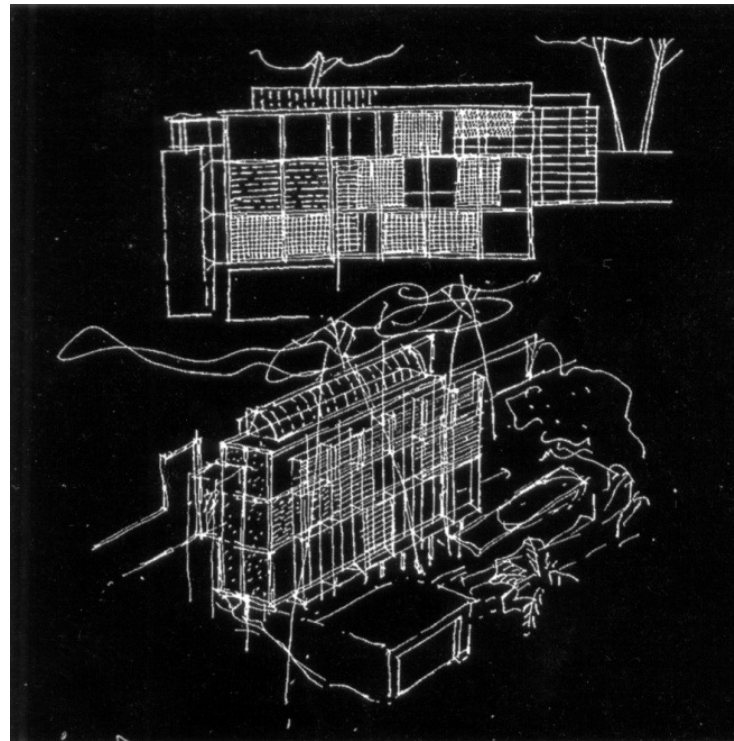


8 THE PRECEDENTS

“The design of the house incorporates themes of narrative, of layering and of expressed threshold. The visitor is invited to take part in a **journey of discovery**, requested to participate in the **unlocking of experiences** within the house, the **unpeeling of layers**. We tried to heighten the experience of unveiling and of **delicate exposure**, to create within the house **sensuality** and moments of intense intimacy - a folly immersed in, and closely linked with, the majestic beauty of the African landscape - a simultaneous dialogue between **inside and outside** and outside and inside, neither taking precedent over the other” (www.vdma.com/projects.html 12/10/2009).

“Trees are precious in Africa. They provide shelter for the elders at meeting time, for school children in the midday heat, for all to shield against the unrelenting elements. In a sense the tree has become iconic, almost mythical.” (www.vdma.com/projects.html 12/10/2009)



*Conceptual sketch
("Architecture South Africa"
November/December 2008: 18)*



Perched on the hillside
(www.vdmma.com)



Curvilinear shapes
(www.vdmma.com)



Solid base
(www.vdmma.com)

1 TREE HOUSE

Van der Merwe Misewski Architects (1997)

Residence – Higgovale, Cape Town

“The building is situated on a narrow, steep site. Apart from the indigenous fynbos, cultivated stone Pines are the most distinctive features on the foothills of Table Mountain. Given their dominating presence, these tall, canopied trees served as design inspiration. The rectilinear plan is organised on three levels around five tree like timber columns, growing through a triple volume and branching out to support the roof. This internal structural system permits a non load-bearing exterior of glass and steel frames, combined with sinuous walls and partitions. It is difficult not to read the tree-like columns and roof as an extension of the forest of trees, while the platforms among the leaves reinforce the sensation of living in a tree. The curvilinear shape of walls and balustrades heightens the allusions to nature and the triple volume amplifies the visibility of the towering tree trunks from all vantage points” (Dr Nic Coetzer, Joubert 2009:308-311). The site of the CCC is similar in that it is long, narrow and sloping, although not a steep as the Higgovale Residence. The inspiration for the design of the CCC comes from the African tress with its many ideologies. The Higgovale Residence has been designed as an uplifting extension of the forest whereas the CCC uses the umbrella-like acacias, providing more of a cocoon and protective role whilst its roots are embedded in a truly indigenous situation. The Higgovale design inspired the use of curving walls, platforms, and rectilinear shapes within my own design. Furthermore, the theme of narrative, which is embedded in the Higgovale Residence, has informed my own design.



