

The design is about expressing a **visual** statement onto the urban realm.

CONCEPTUAL DESIGN

Design concept:

The manner in which the project interrelates with the existing architectural forms construed within the context was formulated with relation to sub cultural theories. The notion that subcultures represent resistance became the point of departure that was initiated in deriving an architecture that challenged the principles of conformity.

The architectural forms expressed within the context of the site became signifiers that communicated rigidity, conformity, conventionalism, dominance and static aesthetics. The element of resistance expresses a counter-trend to the mainstream conventionalism construed within the context. A non pragmatic manifestation that communicates visibility since 'visibility is naturally a central concern, not only because of its involvement in the representation of otherness, but also because visual identity and style are important signifiers of cultural expression and identities'. [Van Eeden, 2005:7]

The design implication for the centre for youth sub cultural expression will therefore focus on the notion of visibility and resistance in architecture. Visibility and resistance being the central concern with regards to form.

The expressive and complexity of its form projects tension, pretentiously revealing its protruding forms to the public in communicating conflict against the conventional order that mainstream society projects. It is this visual statement that the building represents which identifies it as a building with an affiliation with a counter culture, a physical representation of production and movement that becomes an on going exhibition.

The existing buildings on the edge of the site form barriers; these barriers enclose the subculture that is operating within. The idea is in creating a situation where the mainstream society is operating externally and the subcultures, internally. The design resists against the old police headquarters because of its initial function as well as its architectural tectonics and the expression that it projects onto the urban realm. The authoritative statement of the old police headquarters is resisted against by the centre for youth sub cultural expression. This resistance is not a negative connotation but a positive fusion with the old in regenerating a derelict building.

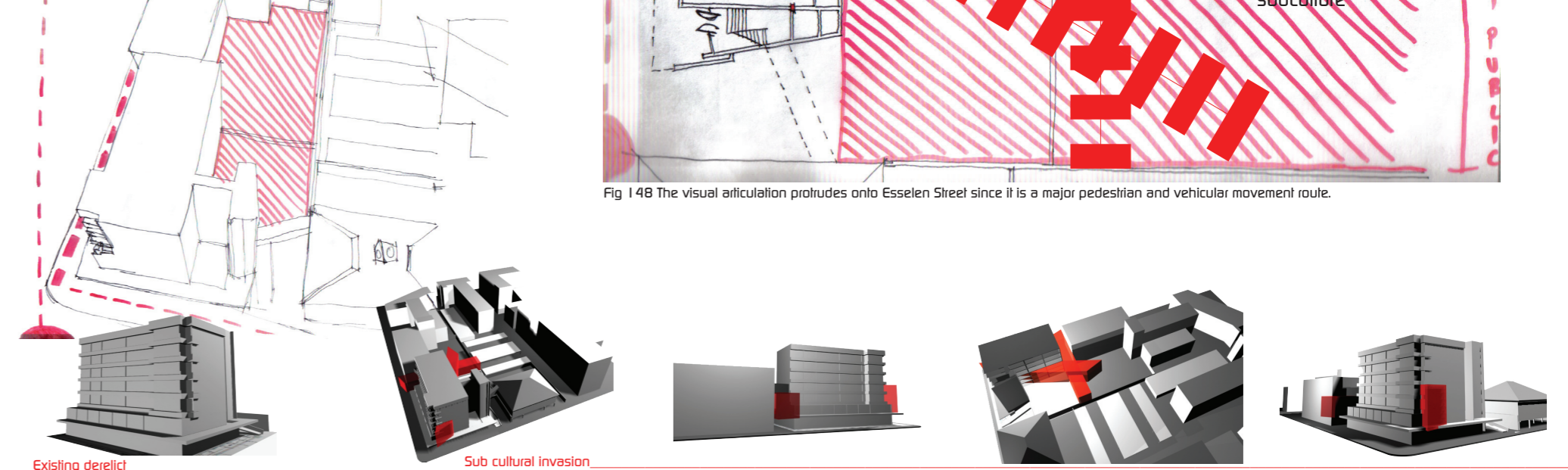


Fig 1 48 The visual articulation protrudes onto Esselen Street since it is a major pedestrian and vehicular movement route.

The positive fusion that the building makes becomes an inscription made by the subculture.

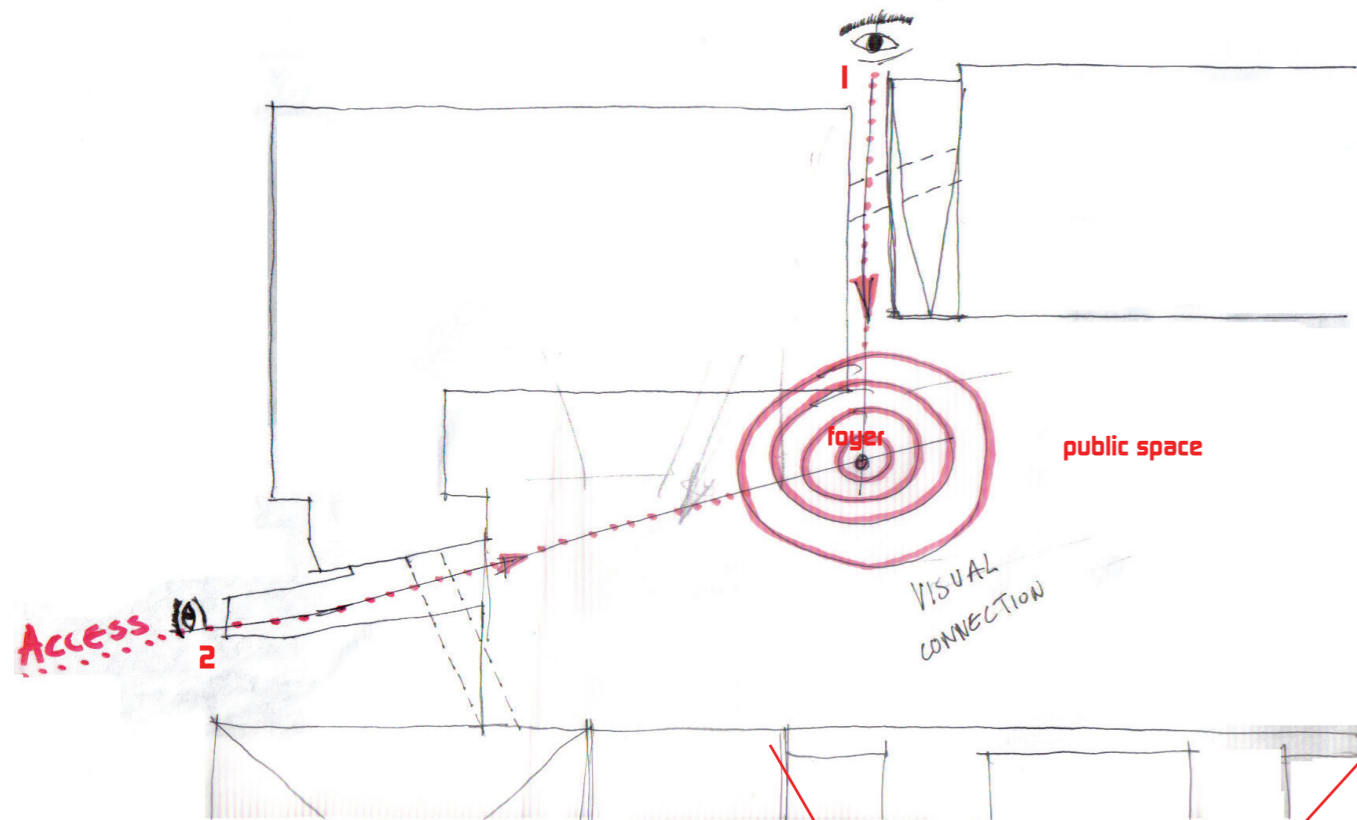


Fig.149 Plan indicating visual connection from Esselen and Mientjies

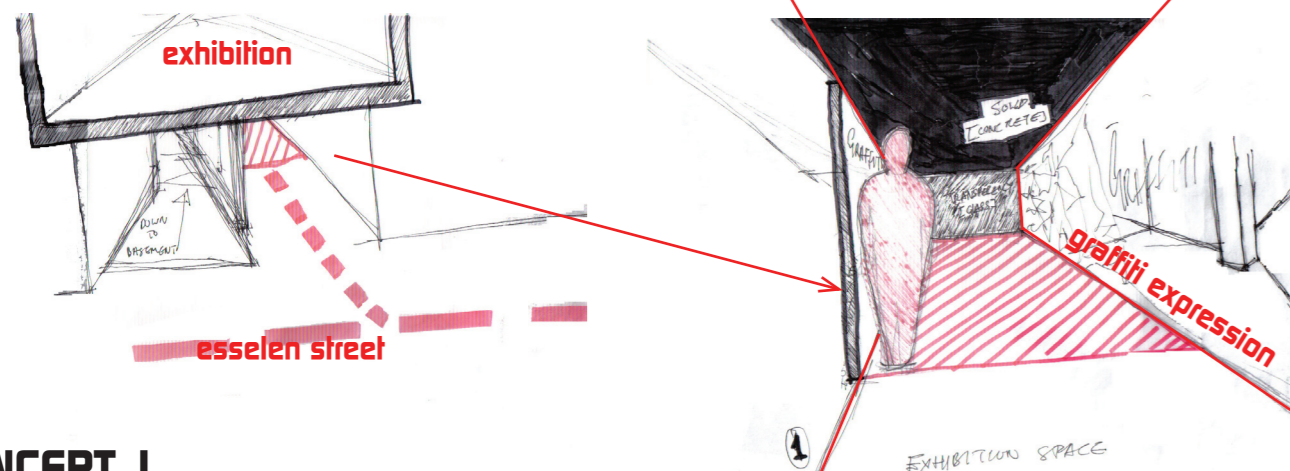


Fig.150 Perspective of Esselen Street entrance

DESIGN PROGRESSION

The initial concept expressed the idea of subcultures operating underneath the mainstream. The subculture then produced artworks that were exhibited to the mainstream in order to gain recognition. The artworks would be exhibited in the protruding forms as indicated on the model.

