

# hinterland

pieter swart MArch(Prof)



# HINTERLAND

*a conservatory of reimagined worlds*

The imaginative reanimation of Brixton cemetery's nostalgic, remnant reality through the mechanization of its inherent narrative of escape.

*by Pieter Swart*



# HINTERLAND

*a conservatory of reimagined worlds*

The imaginative reanimation of Brixton cemetery's nostalgic, remnant reality through the mechanization of its inherent narrative of escape: synaesthesia through the synthetic.

**Location:** Brixton Cemetery

**Vrededorp,** Johannesburg, 2092

**GPS:** 26°11'48.5"S 28°00'38.3"E

**Program:** Bioluminescent Conservatory and columbarium

**Study field:** Heritage and Cultural Landscapes

*By Pieter Swart*

*Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree  
Masters in Architecture, MArch(Prof)*

*Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment and Information Technology  
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*Study leader: Marguerite Pienaar  
Course co-ordinator: Dr. Arthur Barker*

*Declaration*

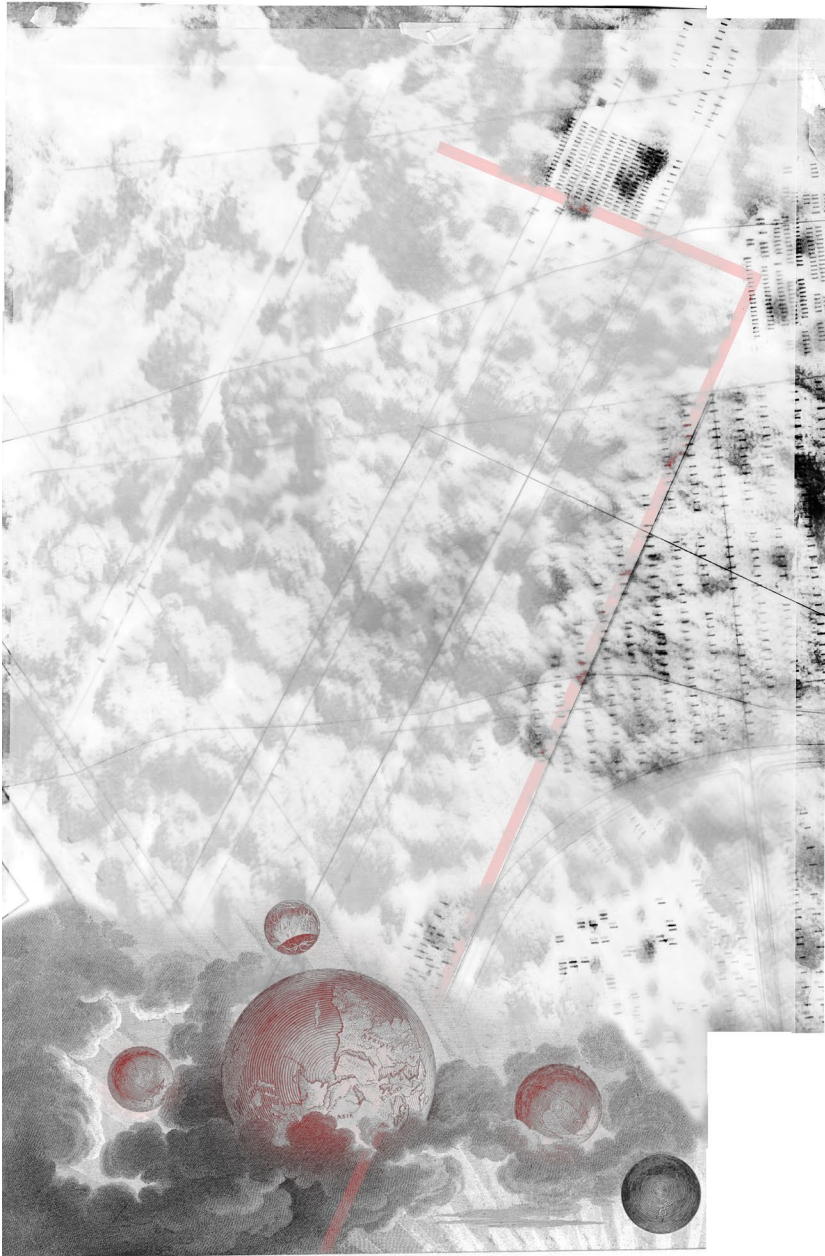
*In accordance with Regulation 4(e) of the General Regulations (G.57) for dissertations and thesis, I declare that the thesis, which I hereby submit for the degree Master of Architecture (Professional) at the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other tertiary institution.*

*I further state that no part of my thesis has already, or is currently being submitted for any such degree, diploma or other qualification.*

*I further declare that the thesis is substantially my own works. Where reference is made to the works of other, the extent to which that work has been used is indicated and fully acknowledged in the text and list of references.*

*Pieter Swart*

.....



ÉLEVATION DU CIMETIÈRE DE LA VILLE DE CHAUX.

fig. 1.1. (author) *La petite mort*. Collage of Brixton cemetery and Ledoux's cemetery for Chaux as 'another world'.

Describing the cemetery Claude-Nicolas Ledoux envisioned for the *Ideal City of Chaux* (1775-1778) Gruson (2008:301) states: "In this way, the entrance in the Salt works looks like a gate to another world wanted perfect by Ledoux. This cosmic idea is to be found in a restrained shape in the cemetery of the city of Chaux which Ledoux imagined for his ideal city. In this utopian cemetery, the relation with death is a purely poetic one, since the centre of the whole cemetery is an immense round empty room, symbolizing the absolute void".

### ***Acknowledgements:***

Marguerite Pienaar. Your alacrity with the project, keen sense for creating, and inexhaustible enthusiasm has been a profound source of inspiration throughout the year.

### ***Dedications:***

Aan Pappa, Mamma en Cornell vir die geleentheid om iets betekenisvol te skep, die jare se ondersteuning, hulp, geduld, slapelose nagte en oorvloed koffie. Dankie.

### ***Q***

For the kingdoms we discovered stumbling among ruins.

*Narcissus, then, goes to the secret fountain in the depths of the woods. Only there does he feel that he is naturally doubled...But at the fountain Narcissus has not given himself over exclusively to contemplation of himself. His own image is the center of a world. With and for Narcissus, the whole forest is mirrored, the whole sky approaches to take cognizance of its grandiose image.*

- Bachelard, *Water and Dreams*



## ABSTRACT

Artificiality, as a manifestation of the pursuit of escape, saturates the city and landscapes of Johannesburg. It is the narrative from which the city spawned, constructs and relentlessly perpetuates itself. This *first artificial landscape* is the materialization of escape, the synthetic, nostalgic reproduction of the known.

Brixton cemetery is nostalgic remnant existing in Johannesburg. Looming in a state suspended animation, it is an embodiment of the amnesic material and urban blight which pervades the city, created from desire to escape. The nostalgic artificiality inherent in this cemetery (produced by the desire to escape), in dire need of intervention, holds the material which unlocks the method for its reanimation.

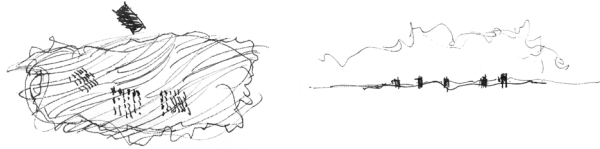
The project investigates how architecture, as a *second artificial landscape*, can occupy the amnesic gap inherent in the nostalgic remnant to reanimate the conditions present in the cemetery and the nostalgic forest. This is accomplished through an architectural insertion which appropriates the physical, nostalgic, metaphysical and mythological layers of escape embodied in the cemetery as the strategy for intervention. The project further investigates a new burial typology which functions by either the prevention or acceptance of the inevitable amnesic condition caused by memorialization. A *Bioluminescent Conservatory* is proposed to reanimate the forest through the artificiality of escape, while the addition of a columbarium serves to expand and reoccupy the cemetery.

Conceptually, the projects investigates how the *narrative of escape* can further be absorbed into the architecture through the artificiality inherent in the cemetery's material. The idea of *negative* as an artificial reproduction is adopted as a conceptual strategy for intervention and articulation of the architecture. The *negative* as conceptual framework is explored through the artistic work of Christian Boltanski who's work painfully reveals the treachery of memory and memorialization, but also finally signifies the potentiality inherent in this amnesic inevitability to redeem, reoccupy and recreate from this gap. The cemetery and forest are reanimated by disconfiguring the mechanism of escape and the conditions which it instilled in the cemetery.



fig. 1.2. (author) Brixton cemetery as escape from Johannesburg.

# Glossary



These definitions have been sourced from the Oxford English Dictionary unless indicated otherwise.

## 1

**First artificial landscape:** (author) an artificially constructed and materially present morphology (created by the anthropocene) which not only provides protection from the meaningless and hostile space of the natural world (Pallasmaa, 2011: 97), but also shrouds the chaos of the real through creating space imbued with illusions of safety. The *first artificial landscape* is not only saturated with, but always finds its origin in the desire of escaping the real. It thus represents the point from which, according to Malcomess and Kreutzfeldt (2013:11), the city “unconsciously projects, and literally constructs, its own image” and therefor its own artificially subdued reality.

**Artificial:** Made or produced by human beings rather than occurring naturally, especially as a copy of something natural. Derived from Latin *artificium*, based on *art-* ‘art’ + *facere* ‘make’.

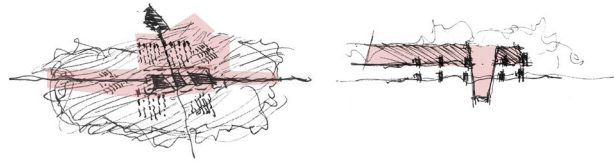
**Amnesia:** A partial or total loss of memory, derived from Greek: *amnēsia* meaning ‘forgetfulness’.

**Escape:** A form of temporary distraction from reality or routine, or succeed in avoiding or eluding something dangerous or unpleasant, derived from Latin: *ex-* ‘out’ + *cappa* ‘cloak’

**Nostalgia:** A sentimental longing or wistful affection for a period in the past, derived from from Greek: *nostos* ‘return home’ + *algos* ‘pain’, ‘homesickness’.

**Remnant:** A part or quantity that is left after the greater part has been used, removed, or destroyed. A surviving trace. Derived from Old French *remanant* meaning ‘remain’.

**Uitvalgrond:** The Afrikaans word assigned to the triangular piece of surplus ground around which Johannesburg as mining town formed. *Uitvalgrond* is a distorted geometry, not only manifesting the ‘grid’ around which the city incrementally surfaced, but also a metaphor for the formation of its “incipient themes and infant mythologies” (Koolhaas, 1994: 30). The dominance of *Uitvalgrond* both invents the reality of the city and sustains its myth (Kreutzfeldt and Malcomess, 2013:29).



## 2

**Second artificial landscape:** (author) On a physical level, the *second artificial landscape* reanimates the cemetery through the addition of a columbarium and a conservatory, in a response to the existing conditions. The architectural in(ter)vention further acts to reanimate the cemetery through a mirroring and dismantling of the desire for escape manifested in its material as the *first artificial landscape*. This in(ter)vention draws strongly from the work of Baudrillard in his book *Simulacra and Simulation* originally published in 1981, in which he states:

*The territory no longer precedes the map, nor does it survive it. It is nevertheless the map that precedes the territory — precession of simulacra — that engenders the territory, and if one must return to the fable, today it is the territory whose shreds slowly rot across the extent of the map. It is the real, and not the map, whose vestiges persist here and there in the deserts that are no longer those of the Empire, but ours. The desert of the real itself (Baudrillard, 2014:1).*

The *second artificial landscape* captures and produces fleeting wonder, accomplished through creating *negatives* of the cemetery's synthetic, nostalgic and mythologically charged material (both architecturally and botanically). Furthermore, it mechanizes the artificiality manifested by the attempt to escape from *the real*, through *negatives*, in order to expose these vestiges.

**Columbarium:** A room or building with niches for funeral urns to be stored.

**Conservatory:** A room with a glass roof and walls, attached to a house at one side and used as a sun lounge or for growing delicate plants. Derived from late Latin *conservatorium*, from *conservare* 'to preserve'.

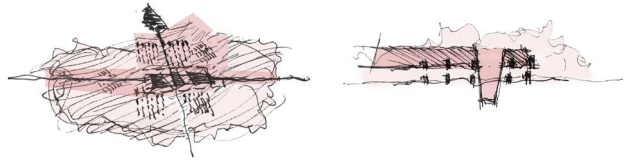
**Revenant:** A person who has returned, especially supposedly from the dead. Derived from French: *revenir* meaning 'coming back'. This term is contextualized to indicate the reanimation of the cemetery's material, through the intervention of the *second artificial landscape*.

**Reanimation:** Restore to life or consciousness; revive. Derived from Latin *animat-* 'instilled with life', from *anima* 'life, soul'. This term is contextualized to indicate the cemetery's recovery from a state of lapsed significance, material dilapidation and metaphysical chaos.

**Negative:** (author) the architectural reproduction of the *first artificial landscape*, developed from the conceptual frameworks of Christian Boltanski's photographic installations and Anselm Kiefer's subterranean land art.

**Ontslape:** (author) An Afrikaans word meaning 'deceased', derived from *slaap*, 'sleep'.

**Verbeeld-ing:** (author) A wordplay on the Afrikaans word meaning 'copy', 'negative' or 'simulation', with its root being *beeld* 'model', 'image'.



### 3

**Third intimate landscape:** (author) Reimagination of the cemetery as a nostalgic remnant of the *first artificial landscape*, accomplished through the in(ter)vention of the *second*. This is a fluid, intimate process facilitating the occurrence of *La Petite Mort* in the dweller through the *second artificial landscape*, firstly by reanimating the cemetery from its ruinous state, through intervention into the original material of the remnant. *La Petite Mort* is secondly manifested through the dweller's complete immersion in the unknowns manifested in the artificiality of the architectural intervention and its synthetic botany. Through these synaesthetic processes, the cemetery sustains significance by embracing the inevitable amnesic decline of the *first artificial landscape*.

*Ruins, for me, are the beginning. With the debris, you can construct new ideas. They are symbols of new beginnings* - Anselm Kiefer.

**Reimagination:** Reinterpret (an event, work of art, etc.) imaginatively. Derived from Latin *imaginare* 'form an image of, represent'.

**Intimation:** The action of making something known, especially in an indirect way. Derived from late Latin *intimare* meaning to 'impress, make familiar', from *intimus* 'inmost'.

**Reverie:** A state of being pleasantly lost in one's thoughts; a daydream. A dreamy or musing state. Derived from Old French *reverie* 'rejoicing, revelry', 'be delirious'.

**Ont-slape:** (author) A play on the Afrikaans word *ontslape* meaning 'deceased', reimagined as 'awaken' through *ont-* 'not' + *slaap* 'sleep'. Similar to *verbeeld-ing* and *verbeelding* it is analogous to the process of deepening, or creating new knowledge through reverie.

**La-petite-mort:** Translated as 'little death', it describes the occurrence whereby the reader experiences "*jouissance*" (bliss) at the moment of 'authorship' over a text, transcending the state of "*plaisir*" (comfort and euphoria of reading) by assuming a state of reimagining only acquired through a process of loss and discomfort (Barthes, 1975:14). It describes reimaginative death when old knowledge is sacrificed or made obsolete through a process described by Swiss clinical psychologist Jean Piaget (1896-1980) as scaffolding.

**Verbeelding:** (author) An Afrikaans word meaning 'imagination' with its root being *beeld* 'model', 'image'. The word is, however, reimagined (in Heideggerian fashion) through a wordplay on itself found in *verbeeld-ing*, intended to subtly exposure the potentiality of reimagination. In this reimagination, a deepening of knowledge and exposure to the unknown is made possible through reveries drawn from words which have lost their etymological significance.

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# 1 [ FANTASY OF ESCAPE ]

“ verbeelding / ont-slage ”

The creature creates a burrow, a sanctuary to escape the terror of the unknown pervading the surface. The **FIRST ARTIFICIAL LANDSCAPE** is created.

# 2 [ NOSTALGIC REPRODUCTION OF THE KNOWN ]

The creature is possessed by a delirious desire to incessantly reproduce the comfort of his constructed den. The terror of the unknown is exacerbated.

# 3 [ DEMISE IN ESCAPE ]

In the relentless endeavour to construct an artificial world, the creature is seduced by and enslaved to a nostalgia of the known. The creature meets its demise in its attempt to escape the unknown through the construction of the **FIRST ARTIFICIAL LANDSCAPE**.



# Preface

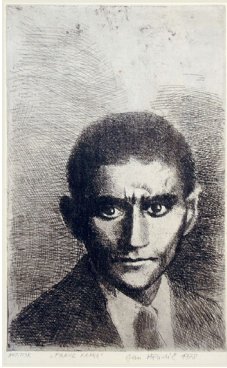


fig. 1.3. Franz Kafka.

*We are such stuff  
As dreams are made on, and our little life  
Is rounded with a sleep.*  
— The Tempest, IV, i

*To speak of memories is to imply that paradise is more than just a dream.*  
— Karsten Harries (1982:61)

## **The Burrow** - an artificial nostalgic landscape for escape.

In 1931 the story *Der Bau*<sup>1</sup> was published as part of an anthology of unfinished works written by Franz Kafka<sup>2</sup>. Translated as 'The Burrow', it describes the toil of a burrowing creature<sup>3</sup> creating a habitable, familiar sanctuary for itself where it "can sleep the sweet sleep of tranquility, of satisfied desire, of achieved ambition" (Kafka, 1993:279a) in an attempt to escape the terror of the unknown that lurks on the surface. It is, however, the familiarity of this labyrinth and the certainty of its sanctuary that unnervingly introduces and exacerbates an insidious awareness of entrapment<sup>4</sup>. This in turn incarnates the illusion of a looming terror that pervades the unfamiliar territories external to his burrow. That which is so frantically guarded against

fig. 1.4.(author) An artificial landscape for escape. Nostalgic expanse in *The Burrow*.

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1 Kafka, F. (1931). *Der Bau*. London: Martin Secker.

2 Franz Kafka (1883-1924) was a Czechish prose writer. He is regarded as one of the most influential Modernist writers of the twentieth century, portraying the world through grotesque visions, often through the Absurdist analogies of metamorphosis.

3 The creature is presumed to be a mole. However, the only reference found in the fable validating this assumption is suggested by the words: "my forehead — that unique instrument" (Kafka, 1993:279b), a ruse referencing to the uniqueness of rationality of Man.

4 Entrapment, here, both implies the restriction of movement imposed by the burrow and insinuates the further visceral implications of this circumscription experienced by the creature.

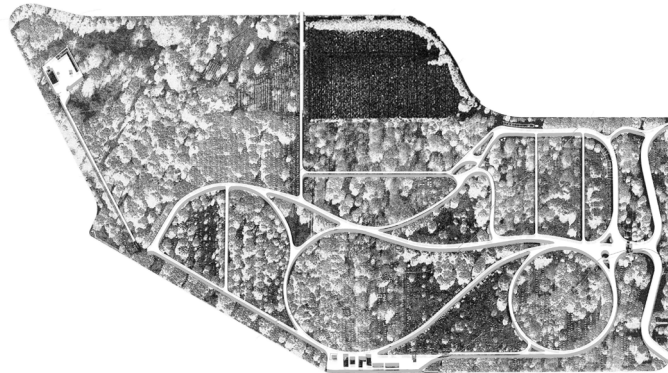


fig. 1.5. (author) Brixton cemetery as artificial landscape.

(the unfamiliar), in a sweep of irony, animates that which he fears. The perceived penetrability of the burrow's walls by this looming threat, albeit imagined, induces delirium within the creature. A frantic neurosis which is only soothed or escaped in a fervor of burrowing and fortification ensues and momentary refuge is found in the abundance of the burrow's new expansions, yet the presence of this threat persists and burrowing never surcease.

*Unable to possess the world, it tries to withdraw into its artificial environment. It intends to replace nature with artful construction. But the threatening outside cannot be eliminated. The reasoning animal of the story is, of course, a figure for man, whose anxious anticipation of what may threaten him leads to frantic building and planning. Yet the results can never satisfy what is demanded. Technology and construction increase rather than diminish the terror of time (Harries, 1982:60).*

The creature finds its demise in the entrapment of its own constructions and consciousness caused by its pernicious desire to burrow and escape from *the real*. At this point one realises the duplicitous intentions of the title *Der Bau*, or *The Construction*: not only of the burrow as a necessity to subdue the terror of the creature, but also as the self-reflexive 'construction' of his neurosis perpetuated by his manic burrowing.

*The Metropolis strives to reach a mythical point where the world is completely fabricated by man, so that it absolutely coincides with his desires. The Metropolis is an addictive machine, from which there is no escape, unless it offers that, too[...]Through this pervasiveness, its existence has become*

*like the Nature it has replaced: taken for granted, almost invisible, certainly indescribable* (Koolhaas, 1994:293).

This delusion is not only demonstrated in perceived safety at the expense of emotional trauma, but also alluded to by the disorientation caused by the darkened passages, its architecture, which inevitably causes the creature's blindness. The architecture that we create and inhabit not only circumscribes our movement, but also produces a muteness in our consciousness that momentarily prevents even our awareness of this muteness.

Escape is sought in the artifice of constructed worlds, and even found momentarily, yet the nostalgic endeavour to sustain the familiar, or the nostalgic propagation to acquire 'utopia'<sup>5</sup> is dire. The burrow enshrines futility as the experience of entrapment, through the artificial preservation and reproduction of familiars for the purpose of evading the unknown, ensures the creature's demise. Located in Johannesburg, this dissertation is an investigation of the potentiality not only latent in the artificiality of this construction, but also of how the drive to escape through artificial reproduction, can be inverted to locate architecture's potentiality for intimation. Pallasmaa describes the relation between architecture and the dweller's intimate, ontological experience, stating that:

*Since its very beginning, architecture has structured limitless physical space into distinct places and given space its human measure and meaning. In addition to inhabiting and protecting us in meaningless and hostile physical space, architecture has given us our domicile in cosmic and mental space. 'A house is an instrument with which to confront cosmos,' as Gaston Bachelard suggests* (Pallasmaa, 2011: 97).

This dissertation explores how architecture makes intimation accessible for the dweller, by positioning it as a device for the dweller to engage with and confront the unknowns inherent in the artificial. The remnant material of Brixton cemetery having lost its significance within the city, as well as the intervention in an artificial, yet amnesic forest, pervaded with terrors, ideally positions the cemetery for such an architectural exploration. The intervention furthermore makes the cemetery reaccessible through not only restoring but also sustaining significance, preventing it from lapsing back into an amnesic state.

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<sup>5</sup> 'Utopia' from the Greek *ou* 'not' + *topos* 'place', meaning non-place. It describes a nostalgic longing, a fantasy for paradise.



*PART I*

***THE CONSTRUCTION***

Escape into the *first artificial landscape*

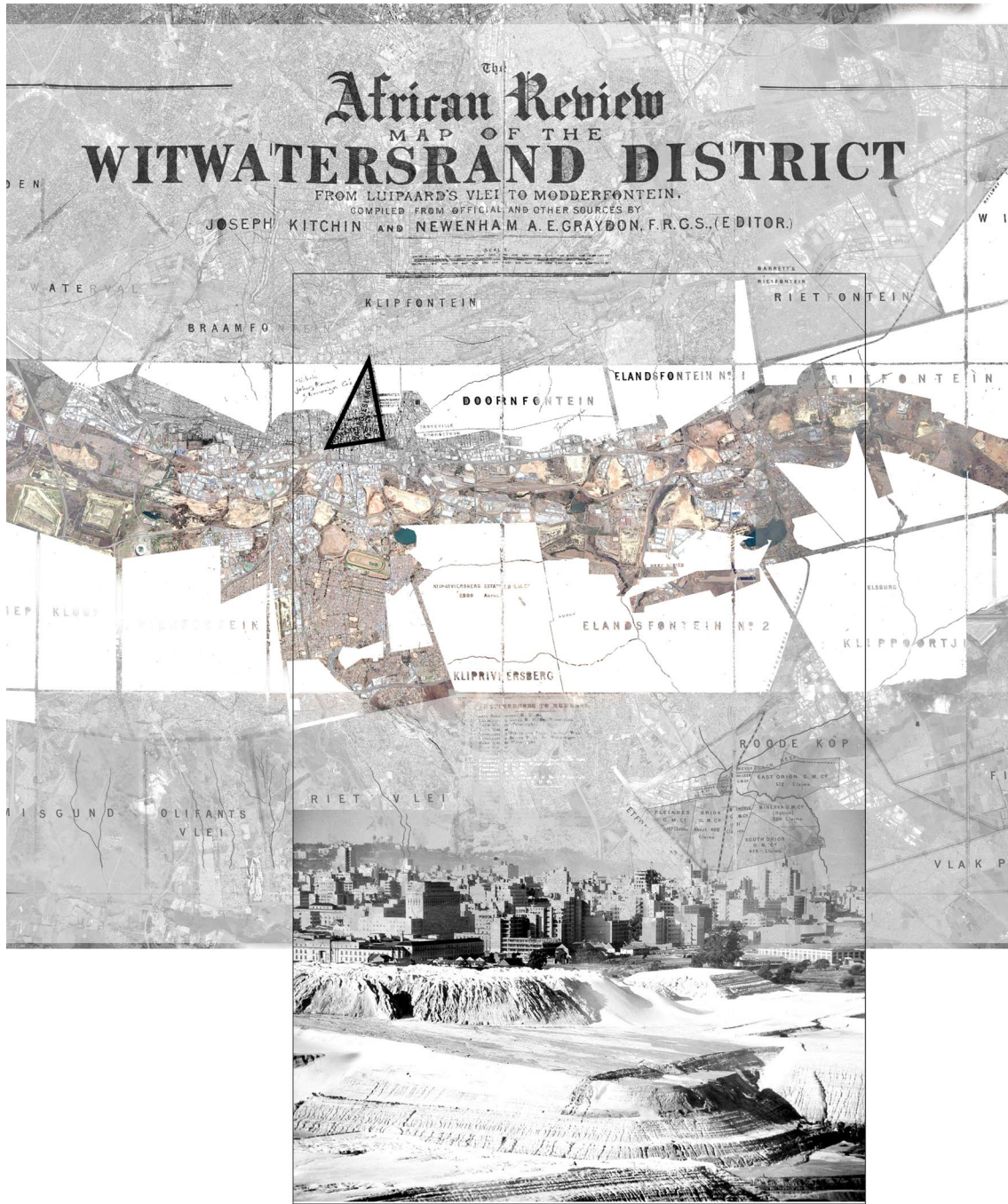


fig. 1.6. (author)  
 Johannesburg situated  
 within the Witwatersrand.  
 Escape into the *first*  
 artificial landscape.

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

**Johannesburg as an artificial nostalgic landscape to escape:**  
the first artificial landscape.

The surfacing of Johannesburg as an 'instantaneous Victorian boom town' in the hinterland<sup>6</sup> of the Witwatersrand area is owed to a Mr. George Harrison's serendipitous discovery of the world's richest gold field on a farm in Langlaagte in 1886 — the event from which the narrative of Johannesburg always begins (Malcomess and Kreutzfeldt, 2013:20). Clive Chipkin, the pre-eminent architectural historian of Johannesburg (1929-), describes the rupture of this mining town not as an isolated event, but as forming part of a narrative of burgeoning New World cities which started populating the globe, instigated by the new Capitalist age which spawned in the nineteenth century, and the sudden insatiable demand for gold ingot by the world market brought about by financial speculation (Chipkin, 1993:4-5). The proliferation of these New World cities, he argues, had already been predicted by Marx's and Engels's *Communist Manifesto* in 1848:

*The need of a constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeoisie over the whole surface of the globe. It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connections everywhere* (Marx and Engels, 1848:16).

Johannesburg erupted amongst towns such as San Francisco in California, Virginia City in Nevada, Ballarat in Australia and Kimberley in South Africa as part of a phenomenon compelled by the unbridled pursuit of wealth as confessed in a letter

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<sup>6</sup> The definition of 'hinterland' is significant: in addition to describing a remote area away from the coast or banks of major rivers, it also denotes that which lies beyond what is visible or known (Oxford Dictionaries, n.d.).



fig. 1.7.

Johannesburg as arrival city. Park Station, the Blue Room.

to the editor (c. 1893) by a prospector working on these gold fields: “We are none of use here for the benefit of our health. Money making and money grabbing is the alpha and omega of those resident on these fields” (ibid, 1993:9). A whole population of prospectors flooded to the Golden City with a frenzied gold fever and the desperate romanticism of attaining fortune.

Sarah Nuttall, an associate professor of literary and cultural studies at the Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research at the University of the Witwatersrand, interprets the city of Johannesburg as an elusive metropolis “wrought from its surfaces and depths, from that which is apparent, on display, there to be seen...and that which lies underneath, hidden in part, heaving at times to the surface” (Nuttall and Mbembe, 2008:91). This city is defined by its artificial landscapes: mountains of prospected earth or chasms in the landscape, memorialising the industry of the past that still prevails beneath the surface. This artificiality is, however, representative of the bewilderment that drew the first prospectors to the virginal yet fortune bearing plains of the Witwatersrand, where the fantasy to escape through wealth and prosperity caused the eruption of a city — characteristically constructed around *Uitvalgrond*<sup>7</sup> — “without any of the constraints that usually bind other cities so tightly to their ancient past” (ibid., 2008:18). The sacrifice of assured provisions of natural resources (water,

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<sup>7</sup> “Uitvalgrond” is a word used to define the original triangular-shaped area falling between the other farms, on which the ‘town’ was built. In the form of *Uitvalgrond* there resides uncertainty, perhaps most closely allied to the beginning of the city defined by speculation, randomness and escape, as manifestations of individual fantasy. *Uitvalgrond* abound in the city and define it by not only harboring these excesses, but insuring its proliferation (Kreutzfeldt and Malcomess, 2013:29).

sustenance and defence) in the pursuit of attaining wealth through the singular resource of gold only affirms the claim of finding and constructing escape.

It is clear why Johannesburg is often depicted as an arrival city, beckoning an immensity of immigrants to a utopian dream so clearly described by the number of lustrous pseudonyms it has been adorned with — *Egoli*, *El Dorado*, the Gilded city. The British novelist Jonathan Raban eloquently remarks in his book *Soft City*:

*For every immigrant, the city is a different dream. He comes to it in flight - from persecution, from economic drought, from the stifling title-tattle of the home town - and enters it in wonder and hope[...]. This continuous freshness of the city composes most of what is left of the city's power to persuade the immigrant that he has crossed a frontier into a new world (Raban, 1988:40).*

Compelled by suffering the immigrant flees to the city with a romanticized longing to escape or find sanctuary in the ceaseless nostalgic reproduction of new desires and exotic typologies in this new utopia, echoing Kafka's fable of *The Burrow* — *The Construction* endures.

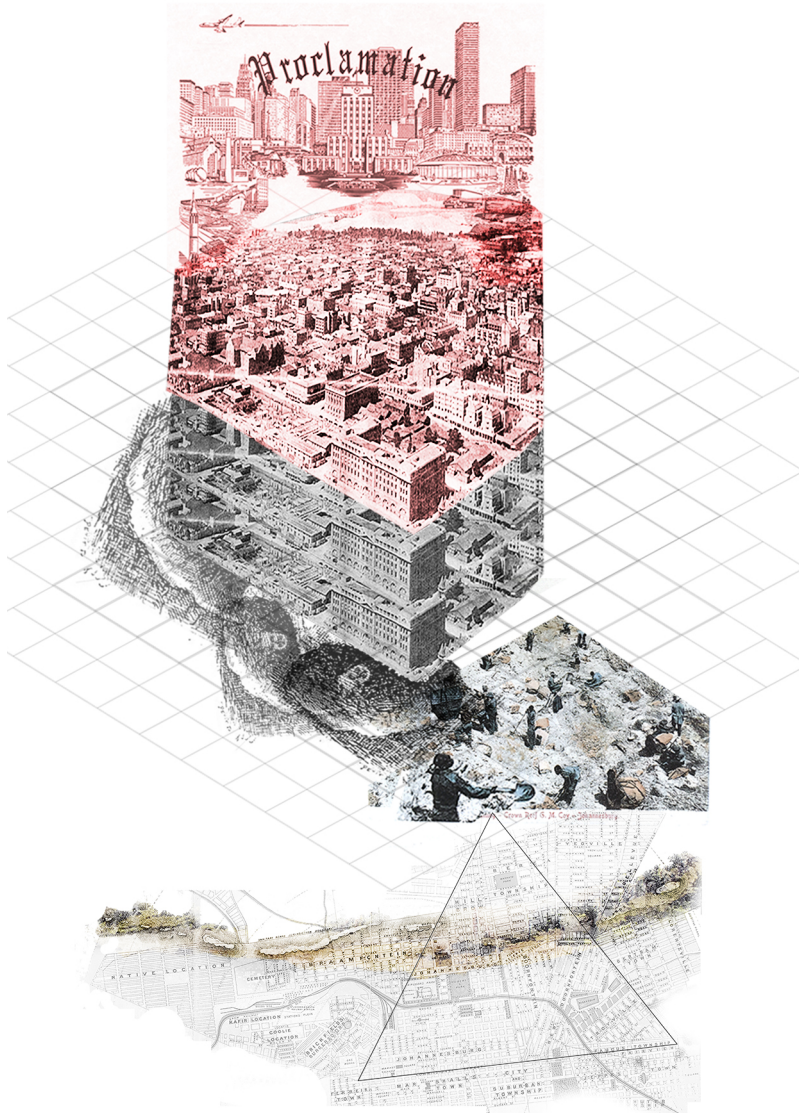
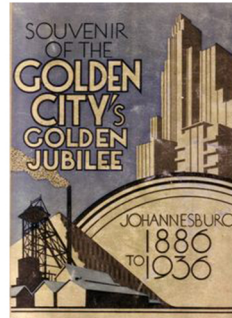
*All responsible building is a creative repetition of the past that is open to new possibilities. And so, again and again, colonies have sought to preserve the image of home in a new environment (Harries, 2017:15).*

Fantasy to escape sustains the reality of the city — its relentless fragmentation and reconfiguration — and the arrival city thus becomes host to a population where all its denizens are essentially *Uitlanders*, or foreigners<sup>8</sup>, each enthralled by their own idealised fantasies and, with the city's material at their disposal, perpetuating “the large freedoms of the mining camp days [which] still determine the character of the city” (Meiring, Van der Waal and Grütter, 1986:139). The construction of the *first*

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<sup>8</sup> Johannesburg, from its infancy, was a conglomeration of the early Voortrekker settlers, diverse cultures of overseas immigrants who flocked to the Witwatersrand, and the Indian and Black indigenous workforce who came as labourers (Meiring, Van der Waal and Grütter, 1986:139). Lindsay Bremner elaborates on this condition, in her book, *Writing the City into Being: Essays on Johannesburg 1998-2008* suggesting the categories of: the Colonist, Migrant Worker, Exile, Underground Operative, Mercenary and Expat in the essay, *Six Ways of Being a Stranger* (Bremner and Law-Viljoen, 2010:150).

1886 JOHANNESBURG IS ESTABLISHED



## 1 [ FANTASY OF ESCAPE ]

*Production of the FIRST ARTIFICIAL LANDSCAPE constructed from the desire to escape.*

## 2 [ NOSTALGIC REPRODUCTION OF THE KNOWN ]

*The city as artificial landscape is constructed nostalgically, a simulacra of the known. It is a morphology of desire "from which there is no escape, unless it offers that too" - Delirious New York (Koolhaas, 1994: 293).*

## 3 [ NOSTALGIC REMNANTS OF ESCAPE ]

*Nostalgic remnants saturate the first artificial landscape as the desire to escape restlessly constructs the city and amnesia claims pockets of escape of that which is below and that which heaves to the surface.*

*artificial landscape*<sup>9</sup> as a new morphology is not only saturated with, but always finds its origin in the desire to escape<sup>10</sup> — the point from which, according to Malcomess and Kreutzfeldt (2013:11), the city “unconsciously projects, and literally constructs, its own image”. Informing their reading of Johannesburg as the negative of *No Place*, by acknowledging the “possibility for the actual materialisation of ‘place’ within the ambiguities of the Utopian form as both impossibility and always deferred potential” (ibid., 2013:12).

### **The first artificial landscape as nostalgic reproduction of the known.**

This emerging mining town as an “instant city of strangers, aliens, and foreigners (uitlanders)” (Nuttall and Mbembe, 2008:17) was exposed to the excesses of the unadulterated fantasy of attaining escape, ensuring the vulnerability of its fabric and causing the city to be manifested in a peculiar manner of “ceaseless birth, destruction, and reconstruction of forms” with the aim to “distinguish nature and landscape... [testifying] to the presentness of the past while making way for the ‘new’” (ibid., 2008:17). The book *Not No Place* conceptualises this manifestation of the desire to escape with a subtle nuance declaring that:

*Johannesburg is a city defined by a nostalgia less for the past than the future. The image of the past is adapted to suit the city's image of itself in the present, itself a desire for its own accelerated future...The same characters are written over and over again, with a fixated nostalgia* (Kreutzfeldt and Malcomess, 2013:18-20).

Devoid of this fantasy to escape, the nostalgic city does not and would not exist. Escape through artificial nostalgic reproduction of the familiar is the city's dominant narrative. The French sociologist, philosopher and cultural theorist, Jean Baudrillard (1929-2007) declared: “Simulation is master, and nostalgia, the phantasmal parodic rehabilitation of all lost referentials, alone remains” positioning nostalgia as a defining

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9 The creation of the first artificial landscape coincides with Baudrillard's description of the Borges fable in which cartographers of a fictional Empire creates a map from its territory which is so detailed and vast that it obscures the real Empire, causing its collapse into ruin and creating the desert of the real beneath. “Simulation [artificiality] is no longer that of that of a territory [...] it is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal” (Baudrillard, 2014:1).

10 The romanticized legacy of the gold rush remains evident in the naming of South Africa's currency: “Rand” being an abbreviation of the term “Witwatersrand”, perhaps epitomising this relation between fantasy and landscape. This linguistic acknowledgement also elevates the mythical status of Johannesburg from other cities in South Africa.

fig. 1.8. (author) An artificial nostalgic landscape for escape.



fig. 1.9. (author)  
*Uitvalgrond* in early  
 Johannesburg.

characteristic of postmodern, hyperreal society. One can assert a stark parallel between nostalgia and escape from this insight, or rather argue nostalgia to be *the* contemporary manifestation of escape.

The self-reflective condition of nostalgia reveals itself, even under minimal observation, in the gradual transmutation of the natural landscape into the city and its architecture as a new artificial landscape for escape. Nostalgia, thus understood as a manifestation of escape from of entrapment, is visible, perhaps clearest, in the residual fabric and nostalgic artificiality of the landscapes that characterise Johannesburg: its mountainous mine dumps, the vestiges of a synthetic European forest still suffused with houses demonstrating “slavish mimicry of overseas taste” (Chipkin, 1993:10), nationalistic art-deco impulses that still trace the facades of streets, and the imaginative reconstruction of the city’s formation even in its theme parks — allusions to the desire to escape through nostalgic reproduction of the known. Baudrillard stated “[w]hen the real is no longer what it used to be, nostalgia assumes its full meaning”. The city is defined by nostalgic artificiality as a manifestation of the desire for escape, i.e., to that which is not real. *A first artificial landscape* is constructed to shroud the chaos of the real (Poster, 2001:174).

## **Escape inherent in the city's artificial nostalgic nature.**

The evidence of the city as escape through the *first artificial landscape* is further accentuated by Johannesburg being classified as an urban forest (spuriously captured in the public imagination as being the largest existing artefact of its kind) (Jhbcityparks.com, 2007) <sup>11</sup>. The legacy of the forest as artificial landscape existing from the inception of the city is apparent in the verdurous outlandish trees which cover the suburbs, although the formation of Parktown Ridge, Belgravia, The Wilds (briefly elaborated on in Appendix A) and, particularly, the creation of the city's cemeteries (originally intended as urban gardens to escape from the city), is regarded as significant events that epitomise its artificiality <sup>12</sup>.

### **Artificial natures of Johannesburg:**

#### **Parktown Ridge as artificial forest:**

Parktown Ridge can be identified as an *artificial forest*, a resultant fragment of the fir and pine plantations originally planted by the Braamfontein Co. to satisfy the need for construction timber during the highly industrialized era of Johannesburg, stretching from the late nineteenth century into the middle decades of the next century. These plantations were regarded as forests and offered escape from the toil and mundanity of the burgeoning city.

#### **Belgravia as nostalgic forest:**

Belgravia, Yeoville and Parktown were established in the early years of Johannesburg as sanitariums for those who not only made their fortunes from the city, but in doing so garnered political influence. These suburbs were established to the north, among the new plantations which already offered escape and repose, however, the nostalgic character of this artificiality is evident in the longing to recreate the foreign milieus

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<sup>11</sup> According to a survey published by the city's park department this forest hosts an estimated 1.2 million trees within parks and streets and a further 4.8 million trees in gardens (the majority not being indigenous species), while a further investment of R44-million has been contributed to the parks department for its expansion, stating the significance of the forest in remediating pollution, improving habitability of the city, fostering wildlife and increase property value. This further underscores the necessity to reanimate existing parks.

<sup>12</sup> The construction of this forest represented a characteristic "integral to early modern articulations of urban and rural landscape [which] was the construct of the three natures—the 'first nature' of wilderness, the 'second nature' of cultivation, and the symbolic, artificial 'third nature' of the garden" (Foster, 2012:45)



fig. 1.10. Old postcard of Parktown Ridge.



fig. 1.11. Photo of the Wilds.



fig. 1.12. Old postcard of Belgravia.

from where these individuals immigrated, through the import of those local arboreal species. This nostalgic reimagination was a privilege held by the opulent to further escape the relentless industry and pollutions of the city, deepened now by enticing the imagination. The creation of these landscapes further represented mastery over “wild, dark Africa” to foreign visitors who were hosted in these ostentatious estates flocking with agendas of economic and political investment.

#### **The Wilds as Third Nature:**

The Wilds is a nature reserve established in 1937, shortly after the Empire Exhibition (which celebrated the city's golden jubilee) closed and the plants from the exhibition's rockery were transferred to a donated piece of land south of Yeoville. Ironically described as a nature reserve, The Wilds is a reconstruction of an already artificially created nature (Foster, 2012:45) intended to facilitate the dweller's escape through exhibiting a recreated nature (further discussed in the typological development of the conservatory in the theory section).

#### **Braamfontein Cemetery as Paradisiacal escape:**

From its nascence the mining town's relentless expanse brought with it insufferable affliction creating a dire need for burial ground. Paralleling the town's rapid expanse these spaces, however, also provided havens of escape from the industry and toil of the everyday. While Braamfontein cemetery (established in 1888) was one of the first spaces to provide such sanctuary it further acted as a bridging between the sacred and profane, clearly manifested in the tympanum both guarding the entrance and creating a portal to the sublime, an otherness further embodied in the forest:

*Ever since ancient times, in pagan cults as in classical mythology, trees have been viewed and represented as symbols of power both human and divine. As gigantic elements that link the earth to the sky and the past to the future, they appear to embody ideals of transcendence [...] When they gather in forests — often sacred, sometimes haunted — they are most frequently described in terms full of awe [...] they have been incarnations of the generative force of the cosmos (Pacini, 2007:1).*

- 1\_ Braamfontein cemetery (1888)
- 2\_ Brixton cemetery (1908)
- 3\_ Wespark cemetery (1942)



- 1\_ Braamfontein cemetery (1888)
- 2\_ Brixton cemetery (1908)
- 3\_ Wespark cemetery (1942)

## Johannesburg's artificial nostalgic remnants / *Uitvalgrond*.

The *first artificial landscape* as a manifestation of escape is thus created from a binary which is essentially divergent and, again, aptly demonstrated in *The Burrow*. The familiarity of nostalgia which incessantly regenerates the old models (the Afrikaans word *verbeelding*<sup>13</sup> aptly describes the working of this mechanism when interpreted from its root in *verbeeld*, and will be developed throughout the dissertation), as well as that which is novel, is produced from the old when imagination (*verbeelding*) engages the unknown through fantasy. This constitutes the intimate imaginative process by which new typologies emerge, or the amnesic is revived through reimagination. In his 1994 thesis, *Delirious New York*<sup>14</sup>, the Dutch architect, architectural theorist and urbanist Rem Koolhaas (1944-) deliberates on this theme in describing the fantasy of Manhattan:

[...] *continuous reenactment of the same subconscious themes in ever new incarnations and on inarticulateness systematically cultivated in order to operate more effectively can never last longer than a single generation[...] But such a method of preservation ensures its own extinction* (Koolhaas, 1994:285).

This continuous reenactment is manifested in Johannesburg's restless metamorphosis as *first artificial landscape*. It is from this point that Malcomess and Kreutzfeldt (2013:63) recognise the significance of the vulnerability of the artificial landscape's geometric fragmentation and saturation with the fantasy of escape. Appropriating the term, "*Uitvalgrond*", the Afrikaans word assigned to the triangular piece of surplus ground around which the mining town formed, they posit that the disconfigured geometry of this surface not only accommodates this narrative, but imbues itself into the city as its creation myth. The looseness<sup>15</sup> of *Uitvalgrond*, not only as morphological structuring

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<sup>13</sup> "*Verbeeld-ing*" describes image, memory or model (interpreted in the context of Brixton cemetery as both remnant and more specifically revenant), while "*verbeelding*" describes imagination (reverie).

<sup>14</sup> *Delirious New York* is a retroactive manifesto for Manhattan written by Koolhaas in which he argues how Manhattan, as a mythical laboratory, invented a revolutionary lifestyle he describes as the 'Culture of Congestion'.

<sup>15</sup> In her book, *Imagining the Edgy City: Writing, Performing, and Building Johannesburg* (2013:3), Loren Kruger develops this idea of looseness stating: "Beyond the expression of subjective edginess, the term "edgy city" describes the objective layout of oddly shaped and unevenly developed districts, an urban form that has defined the city from the start. Johannesburg's growth and slump through cycles of speculation and retreat over unevenly joined parcels of real estate has always eluded the order of a rational street grid" (Kruger, 2013:3).

fig. 1.13. Old postcard of Braamfontein cemetery.

fig. 1.14. (author) Johannesburg's artificial natures.

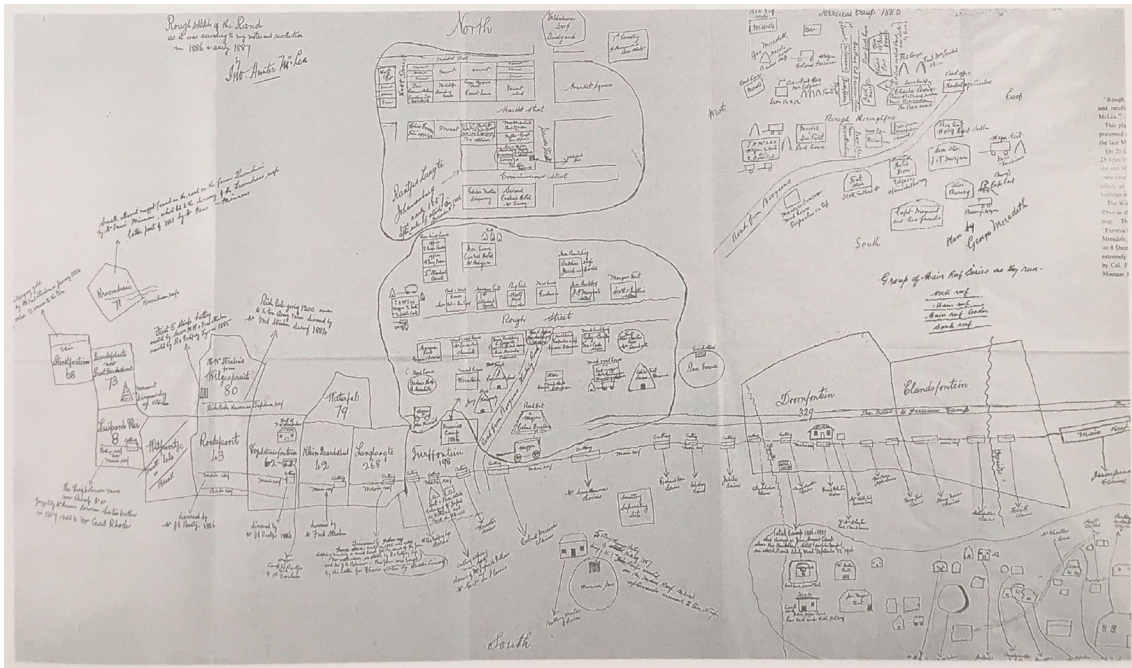


fig. 1.15. Origin of Uitvalgrond: first map of the erupting town.



fig. 1.16. Johannesburg as second artificial landscape.

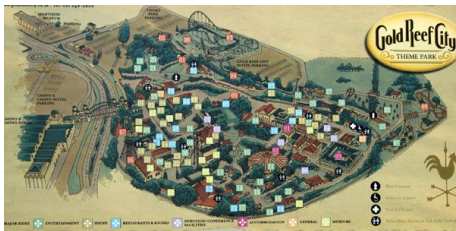


fig. 1.17. Map of Gold Reef City.

element (Foster, 2012:44), but also as mythological metaphor of the *first artificial landscape*, permeates the city. On every scale, the city thrives on the proliferation of *Uitvalgrond*. The dominance of this narrative/metaphor invents the reality of the city and sustains its myth, making the city's fabric disconfigurable and fertile to reinvention or 'reenactment', but also acutely susceptible to cultural amnesia or 'extinction' as the lived memories which created these artificial artefacts expire, and thus the formation of urban blight (Kruger, 2013:1) witnessed in the artificiality of the city's surface: new mountains in the form of mining dumps, synthetic European forests, Neoclassical, Victorian, Art Deco and Modernist artefacts and romanticized simulacra of the old city such as Gold Reef City. These anachronistic aspects of the city saturate the surface and the subterranean <sup>16</sup>, accumulating as nostalgic remnants, distinctly discernable in Brixton's cemetery.

Johannesburg erupted as a fantasy of escape promised by wealth. It is a nostalgic landscape (generated by an arrival culture of immigrants). It longs for escape. Its morphologies are artificial, its landscapes are nostalgic or residual. *Artificial landscapes* frame the reality of the city, they are simultaneously vulnerable to amnesia of cultural memory (with the erasure/loss of the desires that functioned to create them) and a fertile bed for imagination and the propagation thereof. This susceptibility is transposed to the dweller. Artifice circumscribes the dweller's movement and mobility, it offers momentary bliss/escape, it is limited. Artifice, however, also sustains the experience of intimacy with the city — the fantasy of escape here not only sustains the reality of the city defined by previous constructions of this fantasy, but eventually transcends this physicality by the acceptance of its inherent bifold vulnerability.

Imagination is not escape. It is a loosening of the known and a revelation of and engagement with the unknown that comes about when accepting the model, and reimagining its image. Nostalgic desire uses the image to compel imagination, thus opening a means of intimate, engaged experience through this process of redefinition and creation.

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<sup>16</sup> Referring here to urban characters such as the old Victorian Park Station and Blue Room, the burnt down Postal Station in Rissik street and the discovery of the postal network below binding it to the station. Gold Reef City as a hyper-real (Baudrillard describing disney world) geographic reconstruction of the mining town's bewilderment, charted cartographically in an escaped realm where fantasy is monetized, is perhaps the most poignantly lucid proponent of nostalgic materiality, echoing the construction of the city as "a vast mining encampment of prefabricated components [which] sprang up on the triangular *uitvalgrond*...[where] The cycles of Johannesburg's continual building and re-building had begun" (Chipkin, 1993:6)



fig. 1.18. (author) Sacred divisions. Graves in Brixton cemetery layed out discordantly, forming denominational sections and tensions.

## Research intentions

Artificiality, as a manifestation of the pursuit of escape, saturates the city and landscapes of Johannesburg. It is the narrative from which the city spawned, constructs and relentlessly perpetuates itself. The *first artificial landscape* is the materialization of escape, the synthetic nostalgic reproduction of the known. *Hinterland* situates itself in the condition of amnesia which inadvertently reclaims the artificial nostalgic material constructed from the dweller's the desire of escape. Brixton cemetery epitomizes the *first artificial landscape*, where escape has manifested in a new synthetic granite morphology as well as a simulacral forest. The cemetery and its forest exists, firstly, to escape from the mundanity and drudgery induced by the city and the afflictions which haunted the city during its nascence. It is an isolating forest within the city, a sanctuary which, tellingly, consists only of exotic species of European, American and Australian trees imported by immigrants who, overcome with an acute nostalgia, attempted to reconstruct the familiarity and comfort found in memories of their origins. Escape is, secondly, represented in memorialization of the deceased, an attempted escape of death alleviating those remaining from a constant confrontation with the inevitability of death. Thirdly, the cemetery represents the desire to escape the suffering pervading the chaos of *the real*, attained through a simulacral reconstruction of Paradise. The forest as Paradise exists as an *axis mundi* (a device similar to the tombstones and mausolea scattered over the cemetery's surface) which escapes the banality of the city by creating a portal to a metaphysical, blissful, otherness.

Evading, rather than encountering, the unknown, through artificial nostalgic reproduction of the known, has, however, caused the desacralization of the cemetery, causing its typological metamorphosis into a surface of remnants and a forest of unknowns. This has occurred through amnesia of lived memory of those buried there as the cemetery has been passive from the 1960's. This loss of significance has resulted in the forest claiming the cemetery's material, leaving it impenetrable to the dweller and subsequently instigating nefarious occupation. Amnesia, through synthetic nostalgic reproduction, has made the cemetery physically and imaginatively impenetrable. The cemetery is a nostalgic remnant, a hinterland, existing in the realm beyond the known. It is the awareness of this inevitability of amnesia in which *Hinterland* situates itself by re-imaginatively occupying the amnesic gap encountered in Brixton cemetery as *first artificial landscape*. The architectural in(ter)vention functions to deconstruct and reimagine its artificiality to reanimate the cemetery as nostalgic

remnant. Reimagination of the artificial is accomplished through the in(ter)vention of a *second artificial landscape*.

