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Social nex[us]: reimaging public life and cohesion in Windhoek West through empowering student entrepreneurs and their sidehustles

Nankela, Junior-Steps

2024

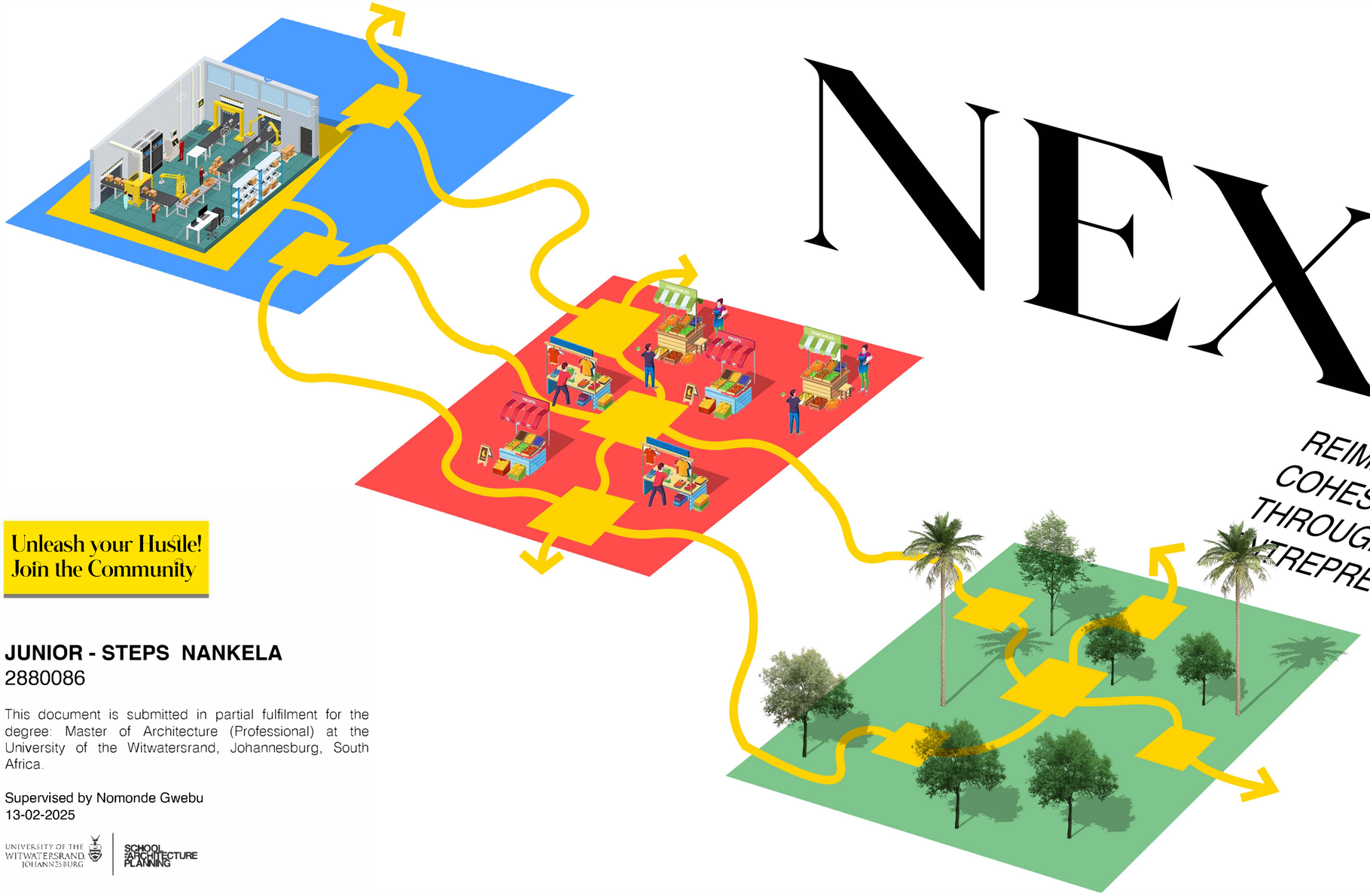
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NEXUS

SOCIAL [US]

REIMAGINING PUBLIC LIFE & COHESION IN WINDHOEK WEST THROUGH EMPOWERING STUDENT ENTREPRENEURS & THEIR SIDE HUSTLES

Unleash your Hustle!
Join the Community

JUNIOR - STEPS NANKELA
2880086

This document is submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree: Master of Architecture (Professional) at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.

Supervised by Nomonde Gwebu
13-02-2025

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ABSTRACT

This research report addresses urban issues in the diverse community of Windhoek West, specifically the lack of social cohesion due to inadequate public facilities and the underdevelopment of local entrepreneurial opportunities. The study proposes a community-centered marketplace designed to support local SMEs and microenterprises, including those run by students and local entrepreneurs. This marketplace aims to serve as a social hub for networking and showcasing work to the Windhoek West community and beyond.

The report begins with a historical overview of community centers, setting the context for Namibia's current urban landscape, which lacks such facilities. It then redefines the community center as a nexus, or connecting point, among community members, and explores how other typologies serve similar functions. This leads to the proposal of a market as a community center for Namibia.

Windhoek West is analyzed as a transition and autonomous zone combining commerce and residence. The analysis identifies issues and opportunities for intervention, forming a framework that links these activity zones through the design of the Nex[us]. Interviews with local entrepreneurs provide insights into their brand identities and how the Nex[us] can accommodate them.

The proposed Nex[us] is situated on an open space northwest of Windhoek West, along a key road connecting the city center to northern residential areas. The design features three distinct spaces: a market, a park, and a production area. These spaces are conceptually and architecturally composed to challenge the dominance of multinational corporations, foster community cohesion, and provide a collaborative environment for entrepreneurs. The design emphasizes modularity, flexibility, adaptability, and inclusivity.



Figure 1: Social Nex[us]
(Author, 2024)



Figure 2: Community (Author, 2024)

> “Man must learn to look upon himself as a **PART OF A GREAT COMMUNITY** and develop a hierarchy of loyalties **EXTENDING FROM HIS FAMILY TO HIS OWN COMMUNITY.**”
>
> JOSIAH ROYCE, 1908

PREFACE

From my first year of studying architecture, I have been captivated by design. Even before I fully understood the profession, I was drawn to the creative process from doodling comic books in primary school to imagining designs for cars, technology, and clothing. This fascination with the ability to translate mental images into physical forms led me to pursue architecture. During my honors year, as I tackled urban design for the first time, I began to comprehend the profound influence design has on society. Design possesses the power to shape social dynamics, deconstruct and reconstruct power structures, and ultimately dictate the way communities’ function. This sense of empowerment is what I seek to explore and showcase in my master’s thesis.

Having lived in Windhoek all my life, I have witnessed the city’s growth first hand. Through the lens of architecture, I came to understand how the built environment plays a pivotal role in shaping urban life. My personal connection to Windhoek inspired my research. Titled “Social Nex[us]: Reimagining Public Life and Cohesion in Windhoek West through Empowering Student Entrepreneurs and Their Side Hustles”, my goal has always been to address not just an architectural issue, but an urban challenge, specifically the lack of cohesion and connectivity in Windhoek West, a vibrant neighborhood bordering the city center.

This neighborhood holds a special place in my heart, as it is where both my primary school and university are located. Despite its mixed-use nature and diverse population, Windhoek West lacks true public amenities and community facilities that could serve as social hubs. The second, and perhaps more critical, urban issue I aim to address is the city’s capitalist style of governance. Even before my formal education in architecture and urban planning, I observed how local residents, including my own family, constantly hustled to make a living. The city consistently falls short in providing equitable avenues for economic growth, which I seek to tackle through my architectural intervention.

My proposed solution is the “Social Nex[us],” a contemporary community-centered market designed to empower local entrepreneurs and provide a social hub for the broader community. This market is not just a place for economic transactions; it is a space infused with the ideals of a community center, a nexus where people can connect, collaborate, and thrive. While the design can be interpreted as a market, I view it as a hybrid typology; a park, market, and production space combined into a cohesive whole.The primary focus is on university students and young professionals with side hustles, a group I am personally connected to through my own experiences as a student.

Throughout this journey, I constantly questioned whether I was designing a community center or a marketplace. The answer became clear as my research unfolded: it is a blend of both, reimagined to serve the unique needs of Windhoek West and local retail landscape. My exploration of community centers across different cultures and historical periods, from the agora of ancient Greece to pre-colonial African commons, to the apartheid-era community centers, led me to redefine what a community center could be in the Namibian context.

It is not just a building but a social nexus, a link that connects people and facilitates meaningful interactions.

By the end of this research, I see this thesis as a culmination of everything I have learned during my five years of studying architecture. It reflects my understanding of design, its potential to impact communities, and hints at how I intend to practice as an architect in the future. This work represents my attempt to bridge the fields of urban design and architecture, showcasing my passion for both and my commitment to using design as a tool for social change.

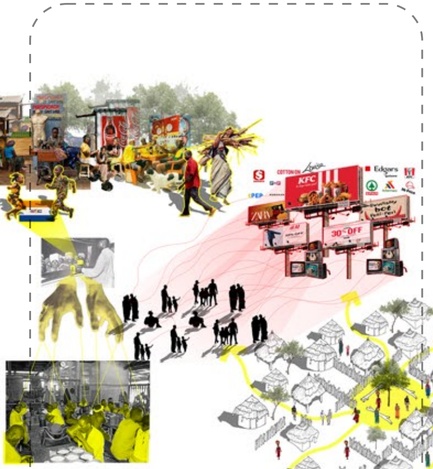
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I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my mom and dad, for their unwavering love, guidance, and encouragement, which has been the foundation of my success. I am incredibly grateful to my supervisor Nomonde Gwebu, your guidance was instrumental in conducting this research. I am also thankful for my friends, who have been my rock, confidants, and sounding board, sharing in the laughter, tears, and memories that have made a significant difference in my life. Lastly and most importantly to God, who has been my constant companion, source of strength, and inspiration, I'm humbled by Your grace and mercy that has sustained me.

This book is a testament to the love and support of all of you, and I'm forever grateful.

1 JOHN 15:4 NIV

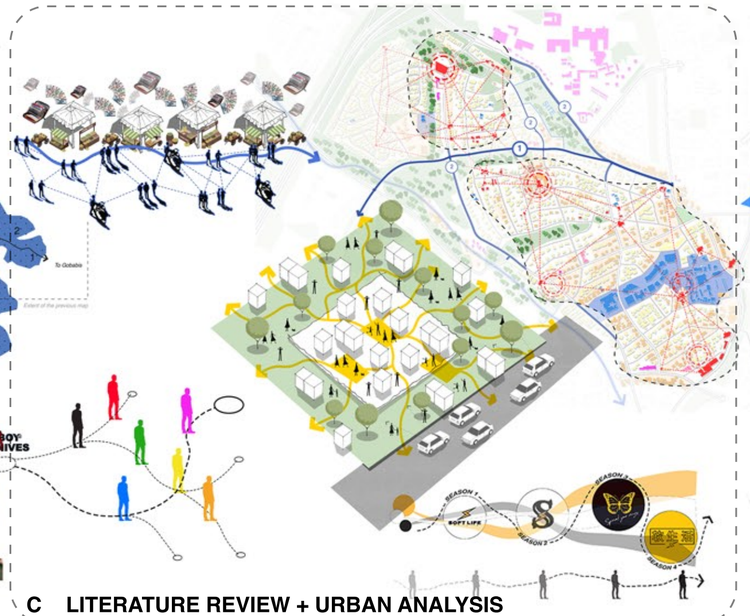
No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me'



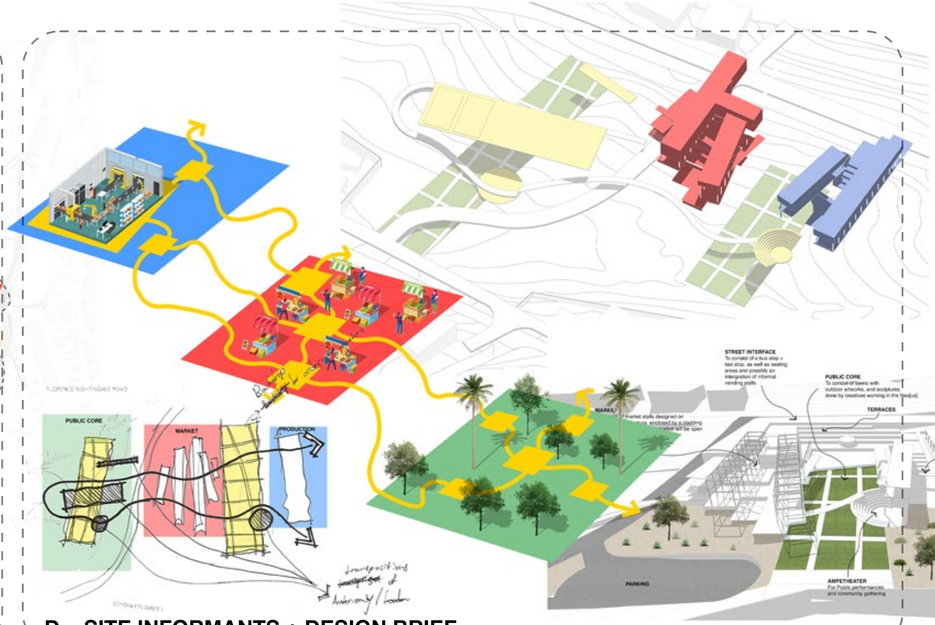
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THE AGORA



Figure 3: The Agora
(Author, 2024)

A community center is defined as “public locations where members of a community tend to gather for group activities, social support, public information, and other purposes”. According to Eugene and Barbara Sternberg (1971), the primary function of community centers is to stimulate a sense of identity and to promote self-help to address issues within the community. This is done in conjunction with an immediate program of cultural and educational events tailored to the interests and needs of the community, which aims “to enrich the daily lives of residents. (pp. 9). Therefore, the modern community center serves as a public space for facilitating social interaction, building community identity, enhancing the quality of life and also “bridging the gaps in societies by promoting inclusivity and diversity, facilitating intergenerational connections, and providing services to those in need” (Kentucky, 2021). However, the term and current typology of the “community center” is a modern variation of an architectural form that goes as far back as 500 BC. Thus, this introductory essay discusses the historical overview of the architectural form and functionality of community centers, illustrating its development of this typology over the span of approximately 50 centuries, to historically contextualize the position of this research in redefining the community center for tomorrow.

The Agora of Athens was built in 500 B.C by the ancient Greeks (Greeka, n.d) . This public space became a significant moment and notable feat in the history of architecture and public space as it can be considered as the birthplace for the community center. Directly translated to English as “the gathering place”, the Agora functioned as the focal point of community life in Athens (Thompson, 1954). It would serve as a market place, sanctuary, venue for festal processions, as well as “the scene of dramatic contests and athletic displays (Thompson, 1954).

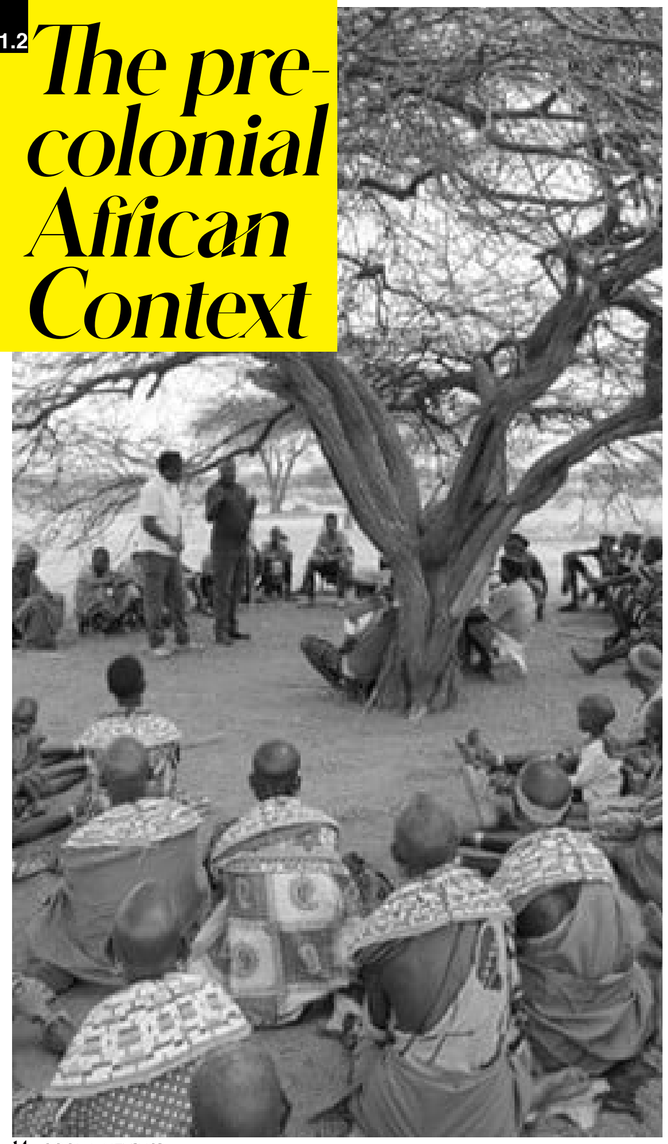
The agora as an architectural form gained serious attention from Greek designers like Peisistratos, Pericles, Antistates, Callaeschrus, Antimachides, and Porinus (Kaye, 2016). This is because unlike the more uniform designs of the already well established and refined Greek temples and sanctuaries, the agoras allowed for a greater variety and freedom, as it was a more complex architectural composition, one more subject to the local conditions both of the local customs of the society and it’s physical setting (Thompson, 1954, p. 9). Thus, the agora was designed and developed according to the dynamic and ever-changing nature of societal norms and traditions, whereas the sanctuaries and temples’ design was predetermined by the static and linear notions of Greek religion and mythology.

Very early on in its developmental stages, the agora, functioning as the focal point of community life in Greek cities (Thompson, 1954), perhaps unintentionally envisioned the nature of a community building; one that is determined by and fully dependant on the social dynamics and customs of the society it is to be built in. This brings about a language for this architectural form as an everchanging composition as time progressed.

The complex elements of the agora recognized the multi-faceted social aspects of Greek societies, and in designing the space, took into account all these local customs to design various functions on the site that integrated commercial, social, political, and religious functions, supported by a diverse range of architectural elements. These various interventions included stoas, temples, bouleuterions, tholos, monuments and altars. Thus, the agora reflected a dynamic approach to urban and architectural design, influenced by the evolving social dynamics of Greek society.

1.1.2

The pre-colonial African Context



In the context of pre-colonial Africa, community and civic centers took on various forms that were deeply rooted in the social, cultural, religious, and economic structures of indegenous societies. As opposed to the civic centers of other parts of the world, these spaces were less about the physical buildings and more about gathering places and its spirit that fostered and encouraged communal activities and social cohesion.

Architecturally, these spaces typically existed as common areas located at the center of villages, serving as hubs for social interactions and community gatherings. Rather than being defined by physical structures, these communal spaces were often open areas marked by natural elements, such as large trees or rings constructed from woodland (Kaloko, 1983). Perhaps a form of “architecture without architecture”, these spaces facilitated an aspect of an architectural form that goes beyond structure and physical form; the spirit of place. These spaces were crucial for the cohesion and connectivity among community members, fostering a sense of belonging and identity within the community.

These communal spaces were central to governance and decision-making in pre-colonial African societies. They served as venues where elders and leaders gathered to discuss public concerns, resolve disputes, and make community-wide decisions. Their openness encouraged participation, ensuring diverse voices were heard. This collective approach to governance reinforced social cohesion and shared responsibility, making these spaces the heart of communal life, where dialogue, consensus-building, and conflict resolution took place.

Figure 4: Village Common Area
(Author, 2024)

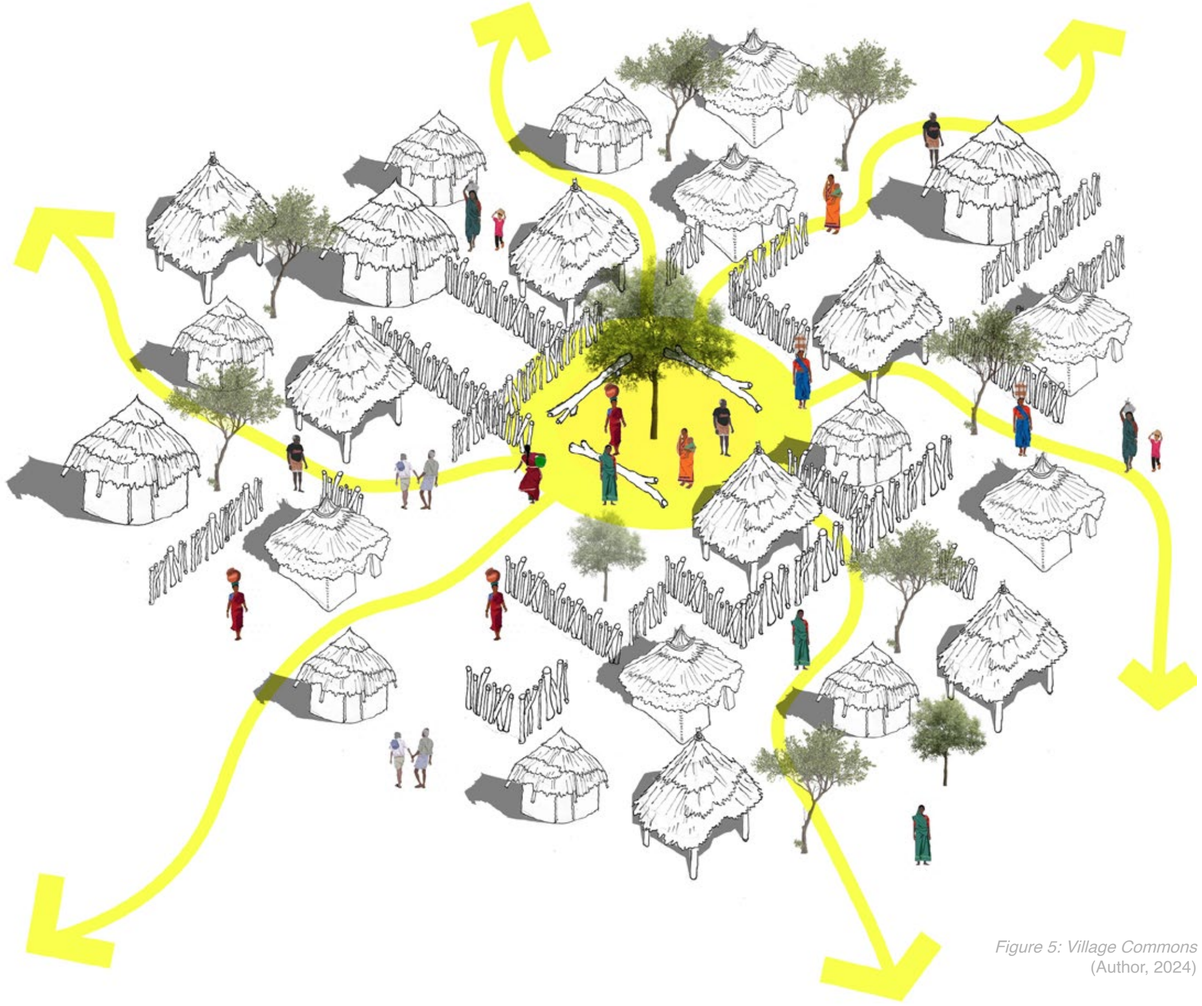


Figure 5: Village Commons
(Author, 2024)

As described by Anna Floerke Scheid (2011), the palaver is defined as an African custom of meeting, and of maintaining and creating social links. The palaver either took on the form of a designated hut in a village or a tree in other regions of Africa. Therefore, this served as a natural gathering place for community discussions, storytelling, festivals, and problem-solving.

Comparable to the agora or civic plazas discussed earlier, the palaver functioned as a space for community interaction and engagement. The loss of this symbolic space in many African traditions contributed to the unravelling of communal fabric (Keiff, 2007). The African concept of the palaver created a social, physical, and psychological space for open communication, where individuals could integrate into the life of their communities (Scheid, 2011). This form of communal space was widespread across African societies, with large trees serving as central gathering places for communities, including in Namibia.



Figure 6: Palaver Tree
(Author, 2024)



Figure 7: Owambo Homestead 1
(Info, 2024)



Figure 8: Owambo Homestead 2
(Kreniske, 2014)

In smaller contexts of traditional homesteads, the Owambo tribe of Namibia followed building traditions similar to those of other African cultures, which included circular structures that comprised their homesteads (Shiweda & Nghitevelekwa, 2019).

The unique Owambo rendition of the circular layout included the ‘Olupale’, translated to english as “living room” or “common area”. This consisted of an open space enclosed by a wooden palisade or a millet stalk fence. This space was often situated close to the entrance of the homestead, functioning as a gathering space for welcoming people and as a venue for interaction and engagement. Additionally, the Owambo tribe adopted the custom of the “Palaver” (Bujo, 2001), using large camelthorn trees, native to the Namibian landscape, as gathering spaces for events, social interactions, and other engagements. This variation of the palaver is used across many other Namibian tribes and cultures.

Figure 9: Owambo Palaver
(Kalimbo, 2024)

1.1.3

Colonial Community Centers

Vernacular African settlements, or what is now commonly referred to as “rural settlements” were widely appreciated for their human scale, aesthetic clarity, and harmony with nature (Steyn & Roodt, 2003). With the arrival of the Finnish mission in Owamboland in the 1890s, came about changes in the architectural language of Owambo architecture (Shiweda & Nghitevelekwa, 2019). Specific to the South African colonialisation of Namibia, the apartheid era essentially deconstructed vernacular urban dynamics and replaced them with western, or “modern” forms of civic spaces. In the context of Windhoek, the capital city of Namibia, urban dynamics of African residents were greatly disrupted by the apartheid regime.

The implementation of apartheid laws, such as the Odendaal Plan in 1961, led to enforced spatial segregation in Windhoek, where black urban residents faced increasing restrictions while white immigration was encouraged (Botha, 2022). The Old Location, which had long undermined apartheid ideologies with its diverse and harmonious social life, became a focal point of tension for the South African administration (Gewald, 2008). In 1959, the forced relocation of Old Location residents led to protests and the tragic Windhoek Massacre, where at least 13 people were killed. Following this, the Old Location was demolished, and its residents were moved to the new, segregated township of Katutura on the northern edge of the city (Roland, et al., 2024).

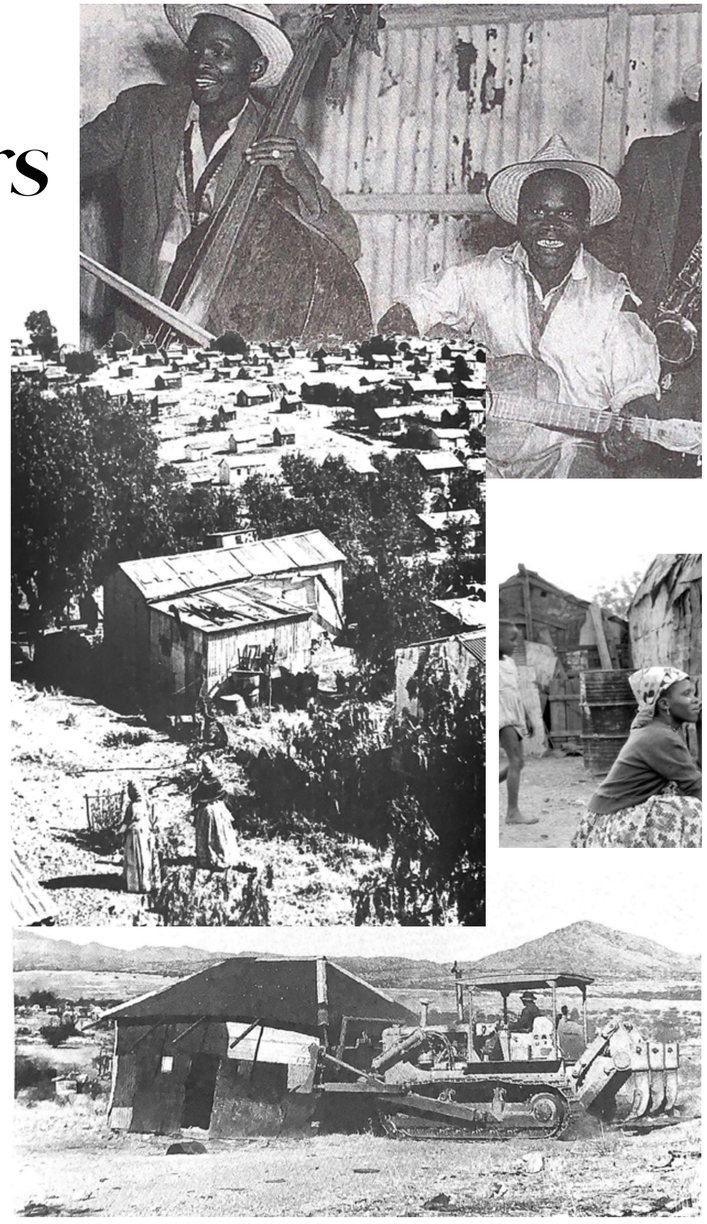


Figure 10: Old Location Collage
(Pendleton, 1974)

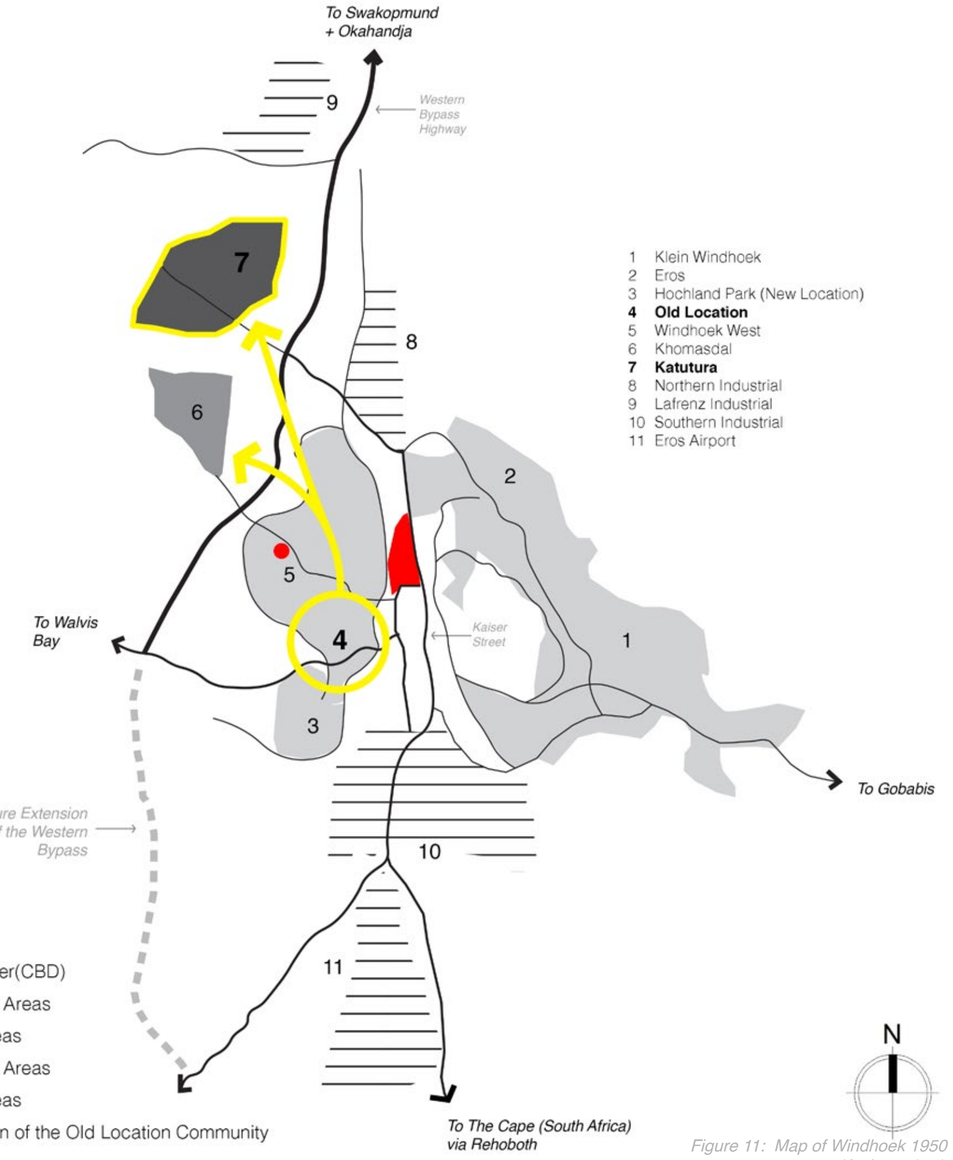


Figure 11: Map of Windhoek 1950
(Author, 2024)



Figure 12: Map of Katutura 1960s
(Author, 2024)

The urban situation of Katutura defines how the South African apartheid government strategically made use of civic planning and facilities to disrupt and control communities. Katutura, meaning "The place where we do not want to live" in Otjiherero language, was designed not only as a physical space but as a mechanism of social and economic control. In the context of community centers, the apartheid regime constructed a municipal beerhall in the heart of Katutura. (Pendelton, 1974).

Figure 13: Katutura 1960s
(Pendleton, 1978)



Figure 14: Katutura Town Hall 1958
(Pendleton, 1978)



Figure 15: Katutura Town Hall 2024
(Author, 2024)

The government also constructed a complex housing the community hall, cinema, and library, but like the apartheid era beerhalls of the townships of South African cities, these public buildings possessed the most popularity, ultimately taking on the role of the civic plaza of societies (Seid, 2014). These structures served as a distraction, drawing people away from traditional communal spaces and activities. Further worsened by the Native Beer Act of 1908, which made it illegal for South African people (later on also Namibian people following South Africa's colonialisation of South West Africa) to brew traditional beer (Union, 1923), the municipal beerhalls were left as one of the few legal places where alcohol could be purchased and consumed. (Masilinge, 2020). This resulted in black people spending much of their already little income in beerhalls, consequently weaking the social fabric that had once united residents in the Old location. Along with weaking the community's social fabric, the revenue generated from these beer halls were funnelled back into the apartheid system, funding the very structures that oppresses them. (Seid, 2014)

In this way, community facilities that once existed as hubs of social life and cohesion were reappropriated in Namibia to serve as tools of control and suppression. The introduction of the Native Beer Act also stifled economic development and entrepreneurship, as many Namibian women who had previously earned a sustainable income from selling traditional beer were now deprived of this livelihood. Thus, the apartheid regime's use of beer halls represents a broader strategy of undermining traditional communal and economic practices, further entrenching their control over non-white populations.

BEER HALLS
TOOLS OF OPPRESSION

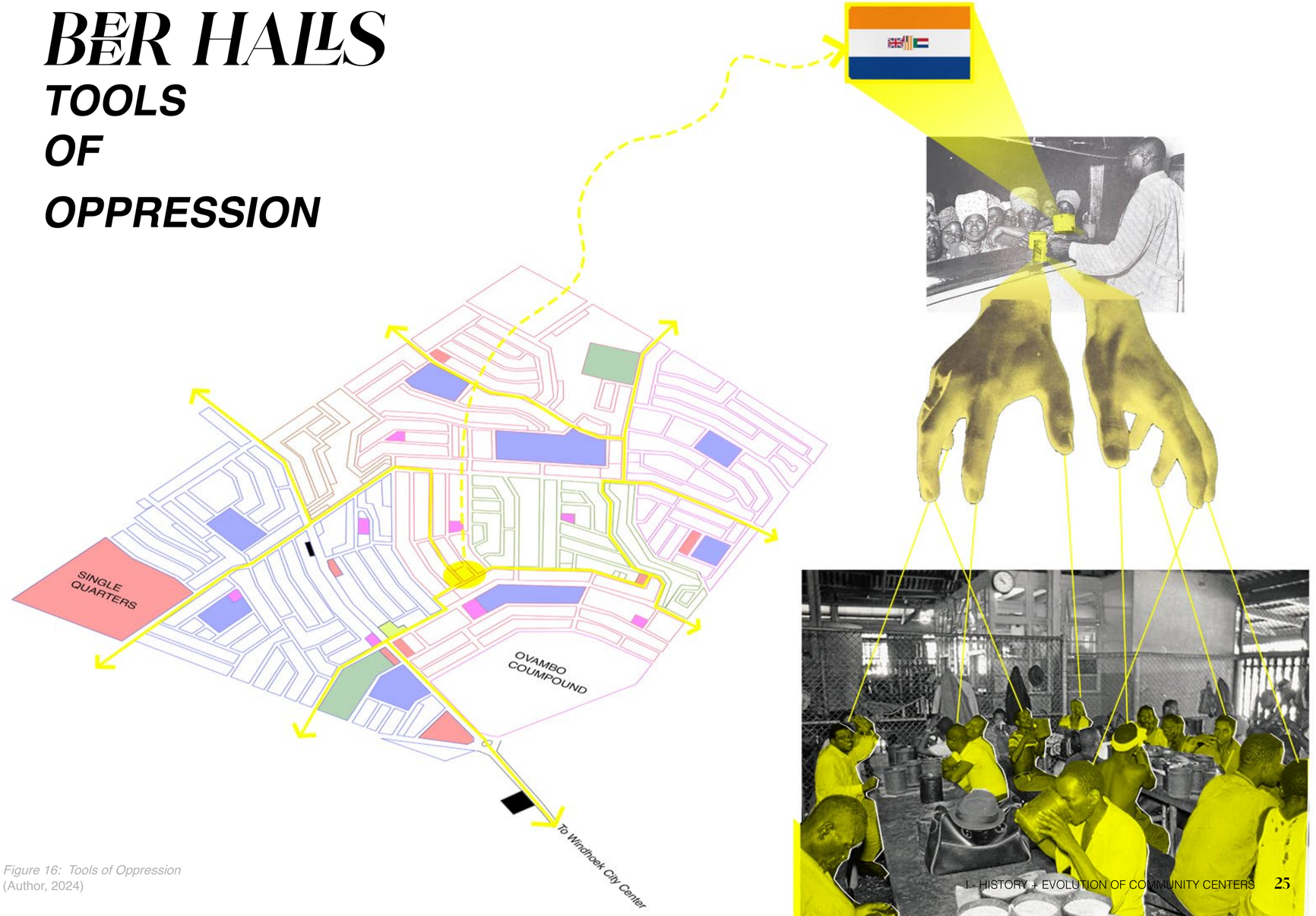


Figure 16: Tools of Oppression
(Author, 2024)

1.1.4

Early Post-Colonial Context of Namibian Community Centers



Figure 17a: Katutura Old Beerhall
(Author, 2024)



Figure 17b: Katutura Old Beerhall 2
(Author, 2024)

In the current context of today, the beerhalls of Namibia's colonial period did not make it into the period of independence, and by the time alcohol consumption was fully legalised in the 1970s, the era of this structure ended (Masilinge, 2020). In rural areas of the country, many communities continue to use palaver trees on smaller contexts of villages, even in some informal settlements in urban areas such as Windhoek city.

In the context of the community center in Windhoek's post-apartheid landscape, multi-purpose youth centers were built in the late 1990s and early 2000s, to function as a modern rendition of a community center for Namibia. These structures were successful in their early years, as recounted by Popyeni Kaxuxwena in a newspaper article published last year. The Multi Purpose Youth Center, located in Katutura, Windhoek, was a true beacon of a community center that embodied the spirit of a liberated nation with goals and ambitions for uplifting future leaders, and mending the broken social cohesion across the city. Each room featured various classes and programmes designed to keep children occupied, and these classes were free (Kaxuxwena, 2023). The space was vibrant with music and dance classes, and it engaged with various community members beyond just the youth, through volunteer coaching programmes. In Kaxuxwena's words, the centre was a place that allowed young people like himself to not only imagine but it also stimulated their minds to a world of learning opportunities outside the school curriculum. Katutura's Multi-Purpose Youth Centre was their afternoon go-to place, as it kept them busy. "I'm a proud product of the centre." (Kaxuxwena, 2023). Forming a part of the Ministry of Sports, Youth and National Service's nationwide plan to build multi-purpose youth resource centres (MPYRCs) in all 13 regions of the country; every major city and town across Namibia were gifted with these multifaceted centres that played an integral role in addressing the various needs of the community, primarily the youth.

As stated earlier, MYPRCs were only successful up until the early 2000s. As time went by, the buzz and vibrancy of these areas began to dwindle, as less people visited these centers (Kaxuxwena, 2023). From Kaxuxwena's conversation with a security guard working at the Katutura Youth Center, they found that there is little interest among the youth (Kaxuxwena, 2023). This observation may be true, as with the advancement of time also came about changes in interests and lifestyles of people.

Therefore, the activities and programes that once drew people to the MPYRCs might no longer resonate with them in the same way. As society and technology has evolved, people of today seek out new forms of entertainment, ultimately seeking a newer rendition of a community center.



Figure 18a: MPYRC
(Author, 2024)

Since 2009, the Katutura Multi-Purpose Youth Centre has been repurposed to house a newly renovated resource center for the Physically Active Youth (PAY) program, in collaboration with the AIDS Care Trust (ACT). This initiative, supported by the National Youth Council, the Ministry of Youth, and Cadbury, focuses on academic tutoring, sports, life skills training, and HIV-AIDS education for young people in low-income communities. The center aims to empower youth and create opportunities for them to make informed life choices. (Shejavali, 2009)

Figure 18b: KCAC(Author, 2024)

1.1.5

SUMMARY

+ CONCLUSIONS

Community centers have long been crucial hubs for social, cultural, and civic life, from the ancient Agora of Athens to the palaver trees of pre-colonial Africa. These spaces have always been more than just physical structures; they have been the core of communal interaction, shaping societies.

During colonial times, community spaces were manipulated for control, as seen in Namibia's apartheid-era beerhalls, which distorted their original purpose. Post-colonial Namibia sought to revive and modernize these spaces through Multi-Purpose Youth Resource Centres (MPYRCs), which initially thrived but eventually lost relevance as society changed.

Today, the challenge is to redefine community centers to meet the evolving needs of Namibians, blending rich traditions with contemporary realities. These spaces must adapt to foster inclusivity, innovation, and social cohesion, ensuring they continue to play a vital role in building strong, connected communities.

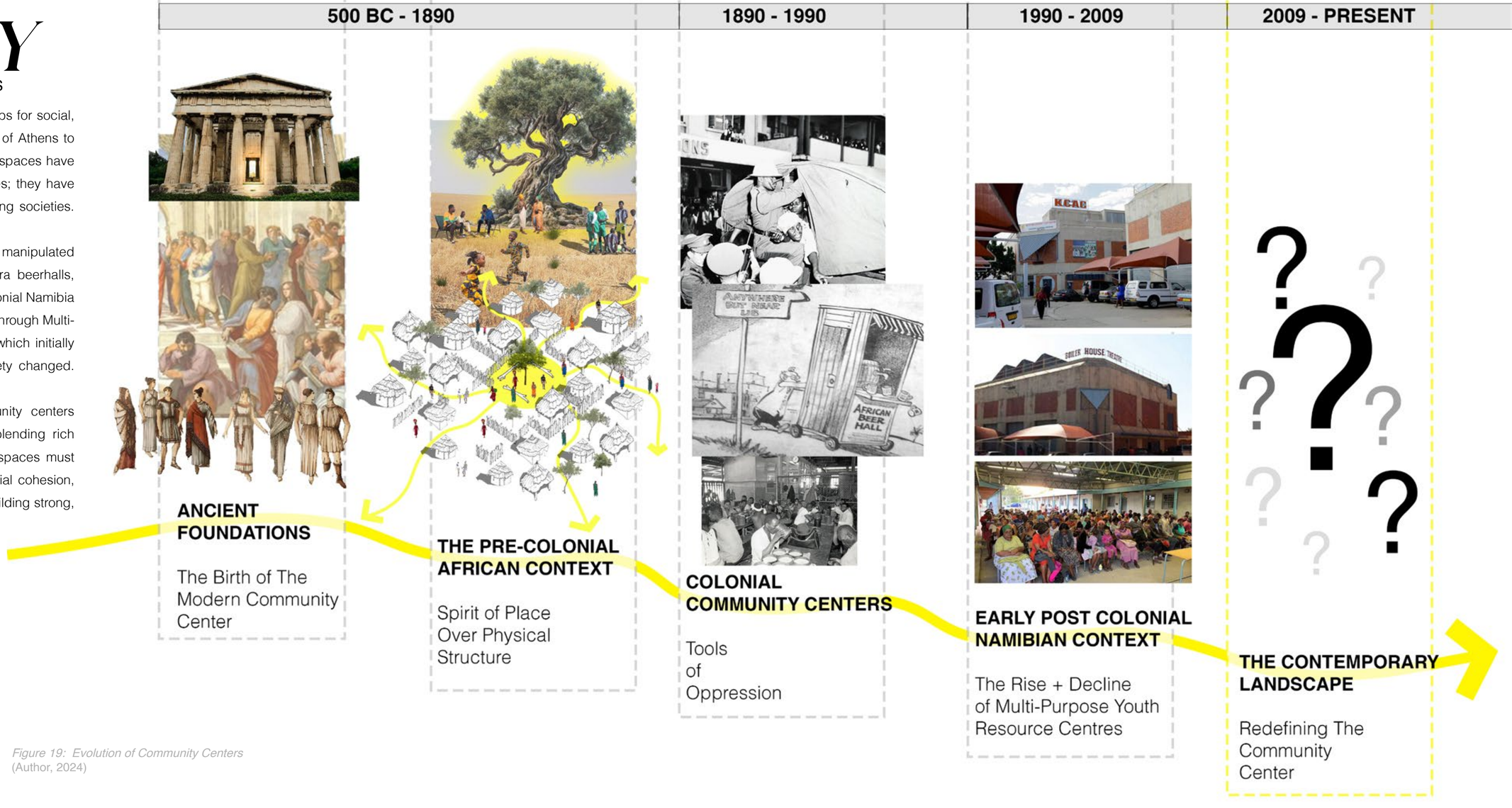


Figure 19: Evolution of Community Centers
(Author, 2024)

MARKETS



Figure 20: Markets
(Author, 2024)

Perhaps lightly touched upon but not directly outlined, marketplaces continued to play an important role in every community. From the stoas and open markets of the agora to the informal markets in African societies, trade has always functioned centrally and to the sustenance of community life. However, it is very seldom that trade is treated nor described as a kind of community center, although it nearly aligns with principles of a civic building, it is continuously treated as a separate architectural identity, one tied more to its economic functionality rather than its intersectionality for all groups of society. Therefore, this research draws parallels between the two architectural forms to merge them into one, ultimately positioning the marketplace as a community centre in its own right.

It should be clear to see that trade is an integral part of any and every person's everyday life. From the trader to the consumer, shopping has become or perhaps always been an involuntary action adopted into everybody's lifestyle. The word "trade" in this context refers to any form of retail ranging from small tuck shops to city malls. The varying levels of dependence on this sector presents a permanence of this architectural form. In Namibia's context, local markets exist as structures that not only promote economic development for local entrepreneurs but it also embodies the essence of the society. It creates an identity and flavor unique to the community in which the markets serve, to ultimately foster cohesion and a platform for people to connect to each other. A famous Namibian example includes the Single Quarters Market, and Soweto Market. These buildings are further explored and analyzed as case studies in chapter 4. The colonial masters of Namibia took into cognizance the role local markets play in strengthening communities and local economies, which is what influenced their decisions in implementing acts that limit local trade, and deconstructing these markets to build their own, such as the beer halls discussed earlier.

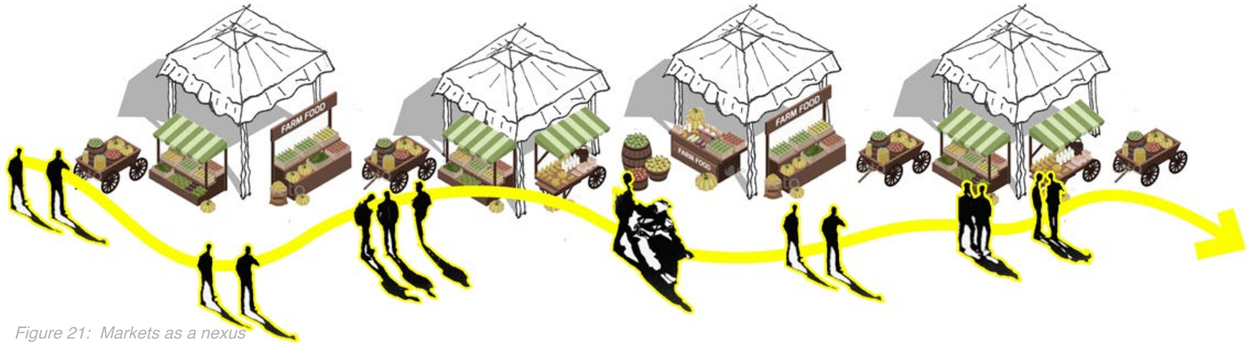


Figure 21: Markets as a nexus
(Author, 2024)

It could be argued that the functionality of markets has been static from prehistoric times, because they all fundamentally work in the exact same way; customers arrive looking for a specific product or browse through the stores' catalogue to find products that pique their interest and suit their budget, and then they buy it and leave.

Technological advancements have improved this dynamic but the overall crux of its operational functionality is consistent. One might read this and say that trade overall is a linear form of architecture compared to the dynamic nature of a community center but this research argues that trade is also ever changing. As societies develop so does the needs of the consumer, ultimately altering the products offered and services rendered in market places. This is what has provided a sustenance for marketplaces on every level. The survival of this architectural form, due to its interchangeability in trade, begins to draw parallels with the community center.

The second and most important parallel is trade's positionality in intersecting different groups of society. Perhaps not as intentional as a community center, marketplaces attract people from all walks of life. This constitutes trade as a nexus point, one that serves as a medium of connection for different groups and identities of a society. This is something trade does better than a community center, however, contrastingly enough it does not exactly "connect" people. Just because a mother of four kids from a rich afluent area of the city and a poor student from a poor neighborhood walk into the same store does not mean that they interact or connect with each other. This inference is what results in the distinction of a market from a community center. The market in its functionality as a nexus point stops at this stage, serving merely as a platform for different identities to converge in one space, whereas the community center takes this a step further by not just serving as a platform for placing different people in one space, but actively encouraging engagement and interaction with various activities or micro interventions. This is what divides them into two typologies.

The position of this research now begs the question,



Figure 22: Research Question 1
(Author, 2024)

The purpose of this inquiry seeks to antagonize the role of community centers today, ultimately encouraging a reconsideration of the positionality of this building typology. Consider the following analogous questions: ***Does a library function as a cultural center, or can a cultural center serve as a library? Does a coffee shop act as a social hub, or can a social hub include elements of a coffee shop? Is a school inherently a community gathering place, or can community centers fulfill educational roles? Does a sports stadium serve as a community venue, or can a community center also provide sports facilities?*** Therefore, this thought provoking question posits two perspectives on the integration of two architectural forms, each emphasizing different typologies. Can marketplaces, traditionally viewed as spaces for buying and selling goods, also fulfil the role of a community center by facilitating social interactions, community events, and civic activities? Conversely, can spaces primarily designed as community centers incorporate elements of a market, by integrating commercial activities within a community center?

Historically, designers and societies have often adopted the latter view; community centers incorporating elements of markets, sport, and educational facilities to enhance their cohesiveness and functionality. Consequently, the community center is treated as the core (the tree stem) with these incorporated elements as branches, or sub-departments of the community center that complement and enhance its overall function. However, this research flips the narrative to prompt a different view on community centers. It has become apparent that community centers cannot function solely as a “townhall” to connect society. They can no longer operate as standalone entities capable of effectively fostering social cohesion and civic engagement (Fenech, 2021). Instead, it posits that the functionality and success of community centers as a nexus point depend on integrating elements traditionally associated with other types of spaces, such as markets, sports facilities, educational institutions and cultural centers. Each of these elements inherently possess qualities of community center. Thus, if community centers depend on these elements, is it fair to say that the community center, as a distinct architectural entity, has diminished into a functional trait or characteristic of other architectural identities? If so, why is the community center still perceived as its own architectural identity rather than a characteristic dependent of other identities?

Thus, this research takes the position that the community center can no longer exist as a standalone architectural form as it is now fully dependent on other forms to bridge societies effectively. This establishes the market as a key community hub, incorporating educational and recreational opportunities to enhance its ability to foster community cohesion and economic development. This research posits that the community center’s role as an independent architectural entity has evolved, becoming a functional characteristic within other architectural identities, thereby redefining how community spaces are perceived and utilized.

1.3.1

DEFINING nEXUS



Figure x: xxxxxx

Figure 23: Defining the Nexus
(Author, 2024)

TOMMORROW’S COMMUNITY CENTERS

This section continues from the previous one, as It argues that public buildings such as institutions, sporting facilities and more specifically marketplaces have the means and potential to serve as de facto community centers. They are accessible to all, regardless of social status, and serve as points of intersection for diverse groups within society. Additionally, the need to develop the community center into a more contemporary and dynamic space is presented by the fact that overtime, community centers have become monotonous interpretations of what once was a vibrant, welcoming, and diverse architectural form (Fenech, 2021).

Historically, the development of the community center continuously expressed and outlined an importance in functioning as a focal point of community life (Kentucky, 2021), embodying the spirit and vitality of the communities they served. However, in the current state of public life, many of today’s centers have been reduced to mere neighbourhood requirements for city officials to check off their lists. This has led to the proliferation of subpar, mundane, and underperforming facilities that fail to foster social cohesion. While there are notable community centers that effectively engage and connect communities, the typology as a whole has developed a lackluster reputation.

On that note of rebranding this architectural form, the research starts from the mere term “community center”. It is quite mundane to dub a vibrant space as a “community center”, which is probably another factor to why these spaces do not have a distinct buzz around them. Therefore, in the effort of revolutionizing the typology the research proposes “Nex[us]”. Along with strategizing a more hip and snazzy narrative around the appropriation of a modern community center, the deployment of the word “nexus” for a community centered place is conceptualized by multiple aspects.

NEXUS | ‘nekses | noun

The means of connection, link or tie between members of a group.

1. The word “nexus” is defined as the means of connection, link or tie between members of a group. The term is already synonymous with every historic iteration of the community center, as it is a direct translation of the main principle that binds all variations of this typology; “bringing communities together”. Nexus therefore implies a central point where different elements of society meet and interact.

2. The term “nexus” has a modern and dynamic connotation, encompassing a more complex and broader scope, suggesting a hub of interconnected activities and services. The rebranding of this architectural form conveys a sense of an enhanced perception, symbolizing a new era and vision for community centers in general, signaling a commitment to meeting the contemporary needs of the community.

NEX[US]

THE IMPORTANCE OF “US”

The last two letters of this term hint at the crucial factor of any and every community center; the people it aims to serve.

The community is the heart of any nexus, thus making their needs and desires central to its success. The “us” in this context represents not just members of the community but also the stakeholders within the nexus; the retailers and potential business owners that will operate in this space. This therefore presents the need for a community-centered approach that is inclusive, participatory and people-focused.

Only through this approach can a shared purpose and belonging of this space be created and making the nexus an equitable and exciting venue for the community at large.



Figure 24: Nex[us]
(Author, 2024)

On the note of the potential stakeholders of the nex[us]; as described earlier, entrepreneurial spirit has been continuously suppressed throughout Namibia's history, starting from the apartheid regime and further continuing through governance practices that will be discussed in the next chapter. These factors ultimately fostered an underdeveloped local economy for the nation. This is not to say that the city possess a small quantity in an entrepreneurial force, the world bank tallied a total of over 800 microenterprises across 4 regions of the nation, with Windhoek containing majority of these enterprises. More than 55 percent of these business consist of retail traders, showing a high concentration of Namibia's entrepreneurial content operating within the retail space. (Bank, 2011).