This stage of the design focused on the generation of form, the movement of people would be filtered from Esselen Street through an existing 3m gap between the old police building and the existing basement entrance for Alan's place apartments.

The Mientjies Street entrance was via the existing ramp of the old police building, this entrance led the visitor into the protruding forms where art was exhibited. On the contrary, the Esselen entrance led the visitor into a public space and a foyer space on the ground floor which also had access onto the protruding forms.

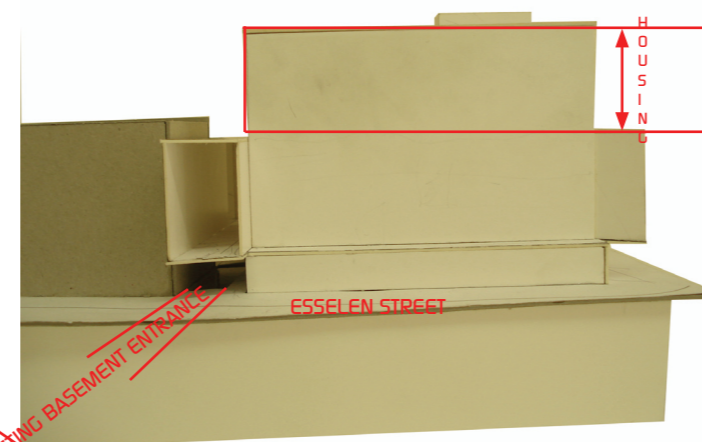
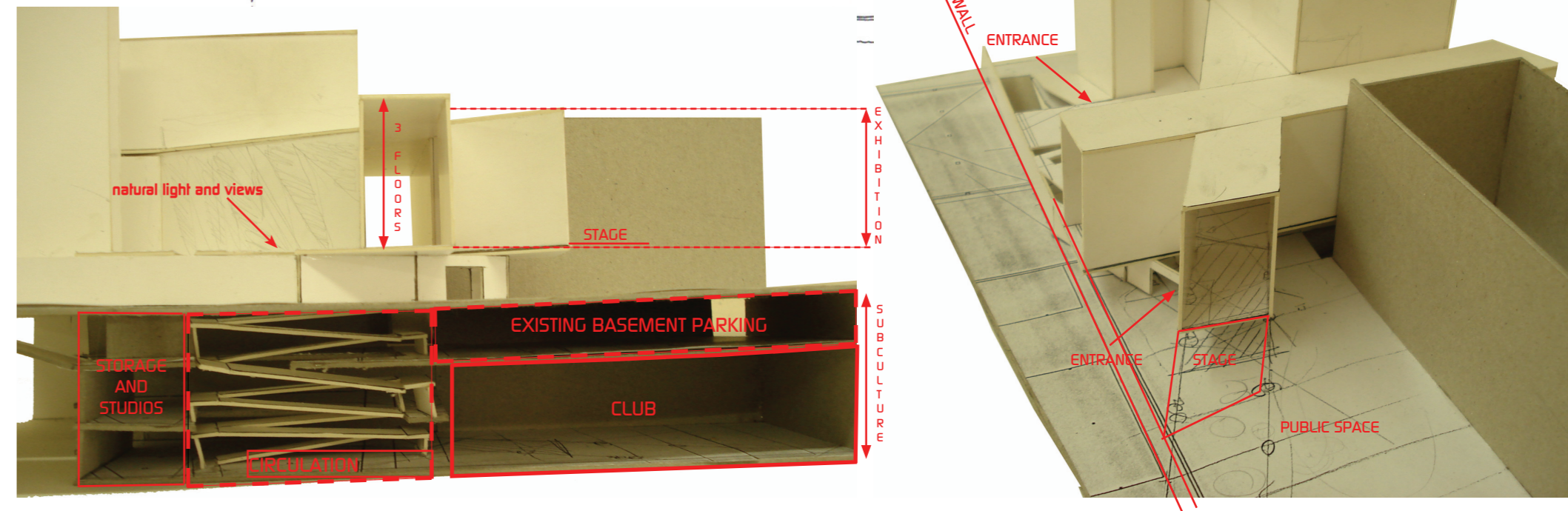
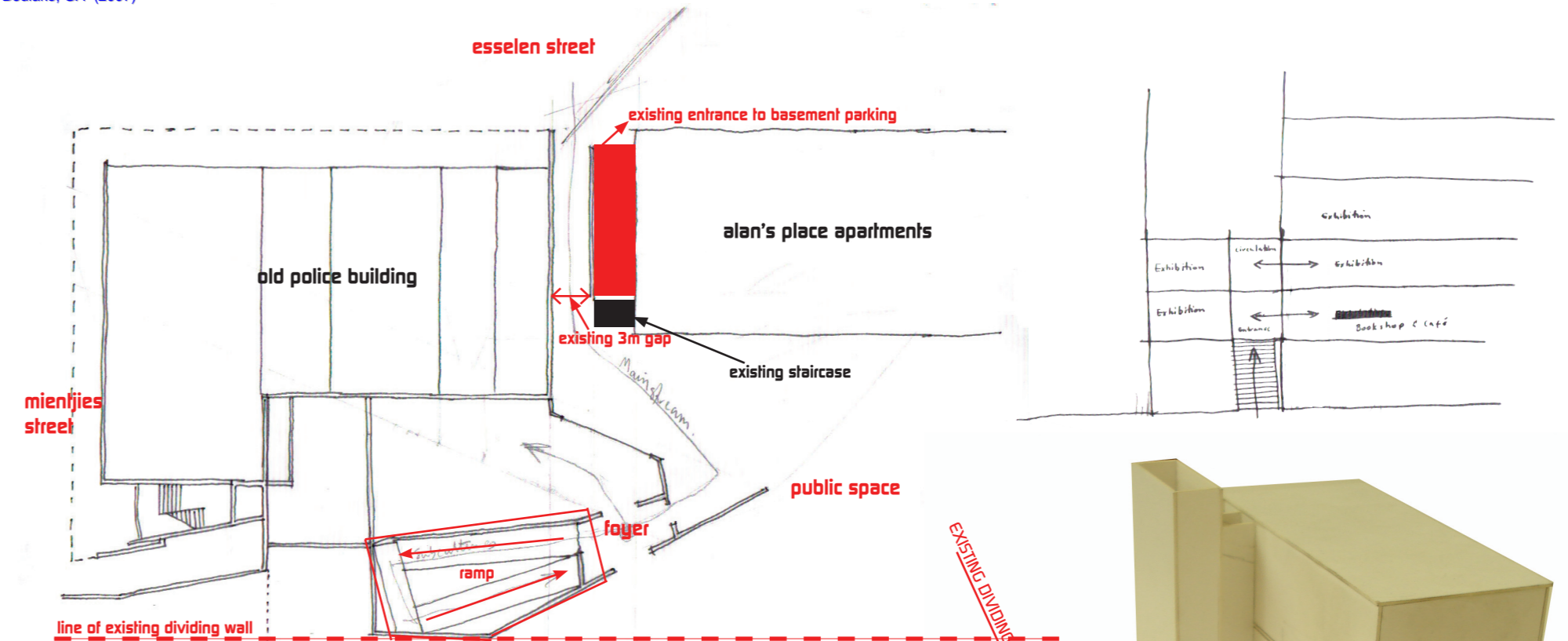


