FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION FORUM
Nilene van Niekerk

Principles of protest reinterpreted as place
Constitutional Hill, Johannesburg

DECLARATION :

This dissertation is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree M. Arch. (Prof) at the University of the Free State. All work contained in this document is my own except where otherwise acknowledged.

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PREAMBLE:

The focus of this dissertation stems from the interest of objectifying a non-architectural contemporary problem in South Africa by means of symbolic representation, so that the conceived may become the perceived. This dissertation questions whether there is an analogy between architecture and linguistics and attempts to determine to what extent architecture can communicate through the process of signification.

It was within this framework of addressing a contemporary problem that the intimidation of journalists by the controversial Secrecy Bill became an insightful investigation of a significant contemporary problem in South Africa. Although freedom of expression and freedom of the press are generally protected practices in South Africa's constitution, the persistent role of the government to protect state information is a substantial threat to citizens' constitutional right of freedom of expression.

This investigation gave form to an institutional architectural intervention that creates a meaningful symbolic place that provides protection to journalists, and become a pivotal point where classified information can be sent to and archived, as well as establishing a public space that encourages communication, all in the name of fostering the right of freedom of expression. Thus the proposed architectural intervention realised into a Freedom of Expression Forum.

By placing the Freedom of Expression Forum within the direct vicinity of the Constitutional Court, the architectural language took on the form of protest, becoming a symbolic way of emphasising, contradicting and commenting on the existing beacons of freedom at Constitutional Hill.

It is through this attempt to preserve the symbolic freedom of the Constitutional Court that the proposed dissertation argues the need for the objectification of the problem through a physical architectural intervention that constantly reminds the journalists, who are challenging the threat, and those who are threatening the freedom of expression, of the importance of this fundamental right.

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INTRODUCTION:

When faced with the unfamiliar task of selecting a dissertation topic, the first ignorant reaction is often 'I want to do a new type of building', which often results in the hard realisation that one cannot merely invent a new typology.

It was my own realisation of this, which led me to approach the question differently and rather ask: 'How can I use architecture as a tool to address a contemporary problem specific to the South African context?'

This led me to an insightful investigation into different contemporary problems. It was however the alarming events of the past years, such as the notorious Nklandla Report that was released in March 2014, the attack on the ***Charlie Hebdo*** newspaper journalists in France in January 2015, and the jamming of cellular signals to block journalists from communicating with the outside world at the South African State of the Nation Address in February 2015, which drew my attention to the worldwide problem of freedom of expression.

The distressing effect of the controversial Secrecy Bill on freedom of expression, journalists and the press in South Africa was a vital element in the realisation of the idea for a Freedom of Expression Forum as a place to protect journalists and house institutions that are fighting for freedom of expression.

The question of how to materialise these complex and abstract ideas of freedom of expression into familiar frames of reference gave form to the theoretical idea of symbolic representation which created a framework for the consideration of the topography, typology, morphology and the tectonics that set the peripheries for the project.

The political power of physical place became a significant consideration in the concern of where to place a symbolic intervention for press freedom. It was inevitably the third space of Constitutional Hill Precinct in Johannesburg that became a possibility to intervene on a physical and symbolic level, by establishing a hybrid institution for journalists and the press within this place that is a beacon of freedom in the urban context. The symbolic language took the form of a protest in an attempt to objectify the threat of the Secrecy Bill within this human rights precinct.

The understanding of the urban topography influenced the typology of the proposed building, giving shape to the verticality of the proposed institution, which ultimately influenced the morphology and the tectonics of the building. The typological perimeters were set by the context, as the proposed intervention started developing in the image of the freedom towers at Constitutional Hill.



The urban topography of Johannesburg

This paper attempts to reflect how the above-mentioned ideas for the Freedom of Expression Forum developed through a process of investigation, exploration and synthesising. The document is structured by the terms topography, typology, morphology and tectonics. Typology in the general sense can be defined as the type of building, may it be institutional, residential etc. and how the functional design and organisation is addressed to suite the client's need. Topological considerations aim for a responsible engagement with the human ecological environment which includes the natural, human, social, historical and cultural elements. Morphology aims for the meaningful making of place though theoretical and conceptual considerations.

This paper firstly discusses the problem statements and aims regarding the typology, morphology, topology and the tectonics in Part 1. Part 2 follows with the exploration and grounding of these terms. Part 3 focuses on the synthesising of the design and construction ideas. Lastly, Part 4 reflects on the process.

DESIGN RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research is designed concerning the exploration of four broad problem statements, relating to the fundamentals of design:

- What to design for whom?
- Where to design it?
- How the gestalt of the design is influenced, and lastly,
- How the design is constructed?

For the purpose of this document these questions relate to the sources of knowledge that influence the logic of type (typology), topos (topology), form (morphology) and structure/ construction (tectonics). The research originated from an interest in objectifying a non-architectural problem through symbolic representation. From the interest, different sources of knowledge were explored in an attempt to develop a design methodology specific to this design project. The sources of knowledge employed include the following research methods:



Touch Stone

The touchstone is an objectification of the effect of the Secrecy Bill to form an understanding of the abstract ideas concerning freedom of expression and how this inevitably can be translated into architectural concepts that can serve as the basis for the design approach.



Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework is the realisation and transformation of abstract theoretical underpinnings and initial ideas into architectural forms that capture the essence of the project.



Precedent and Case Studies (Architectural examples)

The precedent and case studies serve as examples of how typology, morphology, topology and tectonics have been addressed in comparable projects to form an understanding and to gain concrete knowledge of how these principles and ideas can be interpreted in the proposed design intervention.



Literature Review

This portion denotes the critical and creative reflection of literature through a process of exploration and creating a foundation of conceptual ideas within a theoretical framework. The basis of the literature review is formed by the critical, cognitive and interpretive analysis of theoretical ideas to form an understanding of how the ideas apply to and influence the proposed dissertation.

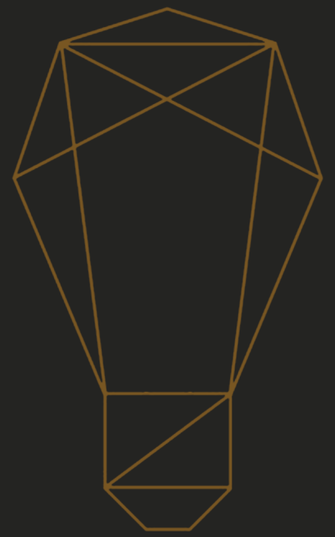


Site Investigation

The site investigation is an analytical understanding of the topology of the site from a macro context to the micro context. By gathering and analysing quantitative information and data an understanding of the physical characteristics of the context is formed. The Cognitive Analysis becomes an investigation of the phenomenology of the site and resembles the lived experience of being on site.

PART 1

PROBLEM STATEMENTS AND AIMS



The end of apartheid in 1994 brought an end to 300 years of colonialism, segregation and white domination in South Africa. South Africa's past, that is littered with injustice, discrimination and oppression played a significant role in the goal to establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights. The new democratic South Africa has paved the way for cultural, economical and political development in South Africa.

Two decades later South Africa has undoubtedly become a better place for all and we have much to celebrate. Together, South Africans have achieved a great deal, especially given the immense socio-economic challenges that were inherited from apartheid.

Although the nation has much to celebrate, South Africa still faces numerous contemporary problems particular to the post-apartheid epoch. Many of these contemporary problems still remain unchallenged.

The main objective of this dissertation is to identify and challenge a non-architectural contemporary problem through a hybrid architectural solution that is specific to the South African context. Through an investigative process the contemporary problem was identified as the threat of the Secrecy Bill on freedom of expression and the consequence of it on journalists. This established a framework for the consideration of the topography, typology, morphology and tectonics that set the architectural peripheries for the project. These peripheries are set out as the problem statements and aims for each of the above mentioned are discussed.



1.1 Topology

The proposed site at Constitutional hill is located within the urban fabric of Johannesburg near the western end of Hillbrow. The urban spatial structure (land use, transport, activities etc.) as well as the urban narrative of Johannesburg (the lived experience of the site) cultivated an understanding of the urban topography of which the proposed building forms a part. This is explored in the quantitative and qualitative analysis in Part 2.

The proposed site is on the southern corner of Kotze and Queens Road, opposite the Old Fort. The site is parallel to the Freedom Towers of Constitutional Hill.

Problem Statement

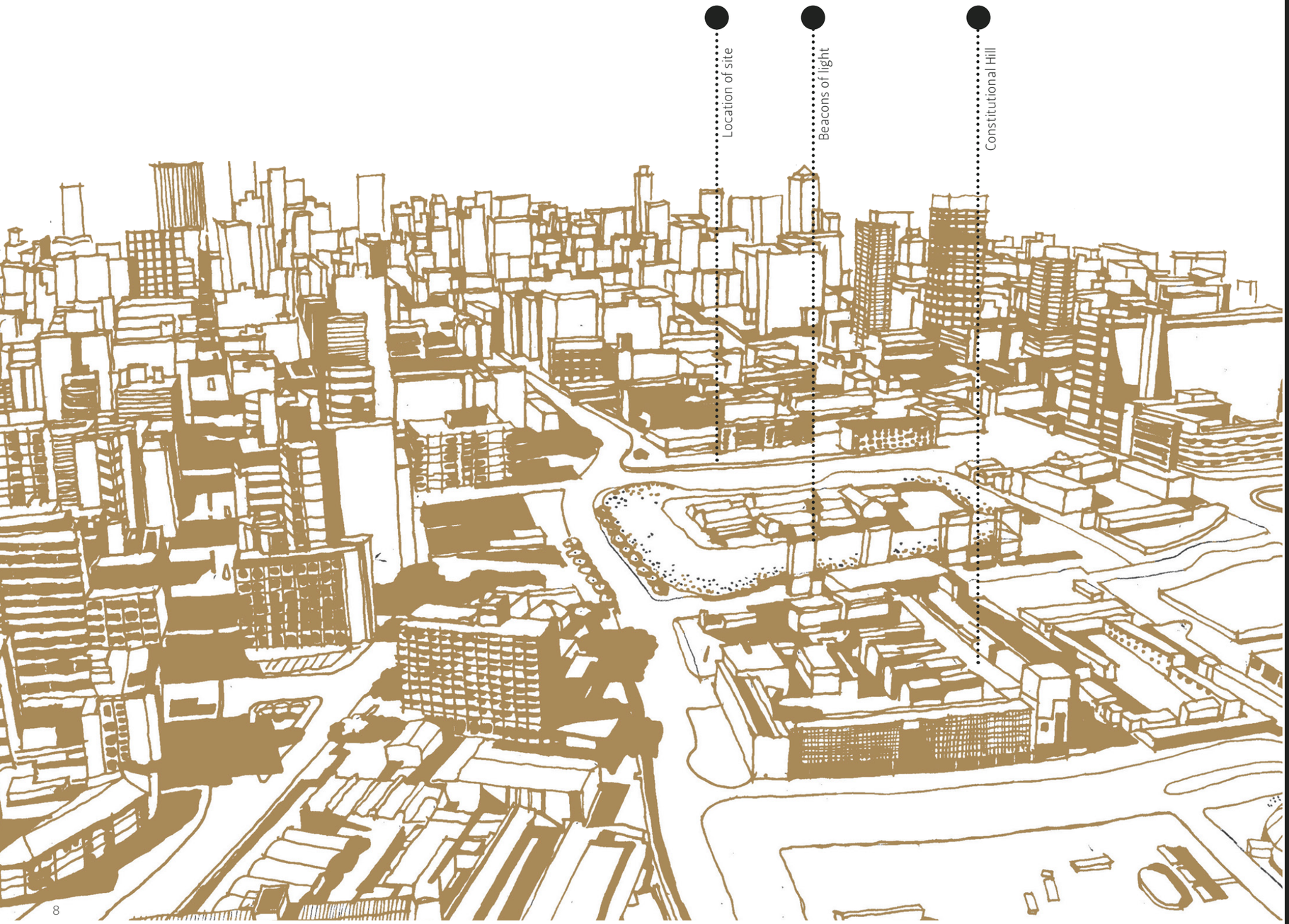
The urban narrative of this specific part of Johannesburg is layered with complex urban and political history, and has a social culture that is unique to the specific location. Constitution Hill is a human rights precinct which holds architectural remembrance of South Africa's oppressive past. This includes the jail that was home to political prisoners, the Old Fort and the Woman's Jail. These historical landmarks are in contrast with interventions like the Constitutional Court that is a symbol of freedom and liberation. It is the spatial structure and urban narrative of Constitutional Hill where the symbols of the repressive past were transformed into present-day custodians of democracy and freedom that contributes to the hybrid quality of third space.

Aim

The project aspires to build forth on this objective of third space. The proposed building should attempt to inscribe itself into the urban spatial structure as well as the urban narrative of Constitutional Hill by adding a new contemporary layer. The architectural language of protest must ideally portray an understanding of the surrounding area and the complexity of the historical and contemporary layers; and therefore contextually contradict the existing architecture in such way that it does not take away from it, but rather adds a new hybrid layer that accentuates and complements the architecture of freedom.



http://www.constitutionhill.org.za



1.2 Typology

The language of architecture is inscribed into the archetypes of our environmental levels of settlement, urban space, institution and house. It is the recognisable identity of archetypes that forms typologies that makes human beings' environment a meaningful place. Typology can be defined as the recognisable characteristics typically found in a specific kind of building. It is especially within the urban topography of the city, like Johannesburg, where the understanding of typology becomes a meaningful instrument to orientate and identify oneself. Johannesburg is a mixture of urban, suburban and industrial areas that are easily distinguishable through the typology of skyscraper, house and factory.

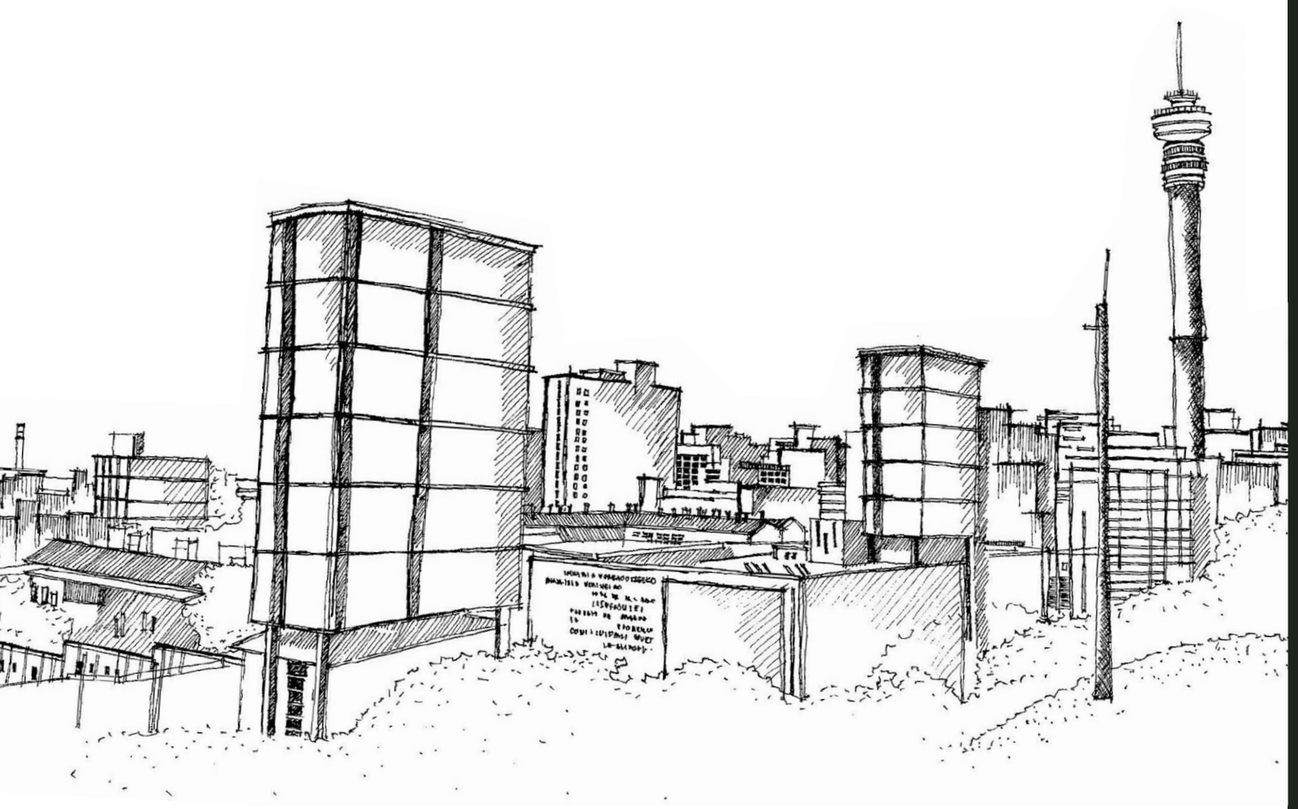
Problem Statement

The urban topology influenced the typological considerations for the proposed building. The tower typology is evident in the surrounding urban context that consists of skyscrapers as well as the beacons of freedom at Constitutional Hill. Verticality and hierarchy is inscribed in the tower typology and relates to importance and visibility. In both instances, verticality and hierarchy become symbolic representations. The skyscraper becomes a symbol of economic power and wealth whereas the towers at Constitutional hill become hybrid signs of freedom. In both instances the symbolic representations contribute to the establishment of a meaningful place in which human beings can identify and orientate themselves in.



Aim

By shaping the proposed institution into towers, the project aspires to imbed itself into the existing contextual framework and create a meaningful place. The treatise investigates how the proposed building can utilise the hierarchical and vertical characteristics inscribed in the tower typology, that denotes importance and visibility, as a protest against the Secrecy Bill in the pursuit that the protest tower will emphasize, contradict and comment on the existing beacons of freedom at Constitutional Hill.



1.3 Morphology

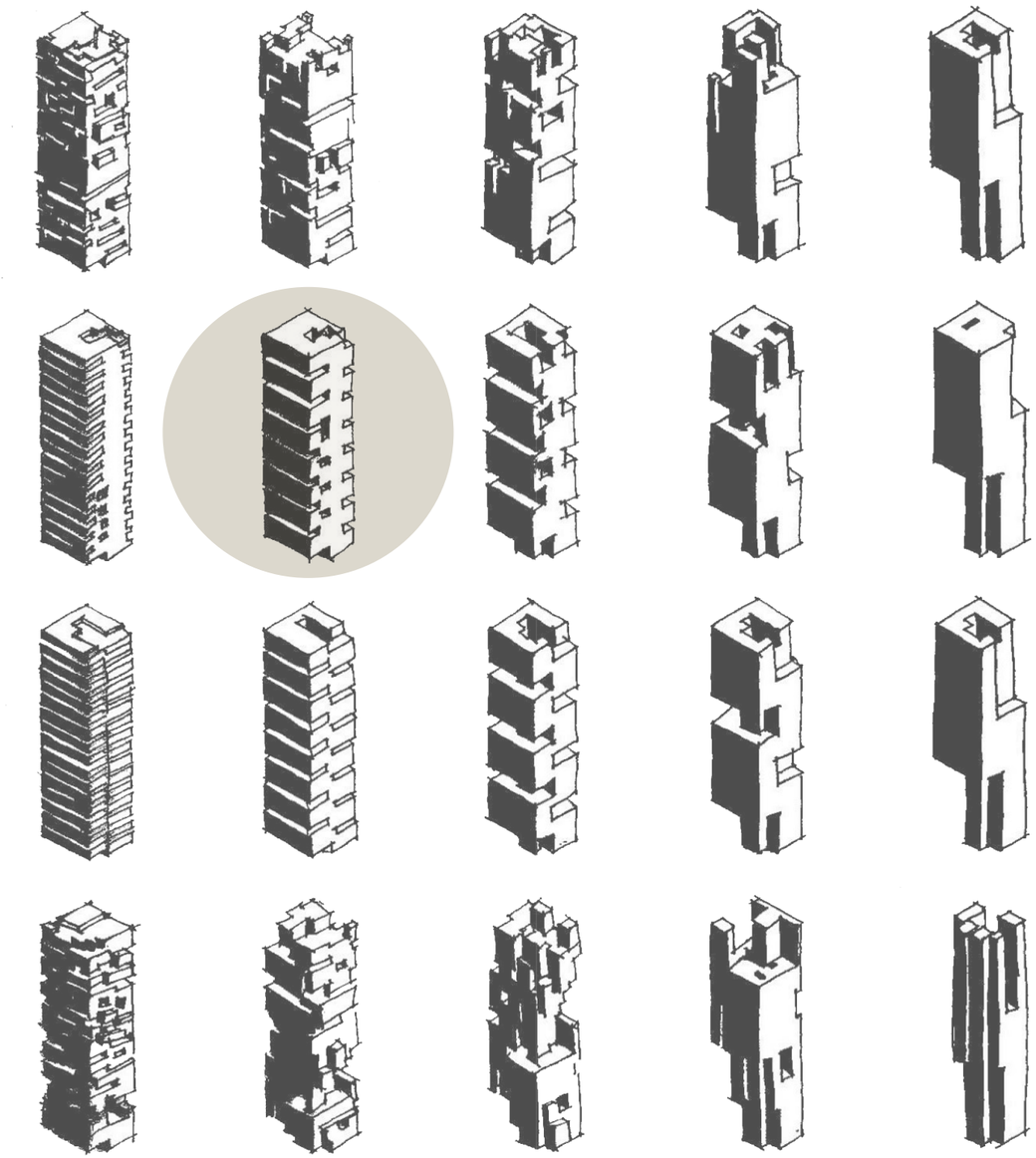
Morphology can be described as the making of meaningful places through a theoretical and conceptual approach. The typology problem statement introduced the idea that archetypes are inscribed with an architectural language. This idea of an architectural language suggests that there is an analogy between architecture and linguistics and that architecture can communicate through a process of signification.

Problem Statement

By exploring the science of signification in language or the semiotics, one can draw similarities between linguistics and architecture. Architecture, like linguistics, is not abstract, buildings can be compared to words in the way they become active, dynamic signs, capable of taking on diverse sets of meanings and connotations for different social classes in different social and historical situations (Selden, Widdowson & Parker, 2005:39). By studying the semantics and syntactic qualities of the architectural language it can be established that architecture communicates to its users through amongst others, its typology, materiality, articulation and scale that creates a meaning environment that can be interpreted though one's bodily experience.

Aim

This dissertation questions whether architecture can communicate through the process of symbolic signification to form an understanding of how the tower typology can become a symbol of protest against the Secrecy Bill. By studying semiology in architecture as well as the fundamental principles of protest, the aim is to translate these ideas into an architectural language that gives form to the spaces, materiality and phenomenological experience that objectifies the threat of the Secrecy Bill.



1.4 Tectonics

Tectonics in architecture describes the relation between the science and the art of a structure. This relation between science and art should be considered to construct a structure that is as much a usable and functional element as it is a work of art. Robert (1986) suggested that construction is not only the activity of making the materially necessary structures that answer to certain needs, but also an activity that raises the construction to an art form.

Problem Statement

The tower typology places distinct limitations and considerations for the structure of the building. These limitations and considerations are essential to create vertical architecture that resists the power of gravity. The conceptual and aesthetic considerations should therefore respect this distinct framework and creative solutions should fall within these restrictions placed by the tower typology.

Aim

The proposed structure should aspire to represent the conceptual approach of architecture as a silent protest, whilst taking the restrictions of the structural system of a tower into consideration. Creative solutions are to be investigated to form an understanding of how the structure of a tower can represent protest, through its materiality, construction methods and tectonics.

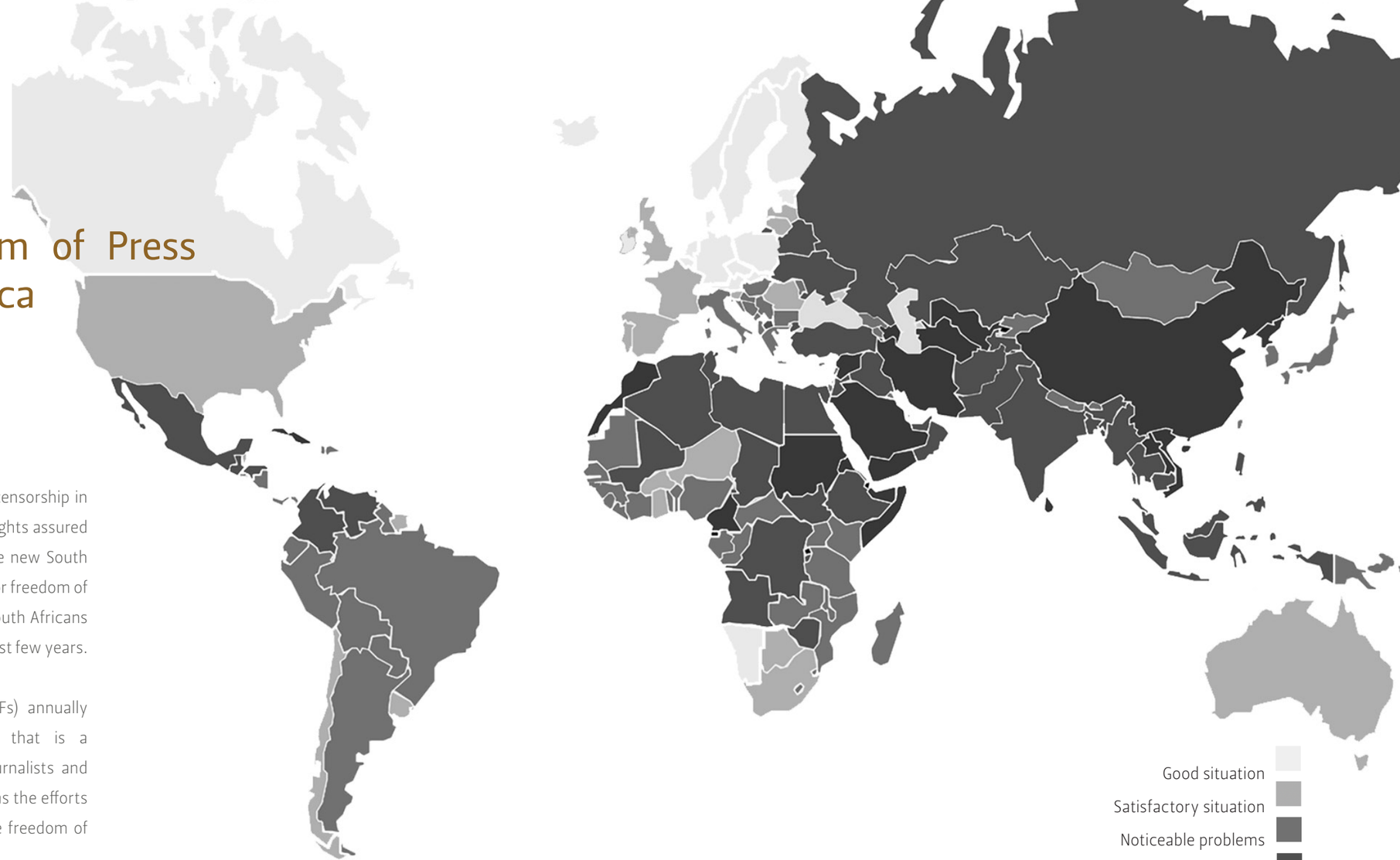
1.5

Exploring the Problem of Press Freedom in South Africa

The end of apartheid in 1994 heralded the end of censorship in South Africa. The new constitution with its Bill of Rights assured freedom of expression, the press and media in the new South Africa. Although the Bill of Rights makes provision for freedom of expression in South Africa, the levels of freedom South Africans have experienced have declined drastically in the past few years.

The organisation Reporters Without Borders (RSFs) annually publishes a Worldwide Press Freedom Index that is a representation of the degree of freedom that journalists and news organisations have in their countries as well as the efforts made by their governments to respect and ensure freedom of expression.

According to Reporters Without Borders' (RSFs) 2013 Worldwide Press Freedom Index, South Africa ranks 52nd out of 179 countries, moving drown ten places from 42nd position from the previous year and a further 19 places down since 2009



World Press Freedom Index 2015

Ranking of every country in 2015 according to the Reporters Without Borders index

(Reporters without Borders, 2013).

Although South Africa enjoys freedom of expression due to the democratic government and constitution that protects our freedom to circulate accurate information, South Africa's rankings were greatly affected by the Protection of State Information Bill (Reporters without Borders, 2013).

The bill was passed in April 2013, and it gives the minister of State Security control over the classification of information. While State Security Minister Siyabonga Cwele argues that the Bill is there to protect the information of ordinary people and cannot be used to hide corruption, opposition to the Bill argues that the Bill favours state interests over transparency and freedom of expression.

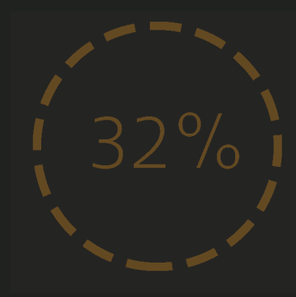
The Bill is a great threat to journalists as it has made no provision for the protection of whistle-blowers and journalists who exposes information. Anyone who reveals state classified information can be sentenced for up to 25 years in prison, making journalism based on 'information leaks' and investigative journalism almost impossible (Reporters without Borders, 2013).

The rating of press freedom in South Africa from 2009 - 2014



2009
0 = Best, 100 = Worst

Free



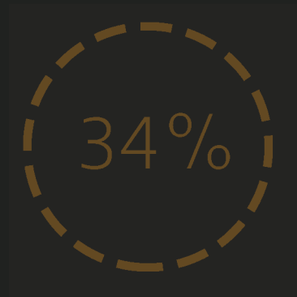
2010
0 = Best, 100 = Worst

Partly Free



2011
0 = Best, 100 = Worst

Partly Free



2012
0 = Best, 100 = Worst

Partly Free



2013
0 = Best, 100 = Worst

Partly Free



2014
0 = Best, 100 = Worst

Partly Free

(Reporters without Borders, 2013)

2010

An ad hoc committee was established to oversee the process of the review of the Bill. The committee consisted of members of parliament and had to address the concerns raised by the opposed. Major revisions included the removal of sections which provides protection against disclosure and classification of sensitive and commercial information. A further change limits official secrets to only chief state intelligence agencies and not all state bodies.

The initial idea for the new legislation that was proposed in 2008 to replace the apartheid law was not taken in consideration. The first draft suggested a new legislation that allows all state bodies to classify document as secret. A total of 25 years were suggested as a penalty for whistle-blowers (Parker, 2011).

2009

The film and Publication Amendment Act was signed into law. The law acts as a protection against child pornography and hate speech. However, it requires publishers who are not recognised by the Press Ombudsman to submit potentially harmful material to a government board for approval. This requires prepublication censorship, which is a violation of the freedom of expression (Parker, 2012).

2008

Intelligence Minister Ronnie Kasrils introduced the protection of Information Bill. The idea was to develop new legislation to replace the apartheid era law regarding the classification of state secrets. The new Bill was to protect state secrets, but at the same time be aligned to the constitutional principles of a transparent government and make provision for whistle-blowers to leak information that is in public interest without prosecution (Parker, 2011).

2004

Law on Anti-terrorism. The law gives authorities the power to restrict reporting on security forces, prisons and mental institutions (Mulana, 2004).

1994

The new Constitution of 1993 meant freedom of expression, for the press and media and for all South Africans.

Timeline of Secrecy Bill and laws that affects freedom of expression in South Africa

Continue

2015

Organisations like SANEF, Freedom of Expression Institute (FXI) and the Right2Know Campaign are still fighting against the implementation of the bill.

For the past 22 months the Bill has sat with President Jacob Zuma, waiting to be signed into law. Meanwhile State Security Minister Mahlobo has been busy with the groundwork for the Bill to be implemented as soon as it is signed into law, meaning that when it is signed into law state information will be regulated and journalists or any other person who publishes classified information will face punitive measures, like imprisonment (Makina, 2015).

2014

SANEF called for the Protection of State Information Bill to be sent to the Constitutional Court for ratification before it is signed into law.

In September 2013 President Jacob Zuma refused to sign the Bill into law and instead sent it back to the National Assembly for reconsideration, requesting that grammatical errors and mistakes in cross-referencing to be rectified (Makina, 2015). It was also in this year that the scandalous Nkandla report was revealed.

2013

There is still no clause to protect journalist or whistle-blowers who expose classified information against prosecution (Anon., 2013).

25 April 2013: The Bill with its amendments was approved by the National Assembly with a vote of 189 over 74. Only minor alterations were applied to the earlier version which was adopted at the end of 2011.

2012

29 November 2012: Protection of State information Bill with its amendments was accepted by the South African Parliament's National Council of Provinces (NCOP).

September 2012: The Constitutional Court found that the Film and Publications Act limits the right of freedom of expression and ordered that the legislation should be changed (Parker, 2012).

June 2012: Numerous foreign governments took a stand on the issue during a United Nation Review. Countries including the US, Canada, Germany, Sweden and Switzerland condemned the proposed Secrecy Bill.

2011

Cosatu, the Right2Know Campaign and SANEF announced a coalition against the Protection of State Information Bill.

The national assembly voted in the protection of Information Bill with 229 votes against 107. Editors who attended the parliamentary session left the session after the Bill was voted in as a sign of protest. Protesters in black clothes protested outside parliament (Parker, 2011).

The South African National Editors Forum (SANEF) went to the South Gauteng High Court, arguing that amendments to The film and Publication Amendment Act would negatively impact media freedom (Parker, 2012).

PART 2 EXPLORATION AND GROUNDING

This chapter focuses on the exploration and grounding of the problem statements and aims through architectural concepts, precedents, theoretical knowledge and contextual studies. The process contributed an understanding of how the ideas surrounding topology, morphology, typology and tectonics can be translated into a design solution.

The chapter is structured around the organic design process and how it unfolded and developed from the touchstone to a theoretical approach and inevitably a design.





A Cape Town mother has laid a charge against police after her son, who is physically disabled, was allegedly assaulted by a police officer on Friday night.
Tos Rashied told News24 that her 19-year-old son, who is deaf and has a rare bone disorder, was arrested by an officer who assaulted and verbally abused him.

The son, who wishes to remain anonymous, said in a statement that he was driving on his scooter down De Wet Road in Grassy Park on Friday afternoon when he noticed a police van following him. He turned left as directed by the traffic lights and soon after the police van signalled to him to pull over.

"I immediately pulled over... and the police van screeched to a halt in front of me cutting me off. I switched my [scooter] off and took off my helmet.
"As I was getting off my [scooter] the driver of the police van came running over to me. He was verbally abusing me shouting "jou naai, jou poes, voetsek" and other abusive things.

"He pulled me, tearing my shirt and pushed me up against the police van where he smacked me twice across the side of my head by my ear and started hitting me in the ribs. He proceeded to search me and my schoolbag which was still on my back," said

The effect of half-truths on freedom expression

TOUCHSTONE

"The most dangerous untruths are truths moderately distorted."
Georg Christoph Litchenberg (German physics professor and scientist 1742 – 1799).

The touchstone developed from the idea of portraying the significant effect that censoring has on journalism to emphasise the alarming effect of the Secrecy Bill. The credibility of a story lies in the understanding of the broad spectrum of the story, the context, the people, the facts and many other aspects contribute to the truth. By merely removing certain parts of a story, the touchstone explores the effect that half-truths have on the credibility of a story.

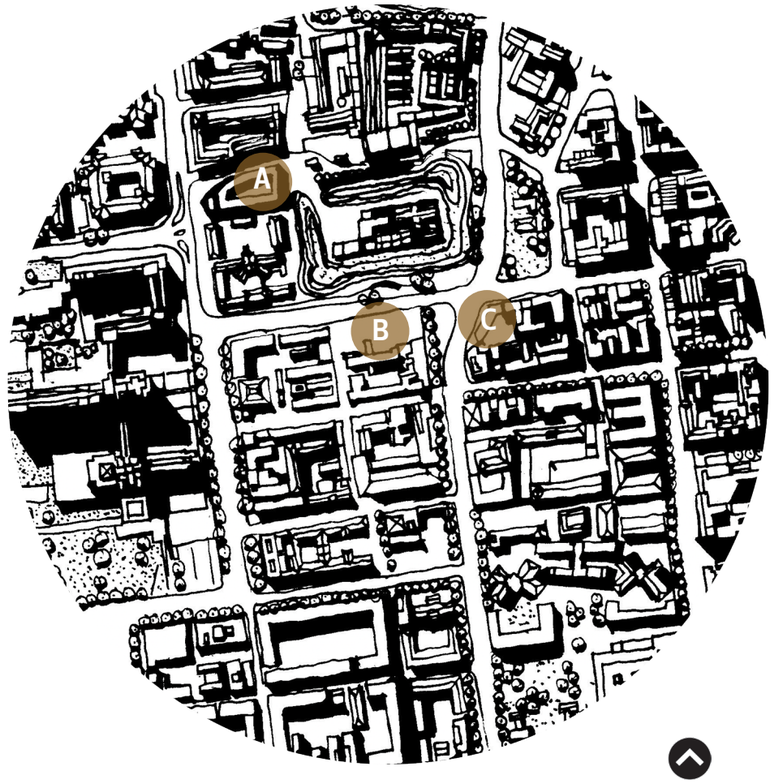
The newspaper articles tell stories of violent behaviour of police officers or corrupt government officials who fail to do their jobs. By censoring the newspaper articles, the context and the essence of the story changes completely. The antagonist becomes the protagonist and the victim becomes the accused.

One of the articles tells the story of a mother who laid charges against police officers who allegedly assaulted her physically disabled son. The officers arrested her son after they pulled him over and assaulted him both physically and verbally. By censoring the article, the context and essence of the story could be completely changed to reflect a story about a woman who laid a charge against her son who verbally abused her.

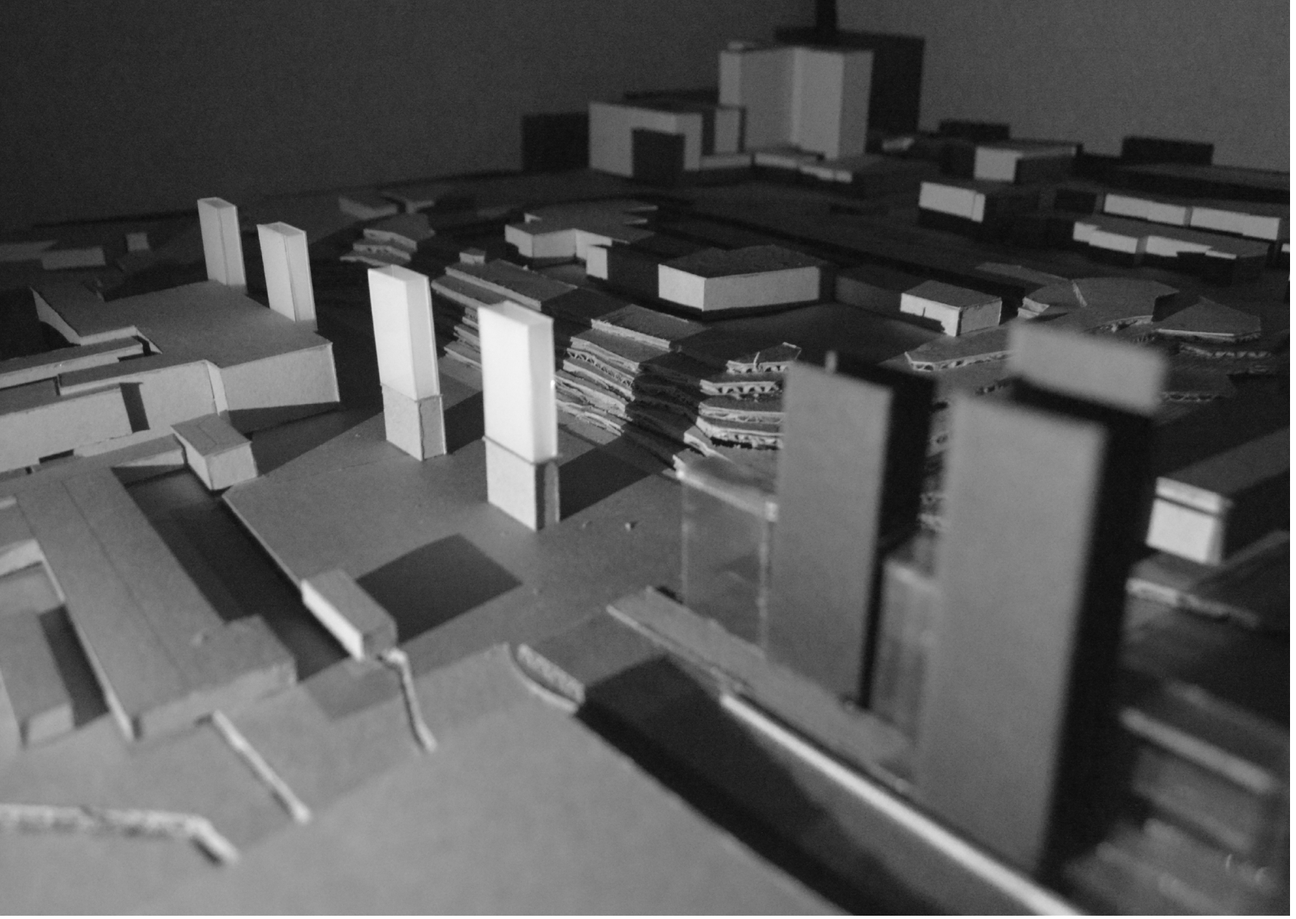
The touchstone serves as an objectification of the effect of the Secrecy Bill to form an understanding of the abstract ideas concerning freedom of expression and how this inevitably can be translated into architectural concepts that can serve as the basis for the design approach.

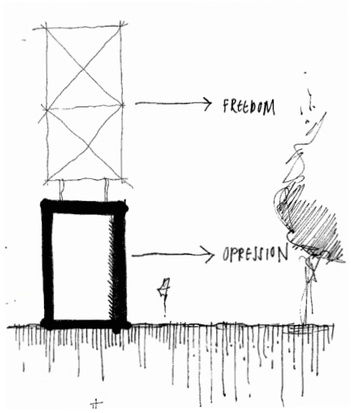
The conceptualisation of the project

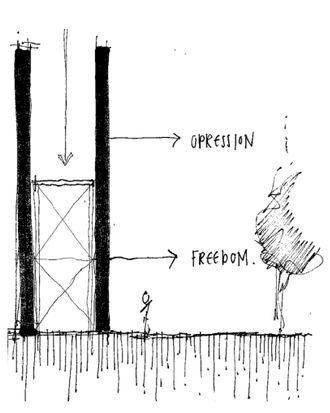
The concepts are the realisation and transformation of abstract theoretical underpinnings and ideas into architectural forms that relate to the specific context of Constitutional Hill. The conceptual approaches each investigated different positions and sites around Constitutional Hill to establish where such controversial intervention would work the best on a conceptual as well as physical level. Three different sites around Constitutional Hill were identified as a possible location for the Forum for Freedom of Expression. A conceptual approach was developed for each site to form an understanding of where to place such a controversial intervention in an extremely sensitive context. The map indicates the location of the three different sites around Constitutional Hill that were considered for a possible intervention. All three of them were chosen for their relation to the Freedom Towers at Constitutional Hill as well as their relation to the precinct itself.

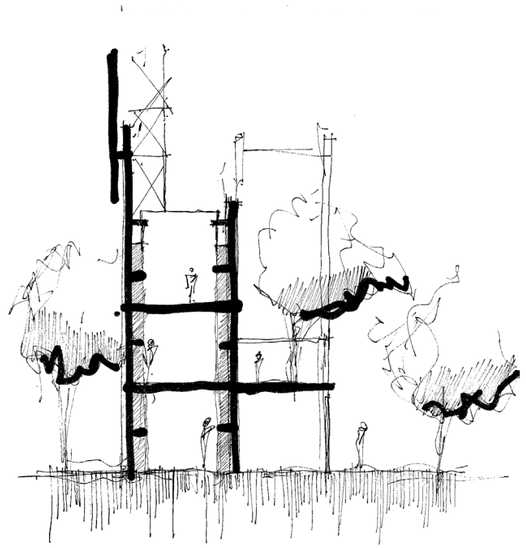


The map indicates the location of the three different sites around Constitutional Hill that were considered for a possible intervention. All three of them were chosen for their relation to the freedom towers at Constitutional Hill as well as their relation to the precinct itself.









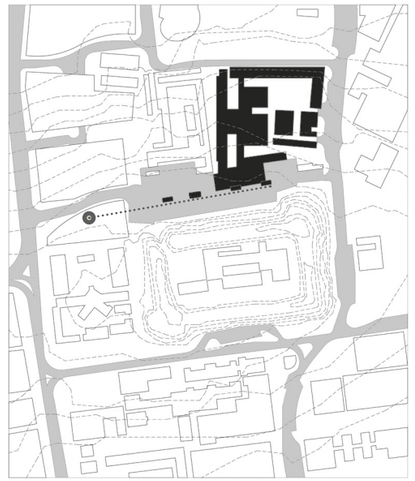
2.2.1 Site A: Deconstructing the tower

This site is located directly next to the southern side of the Constitutional Court and lines up with the freedom towers.

The concept of deconstructing the tower explores the process of metaphorically dissembling the physical and conceptual elements that the towers of freedom at Constitutional Hill are made up of to gain an understanding of the essence and the meaning that are inscribed into the towers. By reinterpreting the elements in a similar, yet contradicting way the proposed intervention can comment on the existing freedom towers in a contextual manner.

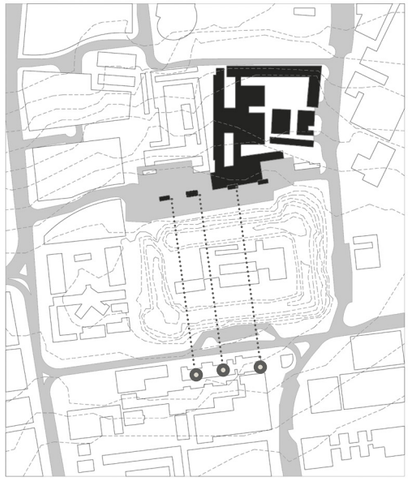
The French philosopher Derrida (1998:319) explained that the task of deconstruction is to discover the other. The result is a questioning of common practice to uncover the paradoxes and value inherited in 'the other' as there are always conflicting ideas or representations of meaning inherited in any sign, much like the Freedom Towers.

