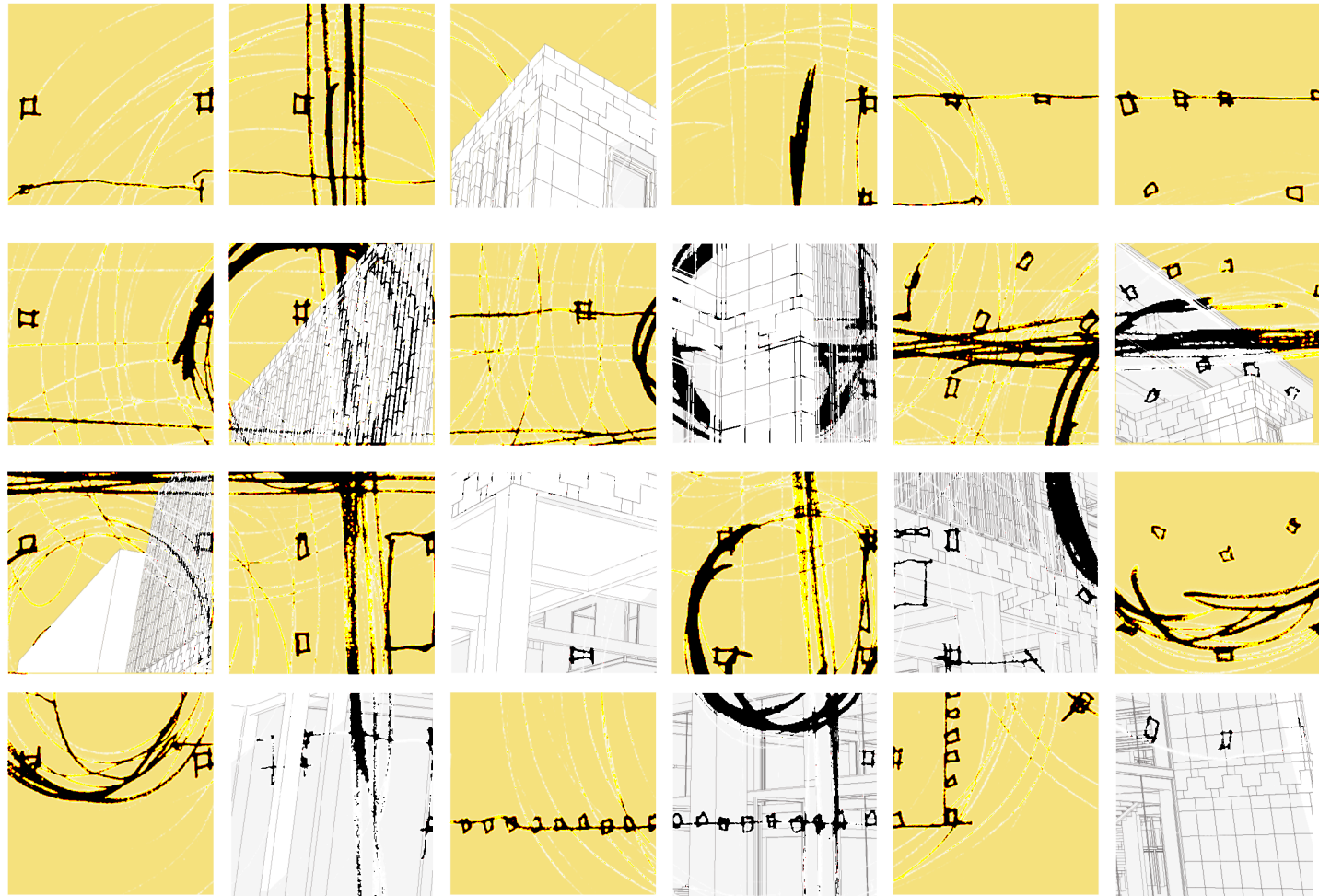




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222004002 M.Arch

TRANSFORMATION OF SPACES IN ABANDONED BUILDINGS FOR SKILL DEVELOPMENT, COLLABORATIO AND GROWTH

A CASE OF THE HOUSE OF COHEN ON INDEPENDENCE AVENUE, WINDHOEK

DECLARATION

I, Fredrick Menyah-Artivor, hereby declare that the work presented in this thesis titled “Transformation of Spaces in Abandoned Buildings for Skill Development, Collaboration and Growth: A Case of the House of Cohen on Independence Avenue, Windhoek” is my original work.

All sources of information and references from the works of others have been appropriately acknowledged by the Namibian University of Science and Technology's requirements.

I would like to thank my Supervisor, Prof. Jaco Wasserfall, and my Co-Supervisor, Dr. Madelein Stoffberg, for their guidance throughout this thesis.

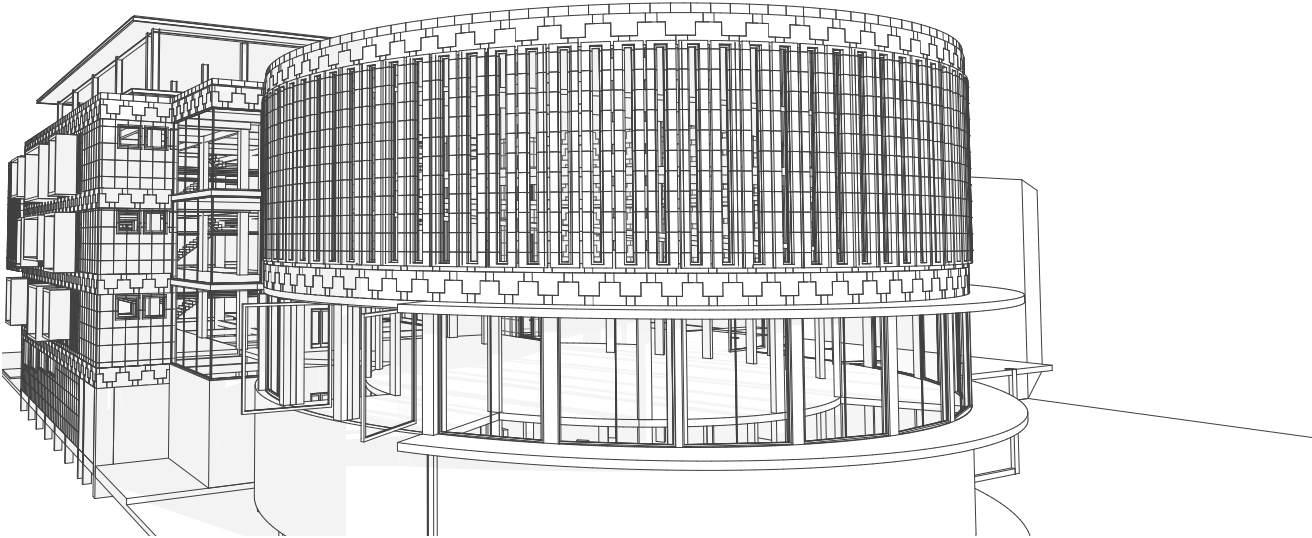
Furthermore, I acknowledge the financial support of Stephen Chamberlain and Chamberlain & Associates Architects and Interior Designers, whose continuous support has been instrumental in helping me finance the completion of this body of work.

This research complies with the standards outlined by the Namibian University of Science and Technology's ethics committee.

I confirm that this thesis is free from plagiarism and has been produced with the highest academic integrity standard in line with the Namibian University of Science and Technology expectations.

Signed: _____

Date: _____



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis would not have been possible without the guidance and support of many individuals and organisations, to whom I owe gratitude.

Firstly, I would like to sincerely thank Prof. Jaco Wasserfall and Dr. Madelein Stoffberg, in their less formal mentorship roles, for their invaluable guidance, support outside of the studio, and patience throughout this journey of ups and downs. Their support in navigating challenges has been highly appreciated.

I would also like to thank the Namibian University of Science and Technology lecturing staff, particularly Gert Van Der Merwe, Sophia Van Greunen, Gaby Hansen, Jens Wiedow, and Conrad Stoffberg, for their advice and encouragement throughout my studies.

I want to give special thanks to Stephen Chamberlain and Chamberlain & Associates Architects and Interior Designers for their financial and emotional support during this research. I am also deeply grateful to my partner, my friends and colleagues, particularly my golf foursome group, CB and Corbs, who provided much-needed breaks and camaraderie during stressful periods.

I am most grateful to my family for their unwavering support and encouragement. Your patience, love, and belief in me have been the cornerstone of my

success. Weathering the storm of stress has made me appreciate you all even more.

Finally, I thank the Namibian University of Science and Technology for the resources, facilities, and support necessary to complete this research.



Figure.1: Contrast of two realities
The collage represents possible alternative
futures for the Windhoek CBD

FUTURE OF DYNAMIC INTERACTION

The streets of the Windhoek cbd tell two tales, one where youthful ambition meets a dwindling economy, and with each passing day, more young adults are unemployed. Opportunities are scarce, and the streets that once bustled with vendors and activity now echo with emptiness. Due to the exodus of active businesses from the CBD, abandoned buildings loom over a city that has lost its sense of purpose, simultaneously reducing foot traffic and business prospects for vendors. Depicted in the collage in Figure 1, we see the disparity of young adults searching for opportunity and resorting to handouts to sustain themselves; reflecting a growing crisis of homelessness and abandonment looming over the youth, who face fewer opportunities to break into a world that no longer seems to need their creativity.

Yet, a different path emerges simultaneously. As Industry 4.0 takes shape, the same streets begin to move towards a future of uncapped potential. The young adults, once confined by the limitations of traditional jobs, now become the architects of their own success, harnessing the power of digital platforms. The right side of the collage in Figure 1 describes the opportunity to harness the talents of the youth and empower productivity. These formerly abandoned spaces transform into thriving creation, collaboration, and entrepreneurship hubs. Foot traffic increases, vendors return, and the economy reignites not through conventional means but the innovative energy of a new generation, creating their own opportunities in the digital age. The adaptive

reuse of the Cohen building aims to set it as a catalyst in the new CBD area of Windhoek.

ABSTRACT

The central business district (CBD) is facing increasing abandonment, necessitating innovative solutions to revitalise the area. This thesis investigates the adaptive reuse of the Cohen Building, aiming to develop design strategies that respond to its current socio-economic and spatial characteristics while preserving its historical and architectural significance and aligning with contemporary urban development trends. The primary objective is to transform the Cohen Building into a dynamic digital creators' hub aimed at empowering the business surrounding Industry 4.0 and revitalising the CBD.

The literature review forms the foundation of this study, encompassing various aspects of architectural theory and practice. Parent's (2020) exploration of typology as dynamism provides insights into the psychological and spatial dynamics essential for adaptive reuse. Adam Hardy's (2007) work on the expression of movement in architecture informs the integration of kinetic elements into static structures. Megahed's (2015) research on kinetic architecture offers strategies for creating adaptable and responsive spaces. Additionally, the human movement and interaction strategies discussed by Vroman and Lagrange (2016) underscore the importance of designing spaces catered for people, that facilitate engagement and activity.

Case studies such as the adaptive reuse of the Malha warehouse in Brazil and the transformation of the FNCC building in Namibia investigate the adaptation of heritage buildings in global south climates such as Namibia and Brazil, which provide practical examples of successful adaptive reuse

projects. An investigation of a case study in Norway presents the applications of kinetic elements rounding up the case studies and emphasising the need for flexible design approaches that respect historical integrity while meeting contemporary needs.

Design cues from the literature highlight the importance of integrating static served spaces and dynamic servant spaces, as conceptualised by Louis Kahn (1974). The static pods will house primary activities, ensuring stability and continuity, while dynamic servant spaces will support these activities through adaptable and movable elements inspired by kinetic architectural principles (Megahed, 2015). Figure 2 shows an amalgamation of these abstracted ideas within a collage, suggestive of the goal of this thesis, combining kinetic elements and reused adapted elements. The collage depicts the project touchstone centrally, which anchors the concept in dynamic, interlinked spaces.

The research methodology includes observational studies, sketching, mapping, and model building to develop and refine design strategies through continuous iteration. Observations will capture the current socio-economic and spatial dynamics surrounding the Cohen Building while sketching and mapping will help visualise potential design interventions. Model building will facilitate the exploration of three-dimensional design solutions, allowing for iterative testing and refinement.

In conclusion, this thesis aims to provide a comprehensive strategy for the adaptive reuse of the

Cohen Building, transforming it into a vibrant digital creators' hub aimed at empowering the business surrounding Industry 4.0 and catalysing the revitalisation of the CBD. By integrating historical preservation with contemporary design principles and addressing current socio-economic needs, the Cohen Building will serve as a dynamic focal point for community engagement and urban development.

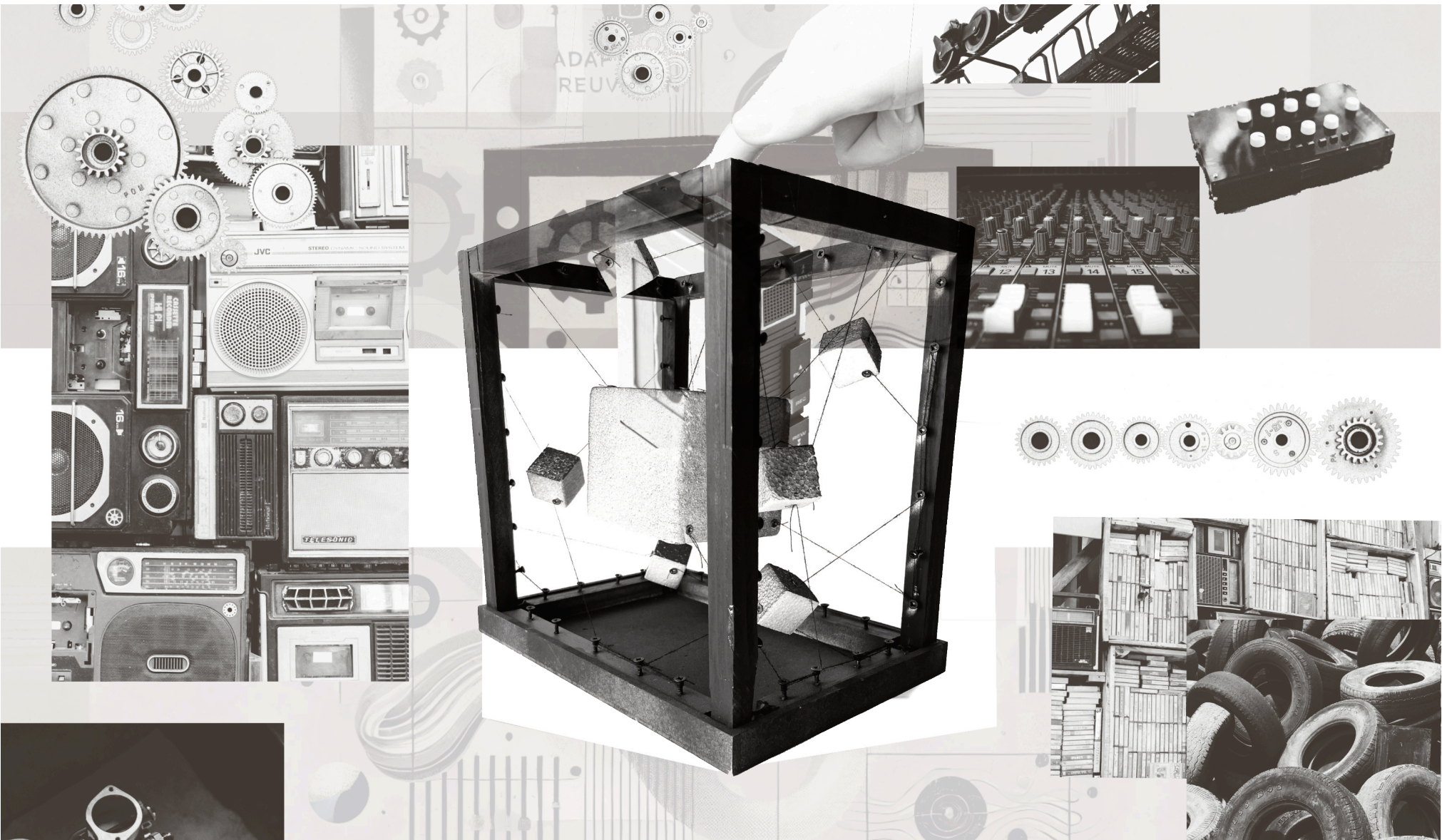


Figure.2: Touchstone press play.
The image represents concepts related to dynamism, adaptive reuse, illustrating the idea to reuse existing elements for the proposal.

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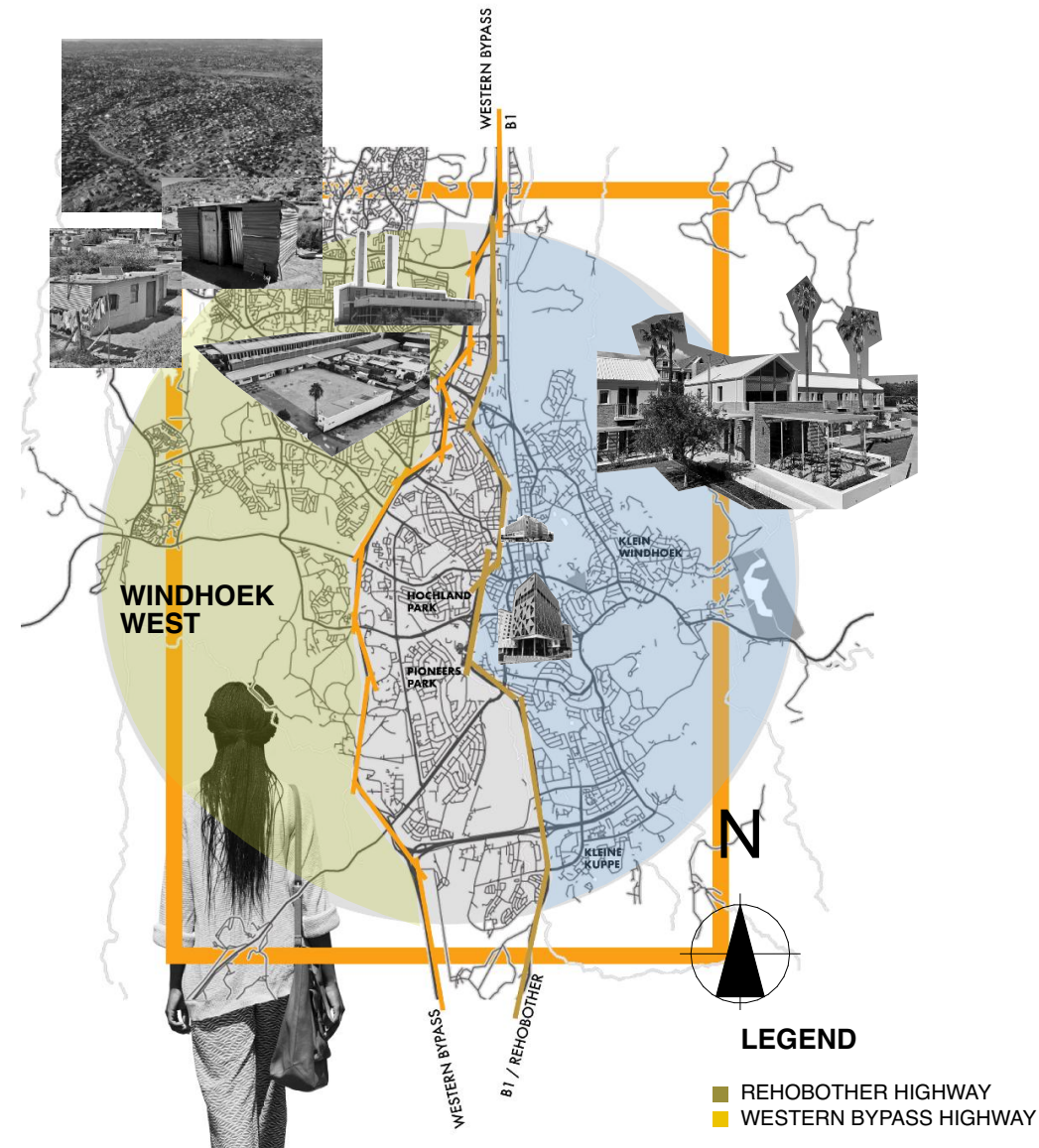
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This chapter provides an overview of the background to the study, outlining the problem statement, research questions, and the methodology employed to investigate the adaptive reuse of the Cohen Building. It also discusses the limitations encountered during the research, framing the context within which the findings and design strategies were developed.