Fig.151 View of model from Esselen Street



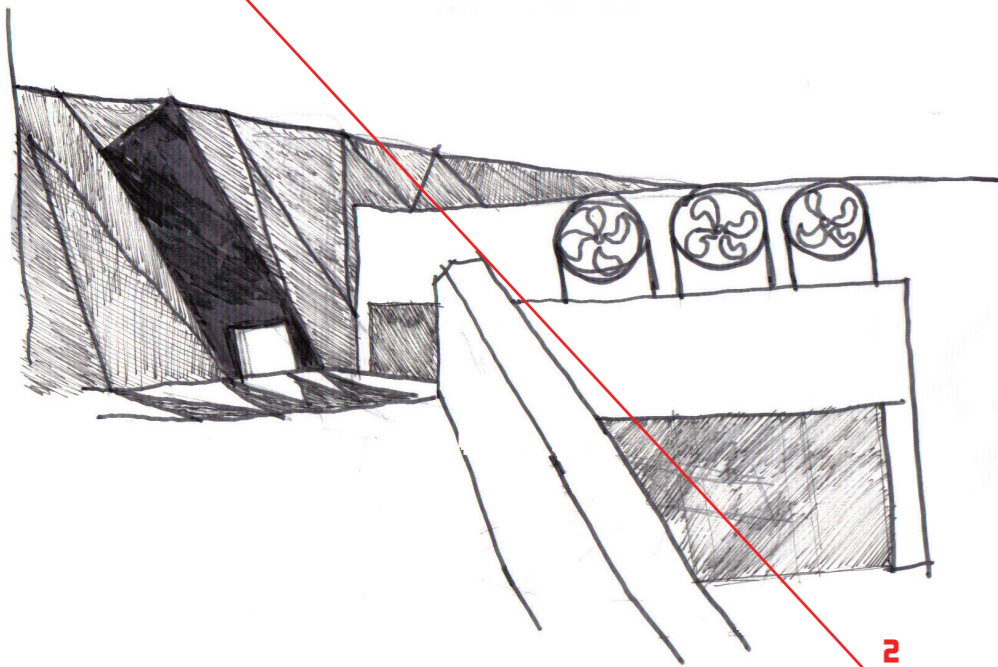


Fig.152 Perspective of Mientjies Street entrance

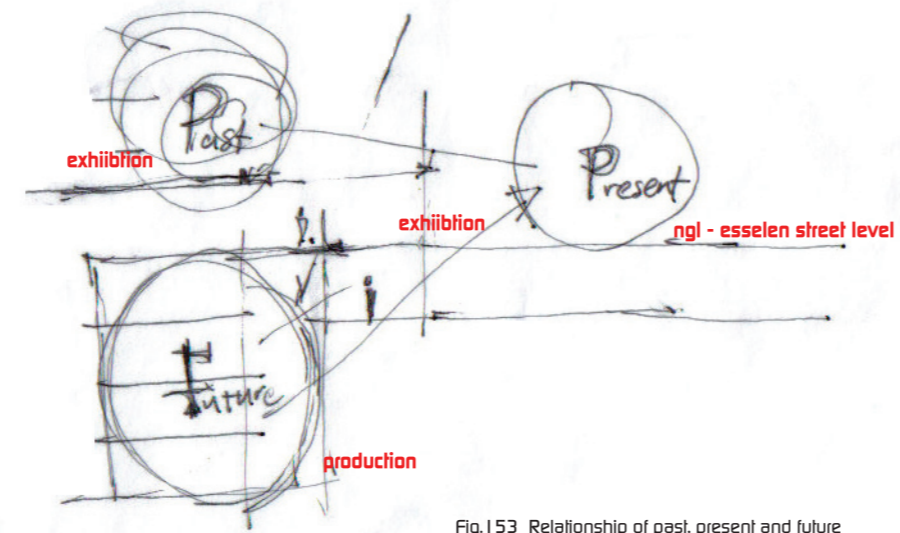


Fig.153 Relationship of past, present and future

PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE

The different spaces were demarcated into the notion of past, present and future. These spaces were respectively expressed as public, semi-public and private. The public space catered for exhibitions, a library and a restaurant; the semi-public formed part of the public space and catered for exhibitions on the ground floor – this space catered for art exhibitions, graffiti, breakdancing, poetry, urban related expression, a foyer and retail amenities that sold sub cultural artworks. The future catered for music studios, a lounge, and a club.

The future [subculture] produces artworks underground and expresses it on the public level. The idea was based on the notion that movement from past to present in the visitors point of view, him/her acquires a glimpse of the future.

