

# GOJOZI

USING INFORMAL TRADE AND URBAN ATHLETICS TO RE-IMAGINE PUBLIC SPACE IN JOHANNESBURG'S INNER CITY







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Stephen Hoffe - 25 October 2012

This document is submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree: Master of Architecture [Professional] at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa, in the year 2012.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I've always been intrigued by the acknowledgements blurb. It's the first personal piece of writing which you come across in most texts, yet it forms the final written contribution to the document. This blurb, therefore, simultaneously opens and closes the text which it precedes. The words you read have been written by a mind looking back at the work, whilst you, the reader, are just beginning the journey.

In order of appearance in my journey, I would like to acknowledge the following people for their contributions to making this thesis possible:

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- And finally, to anybody reading this. To you I give a cliché: I hope you enjoy reading this as much as I enjoyed creating it (in general that is, ignoring the sleepless nights).

Cheers

Stephen Hoffe

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# INTRODUCTION

01

# MYJOHANNESBURG

The city I grew up in and the architectural thesis it helped me produce





*(left)* Contemplating Johannesburg from one of the city's man made mountains - a mine dump.

**Johannesburg** is an interesting place. Most major cities around the world are built on a natural resource which aids life, such as large rivers, fertile land, forests and oceans. These resources are directly responsible for giving life. Johannesburg is different – it's built on a gold mine. This is a resource which does not directly aid life. This is a resource which makes money. If gold was worthless, Johannesburg wouldn't exist, and let's face it – you can't eat gold.

So what does this mean for people living in Johannesburg, a place where the primary activity has always been the pursuit of wealth? To me it means that the only other resource available is the built environment and the people. The former has a rich history crammed into little over a hundred years, whilst the latter is made up of an astounding mix of cultures and differences. These form the social, economic and physical ramifications of a massive gold boom town, and I love it.

# MY JOHANNESBURG

Johannesburg is a city which continues to suffer from segregation. Whilst this is not enforced by law anymore it is still a defining characteristic of the city. Vast garden cities in the north made up of gated communities and shopping malls seem to act as forms of fortification against the threat of crime which, ironically, stems from the vast differences between rich and poor. There exists a cycle here where the rift is widened as an attempted solution.

In this melting pot of cultural and economic extremes there is a space which has been home to both ends of the economic scale: the inner city. During Apartheid this space was designed and built for the 'European' section of society whilst the 'non-Europeans' were pushed to the periphery. Since the collapse of Apartheid an inversion has occurred and it is now the 'Europeans' who feel this sense of exclusion in a place dominated by African urbanity. The difference in this inversion is that the exclusion is self-imposed; there is no legal enforcement behind it. It has been my strong belief that there exists a need for a new public space in the inner city, a new town square for a contemporary Johannesburg.

Through this thesis I have endeavoured to develop the idea of re-imagining public space in the inner city for the purpose of creating GOJOZI. Re-imagining space was a necessary task as it has been my aim to create a scheme which transforms perceptions through the introduction of something radical and iconic. The intention here is an inner city magnet which catalyses renewal and ultimately becomes a new town square organising the inner city around it. To achieve this I looked towards informal urban actors who re-imagine space through their actions, transforming the built environment around them either physically or metaphorically. These actors are made up of informal traders and urban athletes such as skateboarders and parkour practitioners. How I came to these groups as a case study is a

matter requiring some personal explanation.

The easiest way to do this is to describe the events which brought me to this topic. The first starting point, so to speak, was before I knew much about architecture in early high school when I began skateboarding in 2003. At first it was the allure of an extreme sport and a chance to socialise with friends which excited me the most but it soon became more powerful than that. Skateboarding turned the tarmac landscape of Johannesburg into a playing surface. Just as surfers in Durban had their waves, we had our pavements, stairs, half pipes and ledges. We were able to see the sprawl of roads that characterises suburban Johannesburg as an opportunity, as something to be explored on our boards. To find public architecture that was "skate-able" was our goal, and once found we could turn a casual 3 set of stairs into a theatre where the greater the trick achieved the greater the spectacle.

We would skate in service yards behind bottle stores, on pavement ledges that seemed designed for us, in empty shopping mall parking lots and on bent street poles. We saw potential everywhere and soon realised that we were viewing the concrete world through a lens that turned functionless or banal into opportunity and excitement. My friends and I could never look at space the same way and we loved it. Once we had access to our own cars we were able to extend our horizons and began exploring the inner city. We joined the ranks of countless skaters from the suburbs venturing into town to play in the concrete jungle which was unique for my suburban generation, to whom Jo'burg "town" was often known only through our parents. Not only did skating give us the means to see and experience town, but also the means to define or own space within it, and it was only when I began studying architecture that I began to realise how profound this actually was. This profoundness grew

the more I learned about Johannesburg and the spatial ramifications of Apartheid, because skating seemed to be one of the few, if not the only things, attracting young white suburbanites into the city. Skateboarding therefore proved to have both architectural and social relevance in Johannesburg and thus became my first reference when imagining potential thesis topics. This imagining was centred on the following query: how can skateboarding be used as a tool for designing a new form of public space in the inner city?

This question grew to something much more when I reached my second starting point, which emerged whilst researching an area of Johannesburg's inner city in 2011. This area, around the intersection of Jeppe and Delver's street, has become a fascinating model for the study of informal trade systems in Johannesburg's inner city. This is due to the appropriation of buildings of varying occupancy for the purpose of informal economic activity. What started with the manufacturing and retail of curtains and fabrics in the area has evolved into a conglomeration of supplementary services ranging from food, entertainment, electronics and clothing, to name a few. In this collection of spaces both the daily grass roots as well as the bulk retail needs of the populace are met, with the area being known both nationally and internationally for its provision of materials and goods. Often referred to as "Little Addis" due to the prominence of Ethiopian traders, this area revealed itself to me as an interesting model for the re-use of urban space as well as an intriguing juxtaposition to suburban shopping malls. It was then that I realised how trader and athlete form two sides of the same coin.

Both of these groups re-interpret and alter space in what I believe to be, and will attempt to prove, an ultimately positive way, yet are both marginalised by authority and planners for not conforming to the prescribed usage of space. The changes made, either physical

or representational, temporary or permanent, represent a present use of space differing vastly to the designer's original intentions yet intricately woven into the fabric of current day Johannesburg. The athletes move through and use functional space purely for entertainment and therefore re-imagine function. The traders do the same but with retail purposes. They supply the city's inhabitants with their every need, and do so from converted street corners, empty ledges and trolleys. They convert functionless space into valuable micro businesses which shift and adjust according to the pedestrian flux of the city. In my opinion the informal sector in the city is a necessary and undervalued system. It employs vast numbers of people and distributes cost effective goods to the populace when and where they need them. For better or worse, these two groups successfully re-imagine public space in Johannesburg.

These informal actors, however, do have their own requirements. They depend entirely on the existence of a certain kind of urban space for their existence. The athletes require space with a modernist flare; smooth surfaces, ordered level changes, plazas and durable urban furniture. This type of space would suit the trader as well, provided there is sufficient foot traffic and need. With traffic and need the urban trader can find a niche. In both cases, though, another critical requirement must be mentioned - legality. Although both groups have been known to ignore this issue on occasion, legality and the realities of public space must be met because GOJOZI will be a public space first. It is my intention to harness the positives of these groups and change negative stereotypes. I won't succeed in using these groups to re-imagine space if I cannot portray to others what I see in them.

**To summarise this introduction:** I aim to create a catalytic public space in the inner city of Johannesburg, which uses informal urban actors as a resource for re-imagining the built environment. It is my hypothesis that this public space will become a new town square, energising the inner city through the exhibition, and support, of informal urban actors. I intend for this space to be an iconic venue for public events and a gateway to the inner city for visitors. In this way, the space will act as a magnet in Johannesburg. The pulse of this magnet will simultaneously attract people from the suburbs, as well as affect the surrounding urban fabric in terms of future renewal and development.

**GOJOZI**



(right) Two sides of the same coin. "A [trader] told me once that his business suffered when the Library Gardens were fenced off, because all the skateboarders stopped coming there and buying his food and drinks." (Jackson, 2012)

# **INFORMAL** URBAN **ACTORS**

02

## WHOARETHEY?

Defining the types of informl urban actors and their role in, and use of, the built environment.

## SKATEBOARDING

The primary case study for urban athletics.

## PARKOUR

A variation of urban athletics requiring nothing but the body and space.

## INFORMALTRADE

Appropriation of found and in-between urban space for the purpose of economic gain and goods provision.



(right) Manipulation and creation of space through informal actions.

(far right) Same space, different narratives.

## WHOARETHEY?

This term is one I use to describe a specific type of urban user. Besides the average pedestrian, who makes up the bulk of urban users in any given city, is a collection of people who use space differently. To them, the prescribed use of space becomes merely a guideline, where the designer's master plan for movement, occupation and use, is questioned before being followed. These people are informal urban actors and are collectively made up of any person or group who affect change, either constructed or performed, in the built environment. This change is critically of their private impetus and therefore represents the ability and potential of grass root urban development in an existing urban fabric. These informal actors are made up of a wide variety of people, including artists, street performers, guerrilla gardeners, informal traders, urban athletes and more. For this thesis I have focussed my attention on two of these groups whom I believe have the most relevance in Johannesburg: informal traders and urban athletes.

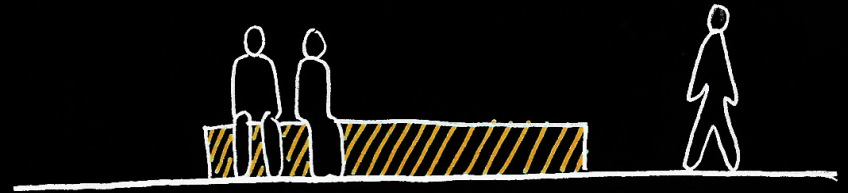
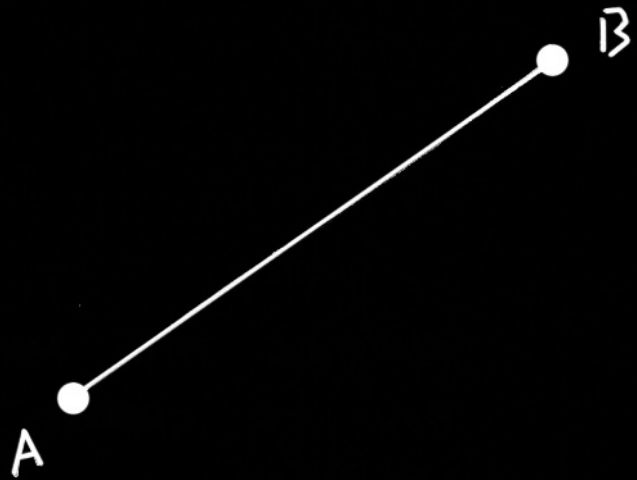
Urban athletes refer to anybody who depends on the built environment for the practise of a sport. This includes skateboarders, in line skaters, BMX riders, cyclists, parkour practitioners and free runners. The people in this category view urban space through a lens which turns leftover, dead and functionless spaces into opportunity and excitement. Their actions transform the perception of space at a fundamental level, the way a surfer transforms a wave. "Sidewalk surfing" is in fact a popular phrase used by skaters and aptly describes the perception of urban space by these athletes. I will be focussing on skateboarding and parkour for two reasons. Firstly, skateboarding is of personal importance to me as I am a skater, secondly it is these two sports which collectively summarise urban athletics in terms

of purpose and space. All other sports mentioned previously can be considered theoretically the same. As you will read later this is also true of the relationship between parkour and skateboarding. The only difference is the medium.

Informal traders are not as different to this approach in terms of urban space as one might initially think. Whilst athletes transform found space for the purposes of entertainment and excitement, traders transform space for the purpose of economic gain. Where there is available space and pedestrian traffic in the city, you can almost guarantee that informal traders will appear to provide even the smallest of required services to the population. In this way, these traders invent their own interpretation of functional space within the context of an existing urban fabric. Urban athletes achieve the very same thing, only in a different form.

The common link between these groups is illustrated in the following diagrams. The first image represents prescribed and designed usage of space in its most functional sense, as well as the rigid grid and modernist influences of Johannesburg's inner city. This perception and usage of space is transformed through the actions of the informal actors. A to B is still being achieved but in the same way that jazz is still achieving the production of music.

The second diagram illustrates the multiple narratives which these actors can produce from what is essentially a mono-functional piece of urban architecture in the form of a bench or seat.



# SKATEBOARDING

The skater interprets the city exactly as he wants to. He does not allow the prescribed narratives of the architect to define his movement through the city. A safety rail alongside a staircase, for example, becomes an obstacle capable of enabling incredible theatrical feats. “The logic of the handrail is turned on its head” (Borden, 2001: 186). This example is one of many in the world of skateboarding, as ledges, stair sets, walls, embankments and gaps all enable alternative interpretations of movement with a skateboard, and that freedom of choice and challenge is liberating. Pioneering skateboarder Stacey Peralta, one of the first to popularise street skating, says of skaters that they “can exist on the essentials of what is out there. Anything is part of the run.” (Borden, et al. 2001: 180).

In Johannesburg, for those who skate in the inner city, integration and exploration comes with the territory: “I’ll meet someone downtown from Soweto or the East Rand and then end up going to skate with them in their area. Downtown as a central location facilitates that” (Jackson, 2012). The first time I was ever exposed to the inner city of Johannesburg on a level which I could both comprehend and enjoy was when I began skateboarding. This is an activity which continues to attract youth to the city regardless of race and ‘class’. Skateboarding also provides an intriguing perspective from which to view public spaces and the uses thereof. Iain Borden phrases it perfectly in his introduction to *Skateboarding, Space and the City*:

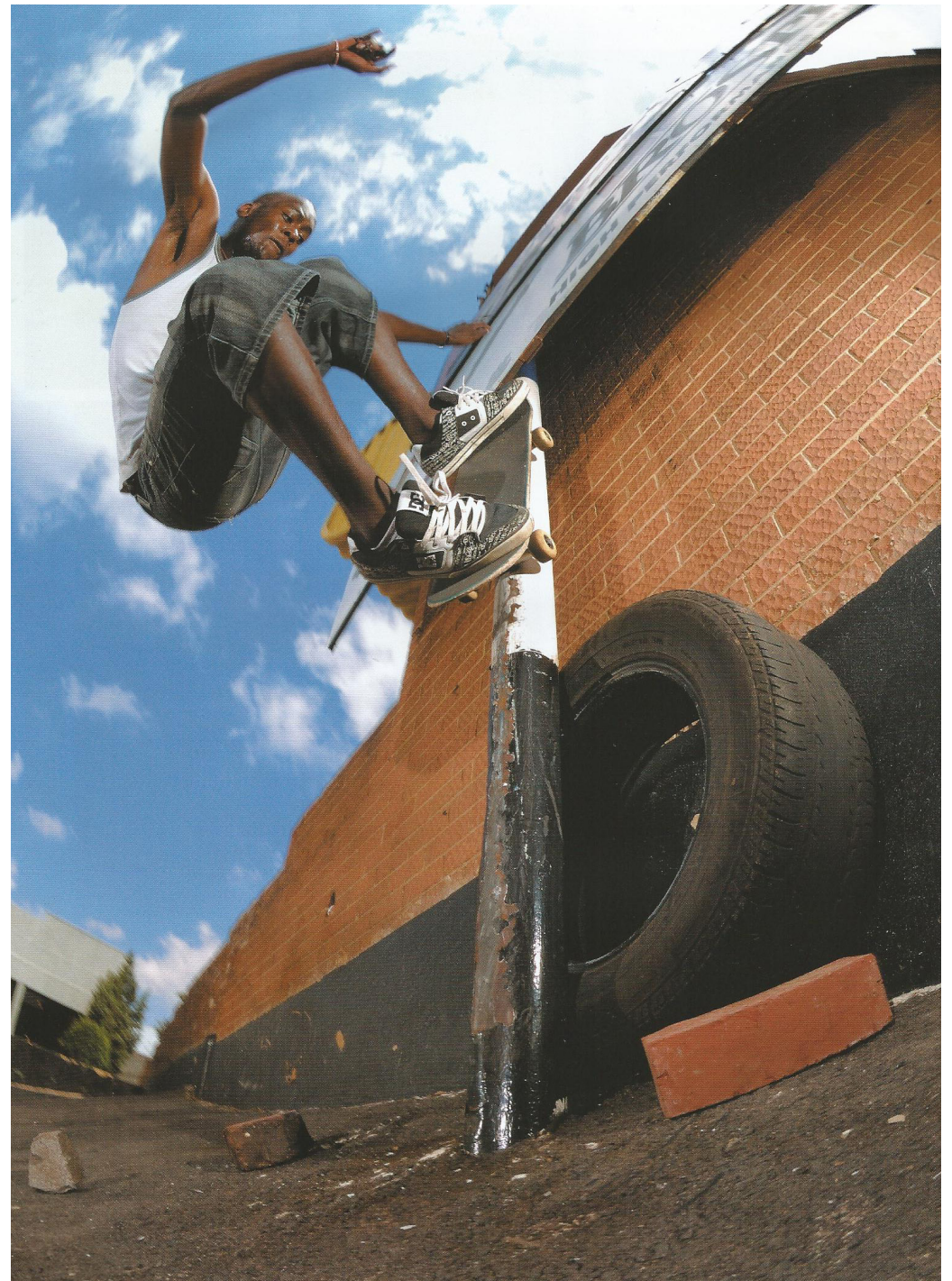
*“Skateboarding is perhaps an unusual object of study in architectural history. But it is precisely its marginal position which enables skateboarding to function historically as a critical exterior to architecture. As such, skateboarding helps to rethink architecture’s manifold possibilities.”*  
(Borden, 2001: 1)

In a video entitled *Skateboarding vs Architecture* a skateboarder named Leighton Dyer is quoted as saying “us skateboarders, we absolutely worship and adore architecture, but not in the same way that [the public and architects] do.” This statement crystallises the perception that urban athletes have of urban environments. A banal set of stairs leftover between buildings is transformed into an amazing opportunity in the eyes of an urban athlete. In Johannesburg, skateboarding has been a popular urban activity for at least 20 years and has spawned a community of young people who explore the city in search of ‘skate spots’ (Jackson, 2012). Beyers Naude Square is an example of such a spot. Affectionately known as LBGs by the skating community (short for Library Gardens), this space provides interesting insight into how a public space is re-imagined through the activities of the urban athlete. The renaming of this square, as well as other spaces such as Angle Banks (Cnr Fox and Loveday Streets) and Newtown Ledges (Miriam Makeba Street), reveals how the athletes’ presence in this space over an extended period of time has inserted a new meaning into the space, one of unique identity and purpose. These spaces are more than a public place to the skateboarder. They are spaces which have now been defined in terms of the sport and the culture surrounding the sport in that location. These spaces have therefore been re-imagined and transformed for the benefit of those involved in the activity. The map above

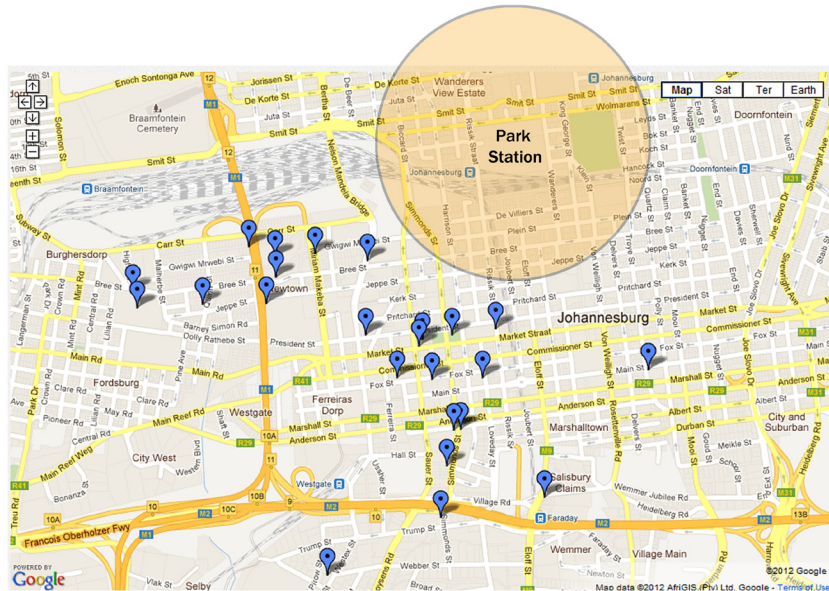




(top) Varial flip on Miriam Makeba St (Reprobait, 2012)  
(right) Pole ride in Randburg (Session magazine #34, 2010)







illustrates the spread of popular skate spots in the city. As is evident, the area around Park Station, which is the location of my site, is devoid of known skate spots.

*“Every city has their iconic spots where the local skateboarders meet up and roll together. Barcelona has MACBA and Parallel, London has South Bank, Philadelphia has Love Park and San Francisco had EMB and Pier 7. In Johannesburg that spot is Library Gardens”* (Jackson, 2012)

The Library Gardens outside the Johannesburg Library provides an important physical case study highlighting how urban space can accommodate both athlete and pedestrian. Often the site of public rallies and protests, LBGs has provided JHB skaters with a common destination and starting point for inner city skating. Not as popular as it once was in the period of 2004 to 2009, where “a lot of amazing skateboarding took place with numbers reaching as many as 30 to 40 individuals at times” (Jackson, 2012), LBG’s still represents an iconic skate spot in the inner city.

This plaza contains a series of low platforms, stairs and ledges designed for casual sitting which become basic obstacles providing multiple opportunities for skateboarding. By mastering the basic ‘ollie’ move, the skater is able to shift his horizontal path vertically, allowing for the exploitation of raised surfaces for the carrying out of more advanced tricks. This fundamental aspect of skateboarding turns public spaces such as LBGs into theatrical stages where the acrobatic movement of the athlete, combined with the dextrous manipulation of board under



foot, enlivens spaces and provides public entertainment.

There are, however, negative perceptions of these urban sports from the public. Damage to property, for example, has resulted in a belief that skateboarders are vandals, a stereotype which still affects skaters today. Luke Jackson, a seasoned skater in the inner city and employee at Familia Skateboards, says that security guards, like their bosses, often misunderstand what skaters are doing which causes frustration and conflict, resulting in authorities trying to “suppress it” purely because it stands out from ordinary or expected urban activity. A common instruction issued is: “you can’t play here!” This highlights that skateboarding is still often viewed as a childish activity and therefore has no place in the ‘adult world’ (Jackson, 2012). In Auckland, New Zealand, the city implemented a series of ‘skatestop’ initiatives which sought to prevent skateboarding in the city. These devices include the most impersonal and alien additions to public benches and ledges, such as steel bolts punched into the concrete at 500mm centres along the edge of a public bench to prevent the use of that edge. Dryer, from Auckland, describes the feeling of seeing places with these additions as “heart-breaking...to see some of the most beautiful spots on earth... but you can’t experience them.” (Skateboarding vs Architecture, 2011).

Whilst damage to property cannot be ignored, is the only alternative the introduction of such awkward and unsightly objects which often affect non-skaters as much as skaters? Is it not possible to be creative about this dilemma by rather addressing the problem from a receptive stance and therefore incorporating the needs (or visions) of the skateboarders in





(top far left) Skate spots in Johannesburg's inner city, compiled by the Johannesburg skating community (Reprobait, 2012)

(top left) Skaters outised the Library Gardens, Johannesburg. (Reprobait, 2012)

(right) Wandile Msomi at Library Gardens, Johannesburg. Switch backside 180 nose manual nollie bigspin out. (Session magazine # 34, 2009)



public space? Integration of this sort has been attempted in a variety of locations around the world with what are known as “skate plazas”, a combination of skate park and street plaza.

Skate plazas consist of skateboard obstacles and structures which are navigable and usable by the pedestrian public. These spaces, such as the Zuiderpark plaza in Rotterdam, showcase the sculptural and landscaped appeal of skate-able structures and how they have the potential for public, non-skateboarding related uses.

I visited this plaza and was surprised to see it being utilised as grounds for a marching band as part of an outdoor festival, as well as a course for a fitness club. My skateboard was the only one present all day. This brings me to an interesting point regarding these plazas, which became a topic of conversation with Dutch skater Martijn Thijssen. According to Thijssen, Rotterdam is known in the Netherlands, and the world, as a ‘skating city’ with wide streets, bicycle lanes and smooth concrete surfaces. This modern urban fabric is, unfortunately, the result of a tragic history as Rotterdam was a victim of significant Allied bombing in World War Two which destroyed a vast portion of the city’s buildings and streets. The rebuilding of this city transformed its character into the modern version we see today. Amsterdam, the more widely known Dutch city, is relatively unaccommodating of skateboarding as it remains an ‘old’ city with cobbled streets and a lack of smooth modern plazas. Rotterdam therefore showcases the importance of modernist space for effective street skating.

The construction of the Zuiderpark skate plaza was the city’s second major response to the notoriety of skateboarding in Rotterdam, the first being a skate park occupying a large island in the middle of a major street. This park, as seen below, is unfortunately mono-functional unlike the skate plaza. In the same way that a parking lot is functionless without cars, this space is functionless without skaters. This, I believe, is to be avoided at all costs.

The Zuiderpark plaza was built on the southern periphery of the city, roughly ten minutes by subway from the city centre. Thijssen added that although the Zuiderpark plaza was frequented by local skaters it is unfortunately too far removed from the ‘hub’ of skateboarding that is the city itself, and although it provides great structures for skateboarding it is still no substitute for the street and therefore considered more as a skate park than a street course. (Thijssen, 2012). Whilst skating around the streets of Rotterdam I came across numerous popular street spots which are within city limits and very much a part of the street itself. This relationship seems to be crucial for the success of urban skate spots.



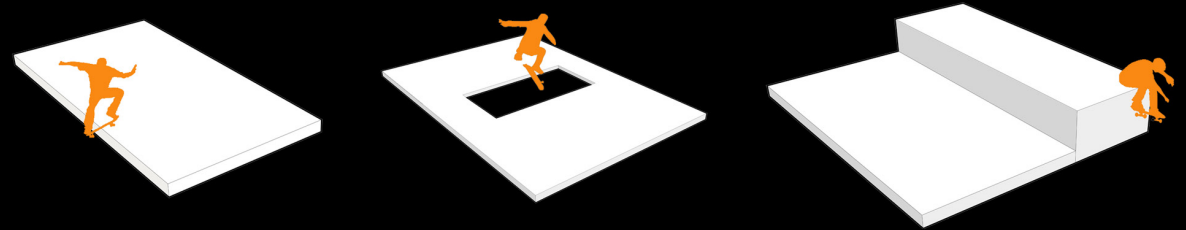




(top left) 'Skatestopping' (Skateboarding vs Architecture, 2011)  
(bottom left and top right) Zuiderpark skate plaza, Rotterdam,  
allowing functions outside of skateboarding.  
(top right) Zuiderpark skate plaza  
(bottom right) Single purpose skate park in Rotterdam showing  
vacancy due to lack of skateboarding.



Ledges



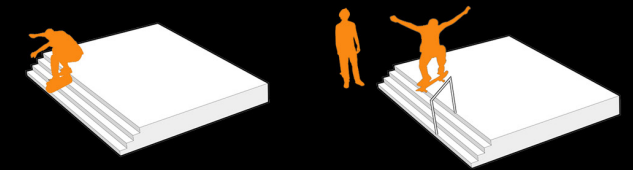
# SKATESPACE

Urban skateboarding is all about found space and potential to use that space to achieve a trick. There is such a vast amount of named tricks today, ranging from the simple ollie to the technically intricate board flips. Combinations of these tricks, as well as the invention of new tricks, make the list of tricks practically endless.

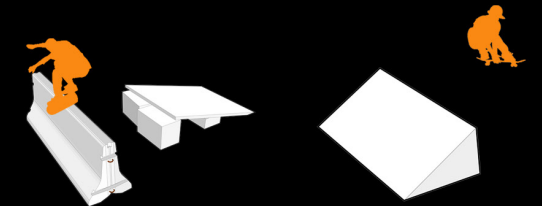
It is therefore of little importance documenting the tricks themselves. What is important are the spaces and structures which facilitate skateboarding. Various obstacles lend themselves to certain tricks but the limitations are constantly being stretched. The more radical the combination the better. I have therefore chosen to map the most common found urban structures which street skater's use. These basic architectural elements are all tertiary components of architectural design, forming the in-between and ground floor spaces of urban design yet offer a seemingly endless array of opportunities for skaters. It is also important to note that these structures also provide skaters with platforms for their own creations. 'Kickers', bins, bricks, poles and rails can be added to these to allow for more daring and exceptional tricks. Skaters therefore actively edit space as much as they re-interpret it.

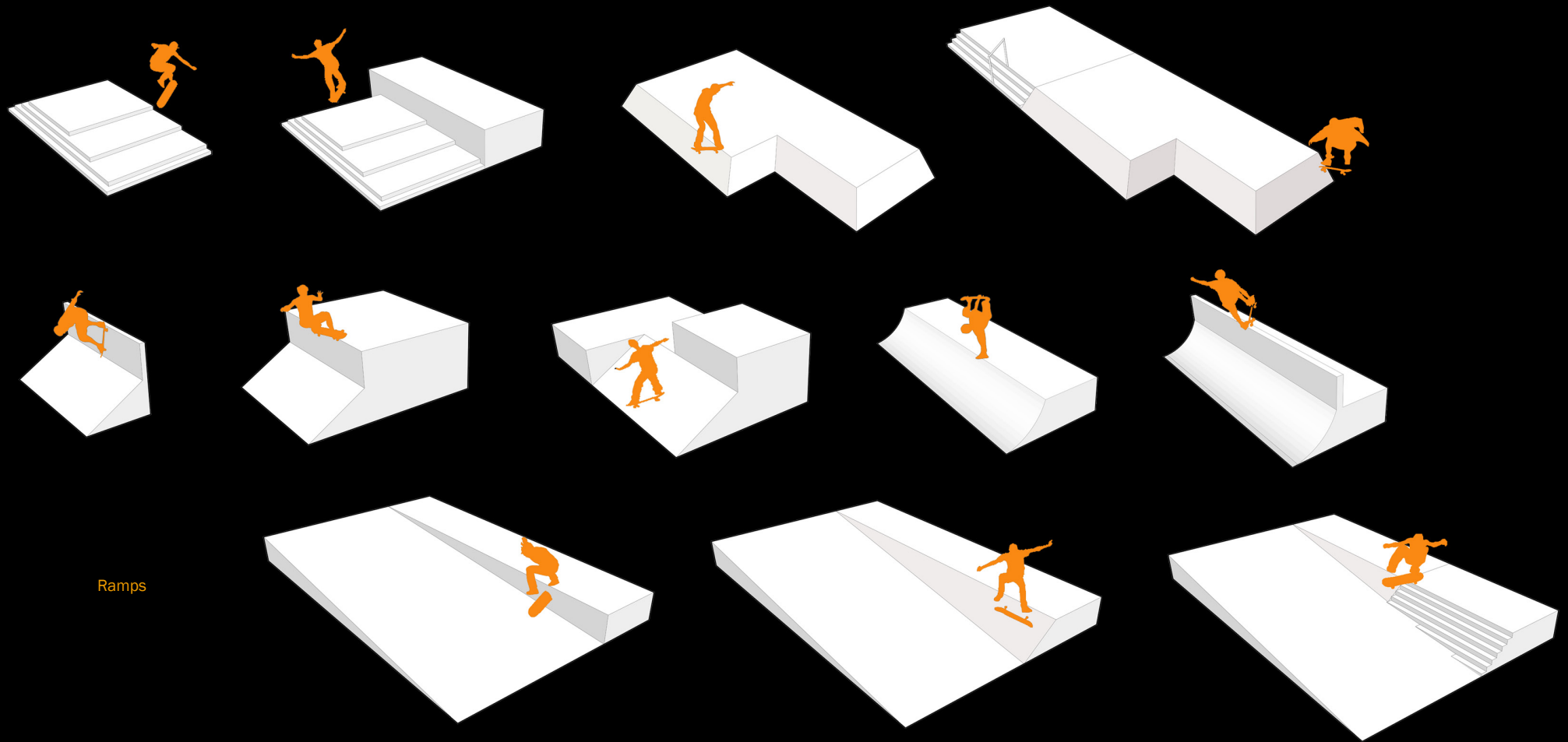
The basic configuration for this diagram is the progression of basic to more complex urban forms found in the built environment. Most of these elements are used in one way or another in skate parks but are bunched together and exaggerated so as to maximise the skating potential. Through my own experience and discussions with other skaters I believe that this process of skate park design lacks the flow of street skating where the creation of a 'run' with cruise time in-between obstacles is often the most rewarding part of skateboarding. Wandile Msomi, a well-known South African skater, refers to the look and feel of skate park skating as "scoot-scoot" which describes the frantic push movements required to gather enough speed between obstacles (Msomi, 2012). Street skating requires the openness, freedom and unpredictability of a street made up of the elements documented here.

Stairs and embankments



Kickers and transitions





Ramps

# PARKOUR

I've chosen parkour as my second urban athletics case study for similar reasons to that of skateboarding in that it is a sport which requires a built environment providing the necessary obstacles, challenges and opportunities. Practitioners of parkour view urban space through a lens similar to that of the skateboarder. It is a lens which transforms space into opportunity, and creates theatrical potential from the most ordinary urban objects. It is because of this that the theoretical relationship between the sport and the built environment is essentially the same as that for skateboarding. The only difference between the two sports is the movements and useable objects.

Parkour as the sport known today was developed by David Belle in France in the mid 1990's but has its origins in the 1920's with Georges Herbert's introduction and promotion of the obstacle course for military training. Herbert wrote of the obstacle course, or "parcours", in his book entitled *La Methode Naturelle* (The Natural Method) and describes his method of exercise categorised under the primary headings of: walking, running, jumping, quadrupedal movement, climbing, equilibrium (balancing), throwing, lifting, defending and swimming. (Bazin, 2009). David Belle adapted elements of this method in the development of parkour which Paul Grey, owner of Jump City Fitness, explains as "efficient, quick movement through space." (Grey, 2012). Parkour therefore refers to the discipline of moving through space as directly as possible.

Various adaptations of parkour include 'free running' which promotes self-expression through invented or combined movements in space. During a free run session, athletes are

encouraged to pause and expand their movements instead of simply passing through. The final adaptation is 'tricking' where athletes demonstrate their athletic ability on flat ground, exhibiting various jumps and flips without the aid of obstacles (Grey, 2012). Through this sport a "traceur" (Traceuses for female) is allowed to re-think how they move through a space. Through this re-thinking the athlete invents new uses for space, inserting theatrical narratives which emphasise the body in space. Cedric Dahl, director of People in Motion, says "parkour...gives you the ability to re-architect your surroundings" (Sha, 2012) which I believe means that parkour provides the athlete, and those viewing the athlete, to alter the uses and narratives of a given space through physical movement and in so doing change the actual architecture of space.

Parkour, however, is often perceived negatively by those unfamiliar with it. Just as with skateboarding, damage to property as well as liability for injury causes concern amongst security and property owners as the athlete's use of the space differs vastly from that which it was intended and designed for. The primary response from authority is therefore prohibition. When damage is concerned, either to property or person, it's hard to fault the property owners for feeling this way.

Once again, just as with skateboarding, is it not possible to approach this conflict from a receptive stance and in so doing accommodate traceurs and the spectacle they provide? I believe it is possible to design a public space which accommodates urban athletes and pedestrians in a mutually beneficial way and incorporates into the design the provision of



(top) Vaulting over a balustrade (Ho, 2012)  
(right) Forward flip off a roof (Ho, 2012)







management, which facilitates the safe use of that space by the athletes. This management would be in the form of on-site urban athletes whose job it is to educate, train and watch over the space. This would provide a critical link between the athletes and the management of the site which would significantly improve the perception of the various sports. Every athlete I have spoken to, myself included, has come into conflict with the various administrations of the spaces we use, and it is my firm belief that it is unnecessary and unfair. These sports aren't going anywhere and it's about time a different approach is adopted in a new public space which deals with these issues, ultimately allowing the sports to grow and become a greater part of Johannesburg's urban fabric.

(top) Wall flip (Ho, 2012)  
(right) Urban gymnastics (Ho, 2012)



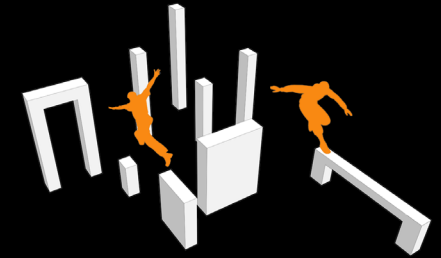
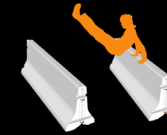
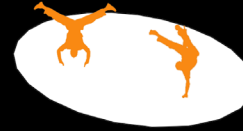
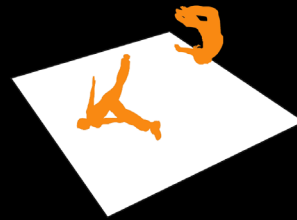


DEAL BEER TASTE

LA BEER ASSOCIATION  
SANTA MONICA

SWINGWAY MARKET

Small



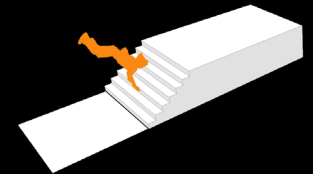
# PARKOURS SPACE

Parkour and urban architectural space have a much greater physical connection than skateboarding. This is simply because Parkour, and the variations of it, require nothing more than the body in space. With skateboarding, the athlete is limited (although simultaneously emancipated) by the skateboard. Traceurs are limited only by their skill, strength and daring.

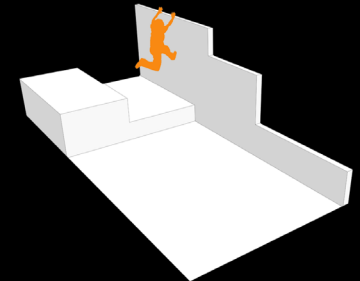
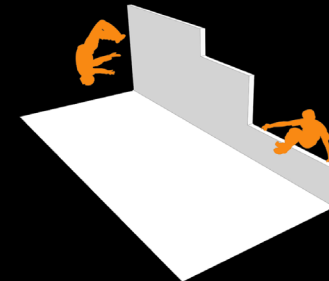
The moves and tricks available to the traceur are equally as vast as that of skateboarding and it is therefore my belief that the mapping of individual moves is irrelevant in the search for the design of a parkour friendly space. Understanding of the basic moves, however, is important as it allows me to catalogue spaces which facilitate those moves and therefore any variations of them. As I am not a traceur myself this process of documentation was in the form of interviews with traceurs followed by demonstrations. To achieve a more thorough and global understanding of the sport and its urban requirements I watched an extensive amount of parkour videos courtesy of YouTube and similar internet sites. This gave me a truly vast source of information for the cataloguing of useable urban space.

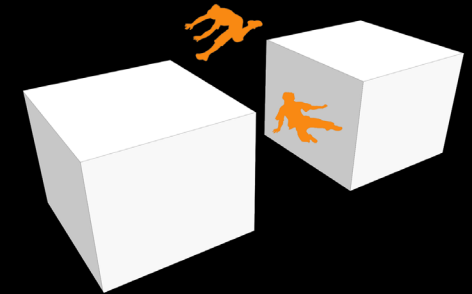
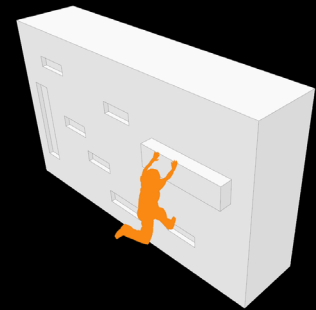
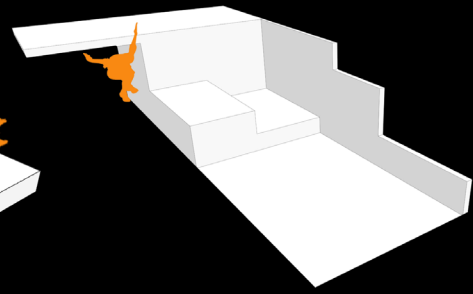
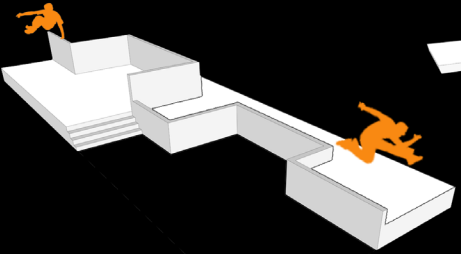
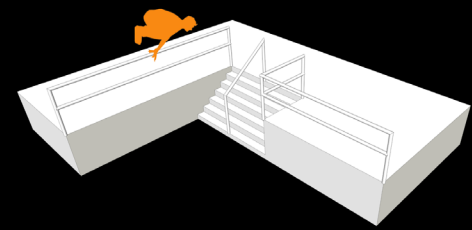
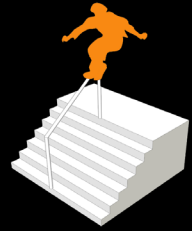
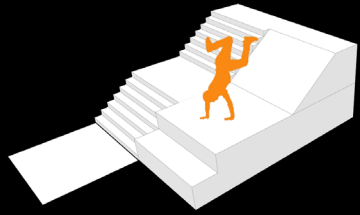
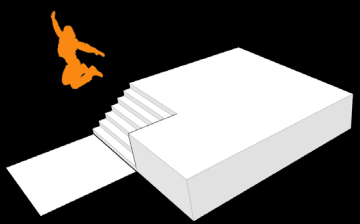
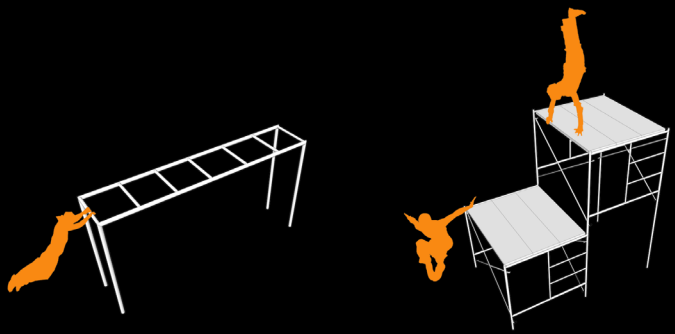
This diagram is arranged simply from small to large and illustrates the most fundamental forms required for parkour, free running and tricking. These forms will become a useful tool when it comes to the micro-design of my public space.

