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Spatial justice: reintegrating the High Court and bridging the political divide

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Reintegrating the High Court and bridging the political divide

spatial justice

Brad Evan Krom. 2010

For my Zaida
You taught me right from wrong. Thank you

I miss you

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SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE & PLANNING

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND JOHANNESBURG

Declaration

I, Brad Evan Krom 0407022X, am a student registered for the course Master of Architecture [Professional] in the year 2010. I hereby declare the following:

I am aware that plagiarism [the use of someone else's work without permission and/or without acknowledging the original sources] is wrong. I confirm that the work submitted for assessment for the above course is my own unaided work except where I have stated explicitly otherwise. I have followed the required conventions in referencing thoughts, ideas and visual material of others. For this purpose, I have referred to the Graduate School of Engineering and the Built Environment style guide. I understand that the University of the Witswatersrand may take disciplinary action against me if there is a belief that this is not my unaided work or that I have failed to acknowledge the source of the ideas or words in my own work.



Bradley Evan Krom
27 October 2010

This document is submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree:
Master of Architecture [professional] at the University of the Witswatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa, in the year 2010

Structure

The following thesis research has been broken down into two main essays followed by a systematic explanation to the final design. The written research is broken down into two parts - the first is divided into five main sections dealing with identity, legibility, urban democracy, courthouses and African spatial justice. In this essay each section deals with its specific theme within the greater context of bridging the social contract. Each section deals at first with the theoretical aspects of its particular theme and follows this theoretical underpinning with a precedent study showing how the theory works in a build architectural project. The second essay functions as a case specific introduction and historical backdrop to the final site choice selected for this thesis. It provides a backdrop to the chosen site and acts as a mediator between the purely theoretical essay and the final design proposal.

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Lord Chief Justice Hewart
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Abstract
The political divide

The social contract is the link connecting a nation and its people: An intertwining and ever present bond between man and state. An inherent divide exists in this contract - a gap between the political theory and the societies that it governs. Lying in the middle of this rift is architecture, a powerful connection between man and state. In bridging the political divide architecture can become more than building because it represents a nation, its people and its laws. It can be the stage from which a nation addresses its people and from where the people connect to their government. This communication and interaction between state and citizen through architecture creates a space of inclusion that bridges the political divide. It becomes democratic in nature: a spatial justice.

A

Theory Essay

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The following essay acts as the theoretical Underpinning to the final thesis design proposal. It acts as an explanation to the social contract and its relationship to architecture in bridging the political divide.

“We, the people of South Africa”

Constitution of the Republic of South Africa

Introduction

Inherent in any system of government is the rift between the theories of a nation and the people that are governed by them. Ideas of justice, democracy, power and law are created by a government to oversee the people of the nation it governs. This link between state and man is the social contract: the intertwining and ever present connection between man and state. The contract ensures an understanding between the two forces - the acceptance of the law by the people ensures the stability of the people for the government. However man and state are not one and within the contract exists A rift or gap. When this rift between the two widens, the contract begins to dissolve and the nation no longer speaks for or to the people. This thesis - having begun as an investigation into these themes – looks at the idea that architecture exists within the middle of the social contract and can bridge the gap between the high plane of political theory and the people it governs. The ideas of social justice – a measurement of fairness based on human rights and equality – is linked to human social relations with space. It is in space that justice, and injustice, become visible (Lefebvre, Henri 1991). This bond between people, space and political theory makes architecture the central figure in the disconnection between society and theory - and the reason that its importance must be investigated

On spatial justice

The political gap

Architecture as connection

Architecture has the ability to be more than just building, but to be the physical embodiment that represents the ideals for which it was built. As a built form it then can become a tangible expression that we the people can relate to. In this way it becomes part of the "city symbolic" (Kotze, Paul. 2010). This symbolic nature that is ingrained into political buildings takes on a role beyond that of pure function. By being a representation between man and state, it is at its core a built form of an abstract ideal, the middle man in the social contract. It is this central role where the potential and problems of judicial architecture lie. In the young democracy of South Africa the 'face' of architecture is often representative of a past removed from the ideals of a new constitution. If architecture is the gap that bridges the void between man and law, then the space - as much as the constitution - should be just and fair to the people who inhabit it. Bridging this political divide takes on an important architectural position by being able to correct a spatial injustice and take on a new face that connects both people and state.

The importance of this connection allows citizens to associate themselves with the institutions of their government (Wise, M Z. 1998). This link creates a participatory democracy, the foundation of all democratic nations. Without this the very nature of the system holds no validity, as identifying and being involved in matters of state is the cornerstone of democratic thinking. Since the birth of democracy in ancient Greece, the Agora - literally translated 'I speak in public' - was placed in the centre of the town allowing personal participation in matters of state. I speak in public – 'I' representing the right of each and every individual person to hear and be heard. The foundation of democracy holds that the individual is associated to a greater whole. This interaction is tied to collective space, "the very idea of democracy is inseparable from that of public space" (Henaff, M., Strong, T. 2001: P 35). The link between the public with both themselves and those that govern is, according to sociologist Richard Sennett, what makes us fully man. This idea is shared by Aristotle who considering only those who involved themselves within the Agora as citizens (Sennett, R.1998)

When built form embraces the relationship between government and the public it is more than just a space, but a place of belonging. Architecture can become icon, a representation of this 'greater whole'. The architecture of these places is representative of how a nation sees itself or wants to be seen, and also as a place that embodies the ideas of the society it exists in (Sudjic, D., Jones, H. 2001). As an icon architecture should portray a face suited to the political views of the nation. It is through people that governments find their legitimacy, without this legitimacy power means nothing. When the face of power is linked to architecture then architecture must allow legibility to its people in order for it be granted its legitimacy (Henaff, M., Strong, T. 2001). This legibility, the visual connection between the powers that govern and those governed, is what enables a democratic forum. A space that allows and encourages visual connections and interactions between people and state becomes the platform between the two – It is this meeting point, the overlaps and blurred boundaries, where the ideas of spatial justice lie.

This 'Spatial' justice - the need for our surroundings to be inclusive rather than exclusive - is tied to the idea that democracy has a deeply embedded urban aspect. This urban democracy relies on the interaction and debate between civic building and public space. It allows the physical expression of justice, democracy and power to take shape. As a purely architectural form, the relationship between building and 'democratic space' has created some of the world's most highly charged, resonant and accomplished works of architecture (Sudjic, D., Jones, H. 2001).

Premise

Bridging the gap

My argument is that a civic space that is exclusive widens the gap in the social contract and must be rethought. It is these spatial injustices where civic architecture must mutate to become architectural icons that the nation, both people and state, can associate and connect with. With this the premise of this thesis rests in the idea that abstract ideals like justice, inclusion, democracy and iconic representation are part of civic architecture. These themes exist in multiple forms within architecture, ranging from parliament buildings to courthouse and monuments. In the same way that no two nations are the same, no two built representations are the same. The method this thesis takes in discovering how architecture can be the tool in bridging the political divide is by laying out the principles that define political architecture. Through analysis and interrogation of precedents this thesis aims to find the common threads underlying this type of architecture and extract what is both successful and unsuccessful in these typologies. This interrogation of both architecture and 'democratic space' will bring to focus what makes political architecture such a powerful and meaningful tool in connecting people to state.

The precedents chosen have been divided into chapters dealing with different ideas in political architecture. Themes of identity are brought up to highlight how architecture can embody the spirit if a nation, not just be a structure to house a function. Through analysis of both the German Reichstag and American Capitol building I will show how architecture soaks up the image that a nation wishes to express of itself. The examples chosen show how these buildings become icons, permanent structures representing an ideal that the people of a nation can relate to beyond that of a purely theoretical social contract. This theme of identity is closely tied to the ideas of legibility and legitimacy in the realm that is known as the 'theatre of politics'. It is here that architectures role as a platform in becoming a mediation point between man and state is shown. With reference to the totalitarian architecture of Stalin, namely the Palace of the Soviets, the power architecture has over space and its ability to become a stage into the political realm is highlighted. By creating a platform for people to interact with the government creates a stage into the political realm, a porthole for us to peer into. This legibility is the key to the legitimacy of the social contract. Legitimacy of a government, the acceptance of the social contract, lies within architecture becoming part of the daily life of the people. Unless the architecture that a government uses to expresses itself is part of the people's lives it separates itself from society. This separation widens the gap in the social contract. The example of the Piazza del campo in Sienna, Italy, shows how being part of daily activity strengthens bonds in the social divide. This town square acts as the central market space and within it are the town's mayoral and judicial offices. By being linked to the central daily life of the people the governments has become tied to the daily life of the city. The acceptance of the government to the daily life of the city has lead to the strong bonds of the people to the government. Finally these three mains themes in bridging the social divide are highlighted in the typology that best demonstrates the importance of governmental role in daily life, the courthouse. Through interrogating the new Jerusalem Supreme Court the importance the courthouse holds is shown. It is within the courthouse that the social contract is upheld and where the importance of both state and the individual is recognised.

As a tool of connection architecture can be used to bridge the political gap of man and state in South Africa. In a country where this divide grows increasingly wider the importance for people to associate and be part of the workings of a nation is becoming paramount (Ngcobo, J. 2006). Spatial injustices - where places of political power completely shut themselves off from the people and the city – have become typical of our government institution buildings. Our Courthouses, the places that should be holders of justice and righteousness, fortify themselves. The courts are the link to our laws, the representation of justice and equality. When the places of justice become islands, marooned from the city, they disconnect the people from the state (levy, K. 2010: P 2). This injustice, the removal of public association in South Africa, is the target of this thesis exploration. By pinpointing a spatial injustice and correcting it there is an opportunity to build a new icon of African democracy to join the broken connection between political theory and the people.

By breaking down what constitutes a space of power and what should be a place on inclusion, a site exemplifying a spatial injustice has been chosen: the Johannesburg High Court. The reintegration of this lost relic in the dense city allows for the makings of a new juristical identity that can become the connection between law and the people. So it is with these themes, ideas and interrogation of precedents that I look into the question: 'how can architecture correct a spatial injustice?

(Image Right)

Facade Detail

Existing Johannesburg High Court front facade, designed by architect Gordon Leith. The front face of the court is lined with Tuscan ordered columns as fitting with the renaissance style of architecture in which it was built.
Photo: Krom, B. 2010

“We shape our buildings and afterwards our buildings shape us”

Speech given by Winston Churchill
House of Commons, October 1943

Identity

Association, connection and affirmation

There are stories behind buildings. Meanings and symbols are embedded into architecture and are keys to what is housed behind their walls. Whether they are open to see or hidden from view, the bricks tell us something, they speak about where they are and what they represent. They can speak about a nation, about a people, and even more importantly about an identity. Through time they grow to be the voice that can speak about the place they look over. Architecture becomes man’s physical and metaphorical connection to the state, our viewpoint into the political sphere. The expression of architecture, its ability to stand for something bigger than itself, is prominent throughout history. The German Reichstag is a dominating figure in the history of the German people, a piece of architecture that has seen the turbulent past of a countries history and has served as its stronghold through varying political eras. It has seen the flags from the Weimer republic, the red army and Hitler’s Swastika raised from its flagpole. In 1994 a new president stepped in to guide the country into a new era, and his search to give the German people a new face to their democracy started with its architecture. To give a new look to the German seat of power was seen by the president as an act as important as amending its constitution. Democracy and justice was something not only on paper but as an image that must be seen by the people in architecture that sought to “capture the spirit of the people they exist to serve” (Sudjic, D., Jones, H. 2001: P 8). The end result was embodied through the Reichstag’s glass dome, a transparent crown on the head of the building, a representation of the new transparency of the constitution, justice systems and laws of the nation.

This link between icon and perception can be used as a way to analyse architecture not only for architectural sake but as a means to peer into society’s political system. Architecture by its very nature is a tangible narrative of history, one that is told and embodied in architectural form. By analysing the form of iconic structures you can piece together a trail of symbols that have come to embody this narrative- A breadcrumb trail of politics, justice and law.

In the case of the German Reichstag this narrative was one of fragmentation, a broken history that aimed to be corrected. The Reichstag had stood as a looming edifice in the centre of Berlin; A classically proportioned, highly ornate traditional piece of power architecture. The facade of the building reads “Dem Deutschen Volke”- To the German People - but after years of political change the building no longer spoke to the German people (Wise, M Z. 1998). Politics and law, like society, is not a complete system. They change and adapt over time forming ‘incomplete societies’ within an ‘incomplete system’ (Barnett, C. 2004). The need for the association and connection between man and state in this ever evolving cycle must be present throughout as ‘the people *are* the government’ (Dozer, D. 1945)

“The story that a building tells through its design may be as important to the community it serves as is its function. By shaping our thoughts about ourselves and our institutions, it will directly affect our efforts to work productively together.”

Justice Stephen G. Breyer
United States Supreme Court Judge
Breyer, Stephen G. 2006: P9

Importance of recognition

The legacy of political architecture has a strong association with traditional forms; they contain strong symbolic references to the past. However in the case of the Reichstag the symbolic nature of the building needed to adapt to a new German identity, to reconnect to the people. However the Reichstag, even in its updated form, is still very typical of the traditional typology of iconic political architecture. This typology of can be traced back to classical Greek and Roman architecture. As the birthplaces of democracy the style of both the classical Greek and Roman architectural “political legacy is still reflected in the abundance of government buildings which act as a physical reminder of the classical origins of parliamentary democracy” (Sudjic, D., Jones, H. 2001: P 20). Even with its facelift and modernisation to a ‘transparent democracy’ the Reichstag is never the less part of the classical school of icons stemming back to the Greek and Roman style of building

The construction of the Reichstag began in 1884, its design coming from a Frankfurt architect Paul Wallot. The building is separated by nearly 2000 years to that of the Pantheon in Rome, yet has an unmistakable similarity. The central axes to both buildings rise up from a grand staircase lined with columns holding up a foreboding pediment. This approach to the building creates a definitive separation between outside an in, a triumphant entrance marking your journey into a building of importance.
This classical ordering of the building, its symmetrical planning across two axes, shows unmistakable traits to past typology of building. Clear repetitive geometries of columns, arches and pediments encircle the building rising up at its ends like a castle.

The historical nature of this building came into question when, in 1992, Norman Foster won the design competition to reconstruct the Reichstag.
The design proposed an almost entire gutting of the building while keeping the outer walls untouched; even graffiti left by soldiers of the Red Army in 1945 was kept. Internally the spaces were adapted to transform the building into a modern parliamentary building that met the spatial requirements of a modern government. New chambers, meeting spaces and a revamped main hall interlock with public access and facilities making a clear correlation and integration between public and private that was entirely absent before the renovation. The new glass cupola looks down onto the main hall allowing visitors to peer into parliamentary discussions, this marking the opening up of the democratic process to the people. The connection and association between man and state is embodied through the ability to enter and be part of the political system where as in the past it was hidden from view.

However it is the facade of the building that comes into question - the face the building shows to the people has an unmistakable lineage to a past that during the reconstruction was almost untouched. While the inside was gutted with a questionable lack of respect to history why was the facade left with the same face that led to the proposed redesign to start with?
The answer to this lies in the association we have to this lineage: It represents something. It express’s an idea that has spanned generations. Embedded within columns, ornamented pediments and vaults is the safety and legitimacy of law. By a nation constructing its icons in this manner there is safety in the fact that these icons will be seen in a certain light by the people who sit on the outside of the gap between man and state. As much as the “law is separated, and secluded (From the outside by its framework and its frame of reference), what frames the law must by its very nature bear some sort of relationship with the outside” (Haldar, P. 1994: P 190)

This deliberate use of classical ordering and aesthetic has been used world over as a way to firmly plant law and order over a nation. In no building is this message clearer than that of the United States capitol building in Washington DC.

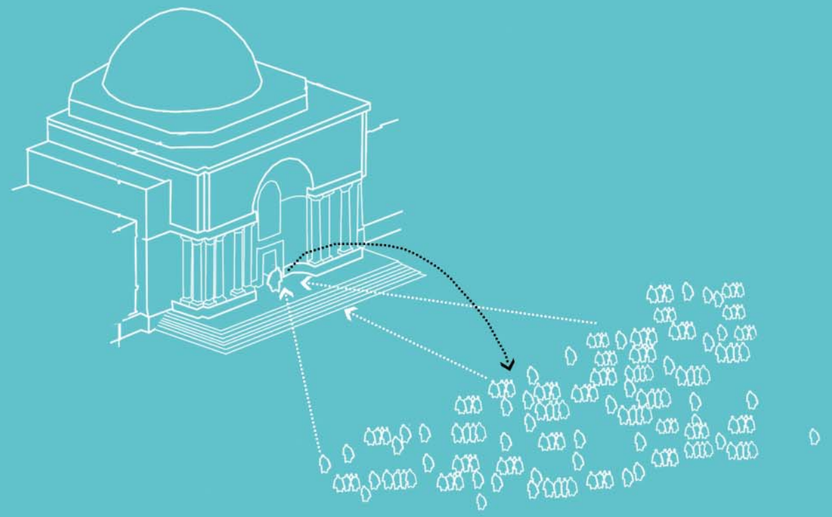
James Wilson, associate justice of the Supreme Court stated that “according to the rules of judicial architecture, a system of courts should resemble a pyramid. Its base should be broad and spacious: it should lessen as it rises: its summit should be a single point” (Perry, B A. 2001: P 320). This temple architecture arguably reached its peak with the completion of what would become the icon of American politics in 1819, to the degree where it is known as ‘the temple of freedom’. The building, designed by architect William Thornton, has deliberate ties to past architectural styles of ancient architecture; Thornton himself stated his inspiration for the design came from the Pantheon. The ‘inescapable majesty’ of the Capitol complex is created from the visual impact the building has, a tiered monument rising out of an otherwise empty landscape (Perry, B A. 2001: P 320). This grand gesture of a building would be, in the words of the United States president of the time Thomas Jefferson, “a durable and honourable monument to our infant republic, and will bear favourable comparison with the remains of the same kind of the ancient republics of Greece and Rome” (Sudjic, D., Jones, H. 2001: P 28). It is for this reason that nations look at classical examples to model their future icons on; they act as symbols to an immediate and understood past of law and democracy. Establishing a strong national identity with direct ties to a legitimate and respected past was essential in firmly showing the fledging nations independence to the rest of the world and, as importantly, showing the American people that the new government was capable of leading them. These two needs, finding national identity and firmly showing this confidence to foreigners and natives of a nation, are both manifested in architecture. Through the use of classical motifs; grand entrances, soaring structures and recognised symbols of politics, the U.S Capitol building is a potent figure of the American people and affirms the power and strength of its rule (Sudjic, D., Jones, H. 2001.).

Political typology

What becomes clear in the Reichstag and Capitol building is the association between people and recognised geometries of law and power. In 2000 a study was conducted in Italy where 120 students were shown photos of two courthouses: one modern and one classical. They were asked to imagine that they were accompanying a friend to a trial for a crime they knew he was innocent of. In this imagined space they were asked to express how they felt when entering the building; if they were anxious, scared, lost or uncomfortable. Finally they were asked at which court they felt their friend would be found innocent. The results showed that the majority of participants felt anxious when entering into a modern court while felt more at ease and comfortable in a classical one. Most surprisingly this majority felt that there was a greater chance of the right judgement being made in the older court (Maass, A. 2000)

There was no clear cut reasoning to these responses, the participants were unable to pinpoint exactly what informed their decisions. Their answers however centred around the fact that they trusted the classical form whereas the modern courthouse made them feel as though their friend had already been convicted before they even entered (Maass, A. 2000). By pure design alone there was a link between architectural form and negative thoughts on wrongful judgement.

This engrained image of the face of law, the classical ordering of political buildings, enforces the choices made by nations to stand by a tried and tested method of architecture. There is more to this architecture than form; rather there are centuries of recognition and association. The validity in law seeps though a courthouse and is much a part of the building itself than with the pure working of the courtrooms themselves. The representation of a building of democracy is mans connection to the theory or idea housed in it, and it is deeply ingrained.



The stage of politics sets up the platform for the social contract, it is the bridge for man to peer into politics and for politics to speak to the masses

“Always remember that the crowd that applauds your coronation is the same crowd that will applaud your beheading. People like a show”

Terry Prachet,
Going postal chapter 14

Legibility as legitimacy
Expression, exposure, theatrics and power

For a nations authority to be legitimate it must have the consent of the people or else it will fail. Without the people, power is nothing. This thinking forms the basis of the social contract: the agreement between man, the state, and the rules connecting the two (Hobbes, T. 1982)
This agreement, argues Hobbes, has a direct link to the idea that legibility becomes legitimacy. Through visibility comes the recognition of power and rule, this “visibility of power is not an accident: it is, as Hobbes knew, the very stuff of power” (Henaff, M., Strong, T. 2001)
Showing of power, parading it to the public, is the theatre of politics: the understanding that politics and law is a stage from which to address the masses. An idea understood by Queen Elizabeth I when she addressed the House of Lords in 1586 with the words “we princes, are set on stage, in sight and view of all the world duly observed’.

The stage of politics sets up the platform for the social contract, it is the bridge for man to peer into politics and for politics to speak to the masses. The only way for the link between man and state to survive is if he feels he is part of it, and to see is to know. This almighty visual link is the first connection to bridge the gap in political theory, and it is a powerful one. Legibility becomes legitimacy and “When a society lacks legitimacy, citizens do not feel bound to obey its laws, even less to denounce those who break them” (Penalosa, Enrique. 2007). For a nation’s social contract to work the power of visibility and the importance of the theatrics of a political realm become central. The importance of this connection is best echoed in the final ruling by Lord Chief Justice Hewart in 1934: “Not only must Justice be done; it must also be seen to be done.”

The theatrics of politics, when used in conjunction with architecture, allows a nation to construct its own legibility through representation. They create their own stage from which the nation sees them, using “Representation, or the effect of presence, [to] produces its power and produces itself as power” (Haldar, P. 1994: P 192). The stage created and the representation used brings about the fourth wall, the imaginary wall standing between the nation and the people. It is through this wall that we the audience interact and associate with the government and her laws. As in theatre this wall can either be retained or broken, allowing various degrees of interaction between audience and actor, citizen and politician. The wall is the frame of reference, the stage we watch. It can be used to enforce a nations might onto the people and engrain a new political ideal to the world.

“Let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name”

Tower of Babel, Genesis chapter 11

The story of Babel

The Palace of the Soviets is an expression of power, a political decoy, a monumental theatre to the might of the USSR and Stalin’s megalomania. The scale of this project is nothing short of colossal; its realisation would consume seven years of Russia’s entire concrete manufacturing capacity, a building so big its construction would drive a nation out of economic collapse. The story of the palace “is a Babel story, but without the bible; a dissonant fairy tale; no lesson, no allegory, just grasping” (Koolhaas, R. 1998: P 823).

The brief for the project was a simple order from Stalin: Drive the tower upwards like a column, make it taller than the Eifel tower, adorn it with images of the revolution. At its final design it was a “grotesque project, partly American skyscraper, partly hollow Babel. It looked like an insane enlargement of a classical wedding cake; on top, bride and groom morphed to form a huge Lenin, pointing – as always – forward” (Koolhaas, R. 1998: P 823).This towering palace, designed in 1933 by Russian architect Boris Iofan, is a collection of figures: a four hundred and fifteen metre tall structure to house a main hall one hundred metres high to seat twenty thousand people - and to top it off a one hundred metre tall statue of Lenin. Taller than the empire state building if it was crowned by the statue of liberty. The palace was to be illuminated at night, making it visible twenty five miles out of Moscow. It was to be the first thing you saw while approaching the capitol, and when in the city it would be a constantly watching figure. An ever present visual connection, the cities own gargoyle: the protector of communism. Its design spread through the world as a testament to the newly instated and undeniably in control Soviet Union. Frank Lloyd Wright remarked on the projects proposal: ‘This structure – only purpose I hope – is good if we take it for a modern version of Saint George destroying the dragon” (Johnson, D L. 1987: P 67)

“As George was killing the dragon, he told the city citizens that this act was to show the power of God.
Not only was the princess saved and the city relieved, but the people gave up their idols and accepted Christianity”

St George and the Dragon
(Holmes, Tom.1998)

Here the palace is Saint George, a mighty figure standing out amongst the people - the Tsar: an evil dragon who is now defeated. The palace is a theatre, a monumental stage in the centre of town that tells the citizens of the story the day they were saved from oppression.
The site of the palace expresses this destruction of an icon, the killing of a beast. Along the river Moska stood Russia’s largest church, The Cathedral of Christ the Savoir. The church, a symbol of Tsarist authority, was the tallest building in Moscow; a gift from Tsar Alexander 1st to his people. By order of Stalin the building was reduced to rubble and the site cleared of any trace of the former church. In its place rose the palace.
The project is a political move in every sense - destroy one church to make room another: a temple to communism. Constructing the Palace on the destroyed remains of the symbol of Tsarist Russia would “transform ‘old’ Moscow into the ‘socialist’ capital” (Hoisington, S S. 2003: P 47).
The whole process was a play, an acted out series of events for the people to show the transformation of Russia. It sent a message throughout the world: Communism is here to stay (Hoisington, Sona Stephen. 2003).

(Image Right)
Palace of the Soviets
Proposed rendering of the palace as i would have stood
Image: Google images
http://www.oginoknauss.org/blog/?p=338



“Politics is just showbiz for ugly people”

David Cameron, TED talk. 2010

The Theatre of politics

The Soviet Palace has two very distinct purposes: Its program as a functioning civic building versus its meaning as a platform and stage. Its purpose, although on a monumental scale, was similar to that of a city hall: a central hall for town meetings and political disputes, chambers for meetings, administrative offices and public services. The facilities it contains were necessary for the daily runnings of any government - However there was publicity to the programme that marks its distinction from that of the Capitol complex in the United States. Their purposes are similar; both administrative buildings, both built to express the concrete roots of the government. Where they differ is in the dramatisation of events of both the process of the design and the building itself. During its design stages the great architects of the time were invited to Russia to take part in the project. Le Corbusier and Frank Lloyd Wright both documented in their journals the procession of the project and of its importance to a new architecture. The project was a political drama to show to the Russian people that what was about to be built was of worldly importance: Stalin had put Russia into the spotlight (Johnson, D L. 1987)

The theatrics of politics is deeply imbedded into the relationship between man and state. In the opening chapters of discipline and punish Foucault describes the public execution of Robert Francois Damiens, a Frenchmen convicted of the attempted regicide of King Louis XV. The crime was punishable by an excruciating death: public dismemberment in the city centre for the entire town to see. This punishment was drawn out, the agony of the victims death put on display to show the severity of his crime; and more importantly to show the people the penalty for fighting the kings sovereignty (Foucault, M. 1977). The public display of torture was the theatre of power; the king used the city as his stage to enforce his rule. Ultimately, Foucault argues, this method of public execution is futile as it can have the reverse effect intended; the public would relate to the prisoners pain and rise up in public revolt against the rule.
Public space was the forum where the state displayed its power and where the people would give their response (Foucault, M. 1977)

In the maturing of government rule the theatre of politics has changes, but its intended purpose has remained. A nation’s display of power must be executed in the streets for the people to see - it is in the theatre of politics and law that turns unseen power into a legible, and therefore understandable, representation of rule. The legitimacy of rule must be displayed to the public to entrenching the power that the nation wields. For the most part public execution has given way in modern society to a different form of public show. Scaring a nation into submission through public executions has evolved into displays of nationalism, the display of the might of the state. This display glorifies a nation, making its people proud to associate to it.

