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Re-activating play :|bchildren in the fashion district

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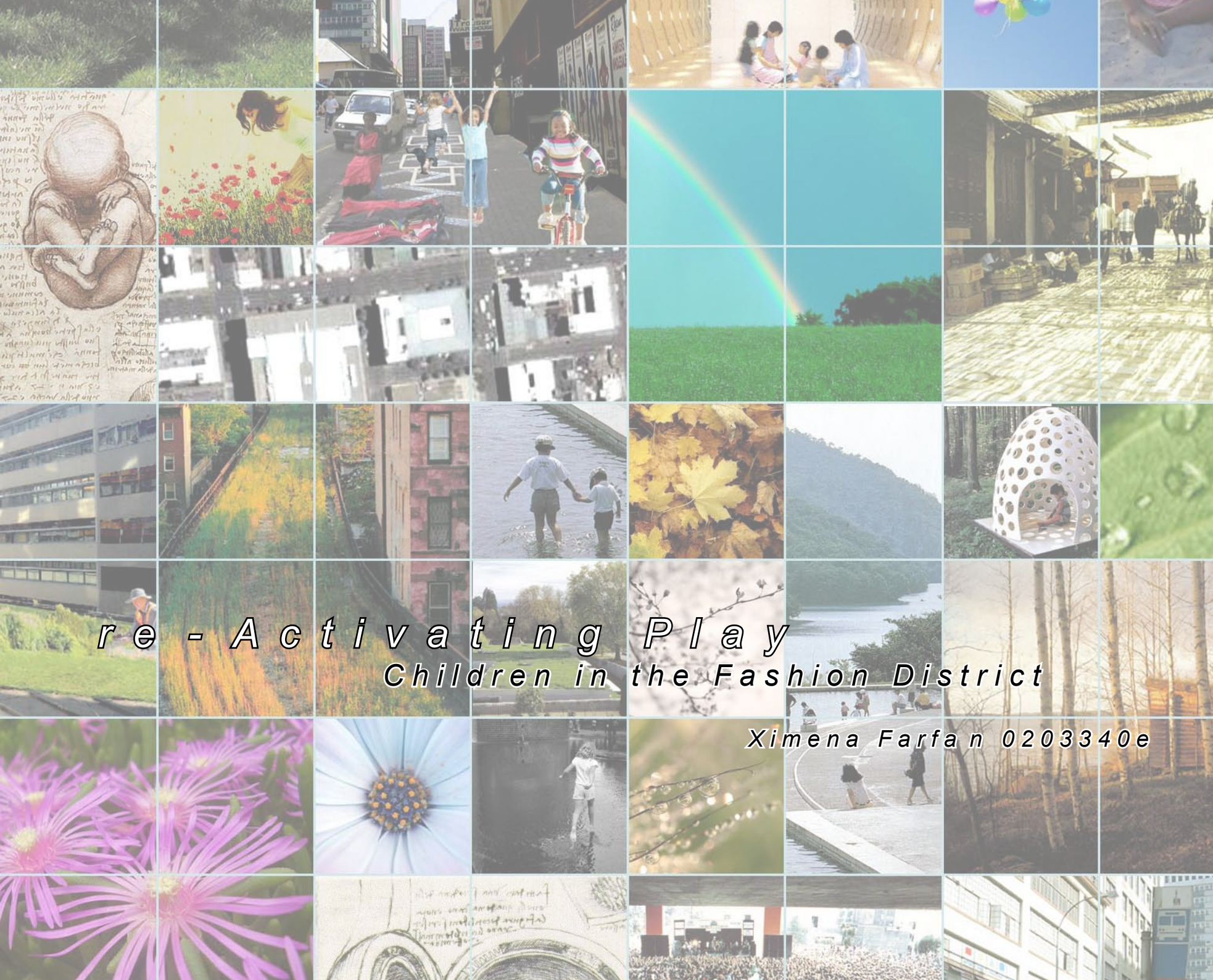


r e - A c t i v a t i n g P l a y

Children in the Fashion District

X i m e n a F a r f a n 0 2 0 3 3 4 0 e



Declaration

I, Ximena Farfan student number: 0203340e am a student registered for the course 'Bachelor of Architectural' or 'Master of Architecture [Professional] in the year 2006. 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 materials 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 Witwatersrand may take disciplinary actions against me if there is a belief that this not my unaided work or that I have failed to acknowledge the source of the ideas or words in my own work.

Signature:

Special thanks to all the people who I interviewed during this process. Thank you for your time and effort.

- Mathebedi
NGO: Lapeng: Woman and Child Resource Centre: Joubert Park

- Luke
Teddy Bear Clinic

- Karen Bailey
Teddy Bear Clinic

- Janine Radmeyer
Pediatrician: Coronation Hospital

-Eva Waldman
Principal: Glenhazel Primary School

-Sylvia
Principal: Barbie's Pre School and Creche

- Mohamed
Owner of African Queen

- Bongi
Worker at African Queen

- Anne Tait
Occupational Therapist

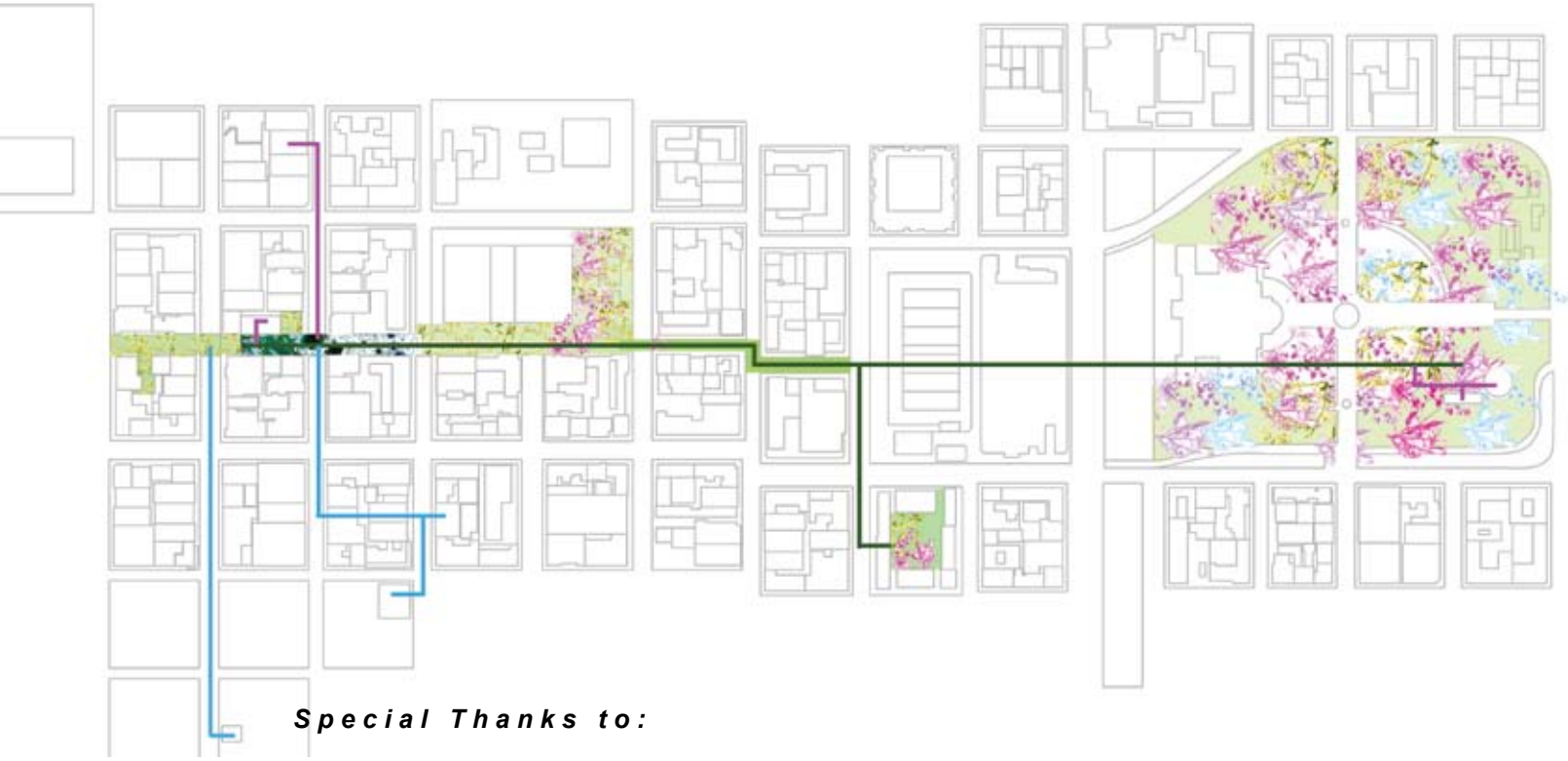
- Lindsay
Occupational Therapist

- Traci Mann
SewAfrica

- Rees Mann
SewAfrica

- Yusof (Parent)
African Traditional Wear





S p e c i a l T h a n k s t o :

Mom and Dad:
For always supporting me and having faith in what I do. Thank you so much. I really appreciate everything you do and I hope this makes you proud.

My ArchiBuddies:
Kitty, Marina, Frances, Liale, Alex and Ash.
Thanks for all the laughs, support, listening and guidance: its been quite a journey.
.....and a big thank you to those of you who came to site with me and enjoyed walking through the streets of the Fashion District.

Brigitta Stone: Thank you for your guidance and information at the beginning of this year.

***Blane**: Thank you for always believing in me.*

***Hannah Le Roux, Paul Kotze and Lone Poulsen:** For guidance, support and dedication to teaching throughout the year.*









Re-Activating Pl



This document is submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree:
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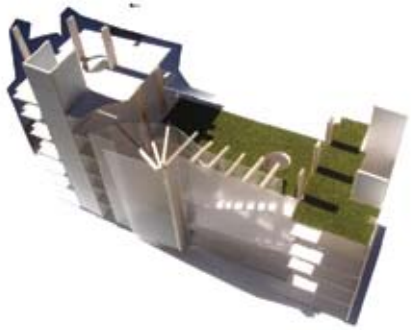



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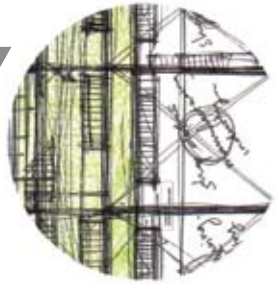

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This thesis is about children, their spaces and opportunities for development in the Fashion District: Inner City, Johannesburg.

The city of Johannesburg has become an unfriendly space for children. It seems that the architecture and spaces that exist in the Inner City today are after thoughts that have occurred due to existing social and economical situations.
Pre-schools, which alternatively act as Day Care Centers on Saturdays, have become relatively more important over time as the working lives of parents have become more demanding. Parents, who in Johannesburg, are most likely single working mothers, need a safe place to leave their children while they attend to their daily working lives. Children, who are left unattended or neglected, either face a life on the streets or endure an underdeveloped childhood which results in further disadvantages in life and so the necessity for these schools to exist cannot be neglected.

The aim of this architectural thesis is to provide a means and a sense of dignity to children through space in the Fashion District, Johannesburg. The city lacks spaces for children to play and develop in a positive manner. Although there are many issues at stake and one cannot design for everything, this is only an attempt to improve and hopefully provide a better play space for children where they will develop and grow in more stimulating environments.

In an Article written by the Center of Urban and Metropolitan Policy entitled 'Children in Cities: Uncertain Futures' it states that "A growing number of children are at the risk of becoming another generation of poor adults and a disproportionate number of these children are located in the nation's inner cities". (Sawhill 1999:1) This indicates many things, firstly one might start to question the state of our cities and the priorities that have been placed upon them and secondly we might start to question the future of our cities, if the generation to come after us will be severely limited and at a disadvantage.

Images 01 - 03 (Authors Own)
Photographs of the Spaces for Children in the Inner City of Johannesburg.





Many cities around the world, including the Inner City of Johannesburg have transformed into unsafe places for children. There is not enough emphasis on designing places or spaces for children as they are usually neglected for more commercial projects. The absence and neglect of children's spaces in the Inner City has meant many things for the city as a collective whole: it has meant that the city has proven to be an incredibly unsafe place and that there is no trust amongst the people who live and work in the city.

These factors have impacted heavily on the lives and spaces for children. A book entitled Cities for Children states that "Cities are places of social turmoil for children. When people are crowded together under conditions of deprivation and uncertainty, their dealings with one another can become marked by suspicion and hostility. Neighbourhoods are often torn by violence. Large scale migration, rapid urban growth and high rates of urban poverty have contributed to the erosion of family and community structure. Old safety nets have disappeared, often leaving little to replace them. The capacity of adults to function adequately as caregivers can be stretched to the limit by the burdens of poverty." (Bartlett 1999:11) This is perhaps, a relative description of the Fashion District in Johannesburg in the context of children and their main caregivers. Safety is a huge concern for many in the Inner City, not only for parents, but for many who live and work there. Women express a certain degree of fear in the Inner City of Johannesburg and an even bigger concern as to where they can leave their children while they venture off to find work. And this is only the case if the parent/parents are responsible whereas sometimes in the realm of poverty there are many parents who think and act otherwise.

Images 04 - 06 (Authors Own)

A series of collage images were compiled in an attempt to capture some of the qualities of life that are missing within the Fashion District of Johannesburg. These images exposed the Fashion District (textile and manufacturing industry) as a hard place for children to express themselves and be free.

Safety became an important theme within this project which was further explored as a means to improve spaces for children. This was done by exploring relevant ideas regarding community networks, neighbourhoods and the presence of adults for good play space for children. These aspects can be regarded as part of the everyday lives of children which impact heavily on their ability to feel safe and play freely, if absent.

Childhood was once regarded as innocent and children were given the freedom to access streets and make use of spaces outside their homes and facilities quite frequently and freely. Today, the city poses too many threats for children and it is not safe for children to explore. Cities are filled with traffic, untrustworthy adults, pollution, chaos, dangerous spaces, people, crime, etc. "Around the urban, children and adolescents speak of their fears and their desire to live in peace and safety. For many children, this is a more pressing concern than even the need for food and health care." (Bartlett 1999: 123)

The Fashion District forms a part of the Inner City of Johannesburg which is known for large amounts of work especially in the retail and manufacturing industries. The area is condensed, compact, grey and vertical. Children in the Fashion District are exposed to an urban fabric that is severely built-up and that leaves no space for outdoor play or green spaces. Children are thus, contained safely inside buildings, away from the streets and industry which proves to be a threat for them. Their days usually start from as early as six o'clock until late in the evening which means that a large percentage of time is spent in these enclosed care facilities. Children need stimulation in order to develop naturally and positively, expanding their senses and thus, learning. It is important that they have places to play, can make contact with nature and other children, etc.





Another critical theme which was investigated was the absence of light in children's spaces and how this has caused underdevelopment and unhealthy spaces. Light, in the context of this project is considered as a fundamental aspect as it affects positive growth and learning development. Light can also be associated with delicate childlike fantasies of colour and texture, which if missing prove to lead to non-stimulating environments. Re-introducing Nature into the Fashion District and relative site was considered to create softer and more textural experiences for children and adults. This investigation led to new-age discoveries on how other cities are re-interpreting green back into their city lives.

The context of the Fashion District revealed many opportunities and disadvantages which will further be discussed; however, the Area and its surroundings proved to be the main source for this project as it informed all design decisions and project development. The development of this project was seen as part of the District and used recollections of history, layers and information to re-interpret a new meaning to space for children which would not be alien to its surroundings. This idea of intertwining threads later transformed into conceptual ideas regarding fabric into the built format as softer spaces for children relating back to previously mentioned themes regarding safety and light. Although the District may prove to be an unfriendly space for children in its current state, this project saw the area as an opportunity to begin to provide children with more stimulating spaces and safer ones too. The project evolved into not only considering the District, but also its people (which in this context became the parents) and the children.

05 - Authors Own: Collage Series

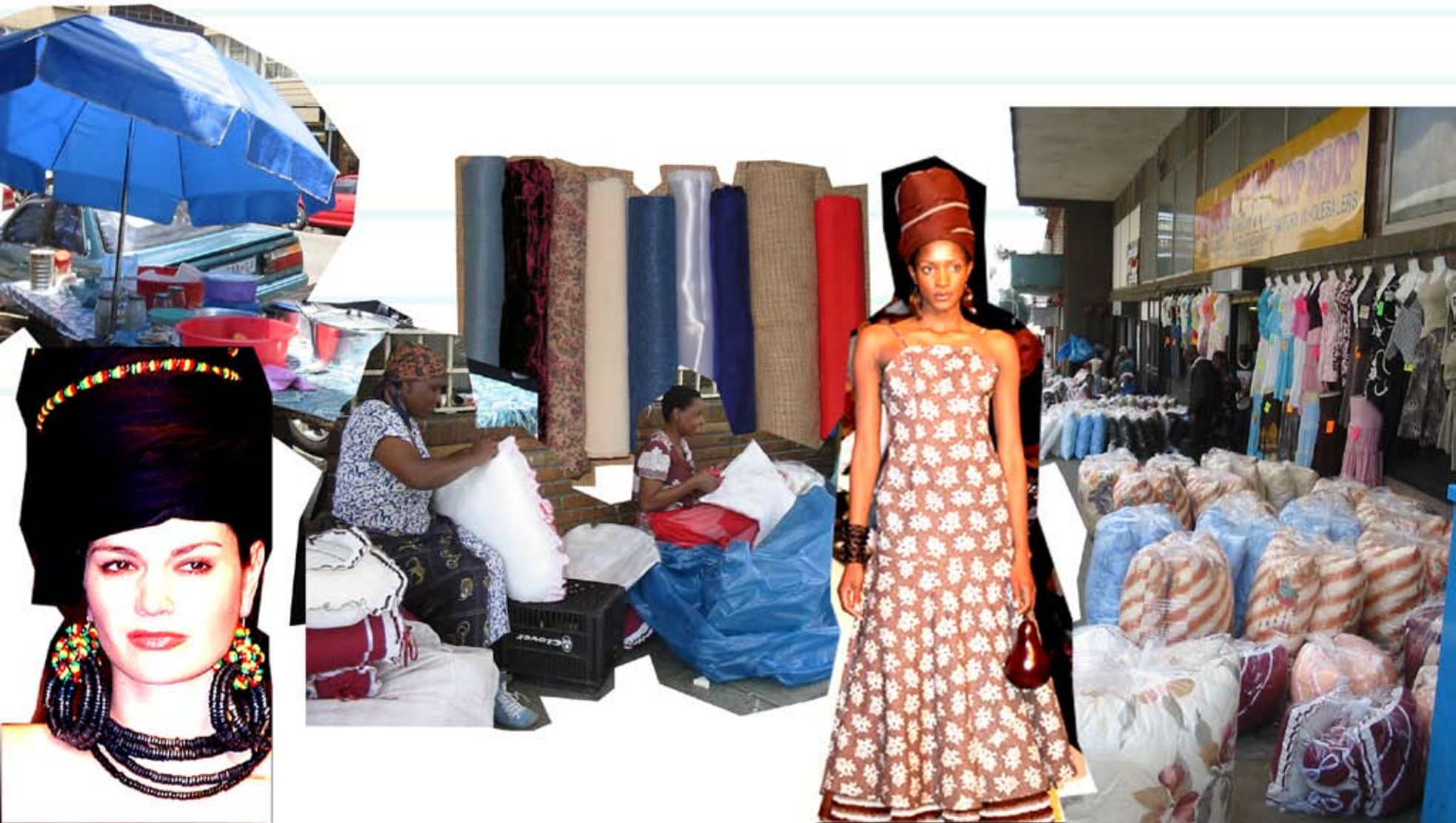

OUTSIDE
Demarcated
Stalls Site
BEEF STEW
DICE & FRY:
ONION, BRINJAL, GREEN PEPPER
ADD: MILD CURRY SPICE,
DICED BEEF
BEEF OR VEG. SOUP
FROZEN MIXED VEG.

As Architects, we tend to forget sometimes that we are designing for people and although the theoretical value of books is important, there is not enough emphasis placed on the practical research that needs to occur on street level in order to understand the reality of the city and the lives that it holds. Nabeel Hamdi author of Small Change states that "still today professional planners of highways, of redevelopment housing, of inner city renewal projects, have treated challenges from displaced communities or community groups as a threat to the value of their plans, rather than as a natural part of the effort as social reconstruction. (Namdi 2004:65) In order to understand the spaces that have transformed into places for children, one needs enquire about the social and economical situation that parents face on a daily basis in hopes to understand why a certain reality exists or might occur. Keeping children constantly in mind, there was also a need to go further beyond just the spaces for children and so an analogy of the Fashion District was conducted as an initial step towards not only understanding the social aspects of the area, but understanding its opportunities, threats and people for development purposes.

The development of this thesis can be divided into two aspects. Firstly, the Fashion District is regarded as part of the City which informs one of the spaces which have become a part of the city's fabric and which in turn have resulted in particular places for children. The nature of space within the buildings of the Fashion District is a different space which is explored and discussed further within the development of this project. It is important, however, to make note of these two scales which form critical perspectives on how to interpret good spaces for children, as part of the city and as part of buildings.

06 - Authors Own: Collage Series

fashion

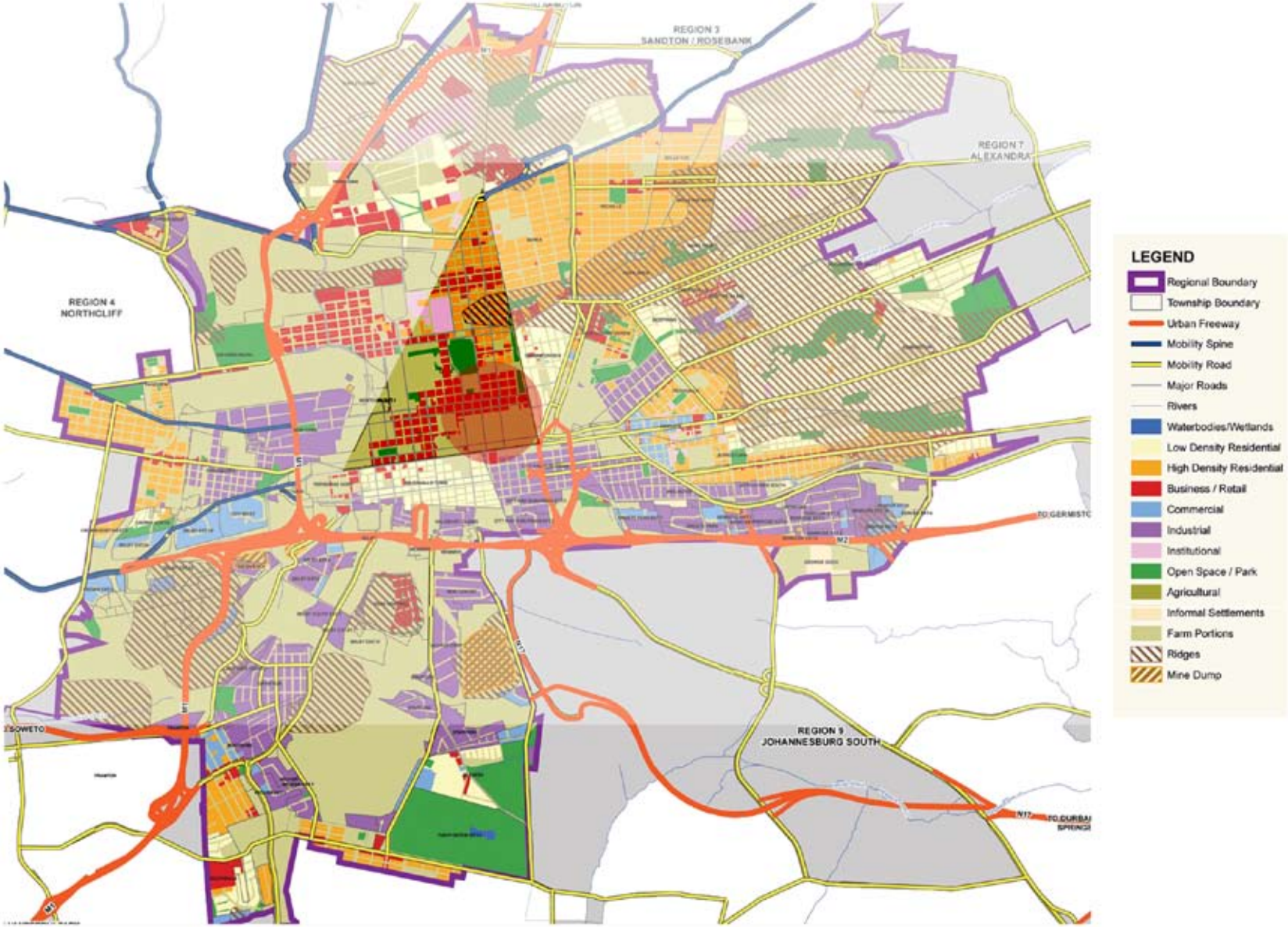


d i s t r i c t

Introduction to Site

We thought of the space of the fashion district as urban fabric, made up of threads of social, spatial and economic forces that intertwined in unique ways. (Le Roux 2005: 8)

(Left) - Authors Own: Fashion District Collage


REGION 3
SANDTON / ROSEBANK
REGION 7
ALEXANDRA
REGION 4
NORTHCLIFF
REGION 9
JOHANNESBURG SOUTH
LEGEND
Regional Boundary
Township Boundary
Urban Freeway
Mobility Spine
Mobility Road
Major Roads
Rivers
Waterbodies/Wetlands
Low Density Residential
High Density Residential
Business / Retail
Commercial
Industrial
Institutional
Open Space / Park
Agricultural
Informal Settlements
Farm Portions
Ridges
Mine Dump

As the Fashion District forms part of the Inner City of Johannesburg, there was a need to describe a brief encounter with the city of Johannesburg as a whole because it has direct connotations to the existing nature of the Fashion District and because it too faces similar problems of crime and inaccessibility.

The inner city of Johannesburg, like many other cities has drastically changed over time. Initially it was the home to many foreigners around the world hoping to establish a life in the city centre due to the discovery of gold, making it a thriving and successful metropolis. However, due to a long history of racial segregation, the city became distinctively more disconnected and fragmented over the years. Today it is known as the Apartheid city in transformation and with idealized improvements in infrastructure, the city hopes to revive and reclaim some of the lost aspects of city life that Apartheid left over. During Apartheid, a great number of people were denied access to the city and eventually, were even geographically placed further away from the city centre. They were not only disadvantaged from receiving an education but were also denied critical opportunities and needs. When Apartheid ended and people where once again given their rights to the city, the city centre was abandoned in fear of what it would become. People who where living in the inner city, left the city centre and re-located to other parts of the city or effectively left the country.

Although Apartheid was over, existing segregation was nevertheless still evident, not only within race but amongst the rich and poor too. For Johannesburg, a centralized city centre was no longer needed due to large enclaves being constructed further away to minimize central city public life and mixing.

(Left) - Plan of Johannesburg: (Johannesburg City Council RDP 2006) Overall Map showing the context of the Inner City within Johannesburg as the Triangle and the Fashion District within the Inner City as the Red Circle.

The Fashion District forms part of the Inner City Centre of Johannesburg. While the city may appear to be neglected and deteriorated, it nurtures a poor economy where many people come to find work.

Unlike many other parts of Johannesburg, it has a unique character and has allowed for its people to interpret and use the city as they have needed. Although, this is sometimes also viewed as problematic, there is a particular notion of freedom that exists and that has denied all connotations around Modern planning which has resulted in a more diverse and jumbled use of the city bringing diversity and excitement. It is also one of the remaining parts of the Inner City which is in favour of many developers and investors. Hopefully the life that it holds will not be destroyed by gentrification, but rather seen as part of the growth of the city and respected.



(Above) - The Fashion District
Map showing relative outline of the District and its close location to Commissioner Street and the Carlton Centre.

INTRODUCTION TO SITE

The Fashion District was once renowned for its designs and manufacturing industry. However, the area collapsed after some time due to the impact of increasing globalization, the lower manufacturing costs from Asia and the higher cost of labour and manufacturing in Johannesburg compared to the cheaper operations in Durban and Cape Town. (www.joburg.org.za) There are no definite borders that define the exact location of the Fashion District, but most people on the streets regard it to be bounded by Jeppe Street in the North, Market Street in the South, End Street in the East and Delvers Street in the West. The Fashion District constitutes a significant area of the eastern Inner City of Johannesburg, effectively occupying a transitional area between core retail uses to the west and southwest (traditional CBD), the residential orientated areas further north (Joubert Park and Hillbrow) and the predominantly manufacturing and light industrial uses to the east and the southeast. (Doornfontein and City & Suburban). (Fashion District: Fashion Square: Report)

The Fashion District is distinctive and rare through its street life, where many hawkers and retail opportunities exist and where many people are seen walking and using the Inner City streets. This life however does not continue into the night. Many workers in the District pack up their goods before nightfall and make their way back home leaving the area empty and desolated.

It is during the day that the streets buzz with noise, flavours and activity. Descriptions of an urban African city exist in amongst many multi racial activities prominent on the streets. The Fashion District nurtures a particular street life that is non existent in many suburbs of Johannesburg today and it is this particular street life that makes city life exciting.

01



02



03



In essence, it is the city that has allowed its people to transform it, where their activities spill on the streets and have not yet been contained. There are many who have traveled into the Inner City and Fashion District alike, in order to sell their goods in hopes to sustain a living in the midst of the concrete jungle of Johannesburg. There are many who do not have their own shops; where the streets have become those spaces for them to work and for such exchanges to occur. The Government and the Metropolitan Police; however, see this as problematic whereas in fact, some street vendors are only making city life more vibrant and diverse. The skills of sewing are even visible on the streets where many women are seen either sewing fragments of material onto larger ones or alternatively making cushions.

As an outsider, the area seems busy and exciting but within the working world another reality is revealed. Many shop owners complain that Hawkers have positioned themselves right in front of their shops leaving customers a very tight space to walk in, in between the street, therefore, losing potential customers. At the same time others complain of the existing Chinese Industry, believing that have stolen their space, many fear that their goods will be stolen or that they will be robbed. Behind the street scenes, inside buildings there are illegal manufacturing companies which provide unstable jobs and pay very low wages. And perhaps, the most pressing issue for most people working in the Inner City is that they simply do not feel safe.

Images 01 - 03
01. (Photograph: Brigitta Stone) Showing much of the retail industry that exists on most of the streets of the Fashion District.
02. (Photograph: Brigitta Stone) Hawkers locating themselves on the edge of the District causing pedestrian steet pavement to decrease in size.
03. (Photograph: Author's Own) Hawker's Street Edge. Fashion District.

The problem with the big dumping of Asian products and Hawker wholesale shops is that they take advantage of the poor as their jobs can easily be replaced by someone else resulting in a highly unstable situation for the economy and the poor. It creates a dead end situation and one which is extremely difficult to break. When entering the Fashion District, one is bombarded with many retail shops and a constant display of what seems to be the same product over and over again, at a different price which can obviously be negotiated from shop to shop.

However, in amongst the Fashion District, are a few unique shops that have made a business and success out of using local design products and materials in the District as resources to their own shops. At the same time enhancing their skills and the diversity of their products. Some of these shops exist further into the Inner City, where unfortunately they are inside buildings and inaccessible. These existing shops show promise to the city as potential economic catalysts and skills development. They provide the means and the possibility for people to receive skill based training as well as more stable jobs.

(Below) - SewAfrica
Compilation of Images depicting Local Fashion Designs by Bongiwe Walasa. SewAfrica offering various opportunities i.e. sewing and other skills as part of the areas rejuvenation.





SewAfrica, situated on Pritchard Street in the Fashion District, is one of the few shops to have remained in the area despite Johannesburg's history, racial and social dilemmas. It has transformed and developed into a larger institution over time, that today now teaches skills in sewing, business management, fashion design, etc. It has been the areas success story, in terms of city revival and opportunities and is also the main hub of attraction in the eyes of developers who see this institution as the catalyst to revive the area. It is the only formalized institution and plays a crucial role to the city in the sense that it provides the area with the potential to learn various skills. Although on street level, SewAfrica seems highly inaccessible in regards to security (which is inevitable), their contribution to the city seems to be expanding. As part of their social responsibility, they have trained people on the streets, given them sewing machines and made provision for them to start up businesses of their own. SewAfrica is also renowned for many other individual success stories of many who have learnt fashion design skills and further improved themselves because of it. The only downside to these success stories is that they are not as evident on the streets of the Fashion District, but this seems to be slowly changing and perhaps, in the near future, the area will boast more local design.

SewAfrica is also partially responsible for the Fashion District Precinct which is currently underway. The Precinct offers a new public square to an area where public space is non existent. Demolishing a number of buildings whilst preserving the cornerstone ones, the new Fashion District Precinct speaks of a more interactive city solution. There has been much talk of the Fashion District becoming similar to that of New York's Fashion District or London's.

However, it is the existing economic situation that poses a rather different scenario for the Fashion District of Johannesburg and the barrier lies within a way to achieve a double economy where the existing infrastructure could possibly appeal to more people, both rich and poor. The Fashion District in Johannesburg is uniquely different to those Fashion Districts around the world and there should be an effort to nurture the existing cultures that exist which bring diversity and vitality into the city.

With the discovery of certain local fashion design shops and SewAfrica, a delicate framework of retail, manufacturing, residential and childcare facilities begun to unravel, revealing certain opportunites and possibilities. These are the links that have been established and that could be used as a means to improve the city and spaces thereof.



Retail Industry

The Retail Industry in the Fashion District forms a large part of the thriving activity on the streets. Street level shops are occupied selling almost anything from fabrics, bags, shoes, clothes, jewellery, hats, etc.

The Area is hugely dependent on this activity but it also contributes to the area's poor existing economy as workers then receive low wages due to the impact of low cost imported goods.



Manufacturing Industry

Manufacturing Companies are found further away from the center of the Fashion District towards the East where large companies operate with as many as up to 300 workers.

There were many problems and issues identified within this area: firstly that of low wages and instability and that working conditions were not attractive as many people feared such working environments due to the high level of crime. Secondly, this area revealed a gender concern as although women dominate the working industry, men were at an advantage as they had the skills in the know-how's of the technical machines and apparatus.

Image Mapwork re-produced by Author Mapwork Information obtained via Brigitta Stone.





R e s i d e n t i a l

The Residential Component of the Fashion District seems to be changing due to more people wishing to locate closer to working opportunities. At present, residency seems to be spilling into many parts of the Fashion District. (from Joubert Park downwards)

Many Office Blocks have been converted into poor residential units. This poses a problem for the District, as many of these buildings have either turned into slums or are mismanaged.

There are however, some residential Blocks which have been revamped and have been successful. Some of these buildings are part of the Art Deco genre which were prominent during Johannesburg's initial building boom.

S c h o o l s

More and more schools are re-appearing in the Fashion District and Inner City alike as there is a clear necessity for these schools to exist.

Schools are noted via street level by their painted windows; however it is not the case for all. An NGO operating within the Inner City estimated over 50 schools in the Inner City alone. Although not all are evident or were found, the few schools that were used for the process of this project all stated that they were too full and had to turn children down yearly.

Some schools cater for up to 50 children while others for up to 150.