1.1 BACKGROUND

The city of Windhoek bears the historical imprint of a uniquely divided colonial experience (Kössler, 2007). During the colonial era, settlers predominantly occupied and developed the eastern regions of Windhoek, while central-eastern areas were reserved mainly for business and industrial purposes, and the western parts of the city were designated for lower-income residential purposes. Figure 3 illustrates the divided nature of Windhoek, visualising the sectioned-off eastern, western, and central domains.

In recent years, Windhoek's urban landscape has undergone a transformative shift, with many businesses choosing to relocate from the Central Business District (CBD) to newly developed business zones on the periphery. This movement has left the CBD with an increasing number of vacant buildings, creating an economic vacuum. The exodus of major companies to periphery business buildings (Hislop, 2022) has contributed to a growing sense of stagnation in the city centre, and decentralised development has further exacerbated this trend. The result is an upsurge in abandoned office spaces within the CBD, offering both a challenge and an opportunity to redefine the area's character and function (Hoodendrood and Marias, 2008). Figure 4 highlights the varied methods of appropriation that have emerged, ranging from positive small-scale economic initiatives to negative social behaviours, with the latter becoming more prevalent.

The departure of businesses from the CBD has contributed to a rise in antisocial behaviour, largely as a result of unemployment among young adults.

Figure.3: City Divide.
The image illustrates the segregated view of the CBD and the people it serves.

This mirrors the analysis of Hoodendrood and Marias (2008), who argue that crime and other negative social behaviours are directly proportional to decentralised development in cities, as

demonstrated in their study of the Bloemfontein CBD in South Africa. As business and economic opportunities move outwards, the youth within the

CBD face shrinking employment prospects, leading to increased social instability.



Figure.4: City appropriation.
The image illustrates the atmosphere of the CBD area, appropriated by various means.

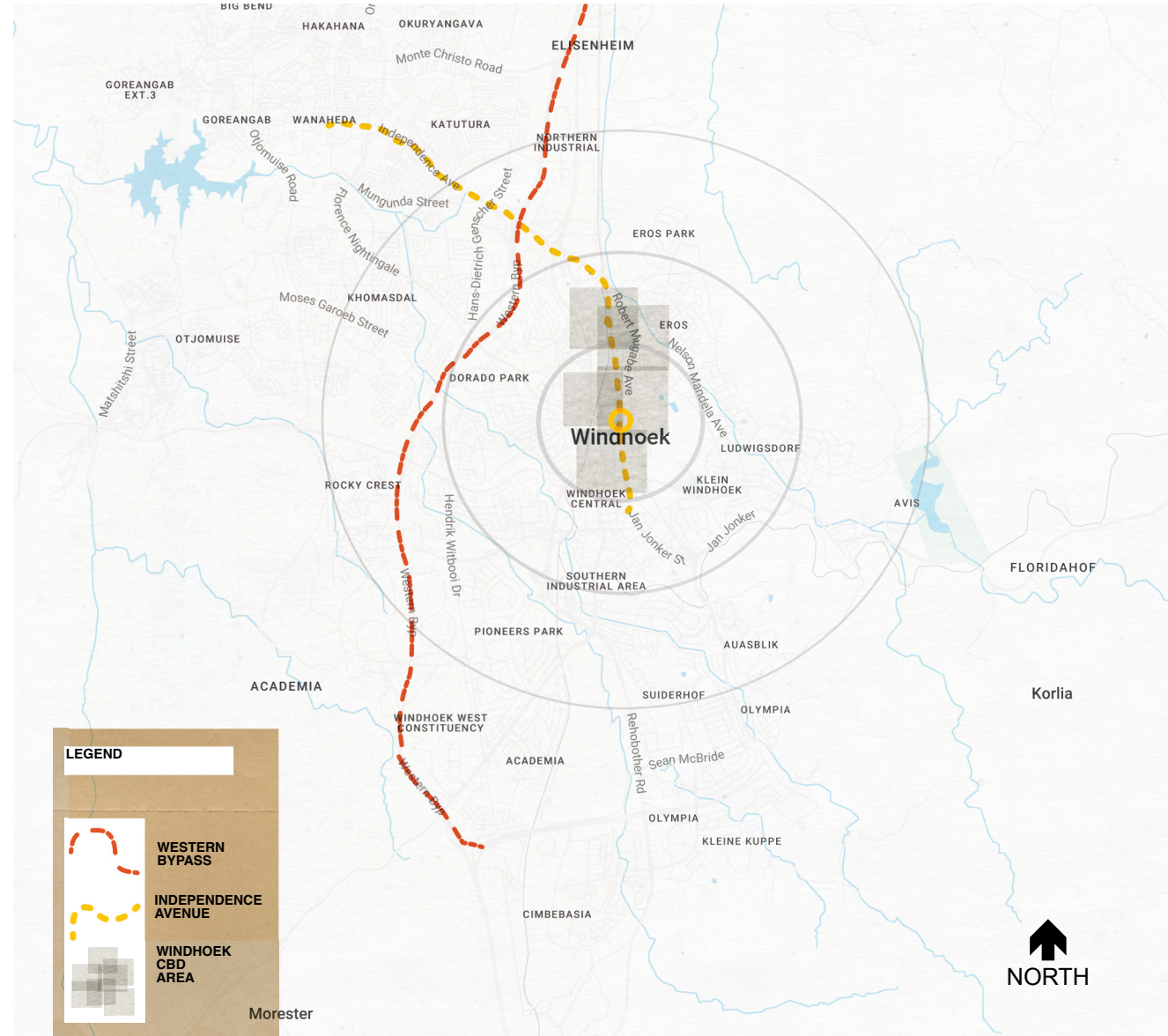


Figure.5 Windhoek Locality Plan.
Site plan depicting the Western bypass divide
and its's relation to the CBD area and the
Cohen Building.

However, this challenging urban climate also presents an opportunity to repurpose these vacant spaces. The property market remains a sound investment, and there is potential to revitalise the CBD by creating spaces that meet the needs of a modern economy (Hislop, 2022). By understanding the social fabric and dynamics of the area (Cox, 2024), addressing the contextual challenges, and promoting a more inclusive and engaging urban experience, there is potential to reverse the trend of urban decay. Figure 5 highlights the division between the eastern and western parts of Windhoek, with a focus on the CBD area and the abandoned Cohen Building. Figure 6 illustrates the Cohen Building and Adjacent Buildings.

This context sets the stage for the adaptive reuse of the Cohen Building, as explored in this thesis. By transforming this neglected structure into a digital creators' hub, the project seeks to harness the power of Industry 4.0 and provide a platform for the youth to generate income through digital means, reshaping the future of the CBD and contributing to a thriving urban environment.

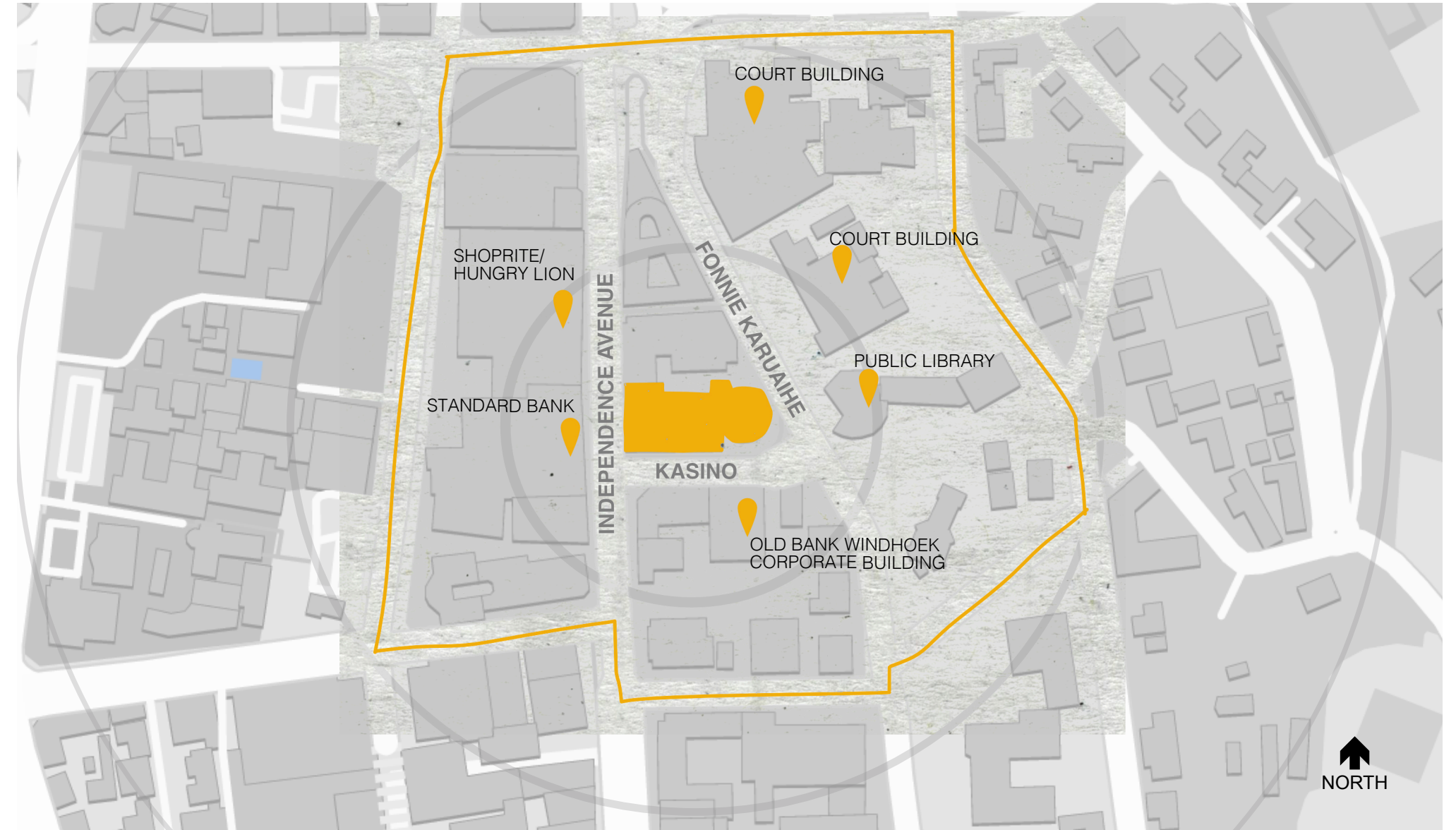


Figure.6 CBD Locality Plan.
Site plan depicting the CBD area and the
adjacent building/ businesses around the
Cohen Building.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The issue being addressed is the abandonment of buildings within the CBD and the subsequent rise in anti-social behaviour. This exploration examines the issue through the lens of the “beat of the street”—a metaphorical representation of the vibrancy, activity, and movement within the urban environment. The beat of the street involves analysing the dynamic interactions that take place throughout the site, reflecting the rhythm and pulse of daily life. A lack of dynamic interactions is central to the problem of abandonment, as reduced vibrancy directly impacts the economic and social fabric of the area.

Figure 7 illustrates significant occurrences within the CBD area surrounding the Cohen Building, highlighting the diminishing activity, which has resulted in weakened street life and consequently contributed to the rise of antisocial behaviours. Figure 8 is a visual representation of the business exodus in the CBD area. This decline has put immense pressure on retailers in the CBD, once

responsible for generating employment opportunities. The exodus of businesses, coupled with the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, has led to a significant loss of foot traffic, further exacerbating urban decay (Brandt, 2022).

The problem is multifaceted, involving three critical areas. First, the increase in anti-social behaviour reduces the ability of urban citizens to freely use public facilities, impacting their perception of safety and restricting their options for travel and activity (Hooden & Matias, 2008). This decline in freedom diminishes the vitality of public spaces. Secondly, the abandonment of the House of Cohen and surrounding structures represents unsustainable economic and environmental practices. Adaptive reuse presents an opportunity to address this by balancing social, economic, and environmental interests (Vackier, 2014). Lastly, the rise of anti-social behaviours and misappropriation of spaces underscores the urgent need for revitalisation

interventions as left unchallenged, the CBD could reach a point of extreme in which it will be a challenge to reverse Sassen (2005). The CBD should be a place that attracts investment and fosters economic growth, representing the heartbeat of urban development (Cox, 2024).

By addressing the lack of vibrancy and dynamic interactions in the CBD, this thesis seeks to explore solutions that will reinvigorate the area, transforming it from a space of decay into a thriving hub of activity, where the beat of the street returns, and with it, opportunity and social cohesion. The proposed intervention of adaptive reuse aims to bring life back to the Cohen Building, thereby contributing to a broader revitalisation effort for the Windhoek CBD.

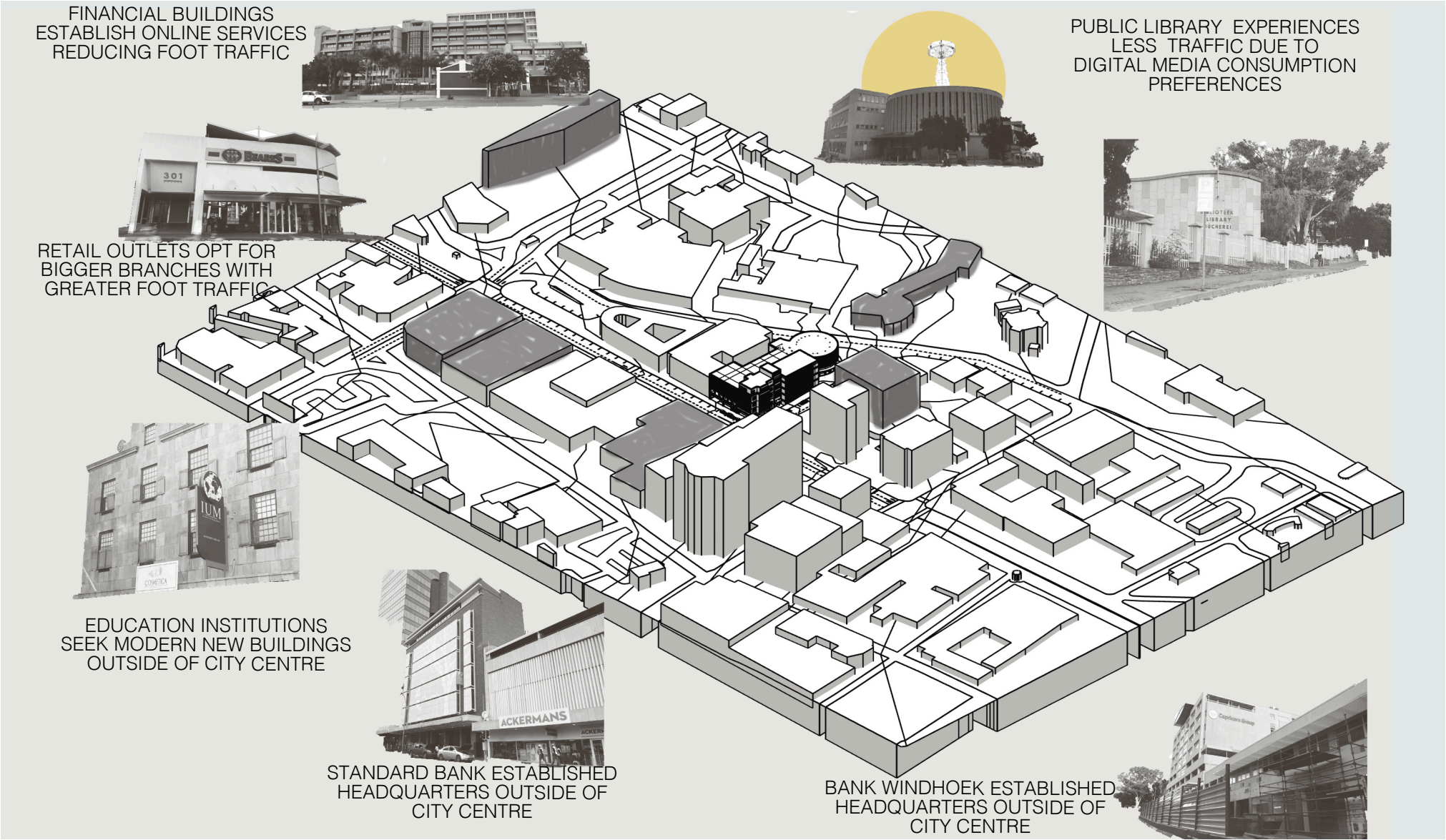


Figure.7: The Exodus of Business. The image illustrates the loss of business in the CBD area.

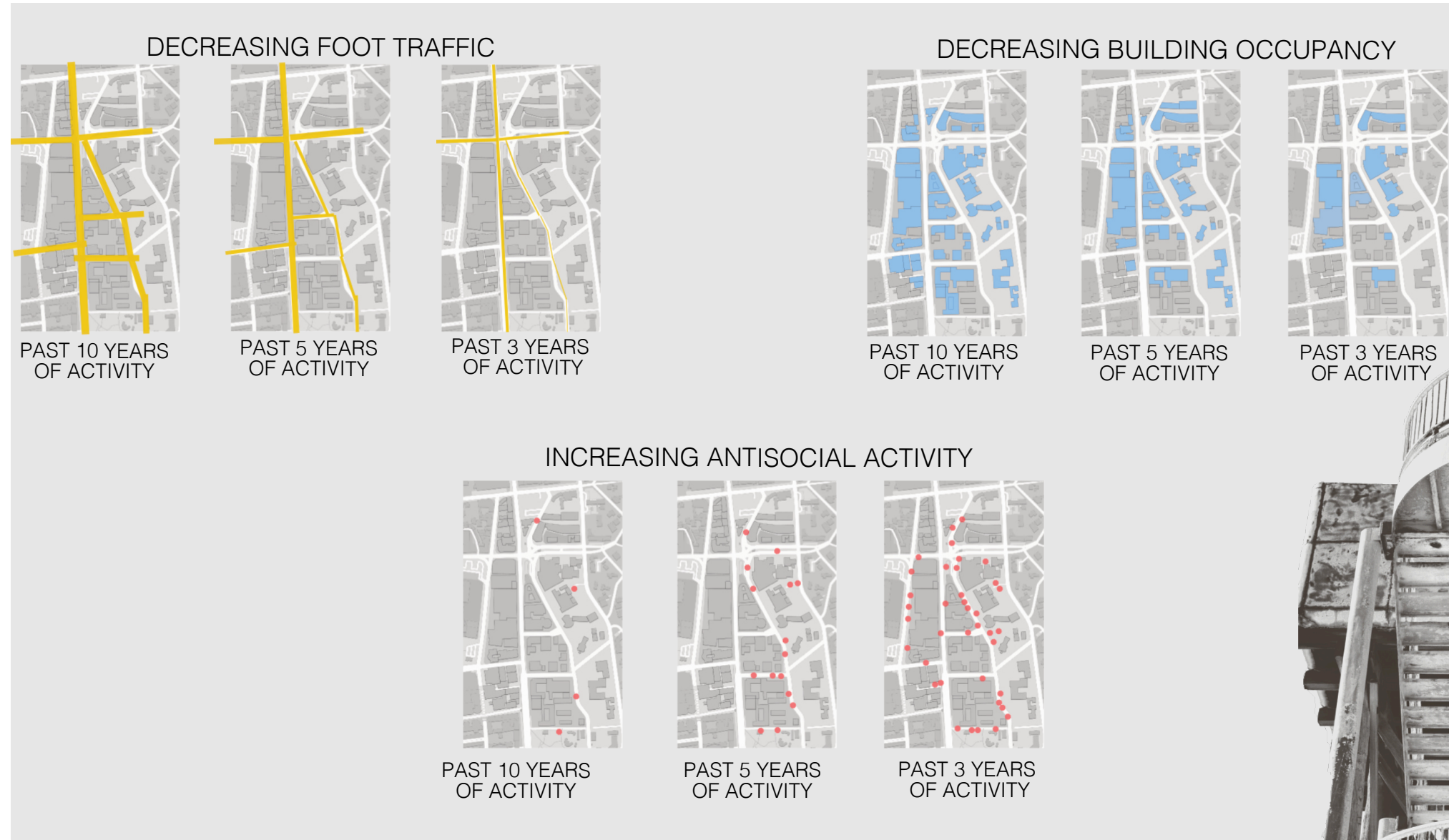


Figure.8: Activity and Occupancy.
The image illustrates the activity in the CBD area.