The palace was an attempt at this - an icon for the people to see, associate with and believe in. In the renderings for the uncompleted project the tower is the centrepiece to Soviet military parades. Its foreboding presence dominates the cityscape while endless rows of red flags march past the complex under the watchful eyes of the monolithic champion of the revolution. The scale of these processions would have been comparable to that of the Nuremburg rallies where Hitler’s army would march though Albert Speer’s cathedral of light; a procession of 130 anti-aircraft searchlights pointing upwards creating an illuminated fortress from where Hitler would address his troops. Although both the Soviet palace and the Nazi cathedral belong to regimes of Totalitarian rule the purpose of unifying a people through political theatre is as relevant to a democratic nation. The power of gathering in front of an icon, witnessing the power that lies behind it and associating to its purpose, builds strength in the nation and the people alike.

The palace of the Soviets expressed a direct link between state, man and architecture. At its end the Palace was never realised, in part due to the Soviets involvement in the 2nd World War, and the financial restraints thereafter. The palace stood partially built, its massive basement standing as “a strange navel in the heart of the city, an extinguished ideological volcano” (Koolhaas, R. 1998: P 824).

“I have said that the survival and extension of the public space is a political question. I mean by that it is the question that lies at the heart of democracy”

Claude Lefort,
Human rights and the welfare state. 1989

The Market of politics
Integration, interaction and participation

From its birth democracy has been linked to the idea of a public space belonging to the people, “the very idea of democracy is inseparable from that of public space” (Henaff, M., Strong, T. 2001: P35). This public sphere acts as a common ground, a meeting place free from exclusion that becomes a place of appearance: a place to be seen and heard. The importance this space of appearance plays, according to Hannah Arendt, is that it creates a “common world [that] not only gathers us together, but it prevents us from falling apart” (Rowe, P G. 1997: P 63). An urban democracy, this inclusionary space within the city, translates the theories of democratic thinking and realises them in space. Urban space, in the views of Lefebvre, is a political space and the city a space of politics (Sennett, R. 1998). The political divide that exists in the city between man and state can be bridged “When the city operates as an open system –incorporating porosity of territory, narrative indeterminacy and incomplete form - it becomes democratic not in a legal sense, but as physical experience” (Sennet, R. 2007: P 296). This physical experience of being part of the nation is the reason why nation states use theatrics in politics and create icons we can associate with. Only when we feel part of the nation does that nation then truly begin to work. Participation empowers individual members of a state; it strengthens the legitimacy of legislation and gives importance to our collective and individual voices. Participation makes citizens part of the system rather than merely being dictated by it (Ngcobo, J. 2006).

“Urban democracy is a necessity if democracy in society at large is to be real. Without meaningful ways for ordinary people to influence and shape the most vital conditions of their lives in their immediate surroundings, the democratic process is a mere façade, and political democracy is offering only the – perhaps illusory – promise of our potential, as ordinary citizens, to achieve real democratization, a real say, in our own affairs “

The Urban Democracy Manifesto. March 2001

Realising an urban democracy

Spaces of participatory politics, of identification and association with the state (and with a state that recognises the city as a space of politics) can be traced back to the ancient Greek political theatre: the Agora. Directly translated Agora means ‘I speak in public’: the importance being placed on an individual’s association to each another and with the public space itself. This public sphere, located in the heart of the city, became “a place of appearance, representative publicness and publicity among private citizens” (Habermas, J. As cited in Rowe, P. 1997: P 62). It’s location in the cities centre is what makes the Agora such a powerful inclusionary space. Habermas argues that for a civic realm to exist as a space of inclusion it must exist within the public market as this is the meeting point of both public and private spaces. It is at the intersections and blurring of these borders that a spatial justice happens; where ideas, similarities and differences are experienced (Habermas, J. As cited in Rowe, P. 1997).

As the central market place in Athenian life the Agora was the commercial and religious hub in the city, catering to all aspects of citizens needs. At its heart was the platform for political debate surrounded by the buzz of this commercial life. The reason for its placement was to allow all those in the city to be witness to the debates of concerning the city, rather than politics being removed from daily life it was central to it. Urban spaces were political and open for everyone to bear witness to. The duality of a market and politics relied on the idea that “commerce draws people out of their homes [and] into common areas, and the people create commerce by simply being there - A healthy public space is thus both commercial and civic” (Barber, B. As cited in Henaff, M. 2001: P 215). This interdependence between commerce and politics creates the atmosphere for political inclusion to survive. It creates a space of disorder and density, of collision and chance: a place of uncontrollable events that breathe life into a space (Jacobs, Jane. 1992). A central space teeming with activity was the result of the Agora, it allowed people to associate and interact with the city. For this reason the model was adapted by the Romans, at every city centre was the Forum – literally meaning Market. The city is not just a space for commerce, but a market of ideas, laws and politics.

“Existence was bigger than just life. It was everyone’s life all together..... you were part of the puzzle.... It didn’t matter how small your life was.”

Paul Auster, The Brooklyn Vollies

Piazza Del campo
Memory, history and association

The ideal of an urban democracy or a spatially just civic space requires that there is an interaction and association between man and space. When this is in place “the public sphere is not merely the sphere of politics, of action or deliberation; it also has an irreducibly cultural dimension” (Villa, D R. 2001: P 167). The culture of a people, their wills and hopes, are directly translated in how they use space and how it constantly develops with its users.

Spatial politics, the associations we have with one another in space, creates a common ground that allows for an open platform for interaction. By shaping spaces that “belonging to everyone and yet nobody in particular” (Rowe, P G. 1997: P 6) we allow for flexibility and change within the urban sphere. Space that adapts to its use and to its users transforms a space into a place of association and identity - it becomes part of daily life. The result of this mixing and blurring in space encourages a use of public space that does not fit neatly together - an argument best laid out by Jane Jacobs who argues that “The arts result from overcrowding” (Jacobs, Jane as cited in: Sennet, R. 2007: P 293).

When public and political space begin to follow a parallel path their meaning to societies become invaluable. This link is evident in the Piazza Del Campo in Sienna, Tuscany, Italy, where “civic life, civic aspirations, and civic responsibilities have been inscribed indelibly” (Rowe, P G. 1997: P 6).
The History of the site dates back to the very history of the Sienese people, the land it stands on was purchased by the early ruling government to construct a neutral seat of parliament that never materialised. Over time the land was converted into the towns market, its importance to the cities trade was so great that it became the meeting point to the major roads in the city (Kent, E. 2001). As the space matured it was added onto, growing to becoming an active space for civic and cultural life with markets, public meetings, demonstrations, cafe life and political rallies (Rowe, P G. 1997). The flexibility in the Campo to adapt to the city has made the campo “more than public, more than a matter of access or the right of expression and display - It produced an aura and recalled fine moments from the past” (Rowe, P G. 1997: P 7). The site is engrained to the image of the city; its importance is so deeply embedded into Sienese life that it has become an image in the people’s minds that store their collective memories, of the city’s history and of personal encounters (Lynch, K. 1960).

The power of the Campo lies in this ability for it to create an identity for the Sienese people, it has transformed over the years to represent their culture. For this very reason the space became the home of the political identity to the town. Its shell shaped public space is paved in a sunburst pattern of nine bands of red brick representing the government of nine who ruled the city for over a hundred years. It is a tribute to the memories of the cities past. The Campo’s central building is the Palazzo Pubblico, built in 1298 as the seat of power for the government of nine. During the towns political change the palace became the city hall holding the seat of the mayor (Kent, E. 2001). The space of the Campo was chosen to become the towns meeting space because the daily political life of the city already flourished in the teaming market space. Through the years the outer ring of the Campo has been built on, encircling the square with architectural icons for religious gatherings, commercial spaces, museums and government buildings. Its proximity to the public sphere has made the link between government and citizens legible to the people, it “embraces everyday life [and] provide[s] an appropriately formal setting for government” (Rowe, P G. 1997: P 37). By being in the nub of daily life the citizens of Siena associate to their government, making it approachable, legitimate and loved.

The social aspect of the campo has created a charged space happening in free air; this condition is what Rem Koolhaas regards as the Urban Realm (Cecilia, F. M., & Levene, R. 2007). What is evident in the Campo, and in the Agora, is that the theatre of politics in everyday life is meaningless unless it embraces everyday life. The proximity of government to the people creates a bond between them; it bridges the political gap by allowing clear and constant visibility between man and state. The Urban realm allows us to associate to one another, building bonds of trust and enforcing the social contract.

(Image Right)
Piazza Del Campo
Aerial view over The Piazza
Image: Google images
http://www.citypictures.net/r2573.search.htm





“But above all, the courthouse: the centre, the focus, the hub; sitting looming in the centre of the country’s circumference like a single cloud in its ring of horizon, laying its vast shadow to the uttermost rim of horizon; musing, brooding, symbolic and ponderable, tall as cloud, solid as rock, dominating all: protector of the weak, judiciate and curb of the passions and lusts, repository and guardian of the aspirations and hopes...”

William Faulkner
The Courthouse, Pg 44

(Image Right)
Johannesburg High Court
Entrance detail
Photo: Krom, B: 2010

“No other building type communicates as much about our society as does the courthouse. Courthouses are like medieval cathedrals: they express the will and the hopes of the people.”

Fulford, Robert 1998

On courthouses: Interrogating a typology

Justice, law and the people

Contained within courthouses are voluminous messages about law, politics and a nation. For this reason they have been called the “central buildings of the world” (Brownlee, D B. 1984: P 17). Justice Lewis F. Powell Junior of the United States Supreme court noted the importance of courthouses as “Public buildings [that] accurately reflect the beliefs, priorities, and aspirations of a people” and how “the courthouse has served not just as a local centre of the law and government but as a meeting ground, cultural hub, and social gathering place.” (Powell, L F, Jr. 1995)
It is this ability for a court to be something more than just architecture, but a piece of the symbolic city that makes courthouses the prime architectural model for a spatially just democratic space. At the heart of law and the judicial system is the principle of “Audi et alteram partem” - hear the other side out (Sitapati, V. 2009). The fundamental principles of a court of law is its obligation to listen without judgment, to understand before persecuting - to let voices be heard indiscriminately of age, race, sex or religion. A court is a true test to a democracy. It belongs to the people.

Its connection to the people make courts the evidence to a nation’s legitimacy by rule of accepted law, the formalised representation of the social contract (Levy, K. Kent, F. 2010). In the divide between man and state the courthouse plays the role of mediator; in the same way a judge presides over a hearing between two parties, the courthouse presides between theory of justice and the needs of the citizens. It lies directly in the gap between man and state.

In the twenty first century the roles that the courts have had to provide have mushroomed with courthouses having to get larger to deal with the strain of judicial proceedings. The courts are no longer solely for litigation purposes but act as central law libraries, document storage facilities, offices, mediation meeting hubs and various forms of judicial courts. In the expanse of the buildings size there has been less focus on the civic function of the court, reducing its civic nature resulting in them being unable to “Sustain the vitality of communities or foster public engagement” (levy, K. 2010: P2).
This disengagement from public life has lead to the inaccessibility of the court, and in so doing lead to the distancing of our association with them (levy. K. 2010). The result of this exclusion has made law separated to man: he is no longer associated to the state, but rather become a victim of it.

“Someone must have traduced Joseph K., for without having done anything wrong
he was arrested one fine morning”

Franz Kafka, The Trial

In The Trial by Franz Kafka the rift between man and law is exaggerated to breaking point. The main character is blind to the judicial system, his remark to his arresting officers about the laws he broke are “I don’t know this law.... It probably exists only in your heads” (Kafka, F. 1999: P 2). The law is something unfathomable, irrational and unknown. At no point in the novel does the reader or the main character gain insight into his actual crime, he is left alone, tried and convicted by a judge he never sees, in a high court he has never reached (Kafka, F. 1999). Even in this exaggerated Kafkaesque representation of courts there is an element of truth about society. Courts have become these unreachable places, somewhere high up and distanced from its people. We no longer associate to them but rather enter their cavernous halls when we have to meet the judge who is raised high of the ground. The courts are something to fear rather than something to love.

In the effort to reintroduce the court system back into the daily life of the people there has been a move away from the mono-functionality of the courthouse and reprogramming it to once again function as a civic centre. It is in the very nature of a courthouse to act as a democratic space that allows for participation and involvement, “this right is rendered meaningless when court spaces fail as public places” (Levy, K. 2010: P 2). As a result of this widening gap there has been a shift in courthouse architecture from the past iconic mono-functional monoliths that rose from the ground proclaiming their legitimacy. The age of grand towers is no longer the means by which nations wish to express themselves. This typology speaks of victories and elite social powers rather than inclusion and openness of the judicial system (OMMUS. 1998). Monumentality in form, argues Lefebvre, brings about a spatial exclusion brought about by the dominance of a monument in space and on the body (Lefebvre, H. 1991).

With breaking these accepted ideas of monumentality in classical styles of architecture there is a risk in breaking the trusted ideas of law and justice we associate with it. It is in the Gravitas, the depth and grounding in traditional court buildings, that we associate our trust in law. Hidden inside the safety of colonnades and pediments is where “Wigged and gowned lawyers wander past the decorative details, beneath the high vaulted ceilings” (Haldar, P. 1994: P 189). The traditional image of a courthouse is deeply imbedded in our psyche and if it is tampered with we may lose our trust and association to justice and law. The roles courthouses play in society must be considered, their architecture cannot be seen as merely architecture but as the conduit that connects the people to the laws that govern them. Architecture can, in the words of President Woodrow Wilson, close the gap and “bring the government back to the people” (Dozer, D M. 1945). The image of the court has been addressed and adjusted to represent and legitimise the changing models of society and justice. To find a new national identity has become a priority of the state and its answer is found in architecture, the visual link between that connects man to state.

“I love judges, and I love courts. They are my ideals that typify on earth what we shall meet hereafter in heaven under a just God”

American President William Howard Taft
Address in Pocatello, Idaho
5 October 1911

Constructing a nation
Building a just space

In his analysis of civic spaces and culture Urban Planner Peter Rowe argues that the three civic values are justice, freedom and honour - honour being the symbiotic relationship between governments and culture (Rowe, P G. 1997). At its core civic architecture and space must engage and capture their relevance to society. In the same way that matured democracies, such as the Unites states, entrenched their power through architecture, it has become a matter of national pride for younger democracies to do the same. The importance of architecture in the legitimisation and remodelling of new governments is expressed in the changing ways that governments wish to be seen by the people.

This change in society is often gradual, it evolves over time and its architecture moves with it. In this parallel movement architecture soaks up the image of its people, such is the case in the Piazza Del Campo. However as is seen in the examples of the palace of the Soviets and the Reichstag when the existing representations of law, society and justice are no longer relevant it is of national importance to correct. Such is the case with the Jerusalem Supreme Court and the South African Constitutional Court. In both examples there existed no formal built house of law to accommodate their functions; their roles went unseen by the public. With this lack of visibility there could arise a lack of legitimacy, “in the eyes of the people this could decrease their certainty – their belief in the existence of justice that could defend them, protect them” (Shamgar, M. As cited in Perry, B. 2001: P325). So important was this necessity for the government to legitimise these courts that the smallest of actions brought about their construction. Something as simple as a letter.....

(Image Right)
Jerusalem Supreme Court
View into judges courtyard
Image: Google images
http://www.myworldshots.com/Israel/Jerusalem/Supreme-Court-of-Israel-8091.html



“Truth shall spring out of the earth; and justice shall reflect down from heaven”

Psalms 85:12

“Dear prime Minister,
May I write to you on a subject which is very near my heart as I feel sure it is near yours – It concerns the building of a new Supreme Court of Justice on a site worthy of its national importance...”

Letter from Dorothy de Rothschild to Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres
Dated December 1984

As long as in the heart, within,
A Jewish soul still yearns

The Jerusalem Supreme Court

The Yad Hanadiv foundation (the generous hand) is an Israeli charity organisation headed by the Rothschild family. In 1984 the head of the foundation, Dorothy de Rothschild, send the above letter to Shimon Perez (The Prime Minister of Israel) expressing her wish to donate unconditionally a new supreme court to Israel to “help establish a solid base on which the people of Israel could raise their fledgling state” (Sharon, Y. 1993: P 7). From the outset the building of the new Courts was an act to construct an icon for the people of Israel, something for the nation to associate with and be connected to. The importance of the project was recognised immediately, the Prime Minister stating that what is being given to Israel is “much more than a building; it is a gift that will serve as a repository of justice, enshrining the cherished values of the rule of law whereby Israel lives” (Sharon, Y. 1993: P 11). The new court complex was more than a court; even before its construction it was to be an icon to justice, the roof that housed law and order in the eyes of the people.

The architectural representation of the court was of vital importance. As the connection between the state and the citizens the court could not be “a pretentious structure, one liable to create the impression that those sitting in judgement place themselves above the nation’s representatives in the legislature” (Sharon, Y. 1993: P 25). The winning proposal to the project came about as a collaborative effort from Ada Karmi-Melamede and Ram Karmi architects who recognised that the new court could not be a freestanding object in a landscape, but must be part of the immediate environment and the urban spirit of Jerusalem (Sharon, Y. 1993). This link between judicial architecture and the city, where the one is part of the other, marks a distinct different with former traditional court architecture. The grandeur of the court did not arise by being an icon standing out in the landscape but was to be “more evocative of a walk through a Jerusalem alley than an assent into the gates of heaven or the front door of the US supreme court” (Gibson, J L., Et Al. 1998: P 326).

This procession of an extension to Jerusalem builds onto the existing memories of the Israeli people. In the human scale of building lies an “overthrowing of the conventional symbols of public power...the dethroning of the monument” (Noble, J. 2010). The greatest challenge in this approach to the project was the understanding that a court is both a “public building and a sacred space” (Albert, Leon as cited in Haldar, Piyel. 1994: P 188). Without using monumentality the new court still had to have the effect of presence and dignity found in classical court typologies. The power of the project would exist in its ability to create a sacred space, a solemn chamber of justice, without using the almighty image of classical judicial architecture. The aim of the architectural team was to evoke feelings of protection to all those who entered it, a dignified space that would compel its users to act in a dignified manner (Perry, B.2001: 326)

This feeling of reverence was achieved through a series of threshold as you move towards and into the building. The architecture aimed to drag the outside of Jerusalem into the building, creating a continuous movement from outside city to inside courthouse, the building reflects inwards rather than rise to the heavens (Perry, B.2001). In this procession towards the court the scale of the project slowly evolves culminating at its gateway like entrance where the “the feeling of insignificance is but a small price to pay for the reverence accorded under the rule of law” (Sharon, Y. 1993: P75). The symbolism of the gateway in the court is used as a tie to into the collective historical memories of the people of Jerusalem. The gateways in biblical Jerusalem were the site where judgment was made because these passages where teeming with movement in an out of the city. In the gateway was where the people would see judgment being done, it was the theatre of justice. Gateways in the new court represent this past; the court was to be as open to the public to witness judgment as it had always been.

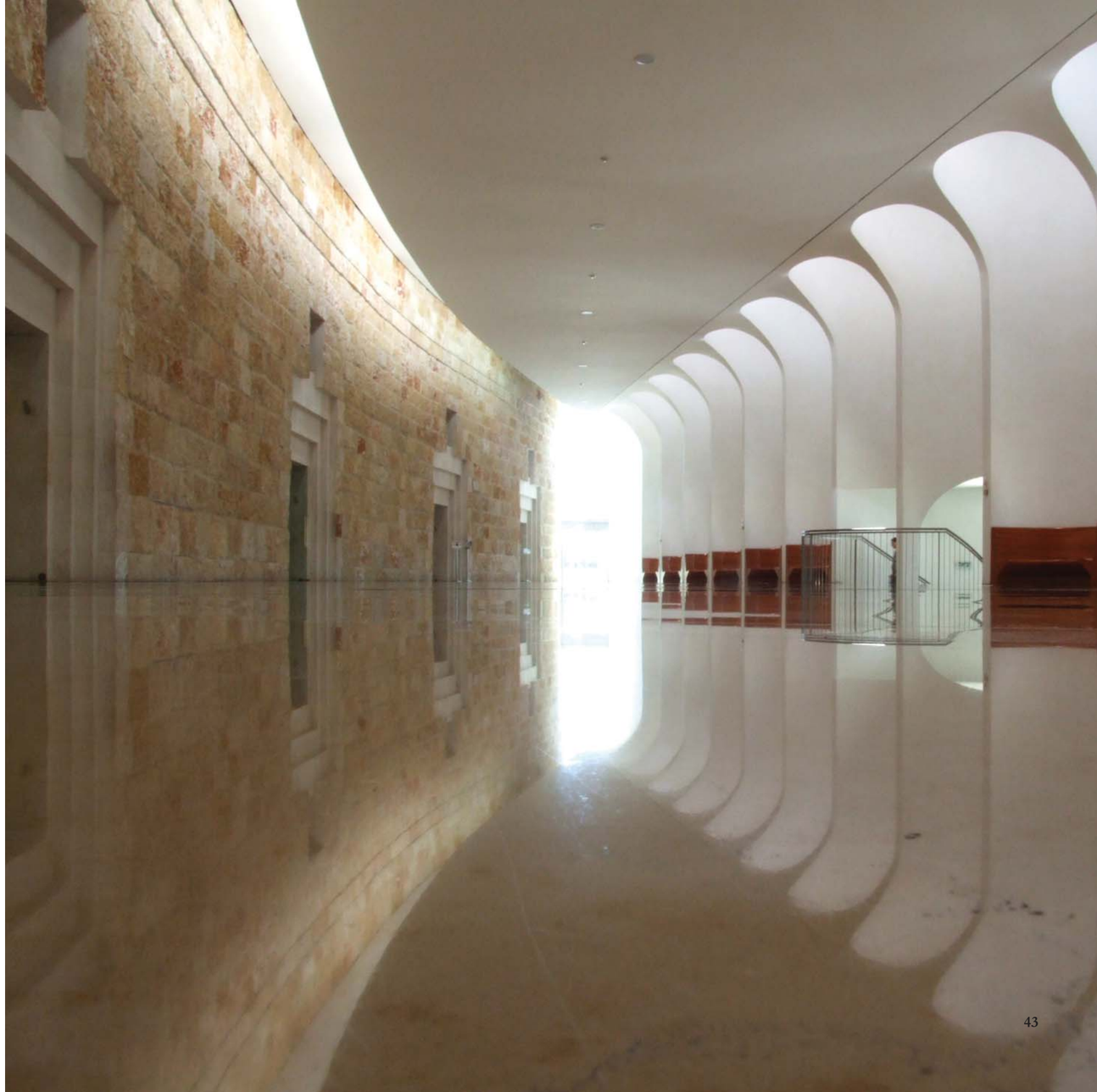
The court is steeped in a deep political understanding, but alongside this is an importance to the religious and historical knowledge of Israel and Jewish beliefs. What has becomes the most enchanting and powerful design tools in the new court is its use of light to create an atmosphere of dignity and respect alongside the courts planning based on Jewish religious texts. The metaphor of simple geometries in the spatial layout in planning resembles squares and circles connected by straight lines. Beyond functional planning aspects this relationship between geometries springs from the Biblical connection of law being a straight line while justice is a circle (Sharon, Y. 1993). The intersection between these points becomes the realm of ‘spatial justice’, the courtrooms where man associates directly to his government and laws. These metaphors are present throughout the court, they dictate the processions and access in and around the building. The library, the focal point of the project, acts as the visual link to law. Israel, like South Africa, does not have a jury system but base all legal proceedings on the knowledge of the court judges and case precedents. The library is the store to these precedents; they are the archive to Israeli law. The visual link between the judges, the

law and the people happen within this space, “for this reason the judges and their library is on the top floor, representing the lofty role of justice, while the courtrooms are on the lower level accesses easily by the public” (Gibson, J L., Et Al. 1998: P 68)

In the search to create a grand space dignified to the role of a court without using the oppressive grandeur of past styles the role light plays in the building became critical. The importance of light is expressed by the architects who compared the Ten Commandments brought down Mount Sinai by Moses to burning justice, an absolute light. This light they compared to the desert sun in Jerusalem. Light, they said, is justice, yet in their “building you do not get justice, you get the law, which is man-made. Light enters as a reflection, and thus becomes ‘manmade’ (Karmi, R. As cited in Perry, B. 2001: P 332). The interior spaces are bathed in this burning Jerusalem sun that reflects of the Limestone blocks that all of Jerusalem is constructed from. In this reflection “hues of stark white, pale yellow and pastel pink glow from the edifices as the sun traverses the sky over the city of David” (Perry, B. 2001: P 332). Through the use of light penetrating the buildings internal spaces the architecture becomes majestic, it has the aura of reverence and respect without having to become colossal and dominating in size.

The purpose of the Jerusalem court was to “construct a building as a representative to the ideals of a state, a building as a symbol of its permanence [with] deeply root[ed] ideals into a culture, making them visible and permanent to its people” (Gibson, J L., Et Al. 1998: P 68). In this challenge the architecture had to reconsider what the image that connected man to state would be. As the key link in the political divide the nature of what a court represents had to be rethought in order to bridge the gap for political association to survive.

(Image Right)
Jerusalem Supreme Court
View down Courtset entrance
Image: Google images
http://www.panoramio.com/photo/3605488



“Constitutional government is only as good as the courts; no better, no worse. the laws are promises. they are kept or broken in the courts”

Chief Justice John Marshall, United States Supreme Court
(Hugh, Corder. 1989. pp 7)

“In its proper meaning equality before the law means the right to participate in the making of the laws by which one is governed, a constitution which guarantees democratic rights to all sections of the population, the right to approach the court for protection or relief .....In the absence of these safeguards the phrase ‘equality before the law’, in so far as it is intended to apply to us, is meaningless and misleading”

President Nelson Mandela
First court statement, 1962

African Justice
Representing the South African democracy

Shortly after 9pm on May the 2nd 1994 the history of South Africa changed with the “joy that we can loudly proclaim from the rooftops – free at last!” (Mandela, N. 1994). The political turmoil had come to an end and the time to “heal the wounds had come.....to bridge the chasms that divide us” (Mandela, N. 1994). With the birth of a new democracy came a new constitution. For the first time in our history everyone was equal under the law. The new government stood for everything the previous one did not, yet the old association between state and architecture remained. With a new government comes a new social contract - but with the existing political icons still standing the gap between a new state and the now free nation was bigger than ever.

The method of this thesis has been to identify what the ties architecture has between a nation and the nation’s people. In this analysis the theories underlying democracy, power, politics and law have been linked to the visual representations within architecture. These links have an effect on space and have been used as the means to cross the political divide, connecting the abstract to the tangible. Within architecture the role a courthouse plays exemplifies the powerful connection political architecture can have (Perry, B. 2001). Its ability to affirm a nation’s legitimacy, and become part of its cultural identity and memory, makes court architecture the primary target in reconstructing a nation’s national identity by creating new links that connect man to state.