Through the process of deconstructing the materiality of the freedom towers, it can be established that it is inscribed with symbolic meaning. The transition of oppression to freedom in South Africa is represented in the way the stereotomic awaiting trial blocks have been extruded into light tectonic glass towers as a symbol of freedom. By extruding the solid stereotomic walls upwards and lowering the tectonic glass box between the solid walls, the concept explores how the symbol can be reinterpreted to represent the oppression of freedom by the Secrecy Bill. By applying the materiality of the existing towers in a different way, the conflicting meaning inherited in the tower is exploited.





Site B is allocated in Kotze Street north from the freedom towers, on the northern site of the rampart walls of the Old Fort. The site is parallel to the Freedom Towers.

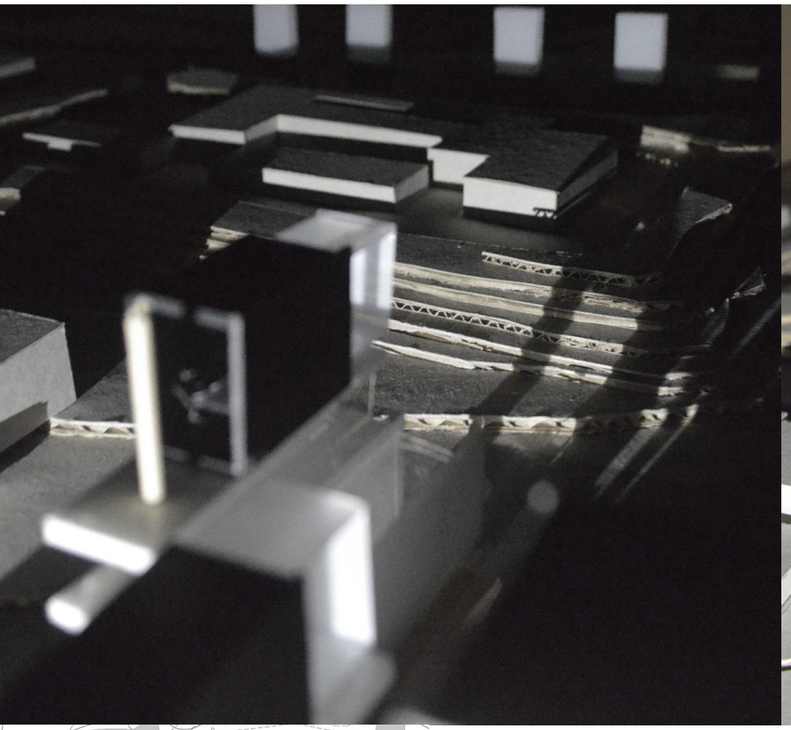


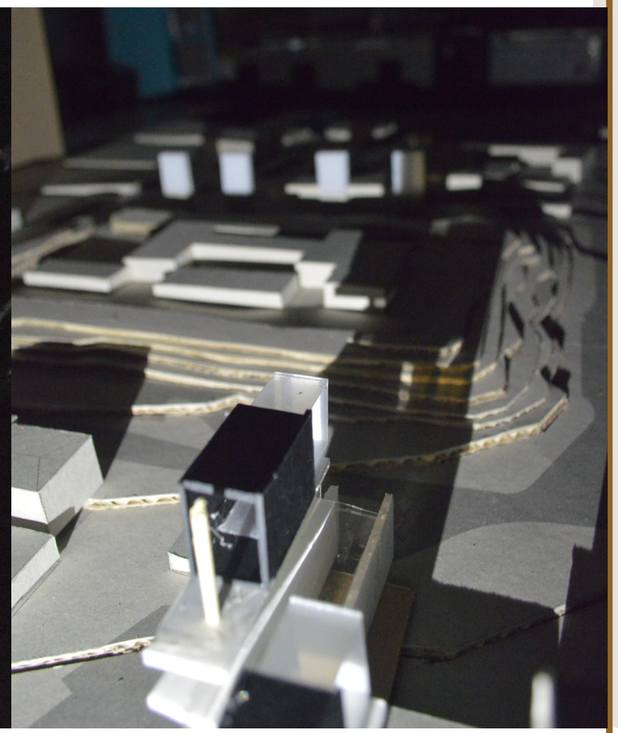
2.2.2 Architecture as a silent protest

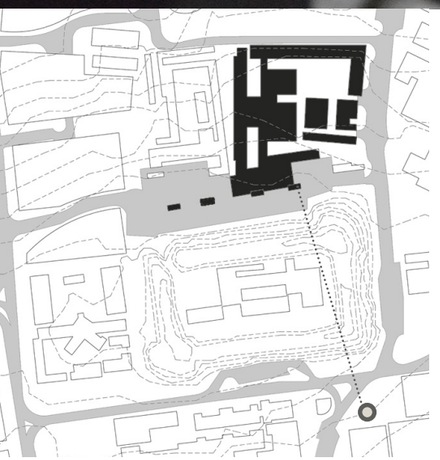
The concept of architecture as a silent protest explores how the principles of protest can be translated into an architectural intervention. A silent protest is explained as a symbolic act of peaceful opposition or an attempt of persuasion. These types of protest extend beyond verbal expression but do not support non-cooperation or violent behaviour (Sharp, 2012).

By introducing three towers, in line with the freedom towers at Constitutional Hill, the concept explores how these towers can act as beacons of protest against the Secrecy Bill and the oppression of the freedom of expression. Through the materiality, composition and form, the architecture attempts to represent characteristics of protest.

The protest towers contradict the freedom towers at Constitutional Hill by placing the stereotomic structure at the top and the tectonic structure at the bottom. The black colour of the towers represents protest. By turning the towers away from the Freedom Towers, they attempt to signify symbolic opposition.







2.2.3 Architecture of perception

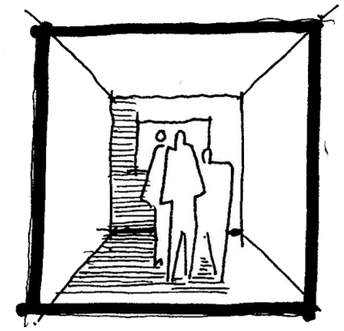
"I am certain that I can have no knowledge of what is outside me except by means of the ideas I have within me." Rene Descartes, As he says in a letter to Guillaume Gibieuf (1583–1650), dated 19 January 1642.

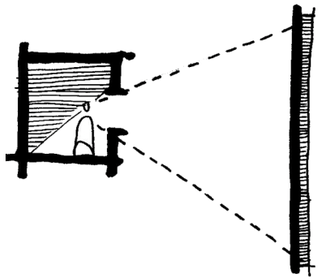
Site C is allocated north from Constitutional Hill, on the corner of Kotze and Queens Road. The site is oriented in an east western position, with only a small northern relation to the site.

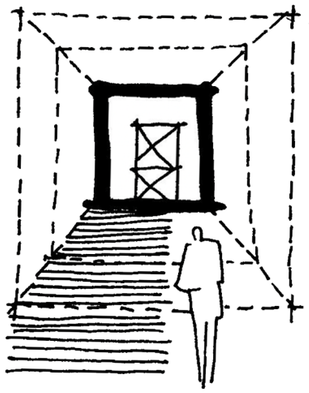
The concept explores the idea that perception can only be gained if one steps beyond the existing frame of reference manifested by the direct vicinity in which one finds oneself. By stepping away from Constitutional Hill, the concept explores how an architectural intervention can bring perception on freedom in South Africa as symbolised by the architecture at Constitutional Hill.

The view to Constitutional Hill is limited from the site and the relation is not as evident as the other two sites. By metaphorically stepping away from the site, one can gain a more subjective perspective of the true nature of freedom.

By interpreting the conceptual idea of layering, the concept explores how one can frame certain views through 'lenses', or windows, to the freedom towers at constitutional Hill. The building itself puts these views in view by enfolding these moments of freedom with an impervious layer, in a similar way to the effects of the Secrecy Bill.

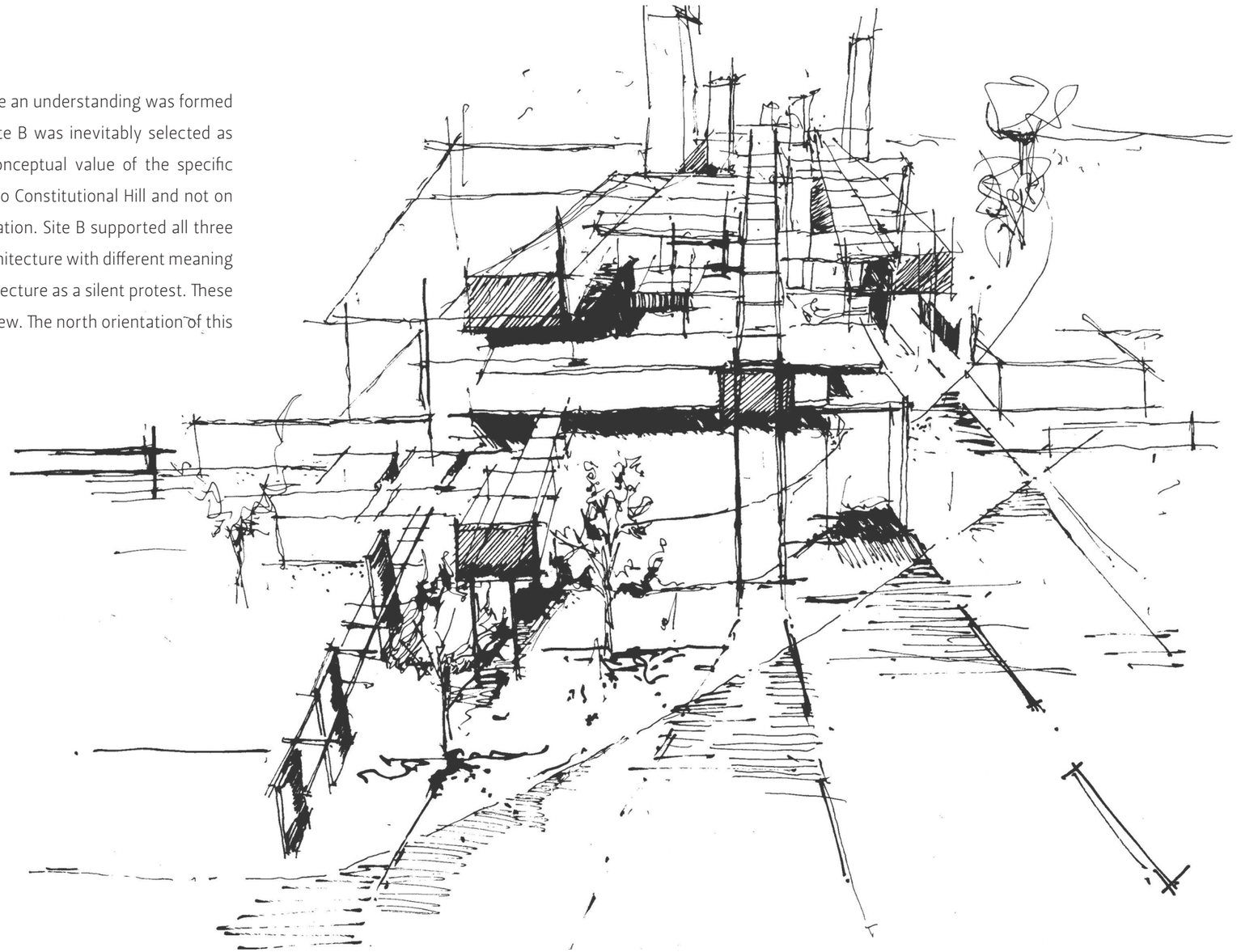






Conclusion to concepts:

By exploring the different sites through their conceptual value an understanding was formed of where to place the Forum for Freedom of Expression. Site B was inevitably selected as the most applicable location for such intervention. The conceptual value of the specific site played an important role, the fact that it was adjacent to Constitutional Hill and not on the premises like Site A also became an important consideration. Site B supported all three conceptual ideas, opening up the opportunity to layer the architecture with different meaning and conceptual ideas that support the main concept of architecture as a silent protest. These conceptual ideas are further substantiated in the literary review. The north orientation of this site also played an important role in the choice.



Exploring the TOPOLOGY

Mapping Johannesburg

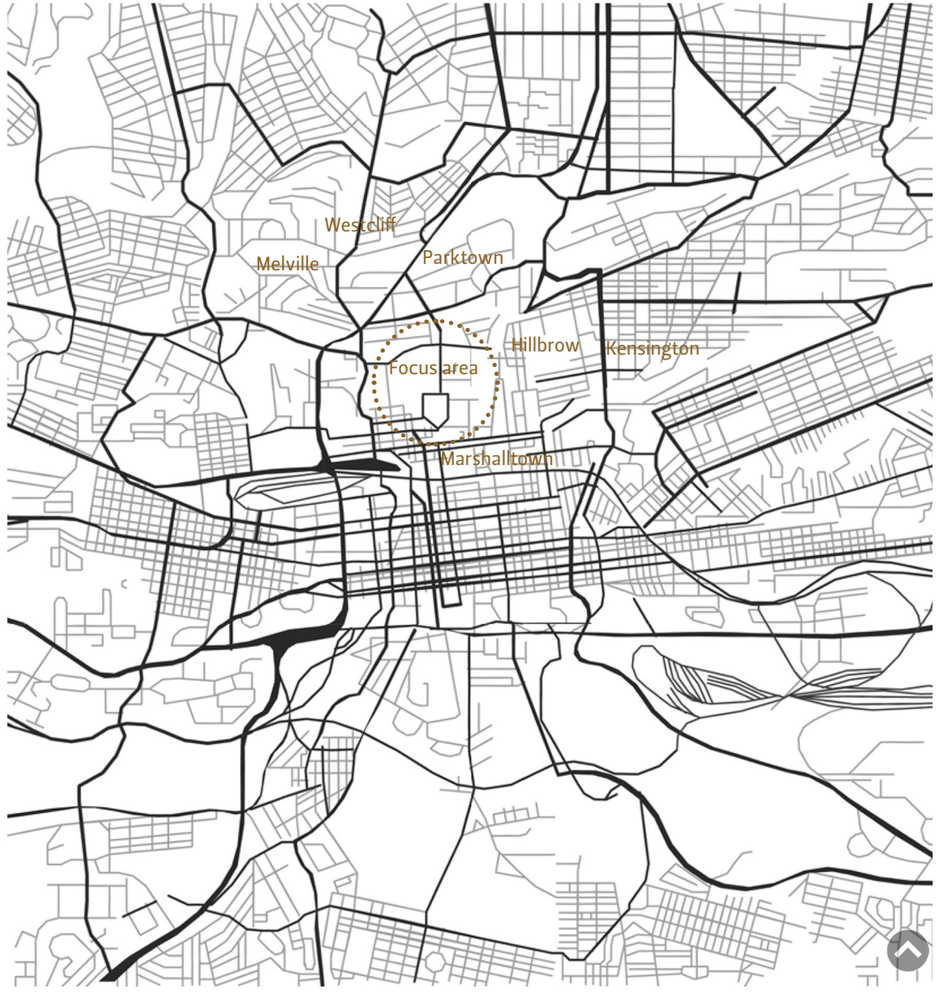
The site analysis investigated the macro, meso and micro context of the greater Johannesburg to the specific location of the site to gain a better understanding of the urban topography. The investigation recognised patterns and influences through quantitative and qualitative data to form a concrete and abstract understanding of the context.





Grids and patterns of greater Johannesburg

Macro Site Analysis



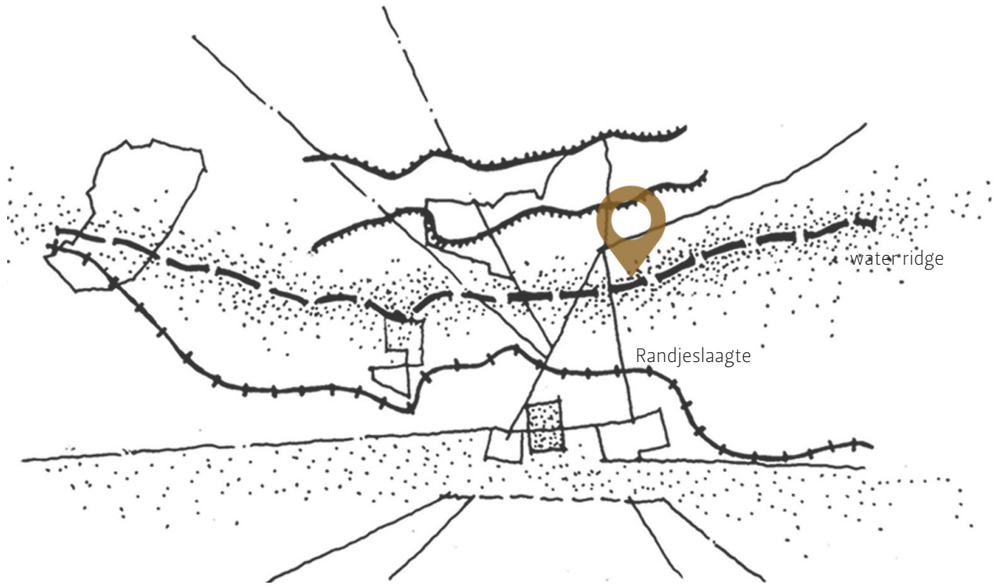
The site is located within the larger urban fabric of Johannesburg and forms part of the inner-city area of Johannesburg. The site is situated on the western side of Hillbrow. The maps indicate the grids and patterns of the larger urban fabric. The area that will be focused on is indicated on the maps.

Macro History of the site

Even though Johannesburg had a brief existence before the discovery of gold, it is unavoidable that the gold rush of 1886 was the main reason for the establishment of Johannesburg as we know it today. Johannesburg developed in the late 1900s on a triangular piece of 'uitvalgrond' (unused land) called Randjeslaagte. Randjeslaagte was wedged between the farms Braamfontein, Doornfontein and Turffontein. It was an unfertile, stony and waterless triangle that was deemed undesirable by farmers (Meiring, 1985:13). This would become the position of the inner city of Johannesburg (Van der Waal, 1987:6).

Claredon street on the North eastern side of the site that is located in Kotze street, lines up with Diagonal street South east from the site. It is evident therefore that the allocated site is just outside of the original 'uitvalgrond' where Johannesburg originally developed. The site is also just south of the water ridge on which Johannesburg is built on.





Diagrammatic analysis of the historical layout of Johannesburg



Diagrammatic analysis of the recent layout of Johannesburg

Hillbrow Tower

Ponty Tower



Vertical Landmarks

The image illustrates the vertical landmarks that are visible in the inner-city Johannesburg



1. Site Location
2. Constitutional Court
3. Adler Museum
4. Miner's Monument
5. Civic Centre
6. Civic Theatre
7. Wits University
8. Hillbrow Tower
9. Windybrow Theatre
10. JHB Art Gallery
11. Nelson Mandela Bridge
12. High Court
13. Carlton Centre
14. City Hall
15. Diagonal Street
16. Joubert Park

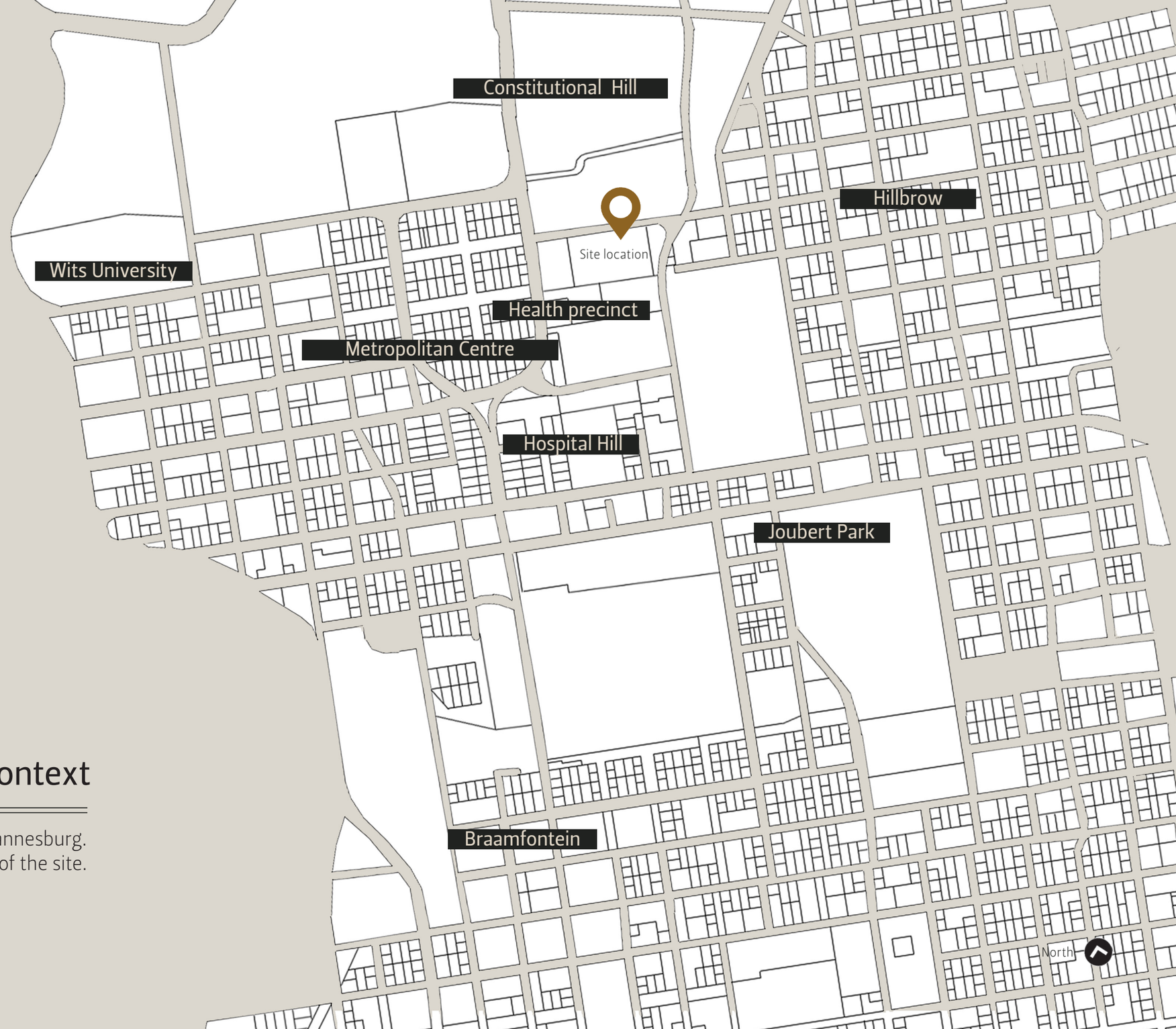
Landmarks

North

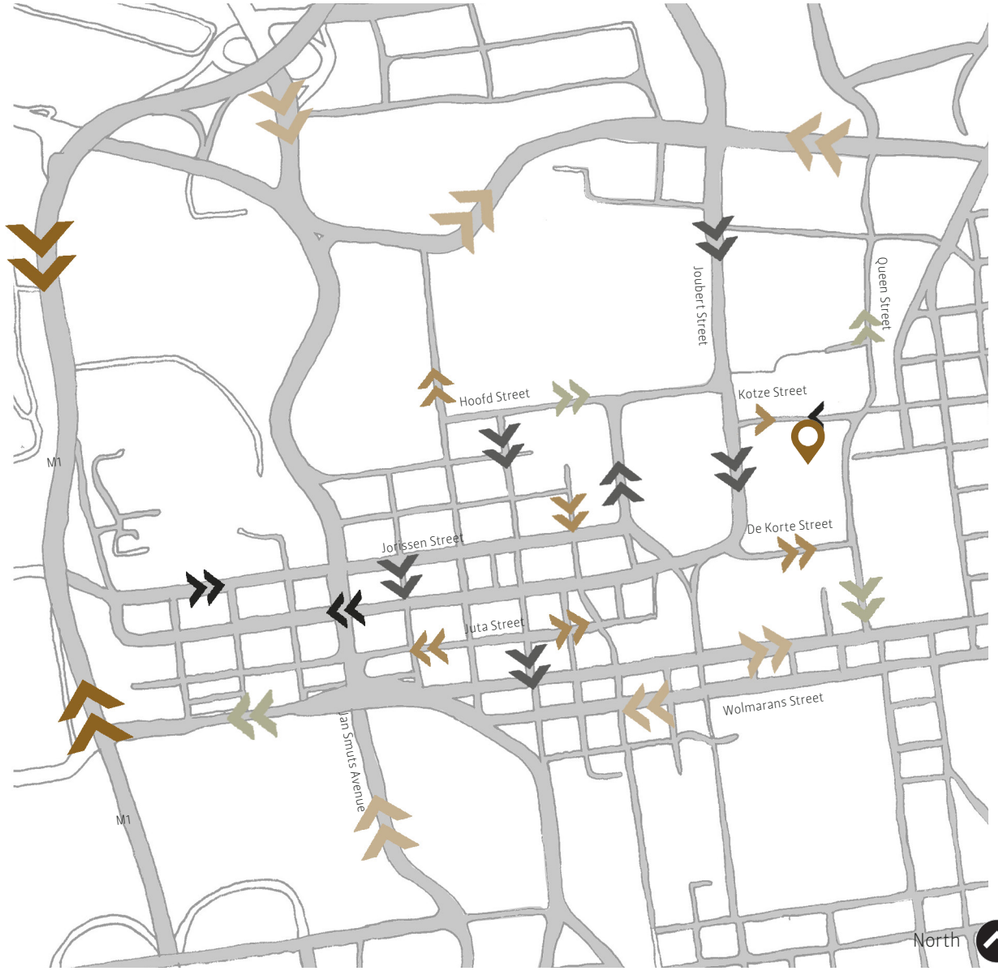
This map illustrates the landmarks and orientation points in the surrounding context

meso context

The location of site within the urban fabric of inner city Johannesburg.
The map illustrates the surrounding neighbourhoods of the site.



Street Types



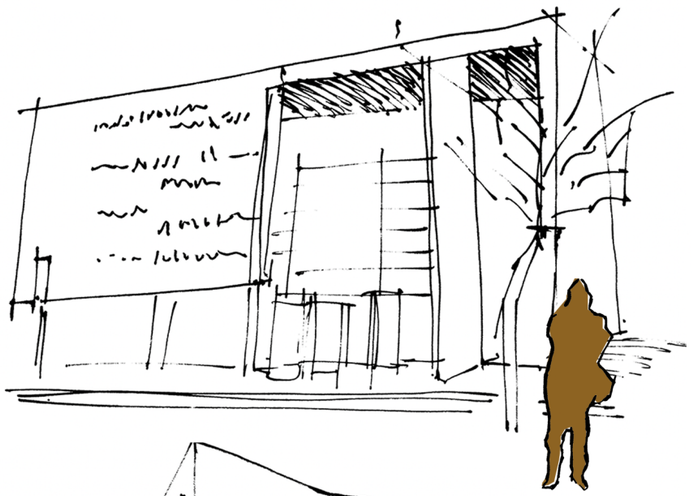
Highway
Major Street
Minor Street
Commercial
Cultural
Historic

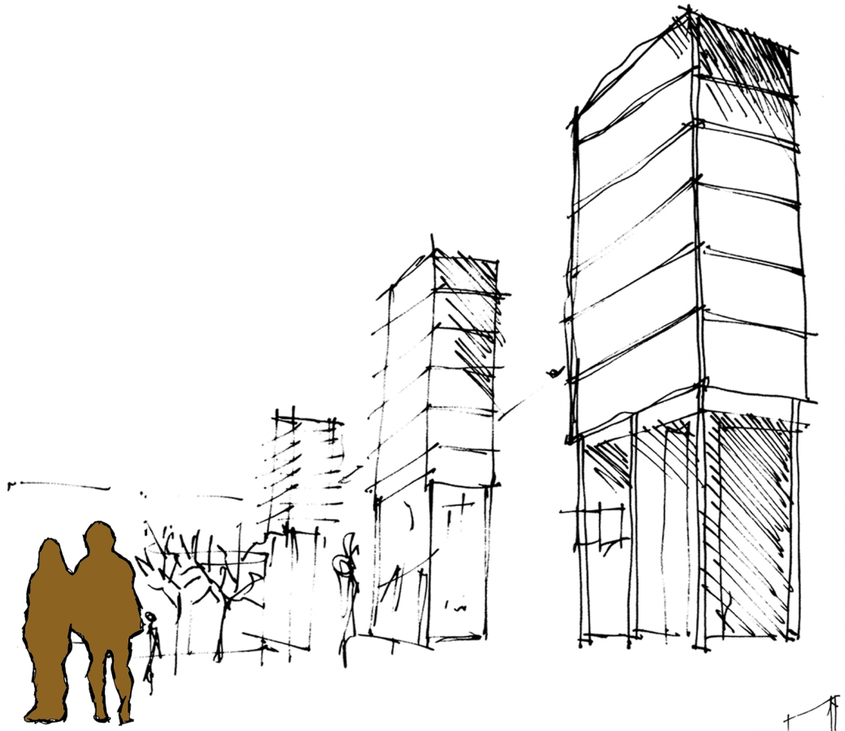
The map illustrates the main arteries that connect Constitutional Hill to the larger city as well as the minor road network connecting the site with the larger context

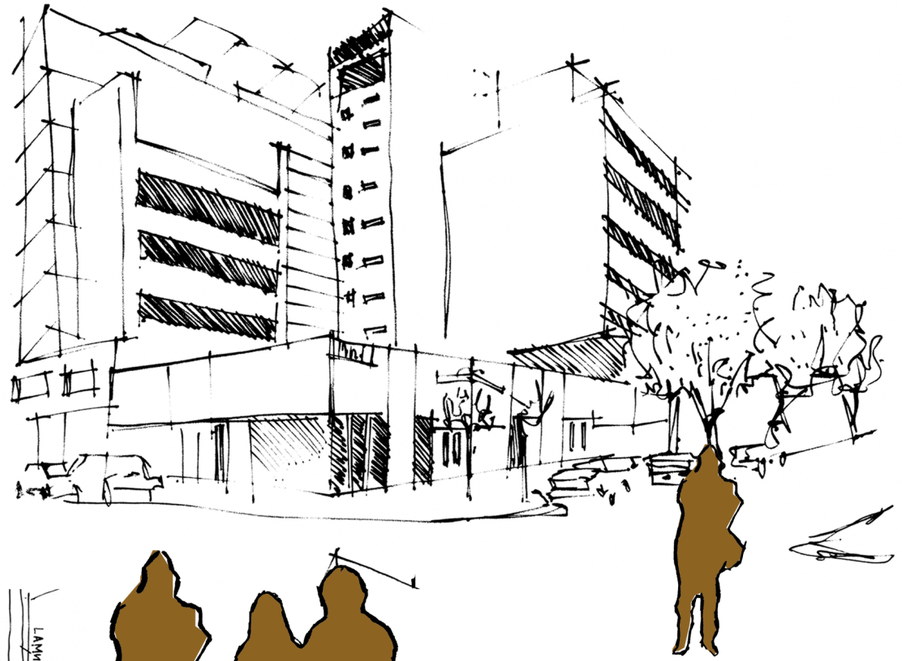
Urban development

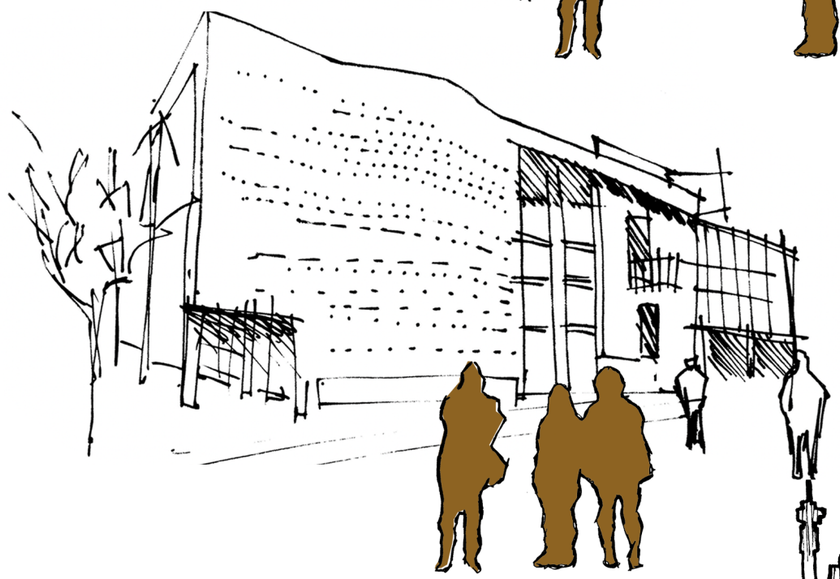


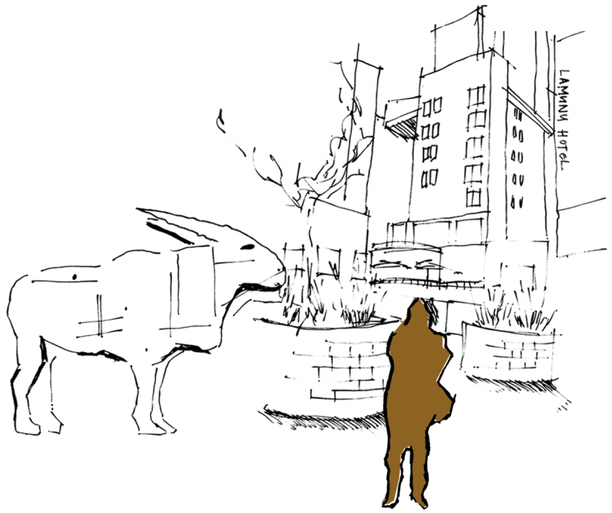
The future urban development of hospital hill as proposed by the municipality. The proposed project forms a node alongside a pedestrian node.

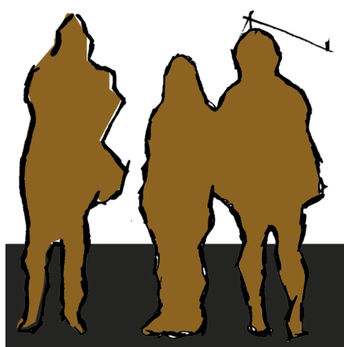












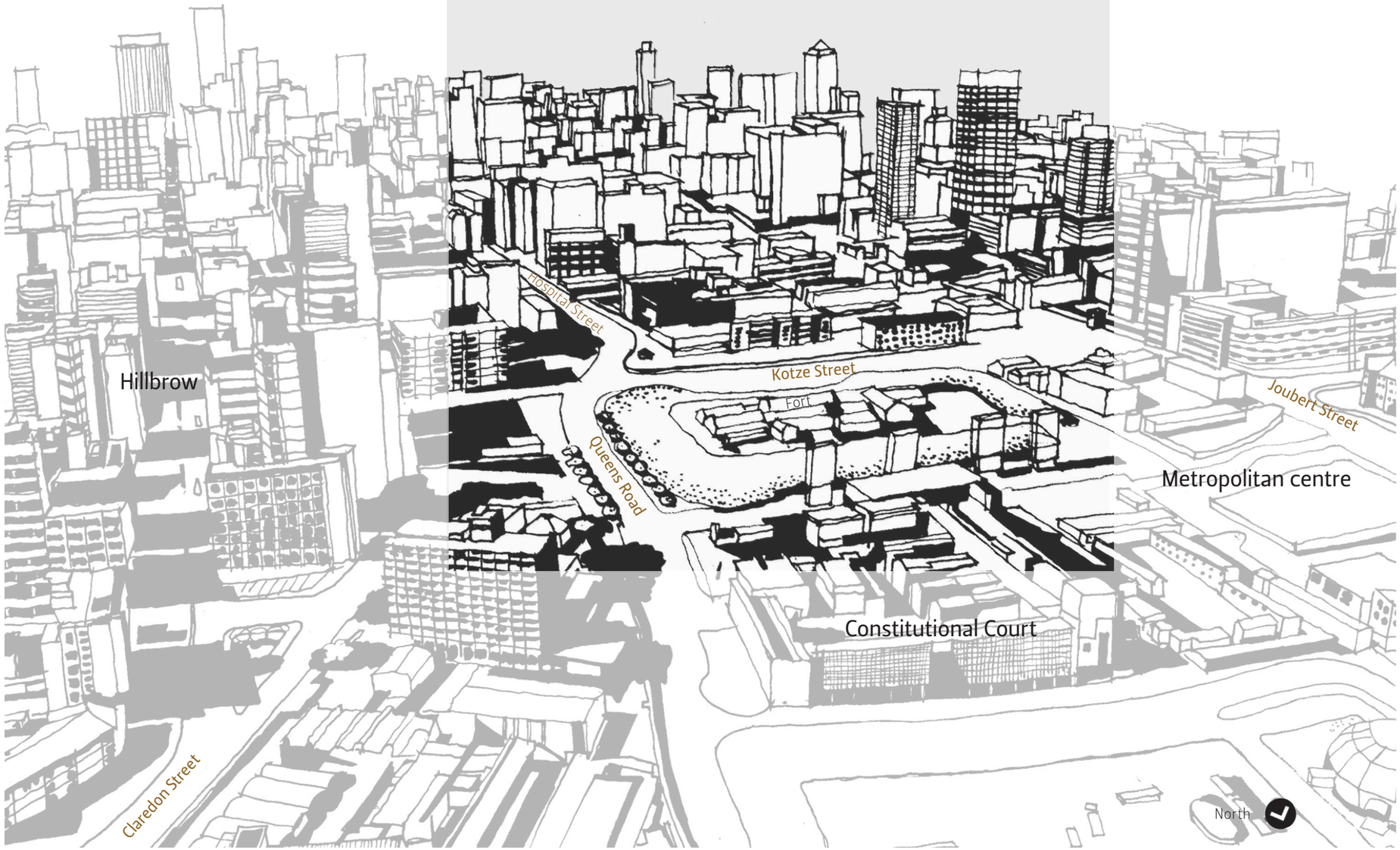
Qualitative Analysis _ Walking the city



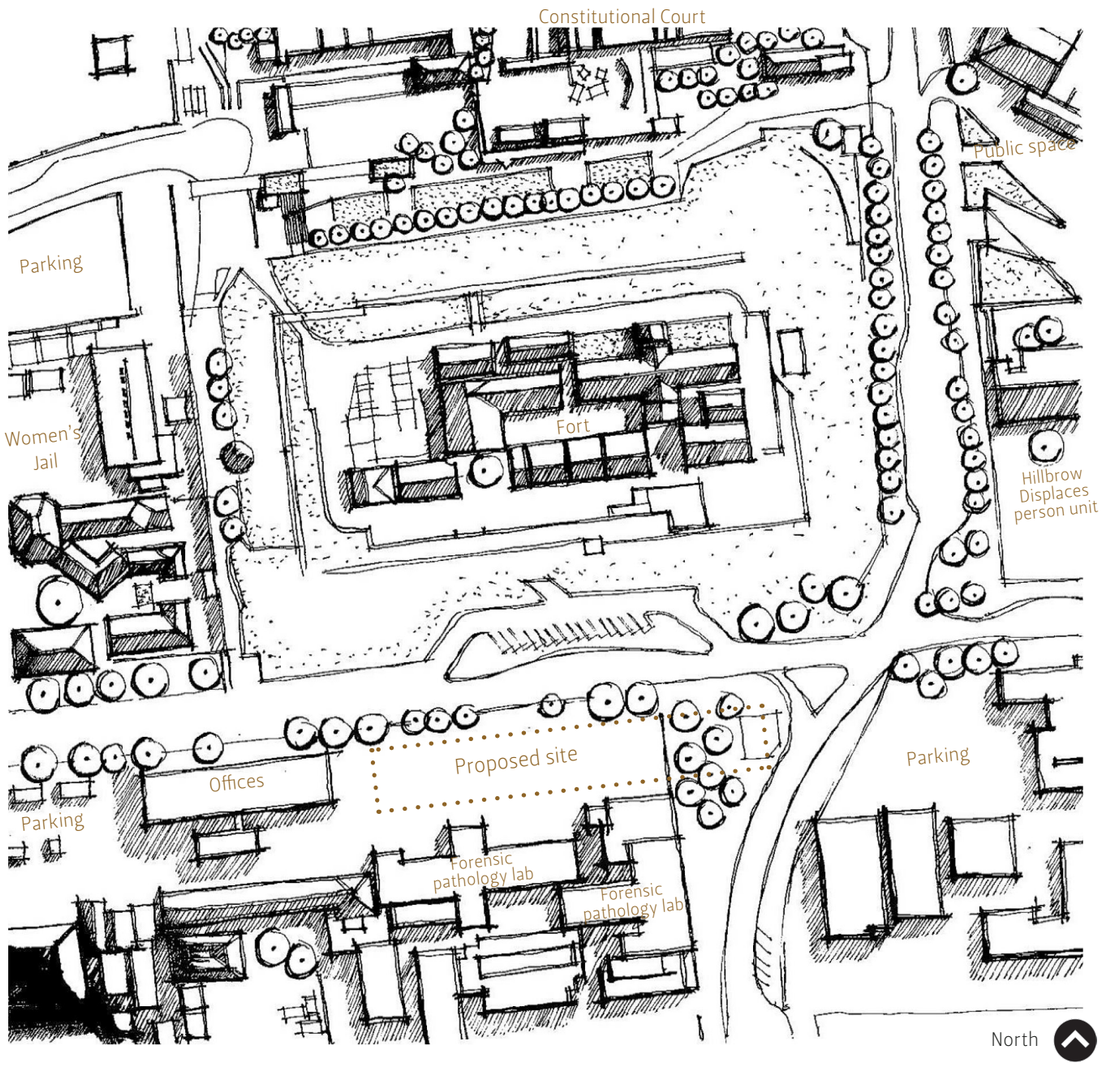
Micro Context

The inner-city of Johannesburg is a very densely built area with little open spaces. The proposed site is located to the northern part of inner-city Johannesburg. Hillbrow is located at the western side of the site and Braamfontein at the south. Building heights increase to the south and the north; accommodating economic, retail and business functions, whilst heights to the northern and eastern periphery are generally lower institutional buildings.

Micro Context to be investigated

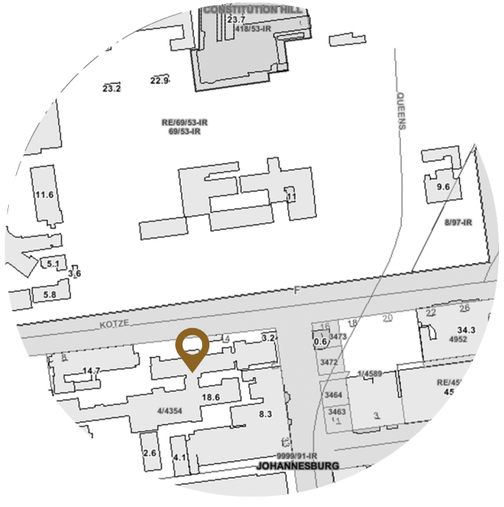


The surrounding context





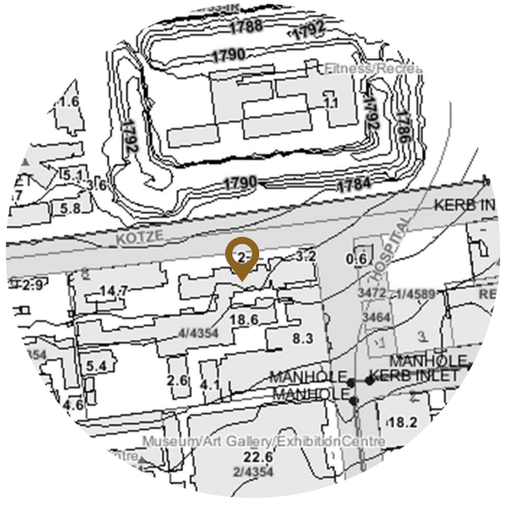
There is currently an abandoned building on the proposed site. The project is designed under the premise that the building will be demolished as it has no urban viability in its current abandoned state.