As high as the number of microenterprises and small to midsized enterprises (SMEs) is in Namibia, the dilemma at hand rests in the fact that the entrepreneurial sector is underdeveloped, and continuously suppressed by a capitalist driven style of governance that only makes it challenging for local businesses to thrive in Namibia's economic landscape. Specific to the social(urban) landscape, the retail space plays a pivotal role in shaping community identities (Zukin, 1995). The relationship between retail and social identities in urban settings is multifaceted and intricate, as retail environments do more than just facilitate economic transactions. They function as social hubs, nexus points, cultural landmarks, and even symbols of community values and aspirations. Therefore, depending on the perspective, retail spaces can either be beneficial or detrimental to societies, and from the Namibian entrepreneurs' point of view, the dominance of multinational corporations in the nation's retail landscape is disadvantageous to them.



Figure 25: Local Markets
(Olingo and Esiara, 2024)

As described by Guy Debord(1967), these large retail companies and such as Woolworths, Mr Price, Zara, H&M, and Cotton On play a significant role in perpetuating the “spectacle of society” (Debord, 1967) by contributing to the dominance of consumer culture, the commodification of everyday life, and the creation of a mediated reality that shapes how people perceive themselves and the world around them (Debord, 1967). With similar marketing strategies across different regions of the world, these companies create a standardized and predictable consumer experience. Thus, this global reach turns consumption into a universal spectacle, where local cultures and identities are placed under a dominant, global consumer culture.

Just like the beerhalls that were used to blindly control Namibian black communities, the shopping centers that accommodate these big brand companies hold a similar control and influence over the societies of today. It is why this research sheds a bright light on the local enterprises of Namibia, as these businesses hold the potential to redefine the urban dynamics of Windhoek through redefining the image of the society, and essentially deconstructing the spectacle created by the large companies. Aided by the neoliberal governing style of city officials, capitalist free market systems and laws have been implemented into the country’s fine print that essentially make trade easier for bigger corporations, leaving limited space for SMEs in the retail sector.

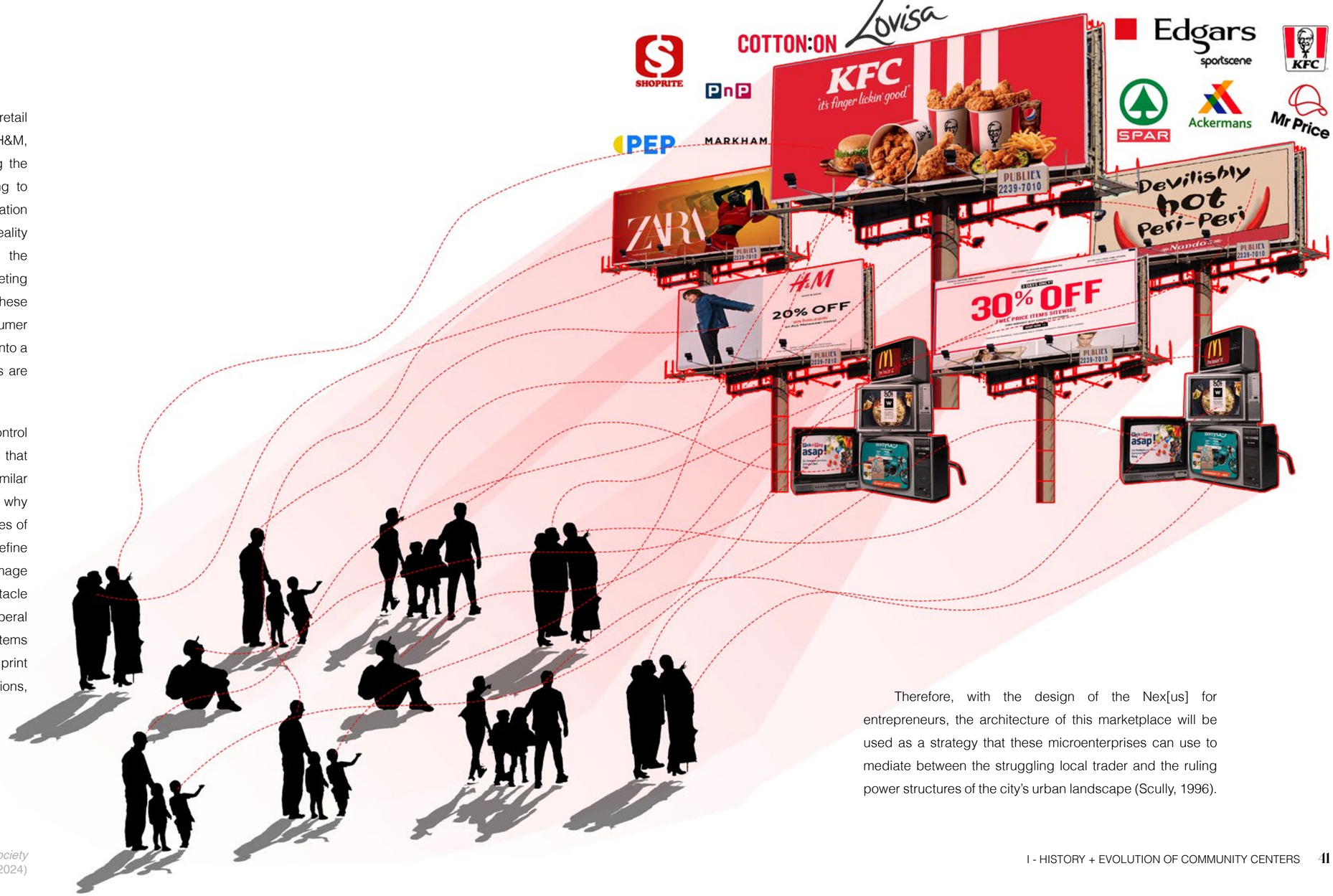


Figure 26: The Spectacle of Society
(Author, 2024)

Therefore, with the design of the Nex[us] for entrepreneurs, the architecture of this marketplace will be used as a strategy that these microenterprises can use to mediate between the struggling local trader and the ruling power structures of the city’s urban landscape (Scully, 1996).

2 WINDHOEK WEST

THE TRANSITION
+ AUTONOMOUS ZONE

1 WINDHOEK: COLONIALISM + CAPITALISM AS DIVIDERS OF THE CITY
2 CONTEXTUALISATION OF THE “IN-BETWEEN”: TRANSITION SPACES
3 WINDHOEK WEST: AN AUTONOMOUS TRANSITION
4 CONCLUSIONS + FINDINGS

This chapter places the previously discussed research topic in its context, which resides in Windhoek, Namibia. The historical and social layers that have shaped the city are described and illustrated from a practical and theoretical perspective. This includes a brief investigation of the historical layers that have shaped the current spatial layout and current social dynamics of WIndhoek, drawing from the lens of colonialism (German rule and apartheid), neo-capitalism, and their influence on the current trends in the dynamics of the city. The historical context serves as a backdrop and base setting for the social context, which begins with a brief overview of the social landscape of the entire city, before diving into the neighborhood of Windhoek West, the location of the site within the city, to discuss a more in-depth understanding of the community's social dynamic. Using the "community capitals framework" in the third chapter, the analysis assesses the natural, cultural, social, built and human capital to gather insight on the various forms of social capital that contribute to the social dynamics and development of the community.

The findings of this urban analysis are used to theoretically interpret the social and public fabric of Windhoek West as a "transitional zone" (Pittaluga, 2020) in relation to the CBD and residential suburbs that Windhoek West is located in between, and further abstractly relating it to "autonomous zones" (Bey, 1985). Additionally, the findings of the analysis conducted highlight market and retail spaces as points in which all social identities of Windhoek West intersect, presenting the use of trade as a nexus point among a diverse and fragmented community. The findings more importantly outline an emerging trend among numerous university students in Windhoek West, in which they partake in small scale entrepreneurial ventures, or simply "side hustles".

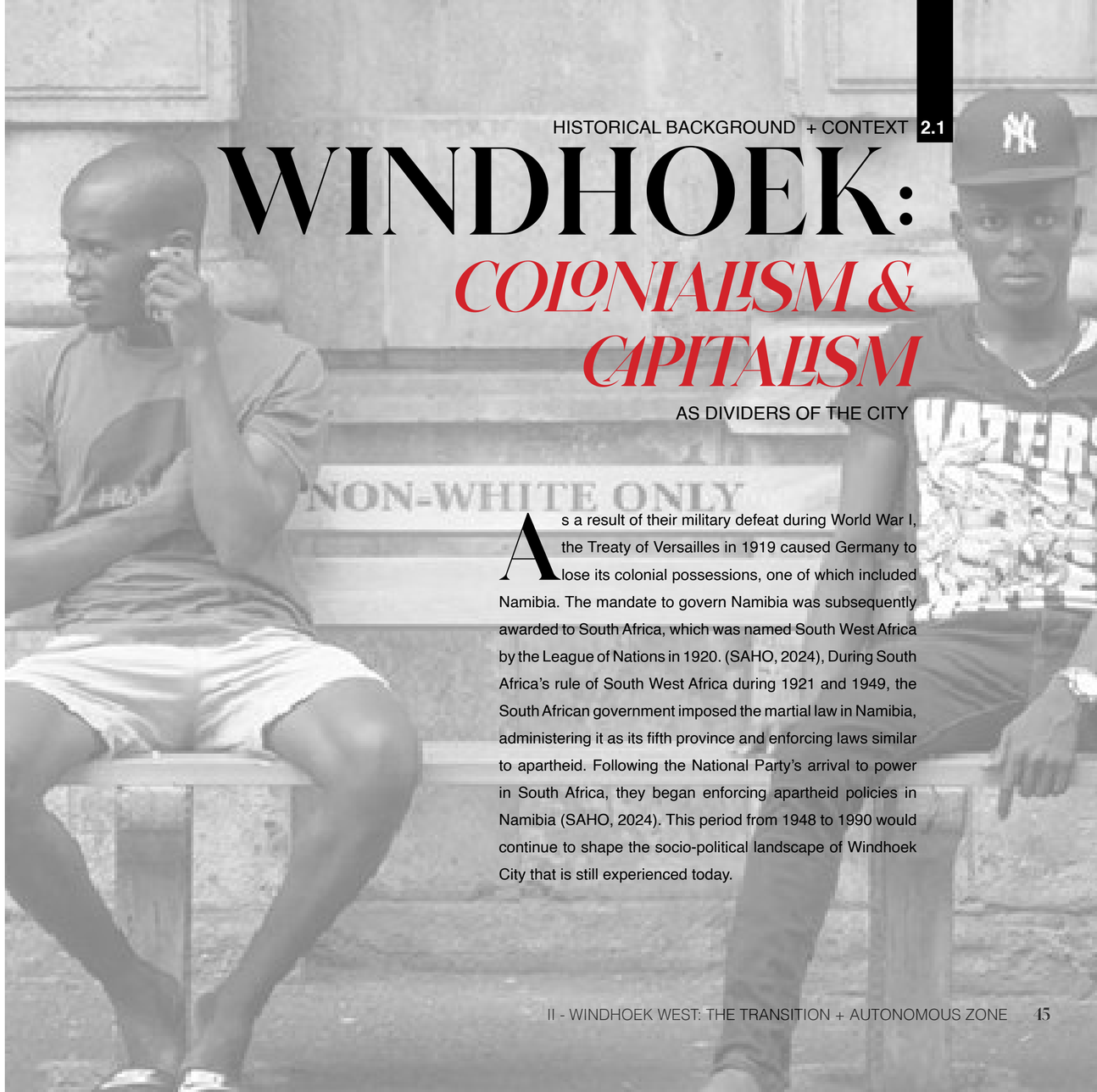


Figure 27: Apartheid
(Hamill, no date)

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND + CONTEXT 2.1

WINDHOEK:
COLONIALISM & CAPITALISM
AS DIVIDERS OF THE CITY

As a result of their military defeat during World War I, the Treaty of Versailles in 1919 caused Germany to lose its colonial possessions, one of which included Namibia. The mandate to govern Namibia was subsequently awarded to South Africa, which was named South West Africa by the League of Nations in 1920. (SAHO, 2024), During South Africa's rule of South West Africa during 1921 and 1949, the South African government imposed the martial law in Namibia, administering it as its fifth province and enforcing laws similar to apartheid. Following the National Party's arrival to power in South Africa, they began enforcing apartheid policies in Namibia (SAHO, 2024). This period from 1948 to 1990 would continue to shape the socio-political landscape of Windhoek City that is still experienced today.

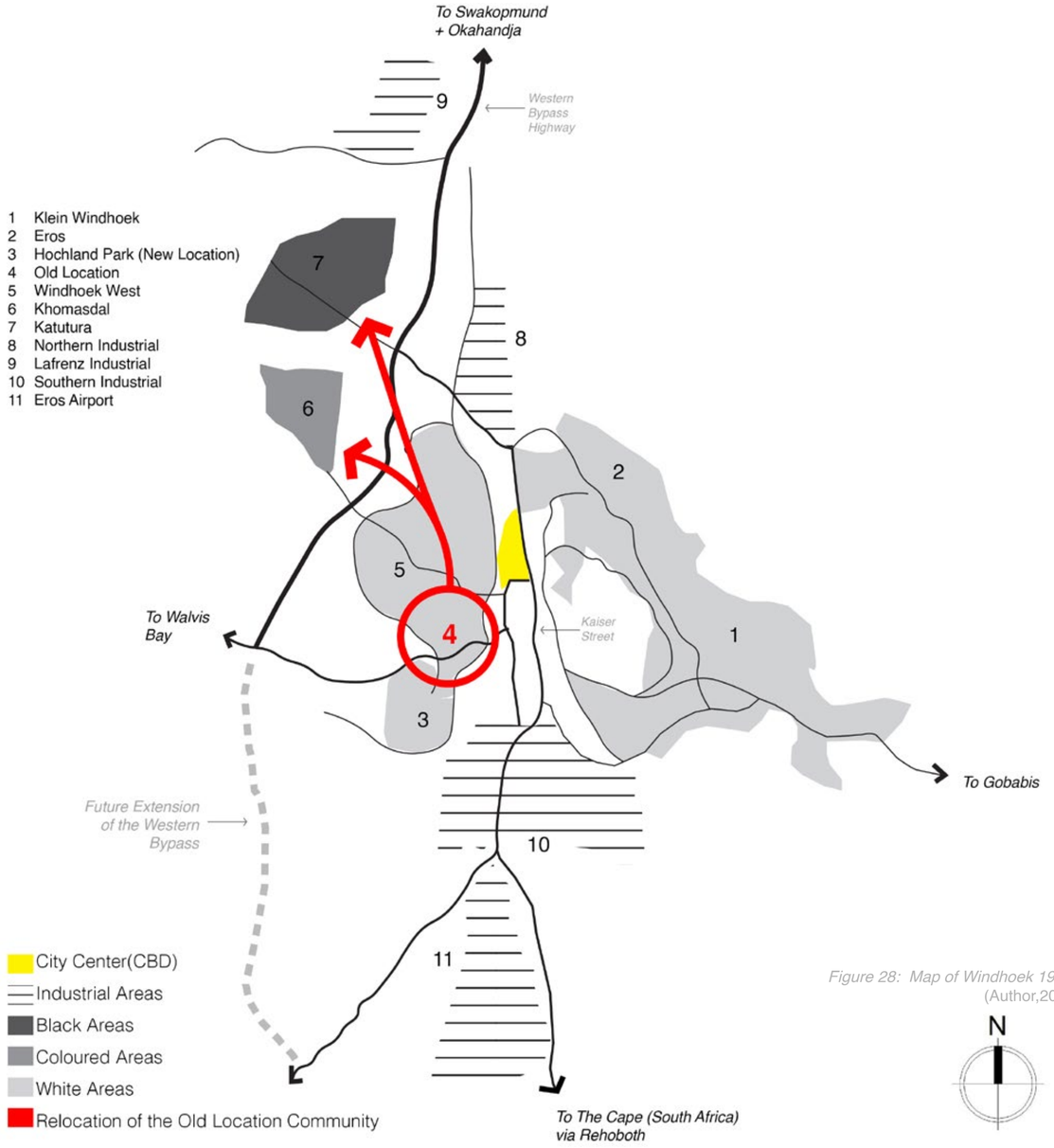


Figure 28: Map of Windhoek 1950s
(Author,2024)

APARTHEID

The first form of division

With the introduction of apartheid laws such as the Odendaal Plan in 1961 (Botha, 2022), a spatial segregation was enforced in Windhoek. As a result, black urban residents were increasingly legislated and restricted, whilst white immigration was promoted to the extent that for the first time in the city's history, the white population matched the African and coloured populations (Melber, 2016). The suburb of Windhoek West was expanded as a residential space for white residents. A portion of Windhoek West comprised of the Old Location.

The Old Location had long been a source of dismay to the South African administration, undermining apartheid ideologies with its vibrant social life, cultures and ethnic groups residing together in harmony (Gewald, 2008). In 1959, the South African administration's decision to forcibly relocate the residents of the Old Location led to protests, resulting in the Windhoek Massacre that killed at least 13 people. The Old Location was demolished, and the ethnic groups were relocated to the new segregated township of Katutura, situated on the far northern edge of the city. (Roland, et al., 2024) The primary implications of this segregation were to separate the different racial groups to maintain white minority rule, however, in terms of the social dynamics of the city, white people were situated closest to the Central Business District (CBD), whilst the colored and black communities were situated further away from the CBD. This led to the fragmentation of communities, limiting cohesion amongst Namibians, and most importantly economic disparities, as opportunities for economic development, employment and basic amenities for non- white people were limited. (Frayne, 2000)



Figure 29a: The Rich
(Photos: The beautiful African city of Windhoek, capital of Namibia - Travel - Nigeria, no date)

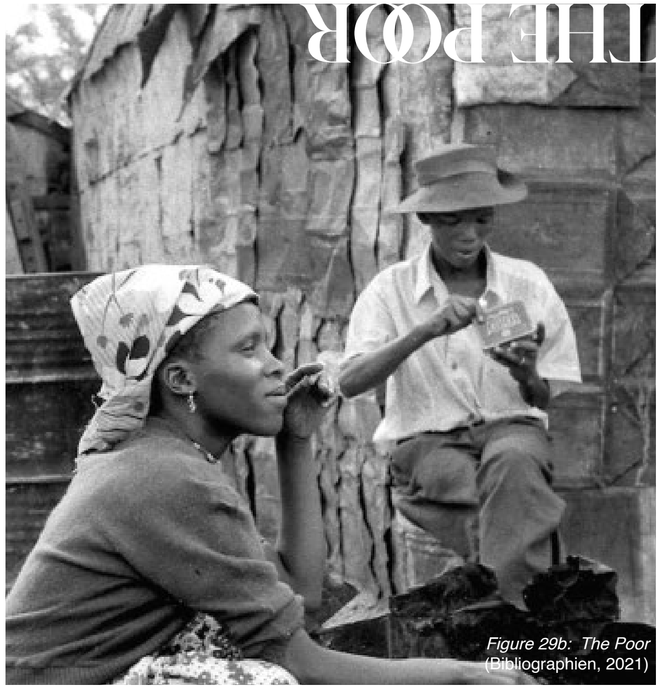


Figure 29b: The Poor
(Bibliographien, 2021)

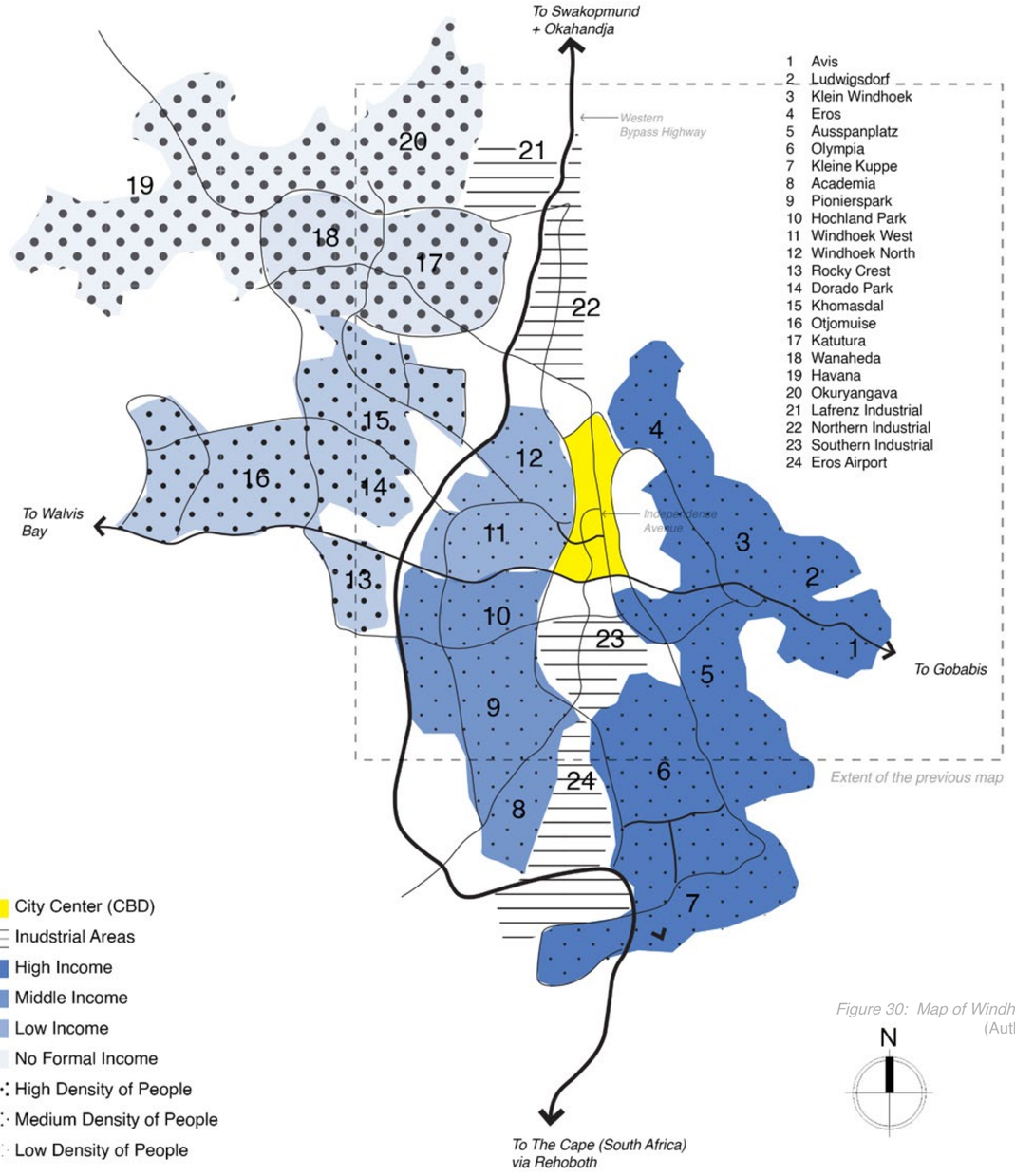


Figure 30: Map of Windhoek 2024
(Author,2024)



Figure 31: Windhoek CBD
(Author,2024)

CAPITALISM – THE SECOND DIVIDER

Post-apartheid and onwards, racial segregation laws are abolished, yet a great division is still experienced in Windhoek, the culprit now being wealth disparities. However, apartheid continues to play a pivotal role in dividing the city today.

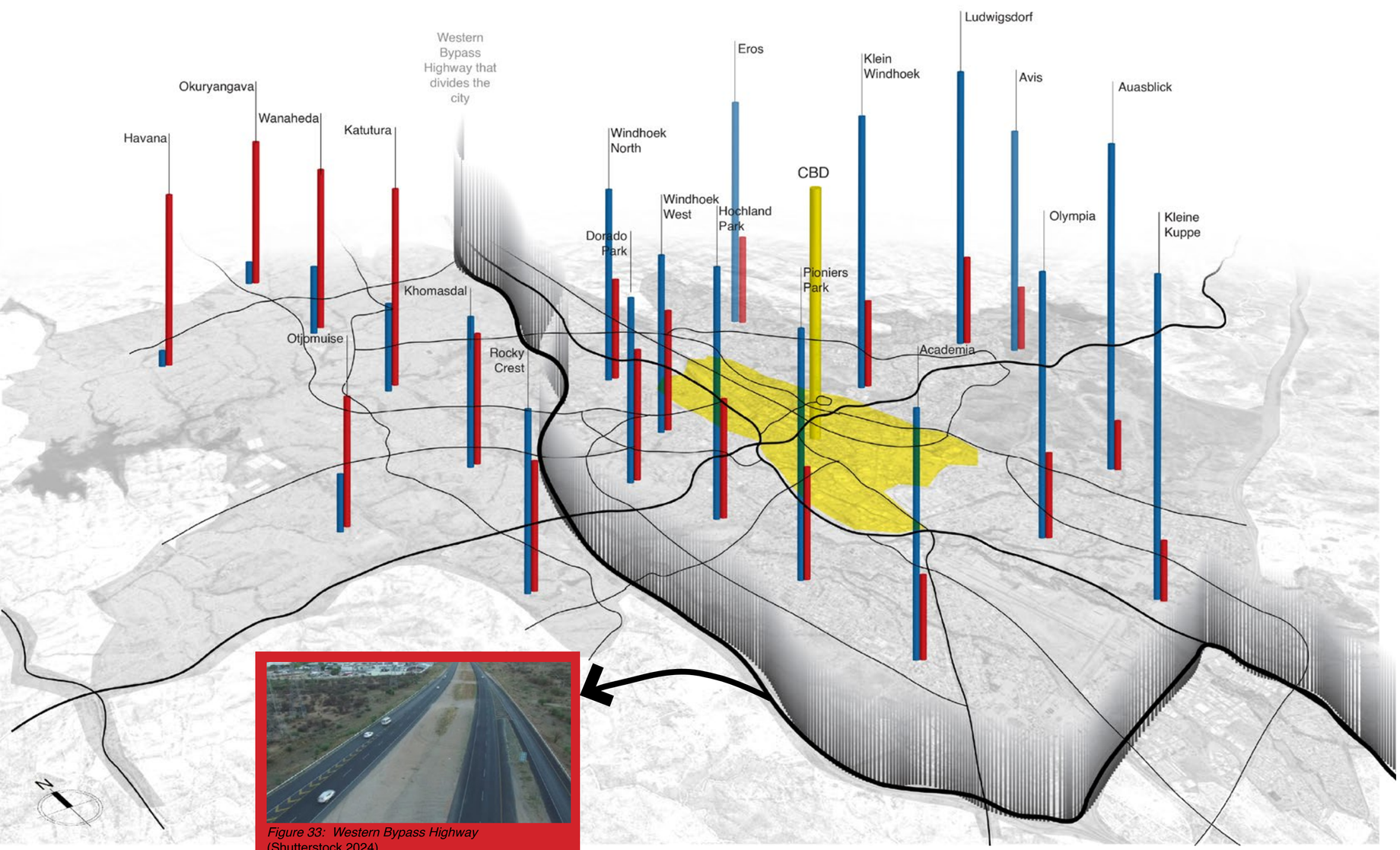


Figure 32: Windhoek division
(Author,2024)

Figure 33: Western Bypass Highway
(Shutterstock,2024)

The Western Bypass was fully built around the 1980s.

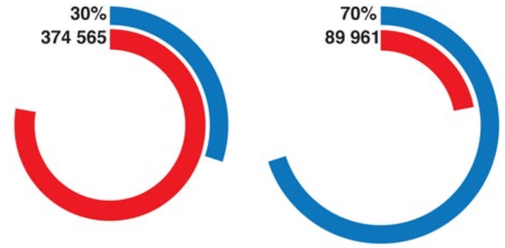


Figure 34: Distribution of wealth vs population
(Author,2024)

World Economics recorded Namibia with a Gini coefficient Index of 64.2 (Economics, 2024), this indicates a high level of income inequality, which suggests that there is a significant disparity between the incomes of the richest and the poorest people in Namibia. In relation to the spatial planning and landscape of Windhoek City, severe remnants of apartheid-era planning remain as the northwestern areas of the city still consist of the poorest neighbourhoods, which are still majorly populated by non-white residents, and the most affluent areas are located in the southeastern areas, consisting of a larger proportion of white people than to rich black people. Spatially, the physical manifestation of this division of wealth exists in the western bypass that cuts right through the city (Roland, et al., 2024). This highway acts as a barrier, extenuating the wealth disparities among Namibians as it separates the rich from the poor. Like the spatial dynamics of the city prior to the nation's independence, the rich reside closest to the business districts and major economic activity zones compared to the poorer communities. Note that the distinction of the city is no longer categorized by race but now wealth; this adds to the belief that apartheid no longer exists today, but the research contradicts this.

“apartheid did not die; it was privatized”

(Mpofu-Walsh, 2021)

It is no secret the richest people in Namibia are white people, but the discussion provided here is made based on where the rich are versus the poor, and how the poor are affected. In the instance of the “who”, the categorization of these groups are not primarily distinguished by race but rather the wealth attained. This research report therefore does not directly address race as the issue of division in the city, however it is very important for it to be discussed to highlight how apartheid has trickled through “democracy” and used a nuanced approach to portray a democratic style of rule driven by neo-liberal ideologies that impacts economic development in Windhoek.

As Dr Sizwe Mpofu-Walsh denotes, the apartheid-era spatial segregation continues to shape the landscape of Windhoek city, as it has created a new form of spatial segregation based on economic rather than racial lines in Windhoek. Dubbed “neo-segregation” (Kohima, et al., 2023), the economic disparities remain a lasting effect of apartheid, and while society at large may believe that this colonial regime is a thing of the past, this newer form of apartheid now consists of two intertwining and competing visions that clash in Namibia today. The Namibia of today is caught between the ideal visions of democracy and fairness and the reality of ongoing oppression and inequality hidden in plain sight (Mpofu-Walsh, 2021, p. 20). These conflicting visions produced a society that exists in contradictions of power and subversion (Obert, 2015), as the infant stages of Namibia’s independence involved revolutionary changes in policies for land reform and other anti-apartheid laws, but now the current dynamics have subsided into a stagnant form of oppression hidden behind the disguise of a neo-liberal rule of governance.





Figure 35: Collage of the Extremities of Windhoek
(Author,2024)







the extremeties of Windhoek

Windhoek’s society is characterized by a stark polarization, with two distinct worlds emerging under the influence of its ruling style and economic development strategies. This has resulted in a profound separation of living conditions, highlighting the city’s deep-seated inequalities.





Neo-Liberal Trends in Namibia

Before the 19th century, various countries in the global south adopted different types of political-economic ideological formations. These included divergent political experimentations inspired by various forms of western democratic types of government, such as communism, socialism and even a military kind of centralized totalitarian government. With the increased threat of neo-liberlism, there was an overwhelming convergence of western democracy as the best form of political ideology (Harvey, 2005). As a result, democracy emerged as the dominant global political ideology, all thanks to neo-liberalism.

Defined as a political and economic philosophy that emphasizes free-market capitalism, privatization, deregulation, and reduced government intervention (Thorsen & Lie, 2007), this political ideology coined in the global west permeated and shaped the political and economic thinking in other regions of the world, especially in the global south. Specific to Namibia, the major institutional frameworks that drive neo-liberal thinking are capitalism and democracy.

During and after colonialism, the relationship between developing countries such as Namibia and their colonial masters continued in the form of dependence of the former on the latter. Neo-liberalism has supported the removal of barriers and inhabitations to global trade to the extent that most global south cities are net importers of the necessities of life as illustrated in figure 34. Advanced western countries such as the USA use loans and grants to compel nations in the global south to politically align to liberal democracy and to deregulate their economy.

The consequence of these unequal economic relations are the ever increasing indebtedness of developing countries to international financial institutions. This financial dependence and the broader neoliberal agenda have significantly shaped Namibia's retail landscape. The country's economy, heavily influenced by external forces, has seen an influx of multinational corporations that dominate the retail sector. These global giants often outcompete local businesses, leading to a retail environment where large, foreign-owned brands overshadow small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) (Melber, 2014). As a result, local entrepreneurs struggle to gain a foothold in the market, and Namibia's retail sector becomes increasingly dominated by international corporations rather than homegrown brands (Jauch, et al., 2009). This dynamic not only stifles local economic growth but also reinforces the cycle of dependency on foreign entities, further entrenching the unequal economic relationships established during the colonial era.

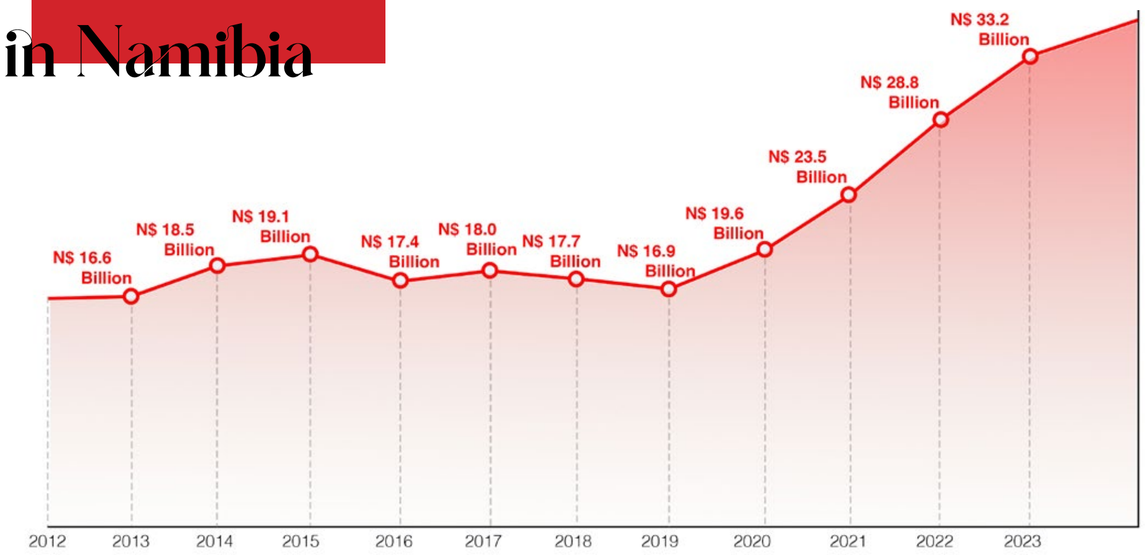


Figure 36: Namibian Debt to World Bank
(Author,2024)



Figure 37: Governance
(Author,2024)

economic development & good governance

Economic development and governance are two interrelated concepts that play key roles in shaping the social, political and economic conditions of any country, as they are interdependent and mutually reinforcing; effective governance provides the enabling environment for economic development, whilst economic development creates opportunities for better governance by providing the resources necessary to support good governance practices.

As illustrated in figure 36, good governance rests upon these specific principles, and as highlighted in this section of the report, this principles have been inadequately practiced in the context of Windhoek. Threfore, through design, the proposed Nex[us] aims to follow these principles to promote an equitable platform that fosters transparency, inclusivity, active participation, and effective implementation.



Figure 38: Good Governance
(Author,2024)

In the context of the wealth disparities and lack of economic development experienced by small to midsized enterprises (SMEs) in Windhoek, the ideologies of neo-liberalism have been used by the Namibian government to proliferate economic policies. However, as described by David Harvey (2005), this form of governance has influenced the deregulation, privatization, and emphasis of a free-market capitalist style of trade that benefits large multinational corporations at the expense of smaller local business (Harvey, 2005). The preferential advantage possessed by multinational corporations to the detriment of SMEs will be unpacked in a later section of this report. Specific to the previously discussed point that apartheid has taken the form of neo-liberal ideologies, capitalism has become so embedded in common sense that they have been taken for granted and not open to question, as neoliberal thought took political ideals of human dignity and individual freedom as a fundamental, or even “central value of civilization” (Harvey, 2005, p. 5). In simple terms, the ideals of democracy have been tainted by capitalism, as neo-liberalism masquerades as a “mixed economy” (Amupanda, 2017) , thus ultimately producing a false sense of economic freedom for individuals.



Figure 39: Big brands vs SMEs
(Author,2024)

2.2 URBAN CONTEXT OF WINDHOEK WEST

CONTEXTUALIZATION OF THE "IN BETWEEN"

TRANSITION SPACES



This historic background and context of the economic dynamics of Windhoek provide a base for the context of the location that the site sits in, Windhoek West. This suburb is situated between the CBD and the residential areas of the city, best theoretically described as an indistinct area that defies traditional interpretations (Pittaluga, 2020), as it integrates the situations of its neighbouring environments; commerce of the city center and residence of the suburbs northwards of the city. Thus, Windhoek West translates as a diverse community of multifunctionality, which has not always been the case for this suburb. Windhoek West was originally part of the Old Location. Following the forced removal of Namibia's native residents to accommodate white inhabitants, the area was developed into a residential neighbourhood close to the CBD. Initially designated as a whites-only suburb, Windhoek West has since evolved to include a diverse population of low to middle-class individuals from various racial, age, and identity.

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Figure 40a: Windhoek West Location
(Author,2024)

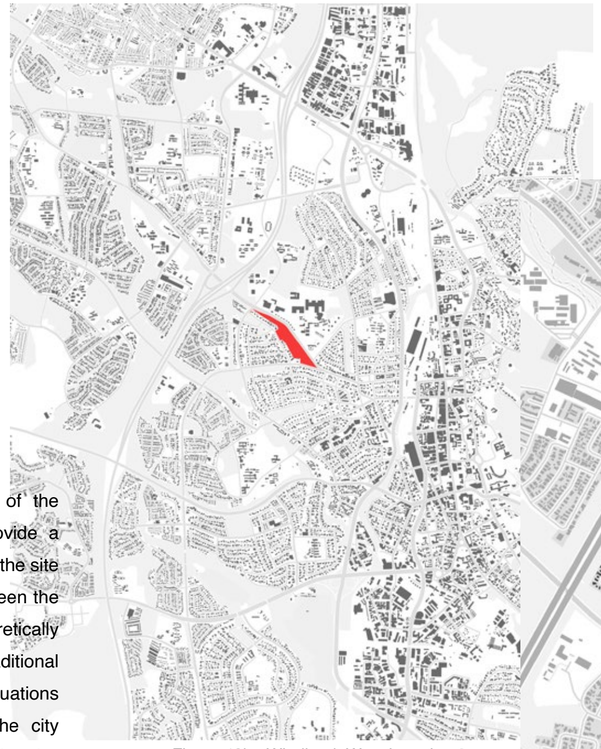


Figure 40b: Windhoek West Location 2
(Author,2024)

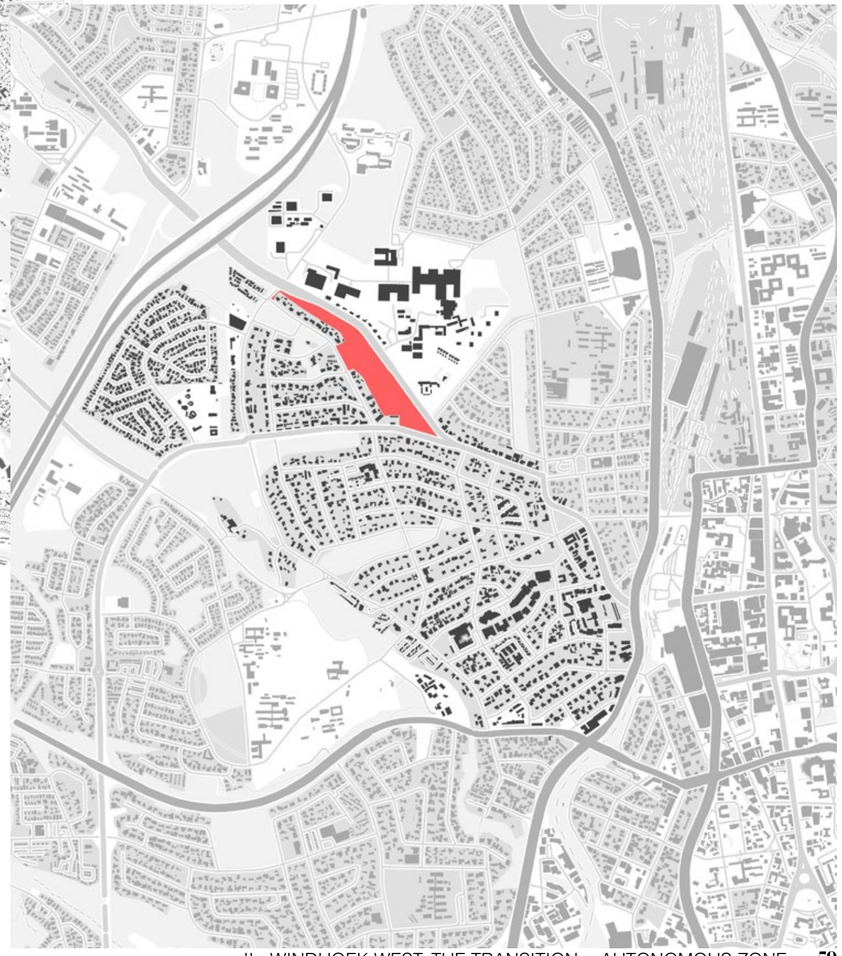


Figure 40c: Windhoek West Location 3
(Author,2024)



Figure 41a: City Center Decay
(Author,2024)

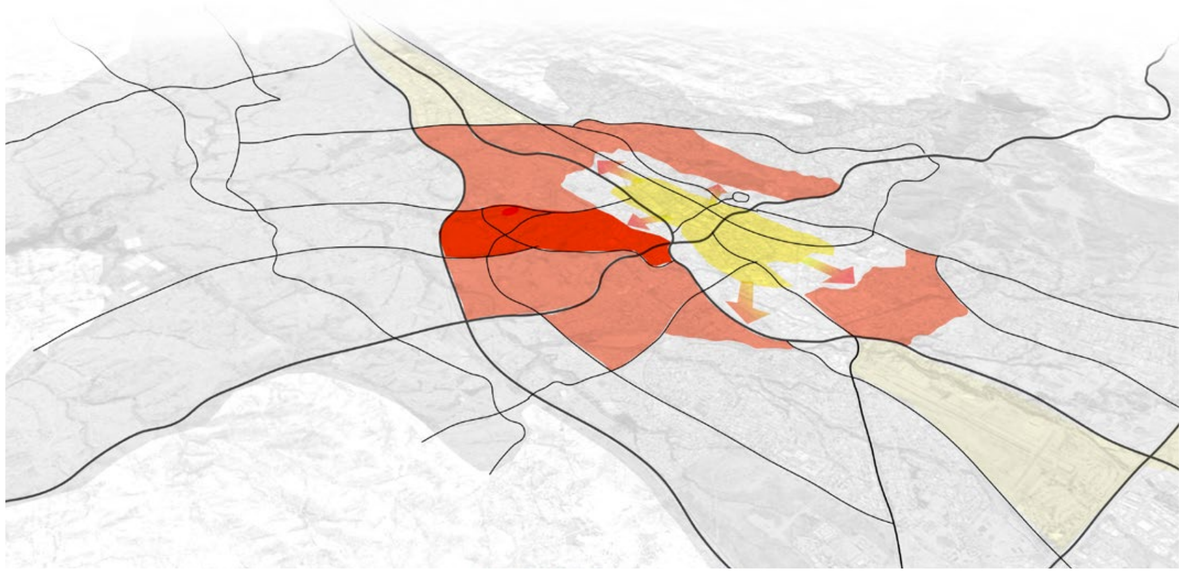


Figure 41b: City Center Decay 2
(Author,2024)

As stated in the first chapter, suburban areas usually develop in response to perceived problems and challenges in the urban center, functioning as a means of escape from issues of congestion, crime, pollution and lack of space. Sternberg (1971) describes the state of decaying centers; which have caused businesses to move from these central business areas and into the suburbs, forming “grey areas” (Sternberg & Sternberg, 1971, p. 16). These areas are described as multifunctional and multiservice neighborhoods that consist of housing mixed with industry. The shift is caused by a modern phenomenon where “industry follows workers into the suburbs” (Sternberg & Sternberg, 1971, p. 16).

In the context of Windhoek, factors such as inflation, and city growth, which are further exacerbated by a capital driven style of governance, have caused land values in the CBD to continuously increase. This has resulted in numerous smaller businesses and commercial activities relocating to either the secondary business districts of Northern and Southern Industrial, or the residential suburbs surrounding the CBD. Consequently, newer businesses have also opted to operate in these suburbs rather than the city center (Sternberg & Sternberg, 1971). Through this interpretation, one can understand how the multifunctionality of Windhoek West was produced.

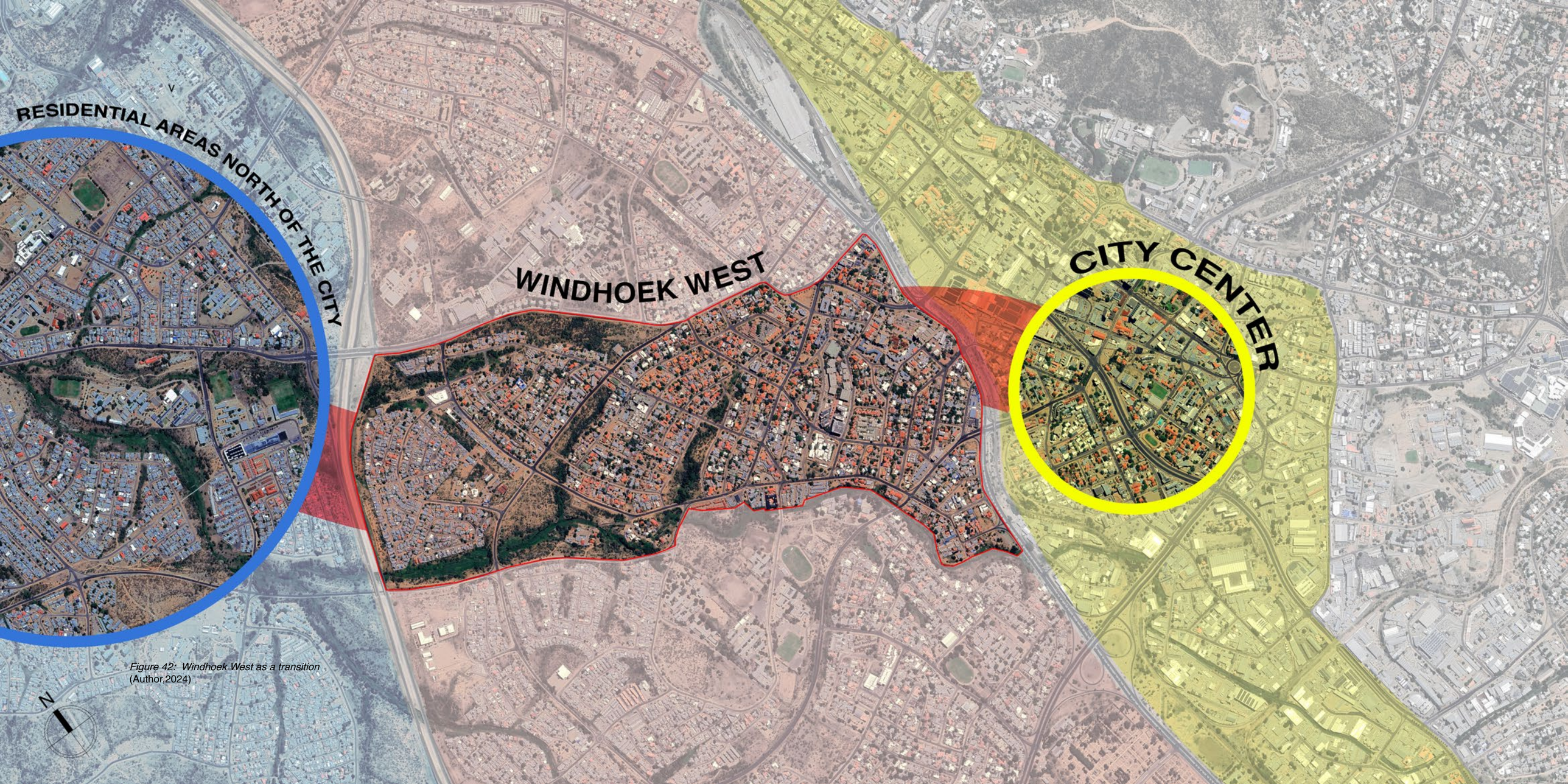


Figure 42: Windhoek West as a transition
(Author,2024)



Figure 43: Windhoek West Aerial Image
(Author,2024)

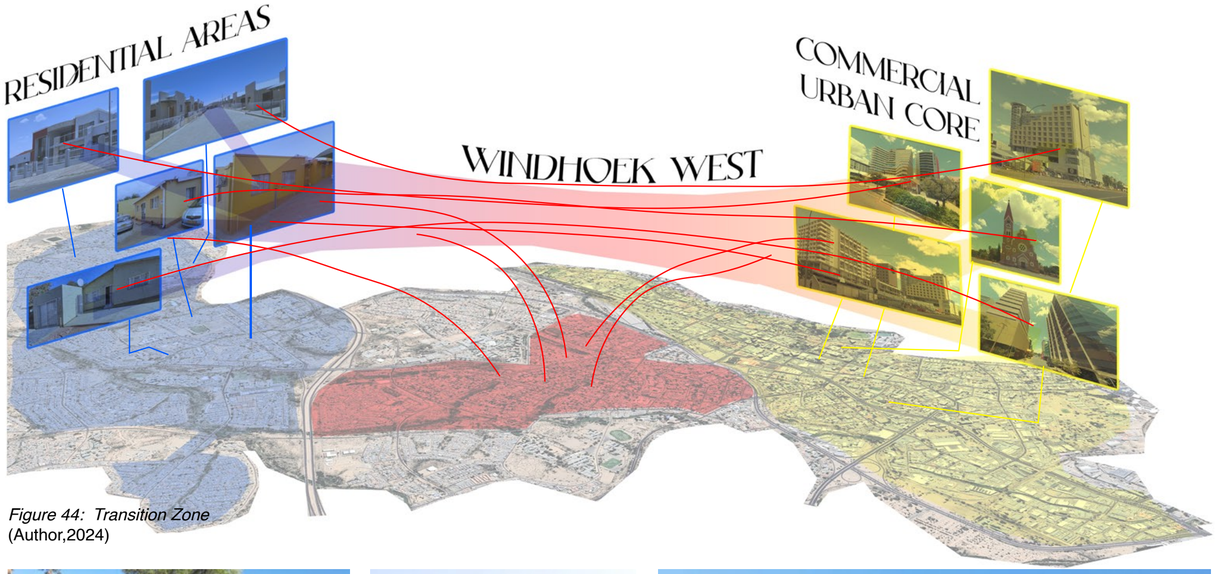


Figure 44: Transition Zone
(Author,2024)

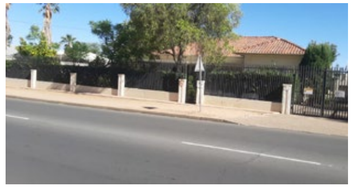












Figure 45a-f: Photomontage of Windhoek West
(Author,2024)



Figure 45g: Photomontage of Windhoek West
(Author,2024)

The definition of “grey areas” (Sternberg & Sternberg, 1971) somewhat describes the conditions of Windhoek West, however not quite. Grey areas, or twilight areas, are mainly characterized by areas “in the process of decline, partly from overcrowding, poverty, crime, obsolescence, and lack of maintenance” (Sternberg & Sternberg, 1971, p. 16). As shown in the photos, Windhoek West is considered a rather well-maintained and prosperous community that experiences moderate crime. Additionally, the community is best characterized by middle class residents. not poverty. Therefore, this term is not appropriate for the urban context of this research. A more appropriate description of Windhoek West would be a transitional space. Described by Paolo Pittaluga (2020) as an indistinct area that defies traditional categories of interpretation, often blurring the boundaries and functions. “These areas become less distinct, melt into one another, and look porous and fragmented when conventional binary systems of understanding—such as urban/not-urban, center/periphery, and public/private are separated and scrutinized more thoroughly.” (Pittaluga, 2020, p. 9). As a pose to Sternberg’s (1971) term, this term better describes Windhoek West as an in-between space, an edge between different situations.

Situated on the fringe between the city’s commercial core, and the residential suburbs of Khomasdal, Dorado Park, and Hochland Park, Windhoek West operates as a mix use residential suburb. Like Windhoek West, other suburbs located on the edge of the CBD fit Pittaluga’s (2020) description of transition spaces. These other spaces include the suburbs of Windhoek North, Eros, Klein Windhoek, and Olympia, as they each adopted businesses and commercial activity to operate within their respective domains. However, if other areas exist in the same fashion as Windhoek West, why has Windhoek West been chosen as the specific focus area of this report?

AN AUTONOMOUS TRANSITION

SOCIAL CONTEXT OF WINDHOEK WEST

A particular spotlight is placed on Windhoek West for multiple reasons. Firstly, contrary to most other transition spaces, the businesses and enterprises residing in this suburb mostly comprise of smaller scale enterprises whereas the other transition spaces possess a greater amount of larger, more profitable, and well-established, some of which even include global corporations.

This differentiation in business types and size is attributed to the fact that Windhoek West is situated right next to the Western Bypass, further placing Windhoek West closest to the less affluent neighbourhoods compared to the other transitional suburbs. This further groups the residents of Windhoek West of incomes ranging from lower to middle class, whilst the other suburbs consist of more affluent (middle to upper class) residents (Roland, et al., 2022). In terms of land and rental value in Windhoek West compared to other neighbourhoods, it is relatively cheaper in Windhoek West (Property24, 2024), making it a more suitable place for smaller scale enterprises to operate in this suburb.

