

ARCHITECTURE AS MNEMONIC

Experiencing Past, Present, and Future Narratives in a
Johannesburg Cultural Complex



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ARPL7003 *RESEARCH*

I, *Yehuda Segal*, student number *844509*, am a student registered for the degree of MArch (Prof) in the academic year 2022.

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This document is submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree of M.Arch(Prof) at the Faculty of Engineering & the Built Environment, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.



01.1 | *Conceal*
Detailed photo of a tree trunk, showing
the fissures and texture.

Acknowledgements

It is with great appreciation that I acknowledge the following people for their unwavering, dedicated support and commitment which has helped me get to where I am today.

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Thank you to Hakadosh Baruch Hu.



01.2 | *Reveal*
Detail photo showing a tree trunk with peeling bark.

Abstract

Memory is transient, it comes and it goes. It is a passing remembrance of a past time, person or place. Memory is the experience we store in our minds to recall at a future time and date. It is the friends we make on the first day of school, our childhood holidays, or beach sand between our toes. Memory is also stored in books, visuals, art, and the internet. It is the long-gone monarch in a painting, the photographs and videos of historical events that record a past time and people.

And so, memory is architecture- or, simply, space. Spatial recall- the ability to remember a space or place, directions from point A to point B, is the reason we find our way when lost. The architecture of memory is related to that of structures, buildings and spaces that serve to record or preserve a past event or person, yet also the landmark that guides us. It is a museum, memorial, triumphal arch and even a religious or cultural space. It is also the old as opposed, or in harmony with, the new.

Architecture as mnemonic is relatable to other aspects and devices with mnemonic value. Memory is therefore an important aspect of architecture and the built world. Not only do we remember through spatial interactions, we also experience spaces which lead to us creating new memories.

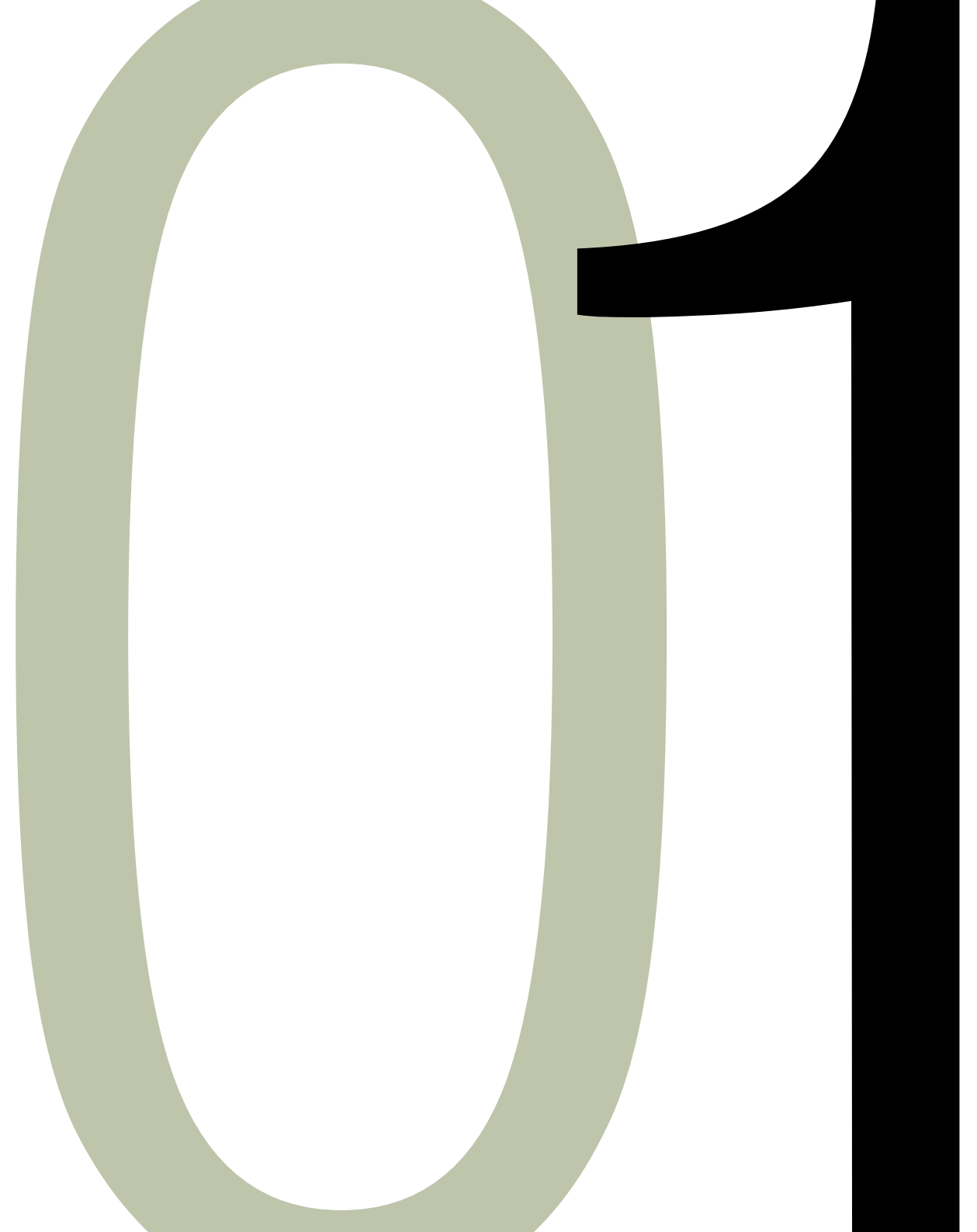
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burg Cultural Complex

Contents

01	Introduction	9
	01.1 Abstract	6
	01.2 Background	9
02	Theory	13
	02.1 Architecture as Mnemonic	15
	02.2 Judaism and Memory	37
03	Context	53
	03.1 Place	55
	03.2 Site	61
04	Precedents	79
05	Design Development	93
	05.1 Design concepts	95
	05.2 Charette	97
	05.3 Design Development	99
06	Technical Systems	119
	06.1 Material Considerations	121
	06.2 Technical Musings	123
07	Final	127
	07.1 Drawings & Renders	129
	07.2 Explanation	183
08	References	185
	07.1 List of Figures	187
	07.2 References	189
09	Appendices	193

INTRODUCTION



01.2 BACKGROUND

Exploring the issues of importance

It would be my personal inclination to consider a multitude of issues and attempt to find and provide potential solutions for them. This is all very well if I was not limited in the time I have to complete my masters degree and its required course-work, in this case a research report. As such, I have herein outlined a number of the issues which I have considered and discussed through this report.

The topic: *Architecture as Mnemonic*

Mnemonic as a notion of that which aids in the creation of memories is important to the research in this document. Architecture as mnemonic is relatable to other aspects and devices with mnemonic value. Memory is therefore an important aspect of architecture and the built world. Not only do we remember through spatial interactions, we also experience spaces which lead to us creating new memories.

Architecture is a powerful force to be reckoned with. It is able to take words, needs and even desires, and, turn them into spatial outcomes. Forms both buildable and unbuildable can be created through the capture of fleeting or insistent memories. Architecture provides a stage on which we may enact or live our lives, thus linking to the notion of narrative and story-telling.

There is a special relationship between memory and space, where it grasps the essence of it, this may be the good or the bad, but lets the other details fade into gray.

As mentioned above, architecture has a powerful role to play in society and is able to create spaces for all sorts of uses. In fact, it is really important to me to consider the notions of memory and architecture, as my late grandmother suffered from Dementia on top of Macular Degeneration in her old age. She passed away in June 2022, and seeing her suffer with these two conditions was certainly unsettling, but also inspiring in that it evoked my mind to consider how we as humans experience spaces in different ways. We all experience spaces differently as a result of so many factors, whether it is our background, our environment, our belief system, or even the mere fact that we have senses to experience spaces accordingly. Considering my grandmother and her deteriorating vision, or even her memory loss, what someone who perhaps lacks, or has a limitation, with any of the senses will undoubtedly create for them a very different experience of space than that which someone else with a fully functioning set of senses will be able to experience.

Connecting Mnemonic and Culture

For each person or group of people, a mnemonic device may differ. This may be due to an importance, or lack thereof, given to such a device. This therefore associates itself with the notion of culture and the way that different cultures view or consider memory and narratives, as well as the types of spaces which they may view as being important.

THEORY



02.1 MEMORY & ARCHITECTURE

Exploring the themes and roles of memory and culture in the built environment

This section within this chapter will examine the notions of memory, its psychological significance, its relation to architecture, its relation to spatial experiences and narratives within architecture and space. Through use of headings, the following essay will consider and discuss these notions, considering the relation to culture and identity, with the hope of tying together these themes.

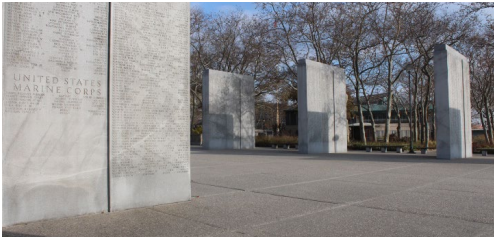
1. Memory and Architecture

- Memory
According to the world’s principal mental health and behavioural science destination online, Psychology Today, ‘memory is the faculty by which the brain encodes, stores, and retrieves information. It is a record of experience that guides future action’ (Psychology Today Staff, n.d.). Memory is the ability to recall the past. Memory is a powerful tool. Power is a memory tool. Memory is a fundamental part of human life and function. It allows us to create habits and function from day-to-day doing repetitive and necessary tasks for our survival.

- Relation to architecture
In the category of memory and architecture, one could- and rightfully so- immediately conclude that this relates to a memorial of sorts, be it a statue or a cemetery, and indeed a museum. Although this is common sense, memory does not have to solely be connected to architecture through such examples. Memory as an experience in time is something that can be applied to any type of architecture or space,

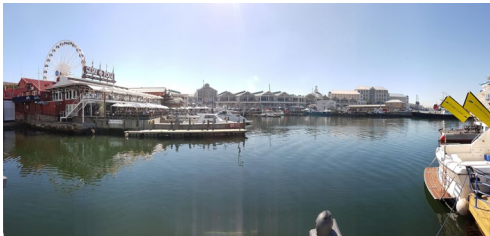
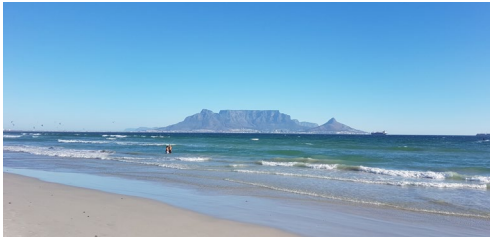
even a single room - so long as there is some form of identifiable landmark.

Architecture or space, especially with a defining characteristic or identity is much more likely to plant itself in the mind and thus memory for later reference and recollection. Think for a moment of a South African townhouse complex where the buildings are all uniform in appearance or aesthetic. What is it that allows a resident or visitor to know where their unit is? In this case the signs indicating directions to a number of units will be the mnemonic device to allow the person to find their way. What if there are no signs or numbers? This can complicate things, unless of course a sight or location triggers the person’s memory or



knowledge base, be it a specific plant or a light fixture in a particular spot. In this way a mnemonic device can be anything really, so long as it in some way aids in our remembering.

In reference to the significance of architecture and memory, John Ruskin states that ‘we may live



without [it], and worship without [it], but we cannot remember without [it]’ (Ruskin, 1963, p. 182). Indeed, this would appear so, for people can live without architecture, shown to us by history and the revelation of how people lived. Nature in and of itself can be considered as architecture, in the sense that it does provide the bare minimums such as ground to sleep on, tree canopies to give shade and when considering a cave, it thus provides a secluded space to live. Worship we may do anywhere, for the requirement of a space in order to practice rituals associated with worship was not always a thing. Yet, the most important part of Ruskin’s quote is its ending. The likelihood of remembering where one worshiped or where one slept if we are just surrounded by nature and naught else will be greatly reduced. With architecture and built spaces we are able to discern locations and ultimately recall where we ought to be.

‘... There are but two strong conquerors of the forgetfulness of men, Poetry and Architecture; and the latter in some sort includes the former, and is mightier in its reality: it is well to have, not only what men have thought and felt, but what their hands have handled, and their strength wrought, and their eyes beheld, all the days of their life. The age of Homer is surrounded with darkness, his very personality with doubt. Not so that of Pericles: and the day is coming when we shall confess, that we have learned more of Greece out of the crumbled fragments of her sculpture than even from her sweet singers or soldier historians’ (Ruskin, 1963, p.

This Page:
Top to bottom | 02.1.1 | Memorial in
New York City | 02.2.2 | Statue as
a memorial and monument in New
York City

This Page:
02.1.3 | View of Table Mountain
from Table View beach, Cape Town.
| 02.1.4 | Sunset in Kruger. | 02.1.5 |
View of the V&A Waterfront, Cape Town.

182). Clearly Ruskin views architecture, and other art forms, as being what allows us to remember.

Any given place has a life and memory attached to it. Ruins are deeply imbued with the memory of long-gone civilisations and nations, a bygone era. The events of the past are stories stored in the



02.1.6 | View of a stone street in the Cape Town neighbourhood of Bo-Kaap, the colourful houses visible

ruins and crevices of collapsed architecture. The memory of an architect is also inherently infused in their projects, especially in the instance that there is a particularly noticeable style to the work. When one happens upon a notable building designed by a prominent architect, one does not usually refer to the building by its name. Rather, the building is referred to as being that of the architect or that is this architect's building.

In space and in time, are our histories bound. This spatial language is alive; it is grounded as the precepts of the discipline of architecture and cultural history. Bastea makes mention of Byatt, who likens writing to remembering: "if you are writing a long novel there is a sense in which you do, precisely, remember all of it, including in some sense the part which is not written, which feels like a projected memory-image or mnemonic..." (Bastea & al., 2004, p. 6).

In *The Art of Memory*, Frances A. Yates penned that, at least to some level, the manipulation of images in memory should continuously encompass the whole psyche. We are constantly in an open discourse between space and memory, form and culture, images and psyche. (Bastea & al., 2004, p. 2) Whenever we can, and wherever we may be, we tend to visit buildings and spaces. We do so not only to place them in our memory, but we do so as well in order to absorb their spaces by passing through them, and thus we make them a part of us in some way, perhaps providing us with inspiration

for our own works. (Bastea & al., 2004, p. 3)

- Individual vs Collective
When discussing the notion of memory, its significance is not always seen as equal between any given persons or groups. Whose memory should be recorded or told, or whose would be considered most important? History is replete with events, including utterly destructive, resulting from this flaw in sound reasoning, as there is no one memory regarded as being more important than another, and there is no one group whose memory is more important than that of another group's memory.

Considering history and that which has come before, most of that which has been recorded of the past by historians - especially in the Western World - is from the perspective and bias of that side who recorded the history they refer to. History is recorded by those who tell the narrative of those who came before. This doesn't consider much in relation to native people who lived in places before Western society colonised the globe. The history of native peoples is often unrecorded - albeit verbally through tradition and passed down from one generation to the next - and in a number of instances has been almost or completely wiped out.

Memory and Identity

The notion of memory and its relation of whose should be more importantly regarded does therefore play into the notions of identity. In fact, this therefore connects to the topic of vernacular as being the

bearing of identity. Vernacular refers to something native or local, and there are many vernacular languages which are not spoken anymore and, in some instances, long forgotten. Not only have languages ceased to be used, many other aspects regarding different local rituals, observances or lifestyles have diminished or been lost to history. This includes facets of the built environment from a variety of perspectives, including building materials used, building technologies and methods used, and vernacular architectures that one no longer sees other than that found amongst ruins and archaeological dig-sites.

On the flip side of forgotten vernaculars, there are many instances of revived vernaculars. The language of Hebrew was not formally spoken as a language for centuries until the birth of Zionism and the creation of the modern state of Israel in 1948. The former promoted the reuse and introduction of Hebrew as a spoken language with the striving for a Jewish state. This is so for many forms of the vernacular, be they native - also known as local - or the result of being imported to a place - thus being possible to call it global. Languages are often considered to have a prominence to them. English is arguably the most widely used language across the world in its use on signage and instructions. It is not necessarily the most widely spoken language when one considers a society's first language. French, Spanish and Portuguese are other examples of widely seen and heard languages. The legacy of colonialism saw the introduction and use of foreign

vernaculars to new places. As such, across countries formerly under any given European colony or empire, the language, fashion, arts, culture, beliefs, and even the architecture is indicative of the former state rulers.

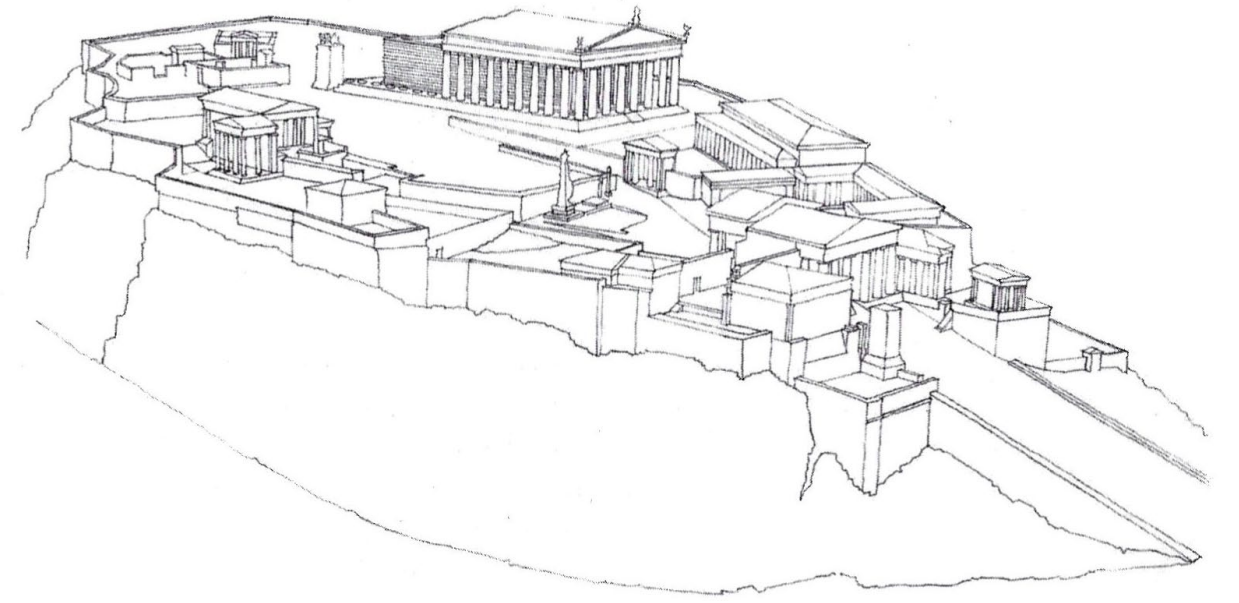
This brings to attention the idea of continuous vernaculars: those aspects of a given place being introduced, and by extension, having continuous use through time. Neo-classicism has seen the revival of classical architectural styles in many parts of the world. This was introduced with the advent European global expansion. Today, it would seem, that no specific country has any intrinsic architectural vernacular. This is because major cities across the world are a mishmash of architectural styles. Both Clive Chipkin in *Johannesburg Style*, and Keith Beavon in *Johannesburg: The Making and Shaping of the City*, show how Johannesburg is a conglomeration of different architectural styles. The city is home to art deco, neo-classical, modernist and contemporary architecture. At the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, it is possible to also find a variety of architectural styles. The iconic great hall is neo-classical, adjacent buildings have Egyptian inspiration, Solomon Mahlangu House – formerly Senate House – is a Brutalist tower, while the John Moffat building is modernist.

Historically, religion has arguably played a significant role in the production of architecture and urban planning, as in many instances within predominantly Christian societies, urban grids and layouts are

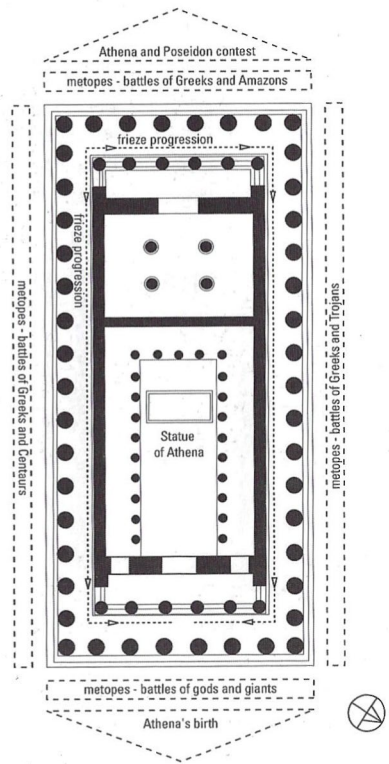
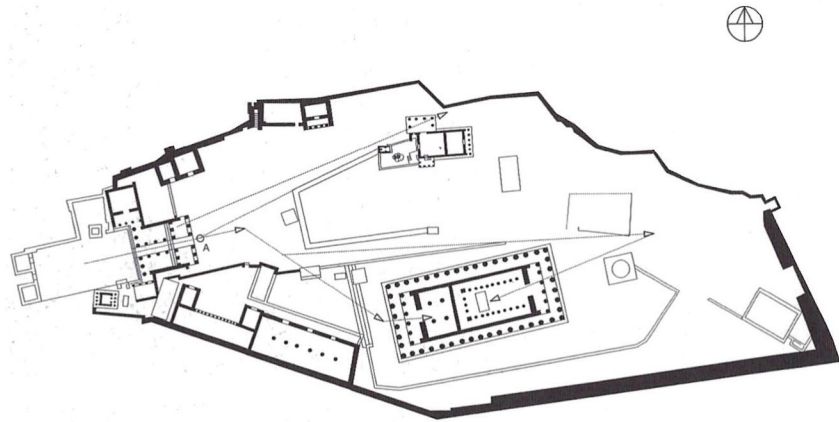
designed with a church as the focal or anchoring point. Churches, and especially Cathedrals, have been designed as landmarks where they either have towers or spires which are visible, as well as bells which are audible, and these serve as the means to guide one to the place of worship. That said, it is not only religion, but also cultural ritual and hierarchical position that has played an important part of the layout of urban and suburban environments. A shopping mall or high street, and even a school setting, will usually be the anchor of a given suburban region; a castle will usually be found on the highest hill where it has a good vantage point over the surrounding cityscape or landscape; and in many cases, mosques are designed to include minarets which are generally visible over a fair distance thus attracting worshipers to prayer.

In Ancient times, buildings of importance tended to be constructed at higher places, thus not only ensuring the physical distinction of hierarchy, but also promoting the idea of the space being unique and significant. Take for example The Acropolis in Athens, home to the Parthenon and the Erechtheion. Both of these Temples were constructed for the Greek gods. The Parthenon sits at a point above the other structures on the site, this showing the importance associated to it as a Temple dedicated to the god Athena.

The so-called discovery of the 'New World', along with Colonialism saw the expansion of Christianity and Western values to the Western Hemisphere,



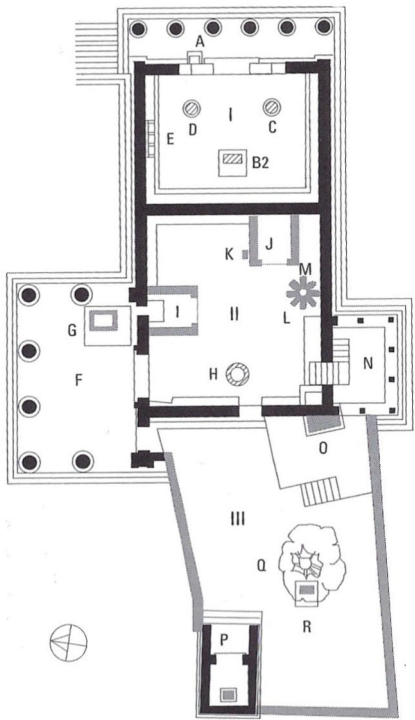
02.1.7 | The Acropolis, Athens



This page from top to bottom:
02.1.8 | Plan of the Acropolis, Athens.
Point A is defined by the intersection
of the central axis with the visual
lines produced by the extension of
the retaining wall and the edge of the
Erechtheion sanctuary. Beyond this
point the north portico of the latter
would no longer be visible.
02.1.9 | Plan of the Parthenon showing
the progression of the frieze and the thematic content of
the metopes and pediments.

across Africa and the East. It also saw the destruction of many native civilisations across North and South America. Consequently, there are a number of cultures that simply do not exist but for ruins and written or illustrated records. This is also applicable to Oceania, and especially Australia where a large number of Aboriginals were killed to create a Western country. Similarly, across Africa, colonialism also brought Christianity, however, in most instances the native peoples in African countries, and particularly known in South Africa, notoriously during apartheid, were discriminated against based on race and even cultural differences. The legacy of the introduction of Christianity to the world is that it is the most widely followed religion globally. It also serves to note that in some places, native peoples have incorporated traditional beliefs and practices with Christianity.

Bastea (2004) also brings to attention the ground-breaking studies done by Maurice Halbwachs regarding collective memory, *Les cadres sociaux de la memoire* (1925) and *La memoire collective* (1950). There the author asserts that each recollection, even the most individual and private thought and sentiment, occurs in connection to a social group. Our memories are localised within a social group, positioned in the mental and material spaces which that group affords. Due to the seemingly stable nature of these material spaces around us, we are able to conserve our recollections. She continues to express that without trivialising the trauma of immigration and forced



This Page:
02.1.10 | Plan of the Erechtheion with
shrines.
I. Eastern Section: A. Altar of Zeus
Hypatos, B. Altar of Poseidon and
Erechtheus, C. Altar of Boutes, D. Altar
of Hephaistos, E. Thrones of Priests.
II. Western Section: F. North Porch,
G. Altar and marks of thunderbol, H.
Salt spring and trident marks, I. Tomb
of Erechtheus, J. Athena Polias, K.
Hermes, L. Lamp of Kallimachos, M.
Persian Spoil, N. Caryatid Porch.
III. Pandroseion: O. Tomb of Kekrops,
P. Temple of Pandrosos, Q. Olive Tree, R.
Altar of Zeus Herkeios

dislocation, we should acknowledge that, seen in a universal standpoint, the loss of home may have now become the standard. Most people have grown up in a house of memory belonging to someone else, and we are all carrying memories around with us, all the while searching for a new home in which they may rest.

In his introduction to *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*, historian John R. Gills points out that “both identity and memory are political and social constructs, and should be treated as such... Identities and memories are not things we think about, but things we think with” (Bastea & al., 2004, p. 8). Connections among memory, history, and space have been established among the work of historians and anthropologists. In his multivolume study on French history, *Les lieux de memoire* (1984-1992), Pierre Nora and his colleagues have underscored the “importance of memory and the search for the lieux that embody it, the return to our collective heritage and focus on [that] country’s shattered identities.” (Bastea & al., 2004, p. 9)

With appreciation to the study of psychology, we know that we use the right side of our brains to perceive and remember visual designs and spatial locations, and we use the left side of our brains when we remember verbal information. Thus, it is possible to say that the right side sees while the left side narrates. Put in that way, the memory associated with “our own home” is hence encoded in the right side of our brain, and it is constructed

on individual, lived experience. Conversely the memory which we associate with “our own nation” is encoded via the left side of our brain. This is to say that it is a learned concept which has been communicated and reinforced with our education, socialisation, media, state rhetoric, and so forth. Bastea believes that we distinguish these two entities autonomously and it is therefore possible for us to negotiate between them, finding links between them short of, seeing home as a mere subgroup of the nation.

With the distinction made earlier between the lived and the learned memory of space, we can examine Body Memory and Mind Memory. Body Memory denotes to memories of space consequential from individual, lived experience, such as the arrangement of our bedroom, the streets of our hometown, or the old childhood home. These give the impression that they are directly stamped or programmed in our bodies. Motor memory is a component of body memory and involves remembering how to do an action, be it how to ride a bicycle, swim, or dial a familiar phone number without thinking or rehearsing. Mind Memory denotes to secondary memories that we have of space, recounted experiences which have been passed to us from our family, as a result of our schooling, influence of our community and so forth. They could be a relative’s home that we have never seen, architectural landmarks we may have considered yet not visited, and even national borders of our country. Stories which we have heard and overheard about given places

also develop as a part of our autobiographical memory. P10

Autobiographical memory works in its own particular way. The encoding procedure takes place first. “Only that which we have encoded do we remember, and that which we do encode is greatly dependent on who we are,” Schachter points out. However, it should be noted that not all encoding happens consciously. A significant facet of our memory arises from implicit memory, this being the events and experiences that materialised in the past without our even being cognisant that we are truly remembering them. Current research suggests that “the brain structures that sustain implicit memory are in position before the structures required for explicit memory.” Once children develop language skills, they are able to impose their own narrative structure on their experiences. Studies on literary autobiography focus on the significance of narrative. Our memories would endure as an amorphous mass if we are unable to give them form, or to shape them into any comprehensible narrative.

Remembering is a process that involves the act of retrieval, this being the past experience which we unearth from the treasure chest of Mnemosyne. This procedure is intricate and complex, as retrieval presupposes the active, sentient alteration of old experiences to fit with the present conditions. Autobiographies are not documentaries, as the brain actively engages in the creation of a memory during the retrieval process. “Through act of remembering,

we come to complete a pattern which best matches that which is accessible in memory; there is no spotlight which shines on a deposited image.” Events and images that are stored in our memory are not engraved in stone, as was previously believed, but are instead subject to selective, continuous recasting that reflects our present experiences and concerns.

Memory of place appears to work in a comparable way. We tend to revisit earlier experiences, editing or adjusting them, even altering or erasing them. We may experience architecture with our physical body, yet we remember in our mind and heart. “The unfolding drama of life is revealed more by the telling than by the actual events told. Stories are not merely ‘chronicles,’ like a secretary’s minutes of a meeting... Stories are less about facts and more about meanings. In subjective and embellished telling of the past, the past is constructed - history is made,” writes psychologist Dan McAdams.

- Spatial Recall

The notion of spatial recall is quite easily understood, as it simply refers to the ability to remember a space - being a place. It is the familiarity one has with any given place one has been to, and by extension seen in visual media. ‘Whether intended or not, architecture and designed landscapes serve as grand mnemonic devices that record and transmit vital aspects of culture and history’ (Treib & al., 2009). The writers who have contributed to Spatial Recall consider the concept of memory in a broad

spectrum, taken here to refer to the trace of all which has come before, be it something existing as tangible remains or even something merely having a vague yet persistent mental presence.

'Memory haunts not only the derelict house but also the vibrant plaza. It haunts built worlds that have fallen to natural disasters or to changes of political regime' (Treib & al., 2009, p. XIV). How accurate this is in relation to the South African story. All buildings maintain our perception of time-based duration and that of depth. Cultural and human narratives are recorded and advocate through buildings. We cannot comprehend or think of time as a more physical measurement; it is only possible grasp time via its actualizations: these are the traces, the places, and the events of temporal manifestation. Joseph Brodsky points out an additional deficiency of human memory when he considers the amalgamated images of cities in human memory. There, he asserts that these cities are constantly empty: "[The city of memory] is empty because for an imagination it is easier to conjure architecture than human beings." Architectural structures facilitate memory; without the image of the pyramids in our minds, we would have a decisively weaker understanding of the depth of time. The mere image of a pyramid marks and concretises time' (Treib & al., 2009, p. 19).