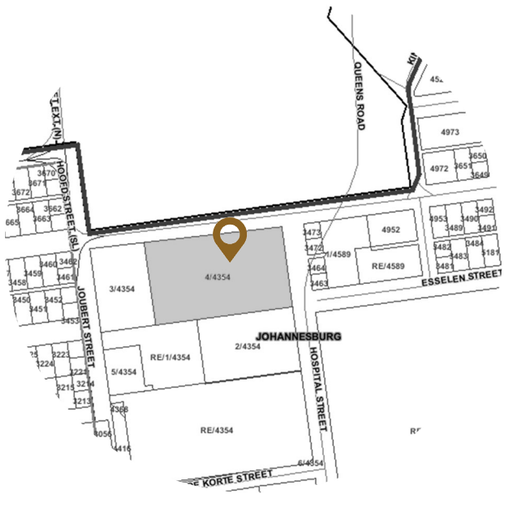
Built Structures versus open spaces



Adjacent streets and built fabric



Contours and sewage links



Cadastral map

Block Types



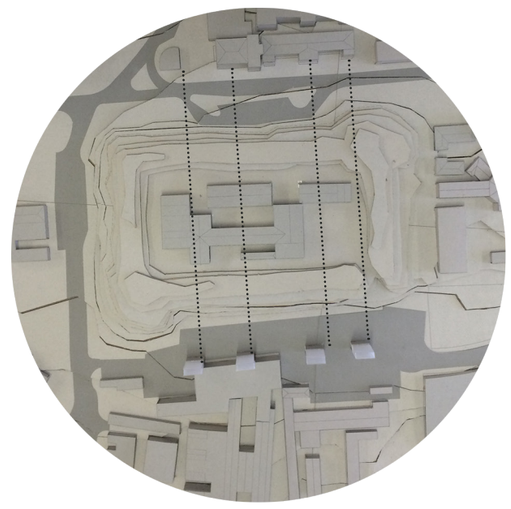


The map illustrates the crowded character and the limited public spaces within the inner city of Johannesburg. The geometric grid is a legacy of the area's colonial history

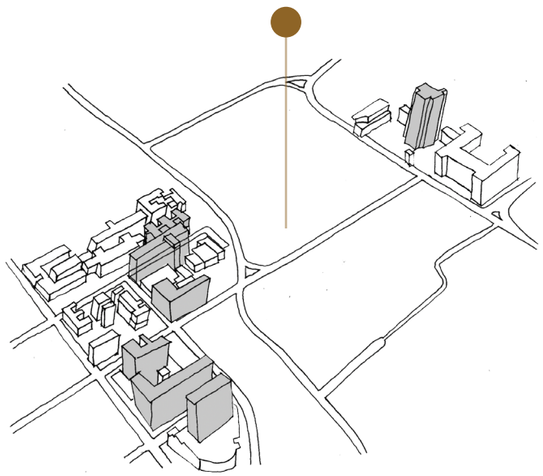
North



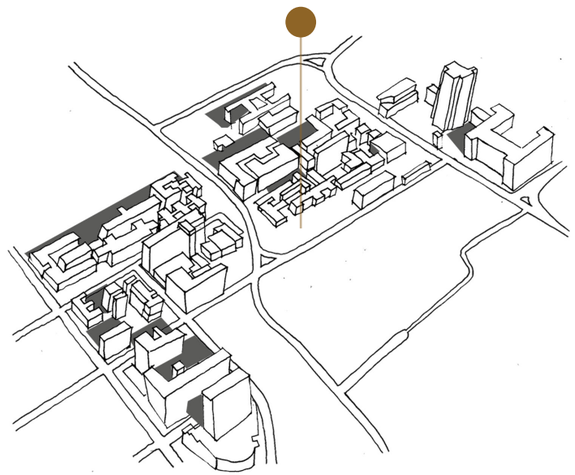
Green spaces in the surrounding context



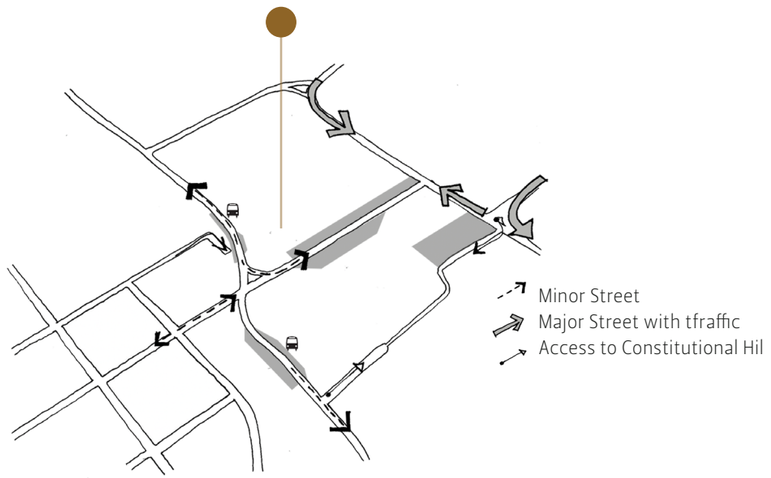
The relationship between the freedom towers and the proposed site



Tall buildings in the surrounding context

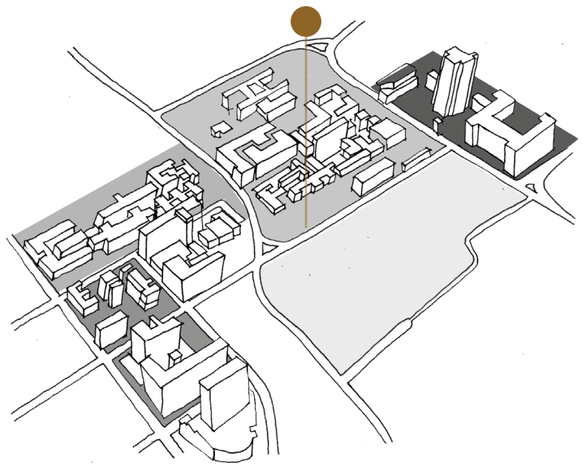


Sun path and shadows

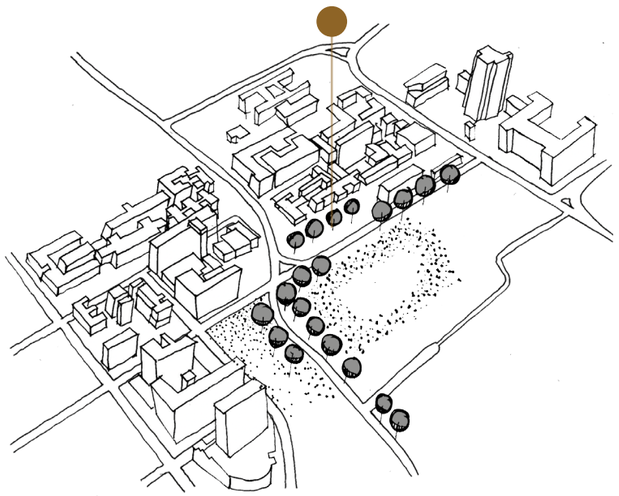


The roads that connect the site with the larger context of Johannesburg as well as the taxi stops

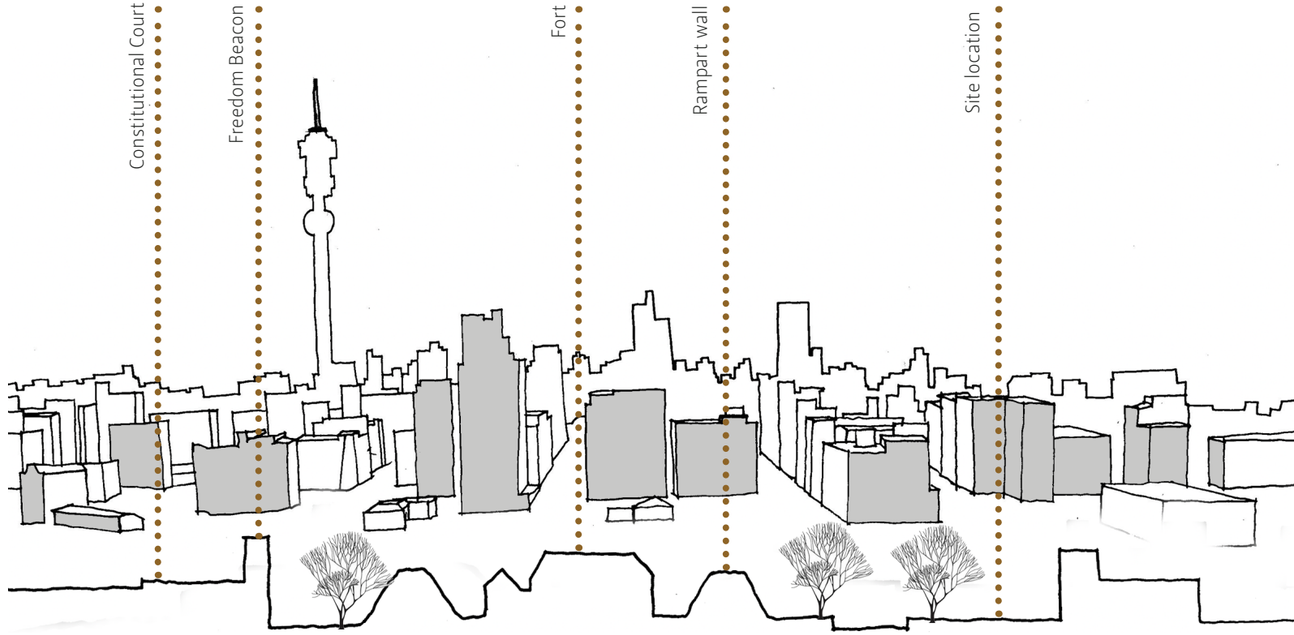
Exploring the urban qualities of the site



Block types



Green Spaces and trees



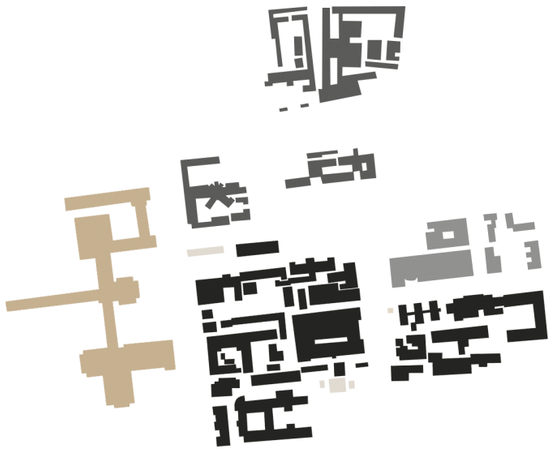
North south site section



Public concentration

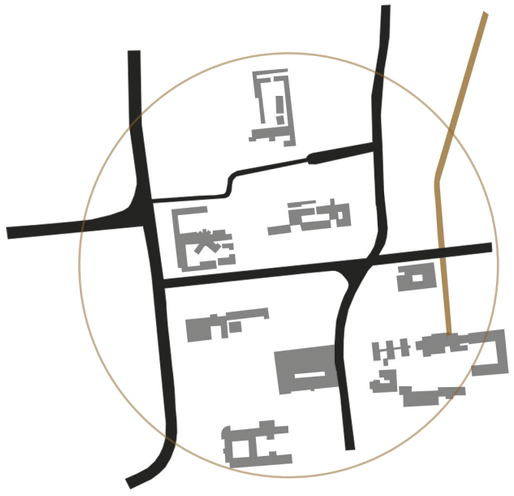


Pedestrian circulation

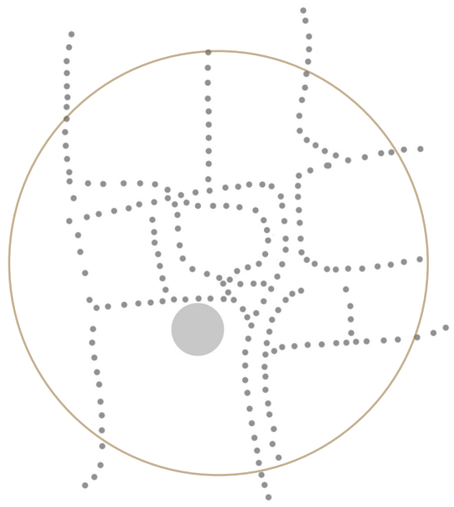


Use of spaces and types of buildings

- Governmental
- Institutional
- Residential
- Institutional landmarks
- Community
- Parking



Historical layer



Pedestrian pattern



Noise pollution

Exploring the urban qualities of the site

North

Collaging the surrounding context of Constitutional Hill

Architects: Design Workshop with Urban Solution Architects & Urban Designers, 2004
Location: Johannesburg, Constitutional Precinct, Braamfontein

The analysis of the Constitutional Court serves as an understanding of the urban topography and built environment of which the proposed building forms a part. The context has a rich history that is embodied by the site specific design of Constitutional Court which is influenced by the past, present and future of the site. By gaining an understanding of the conceptual considerations of the built environment, the case study investigates the typologies, design approaches and concepts, to comprehend how these can be reinterpreted as a form of contextual protested in the design.

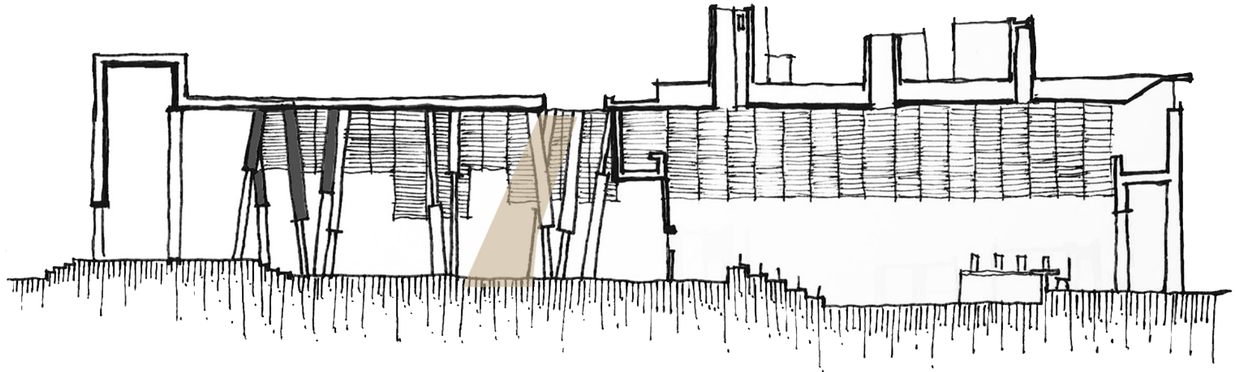
History of the site

The Constitutional Court is located in Johannesburg, on the Old Fort complex known for its troubled history of imprisonment and oppression. The Constitutional Court acts as a symbol of democracy and freedom in a space of confinement (Constitutional Court, 2014).

The Concept

The conceptual approach of the design was to create an architectural intervention that is rooted in the site's past, present and future. The idea was to re-shape the negative connotations and memories associated with the political prison that housed leaders like Nelson Mandela by introducing the Constitutional Court onto the site as a symbol of diversity and freedom. The two most prominent symbols used in the architecture, includes transparency and layering, which were interpreted and addressed in various ways.

Case Study : Constitutional Court



Transparency

The idea of a traditional African court under a tree where justice is open and participatory, influenced the design of the foyer (Constitutional Court, 2014:2). Slanted columns and dappled light from above creates the idea of light filtering through leaves. The use of light from above is contradicted in the manner in which windows are placed at the bottom creating a dialogue between the courtroom and the exterior of the building. The relationship between inside and outside were also considered for the entrance of the building. A large door opening up to the courtyard, transparent glass facades, natural light and the high volume were intentionally used to create a space that is as much an inside as outside (Bronwyn Law-Viljoen, 2007:3).

The theme of transparency is particularly effective, since the ancient form of justice under a tree is associated and interpreted into a new typology, linking the past with contemporary times.

Layering

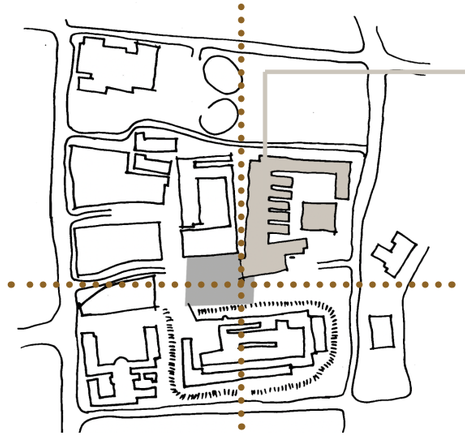
The social, political, historical and cultural value of the multi-layered site was addressed by the layering of different types of spaces and weaving these spaces into the historical structures (Noble, 2009:116).

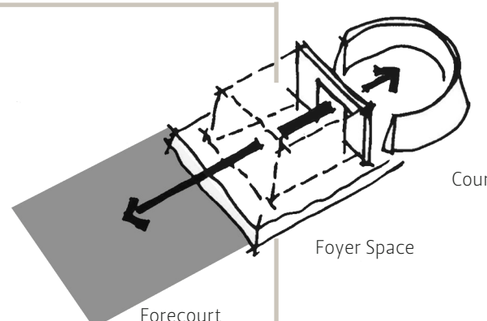
Being a reminder of the country's transition from oppression to freedom, the architects spatially organised the circulation routes and sequence of arrival in contrast to the authoritarian structures of the past (Noble, 2009:116). The building was placed in such way that it accommodates the two pedestrian axes that intersect the site. By doing so, the previous confined spatial order is broken, creating an accessible space that symbolically refers to the idea of the constitution as a court of the people (Deckler, 2006:19). The pedestrian axes intersect in front of the court where the Constitutional Square is located (Noble, 2009:116). The square flows into the foyer space and the foyer space becomes a doorway between the square and the court (Makin, 2007:51).

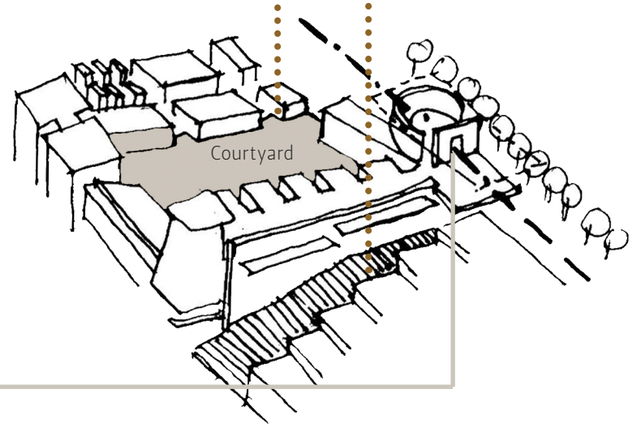
The spatial layout consists of two layers, the first layer is a public one, that is made up of the foyer, the court chamber, the auditorium and an exhibition space that leads to the Great African Steps. The second layer comprises of the private section that is not directly accessible to the public. It contains the administration offices, the judges' chambers and conference rooms that wrap around a protected courtyard, which questions the traditional court typology and becomes a symbol of unity and diversity (Constitutional Court, 2014).

By placing new structures in between and onto historical structures, merging old and new materials, the architects succeeded in layering the past and the present. The use of stereotomic and tectonic elements created an architectural language that recognises trans-cultured values.

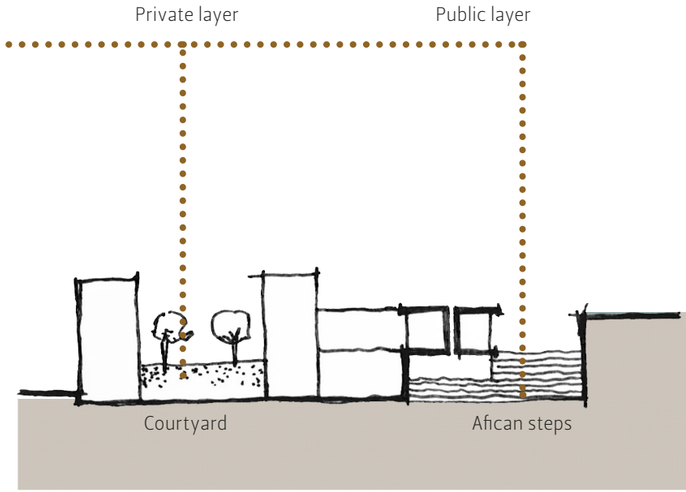








The relation between interior and exterior



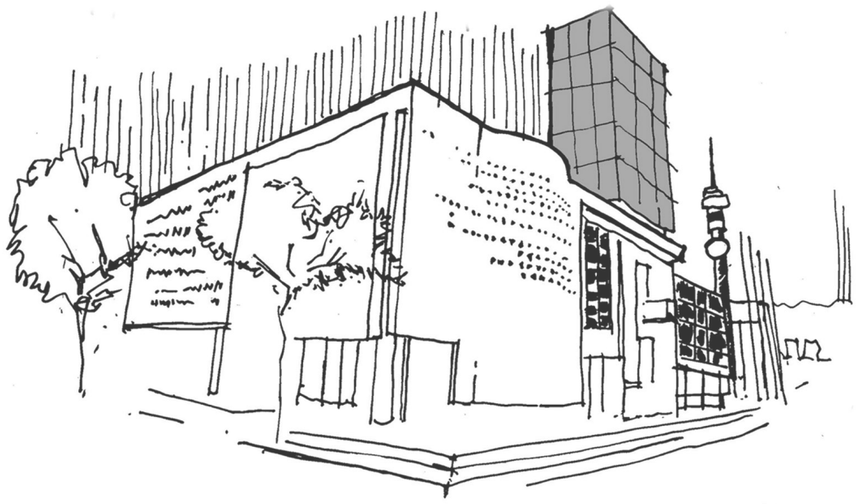
Threshold

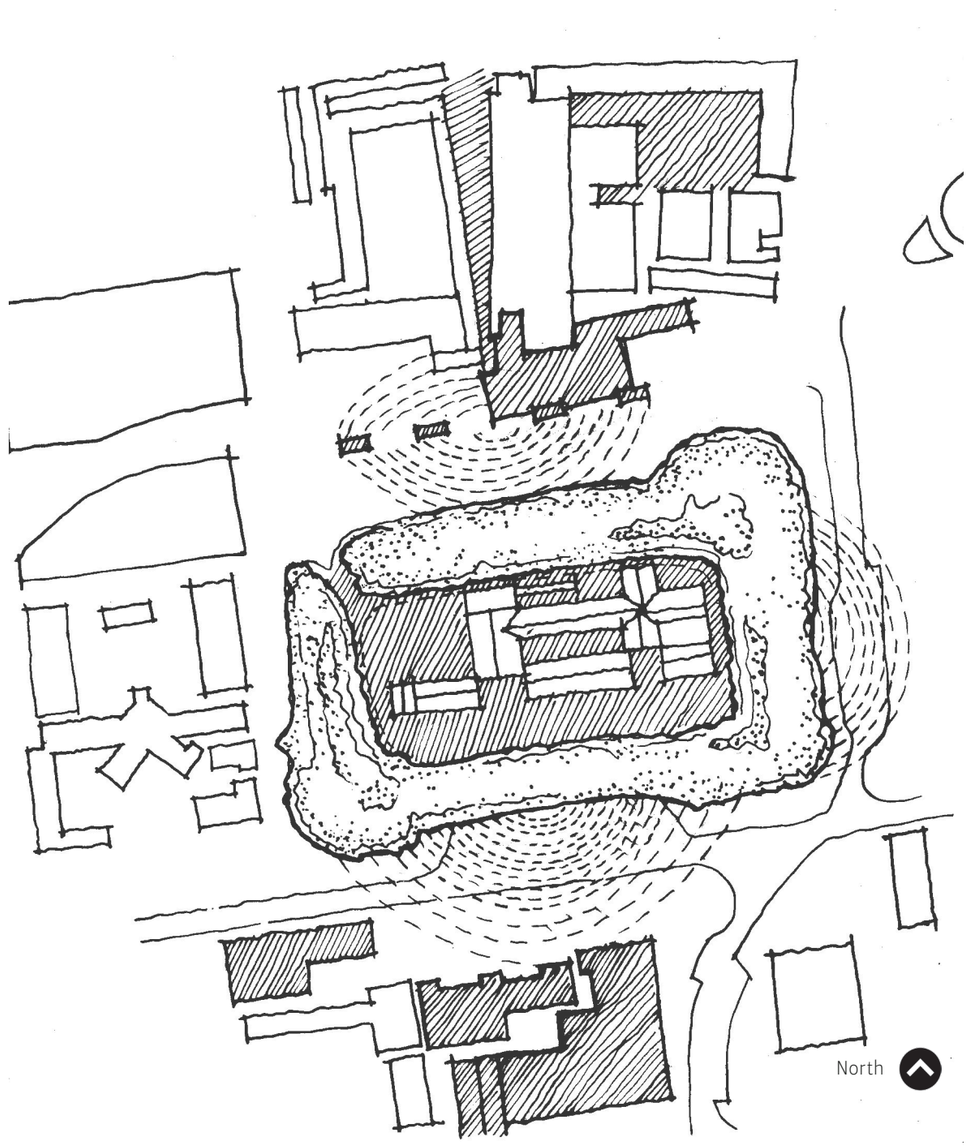
The African steps located on the north-south axis and these are parallel to the gallery space. A decorated skin functions as a protective barrier, questioning the threshold typology as art is used as a soft boundary between exterior and interior spaces.

Verticality and typology

The verticality of the Constitutional court responds to the surrounding high rise context, connecting the court building in scale with the context. The idea was to transform Constitutional Hill into a beacon of light. The Awaiting Trial blocks that were once a symbol of oppression are transformed into beacons of light as they are vertically extruded into glass boxes and become symbols of freedom. The iconic Hillbrow tower is visible from Constitutional Hill, and responds to the light towers on the site (Bronwyn Law-Viljoen, 2007:21).

Within the court, the public is seated higher than the judges as a reference of the court of the people. This as well as the fragmented layout of the court questions the traditional court typology, yet there are recognisable elements and forms that relate to the traditional court typology.

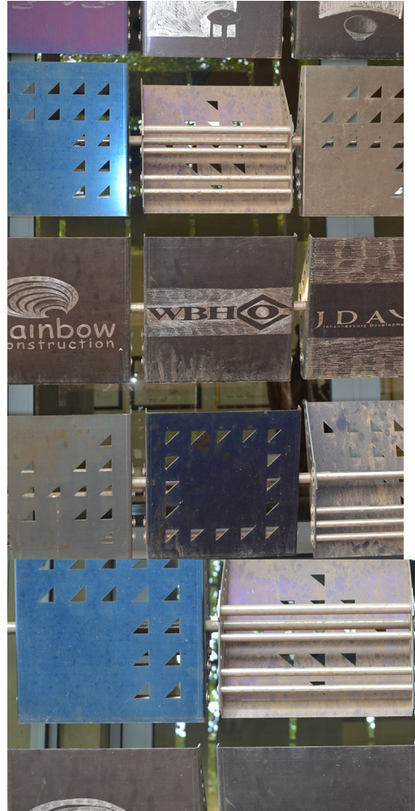




Qualitative site map : The effect of the towers on the surrounding context















Collaging the materiality of Constitutional Hill



Exploring the threshold and boundary typology in inner city Johannesburg

Socio-economic environment

Hillbrow is located on the Eastern side of the site and was once a bustling middle-class neighbourhood, until the end of apartheid. Hillbrow's white middle class fled to the suburbs, making way for poor black South Africans and immigrants from across the continent. The population soared, unemployment increased and crime grew rampant. Although attempts have been made to regenerate parts of Hillbrow and its infrastructure, it is still regarded as one of the most unsafe areas in Johannesburg (Silverman, M. & Zack, T. 2005:30). Inner city decay also plays a vital role in the socio-economic environment. Many buildings are hijacked by tenants, or old buildings that are not in use any longer are left to decay (Silverman, M. & Zack, T. 2005:17).

The proposed site is home to a building that was left to decay, by demolishing the building and proposing a new building the project aims to use valuable space more efficiently within the inner city, to help the process of regeneration, economic growth and the development of public spaces. Although the site falls into the regenerated tourist area of Constitutional Hill, crime is still a major concern and an important design consideration within the inner city of Johannesburg. The proposed building should reinterpret thresholds and boundaries in a creative manner to soften the transition between interior and exterior, as well as public and private spaces. An applicable example of a building that reinterprets threshold is the Circa Gallery in Rosebank, Johannesburg.



Safe and unsafe spaces around the site

Safe spaces around the site

Unsafe spaces around the site

Case Study
Architecture as a threshold_Circa on Jellicoe

Architects : StudioMAS
Type of Building : Art Gallery
Location: Rosebank, Johannesburg,

The Circa on Jellicoe gallery is located in Johannesburg on the corner of Jellico avenue and Jan Smuts Avenue. The design of the building rethinks principles of threshold and boundaries by layering public, semi-public, semiprivate and private spaces. The gallery consist of a stereotomic core with the tectonic circulation space wrapped around it. The protective private core is where the exhibition is housed while the circulation space creates a threshold between inside and outside, softening the harsh boundary of the protected core.

The building is lifted on high terraces that responds to the street, creating a semi-public space (Walker, 2010). Although the entrance is visible from the street, it is not accessible and one should walk around the building to access the entrance. A sculpture garden is located between the two buildings as means of creating a public interface (Archdaily, 2009).

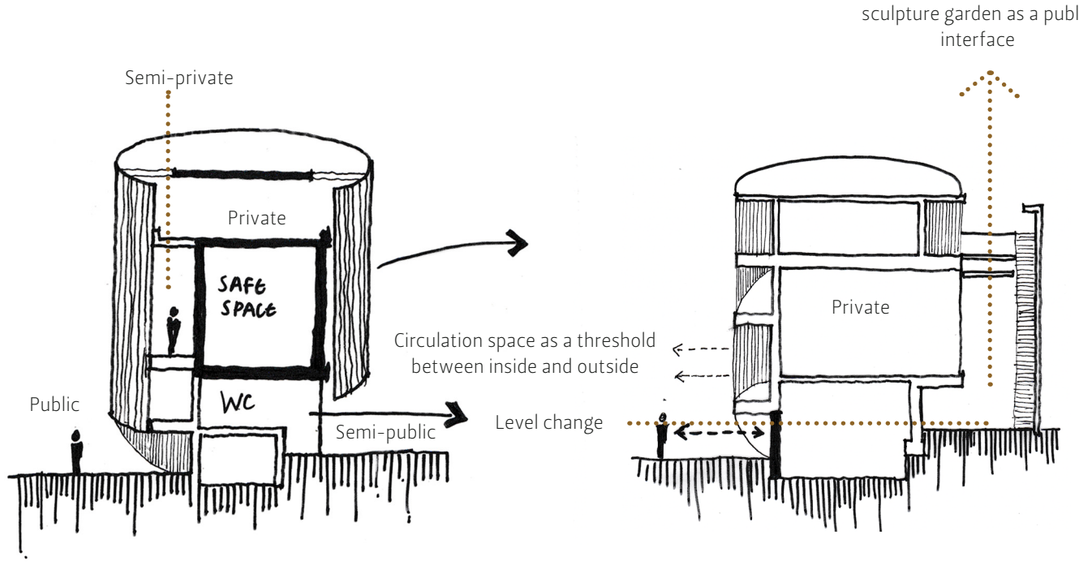


http://time-spacedesign.blogspot.co.za/2010/06/circa-on-jellicoe.html

The building invites the exterior within the circulation, as one move through the space you can orientate yourself with the surrounding context. It also contributes to a haptic experience with the natural light and air filtering through the fins of the façade.

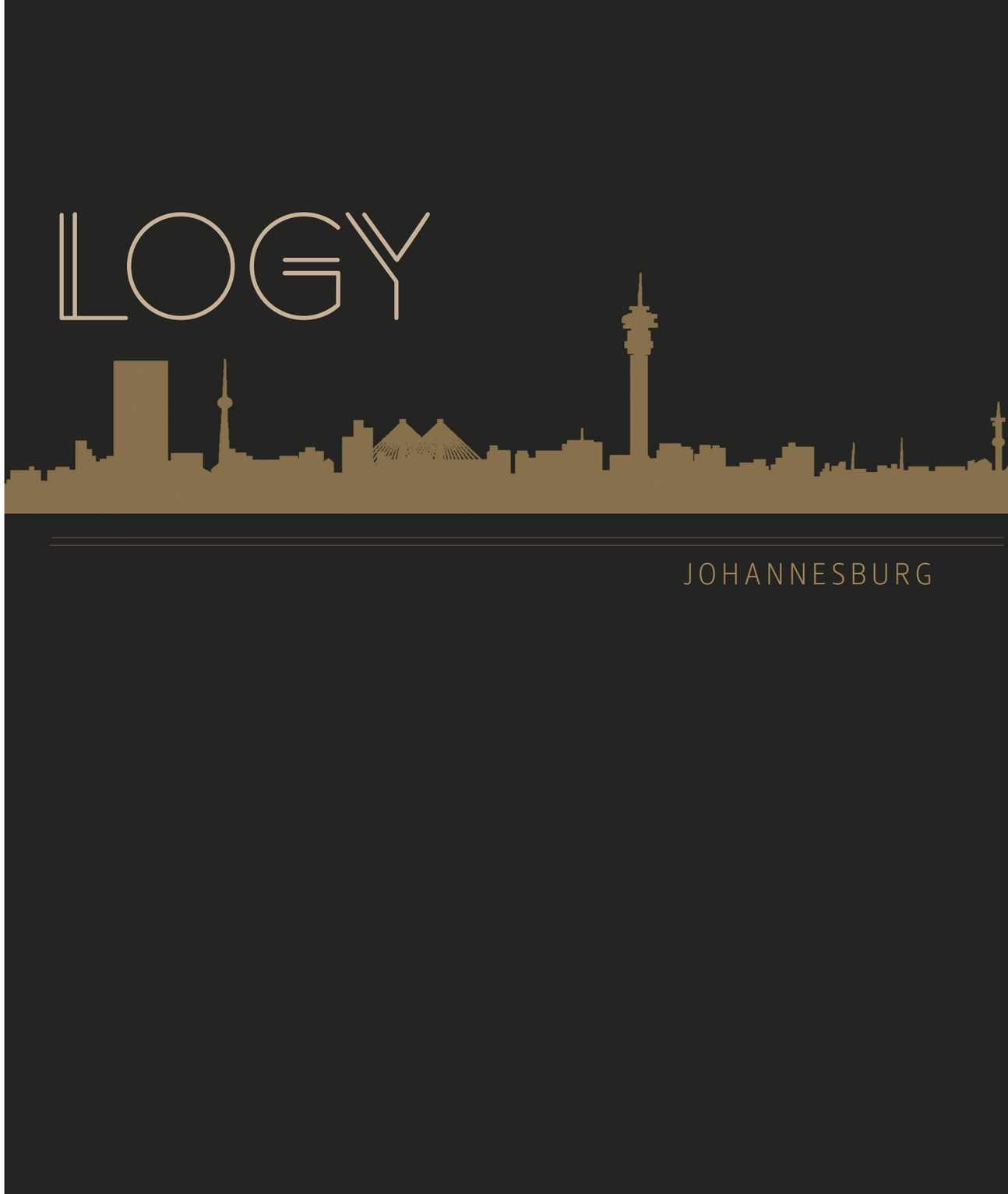
The exterior of the building explores alternative methods for a protective boundary wall. The skin around the circulation becomes a modified version of a conventional palisade fence that creates a threshold between public and private in a more subtle manner. The skin does not only act as a protective barrier but also becomes part of the experience of the space, the fins and scrims creates a visual linkage into and out of the building, creating a semiprivate space, that protects the private main gallery from the hustle of the street (Walker, 2010). The way you move through the building becomes a haptic experience and contributes to the experience of how the art gallery becomes responsive to the art it exhibits.

Through innovative design solutions, like changes in levels, building skins and the use of circulation as a barrier, the project becomes a good example of how to reinterpret the conventional fence and façade threshold in the urban environment.



Exploring the TYPOLOGY

The typological characteristics of the tower are mainly explored through the tectonics of the tower as well as the design methodology. However, the typological considerations go beyond the tower, how the concepts and ideas are translated into functional architecture for the specific client's needs together with the uses of the building are important typological aspects. Other important typological considerations that are investigated through precedents and case studies include how the proposed treatise can utilise principles of the ancient Roman forum, how boundaries and thresholds can be reinterpreted and how to reinterpret a boundary as a place that stimulates dialogue.



The client

The Freedom of Expression Institute and The South African National Editors' Forum (SANEF), are both non-profit non-governmental organisations committed to fight for freedom of expression within the South African media. They are both part of the fight against the Secrecy Bill and therefore appropriate clients for this project.

* The South African National Editors' Forum (SANEF)

SANEF members consist of editors, senior journalists and journalism trainers from the different entities within the South African media. The organisation is committed to promote the constitutional principles of freedom of expression and freedom of the press (Sanef, 2015).

* The Freedom of Expression Institute (FXI)

The Freedom of Expression Institute was established in 1994 with the goal to protect and promote the right to freedom of expression. The Institute was established when three organisations merged; The Campaign for Open Media, the Anti-Censorship Action Group and the Media Defense Trust.

* The Freedom of expression Institute provides the following services:

A legal clinic which lends support regarding **litigation and legal** advice concerning matters regarding freedom of expression.

Research and monitoring regarding issues, policy and legislation which concerns freedom of expression as well as tendencies regarding how the right is exercised in South Africa.

The FXI civic education and advocacy which is concerned with the enhancement of policy and legislation relating to freedom of expression as well as **informing community members** around the country on these issues (FXI, 2013).

The occupants of the building

The occupants of the building consist of the following: the public, permanent staff members and journalists.

The public:

The idea of the building is to provide an insightful experience of the problem of freedom of expression to make the public conscious of the threat. The building accommodates a public forum as a place where the public can freely exchange ideas and opinions, as well as exhibition spaces like the archive tower that is open for the public.

The permanent staff members are as follows

- Receptionist



The Freedom of Expression Institute

- Executive Director
- Administrator
- Senior Project Officer
- Head of Law Clinic
- Researcher
- Research Assistant
- Legal Assistant
- IT Officer



The South African National Editors' Forum (Sanef)

- Two permanent staff members, dealing with administration, etc.
- A board of 20 delegates

The journalists

The building provides 'safe houses' for any journalists or media figures who want to write or publish sensitive information, but who feel threatened to do so in their usual environment. The safe spaces for writing are to prevent a terrible event such as the Charlie Hebdo killings earlier this year.

2

Act as a public landmark that represents the fight against the oppression of freedom of expression.

3

To prevent an event like the Charlie Hebdo shooting by providing a safe space for journalist to write without feeling threatened or unsafe.

4

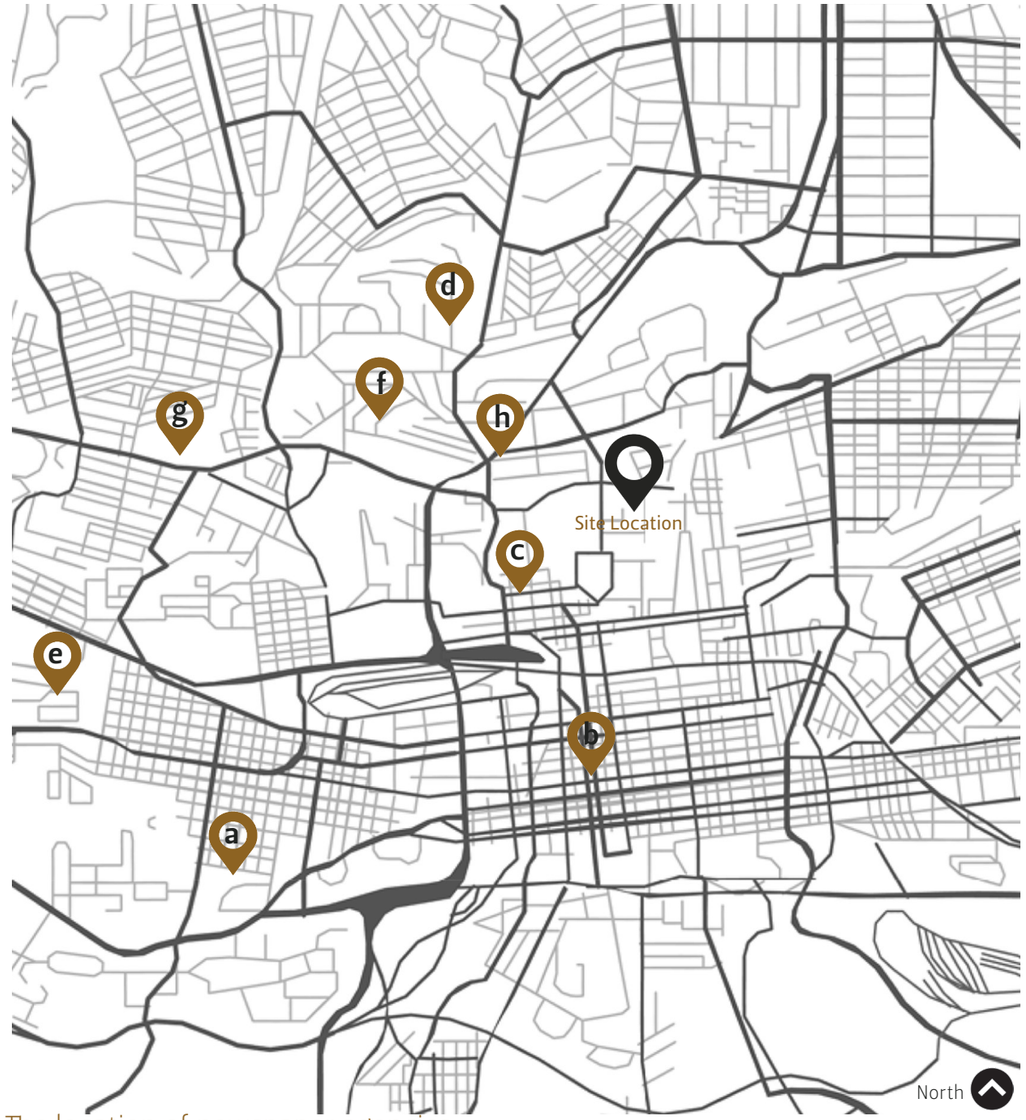
Provide a forum for the public to freely exchange ideas. Provide legal assistance for anyone who needs it regarding freedom of expression

1

Play a pivotal role in receiving, archiving and distributing classified or sensitive information that may be important for journalist.

Provide a central point where journalists and the press can compile information.

The Main functions of the building



The location of newspaper agencies

This map illustrates the location of newspaper agencies who can use the facilities provided by the Freedom of Expression Forum

a) The Citizen
b) Independent
c) Wits Journalism Department
d) Sunday Times
e) Times Live
g) Media Park (News 24)
h) National Electronic Media Institute of SA

Accomodation List

The accommodation list may adapt as design develops

Law clinic :		
2 x law consultant offices	2x (16m^2)	32m^2
Law clinic reception	1x (65m^2)	65m^2
Multi-purpose area with law assistants and lounge area	1x (30m^2)	30m^2
Storage space	1x (6m^2)	6m^2
Kitchenette	1x (9m^2)	9m^2
WC	1x (6m^2)	6m^2
Total area :		148m^2

Tower 1 : Safe rooms		
4x safe rooms for journalists	4x (16m^2)	64m^2
Lookout tower and deck	25m^2	25m^2
Boardroom	1x (49m^2)	49m^2
Discussion room for journalists	1x (30m^2)	30m^2
Storage spaces and or services	6x (4m^2)	24m^2
Kitchenette	1x (9m^2)	9m^2
WC	2x (6m^2)	12m^2
Lounge area	1x(25m^2)	25m^2
Circulation space	7x18mm^2	162m^2
Total area with circulation		700m^2

Tower 2 : Archive tower		
Reception to archive tower	1x (58m^2)	58m^2
Circulation space	7x (18m^2)	126m^2
Archive	4x (63m^2)	252m^2
Storage space	1x (6m^2)	6m^2
Archive storage space	1x (32m^2)	32m^2
WC	2x (6m^2)	6m^2
Total area with circulation		900m^2

Office area for SANEF and FXI		
Reception area	1x (74m^2)	74m^2
Circulation area	1x (358m^2)	358m^2
Offices	6x (14m^2)	84m^2
It office	1x (21m^2)	21m^2
Print room	1x (24m^2)	24m^2
Staff room with kitchenette	1 x (31m^2)	31m^2
Storage space	1x (10m^2)	10m^2
Wash up area and cleaning equipment storage	1x (15m^2) + 1x (8m^2)	23m^2
WC	1x (6m^2)	6m^2
Boardroom	1x(49m^2)	49m^2
Total area :		680m^2

Freedom of the Press Monument

Location: Brazil
Architect: Gustavo Penna

The Freedom of Press Monument in Brazil becomes a typological example of how architecture can represent press freedom.

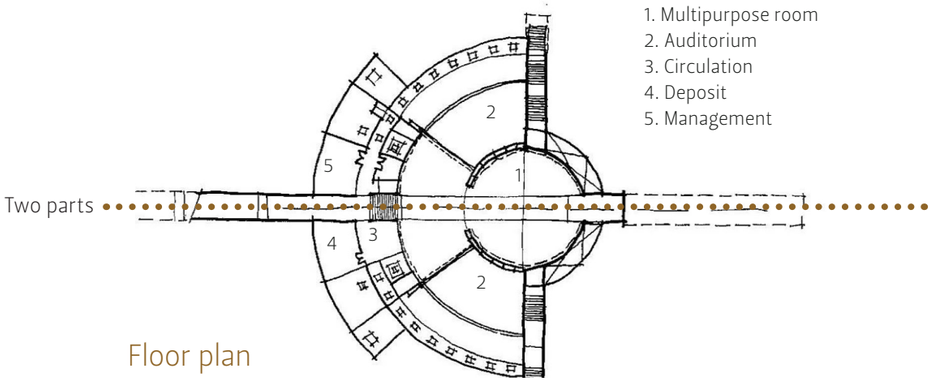
The conceptual idea of creating a beacon that represents freedom relates to the concept of the light towers at Constitutional Hill. The translucent quality of the glass tower speaks of open and transparent reporting in journalism (Aguilar, 2014).

The beacon divides the space underneath in two distinct parts, and represents the two main objectives of press freedom, which is the advancement of factual evidence as well as the ability to freely expose information that can speak loudly to the whole world (Aguilar, 2014). The space underneath accommodates an international press centre.

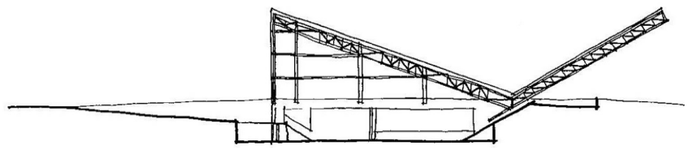
The dynamic form of the building represents the perpetual fight journalists have to uphold press freedom. The subtle quality of the materiality of the building becomes a symbol of the delicate nature of freedom.
Interestingly enough, this precedent was only stumbled upon after the tower typology for the proposed design was developed from the conceptual consideration of architecture as a silent protest.



archdaily.com



Floor plan



Section

Precedent Study: The Roman Public Forum

This precedent study investigates the typology of the ancient Roman Public Forum to comprehend how these principles can be reinterpreted into a modern public forum in the specific context of Constitutional Hill.

A forum can be described as a meeting or a type of medium that allows for the exchange of ideas and opinion on a certain topic (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2015). There are two types of forums, physical spaces as well as virtual spaces. In the 21st century, most forums take the form of virtual spaces. Internet forums such as blogs, social media and websites have replaced physical forum spaces.

A public forum as physical space can be described as a place that has been earmarked for general use by the public for speech-related purposes. "Open public spaces" like public parks and street corners are associated with a long tradition of freedom of expression. These spaces are open for discussion, protest, demonstrations etc., in these spaces the government can normally only impose restrictions on content, time and manner (O'Neill: 2015).