The ability for courts to affirm itself into society became apparent in post Apartheid South Africa when the new constitution was adopted as the cornerstone to our democracy. With this the Constitutional court was born to protect the constitution impartially, without fear, favour or prejudice (CCSA, 2010). The constitutional court has become a metaphor to the history of the South African people, their struggle and victory over oppression. The site it sits on exemplifies this journey. In its past life the court was the old fort, a prison complex that became a symbol of oppression (Kotze, P. 2010). The sites infamy grew over the years of its use, housing such ‘political enemies’ as Mandela and Ghandi. With its closure in the 1980’s the fort was left empty “leaving this highly charged and emotive site in a vacuum”. (Kotze, P. 2010). The prison became a symbol of a spatial injustice, an icon of exclusion, hatred and disassociation to the state. The retired Judge Albie Sachs remarked about the building of a new court that its presence “should physically dramatize the transformation of South African from a racist, authoritarian society to a constitutional democracy” (Le Roux, W. 2001: P 140). In the reuse of the site the project transformed the memories associated with the old fort complex. Political places are spaces of memory; they feed of the interaction and association with its citizens. In the same way the city stores the citizens collective memories becoming representative of society (Lynch, K. 1960), a courthouse is representative of a nation’s judicial system. The constitutional court is the guardian of our constitution, the protectors of our freedom. With the commencement of its building in 2001 the laws on which our nation is based would have a home, an architectural representation that legitimised to the people our commitment to a free and fair democracy.

Even though courts are our ties to the accepted law, if there is no respect for the courts their rulings become of no effect. This disregard for a courts judgement leads to loss of legitimacy in the strength of the courts. When the rulings of court decisions are ignored it becomes a dangerous disregard to the legal structure that can weaken the resolve of the nation (SAPA. 2010). In recent media scandals involving high ranking political and judicial figures the independence and security of the law has come into question. The problem lies in the legibility of the courts, of the association that we have to them. The constitutional court is an example of the nation constructing an icon that we as the people can associate to. However there exists a deep divide with our recognition to the lower courts and the legitimacy of their rulings. The constitutional court exists as the governing body of the constitution; however the importance of the lower courts (namely the High and magistrates court) must not be underplayed. The importance of these court’s rulings, most notably in political matters, has far ranging effects. When there is no association to these courts their rulings become less legitimate.

It is with the knowledge of the danger that courts face when they lack legitimacy that this thesis tackles the problem facing many South African courts. When there is a lack of legibility between society and law a spatial injustice exists and must be corrected for law to connect to the people. In the political gap if the issues of association are not dealt with a complete separation between man and state can arise. Based on the theories presented on what constitutes a democratic space a site exemplifying a spatial injustice in South Africa has been chosen: The Johannesburg High Court.

Conclusion

Within every nation there exists a gap between the inner working of a government and its connection to the people it exist to protect. The government and its people are not the same; they are two parallel lines running the same history. Their paths never merge so the gap between them will always exist: but it can be bridged. The meeting point between the two lies in architecture: it is the visual connection where man and state connect and associate to one another. By becoming a symbol of a nations identity architecture can reflect the ideals of a nation. Imbedded within its form are massages about the power, validity and histories of the nation's laws. Architecture has become a powerful representation of the legacy behind democracy and judiciaries: it is more than just building, but a reflection of an ideal. Political architecture is a stage, a platform from where a nation presents itself to the public and where the public can accept and legitimise its rule. This is the social contract, the unwritten agreement between man and state that connects the two together. The agreement must exist for a nation to hold power, without the consent of the people there can be no rule. The acceptance of the contract lies in legibility – it is through visibility that recognition of political theory materialises, and it is within the public realm that this visual link must exist. The public sphere is where the formal and informal interact, where government meets people. This is the space of appearance - the places that gathers us together, binds us, creating an open forum that makes space democratic not in a legal sense, but in a physical experience. Ideals of democracy, inclusion and participation are more than words, but are experiences that can be felt within space. They exist, and must exist, within the urban realm to create a city of inclusion, representation and association. These are the ideals that create a spatial justice, an urban democracy that gathers both nation and people together and provide the middle ground for their interaction. When these spaces exist they act as reminders of a nation's history; they absorb the collective memories of the people. Architecture becomes the tool to legitimise a nation.

In creating a spatial justice through architecture no building connects and represents more to a people about a nation and its laws than a courthouse. They are the guardians of the laws that hold a nation together; when they are broken the laws of the system that tie us together are broken. Courts are the bridge between the political divide. If a disassociation between man and law exists, there exists no legitimacy. Association and legibility create a bond, they legitimise a state. When this legitimacy is threatened the base footing of an entire nation can crumble. The court is the cornerstone to a nations resolve and must be protected. In the context of contemporary South Africa the need to strengthen ties to our government is now more than ever a matter of national importance. In the weakening of the courts independence they have slowly begun to lose their credibility. As the rift between our trust in the courts grow the gap between the nation and state widens; the social contact begins to dissolve. It is in architecture that the political divide can be bridged. By correcting the spatial injustices that exist within our courts architecture can become the tool to reconnect us to the state; to bond our nation together and create a stronger, more meaningful democracy.

B

Site Essay

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The following essay acts as a supplementary written history and analysis to my chosen site of this design proposal. It provides a general historical backdrop to the chosen site and a written analysis to both the practical and theoretical problems of the existing court.

“Here is a black, grey structure dwarfed by imposing modern skyscrapers, yet remaining all the same as the symbol of justice to the public of Johannesburg.”

Liebenberg, J H. 2003. Pg 34

A Spatial injustice

Resting in the heart of the city lies the Johannesburg High Court – an unassuming grey building with its origins at start of the city’s history, a tangible piece of collective memory hidden within the cityscape - “musing, brooding, symbolic and ponderable” (Faulkner, W. The Courthouse: P 44).

The story of the courthouse itself has its origins when Johannesburg was in its infancy, a disorganised and struggling mining camp at the lower ends of the African continent. From the goldfields arose an increasing amount of litigation cases brought about from mining disputes. The large case load began to tax a heavy toll on the Pretoria courts that were at the time the only courts set up to deal with cases that arose in Johannesburg. The authorities recognised the need for permanent facilities within the new city to deal with the legal issues. Circuit courts where then held once a month in Johannesburg to deal with both civil and criminal cases, but by 1889 these monthly courts had evolved into a Johannesburg local division with its own appointed judges to hear the cases brought forward to it (Liebenberg, J H. 2003). These courts however had no official home; rather they were housed in various buildings that could accommodate for its use. Between the various branches of government “few branches of the public service (had) been more badly housed throughout South Africa than the high court’s of justice, but in no town has the provision been inferior to that of Johannesburg” (Liebenberg, J H. 2003: P 36). The ad hoc residence of the high court left the city without a symbol of justice for the public to relate to and left the judges, and those attending trial, inadequate facilities to conduct the daily activities of court.

The need for a permanent and appropriate building to house the new judiciary became essential in the solidifying of Johannesburg into its own autonomous and respected city. In the same way the United States Capitol building in Washington DC was built to concretise a nation’s power, the Johannesburg High Court can be seen to have had the same motivation behind it. The site chosen for the new court building was on government square, an open plot of land save for the Dutch reformed church that sat on the extensive site. The open space around these buildings was used by the early inhabitants of Johannesburg as grounds where many protests were held as the sites central location and visibility suited the nature of public demonstrations (Van Der Vaal, G M. 1987). These grounds were renamed in 1894 to Von Brandis Square after Johannesburg’s first Magistrate, Captain Carl Von Brandis. Von Brandis held the position and task to uphold law and order in the fast growing city and the area of public gathering was named in his honour.

It was this site that was chosen to be the new home of the Johannesburg Judiciary, and true to the use of the site a “strong outcry was raised when the government indicated its plan to build a law court on the square” (Liebenberg, J H. 2003: P 36). In 1909 the Dutch reform church that stood on the site was brought down to the ground and the foundation stone was laid on which the new court would rise on the 9th of April 1910 (Liebenberg, J H. 2003). This marked the opportunity for Johannesburg to create an icon within the city that the inhabitants could associate with and create a space of inclusion and gathering within the city.



High Court

The entrance portico at the High Court has become a Shelling point, or focal point, used by society as a gathering space due to its significance in the city. Its steps have become the focal point for demonstrations for matters both dealing with the court and without.

(Image above)
Johannesburg High Court
Aerial photo
Photo: Krom, B: 2010

(Image Right)
Johannesburg High Court
Entrance portico
Photo: Krom, B: 2010

The design of the New Courthouse in Johannesburg was given to the architect Gordon Leith, a South African born architect trained in London at the Architecture Association. The court was to serve as the permanent home to the Johannesburg judiciary and the building was to follow the same long historical lines of judicial buildings. The form and layout of the building follows that of the Italian renaissance and shows clear referencing to characteristics of this classically Roman adopted style. In plan the court is square and symmetrical along its central axis with its facade being a reflection and integrated feature of internal planning, an idea brought about by Renaissance architects such as Brunelleschi, Alberti and Palladio. These features of Renaissance architecture are carried on through the building with its use of Tuscan order columns set against walls, Semi circular arches and a large structural dome set as the main external feature of the courthouse.

Stylistically the building was appropriate to the needs of the court, a grand imposing structure that dignified the role of the court and set its permanence on the site (Liebenberg, J H. 2003). However in constructing the new court "the authorities wished to assert their presence on the square in no uncertain terms, but this was done by putting a distance between the building and its environment" (Van Der Vaal, G M. 1987: P 107). The building was to be isolated from the city rather than be part of it. Its architectural representation when left in the hands on government officials became dry, academic and "even more formal with the emphasis on the ponderous show of power to the outside" (Van Der Vaal, G M. 1987: P 102). This face of dominance the building projected neglected the community functions that the building could serve and further isolated the court from the citizens of Johannesburg. The dryness of "the impersonal architectural style repels rather than invites emotional involvement" (Van Der Vaal, G M. 1987: P 102). Rather than being part of the common ideal that a courthouse can embody in their symbolic presence, "the building itself withdraws into its own isolation" (Van Der Vaal, G M. 1987: P 102). The concept of the public square seemed to have disappeared entirely in the construction of the court, its narrow gardens being fenced off from the street and unused by its people. This lack of a public gesture and absence of greenery further added to the courts "Severe and asocial impression" (Van Der Vaal, G M. 1987: P 102). From the outset the design of the court was denied the impact that a courthouse could achieve "and had a negative effect on the development of [the] environment" (Van Der Vaal, G M. 1987: P 107). A courthouse that could "prevent our government from being perceived as a hostile alien entity" (Flanders, S. 2006: P 9) separated itself from its people and becoming an empty space: A walled off temple to the law that none could touch. The new court had left a rift in the young social contract between man and state.

Despite the questionable failings the court had in its social relations to the city the amount of litigation cases brought to the courts continued to grow drastically in Johannesburg after the years of the courts completion. By the late 1970's the fenced off court could no longer deal with the amount of cases being brought forward to it or house the staff required to handle the workload. Once again the judiciary was moved to a temporary residence and the old court abandoned (Anon. 1981).

With the old court unusable due to its size a new extension was needed. The task of creating a courthouse able to deal with the high caseloads in Johannesburg was given to the architectural firm Neil, Powell Neil. They envisioned a new modern court; a clean lined, sleek and modern facility that would rise behind the existing courthouse. Sitting between the old court and the Jeppe street post office rose a twelve story high tower block consisting of eighteen new courtrooms, private judge's chambers, Clark's offices and administrative facilities. The public would enter through the old court and into the grand entrance foyer of the new. The internal planning of this new facility was set out with a rigid modernistic logic. The planning is divided into three layers – Public access, private judge's chambers and sitting between the two are the courtrooms. The separation of these elements was done to ensure



maximum security for judges who were given their own secure circulation paths that allowed for quick access in and out of courtrooms. The purpose of setting the courts in-between these two separate circulation paths was to isolate the courts from the outside environment so that they could be controlled mechanically both for ventilation and lighting (Liebenberg, J H. 2003).
This change in courthouse design from traditional styles of judicial architecture to a modern design, according to Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court Stephen G Breyer, resulted from the need to be able to facilitate and accommodate the need for more and larger courts, increased administrative space and heightened security. In dealing with these new architectural problems "Courthouse design became a troubled art and [a] troubled business in the course of the twentieth century" (Flanders, S. 2006: P 13). In modernising and increasing building capacities the ideals of what defined a courthouse from other buildings began to blur and we begin to see "courthouses that looked not like significant public buildings but faceless office buildings" (Justice Breyer, S G. 2006: P 10). By addressing the need for a larger up to date courthouse the architects of the Johannesburg High court extension further isolated the courts from the people: the building offers no community engagement and has no architectural feel that highlights the importance of the space. The courthouse extension serves its role as a court but has little to no impact as a civic building, or even as a building one would associate to a courthouse. Its central location in the Johannesburg CBD and its surrounding context was ignored; a building that could facilitate and become part of daily activity shut itself out from the city. Both the old court and the new pushed themselves right up to the street edges leaving no visual or social interaction, "the overriding concern was with the 'modern' facilities rather than with man and his relationship with his physical and social surroundings" (Van Der Vaal, G M. 1987: P 177). The city centre began to lose its identity and people where being alienated from it.

Civic Mutation
Reclaiming the courthouse

The site of the existing Johannesburg High court provides a prime example of a courthouse that creates a spatial injustice. It is a work of civic architecture that does nothing in protecting the link in the social contract. As the previous theoretical essay highlights there are certain key elements that should be in place in creating a space that allows for a people to connect and associate with their government. A courthouse should become more than a court but begin to act as a public building. It should mutate to become an architectural icon that exists to serve the people, not just lawyers. The site of the court is however a part of the history of Johannesburg and has played as the backdrop to the cities developments. In both the modernisation and reintegration of the court back into the daily lives of the city there must be a compromise between progression and historic preservation. This duality of keeping the old with the addition of the new is the key in creating a new civic architecture for the courthouse that challenges the typical format of a courthouse. The traditional modern courthouse that rises from the ground and acts as a blockage to the site - no matter how functional it may be - is not the answer to creating a court that begins to bridge the social contract. Rather a new proposal must be a looked at: a court that exists not only to function within itself but acts as a piece of architecture than engages with the city, which integrates itself within the daily lives of the people and acts as a mediator between past history and new function.

(Image Right)
Johannesburg High Court
Facade details
Photo: Krom, B: 2010





(Image left)
Johannesburg High Court entrance
Photo: Krom, B: 2010

"But above all, the courthouse: the centre, the focus, the hub; sitting looming in the centre of the country's circumference like a single cloud in its ring of horizon, laying its vast shadow to the uttermost rim of horizon; musing, brooding, symbolic and ponderable, tall as cloud, solid as rock, dominating all: protector of the weak, judiciate and curb of the passions and lusts, repository and guardian of the aspirations and hopes..."

William Faulkner
The Courthouse, Pg 44

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C

Site Analysis

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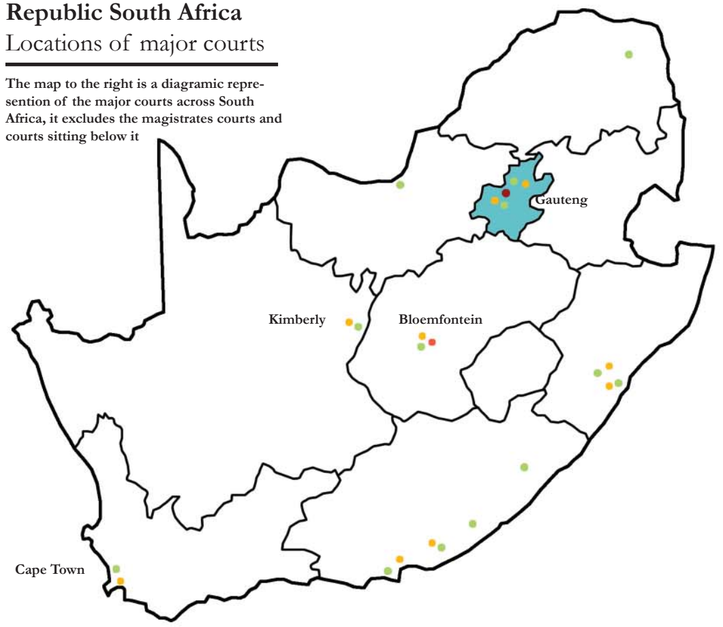
The site analysis and mapping acts as a diagrammatic extension to the historical Essay. It aims to build onto the history of the site and provide keys to the final design proposal

Site selection

Located throughout the country are the court-houses that protect the laws of the nation, from the constitutional court in Johannesburg to the Supreme Court of appeal in Bloemfontein. Each court is bound by the jurisdiction of its powers. Within this hierarchy of courts the High Courts play an important role as the protectors of civil and criminal law that is recorded in juristical precedent. Of these High Courts the Johannesburg high court has become the busiest Court in South Africa due to the enormous case loads it deals with. It is located in the Central Business District In Johannesburg South Africa sitting between Jeppe and Prichard Street. Its Location is historically significant in the development of Johannesburg from a small mining town into South Africa's commercial hub.

Republic South Africa
Locations of major courts

The map to the right is a diagramic represention of the major courts across South Africa, it excludes the magistrates courts and courts sitting below it



South African Constitutional Court

Gauteng
Johannesburg

Supreme Court of Appeal of South

Free State
Bloemfontein

Supreme Courts of South Africa

Free State
Bloemfontein
Northern Cape
Kimberly

Kwazulu Natal
Pietermaritzburg
Durban

Western Cape
Cape Town
Eastern Cape
Grahamstown
Port Elizabeth

Gauteng
Pretoria
Johannesburg

High Courts of South Africa

Western Cape
Cape Town
Northern Cape
Kimberly
Free State
Bloemfontein

Gauteng
Pretoria
Johannesburg
Kwazulu Natal
Pietermaritzburg
Durban

Eastern Cape
Bhisho
Grahamstown
Mthatha
Port Elizabeth

North West
Mafikeng
Limpopo
Thohoandou



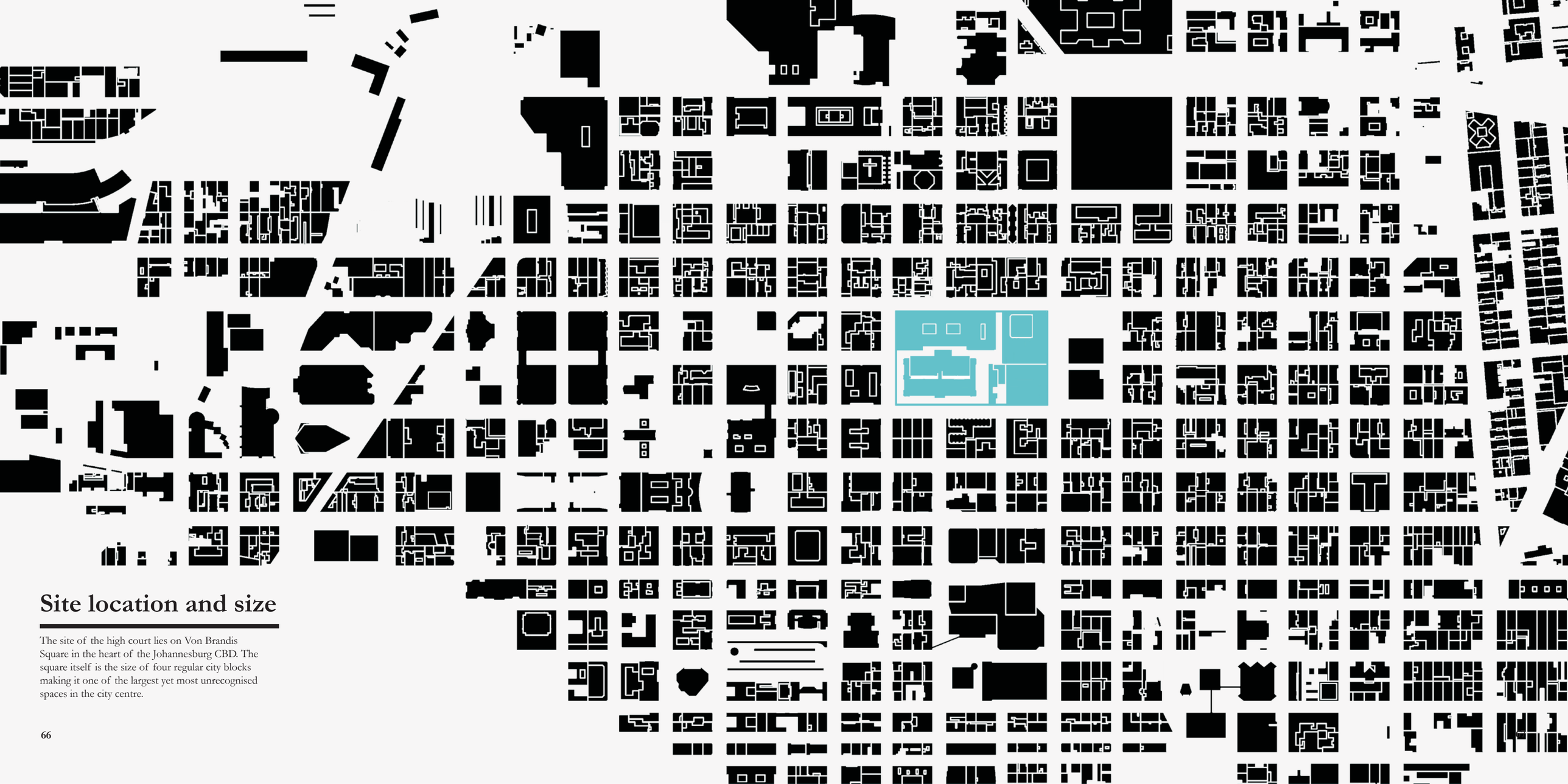
Gauteng province

Each province has its own selected of minor courts that deal with issues specific to each courts jurisdiction or province. Courts such as the constitutional court or Supreme court deal however with matters from across the nation.



Central Johannesburg

The chosen site for this thesis is the High Court of Johannesburg, previously called the Supreme Court. The building housing the courts has been located within the central CBD since its birth in 1910



Site location and size

The site of the high court lies on Von Brandis Square in the heart of the Johannesburg CBD. The square itself is the size of four regular city blocks making it one of the largest yet most unrecognised spaces in the city centre.


Johannesburg Legislature
Family court
Johannesburg High Court
Police station
Magistrates Court

Evolution of Von Brandis Square

From open square to spatial injustice



Johannesburg Nolli map - 1890

During the earl years of Johannesburg Government Square was used as a meeting space in the city and surrounded by various religious groups. The square was a hub in the city for daily life

1 - NH of G Church
2 - Congregational Church
3 - Baptist Church
4 - Presbyterian Church
5 - St. Mary's Church
6 - Synagogue
7 - Wesleyan Church

Johannesburg Nolli map - 1900

Government Square is now known as Von Brandis Square, Named after Captain Carl Von Brandis. On its site the Johannesburg public school is build behind the existing church with the majority of the site still acting as a main open space in the city for congregations to assemble.

1 - Johannesburg public school
2 - Public Library

Johannesburg Nolli map - 1920

After much protest the bulk of what was Von Brandis Square is built up ontop of by the new Supreme court. The square is no longer able to function as an urban public space in the city

1 - Johannesburg Supreme Court
2 - Telephone exchange building
3 - Central Fire Station
4 - YWCA

Johannesburg Nolli map - 1940

Due to high post usage a new post office is built behind the court to help the high usage of the Rissik street post office. The new Post Office made use of underground tunnels connecting directly to the railroads for faster collection and delivery of mail

1 - Jeppe street post office
2 - East extension to post office
3 - West extension to post office

Von Brandis Square today

key

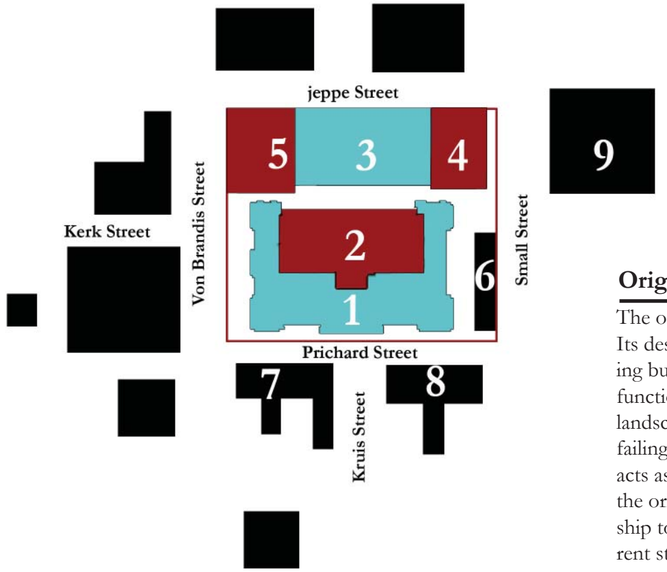
1 - original court (1910, designed by Gordon Leith)
2 - Court extension (1970, designed by Neil Powell Neil

3 - Jeppe Street Post Office (1935, F.D Strong)
4 - Jeppe Post Office Extension (1940)
5 - jeppe Post Office Extension 2 (1970)

6 - Small Street Mall

7 -Innes chambers Advocates offices
8 - Shneider Chambers Advocates offices

9 - Old Southern Sun Hotel



Original Supreme Court

The original Court building was constructed in 1910. Its design is by architect Gordon Leith. The existing building, although too small to house the courts functions, is a monument in the Johannesburg urban landscape. Its extension however is where the major failings of the site begin. The modernist tower that acts as the extension to the court does little justice to the original courthouse, its facade shows no relationship to its Renaissance style predecessor and its current state is one of complete disarray.

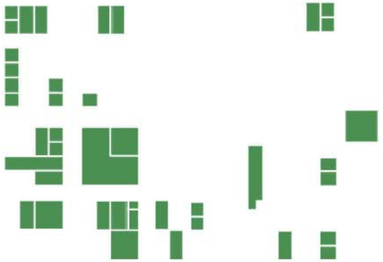


Immediate context

The above map is a diagram of the immediate surroundings of the Johannesburg High Court. Each colour represents a different activity taking place in each building with the key on the opposite page.

Site use

During the early 1900's Von Brandis Square was an open site surrounded by the major churches and shul's of Johannesburg. In the development of the city the site began to develop into the business district it is today. The court and post office no longer act as the civic centre it was built to create. With the advent of Jeppe Street being converted into a retail strip along with the pedestrianisation of the Small Street and Kerk Street Mall the area is predominantly retail. The site is congested both during the week and weekend with shoppers. Ground floors of buildings have been converted into retail shops with their upper floors being used as office spaces. With all this commercial activity the court acts as a barrier to the site rather than embracing it.



Retail

Formal retail shops within the area including structures build specifically to house the Small Street Mall development. Other buildings include Markhams and other larger fashion outlets



Office space

The site surrounding the court has been built up to facilitate rentable office space. These offices include facilities that act independently yet inclusive of the court such as the empty Innes Chambers Advocates office, the Schneider Chambers offices and Pitje Chambers offices. Adjacent to the site to the east are the offices spaces around the empty Southern Sun hotel.