Buildings and their remnants are indicative of stories of human fate, those that are real and those which are imaginary. Remains ignite our contem-

plation with regards to any lives which have before now disappeared and enable us to envisage the fate of their long-deceased inhabitants. Ruins and settings which are eroded have a particularly evocative and emotional power; they give the impression of forcing us to ruminate and visualise. Incompleteness as well as that of fragmentation also contain distinct evocative power. Often within medieval illustrations and paintings from the Renaissance, architectural settings are regularly depicted with only a small portion or edge of a wall or that of a window opening, yet this fragment in isolation serves in its ability to create the experience of a wholly constructed setting. This is not only the secret to the art of collage, but also of some architects, for example John Soane and Alvar Aalto who have used the advantage of this emotive power of the architectural fragment. Soane's own house located at 13 Lincoln's Inn Fields in London (1792-1824) is an assemblage of architectural fragments and a built ruin, whereas the design approach of Alvar Aalto's mature work is frequently created on the idea of a sporadic collage of architectural events, images, and fragments. 'Our recollections are situational and spatialised memories; they are memories attached to places and events. It is obvious that our existential space is never a two-dimensional pictorial space, but a lived and multi-sensory space saturated and structured by memories and intentions' (Treib & al., 2009, p. 22). Life and living would arguably be naught without spatial referencing in our minds and memories.

2. Memory into Culture

• How is Culture to be defined?

Culture is multi-faceted, multi-dimensional. It may refer to a person's religious or faith beliefs, their dress, food, birth-place, identity. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, the word culture has a few possible definitions depending on its use as a noun or verb. As a noun, culture may be defined as the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group. Culture can also be viewed as the characteristic features of everyday existence (such as diversions or a way of life) shared by people in a place or time: - popular culture or Southern culture. The term can also be regarded as the set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterizes an institution or organisation: - a corporate culture focused on the bottom line. It can also be defined as the set of values, conventions, or social practices associated with a particular field, activity, or societal characteristic. This may refer to the study of the effect of computers on print culture, and even to Peggy O'Mara when she states that, 'changing the culture of materialism will take time ...' It can also mean the integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behaviour that depends upon the capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations

In addition to the above definitions, culture may also be regarded as the enlightenment and excellence of taste acquired by intellectual and

aesthetic training. Alternatively, it might refer to the acquaintance with and taste in fine arts, humanities, and broad aspects of science as distinguished from vocational and technical skills, where we may see someone as being a person of culture. It can also be associated with the act of developing the intellectual and moral faculties especially by education.

While culture can refer to the arts, it can also refer to sports or religious beliefs and even food. We tend to refer to films, art and literature as popular culture, while in relation to society we refer to the different rituals and practices observed by different cultural or religious groups, either in their beliefs, dress or even the types of food. Different cultures also tend to have different opinions, architectural and art styles or speak different languages, and practice different rituals.

Architecture in its own right is seen as an art form. It is thus surely well to say that architecture is in fact a part of culture within society and the built environment. It is in its own way its own cultural element within the extensive web of that deemed cultural. Different typologies of architecture can be considered to be facets of the eras and styles in which they were constructed, this in its own regard a form of culture. Specific countries, cities, suburbs, and communities- even down to family groups- have their own cultural identity and associations or affiliations. In this merit, South Africa has its own cultural identity, albeit a rather diverse and multi-coloured thing. The mere fact that there are a

LESS
I
MORE

This Page:
Images of popular culture and the like.
Top to bottom, left to right | 02.1.11 |
Text graphic reading, "Less is More", a
phrase coined by architect Ludwig Mies
Van Der Rohe, and a sure influence of
minimalistic and simplistic lifestyles.
02.1.12 | Product design, in this case
a mug, with a graphic on it is also an
example of popular culture.
02.1.13 | The same graphic as in figure
02.1.12, printed on a tote bag.
02.1.14 | The same graphic as seen in
both previous figures, this time printed
on a shirt.



variety of race groups already means that there are different cultures. There are eleven official languages in the country, and a number of others that are spoken, thus showing further the variety of cultures. There are unique foods found only in South Africa and those whose origin is from this land: - biltong, dry wors, gem squash, rooibos tea, and a koeksister. There is bunny chow, chakalaka, and a good old braai with pap. The people in South Africa are known to be friendly and warm, always with a smile, thus even showing a culture of comradeship.

While architecture itself can be an aspect of culture and cultural identity, the function of architecture and urban spaces are also capable of having their own associations with culture. A sports stadium is host to a culture of sport and patriotism. A museum is a house of culture, be it art or history. A café or restaurant is a host to food culture and cuisine. A cinema or theatre is home to culture in the sense of popular culture and arts. A park promotes a culture of outdoor-living and enjoyment, connection to, and respect of nature. A gym is home to a culture of health and fitness. The examples are extensive, and the definition of culture can be very broadly regarded.

Culture relates to the notion of memory and narrative in a variety of ways. Memory is an important facet of different cultures, the notable element of storytelling and passing down of life skills from generation to generation. This is also indicative of narrative, where different cultures have a history

unique to themselves, a history and story to tell of their practices and beliefs. Without memory, narratives would be naught but concocted imaginations. Without memory, would there even be a past? For surely without memory, what is to be recalled, recounted and related to others.

3. Mnemonic as Narrative

- Experiencing Architecture
Since architecture has the ability to aid in our memories, it is also safe to say that it is a prime way that we experience life. Daily actions take place in architectural spaces, and although we may not even give it any thought, these moments create our experiences that we keep in our conscience and remember in future. For the most part, people sleep in beds in a room, use a bathroom for personal hygiene, cook in kitchens, eat in dining rooms, drive in cars and either study at school or work in an office. All these small and seemingly insignificant actions are our daily experiences and they take place in spaces defined by elements of architecture.

Just as the small things create experiences, sometimes the architecture itself is designed to create an experience - instil a feeling or thought within a person. Certain elements can be utilised to arouse different experiences. These elements vary greatly, being a material or even the way a space is lit. Concrete is generally a cold and hard material whereas wood is warmer. Large openings in a façade will let

in abundant amounts of natural light, whereas few - or no - openings will ensure a space is dark unless it has artificial light sources. A brighter space will feel more welcoming and warmer, while a dark space will feel uninviting and cold. Thus, the way in which a building is designed may stimulate the production of memories.

Architecture and Narrative explores the affiliation between architecture and that of cultural meaning. It considers how architecture and meaning are comprehended through embodied experience. In architectural theory the conceived and perceived ideas of space are frequently cast as a powerful opposition. 'Narrative is often seen as a form of representation bound with sequence, space and time' (Cobley 2001:3). It is however also viewed 'as structure, a particular way of combining parts to make a whole' or as a narration, as the process or 'the activity of selecting, arranging and rendering story material in order to achieve specific time-bound effects on a perceiver' (Bordwell 1985: xi). A narrator and a reader are required for a narrative in the same way in which architecture requires an architect and a viewer. Narrative also partakes in the construction of meaning through the ordering of spaces and social relationships. (Psarra, 2009, p. 2)

Architecture itself can be a narrative or it can play host to the telling-over of narratives. Sometimes architecture can even do both simultaneously. A theatre for example is designed to give the audi-

ence an experience or narrative while also being the stage to tell or show a narrative. Cinemas are also designed to show narratives through film while giving the user an experience.

The architects who have successfully designed buildings which focus on the experience of the user generally create spaces where the choice of materials or the manipulation of light entering the space creates an emotional or intellectual response. Moshe Safdie, the Israeli-Canadian architect famous for Habitat 67, designed the Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum in Jerusalem, Israel. In this project, he has utilised the coldness of concrete combined with the forced path of movement through the building, along with the light prism stretching across the main space's length as it opens up gradually, to create a narrative and experience for those who visit the museum. Daniel Libeskind is also known for his ability to design and incorporate narratives and experiences in his architecture. One of his most notable works is the Jewish Museum in Berlin, where he has used the abstraction of a star of David to inform the building plan. He has also cut slits across the façade and used elements such as beams or columns in chaotic ways to create certain experiences within different spaces of the building. This ties into the ability of architecture to act as a story-telling medium.

- Architecture as a story telling medium
Architecture does not solely have the ability to create experiences and narratives. It is indeed

also able to tell stories, notably through ruins and remnants, old and monumental structures. Stories can also be depicted through architectural elements, facets and fragments. Consider in particular architecture which has stained glass windows, the colours tell a story. In instances where these windows are stained with imagery, and in cases where frescos have been painted upon walls and ceilings, there are stories being told through these elemental fragments. In fact, gargoyles, structural elements and unique architectural styles also tell stories of past cultural identities, albeit at times we are left to ponder or speculate over these.

4. Cross-culture

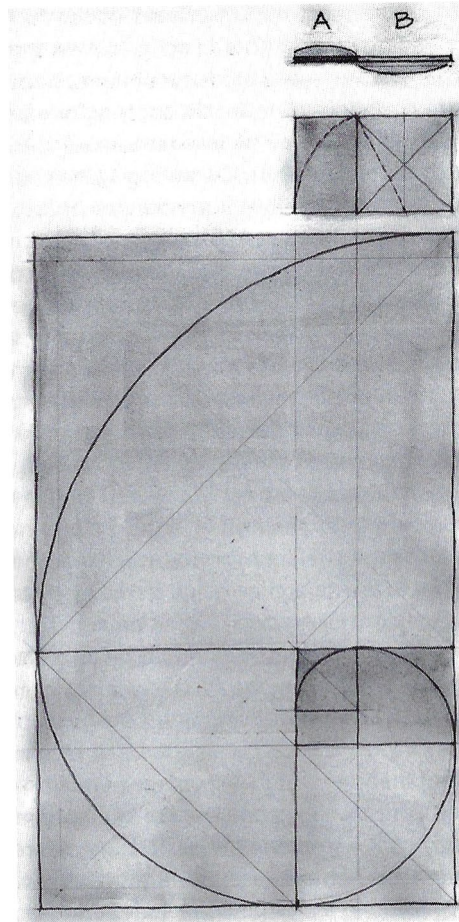
Coming back to the aspect of culture, it is important to consider the notion of cross-culture. Cross-cultural is defined by the Merriam-Webster dictionary as that which deals with or offers comparison between two or more different cultures or cultural areas. (Anon., n.d.) This is in itself related to multiculturalism.

- Multicultural
Multicultural is defined by the Merriam-Webster dictionary as 'of, relating to, reflecting, or adapted to diverse cultures.' (Anon., n.d.) Much of the world is today a melting pot of cultures. Across many countries there are an abundant variety of different racial, religious or secular groups of people. As such, one of the biggest challenges faced by liberal democracies is the need to address the rights of so many different people with so many different

views. Many countries have foregone their former identities as Christian states and instead identify as secular, keeping politics and religion separate. In these states, or nations, there is usually the right to freedom of belief, opinion, and religion, thus providing the stage for a diversity of peoples. That said, there are still many countries which still promote or have a connection between state and religion.

- Intercultural dialogue
In the article on cross-cultural communication by Dominique Bouchet of the University of Southern Denmark, the author explains that the advancement of globalization requires better understanding of our different cultures and what impact the factors that influence our cultures has on cross-cultural communication. Bouchet sets out some of the issues at stake when it comes to the importance of cultural dialogue, while still ensuring cultural preservation. There can be no real intercultural communication, even so much as an attempt at it, as the procedure is paradoxical. 'It supposes that he who engages in it, at one and the same time recognizes the foreigner as similar and as different. This implies that the user of communication who really wants to perform intercultural communication has to put his own 'things' into perspective. He or she has to relativize his own system of values, and admit that there may be other motivations, other references, and other customs. A user of communication who is aware of the challenge of intercultural communication might try to avoid an interpretation of the foreigner's ways

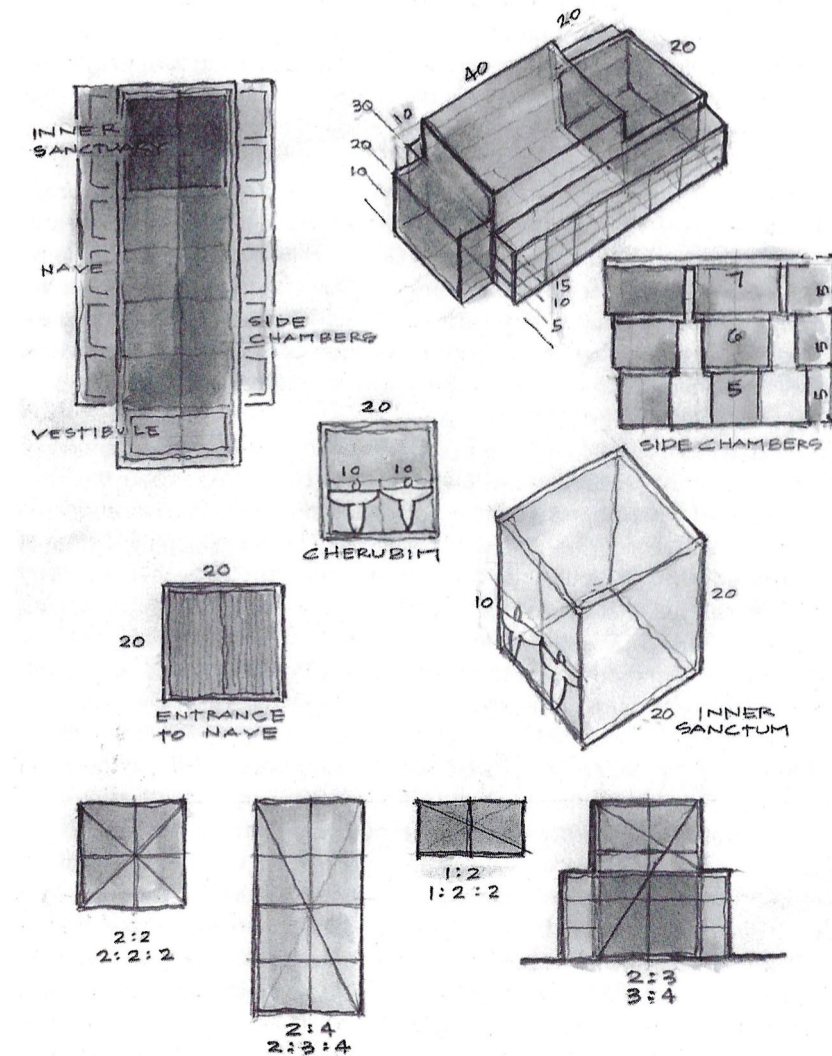
02.1.15 | The Golden Section and the Fibonacci Spiral



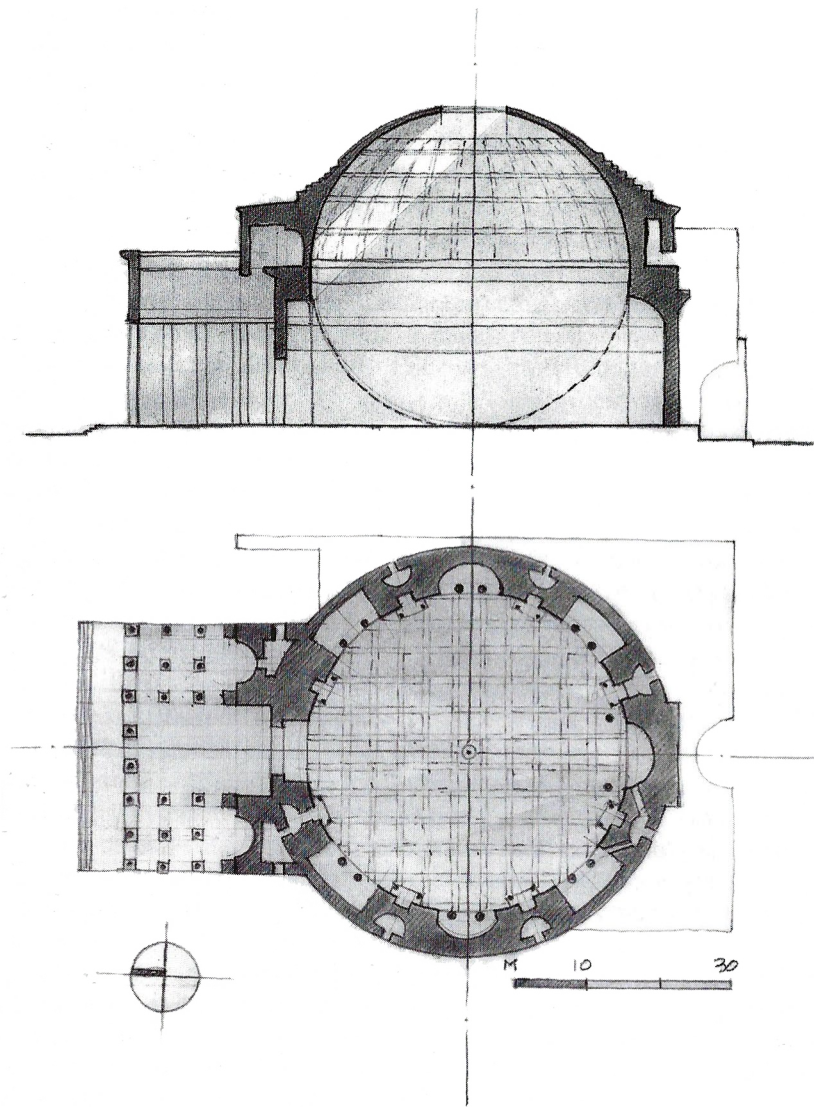
to communicate that is exclusively based on his own language, his own ways. He might intend to perceive the diversity of the referential differences and the complexity of the contextual situation. He might attempt to understand the significance the context assumes for him. Under such conditions, an awareness of his own cultural identity might develop. This, again, may lead to acceptance of the other and a better understanding of what communication is about, but also to rejection of the other and general obscurantism. Consideration, mutual respect, and open-mindedness do not necessarily show up in intercultural communication'. (Bouchet, 2012)

Any endeavour to have intercultural communication ought to be respectful, otherwise it should not really be considered intercultural. There might be disdain lingering in the air, where at least one party has no certain intent to find any common ground and as a result they remain stuck on their side.

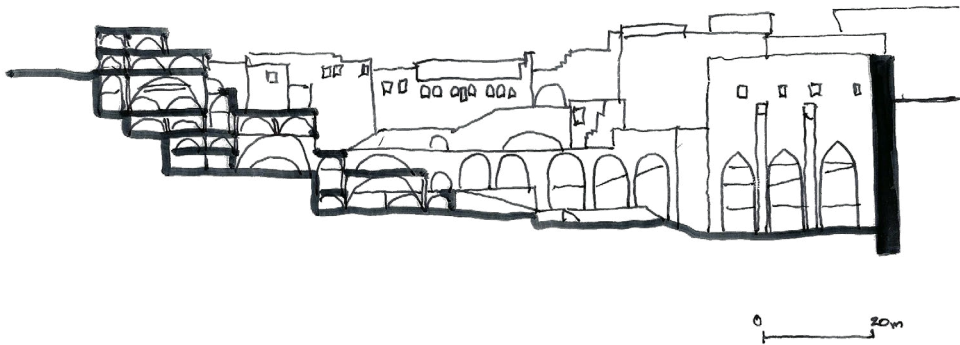
Seeing the world in a state of chaos, begs the question and search for a way to overcome the divide across the world's population. Religion and culture are significant aspects of societies historically and to this day. Although beliefs stemming from religions do promote morals and values, there is an adverse side to religion. Many of the world's conflicts across history have been the result of religious difference and the perception of the one side as being better than the other. In fact, some historical conflicts have been called 'holy wars', an



02.1.16 | The Temple of Solomon, also known as the House of the Lord, was built according to precise proportions. Here depicts Solomon's temple reconstruction showing proportions.



| 2.1.17 | The Pantheon in Rome



Top to bottom | 2.1.18 | Sectional sketch through Kotel, Western Wall, Plaza as per Moshe Safdie's 1973 design.

example of this being the crusades or the change in Rome to a Christian Empire or identity, as well as the Islamic conquest of Northern Africa, the Middle East, and parts of Europe at certain points in history. Even to this day, extremists tend to view their cause as being G-d's will.

Sacred Architecture
The notion of intercultural dialogue also plays into the concept of that which is sacred. Society and civilizations have considered aspects of their environment to be sacred for thousands of years. With the formality of built structures and spaces, the notion of what is sacred took on a new meaning. Beliefs based on rituals have been the primary informant for the creation of sacred spaces, or the

regard thereof. Stonehenge is one of the oldest recorded man-made structures still standing which appears to have some cultural significance. As with other Neolithic stone structures, there is a certain sense of spirit imbued in the space, a narrative long lost.

Sacred architecture is generally used to refer to religious spaces, be it a church, mosque, synagogue or temple. However, what is truly sacred? Indeed, there is a sacredness to any religious space as regarded by those who practice that faith, and this ought to be respected by others not of that faith, at least out of common decency. Yet, it is clear that what one may consider sacred, another may not see the same value of sacredness in it. Nowadays what

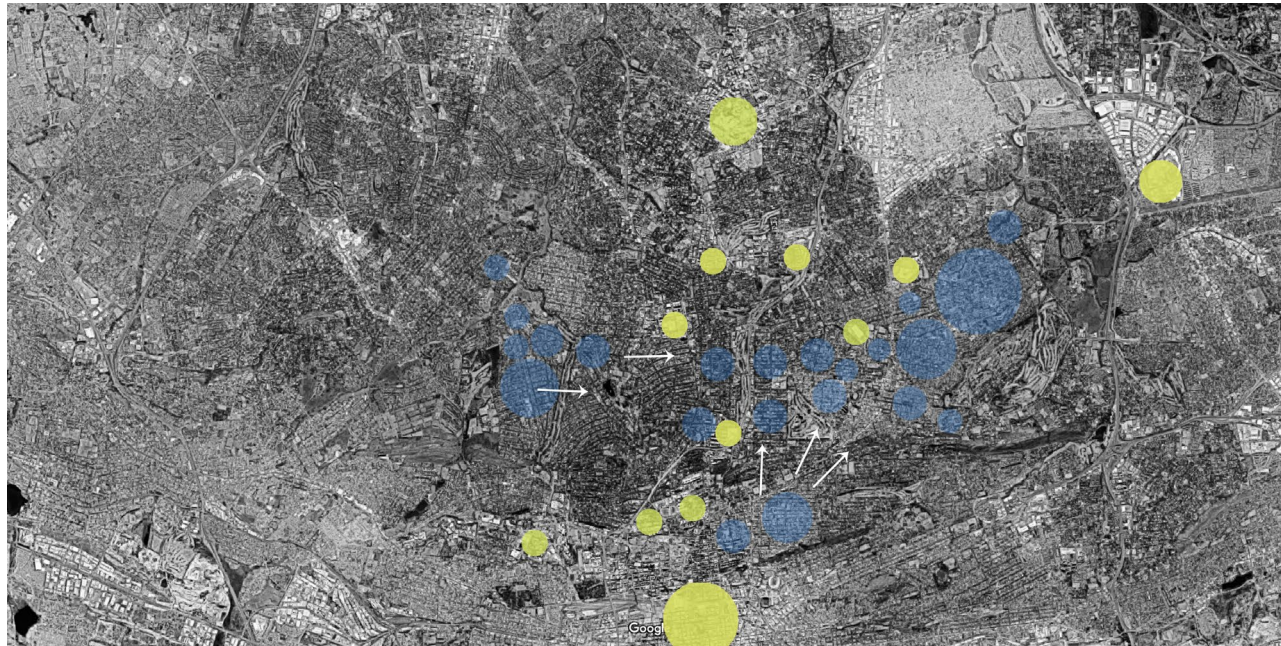
is considered sacred has been expanded to include multiple spatial uses and building types. This can include spaces which are used for mundane, everyday tasks, while it can also refer to spaces with specific functions promoting health and wellness. If humans treat their bodies as sacred things, and in some chains of thought as temples, then it seems only appropriate that a space where we may work on improving ourselves should be considered sacred too. This therefore extends to include physical and mental health spaces and architectures, be it a gym, a spa or even a meditation hall. In fact, sacred architecture is also associated with buildings of social and cultural significance, those with historical reference and life stories, and those used for recreation and education purposes.

Water tends to be found in or around sacred architecture, its transparent fluidity invoking reflection and mindfulness. Spaces are also designed to harness natural light in order to create an environment which promotes feelings and experiences of sacredness.

Something sacred has meaning associated to it. It is either related to religious practice, thus a space for the divine; health and wellbeing, thus a space for meditative and physical exercise; or cultural in a sense of being revered as an important and vital part of a society, be it a museum or theatre.

02.2 MEMORY & JUDAISM

Exploring the themes and roles of memory and culture in Judaism, the experiences of South African Jewry and consideration of the concept of Jewish Architecture.



02.2.1 | This broad map of Johannesburg shows a layering of- and consideration for the past and present of the Jewish population's areas of inhabitation in relation to commercial or retail centers. It should be noted that the arrows indicate migration of the Jewish population from former areas to the more recent areas where there are prominent Jewish communities.

In Jewish culture, memory is an important aspect of daily life, an example of the importance of this is the six remembrances said every day after the Shacharit (morning) prayer. One of these is the commandment to “remember the day of your departure from the land of Egypt as long as you live” (Deuteronomy 16:3). Another prominent commandment- one of the aforementioned six, as well as one of the ten commandments given at Mount Sinai- is “to remember the holy Sabbath”. The Sabbath, otherwise known as Shabbat, is observed weekly from sunset on a Friday to nightfall on a Saturday. It is known as the day of rest, this relating to the meaning of the Hebrew word shevet - to rest, and in reference to the seventh day on which G-d rested subsequent to His creating of the world as recounted at the opening of Genesis.

As with many religious rituals and holy days found across the cultural spectrum, Jewish festivals and important dates are also observed to commemorate past events or people that came before. The

festival of Pesach - also known as Pass-over - is celebrated to recall the exodus from exile in Egypt. It is a reminder that our freedom, and in fact the freedom of so many, is not a given. On Tisha B'Av - which corresponds to the ninth day of the Hebrew month of Av, Jews observe a fast in reminiscence of a number of historical events, but most importantly is the destruction of both the Temples which stood in Jerusalem. Under a chupah, this being the religious ceremony of marriage, the groom breaks a glass beneath his foot to symbolize and reflect on our joy not being complete without the Temple in Jerusalem. On an annual recurring basis after a person's passing, Jews observe a yahrzeit, or a day of remembrance, and light a candle in memory of the departed.

Throughout history, Jews have been subjected to intolerance and hatred. They have been discriminated against, treated as second-class, forced to convert, or killed. Notably, during the Spanish Inquisition, Jews were forced to convert to Christianity or killed. Many either escaped and fled

elsewhere and some hid their identities, observing Jewish practices in secret. The Merchant of Venice by Shakespeare portrays the character of Shylock, a Jewish money-lender. At that time Jews were restricted as to what type of work they could do. Jews were also expelled from England in the 12th Century and the ban was lifted in the 18th Century. More recently, Jews were victims of discrimination and intolerance in Eastern European countries, where they were often forced to live in inferior conditions in a region known as the Pale of Settlement, and most notably the mass-murder of 6 million Jews, known as the Holocaust, which took place at the hands of the Nazi regime during World War II. Beginning in the latter half of the 19th Century many Jews began leaving Eastern Europe and headed to other parts of the world for better quality of life and the hope of a life without discrimination. Many Jews migrated to America, Australia, England, South America, and South Africa.

Bjorn Krondorfer notes in his article, The Art of Dialogue, that it would probably be

desirable that some past events would simply and soundlessly descend into oblivion, and be rubbed out from collective memory in order to create a new start. The Holocaust, also referred to as the Shoah, would surely be one such instance: The organised attempt by Nazi Germany together with its European collaborators to annihilate European Jews along with Jewish culture exposed modernity's darkest side, and it certainly sobered the Enlightenment's belief in the stable progress of humanity on the way to moral enhancement. The combination of relatively modern technology together with a bureaucratic device at the service of a nation state ruled by a radical ideology is what allowed the unprecedented genocidal violence to be unleashed. Beginning as domestic terror in the initial years of Hitler's dictatorship, it grew into a methodical genocidal campaign after the 1939 commencement of World War II. Across the European continent, the so-called inferior and undesirable people laboured, starved, suffered, and died in camps. This system of terror reached the abyss with operations at the six extermina-

tion camps starting in December of 1941. 'The name Auschwitz is seared into our collective conscience and consciousness'. (Krondorfer, 2012)

With consideration of Auschwitz, the notion of dialogue does not willingly arise in thought. Surely it would look as if Auschwitz must be the entire antithesis to that of dialogue or understanding, to that of reconciliation, and even to life. Just as the philosopher, Theodor Adorno, once questioned whether poetry can be written once more after Auschwitz, it may likewise be asked whether dialogue can emerge following such tragedy. Auschwitz, is indeed a negative space, it is a cemetery lacking graves, a house of death deprived of traces — and this negative vortex cannot be repaired or undone by means of dialogue. Nevertheless, Auschwitz is today no longer a death camp. Instead, it is now a memorial site, a tourist spot, and a place of pilgrimage attracting millions of visitors annually. 'And if Auschwitz the death camp dampens any optimism about the prospect of dialogue, Auschwitz the contemporary

memorial site demands us to engage a dialogical ethics.' (Krondorfer, 2012)

The South African Experience

Lithuania and neighbouring countries are the origins from where the majority of Jews in South Africa descend, yet a Jewish presence has been in the Cape since the establishment of a British colony. Those Jews who came from Eastern Europe were faced with a multitude of challenges in integrating into society, one of the biggest being the language barrier. In their introduction to Memories, Realities and Dreams, editors Milton Shain and Richard Mendelsohn make note that undoubtedly long-lasting, significant features of the South African Jewish experience is that of migration and the challenges which they confronted in the new setting. It was only possible for Jews to settle in South Africa in the early nineteenth century with the British occupation at the Cape. The new opportunities would have been viewed as advantageous, to the trickle of English and Central European (mainly German) Jews who arrived. The establishment of

the Cape Town Hebrew Congregation in 1841, prepared the way for other congregations located at the smaller centres. An influx of fortune seekers was attracted by the discovery of diamonds in the 1860s and the subsequent discovery of gold two decades later. 'Their numbers increased with the influx of Eastern European (mainly Lithuanian) Jews escaping oppression in the Tsarist Pale of Settlement.' (Shain, et al., 2000, p. 7)

It is worth noting that a number of Jewish communal institutions had either emerged or evolved by the early twentieth century. This included institutions and organisations such as the representative voice of the Jewish community in the country, the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, the South African Zionist Federation, and in addition to this there was also a range of educational, religious and welfare structures put in place. In fact, by the country's Jewish population at the time of 1911 numbered 46 919, that being equivalent to 3,7% of the total white population. In the four decades prior to the First World War, it

was the wave of Lithuanian Jewish migration that in essence saw the foundation upon which the community was built. This experience, together with the cultural baggage which the newcomers brought with them should not be ignored, and rather it should be seen as a pivotal facet in the shaping of their new identity and behaviour in the new country. At the same time, contributing writers tend to differ noticeably in reference to the significance which they attach to these processes of migration and adaptation. It is imperative to consider the connections flanked by the 'old' and 'new' worlds and the effect of changing cultural and political mores upon generations.

One of the book's contributing writers, Dan Jacobson, relates elements of his growing up in the 1930s and 40s in Kimberley. He asserts that with only 130 Jewish families it was atypical, portraying the new world as far flung from the old country. Considering his roots, he manages to capture the essential South African Jewish experience of his generation: that being the formative impact of immigrant parents, the powerful

influence of Zionism as an ideology in the home, the abiding sense of Jewish peoplehood, the overwhelmingly Christian character of the host society, and empathy for the underdog (which did not necessarily translate into political action). For Jacobson, the British Commonwealth served as a beacon of decency in an unfriendly world, at any time prey to antisemitism and bigotry. Self-division, self-doubt, self-rejection, anxiety, tiredness, differing loyalties, envy, shame, the longing to be rid of the situation is what captures for Jacobson the angst of Jewishness in the milieu.

The challenges which Jacobson faced in a rather homogenous small town tends to differ from those challenges encountered in the larger, and more variegated, centres. In the latter instances there was increased freedom for personal choice, ideological contestation, and for an assortment of debate as well as identification forms. One such debate was that over the valence of Yiddish and Hebrew. Within the community, this debate - which at times was ferocious and intramural - was intrinsically

tangled within a Yiddish battle counter to Zionists who 'demanded the revival of Hebrew as a precondition for fulfilling Jewish national aspirations in a restored Jewish homeland'.