Constitutional Court logo
(www.constitutionalcourt.org.za)

The Logo

It depicts people sheltering under a canopy of branches - a representation of the Constitution's protective role and a reference to a theme that runs through the Court, that of justice under a tree. The idea comes from traditional African societies: this was where people would meet to resolve disputes.



Resolving a dispute under a tree
(www.rolexawards.com)

Justice Albie Sachs, who was deeply involved in the development of the logo and the design of the new building, told a group on a tour of Constitution Hill: "The tree protects the people, and they look after the tree. Besides, in South Africa, justice has traditionally taken place under a tree."

*Left: Foyer
Middle: Slots in concrete roof
Right: Decorated columns*
(www.constitutionalcourt.org.za)



2 CONSTITUTIONAL COURT

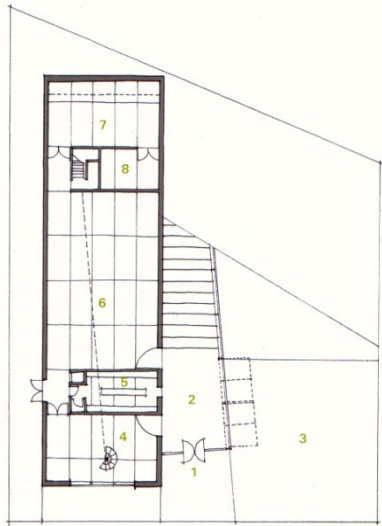
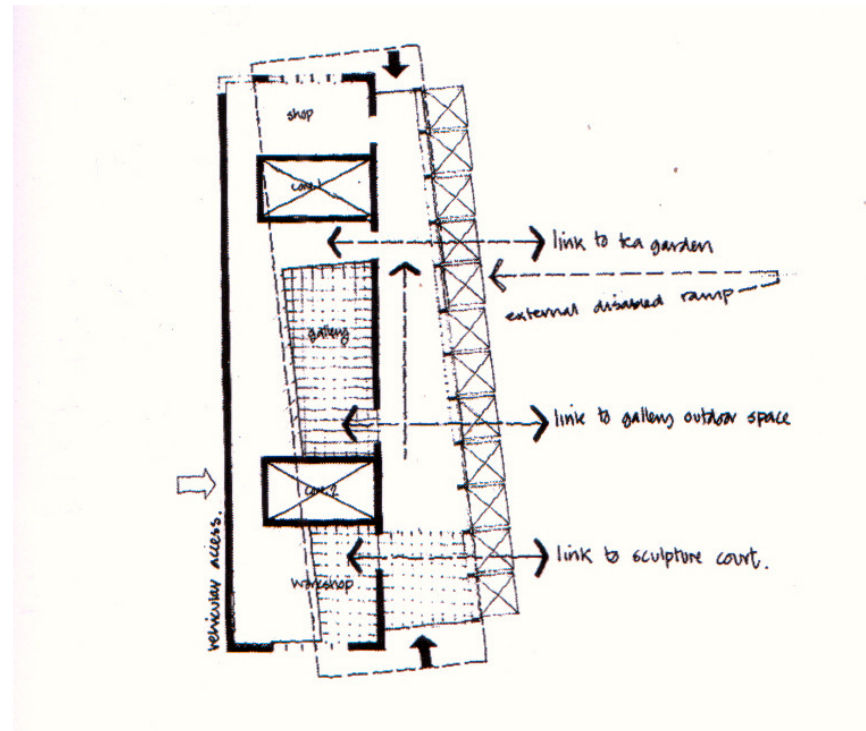
Urban Solutions • OMM Design Workshop

An Architectural Metaphor "Justice under a tree"