In the article, ***In Protest, the Power of place***, Michael Kimmelman (2009) pointed out that in contrast with a virtual forum, when people physically assemble together in a physical forum, one can truly discover the numbers of people with similar concerns over different races, genders and ages. It is within these public forums that people create a community that cannot be achieved when everyone sits at home on their computers fighting a cause.

Kimmelman (2009) noticed that in Europe, people often assemble in parks and squares to fight causes. He emphasised the importance of open public spaces that can be occupied as a public forum. Fig 1 and 2 illustrate the open and public spaces in the surrounding areas of Constitutional Hill; only a few spaces have been noted as possible public spaces for people to gather.

It is therefore important that the proposed design intervention accommodates a public space that opens up the possibility for conversation.



Open and public spaces

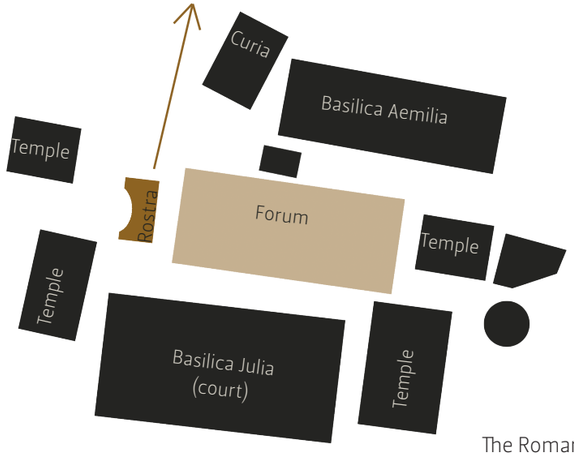


Open public spaces that can possibly be used as spaces where public opinions and ideas can be exchanged without interference of government bodies

The Roman forum

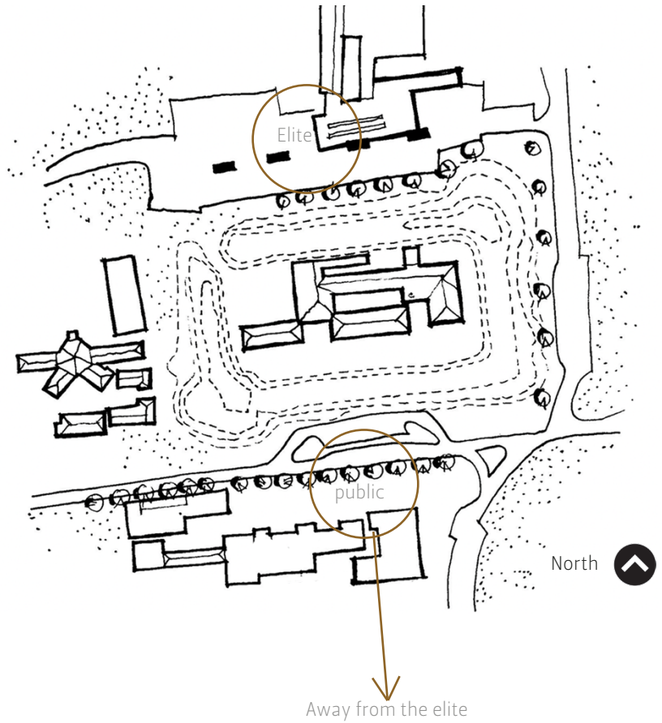
The idea of a public forum stems from the ancient Roman forum, a rectangular open space of approximately 150mx75m. The space was the heart of the city and hosted political and legal activities. Important buildings like temples, political buildings and the court (Basilica Julia) defined the space. On the upper northern point the Rostra, a type of stage, was an allocated space for public announcements. The elevating Rostra faced to the north toward the senate house (the Curia) where the politicians and elite were seated, meaning that the speaker turned his back on the public that where assembled in the forum (Aldrete, 2009:47).

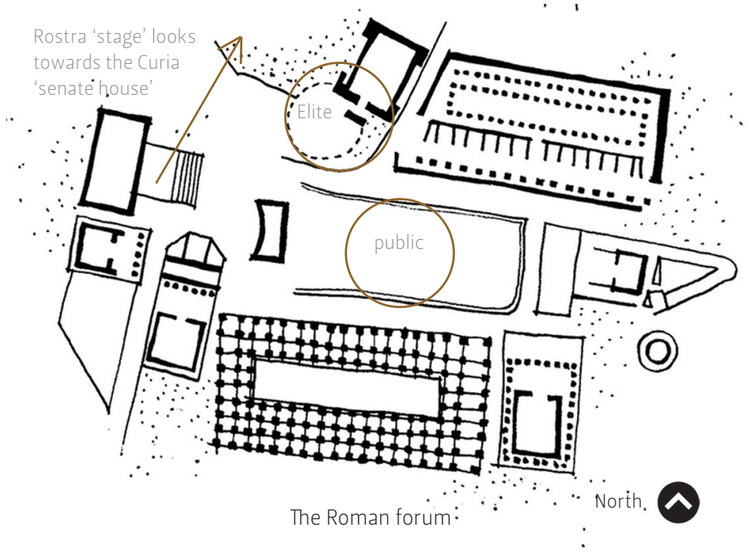
By reinterpreting these principles of an ancient forum, the idea developed to create a modern public forum which allows the public to start communicating with one another, turning away from the court where the elite is and focusing on the public. In contrast with the Roman forum, which elevates only a single individual, the space should rather encourage dialogue between different members of society. Instead of only defining the space as a horizontal plain through surrounding buildings, the idea developed to extrude the open space vertically, so that it can become a vertical beacon in the high rise context of Johannesburg. The site for the Forum For Freedom of Expression lines up with the constitutional court, similar in the way the Roman forum lined up with the basilica Julia, but is stepped away from the court to create the opportunity for objectivity.



The Roman forum

Constitutional Hill as a public forum





The Roman forum

Storefront for Art and Architecture

Place: New York, NY, United States, 1992-1993

Type: Facade renovation for art & architecture gallery

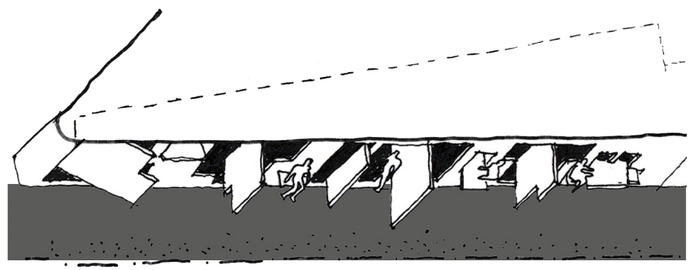
Architect: Steven Holl Architects

This precedent study explores how a conventional threshold typology, like the wall, can be approached in a different manner to create a place of dialogue and interaction in the urban landscape.

Storefront for Art and Architecture is a contemporary art and architecture institution in SoHo, Manhattan, which focuses on to the development of innovative ideas concerning architecture, art and design by inviting dialogue and participation between different disciplinaries, social groups and geographical boundaries (Holl, n.d). The project investigates how boundary and threshold can be reinterpreted, especially in the urban context like Johannesburg.

The small triangulated exhibition space is located on the ground floor of a corner block in Manhattan and becomes a meeting point between Chinatown, Little Italy and SOHO, three very distinct neighbourhoods in Manhattan (Holl, n.d). The space functions as a public forum for different ideas, through exhibition and dialogue.

The façade of the building consists of a series of hinged panels that can be moved and adapted to create different shapes, views, planes and boundaries.



The wall is reinterpreted to create a sense of place where humans can interact and inhabit, becoming a place of dialogue and expression rather than only functioning as a boundary.

The façade dissolves the threshold between exterior and interior in the way the gallery expands onto the sidewalk, creating an inclusive experience that questions the exclusivity of the art word. The façade invites the pedestrian to interact with it and interpret it differently. The wall is reinterpreted to create a sense of place where humans can interact and inhabit it, and become a place of dialogue and expression rather than only functioning as a boundary.

The solid façade is punctured to create a physical accessible threshold that questions the conventional glass façade that only creates visual access to the interior but still acts as impenetrable boundary.

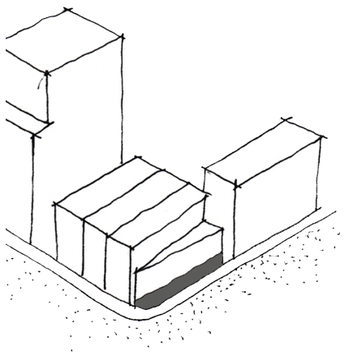
This precedent influenced the design idea of reinterpreting a vertical wall as an embankment, similar to the rampart wall across the street, but with seating and a place for social interaction with the objective to reinterpret boundaries to stimulate conversation.

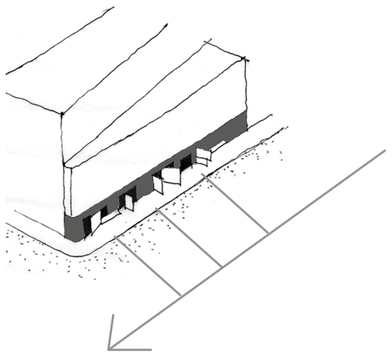


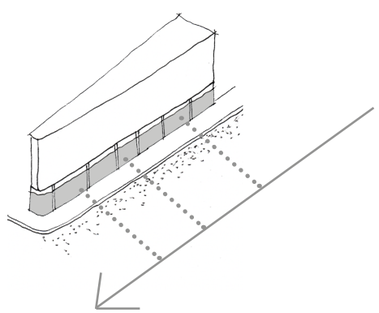
http://www.stevenholl.com/project-detail.php?id=24

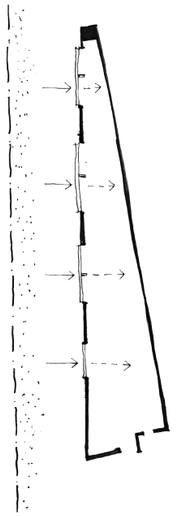


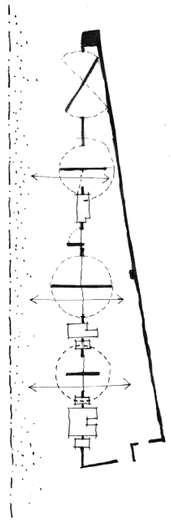
http://www.stevenholl.com/project-detail.php?id=24

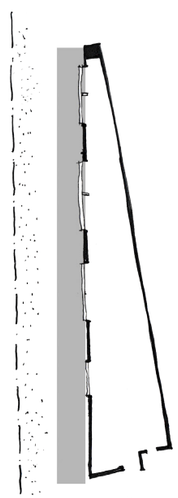


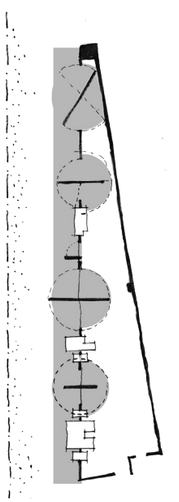












The solid façade is punctured to create a physical accessible threshold that questions the conventional glass façade that only creates visual access to the interior but still acts as impenetrable boundary.

Hector Pieterson Memorial Museum

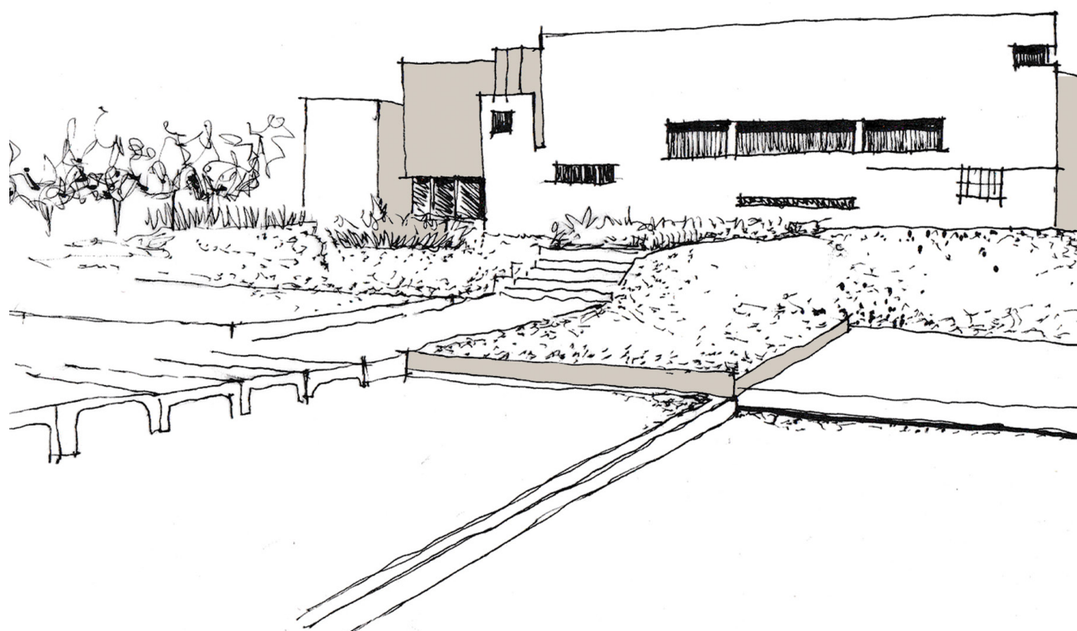
Place: Soweto, Gauteng

Architects: Mashabane Rose Architects

This precedent study relates to the Concept of Architecture of Perception and the building becomes an example of how architecture is used to comment and emphasise on a location beyond itself.

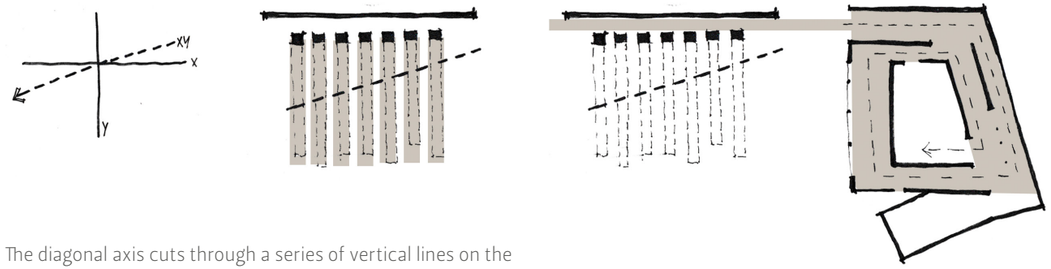
The Hector Peterson Memorial Museum is located in Soweto, Johannesburg and commemorates the students who were killed in 1976 by the police in the Soweto student uprising against Bantu Education. The building becomes an abstract interpretation of the surrounding context.

The building is situated in the heart of where the uprising took place and interprets the memory of the surrounding context, capturing the events of 16 June 1976 within the current context.

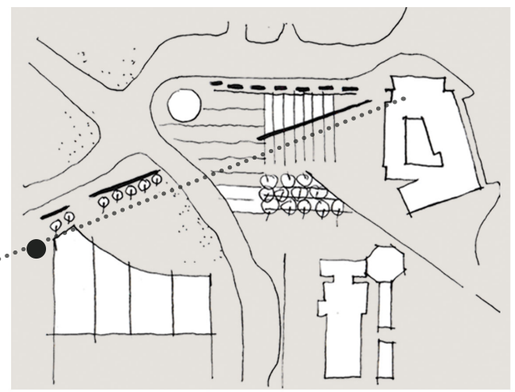


The configuration of path plays an important role in the spatial layout of the design. A journey through the exterior space becomes part of the commemorative experience of the memorial. The museum precinct forms part of a path leading to the entrance of the building. Freestanding stone walls and repetition of element such as horizontal planes, accentuate the axis leading to the building (Silverman, 2009:130).

The location where Hector Pieterson, the first of many children, was shot and killed, is 600m away from the building. A line of glass that cuts through the square in front of the Museum, connects the entrance of the building with the location (Deckler, 2006:31). The diagonal axis cuts through a series of vertical lines on the pavement and enhances the sense of direction.

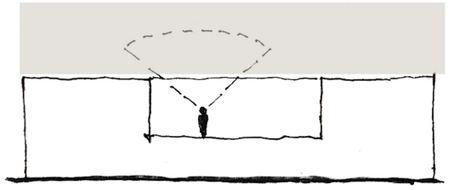


The diagonal axis cuts through a series of vertical lines on the pavement and enhances the sense of direction

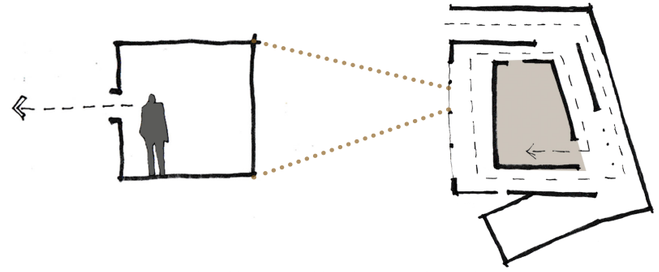


The location where Hector Pieterson was shot and killed

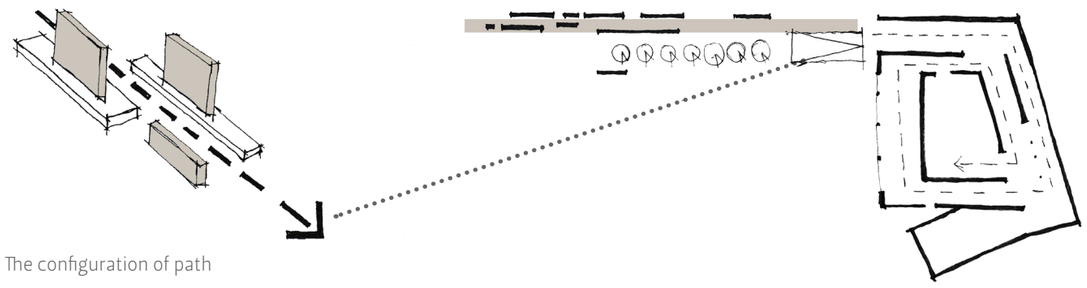
The circulations within the building are used as a journey to unfold the narrative of 16 June 1976. By implementing the Japanese idea of borrowed landscape that can be described as incorporating background landscape into the composition, the building starts to frame significant historical sites like the police station, the shooting site and the final rallying space as you progress through the space (Deckler 2006:33). The circulation space terminates into a gravel-filled courtyard with views of only the sky as the final resting place for the students who died (Silverman, 2009:130). By shaping the building to frame certain views the architecture metaphorically starts to comment and attempts to understand the narrative inscribed into the surrounding landscape. The red brickwork used for the building, echoes the red brick houses from the early 1950s.



The circulation space terminates into a gravel-filled courtyard with views of only the sky as the final resting place for the students who died



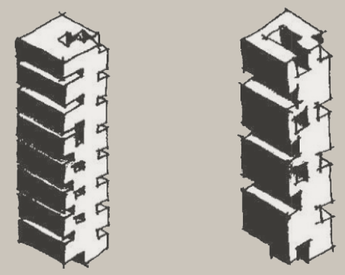
The principle of borrowed landscape where the background composition is incorporated in the composition of the building

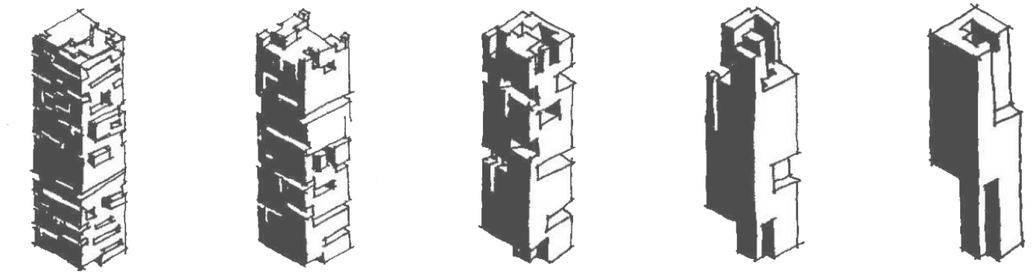


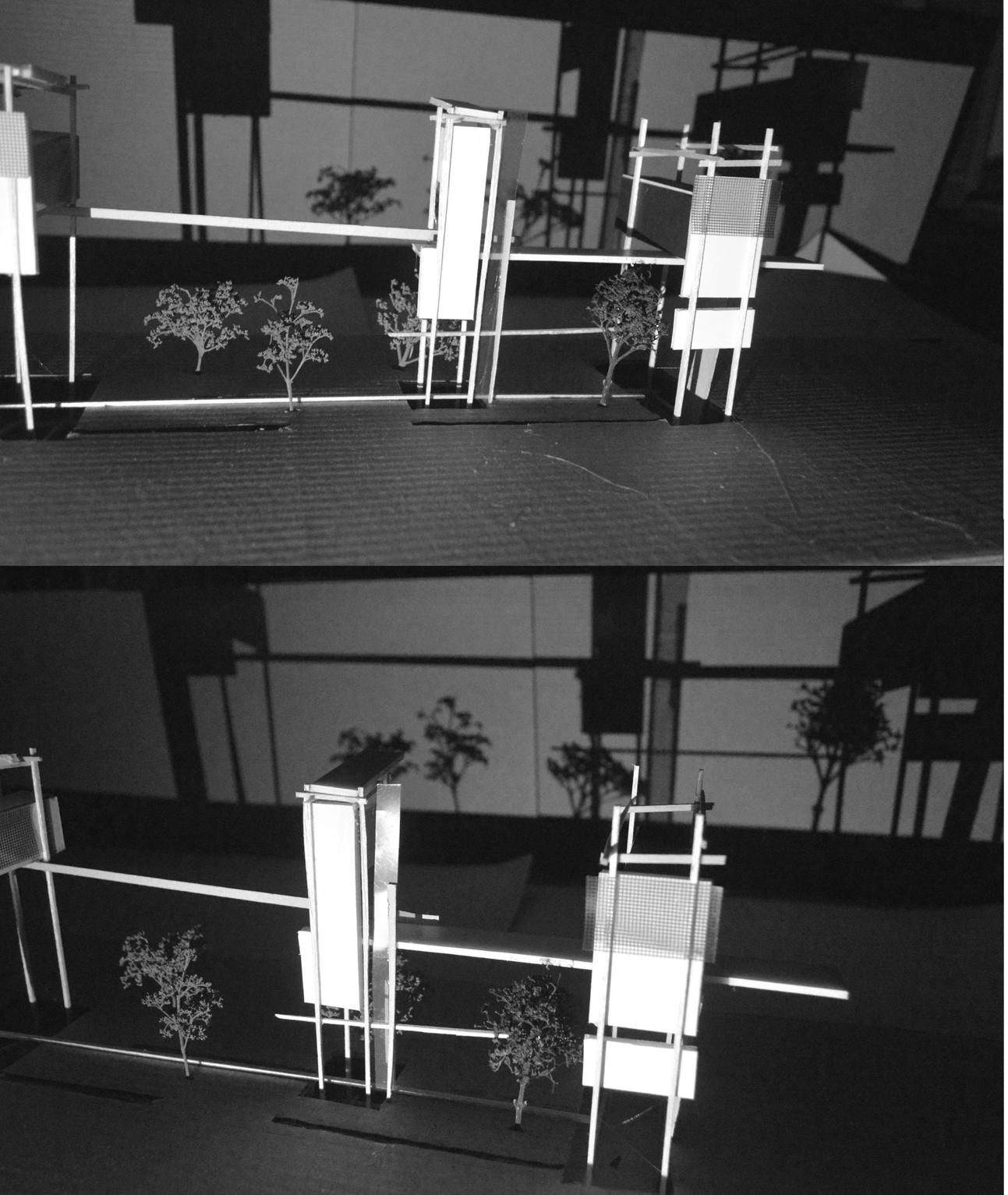
The configuration of path

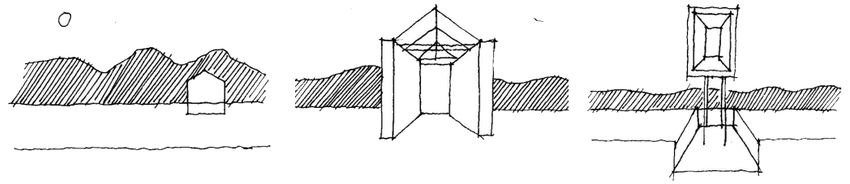
Exploring the

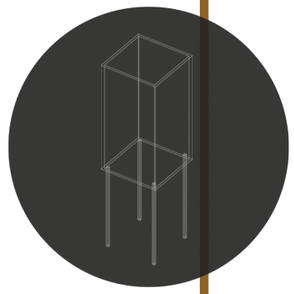
TECTONICS











Tectonic Concept

The structure as a silent protest

According to the theorist, Martin Heidegger the ‘fourfold’ becomes an essential part of dwelling. He explained the fourfold as the earth and the sky, divinities and mortals where man is not only a being in the world, but a part of this fourfold (The Cultural Reader, 2011).

The earth becomes the stereotomic part that supports us mostly in a physical sense, the sky becomes the tectonic element above us, relating to a spiritual experience of eternity.

Human beings have translated these concepts into the structure of dwellings. The walls and the floors become the stereotomic element at the bottom, relating to the support of the ground and the roof becomes the tectonic element relating to the lightness of the sky.

The concept explores how the structure of the building can become a protest against this architectural language. On the ground floor, the structure contradicts the idea of a ‘grounded’ solid structure by using a light tectonic structure. The stereotomic elements are placed on top of the tectonic element against the sky, protesting the idea of eternity and freedom. By building into the earth, removing the supportive ground on which we stride on, the building contradicts normality.

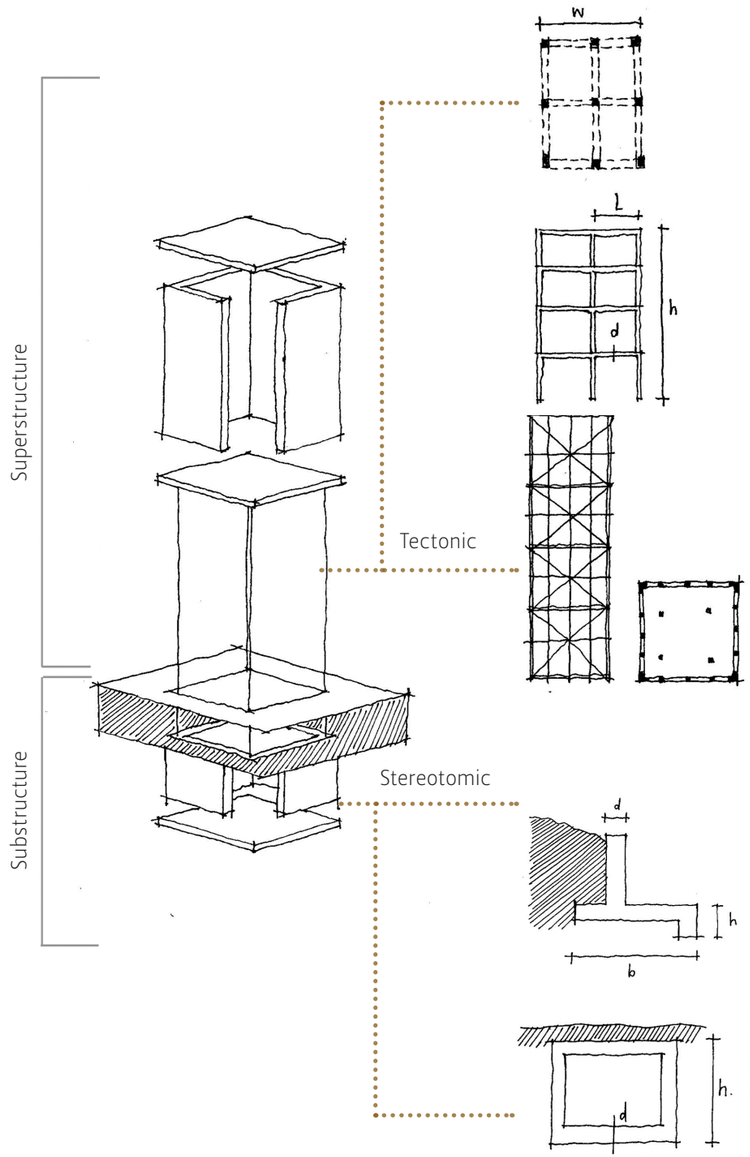
Structural considerations for the tower typology

Superstructure

Substructure

Tectonic

Stereotomic



Element :
Multi-storey cast in-situ frrames

Typical i:
h = 15 - 45m

Typical spanning ratio :
typical i/d = 20-40
typical h/w = 1-5

Element :
Diagonal truss tube

Typical span:
h = 60-110 storeys

Typical spanning ratio :
typical h/w = 5-7

Element :
Concrete retaining wall

Typical height :
2-6m

Slenderness ratio :
typical h/d = 10-12

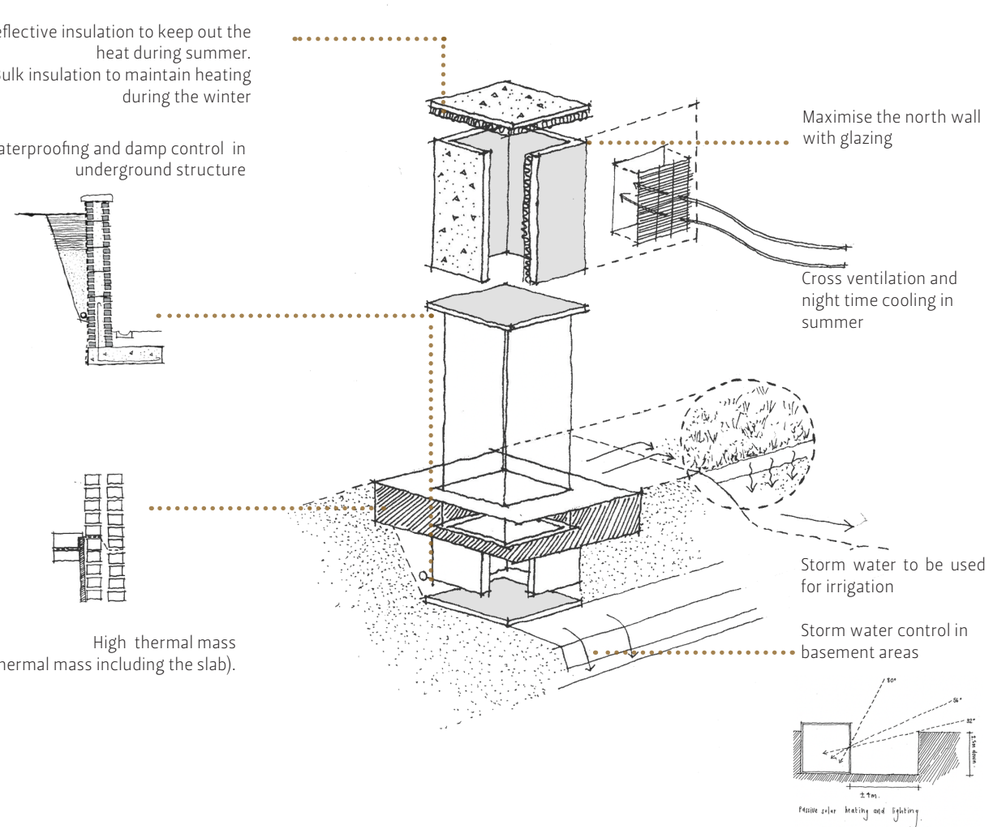
Element :
Concrete retaining wall

Typical height :
1-4m

Slenderness ratio :
typical h/d = 25-30

Investigating how the propose structure can respond to the climatic conditions of Johannesburg

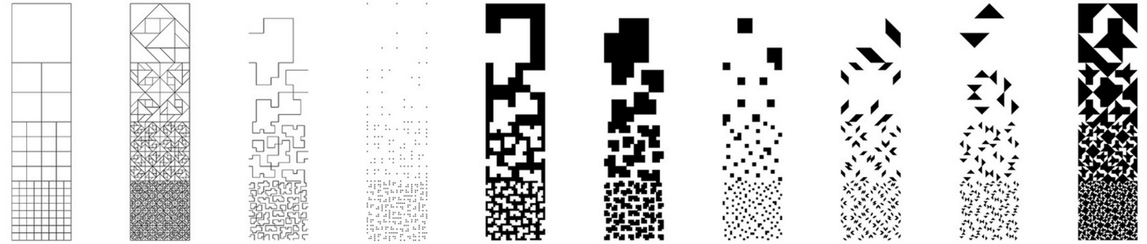
According to the SANS 10400, Johannesburg is located in climatic zone 2, described as 'temperate interior' (Schmidt, 2014: 105). Climatic characteristics include general lower day temperatures with hot to very hot summers and mild to cool winters. The summers are moderately humid but during winters humidity is low.

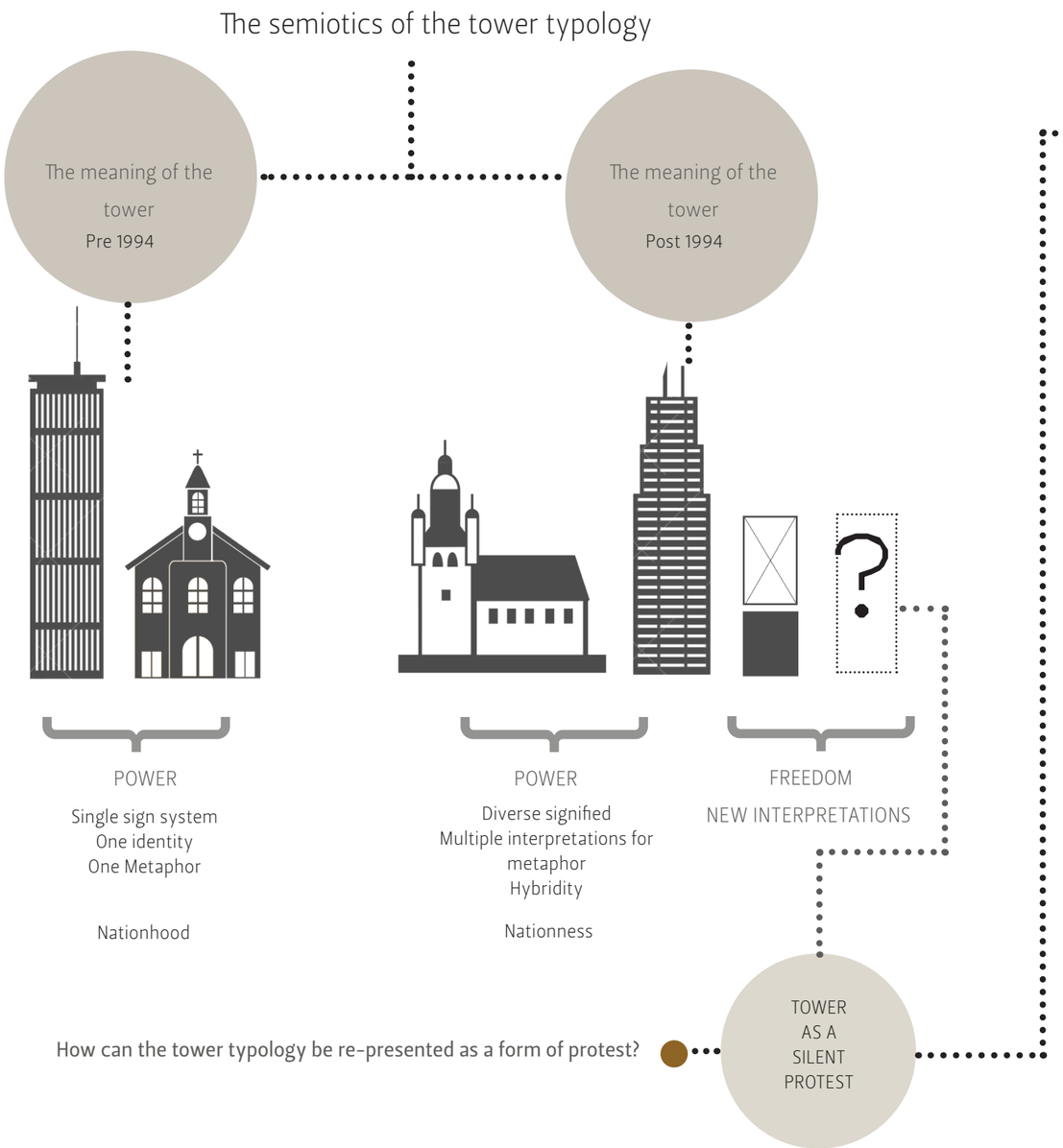


Exploring the MORPHOLOGY

The Exploration and grounding of conceptual ideas within a theoretical framework of semiotics

Morphology in architecture aspires to make architecture meaningful. Although the project has developed from the combination of the conceptual framework, typology and topological considerations which also address meaningful place making, morphology seeks to ground these ideas within a theoretical framework. The morphology of the tower is investigated to identify its symbolic meaning with the objective to form an understanding of how the proposed towers can embody principles of protest through the process of signification.





Understanding the argument

Freedom of expression goes beyond the spoken word, human beings use various sign systems or semiotics to express themselves, ideas and collective ideologies. It is this ability of human beings to understand sign systems; may it be in our environment, our body language or in spoken words that relates to Heidegger's idea of phenomenology and how architecture also becomes a way human beings communicate ideas.

Heidegger (2000:23) explained phenomenology as man's state of being-in-the-world where architecture becomes the manifestation of man's being in the world. "Understanding is never without presuppositions; We do not, and cannot, understand anything from a purely objective position. We always understand from within the context of our disposition and involvement in the world" (Johnson, 2000:23).

It is from these phenomenological readings which Giedion's idea, that contemporary architecture's main task is to interpret a way of life valid for our time, stems (Harries, 2000:12). In The Ethical Function of Architecture, Harries (2000:13) noted that if the main task of architecture is that of interpretation, architecture should possess the power of speech.

It is this idea of the voice of architecture that suggests that there is an analogy between architecture and language (Harries, 2000:86). Many believe that language is the fundamental sign-system of human beings to express themselves. By exploring the science of such system or the semiotics, one can draw similarities between linguistics and architecture. Architecture, like linguistics, is not abstract, buildings can be compared to words in the way they become active, dynamic signs, capable of taking on diverse set of meanings and connotations for different social classes in different social and historical situations (Selden et al, 2005:39). By exploring the development of the sign-system of architecture, the paper attempts to form an understanding of how the press can utilise architecture as a voice in the fight for freedom of expression through symbolic representation.

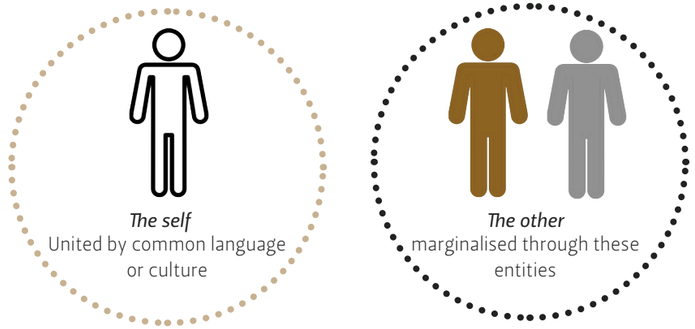
Through the conceptual approach it has been established that the tower typology will influence the form of the building. The semiotics of the tower typology was investigated to form a theoretical understanding of how the symbolic meaning of the tower developed, from a symbol of power to represent nationhood during the post-colonial landscape, to a hybrid beacon of freedom in the post-apartheid epoch. This study inevitably led to a theoretical understanding of how the hybrid symbol of the tower can be re-presented as a form of protest against the threat of the Secrecy Bill within the context of Constitutional Hill.

Architecture as a representation of ***nationhood*** in post-colonial South Africa

For most of the 20th century colonialist and apartheid ideologies prescribed the meaning of space through a well-defined formation of ***the self and the other*** (Olivier, 2012:17). In The Location Of Culture, Homi Bhabha (1994:1) explained that the articulation of cultural differences, between the apartheid entities with their rationalist worldview and ideology of modernity versus those who are marginalised through these entities by their skin colour, race and religion, became a strategy to enhance the idea of selfhood or nationhood.

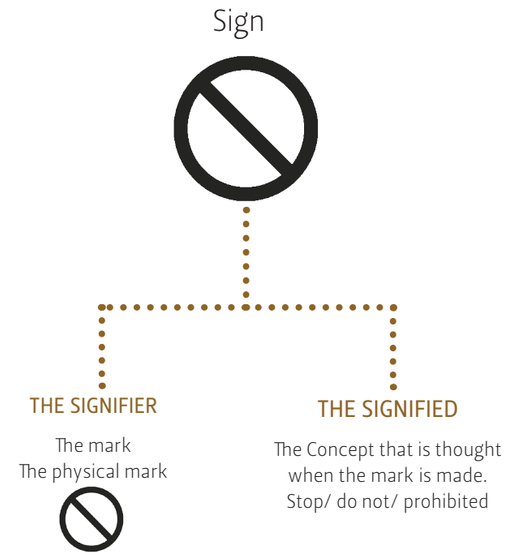
Nationhood can be described as the state of being a nation, or a large group of people united by common language, culture or economic life. Bhabha (1990:293-295) strongly critiqued the essentialist nature of the nationhood of post-colonialism. Due to the modern ideologies of the time, the national culture was seen as a pure uniform entity that was constituted by the awareness of ***the other*** that provoked the need to define ***the self*** by initiating single signs of identity.

The apartheid entities used these single signs of identity to represent the unity and homogeneity of the modern Afrikaner nation. These metaphors of national life were articulated through different elements that included the landscape, architecture and the spatialisation of historical time (Olivier, 2012:20). National life was composed by symbols like the Voortrekker Monument that only represented the Afrikaner history and the ideology of white superiority, capitalism and Christianity.

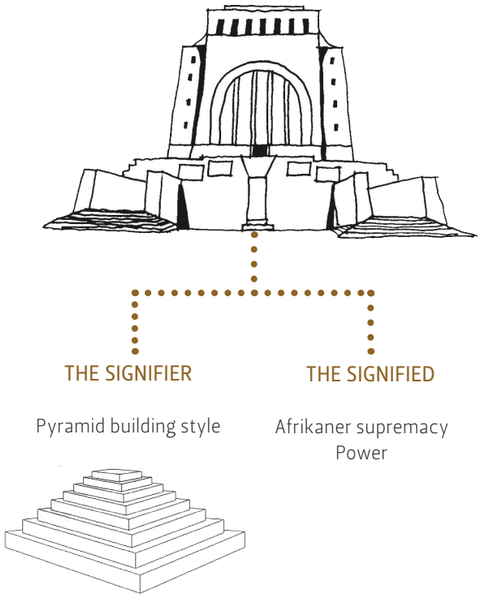


Explanation of Nationhood

Karsten Harries (2000:98) stated that architecture is an art of representation, where symbols and representations are used to signify something else. The linguist, Ferdinand de Saussure (Selden et al, 2005:63) explained that signs consist of two parts, the ***signifier***, that is the written or spoken mark and the ***signified*** that is the concept that is represented by the mark (signifier). Referring to the example of the Voortrekker Monument, the physical components that the monumental building is made up from becomes the ***signifiers*** that ***signifies*** the power of the Afrikaner volk. The architect of the Voortrekker Monument, Gerard Moerdyk, explained that the pyramid building style was used as inspiration. The Voortrekker Monument is built from smaller granite blocks to form the great mass similar to the construction of the pyramids in Egypt that are ancient symbols of immensity, majesty and power (Moerdyk, 1949). The scale of the building is enhanced by the base that steps up to make it appear larger, emphasising Afrikaner supremacy. Bhabha (1990:2-3) argued that the pedagogical value of these types of holistic representation of culture, like the Voortrekker Monument during the apartheid era, relies on the idea of creating a single evolutionary narrative of historical continuity, rather than acknowledging the ambivalence of the culture of modern society.

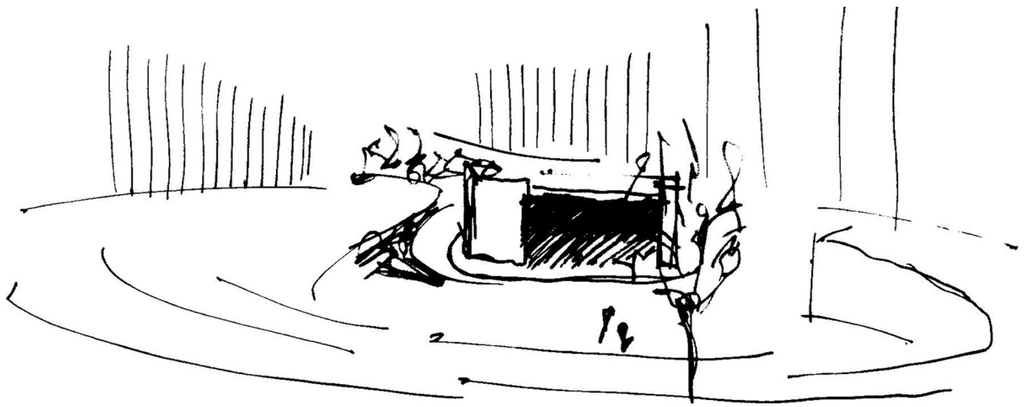


The Voortrekker Monument



Architecture as a representation of ***nationness*** in the post-apartheid landscape

The beginning of democracy in 1994 brought an end to the single narrative of the Afrikaner. National power was transferred from the coloniser, the apartheid government ***(the self)*** to the colonised ***(the other)*** leading to the phenomena of nationness (Olivier, 2012:20). In Nation and Narration, Bhabha (1990:292) explained the cultural construction of nationness as a form of social and textual affiliation that takes place. Suddenly the signifiers of the coloniser that represents the ideology of white superiority, capitalism and Christianity are not relevant anymore, opening up the possibility for new interpretations ***(signified)*** for the new national narrative. Bhabha (1990:297) suggested that a split narrative that attempts to narrate the people in double time, should replace the previous single narrative. By introducing Freedom Park in the direct vicinity of the Voortrekker Monument, Bhabha's idea of a split narrative was successfully achieved. Freedom Park retells South Africa's history from its geological origin until today, including all cultural and historical influences. Freedom Park is designed in such way that it includes views to the Voortrekker Monument, Unisa and the African horizon as an attempt to tell South Africa's history as a whole and to place the history of the Afrikaners and the Voortrekker Monument in perspective (SouthAfrica.info, 2015).