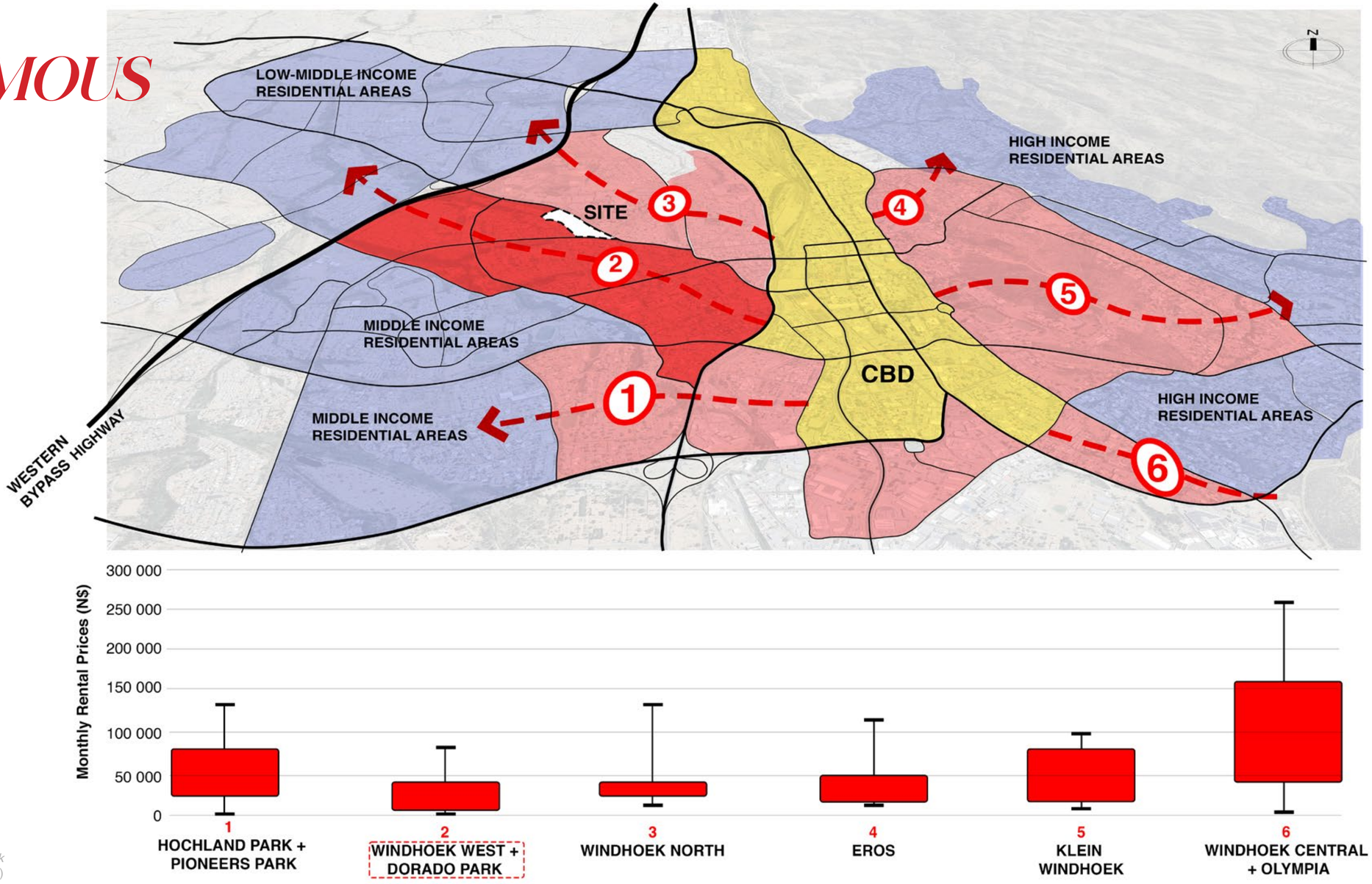


Figure 46: Rental Values In Windhoek (Author,2024)

On the note of community cohesion and the public realm, the city in general suffers from a lack of accessible, truly public spaces (Lühl, 2012). However, specifically to the context of Windhoek West in relation to other transitional spaces, this suburb has no public spaces at all. It is this absence of any community facility or public space that highlights an underdeveloped public realm as well as fragmented sense of community. However, this is not to say that this area does not have any form of a nexus point.

Taking from the discussions of the introductory essays in the first chapter, the absence of community, civic and public spaces in Windhoek West outline the presence of public buildings such as the educational institutions, trade centers, and churches as nexus points. Referencing Eisenman's discussion on the "presence of absence" (Eisenman, 2004), the absence of community spaces perpetuates a sense of an anti-place, a space that challenges conventional notions of community and the public realm by not providing what is typically expected (Eisenman, 1999). Instead, the existing public buildings act as nexus points. Therefore, these points of activity and congregation become the "presence" within the "absence" (Benedikt, 1991). This presents the opportunity to capitalize on these nexus points to enhance them into a public space and community facility, one that does not follow the ideals of Western middle-class suburban dynamics (Friedman, 2000).

In reference to these nexus points, another factor aiding to the dynamic of commercial activity in Windhoek West are the institutional functions operating within the suburb, in particular the Namibia University of Science and Technology, a tertiary university accounting for about 15 000 students. (NUST, 2024). The university exists as a distinct and focal feature of Windhoek West, which is further expressed by a high number of enterprises within the suburb that function according to the needs of the students, ranging from stationary shops, convenience stores, barbershops, food trucks, medical facilities, as well as firms and companies of different disciplines situated themselves in close proximity to the institutions to hire students and engage with the university for research purposes and other ventures. Additionally and more importantly, many of these enterprises are ran by students themselves, reflecting a drive in many young professionals in leveraging their creativity to create economic avenues for economic development.

Theoretically, this interpretation of Windhoek West as a transitional space (Pittaluga, 2020) can be further explored using Hakim Bey's (1985) theory of autonomous zones, who discusses how these spaces exist between established structures and norms. Bey (1985) rather abstractly and arbitrarily discusses transitional zones as a "temporary, liberated space beyond the control of authority structures, where individuals can live autonomously and freely" (Bey, 1985).Bey's theories and concept of ontological anarchism relate to the context of transitional zones like Windhoek West, as their transitional nature often challenges traditional notions of order, identity, and authority. Ontological anarchy as a philosophical concept describes an ideology that rejects forms of imposed order, authority, and hierarchy (Williams, 2010).

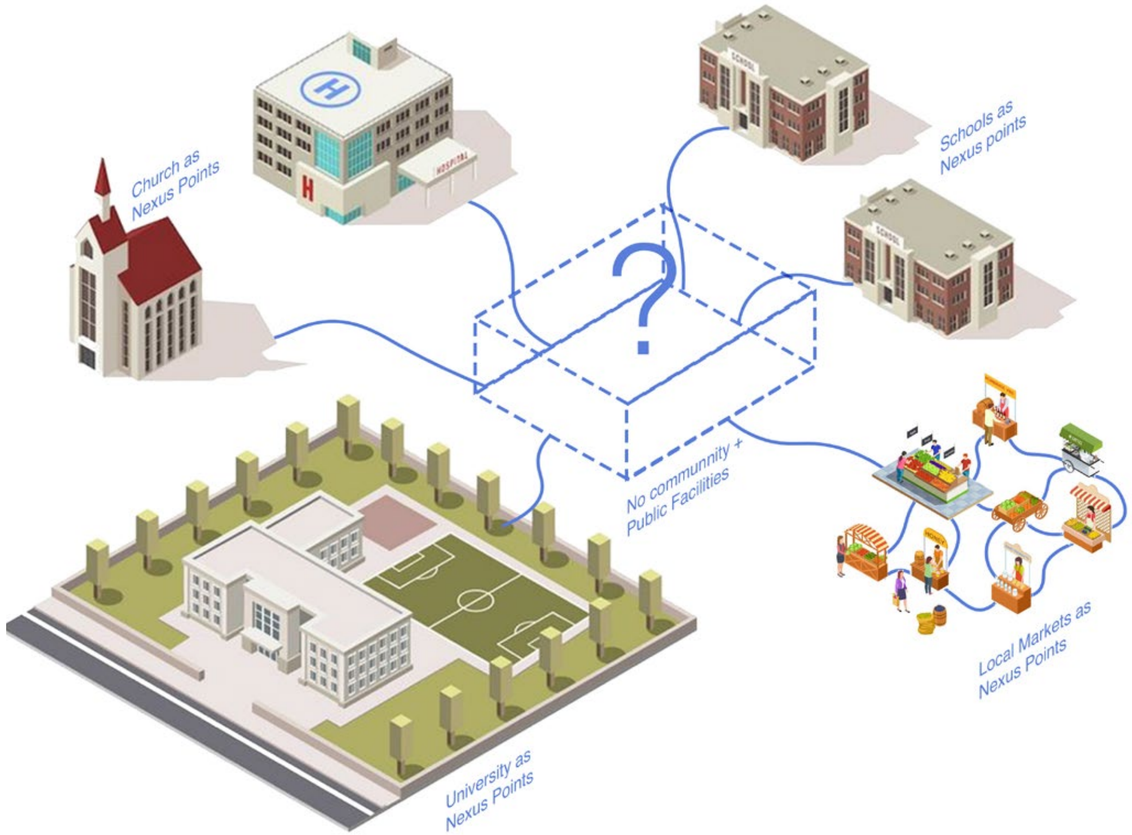


Figure 47: The Presence of Absence
(Author,2024)

LEVERAGING AUTONOMOUS ZONES FOR EQUITY:

REIMAGINING WINDHOEK WEST AS A COMMUNITY-DRIVEN NEXUS IN POST-APARTHEID NAMIBIA

In the context of the city, the neo-segregation (Kohima, et al., 2023) capital of post-apartheid Namibia, subjected by a continuous imposed order of apartheid manifested through neoliberal economic policies call for a rejection of rigid capitalist structures to advocate for a more equitable society. Windhoek West concurrently exists as an autonomous zone (Bey, 1985), a space where smaller enterprises and diverse communities operate outside the dominant economic and social norms.

This places this suburban area in a position that can leverage the vibrant entrepreneurial force reflected in students and young professionals alike, to counteract and deconstruct an imposed order that continues to proliferate an ever-increasing economic disparity (Friedman, 2000). Additionally, the integration of a trading space as a community hub can propose a solution to an underdeveloped and fragmented public realm, by producing a truly public space (Lühl, 2012) that fosters community cohesion. Finally, the capitalizing of the nexus points in market force, Windhoek West can begin to address the fragmented community, perpetuated by the absence of community and public spaces.

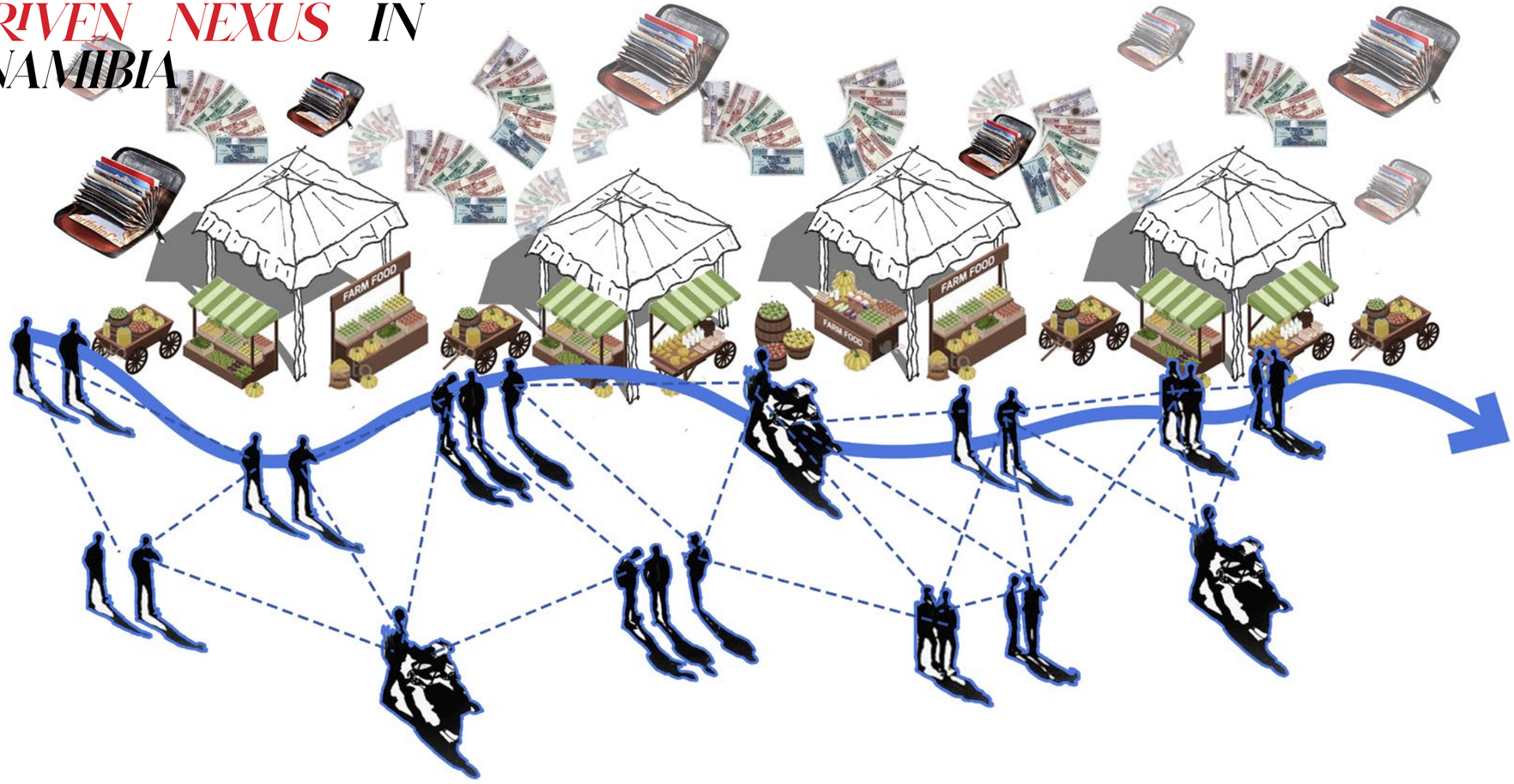


Figure 48: Enterprises In Windhoek West
(Author,2024)

3 FLOWS & CODES OF CAPITAL

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK + URBAN ANALYSIS

1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
2 THE THEORY OF FLOWS + COMMUNITY CAPITALS FRAMEWORK
    2.1 LITERATURE REVIEW
    2.2 THE SOCIAL CAPITALS OF WINDHOEK WEST: NEXUS POINTS
    2.3 URBAN SYNTHESIS
    2.4 FINDINGS
3 URBAN FRAMEWORK
    3.1 HUMAN CAPITAL AS A CATALYST FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
    3.2 THE NEX[US] AS A THIRD SPACE
    3.3 DESIGNING THE NEX[US] THROUGH THE PATTERN LANGUAGE

FRAMEWORK

This section of the report inteprets the aspects of the social context and urban analysis of Windhoek West with theoretical insights. The theories discussed include the theory of flows, social capital, and the community capitals framework. It begins with a brief definition of the theories presented and their interpretation of the social context of Windhoek West as 7 forms of capital in the community, encompassing constructed, natural, cultural, human, political, social, and financial capital. A primary focus is highlighted on the natural, economic, human, and social capital as the main aspects studied in the urban analysis include the functions located within Windhoek West.

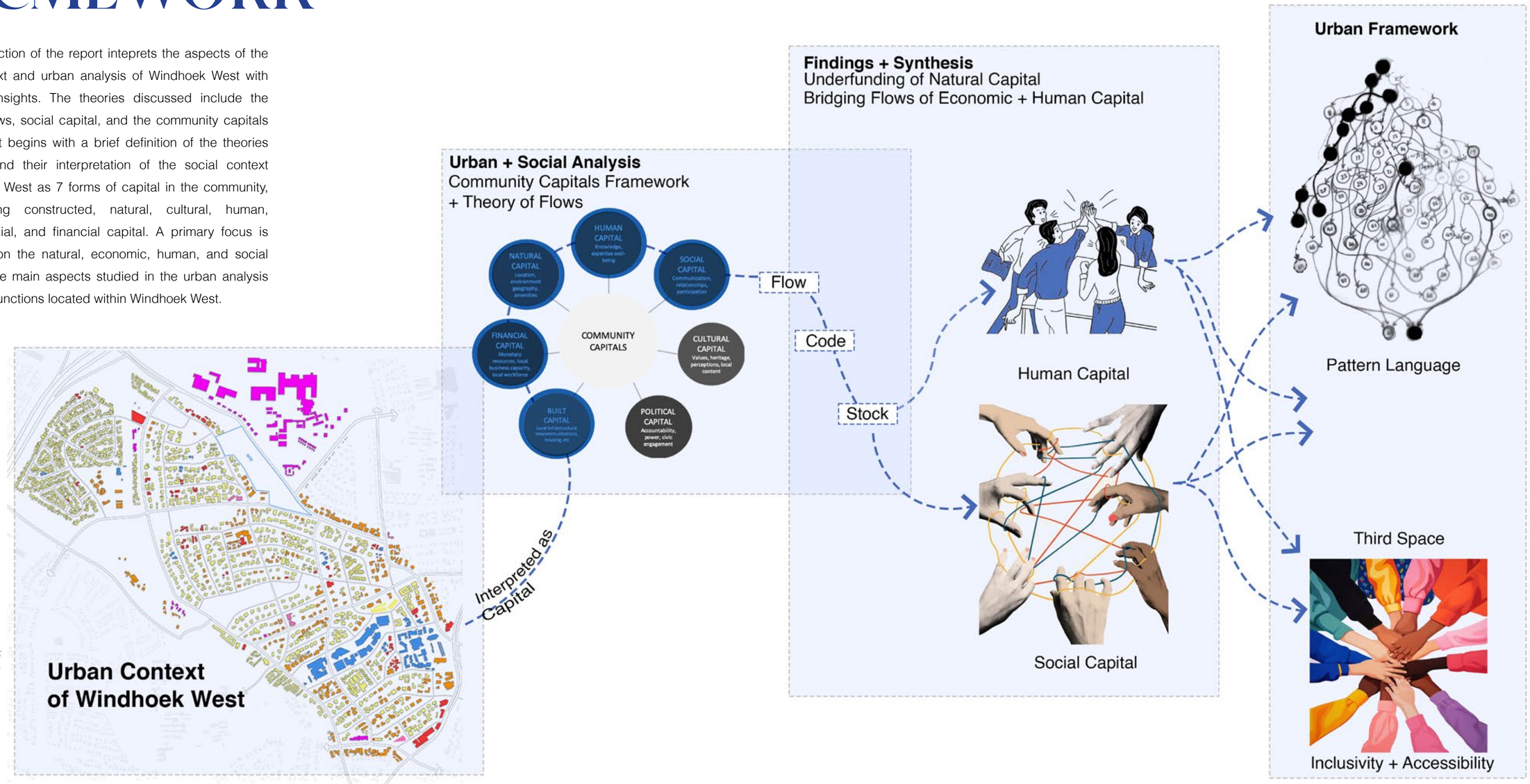


Figure 49: Theoretical Framework (Author,2024)

THE THEORY OF FLOWS & COMMUNITY CAPITALS

FRAMEWORK



Figure 50: Deleuze & Guattari
(Author,2024)

"A general theory of society is a generalized theory of flows"

These words were once uttered by French philosopher Gilles Deleuze, whom with the assistance of Felix Guattari, discuss the concept of flow, code, and stock. Drawing from Keyne's theories on macroeconomics (Keynes, 1936) and Karl Marx's materialist interpretation of the development of the means of production in society (Marx, 1867), Deleuze and Guattari use their concept to challenge the capitalist and traditional psychoanalysis methods, to describe the theory of flows and how it affects all the elements in society (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983).



Figure 51a: Flows
(Author,2024)



Figure 51b: Code
(Author,2024)



Figure 51c: Stock
(Author,2024)

Flows represent the dynamic, non-linear, and interconnected movements of elements within a society. They emphasize the continuous processes of becoming and transformation.

Codes are the mechanisms that regulate and control these flows, shaping social structures, norms, and power dynamics through media, economic systems, politics and cultures.

Stocks are the static accumulations resulting from these regulated flows, representing material or juridical possessions such as economic wealth and social hierarchies. (Smith, 2012)

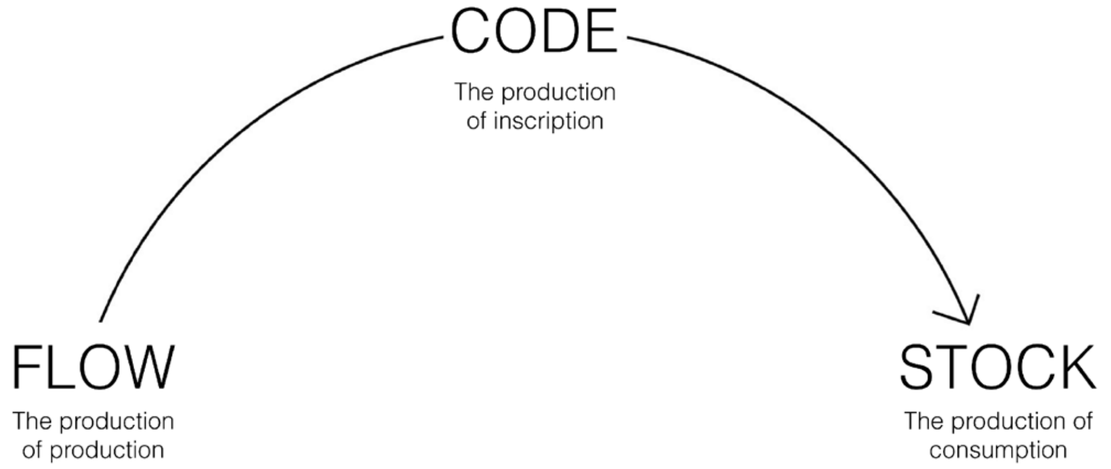


Figure 52: Interplay Between Flow, Code and Stock
(Author,2024)

The interplay between flow, code and stock forms a dynamic and complex relationship within societies, where flows are managed by codes, leading to the formation of stocks. Deleuze's philosophy calls for critical examination and questioning of dominant codes to promote openness, creativity, and diverse social formations. This theory serves as a critical theoretical approach to analyzing the social landscape of Windhoek West, as it interprets the various elements and functions of the community as a series of flows and stocks.

According to Jon L. Flora (1998), social capital refers to the webs of connections that exist between members of a community and employers, which facilitate the smooth operation of that community. It includes the standards, beliefs, and comprehensions that promote collaboration between or inside groups. In the context of this chapter, the term “capital” is used to define the resources as assets that communities can leverage to improve their overall well being and resilience. As defined by Mary Emery and Cornelia Flora (2006), One essential aspect of a community is social capital. The stock and flows from various capital have the power to both shape and be shaped by it (Emery & Flora, 2006).

Thus, by analyzing the various community capitals of Windhoek West, the stocks of these various capitals can be strategically increased to create a new system of positive community change. (Emery & Flora, 2006, p. 19). The community capitals framework, defined as a methodical instrument used to analyse economic and community growth from a systems point of view, is theoretically used to reinterpret the analysis done on the social setting of Windhoek West. This is done by identifying the assets in each capital (stock), the various forms of capital contributed (flow), and the interactions among these various capitals.



Figure 53: Community Capitals Framework (Kelly,2024)

THE SOCIAL CAPITALS OF WINDHOEK WEST:
NEXUS POINTS

The urban analysis of Windhoek West included an investigation of the various functions located within the community, this included a mapping investigation of the institutional, residential, and commercial areas. The findings of the zoning and functional analysis included the observation that residential buildings comprise majority of Windhoek West, however a significant number of commercial areas dispersed around the community, with a general trend of the distribution consisting of an increase in the number of commercial buildings from the northwest of the neighborhood to the Southeast.

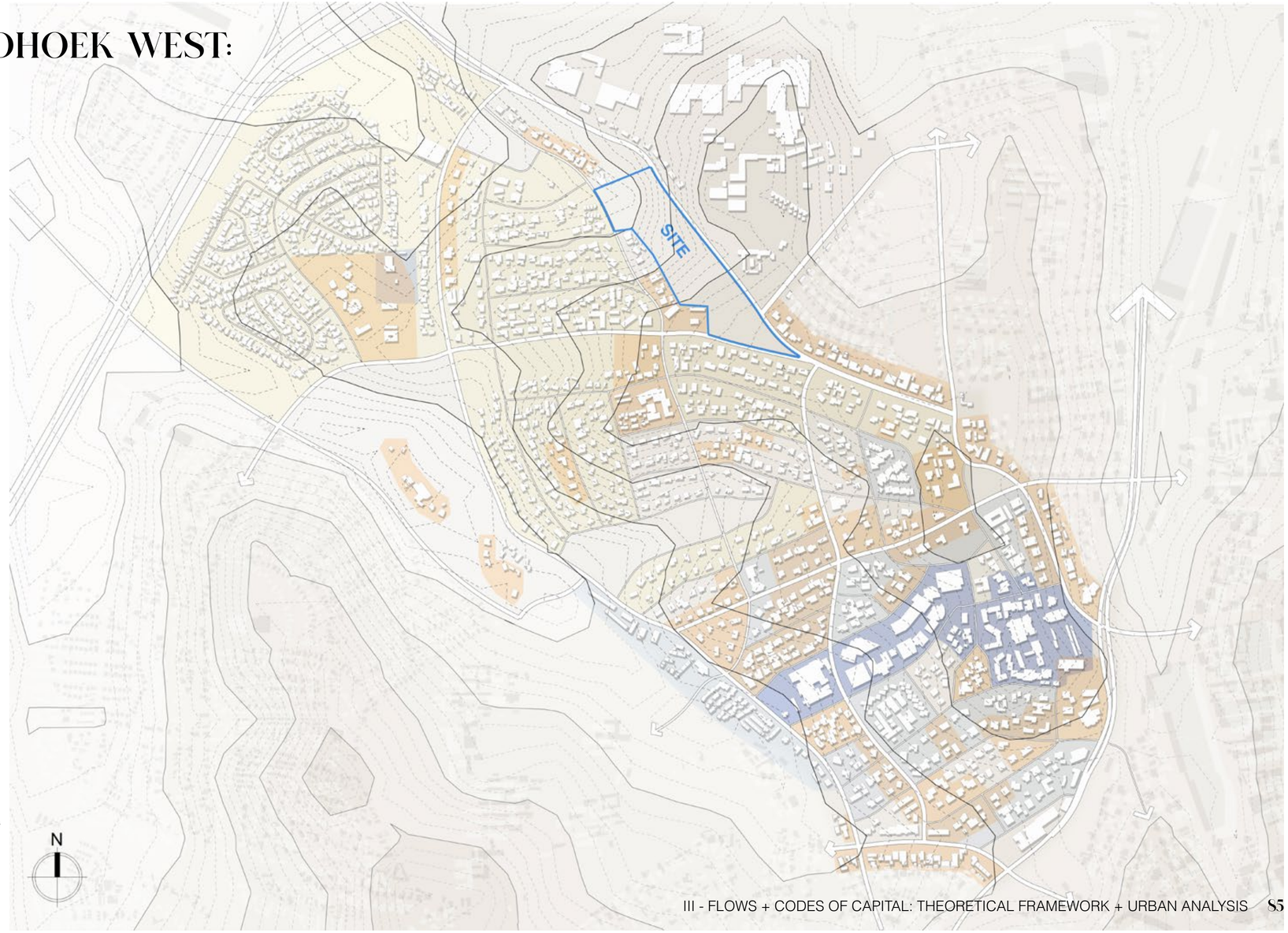


Figure 54: Map of Windhoek West
(Author,2024)



Figure 55: Photomontage of Windhoek West (author,2024)

BUILT CAPITAL
ROADS



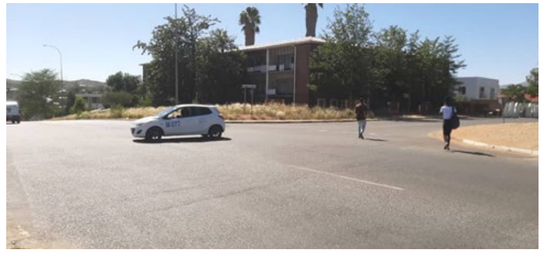




Figure 56: Roads of Windhoek West (Haindongo, 2024)

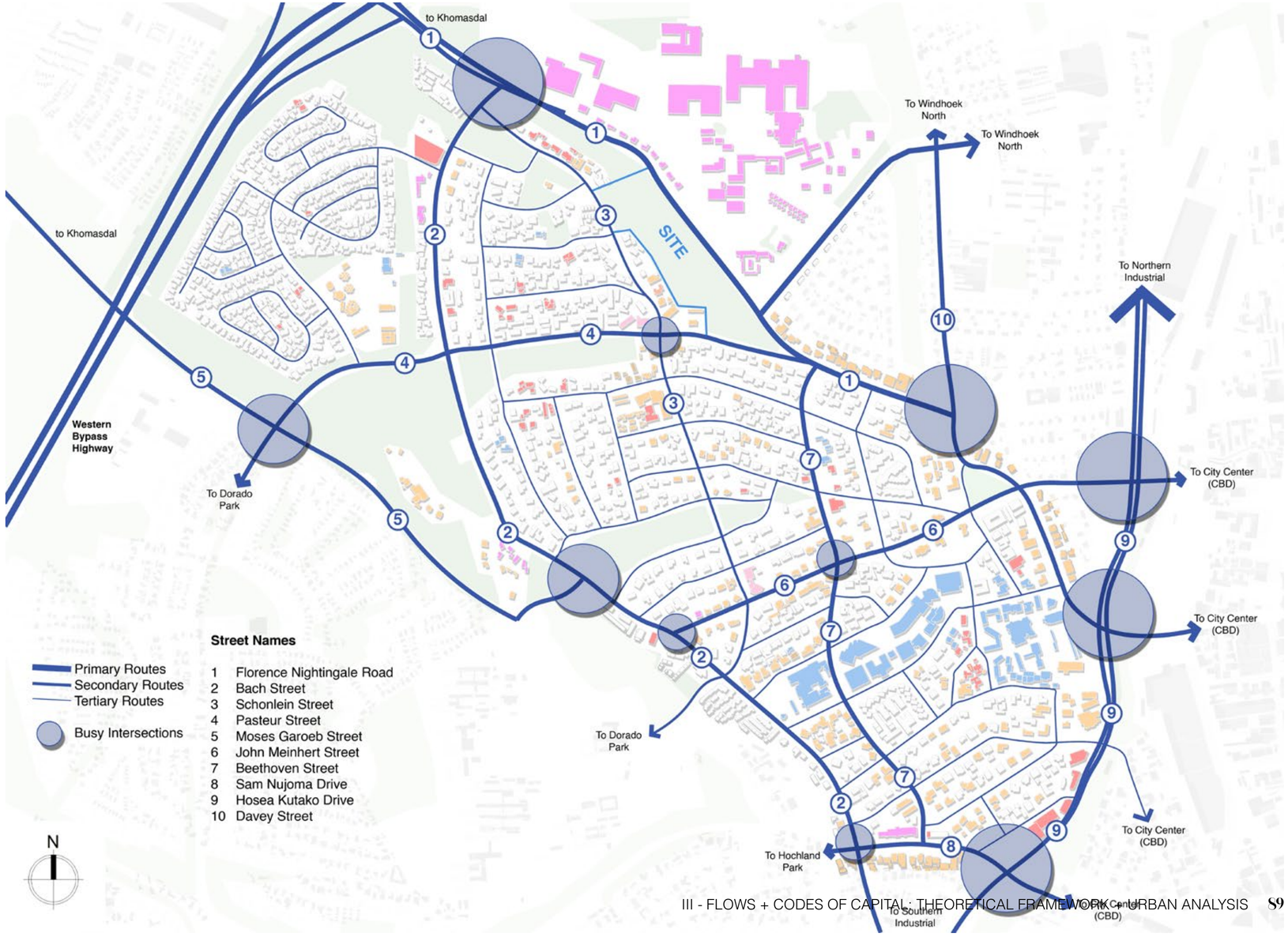


Figure 57: Roads (Author,2024)

BUILT + SOCIAL CAPITAL
RESIDENTIAL

Residential buildings comprise most of Windhoek West. Majority of these buildings include single residential homes ranging of not more than 2 storeys high. A decent amount of the residential spaces also include row apartments and one high rise(7 storey) apartment block. Other typologies include an old age home, guest houses and hotels

The members of the community residing in these homes typically consist of families, with most of the apartment and flat residences occupied by university students and other young professionals.These various residential typologies contribute to the built capital by providing housing options for the differnet demographics of Windhoe West. Furthermore, the inclusion of these diverse building types adds to the built capital by catering a range of needs within the community, from elderly care to short-term lodging.

In terms of social capital, the diverse community fosters a dynamic and diverse social environment. The presence of different typologies attracts the different age groups and social backgrounds. Additionally, the short term residential typologies introduce transient populations into the neighborhood, offering a chance for social exchange and the broadening of social networks, further enriching the community's social fabric.



Figure 58: Residential Areas
(Author,2024)

Figure 59a-g: Residential Areas
(Author,2024)

BUILT + SOCIAL CAPITAL
INSTITUTIONAL

The educational instutions located within Windhoek West consist of primary schools, kindergartens, colleges, vacational training centers and universities. This boasts a diversity in institutional built capital that ultimately contributes to the social fabric as they accomodate all demographics of the community.



Figure 60a-e: Institutions
(Author,2024)

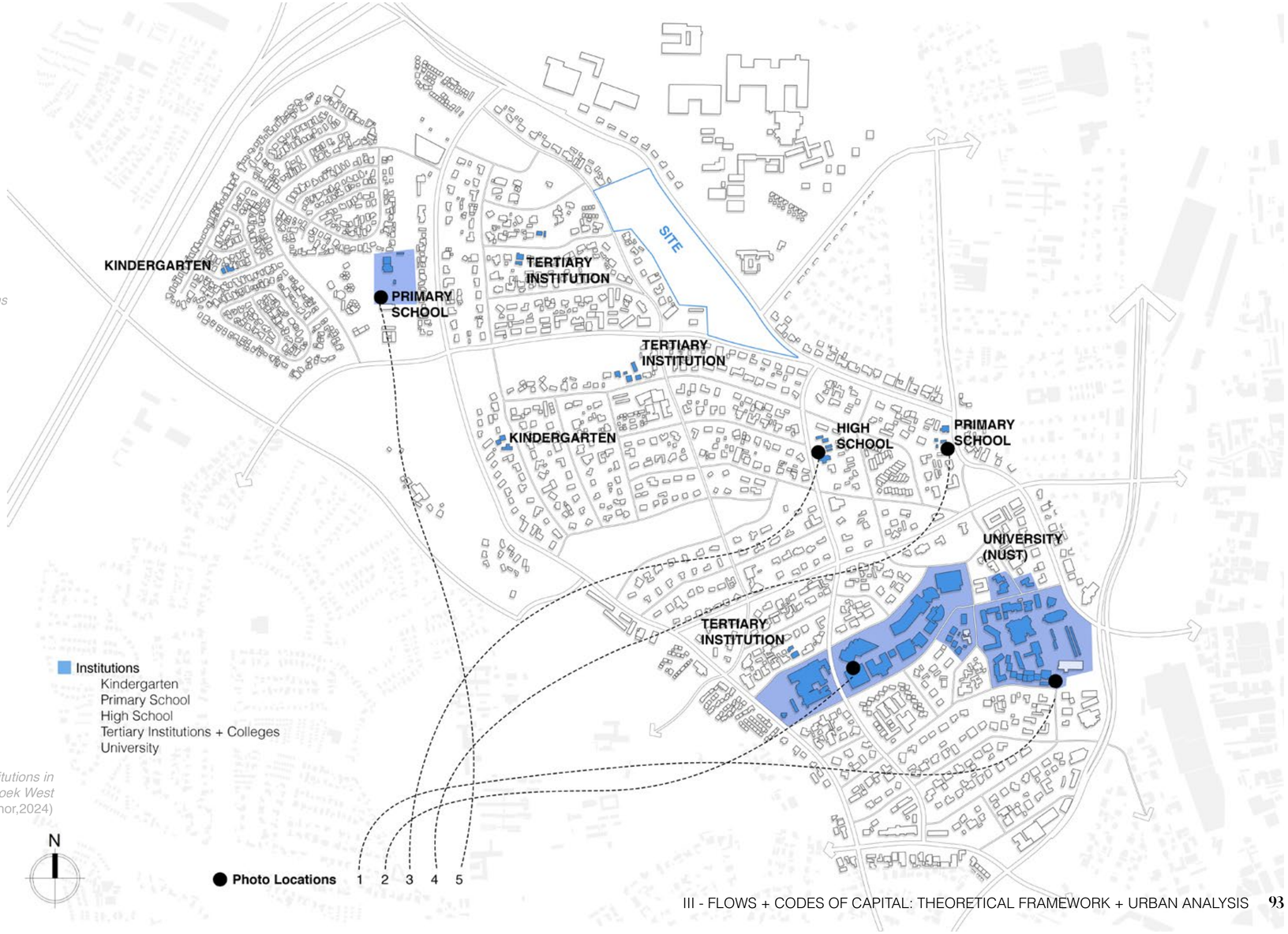


Figure 61: Institutions in Windhoek West
(Author,2024)

ECONOMIC + CULTURAL CAPITAL

TRADE + COMMERCE

The commercial functions in WIndhoek West are moderately dispersed, with most commercial activity increasing southwards of the suburb. These commercial activities consist of small offices for companies, firms and other practices. The trade and market spaces of Windhoek West consist of local convenience stores and vendors. The typologies consist single storey buildings, for local restaurants, barber shops, tailors and other retail stores These markets are used by all members of Windhoek West, with each one having a particular focus.

1. Consists of Usave, a neigbourhood market for all household goods and other utility items. Barbershops, salons, repair shops and informal traders are also situated nearby this market, further showing how this area is popular for trade.

2 and 5: A local convenience store situated in an area with office buildings, also consists of household goods and takeaway food for the community.

3. Puma service station; This is the only service station situated in the Windhoek West, and with the inclusion of a 24 hour store, making it a prominent location for people to buy goods at late hours.

4. This area, situated close to the university consists of Food trucks and takeaway restarants for students, as well as printing facilities and internet cafes.

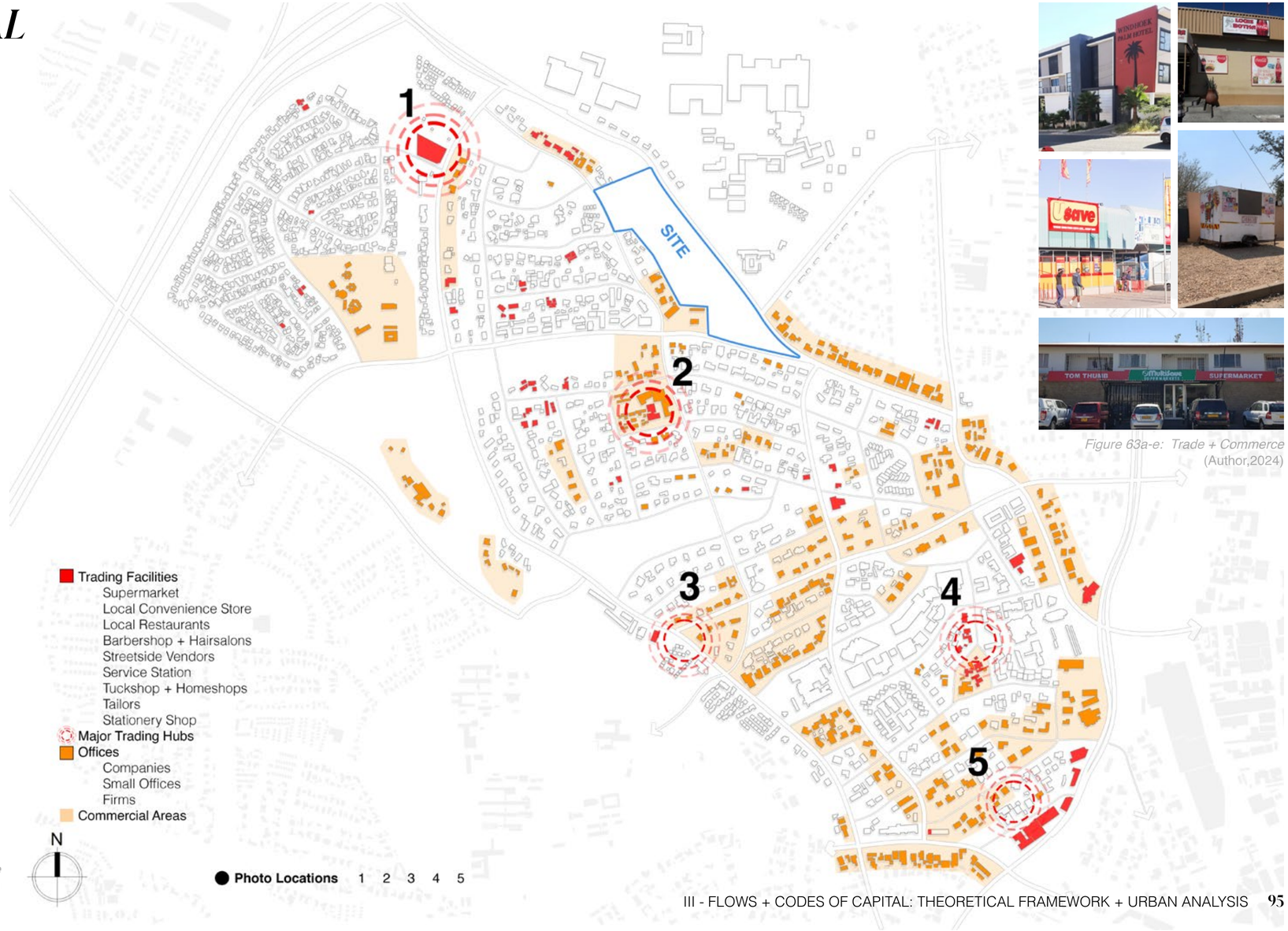


Figure 62: Trade + Commerce
(Author,2024)

Figure 63a-e: Trade + Commerce
(Author,2024)

NATURAL CAPITAL
ENVIRONMENTAL ELEMENTS

Natural capital pertains to the environmental assets that pertain to the context (Emery & Flora, 2006). This includes the vegetation, geography, weather and climate, natural resources, and natural aesthetics (pp.21).

In the context of Windhoek West, the environmental assets exist as a handful of large open spaces moderately dispersed around the community. These ecological sites possess great value and potential. However, the lack of investment contributes to the lack of recreational facilities in Windhoek. The urban analysis shows that the neighborhood consists of zero recreational facilities. The absence of this subsequently negatively impacts the social capital in the community, as recreational spaces are often used as a social “glue” to positively affect the public realm of societies (Kostrzewska, 2017).

Therefore, the proposed site for the Nexus includes one of the underdeveloped open spaces located in Windhoek West. The natural assets contained within the site boundaries can be leveraged to conceptualize a design for the site, that capitalizes on the natural context and environmental landscape to create recreational spaces that promote the well-being of users, and to enhance social life.

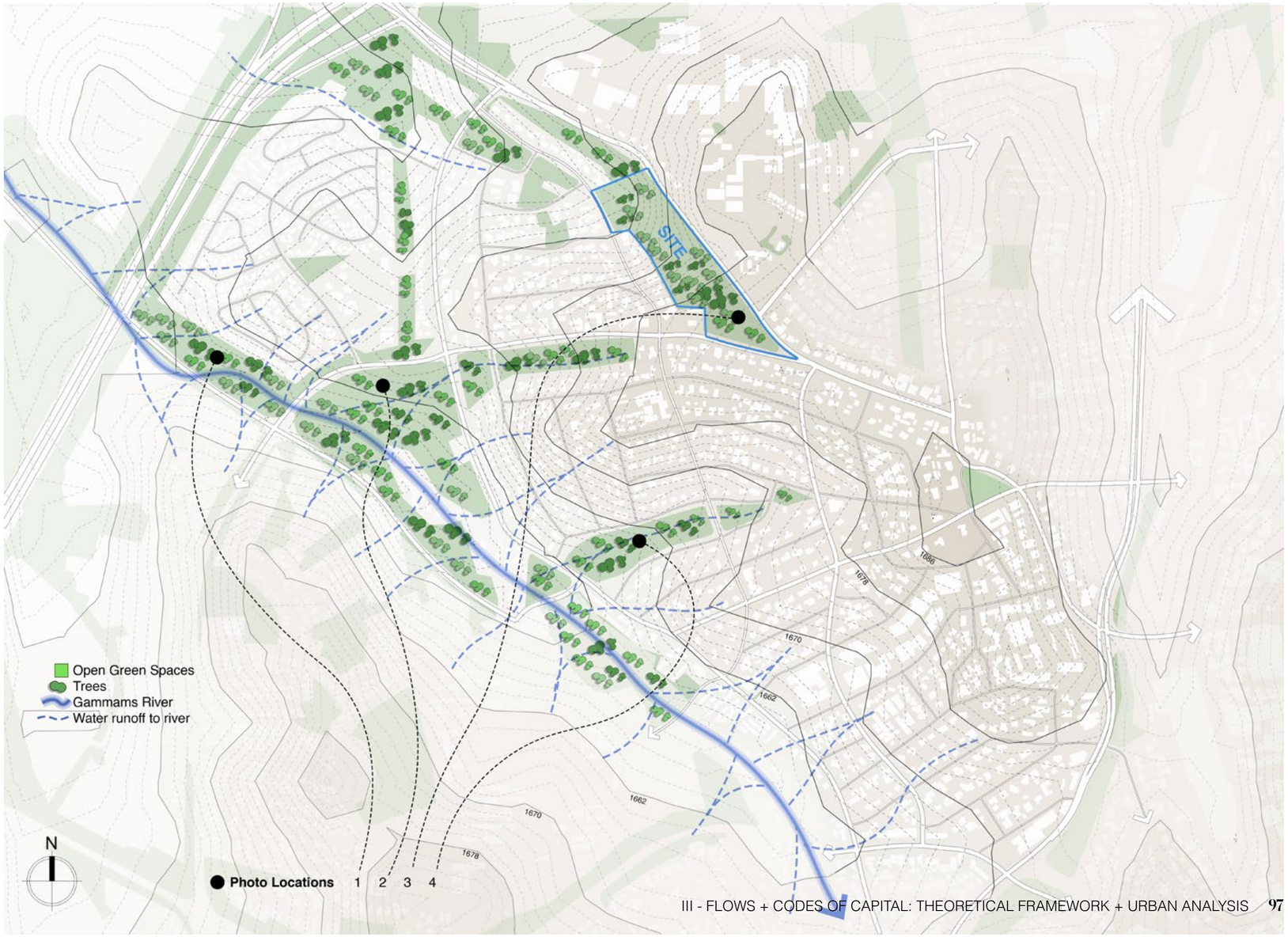


Figure 64: Natural Features
(Author,2024)

3.2.3 URBAN SYNTHESIS

FLOW + STOCK

MARKETS AS NEXUS POINTS

In terms of theory of flows, the dispersed commercial activities within Windhoek West represent the flow of people engaging in economic activities. The presence of the various trading enterprises discussed earlier indicates a vibrant flow of daily transactions and social interactions. Additionally, the various markets in Windhoek west highlight the flow of goods and money among residents of the community.

These transactions facilitate economic exchanges that sustain the community's livelihood. The stocks formed by the various flows in Windhoek West can be translated and interpreted into numerous types of capital. The skills and abilities of the entrepreneurs form a significant stock of human capital (Emery & Flora, 2006), as the concentration of diverse trading services indicates a wealth of specialized skills and entrepreneurial spirit. The stock of social capital is represented by the networks and connections among community members, reinforced through frequent interactions in commercial areas. The physical infrastructure, including residential buildings, commercial areas, and institutional facilities, represent the built capital.

The spatial layout and distribution of these built forms reflect the investments made into the physical development of Windhoek West. The stock of cultural capital is represented by the traditions, norms, and cultural practices evident in the types of businesses and services. This includes the local cuisine sold at food trucks, traditional hairdressing styles, as they all form as a part of the community's cultural capital.

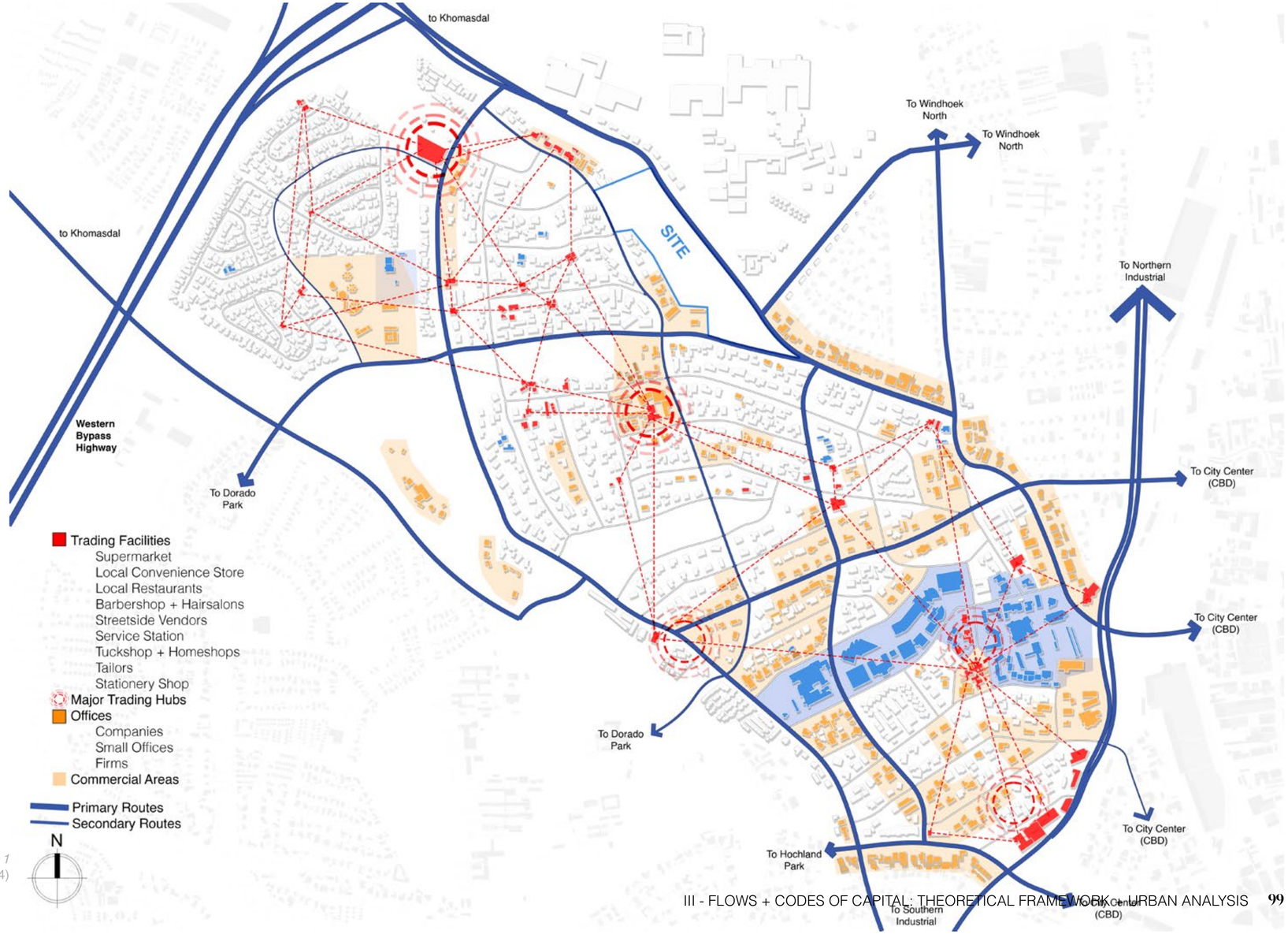


Figure 65: Composite Map 1 (Author,2024)

Various trading enterprises and markets highlight the circulation of goods and money, sustaining the community's livelihood. Therefore, each type of trade facility in Windhoek West function as a nexus point in their own capacity, as they each individually influence interaction among different social groups (Callon, 1998). For instance, convenience stores in Windhoek West such as Louis Botha and Tom Thumb exist as arenas for young students, adults, security guards, and the elderly to intersect with each other. Food trucks and other Informal trading stalls along the streets are fronts for social interaction and engagement among pedestrians. Although quite passive in its nature of influencing social engagement, markets still make a great case for functioning as platforms for social engagement and interaction.

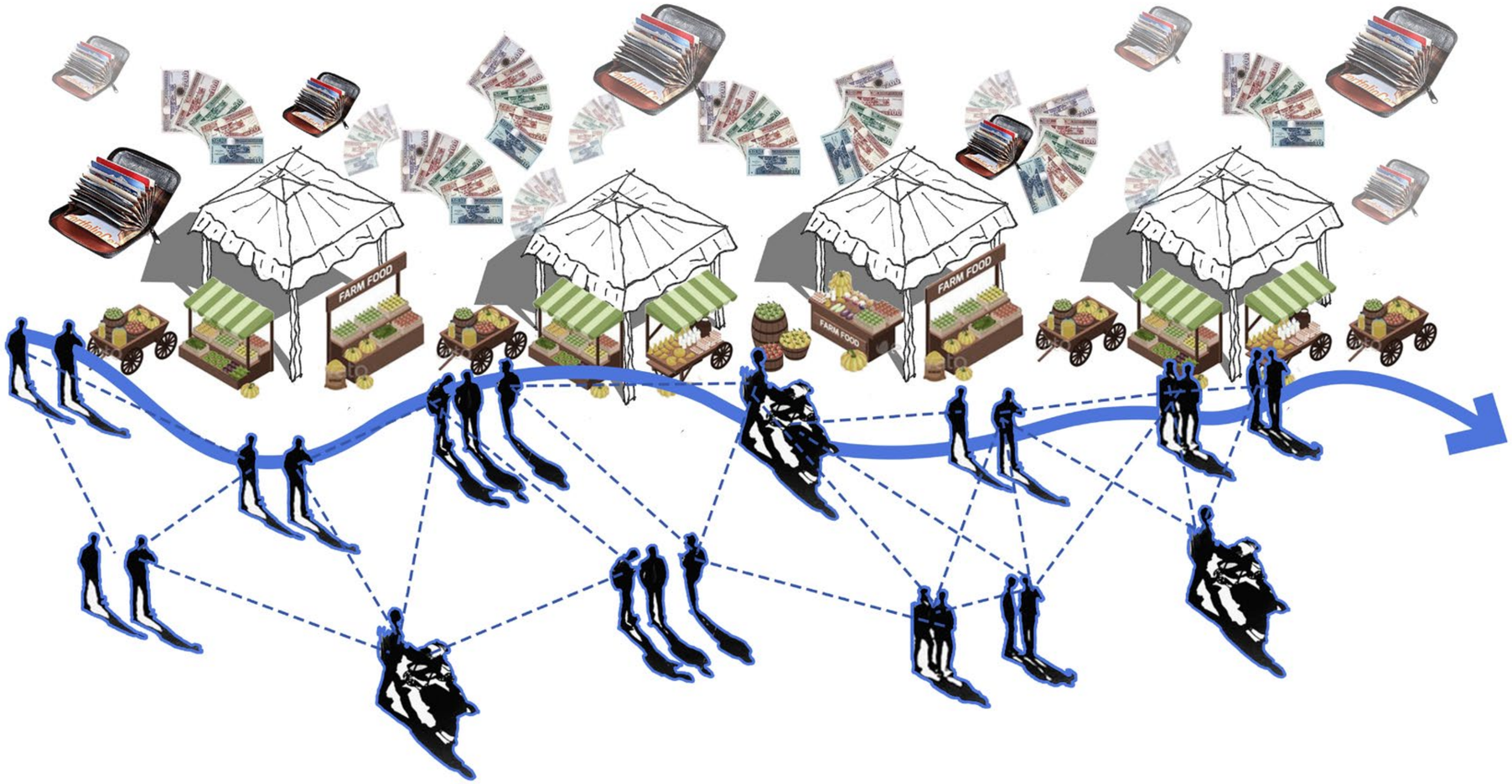


Figure 66: Markets as Nexus Points
(Author,2024)

CODE

STUDENT CULTURE AS A CODE FOR DICTATING SOCIAL CAPITAL

The various flows and stocks of the capitals discussed are regulated by the following coding systems. In the eyes of governance and policies (top-down perspective), zoning regulations could be considered the most obvious code that dictates land use and influences the spatial distribution of activities.

However, even more deeply rooted in the urban context of the community, the culture and social fabric of Windhoek West could be identified as a significant code that influences and regulates the flows and stocks of human, economic, and social capital. As stated earlier, the Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST) functions as a beacon in Windhoek West. The social and cultural capital of this institution has directly influenced the dynamic and functionality of trade and its spatial distribution in the community. This inference is based on the finding that majority of businesses, and enterprises are situated closer to the university. Along with the spatial composition of commercial areas in proximity to the university, the functionality of these enterprises is also coded by the social capital of the institution.

The students at the university form a significant and crucial part of the stakeholders, as they do not only make use of the trading services, but many of the trading services themselves are built upon the needs and requirements of them. However, this is not to argue that the markets function solely based off student culture, most of the significant trade facilities in Windhoek West are equally as equitable for the students as they are for the rest of the community. This synthesis merely highlights and recognizes NUST as a significant code among other codes that influence the urban dynamics of trade in the community.