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The goal of this thesis is to propose an adaptive reuse strategy that addresses the challenges of building abandonment in Windhoek's city centre by transforming the House of Cohen into a vibrant digital creators' hub. This intervention aims to reduce the loss of foot traffic, reinvigorate abandoned spaces, and promote positive behaviours aligned with the CBD's urban development. Figure 9 illustrates the intent to curb urban decay by fostering a renewed sense of activity within the area. Furthermore, Figure 10 outlines the vision for urban revitalisation, highlighting how the project could

serve as a catalyst for future regeneration efforts. By encouraging collaboration between public stakeholders, private entities, and non-profit organisations, this thesis seeks to mitigate the negative impacts of businesses leaving the CBD and harness the latent potential of these underutilised spaces.

Through this framework, the thesis will explore the research questions by investigating how the transformation of the Cohen Building can contribute to revitalising the CBD, examining the socio-

economic factors at play, and proposing design approaches that meet the area's evolving needs.

The vision lines up with that of the Ministry of Communications, Information, and Technology fostering innovation by embracing new ideas and aligning with emerging trends to meet the needs of a dynamic society. (MICT, 2023)



Figure.9: The city with dynamic liveliness.
The image represents a renewed street edge condition of activity in contrast to a derelict and degrading edge.

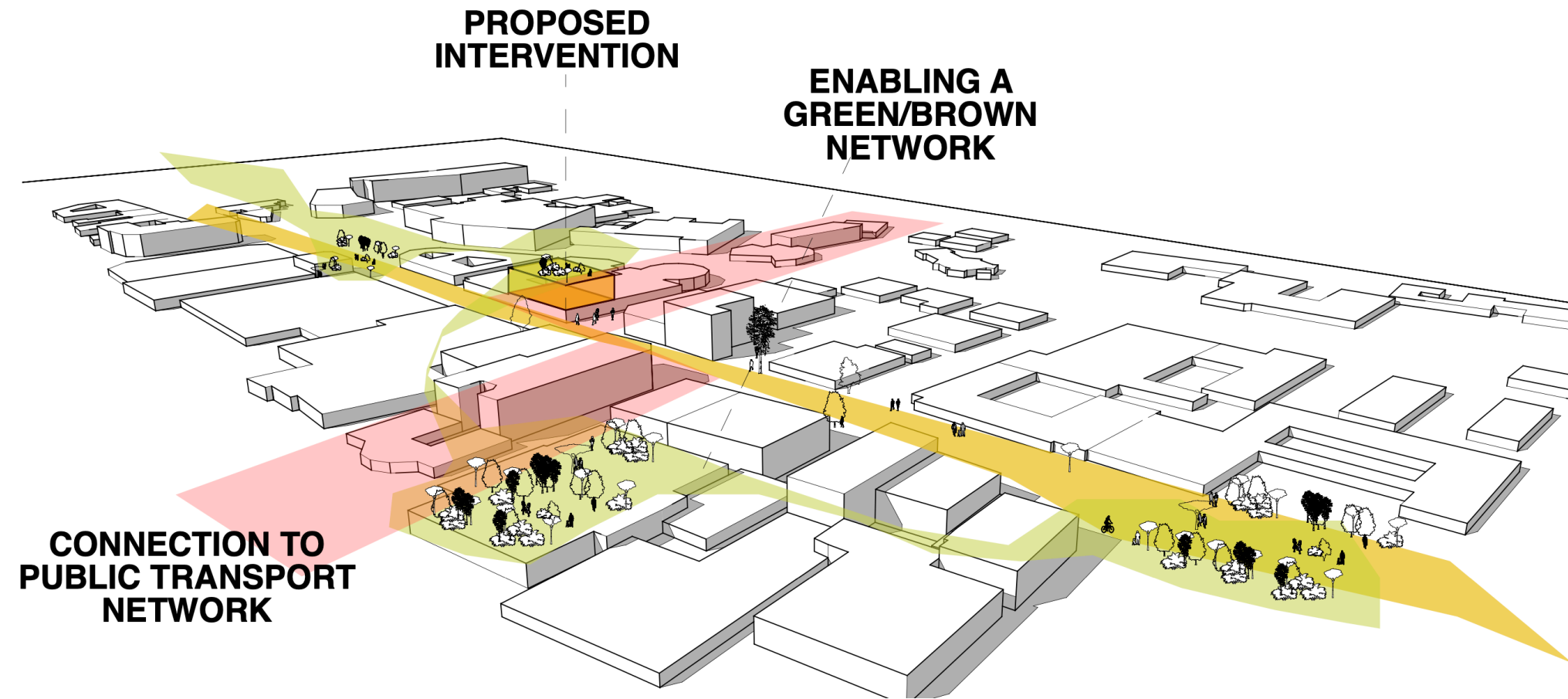


Figure.10: Catalyst plan.
The image illustrates overall idea to revitalise
the section of the CBD area.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the current socio-economic and spatial characteristics surrounding the Cohen Building?

2. What are the historical factors, architectural features, and urban development trends that have shaped the Cohen Building?

3. How can we develop effective design approaches and programs, within the current context for repurposing the Cohen Building?

THE SPATIAL EXPLORATION QUESTION

“How can an architecture of ethereal flow reimagine a historic building of exchange into an architectural influencer by choreographing kinetic pods for flexible usage, funnelling atriums for collaboration, and reposting a narrative gallery aimed at empowering young creatives, thus shaping the destiny of aspiring digital entrepreneurs?”

This revised question maintains the original focus but refines the language to make it clearer and more focused on architectural and spatial dynamics, while

still maintaining the conceptual and metaphorical aspects. The idea of “ethereal flow” introduces a dynamic spatial quality, and concepts like “choreographing” and “reposting” introduce movement and interaction in the space.

The elements of my thesis design, such as kinetic pods and collaborative atriums, become more integral to the investigation, suggesting an archetype or architectural typology that is both physical and conceptual in addressing the needs of

a digital economy. Figure 11 breaks down the intent of the research question into spatial factors that can be addressed by a design.

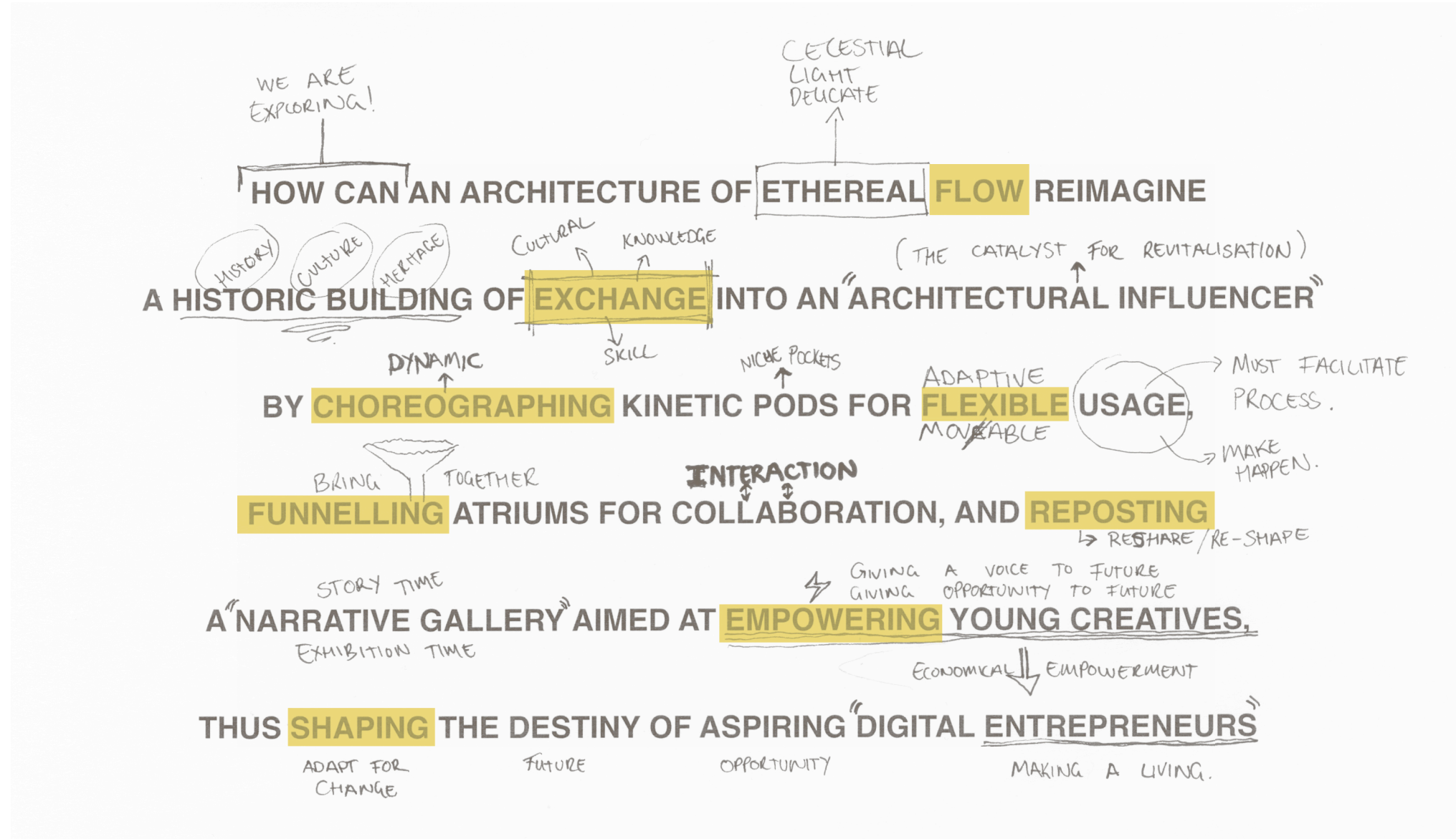


Figure.11: Illustration of the breakdown of research question.

1,5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This thesis employs a varied methodological approach to explore the transformation of the House of Cohen into a dynamic digital creators' hub, answering the spatial question: "How can an architecture of ethereal flow reimagine a historic building of exchange into an architectural influencer through kinetic pods, collaborative atriums, and a narrative gallery aimed at empowering young creatives?" The methodology focuses on adaptive reuse, contextual analysis, and dynamic architectural principles to address building abandonment and foster collaboration and growth within the digital economy.

The initial investigation analysed the site through a desktop research approach, focused on studying the historical, architectural, and socio-economic characteristics of Windhoek's CBD to understand the role of the House of Cohen in this space. Drawing on concepts from Norbert Schulz's Genius Loci (1980), the research emphasised the importance of grasping the spirit of place in the pursuit of designing responsive architecture. This is followed by site exploration through the "beat of the street" method, which entailed observing the movement and interaction of people with a device designed to emulate the purpose of the building, around the site to inform design decisions addressing the issue of abandonment and anti-social behaviour, which serves as a test to see whether the intended proposal would be a fitting response.

Photography, sketching, and collaging are employed to document the site and visualise new abstract and visual-spatial possibilities. These explorative, layered photo collages aim to break from traditional design processes, facilitating the

exploration of how pods and spaces interact dynamically. Computer-aided design (CAD) was adopted in the development of precise and flexible spatial configurations. Dynamic elements were modelled through CAD, and collaborative spaces were tested as a repeated exercise to deliver a holistic proposal, supporting visual communication through 3D digital modelling.

The methodology further involves physical modelling and analysis of dynamic interactions, using physical and digital mediums to explore adaptive design options in kinetic architecture. This iterative process examined how spaces respond to changing needs and presented opportunities to enhance social interactions. Conventional exploration methods, such as exploratory site visits and walks within the site combined with interactive mapping, formed part of the methodology for testing whether the ideas had the potential to act in the ways intended.

These combined methodologies ensure the analysis aligns with the thesis objective: reimagining the House of Cohen as an architectural catalyst, fostering collaboration, engagement, and innovation within Windhoek's CBD and contributing to a thriving digital economy.

1.6 RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

This thesis highlights several limitations. The study spans from 2022 to 2024, restricting on-site investigations and the ability to consider seasonal shifts in urban activity. Thus, it captures only a moment in Windhoek's CBD dynamics, potentially missing long-term trends that inform adaptive reuse strategies. This limitation confines the research scope.

Additionally, the House of Cohen, though vacant, remains government-owned, requiring multiple authorization levels for site access. Bureaucratic challenges restricted the analysis to publicly available data and external observations, impacting the depth of on-site investigation and informing the design strategy.

Ethical considerations also shaped the research. Direct engagement with vulnerable groups, like homeless youth, was avoided to prevent false hopes about immediate solutions. This led to a focus on indirect observation instead of structured interviews. Consequently, the thesis presents insights into potential adaptive reuse strategies for revitalizing the CBD, without guaranteeing specific outcomes.

These limitations underscore the project's exploratory nature and the need for flexibility in the design process. Nonetheless, the research aims to provide insights into reimagining the House of Cohen as a catalyst for a more vibrant, economically active, and socially inclusive Windhoek CBD.



This chapter delves into the literature relevant to the study, exploring socio-economic challenges, the significance of heritage and history, and the critical role of context-specific, people-centric design. These themes provide a theoretical framework for understanding how adaptive reuse can address urban decay while preserving cultural identity and fostering community engagement.

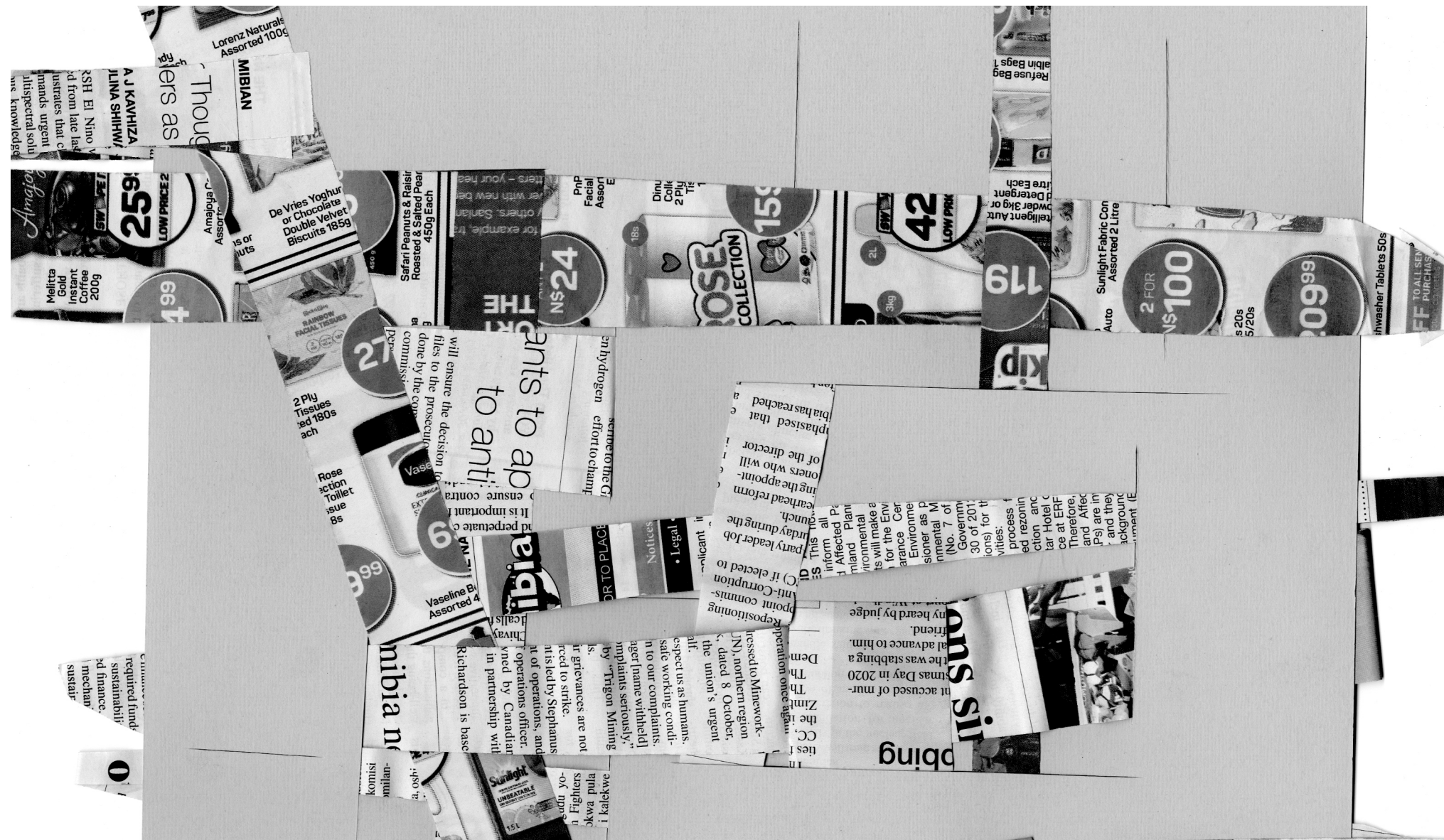


Figure.12: The context weave. The image illustrates the tangled weave in which context and the economy interact..

2.1 THE ECONOMIC, CONTEXTUAL WEAVE.

The first section explores the essence of the surrounding context, delving into the socio-economic indicators and spatial characteristics. The section examines economic factors associated with a decrease in foot traffic and activity within areas with small business or employment opportunities. This understanding allows for a bottom-up approach to solutions rather than a top-down one. The complex nature of understanding a context from its roots is illustrated by Figure 12; the contextual weave highlights the idea of overlapping factors building up a context. This emphasises the need for a holistic approach that addresses the challenges faced in an abandoned city centre. Sassen argues that points of extreme are reached when there is insufficient understanding of a particular subject (2005); Figure 13 is representative of this notion. A lack of understanding of deeper-rooted relationships within an issue leaves only the symptoms to be addressed, allowing the main issue to grow out of control.

Looking at the big picture, factors associated with socio-economic challenges, such as low employment for youth, prove to be important in preventing and alleviating the abandonment of the CBD. Moreover, the micro-economy that provides stability to low-income opportunities plays a greater role in the global economy of a city (Sassen, 2016). The emergence of an alternative economy surrounding young entrepreneurs will allow for growth within the financial network, opening channels for small-scale digital entrepreneurs to feed into larger businesses. Although larger firms have migrated out of the CBD area in favour of new, larger buildings with consolidated department setups, the micro-economy created will benefit from the professional services rendered by lawyers, accountants, and other knowledgeable personnel. In this way, the local economy will feed into the network of the global economy, avoiding a sustainable fragmented economy, as illustrated in Figure 13. A

fragmented economy results in the abandonment of micro-economies, countering the development of the CBD and fuelling unemployment, lack of

housing, education, medical care, and food security, ultimately contributing to anti-social behaviour.