The *first artificial landscape* is reanimated through the dweller's reimagination of its artificiality, through the voluntary encounter with the unknown which pervades the cemetery and the forest, both in the form of physical Death, artificial death (nostalgic promulgation of the known), and amnesic death (through memorialization and desacralization). The reimagination of the *first artificial landscape* is provoked through the (synthetic) architectural insertion, a *second artificial landscape* manifested as a *Bioluminescent Conservatory* (cultivating a collection of synthetic botany) reanimating the forest, and a columbarium as a response to the cemetery's dire need to expand its capacity for burial. This intervention, however, allows the dweller to engage, rather than escape, the terror of the unknown.

The encounter with the unknown is, furthermore, represented by the archetype of the mythologically forest. *The Forest* represents a chaotic realm of unknowns and obscurities confronting the dweller (the archetypal hero) upon entering. Through the confrontation with unknowns constituting *the real*, these unknowns are made less intimidating and abstract, and gradually alleviates the dweller from the desire to escape, which, as in Kafka's fable of the burrow, only results in an insidious exacerbation of the terror presented by unknowns (which cause the creature's demise). The *second artificial landscape* therefore induces the potential for an imaginative reanimation of the cemetery through this intimation experienced by the dweller when confronted by the unknowns inherent in artificiality.

A *third intimate landscape* is therefore realised by means of teasing the dweller's imagination to reimagine (synaesthesia) the nostalgic remnant in the *first artificial landscape*, within the dominant narrative of escape from which the city is artificially constructed. The cemetery is reanimated by reconfiguring and mechanizing the desire for escape to engage the unfamiliar, fostering a process in which imagination engages death as both the reality of the cemetery, but more so, as a process of reimaginative death allowing the reenchantment of this reality through *La Petite Mort* or "little death" described by Roland Barthes.

## Architectural intentions

### 1\_ **Remnants** in the *first artificial landscape*.

Understanding the nostalgic remnants dormant in the fabric of Johannesburg as an *artificial landscape* produced by the desire to escape the terror of the unknown. The production of the *first artificial landscape* is thus recognised as a result of nostalgic reproduction of the known.

### 2\_ Amnesia in the *first artificial landscape*.

Recognising that the nostalgic production of the known is not only a futile endeavor to escape the unknown, but that it exacerbates the terror of thereof. The *first artificial landscape* is thus saturated with amnesic pockets (the loss of individuals' nostalgia from which it was created) in suspended animation due to a resistance to imaginative engagement - the encounter with Death/death - as a consequence of this nostalgia for escape. Death pervades Brixton cemetery both physically but also metaphorically, recognised in the amnesia of the fantasy of the cemetery as a Paradisiacal forest and loss of lived memory of those buried there. The impenetrability of this nostalgia is further exacerbated by the deferral of imaginative potentiality through memorialization.

### 3\_ **Revenants** from the *second artificial landscape*.

Understanding the imaginative potentiality of encountering, rather than escaping, the unknown both inherent in artificiality (as a nostalgic reproduction to escape the terror of the unknown) as well as the archetypal mythological forest, through Death/death. Further investigating how Architecture, as a *second artificial landscape* can internalize and reimagine these two conditions encountered in Brixton cemetery existing as a nostalgic remnant, to reanimate the cemetery and the forest. This is accomplished by mechanizing artificiality latent in the cemetery and forest by producing negatives of these conditions manifested as the *second artificial landscape*.

### 4\_ **Reveries** in the *third intimate landscape*

Understanding how the dweller's reimagination of the cemetery, through the intimate encounter of Death/death as the physical and mythological unknown, revives the cemetery as a *third intimate landscape*, and allows autonomy of dweller over the architecture.

5\_ The reimaginative translation of artificiality found in the narrative of escape into an architectural language, through the production of negatives of conditions encountered in Brixton cemetery. Developing this language creates a framework from which architecture can be produced as an emphatic response to the artificial and amnesic conditions inherent in the cemetery. This language permeates the architectural response on the level of conceptualization, program, formgiving, materiality, construction, detailing, maintenance and its inevitable ruination. This language itself becomes an investigation of through the production of negatives of conditions encountered in Brixton cemetery. Developing this language creates a framework from which architecture can be produced as an emphatic response to the artificial and amnesic conditions inherent in the cemetery. This language permeates the architectural response on the level of conceptualization, program, formgiving, materiality, construction, detailing, maintenance and its inevitable ruination. This language itself becomes an investigation of the architecture's relation to death, imagination and temporality, allowing the architecture to become autonomous through its relation to Death/death, sustaining both its significance within the cemetery as well as that of the cemetery itself sustaining both its significance within the cemetery as well as that of the cemetery itself.

### **Research methodology:**

The task of this investigation is to uncover both the real (profane) and the elusive (sacred) characteristics and conditions which determines (and predetermined) Brixton cemetery and its immediate context, i.e., the nostalgic fantasies from which it was created. These conditions are mapped, analysed, synthesised and conveyed, however, always tethered to the notions of escape and artificiality. These conditions are dialectical: ephemerality (mortality) and perpetuity (immortality), sublimity and banality, mundaneness and uncanny, passage and passing, horizontality and verticality, sacred and profane, familiars and exotics. Furthermore, these conditions are mapped in terms of the existing and historical, edges, surfaces, monuments and memorials, presences and voids (negatives) as spatial informants that will articulate architecture. The intention is to reveal points of significance and sensitivity where fantasy can act as an oblique between these dialectics to engage imagination. This function of fantasy and imagination is evident in Brixton cemetery; the existence of cemeteries indicates the desire for (spatial) reimagination.

Understanding these evanescent parameters is critical to the project. Although these parameters diverge from the familiar scales and modes of investigation, it is necessary to establish a relation to the prevalent and prevailing narratives that underpin the morphologies of the city, rather than investigating and fixating on the physical manifestation of those morphologies which exist in flux, temperament and amnesia, which currently, and inevitably, influence the cemetery unpredictably. Fantasy, here, is more constant than fabric.

The project will then be developed to gain further insight into the intimate interface between dweller and architecture acknowledging that escape constructs and defines the city through artificiality and imagination. Programmatic dismantling and reimagination of the characteristics of the conservatory and columbarium, through typological reconfiguration and conceptualisation, further informs the creation of an architectural language necessary for this reimaginative intervention.

### **Research is conducted through:**

1\_ Qualitative and quantitative field research through site visits and mapping exercises,

2\_ Literature studies of:

a) influences of existing, historical and projected conditions in the macro and micro context relevant to the site,

b) historical and contemporary discourses on the mythology and philosophy of escape and the production of artificiality, with special attention paid to negatives,

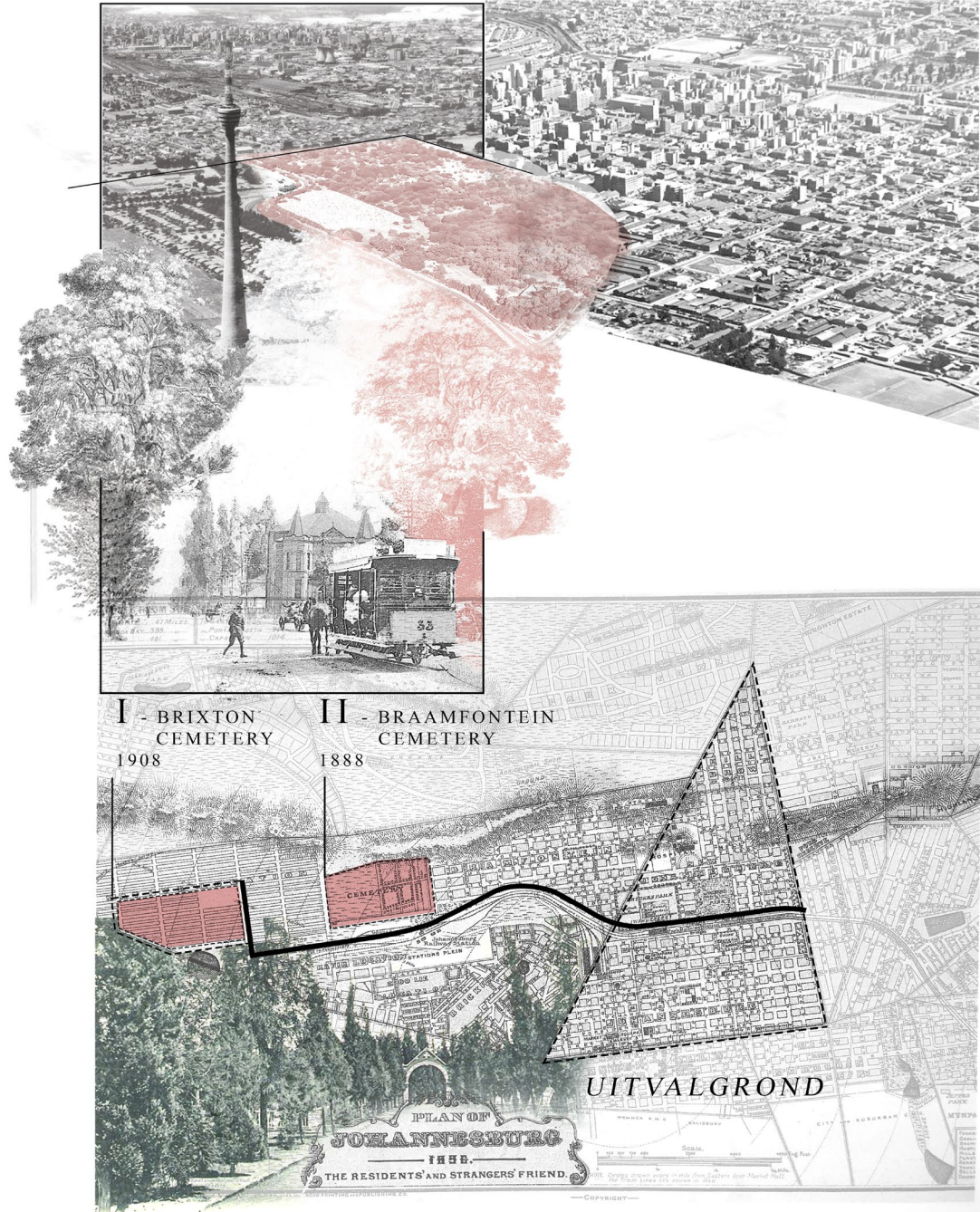
c) historical and contemporary discourses in art, pertaining to memory, artificiality, and amnesia,

d) historical and contemporary discourses on the mythology and philosophy of conservatories,

e) relevant architectural, philosophical and psychoanalytical discourses to inform and guide theoretical and conceptual arguments,

3\_ Precedent studies drawn from art and architectural discourses to investigate the significance and potentialities of artificiality, to underpin and develop theoretical and conceptual thinking. This is done in order to develop an architectural language in relation to contextual narratives, physical context, programme, spatiality, materiality, tectonics, construction and maintenance, pertaining to the study of memory, amnesia and imagination.

4\_ The achievement of the thesis will not only be in the argument, but will furthermore attempt to derive its value from volume generated through the application of this reimaginative process (as a practical demonstration of the effect of the theoretical discourse). This allows the author to engage unknowns inherent in the artificiality of his gained architectural knowledge and understanding of its language. A realm of intimation is thus created for the author, existing between the architectural process and product, and the experience of undertaking the dissertation in the pursuit of expanding knowledge.



Cemetery Avenue

fig. 1.19. (author) Brixton cemetery mapped in relation to the city.

## Chapter 2

### Site Context: Brixton Cemetery

**Brixton as nostalgic suburb** (morphology of looseness and tightness):

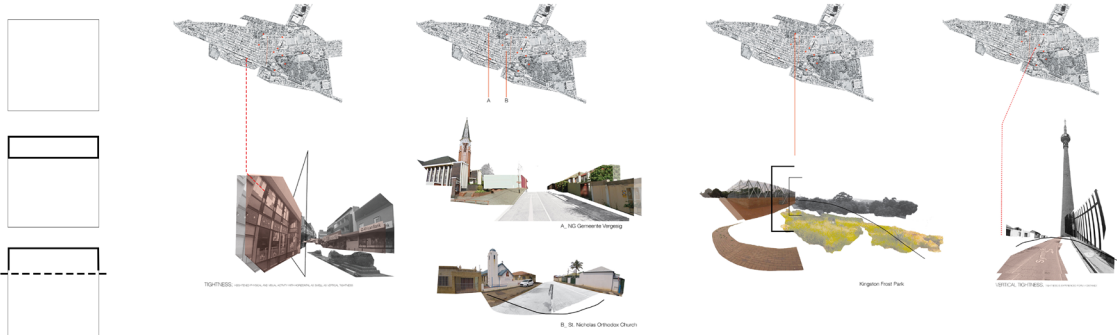
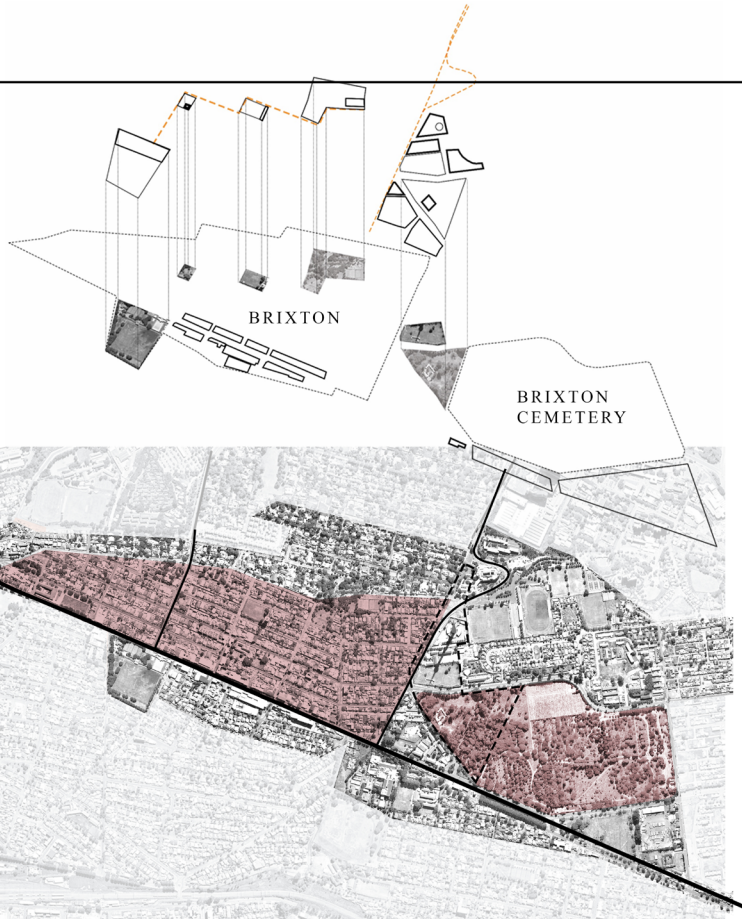
Brixton, the suburb where this project is situated, is one of the oldest (mainly) working-class neighbourhoods in Johannesburg. Proclaimed in 1902 as a labourers district, and named after the suburb in London in the United Kingdom, it is located towards the western edge of the city's core, on one of the highest points on the ridge that straddles the watershed between the Atlantic and Indian Oceans. The neighbourhood is characterized by a fine urban grain, resulting from the relatively small properties charted from its outset, and has been largely disaffected by the influences of urban decay and gentrification, retaining much of quaint character of its Victorian heritage (although this has recently come under threat due to developmental pressure). High Street, the main vital corridor linking the suburb to the city, has been the most affected by change seeing an influx of commerce and development of mostly student residences, although this has taken place in a slow, incremental nature. The Brixtonian population is highly diverse, despite the majority of neighbourhood's residents having been settled there for relatively long periods of time. The community is well integrated, but insular with retail, work, recreation, religious spaces and social opportunities being abundant and mostly within walking distance, although, a host of these places have become territorialized. This has fostered conditions for crime to become rife, and often encountered in the parks (some of which have attempted to be formalized to combat these activities), cemetery and unoccupied parcels of land throughout the suburb (Kotze, 2014). While these conditions have incapacitated the progression of Brixton and, to some extent, barred its inclusion into the city, recent development in Chiswick Street (binding High Street with the ridge) have attempted remediating the effects of this through gentrifying pockets of the old fabric. Furthermore, the *Empire-Perth Development Corridor* is a document released by the Johannesburg Development Agency in 2017 which includes a redevelopment framework for Brixton as a medium to high density residential area (with new mixed use commercial, retail and recreational services, mostly accommodating students

## BRIXTON

The suburb where this project is situated, is one of the oldest (mainly) working-class suburbs in Johannesburg. Topographically, it bears the distinction that it straddles the watershed between the Atlantic and Indian Oceans that traverses this part of the city. This means that the suburb is situated on one of the highest points in the city. From the start, its relatively small properties resulted in a fine urban grain. Despite the suburb being well situated in terms of work, leisure opportunities and its proximity to metropolitan connector routes, the change that gentrification or urban decay can inflict on an urban area has largely passed it by. The change that has occurred is of a slower and more incremental nature. The population living in Brixton is, like that of many inner-city areas, highly diverse and cosmopolitan. Most residents have lived here for a relatively long period of time; long enough to form lasting bonds with the place and the other inhabitants. This has resulted in a pronounced pride in, and ownership of, the area by the majority of its residents.

Brixton's Victorian heritage, whilst under threat, is also enlivened through a diverse citizenry not too concerned with appearances but appreciating the convenience of children playing in the street, shopping in spazas and corner cafes, repairing and washing cars on pavements, conversing from verandas and over low walls or winding down in taverns and boutique B&B's. The neighbourhood is well served internally with retail, work, recreation and social opportunities -all mostly within walking distance."

(from <http://artefacts.co.za>)



## BRIXTON AND THE FOREST

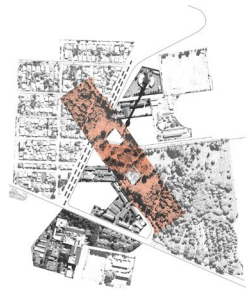
A MORPHOLOGY OF LOOSENESS AND TIGHTNESS



1\_ LOOSENESS / SCHISM

2\_ COLLAPSING THE SCHISM

3\_ BINDING NEIGHBOURHOOD AND FOREST



TEXTURAL BINDING AS CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

fig. 2.20. (author) Brixton morphologies.



fig. 2.21. Brixton cemetery in relation to the city.

from the University of Johannesburg and the University of the Witwatersrand), as well as a strategy to formalise Auckland Park, which includes the Universities, their sports grounds, as well as some schools, as a *Knowledge Precinct*. This precinct includes the Jan Hofmeyer and Vrededorp suburbs which are immediately adjacent to the northern edge of Brixton cemetery, and are to be redeveloped as four to six storey apartment blocks (Empire Perth Development Corridor Strategic Area Framework, 2017:83-93). The framework proposes the integration of these precincts to the city through the Johannesburg BRT system.

The schism created by public institutions and civil amenities (particularly Garden City Hospital and the fire station) bordering the suburb's eastern and southern borders have to a large degree bolstered the degree to which Brixton is isolated from the city, and further severs Brixton from the cemetery, impeding its necessary rehabilitation as a public park <sup>17</sup>.

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<sup>17</sup> According to the *Empire Perth Development Corridor* document, open space and the rehabilitation thereof is crucial to the densification of these precincts, stating that the current availability of green spaces is already insufficient for the existing population. Out of 195 hectares of space available in the corridor, 104 hectares belong to the three cemeteries established here (Brixton cemetery being the largest), although they have become impenetrable to the public. A ratio of 1,5 hectares per 1000 population (CSIR guidelines require a ratio of 0,5) can be achieved with the rehabilitation of cemeteries as public parks (Empire Perth Development Corridor Strategic Area Framework, 2017: 44-45).

### **History of Brixton cemetery:**

Johannesburg's City Parks department regards cemeteries as parks, recognising their potential as green pockets in urban belts, however, most of the cemeteries have become isolated from the city, unused and neglected. From the outset, Brixton cemetery was landscaped, planned and organized as a park with a curviform nature in the tradition of English and Scottish urban cemeteries with the various religious denominations permitted to have isolated sections (Munro, 2017). The cemetery is currently one of 35 cemeteries in the greater Johannesburg area, 26 of which are passive and the remainder of which are being rapidly occupied. According to estimations an additional 1 500 hectares will be required for burial within the next half century, and while the City of Johannesburg has set aside R20-million for developing new cemeteries (ibid., 2017), custodial bodies are forced to consider and encourage alternative burial methods which include: extension of cremation facilities (although only 6% of the city's population makes use of cremation), columbariums and mausolea, gardens of remembrance, second and third burials, reduced space coffins, upright burials, and deep-freeze liquid nitrogen cremation (Jhbcityparks.com, 2008:3-7). Reduction of burial graves is also considered in attempt to preserve green spaces. Brixton cemetery's first burial on the 34 hectare site took place in 1912 with Braamfontein cemetery nearing its full capacity. The cemetery provides burial to various religions and races including a Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Roman Catholic section, and hosts two crematoria towards the north-west portion of the site, the first, with a wood-burning oven, was built in 1918 after a request was made by Mahatma Gandhi in 1908 to the Town Council on behalf of the Hindu community. The second, more efficient gas-fired oven, was built in 1956 to accommodate increased demand.

### **Dates of significant events in Brixton:**

**1902\_** Brixton proclaimed

**1911\_** Brixton Recreation Ground established

**1912\_** Brixton Cemetery

**1918\_** Brixton Hindu crematorium established by Mahatma Gandhi

**1922\_** Site of the pitched battle during the Red Rebellion

**1925\_** Kingston Frost Park established

**1940\_** Brixton Swimming Pool built

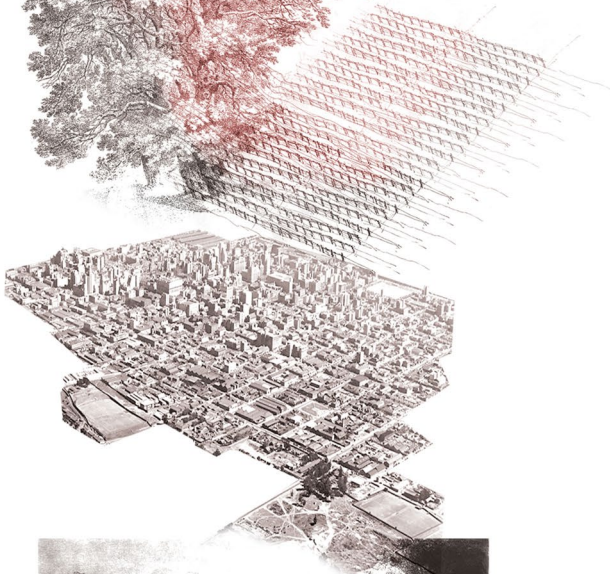
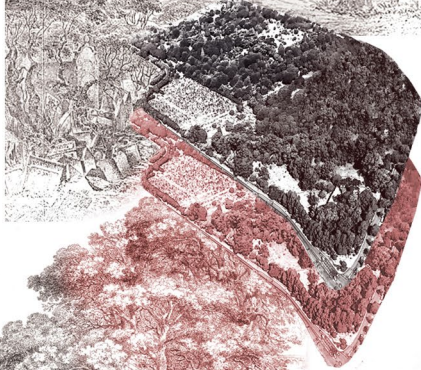
**1955\_** Group Areas Act

**1962\_** Sentech Tower





fig. 2.22. (author)  
 Mapping Brixton  
 cemetery.



## [ ARTIFICIALITY OF ESCAPE ]

### REVENANTS / ( “verbeeld-ing” )

#### I\_ ESCAPE THROUGH AXIS MUNDI

*Cemetery as simulacra of Elysium / Paradise sanctified in religions’ isolated pockets and rituals.*

#### II\_ ESCAPE THROUGH ARTIFICIAL FOREST

*Cemetery as nostalgic, synthetic European forest.*

#### III\_ ESCAPE THROUGH MEMORIALIZATION

*Deferral of Death/death through memorialization.*

*Tombstones (especially Jewish cemetery) as artificial granite surface.*

### AMNESIA / ( “ontslape” )

#### I\_ Cemetery passive from 1960’s.

*II\_ The forest reclaims the cemetery as lived memory of the buried is lost. The cemetery is desacralized and amnesia is exacerbated as significance of the cemetery becomes ambiguous.*

*III\_ Deepening of edge and nefarious occupation occurs as desacrelization occurs as the artificiality of escape recedes.*

*IV\_ Developmental pressure threatens erasure of large portions of Brixton, the cemetery, and its engrained memory.*

## **Artificiality of escape manifested in Brixton cemetery.**

### **Escape inherent in axis mundi:**

Brixton cemetery can be regarded as an archetypal precedent of the narrative of escape in as much as it primarily attempts to escape to a mythological realm through its simulacral reimagination of Paradise. This is not only represented by the forest and tombstones existing as axis mundi binding the immediate to the cosmic, but is also sanctified in the various religions' isolated pockets and rituals.

*Memorials ritualize remembrance and mark the reality of ends... The memorial is a special precinct, extruded from life, a segregated enclave where we honor the dead (Young, 1993:3).*

### **Escape inherent in the artificial forest:**

Secondly, escape is captured here in the cemetery existing as a nostalgic, synthetic European forest that provides serene, but claustrophobic seclusion from the city. More significantly, however, the site (which was previously a camp for native labourers) is a dense verdant forest, lined on its peripheries with towering blue-gum trees, overgrown as an arboreal forest - rid of any indigenous species - attempting to escape through the familiarity of nostalgia. According to Foster this artificial reproduction of European nostalgia identifies that "the differentiation of nature was not just spatial but temporal, and incorporated history, and that a people's nature was linked to their environments" (Foster, 2012:45).

The artificiality of the landscape furthermore manifests in the tombstones, mausolea and shrines forming a new surface of granite monuments <sup>18</sup>. These memorials now subject to cultural amnesia "suggest themselves as indigenous, even geological outcroppings [where]... in time, such idealized memory grows as natural to the eye as the landscape in which it stands" (Young, 1993:2).

### **Escape through memorialization:**

Escape is also characterised in the process of memorialization, which, according to Young further exacerbates the process of amnesia, with particular relevance to cemeteries:

*For once we assign monumental form to memory, we have to some degree divested ourselves of the obligation to remember. In shouldering the memory-*

fig. 2.23. (author)  
Artificiality of escape in  
Brixton cemetery.

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<sup>18</sup> This is especially evident in the Jewish section, a poignant mirroring of the city rising in the background towards the east.



*BRIXTON TOWER*

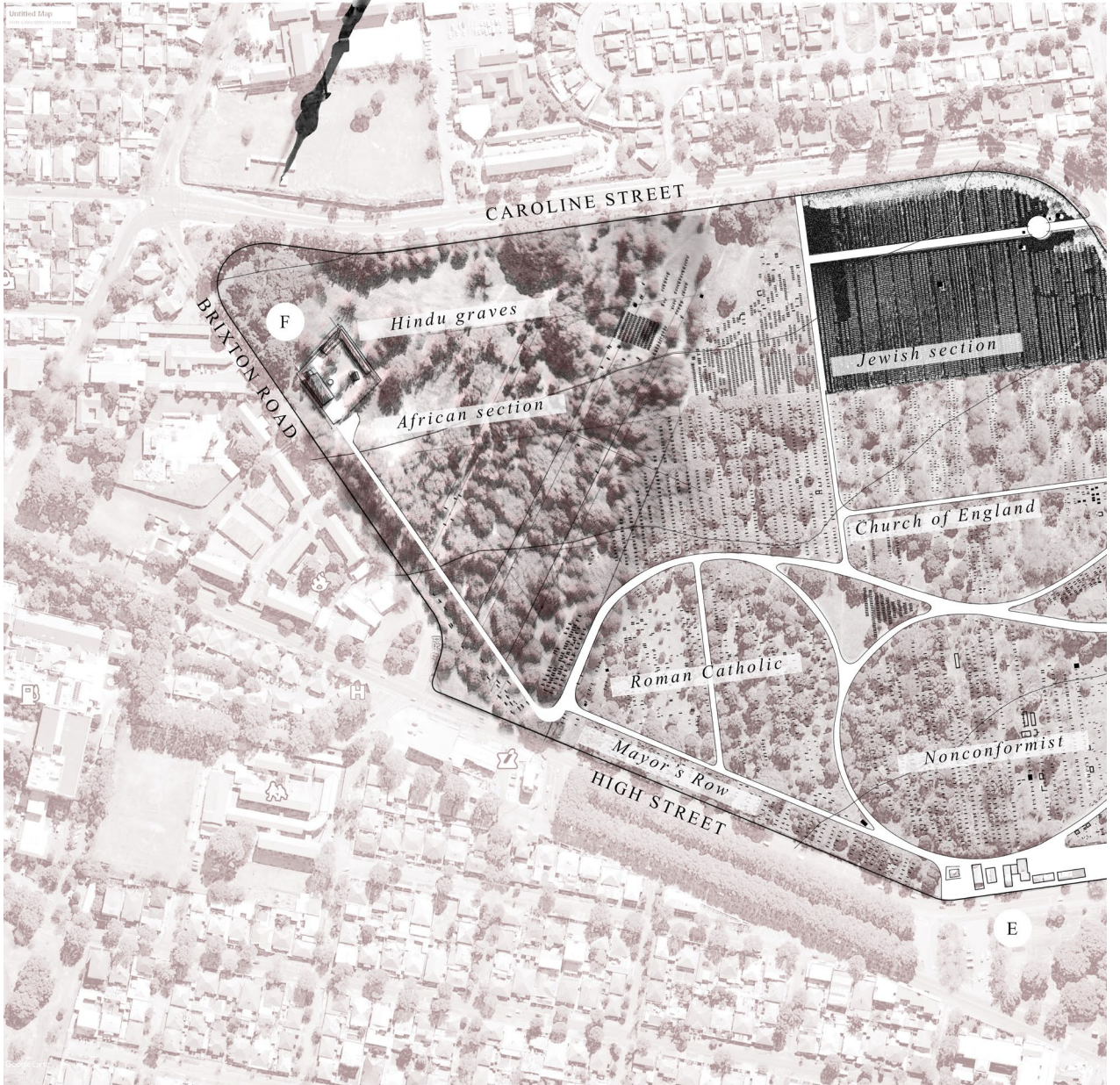




fig. 2.24. (author) Sacred division and sublime escape in the artificial forest. Brixton cemetery as nostalgic remnant.

"The map is no longer the territory":

"[...] and if one must return to the fable, today it is the territory whose shreds slowly rot across the extent of the map. It is the real, and not the map, whose vestiges persist here and there in the deserts that are no longer those of the Empire, but ours" (Baudrillard, 1994:1).

**CYPRESS**

*Cupressus sempervirens*  
Eastern Mediterranean



**SYZYGIUM**

*Syzygium gerrardii*  
Australia



**WHITE STINKWOOD**

*Celtis africana*  
indigenous



**BLUE GUM**

*Eucalyptus globulus*  
South East Australia



**PLANE TREE**

*Platanus x acerifolia*  
European



**BOTTLE BRUSH**

*Callistemon*  
Australia



**LILAC**

*Syringa vulgaris*  
Asian



*work, monuments may relieve viewers of their memory burden* (Young, 1993:5).

The cemetery provides a framework for two dialectics of death through which the argument is developed: firstly, *physical Death* and *amnesic death* experienced when memory fatally attempts to reproduce a model (through desire to recreate the familiar) and eventually erodes (aptly described by the Afrikaans word (*verbeeld-ing*) or, secondly, death <sup>19</sup> that is experienced when reimagination claims the original model to create the new (*verbeelding*). This becomes a process with particular relevance in relation to the pervasiveness of Death in the cemetery, and is appropriate to reanimate the forest and its material through this process of Death/death.

**Amnesic conditions in Brixton cemetery:**  
a nostalgic remnant of the *first artificial landscape*.

Amnesia is encountered in Brixton cemetery where its artificiality has manifested itself as a nostalgic remnant in the *first artificial landscape*, the world of the dead belonging to the living (Munro, 2017). Escape here has become residual. The cemetery gradually undergoes typological metamorphosis as amnesia ensures its gradual transformation into an uninhabitable forest and graves are reclaimed by nature. The cemetery, which provided physical and imaginative escape to the dweller, has dilapidated into urban blight and become impenetrable to the public (both as cemetery and forest) firstly because of the extent to which it was intended as escape and isolation from the city, and secondly due to the desacralization it undergoes as lived memory of those buried there is exhausted (the cemetery has been passive from the 1960's). The loss of significance caused by these conditions has resulted in further isolation from the public as its ambiguity has become a haven to vagabonds, nefarious activities, vandalism and desecration of graves, and has had an adverse effect on all the surrounding neighbourhoods (*ibid.*, 2017).

The cemetery is further isolated from Brixton's residential fabric as public institutions and civil amenities form an impenetrable belt severing these spaces, while the lack of articulation of edge conditions on the eastern and southern edges, and shortage of public entrances has led to the insurgent opening of informal entrances to the cemetery, which become festering crime nodes afflicting pedestrians.

As developmental pressures from the city and densification further threaten the erasure of significant portions of Brixton, the memory enshrined here further recedes. It is an heirloom in suspended animation.

fig. 2.25. (author)  
Herbarium of exotic  
species in Brixton  
cemetery.

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<sup>19</sup> Death (deceased): "*ontslape*" / little death (awakened): "*La Petit Mort*", "*ont-slape*".

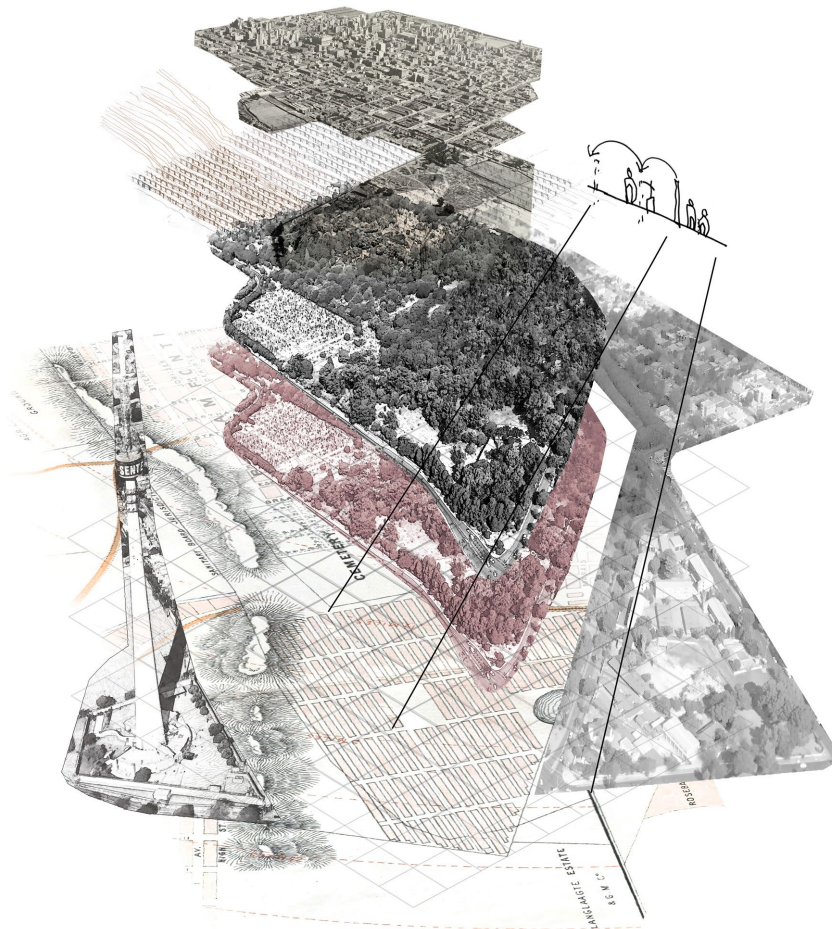


fig. 2.26. (author)  
Desacralization of Brixton  
cemetery.

### **Necessity of intervention and the role of reimagination.**

Recognising the cemetery as a physical manifestation of cultural amnesia still in a degenerating state of dilapidation (as custodianship over the cemetery withers), acts of desecration, vandalism and crime becoming pervasive, it has become a priority for the city to intervene here. Current urban development plans from the city propose rezoning Brixton, Vrededorp and Pageview as medium to high density residential, which will infringe on the cemetery due to the availability of developmental space, and further threaten the erasure of heritage value of large portions of Brixton and the memory ingrained in the cemetery. This loss of significance due to amnesia and erasure will induce further desacralization and exacerbation of current conditions.

Desacralization of the cemetery causes its transformation into a forest while densification of residential developments surrounding the cemetery and the *Knowledge Precinct* proposed in the *Empire-Perth Development Corridor* by Johannesburg Development Agency (2017) just north, adjacent to the cemetery necessitates its reanimation into a park for public recreation and exploration. The city council further expressed the urgent need to expand the city's overburdened crematoria as well as the dire need to reconsider burial methods as the availability of burial space in the city drastically diminishes (with an estimated 1500 hectares required for burial grounds in the next 50 years), although superstition around the exhumation of graves foster stigmas preventing any intervention in cemeteries. Furthermore, the highly sanctified proximity around the Hindu crematoria causes pedestrian corridors between Caroline Street (northern edge) and Brixton and High Street (southern edge) to press deeper into the forest making its crossing dubious, while the heritage significance of the Hindu passive resistance graves surrounding the crematoria makes physical intervention and necessary expansion of the currently overburdened crematoria problematic.

This new landscape captures excess by being "increasingly permeated by culturally constructed geographical images, narratives, and discourses that shape the disposition of urbanites toward the spaces they inhabit" (Foster, 2012:44-45) and can thus be understood as being as much a metaphorical image as physical space (ibid., 2012:44-45). Nuttall further stretches the significance of this geographic reformation witnessed in the city by observing that this newly created surface is inseparable from the narrative of fantasy in which originates, arguing that "the entanglement between surface and underneath constitutes one of the defining metaphors by which to understand the city" (Nuttall and Mbembe, 2008:91). Nuttall further argues that understanding this essential metaphor allows for a deepened interpretation of the city. Instead of relying on the city dweller's ability in modes of translation and translatability, enabled by the reading of the city, the understanding shifts to an understanding of how cultural forms sustain the movement and reconfiguration of the city (Nuttall





fig. 2.27. (author) View into the forest towards Hindu crematoria. Taken from an informal entrance on High Street on the southern edge.

A



fig. 2.28. (author) View into the forest towards the intervention site. Taken from an informal entrance on Brixton Road on the south western edge.

B



fig. 2.29. (author) View into the forest taken from the informal pedestrian corridor in proximity to the Hindu crematoria on the north western edge.

C



D



E



F

fig. 2.30. (author) D.  
Informal pedestrian  
corridor from south  
western edge.

fig. 2.31. (author) E.  
View into the forest from  
western edge.

fig. 2.32. (author) F.  
Jewish cemetery on  
northern edge.

fig. 2.33. (author)  
Photographic mapping in  
proximity to the site.





fig. 2.34. (author)  
Remnant conditions  
throughout Brixton  
cemetery.



fig. 2.35. (author) Graves  
claimed by the forest  
throughout Brixton  
cemetery.

and Mbembe, 2008:93). It is by understanding the *second landscape* as a socio-nature assembled of material and cultural practices, always through this narrative, that the relation of perception and the potential of imagination to the creation of lived environments is revealed (Kruger, 2013:7).

Brixton cemetery provides a realm where slippage between architecture and the dweller's imagination can occur, where the architecture lures the dweller's imagination to revive the forest. The forest is reanimated in recognising the symptoms of amnesia in the desire for artificially creating escape. As the architectural intervention uses artificiality divisively to facilitate the re-imagination (*verbeelding*) of the existing material, and to create a condition for fantasy that engages the dweller's imagination, the forest and the architecture is experienced intimately. Fantasy here further functions on a mythological scale in that the forest is regarded as an archetype for revealing the unfamiliar and engaging death through imagination.

#### **Proposed urban intervention in cemetery:**

The conceptual analysis of Brixton as a morphology of looseness and tightness is appropriated as language to intervene in the site. The schism existing between cemetery and urban context is collapsed firstly by removing the hard edges and impenetrable barriers to the cemetery and formalizing the insurgent entrances to the cemetery, and secondly, through binding the natural texture and intimate grain of the cemetery into the immediate surrounding urban context, deepening the periphery and creating a profane edge around the cemetery as a sacred belly. This intervention will further instigate pedestrianization of the cemetery by formalizing existing and inserting new pedestrian corridors which intersects to establish nodes at various points within 100m by 100m radiuses, allowing points for repose as well as passive surveillance around these areas. The pedestrian corridors are divided into arterial routes (3m wide) stretching between the formalized entrances and significant structures (chapel, crematoria, mayor's row graves), and subsidiary routes (with varying widths) which deviate between these routes, hosting landscape follies and highlighting significant shrines, graves and memorials in the cemetery. This will facilitate entrance into the cemetery from the newly proposed medium to high density residential buildings bordering the eastern and southern edges, while further development of retail, commercial and recreational facilities are proposed to mediate this transition on the southern edge following High Street, and expanding on the vigor which already infuse this street. New BRT stops are further proposed in Caroline Street to serve Brixton, the cemetery and educational band to the north as well as in High Street bordering the south, serving the retail, residential, recreational, religious and health care facilities. This establishes the cemetery as a new destination on the BRT transit.



1 - 4: NEW AND FORMALISED ENTRANCES TO CEMETERY

**EXISTING:**

<span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #8B4513; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Hospital and health care
<span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #8B0000; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Public schools
<span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #4B0000; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Fire Station
<span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #C00000; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Religious

**PROPOSED INTERVENTION:**

<span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #A9A9A9; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Medium to high density residential
<span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #404040; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Retail and commercial
<span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #000000; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Recreational

**BF**  
SITE  
DEV  
SCA

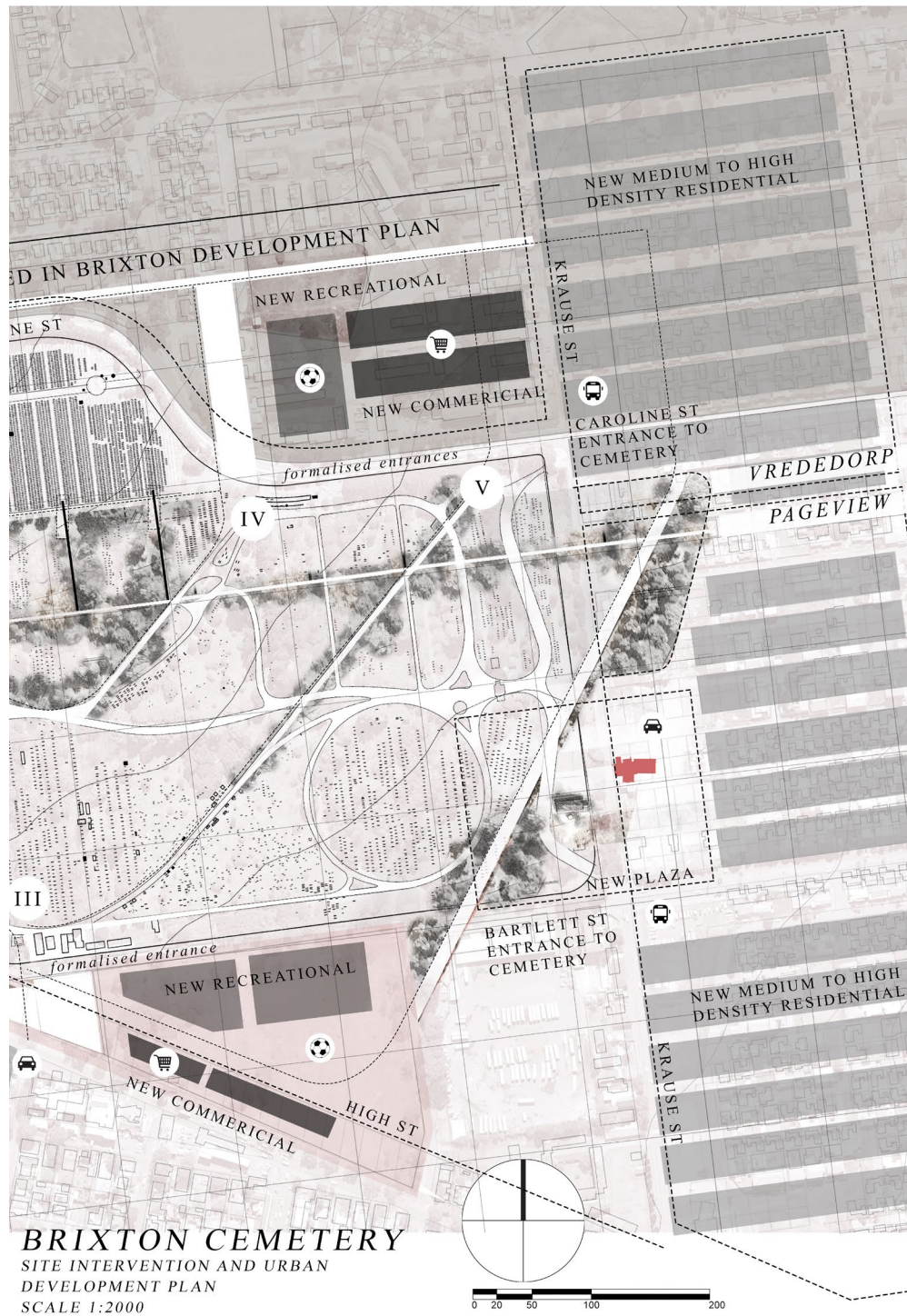


fig. 2.36. (author)  
 Proposed urban  
 intervention in and  
 around Brixton cemetery.



*PART II*

***THE KNOWN***

Escape and imagination in the  
*second artificial landscape*

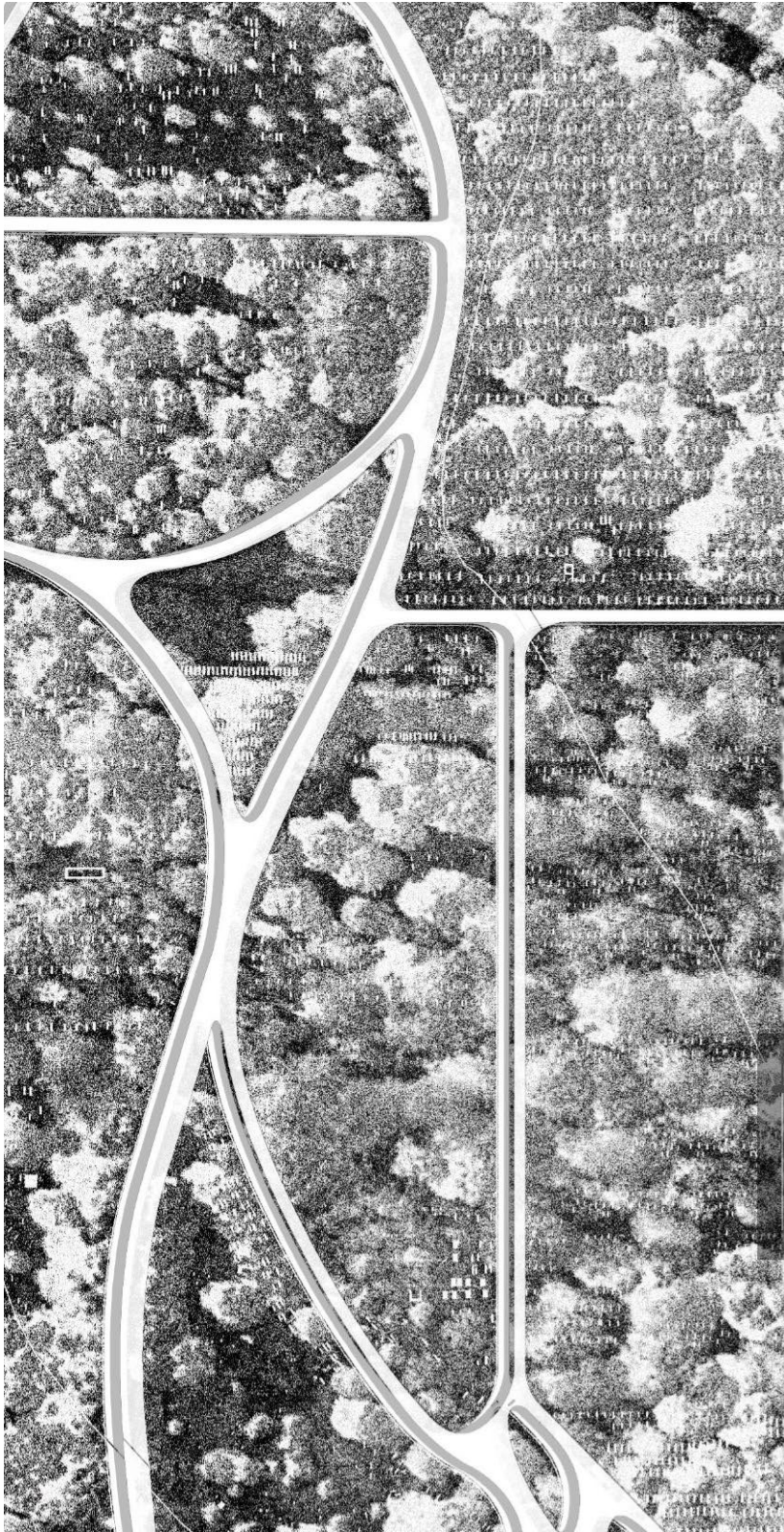


fig. 3.37. (author)  
Textures of escape in  
Brixton cemetery.

# Chapter 3

## Theory

**Potentiality of intervention:** reimagination of the cemetery in the encounter of the unknown inherent in artificiality.

*Thus a piece of architecture is not architectural because it seduces, or because it fulfills some utilitarian function, but because it sets in motion the operations of seduction and the unconscious (Tschumi, 1994:96).*

The role of imagination in architecture in relation to the narrative of the *second artificial landscape* is explored which, through nostalgic desire, produces the reality of the city. Karsten Harries's essays *Building and the Terror of Time* (Harries, 1982) and *The Two Faces of Nostalgia* (Harries, 2017) is adopted as a framework to reveal the slippage between imagination and nostalgia in architecture. The potentiality of imagination, *reveries*, as a form of death is further developed in relation to *physical Death* and *amnesic death, revenants*, (both as loss of significance resulting from loss of memory and erasure, as well as the desire to forget) to Brixton Cemetery, tethering death back to cemetery, thus reanimating the nostalgic remnant both physically, but also *intimately* through what Roland Barthes describes as *little death (La Petite Mort)* experienced by the dwellers, when confronted by the artificiality of the remnant's material and the unknown that pervades the forest as mythological archetype.

Once situated in/participating in the construction of the narrative *second artificial landscape*, the dweller's intimate engagement with unfamiliarity is underpinned by the theoretical discourse presented by Finnish architectural theoretician Juhani Pallasmaa (1936-) in his book *The Embodied Image: Imagination and Imagery in Architecture* (2011).

### **Escape as perpetuant for nostalgic recreation.**

According to Harries (2017:7) the built environment is a testament to the power of nostalgia in its propensity to alleviate Man from a sense of homelessness caused by the terror of space and the terror of time. Whilst recognising Man's desire to escape the elements and find comfort in shelter, Harries claims that a more profound sense of *being sheltered* is demanded and thus describes the endeavour of building as the 'domestication of space' spawned from a desire to control both the physical and psychological environment. Again, he parallels *The Burrow* in this construction of the *first artificial landscape* to control the real, stating that "[i]t is homelessness that lets man build; the terror of space provokes him to creation (Harries, 1982:59). He recognizes that escape is accomplished by rooting dwelling in the familiarity of a wholesome past, however, this does not fully satisfy. In speaking of architecture as a sanctuary against the terror of space, he suggests that one must necessarily acknowledge how architecture functions as a sheltering from the terror of time:

*The condition of fallen humanity is shadowed by death*<sup>20</sup>. *Not only is man vulnerable and mortal, but he knows of his mortality, knows that all that now is and all that still awaits him will some day be past [...] The past will overtake every present [...] Shelter promises protection from time's terror. To feel sheltered is to have banished feelings of vulnerability and mortality* (ibid., 1982:60).

Making analogy to the biblical story of the fall of Man and banishment from Paradise, he suggests that it is Man's homelessness in the world which inspires dreams of "a genuine homecoming, or paradise lost and regained" (Harries, 2017:9) to escape suffering from the terror of time and the terror of space by projecting the promise of paradise onto the future. Bachelard<sup>21</sup> emphasises this reconstruction of paradise by suggesting that the familiarity of nostalgic memories and the comforting spectre of protection which it offers incites an incessant desire to reconstruct it in an effort to *escape* the terror of time — the desire to which Kafka's burrowing creature finally succumbs: "paradise is more than just a dream...We live fixations, fixations of happiness" (Harries, 1982:61). It is for this purpose, he argues, that Man has

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<sup>20</sup> The dual nature of death is discussed in the following section. Milton captures this condition of death in the opening lines of *Paradise Lost*: "Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste brought death into the world, and all our woe" (Milton, Orgel and Goldberg, 2008:3) does not refer to death through sin, it rather describes death as the violence that allows consciousness to expand and thus experience intimacy.

<sup>21</sup> Gaston Bachelard (1884-1962) is a French philosopher renowned for his psychoanalytic discourse on the poetics of space.

engaged in the creation of *axis mundi*<sup>22</sup> which, through fantasy, facilitates their escape from the anguish of reality and the terror of time — the resemblance of which is evident in the cemetery. Nostalgia is an act of remembering in the pursuit to forget, a desire for distancing inevitably producing mutedness through disillusionment, the “real disappearing to make room for an image, more real than the real...the remainder disappearing from the assigned location to resurface inside out, in what it was the remainder of” (Baudrillard and Glaser, 2014:144).