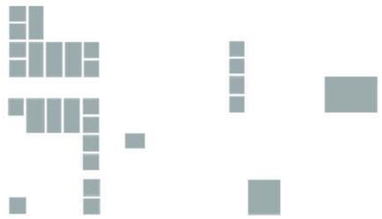
Residential and retail

The Spaces behind the main Jeppe Street retail spaces have been converted from solely residential units to ground floor commercial spaces with living units above.



Office and retail

Along Jeppe Street the old medical offices have been converted into high rise retail shops by the Ethiopian community in the area. These retail shops reach up to around the fourth floor with rentable office and storage spaces above.



Residential

Many of the residential units built up in the area where units built up in the art deco style of architecture. These buildings have been neglected and in many cases derelict.



Civic

The Jeppe Street Post office was built in 3 stages, the original in 1930, then 1935 and 1970 respectively. Currently the majority of the post office is not used and inaccessible. The old PO Boxes are still accessible but the majority of the building is in a bad state of disrepair. As a civic building the post office is an unused empty building while its architecture is an icon of the inner city.

The courthouse extension of 1970 is the main problem of the current site conditions. It sits in between the old courthouse and the post office

The original courthouse of 1910 is a landmark in the inner city however with the buildup of the area the courthouse extension paid no relationship to its predecessor. Because of this the court has been lost in the city





Religious

The Methodist Church on Prichard street is the last church on the site that used to be church square. The church has been highlighted in the news recently for its intake of refugees into the country.



Hotel

The Southern Sun hotel adjacent to the court is currently empty however with the development of the courthouse can become office space for advocates offices.



Small Street Mall

The pedestrian mall on Small Street attracts massive retail activity on both week days and weekend



Jeppe Street

With the advent of the old medical district on Prichard Street being converted into a retail strip the area pulls in large amounts of commercial activity



(Image above)
Johannesburg Souther Sun Hotel
Photo: Krom, B: 2010

Southern Sun Hotel

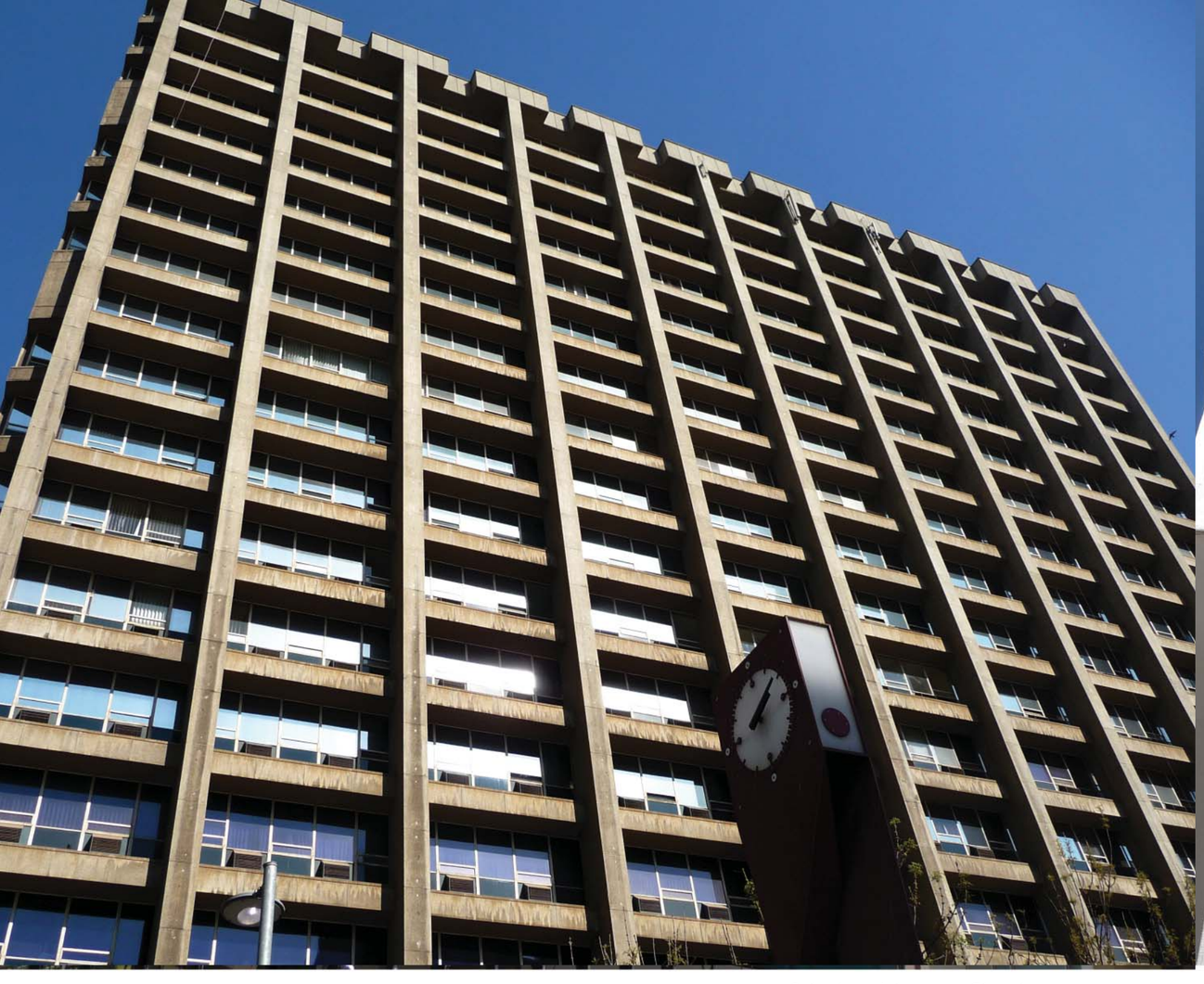
The Southern Sun Hotel along Jeppe and Von Welligh Street currently stands unused except for its basement parking levels that are used as parking for the court house. It has potential to house the growing number of advocate houses needed.



(Image above)
Jeppe Street Post Office entrance
Photo: Krom, B: 2010

Jeppe Street Post Office

The Jeppe Post Office facade is protected by South African Heritage. Its Art Deco detailing has become an icon in the inner city but the building itself is unused.



(Image above)
Schreiner Chambers
Photo: Krom, B: 2010

Schreiner Advocates Chambers

In the immediate site of the court are the unused advocates houses. Currently seven of the nine main advocates houses are in Sandton. With the proposed new court project the hope is that the advocates chambers i the city will be used again to create a court district.



(Image above)
Innes Chambers facade
Photo: Krom, B: 2010

Innes Chambers Facade

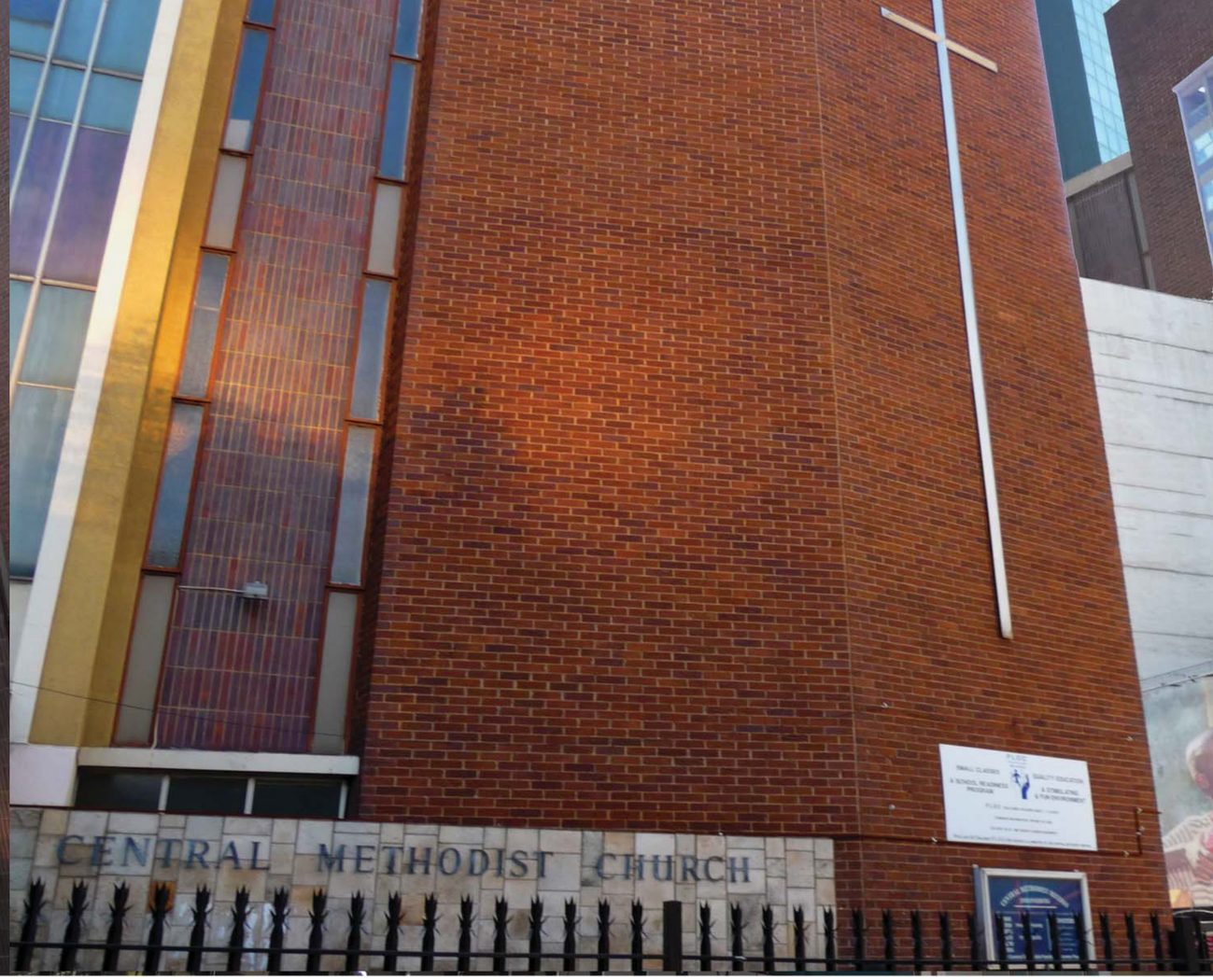
Close up image of the concrete framed modernist facade of the Innes Chambers building along Prichard Street.



(Image above)
Small Street mall
Photo: Krom, B: 2010

Small Street mall

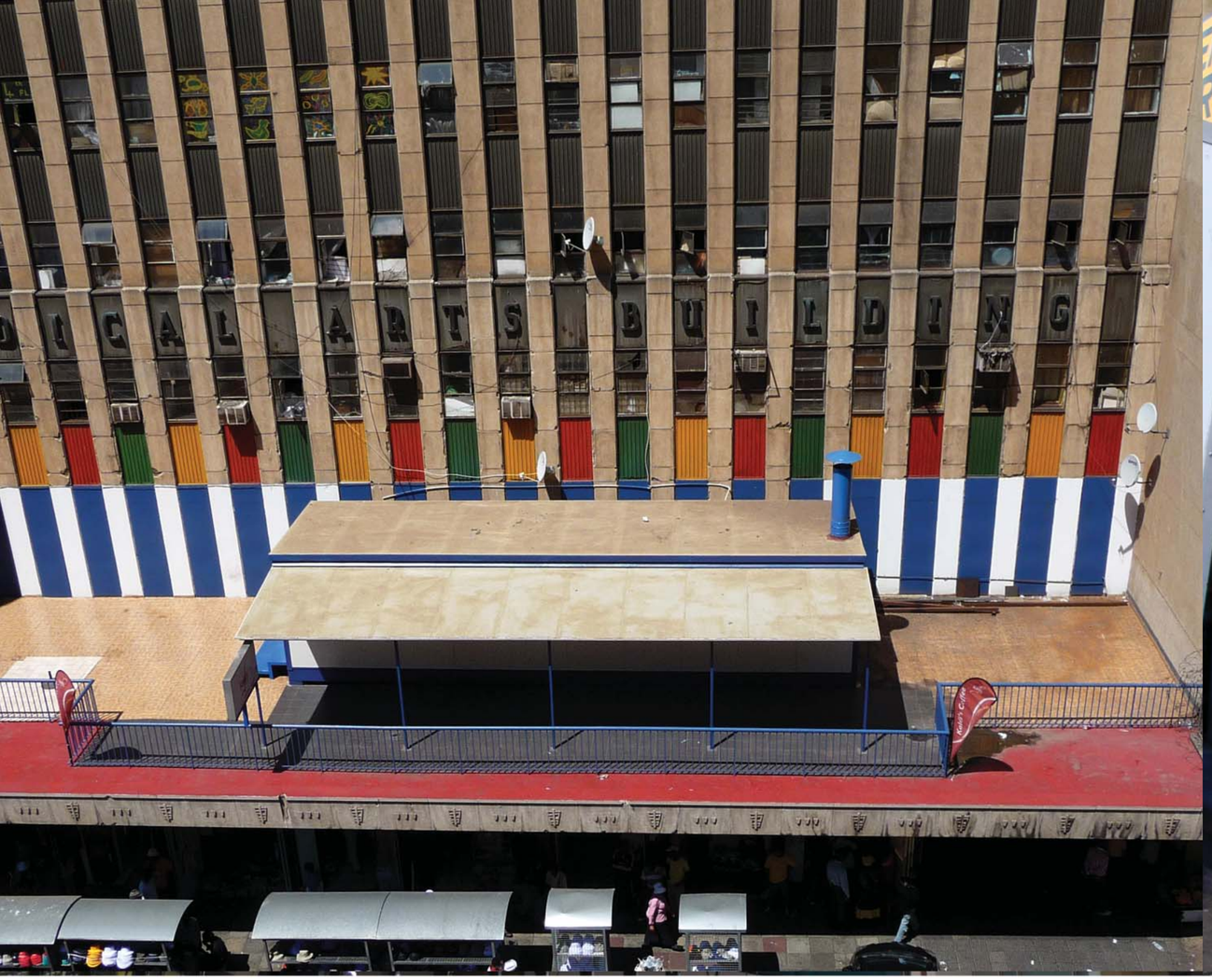
Cutting through Von Brandis Square is the Small Street Mall. This pedestrianised strip has become a retail hub during both the week and weekend.



(Image above)
Central Methodist Church
Photo: Krom, B: 2010

Methodist Church

The remaining church around the old Church Square is the Central Methodist Church. Recently the church has come under fire for their overflow of refugees living illegally in the Church.



(Image above)
Jeppe Street Traders
Photo: Krom, B: 2010

Medical Arts Building

The old medical district along Jeppe Street Street has been converted by the Ethiopian community into a thriving retail district that has given new life to the previously unused buildings.



(Image above)
Jeppe Street Trading
Photo: Krom, B: 2010

Street Trade

The areas along the streets of the reused buildings have been used to take advantage of the high amount of pedestrian shoppers along Jeppe Street.

D

Program

-

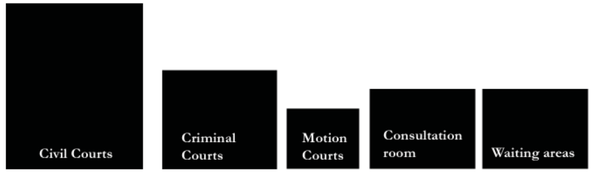
-

The analysis that follows is to show the existing program of the High Court and exploration into the new program needed in order to achieve the required spaces of a modern courthouse. It serves as a direct link to the final design solution using the programmatic needs and overlaps to inform the design

Existing court program

The existing High court program is comprised of the main courtset, the subsidiarity services and restricted areas. Each section falls under extreme separations of privacy use with overlaps of circulation. The failings of the existing court lies in its inability to deal with the amount of case loads. In the extension of the court to try deal with this the separations of circulations and security has been compromised. In the design of the new court the existing program must be extended and expanded upon in order to create a modern courthouse that can deal with the case loads of the court as well as become a spatial justice to the city.

Courtset



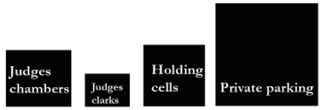
The courtset comprises the bulk of the existing program. The constant use and increasing amount of judicial hearings have lead to an increased number of courts being needed and ended up with long court date waiting times.

Supplementary , judiciary and information



Supplementary to the courtset are the administrative departments to the courthouse housing office clarks, registrar offices and filing departments. High case loads have lead to various areas in the court having to be adapted to become file storage areas causing an ad hoc system of administrative paperwork offices scattered around the building.

Restricted

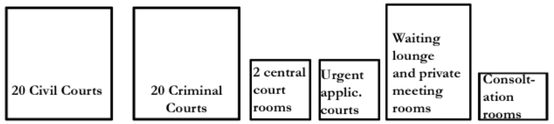


The judges chambers and holding cells within the courthouse walls should be the most secure areas of the court, both to protect the judges and to ensure all dangerous criminals are secure at all times. However the security and circulation routes have been adapted and changed over the years leaving the building in disarray with little security between public, private and restricted zones

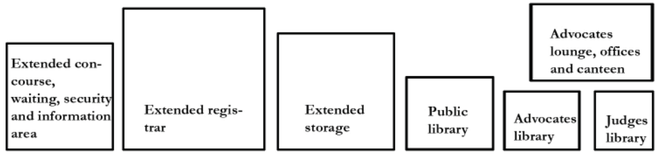
Extended program

The extended program of the new court encompasses both modernizing the existing, converting the historical aspects of the building and extending the court so that it can handle the increase in case load. The new program is not isolated to the court itself but includes activities to activate the space around the court in order to make the court part of the city, not just exist within it.

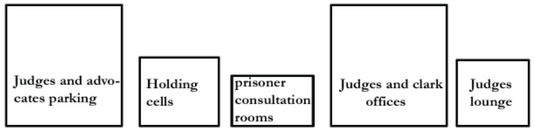
Proposed new court program



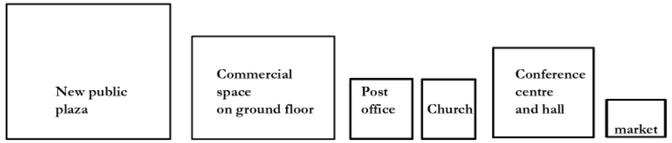
Suplimentary , judiciary and information



Restricted access



Program proposed to activate space



Renovation and new extension of the High Court facilities

The extensions to the courtset and its adjacent facilities for advocates and witnesses will help speed up and facilitate for the increasing amounts of case loads the court deals with. The new courts will also allow for new modern methods of court cases to be used in the out of date building

Modernisation and preservation of the court with improved accessibility

The inclusion of a new public law library will turn the once closed of court into a civic space allowing for public use of the law records and library. This along with a new administrative space and registrar will turn the court into a true public building allowing the public access into the judicial realm of the government.

Improved security, access and control

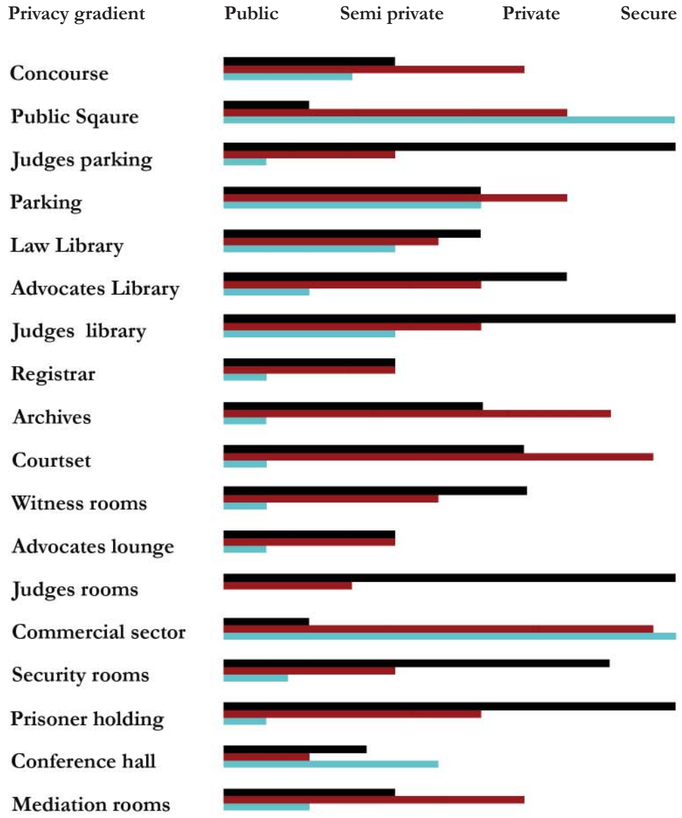
With the constant extensions and alterations to the existing court has been a severe decline in the security control of the building. Within a court judges, prisoners and witnesses must all be kept safe for a court to be able to function. The new court security, access control and circulation will ensure the court runs faster and safer.

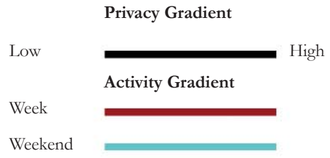
New public space that integrates into existing site usage

The court must become more than a collection of courtrooms but must mutate into the urban fabric, becoming a civic space. By embracing and extending onto the existing site use the court will not only exist within the city but be part of it.

Gradient

The design challenge of a courthouse lies in its separation of spaces and gradients of privacy. A court is a nations guardian of the law and the pinnacle of a civic building, open to all. However it must protect both those in and outside the court. This juxtaposition of being private and public defines the program of the courthouse and organises its spaces.





Activity

Although privacy gradients define the spacial organisation of a court its size and location is defined by usage patterns. Different programs have higher usage patterns, this in conjunction with privacy gradients define the final spatial organisation of the court. In relation specifically with the Johannesburg high court the location of the building to the commercial sector of the city greatly influences the public spaces in and around the court building.

Extended program

The proposed extended program of the court falls under four main areas of division: Public, Semi Public, Private and Restricted. The divisions of program into these areas is for the safety of those within the court. The dealings of the court must protect judges, criminals and witnesses alike. Because of the sensitive nature of the court each division must be separated within these groups yet have access between on another. The extended program proposed will allow the court to handle the amount of case load the Johannesburg High Court deals with as well and turn the outdated court into a modern centre for justice.

Johannesburg High Court _ proposed areas schedule

Security level and function	No. needed	m^2	m^2 total
A — PUBLIC			
A2 Public Facilities			
Public square			1750
Comercial space			700
Post Office			200
Confrence centre/ hall			400
Total			**3050**
A3 Public Library			
Public shelves		1600	
Admin		120	
Conference rooms		200	
Study rooms		350	
Total			2270
Total			5320
B — SEMI PUBLIC			
A1 Courtrooms			
Motion court	2	320	640
Main civil court	1	280	280
Main criminal court	1	280	280
Civil courts	20	225	4500
Criminal Courts	20	225	4500
Urgent Application courts	2	165	330
Total			**10530**
B2 Public concourse			
Security office and storage			150
Information office			100
Waiting areas/ Foyer			1400
Public waiting lounge			500
Seminar room			320
Public lock up rooms			70
Cafe			300
Media room			350
Total			**3190**
A3 Registrar			
Registry counter	3	50	150
Registrar offices (open plan)	100	7	700
Registrar offices (private)	50	15	750
Meeting rooms			200
Staff rooms/lounge			200
Copy rooms			75
Filing offices			150
Total			**2225**
A3 Public Parking			
Public Parking			**12500**
Total			28445
C — PRIVATE			
C1 Prosecutors, Defendants and witness			
Defence witness consultation rooms	21	35	735
Prosecution witness consultation rooms	21	35	735
Vulnerable witness waiting rooms	10	25	250
Remote witness rooms	5	15	75
Secure court hall / gallery			600
Amenities			200
Total			**2595**
C2 Advocates lounge			
Admin			75
Lounge space			750
Meeting rooms			200
Cafeteria			500
Amenities			200
Work stations (closed offices)			200
Robing room			100
Total			**2025**
C3 Mediation			
Mediation meeting rooms	20	30	600
Admin			50
Waiting lounge			150
Total			**800**
C4 Archive			
Public records			1000
Private storage			1500
Admin offices			200
Total			**2700**
C5 Advocates Library			
Reference private shelves		1200	
Admin		80	
Conference rooms		200	
Study rooms		200	
Total			1680
A3 Private Parking			
Advocates Parking			**16000**
Total			25800
D — SECURE			
D1 Judges private			
Office space	40	18	720
Clarks office	40	10	400
Conference rooms	5	25	125
Judges lounge			400
Cafeteria			300
Total			**1945**
D2 Judges Library			
Judges private shelves		1000	
Admin		60	
Total			**1060**
D4 Security check			
Security check point			200
Search room			50
Security day room/office			75
Total			**325**
D5 Prisoner lock up			
Prisoner holding cells	12	20	240
Holding cells lobby			60
Police admin offices/change rooms			25
Secure prisoner arrival gate			50
Total			**375**
D6 Secure Parking			
Judges parking			2340
Prisoner drop off			11000
Total			**13340**
Total			17045

Definition of areas

Public space

The key element in the extension and modernisation of the new court house is the inclusion of the public spaces that will turn the court into a place of exclusion into a civic space within the city. The old court will be converted into a new public law library, converting what was once the space of exclusion is now the public home of the law. The space that was once the new extension of the court is now clear and converted into a public plaza that feeds of the existing hub of activity in the site.

Semi Public space

The courtset and administrative facilities of the court comprise the courtset, the space within the court that is accessible to public but exist within the security barrier of the court. The new courthouses will facilitate the growing demand for judicial spaces, the modernised administrative spaces and registrar will speed up the process of judicial paper work. These spaces work within the public concourse, the link between the public space and the court. The concourse is the link in the social contract, it joins the public and the judiciary.

Private space

Although the court is a civic building, and therefore open to the public, a courthouse must have areas of restriction. The private spaces of the courthouse are to protect court employees and records. The advocates and court employees must have areas within the court where they can be separated form the public areas. Advocates must also have spaces that act as offices for court proceedings and court employees must be able to protect the sensitive court material stored within the court.

Secure space

Beyond the protection of the advocates the prisoners and judges within the court must be secure and safe at all times. Both groups must have isolated parking spaces, circulation and waiting spaces. These secure spaces must be able to access all areas of the court but be secure from being accessed from others within the court.

E

Design Drivers

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Based on site history, research into the area, mapping of movement patterns and program analysis the design solution took shape. Based on the previous research the following design decisions were chosen to best combine site, program and theory.