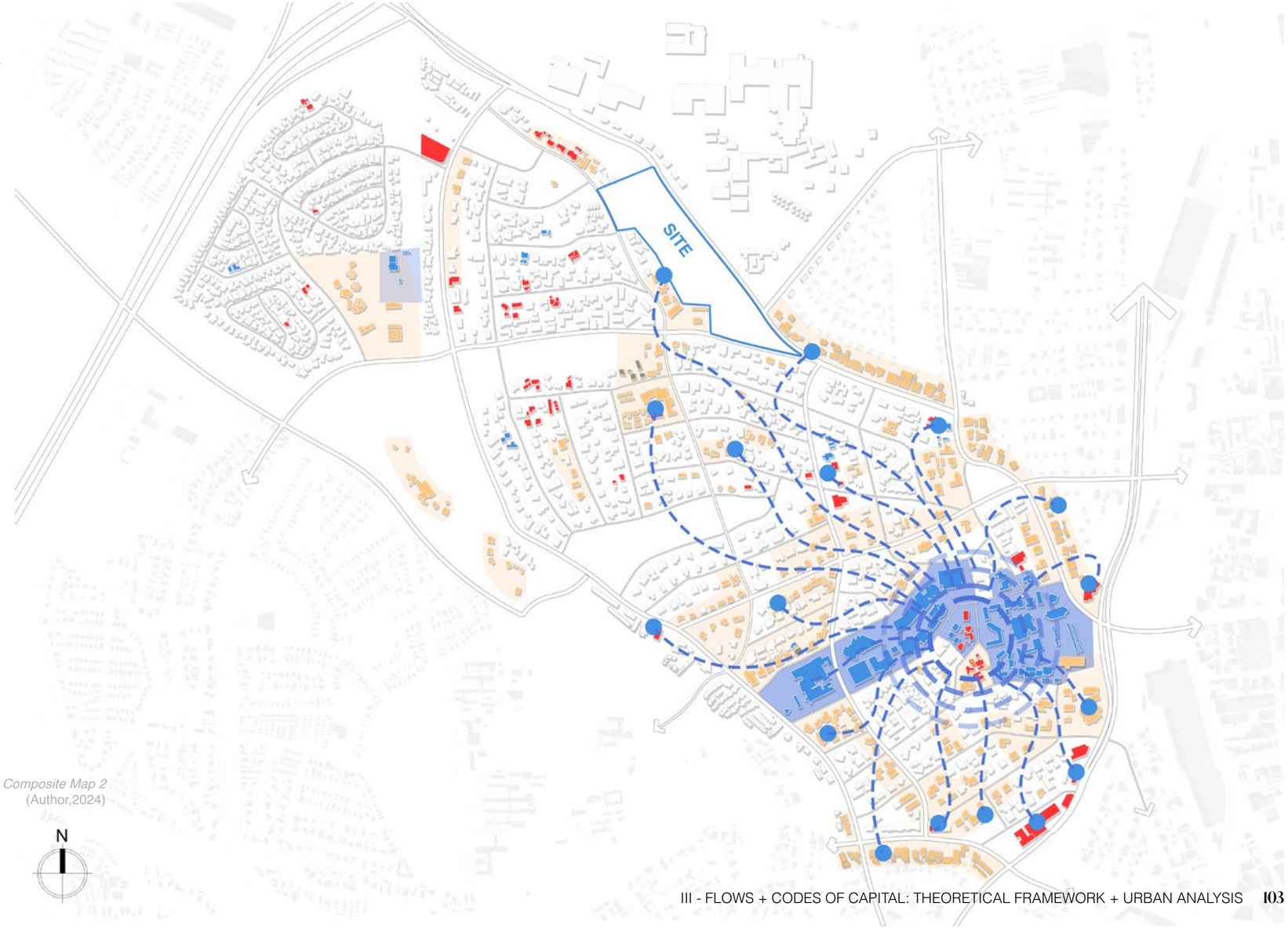


Figure 67: Composite Map 2
(Author,2024)

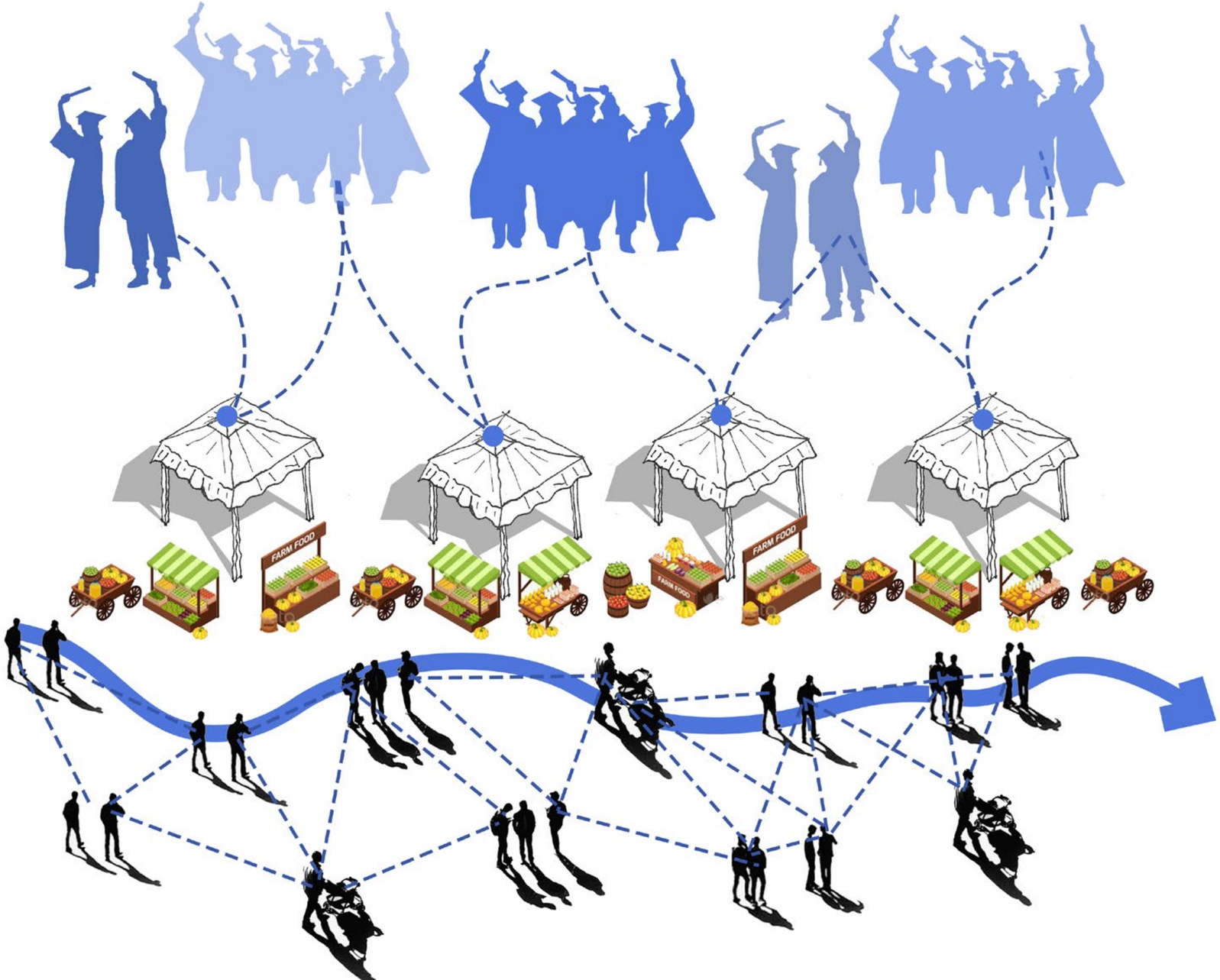


Figure 68: Instutions as Codes
(Author,2024)

LACK OF COHESION
AMONGST ENTREPRENEURS



Figure 69: Instutions as Codes
(Author,2024)

The findings of the analysis highlight the fact that many of the local markets and enterprises function independently. As much as this may be sustainable for their own economic stock, the social stock of the whole commercial layer of Windhoek West is undercut, limiting opportunities for economic development and social capital. Interviews were conducted on four young student entrepreneurs who each expressed a need for networking and collaboration amongst other creators. This therefore highlights the significance of integrating the various micro enterprises into one hub that heightens their exposure to further influence economic growth, all whilst mixing customer bases, fostering cohesion in the community.

THE UNDERFUNDING OF
NATURAL CAPITAL



Figure 70: Site Aerial Photograph
(Author,2024)

As stated earlier in the analysis, the natural capital of Windhoek West remains underfunded due to the absence of any recreational facilities.

Drew Cassels and Mirko Guaralda (2013) investigated how the design of public spaces can influence social behavior and interaction by examining the usage of public spaces in various social contexts. In doing so, they identified the design principles that promoted the social activation of these spaces. Their findings suggest that “the levels of interaction between the users, being it for transitory or occupational purposes, rose directly with vegetation and opportunity for occupation” (Cassels & Guaralda, 2021). It is for this reason that the chosen site for the Nex[us] is on an open green space, to leverage the natural assets to create a public space for the community and city at large.

The site consists of a large public open space perched near the summit of north western section Windhoek West. The site is characterized by a hillside that spans the length of roughly 600 meters, climbing a height of nearly 50 meters, furnished with trees and wild bushes. Situated along Florence Nightingale Road, a very busy thoroughfare that connects the city center to the residential areas north of the city.

Therefore, the site presents an opportunity to not only connect the Windhoek West Comunity but also to express the transitional nature of this area, by enhancing the experiental qualities for users. Other opportunities also include ecological design, which is presented by the environmentally rich natural landscape found on the site

LEVERAGING

NATURAL, HUMAN + ECONOMIC ASSETS

TOWARDS ENHANCING SOCIAL CAPITAL FOR THE NEX[US]

As stated earlier, the urban and architectural issues outlined in the analysis of Windhoek West firstly highlight a diversity in function within the community, which is translated as an abundance of community capital (Woolcock, 1998). The various forms of social capital are dispersed around the community. However, one aspect is absent within the urban landscape, and this includes recreational facilities, the second issue also highlights the fragmentation of markets and entrepreneurs within the community, causing them to function separate form each other. The final issue which is rather complex one pertains to the divided social activity in Windhoek west, created by the distribution of the functions.

The urban framework for the Nex[us] therefore seeks to address these urban issues, by leveraging the natural, human and economic assets situated in Windhoek West, to enhance the social capital of the neighbourhood and beyond.

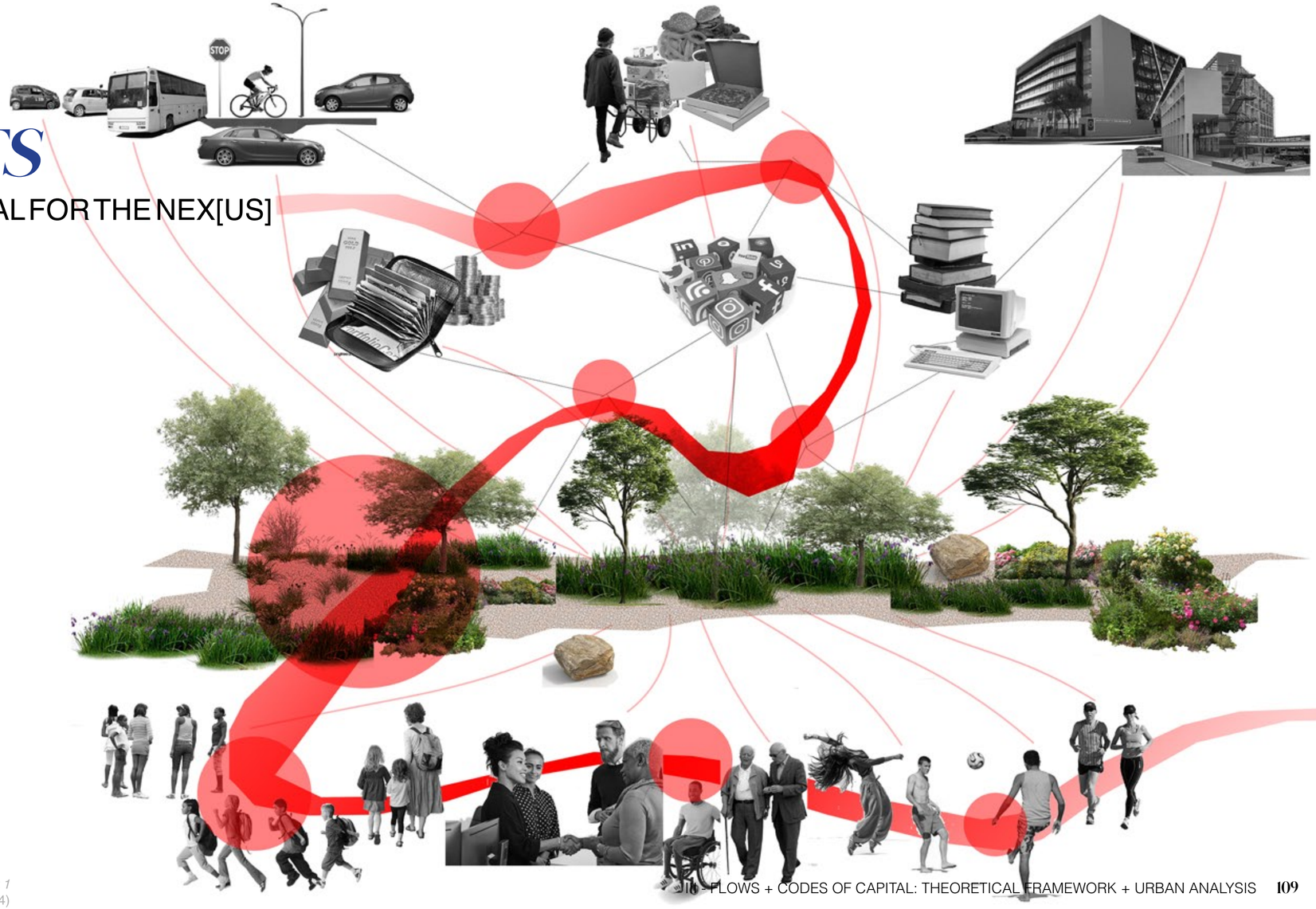


Figure 71: Urban Framework 1
(Author,2024)

OPPORTUNITIES

DIVISION OF ACTIVITY ZONES

Windhoek West is divided by Pasteur Street, which is due to the large open spaces along this road as well as the lack of functions along the road. This causes the road to function as a barrier that splits the neighbourhood into two separately functioning areas; as the activity zones are highlighted in these two regions, this further shows that the social and commercial activity within the community is seperated by this road.

The distribution of these functions creates two zones of activity, a smaller zone located towards the northwest, created by the concentration of commercial activity along the highlighted portion of Bach Street. The second activity zone is located towards the southeast of the neighborhood. This zone is much larger as it consists of various sources of economic and social capital, including small business and local enterprises, educational facilities and other offices. Therefore, the functions act as nexus points, inviting and accessing groups of people, creating the zone of activity.

Just as Pasteur street functions as a barrier that separates Windhoek West into two zones of activity, the three streets (Bach, Schonlein, and Florence Nightingale) that run from north to south, act to connect these two activity zones.

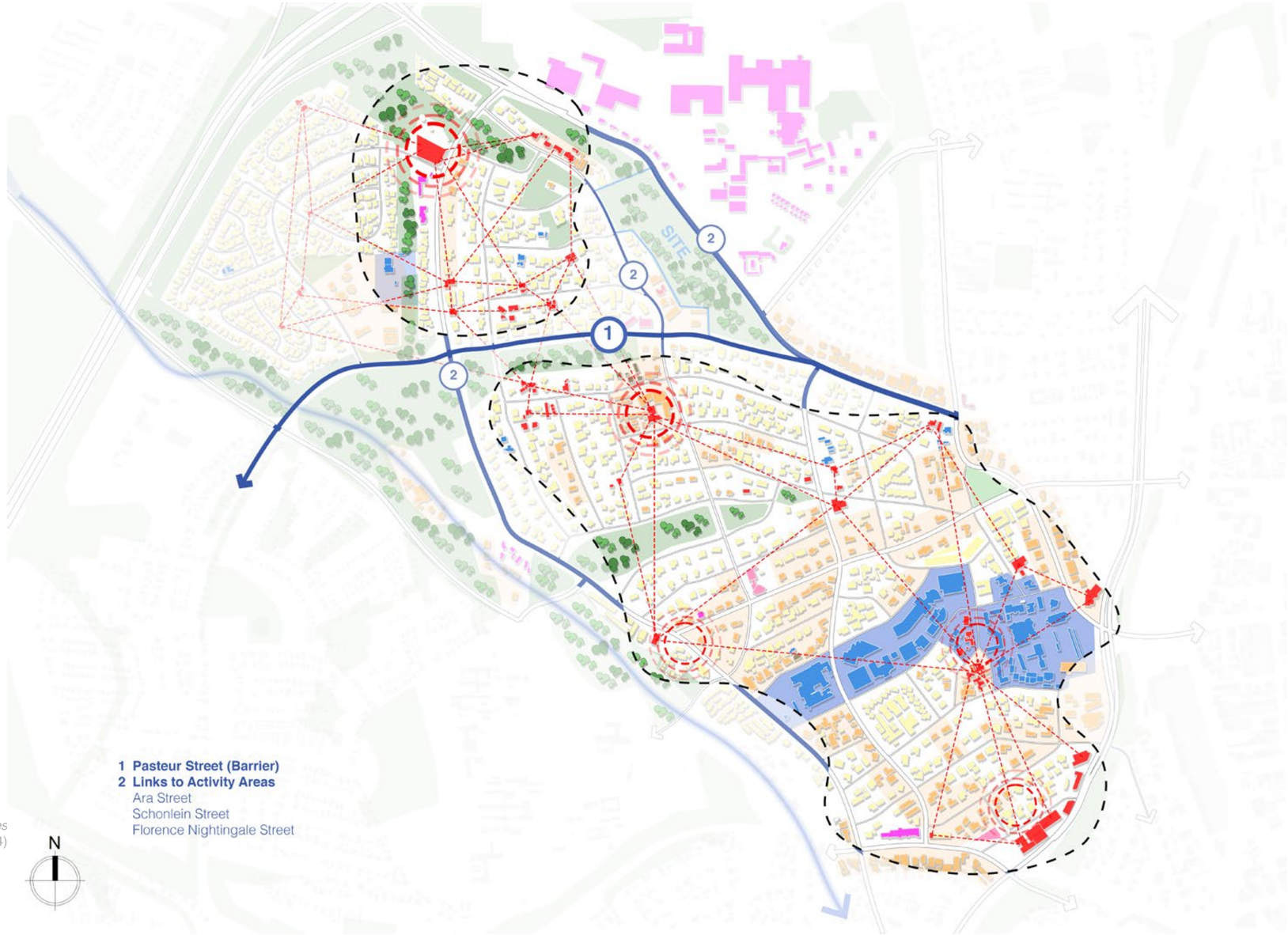


Figure 72: Opportunities (Author,2024)

URBAN FRAMEWORK

CONNECTING THE ACTIVITY ZONESV

Therefore, the site's positioning in relation to the two zones of activity present an opportunity to connect these areas by forming a continuation of public life and activity, by having the site designed as an urban corridor that connects the north of Windhoek West to it's south.

Furthermore, on an urban scale, the two activity zones express a divided public realm in Windhoek West, therefore its community capitals are leveraged, particularly the natural capital of the proposed site, the economic and human capital of the entrepreneurs to design the Social Nexus as a market place, spaces for retail, networking amongst entrepreneurs and recreational spaces. This theoretically translates the urban framework of the social nexus as a bridge between the two activity zones, by designing the project as an urban corridor that connects social activity in the northwest of the community to the south east.

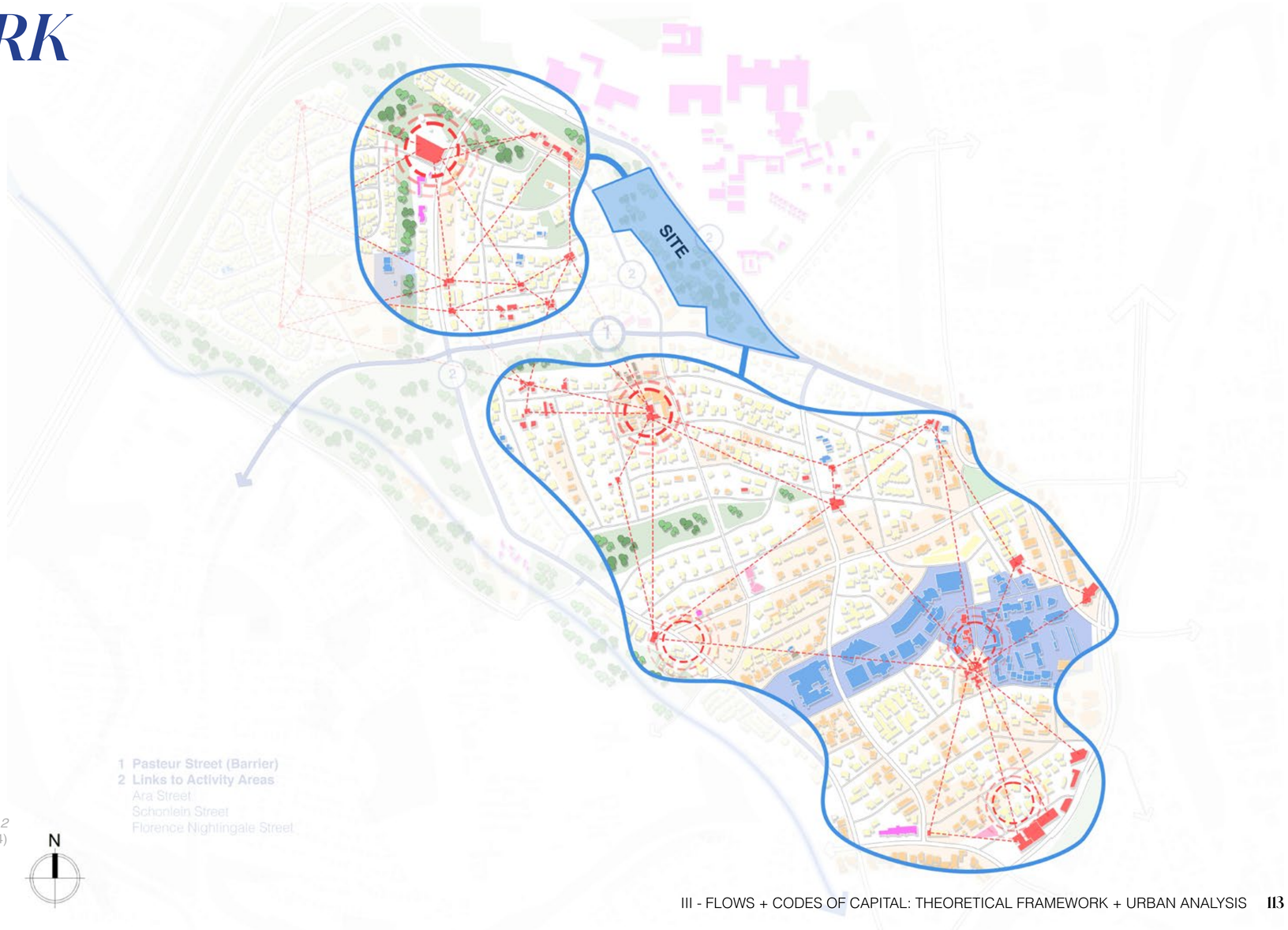


Figure 73: Urban Framework 2
(Author,2024)

3.3.1

HUMAN CAPITAL

AS A CATALYST FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Classical economics only recognised labour property, and physical assets as the three variables influencing economic growth before the development of the theoretical idea of social capitals. Michael Woolcock (1998) discusses how neo-classical economists such as Gary Becker and T.W Schultz introduced the notion of human capital, which includes their argument that the overall productivity and economic growth of a society is dependent on the education, skills development and training of the members of that society (Becker, 1993). “The current tools and most innovative ideas in the minds or hands of the brightest individuals will amount to little if that person has no access to others to inform, correct, assist, and disseminate their work” (Woolcock, 1998).

Therefore it is crucial to support local entrepreneurs through support programs and resources to foster economic development and community resilience (Greene & Storey, 2010). This aims to be accomplished by exploring the fluid and non-traditional nature of these creatives.

Firstly, as a pose to the standardized, monotone, and homogenized products sold in multinational, large scale enterprises, local entrepreneurs pride themselves on expressing a dynamic mode and approach in creating products to sell. An interview conducted on a handful of Namibian entrepreneurs, particularly fashion label owners operating in Windhoek outlined a conscious effort made by these individuals to ensure that they adequately address the wants and needs of their customers. One of them describe it as “a niche in the market where the retail industry often overlooks the needs and preferences of individuals who seek to be unique. Thus, by targeting this niche market segment, we can differentiate ourselves from competitors and establish a strong brand- identity” (Ngoshi, 2024). Writings by Harrison C. White support the statement made by one of the interviewees, as he describes how the key to economic growth is that producers must try to find niches to limit competition and increase profit. (White, 2001). This highlights how many entrepreneurs reject capitalist notions and models of market economy to create unique avenues of and styles of trade that does not enforce competitiveness amongst other entrepreneurs, as they each accommodate a unique customer base.

This essentially leverages the human capital of these creatives’ fluid and dynamic nature to create a market from the networks formed between the entrepreneurs.



Figure 74: Human Capital (Panos,2024)

3.3.2 THE NEX[US] AS

THE THIRD SPACE

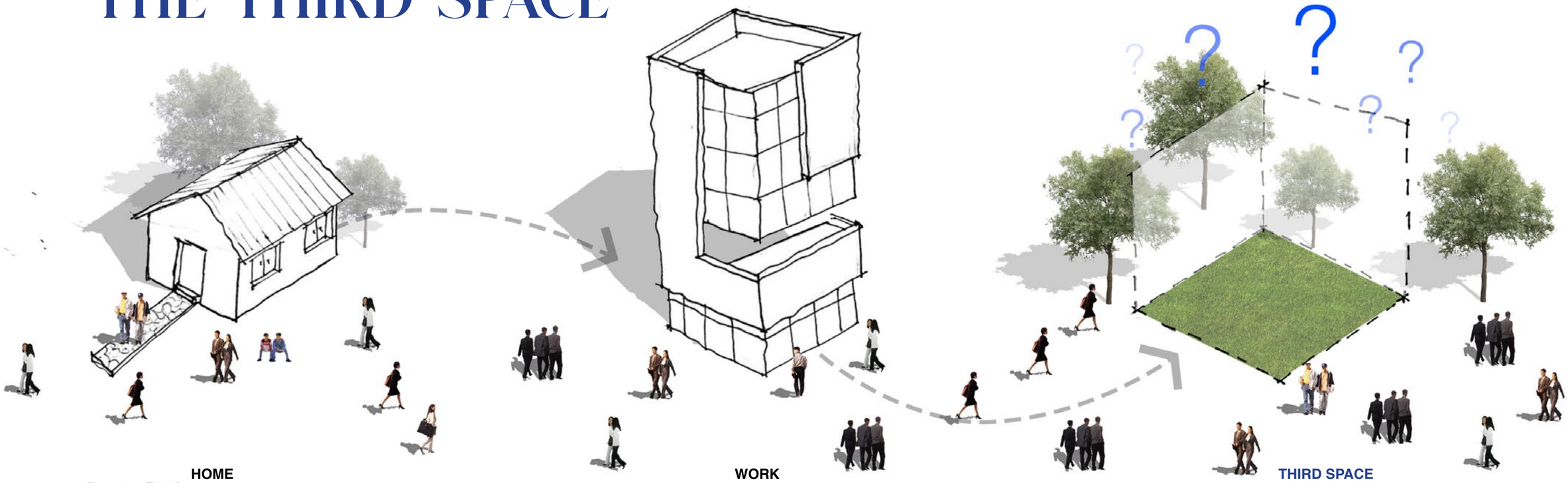


Figure 75: Third Space
(Author,2024)

The third space, a concept introduced by postcolonial theorist Homi Bhabha, could potentially describe the role of the Nex[us]. Bhabha defines it as an in-between space where cultural identities are negotiated and constructed through processes of hybridity and cultural exchange (Bhabha, 1990).

Hybridity refers to the blending of different cultural identities and perspectives, and Bhabha (1990) discusses how the processes of colonialization have led to the creation of hybrid cultural forms, such as how the colonialization of Namibia has influenced the current social dynamics of transitional spaces like Windhoek West. In relation to hybridity, Bhabha explores this concept in his essay “Aura and agora: on negotiating rapture and speaking between” (1994). Here he discusses the concepts of “aura” which refers to a heightened experience related with aesthetic encounters, and “agora” as a public space of assemblyand exchange (Bhabha, 1994).

In this way, the Nex[us] can foster a sense of community identity by intersecting diverse cultural identities on an urban scale.

3.3.3 DESIGNING THE NEX[US] THROUGH

THE PATTERN LANGUAGE

Taking all these theories and its interpretation of the Nex[us], the spatial translation of the urban framework is translated using the Pattern Language.

The pattern language is defined as a framework consisting of patterns, with each pattern describing a specific problem, the context in which it can be applied, along with a solution or a design guideline to follow. Depending on the context of the building, the pattern language is used to guide designers (Alexander, 1968, pp. 17-19). Not all of the 64 patterns illustrated by Alexander (1968) pertain to the context of a Nex[us], some of the patterns speak to a wider context of buildings beyond the community buildings. Thus, this pattern can be reinterpreted to better suit the context of this research to help create cohesive, functional, and aesthetically pleasing public spaces that promote wellbeing and to enhance the quality of life for the people of Windhoek West.

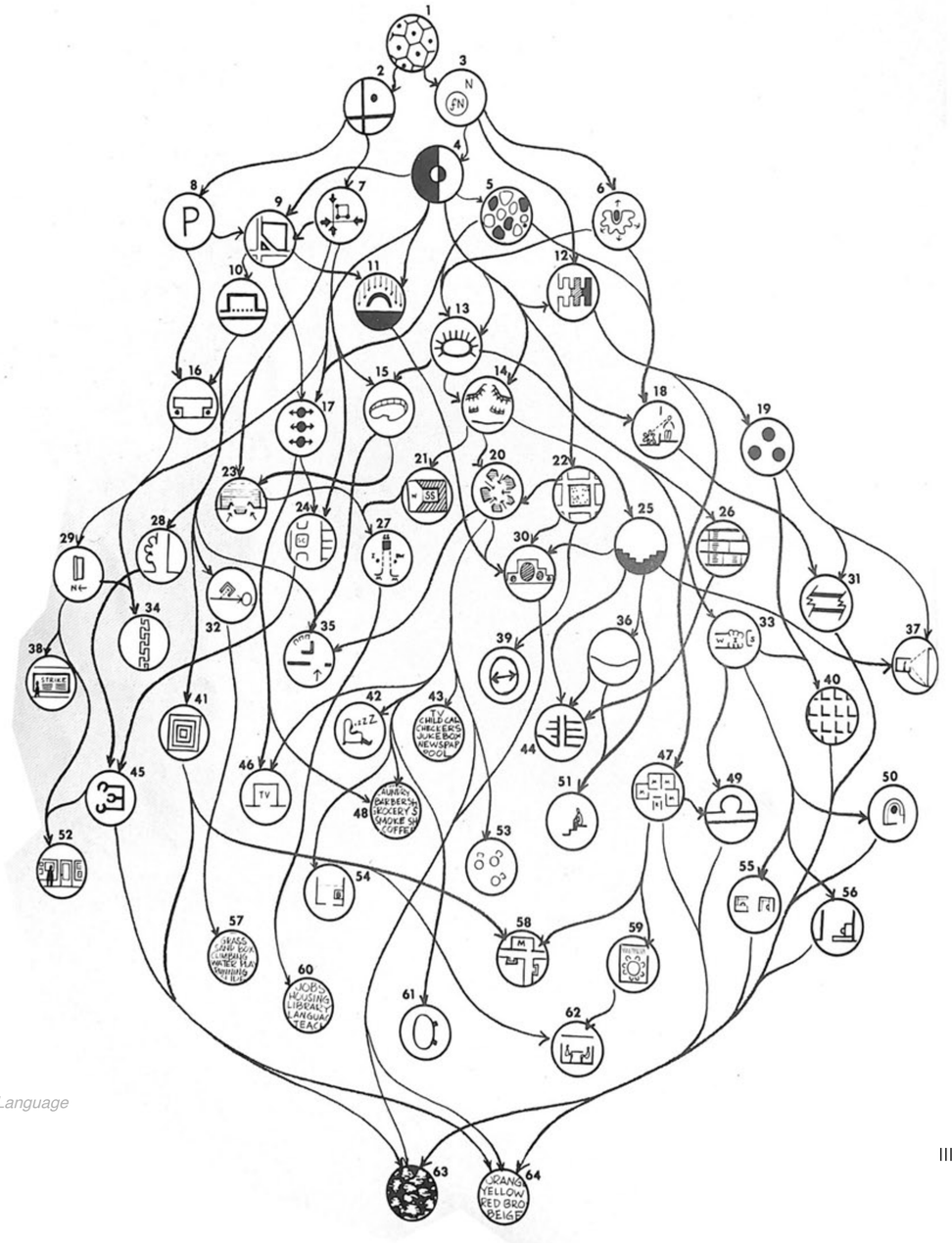


Figure 76: Pattern Language
(Alexander,1968)

Thus, certain patterns have been highlighted and contextualised as strategies to be considered in the later chapters of the report that will illustrate the design development of the Nex[us].

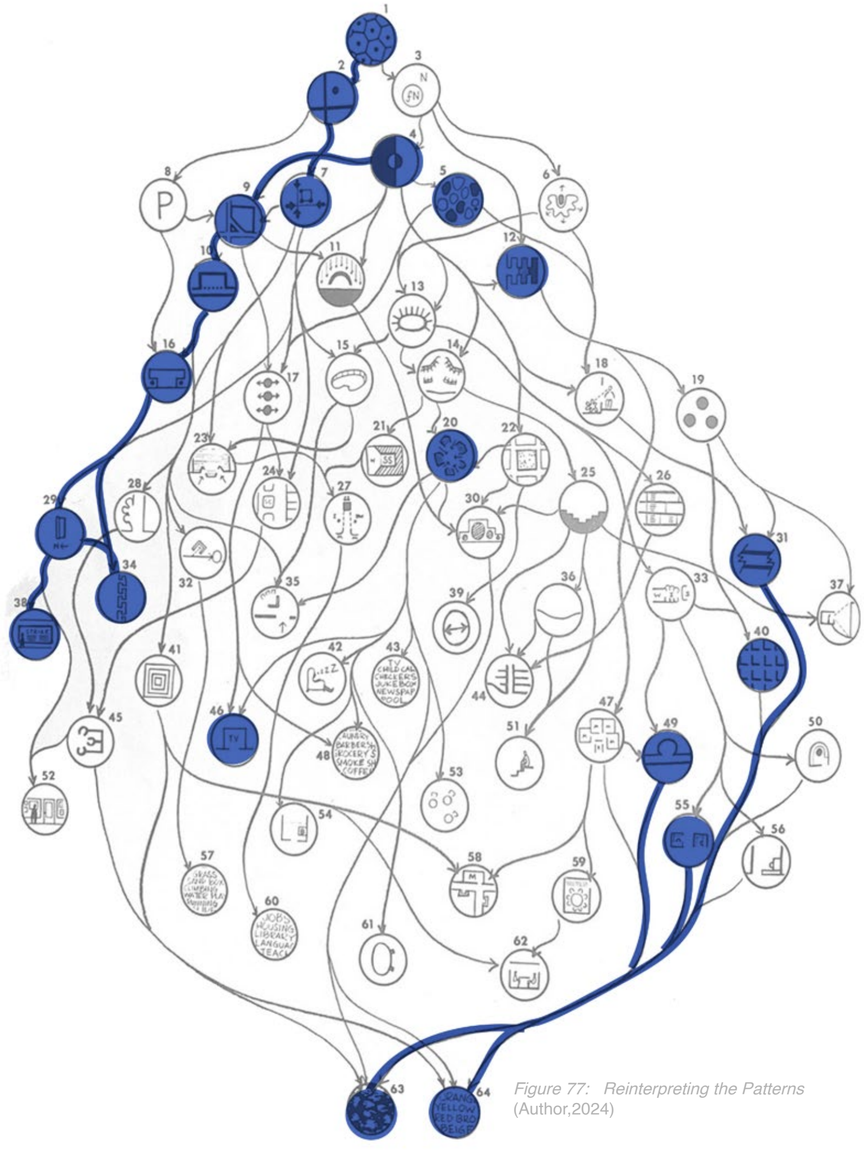


Figure 77: Reinterpreting the Patterns
(Author,2024)

1 TARGET AREAS

Large centers for service large target areas. In this context the target area is primarily Windhoek West.

2 LOCATED WITHIN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO MAJOR INTERSECTION

As stated earlier, the proposed site of the Nex[us] is located along Florence Nightingale Road, a major roadway that connects the city center to the residential areas north of the city

4 COMMUNITY TERRITORY

A significant portion of the Nex[us] must contain a public space for the community. This includes a public "arena" for social interaction and engagement, and to provide custodianship to the community, to foster a sense of ownership.

5 SMALL SERVICES WITHOUT RED TAPE

Each service(program) provided by the Nex[us] msut be autonomous as far as possible, to be identifiable and physically different.

7 ENTRANCE LOCATION

Main entry must be visible to the people approaching the Nex[us].

9 ARENA THOROUGHFARE

Natural pedestrian shortcuts through the Nex[us].

10 OPEN TO STREET

The public spaces of the Nex[us] must be open to the street for people who pass by to see.

12 LOCKED + UNLOCKED ZONES

The Nex[us] must be divided into three zones, zone A open from 9 am to 5 p.m. Zone B open from 9 am to 11 pm, and zone C open 24 hours.

16 NECKLACE OF COMMUNITY PROJECTS

The Nex[us] must have community projects situated on the ground plane.

20 ACTIVITY POCKETS

The Nex[us] must be filled with pockets of activity, with different points of access.

29 OUTDOOR SEATING

The Nex[us] must have seating areas that face onto pedestrian activity.

31 SHORT CORRIDORS

The Nex[us] must not have monotonous corridors or straight paths.

34 STREET NICHES

The Nex[us] must have niches along the buildings frontage, where it meets the street.

38 COMMUNITY WALL

The Nex[us] have community driven advertising such as murals and other branding.

40 STUDIO FLEXIBILITY

The Nex[us] must consist of flexible and adaptible studios and workspaces for the creators and entrepreneurs.

46 SOCIAL MEDIA

The Nex[us] must have social media platforms to advertise and broadcast to the city, as well as branding strategies such as billboards.

49 STAFF LOUNGE

The Nex[us] must have common areas for the stakeholders to interact with each other.

55 ADMIN

The Nex[us] must have an area for administrative and secretary functions.

63 POOLS OF LIGHT

The Nex[us] must make use of discernible pools of light.

64 WARM COLOURS

The Nex[us] must make use of warm colours throughout the space, to express a vibrancy of colour, textures and identities.

4 NEX[US] FOR THE COMMUNITY

EXTENDED ESSAYS + CASE STUDIES

1 THE MARKET AS A NEX[US]: TRADE AS A NEXUS POINT
2 THE MARKET AS AN ANTI-NEXUS: EXCLUSIONARY CAPITALISM
3 CONCEPTUAL APPROACH: RECONSTRUCTING THE MARKET

Before delving into the analysis of the proposed site and the design development of the Nex[us], important discussions must be had. These discussions include the next two chapters showcasing various case studies; the current chapter expands on the earlier descriptions of markets function as a nexus point, drawing from the lens of local market places, to better understand how past designers have addressed Namibia's urban retail landscape. Other case studies also discuss 'exclusionary capitalism' and how some markets function as anti-nexus points, to gain further perspective on what not to do when designing the architecture of the Nex[us].

The proceeding chapter than highlights findings from interviews conducted with student entrepreneurs to gain further insight on their positions of trade as well as how they envision the Nex[us] functioning.

The reason for having this section prior to the design is done to illustrate the considerations taken before designing the Nex[us], to better position the design in Namibia's context, by gaining lessons from local examples, as well as gaining further insight from the stakeholders of the project.

4.1 THE MARKET AS A

NEX[US]

EXTENDED ESSAY



Figure 78: SMEs (Author,2024)

As previously discussed, trade functions as a nexus point for the different social groups of Windhoek West. Markets can be understood as socially created spaces where buyers and sellers engage in frequent trades while adhering to a system of formal and informal regulations governing the relationships between rivals, suppliers, and customers (Fligstein & Calder, 2015). As much as this report argues for a "rebranding" of the community center for a new form of this typology that makes use of trade as a nexus point, it is important to note that a market as a community center is not a new concept. Notable examples already exist, therefore, the argument is the fact that not a clear enough distinction is made. There are existing situations where students entrepreneurs and young professionals access formal facilities to sell their products, however, there is no clear architectural language developed around it. This where the report operates; developing an architectural form that truly uplifts economic development for people's "sidehustles" – one that not just provides a facility for students and entrepreneurs to sell their products, but one that expresses their unique identities in an attractive manner for the public, one that creates a distinct environment, and lastly, a center that facilitates the growth of their business, that gives a popularity to the local brands and business ventures that takes them to a level that can compete with larger corporations. One that asserts a dominance in the trading sector for local business people and entrepreneurs alike.



Figure 79: Markets
(Author,2024)

In the context of Windhoek West and the entire city, the retail sector plays a critical role in shaping the identity of the society. Through multiple brands, advertising and marketing strategies, the retail industry dictates and controls urban culture. It is through this intangible power that exists within these trading structures that give them the authority and means to operate not just as a point of convergence, but as a symbol or marker of specific brand identities, pushing forth and perpetuating specific views either towards a multinational corporation or a local economy. Additionally, as stated by Jane Jacobs, public spaces such as markets greatly contribute to the urban vitality and health of communities. She emphasizes that these spaces facilitate diverse activity and interaction, fostering a sense of community (Jacobs, 1961).

As stated earlier, markets are social structures characterized by an extensive network of relationships between firms, workers, suppliers, customers, and governments (Fligstein & Dauter, 2007). Markets have been extensively explored in the fields of sociology however the primary perspectives on markets as social structures are continuously separate and distinct at a theoretical level, and from the perspective of many scholars on this level, they tend to focus on a particular aspect of markets and act as if it has a more general understanding (Fligstein & Dauter, 2007). The most common perspective posits that culture plays an important role in shaping markets. In the context of this research, this remark remains true, as the success of a marketplace will always depend on whether it has fulfilled the needs of its consumers. Subsequently this also assesses the markets effectiveness as a nexus point. It is for this reason that retail architecture have become more elaborate and complex, with a particular interest placed on branding, place-making and the creation of a shopping friendly atmosphere.

As time progresses, retail spaces are becoming more embedded into the public realm, with more articulate examples of retail spaces being designed and less shopping malls and city centres are being produced. In the context of Namibia, one very notable nexus point of a market space includes the Single Quarters Market (MARAIS, 2024).

CASE STUDY 1

SINGLE QUARTERS MARKET

KATUTURA, WINDHOEK - 2000

Since it opened in 2000, the single quarters market has been honed and treated as a beacon, showcasing the Namibian essence and flavour for locals and tourists. Through a dynamic programme that accomodates local traders, the market houses small businesses and provides a suitable platform for economic development for these entrepeneurs, all whilst offering a vibrant and unique public setting for the visitors of the market place, by exposing visitors to the heritage of Namibia through hand crafts, clothing, and most notably the local quisine offered there, known as “okapana” which is barbecue beef stips typically served on newspapers (MARAIS, 2024).

As stated by the architects, the main objective was to achieve a cohesive composition of the existing structures, which consisted of seven brick units and six steel sheds. This is accomplished by arranging the market place in a manner that allows the traders to use their spaces and display their products openly to their customers, and also to allow people to move in a manner that is deliberated by the pathways, yet allowing a fluid, and comfortable experience of the market (MARAIS, 2024).



Figure 80a: Single Quarters
(Marais, 2024)

In the context of the research, this market provides a good baseline for what it takes to achieve a market space that adequately addresses the needs of its users, activates and enhances the public realm, and creates a unique and vibrant atmosphere, all accomplished with a limited set of resources. The Single Quarters reflects a model of community cohesion and entrepreneurial brand identity rooted in Namibian culture, serving as the tool for bringing people together, allowing for cooperation and the evoking of a multidimensional reality (Rynkowska-Sachse, 2014).







Top to bottom Figure 80a-c: Single Quarters
(Marais, 2024)

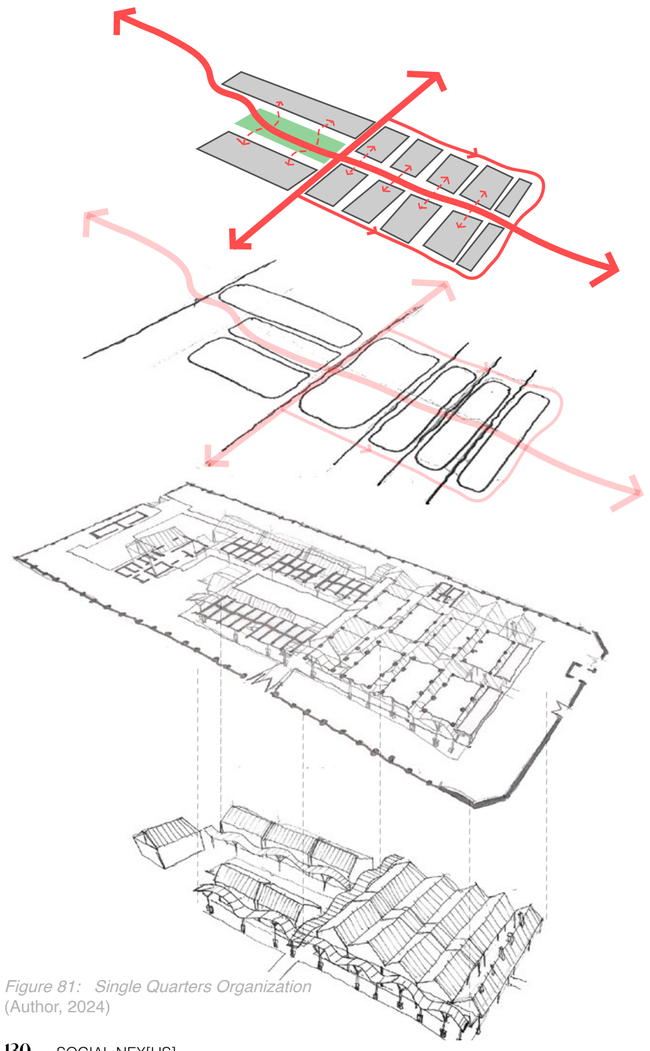


Figure 81: Single Quarters Organization
(Author, 2024)

MOVEMENT

Movement occurs on the main walkway that runs in an east-west direction, whilst the secondary walkway runs north-south. This creates an dual axis that intersects perpendicular to each other, subsequently creating flexible movement routes for people, which is further aided by the open plan layout of the market.

SPATIAL ARRANGEMENT

The market is primarily aranged in a linear shape along the north south axis. These spaces are anchored by the courtyard towards the south, and the most popular portion of the market on the far north, consisting of stalls that are composed of barbecue that are used to make “okapana”, a local quisine among Namibians. In between these two nodes are open stalls that are separated by the type of trade, ranging from fresh foods, to clothing and jewelery.

PROGRAMME + FUNCTIONS

The programme of the market place is mainly seperated by the east - west axis; towards the north of this axis includes an open plan with trading stalls for local vendors to sell their products, and the south containing up to 40 individual trading units.

The trading stalls are dynamic and flexible to change, therefore traders who require more space or a more open area to operate in make use of these stalls whilst traders who require particular workstations and equipment opt for a the individual trading units. The types of trade include traditional food, and clothing in the open trading stalls, whilst artisans, barbers, tailors, and other vendors.



Figure 82: Single Quarters Organization 2
(Author, 2024)

STRUCTURE + FORM

The market consists of six steel sheds towards the north for the open trading stalls, and seven brick units which consist of the individual trading stalls on the south of the market.

Because most of the stalls front east or west, the walkways are covered by wave like roof coverings, to enliven the elevation. The individual trading stalls have garage doors, so that when a stall door is opened it becomes part of the walkway. The doors are painted in bright colours with different designs to create a colourful effect when it is closed.

In conclusion, the Single Quarters Market is arranged around a dual axis, created by two main walkways. The market stalls are arranged around these axes. This arrangement allows for free movement and a prioritization of the experience of the visitors as the spaces are organized around the walkways.

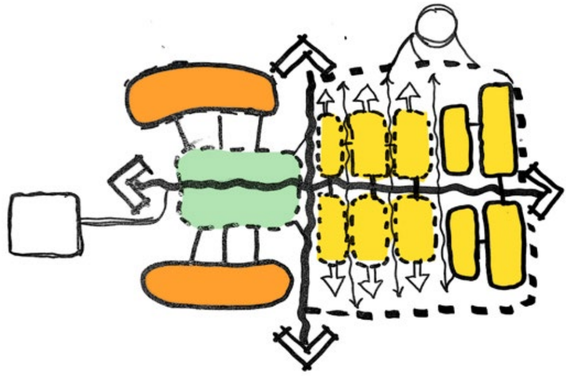


Figure 83: Single Quarters Organization 3
(Author, 2024)

CASE STUDY 2

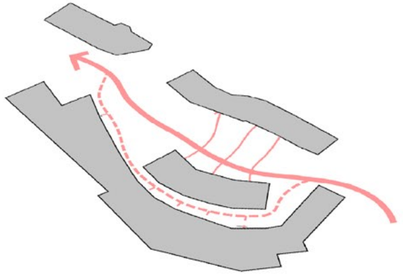
COSDEF ARTS & CRAFTS CENTER

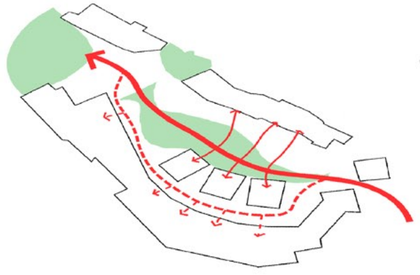
SWAKOPMUND, NAMIBIA - 1991

Another notable example that makes use of this approach include the COSDEF Arts and Crafts Centre in Swakopmund, Namibia. Constructed in 1991, the (Community Skills Development Foundation) COSDEF Arts and Crafts Center has been serving the community of Swakopmund through entrepreneurial opportunities created by spaces that accommodate people who do not have a formal educational background (Scheepers, 2023). This provides them with vocational education and traing for the production of arts and crafts. This includes production studios, a dance studio, a hall, food stalls,and retail kiosks. As the center is designed primarily for these individuals, the programme also includes a public realm that makes the space inviting to all residents, which inlcudes the ampitheater, a restaurent, exhibition space, and a sculpture garden. This provides spaces to showcase and retail national arts and crafts to tourists and the locals (Scheepers, 2023).



Figure 84: COSDEF Arts & Crafts Center
(Scheepers, 2024)





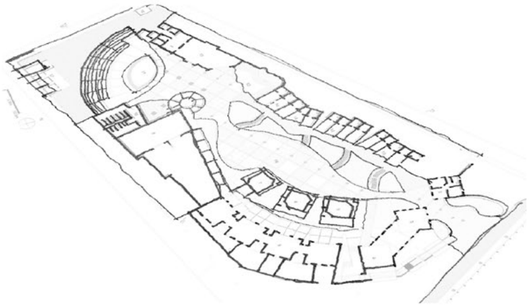


Figure 85: COSDEF Arrangement
(Author,2024)

MOVEMENT

Movement occurs on a main route that is linear in shape, as it runs through the middle of the building. This path way functions as an axis that connects the entrance to the ampitheater on the other side.

This creates an experience for users in which they move through the various spaces and are surrounded by all the activity, making the axis a spine that also functions as a center of activity and public life.

SPATIAL ARRANGEMENT

The axis is defined by public spaces, this includes a sculpture garden, a play ground, and the ampitheater. The market spaces are organized around this spine of social activity. providing a main route that grants access to all the kiosks.

The secondary route is used by the traders as it provides access to the studios and conference rooms.

PROGRAMME + FUNCTIONS

The floorplan is organic in shape, as it is built around the pathways, giving the center a unique form and shape to it. The programme includes 4 skills training/ production studios, 4 classrooms, a dance studio/ 100 person functional halls, 250 person ampitheater, restaurant, food stalls, 10 retail/ production outlets for small scale crafters and artists, 3 retail kiosks for established crafters and admin offices and other support facilities.



Figure 86: COSDEF Arrangement 2
(Author,2024)

In conclusion, the arts and crafts centre is organized around the main axis that connects the entrance to the ampitheater. a secondary route is created for the crafters and other traders to privately use.

The public and social functions are placed along this axis, whilst the market spaces are arranged around the axis, altogether creating a linear arrangement that centralizes the public spaces and provides access to the retail spaces

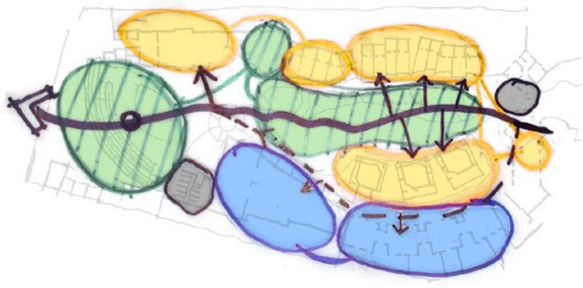


Figure 87: COSDEF Arrangement 3
(Author,2024)

4.2 THE MARKET AS AN

ANTi-NEXUS

EXCLUSIONARY CAPITALISM

As an abstract exploration, the conceptual experiments conducted consisted of an abstract form finding exploration with the use of a carrybag. The particular choice of this material for the charette was inspired by the sustenance and reliance of this object in every level of trade. Carry bags are used to carry the products bought in stores. Thus, this element was metaphorically abstracted to conceptualize various forms in an effort to establish an architectural language for the Nex[us], by creating a canopy or enclosing that figuratively and physically relate to the function of a carry bag, to shelter the architectural intervention and its occupants as it would with products bought in a store.

The bags were cut into strips, with each strip meant to represent different members of society, as well as to use the material as a medium for framing and connecting the various event spaces of the Nex[us]. These strips were then pinned down onto a whiteboard and different curvilinear forms were created. Throught the three iterations, a dynamic and organic rhythm began to showcase throughout each exploration. Spatially/ architecturally speaking, the exploration yielded interesting results that had the potential to inform design decisions imposed in later sections of this report.