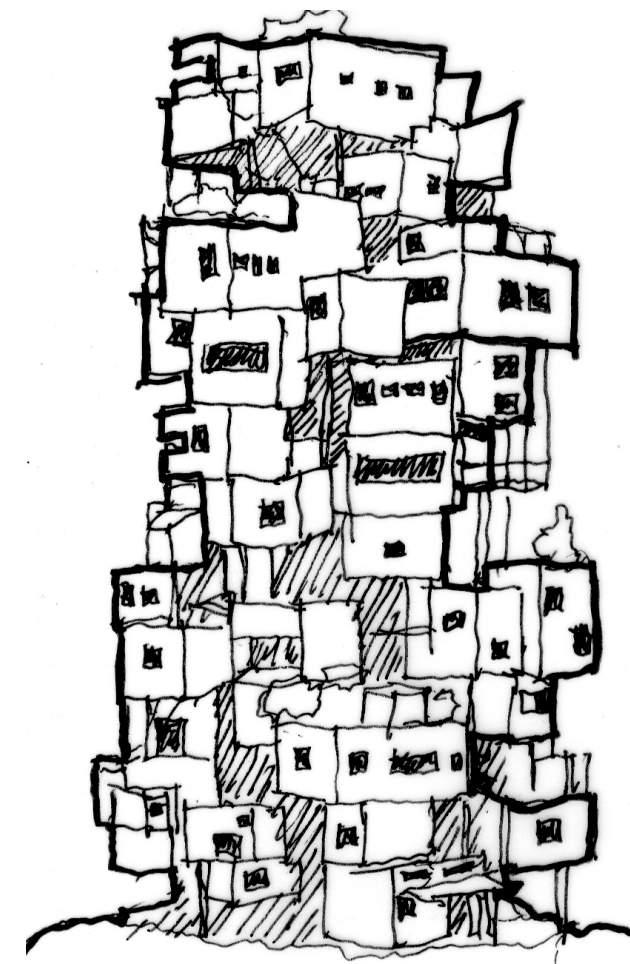


Figure.13A: Representation of the growing appropriation by economically disadvantaged resulting in large squatter developments..

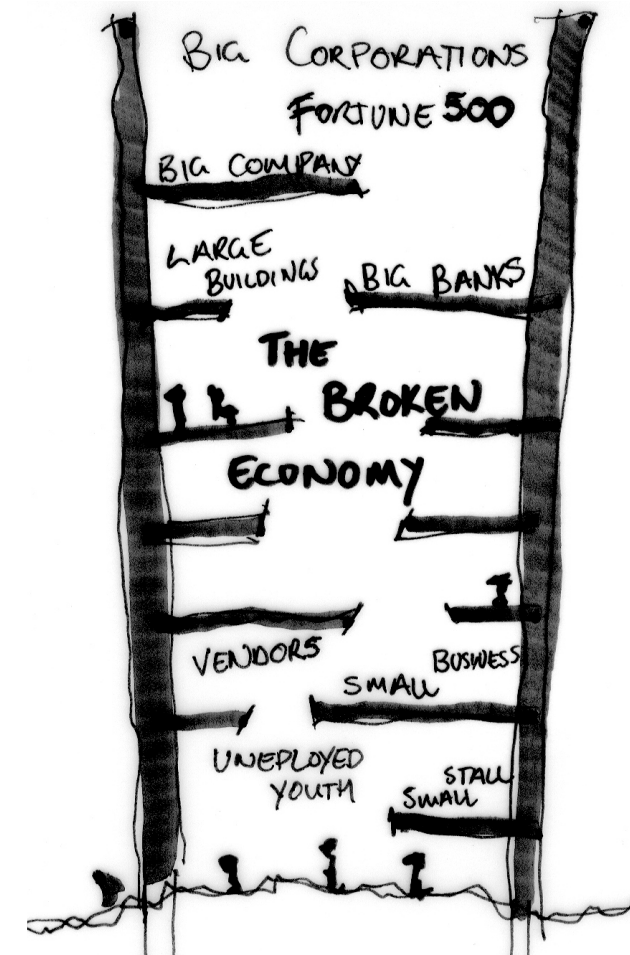


Figure.13B: An illustration of an economy disjointed creating socio-economic challenges.

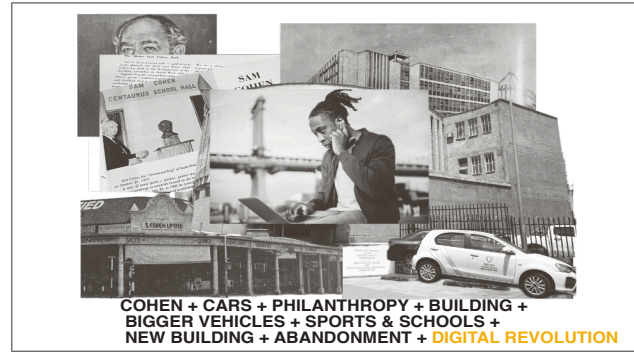
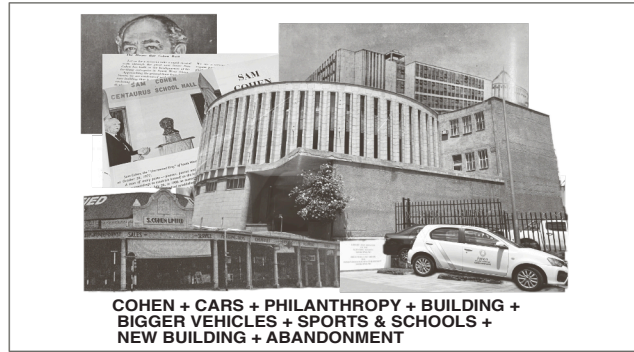
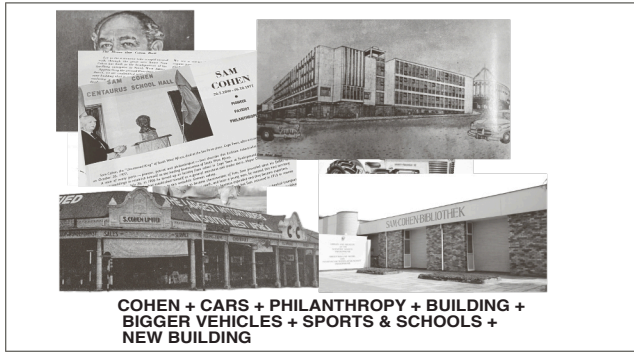
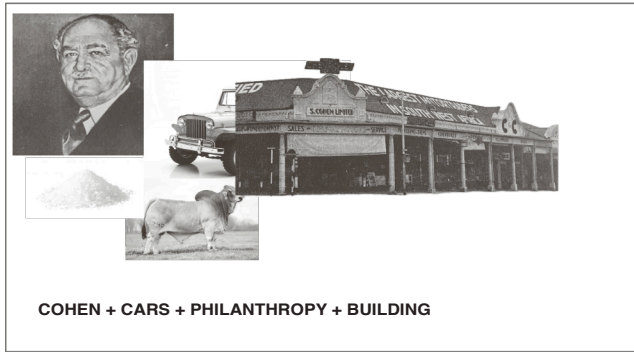
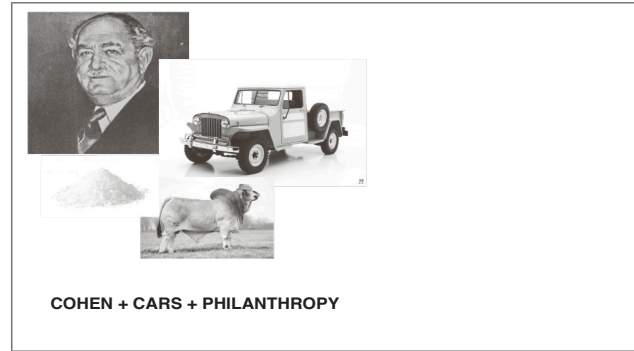
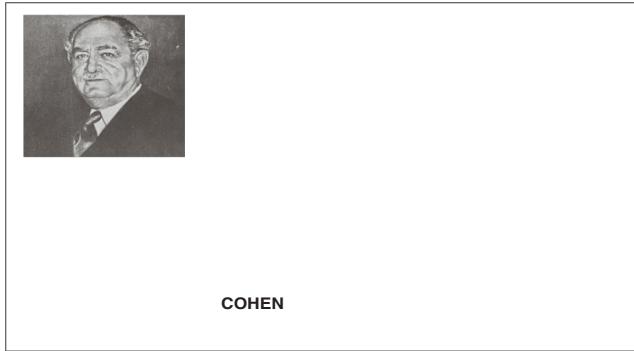


Figure.14: Contextual continuity. The image illustrates the context layers over which the House of Cohen exists.

2.2 LINEAGE: HERITAGE, CULTURE AND IDENTITY

The second section focuses on historical factors, outlining the aspects of heritage, culture, and identity as key informants for urban development. The House of Cohen unveils significant contextual history within materials, structure, and story. This history fosters a sense of identity by connecting people to their visionary and innovative roots. Figure 14 illustrates the legacy of the building and its importance as an industry leader in the urban development of the CBD. Disko argues that the policies, programmes, and activities affecting the indigenous people should be recognised for their interconnectedness (2017). This emphasises the connected holistic approach visualised by the contextual weave of Figure 13, and accentuates the need to acknowledge the present, past, and future in the repurposing of abandoned buildings. The House of Cohen stands as a significant symbol of urban growth and innovation, contributing to development during the upswing of the automotive industry in Windhoek, linking its heritage to future design that will aim to be part of the digital revolution. This proposal for conservation requires a range of preservation strategies for safeguarding architectural heritage, including community engagement initiatives that empower local communities to take ownership through participatory planning, skills development, and cultural tourism (Chacabveyo 2024). Without consideration of these aspects, repurposing the Cohen Building will fail to maintain a balance in remaining relevant to the current context (Nursanty et al., 2023). As important buildings such as the House of Cohen have histories forgotten, abandonment seizes the opportunity and the legacy is lost. The importance of this practice of safeguarding allows authenticity to be preserved, which acknowledges the current environment, local values, and traditions in place, ensuring longevity (Nursanty et al., 2023).



Figure.15: Contextual connectivity, this image shows the vast spread influence of Cohen..

2.3 PEOPLE CENTRIC ADAPTIVE PLACE MAKING

The third section examines placemaking through case studies to identify strategies for repurposing buildings like the House of Cohen. Meaningful space is a result of a deep understanding of the origins of its context and relationships (Brown 1981). Contextual comprehension forms part of a critical understanding when dealing with the reuse of an existing building. Following this impression, Figure 15 illustrates the known relationships of the House of Cohen to various towns in Namibia. The building has deep-rooted connections with various towns, stemming from historical relationships surrounding trade, culture, and industry. These ties reflect how architecture becomes part of human network experiences, emphasising that buildings should respond to the needs of the people. As the digital world converges with physical environments, there is a growing need for buildings to embrace new technologies to enhance their functionality and relevance in today's learning landscape (Griffiths & Barbour, 2016). With this insight, the House of Cohen sets out to embrace dynamic techniques and technologies in its intent, striving not to abandon its relationship with the community it serves, recognising the importance of architecture for people. Figure 16 depicts scenarios in which the community is allowed to have a say within an intervention, context is consulted, and contrasts the misalignment in a vision curated by the designer.

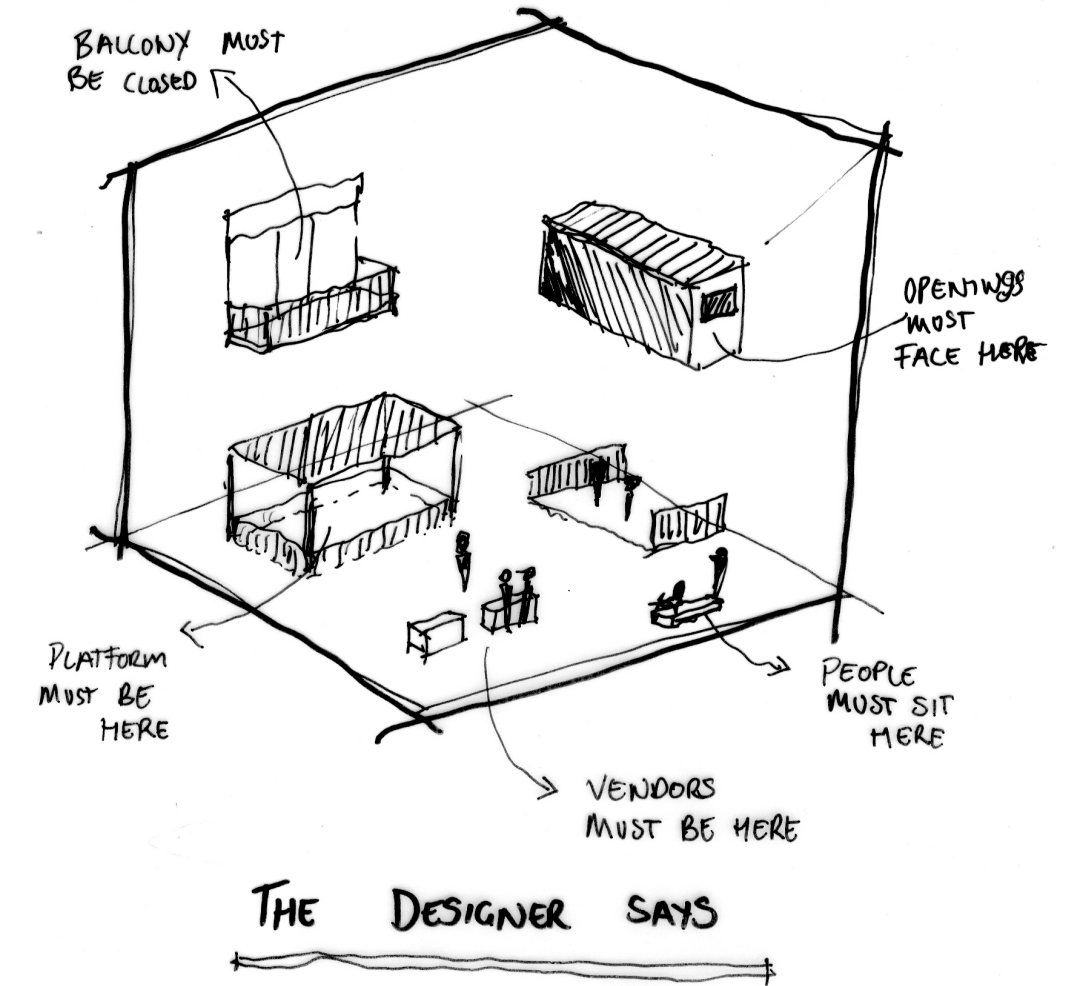
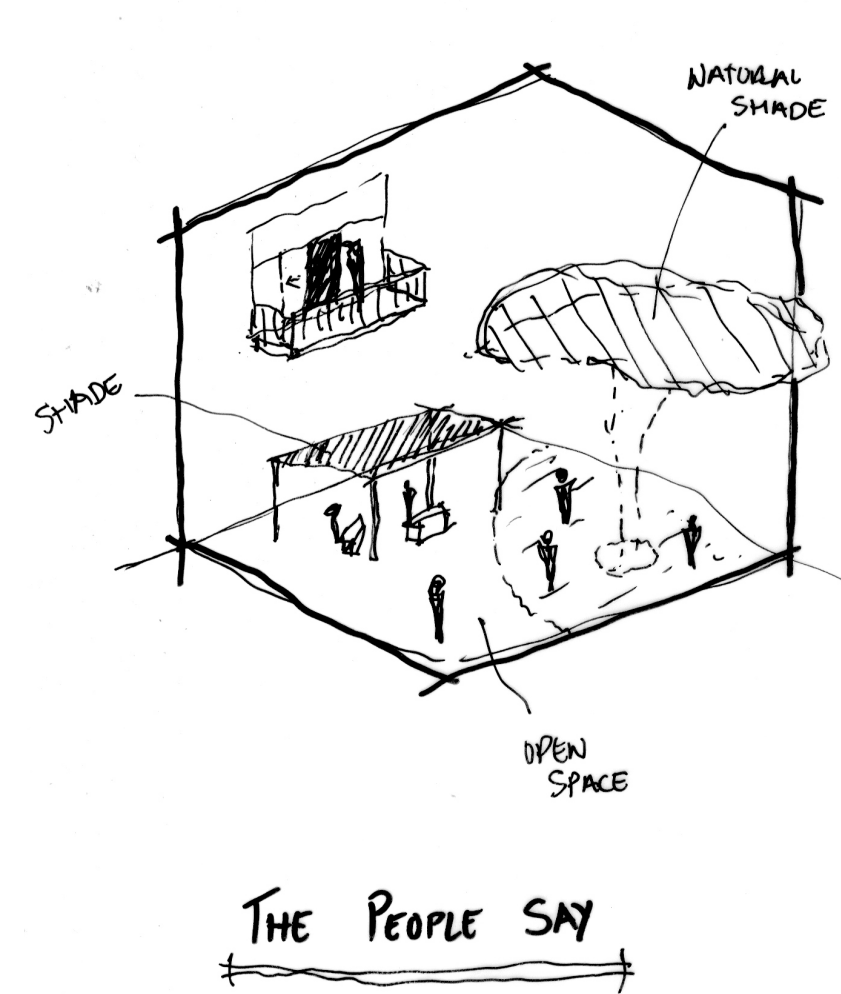


Figure.16: this image illustrates the dilemma of top - down approaches to dealing with design.

2.4 DYNAMISM

Dynamism takes precedence as the concept in which the House of Cohen will act as a catalyst in the transformation of the CBD whilst taking into account socio-economic, cultural, historic, and people-centric aspirations for the future digital revolution. Dynamism pertains to the practice of movement, change, and fluidity, which typically includes the creation of comfortable spaces that are often transformable and functional (Gorgorova and Sarkisyants, 2018), not limited to perceived movement but also encompassing the functional properties of the environment and the offerings or relationships of varied perspectives available to the user (Øien et al. 2023). The concept proposes a break away from static, rigid, and traditional conceptions and embraces a sense of transformation through vibrant and responsive architectural practices. This favoured approach calls for kinetic architecture endorsing adjustability and

reconfiguration, which serves to keep the proposal relevant and functional to the community needs of the newly proposed digital economy spearheaded by Industry 4.0. The dynamic interplay of the architecture and the perceiver, therefore, aspires to bring more meaningful and value-rich experiences (Øien et al. 2023), adding to the memorable experience of place and psychological connection to space. In addition, the concept of dynamic architecture calls for interactive and responsive design, focusing on real-time data and creatively reacting and responding to impulses associated with the needs of the community within the current digital climate of Industry 4.0. This adaptation to respond to changed environments through components that adapt automatically is coined as adaptive architecture (Gentleman, 2004). The proposal, as a holistic approach, represents a forward-thinking, context-driven measure that

challenges the abandonment of existing architecture, pushing the boundaries of the practicality of the once innovative House of Cohen, leveraging technology, innovative materials, and creativity to create engaging environments for its users.

2.5 KEY INSIGHTS



03

CHAPTER CASE STUDIES



This chapter explores three case studies addressing inserting engaging activities within an existing building, inside-outside spatial relationships, and integrating dynamic architectural expressions for adaptable design.



Figure 17: Photo of Malha project interior.
Source: <https://www.archdaily.com/877147/malha-tavares-duayer-arquitetura>

3.1 CASE STUDY 01:

The first of the case studies is from a global South context, with similar climatic conditions and a history of colonial influence as Windhoek. Project “MALHA” was created as a platform for the fashion industry of São Cristóvão, Brazil.

The town is one of the oldest settlements in Brazil, with a rich textile industry. Due to its strategic location near the Atlantic coast, it was an important colonial centre. The town was established as an upper city and a lower city, the latter housing the port, which now serves as a logistics hub. The area is mainly populated by abandoned factory and warehouse buildings.

Due to its history with Spain and Portugal, these two cultures have heavily impacted the city, influencing the richness of the textiles produced.

The architects created a hub for creators, entrepreneurs, producers, and suppliers to challenge the socio-economic status, providing sustainable livelihoods and connecting to consumers and a global market, similar to the intention of the House of Cohen.

The building takes advantage of the existing structure of an empty warehouse space and floods the open plan with small offices, accommodation, multipurpose spaces, co-working space, and an auditorium.

The proposal makes use of existing materiality and adapts to the requirements of the internal environment; internal brickwork is maintained, and as an addition, the proposal makes use of recycled shipping containers as a means of sustainable innovative practice.

The proposal provides pods for engagement within the internal space and offers various spaces in which interaction occurs.