Medium



Large







# INFORMALTRADE

I believe urban traders enliven the streets in a similar fashion to that of the athletes. The informal trader of Johannesburg, broadly speaking, offers everything which the public might need throughout their day in the city. Traders convert otherwise functionless public spaces, or spaces in between those with a designed function, into that which the city dweller depends on for the purchase of everything from breakfast to clothes, electronics and groceries. And all of this happens from the urban platform that is the street.

These traders, like the athletes, engage with the city's architecture on a fundamental level, exploiting the everyday spaces and creating a unique layer of activity within the city which had no place on the drawing boards of the city's designers. The multitude of goods offered is always growing and changing depending on the ground level needs of the urban populace. This form of activity, however, has its downsides. These include issues ranging from illegality to public safety. This duality has put the informal sector in the discursive limelight over the past few decades, which Caroline Skinner (2011: 7) describes as falling into the categories of two "broad traditions". The one focus is on the informal sector as a symptom of a failing capitalist system unable to provide sufficient employment on a mass scale. The other focus adopts a more "celebratory" view, promoting the grass roots nature of the sector and its ability to provide vast but small scale income generation. My intention is to understand both sides in order to work with the informal sector, namely street traders, as a resource for public space design.

I will begin with the positives of the informal sector, starting with the sector's national and

international economic importance. In Part A of the Informal Trading Policy of the City of Johannesburg it is claimed that informal trading, at least what is known, is responsible for as much as 4.5% of the country's GDP (City of Johannesburg 2009: 5). To put it another way, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) calculated the informal sector in South Africa to be responsible for 33% of non-agricultural employment. In Sub Saharan Africa this figure rises to 72% (ILO 2002:7). The informal sector plays a vital role for a large portion of our society in terms of both income for the informal traders and goods for the customers. It is estimated that 75% of basic needs in African cities are provided through informal trade systems (Simone 2004: 6). These statistics collectively illustrate that although informal work is often considered as a secondary, if not tertiary mode of work, it is in fact the primary form of work in African towns and cities. (Skinner, 2011: 2) It is also important to note that the income being generated is, in most cases, for the benefit of the urban poor who are unable to afford the bureaucratic formalities of formal business establishment. Hernando DeSoto, a Peruvian economist, established this flaw by drawing on the findings of a report from a number of African counties by the Instituto Libertad y Democracia (ILD). DeSoto concluded the following regarding this stifling of informal activity:

*"...the existing legal system – the red tape, the widespread mistreatment of waiting lines, the bribes, the rudeness – are a Kafkaesque trap which prevents the [informal trader's] and the country's resources from being used efficiently."*

(DeSoto 1989: 243)





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*“If the entrepreneurial spirit of informal operators were to be legalised and nurtured rather than fettered and suppressed ... a burst of competitive energy would be released, living standards would start rising.”*

(DeSoto 1989: 15)

DeSoto's theory of informal sector suppression is backed by a World Bank report claiming that actors in the informal sector “frequently decide against [formalising]” as a simple “cost-benefit analysis” often discourages it. (Perry et al, 2007: 2). With DeSoto's stance in mind, and the economic figures behind it, the potential for informal trade becomes apparent. Johannesburg administration has acknowledged this importance, declaring that “informal trading is as much a part of the past, present and future of the City of Johannesburg” (City of Johannesburg, 2009: 5). Whether or not that future fulfils its potential relies on a change in perception of the informal sector from policy makers to the traders themselves. To date the most significant document outlining the future of informal trade in Johannesburg, The Informal Trading Policy, outlines the importance of formalisation and describes how significant this challenge is due to a variety of issues (City of Johannesburg, 2009: 4). These include, among others, limited infrastructure, hygiene and safety issues, law enforcement difficulties, and consumer behaviour. Xolani Nxumalo, a project consultant in Johannesburg's economic development department, claims that these issues have resulted in negative perceptions of street traders which further hinders their development (City of Johannesburg, 2007).

These characteristics are what define informal trade in the inner city of Johannesburg. The

question then becomes a matter of promoting the positives whilst preventing the negatives and whether or not this is possible through architectural design. Skinner maintains that once the informal nature of this activity is accepted as a model of development, the challenge for designers becomes how best to “cope with [it's] complex and nuanced activities”. (Skinner, 2011:13) It is this complexity which will drive my design process, as every decision made must be done so with as much thought given to potential ramifications as possible. Hopefully, in this way I can design a scheme which promotes the positives of informal trade whilst avoiding the negative. Ultimately, it is these negative stereotypes which help to generate the character of a place, such as the inner city of Johannesburg. If a public space were to achieve my goals, then that space would have the potential of attracting new people to experience that unique characteristic of African cities, that ‘otherness’ which is epitomized by the informal sector.

The following quotation describes how I feel about experiencing that otherness and solidifies my perceived link between informal trade and skateboarding (and ultimately urban sports in general) because it is, in fact, referring to skateboarding. For me, this quotation could just as easily be describing the experience of inner city informal trade.

*“...we get something vibrant to look at besides shop windows; we get strange sounds and colours in our streets; and, above all, we get something different which we might not expect to come across.”*

(Borden, 2001. 154)



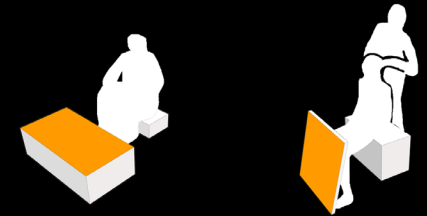
(left) Transforming dead space into functional space at Park Station, Johannesburg.

(right) Adding colour with food, Eloff Street, Johannesburg.

Mobile



Semi-mobile



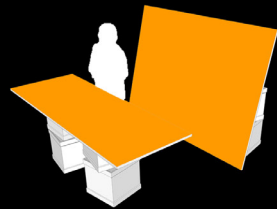
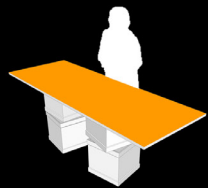
## TRADESPACE

Informal trade in the inner city of Johannesburg is present in a wide variety of forms. The overriding theme is that when there is a combination of foot traffic (with consumer needs) and available space, then informal traders emerge and fill gaps in the potential market. Due to the informal nature there are few rules besides the limitations of the product being sold or the requirements of the service being offered.

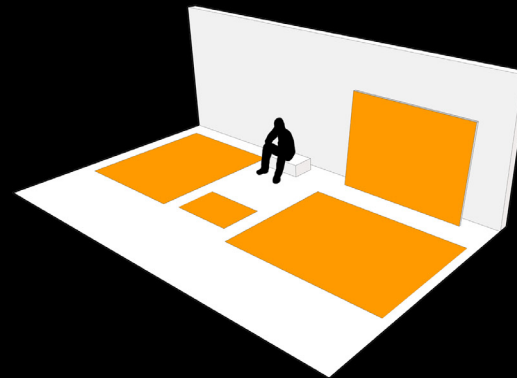
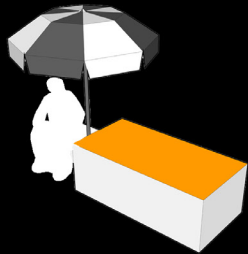
The goods on sale by these traders include food, electronics, clothing, art, music and film, with services such as hair care, public 'phones and entertainment being offered. The volume, quantity, quality and location of trade is directly linked to the need of the city's inhabitants. It is because of this that the informal system is in a constant state of flux responding to the changing city's demands and provisions. The adaptability and temporality required for this trade means that administration and management by the city is a massive task. Issues of legality and acceptable practice are therefore of significant importance when dealing with informal trade.

This tradespace diagram illustrates various responses to this flux, ranging from mobile to fixed traders. All of these examples represent documented forms of informal trade in the inner city of Johannesburg and it is my intention to accept these forms, in terms of aesthetic language and function, as an integral component of my public space design.

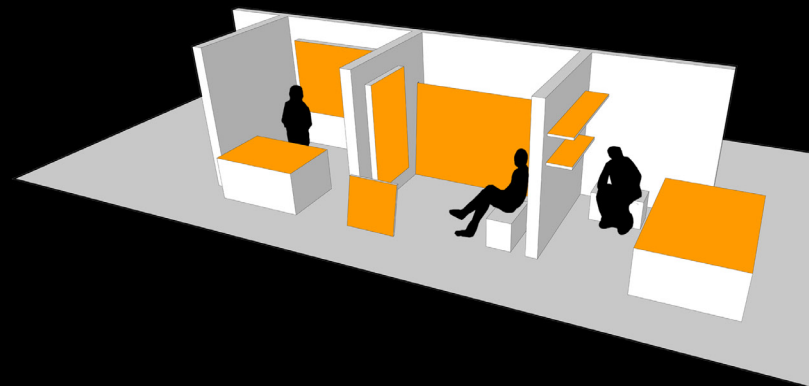
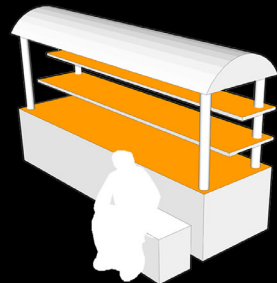




Semi-fixed



Fixed



**WHAT IS JOZI?**

03

# SEPARATIONJOHANNESBURG

An exploration of historical and present day segregation in the city establishing precedent for new public space.

# PUBLICSPACEJOHANNESBURG

How important is public space in the South African context and what forms of this space are found in Johannesburg?

# INNERCITYJOHANNESBURG

Defining the inner city and zoning in on my site's location.

# THESITE

Defining the location for GOJOZI in the inner city and exploring the context.



# SEPARATION JOHANNESBURG

I wish to discuss the division between suburban or peripheral Johannesburg and the inner city. This difference is multi-faceted and complex, compounded by South Africa's history and Johannesburg's unique and pivotal role in that history. The spatial ramifications of the city's past are being felt in the present day and will continue to define the socio-economic characteristic of Johannesburg for generations to come. I am working in the context of these ramifications and attempting to find a contemporary architectural response to them. This process begins with an understanding of the past.

The recent history of Johannesburg is, broadly speaking, dominated by the pursuit of wealth through gold. Immigrants seeking their fortune would travel the immense distances from Europe, America, Australia and Asia to the South African Highveld for a chance to claim their share of the biggest gold reef ever recorded. This gold, however, was extracted from the earth through the exploitation of labour. In order to maintain a steady source of this labour, the pre-Apartheid city and state authorities planned the city of Johannesburg to house mine-workers on the periphery in townships such as Soweto. The initial planning of the city of Johannesburg itself was carried out under the assumption of Paul Kruger that once the gold had been extracted the city would enter a state of decline similar to that of other gold boom towns in the country such as Pilgrim's Rest and Barberton (Silverman, 2011). Johannesburg was therefore, from the very beginning, planned as a temporary city, with great emphasis being placed on the accumulation of wealth in as short a time as possible. The planning of small city blocks maximising the number of corner sites and making easy the job of laying out, surveying and administering has become a lasting consequence of this thinking, resulting in

significant traffic congestion today.

Whilst Johannesburg boomed, a physical rift was being constructed between the 'European' and 'non-European' inhabitants of the city with the former spreading north into Ebenezer Howard style garden cities and the latter being kept on the outskirts in mass housing schemes. During Apartheid the city itself grew into a powerhouse of white commercial and residential activity whilst the garden cities continued to benefit from the wealth being generated in the city. By successfully insulating white people from the hardships of black South Africa with a curtain of media control and militaristic policing, the Apartheid Government kept white Johannesburg separate from black Johannesburg. As the curtain began to fall from the 70's onwards the situation began changing. The ultimate change was the eventual decline of the laws which governed racial separation and the city began to experience the public integration of white and black which, as a consequence of Apartheid, meant also the integration of rich and poor.

There was, however, a failure in the integration of these two polar worlds and the Central Business District (CBD) experienced an exodus of white residents and businesses to the north. Metamorphosis of the inner city had begun as the relative informality of African urbanity began to re-shape the social fabric of the city. This metamorphosis is described in *Emerging Johannesburg: Perspectives on the Post-Apartheid city*. 86% of the inner city population was black by 1993 and 95% by 1996 (Tomlinson et al, 2003: 13). The combination of business exodus combined with massive people and poverty influx, put extra strain on the

infrastructure and maintenance of many buildings and the city began experiencing physical deterioration.

As the northern suburbs expanded, catering to the needs of the affluent, the inner city became nothing more than an object on the southern horizon for many people in the North. As a young Jo'burger born in these northern suburbs six years before the 1994 election, I grew up with the inner city revealing itself through stories from my parents and views afforded from car windows whilst skirting around it on the elevated highways. I would be taken into the city occasionally but only for specific reasons, never for the purpose of experiencing city life. In this sense the inner city's present occupation was an inversion of its past for people like me. The big difference being that there was no legal framework behind that sense of exclusion; it was and possibly still is, in my opinion, self-imposed through fear of the unknown and the different.

Neil Fraser, executive director of the Central Johannesburg Partnership (CJP), an inner city renewal initiative, outlined in an article by Lucille Davie (2002) that "we need to encourage people to walk in the city, to experience it". Davie paraphrases Fraser in this article and says that Neil believes that young South African's perceptions of the city need to be changed (City of Johannesburg, 2002). Fraser believes that if this were achieved then it might even be possible to change parents' perceptions as well. This mission statement describes quite aptly what I believe urban renewal in Johannesburg needs to achieve.

The inversion of occupation in the city of Johannesburg is very interesting to me. What is more interesting though is that this inversion is by no means the first. Before colonial intrusion in the 19th century, the area of Johannesburg we know today was "home to long established Sotho- and Tswana-speaking people settled in the South African Interior...who clung precariously to the natural artesian springs" (Chipkin, 1993: 3). Colonial influence re-configured the landscape into surveyed European farmland. This changed again with the discovery of Gold in 1886 when the farmland was "overlaid by the irruption of an instantaneous Victorian boom town called Johannesburg." The predominantly Afrikaaner/Boer farmland soon became an anglophile city through English influence and economics. The city of Johannesburg has therefore seen multiple and diverse forms of occupation changes.

With this in mind I can move onto my discussion regarding contemporary Johannesburg. As discussed earlier, the city has been a stage for the occupation of various social groups, either legally enforced or self-imposed. I believe that the new public space which I'm designing needs to acknowledge the city as a receptive platform for various user groups as it has done in the past. Only now I am trying to re-introduce a group that has willingly left. The city itself has seen it all. I believe it is now ready to accommodate it all, and I believe that the starting point is a new public space, a gateway to and from the city.

# PUBLICSPACEJOHANNESBURG

## WHAT IS PUBLIC SPACE?

Public space is a relative term because it relies on the existence of a counterpart: private or owned space; that which you move from when entering the public realm. Superficially it describes a space which is open to all and devoid of private ownership, a space which promotes the ideology of democracy.

In South African history the term “public space” is loaded with the bias that is best described by a simple question: who is the public? Land ownership during Apartheid, and therefore private space, was limited in ownership and occupation to those referred to as ‘European’ or white. The concept of public space was therefore as much of a privilege as the concept of private space. The physical spaces themselves, deemed public, emphasised this idea with the prohibitive “whites only” type signage. This type of biased public space is by no means restricted to South Africa or even modern times. The Greek agora, one of the earliest known examples of public space where commerce, politics and spectacles were conducted in public, denied participation in these activities to “slaves, women and foreigners” (Mitchell, 1995: 116). In this case the public was a clearly defined group and the space would have reflected that. This was also true of pre-revolution French society where the public was “never thought to be the same as the people”, consisting of those deemed “literate and educated” (Agacinski, 2001: 133).

Historically, therefore, public space has been a production of the active public, ignoring the needs and involvement of the marginalised other. This statement is especially true with regards to South African history where the marginalised ‘non-white’ countrymen and woman were actively excluded from the public sphere. It was the inclusion in this sphere, with the right to vote and participate in public affairs without punishment, which became a strong rallying point of political activity. Public spaces themselves, in instances such as these, can then become the grounds upon which political protest can be carried out. As Jeffrey Hou notes: “in modern democracies, as the power has shifted to the people, public spaces have at last provided a legitimate space for protests and demonstrations – an expression of the freedom of speech” (Hou, 2010: 3). These spaces are therefore of particular importance in truly democratic societies because they allow for the voices of the marginalised to be heard through the very occupation of these spaces. The establishment of this perception of ‘public’ space is relevant for my thesis because it illustrates the importance of including the marginalised in the public sphere. It is the inclusion of these groups in the design of a new space which serves as a bold statement declaring that space as genuinely public.

With this in mind, I can begin an analysis of the current state of public space in post-Apartheid Johannesburg. The primary discussion here will be on the differences in public spaces of the northern and peripheral suburbs of Johannesburg versus the inner city.





(top) Johannesburg Library Gardens

(top right) Kerk St mall: giving the street to the pedestrian.

(bottom right) Sandton City: privatised public space.





## PUBLIC SPACE IN THE INNER CITY

In the inner city of Johannesburg there are a variety of concentrations of communal public space areas such as Delvers street, also known as “Little Addis”, where people eat, shop and socialise in and amongst informal and formal trading hubs. These hubs represent an appropriation of public street space for trading purposes. The traditional and intended use of the street as that of a movement zone for vehicles and pedestrians has become one of trade initiated by the public for the public, in what I like to refer to as ‘Publically Initiated Space’. These spaces are still utilised as movement zones but that function is now shared with a retail component where the balance is determined by availability of space and need. However, according to a Johannesburg Inner City Traffic and Transportation Study, conducted in 2010, the combination of informal trade with pedestrian and vehicular movement in streets such as Jeppe and Bree is resulting in “high pedestrian accident rates” (JDA, 2010: 7). This type of space appropriation has its risks and appears, therefore, to be an undesirable model for public space. Pedestrianisation of portions of streets such as Kerk and Noord are ways of preventing such accidents and provide a more sustainable and ultimately successful model for street level trade.

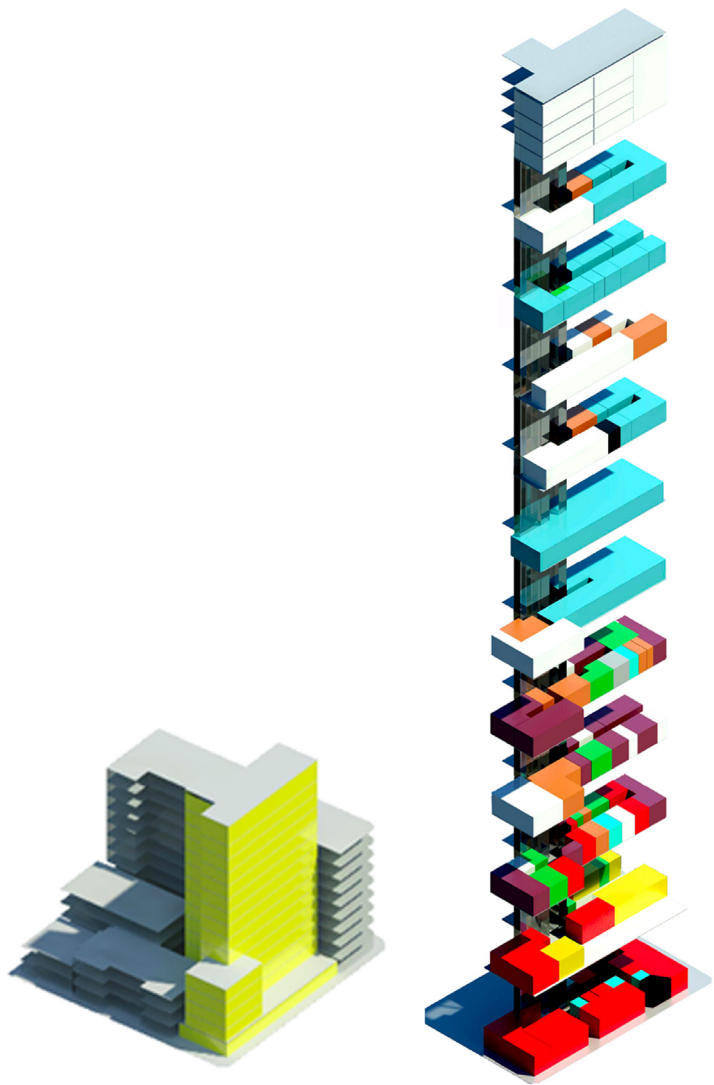
A safer alternative has emerged in the city, primarily in the Little Addis where this transformation of street space from movement to trade expanded into the surrounding buildings. High density retail, restaurant, service and manufacturing businesses have been inserted into the unused spaces of commercial and residential buildings, transforming them from private buildings of varying emptiness to thriving public commercial spaces creating a mixed use, high density public urban zone in previously designated and designed residential or commercial areas. In the diagram to the right, the appropriation of the Medical Arts Building on Bree Street is evident. The various colours in this diagram highlight programmes of retail, manufacturing, entertainment, services and storage.

The inner city also contains more traditional examples of public space such as Joubert Park, Johannesburg’s first public space. Established in 1893, Joubert Park was a popular green oasis for the residents of a dusty Johannesburg (Brodie, 2008: 166). The park’s function as a green space remains, and is a location where strangers (and friends) meet, interact, establish networks, catch up on sleep or test their ability in chess. There are other examples of green spaces in the city, such as Beyers Naude Square next to the Johannesburg Library which provides a popular rest spot, whilst Mary Fitzgerald Square provides space for large events yet remains fairly underutilised outside of such events.

Another important public space typology in the inner city has evolved as a result of the informal taxi industry. This type of public transport is undoubtedly the most popular and extensive transport network in the country and services every inch of the city whilst operating in an adaptive and flexible manner. According to the aforementioned traffic study it is estimated that out of 1.4 million motorised person trips made daily either into or out of the inner city. Minibus taxis account for a vast majority of this at roughly 45% (JDA, 2010: 8). In the inner city this has resulted in various taxi ranks and parking complexes becoming critical nodes of public interaction owing to the popularity and importance of taxis. Park

Station’s long distance taxi rank and Jack Mincer Taxi Park are examples of these, whilst new builds incorporating public amenities and taxi transport services such as Metro Mall closer to Newtown are examples of the formalisation of this typology. According to the Johannesburg website there are 12 primary taxi departure and arrival points in the inner city each providing unique destinations (COJ, 2012). These points attract traders and form nodes of social interaction, therefore acting as important areas of public space in the city.

I have shown that public space in the city, in terms of communal areas for eating, gathering and socialising, can be found in a variety of locations and in a variety of forms. These spaces are both formal and informal in the sense that some have been planned and others have emerged as a result of public activity through the appropriation of found space, a post-design and construction creation by the people using the city. Public space in the city therefore cannot be considered as a static definable space serving as a counterpoint to private space as is the norm in Western town planning. In the northern suburbs, however, public space and the utilisation of it take on a completely different form.



(top) Informal appropriation of the Medical Arts Building on Bree St, Johannesburg. (Le Roux et al, 2011)  
 (top right) Food bazaar in Metro Mall Tax Rank, Johannesburg  
 (bottom right) Street edge trading from Metro Mall Tax Rank, Johannesburg.

## PUBLIC SPACE IN THE NORTHERN SUBURBS

*“Increasingly, to spur economic development, public funds are used to subsidise development of private venues, while developers are generously rewarded for providing spaces with limited public use. As streets, neighbourhoods, and parks become malls, gated communities, and corporate venues, public space becomes subject to new forms of ownership, commodification, and control.”*

(Hou, 2010:6)

Public spaces in the northern suburbs, in the sense of a place where strangers share a common area for the purpose of retail and socialising, seem in my experience to be largely in the form of shopping malls. Other models, such as restaurant and shop lined suburban streets, exist in suburbs such Parkhurst or Melville, and most suburbs have designated park spaces. However, the sheer quantity and size of shopping mall complexes found throughout suburban Johannesburg, places these buildings at the forefront of communal space in the suburbs.

I regard malls as conforming to an international standard as they follow a rather formulaic design worldwide. This is due to their dependency on the private car, and their use of an internal public concourse between two parking lots flanked by retail on privately owned land. Victor Gruen, an instrumental architect in the development of malls in the USA, intended for these shopping centres to emulate public life similar to that found on shopping streets of urban centres (Wolfrum et al, 2008: 234). Since the 1950's, when these malls started appearing, they have become public spaces defined by consumerism and not public life. Alex Wall talks of this in his essay *The Shopping Centre as an Urban Innovator*. “[Shopping malls] are devoted to forms of consumption divorced from daily needs and their public spaces represent an artificial world disconnected from the social, cultural, and political realities that define public life in an urban society.” (Wolfrum et al, 2008. p239). Another noted urban theorist, Iain Borden, believes that malls “insist that we know what we want and that we do not want to be truly surprised.” (Wolfrum et al, 2008: 154). In Johannesburg I find this to be especially true when malls are juxtaposed with the informality and unpredictability of inner city shopping. Borden reaffirms this when he continues to theorise that “much of the joy of public space comes from their surprising qualities, from not always knowing them or the people who populate them” (Wolfrum et al, 2008: 154).

In my experience the malls and gated communities of the northern suburbs have become the primary representation and experience of public or communal life in the area. As a result of this typology of built environment in the northern suburbs one cannot help but contemplate the differences in public experiences between the inner city and suburbia and how this might be critical in the cultivation of a sense of separateness, not only physically but culturally and economically as well. Lindsay Bremner discusses how this sense of separateness has been further compounded through the increase of crime in her essay entitled *Crime and the Emerging Landscape of Johannesburg* (Architecture\_blank, 1999). Bremner discusses how the pristine streets and grand houses of the garden cities began attracting more and more crime as the segregationist policies of Apartheid withered. What were once signs of wealth

were now signs of vulnerability as large gardens, big houses and fancy cars attracted more crime. Walls were raised and topped with electric fences; massive gates were installed and private security companies saw a huge growth spurt. Eventually entire streets were being blocked off with security check points allowing only residents and invited guests through. This type of activity further altered the value of public spaces in the suburbs as more and more families insulated themselves against the outside and ultimately the public.

In my experience this has had very negative consequences on the daily life of the northern suburbanite. Firstly, space is experienced as a series of passing images as you move from home to work or school in the bubble of your private car, returning home along the same route only to step out of the car once inside the garage. There is no in-between in this narrative, just origins, destinations and pause moments at traffic stops. This brings me to my second point: without the in-between, how is one expected to experience a life other than that of the one you're living? A plausible answer is that unless you make experiencing 'otherness' in Johannesburg a destination, northern suburbanites will seldom integrate with the vast cultural and economic differences that continue to define Johannesburg. The paradox here is that 'otherness' as a destination is nothing more than tourism, and tourism is at best a superficial method of integration. What I believe is needed is the creation of a new public space which adopts a more sincere approach to integration and renewal, a space which is open to potential future narratives developing into a genuine public space through the influence of people using it. This re-imagining of public space would hopefully become in itself an attraction and development catalyst.

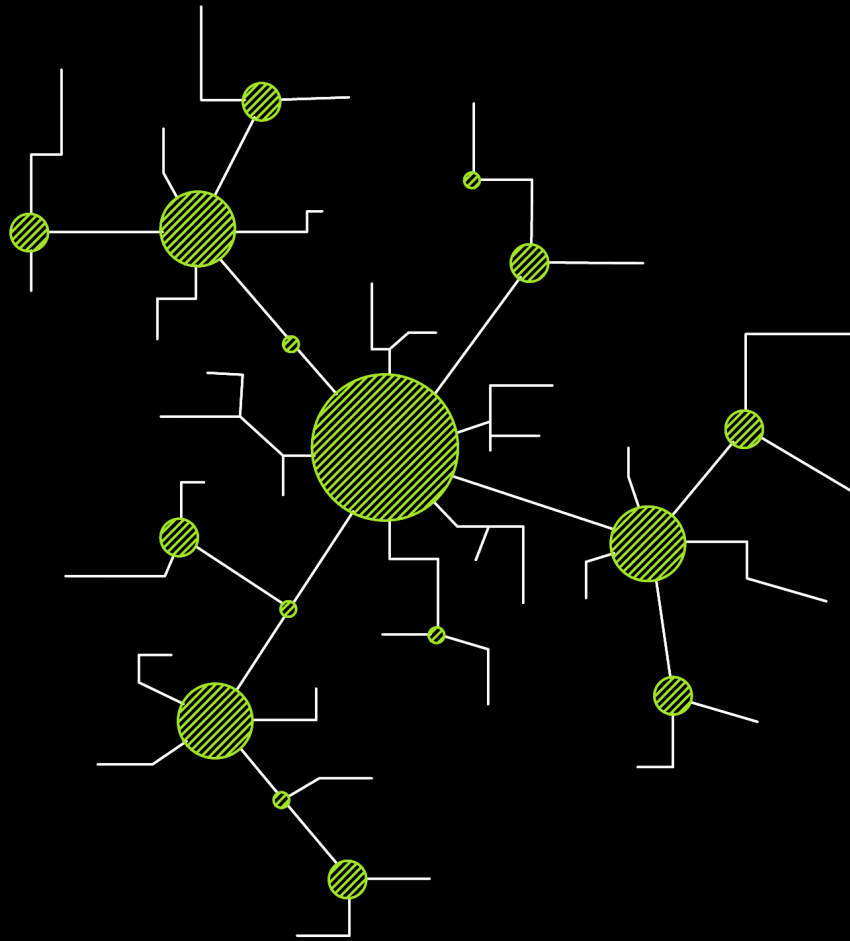




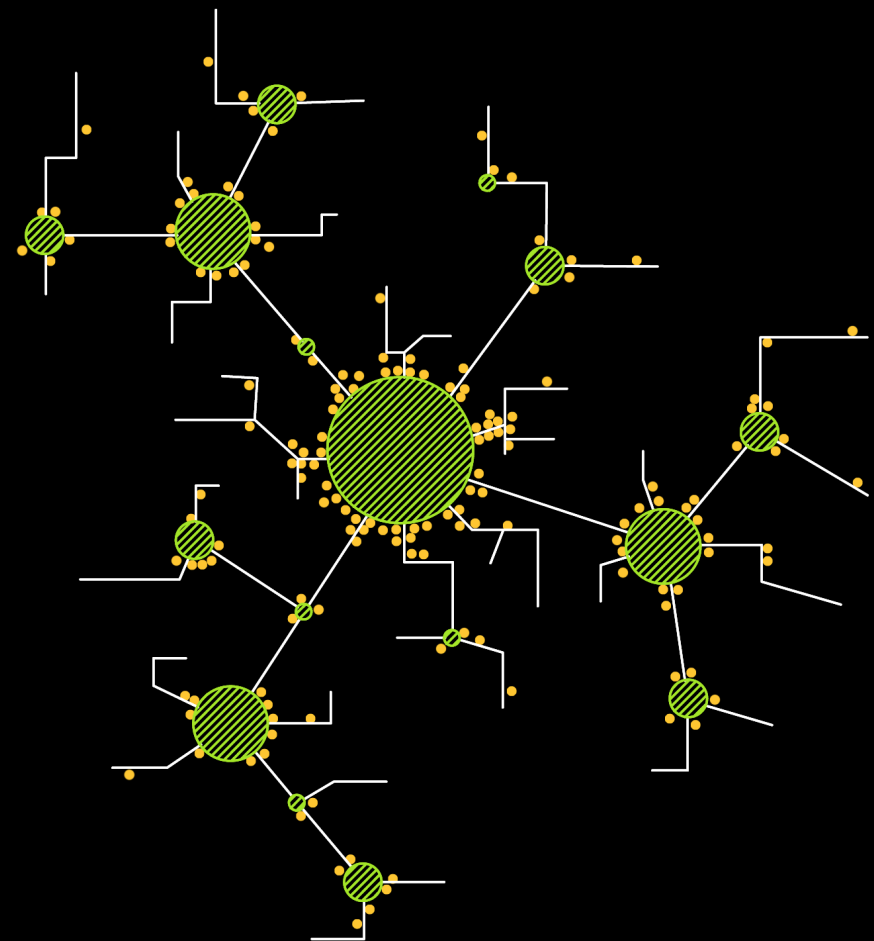
(top) Security in a northern suburb of Johannesburg



Diagrammatic layout of public transport nodes.

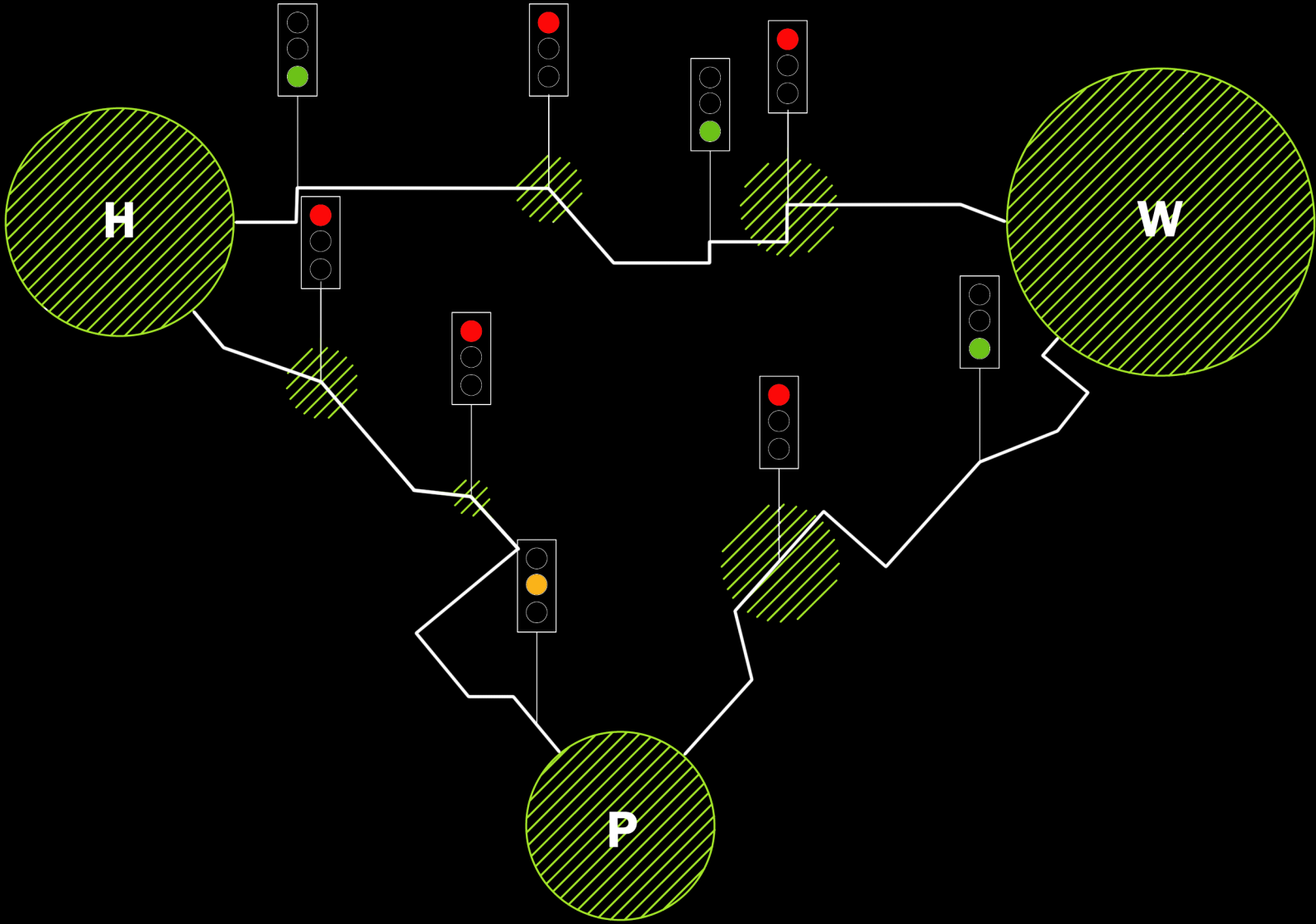


Emergence of opportunistic informal trade and social interaction



## PUBLIC VS PRIVATE TRANSPORT

Modes of transport have a significant impact on public spaces in Johannesburg. Public transport, primarily in the form of minibus taxis, spawn multiple nodes of social interaction and trade along their routes and at various stops. Private transport however, in the form of private vehicles, is responsible for a narrative of movement between isolated bubbles of home, work and play. Pauses en route at traffic stops become the only in-between in this narrative.



# INNERCITYJOHANNESBURG

The area chosen for my intervention is the inner city of Johannesburg. As discussed earlier, it is a city that has hosted multiple urban narratives since its creation and where I believe potential exists for a new public space that attracts people back to the city. It is intended for this new space to also improve existing conditions so that when combined with the introduction of new people, acts as a renewal and development catalyst for the surrounding context. Simply put, I perceive this idea as the introduction of a new town square which organises the urban fabric around it and creates an iconic, identifiable new centre for the city. The importance of town squares in this respect is illustrated in *Multiple Cities*:

*“The square (as an organising and central element) is a key unit in urban planning, functioning as the ground floor responsible for structuring all other facilities; an urban reference structure to be found in more than five thousand existing cities.”*

(Wolfrum et al, 2008: 300)

What is the inner city of Johannesburg and where is there potential for new public space? To answer this question I looked at public transport in the city, with my understanding being that pinpointing the confluence of public transport options is an acceptable way of pinpointing the centre of the city. Public transport is also of significant importance to urban public space. In Johannesburg there are multiple public transport hubs, but only one which stands out as the original and most prominent: Park Station. It is here where multiple forms of transport converge on an epic scale, from long distance buses to local

taxis and national train services. The recent addition of a Gautrain stop as well as Bus Rapid Transport (BRT) has increased Park Station’s repertoire to now include fast and efficient 21st century transport to and from the city. The Gautrain is hugely important for my scheme as it literally makes Park Station the gateway into the inner city from as far as Pretoria and O.R. Thambo International Airport.

Other important features of this inner city distinction are the surrounding districts and attractions. To the west is Braamfontein, an area undergoing rapid regeneration through development companies such as South Point who have introduced multiple student accommodation options for neighbouring Wits and UJ universities. Braamfontien is also establishing itself as what I’ve termed a ‘transition zone’ between the inner city and the suburbs. By this I mean it is in the city but is devoid of the frantic urbanism you see deeper in the city. Juta Street is home to popular attractions such as food and clothing markets, restaurants, bars, clubs, art galleries and shops. These attractions have successfully introduced a new demographic to Braamfontien in the form of young, affluent Joburgers, predominantly from the suburbs.

To the north east of Park Station is Hillbrow, the super-dense residential district home to masses of immigrants (both legal and illegal) and impoverished South Africans. Hillbrow is known for its reputation of crime and degradation, commonly regarded as a no-go zone for most Jo’burg suburbanites due to security issues. Recently NIKE organised a 10km night run through the streets of Hillbrow, ushering in an invasion of 10 000 runners for





(right) View into Johannesburg's inner city over Park's Station's long distance taxi rank



Braamfontein

Cautrain

Park Station

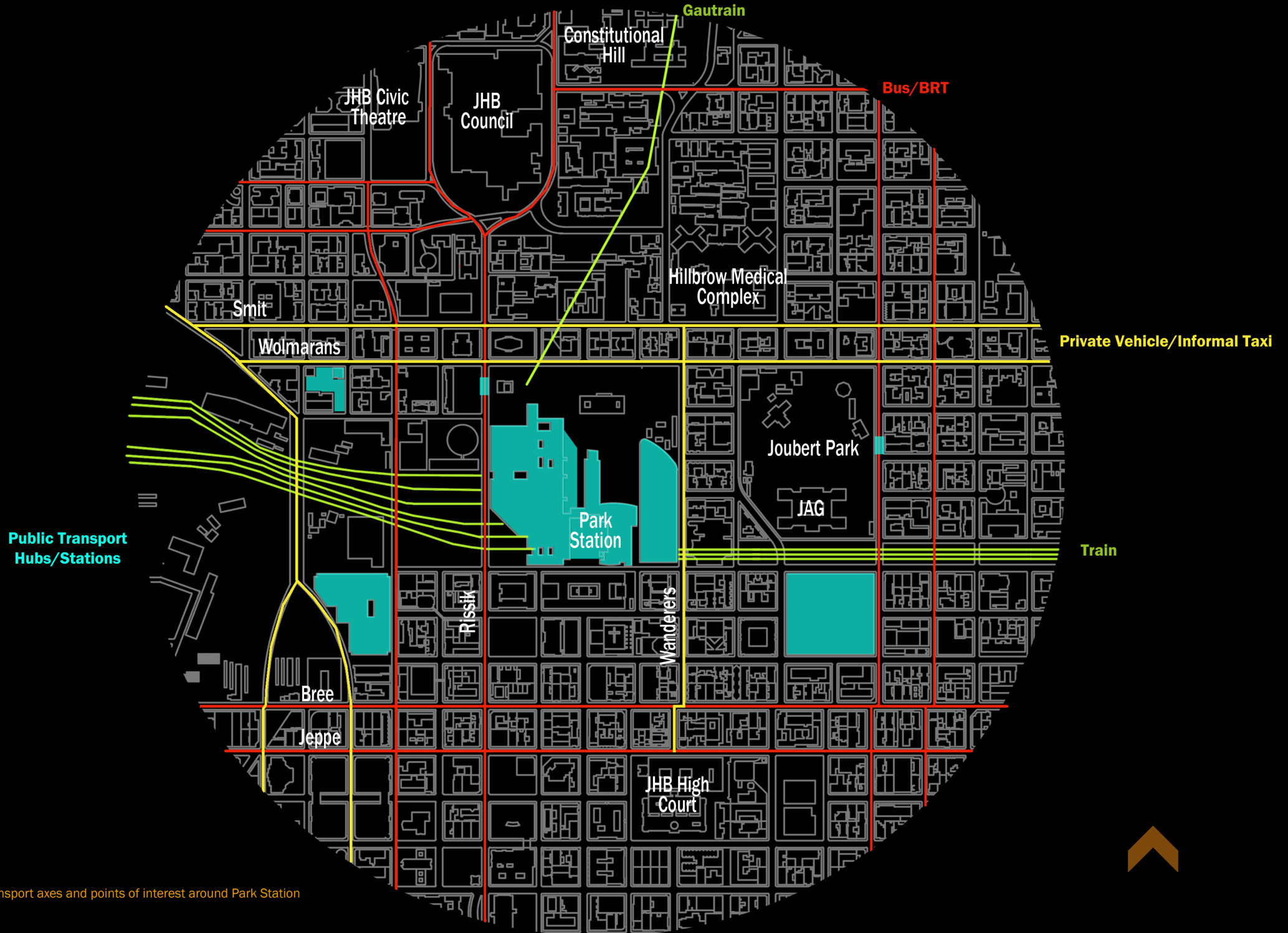
Hillbrow

Joubert Park

"Little Addis" Informal Trade Hub

Existing inner city pulses around Park Station





Transport axes and points of interest around Park Station





the duration. Although this did little for prolonged change, it did show a great deal of people that stereotypes of places such as Hillbrow, although often substantiated, can be overlooked in favour of positive activity.