Figure 88: Design Exploration 1
(Author,2024)



Figure 89a: First Iteration
(Author,2024)



Figure 89b: Second Iteration
(Author,2024)



Figure 89c: Third Iteration
(Author,2024)



Figure 89d: Forth Iteration
(Author,2024)

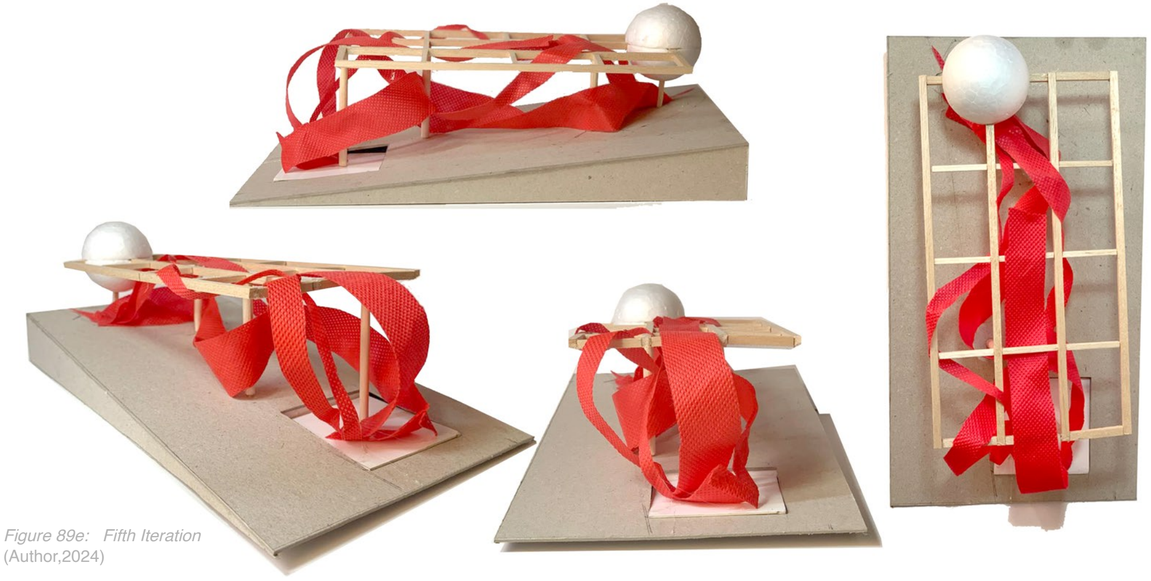


Figure 89e: Fifth Iteration
(Author,2024)

However, theoretically, a very important detail was missed during the course of the exploration. This is what has sparked this section of this chapter titled “anti-nexus”. The major detailed missed was the branding of the carry bag used. Although it did not play any role in the selection of the material (the choice was merely based on the availability of any kind of packaging and the fabric of it, not the brand), it should have, as the branding represented “Mr Price”, a multinational corporation. This inadvertently represents the conglomerate companies that neoliberal economic policies benefit to the detriment of SMEs and other local brands, the very individuals this research positioned itself to support.

Excusing the fabric and quality of the material itself, the brand names of these multinational companies exist as silent dictators of urban and social culture in Windhoek, functioning as a dominant code that regulates not just trade in the retail industry, but also the identity image of the city (Lynch, 1959).

Therefore, before markets can be further explored as an abstract community center, it is crucial to note that not all markets and trade facilities positively enhance urban vitality. This brings the report to a critical discussion about exclusionary capitalism and the market as an anti-nexus. Under neo-capitalist systems, most malls and shopping centers, while offering spaces for continuous community engagement and activity, are equally detrimental to the economic development, cohesion, and inclusion of small-scale entrepreneurs. In many ways, the prevalence of multinational brands and the dominance of large corporations create barriers that exclude smaller, local businesses from thriving. This exclusionary capitalism undermines the potential for diverse, vibrant economic ecosystems and reinforces a homogenized urban culture dictated by a few powerful entities. David Harvey's concept of "accumulation by dispossession" perfectly describes how the capital accumulation usually occurs at the expense of smaller, local businesses. Capital tends to concentrate in the larger corporations, which subsequently dominate the retail landscape (Harvey, 2001).

Two case studies of shopping malls in WIndhoek are analyzed to explain how these markets, act as anti-nexuses, opposing the inclusive, interconnected vision that the Nex[us] strives to embody.



CASE STUDY 3

MAERUA MALL

The first example includes Maerua Mall, one of the largest shopping centers in Namibia. A key nexus point in the country's capital, this regional shopping center is situated close to the heart of the city, towards the more affluent suburbs. Maerua Mall opened as one of the first shopping centers in Windhoek in the early 2000's, and through various additions and extensions, the shopping center thrived as a popular retail space for the residents of the city.

Figure 90: Maerua Mall (Mattys, 2018)

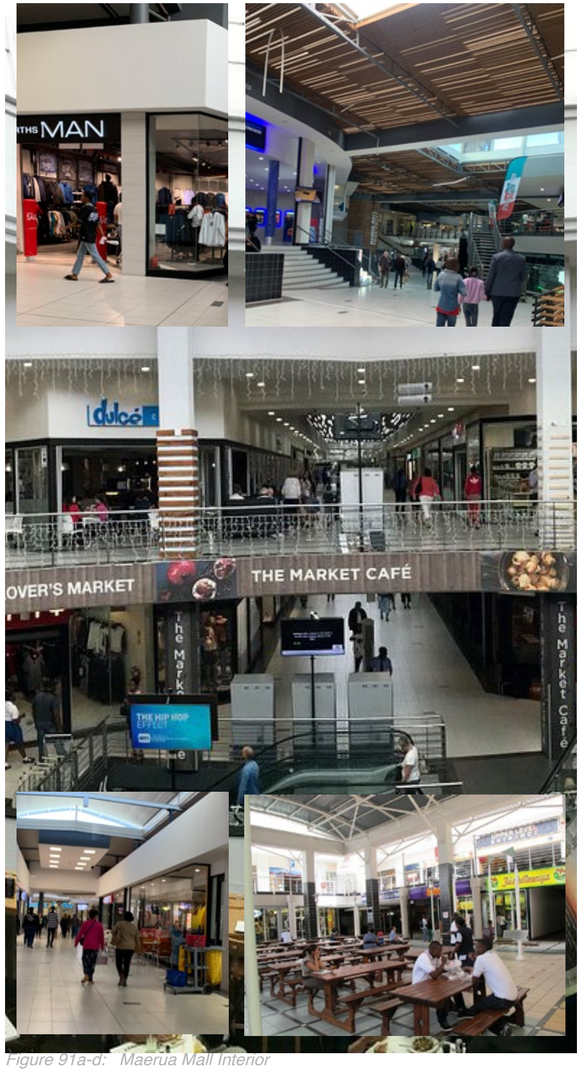


Figure 91a-d: Maerua Mall Interior
(Author,2024)



Figure 92: Multi-national Coorporations
(Author,2024)

As an anti-nexus for SMEs, the architectural language of this mall perpetuates a preference for the bigger companies, through the use of large shopping stalls, increasing rental values to the point where few local enterprises can operate at a profit margin. This is further exacerbated by lease agreements that include terms that make it very difficult for smaller businesses to thrive in these trade centers (Mwedhinanga,2024). This is because neo-capitalist structures are designed to maximize profit and minimize risk, resulting in an economic retail structure biased towards established, and multinational brands that can afford high rents and offer financial stability. Therefore, these large commercial developments that function as nexus points in societies displace smaller businesses, further disrupting local economies and community dynamics (Jacobs, 1961).

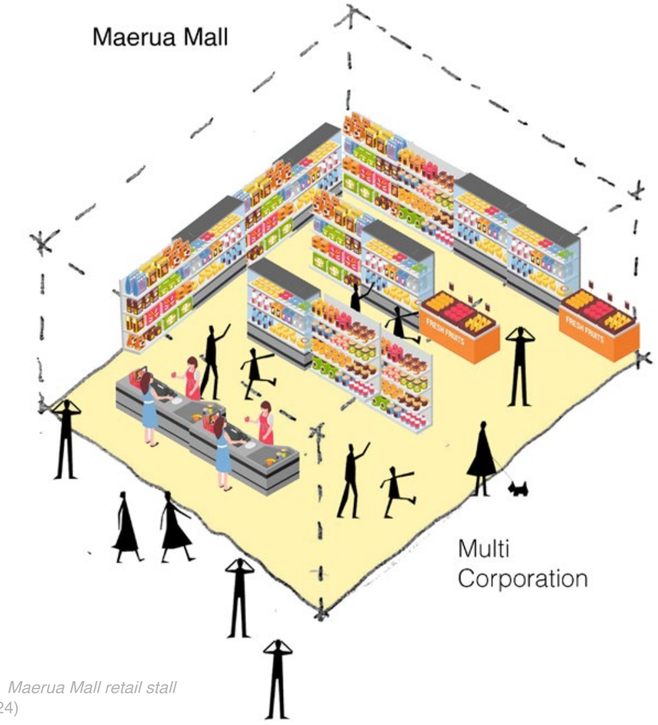


Figure 93: Maerua Mall retail stall
(Author,2024)

Inasmuch as Maerua Mall includes social arenas and recreational venues, “public spaces” such as entertainment centers, Virgin Active Gym, and the Ster Kinekor cinema, shopping centers of this nature still promote a consumerist culture, where the social interactions and community engagement are regulated through commercial transactions (Borden, 2000). Simply put, one has to spend money for an opportunity for social interaction. Additionally and most crucially, this mall offers a homogenized shopping experience. The reason spaces such as the previously described Single Quarters Market stand out in the retail and trading landscape is because they offer a unique cultural experience found nowhere else in the city (Shikemeni, 2017).

The accompanying malls of Wernhill Park and the Grove Mall include similar flagship stores and brands. This ultimately erodes local culture and business, leading to a loss of unique locally owned shops and cultural diversity. More importantly, what centers like Maerua Mall has done to the retail industry of the city is overlay a static, monotonous environment of brand identity that produces a less vibrant social life, consequently overshadowing the more unique and vibrant local brand identities. The commodification of leisure has inadvertently impacted society’s perceptions of public space and community engagement in these spaces, consequently devaluing diverse leisure experiences (Wearing & Wearing, 2010) such as that of the Single Quarters Market.

CASE STUDY 4

FUNKY TOWN MALL

The second case study of a shopping malls highlights an interesting observation that adds to this report's argument for a specific architectural language of the Nex[us] to be developed. The Khomas Grove, informally known as Funky Town, was built following the neoliberal ideals of shopping malls similar to Maerua Mall. Constructed more recently as opposed to the first case study, this shopping center is built in Khomasdal, a diverse residential constituency located north west of the city, occupied by lower to middle class families. This shopping center was built as an addition to the consumerist driven trade centers that plague the city's retail landscape, with large trading stalls, large parking lots, multi storey plan, and an enclosed atmosphere.

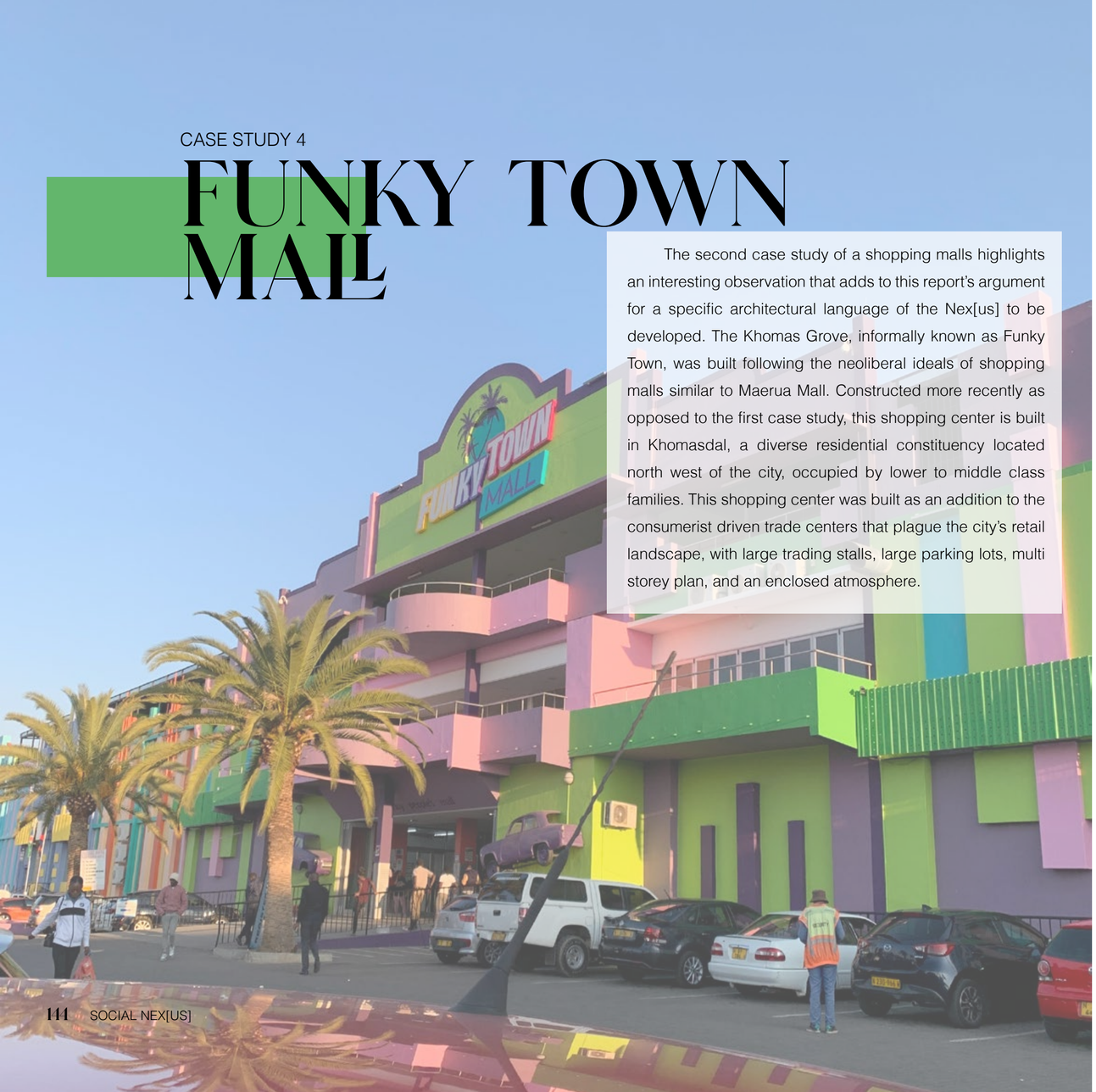


Figure 94: Funky Town
(Author,2024)

Different to Maerua Mall, the Khomas Grove Mall only consists of a few international stores, with the most significant consisting of Pep, Woermann Brock, and Choppies. An unattractiveness in the mall towards its other target brands is presented in the placement of the mall in a less affluent area of the city. Subsequently, the mall consists of a large amount of vacant stalls. A good amount of the stalls began getting occupied by local vendors and retailers.

One might say that this is a good initiative as these local enterprises gain empowerment. However this is not quite the case. The vibrancy expected to be created by this phenomenon in which the excluded individuals make use of the space, is simply non-existent. As stated earlier, Funky Town was built on the principles of capitalism and consumerism, thus, these deliberate architectural elements work against the daring entrepreneurial individuals who have attempted to operate in this territory. Majority of the occupied spaces only take a small portion of the trade stall, as they are too big for vendors to use. The resulting trend is less than half of the stall being used, creating a negative sense of belonging and placement for these vendors in this mall.



Figure 95a-e: Funky Town Interior
(Author,2024)

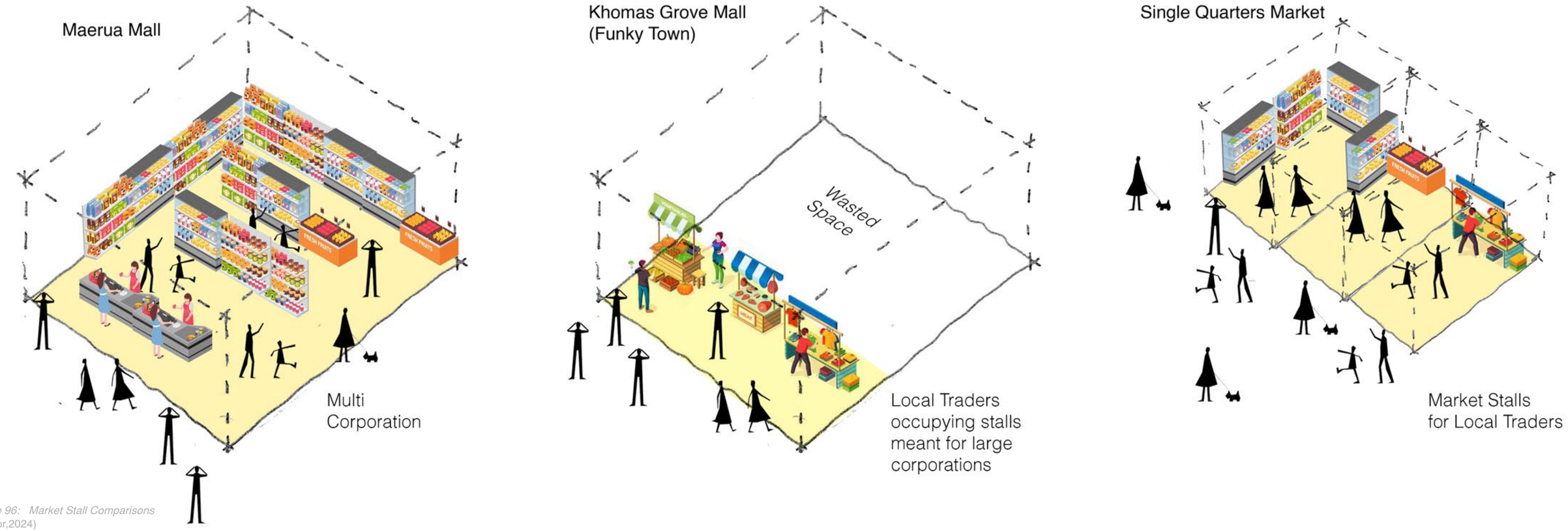


Figure 96: Market Stall Comparisons
(Author,2024)

Compared to the design principles of the Single Quarters, which included an open plan style of trade that blurs the internal and external spaces, Funky Town distinctly and non-discreetly distinguishes inside from outside by created an enclosed, self-contained environment.

This only works for the international stores and not local enterprises, as SMEs only thrive in situations where visual permeability from the exterior is achieved. This isn't needed in the spaces for the big brands, they already have such a large enough following that they can be hidden in a mall that their customers will make the effort to find them. Simply put, if a local retailer's business is not adequately placed in the line of sight of passer byers of the site, no one will try to find the store as they lack a strong following.

Therefore, it is for all these factors that it is crucial to develop a framework and architectural language that rejects notions of homogeneity, consumerist lifestyles and enclosed atmospheres, to adopt a free form, open, and flexible plan to accommodate the SMEs.

4.3 CONCEPTUAL APPROACH

RECONSTRUCTING

THE MARKET

The findings of the 4 case studies provided a baseline on architectural typologies of the marketplaces in Namibia's context, and how they foster social cohesion positively and negatively.

Taking from these case studies, the conceptual approach for the Nex[us] essentially reconstructs the market for local vendors and SMEs. To achieve this, this involves promoting flexibility and openness. Learning from the Single Quarters Market, an open plan layout would be beneficial as it will accomodate a variety of trades and allow for dynamic use by the vendor. In an effort not to make the same mistake as the Khomas Grove Mall, it would be more suitable to have smaller stalls for traders.

Another factor includes visual permeability, to ensure that the Nex[us] is visually accessible from the outside is crucial for attracting customers, especially for microenterprises that rely on visibility and foot traffic. Additionally, the nexus should be integrated with the surrounding public realm, enhancing the urban vitality and encouraging community interaction. The public spaces within the Nex[us] such as courtyards or plazas, can function as focal points for social activity.

This approach therefore emphasizes the importance of rejecting homogenity in market design. Instead of enclosed, self contained environments like that of Maerua Mall, the Nex[us] for SMEs should embrace diverse, vibrant, and culturally rich spaces that celebrate local identities and communities.

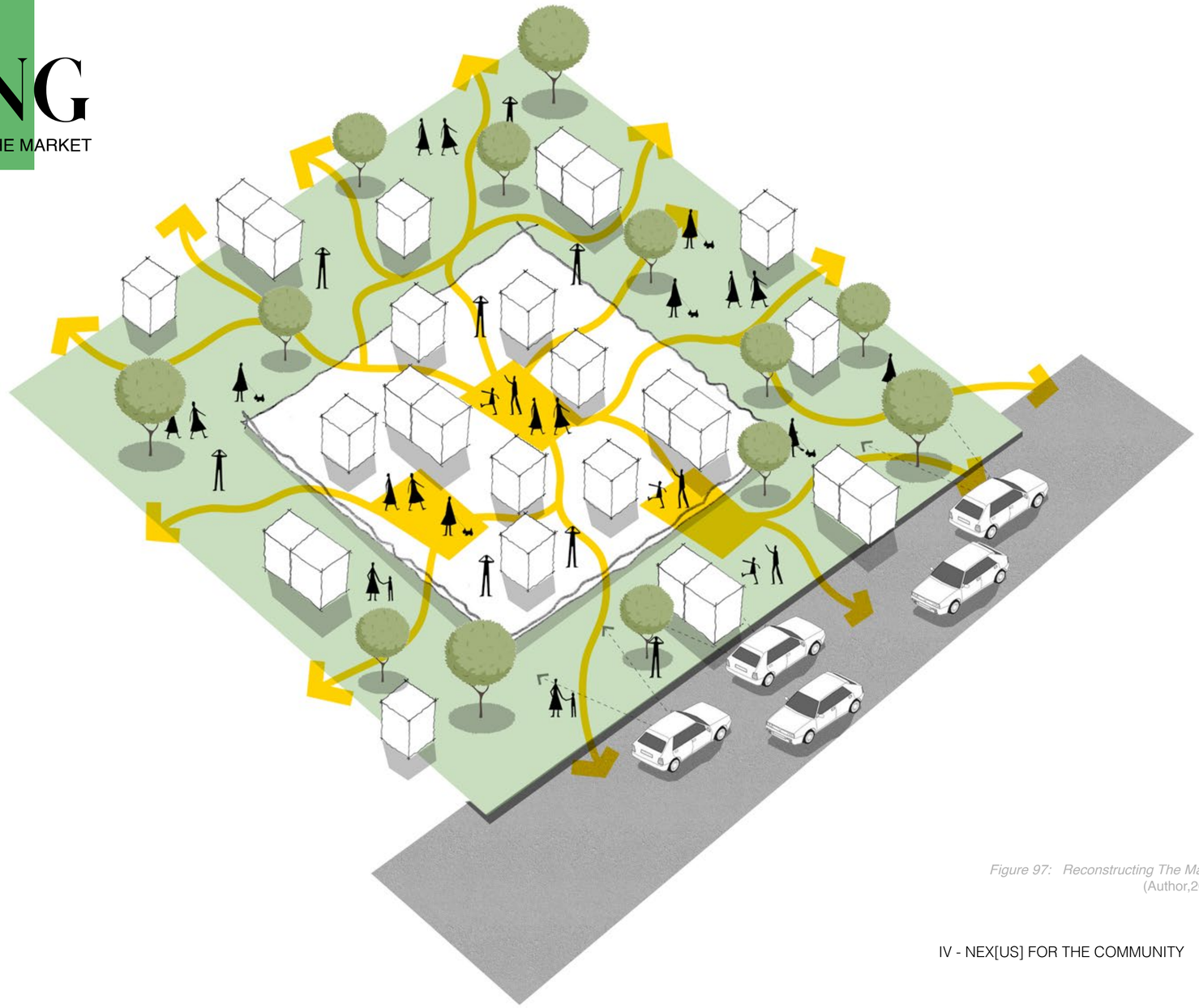


Figure 97: Reconstructing The Market
(Author,2024)

5 YOU CANT SPELL NEXUS WITHOUT US!!

CASE STUDY INTERVIEWS WITH STAKEHOLDERS

1 ESTABLISHING “US”: THE HUMAN CAPITAL
2 EXPLORING THE ONTOLOGICAL ANARCHY OF HUMAN CAPITAL

“We have a lot of people making things locally but don’t have a place where you can find it.”

Jerobeam Mwedhinanga,
Owner of Vinyls Music Cafe
2024

Taking from the discussions of the earlier chapters, the proposed Nex[us] seeks to promote the local market force, SMEs and micro enterprises by providing a platform for them to display their works and cater to the city.Therefore, various enterprises were identified to illustrate the various stakeholders that the Nex[us] aims to accomodate.

Majority of these entrepreneurs operate remotely from their homes, and others operating from rented residences around the city. As will be outlined in the interviews in this section, it will be highlighted that these future stakeholders seek a platform for networking and collaborating with other creatives, and also to advertise their works to a larger audience.

CLOTHING + RETAIL

1 GOODBOY ARCHIVES	4 LIGHTWORK CLOTHING	7 DA BROAD WEAR
10 AUTHENTIC CLOTHING WEAR	13 ASHEN ARCHIVE	16 21 PETALS
2 SOFTLIFE STREETWEAR	5 ANGELIC HEARTS	8 PARAMOUNT STITCH
11 BETTER DAYS NA	14 GENIUS WORLDWIDE	17 MEIYZ. CO
3 FEJ SE FRESH	6 MI. CO FASHION	9 THE HEADWEAR COMPANY
12 THE MEN’S CORNER	15 TODIA THRIFT	18 NOBBLY

Figure 98a: Student + Local Entrepreneurs
(Author,2024)

JEWELLERY, ACCESSORIES + LIFESTYLE

FOOD CATERING + EVENTS + LIFESTYLE

19 FENR	22 JEWELRY EMPIRE	25 ADORNET	28 U & R BOX	31 AMISDAY CLUB	34 GRAB-N-GO NAM	37 WING IT	40 STICK & WHISTLE
20 HAVEN JEWELRY	23 ALINA'S VINTAGE ATTIRE	26 LILY LUXE	29 M & C BOUTIQUE	32 VYNILS MUSIC CAFE	35 KASSIE BURGER	38 DOLCE & KAPANA	41 NUNU'S KITCHEN
21 DAY TRIP	24 LITTLE GLAM JEWELS	27 POPYENI JEWELS	30 LAVISH HAIR BOUTIQUE	33 FLAMINGOS	36 HOTSPOT BURGER	39 CHILL HUB	42 DIEBANGOS

Figure 98b: Student + Local Entrepreneurs (Author,2024)

CASE STUDY INTERVIEWS



Figure 99: Human Capital
(Author,2024)

As briefly discussed earlier, ontological anarchy refers to the concept where traditional structures and definitions of existence are fluid, dynamic and not bound to fixed rules or hierarchies. (Bey, 1985). In the context of human capital, the Nexus seeks to explore how local student entrepreneurs embody a non-traditional and fluid understanding of their human capital.

Q+A with GOODBOY ARCHIVES

IMAGINE THIS

Good Boy Archives is an emerging Namibian fashion label that seamlessly intergrates modern craftsmanship with refined sophistication and contemporary aesthetics with a particular focus on catering to the youth through minimalist streetwear pieces.

"Our vision is characterized by resourcefulness and creativity. Coming from a limited industry, we draw inspiration from our imagination and utilize whatever resources are available to bring our ideas to life for our audience. We strive to push boundaries and challenge conventions, constantly seeking innovative ways to express our vision through our fashion creations." Our unique approach involves up cycling clothing from thrifted materials, breaking them down, and transforming them into exclusive ready-to-wear items. In addition, we have diversified our operations by sourcing blank garments and applying our original graphic designs through screen printing, showcasing our artistic expression.

IMAGINATION BROUGHT US THIS FAR

NGOSHI
FOUNDER OF GOODBOY ARCHIVES

Figure 100: GoodBoy Archives
(Ngoshi,2024)











Figure 101a-e: GoodBoy Archives
(Ngoshi,2024)

As their motto suggests, GBA stands out as one of the leading NAMIBIAN fashion labels for it's innovatiON and unique CHARACTER.

Forming an identity that transcends fashion and clothing, the fashion label has created a SOCIAL atmosphere and CARRIED THE hype around IT'S BRAND THROUGH THE DIFFERENT MEDIUMS OF WINDHOEK CITY'S SOCIAL SCENE SUCH AS ARTS, SPORTS, ENTERTAINMENT, MUSIC, AND MORE.

"Our target audience consists of youth and fashion enthusiasts who seek to stand out and express their individuality through their clothing choices. These individuals are looking for unique and distinctive pieces that set them apart from the mainstream and allow them to showcase their personal style. They are not satisfied with the conventional offerings of the fashion industry and are constantly seeking new and innovative designs that reflect their personality and values."

FACTORS INFLUENCING MARKET CHOICE



Figure 102a: Unique Fashion
(Author,2024)

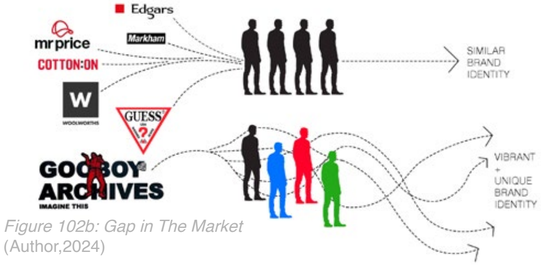


Figure 102b: Gap in The Market
(Author,2024)

1 Demand for Unique Fashion

There is a growing demand among our target audience for clothing that allows them to express their individuality and stand out from the crowd. We aim to cater to this demand by offering unique and unconventional designs that resonate with their sense of style.

2 Gap in the Market

We have identified a gap in the market where the fashion industry often overlooks the needs and preferences of individuals who seek to be different and unique. By targeting this niche market segment, we can differentiate ourselves from competitors and establish a strong brand identity.

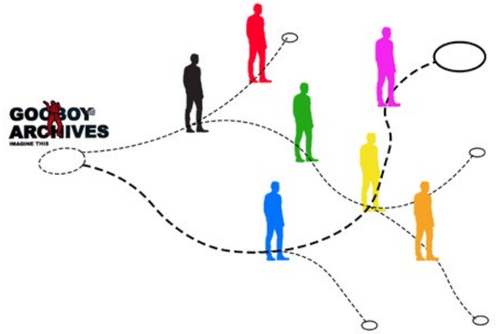


Figure 102c: Changing Trends
(Author,2024)



Figure 102d: Cultural Influence
(Author,2024)

3 Changing Trends

Fashion trends are constantly evolving, and there is a shift towards more personalized and expressive styles. Our target audience is influenced by these changing trends and seeks out clothing brands that align with their evolving fashion preferences.

4 Cultural Influences

Cultural influences play a significant role in shaping fashion preferences and trends. Our target audience may be influenced by subcultures, music, art, and other cultural movements that celebrate individuality and self-expression.

In our creative process, we utilize a variety of specific equipment and tools to bring our ideas to life. These include:



One screen printing machine

Used for applying our original graphic designs onto garments.



Domestic sewing machine

Utilized for sewing and stitching various fabric pieces together to create our clothing items.



Fabric Paint

Used for creating original artwork and graphic designs for our clothing.



Cameras

Used for photography and capturing images of our products for marketing and promotion.



Computers + Adobe Software

Essential for designing and digitizing graphics, as well as for administrative tasks.

Figure 103: Equipment
(Author,2024)

WORKSPACE

Currently, our workspace setup is limited to a small area within my apartment. The workstation consists of a desk that houses the screen printing machine, as well as canvases and paint for artwork creation. While this setup allows us to carry out basic screen printing and painting tasks, it presents several challenges and limitations.



Figure 104: Workspace
(Ngoshi,2024)

One major limitation is the lack of space and resources for more advanced equipment and processes. For example, we do not have a dedicated studio space with the necessary equipment like a large screen printing machine, a screen curing machine, pressure washer station, or a drying station for screens. These limitations hinder our ability to scale up production and carry out more intricate and complex projects.

Additionally, the limited workspace makes it challenging to collaborate with other creatives or bring larger ideas to life. Without a dedicated studio environment, we miss out on the opportunity for brainstorming sessions, shared resources, and collaborative projects that could enhance our creative output.

Furthermore, the absence of a dedicated photoshoot studio limits our ability to showcase our products effectively. We rely on improvised setups and natural lighting, which may not always yield professional-quality results.

Despite these challenges, we make the most of our current workspace setup by maximizing efficiency and creativity within the available resources. However, we recognize the need for a more expansive and equipped studio space to fully realize our creative vision and potential.

Q+A with SOFT LIFE

SOFT LIFE STREETWEAR is a Namibian owned clothing brand. The brand currently comprises of streetwear ranging from tees, hats, hoodies, and trousers. We are yet to incorporate various other products such as jewelry, sports attitre, designer goods, and footwear”

Our Vision is to style and outlive fashion trends.

As their motto suggests, soft life’s philosophy is rooted in the idea that achieving a soft, effortless life requires dedication and hard work. This duality is beautifully represented in their logo, where the lightning bolt symbolizes the intensity and power of hard work , which is juxtaposed with the flowing script of ‘softlife’.

The emphasis on hard work and dedication is seen in how the brand uses their empower individuals creative output to empower their customer base to take control of their lives and strive for a better future.

This concept also implies a desirable, aspirational lifestyle that is within reach through hard work and determination

IN ORDER FOR YOU TO HAVE A SOFTLIFE, YOU MUST WORK HARD

VENDELINUS AMADHILA
FOUNDER OF SOFTLIFE

Figure 105: Soft Life
(SoftLife,2024)

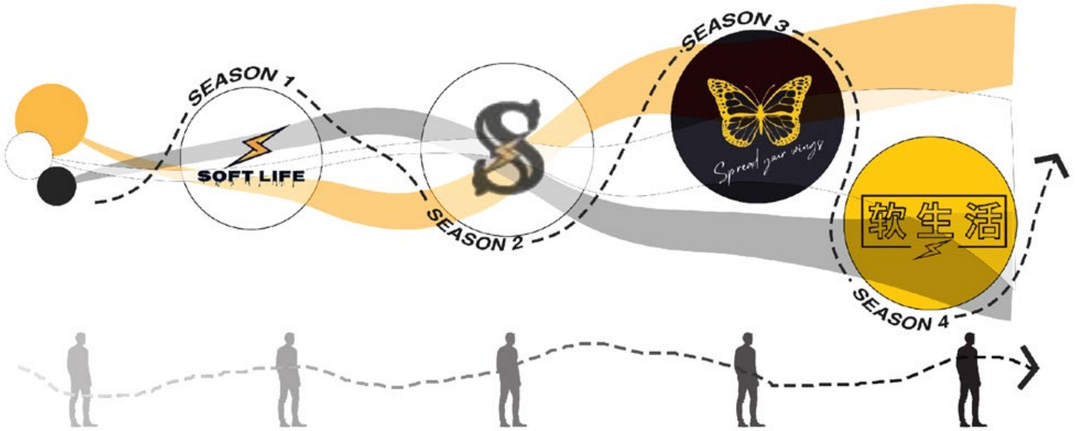


Figure 106: Soft Life Brand Identity
(Author,2024)

“Presentation is everything!

My brand has 3 base colours; Yellow, White, and black. From the social media accounts to exhibitions, i always comply with this base colours.

In terms of display, I arrange them from the oldest to latest design, and label them as seasons, so whether its on social media or at an exhibition, the older seasons are presented to you before you see whats new.”



Figure 107a: Branding
(Author,2024)

1 SOCIAL MEDIA

Mainly rely on platforms such as instagram to advertise their content and to reach more people.

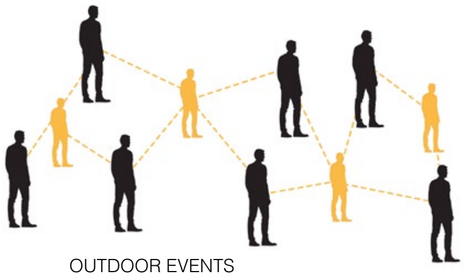


Figure 107b: Advertising
(Author,2024)

2 OUTDOOR EVENTS

Social gatherings such as parties, because this where most of the modern youth are typically found.

EQUIPMENT

In our creative process, we utilize a variety of specific equipment and tools to bring our ideas to life. These include:



HEAT PRESS MACHINE

For the production of the clothing, which includes printing the designs onto the fabric with this machine.



PHOTOGRAPHY + VIDEOGRAPHY

Used for photography and capturing images of our products for marketing and promotion.



Computers

For designing and digitizing graphics, as well as for administrative tasks.

Figure 108a: Equipment
(Author,2024)

WORKSPACE



Figure 108b: Workspace
(Soft Life,2024)

*"Softlife Streetwear" is a **sole proprietorship**, therefore I run the brand from my room.*

I have a table where i design, and it is quite limiting due to the fact the space is not that much creative, its just a room afterall.

I store stock in my closet, which is quite challenging as to which the space becomes overcrowded.

I also print from my room so its always a mess, therefore because all of my work occurs in my room you can imagine how challenging it is for me."

ENVISIONING THE NEXUS

For an upcoming clothing brand looking to showcase and sell creations, an ideal marketplace would offer the following features and amenities:

1. Creative Workspace:A dedicated workspace equipped with essential tools and equipment, such as a screen printing machine, screen curing machine, pressure washer station, and drying station for screens. This workspace would allow the brand to experiment with different creative ideas and bring them to life efficiently.

2. Photoshoot Studio:A fully equipped photoshoot studio with professional lighting, backdrops, and photography equipment. This studio would enable the brand to capture high-quality images of their clothing creations for marketing and promotional purposes.

3 Networking Opportunities:Opportunities for networking and collaboration with other creatives and businesses within the marketplace. This could include events, workshops, and networking sessions aimed at fostering connections and partnerships.

4 Promotional Support: Support for promotional activities, such as social media promotion, advertising, and marketing campaigns, to attract more visitors and customers to the marketplace.

5 Vibrant Atmosphere: An atmosphere that is vibrant and inviting, encouraging exploration and interaction among visitors. This could include colorful displays, interactive elements, and engaging activities to enhance the overall experience.

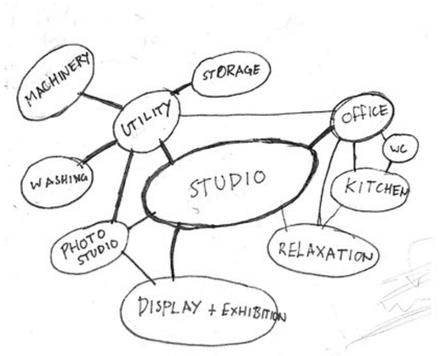
6 Convenient Location: A convenient location with easy access for both creators and customers, ensuring maximum visibility and foot traffic.

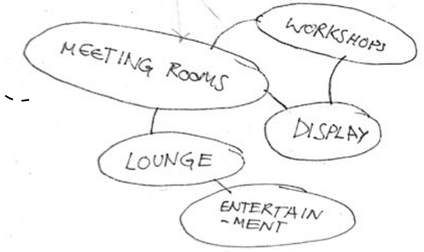
7 Comfortable Amenities:Comfortable amenities for creators and visitors, such as seating areas, refreshment stations, and restroom facilities, to enhance comfort and convenience. By providing these essential features and amenities, the marketplace can create an environment that not only showcases the clothing brand's creations but also supports its growth and success in the competitive market.

Creation Space for Creators
Clothing Design
Clothing printing
Washing + Drying
Photography

Meeting space for creatives
Collaboration
+ Networking
Workshops

Public Space for visitors
Interaction + Engagement
Vibrant
Urban infrastructure
Exhibition + Display
Accessibility
Advertising + Signage
Unique Appearance
Comfortability
Permeability





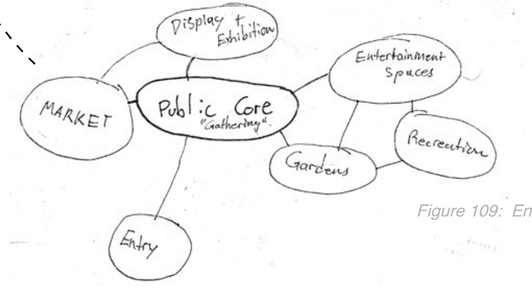


Figure 109: Envisioning The Nexus
(Author,2024)

6 SITE ANALYSIS

SITE + INFORMANTS

1 FRAMEWORK
2 SITE ANALYSIS + INFORMANTS
3 RESPONSES

FRAMEWORK

This section continues from chapter 3, to finally start to enterpret a formal approach to the design of the Nex[us], following the strategies outlined in the framework, and the case studies.

The site is then analyzed to gather physical informants that the Nex[us] will seek to address and respond to, to define a master plan for the hub, as well as the specific program and brief of the project.

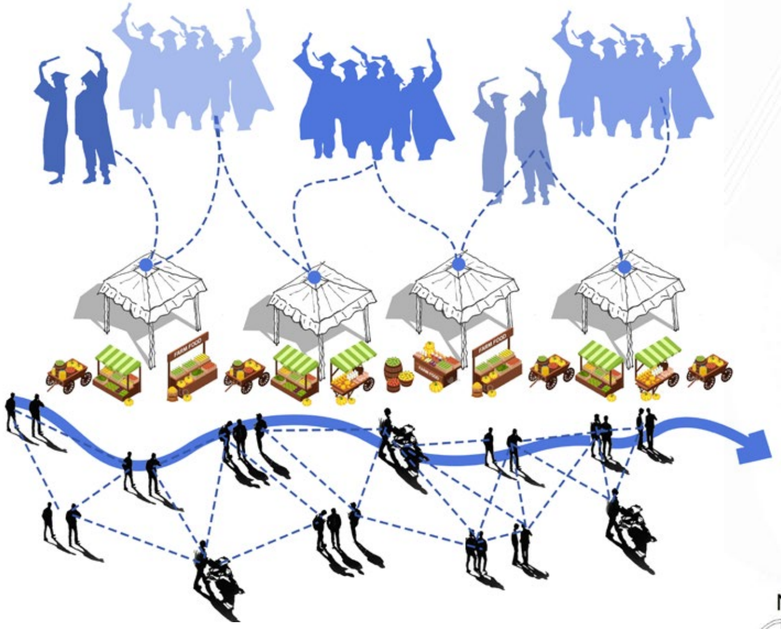




Figure 110: Framework
(Author,2024)

SITE

The proposed site consists of 5 erven all owned by the City of Windhoek. All of these plots are open areas that are accessible to the public, with a total area of 23 610 m².

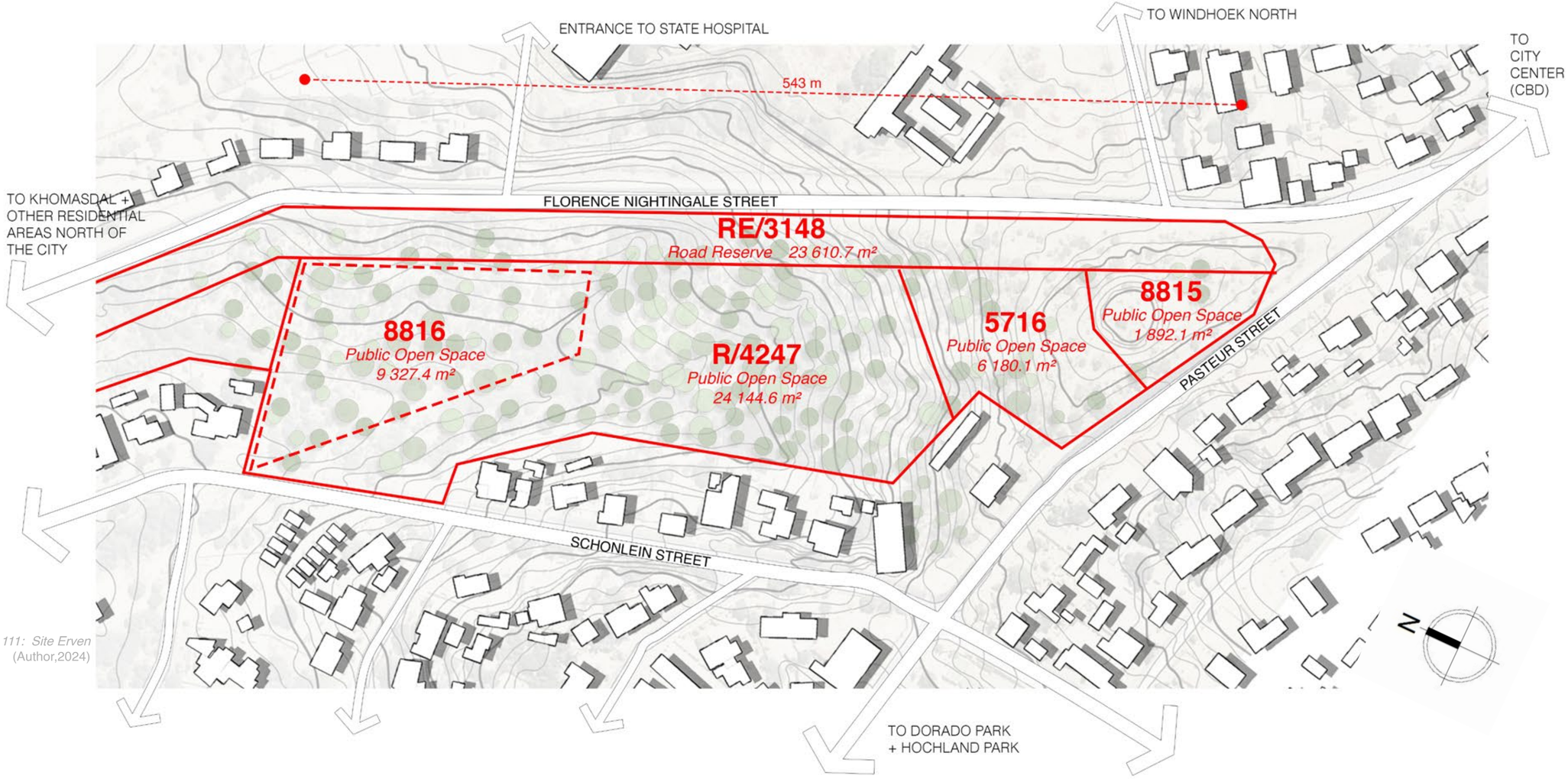
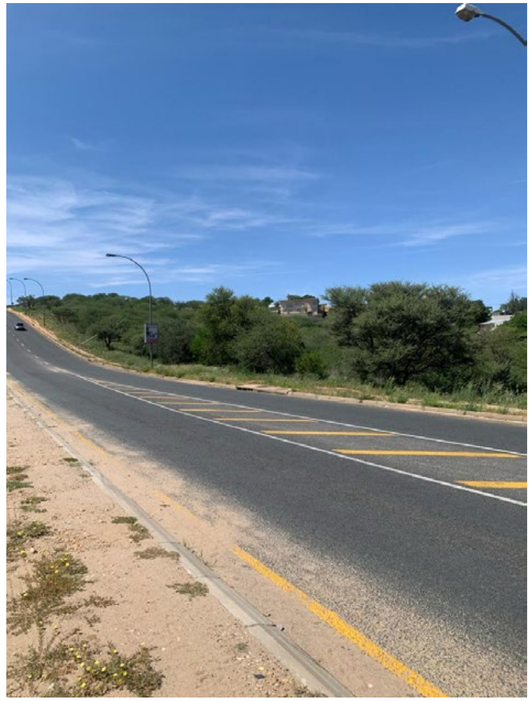


Figure 111: Site Erven (Author,2024)





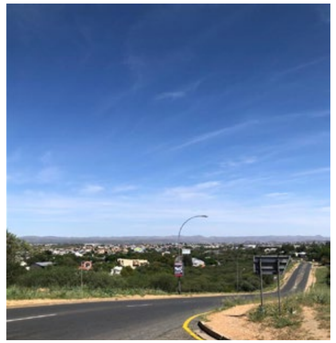




Figure 112: Site Photos (Shipingana,2024)

NATURAL FEATURES



Figure 113: Natural Landscape
(Author,2024)





Figure 114a-b: Natural Landscape
(Author,2024)

SOIL + LAND COVER

Windhoek consists mainly of leptosol, which is a shallow soil over hard rock and stones with a deeper soil that is extremely gravelly and/ or stoney. Leptosol is also unable to hold water.

VEGETATION

Much of the vegetation in Windhoek fall under Acacia hereroenis savannah, with semi open, short bushland with mesic grassland species.

The vegetation type supports a very high diversity of species but is prone to encroachment by sickle bushes. (Flora| Windhoek Green Belt Landscape, 2013)

SITE SECTION

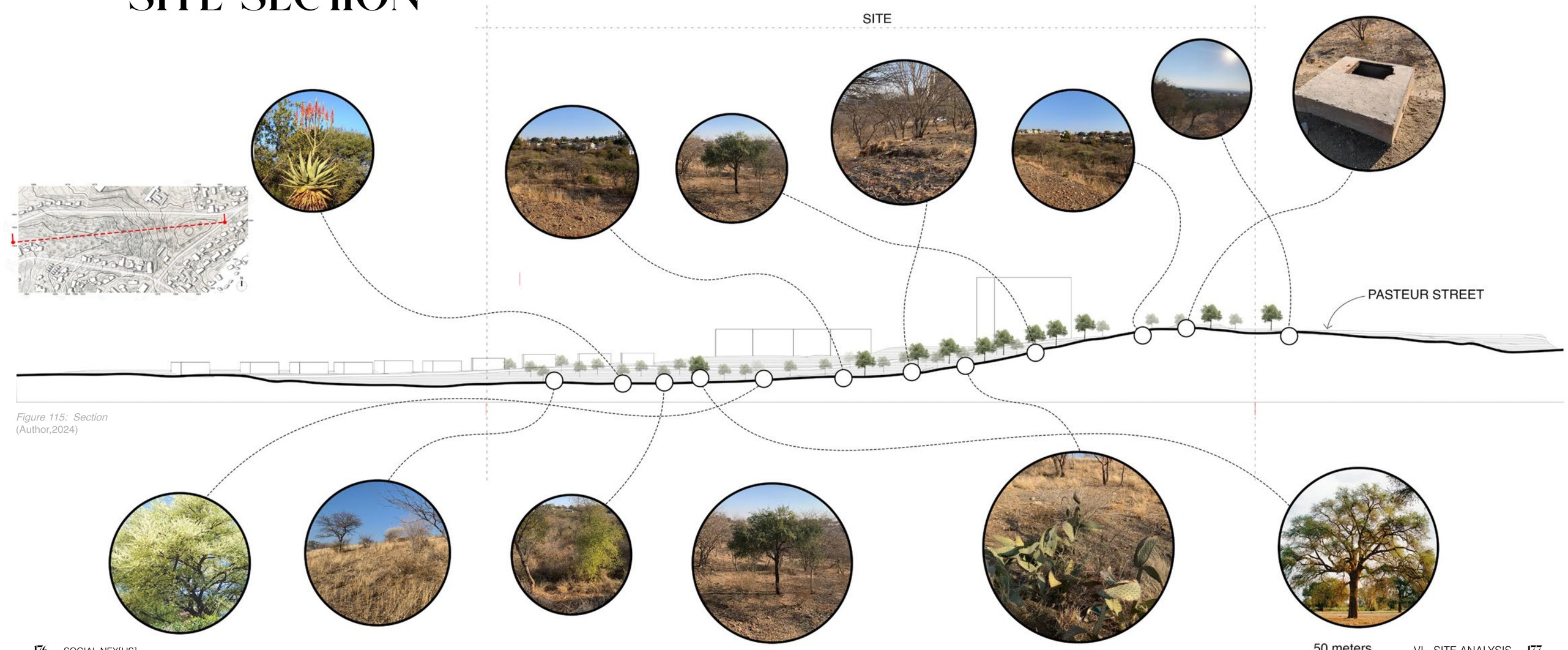


Figure 115: Section
(Author,2024)

INFRASTRUCTURE



Figure 116: Physical Features
(Author,2024)

VIEWS ONTO SITE



Figure 117: Views Onto Site
(Author,2024)

RESPONSES

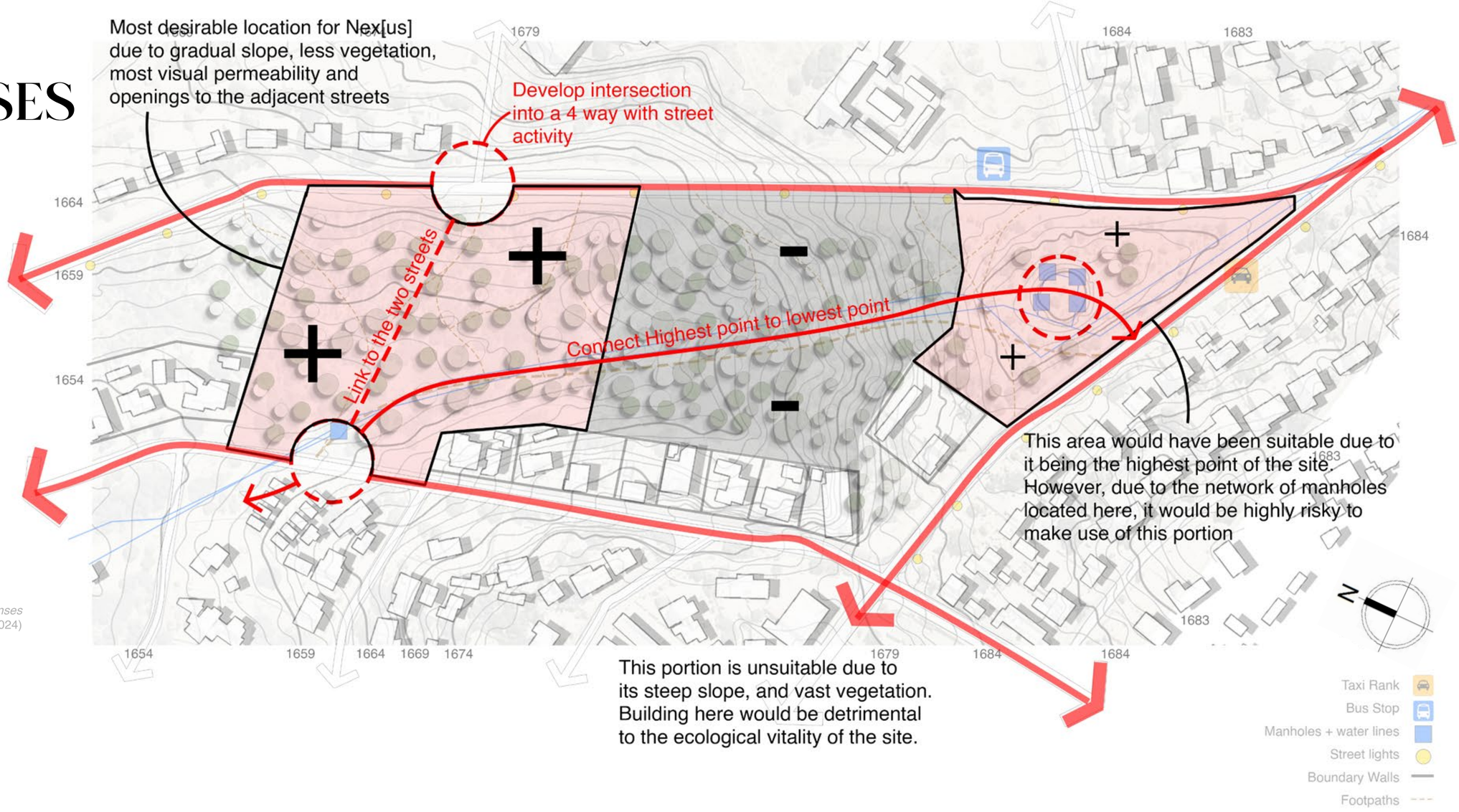


Figure 118: Site Responses
(Author,2024)

7 FRAMING THE NEX[US]

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

1 DESIGN BRIEF
- 1.1 CONCEPT
- 1.2 PROGRAM

2 INTERPRETING THE NEX[US]

3 DESIGN EXPLORATION + DEVELOPMENT
- 3.1 FIRST ITERATION
- 3.2 CURRENT DESIGN

4 MASTERPLAN

5 TECHNICAL EXPLORATION + DEVELOPMENT
- 5.1 CASE STUDIES
- 5.2 TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENT

CONCEPT

The concept of the Nex[us] includes the expression of diversity, autonomy and interconnectedness. Therefore, taking from the analyses and case studies, the Nex[us] is fragmented into 3 spaces; the market, park(public core), and production space. Each of these spaces play a role in connecting both users of the Nex[us] and the traders, which are done on different levels and in different ways in each space.

These 3 elements are disordered, and autonomously designed to represent the diversity of culture, and to express the dynamic, limitless and self-governing identity of the traders and entrepreneurs.