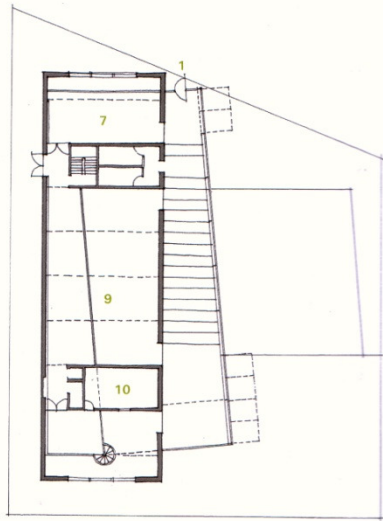
"The foyer of the Court is a spacious, light-filled area punctuated by slanting columns, an architectural metaphor for trees under which African villagers traditionally resolved their legal disputes. This is just one of the many representations of a recurring theme in the building: that of 'justice under a tree'. The columns are decorated by mosaics - blue, green, orange and red. And in keeping with the metaphor, the concrete roof has slots designed to create moving areas akin to dappled sunlight filtering through leaves. And the principal materials - timber, concrete, steel, glass and black slate - infuse the court with an African feel" (www.constitutionalcourt.org.za cited 12/10/2009). The ideals taken from the Constitutional Court were those of the traditional role of the tree in providing protection and justice as well as the use of the indigenous materials to create a building that has its roots firmly embedded in the African soil in order to provide people with a sense of belonging and security. The idea of creating lightness and movement through the paradoxical use of heavy materials, such as concrete in the case of the Constitutional Court, inspired the design of the CCC, especially with regards to the stone retaining walls.



Slatted screens
(Joubert 2009:418)

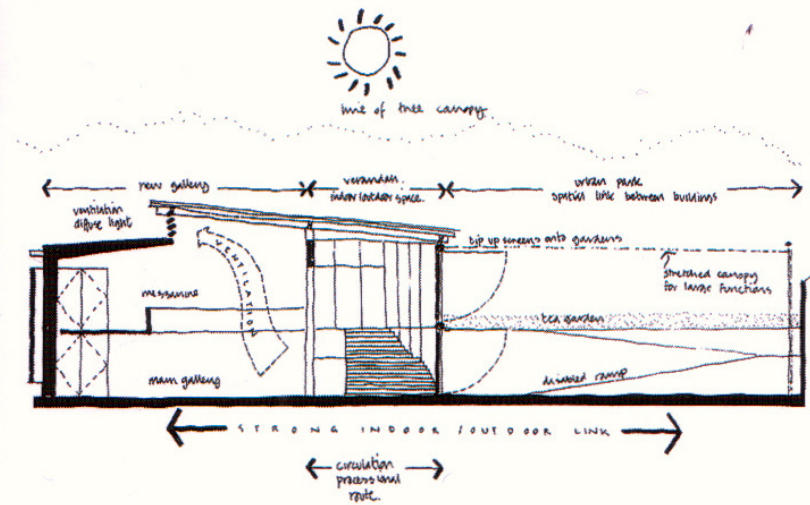


ground floor plan

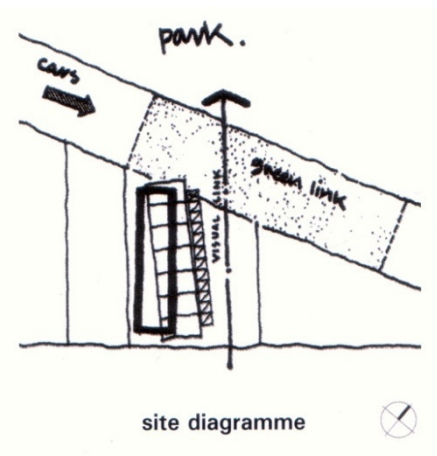


first floor plan

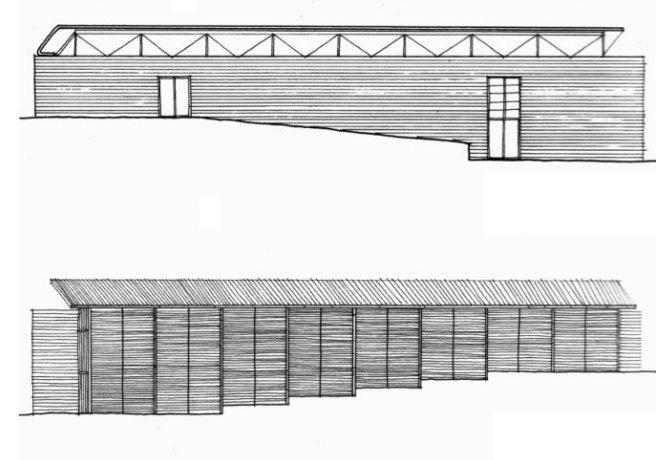
Plans
(Joubert 2009:417)



Concept Sketches
(Joubert 2009:417)



Concept sketch
(Joubert 2009:416)



Elevations
(Joubert 2009:417)