S a f e S p a c e for Children

(Left) (McQuaid 2003: 56) Shigeru Ban's Hospital Day Care Centre
Womb like Structure filled with Sunlight. A good light filled space for children to play.

The second part of city analogy was to visit some of the existing schools in the area in an attempt to understand the spaces which children experience.
The schools in the Fashion District do not only cater for parents who work in the District but also for parents working further into the Inner City and even as far as Soweto. The Schools are evident from Street Level by their colourful painted windows and signs. Although some of the pre-schools are not registered and do not uphold to the regulations made by the Government, an NGO working at Joubert Park: Lapeng (Woman and Creche Empowerment Centre) stressed the need for these facilities to exist even if they are inadequate. Failure to provide any form of childcare can result in more damaging situations.

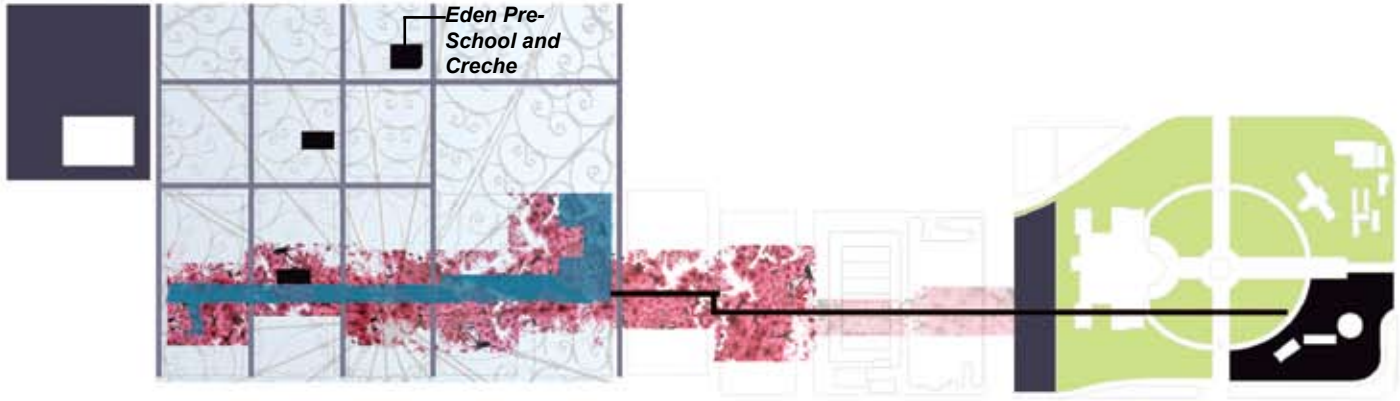
(Below) Initial Diagram constructed out of needs and desires for Children.



These childcare facilities can be further divided into three noted categories:
1. The Pre-School/Nursery School: is a learning institution based on necessary education before Primary School.
2. The Day Care Centre: can also be regarded as a learning institution but is usually referred to as a Centre which allows parents to drop their children off knowing they will be in a safe environment with other adults during the day.
3. Crèche: For children who are below the age of 2. Should be equipped with cots, etc.

There are good and bad schools in the area but all in all, they are limited by the fact that firstly, they are inside buildings which were not designed for children and secondly, they are within an area which does not provide any public facilities or accessibility outside buildings for children. Children spend a large majority of time indoors and hardly receive any exposure to the outside world. Almost every school in the Fashion District is housed within a building where some in cases, buildings do not offer any means to good natural light therefore resulting in the use of constant artificial light.

A written Interview with Pediatrician, Janine Radmeyer revealed that Artificial light is inadequate especially for young children's physical development which has resulted in many children suffering from Rickets in the Inner City. Rickets is caused by the lack of vitamin D resulting in soft and weak bones.



06

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08:30 - 09:00 Breakfast
09:00 - 09:15 Toilet Running
09:15 - 09:30 Introductory
09:30 - 10:30 Activities
10:30 - 10:40 Toilet Routine
10:40 - 11:00 Snack Time
11:00 - 11:15 Toilet Routine
11:15 - 11:45 Indoor/Outdoor
11:45 - 12:00 Toilet Routine
12:00 - 12:30 Lunch
12:30 - 02:30 Sleeping time
02:30 - 02:45 Toilet Routine
02:45 - 03:00 Snack Time
03:00 - 03:15 Bathing Time
03:15 - 04:30 TV Time
04:30 - 6:00 Free Play



01



02



03

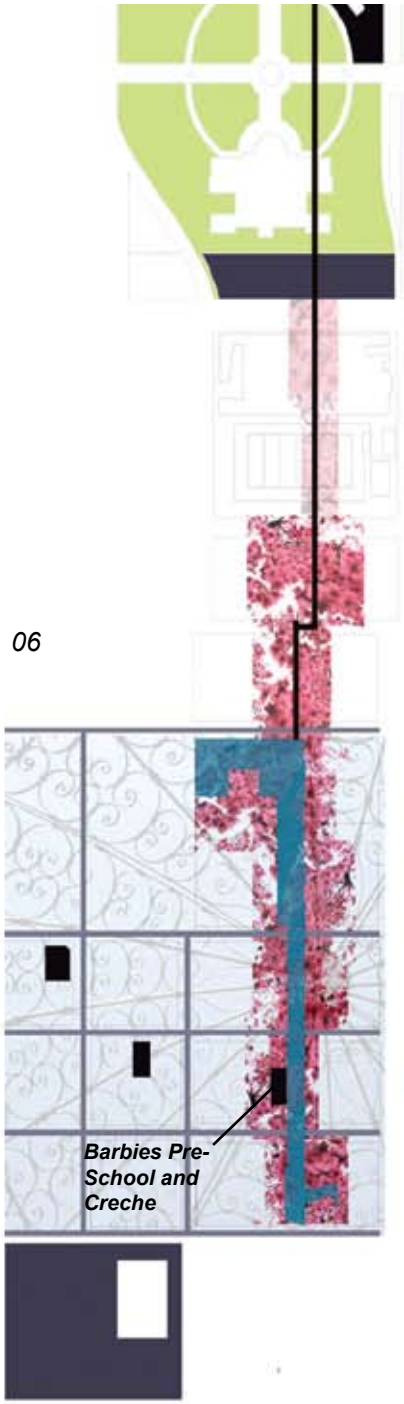


04

01. (Photograph: Authors Own) Good Kitchen Space.
02. (Photograph: Authors Own) Indoor Play Space: Colour Strings Again.
03. (Photograph: Authors Own) Indoor Play Space. Bad light. Artificial Light remains on all day.
04. (Photograph: Authors Own) Decorative Walls.
05. Timetable for Daily Activites
06. (Diagram: Authors Own) Black Boxes indicate schools that were studied in the Area.

'...they're the ones who are most affected, but there's nothing they can do about it..." Sylvia, Principal at Barbies Creche on Delvers street

06



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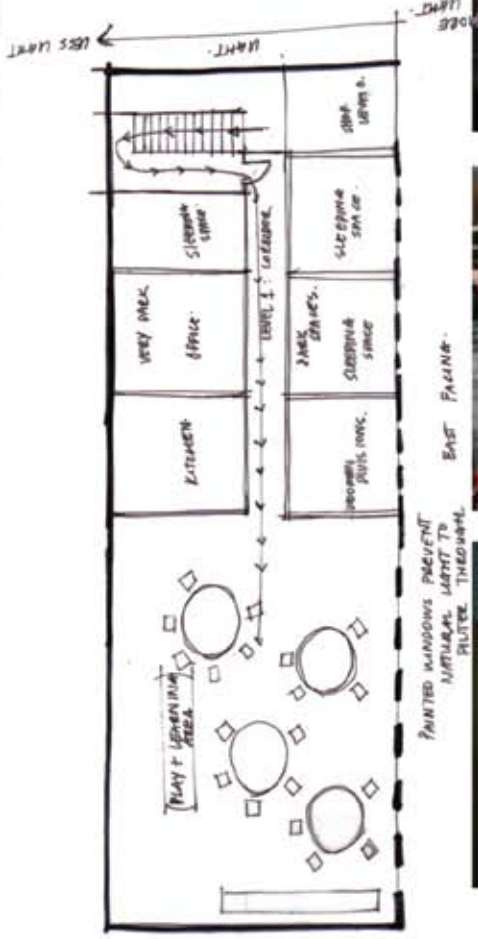


01



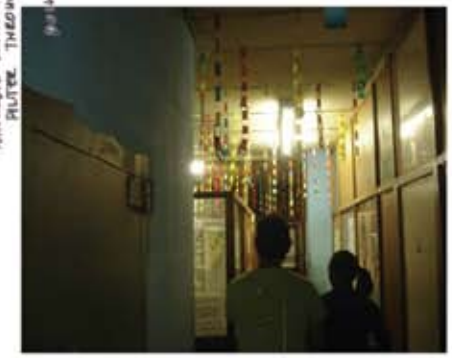
02



03



04



01. (Photograph: Authors Own) Depicting Street Life outside. View from Barbie's Pre School and Creche.
02. (Photograph: Authors Own) Decorative Colour Paper Strings
03. (Photograph: Authors Own) Good Light Indoor Play Space but small in size for the amount of children using it.
04. (Photograph: Authors Own) Corridor Space throughout School. Artifical Light results in bad Play Space for children.
05. (Sketch: Authors Own) Initial Sketch of the Plan of Barbies Pre-School and Creche.
06. (Diagram: Authors Own) Black Boxes indicate schools that were studied in the Area.

Numerous Pre-schools were visited, not only in the Fashion District but further out into Joubert Park and even as far as Johannesburg's suburbs. Although the spaces provided for children, in the Fashion District, may not be sufficient in terms of stimulation, there is evidence of care that has gone into making these spaces more colourful and vibrant. For example, all schools in the Fashion District are decorated with colourful arrays of paper strings which hang from the ceilings and several painted characters on the walls. Better schools have taken care into sub-dividing their children into particular age groups which is fundamental to the development of children, especially since a two year old is experiencing and learning different things to that of a six year old. Most schools in the District, however do not have the means to do this and usually all children are placed and kept within one room.

Barbie's pre-school and crèche is situated on Delvers Street in the Fashion District of Johannesburg, inside an old manufacturing building. Access into the School is relatively difficult to find as the entrance is further tucked away behind the ground level retail floor. The only evidence of the school from the street is depicted by the painted windows which indicate the presence of children inside.

The Principal of the school is not only a teacher but does voluntary work at Childline and even assists in Places of Safety where she provides permanent/impermanent homes for a few children who have either been neglected or abused. Her incredible passion and dedication to helping children in the Inner City is perhaps, often understated as not all working teachers are as dedicated: there are a few who are only doing it because it means a stable job where they can earn some money. These teachers that are not concerned in improving or providing any new forms of stimulation to the children in their care.

c h i l d r e n

On the other hand, there are many teachers who do love and enjoy what they do despite their difficult working conditions and the Governments attempts to close them down.

There are inappropriate requirements posed by the Government known as the White Papers which uphold certain regulations which all Pre-Schools, Crèches and Day Care Centres must abide by. These requirements, however would result in these facilities to become unaffordable and beyond the means of the community.

It seems that the Government fails to recognize the current situations that exist and the social and economic barriers that place many of these schools at a huge disadvantage.

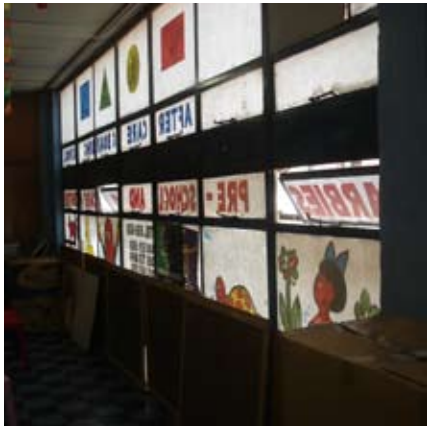
In perspective, for many parents, the school's monthly fee of two hundred rand, is too much. This is particularly evident in the Fashion District, where as mentioned before many of the jobs on offer are either retail related or in manufacturing companies which are unstable and of minimum wage. This results in a very hard cycle to escape as it is consistent and reliant on many other factors which make it difficult for any improvements to occur. The regulations state that there needs to be at least one toilet set which includes the potty and basin for every fifteen children however it seems that they are unaware of the prices of children's sanitary ware which are incredibly expensive investments and to which most schools cannot even afford. Figure 03 indicates the situation that has resulted due to insufficiently designed toilets for children and the investments that can be afforded.

Some schools are even drastically charged for renting spaces inside buildings which are often inadequate as shown in Figure 01 and 02 where spaces are dark and unfriendly.

If the schools are registered, the Government does provide a small amount of subsidy, but this is not even enough to sustain or adhere to the requirements which the government proposes.

01. (Photograph: Authors Own) Painted Windows results in inadequate light inside.
02. (Photograph: Authors Own) Corridor Space
03. (Photograph: Authors Own) Bad bathroom facilities
04. (Photograph: Authors Own) Some dark rooms.

01



02





03



04

Besides the physical value of the space and the lack of stimulating environments, another important issue to consider when designing for children is the provision of natural light. Most buildings in the Inner City of Johannesburg including the Fashion District where designed in such a manner as to achieve most commercial value and the importance of light was not always prioritized. This poses a problem for existing children's spaces because as a result most children are deprived of natural sunlight. Their room functions also alternate throughout the year in accordance to which rooms receive the best warmth and light during winter and which ones are cooler in summer. This is sometimes inappropriate when children are found to be sleeping on tiles by the entrance of the school where the winter sun is most prominent.

In order to gain more insight into spaces for children, visits were also made to pre-schools found outside the Fashion District. Schools with access to outdoor play spaces were also considered as part of the analysis and interpretation of what children's spaces should encompass.

Glenhazel Nursery School is situated in the suburbs of Johannesburg and has access to a large outdoor play space. Even though the school has provision for formalized classrooms, the teaching methods are incredibly simple and short. Young children's attention span to a formal education between the ages of two until six is very limited. Children's development both physically and mentally is mainly dependent on their interactions with other children, sense exploration and play and all this was evident in the large playground that was provided. They need various textures, smells and spaces where they can climb, jump and run. Literature published in 1999 by UNICEF states that "there are a few but simple requirements for young children's play: physical safety, social security, diverse and stimulating physical surroundings, the presence of other children, a lack of temporal pressure and the proximity of adults". (Bartlett 1999: 134)

c h i l d r e n

An important model for this project is the Lapeng: Child and Family Resource Service situated in what is known as the Heart of the Inner City: Joubert Park. Although the area is described to be crime ridden, the park sustains much activity and is one of the largest green spaces remaining in the Inner City. Lapeng is part of a network that uses all existing facilities to their advantage and has to an extent successfully provided alternatives to facilities and opportunities for not only children in the city but for adults too. They work closely with the GreenHouse Project which is situated further north-west and the Johannesburg Art Gallery which is further south of the park. The Drill Hall provides a play space for children where swings can be found attached to exposed beams resulting in a highly-used and vibrant space, especially on the weekends. All four institutions interconnect with one another as a means to not only promote more community development but also in assisting each other with various activities. (Refer to Image) For example, the Johannesburg Art Gallery organizes Saturday Art Classes to occur at Lapeng where children of all ages in surrounding areas are welcomed to participate.

The GreenHouse is also responsible for providing up to fifty percent of the parents who have children in the facility care of Lapeng, with working opportunities. This means that a safer environment is created for children and the possibility of interactions between parents and children can be organized.

Traci Mann, Director of SewAfrica, ex-teacher and NGO, states that it would be a beneficial opportunity for children to accompany their parents to work and to be able to physically see what that they do. Children's development could be enriched through a basic understanding of how the working world operates at a very minimal level. Perhaps, it could even be the place that they return to one day, to find work for themselves.

The GreenHouse Project also offers children the possibility to grow their own vegetables and to learn about various processes through interactive projects with other children. This is an opportunity that many children do not have especially in areas such as the Fashion District which are mainly composed of retail and manufacturing industries where there are no green spaces leftover to either inhabit or use.

This results in the park and especially Lapeng to become one of the few centre points in the city where many children can attend and interact with others in an outdoor green play space.

(Right) Authors Own. Overall Image of Joubert Part indicating structural framework/networks which results in various activities for children. It also promotes a safer environment.


1.
2.
3.
4.
1. creche
2. greenhouse
3. JAG
4. drill hall

The idea for this thesis was to emulate some of these existing networks and structures from the Joubert Park model back into the Fashion District for the benefit of children to create a safer and greener environment for them to develop and play in. There was also a desire to work within the existing context of the Fashion District, its advantages and opportunities and to provide a space for parents to be able to work as well as to interact with their children. To create a self sustaining system where parents would be able to improve their financial situations to not only empower themselves but to ultimately provide a more stable and supportive structure. The set-up would resource its information from the city and through the use of design would incorporate the more successful opportunities of the District back into a model that would nurture and establish them. These were seen as the small micro-businesses that exist in the District which have the possibility of being transformed into economic catalysts.

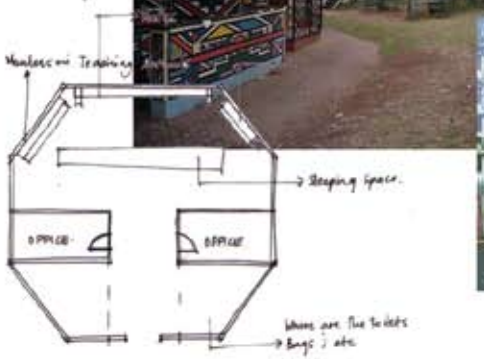
(Right) Authors Own. Lapeng: Joubert Park
Overlay of Images showing large Outdoor Play Space which obtains a large Jungle Gym. The idea of the Jungle Gym was re-looked at, at a later stage because of related ideas to multi levels and in-between play spaces.

Image also shows surrounding residency which results in the park being visible at all times and many children from various buildings come outside and play.

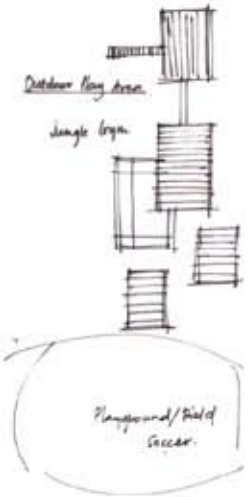


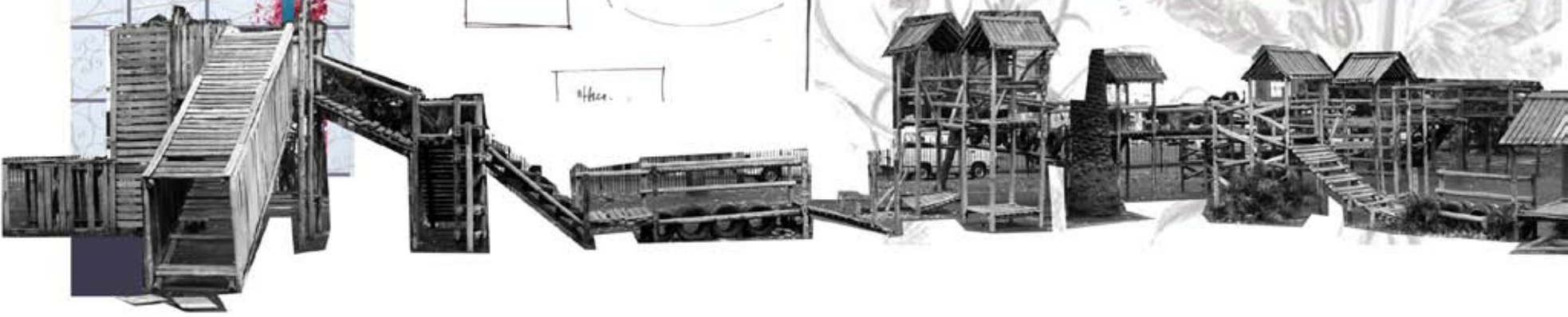





Sleeping space.
Office
Office
Where are the toilets
Bags etc


Saturday Arts: with Arts Gallery.


Outdoor Play area
Jungle Gym
Playground/Field
Soccer.



Bringing nature back into the City with ideas of



Networks, Outdoor Play Space... etc.

from Joubert Park into the Fashion District





1. joubert park
2. residential surroundings
3. johannesburg art gallery
4. drill hall
5. jack mincer taxi rank

fashion district

6. delvers street
7. carlton centre
8. commissioner street

(Left) Authors Own: portraying overall area which was explored.

S i t e S e l e c t i o n

- Existing Space
- Site Analysis
- Small Interventions

EXISTING SPACE

The Inner City and particularly Fashion District offer no horizontal space as the area is condensed with many old buildings that represent the history of Johannesburg's CBD. Demolishing buildings to regain horizontal space would mean losing diversity and history in the city and would also prove to be extremely onerous.

It would also be destructive to the existing highly dependent notion of retail activity that occurs in the District. The retail component is what sustains the area and this needs to be respected and proposing to remove some of it, could mean destroying some of the lives that people have created for themselves on the streets. It is estimated that seventy percent of activity in the Fashion District is evident on street level while further thirty percent is found inside buildings.

Because of the existing economy, the people who access the city and the provision of the new Public Precinct (which has already meant the demolition of a few buildings): A decision was made to work with an existing building as not only a means to preserve history and significant retail prospects but also to provide a more feasible solution for the District.

Working within an existing building which formed a part of the initial beginnings of Johannesburg meant working within particular variations of time. Buildings and Cities absorb time and are made of various layers which are composed of past, present and future. By layers, we speak not only of physical layers depicted by streets and edges, but also of the invisible layers which form parts of history.

(Below) Image

Existing building Site in Red.





(Below) Image

BridgeWater House built in 1927.
To be converted into Children's Play Space as well as the provision of retail space. The mixture was in hopes to provide more stimulating environments for children and to create a form of community, in which safety in the presence of adults would evident.



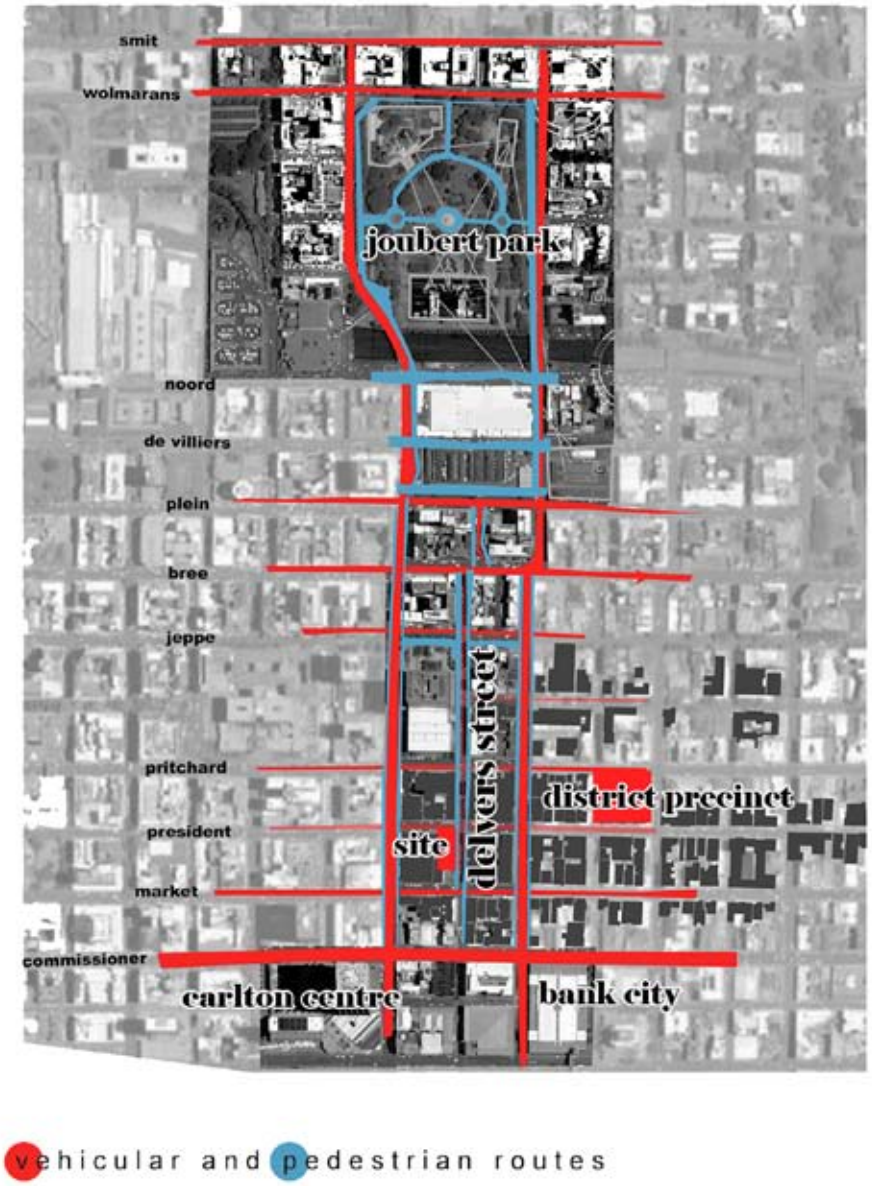
Within the historical context of the city, an existing building was selected by its orientation towards Light and its location on a relatively quiet street, known as Delvers Street which is pedestrian-based.

The site is north-facing on the corner of Delvers Street and President, relatively close to the Carlton Centre and in view of the new Fashion District Precinct. The corner also offered many opportunities in terms of retail prospects and vision. At the same time, the site sits on the edge of the Fashion District and also on the edge of what is known to be Bank City: Absa Premises. These are two distinct worlds that occur just beyond the edges of Commissioner Street.

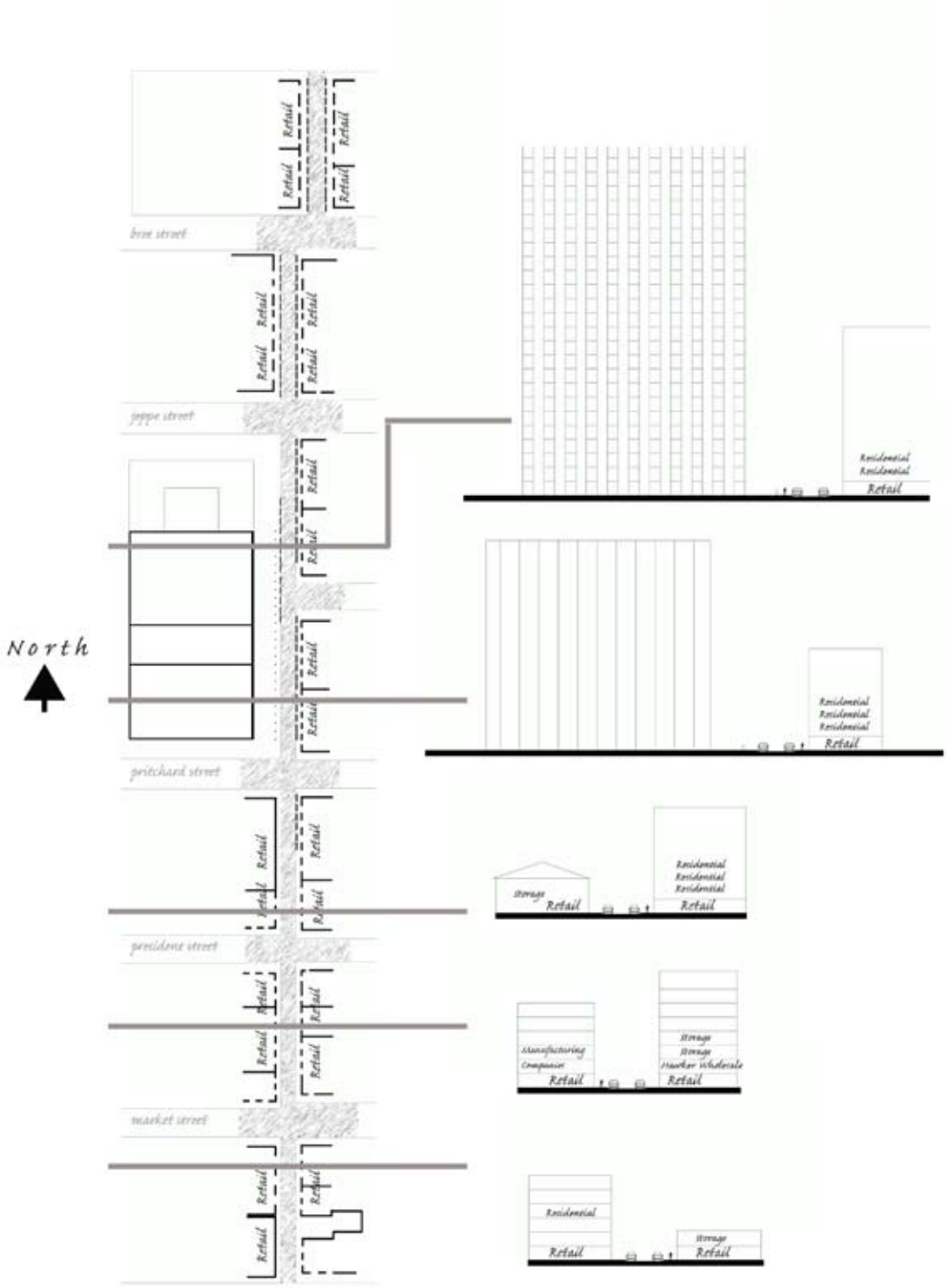


(Right) Image

Indicating why Delvers Street is so quiet: It is a one way street which cannot be accessed off Commissioner and relatively hard to access by car further at the top because of one way and dense traffic.



(Above) Image
Blue pedestrain Route is Delvers Street in between Troye and Von Weilligh.

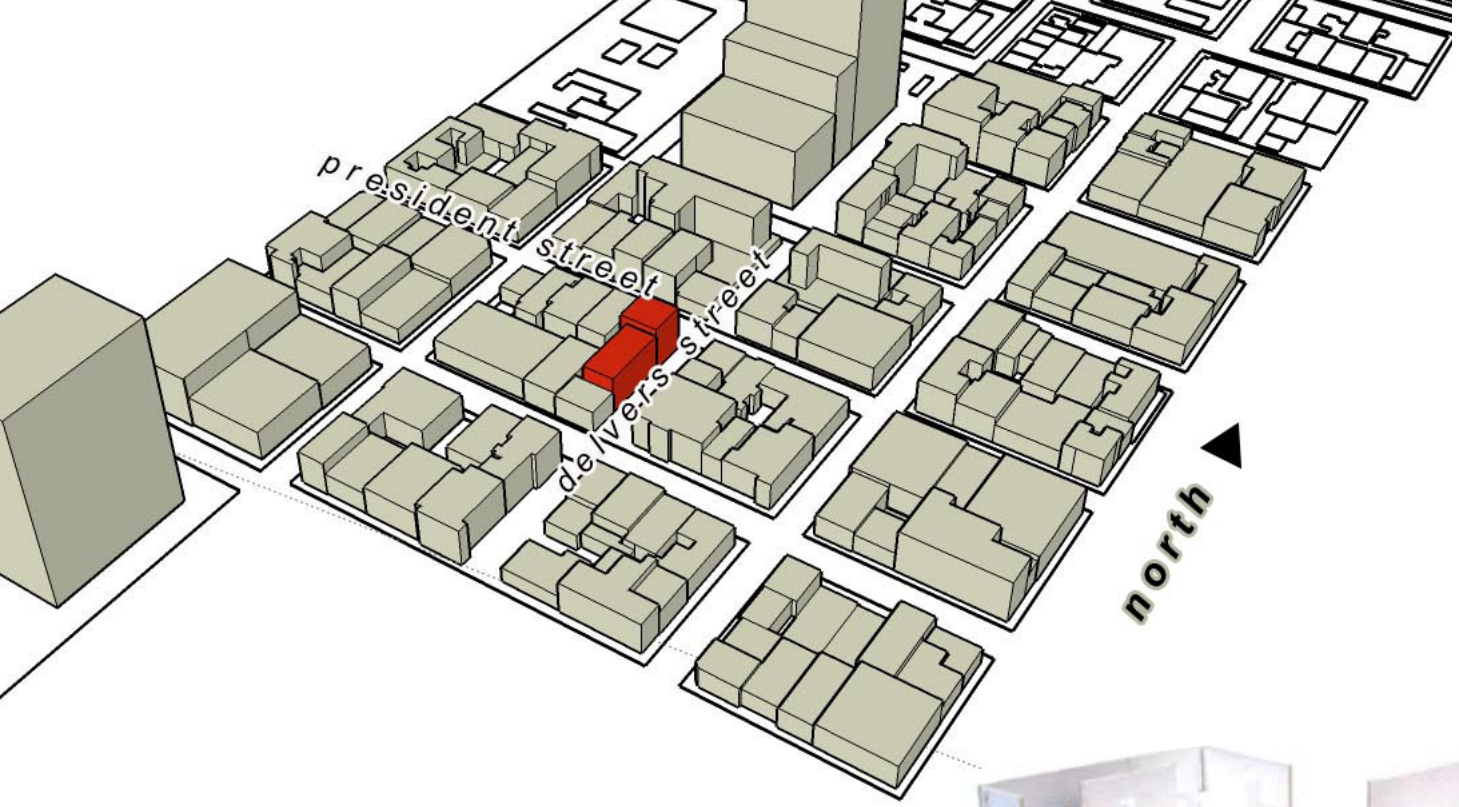


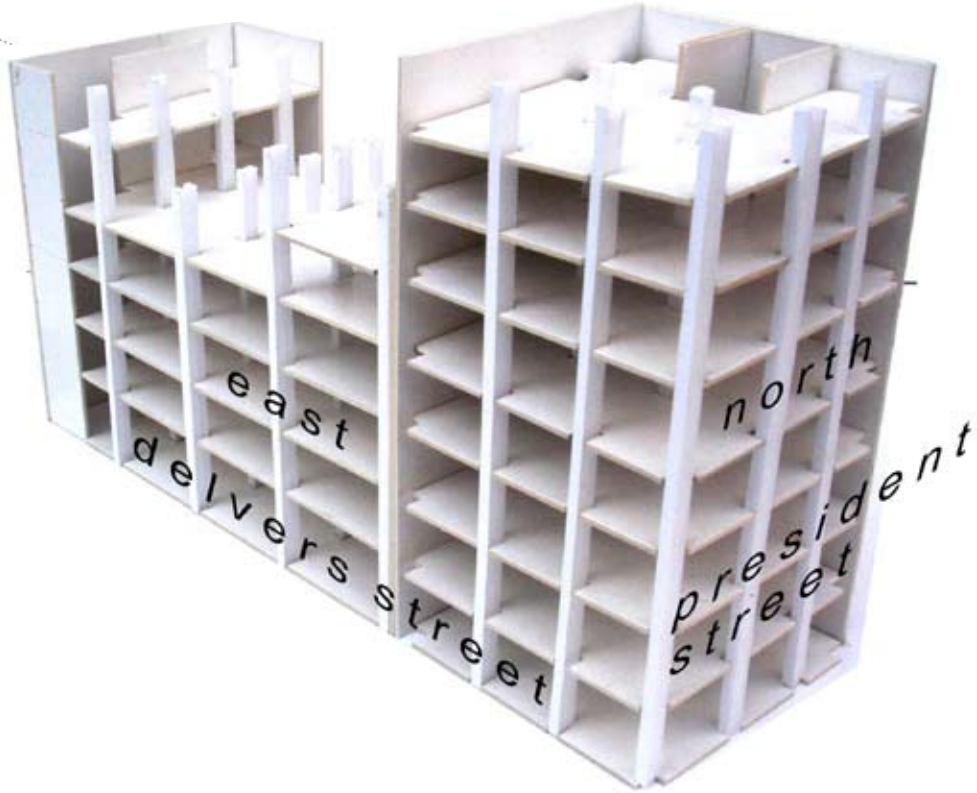
The image on the left indicates the prominence of the retail industry in the Fashion District with the plan of Delvers Street showing edge definations of various shops and their openings thus extending the inner edges of streets further inside.