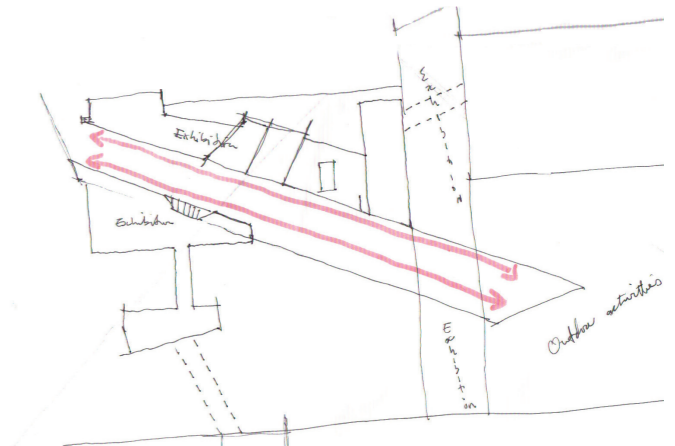


Fig.155 Initial articulation of first floor

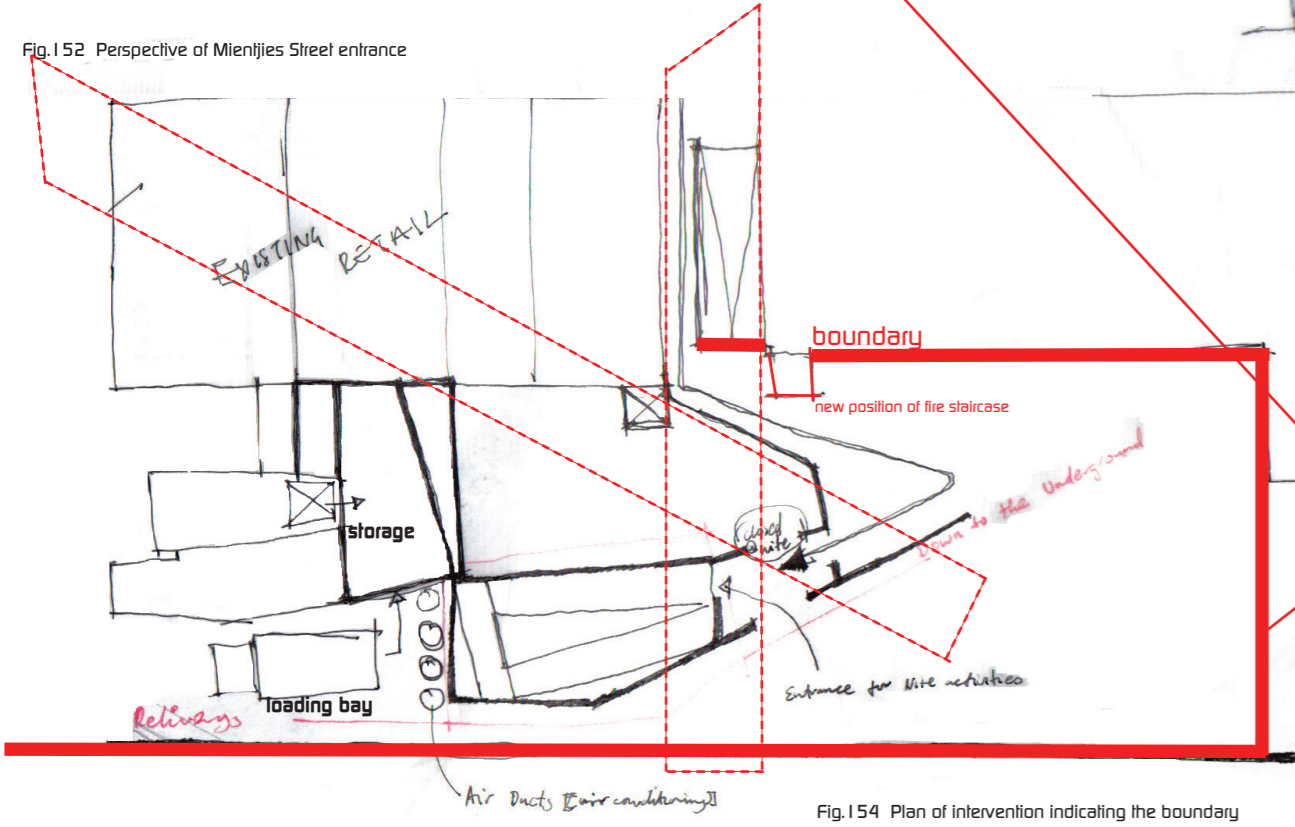
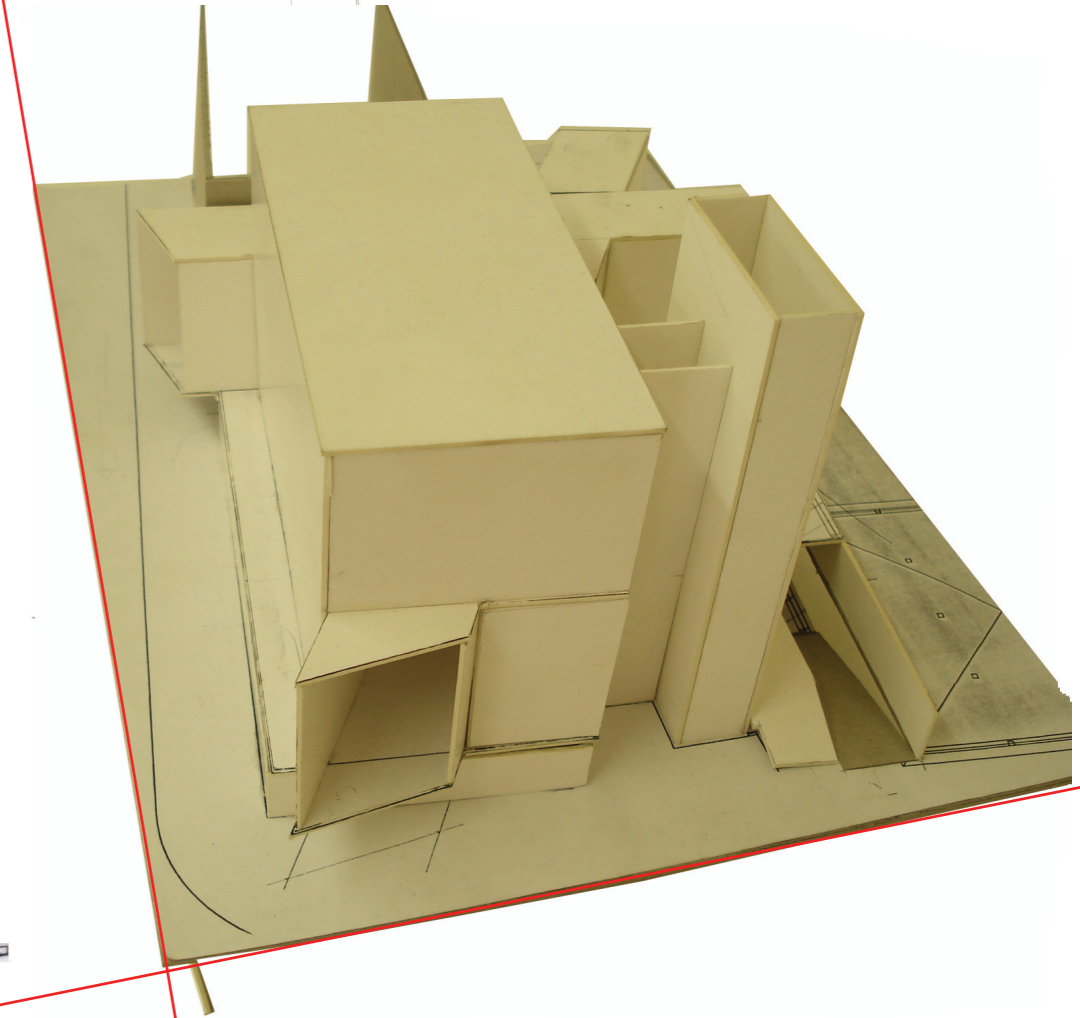
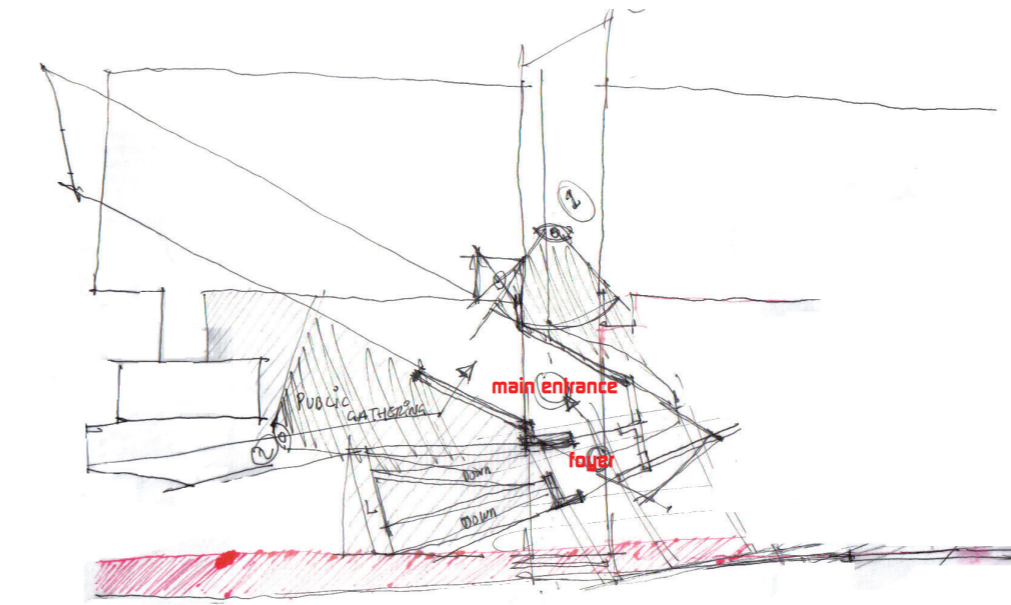
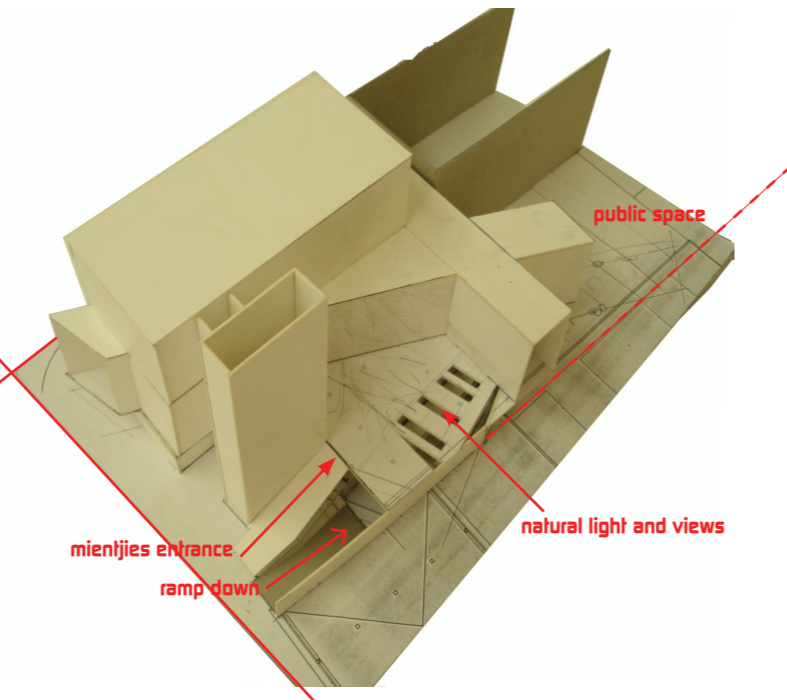


Fig.154 Plan of intervention indicating the boundary



SITE PROCESS

The second concept was a drastic development from the first; the design still retained its initial concept but the structure was extended in the eastern direction. The motive for this extension was to rezone the studios from their underground position to an elevated position whereby the public would be able to view the artists at work.

The club was moved into the first floor of Alan's place apartments since that space is currently vacant and it initially functioned as a disco. These modifications simplified the design and made it more adaptable as a public space. The initial entrance from Esselen Street was sealed off; the existing commercial divisions were rezoned across the street as per the urban proposal.

The vacant retail divisions on the ground floor of Alan's place apartments become the new entrance into the public space. This manifested the design into a more permeable intervention; the idea was to allow people to filter through the public space from Esselen to Mientjies Street.