These diverse elements(fragments) are unified along the site by means of pathways and activity pockets(Alexander, 1963) to enliven all the spaces of the Nex[us]. The boundaries and different situations of the spaces are blurred (external/ internal, public/private) to express anarchy that breaks free from the capitalist practices of shopping centers, and traditional notions of territory, to radicalize individual liberty amongst the users.

This ultimately seeks to promote the decentralization of control, for flexibility, adaptability, and non-hierarchal organization. This also resists capitalist norms by promoting spaces that are not driven by profit but rather the by the well being and needs of the users.

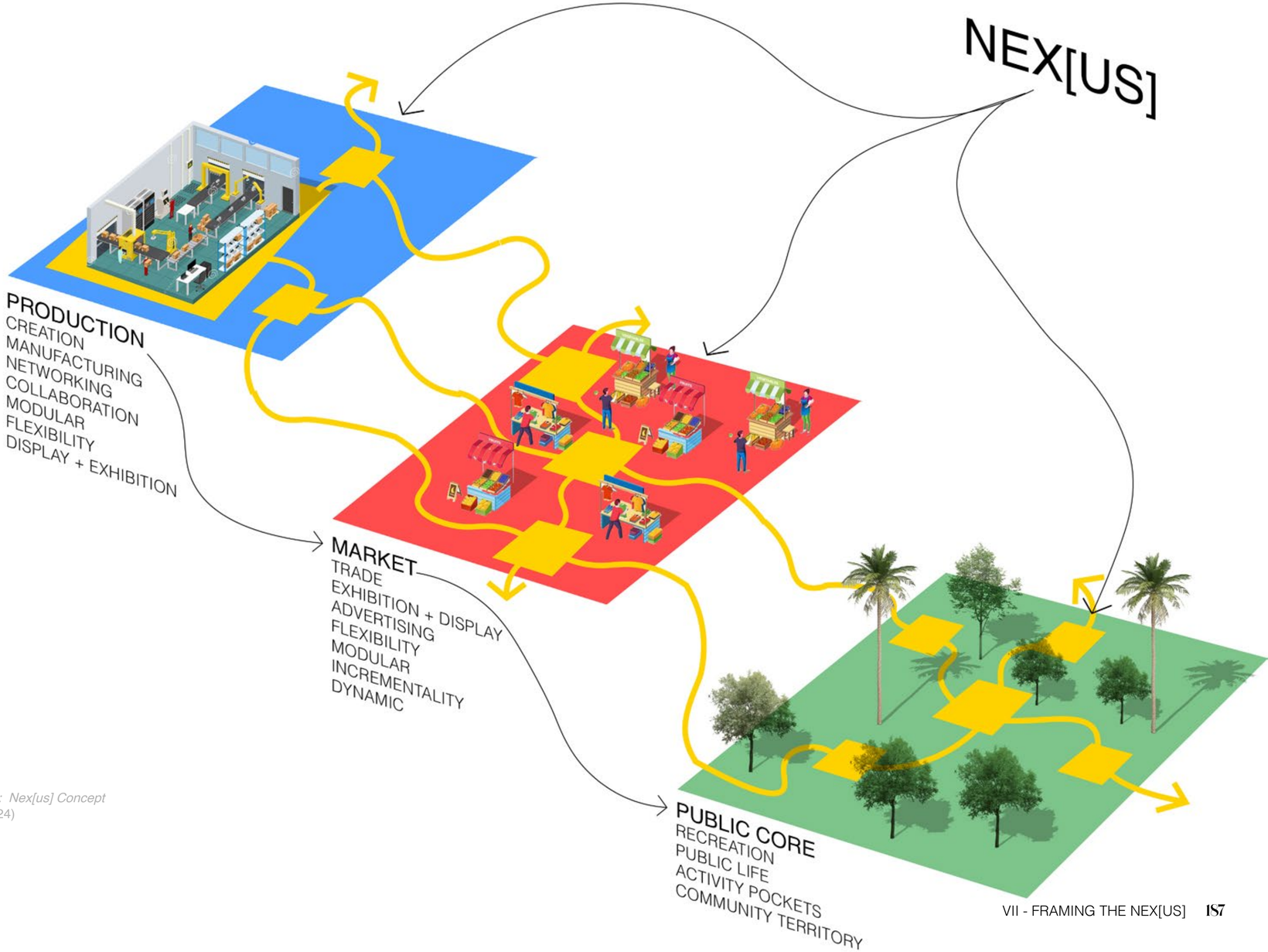


Figure 119: Nex[us] Concept
(Author,2024)

PROGRAM

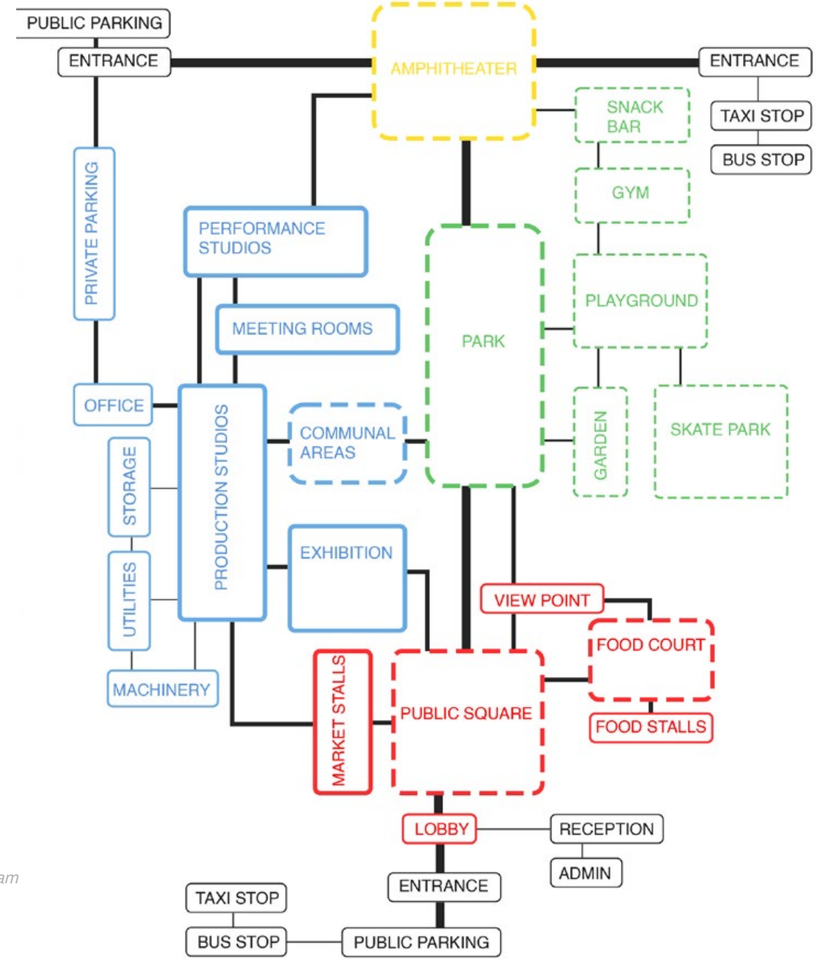


Figure 120: Program
(Author,2024)

NEX[US]

As highlighted in the analysis of Windhoek West, the broader intention of the Nex[us] project is to address urban fragmentation by establishing an activity corridor that connects two key nexus points within the neighborhood. This design seeks to mend the fragmented social fabric through a spatial arrangement that facilitates interaction along this axis.

Two significant elements of the site's context were key to shaping this design. Firstly, the site's topography, with a 30-meter elevation change over a span of 500 meters, posed a significant challenge. Inspired by the works of Eisenman and Bernard Tschumi, the design process began with the creation of an axis to connect the highest and lowest points of the site, thereby providing a spatial framework for the arrangement.

Secondly, the two roads flanking the site, Florence Nightingale Road and Schonlein Strasse, offer contrasting interfaces. Florence Nightingale Road serves as a major artery, connecting northern residential areas to the city center. However, it lacks building interfaces, transforming it into a thoroughfare with no opportunities for pauses or interaction. In contrast, Schonlein Strasse operates as a more localized route, primarily used by residents and visitors within Windhoek West. It features permeable boundaries and parking areas, providing moments of engagement and interaction along the street.

This juxtaposition of the two roads presents a unique opportunity for the Nex[us] to establish a dialogue between these interfaces. Florence Nightingale Road, in particular, requires intervention to create a more social, interactive realm along this public route.

To develop a coherent spatial language, the design drew further inspiration from Eisenman's use of urban grids and diagrams. A grid was overlaid on the site based on the two road interfaces, aligning the building arrangement with the site's structure. The grid, set at an urban incremental distance of 25/12.5 meters, provided a formal basis for organizing the three primary spaces of the Nex[us]. This linear framework integrates the building with its surrounding context, creating a meaningful connection between the site and its urban environment.

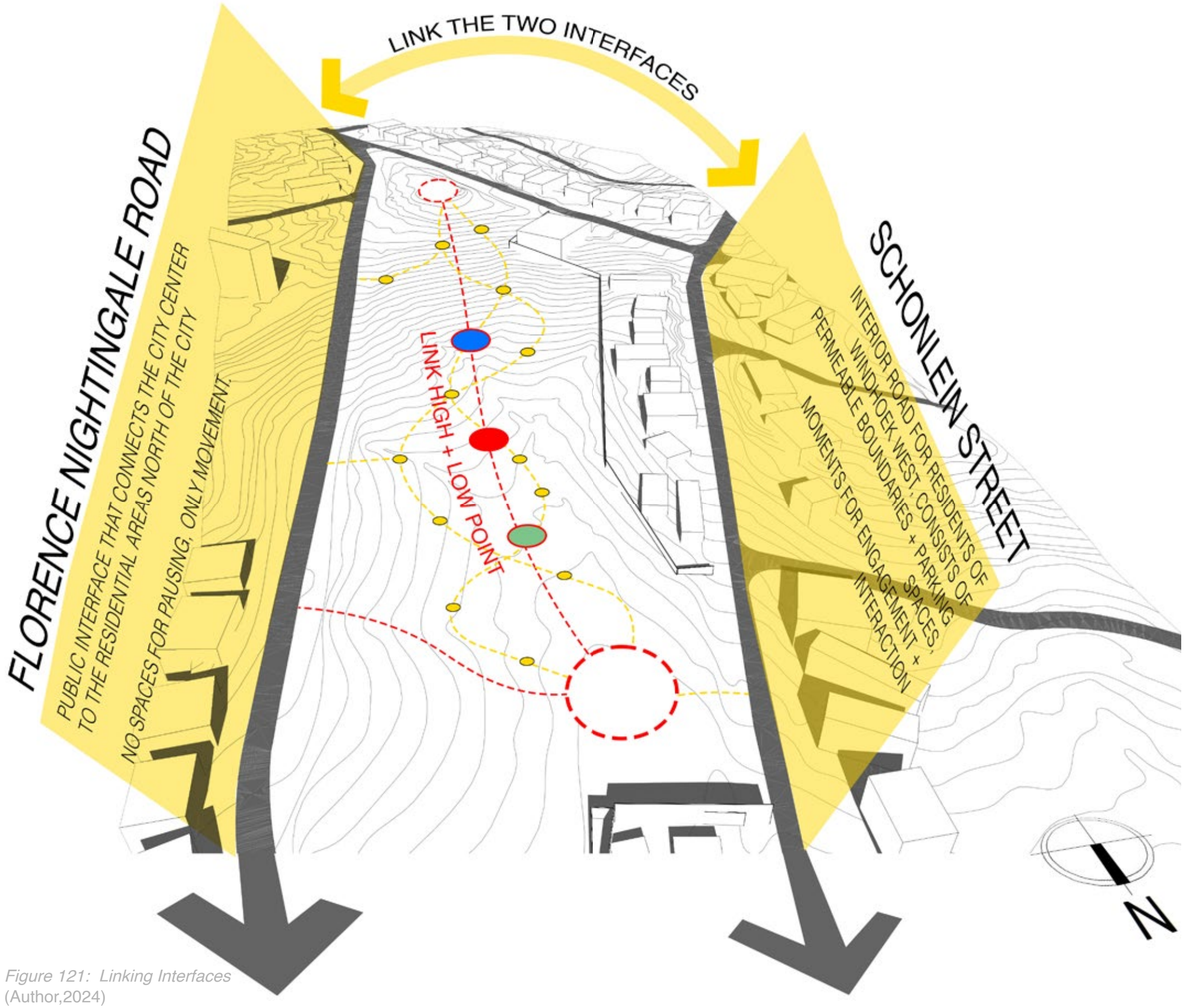


Figure 121: Linking Interfaces
(Author,2024)

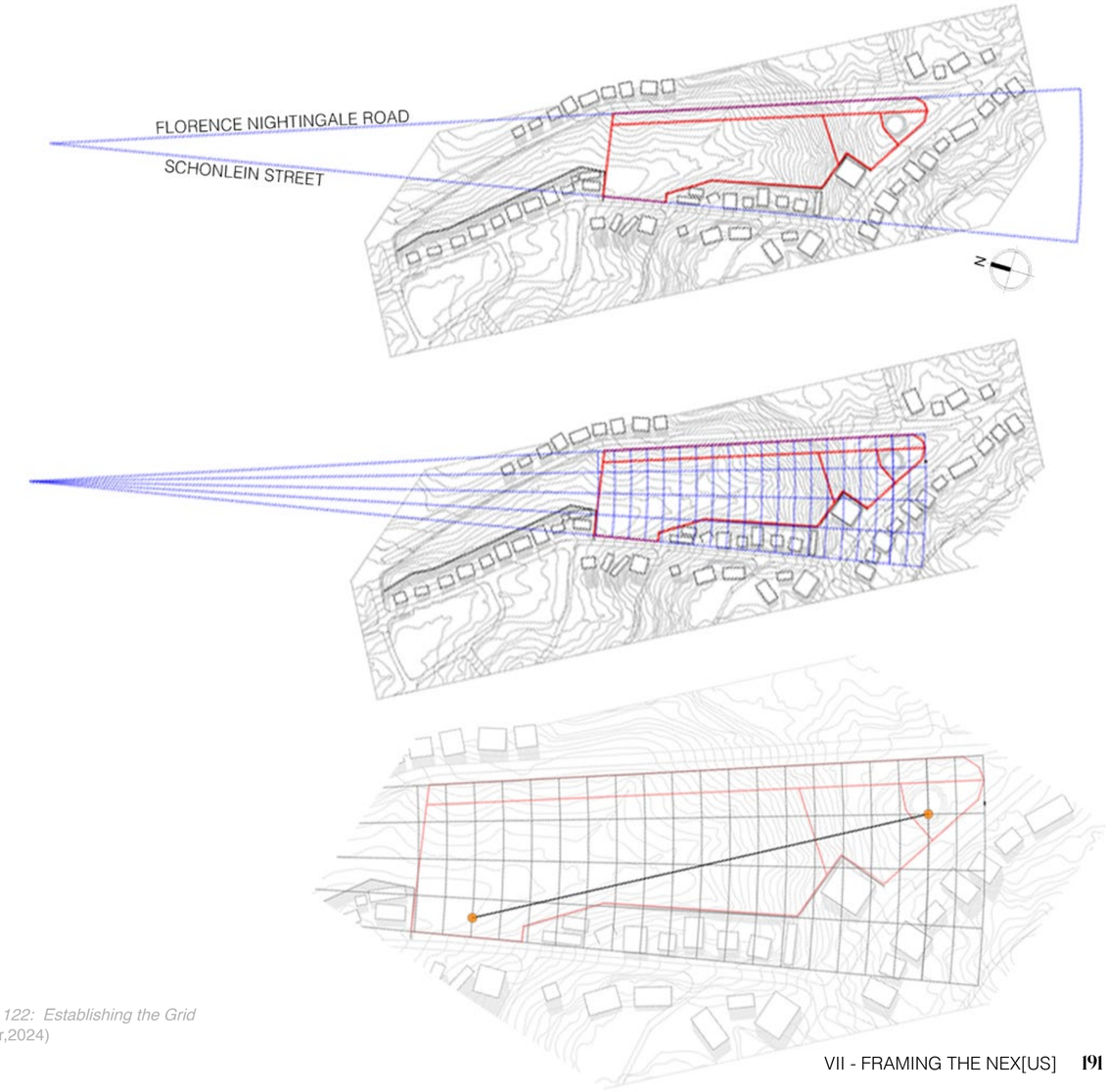


Figure 122: Establishing the Grid
(Author,2024)

FIRST ITERATION

The initial design approach used the grid and axis to position the three main spaces at different points along the axis. The market was placed at the top of the hill to emphasize a hierarchical structure, positioning it as a beacon for Windhoek West; a monument representing a new order. The park was situated on the flatter, lower parts of the site, while the production spaces were placed in between, along the hill, closer to the site's edges near neighboring structures. The axis itself extended more than 500 meters, and to avoid creating a monotonous pathway, activity pockets were introduced at various levels to serve as lively nodes of interaction.

However, as this design was developed, several critical issues became apparent. The most significant challenge was the sheer distance between the spaces; they were simply too far apart, making the site's size overwhelming to address from an architectural perspective. The most important discovery, though, came during a site revisit. At the top of the hill, where the market was intended to be, a 15-meter-diameter concrete platform with multiple manholes was found. This area was part of a network of servitudes that could not be altered, rendering it unusable for the market as originally planned. This forced the design process to start over. From this attempt, a key lesson was learned: aligning the Nex[us] parallel to the site's interfaces led to a scale that did not correspond well with the human experience. As a result, the next design iteration focused on reorienting the scheme perpendicular to the interfaces, following the shortest route between them.

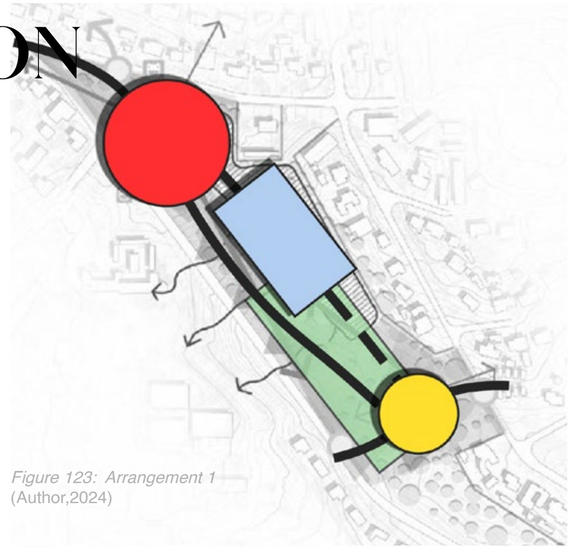


Figure 123: Arrangement 1
(Author,2024)

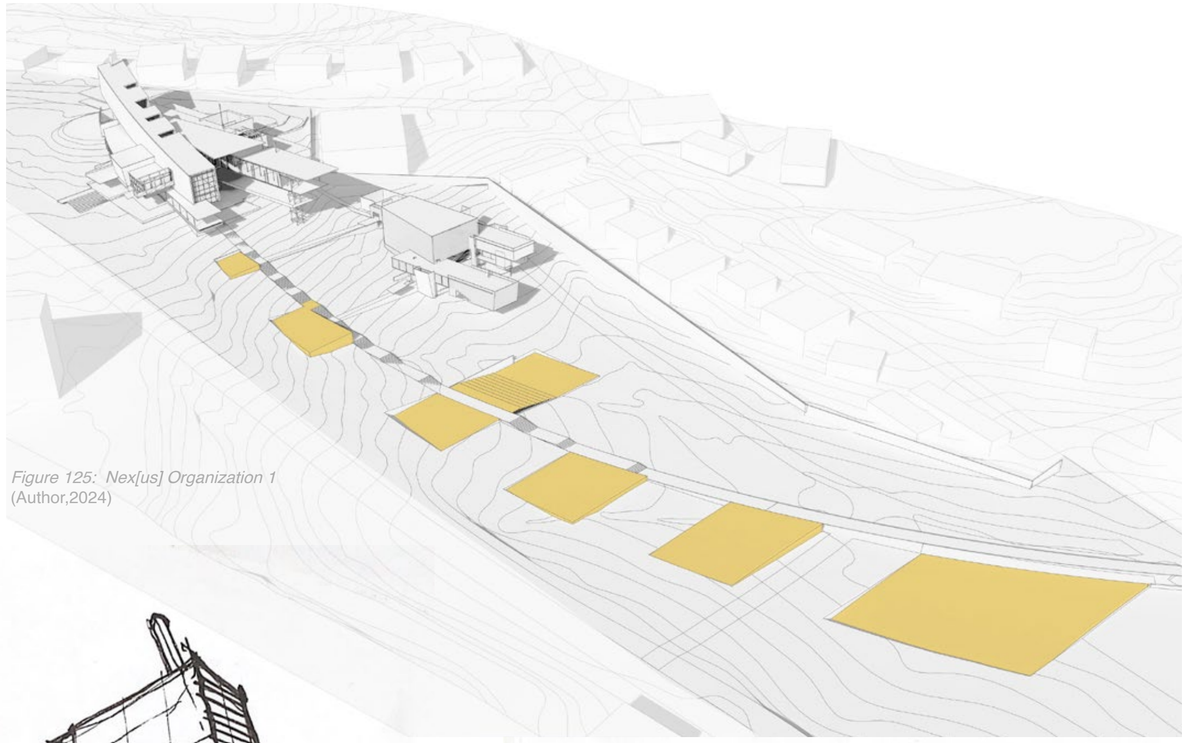


Figure 125: Nex[us] Organization 1
(Author,2024)

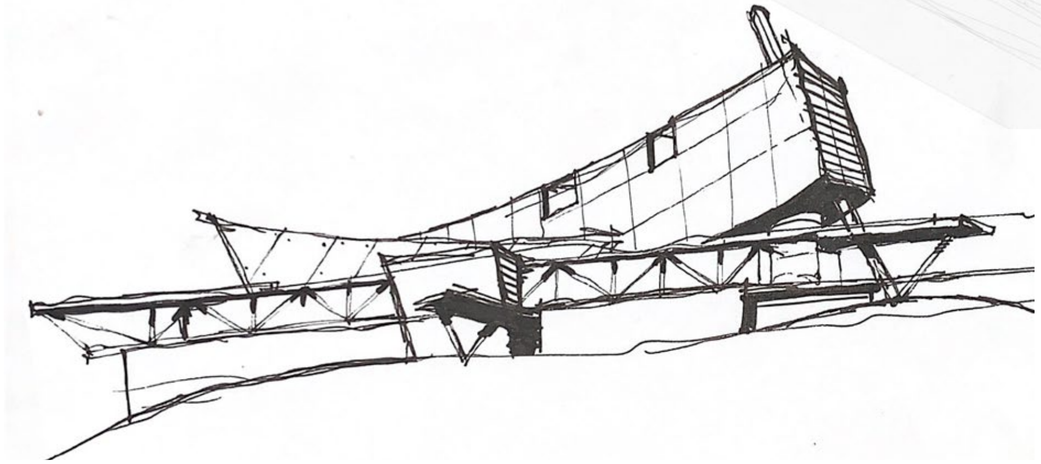


Figure 124: Exterior Sketch 1
(Author,2024)

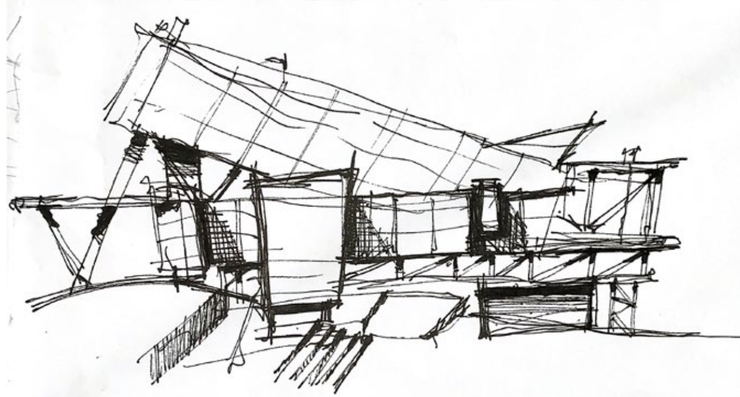


Figure 126: Exterior Sketch 2
(Author,2024)



Figure 127a: Exterior view 1
(Author,2024)

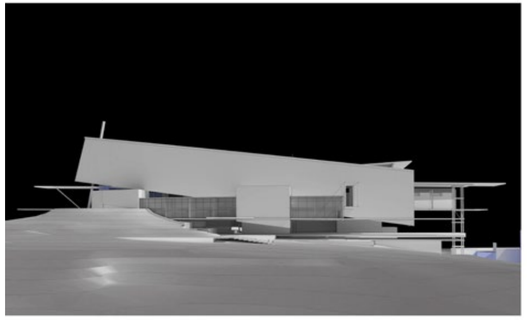


Figure 127b: Exterior view 2
(Author,2024)

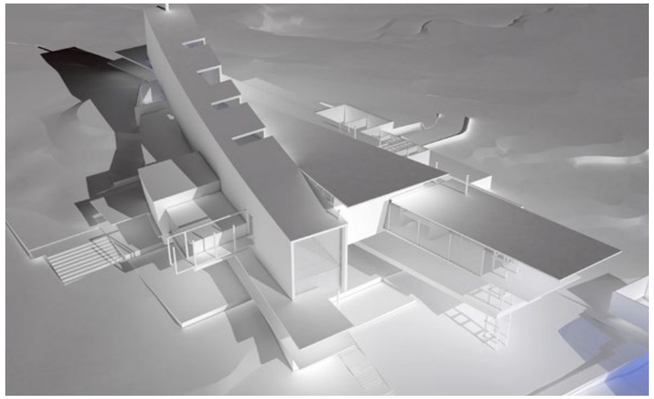


Figure 127c: Exterior view 3
(Author,2024)

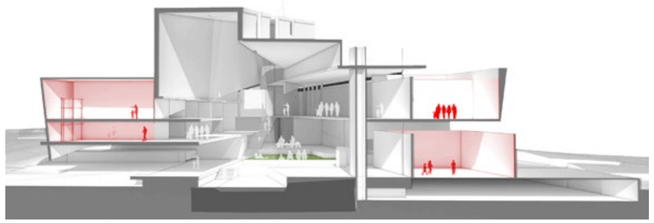


Figure 128: Section(Author,2024)

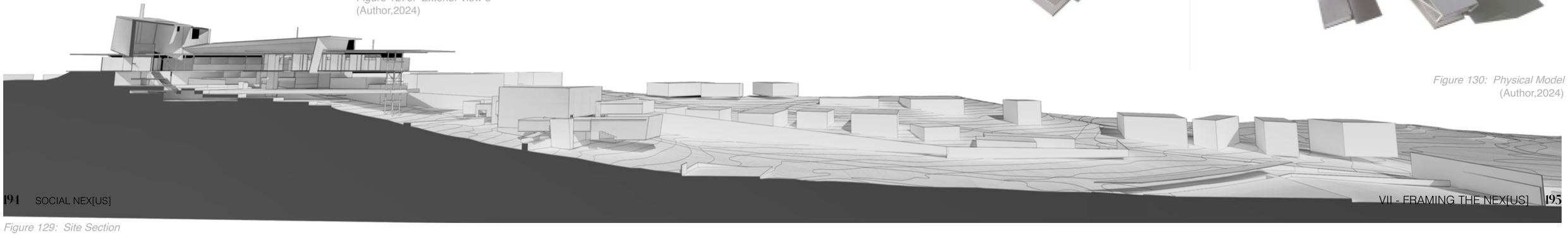


Figure 129: Site Section
(Author,2024)

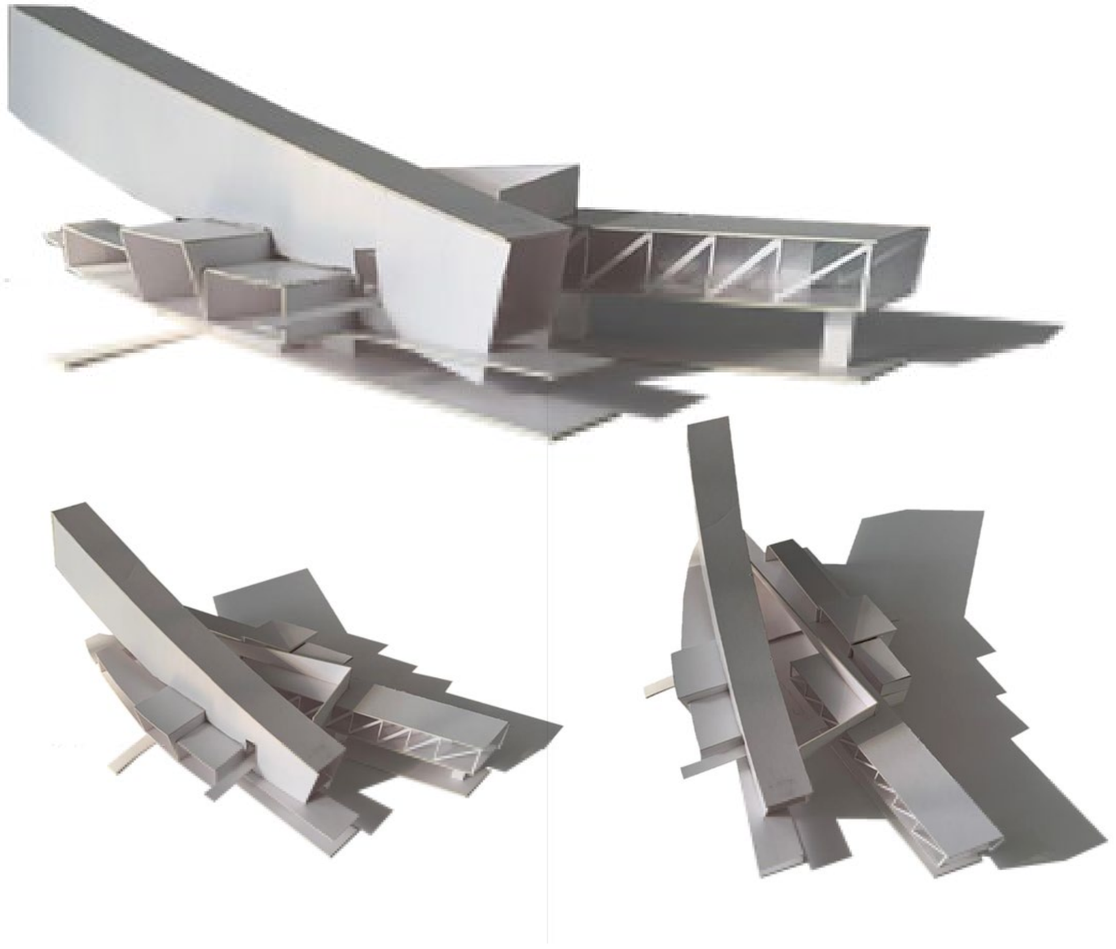


Figure 130: Physical Model
(Author,2024)

CURRENT DESIGN

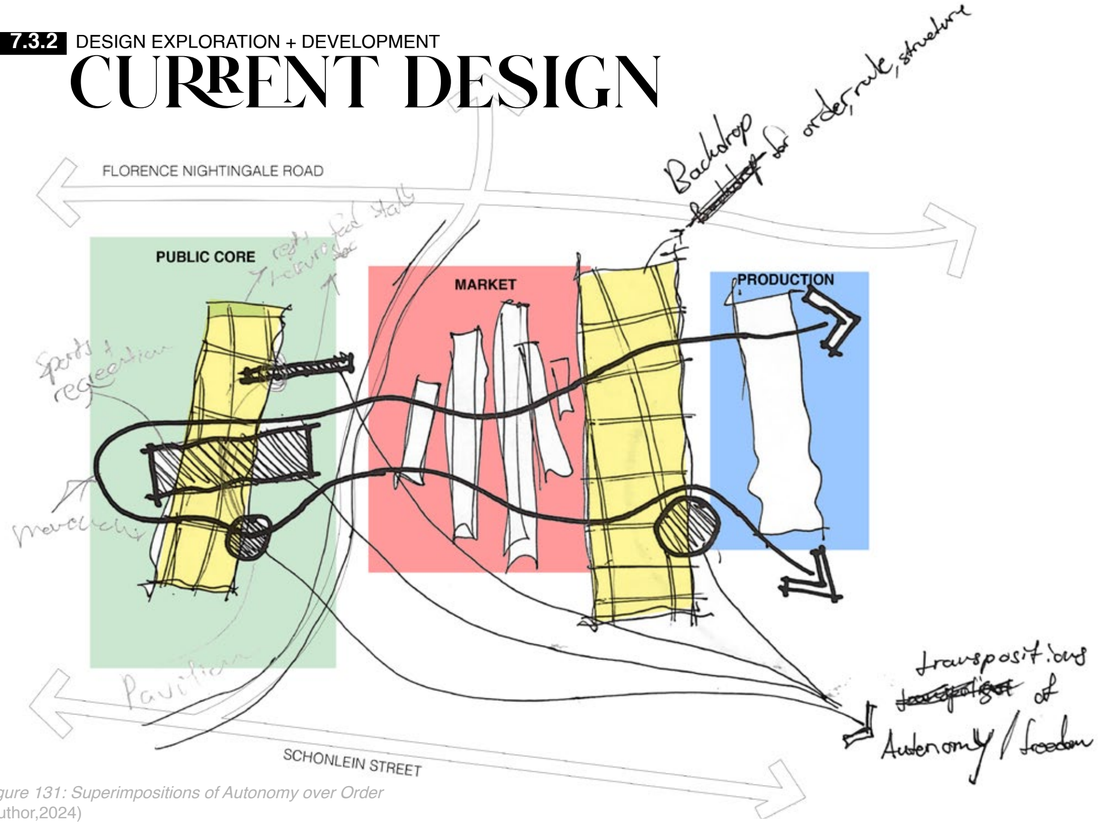


Figure 131: Superimpositions of Autonomy over Order
(Author,2024)

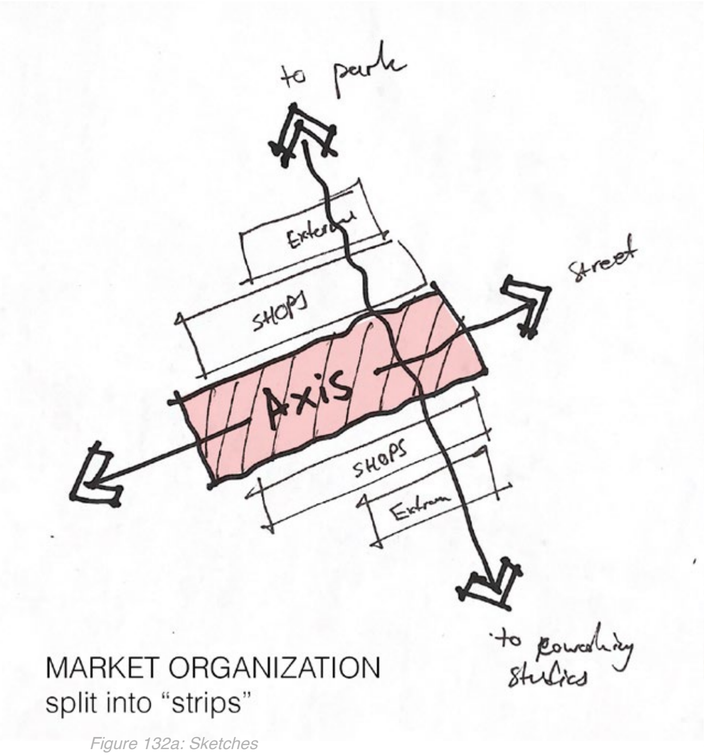


Figure 132a: Sketches
(Author,2024)

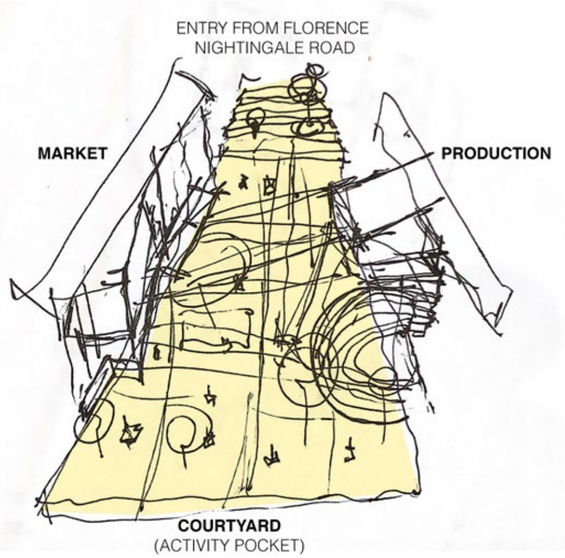


Figure 132b: Sketches of public core
(Author,2024)

This took the Nex[us] towards the lower levels of the site, as less trees and a more subtle slope proving advantageous. Secondly, one inference included the road providing entry into the state hospital adjacent to the site, presenting an opportunity for activation of Florence Nightingale Street along this section. Therefore, a pathway is created for vehicular access from Schonlein Street to Florence Nightingale street, creating a fourway. As for the intervention, inspired by the grid once more, the buildings are split into strips. This strips as stated earlier are placed perpendicular to the road for a more engaging dialogue to be created, and each strip is placed along differing levels for opportunities to be created for vertical engagements. The strips provide varying levels of tectonics, publicness, and privacy specific to the requirements of each space. As the most public space is placed at the lowest levels followed by the market along the newly created axis (semi-public) and the production spaces higher(semi-private to private). A hierarchial order of privacy and accessibility is created this way. As the spaces are distributed along the site, the in between spaces are then created as well. This spaces now act as transitions within the larger transitional composition, spaces of conflict, movement, activation and engagement.

These spaces are designed as juxtapositions of order and autonomy, As the activity pockets are recreated as transpositions of autonomy and freedom, superimposed over the elements of order and structure(the grid). Not only does this create an architectural composition that subverts the existing capitalist power structures of order and control over the freedom, autonomy and radical nature of the human capital of the Nex[us] but also unique moments are created that blur the boundaries of internal/external, public/private through the conflicts created through these superimpositions.

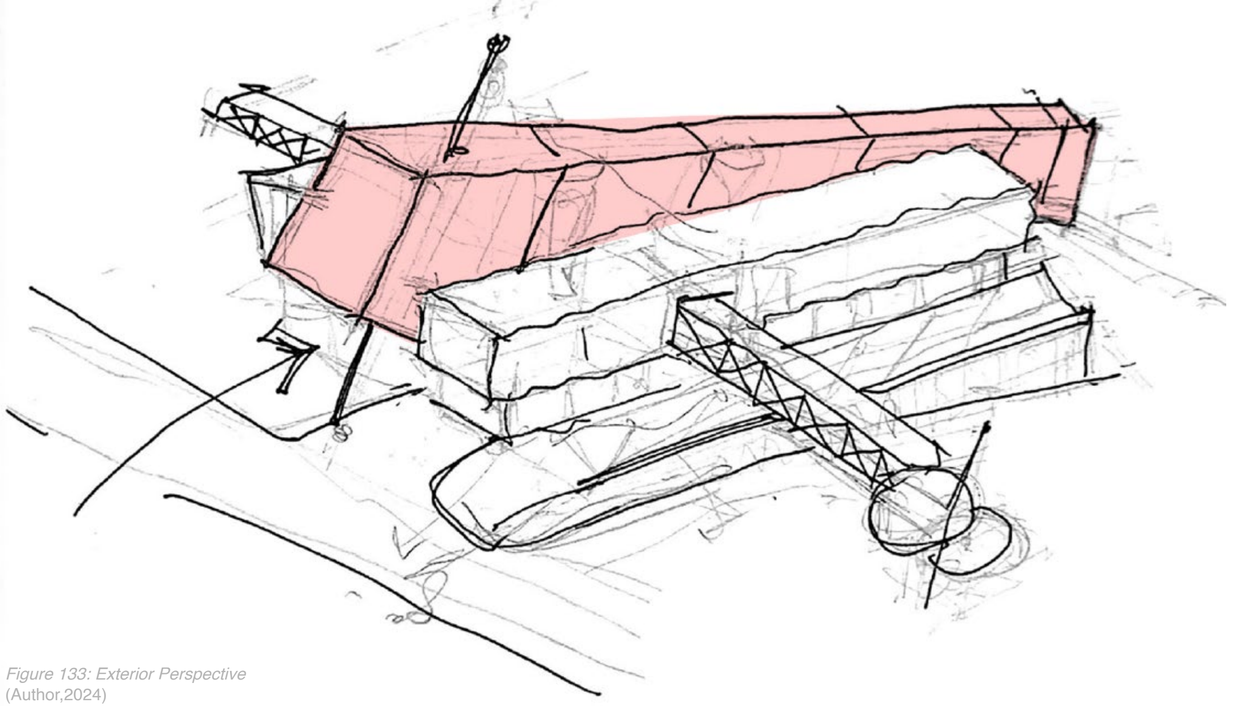


Figure 133: Exterior Perspective
(Author,2024)

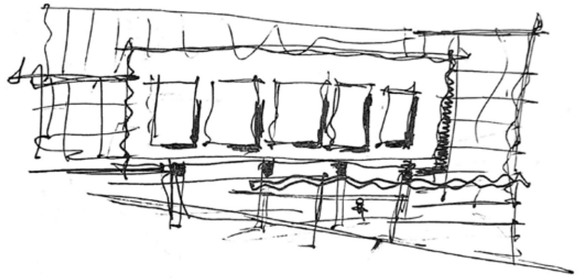


Figure 134: Exterior Perspective
(Author,2024)

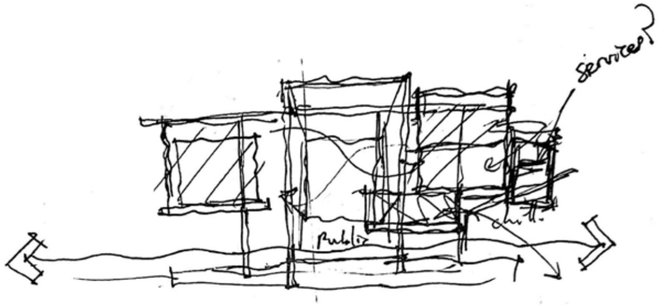


Figure 135: Exterior Perspective
(Author,2024)

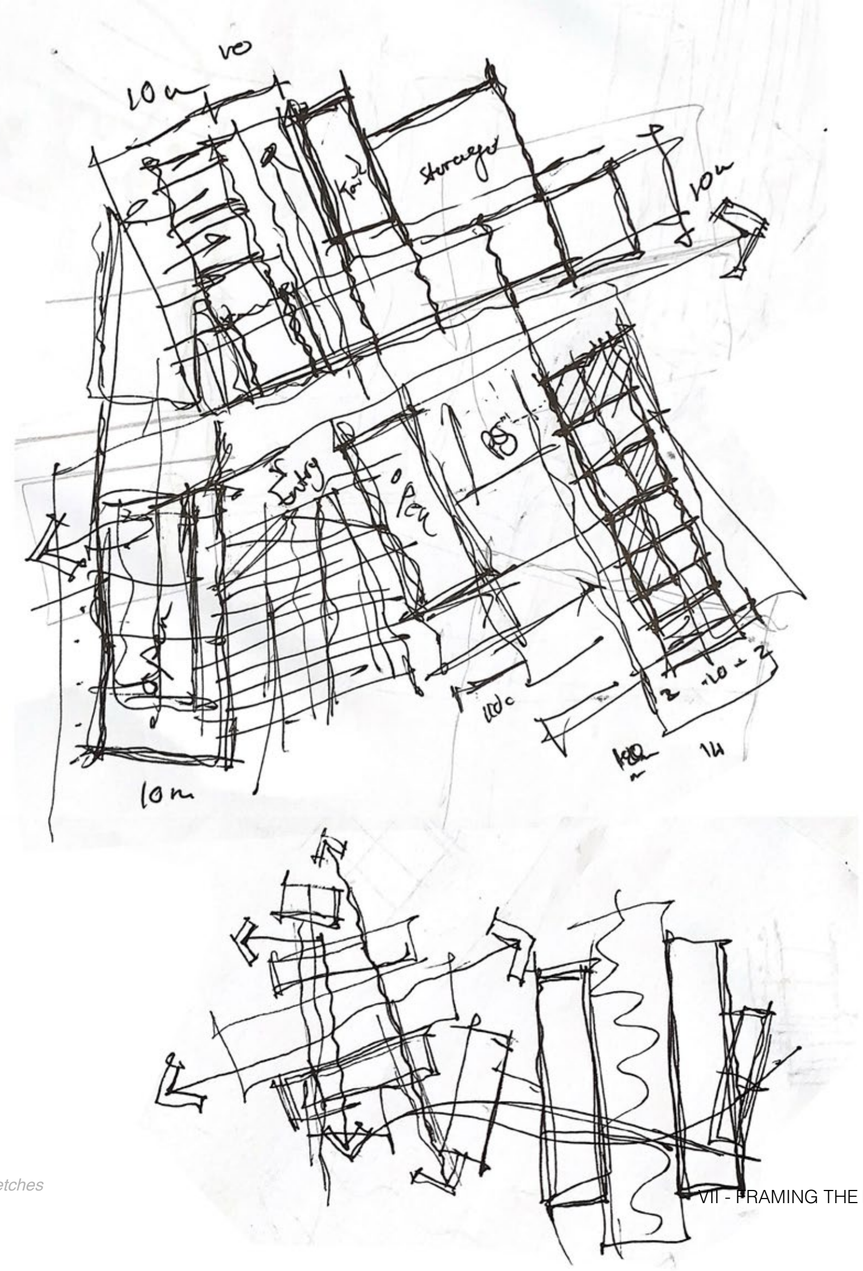


Figure 136: Floorplan Sketches
(Author,2024)

MASTERPLAN



Figure 137: Masterplan
(Author,2024)

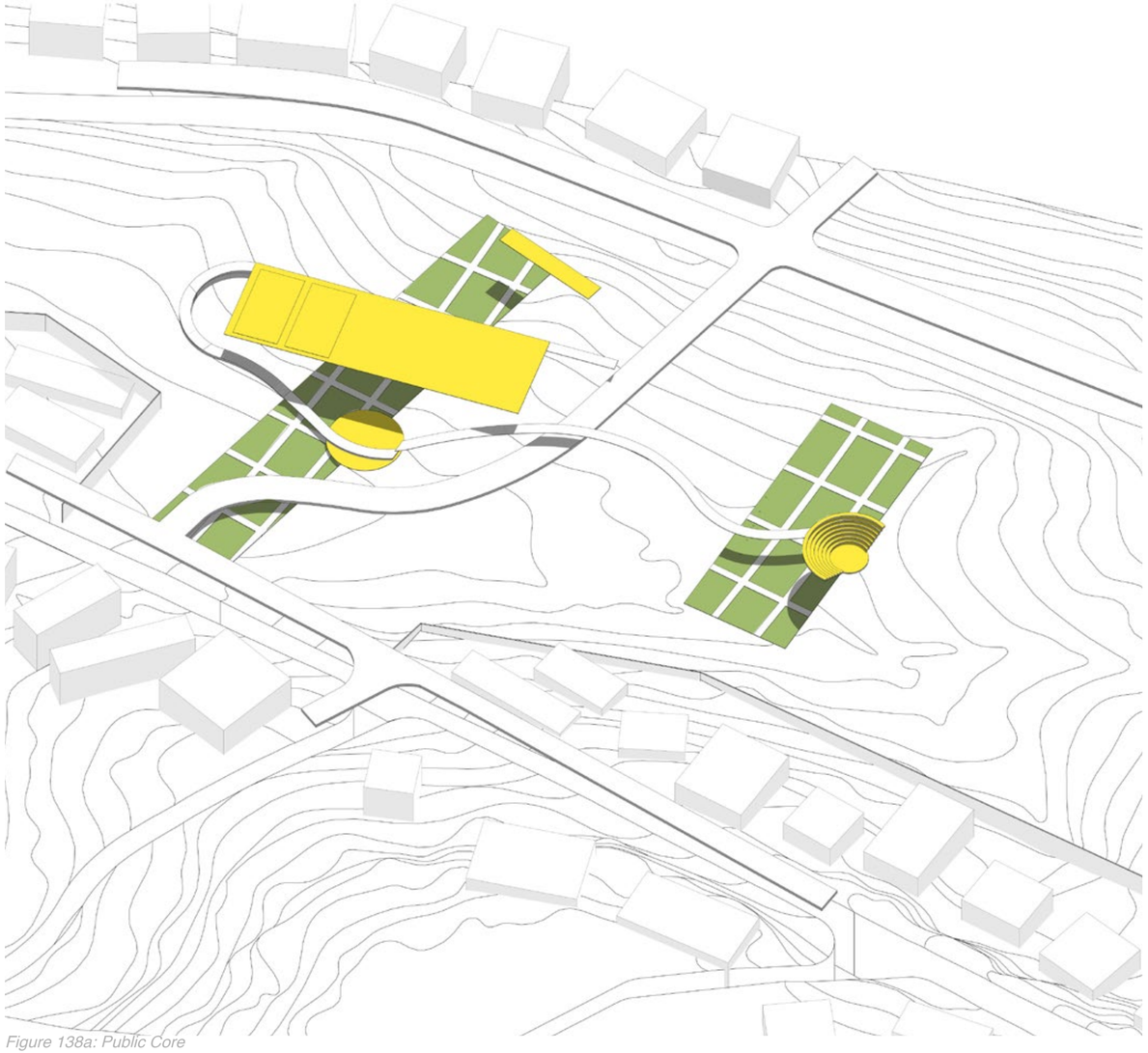


Figure 138a: Public Core
(Author,2024)

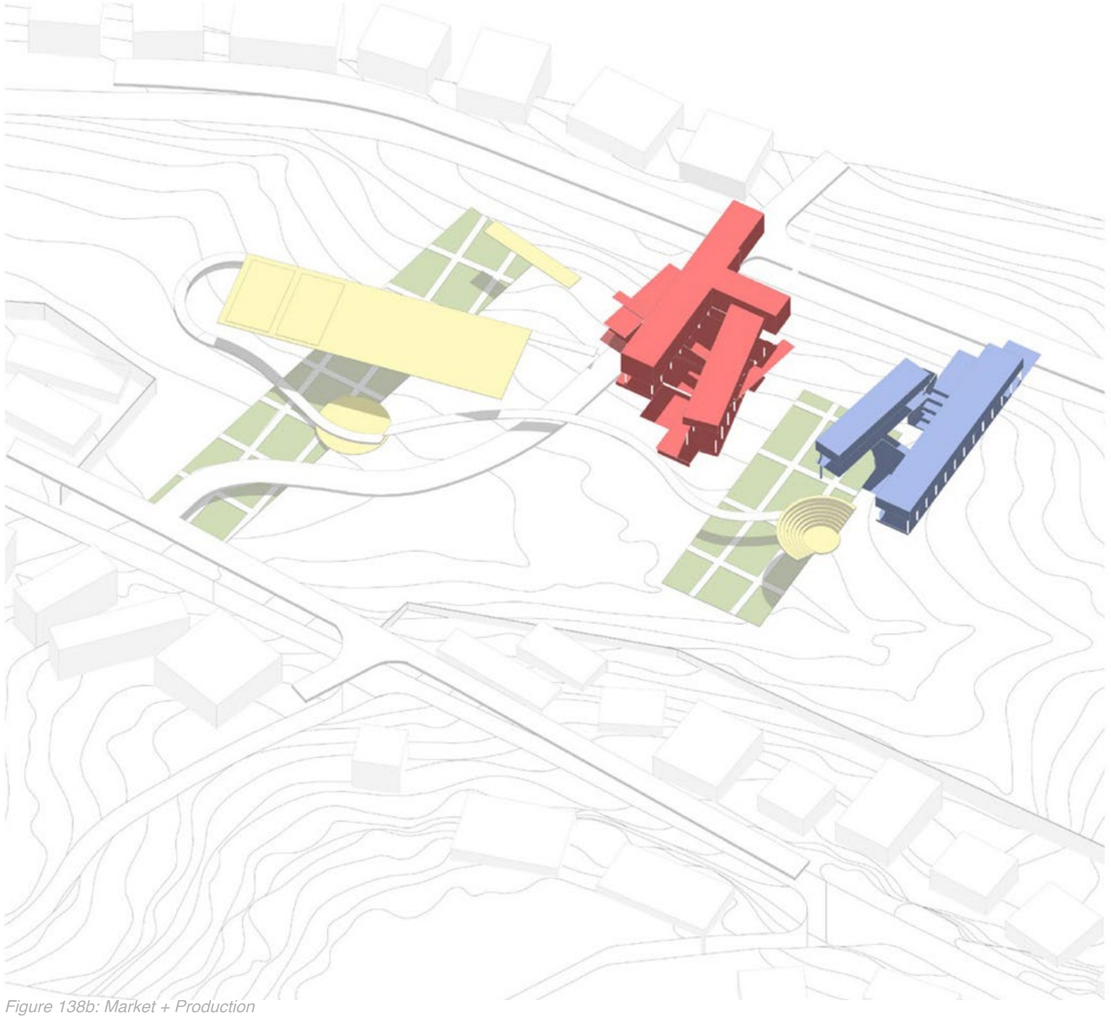
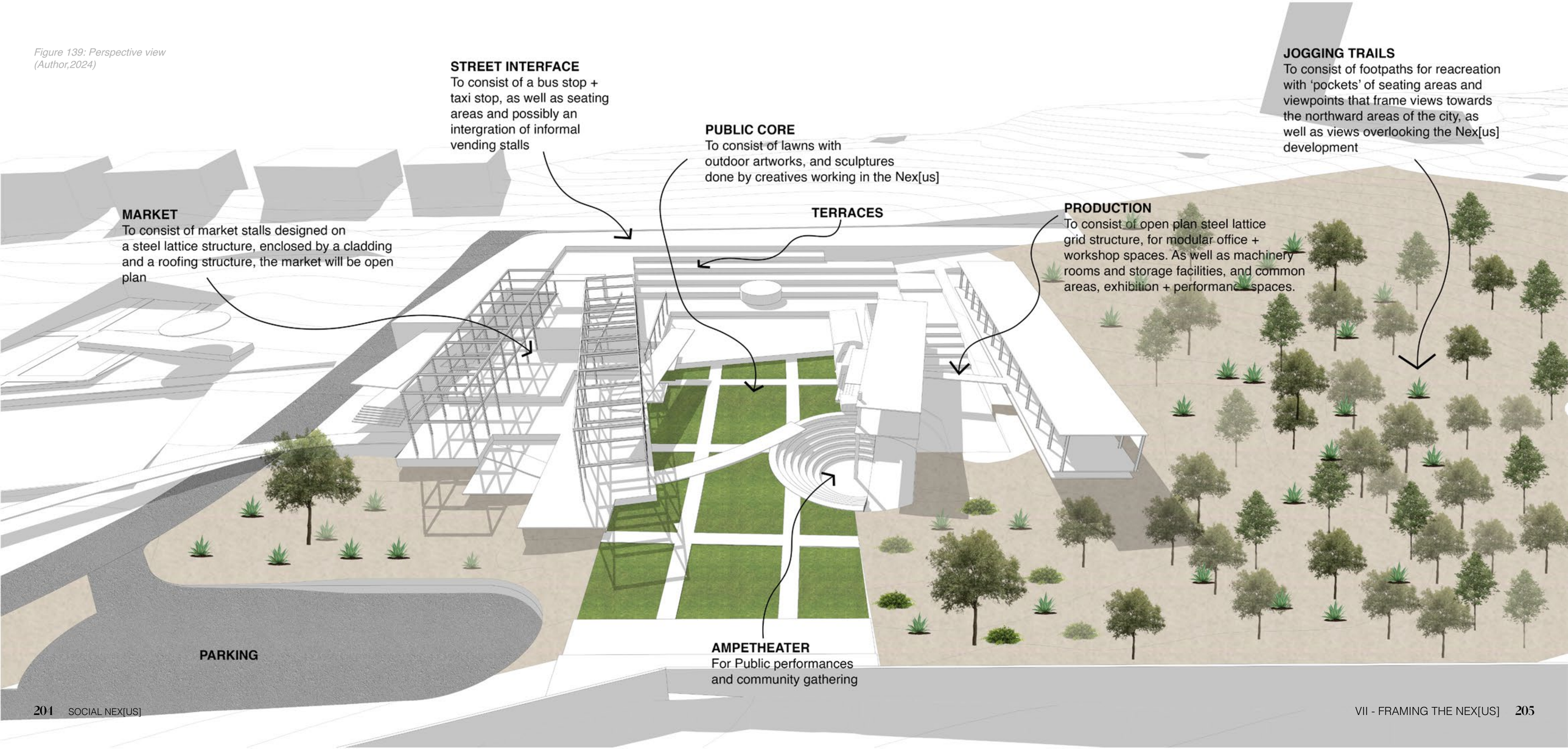


Figure 138b: Market + Production
(Author,2024)

Figure 139: Perspective view (Author,2024)



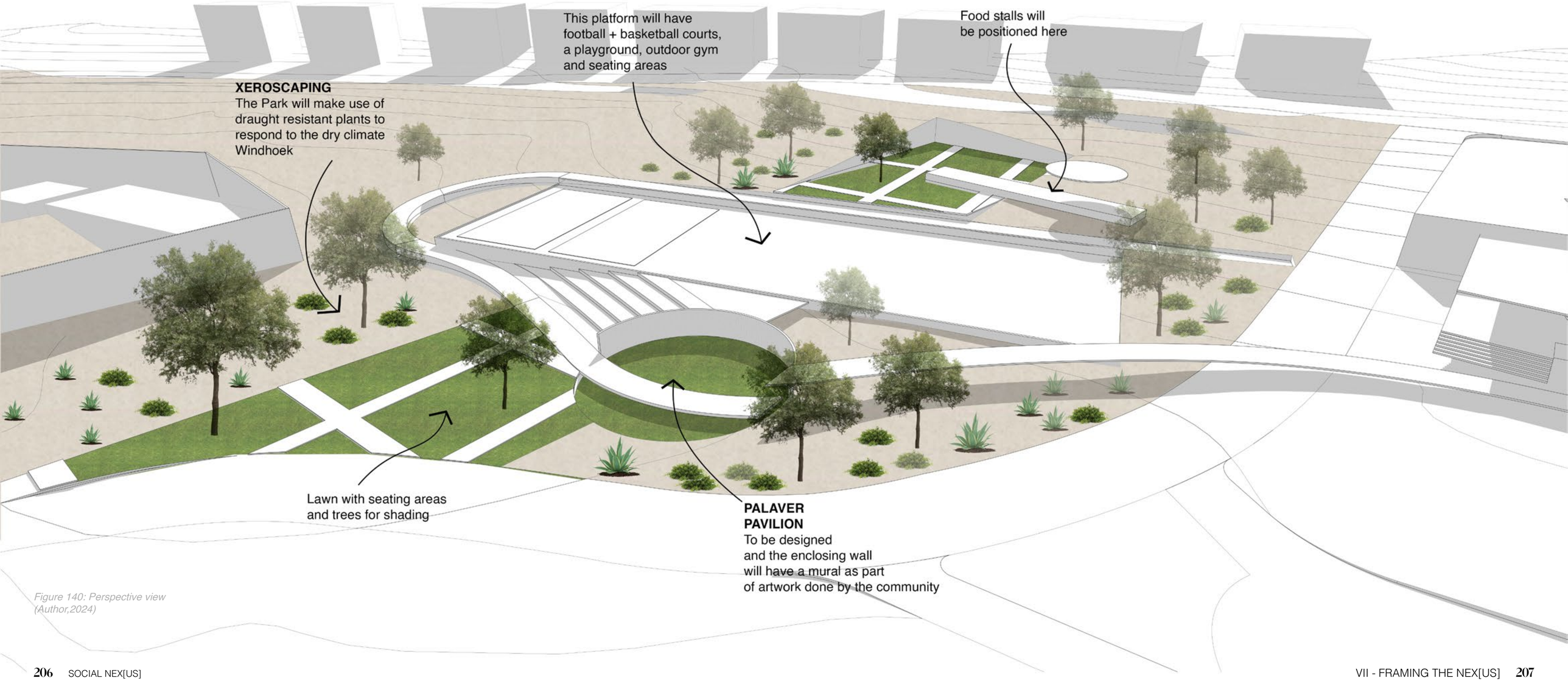


Figure 140: Perspective view (Author,2024)

TECHNICAL SYSTEMS

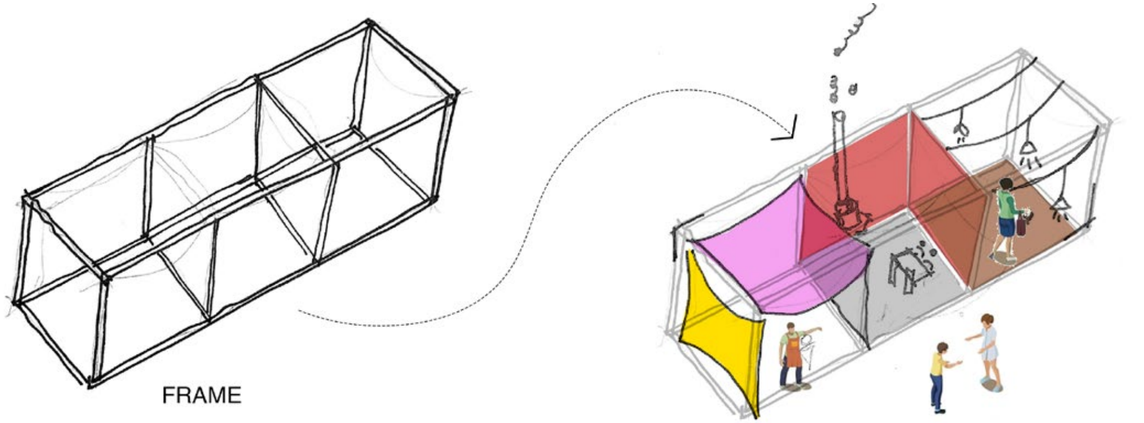


Figure 141a: Design Intent of Technical System
(Author,2024)

The design intent of the technical systems employed in the Nex[us] includes the design of a frame that allows retailers to modify and define spaces to their own liking. For the users, this creates a diverse experience in which the vibrancy of each trader is expressed through a diverse range of elements, blurring inside from outside through a play of tectonic and stereotomic elements.