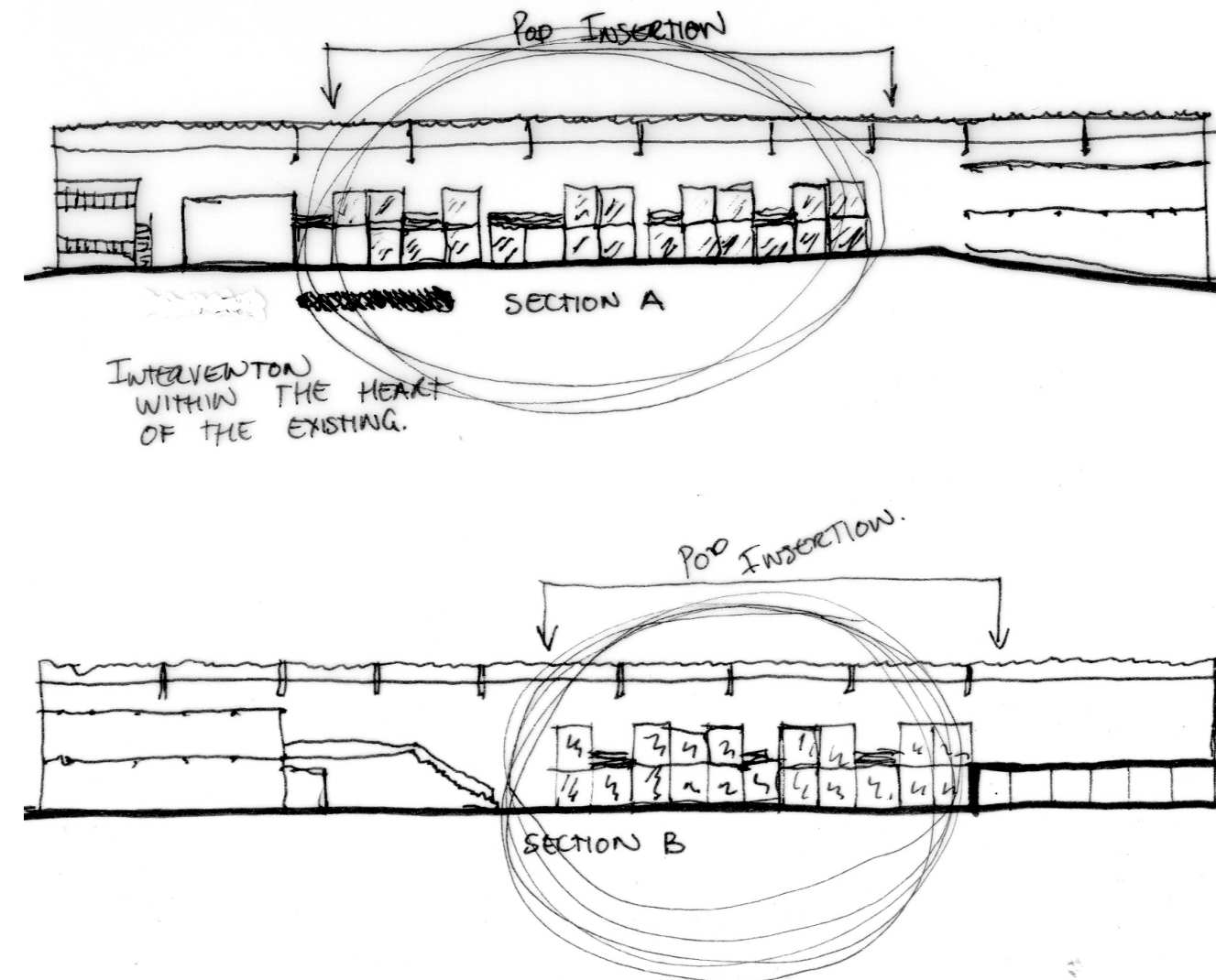


Figure 18: Sketches analysis of pod in spatial setting of interaction of Malha fashion warehouse precedent.



Figure.19: Contextual continuity. The image illustrates the context layers over which the House of Cohen exists.

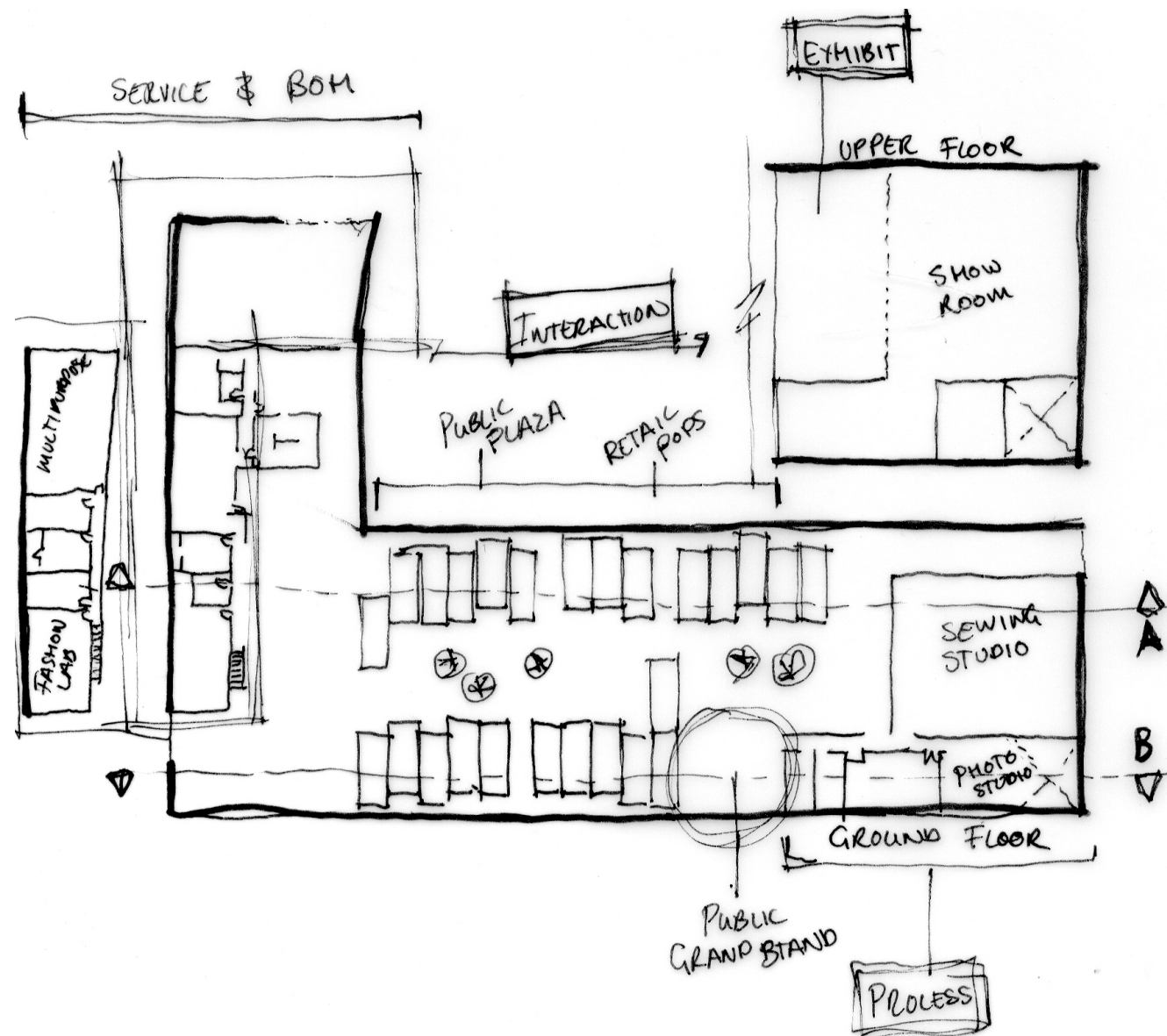


Figure.20: Sketches analysis of floor plan of Mahla fashion warehouse precedent.

3.2 CASE STUDY 02:

The second case study is located in Windhoek, in proximity to the House of Cohen. With similarities in terrain and site accessibility, this precedent offers insights into inaccessible space and the balance of private and public areas. The Centre was awarded to the architect as a result of a competition in 1997. The case study explores one of the earliest proposals to keep the CBD relevant in the wake of Industry 4.0.

The Centre consists of an existing German colonial house nestled atop the hill, with a larger theatre and exhibition space adjacent. The materiality contrasts to differentiate from the existing form and offers

opportunities to present the heritage in a manner that preserves its history and identity.

This celebration of culture facilitates interaction between the new adaptation's external and internal spaces. This fosters engagement with the community and the environment, focusing on keeping, reflecting, and updating trends, and the relationship with internal and external environments. The main building, featuring theatre and exhibition space, opens to two opposite sides, inviting the outside in; similarly, it allows interior programmes to spill out of the building and connect.

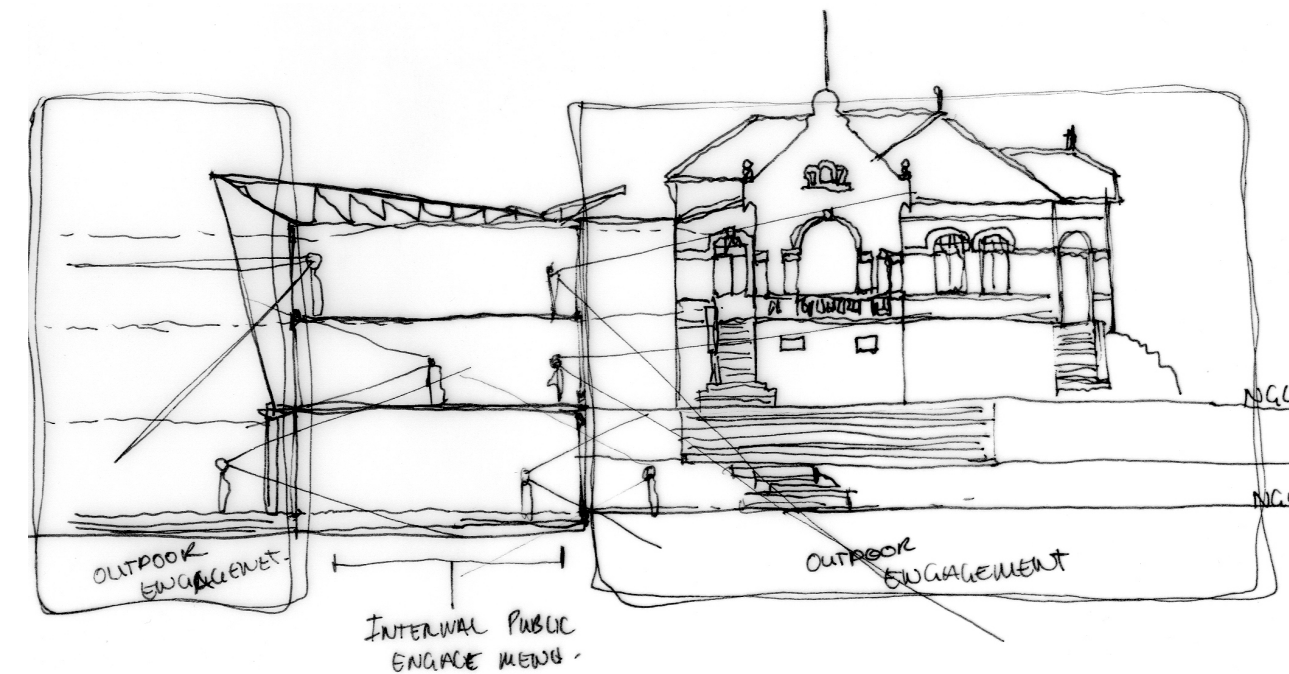


Figure.21: Section analysis of outdoor and indoor connectivity at the FNCC building.

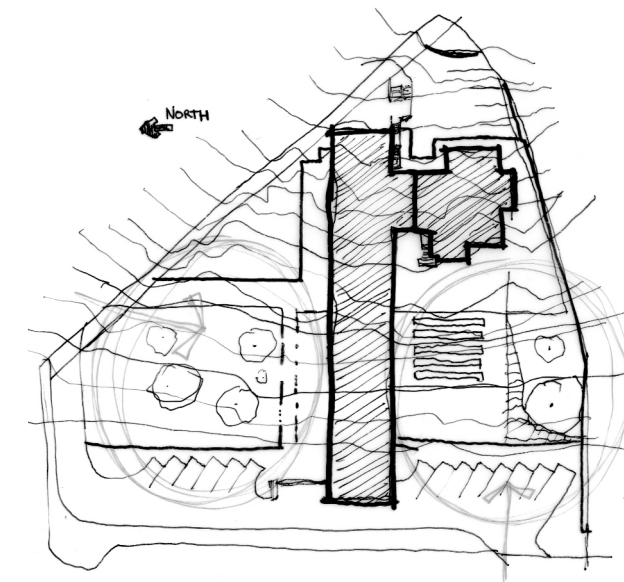


Figure.22: Site plan and orientation diagram of FNCC.



Figure.23: Photo of FNCC Building, Source: <https://www.jwainc.co/fncc>.

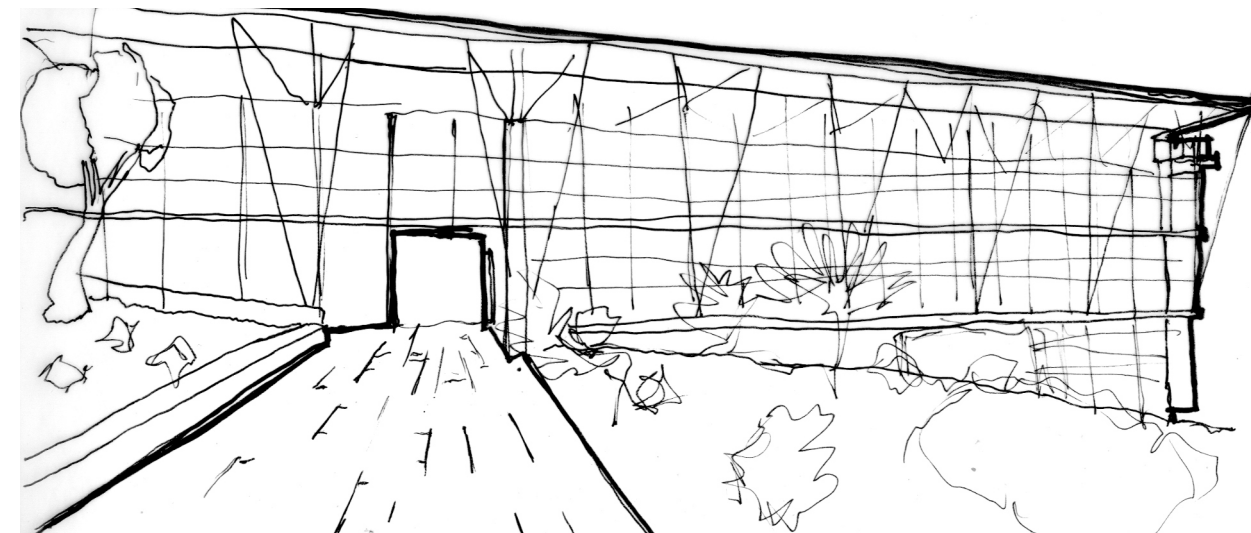


Figure.24: Sketch of North Elevation of FNCC Building.

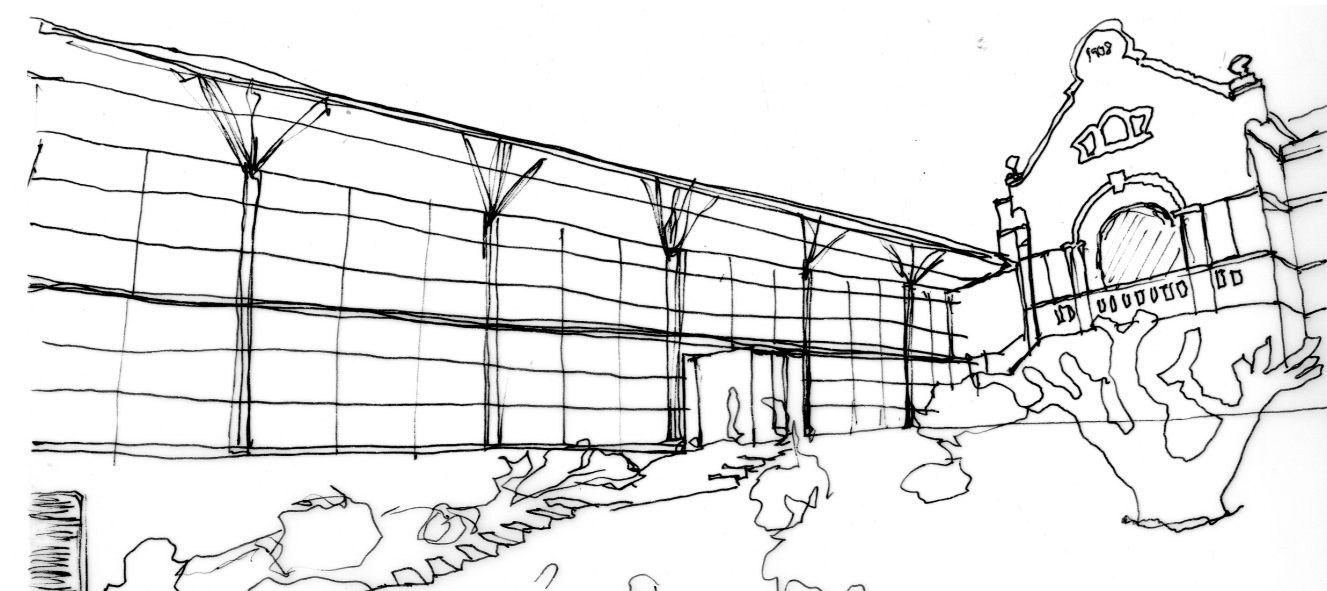


Figure.25: Sketch of South Elevation of the FNCC.

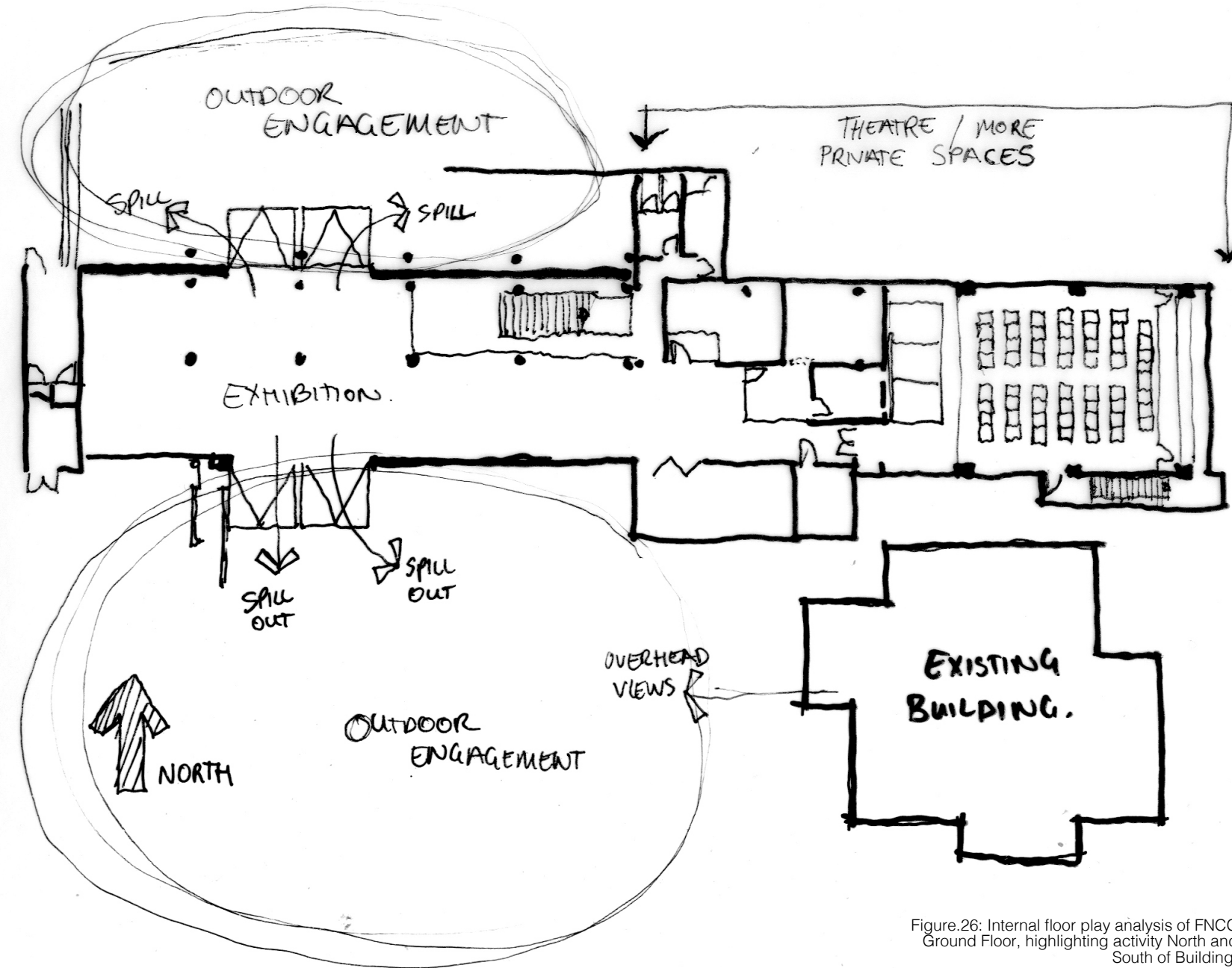


Figure.26: Internal floor play analysis of FNCC Ground Floor, highlighting activity North and South of Building.