Clashes between those who sought to retain Yiddish, or called Yiddishists, and those promoting the use of Hebrew, or the Hebraists, thus turns out to be a light-shedding instance through which to inspect a chief fragment of the immigrant experience. The 'old world' is abandoned in what contributor Joseph Sherman designates as 'the destruction of Yiddish'. Ascendent social mobility had vast implications for self-definition and identity. Jewish educationalists, most notably Isaac Goss, cemented the dominion of Hebrew (accompanied with Zionism) by means of the Jewish Day School structure. Sherman lures attention to the status given to the politics of language and the prevailing influence of Israel. 'Yiddish is now dead, and cannot be recalled to life,' he laments. Nonetheless, he argues, that scholars should scrutinise surviving Yiddish

writings in order to get a clearer and more complete representation of South African Jewish history. With regard to the history of Yiddish creativity and culture in South Africa, Sherman's advocating of such is a significant corrective to established narratives.

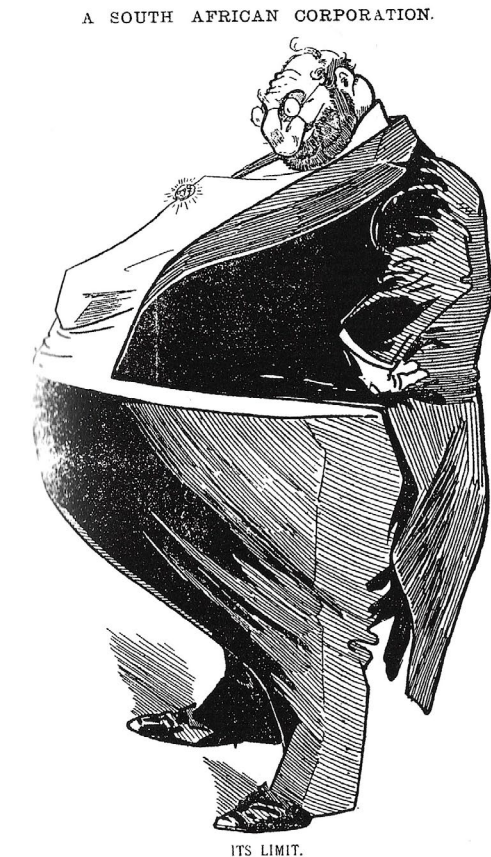
Richard Mendelsohn also focuses on the self-definition and identity of the community. He does so through the exploration of the shaping of Jewish loyalties in the country in the early stages of the community in first decades of the twentieth century. There he compares the effect on the infant community of the two great disturbances of the period, that of the South African War as well as the First World War, arguing that both had a crucial role to play 'in the shaping of the community's relationship with the broader society, in particular the locus of its members' broader political loyalties'. Where neutrality was permissible with the former conflict, the Great War 'threw into much sharper relief than had the South African War the issue of Jewish public loyalties'. While the

South African War, Mendelsohn contends, 'settled the issue of where their public loyalty should lie, the First World War taught South African Jewry the necessity of embracing these loyalties enthusiastically and unconditionally, lest the Jewish community be singled out for unflattering and uncomfortable public attention'.

Marcia Leveson also explores the identity of Jews, focusing through South African Jewish writing on the problematics of insiders and outsiders, the impact of marginality, and responses to prejudice- the 'stigma of difference' as she puts it. Like Jacobson and Sherman, she reflects on Jewish attitudes towards the 'other', in this case the oppressed black majority. Unlike Jacobson, who characterises the Jews as marginally more sympathetic towards the underdog than their gentile peers, Leveson reminds us that, notwithstanding the frequent appearance of the Jew portrayed as a 'Kaffirboetie' – a negrophile – as a powerful motif in South African literature, most Jews accepted the norms and even the prejudices of the white society at

large, and instead focused on communal and personal matters', a view with which Joseph Sherman concurs.

While the Jewish community did join in with their white compatriots in 'other-ing' the black majority, they themselves were viewed as the classic 'other' by that white minority. Host attitudes towards the newcomers were informed by perceived differences, as shown by Milton Shain. He reveals how the Jew was constructed through time as the 'other', but also asserts that Jews were not at all times the target of hostility. Quoting an historian of Oudtshoorn Jewry, George Aschman, 'My Joodje,' he attests 'was a term of endearment applied by Boers to those peddlars who had for years brought news of the "outside world" and "gossip from the town and the rest of the countryside"' (Shain, et al., 2000). Shain traces the ebbs and flows of animosity, and the nature of anti-Jewish stereotypes, arguing that antisemitism was contingent on numerous factors unconnected to Jewish behaviour. Programmatic antisemitism, however, was only a short-



02.2.2 | An image depicting an antisemitic cartoon published in *The Owl*.

'I am of opinion that when the war . . . is over, and South Africa is . . . there will be no limit to the size of these corporations.' – John Morley

The Owl, published in Cape Town, produced a number of anti-Semitic cartoons. This one, from its Christmas number, December 1901, would have been seen by Johannesburgers as many were still refugees in Cape Town at this time.

lived consideration, rooted in the tensions and problems of political and socio-economic crises in the 1930s and 40s: The increase of poor whiteism as a result of the impact of the world depression upon South Africa, together with the appearance of Nazism in Europe and, most notably, the rise of an illiberal, anti-modernist and exclusivist Afrikaner nationalism.

Jews were assumed as whites during apartheid, and this saw the rapid recession of antisemitism. Following a visit to Israel in 1953, the then Prime Minister DF Malan expressed admiration for the “Jewish People” (Shain, et al., 2000, p. 10). It seemed that the National Party hoped to put any tensions and excesses of the 1930s and 1940s behind it. Considered as whites, Jews were to have a rightful and welcome place during apartheid. This enabled embourgeoisement and overall material well-being. As stated before, most Jews accepted the racial order, content to stand by the apolitical and quiescent stance vis-à-vis apartheid and the tortuous moral conundrums of the day, of the Jewish Board.

Political choices came down to individual preference, and moral issues – at least formally – were deflected to the rabbinate. With the exception of an outspoken few, the latter failed the challenge.

A considerable amount of Jewish South Africans did challenge apartheid’s inequalities. In light of the National Party’s recent antisemitic history, combined with a sense of Jewish vulnerability heightened by the Holocaust, it is perhaps understandable – even with the aforementioned communal timidity. Many of those who did take up the challenge fought for the disenfranchised majority’s political rights, others fought for acceptance and freedom, and some fought for workers’ rights. These efforts were manifest in both mainstream and racial politics, legal aid, student activism, educational, cultural and health-care initiatives, philanthropic endeavours, trade unions, underground resistance and in the delegitimization of the apartheid state from abroad. In short, Jews were conspicuously present – and overrepresented – in the struggle for democracy and human rights.

Among the 156 activists at the Treason Trial of the 1950s there were 23 whites involved, and, of these whites, more than half were Jews. Additionally, all five whites arrested at Rivonia (where leading ANC activists were arrested and subsequently charged with sabotage) were Jewish.

James Campbell is therefore surely correct in asserting that ‘Jews were massively overrepresented in the ranks of opposition’ (2000, p. 98) to apartheid. Accounting for this, he discounts religious and cultural legacies and instead emphasizes the weight of migration, and the consequential disruption and estrangement. ‘The point, put simply, is that immigration was a profoundly disruptive experience, and that South Africa’s celebrated Jewish radicalism may be less a product of community “tradition”, handed down from generation to generation, than a function of historically specific processes of dislocation and conflict’ (Campbell, 2000). Campbell deals with recent South African Jewish autobiographical memoirs of Hyman Banner, Baruch Hirson, Pauline Podbery, and

Joe Slovo. There he teases out common features and experiences. Marginality and dislocation are in Campbell’s view of fundamental importance. Radical politics, he asserts, in particular the Communist Party, represented much more than a mere new political affiliation. From this stemmed the offering of community, human contact, warmth and a sense of solidarity which was otherwise missing from their daily lives (Campbell, 2000).

By contrast, Gideon Shimoni, addressing the same phenomenon, stresses ‘cultural baggage’ and the particular values within families as a possible key to explaining Jewish overrepresentation in activist politics. A major factor was that the immigrant home had affiliations or sympathies to communist ideals. An impetus for political awareness and from time-to-time radical activism was provided with a training ground by the Zionist movement which many of the radicals partook in. Against a background of escalating fascism in Europe, aped during interwar South Africa by the radical right, huge dilemmas were

generated for young Jews. The culmination of the Second World War, the advancing of apartheid, as well as the state of Israel's birth in 1948, these dilemmas merely continued.

'Jewishness' is seen by contributing writer Glenn Frankel as an important influence on radicalism within Jewish circles, though he emphasizes that a radical choice was not a guarantee. The community had numerous conservative elements within it. Percy Yutar, the then Transvaal Deputy Attorney General, as well as the prosecutor of Mandela, was such an example. Yutar an Orthodox Jew, was born in Cape Town to immigrant parents who came to the country, 'like so many of the radicals he pursued, from the ghettos of Lithuania'. Frankel argues that the response of Percy Yutar arose from a different tradition- that of the medieval shtadlan or intercessor, the defender of 'Jewish interests in the court of the tyrant' (Shain, et al., 2000). He asserts that the actions of Yutar prosecuting his fellow Jews, ultimately offered protection for the Jewish community at large.

From the above considered narratives, the role of Jewish radical politics in South Africa will clearly remain a field of ongoing enquiry. As the carefully nuanced arguments of Campbell, Shimoni and Frankel so richly illustrate, simple explanation cannot match empirical complexity. Shimoni is probably correct when he writes that ultimately, we can only talk about 'common denominators' and 'no generalisation can cover every single case... for every Denis Goldberg or Ruth First (Slovo) whose lives were totally divorced from Jewish or Zionist associations, there is an Arthur Goldreich or Baruch Hirson who passed through one or other phase of meaningful Jewish involvement, and so on.

Architectural Aspects

While the above portion of this section considered a more insightful look into Jewish life in general and that in South Africa, it is now also imperative that the role of architecture and that which is Jewish, is brought to light. There is a general consensus that there is no real thing known

as Jewish architecture. Rather, Jewish architecture is generally viewed as structures housing Jewish behavioural, ritual or living spaces. There is no real specific style of architecture like that found in Christian cathedrals and churches, Islamic architecture such as mosques, Temples or any other culturally or religiously-associated structure. Often, synagogues have been designed to fit in with the cityscape in which they are situated, and in a number of instances, they tend to have similar features to other religious buildings within those cities. Particularly in major European and even American urban centres, Synagogues have been designed with grandeur and facades resembling that seen on cathedrals. In fact, and especially from an internal layout, many reform and conservative sanctuaries do not look too different from their Christian counterparts.

That said, there is still a specific functional and spatial layout requirement that is found in synagogues across the spectrum of Jewish denominations. The Aron Kodesh, also called the Ark, is the space where the

Torah scrolls are kept. This will be found at the 'front' of the sanctuary space, and in most instances, it will be at the point closest to Jerusalem, being the holiest city in Judaism, and the place where the former Temples stood. There is the bimah, which is where the Torah is read on Shabbat or Festivals and during the week as required. The bimah may also be used as a point of liturgical cantorial prayers by a cantor and sometimes a choir. In some synagogues, there will be a dedicated amud, or stand, from where the chazan (the one leading the congregation in prayer) prays from. There is also usually a pulpit from where the Rabbi delivers sermons. Another aspect of synagogue layout is the need for separate seating areas for men and women, although this is specific to Orthodox or religious synagogues as opposed to Reform or Conservative Jewish practices.

Within South Africa, the majority of Jews are affiliated with Orthodox Judaism while there is a sizable reform community most noticeable in Johannesburg and Cape Town. As such, the majority of synagogues



are Orthodox in the way they are spatially configured and in the manner in which they conduct their services. For a good part of the twentieth century there was a Jewish presence throughout the country and not merely in major centres. In most of these communities, with the exception of those where only a handful were present, there could be found some form of a communal structure. Not always did this mean the reality of a synagogue, yet it did mean that religious meetings did take place in either someone's home or store. This leads to my own family narrative. All four of my grandparents were born and raised in South Africa: - my paternal grandfather was born and grew up in Muizenberg. My



paternal grandmother was born in Vrede, and my maternal grandfather grew up in Ventersburg, both located in the Free State. My maternal grandmother grew up in Coligny before she moved to Johannesburg to attend high school and stayed with family. It is the previous generation that immigrated to South Africa from Eastern Europe, although it is thought that my one great-grandmother was born in the United Kingdom along her family's journey to South Africa.

There are a number of identifiable synagogues across the country in terms of their architecture. For the most part, a former or current Jewish institution or religious centre will have identifiable icons, be it a star of David, a Menorah – a candelabra - or a Torah scroll. At one point there were Jewish communities in many of the smaller country towns, and to this day, the original structures of synagogues still stand with some of these identification symbols. There are also still the cemeteries in these towns which speak of past histories of these smaller and once vibrantly

existent communities. Today most Jews in South Africa live in main city centres, predominantly Johannesburg followed by Cape Town and Durban. Some of the most architecturally recognisable synagogues include the Cape Town Hebrew Congregation, otherwise known as the Gardens Shul, the former Wolmarans Street Shul- also known as the Great Synagogue, the Lion's Shul in the Johannesburg suburb of Doornfontein, and the Kimberley Shul. A Jewish cemetery is usually recognisable by the Jewish symbols on the headstones, generally a star of David or often the Hebrew text either as a standalone or as companion to English. The same applies to a Christian cemetery which will have identifiable aspects such as a cross, and Muslim cemetery will have its own icons such as a crescent and star or the use of Arabic text.

As mentioned already, Jewish architecture is generally viewed as that being associated with, or relating to, housing or functioning as- a given religious and/or ritual practice or lifestyle. This is to say that



02.2.6 | A photograph of the Great Park Synagogue - Houghton - interior taken in 2022.

something as simple as the house belonging to a Jew may be classified in this umbrella term. It also means that Jewish houses of worship, Jewish schools, Kosher food establishments, and Jewish aged homes are also considered to be Jewish architecture. While there may not be any

given or specifically recognisable style in the architectural sense, there is the aspects of the spatial use and layout, the intricacies of Jewish law associated with these spatial requirements, and symbolic motifs included in the architectural elements in some instances. It is also worthy to con-

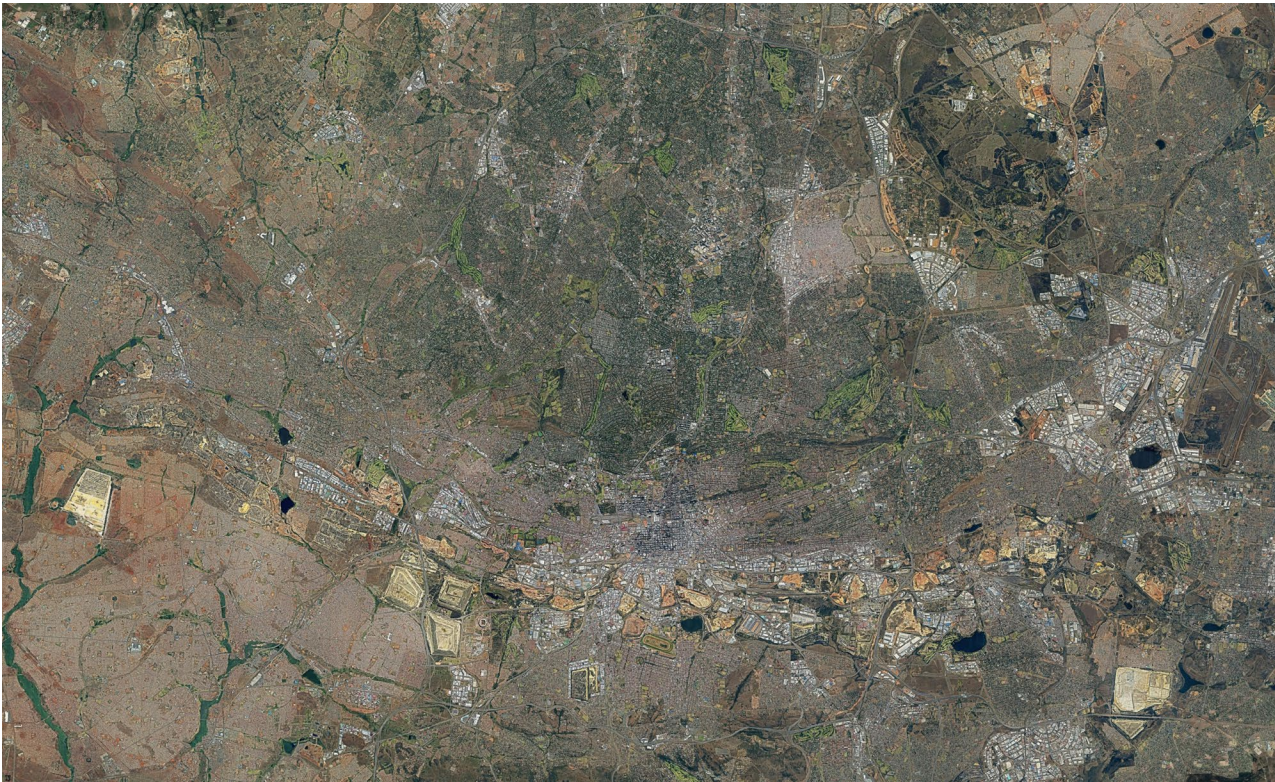
sider the concept of Jewish architecture being that which is the work of a Jewish architect, even if the project is be any means 'Jewish'. Rosenfeld points this out in showing a church which was designed by a Jewish architect in the United States of America.

CONTEXT

or

03.1 PLACE

The City



This Page:

03.1.1 | Aerial view of the Johannesburg Metropolitan area.

Johannesburg is known as the city of Gold, Egoli, Joburg and Jozi. Its beginnings stem back to the discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand. Since its inception it has been a home for immigrants from all reaches of the country, continent and the globe. These newcomers sought opportunities to better their livelihoods, although this was not the case by everyone. Arguably, any labourers who were brought from other places within the country or foreign lands with the sole purpose of them doing the hard and dirty work, would presumably not come at their own will.

Johannesburg is known to have one of the largest man-made forests in the world. Although this is of high-esteem, one should not forget that many of the trees planted not only in Johannesburg, but alas also across the country, are not indigenous to South Africa. Some of the first trees planted in Johannesburg include London Plane Trees,

Johannesburg sits in a region known as the highveld, where the typical vegetation is a savannah/grassland, meaning that other than grassland and scattered scrubs, there are no naturally occurring trees. Another consideration is that due to the drought-prone nature of the region, and the increased possibility of wildfires during the dry winter months, any trees that may grow will likely not last long or die. Curiosity would thus request information on the planting of the first trees in the city.

Prior to the gold was discovered in the area in

1886, there were a few farmers on the Witwatersrand. These first farmers brought seeds from the Cape and thus planted acorn, oak and walnut trees. Among the first white settlers in the area, the Bezuidenhout family built their farmhouse on the farm Doornfontein in 1863. They planted fruit trees in Judith's Paarl and Cyrildene, east of the city center, but these do not exist any longer. The farm was known for its "walnut walk", an avenue of walnut trees leading to the present-day bowling green. Since walnut trees have about a 50 year lifespan, this walk along with the trees are long disappeared. A curved row of about six large oak trees still remains at the front of the house, probably descended from the original oak trees planted on the farm at the time taht the house was built.

The farm Braamfontein, owned by the Geldenhuys family, was located on the other side of town. Louw Geldenhuys built his farmhouse against the Melville Koppies ridge, and his wife, Emmarentia, planted an oak tree and five palm trees in front of the house. The house as well as these trees still exist today. When the suburb of Emmarentia was laid out in 1937 the town planners sought to cut down the oak tree as it interfered with the path of the road being laid out. But Emmarentia put her foot down - the oak was to stay. The tree was then to be found on the pavement, the road kinking around it somewhat. Unfortunately, in 2004 the tree fell over.

Orchards of fruit trees were planted by Geldenhuys covering an area of several hectares from his house

in Greenhill Road right down to the Emmarentia Dam. The creation of the suburb of Emmarentia saw these trees cut down.

Planned in 1887, Joubert Park was the first primary public park that was laid out for the swiftly booming city. Early photographs of the park depict a neatly-planned Victorian parkland, with a variety of thriving conifers.

Strolling through either the Braamfontein or Brixton Cemeteries, laid out in 1887 and 1912 respectively, to the north-west of the city center, will reveal numerous majestic old trees, among which are oaks, pines, cork oaks, and blue gums.

As the demand for trees grew, trees were imported from KwaZulu-Natal as well as from overseas. Anna Smith, a researcher and chief librarian of the city in the 1960s and '70s, wrote in the 1972 edition of *Trees in South Africa* magazine: "Letters were exchanged with nurseries in Europe, the East and Australia."

A parks department was established by 1904, by which time the city had four major parks: Joubert Park (17.5 acres), End Street Park in Doornfontein (4.5 acres), Oval Park in Parktown (3.5 acres) and Jeppe Park (2.5 acres).

By 1934 the number of parks had increased to 67, and there was an active tree-planting policy by the

council, with 8 000 trees being planted each year.

Doornfontein, east of the city, was the first residential suburb of the wealthy Randlords. Below the Hillbrow ridge there was a lack in trees, and when the wind blew, the suburb turned into a dustbowl.

Geldenhuys started selling the western portions of his farm Braamfontein. These portions became the early northern suburbs of the city: Parktown, Parkview and Forest Town. Parktown became the suburb of the Randlords, where several of their grand mansions still stand. And they actively started planting trees, so that within a short time the suburb became known as the "garden suburb". Large plane trees can still be seen in Parkview. Parktown has some large pepper trees in the grounds of the mansions, in particular North Lodge, having been planted near the stables to ward off fleas.

Mine props

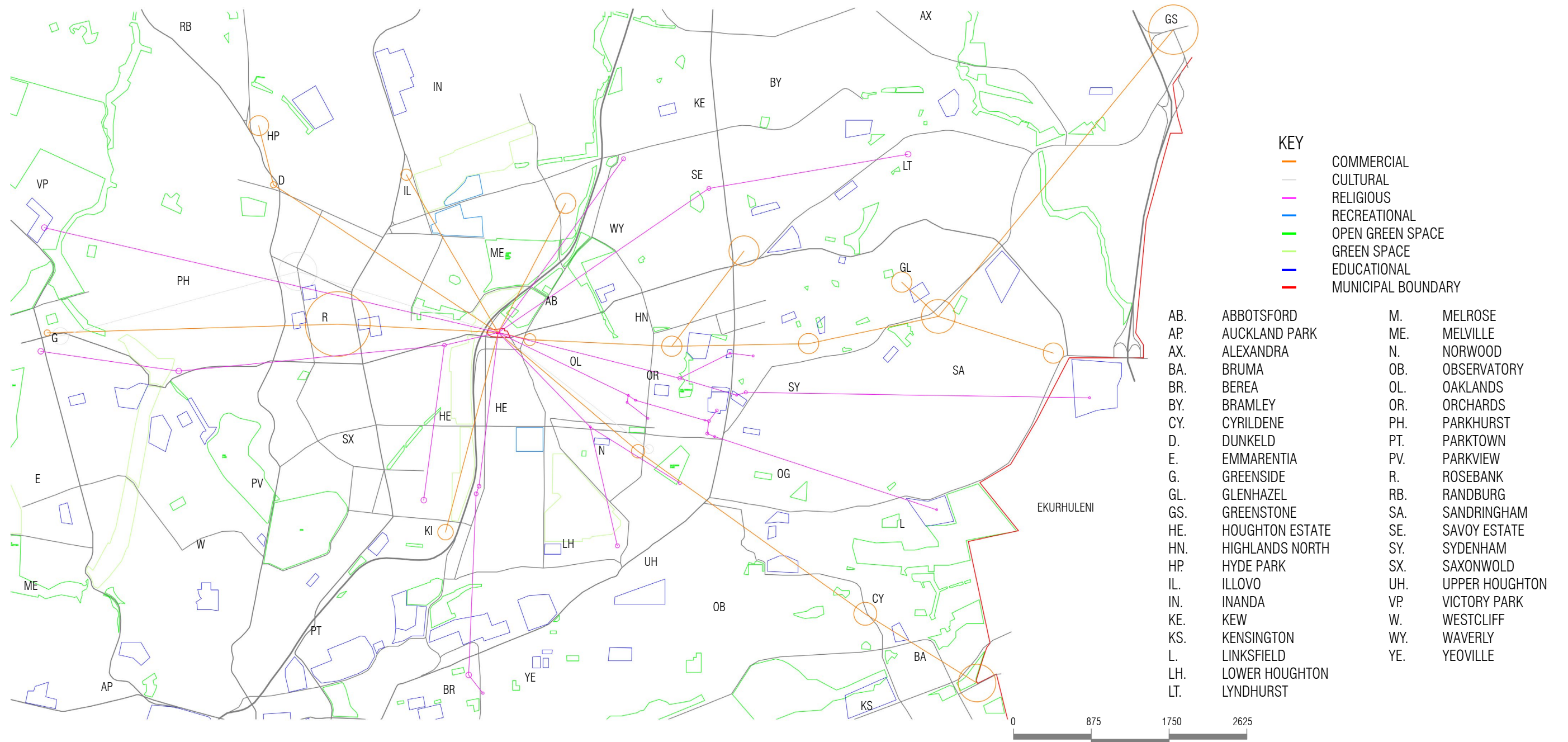
In the meantime, after the initial rush for alluvial gold, one of the biggest mining houses, the Corner House, was established, providing the capital needed to extract gold below the surface. But one of the demands of deep level mining was wooden props to line the underground tunnels.

More than a million trees were planted in what is today the Zoo Lake and the Johannesburg Zoo areas, in an area named Sachsenwald (later

Anglicised to Saxonwold, a current suburb of Johannesburg). These included blue and red gum trees, which grow quickly and are ideal for their use as mine props. Oaks, pines and wattles were also planted. Picnic spots with benches were created in the forest, and it became a favourite picnic and riding area for Randlords and their families in nearby Parktown.

Remnants of the forest can still be seen in the zoo and in the parkland around Zoo Lake. Suburbs in the area reflect this history in their names: Forest Town, Parkview and Parktown.

Following Spread:
03.1.2 | Extensive Site Plan and analysis looking at and showing a variety of surrounding areas and spatial uses in relation to the site.



03.2 SITE

The site within its context



This Page:
03.2.1 | 3D Aerial view of the chosen site along Glenhove Road in Houghton Estate.

The chosen site for the design project is situated in Houghton, which is a wealthy suburb of Johannesburg with a high-earning demographic. It was founded as a suburb along with a number of others known as the Northern suburbs between 1901 and 1910. These areas formed part of the white suburbs and attracted many affluent people seeking to move from the cramped inner city.

With changes in legislation and the end of apartheid, Houghton has become home to a diverse community of inhabitants. It was historically a whites-only suburb, and by their luck of inclusion into this racial category, Jews also settled in Houghton. The former first democratically elected president, Nelson Mandela, resided in Houghton for part of his later life. The introduction of two mosques in the area, the later and newer one on West Street which is visible from the highway, are proof of the change in the neighbourhood and its surrounding demographics.

From a broad context, the chosen site is situated in Houghton Estate along Glenhove Road, and its West perimeter borders the M1 highway offramp. To the North and North-East is Abbotsford, Melrose, Waverley, Savoy, and part of Highlands North. To the East is Oaklands, The Gardens, and some smaller suburbs. In a South-Easterly direction is part of Oaklands, Orchards, Norwood, Upper Houghton, and Orange Grove. South and Southwest of the site is Houghton Estate, and Killarney. To the West and North-West is the Northern edge of Houghton, and

Melrose.

Prominent areas not visible on this map include Rosebank to the West, Sandton to the North, Edenvale to the East, Braamfontein and the CBD to the South. The M1 Highway is a major arterial route running South-North and its proximity to the site affirms the importance of the chosen site's location. In a broad context there are multiple types of land uses nearby the site: - residential, commercial, retail, business, cultural, religious, educational and recreational. Although not specifically identified, there are a number of Synagogues, Churches, Mosques, and a Temple. Other significant sites include the Nelson Mandela Foundation along Central Street in Houghton, as well as the Satyagraha House to the East of the map.

There are a variety of recreational and public spaces, some with restricted access. There are two golf courses: - the Killarney Country Club along the West of the M1 highway, and Houghton Golf Club. There are multiple parks, the James & Ethel Gray Park in Melrose is popular especially with dog owners. Another significant one not shown is Patterson Park bordering Norwood and Orange Grove. There is also the Old Eds campus which is home to a Virgin Active gym, and provides a variety of outdoor sport facilities, fields and courts.

The forest by the Great Park Synagogue is the intended location for the project. It is a prominent site in a multi-type-built environment with views to the



- KEY
- SITE
 - RELIGIOUS/CULTURAL
 - NM FOUNDATION
 - GREEN SPACES
 - SITE BOUNDRY
 - ROADS
 - WATERWAYS
 - GREEN SPACE BOUNDRY
 - CONTOURS
- SITE
 - KILLARNEY COUNTRY CLUB
 - HOUGHTON GOLF CLUB
 - JAMES & ETHEL GREY PARK
 - NM FOUNDATION
 - GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
 - CHURCH
 - WANDERERS CLUB
 - OLD EDS
 - MELROSE ARCH
 - TO SAXONWOLD
 - TO ROSEBANK

site from the adjacent roads, M1 highway offramp, and other sites within the area. The predominant wind direction is North-Westerly, although it does vary at other times of the year where it is Northerly or North-Westerly. The vehicular movement on the highway and along Glenhove Road mean that there is noise that enters the site. The sun path and angle of the sun in relation to objects on site depends on the time of year. During the summer months the sun is almost directly above the site, whereas in the winter months, the sun is at a lower angle in the North, creating longer shadows. In terms of natural elements on site, there are a variety of many trees, shrubs and plants on and around the site. The trees aid in providing natural shade and to an extent suppress the noise. There are gum trees, pine trees, as well as other types. In terms of the slope of site, it slopes from South to North. Existing access to the site is from 4th Street via the main Synagogue campus entrance point and through another gate after that.

Existing Land Use
The Site is owned by the Great Park Synagogue, and as such is used by them and the broader community for numerous purposes. First and foremost is the synagogue which houses the main sanctuary used over Shabbat and Jewish Festival services, as well as the smaller sanctuary used on most week-days where there are less congregants present and the need for the larger space is unnecessary. The main synagogue building also house administrative offices, the office of the Rabbi, and on a lower level

Opposite Page:
03.2.2 | Broad Contextual Map and
analysis of the site and surrounding
areas.



there is the Chief Rabbi Cyril Harris Community Centre which is host to a small auditorium, events hall and gallery. The second important structure on the site is the Mikveh, also known as a ritual bath. This building is situated to the West of the synagogue building and it houses the ritual bath which serves the wider Jewish community as a place for

immersion and purification. The remainder of the expansive site is dotted with trees, more densely on the Southern portion than on the Northern side. It is this dense forest space which is used annually, with the exception of not occurring during the Covid-19 pandemic, as the location for a Lag Ba'Omer event. At this event families and friends come together

Opposite Page:
03.2.3 | Site Plan and basic analysis considering sun path, wind direction, and noise.

This Page:
Top to Bottom, Left to Right:
03.2.4 | View of the Synagogue building from the West.
03.2.5 | Closer view of the entrance to the community centre.
03.2.6 | View of the mikveh - ritual bath - in its own space, shaded by the trees.
03.2.7 | Zoomed-in view of the Magen David, or star of David, atop the dome roof.



03.2.8 | Exterior view of the Park Synagogue. The structure on the right was the Jewish school.

from across the Jewish community and chill around bonfires, enjoying food and music. The Northern portion of the site is not used often either, although it does serve as a parking lot when there are larger events since the main site has little parking and even the parking along 4th street is limited. That said, considering the synagogues affiliation with Orthodox Judaism there are halachic (Jewish law) related issues regarding the act of driving on a Jewish holy day such as Shabbat or Festivals, and as such, the main vehicular access gate is most likely closed on these days, and instead, entry is through the pedestrian access also on 4th Street.