This area is also important to Johannesburg historically as it sits at the centre of the triangular 'uitvalgrond' known as the Randjieslaagte Triangle. This was a leftover parcel of land between 3 farms which was divided into uniform, saleable pieces of land by Paul Kruger soon after the discovery of gold. The hypotenuse of this triangle became Diagonal Street which remains today in Newtown. The two surveyors responsible for this grid conversion, and therefore the spatial layout of the entire city's grid, were Johann Rissik and Christiaan Joubert, two names which feature strongly in the history of Johannesburg. Rissik Street is an example of this, but a popular theory that Johannesburg itself might be named after Johann Rissik or Christiaan Johannes Joubert is by far the most intriguing (Silverman, 2011). All this boils down to the fact that being at the centre of the Randjieslaagte Triangle essentially means being at the historical centre of urban Johannesburg.

Another interesting historical feature of this area is that the Park Station precinct, as it is now, was the site of Wanderers cricket and sporting ground, part of Kruger Park. This is why the officially named Johannesburg Station is known as Park Station (Brodie, 2008: 89). This lost history of a popular cricket oval where "test cricket was played from 1896 to 1939" (Chipkin, 1993: 257) is a poignant reminder of Johannesburg's complex past. It is entertaining to think of Park Station now as once being home to turn of the century test cricket.



(left) Wanderers cricket ground, Johannesburg, in 1938. (Brink, 2012)

(top) Randjieslaagte Triangle. (Brodie, 2008)

(right) The triangle today







## THE SITE

I have now highlighted the Park Station precinct as the choice for my site. My task now becomes site definition. When it came to choosing a location a list of requirements became apparent. My site would need to consist of open space, ample street edge, pedestrian potential and sufficient access to the station itself. I also wanted to make sure that there was a surrounding context that spoke of possible development and renewal potential. With these established my task became easy. There really is only one space which fulfils these criteria in the Park Station precinct.

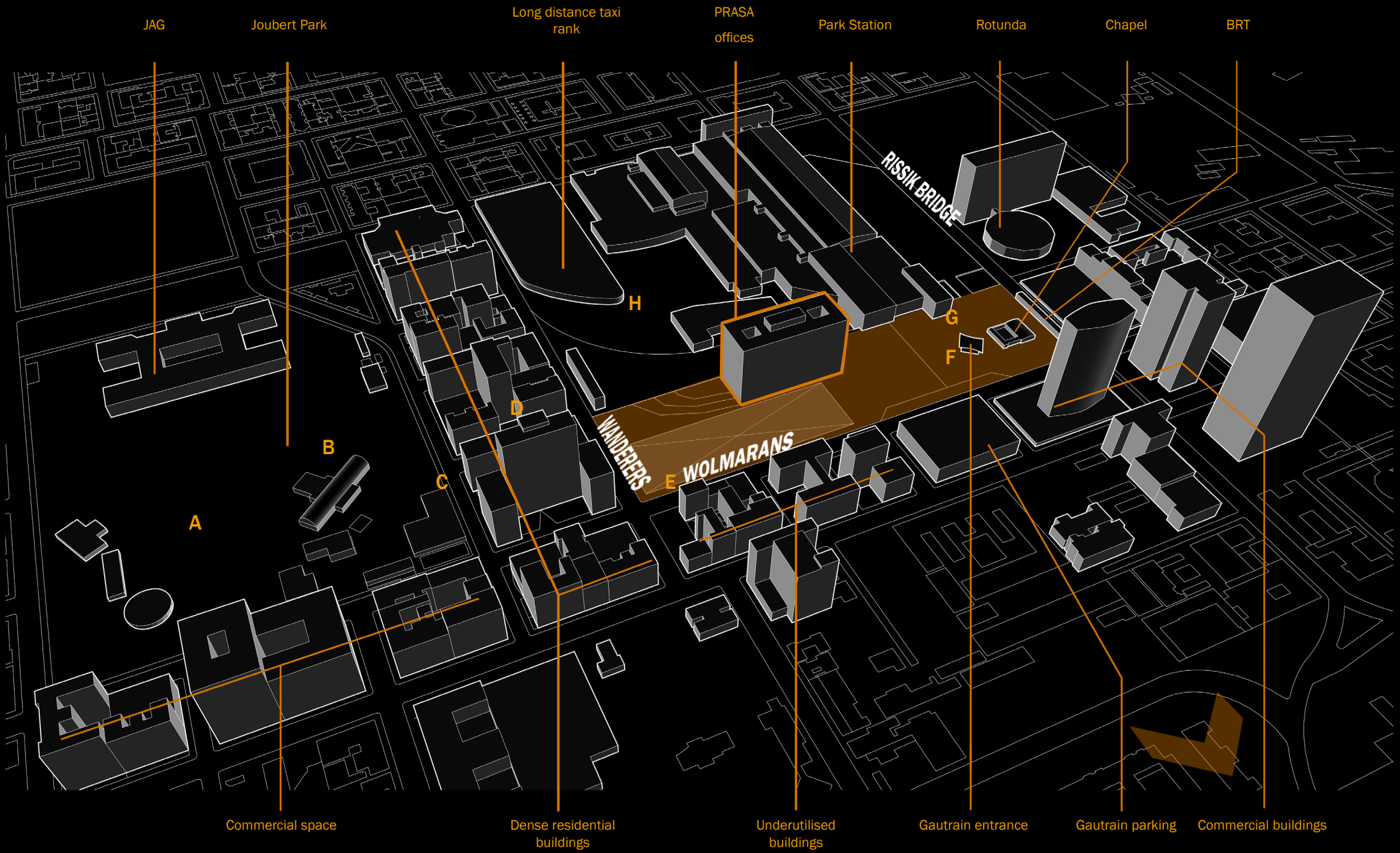
On the northern side of the precinct is Umjantshi House which I will discuss in detail later. This building is the current home of the Public Rail Association of South Africa (PRASA) who runs and operates Park Station and all passenger rail transport. The visitor's parking lot for PRASA occupies a significant piece of prime, street edge land. This parking lot, along with a lush garden and courtyard, is a private fenced off property which squeezes pedestrians onto a narrow pavement along Wanderers St, where informal trade and taxi activity occupies the space, and Wolmarans St which is a popular pedestrian route and pick up/drop off street for taxis. Within this fenced off private property is a large green courtyard as well as a private garden with large trees which I like to believe date back to the final days of the Wanderers cricket grounds.

To the west of this parking lot is the ad-hoc Gautrain plaza which has done little to activate the site. The flying light weight roofing of the buildings in the plaza feel to me like a superficial addition to the space, taking little cognisance of the site's potential. My site therefore

combines the parking lot with the Gautrain plaza. It is defined by Rissik Street and the BRT stop to the west, Wolmarans Street to the north, Wanderers Street to the east and the 6m drop line to the south, which is a distinct and jarring schism between my site's ground level and Park Station's ground level.

The surrounding context includes fairly dense residential buildings concentrated to the east with a greater prevalence of commercial buildings to the west. The site also contains development and renewal potential in the form of vacant sites, abandoned to semi abandoned buildings and heritage buildings such as the rotunda, the small chapel and Park Station itself.

The following pages include a walkthrough comic of the surrounding site. The **alphabet letters** in the birds-eye map chart the route which the comic takes and attempts to create a personal walkthrough of the site context allowing you to experience the approach and exploration of the site as if you were me. Following this is a more detailed site map with **numbers** corresponding to adjacent photographs.



JAG

Joubert Park

Long distance taxi rank

PRASA offices

Park Station

Rotunda

Chapel

BRT

A

B

C

D

H

G

F

WANDERERS

E

WOLMARANS

RISSIK BRIDGE

Commercial space

Dense residential buildings

Underutilised buildings

Gautrain entrance

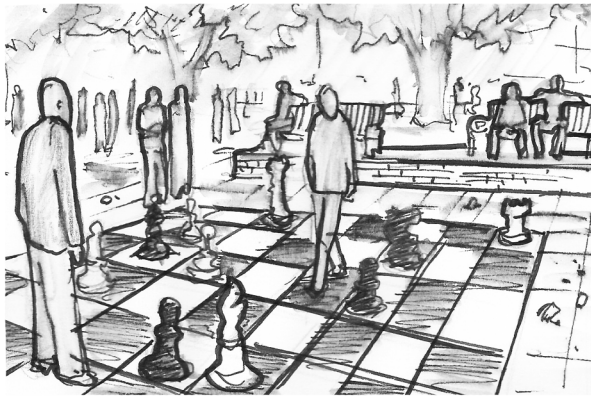
Gautrain parking

Commercial buildings





A



B



C



D

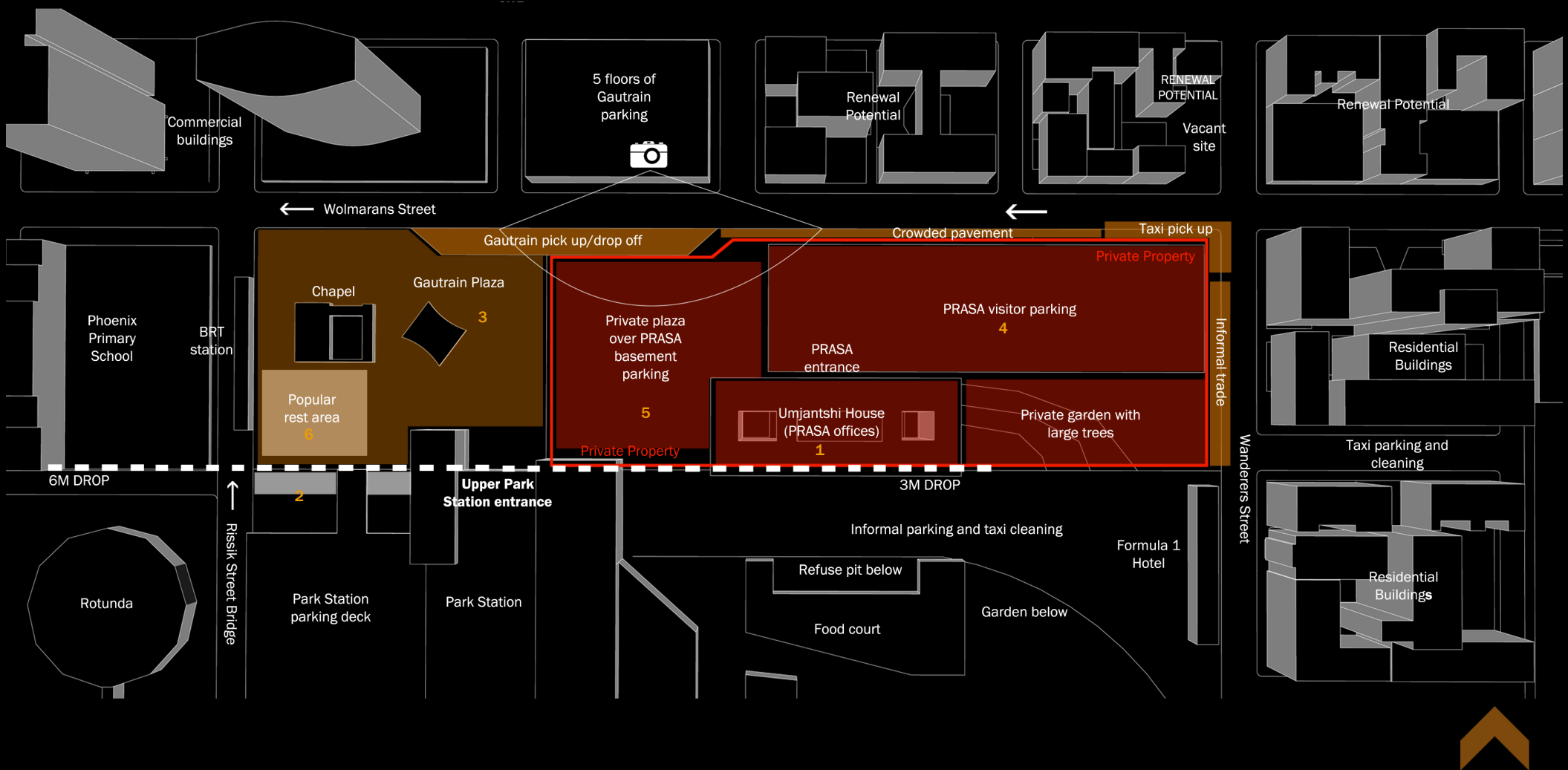




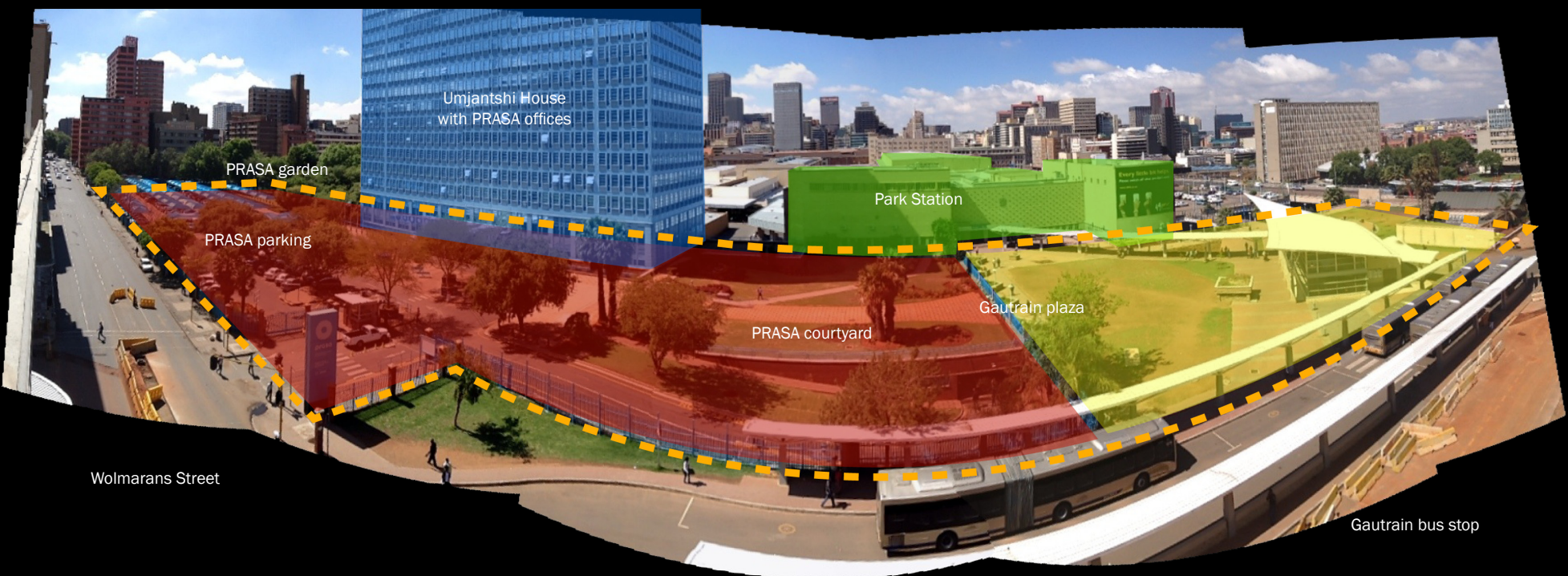
**Site Comic**

- A Relaxing. Joubert Park
- B Chess. Joubert Park
- C Linear market. King George St.
- D Pedestrianisation of Leyds St.
- E Between a fence and a motorway. Womarans St.
- F Informal photo booth. Gautrain plaza.
- G Seeking shade. Gautrain plaza.
- H Blanket seller. Park Station.





(top) Site map  
 (top right) Panoramic photo of the site  
 (bottom right) Site information







1



2

#### Site photographs

- 1 PRASA building
- 2 6m drop between my site and Park Station
- 3 Gautrain plaza
- 4 PRASA visitor parking
- 5 Park Station entrance from PRASA courtyard
- 6 Popular rest area outside the chapel





3



4



6

5



## UMJANTSHI HOUSE

Umjantshi House, formerly known as the Paul Kruger Building, was built in 1965 as an office block for Transnet. This building is part of my site context and requires as much attention as the ground around it. As soon as I had decided on a site I was very much aware of the possibility that I would be using this building as part of my public space in one way or another. Whether this would be a total redevelopment, partial occupation, or merely a new facade treatment was undecided. In expectation of this I embarked on a study of the building in order to understand the limits and potential of the building. This would allow me to make informed decisions during my design process should I need to use it.

My first step was to understand the extent of the building's occupation of the site. There are two levels of underground parking leading to three adjacent basement levels. These basements are currently used for loose storage and little else. The underground parking, which has a perimeter of 70m by 51m on both levels (3570m<sup>2</sup>), has appeared predominantly empty on every visit, with the lower level having only a few cars on each occasion. This basement parking structure is visible in the aerial photograph from 1960's. Above this parking is a private landscaped courtyard flanking the visitor's parking lot which I have previously discussed. The private garden, as mentioned previously, is located to the east of the building. It is defined by the large trees visible in the various site photos.

Above the basement levels the building rises sixteen storeys. Both the ground floor and first floor consist of sparsely occupied office space, mainly housing the security management and reception offices. From the second floor upwards the building is occupied by cellular office space for PRASA. It is evident that the basement levels and first two floors are underutilised and present potential for new programmes without affecting the functioning of the rest of the PRASA office block.

In terms of structure, this building is representative of the time that it was built. It is made up a simple system of perimeter and core columns supporting up-stand beams which support a trough slab. The facade consists of uniform brick and window infill panels which occupy the entirety of the facade, creating a monotonous and strictly functional aesthetic. The repetition of the facade detail and structure creates a monolithic block which dominates the site. This bland monolith, however, provides a certain beauty through the provision of open plan office space devoid of structural elements with all services contained in the internal core. This building, therefore, allows for fairly flexible re-interpretation because of its simple yet sturdy structure.

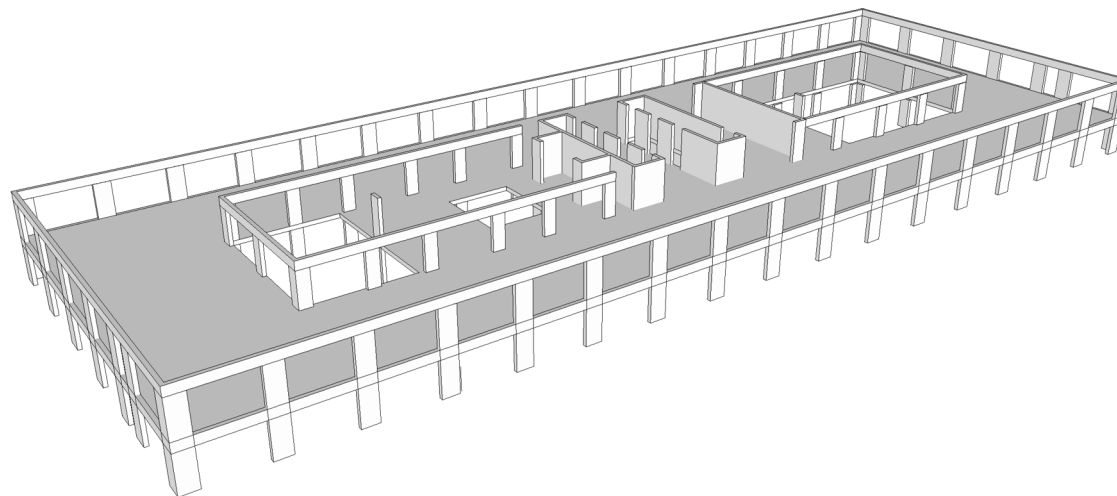
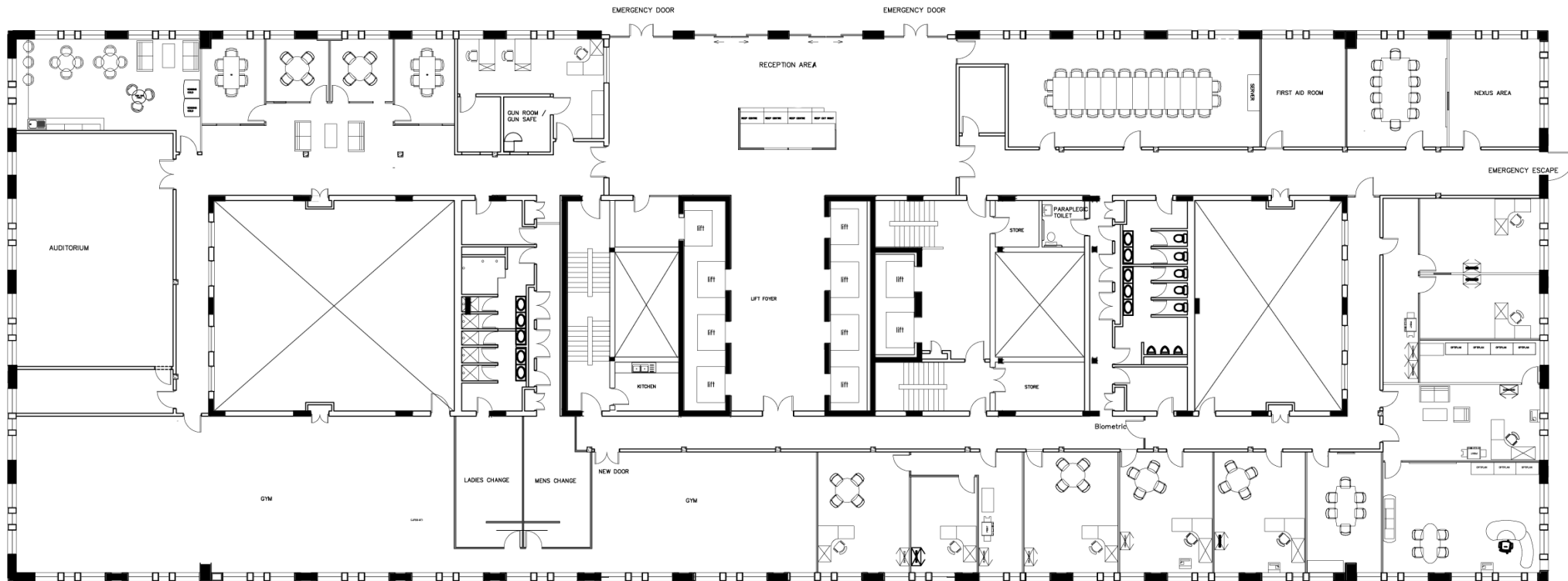


(top) Aerial photograph of Park Station in the 1960's. The underground parking is visible.

(bottom left) Facade detail of Umjantshi House

(top right) Current ground floor plan of Umjantshi House

(bottom right) Structural model of Umjantshi House





# DEFINING BRIEF

04

# PUBLICSPACEPRECEDENT

Learning from public spaces in a global context.

# DEFININGPROGRAMME

Combining all precedents and site information to produce a programme of functions and requirements.

# PROJECTBRIEF

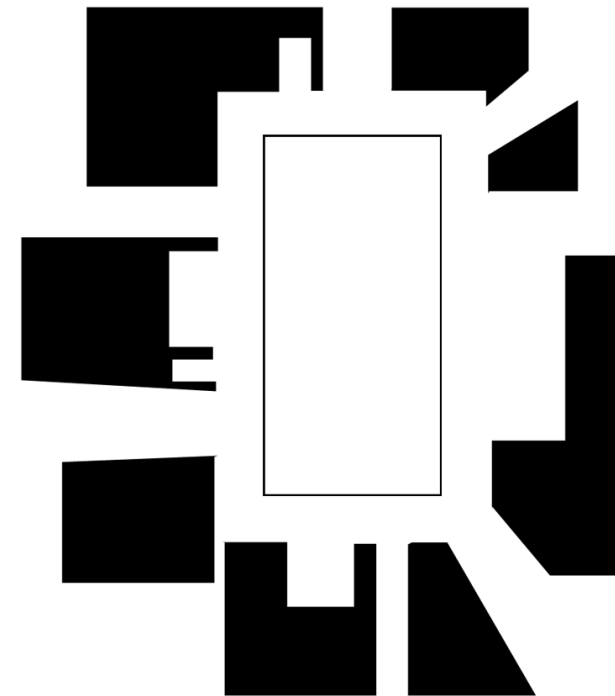
Distillation of GOJOZI.

# PUBLICSPACEPRECEDENT

This chapter explores three public space case studies. The studies chosen each represent an element of public space which I have chosen to be of critical importance to my project.

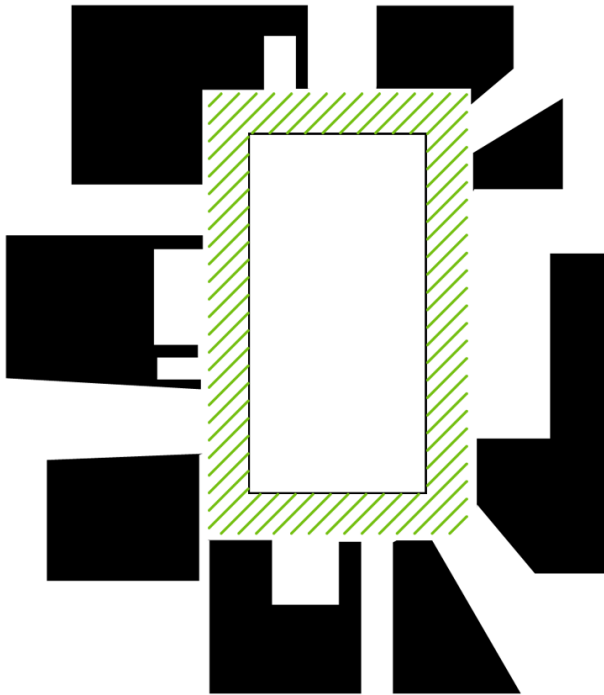
The first study, of Barcelona, analyses the potential which the introduction of new, catalytic, public spaces has on cities suffering from various negative image perceptions. Barcelona is an example of a city whose populace and administration united behind the creation of these spaces and is internationally recognised for it. The diagrams on the right illustrate the trajectory of new catalytic public spaces inserted into an existing urban fabric.

The second study is of a park renovation in Japan where the introduction of outdoor urban sporting facilities and improved access transformed the site into an iconic social node in the city. The third and final study is of LOVE Park in Philadelphia, USA. This is the story of pre-World War II public space which became a beloved, and globally famous, skateboarding spot. LOVE Park's rise to fame made an icon out of a plaza and became one of the most recognised names in Skateboarding. This all changed when skateboarding was banned and the Park was renovated. This case study is included to show the positive impact that skateboarding can have on a space, and the impact which that space can have on a city.

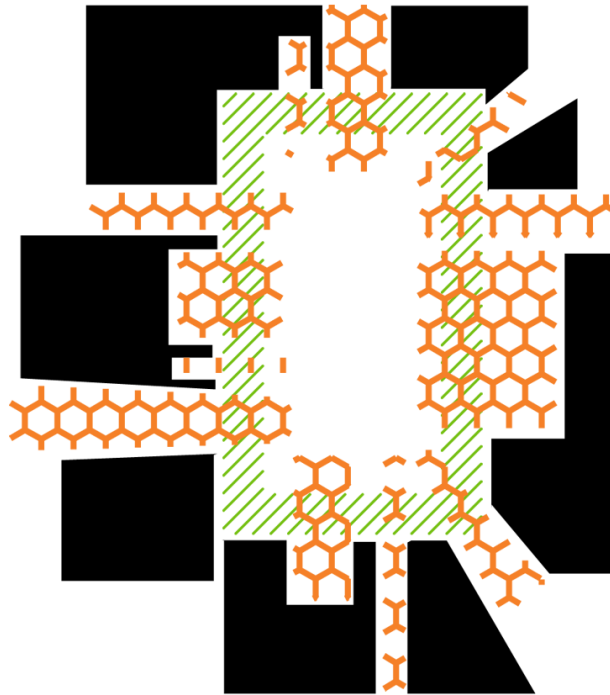


Potential for new public space in an urban setting

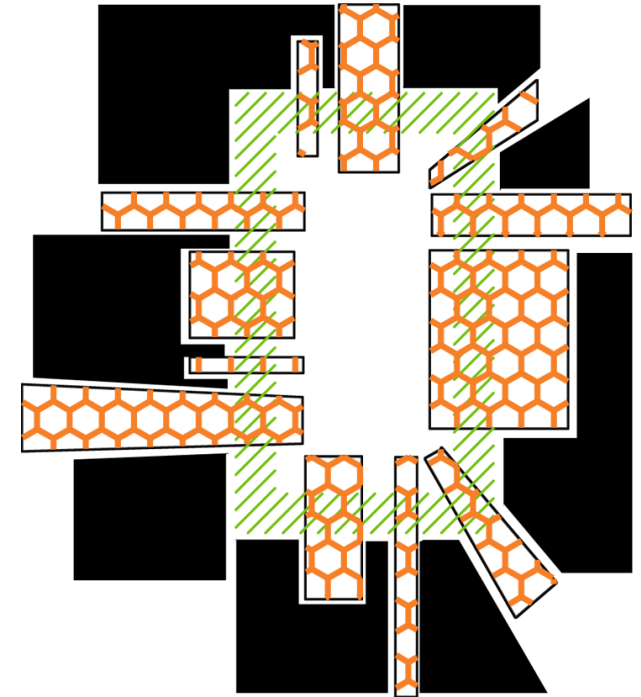




Improve access, legibility and definiton



Increased use sparks activity which extends outward



Activities influence surrounding narratives and urban fabric

## BARCELONA

*“In 1999, precedent has been broken to award the Royal Gold Medal to a city: to Barcelona, its government, its citizens and design professionals of all sorts. Inspired city leadership, pursuing an ambitious yet pragmatic urban strategy and the highest design standards, has transformed the city’s public realm, immensely expanded its amenities and regenerated its economy, providing pride in its inhabitants and delight in its visitors.”*

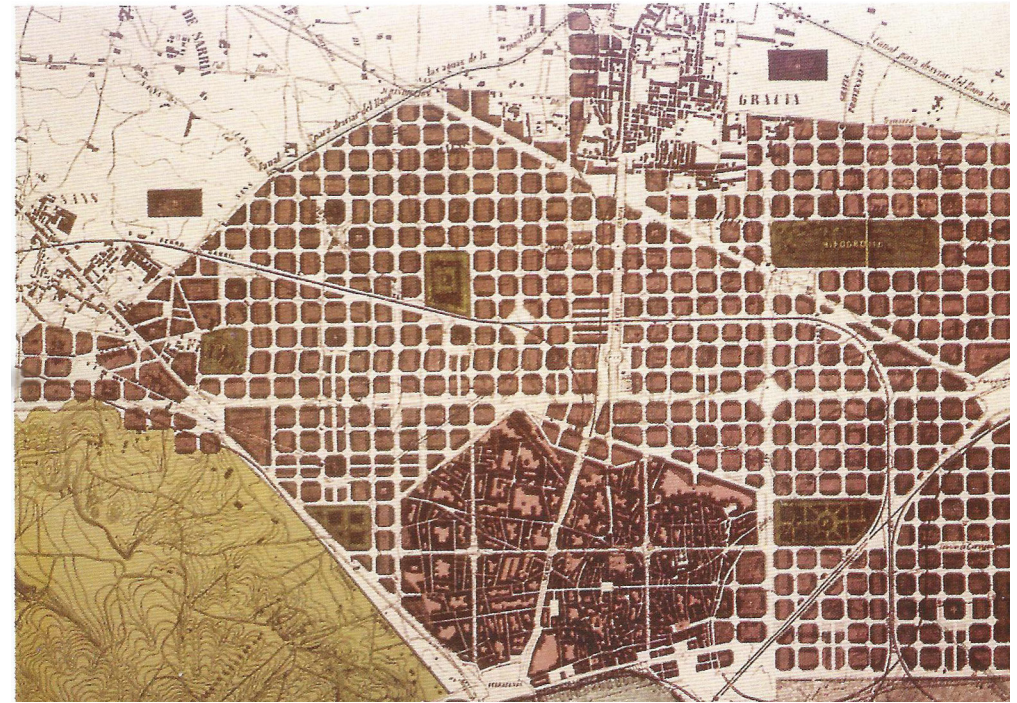
(Balibrea, 2004: 205)

Barcelona is renowned for urban renewal and regeneration. From the 1980’s onwards the city and its administrators have actively embarked on a campaign to improve the quality of public spaces in an effort to transform the city from a post Franco “dusty, down at heel” metropolis suffering from poor living conditions and poor service delivery into a more liveable and harmonious urban fabric produced through “local cultural enterprise” (Rowe, 2006: 36/48). So successful was this transformation that the city of Barcelona proudly hosted the Olympic Games in 1992 and received a Royal Gold Medal in 1999 for architecture from the Royal Institute of British Architects in recognition of the city’s contribution to world architecture. This award, with fellow recipients including architects such as Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe, Frank Lloyd Wright and Sir Herbert Baker, acknowledges the significance of Barcelona’s architectural public space regeneration as a tool for transforming a city. Analysing the success of Barcelona’s transformation therefore becomes critical in understanding the potential of public spaces to affect the identity and character of a city. Furthermore, are there similarities to be found with Johannesburg’s urban condition and character, and is it possible to incorporate certain aspects of Barcelona’s transformation in my design proposal?

*“There exist basically two types of pathology in the city [of Barcelona]: on the one hand, the situation of degradation, in the sense of the loss of quality that the fabric of the city has suffered in certain central areas, and on the other hand the situation of the periphery which, due to many deficiencies, has not managed to become fully part of the city.”*

(Esteban, 2004: 113)

Before assessing these queries I need to establish some background information on Barcelona’s situation and urban trajectory. In 1939, General Francisco Franco became the leader of a unified Spain after the defeat of the Republicans in the Spanish Civil War. In the following decade Spain suffered from economic depression and demoralisation which became known as the “the years of hunger”. This period had a significant effect on Barcelona which was aggravated by a personal grudge of Franco’s. Barcelona was the capital of Republican resistance during the war, and “Franco’s animosity towards Barcelona was particularly aggressive” (Rowe, 2006: 30). The city was essentially relegated to the back of the queue in a country suffering from economic turmoil. Until the 1960’s, which became known as the “years of development”, Barcelona continued to struggle under the weight of increasing urban densification, intensified by vast immigration in the 1940’s and 1950’s which spawned the formation of ‘barracas’, or shanty towns, on the periphery of the city. The government’s solution to manage this growth was the expansion of the city’s organisational structure into the surrounding municipalities under the guidance of the 1953 Regional Plan. This plan

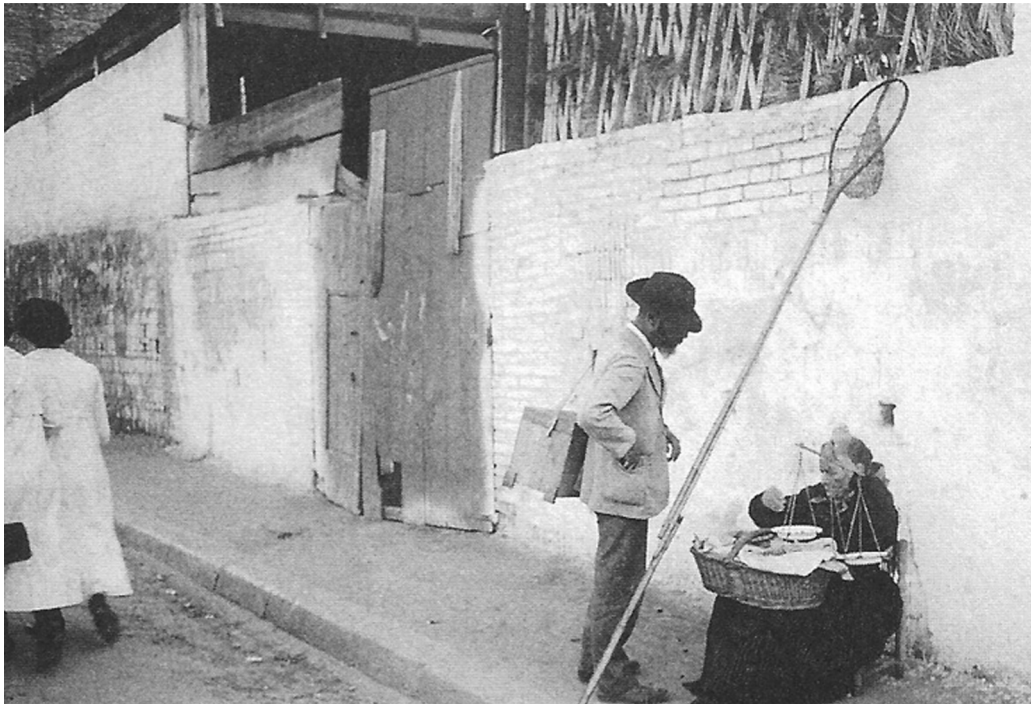


significantly increased the residential mass of Barcelona and its peripheries, resulting in densities of between 70 and 150 apartments per acre combined with a significant lack of public facilities and services. (Calavita et al, 2004: 51). It was this type of urban condition which led to the social movements that ultimately fostered the transformative Public Spaces Program of the 1980’s headed by the new government following Franco’s death in 1975. This was a program which has been responsible for upwards of 150 finished public spaces throughout the city (Rowe, 2006:57).

Oriol Bohigas, a key figure in the architectural rejuvenation of the city, gave a speech at the Royal Gold Medal awards ceremony entitled “Ten Points for an Urban Methodology” (2004: 91-96) which outlines the Public Spaces Program (PSP). Bohigas describes this program as a combination of political impetus and the society’s will to see their situation improve guided by a “radical” collective understanding of the city as the “indispensable physical domain for the modern development of a coherent commonality.” Bohigas expands on this by describing the PSP as providing Barcelona with a public sphere that fosters a sense of identity with spaces that “take on a personality and receive a name.” This was achieved through a series of progressive moves by the city’s administration which Rowe clearly outlines in *Building Barcelona* (2004).

Firstly, the city was divided into smaller urban zones which could be classified as having their own architectural typology and function. These zones were then treated individually in terms of upgrading and development. To prevent speculative development, which had





*(top left)* Historic Cerda Plan of Barcelona. (Marshall, 2004: 117)

*(top)* Somorrostro (Rowe, 2006: 44)

*(right)* Barracas at Somorrostro, Barcelona, in 1966. (Rowe, 2006: 44)





resulted in previous urban inefficiency, administration opted to be in control of as much development as possible. Local government administration therefore actively appointed young designers, architects and engineers to design public space and renewal schemes. Land for these schemes, when not available, was appropriated through the de-densification of urban areas with as much as 30% less density being realised in certain areas (Rowe, 2006: 50). This reverse densification was a bold move, receiving criticism but ultimately being defended with the argument for the availability of more space for services as well as significant traffic decongestion. This was not the only bold move made, however, as the appointment of young designers combined with “an unusual tolerance for experimentation” (Rowe, 2006: 61) meant that the political players behind these initiatives were willing to allow ‘invention’ to substitute the lack of precedent (Rowe, 2006: 62).

The resulting urban spaces became, therefore, site specific (or zone specific) responses to public requirements which had become progressively more vocalised by the public since the beginning of Barcelona’s post Franco awakening. The significance of this public involvement cannot be understated and was crucial in the cultivation of a ‘new’ Barcelona. Eduardo Mendoza, well known Barcelonan author, shed light on this social context when he commented that “it was as if we in Barcelona woke up forty years later and had to decide who we were. Mom and Dad [so to speak] were dead.” (Rowe, 2006: 55).

I feel that this statement aptly summarises the city’s rejuvenation as a city defining itself, and therefore highlights the relevance of its study in relation to Johannesburg. This is because the struggles of a new democracy trying to define itself in a post-Apartheid society have given us first-hand experience of this type of societal shift.

The physical results of this urban planning revolution can be seen in the public spaces themselves. What is most interesting to me, naturally, is the notoriety which Barcelona has received from the skateboarding community. It is a “skateboarding Mecca” (Jackson, 2012) which features in countless skating videos and magazines. The “radical” approach (Bohigas, 2004) to space planning by designers, as well as the tendency towards experimentation, has resulted in a city-wide collection of skate-able spaces.