3 KZNSA GALLERY

Walters & Cohen Architects • Sally Lewis Architects (1996) Huizinga Architects (2006)

An example of 'Natural Comfort'

“Compositionally, a solid elongated box is intersected by another of lightweight construction at an angle determined by a tapered staircase. The latter is characterised by a north façade of slatted timber, glazed sides, tilted roof and resulting clearstorey lighting. The concept of two intersecting geometries is more than an ordering device. It also achieves natural comfort in Durban’s balmy summers and high diurnal temperature range. The inner box is permeated, not only to provide visual and spatial interaction but to encourage cross-ventilation and nocturnal cooling beneath its sheet metal roof; warm air is extracted through the clearstorey. Its desirable orientation and slatted screens, promoting cross-ventilation and filtering sunlight, provide a pleasant ambience for art appreciation in a garden setting. The structure consists of steel portal frames and carefully detailed concrete block infill. Bagged walls are neutrally painted for the art to provide colour. All balustrades are of galvanised flat metal of robust detailing and painted grey” Prof. (Walter Peters, Joubert 2009:416). The KZN SA Gallery provided inspiration for the use of angled connections and placements of the different structures of the CCC, not only to promote a feeling of orderliness and process but to also deal with the extreme heat in Durban. The position and design of the CCC allows the full benefit of the breeze coming off the sea and funnelling up through the Umgeni River Valley to cool down the spaces of the CCC. There is a similar use of permeated boxes, slatted screens and clearstories to capture the cooling breezes and naturally cool the buildings. The courtyard areas of the CCC provide places for reflection, peace and interconnection as well as appreciation of the arts and crafts generated in the CCC studios.



Jungle Patio
(www.mecanoo.com)



Zen Patio
(www.mecanoo.com)



Water Patio
(www.mecanoo.com)



Water Patio
(www.mecanoo.com)

4 FACULTY OF ECONOMICS AND MANAGEMENT, UTRECHT

Mecanoo Architects (1993-1995)

Three patios (courtyards)

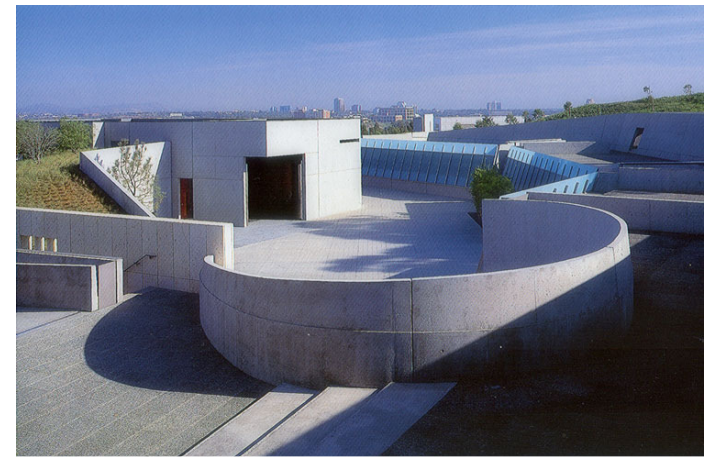
“The building is designed as one continuous space, enclosed by glass, in which four volumes of different shape and material rest on concrete columns. The square ground plan, with four connecting parts separated by three patios, ensures a free circulation to each corner of the building. The **‘Jungle’ patio** has a dynamic ambience, influenced by the varieties of bamboo that are interspersed throughout the walkways, and open steel footbridges that connect the patio to the first floor and incorporate it into the interior circulation system. The design for the **‘Zen’ patio** is inspired by Japanese meditation gardens with gravel and boulders, and is the most static of the three patios. The walls of the Zen patio are covered with grids of Western red cedar that act as sun shields. The **‘Water’ patio**, the narrowest of the three, has a glass footbridge with views to the open landscape at the rear of the building. The water symbolises the calm nature of the building” (www.mecanoo.com 12/10/2009). The inspiration for my own use of different but connected exterior spaces came from the way in which this building incorporates different patios, each with its own character and ambience. Each of my spaces is part of the same healing journey but has its own clearly defined character.