Furthermore, it highlights the essence of the District being the importance of ground level retail shops and how in the case of Delvers street almost all ground level space is occupied. Street life is vibrant and many infill the streets as part of this working space.

The Sections through certain portions of the street are to show not only the relationship of the buildings to their street, but also to reveal the functions of buildings further upwards. The residential component of the city is reflected further towards the top while towards the bottom, many buildings are used for storage purposes, working spaces, etc.

The scale of the City through sections shows that many buildings are above five stories in height, with the exception of a few demonstrating the density of the city.


president street
delvers street
north


east
delvers street
north
president street

Two building sites were finally chosen as the initial corner site proved to be limited by its sixteen by sixteen meter square plan. By adjoining two buildings together, there was more freedom in design opportunities and play, especially since there needs to be a relative amount of horozintality available to children even within the vertical context.

Both buildings, Bridgewater House and Esbee Building are of historical value and importance to the city as they represent Johannesburg's initial manufacturing industry dating as far as 1937 and 1928, respectively. Today, both buildings are underused and partly empty.

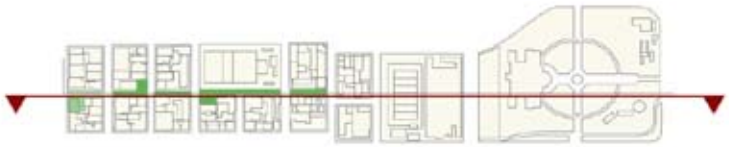
Their skins are concrete-hard, depicting time and weather, filled with many windows which allow for maximum light to filter through. However, light does not travel towards the rear ends of these buildings. With many tall buildings around the edges of the city, light is sometimes difficult to reach in cases where buildings do not face north and when taller buildings are in front. Some buildings remain in shadow for large portions of the day resulting in dark and cold spaces. This became a design issue which was later resolved.

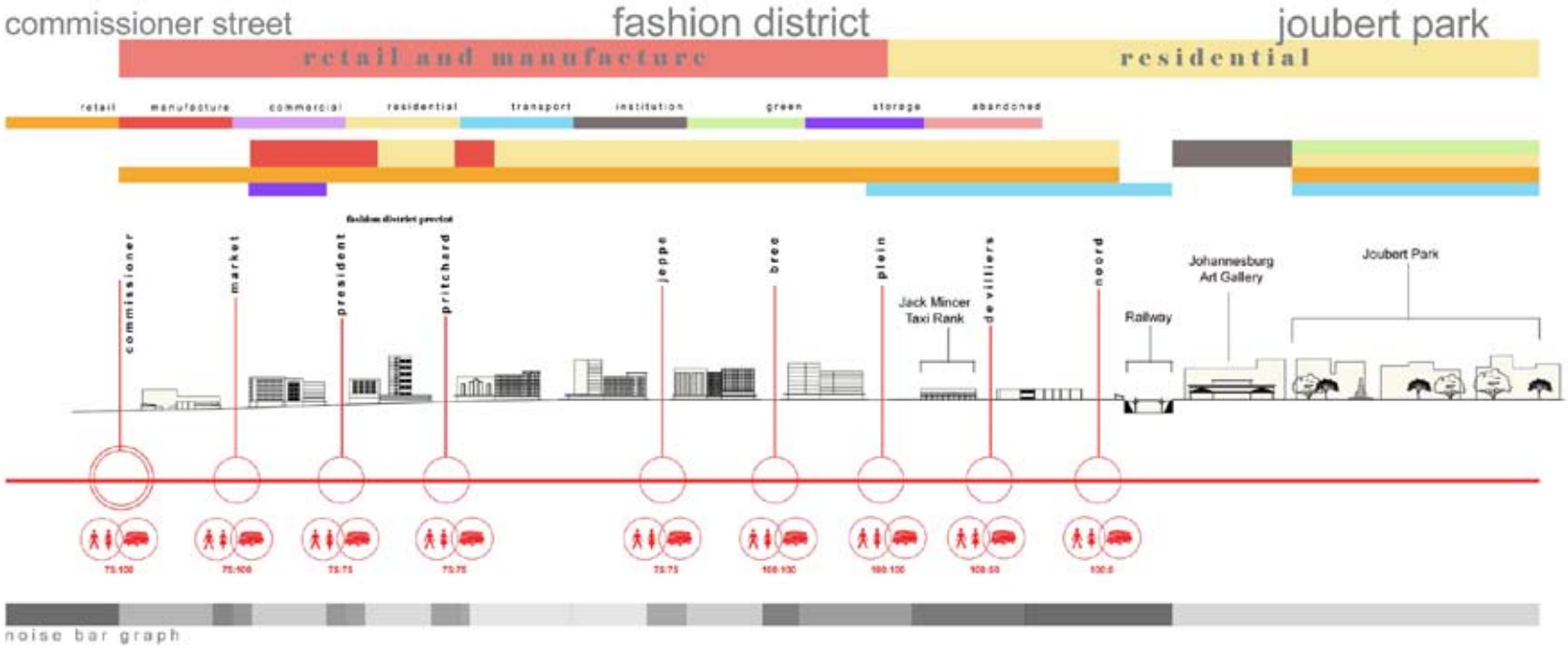
Both structures are relatively simple based on a concrete column-beam and grid design. The design process would therefore have to maneuver itself through the existing skeleton structure to create new space.

(Right) Image
Image depicting the occurance of Section (below) on Plan.



(Below) Section Lines. The Section below is the oppositie view to the image on the Right.





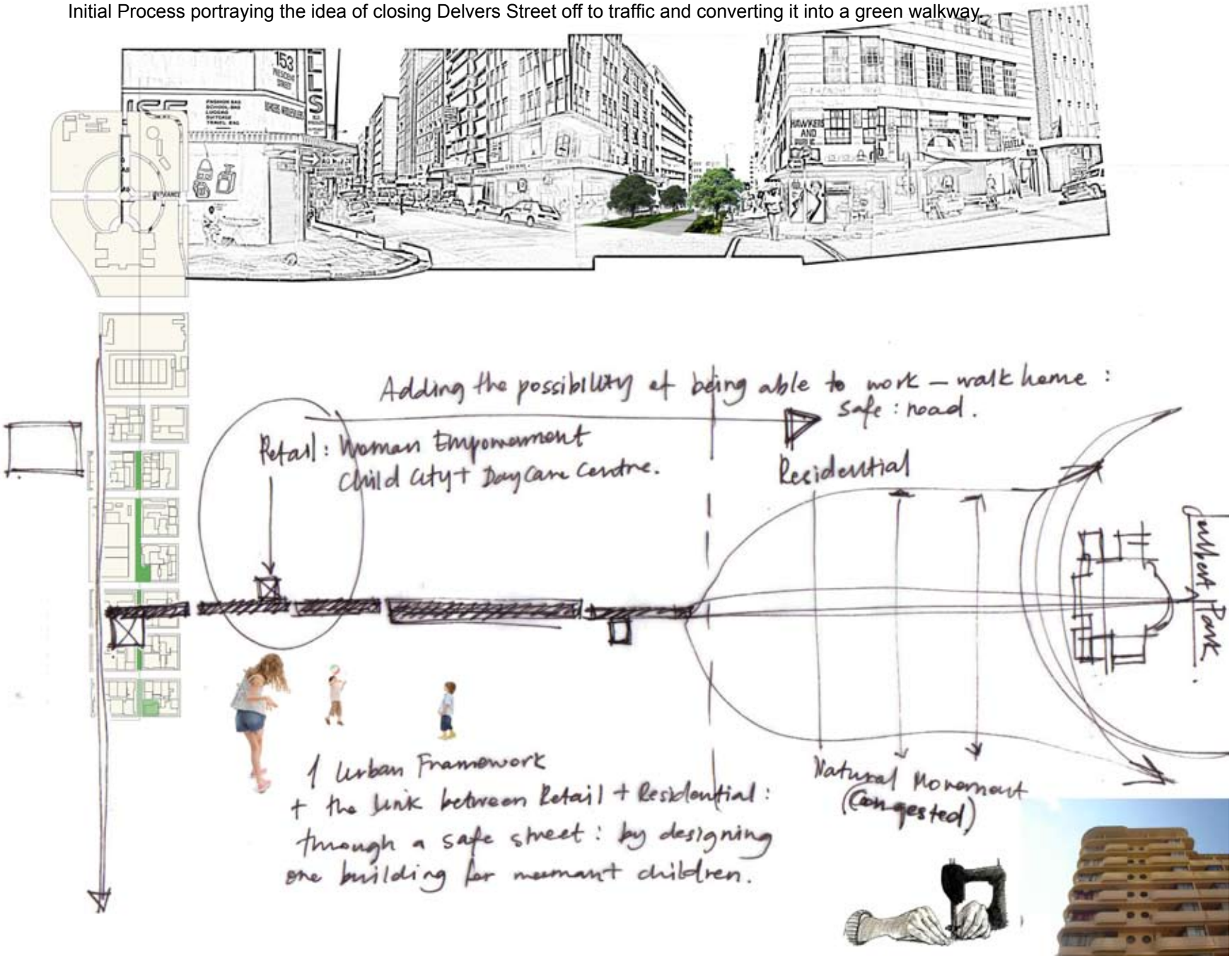
This Section through Delvers Street cuts through the Fashion District until Joubert Park showing the context of the site (which is in red) and its relationship and scale to other buildings and the city. It was also conducted as a means to indicate different uses and functions through the city showing how differential aspects of the retail and manufacturing industry work adjacent to the residential aspects of Joubert Park.

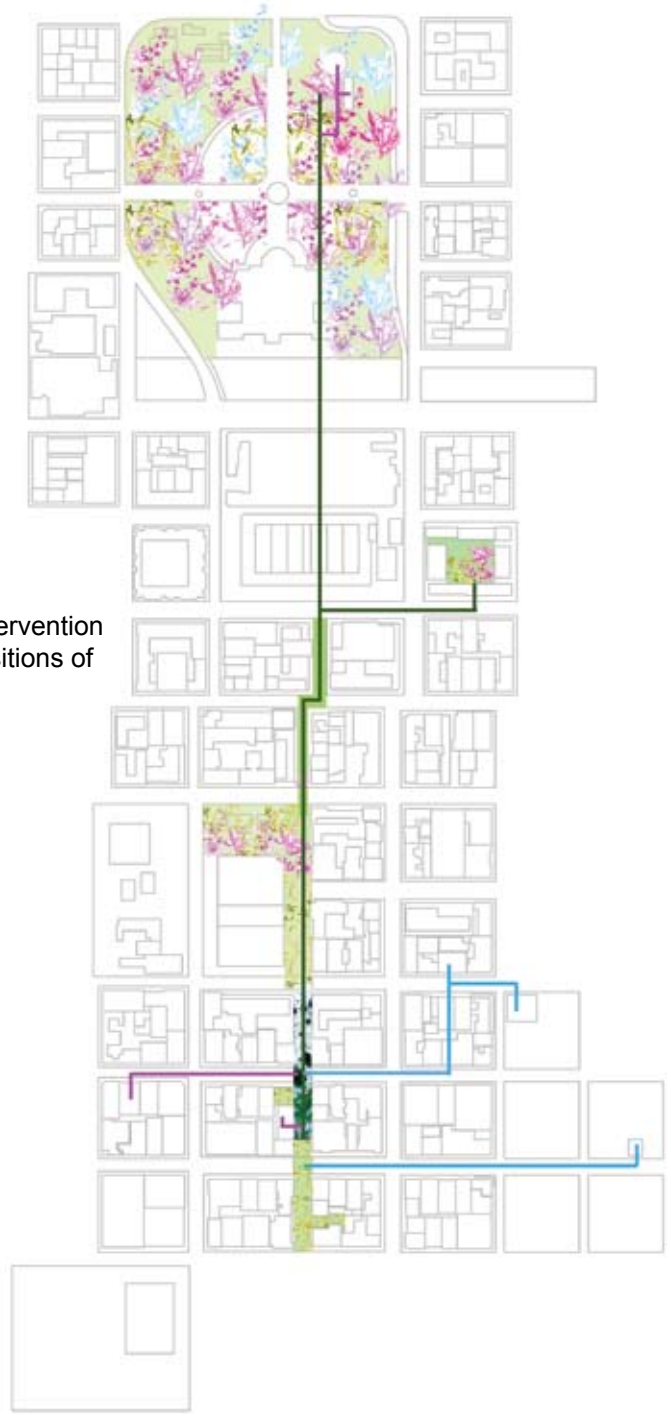
It also highlights how the Fashion District is slowly starting to re-convert into residential space further upwards towards the Inner City. There are missing facilities and links between the Fashion District and Joubert Park where many travel in between these worlds for different purposes. Delvers street, in its quiet nature offers many a more peaceful walk through the city as opposed to other prominent streets in Johannesburg, which are filled with chaos and noise.

It is important to recognize how the site sits in between its surroundings in order to design for the city and building alike. As Peter Cook, Author of Archigram wrote: "Architecture is only a small part of city environment in terms of real significance; the total environment is what really matters.". (Cook 1978: 20)



Initial Process portraying the idea of closing Delvers Street off to traffic and converting it into a green walkway.





(Right) Journey Intervention and smaller propositions of space in between.

INTERVENTIONS

In acknowledging the missing links between facilities in the Fashion District through to Joubert Park, there was an initial idea to propose the closing of the street off to vehicular traffic. This was in hopes to create a link that would be used by various pedestrians and also seen as the potential street space where communities could start to develop and children would be safer to play outdoors or at least make use of the connected facilities. The idea was also based on the journey which children experience on their way to Joubert Park. This additional route was seen as a softer edge to the city that could direct them through quieter and friendlier spaces, away from traffic and additional threats. The proposal also entailed the planting of more trees and child friendly robots when crossing busy intersections.

But the idea was downsized to possibly only suggesting the closure of Delvers Street on Saturday mornings when children are not in school and are seen to play on the streets while their parents work. There is already a connecting road from the Fashion District to Joubert Park known as Smal Street and so the idea of having another connection within the city did not seem practical.
However, the idea was not entirely neglected but further fragmented into the possibility of providing smaller off-street interventions along the city that would enable children to have more access outside. These smaller interventions were seen as possible in-fills of lost city space or neglected ones which could be softened as part of a more subtle and gentle infrastructure of the city for children. The idea of smaller interventions was not resolved within the context of this project, however, it is important to consider the city as part of children's spaces and their ordinary lives.

1.

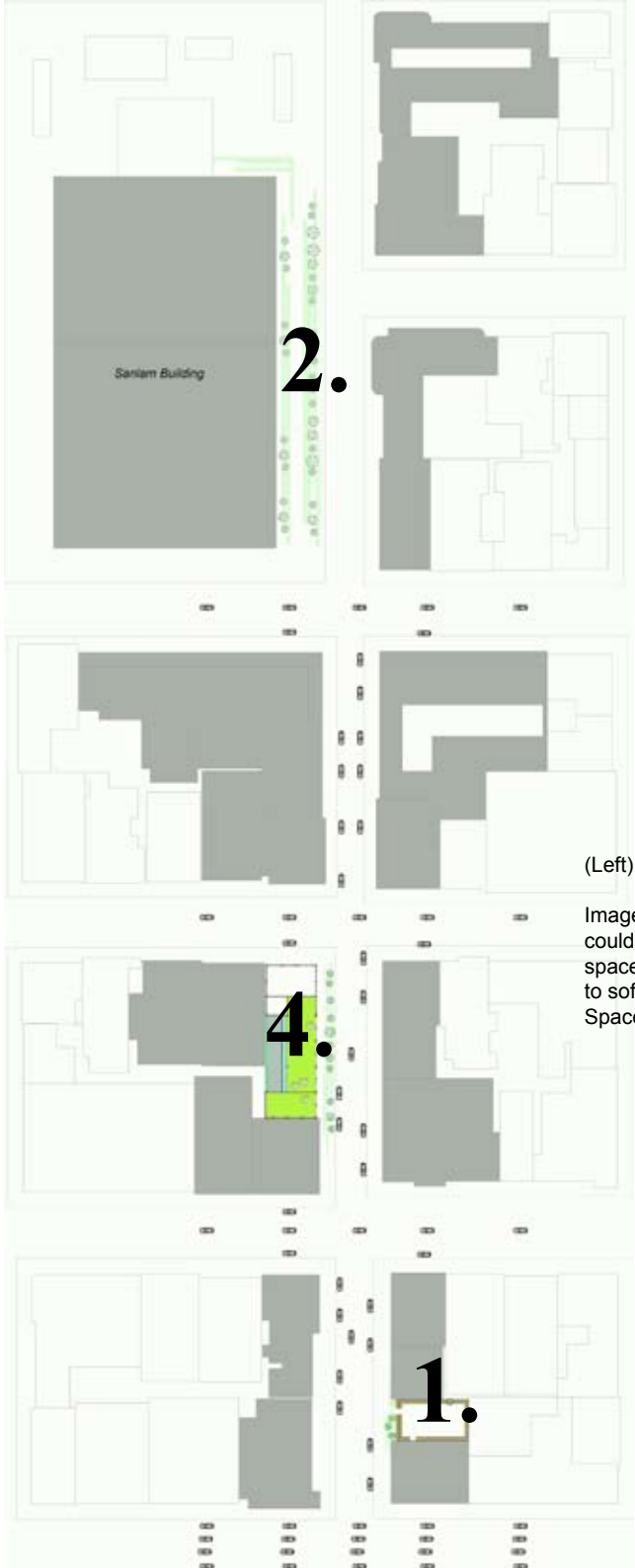
The first intervention (Refer to Image on Opposite Page) was to create an urban concrete play space where children could play soccer, hopscotch, etc. (concrete games). This is located next to an existing retail ground floor shop where the idea was that the shop owner could maintain and care for the play space and the management of it. The shop owner could even charge a minimum fee if other children or adults desired to access this space but limiting its access to some extent so that it would remain exclusively for the use of children from surrounding schools.

2. *The second small-intervention was the softening of a particular large street edge of the city which has been abandoned and inaccessible through the use of existing bollards. It runs against the Sanlam Building which has provided various means to keep the edges of their site inaccessible and unfriendly to the rest of the city. This large street edge provided the possibility of planting a row of trees in hopes to achieve a more humane pathway for children to journey through to Joubert Park and a means for the city regain some of the edges that have been lost.*

3. *The existence of a new Public Square known as the Fashion District Precinct (refer to Image: Far Right) also offered the opportunity for schools to be able to organize more interactive events with each other such as puppet shows, etc. This would have to occur during times when the square was not hosting public functions themselves.*

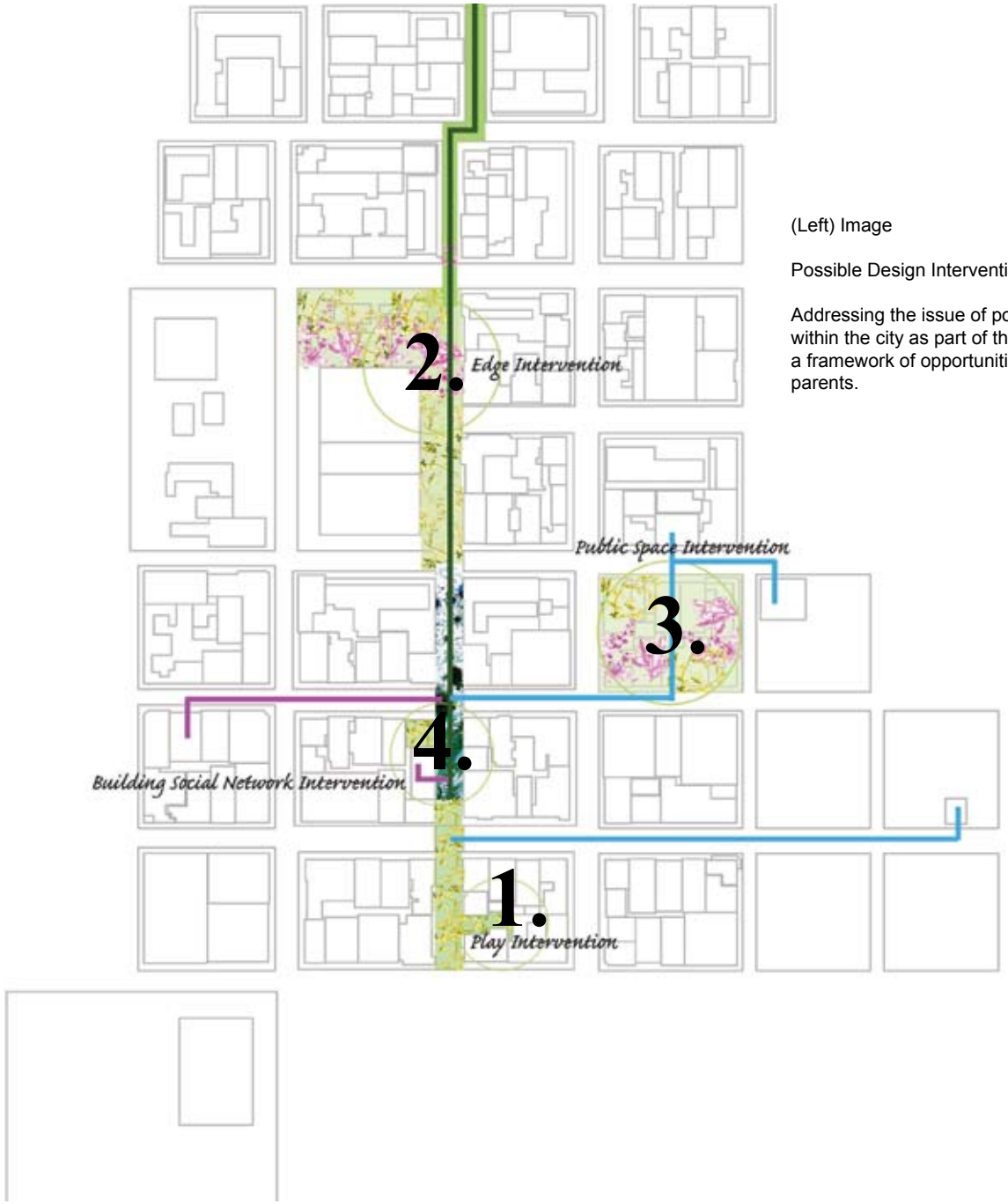
4. *The fourth intervention is the inclusion of the building site which is part of these interventions and city alike. The main focus for this project is based on this Site, its needs and its relationship to the city. It cannot sit exclusively on its own. Part of this project and thesis is to consider all alternative options to provide children with more adequate and vibrant spaces, be they inside buildings or outside.*

The building site respects and acknowledges the life outside but also houses a life within which is unique and different in the sense that its attempts are to provide a space for children to play during school time, as well as the opportunity for them to interact with their parents. Simultaneously, the building works as a factory where work space is provided above but where the product is sold on street level below (to the public). Using the existing resources offered by the Fashion District, the building will achieve a local product using local skills and materials. It is to incorporate the small micro-businesses that exist in the Fashion District, some of which are even run by the parents themselves into a structure that could benefit other parents and their children too.



(Left) Image

Image indicating lost city space that could be utilized as positive play space in amongst the city or ways to soften edges. “Pockets of Safe Space.”



(Left) Image

Possible Design Interventions.

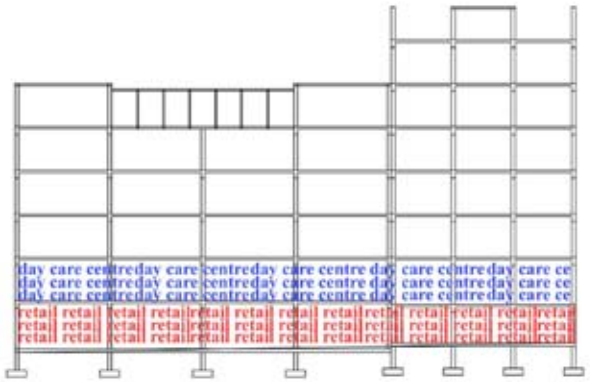
Addressing the issue of possibly providing more network possibilties within the city as part of the building intervention, so that it sits within a framework of opportunities and resources, for children and their parents.



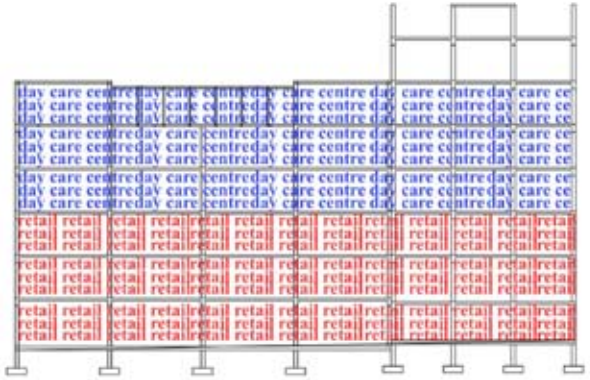
Communty Networks provide safer spaces for children to play within. (Barlett 1999: 73)

Regarding Safety

- *Community Dialogue*
- *The Importance of Mixture*
- *Parents as Workers: The Crafters*



Existing

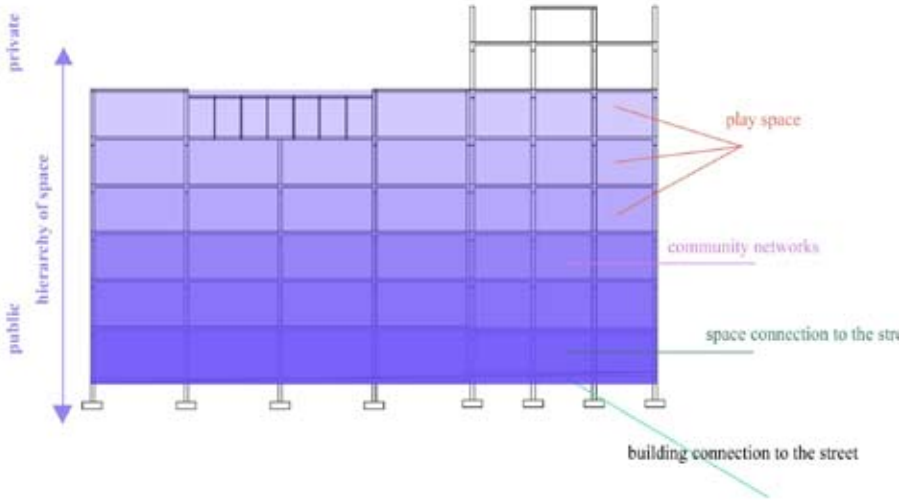


Proposal

(Below)

Ideas regarding how the building is to function within its surroundings and different criterias that it needs to consider. Play Space, Community Networks, Its relationship to the Street and Site and how all these need to exist within Public or Private Realms.

(Left) Reflecting the Existing: Another theme which is fundamental to the design process. Understanding the existing context and to design for it. The proposed image is to replicate the existing but to improve it in such a manner that it still respects and acknowledges its surroundings.



C O M M U N I T Y D I A L O G U E

By introducing a building where parents working together know that they have children in the same facility, there was a desire to create spaces to accommodate this form of a community based structure. Parents would be able to relate to one another as they would have similar problems and issues which they face as parents together, in the Inner City of Johannesburg and Fashion District. By creating community networks and allowing for space to nurture this, one is also creating a safer space for people to interact and for familiarity to occur. As further explained in the book South African Cities: A Manifesto for Change: "the concept of community is a complex one. In essence it relates to creating a sense of identity and belonging – a sense of absorption into urban life. (Dewar 1991:21)

This also meant that parents would feel safer leaving their children in an environment where they would be comforted by the knowledge that more than one person would be looking after them. In a city where safety is a huge concern, community networks are perhaps the initial steps to recovering some of the spaces that have been lost due to fear. Tudor author of Sociology of Fear describes this fearfulness as a way of life in modern societies where our children are no longer allowed to walk to school, and the landscapes of fear we paint for them are populated not with trolls, wolves or wicked witches, but with paedophiles, satanic abusers and generally untrustworthy adults. (Tudor 2003: 238)

T H E I M P O R T A N C E O F M I X T U R E

It is important to create a diverse building that will speak to many users in order to maintain and achieve a successful working scheme. The public is not only necessary in regards to becoming potential customers but also for mixture to occur. Jane Jacobs, author of the book "The Death and Life of Great American Cities" further explains on the need for mixed primary uses and states that "these must insure the presence of people who go outdoors on different schedules and are in the place for different purposes, but who are able to use many facilities in common. (Jacobs 1962: 153)

Allowing for mixture in uses within the building will mean various users throughout the day all within a community that will provide a safer environment for children. And this mixture can also contribute quite positively to children who although have their own spaces will also be exposed to other parts of the building and hopefully, visual parts of the city that will become part of the building.

Part of the developing programme and mixed use proposal was to incorporate some means of residency for either parents or staff or alternatively people who might need accommodation while they train and receive skills from SewAfrica. Residency would also signify mixture and a more permanent use which would result in the building to be safer at night. Providing Accommodation would also have to consider what people might be able to afford within the framework of this building and city alike and how their living conditions could be improved.

PARENTS AS WORKERS: T H E C R A F T E R S

Part of this strategy of improving the lives of children as mentioned before, is to target the working parents in the Fashion District. Some parents work in retail, others own small micro-businesses where they design garments, others work on the streets either as hawkers or cushion ladies, etc.

A project which exposed fundamental information for this thesis was a Research proposal by Industrial Sociology student, Catherine Joynt, who is exploring and through the use of interviews gathering information as to understand the working conditions and lives of people in the Fashion District. Through this process, several parents in the Fashion District were interviewed and thus relevant information was captured in relevance to their lives and economic situations.

The questions posed in the Interviews also revealed instability within the Area and a certain level of neglect from the Government. The information also revealed that most workers were highly dependent on themselves, as working structures made no provisions or assistance for any form of benefits.

Overcoming issues of instability does not mean only providing secure jobs. It means providing skills development in order for people to regain a sense of dignity and pride. Skills Development allows for people to grow and improve, whereas simple job provision, especially in the likes of the Fashion District, is not viable or supportive to either workers or the Area.

This questionnaire, however only applies to workers either working inside shops owned by themselves or workers in large manufacturing or retail factories. It did not consider many who use the streets as their trading grounds. The District's street edges provide many with the working space that they desire and need. Many of these workers are hawkers but there are also many who are otherwise known as Crafters.

These Crafter's skills range from shoe making, to beadworks, to cushion making, etc. All these small micro-businesses were later assembled as part of the developing programme which was to accommodate various parents as workers in the Fashion District. Some people view these Crafters as problematic to the city but they are in fact creating a safer environment for most and usually clean the streets before and after they leave. The Metropolitan Police Department, however, views these Crafters as ordinary street traders and because the by-laws do not make provision for them, they are usually removed from the city streets. They are in fact, only trying to make an honest living.

These Crafters are also the parents of some of the children who are either in the care of surrounding schools or otherwise on the streets. Some of these parents known as the Cushion ladies (Crafters) are woman who are bound together either by family ties, children to care for, their desires to escape poverty, their shared experiences with grief and abuse or the freedom to express themselves from woman to woman.

Although their skills are limited and few, there is the potential to expand upon these basic-skills and develop them into something more meaningful and beneficial. SewAfrica and The Economic Development Unit of the City underwent a project entitled "The Crafters Project" which entailed taking several of these women and teaching them more valuable skills that would empower them.

Even though there are more weaknesses than strengths in terms of ability, prospect and development, they do possess an innate creativity that can be nurtured and could result in a successful local product.

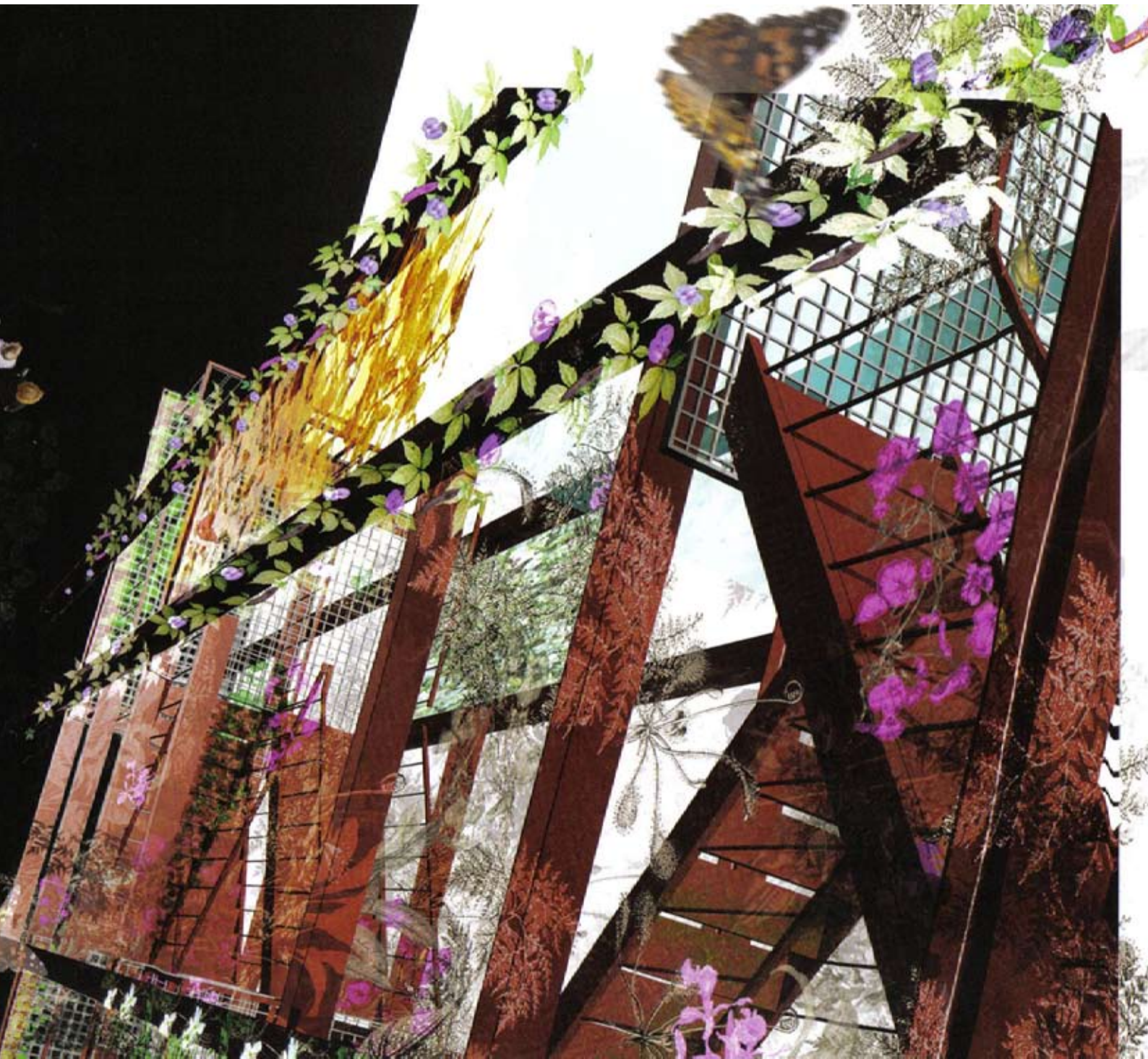
The Crafters Project revealed that certain woman who completed the Sewing Course and had received a sewing machine, went on to start up their own business and became the source providers (the basic pillow case) to other Cushion Ladies. This further revealed the potential market that can be achieved within the District, if these Crafters remained in the city to provide others with skills.
The Project was in effort to incorporate the existing underdeveloped skills in the Fashion District as part of establishing relationships with SewAfrica and including the exterior of the District as part of an Interior Project. The Crafters were seen as part of the Fashion District and its vibrancy.