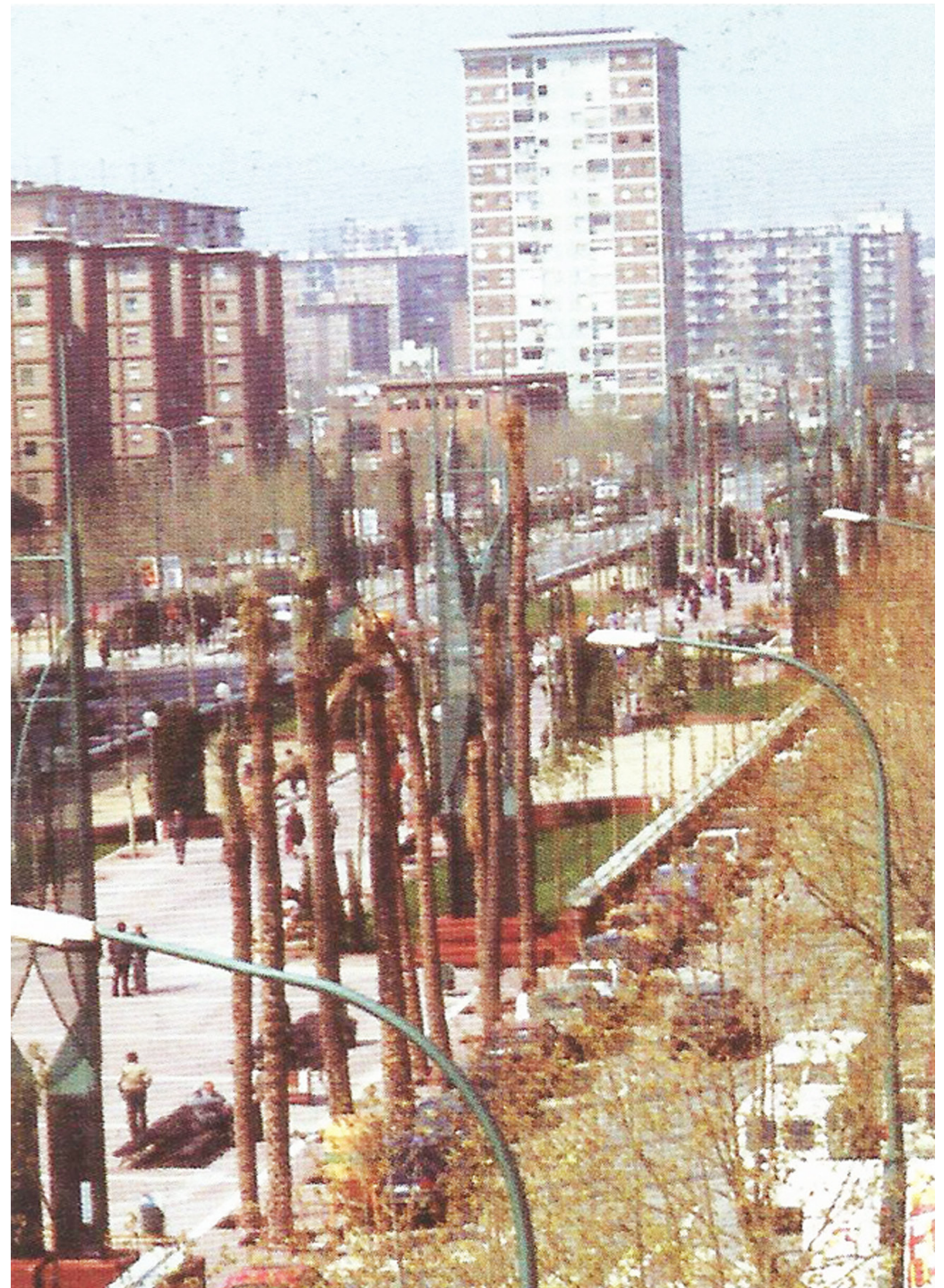




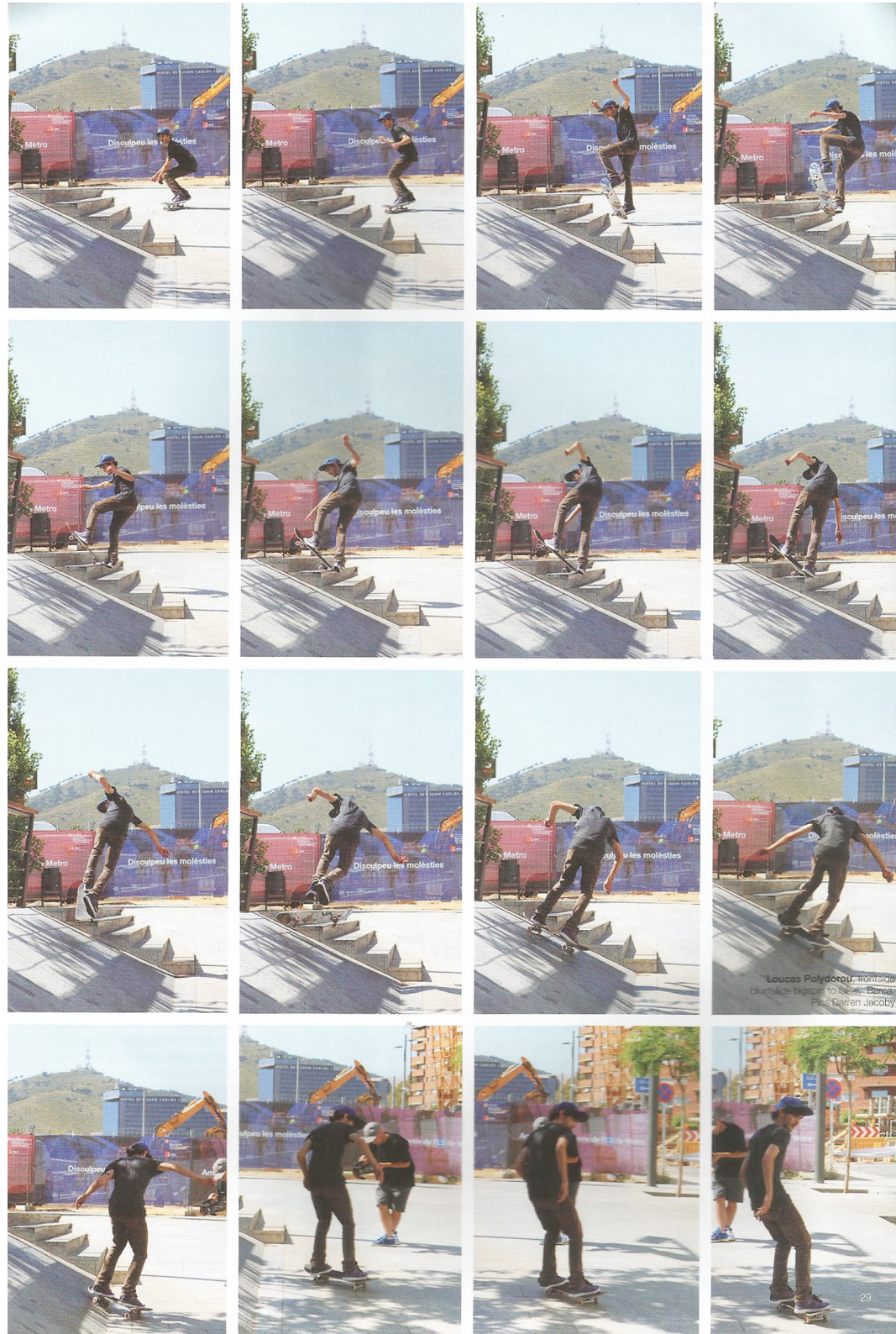
(left) Via Julia. (Marshall, 2004: 118)

(top) Placa dels Països Catalans (Rowe, 2006: 79)

(right) Rambla Prim. (Marshall, 2004: 119)

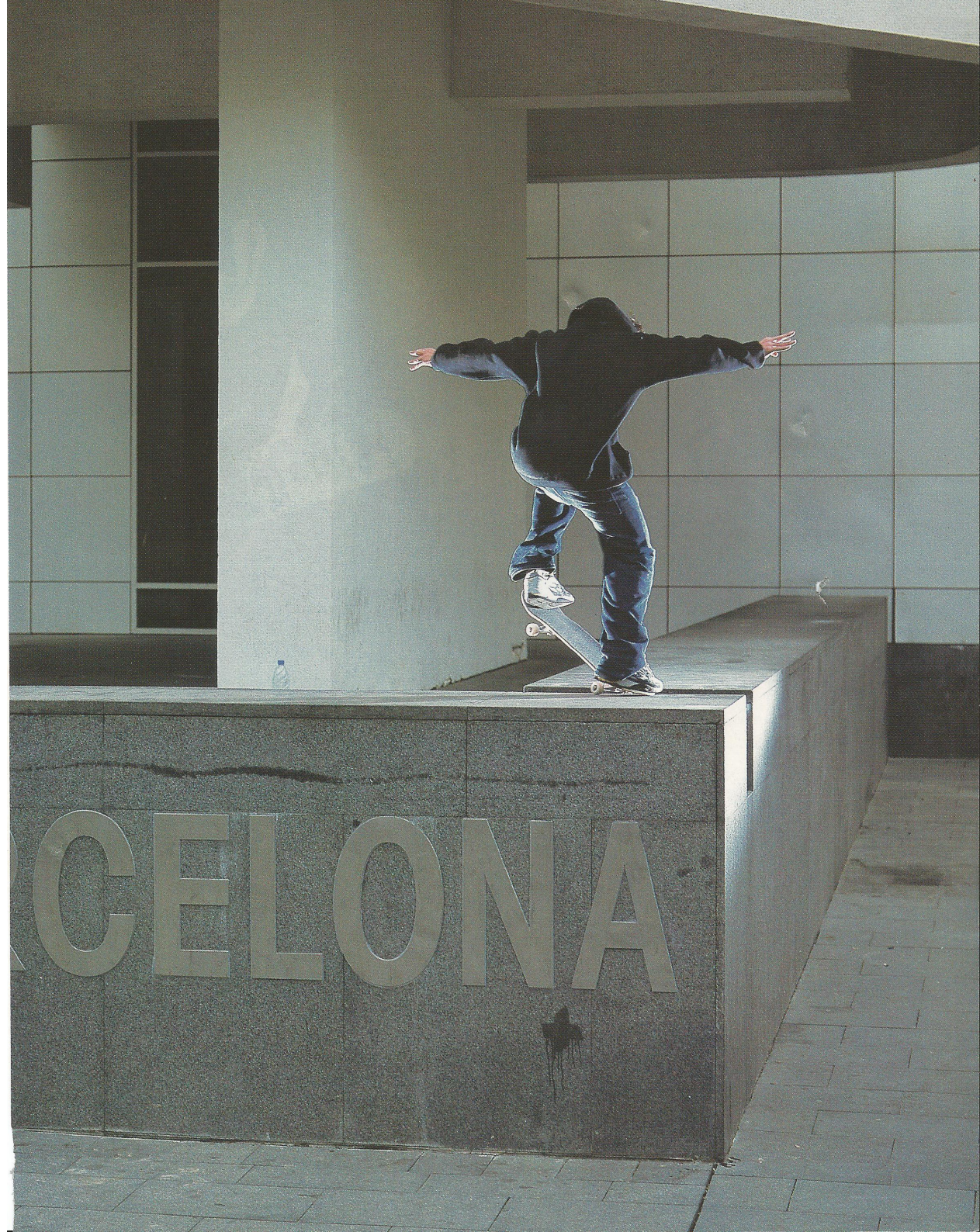






Loucas Polydorou, transition burndog bigspin to table, Barcelona, film Darren Jacoby





(far left) Loucos Polydorou, frontside bluntslide bigspin to fakie, Barcelona. (Session Magazine #36, 2009: 29)

(left) Ricky Oyola, 360 ollie, Barcelona. (Transworld Magazine, May 2002: 259)

(right) Stefan, witch crooked grind, Barcelona. (Transworld Magazine, May 2002: 267)



## MIYASHITA PARK RENOVATION, JAPAN

Miyashita Park was originally created in 1948 as a green space, flanked by railway tracks, near the present fashionable Shibuya district in Japan. In the 1960's, when Japan's roads saw a substantial increase in car numbers due to an economic surge, the park was re-planted onto the roof of a car park built on the site. The separation of the public space from street level saw the park experience a decline in popularity over the following decades whilst an increase in homeless occupation began to characterise the site. In 2011, NIKE spearheaded the renovation of the park by introducing 'pay-for-use' sport facilities aimed at the youth. Atelier Bow-Wow, a well-established urban based firm, was hired to design the renovation.

Atelier Bow-Wow is a firm known for its designs relating to architectural projects that have been inserted into leftover urban spaces. This ideology forms part of the firm's belief in the concept of 'Micro Public Spaces' which promotes Henri Lefebvre's notions of what it is that produces space. "[S]pace is produced neither by architects nor by city planners, nor by the users who live in space: space is not consumer-generated but space-generated" (Atelier Bow-Wow, 2010: 250). This type of thinking is critical to the concept of GOJOZI where informal urban actors are used as a resource for completing my architectural sentence. Bow-Wow affirms this concept by stating that "social spaces...use people to bring themselves into being" (Atelier Bow-Wow, 2010: 251)

The renovation of Miyashita Park is an example of how this thinking has been realised in the design of a public space. The existing park, separated from the street and wedged between railway tracks and high rise residential and commercial buildings, was given a breath of fresh



air with the introduction of youth orientated sporting facilities. These included a skate park, two futsal fields (mini soccer) and a climbing wall. Supporting facilities such as a coffee shop, club house and events square were also added to the park. The design of a grand staircase and elevator unit on the primary street corner, however, has had the largest impact on the park. This new accentuated entrance entices people up to the park and provides the necessary public activity which has transformed the park from a public space into an iconic piece of urban architecture.

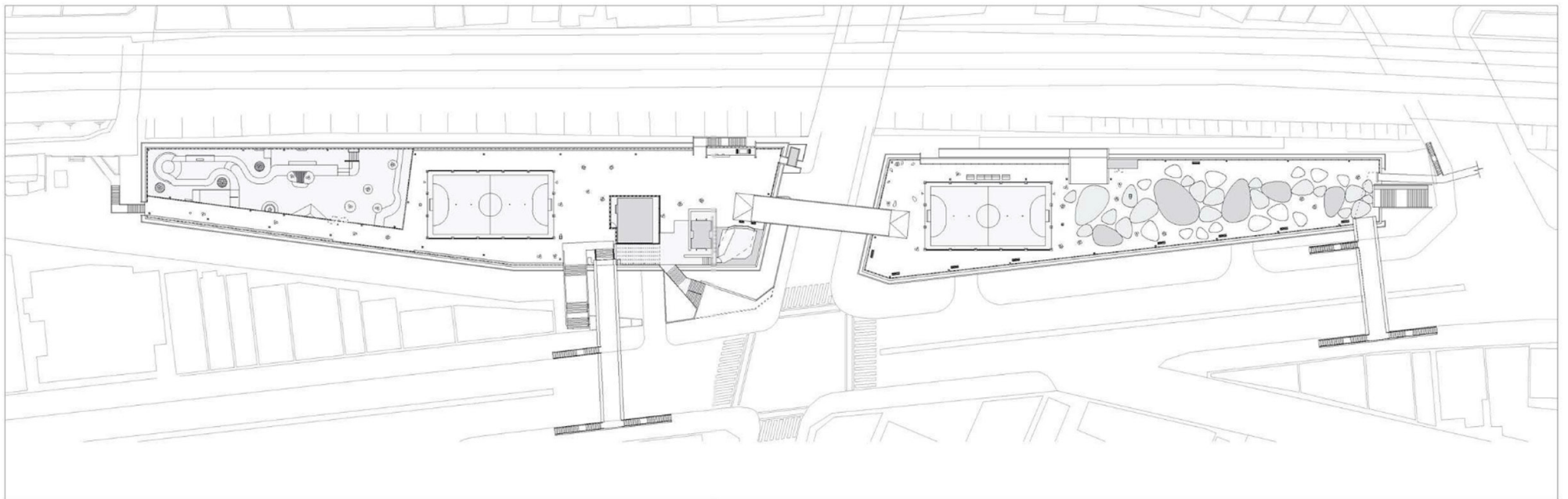
(top) Skate park at Miyashita Park. (Architecture and Technology, Autumn 2011: 56)

(top right) Urban context (Architecture and Technology, Autumn 2011: 48)

(top far right) New accentuated park entrance (Architecture and Technology, Autumn 2011: 49)

(bottom right) Miyashita Park site plan (Architecture and Technology, Autumn 2011: 48)





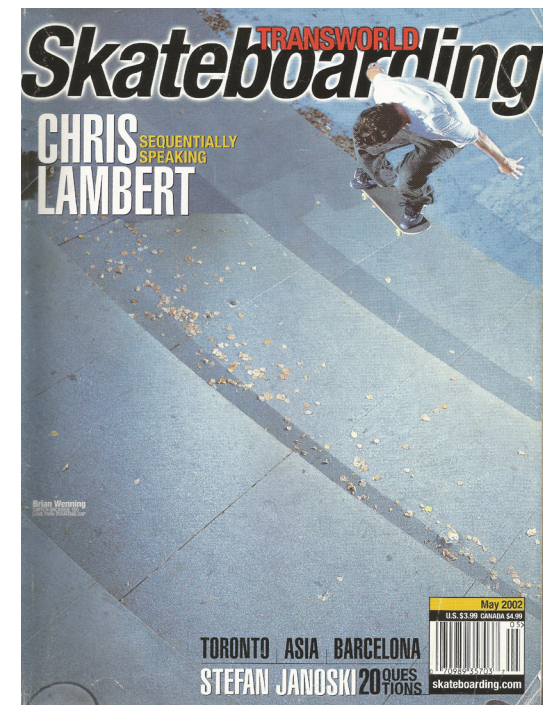
## LOVE PARK, PHILADELPHIA

*"I've [skated] all over, Barcelona, Paris, the West Coast and the East coast...but LOVE is so perfect, and its setup so right, you can't get better than that place"*

Josh Kalis in *LOVE Story, the Saga of a skate landmark* (2004)

LOVE Park, officially known as JFK Plaza, was completed in 1965 as part of Edmund Bacon's 1932 "Civic Centre for Philadelphia" master plan. The architect, Vincent Kling, designed the space as a "cascade of curving granite steps" ([www.ushistory.org](http://www.ushistory.org)). In 1967 the park was dedicated to John F Kennedy and officially named after him. A competition for a sculpture was announced and in 1969 a circular fountain was installed which became the iconic feature of the plaza. This changed in 1976, however, when Robert Indiana's famous 'LOVE' sculpture was placed in the park, forever changing the name and character of the park. The plaza was destined for greatness in the skateboarding community, a fact which Edmund Bacon affirms could never have been predicted or designed: "Neither Vincent nor I would have had the slightest premonition that our work would become world famous." (*LOVE Story*, 2004).

In the mid 1980's LOVE Park was noticed by skateboarders. The granite steps, ledges and benches were perfect for ollie based skateboarding and the smooth open space provided great opportunities for fluid sessions and trick runs. The Park's fame was aided by its close proximity to subway and rail lines, making it easily accessible. Together with the growing popularity of street skateboarding in the 1990's, LOVE Park became internationally known and enjoyed a reputation of one of the world's greatest skate spots. It was so popular in



this regard that ESPN's X-games, an extreme sporting competition based on the Olympics, used LOVE Park for their street skateboarding course two years in a row in 2000/2001. "The X-Games generated eighty million dollars for the city" (*LOVE Story*, 2004) and was "watched by 150 million households worldwide". The X-games officially made LOVE Park "an icon for the city's youth community" ([www.usahistory.org](http://www.usahistory.org)).

Unfortunately, LOVE Park's future is uncertain. In 2002, the mayor of Philadelphia banned skateboarding in the plaza. Severe fines were issued and skateboards were confiscated. The perceived nuisance of skateboarding was deemed to outweigh the will of the skateboarders. This led to the Park's closing for renovations aimed at making the park more accessible to the public through the prevention of skateboarding ([www.ushistory.org](http://www.ushistory.org)). At the announcement of the closing LOVE Park saw two months of intense skateboarding. Twenty-four hour security was implemented to cope but achieved very little, and when the fountain was drained in preparation for the close, a new obstacle was revealed in the basin of the fountain. Nicknamed "the Love Gap", this new long and deep four ledge set caused a ripple of excitement enticing skaters from around the country to head to LOVE to try claim the 'sickest' trick over the ledge gap. Some professional skaters, such as Anthony Pappalardo, even brought a generator and lights in order to skate the LOVE Gap at night. This was all at a time when skateboarding was officially banned in the plaza.

When a fence eventually went up to prevent the skating, the closing of LOVE Park was final. The responses from those who skated at LOVE describe aptly how this was received. Stevie

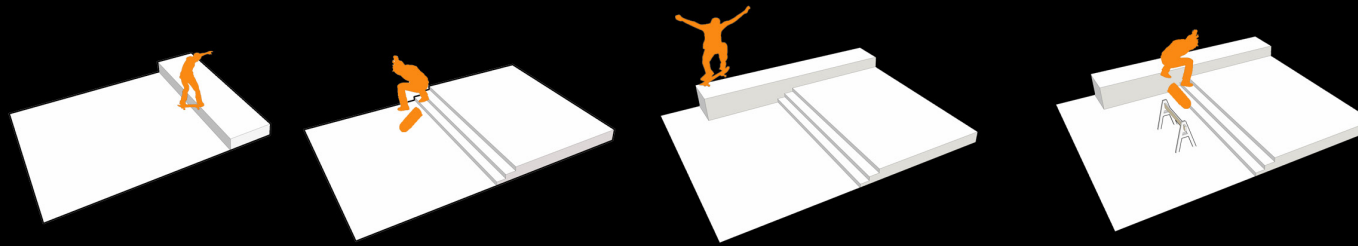




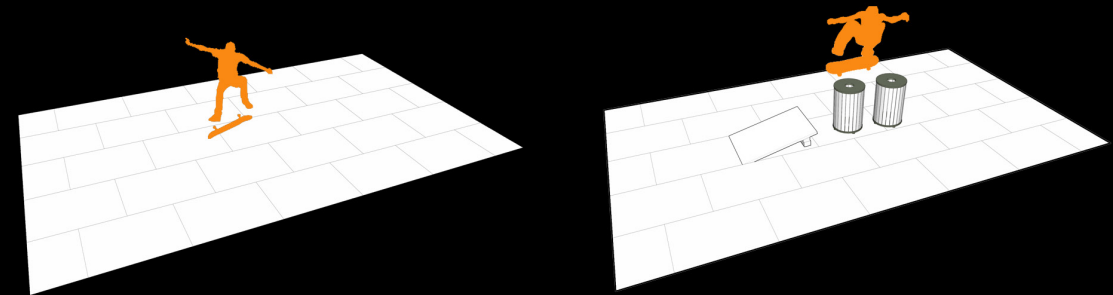
(top left) The LOVE Fountain Gap on the cover of Transworld magazine. (Transworld Magazine, 2002).  
(top) Brian Wenning with a switch backside 180 at the Gap.



Ledges and stairs



Flatland



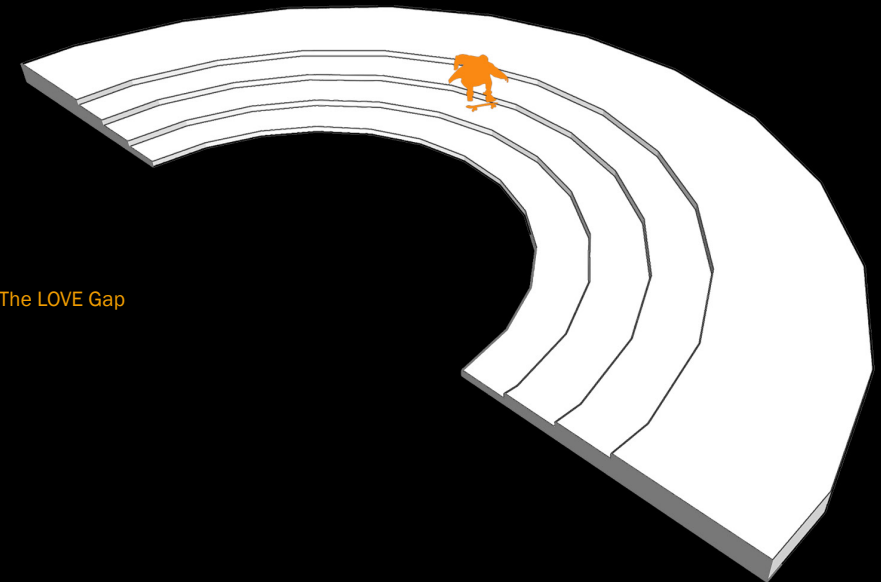
Williams, a skater whose career was launched at LOVE, describes briefly his experience at the park: "We saw what we could do with it...did it...and then they shut us down." (*LOVE Story*, 2004). Bam Margera describes the closing more descriptively: "Now you're not going to see kids doing crooked grinds on ledges, you're going to see bums taking shits in the grass...well done mayor." The most profound response of all, however, comes from an unknown skater in the *LOVE Story* documentary. He describes how before LOVE Park became a haven for skateboarders, it was nothing more than a hangout for drug dealers and low-lives in a bad part of town. Skateboarding changed that. The following quotation must be read with the inner city of Johannesburg in mind.

*"We came here and we gave it life. We made it so that people could walk by and not feel scared because these little scrawny kids on skateboards aren't scared...why should a 30 year old man be."*

Unknown skater (*LOVE Story*, 2004)

Since the renovations there have been multiple attempts to get the park restored to its loved state but have yet to be successful. Edmund Bacon, the original mind behind the plaza in 1932 now known as LOVE Park, supported this restoration until his death in 2005.

The LOVE Gap







(left) Skatespace at LOVE Park

(top) Other informal actors inspired to use LOVE Park

(Source: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/9682451@N02/2635915563>)

(right) Skating the smooth granite surface at LOVE. (Source: [http://www.flickr.com/photos/joel\\_levin/7054567317/lightbox/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/joel_levin/7054567317/lightbox/))



Photography By Demetrios



# DEFINING PROGRAMME

GOJOZI has a distinct aim in the creation of an iconic public space which attracts new people and improves conditions ultimately acting as a catalyst for the renewal and development of the surrounding urban fabric. I have discussed already how and why I plan on using informal urban actors as a precedent for the re-imagining of space. I have also discussed public space both locally and internationally to establish the potential of public space for urban renewal. I will now combine the information I have collected and formulate a programme for GOJOZI which illustrates how I plan to achieve my aims.

Firstly I wish to discuss the broad programmatic picture of these aims. As discussed previously I want to re-imagine public space. With the help of the informal actors my task becomes one of facilitation. I need to design a space which promotes their activity and uses them to create public space. To do this I believe two things are required: a ground zero plaza space which becomes a receptor for their activity, and a building which houses the necessary resources which allows these actors, as well as others, to expand the potential of their space appropriation. Let me begin with the plaza space. This will be the new town square, the gateway to and from the city and the iconic space representing contemporary Johannesburg. More importantly for this thesis, however, it will be a space which accommodates informal urban actors and pedestrians in a single public space. By incorporating these groups together, this space will showcase the re-imagining of space in a public environment through the facilitation and celebration of their actions. This would hopefully entice or encourage pedestrians and other members of the public to appropriate spaces for their own purposes as well as ultimately sparking a broader re-imagination of space in Johannesburg. This, in

essence, is what catalysts are all about. The issue now is the character and programme of this plaza. To accommodate and attract urban athletes to the space there is a need for useable space. The incorporation of the urban elements, previously documented, is the first step. These will form the basis for athletic activity. If it's skate-able you can bet anything a skateboarder will find out about it. The same is true for tracerurs and traceuses and their obstacles. However, to make the plaza an iconic spot which becomes a household name in the sporting community, like LOVE Park, a defining character or obstacle is needed. For this reason I will explore the design of a useable, sculptural object that defines the space for athletes.

To accommodate the traders in the plaza I will need to design adaptable trade space around points of high pedestrian activity. These spaces need to be adaptable as the changing pedestrian patterns (in terms of direction, concentration and requirements) changes throughout each twenty-four hour cycle. Informal traders will set up their shops at certain times of the day to provide specific requirements. For example, breakfast and coffee sellers will only sell in the early hours of the morning. They then either change their product or move onto other locations to adapt to the daily market. If the new plaza is designed to facilitate a complete range of contexts throughout a daily cycle, then the tradespaces need to be able to adapt to those changing requirements and facilitate multiple trade types from single locations. This brings me to the final requirement of the plaza: social activity. The variety of public transport options offered provides the potential foot traffic. Park Station alone is used by an average of 800 000 commuters per day (Brodie, 2008: 166). What is needed





(right) Allowing informal traders to finish my architectural sentence

is a space that entertains those people as well as attracts newcomers. In the case of those already frequenting the area, the addition of positive social activity will help improve the quality of life. I will therefore include in my design a multi-purpose sport and festival space which allows for large markets, gatherings and events. This space will be supplemented by a multi-purpose outdoor theatre. This will act as a night time movie cinema and anytime performance space for plays, concerts and music events. For this theatre I will look to Atelier Bow-Wow's BMW Guggenheim Lab project in New York. This project consists of an elevated theatre fly-tower occupying an alleyway in the city. The space below is completely free for a variety of activities supported by the theatre rigging above.

The second requirement of GOJOZI as a whole is the design of a building which will act as a support structure for the public space itself. It will serve as the go to place for anybody seeking to involve themselves in creative re-imagining of space. This building will become a magnet for creative types and anyone in need of studio space, workshops and design facilities. It will be a space where traders can create their mobile stalls, build attachments for an existing stall or simply repair their trolley. For the athletes this space becomes a workshop for the creation of ramps and kickers to be planted in the site and in the city. For artists seeking to build a sculpture or installation this will be the place to go to. To complete this building I will add an art gallery, food bazaar, pool bar and night club. In short, this centre will provide all the necessary tools required for user led urban intervention, enjoyment and exploration.

The inspiration for this space came from a reference to a similar centre in New York called 3rd Ward. This centre offers rentable work space and classes in all aspects of creative workmanship, including woodwork, metalwork, jewellery design and photography. I aim to have a similar centre where traders, athletes, artists and anybody interested could design and build their own spaces within GOJOZI and the surrounds. There is, at present, an existing version of a 3rd Ward type establishment in Johannesburg: the Maboneng Precinct.



*bottom*) Architect's model of the BMW Guggenheim Lab, New York.  
*(right and bottom right)* Various functions underneath the elevated fly-tower.  
(Source: <http://www.designboom.com/weblog/cat/9/view/16026/atelier-bow-wow-bmw-guggenheim-lab-complete.html>)





## THE MABONENG PRECINCT

*“The Maboneng Precinct has become known as a hub for Johannesburg’s creative community offering spaces to live, create and collaborate.”*

([www.mabonengprecinct.com](http://www.mabonengprecinct.com))

This precinct consist of artist spaces and studios, including film and sound recording, as part of a downtown renewal project which started in 2008 with the purchase of DF Corlett construction offices and warehouses by Jonothan Liebman and his company, ‘Propertunity’. This building was converted into Arts on Main in 2009, forming “fully integrated, mixed-use community and a comprehensive and mixed-income residential offering” which was named Maboneng, a Sotho word for ‘place of light’ ([www.mabonengprecinct.com](http://www.mabonengprecinct.com)).

The Maboneng Precinct has been successful in this regard, generating significant interest from investors and developers. The area has since seen the introduction of a movie house, various restaurants and coffee bars, a hotel and other residential conversions. This project shows that there is potential for creative led renewal in Johannesburg. This precinct, however, is very isolated. It’s location in-between Fox and Main Street in the south eastern area of the CBD close to the M2 highway. Whilst there are BRT stations close by, the predominant form of access is with a private car via the highway. There is very little urban activity around this area and in my opinion the precinct does little to integrate economic and social differences as it serves as a pocket of affluent development in an area of the CBD that provided cheaper property prices due to its isolation.

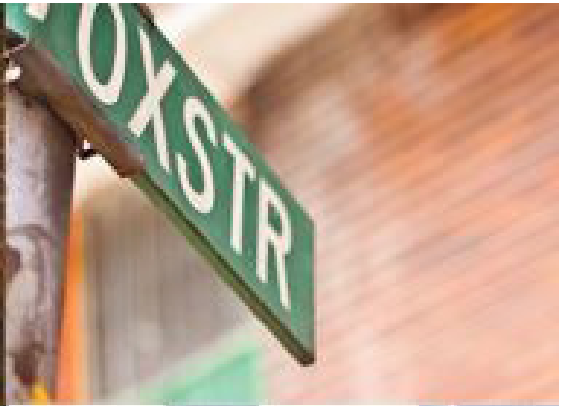


To be fair the integration I mentioned is not the aim of Arts on Main, and for this reason it is successful as it has formed a creative hub in the city. The introduction of a similar scheme (with a greater sensitivity towards social integration) close to a large variety of public transport options as and with a greater density of pedestrian traffic, is where GOJOZI will establish itself. This, as well as the availability of wood and metal workshops, photography studios, audio/visual studios, classrooms and design library is what will make GOJOZI unique.





# THE CITY IS BACK.



(top left) Maboneng Precinct street art  
(Source: <http://www.joziliciousblog.co.za>)

(top) Maboneng Precinct advert.  
(Source: [http://sphotos-h.ak.fbcdn.net/hphotos-ak-snc7/s720x720/409375\\_237073409705432\\_773080343\\_n.jpg](http://sphotos-h.ak.fbcdn.net/hphotos-ak-snc7/s720x720/409375_237073409705432_773080343_n.jpg))

# PROJECT BRIEF

I now have a solid understanding of the primary elements of my programme which include an iconic public space and a supplementary community workshop centre to facilitate creative intervention in the site and surrounding city. I will now summarise this programme through the creation of a brief... of sorts. The Johannesburg Development Agency (JDA) has outlined objectives for the future development of the Park Station precinct (JDA, 2007: 1). Eleven of the thirteen objectives on this list are met through the programme I have outlined. The two not being met are concerned with increased capacity for long distance buses and taxis, as well as the provision of housing. Both of these requirements could, however, be met as a result of future development resulting from the catalytic space that is GOJOZI. The JDA's objectives are as follows:

## To improve efficiency of intermodal interchange

The PRASA parking lot occupies a vast parcel of street front space in the Park Station precinct. By converting this lot into public space I am opening up new pedestrian routes over the site which in essence creates better access for all transport nodes in the vicinity.

## To improve accessibility to the area to both pedestrians and motorists.

For pedestrians the availability of public transport is the key issue. As this is already available my focus must shift to the ease of movement around the precinct. An understanding of pedestrian movement is therefore critical in order to assess existing routes around my site

and consequently potential routes within my site.

For motorists this issue becomes a matter of available parking around the site. The recent addition of 5 stories of Gautrain parking on Wolmarans Street as well as the decked parking platform for Park Station provides ample public parking yet more can be added to the street edge and tarred surface to the immediate south of my site. The unused 3rd basement of the PRASA building can also be converted into parking for employees of PRASA.

## To improve legibility within the area

Legibility, in my opinion, refers to the ease with which people navigate the site. This refers to clearly defined functions, entrances and facilities within the site.

## To improve safety and security in the area

The provision of sufficient lighting and surveillance is important for this point. Lighting will promote night time occupation and surveillance will deter illegal activity. What is also crucial is a public space which prevents isolation of individuals, ultimately minimising the risk of theft.



### To make special places and experiences

This point speaks of the iconic status which I am aiming to achieve with GOJOZI. The space must be unique to Johannesburg architecturally yet maintain the essence of what allows urban Johannesburg to thrive.

### To promote social integration and inclusion

This new public space must attract suburban Johannesburg residents to the city. People wishing to visit town should know that GOJOZI is their first port of call, a gateway from which they can venture beyond or simply explore the site. This is in keeping with the history of Park Station which was the entry point for all people arriving in Johannesburg from afar.

### To create jobs and economic opportunities in the area

The provision of space and need for informal trade forms the initial and immediate response to this point. However, the inclusion of other informal actors such as artists and other creatives under the umbrella of informal urban actors opens up more opportunities for the space. This will be achieved through the introduction of a community workshop centre (The Space Workshop) which facilitates user led urban intervention through the provision of resources and education.

### To upgrade existing and provide new social amenities

This will include the addition of sport facilities, an adaptable theatre, gallery/exhibition space, market areas, festival space, a food bazaar and a pool bar/night club. GOJOZI will also become the official home of Nollie Faith and will therefore require management offices and facilities for the children and staff. (See page 92 for details)

### To preserve and develop the heritage of the area

The renewal of any element within the Park Station precinct and surrounding area could count as heritage development if the history of the area is acknowledged through design. This includes a variety of heritage buildings and spaces in the area such as the Rotunda, the Chapel, the old station concourse building and Joubert Park. With the creation of a new town square in close proximity to these buildings it is envisioned that they will form part of the development portfolio available to future private investors.

### To develop public open space in the area

The conversion of a parking lot into a multi-use public space for the city of Johannesburg and its public should result in adequate fulfilment of this requirement.

### To balance the interests of land uses and users

GOJOZI must be considered as a public space first. The character of this public space is derived from the study and acceptance of the informal urban actors which will allow for their accommodation and celebration of their activity. The balance of spaces devoted to pedestrians, traders and athletes is critical, ensuring at all times that conflict between groups is avoided whilst simultaneously integrating them in a unified space.

## PROGRAMME SUMMARY

### The Plaza:

- Iconic urban athlete landscaping
- Sufficient adaptable tradespace
- Multi-purpose theatre
- Festival space (for sporting, events and markets)
- Street edge parking with taxi drop-off and pick-up zones
- Improving the Gautrain entrance
- Green spaces

### The Space Workshop:

- Timber and metal workshops with storage
- Studio spaces
- Communal and private workspaces
- Media centre (computer room, library and audio visual room)
- Photographic studio with dark room
- Art gallery and exhibition space
- Informal trader storage units
- Staff offices
- Site management offices
- Food bazaar
- Pool bar and night club



## NOLLIE FAITH

*"We're just some regular guys who are trying to make a difference in a tough community. Skateboarding is giving these kids opportunities that they would normally never have experienced."*

(Ferreira, 2012)

Nollie Faith is an inner city outreach programme for children. It was started by Zean Ferreira, a skater who lives in an apartment at the Arts on Main complex, when he saw kids playing around on Fox street. He decided to bring out some spare boards and teach the kids to skate. The skateboards were a hit. Zean then decided to start a Saturday day-care programme where the kids are given a lunch and taught to skate by volunteers. This has grown into a fairly successful programme with as many as forty kids appearing to skate. (Ferreira, 2012). I wish to include Nollie Faith in my design by proposing a resident place in the GOJOZI scheme where the kids can learn to skate in a safer environment which is closer to public transport. Ferreira and his team could then have on-site offices to expand the charity.

For more information visit [Nollie Faith on Facebook](#).



(top left) Child's play at Nollie Faith. (Jackson, 2012)  
 (top) Doubling up  
 (left) 360 flip

(top right) Singata perform on the fourth floor balcony, Anstey's Building. (Source: <http://urbanartsplatform.blogspot.com/p/past-events-album.html>)  
 (far right) Reptilez, finalists at Battle in the City. (Source: <http://urbanartsplatform.blogspot.com/p/past-events-album.html>).





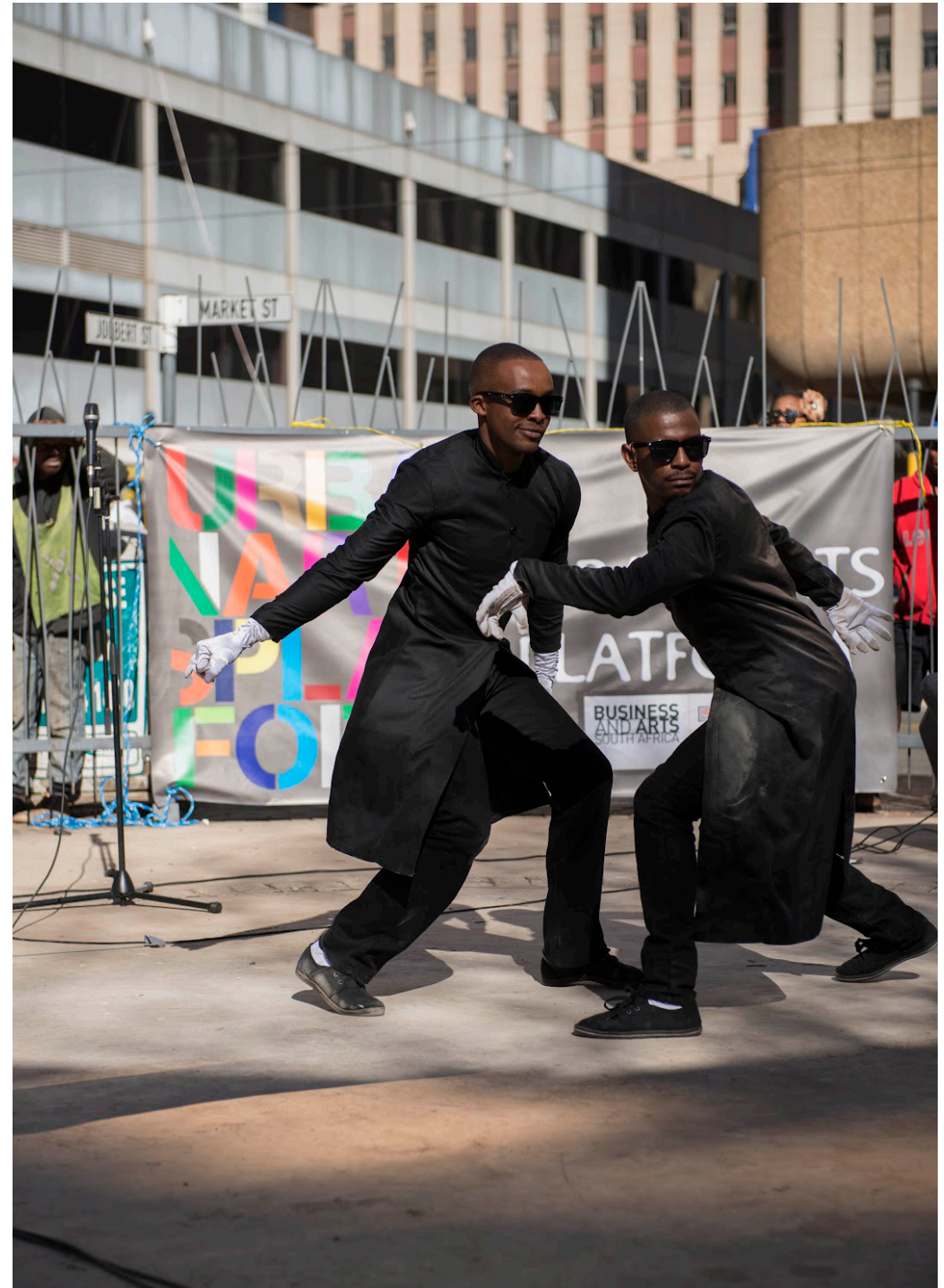
## URBAN ARTS PLATFORM

*“Urban Arts Platform (UAP) is a multidisciplinary non-profit arts organization that began in 2010 because of a need that young and/or underprivileged artists have to develop and grow their artistic talents. UAP works with these artists in the inner-city of Johannesburg, where UAP has coordinated multiple projects and events. Here, various communities have gained access to arts and culture. UAP is dedicated to people development through the arts while contributing to the advancement of urban renewal.”*

(Urban Arts Platform, 2012)

UAE is all about the renewal of Johannesburg through artistic interventions. They currently operate out of the Ansteys building and have been responsible for a variety of projects around Johannesburg ranging from street performances to musical events and rap battles. I believe the inclusion of the UAE as part of the Community Workshop Centre, by offering them office and exhibition space to expand their operations, would be a great addition to the GOJOZI label.