CONCEPT 2

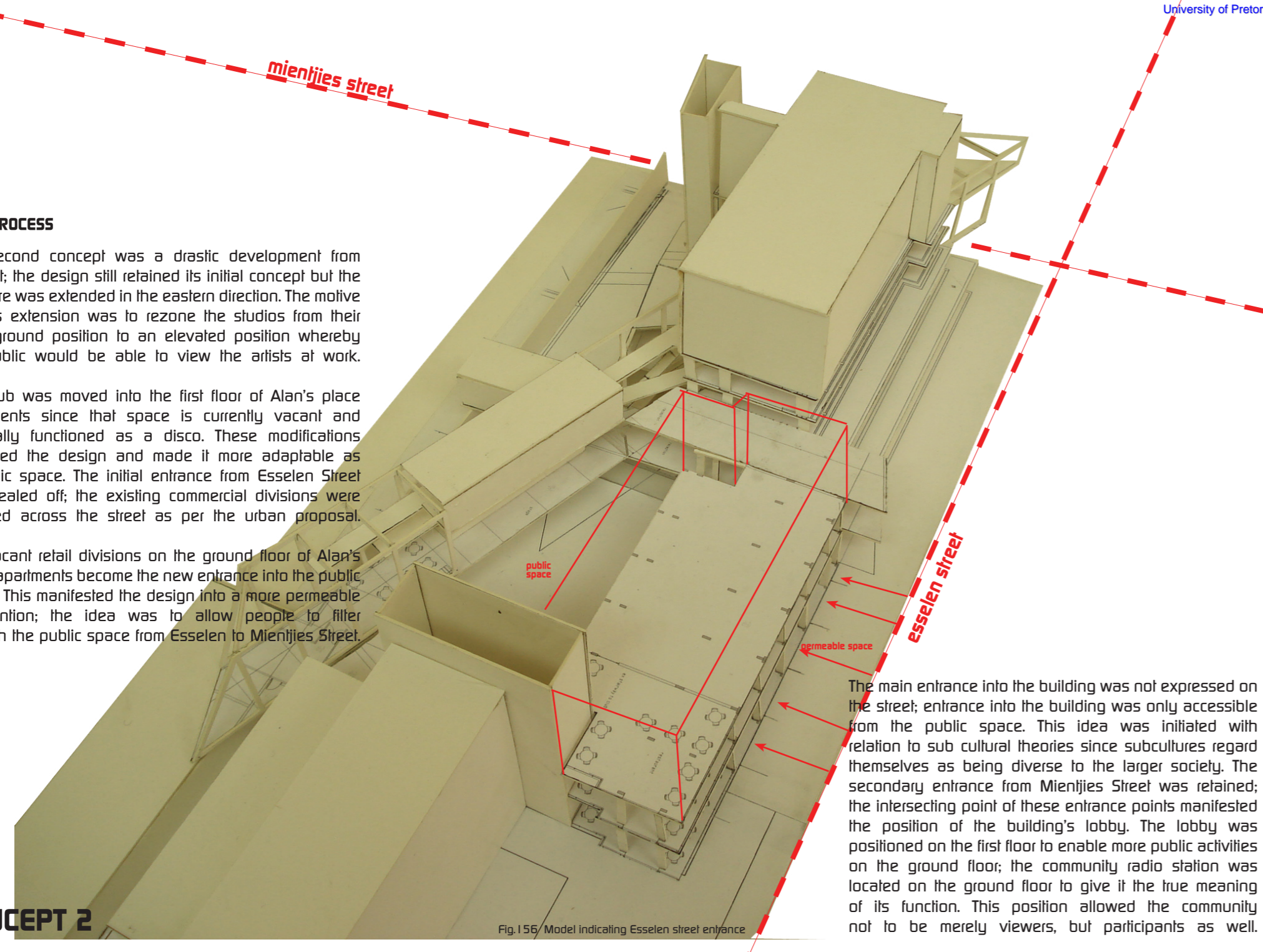


Fig. 156 Model indicating Esselen street entrance

The main entrance into the building was not expressed on the street; entrance into the building was only accessible from the public space. This idea was initiated with relation to sub cultural theories since subcultures regard themselves as being diverse to the larger society. The secondary entrance from Mientjies Street was retained; the intersecting point of these entrance points manifested the position of the building's lobby. The lobby was positioned on the first floor to enable more public activities on the ground floor; the community radio station was located on the ground floor to give it the true meaning of its function. This position allowed the community not to be merely viewers, but participants as well.

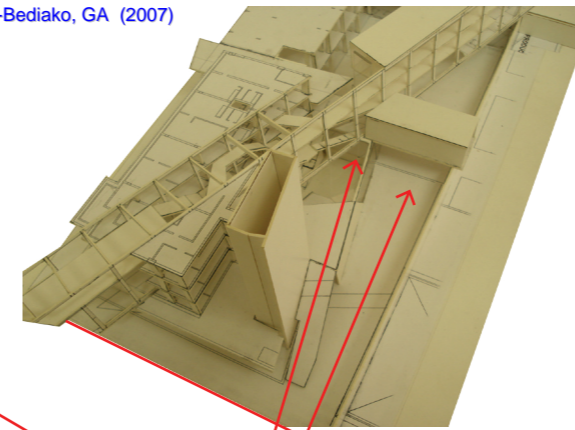
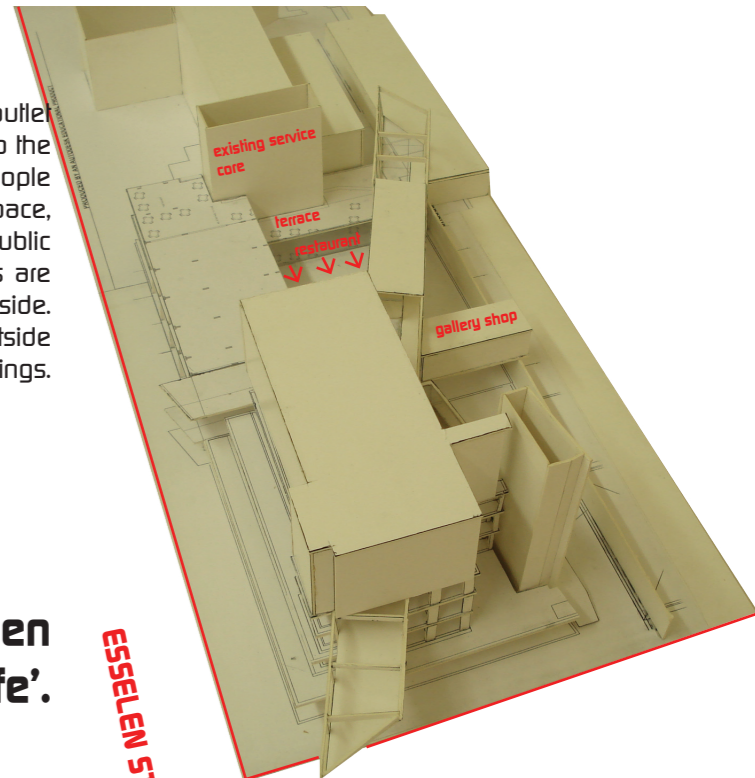


Fig. 157 Model indicating access paths from Mientjies Street to the lobby and the public space

Amenities in the form of a restaurant and a retail outlet were placed on the ground floor; this opened out into the public space. The motive behind this was to attract people through the space and once they are within the space, these functions will make them participate within the public space and make it a vibrant domain. These spaces are safer when people inside can watch over those outside. They are more interesting and safer when those outside feel some contact with people inside adjacent buildings.



'Public spaces are vibrant when they are interesting and safe'.