### **The two faces of nostalgia.**

The term *Nostalgia* was coined in 1688 by Johannes Hofer, an Alsatian medical student who studied in Basel, to describe the vernacular word for ‘homesickness’ (*Heimweh*) by joining the words *nostos*, meaning ‘a journey back home’, and *algia*, meaning ‘pain’. It described the physical affliction of a patient caused by an inability or unwillingness to be content with memories of a home left behind, and the paralyzing need to return — nostalgic memory becomes an impediment to explore and absorb the unknown. Towards the late eighteenth century the understanding of nostalgia gradually ceased to be considered a medical ailment, however, gaining prominence in poetry and philosophy as a reaction to a dissatisfaction with the culture of reason of the Enlightenment. Acutely aware of this manufactured escape, philosophers Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) and Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) criticized this propensity to transform present reality into a remembered or imagined simulacrum of some lost paradise, claiming that nostalgia suffuses and enslaves the imaginations of those unwilling to embrace the progress of reason presented by the Enlightenment and that the nostalgic longed to escape to the halcyon of youth, captured and restored by fragments of memory which existed in a realm oblivious to suffering and circumscribed by what is known. But when the nostalgic does manage to return home “reality is likely to shatter its imaginative construction and leave the sufferer disappointed” (Harries, 2017:12).

*Nostalgia and a desire to forget are thus intermingled. A presupposition of the founding of a colony, of a new way of dwelling and building, is that the idea of home leaves those venturing into the new dissatisfied. They want something new and different, and yet the colony remains bound to that mythical home that continues to enthrall them. All responsible building is a creative repetition of the past that is open to new possibilities. And so, again and again, colonies have sought to preserve the image of home in a*

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<sup>22</sup> Harries describes such artefacts (especially from primitive cultures) as a repetition of ‘divine building’, again, recognised as productions of artificial paradise and momentary escape (Harries, 1982:61).

*new environment, enacting a contest between nostalgia and the need to forget (Harries, 2017:15)*

It is here that Harries presents the second face of nostalgia by evoking an ambivalence in Kant's discussion thereof. Even though this escape to confront reality by finding refuge in the past is futile, the nostalgic, he states, is "right not to feel at home in the world, to want to escape from it, but wrong in the desire to actually return to that home whose memory haunts him. Homelessness is the human condition" (ibid., 2017:14). Nostalgia, to him, offers reprieve in allowing the dweller to be absorbed in the familiar splendour of this illusion — forgetfulness, if only momentarily.

Baudrillard, however, discerns a further potentiality presented in the frailty of the tether between nostalgia and amnesia. His claim that nostalgia has not only circumscribed the real, but that nostalgia alone remains (Baudrillard: 1994:39) is not a lamentation, but rather emphasises his recognition that this remainder holds the material from which to produce significance:

*When the real is no longer what it used to be, nostalgia assumes its full meaning. There is a proliferation of myths of origin and signs of reality; of second-hand truth, objectivity and authenticity [...] Desire in the form of nostalgia become the driving force behind the consumption, and hence the production, of the past (Poster, 2001:110).*

It is the longing to escape which produces a desire to create. Nostalgia is reconfigured through the dweller's reinterpretation of the object, or his imaginative reconfiguration of the nostalgic material. Both the nostalgic material (system) produced by the desire to escape and desire itself (tool), is engaged. Nostalgia creates a gap where amnesia either claims or becomes a tool to reimagine the original material, revealing its productive potentiality. It is this gap which offers space for intervention into the cemetery as nostalgic remnant, but more significantly, which provides the potential of intimation though the dweller's reimagination of this remnant.

### **The amnesic gap inherent in nostalgic remnants.**

*The weight of the architecture reflects the gravity of the task at hand: to restore meaning — both personal and collective — by revitalizing myth and ritual (Taylor, 1992:211).*

Nuttall (Malcomess and Kreutzfeldt, 2013:20) further elucidates the significance of

how this amnesic gap, created by escape, can become a device to reanimate the nostalgic remnants which it produced. The notion of a gap, to her, is a place where memory (revenants / *verbeeld-ing*) and imagination (reveries / *verbeelding*) touch, where intimacy is experienced when the memory instilled into the artificial material of the city is not lost, but redeemed by its continuous morphing into new surfaces, propelled by this mythological narrative (of new desires). The act of reconstruction does not necessarily imply the erasure of previous states but, rather, intimately reimagines the existing through this mythological depth. Graves, however, further reveals the significance of this mythological depth by arguing that it is “crucial that we reestablish the thematic associations invented by our culture in order to fully allow the culture of architecture to represent the mythic and ritual aspirations of society” stating that:

*The basic aspiration expressed in myth and ritual is the longing for wholeness and reconciliation in which every trace of personal and social fragmentation is overcome. Myth and ritual are mnemonic strategies through which individuals attempt to return to the eternal origin of their being for renewal and regeneration* (Taylor, 1992:214).

He describes this as a “re-membering” which, through this process, overcomes the “dis-memberment” which Man has inevitably suffered in the course of time and thus concludes that “[a]rchitecture becomes the search for an arché that can serve as a secure foundation for human existence” (ibid., 1992:214).

### **The role of amnesia in reimagination of the nostalgic remnant.**

Henri Lefebvre (1901-1991), the French intellectual renowned for his influential writings on the interrelationship between culture and space, states that the *right to the city*<sup>23</sup> comes exactly through occupying this gap created by escape. The gap does not disintegrate the potentiality of the city, but becomes dispersed when relieved from the illusion of ‘realism’ which so often deludes planners and developers. The *oeuvre* of the city comes, to him, as a response to the historic city which is “no longer lived and no longer understood” (Lefebvre, Kofman and Lebas, 1996:148), when the nostalgic material of escape becomes elusive and is made fragile due to amnesia. Intricacy

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<sup>23</sup> *The Right to the City* is an essay that appears in Lefebvre’s book *Writings on Cities*, published in 1996, which calls to question the motivations and methods of those who plan and develop the city. Lefebvre, questioning the grasp of scientifically ‘rational’ methods of analysing the city, proposes that the *oeuvre* (as opposed to the product) of the city can manifest when planning rather originates from an anthropological analysis of the layers of this landscape which would harbour the dweller’s need to “accumulate energies and to spend them, even waste them in play” through imagination (Lefebvre, Kofman and Lebas, 1996:147).

### 3 [ FOREST AS ARCHETYPE ]

**FOREST AS MYTHOLOGICAL ARCHETYPE** of gaining enlightenment by encountering the unfamiliar and death. Intimation is experienced by the dweller through the reimaginative potential of this encounter. The forest is reanimated, ephemerally by the dweller as a **THIRD INTIMATE LANDSCAPE**, through the reimaginatin of the **FIRST ARTIFICIAL LANDSCAPE**. "One does not become enlightened by imagining figures of light, but by making the darkness conscious" [Carl Jung].

### 2 [ ARCHITECTURAL INSERTION ]

The architectural insertion teases the dweller's imagination with the artificiality constructed in the cemetery by the fantasy to escape Death/death (axis mundi) and the city (nostalgia and verdurous forest). The architecture is inserted into the forest, appropriating artificiality and escape, as a **SECOND ARTIFICIAL LANDSCAPE**.

**BRIXTON CEMETERY** as nostalgic remnant of the first artificial landscape. Memorialization recognised as deferral of imagination.

### 1 [ NOSTALGIC REMNANT ]

**AMNESIA OF  
ARTIFICIAL ESCAPE:**

- 1 NOSTALGIC FOREST
- 2 MEMORIALIZATION
- 3 AXIS MUNDI



is gained, allowing the city to proliferate as a place where the “imagination [can] be deployed, not the imaginary of escape and evasion which conveys ideologies, but the imaginary which invests itself in *appropriation* (of time, space, physiological life and desire)” (ibid., 1996:155). Bachelard suggests how imagination reanimates the nostalgic material through intimation:

*Imagination is not, as its etymology would suggest, the faculty of forming images of reality; it is rather the faculty of forming images which go beyond reality, which sing reality...[through] the new image grafted onto the old...The imagination will see only if it has “visions” and will have visions only if reveries educate it* (Bachelard and Farrell, 1999:16).

### **The cemetery's revenant material.**

Acknowledging that the cemetery, as a nostalgic remnant of the *first artificial landscape*, represents the manifestation of the desire to not only escape the physical reality of the city, but also the unknown which pervades death, and that this resulted in the destabilization of significance and desacralization of the cemetery into a hostile, uninhabitable forest due to the amnesic loss of relevance to escape (with the cemetery being passive), provides the possibility to mechanise this desire which created the cemetery. The remnant is made revenant. The intervention, however, inverts the process whereby desire to escape caused the loss of significance (because of a lack of engagement with the unknown and further disengagement due to loss of memory) through deconstructing the inherent artificiality within the cemetery.

The forest is restored through intimations of reimagination. Amnesia is prevented through the encounter with the unknown inherent in death, in the archetypal forest and in the fantasy of artificiality. Reveries thus reanimate the remnant.

### **The forest as mythological archetype.**

The potentiality of reimagination is further validated by understanding *the forest* as mythological archetype of representing a realm of chaos where the pervasiveness of the unknown is overcome by engaging, and not escaping the unknown and ultimately Death/death. The encounter with the forest is not only intimate in the dweller's engagement thereof, but in the reimaginative process whereby the unknown is revealed and the terror thereof assuaged.

Within mythology and lore, the forest is often the locus of intervention. The frequency with which the image of the forest occurs in cultural narratives is a clear indication of the universal significance of its symbolism. It is in and within the archetypal forest

fig. 3.38. (author)  
Reimagination in the  
encounter of the  
unknowns pervading the  
cemetery.

that we encounter depths of psychoanalytic potential. The recurring motif of these narratives exceed familiarity. Our knowledge of them preceding when they were first presented to us in the form of lore as children, suggesting some deeply intrinsic insight drawn forth or inherited from our cultural memory and collective consciousness regarding the site and our experience of it.

The dweller who is, in this case, *subject* of psychoanalysis, the hero of myth, the protagonist of fairy tales finds him or herself at an existential impasse in some manifestation. In order to overcome this, the dweller naively undertakes the risk of entering the forest. At this point the dweller may not fully comprehend the dangers to which they will ultimately expose themselves. They are, however, well aware of the potentiality for it. The forests of narrative expression, the archetypal forest is deep, dark and dense. However uncultivated and inhospitable, the forest is by no means uninhabited. Psychically and geographically the forest lies beyond the boundaries of the consciously constructed realm, but is engaged and ultimately overcome through reimagination.

*We construct our idealized world, in fantasy, according to all the information we have at our disposal. We use what we know to build an image of what we could have and, therefore, of what we should do. But we compare our interpretation of the world as it unfolds in the present to the desired world, in imagination (Peterson, 1999:34).*

# Chapter 4

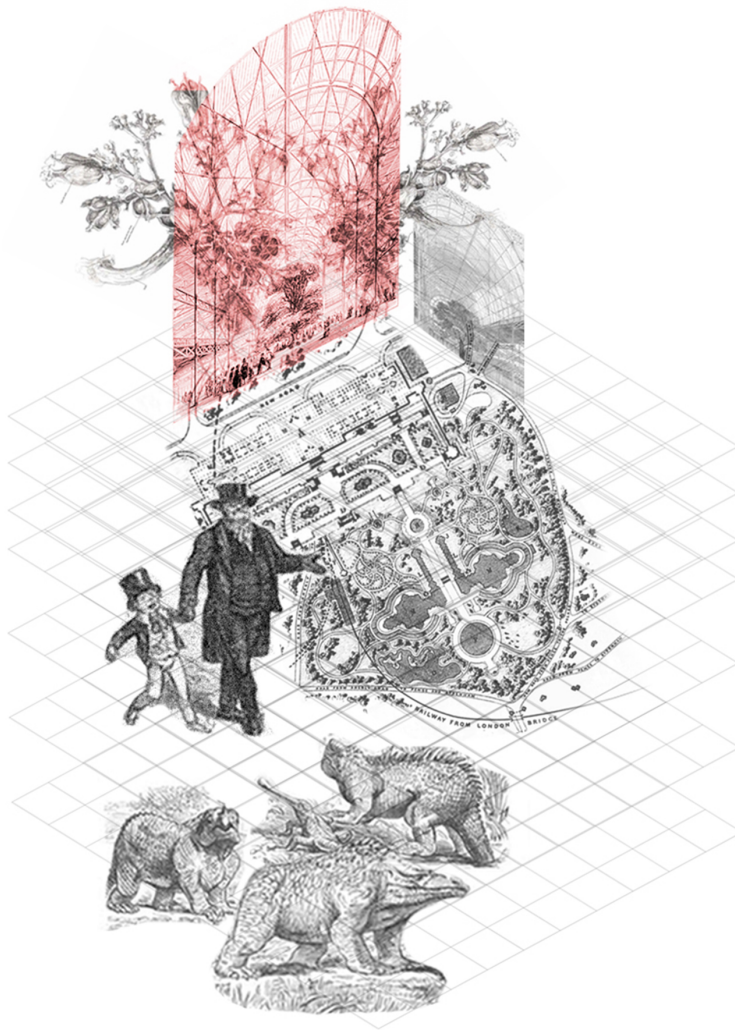
## Program

### **The second artificial landscape:** artificiality as escape.

The architectural intervention teases this imagination, by absorbing the embedded nostalgic narrative of the city. More so, it absorbs the internalised desire of the culture that constructed it, in attempts (as a desire in itself) to tempt the peripheral unfamiliarity of the site. By its existence on the border of the unknown *via its artificiality*, fantasy rouses the imagination, widening the perimeters of the unknown.

*The poetic image is a distinct imaginary experiential entity with its cohesive identity, anatomy and essence. The poetic image redirects and focuses the viewer/listener/reader/occupant's attention and gives rise to an altered state of consciousness, which evokes an imaginary dimension, an imaginative world...A building is a structure of utility, matter and construction, as well as an imaginary spatiotemporal metaphor for a better world. Artistic and architectural works exist thus in the realms of physics and metaphysics, reality and fiction, construction and image, use and desire, all at the same time (Pallasmaa,2011:93).*

Pallasmaa describes this as the dual existence of the poetic image (interpreted here as the *second artificial landscape*) within the physical reality of its material essence, the synthetic, nostalgic material that is produced from what is perceived, embodied and remembered (revenants / *verbeeld-ing*); secondly, within the imaginary reality, which takes over when the unknown inherent in the material existence of the work becomes perceptible (reveries / *verbeelding*) and suppresses the physical reality (ibid., 2011:94) — death of the old through its reimagination produces a third intimate landscape. Pallasmaa claims that architecture, therefor, exists in and maintains a balance between the physical reality of perception and the 'unreal' or unknown realm of imagination (ibid., 2011:95). Pallasmaa states that:



## 2 [ NOSTALGIC REPRODUCTIONS ]

*Conservatory constructs the novelty of worlds from which artefacts are brought by reproducing those worlds artificially to capture the public imagination, typified especially by the display of the antedeluvian animals in the park outside of the Great Exhibition at Paxton's Crystal Palace.*

*Artificiality through nostalgic reproduction of the known is demonstrated both historically and mythologically in the narrative of the conservatory.*

## 1 [ TYPOLOGY OF ESCAPE ]

**CONSERVATORY AS TYPOLOGY OF ESCAPE,** collecting, archiving (memorialization) and displaying exotics and unknown artefacts from foreign countries as a form of delight to facilitate escape to novel realms. **CONSERVATORY AS A FIRST ARTIFICIAL LANDSCAPE.**

*[w]hen the imaginary realm overwhelms, the work appears sentimental or kitsch as our mental awareness glides too easily into the suggested illusion... [and] when the reality of matter or execution dominates, the work tends to appear crude and unarticulated...incapable of evoking a credible imaginary world (ibid., 2011:95).*

Death, through imagination, thus becomes materially as well as metaphysically transformative and experienced intimately by the dweller, allowing agency over the architecture.

### **The architectural insertion: mechanising amnesia.**

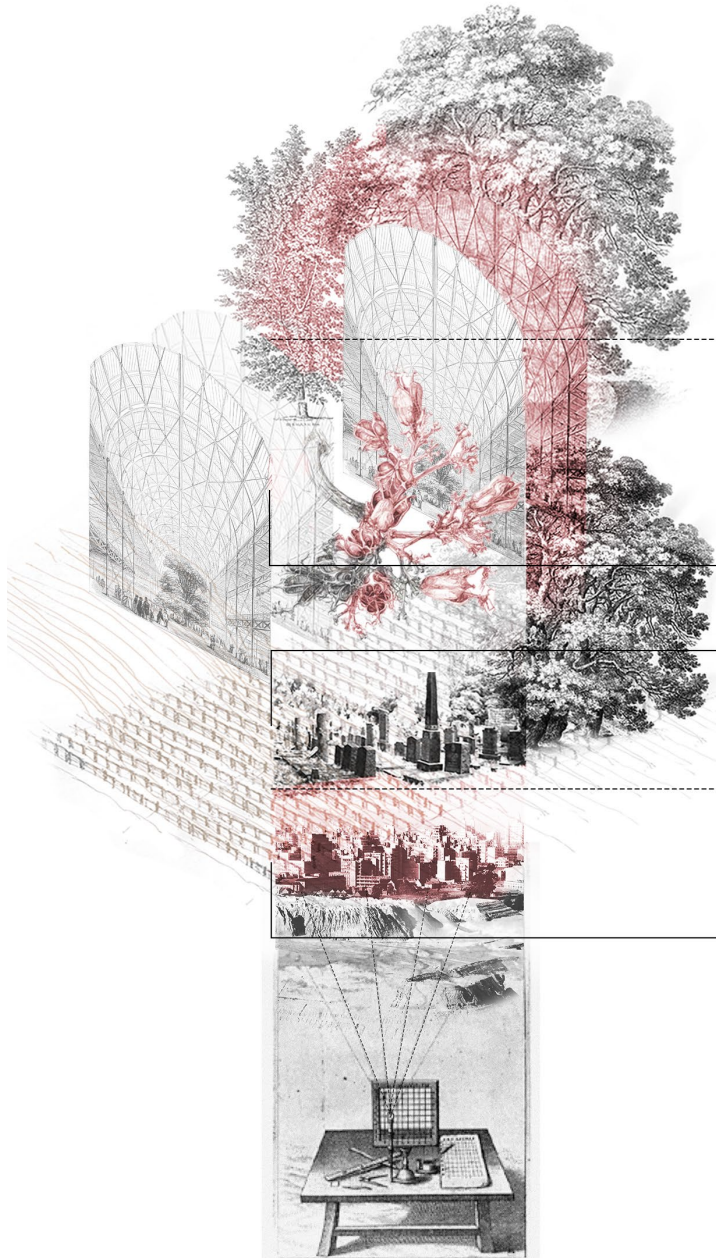
The architectural insertion teases the dweller's imagination with the fantasy of artificiality (bioluminescent conservatory) and Death/death, constructing the *second artificial landscape*. The site is reactivated by re-mechanising its own internalised nostalgia — in this way nostalgia functions as both system and tool — the loom that frames the tapestry as well as the thread that weaves the image. This imagined realm, the *second artificial landscape*, does not offer escape. It offers encounter with the unknown and Death/death. The architectural intervention is an insertion into the nostalgic remnant: a *second artificial landscape* facilitating the encounter with the unknown by engaging physical Death. It engages physical Death through a columbarium which reassigns ritual value to the original cemetery but also engages amnesic death by intervening in the nostalgic forest with a synthetic bioluminescent nature, creating a habitable forest to dwell in. In so doing, the conscious and subconscious perceptual borders are opened when the dweller is absorbed in fantasy through architectural detail. The divisive fabric of nostalgia is made diaphanous and the veil becomes penetrable. This passage is not without consequence as it ultimately reveals the process by which intimate reanimation is made accessible. In order for this unveiling to manifest, dual deaths must occur.

*If it aspires to a permanent mental impact, an architectural work has to engage our personal and active imagination; even an architectural narrative has to be left incomplete and open-ended in order to be completed and embodied by the imagination of the observer/occupant (ibid., 2011:97)*

fig. 4.39. (author) Escape through the artificiality of museumification and exoticism.

### **Reanimation of the cemetery as nostalgic remnant: the dweller's re-imaginative encounter of artificiality through Death/death.**

Through the death of memory, revenants (*ontslape*) and reveries (*verbeeld-ing*) are conjured forth and fantasy not only bemuses but augments the spectral image. It is important to note that this death is not a mournful one however engulfing it may



### 3 [ REANIMATION ]

#### REVERIES

“ verbeelding / ont-slape ”

The dweller’s re-imaginative encounter of artificiality and death/death (La Petite Mort).inherent in the forest, reanimates the cemetery which exists as a nostalgic remnant, through intimation. The forest is revived as a THIRD INTIMATE LANDSCAPE.

### 2 [ ARCHITECTURAL INSERTION ]

The architectural insertion teases the dweller’s imagination with the fantasy of artificiality (bioluminescent conservatory) and death/death, constructing the SECOND ARTIFICIAL LANDSCAPE.

**BRIXTON CEMETERY** as nostalgic remnant of the first artificial landscape. Memorialization recognised as deferral of imagination.

### 1 [ ESCAPE ]

#### REVENANTS

“ verbeeld-ing / ontslape ”

Fantasy as the city’s dominant narrative nostalgically recreates escape, constructing the FIRST ARTIFICIAL LANDSCAPE.

be. It is not restrictive in its fatality — it is not final. Instead, it is to be framed in release, its resonance found in its ambiguity, making fluid the boundaries between agony and ecstasy. French literary theorist and philosopher, Roland Barthes (1915-1980) describes this occurrence as *La Petite Mort* (Barthes, 1975:14), or 'little death', whereby the reader experiences *jouissance* (bliss) at the moment of 'authorship' over a text, transcending the state of *plaisir* (comfort and euphoria of reading) by assuming a state of reimagining only acquired through a process of loss and discomfort. The forest is revived as a *third intimate landscape*.

### **The Bioluminescent Conservatory: an exotic collection of imagined worlds.**

The architectural intervention, a *conservatory of reimagined worlds*, is a reimagination of the typology of a conservatory, hosting an inventory of synthetic biological bioluminescent botany<sup>24 25</sup>, metaphoric of the exotic transmutation of fantasy (escape through wonder) into the nature, and thus evidence of how artificiality expands knowledge through the engagement of unfamiliar. Fantasy deepens nature. The conservatory is recognised as a typology of escape in its purpose of collecting, archiving (memorialization) and displaying exotics and unknown artefacts from foreign countries, as a form of delight to facilitate escape to recreated (reimagined) novel realms. The conservatory harbouring novelty and cultivating exotic botany through the artificial preservation of climate, is a typological representation of the *first artificial landscape*. The conservatory reconstructs the novelty of worlds from which artefacts are brought by reproducing those worlds artificially and nostalgically to capture the public imagination. This is typified by the Great Exhibition at Paxton's Crystal Palace (and particularly by the display of the antediluvian animals in the park outside). Rem Koolhaas describes how imagination (*verbeelding*) is inherent in the conservatory:

*Manhattan's Crystal Palace contains, like all early Exhibitions, an implausible juxtaposition of the demented production of useless Victorian items celebrating (now that machines can mimic the techniques of uniqueness) the democratization of the object; at the same time it is a Pandora's box of genuinely new and revolutionary techniques and inventions, all of which eventually will be turned loose on the island even though they are strictly incompatible* (Koolhaas, 1994:25).

fig. 4.40. (author)  
Revenants and reveries.  
Mechanization of  
artificiality of escape to  
reanimate the nostalgic  
remnant.

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24 In 2013 the company *Glowing Plant* started a Kickstarter campaign proposing to synthesize and produce bioluminescent plants as part of a wave of "DIY biologists" now able to practice synthetic biology with the commercialisation of DIY laboratories. It was one of the most successful campaigns of that year, attracting a total of 8 433 backers who pledged a total of \$484, 013.

25 There is no consequence to the alien import thereof into the city as *first artificial landscape* existing with no grand formal narrative but rather as a morphology constituent of incongruent narratives of exotic collection.

### 3 [ REIMAGINATION ]

#### REVERIES

“ verbeelding / ont-slape ”

The fantasy of artificiality engages, rather than escapes, the unfamiliar, intimating the nostalgic remnant as a THIRD INTIMATE LANDSCAPE.

Imagination is intimated through the artificiality of the Bioluminescent Conservatory. [Synaesthesia from the synthetic].

### 2 [ BIOLUMINESCENT CONSERVATORY ]

THE EXOTIC COLLECTION OF IMAGINED WORLDS

The Bioluminescent Conservatory is inserted into the cemetery as nostalgic remnant of escape as a SECOND ARTIFICIAL LANDSCAPE, hosting synthetic biology.

### 1 [ TYPOLOGY OF ESCAPE ]

CONSERVATORY AS TYPOLGY OF ESCAPE, collecting, archiving, and exhibiting newly cultivated species as a delight that facilitate the dweller's escape to novel realms. CONSERVATORY AS A SECOND ARTIFICIAL LANDSCAPE.



Fantasy, through the desire to escape, pierces the border of the unknown *via its artificiality*, it teases the imagination and engages with the unfamiliar which is both physically and metaphysically present in the cemetery in the form of the desacralized forest, a nostalgic remnant resulting from the deferral of engagement with the unfamiliar through memorialisation. The conservatory is sardonically and abjectly artificial, its contents offering fleeting moments of wondrous delight or the artifice taunting the deprived gaze of the dweller to reimagine. Escape, through imagination, thus becomes materially as well as metaphysically transformative and experienced intimately by the dweller, allowing agency over the architecture. In his introduction to *Water and Dreams*, Bachelard ruminates over imagination and matter:

"A new image costs humanity as much labor as a new characteristic costs a plant." Many attempted images cannot survive because they are merely formal play, not truly adapted to the matter they should adorn [...] imagination must, above all, study the relationship between material and formal causality. The poet as well as the sculptor is faced with this problem; images also have their matter (Bachelard, 1999:3).

### **Brief mythological and historical analysis of conservatories:**

Although the occurrence of augmented nature through the use of greenhouses can be traced back to the Roman era, the social and cultural significance of this typology only becomes pertinent in eighteenth-century France with the conception/invention of *landscapes within buildings*. This section will elaborate on the significance of conservatories as *second landscape*.

The phenomenon of landscape within building is traced back to Chantilly estate just outside Paris in France 1774 when Louis-Joseph de Bourbon, prince de Condé, instructed his personal architect Jean-François Leroy to design an "artificial hamlet of mock-rustic buildings" imitating proletariat workshops which included three cottages, a barn, an inn, a water mill, a dairy and a stable, although only facades to a grandiose billiard room, library, a large dining hall and a salon <sup>26</sup>. The interior of these buildings depicted a fanciful reimagination of "fantasy of the extensive woodland... [which] alluded to the extension of hunting privileges enjoyed by the Condé over the

fig. 4.41. (author)  
Reimagination of  
the *Bioluminescent*  
Conservatory.

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<sup>26</sup> These can perhaps be regarded as predecessors of architectural theoretician Bernard Tschumi's conceptual notions of *crossprogramming*, *disprogramming* and *transprogramming*.

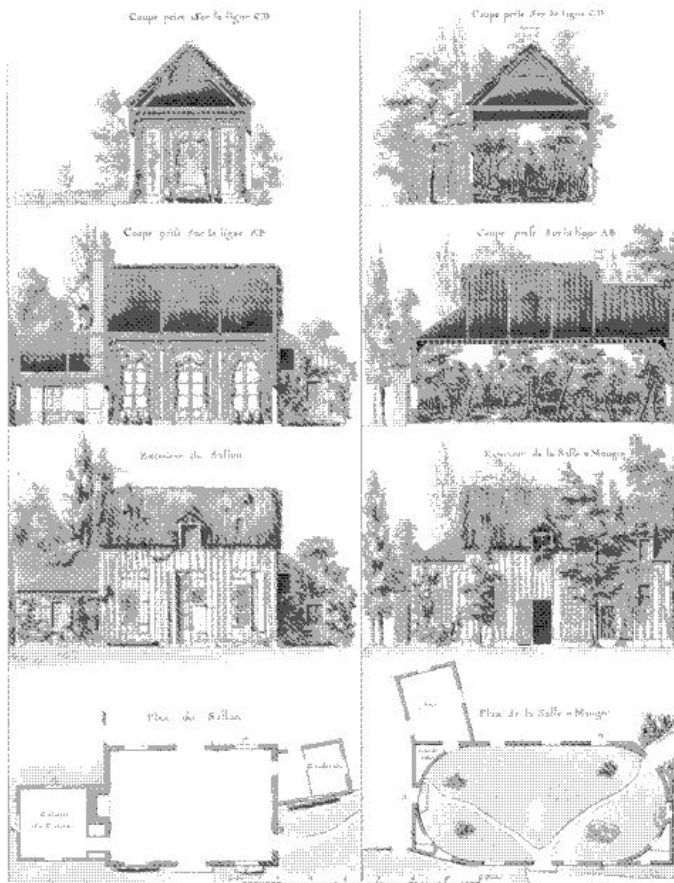


Figure 8.3. Plans, sections, and elevations of the salon (left) and dining hall (right) in the hamelet at Chantilly; from Chambé, *Album du comte du Nord*, 1784, fol. 16. Courtesy: Réunion des Musées Nationaux/Art Resource, N.Y.

fig. 4.42. Landscapes within buildings at Chantilly, Jean-François Leroy, 1774.

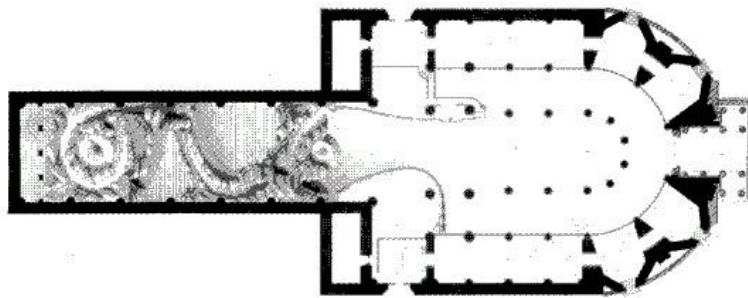


fig. 4.43. Landscapes within buildings at Chantilly, Jean-François Leroy, 1774.

landscape surrounding their estate”<sup>27</sup> (Hays, 2007:178). It was intended as a display of stature for his elite aristocratic guests and conceived as “an affirmation of society by nature” (ibid., 2007:160-168). Each building further included its own produce garden. The conception of interior space as landscape became an influential proponent of “visionary” architecture in the following two decades and, being absorbed into bourgeois life, these artificial structures hosting synthetic landscapes soon took shape as even more extravagant designs such as French architect Charles-François Ribart’s *Éléphant Triomphal* - a city residence for Louis XV in Paris in the form of a monumental elephant - but more significantly inspired a slough of new fantastical inventions such as solari, hot houses, orangeries and conservatories with dining halls exhibiting exotic botanical collections and the benefit of cultivating fruits throughout the year, reflecting the “retreat of the individual to nature and to the rural life in a period of political and economic decline” (ibid., 2007: 167-179). This also became the model for the Enlightenment’s utopian monuments including Étienne-Louis Boullé’s *Cenotaph to Newton* and Claude-Nicolas Ledoux’s *Elevation of the Cemetery of the Town of Chaux* around a decade later. This fantastical, and more specifically, paradisiacal nature of conservatories perhaps already finds antecedent in the description of the *Hanging Gardens of Babylon*, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, constructed under command of the Neo-Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar II to indulge his queen whom, coming from mountainous country, desired a monument resembling such a landscape. A subtler nuance (perhaps archetype) can, however, be derived from the Biblical (and mythological) narratives of the ark. Describing the construction of an ark by Noah, a man commanded by God, as vessel to host the pre-deluvian animals which inhabited the earth before the *deluge*, the flood sent to purge earth’s surface of Man whom have succumbed to sin, so doing preventing their extinction, although tellingly only those animals which could fit the ark’s dimensions. The significance of this myth is elucidated in a diary entry of Harriet Martineau, a journalist whom, travelling from London to the newly rebuilt Crystal Palace<sup>28</sup> by rail in 1854, noted down a conversation which he eavesdropped:

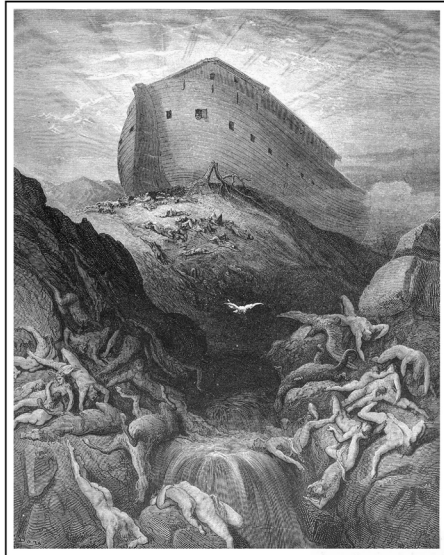
*Just before arriving, the passengers were presented with an astonishing sight: a lake with islands inhabited by models of huge beasts, some over thirty feet long:*

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<sup>27</sup> Hays (2007: 178) further notes: “the various ways in which forests are conceived, represented, or symbolized will give us access to the shadow of Enlightenment ideology - its fantasies, paradoxes, anxieties, nostalgias, self-deceptions, and even its pathos”.

<sup>28</sup> The original Crystal Palace was dismantled after the six month duration of the Great Exhibition in 1851 and reconstructed at Sydenham Hill in 1852 where it stood until finally being demolished in 1936. Some of the antediluvian creates are still scattered around the park.

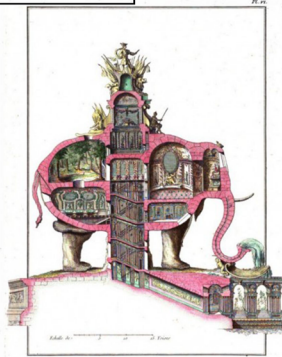
SIGNIFICANCE OF PROGRAM:



MYTHOLOGICAL



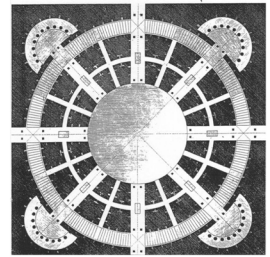
*Elevation de la face du Theatre*  
Origin of landscapes within buildings in France.



*Profil de l'Elephant de la Victoire*  
Elephant de Triomphe, Paris, France  
Charles-Francois Ribart



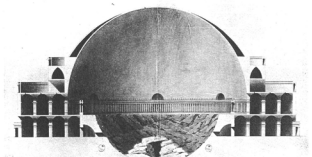
Kew Gardens, England  
Joseph Paxton  
1844



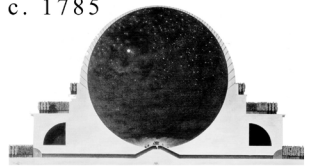
Cemetery at the town of Chaux,  
Claude-Nicolas Ledoux  
c. 1785



Chantilly, France,  
Jean-Francois Leroy



Temple of Death,  
Etienne-Louis Boullée  
c. 1785



Cenotaph for Newton,  
Etienne-Louis Boullée

BC LATE 18<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

1758

1773

1784

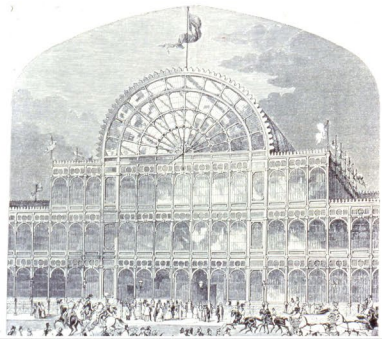
HISTORICAL

1\_ **French aristocratic society:**  
fantasy of landscapes within buildings

2\_ **Enlightenment:**  
mastery of nature through artificiality

CONSERVATORY:

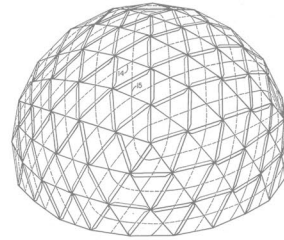
ESCAPE THROUGH NOSTALGIA, EXOTICISM AND MUSEUMIFICATION



*The Crystal Palace at Hyde Park, London, England, Joseph Paxton*



*The Eden Project, Cornwall, England  
Nicholas Grimshaw  
c. 1998*



*Laminar Geodesic Dome patent,  
Roger Buckminster Fuller  
c. 1965*



*The Dome over Manhattan, New York  
Roger Buckminster Fuller*

1851

c. 1960

**3\_ Egalitarianism of Marxist consumerism: artificiality of exotics and archiving**

fig. 4.44. (author)  
Chronology of the conservatory.

*"What are those?" exclaimed a passenger in the railway carriage, as it ran along the embankment above the gardens. "The antediluvian animals, to be sure", a comrade informed him. "Why antediluvian?" "Because they were too large to go into the ark; and so they were all drowned" (Secord, 2004:138).*

This dialogue recapitulates the peripheral nature of engaging with the unfamiliar which is encountered in the nostalgic construction and promulgation of the world, more precisely here through exhibition, collection or archiving that which is familiar.

The project will then be developed to gain further insight into the intimate interface between dweller and architecture acknowledging that nostalgia constructs and defines the city through memory and imagination. Programmatic dismantling and reimagination of the characteristics of the conservatory through typological reconfiguration and conceptualisation further protrudes the architectural surface. These characteristics are derived from a historical analysis of the nostalgia and artificiality demonstrated in conservatories' representation of: societal fascination with the wonder of illusion, the romance of nature, recreational rituals, preservation (of climate, olfactory sensations, exotic flora, *hortus conclusus*), horticulture, museumification, commodification <sup>29</sup>.



fig. 4.45. The Great Exhibition at the Crystal Palace, 1851 By Joseph Paxton, 1851, Hyde Park, London.

<sup>29</sup> Paxton's Crystal Palace presented to the world the promise of Marxist egalitarianism through the means of rapid production, consumption and immediacy of exotic fancy.

# Chapter 5

## Programmatic precedents

**Second artificial landscape as intervention:** contemporary precedents for restoring significance to cemeteries through escape and artificiality.

**Reanimation through artificiality** (fantasy of bioluminescent nature):

The architectural firm DeathLAB is a trans-disciplinary research and design initiative, based at Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation, which researches and reconceptualizes how the dead is dealt and lived with in the metropolis, recognizing that death is both personal and infrastructural in dense cities. DeathLAB makes projections of future cemetery typologies, both as interventions into existing cemeteries (as remnants in the landscape) as well as newly imagined landscapes within the existing fabric of the city. Their projects *Constellation Park* and *Sylvan Constellation at Vale Cemetery* are investigated as programmatic precedents which not only deal with the infrastructural requirements of cemeteries in the metropolis, but also uncovers the psychological benefit of the ritual element that these sanctuaries offer the city dweller. Cemeteries offer spaces of escape where the dweller, absorbed in ritual and death, can engage with the cosmic significance of the self, seldom provided elsewhere by the city. These projects further promotes an ecologically responsible solution in dealing with the dead, by proposing a system in which energy released from biomass during biodegradation is sublimated into artificial luminescence, allowing their cemeteries to become spectral, nocturnal public parks, where ritual and death is perpetuated into the creation of space.



fig. 5.46. Perspective of the processional promenade in Constellation Park.

fig. 5.47. Constellation Park suspended below Manhattan Bridge.

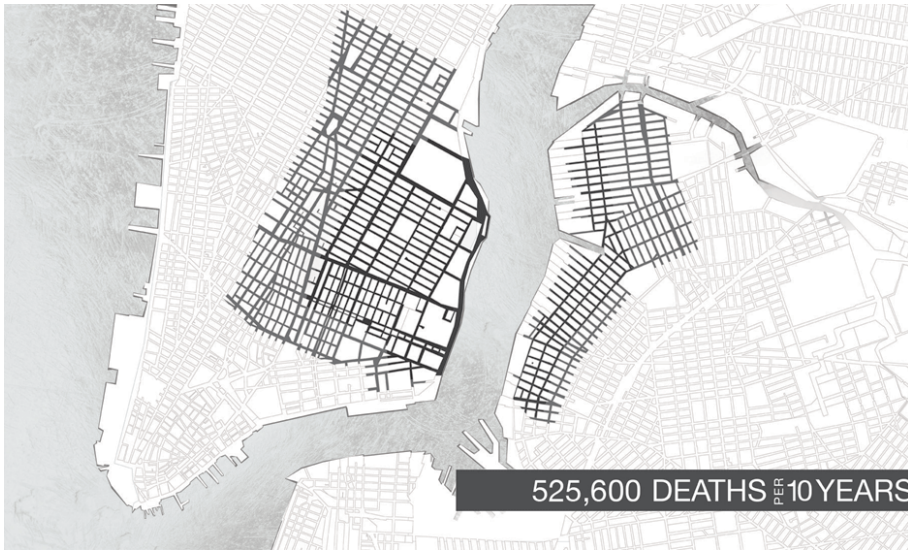


fig. 5.48. The physical occupation of death in Manhattan over a decade.

## **CONSTELLATION PARK:**

Spaces of Remembrance Amidst Everyday Life

Location: Manhattan Bridge, New York, USA

Date: 2017 (unbuilt)

Architect: DeathLAB

Keywords:

Infrastructural intervention, landscape, bioluminescence, ritual, death, imagination

This project speculates about the potential of a cemetery as infrastructural intervention into existing fabric of the city by imagining a new ritualistic and civic landscape of shrine clusters, memorial vessels, a processional path, pedestrian pathways and public spaces suspended from Manhattan Bridge with structural cables. The park is a public memorial, embedded within the urban metropolitan life, which “conveys the acceptance of the physical finality of death, while recognizing the transience of remembrance, and the cyclical nature of organic life” (DeathLAB: 2017). The intervention proposes a system by which biomass of individuals collected in shrines or ‘mourning lights’ are transformed into a constellation of light under the bridge, powered by the energy released from the corpse over a year of decomposition. This constellation of individual vessels accumulate into a landscape which perpetually honours the dead, and, through the cyclical nature of organic life and decomposition ensures that the cycle of the park itself will never cease and lapse from memory. Death and imagination sustain the park, which is woven through the vertically layered constellation of shrines and mourning spaces, ceremonial areas and processional routes with pedestrian corridors, bike paths, communal spaces (hosting 700 people) and a diversity of public functions. An estimated 10% of all annual deaths (5,400 lives) in New York can be hosted in this park.

This precedent is conceptually and programmatically relevant to the project due to the introduction of bioluminescence in relation to the imaginative significance and infrastructural requirements posed by death in the metropolis. It further suggests how the spectrality of this constellation allures public and individual imagination and prevents the loss of significance of the landscape by allowing the cyclical nature of decomposition, where “spaces of death and remembrance are defined by, and continually fortified within the cycles and energies of urban life” (DeathLAB: 2017). The idea of park and cemetery not only functioning in co-existence to each other, but maintaining each other is also drawn from and applied to the project. The project furthermore draws from Constellation Park in recognising the spatial and urban potential created by binding New York to Manhattan Island with a pedestrian corridor which occupies a spatial negative. The new artificial landscape not only adds value to an otherwise desolate space, but also wrings out potential from the surrounding city fabric.



fig. 5.49. The forest at Amos Vale reclaiming graves.

fig. 5.50. Amos Vale cemetery.



fig. 5.51. Sylvan Constellation at Amos Vale.

## **SYLVAN CONSTELLATION:**

A truly perpetual future for Arnos Vale Cemetery

Location: Arnos Vale Cemetery, Bristol, England

Date: 2017 (unbuilt)

Architect: DeathLAB

Keywords:

Historic landscape, nostalgic remnant, bioluminescence, ritual, death, imagination

*Sylvan Constellation at Arnos Vale cemetery*, located in Bristol, England, is another project by DeathLAB which speculates about the potentiality of cemeteries as public spaces. Arnos Vale cemetery is a nostalgic remnant bearing a stark likeness to Brixton cemetery. The cemetery, which was established in 1837, was the most desirable place to be buried in Bristol, until it fell into disrepair during the 20th century, as burial space became overburdened. Similar to Brixton cemetery, Arnos Vale was designed as an Arcadian landscape and is covered by a lush forest saturated with clusters of granite graves and tombstones facing towards the pedestrian corridors that traverse the forest. Following a public petition, the cemetery is currently awaiting restoration and development while graves are being desecrated and overgrown.

DeathLAB, again, proposes a bioluminescent intervention into the cemetery, however, differing from *Constellation Park* in that the project is an investigation into the reanimation of a cemetery existing as nostalgic remnant. The significance of this precedent is further recognized in the intervention's potential to manifest resilience against amnesia through the overlap of imagination and the encounter with death. The project proposes new woodland pathways and sanctuary spaces within the historic cemetery to be illuminated by a constellation of light similar to that of *Constellation Park*. A network of memorial vessels which are buried in the forest floor or supported by tectonic steel pylons aggregate over time and form clusters that illuminate the forest. The accumulation of these light bearing vessels over time, growing from the forest, not only memorialize the dead, but also enshrines the cyclical nature of life and remembrance. A second, artificial surface rises from the remnant, which, through the performance of the process of death, amnesic death, and degradation, reanimates the deteriorating landscape.

Both these project situate themselves in a position to ruminate over the relevance and opportunities of spaces for burial and memorialization within ever-densifying cities — spaces which, furthermore, inevitably lose significance and often devolve into

urban blight when custodial and financial burdens overshadow their amenity. These projects, which can be identified as *second artificial illuminated landscapes*, not only propose how deteriorated conditions in the city can be reanimated by reimagining the significance and potential of death through architectural intervention, but also suggests how the significance of these spaces can be maintained. Their spaces act as an “enduring collective urban cenotaph for intimate individual memories” (ibid., 2017) - both relating to the dead, but also to imagination intimated through how the architectural interventions reimagine death. DeathLAB not only provokes and unpacks the diverse perspectives of both the urban and social significance of death-related spatial practices and their intersection with civic life environments, but also reveals how architecture can innovate new ways of reweaving the cycles of life and death into the metropolis, augmenting civic space while being sensitive towards the environment and the revering of the deceased.

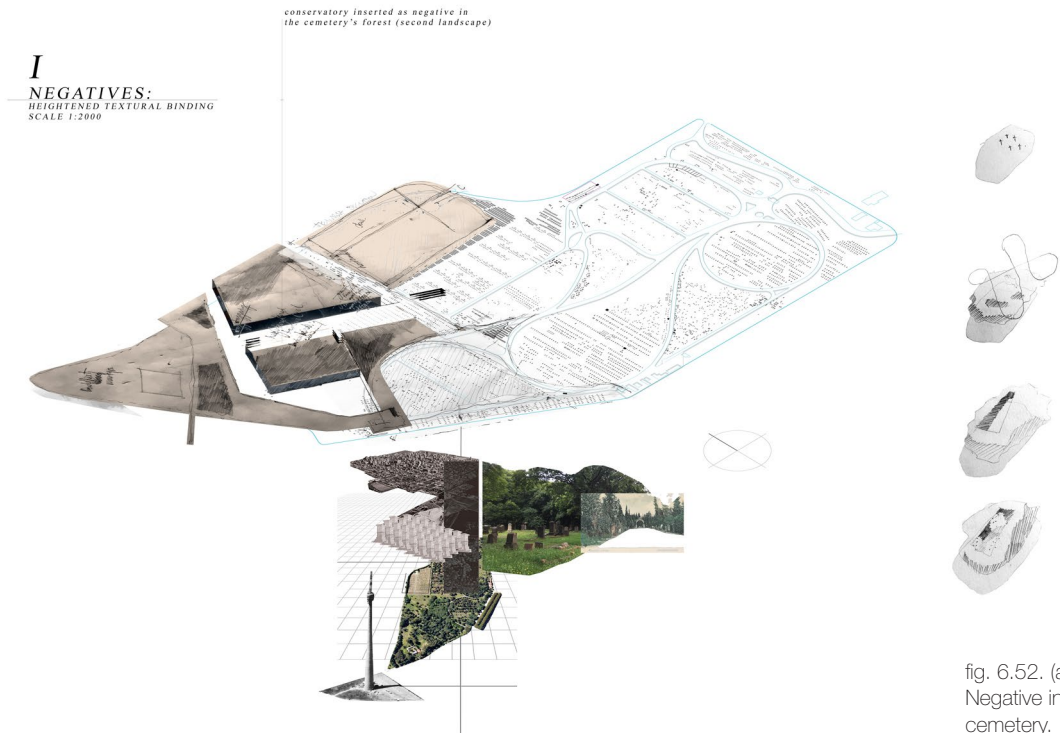


fig. 6.52. (author)  
 Negative insertion in the cemetery.

# Chapter 6

## Concept

### **Design vision and intent:**

The project investigates how architecture, as a *second artificial landscape*, can occupy the amnesic gap inherent in the nostalgic remnant to reanimate the conditions within the cemetery and the nostalgic forest.

The conceptual design approach is informed by understanding the desire to escape as an intrinsic motif to the cemetery's creation, as well as by instigating its eventual lapse from significance. The constructed reality of the cemetery is mechanized by recognizing the potential for reanimation latent in this amnesic condition. With escape being thoroughly embedded in the materiality of the cemetery, this project's strategy for intervention aims to identify and deconstruct the amnesic conditions that hinder the dweller's ability to physically and imaginatively inhabit the cemetery. In addition to this theoretic conceptual framework, design is further generated from an understanding of the site context, site conditions, programmatic requirements (meeting SANS standards), detail development, environmental responses (meeting SANS 10400 stand and precedents pertaining to this framework). The design development aims to investigate how the manifestation of these constituent architectural elements can be developed into an architectural language which consistently harkens back to the narrative of escape. This is accomplished through an architectural insertion that appropriates the physical, nostalgic, metaphysical and mythological layers of escape which are embodied within the cemetery as the strategy for intervention through the conceptual framework of the *negative* drawn from the work of artist Christian Boltanski.

The architectural insertion as a *second artificial landscape* aims to reanimate the two conditions which caused Brixton cemetery's collapse into a nostalgic remnant: the cemetery, functioning as a sublime space (*axis mundi*) for escape through burial and memorialization, and the forest providing escape from the city. The architectural intervention responds conceptually and programmatically to these amnesic conditions

**NEGATIVES:**  
CONTROLLING FORESTATION,  
VERTICAL LANDSCAPE EXTENSION  
AXO SCALE 1:100

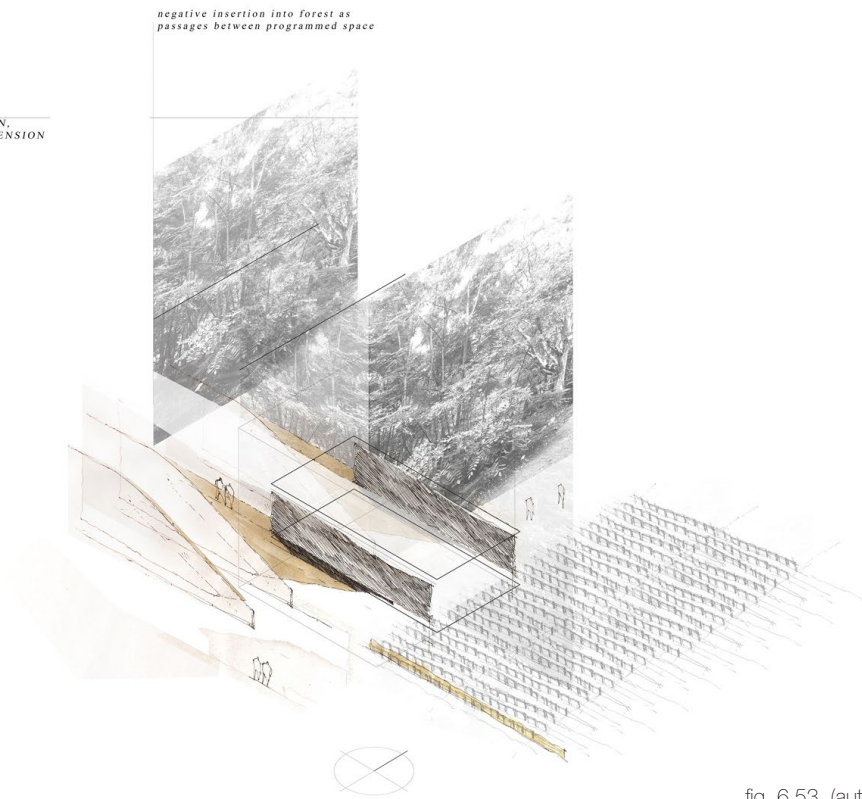


fig. 6.53. (author)  
Architectural insertion into  
the cemetery's negatives.



fig. 6.54. *The Double  
Negative* (1969-1970).

through the additions of a columbarium. This columbarium is introduced as a new burial typology that functions as a reanimating component of the former (developed in conjunction with the proposed expansion of the existing crematoria in the cemetery) and the *Bioluminescent Conservatory* that functions as a device for reanimating the latter through the addition of a synthetic forest. The intervention thus restores the cemetery as park, and innervates the forest with a new fantasy. The reanimation of these two components — given material dimension through the *negative* — aim to expose and mechanize the existing amnesic material as revenants and to function as devices that engages the dweller's imagination and reimagination of the cemetery, thus intimating a new, *third landscape*, through reverie as described in the theory section.