Christian M. Rogerson in his presentation "Pro-Poor Local Economic Development in post-Apartheid South Africa: The Johannesburg Fashion District" views the Fashion District as "an example of a promising form of pro-poor intervention". He further states, "More broadly, the Fashion District serves as an illustration of South African innovative LED with potential lessons for LED in other parts of the developing world". (Openshaw 2004: 1)

(Below) Photograph: Author's Own; Britgitta Stone

The Crafters in the Fashion District.



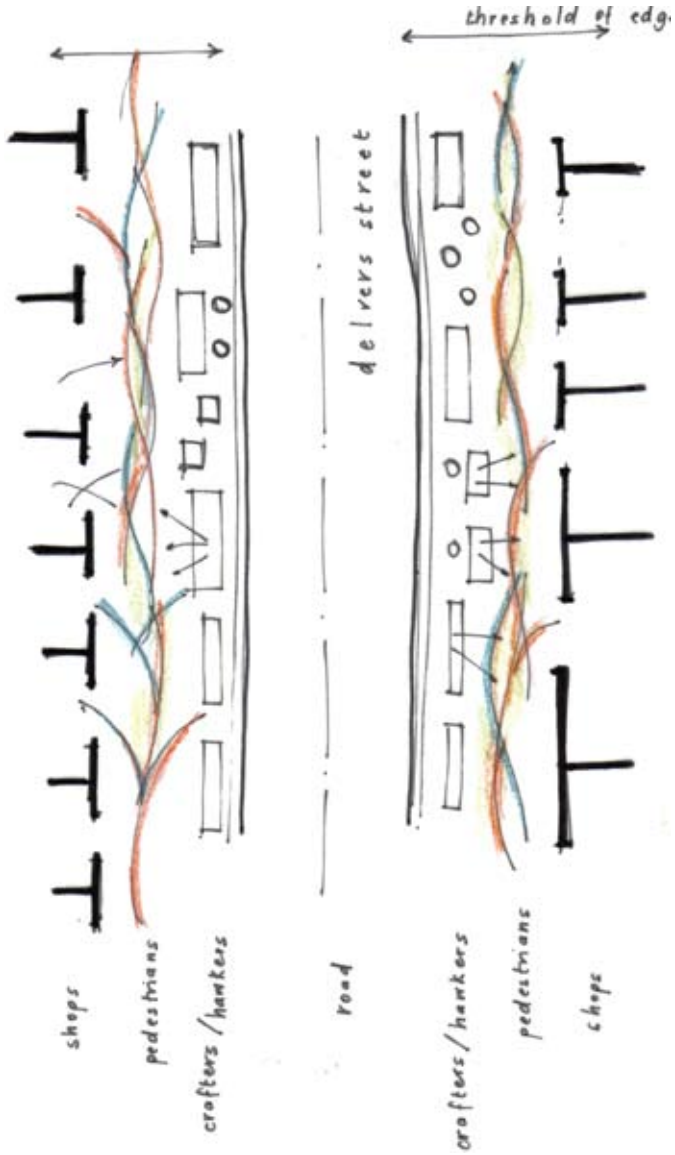


Themes : Themes

1. *Edge Philosophy*
2. *Sense Exploration*
3. *City vs. Nature*
4. *Sunlight*

Conceptual Ideas regarding Green Vertical Walls
Gross Max, Vertical Garden, London 2005 (Spens 2007: 77)

(Below) Image depicting various edges on Delvers Street: Fashion District.



EDGE PHILOSOPHY

There are various themes that guided the process of this Project and various inspirational projects that were viewed in a positive light as to what can be achieved these days, with new conceptual ideas emerging on the ways cities are dealing with similar problems. These themes can be further described as the themes of edges, sensory experiences, nature and light. They can all be said to be interconnected to one another but they are explained separately as to portray their significance to this thesis.

The edges of a city are extremely important as they can define various elements of space e.g. buildings, streets or public spaces. The word "edge" in terms of architecture can be connected to various elements in the city: these elements can be related to history, layers, people, activities, movement, etc. Although edges can be a part of endless formations of a city i.e. streets, they can also define smaller pockets of space in-between. In understanding the edges of a city one is closer to gaining more accuracy in the ways cities work and the ways in which people are using space or are transforming it.

The edges of the Fashion District can be further composed of impermeable spaces through to permeable ones. For example, the fusion of people moving through the city results in a particular space. This space is continuously in motion and although it cannot be entirely defined by linear movement, it can form a part of permeable edges of passage or liquid.
Transient edges can be verified by the people who use the streets as part of their working space. Their spaces are not permanent and can easily be occupied by another or respectively change due to weather conditions.
Permanent spaces are noted in the shops surrounding the Fashion District which are in more constant in shape and









These spaces and edges form a distinctive part of the Fashion District that is highly informative as to how people are currently using the city. Part of the design process was the understanding of these edges and how to incorporate them back into a design which would nurture them. The edges of life that exist need to be moulded and formed into the design interventions that are to be created through the understanding of the elements that make up many people's daily lives. The edges of impermanent and permanent life that exist need to be catered for as they form a vital part of how people use and desire the Fashion District today.

The edges described so far are partly the edges that define city perspectives but edges can be further explained in the development of the building process. There is firstly, the edge that defines where the building sits within the city and its relationship to it. Furthermore, are the edges that identify the spaces within a building. In working with children, these edges became specific not only for safety precautions but by softly indicating different spaces for different uses without having to be blunt as edges can form seating spaces, viewing points, fun accessibility, etc.

(Top Left) Edge Definition for Children: One space can mean many spaces within. (Hertzberger 1991: 184)
(Bottom Left) Children playing on edges that define boundaries at the Delft Day Care Centre, Cape Flats, Cape Town. (Deckler 2006: 86)

SENSE EXPLORATION

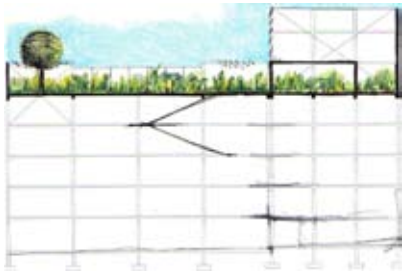
Another theme which is fundamental to this project is the idea of creating an architecture that is part of an experience by investigating the five senses. Sight, sound, touch, taste and smell. Part of the experience is to enhance the lives of children in the Inner City whose sense exploration through nature and the city is limited by their access. Although, the city as a sensory experience is very enriching, it does not provide many opportunities for nature to exist and the experience of the Fashion District can sometimes be too overwhelming. There are various parts of the Inner City that are filled with pollution and this is the type of experience that children do not need and can result in an astounding experience where children and childhood are somehow lost in between. These are the places where the experiential components of a sensory journey are too immense and too excessive to be appreciated or captured. An expansive sensory experience is fundamental to the development of children as it is part of an experience and discovery between the relationships of their bodies to their surroundings. This idea was further explored and explained in the book "The eyes of the skin" by Juhani Pallasmaa where he wrote: "we touch, listen and measure the world with our entire bodily existence and the experiential world becomes organized and articulated around the centre of the body." This is denoted in both children and adults alike, but the exploratory dimensions of children at a young age develop certain personality traits and ways of dealing with the world that if not explored at a young age can become detrimental to their experiences into the world as adults.

(Left) Image: Photographs: Authors Own
Children experiencing the outside world in Mother Theresa's, Berea, Johannesburg. These children have little experience with nature and texture. Occupational Therapist's attend to these children once a week where they organize sensory experiences.

The lack of sensory exploration is evident as these children are initially scared of textures like grass and sand but through assistance and exposure, they learn to play and experience.







(Left) Image: Authors Own: Reflecting the Idea of a Green Rooftop as Outdoor Green Play Space within design proposal.

(Below) Inspiration: Green Rooftops for Buenos Aires. (www.holcimfoundation.org)





CITY VS. NATURE

Nature can become a very practical and positive solution to providing environments which can cater for a variety of natural textures and experiences in aid of all the five senses. Nature "can be an important learning opportunity and can also contribute significantly to food provision." (Bartlett 1999: 181) It can provide a softer barrier/façade to the existing nature of our cities and also be highly interactive amongst children and adults. Nature in the inner city of Johannesburg is hardly evident with the exception of Joubert Park which offers many a place of sanctuary in between a highly dense and concrete world. The Inner City of Johannesburg and more precisely the Fashion District offers no green spaces for play and no opportunities for such large green spaces to occur. Inspiration was noted in the numerous projects currently underway in many cities which are focused on re-introducing nature back into their daily lives. This led to thoughts based on a paragraph written by N.Teymur entitled Re-Architecture where he wrote: "Urban adults idea of rest tends to be a run away from the mess that they have participated in creating and to find refuge in the countryside, in order to rehabilitate their sense and to replenish their energy so that they can continue their work in cities with more vigour (hence build more, destroy more, build more, destroy more..) Children on the other hand, have neither of these hang ups. They want science fiction reality and imaginary landscapes right where they are: in the middle of the city." (Teymur 2002: 132)

Perhaps, some of this magic can be revitalized through the integration of nature back into what appears to be a very hard and concrete edged city.

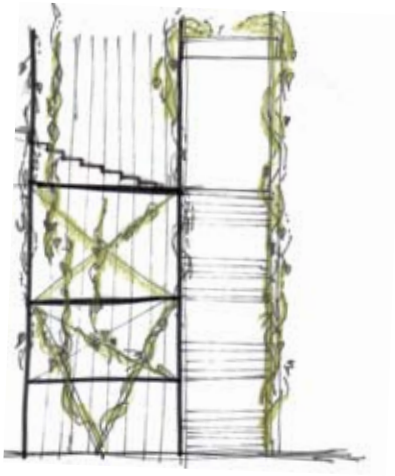
Some of these projects based in cities, face similar problems and situations being the lack of horizontality. They have in turn resolved various solutions through the use of the vertical space available instead. The rooftop space in the Inner City is the most neglected space due to buildings being underused for storage purposes which results in no activity to occur within. This thesis was stimulated by various landscape projects which worked within limited means and regarded nature and green as important factors to be re-introduced back into the city. The first was the project entitled "Green Rooftops for Buenos Aires which proposed for various rooftops in the City to be converted into green outdoor spaces. This would not only provide another space for people to enjoy but would enable more people to become acquainted with each other within buildings.
The second project was an Urban Vertical Park entitled MFO Park in Zurich, Switzerland which used the lack of horizontality as the concept for a vertical playground. The park is built up and through the use of creepers various vertical walls have been created as soft and playful spaces throughout the intervention.











(Top) MFO Park in Switzerland within urban context.
(Middle) MFO Park in Switzerland
(Left) Authors Own: Image depicting nature of structure at MFO Park. Lightweight steel frame allowing plants to ravel through and create green walls.
(Far Left) Children experiencing Nature: Water. Sense Exploration. (Hertzberger 1991: 168)

ildhood

01

02

Different forms of light and the ways in which structure can influence definations of “play”. The theme of play and light was further adopted in the design process as ways to teach children about nature, shadows, shapes, time, etc.

01. (Image: Tischhauser 2005: 40) Notre Dame du Hant, Ronchamp.
02. (Image: Tischhauser 2005: 62) Light can form a non physical boundary.
03. (Image: Tischhauser 2005: 194) Hal Morey’s famous photograph of sunlight streaming in through the windows of Grand Central Station.
04. (Image: Tischhauser 2005: 16) Natural Light
05. (Image: Tischhauser 2005: 16)) Moonlight.





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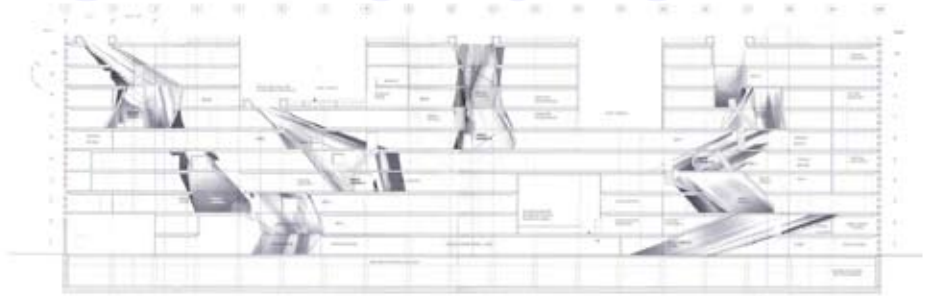

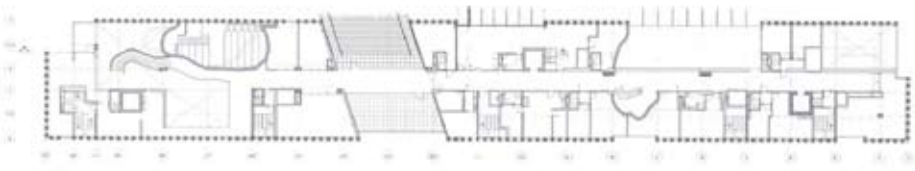

(Left) Image: (Holl 2000: 101)
Stevel Holls MIT Campus. Section and Play showing ways in which slabs are broken in order to allow light to filter straight through the building: vertically. These ideas were later adopted for the Design Process where issues of light and existing verticality were evident.

03





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05



L I G H T

Light was another important theme within this project because it provides all fundamental aspects regarding children's experience within the world and healthy environments.

Light is part of the experience of life and was seen as the catalyst to providing more fun filled spaces for children where they can learn about growth, shadow, texture, colour etc. Without light there is no colour.

It also contributes to healthier spaces which are fundamental to this project as it was the first factor to be noted as a critical missing element within the lives of the Children in the Fashion District.

How does one allow for light to filter through within a dense, urban fabric? Architect Steven Holl, in the design of the MIT Campus (Image: Left) allowed for light to form the shapes and holes of the building thus breaking away certain slabs and creating skylights.
Light is also connected to time via shadows and this was another idea which was to be implemented within the programme and play space for children.

'Light is integral to architecture; it reveals beauty, function and form. It defines the image, colour and texture or buildings, cities and landscapes. It determines visual boundaries and our understanding of scale. The built environment is designed not only to provide light, but also to be experienced in light. Whatever we are doing in our lives, light plays a part. Light is a communication tool; light is energy; light is magic. Light is life. Our world is Made of Light. (Tischhauser 2005: 1)

Precedents: Case Studies

- *The Vertical World*
- *Natural Architecture*
- *Child and Parent Connectivity*

(Left) Authors Own
Compilation of Nature and City Images depicting the lack of Nature within the Fashion District, Johannesburg.

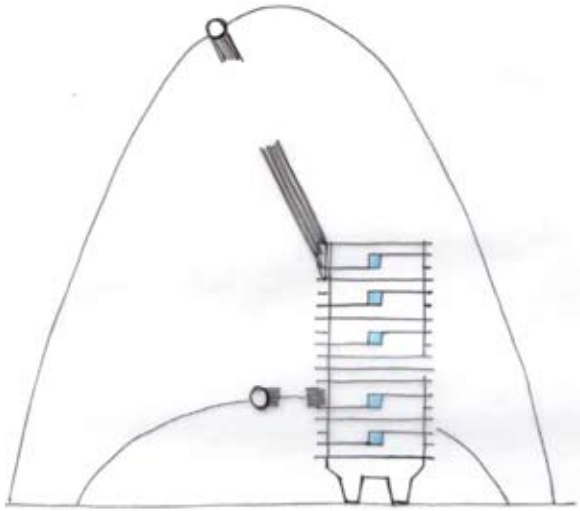
THE VERTICAL WORLD

Verticality is not a new issue or concept which hasn't been discussed and configured by many cities around the world. And in the context of the Inner City of Johannesburg where large amounts of vertical spaces are discarded, there is a need to recover some of this lost space as a means to recover some of the vibrancy and diversity that existed as part of a once highly cosmopolitan city.

One of the most prominent cases regarding verticality is the Unite d'Habitation in Marseilles by the French Architect, Le Corbuiser. "Le Corbuiser aimed to reconcile high density urban living with the provision of light and space and greenery in the integration of social and communal facilities within a housing block. There is clear conception of the building as a city, where corridors take the form of internal streets, linking the building across its ends and expressing the notion of a unified community. (Curtis 1996: 287) It was a solution to the large amounts of people inhabiting the same place at the same time, where much needed accommodation (residency) and infrastructure was needed otherwise known as the period that defined the meanings of Modernism.

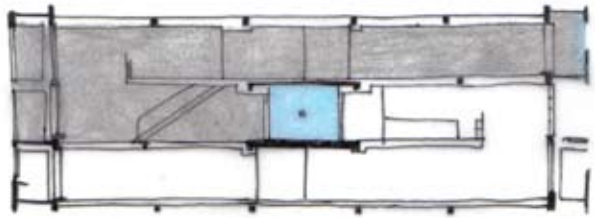
(Below) Residential Units at the Unite d'Habitation showing how Double Volume spaces results in great light to filter into space. (Hertzberger 1991: 205)





(Above) Sketch of Unite showing how apartment units are designed as to receive both northern and southern light. Blue indicate Indoor corridor.

(Below) Close up of Residential Units at the Unite d'Habitation, showing how units are interlocked with one another resulting in the provision of good light and comfortable space.



The Unite d'Habitation was a mixed-use module form of architecture which was a large residential compound including other facilities designed to accommodate up to 1200 inhabitants. The design of the Unite d'Habitation was revolutionary in terms of vertical compact residential units which were all designed to have double volume spaces to require sufficient light. Each unit was designed in such a manner that both edges made use of both northern and southern light. The Unite d'Habitation was placed on large pilotis in order to allow for the land to be utilized for either large urban parks or undisturbed traffic.

The Unite d'Habitation was looked at as a case study for this thesis because firstly it deals with the idea of housing functions vertically and secondly, its design incorporated the idea of having the children's play space on the roof. Le Corbusier believed that the safest place for children was on the rooftop away from traffic and other threats.
"The importance of children and playgrounds for Le Corbusier was manifested in a very different context in his design for the Unite d'Habitation. In the publications of the building he always emphasized children in his photographs of the famous rooftop garden. (Lefaivre 1999:18)

In recognizing the values and progression that the Unite d'Habitation had on the built environment, one also needs to acknowledge its faults and mishaps. For example, the idea of people being contained within a permanent environment did not suit its habitants. In a city where many public facilities are available, users preferred to go outside than to remain within the Unite d'Habitation. The building does not, however, have any relationship to its surroundings. It is an Architectural module that can be applied anywhere in the world.

At a time when large amounts of infrastructure were needed and a fast solution was required, this module proved highly efficient as its basic design components were based on the theories of mass production. Much of the Architecture based in Johannesburg, was built and designed out of the same principles and out the same problem that occurred when many people begun inhabiting the city.

There are both disadvantages and advantages to this design and were either considered, neglected or incorporated into the further development of this project. An issue which was highlighted where some of the problems regarding verticality in terms of mixed use functions and how if they were not woven into a more complex and dynamic urban fabric, they proved to be inefficient.

However, the advantages were placed on light and the design resolutions of space based in the vertical context while disadvantages were based on the fact that the building had no interaction with its surroundings.

"I believe that buildings which misbehave towards what exists outside them will also tend to misbehave towards what is inside them – towards what they were meant to fulfill. Thus the right relationship between inside and outside is not only a spatial one but also a temporal one. A building as a neutral alien object in time and space is just another modern invention." (Ligtelijn 1999: 184)



(Below) Images of the Unite d'Habitation portraying exterior facades and Rooftop Scenes: (Internet: www.pbase.com)













(Above) Photograph: (www.holcimfoundation.org)
Interior Space. Light construction is evident as well as the clear incorporation of Light. The Ceiling is also decorated with soft fabric. The idea of “fabric” was also later developed.

NATURAL ARCHITECTURE

A Project which has a direct relationship to its surroundings is the Handmade School in Rudrapur, Bangladesh. It speaks of an Architecture which is extremely humble and modest and its design is guided by its natural environment and people. It is not about modular architecture or mass production and is not situated in the context of a City where horizontal green space is almost non-existent.

The Handmade School was a project designed for children but the spaces are considered multi-functional as the community is also allowed to inhabit the spaces when children are not utilizing it. There are however, particular spaces that were solely designed for children and in which adults cannot access.

This is about an architecture that speaks of humanity and is designed in such a manner that it accepts the outside as part of the inside and vice versa. There is an element of openess within the same element of protectiveness. The edges of this lightweight architecture allow for the outside to penetrate inside, through light, natural materials and a particular scale which allows children to experience the outside world. This is achieved by regarding scale and height and providing the correct architectural means within.

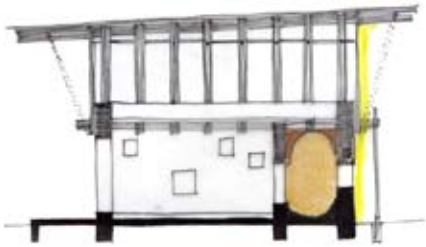
It can almost be defined by a pure creation of spirit, experience and wholeness. The Handmade School speaks of a unified expression of humane collaboration where it has developed into such a form that can almost express the formations of nature out of the earth.

The Architects textural expression responded through the natural surroundings by using on site materials for not only economical purposes, but because it represented the lives of the people who lived and worked there. The design evolved into simplicity not only via its form but through its construction which enabled the community to be part of the building process. There were also delicate decisions that were made in the use of colour and light which resulted in sunlight filled spaces with colourful strips of material softly hanging from the ceiling.(Refer to Image on Previous Page). Clay interiors are warm extensions of the earth and provide fun spaces for children to play and hide.

Even though the Fashion District proves to be within an entirely different context, there are many and very fundamental ideas from the Handmade School which were adopted into the design process for this thesis. For example and in particular, are the ways in which the Handmade School's Architecture speaks of a certain level of wholeness, respect and understanding to its context. Secondly, the ways in which spaces became more than just spaces for children but for adults too. And thirdly, the subtle use of materials and light and how they too, transformed into the language of lightweight architecture.



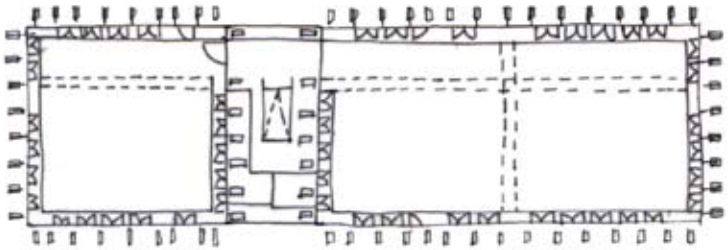


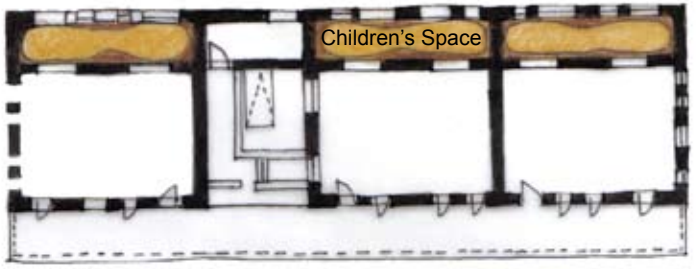


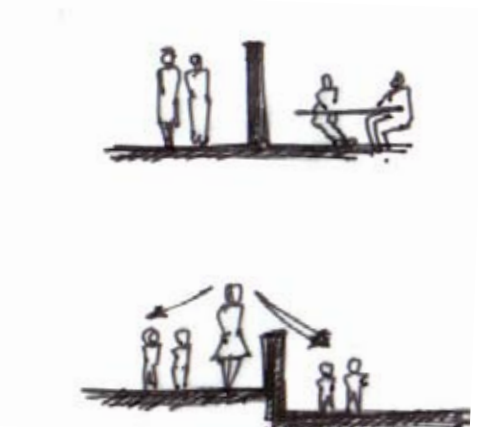
(Right) Image: Sketch of the Handmade School

Plans and Section indicate simple forms.This allowed for the project to be a communnity collaboration as locals were able to participate in the construction process.

The clay spaces (shown in the diagram) at the back are spaces only for children. This allows them to crawl into spaces and have their own quiet space away from the Main Hall.







(Above) Image: Vertical Visual Connections through edges and different levels.
(Authors Own)

The Ways in which edges and height could begin to define space while still remaining connective.

01. Hubertus House.
(Ligtelijn 1999:195)
Parent watching children while the play below.

02. Hubertus House
(Ligtelijn 1999:185)
Different Levels in the front of the building as to allow its edge to become a part of the street, accepting the outside as part of the inside.

03. Hubertus House.
(Ligtelijn 1999:194)
Children playing on stairs. The detail in the landing shows ways in which functions can have double meanings. A landing could also

01



02



03



CHILD AND PARENT CONNECTIVITY

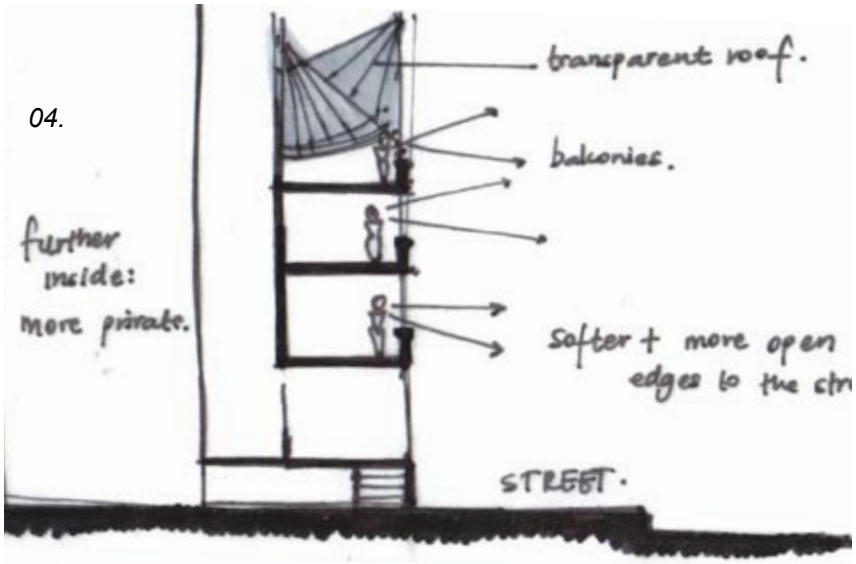
Another case study which was investigated was the Hubertus House, Home for Single Parents and their Children on Plantage Middenlaan in Amsterdem by Aldo van Eyck. A Dutch Architect as well as a prominent figure in Team X who tried to redefine the operational concept of play, work, collective event and individual activity in order at arrive at a higher definition of functionality. (Lefaivre 1999:11)

The building speaks of interconnecting spaces through verticality which provides various levels and thus various viewing, connection points between parent and child. Its design is also based on the connection between an old building and a new one. Even though, the building is composed of various mixed functions, the main focus is placed on children and childhood. The building speaks of many spaces into which children can play, hide, interact with many others or play individually but within a building which is safe and in the presence of adults. By reducing the floor area upwards from floor to floor i.e. stepping back the volume from floor to floor, sun and air penetrate deep into the building, by ways of loggias and roof terraces (Ligtelijn 1999: 184). This not only places emphasis on the importance of light and air for a healthy building but also slowly breaks away from the defined street edges which allows for the building to become more open towards an edge which is usually quite linear. The building therefore becomes more open to the street as opposed to being tucked away towards the back and having no relationship to what exists outside. The entrance into the building is via the old, but the edges have been transformed into more inviting ones, simply by their curved forms and protruding steps outside.

There is also a distinctive play on light and colour. Light filters into almost every single part of the building despite its level changes and spatial derivations. The use of lightweight structure and transparent materials aids in the light quality that seems to exist throughout. Colour is also a consistent theme where if not exposed via tile-work, it is painted throughout the building or above door frames. There is a paragraph entitled "Again the Prisms in my Childhood" written by Aldo van Eyck where he recollects memories of what colour and light meant to him during his childhood. Children and adults alike are amazed by such natural and simple devices that are used to explain the breaking of light into seven colours: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet. And it is these simple notions of light and colour that Aldo van Eyck uses to enhance and delightfully soften building space into play and structure into amusement.

The design development of this thesis was based on similar design principles which were evident in the Hubertus House. Firstly, visual connections within the vertical became an important design tool for this project especially in designing for children which meant that a sensory visual experience could be achieved as a form of play and interaction. Secondly, was the ways in which Hubertus House was softened notably on the street edge which allowed for the building to acquire a different relation to what exists outside, accepting the outside as part of the inside and vice versa. Lastly, the use of colour and light as a means to enhance and enrich spaces for children and adults alike, through materials. The word "material" also begun to indicate more possibilities and opportunities as working within the surroundings of the Fashion District meant that vast amounts and variety of materials were available. Connotations of colour, softness, and light could also be linked.

04.



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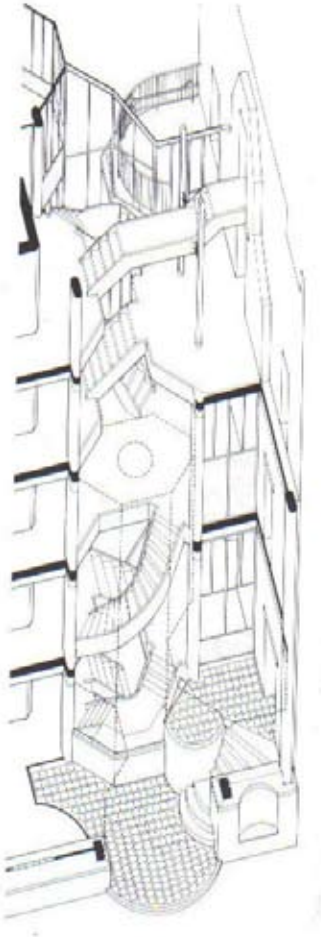


04. Interpretation of the Image below through section where balcony space has been considered to have a unique relationship to the street. Even though it is a seperate element, it allows for the building to be open, yet protected as the same time.

05. Image: Hubertus House
(Ligtelijn 1999: 186)

Image portraying different levels and circulation. It also captures a certain essence of "play" which is denoted into its intertwining fixture of different levels and visual points.

The idea of "breaking" slabs as a light filtration technique, visual connections and its relationship to the existing exterior were themes and ideas which were later incorporated into the design process.

S C A L E

The Orphanage in Amsterdam designed by the Architect Aldo van Eyck was studied because of its relevance to scale and space for children. Scale plays an important theme throughout this project and can be noted in almost every space within the building. It can be verified in the overall plan which is composed of many small modular blocks which allow for a particular sense of freedom in space being able to become more than just one space. This is a module which can be further fragmented into many more spaces which can be described in a grid that exists within a grid that is never-ending. This is further explained in his statement: "tree is a leaf and leaf is a tree, a house is a city and city is house, a tree is a tree but it is also a huge leaf, a leaf is a leaf, but it is also a tiny tree, a city is not a city unless it is also a huge house, a house is a house only if it is also a tiny city. (Lefaivre 1999:49)

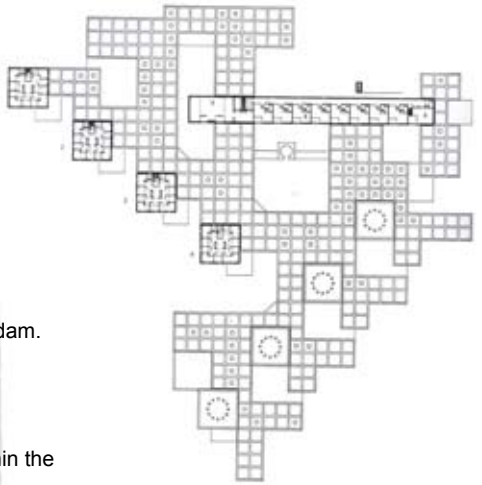
Scale is evident within play spaces for children where walls are designed to have holes for visual connections and where columns become spaces surrounded by seating edges. These edges and play spaces are designed either for children of all ages or particular age groups where the definition of space becomes fundamental to the size of the body. The extent to which scale is portrayed within this project is even to be noted in the design of the kettle holder on the table which prevents children from touching hot surfaces.

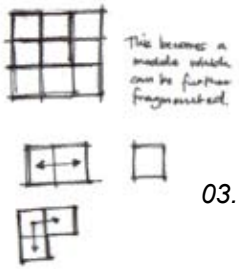
The concept of the circle within the Orphanage is explored as not only a shape which sustains harmony, balance and wholeness but also as part of a space which does not have any boundaries. The first explanation of the circle within the context of this building is the reference to the circle proposing more than one space. Lines are drawn on floor surfaces as play spaces around columns and collective spaces.

01.



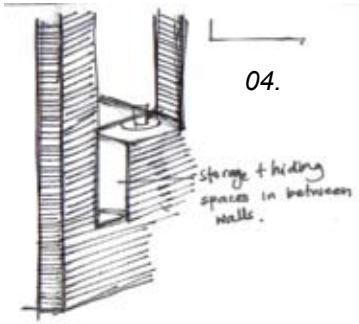
02.





03.

01. Orphanage Elevation: Amsterdam. (Ligtelijn 1999: 91)
02. Orphanage: Modular Plan (Ligtelijn 1999: 95)
03. Authors Own: Sketch
Portraying scale and freedom within the modular system.
04. Authors Own: Sketch
Holes within Walls adding another spatial dimension.
05. Authors Own: Sketch
Circular Seating Space around Column.
06. Kettle Holder (Ligtelijn 1999: 99)



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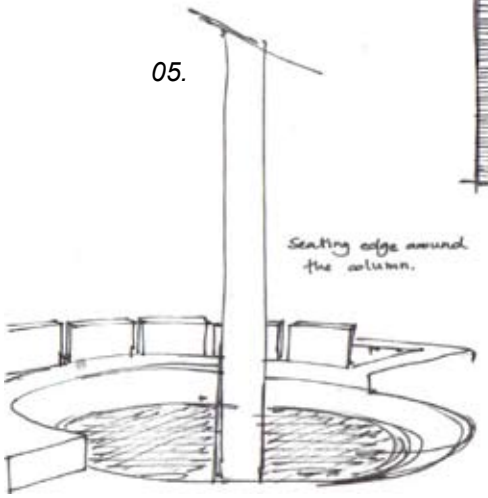
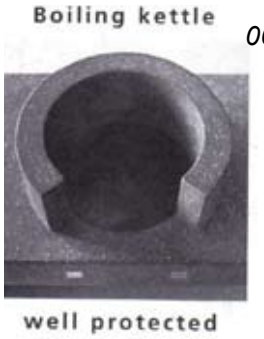




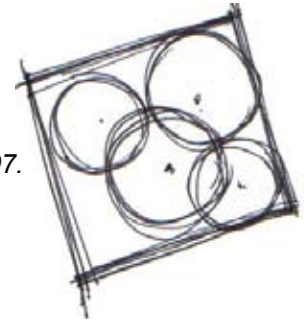
06.