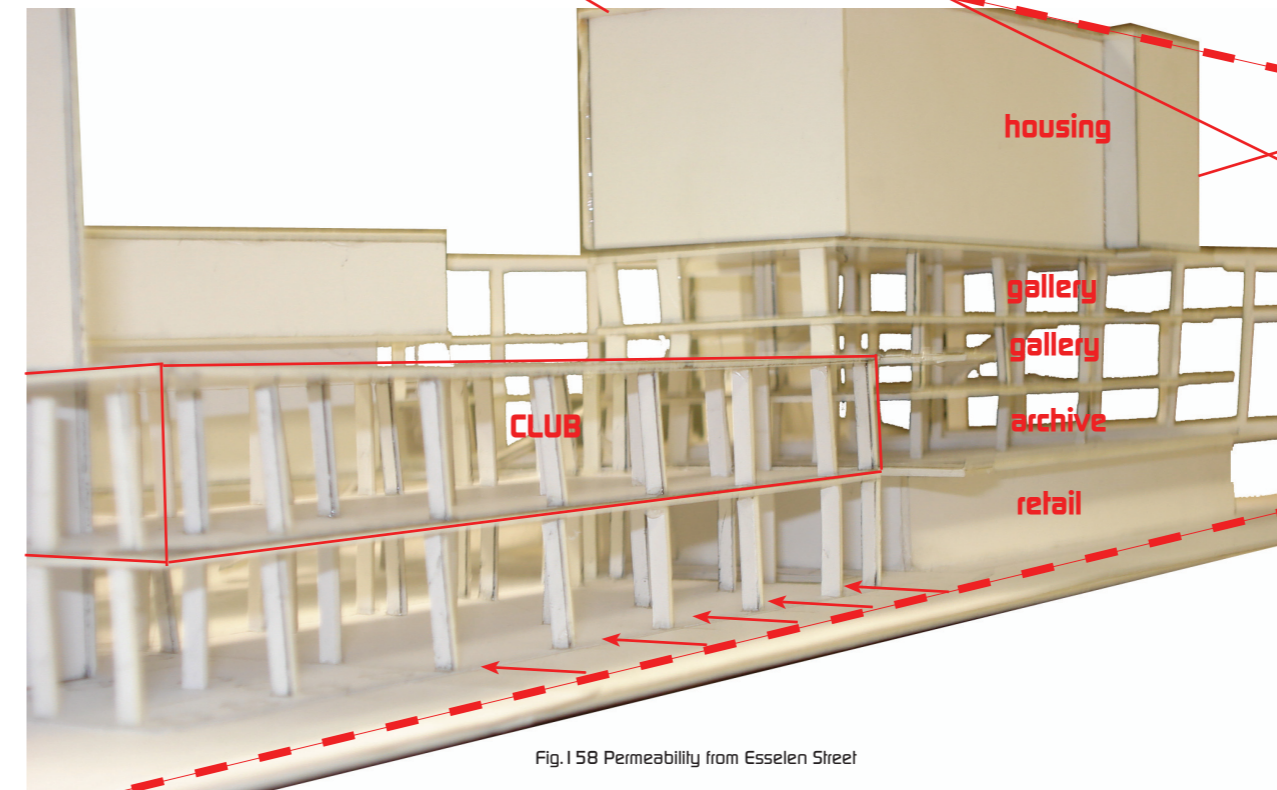
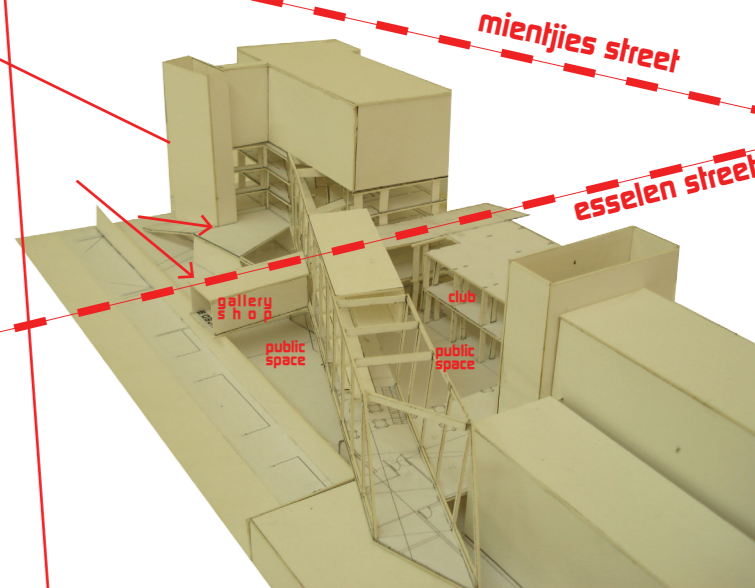
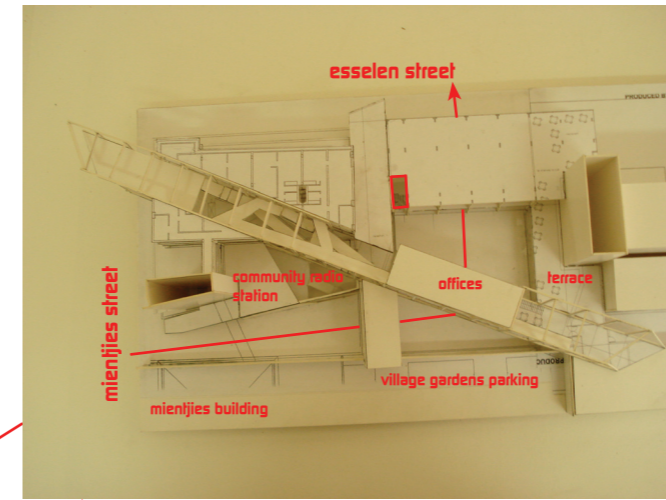
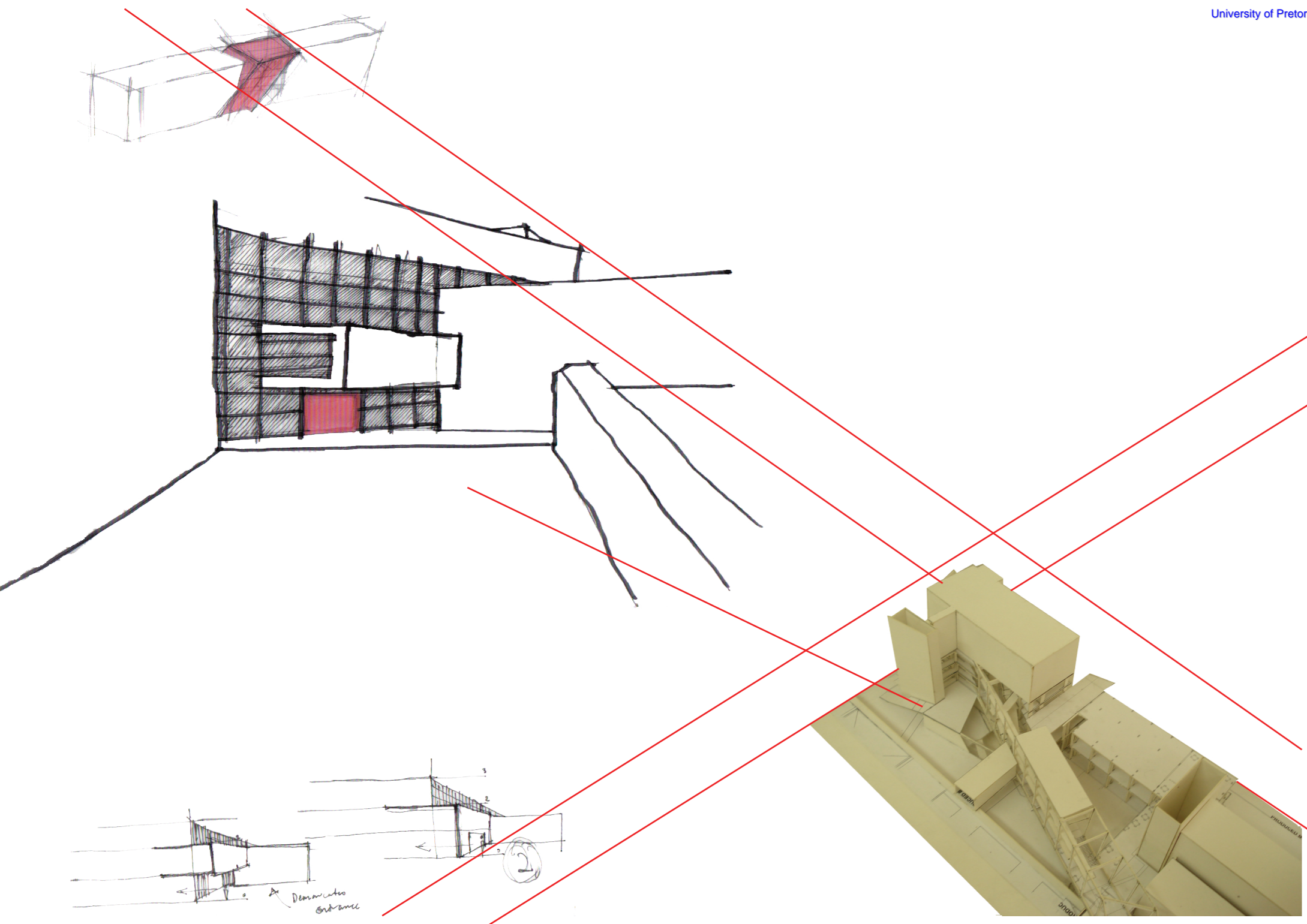
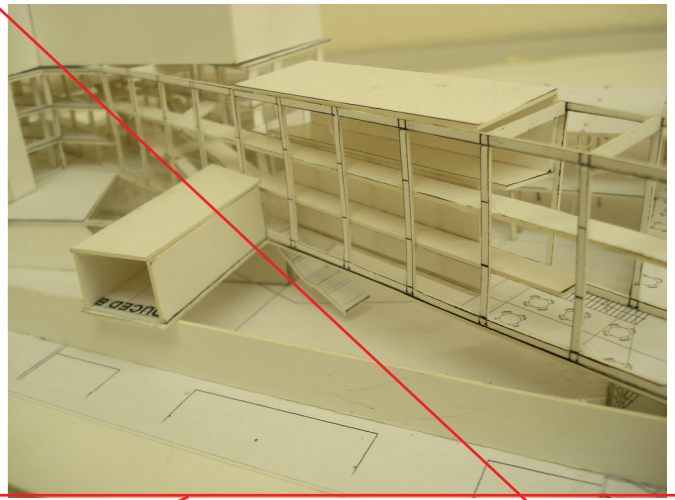
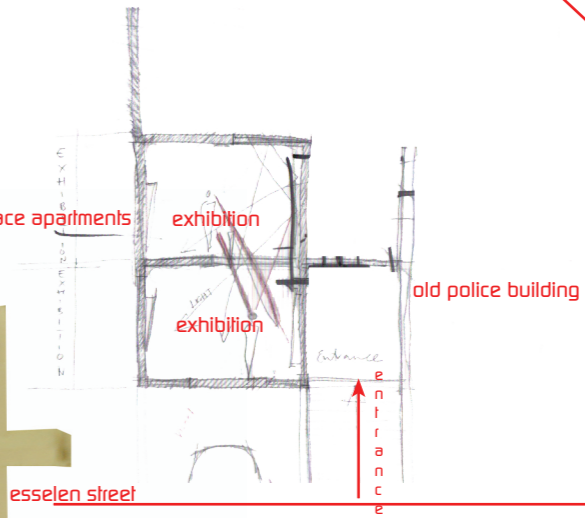
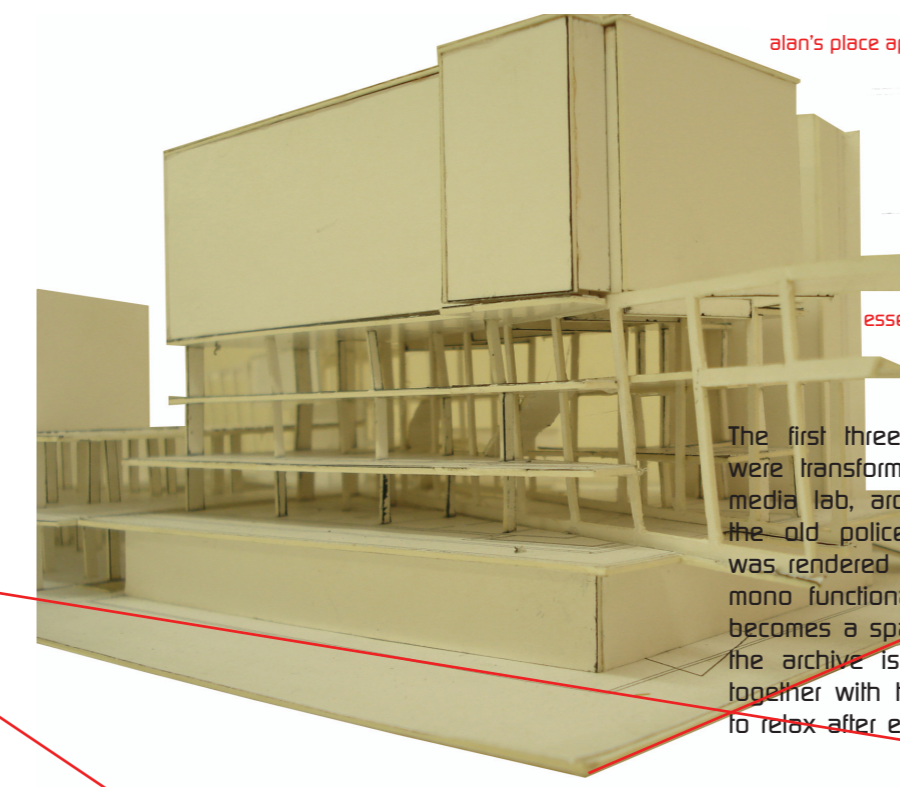