For more information visit [urbanartsplatform.blogspot.com](http://urbanartsplatform.blogspot.com).



**GOJOZI**

**05**



# THE PLAZA

The public space component

# SPACEWORKSHOP

The building housing supplementary services for the plaza

# DETAIL DESIGN

A closer look at the detailing of GOJOZI

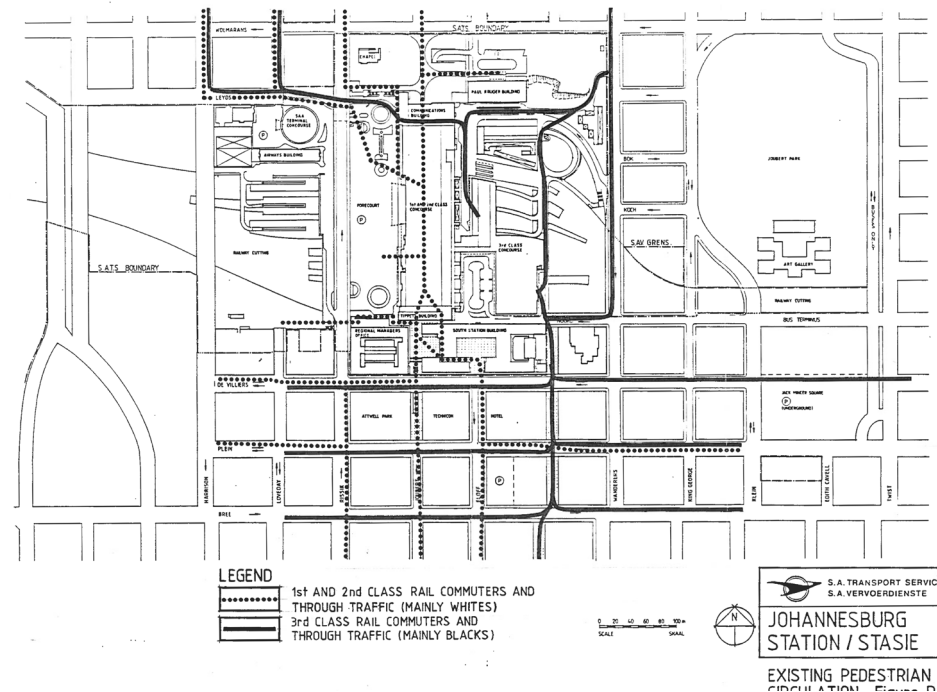
# THE PLAZA

## DEFINING THE SCHEME

Now that the programme is established the process of design begins. By far the most important element of this scheme is the activation of pedestrian activity. This is a necessity of the traders as well as the most critical component of any urban public space. With regards to the athletes pedestrian activity is a defining characteristic of the street scene without which the space would feel like a skate park. Pedestrian activity is therefore the first design activator which I turned to, and it began with the mapping of this activity as thoroughly as possible.

The following image is taken from a report of the Johannesburg Station and its environs by Basil Brink (1987) who worked as an architect for Transnet, owner of the station precinct, from 1976 to 2003. What this image shows is the pedestrian circulation at the time, divided into transport classes. As is visible in the image, these classes ultimately determined racial class as well. The map clearly shows distinct axes of pedestrian traffic. The decking of the station forecourt and the fencing off of the then Paul Kruger Building's parking lot (now Umjantshi/PRASA) have resulted in the most significant changes in these routes today. This map formed an important tool in the planning of developments for the precinct, so it is with this in mind that I mapped current pedestrian routes around the site.

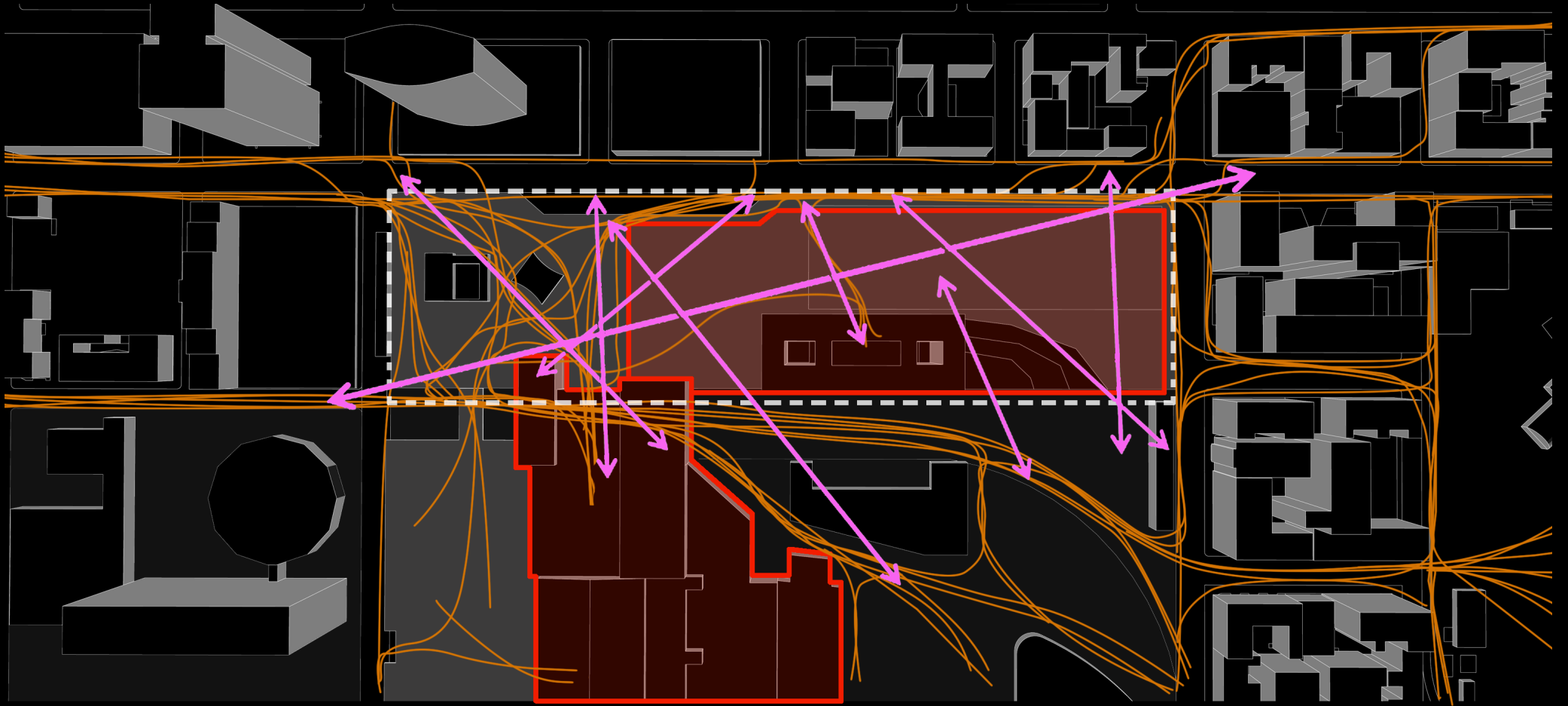
The current pedestrian activity establishes axes on the site and around the precinct. The axes shown on the map are a combination of existing routes around the PRASA property as



well as imagined or potential routes through the site. Collectively this creates a diagram from which to draw various spines through the site. The hierarchy of spines is determined by an intuitive look at the intensity of pedestrian activity.

(top) Pedestrian mapping of Park Station in 1987. (Brink, 1987: 66)  
(right) Current pedestrian mapping of Park Station informing existing and imagined axes on the site





Site  
PRASA property  
Axes  
Pedestrian activity

## THE SPINE

With the primary and secondary spines defined I was able to begin designing the form of the public space. An important site feature, however, was to have a significant impact on this design. The 6m drop between my site and the Park Station ground floor creates a vertical barrier for pedestrians and hampers movement as well as creates an imposing cavernous space at the dominant entrance to Park Station. My intervention must therefore address this issue. The primary form at this point became an excavation into my site from the Park Station ground floor. This was to have multiple benefits.

- Opening up the cavernous space around the station entrance and the southern side of PRASA building.
- A large portion of the excavation already exists in the form of the underground parking of the PRASA building.
- Creating a second Gautrain entrance closer to the station platform. (In terms of depth)
- Provide programme definition and sense of enclosure for certain programmes within the space.
- Allows for raked seating for festival, sport and theatre space.
- Creates opportunities for level changes necessary for urban athletics landscaping.
- Two out of three under-utilised basement levels of the PRASA building are exposed to daylight and therefore available for use in the scheme.

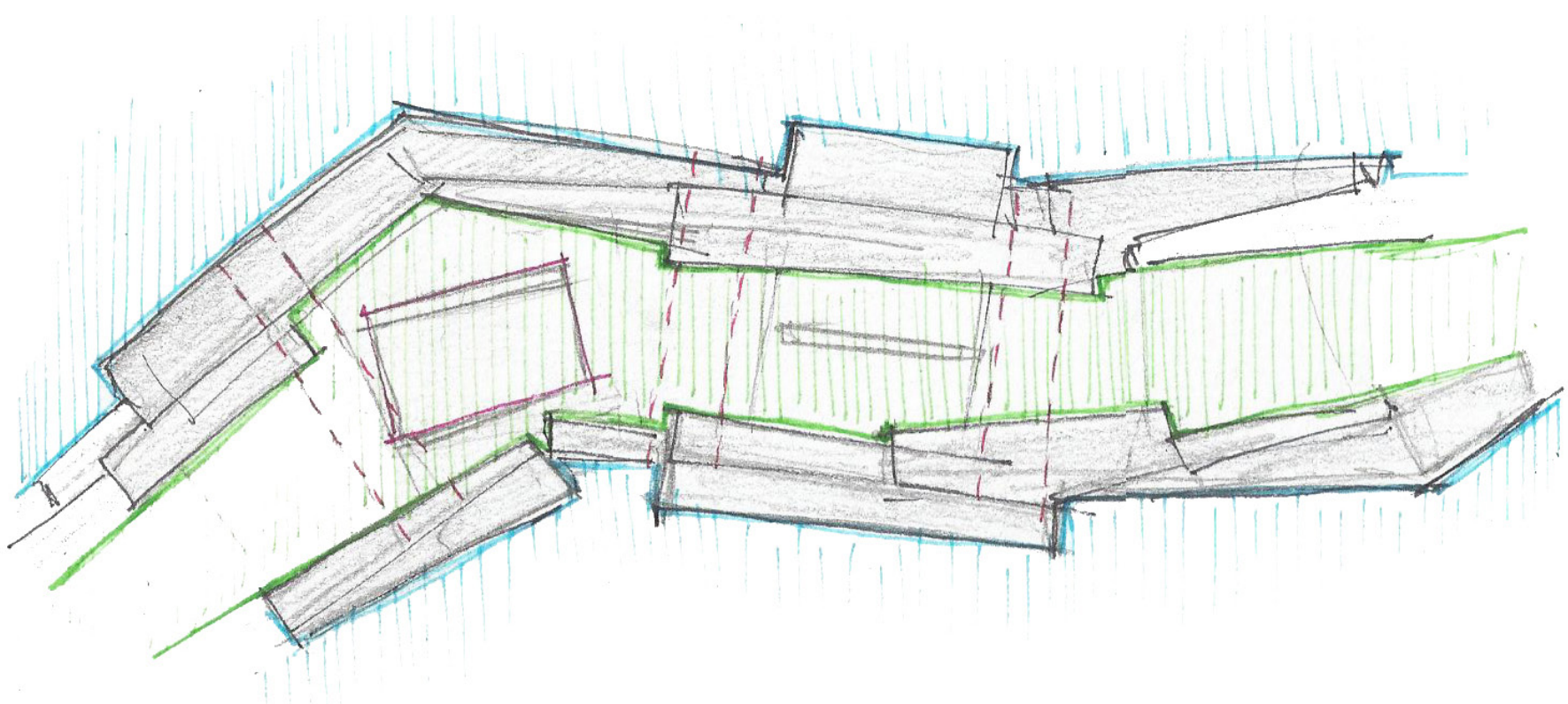
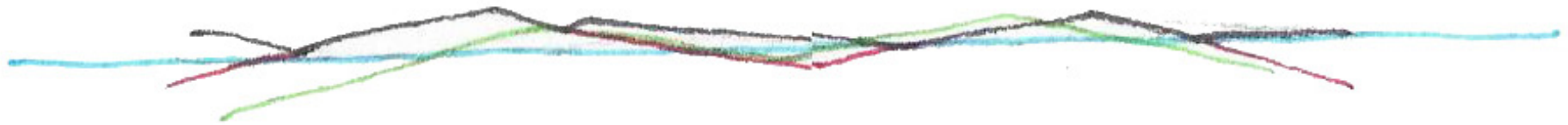
Although these benefits highlight the effectiveness of an excavation in this instance, certain problems did present themselves. These were as follows:

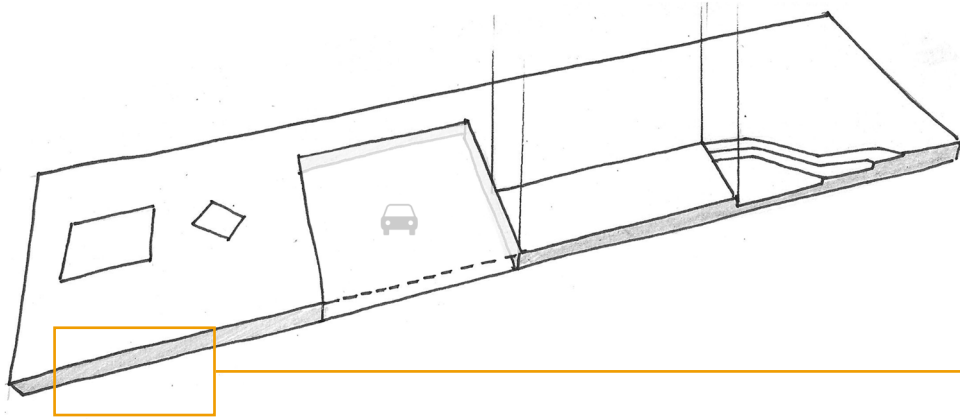
- How do you maintain the existing PRASA ground floor links?
- How do you terrace the 6m drop to minimise the 'canyon' experience?

The solutions to these queries as well as the resolution of the benefits become the focus of my design for the plaza.

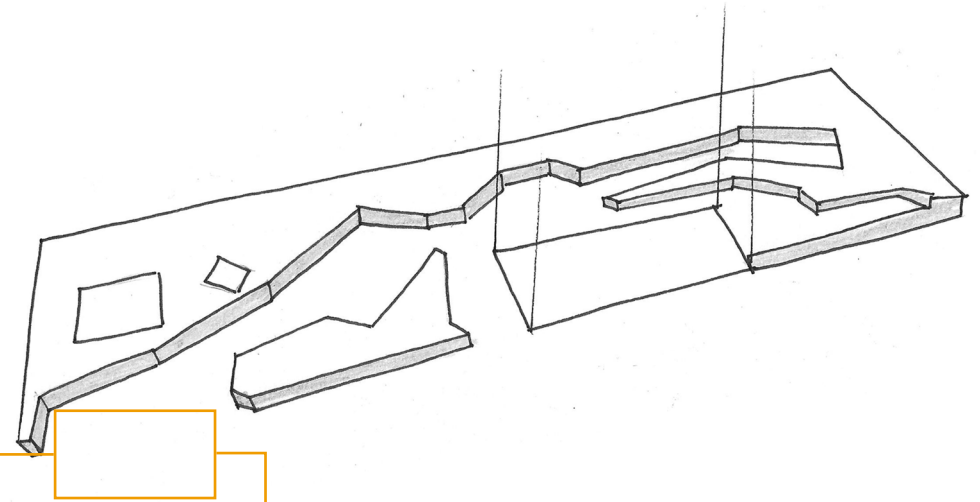
The primary straight axis of the spine is used as a guideline for shaping of the excavation. Through the manipulation of that line, in an almost literal translation of my earlier AB diagram, an interesting form begins to emerge. The transformation of the straight line is used to define programmes within the excavation. In this sketch the placement of a basketball court and theatre space are shown as primary spaces within the scheme. From this point the insertion of other programmes, as well as the corresponding terracing, organise themselves around this initial gesture.







Existing site



Excavation

## THE EXCAVATION

The final product of the plaza is a terraced excavation which accommodates the programme outlined previously. This excavation turns the flat site into a 3 dimensional space and re-imagines the potential of the site.

Through this action the level of the primary Park Station entrance is extended into my site and ultimately up to the street level above through a series of gradual level changes. As seen in the images, the opening up of this space will vastly improve the spatial quality of the existing Park Station entrance.

The following pages of images and diagrams illustrate the layering of programmes within this plaza, and highlights the spatial logic behind my design of the space.



6m drop between my site ground level and Park Station ground level



BRT

Chapel

Excavation  
entrance

Added Gautrain  
entrance

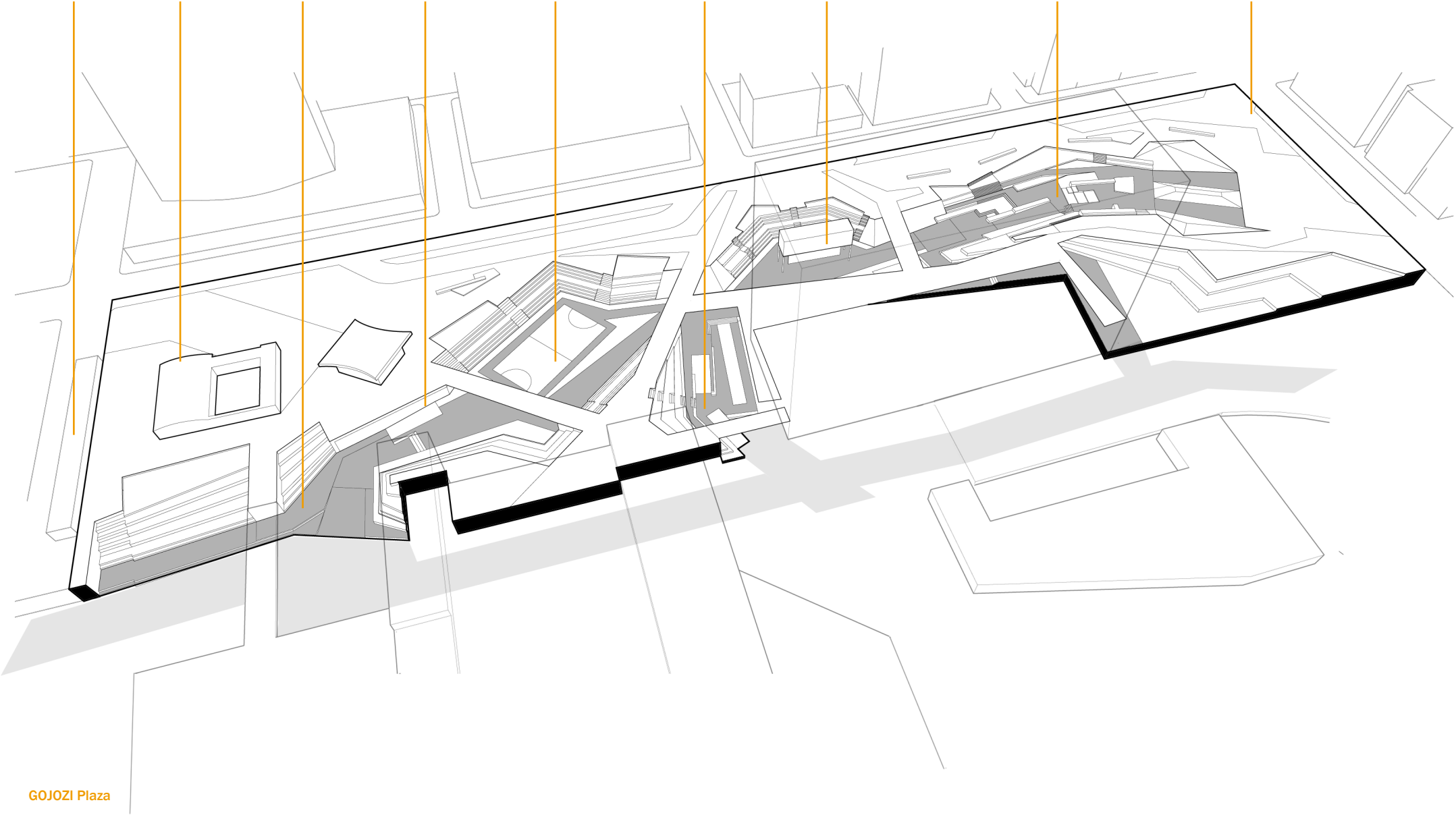
Basketball court  
and festival area

Excavation  
entrance

Multi-purpose  
outdoor theatre

Iconic urban sports  
landscaping

Taxi corner



GOJOZI Plaza

## URBAN ATHLETICS SPACE

Skate-able surface  
Parkour obstacles  
Basketball court  
Lighting

The space is filled with large and small urban athletic friendly surfaces. These include purpose built iconic obstacles as well as the more traditional found surfaces such as benches, ledges, manual pads, low walls and flatland spaces.

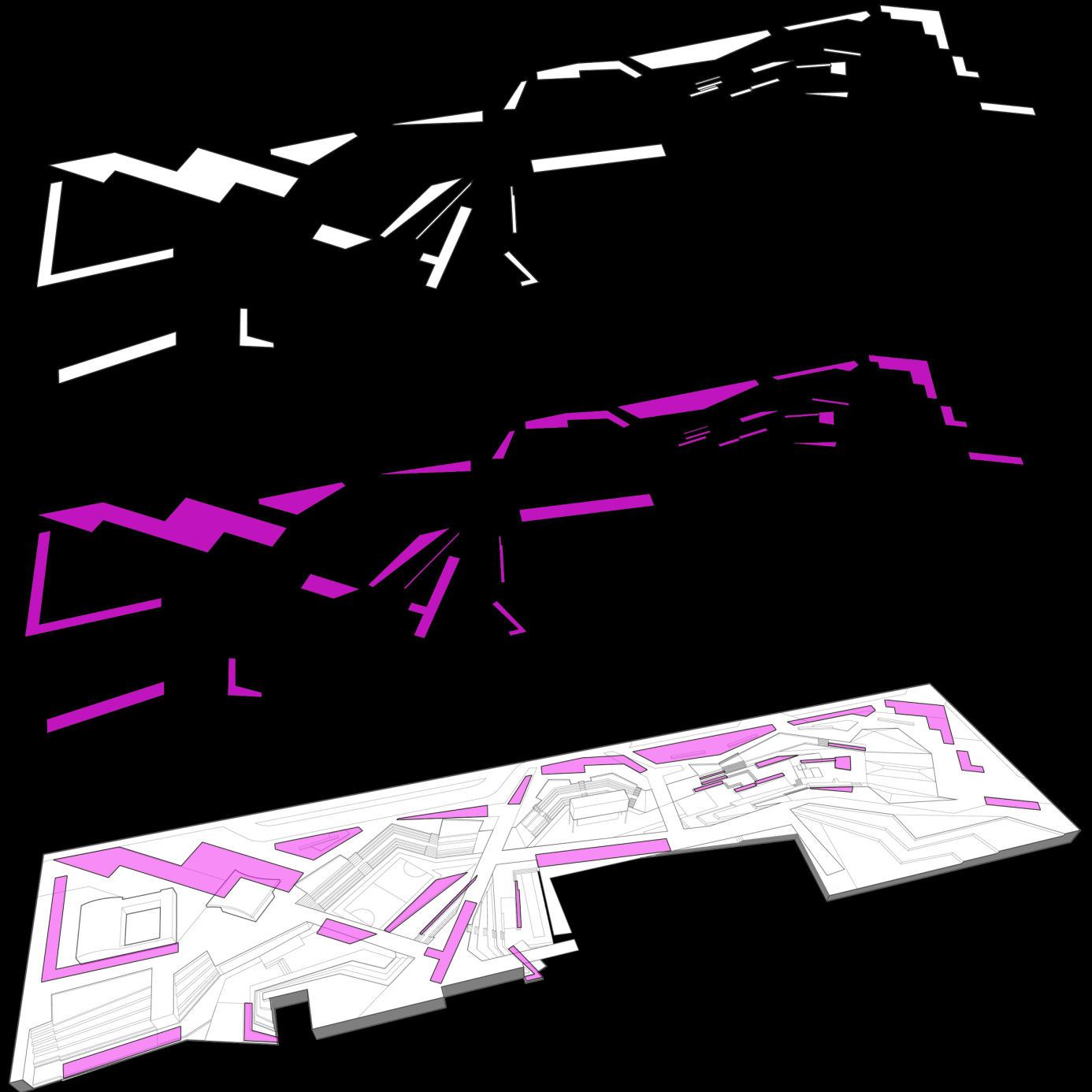




## TRADE SPACE

Seating  
Trade surfaces  
Electricity supply  
Lighting

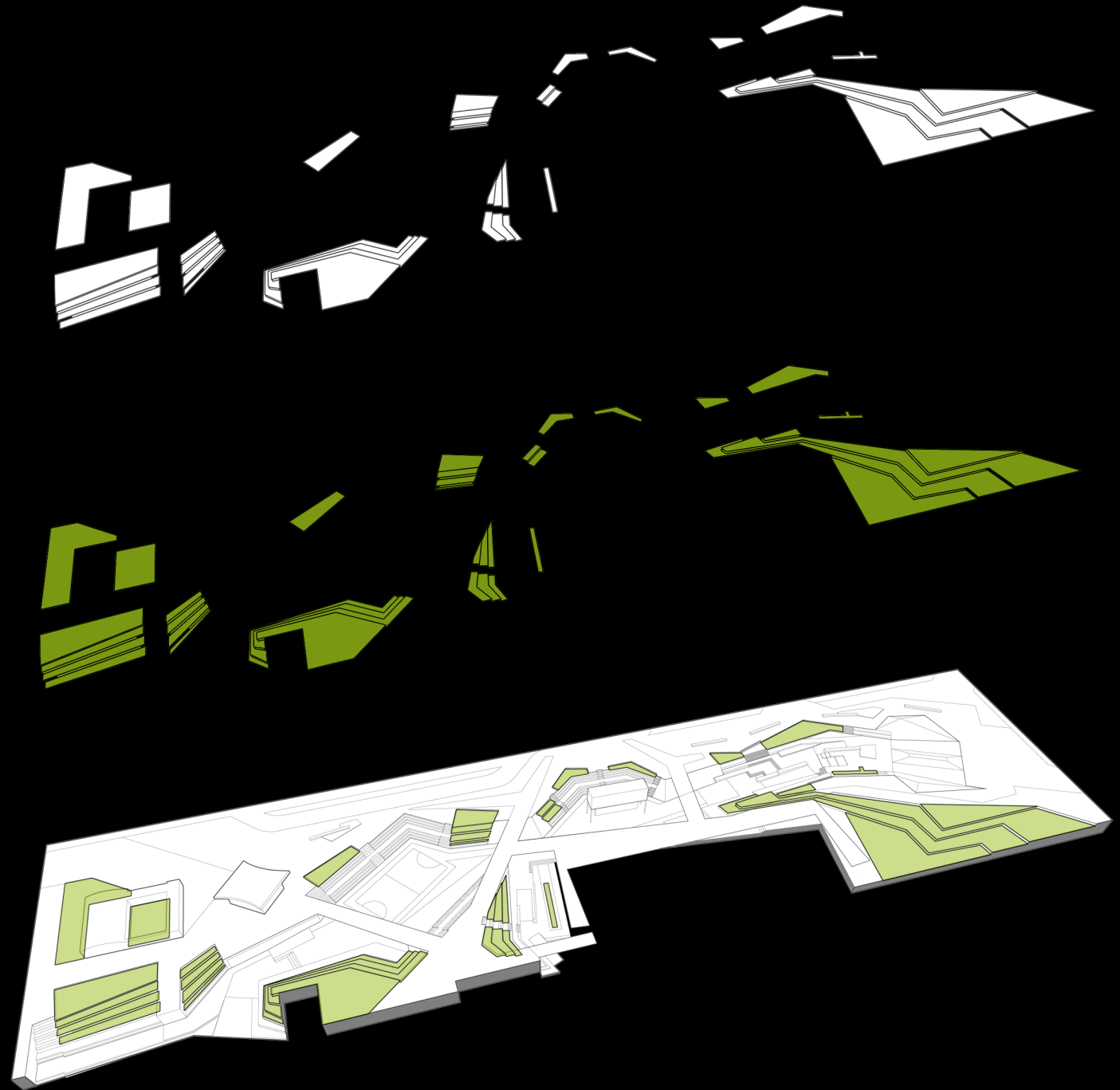
Trade spaces include any surface which can be utilised for trading purposes. Designated areas are provided with adaptable trade surfaces and electrical outlets (these will be explored further on). Non-designated space can still be utilised by informal traders as there is ample seating and trade surfaces throughout the site.



## LANDSCAPING

Indigenous planting  
Grassy rest areas

The excavation provides ample terraced levelling for landscaping. These levels are divided into useable grassy areas, for rest and relaxation, and non-useable areas for aesthetic indigenous landscaping with Highveld grasses, shrubs and stone

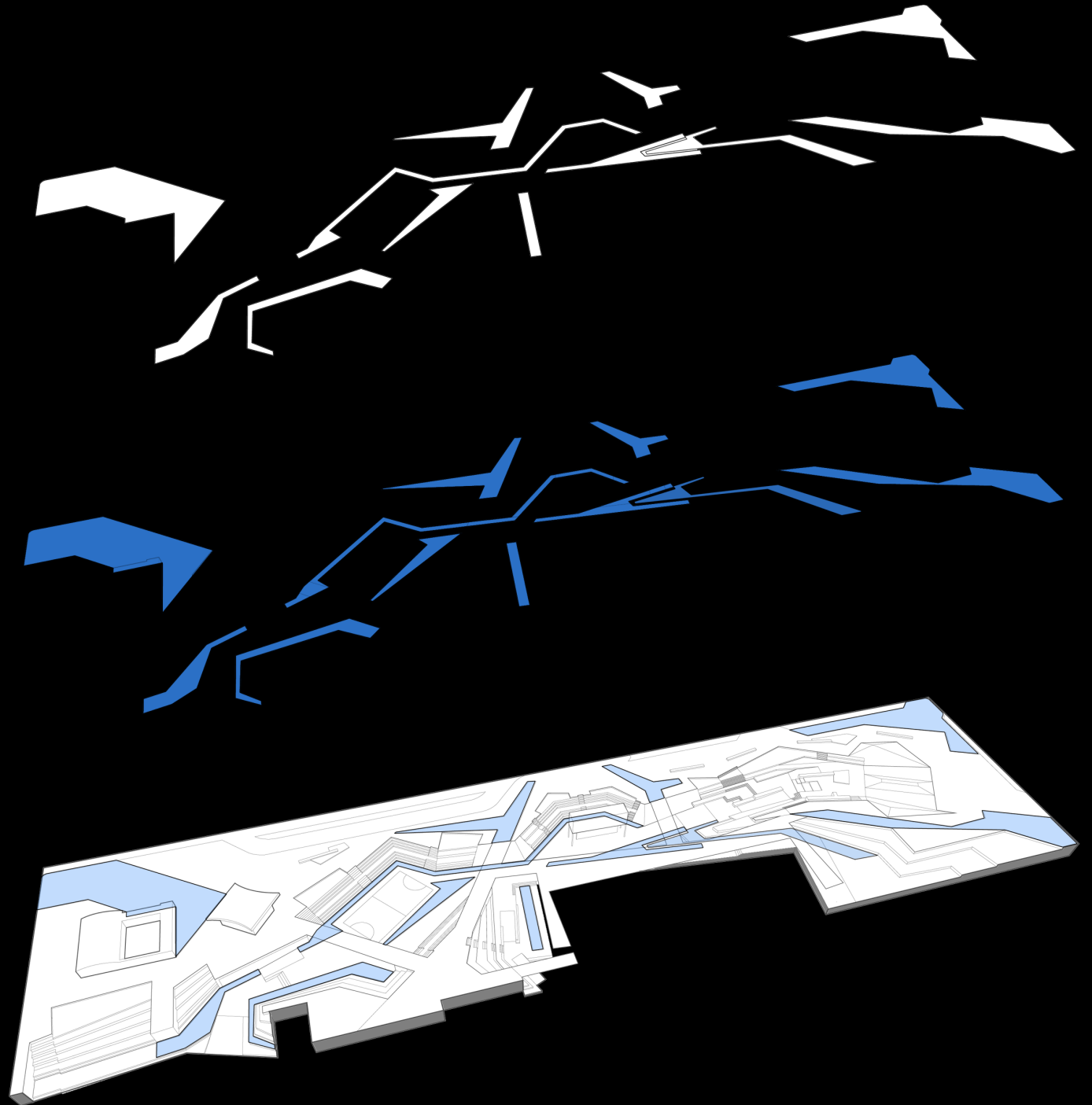


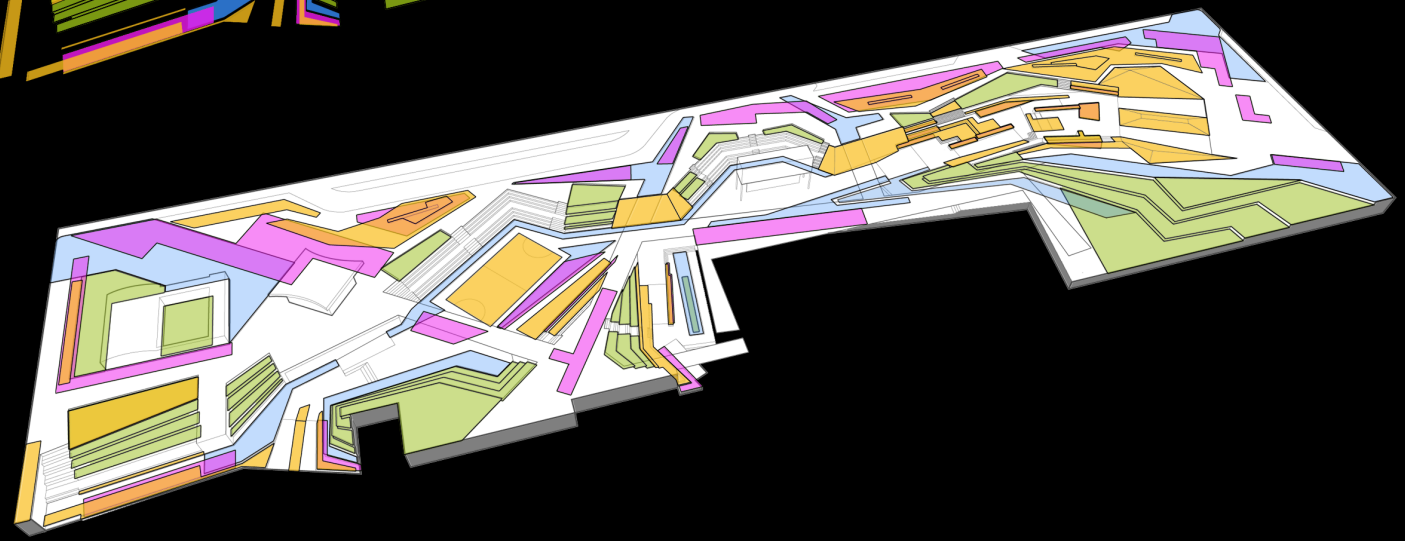
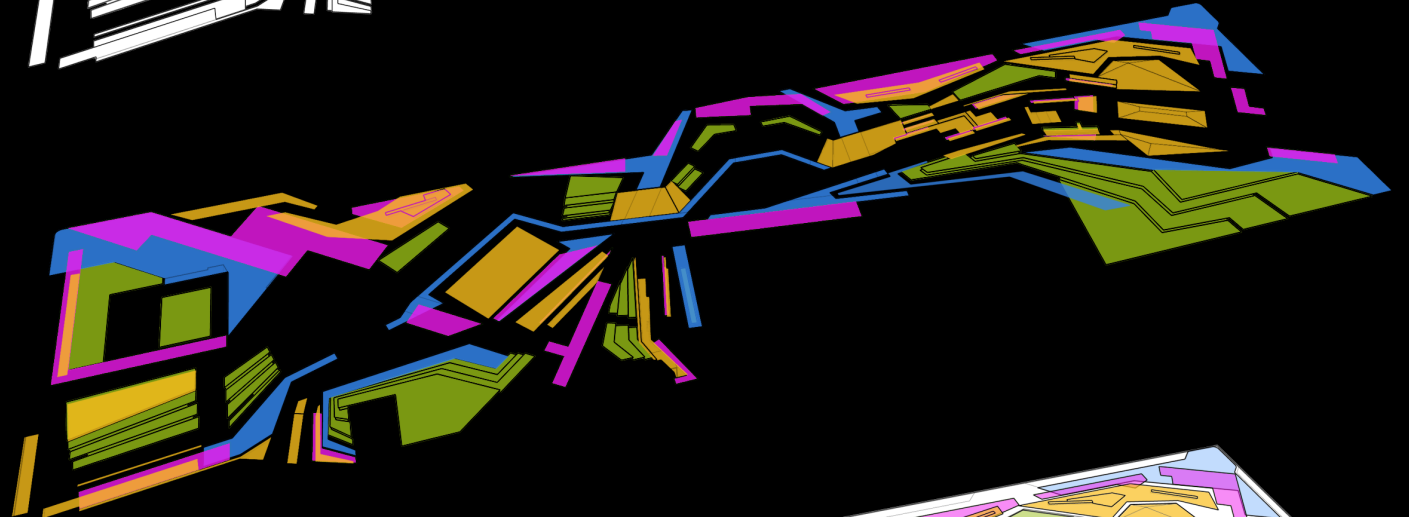
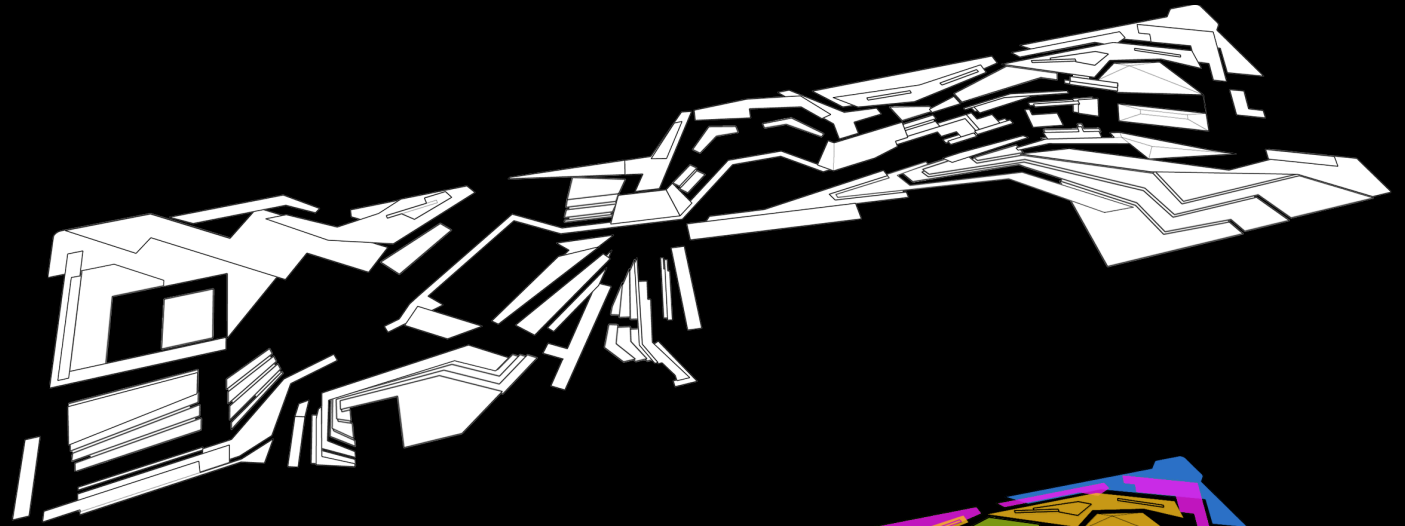


## WATER DRAINAGE

Permeable paving  
Rainwater ponds/gardens  
Water features

The vastness of the excavation and the resulting slopes of the scheme creates a channel for rainwater. Highveld storms therefore pose a significant threat. This is mitigated through the use of strategic permeable paving and rainwater drainage points in the form of rainwater ponds and water features. Permeable paving is a non-skate-able surface and is also therefore used as a tool for organising the plaza in terms of pedestrian, trader and athlete at critical points.