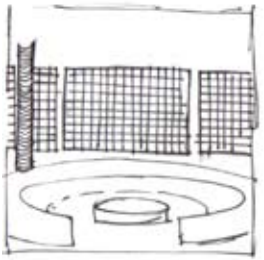
The circle, however, also contributes to an understanding of space that is composed of many circles which are defined by a centre point only to emphasis the idea that a space can be made of many centre points and space can exist within space itself. (Refer to Image 06.)

The idea of scale is important to consider in regards to designing good and meaningful play spaces for this project as well as considering in between spaces for children.

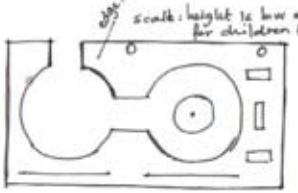
It also led to consider other connotations to scale regarding "opposites" such as large to small to large, light into shadow into light, outside to inside to outside, etc.

07.





09.



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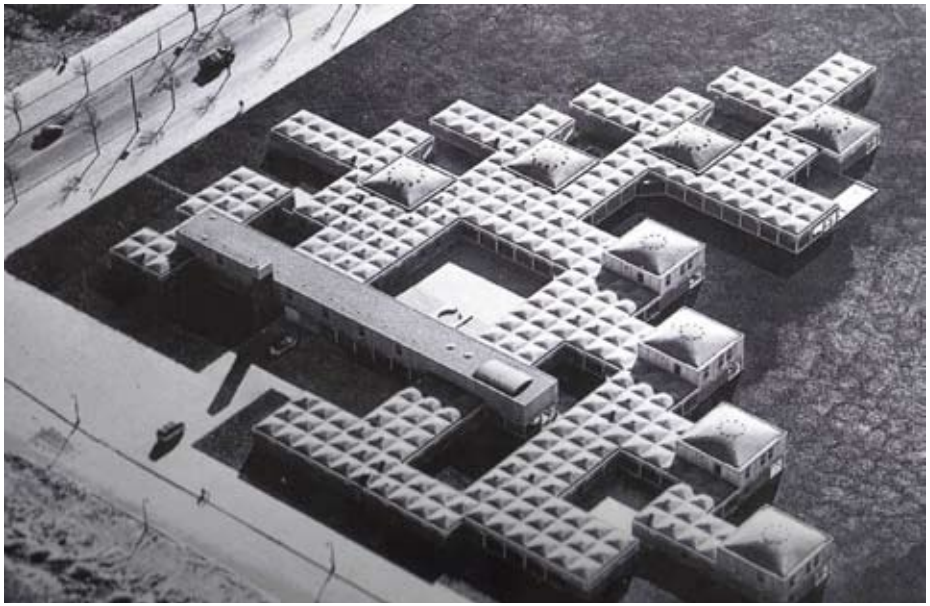


07. Authors Own: Sketch revealing circle proporties within space.
08. Girl in Orphanage. (Ligtelijn 1999: 99)
09. Authors Own: Sketches demonstrating circle spaces and edge definations. The room therefore becomes a room in which a child can climb, jump and run.
10. Aerial perspective of Orphanage. (Ligtelijn 1999: 91)

(Right) Authors Own Compilation of Themes, Nature, Children, People and City. Depicting a Collection Process.



P r o g r a m m e : Space Collection Process

- Information Compilation
- The Users

1. *The Children*
2. *Parent/Worker*
3. *The Resident*
4. *Maintenance and Management*

I N F O R M A T I O N C O M P I L A T I O N

One of the reoccurring themes in this project is the theme of collection. It is the process that defines the gathering of information within a city through its streets, people, shops, ideas etc. The idea of also compiling information can refer to an element of play. At the same time, it can have connotations to weaving complex information into a form, either through descriptions of fabric or through descriptions of small fragments disconnected and unraveled out of city components.

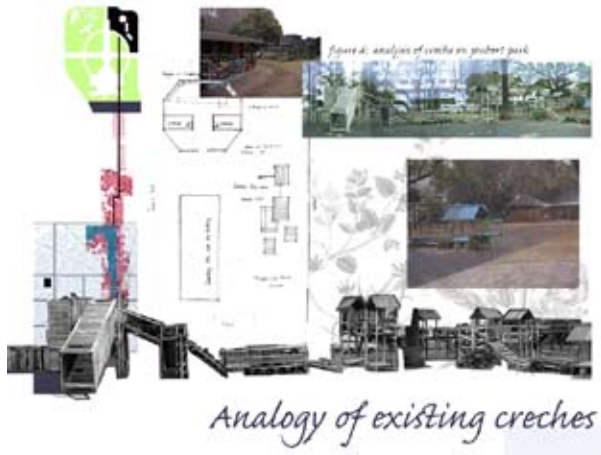
The programme was the interpretation of the compilation of much gathered information into a new light form. Although this thesis begun with the intention to improve the spaces provided for children in the Fashion District, it transformed into a mixed variety of uses as a positive resolution to what the city and children might need.

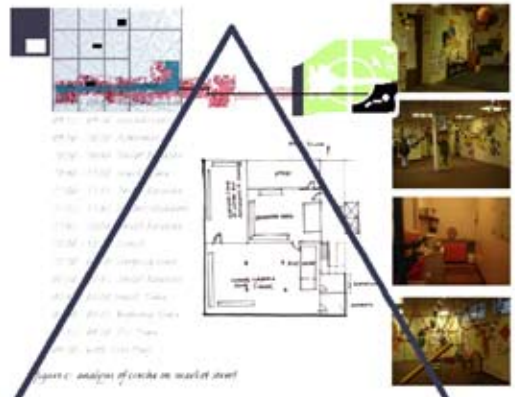
In recognizing that there is an existing poor economy that needs to be uplifted in order to begin to provide any means to alternative options, the idea to target the parents of the children was necessary as well as understanding the spaces that are provided for them. And thus, in furthering this concept, the idea of incorporating both parents and children into a building programme seemed viable as a solution to benefit both.

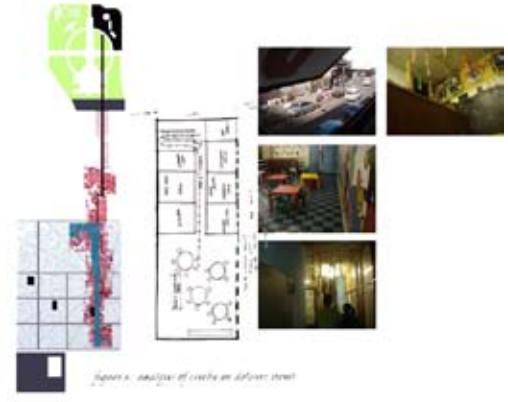
The context of the Fashion District, revealed particular information which was necessary in understanding what opportunities and possibilities could be incorporated into a working programme for children and adults. By using existing modules that work in our Inner City within a particular social and economical situation meant the programme was highly centered on providing a sensitive and improved architectural solution that would not be alien to the city and blend in quite comfortably to its surroundings.

The Programme was also refined by acknowledging three worlds which were to exist within the building. These three worlds/spaces were that of the children, the parents and the public and how they too, developed into a design which didn't separate the three entirely by walls, but rather by soft edges.

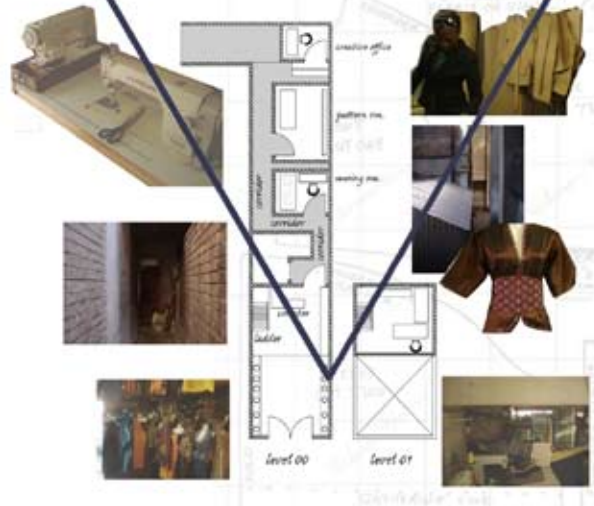
The programme developed into a play space for children intertwined within a working space for parents. The programme is then further divided into smaller opportunities and shops to allow for some of the micro-businesses in the District that are run by parents to insert into the building programme as business ventures. Ground level exposure of these shops will promote more business and thus a better turnover.











(Right) Image: Intial Programme Compilation: Process

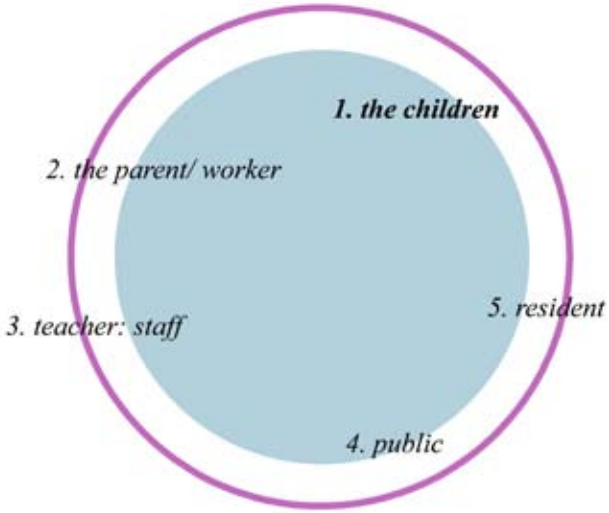
This Image defines the beginnings of the programme which is to include not only improved play spaces for children but a place for parents to work, creating an economic catalyst to benefit both parents and children.

The Image also indicates that the Programme was composed of groundwork where School Analogies revealed missing functions. The Economic Catalyst was based on an existing shop which is successful and has been able to expand within the Fashion District.

The ideas were based on existing modules which work for the people within the conext of the Inner City, Fashion District. This means that by understanding these modules, the final design would enable it to form a distinct relationship to existing networks and surroundings.

(Below) Image

User Groups



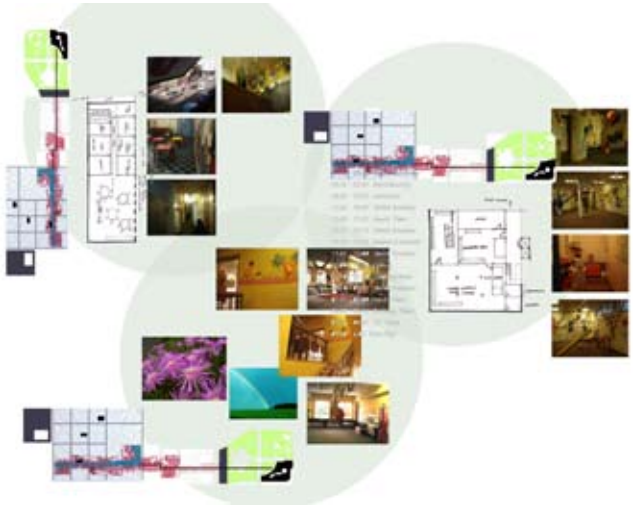
1. THE CHILDREN

The initial groundings for this project were to provide healthier spaces for children to develop, learn and play through the provisions of light and nature. At the same time, there was a desire to create more stimulating environments to which children could be exposed to. These environments needed to be safe, not only through design interventions and equipment but also through familiarity and community networks that would promote the presence of adults.

An analogy of visited Pre-Schools in the Area and Suburbs alike enabled one to distinguish between what is missing in terms of spatial design and if there were any positive elements, which could be nurtured. A table was conducted through the information that was provided through these visits and various aspects were highlighted. In amongst the most notable ones were the lack of outdoor play, inadequate light and ventilation.

Another disadvantage found within most schools in the Fashion District was that no classroom divisions were evident: thus this aspect was re-introduced into the School Design. Classrooms are necessary as they do not only provide children with their own space, as a small collective, but also the divisions allow for different activities and learning capabilities to be supported at a more meaningful and manageable level.

Although a Programme was developed through the noted disadvantages and advantages of various schools, another programme was extended to the access of the building i.e. if the building was to house children and parents alike, then there was the opportunity for interaction through spaces to occur and for children to mix within many other parts of the building that were not merely only school spaces, through the intervention of play.



	Glenhazel Nursery School: Suburbs	Eden Garden Pre-School: Fashion District	Barbie's Pre-School and Creche: Fashion District	Hollywood Pre-School: Inner City	Lapeng: Joubert Park
Clasroom Space	*Clasrooms: Division of Ages: 2-3; 3-4; 4-5; 5-6*	*No Divisions One Multi Functional Room*	*Some Divisions but not enough teachers to be able to assist.*	*No Divisions One Multi Functional Room*	*No Divisions One Multi Functional Room*
Light	*Good Light throughout*	*Good Light Situated on the 3rd floor. North facing*	*Bad Light. Artificial Light remains on all day.*	*Bad Light. Artificial Light remains on all day.Bad ventilation.*	*Good Light but Bad Design.*
Bathroom Kitchen	*Good Bathrooms. Sufficient. Kitchen: Seperate Element*	*Good Kitchen. Good Bathrooms. Well maintained.*	*Bad Bathrooms. Only 2 plastic pots and adults bathroom. Insufficient. Good Kitchen but no nature light.*	*Insufficient Bathrooms. Medium Kitchen.*	*Medium Bathrooms. Medium Kitchen*
Play Space Indoor/ Oudoor Accessibility to other facilities	*Large Outdoor Play Space with plenty of equipment. Good Large Indoor Space - no access to other facilities: have to use transport.*	*No Outdoor Play Space. Large Indoor Play but space has no access to good natural light. - Very few trips to Joubert Park.*	*No outdoor play Space. Large Indoor Play Space. Bad Light. - Few trips to Joubert Park and Public Library.*	*No Outdoor Play Space. Small Indoor Play Space. Bad Light. - Very few trips to Joubert Park*	*Large Outdoor Play Space with Large Jungle Gym. - Access to GreenHouse, JAG. Many children come to use their facilities. Good Interaction.*

(Top Left) Pre-School Analogy

Image portraying the Design Programme which entailed the assembly of information gathered from various schools.

(Bottom Left) Table Analogy

A Table was conducted in order to gain insight into the positive and negative aspects regarding Children's Spaces in the Fashion District.
They were broken down into components which seemed critical to provide more stimulating and enhancing environments. From this analogy, a Programme was later established.

Table provided by Occupational Therapists (University of the Witwatersrand) indicating child gross motor skills at different ages. This was neccessary to consider especially in designing spaces for children and understanding their capabilities.

A3 Gross Motor	24 months	30 month	36 months	42 months	48 months	54 months	60 months	72 months
CLIMB	Climbs on chair to look out the window. Can get down again	Climbs easy nursery apparatus. Climbs in on over	Climbs nursery apparatus with agility.		Climbs ladders and trees. Somersaults.	Plays safely on jungle gym.	Skilful in climbing, sliding, swinging, digging	
STAIRS	Walks up alone 2 feet to a step. Holds on. Walks 2 feet to a step.		Up alone. Alternates feet. Can carry toy. Down 2 feet to a step.		Walks down one foot to a step.		Walks down carrying object in both hands.	
JUMP		Jumps two feet together. Both feet off floor.	Jumps in one place. Jumps down from step two feet together – girls.	Jumps both feet leave the floor. Jumps down step two feet tog - boys	Running or standing broad jump ± 50 cms	± 60 cms	± 66 cms	Jumps from ht of 30 cms. Lands toes 80 cms.
TRICYCLE	Sits on small trike can't use pedals. Propels forward with feet.	Begins to pedal.	Rides tricycle using pedals. Can steer round wide corners.		Expert Rider. Executing sharp U-turns.			
STAND STATIC BALANCE	Picks up object off floor no falling. Squats to play very steady.	Tries to stand on one foot.	Stands on one leg momentarily. Can balance on tiptoe.	On one leg. 2 secs or more	2 – 7secs.	8 secs.	9 secs. On toes 10 secs.	One leg 15 secs. Eyes open.
STAND DYNAMIC BALANCE				Hops on preferred leg. Gallops	Hops forward. Preferred leg ± 1m.	Hops 2-3 meters either leg skips alternating.	Hops 2-3 meters either leg. Skips alternately.	Hopping forward. Hand on hips 5m.
WALK	Walks backwards pulling toy. Running well no falling. Starts with ease.	Walks on tiptoe if held.	Walks forward sideways back hauling toys. Runs with feet & arms alternating.	Walks on tiptoes Runs smoothly and well.	Runs on tiptoe	Runs well on toes	Walks along chalked line. Runs lightly on toes.	Carries liquid 2 and a half meters- no spilling.
BALL KICK	Walks into ball when trying to kick. Lifts one foot momentarily.	May run to ball but stops before kick. Kicks it but gently & lopsidedly.	Kicks ball forcibly.	Running kick at ball accurate.			Plays ball games with agility.	
BALL CATCH			20 cm ball between arms and body or between ext arms		Catches bounced ball (20 cms)	20 cm ball between hands and body.	Bounce tennis ball. 4 clean catches out of 10. 2 hands.	Bounce tennis ball 8 out of 10 prefer. 5 out of 10 other.

The table on the left was required to understand the ways in which children develop through their experiences via their bodies and surroundings and their capabilities within the vertical context. This information will further be implemented into the design.

For example, a three year old child is experiencing and understanding space at a different level to that of a child of six years, who has already mastered the understanding of space and can differentiate between levels and edges. The experience of an edge for seating can mean different spaces for children according to their age, size, development, etc. Through gross motor skills development, children will begin to understand space differently and this needs to be understood by designers as it creates an understanding of how to interpret space differently according to its users.

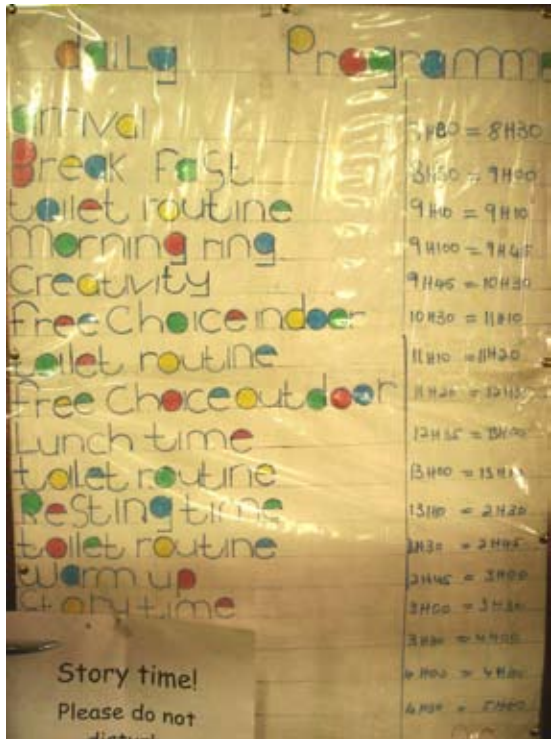
These ideas of scale and experience were downsized to providing playful spaces within the building. Children play under stairs, find space in between walls and fabric. These are the spaces that adults dismiss as part of any spatial experience. These spaces provide various opportunities to hide, places to run, climb, jump off, etc. Children experience space in a lighthearted manner which allows them to explore and imagine. Adults and designers, alike, seem to have forgotten about these spaces which bring joy and delight to the nature of a space. It is in designing the details, in small micro manners that large spaces are broken into smaller ones, where corners are just as important as the essence and centre of any space.

These are the play spaces which need to be designed for and in understanding spatial and bodily dimensions of children, one is able gather more information as to how they might experience and interpret space.

Although the design programme was formulated through the compilation of missing elements which were considered to be fundamental aspects to learning and growing, there was also a desire to intertwine play spaces in amongst other programmes within the building as to provide spaces of exploration and to some extent a relevant amount of freedom.

These spaces were considered to be play spaces in between spaces which are usually neglected but that in essence become part of a whole experience and that have no defined boundaries.

Image: Photographs: Authos Own. More formalized programmes found in Barbie's Pre-School: Fashion District and Eden Pre-School: Fashion District, respectively. These programmes were incorporated into the design as well as introducing more stimulating environments (such as outdoor play and more textural opportunities) and the provision of more light.



01.



02.

Although children's spaces are considered to be of a playful nature and are allowed to wrap throughout the building, there is also a more formalized programme that needs to be incorporated.

This facility is regarded as a ***Pre-School*** *which is to alternatively act as a Day Care Centre on Saturdays when the District is most active and busy. The Pre-School considers play to be an important part of growing up but at the same time it is also a learning space.*

The first aspects to be included are the opportunities for play. There is an opportunity for ***indoor play as well as outdoor****. Indoor play is further stimulated with fabrics and textural walls, while outdoor play allows for nature to become a part of the building and space. There is also a particular emphasis on collective activity as well as individual ones and how play spaces need to be equipped with such opportunities.*

Classrooms *need to be provided as children develop differently at different ages and this needs to be respected and facilitated.*

A Kitchen *is another important aspect to consider in regards to growth and development which thus incorporated into the design. Children need healthy nutrition in order to develop positively. The use of an outdoor vegetable garden is present not only to assist in food provision, but also to provide a learning experience for children.*

Multi-Purpose rooms *are considered for collective interactions where children of all ages are to participate in certain activities. This space is necessary as it allows for children to mix into other age groups in a playful and adult assisted manner. This is considered to be a more formal space than that of the indoor and outdoor play space.*

Children's Toilets *are provided as this is part of an educational process. These spaces are seen as large light filled spaces that are friendly and colourful for children.*

A toy/book library *has been introduced into the programme as to provide a space where alternative toys and books can be kept and maintained. Books are essential to provide in different languages. This will also assist in the toys and books to remain in a space where they will be safe and children can use this space at their own leisure. Toys and Books are part of educational "play".*

A Staff Room *is provided as a space for teachers to gather and discuss activities and programmes which need not interfere with the children. This space is also conceived as a quieter and more secluded space away from the children.*

A Principal's office *is required as one person needs to maintain and manage the overall school. Although the Principal is regarded as the main figure to oversee this programme, he/she is also considered to be a part of all play spaces and an important interactive individual.*



2. P A R E N T / W O R K E R

Part of enriching the lives of children is to incorporate the lives of the parents within a framework that would benefit both. Parents working within the Fashion District were interviewed as possible users. Their working lives were composed of many different occupations, either to be found on the streets or within buildings which were not easily accessible.

Their occupations ranged from:

- *Crafters – Cushion Ladies and Beadwork*
- *Hawkers*
- *Retail Owners*
- *Local Fashion Designers*
- *Cooking on the Streets*
- *Hairdressers*
- *Sewing Assistants*

These occupations were thus considered as potential working stations to be incorporated into a Programme that would improve not only existing working spaces in the Fashion District but allow for an interactive use of functions to occur.

There was also a desire to expand on the underdeveloped skills that exist in some of these occupations by providing a support system where they will be nurtured and exposed to more challenges and opportunities for skill development.

An existing shop in the Fashion District with street exposure was studied as a working module that could be continued further into other parts of the District. The shop is located on Market Street and makes it primary business from designing local garments and using other local skills to enhance them.

These skills can vary from using various ladies on the streets who are known for their intricate beadwork to Nigerians for high quality embroidery: all to be found within the Fashion District. The city streets are alive with underexposed skills or underdeveloped ones meaning that there are opportunities to be expanded upon and there is an existing and exciting infrastructure that we as designers, be it fashion or architecture, can work with.

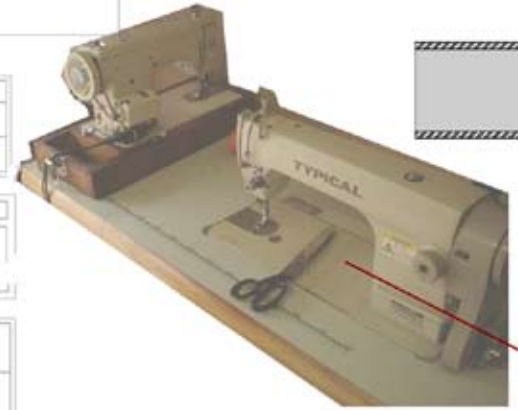
The workers in the shop, African Queen, unlike many others in the Fashion District, speak of a certain level of stability in their jobs. They are paid on time and their skills are valued. They all feel that by working within such an environment they are gaining the correct experience and can ultimately further their skills and knowledge.
Studying existing spaces gave insight into the sizes of work spaces that are needed in order to be able to accommodate workers at a comfortable level. It also provided information as to the process which is embarked in order to arrive at a final product that is exposed and sold in front. Although the design of the shop is practical and works efficiently in many ways, there are changes and additions that can be made. For example, there are no change-rooms for customers to try on their clothes and the outside corridor connecting different rooms is sometimes problematic when it rains.

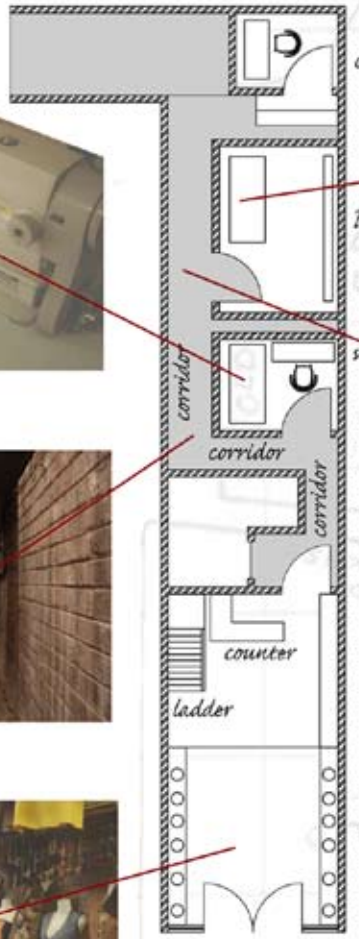
The African Queen shop was studied through its space interventions as to gain insight to the spaces that are needed in order to produce a product (local fashion clothes). They were also mathermatically calculated as a design method which would entail the sizes of particular rooms required within the building.

"....Its our responsibility to help those on the streets..." (Mohamed Owner of African Queen)



(Image) Plan of African Queen showing how the shop is further divided into smaller fragments of space which operate towards the back of the building.

















Egoli Sewing Centre, Market Street, Johannesburg

Five people work in African Queen, where they all obtain skills in the art of sewing and designing. Their spaces where recorded as follows:

- *2 x Sewing Rooms (12 msq)*
  (9 msq)
- *1 Pattern Room (18msq)*
- *1 x Creative Office (6 msq)*
- *1 x Display Area (32msq)*
- *Total Area w/o Circulation: (77msq)*

This prompted further ideas as to the spaces and sizes to which one should design for.

The programme thus evolved into providing a space in which to accommodate this structure of process and product. Smaller spaces were also provided in order to accommodate smaller businesses such as working parents on the streets who manage small scale projects such as cooking, beadwork, etc.

This in turn would result in a diverse programme reflecting the very essence of the Fashion District and by re-designing the edges of the building, they were to welcome the existing fabric to wrap around.



3. R E S I D E N T

Included in the programme are residential units to provide accommodation for either parents or staff.

Within a poor urban structure and the fact that many workers in the Fashion District do not earn more than R2500 a month (this being the exception of the very fortunate) the design/ programme needed to reflect this and provide an affordable and sustainable form of living units.

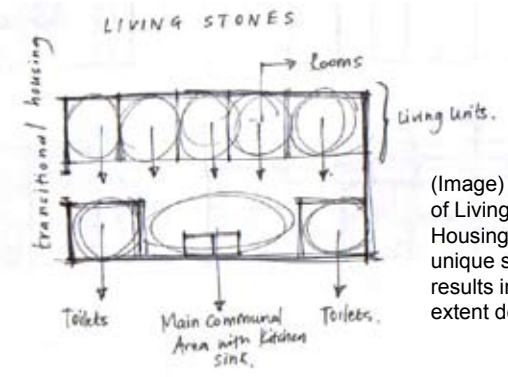
Although the idea of providing individual units was desired, the reality is that most people working in the Fashion District are not able to afford such luxuries. Small residential units are thus favoured with possibly providing communal facilities and a room to sleep in/work.

Numerous projects in South Africa have provided such means of accommodation, which is termed as 'transitional housing', giving the poor an opportunity to improve their living conditions and live within the city. One of these projects entitled 'Living Stones' was studied as a pragmatic solution to affordable housing for the District. The housing components are simple, where occupants have their own private rooms but where all other facilities are shared. The outcome of this project also revealed the necessity for these modules to exist and the demanding need that there is for them especially for the poor.

These facilities are important in areas such as the Fashion District where many job opportunities are to be found, but were residency is limited, badly maintained or unattractive.

By living closer to work opportunities, one is not only reducing traveling costs but also creating safer city spaces by establishing more people in the same space. The absence of people living within the Inner City and Fashion District alike has resulted in empty city spaces which have triggered crime factors and fear. This however, is not the only issue to consider when addressing problems of inactivity in the Fashion District at night, in essence, the existing economy also needs to change along with many other factors.

Although this project was not based on a family module which needed to be considered for this project, in regards to dealing with children, it did provide the basic outline for a design which would emulate similar spatial opportunities.



(Image) Authors Own: Plan type of Living Stones: Transitional Housing in Pretoria showing a unique simplicity in planning that results in affordable and to some extent desirable living units.



MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE

Management within this framework needed to be provided as there are three main interventions that need maintenance. The programme is divided into three fundamental aspects;

- *The School (pre-school and day care)*
- *Business*
- *Residence*

All three need to be managed in order to sustain a successful framework and in order to maintain regulations.

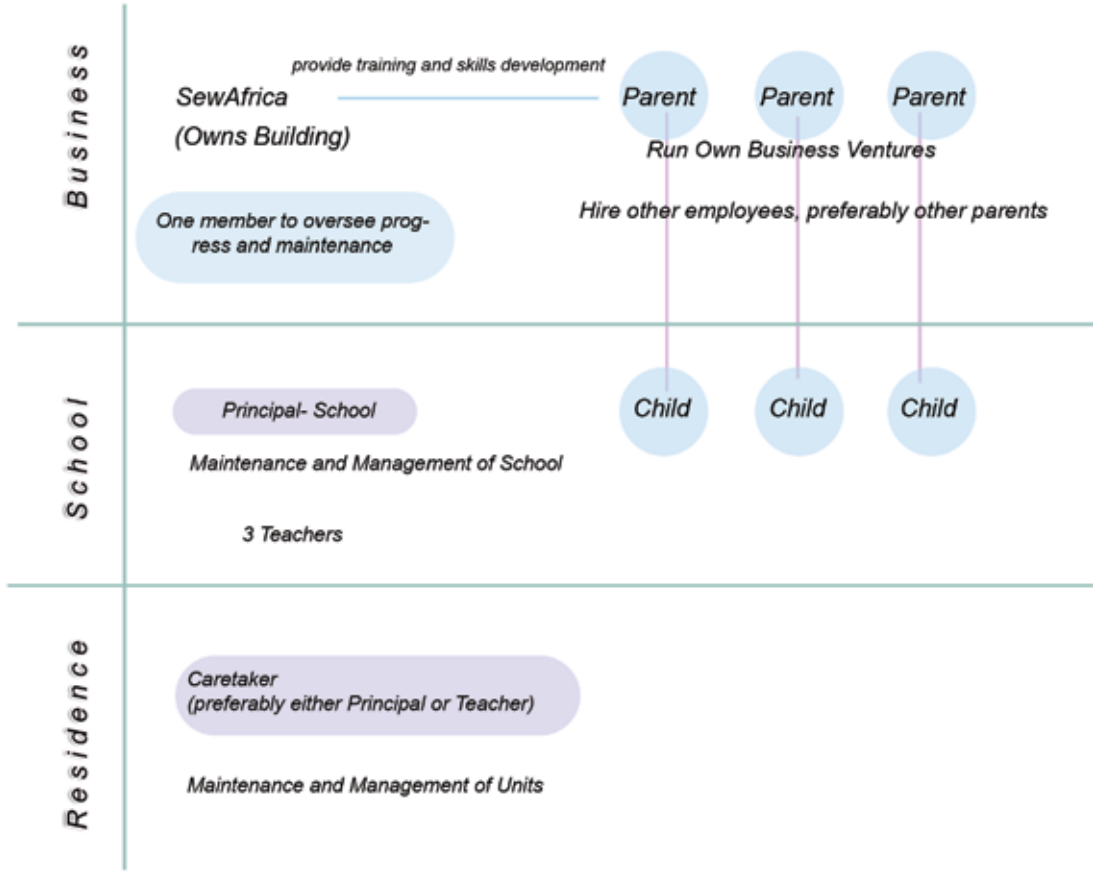
Theoretically, SewAfrica was seen as the part of the catalyst and programme to further those parents with provisional skills, with sustainable skills in the likes of management and business. These skills would allow them to improve their businesses and allow them to successfully manage their own shops. Therefore, SewAfrica was seen as the potential buyer for this programme and development.