Historical Considerations

Due to the nature of the site and its uses, there is a significant historical aspect and relationship to the site and the broader city, and by extension the country. This is the history tied to the presence of Jews in South Africa and importantly Johannesburg. The Great Park Synagogue was built in the late 1990's and completed at the turn of the century. It serves as the continuation and subsequent home of the former Great Synagogue which was located along Wolmarans Street in Hillbrow. This former synagogue was, for a long time, considered the main synagogue in Johannesburg, as it was also the seat of the Chief Rabbinate in the country. By extension, the former synagogue was also the subsequent location in which and where the prior two congregations united once more in 1915.



03.2.9 | Interior view of the Park Synagogue.

It is thus an important part of Jewish life in the country and city, and the significance of this history stems to the first Hebrew Congregation founded in Johannesburg back in 1887, which was known as the Witwatersrand Hebrew Congregation. When this congregation split, the new Park Synagogue was known as the Johannesburg Hebrew Congregation, while the former renamed to the Witwatersrand Old Hebrew Congregation.

Park Synagogue

The Park Synagogue was located at the corner of De Villiers Street and Joubert Streets. The telephone tower stood opposite this. Built by Messrs Alpine and Short in 1892, it was designed by architects

Menze & Brauer. President Kruger, who also consecrated the building, donated the four stands on which the synagogue was built. In 1896 J. F. Kroll designed the minister's residence and Kallenbach & Reynolds oversaw 1903 alterations. It operated until 1912 when it was acquired by the railways and closed. A Railway building now stands in its place.

The history of the Great Park Synagogue dates back to the very beginnings of the city of Johannesburg. Only a year after the city's founding, which happened to be July 10th 1887 - Mr. B. Wainstein's shop hosted a meeting at which a unanimous decision was conceded that the Witwatersrand Goldfields Jewish Association would be formed. The association was tasked with the responsibilities of maintaining the Jewish burial grounds as well as holding religious services for Johannesburg's early Jewish pioneers. The first Rosh Hashanah - Jewish New Year - service was held on 19 September 1887 in the Rand Club. It saw the accommodation of more than 500 worshipers in attendance at the services.

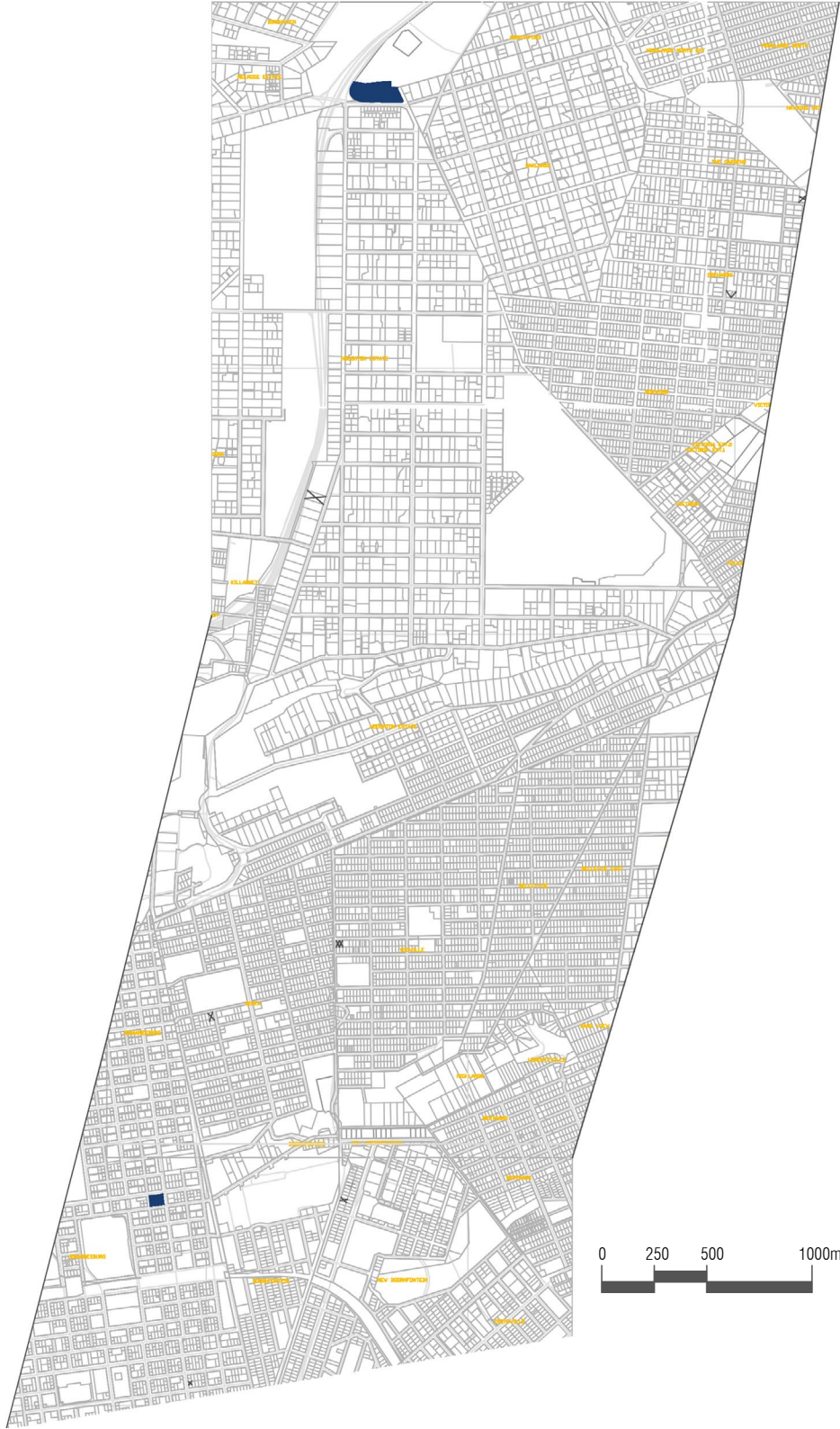
A few months later the association decided to change its name to Witwatersrand Hebrew Congregation, indicative of its purpose to be recognised as a religious organisation. The congregation purchased two stands on President Street in January 1888 for the purpose of building a synagogue. Rev. Mark L. Harris laid the foundation stone on the 7th of November, hence the commencement of the construction of the first Johannesburg synagogue. Daily services were instituted in the synagogue in March 1890, and the congregation was simply referred to as the President Street Synagogue.

Regrettably, a rift formed in the newly founded community surrounding various communal matters. As a result of this, a few members left and subsequently formed a new congregation De-

cember 1891 which was called the Johannesburg Hebrew Congregation. At that point, The Witwatersrand Hebrew Congregation changed its name to the Witwatersrand Old Hebrew Congregation. The two congregations functioned independently for 24 years from 1891 until 1915, each with its own eminent Rabbi and community leaders. The Witwatersrand Old Hebrew Congregation appointed Rabbi Dr. J.H. Hertz at the age of 26 as its Rabbi in 1898. He continued as the congregation's spiritual leader until his return to America in 1911. Rabbi Dr. J. L. Landau was invited by the Johannesburg Hebrew Congregation to become its Rabbi in 1903, a position which he remained in until his death in 1943.

During 1913 and 1914, the Great Synagogue was being built on an entire city block bordered by Wolmarans, Claim, Quartz, and Smit Streets. The architect Herman Kallenbach chose this new large site, in particular due to its proximity to where the Jewish community lived at that time. Theophile Schaerer designed and oversaw the structure of the building, while Hoheisen and Co. were the contractors. The Synagogue's foundation stone was laid by Siegfried Raphaely on 3 September 1913. All of the bricks required were provided by Sammy Marks, and at the opening ceremony he was honoured by presenting the Rabbi J.L. Landau the building's keys. Rabbi Dr. J.L. Landau officially consecrated the brand-new Synagogue of the Johannesburg Hebrew Congregation on 23 August 1914, after a year of construction.

03.2.10 | Extensive contextual plan showing a historical consideration for the narrative and story of the Great Park Synagogue and the former site on Wolmarans Street.





This Page:
03.2.11 | A view of Houghton in 1897,
as published in the Annual Report
of The Johannesburg Consolidated
Investment Company, Limited.

This Page:
03.2.12 | A view of Houghton taken
from a similar spot to the photograph
on the opposite page, this one shows
the view around the time of the books
publishing.



The above contextual figure ground shows the footprints of the built fabric in the year 2000. This was also during the construction of the synagogue, its footprint visible. It is clear that the area was not very dense in its built form.



The above contextual figure ground shows the footprints of the built fabric in the year 2006. This shows how the area changed over an odd 6 years. There is an increased density in the built fabric seen especially with residential developments and the introduction of commercial buildings.



The above contextual figure ground shows the footprints of the built fabric in the year 2012. This was also during the construction of the mikve (ritual bath), its footprint visible. It is mostly visible that there was some change in the built fabric to the south of the site on this map.



The above contextual figure ground shows the footprints of the built fabric in the year 2019. This shows how the area has changed over the last 20 odd years. There is an increased density in the built fabric seen especially with residential developments and the introduction of larger commercial buildings particularly across the highway to the west.

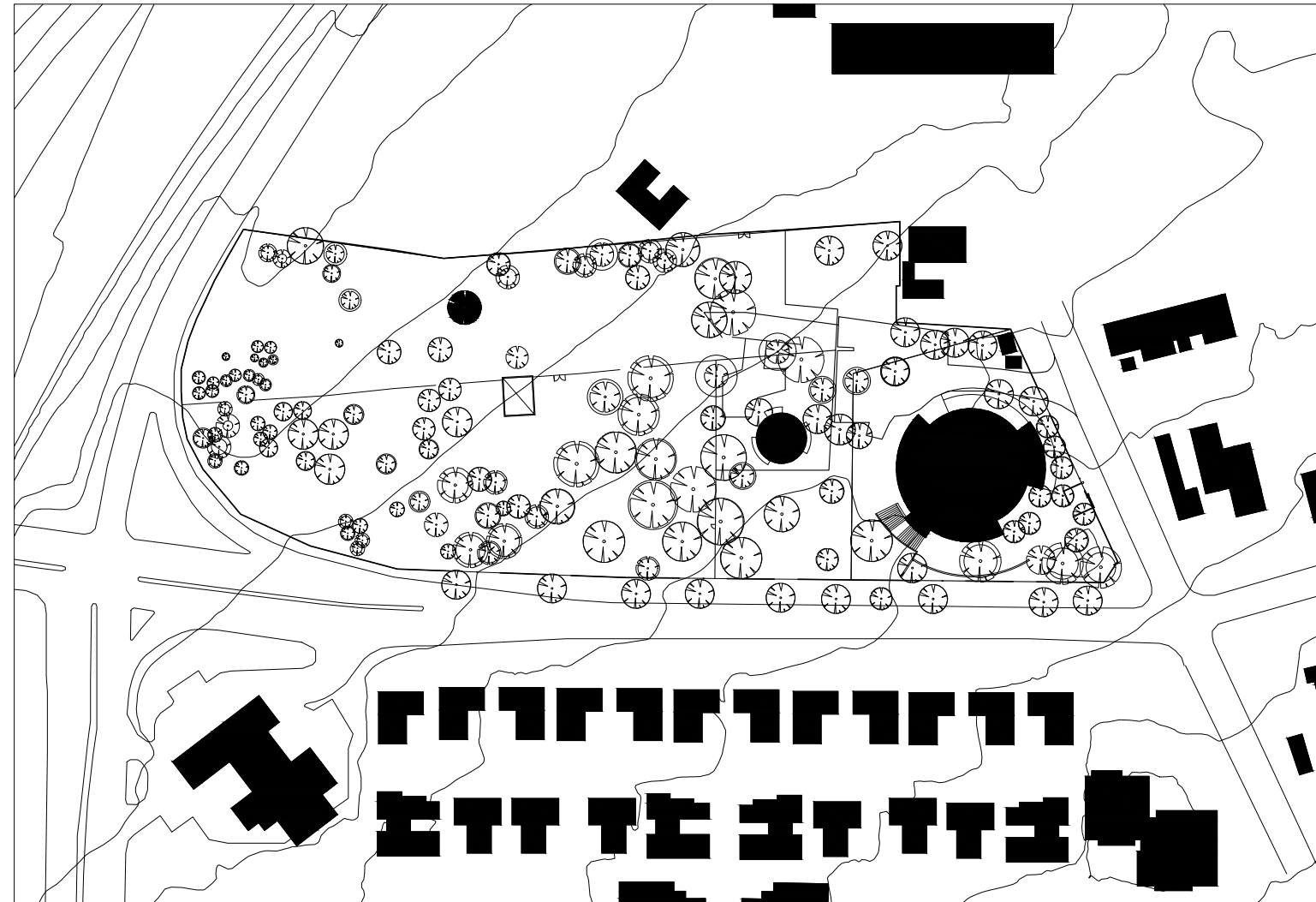
Site Selection

Choosing A Site

Based on my understanding of- and interest in the a number of sites which I initially considered- I have decided that my aim for a design proposal catering to intercultural connections and exchange is best suited in Houghton, Johannesburg. After an initial visit to the site, I felt that there are many advantages and opportunities afforded by this location. For an urban area, the site is mostly vacant, with the exception of the natural elements- most notably the trees.

Identifying Land Use Opportunities

Due to the nature of the area, especially its character as a predominantly residential area, yet also with increasing commercial and cultural uses, with the intention of addressing the diverse community, I feel it would be fitting to propose a scheme to promote the interactions between peoples of different faiths, cultures, or backgrounds. I would intend to design a cultural complex which serves as a beacon of knowledge and understanding, providing studios for the arts, gallery and exhibition space, as well as an auditorium and outdoor spaces. The scheme would focus on narratives and the experiential value of architecture.



This Page:
03.2.17 | Site plan showing trees.

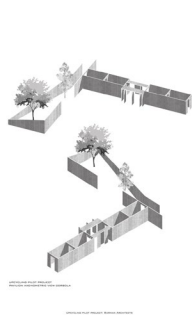
PRECEDENTS



Upcycling Museum

Corbola, Italy | Barman Architects | 2021

Also known as the Upcycling Pavilion Icarus Open Air Museum, this project is a wonderful example of an architectural element sitting withing a natural environment and showcases the respect of nature.



This Page:
04.1-04.2 | 3D View & photograph of
the project.
Opposite Page:

Rotation Workshops Multi-purpose Hall

Verson, France | ACAU | 2022

This scheme also functions as an association house. One of the pros with this project is its multi-purpose hall. This allows for flexibility in the spatial use and setup depending on given requirements at a certain circumstance. The project also seems to deal well with its connection between the old and new, and it appears to sit well in its natural context.



This Page:
04.3 | External view of the scheme.
04.4 | Internal View of a hall.

Repentigny Theater

Repentigny, Canada | FABG | 2021

A second place winner, this project uses an inspiring material aesthetic and approach to the idea of a hybrid/mixed-use development. It is relavent to my design typology in terms of its functional similary.



04.5 | Exterior view of the building.
04.6 | Interior view of the theater space.



Greenpoint Library & Environmental Education Center

Brooklyn, NYC, USA | Marble Fairbanks Architects | 2020

I like the facade detail, the colour palette and the way that it does not seem imposing like some other buildings at such a scale, and perhaps this is due to its colourful facade.



04.7 | Exterior view of the building from the street.

Yad Vashem

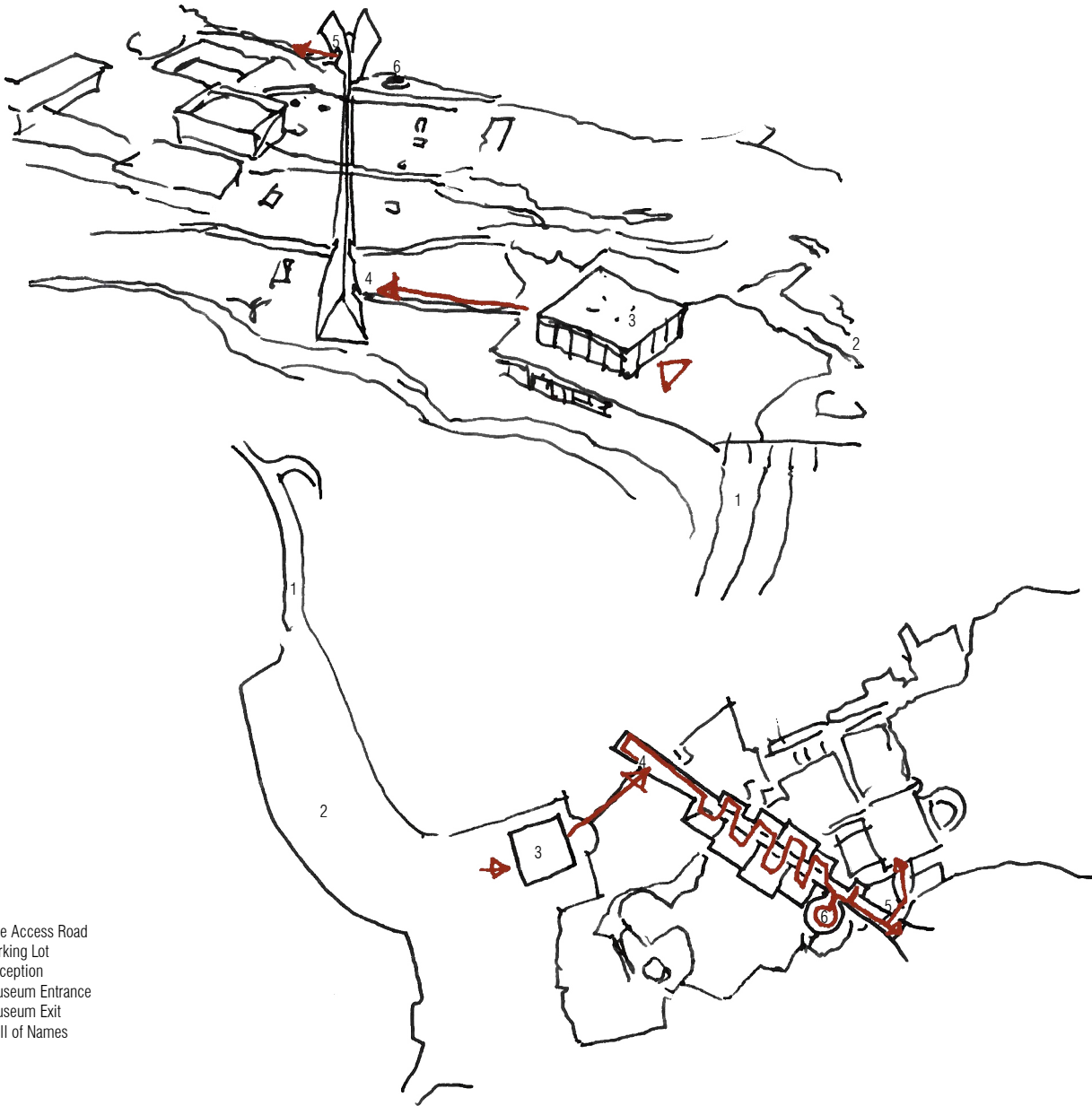
Jerusalem, Israel | Moshe Safdie | 2005

One of my favourite projects by one of- if not my- favourite architects. The building has been submerged and cut into the landscape, and the resulting form and spatial functions seem to work with the intended narrative journey which a user passes along as they move through the building

and its exhibitions. This building not only relates to the theme of memory due to its functional aspect as a museum, it also relates to the idea of narrative and experience in architecture through spatial arrangements and use of materials and manipulation of forms.



This Page:
04.8 | Interior view looking down the central prism.
04.9 | View looking down at the pit in the Hall of Names room, the dug out hole mimicking the cone shape above which displays images of holocaust victims, somewhat visible in the reflection.
Opposite Page:
04.10 | Analytical sketches showing a 3D view and floor plan of the scheme, pointing out access and movement through the internal spaces.



Jewish Museum Berlin

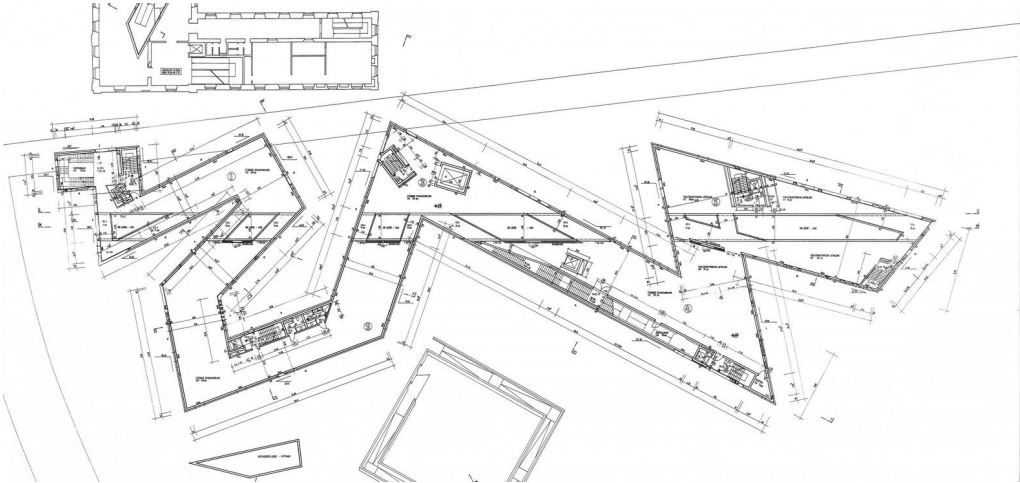
Berlin, Germany | Daniel Libeskind | 2001

Informed by a deconstructed and abstracted star of David, this project is significant not only at a local German or continental European level, but also on a global stage. It is appropriate for such a museum to be situated in Berlin, Germany as this is where the spread of anti-Jewish hatred and extermination, one of the darkest periods in history, originated. This is obviously in reference to the Holocaust which took place during World War II. Indeed the museum is one which really captives a viewer or visitor to its spaces. Due to the massive void space in the building, together with the coldness of materials used, there is a feeling and experience of void or emptiness. From some of the photographs of internal spaces it clearly seems to even promote a feeling of eeriness, unease. The architectural

elements within the building themselves add to the experience of the space. This is also prominently shown with the facades and the slits scattered thereon. What natural light enter the spaces is limited to what comes through these openings, their lack of orderliness in itself creating an unbalanced and uneasy experience.



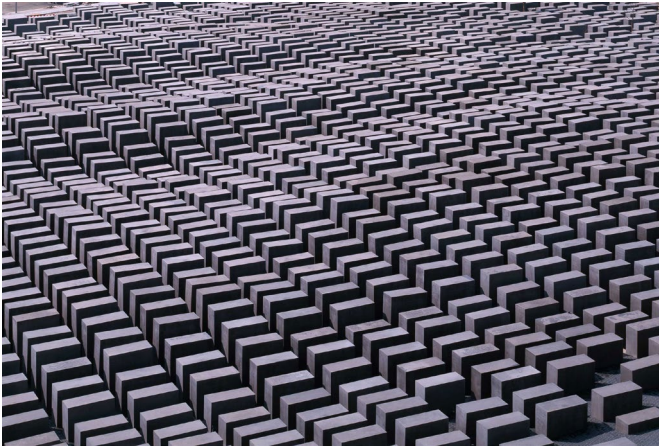
This Page:
04.11 | Floor plan of the museum.
Opposite Page:
04.12 | Exterior view of the building,
the slit-like openings visible on the
facade.
04.13 | Interior view of an internal
space which no doubt ensures a re-
sponse from any visitor moving through
it, stepping on 'faces'.



Berlin Holocaust Memorial

Berlin, Germany | Peter Eisenman | 2005

This project makes use of its site and it shows the flexibility in the architect's design capability in response to its site, and in its physical form. I like how this has been achieved and I also like the use of greenery and the coloured glass on the various balconies



04.15 | 3D Aerial view of the scheme.
04.16 | Interior view of a museum display space, the roof above being part of the undulating blocks above.
04.17 | Exterior view of the blocks, giving the distinct feeling of a cemetery.



Museum of Historical Remembrance

Medellin, Colombia | Yemail Arquitectura | 2018

This project was built as a pavillion, Voices to Transform Colombia, in the park El Parque de los Deseos. It considers stories of pain and courage which have been ignored for some time and exposes them.



04.18 | Floor plan.
04.19 | Interior view.
04.20 | Exterior view of the pavillion.

Abrahamic Family House

Abu Dhabi, UAE | Adjaye Associates | 2019

With the aim of promoting dialogue and understanding between the three Abrahamic faiths, this project is designed to provide prayer spaces for the three religions, namely Christianity, Islam, and Judaism, each with its own unique exterior style retrofitted within a standard size cube seen in the image below.



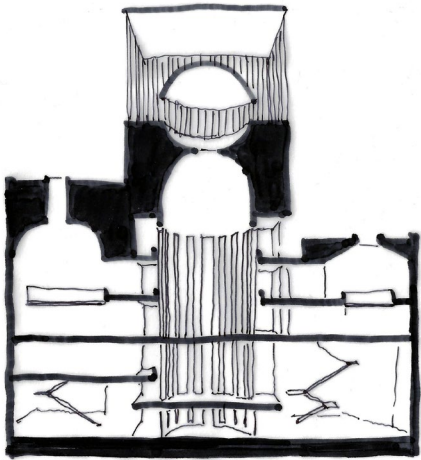
This Page:
04.21 | External aerial view of the scheme.

House of One

Berlin, Germany | Kuehn Malvezzi



This project, like that of Adjaye's Abrahamic Family House, is designed to create a multifaith center where religions have space for worship as well as space to interact and engage with each other. From the outside the building seems quite simple, however when looking at the section it is much more complex in the spaces which are created. Worth noting is the dome-like structure as well as consideration for natural light entry, thus showing its link to other religious buildings.



04.22 | Section through the building.
04.23 | Exterior view of the scheme.
04.24 | Sketch of the section.

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT



05.1 EARLY CONCEPTS

Early development

Design Concept

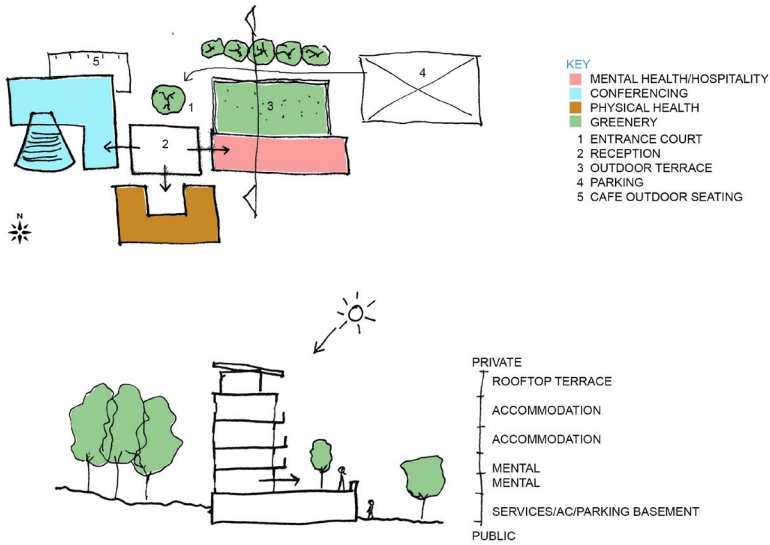
Cultural Center

The initial idea I considered was a cultural center which would mostly consider the story of, and focus on, Jews in Johannesburg. This idea was important to me as it considers multiple issues, one being the rising global antisemitism. I also felt that although there is already a Jewish Museum in Cape Town which does focus on South African Jewry as a whole, I felt that, within the context of Johannesburg as the largest metropolitan city in the country, there was opportunity to provide some form of center which therefore focused on this. This idea was therefore intended to have a museum as the main spatial use.

With reviews and discussions, I decided that the focus was too narrow, and as such I began to contemplate a cultural center that would cater to, and be open to diverse groups of people. This brought up the issue of what type of center this could be. By the second quarter I was quite unsure of that idea as well, and the complexity of considering the function of the design was rather overwhelming. As such, I once again reconsidered what type of cultural center I could design, and after some research into different types of cultural centers, I arrived at a center for wellness. This would house a number of spatial uses: - individual and group therapy spaces, physical fitness/gym spaces, meditation spaces,

conference facilities, and the addition of a small hospitality division. The scheme was envisioned to provide a means of 'escape' from daily life, its stresses, and give people the opportunity to focus on and improve their overall wellness from a holistic approach. This would essentially cover aspects of mind, body and spirit, thus linking to the idea of spirit in the spiritual realm of religion and the synagogue on site.

The Wellness Center was my proposal at the time of the third review held at the end of the first semester. After this review, the feedback I received from the external examiners as well as main lecturers was quite a blow to what progress and design proposal I had presented.



05.1.1 | Wellness Center sketch plan.

05.2 CHARETTE

Early development



05.2.1 | View from above of an arrangement of modular blocks, the intention to show how light is manipulated with that formation and configuration.

05.2.2 | A side aerial view of the same formation as in figure 02.2.1, seeing how the light hits the blocks and how the quality of light changes in different instances.

05.2.3 | Once again the same formation as seen in the previous two figures, although this time viewing it from a different angle with a more prominent view of the area in shadow, thus showing the quality of light.

05.2.4 | A different configuration in which I had attempted to create a tunnel-like space and in this view I was trying to see once again how light affects and enters the space.

05.2.5 | A top view of another configuration, in fact it is attempting to play with the concept of sketched squares intersecting with each other at corners and looking at how solid might appear as opposed to the void.

05.2.6 | A different formation, almost snake-like in its appearance. This was part of my consideration for the relationship to the site and its forest of trees, thus informing a maneuverable and flexible flowing form.

05.2.7 | This is merely another view of the formation shown in figure 05.2.6.

05.2.8 | A top view of a simple layout with five blocks, two of which are sided with tinfoil and the central one is completely covered in tinfoil.

05.2.9 | The same configuration as the previous figure 05.2.8, just taken from a different angle. It is easier to see the tinfoil on the two outer blocks. This also shows the different quality in light as it hits different materials and the resulting play of reflectivity when this is a reflective material.

05.3 INTERIM CONCEPTS

Progress of development

Rethinking the Design

Cultural Center

Seeing that the review at the end of the first semester did not go well, I decided that I best take a step back and rethink or consider where to go with the design. This was not at all easy due to the fact that I had already done the majority of my research and been writing for a while, and I could not seem to consider an appropriate design proposal. That said, I was still set on designing a cultural center, what the function of it would be remained to be determined.

With the return to second semester and the small period of rest afforded myself with the winter break, I began to contemplate the feedback I had received from that review and I considered their critiques of my proposal. The design seemed to be distant from the topic and title of, and the actual, research. Additionally, the scheme did not link to the existing site and its uses in that of the synagogue and mikve, and rather it turned its back upon this. It seemed to be isolated in its planning.