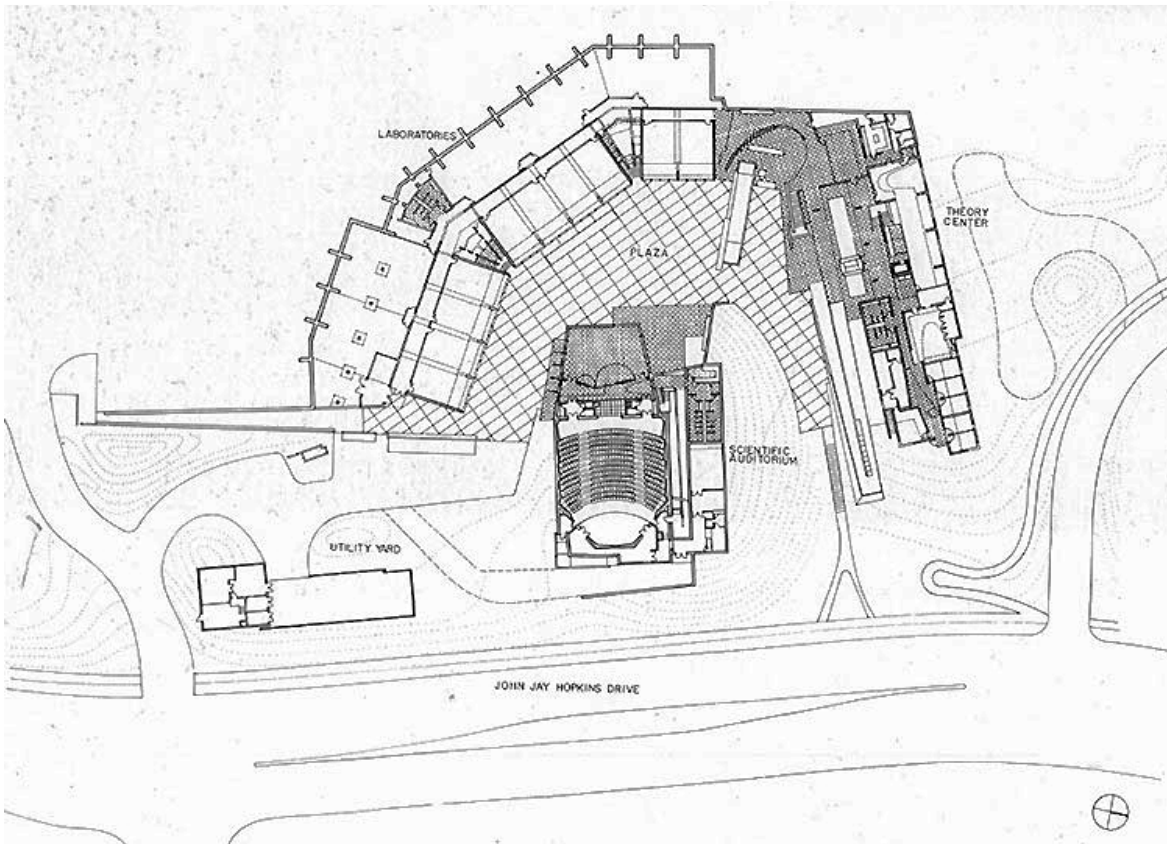
Sloping site
(www.interiordesign.net)



Sloping site
(www.goljurios.blogspot.com)



Cutting into site
(www.goljurios.blogspot.com)



Site plan
(www.goljurios.blogspot.com)



Central plaza
(www.fanfaire.com)

5 NEUROSCIENCES INSTITUTE, LA JOLLA, CALIFORNIA

Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects (1993-1995)

The Neurosciences Institute is a theoretical and clinical research campus for the study of the brain. The program is comprised of a theory centre, laboratories, and an auditorium. According to the architects, the three buildings are arranged to form a central plaza that unifies the entire project. The buildings cut into the sloping site and appear as low profiles demonstrating a strong link with the landscape. The intent behind partially burying the buildings is that the landscape and the buildings form a quiet courtyard. The resulting space is both open and sheltered, encouraging interaction between the different disciplines.