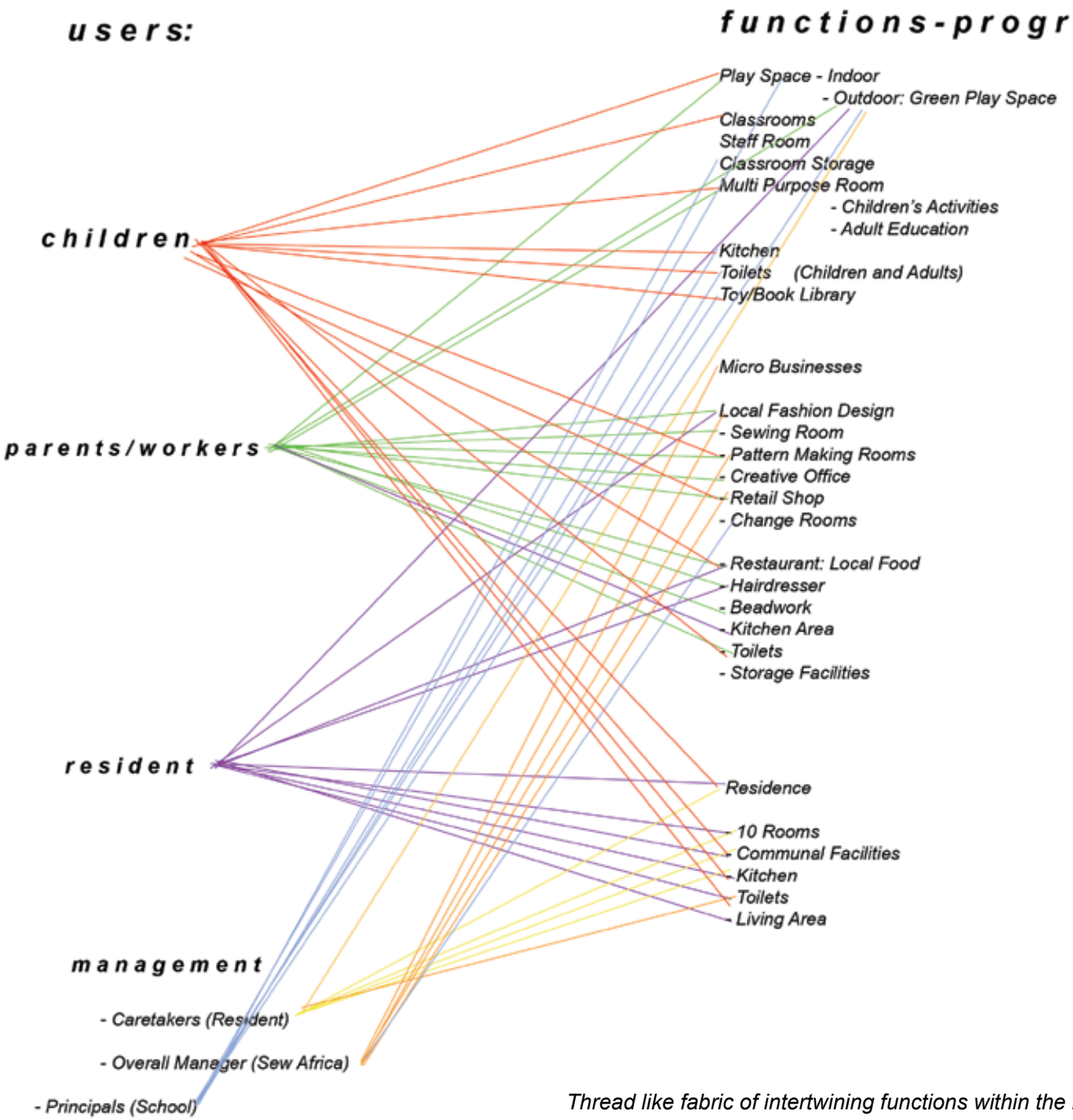
The Business aspect for this building was sub-divided into two different catgeries where one aspect would be managed and maintained by a member from SewAfrica and the other, to be managed and maintained by the parents. Each parent/worker would manage their own shop but would have to report on a monthy basis to the Overall Manager who would ensure progress and attend to any relevant problems.

The School would be managed and take care of by the Principal (NGO). It would be prefebable if he/she remained on the premises in order to also maintain the Residential Units. Interviews with Teachers revealed that at least one staff member lived within or close to the premises as there is a neccessity for one of them to be present within the School before sunrise.

The Caretaker would be in charge of overseeing the residential units and providing additional services and care to other residents, if needed.

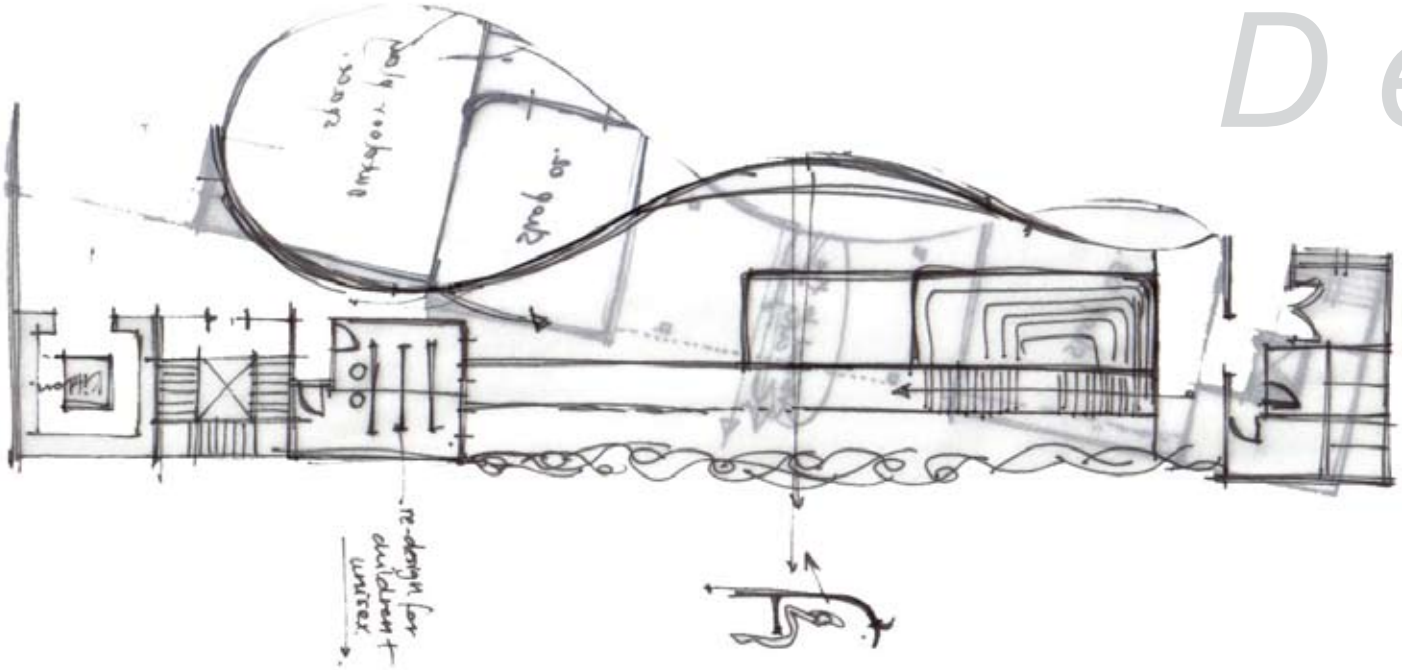
The Image Below demonstrates the breakdown of what has been discussed:





Thread like fabric of intertwining functions within the building and its users.

Sketch Design portraying ideas of transparency, curvature forms and layering by playing with paper as though it were fabric.



n Process

(Below) Design Development. Mind Map indicating several issues and themes which interlocked and were relevant to this project.



Summary of Issues to consider for Design:

Edge, Street and Entrance: The edges of the building become a part of the street where the existing street life is so vibrant and diverse, there is a need to incorporate these elements as part of the design process, as part of the city and street. The edges can also provide a friendlier and more inviting environment for potential customers and community development.

Inner Edges: Inner Edges were considered as part of the design process as they include the edges designed for children. These edges are not only important in the sense that they are safety precautions but also in forming gentler space divisions and access points for children.

Light and Colour: (Light Atrium Space) Light is a critical factor to consider as it was the first aspect to be noted as "missing" within play spaces for children. It not only means healthier environments but also more ample and natural spaces and can contribute to the "playful" elements of shadow and time. The design process needed to resolve how light would be captured and how it would in turn contribute to more ample, natural and colourful spaces.

Nature and Green: The lack of Nature within the Fashion District was seen as a potential loss for children's growth development. Even though, it is not entirely necessary, it still opts for a delightful experience for children as nature forms a part of a delicate understanding of growth and respect. With inspirational projects discussed in previously, there was a desire to create vertical green walls and spaces as part of the softening fabric of the building.

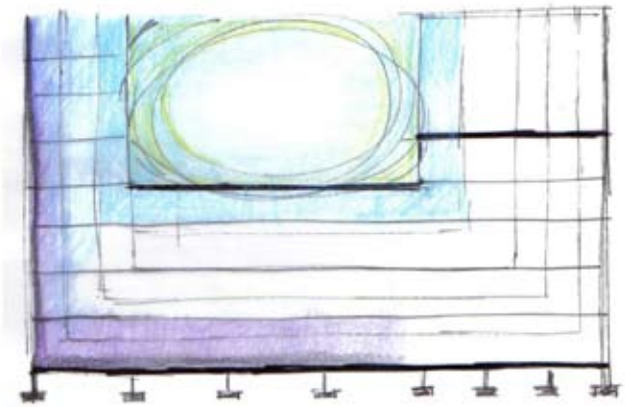
Visual: Children and Parents: The emphasis of this project is on children and not only providing improved spaces and places for them to play, develop and learn but also an opportunity for them to begin to mix into other parts of the building, the city and life. The parents of the children were also targeted as the potential catalysts for the city and the benefits of children. The possibility of allowing children to interact with their parents also became viable and the design needed to reflect spaces where children and parents were in visual connection to one another, but at the same time separate. Different levels allowed for this exploration of space to occur.

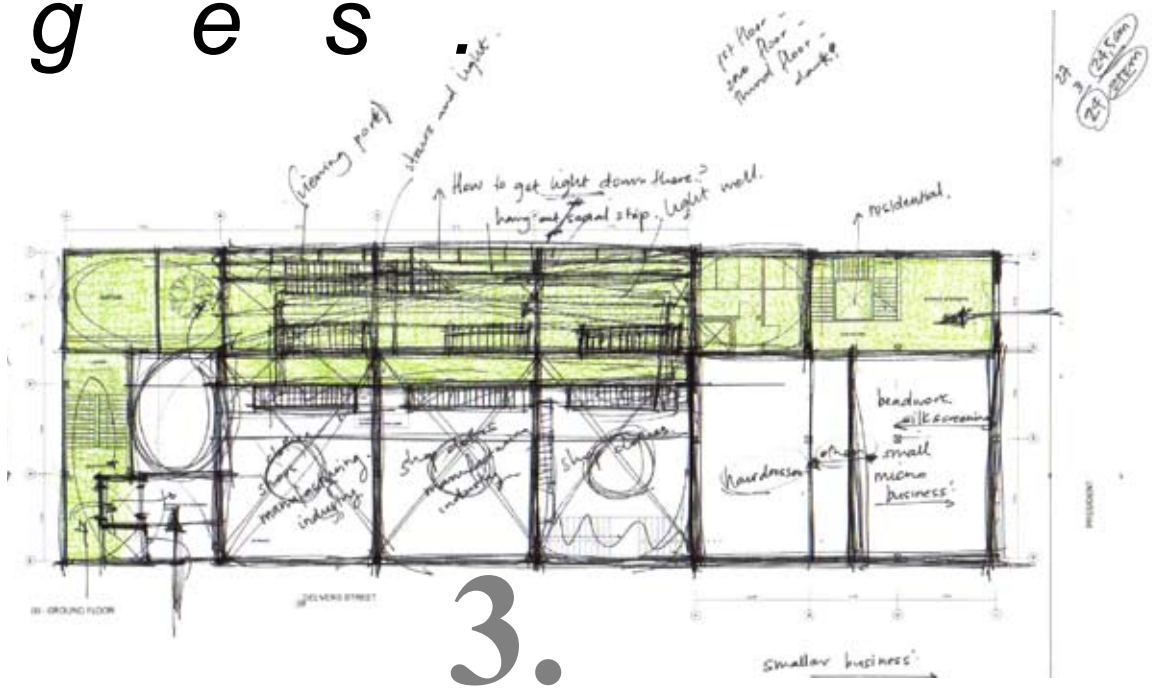
Movement within Private and Public Realms: Through the design process there was a need to differentiate between public and private as a means to address particular issues of safety. Although parts of the building are contained for several reasons (i.e. working spaces and pre-school): there are other parts which expose themselves and become a part of the city, part of the street and culture that exists. Safety can thus occur on a number of levels, the community based structure inside and the exterior spaces which have a relationship to the street, but that are still in vision by those who work there and in use by the public.

The various sketches and images to follow are part of the design process which attempted to consider all above elements.

e d g e s .

2.





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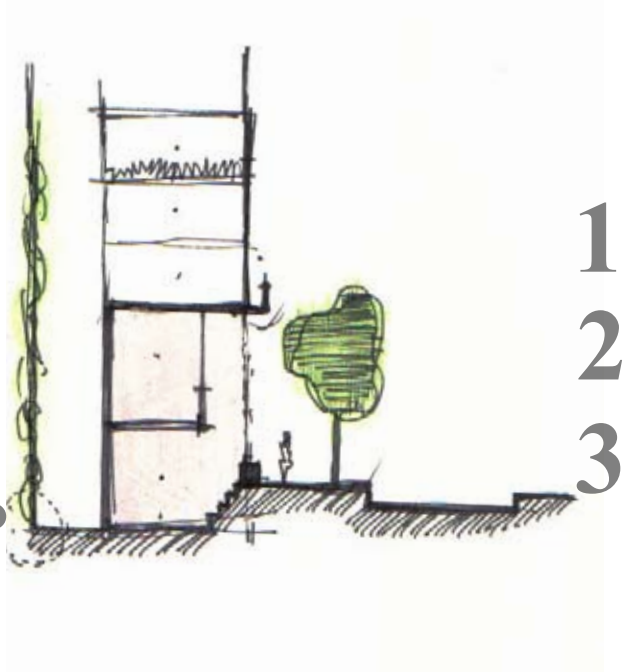


1.

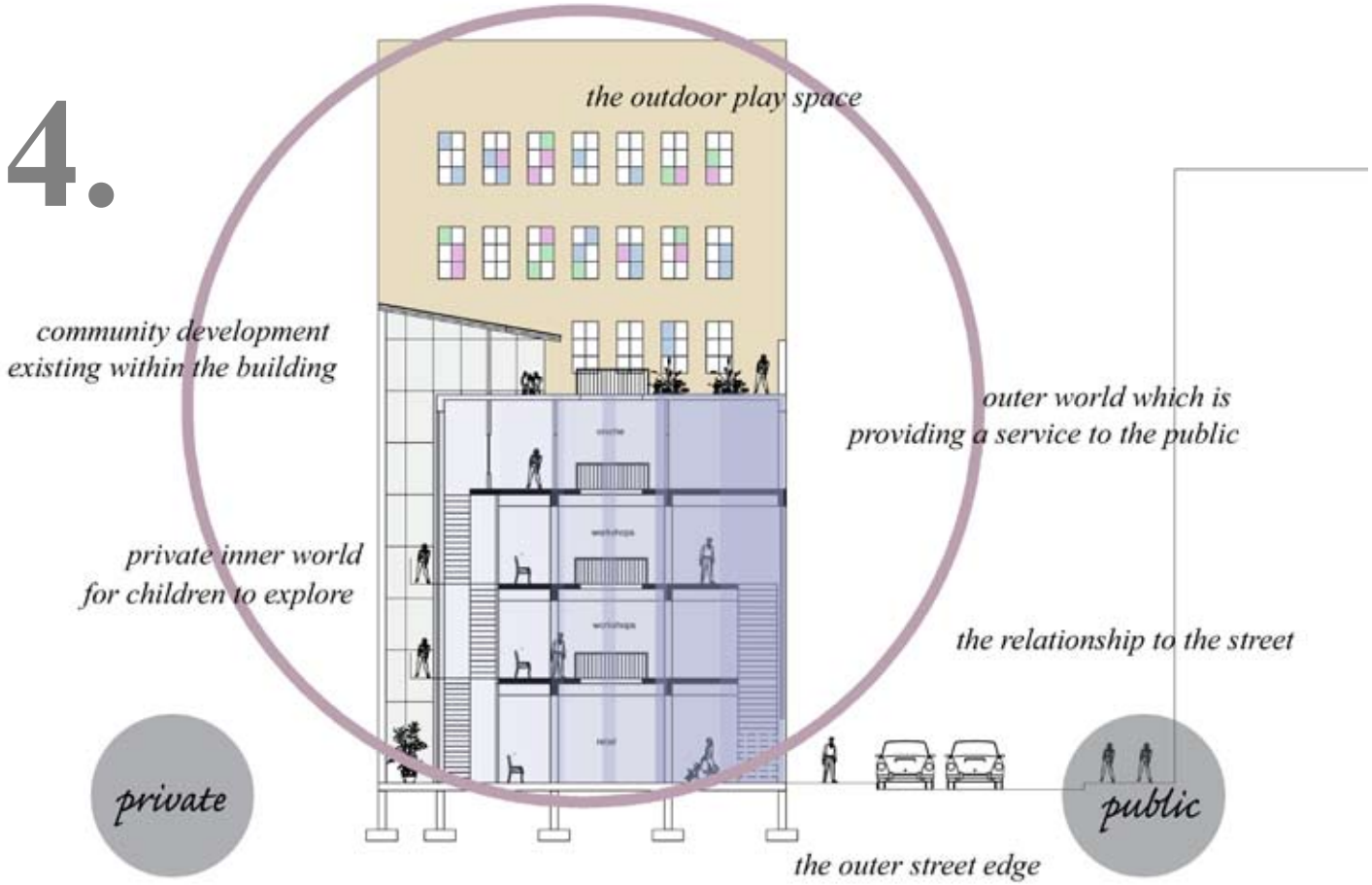
Edges have been an important theme throughout this project and can be interpreted in various scales as depicted in these four images. Ideas of how to incorporate themes of edge into the design process were relevant as they were seen as the tool to soften space.

1. *Figure01. describes an edge which begins to interact with the street, not only through level changes but through the retraction of first floor slab levels.*

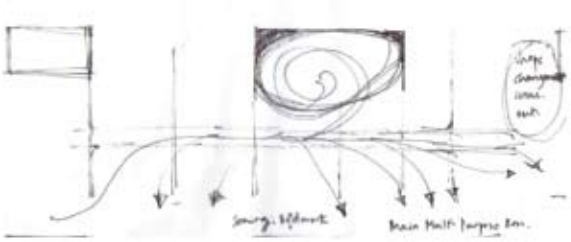
2. *Figure 02. speaks of soft internal edges which are critical to provide through spaces for children.*

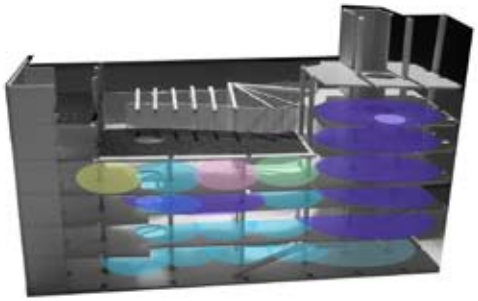
3. *Figure 03. is the edge on plan which begins to differentiate between public and private access space. This idea of edge between public and private was explored in various ways as to decipher a solution which would complete a balance between what is needed inside and what is needed outside.*

4. *Figure 04. describes edge through a section within the context of the building and how spaces are to be accomodated as to allow for edges to intrude and exclude. This was initially promted by the idea that the street was an outside edge whereas in opposite contexts, the inner world of the building was a space which could be privately used by children and their parents.*

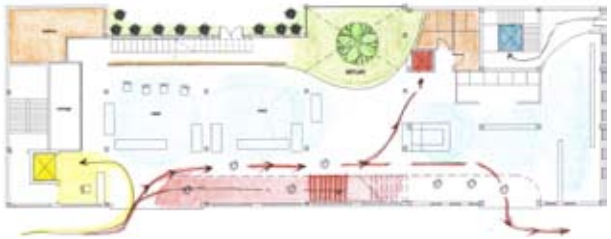


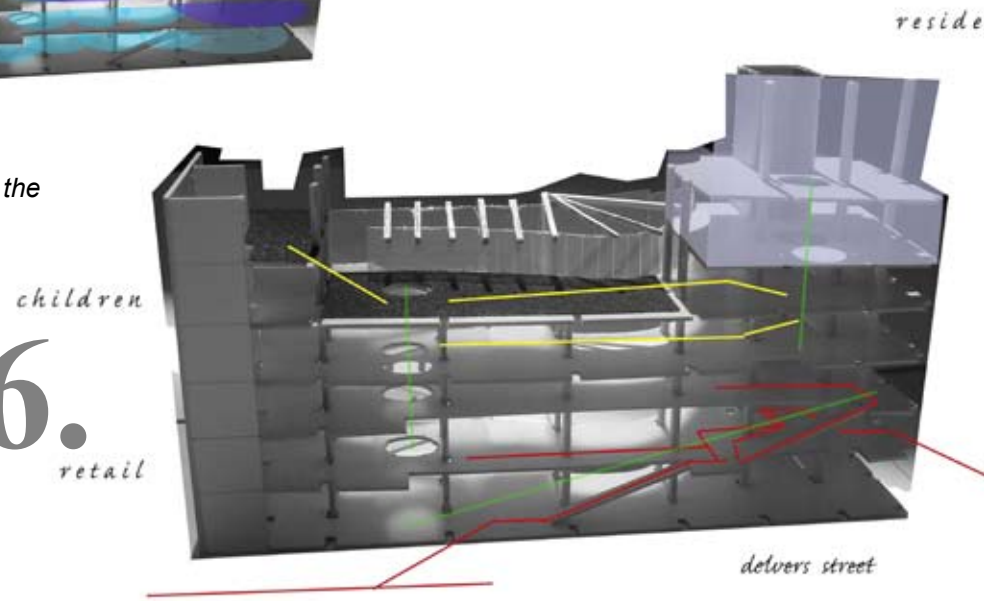
m o v e





Initial sketches revealing public circulation. Allowing the public to filter within a building means that there needs to be certain access points and limitations to the amount of space which the public can experience.





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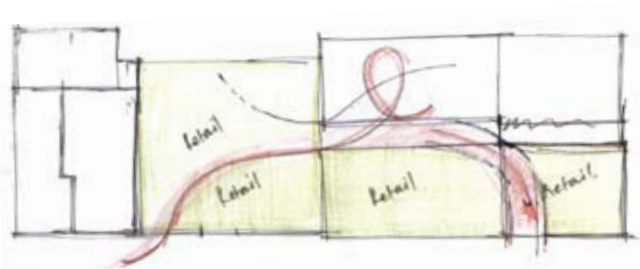

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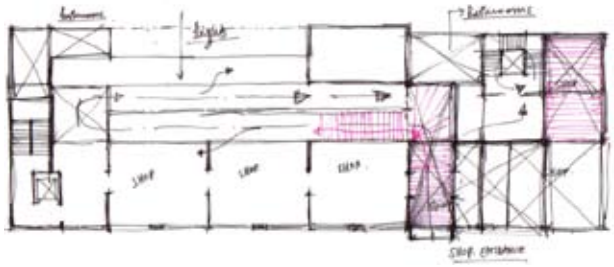


5.

Movement within the building was defined by public and private access. Although there was an initial idea to allow the public to circulate within working spaces as to gain knowledge of the design and fashion process, this was further abandoned due to Interviews which revealed that the fast pace of the Fashion Industry meant that ideas were rapidly plagiarized and therefore a certain level of privacy needs to be maintained.

Movement within was first explored through the provision of a ramp but this was rejected as it became a large intervention that would become monotomous and prove to be inefficient.

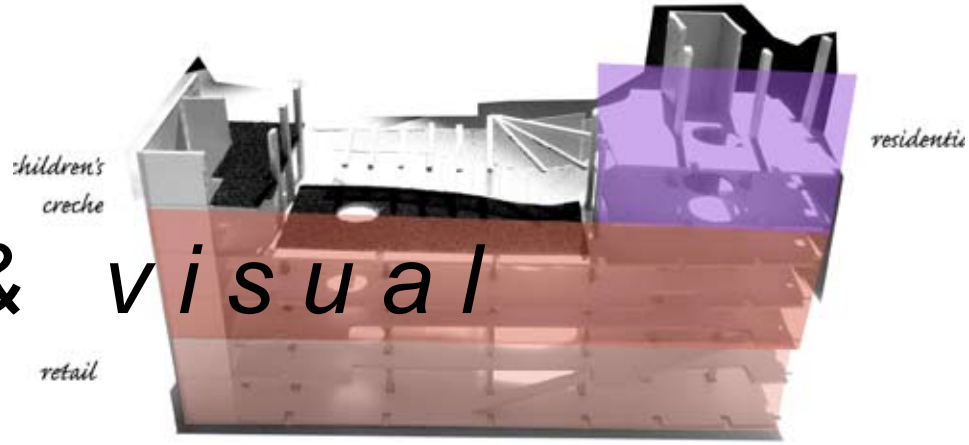
6.

Movement was later seen as part of the extension of the street allowing for the public to circulate through a limited section of the exterior facade. Different motions were depicted in the spaces for childen, residents and workers. This idea motioned towards the idea of allowing for the public to access working spaces which would result in poor planning.

m e n t

ntial

v e r t i c a l & v i s u a l

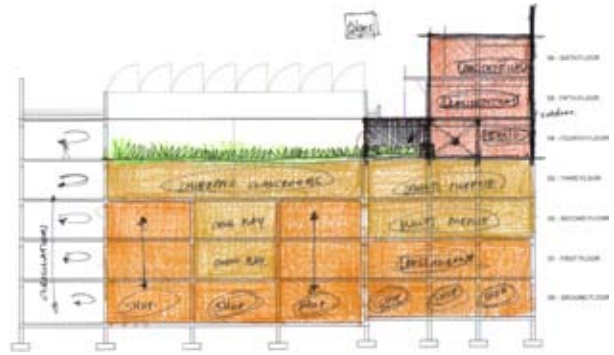


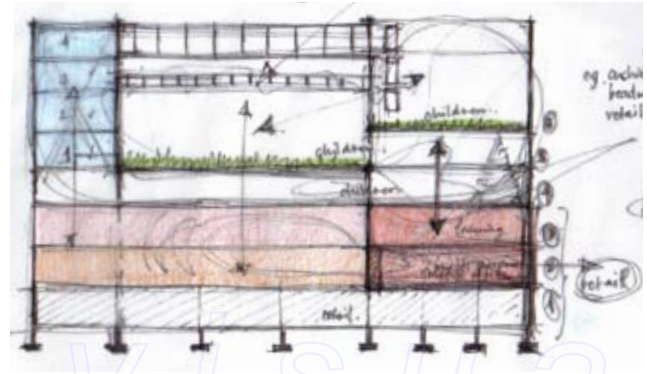
The organization of vertical functions resulted in the opportunity to provide vertical visual connections through spaces. However, how would this work?
Parents and Children would to some extent be able to view each other at certain points or have close and direct access to each others spaces.

7. *This idea was explored in various ways, firstly as skylights within certain spaces to allow for this visual connection.*

8. *Secondly by means of intermediate spaces between levels.*

(Above: Image) Initial design development was composed horizontally, but this was later abandoned as it did not allow for many visual experiences to occur or space to intertwine with other spaces to order to create smaller and more meaningful spaces to play.
(Below) Further development to allow for functions to work vertically.





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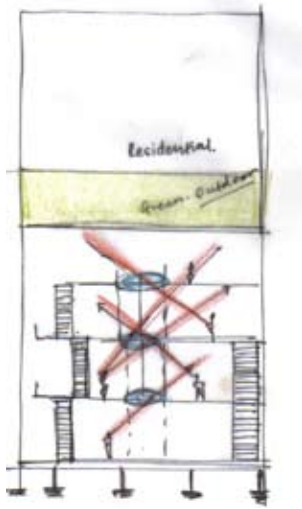

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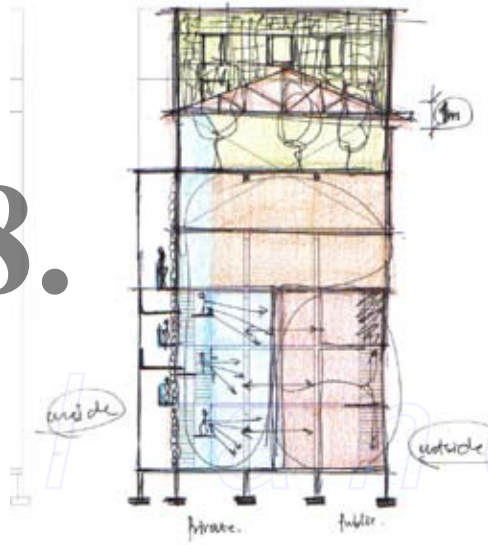
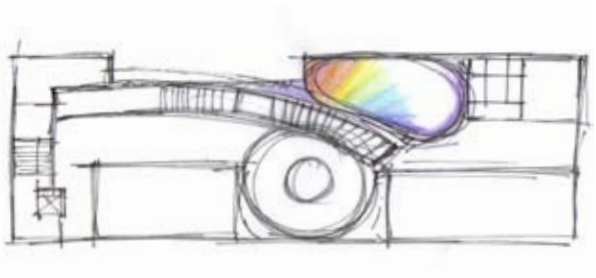
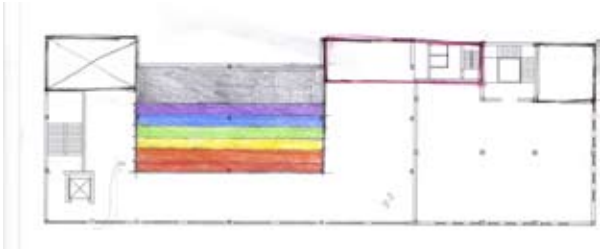
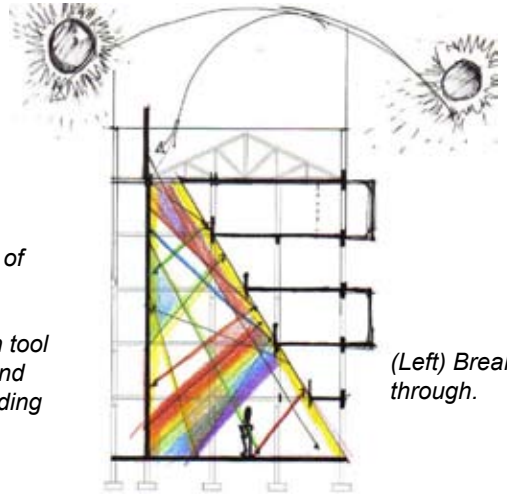
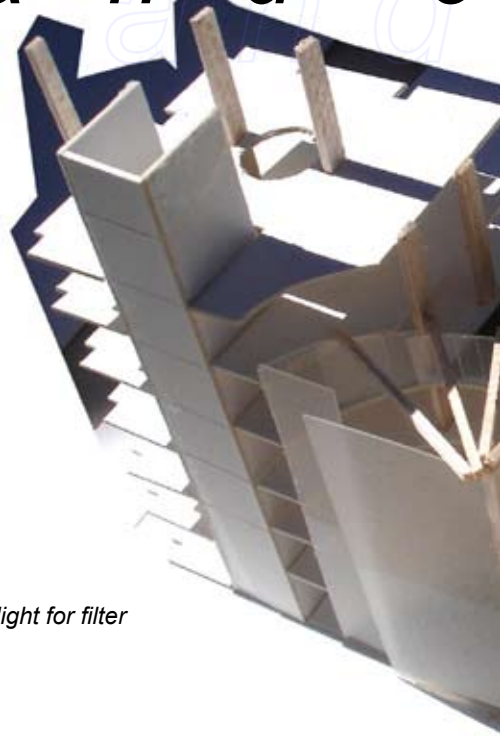


l i g h t a n d c





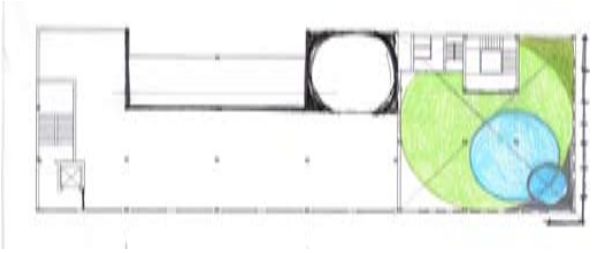


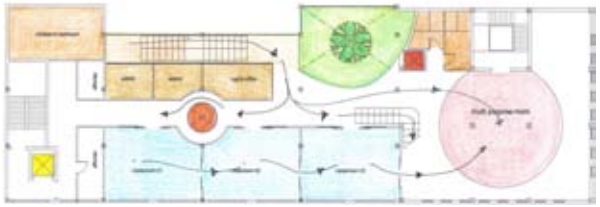


(Above) Atrium spaces on plan depictng the emergence of light and colour.

(Below) Ways in which colour became part of the design tool to differentiate between space, movement, green, etc. and how this method could be introduced into the actual building design.

(Left) Breaking Slabs in Section to allow light for filter through.





Light and Colour are important themes to this project, as have been discussed at length in previous chapters. Light and the relevance of colour are critical elements to work with especially in regards to children. They were also considered as factors that would begin to lighten space and playfully begin to educate children about nature.

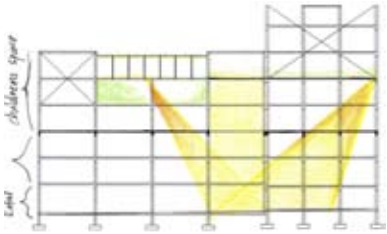
Ways in which to capture light were explored through various design options such as atrium spaces, skylights, breaking of slabs, etc. It seems that all three had relevance to re-interpreting light filled spaces especially in the context of the Fashion District and in working with children.

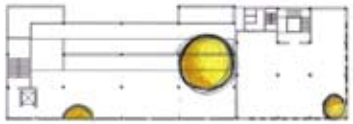
Light and Colour were thought of as one unifying element as one cannot work without the other and so, by re-introducing light, one is also re-introducing colour.

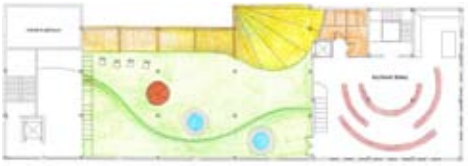
o l o u r .

Conceptual Model depicting Green Rooftop Spaces and an Atrium Space towards the back of the building.





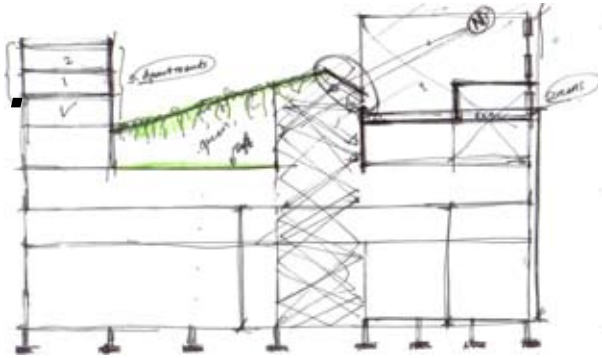


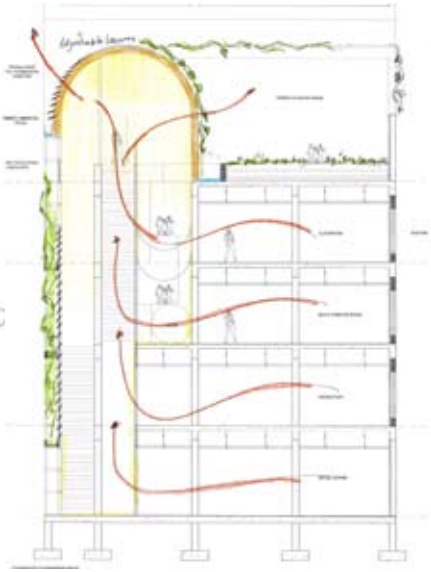


Through the re-introduction of Light, there were other relevant issues to consider, such as ventilation. Light is important to consider but it this also means Heat. Materiality needed to be regarded carefully in terms of the Atrium design.

The Atrium Space additionally provided ventilation to occur as it double acted as a chimney effect.

g r e e n .