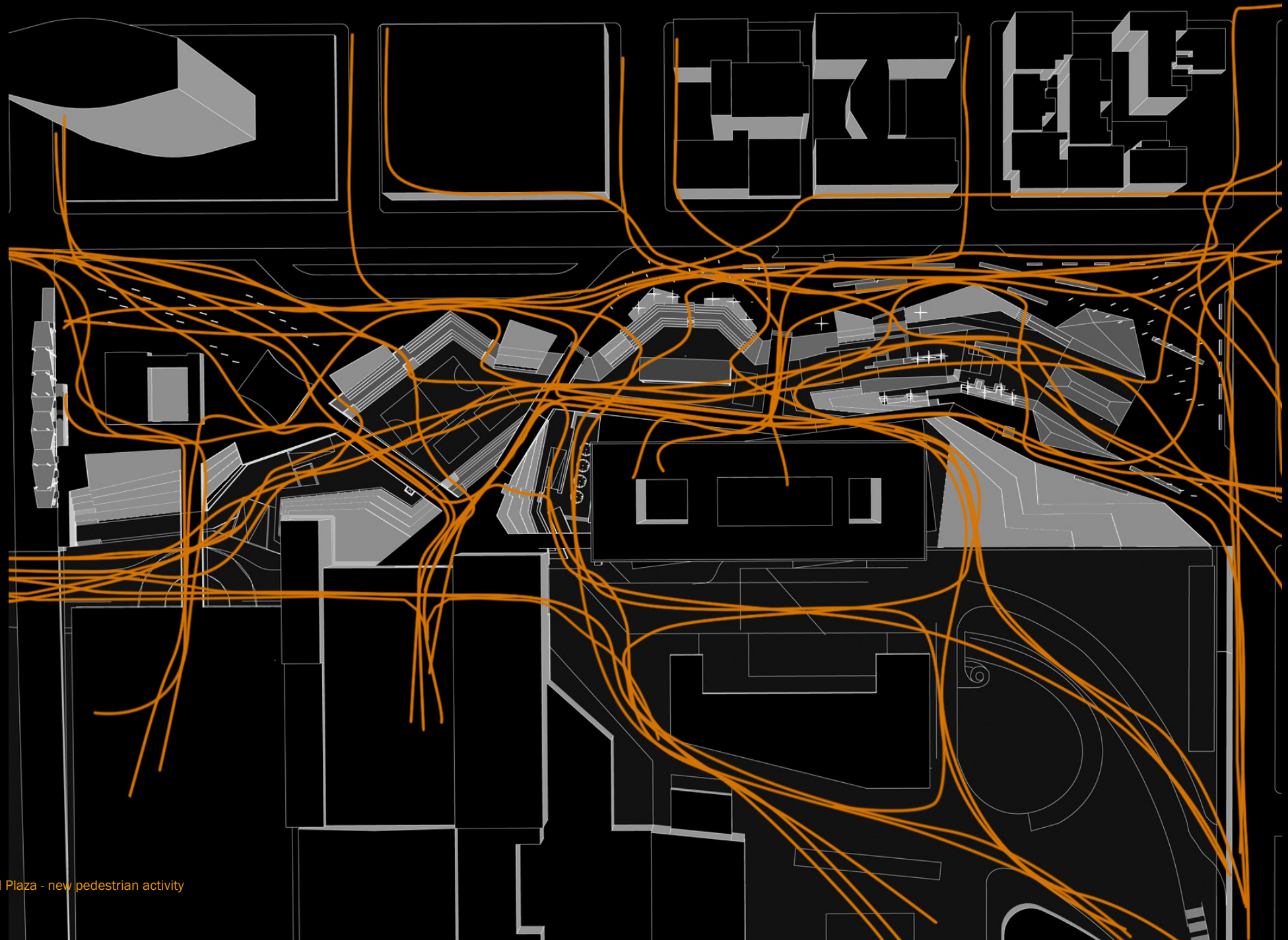




## INTEGRATION

The layering of all these elements creates the space as a whole. Overlapping of functions is the intention here as this creates dynamism.





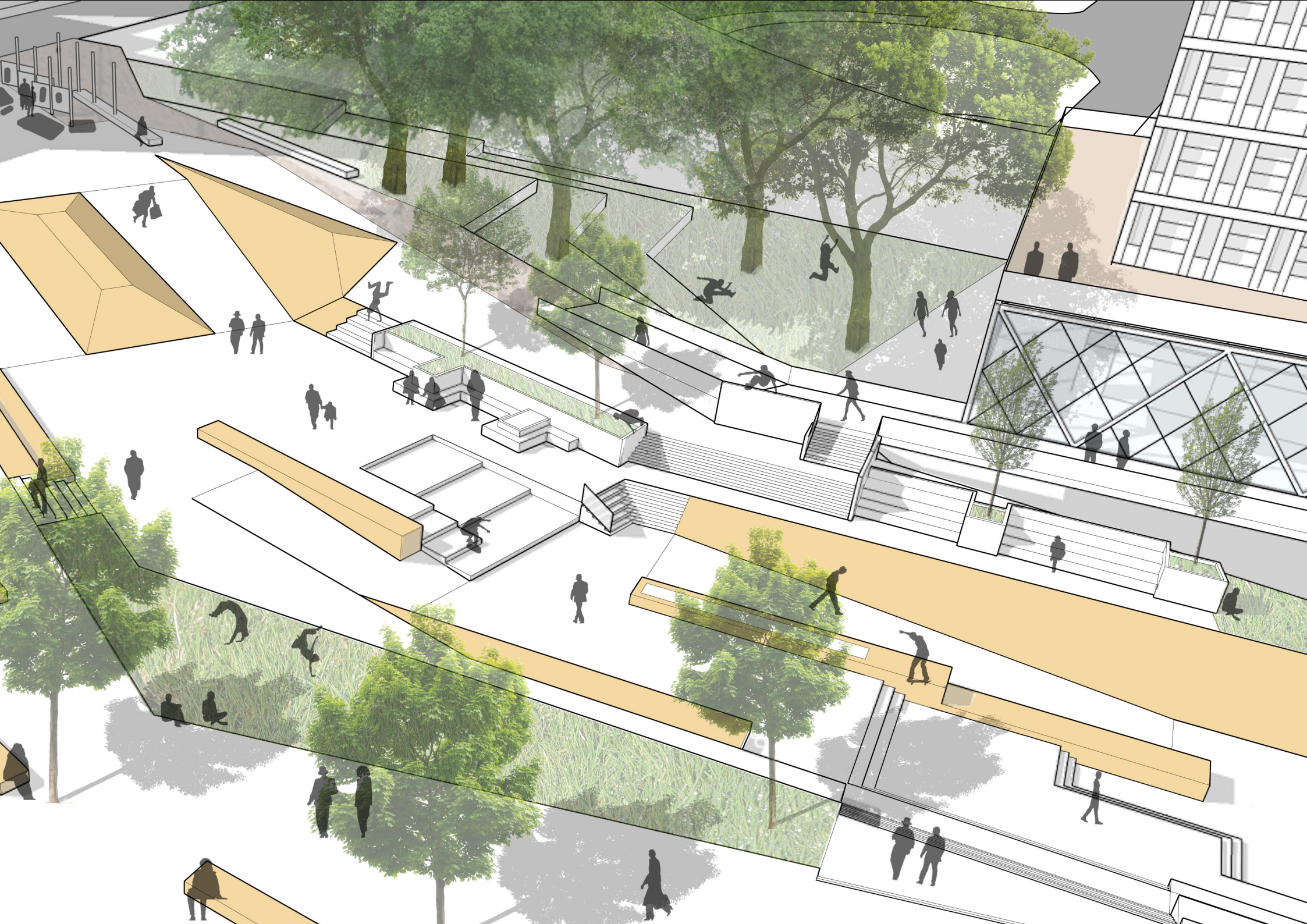
GOJOZI Plaza - new pedestrian activity



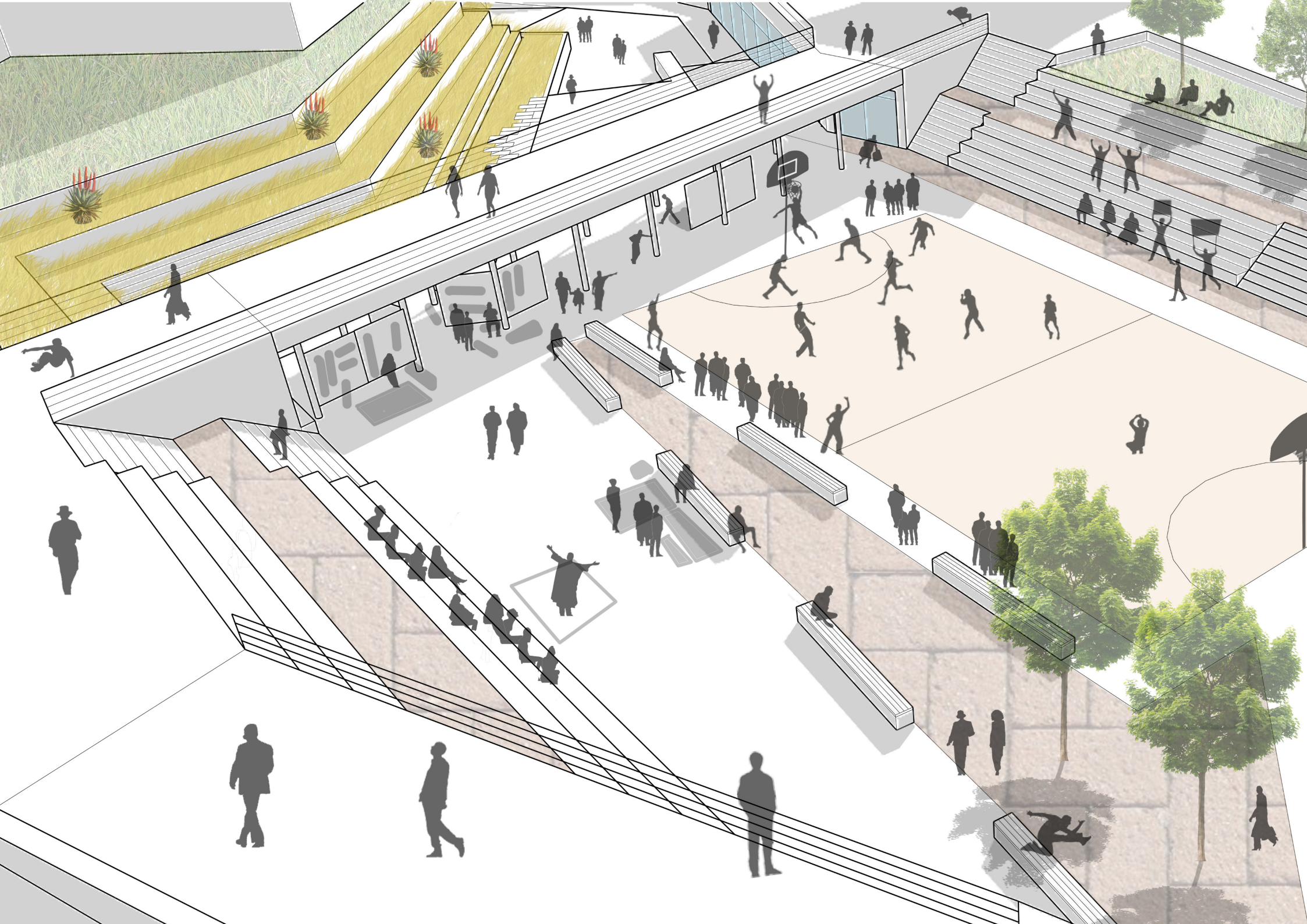
ICONIC PUBLIC SPACE



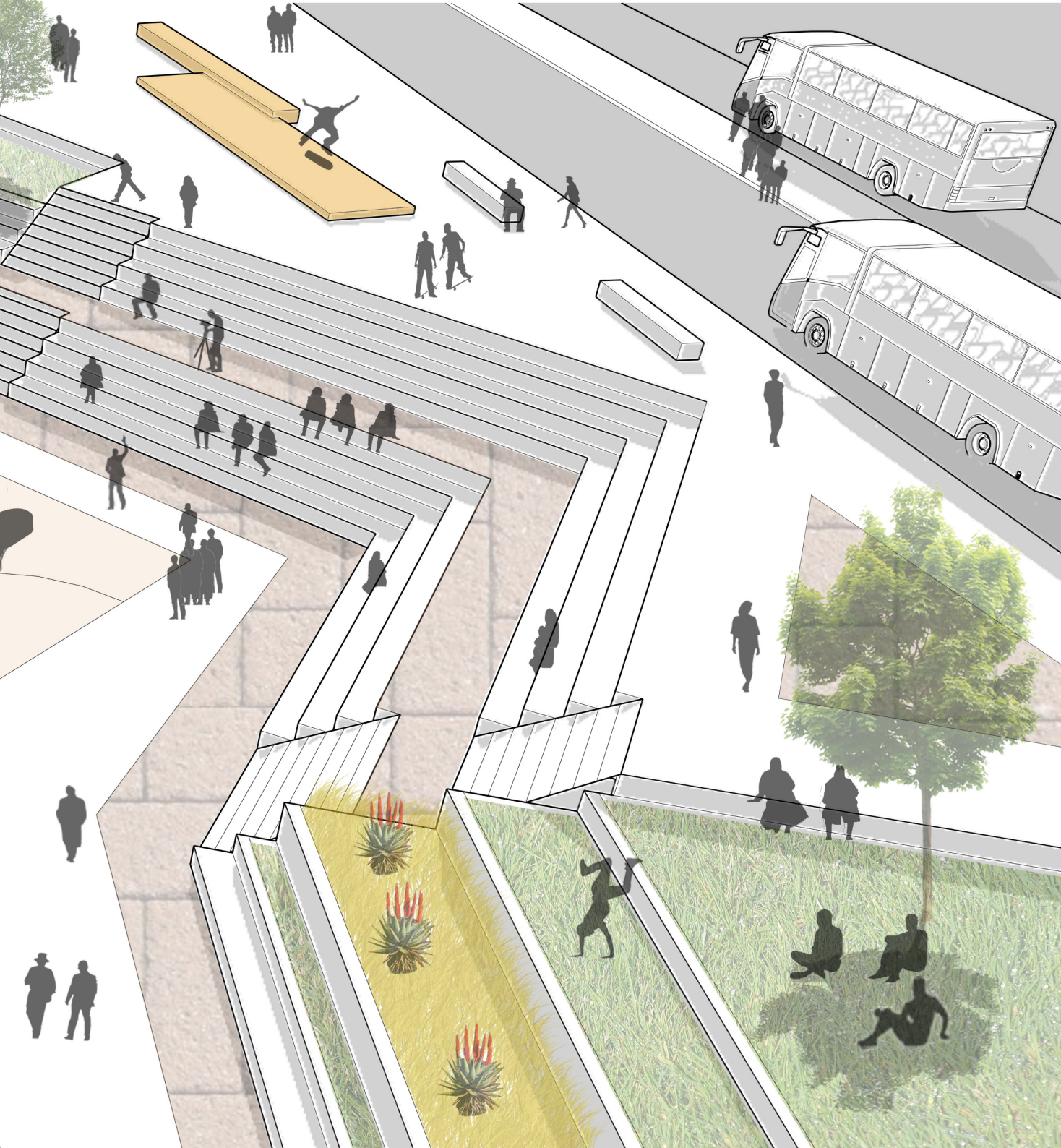












FESTIVAL SPACE





# SPACEWORKSHOP

The collection of spaces performing a supporting role to the public space itself requires a building. As previously explored, the excavation of the site exposes two basement levels of Umjantshi House. Combined with the potential to occupy another two floors (ground floor and first floor), make this building an ideal candidate to receive a new programme of uses.

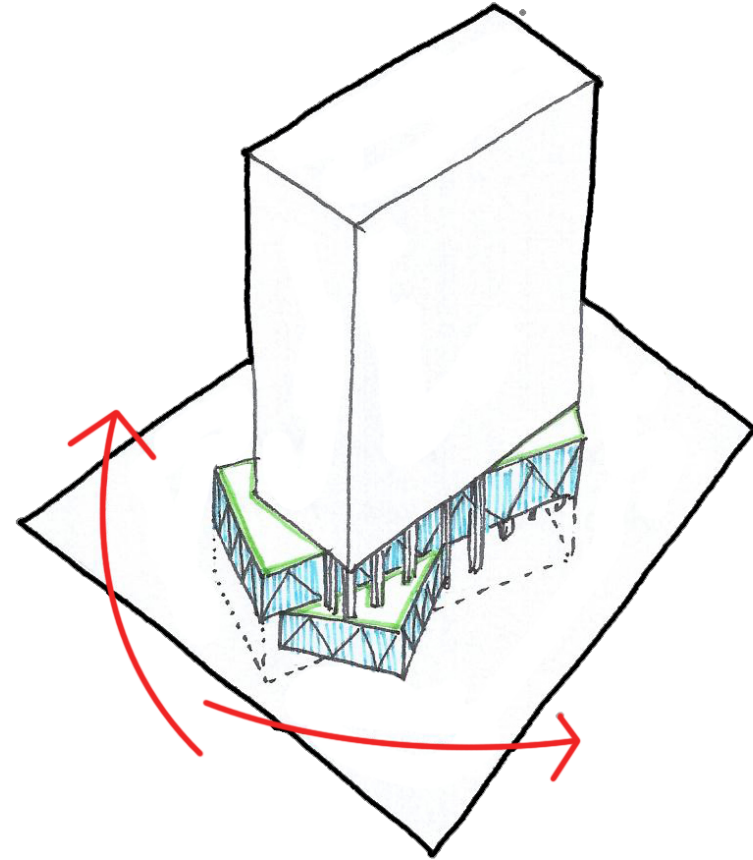
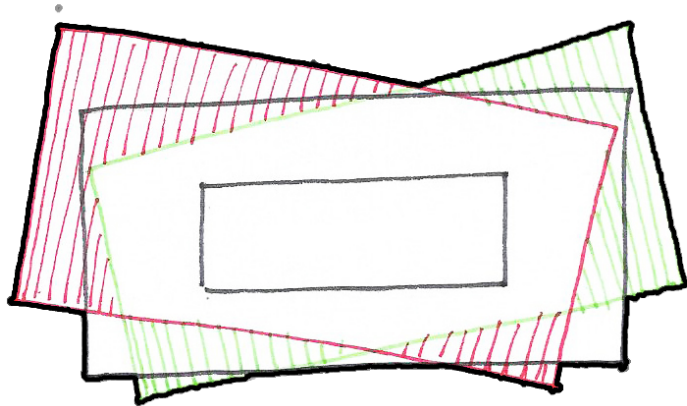
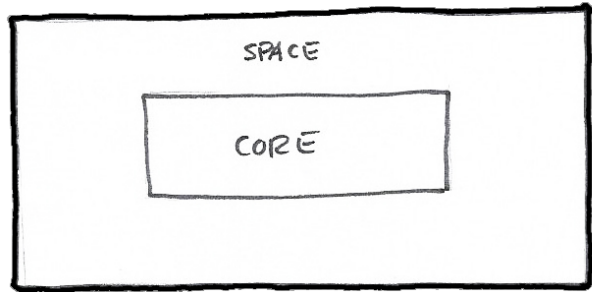
The existing PRASA reception, as well as sufficient space for their security and reception offices, will be taken into consideration when proposing this new insertion. It is my intention to transform the aforementioned levels into a new space accommodating the supporting spaces for the public plaza, leaving everything above the 1st floor exactly as it is now. Any PRASA function currently existing on the floors intended for renewal can be shifted into the floors above. I believe that the upper floors could easily accommodate any such function with sufficient design input. The resulting building will therefore be a hybrid of the existing Umjantshi House, with the tenants remaining as is, and the new building integrated with the fresh street level context that is GOJOZI.

The first step in achieving this insertion is looking at the 'new' site context which is the excavation and its unique shape which transforms the site. In response to this new context, and the requirements of a new programme in a commercial building, my first design consideration becomes the transformation of an existing building to suit the plaza. As discussed earlier the sturdy yet simple structure of Umjantshi House provides an opportunity for adaptation. There are two primary options for adaptation in this case. The first is simply to reconfigure the floor plan to achieve a new design and function. The benefits here are cost effectiveness and time

savings. This option, I believe, does not suit the theme and theory of space appropriation and transformation which has been so critical in this thesis. While effective in terms of functionality, it does not represent architecturally what I am trying to achieve. This brings me to the second option. What if I were to remove everything but the structure, leaving only the columns and cores which support the building above? This would provide me with a skeleton which I could re-dress and re-configure. The opportunities here speak of contrast: a new light weight building inserted into the base of an existing heavy concrete frame. The language which I could develop would be a dialogue between the old and the new, an apt statement considering the intentions of GOJOZI. So how could I achieve this? The answer lies in a simple shift of form.

The existing building is a rectangular box which would be in a state of tension with the proposed angular excavation of the plaza. In order to synchronise with the plaza I would ideally need this rectangle to shift along with the excavation. This is obviously not possible. However, this is possible for the new building. The rectangular plan is therefore rotated and shifted to adjust to the new plaza. This begins a discourse between the excavation and the building which transform each-other as the design process progresses. When these two projects begin lining up and speaking the same language I freeze the image and produce a unified scheme. GOJOZI as a single entity is born.

Now that the concept for the building is defined, the spaces and layouts within the building can be designed. The challenge here is the design of a new programme between the meeting



(top) Shifting of the rectangular Umjanthsi House plan



of old and new geometries. The first step is a breakdown of the programme requirements which essentially is a process of elimination. Certain spaces, for example, require large storage and loading/ delivery zones, whilst others require ample public access. This process organises my programme within the four floors of available space.

What is important to note is that this scheme has two ground floors: the existing floor level of the site which is maintained in certain places with the bridges and decks, and the new ground level resulting from the excavation. This new context divides my programme in two, with the more public spaces being situated in the upper two floors (off the old ground floor) and the more private spaces being situated in the lower two floors off the new ground floor. The more private spaces are collectively known as the Community Workshop Centre. There is more reasoning behind this division of programme decision however, as the workshop centre has a greater need for service delivery and loading as well as bulk material storage. Whilst the upper programme of art gallery and food bazaar also requires loading and storage, these can be accommodated more easily with service elevators etc.

The two primary programme divisions are represented literally by the conversion of four floors into two double volume spaces defined by two truss boxes. These two truss boxes each showcase their own shift of the existing rectangle.

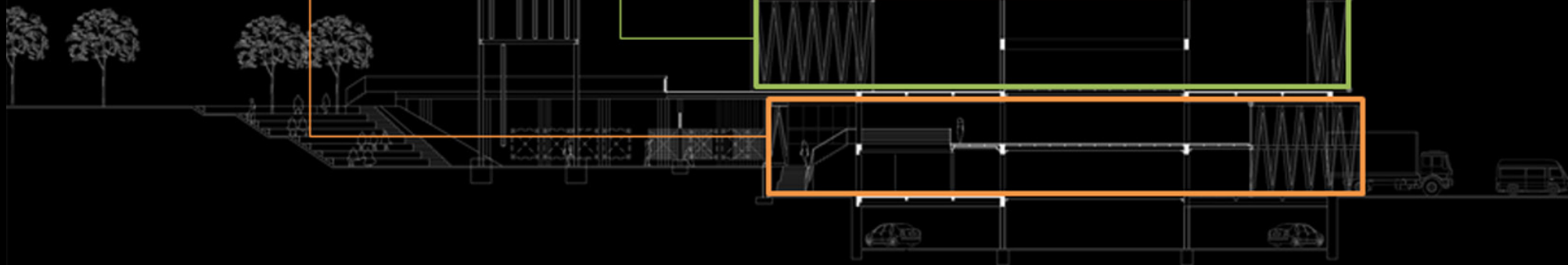
(right) GOJOZI site plan illustrating the shifting of space



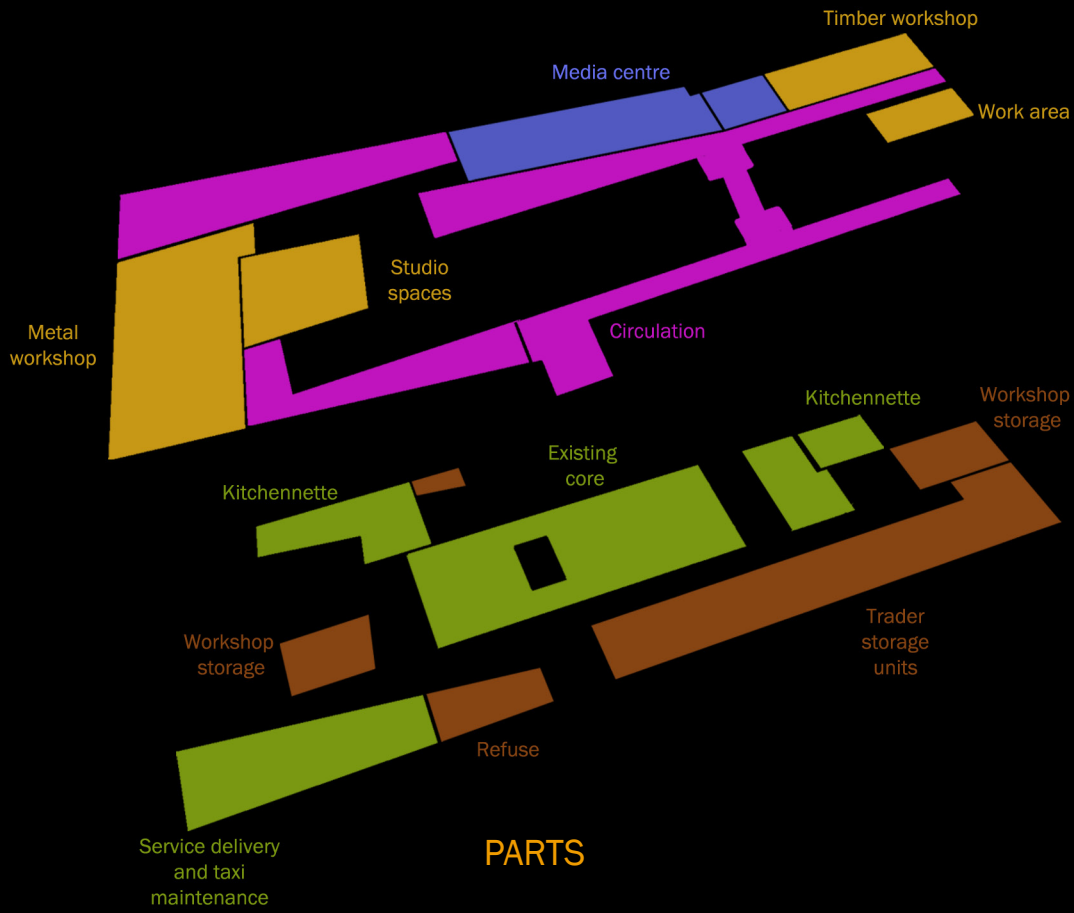


- Art gallery
- Food bazaar
- PRASA reception
- Pool bar and night club

- Space Workshop
- Workshops with storage
  - Studio spaces
  - Media rooms
  - Offices
  - Trader storage

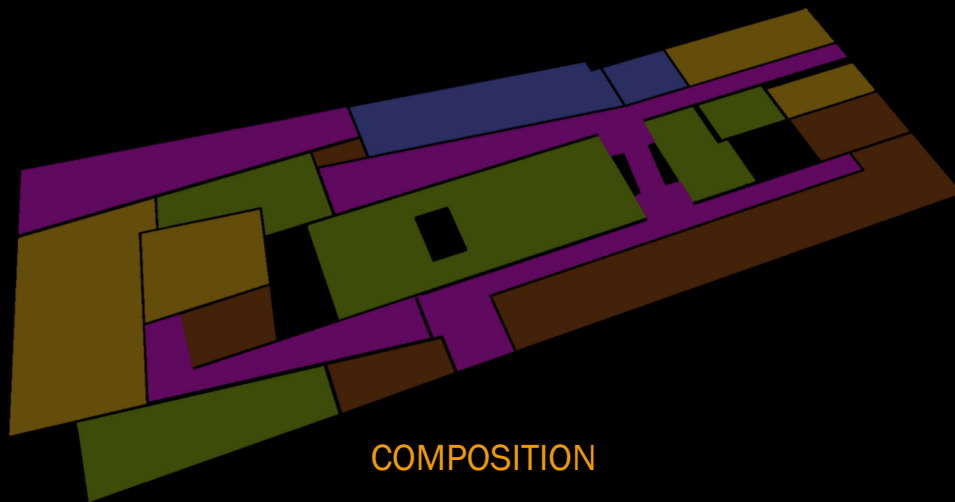


Diagrammatic section through theatre and Umjantshi House with new building

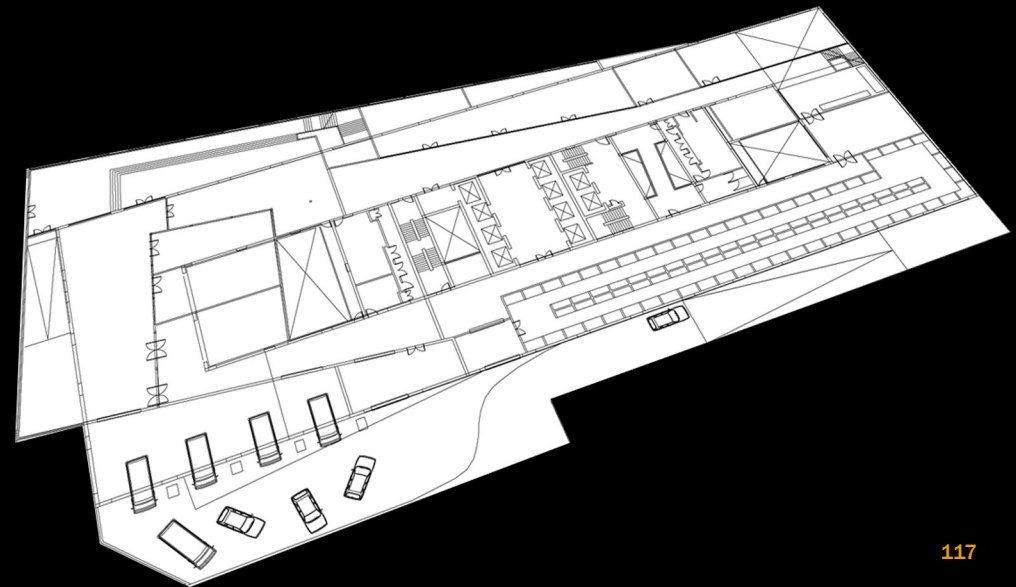


**PARTS**

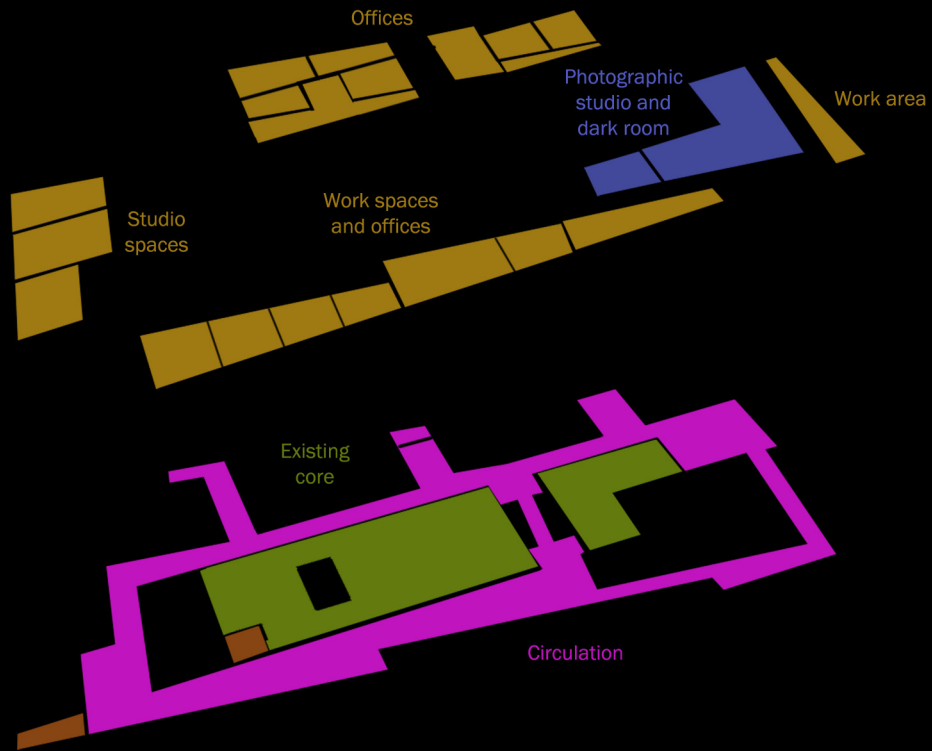
**SECOND BASEMENT PLAN**



**COMPOSITION**

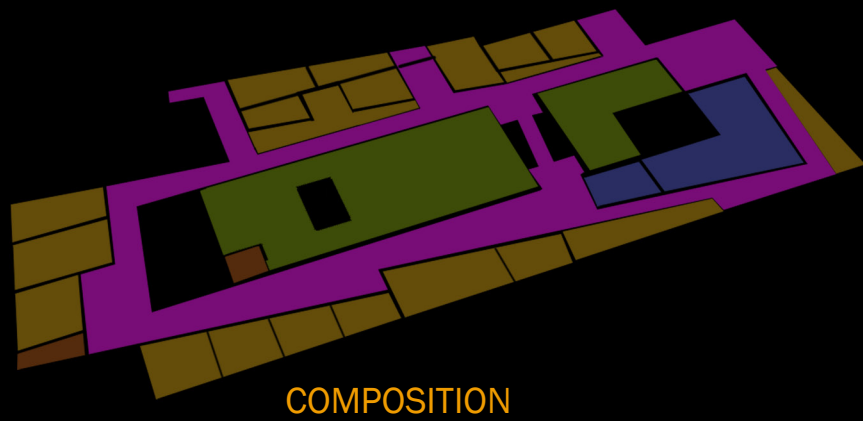




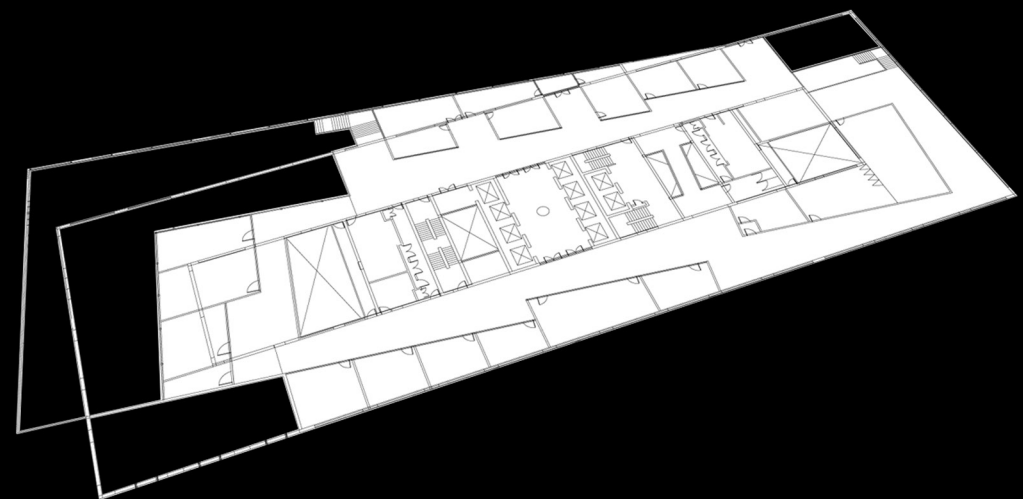


PARTS

FIRST BASEMENT PLAN



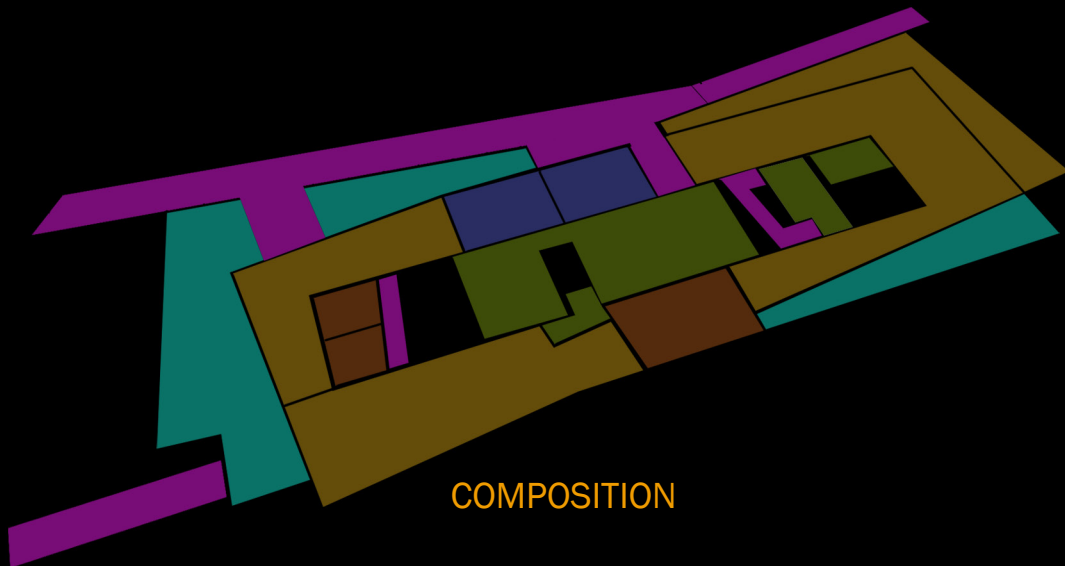
COMPOSITION



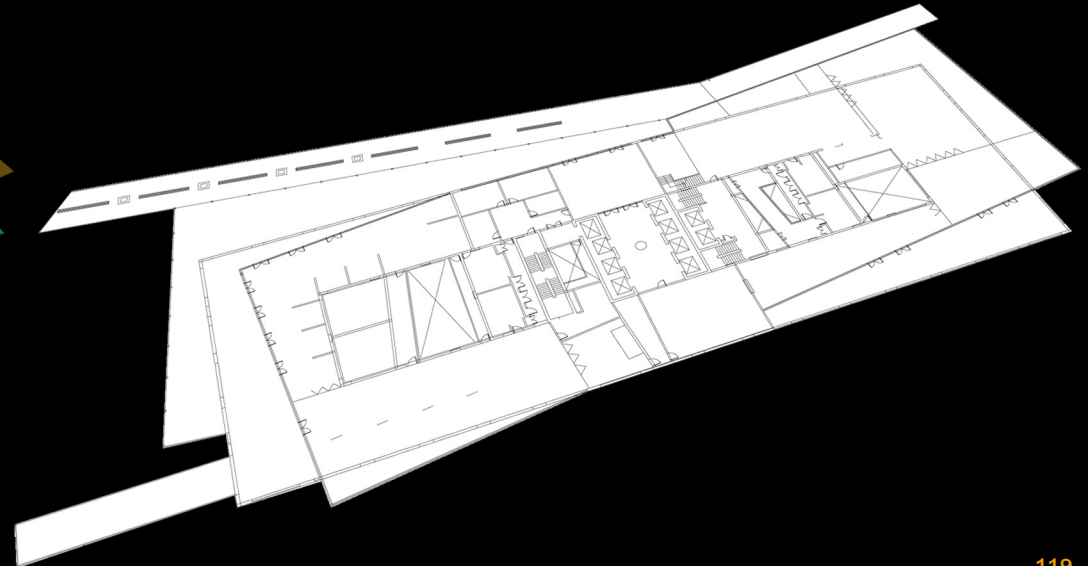


PARTS

GROUND FLOOR PLAN



COMPOSITION

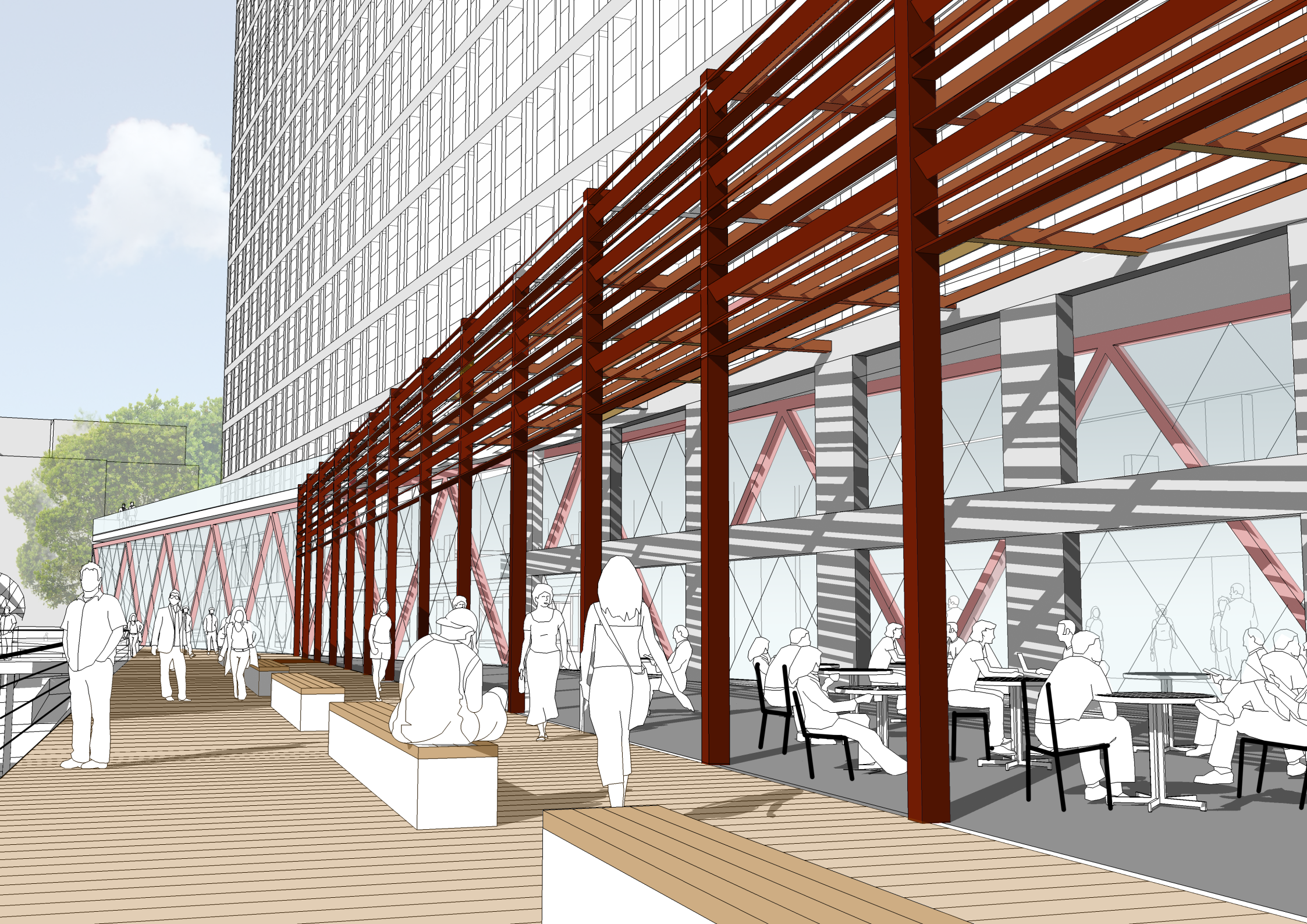




FOOD BAZAAR DECK







# DETAIL DESIGN

Through the process of design development in this thesis I have highlighted certain features of GOJOZI which require further explanation in terms of architectural design. The technological component of this thesis is therefore made up of a collection of detailing solutions. For this chapter I will explore three of these issues which have the greatest architectural merit. The first of these is the perimeter design of the Space Workshop – how do you insert a new steel structure into an existing concrete framed building? The second component is the design of adaptable outdoor tradespace. Here I will be looking at definable space versus defining space. Lastly I will explore the multi-purpose theatre by designing an elevated fly tower capable of supporting various productions underneath.