Design drivers

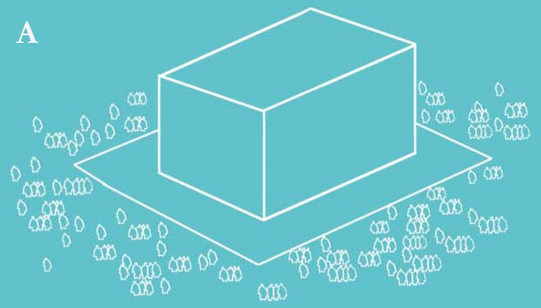
The previous chapters of this document, that being both the essays and the site analysis, guided the form of the final design proposal. The Aim of the design is to meet the criteria set out in both the theoretical aspects of the project and the practical necessities of the court. The following chapters show the evolution of the design thinking of turning theoretical ideas into design solutions. By implementing the ideas discussed the aim is to reintegrate the lost icon of the Johannesburg High Court back into the inner city while creating a modern courthouse that can cope with the functional needs of its usage.



From exclusion to integration

Reintegrating the courthouse into the existing urban fabric is the key goal of this thesis. The role of a courthouse plays an important part in bridging the political divide, yet the current court isolates itself from society. In order for the court to be part of the lives of the people it must embrace the lives of the people.

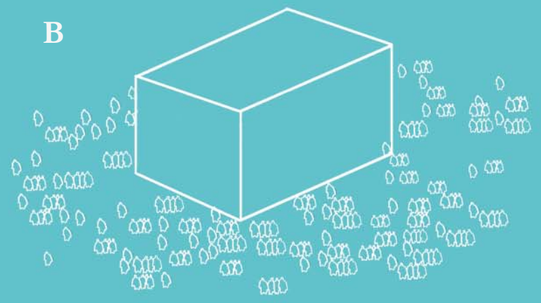
A



Exclusion

The existing court acts as an island, an isolated space within the city that shuts its doors to its surroundings. A court by its very nature should be a space that associates itself with society as it is the guardian of the social contract. Currently the court is unreachable, walled of to the city, unknowable and unloved

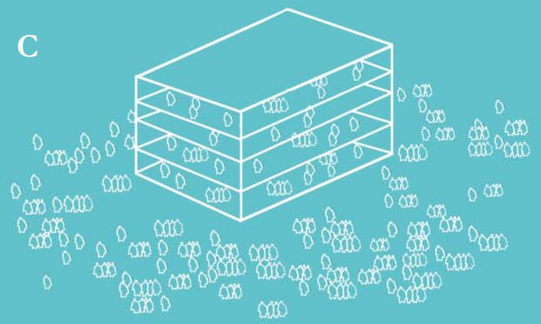
B



Inclusion

The first step in making the court part of the urban fabric is by including it with the city. Breaking down its walls will allow for people to associate with it by actually being able to physically associate themselves with it. A court should include society and be part of it

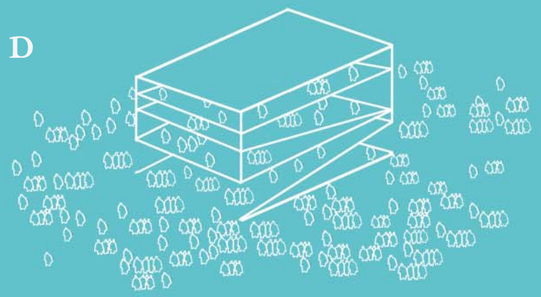
C



Visibility

The term 'not only must justice be done but be seen to be done' speaks about the visibility of the court. When we see something we can associate with it, it is no longer unknown. By creating a visible court, one that is inclusive of society and allows us to peer into its walls we start to break down the barrier and bridge the political divide.

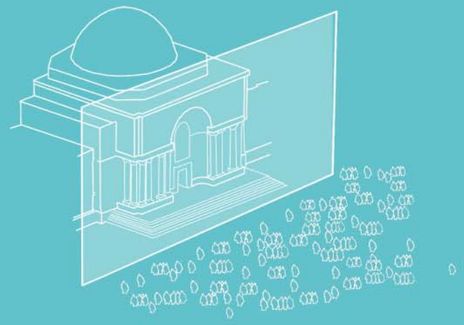
D



Acceptance

For a court to be part of society and bridge the political gap it must embrace society by becoming part of its surroundings. By being an extension to the urban fabric a courthouse becomes part of the daily lives of the people. When this happens a strong connection is made between man and state, the barrier in the social contract is broken.

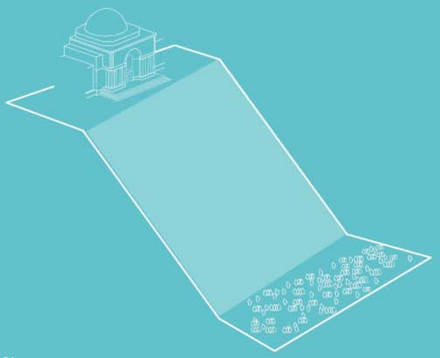
A



Facade of justice

Political architecture is referred to the stage of politics, it acts as the platform on which the nation performs and the people watch. In this play architecture acts as the fourth wall, the barrier between man and state. It is this facade of justice that must be removed, breaking down the fourth wall allowing for complete interaction and association.

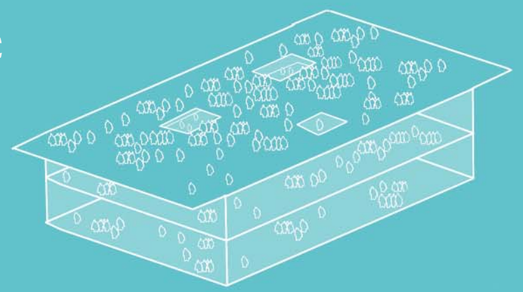
B



Kafka court

If a courthouse is isolated and the barrier between man a law is left unbroken the court becomes a Kafka court: an unreachable, untouchable and unknowable court that exists high up and unseen from the people.

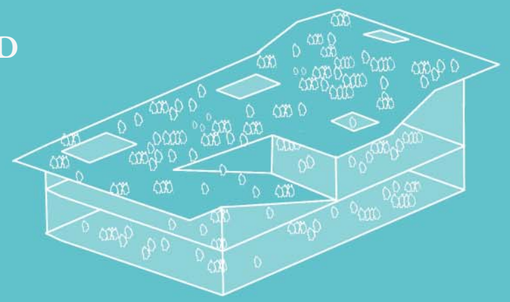
C



Plane of justice

By sinking the court the site opens up, turning the once closed off site into an open space for the city. The facade of justice that acts as a barrier is now the plane of justice, the court is now the platform that supports the people

D

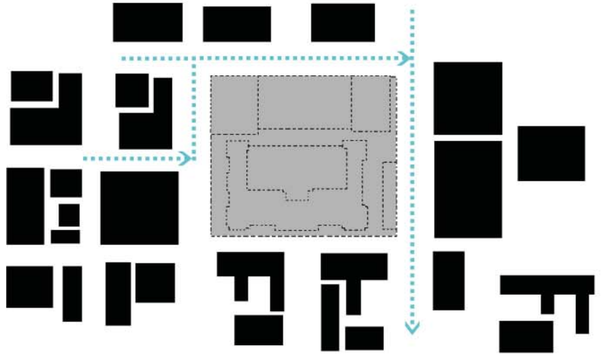


Civic mutation

By sinking the court and warping the surface plane the platform of a civic space and the architecture of the court become intertwined. The fourth wall is broken, the court becomes visible and integrated into its site.

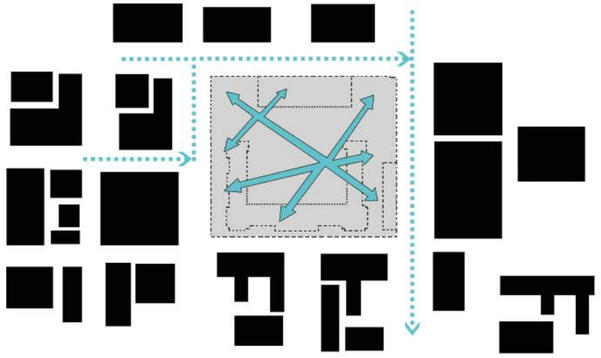
Site connections

Bordering Von Brandis Square are the heavily pedestrian commercial routes on the Small Street Mall, the Kirk Street Mall and the Jeppe Street trading strip. These routes play important roles as thoroughfares through the site. The current courthouse blocks off the site, allowing no connections to be made between these pathways. Joining these pedestrian routes together will transform the site from a place of exclusion into a space that embraces the activity of the site. The following diagrams express the various ways in which paths, routes and programing can be integrated.



Site as block
The island court

The combined footprint of the both the courthouse and the Jeppe Street Post office creates a blockage in the site. The placement of the buildings does not allow connection through the site to allow the heavily used cross paths to connect. The court isolates itself, and by isolating itself it breaks up the important connections that could exist in the area.



Site as connection
The court as conduit

The design goal of the proposed project is to transform the site from a space of isolation into a conduit that connects both man to state and the surrounding site to one another. By demolishing the unused and unkept buildings on Von Brandis Square the new court can become the tool to integrate the site with one another. Von Brandis square will once again be the connection point in the inner city

Path diagram

A. Path collection

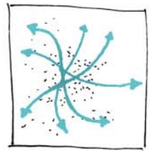
By pulling a variety of paths though the site a route of program is defined. These main paths have the ability to pull people around a main line of interaction or disperse the crowd through a variety of main and subsidiary paths. Defining a route, wether it be isolated or integrated into a system, allows for different degrees of interaction in a site.

1.



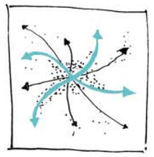
Assemble
A path pulled through an area that allows for and accommodates interaction and collection

2.



Disperse
A group of paths pulled through an area leading to multiple areas that disperses activity over a large area rather than focusing it into one

3.

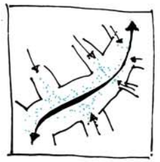


Main collection
Joining main paths and lesser nodes to allow collection and interaction in certain spaces while dispersing activity in others

B. Route accessibility

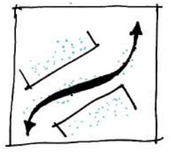
Blockages in and around a site differentiate the forms of accessibility into the proposed project. These routes of accessibility around paths dictate the movement flows around paths. They can create direct pathways or central collection point. Different forms of accessibility dictate the degree of intensity within areas.

1.



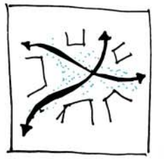
Invite
Breaking through barriers to allow multiple entry ways and areas of interaction

2.



Repel
Separated path and architecture directs a path between or past a selected area.

3.

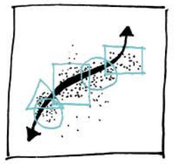


Directed nodes
Using breaks and barriers to direct flow to certain areas and deny access to others

C. Program interaction

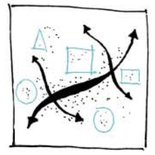
Along nodes within pathways and routes program is inserted into the grid either along or around paths and routes. The location of program can integrate or isolate individual programing into the site. By mixing forms of routes, paths and program the interaction within the site is defined.

1.



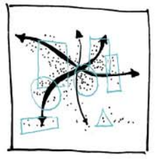
Integrate
Multiple program grouped and overlapping creating an all encompassing architectural solution

2.



Segregate
Isolating program throughout an area connecting one to the next through paths

3.



Overlap
Joining program in a ‘campus’ type model and cutting through it with paths and nodes

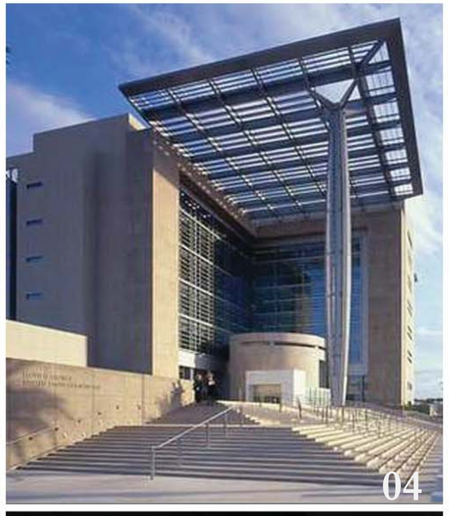
Courthouse Typology

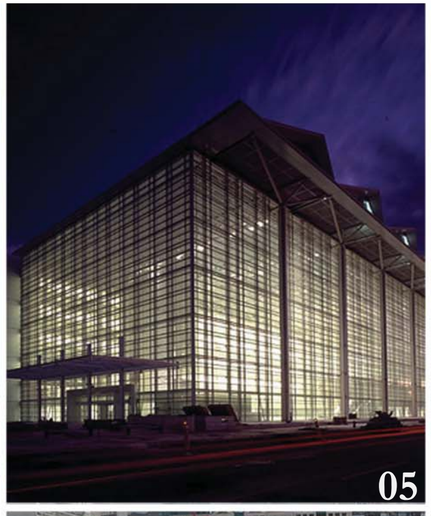
The building of separate buildings for law courts began in the 1700's, before this courtrooms were part of town hall's or other government buildings. In the development of the typology courthouses have had to adapt to the larger amounts of case loads being dealt with. With the rise of modernist architecture courthouses moved away from the traditional monolithic buildings into multilevel courtset buildings. Due to the rigid circulation needs the typology has stuck to a formula that allows all those involved in the court to access all areas needed. This typology has at times led to a lack of legibility with courthouses, the traditional monumental courthouse was lost and replaced with a modernist tower block. Recently this 'face' of justice has begun to change with architecture giving new life into the courthouse typology.







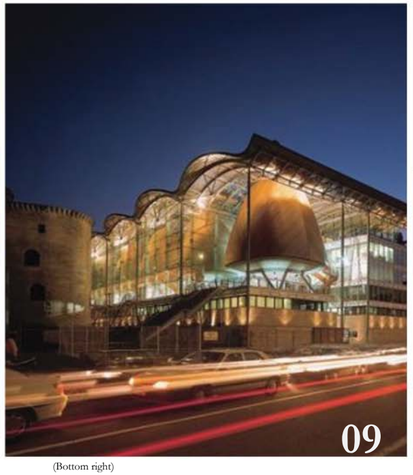


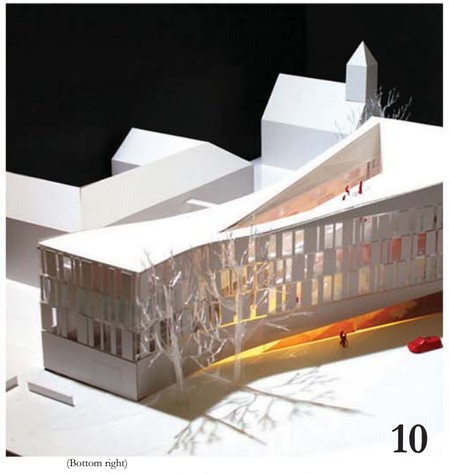
















(Image 01)
Adelaide Commonwealth Law Courts, Australia
Hassell Architects
Photo: Google images
http://www.architecture.com.au/awards_search?option=showaward&entryno=20065021

(Bottom right)
Birmingham Magistrates Court, United Kingdom
Denton Corker Marshall
Photo: Google images
http://www.designscene.net/2008/12/birmingham-magistrates-court-design.html

(Bottom right)
Boston Courthouse, United States of America
Pei Cobb Freed & Partners
Photo: Google images
http://www.cosentini.com/portfolio/pble_usfedbost.html

(Bottom right)
Manchester Jusitice Centre, United Kingdom
Denton Corker Marshall
Photo: Google images
http://culturepublic.com/manchester-justice-centre/

(Bottom right)
Long Island Federal Courthouse, United States of America
Richard Meier & Partners
Photo: Google images
http://clanco.com/wp/2008/06/12/architecture-of-deconstruction/

(Bottom right)
Tribunal de Grande Instance, Bordeux. France
Rogers, Stirk and Partners
Photo: Google images
http://www.arcspace.com/architects/rogers/Bordeaux/

(Bottom right)
Lloyd D. George U.S. Courthouse and Federal Building, Las Vegas. United States of America
Yazdani Architects
Photo: Google images
http://blog.cleveland.com/architecture/2007/09/_the_keynote_speaker_at.html

(Bottom right)
Frederiksburg Courthouse, Denmark
3XN architects
Photo: Google images
http://www.bustler.net/images/gallery/3xn_frederiksberg_courthouse_02.jpg

(Bottom right)
Arizona Courthouse, United States of America
Richard Meier & Partners
Photo: Google images
http://abduzeedo.com/architect-day-richard-meier

(Bottom right)
Antwerp Courthouse, Belgium
Rogers Stirk and Partners
Photo: Google images
http://www.autodesk.co.uk/adsk/servlet/pc/item?linkID=14303569&id=13059384&siteID=452932

(Bottom right)
Eugene Lyman Morse Federal Courthouse ,Eugene, Oregon. United States of America
Morphosis Architects
Photo: Google images
http://blog.pennlive.com/patriotnews/2007/05/downtown_showpiece_or_redevelo.html

(Bottom right)
Johannesburg High Court, South Africa
Neil Powell neil Architecs
Photo: Krom, B

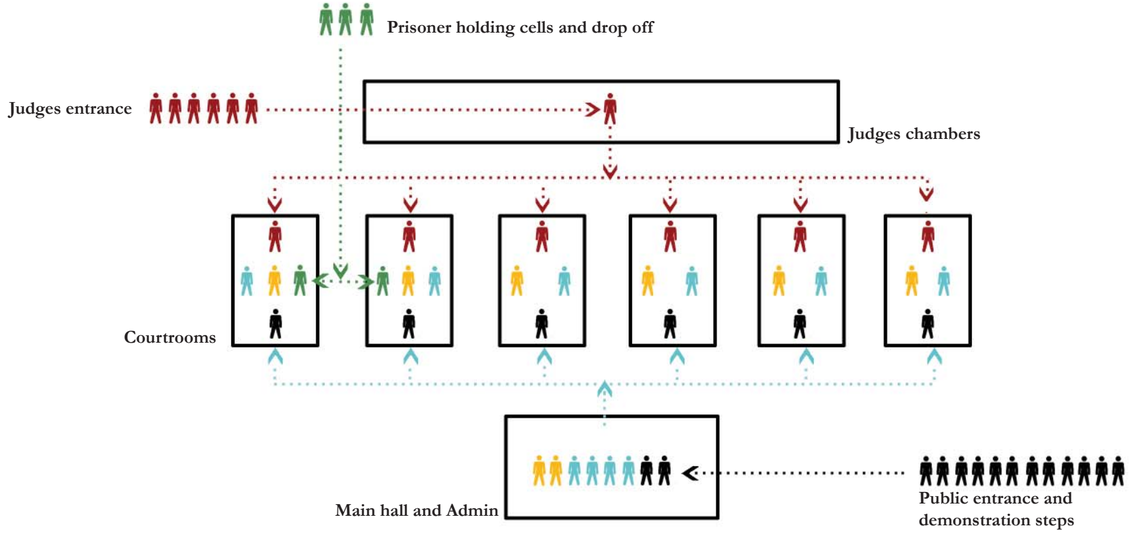
Linear Courthouse

The Images shown in the page beforehand represent what is known as a 'linear courthouse'. In their appearance each court may seem completely unique however their internal planning for the most part follows similar planning. This typology of courthouse is used when numerous numbers of courtrooms are need to be housed as its simple yet effective separation of spaces and circulations allows for easy access through the building while maintaining security measures.

The below diagram represents how each of the above shown courtrooms work. Spaces are ordered according to privacy gradients with each sector being connected along a corridor space. In between these spaces are subsidiary vertical circulation paths for prisoners top access the courtrooms.

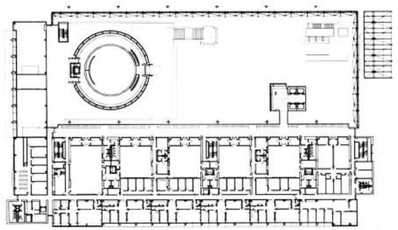
Traditional Linear Courthouse
Circulation use

= Prisoner + Guard = Advocate = Witness = Judge = Defendant and prosecuted

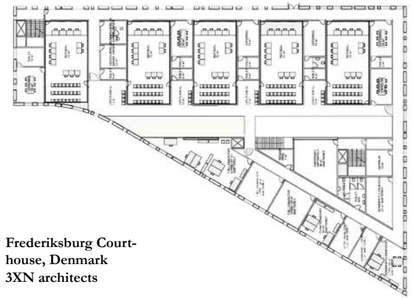


Courthouse analysis

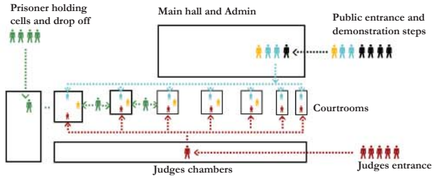
The below courthouses show how even though the form and appearance of a courthouse may change internally they function in very similar ways. These courts are linear courthouses, That being courthouses build to house large amount of courtrooms.

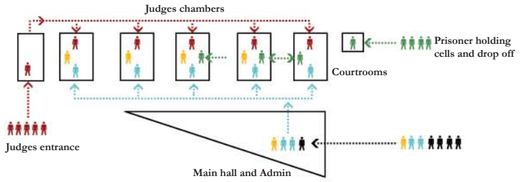


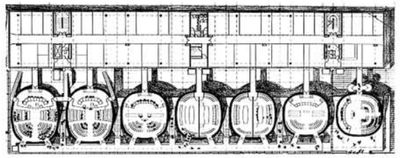
Arizona Courthouse, United States of America
Richard Meier & Partners



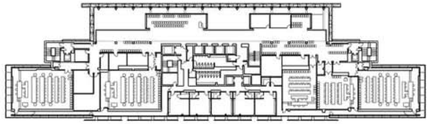
Frederiksburg Courthouse, Denmark
3XN architects



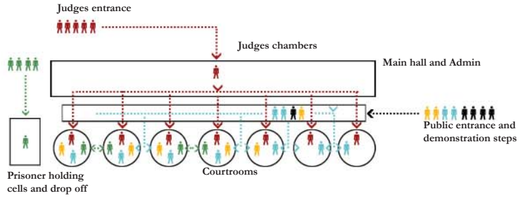


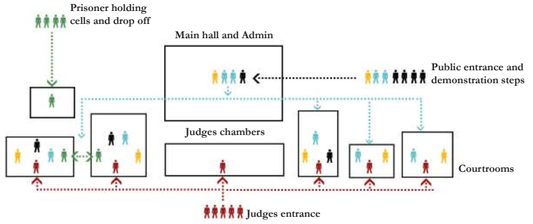


Tribunal de Grande Instance, Bordeaux. France
Rogers, Stirk and Partners



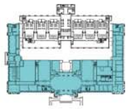
Manchester Jusitice Centre, United Kindom
Denton Corker Marshall



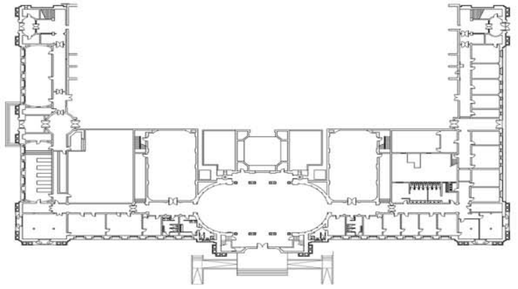


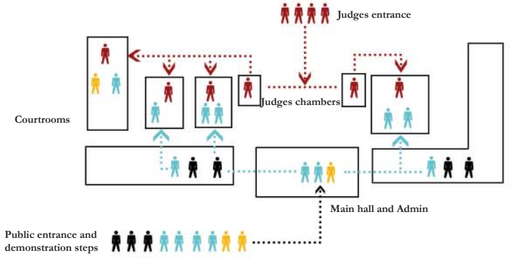
Existing court

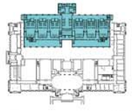
The existing courthouse is built of two main buildings - the original court and its extension. These two seperate buildings are connected by a tunnel from the old courthouse into the main lift lobby of the new. The original court is protected by the historical preservation society of Johannesburg while the extension is not. The proposed project aims at demolishing the new court while retaining the old and converting it as the new law library and main entrance into the proposed extension. The following diagrams show the movement patterns of the courthouse and dictates as to where the failings of each are.



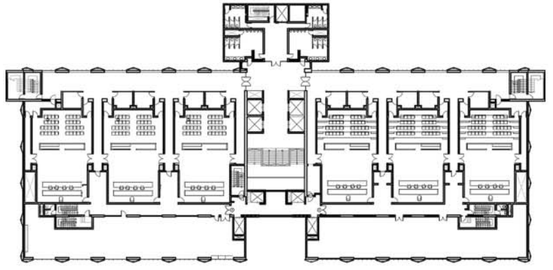
Old court - 1910

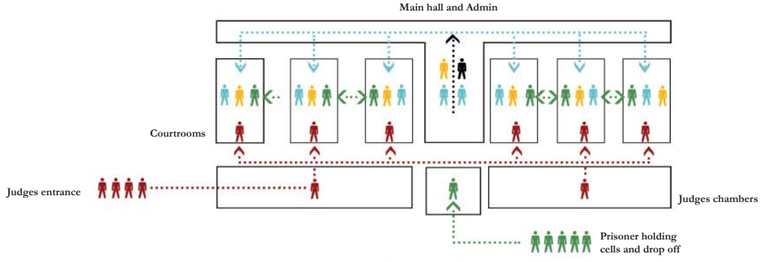






Extension - 1970





= Defendant and prosecuted

= Advocate

= Judge

= Witness

= Prisoner + Guard

Old court

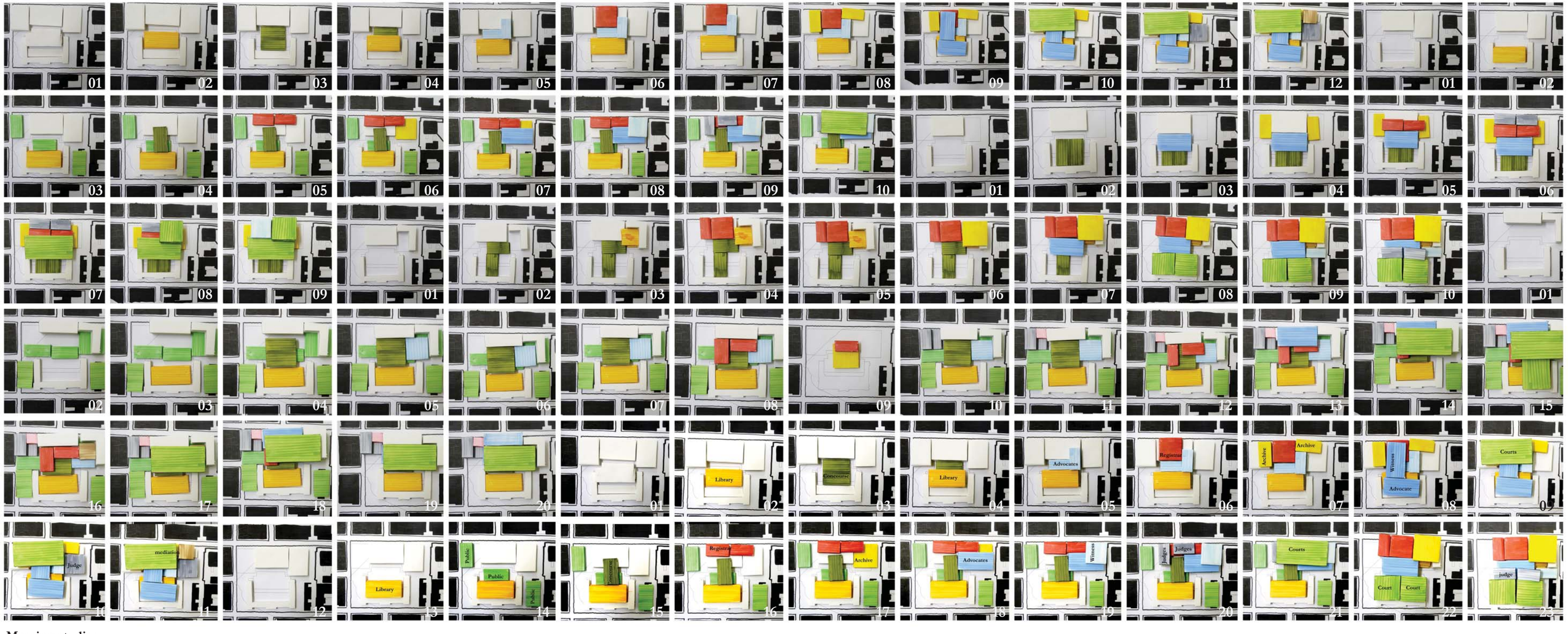
The original Johannesburg court does not fall under the classification of a linear court but rather into the classical courtyard courthouse. The building itself is a beautiful example of classical architecture however its failings lie in its inability to deal with the high amount of case loads due to its size. Because of this the old court is used as administrative spaces which are in need of repair, and as the motion courts for court cases. The new proposed court latches onto the old court and converts what was once the main space of exclusion into a new public law library.