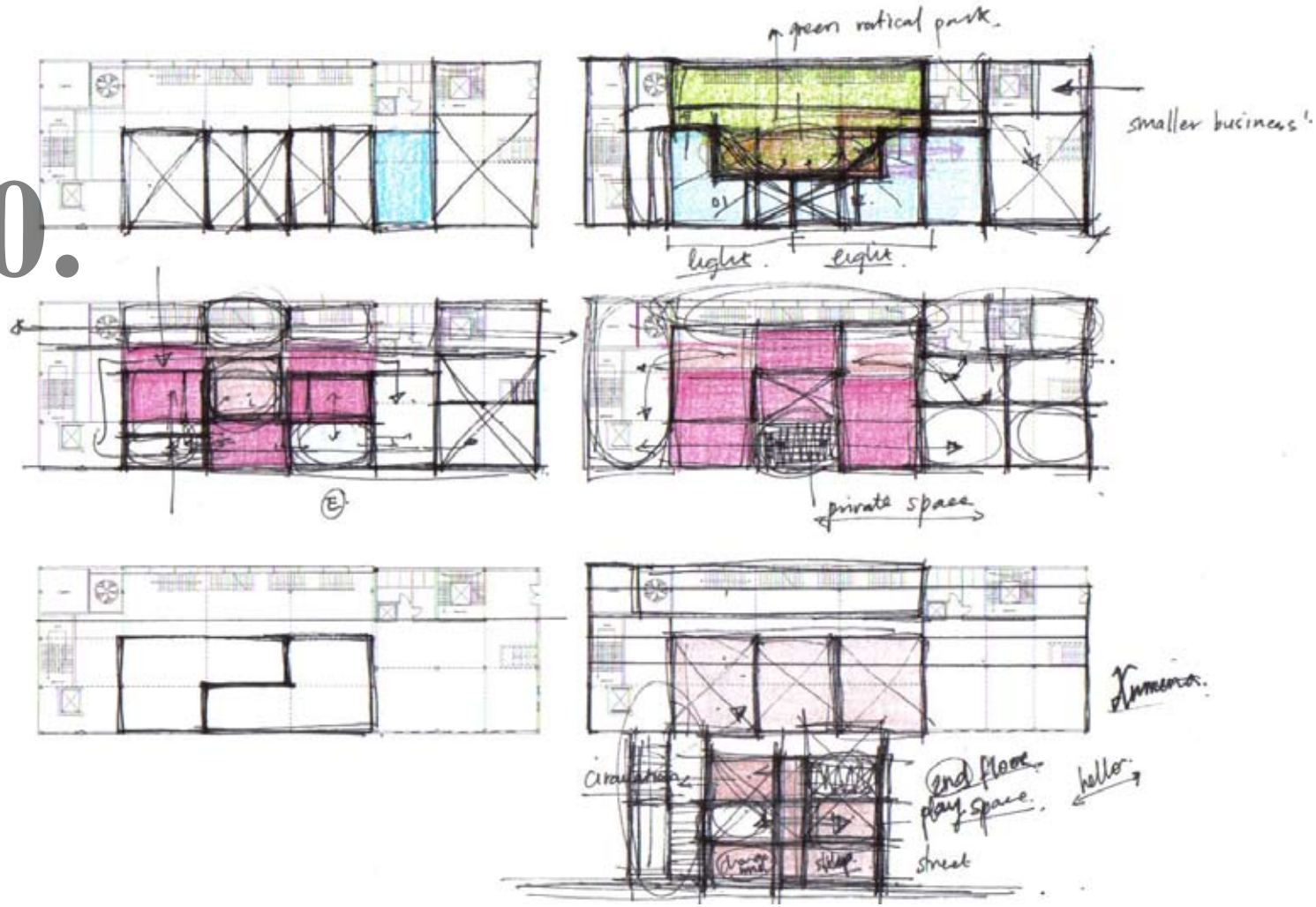


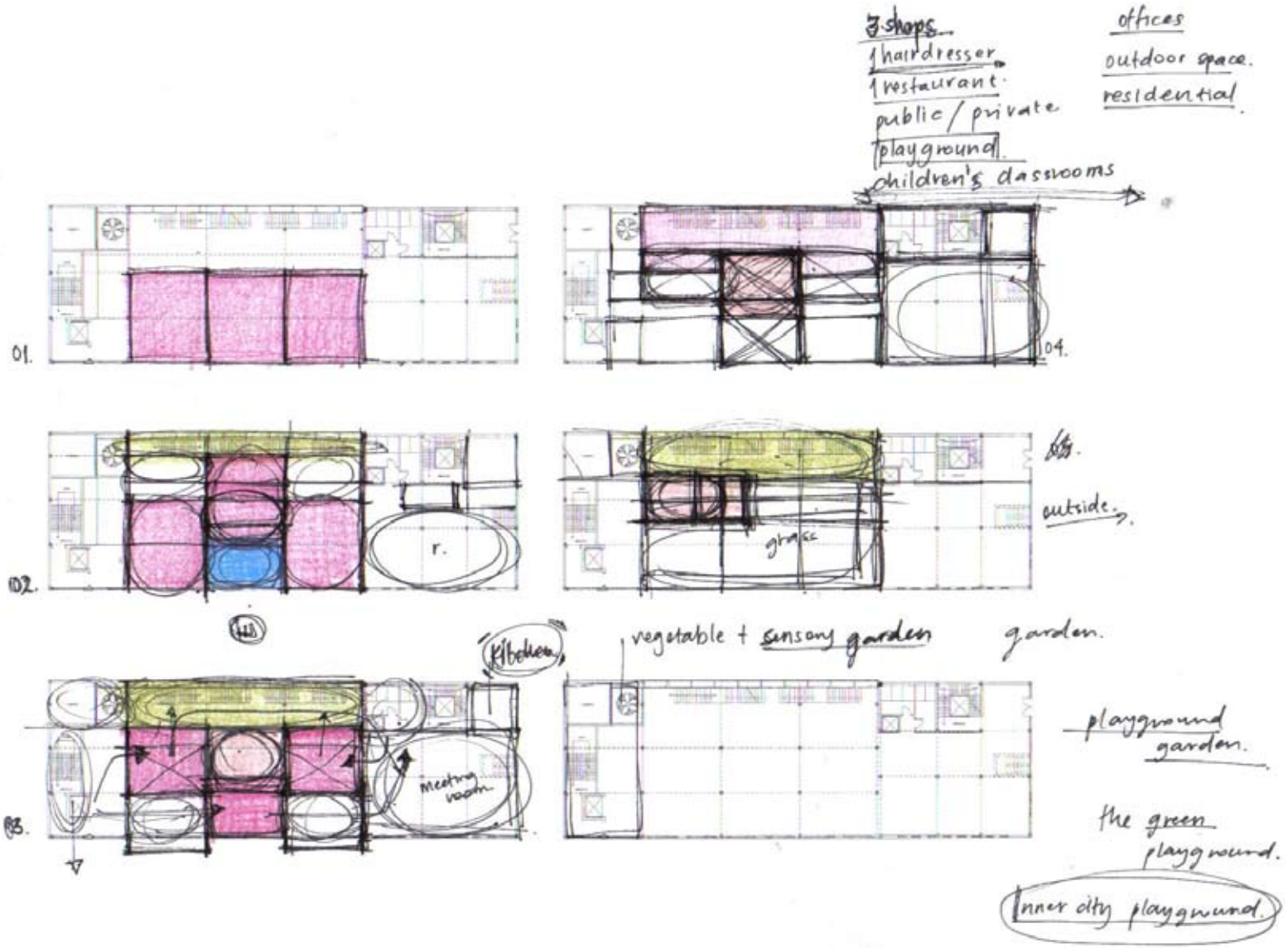
9.

10.

Various skecthes reveal design process through organizing space in such a manner that it begins to create vertical relevance. Colour was thouroughly used in this process.

10.




3 shops
1 hairdresser
1 restaurant
public / private
playground
children's classrooms
offices
outdoor space.
residential
01.
04.
02.
r.
grass
outside.
Kitchen
vegetable + sensory garden
garden.
meeting room
playground garden.
the green playground.
Inner city playground.

s k i n
p l a y

11.



The exterior facade of the building is described in this project as the final extension of many layers within. It is treated as Skin and Fabric and is seen as the layer that wraps around the Building and absorbs parts of the Fashion District.

11. *The idea of breaking away certain portions of this skin where imagined as part of receiving the outside as part of the inside and the interpretation of a new edge to the facade.*

12.



12. *The existing facade, however, represented time and history and a somewhat beautiful texture that was worth keeping. The initial idea was only to break small portions and to change the windows to colourful panes to depict the presence of children inside but this later evolved into something more meaningful.*

Many buildings within the Fashion District, speak of their functions inside via their windows. Although many buildings are not accessible, their functions are easily determined by their exterior facade. There was a desire to continue this theme into the project as part of the existing context.

s p a c e & s c a l e

Scale was relevant in the sense that children experience space at a different level and height, therefore finding in-between spaces which are usually forgotten and dismissed.

13. *There are spaces in between balustrades which provide solitary spaces where children can either hide or be alone.*

14. *While other spaces offer social interaction and are exposed yet at the same time, within a pocket of space this is defined. Sketches reveal the interpretation of these space via plans and sections.*

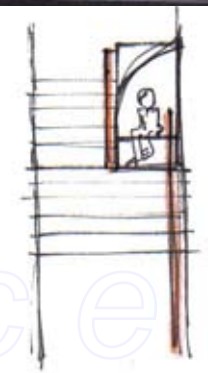
15. *Scale is to be differentiated between adults and children and betweeb children to children as various ages can result in different spatial experiences.*

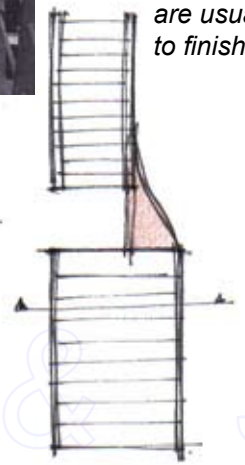
16. *The edges of elements such as the balustrades, are usually curved and provide a sense of softness to finishing contours.*

13.

(Hertzberger 1991: 182)







plan.

15.



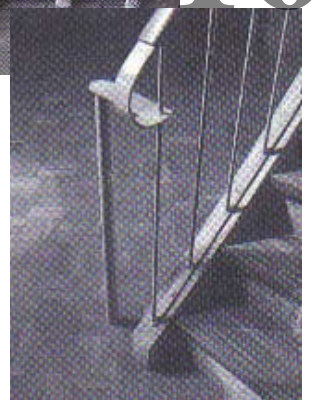


14.

(Hertzberger 1991: 188)

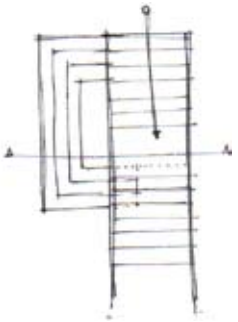


16.



(Ligtelijn 1999:195)






d e s i g

n r e s o l u t i o n

concept

The building, like fabric, is composed of many intricate and complex functions that weave into each other to form connectivity; at the same time, formulating new light spaces in between. This design forms a new fabric in which the Fashion District acknowledges as part of its own, but that in essence begins to re-thread itself back into the city, creating new ground and new relationships.

The building exposes itself in certain areas while in others it retreats and forms a softer edge towards the back. It expresses light and colour within and wraps the nature of the District around the outer edges as new forms. The skin of the building is broken in such a manner to allow for more light to filter through and to give the meaning of a new fabric (a new façade), to the building.

There are different forms of fabric. There are those that are tough and robust while others are softer and more flimsy in their composure nonetheless they all obtain a relevant sense of delicacy and lightness in that they are able to fold and weave quite unconventionally and quite lightly.

The building is also composed of many layers, where some are denser and more compact than others, according to what they are exposed to. There is an inner wall constructed of fabric, sourced from its surroundings and interpreted to be a soft and sensory space for children and adults. This inner edge does not need to be resilient as it speaks towards the insides which are experienced by the community and by the children. Where the outer edges face the street and are exposed to more harmful elements such as weather and pollution. This skin needs to be able to absorb, reflect and protect further inner edges from being damaged.

This is the wonderful reference to fabric, in that while it can be tough and interwoven with many threads, forming a solid form, it still allows for light to filter through.

Although the building is constructed out of solid materials (the basic weaving form), there are holes within the framework which have allowed for the presence of more light. This can be noted through architectural expressions of atrium spaces and skylights within the building design. These spaces of light, found within the urban structure form spaces for children where the fabric is soft and colourful and where the edges are not harmful.

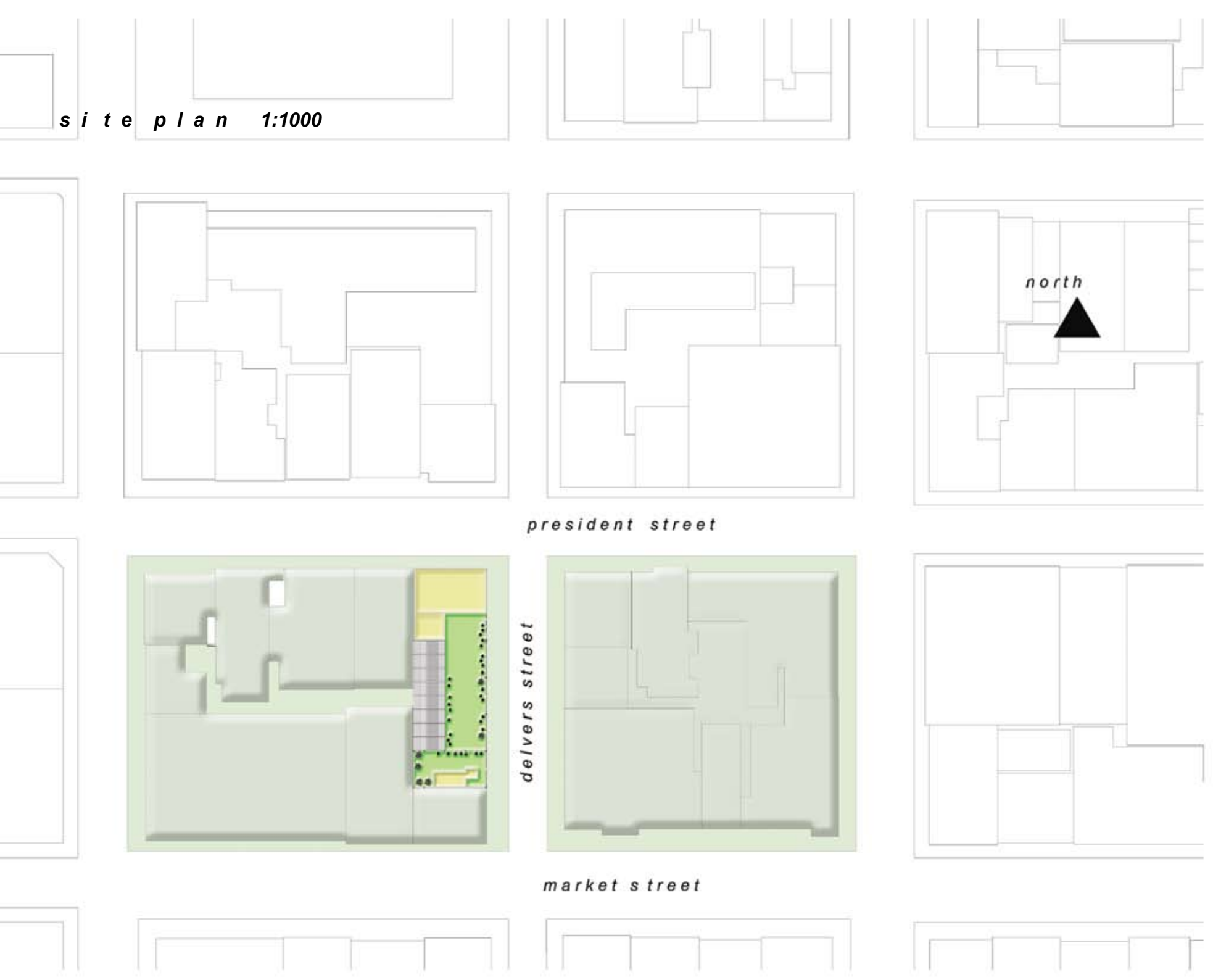
Spaces, structure and furniture contain double meanings in the presence of children. The new stairs within the existing building are used not only for circulation but also for play spaces; double balustrades speak to two users as opposed to one. Play space is as unconventional and lighthearted as fabric. It is not formulated or linear but rather described to have a particular sense of freedom. It is not contained or rigid but allows for its surroundings to become the essence of its shape. The interwoven complexity of functions within the building allows for children to be exposed to more stimulating environments. They are allowed to explore the surfaces of this building, through various levels and this allows for their playful nature to interpret space and fabric as they wish.

The connotations of fabric to light, skin, colour etc. also obtain similarities to that of nature which have been re-introduced into this project. In this design, it formulates into vertical walls and green surfaces which add another “skin” layer to the interiors and exteriors of the building. It brings light, air, colour and soft landings to a spaces which usually do not reflect or provide this. The vertical green walls align themselves towards the far inner and outer edges of the building while green outdoor play spaces are found on the rooftop. Some of the façade is broken with natural green vertical walls which allow for the exterior to speak of new soft language and through this new facade with permeable qualities, the sounds of children can spill onto the streets.

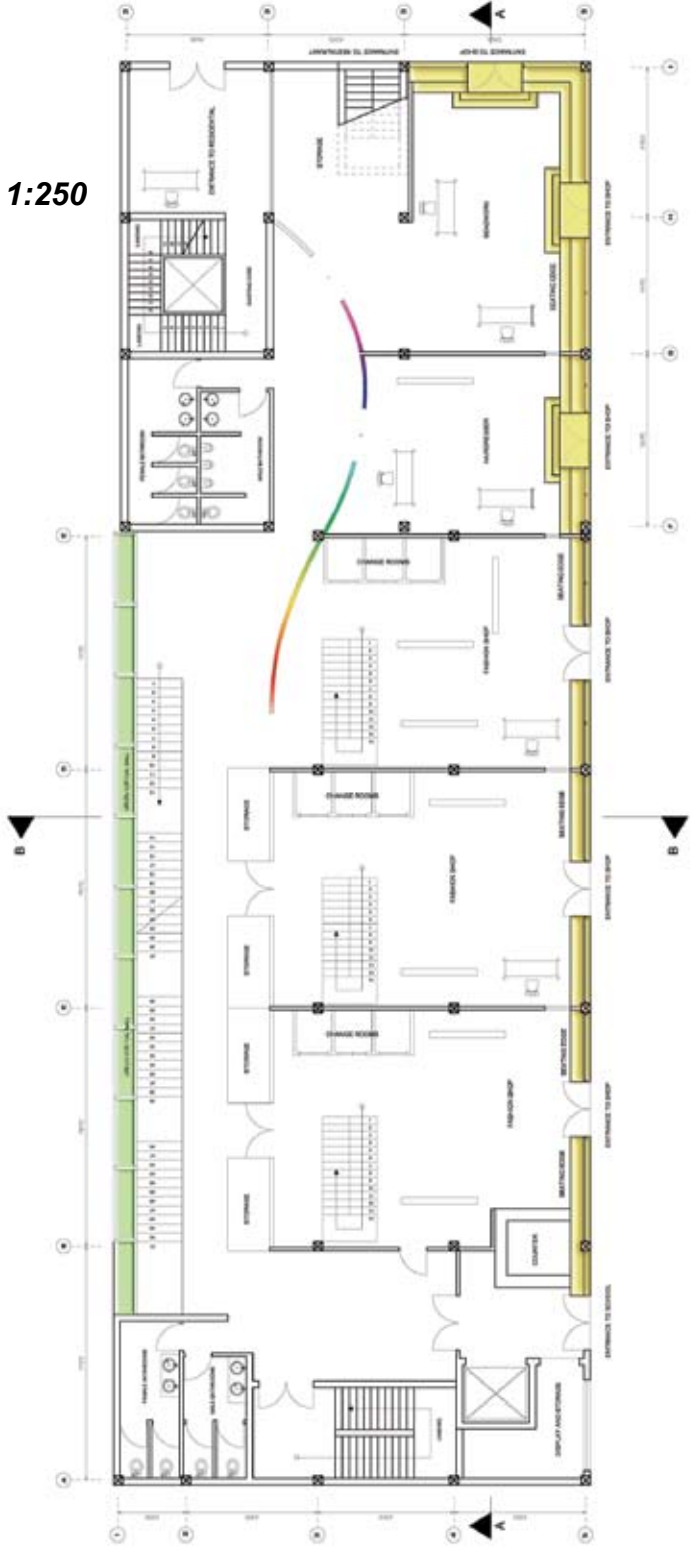
The building is re-stitched onto the streets of the Fashion District where all its layers, threads and components where discovered and used from its existing surroundings. It attempts to delicately and playfully insert itself back into its original place as a new economic form to not only re-activate missing elements within the city, but to provide a better and more stimulating place for children to re-activate play.

Once it is re-stitched, it takes on a life of its own.

s i t e p l a n 1:1000



g r o u n d f l o o r p l a n 1:250



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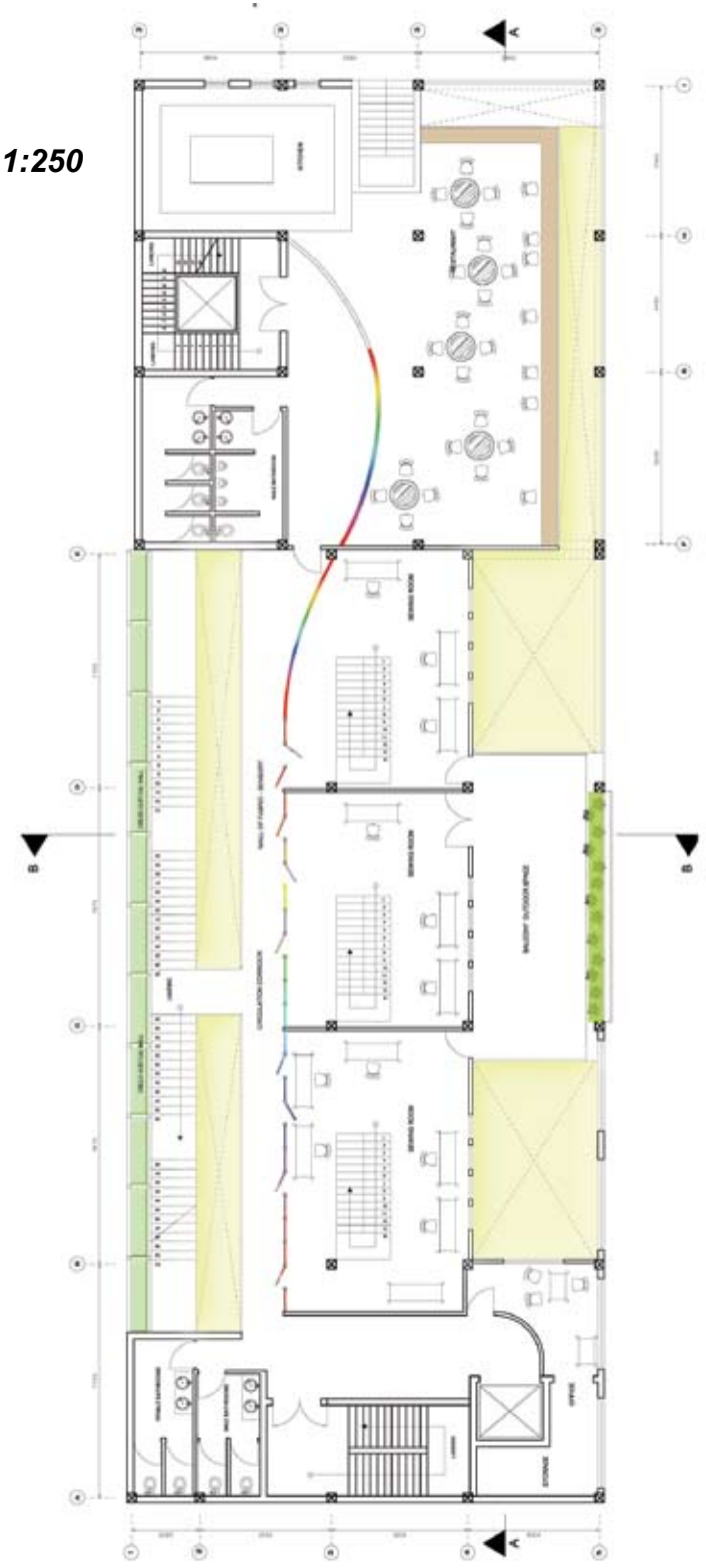
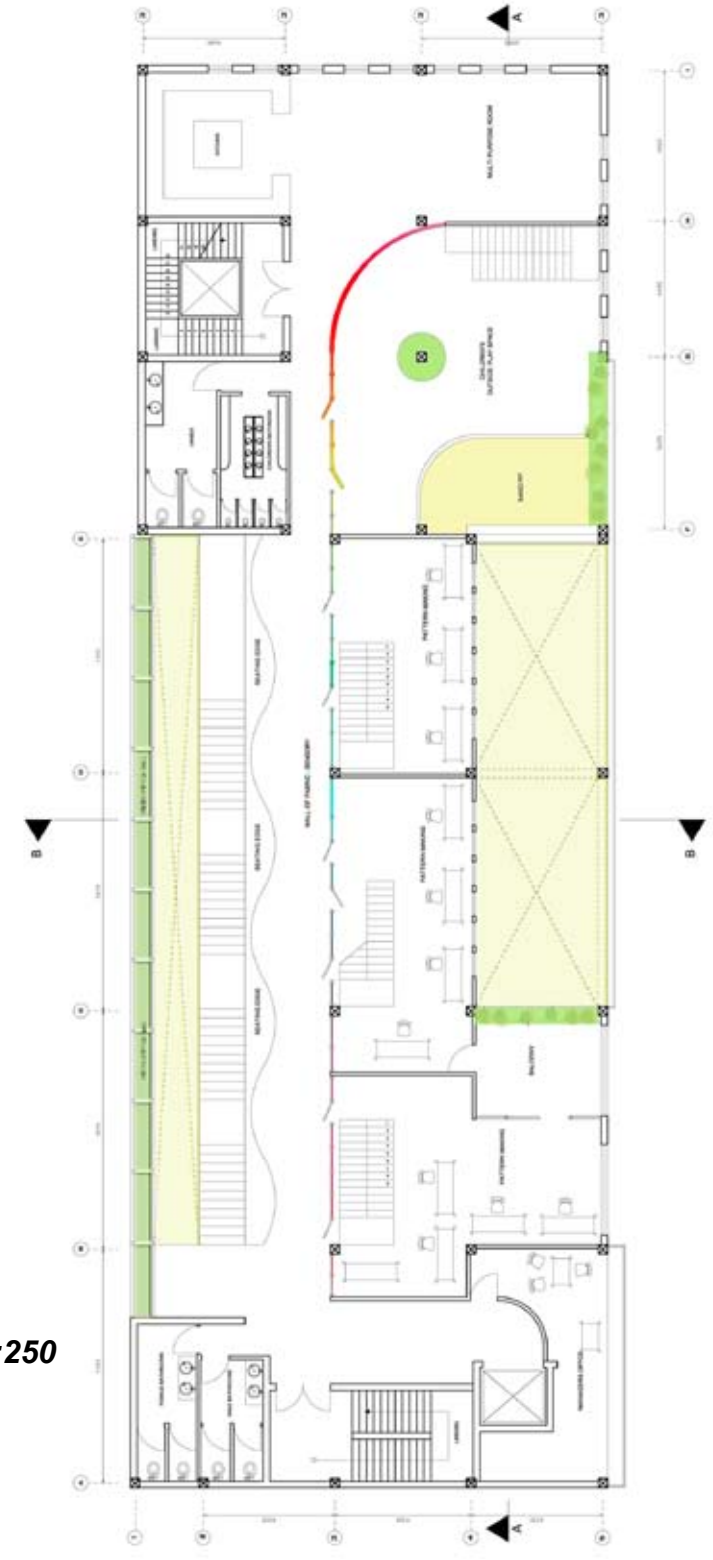
f i r s t f l o o r p l a n 1:250





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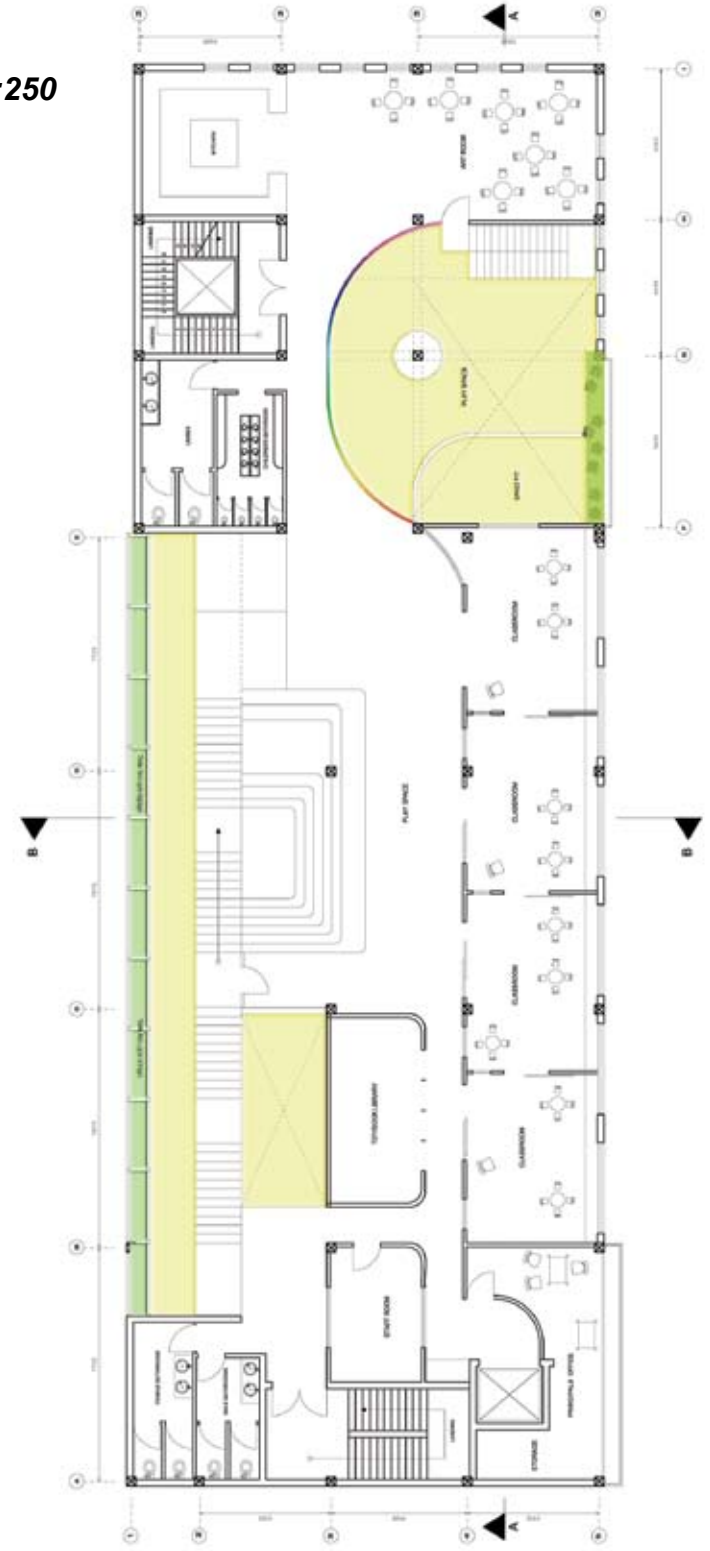
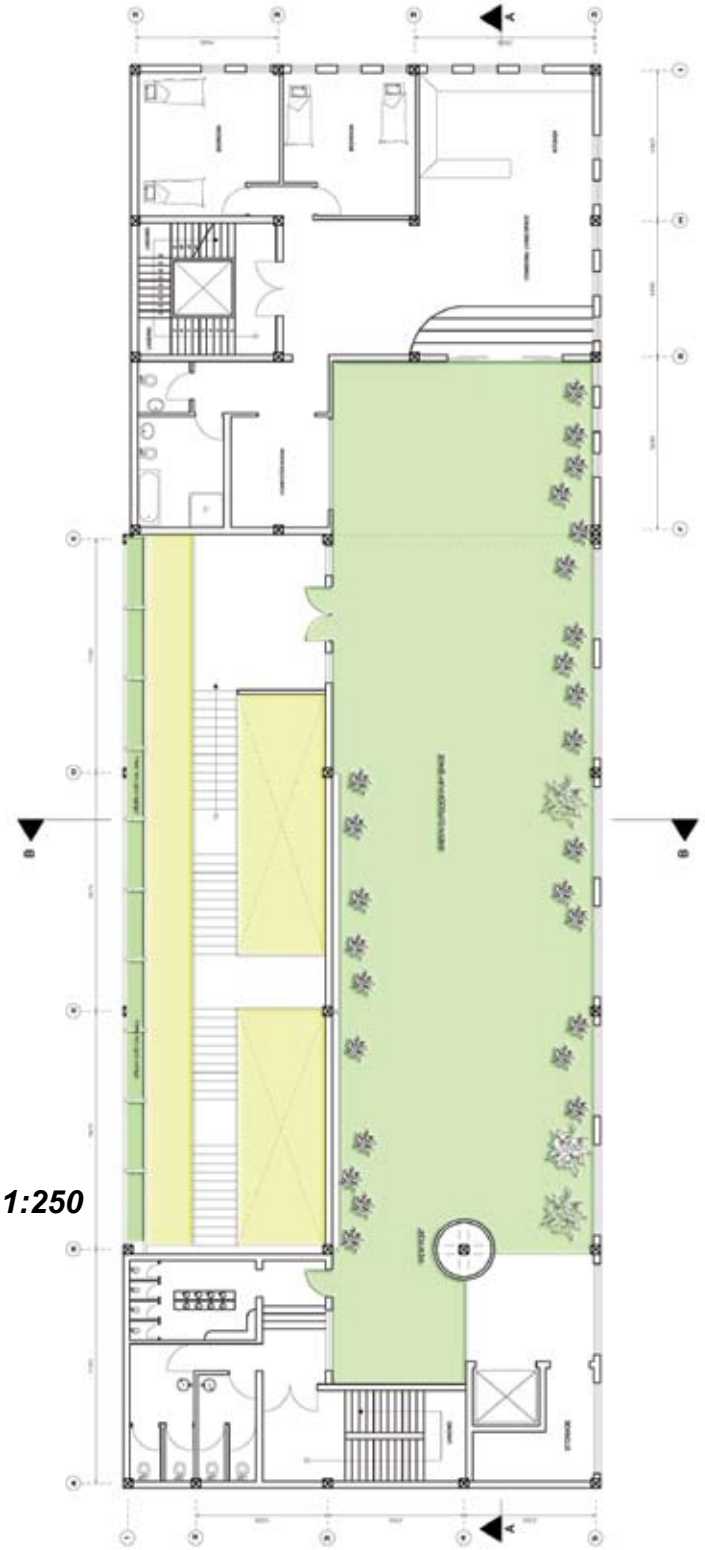
t h i r d f l o o r p l a n 1:250





