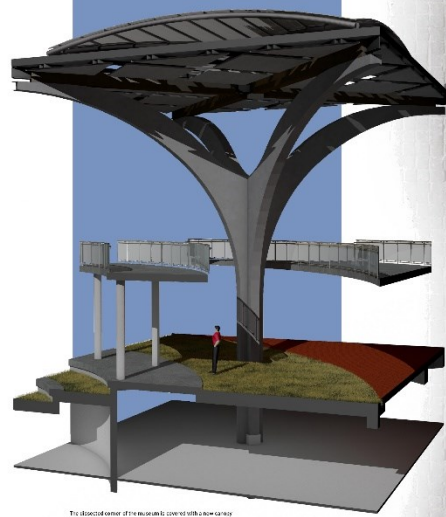
### EASTERN ELEVATION



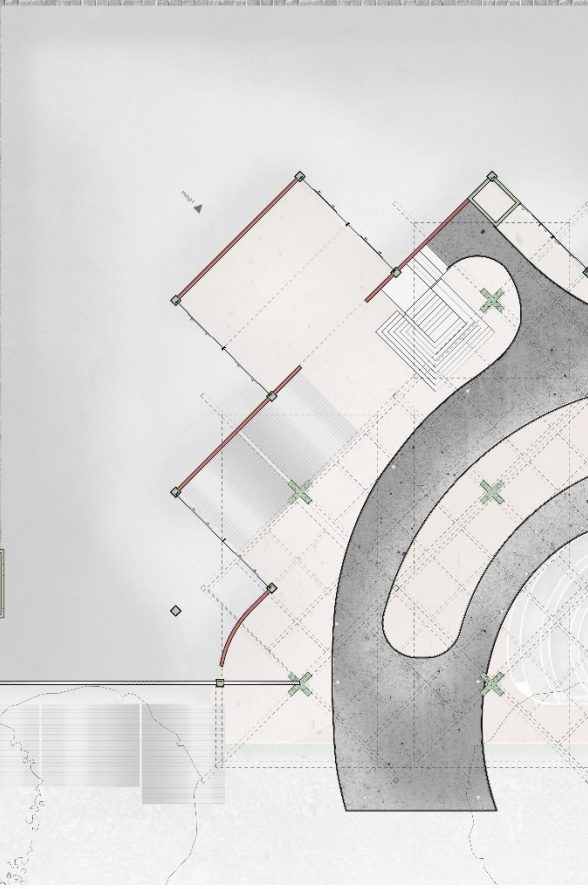
FIRST REVISION CANOPY ROOF



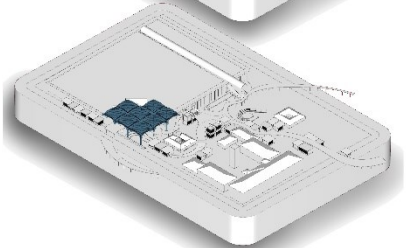
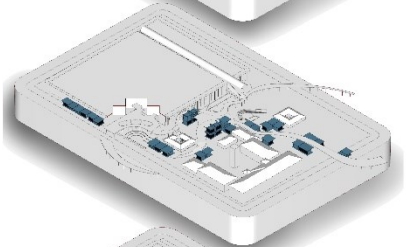
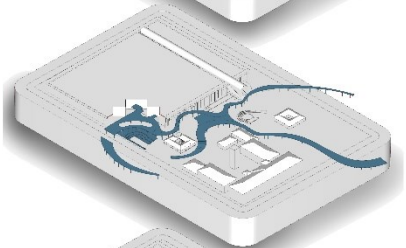
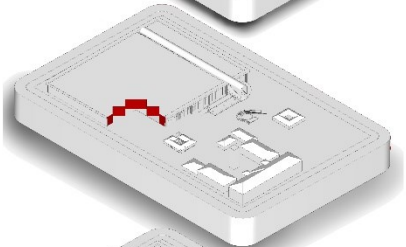
FINAL REVISION CANOPY ROOF



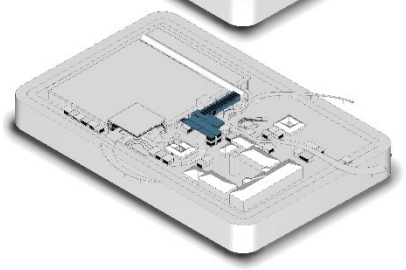
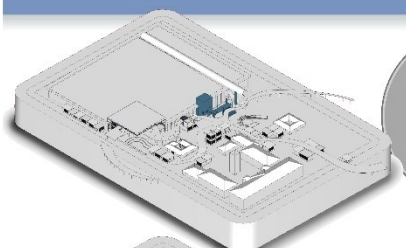
The dissected corner of the museum is covered with a new canopy structure.  
 The structure consists of eight trapezoidal vertical columns with a spiral staircase.  
 These columns provide a new opportunity for public use together with the existing gallery structure system of the building.