### **Initial conceptual generators:**

This section briefly describes the initial conceptual responses from which the final conceptual design approach was generated, and which informed the selection of precedents to be researched:

- 1. Negative**<sup>30</sup>: The negative is considered as it allows a strategy for a sensitized intervention through extraction of the existing material. This strategy provides a means of controlling the prevalence of forestation by cutting negatives into the forest, defining and priming spaces for further architectural articulation. This bears reference to *Double Negative* (1969-1970), the work of artist Michael Heizer (1944-) which, constructed in the eastern edge of the Mormon Mesa ridge in the Nevada desert. This work of art consists of two excavated trenches (negative) cut into the landscape and spanning the rift between the ridges. The negative creates a tension between the artwork and the landscape in which it is situated; it also caused an inherent tension in the artwork itself — the clefts always being in suspense of not touching — through a process of extraction rather than addition (Tarasen, n.d.:1). This relevance of creating presence from absence is particularly significant in the context of the cemetery which suffers from the absence of memory, enshrined in the presence of tombs and graves. The creation of negatives

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<sup>30</sup> This is an incipient version of the *negative* described in the glossary and the final conceptual strategy. The 'negative' here merely implies creating voids through the removal of material from existing, physical conditions.

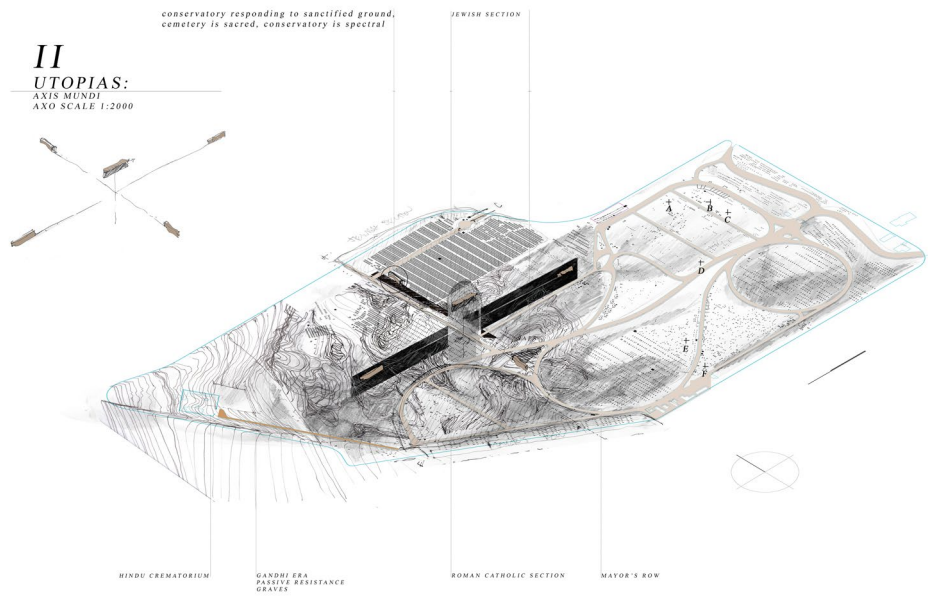


fig. 6.55. (author)  
Architecture situated  
in the cemetery's axis  
*mundi*.

**III**  
**UITVALGROND:**  
CAPTURING THE CITY'S EXOTIC GRIDS  
SCALE 1:100

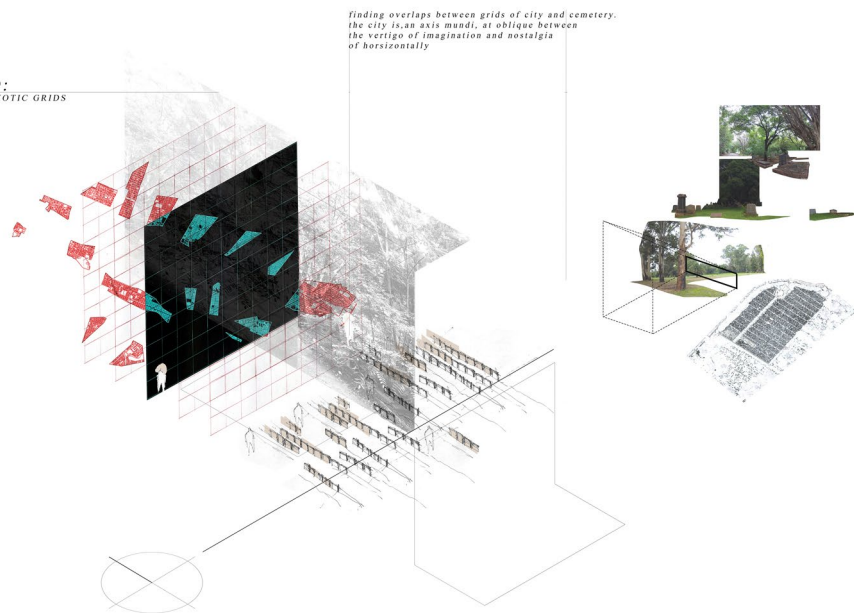


fig. 6.56. (author)  
*Uitvalgrond*. Archictural  
fragmentation mirroring  
the cemetery's disarray.

into the forest not only creates passages between new and existing programmed spaces, but further provides the possibility of creating a void within the forest and its canopy in which the architecture can situate itself as a vertical extension of the landscape.

2. **Axis mundi:** considering the existence of the cemetery as an *axis mundi* intended to enable the escape from the banality and suffering of the immediate through passage into the sublime (manifested both physically and metaphysically in the various forms of *axis mundi* encountered in the cemetery), the intervention of a columbarium and conservatory can be regarded as devices that facilitate this escape from the profane through an architecture of the sacred and spectral. The intervention is situated in response to the existing sanctified ground of the cemetery, which, at some level, still acts as a portal into the sublime, described by Munro visiting Brixton cemetery:

*Stepping within the gates of a cemetery takes one into another world; it is the world of the dead but belongs to the living. Cemeteries are strange places as they are resting places for the dead, a means of disposing of a deceased body, but they are also places for the living to return to, to mourn, grieve and remember a loved one. I may not know any of the people buried there but immediately I become a vicarious mourner if only for an hour or two (Munro, 2017).*

3. **Uitvalgrond:** this strategy provides a method of revealing and interpreting the aggregate of disfigured junctions between the colliding grids in the city<sup>31</sup>, the city and the cemetery, and the arbitrarily demarcated burial areas within the cemetery. The intricacy of these grids woven into each other and into the forest creates a visceral intimacy in its scale and collision as well as an 'owned' intimacy or privacy of space revealed in the segregation of the various religious denominations. *Uitvalgrond*, in this way, interacts with the idea of *axis mundi* in the dwellers' personal sanctification of space (the construction of own paradises addressed by Harries<sup>32</sup>). Using architectural

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31 Refer to chapter 2: "Johannesburg as an artificial nostalgic landscape for escape: the first artificial landscape".

32 Refer to chapter 3: "Escape as perpetuant for nostalgic recreation".

## IV

### SECOND SURFACE: PHYTOTRON AXO SCALE 1:100

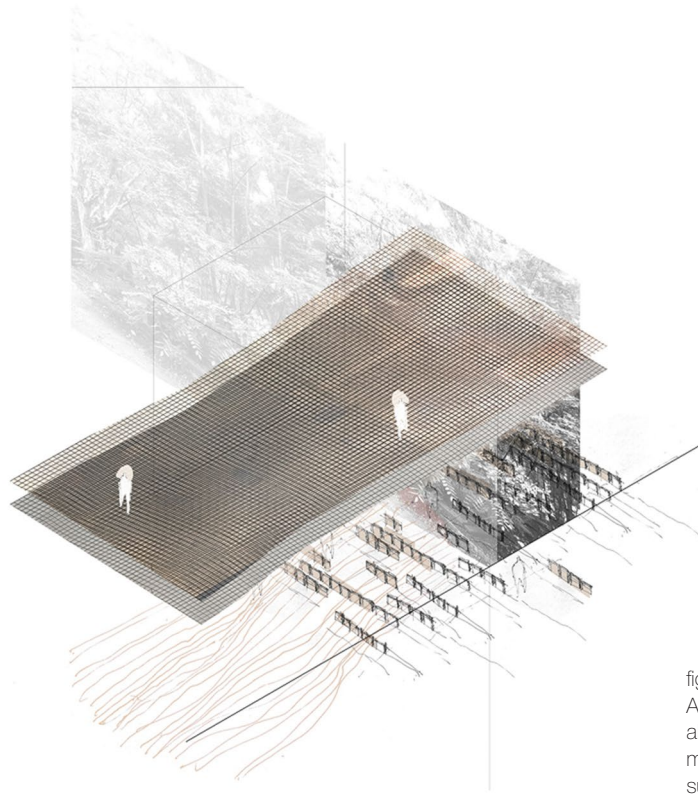


fig. 6.57. (author)  
Architecture suspended  
above the cemetery's  
material as a second  
surface.

intervention to capture the relations and tensions present within the intricacy of these grids, which allow the abstraction of the sacred from the profane, provides a potential space in which architecture can act as an oblique between the vertigo of imagination (*axis mundi*) and the nostalgic memory inherent in the horizontal surface.

- 4. Second surface:** recognizing both the city and cemetery as artificial morphologies (Bremner, 2014) produced from the desire to escape provides a conceptual framework for architectural intervention. The intervention situates itself in the cemetery as a mimicry of this *second landscape*, still embedded within the city's creation myth<sup>33</sup> — a superimposition over the desacralized surface and the abandoned material of the cemetery. The artificiality of this

<sup>33</sup> Refer to chapter 2: "Johannesburg's artificial nostalgic remnants / *Uitvalgrond*".

landscape is further manifested through its acting as a *phytotron*<sup>34</sup> to control and accelerate growth of the nostalgic forest and ruined surface below. Escape is both materialized and revealed through the architecture intended to reanimate the cemetery, and create a new sublime surface amongst the sacred realm of the deceased.

- 5. Artifice:** a new proposed conservatory cultivating bioluminescent botany (an exotic import without consequence) that mimics the artificiality of the forest as a realm for escape, in which the dweller is enthralled by fleeting, spectral wonder, charges the architecture through an understanding of the remnant alluding to Pallasmaa's notion of the *Poetic Image*<sup>35</sup> to provoke intimation through engaging the dweller's imagination with fantasy and unfamiliarity. The conservatory is a reverie, materially manifested as a collection of synthetically created, exhibited and archived bioluminescent botanical species drawn from imagination but scientifically produced through synthetic biology. The conservatory is analogous to the deepening of nature through imagination, demonstrated through its mimicry of the forest and the artificiality of its contents. This strategy further allows the incorporation of the previously mentioned conceptual generators.

A final intervention strategy was extracted from these initial responses, conceptualized and articulated into the *negative*, providing the design framework from which to produce the *second artificial landscape*.

## Project intentions

Conceptually, the projects investigates the relationship between the narrative of escape, its production of artificiality, and how this narrative may be absorbed into an architectural language which informs design decisions: formgiving, program, materiality, technification, construction and maintenance. This is accomplished through creating architectural *negatives* of the artificiality evident in the cemetery's

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<sup>34</sup> This makes reference to the conceptual project A flower factory for the caves beneath Naples by Italian architect Marco Zanuso (1916-2001), in which a new, mechanically automated, botanical intervention is used to rehabilitate the network of natural tunnels below the city of Naples through the cultivation of prize flowers beneath a surrogate sun (Manaugh, 2010).

<sup>35</sup> Refer to chapter 4: "The *second artificial landscape*: artificiality as escape".

V  
**ARTIFICE:**  
 CONSERVATORY OF  
 EXOTIC SPECIES FROM  
 IMAGINED WORLDS

AXO SCALE 1:100

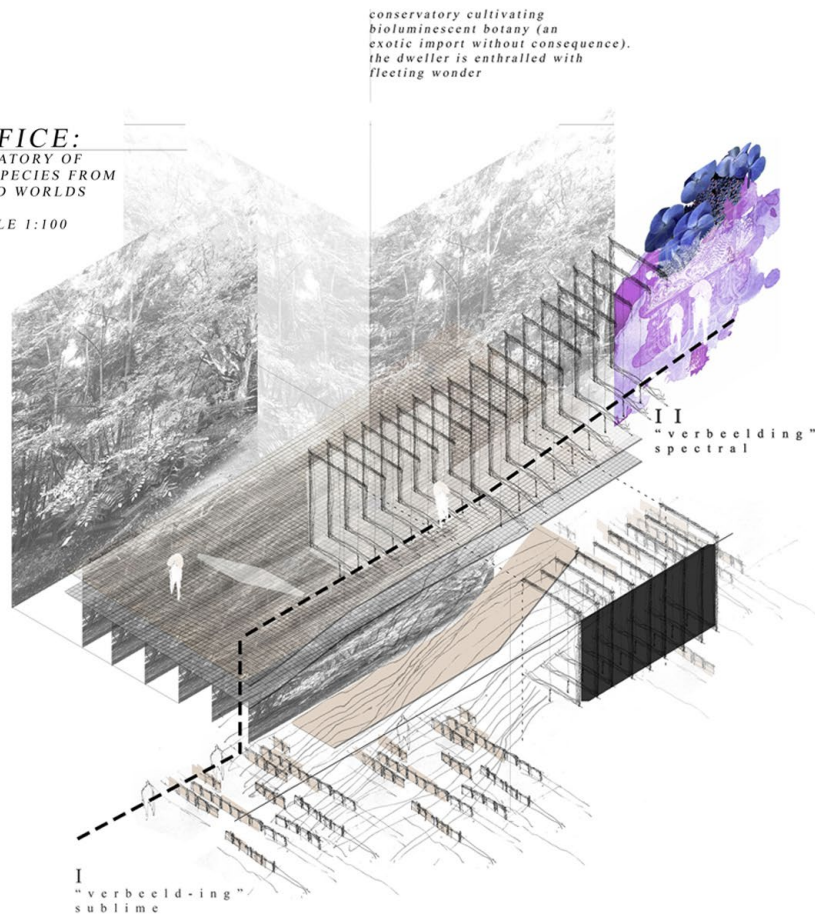


fig. 6.58. (author)  
 Architecture mirroring the  
 cemetery's artificiality.

material. The idea of the *negative* as an artificial reproduction is adopted as a conceptual strategy for intervention and articulation of the architecture. The *negative* as conceptual framework is explored through the artistic work of Christian Boltanski, whose work painfully reveals the treachery of memory and memorialization, but which also finally signifies the potentiality inherent in this amnesic inevitability, to reoccupy and recreate from this gap. The cemetery and forest are reanimated by the architecture's *redeeming* of the mechanism of escape which caused the cemetery's devolvement into an amnesic state.

The *negative* aims to reveal how artifice, in the form of architecture, is the mechanism that initiates the transformation from amnesia to imagination/reverie, and facilitate *La Petite Mort*. That is to say, artifice provides a framework in which the dweller is encouraged to reanimate remnants by actively engaging in the process of re-imagination. This functions on an intimate scale for the dweller. The *negative* reveals the remnant's potential for reverie. However, this also impels the dweller to realise how this mechanism

functions, therefore making it imitable (opening up a sublime framework) even when removed from the realm of the cemetery. This intimate experience of reimagination/revery is sublimated into the dweller's ontological framework, thus existing past its engagement with the cemetery. In this way, the *negative* not only functions as a system which allows intimacy between the architectural intervention and the dweller, but more significantly, function as a tool allowing *the artificial* to be reinstilled with significance.

The *negative* purposefully reimagines the potential of artificiality. In this way the *narrative of escape* is internally reconfigured for the dweller —it not only becomes a voluntary confrontation with the unknowns pervading the cemetery, but, more so, an encounter with *the vestiges of the real*:

*The territory no longer precedes the map, nor does it survive it. It is nevertheless the map that precedes the territory — precession of simulacra — that engenders the territory, and if one must return to the fable, today it is the territory whose shreds slowly rot across the extent of the map. It is the real, and not the map, whose vestiges persist here and there in the deserts that are no longer those of the Empire, but ours (Baudrillard and Glaser, 2014:1).*

It is at this point where Kafka's fable of the burrow meets Baudrillard's acceptance of the artificial that is incessantly produced from nostalgia, as a manifestation of *escape*. There is a delirium in the realisation that artifice shrouds the real, however, it is also in the discovery of the potential to create and reimagine from this mechanism, which makes the experience with architecture intimate. In this way, the significance of both of the *second artificial landscape* and the cemetery is not only restored, but sustained through the dweller's voluntary confrontation with the unknown encountered in the artificial (the simulacral). The discovery of this mechanism, through the *second artificial landscape*, constitutes the realm through which the significance of architecture is reimagined to function as a device for intimation — the tool which eluded Kafka's burrowing creating — with which the *vestiges of the real* can be sublimated into a *third intimate landscape*.

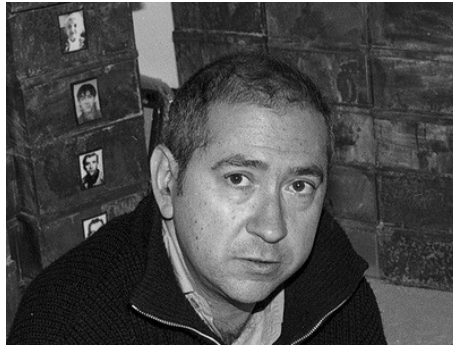


fig. 6.59. Christian Boltanski (1944-).



fig. 6.60. *Autel de Lycée Chases*, 1986–87.

# The Negative

## Conceptual precedents

**Developing the *negative* as conceptual strategy for the *second artificial landscape*:**

### **1\_ The *negative* as performance of memory:**

**Christian Boltanski:**

**Keywords:**

Heritage, memorialization, memory, amnesia, imagination, performative

The work of French artist, Christian Boltanski (1944-), reflects on the millennial critical and artistic obsession with memory born(e) from a culture terminally ill with amnesia (ibid., 2004: 4). His work is an interrogation of this condition and the role which memory plays accomplished through representation of remnants of the Holocaust including human remains, lost property and catalogued belongings of the dead. Predominantly focused on the problematics of memory, memorialization and the inevitability of amnesia, his work offers ways to map the performativity of memory through the theatricality of his installations, providing optimism in the crisis inherent in memory.

**Defamiliarization capacity of the *negative*:**

Revealing the inconsistency of memory through photography and installation, Boltanski's work embodies the theatricality of memory in both medium and content. The performative representations of memory of Boltanski's work resides in this fissure between past and present memory — the interplay between remnant, revenant and reverie:



fig. 6.61. *Réserve* -  
Hamburger Strasse,  
1995.

*In constantly questioning memory, we then hover in the in between, neither the true and exact presentation of a past event, nor an entirely contemporary reinvention [...] Associating with other materials and texts, once engaged in the theatricalized space of a sculptural construction and activated by the viewer's memory, a commonplace snapshot that might be previously overlooked as pedestrian becomes highly charged (ibid., 2004:4).*

As the familiar is defamiliarized and the unknown engaged (through the *negative*), that which is already known is made compelling again. A second sight is provoked through this engagement which allows the existing to be made into a new poetic construct (ibid., 2004: 5) (interpreted as the *third artificial landscape*). Gaines further argues that Boltanski's works often situate memories as continuously recreated events, which, although based on the past, are always interpreted through the present, which, instead of invoking lamentation or ignorance, may offer cause for celebration:

*It is possible to see that memories are potential, simultaneously irretrievable, instable, fluid, transient, poignant, melancholic and goldenly nostalgic. The mapping of memory offers history a chance to reinvent itself [...] Memory is a source of power, a storehouse of cultural treasures and a source of grief and obituary (ibid., 2004: 4).*

Boltanski's installations mechanizes memory and amnesia as the means through which reworkings, engagements and physical confrontations with the past can take place and thus engage imagination. The work provides an optimism in the crisis of the inescapable sense of loss associated with memory by exposing the gap which

(amnesic) memory creates, by delicately tying together representations of death inherent in his photographic memorialization with the amnesic and reimaginative 'death' of his medium. Although this process then implicitly requires sacrificing the known through reimagination <sup>36</sup>, it is this mechanism which the *negative* offers *La Petite Mort* to be manifested materially through the performative reproduction of the cemetery's amnesic material <sup>37</sup>.

*"It is not possible to get back to what was". Performance, based as it is on bodies, space and presence, does not necessarily mourn this unrepeatable past but actually relies on the generation of the re-presented moment, the both completely original and simultaneously patently fake, and it is out of this juxtaposition that performance takes its very form [...] it is possible to understand memory as transient performance, and endlessly reiterable recreation of the past (ibid., 2004:5).*

The *negative* as artificial reproduction is thus adopted as a conceptual architectural language which addresses the processes of memory, memorialization, documentation and amnesia encountered in the cemetery. The transience of *negatives* (produced from the amnesic originals) further acts to bind the intervention to death, elaborated on in the following sections.

*Boltanski's work point to memories as continuously recreated events, based on the past, but understood through the present [...] Revisiting Boltanski it is thus possible to map memory not just as a host of floating signifiers nested in fragile physiologies, but a performative form, a set of concurrences which hover between the original and copy, a theatrical source of creativity (Caines, 2004:4).*

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<sup>36</sup> Refer to chapter xxxxxxx: "The architectural insertion: mechanising amnesia".

<sup>37</sup> When Boltanski declined a commission for creating a Holocaust monument for an American museum in 1994, he made a suggestion as to how such monument could be made. He advised that the monument should be made fragile and transient, subject to the marring of time, a monument which in order to last had to be "constantly tended, looked after and rebuilt [...] as perhaps in the frequent physical watching over and rebuilding of the monument instead of building a monument in bronze that we could leave behind and forget [...] we would have to physically act to remember and keep remembering" (ibid., 2004:4).



fig. 6.62. Internal perspective of the ark at the *Jewish Kindermuseum*.

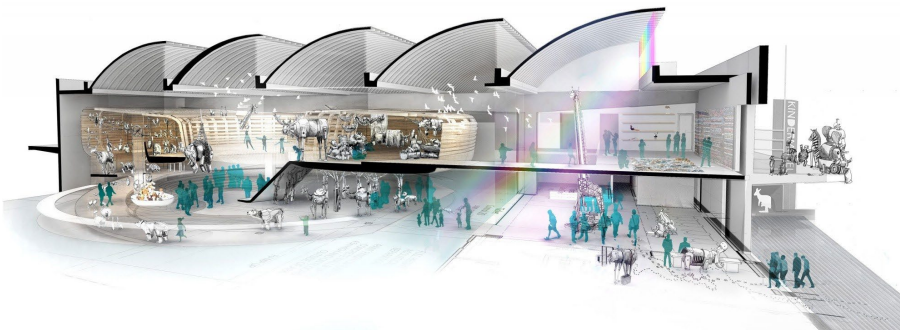


fig. 6.63. Procession into the ark. Physical and virtual escape in the *Jewish Kindermuseum*.

## 2\_ Conceptual, programmatic:

### JEWISH KINDERMUSEUM

**Location:** Berlin, Germany

**Date:** 2016 (unbuilt)

**Architect:** Olson Kundig

**Keywords:**

Heritage intervention, archiving, interactive, role-play, mythology, imagination

The Jewish Kindermuseum in Berlin is a project by architect Alan Maskin from the firm Olson Kundig which investigates how museums can regain significance in a culture enslaved by the need to (predominantly digitally) record, archive, exhibit, and share memory. The French philosopher and social theorist Michel Foucault (1926-1984) regarded the museum or “the place of all times” as a paradigmatic expression of the modern obsession with memory, stating that:

*The idea of accumulating everything, of establishing a sort of general archive [...], the idea of constituting a place of all times that is itself outside of time and inaccessible to its ravages, the project of organizing in this a sort of perpetual and indefinite accumulation of time in an immobile place, this whole idea belongs to our modernity (Foucault and Miskowiec, 1986: 26).*

The museum’s potential for evoking imagination through collection and archiving is explored through appropriating the ‘narrative’ of Noah’s Ark, reinventing the typology of a museum to respond to the fluidity of cultural conditions.

The story of Noah’s Ark is a biblical tale which is deeply rooted in Abrahamic cultures (but echoed in various other cultural mythologies which precede the Old Testament) which describes Noah’s divinely appointed task to construct a vessel which would hold one of each sex of each species inhabiting the world before it would be purged from sin by the deluge. The tale’s significance in relation to the museum is firstly located in the ark, which functions as a device for collection and conservation - properties inherent to the Museum which are challenged by a culture obsessed with documentation, digital archiving, and with infinite access to information. Secondly, the project acknowledges and unpacks the potential for engaging imagination through myth (described, here, in the theory section), thereby addressing the Museum’s declining relevance in contemporary culture.

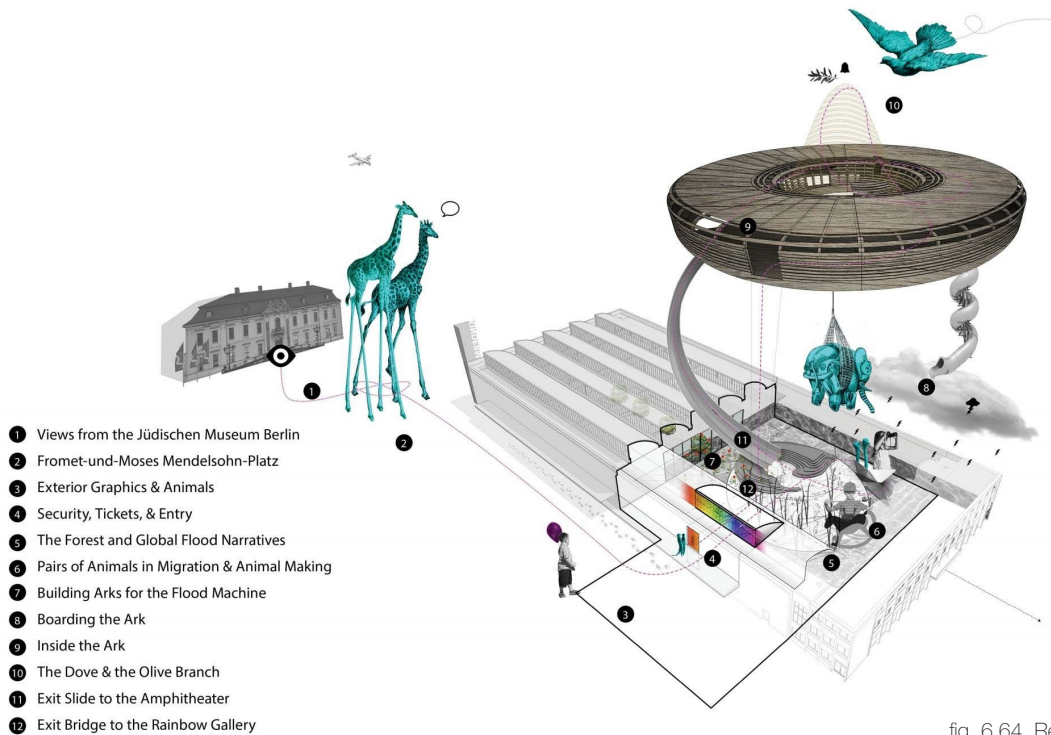


fig. 6.64. Recreating the ark at the *Jewish Kindermuseum*.

The program, which, situated within an old wholesale botanical market, is a spatial retelling of the Noah's ark narrative, unravelled in a sequence of layers which present the dweller with new informative experiences and interactive interfaces as he/she drifts deeper into the museum, until the final arrival at a physical emulation of the ark, containing an inventory of wondrous objects. Typologically reminiscent of the Wunderkammer or "cabinet of curiosities" which originated during the Renaissance as a pedagogical typology allowing the public increased accessibility to otherwise abstract information through physical representation of objects in encyclopedic collections. These collections were regarded as memory theatres that reached their prominence before scientific advances, such as the invention of photography and the mass production of cheap paper, which allowed for an even more accessible distribution and commodification of memory (Giudici, 2017: 91). While the Museum

functions through synecdoche, whereby objects are curated to represent a larger, absent whole, and thereby mostly relieves itself from ambiguity, the *Wunderkammer*, in contrast, loosens this representational structure through analogy. Curiosities contained in the *Wunderkammer* are arranged in disarray, recreating the chaos of the cosmos and “spatializes the narrative of human life as a path from darkness to light, from death to rebirth” (ibid. 2017: 97) as the objects are imaginatively reanimated through analogy.

*The idea of cataloguing the whole of reality in a room requires an implicit narrative, though not necessarily a historical one. While the museum links memory to the temporal structure of history, the Wunderkammer ties the idea of remembering to an ability to mentally reconstruct the totality of things in their spatial order [...] Wunderkammern are microcosms, and the objects they contain are memorabilia - extraordinary pieces to be remembered as exquisite or bizarre anomalies that offer a complete image of the universe recapitulated inside a room (Giudici, 2017: 94).*

The ark is a further poignant metaphor of the consequence of preservation<sup>38</sup> as an insulating Modern condition — that which is too exotic succumbs in the deluge — when stories become demythologized and lose significance of their ontological potential. The reinvention of the ark thus not only situates the myth in relation to contemporary themes of diversity, migration, creation and new beginnings, but also redeems the original myth (Olson Kundig, 2017).

Furthermore, the museum typology is challenged and reimagined as a tool/portal to the imagination that facilitates and inspires the dialectical reimagination of the museum's inventory, as well as the mythological narrative of the ark on an architectural level, reinvigorating its fantasy by appealing to the visitor's imagination through individual interaction and role-play. By dissolving the perceived boundaries between architecture and mythology through participation and performance, fantasy enables the engagement of imagination. Artificiality of memorialization in this way acts as the method to engage the viewer's imagination through the programmatic physical and virtual layering of fantasy hosted in the ark, providing narrative immersion within the ark nested in the building.

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<sup>38</sup> The ark can be likened to the conservatory, which functions as a similar archiving and indexing device, elaborated on in the discussion of Antediluvian Park of 1854 at the Crystal Palace in chapter 4: “Brief mythological and historical analysis of conservatories”.

This leads to a further consideration of how performance is not only absorbed into the architectural language through its conceptualisation of materiality, detailing, construction and maintenance, but also how the skin articulates itself as a *negative*, to become *autonomous* in its artificiality.

Similar to the ark, the project generates a conceptual language with which to reimagine and reanimate the cemetery and the forest:

### **Interpretation of precedents as second artificial landscape:**

#### **Significance and potential of the *negative* as architectural strategy to reimagine cemetery and forest.**

*Negatives* are manifested in the forest firstly through memorialization (representations of the deceased) and secondly as a series of voids nested within the forest, both as consequence of the pursuit of escape. The experience of these absences present material in which the architecture can situate itself and which, being void of significance, prevents intrusiveness and further damage and desecration of the nostalgic layering of the cemetery, while adding new layers of significance.

Recognizing both cemetery and forest as material manifestations of nostalgic escape<sup>39</sup> along with layers of escape further present in the form of various discordant axes of memorials and pedestrian corridors, provides further substance for intervention. The reproduction of these elements in the form of *negatives* is a theatrical acknowledgement, embracement and extension of this layering. Conceptually this strategy is further developed through a language of layering: *negatives* articulating the architecture as *thresholds of escape*, emphasized through the architecture's construction (created through burrowing), materiality and detailing, developed in the following sections.

#### **Potential of programmatic intervention:**

*Negative* manifested as second artificial landscape.

The *negative* reproduction of memory and amnesic traces encountered in the dilapidated surface and substance of the cemetery is a material performance of the consequence of escape. It is a celebration, rather than lamentation, of the treachery of memory and a mechanization of this propensity through which the significance of both cemetery and forest can be restored and sustained. Escape forms the

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<sup>39</sup> Discussed in Chapter 2: "Amnesia in Brixton cemetery as nostalgic remnant of the *first artificial landscape*".

tool by which the architecture is artificially, yet intricately woven into the tapestry of the forest to expose and engage this potential. The *negative*, as reproductions of the existing material, enables escape through a *second artificial landscape*, luring the dweller deeper into its confrontation of unknowns. This artificiality is expressed performatively in the architectural program, materiality, construction and maintenance, as well as throughout the architectural design and design process. As such, the documentation, methodology and language produced by this process is regarded as crucial extensions of the architecture. A language is produced by the architecture with which it can (artificially) infuse itself, demonstrating the limitless creative potential inherent in the artificial, and the method by which (the terror of) unknowns (knowledge existing beyond what is known) can be confronted and made known.

**Required programmatic intervention:**

The urgent need for alternative burial solutions in Johannesburg and specifically Brixton cemetery forms the first base for programmatic intervention. A columbarium is proposed in relation to the conservatory, a further representation of artificiality and reimagination of the *first artificial landscape*, and the crossprogramming of these two typologies is investigated. Bearing in mind the proposed developmental framework of Brixton in the near future, it is necessary to intervene in the cemetery and facilitate its metamorphosis into a recreational public forest. This is accomplished by responding to the proposed *Knowledge Precinct*, which will define the northern periphery of the cemetery and which creates a network between the existing educational institutions in close proximity to the site, by further accommodating a synthetic biological and botanical research. This will include a botanical laboratory which will research and propagate the bioluminescent inventory, guest laboratories facilitating and promoting the emergence of DIY biology, exhibition spaces and archiving facilities to expose the public to and document current and past research.

**Relevance of conservatory as typology: reanimation and reimagination of the cemetery through (the confrontation of) escape.**

The artificiality produced by escape latent in both cemetery and forest, and the amnesic gap it created can be appropriated to engage with, rather than escape from, the unfamiliar, thereby reanimating the nostalgic remnant as a *third intimate landscape*. Imagination is intimated through the artificiality of the bioluminescent conservatory through mechanizing escape, thereby deconstructing the amnesic material encountered both in the forest and the cemetery. The *Bioluminescent Conservatory* as *second artificial landscape*, thus not only functions as a new botanical intervention which makes the forest permeable and habitable, offering fleeting wonder, but also acts as the mechanism which allows the imaginative potentiality of the cemetery to be

## CLIENTS AND FUNDING



### 1 COLUMBARIUM

These institutions are approached as clients, having expressed their interests in the maintenance of and intervention into existing parks and cemeteries, which are regarded both as public amenities and national heritage resources. These institutions have also raised concerns about the dire need for reconsideration of new burial typologies relevant to the ever densifying metropolis.

### 2 BIOLUMINESCENT CONSERVATORY

The institutions harbour a vested interest in environmental research and sustainability. These institutions further promote and support research through funding, human resource development and the provision of research facilities, accommodating knowledge creation, innovation and development in scientific disciplines.

The bioluminescent conservatory offers a platform for research in synthetic biology as a rapidly emerging field (on both an institutional and amateur level), as well as recording, exhibition and sharing of knowledge and advancements.

#### 1 Johannesburg City Parks

- Development, intervention and maintenance of parks and cemeteries as public amenities.
- Rehabilitate cemeteries existing as urban blight to address the abject conditions they create for surrounding contexts.
- Urgent need to reconsider burial typologies.

#### 2 National Heritage Foundation

- Preservation of cemeteries as holding heritage significance.
- Relevant documentation and archiving of cemeteries, burials, buildings and deceased as national heritage resources.

#### 3 The Johannesburg Development Agency

- Urban development of Brixton, the surrounding neighbourhoods and the proposed Knowledge Precinct as part of the Corridors of Freedom urban design proposal.
- The rehabilitation of existing yet neglected fabric of the city.

#### 4 Department of Science and Technology

- Facilitates the research, innovation, development and sharing of knowledge in scientific and biological disciplines.
- Promotes environmental sustainability and research in this field.

#### 5 National Research Foundation

- Facilitates the research, innovation, development and sharing of knowledge in scientific and biological disciplines.
- Promotes environmental sustainability and research in this field.

#### 6 South African Agency for Science and Technological Advancement

- Promotes scientific literacy to the public and youth
- Creates awareness in youth to careers in science.
- Facilitates interaction with public in relation to science, engineering and technology.
- Share advancements made in scientific fields.

#### Research Institutions:

CSIR  
NEON  
DST  
SAEON  
NRF  
SAASTA

#### Educational Institutions:

WITS  
UJ  
Schools and Collages  
Educational Programmes:  
- The Heritage Portal  
- Johannesburg Heritage Foundation

#### Professional Institutions:

SAIA  
GIFA  
UDISA  
ILASA

#### Government:

The City of Johannesburg  
The Johannesburg  
Development Agency  
Johannesburg Heritage Foundation  
The Provincial Heritage  
Resources Authority Gauteng  
National Heritage Council

penetrated (by engaging the unknown), through artificiality. Although the cemetery's desacralization and forestation led to its severing with death (and with its unknowns), the reanimation of the cemetery in the dweller's imagination as third intimate landscape tethers the conservatory back to death, through *reimaginative death* — *La Petite Mort*, revealed in Boltanski's work. The conservatory further engages death by creating habitable gardens (also bound to seasonality, decay, transience) cultivated on the architectural skin interspersed with the columbarium.

### **Programmatic development:**

A reimagination of the constituent programs is required in order to reinterpret their significance not only to the cemetery but also to their performative function, rebinding them to physical-, amnesic- and reimaginative death rooted in the cemetery and its forest:

## **A - Cemetery**

### **1 Columbarium**

**Significance:** burial expanding and reanimating the cemetery  
Public, interacting with 3 & 6

1\_ Burial of ashed remains from Brixton and Braamfontein crematoria.

2\_ Performance of memory through public engagement with burial and the columbarium's interaction with the *Spectral Garden*.

3\_ Performance of the transience of memory as graves become clustered, removed, overgrown.

Includes African, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Roman Catholic and non denominational sections with provision for family graves, shrines, mausolea and a section for the 'mayor's row' and other persons of significance.

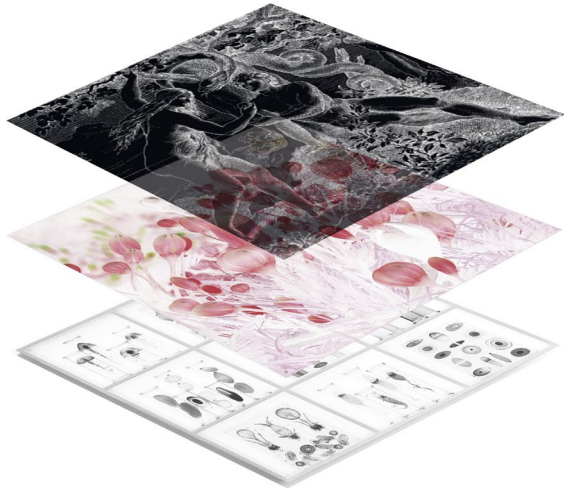


fig. 6.66. (author)  
*The Bioluminescent  
Conservatory.*

## B - Forest

### 2 **The *Bioluminescent Conservatory*** (botanical laboratory)

**Significance:** research and propagation of bioluminescent botanical species as well as further synthetic biological experimentation.

Private, interacting with 1 - 6

- 1\_ Botanical research, experimentation and documentation of current work.
- 2\_ Germination and propagation of bioluminescent botany.
- 3\_ Expanding knowledge through synthetic biological experimentation, performed through an enlarging, yet seasonally bound inventory of plants.

Includes a propagation laboratory, research laboratory, cold storage (seed and sample vault) and equipment storage.

### 3 **Spectral Garden** (*maturation loculi*<sup>40</sup>)

**Significance:** Maturation and collection of synthesized bioluminescent species

Semi public, private, interacting with 1, 2, 6

1\_ Expanding the (material) fantasy of the forest as *first artificial landscape* for escape.

2\_ Collection, maturation and exhibition of bioluminescent species bio-engineered in the *Bioluminescent Conservatory*.

3\_ Forest is made less hostile with the expanse of the bioluminescent collection programmed in relation to the columbarium.

4\_ Performed through the expanse, death and exoticism of newly imagined and engineered species.

Includes the maturation loculi and gardens for the imagined, synthetic bioluminescent botany with a controlled climatic buffer, provision for equipment storage as well as public ablutions.

### 4 **Cabinet of Obscurities** (guest laboratory)

**Significance:** Research and experimentation, gathering of obscure knowledge (known unknowns)

Private, interacting with 2, 5, 6

1\_ Contextual significance in relation to *Knowledge Precinct*.

2\_ Research, experimentation and documentation of current work done by research professionals, students and diy biologists.

3\_ Performance of imaginary death through confronting unknowns and sacrificing knowns.

Including two guest laboratories with working desks, a shared equipment laboratory with the *Bioluminescent Conservatory*, cold storage, equipment

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<sup>40</sup> Derived from *Loculus* meaning: 'each of a number of small separate cavities' (Oxford Dictionaries, n.d.). It refers to an architectural compartment or niche that houses a body, especially found in catacombs. The reinvention of this name becomes a performative reanimation of the cemetery's function through creating loculi in which bioluminescent botany is grown.



fig. 6.67. (author) *The Cabinet of Obscurities.*



ARCHIVE

trace - memory - index

fig. 6.68. (author) *The Inventory of Effigies.*

storage and staff facilities.

5 ***Inventory of Effigies*** (public exhibition)

**Significance:** Tracing, mapping, archiving and exhibition of gained knowledge.

Public / private, interacting with 2, 4, 6

1\_ Exhibition of current work.

2\_ Curation and archiving of contributions, discoveries and advancements of previous research.

3\_ Responsible for the exhibition and performance of gained knowledge through permanent and fleeting exhibitions. The exhibition maps out memory traces and effigies as knowledge is gained and sacrificed.

Including: Temporary and permanent research exhibition galleries, archiving facilities, entrance lobby and foyer and public ablutions.

6 ***Imaginarium*** (administration)

**Significance:** administration, archiving and research facilities.

Semi public / private, interacting with 1 - 6

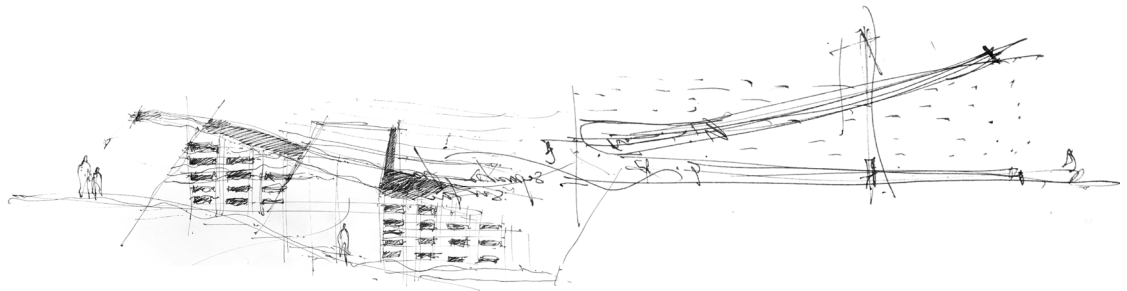
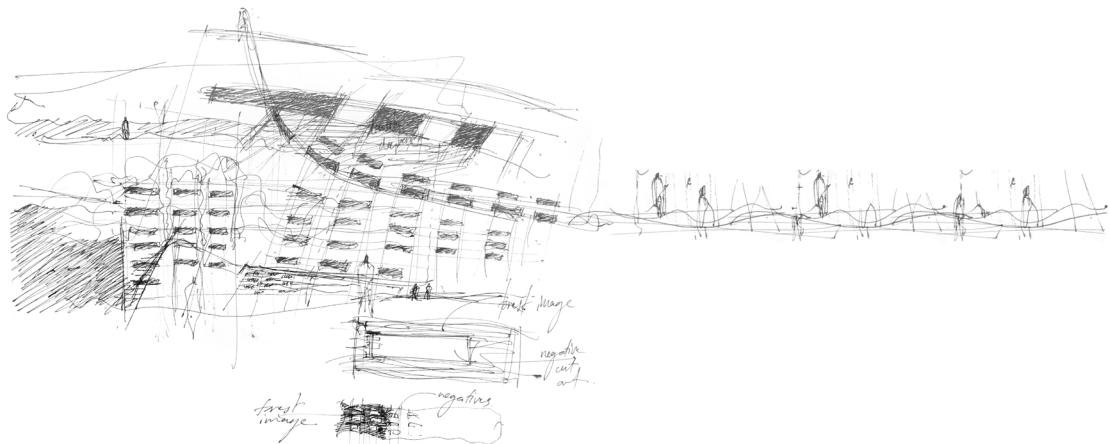
1\_ Administration of research facilities, cemetery and forest.

2\_ Archiving death records as immediate engagement of the public with death.

3\_ Archiving expanse of knowledge from current and previous research and work in the Imaginarium as public engagement of *reimaginative death*.

Including: administration offices, *Imaginarium* (archiving and public research facilities pertaining to both cemetery, *Bioluminescent Conservatory* and *Cabinet of Obscurities*), staff lounge, kitchenette and ablutions.

The program accommodates imagination and reimagination through performance and participation of the archived and newly imagined objects.

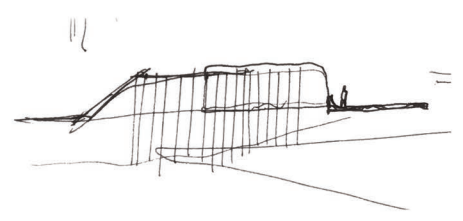
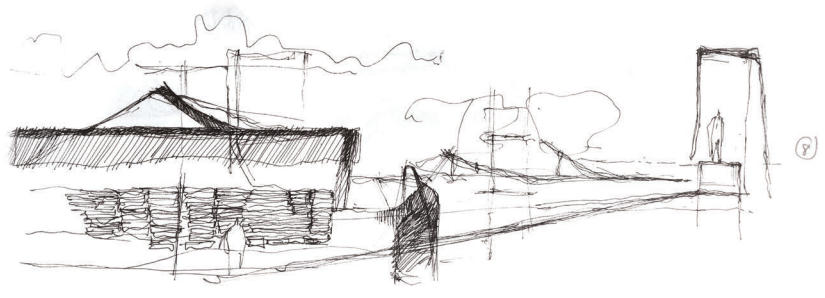
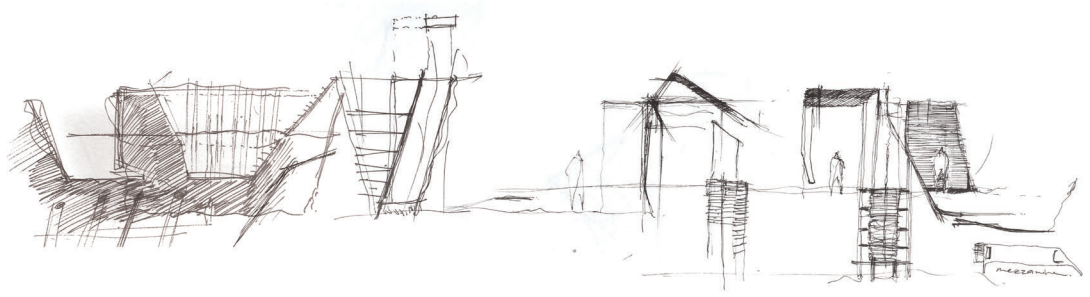
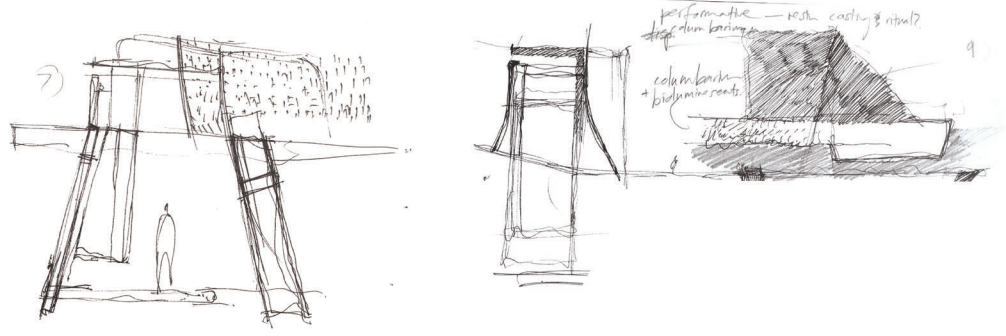
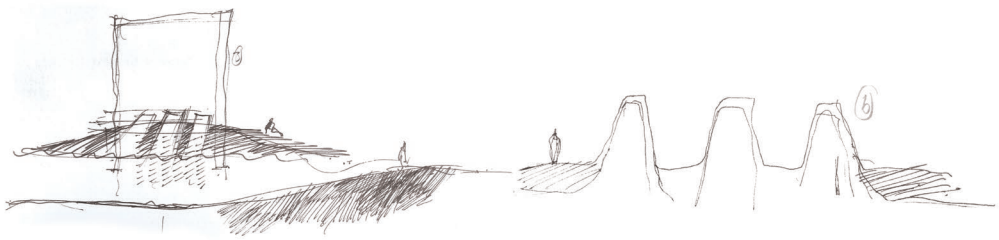


## *PART III*

### *REVERIES*

Escape and reimagination in the  
*second artificial landscape*

fig. 6.69. (author) Initial conceptual sketches of architecture as the *first artificial landscape*.



# Chapter 7

## Design development

### **Negative as architectural insertion:**

The design of the new columbaria and *Bioluminescent Conservatory* is a conceptual, programmatic, material and technological response to, and mirroring of, the unknowns inhabiting Brixton cemetery. These unknowns are created from the cemetery's *narrative of escape* (from *physical-*, *amnesic-* and *reimaginative death*) specifically manifested in its remnants, and its sublime otherness which contrasts the profanity of its context. These unknowns are furthermore encountered in the chaotic nature of the forest — in its nostalgic alienation, temporality, unrestrained growth (versus the voids interspersing its lushness) and mythological fantasy. These conditions form the material basis from which architectural *negatives* can be produced.

The insertion further responds to the proposed site development plan proposing: the addition of new crematoria, articulation of existing pedestrian corridors which will bind the proposed residential, commercial and recreational developments with the *Knowledge Precinct*, newly created passages traversing the cemetery and binding its denominational sections, and the bus stops which also serve the hospital and surrounding schools.

**Design strategy:** Materializing the *negative* into the *second artificial landscape*.

### **Processional escape**

The *negative* is, therefore, adopted as a design strategy with which to create and articulate the *second artificial landscape*. The following section will outline conditions on the site which allow for a sensitive architectural response with specific relevance to the *negative*.

fig. 7.70. Initial conceptual sketches exploring the layering of steel elements over the moulded concrete structure.



NEGATIVES AND SITE CONDITIONS  
SCALE 1:500

# Responding to existing conditions

## **Situating the *second artificial landscape* amongst the remnants.**

Acknowledging the cemetery's current state of uninhabitability due to its loss of significance, not only creates a condition which necessitates its reanimation, but also opens the amnesic conditions on site to in(ter)vention and reimagination. In addition to the cemetery being gradually claimed by the forest, creating precarious conditions for the sporadic pedestrian, the density of graves scattered throughout the site creates a further impediment towards intervention. For this reason, the site is chosen on the south western periphery of the cemetery, firstly, due to the sparsity of graves in this area, which, being in proximity to the crematoria, has been appropriated mostly for Hindu burial (one can see remnant copper plaques retained from the cremation process nailed to the blue gum trees surrounding the crematoria). Secondly, a triplet of pedestrian corridors have formed in this area, stretching between the southern and northern edges and defined by towering blue gum trees. These corridors narrow as they gradually pierce the forest, immersing the dweller, at least viscerally, in the cemetery's sacredness. The dweller is beckoned by the forest's lush otherness, while traversing its profane periphery. Although the forest's density offers the dweller repose from the immediate context, these corridors are travelled through infrequently, both to avoid the peril lurking within as well as the sensory confrontation of the nearby crematoria.

These corridors, being voids that stretch through the forest, offer a sensitivity to the intervention's placement. It provides negative space within which the *second artificial landscape* can be situated without damaging the cemetery's or forest's material. These negatives, furthermore, provide a space exposed to bountiful sunlight in which the conservatory can be situated, which, in binding the new residential and commercial enclaves to the *Knowledge Precinct*, creates a habitable garden for the dweller to be immersed in. This *negative* of the artificial forest unveils itself on entrance, subsuming the dweller in the forest's wonder, reanimating the forest.

Furthermore, the site is situated on the fringe of grave clusters — sanctified ground surrounds the intervention, drawing the *second artificial landscape* into its sacredness,

fig. 7.71. Existing negatives and site conditions.

however, also demanding reverence in its reaction to this sublime material. The graves, here, as in most of the cemetery, are laid out in disarray, however, two main axes can be identified to which the intervention responds. Firstly, the graves on the eastern edge of the intervention are traditionally orientated, with an east-west alignment, forming the first, *memorialization* grid of the architectural response. The volume of graves existing on this axis identifies this as the main amnesic material to respond to. This memorializing granite surface is overgrown and abandoned, creating the conditions to which the archiving, documenting and exhibiting (as forms of memorialization) programs of the intervention will respond, to reanimate the amnesic material. This include the *Bioluminescent Conservatory* (constantly archiving new bioluminescent species), *Cabinets of Obscurities*, and *Inventory of Effigies*. Secondly, the few graves which are found bordering the site to the south, are aligned perpendicularly to the corridors stretching past them. This gives a second axis to which the architecture responds; however, seeing that the majority of burial space designated to this axis is unoccupied, it is left in perpetual anticipation. Suffused with this *negative* potential, it is regarded as the *reimaginative* grid. The architecture manifests, here, through the reimaginative program — the *Spectral Garden*, *Imaginarium* and *Maturation Loculi*, in relation to the new columbarium which is also created here.

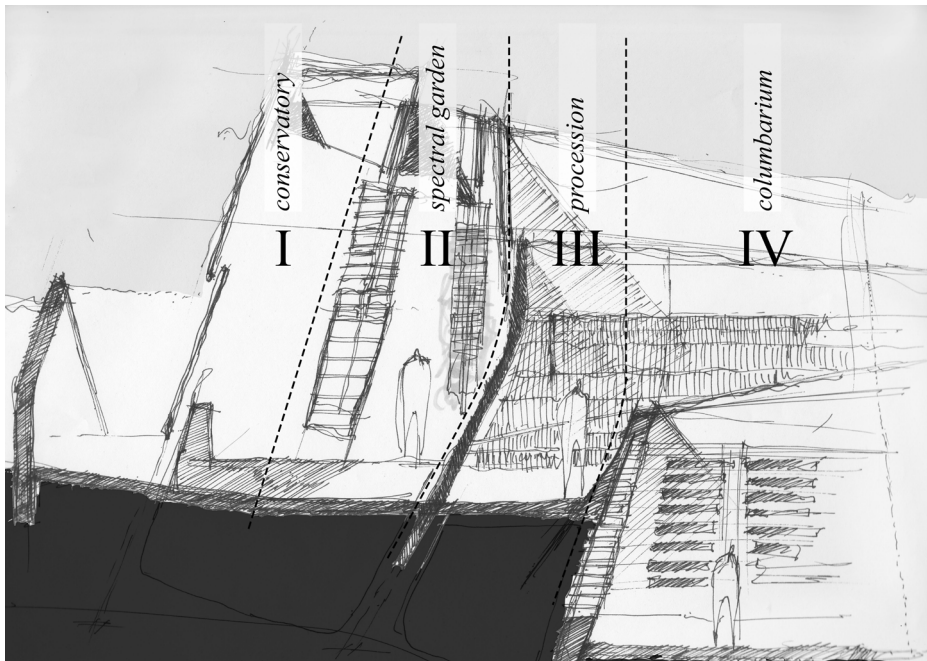


fig. 7.72. Thresholds of escape. Descent through the *Bioluminescent conservatory*.