This therefore fosters a modular technical system, or “plug and play”

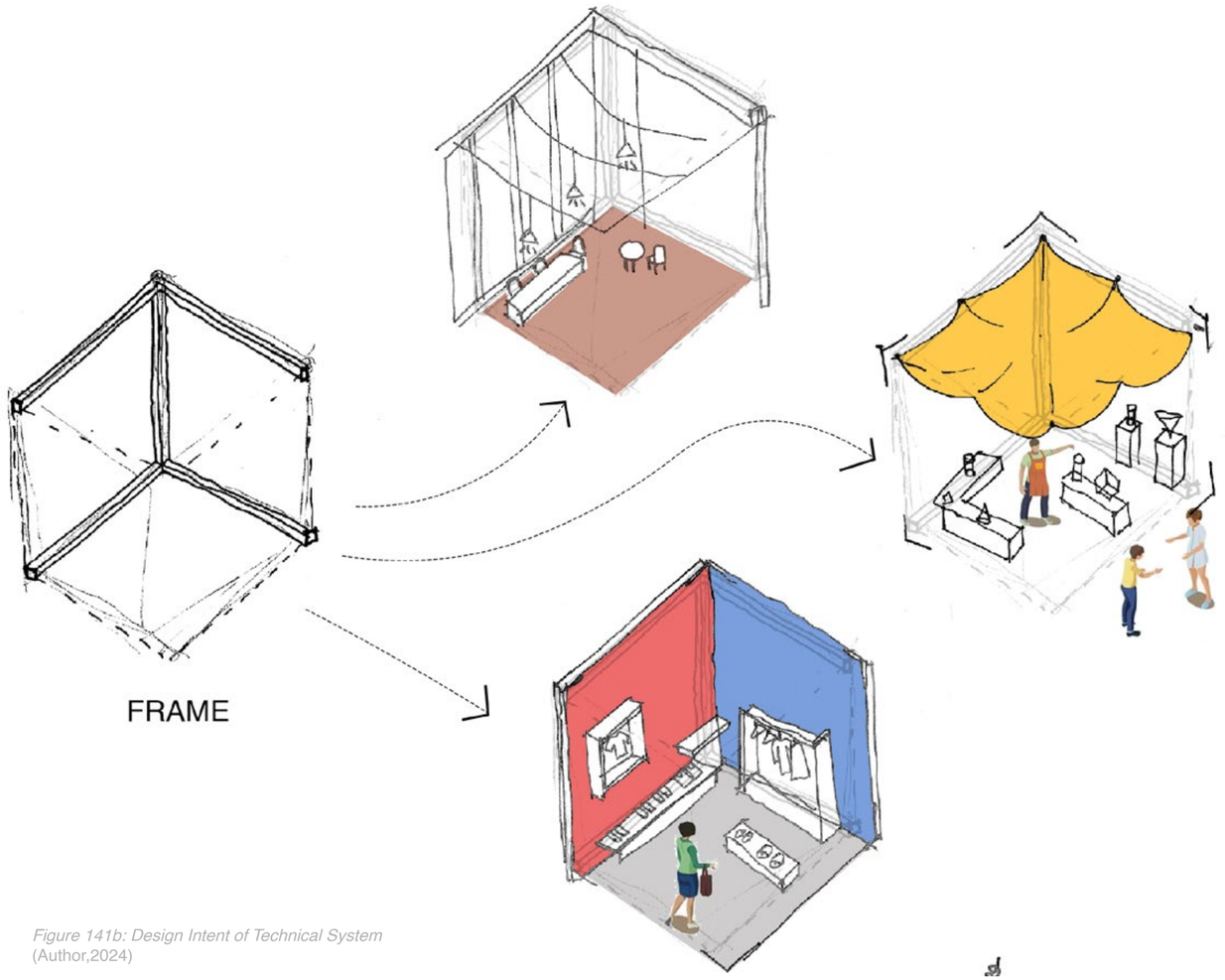


Figure 141b: Design Intent of Technical System
(Author,2024)

'PLUG n PLAY'

THE FUN PALACE + INTERACTION CENTRE BY CEDRIC PRICE

Conceived in the early 1960s by Cedric Price and theatre director Joan Littlewood, the Fun Palace, although never built, proposed a new kind of social hub that challenged conventional ideas of architecture. This included the introduction of the notion of a flexible, dynamic environment that could adapt to the needs and desires of its users (Miro, 2024). The Fun Palace was therefore envisioned as temporary structure and open framework, similar to a scaffolding that could support various activities, with movable walls, platforms, and floors. This flexibility was intended to create a space that could change over time, constantly evolving to accommodate different events and interactions. (Murphy, 2018)

In terms of the design of the Nex[us], the production space intends to be designed on the basis of Price's concept. As it would consist of a grid lattice structure with modular walls as cladding and internal partitions to create studio and workshop spaces for the creatives other entrepreneurs to create their products and most importantly connect with other individuals.

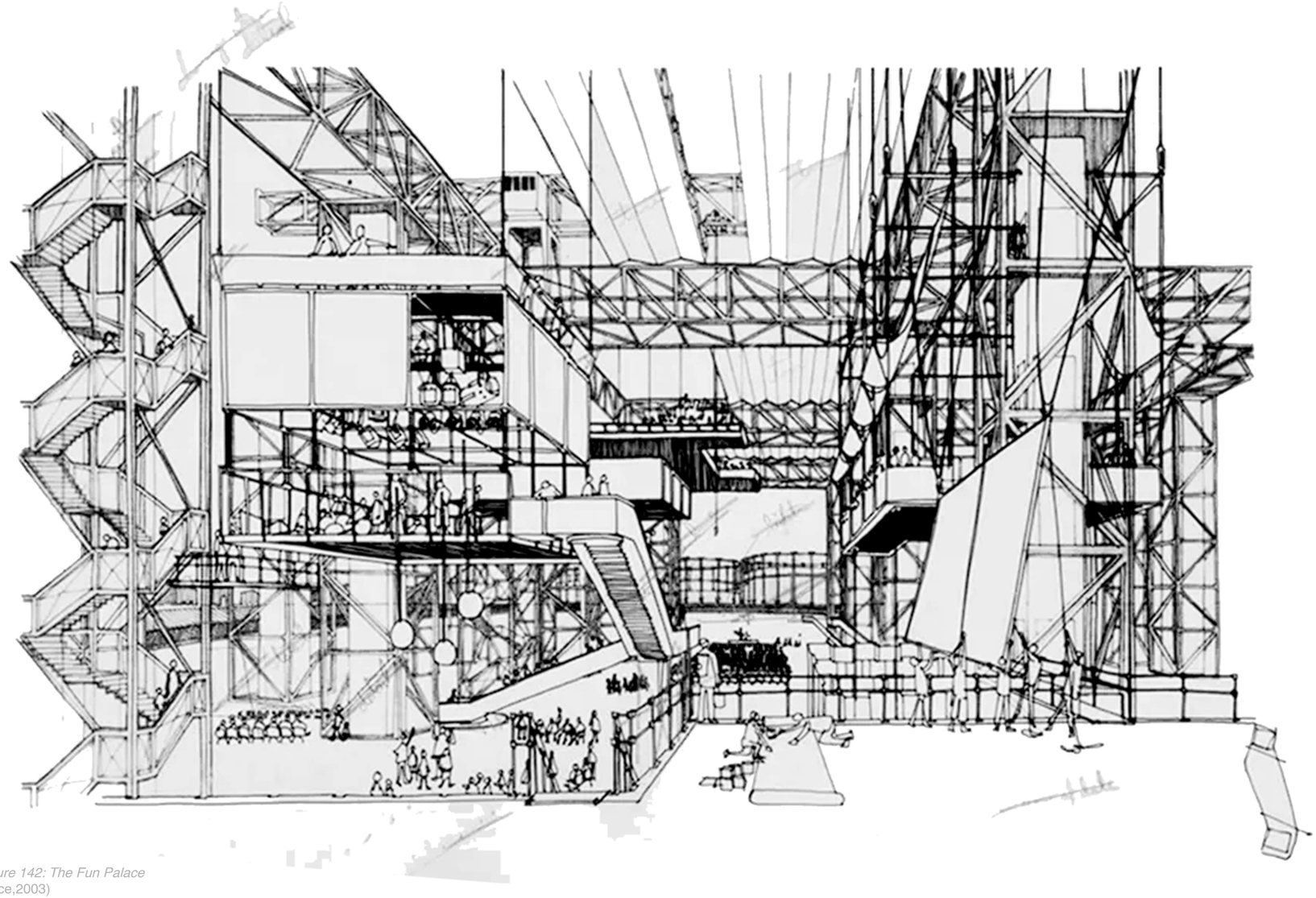
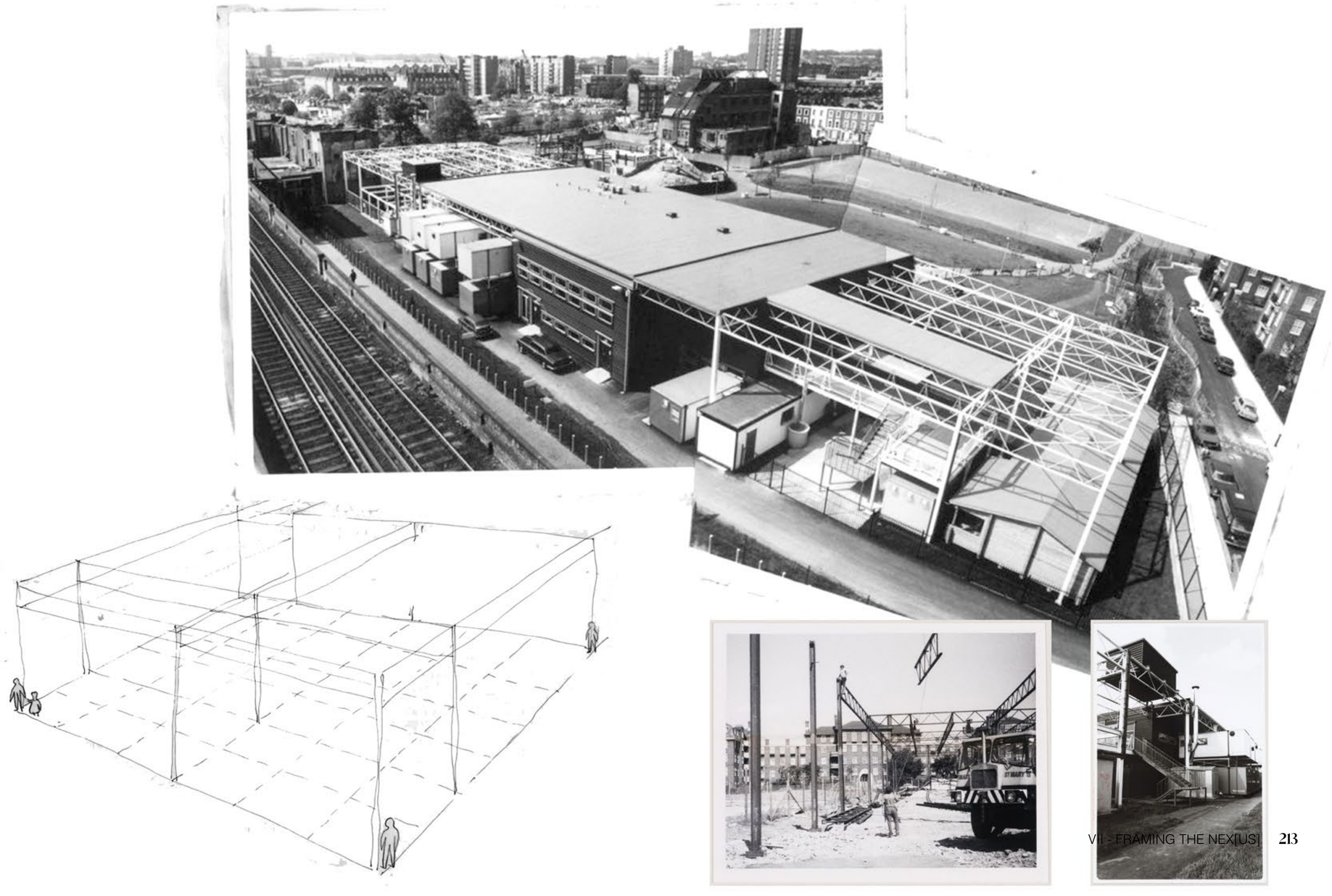


Figure 142: The Fun Palace
(Price,2003)

A similar project by the same architect includes the InterAction Center constructed in London in the 1970s. This building was another bold and experimental project, and was built on the many ideas Price developed for the Fun Palace. It focused on flexibility, adaptability, and user engagement, and social interaction within the community center.

In terms of its structure, Price's principles of flexibility were achieved using prefabricated steel members and concrete components, allowing for an efficient assembly and easy modification. His idea was that portions of the building would be arranged or even dismantled and relocated as the community's needs changed. The spaces within the building could be transformed to accommodate a variety of events, ranging from performance, to workshops and exhibitions. This adaptability allowed for a constant evolution of the activities functioning within the center, reflecting Price's belief that architecture should be responsive to its users (Price, 2003).



Left to right
Figure 143a-e: The InterAction Centre
(Price,2003)

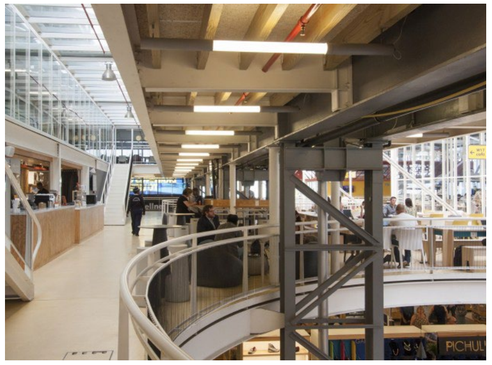
'MODULAR'

THE WATERSHED BY WOLFF ARCHITECTS

In terms of the Market of the Nex[us], principles of modular design are inspired by The Watershed located on the V&A Waterfront in Cape Town. Designed by Wolff Architects in 2014, this dynamic marketplace and cultural space's primary function is to house various artisan shops, craft stalls, and food vendors, ultimately providing a diverse shopping experience while showcasing local craftmanship and products (Wolff, 2014).

Architecturally, the Watershed features contemporary design features such as an open plan layout, which allows for flexible use of space to accommodate different functions. The design incorporates a mix of modern materials such as steel and glass, along with traditional materials such as timber. This combination creates an industrial functionality with commerce and social activities, as the groundfloor consists of the market stalls and the above mezzanine levels built as suspended floors to carry spaces for rentable offices and workshop areas (Wolff, 2014).







Top to Bottom
Figure 144a-c: The Watershed
(Wolff, 2014)

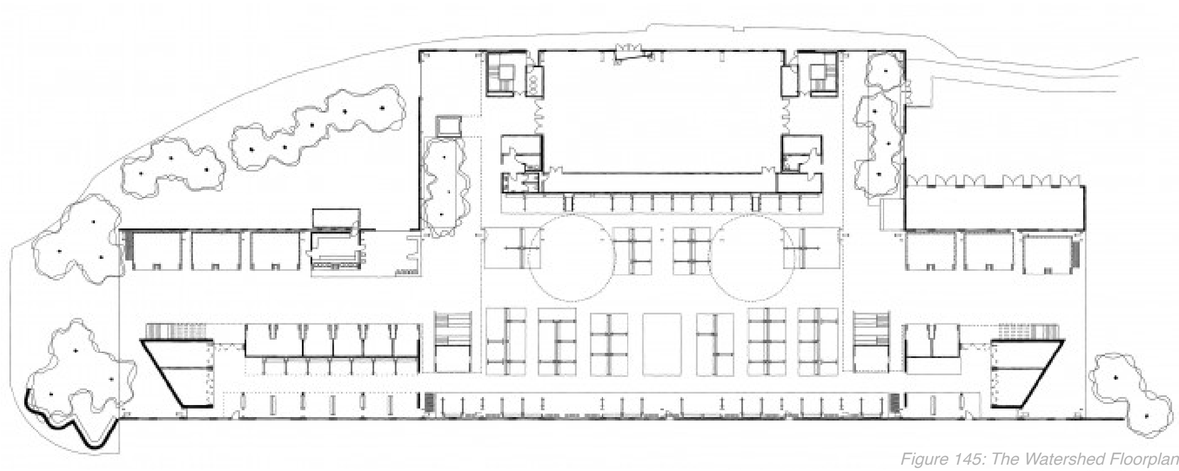


Figure 145: The Watershed Floorplan
(Wolff, 2014)



Figure 146: The Watershed
(Wolff, 2014)

On the note of modularity, the overall design of the Watershed makes use of a steel frame structure, which provides the flexibility need for its open plan layout. This steel frame supports large spans and accommodates for different types of traders. Specific to the market stalls, the building utilizes prefabricated components (Display cabinets and other store furniture) constructed of timber. This also includes modular panels (Wolff, 2014). These components are manufactured off-site and assembled on-site, which speeds up the construction process and reduces costs. This also allows for precision in construction, improving the overall quality and reducing the waste.

Therefore, the interior spaces are interchangeable, due to the use of movable partitions and flexible fixtures that can be rearranged according to the needs of its user, as well as the events that take place in the Watershed (Wolff, 2014). Most importantly, the design supports scalability, as additional modules and sections can be added, if need be. This makes the Watershed a dynamic space, as it can expand and modify the building's functionality over time without requiring a complete redesign.

In terms of sustainability, the watershed makes use of environmentally friendly features. This includes energy efficient lighting and heating systems, as well as natural ventilation and daylighting. These elements assist to minimize the building's climatic impact and also reduces operational costs.



Figure 147a: The Watershed
(Wolff, 2014)





Top to bottom
Figure 147b-c: The Watershed
(Wolff, 2014)

'THE NAMIBIAN ESSENCE'

ADOPTING THE ARCHITECTURAL LANGUAGE OF NAMIBIAN PUBLIC SPACES

Although discussed earlier in this report, one thing that was not outlined is the architectural language of the Single Quarters Market. Rich in colours and textures, this market space was designed using tectonic elements constructed from steel and corrugated roofing sheets, to create shading devices to protect users from the harsh Namibian sun. The shading are designed as curvilinear forms, giving the architectural language of the Single Quarters a dynamic rhythm that once again adds to its uniqueness.

Contrarily, this language is not unique to Single Quarters as other social spaces around Windhoek make use of this style. Soweto Market makes use of a similar style.Additionally, most if not all parks in the city are designed in the same fashion; making use of steel tectonic structures for urban infrastructure, coated in the same colours and textures. This perhaps speaks to the identity of these social spaces, which the Nex[us] seeks to continue from and possibly enhance. In this way the Nex[us] can follow and adapt the architectural language of Namibia to develop an identity that is familiar yet unique.





Top to bottom
Figure 148a-b: Windhoek Playgrounds
(author, 2024)



Figure 149a-d: Single Quarters Market
(Marais, 2024)









Figure 150: Soweto Market
(Author, 2024)

REINTERPRATING THE NAMIBIAN ARCHITECTURAL LANGUAGE

SANTA CATERINA MARKET BY MIRALLES TAGLIABUE (EMBT)

The Santa Caterina in Barcelona serves as a striking case study that can be used to find ways to abstract the architectural language of Namibian architecture. Designed by Enric Miralles and Benedetta Tagliabue (EMBT) IN 2005, this local market place underwent a major renovation and expansion of a 19th century market building. The most striking addition includes its undulating and colourful roof. Covered in a mosaic of ceramic tiles, the roof reflects traditional Catalan ceramics while its wavy form is designed to evoke its surrounding landscape's hills and valleys. This visually engaging element not only enhances the market's aesthetic appeal but also serves as a prominent landmark in the El Born neighbourhood (ArquitecturaViva, 2004).



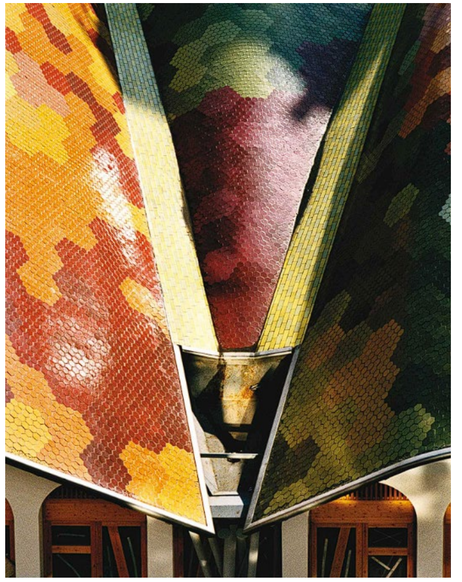






Figure 151a-d: Santa Caterina Market (ArquitecturaViva, 2004)

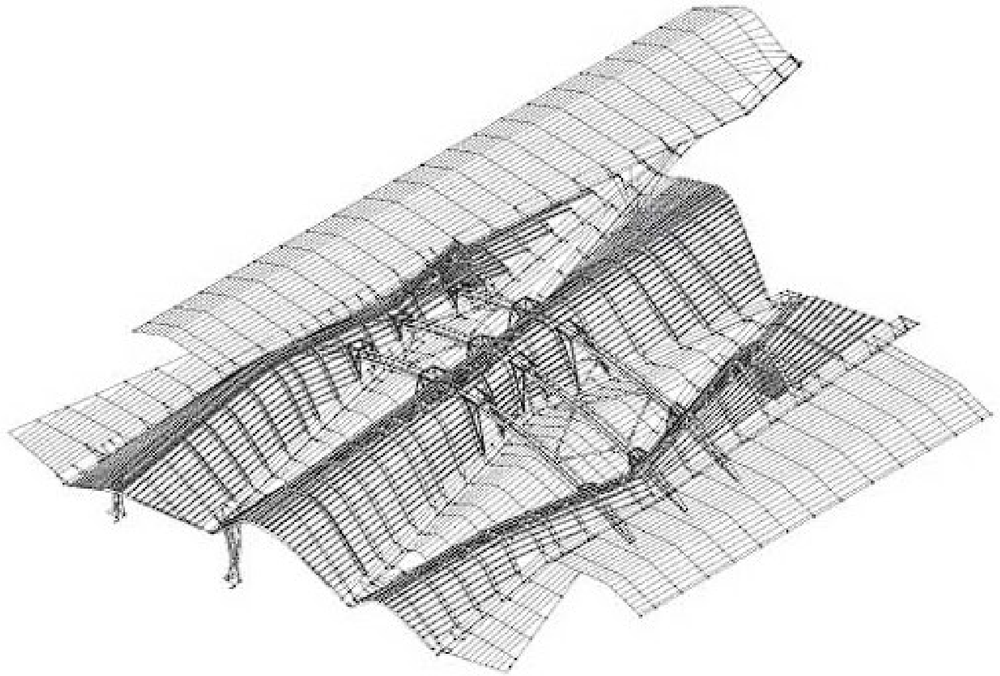


Figure 152: Santa Caterina Market (ArquitecturaViva, 2004)

The roof is supported by a steel framework that provides the structural integrity needed for its undulating shape. The wavy shape of the roof is facilitated by a combination of curved steel beams and trusses, which also support the varying heights and contours of the roof. This steel structure is designed to handle the weight of the roof's complex geometry and the ceramic tiles that cover it. The framework also allows for large spans and avoids the need for internal supports, contributing to the market's open-plan layout. The roof design also makes use of natural ventilation systems to enhance indoor climate control. This is achieved through openings and vents that are placed in positions to allow for the flow of air, to regulate temperature and improve air quality inside the market (ArquitecturaViva, 2004).

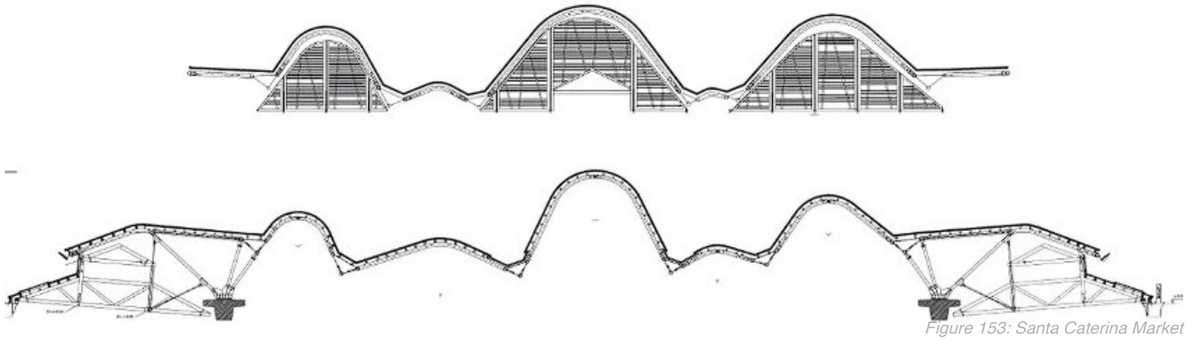


Figure 153: Santa Caterina Market (ArquitecturaViva, 2004)



Figure 154: Santa Caterina Market (ArquitecturaViva, 2004)

TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENT

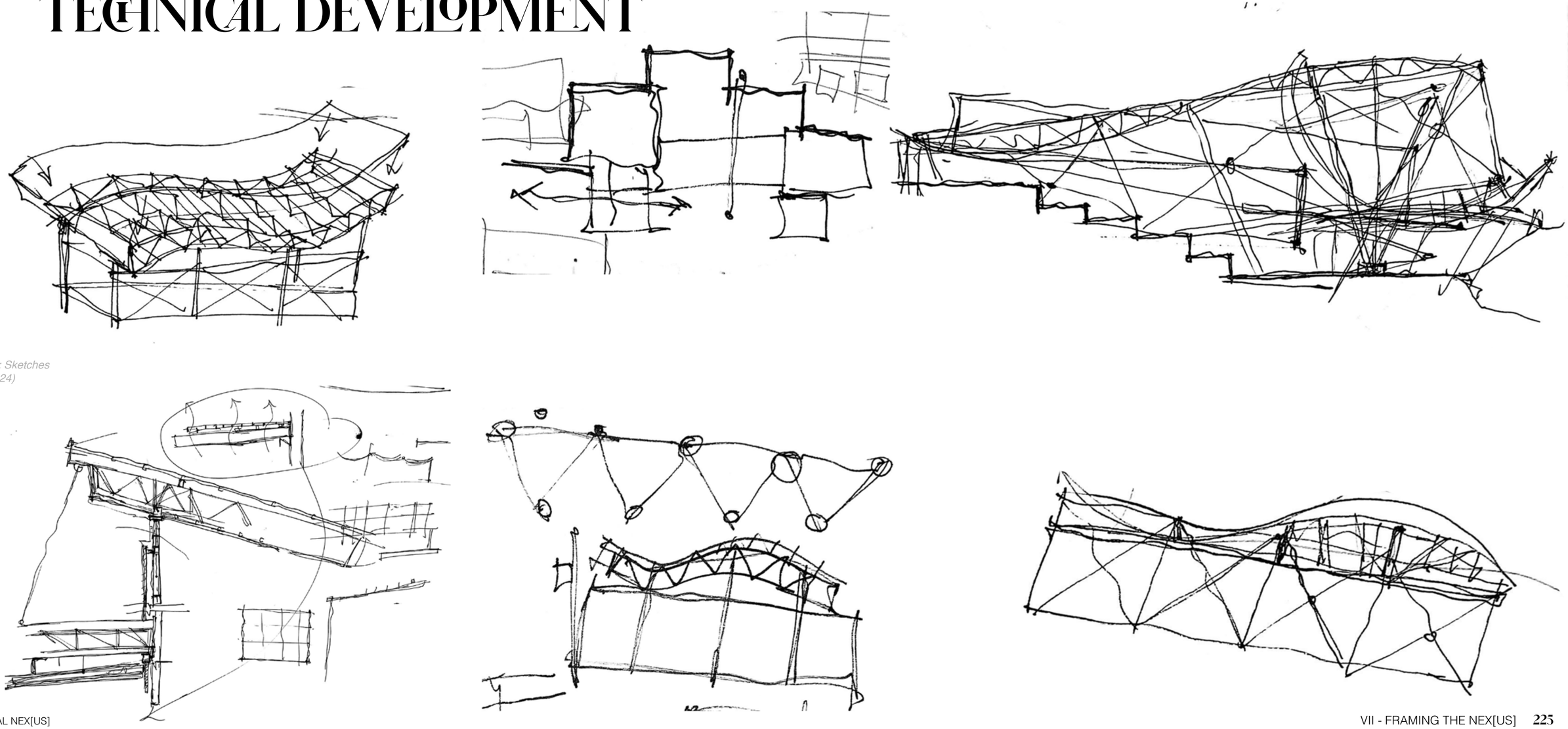


Figure 155: Sketches (Author, 2024)



Figure 156: Floorplans (Author, 2024)

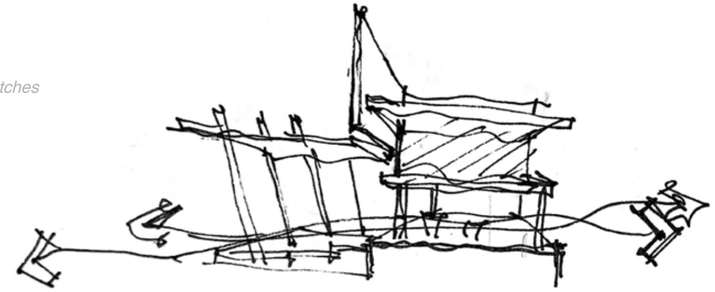
GROUND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR
(STREET LEVEL)

5 10 15 20

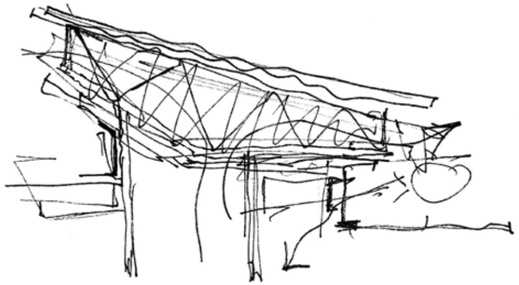
Figure 157: Sketches (Author, 2024)



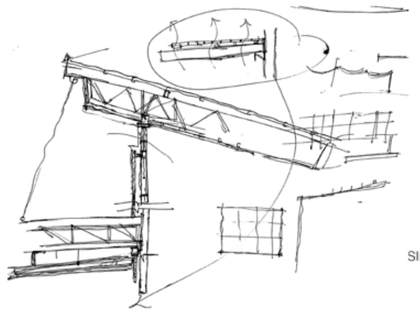
OPEN ON THE GROUND PLANE FOR EASY MOVEMENT + PASSIVE VENTILATION

SKETCHES + IDEAS

CANTILEVER ROOF TRUSS SYSTEM



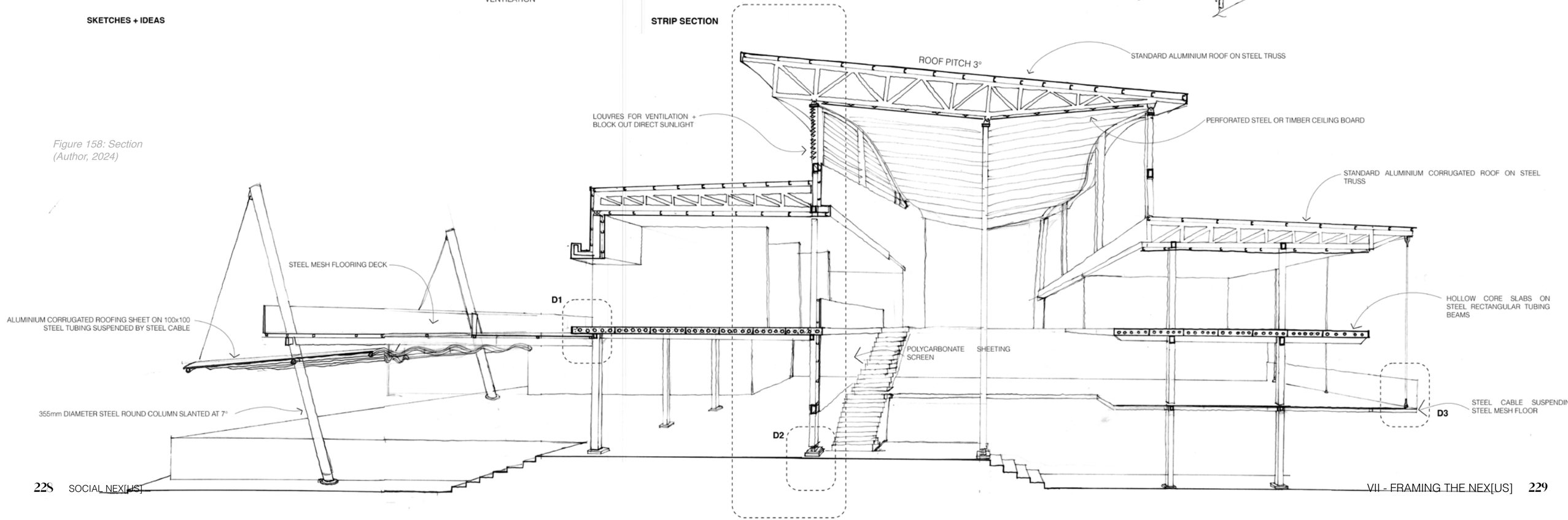
PERFORATED/ STEEL MESH FLOORING TO PROVIDE LIGHTING ON THE SPACE UNDERNEATH + VISUAL PERMEABILITY

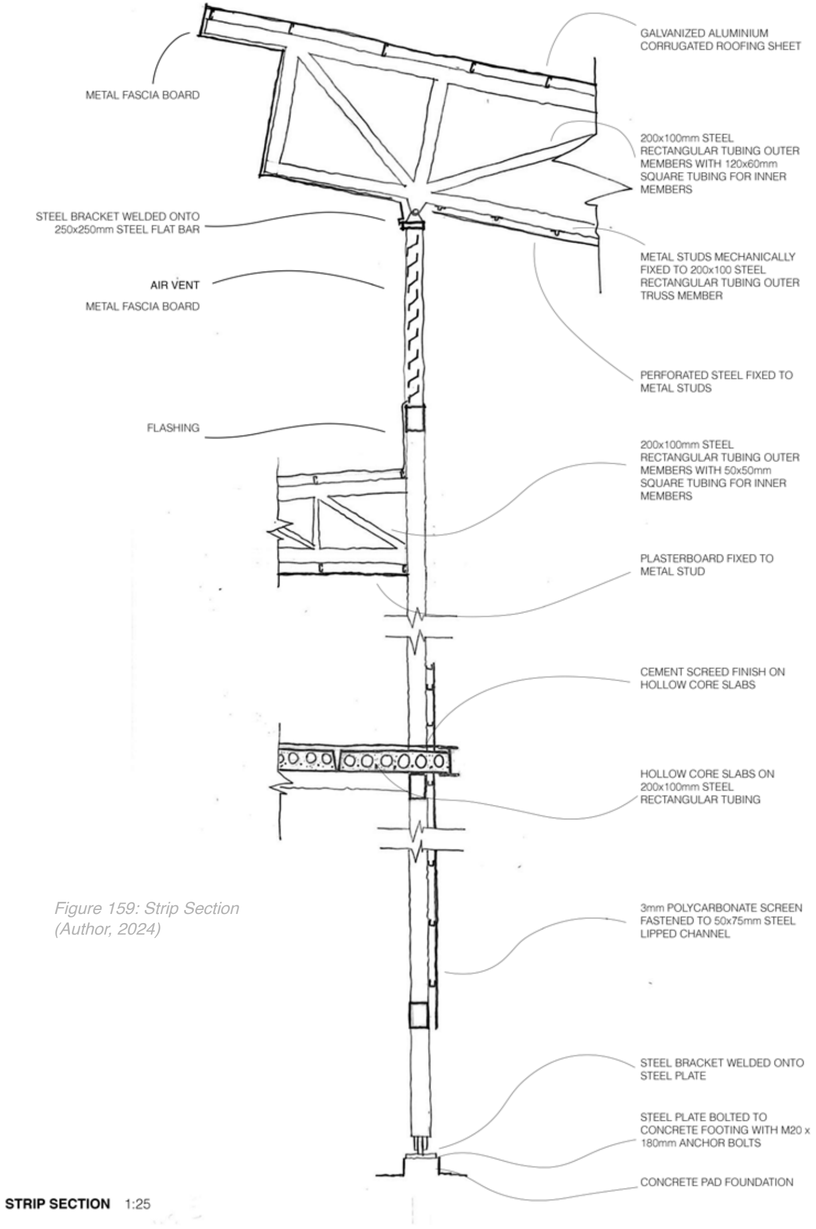


SIMPLIFIED ROOF TRUSS

STRIP SECTION

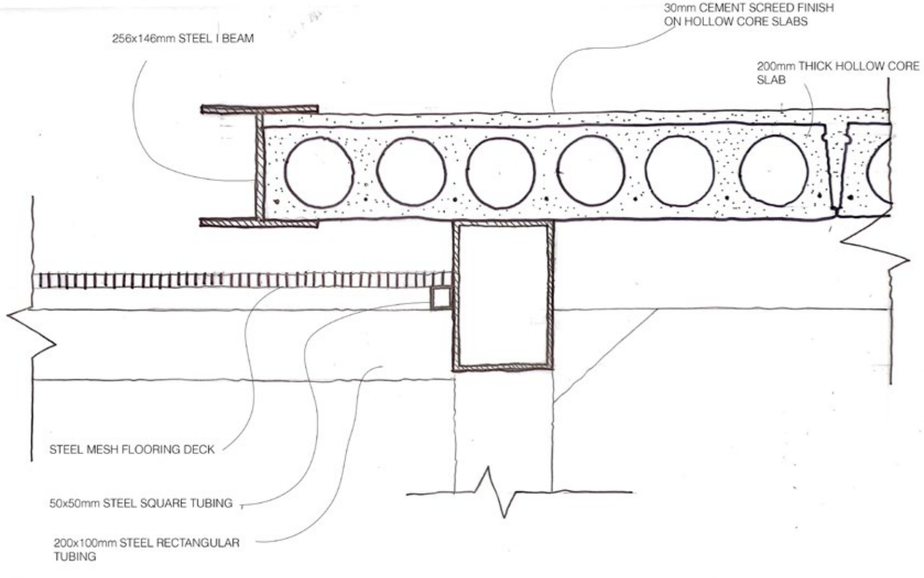
Figure 158: Section (Author, 2024)





STRIP SECTION 1:25

Figure 159: Strip Section
(Author, 2024)



D1

COLUMN FOOTING DETAIL 1:5

Figure 160a: Details
(Author, 2024)

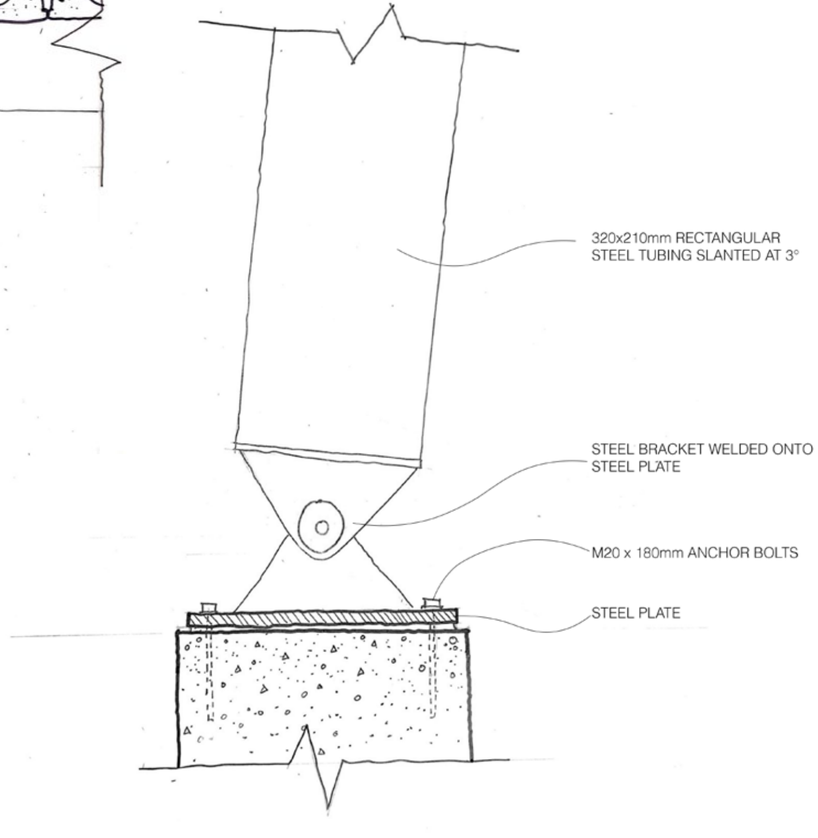


Figure 160b: Details
(Author, 2024)

D2

COLUMN FOOTING DETAIL 1:5

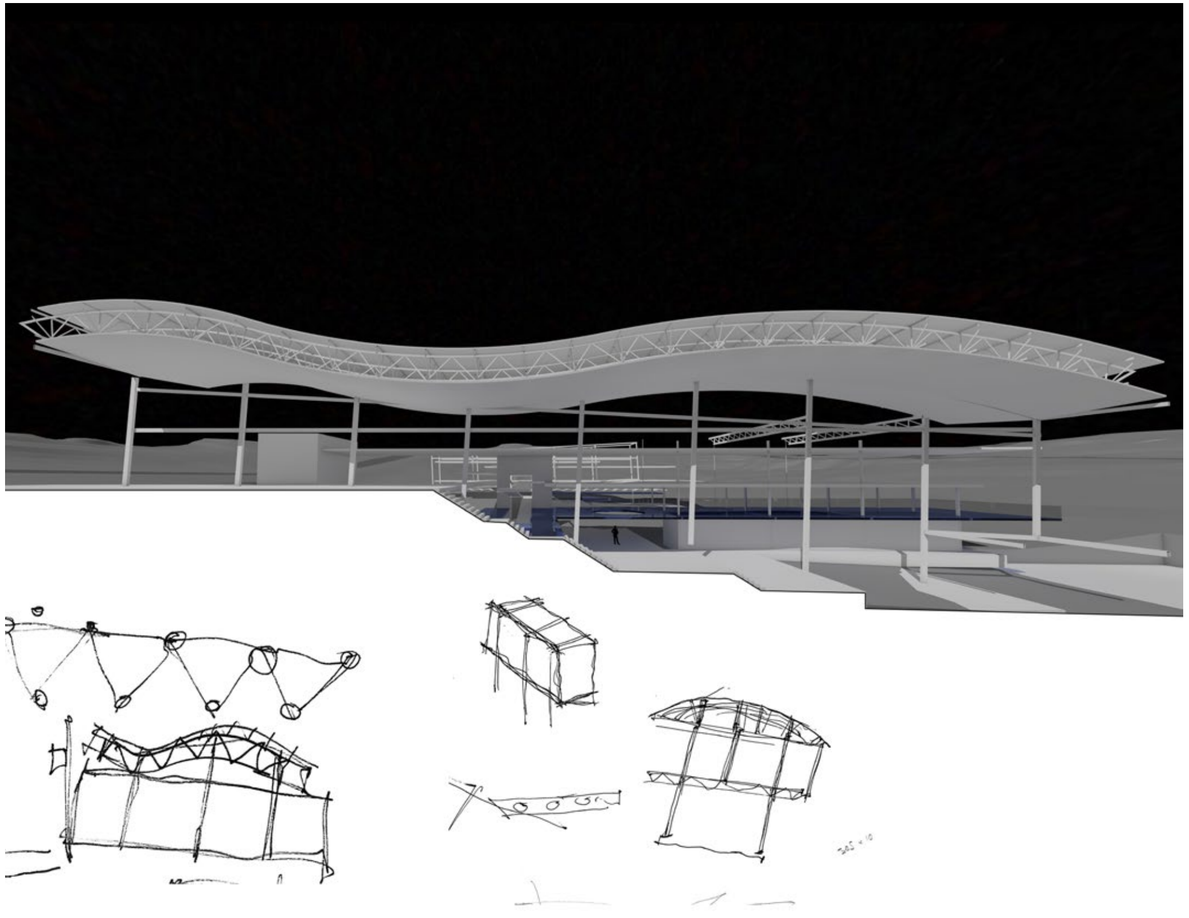


Figure 161: Roof Structure
(Author, 2024)

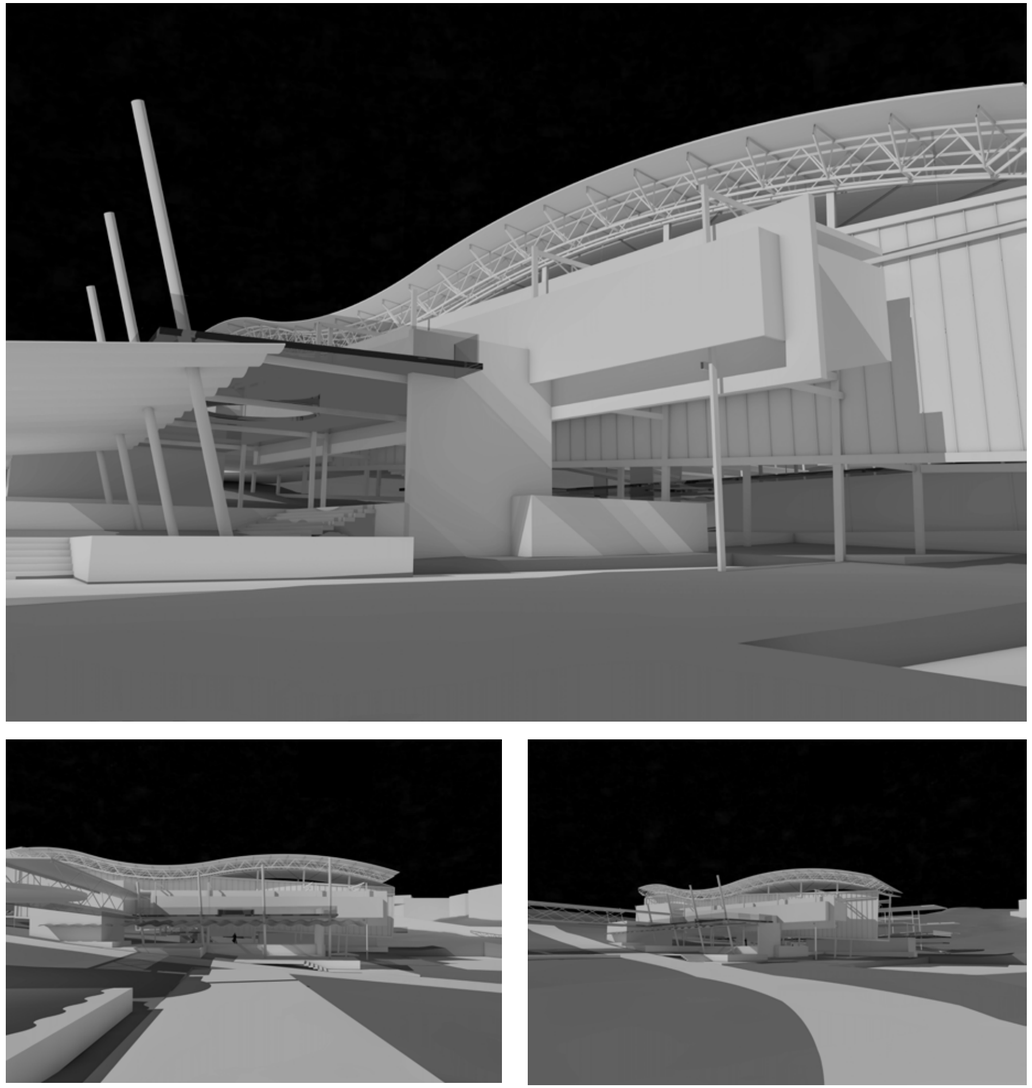


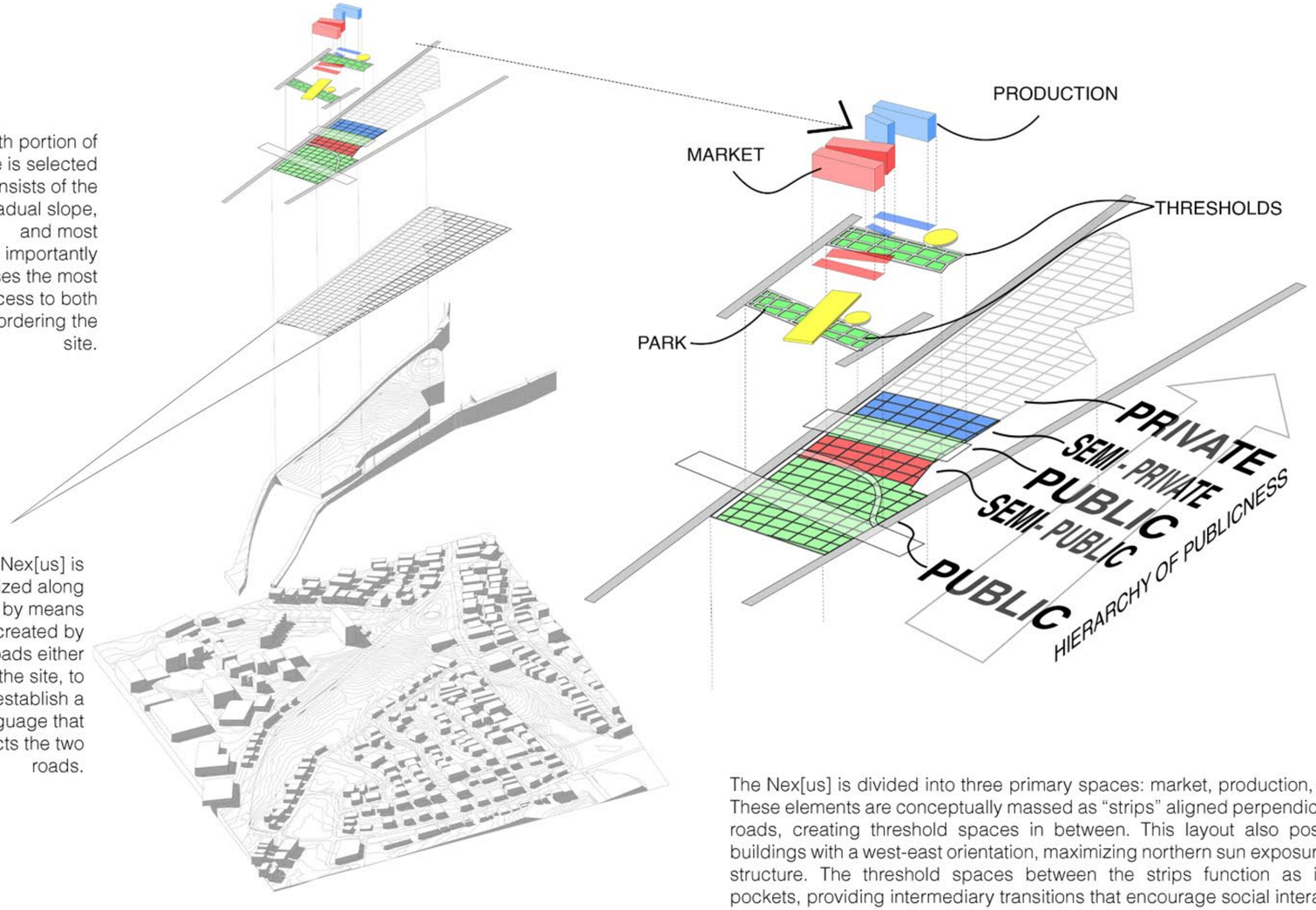
Figure 162: Perspective Views
(Author, 2024)

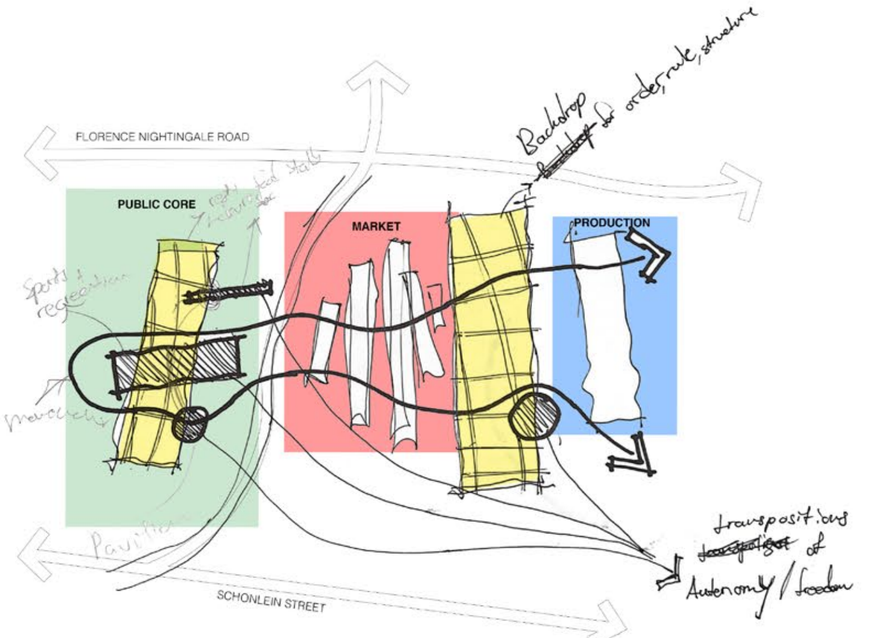
8 FINAL DESIGN

FINAL DRAWINGS

The North portion of the site is selected as it consists of the most gradual slope, and most importantly possesses the most access to both roads bordering the site.