Therefore I was now faced with the difficult task of searching for a type of cultural center that would be appropriate to my research and the site context relative to its natural, social, demographic, economic, and other aspects. One thing was certain, I was not going to design a wellness center. I also knew,

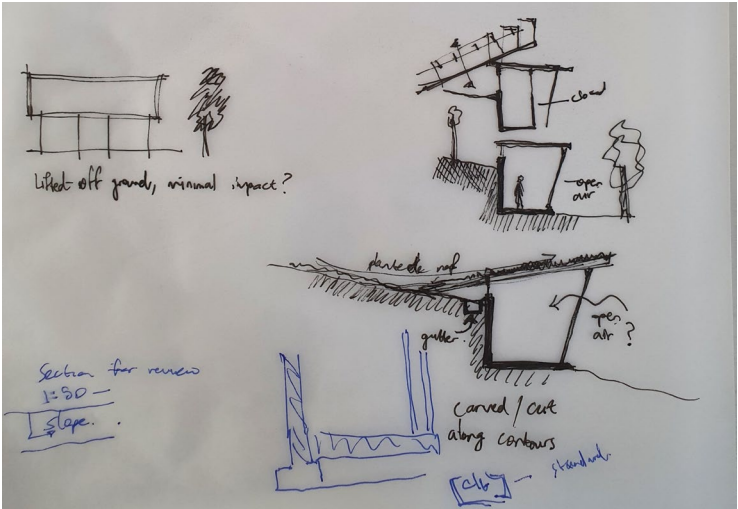
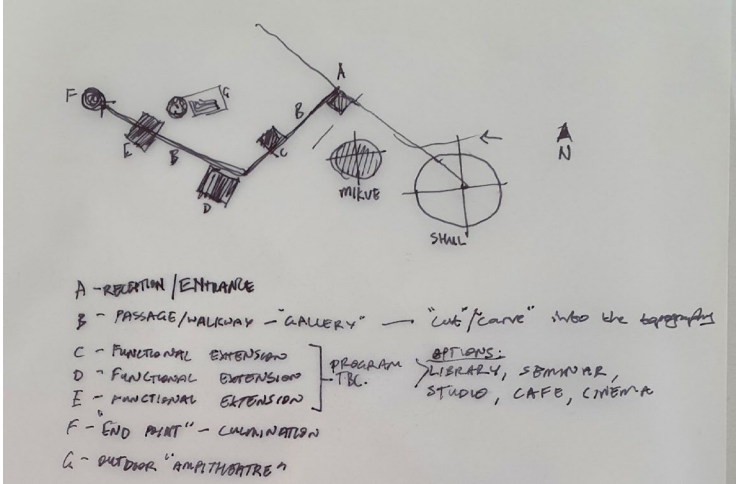
based on the feedback and advice I had received, that I should reconsider the initial idea I had considered regarding a center with a specific focus on Judaism, or perhaps a center that would cater to multicultural considerations.

I finally settled on a multicultural center, one which should be a beacon of light and a promoter of respect, understanding, and dignity between diverse peoples, not just from the surrounding areas or wider city, but from farther afield in the country and eventually even to attract a global awareness.

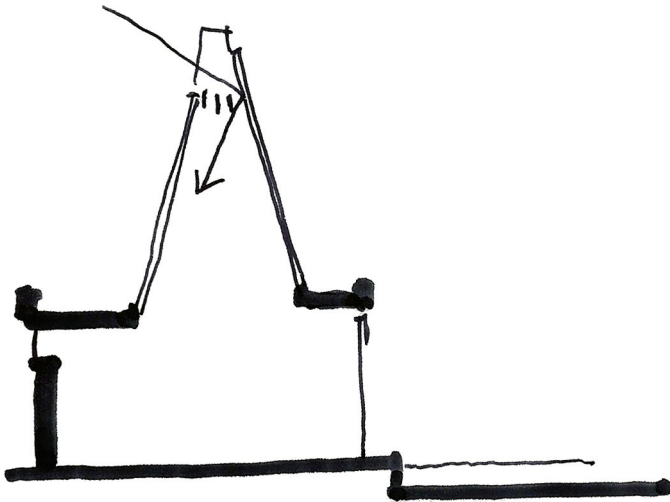
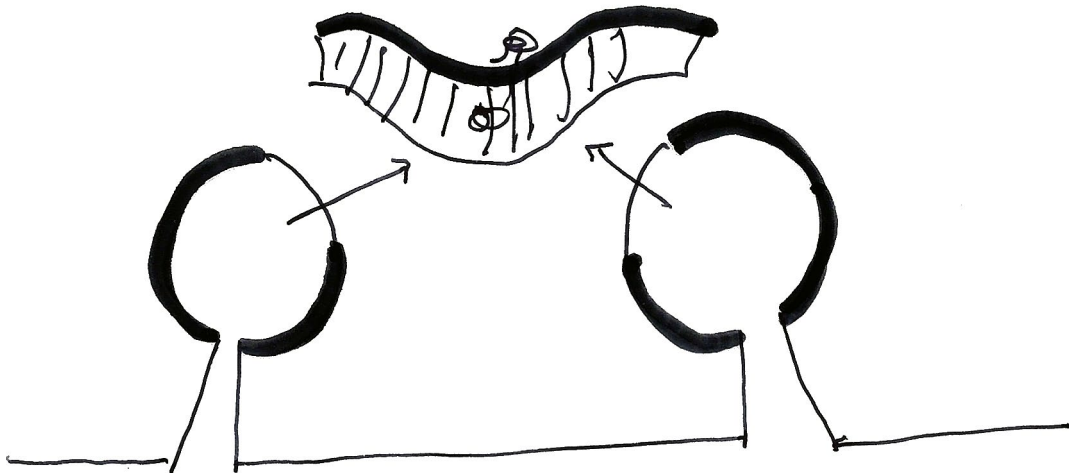
Thus my intention for designing a cultural center was not to merely stick to what - arguably - the mainstream thought on cultural center typologies actually are viewed as being. Instead, I have come to consider that with the broad definition of, and understanding that is associated with the notion of, culture that this opens the door for a different type of center which still relates to the idea of culture.

Finding a Function

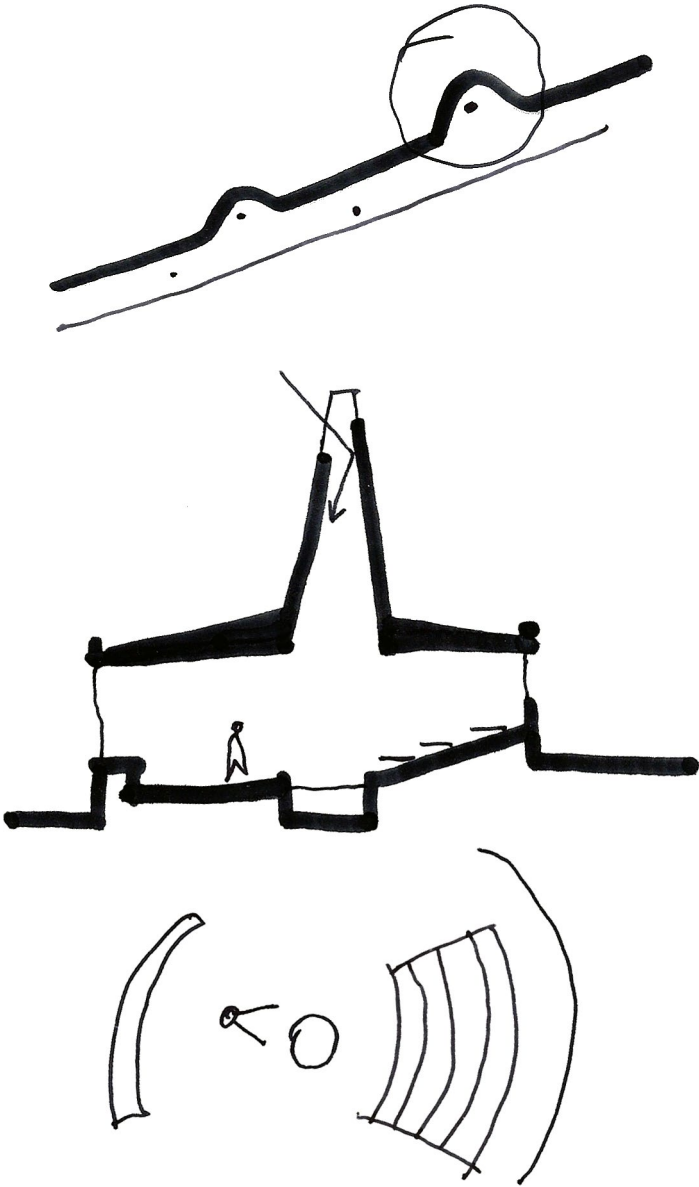
I was hard pressed to find a functional solution to the new design proposition. A new conceptual layout I had, but a confirmed functional typology or spatial usage, not so. While returning to my research and some of the past discourses of former students in the M.Arch at Wits, I reminded myself of a number of such examples which had a focus on cultural centers and even multi-faith programs.



05.3.1 | Early sketches from second semester.



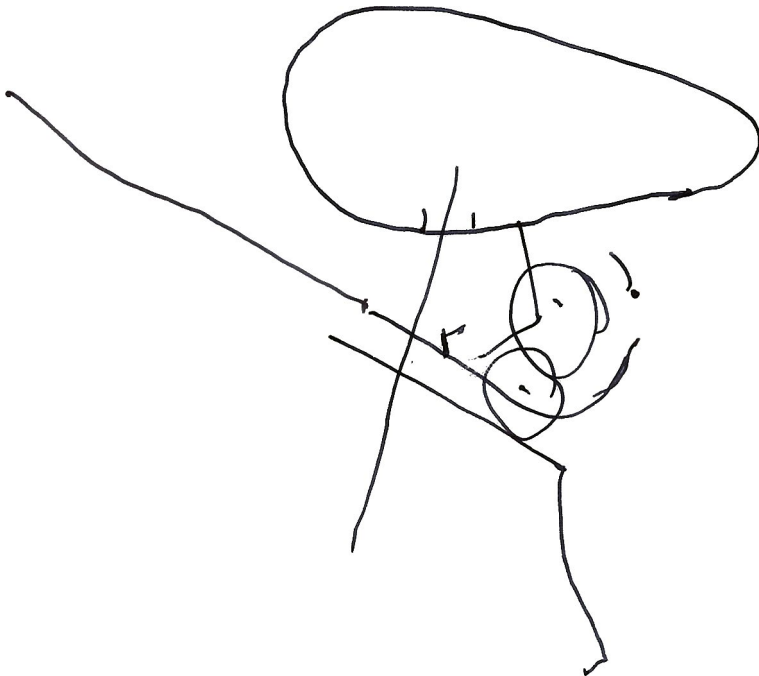
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05.3.2 | Sketches



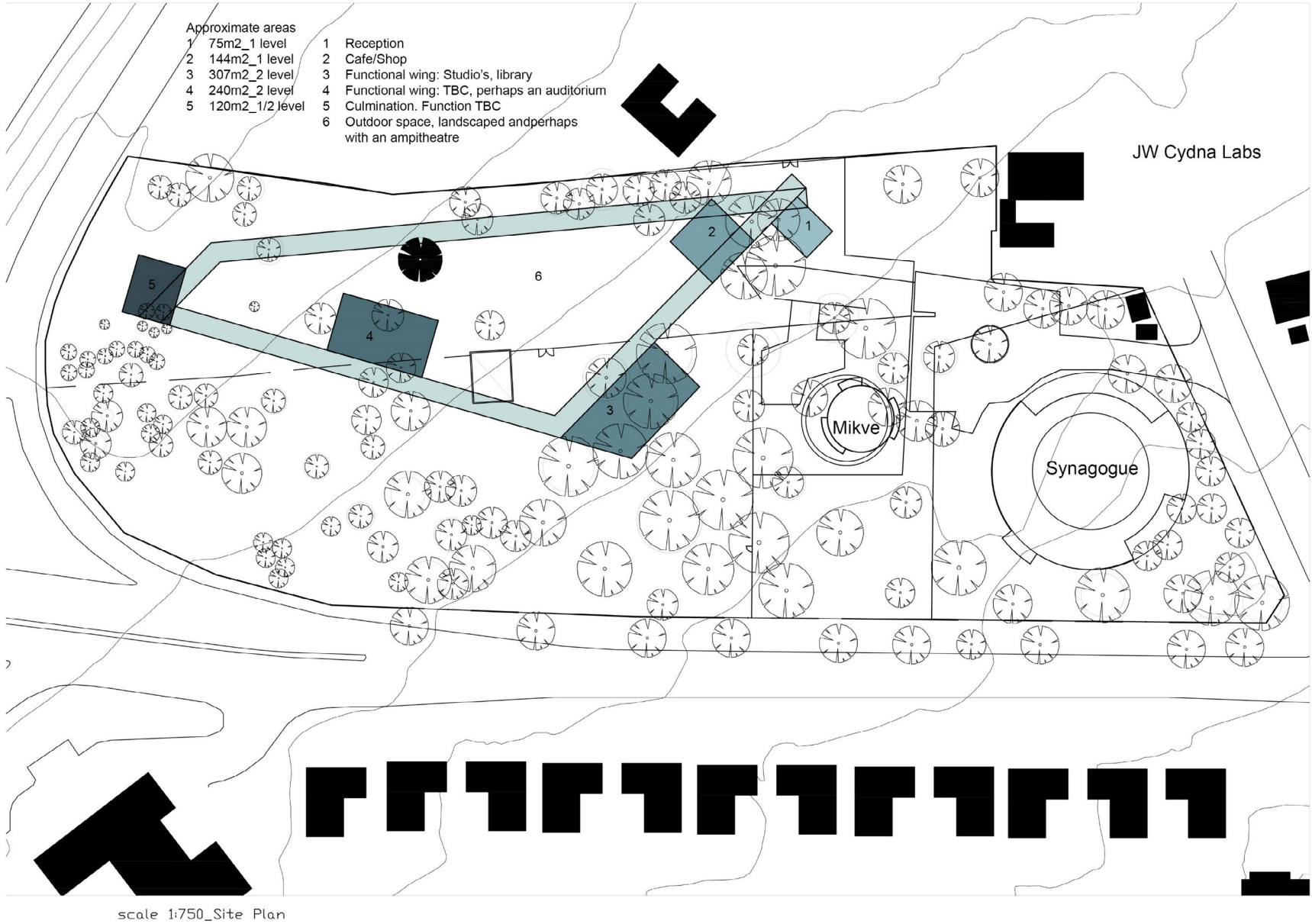
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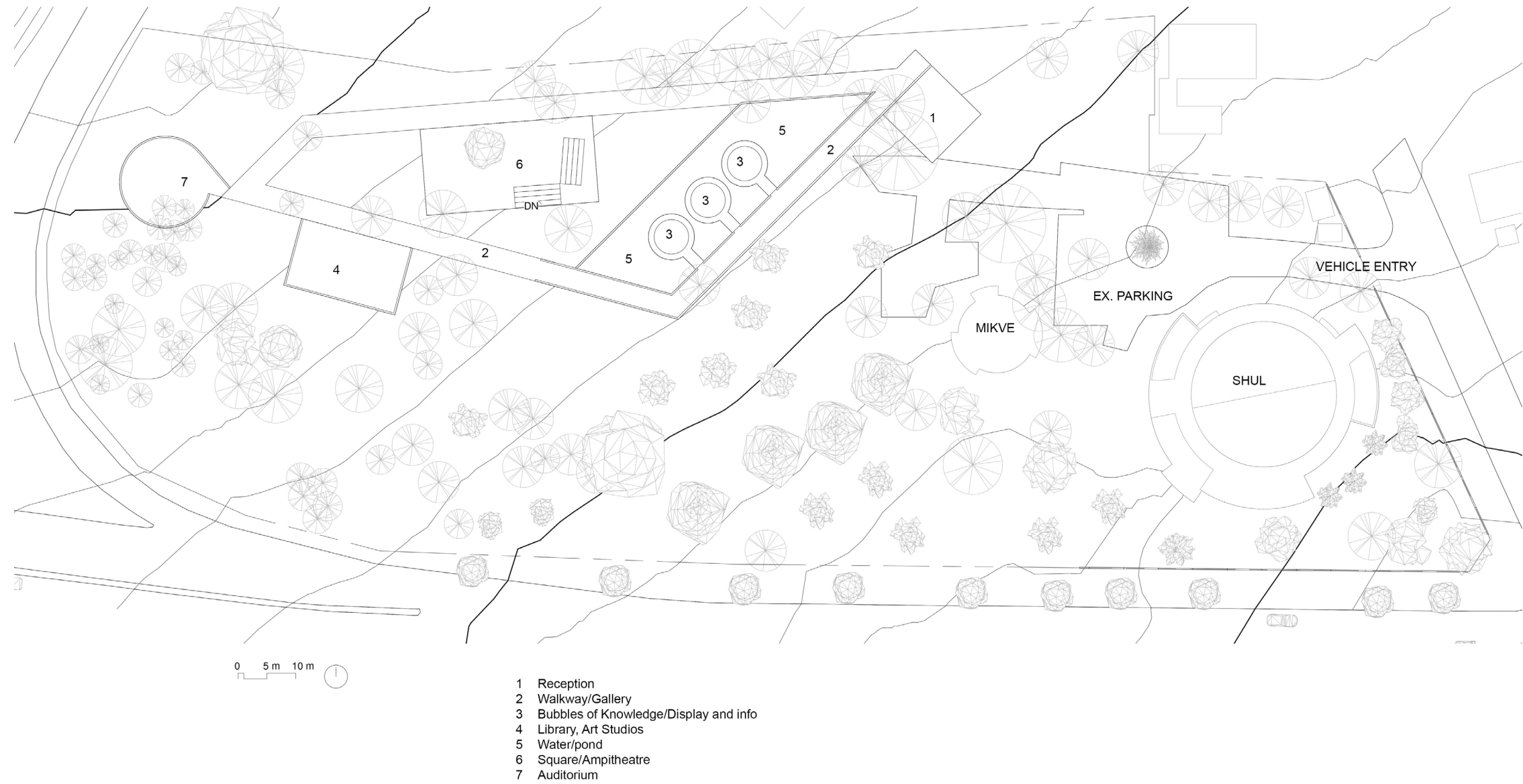
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05.3.4 | Sketches



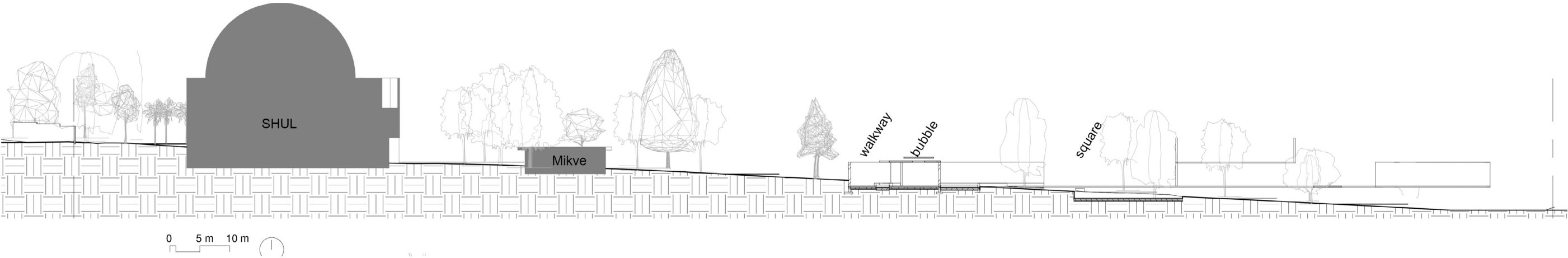
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05.3.5 | Sketches



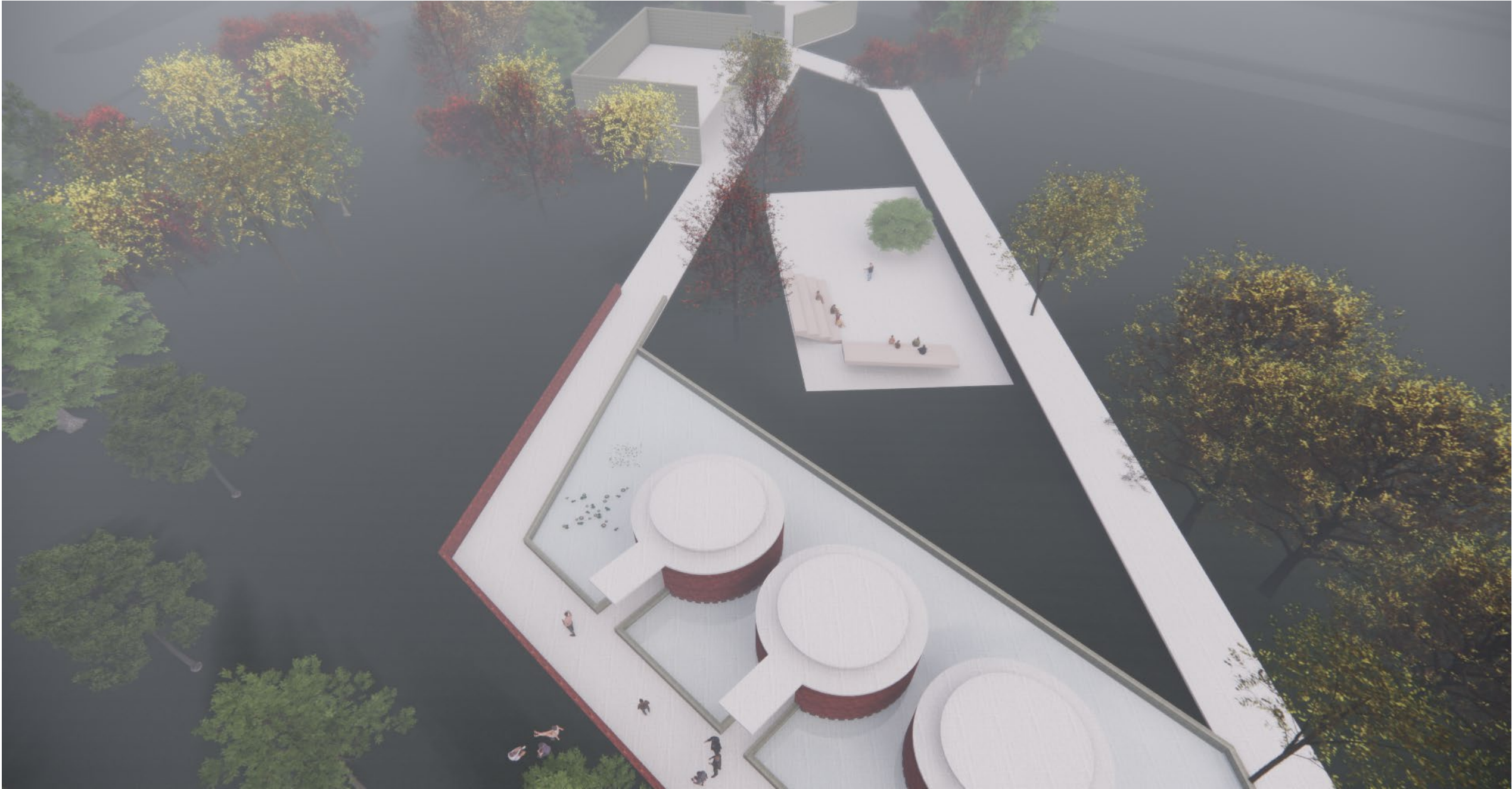
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05.3.6 | Concept plan of the scheme.



This Page:
05.3.7 | Plan of the scheme as done
in revit.



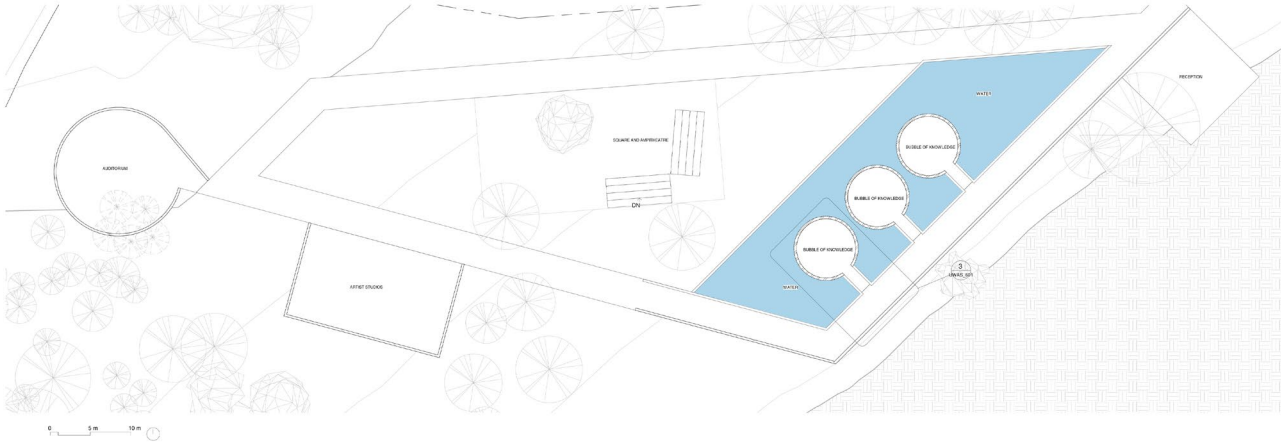
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05.3.8 | Site section.



This Page:
05.3.9 | Site 3D render.

Building Programme

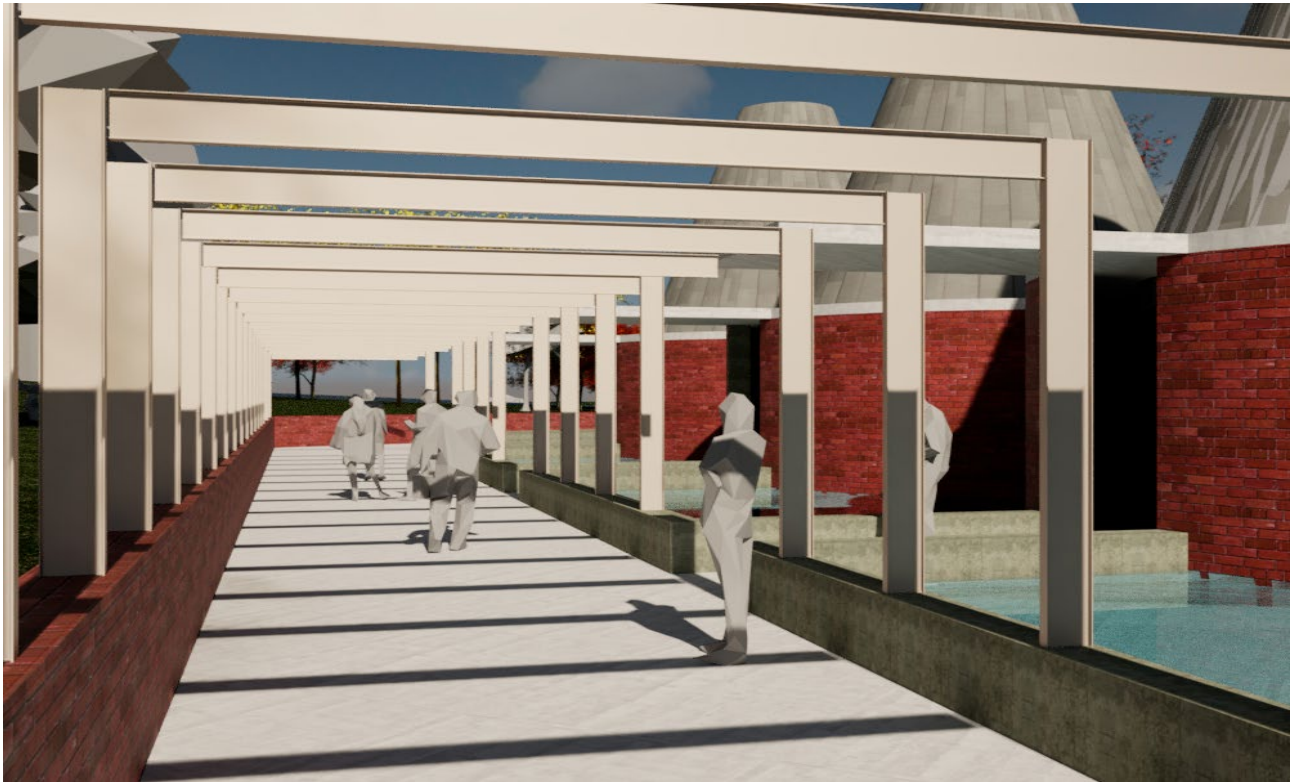
Space	no. of	Area each
Reception	1	50
Security	1	10
Office	1	15
Security Office	1	15
Storeroom	1	20
Foyer	1	50
Sub-total		
Coffee Shop	1	100
Eatery	1	150
Kitchen	1	50
Library		
Entrance desk	1	30
Office	1	20
Storeroom	1	20
Stacks	1	75
Chairs/Tables	1	50
Digital Resource Center	1	50
Archive	1	25
Sub-total		
Art Studio 1	1	100
Art Studio 2	1	100
Music Studio 1	1	50
Music Studio 2	1	50
Dance Studio	1	100
Multipurpose Hall	1	150
Theater/Auditorium	1	300
Spill over space	1	75
Bar	1	30
Learning center/displays	1	100
Administration		
Offices	15x10	150
Director's office	1	20
Staff Kitchen	1	20
Board Room	1	30
Sub-total		
Total		2005



This Page:
05.3.10 | Plan of the scheme.



This Page:
05.3.11 | 3D view.



This Page:
05.3.12 | 3D Render

CONCEPT & INTENTION

It would be my personal inclination to consider a multitude of issues and attempt to find and provide potential solutions for them. This is all very well if I was not limited in the time I have to complete my masters degree and its required course-work, in this case a research report. As such, I have herein outlined a number of the issues which I have considered and discussed through this report.

The topic: *Architecture as Mnemonic*

Mnemonic as a notion of that which aids in the creation of memories is important to the research in this document. Architecture as mnemonic is relatable to other aspects and devices with mnemonic value. Memory is therefore an important aspect of architecture and the built world. Not only do we remember through spatial interactions, we also experience spaces which lead to us creating new memories.

My interpretation of the theme led to exploring various definitions and links to other issues of identity, memory and cultural significance. As such I decided that I wanted to create a community center which caters to a diverse group of peoples from different backgrounds, and coming with different views and beliefs to others. The intention is to promote education and

understanding of other cultural groups or religions and their beliefs and practices. I believe that through understanding will come respect and from respect can come dialogue and friendship with a goal of helping to promote peace.

The site is significant with the synagogue and ritual bath, and both are circular structures, the synagogue is topped with a dome which is seen in a variety of religious and cultural structures. I wanted to connect back to the site and therefore have chosen to use matching facebrick on the exterior facades, and I have also decided to make use of curves and circular forms as well as domes and interesting light wells.

I believe that this center can work as an extension of the current Chief Rabbi Cyril Harris Community Center on the site which can accommodate smaller crowds in a small auditorium and hall. There is also already a kosher kitchen in this center and as such the new kitchen would not necessarily be used for kosher food preparation.

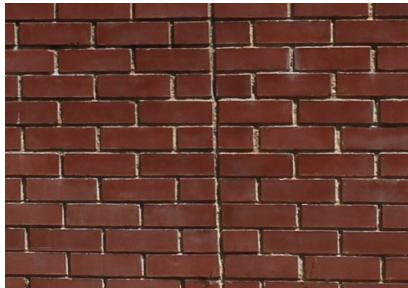
Ultimately the complex is aimed at promoting interfaith and intercultural dialogue and discussion. Thus the center is called the Johannesburg Interculture Center.



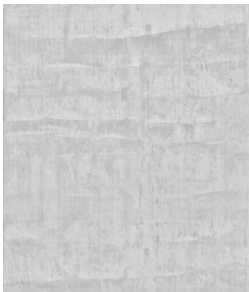
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05.3.13 | 3D interior view of a potential layout.