Lastly, while the soil conditions on the northern half of the cemetery is mainly consistent of quartzite and minor conglomerate, the southern edge consist primarily of shale. This soil condition is favourable for the process of piling and moulding prescribed by the tectonic concept, as it has its own structural integrity, while also allowing piles to be load bearing from the traction between the concrete and its rocky texture, eliminating the need for piling foundations.

### 1\_ *Thresholds of escape*

In recognizing the cemetery and its ruination as a consequence of the artificiality of *escape*, the *second artificial landscape* is conceptually articulated as *thresholds of escape*. This becomes the first *reimagination* of artificiality, translated through the *negative*, into material architecture. The strategy is then to intervene with the *negatives* on three levels, as the dweller gradually descends into the *second artificial landscape*.

The *thresholds of escape* expose the dweller, firstly, to the remnant material and traditional, existing graves of the cemetery, through a first layer of circulation guiding the dweller through the new and existing corridors of the forest (the *first artificial*

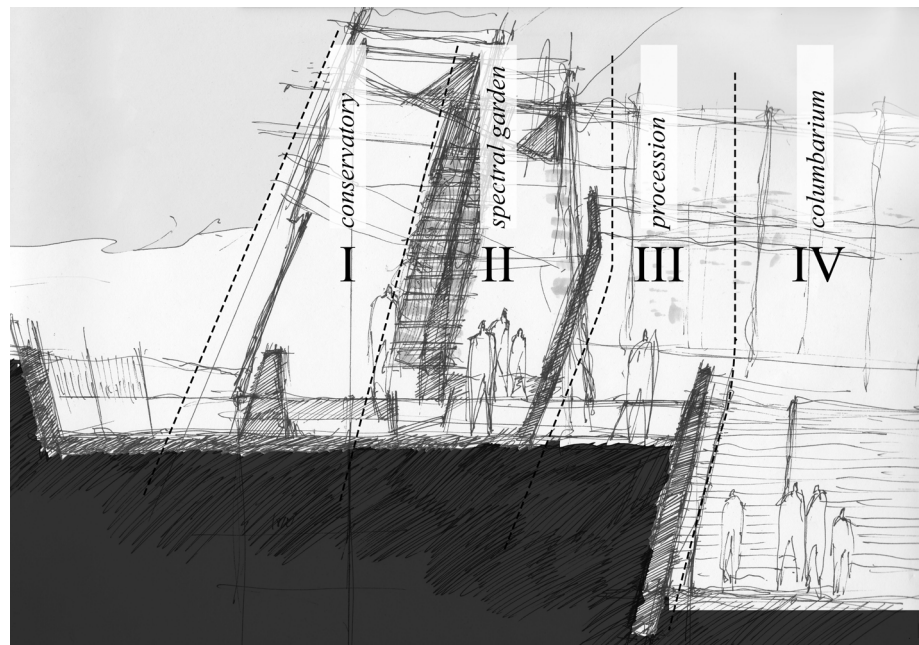
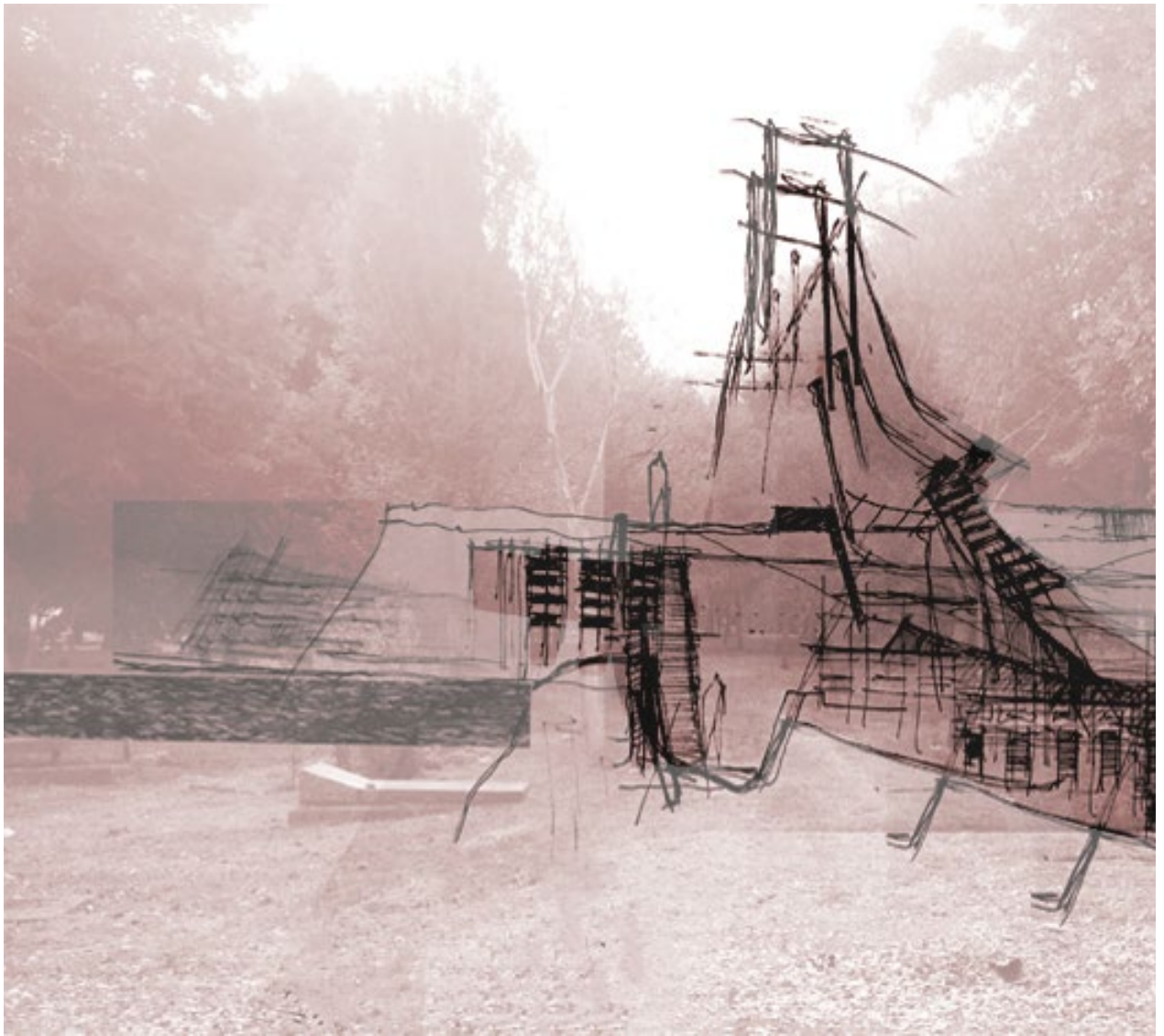


fig. 7.73. Thresholds of escape. Descent into the columbarium

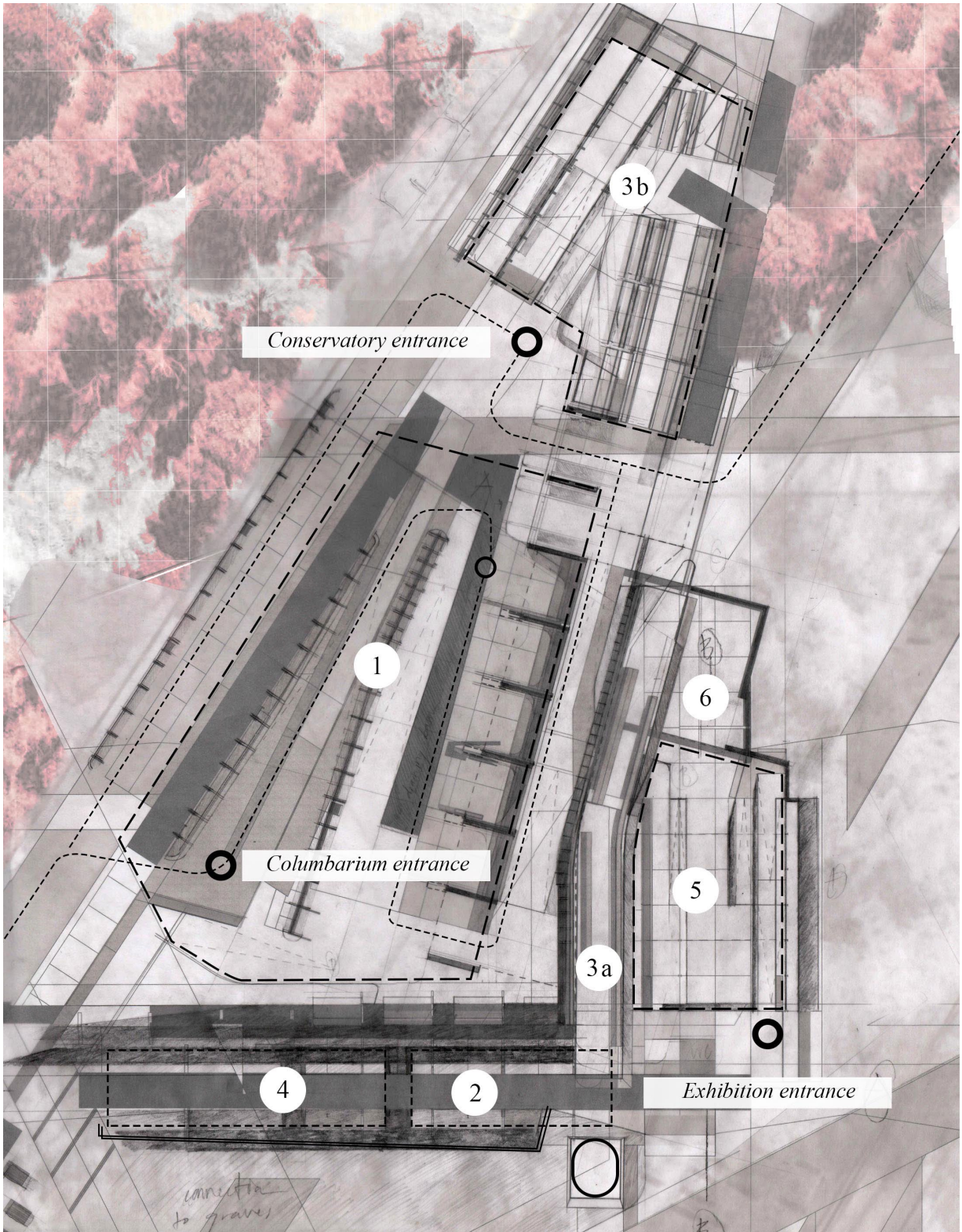


*landscape*), leading to the columbarium. From here, the dweller is lured into a second layer of *escape*, articulated through the performativity of the *negative* which manifests as the *second artificial landscape*. This constitutes the material intervention, with its main proponents being the columbarium and the *Spectral Garden*, which are introduced, respectively, to reanimate the cemetery and the forest. The *negative* suffuses this layer with artificiality through its program, in the form of fleeting wonder captured by the *Spectral Garden*, the ephemerality of exhibitions hosted in the *Inventory*



fig. 7.74. Initial conceptual sketch of performative layering as design and tectonic strategy.

of *Effigies* and the synthetic production and cultivation of bioluminescent botany in the *Bioluminescent Conservatory and Maturation Loculi*. The *negative*, furthermore, performs its artificiality through its materiality, which becomes the second performative *reimagination* of artificiality, translated through the *negative*, into architecture.



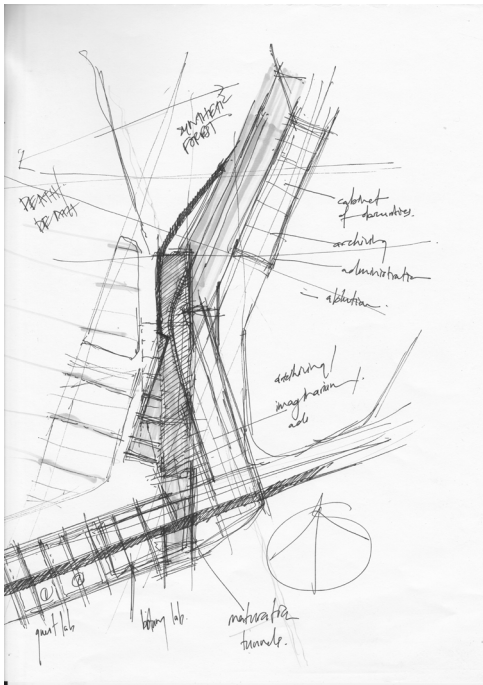
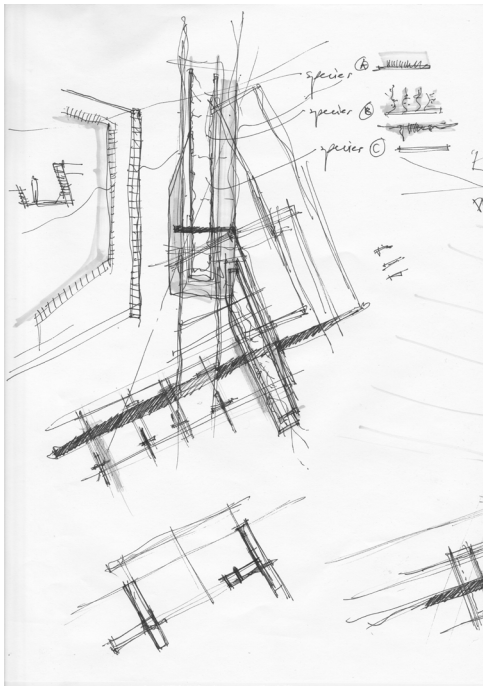


fig. 7.75. Second iteration design development.

fig. 7.76. Second iteration design development.

fig. 7.77. Plan layout development.

## First design iteration:

Program placement:

- 1 Columbarium:  
New burial typology introduced to the cemetery.
- 2 *Bioluminescent Conservatory*  
Bioluminescent botanical research conducted from which to create the new artificial forest.
- 3 a/ *Spectral Garden*  
Cultivation and propagation of new bioluminescent botanical species which are transplanted into the hydroponic system of the columbarium.  
  
b/ *Maturation Loculi*  
Cultivation of propagation of new bioluminescent botanical species in laboratory conditions.
- 4 *Cabinet of Obscurities*  
Guest laboratories for opened to nearby educational institutions for conducting synthetic biological research.
- 5 *Inventory of Effigies*  
Exhibition of research conducted and botanical species developed in the *Bioluminescent Conservatory* and *Cabinet of Obscurities*.
- 6 *Imaginarium*  
Research facility for the interpretation of research displayed and archived in the *Inventory of Effigies*.

The design intervention considers the existing site conditions and negatives mapped in proximity to the project and the need to make the cemetery accessible by articulating the intervention as a series of thresholds into which the dweller can escape. These guide the dweller through the existing cemetery into the new columbarium and garden.

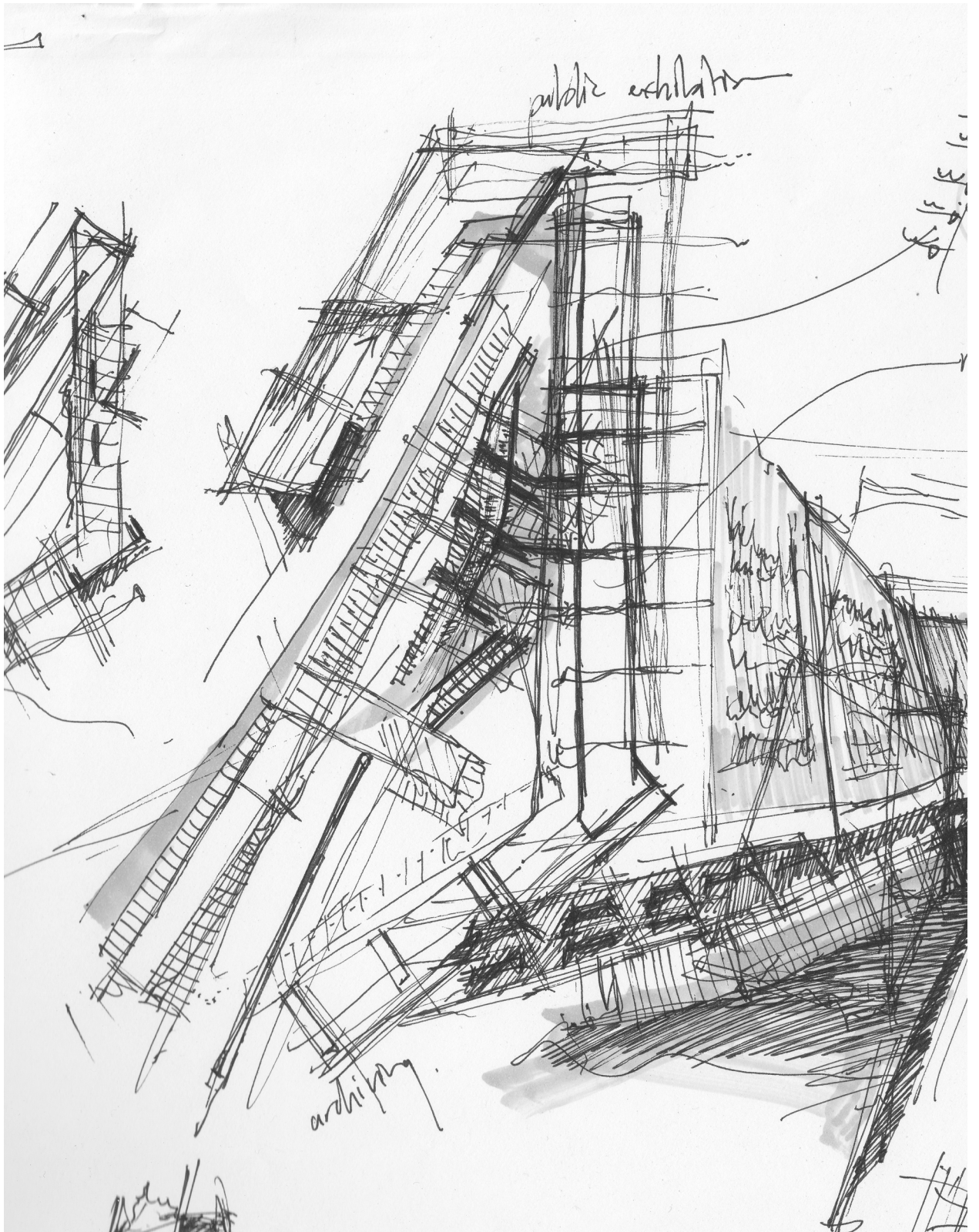
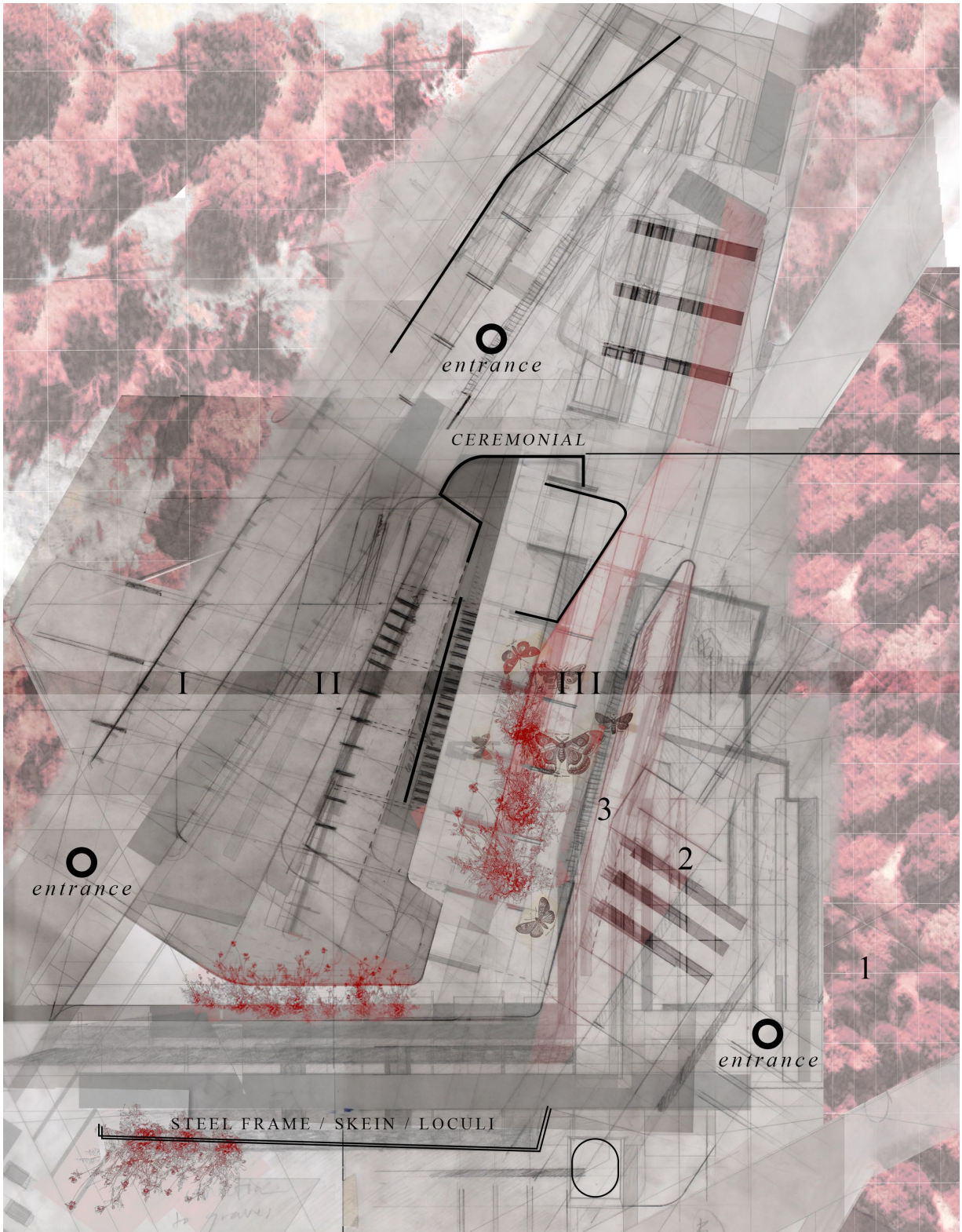




fig. 7.78. Conceptual sketch: *thresholds of escape and articulation of the negative skin.*



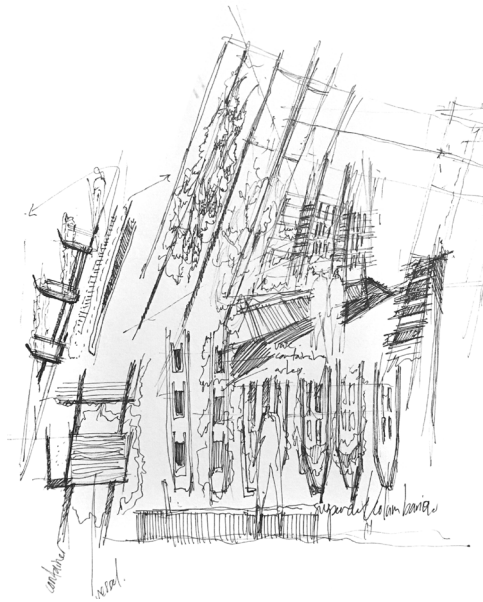
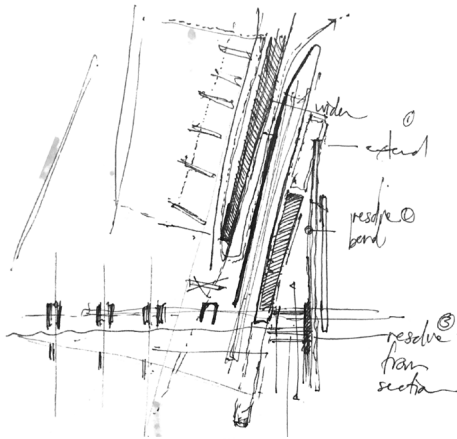


fig. 7.79. Concept sketch. Articulating the thresholds of escape.

fig. 7.80. Concept sketch. Planters interspersing columbarium in the Spectral garden.

fig. 7.81. Plan. Second iteration.

The intervention thus responds to:

- Existing north-south pedestrian corridors stretching through the cemetery,
- The lost significance of existing graves/traditional burial,
- Existing axes used to arrange the graves (responding specifically to the east-west orientation and the subtle oblique from that axis in the section between the two pedestrian corridors)
- The inaccessibility to the forest,
- The existing hindu crematoria.

The exploration resulted in a bi-axial spatial configuration where programs dealing with memorialization, collection and archiving was arranged according to the east-west axis used for burial, while the slight oblique of this axis between the two pedestrian corridors was used as a guide from which to organise programs that are host to reimagination. The use of these axes resulted in rationally arranged, yet ill defined circulation.

### Second design iteration:

Articulating the *thresholds of escape*:

- I Traditional graves (remnant)
  - II Columbarium (new reanimating burial typology)
  - III *Spectral Garden* (new bioluminescent garden interspersing the graves of the columbarium, inspiring reverie)
- 1 Existing forest (remnant)
  - 2 Display of botanical research in the *Inventory of Effigies* (new typology to reanimate the forest)
  - 3 Imaginarium (situated adjacent to the *Spectral Garden*, thereby binding death with reimaginative death)

The rational organization of the circulation and program of the first iteration was articulated to create moments of



fig. 7.82. Site Plan. Third iteration.

pause along the approach to the intervention and throughout the columbarium, thereby emphasizing the *thresholds of escape*. The dweller is furthermore drawn into the intervention through a series of layers which, as described above, introduce new programs which not only reanimate the existing conditions by introducing the new typologies, but furthermore, has the potentiality to invoke reverie through these programmatic *negatives* of the cemetery and forest.

Ceremonial space was added to accommodate ritual space and to resolve edges in the columbarium, while a tectonic steel canopy structure, able to host the hydroponic system for the bioluminescent botany, was designed to cover the procession through the columbarium.

### **Third design iteration:**

While the use of two axial systems according to existing graves became a fundamental drive in the organization of the circulation and programs, the use thereof was not thoroughly explored. The third iteration emphasized the use of these grids within the building and its relation to the context by creating a series of slender oxidized steel roofs which provide cover to the subterranean moulded concrete elements which form the walls to the program. These roofs, covering the *Imaginarium*, *Inventory of Effigies* and *Cabinet of Obscurities* protrude from the surface and extend into the cemetery, not only following these grids, but bolstering them through the programmatic intervention (as depicted in the diagram on the following page). The mass of the *Maturation loculi* north of the columbarium has, furthermore, been fragmented by repeating the same form, allowing a softer edge between the weathering steel structure and the surrounding forest.

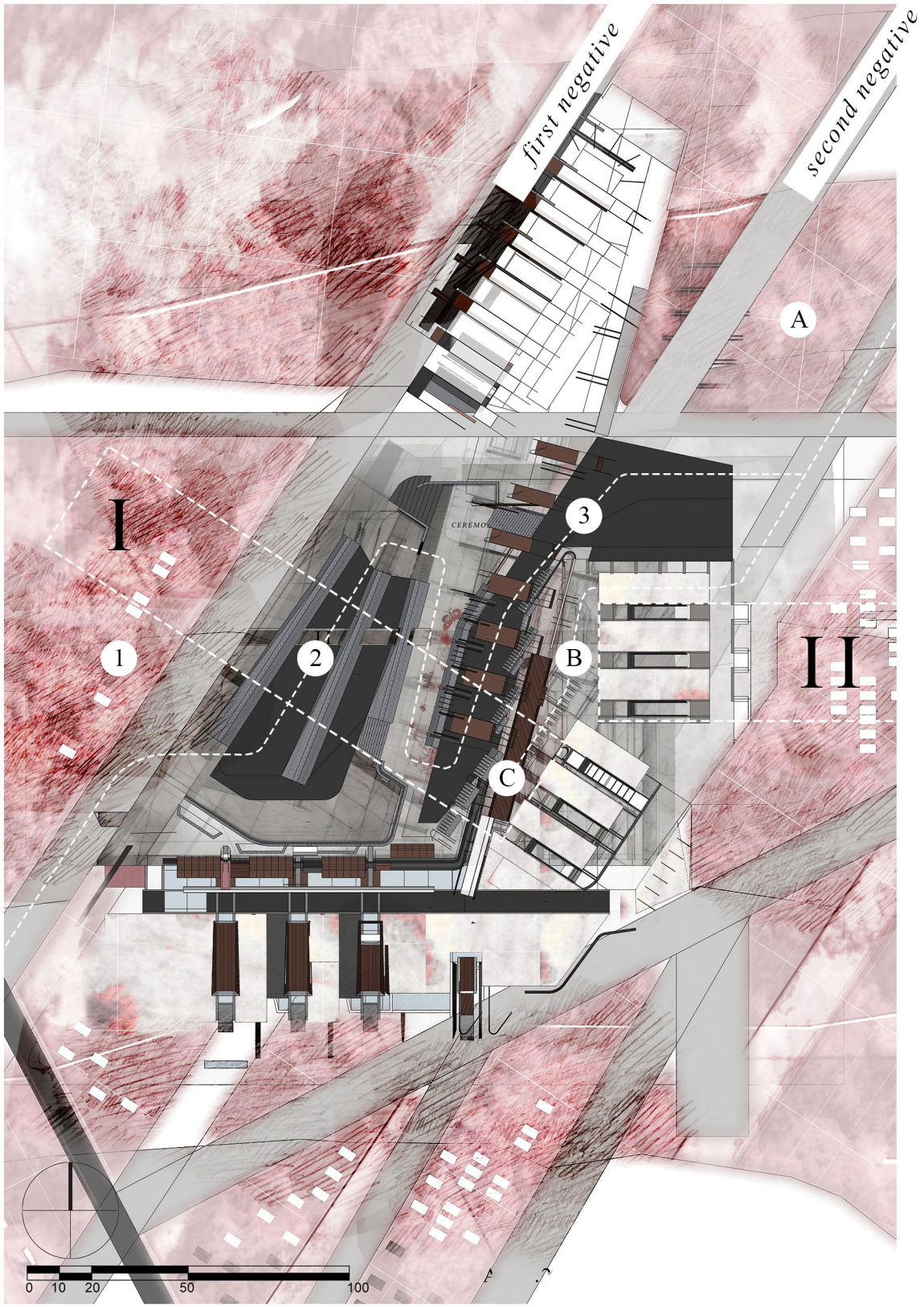


fig. 7.83. Plan. Third iteration.

The primary shortcomings of this iteration are related to the lack of circulation on the southern and eastern edge of the building, the lack of adequate entrances to the building and the creation of uninhabitable spaces between the protruding steel roofs. These issues are addressed in the final iteration.

Procession through the *thresholds of escape*:

- 1 Traditional graves within cemetery,
  - 2 Columbarium as new burial typology,
  - 3 Procession through traditional and new burial into the *Spectral Garden* where bioluminescent plants intersperse the columbarium.
- 
- A Existing forest, made accessible through the intervention of the columbarium and conservatory,
  - B *Inventory of Effigies* exhibit the newly synthesized bioluminescent botanical species,
  - C Synthesizing and propagation of the new bioluminescent botanical species, creating an artificial landscape within the building.
- 
- I Axis of ruined graves surrounding the intervention existing at an oblique to the common axis is appropriated for programs hosting with reimagination (3 & C),
  - II Common axis of existing ruined graves surrounding the intervention on the eastern edge is appropriated for programs hosting memorialization, collection, archiving and exhibition (2 & B).

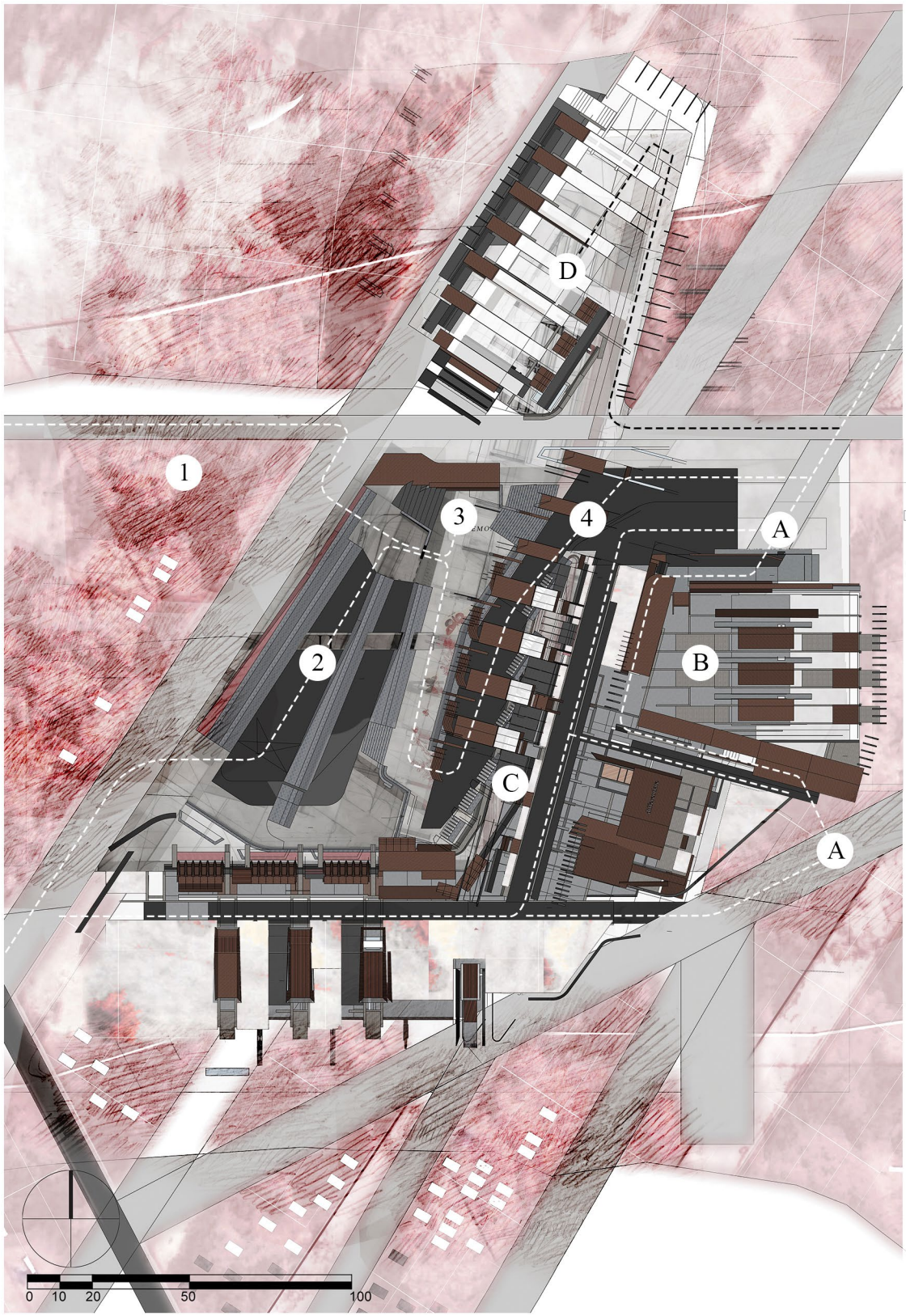


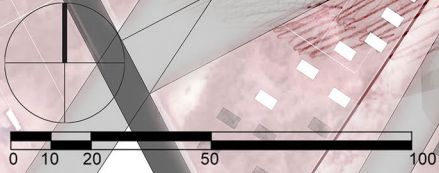
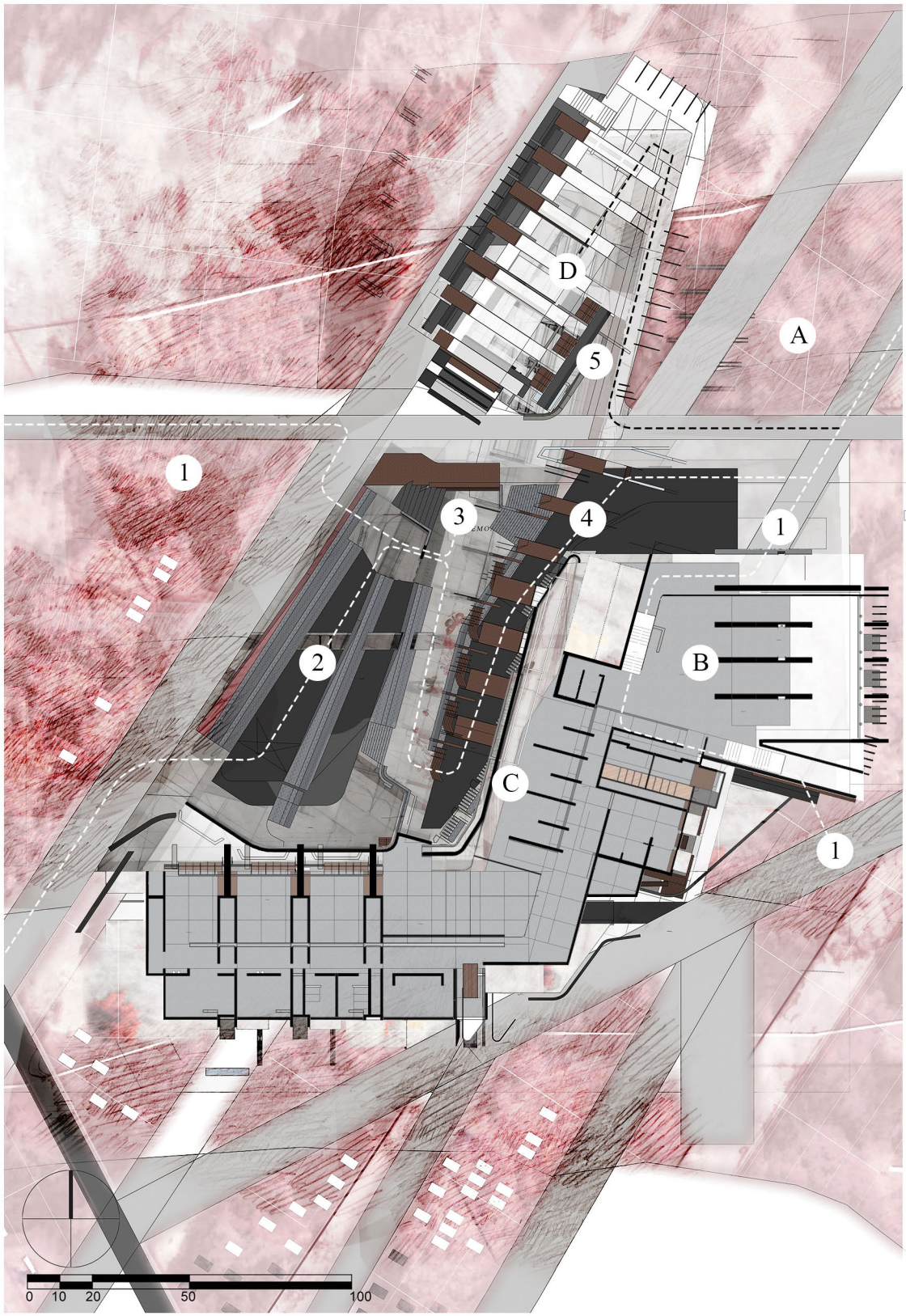
fig. 7.84. Plan. Fourth iteration.

### Final design iteration:

Final procession through the *thresholds of escape*:

- 1 Traditional graves within cemetery,
  - 2 Columbarium as new burial typology,
  - 3 Ceremonial space for burial ceremonies,
  - 4 Procession through traditional and new burial into the *Spectral Garden* where bioluminescent plants intersperse the columbarium.
- 
- A Entrances to the *Inventory of Effigies*, research facilities and archives.
  - B *Inventory of Effigies* exhibit the newly synthesized bioluminescent botanical species,
  - C Synthesizing and propagation of the new bioluminescent botanical species,
  - D Propagation and maturation of the new bioluminescent botany to be used in the columbarium and *Spectral Garden*.

The final iteration resolved the circulation issues presented by the third iteration, firstly, by consolidating the uninhabitable spaces between the elongated, extending roofs into one articulated roof mass with roof lights allowing an abundance of natural light to illuminate the subterranean spaces of the *Inventory of Effigies* and *Cabinet of Obscurities*. Secondly, circulation is added between the columbarium and the research and exhibition facilities in the form of a pedestrian corridor which allows for north-south passage through the building. Entrances (A) are added to the northern and southern sides of the *Inventory of Effigies* to allow more convenient entrance, while entrance to the Maturation Loculi is made semi private (D).

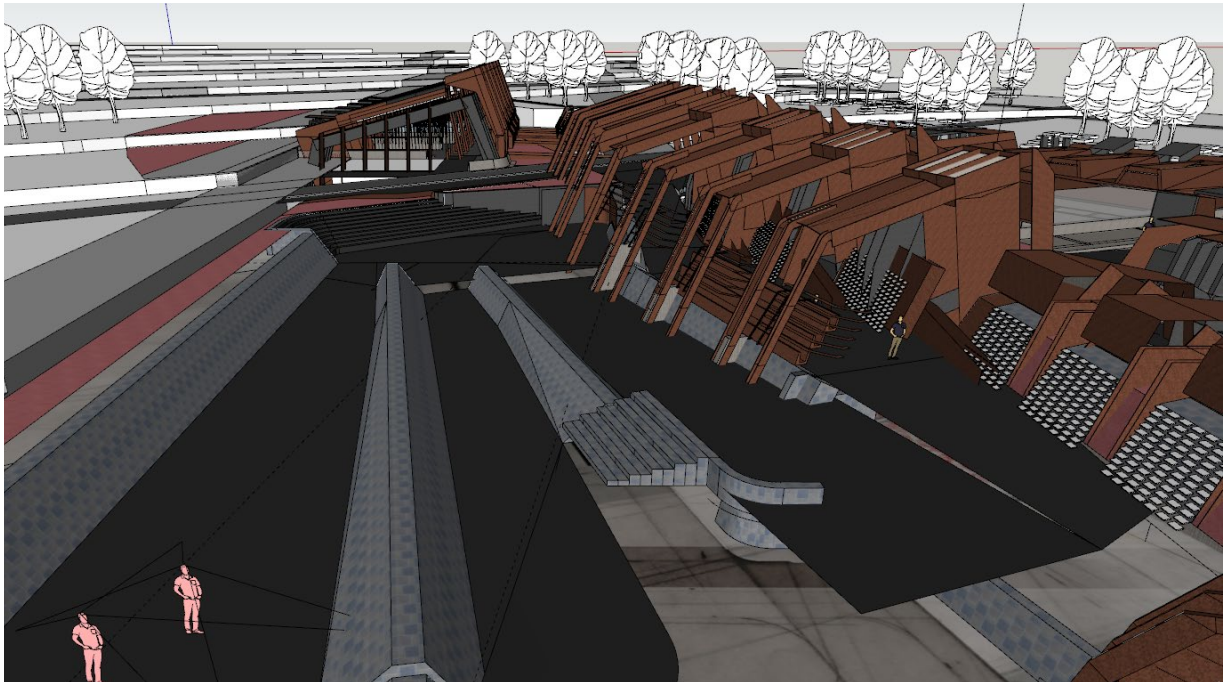


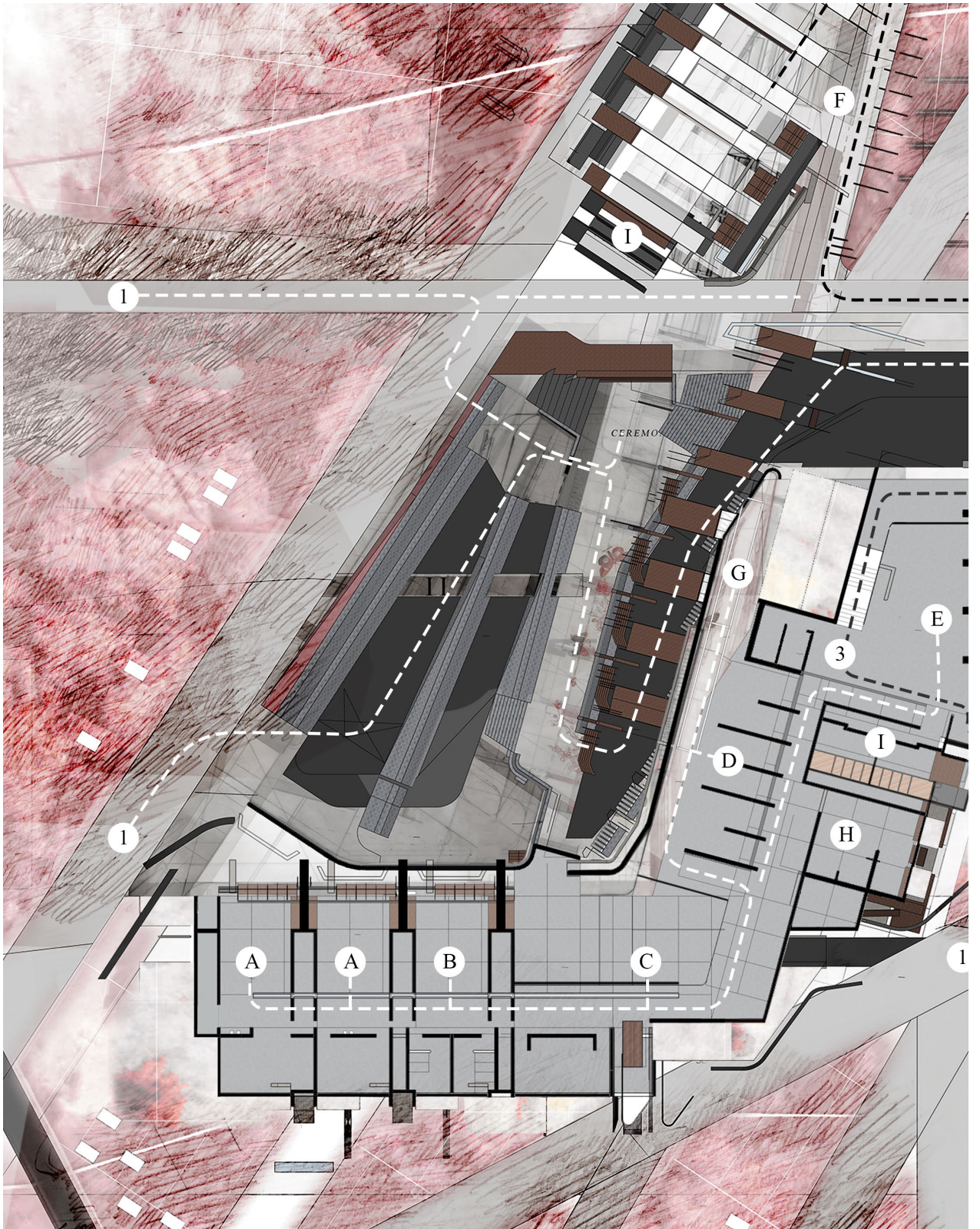
## Final iteration: plan

- 1 Entrances to the columbarium and research facility,
  - 2 Processional descent into the columbarium,
  - 3 Ceremonial space in the columbarium,
  - 4 Procession through traditional and new burial into the *Spectral Garden* where bioluminescent plants intersperse the columbarium, leading to the entrance of the *Inventory of Effigies*,
  - 5 Entrance to the Maturation Loculi is semi private and isolated from the rest of the program in order to not distract from the significance of the columbarium and *Spectral Garden*.
- 
- A Entrances to the *Inventory of Effigies*, research facilities and archives.
  - B *Inventory of Effigies* exhibit the newly synthesized bioluminescent botanical species,
  - C Synthesizing and propagation of the new bioluminescent botanical species,
  - D Propagation and maturation of the new bioluminescent botany to be used in the columbarium and *Spectral Garden*.

fig. 7.85. Plan. Final iteration.

fig. 7.86. Perspective towards *Maturation Loculi* with *Spectral Garden* in the foreground.





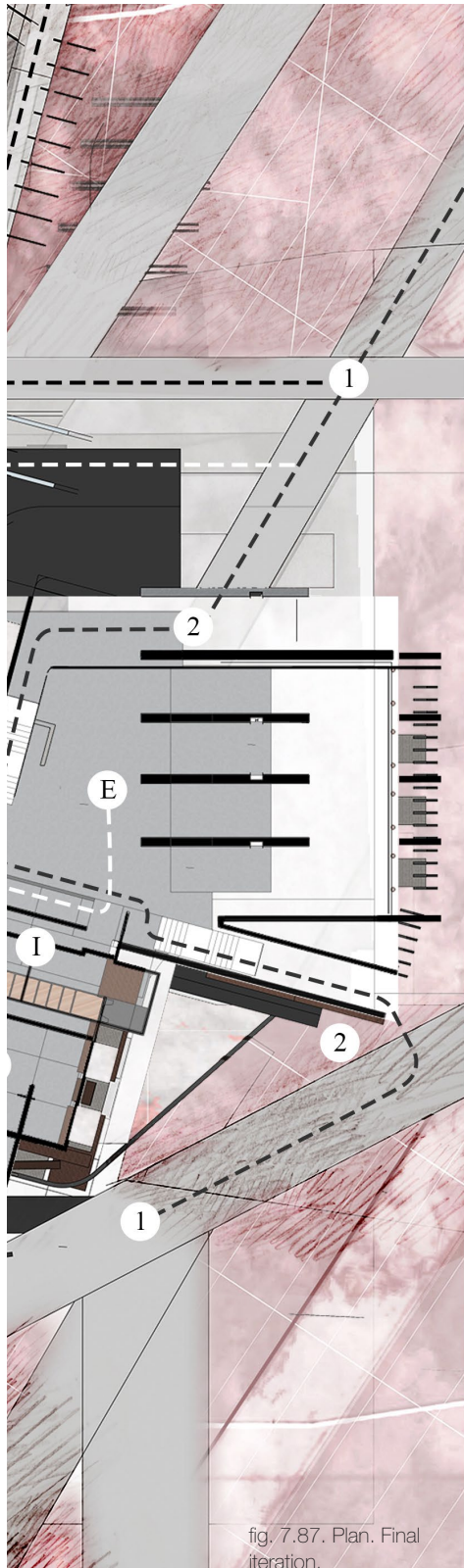
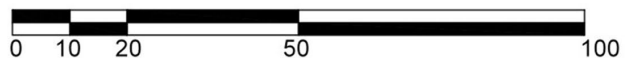
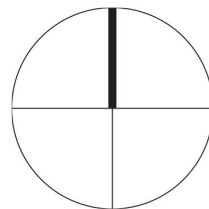


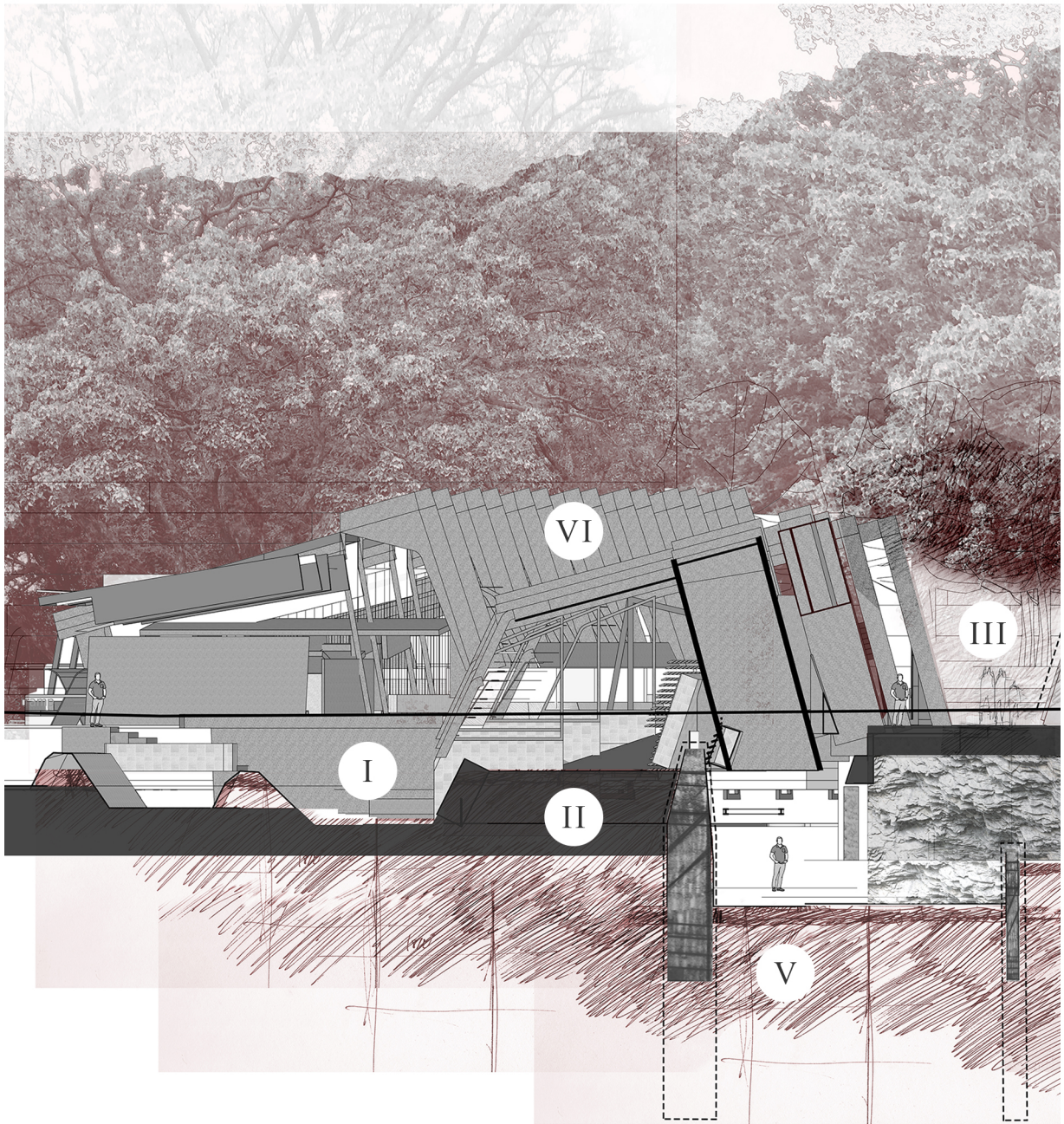
fig. 7.87. Plan. Final iteration.