Freedom Park, Pretoria

The split narrative of the nation attempts to represent both the historical pedagogy as well as the process of signification in the present which he defines as the performative. By accommodating the pedagogical and performative aspects within the narrative of a nation, the ambivalent hybrid tension that defines the 'society' of the nation is addressed. Bhabha (1990:207) referred to events like the 1994 democratic elections as moments of political panic, which breaks down the boundary of the self and the other, the inside and the outside, producing hybrid sites or signs that is ambivalent in their nature. Hybridity can be explained as a mystic multiculturalist reinterpretation of ineffective old national traditions and signs to attempt to mediate different cultures, languages and societies. It is a difficult process of negotiation (Huddart, 2006:0113)

This concept of hybridity played a significant role in establishing an architectural language for the post-apartheid epoch and influenced the conceptual idea of objectifying the threat of freedom of expression by creating a 'hybrid watchdog' in the direct vicinity of Constitutional Hill.



The ***langue*** of architecture: exploring the representation of the tower during modernism

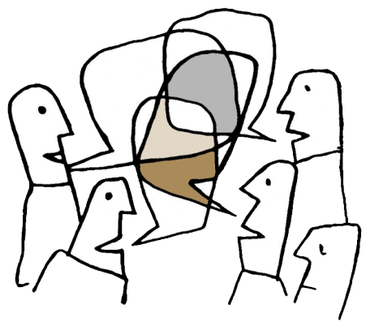
To understand the essence of architectural language it is required to understand the relation between words and things. The Swiss linguist, Ferdinand de Saussure, made the distinction between ***langue*** and ***parole.*** He describes ***langue*** as an unconscious abstract signifying system that we consult, this becomes the social aspect of the specific language. ***Parole*** can be described as the precise utterances and use of ***langue*** (Selden et al, 2005:63). It is therefore fundamental that the social aspect of language or the ***langue*** of an architectural language should be considered to understand the physical architectural intervention or the ***parole.***

The ***langue*** of the apartheid ideology was one of seclusion, superiority and prejudiced. It was this ideology of nationhood as one identity together with the epoch of modernism that contributed to the language of modern architecture. The idea of reason and science formed the basis of knowledge of the time which was concerned with the idea of a single universal truth. This idea of the application of reason can be seen in the manner in which the architecture is obsessed purely with the syntax of the architectural language that can be described as the rules and methods for designing a building as a whole. Modernism perceived language as transparent, with a one-to-one relationship between the signifier and the ***signified*** (Selden et al, 2005:145).



PAROLE

What the individual speaks

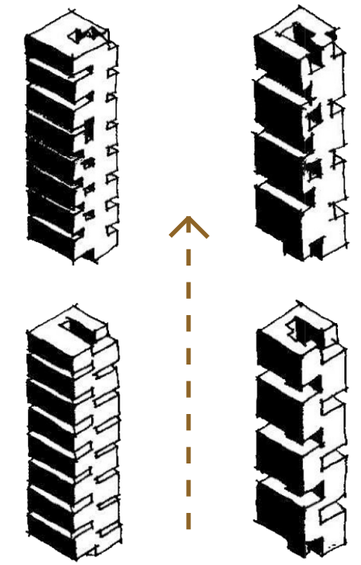


LANGUE

The social aspect of language

As mentioned, modernism is concerned with the syntax of the architectural language. The verticality of a tower is the syntax of the architectural language that means 'up' and elevating oneself means improving oneself. The original relation between tower and power stems amongst others, from the biblical story of the tower of Babel. It tells the story of builders that approaches the task of building a tower in the act of name giving, they wanted to dominate the world by means of a universal language. Derrida (1998:320) explained that the conquest of taking up place in the sky, is a conquest of giving oneself a name. It is from the power of a name that they are able to dominate other languages. Unfortunately for their sake, God utters the word 'Babel' which means confusion that condemned mankind to a diversity of language. This emphasises the limitations of a single universal language of interpretation. Derrida is of the opinion that it is the incompletion of the tower that makes it possible for architecture as well as different languages to exist (Leach, 1998:321). It is therefore evident that the idea of a single metaphor portrayed by modernistic architecture is strongly condemned by Derrida as he argues that as long as diversity and different social cultures exist, different interpretations will occur.

This single metaphorical idea or the one-to-one relation between the ***signifier*** and the ***signified*** is evident in the modernistic architectural language of post-colonial South Africa. The single metaphor of the ***signifier*** can be demonstrated by referring to the tower typology. It was the modernism movement that introduced the tower, or to elaborate, the skyscraper, as a symbol of power. The single metaphor associated with Johannesburg's skyline during the 20th century relates to power, wealth, success and strength of the western capitalistic ideology (Huriot, 2015). Until today the skyline stands as a reminder of this ideology.



The verticality of a tower is the syntax of the architectural language that means 'up' and elevating oneself means improving oneself.

Michel Foucault (Mills, 2003:40) noted that where power exists there inevitably exists a resistance to the power. To be in a relationship where power is exercised there should be something or someone who resists it or experiences the oppression of the power. Therefore any symbol of power like the modernist skyscraper, does not address power as well as the oppressed by the power, is an incomplete signification. In the instances where a sign like the tower consists of a single metaphor, like power to define the self from the other, or the powerful over the powered, the ***signifier*** (the tower) is always predetermined by the ***signified*** (the need to portray power) (Bhabha 1990:48). Bhabha (1990:191) explained that the process of signification or the ordering of symbols is a temporal process where something like a building or a graphic representation is invented to take on a meaning. On the one hand it represents the truth of the world as it becomes an extension of man's being in the world, yet on the other hand it portrays subjectivity as it becomes an extension of a specific man's being in the world. Bhabha explained that it is such a single system of cultural signification that composes the nation as ***becoming*** and not ***being*** (Olivier, 2012:17).



The single metaphor associated with Johannesburg's skyline during the 20th century relates to power, wealth, success and strength of the western capitalistic ideology

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Towers of power in Johannesburg

Nationhood is based on the idea of creating one identity that is represented by one metaphor of power. During the 1920s Johannesburg grew into the image of New York as the architectural style changed from colonial Edwardian to a modern metropolis. Between the 1920s and the 1930s the central business area of Johannesburg was built up with skyscrapers to mirror their Manhattan archetype (Chipkin, 1993:152). It was during the 1960s that Johannesburg's verticality bloomed. The tallest structures were added during this time that simultaneously aligned with the birth of South Africa as a republic and the power of the Afrikaner nationhood. Verticality and hierarchy are the main characteristics of the tower typology. Hierarchy is an ordering principle that organises the environment according to the most important being the most obvious, meaning that a higher tower represents higher power (Huriot, 2015).

The famous Hillbrow tower that still dominates the skyline of Johannesburg was built in 1968 and was initially named after former President J. G. Strijdom. The tower stands 270m tall, making it the tallest man-made structure with a lift in Africa. During its heydays, the six storeys at the top of the tower accommodated Africa's highest revolving restaurant, exclusive VIP rooms, lounges and a grill, all luxuriously decorated (Gauteng, 2014). The tower became a representation of the power of capitalism and those who yielded the economic power. Today, the Hillbrow tower still represents the economic power of the capitalistic city of gold and has therefore been incorporated in the city's official logo as a tribute to the tower's symbolic power. This evidently emphasises the power of architectural representation.

The connotation between power and politics of the time is evident when considering that two of Johannesburg's hierarchical important structures, the Hillbrow tower and the Sentech tower, formally known as the President J. G. Strijdom and Albert Hertzog tower, were named after political figures of the time. This also applies to the John Vorster tower in Pretoria that stands 198m tall (Gauteng, 2014).

The tower in the logo

Joburg

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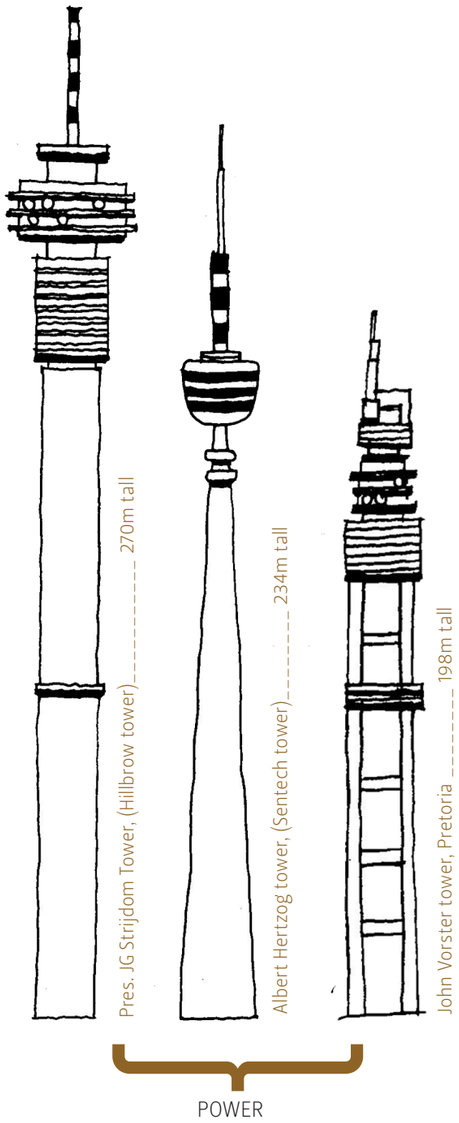
In the article, ***Why Symbols Become Targets,*** Trivedi (2001) explained that the 9/11 attack on the Twin Towers in New York was a symbolic attack on the American ideology of western power and capitalism. This is a powerful example of how political and religious movements wrap their ideology and goals in symbols—crucifix, hammer and sickle, swastika—or buildings or monuments and when these symbols are 'attacked' it evokes strong emotions.

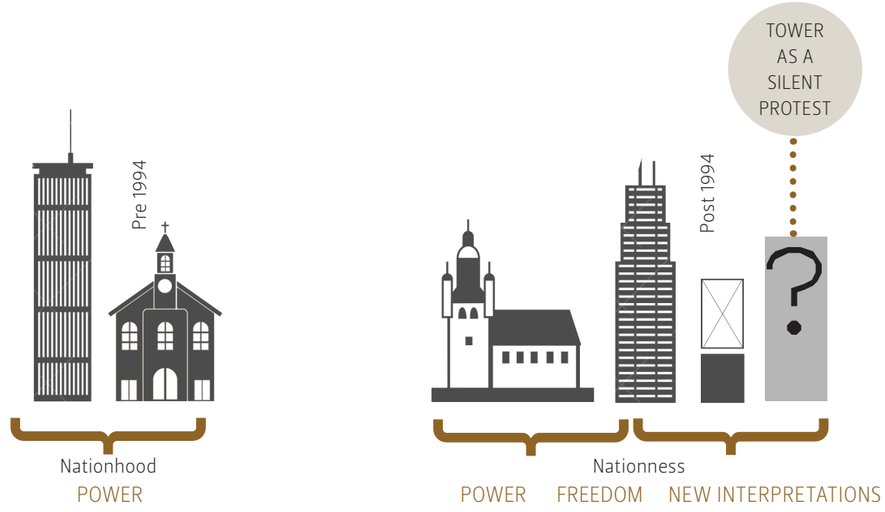
Another significant tower apart from the skyscraper is the church tower. Part of the socio religious practices of the church during the apartheid ideology were the evoking of the governing powers, religious powers and/or society at large. The church tower reaches upwards towards heaven referring to man reaching towards celestial power in the heavens and referring to the strength of religious power on the ground (Huriot, 2015).

The tower as a pure symbol of power and those who yielded it is an example of one of the failures of the modernist mentality. In the article, ***Dialogical Architecture***, Tom Leddy (1994:197) observed that modernists failed to engage with dialogue as they preferred to reject established traditions and rather enforced their own vision on an ignorant and unresponsive audience. They rejected dialogue with the past and attempted to produce a tradition of the new (Leddy, 1994:198). This attempt ultimately failed, especially in South Africa due to the single metaphor sign which only took a small portion of the population into consideration.



Exploring the representation of the hybrid symbol

It was the end of apartheid in 1994 that brought an end to the single sign metaphors and opened up the hybrid process of inscription, reinterpretation and negotiation of the already existing architectural language of the apartheid city. The tower typology was stripped from its symbol of power, opening it up to new hybrid interpretations. This process can be described as the moment where signs are deprived from their subjectivity of nationhood and find themselves in a dimension of inter-subjectivity. This opens up the rediscovery of the world of truth which leads to the reordering and elaboration of symbols in the social sphere. It is as if man's reinterpretation of his being in the world at a specific moment leads to new hybrid agencies and articulations (Bhabha, 1990:191). This relates to Derrida's (1994:194) idea that the relation between the ***signifier, signified*** and referent are organic and dynamic rather than Saussure's notion that the relation between the ***signifier*** and the ***signified*** is based on an arbitrary random formation (Leddy, 1994:194).



The semiotics of the tower typology

It is this organic and dynamic relation between the signifier and the signified that Bhabha argues as the hybrid sign, as it contributes to an ambivalent relationship between the pedagogical and performative. Bhabha (1990:176) explained that," [T]he ideological sign is always multi-accentual, and Janus-faced – that is, it can be discursively rearticulated to construct new meanings, connect with different social practices, and position social subjects differently..."

The end of apartheid created the opportunity for hybridity. Public spaces became the first spaces to represent the notion of hybridity. In the article ***Architecture, Hybridity, and Post-Apartheid Design,*** Jonathon Noble (2015:1) noted that post-apartheid public architecture in South Africa appropriates Western architecture so that there is no distinction between black or white contribution, and dismisses Western architecture completely to develop a completely new approach or to hybridise Western architecture by means of Africanising it. By Africanising it, the architecture adapts to local needs and objectives (Noble, 2015:4). This concept of Africanising leads to the inclusion of 'unconventional' elements like materials, spatial types or symbolic elements within the existing architectural language (Noble 2015:1). The Constitutional Court becomes a good example of a hybrid that came into being after 1994.



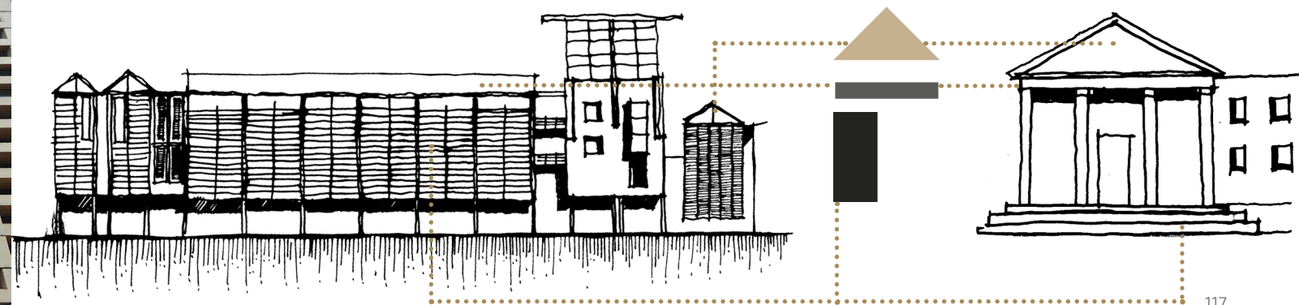


Constitutional Hill as a hybrid

Constitutional Hill is an example of how one of South Africa's symbols of oppression and white domination have been hybridised and transformed into a symbol of democracy and freedom. The Constitutional Court becomes a multi-faceted symbol. Firstly, the Court itself as a building; secondly, the Court with its pieces of art interwoven into the built fabric. The symbiosis of these two facets creates an experiential journey which is deeply rooted in the site's past, present and future. Both the pedagogical and the performative aspects are considered for the architectural language of the court.

A pedagogical element like the proportionality of the exterior reminds one of the typological court and represents the historical knowledge inscribed in the new hybrid architectural language (Deckler, 2006:19). The bricks from the demolished Awaiting Trial blocks were used for the construction of the inner walls of the South African Constitutional Court as a reference to the oppressed past. The layering of historical and contemporary is achieved through the contrast between the old material and the modern open architecture of the building and contributes to a sense of ambivalence and hybridity. Although the building takes from the original court typology, it contradicts the closed-off nature of the over-beaucratic, stuffy court typology by creating a light transparent and open interior space. The architectural language opens up the possibility for prodigious interpretations as it addresses numerous themes, like justice under a tree, freedom and diversity.

The recognisable typologies reinterpreted in the design of Constitutional Court



The layering of historical and contemporary architecture contributes to the hybrid quality of Constitutional Hil



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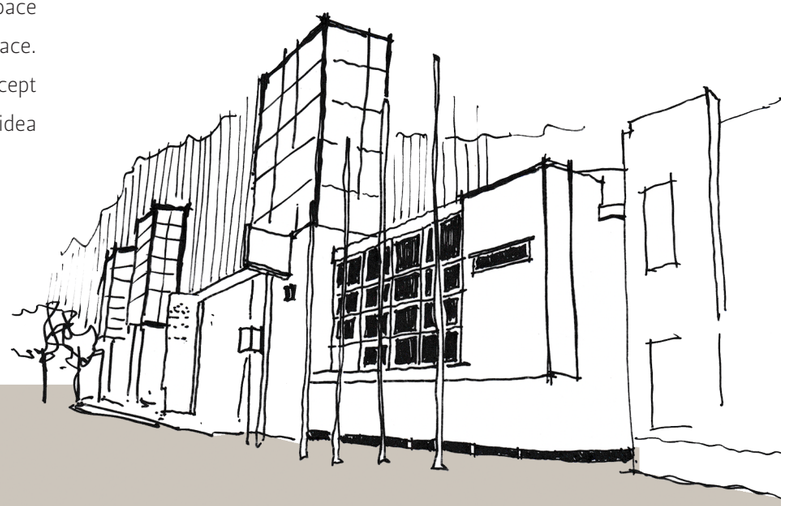
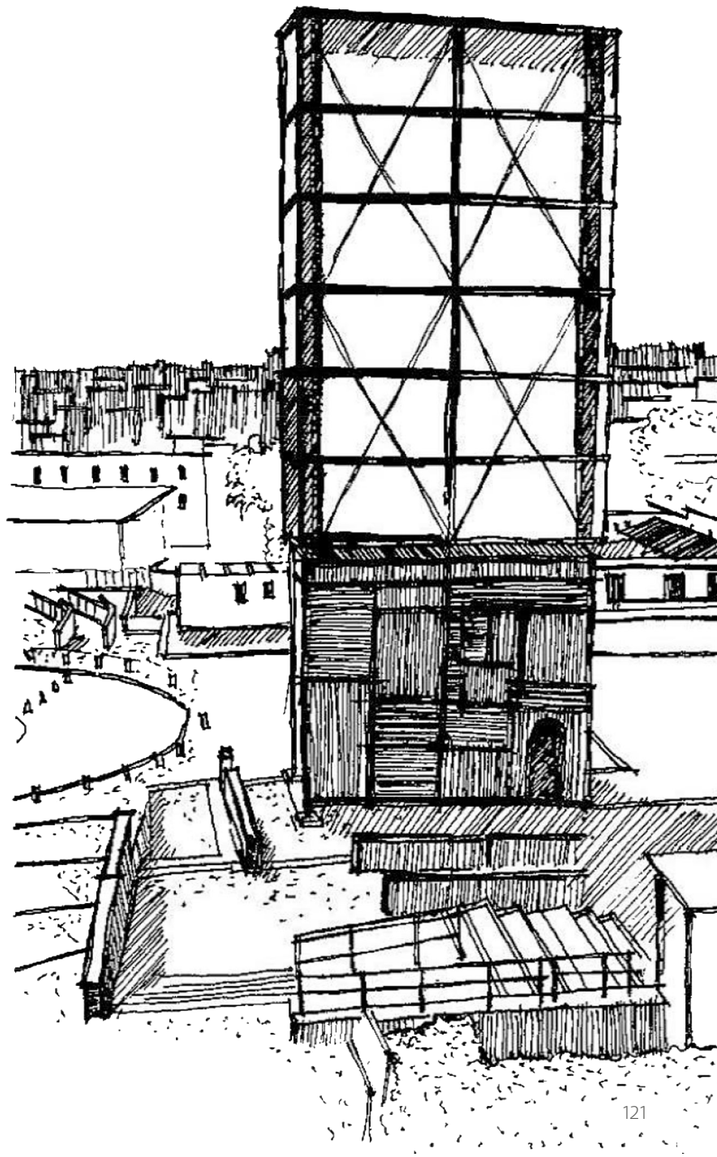
Towers of freedom

The tower is also reinterpreted as a hybrid symbol at Constitutional Hill through a process of layering. The existing Awaiting Trial blocks, which were symbols of oppression of the political prisoners during the apartheids era are extrapolated into light steel and glass towers. These light steel glass towers represents the freedom for all that are associated with the constitutional law and democracy. Yet, the stereotomic Awaiting Trail blocks at the bottom reminds one of the fight of the political prisoners. The hybrid sign of the towers becomes a poignant remembrance and reflection of just how far South Africa has come in its journey of democracy and freedom.

Bhabha called this enunciated space occupied by the hybrid, third space. Third space as an architectural concept can relate to Norberg-Schulz's idea that threshold is a space that simultaneously unites the inside and the outside (Olivier,2012:21). Third spaces plays a significant role in the process of uniting the people from different cultures to stimulate new dialogue. The Constitutional Court can be regarded as a third space. In the words of Homi Bhabha, "The changed political and historical site of enunciation transforms the meaning of the colonial inheritance into the liberatory signs of free people of the future" (Bhabha, 1994:38). This is evident with the reinterpretation of the tower as a symbol of power to a symbol of freedom.



Even two decades after liberation, the tower as a symbol of freedom still seems applicable and an objective that our constitution and society should strive to uphold. However, in recent times the freedom of expression of journalists has been threatened by mainly the controversial Secrecy Bill that has been passed by Parliament. The process of hybridity calls on a process of constant ambivalence and evaluation. Bhabha (1994:112-114) explained that hybridisation introduces the 'other denied knowledge' and by doing so, establishes the outside within. By introducing the 'denied knowledge' of the threat of freedom of expression within the direct context of one of South Africa's strongest beacons of hope, the proposed dissertation attempts to emphasise our shared objective for freedom, by means of creating a 'hybrid watchdog' for freedom of expression at Constitutional Hill.



Reinterpreting the tower typology through deconstructivism

The process of asserting a new meaning to a tower to create a hybrid sign that represents the threat of freedom, and can be considered through a process of deconstruction. Derrida (1998:319) explained that deconstruction in philosophy aims to reveal the paradoxes and value inherited in 'the other' and that there are always conflicting ideas or representations of meaning inherited in any sign and therefore it is never possible to support one essence or meaning in a definite way.

Plato's argument that is based on the Socratic idea that things should have their own proper and permanent essence refers to the notion of modernism that only one universal concept should be signified by the signifier (Leddy, 1994:184). Derrida is doubtful about this notion that there are eternal, unchanging essences. Derrida (1998:320) explained that an essence or essences are partly created and partly discovered. They exist as potentials that should be creatively realised in the world experienced by us. He argued that essences are dependent on language or better yet, the langue, and they must form part of the context of dialectical processes in culture and civilization.

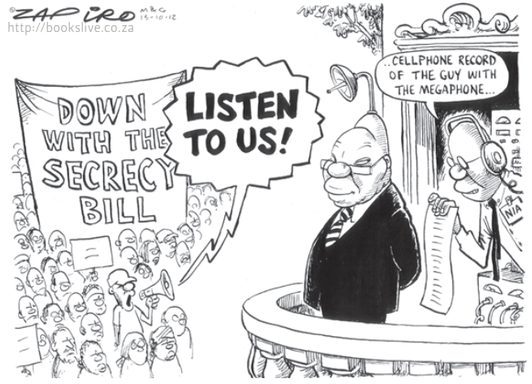




The phenomenon of collective representations
Today freedom of expression in South Africa is most likely to be associated with the threat of the secrecy bill as illustrated by the comic artist Zapiro

Deconstructing the term freedom of expression

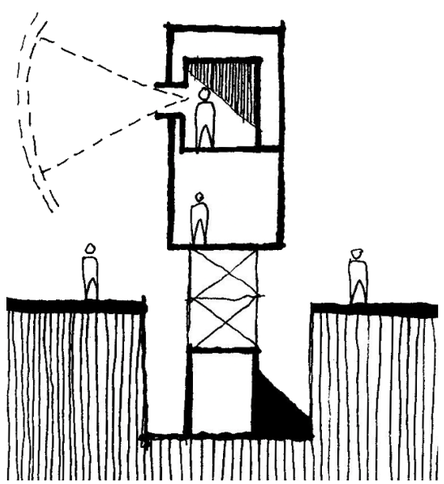
As previously mentioned, langue refers to the social aspect of a language and parole the precise utterances of the words. The Bakhtin School rejected this notion of language as they argue that all instances of language should be considered within a social context and that language cannot merely be dissociated from the social life of the time (Selden et al, 2005:146). When asking a person in 1994 for the meaning of freedom of expression, their answer would be very different from the answer they would provide answer today. In 1994 freedom of expression was most probably associated with the privilege to speak, listen or read any preferred language or information.



Today however, freedom of expression is more likely to be associated with the threat that the Secrecy Bill imposes on journalism. Although the physical words, freedom of expression stayed exactly the same, the social context changed the meaning.

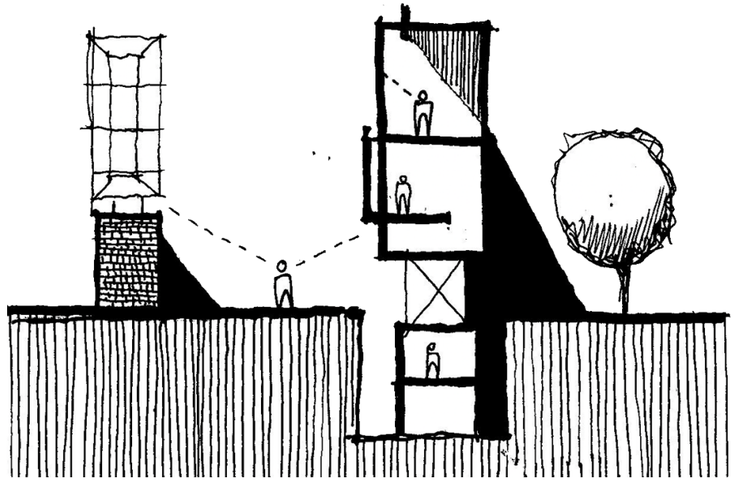
This phenomenon can be described as collective representations and is defined by Durkheim as common ways of conceiving, thinking and evaluating social realities (Höijer, 2011:3). By objectifying our collective or social representations, like the threat of the Secrecy Bill on our freedom, through an architectural intervention, it makes the unknown known and becomes a concrete element which society is able to perceive and have a bodily experience (Höijer, 2011:3). By objectifying the concern of the secrecy bill within the direct context the conceived becomes the perceived and is a constant physical reminder of the threat. A complex and abstract phenomena is therefore materialised into familiar frames of reference, for instance, tectonic materials represent lightness and freedom versus stereotomic solid materials that represent confinement (Höijer, 2011:13).

The sketches explore how the proposed building can objectify the concerns raised by the Secrecy Bill into architecture.



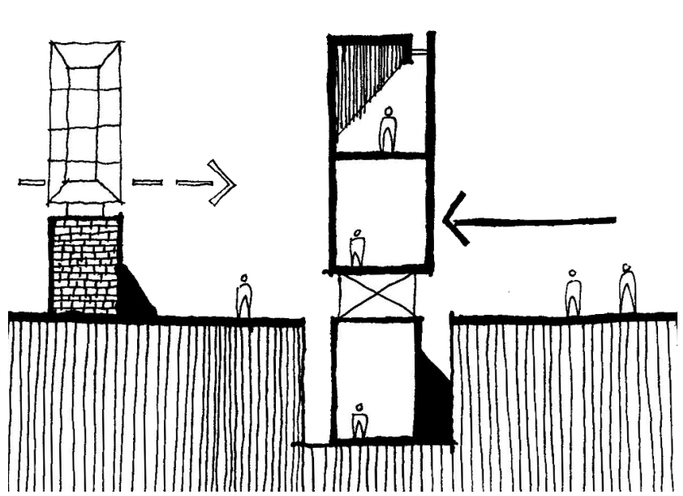
By framing the view to the freedom towers it becomes a constant reminder of the objective of fighting for freedom of expression

1



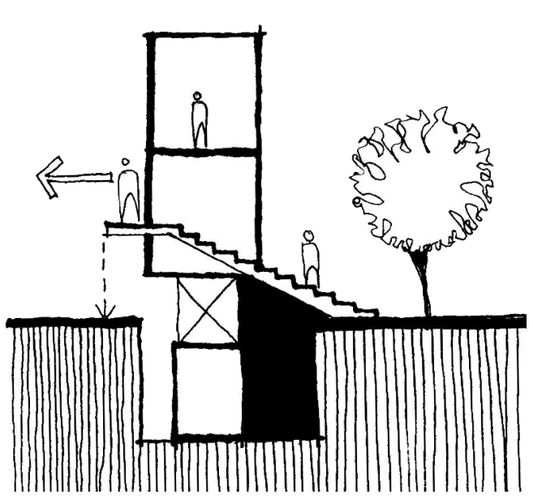
One can physically experience the relation between freedom and oppression

2



The solid mass of the proposed tower obstruct the view to the freedom tower, similar in the way the secrecy bill prevents one to see the truth

3



By objectifying the motion of moving towards the freedom (the freedom towers), it symbolises the goal of the institution

4

Deconstructing the tower

As the conceptual approach of deconstructing the tower suggests, it is the process of metaphorically dissembling the physical and conceptual elements that the tower of freedom is made up from, to gain an understanding of the essence and the meaning of the elements. Derrida (1998:319) stressed the point that deconstruction in architecture is not merely a form of reverse construction but rather an investigation which 'touches the technique itself upon the authority of the architectural metaphor and thereby constitutes its own architectural rhetoric'. It is through the process of deconstruction and re-presentation of the elements of the tower that they are discursively rearticulated to construct new meanings.

The process of re-presentation is described as a process where we take a familiar 'presentation' or concept that is widely understood and re-interpret or re-present it physically to represent the familiar concept (Harries, 2000:118). Harries (2000:121) explained re-presentation by referring to the Parthenon where he explained that, 'the builders took up, worked and re-presented the marble from Mount Pentelicus'. He explains a representation as something which should resemble what it represents while a symbol may, but does not necessarily need to look like what it symbolises (Harries, 2000:89). Harries (2000:121) noted that re-presentation lets materials communicate. This is evident in the manner in which the light tectonic materials of the towers at Constitutional Hill represent themselves as beacons of freedom.

When deconstructing the tower it is also evident that certain elements therefore lends themselves to be re-presented to inscribe new meaning while others should stay consistent as they are essential to the tower typology. The verticality and the hierarchy of the tower cannot be re-interpreted as these are important elements that constitute the tower typology. It is however the shape, materiality, composition and morphology which opens up the possibility for re-presenting itself to inscribe new meaning into the existing typology. The conceptual approach of architecture as a silent protest developed as an idea of how the proposed towers can represent themselves as elements that can emphasise, contradict and become a commentary on the existing beacons of freedom.

Re-interpreting the concept of a silent protest within the built form,

To re-present elements of protest within the tower typology, it is important to understand the essence of a protest as commonly understood by society. A silent protest is explained as a symbolic act of peaceful opposition or an attempt of persuasion. These types of protest extend beyond verbal expression but do not support violent behaviour (Sharp, 2012).

The following types of non-violent methods of protest can be re-interpreted within the materiality, composition, form and of the tower typology to emphasise, contradict and comment on the existing context.

Sit-ins

A sit-in is a type of protest where people occupy particular facilities by sitting on chairs or available spaces for a certain period of time. The purpose of this may be to establish a new pattern, like opening up certain facilities to previously excluded persons or to protest about a topic that is unrelated with the building (Sharp, 2012). An example of such intervention earlier in 2015 were the protestors at the University of Cape Town who occupied the Administration Building for several weeks as part of a campaign which pushed for the removal of the statue of Cecil John Rhodes.

It is possible for an architectural intervention to display the disruption of normal patterns and to establish new patterns through the architectural ordering principles of hierarchy and pattern. The proposed design uses hierarchy as an ordering principle to create a pattern that is similar to the pattern of the Freedom Towers at Constitutional Hill, by lining them up the project aim to disrupt the view of the Freedom Towers from a specific view point in the objective to emphasise them.

Sit-downs

A sit-down is very similar to a sit-in. It can be described as an act of non-cooperation, where people sit down and refuse to leave voluntarily for a limited or unlimited period of time. This can take place on a street, a floor or any other occupiable surface. It is usually a spontaneous act or a reaction to a particular event. This becomes a symbolic act of resistance (Sharp, 2012).

An example of how the architecture embodies the principle of resistance is by placing the stereotomic heavy structure onto a light tectonic structure to give the idea that the heavy structure is resisting gravity.

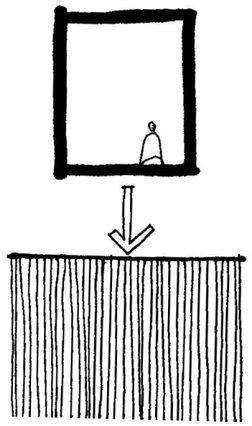
Turning One's Back

A way of presenting silent disapproval effectively is by turning one's back to the opponent, whether sitting or standing. In 1953 factory workers in East Germany protested by showing up for work, but squatted in front of factories with their backs turned to party officials (Sharp, 2012). By layering the protesting towers through the materiality and creating a threshold between the Freedom Towers and the Protest Towers, the architecture aims to embody silent disapproval through this method.

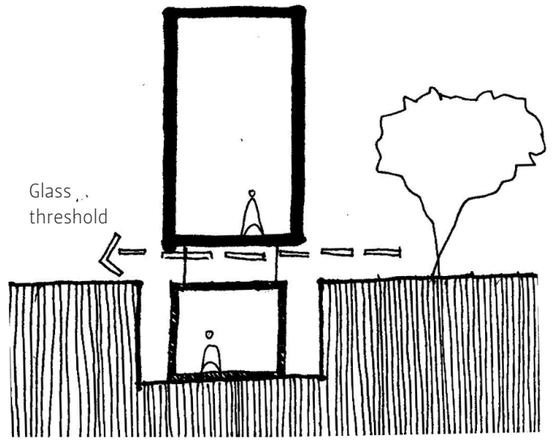
Protest Disrobing

One of the less frequently used methods is the public removal of clothes to express religious disapproval or political protest. In 1969, students undressed during a speech by representatives of Playboy magazine in protest of the magazine's "sensationalism of sex" (Sharp, 2012).

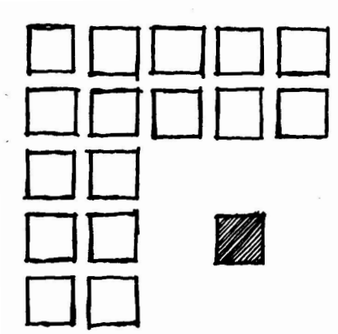
By exposing the structure of the stairs of the tower the architecture represents this method of protest.



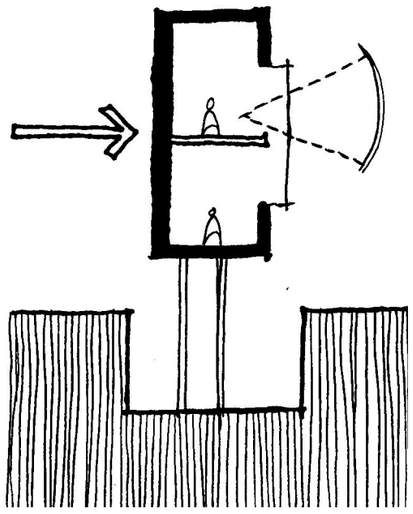
Architecture resisting gravity



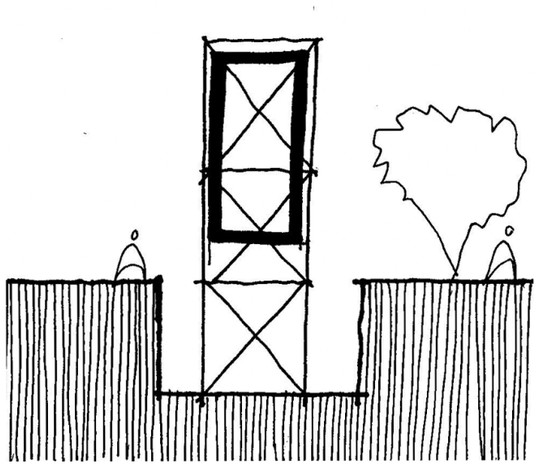
Architecture resisting gravity



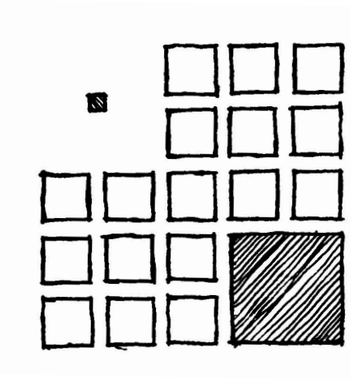
The proposed design uses hierarchy by placement as an ordering principle to create a pattern that is similar to the pattern of the Freedom Towers at Constitutional Hill



Creating a threshold between the freedom towers and the protest towers by using a solid material between them as a representation of turning one's back



Exposing the structure of the building



The tower typology contributes to hierarchy by size which dominates the architectural composition of the surrounding context.

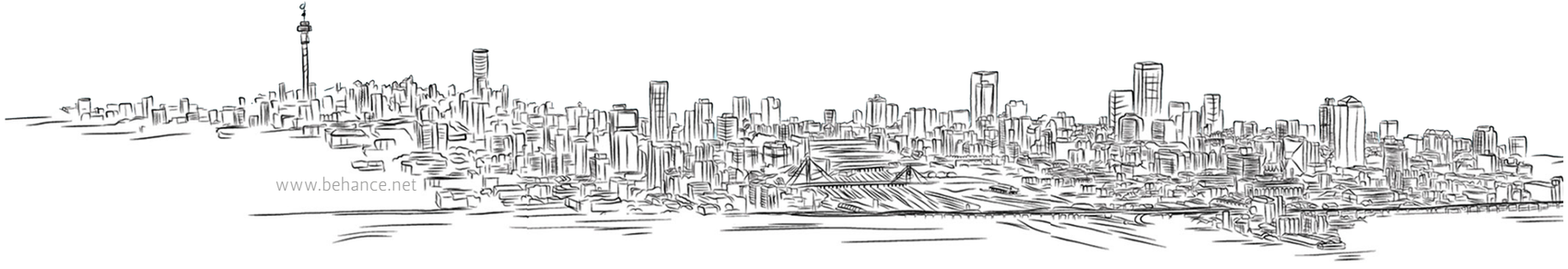
Conclusion

The Marikana Miner's strike in 2012 where 34 people were killed is one of many examples of violent protests in South Africa. Others include the Soweto student uprising against Bantu Education in 1976 where at least 176 were killed by the police. Although some of these protests were successful in terms of resulting in a desirable outcome, most of them are tragedies that emphasised the violation of human rights. By introducing the concept of a nonviolent silent protest into the human right precinct, the project attempts to rethink the role of protest and how it is executed.

The current relation between the signifier (the tower) and the signified (freedom) is not redundant or insignificant. In contrary; it is still an extremely positive and applicable metaphor that we should attempt to preserve in its original sense, by challenging the Secrecy Bill and changing the collective representation for the better.

It is this attempt to preserve freedom (the signified) that necessitates the objectification of the problem through a physical architectural intervention that constantly reminds the journalist, who is challenging the threat, of the importance of freedom of expression. By introducing the concept of silent protest through the process of discursively rearticulating and re-interpreting the elements that form the tower, the symbol becomes, as Bhabha explained, multi-accentual and Janus-faced, layering this historical and contemporary landmark with more meaning.

The paper therefore argues that an analogy between language and architecture exists and through understanding the semiotics of architecture it is possible for architecture to become a symbolic objectification of an abstract idea.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Design Methodology :

The sources of knowledge that have been investigated in part 2, formed a comprehensive understanding of how to approach the problems identified in terms of typology, topology, morphology and tectonics. The design methodology explores how these understandings can be translated into architectural solutions. Throughout the investigation the following main approaches were identified :

Representation and signification,

Representation and signification serves as a process of re-presentation where a familiar concept that is widely understood are re-interpret or re-present physically to signify the concept. The proposed towers aim to re-present the principles of a silent protest into an architectural language that signifies a protest against the secrecy bill.

Layering and transparency,

Layering and transparency serves as a response to the context, as these principles have been applied in the design of Constitutional Court. The proposed towers aim to reinterpret the idea of layering in a contextual manner by horizontally layering their materiality to contradict the idea of the vertical layering of the freedom towers.

The Constitutional Court uses glass facades to create a transparent threshold between the exterior and interior. This influenced the idea of rethinking transparency by breaking open and puncturing solid impenetrable materials and plains to create a transparent layer in the proposed project.

Thresholds and boundary,

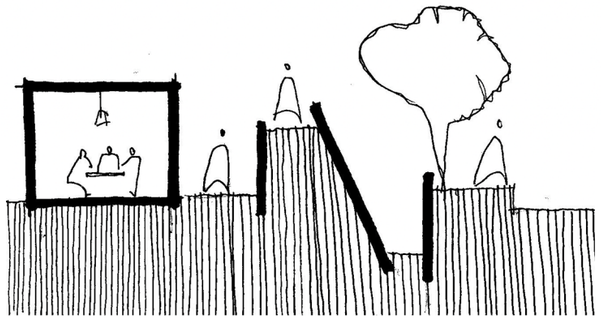
The interpretation of principles of thresholds and boundaries serves as a response to the urban quality of the inner city of Johannesburg. The proposed building should construe ideas regarding thresholds and boundaries in a creative manner to soften the transition between interior and exterior, as well as public and private spaces with the objective to create safe spaces for journalist whilst having public accessible spaces.

The urban Forum,

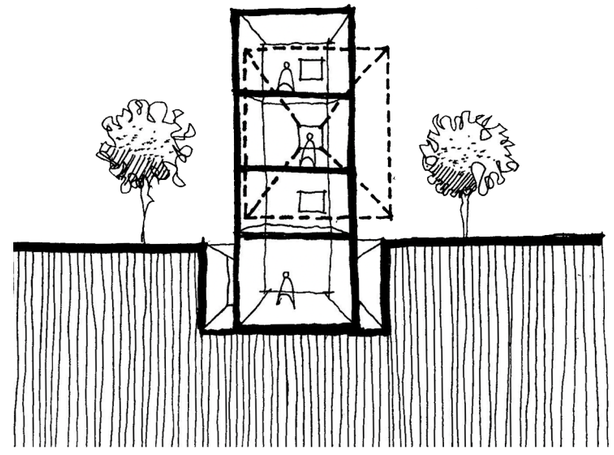
Reinterpreting the principles of an ancient forum serves as a response to rethink open public space as a space that contributes to free conversation.

Borrowed landscape,

Borrowed landscape is the Japanese principle of incorporating background landscape into the composition of the building. By interpreting this principle through the placement of the towers and the framing of views to the freedom towers, the project aspires to emphasise the importance of freedom that is symbolised by Constitutional Hill.



Thresholds and boundary



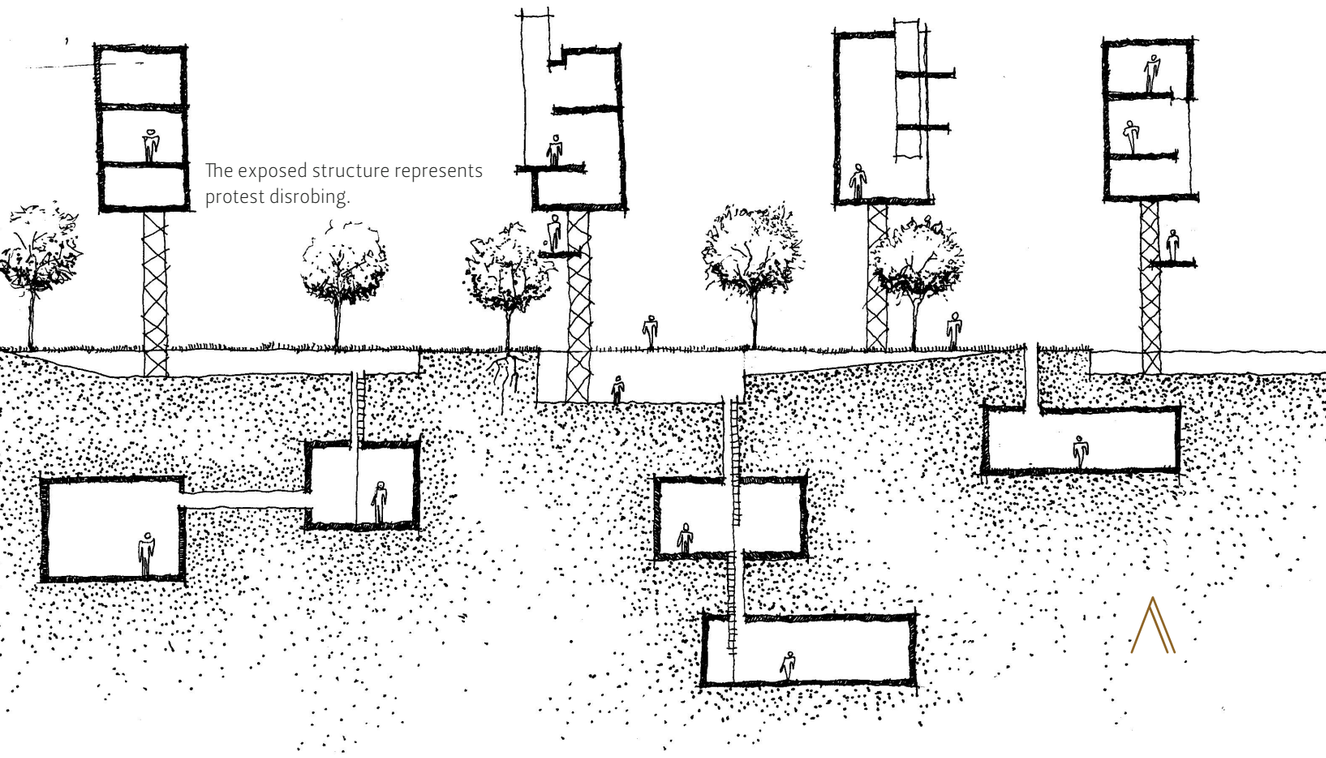
Borrowed landscape

PART 3 Design and technical synthesis

This chapter explores how the comprehensive understanding of the typology, morphology, typology and the tectonics in part 2 can materialize into an integrated architectural design solution. The chapter elaborates how the ideas and approaches regarding representation and signification, threshold, layering and transparency, the urban forum as well as borrowed landscape have influenced and shaped the proposed building as a silent protest. The document explains the design and technical development simultaneously as they influenced one another throughout the process.