TECHNICAL SYSTEMS

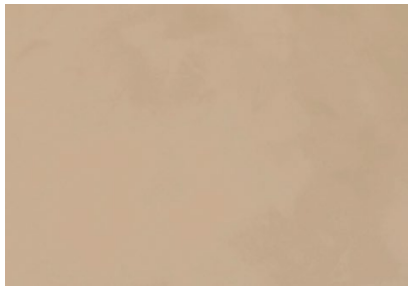




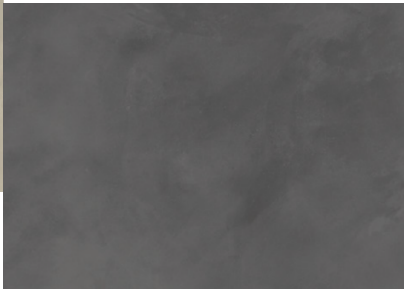
Red Facebrick



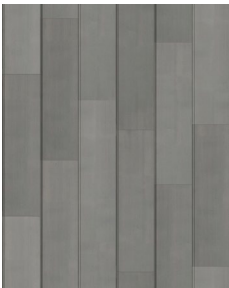
Concrete



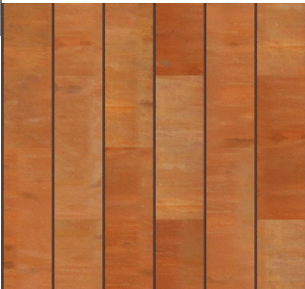
Cement or screed finishes



Timber



Metals, steel, zinc, aluminium, corten steel



Technical Systems

For my design I have decided to consider the context in which my project sits. In lieu of this, I am hoping to take cues from the surrounding built fabric in terms of material use and building technologies used.

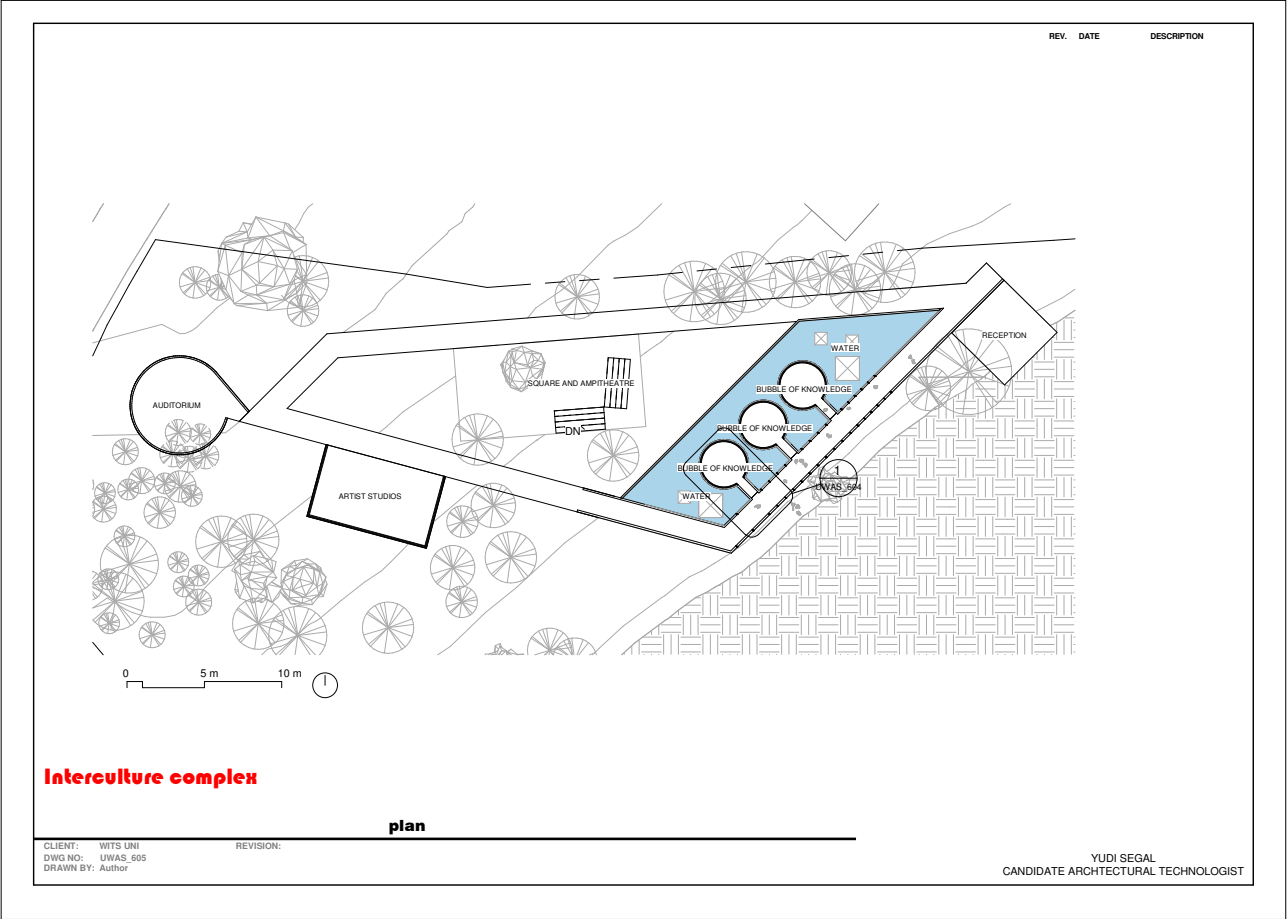
With the existing structures on site, there is a heavy use of brickwork in the form of facebrick as an external aesthetic appearance. As such, I intend to link the new proposal to the existing structures on site through use of facebrick for a number of elements of the building. The dome and its use of copper on the synagogue roof is also a potential informant for possible roof structures on the new building. I envision the use of simple building forms.

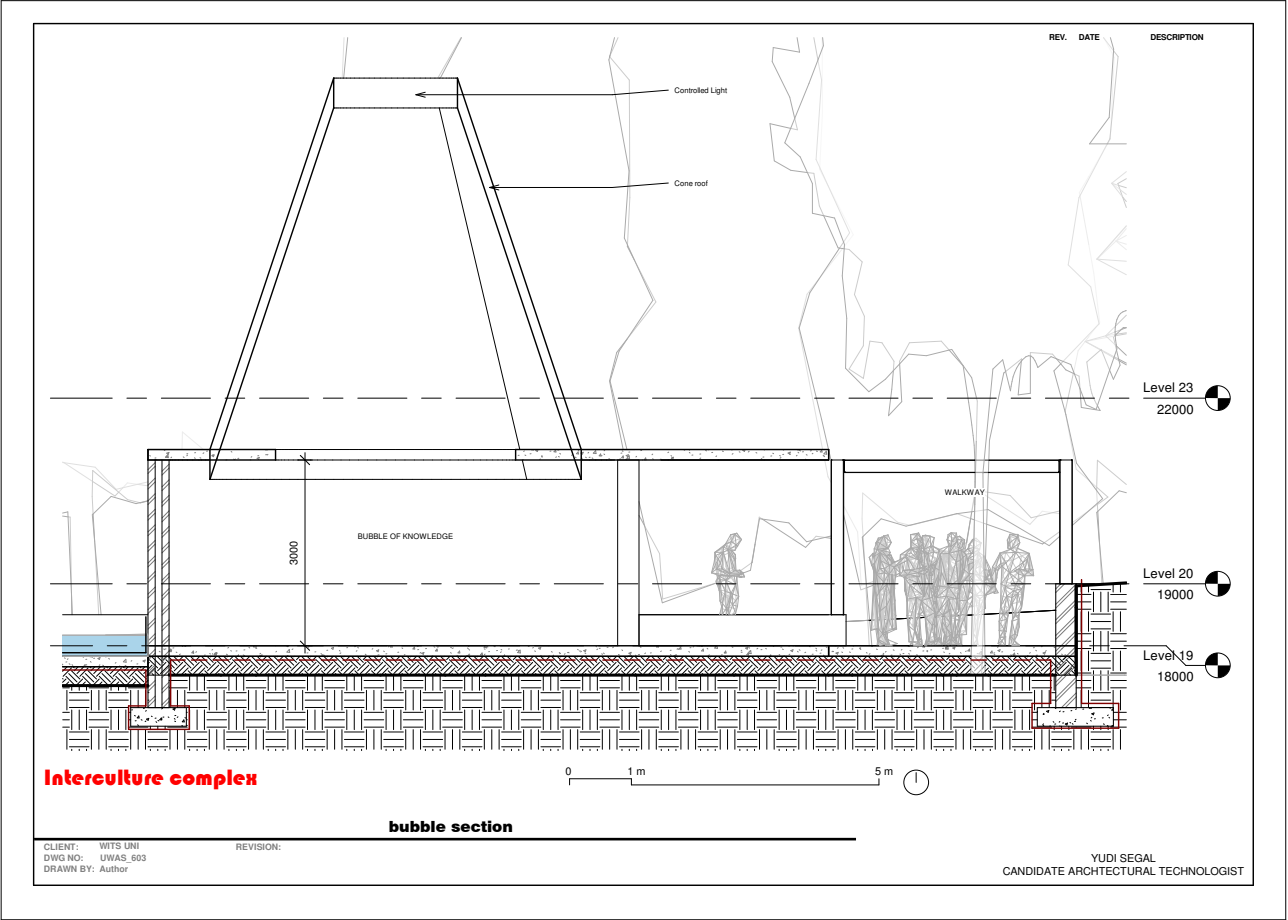
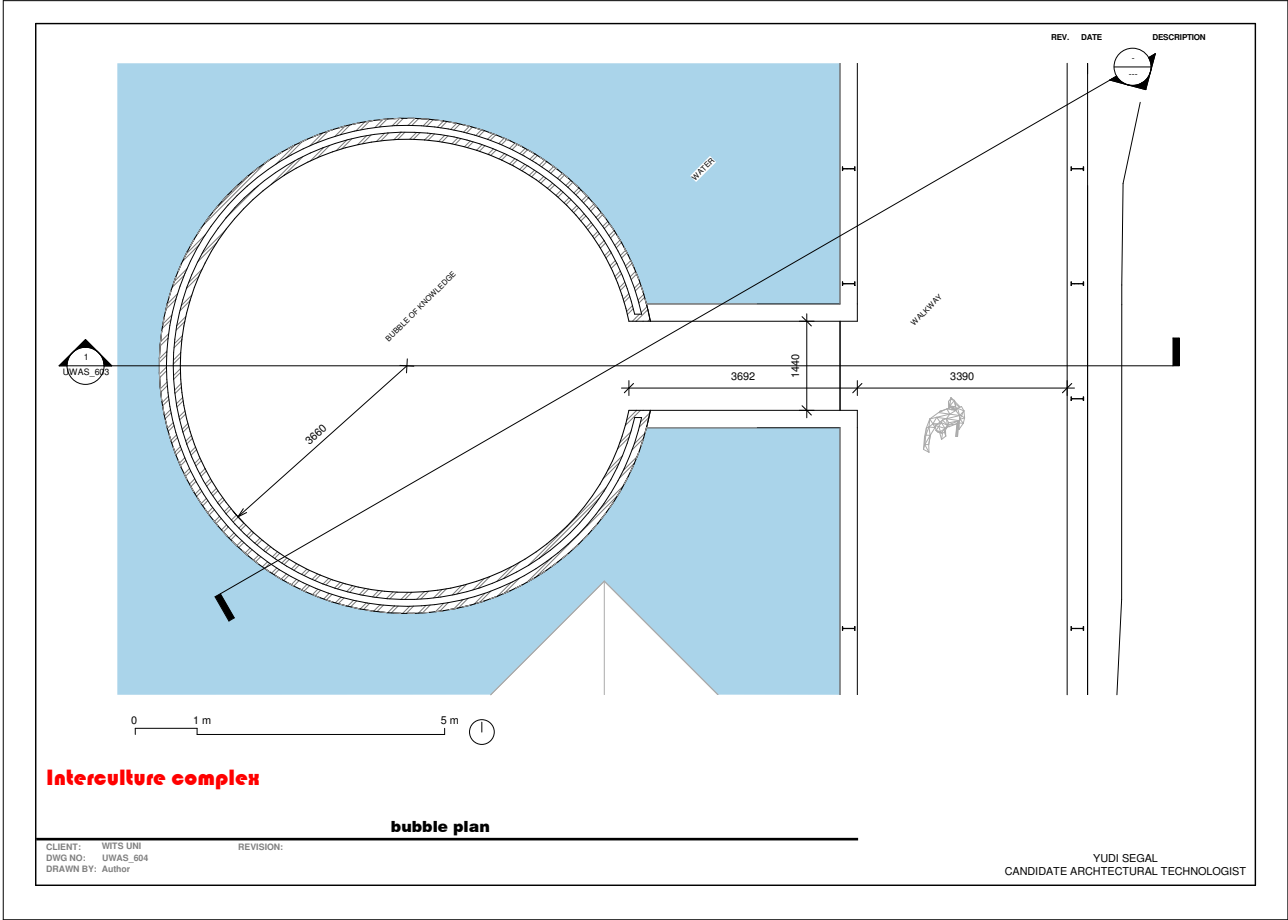
In terms of materials for the building, it will make use of brickwork, concrete, steel, timber, and glass. The

As per the location of the site, much sunlight is available, and I therefore decided to ensure that every unit has its own balcony or outdoor space, allowing for private outdoor living and spatial use, while ensuring that natural airflow is accessible to all units at the same time. I would also like that the scheme uses renewable energy sources, especially solar, in order to ensure a sustainable footprint. Further to this, communal spaces have been provided at the third and fourth levels to allow for the social interaction between tenants and residents of the scheme.

From a perspective of sustainable initiatives, the design will respond to natural contexts of site, utilising natural shading and cooling elements such as trees and water features to aid in the regulation of building temperatures. There are also a number of trees on the site, many of which are in fact not indigenous to South Africa. On one hand there is room to argue for the removal of these trees, yet at the same time there is also an argument to be made in keeping the trees- or as many as is possible- in order to retain what ecosystem has been built over the years that these trees have been present. As such I would intend to retain as many of the existing trees as I can, and in any instances where a tree may be removed, consideration for the placement of new plants or trees will be considered as part of the design.

In reference to regulations surrounding energy efficiency and in order to build with better insulation, the design will make use of external cavity walls, and the buildings water will be reused where possible, rain water will be collected, and solar panels will assist in running the lighting in the new complex.

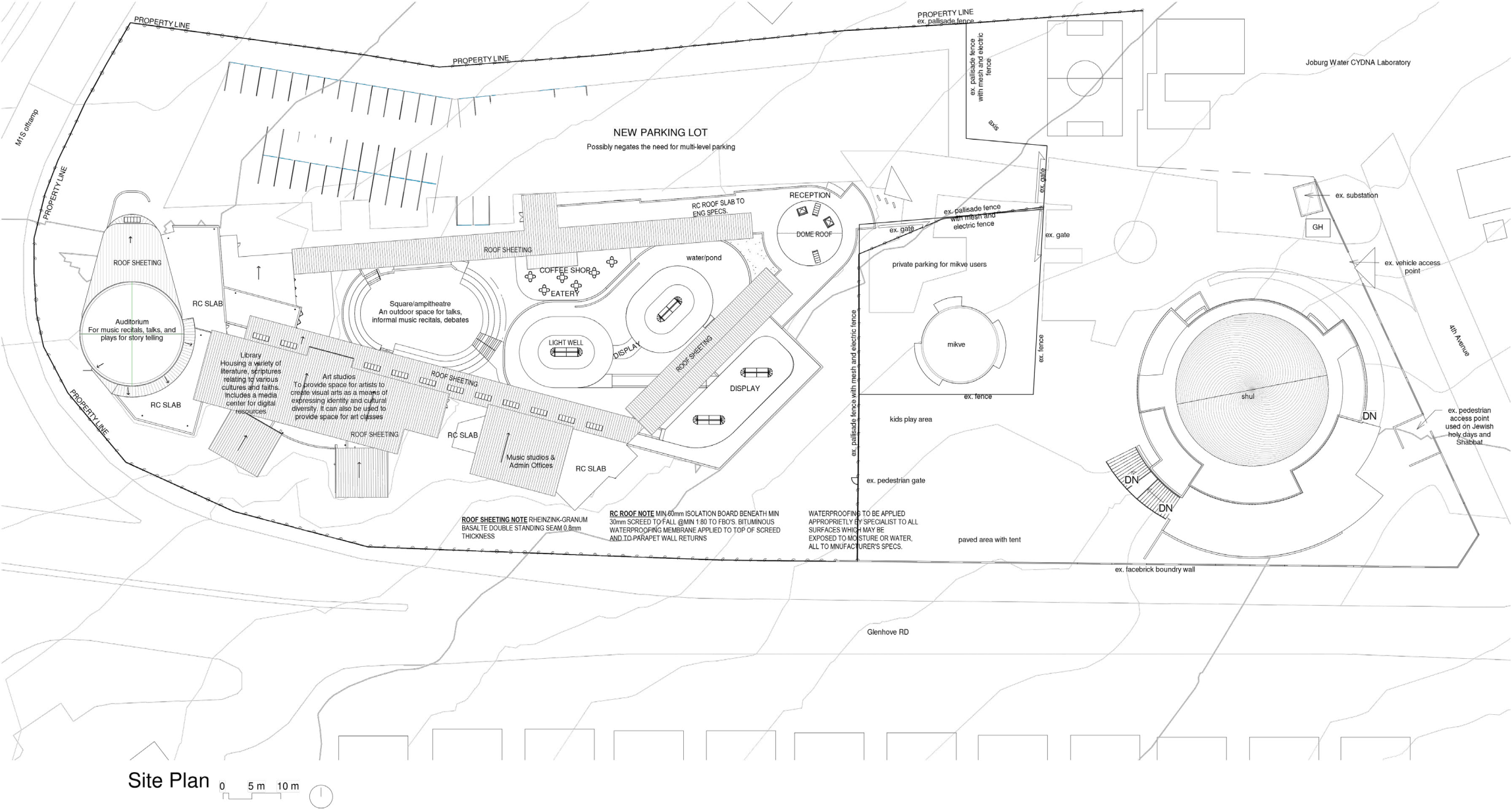


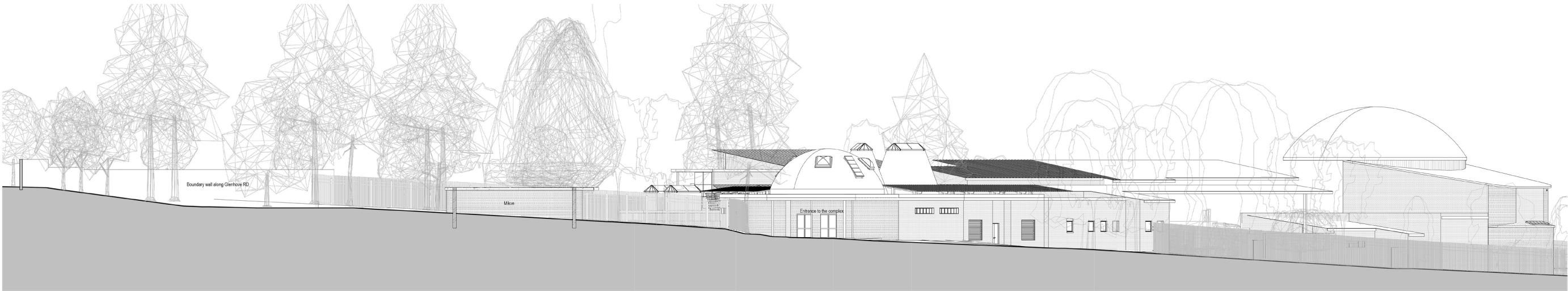


FINAL DESIGN

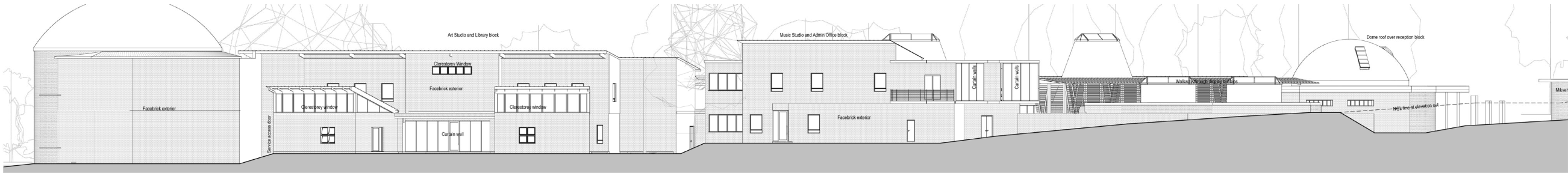
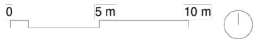


07.1



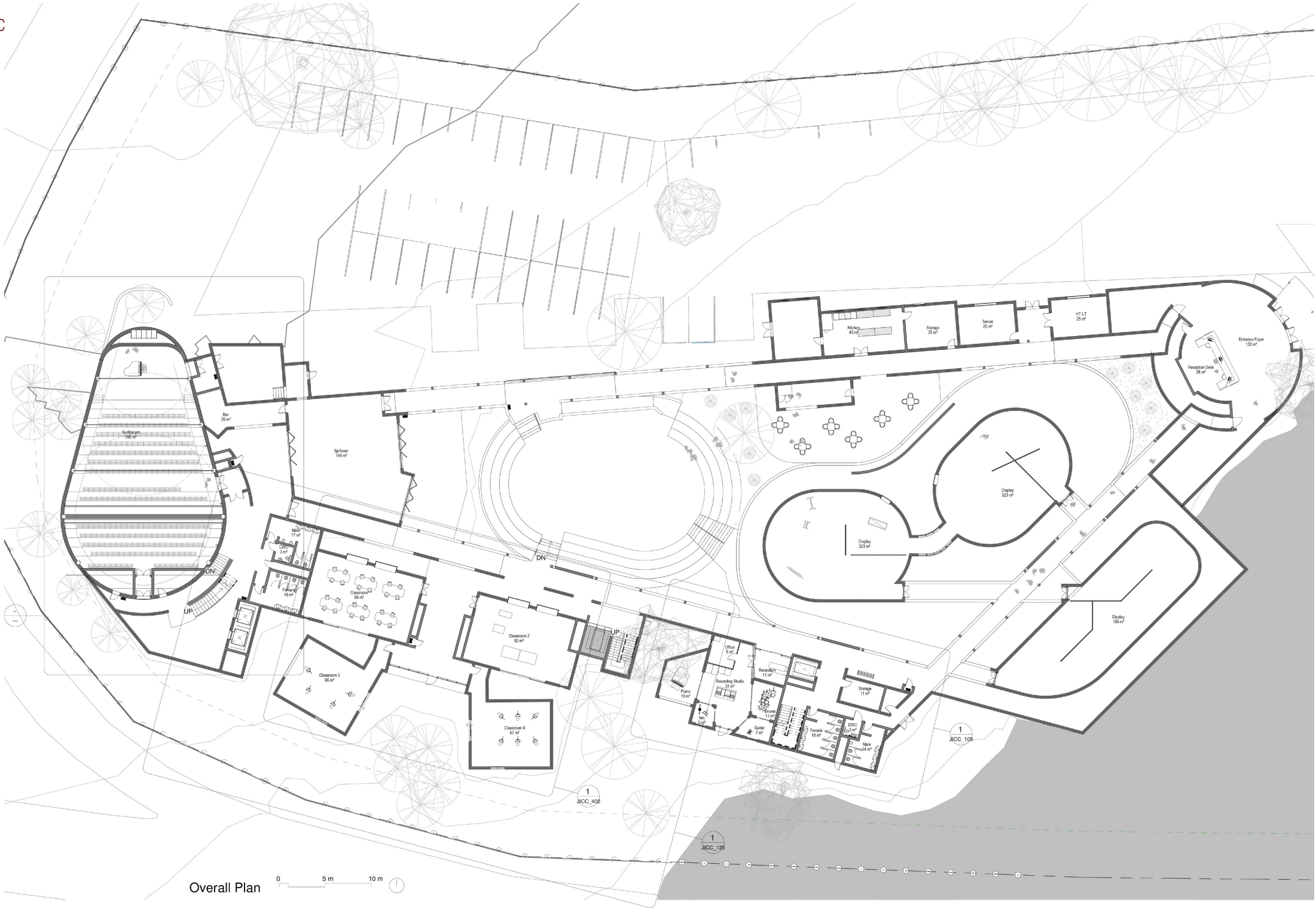


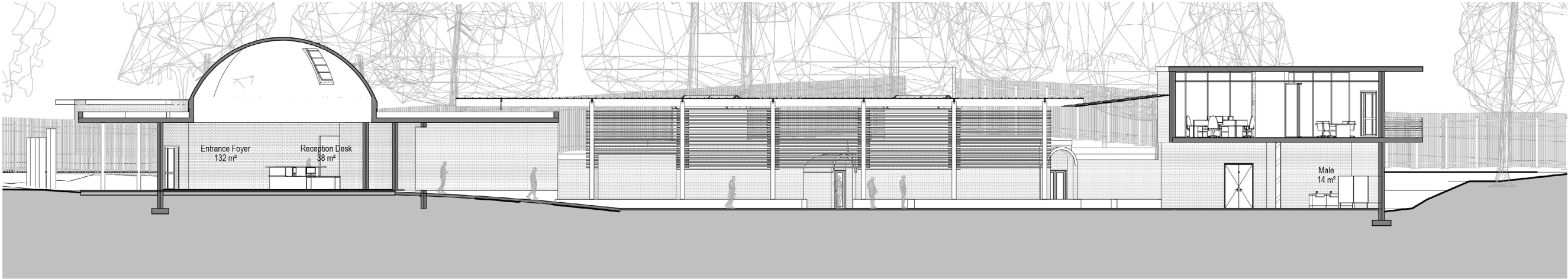
East Elevation



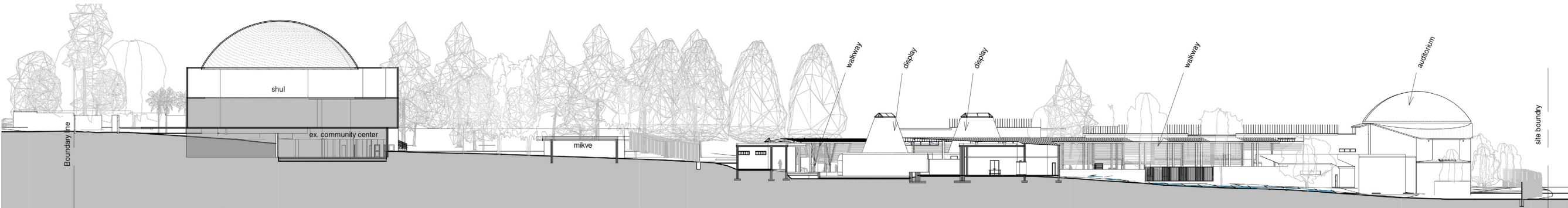
South Elevation



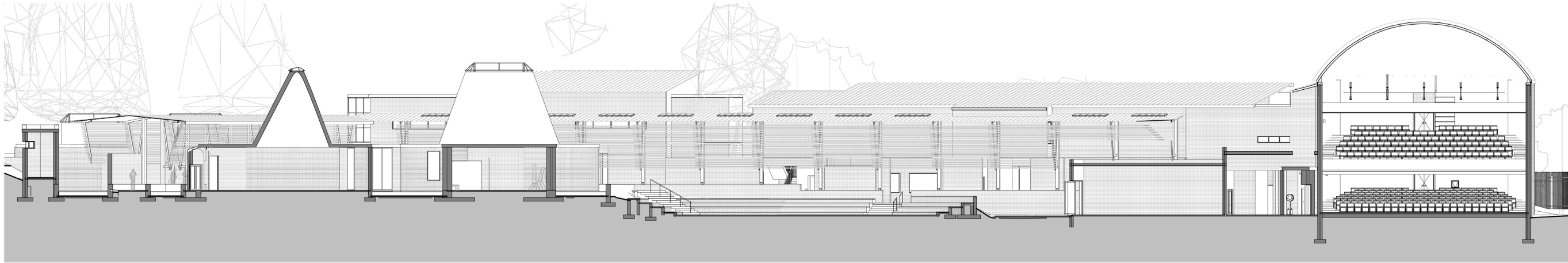




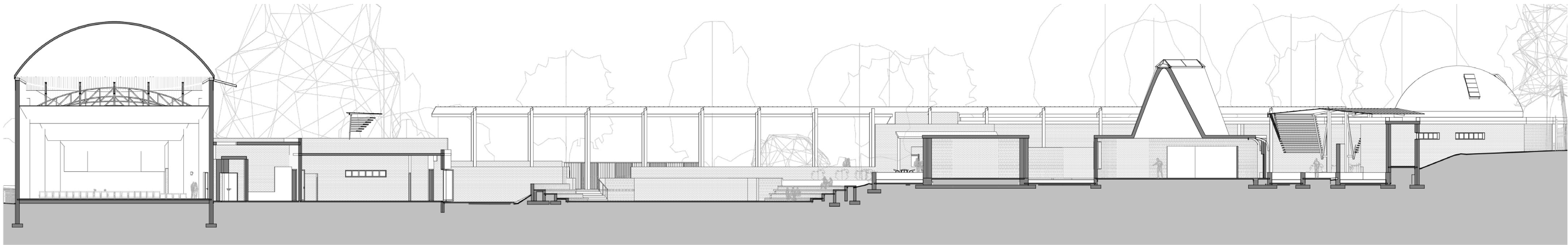
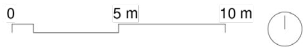
Context Section 1