The Nex[us] is organized along the site by means of a grid created by the two roads either side of the site, to establish a language that connects the two roads.





The Nex[us] is divided into three primary spaces: market, production, and park. These elements are conceptually massed as “strips” aligned perpendicular to the roads, creating threshold spaces in between. This layout also positions the buildings with a west-east orientation, maximizing northern sun exposure for each structure. The threshold spaces between the strips function as interactive pockets, providing intermediary transitions that encourage social interaction and enrich the public realm. These three elements are arranged hierarchically according to public accessibility: the park occupies the lowest level as the most public area, while production, the most private, is situated at a higher level.

This organization creates a contrast of order and freedom, with each function purposefully disrupting the rigid grid structure to architecturally create a dynamic scheme that blurs boundaries. The grid represents capitalist multinational forces shaping urban retail, while the interwoven disruptive elements embody the unique, autonomous identities of local retailers and student entrepreneurs, opposing the imposed structure of traditional retail systems.

Figure 163:Concept (Author, 2024)

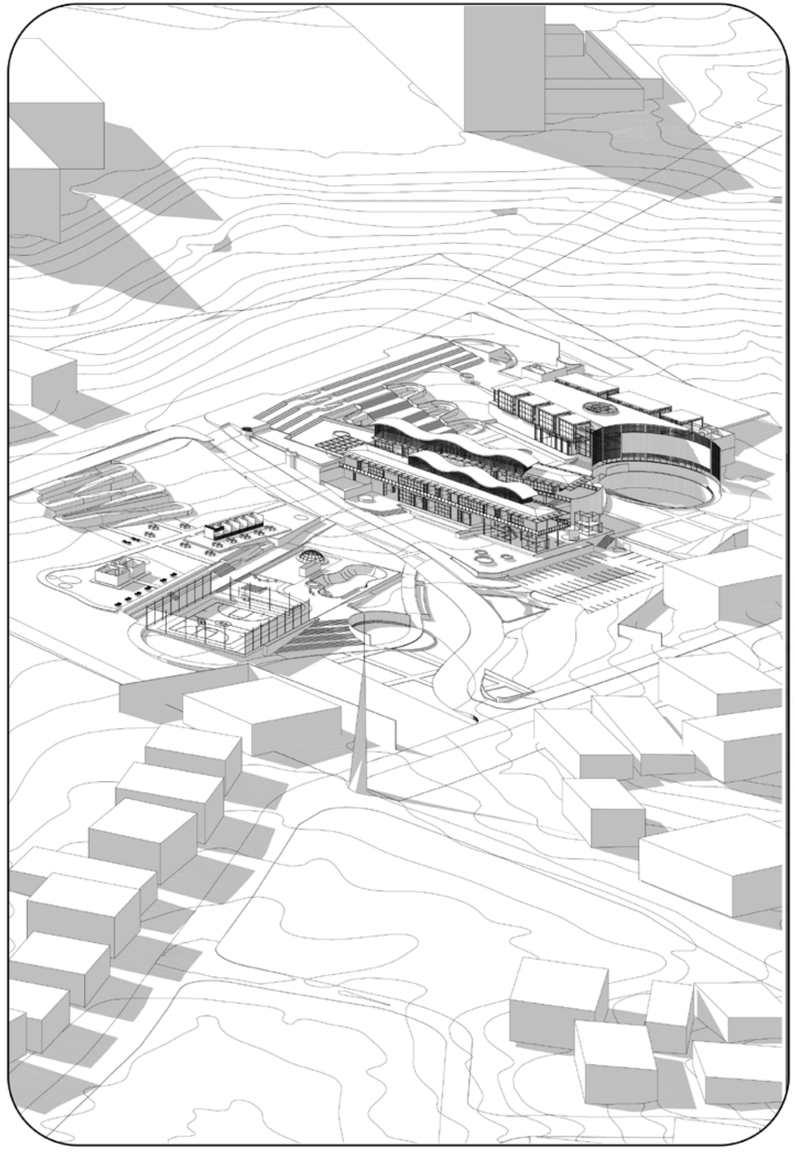


Figure 164: Axonometric View
(Author, 2024)

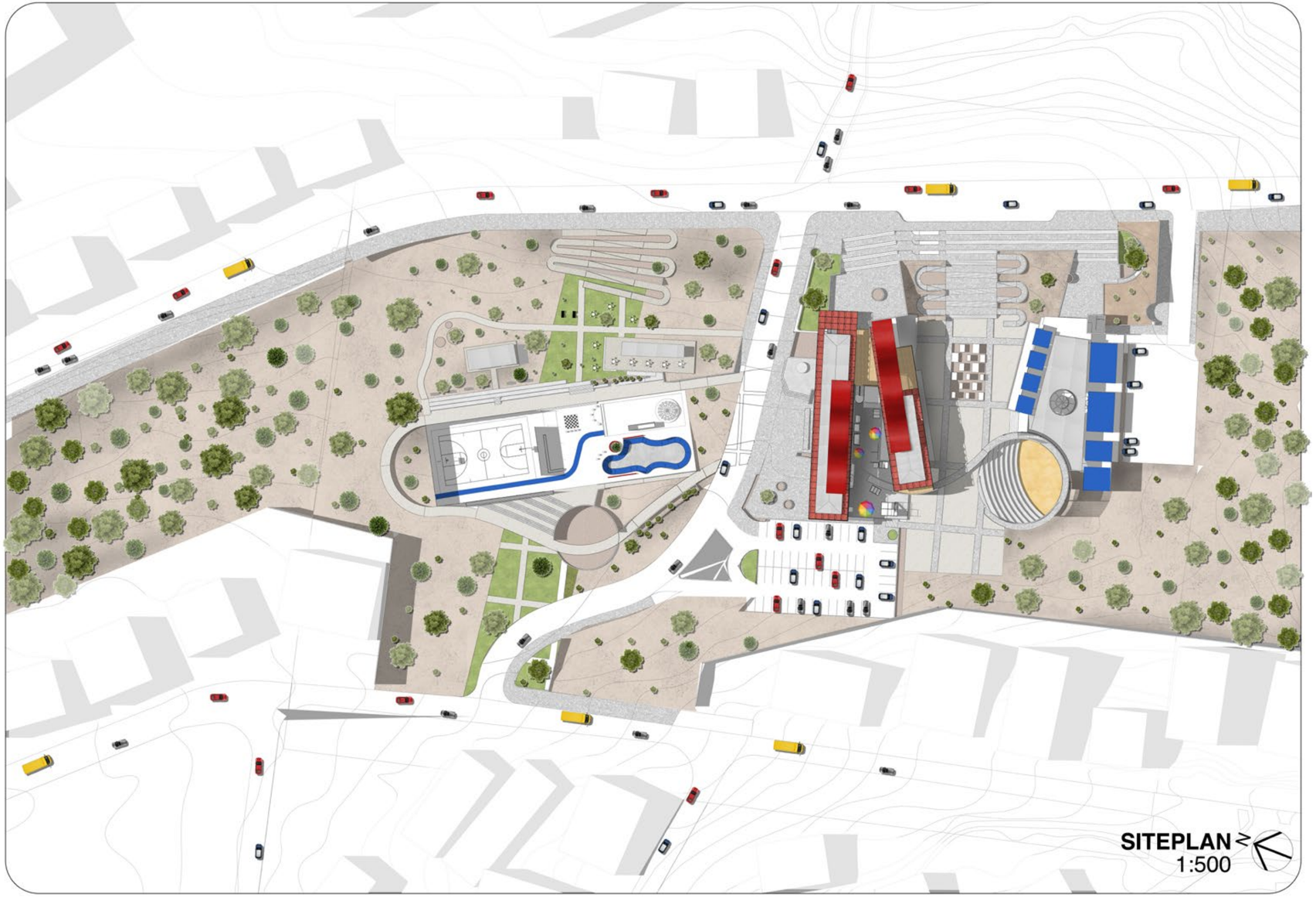
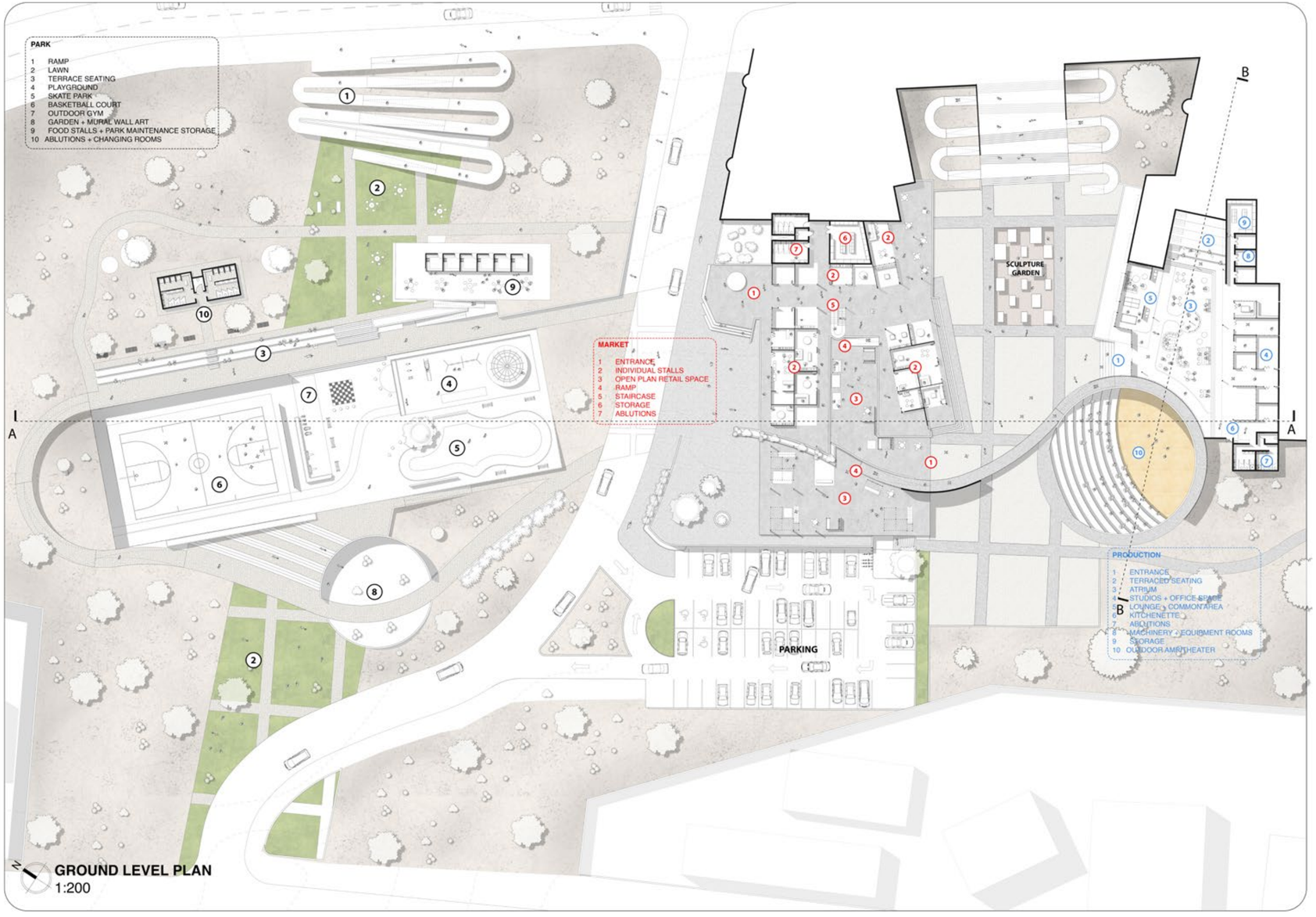


Figure 165: Site Plan
(Author, 2024)



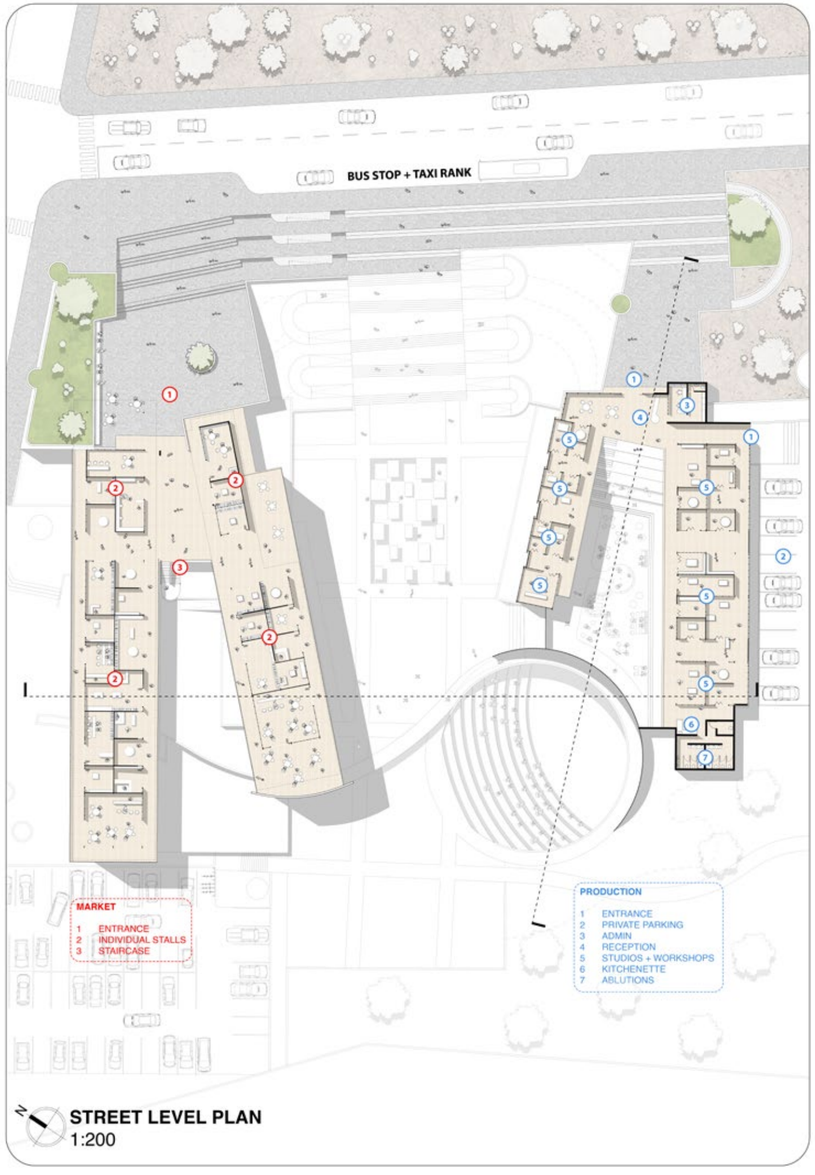


Figure 166: Floorplans
(Author, 2024)

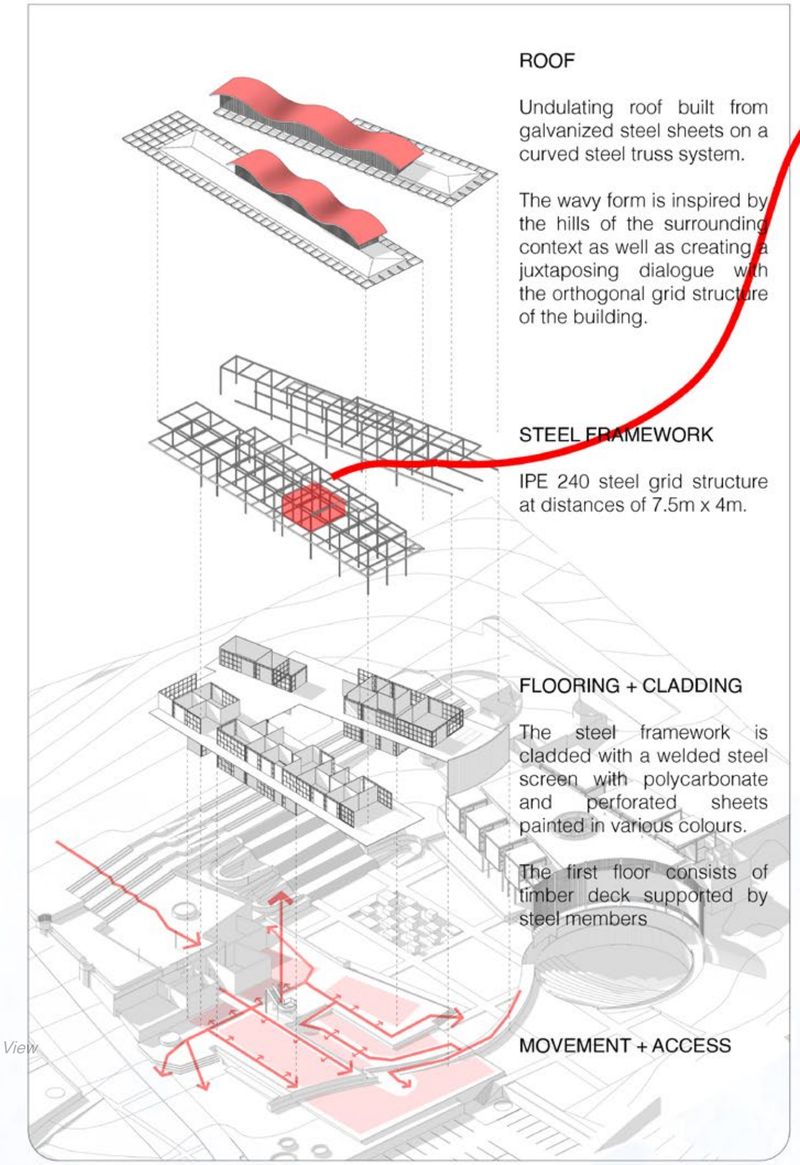
COMMUNITY MARKET
RETAIL NEXUS



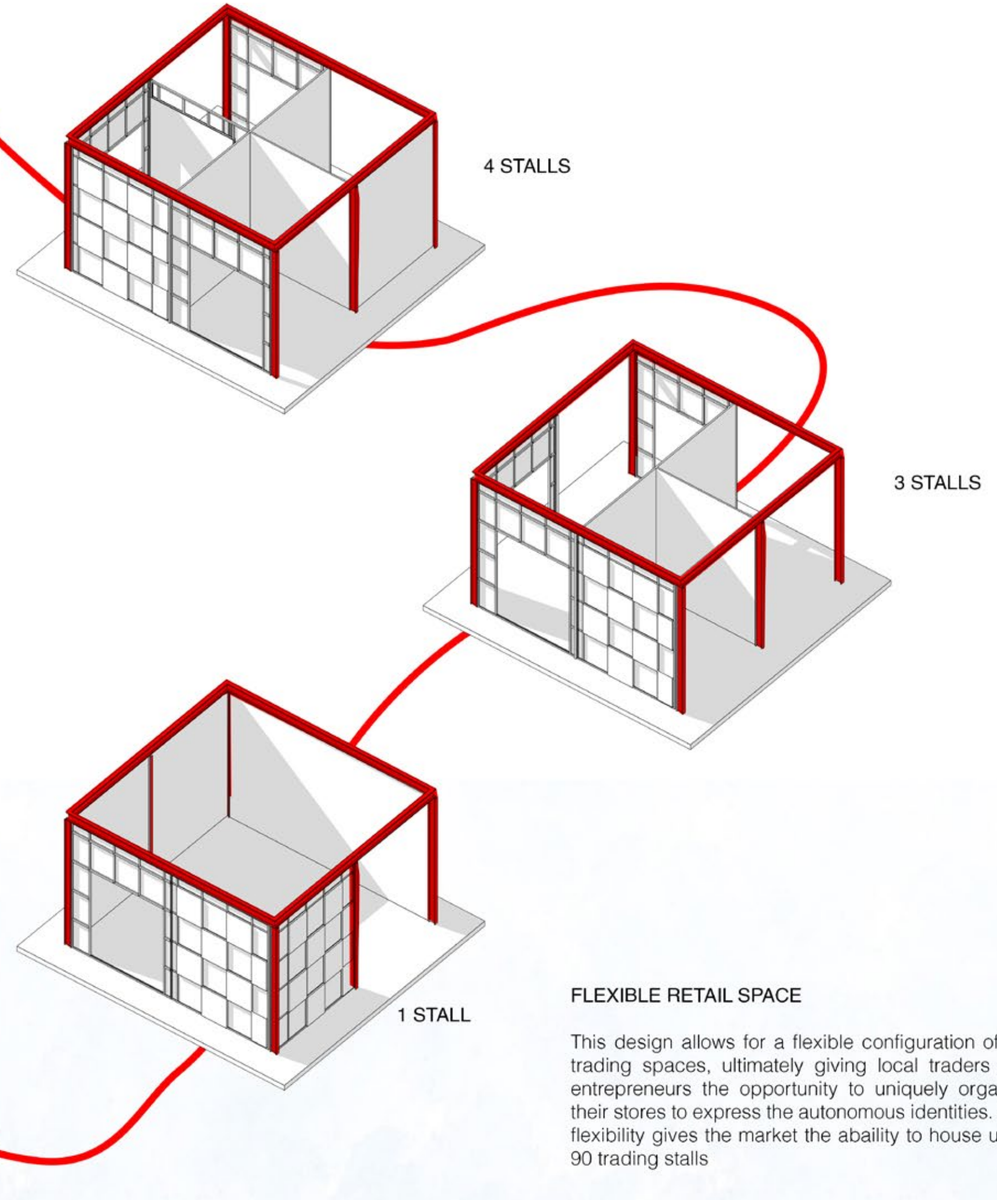
Figure 167: Market Elevation
(Author, 2024)



Figure 168: Market North Elevation (Author, 2024)



EXPLODED AXONOMETRIC VIEW



FLEXIBLE RETAIL SPACE

This design allows for a flexible configuration of the trading spaces, ultimately giving local traders and entrepreneurs the opportunity to uniquely organize their stores to express the autonomous identities. This flexibility gives the market the abaility to house up to 90 trading stalls

Figure 169: Market Axonometric View (Author, 2024)



INDIVIDUAL RETAIL VIEW 1



FIRST FLOOR VIEW

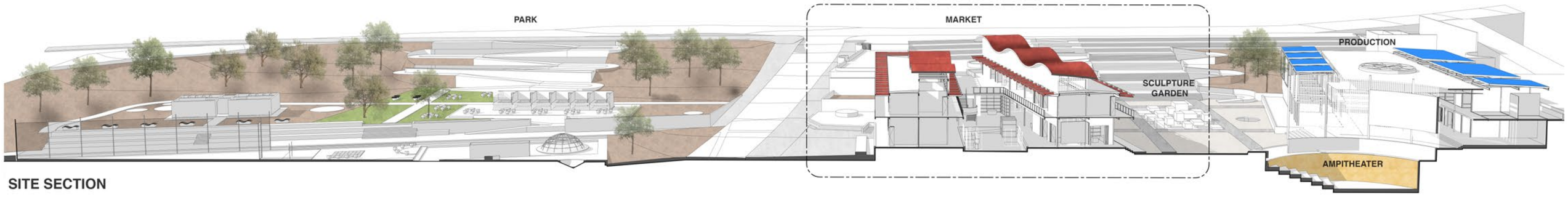


OPEN + SHARED RETAIL SPACE VIEW

Figure 170: Market Interior Views (Author, 2024)



SECTION A
1:50



SITE SECTION

Figure 171: Market Sections (Author, 2024)



Figure 172: Sculpture Garden (Author, 2024)

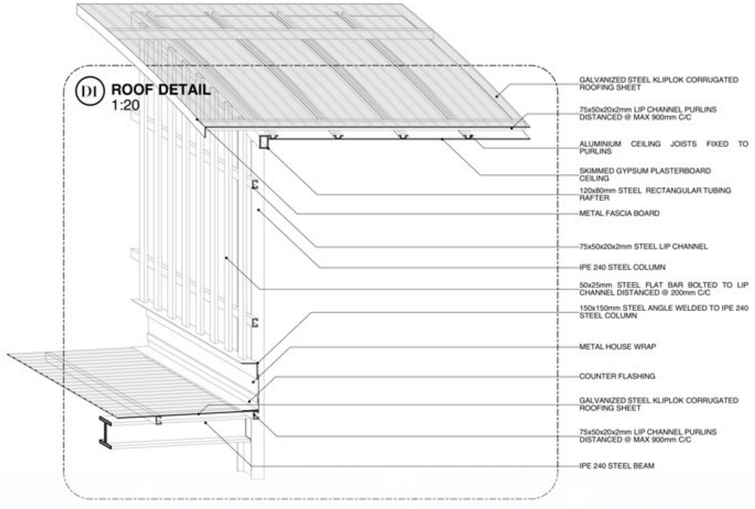
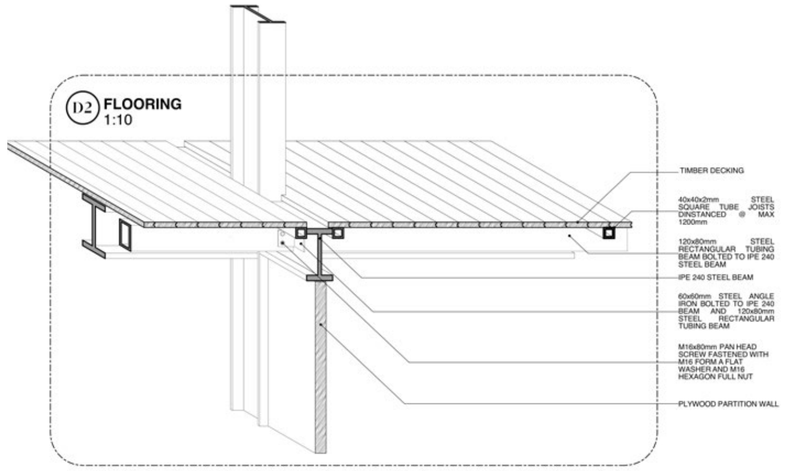
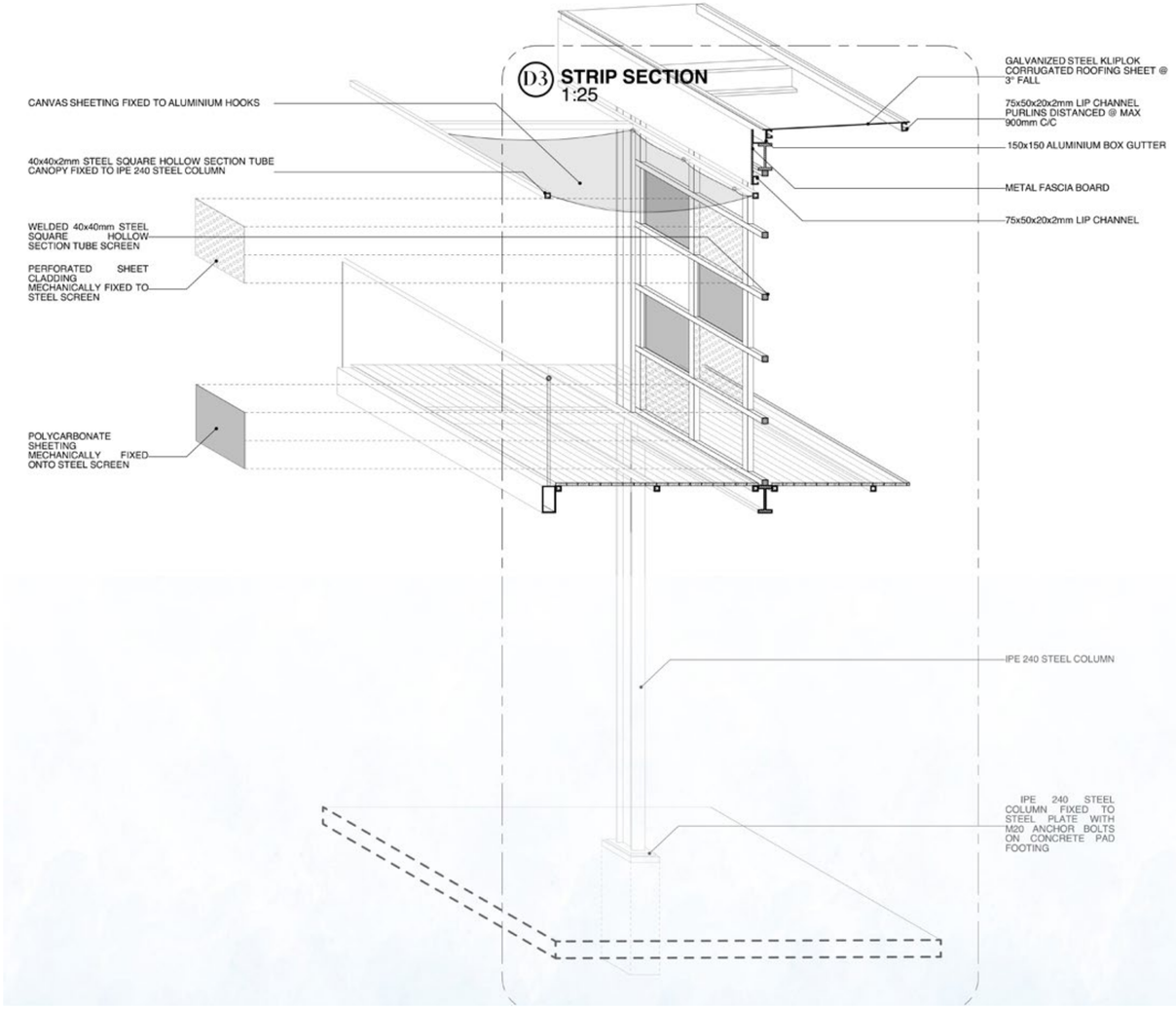


Figure 173: Market Tecnical Details (Author, 2024)





PRODUCTION
INNOVATION + CREATION NEXUS



Figure 174: Production Elevation (Author, 2024)

Figure 175: Production Elevation
(Author, 2024)



ROOF

Galvanized steel roof on steel framework, the ceiling in the atrium consists of an undulating ceiling and a skylight in the center, constructed from a steel truss system and timber ceiling boards

STEEL FRAMEWORK

IPE 240 steel grid structure at distances of 7.5m x 4m.

FLOORING + CLADDING

The steel framework is cladded with a welded steel screen with polycarbonate and perforated sheets painted in various colours.

The first floor consists of timber deck supported by steel members

MOVEMENT + ACCESS

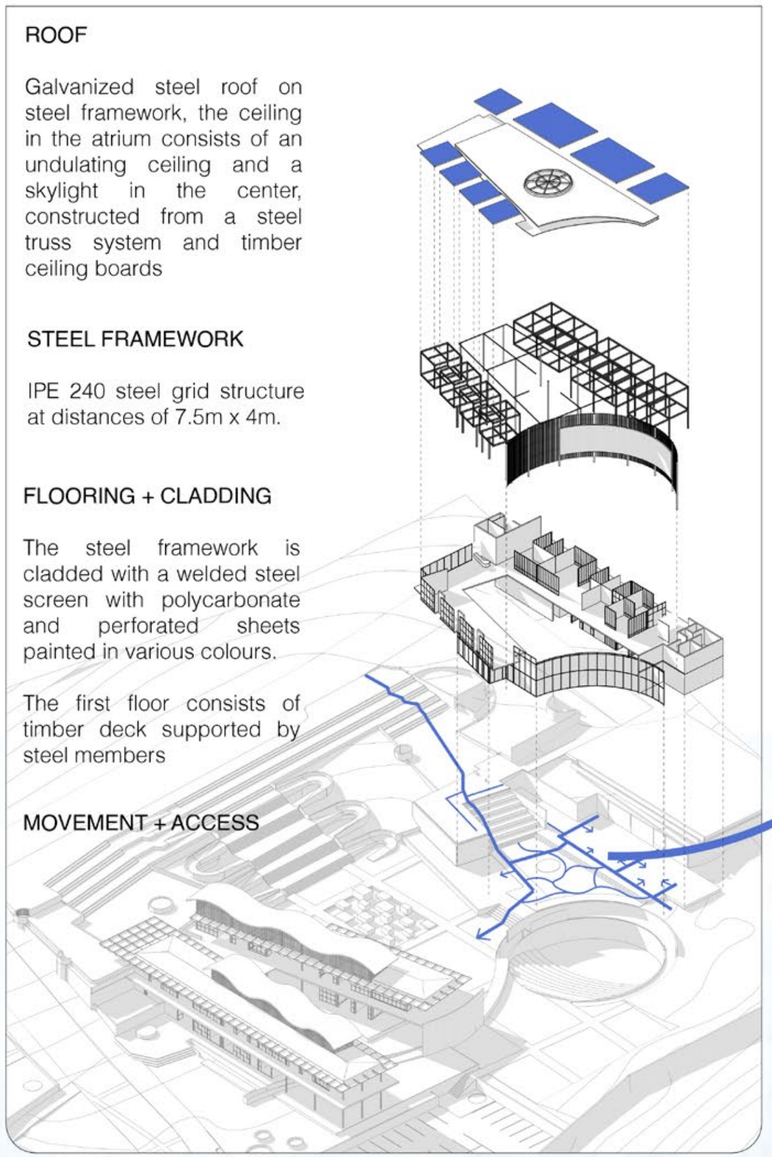


Figure 176: Production Axonometric View (Author, 2024)

EXPLODED AXONOMETRIC VIEW



ATRIUM VIEW

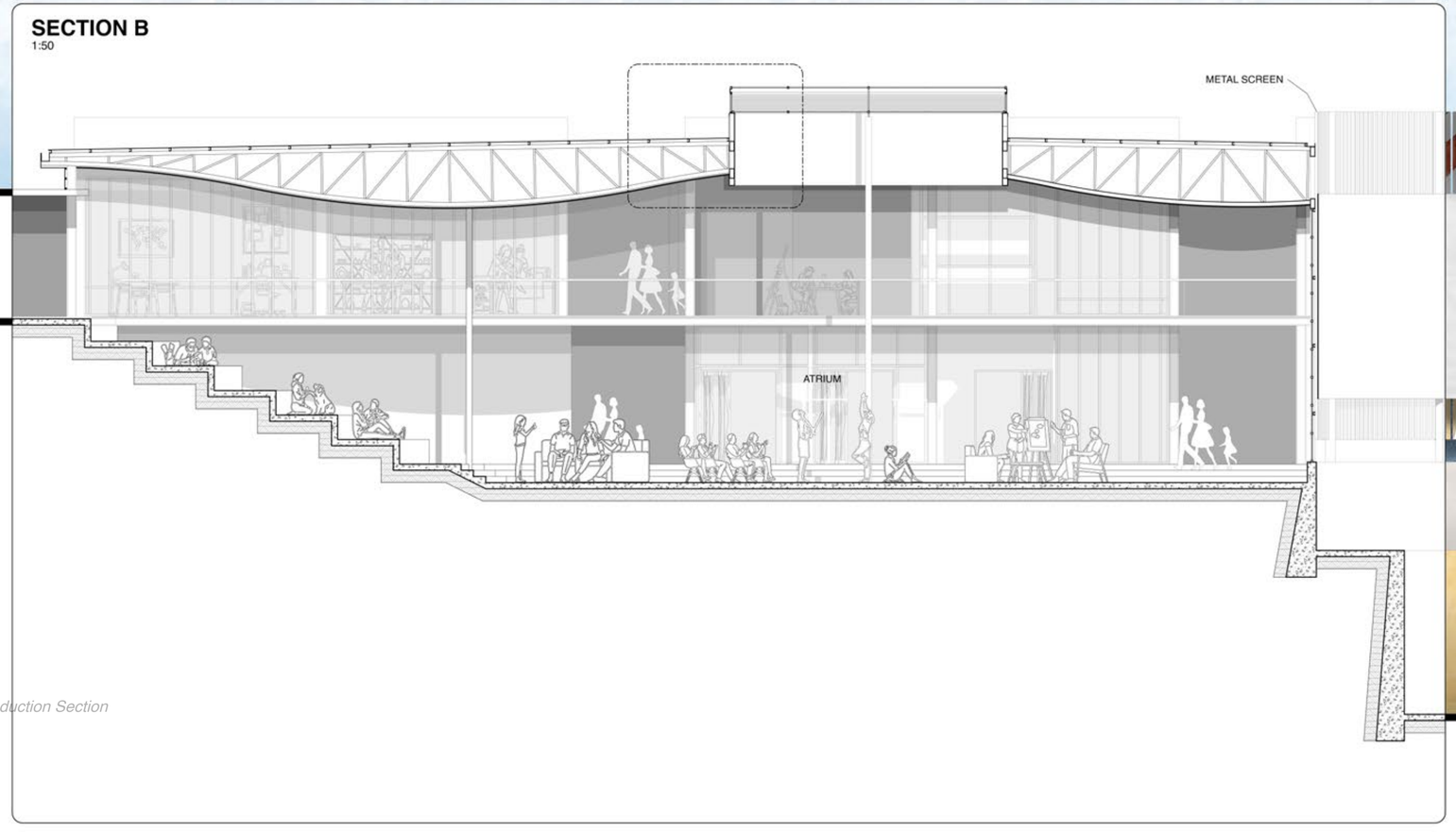
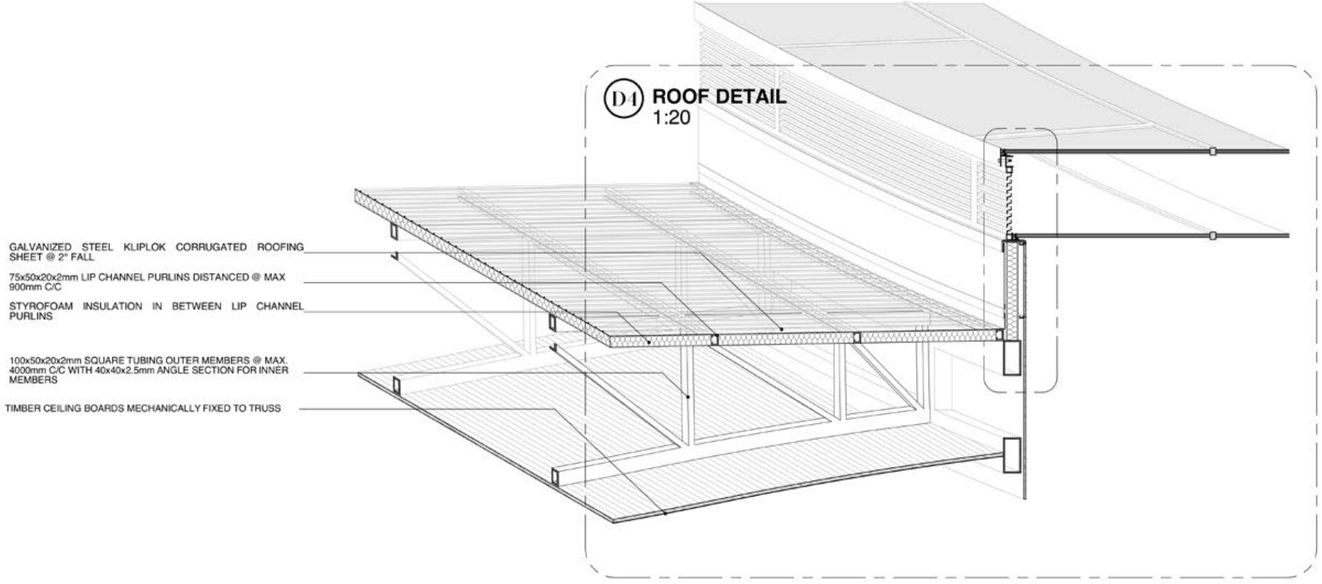


Figure 177: Production Section (Author, 2024)



OUTDOOR AMPITHEATER

The ampitheater provides space for public performances and exhibitions. A metal screen is built between the Production atrium and ampitheater, so that from the interior, the screen filters the sunlight, and from the ampitheater it functions as a screen for artwork to be displayed and to place a canvas sheet on the metal screen for projecting film and hosting events.



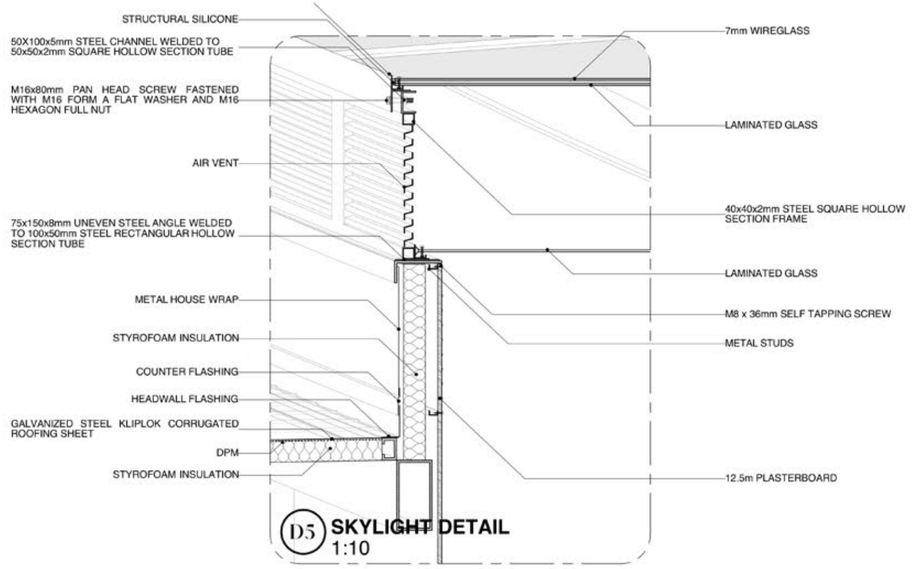


Figure 178: Production Technical Details (Author, 2024)

PARK

ACTIVITY THRESHOLD

The park serves as a threshold space linking Florence Nightingale road and Schonlein Street. The link is created through activity pockets that enhance public life and improve cohesion amongst visitors and members of the community.

These activity spaces act as the community's territory, providing users wuth custodianship through its dynamic functionality, as it provides opportunities to alter and modify the use and appearance of the park.

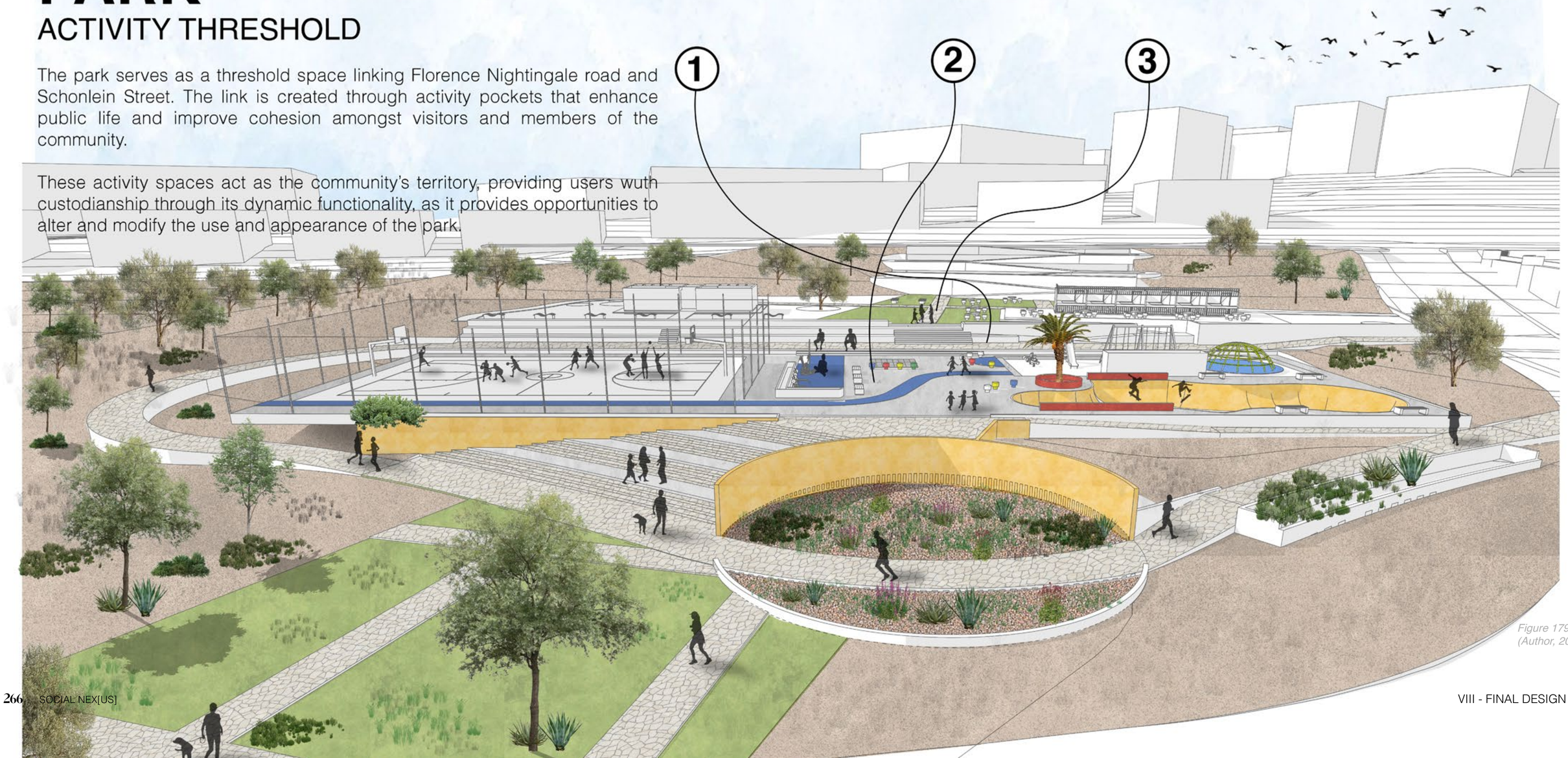


Figure 179: Park (Author, 2024)



1 PATHWAYS + TERRACED SEATING + EXERCISE + COURT

Wide pathways for comfortable movement, terraces for seating and exercise. Multipurpose Court, Life size chess board for recreation + proactivity



2 PLAYGROUND + SKATEPARK

The playground includes a skatepark and areas for different age groups, creating a space for everyone to play and enjoy.

Figure 180: Park Features
(Author, 2024)

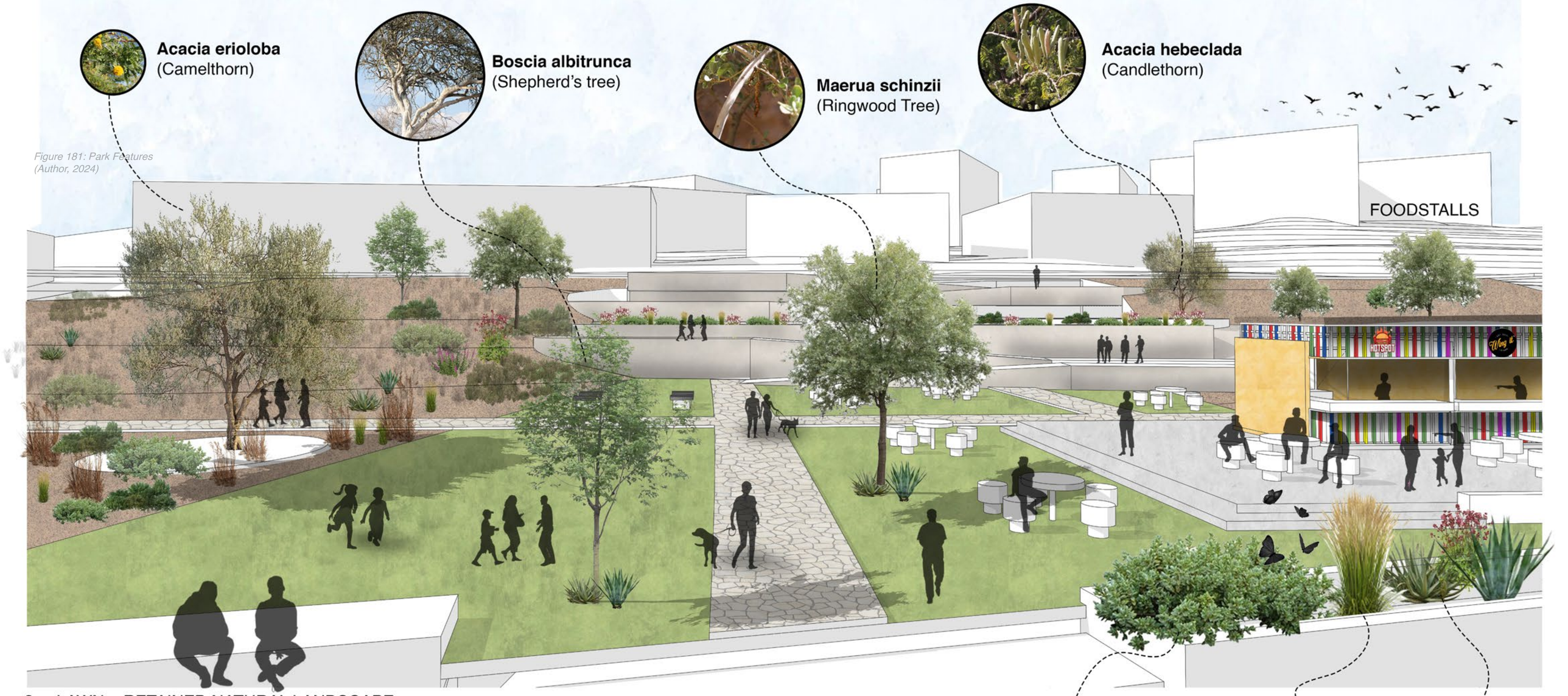


Figure 181: Park Features (Author, 2024)

3 LAWN + RETAINED NATURAL LANDSCAPE

The park is designed in response to the climatic conditions of its context. Therefore, majority of the natural vegetation and ground is retained, and permeable/comfortable surfaces are used as well as drought-resistant plants such as succulents for a sustainable, low-maintenance environment.

9 BIBLIOGRAPHY

REFERENCES + FIGURES

1 REFERENCES LIST
2 FIGURES LIST

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG | SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE PLANNING

30 September 2024

Junior-Steps Nankela

2880086

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RESEARCH ETHICS APPROVAL

Reimagining Public Life and Cohesion in Windhoek West through empowering student entrepreneurs and their side hustles.

This letter serves to confirm that the Ethics application for the above titled study has been approved. The researcher has been granted clearance to proceed with the research study or project.

Protocol/clearance number is: SOAP032/03/2024

Yours sincerely

Motsei Choabi
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UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

Private Bag 3 Wits, 2050
Fax:
Tel:

Reference: Ms Nicoleen Potgieter
E-mail: facultyregistrar.ebe@wits.ac.za

30 September 2024
Person No: 2880086
TAA

Mr JT Nankela
PO BOX 637
ERF 6087
KHOMASDAL 27
9000
Namibia

Dear Mr Junior-Steps Nankela

Master of Architecture (Professional): Change of title of research

I am pleased to inform you that the following change in the title of your Research Report for the degree of **Master of Architecture (Professional)** has been approved:

From:	**Social Nexus: Reimagining public life and cohesion through the design of a Social Nexus in Windhoek West, Windhoek, Namibia.**
To:	**Social Nex[us]: Reimagining public life and cohesion in Windhoek West through empowering student entrepreneurs and their side hustles.**

Yours sincerely

Ms Nicoleen Potgieter
Faculty Registrar
Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment

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