### Final iteration: circulation and program

- 1 Arrival to columbarium and *Inventory of Effigies* (E), (Public)
- 2 Processional descent into the *Inventory of Effigies*, (Semi-public)
- 3 Further descent into the *Imaginarium* archives (D) (Semi-private), *Cabinet of Obscurities* (A) (Semi-private), and *Bioluminescent Conservatory* (C) (Private)

- A **Cabinet of Obscurities** (guest laboratories) (Semi-private),
- B **Shared guest laboratories** (Semi-private),
- C **Bioluminescent Conservatory** (dedicated synthetic bioluminescent biological laboratory) (Private),
- D **Archives** (Semi-private),
- E **Inventory of Effigies** (public exhibition gallery) (Semi-public),
- F **Maturation Loculi** (propagation and maturation of bioluminescent botany) (Semi-public),
- G **Imaginarium** (Private),
- H **Administration offices** (Private),
- I **Public and staff ablutions** (Private).





I\_ Descent into columbarium

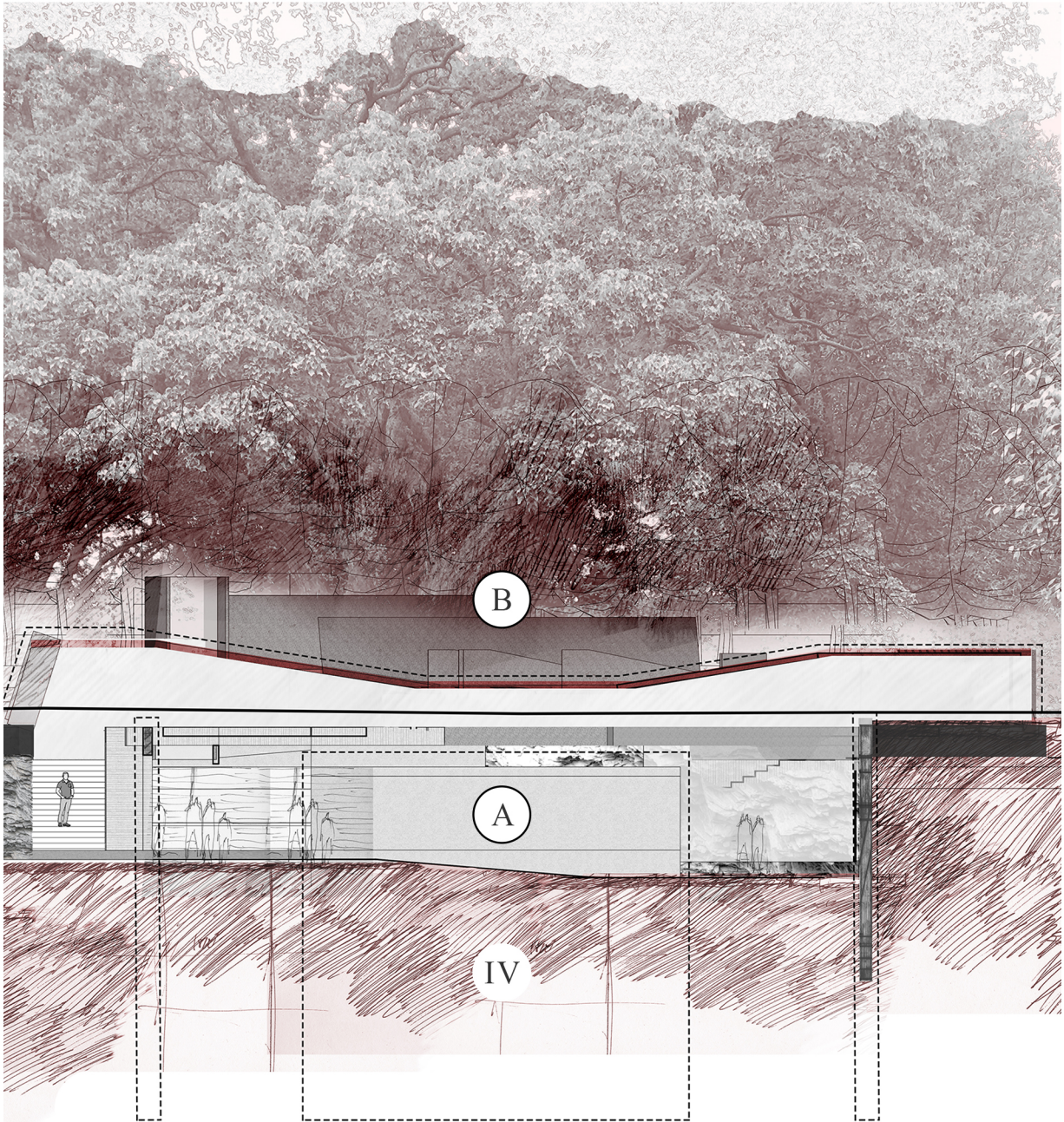
II\_ Immersion in *Spectral Garden*

III\_ Arrival at submerged structure

IV\_

V\_ I

VI\_



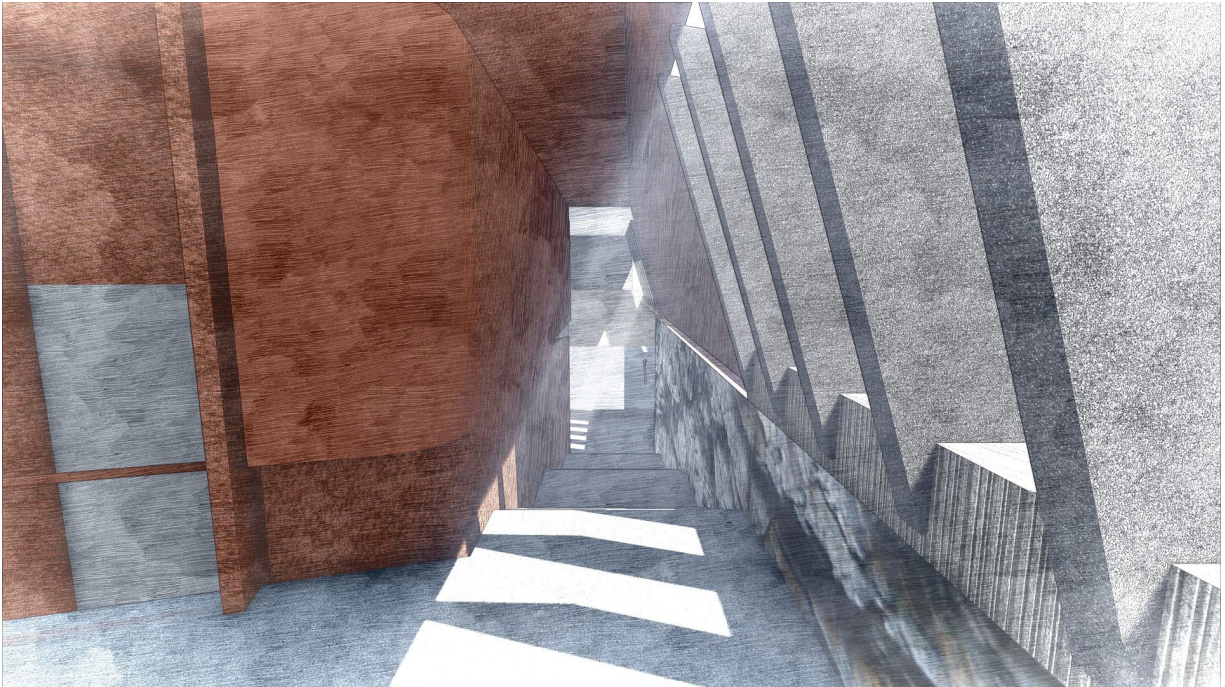
\_ Submersion into Inventory of Effigies  
\_ Imaginarium  
\_ Maturation Loculi

fig. 7.88. Section of fourth iteration indicating the construction of the two types of negatives, indicated in the diagram as A and B.



fig. 7.90. Perspective showing entrance to the *Inventory of Effigies*.

fig. 7.89. Perspective showing descent into the *Inventory of Effigies*.



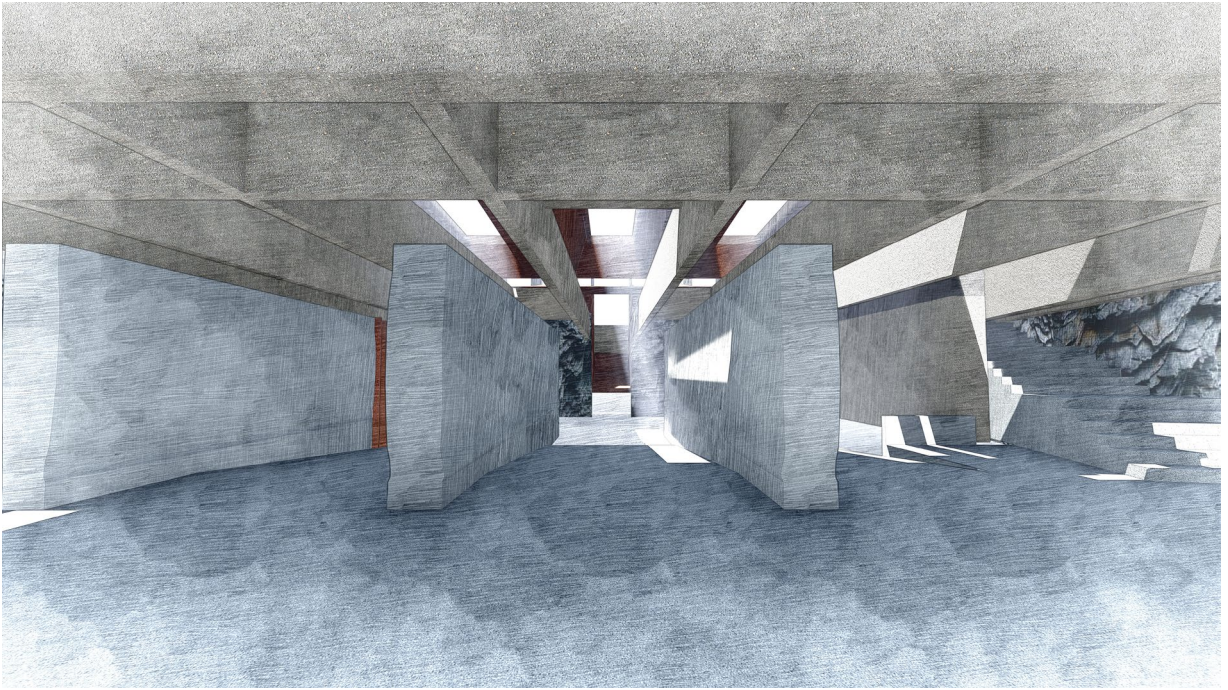


fig. 7.91. Perspective of the columbarium in relation to the *Maturation Loculi* (seen in background).

fig. 7.92. Interior perspective of the *Inventory of Effigies*.

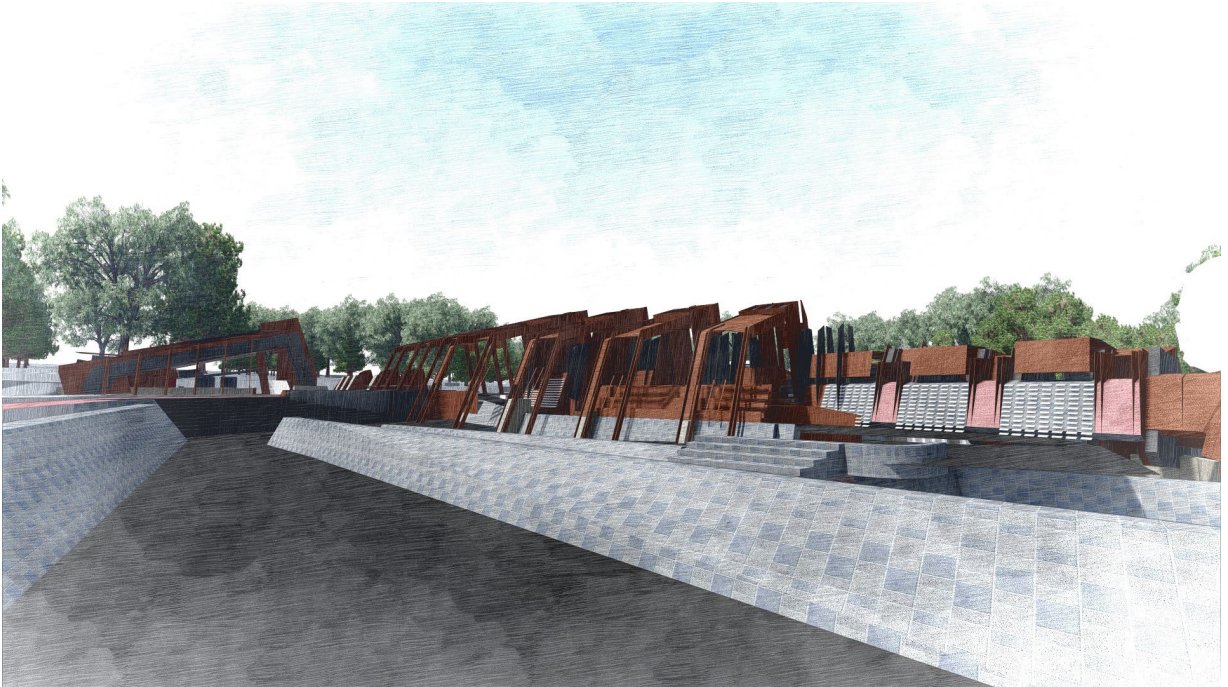




fig. 7.93. Perspective showing both concrete and steel negatives in the *Cabinet of Obscurities*.

fig. 7.94. Perspective showing formalized pedestrian corridor past the *Maturation Loculi*.



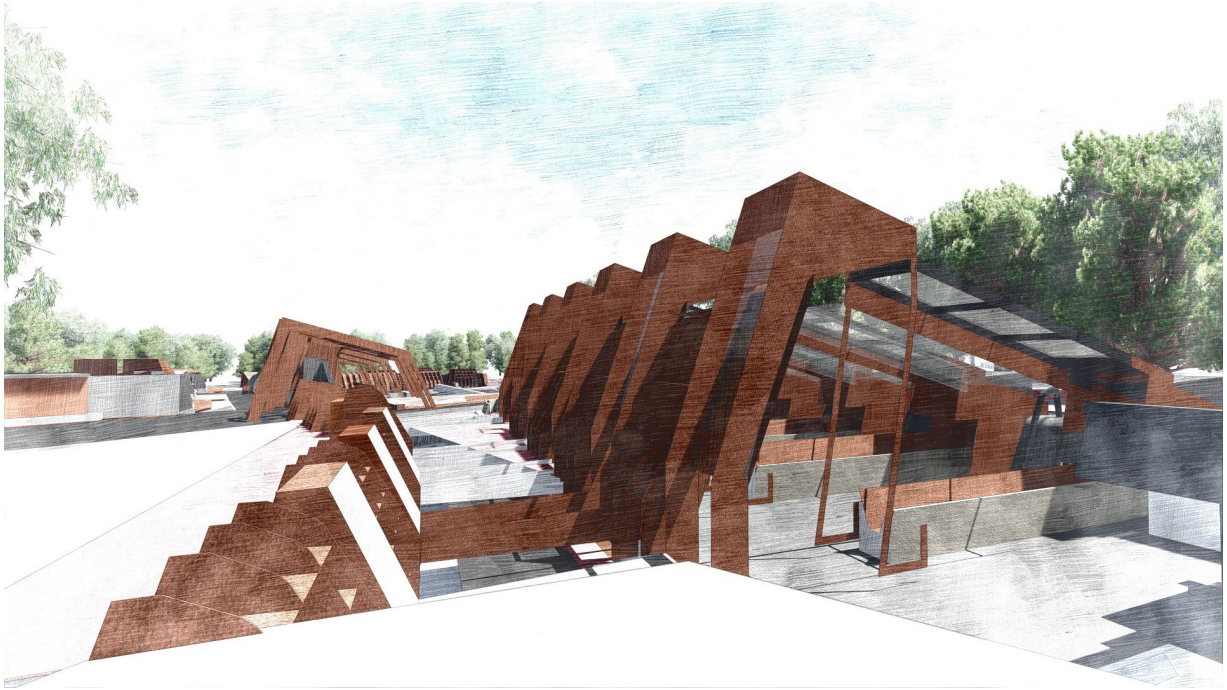


fig. 7.95. Perspective showing *Maturation Loculi* in relation to the *Spectral Garden* (seen in background).

These perspectives of the design development process indicate the fragmentation of massing above ground. In doing this, the steel *negatives* which cover the stereotomic concrete *negatives* produced by the performative moulding process is articulated. The fragmentation of these structures' massing not only emphasizes their tectonic contrast to the stereotomic concrete base, but also serve to dissolve the structure into the forest, while the bioluminescent botany which intersperse the steel *negatives*, further shroud the structure within the forest.

The interior perspectives, furthermore, indicate the play of light accomplished through the articulation of the steel *negatives*, as well as indicate the junctions between the steel skin and concrete base.

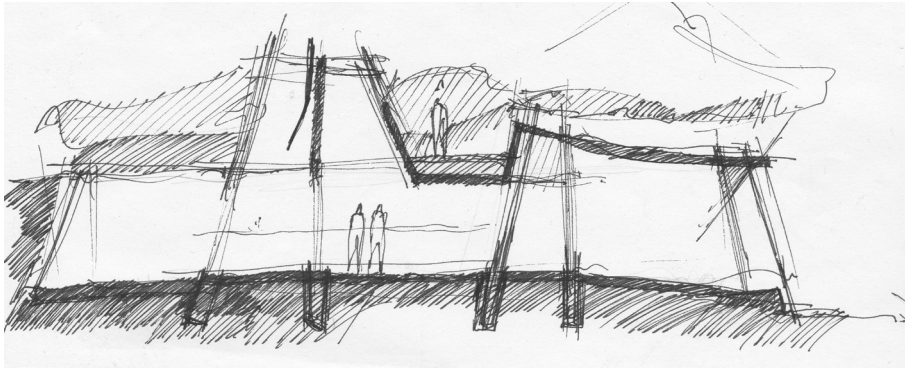


fig. 8.96. (author)  
Conceptual sketch of the articulation of the steel skin.

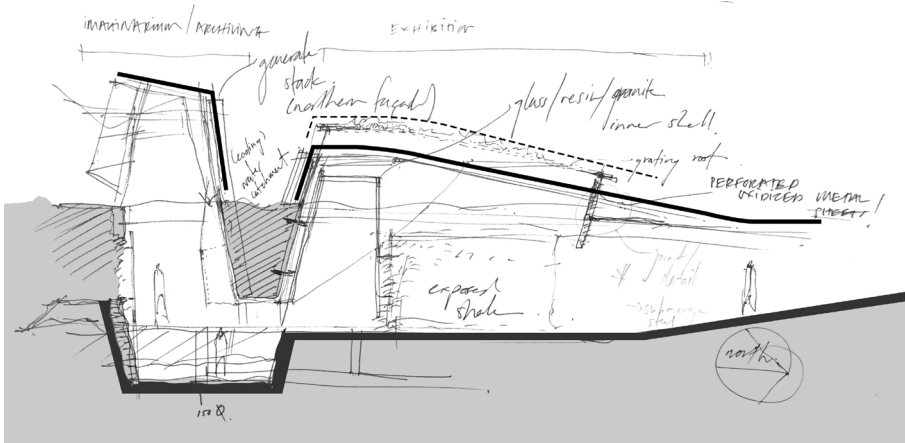


fig. 8.97. (author)  
Conceptual sketch of the layering of the moulded concrete and articulated steel negatives.

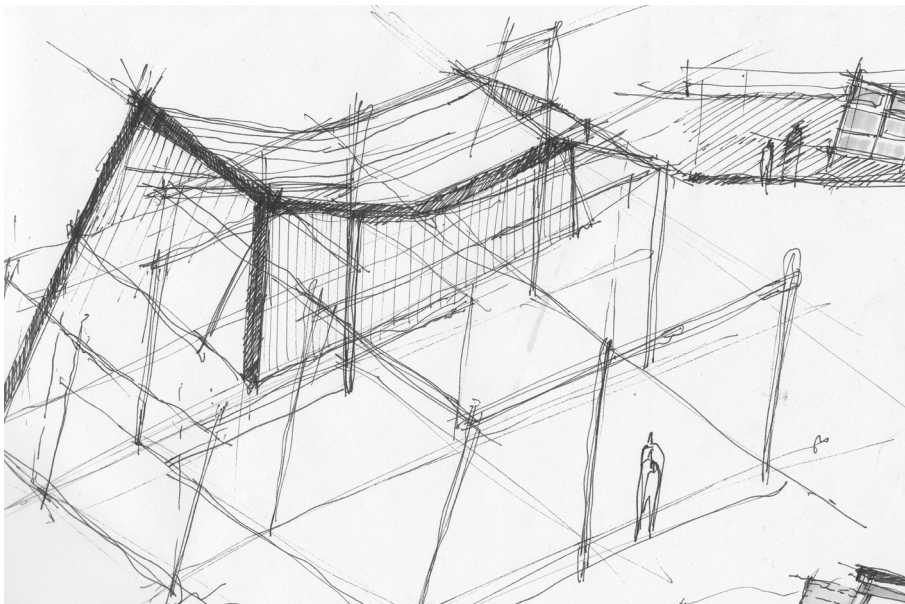


fig. 8.98. (author)  
Conceptual sketch of a granite roof mass which protrudes from the cemetery's surface to form a new artificial surface.

# Chapter 8

## Techné

### **Performativity in the teché of *negatives*:**

The preceding chapters have focused on deconstructing and mechanizing the *narrative of escape* on the levels of urban intervention, conceptual and programmatic thinking, and conceptual formgiving through the *negative*. This chapter, however, focuses on further absorbing the *narrative of escape* into the physical dimensions of the intervention, i.e. exploring its manifestation in the realm of construction, materiality, passive design and detail. This is accomplished not only through the physical abstract, but also, now, performative potential of the *negative*.

### **Tectonic concept:**

#### **2\_ Two types of negatives**

The *second artificial landscape* is, however, furthermore, produced through a layering of negatives which conceptually and tectonically articulates the artificiality of the architectural skin — thereby increasingly layering the skin itself with performative negatives of itself. This deepening of artificiality is performed architecturally through construction techniques of burrowing into and moulding of the cemetery's surface and substrata where memorialization, archiving and invention occurs within the program. The *Bioluminescent Conservatory*, *Cabinet of Obscurities*, *Inventory of Effigies* and *Imaginarium* are then burrowed into the surface, and its spaces formed through a process of moulding. Shale, being the predominant soil condition where the intervention is located, is inherently structural and can therefore facilitate the performative construction process of excavation and moulding, whereby concrete is cast into excavated trenches, leaving behind a negative imprint of the shale on the wall surface when the existing, surrounding soil is excavated to form occupiable cavities between the walls. Friction caused between the shale and concrete elements is adequate to alleviate the structural members from requiring loadbearing footings.

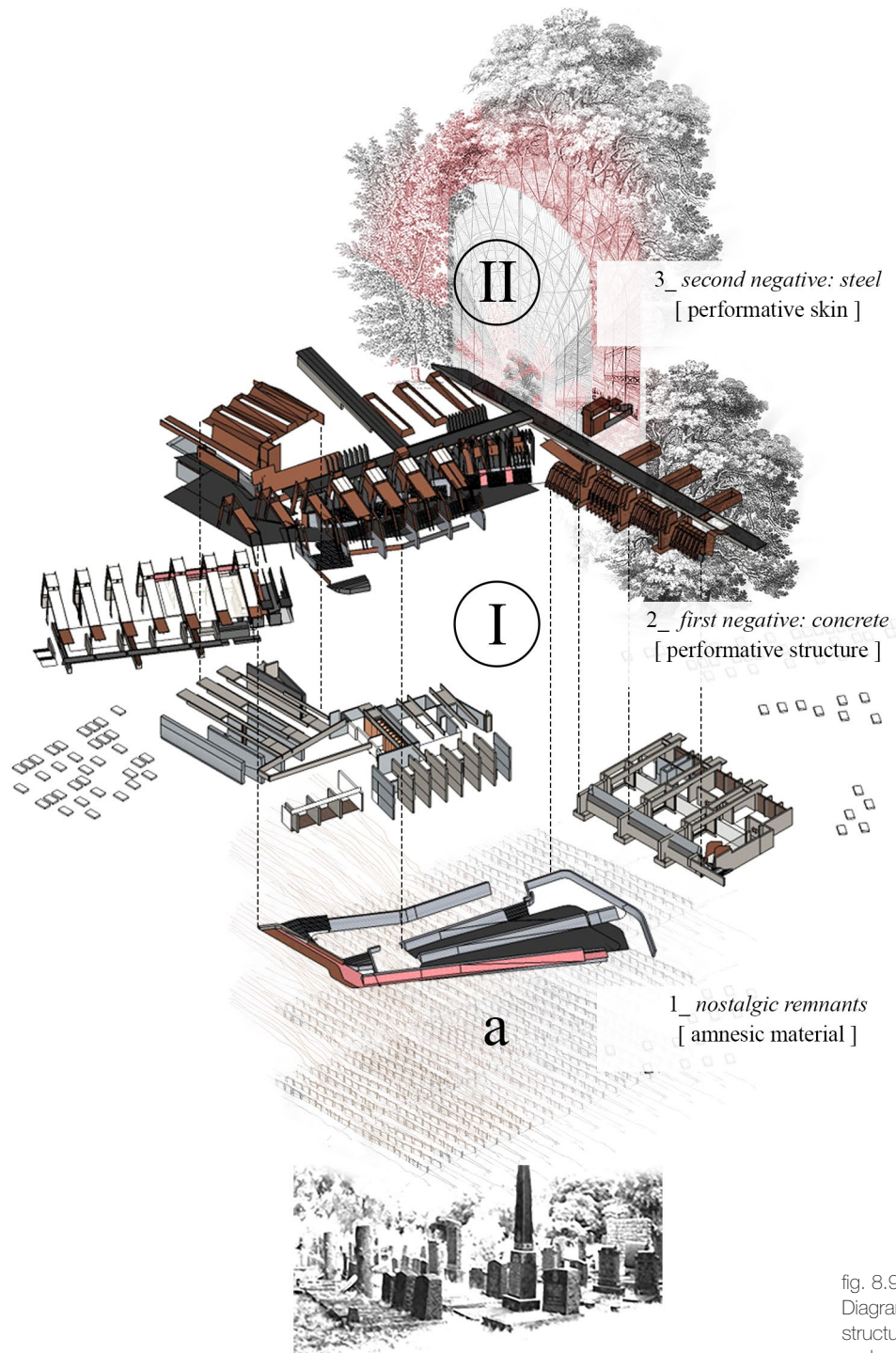
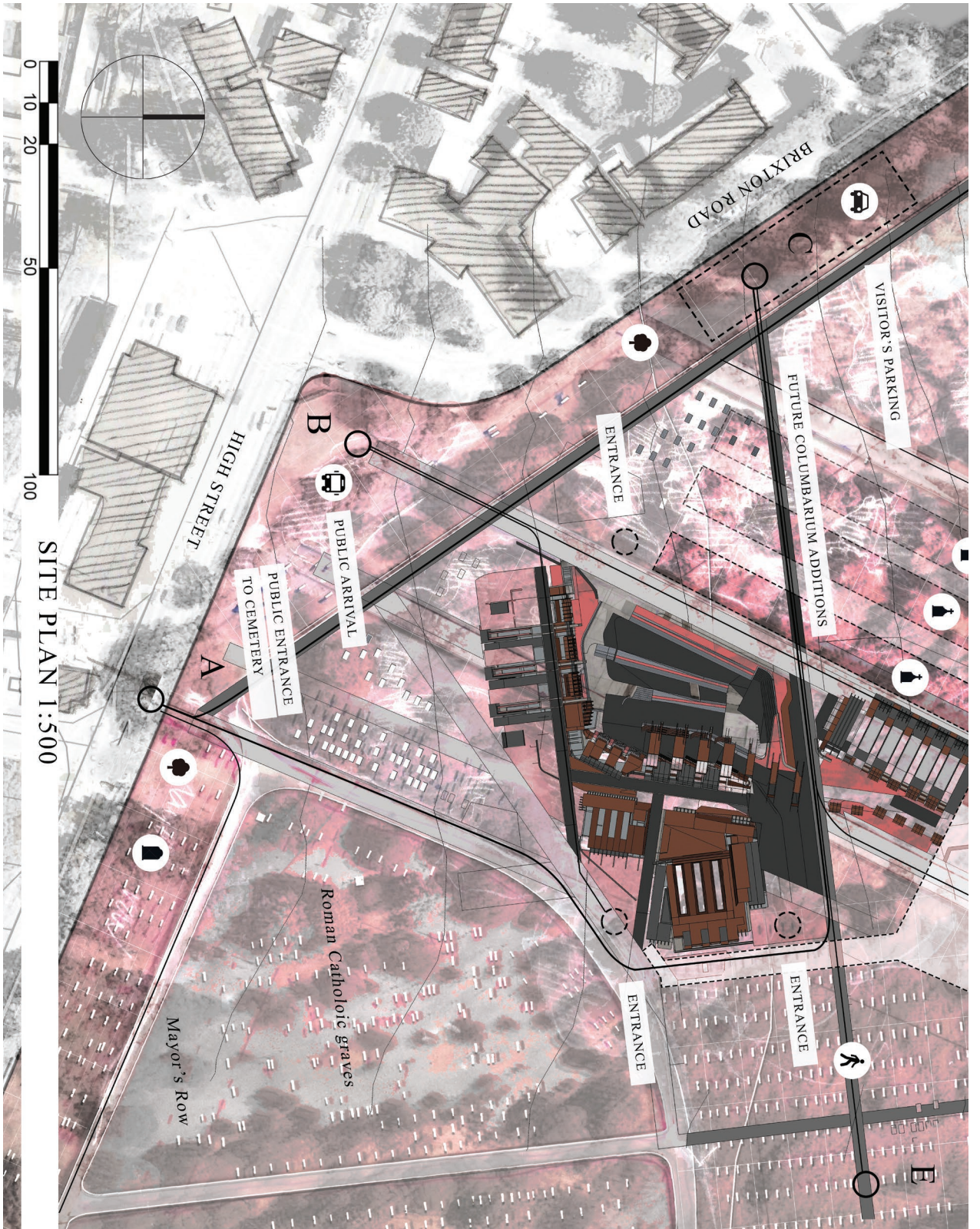


fig. 8.99. (author)  
Diagram of the  
structural assembly  
and artificial layering  
of the architectural  
skin responding to the  
cemtery's conditions.

This moulded structure is articulated with a contrasting, rigid, tectonic structural language, constructed from oxidized steel. This skin comprises the architecture's roof and walls, providing shelter whilst articulating niches and vistas towards existing and created, spatial devices, passages for circulation, explore lighting and ventilation strategies, hosts services and , as it 'weaves' through the moulded concrete elements. The skin is made performative both through this articulation (the skin gaining depth through programming) and through its functional and textural contradiction with the moulded concrete structure. Furthermore, the *Maturation Loculi* being submersed below the cemetery's surface, grants the profanity of this invention a sublimity. In its detachment from the rest of the program, it situates itself on the periphery of the surface's familiarity, creating a physical portal into artificial wonder and therefore the unknown. This unfamiliar inventory of bioluminescent botany can only be uncovered through descent — confrontation with the unknown, inversely, now, attained through *escape*. Its isolation from the *Spectral Garden* is, furthermore, necessitated to allow for controlled cultivation of the botany that will be relocated to the columbarium and *Spectral Garden* adjacent to the *Imaginarium*, and to maintain emphasis on the *Spectral Garden* that makes the cemetery habitable through the columbarium. The bioluminescent botany of the *Spectral Garden* performatively mimics the nostalgic forest's ephemerality, artificiality, amnesia and chaos with a living skin which shrouds and unveiling this nested structure within the forest as plants wither and burgeon.

The *negative's* acute performance of artificiality, culminates in the third, and deepest, layer. It is here where the dweller, having been exposed to the *negative*, and its performative relation to *physical-*, *amnesic-* and *reimaginative* death through a gradual descent, is lead to the *Imaginarium*. In this intimate, isolated space, the *Imaginarium* meets the *Spectral Garden*. The proximity of these two programs with each other, offer the dweller a space where these *deaths* also become proximal in the dweller's imagination.

This reveals the mechanism by which significance can be restored, through the acceptance of reimagination of artificiality and the inevitable amnesic material it produces (which inevitably loses significance), thus reanimating not only the remnant, but transmuting the artificial into a medium for intimation, through *escape*. Again, in the descent from the surface, *the real* is engaged. Through this more profound sense of reimagination - *La Petite Mort* - the architecture achieves intimacy with the dweller. The dweller's discovery of this mechanism, through the *second artificial landscape*, not only pertains to the reimagination of architecture as a device for intimation, but uncovers the potential of *La Petite Mort* as a tool with which the *vestiges of the real* regain significance. There is a profound optimism in this revelation: in the acceptance, and reimaginative reassembly of the *vestiges of the real*, fragments of a *third intimate landscape* start to surface.



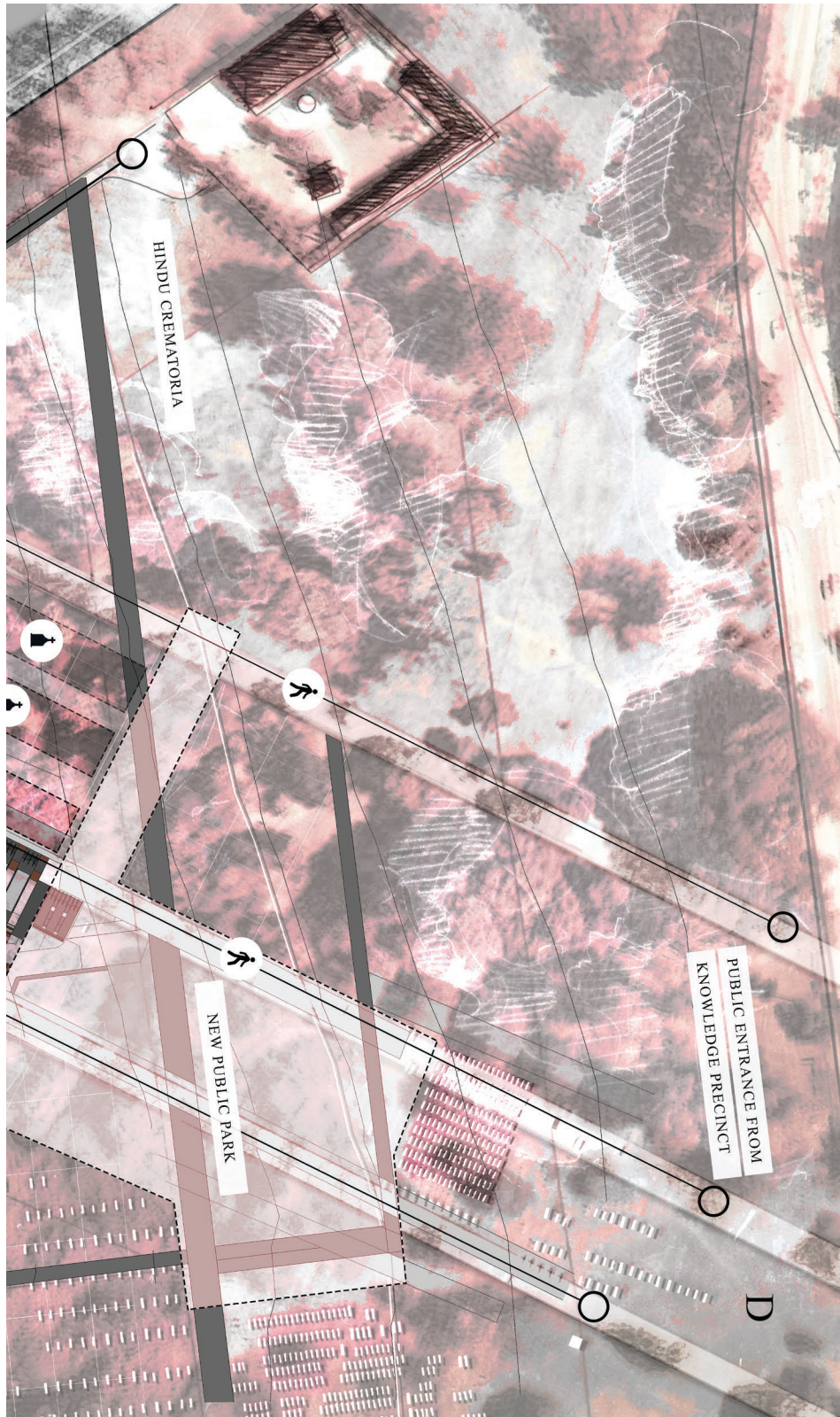


fig. 8.100. Site Plan.

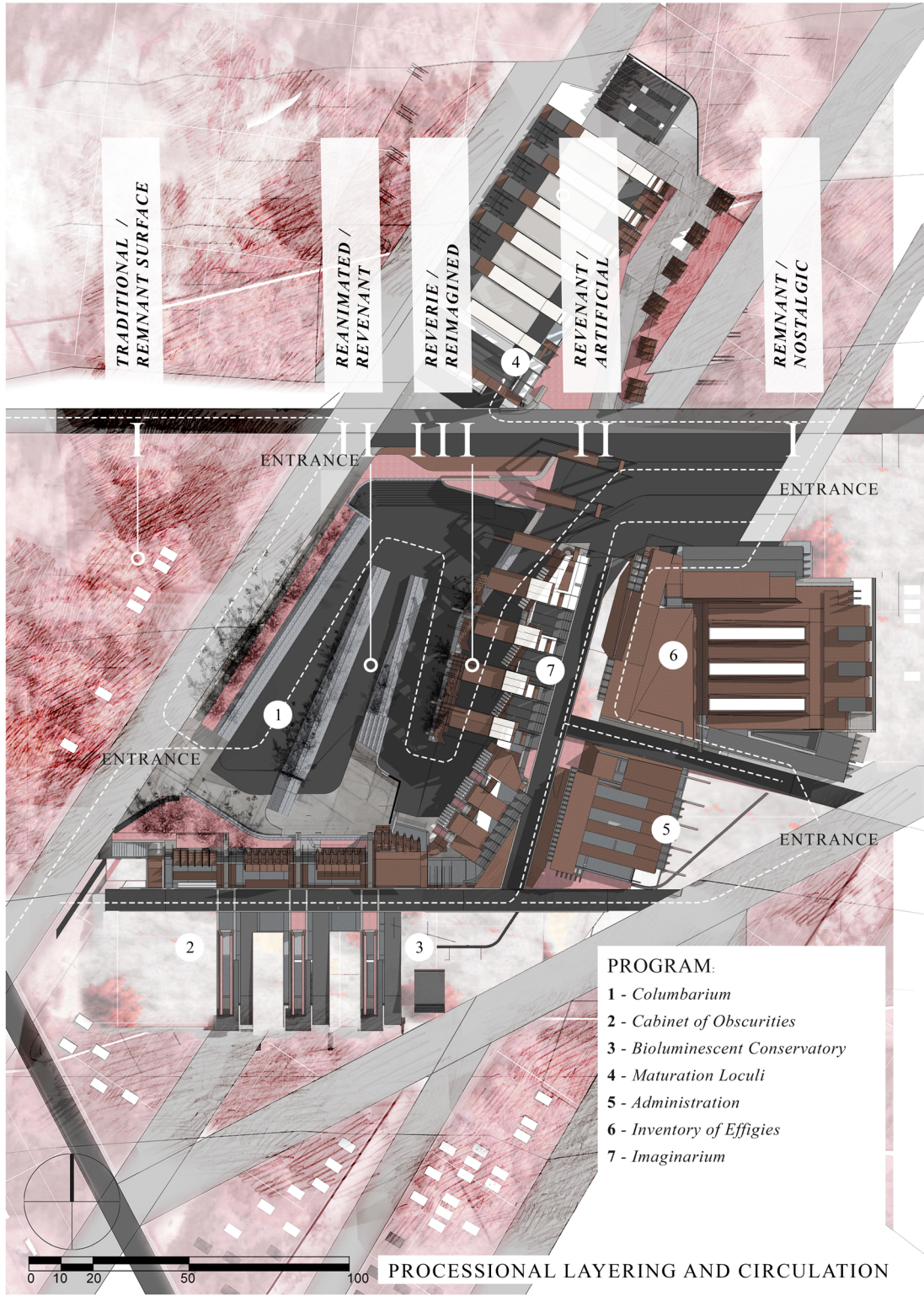


fig. 8.101. Roof Plan.

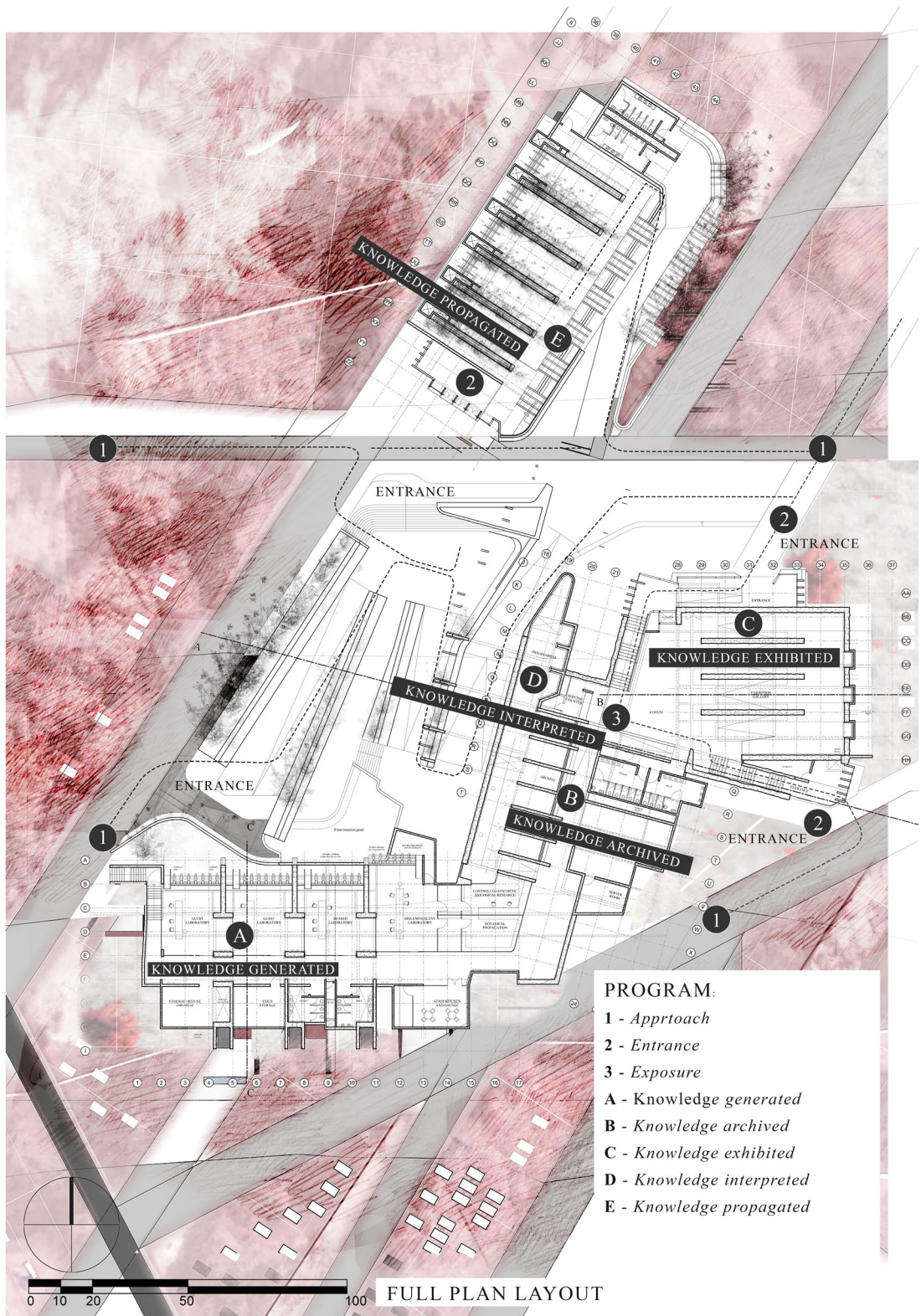


fig. 8.102. Plan.

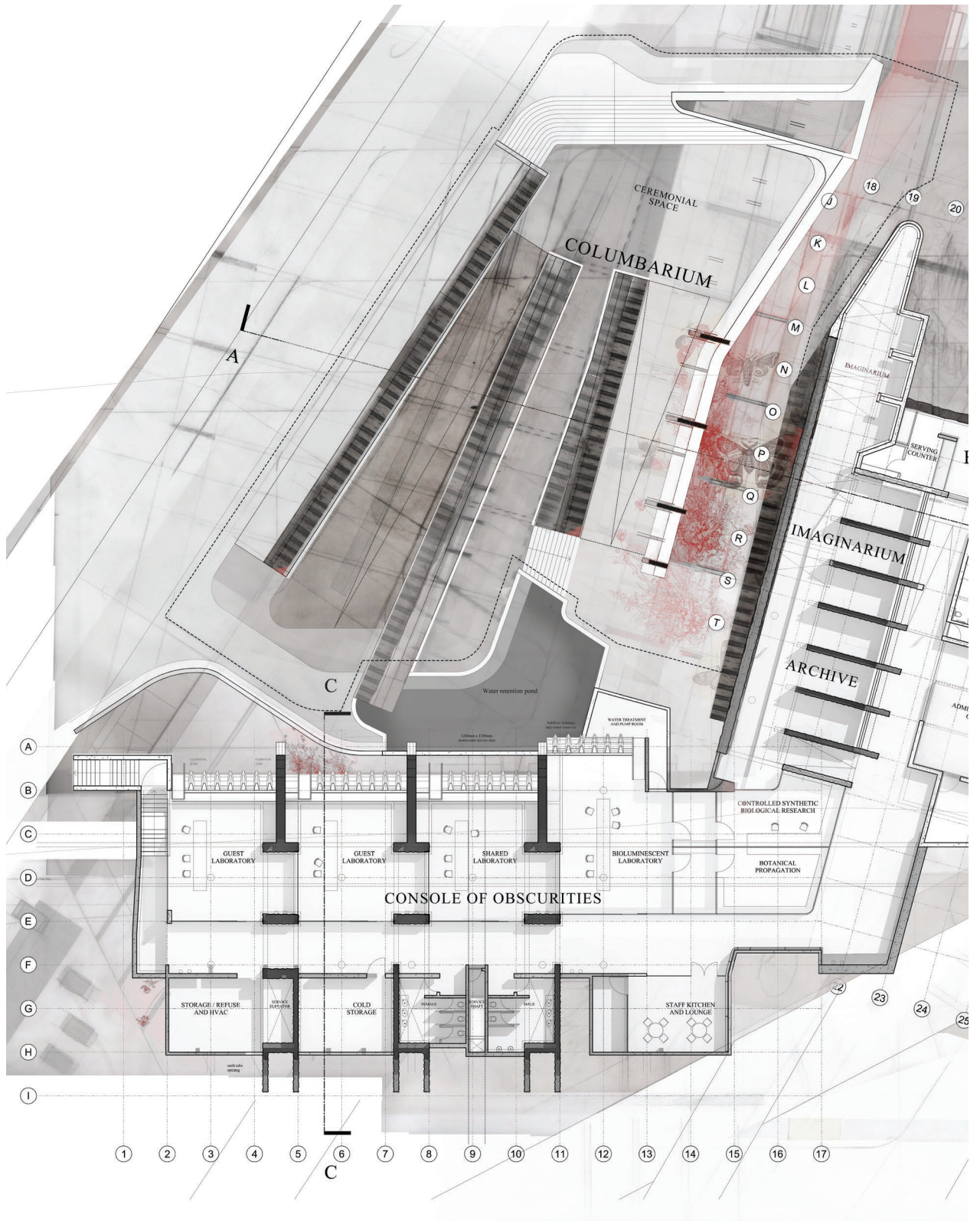






fig. 8.104. Glass blown details by R&Sie(n).

fig. 8.105. Glass blown details by R&Sie(n).



fig. 8.106. Artificial nature veiling the concrete shell.

# Conceptual and tectonic precedents:

## Developing the *negative* as architectural design strategy:

### Lost in Paris

**Location:** Paris, France

**Date:** 2008

**Architect:** R&Sie(n)

### Keywords:

Synthetic forest, artificial nature, hydroponic, tectonic veil, enchanted

"Lost in Paris" is an experimental residential project by architect Francois Roche from the firm R&Sie(n) situated in a Parisian courtyard and shrouded in an artificial forest, cultivated to disguise a bare concrete shell with a living botanical skin of ferns. The dense thicket of hydroponically sustained ferns was imagined as a radical bucolic antithesis of Paris' manicured urban condition, which not only evokes, but relishes in the tensions existing between architecture and nature, purity and corruption, attraction and repulsion (Slessor, 2009). This project is a precedent for how artificiality can successfully be transmuted and reduced to a detail scale. The characteristic feature of the project is a fragile hydroponic system of glass containers blown into botanical forms, which were manufactured to host the natural, living skin of the building. Both the artificially created and sustained forest of ferns, as well as the material detailing of the building manifest as a newly imagined artificial nature. Both in its ephemerality and its enchantment through glass blowing, nature and artificiality is made performative, and becomes as much the material of the architecture as the concrete, glass and steel. The artificial layering of the project is articulated as the synthetic 'botanical' glass skin cocoons the shell of the building while being overgrown by nature.

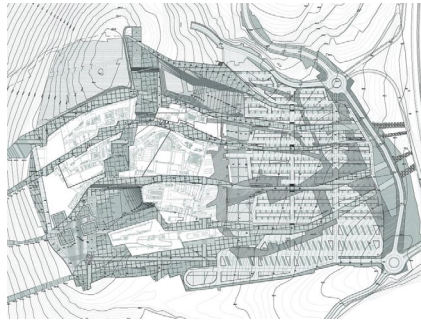


fig. 8.107. Conceptual model of the *City of Culture's* artificial surface.

fig. 8.108. Artificial layering inherent in the *City of Culture*.



fig. 8.109. Artificiality captured in the material construction of the *City of Culture*.

## The City of Culture, Santiago de Compostela

**Location:** Galicia, Spain

**Date:** 2011

**Architect:** Eisenman Architects

**Keywords:**

Tectonic mimicry, artificial landscape, mimicry, *negative*

*Although this project is heavily scrutinized by the architectural community for its obscene insensitivity and theoretical debasement,*

Although this project is heavily scrutinized by the architectural community for its obscene insensitivity and theoretical debasement, the *City of Culture* (2011) in Santiago de Compostela, Spain, can be interpreted as a *second artificial landscape*. Designed by architect Peter Eisenman, this project is conceptualised by overlaying the geometry of the town of Santiago de Compostela over a new, imagined artificial mountainous geography. Furthermore, responding to the topography<sup>41</sup> of the surrounding context and emulating the nearby mountainous outcrop, it is an alluring image of a “folded artificial landscape sliced by crossing streets” distorting the old city of Galicia (Curtis, 2010). This palimpsest of layers filter “the natural surroundings into the artificial world of the architecture” (ibid., 2010) allowing the architecture a perceived degree of autonomy in its generation through which significance is layered into the new, inevitably artificial, architecture. This is further emphasised in the materiality of the buildings through the use of stone cladding sourced from a nearby mountain and its application as new skin on the surface of the building.

Both the concept and technology of the building as *second artificial landscape* becomes performative of its artificiality, through these *negatives*. The building hosts a cultural and educational program further enticing imagination.

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<sup>41</sup> As observed by Curtis (ibid., 2010) the project promoted for its topographical sensitivity, ironically required the complete decapitation of the local hill *Monte Gaias* and the removal of millions of cubic metres of soil from site.



fig. 8.110. Set design for Opera Elektra (2011), Anselm Kiefer.

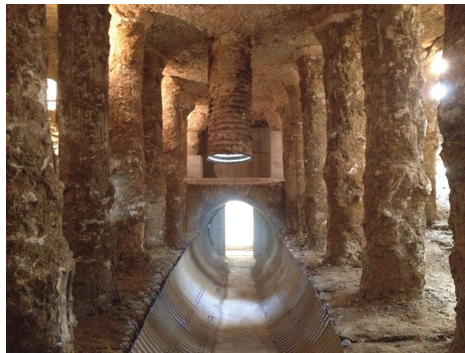


fig. 8.111. Underground gallery, Anselm Kiefer (undated).

fig. 8.112. Underground gallery, Anselm Kiefer (undated).