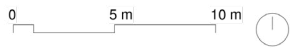
Context Section 2

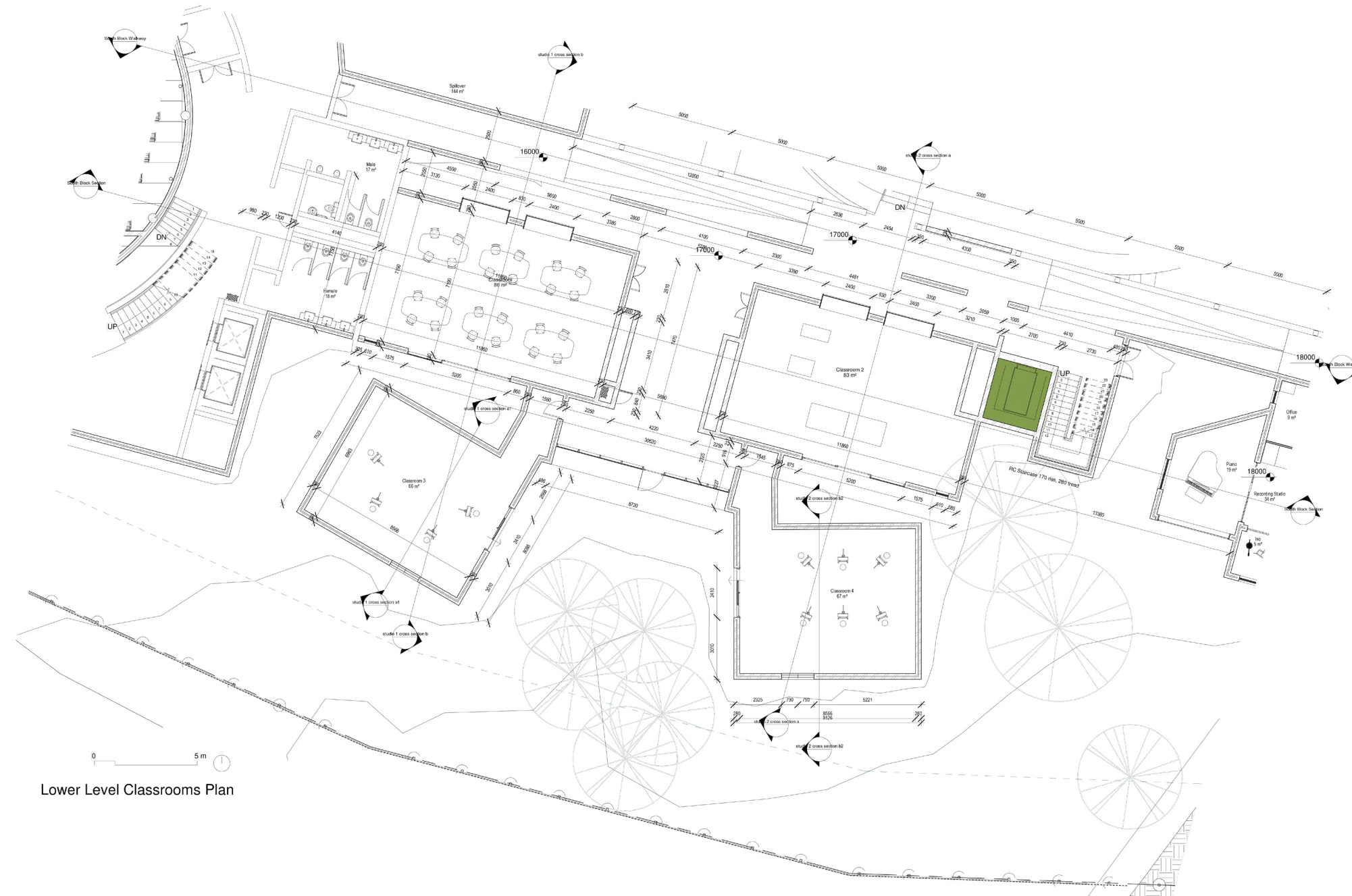


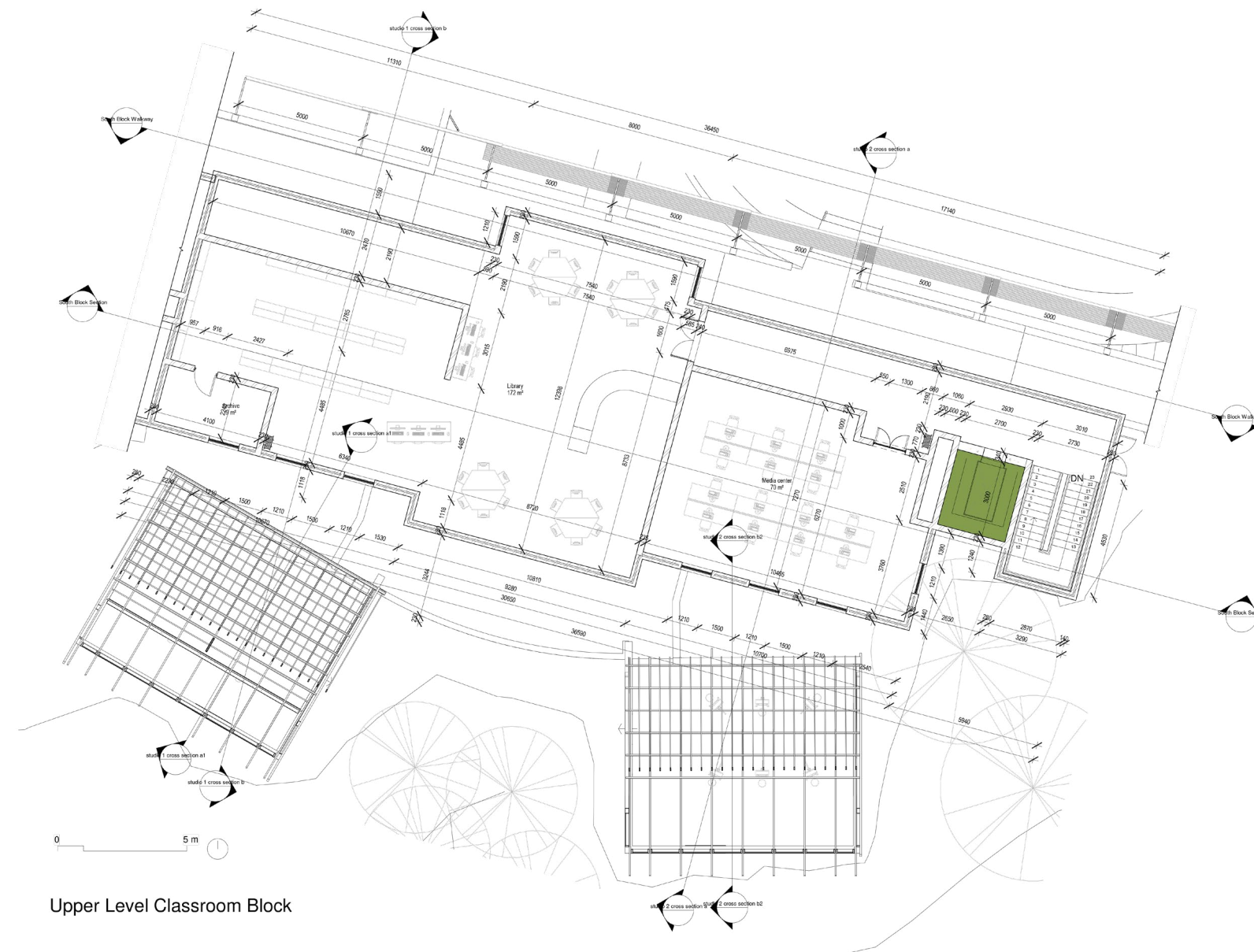
Longitudal Section 1

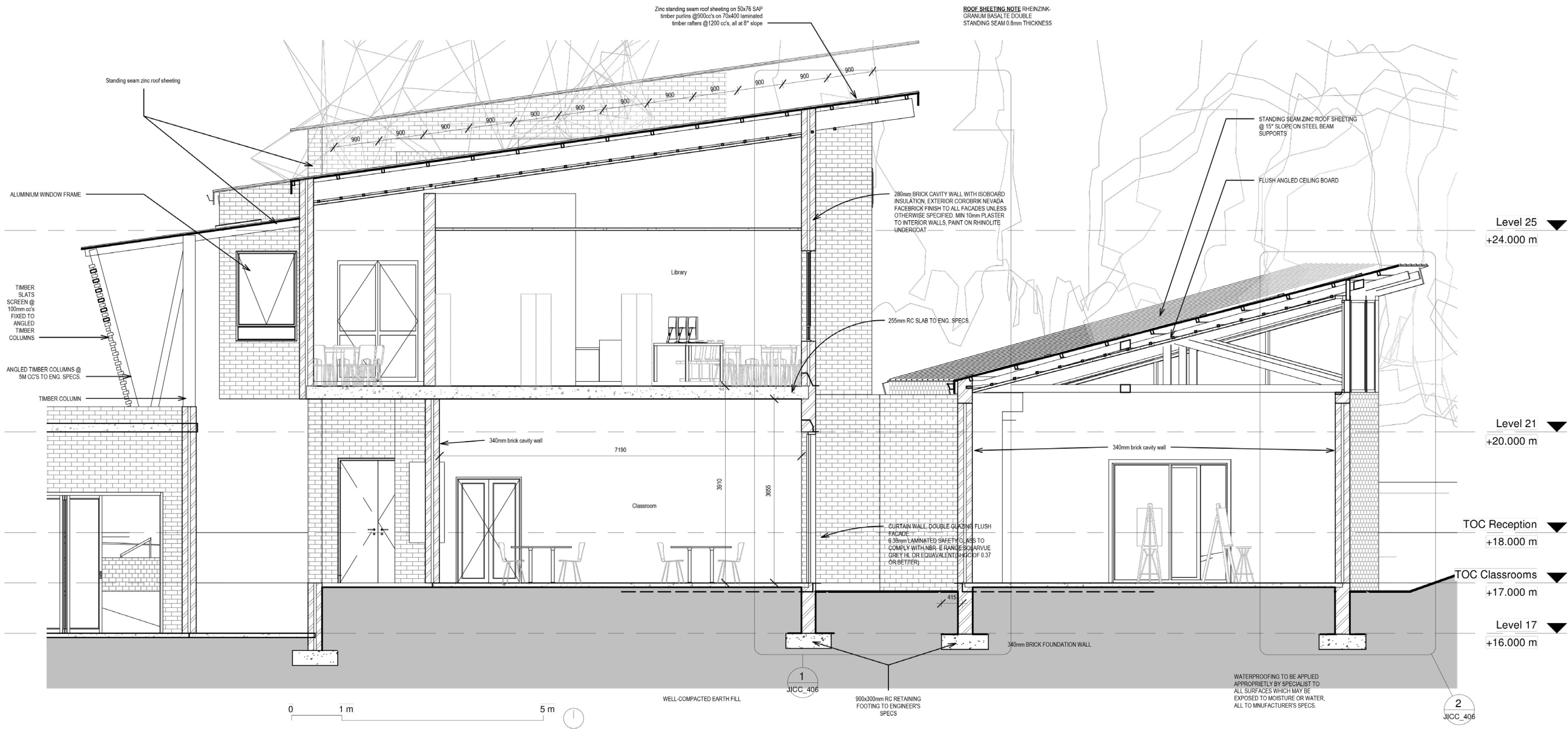


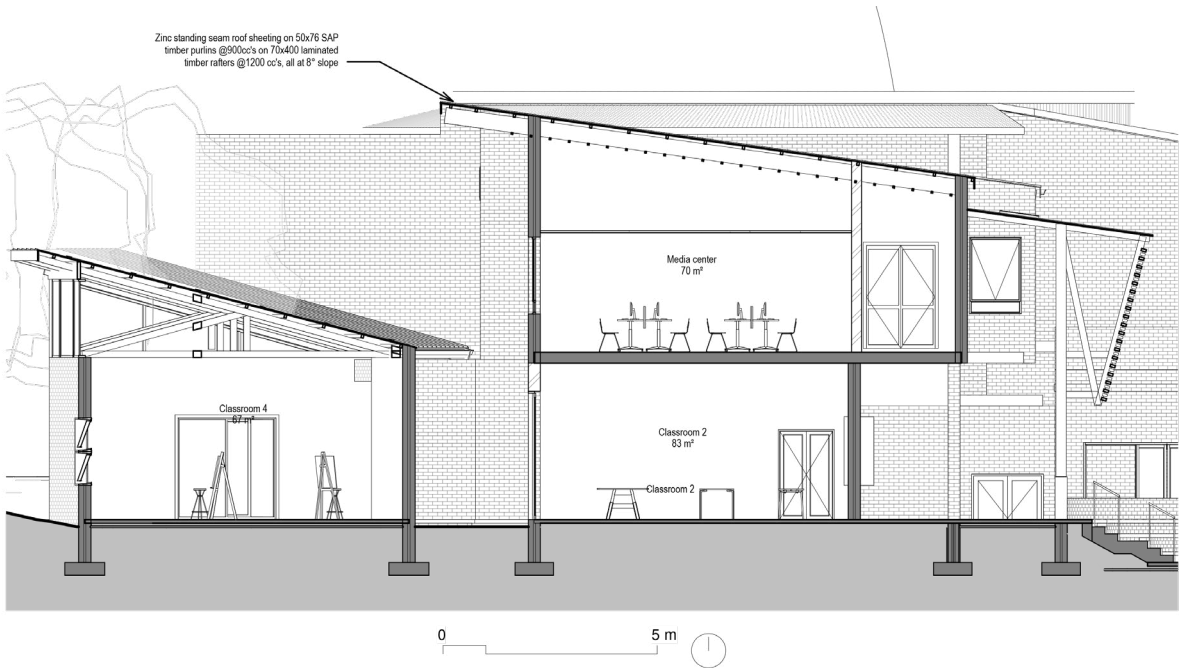
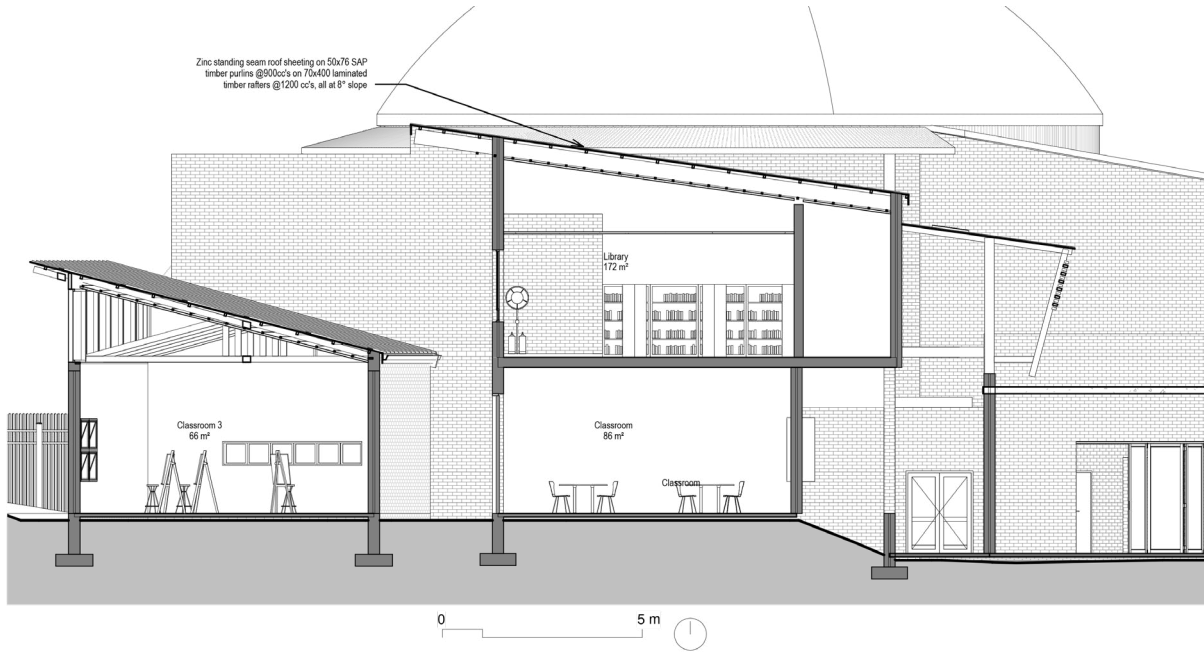
Longitudal Section 2

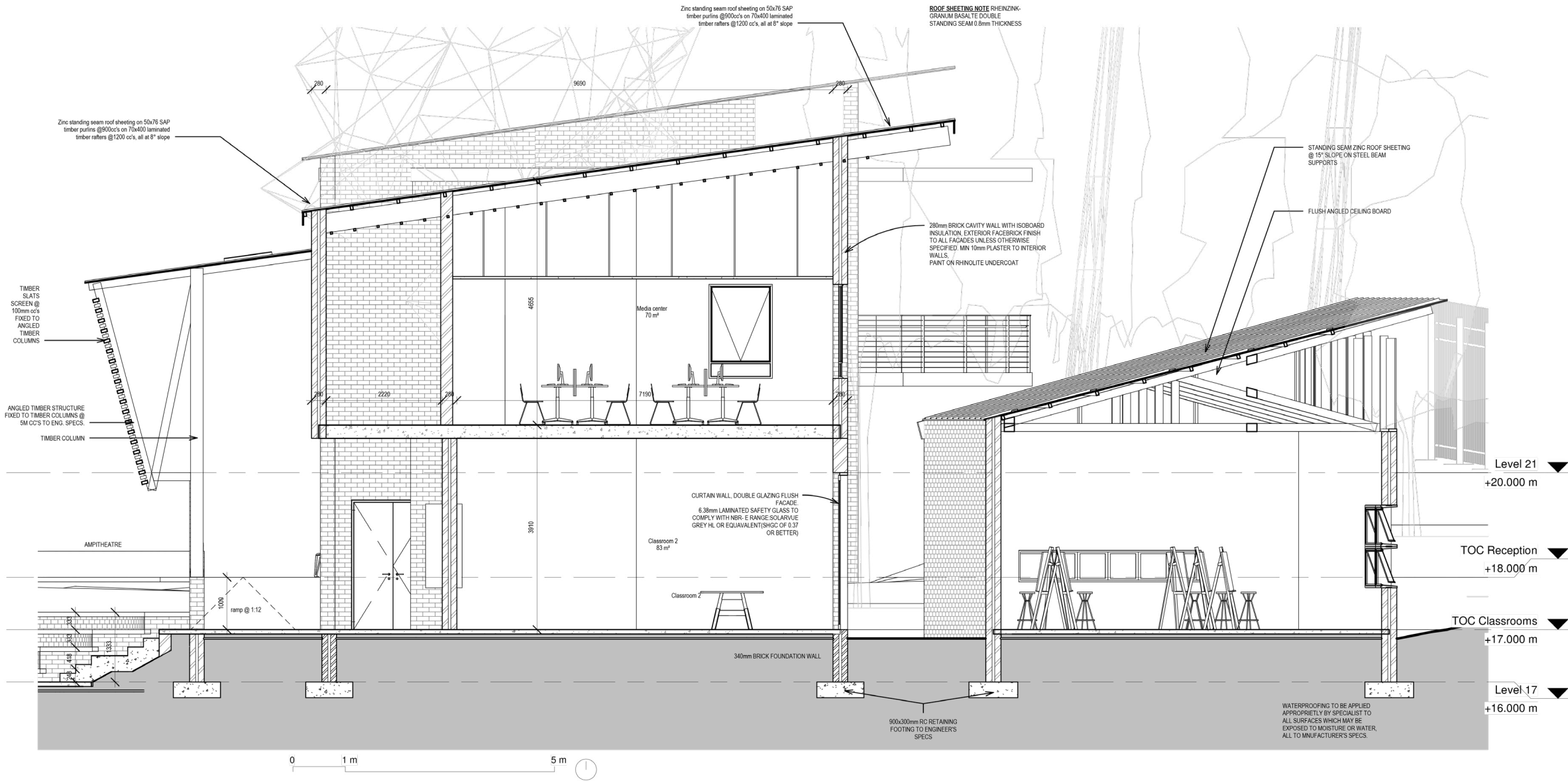


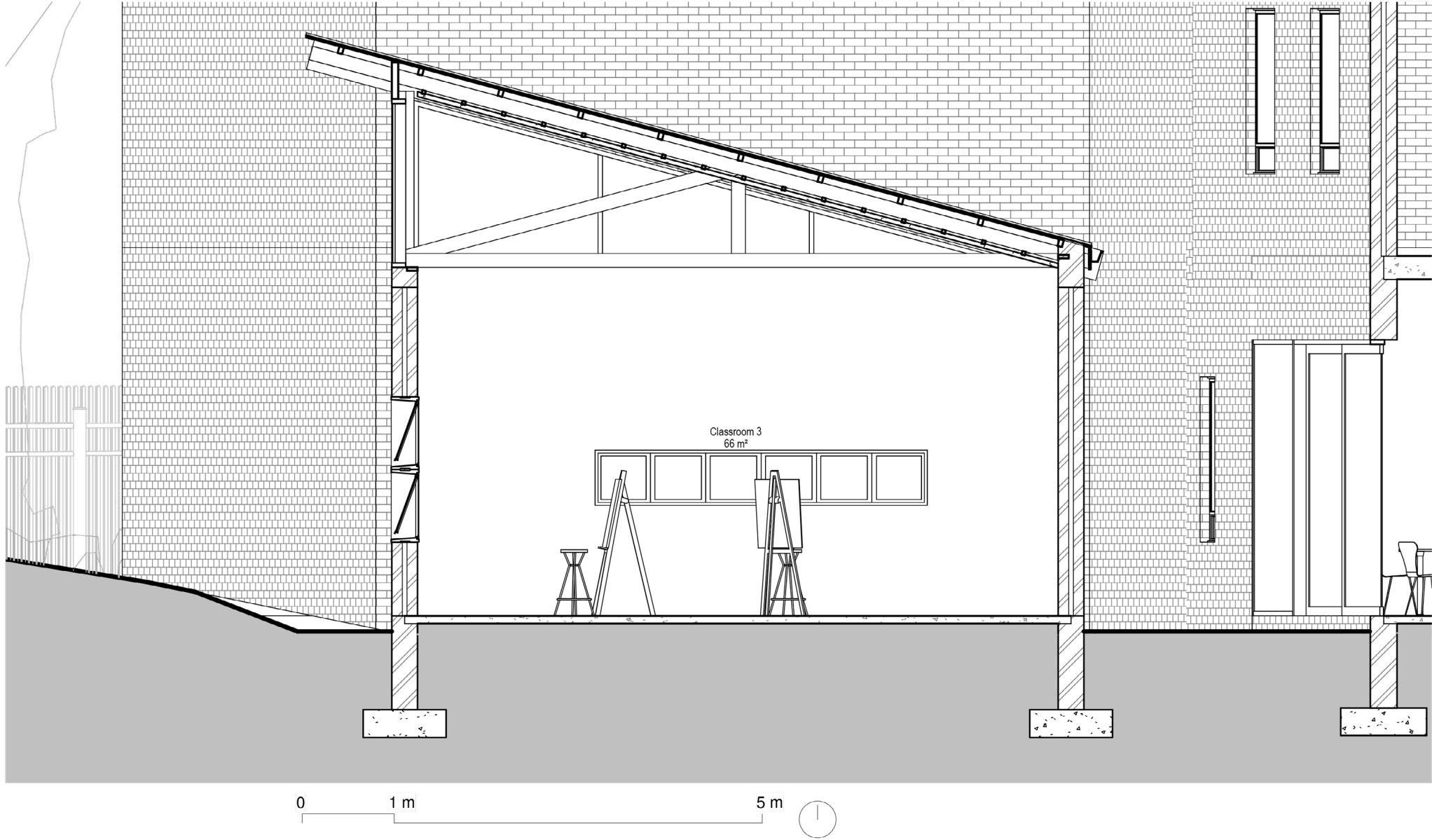


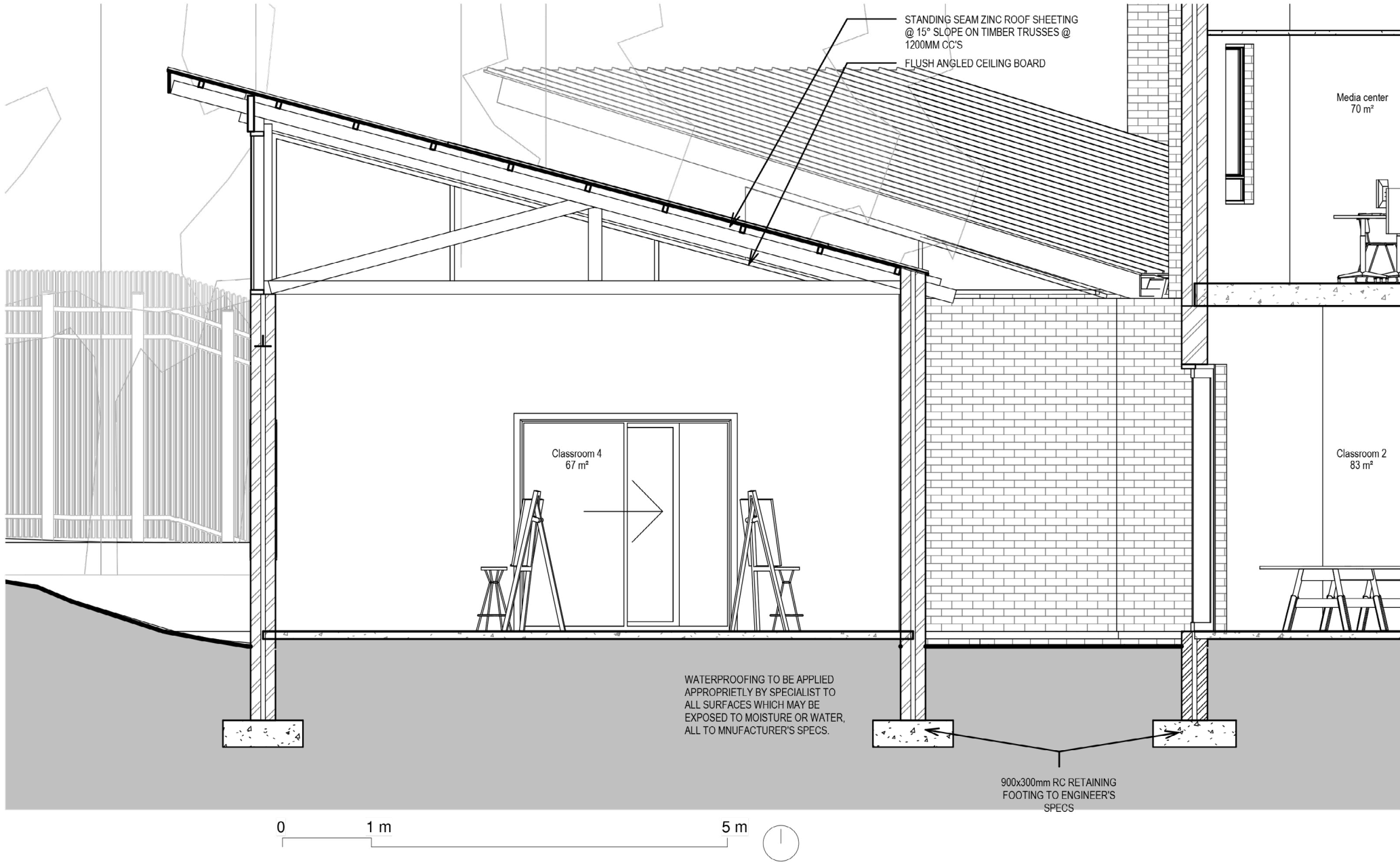


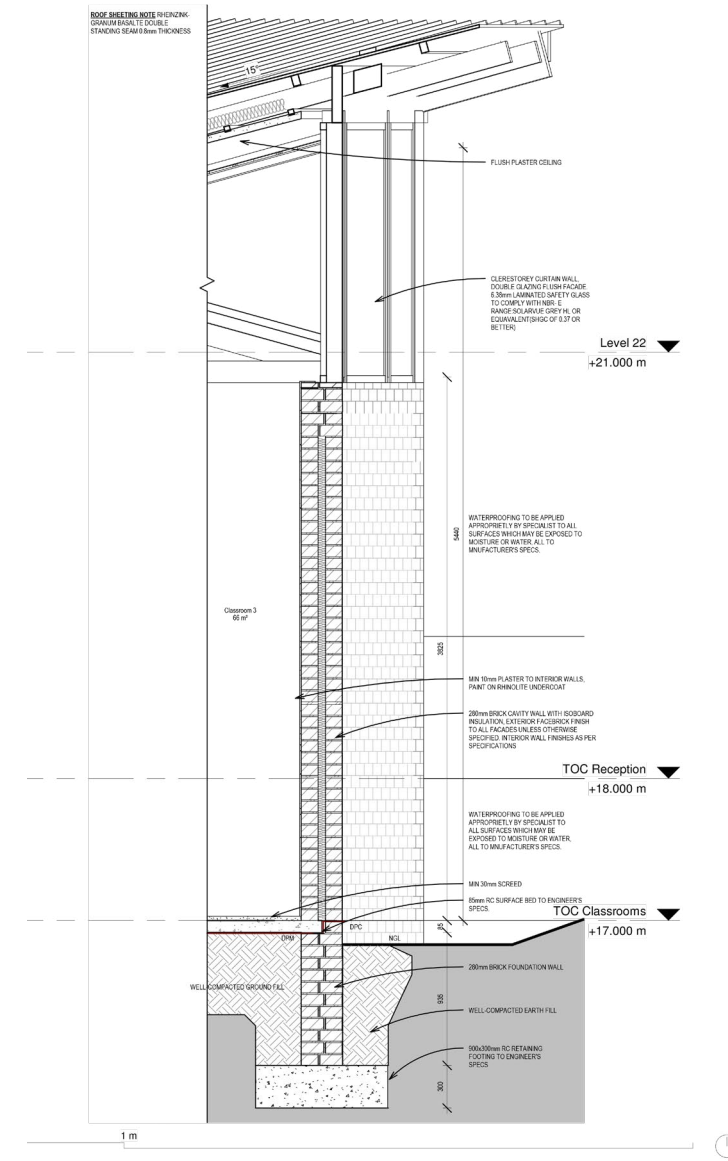
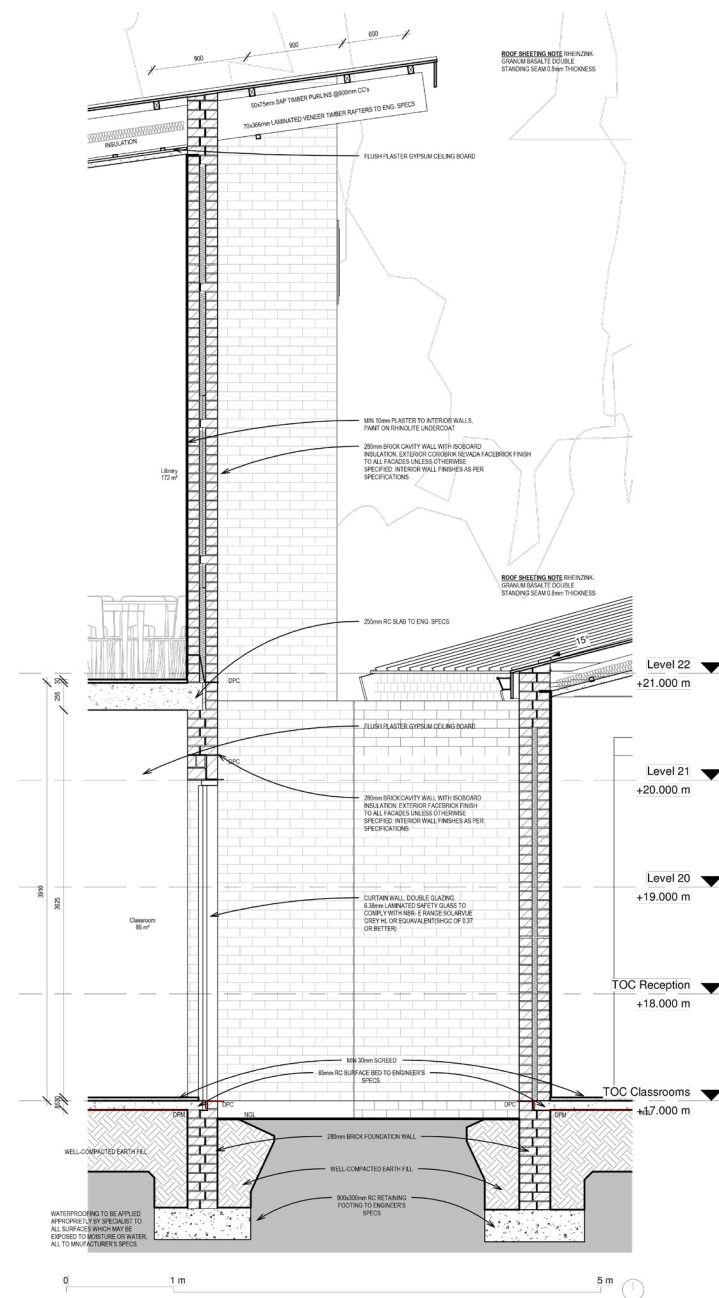