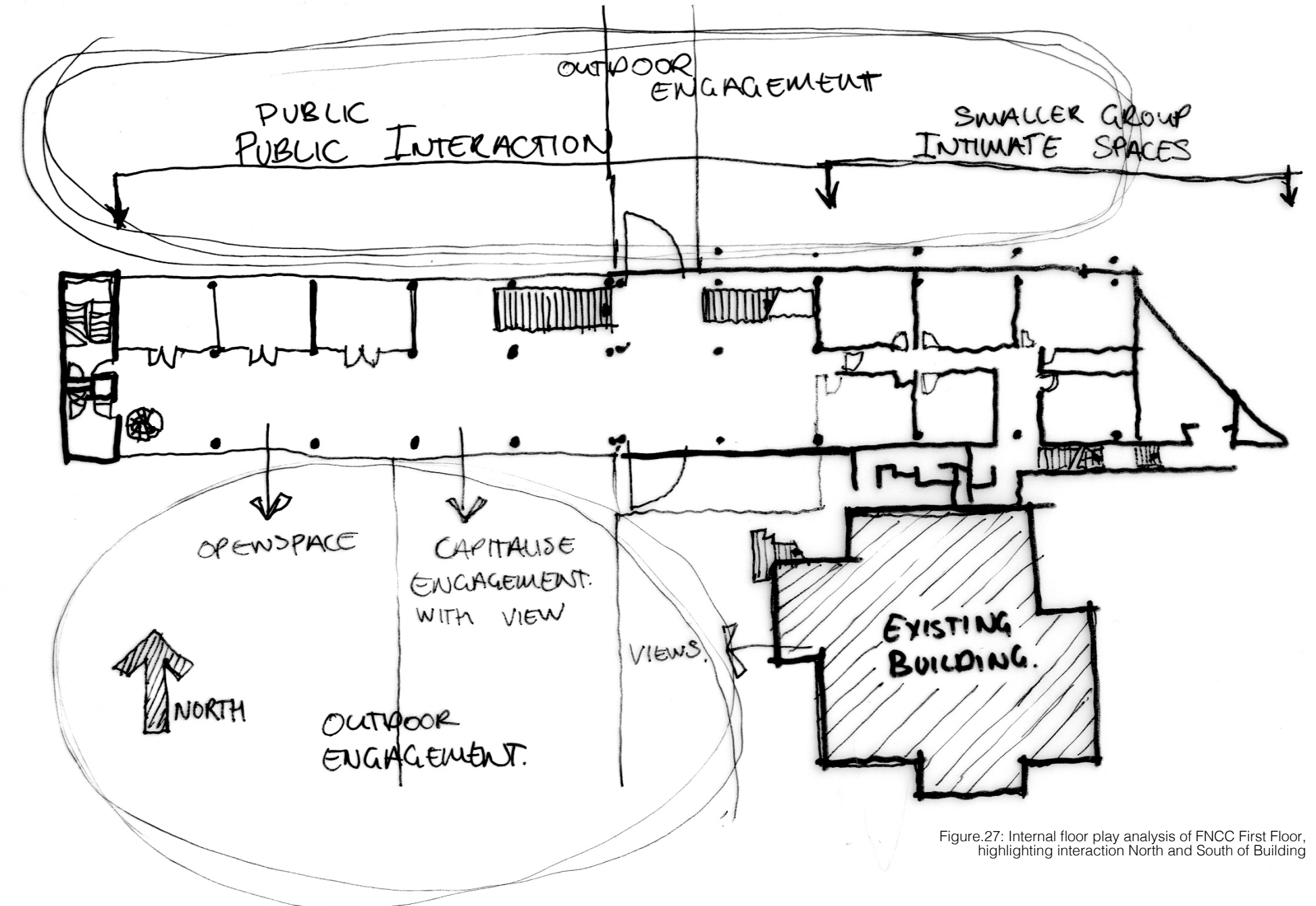


Figure.27: Internal floor play analysis of FNCC First Floor, highlighting interaction North and South of Building

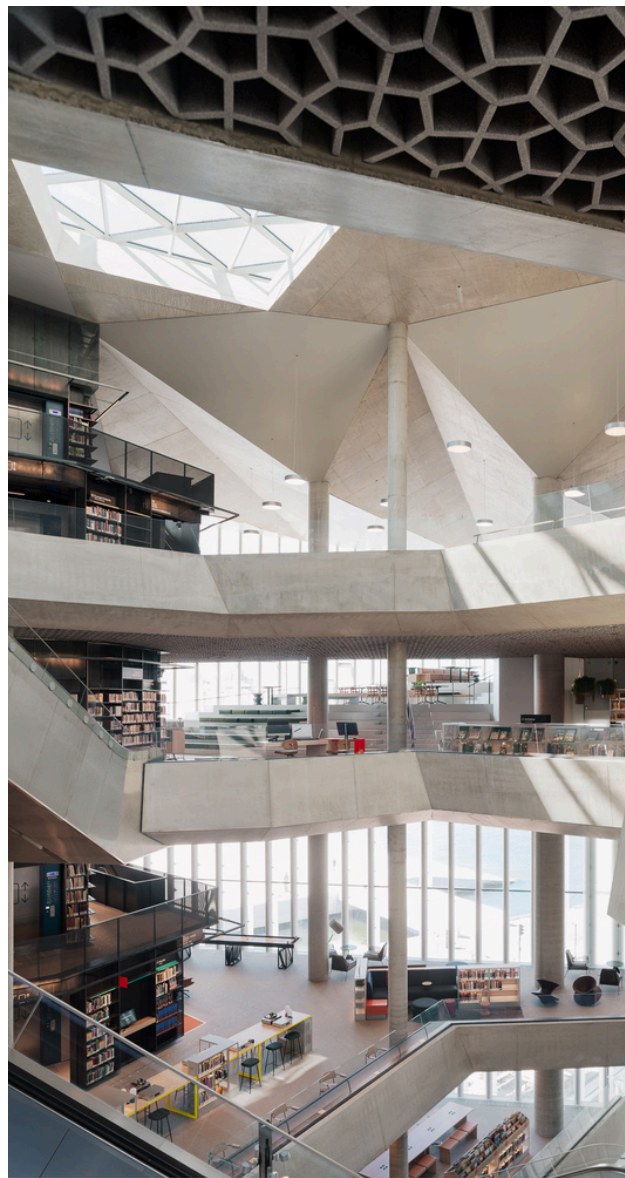


Figure.28a: Deichmaan library interior photograph. Source: https://www.archdaily.com/942813/deichman-library-atelier-oslo-plus-lund-hagem?ad_source=search&ad_medium=projects_tab



Figure.28b: Deichmaan library interior photograph. Source: https://www.archdaily.com/942813/deichman-library-atelier-oslo-plus-lund-hagem?ad_source=search&ad_medium=projects_tab

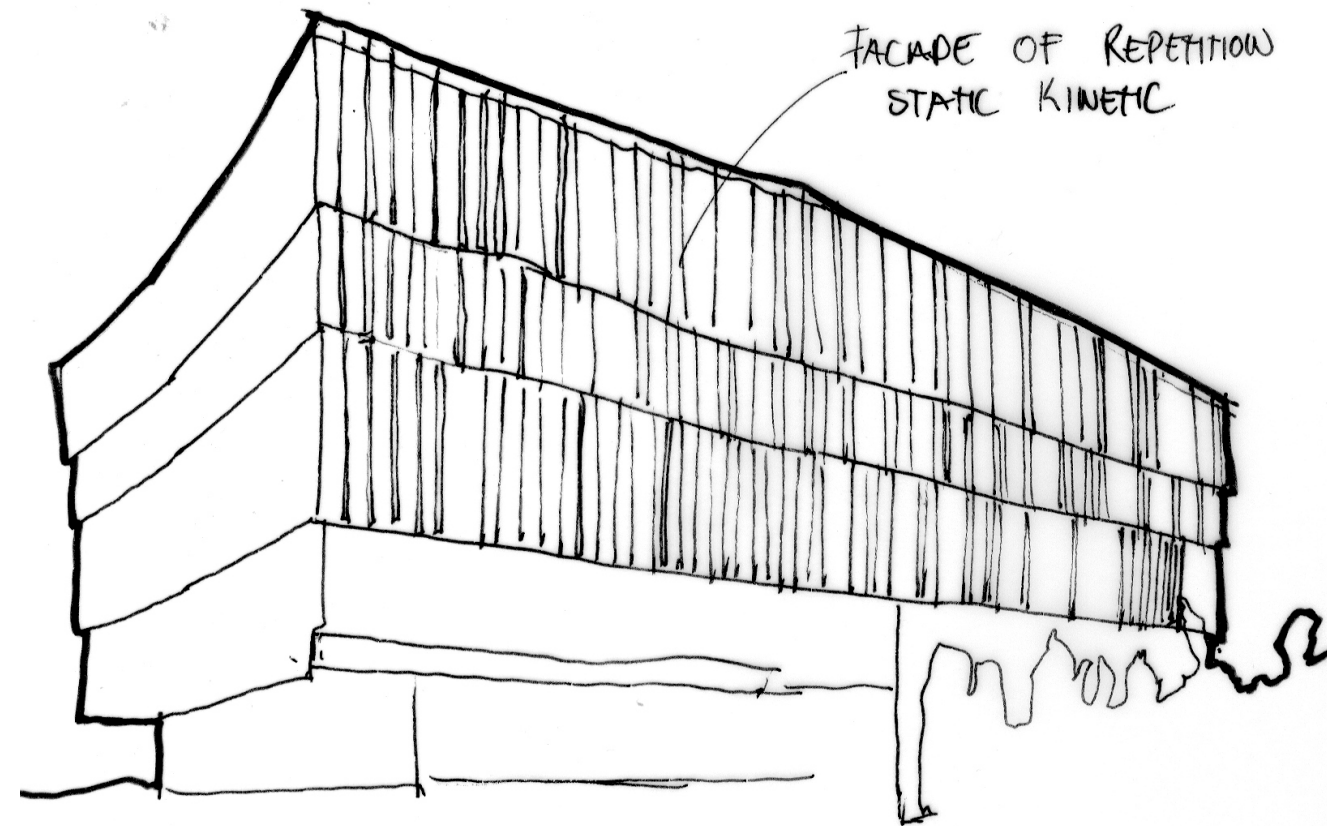


Figure.29: Deichmaan library perspective sketch of dynamic interacting facade. By Author.

3.3 CASE STUDY 03:

This third case study explores movement and perceptions through the concept of dynamism. The building emphasises a kinetic language in the external façade and internal composition. The library fosters innovative learning through physical practices, advocating for a reinterpretation of learning, and in addition, the building emphasises a route for users to be invited into the building.

Similar to the previous case study, this proposal was a competition awarded to the architect. The design emphasises community engagement by means of dynamic articulation of spaces, piquing interest and keeping the space relevant and interesting to the community.

The building uses kinetic elements to lure users in, featuring line work, textures, and forms that connect to the works of Adam Hardy, which we will delve into in a later chapter within the document. This precedent case study also highlights the application of pods or enclosed spaces and niche areas for variations in interacting with the building to facilitate focused work. These spaces are toned down in dynamic elements and focus on practices relating to lingering in space.

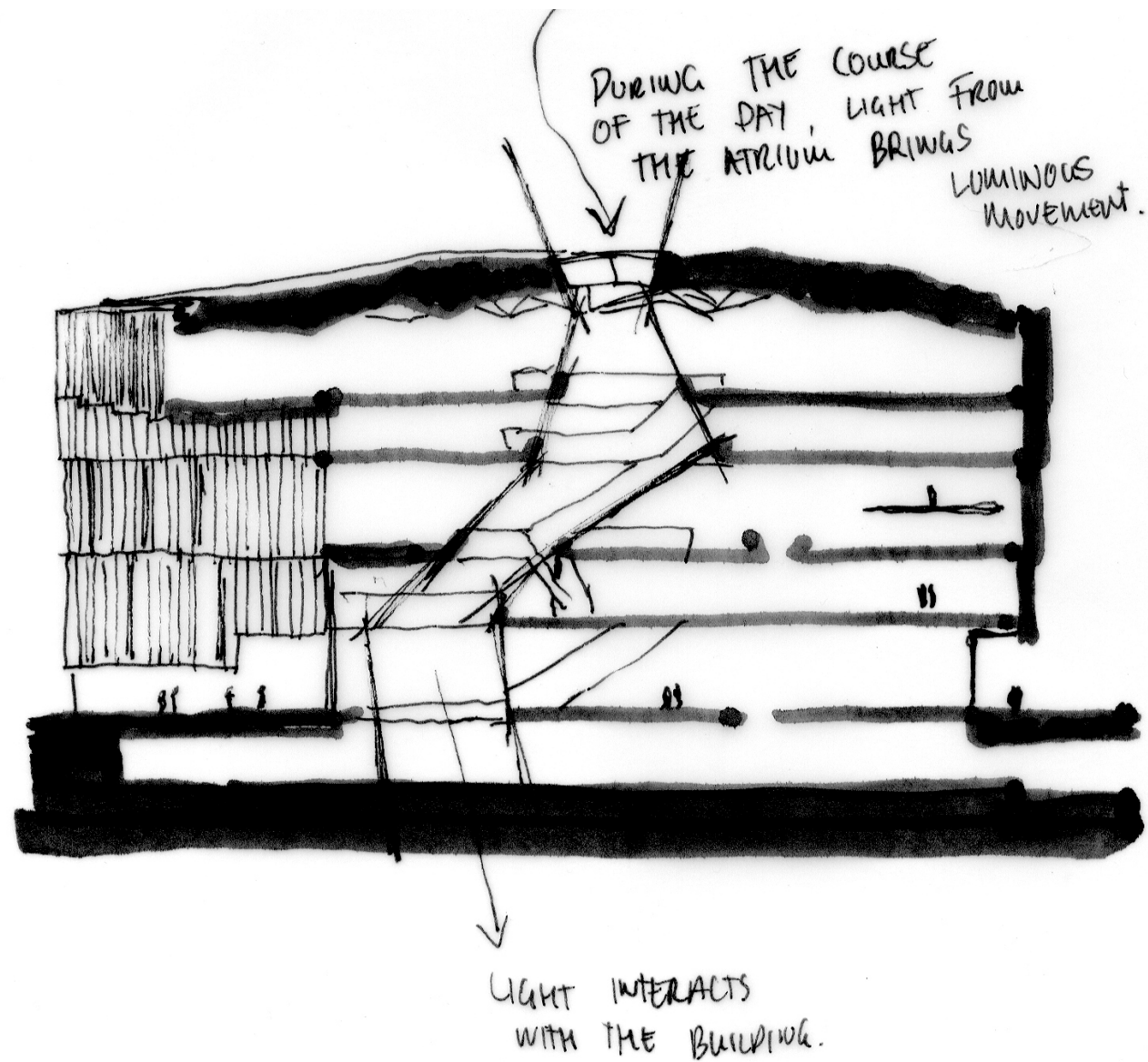


Figure.30: Section exploration of the Diechman library, analysing the atrium interaction.

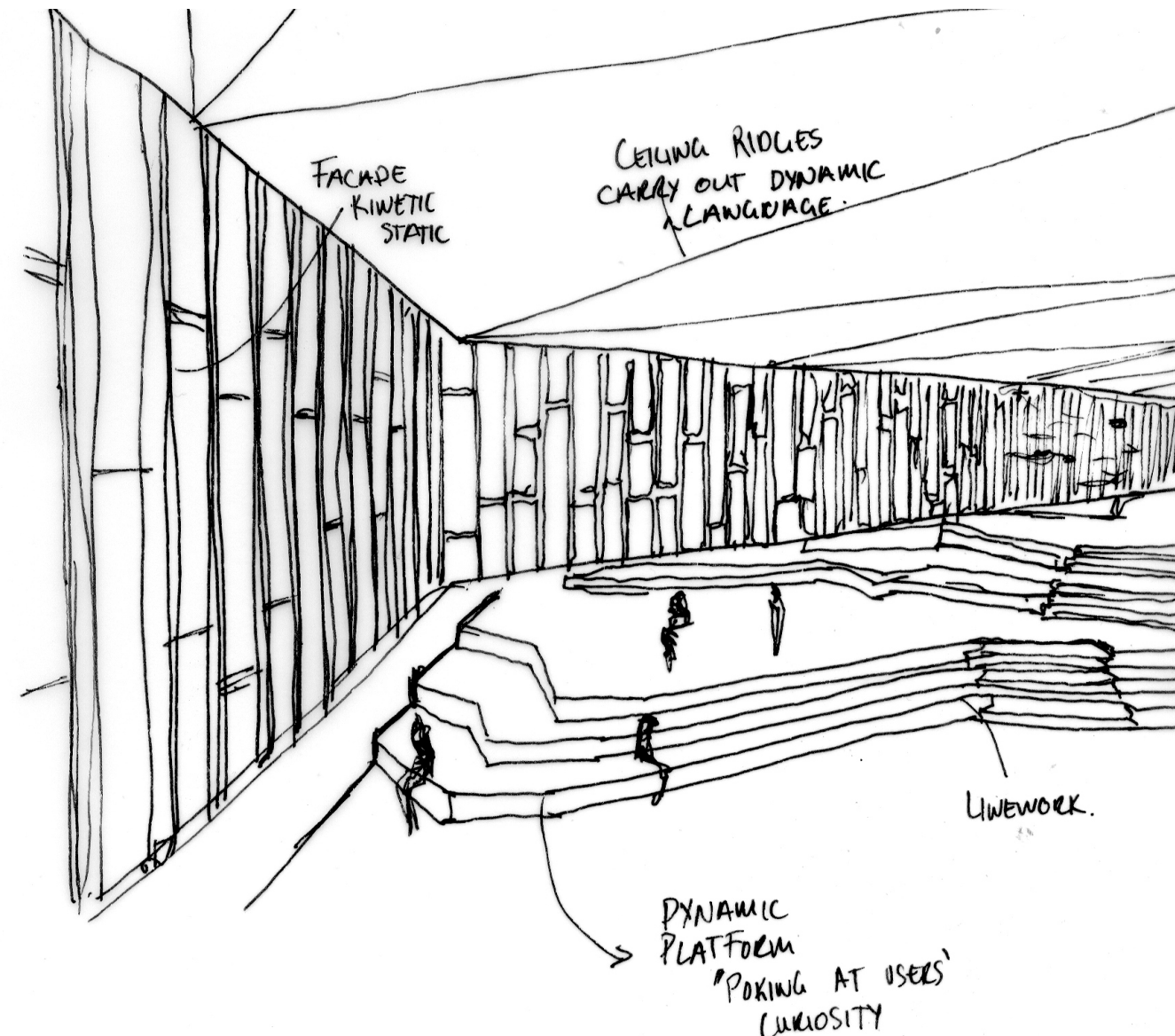


Figure.31: Sketches of internal dynamic walls illustrating kinetic engaging wall elements.