Court extension

It is with the problems in the extension to the court that this the thesis aims to correct. The alterations and extension to the old court blocked off the site, creating an island court. As a functioning court the extension is also failing. Even though it is typical of a linear courthouse the building has been extended over time. This has lead to security problems both for advocates, judges and prisoners. The courtrooms are isolated in the centre of the circulation paths allowing no light or air to penetrate into the building

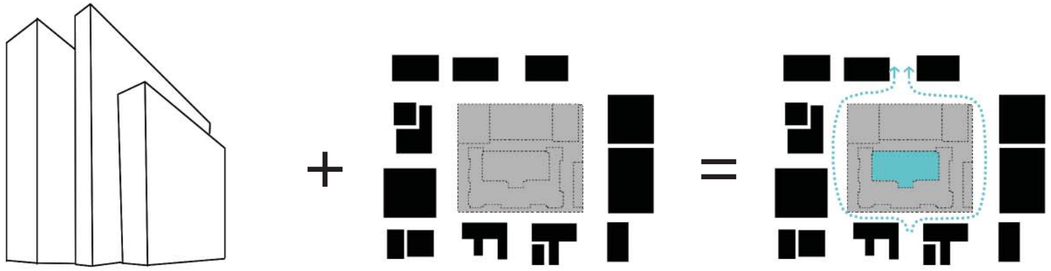
Problems with the court extension

- Lack of natural light inside the court
- No natural ventilation
- Too few courtrooms
- Lack of library space
- Security problems for judges
- lack of secure facilities for prisoners
- No spaces for advocates outside of court
- confusing circulatory patterns
- outdated administrative facilities
- Uncomfortable waiting rooms
- Lack of amenities
- General condition of building
- Extension closes of the site
- Lack of visibility into the court
- Extension ignores the use of the site



Massing studies

The above diagram is a simple massing study using various shaped blocks representative of the different program needed within the new courthouse. The program needed was deriver by speaking to the Judges and advocates who use the court daily. From their recomendadtons a sizing was done and tested ont he site. From this study two key aspects arose. The first being that the program was exteptionaly large and consumes the entire site. Secondly that the traditional linear courthouse was not feasable on the site. By using this traditional model there would be no change in the site other than a new court being built to replace the old.

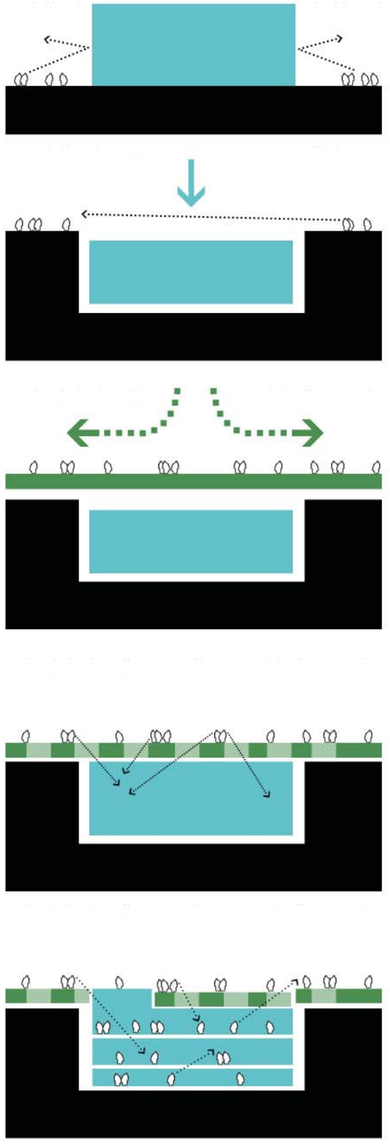


Submerging the courthouse

From the massing study shown above a courthouse on the site would result in the entire site area being used up. With the solution of sinking the court to open up the site again you allow the space to be completely open and interact with its surroundings. This submerged court also demonumentalises the typology of a court, rather than having a facade of justice the court is now the support of the people: the plane of justice is created.

The meaning of the courthouse is nourished by daily life itself and validated by memory

Flanders, Steven. 2006: P 35



Court as a block

The monumental court stands in front of the people, acting as a block in the site. The stage of politics is blocked creating the fourth wall: a barrier between society and justice. In the gap in the social contract the monumental court is not a bridge but a barrier.

Sinking the court

Sinking the court opens up the site, allowing cross interaction between the site. However merely sinking the court hides justice, burying the courthouse hides justice in the same way that the monumental court secludes it.

Plane of justice

By placing a new plane above the court the stage of politics and the platform from which it is viewed becomes one. Interaction happens not only across the court but on it. The facade of justice is broken and it is now the plane that supports the people.

Breaking the fourth wall

By puncturing the plane between the court and the ground plane you break the fourth wall in the stage of justice. Allowing interaction between the court and the people enables the court to be the space that supports the people and makes it visible. Justice must be seen for it to be legitimate. When law is recognised in the eyes of the people the social contract is confirmed.

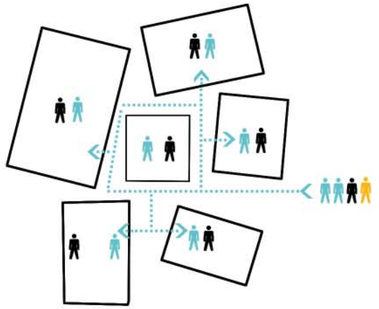
Integration

When the plane of justice is warped and mutated the barrier between society and government is broken, the fourth wall no longer exists. By interlocking the ground plane and the courthouse the law is no longer separate form society but part of it. This is the bridge in the social contract.

Reinventing a typology

The linear courthouse is an excellent typology for dealing with circulatory problems within a court-house however the architectural realisation would be to the site no better than the existing linear court. With the solution of sinking the court to open up the site again the linear court would not work as its need for height would mean the courthouse would have to be sunk deep within the ground. This would lead to a dark cavernous and uncomfortable space. A new court was needed, a site specific typology: The cellular courthouse.

The cellular court-set
A site specific courthouse

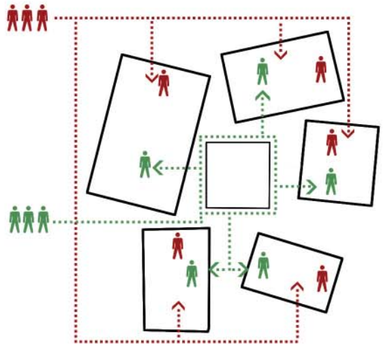


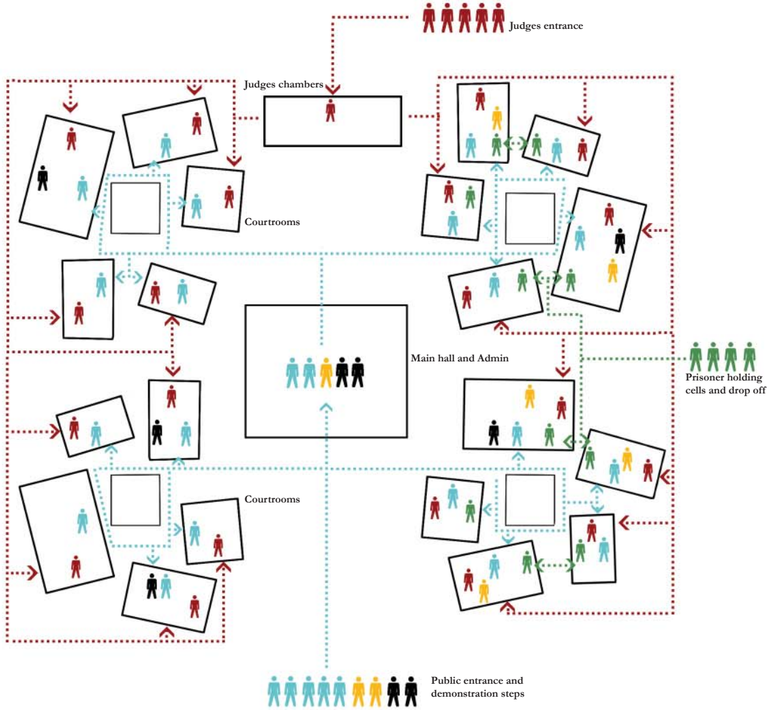
Internal courtyard

The new court-sets are subdivided into 'cellular court-sets'. Each court-set contains between four and six courtrooms centered around an internal courtyard. This internal space brings light into the space and acts as the main circulatory system around which to access each courthouse by advocates and witnesses. This large light filled space acts as a calmer less constricted waiting area.

Outer circulation ring

Surrounding each court-set and located underneath the criminal courts are the restricted circulation paths. The judges access each courtroom from their private chambers from a circulation path that encircles each court-set. Beneath the criminal courts are the prisoner holding cells with vertical circulation that rises up in between the criminal courts





= Prisoner + Guard

= Advocate

= Defendant and prosecuted

= Judge

= Witness

Central circulation core

The full courtyard planning uses four of the above cellular court-sets and connects them to a central circulation core. This core acts as the main connection path between the old court and the new, It also acts as the central design feature of the project acting as the 'new dome' above the courthouse.

The cellular courthouse allows for all those needing restricted circulation to access all areas of the court in safety. Its spread out planning, unlike that of the linear courthouse, allows the court to be submerged while still allowing light to enter deep into its spaces.

F

Design response

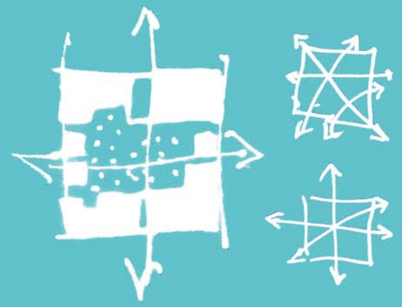
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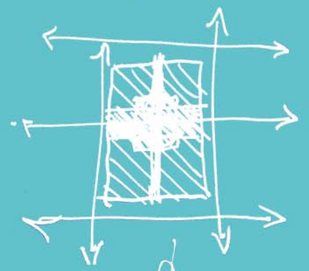
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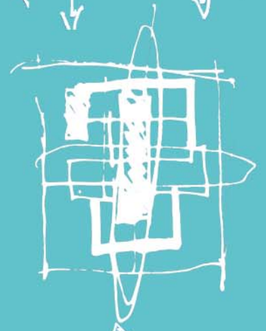
With the underlying theory and architectural solutions in place the design of the project begins to take form. The previous design concepts are expanded upon and resolved.

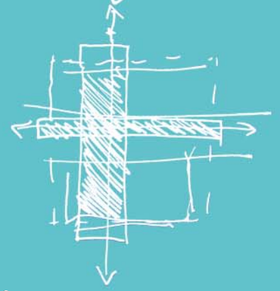
Response

The previous design drivers lead to the major design decisions of how the new proposed courthouse was to function in the site. The following design sketches are the result of the programing and site challenges. They are the driving forces of the final design resolution.









Paths through site

Break through barrier

By demolishing the failing buildings on the site the area is opened up allowing for the site to be a conduit for bringing people into the site.

Create meeting point

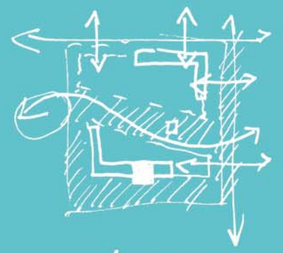
The new opened up site can now be enclosed into a courtyard space. This separation of the space allows the court to become a quiet respite in the dense activity of the city. It also creates a central space, a public square, where society can interact and become familiar with the new court.

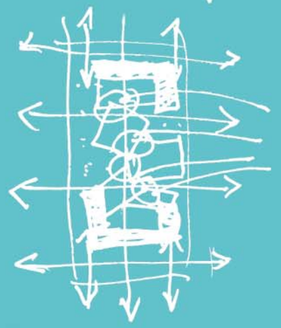
Connect existing buildings

The two main buildings on the existing site are the old courthouse and the original Post Office. Currently the post office is unused and in a bad state of disrepair while the old courthouse goes unnoticed in the city. One of the aims of the new court is to reintegrate these forgotten buildings, reintegrating them back into the city.

Join major routes

The Small Street Mall, Kirk Street mall and the Jeppe Street trading route are the main pedestrian paths around the site. By opening the site up these paths can be connected, increasing the flow of traffic through the site.









Integrate into site

With the major paths through the site connecting they can be programed to integrate themselves into the existing site use. The pathways along the commercial pedestrian routes will be programed to feed of the activity along the site.

Insert program

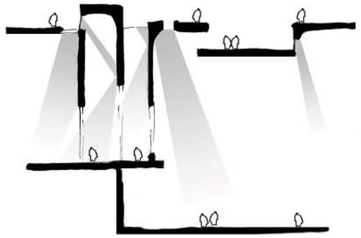
With the site opened and its major paths recognised the program for the new court is inserted along these points connecting the old court to the post office.

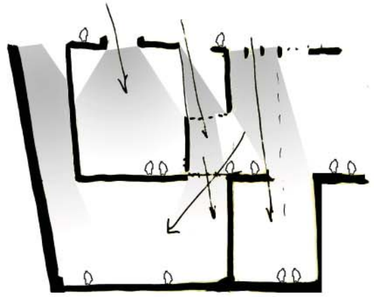
Overlap program

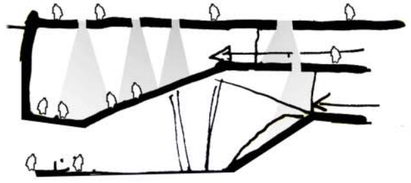
From the program analysis and separation of privacy gradient the new programmatic needs can be overlapped where needed. This creates a more active courthouse where separate elements have access to one another

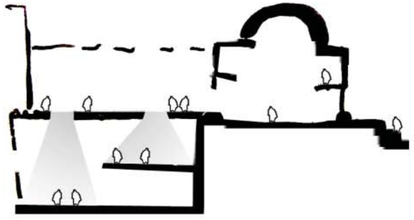
Submerge and reveal

The overlapped program is submerged into the site allowing for an open public square above. Elements of the courthouse are extruded into the public square, exposing the inner working below to the public above.









Sectional studies

Corridors

High level light wells with small openings separates spaces with sharp rays of lights. The material treatment of the courthouse reflects light into deeper spaces.

Low level light

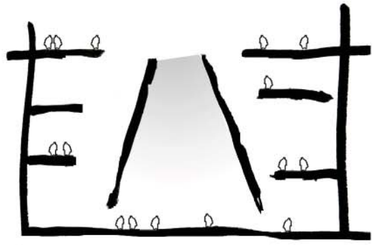
Side light wells and perforations in the floor plates allow to penetrate into the lower levels of the courthouse.

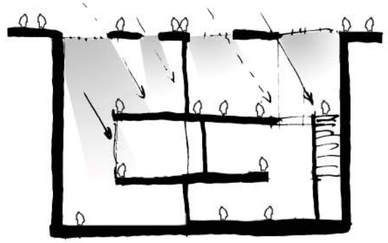
Entrance

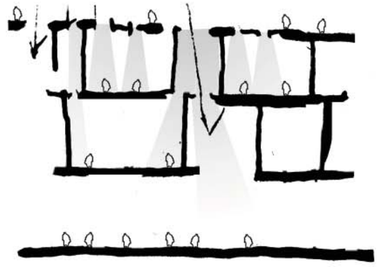
The main entrance that leads from the old courthouse into the new punctures through the new library below ground. from this entrance you enter into the security check with the new courthouse averhead.

Sunken Library

The old courthouse is converted into a library on both levels. The need for an extended public law library to house public records requires more space. The extension to this library is below the old court with its access under the existing dome.









Central cone

Connecting the four cellular court sets is the central cone. This circulatory space acts as the focal point and main light well into the courthouse.

Judges levels

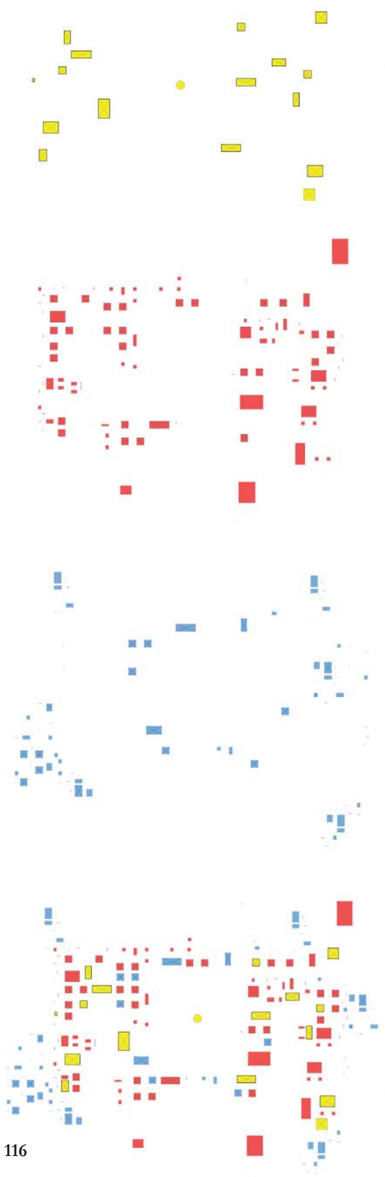
The linear planning of the judges levels requires the space to be subdivided allowing two side light wells to bring light and air into the office spaces.

Subsidiary courts

Beneath the main court sets are the subsidiary court sets for minor cases. Light wells in between the main courts puncture into the roof spaces of these subsidiary courts bringing natural lights and air into every sapce in the sunken court.

Central courtyards

Connecting individual courts in the court set are the courtyard spaces. Above these circulation spaces are the main court set light wells. This airy space makes the waiting spaces more comfortable.



Light well grid

Main cores

The courthouse is broken down into two main elements: the court sets and the central hall. The spaces are all centred around individual courtyard spaces above which is a main light well that punctures through the entire court acting as the main light source for the courthouse.

Courtrooms

Each courtroom internally has its own system of light wells bringing both fresh air and natural daylight into the space. However these light wells acts as light refractors bringing in reflected rather than direct light.

Circulation paths

Dotted between the main light sources are subsidiary light wells illuminating the spaces between the main elements of the court. These light wells bring in direct light, using light as a means to dictate and divide space.

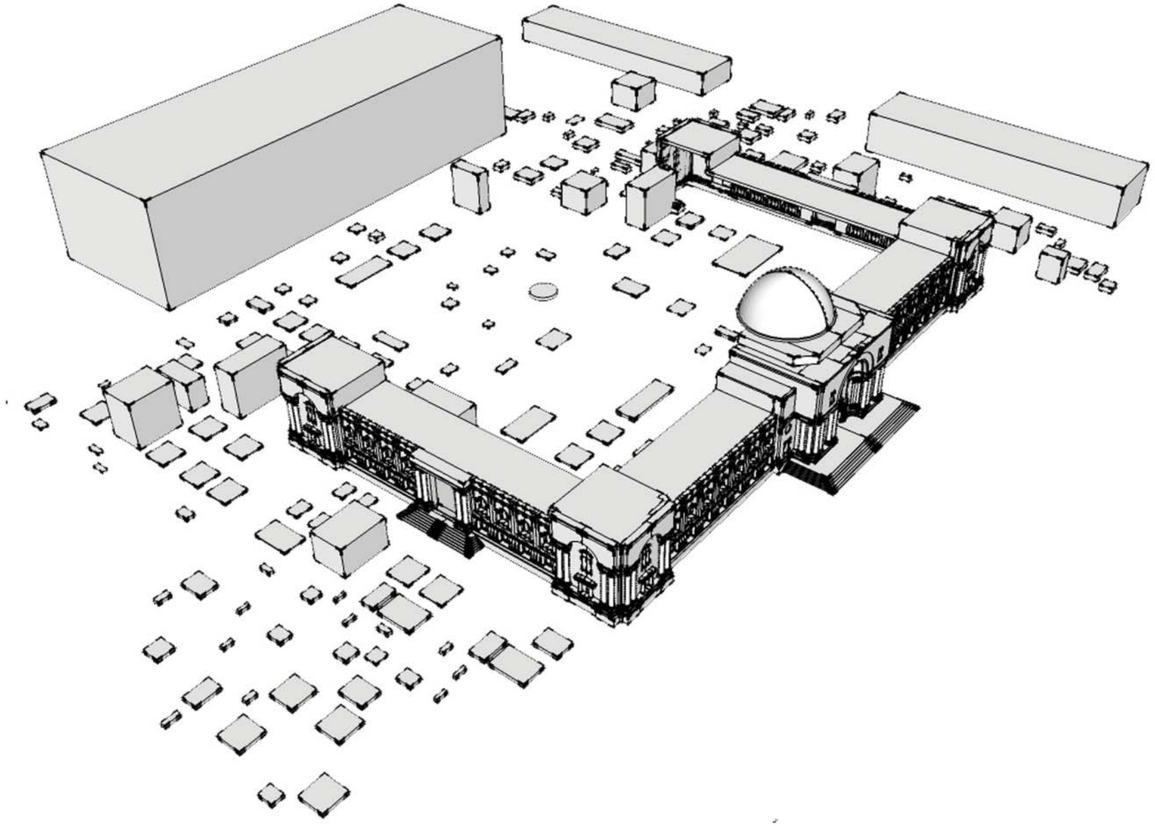
Final grid

When the above light well grids are overlapped they create a seemingly random but precision places system of light sources. These extruded or submerged light sources act as the dictating grid to the ground plane above.

High Court public square

Light well extrusions

The below sketch render shows the elements that will be kept in the extension to the court: The existing court facade and the original Jeppe Post office. Replacing the clutter of the old courthouse is the new public square with the light well punctures.



Power of ten

The power of ten is a place making principle set out by the project for public space making. The principle states that any thriving civic space must have ten things to do and ten reasons for being in the space. These activities should feed off the existing functions of the site and add to what the site lacks. The power of ten principle creates density and activity to a public space. In creating a courthouse that functions as a conduit to daily life the power of ten principle will integrate the court into the daily life of the city.



Public demonstration
The public square is a prime point for large civic protest for issues dealing with the court.



Schelling point
The square can become an unspoken meeting point, a central collection area for the city centre



Speakers corner
With the large amount of people moving through the site it is a prime point for public speaking and protests.



Taxi stop
The courts large area and central location makes it a prime spot for taxi drop off. Its neighboring commercial hub would attract people to this site, making it boom with activity and foot traffic.



Park
With the site cleared and opened it will be a central civic square for both commercial and leisure activities used during the week and weekend.



Civic functions
With the opening of the courthouse and integration of a new post office, Von Brandis Square will regain its civic functions in the city.



Library
The new library acts as the main civic collection point in the area. A new modern library will serve as a university study and education centre.



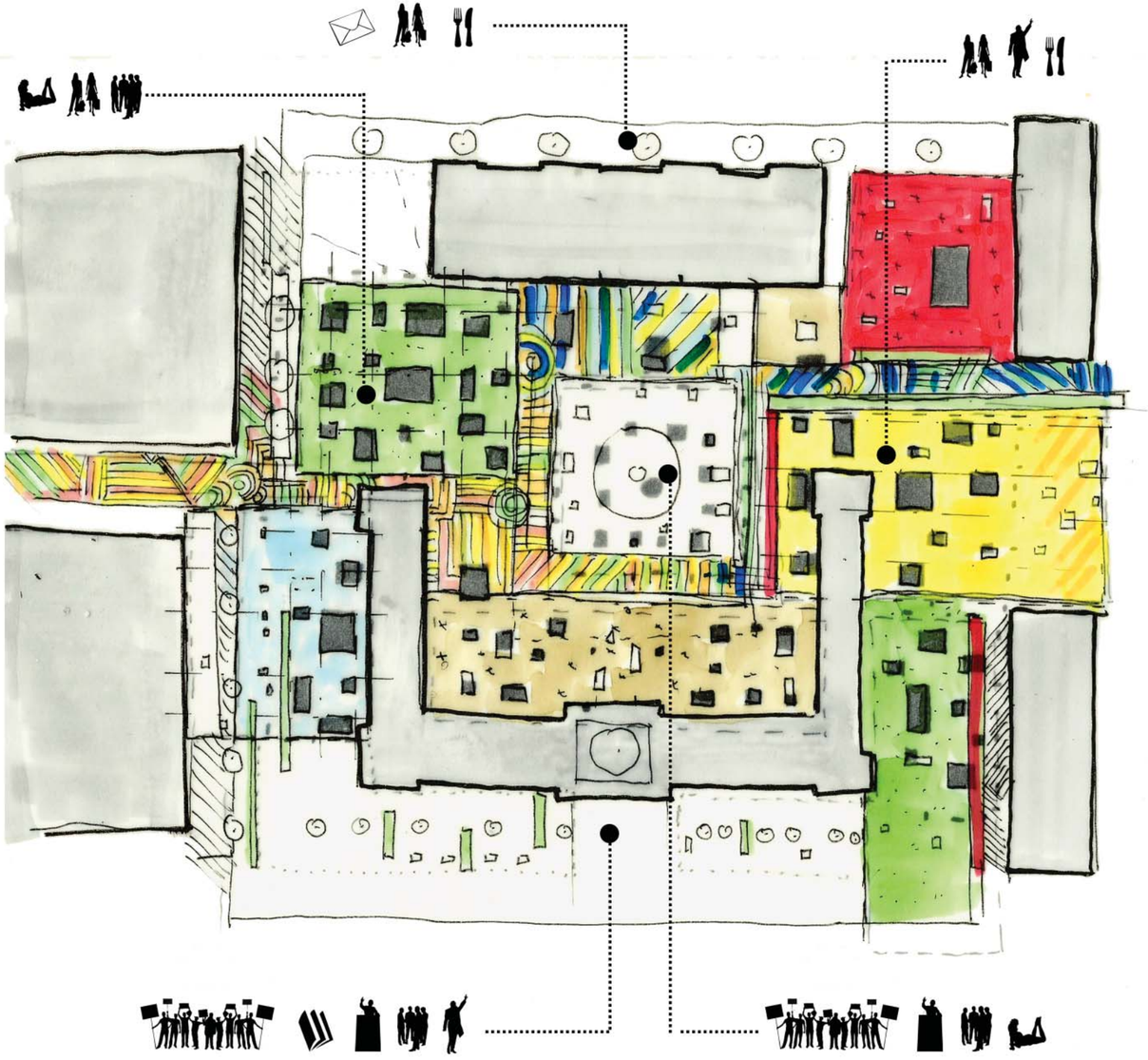
Food and picnic
With the increased foot traffic street traders and large food distributors will be attracted to the site. This will increase the use of the site and increase the leisure functions of the square.