The design development took place in 5 different phases, where each phase explored a different component of the design and inevitably developed into 3 design proposals that are discussed. The final design can be considered as proposal 4. Part 3 elaborates on these different phases to form an understanding how the project developed from the initial concepts and ideas to the proposed building. Each phase is explained through the most influential components, may it be models, plans, section etc.



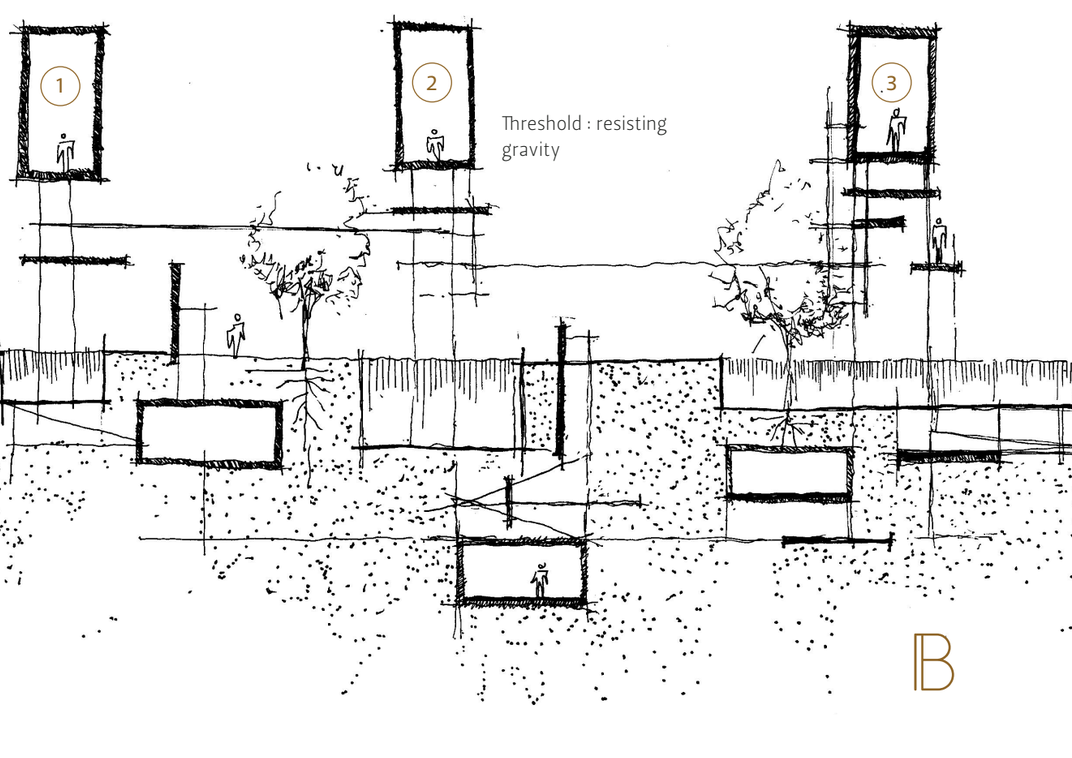


Phase 1 :

The initial design drawings and ideas

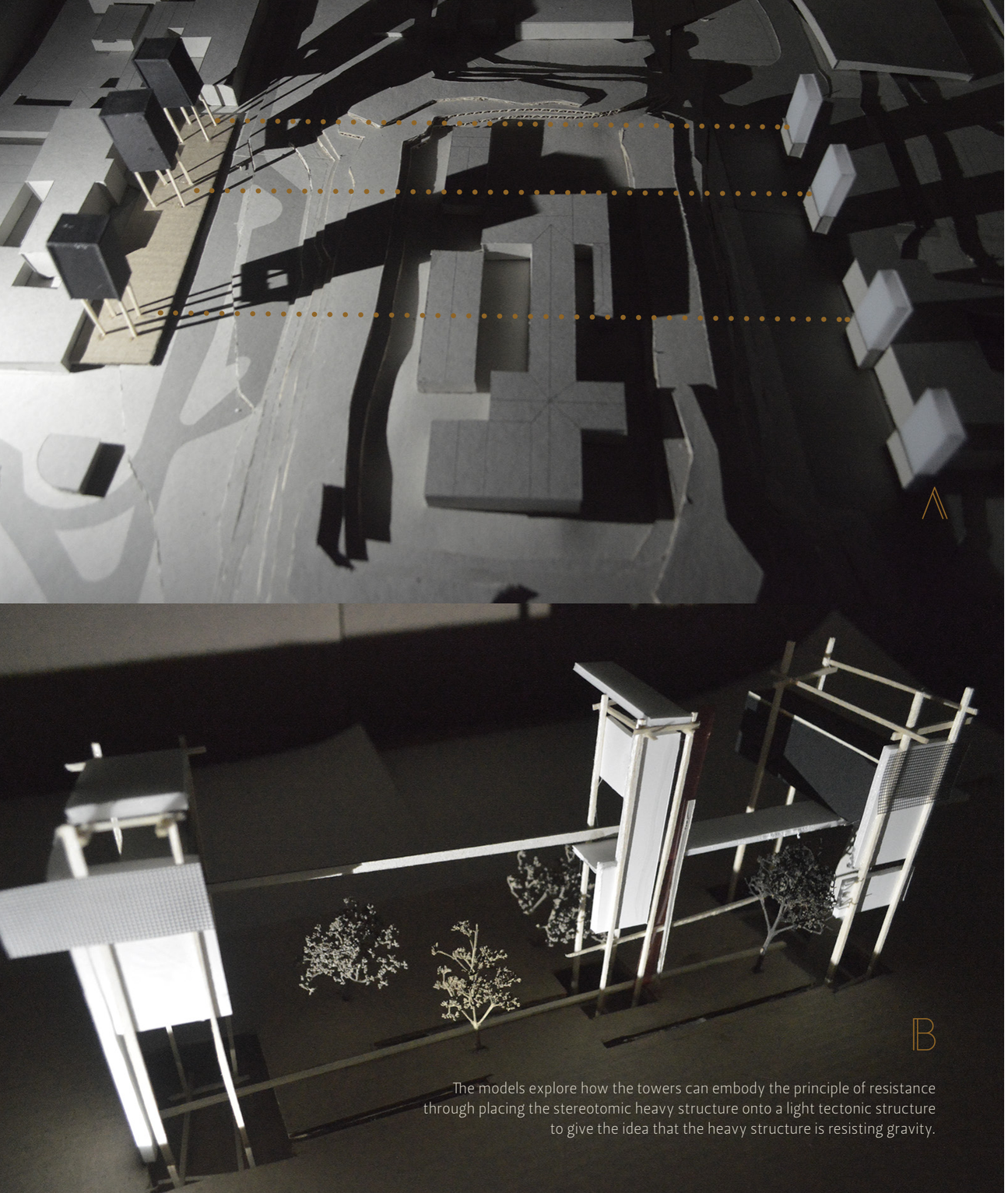
The first design drawings and models developed from the conceptual idea of architecture as a silent protest and explore how architecture can re-present the principles of protest in the most simplistic manner to form a basic approach for the proposed design.

Proposal A explores the very basic conceptual approach.



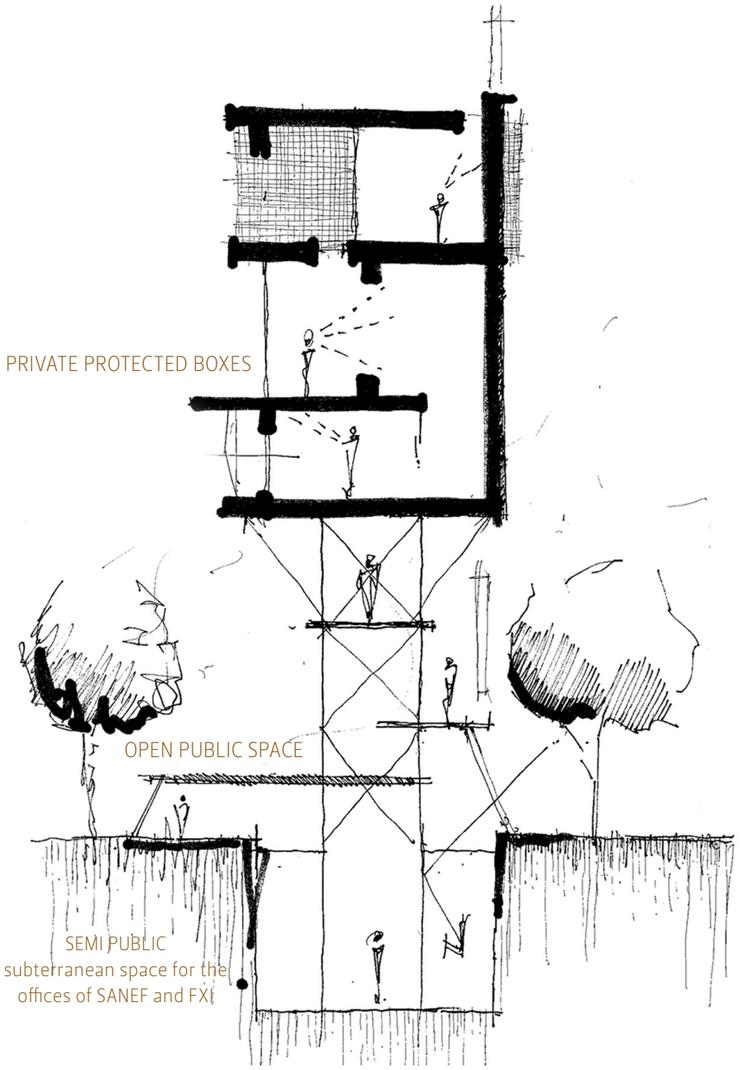
Proposal B explores how the very basic conceptual ideas of protest towers can start taking form into architecture through structure, composition and materiality.

It was in this initial conceptual stage that the position of the three towers was established. The proposed design uses hierarchy as an ordering principle to create a pattern that is similar to the pattern of the Freedom Towers at Constitutional Hill, by lining them up the project aim to disrupt the view of the Freedom Towers from a specific view point in the objective to emphasise them.



B

The models explore how the towers can embody the principle of resistance through placing the stereotomic heavy structure onto a light tectonic structure to give the idea that the heavy structure is resisting gravity.



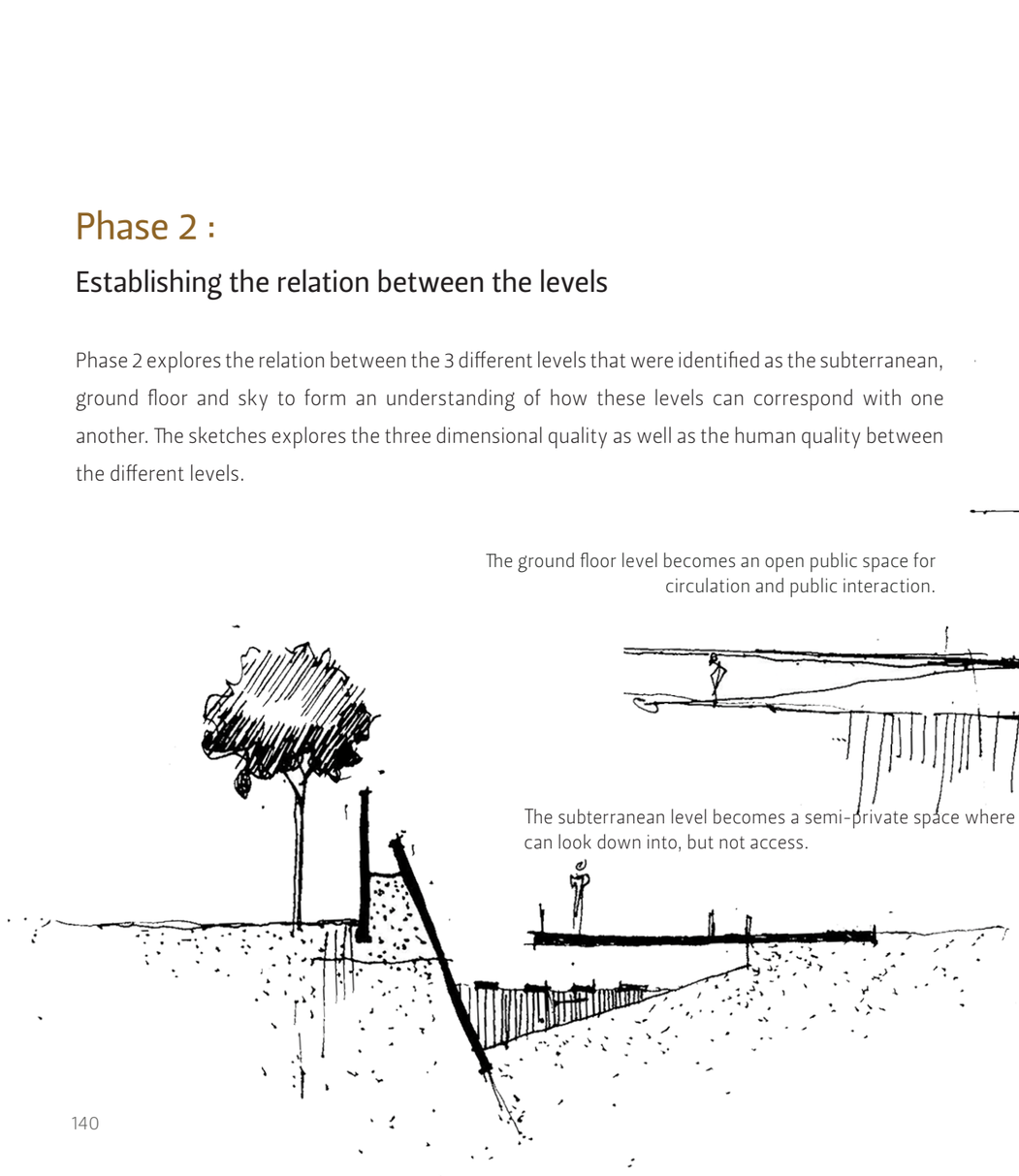
The sketches and models explores how the structure of the building can become a protest against familiar architectural practices. On the ground floor, the structure contradicts the idea of a ‘grounded’ solid structure by using a light tectonic structure. The stereotomic elements are placed on top of the tectonic element against the sky as a protest against gravity. By building into the earth, removing the supportive ground on which we stride on, the building contradicts normality.

This lead to the development of the building on three levels, subterranean for the functions, ground floor as an open public space and towers, as protected ‘boxes’ in the sky.

Phase 2 :

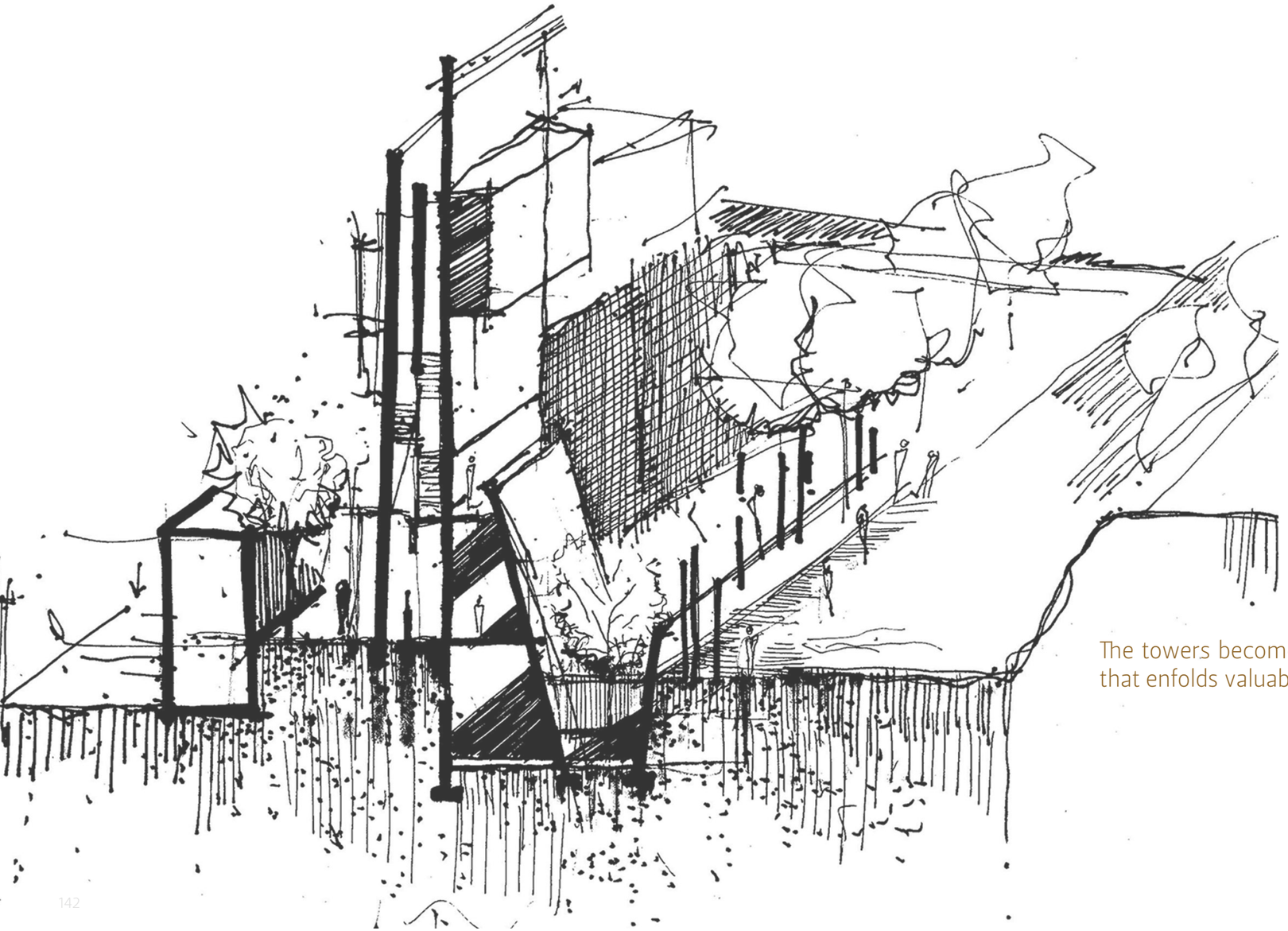
Establishing the relation between the levels

Phase 2 explores the relation between the 3 different levels that were identified as the subterranean, ground floor and sky to form an understanding of how these levels can correspond with one another. The sketches explores the three dimensional quality as well as the human quality between the different levels.

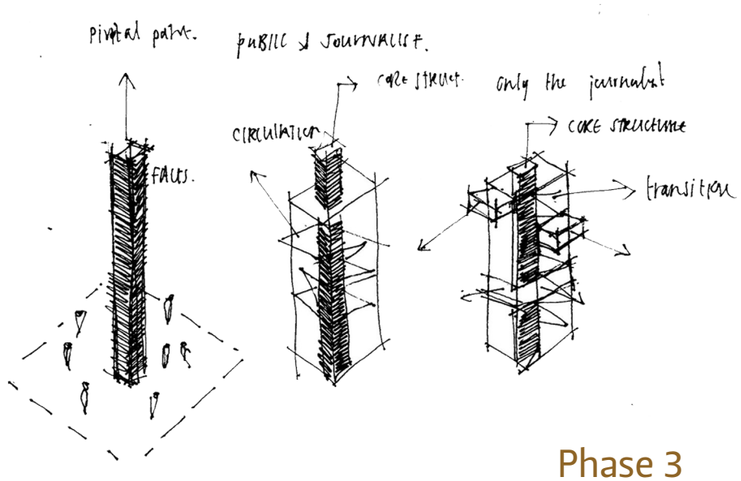


The ground floor level becomes an open public space for circulation and public interaction.

The subterranean level becomes a semi-private space where the pedestrian can look down into, but not access.



The towers become private protected boxes in the sky
that enfolds valuable information



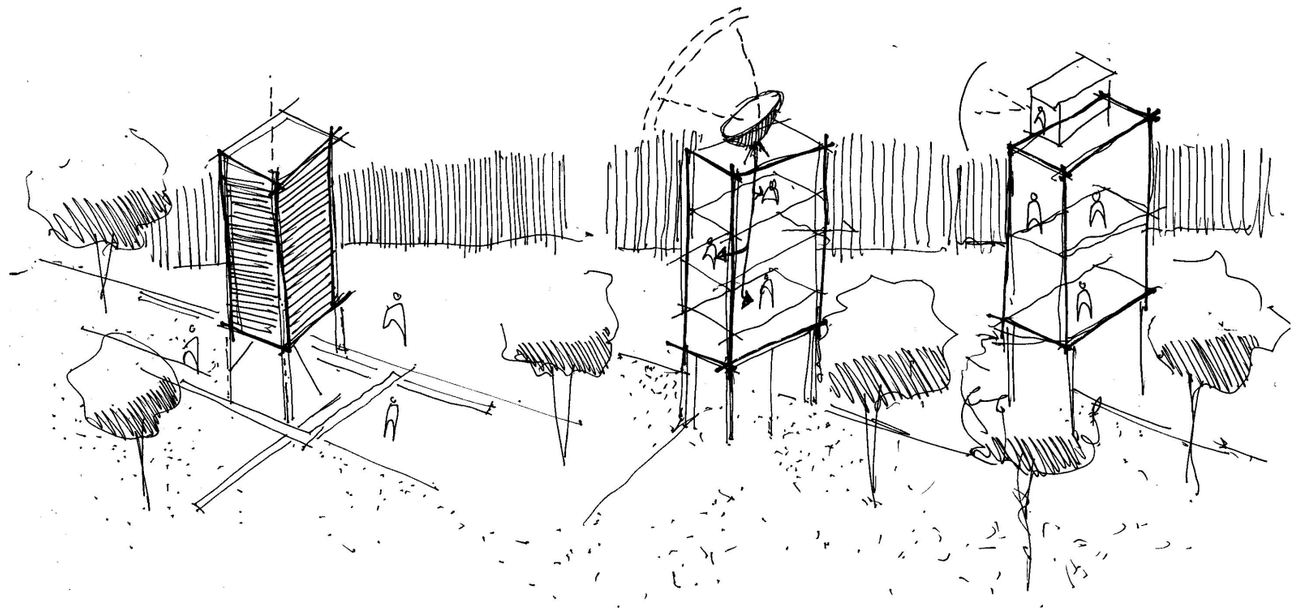
Phase 3

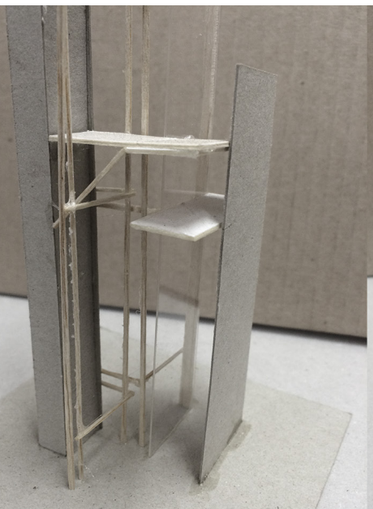
Establishing the functions of the three towers :

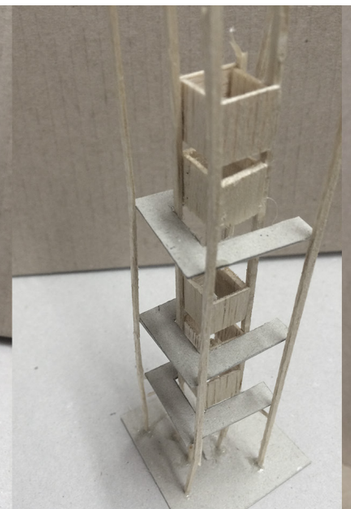
The tower as a beacon to define the public forum

The towers as a container for information (The tower houses an archive for classified information)

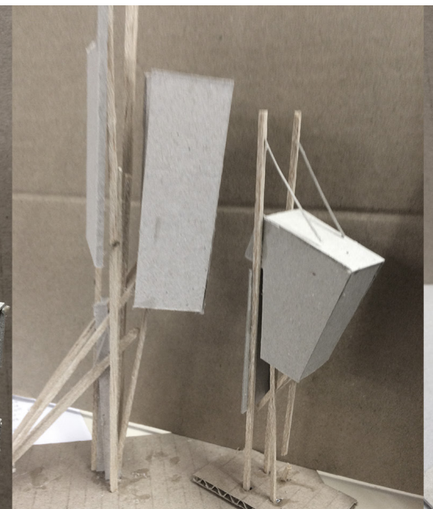
The tower as a safe house for the journalists with writing boxes and a lookout tower

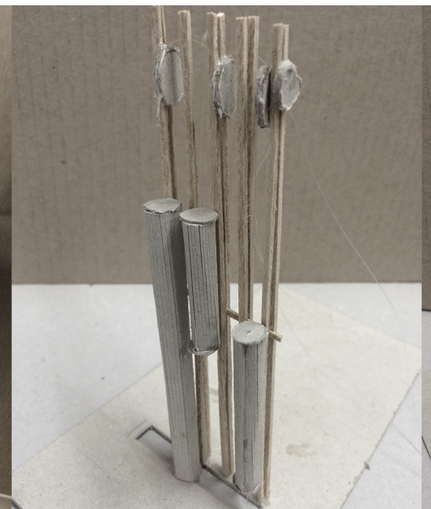


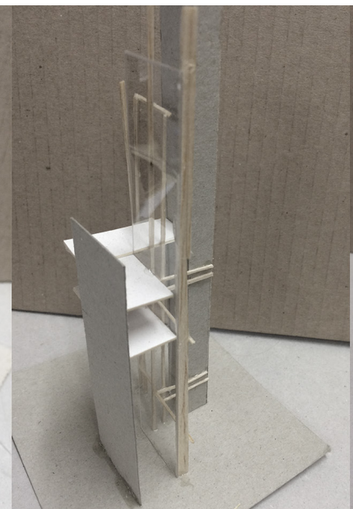


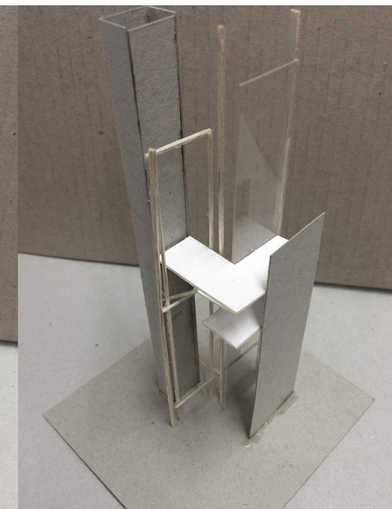


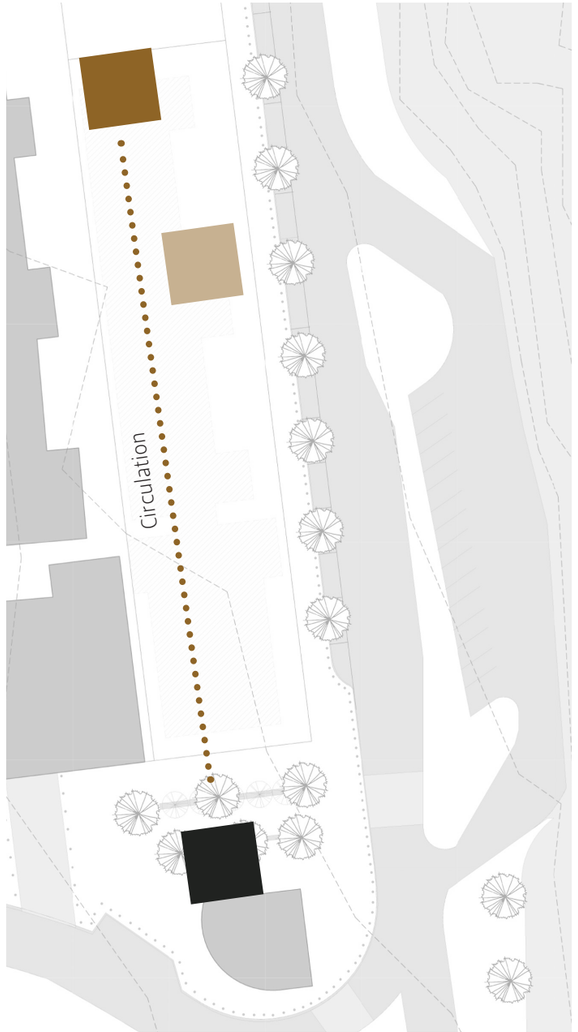


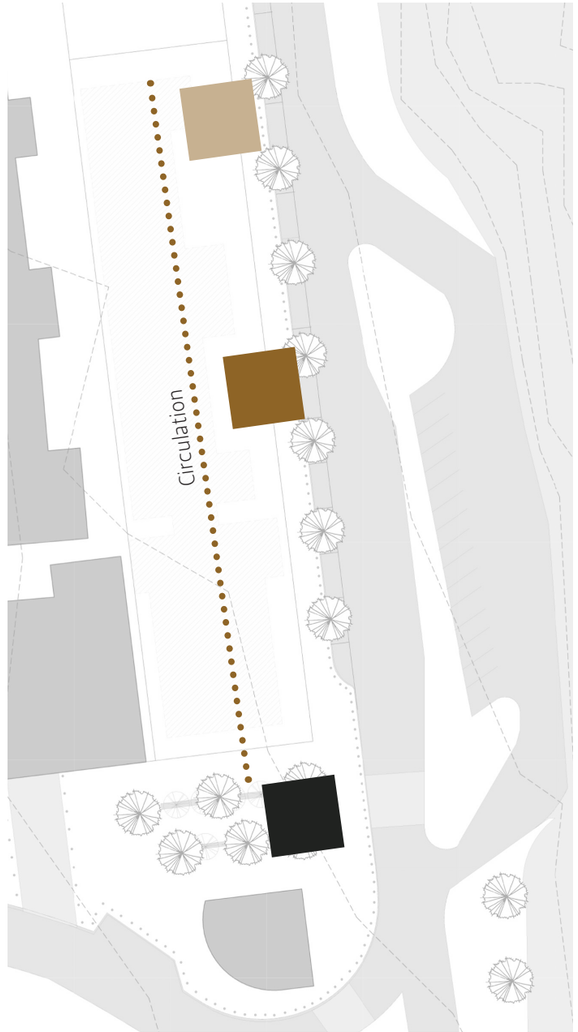


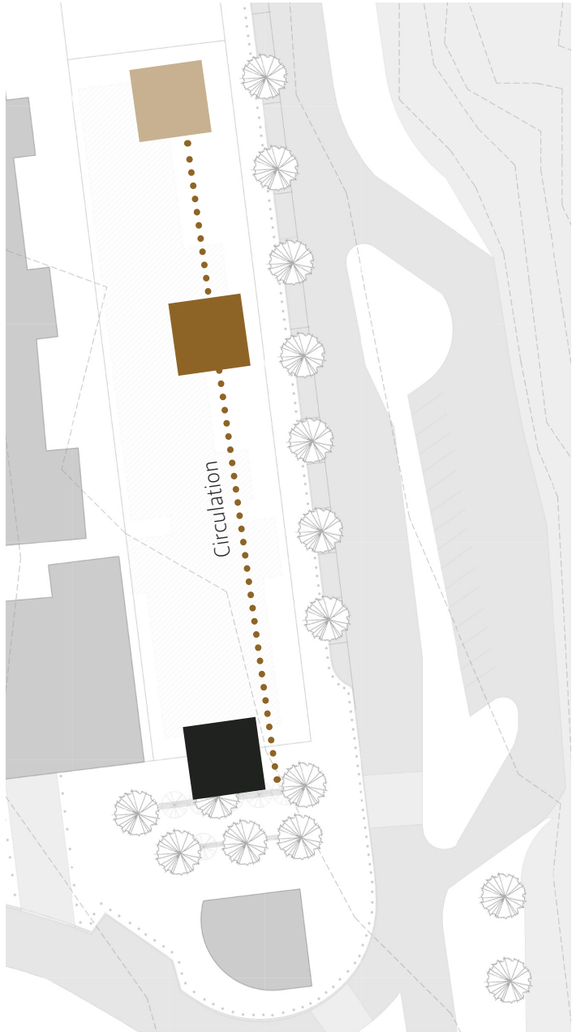


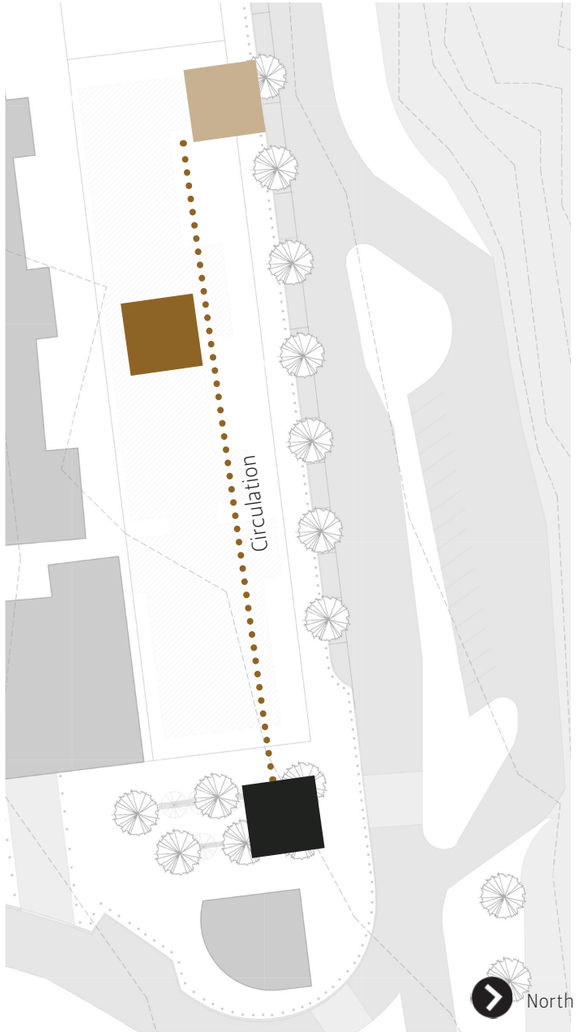












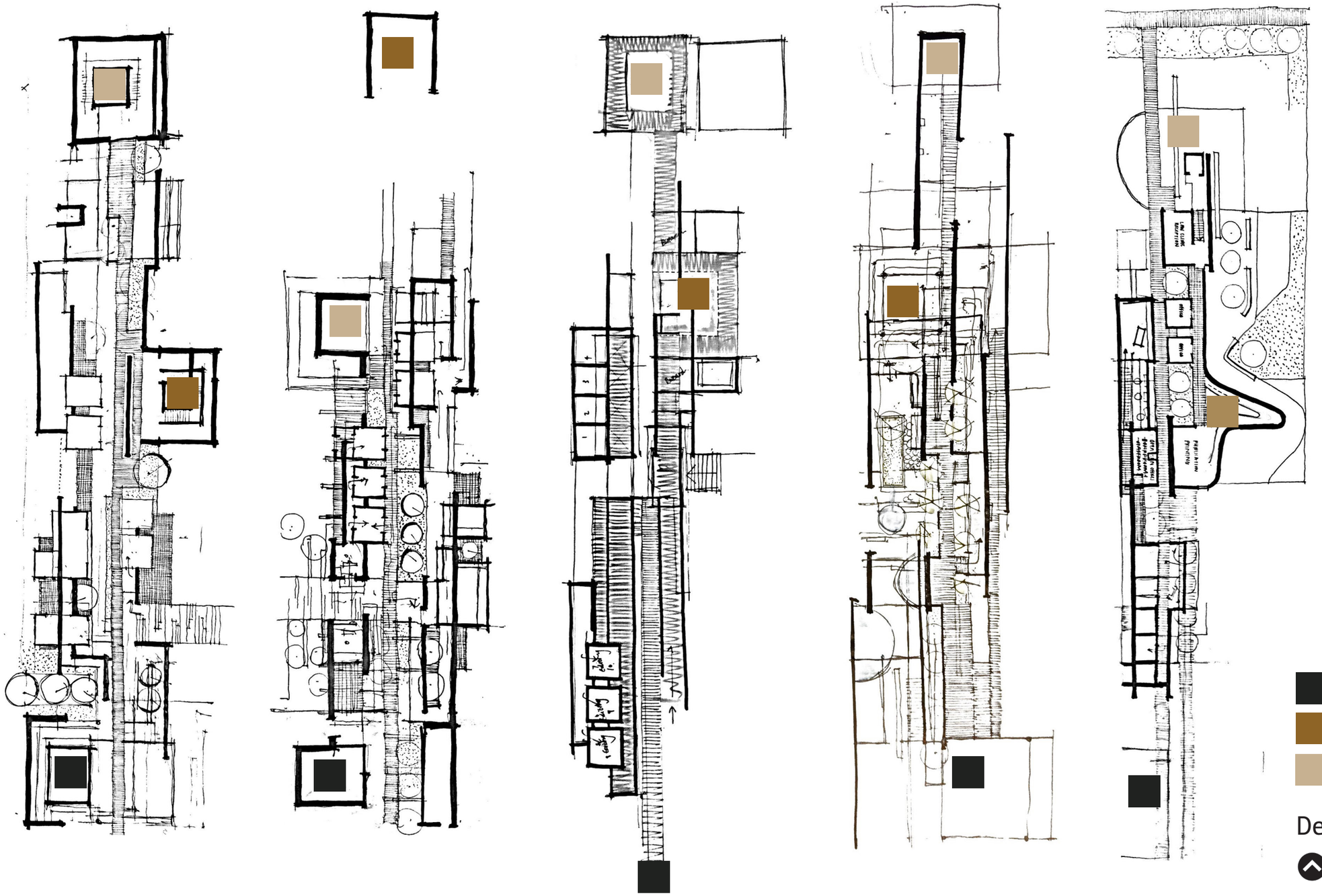
Phase 4_Developing the plan

Exploring the layout of the towers

The tower as a beacon to define the public forum

Archive tower

Journalist tower



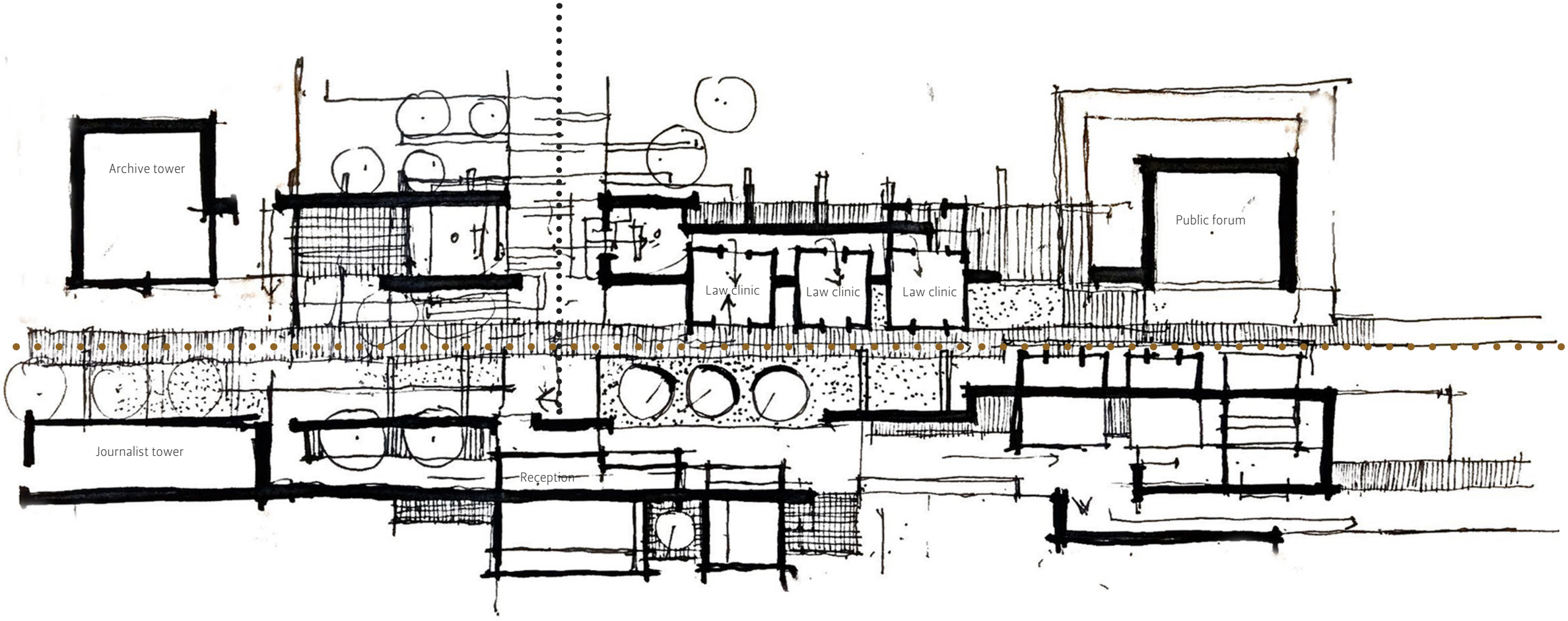
The tower as a beacon to define the public forum