## SPACE WORKSHOP PERIMETER

The concept of this new building is a light weight steel structure juxtaposed with the existing heavy concrete office tower. As discussed previously the form, in plan, will be that of the rotated and shifted rectangular plan of Umjantshi House. This establishes the dialogue between old and new. In keeping with this dialogue I have endeavoured to maintain the strictness of the rectangular form allowing the shifting of this shape to stand out as a bold architectural statement.

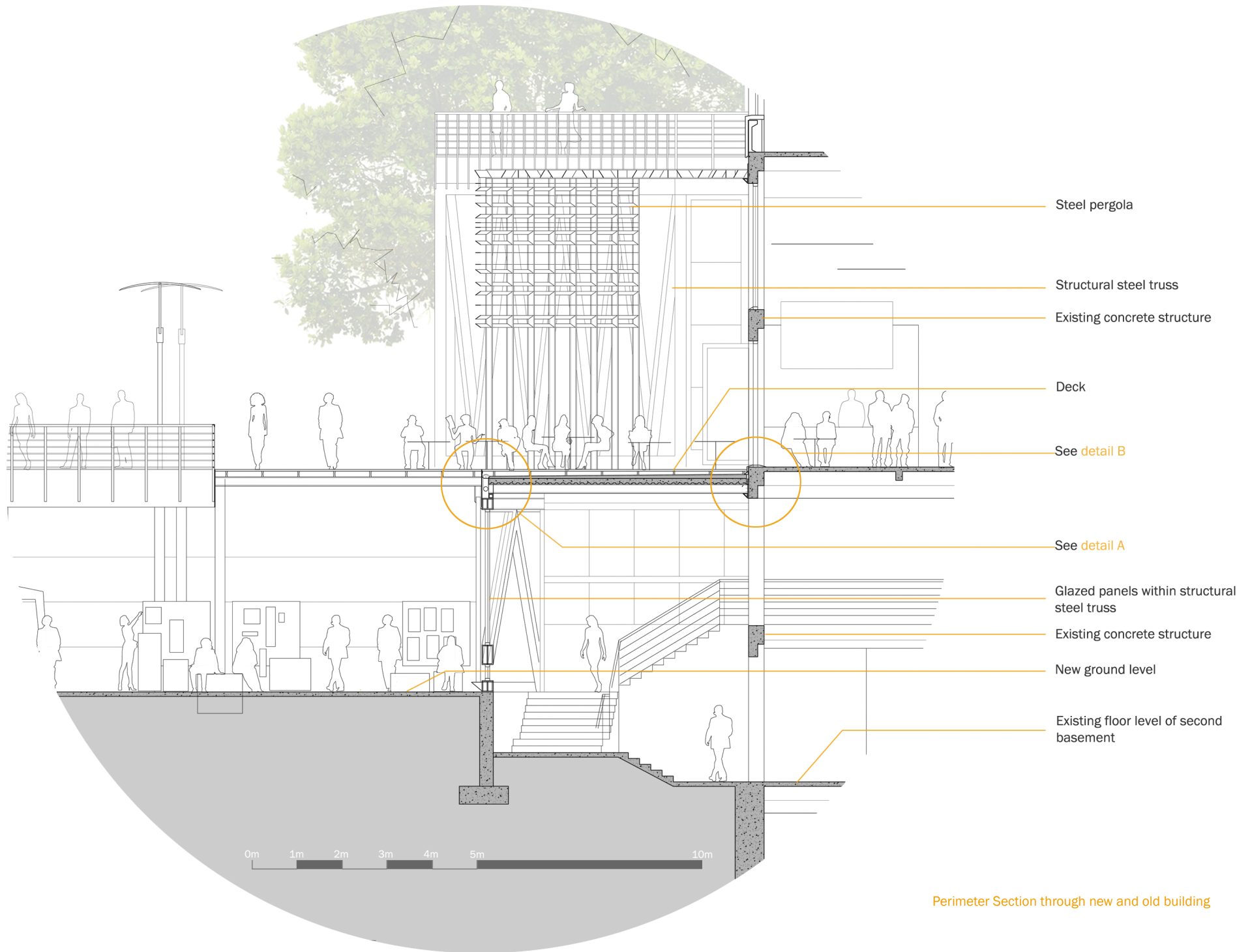
To achieve this I have used a structural system which allows for the insertion of new curtain walls which are self-supporting: steel trusses. These are used to form the new shifted rectangular perimeter of the building.

The benefits of the steel truss system include the following:

- Self-supporting and independent structure which can accommodate a variety of cladding and infill panels.
- The ability to span long distances between supports which can be located outside the existing building.
- Economic use of structural steel.
- Establishes an iconic dialogue between the old and new buildings.
- The trusses can rest on the existing floor slabs of the building as the weight of each truss is

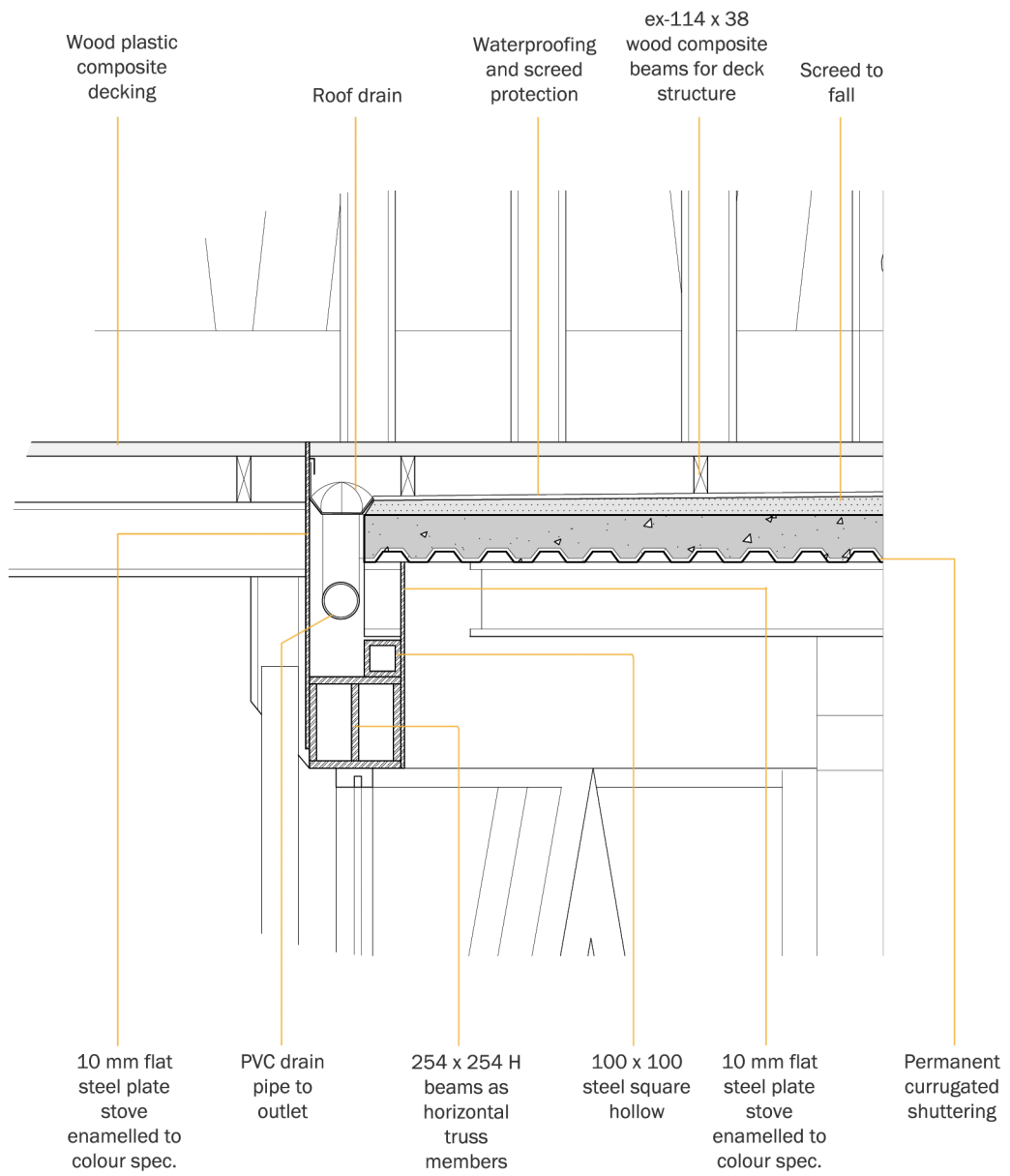
distributed evenly along its length. If needed, extra support columns which extend to the basement level can be inserted at strategic locations.

With the structural system identified the arrangement and layout of the trusses become the next challenge. If these trusses are going to 'slide' in and out of the building it is imperative that they either merge with the existing structure or avoid it. This initiates a process of experimentation in plan and section to determine the possibilities of this system in within Umjantshi house. The close spacing of exterior columns poses challenges, however, as the trusses inevitably clash with these columns in certain instances. To overcome this clash the trusses are broken down into smaller lengths, allowing the geometry of the old building to reveal itself in locations of potential conflict with the new build. This results in a dynamic mix of new and old within the new building. Like the South African National Anthem, this building will be speaking various languages but singing the same song.

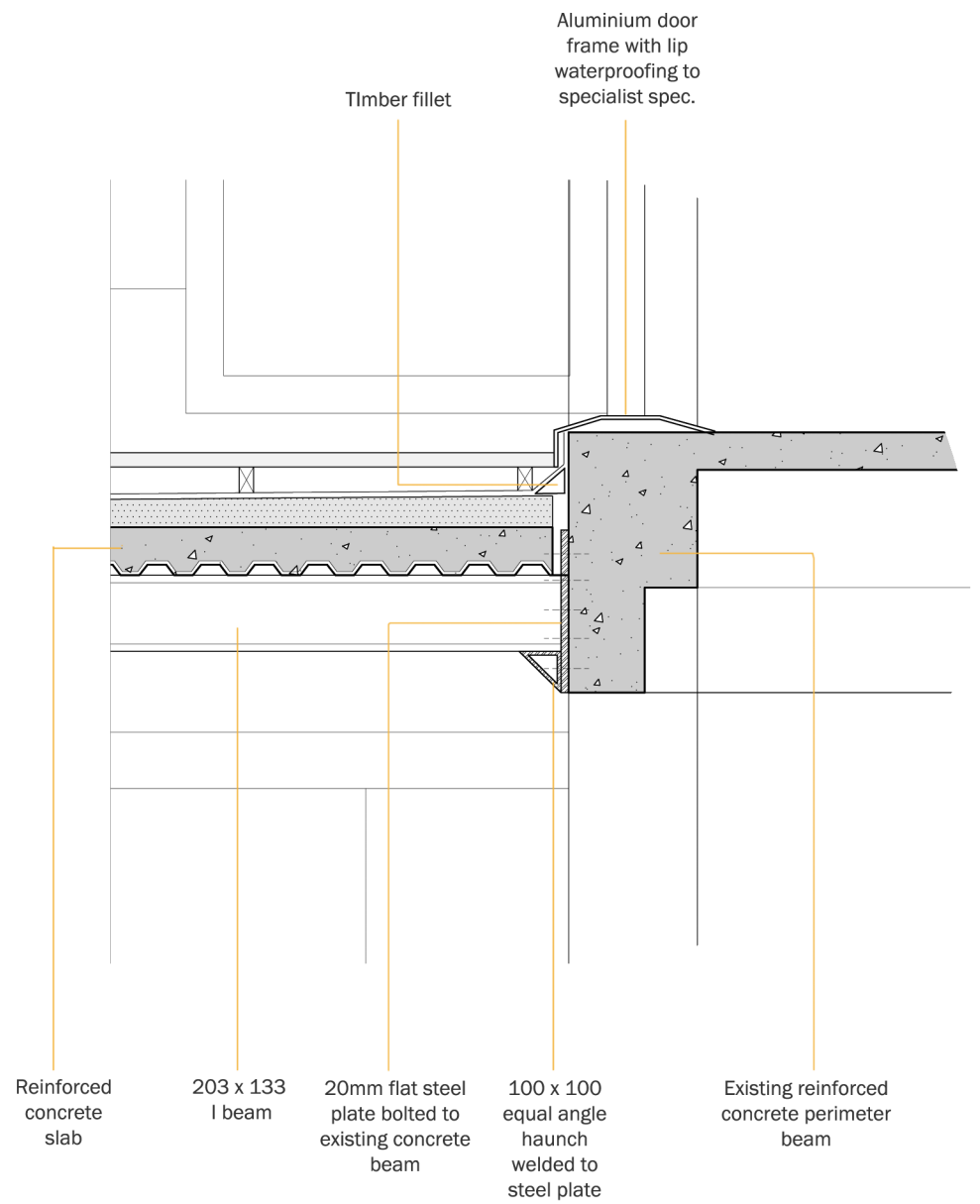


Perimeter Section through new and old building

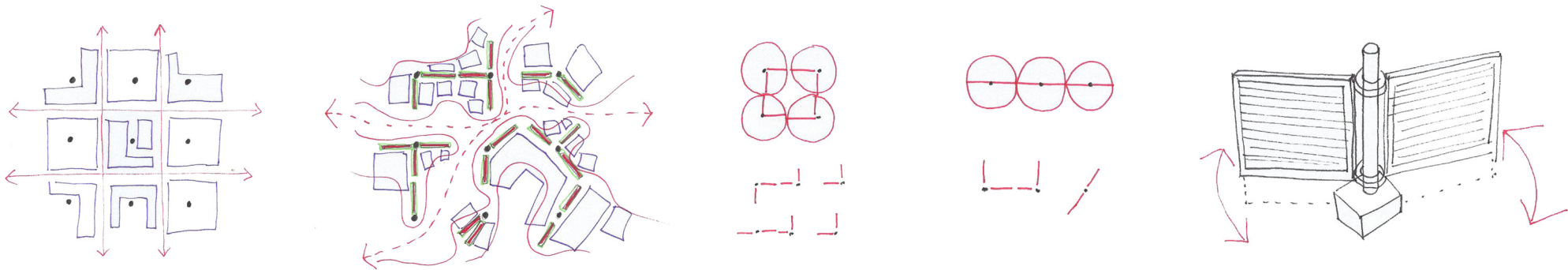




Detail A - 1:20



Detail B - 1:20



Orthogonal grid

Orthogonal grid with adaptability

Space variations from orthogonal grid

Adjustable screens

## ADAPTABLE TRADESPACE

I have mentioned in my programme definition that I wish to provide adaptable trade spaces. In order to accommodate the flux of inner city trading, which responds to the shifting pedestrian narratives, I need to provide definable space in favour of defining space. In the macro sense this means using a structural order which can be adapted, yet is still functional in terms of engineering. In the micro sense this means providing traders with a platform which can be customised in order to suit various types of trade.

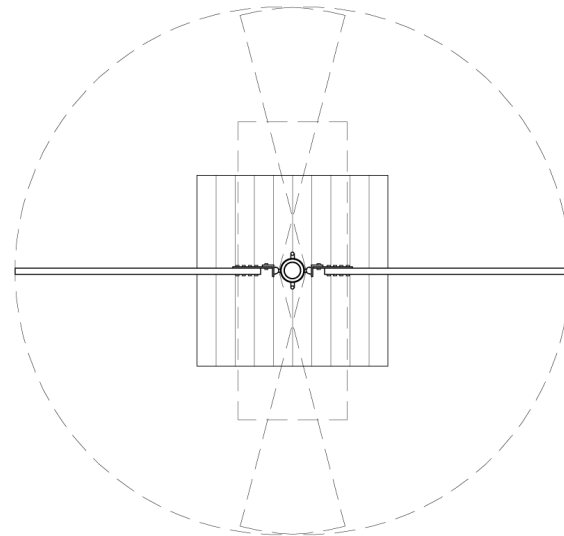
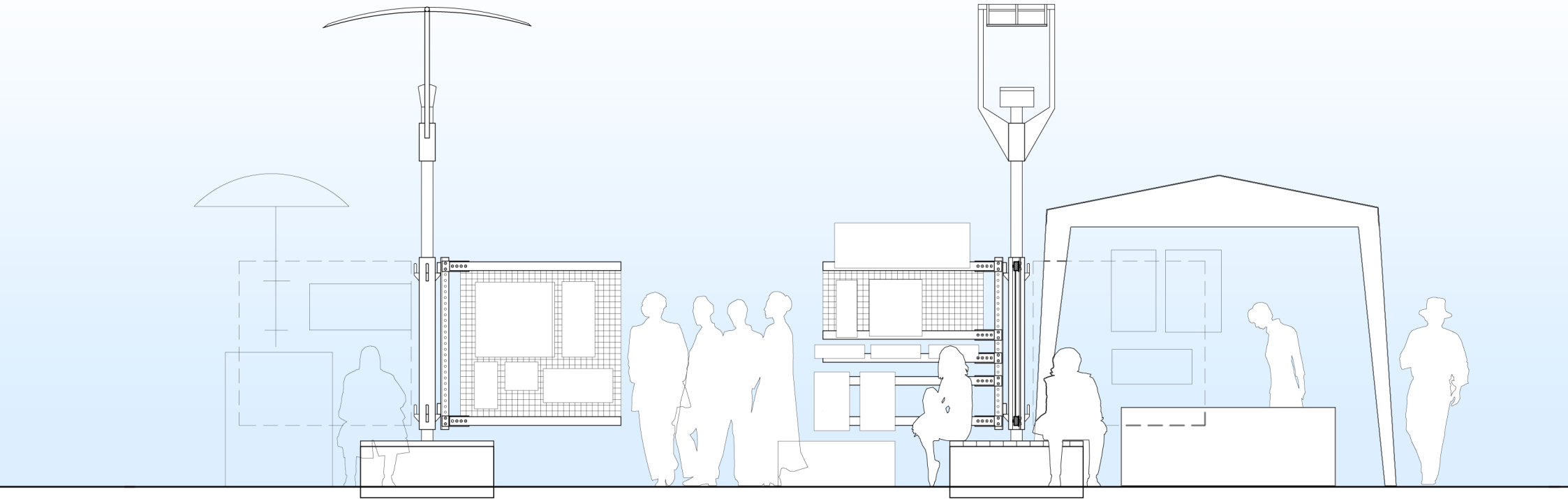
Cecil Balmond, a structural engineer notorious for his unique approach to engineering solutions, speaks of the relationship between space, time and structure in his book *Informal* (2002): “Ratios of distance to time lead to ideas of velocity, pulse, and rates of change. In tectonic terms this sense of motion is either arrested or frozen or just about to be launched.” Freezing a human narrative and designing for it will stifle the informality of that narrative. Balmond continues and questions “why not use structure as an animation that provokes synthesis?” The solution which Balmond gives to this question is to use informal structural rhythms: “...a rat-ta-ta-tat instead of the dull metronomic one-two repeat.” (Balmond, 2002: 35). My solution, though similar in spirit, is the adaptability of a regular order.

The diagrams above illustrate how an orthogonal grid, and order, can be used to achieve a variety of spatial arrangements. This is achieved with the addition of move-able screens at the column points of the grid. These columns are either part of lighting fixtures, in open space, or structural columns for the raised deck of my scheme. The ordered grid used for

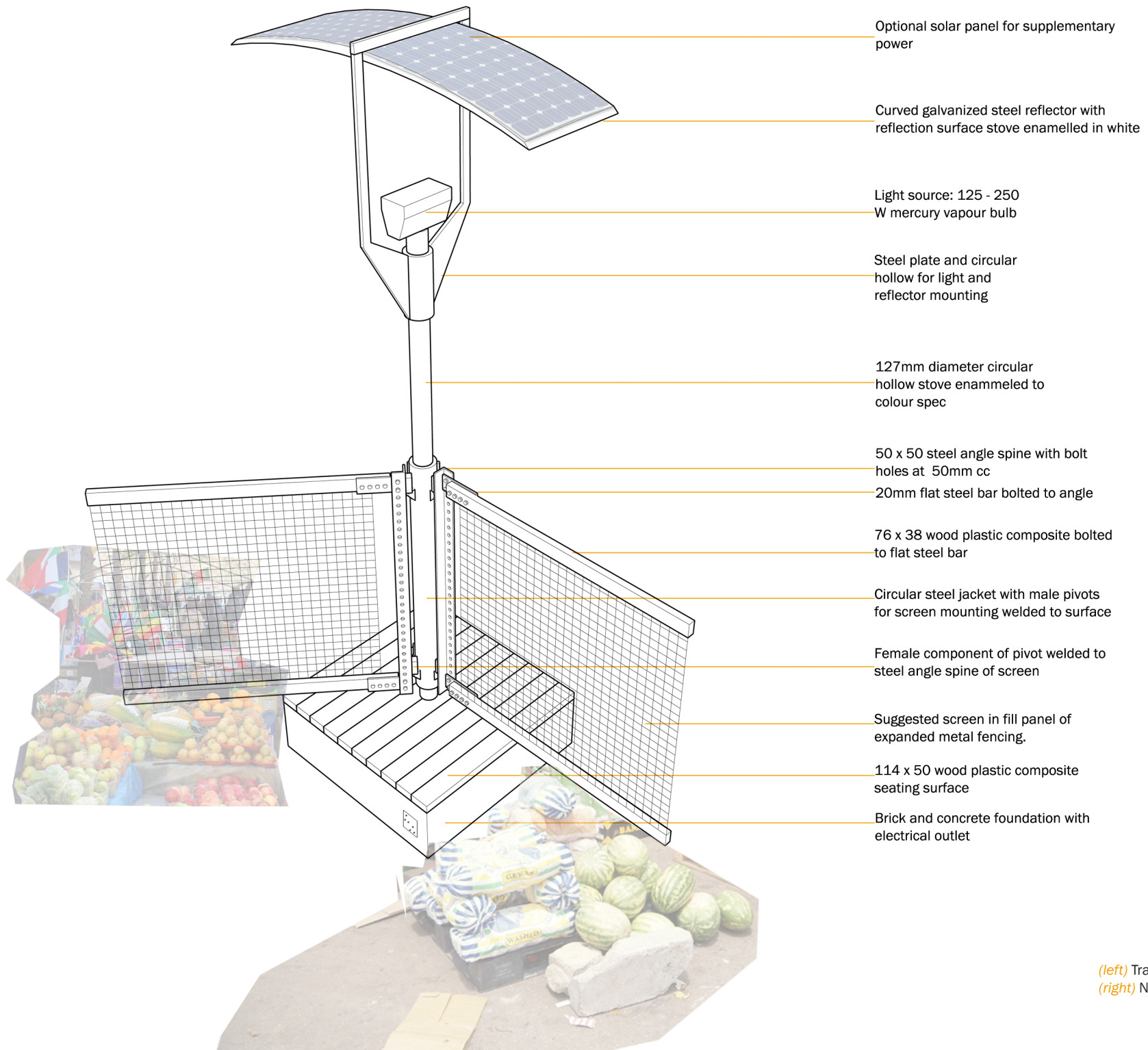
the structure and layout of my design is therefore made adaptable through the addition of these screens.

The screens themselves are completely customisable by the user or trader, allowing for various setups and improvements. I am intending for the Space Workshop to be used as the centre for the maintenance, upgrading and expanding of these screens. The workshop and screen flexibility, combined, make up truly adaptable tradespace.

(right) Elevation and plan of tradespace. 1:50







Optional solar panel for supplementary power

Curved galvanized steel reflector with reflection surface stove enamelled in white

Light source: 125 - 250 W mercury vapour bulb

Steel plate and circular hollow for light and reflector mounting

127mm diameter circular hollow stove enamelled to colour spec

50 x 50 steel angle spine with bolt holes at 50mm cc

20mm flat steel bar bolted to angle

76 x 38 wood plastic composite bolted to flat steel bar

Circular steel jacket with male pivots for screen mounting welded to surface

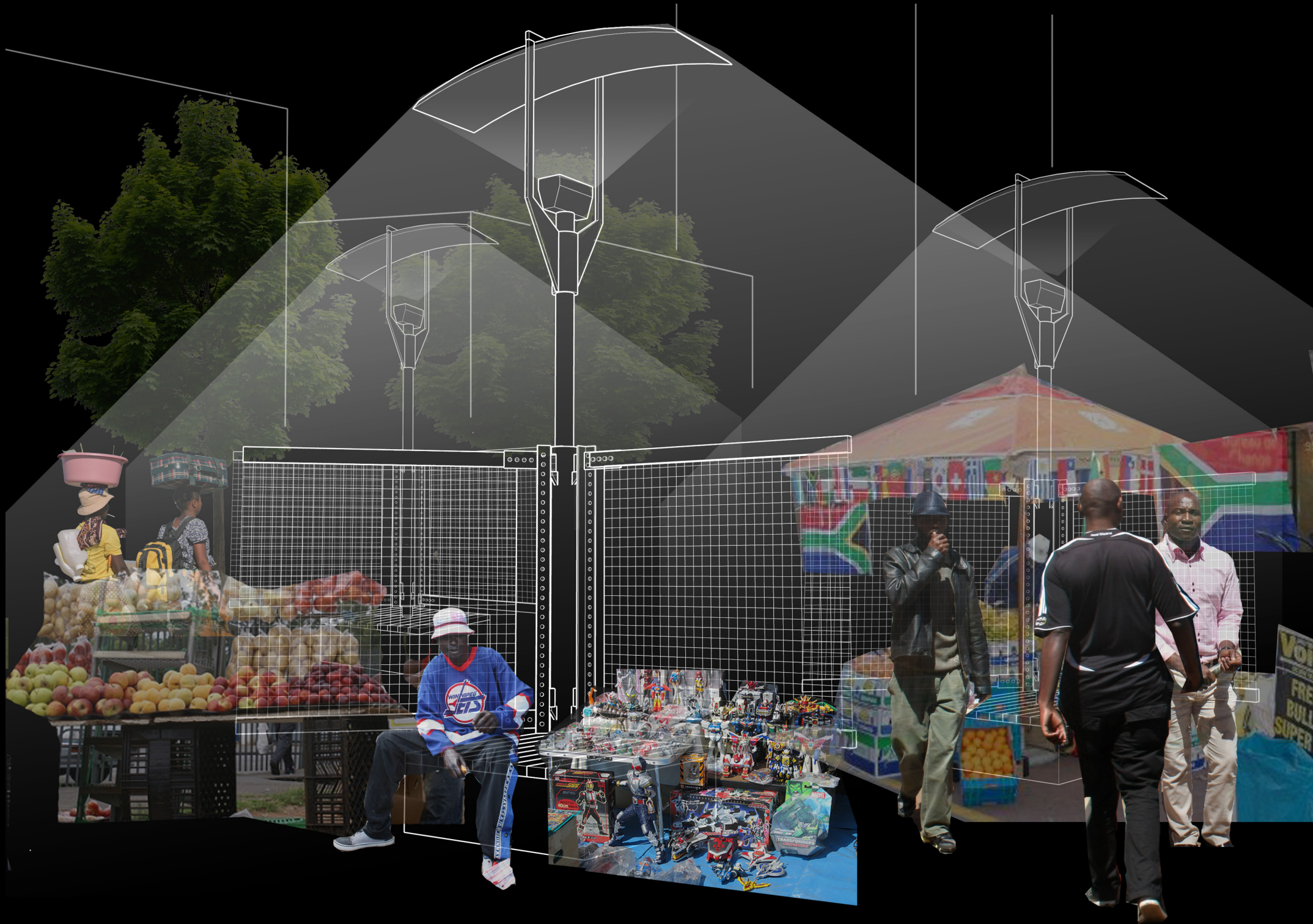
Female component of pivot welded to steel angle spine of screen

Suggested screen in fill panel of expanded metal fencing.

114 x 50 wood plastic composite seating surface

Brick and concrete foundation with electrical outlet

(left) Tradespace model  
(right) Night market





## MULTI-PURPOSE THEATRE

The primary component of this theatre is an adaptable fly-tower. The fly-tower is a space above the backstage of a theatre which houses the sets and rigging for lighting and effects. In this case the fly-tower for this outdoor theatre is housed in an elevated, polycarbonate skin, box which becomes an identifiable GOJOZI icon that glows at night.

The benefits of this fly-tower include:

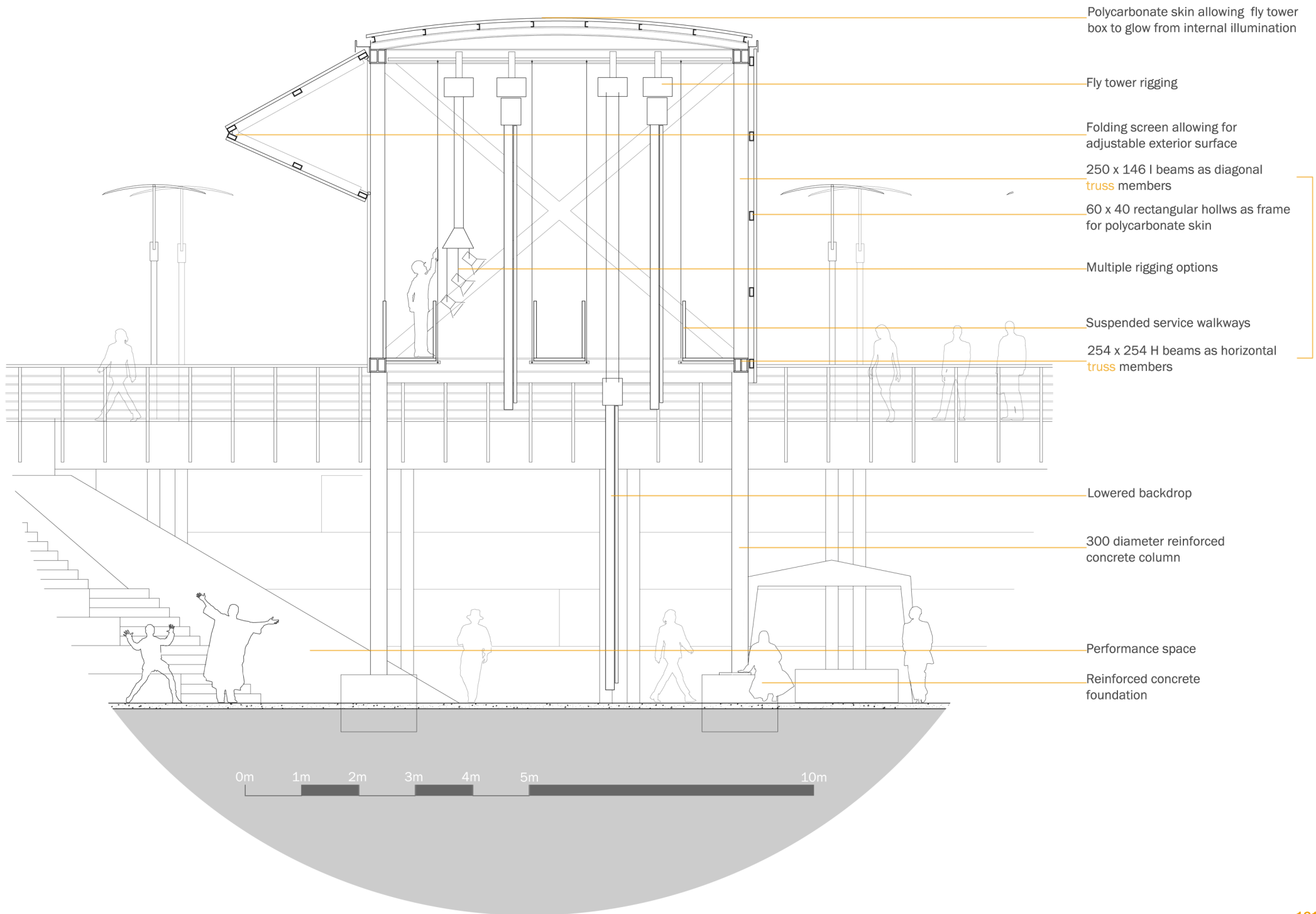
- Multiple rigging options for lighting, sound, projection and set backdrops.
- Unobstructed ground level when all rigging is retracted.
- Rigging is safe from vandalism and theft when retracted
- Iconic structure

This fly-tower is based on the BMW Guggenheim Lab in New York by Atelier Bow-Wow architects.

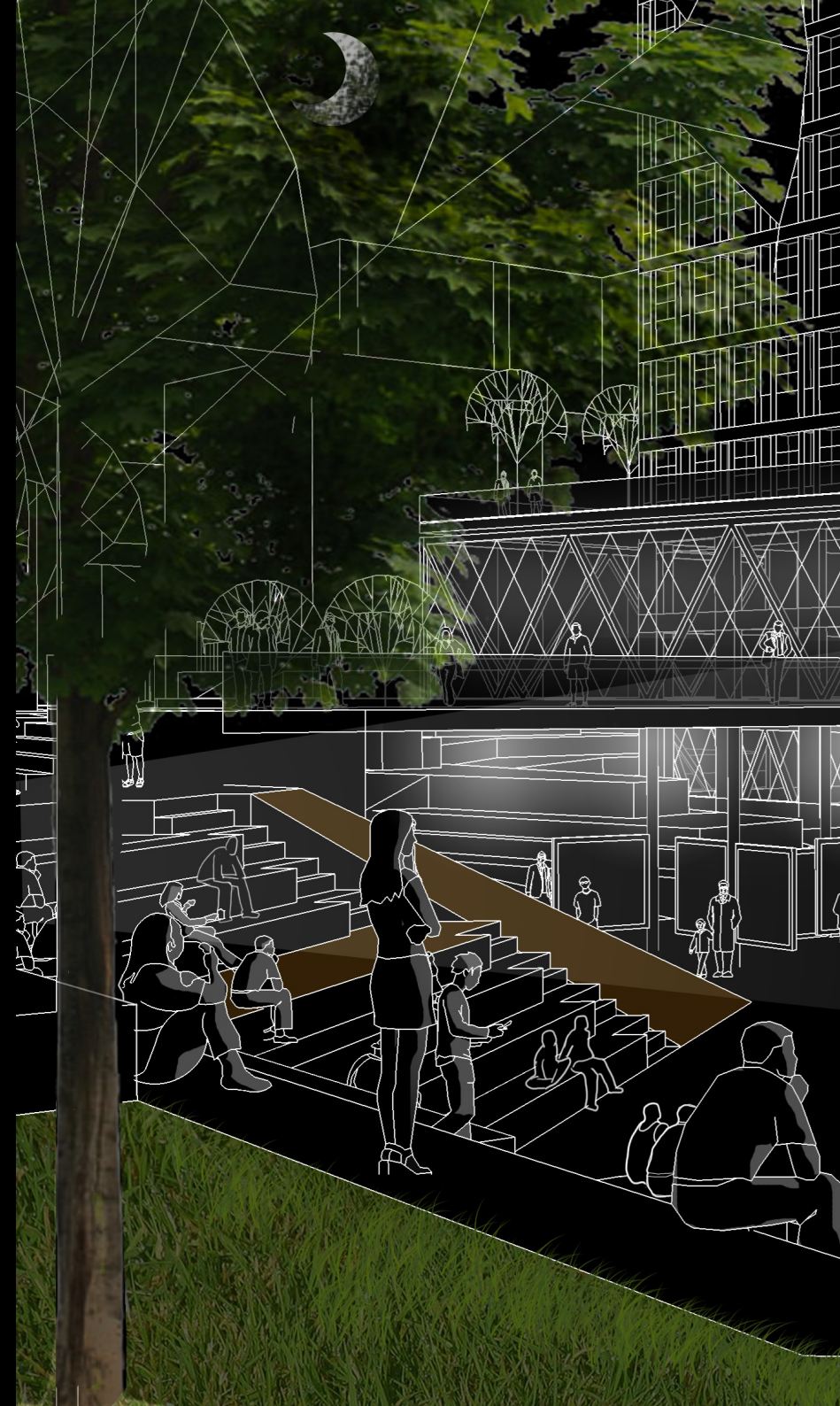


(top) Atelier Bow-Wow's model of the BMW Guggenheim Lab, New York.  
(right) Section through fly-tower.





MOVIE SCREENING AT THE THEATRE





# GO





**CONCLUSION**

06

# DESIGNDRAWINGS

Final architectural drawings including:

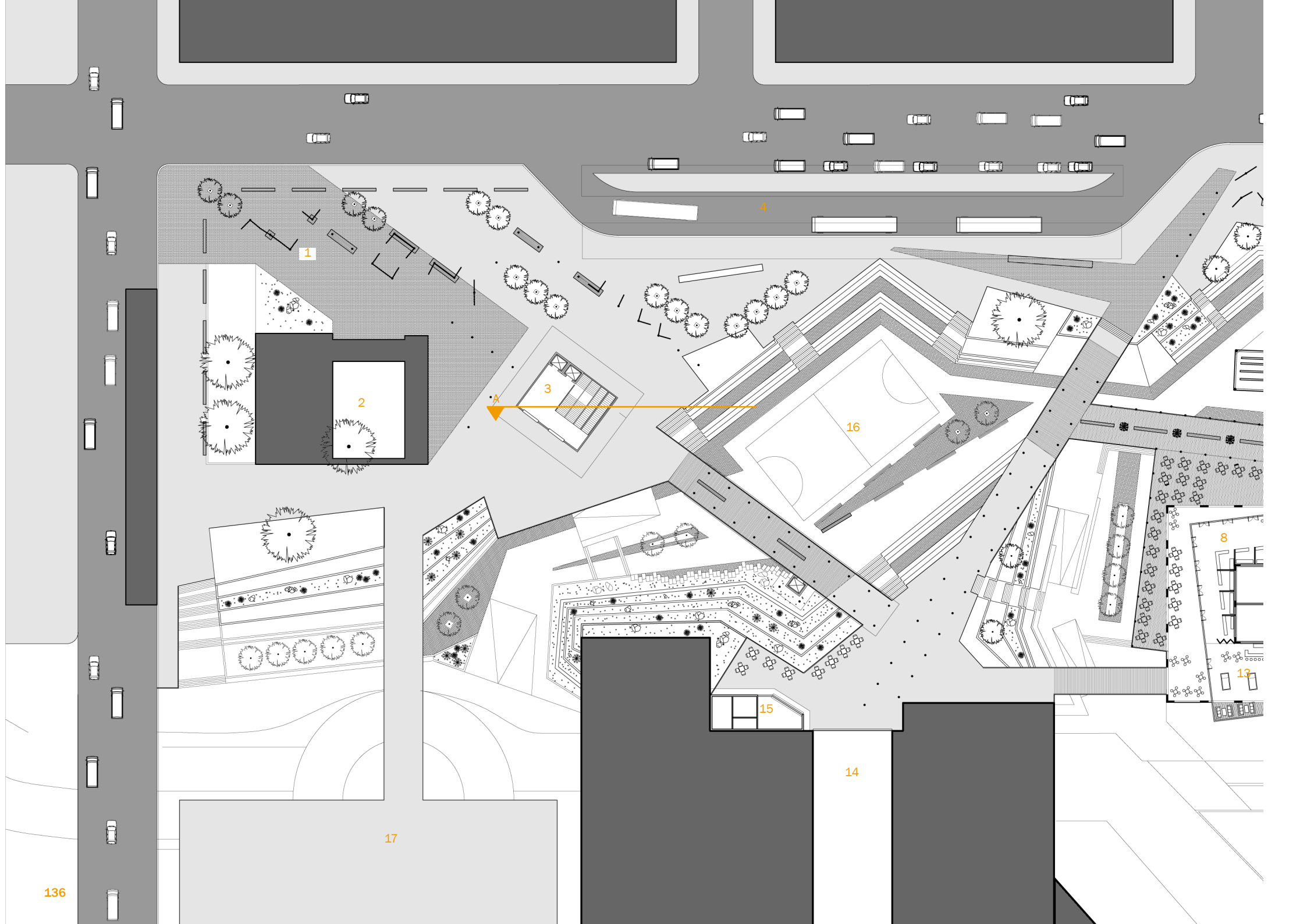
Plans  
Sections  
Elevations

# DESIGNMODELS

1:500 site model  
1:250 detailed model  
1:10 trader screen model

# REFERENCES

A list of sources, including books, Internet, Interviews and videos.