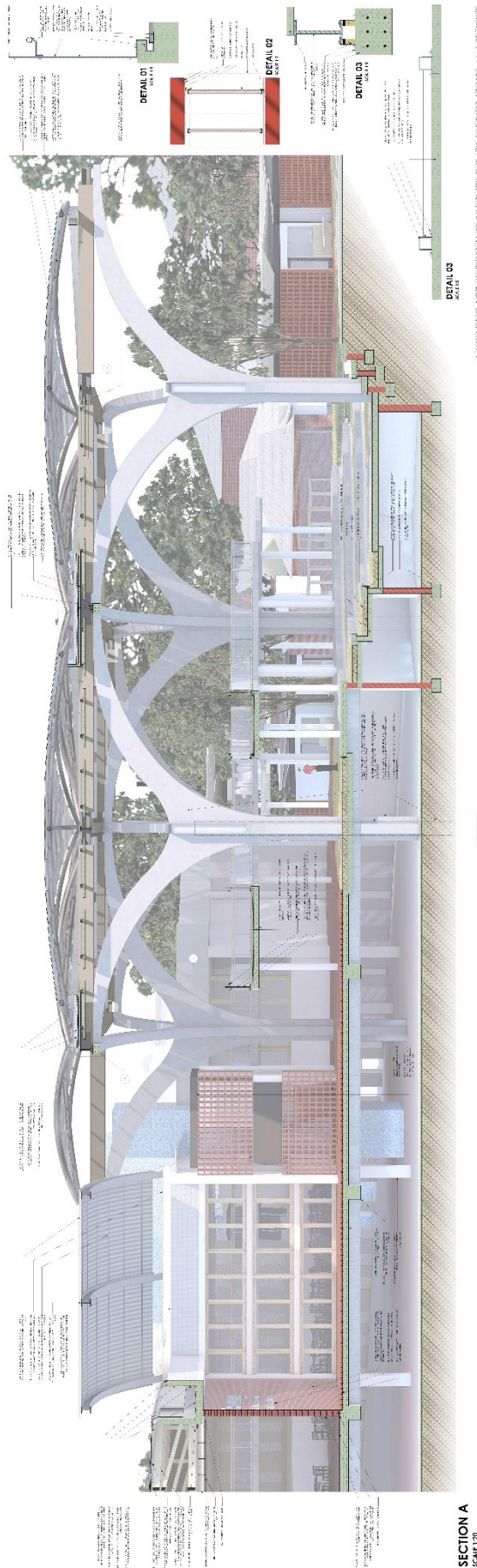






DESIGN ELEMENTS





## 7. Critical reflection

It is crucial to consider the possibility of failure. One assumption made in this project that is subject to failure is that the oppressive presence of the massive existing museum building will be diminished through the mere addition of more intimately scaled modular units. However it is certain that, should the existing building's oppressive presence endure, the new additions will form an even stronger juxtaposition to the old, and therefore the spatial critique will become even more evident.

Another assumption that is subject to failure is that the incorporation of pop-up museum modules into the public spaces will encourage users to visit the existing museum and other museums in the country. This is unlikely to fail, because even if the new user target group – the users of the thoroughfare – do not contribute to more foot traffic, the existing user target group – existing participants in the museum sphere – will be given innovative ways to grow their numbers and activities. Furthermore, if the existing museum remains dead even in the presence of a lively public space that includes pop-up exhibitions, it will emphasise the necessity for a shift of museum programmes to become more public, in the interest of the distribution of public knowledge.

This project presents an interesting topic for debating the nature of public architecture. Since the project exists as a critique on the

daunting scale and impenetrable body of the existing museum, and the pristine sublimity of the site that have all clearly contributed to its failure as public space, it needs careful consideration regarding its architectural language. New interventions need to contrast strictly without falling into the same traps as the old architecture, all while remaining respectful to (yet critically independent from) the heritage on site. The iterative design process pinpointed design resolutions that were too institutional, and others that were too adaptable and meagre, to the point of becoming entirely voiceless. The final resolution aims to find a perfect midway between bold actions and intimate accommodations.

## **8. Conclusion**

Museum programmes in the City of Tshwane are dying at the same hand that is killing democratic space. Although exhibition strategies have so far remained largely colonial, museum programmes do still contribute positively to urban public spaces. However, they have become outdated and need revival. This project reinvents the relationship between urban public space and the public cultural knowledge contained in museums.

The resulting public architecture, the radical inclusivity on site, and the reimagining of cultural heritage preservation will act as a precedent for present and future museums in South Africa. It will showcase what museums in our context need to be in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: public, accessible, and participatory. It will also display what urban public space needs to become in order to be democratic: inclusionary, adaptable, and relevant.

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