Fig. 158 Permeability from Esselen Street

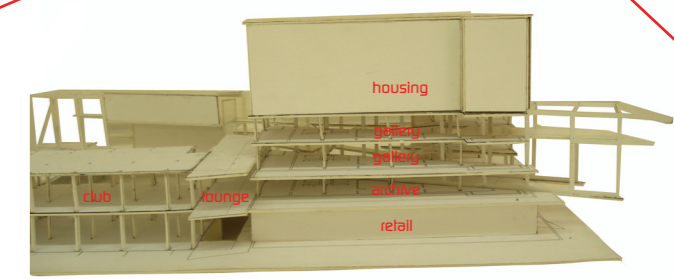


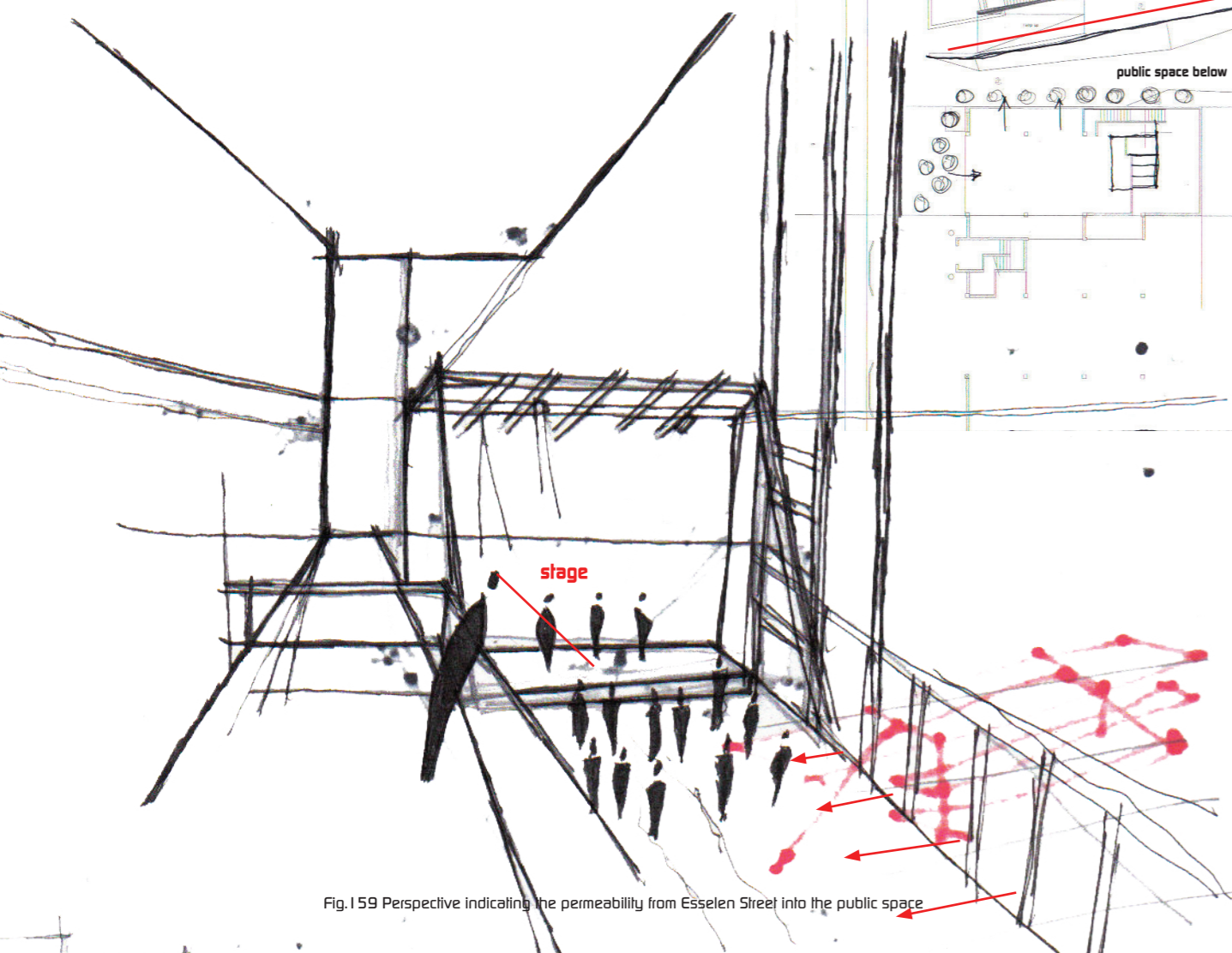
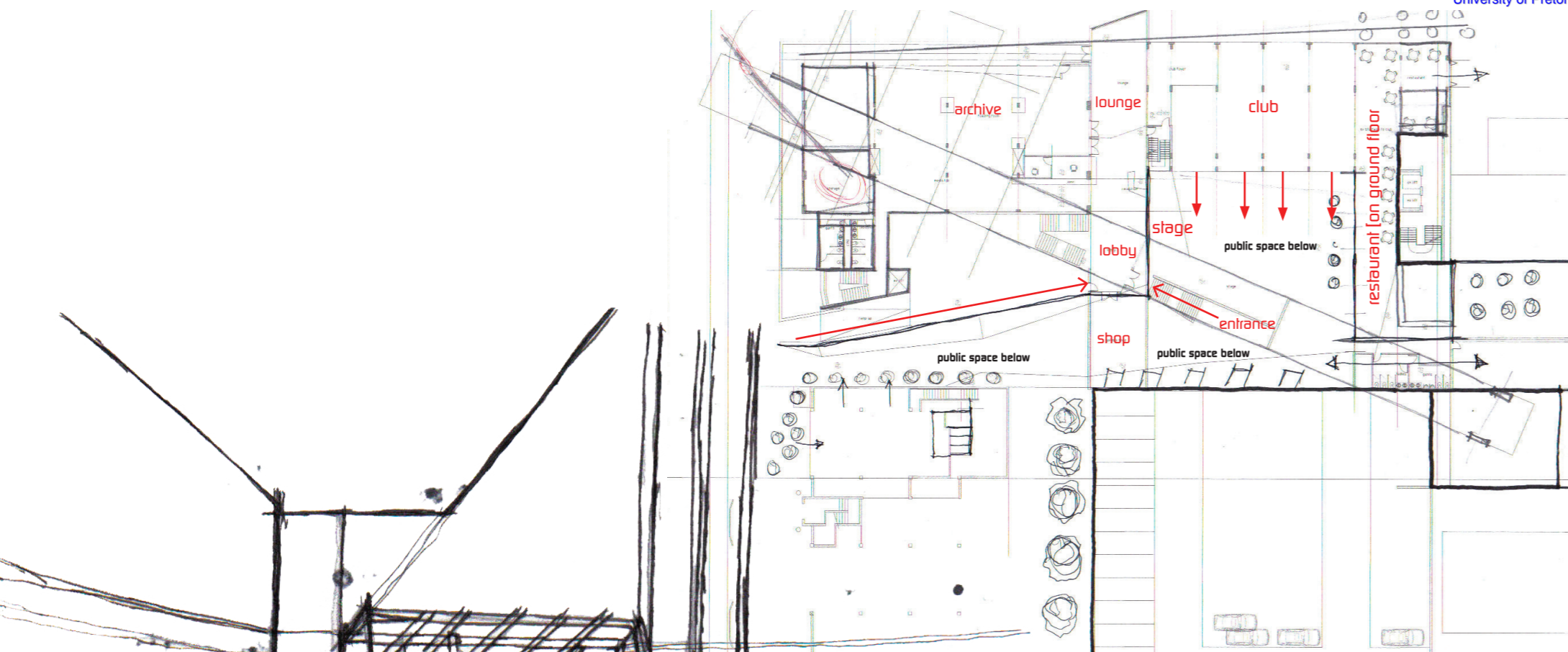