1

2

3

4

16

8

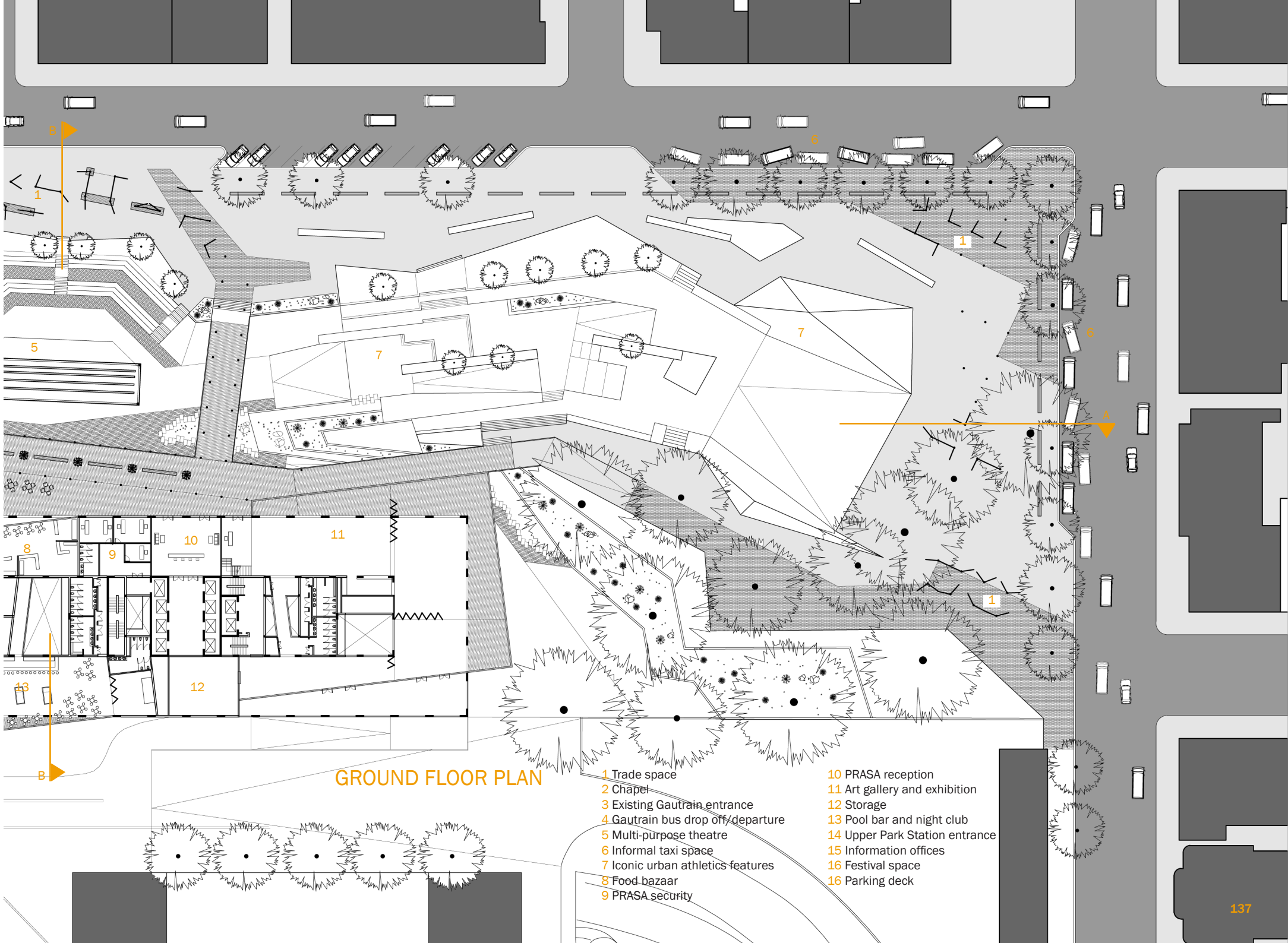
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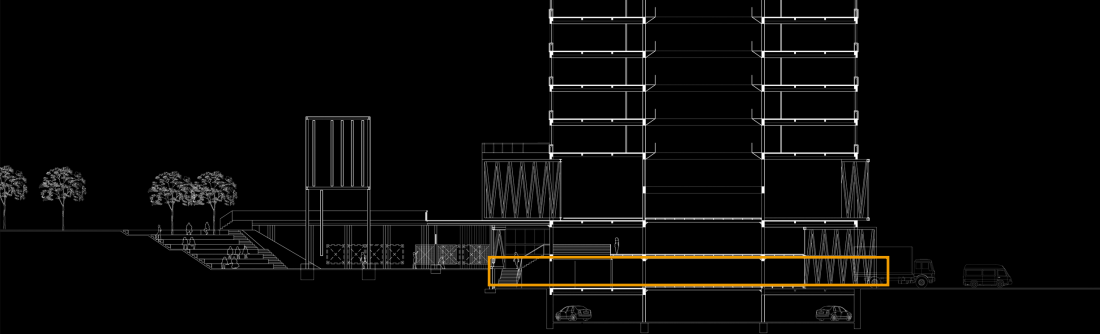
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**GROUND FLOOR PLAN**

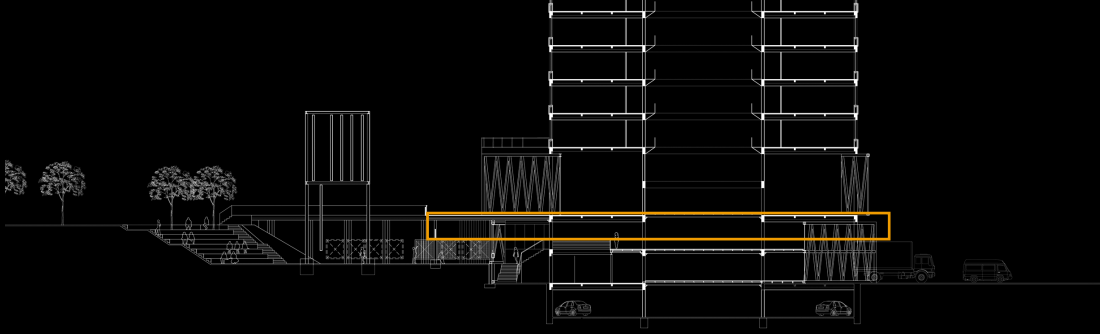
- 1 Trade space
- 2 Chapel
- 3 Existing Gautrain entrance
- 4 Gautrain bus drop off/department
- 5 Multi-purpose theatre
- 6 Informal taxi space
- 7 Iconic urban athletics features
- 8 Food bazaar
- 9 PRASA security
- 10 PRASA reception
- 11 Art gallery and exhibition
- 12 Storage
- 13 Pool bar and night club
- 14 Upper Park Station entrance
- 15 Information offices
- 16 Festival space
- 16 Parking deck



## SECOND BASEMENT

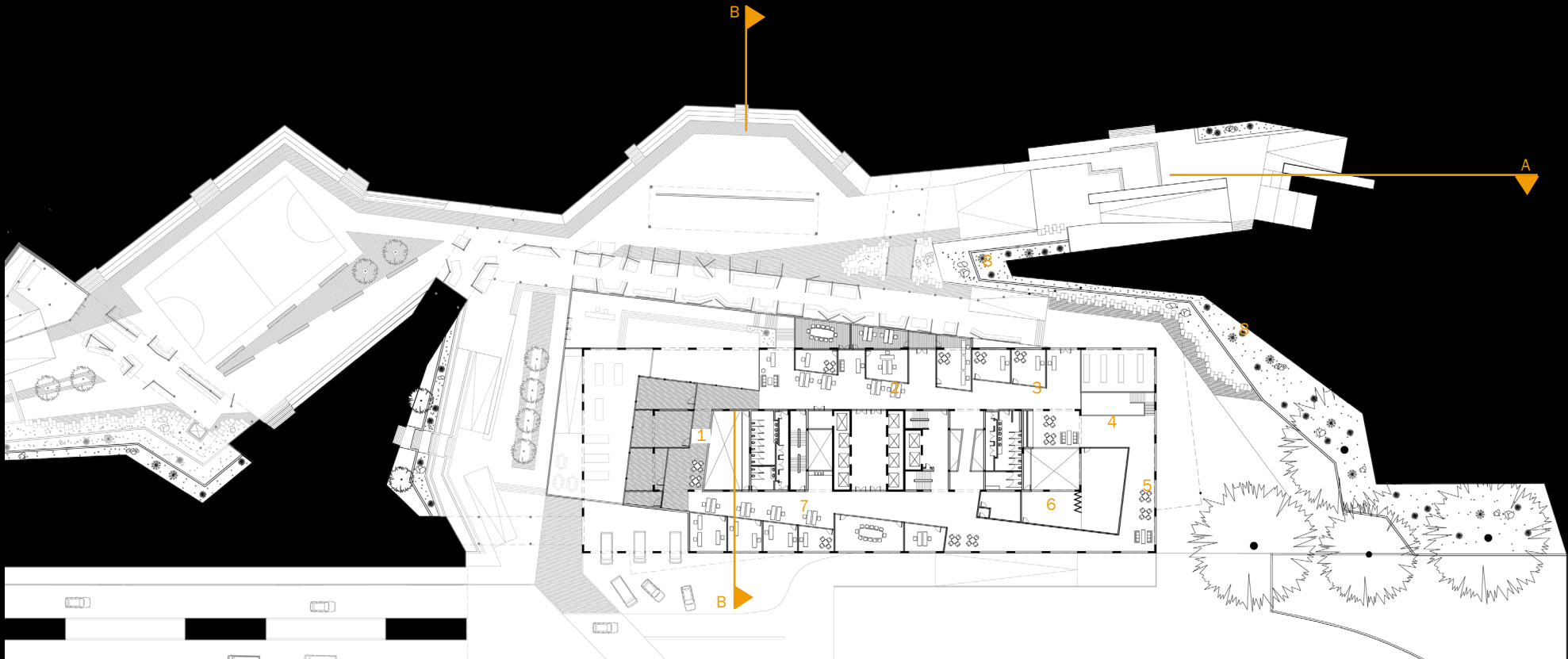
- 1 Existing Gautrain station
- 2 Added Gautrain entrance
- 3 Tradespace
- 4 Basketball court
- 5 Adaptable theatre
- 6 Rainwater pond
- 7 Tradespace
- 8 Entrance hall
- 9 Computer room
- 10 Library
- 11 Audio visual room
- 12 Timber workshop
- 13 Workspace
- 14 Workshop storage
- 15 Trader storage units
- 16 Refuse
- 17 Service delivery and taxi maintenance
- 18 Workshop storage
- 19 Studio space
- 20 Metal workshop



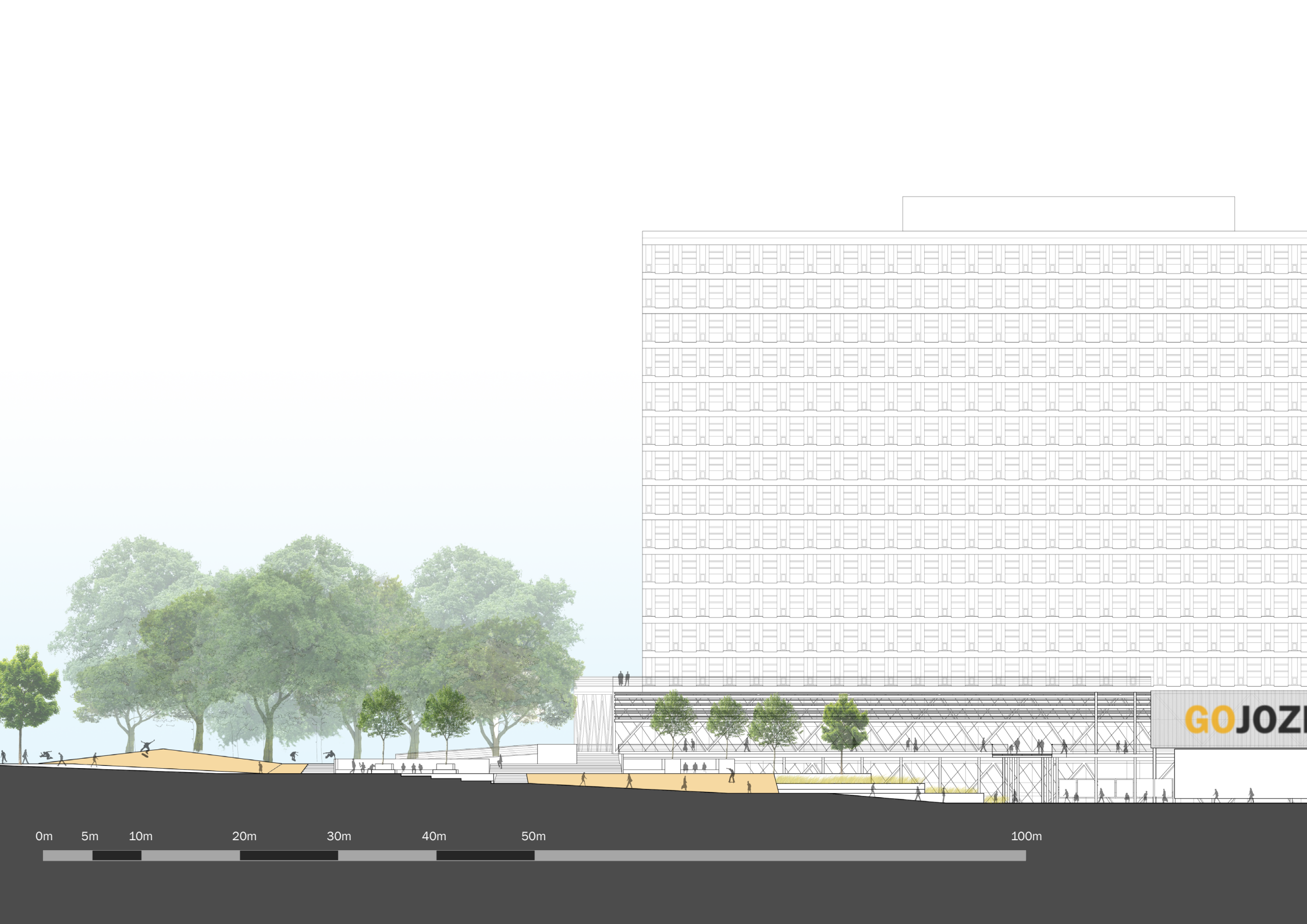


## FIRST BASEMENT

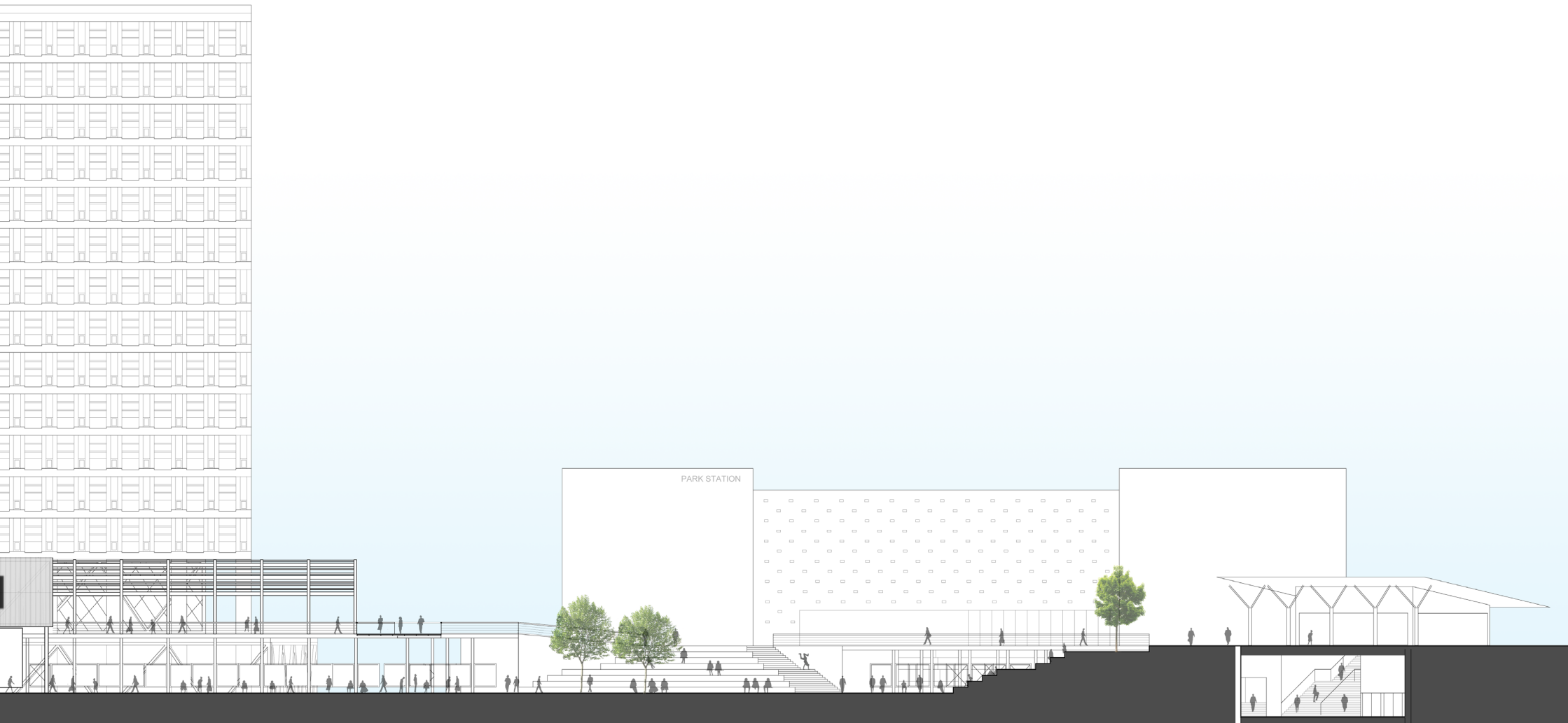
- 1 Studio spaces
- 2 Community centre management
- 3 Work spaces
- 4 Kitchenette
- 5 Photographic studio
- 6 Dark room
- 7 Offices/workspaces
- 8 Water feature







0m 5m 10m 20m 30m 40m 50m 100m



PARK STATION

Sectional elevation AA



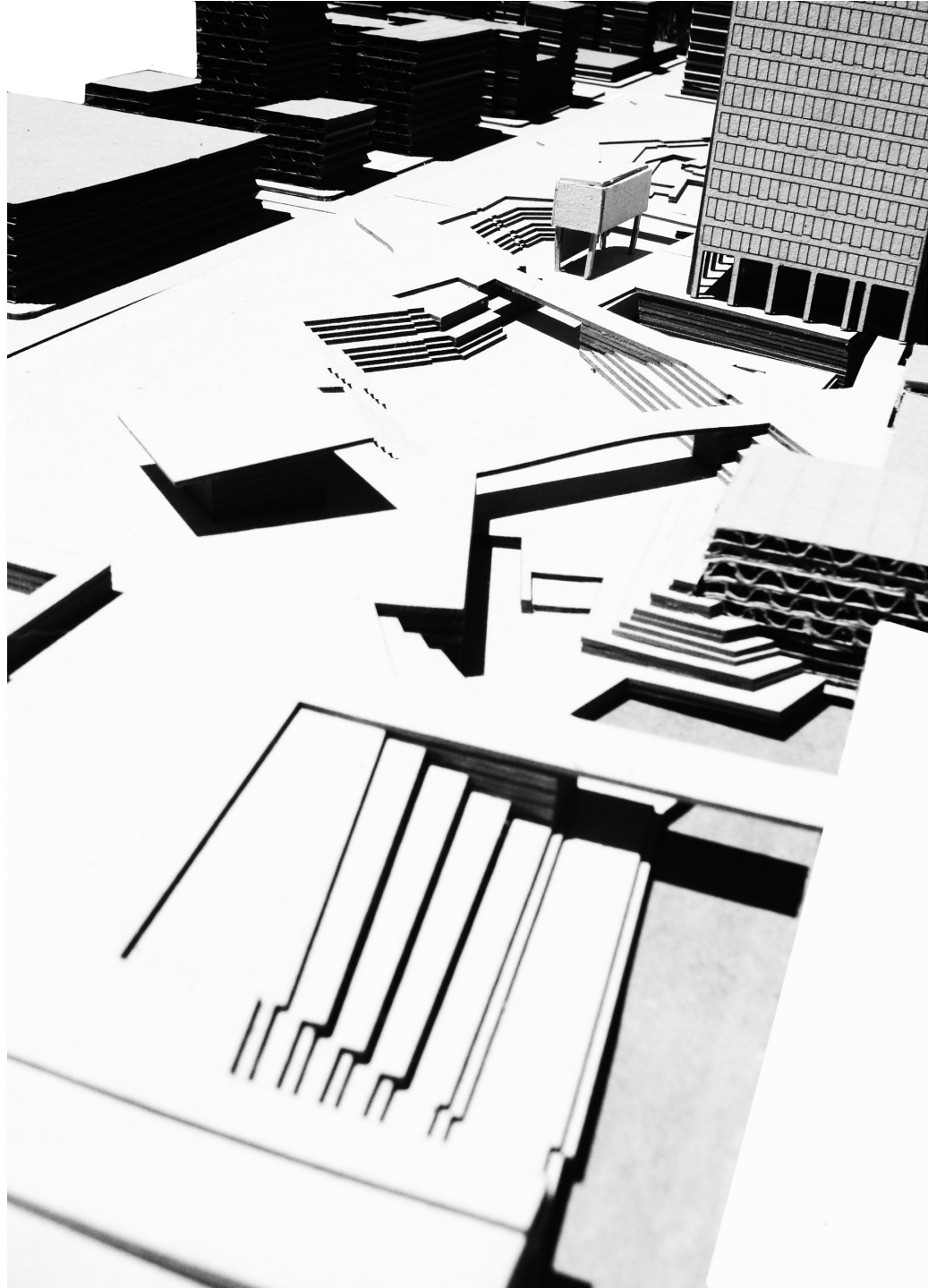
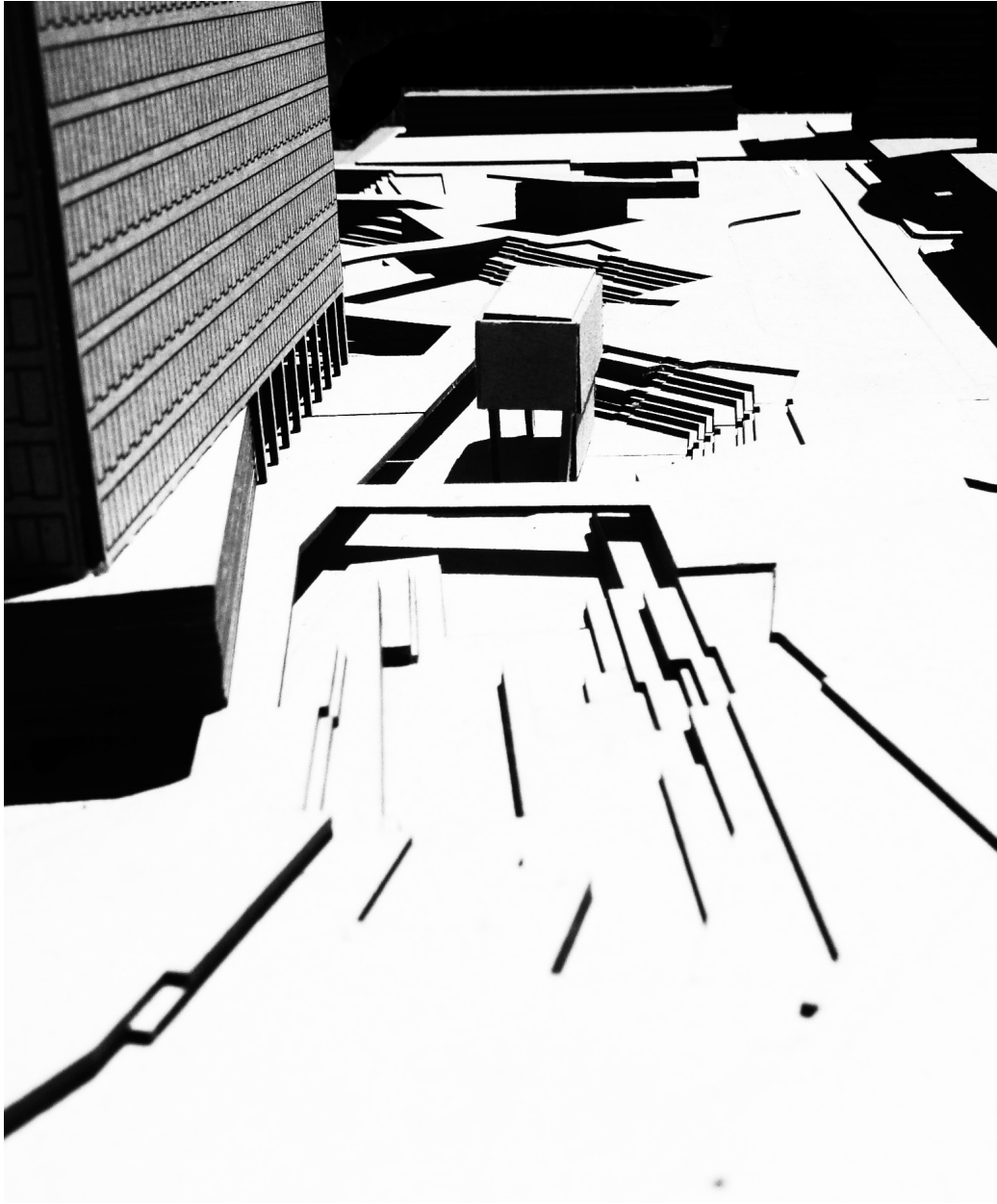
0m 5m 10m 20m

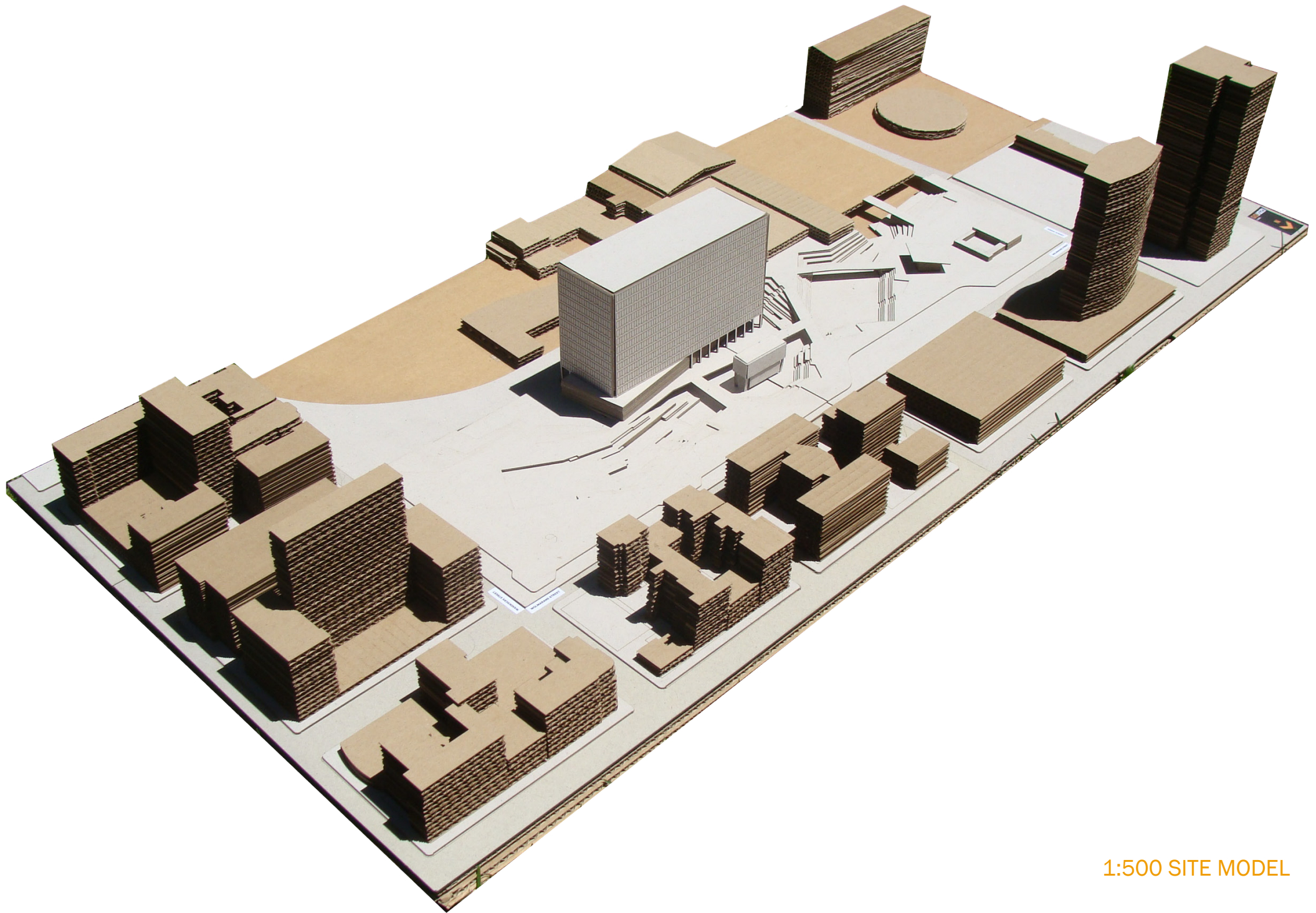
Section BB



GO JOZI

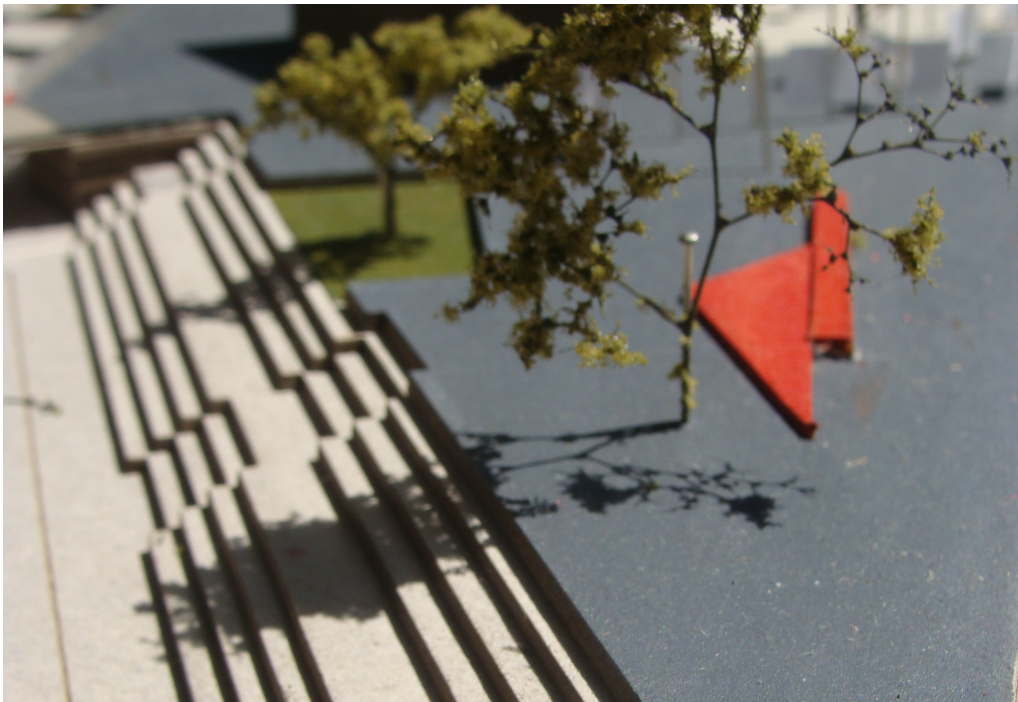
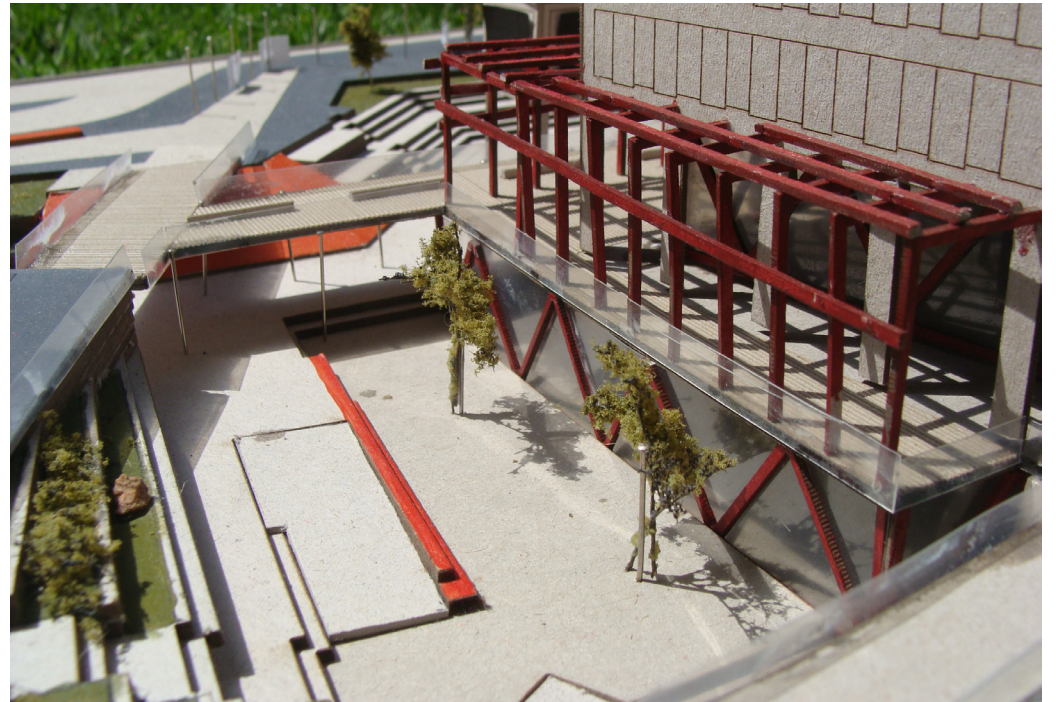
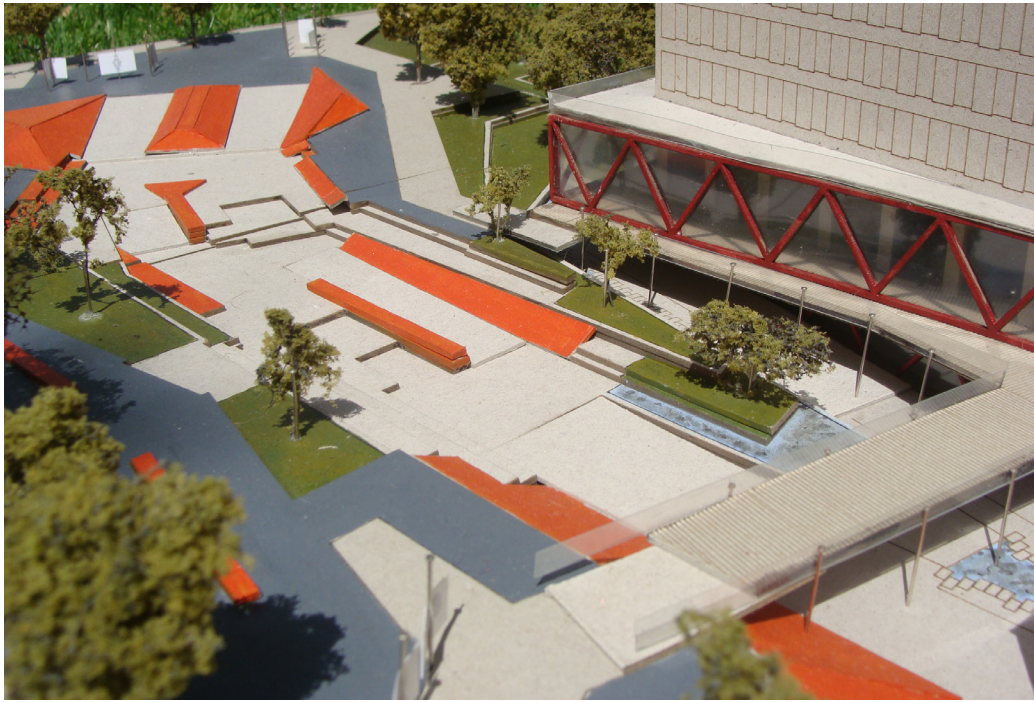




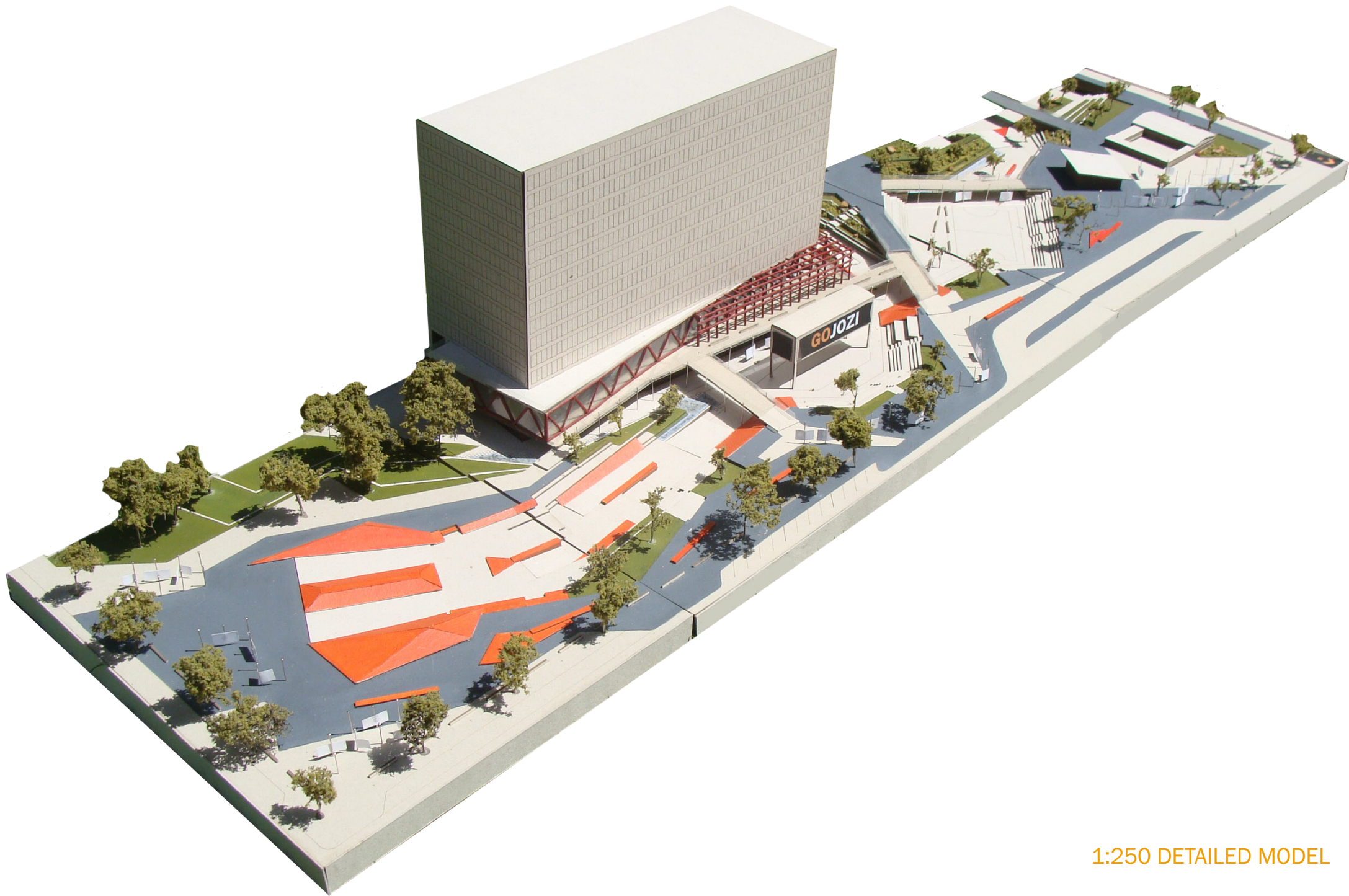


1:500 SITE MODEL





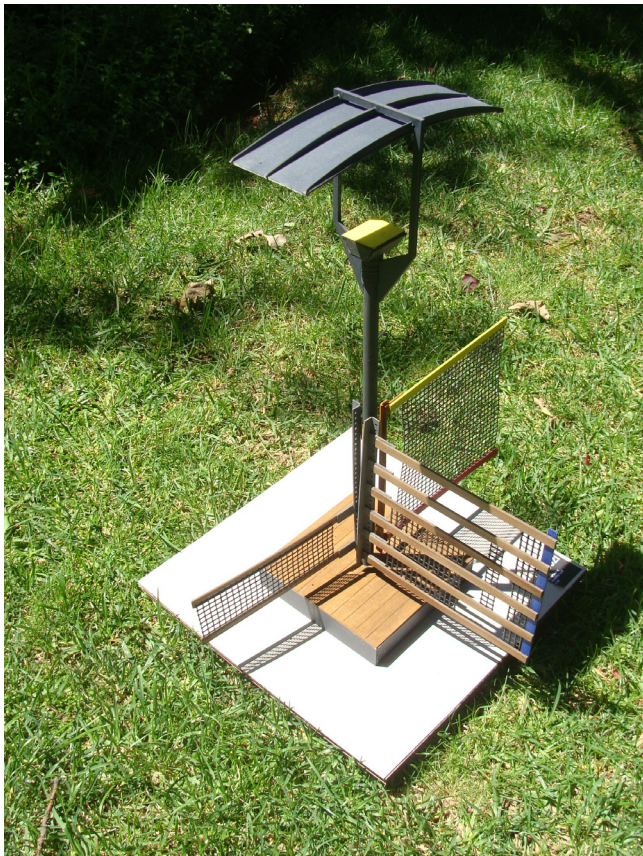




1:250 DETAILED MODEL



1:10 ADAPTABLE TRADER SCREEN MODEL







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