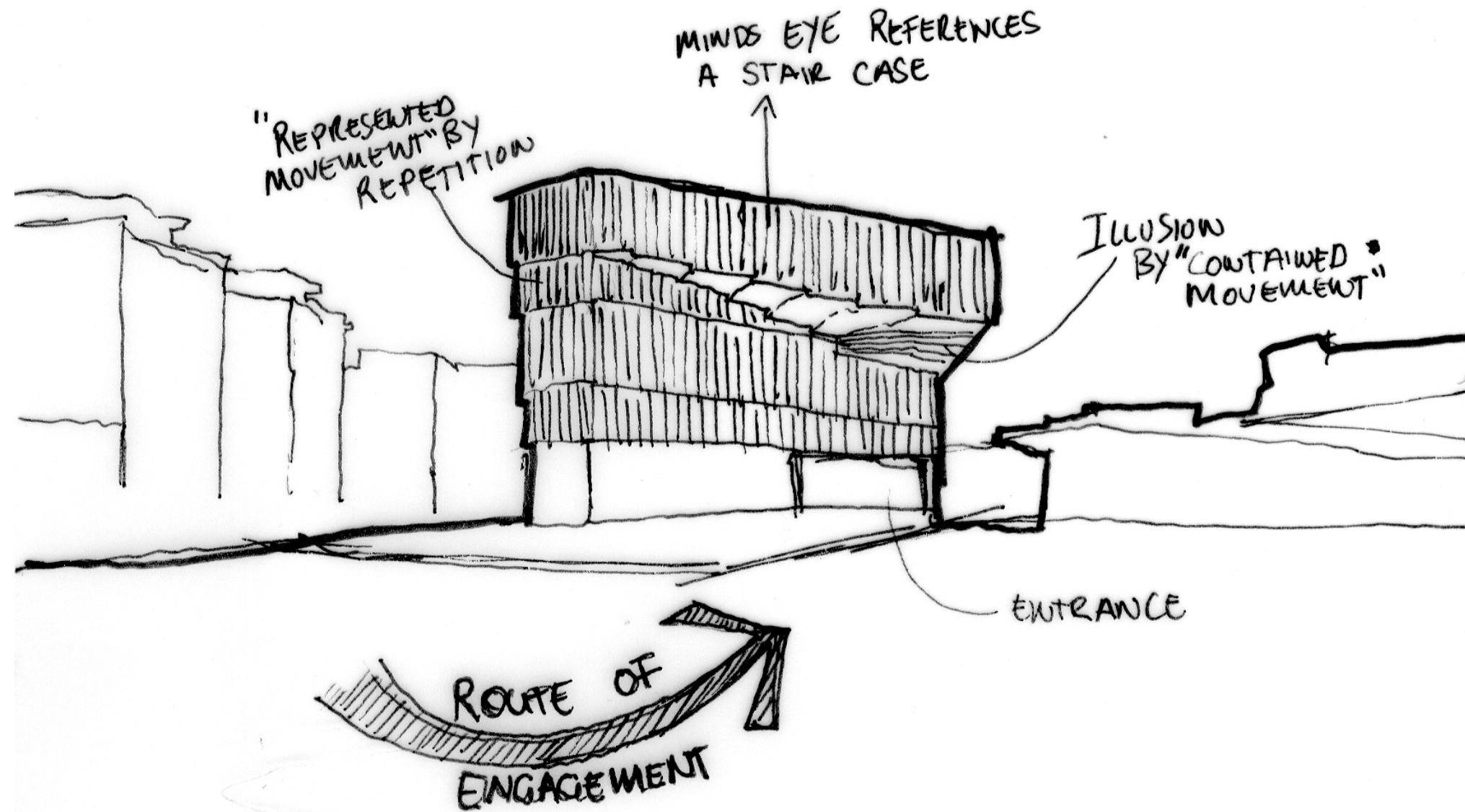


Figure.32: Sketch of pull of interaction into building

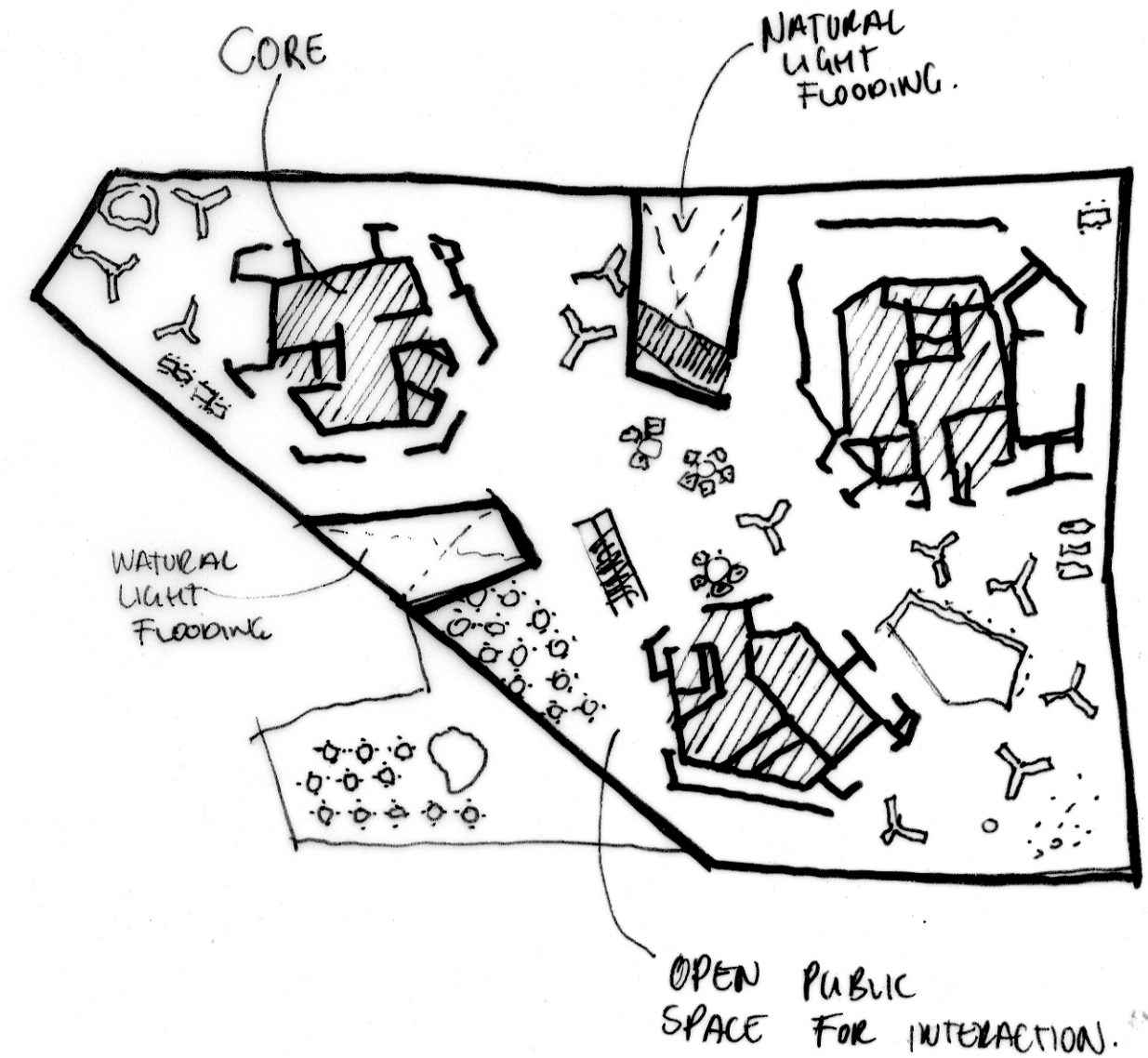


Figure.33: Illustration of Activity pods in relation to open social Space..

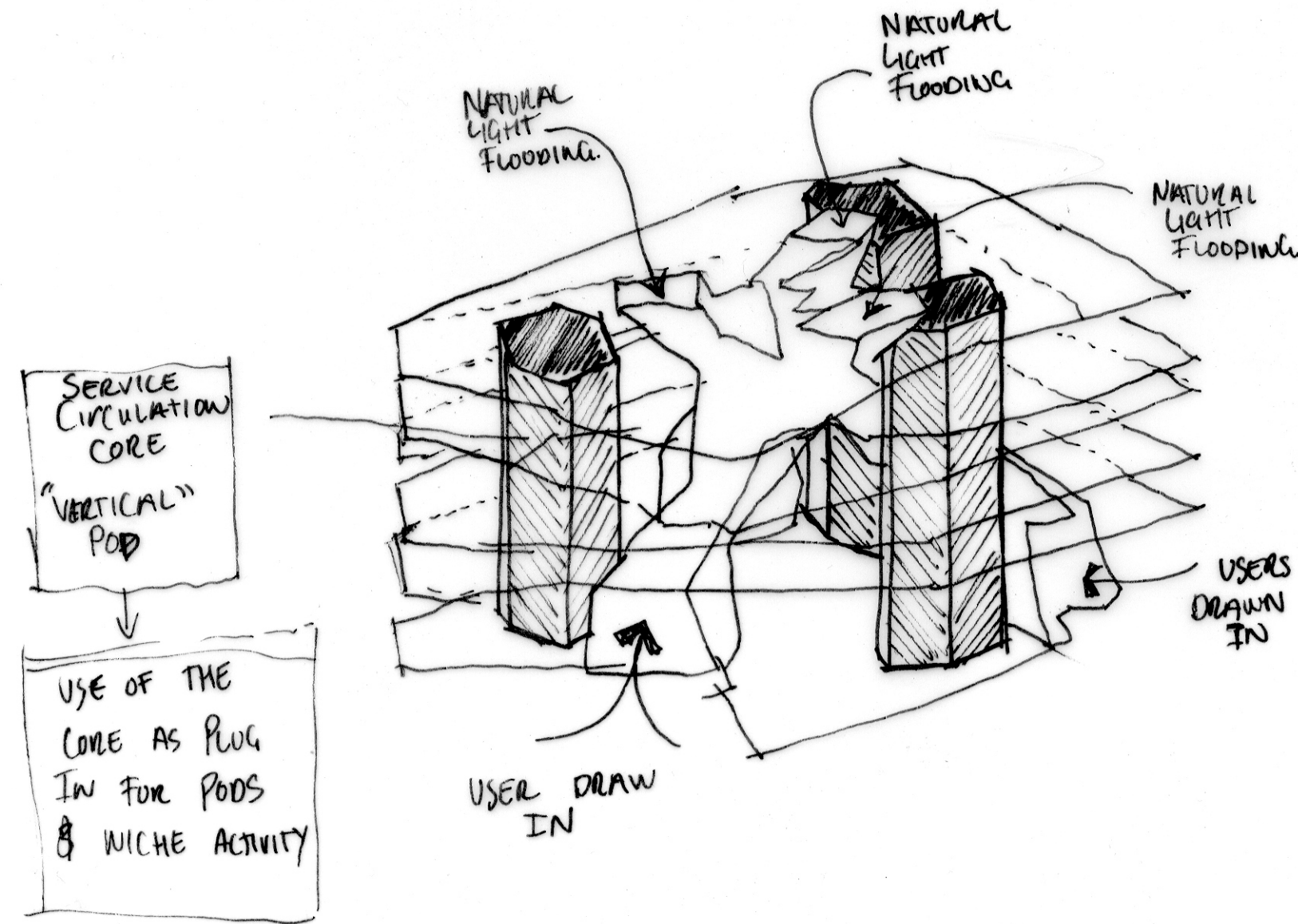


Figure.34: Sketch of atrium analysing Services in relation to Atrium space..

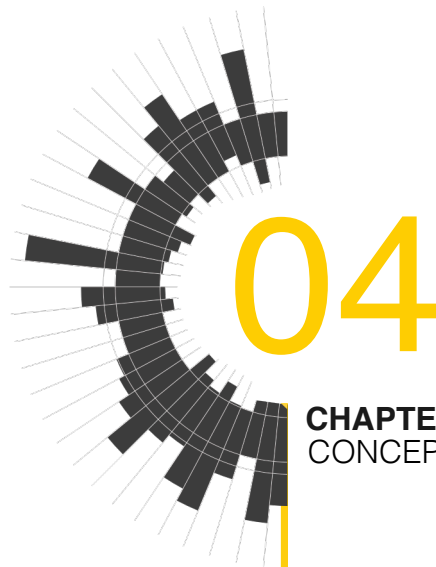
3.4 KEY INSIGHTS

Examining precedent studies yields valuable insights that shape the design strategy for the House of Cohen's adaptive reuse. A Brazilian case study illustrates the importance of preserving the original building's character while integrating functional pods. This method maintains the historical integrity of the structure while introducing versatile areas tailored to modern needs, offering guidance on how to blend these elements harmoniously within the existing framework.

Another precedent emphasises the relationship between indoor and outdoor spaces, informing material selection, strategic openings, and spatial orientation to strengthen the building's connection to its environment. These design concepts illustrate how thoughtful material choices and well-placed openings facilitate continuous engagement with the community, promoting a seamless flow between interior activities and the public space.

Additionally, incorporating kinetic and dynamic elements in adaptive reuse initiatives demonstrates how movement and flexibility can enhance engagement. By adding dynamic features, the building fosters a dialogue between its interior and exterior spaces, inviting people in and cultivating a lively atmosphere of interaction.

The House of Cohen will apply insights from these precedent studies to develop a multifunctional and engaging environment. By honouring historical character, promoting community interaction, and incorporating kinetic elements, the building will emerge as a vibrant hub that nurtures connectivity and growth within Windhoek's CBD.



CHAPTER
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



This chapter outlines the conceptual framework, addressing how senses shape the experience of space, how spatial relationships are influenced by self-perception, and how dynamic explorations inform the perception of architecture.

4.1 RE-INTRODUCTION TO DYNAMISM

The project embraces the concept of dynamism, which generally involves change, adaptation, or progression within the psychological context. Following Parent's ideas of Jung's theory, dynamism refers to the fluid and evolving nature of psychological functions and traits, in which all functions considered are linked and affected via both imagination and experience across perception and expression.

In the realm of architecture, buildings, much like human beings, also possess a dynamic essence that evolves. Conceptually, this parallel allows us to view the Cohen building not just as a static space but as a living, changing, and adapting entity. Linking again to the typology of dynamism emphasises the fluid and transformative nature of characteristics. By adopting this theory, which revolves around continuous evolution, we can express movement, change, and progression through architectural design.

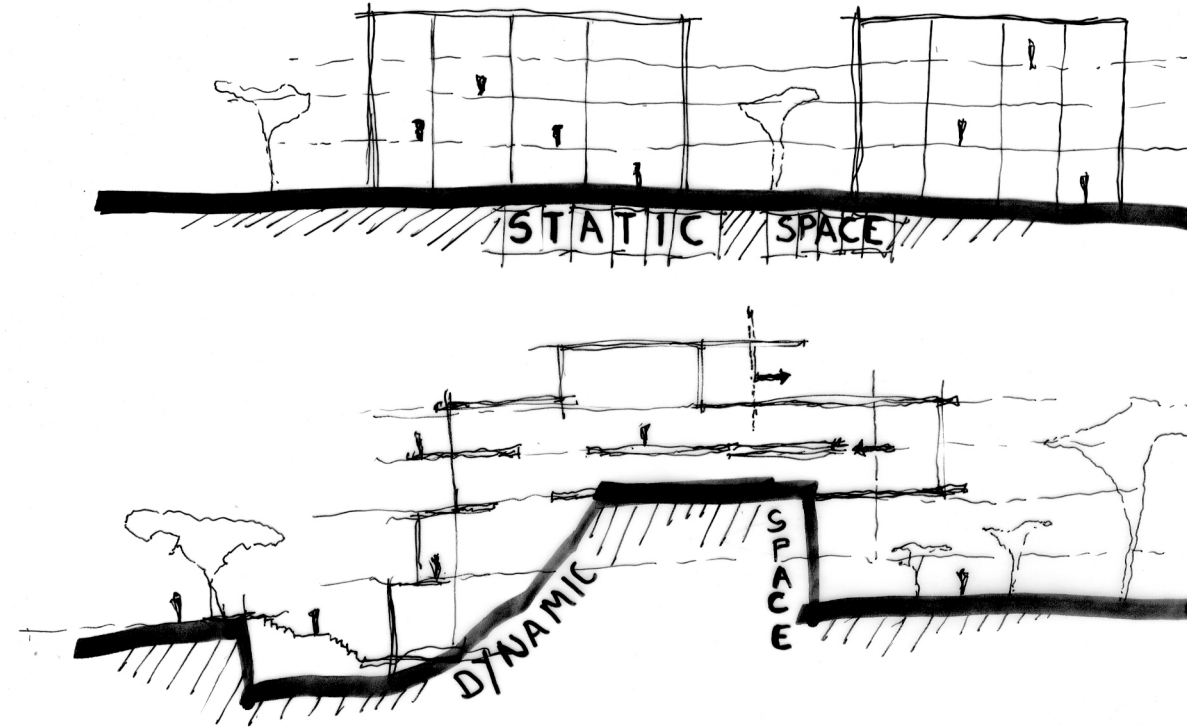


Figure.35: Dynamism represented spatially highlighting potential building relationship to site

4.2 VROMAN & LEGRANGE

Senses and Spaces

Motion is a fundamental element that allows us to experience our environment and is a key foundation in the relationship between people and architecture (Vroman and Lagrange 2017). The way we move in space or elements within the space moving around us shapes our encounters. Movement is therefore fundamental to how we engage with space and is captured by means of the bodily senses. The intellectual and sensory capacity of the body is often overlooked when dealing with architectural design; static approaches are employed, designing around a singular instance or moment of the body in space at a particular time (Hauptmann 2006). Figure 36 is a representation of the phenomenon of the body's interaction with space, highlighting a complex sensory cloud of experience in a single moment.

Vroman and Lagrange argue that through walking, people have a bodily experience with space; this method of motion allows the senses and reflexes to interact with the environment (2017). Through this movement, the senses pick up information that allows navigation through space, which in turn allows reactions to the site that influence the pace, rhythm, and routes selected. This notion draws upon the configuration of spaces, encouraging or discouraging interaction within a space, leading to the interaction of people with architecture being directly influenced by the implemented design within that space. Figure 37 illustrates variations in which movement through space can be manipulated.