Archive tower

Journalist tower

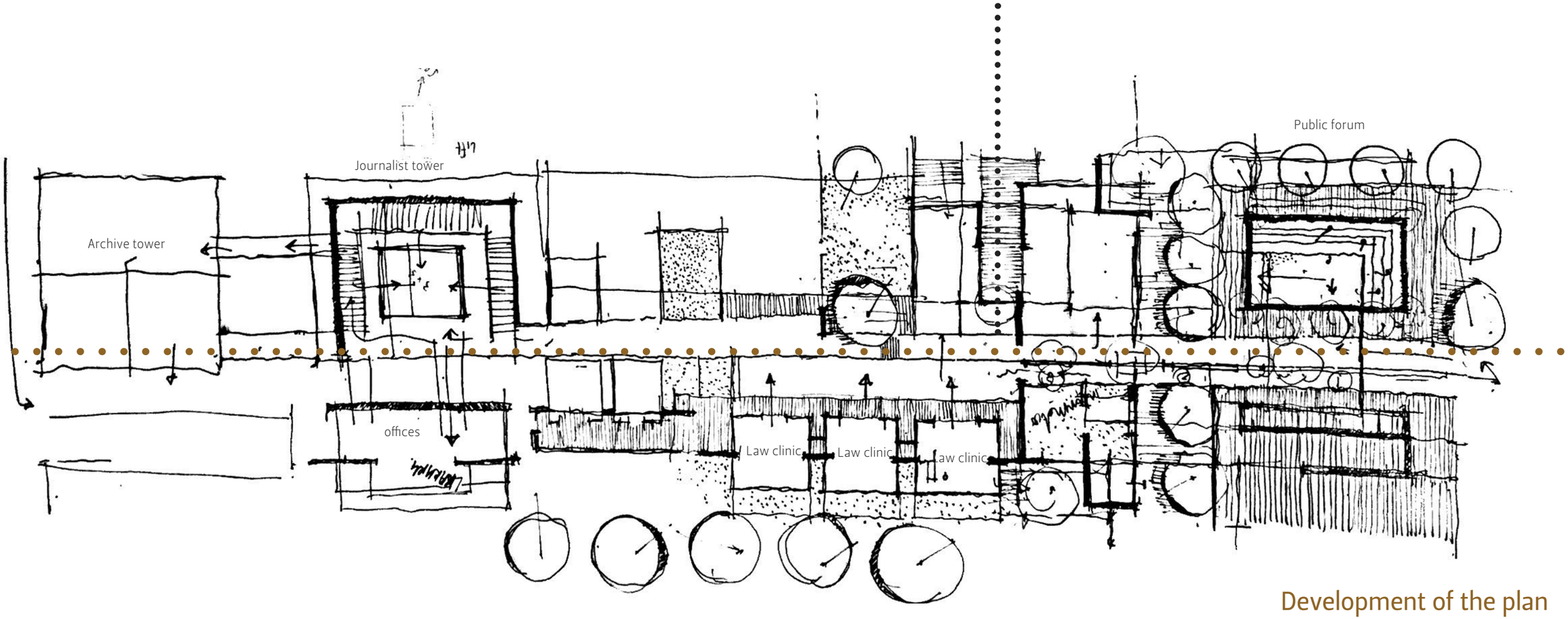
Developing the plan

North



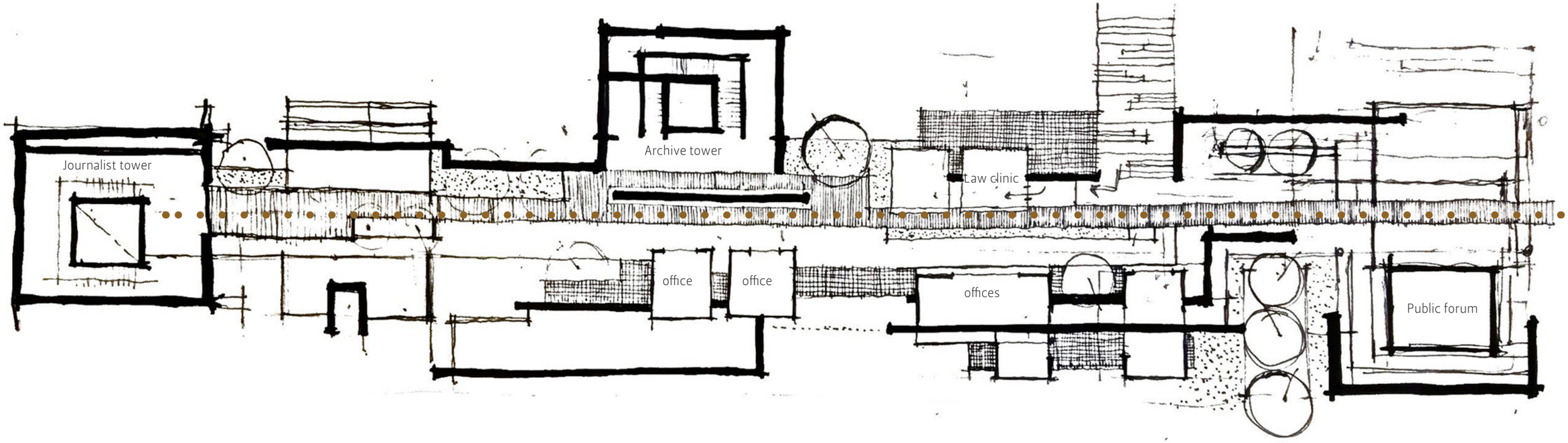
Development of the plan

North



Development of the plan

North



Development of the plan

North



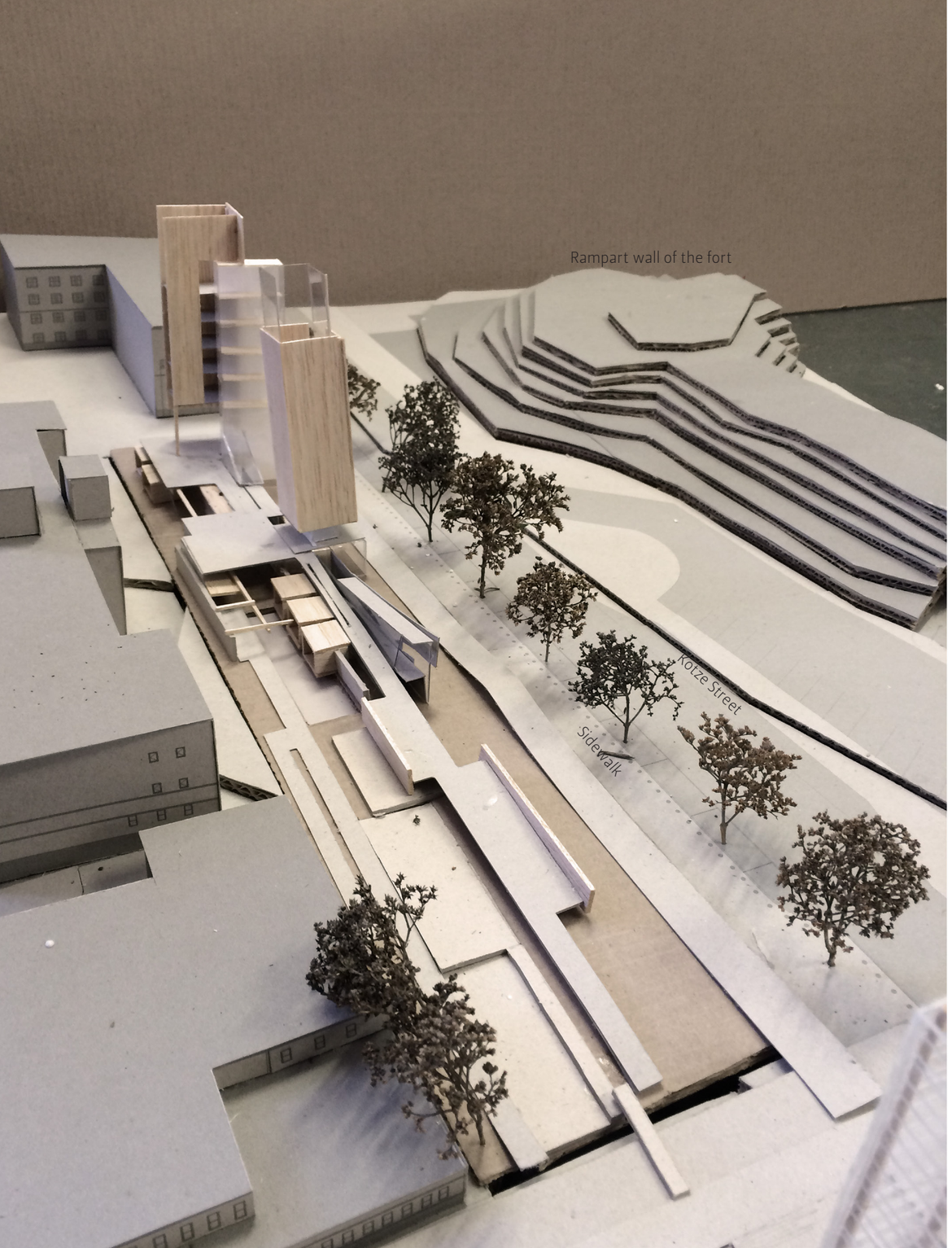
Response to street lacks public interface as it forms a 'solid wall' on the northern elevation

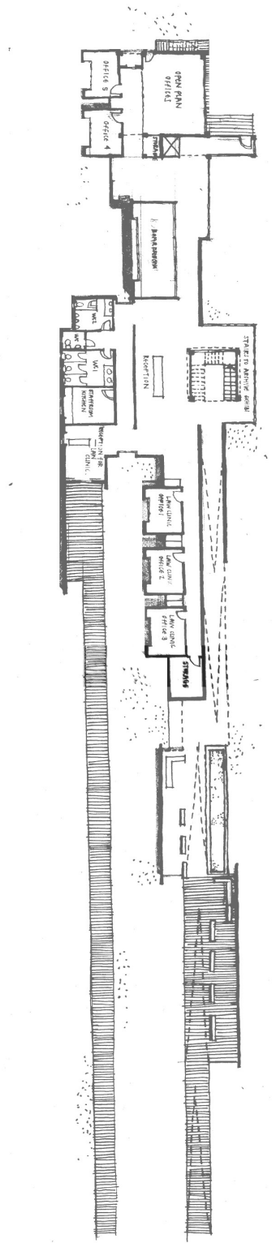


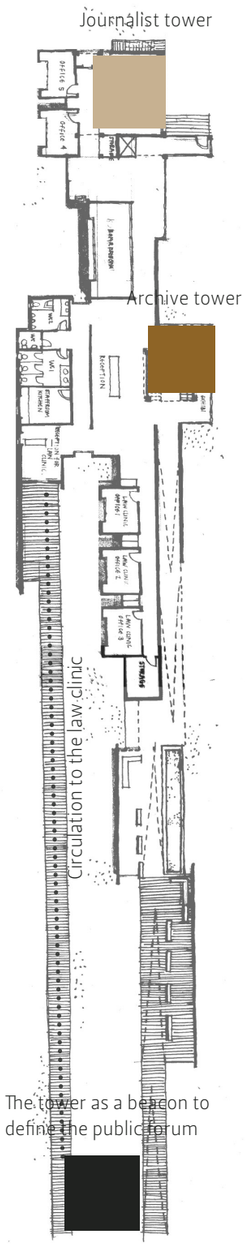
The tower that defines the public forum

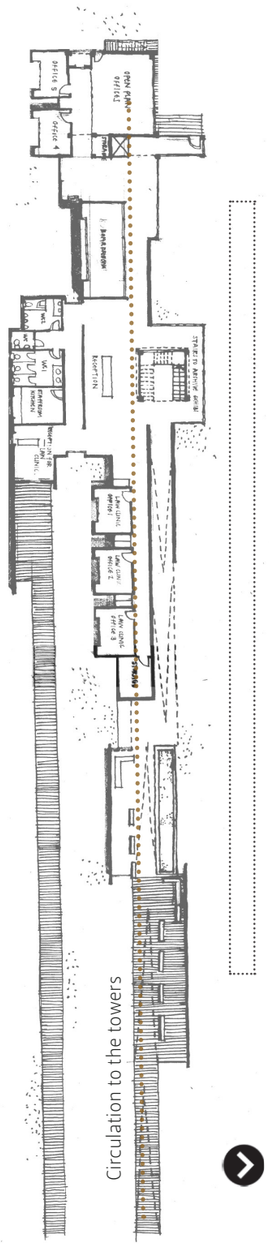
Proposal 1

Proposal 1 mainly focused on the layout of the ground floor plan which forms the base of two of the towers. This specific proposal lacked a public interface between the 'base' building and the street as the entrance of the law clinic was placed at the back of the site and the ground floor lacked a public response to Kotze Street.


Rampart wall of the fort
Kotze Street
Sidewalk

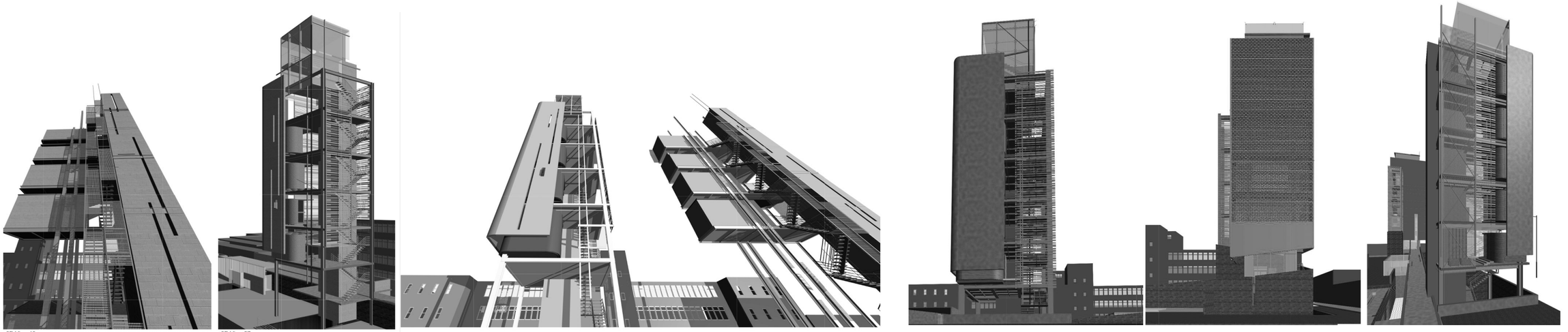



Journalist tower
Archive tower
Circulation to the law clinic
The tower as a beacon to
define the public forum

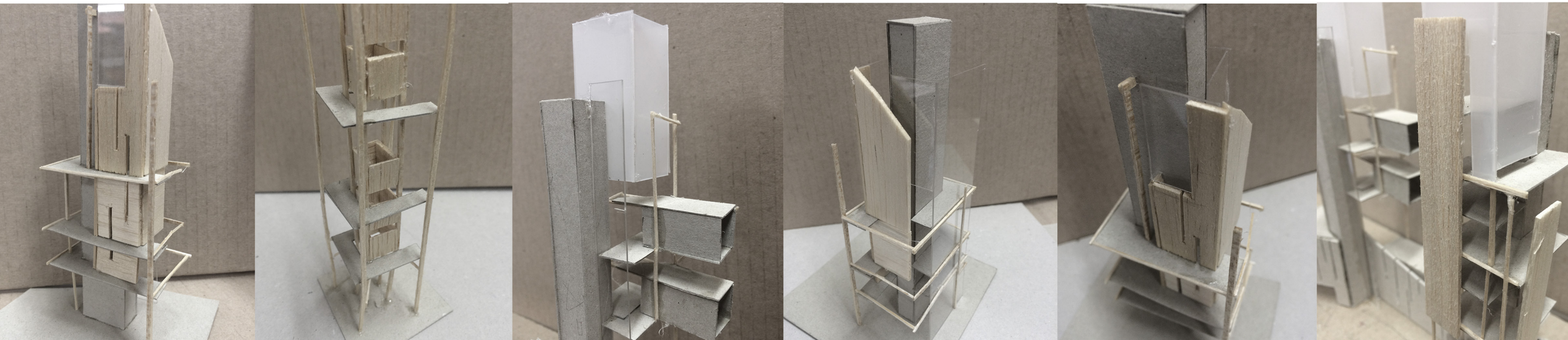

Circulation to the towers

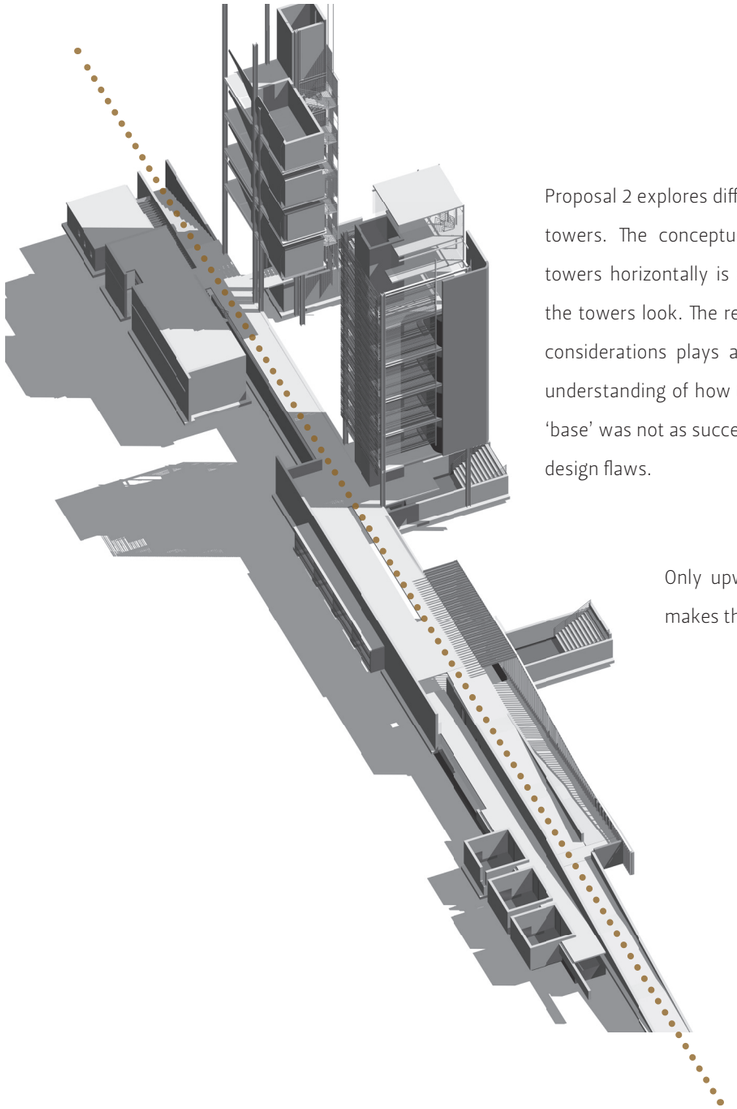
Phase 5

Development of the tower typology



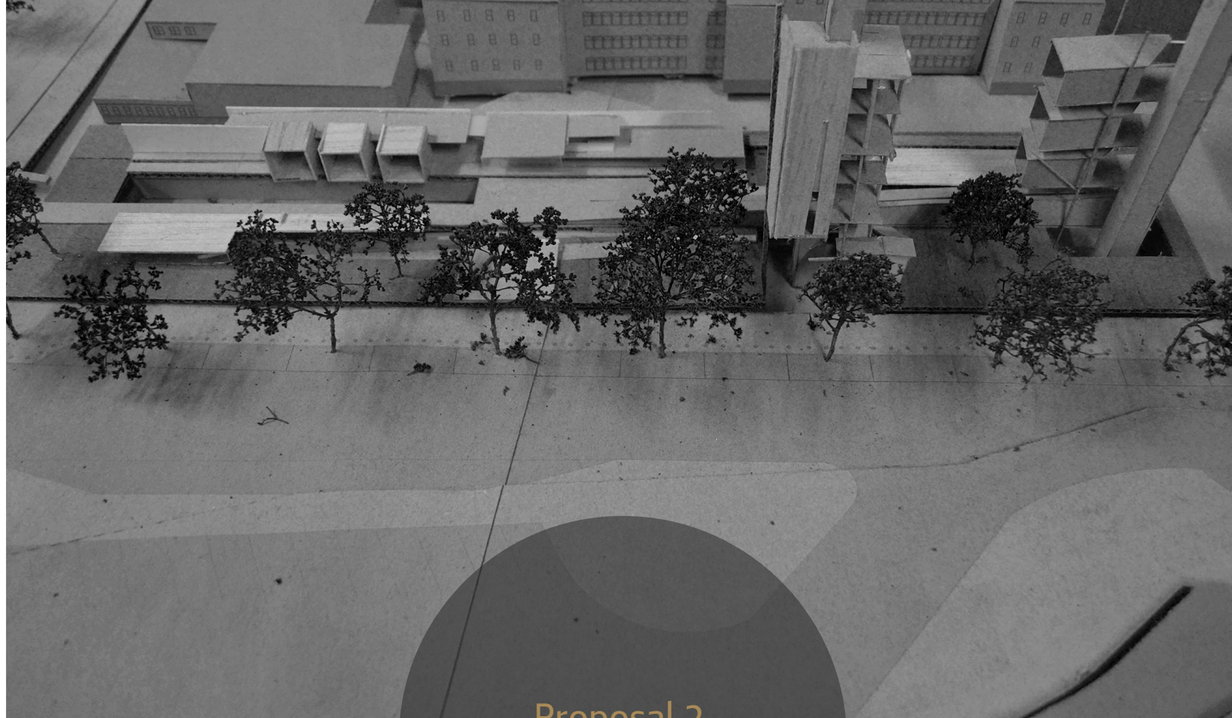
Phase 4 followed on proposal 1 and focused on ‘making architecture’ of the towers by exploring the structure, circulation and materiality of the spesific typology





Proposal 2 explores different solutions for the archive and journalist towers. The conceptual idea of layering the materiality of the towers horizontally is an important aspect which influenced how the towers look. The relation between the structural and aesthetic considerations plays an important role in this phase to gain an understanding of how to put the tower together. The design of the ‘base’ was not as successfully executed as proposal 1 as it had more design flaws.

Only upwards circulation no downwards circulation makes this ‘base’ more unsuccessful than proposal 1



Proposal 2

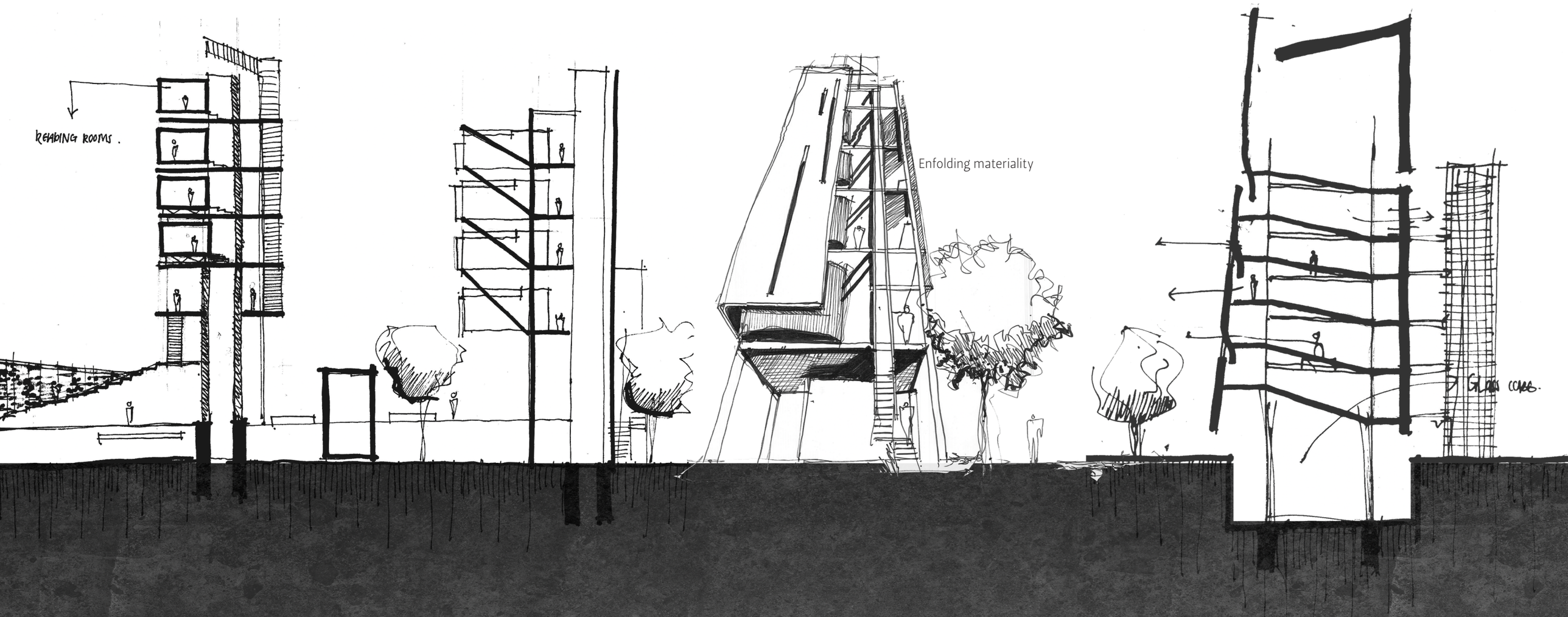
Exploring the towers through design models





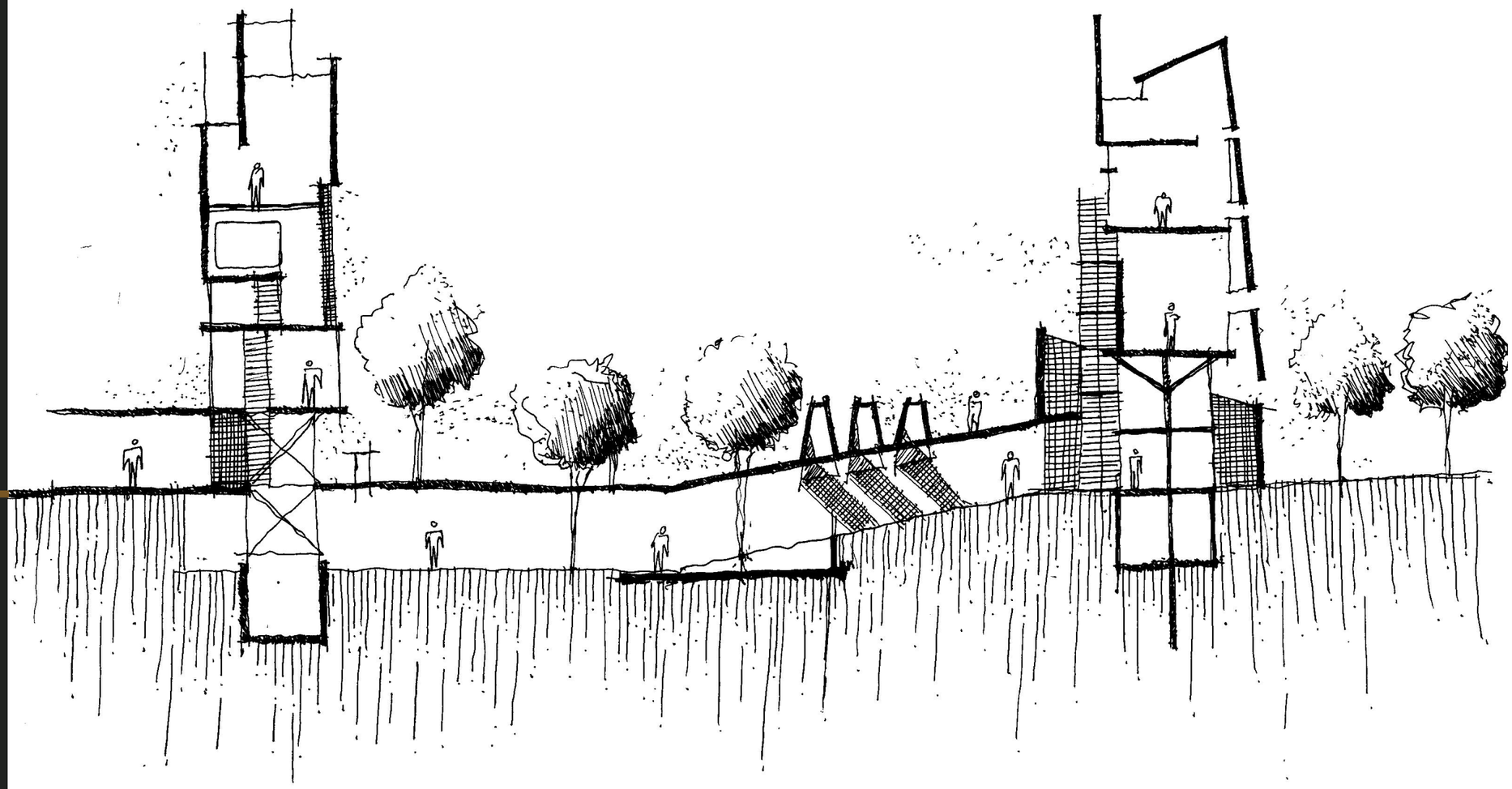
The conceptual idea of a protective container

The idea of developing a container in the sky influenced the ‘interior boxes’ for the information and the journalist in the interior of the towers. The sketches explains the development of the tower as a container and how the ‘containers’ are layered through materiality.

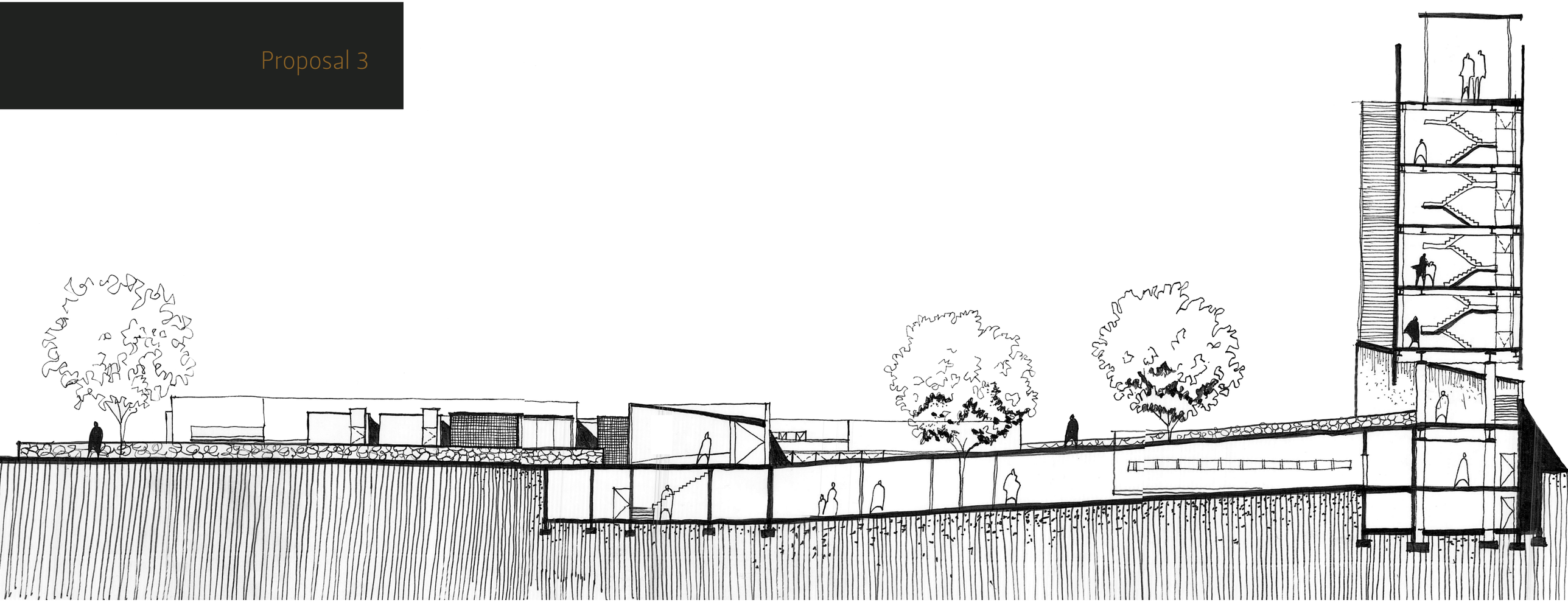


Enfolding materiality

Investigating the connection between the towers and the base

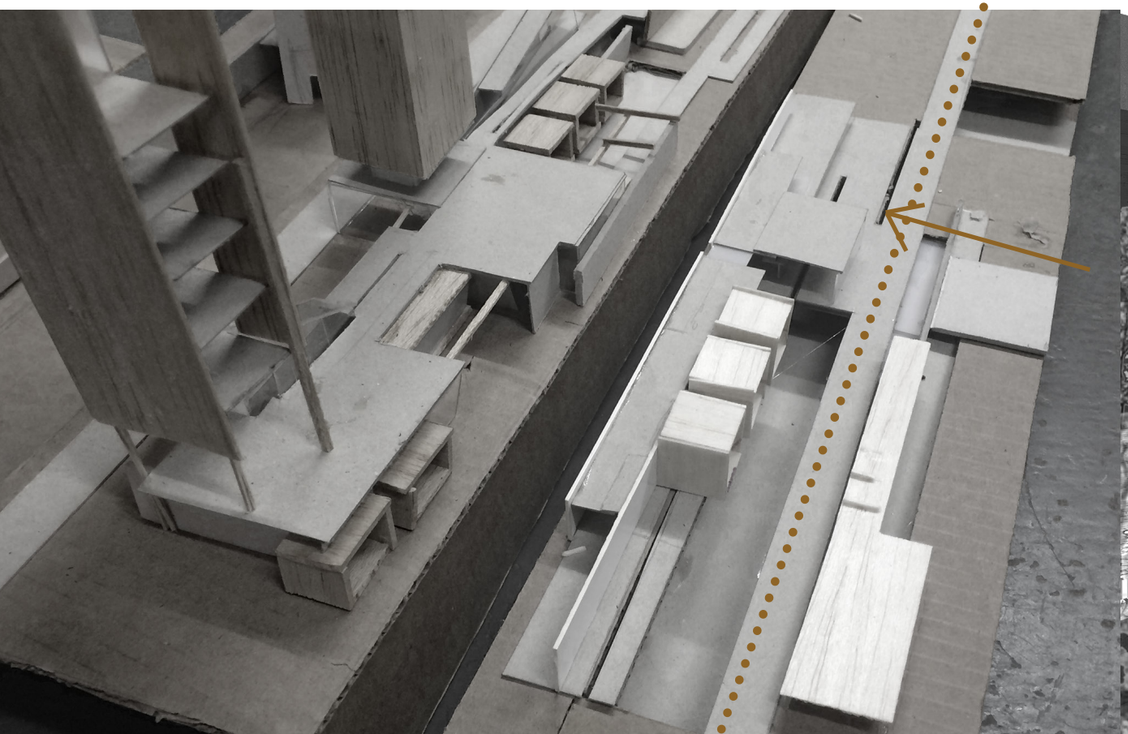


Proposal 3

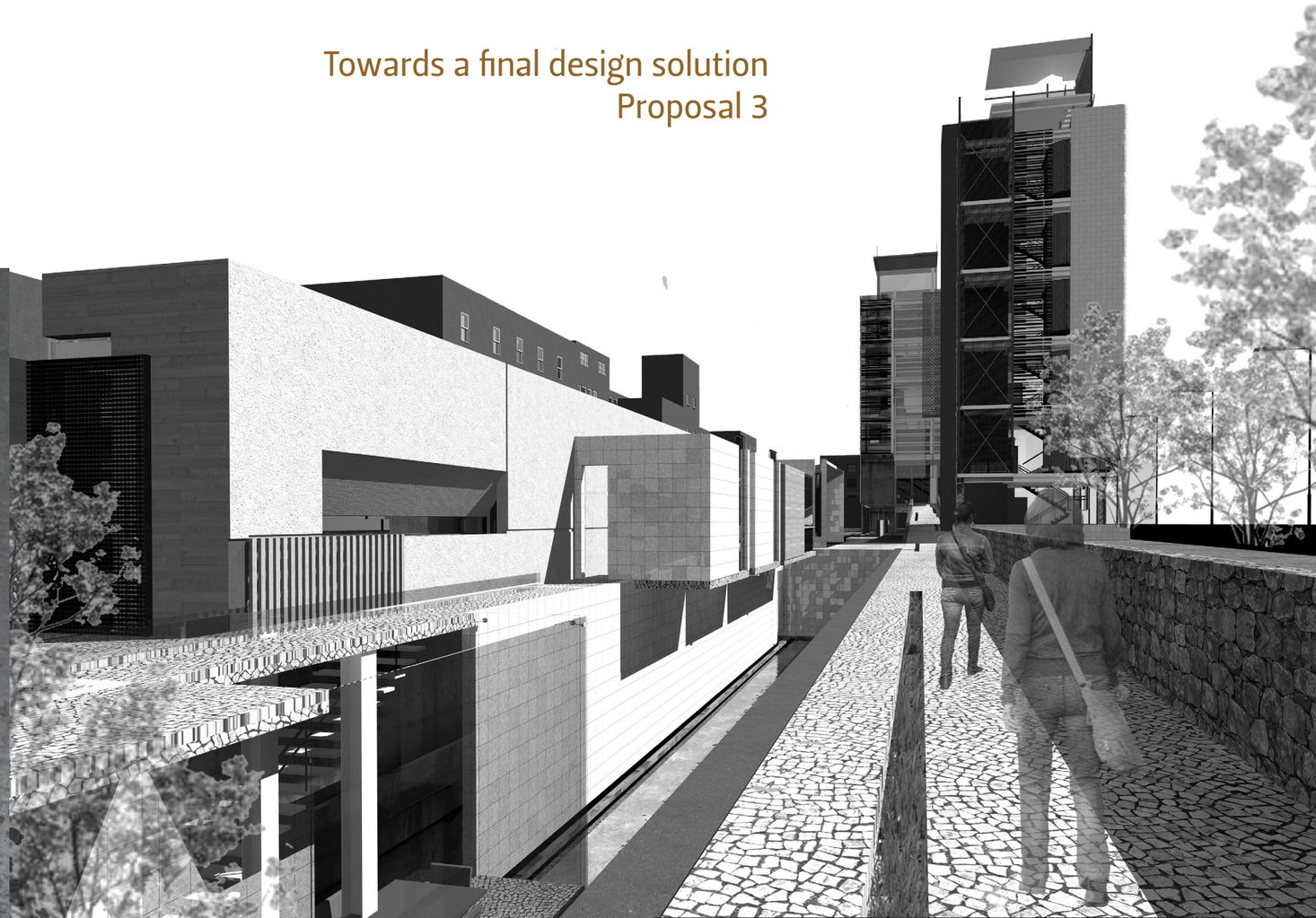


Changes in level and circulation spaces as a threshold,

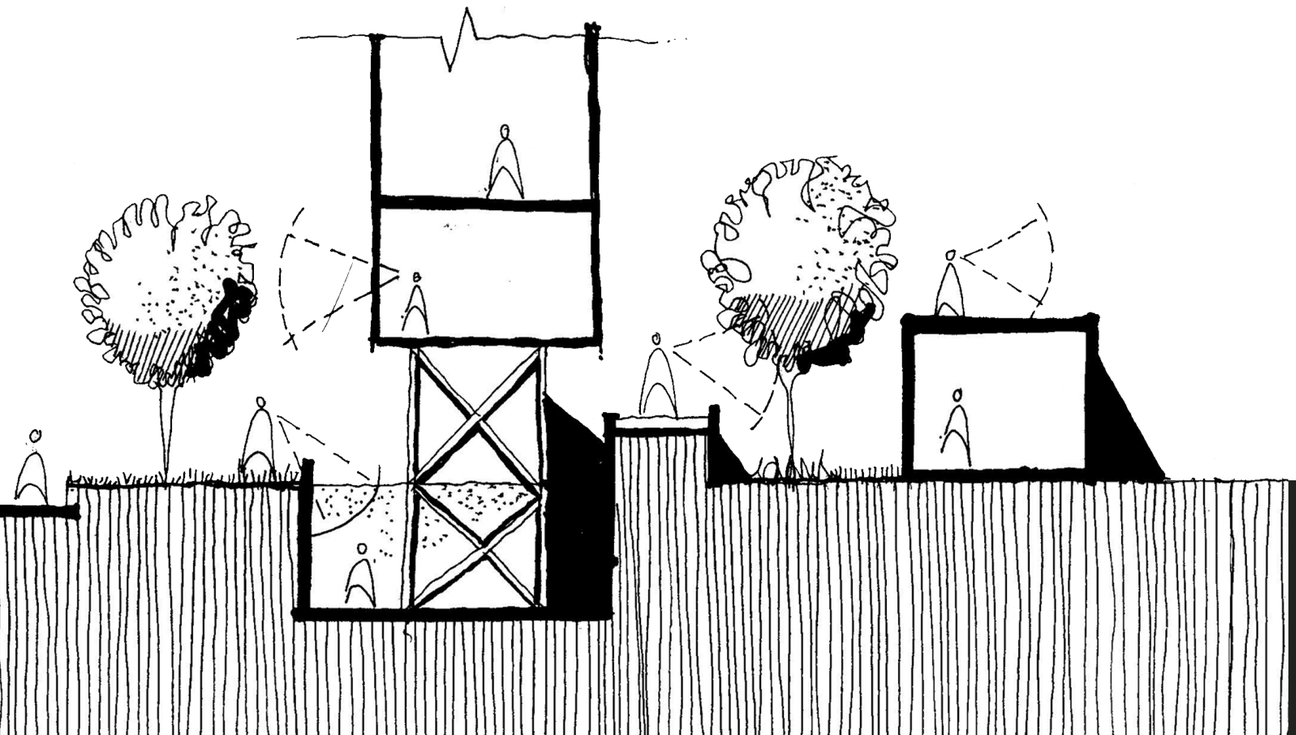
By lowering the building into the earth the building creates a threshold between private and public. The light and ventilation shafts become semi private spaces which are physically accessible for the oc-cupant of the building, but only visually accessible for the public. The changes of level create visual in-terplay between the different spaces, contributing to the urban quality of the building. By introducing changes of levels as seating as a response to the ‘embankments’ of the rampart wall across the street, the project aims to reinterpret boundary as a place public space to stimulate conversation and free speech.



Towards a final design solution
Proposal 3



Changes in level and circulation spaces as a threshold concept drawing



Steel stucture of the tower

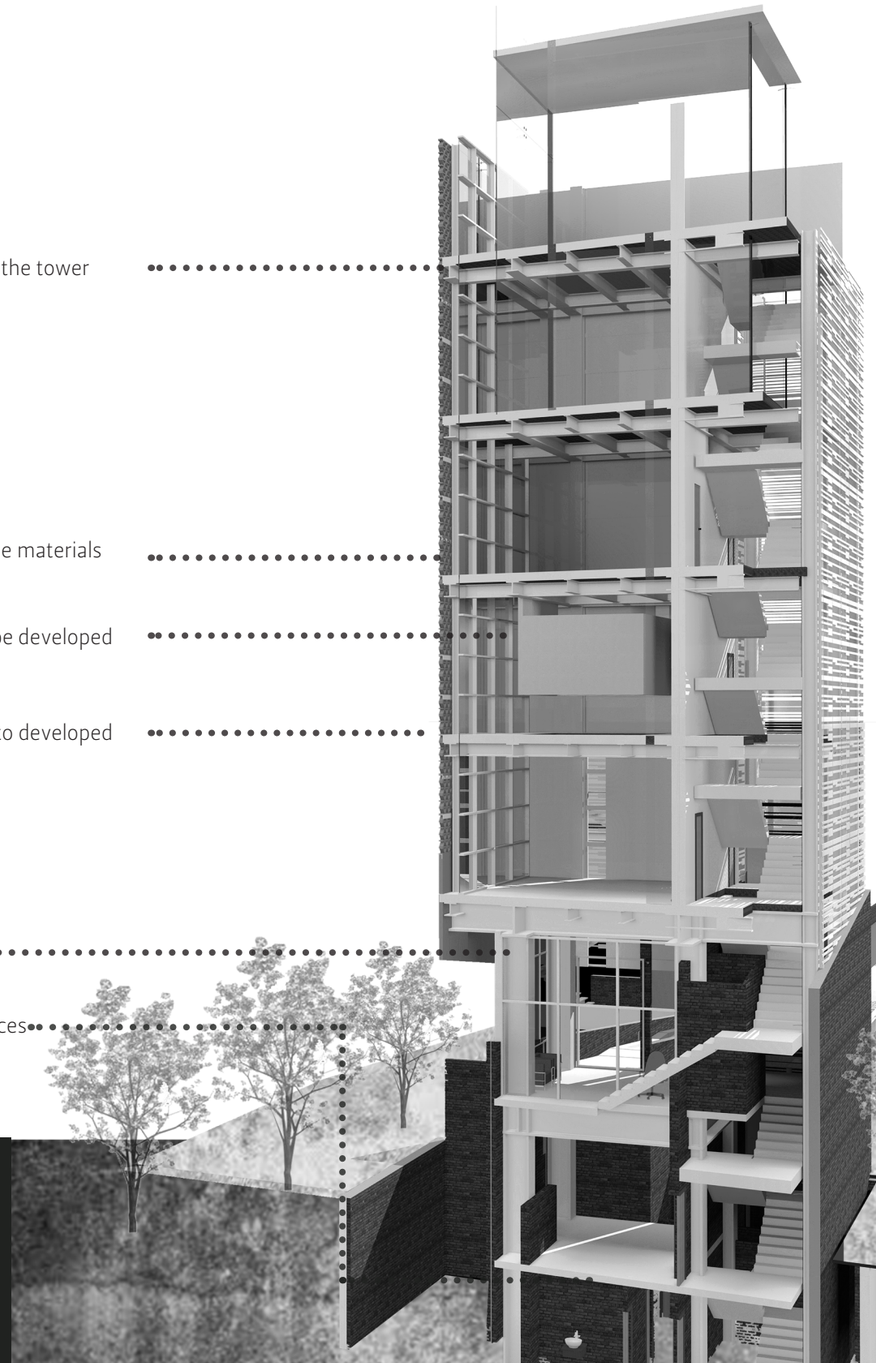
Layering of the materials

Archive boxes to be developed

Perforated skin to developed

Reception space

Archive storage spaces



Materiality and layering as a threshold,

The idea of using solid materials that have been punctured to enfold the towers which relates to the principle of transparency, also acts as a protective barrier between the protected inside and exposed outside. The punctured façade becomes a modified version of a conventional fence that creates a threshold between public and private in a more subtle manner. The punctured façade does not only act as a protective barrier around the journalist and information but also becomes part of the experience of the space within the interior.