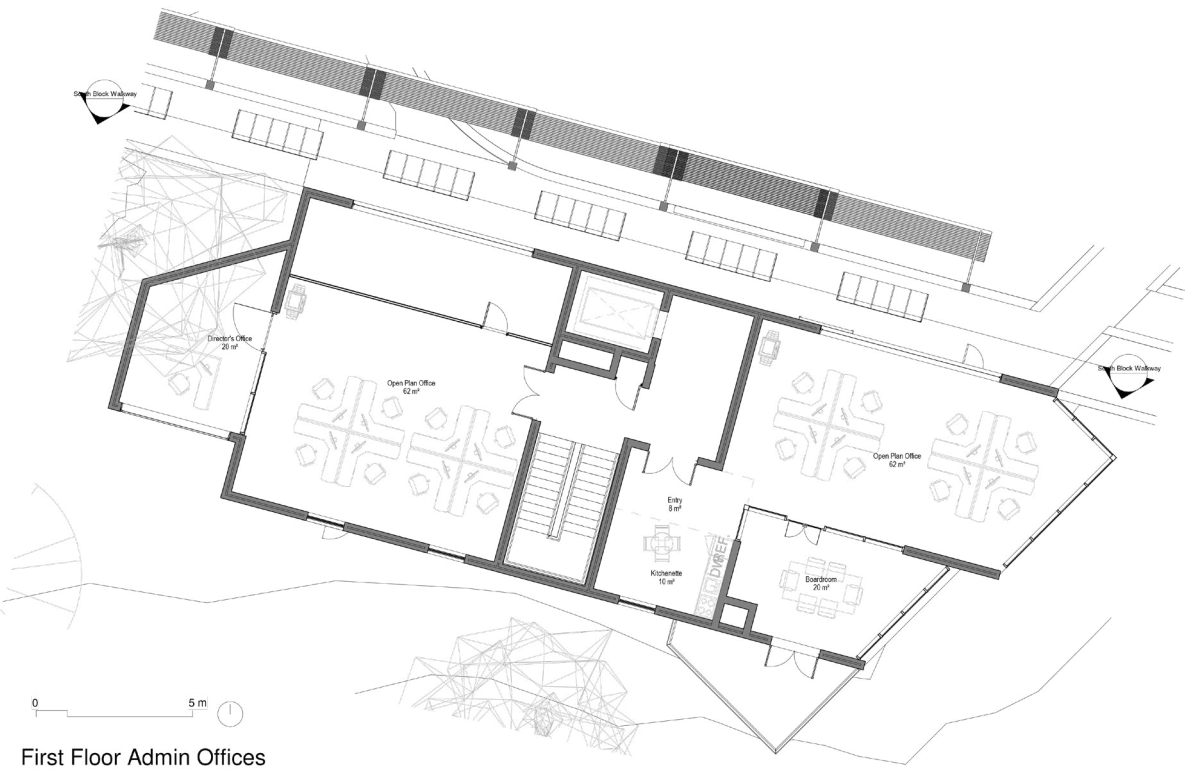
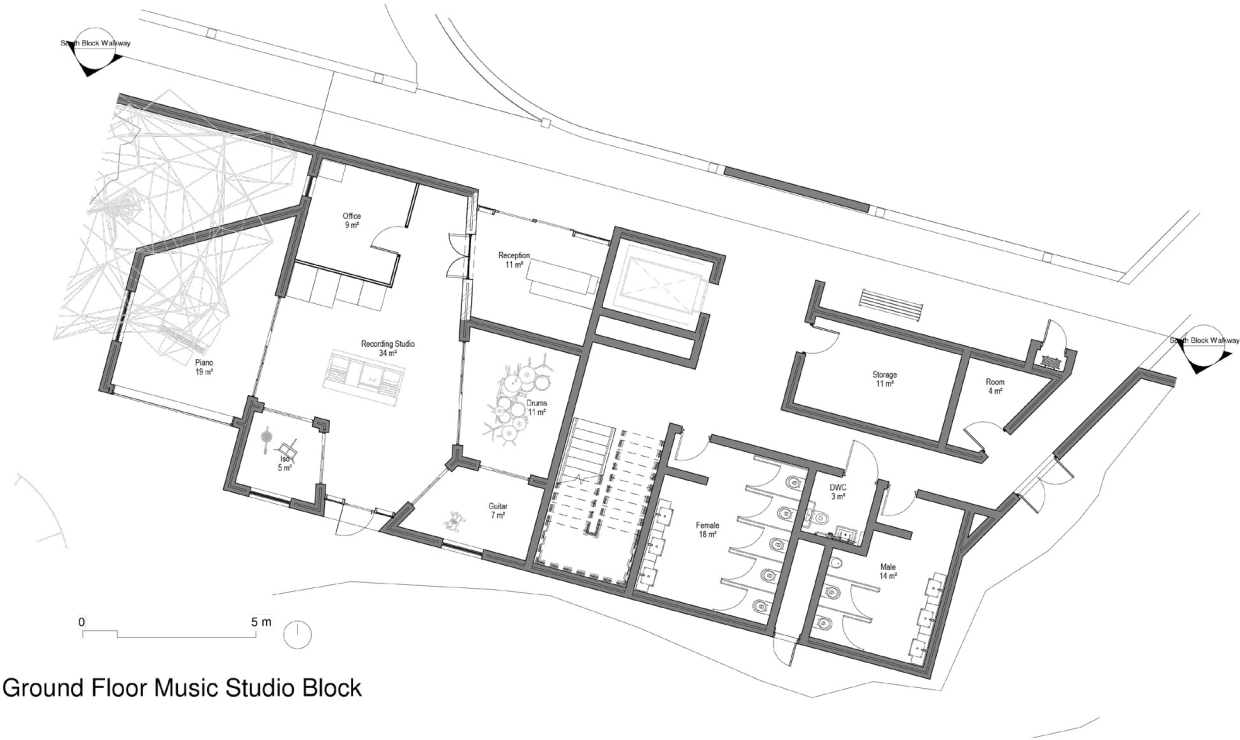


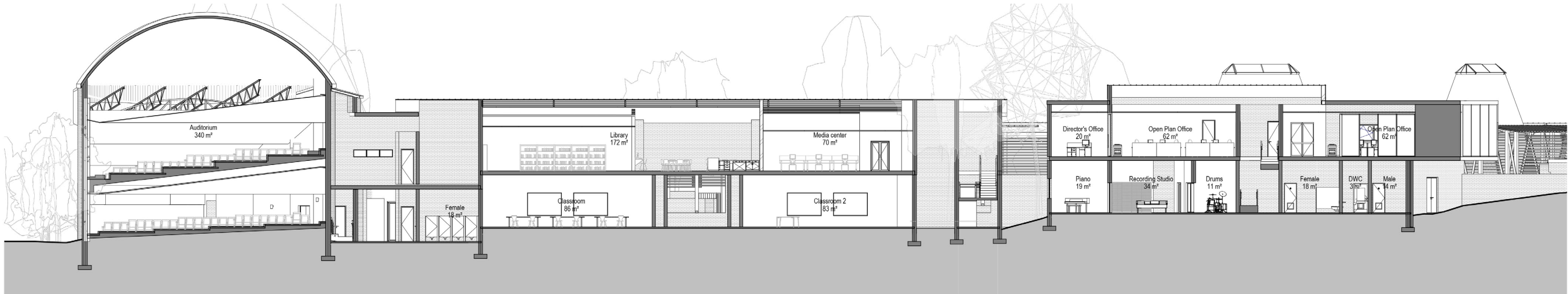




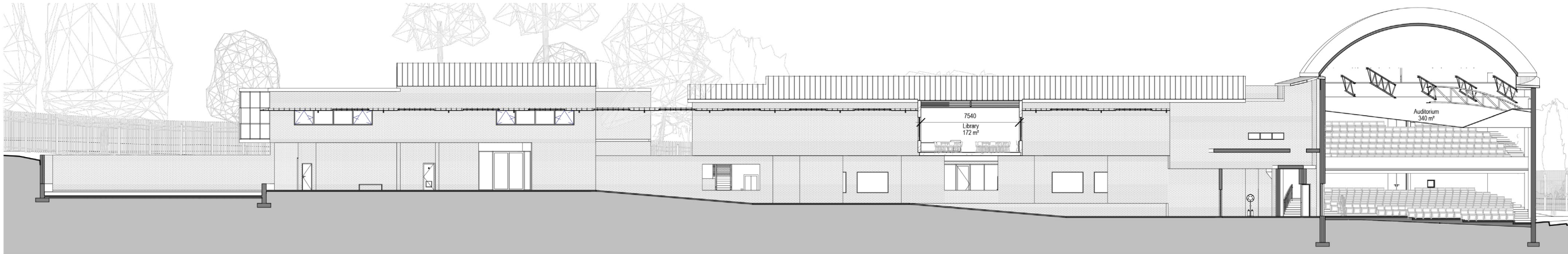
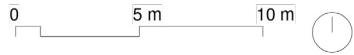






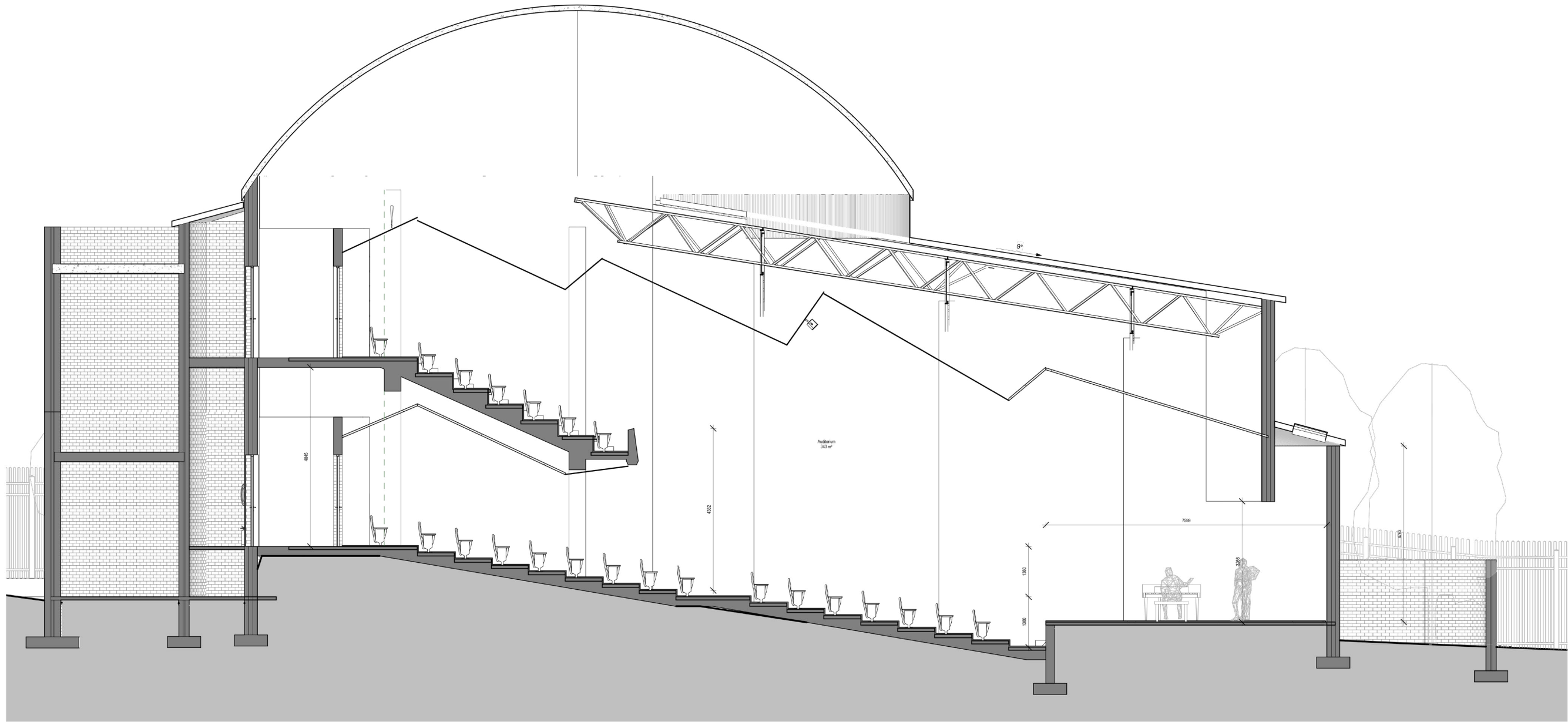


South Block Section



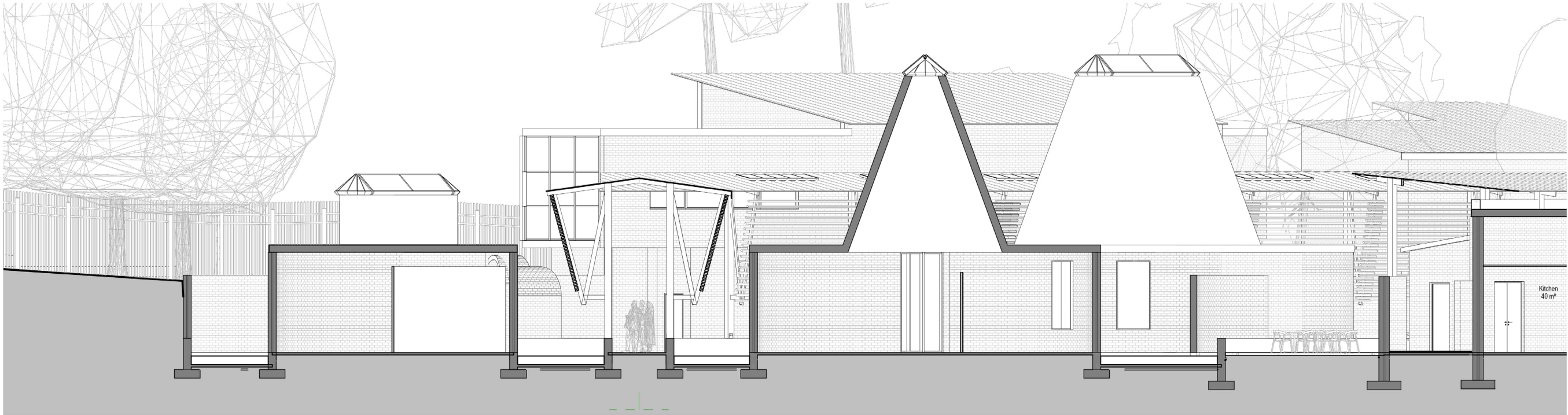
South Block Walkway





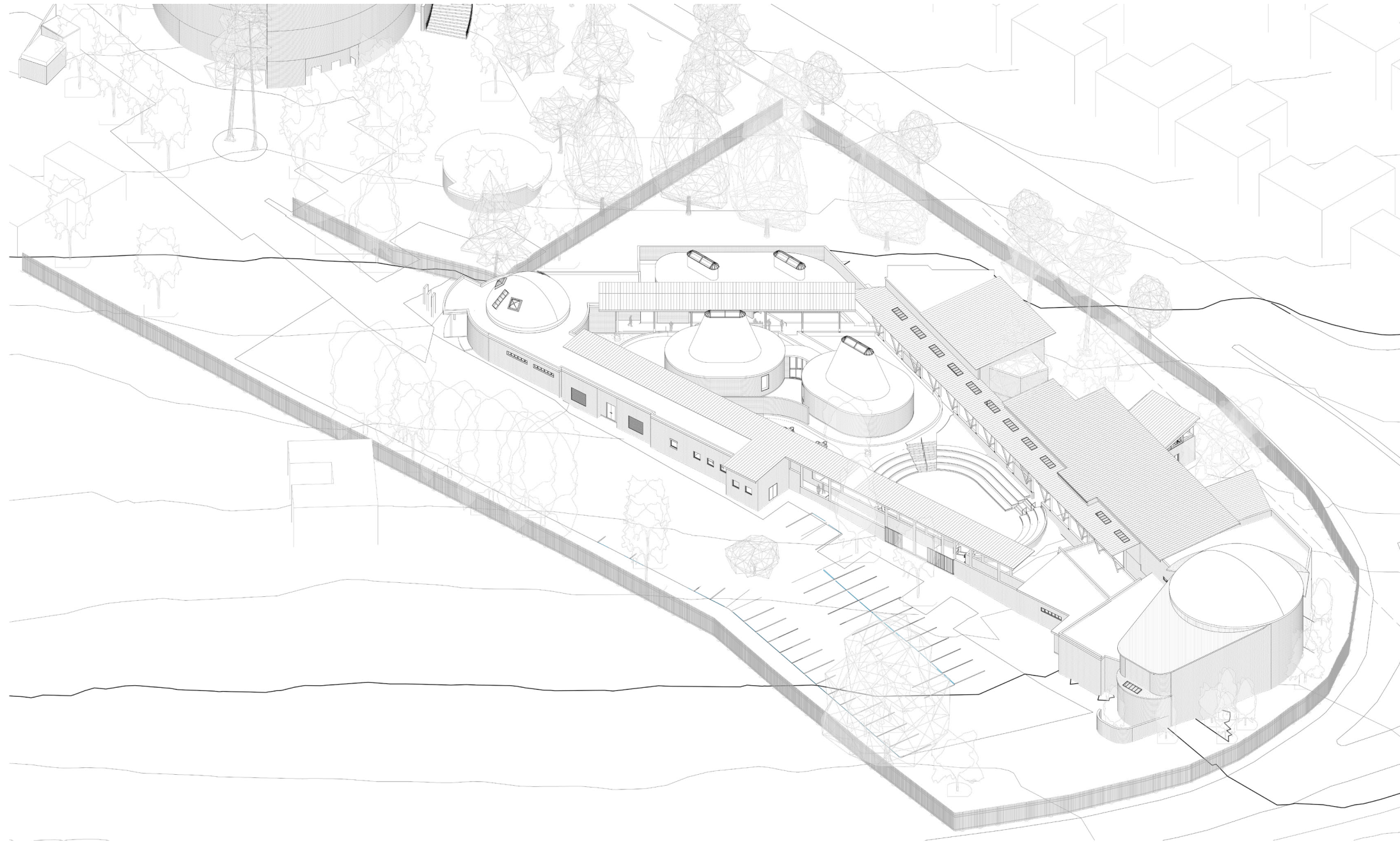
Auditorium Section

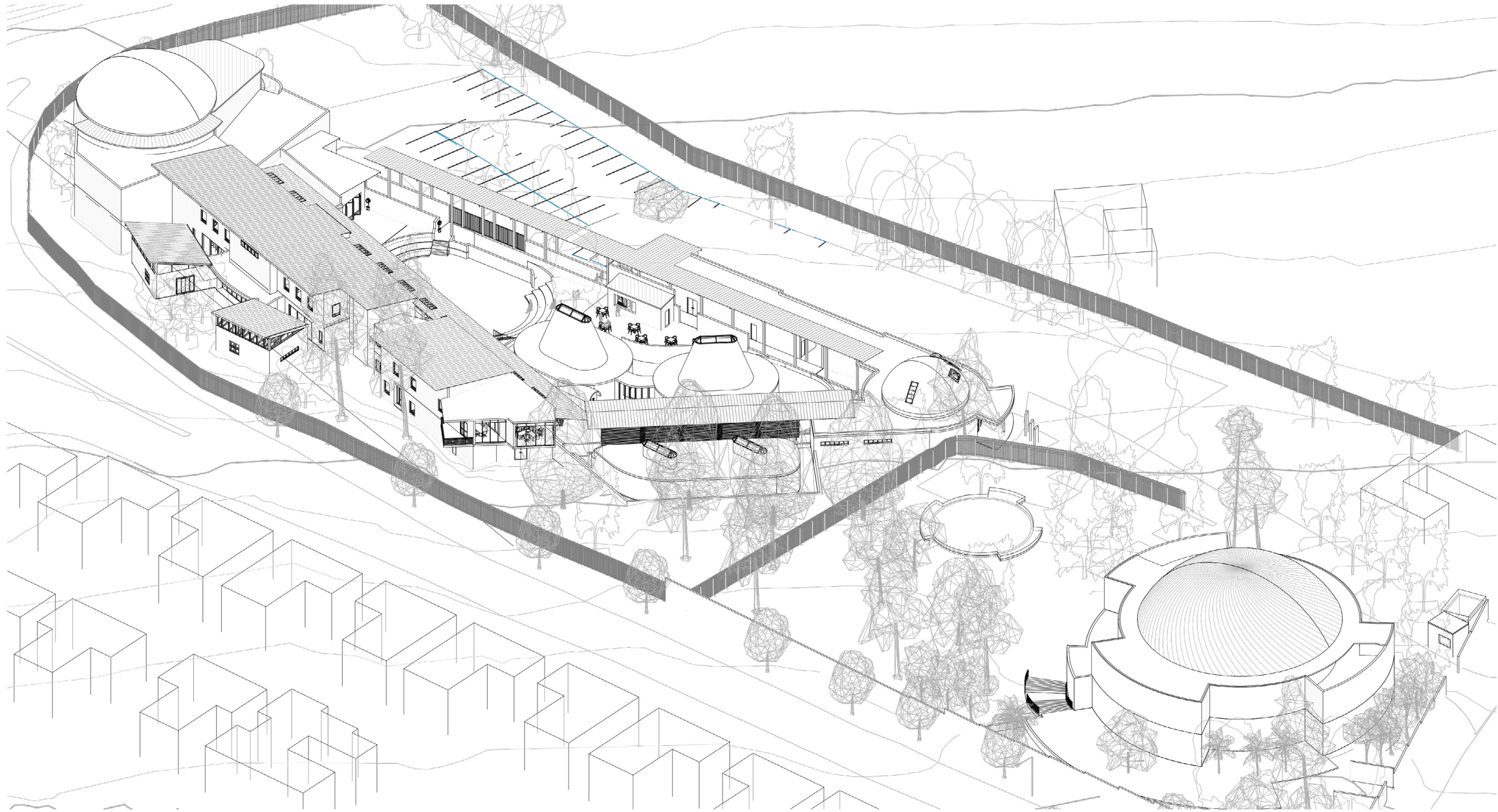




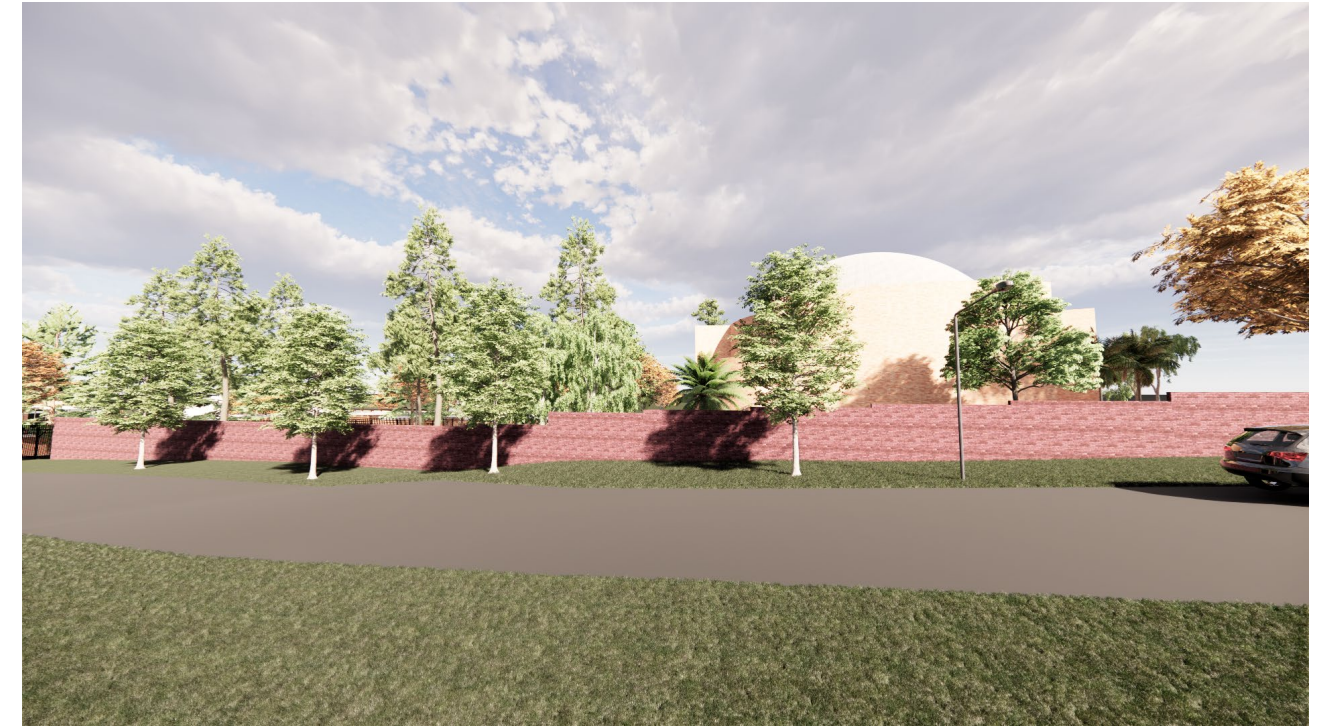
Display Cross Section







SE Aerial View





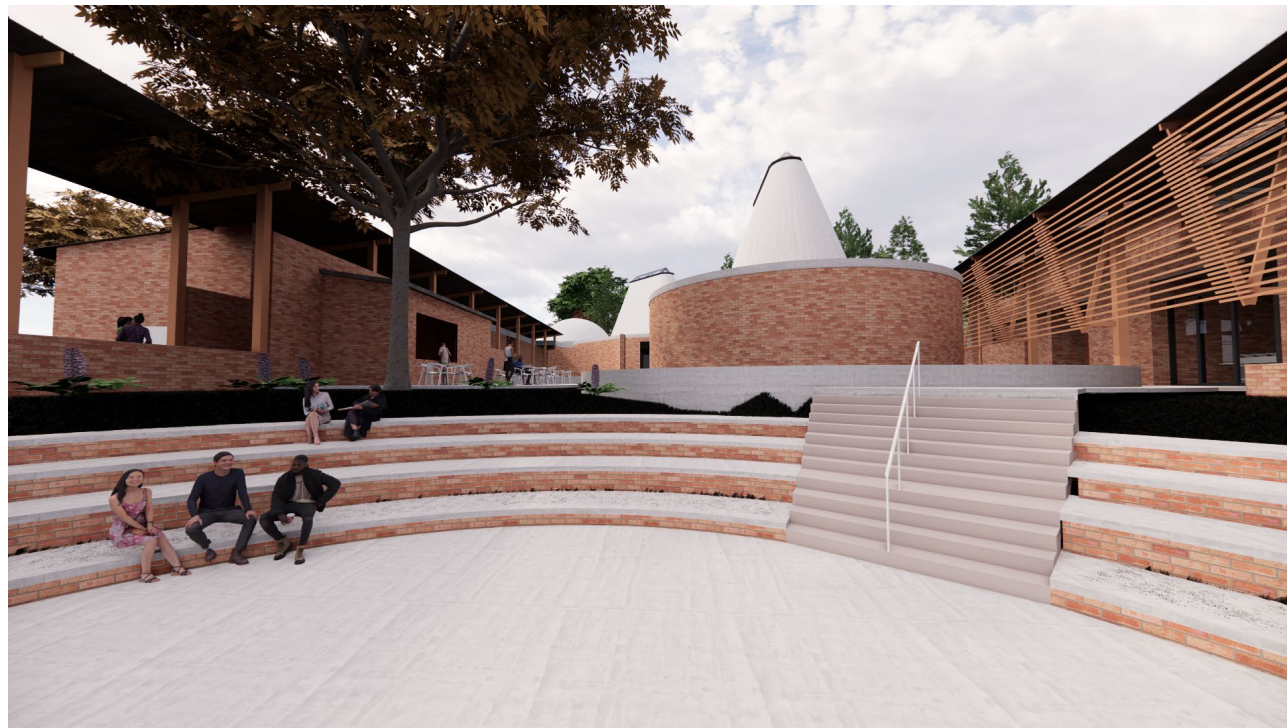












07.2 EXPLANATION

How The Design & Research Correspond

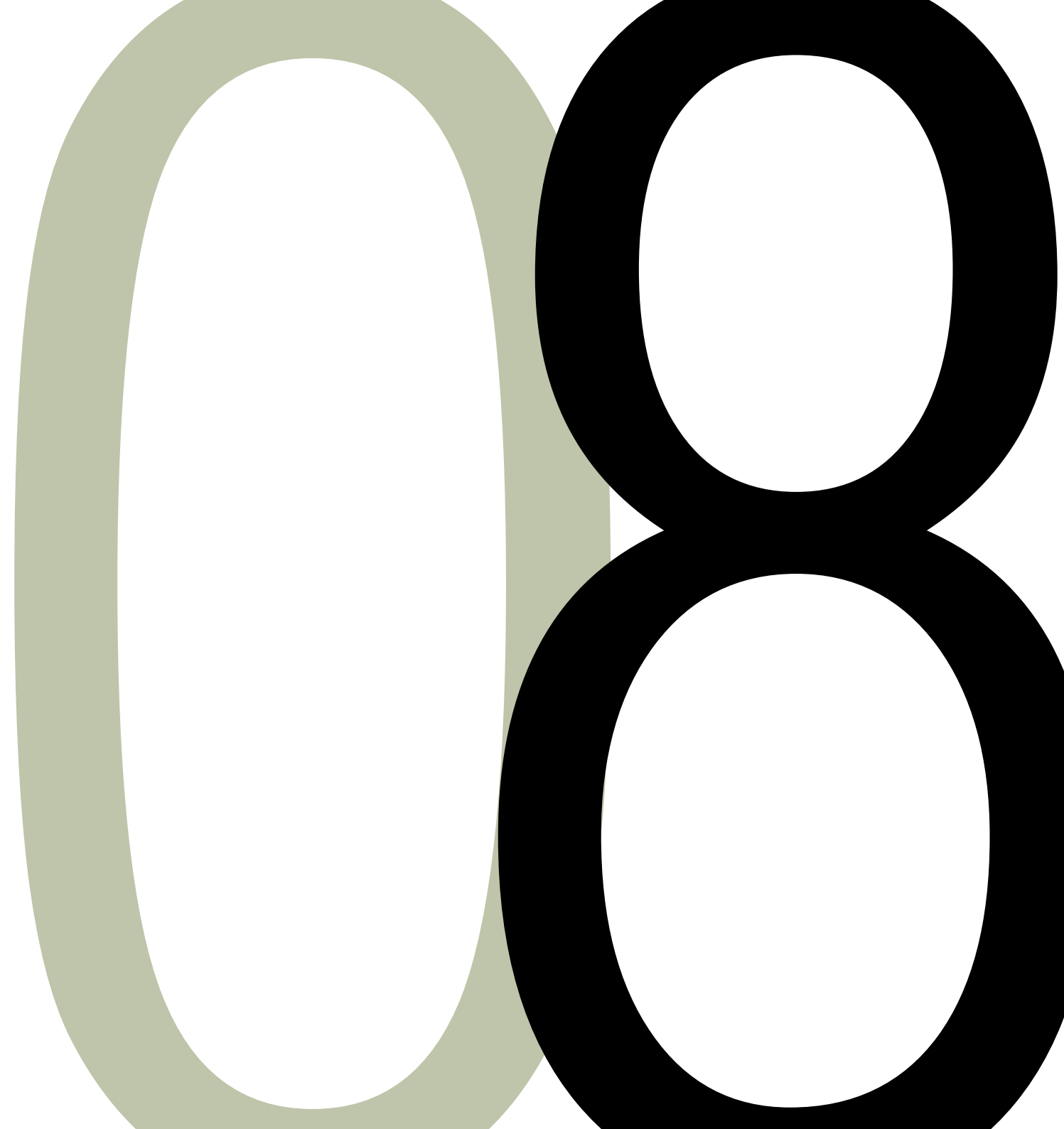
My research focused on the notions of mnemonic, the ideas of memory and identity and their relationship to architecture and the experiences of space. Part of the research also looked at the South African, or more specifically, the Johannesburg Jewish community and its origins, its story and narrative and some of the prominent architectural icons of the Jewish faith both formerly and currently in use.

I chose the site because of its location which is very central in its broader context and is bordered and accessible from many major vehicular routes. The relation to the Great Park Synagogue was also important in that it is a historically significant building and home to the original Jewish community founded in the early years of Johannesburg's founding. There is also the Chief Rabbi Cyril Harris Community Center which is a space for Jewish gatherings as well as other events and film screenings or talks which attract multiple people of different cultures.

In the same idea that the Gardens Synagogue in Cape Town was the first Jewish community to open in the country, and on its site is the South African Jewish museum and Holocaust center, so too I thought that there is an argument for having my proposed building to be on the same site as the Great Park Synagogue. Where my initial design was intended to have a more specific focus on solely the Johannesburg Jewish community and showcasing this in a

museum or center, I ultimately- through the years presentations and crits- settled on a multicultural complex which could promote coexistence through an understanding of others and expressing oneself through the arts and dialogue. As such my final design is centered on the experience not only of the spaces and movements through, but also as a means to create new memories or experiences via the use of the spaces and as such relates to the theme of mnemonic.

REFERENCES



LIST OF FIGURES & IMAGES

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APPENDICES





13 June 2022

Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment:

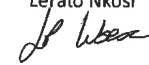
Ethics clearance letter:

Dear Yehuda Segal

Student number (844509), this letter confirms that your ethics application has been cleared. Your clearance/protocol number: SOAP032/03/2022

Yours sincerely

Lerato Nkosi

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lerato Nkosi'.

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