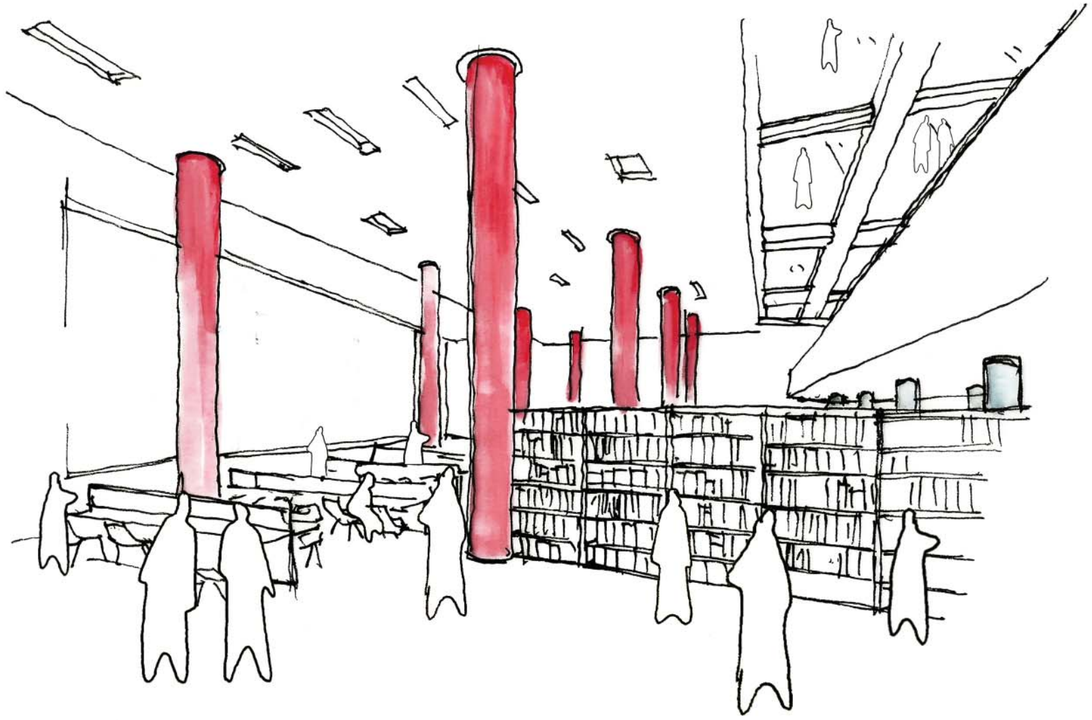


Commercial
The existing trading mall along Small Street, Kirk Street and Jeppe street will be upgraded and extended with the opening up and extension to the public Square.



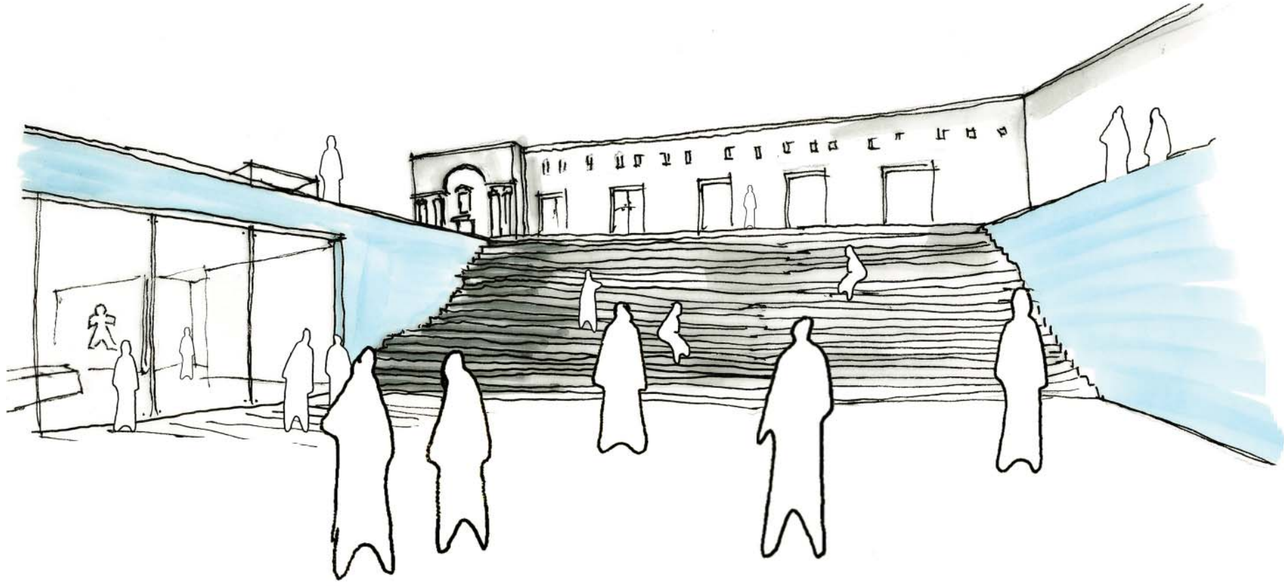
Public performance
The sites location makes it ideal for public demonstration and performances both day and night.





Library extension

Sitting below ground on two split levels is the extension to the law library above. The new space is bathed in light from the large skylights above.

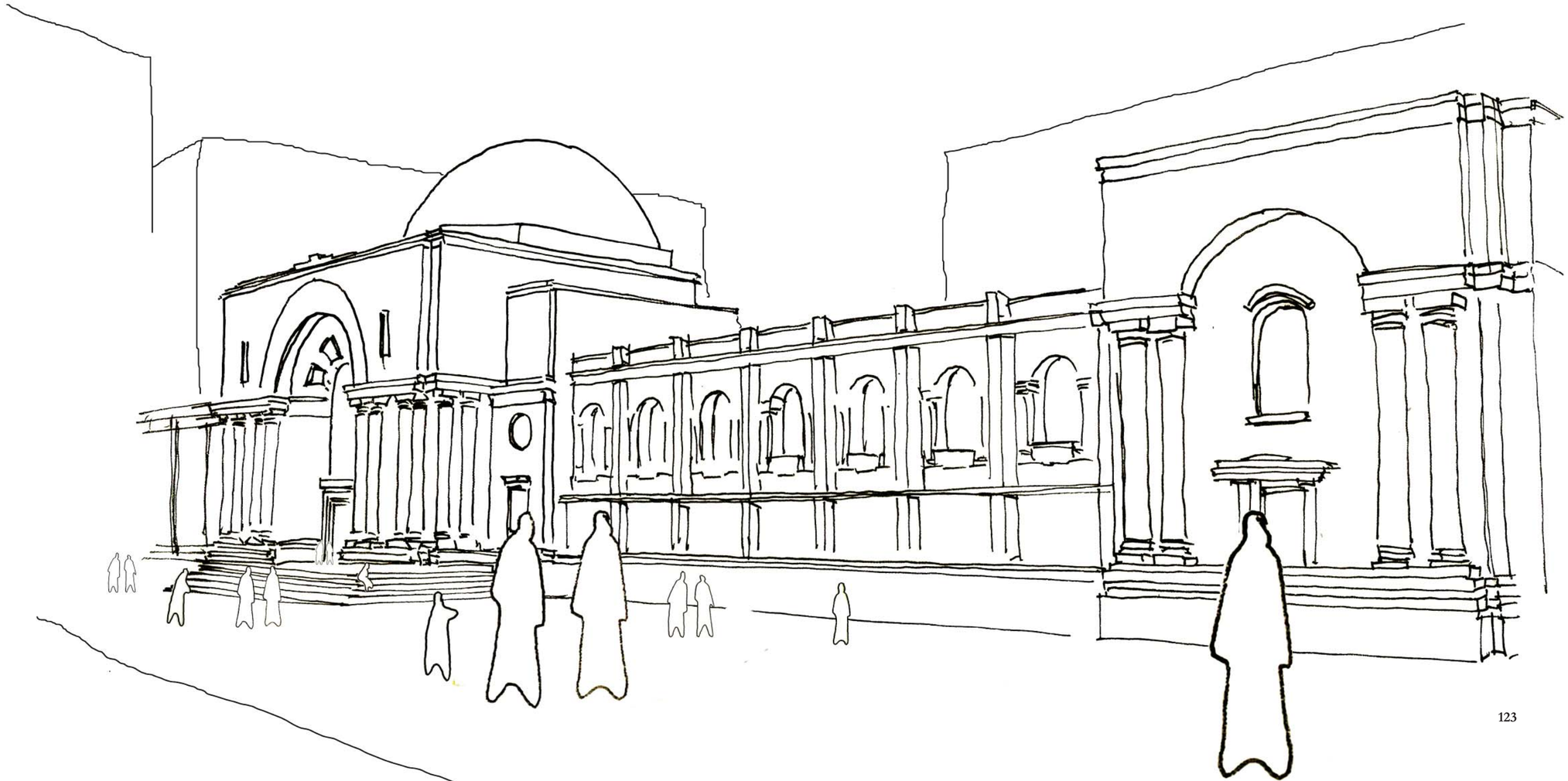


New entrance

The courthouse can be accessed in two ways, the existing courthouse entrance and the above proposed public square entrance.

Existing court facade

The original court facade is retained to preserve its historical significance while the tower block behind it is demolished. This emphasise the imposing nature of the original facade. The fences around the courts are removed to open up the front entrance portico to the street.



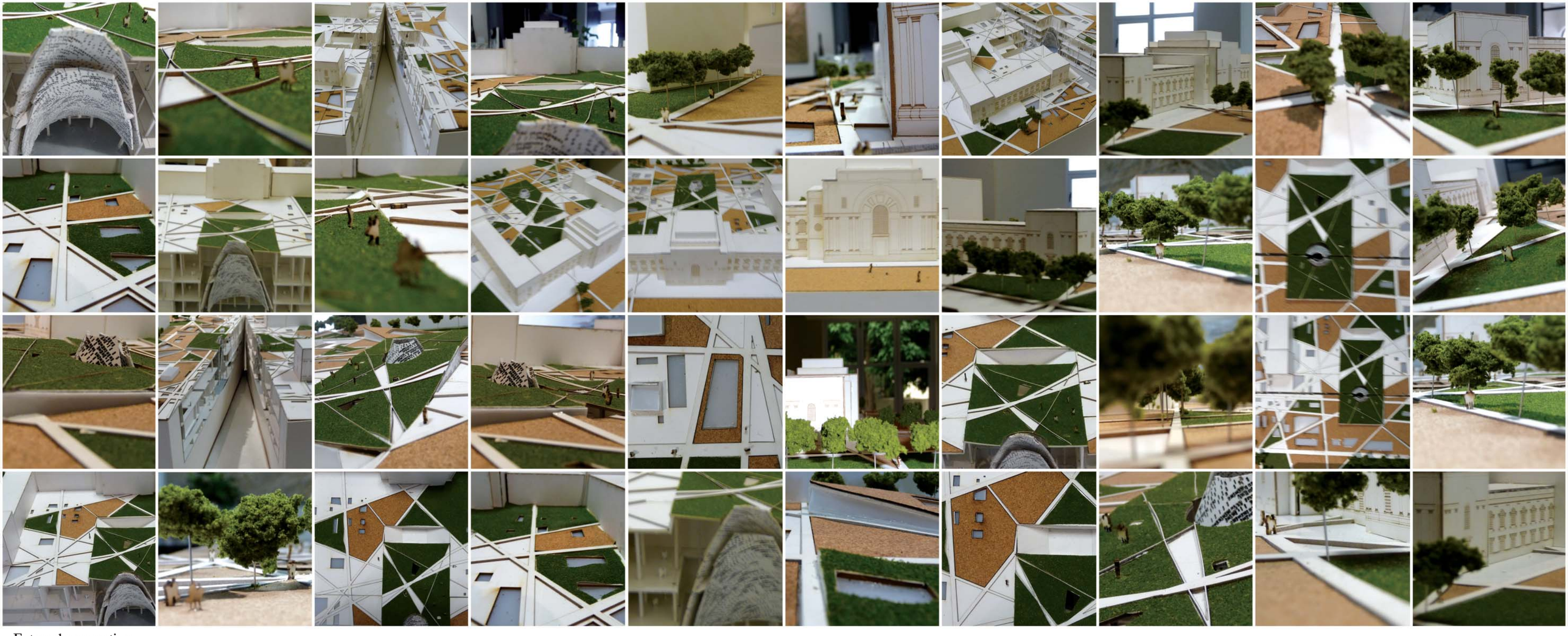
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Technical documentation
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Final Design

The previous design drivers lead to the major design decisions of how the new proposed courthouse was to function in the site. The following design is the result of the programing and site challenges.



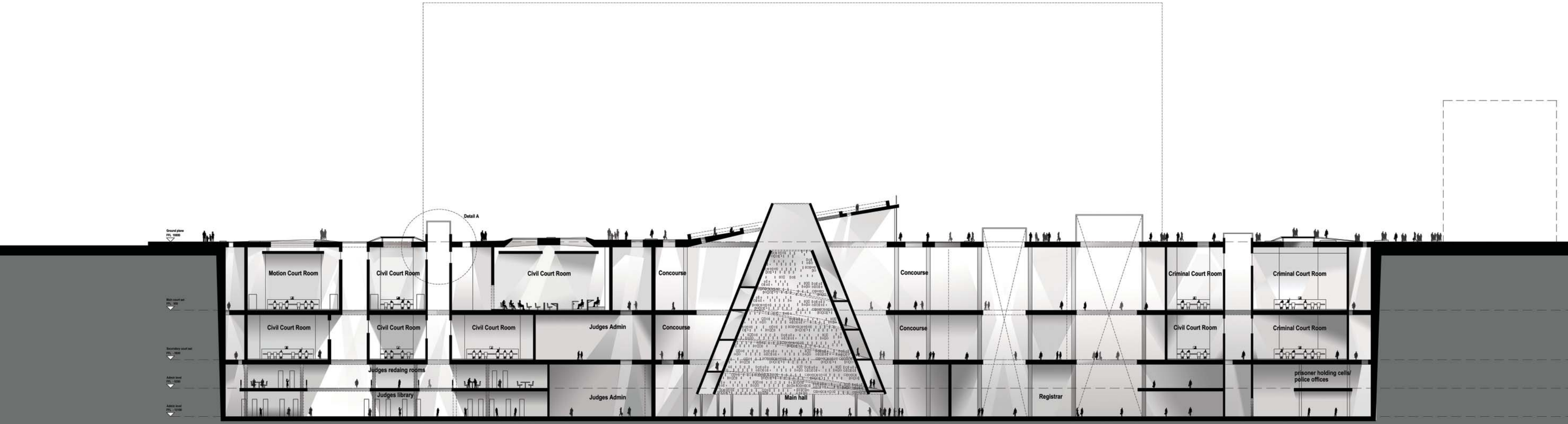


External perspectives

The landscape the crosses through the site is based on the existing main paths through the site. Nodes of interaction are pinpointed along these paths and joined together creating a spiderweb network of interconnecting routes.

Cross section

The below section cuts through the courthouse levels of the sunken courthouse. With the grid of light wells puncturing through the public ground plane each court, office space and circulation path is illuminated by natural light. The aim of this more spacious court plan is to reduce the feeling of being in a closed off underground space.



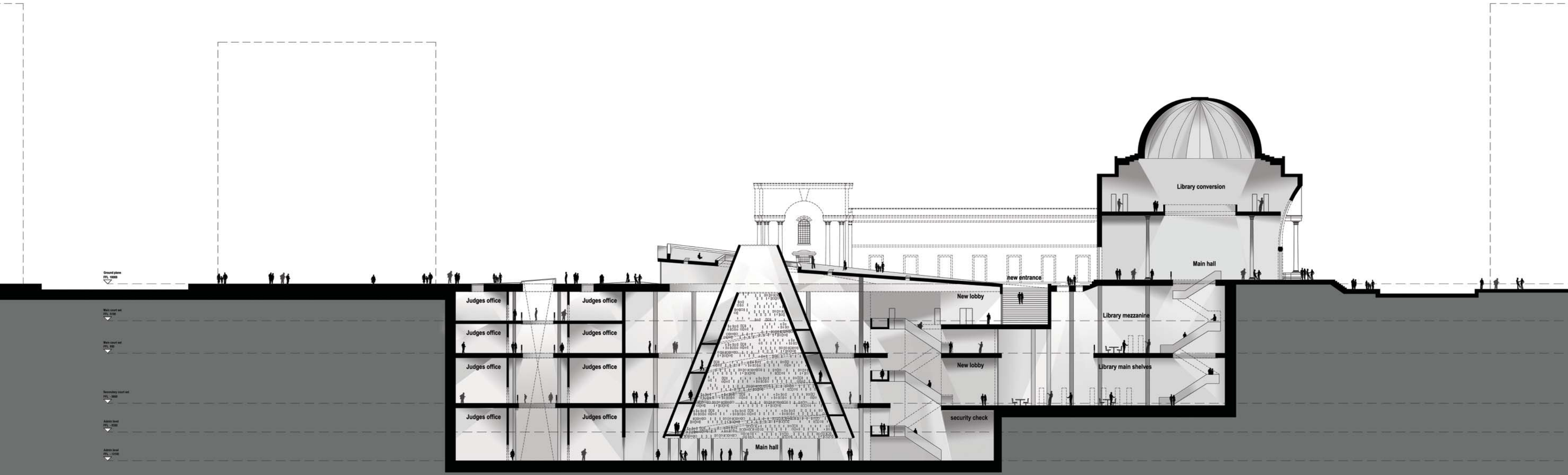


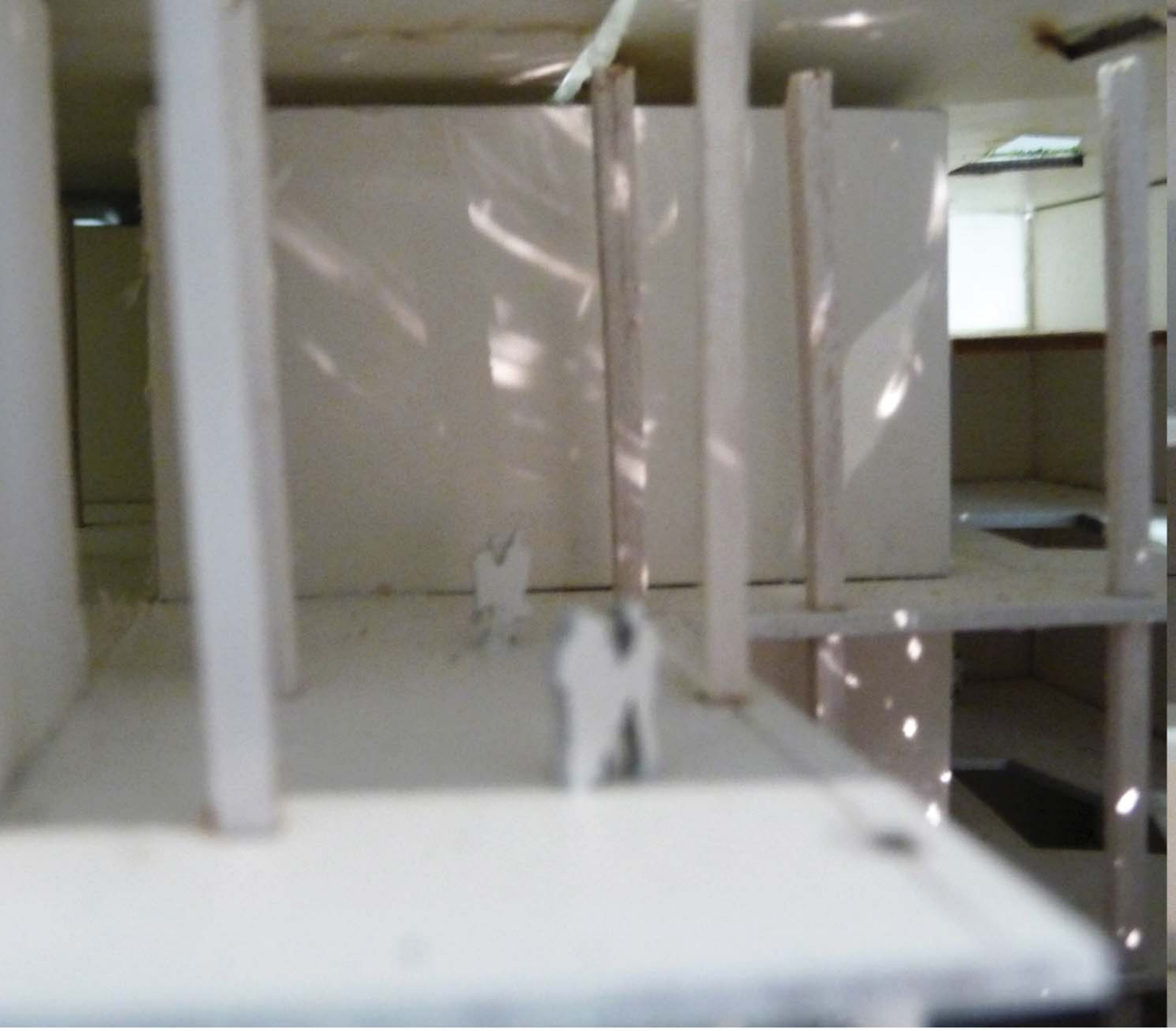
Internal perspectives

The main challenge of the internal spaces was in bringing light down into deep subterranean spaces. Light wells and large areas allowed for light to not only play a functional role but also act feature in the courthouse. Different cuts in the ground facade bring in a variety of lights that dictate the use of the spaces.

Long section

The below section shows the connection between the old court and the new proposed extension. By removing the current extension the ground plane is opened up allowing for interaction with the court.





Central Hall

Light from the main light well gets diffused through the main cone giving various light qualities throughout the central circulation paths.



Light wells

The main courtsets surrounding lightwells use atrium spaces as the main light source from above. These areas act as meeting points around the building.





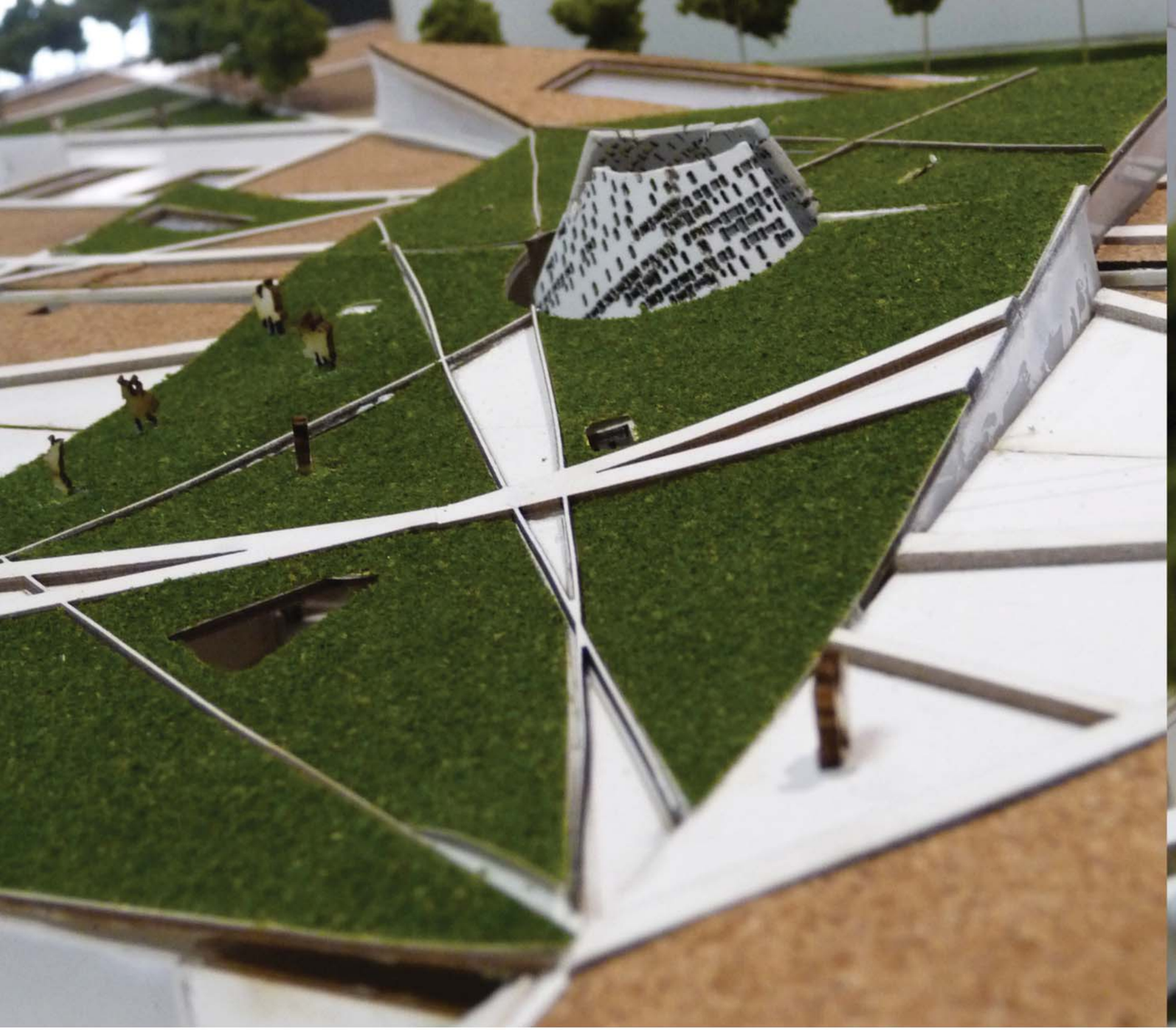
Lifted landscape

On ground level the landscape is lifted to create a new entrance. This lift also creates a dead end, a quiet space for soft planting in the heavily dense site.



landscaping

The paths pattern divides the landscape into two treatments, Hard and soft. Planting and paving is used in different areas based on what that particular area is used for.