Exploring the materiality of the northern facade

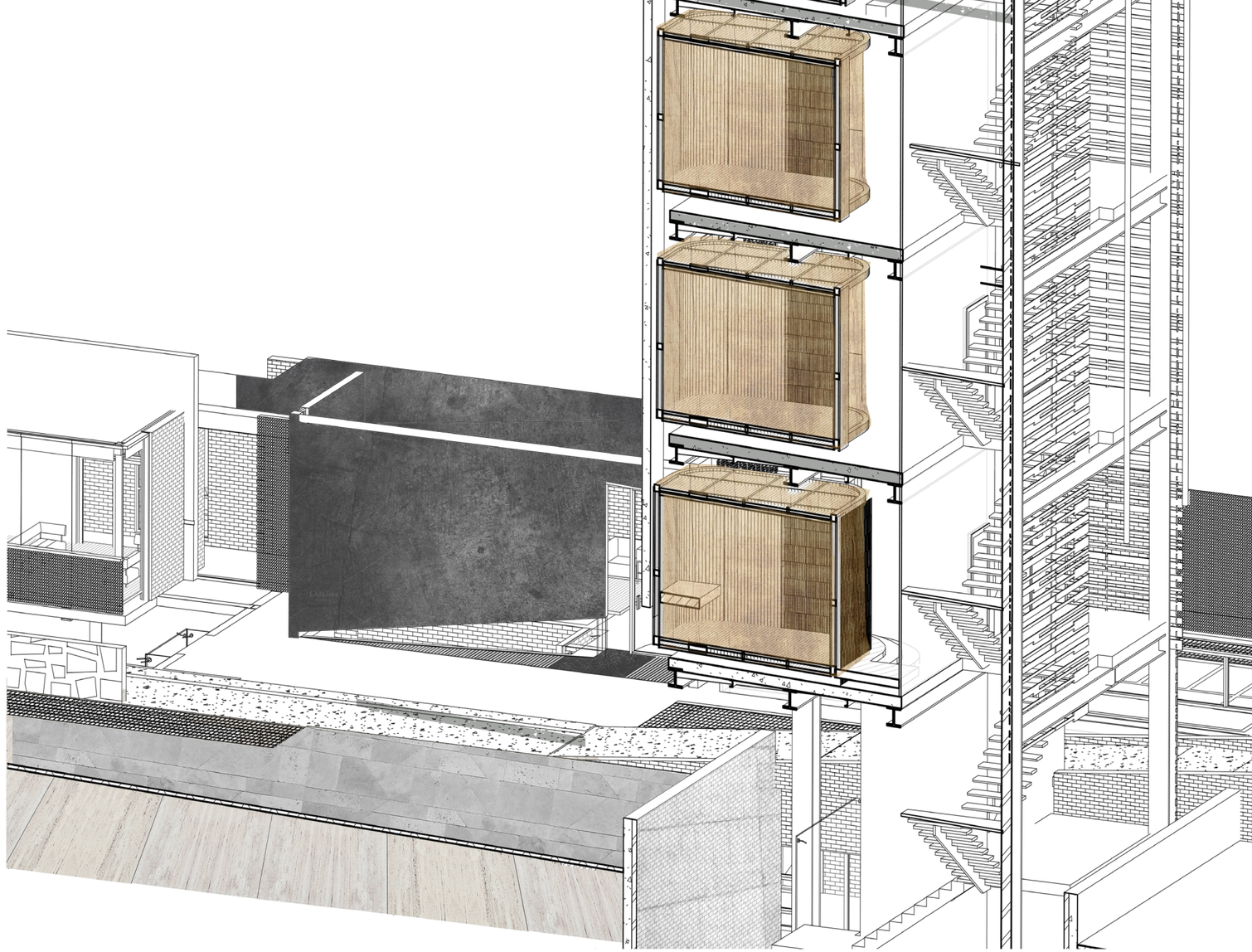
Developing the three dimentional quality of the building





Layering,

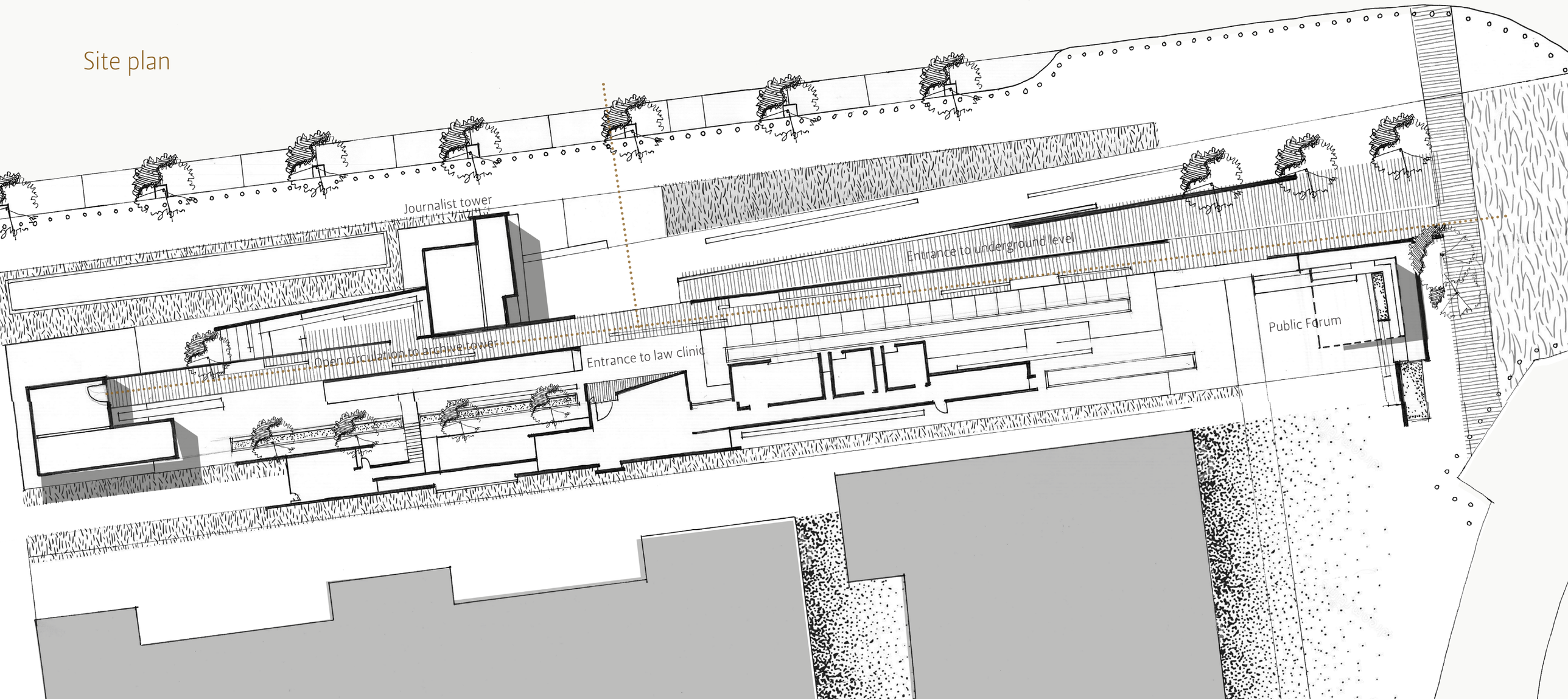
The proposed design intervention responded to the ideas of transparency and layering of Constitutional Court in a different way. The materials of the freedom towers are layered vertically, that influenced the idea to layer the proposed towers for the freedom of Expression Forum horizontally, creating protective barriers around the valuable information and journalists. The core of the towers becomes the protected centre that is enfolded with different layers of material. The tower in the middle houses the journalists' writing rooms. The writing rooms materialised into wooden boxes, relating to the architect Louis Kahn's idea of "carrels of wood". The materiality of wooden boxes creates a warm safe space for the journalist to write. The wooden boxes are enfolded by a steel structure and a building skin, creating a protective barrier between the interior and exterior, yet the inside is a warm 'safe' haven for the journalist to write.



Towards a final design solution
Proposal 3

The principles of threshold and boundary are used as an architectural strategy to enhance the experi-ence of space. The design of the building aims to rethinks principles of threshold and boundaries by layering public, semi-public, semiprivate and private spaces rather than merely placing a solid impene-trable façade or boundary wall. Changes in level and circulation spaces, and use of materials and layer-ing were identified as approaches to threshold.

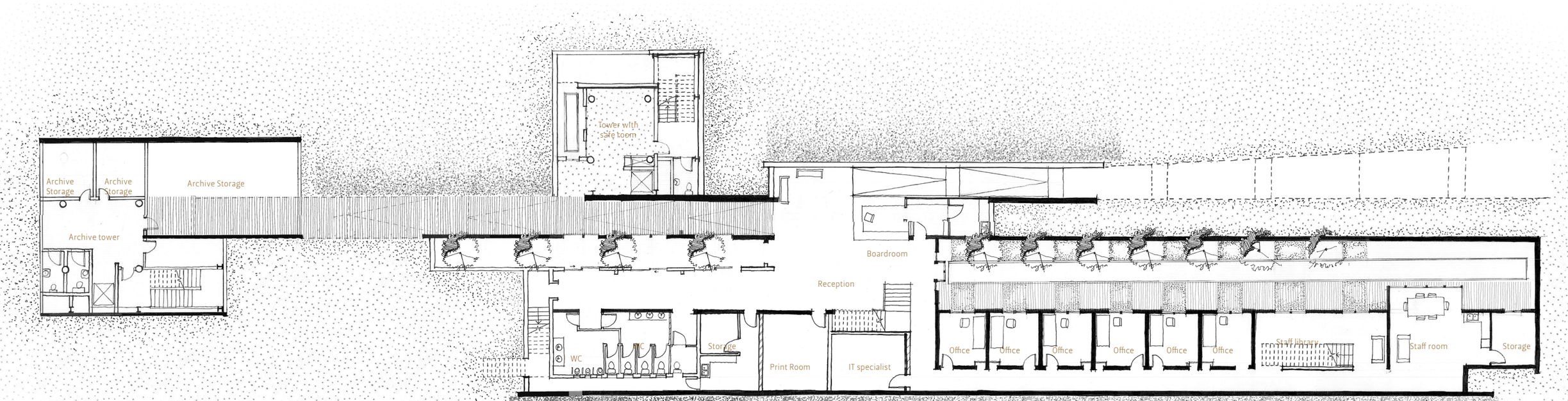
Site plan


Journalist tower
Entrance to underground level
Open circulation to archive tower
Entrance to law clinic
Public Forum

Representation and signification of a silent protest,

The towers are narrower at the bottom than the top. The structure at the bottom is covered with glass whereas the top is covered with more solid materials creating the illusion that the ‘heavy’ parts of the towers are ‘floating’ on the glass boxes. This becomes a representation of architecture as a silent protest as it gives the illusion that the towers are ‘protesting’ the laws of gravity.

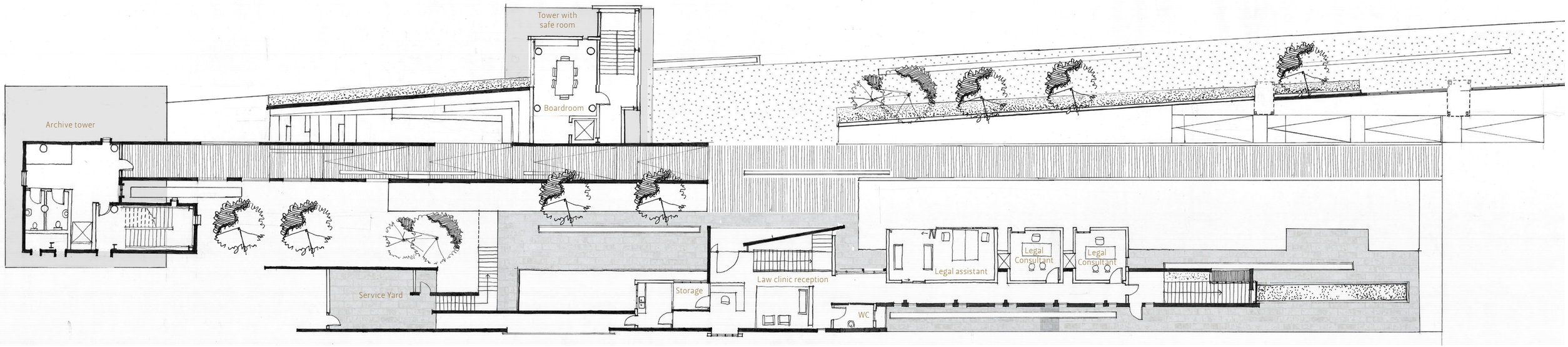




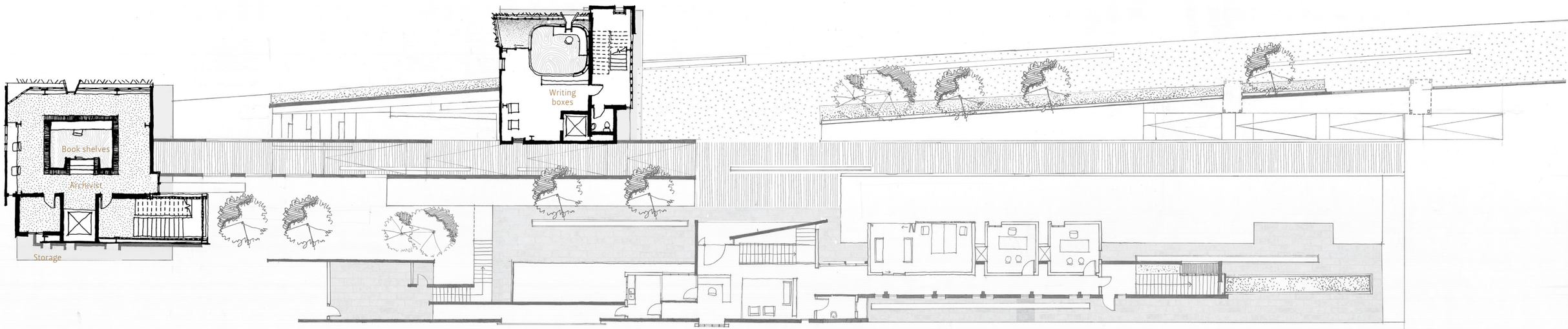
Transparency,

A journalist's responsibility is to report the news in a truthful, unbiased and apolitical way. Their duty is to make unknown information known. This influenced the idea of breaking open and puncturing solid impenetrable materials and plains to create transparency. The project addressed this idea by lowering some of the functions into the ground and creating voids as light and ventilation shafts in the ground. By doing so the impervious quality of the earth is reinterpreted as the solid mass of the earth opens up. The enfolding skin around the towers also creates the idea of a solid material that has been punctured.

Underground Level



Ground floor level



Tower Floors

Layering as representation of protest,

A way of presenting silent disapproval effectively is by turning one's back to the opponent, whether sitting or standing. The project aims to portray this disapproval by layering the protesting towers through the materiality and creating a threshold between the Freedom Towers and the Protest Towers.

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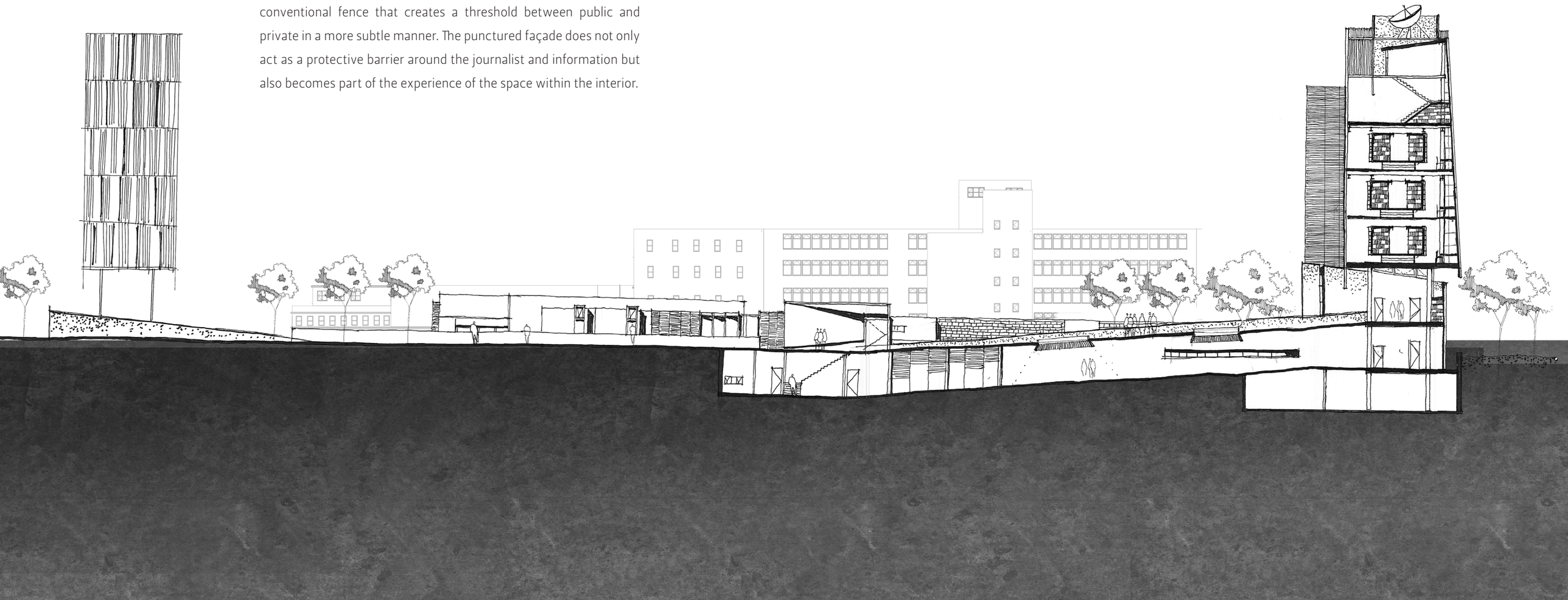
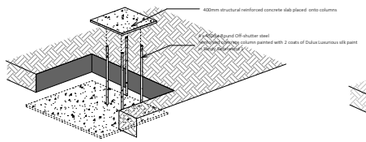
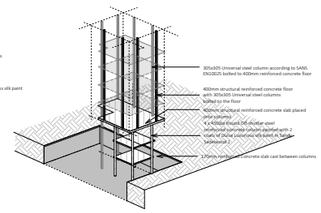
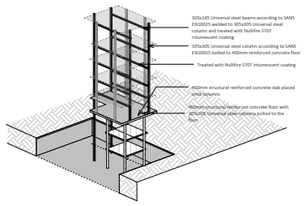
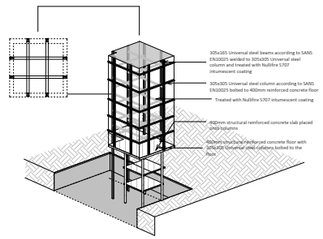


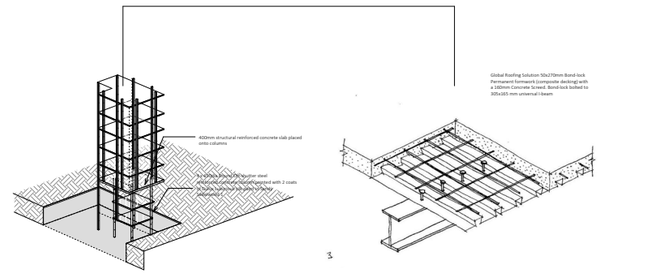
Structural development of tower











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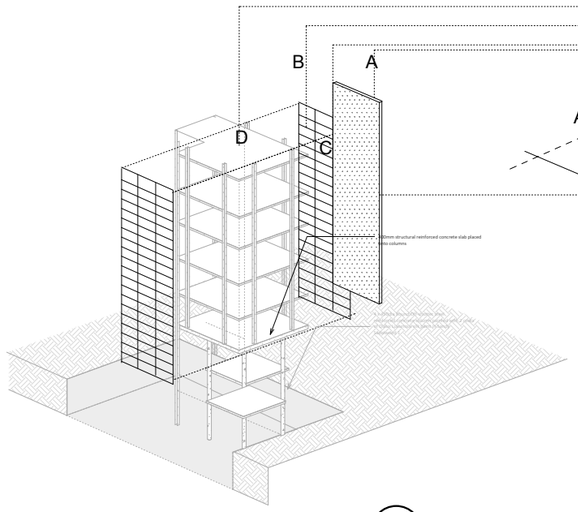
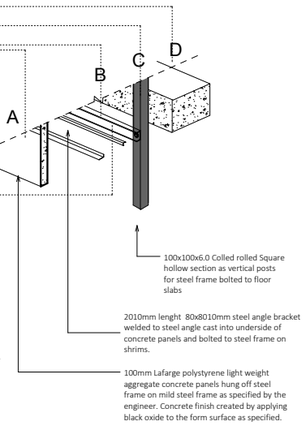
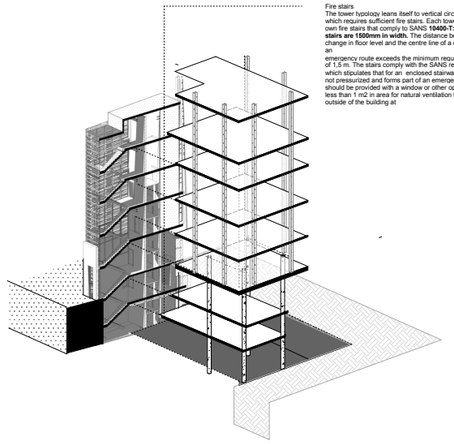


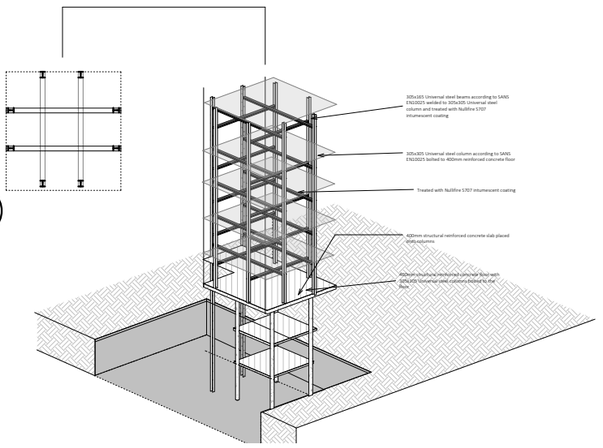




Fire stairs
The tower typology leans itself to vertical circulation which requires sufficient fire stairs. Each tower has its own fire stairs that comply to SANS **10400-T:2011. The stairs are 1500mm in width.** The distance between the change in floor level and the centre line of a doorway in an

emergency route exceeds the minimum requirements of 1,5 m. The stairs comply with the SANS regulations which stipulates that for an enclosed stairway which is not pressurized and forms part of an emergency route; should be provided with a window or other opening not less than 1 m2 in area for natural ventilation to the outside of the building at

6



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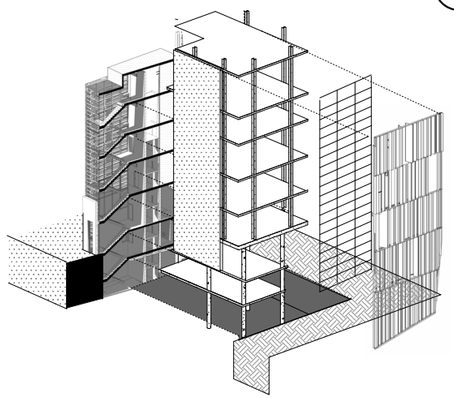
Development of the tower typology



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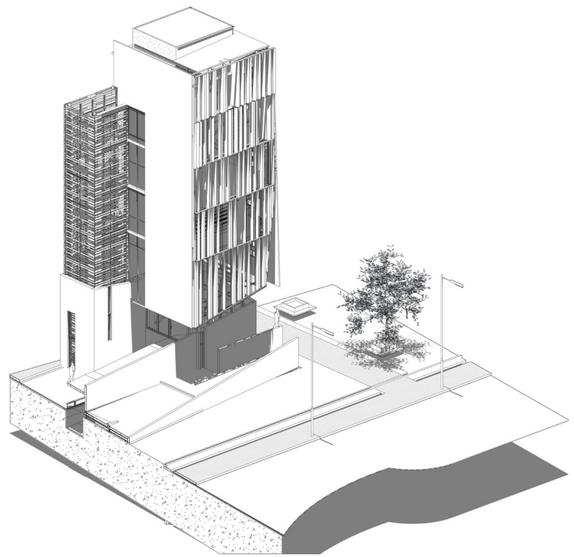


Final Design Proposal

Borrowed Landscape,

The Japanese principle of borrowed landscape is applied by lining the proposed towers up with the freedom towers at Constitutional Hill. The stairs of the second tower opens up the view to one of the freedom towers. As one ascent up the stairs the view to the freedom tower unfolds, emphasising the importance of freedom. The safe rooms for the journalists also incorporate the freedom towers within the composition of the space by framing the view. By shaping the building to frame certain views the architecture metaphorically starts to comment and try to understand the narrative of freedom inscribed into the surrounding landscape.



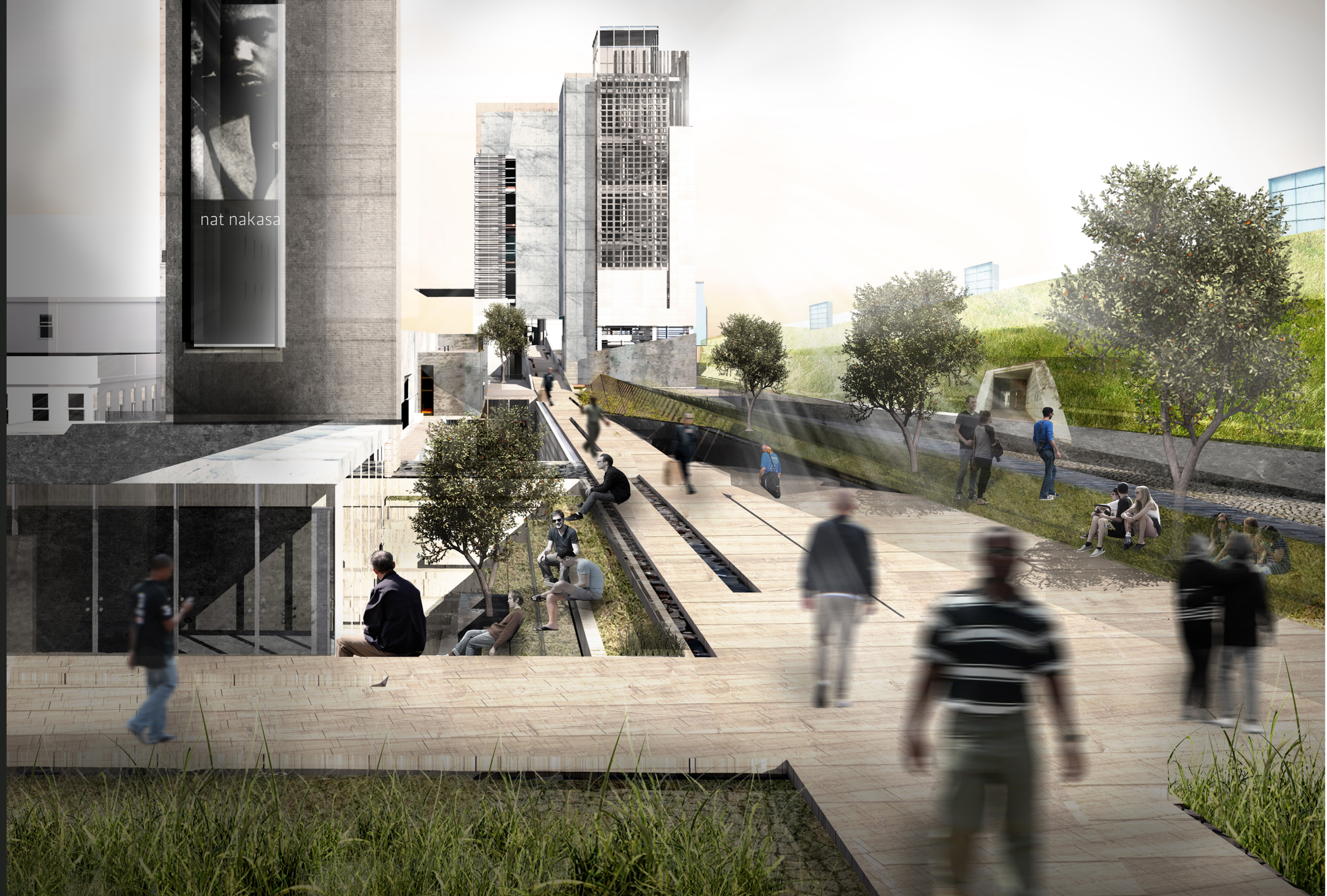
SITE PLAN



FXI



FXI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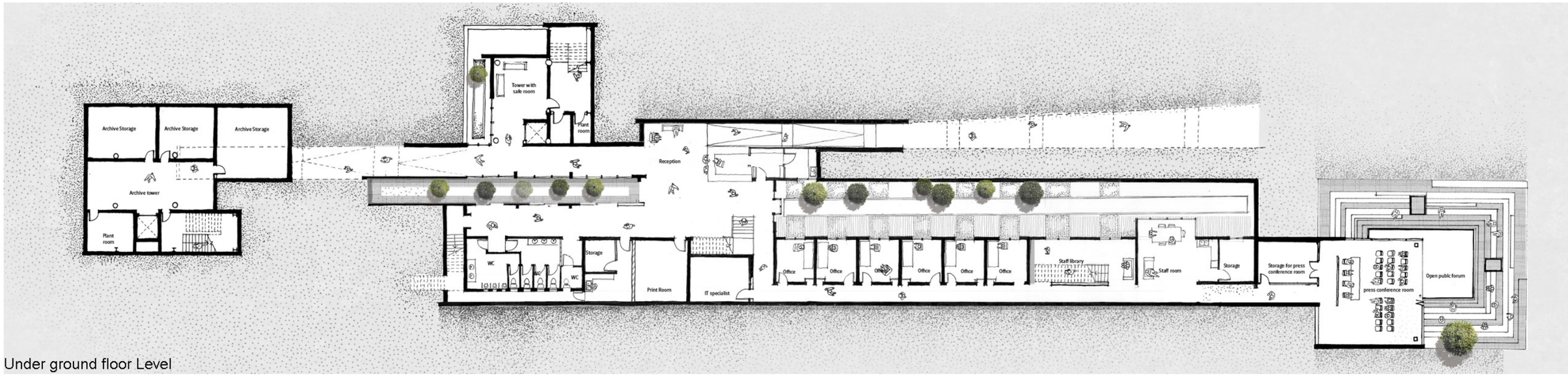
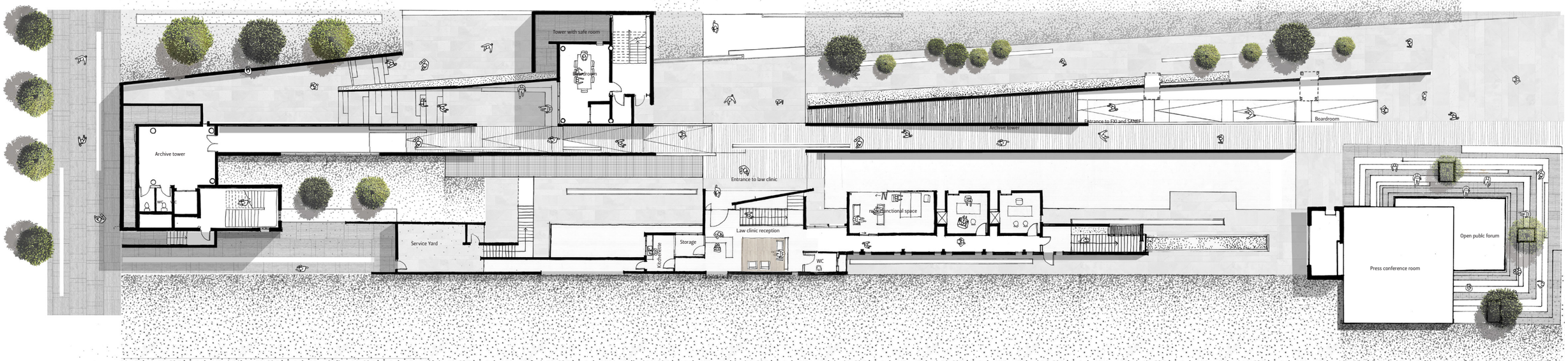


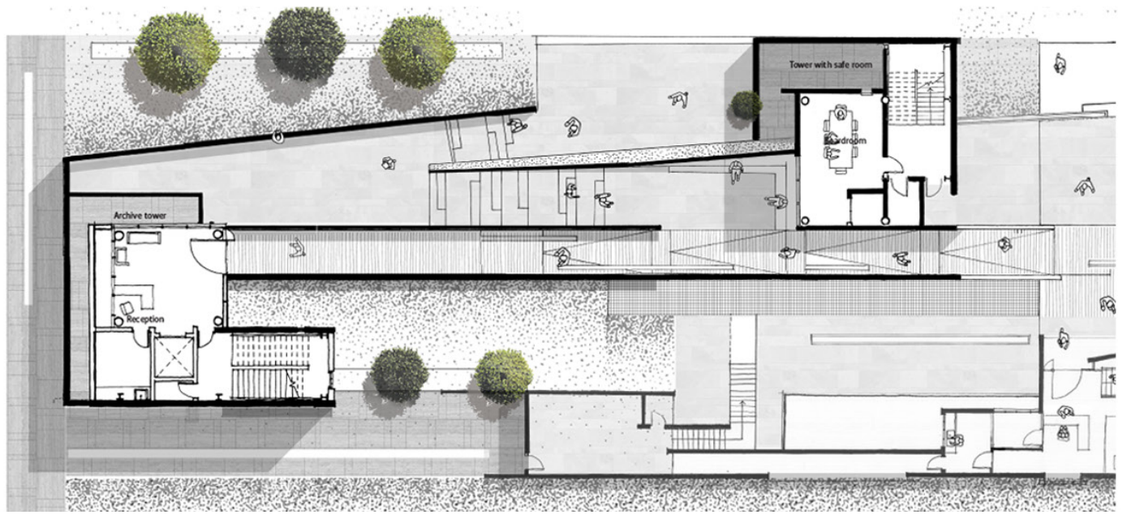
Under ground floor Level

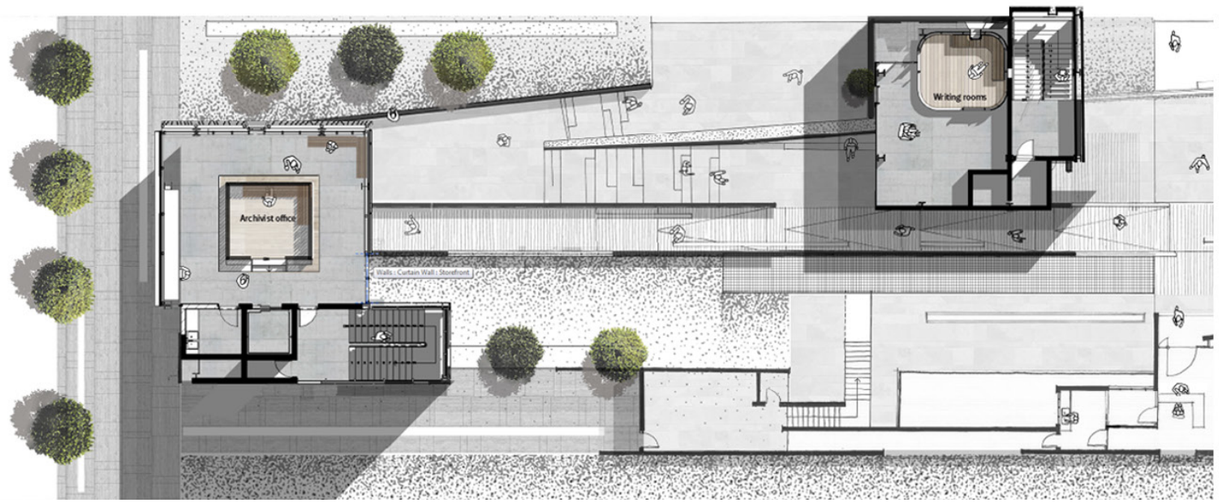
Transparency,

A journalist's responsibility is to report the news in a truthful, unbiased and apolitical way. Their duty is to make unknown information known. This influenced the idea of breaking open and puncturing solid impenetrable materials and plains to create transparency. The project addressed this idea by lowering some of the functions into the ground and creating voids as light and ventilation shafts in the ground. By doing so the impervious quality of the earth is reinterpreted as the solid mass of the earth opens up. The enfolding skin around the towers also creates the idea of a solid material that has been punctured.



Ground floor level

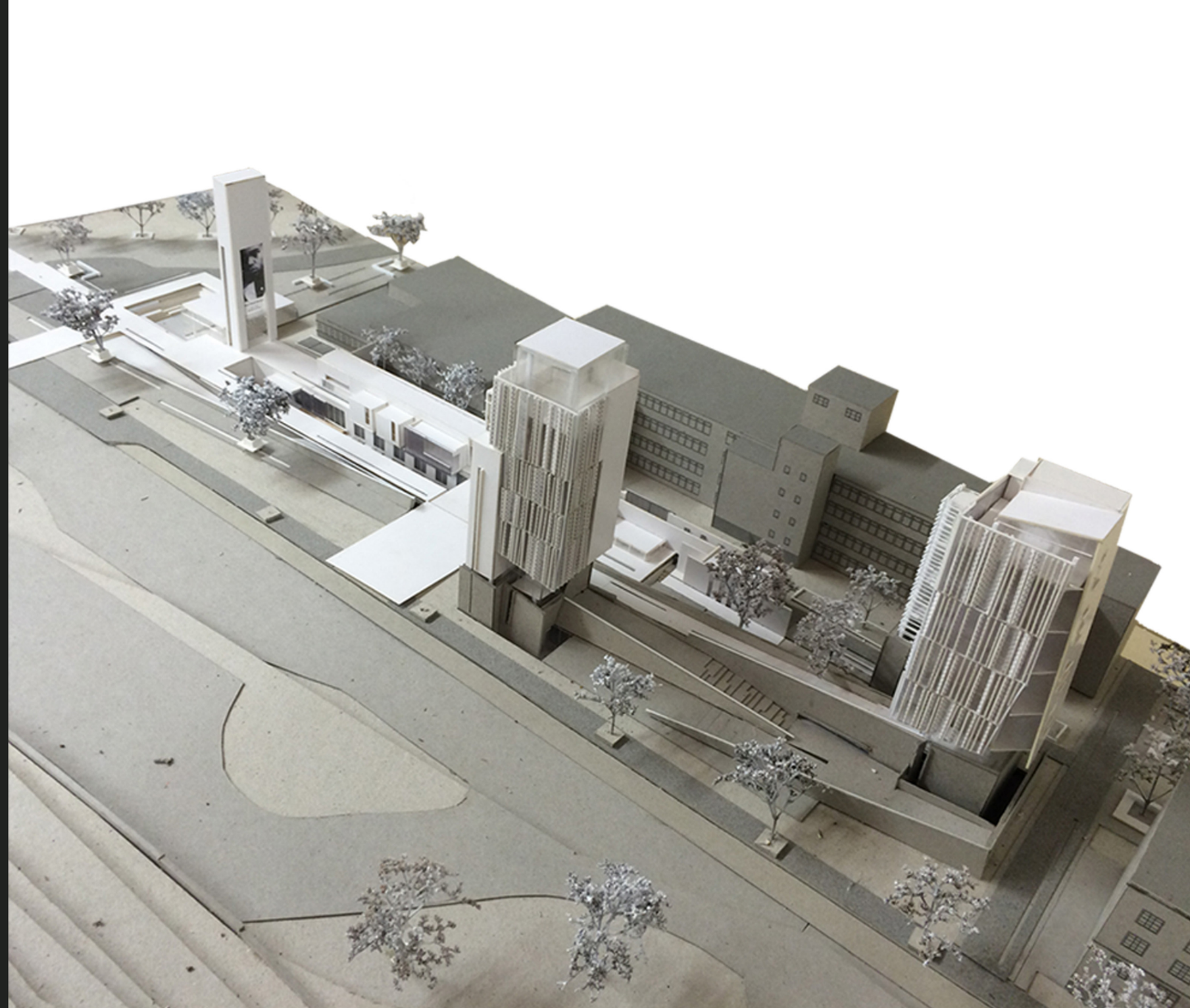




Tower Floors

The urban Forum,
Reinterpreting the principles of an ancient forum serves as a response to rethink open public space as a space that contributes to free conversation.

The principles of threshold and boundary are used as an architectural strategy to enhance the experience of space. The design of the building aims to rethinks principles of threshold and boundaries by layering public, semi-public, semiprivate and private spaces rather than merely placing a solid impenetrable façade or boundary wall. Changes in level and circulation spaces, the use of different materials and layering were identified as approaches to threshold.







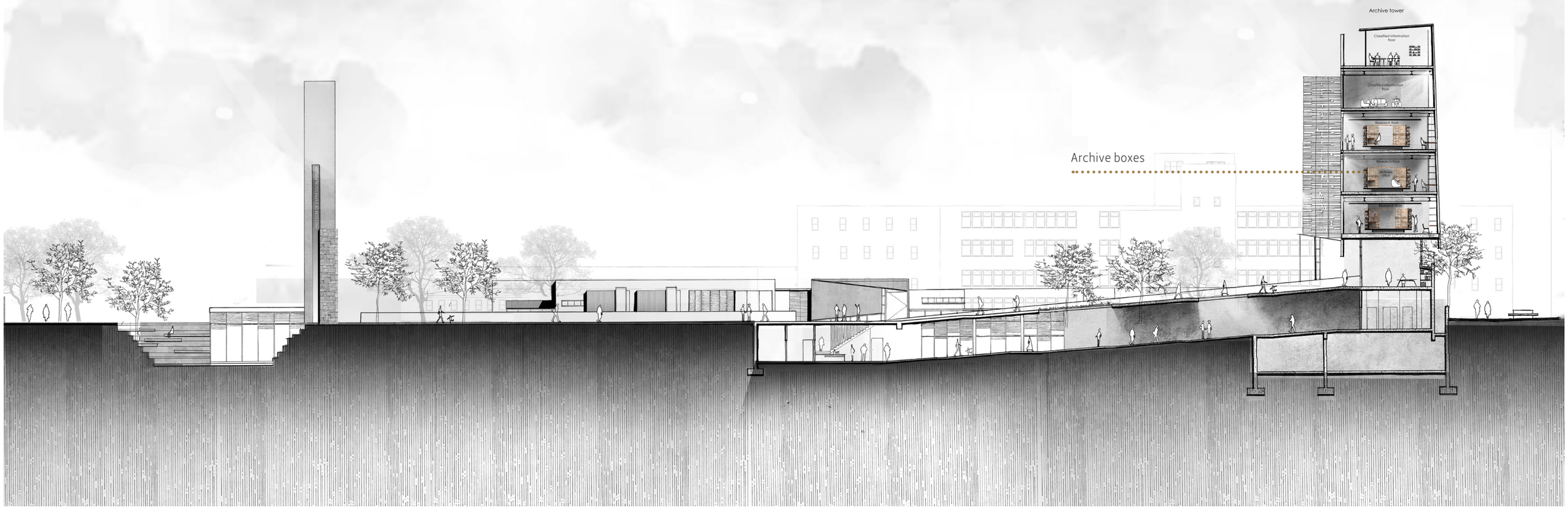
Changes in level and circulation spaces as a threshold,

The idea developed to respond to the rampart wall of the fort across the street. A ramp to the third tower forms a threshold or a ‘wall’ between public and private spaces on site. The ramp that goes up serves as a semi-public space, softening the harsh boundary between public and private. The ramp together with the stairs of the third tower enfolds around the core of the building, creating a protective barrier around the sensitive information that is housed there.



Layering,

The tower in the middle houses the journalists' writing rooms. The writing rooms materialised into wooden boxes, relating to the architect Louis Kahn's idea of "carrels of wood". The materiality of the wooden boxes creates a warm safe space for the journalist to write. The wooden boxes are enfolded by a steel structure and a building skin, creating a protective barrier between the interior and exterior, yet the inside is a warm 'safe' haven for the journalist to write.



The tower at the far right houses an archive on each floor. This tower is accessible to the public, so a receptionist is necessary to control entry to the tower. The circulation of the tower, a stereotomic mass , wraps around the tower and becomes the first layer to ‘enfold’ the valuable information. The facades of the building and the structure underneath become the next layers to surround the archive boxes. The centre of the archive boxes is where the archivists’ workspace is situated.

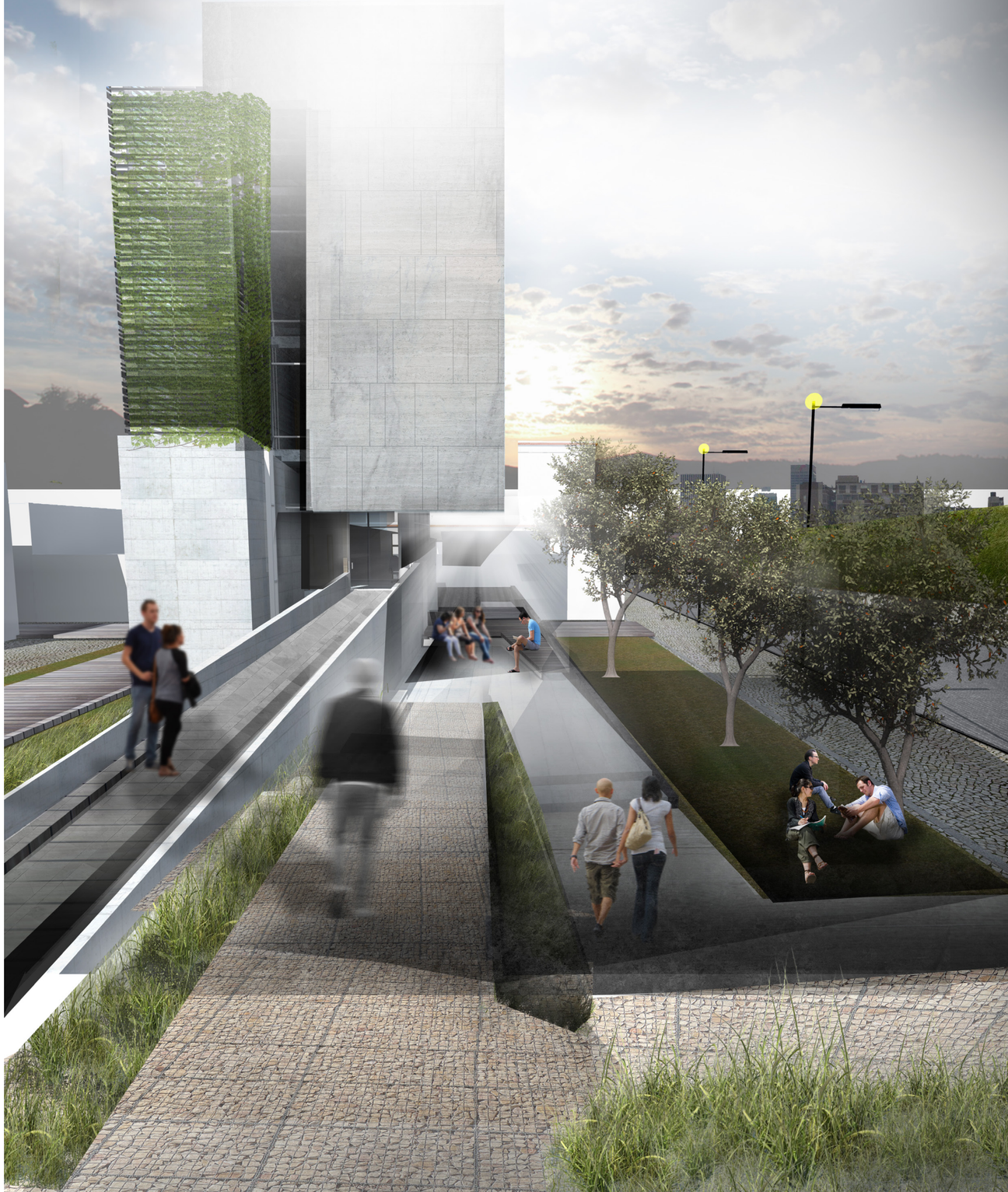
Reflection

The compilation of this document served as a personal reflection for myself to gain a comprehensive understanding of how the project developed to the point it has. It served as a reminder and a way to focus my subconscious ideas as I was forced to put it into writing.

Throughout the year I was often confronted with the question of what I am doing for my dissertation by people outside the field of architecture. When explaining the project to them, it regularly evolved into interesting discussions about the topic and people were able to grasp the need for such architectural intervention. This was a very interesting phenomena for me, as I always found it very difficult to explain a conceptual project to people outside the field of architecture. This, together with the regular stories in the news of journalist and our right of freedom of expression being threatened, grounded the project into reality for me which made it personally worthwhile to work on.

If I had the opportunity to go back and choose a project I will undoubtable choose the same project; even though the project had its challenges and obstacles, most of them evolved into design opportunities rather than limitations. A personal challenge for me was to find the balance between conceptual considerations and rational design solutions. The tower typology, even though a conceptually strong element, forced me to engage with the project on a technical level that I did not initially anticipated, but eventually enjoyed. It was also challenging to keep the project focused and not digress from the fundamental conceptual ideas which forced me to go back many times and focus the project again.

I consider this year successful, although extremely hard, in the sense that I have learned a lot of myself, my design process and my need to create meaningful architecture and the importance for me as a designer to contribute to the world I live in.



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