**A**  
**Opera Elektra set design**

**Location:** Madrid, Spain  
**Date:** 2011  
**Artist:** Anselm Kiefer

**B**  
**Underground gallery**

**Location:** Barjac, France  
**Date:** unknown  
**Artist:** Anselm Kiefer

**Keywords:**

Tectonic mimicry, *negative*, moulding, burrowing

Both the *Opera set design for Elektra* (2011) in Madrid, Spain, and his *underground gallery* in Barjac, France, are sculptural and land art installations by artist Anselm Kiefer, in which the artificiality of reproduced originals are made performative for the spectator. He accomplishes this in his set design for Elektra through a technique of stacking and arranging shipping containers into a mould, into which concrete is cast. This mould is stripped after the curing process, leaving behind a three layered, crumbling, concrete *negative* which not only becomes a performative reproduction of the original, but also performs the process of its creation through the traces left on the *negative* from this method of construction. The process itself is thus made into a *negative*, allowing the art to function autonomously.

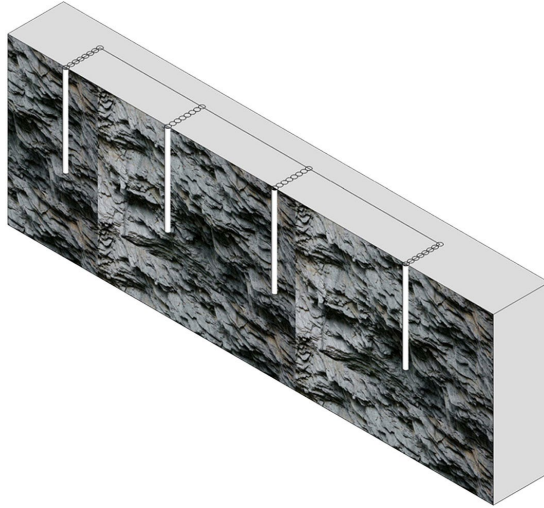
This *negative* is further made performative through its spatiality and programming: a vertical narrowing is produced as the layers descend, forming a *negative* mastaba, which culminates in the claustrophobic focal point of both the set design and opera. Cavities (negative space) left between the walls of the concrete *negatives* are host backstage services.

In his underground gallery at Barjac, this process is imitated through burrowing a mould into the natural landscape by excavating trenches into to earth, into which concrete is then cast. The earth, or the original landscape, forming the mould beneath this new artificial surface is then excavated, similarly leaving behind a *negative* of the original.

This performative process of 'memorialization' allows the reimagination (*reverie / verbeelding*) of the original through the artificial representation (*revenant / verbeeld-ing*) of the created. This technique informs the architectural intervention as technological and conceptual precedent in the creation of the columbarium (the artificiality of memorialization acts as the method to engage the viewer's imagination) and throughout the programs concerned with collection, archiving, documentation and memorialization: the *Cabinet of Obscurities*, *Inventory of Effigies*, *Imaginarium columbarium*, and the columbarium.

## Performativity in the concrete construction process and materiality through the first negative:

This section is an exploration and appropriation of the concrete moulding construction technique used by artist Anselm Kiefer described on the previous page. This construction section relates to section C-C (Cabinet of Obscurities) as indicated on the final plan.

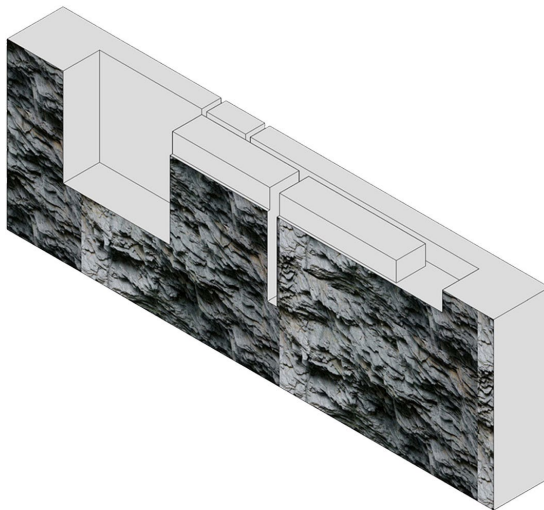


### Phase 1:

Mapping and piling

Map positions to bore excavation grid using 600mm diameter piling drill, used as guides for further excavation.

fig. 8.113. (author).



### Phase 2:

Trenching and excavation

Excavate shale using 600mm diameter piling drill where narrow elements are to be moulded. A 305mm wide back hoe excavator is further used for deep voluminous excavation, while a 300mm wide rotary trencher (1600mm max depth) is used for shallow trenching.

fig. 8.114. (author).

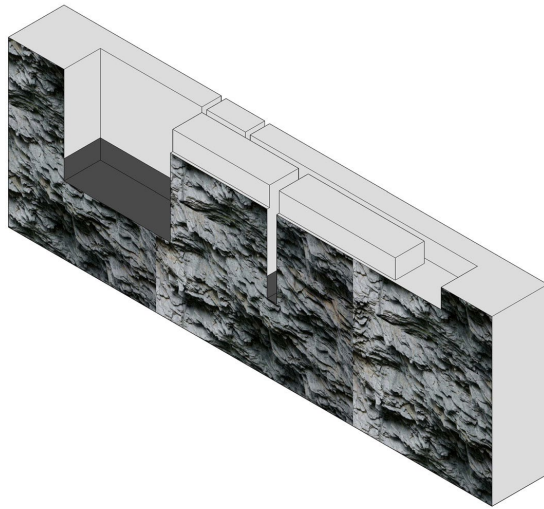


fig. 8.115. (author).

### Phase 3:

Waterproofing

A 375 Micron damp proof membrane is used as waterproofing which is installed onto a Kay-tech bidim A10 6,4mm geo-textile fixed to the exposed shale rock face with steel anchors.

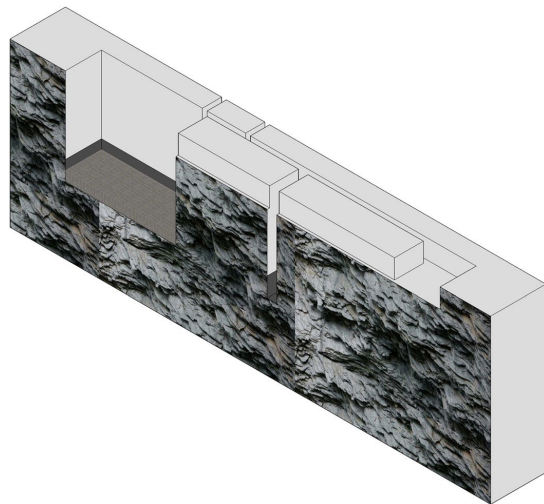
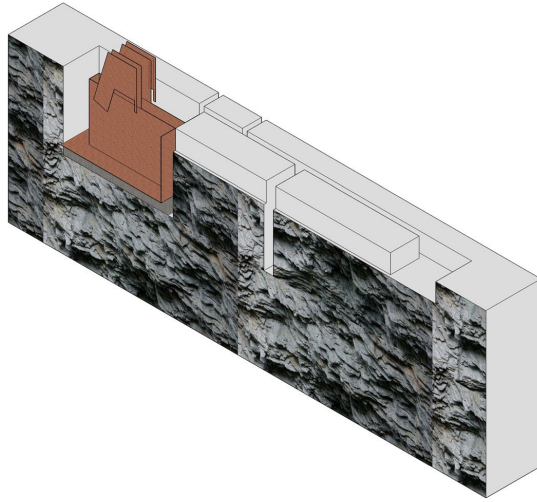


fig. 8.116. (author).

### Phase 4:

Casting foundation

A concrete foundation is cast in-situ over which a steel formwork for further casting will be fixed in place. Mild steel reinforcement is casted into the concrete slab to join and reinforce further casting.

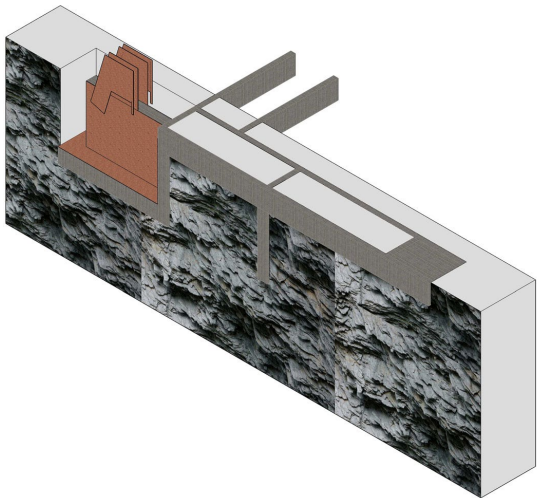


### Phase 5:

Suspending steel formwork

The steel formwork element is placed over the casted concrete footing. This steel element/skin becomes the base to further articulations, including lighting apertures, planters and passive ventilation elements. These elements are the *negative* articulations of the steel skin.

fig. 8.117. (author).



### Phase 6:

Casting

Concrete is cast into the excavated shale mould, vibrated and left to cure before further excavation takes place.

fig. 8.118. (author).

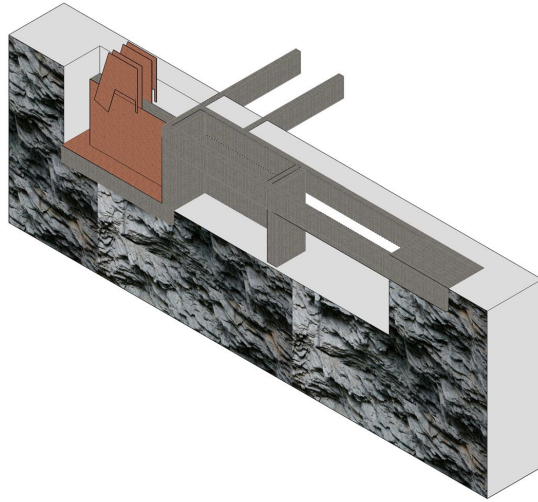


fig. 8.119. (author).

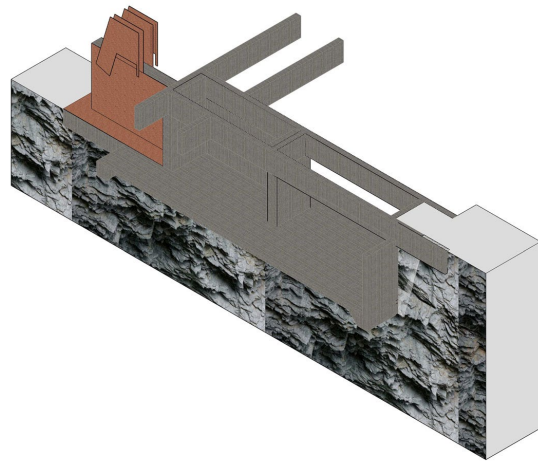


fig. 8.120. (author).

### Phase 7:

Further excavation

Shale surrounding the concrete elements is excavated after the concrete has sufficiently cured. These excavated voids form the hollows which the programs will occupy, while the newly exposed moulded concrete element is a *negative* produced from the cemetery's material, with memory of the removed shale imprinted on its surface. The concrete element becomes the structural, stereotomic base to the steel *negative* which will cover it.

### Phase 8:

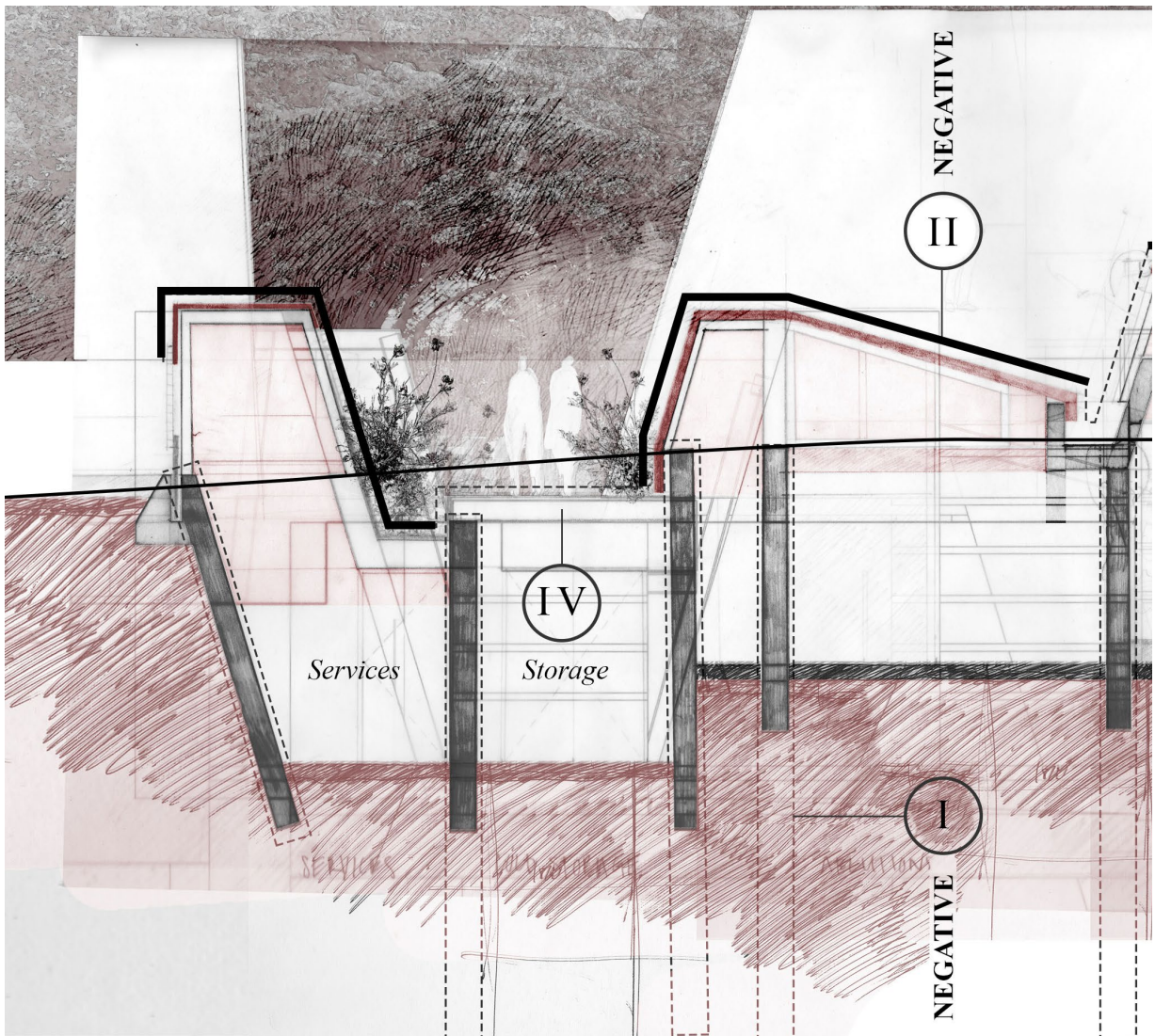
Second casting

A false concrete floor slab with a no-fine concrete slab base, along with concrete retaining walls are cast between the moulded concrete elements using standard concrete casting techniques and shuttering. This duality of concrete construction techniques and the textural difference on these surfaces emphasize the performativity of the concrete moulding process.

**Performativity in layering the moulded concrete with the weathering steel elements articulated as the second negative:**

While the subterranean moulded concrete elements (the first negative indicated as I in the diagram) form the stereotomic base to the memorializing, collecting and archiving programs and elements of the building, the shelter of the building is provided by covering these elements with a contrasting weathering, oxidized steel skin.

The steel skin (indicated as II in the diagram) not only forms the roof of the building but is also designed to articulate circulation throughout the building, accommodate the



hydroponic systems and planters which sustain the bioluminescent botany (indicated by IV), and provide passive lighting and ventilation to the building (indicated at III).

- I\_ Concrete *negatives* produced by moulding concrete in burrowed trenches,
- II\_ Roof articulated as *negative* steel skin,
- III\_ Synthetic bioluminescent botany creating an artificial forest within the building - a *negative* of the cemetery's forest.
- IV\_ The architecture thereby creates layers of escape through creating circulation which guides the dweller through the architectural negatives produced from the cemetery and its forest.

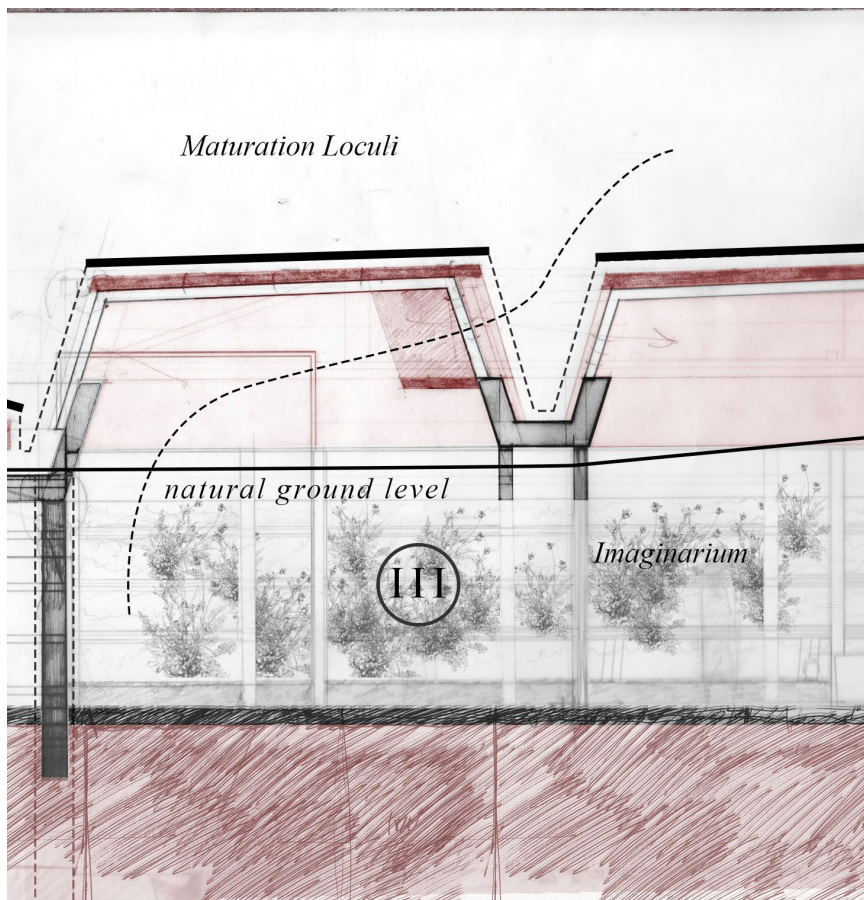


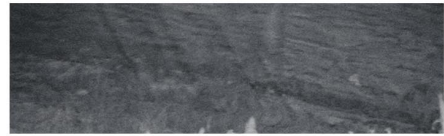
fig. 8.121. (author)  
Tectonic performativity:  
section through *Inventory  
of Effigies* showing the  
material expression of the  
two types of *negatives*.  
First iteration.

## PERFORMANCE IN MATERIALITY



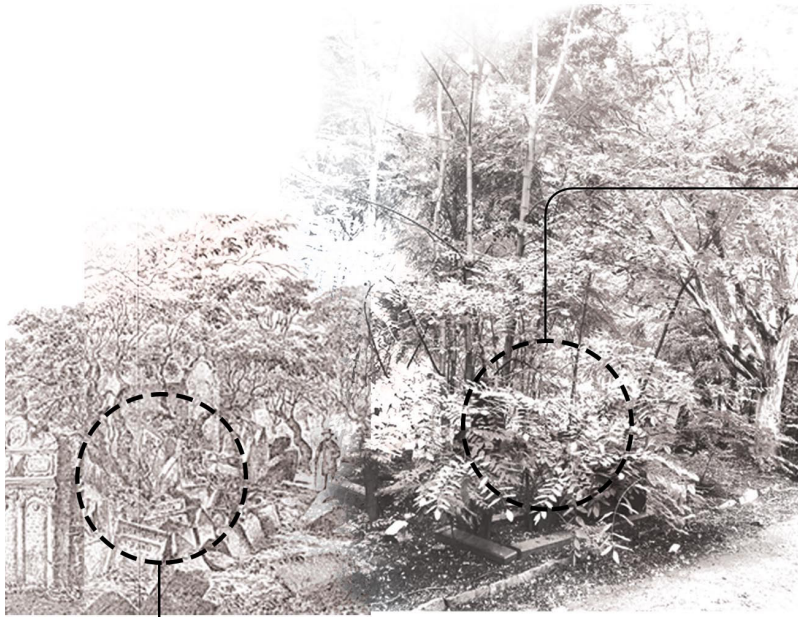
*Shale*

Shale, being the predominant soil condition where the project is located, is inherently structural and can therefore facilitate the performative construction process of *excavation* and *moulding* whereby concrete is cast into excavated trenches, leaving behind a negative imprint of the shale on the wall surface. Friction caused between the shale and concrete elements alleviates the structural members from requiring load-bearing footings.



*Moulded concrete*

Excavation and moulding is the process whereby the first negative is constructed. This is accomplished by excavating into the cemetery's earth (predominantly shale) and by casting concrete into these trenches, after which the earth surrounding the elements is removed. A negative, formed from the 'formwork' earth, is therefore left behind as a memorialization of what has been removed. This not only imitates memorialization occurring in the cemetery, but furthermore mimics the creation of the artificial granite landscape in the cemetery.



### *Botanical skin*

The skin of the building surrounding the laboratories, imaginarium and columbarium is shrouded in a bioluminescent botanical skin. The exoticism/otherness, seasonality and ephemerality of the forest is therefore transmuted into a living skin which shrouds the harshness of the building and allows for its melding into the cemetery.



### *Granite*

Granite has formed a new artificial surface in Brixton cemetery, especially visible in the Jewish section which has been completely covered in granite tombstones and mausolea. These granite elements exist as *axis mundi* in the cemetery is us therefore charged with the escape from the mundane into the sublime. Granite is used in the entrance portals and vista windows of the exhibition gallery and laboratories, not only binding the building to the existing, but also facilitating the passage into the *otherness* of the building.



### *Oxidized steel*

While the moulded concrete elements provide a stereotomic base to programs dealing with memorialization, archiving and collection, steel is used as tectonic alternative to shelter these elements. The one-dimensionality of this material is, however, made performative by allowing this contrasting tectonic skin to become functioning design elements which guide circulation, emphasize light and space, host services and articulate passive design strategies. Oxidized steel is further performative in its weathering process, which imitates that of the cemetery.

**Solar heat chimney ventilation system note:**

300mm Exhaust fan fixed to galvanized steel bracket fixed to 203x203x25mm I-beam steel column  
Double layer glazing separated by max. 150mm cavity suspended over 200mm reinforced concrete slab with black painted finish bolted to 45x45mm galvanised steel angles  
Derbigum Bitumen torch-on waterproofing to manufacturer's specification applied below concrete slab  
100mm PIR rigid foam thermal insulation edges fully bonded glued to all faces but exposed solar face

**Roof note:**

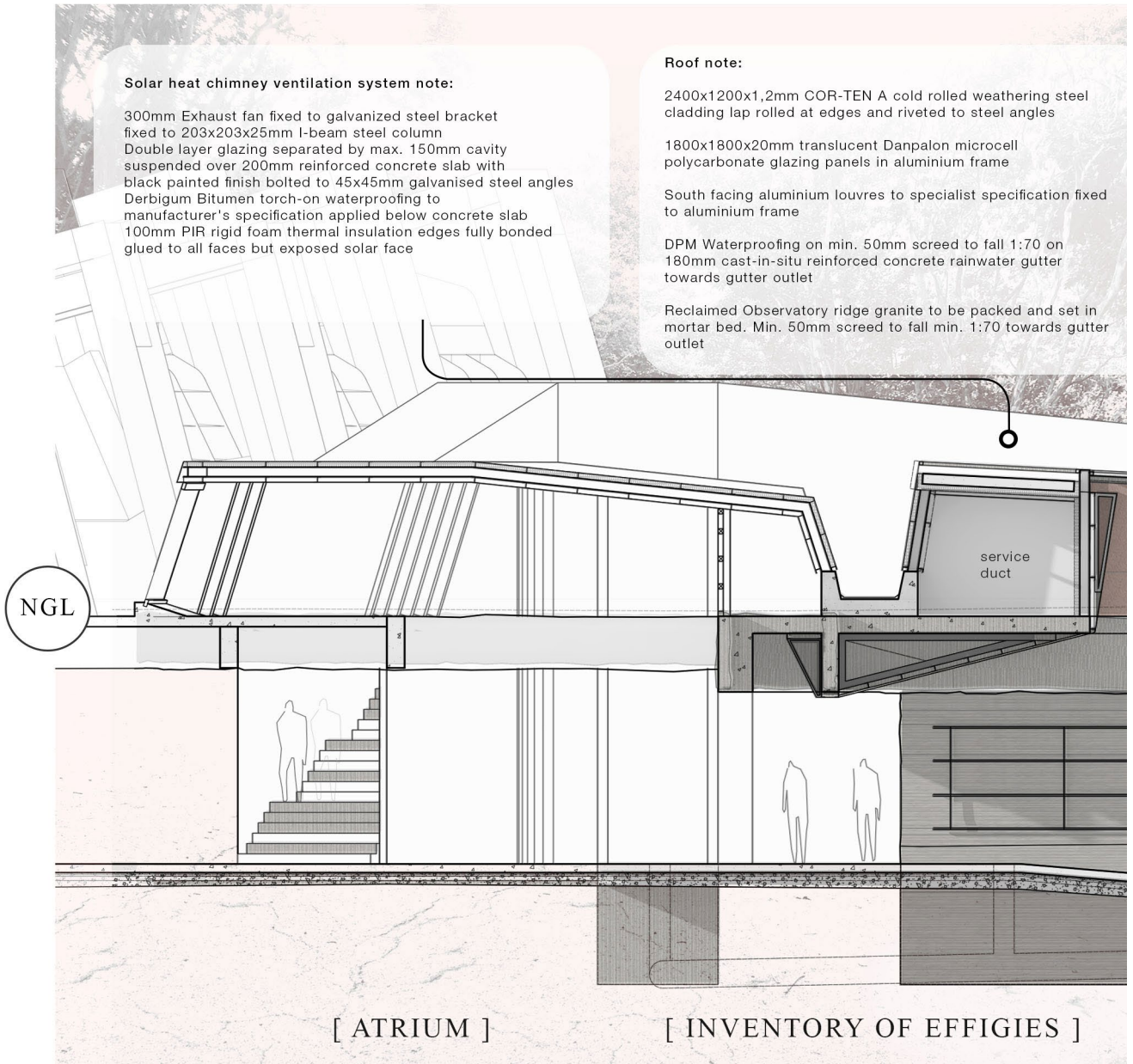
2400x1200x1,2mm COR-TEN A cold rolled weathering steel cladding lap rolled at edges and riveted to steel angles

1800x1800x20mm translucent Danpalon microcell polycarbonate glazing panels in aluminium frame

South facing aluminium louvres to specialist specification fixed to aluminium frame

DPM Waterproofing on min. 50mm screed to fall 1:70 on 180mm cast-in-situ reinforced concrete rainwater gutter towards gutter outlet

Reclaimed Observatory ridge granite to be packed and set in mortar bed. Min. 50mm screed to fall min. 1:70 towards gutter outlet



**Gallery note:**

45x45mm Galvanised and power coated angles as exhibition framework roll-bolted to 600mm cast-in-situ concrete wall with trenched shale formwork finish

## SECTION B-B

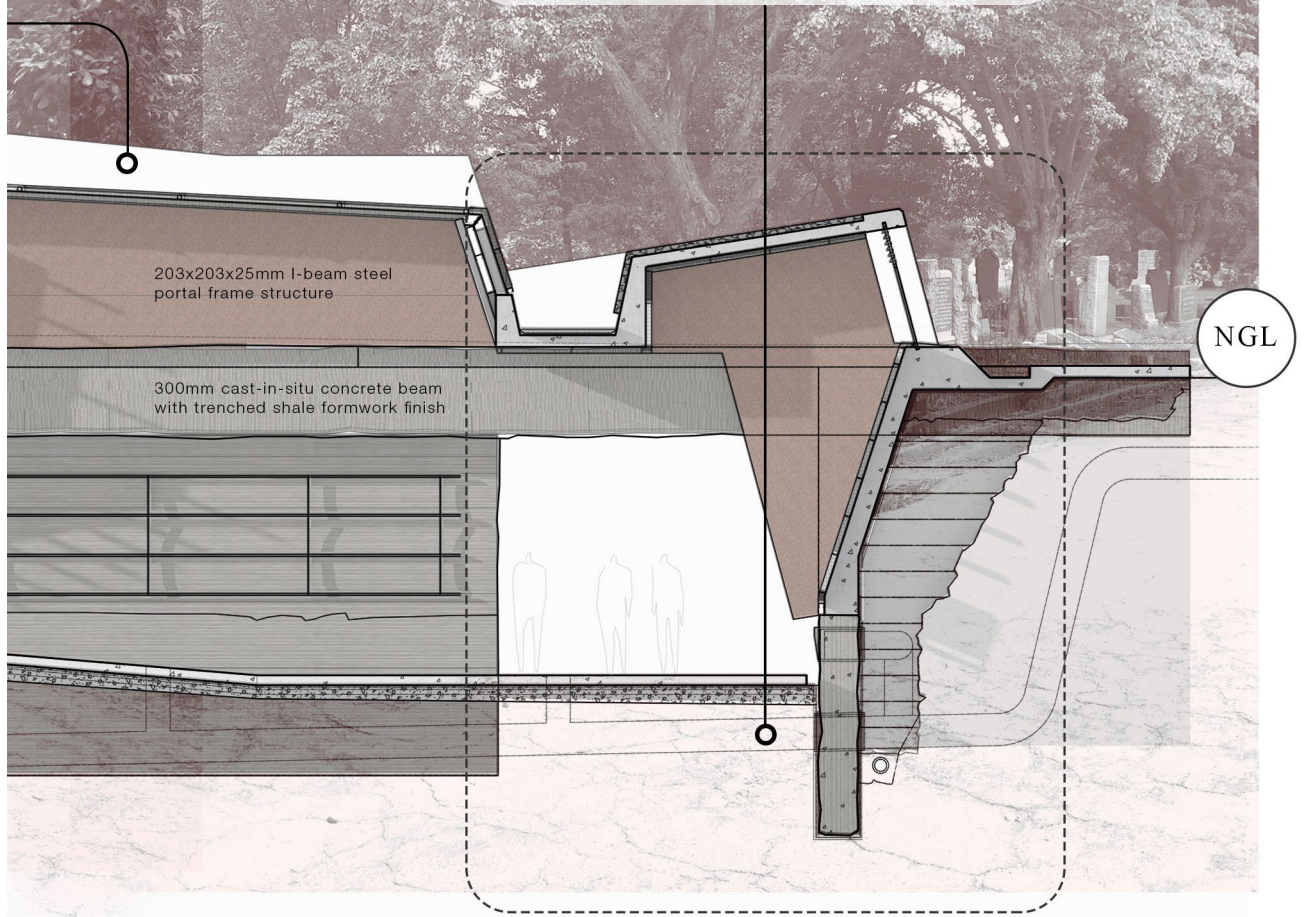
INVENTORY OF EFFIGIES  
[ EXHIBITION GALLERY ]

**Wall note:**

375 Micron DPM lapped and sealed as per manufacturer's specification with min. 150mm overlaps laid over Kaytech bidim A10 6,4mm geo-textile fixed to exposed shale rock face with steel anchors

450mm diam earth tube laid in 510mm precast concrete channel cast into cast-in-situ reinforced concrete wall; min. 3 deg fall towards sump

Mild steel reinforcement at concrete wall juncture



1:20 WALL SECTION DETAIL

fig. 8.122. (author)  
Section through the  
*Inventory of Effigies.*

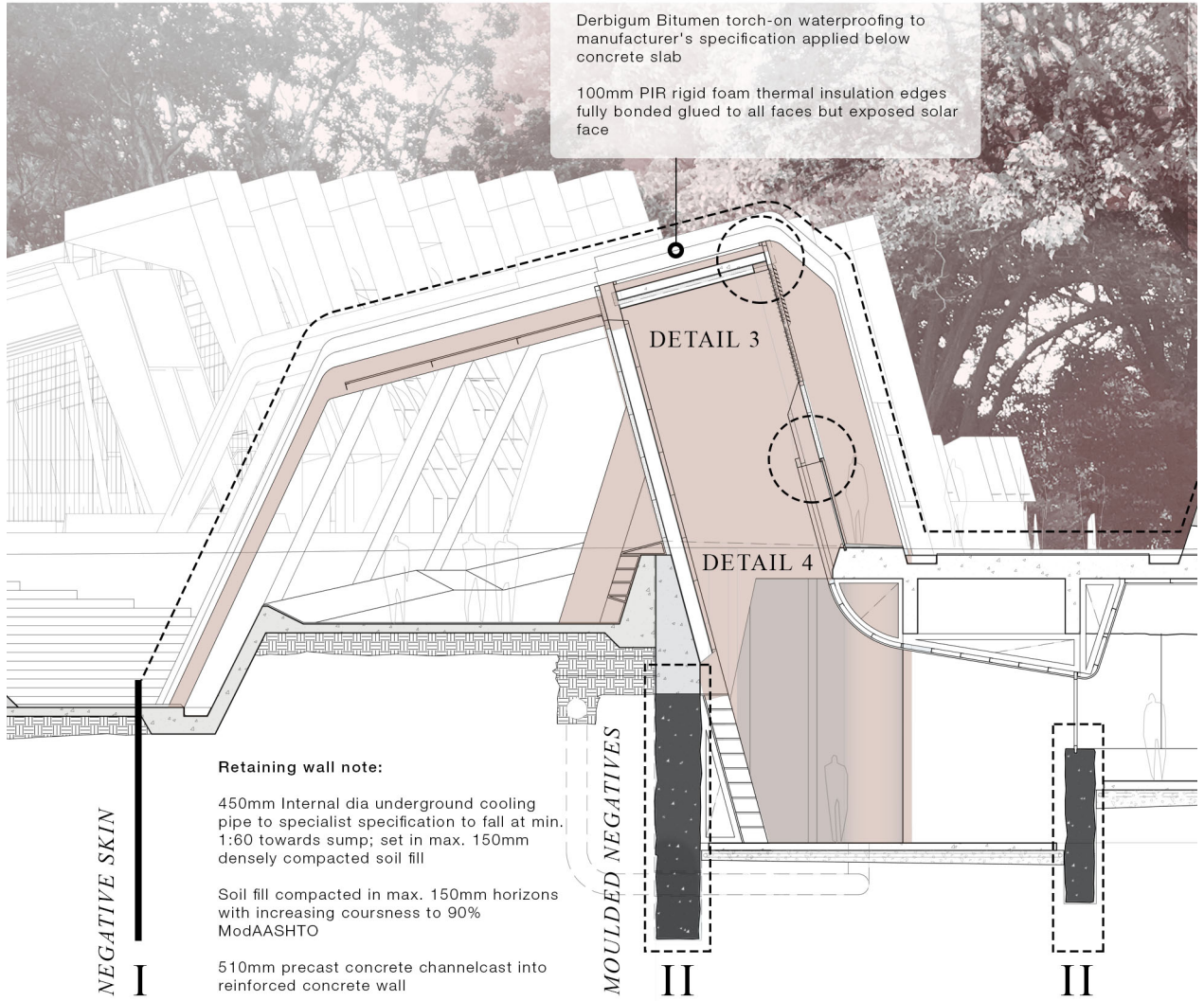
**Solar heat chimney ventilation system note:**

300mm Exhaust fan fixed to galvanized steel bracket fixed to 203x203x25mm I-beam steel column

Double layer glazing separated by max. 150mm cavity suspended over 200mm reinforced concrete slab with black painted finish bolted to 45x45mm galvanised steel angles

Derbigum Bitumen torch-on waterproofing to manufacturer's specification applied below concrete slab

100mm PIR rigid foam thermal insulation edges fully bonded glued to all faces but exposed solar face



**Retaining wall note:**

450mm Internal dia underground cooling pipe to specialist specification to fall at min. 1:60 towards sump; set in max. 150mm densely compacted soil fill

Soil fill compacted in max. 150mm horizons with increasing coursness to 90% ModAASHTO

510mm precast concrete channelcast into reinforced concrete wall

**SECTION A-A**  
**ARCHIVE AND IMAGINARIUM**  
**[ EXHIBITION GALLERY ]**

**Steel roof note:**

203x203x25mm I-beam steel portal frame structure

2400x1200x1,2mm COR-TEN A cold rolled weathering steel panel roof, lap rolled at edges and riveted to 90x90x2 galvanized steel cleats at max. 600mm cc; Sealed with silicon at fixtures and overlaps. Roof to fall at min. 1:70 towards rainwater gutter.

100mm PIR Rigid Foam Thermal Insulation Edges fully Bonded

Double glazing laminated safety glass fixed window unit in aluminium frame bolted in grinded channel in concrete beam and sealed with structural silicon

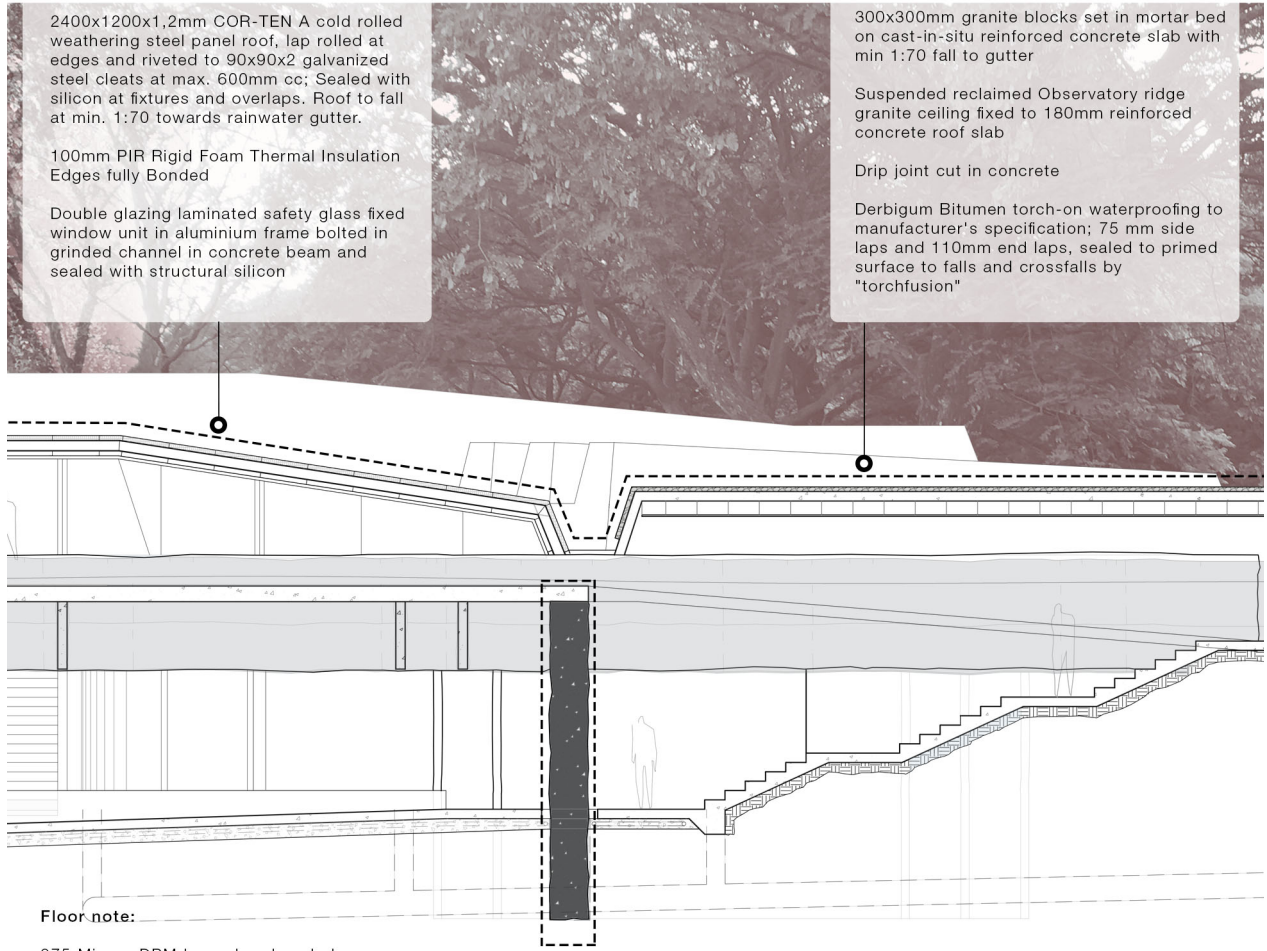
**Concrete roof note:**

300x300mm granite blocks set in mortar bed on cast-in-situ reinforced concrete slab with min 1:70 fall to gutter

Suspended reclaimed Observatory ridge granite ceiling fixed to 180mm reinforced concrete roof slab

Drip joint cut in concrete

Derbigum Bitumen torch-on waterproofing to manufacturer's specification; 75 mm side laps and 110mm end laps, sealed to primed surface to falls and crossfalls by "torchfusion"



**Floor note:**

375 Micron DPM lapped and sealed as per manufacturer's specification with min. 150mm overlaps laid over Kaytech bidim A10 6,4mm geo-textile fixed to exposed shale rock face with steel anchors

Kaytech Kaypipe 75mm drain pipe cast in min. 200mm no-fine concrete false floor laid to fall at min. 1:50. Drain pipe perforated openings to face upwards at false floor edges.

450mm diam earth tubes to fall at 3 deg towards sump

II

fig. 8.123. (author)  
Section through the  
*Imaginarium*.

**Steel facade note:**

406x178x31mm I-beam steel portal frame structure

8mm Laminated clear Solarview Low-E safety glass fixed to mild steel angle window frame with structural silicon

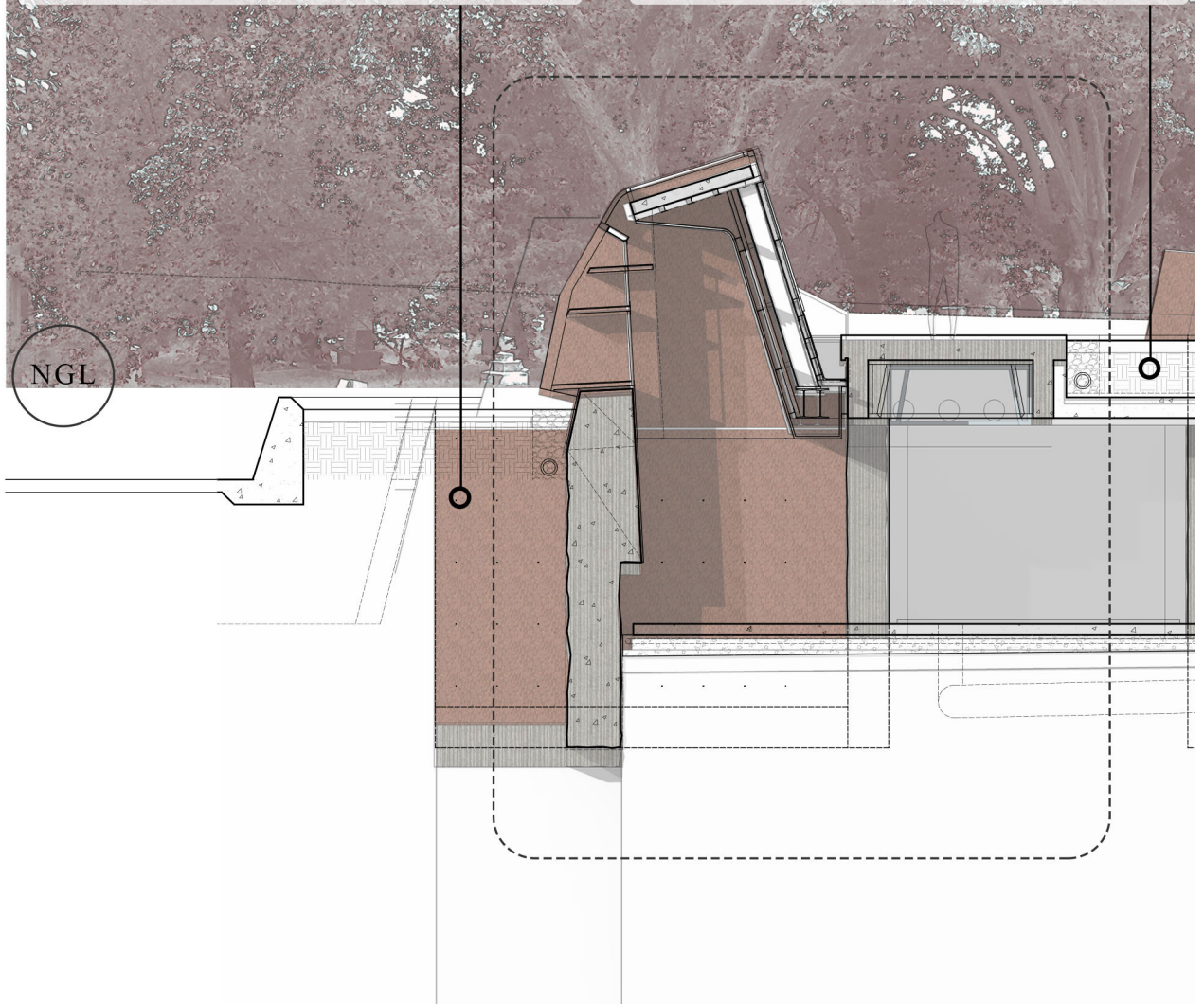
60x60x3mm mild steel square tubing welded to 120x60x6mm mild steel rectangular tubing frame

Prefabricated 6mm COR-TEN weathering steel panel with 60x60x4mm galvanized mild steel internal webbing used as shuttering for 900mm cast-in-situ concrete retaining wall; edge overhang to be formed by excavated trench soil profile

**Green roof note:**

Derbigum Bitumen torch-on waterproofing to manufacturer's specification; 75 mm side laps and 110mm end laps, sealed to primed surface to falls and crossfalls by "torchfusion". 100mm Thick topsoil layer on thick drainage core on waterproofing covered with geomesh pvc coated multifilament woven polyester bi-axial reinforcing mesh and Bidim A2 non-woven filament needle-punched polyester geotextile under topsoil

150mm diameter HDPE geopipe laid to fall to bio-swale



SECTION C-C  
CABINET OF OBSCURITIES  
[ GUEST RESEARCH FACILITIES ]

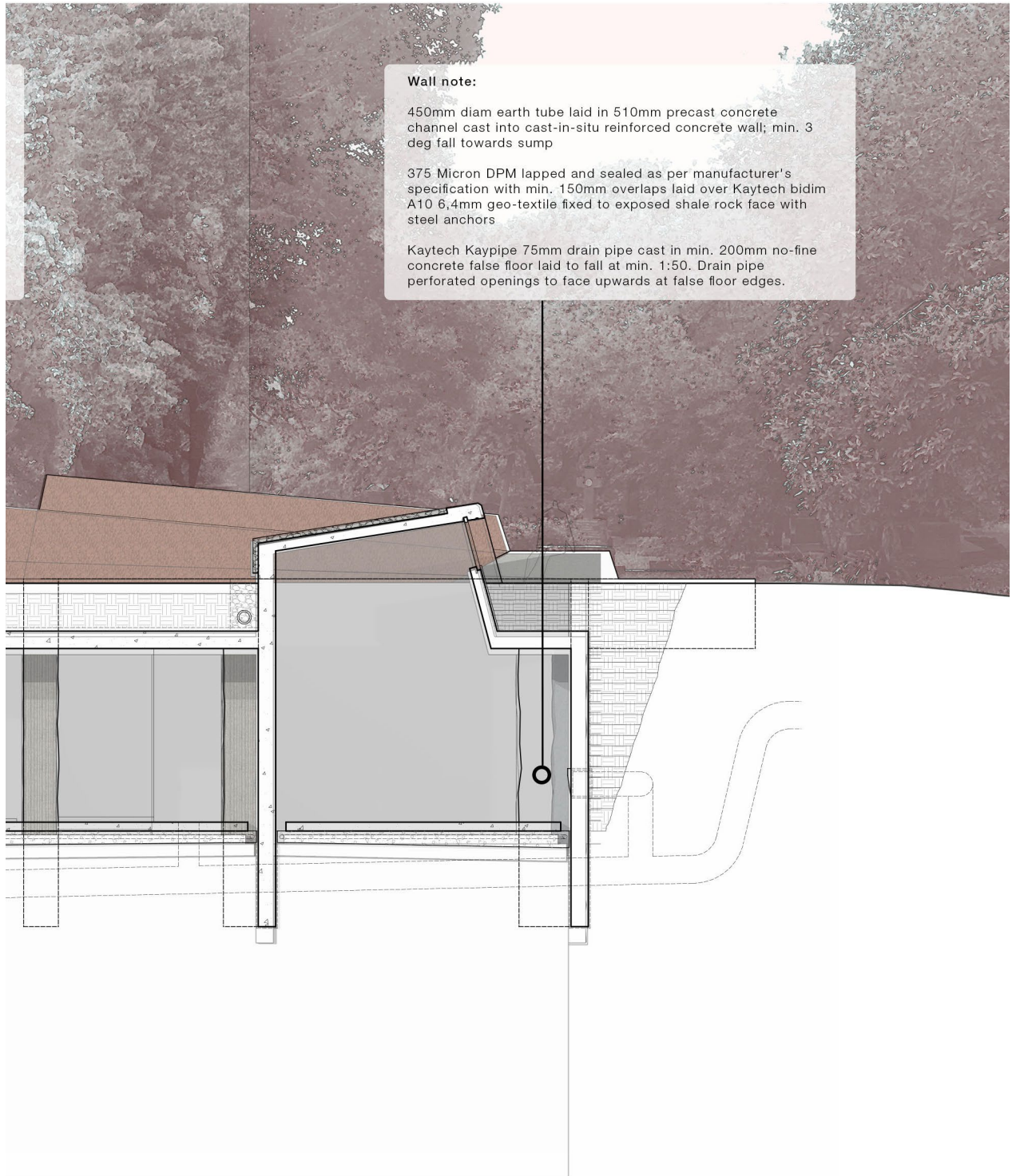
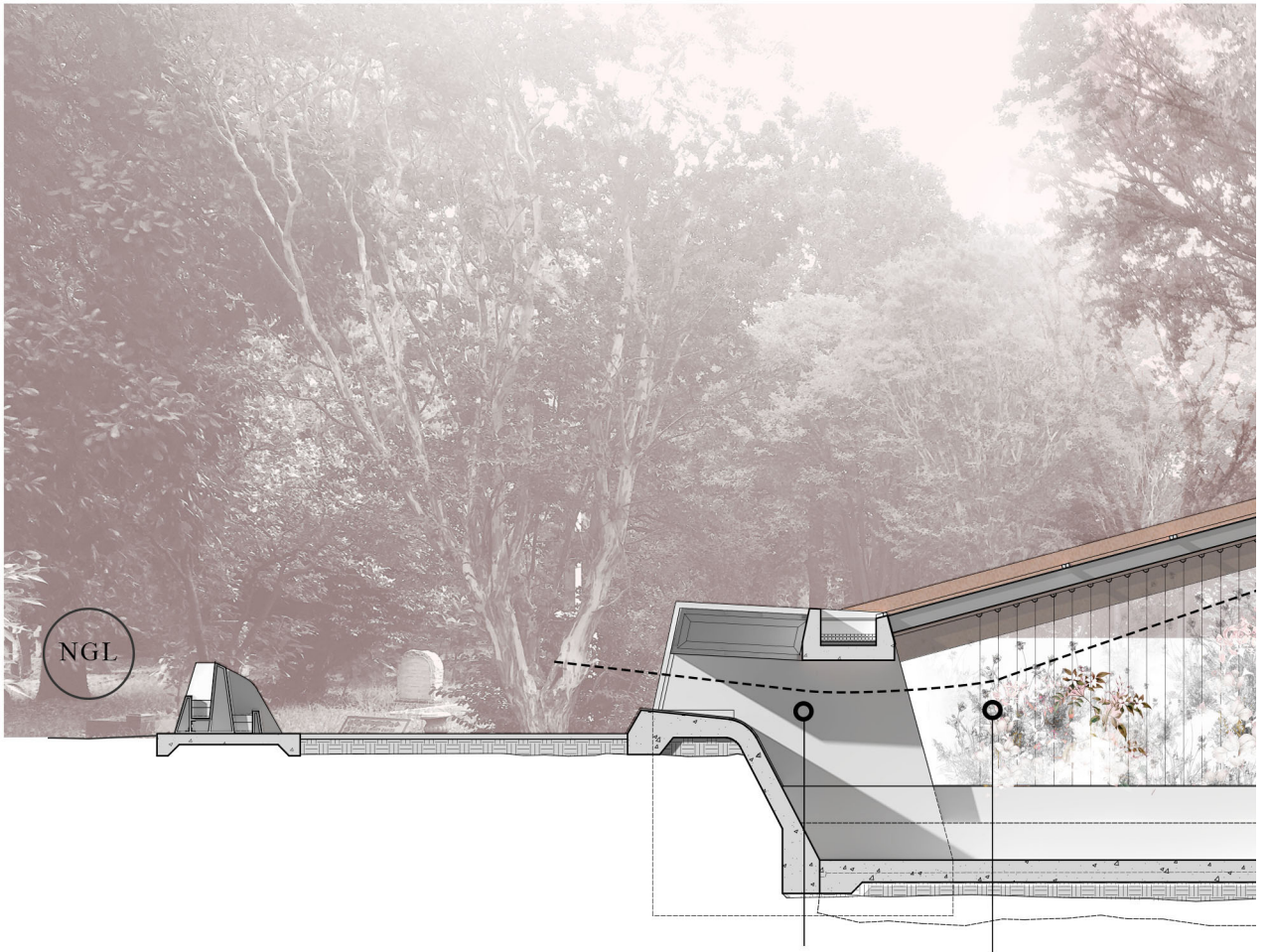


fig. 8.124. (author)  
Section through the  
*Cabinet of Obscurities.*



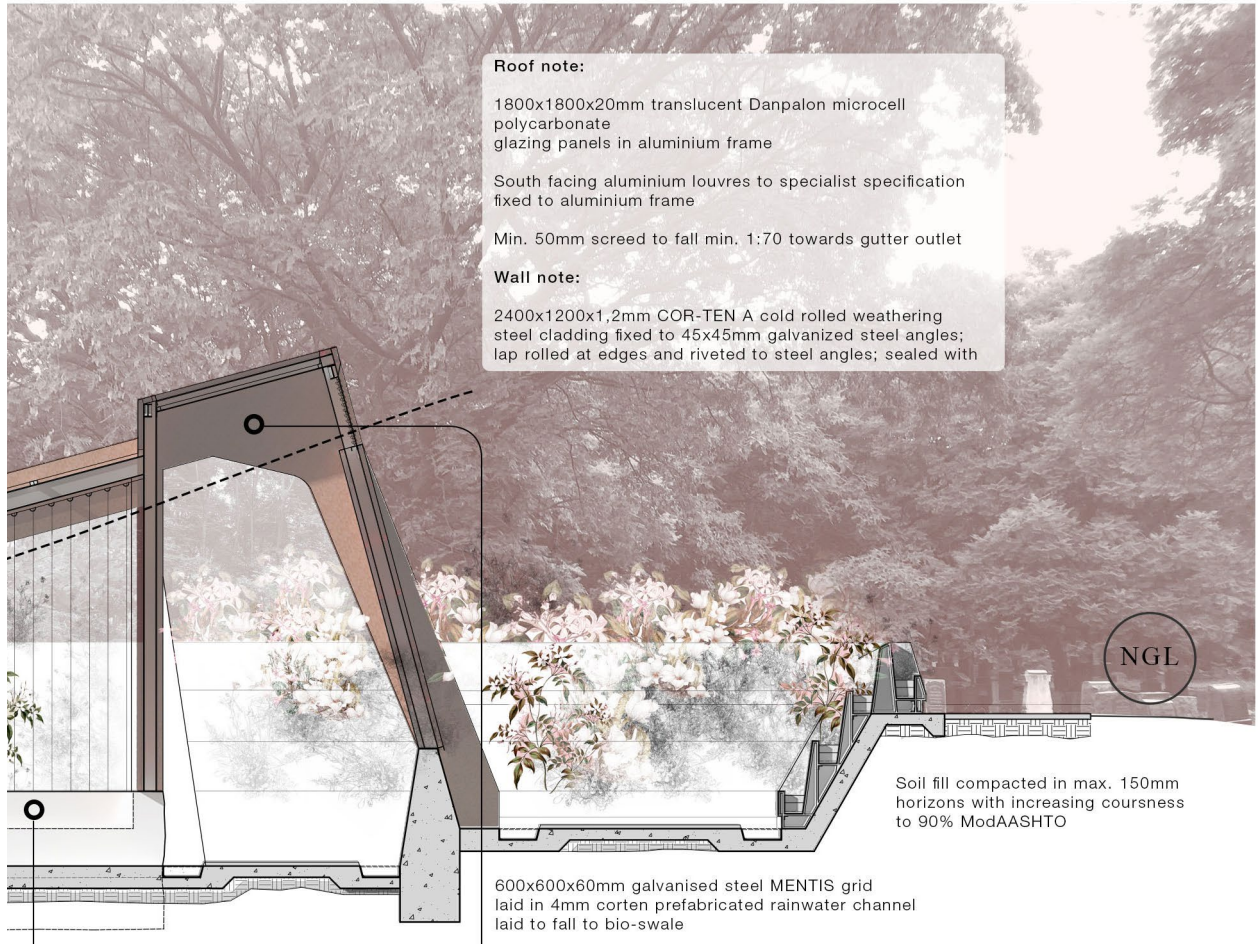
**RAINWATER  
CATCHMENT TANK**

Rainwater catchment tank  
and purification system  
feeding to cast-in-situ  
concrete hydroponic growing  
beds

**GROWING STRUCTURE FOR  
BIOLUMINESCENT PLANTS**

2mm Galvanized steel wire rope to  
carry hydroponic vessels bolted at  
top and bottom to custom COR-TEN  
weathering steel anchors

**SECTION D-D  
BIOLUMINESCENT CONSERVATORY  
[ MATURATION LOCULI ]**



**Roof note:**  
 1800x1800x20mm translucent Danpalon microcell polycarbonate glazing panels in aluminium frame  
 South facing aluminium louvres to specialist specification fixed to aluminium frame  
 Min. 50mm screed to fall min. 1:70 towards gutter outlet

**Wall note:**  
 2400x1200x1.2mm COR-TEN A cold rolled weathering steel cladding fixed to 45x45mm galvanized steel angles; lap rolled at edges and riveted to steel angles; sealed with

NGL

Soil fill compacted in max. 150mm horizons with increasing coarseness to 90% ModAASHTO

600x600x60mm galvanised steel MENTIS grid laid in 4mm corten prefabricated rainwater channel laid to fall to bio-swale

**WATER CHANNEL FOR HYDROPONIC SYSTEM**

4mm COR-TEN A weathered steel prefabricated water channel 900mm used as formwork for cast-in-situ concrete beam with trenched shale formwork finish; Water channel retained in cast-in-situ concrete channel

**PASSIVE VENTILATION THROUGH LOUVRED APERTURE**

1800x1800x20mm translucent Danpalon microcell Polycarbonate glazing panels in aluminium frame

South facing aluminium louvres to specialist specification fixed to aluminium frame

Min. 50mm screed to fall min. 1:70 towards gutter outlet

fig. 8.125. (author)  
 Section through the  
*Maturation Loculi.*

## SANS 10400

The SANS 10400 document was consulted for the design process in order to achieve a building which complies to the national standards and regulations:

### SANS 10400

#### Part A: Occupancy and Building classification

##### Table 1 & 2:

The building falls in a combination of classifications including

- C1 - Exhibition: 1 person per 20m<sup>2</sup>
- C3 - Laboratories: 1 person per 15m<sup>2</sup>
- D4 - Services: 1 person per 15m<sup>2</sup>
- G1 - Offices: 1 person per 15m<sup>2</sup>
- J3 - Storage: 1 person per 50m<sup>2</sup>

#### Part P: Ablutions

Total requirements for categories C1, C3, D4, G1 and J3:

##### 1\_ Columbarium:

###### Required:

Male:

2 Toilet pans

3 Urinals

3 Wash hand basins

###### Provided:

2 Toilet pans

3 Urinals

3 Wash and hand basins

Female:

5 Toilet pans

3 Wash hand basins

5 Toilet pans

3 Wash and hand basins

Two disabled bathroom facilities are provided (male and female).