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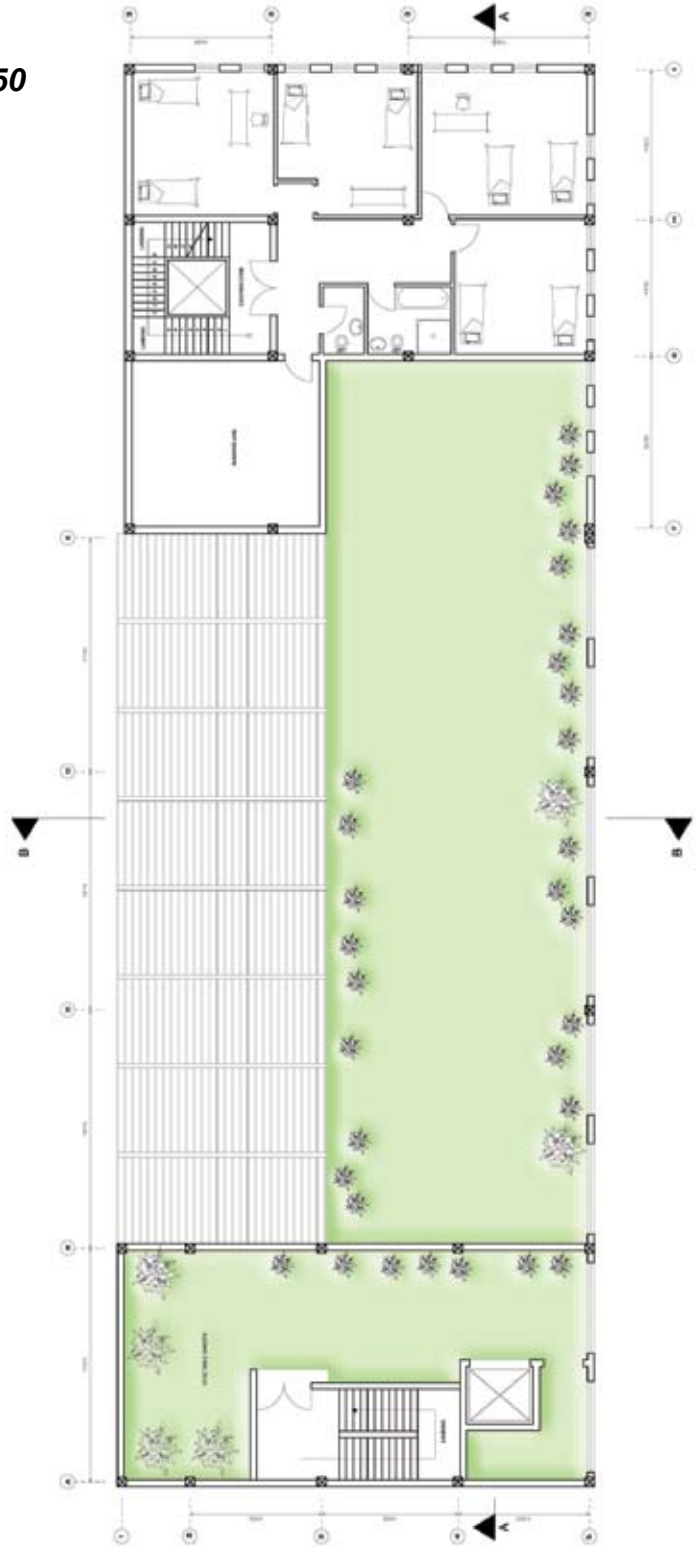
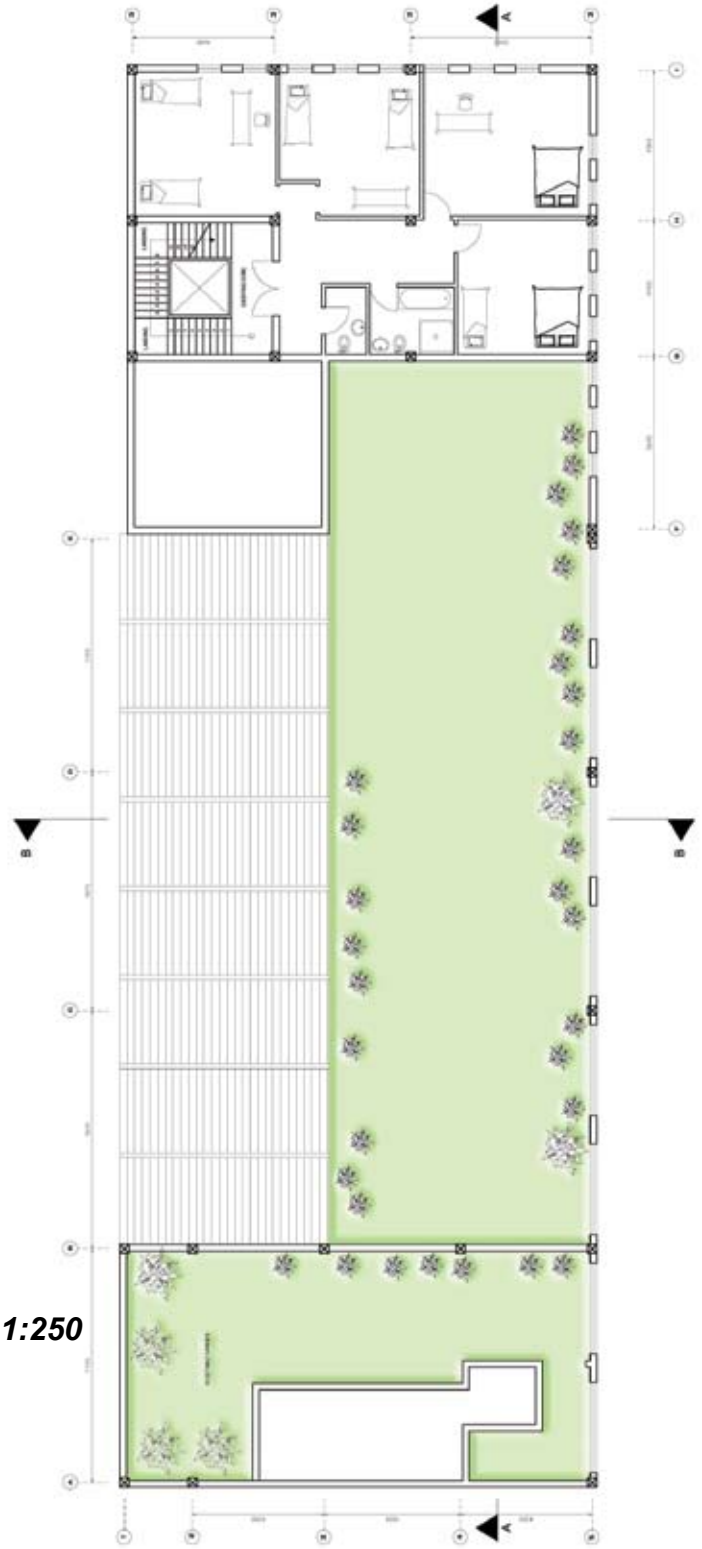
f o u r t h f l o o r p l a n 1:250

f i f t h f l o o r p l a n 1:250





north

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s e c t i o n a a 1:250



section bb 1:250



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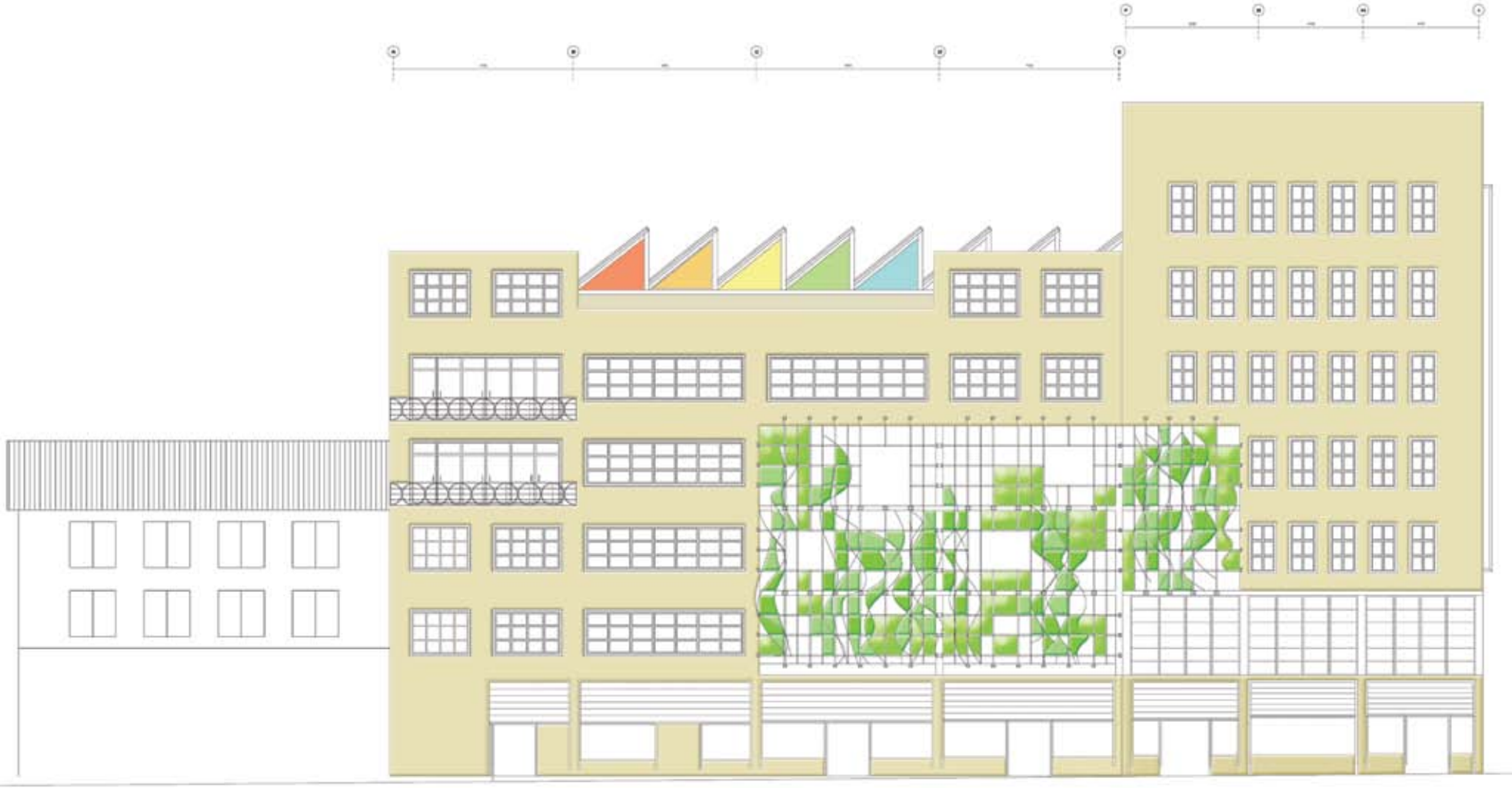
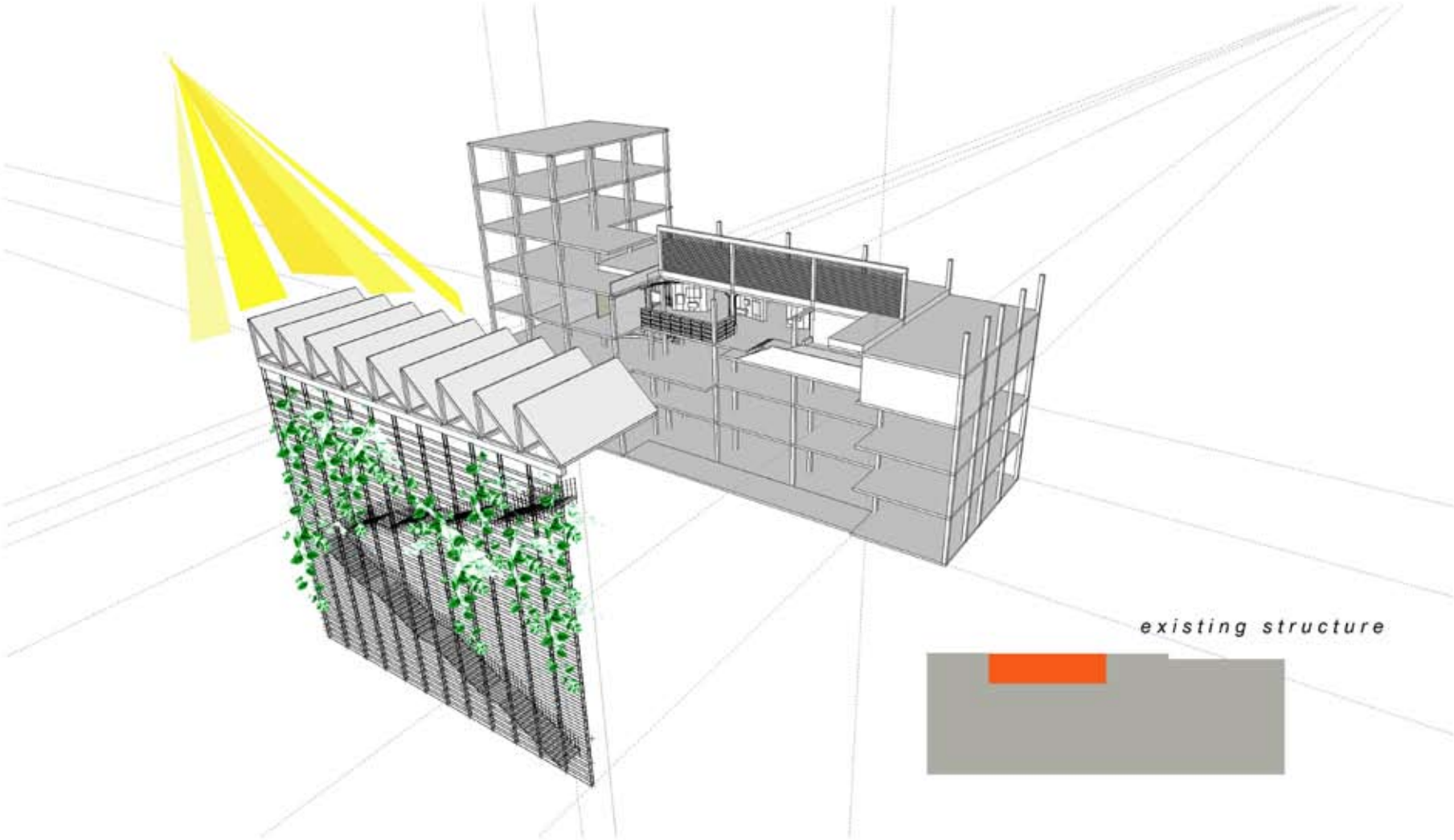
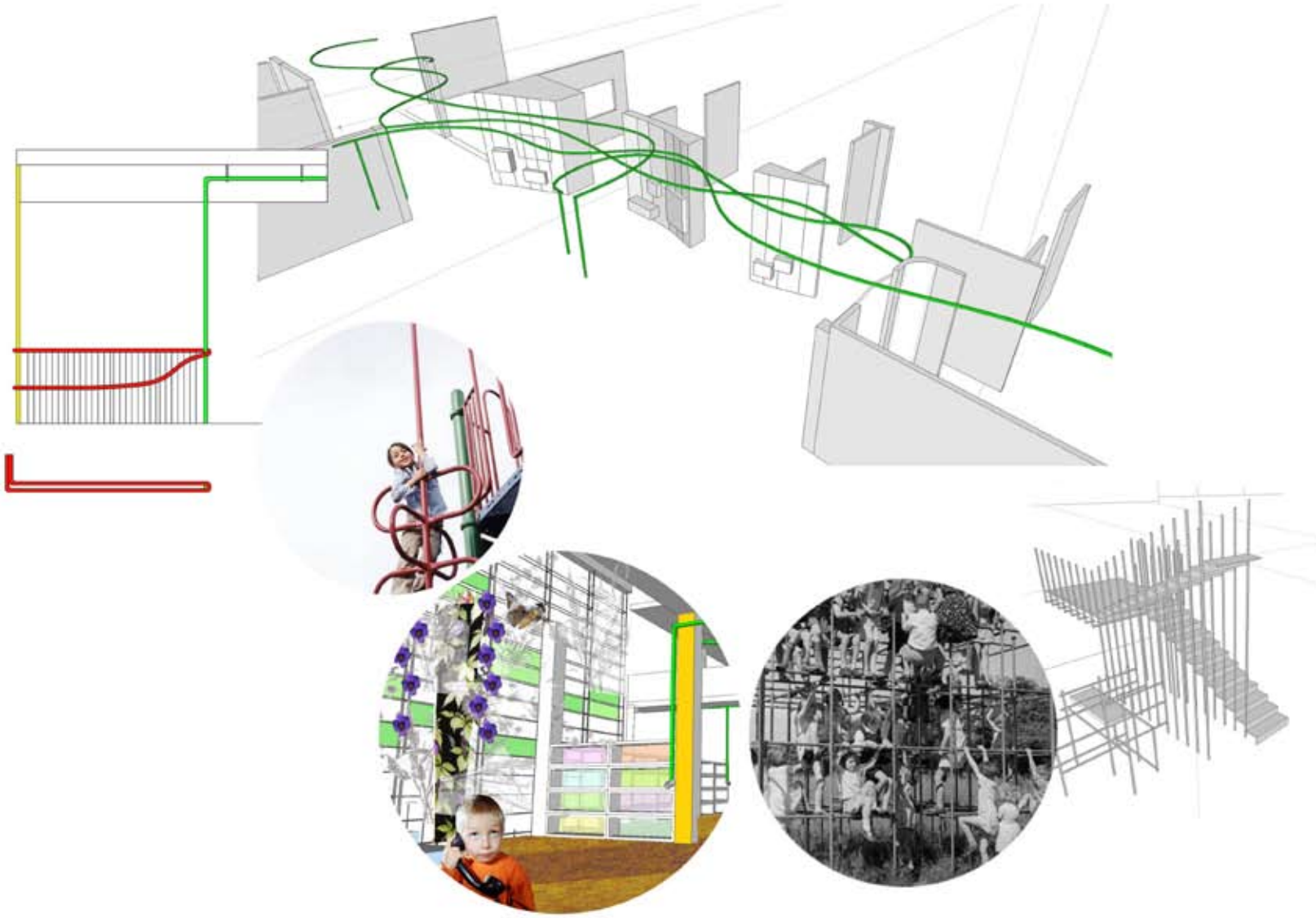
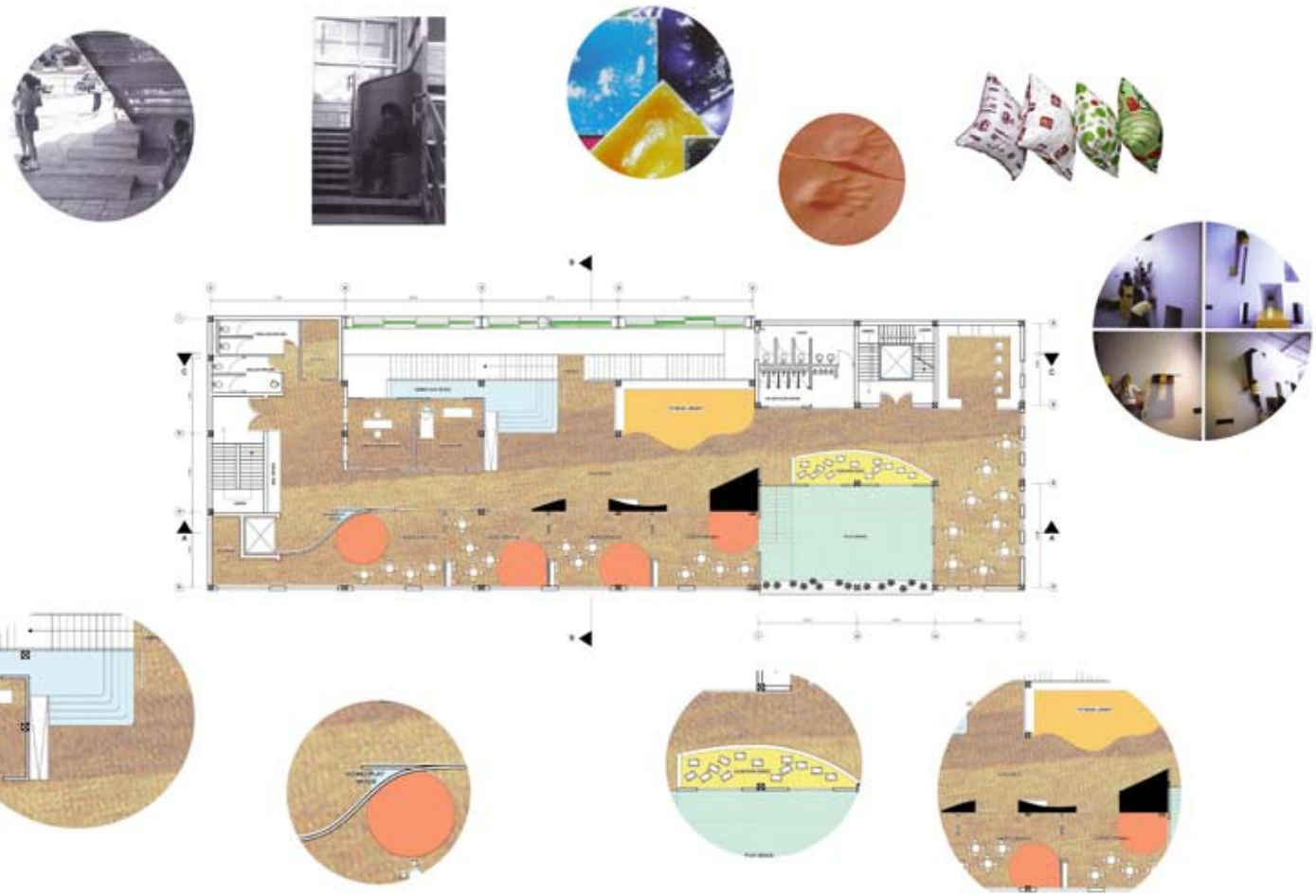
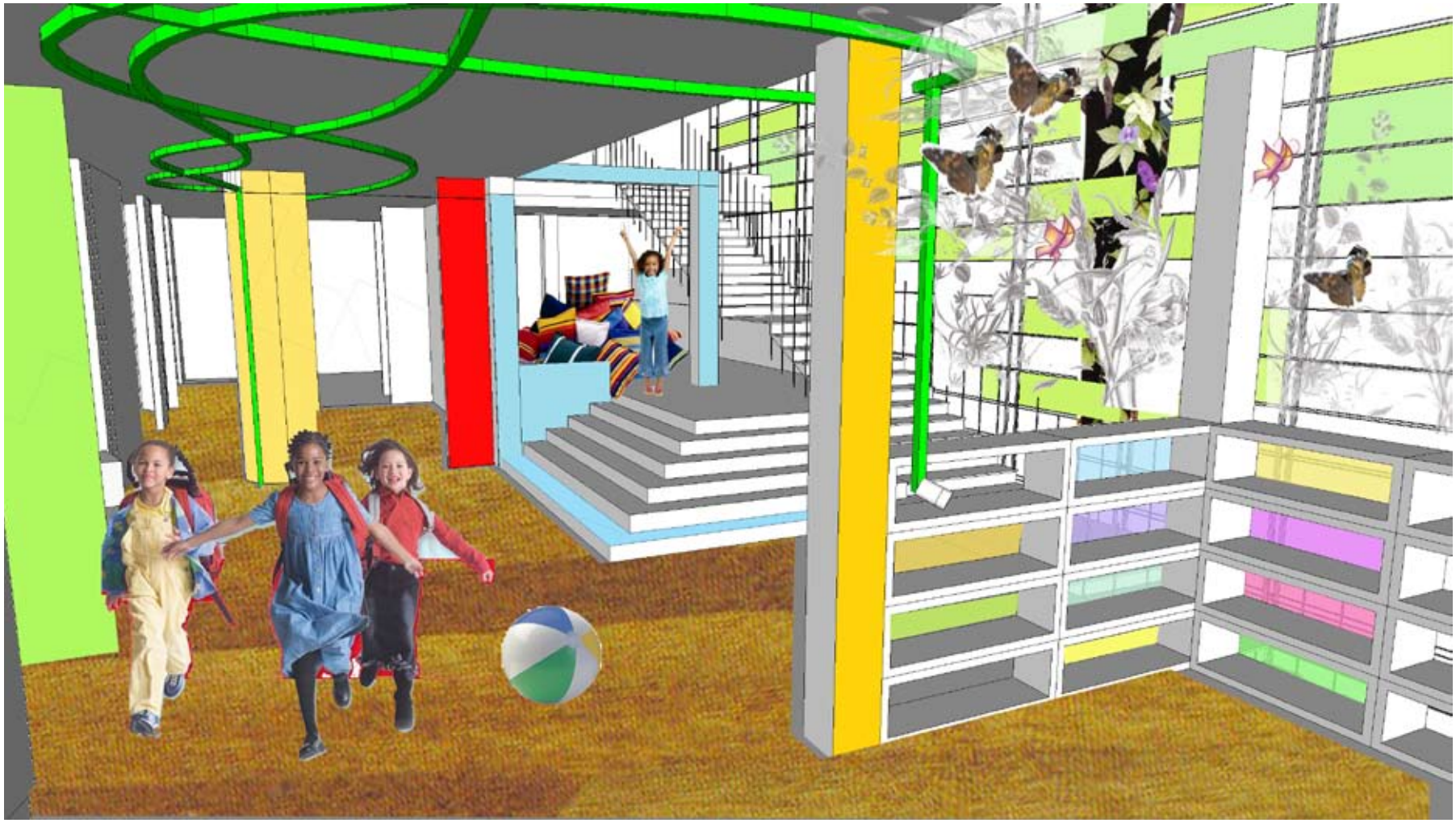
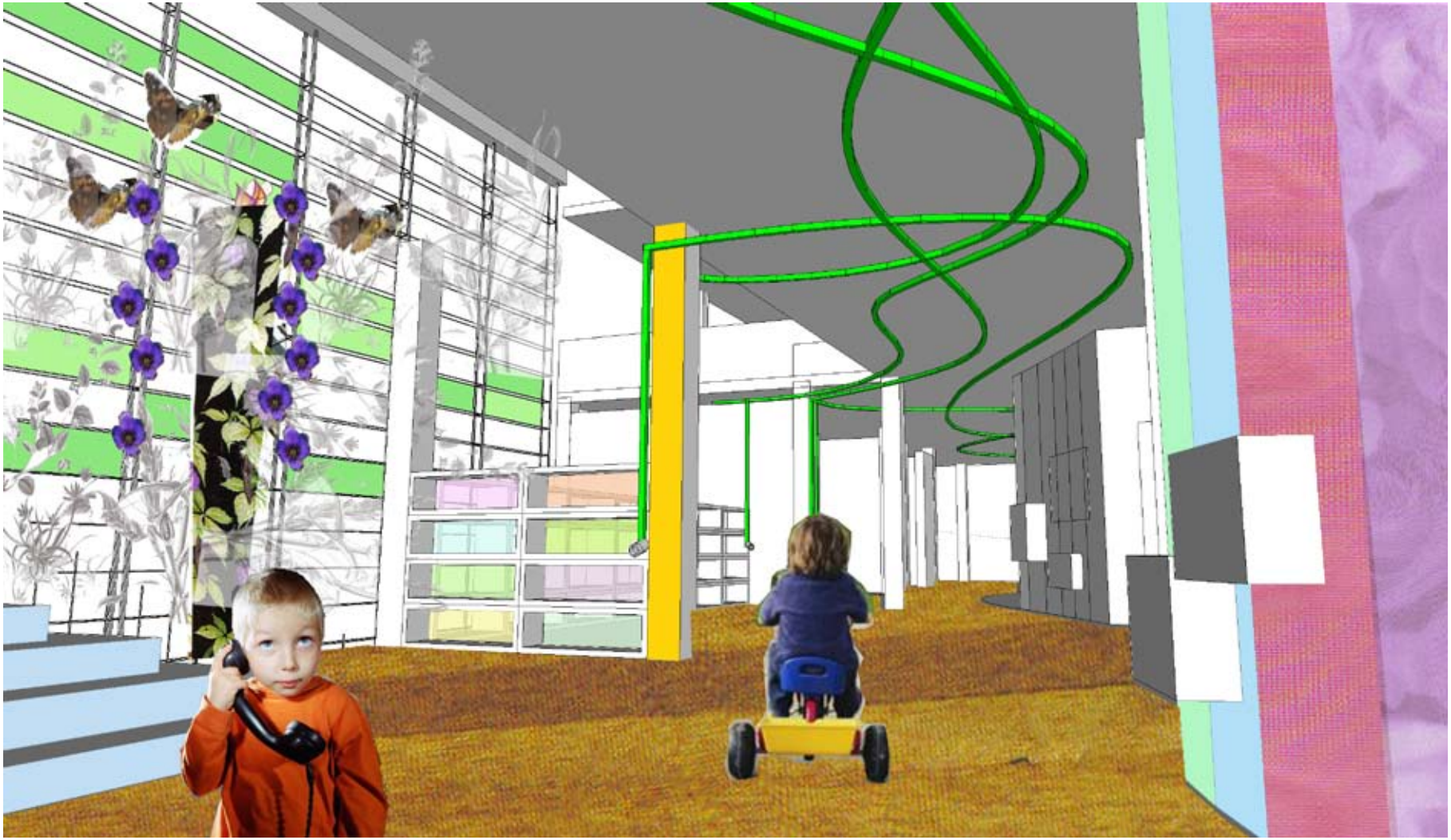


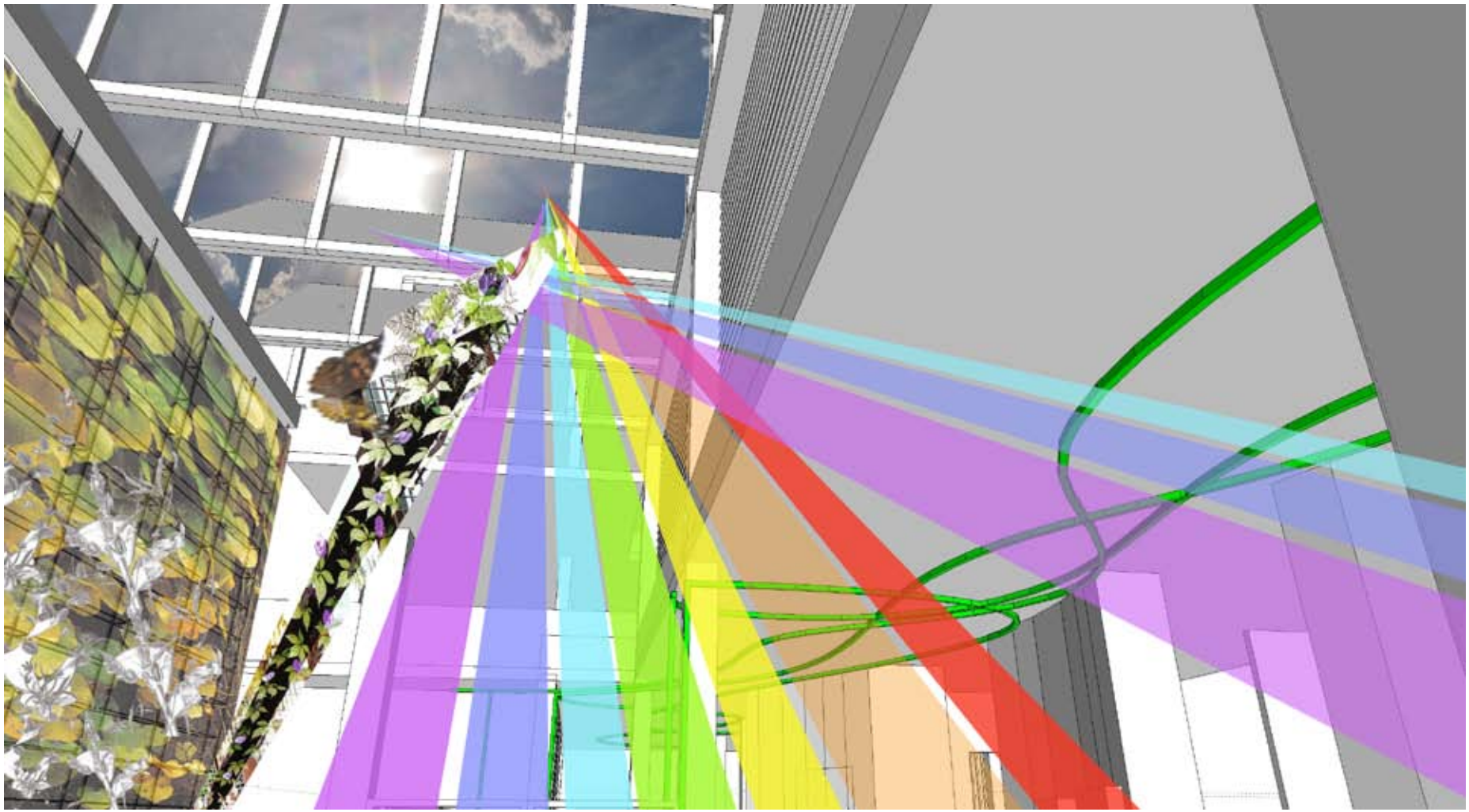

existing structure













Children's Drawings - Barbies Pre-School (Fashion District) : Photograph: Authors Own.

This thesis is focused on children because in theory a city that is friendly for children is a city that is friendly for everyone. The needs of children are usually simple and based on ordinary aspects of life. It is when these aspects dissolve, that spaces become hostile and when the vulnerable and children in this case, are most affected As written by Susan Keller on the Research composed on children and their environments: "with the possible exception of the elderly, children are the people most affected by and most dependent on their immediate surroundings." (Keller 1981: 95)

Children and the importance of childhood have played different roles throughout history. Children were once considered as incomplete adults and their opinions were disregarded and irrelevant or children were perceived as incredibly delicate and fragile people who needed much attention and nurturing. Although this is true to some extent, at the same time, children have immense capabilities and their understanding of spaces and situations are usually more accurate than those of adults. Today children are slowly starting to be recognized as models for adult's attitudes and outlooks and their needs are being recognized as the fundamental building blocks to improving city development and spaces.

Perhaps, if we devote our energy to creating more beneficial and vital spaces for children, we will also address the needs of almost all inhabitants, thus creating safer and friendlier spaces for all. This project aims to bring dignity and pride to children's spaces within a poor environment. The project delicately wove itself into its existing fabric as a manner to assemble information and thus to create an solution which would reflect this and not be foreign to its surroundings. This was composed in acknowledging children's needs and designing for them, to create not only more stimulating environments, but safer ones too.

Children in their nature, deal with aspects more lightheartedly. This is not to say, more ignorantly or neglectfully, but to emphasis a certain quality of "playfulness" that is found in childhood and their interactions with life. This approach to design and life respectively has been neglected by adults in the presence of stress, pressures and their working environments.

Perhaps, we should be acknowledging spaces and structures that nurture and incorporate this lighthearted and playfulness manner, instead of regarding them to be frivolous and trivial.

As the Architect Aldo van Eyck wrote: "there ought to be a child in every adult and an adults city ought to remain a city for a child, built out of chaos and dreams. (Lefaivre 1999: 51)

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