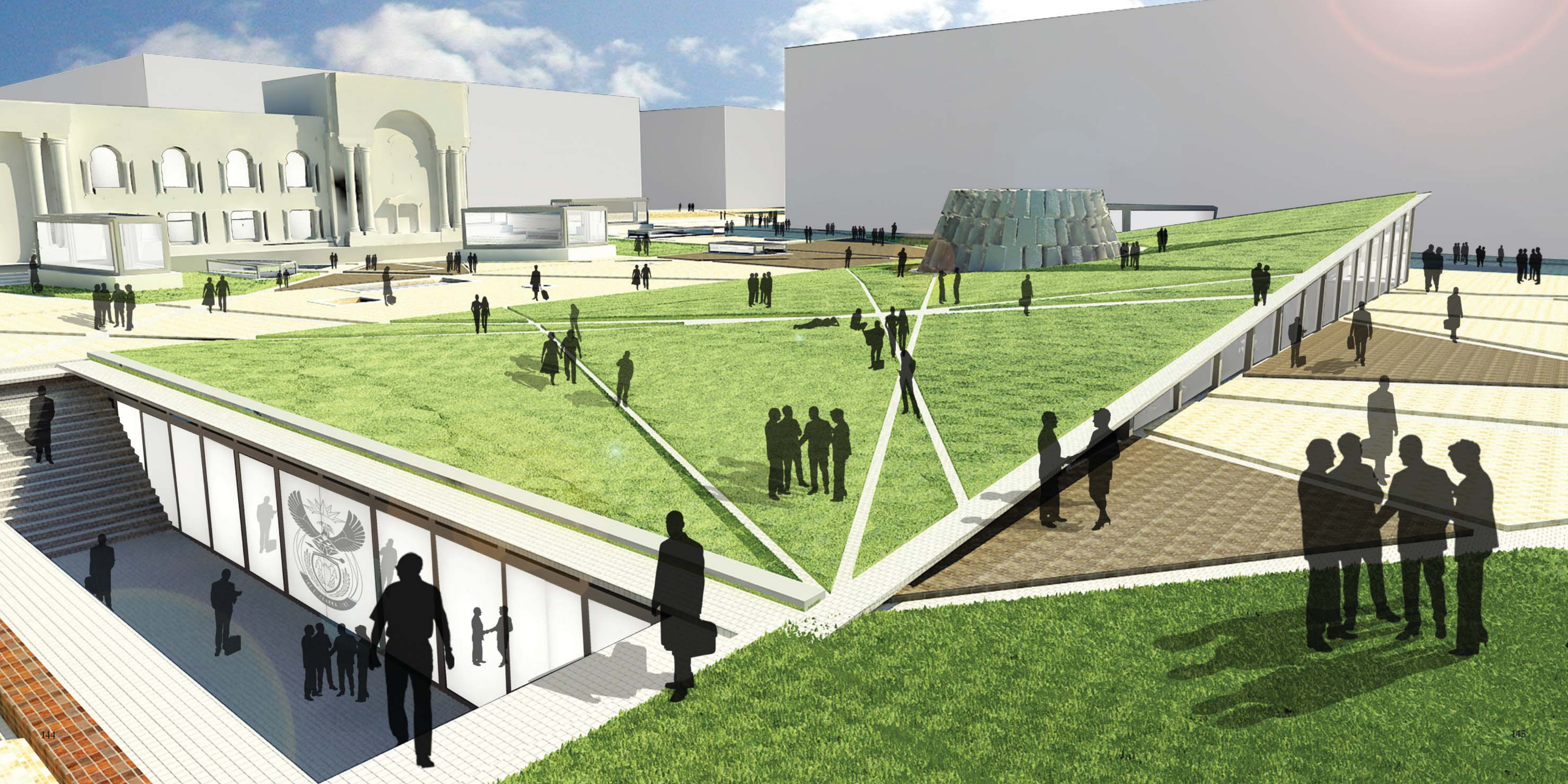
New entrance

Central to the new landscaping scheme is the new entrance into the courthouse that uses the central dome as its main circulatory path. This is the beacon to the new court.



Quiet spaces

Removed from the main pedestrian routes are the quiet spots in the landscaping scheme. By lifting the landscape and planting barriers these spaces become relaxation spots in the city

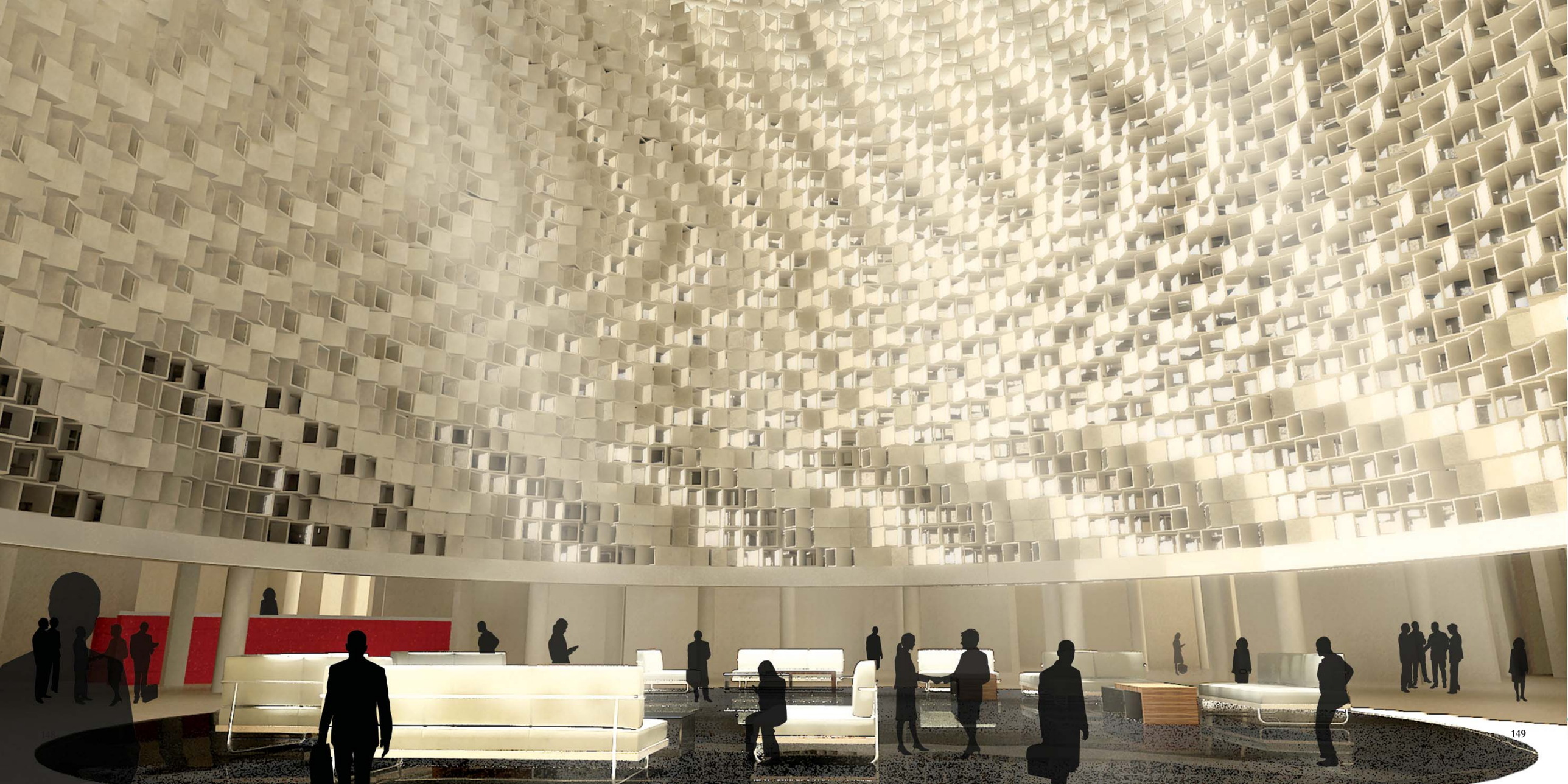


Circulation connection

The central hall connects the four court sets together and acts as the meeting space and amenities area.

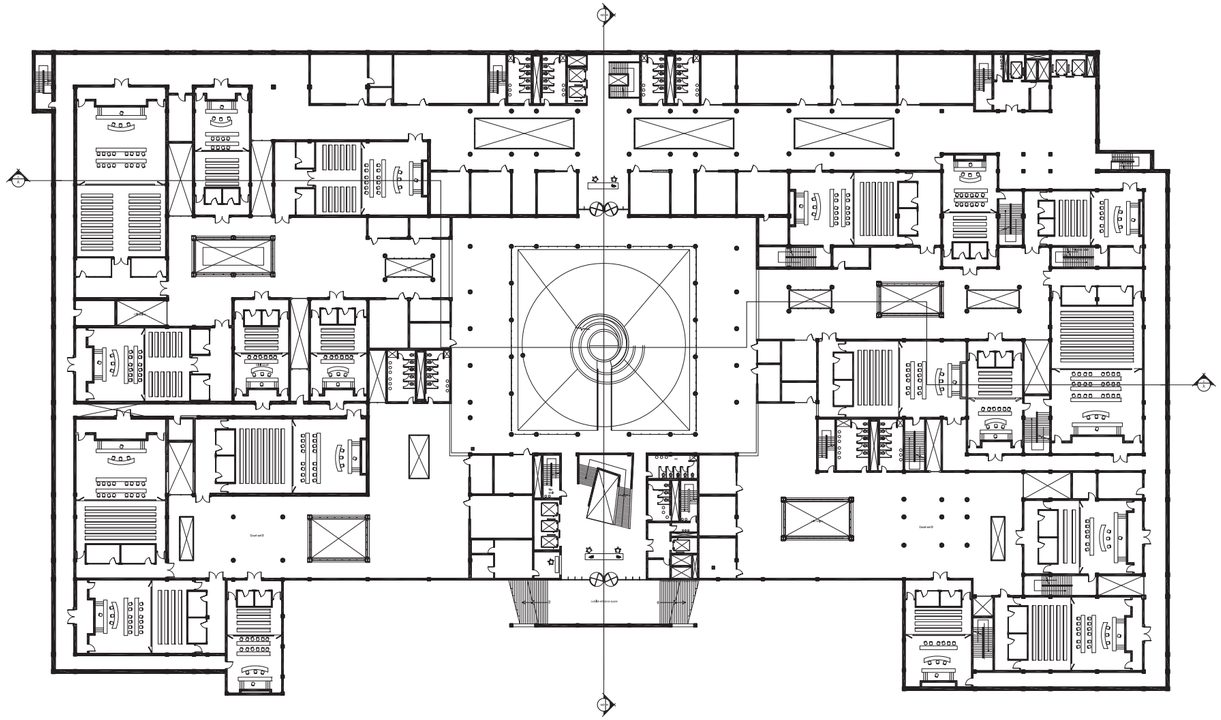
Hall

Beneath the dome in the main hall where one enters the new court extension. All information, meeting and advocates services happen around this central point.



Technical Documentation

The courtrooms are the sacred spaces of a courthouse, the spaces where judgments are made. The court demands a degree of reverence and respect when inside of the court chamber. The lighting within the courtroom filters through a layered ceiling plan allowing a dim radiant light to enter the space from the sides of the court.

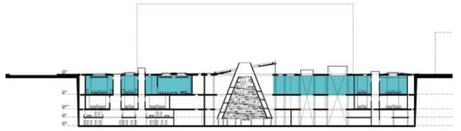


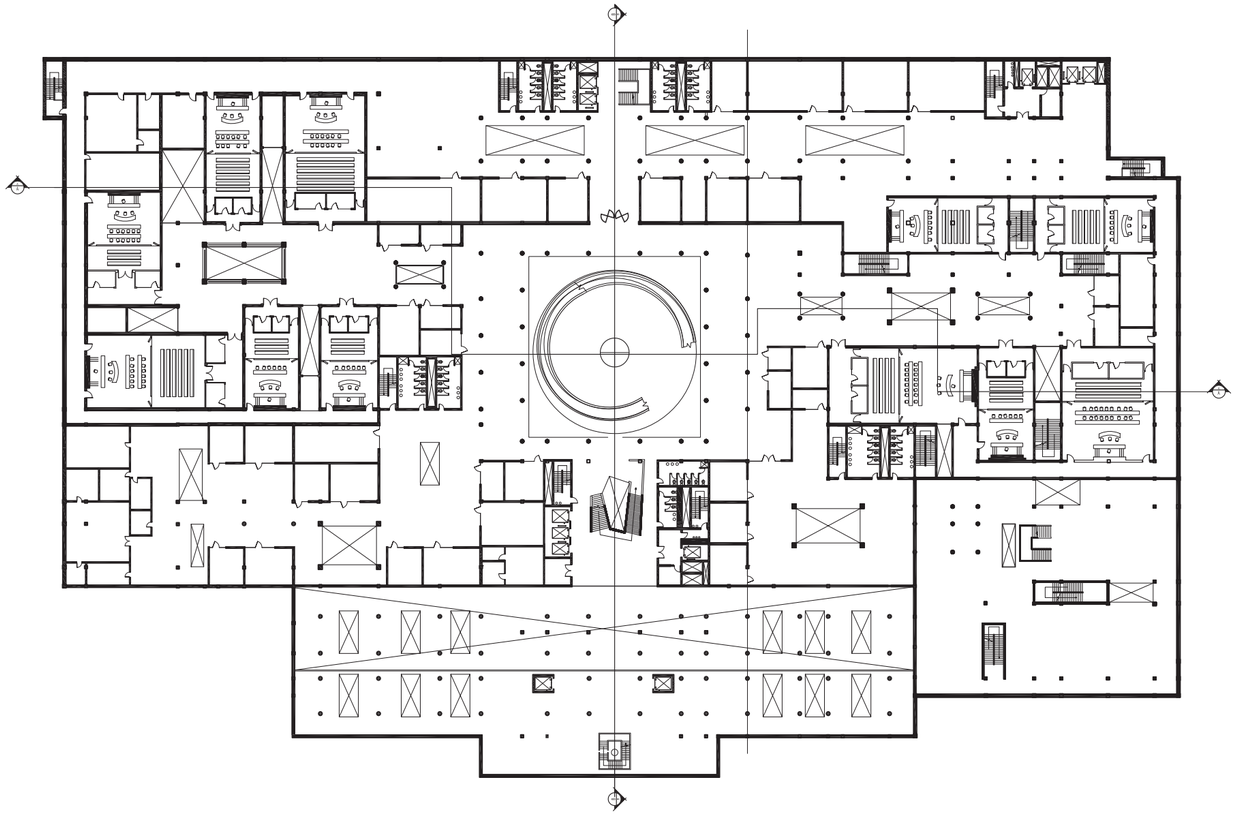


Main Court level

First basement level

The new typology of a cellular courthouse allows the courts to be spread over a greater area than in the traditional linear typology. This makes better use of the immense site and allows the court to be kept to a maximum of three levels deep ensuring light can access all spaces from the light wells above.



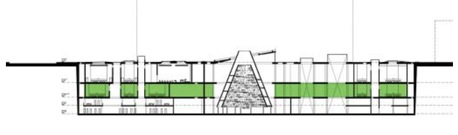


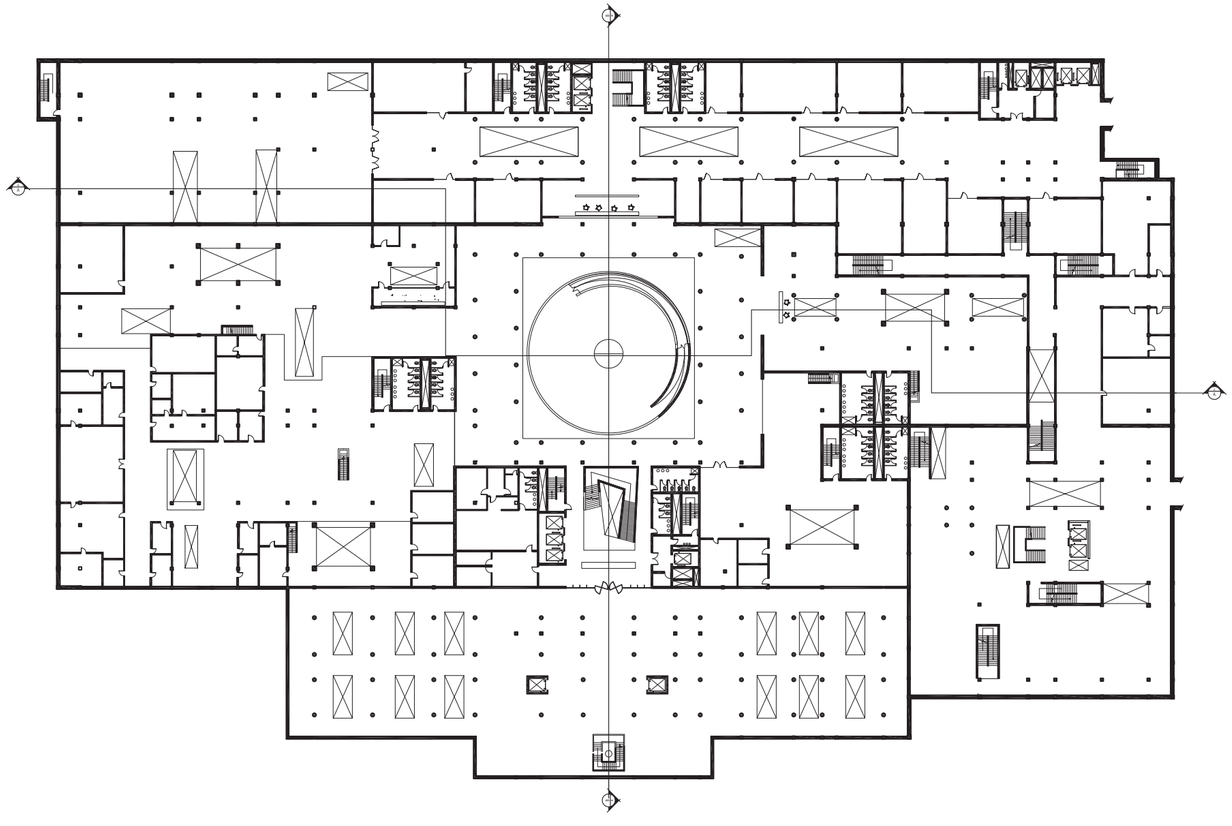


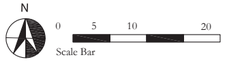
Subsidiary courts and mediation centre

Second basement level

The middle level between the main courts and the administrative spaces acts as the subsidiary courthouses and mediation complexes for the courthouse. These smaller court rooms and private meeting rooms will help lessen the case loads the court deals with and speed up the litigation process.



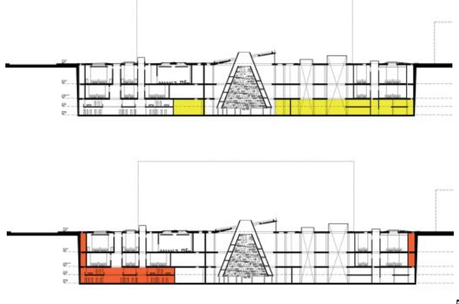




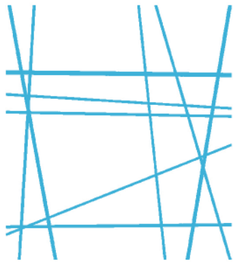
Ground level Administration

Third basement level

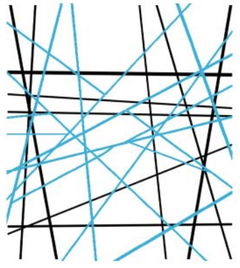
Leading from the new sunken library is the main administrative spaces of the courthouse. These office spaces are divided into two wings: the Registrar and the court administration. The Registrar is a system of waiting areas, counters and filing spaces used to receive new case filed. The open plan office spaces accommodate for all court staff excluding the judges.



Evolution of grid



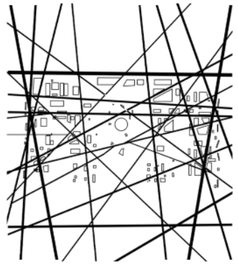
Main Paths



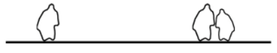
Cross paths



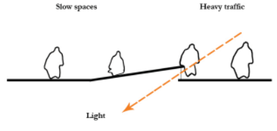
Cross paths



Grid



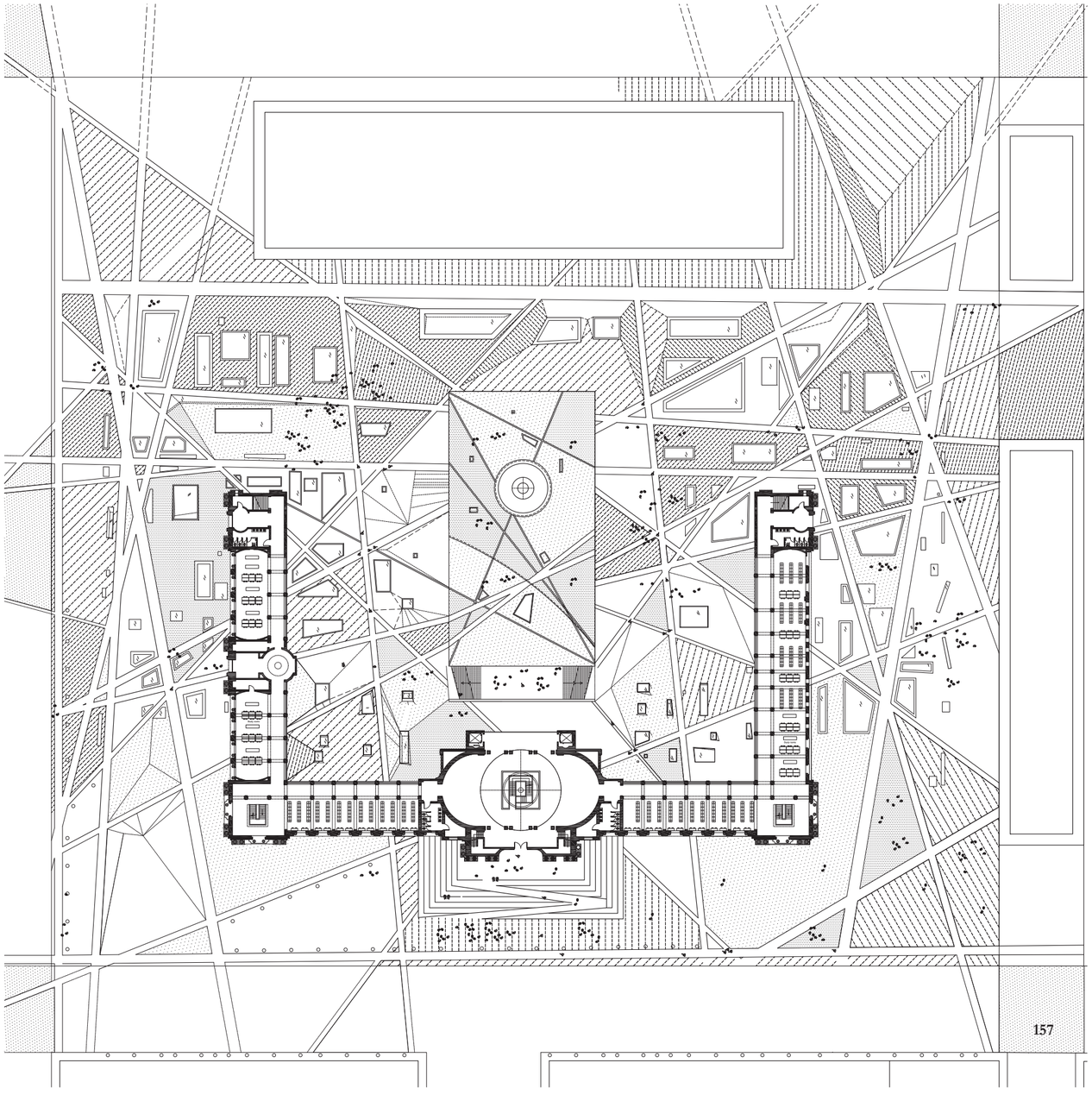
Flat landscape

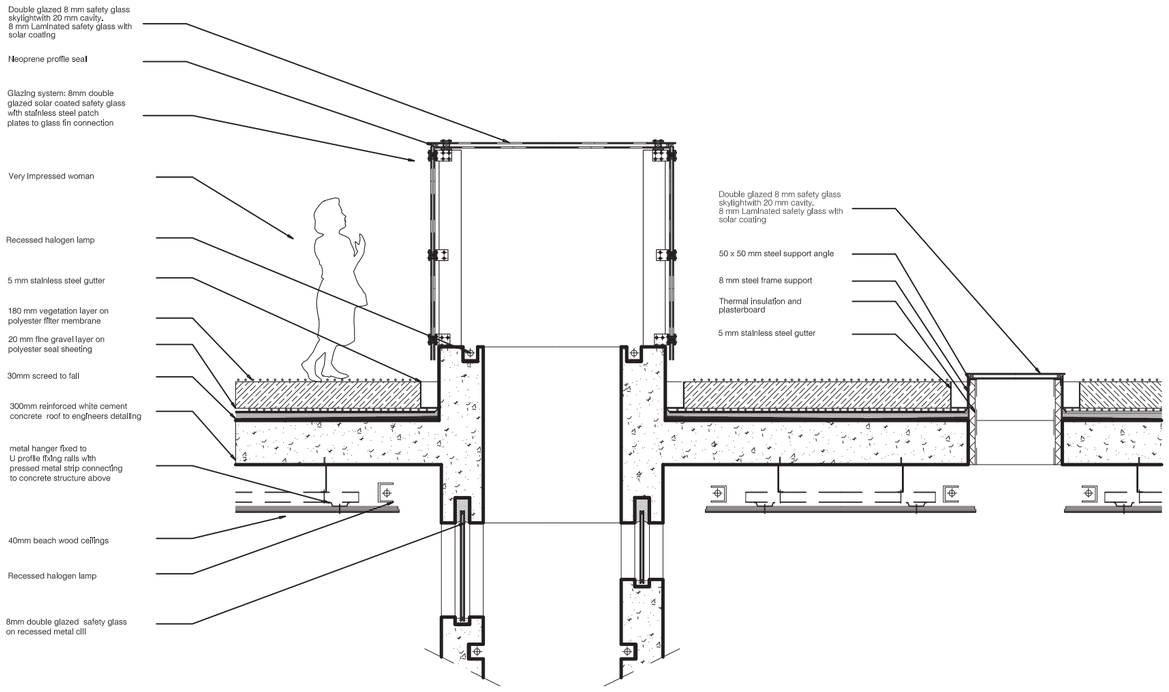


Active landscape

Landscape design

The spiderweb design of the landscape is derived from creating and joining main pathways through and around the site. These paths meet at nodes where points of interest happen. Between the grid of paths various means of landscaping and surface manipulation differentiate different landscape conditions





Light well's

The major light wells pop up into the landscape acting as design features and landscaped furniture. The minor light wells lie flush to the paving and planting allowing for a use able public space

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