## 2\_ Administration and exhibition gallery:

### Required:

Male:

2 Toilet pans  
3 Urinals  
4 Wash hand basins

### Provided:

3 Toilet pans  
3 Urinals  
4 Wash hand basins

Female:

5 Toilet pans  
3 Wash hand basins

5 Toilet pans  
3 Wash and hand basins

Two disabled bathroom facilities are provided (male and female).

## 3\_ Research facilities:

### Required:

Male:

1 Toilet pan  
2 Urinals  
2 Wash hand basins

### Provided:

2 Toilet pans  
2 Urinals  
3 Wash hand basins

Female:

3 Toilet pans  
2 Wash hand basins

3 Toilet pans  
3 Wash hand basins

## Part O: Ventilation

- Exhibition: 2 air changes per hour
- Laboratories: 2 air changes per hour
- Library: 2 air changes per hour
- Offices: 2 air changes per hour

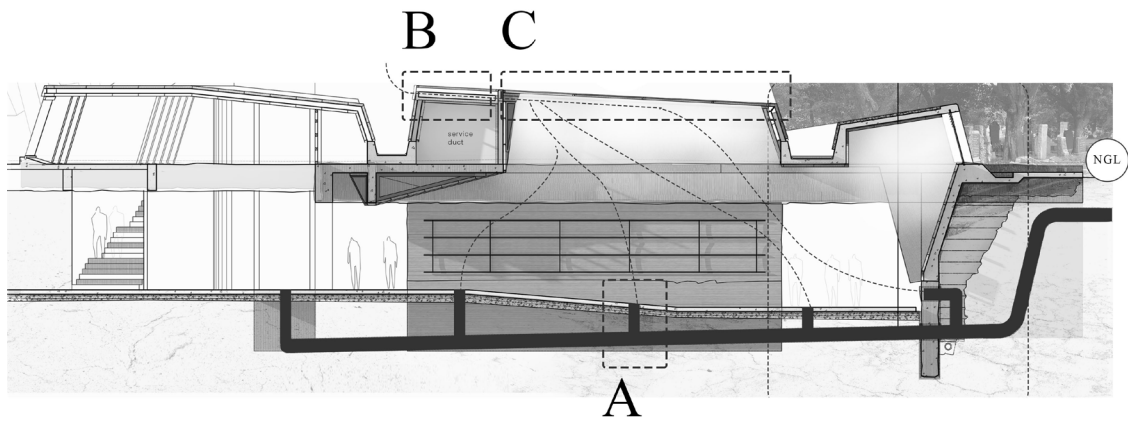


fig. 8.126. (author)  
 Passive ventilation and  
 lighting strategy in the  
*Inventory of Effigies*  
 (section A-A).

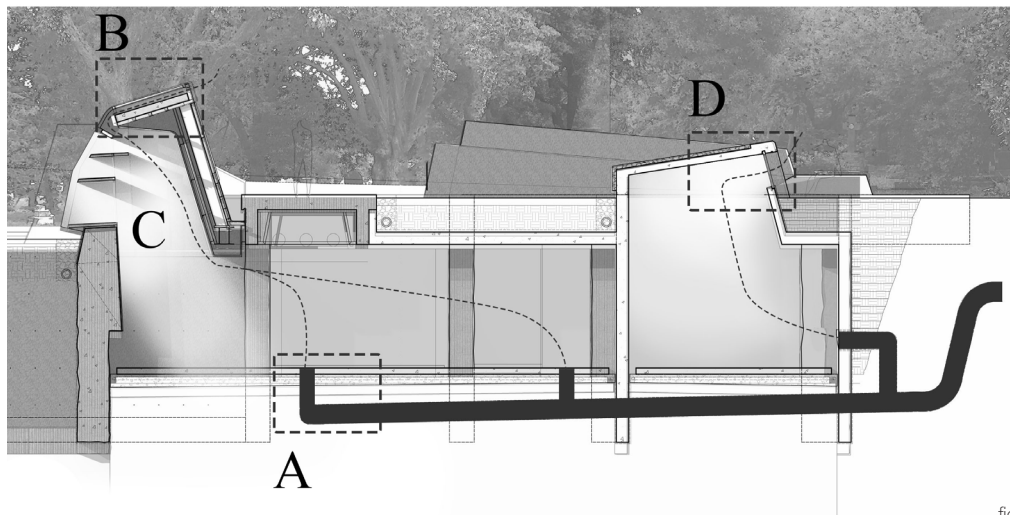


fig. 8.127. (author)  
 Passive ventilation and  
 lighting strategy in the  
*Cabinet of Obscurities*  
 (section C-C).

# Environmental strategies

## Articulating the steel skin to accommodate passive strategies:

The steel skin is, furthermore, articulated to accommodate passive lighting and ventilation strategies, as indicated in the diagrams. Passive ventilation is accomplished in the *Inventory of Effigies*, *Cabinet of Obscurities* and *Imaginarium* through the use of earth tubes (indicated by A in the diagrams) which provide fresh air which has been climatized to the ambient temperature of the earth to the facilities. In addition to the use of earth tubes, the air flow is passively generated through the use of solar chimneys (indicated by B in the diagrams). The solar chimneys are hosted in the steel skin, further creating depth to its one-dimensionality, and thereby further emphasizing its performativity.

The steel *negative* is further articulated to accommodate roof lights (indicated by C on the diagrams), constructed from translucent polycarbonate sheeting, in these

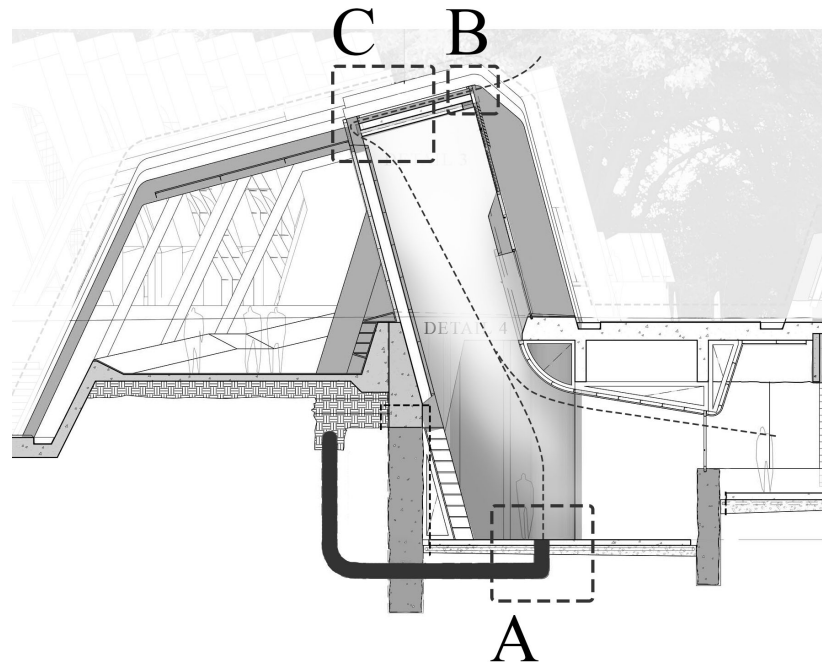
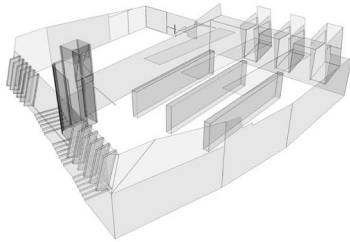


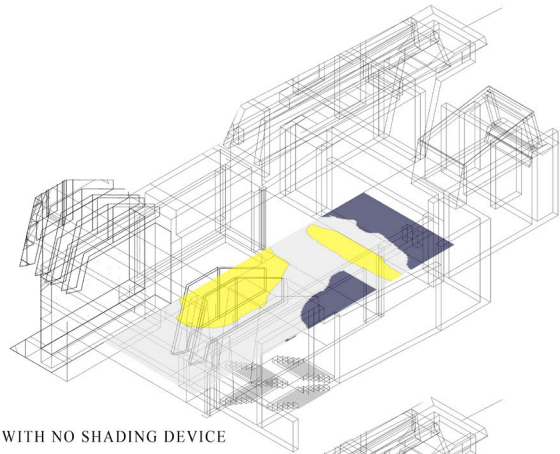
fig. 8.128. (author)  
Passive ventilation and  
lighting strategy in the  
*Imaginarium* (section  
B-B).

# DAYLIGHT ANALYSIS

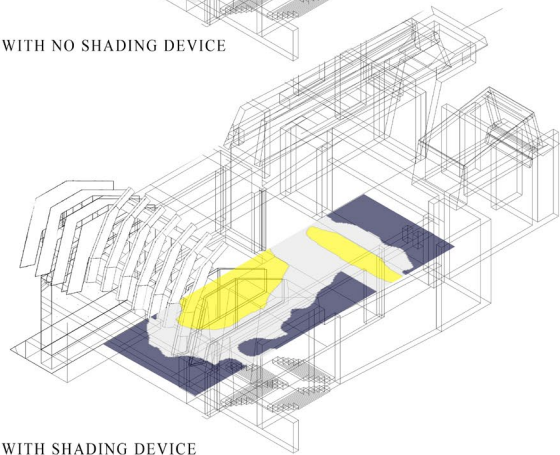
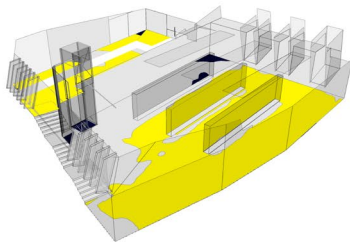
SEFAIRA OVERLIT & UNDERLIT



EXHIBITION SPACE ENVELOPE

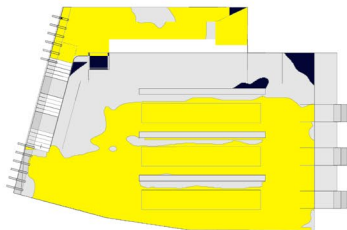


LABS WITH NO SHADING DEVICE

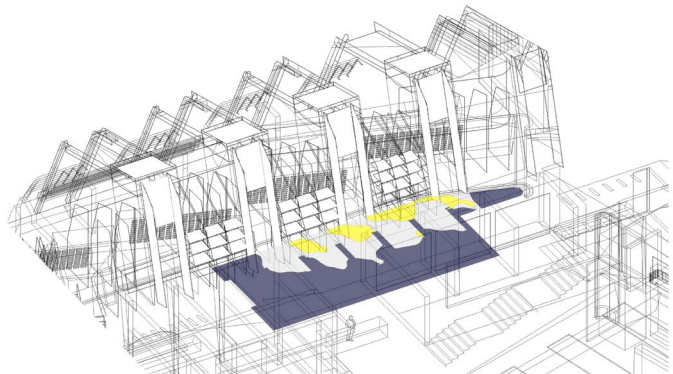


LABS WITH SHADING DEVICE

OVERLIT   
WELL LIT   
UNDERLIT 



DAYLIGHTING ON PLAN



IMAGINARIUM LIGHT SHAFTS

spaces, which allow for passive lighting. While this provides an abundance of light to the spaces, lighting models tested in Safeira indicated that this lighting was excessive (as shown in the diagrams). South facing aluminium steel louvres were therefore introduced to these elements, not only to prevent direct light from entering the spaces, but also to control passive heat gain from the direct sun light.

It is, however, important to note that these tests were conducted without taking the shading provided from the forest into account. An excess of day light was therefore reflected in the calculations and light models, which can be compensated for through the reduction and orientation of the aluminium louvres. The malleability of the steel skin does, however, provide a further means to control light gain into the building.

The building achieved an overall SBAT rating of 4.6, with energy and resource use being the lowest scores, each amounting to a rating of 3.

**SB SBAT REPORT** Achieved **4.6**

**SB1 Project**  
Hinterland

**SB2 Address**  
Brixton Cemetery, Johannesburg

**SB3 SBAT Graph**

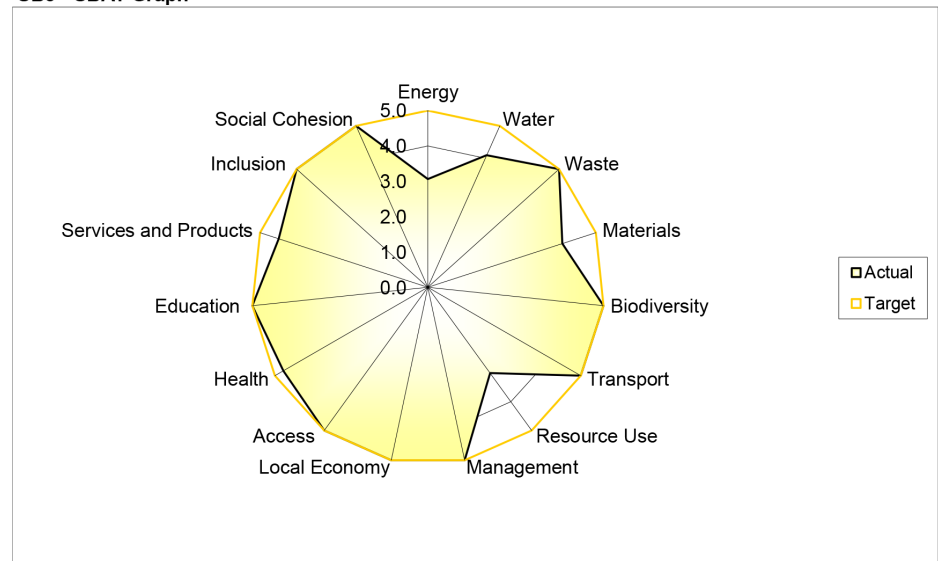
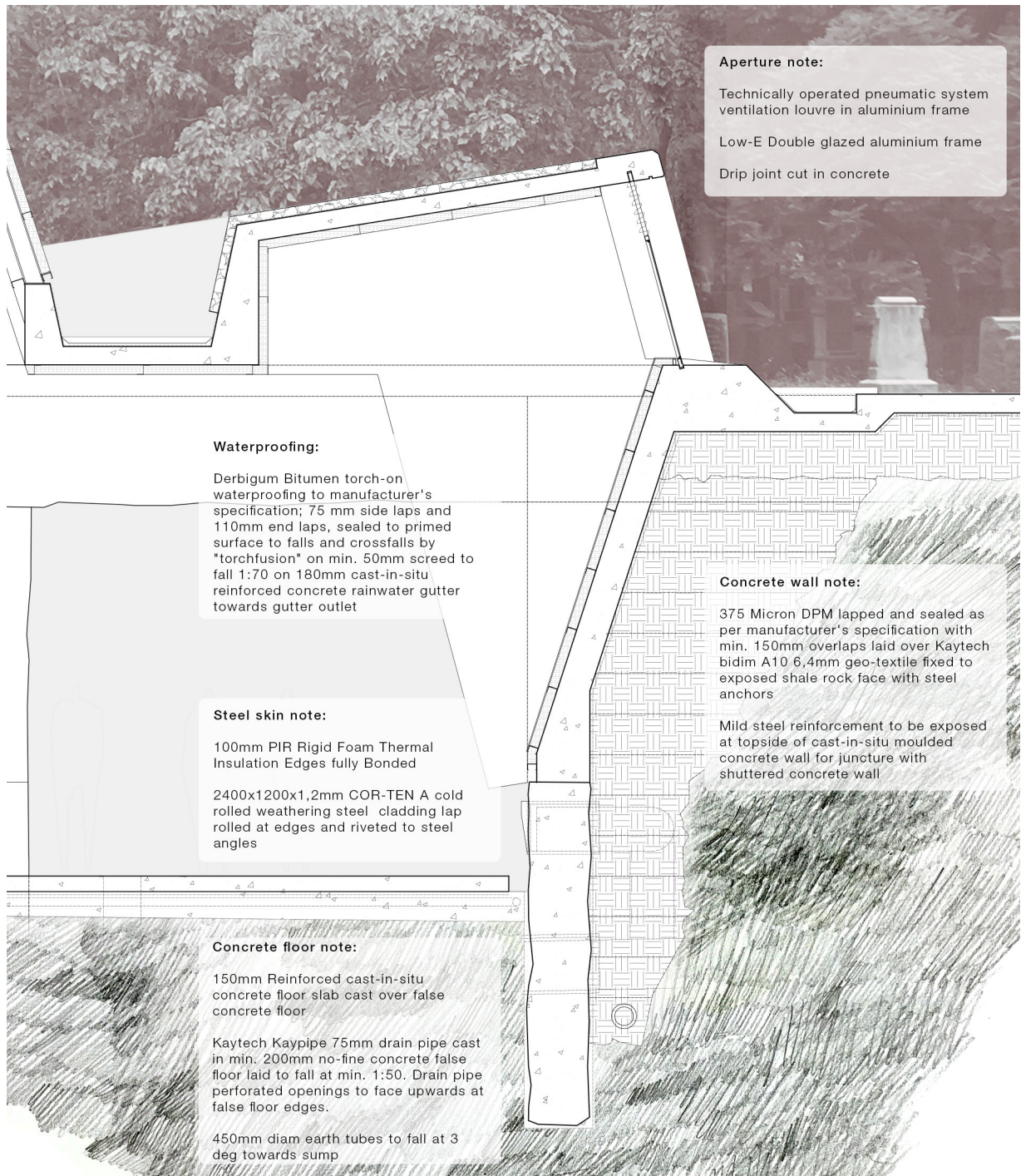


fig. 8.129. (author)  
Daylight analysis  
generated in Safeira.

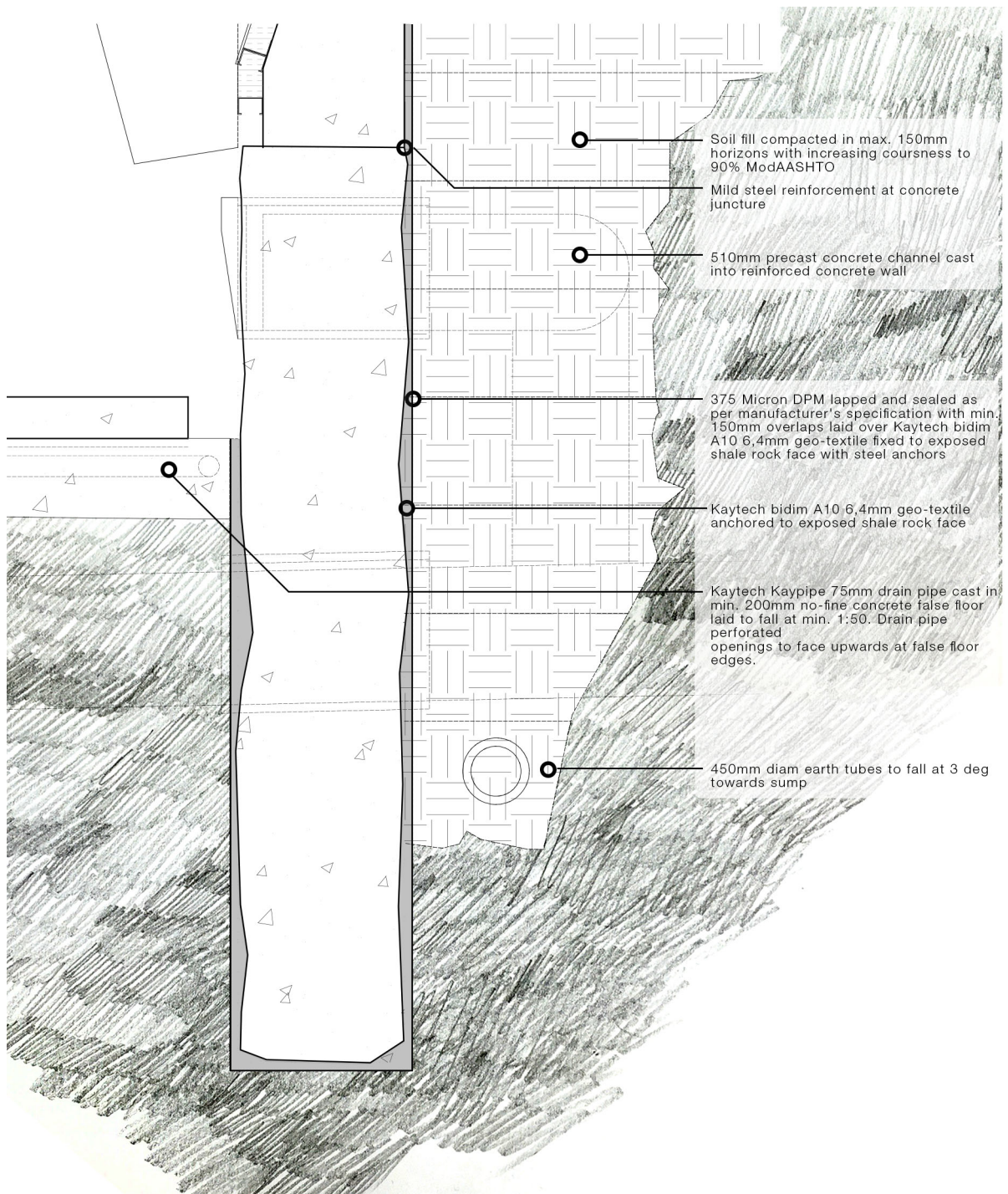
SB4 Environmental, Social and Economic Performance	Score
Environmental	4.2
Economic	4.6
Social	4.8
<b>SBAT Rating</b>	<b>4.6</b>

fig. 8.130. (author) SBAT  
report generated with the  
online SBAT tool available  
online.



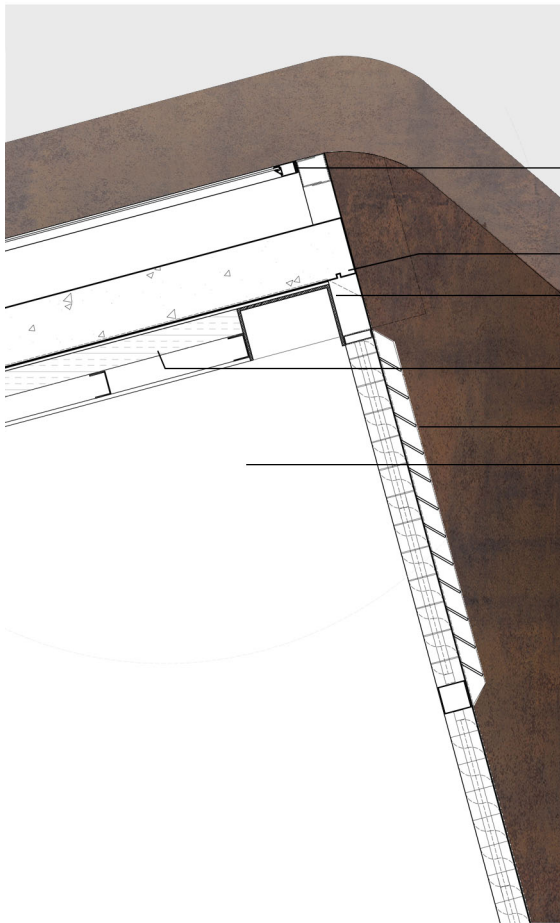
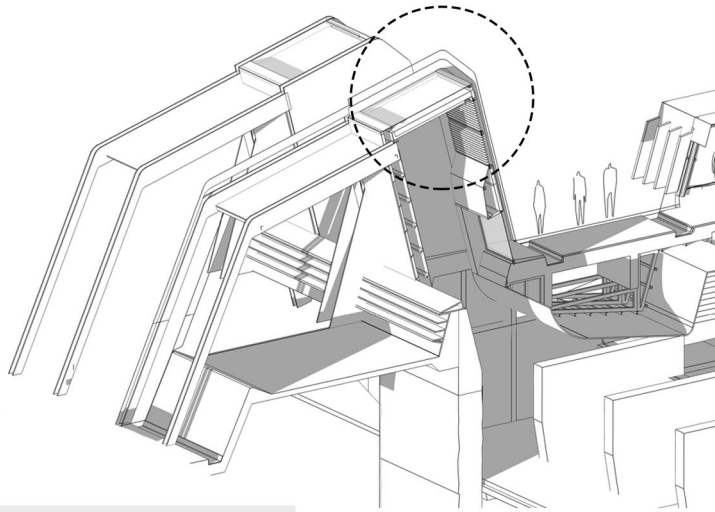
**WALL DETAIL**  
**INVENTORY OF EFFIGIES**  
 [ EXHIBITION GALLERY ]

fig. 8.131. (author) Wall detail.



**WALL SECTION  
DETAIL FOR BURROWING AND  
CONCRETE MOULDING**

fig. 8.132. (author) Wall detail.



**Solar heat chimney**

Extruded aluminium frame bolted to 50x50x3mm hot-rolled mild steel square tubing with 6mm double layered laminated safety glass; sealed with neoprene seal

Drip joint in 200mm pre-cast reinforced concrete slab

260x90x8mm Hot-rolled mild steel channel profile welded to 203x203x25mm I-beam steel portal frame structure

100mm PIR Rigid Foam Thermal Insulation Edges fully Bonded

Technically operated pneumatic system

1800x1200x1,2mm COR-TEN A cold rolled weathering steel cladding lap rolled and riveted to 75x50x2mm galvanized mild steel channel profile

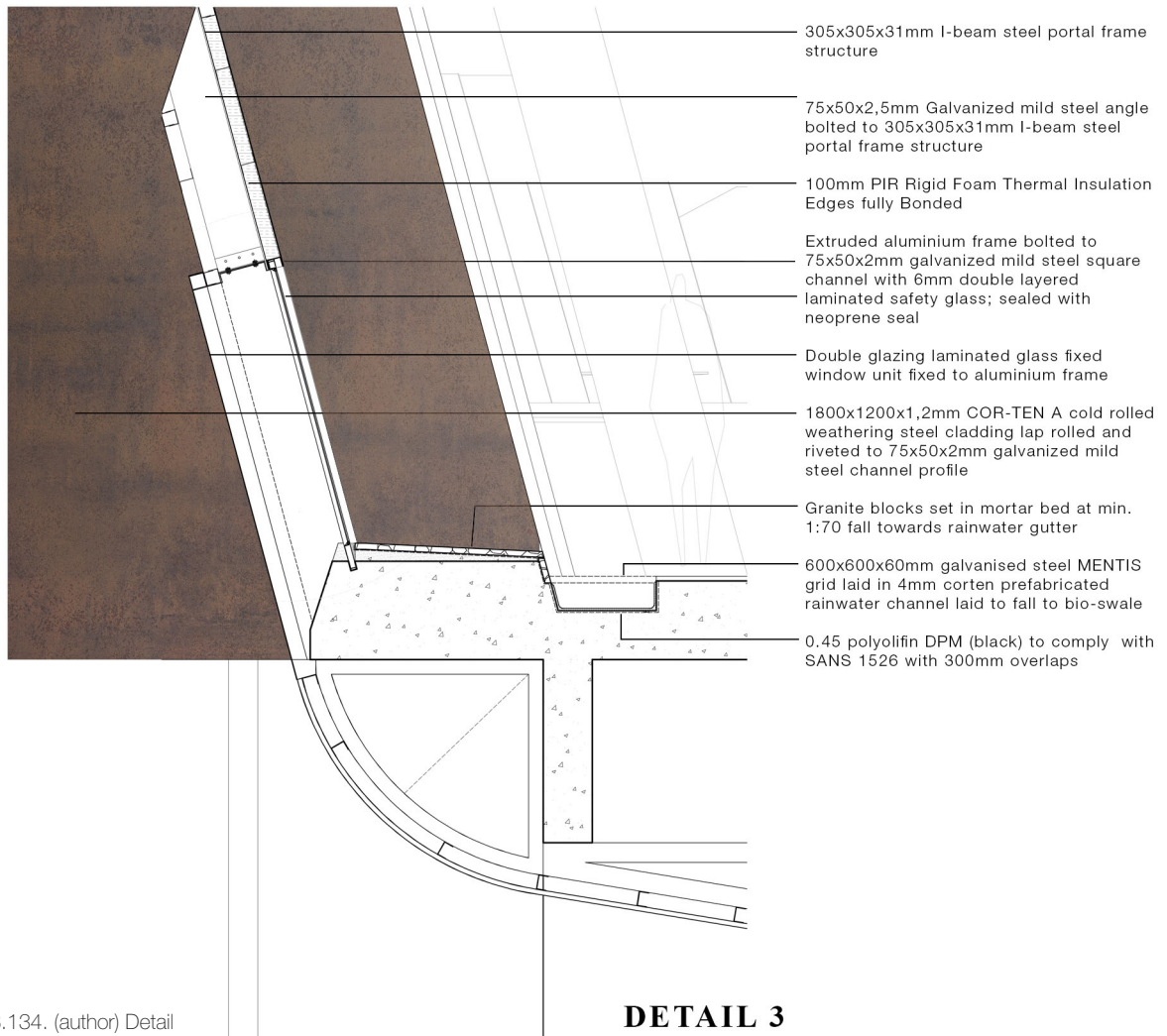
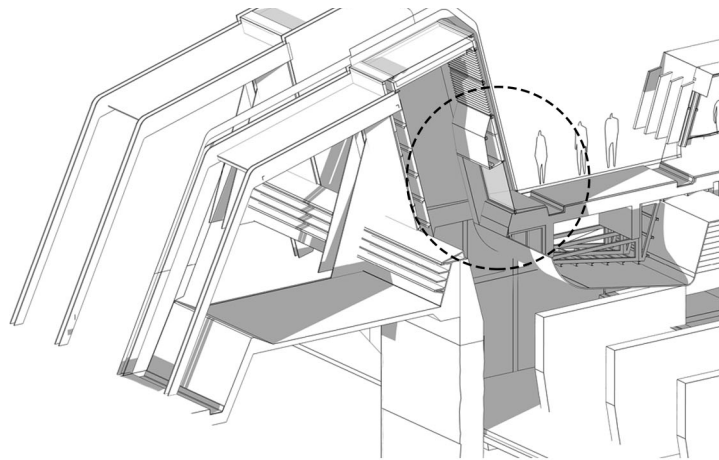
0.45 polyolifin DPM (black) to comply with SANS 1526 with 300mm overlaps

**Solar heat chimney ventilation system note:**

300mm Exhaust fan fixed to galvanized steel bracket fixed to 203x203x25mm I-beam steel column Double layer laminated glazing separated by max. 150mm cavity suspended over 200mm pre-cast reinforced concrete slab with black painted finish bolted to 45x45mm galvanised steel angles Derbigum Bitumen torch-on waterproofing to manufacturer's specification applied below concrete slab 100mm PIR rigid foam thermal insulation edges fully bonded glued to all faces but exposed solar face

**DETAIL 2**  
**IMAGINARIUM**  
**[ SOLAR CHIMNEY ]**

fig. 8.133. (author) Detail of solar chimney at the *Imaginarium*.



305x305x31mm I-beam steel portal frame structure

75x50x2,5mm Galvanized mild steel angle bolted to 305x305x31mm I-beam steel portal frame structure

100mm PIR Rigid Foam Thermal Insulation Edges fully Bonded

Extruded aluminium frame bolted to 75x50x2mm galvanized mild steel square channel with 6mm double layered laminated safety glass; sealed with neoprene seal

Double glazing laminated glass fixed window unit fixed to aluminium frame

1800x1200x1,2mm COR-TEN A cold rolled weathering steel cladding lap rolled and riveted to 75x50x2mm galvanized mild steel channel profile

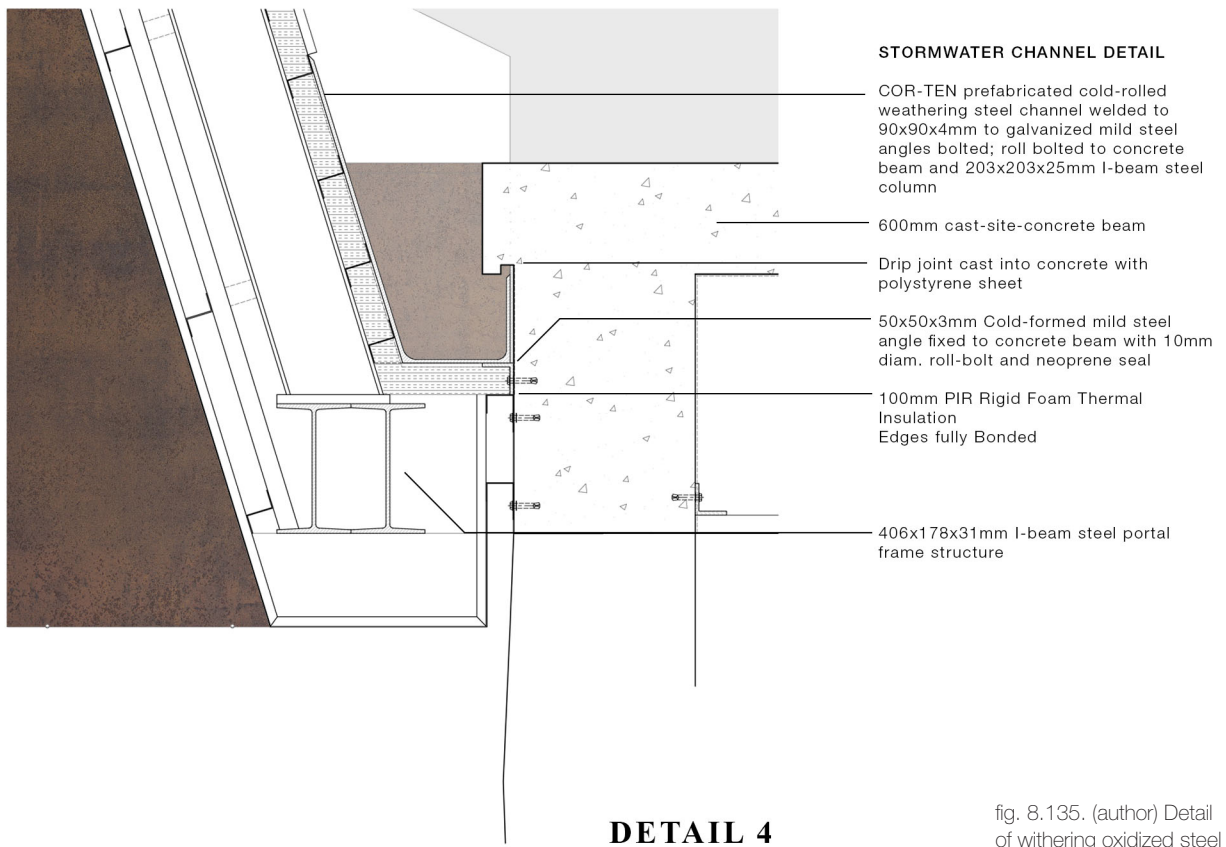
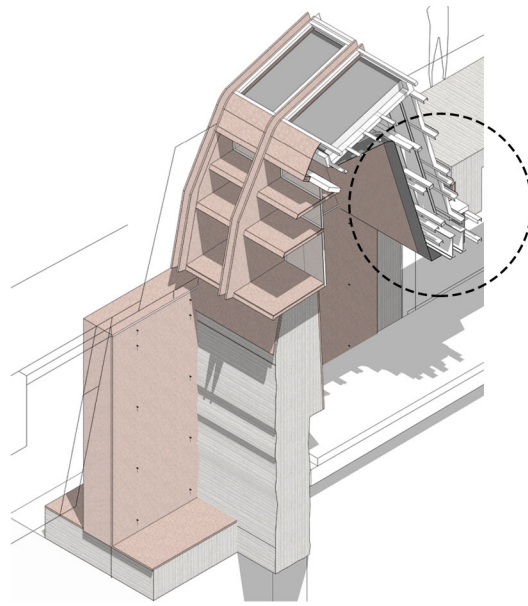
Granite blocks set in mortar bed at min. 1:70 fall towards rainwater gutter

600x600x60mm galvanised steel MENTIS grid laid in 4mm corten prefabricated rainwater channel laid to fall to bio-swale

0.45 polyolifin DPM (black) to comply with SANS 1526 with 300mm overlaps

**DETAIL 3**  
**IMAGINARIUM**  
**[ VIEWING APERTURE ]**

fig. 8.134. (author) Detail of viewing window into *Imaginarium*.



**DETAIL 4**  
**CABINET OF OBSCURITIES**  
**[ STEEL SKIN ]**

fig. 8.135. (author) Detail of weathering oxidized steel skin and gutter at the *Cabinet of Obscurities*.





fig. 9.136. (author) Photo of the exam presentation.



fig. 9.137. (author) Photo of the exam presentation.



fig. 9.138. (author) Photo of the exam presentation.

# Conclusion

While spatial consideration and intervention around graves was considered throughout the project, the finality thereof was challenged during the final examination. It was, however, the objective of this project to not only fixate on micro spatial conditions in and around the cemetery, but rather to focus on the macro narrative which from which the city and consequently the cemetery was constructed - the human desire to escape, and to attain this escape through building an artificial realm. While this artificial landscape provides a fleeting moment of escape, it also subjects these creations to loss of amnesia and ruination as memory, and therefore its significance lapses. This has resulted in spaces which have become fringe to the city - hinterlands nested in the everyday fabric, but made inaccessible due to this loss of significance and subsequent ruination. It was, therefore, the task of this dissertation to uncover and explore the possibilities of architectural intervention through the deconstruction and mechanization of this desire to escape, not only to reanimate the cemetery, but also restore significance through this mechanization. This process was articulated on several scales of the intervention, and therefore limited a thorough exploration of the potential of the intervention on these scales. The dissertation, therefore, placed its emphasis on detail design - the construction and articulation of the *negatives* - as its primary focus. The capacity of this project for being a model, not only for the reanimation of the cemetery in a context created by the desire to escape, but also the restoration of significance to the cemetery through this process, has necessitated limiting the tenacity with which certain design elements could have been explored.

This process has also inspired the creation of a language which binds the architectural intervention (and the architectural language) to the reality of physical death and ruination of space, through reimaginative death. While the project was lauded for its theoretical exploration, the critique the project has received, and the level of engagement from the examination panel indicate the potential value of creating an architectural language as impetus for architectural intervention, as demonstrated by the dissertation. The seemingly obtuse nature and expression of this language was, however, questioned, and invoked fervent debate among the examining panel and between the examining panel and the student.

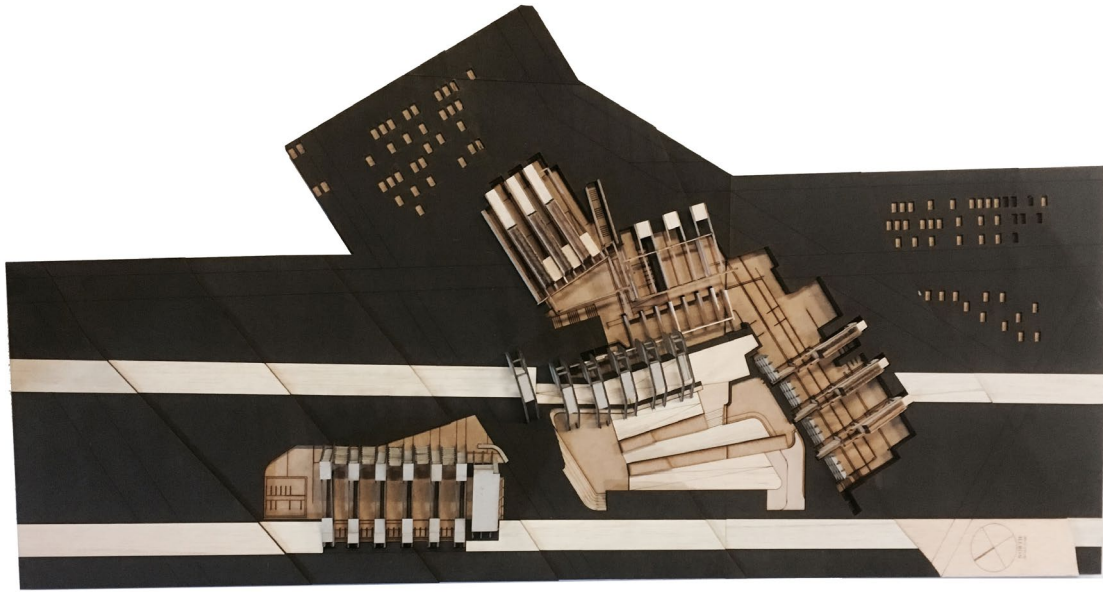


fig. 9.139. (author) Photo of the model present during examination.

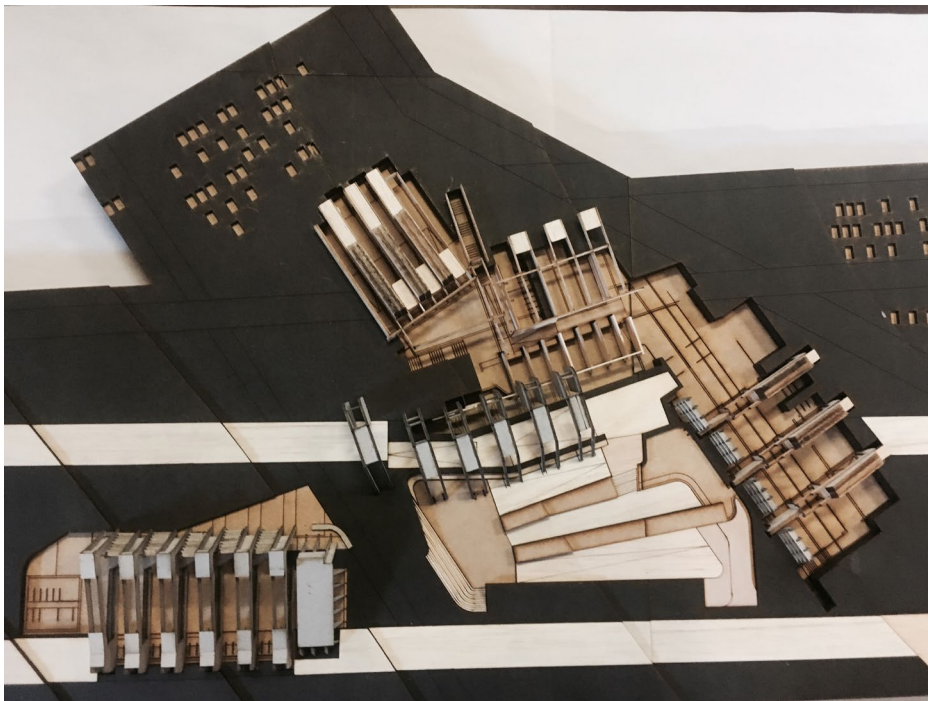


fig. 9.140. (author) Photo of the model present during examination.

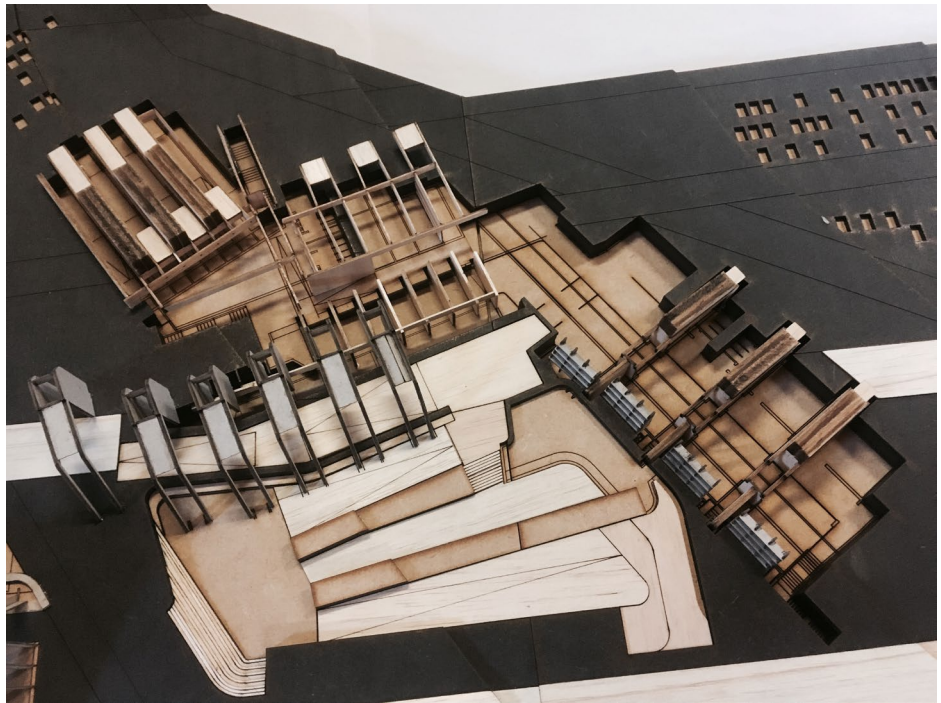


fig. 9.141. (author) Photo of the model present during examination.

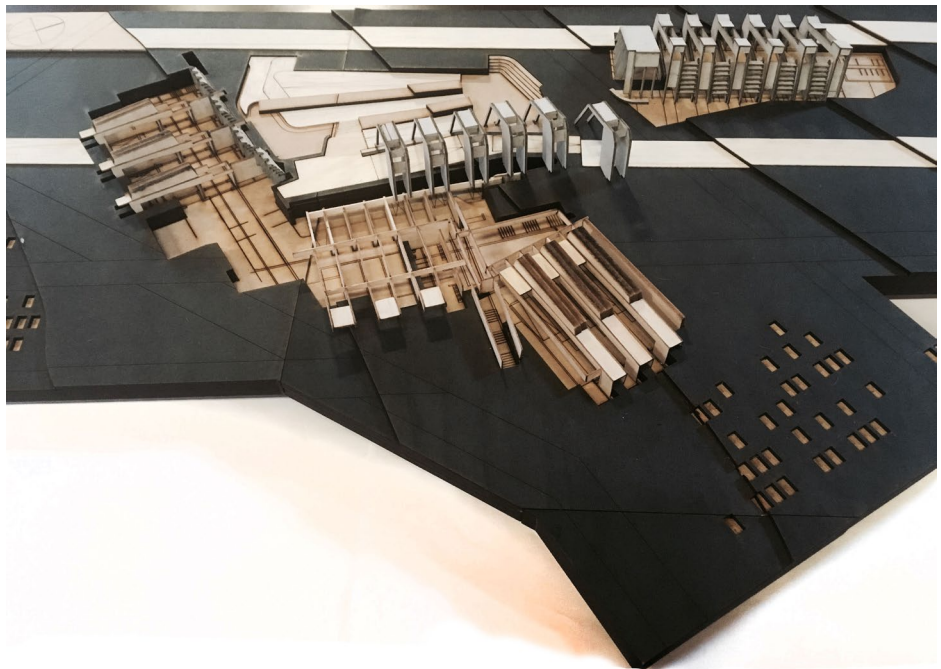


fig. 9.142. (author) Photo of the model present during examination.

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