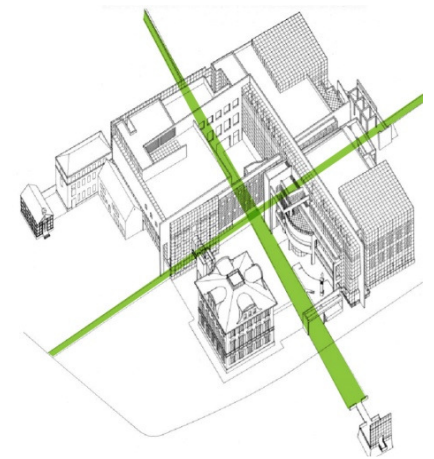
In a similar vein, the four buildings which make up the CCC form a secure enclosure and define an inner landscape. This serves as common ground between the various stages of the design and in this sense holds the building together. This makes for an environment inviting people into a communal space conducive to building relationships and a sense of community. The CCC is embedded into the sloping site in the same way the Neurosciences Institute is. The solidly anchored buildings provide much needed stability and protection but as they open up and out of this anchorage, there is a feeling of freedom and lightness.



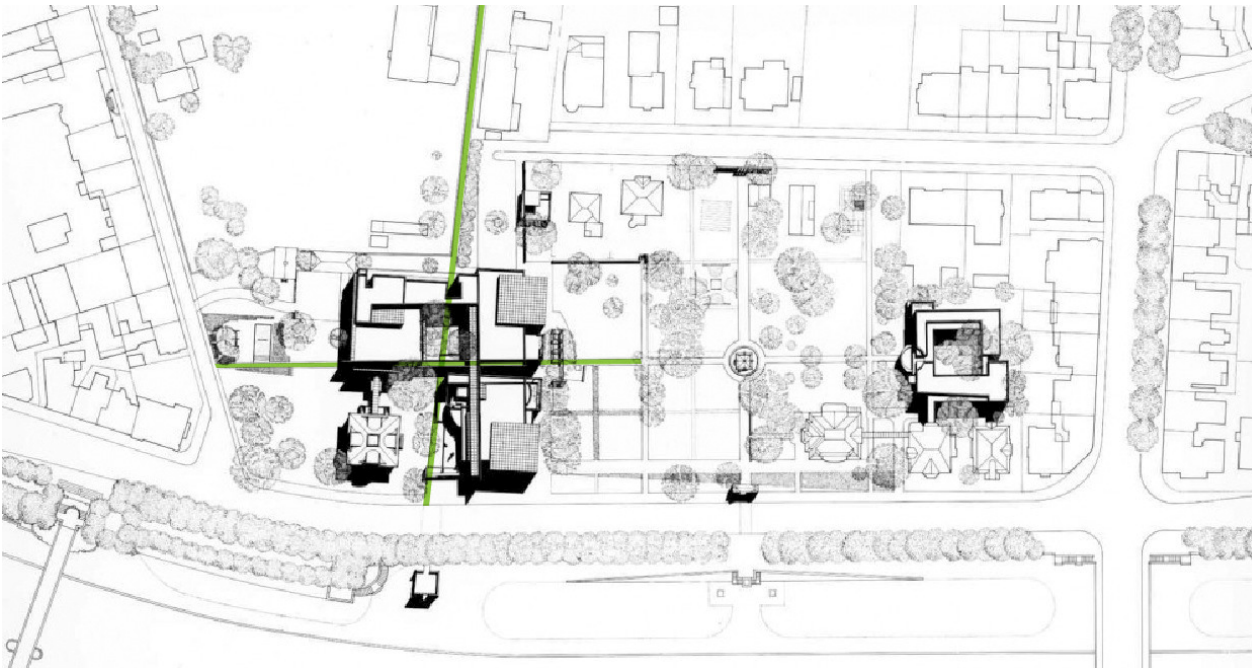
Path running through building
(www.upload.wikimedia.org)



Interplay between exterior and interior spaces
(www.flickr.com)



Axonometric
(www.rlchardmeier.com)



Site plan
(www.rlchardmeier.com)



First floor plan
(www.rlchardmeier.com)



Building enveloping a path
(www.flickr.com)



Path leading to building
(www.flickr.com)

6 MUSEUM FOR APPLIED ART, FRANKFURT

Richard Meier and Partners Architects (1979 - 1985)

The building opens up to allow the paths through the site to continue their course. This forms a dialogue between building and landscape where one is continually witnessing a merging of interior and exterior spaces. There are distinct routes formed within the CCC which direct movement between building and landscape. This means that paths through the site become a generator of the planning as shown in the Museum for Applied Art. The pathways function both as a literal and metaphorical journey of healing, culminating in the sacred space. As in the museum, there is a continuous flow of pathways, with the buildings being part of the flow, as opposed to barriers connected by paths.