'Every square will also express and fit the Local District identity' (MDC Proposal)



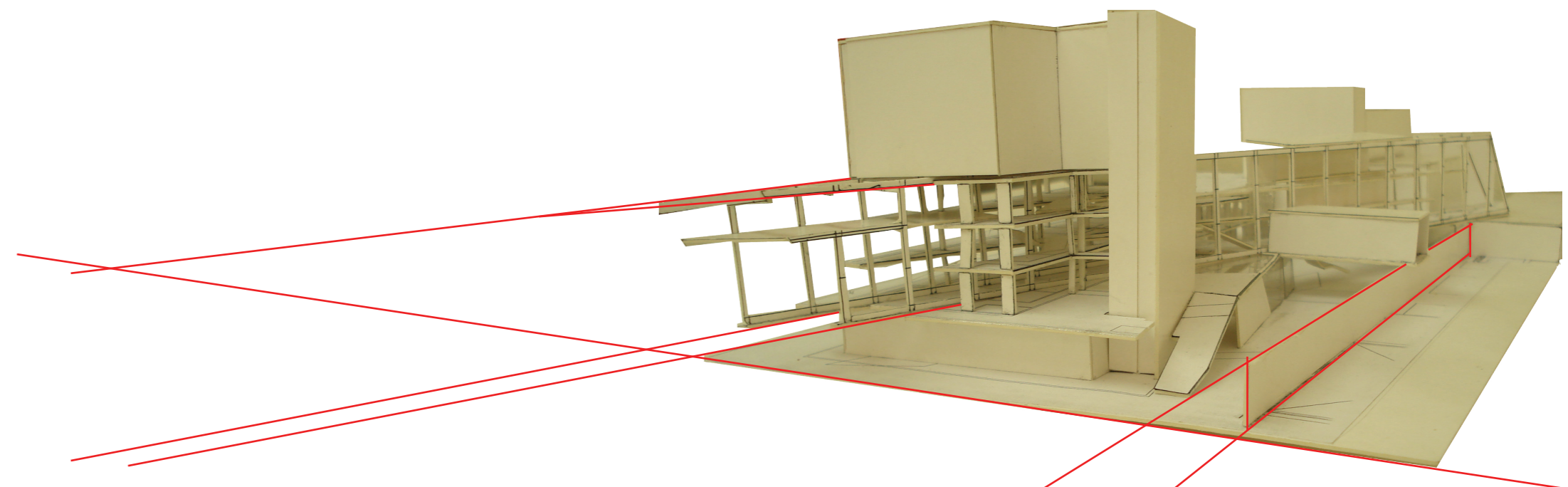
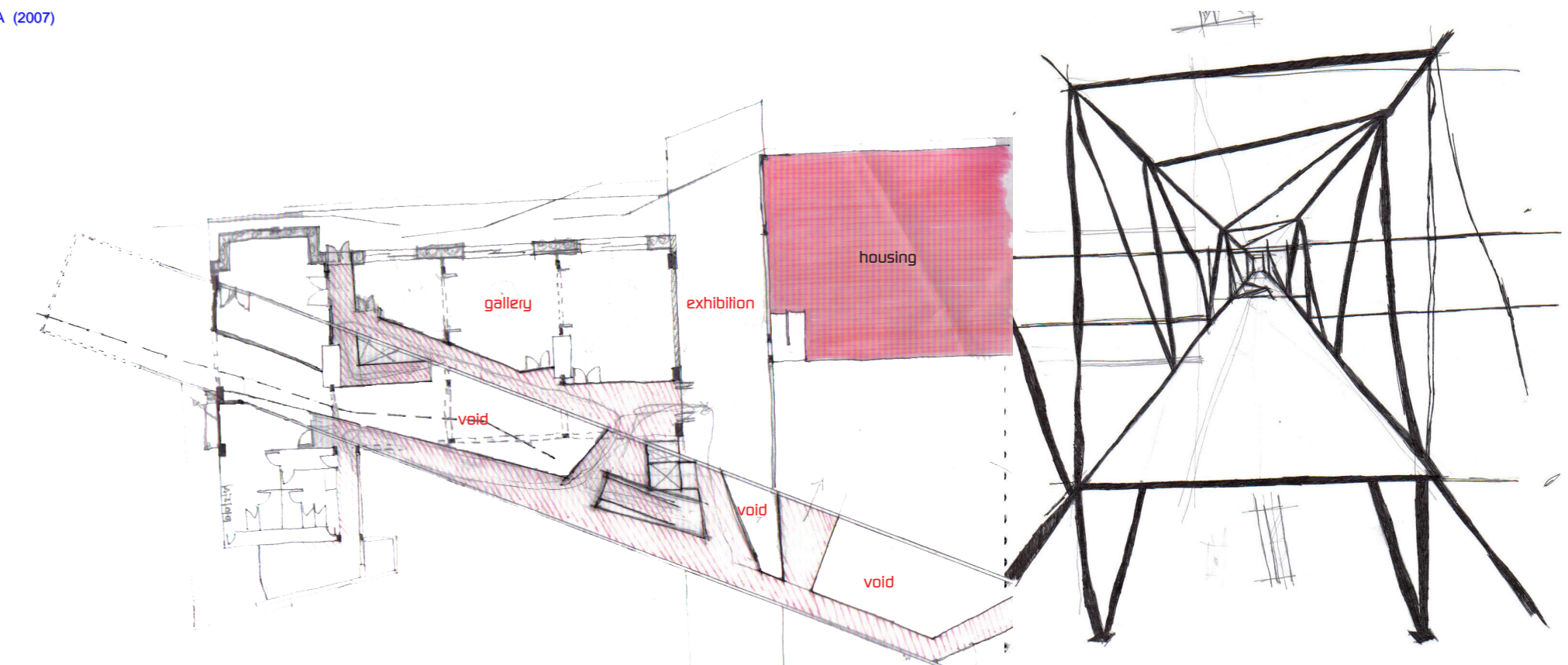
The first three floors of the old police headquarters were transformed; the first floor now functioned as a media lab, archive and a lobby. The space between the old police building and Alan's place apartment was rendered as a lounge space; this space becomes mono functional diurnally and nocturnally. Diurnally, it becomes a space where one can relax and read since the archive is adjacent to it; nocturnally, it functions together with the club as a haven for clubbers willing to relax after expressing themselves on the dance floor.



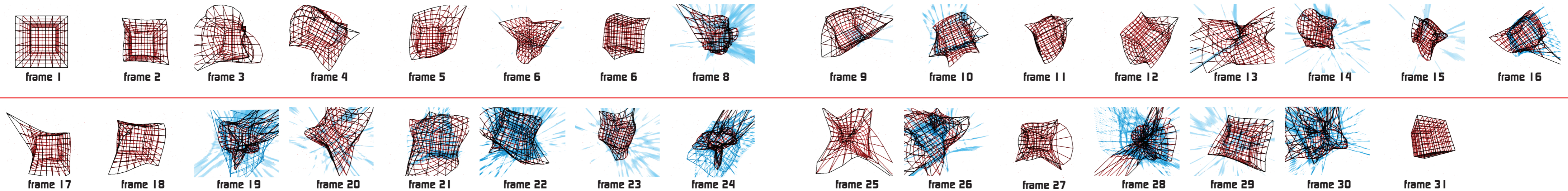


Functions like these relate to the street and not withdraw from it, these activities benefit from interaction with the public realm and contribute to the life of the street.

Fig.159 Perspective indicating the permeability from Esselen Street into the public space



METAMORPHOSIS OF SUB CULTURAL SPACE



The sequential frames were derived from playing a Hip Hop sub cultural song; the progression from frame 1 to frame 31 expresses the routine of a subculture. Frame 1 and 31 signifies mainstream or conventional order; frame 2 to 30 are the gradual secession of the subculture away from the conformed orders that frame 1 and 31 express. The relevance of these frames is in the notion that even though subcultures resist against the mainstream, they eventually do express themselves to the mainstream to gain recognition.

The frames resonate with the lifestyle of a subculture.

The significance of these frames with regards to the design is in the metamorphic nature of the diverse 97 functions expressed in the design. When designing for the domain of youth, it is imperative to design spaces that are conducive for different expressions. The design articulates a vibrant environment where the youth can interact; the spaces are mutations of existing conformed elements that are construed within the site.