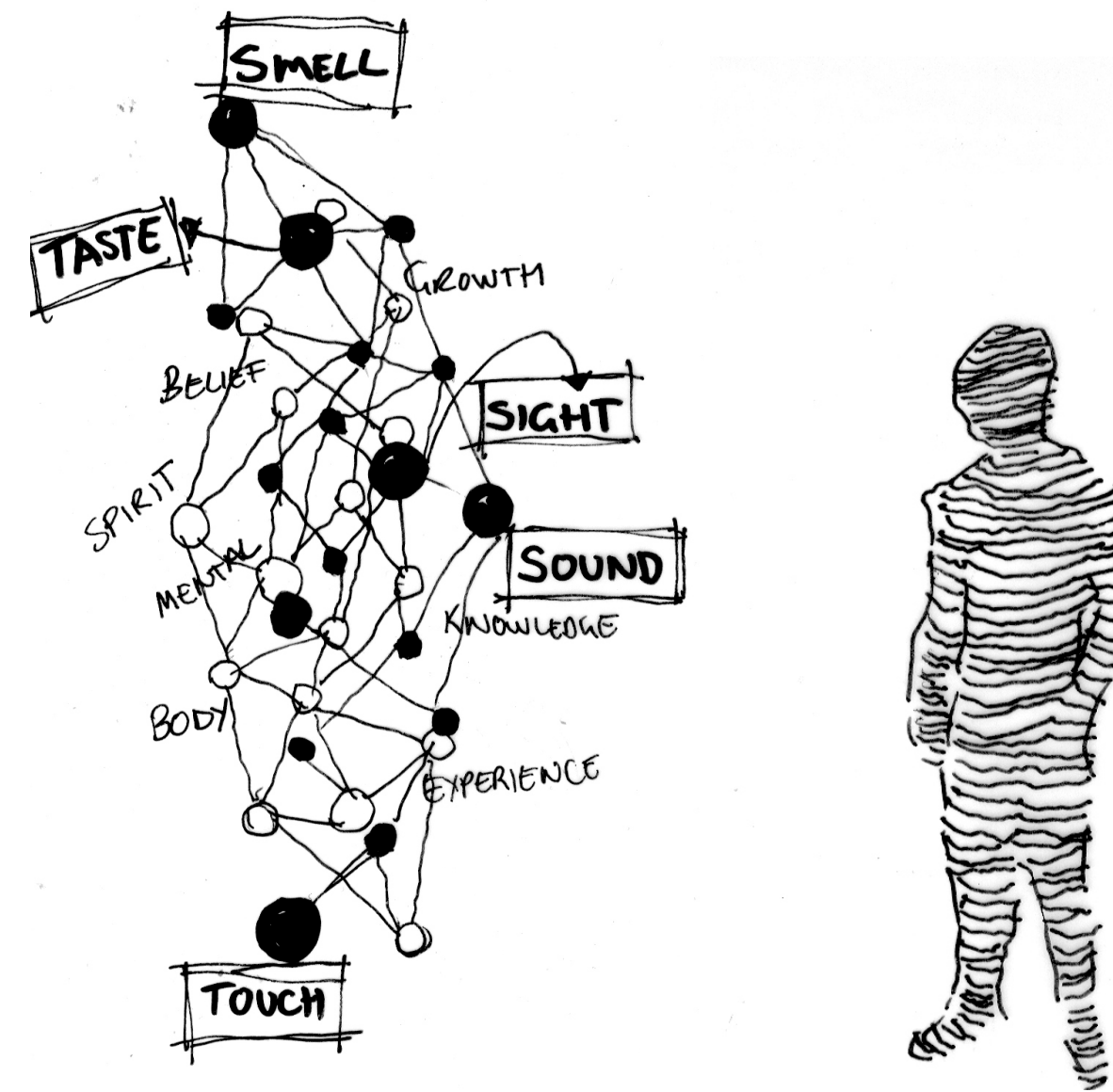


Figure.36: Sensory Experiences of the Body illustrating connectedness of senses in space

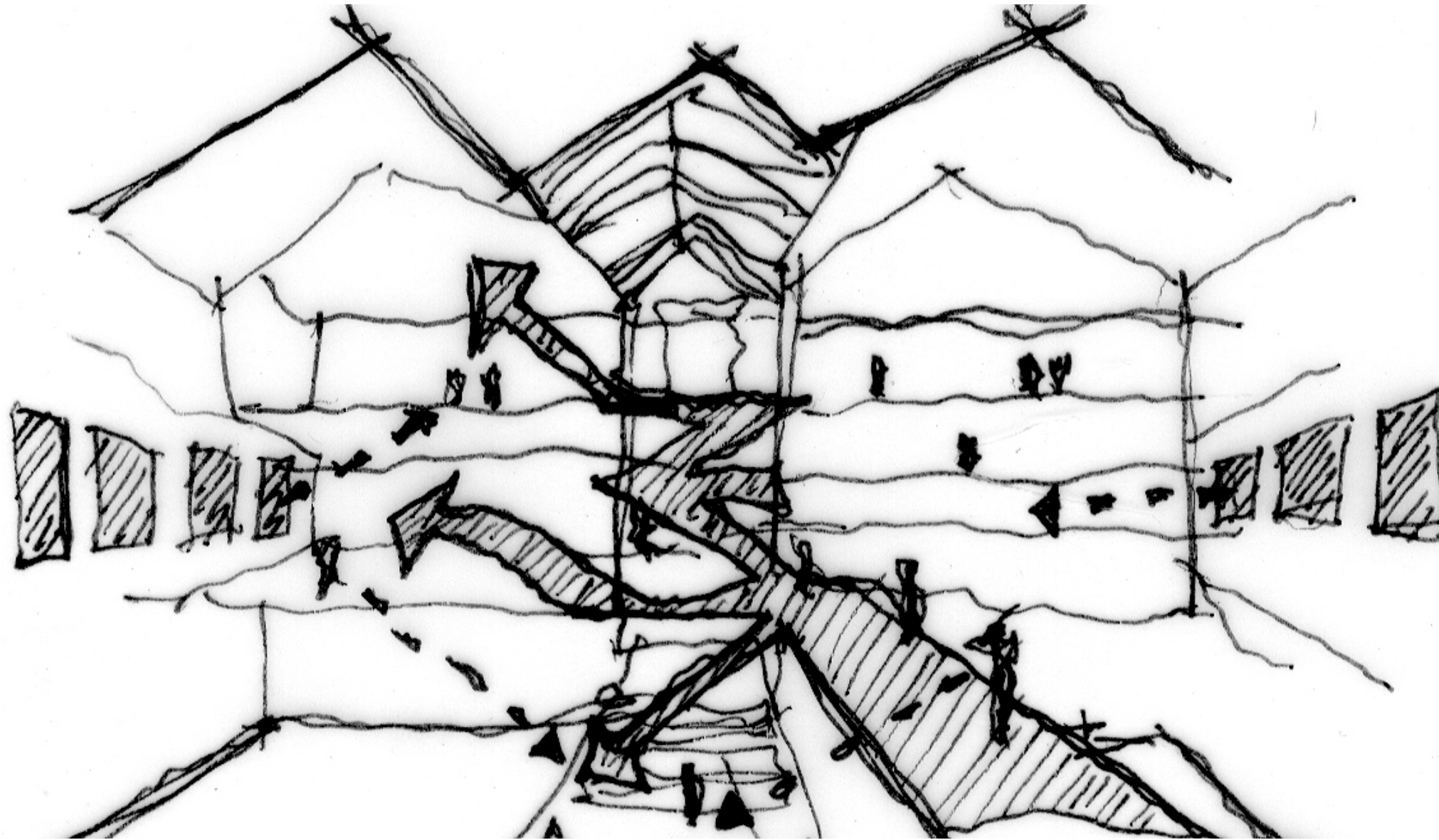


Figure.37: Dynamic Atrium sketch interpretation.

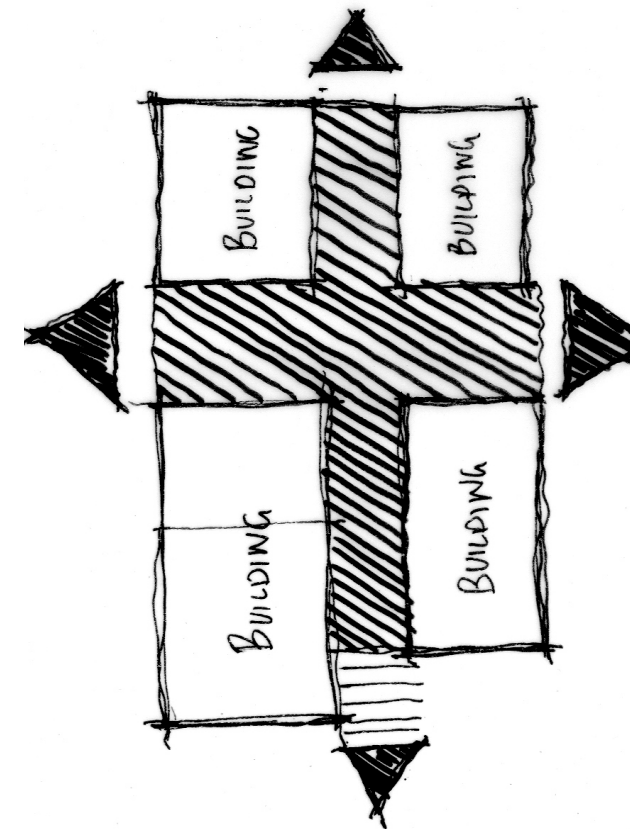


Figure.38a: Buildings in basic orientation.

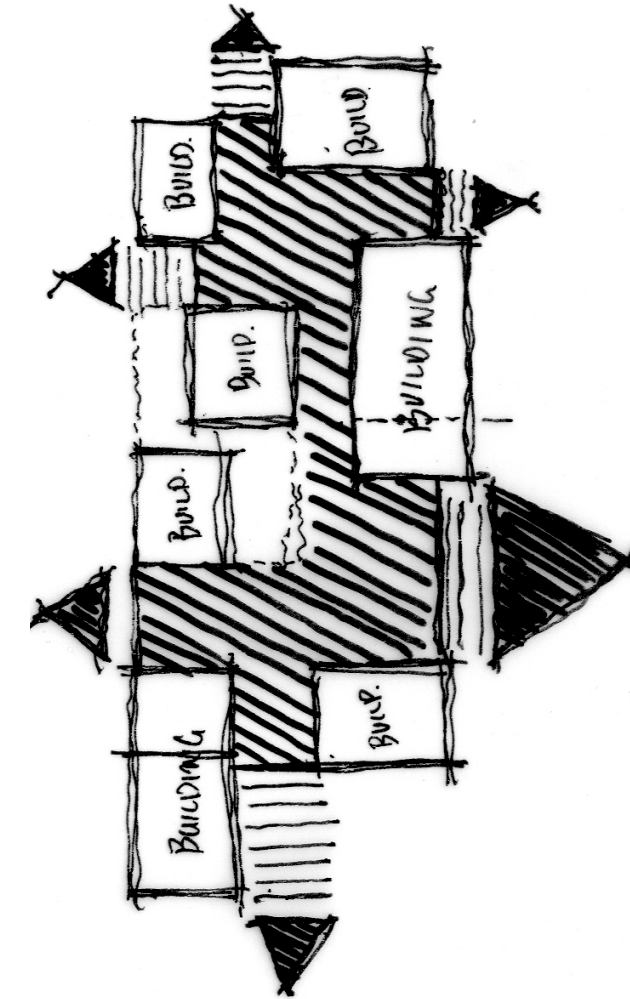


Figure.38b: Building with additional dynamic interaction points.

Vroman and Lagrange, in reference to Gehl's principles, argue there are different ways to move within space, and these movements are innately connected to social activity (2017). Three categories of activity have been furnished to understand these activities: 'necessary activity', 'optional activity', and 'social activity'. Necessary activities occur regardless of environmental design; optional activities spring up spontaneously due to ideal environmental settings, and social activity occurs as a result of the quality of these spaces.

We can therefore call composition the lead in practices for the proposal of the adaptive reuse of the House of Cohen, encouraging the use of senses to facilitate a continued relationship between humans and architecture founded in motion and experience.

4.3 PARENT

Typology as Dynamism

Parent leans on Jungian theory in this section, adding a layer to Jung's insight that dynamism is often related to a compass rose, classified as a device for orientation to locate direction based on the four sections of the cardinal directions (2016). Addressing Parent's argument is a more straightforward approach; the theory challenges the method of classifying movement by the Cartesian plane, which has four major directions: North, East, South, and West. It argues that there is a fifth

function that focuses on the self. A person is oriented to the world through their own inner experiences while maintaining a sense of place (Parent 2016). Leading with this insight, dynamic relationships go a step further than the use of the senses; they employ our past experiences and learned behaviour as the "self", adding a layer to navigating space. With acceptance of Parent's notion, perception becomes a fundamental aspect of dynamism. It invites us to understand that our worldly experience of space, as a set of textures, forms, masses, and surfaces, may

be different, but establishing a language through which the expression of textures, forms, masses, and surfaces can be universally understood opens the door to general imagining of these effects (Parent 2016). The fifth function of perception is therefore a fundamental aspect to be considered in the adaptive reuse of the House of Cohen. The objective of creating an engaging and interactive building benefits from insight into the way buildings are wholly experienced.

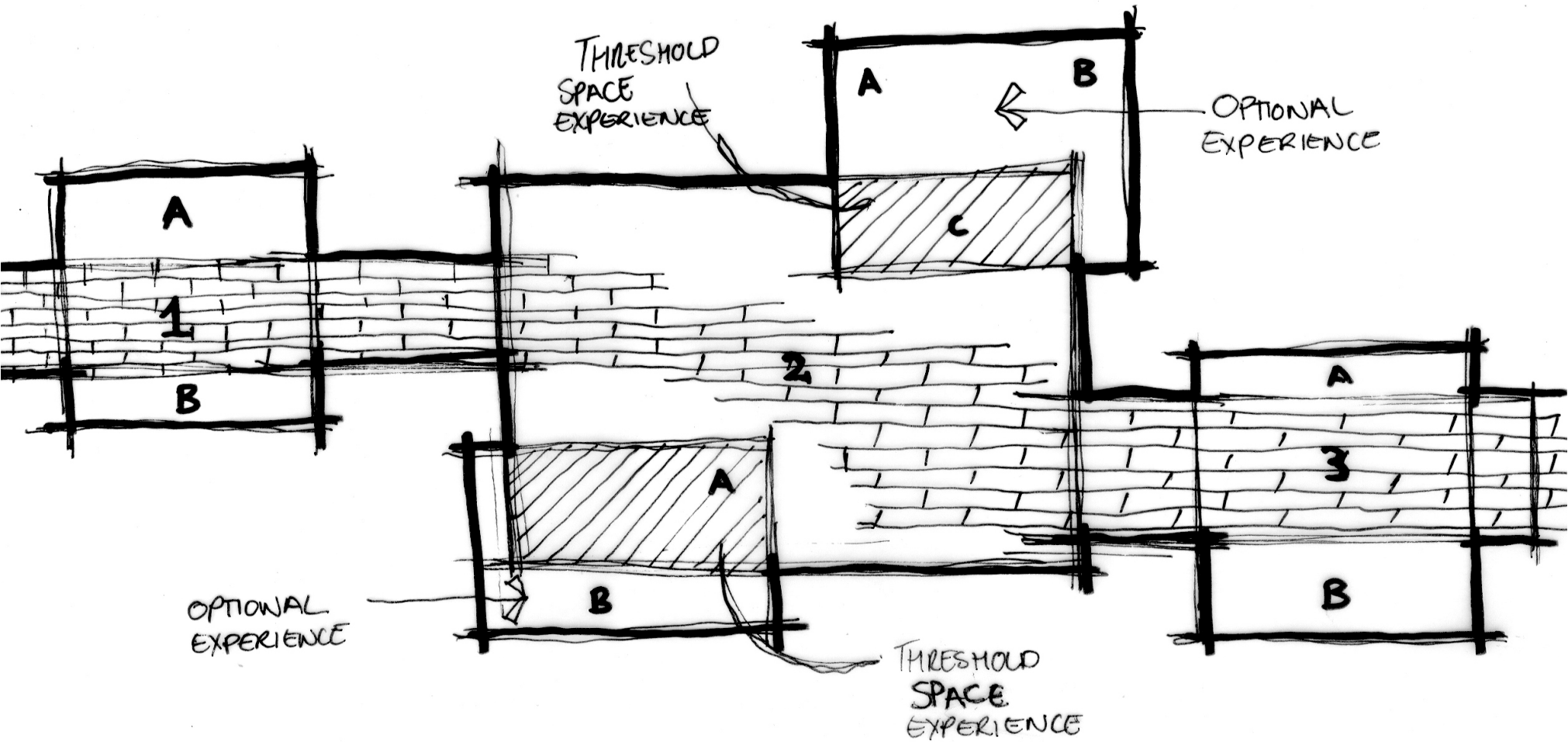


Figure.39 Necessary Path and Optional Experiences.

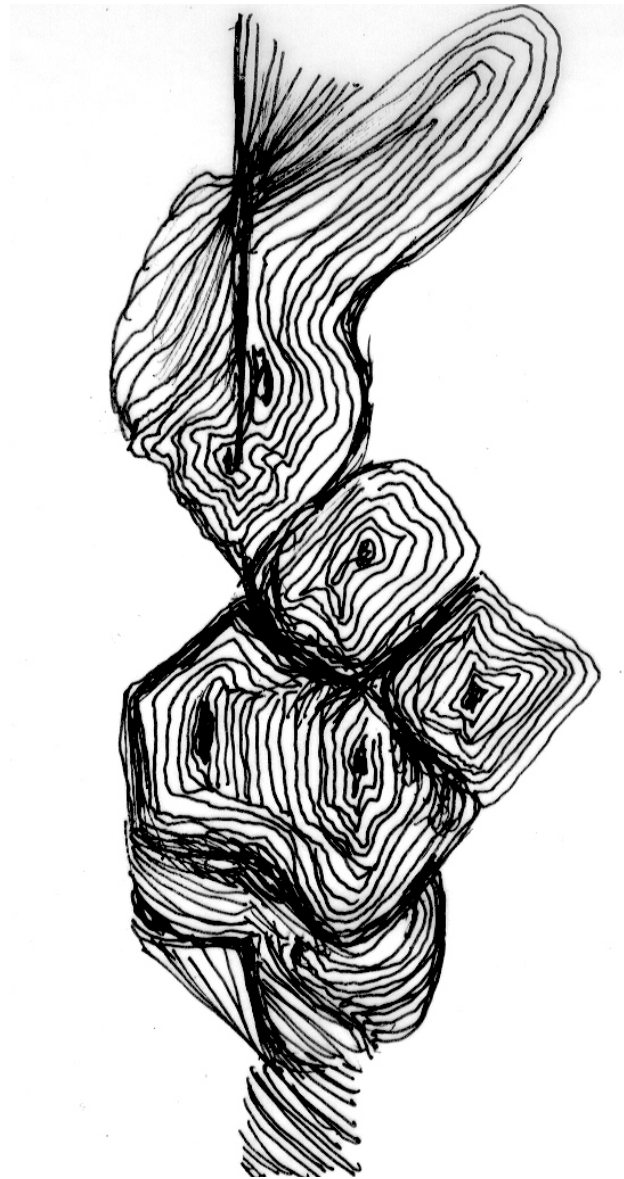


Figure.40a: Visual representation of static dynamism movement

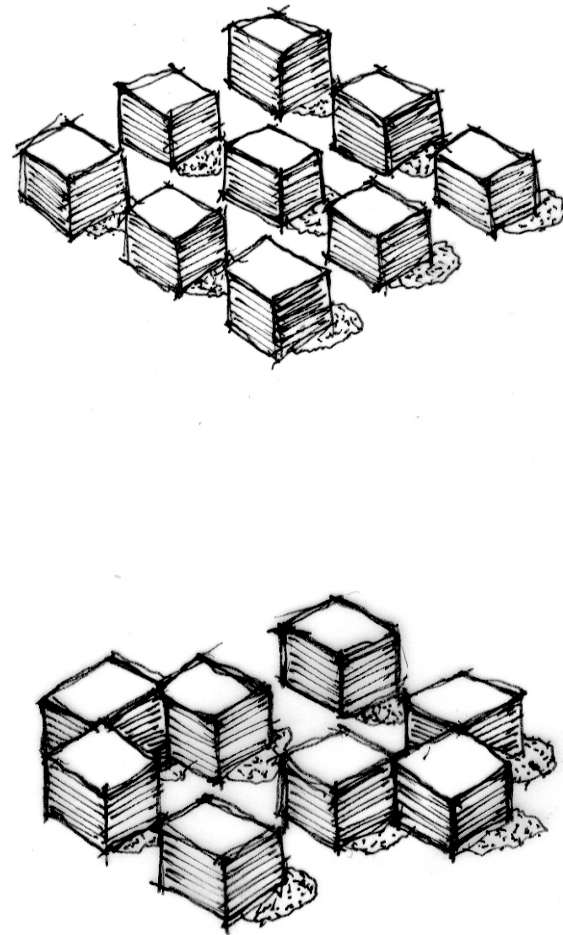


Figure.40b: Visual representation of Physical Change of space

4.4 MEGAHEAD

In this section, we expand upon Megahed's understanding of typology and classification while exploring design strategies focused on acknowledging human perception of experienced space. Megahed argues that designing dynamic kinetic architecture is a challenge, considering the expectations to respond to changes ranging from technical, operational, and psychological requirements in its process (2016). These factors all play a hand in contributing to the spatial experience of people and are fundamental to the relationship between architecture and human interaction. Kinetic interactions vary in geometries and movement, offering the ability to deploy, fold, expand, rotate and fold, providing space the ability to reconfigure, respond, revolve, transport, and adapt for diverse perceptions (Megahed 2016).

Dynamic techniques offer static and dynamic approaches, with static not involving real movement but a virtual one, and dynamic involving mechanised structures that change to facilitate climate, need, and purpose (Megahed 2016). Building on this, spatial and non-spatial movements can be perceived, meaning movement alters space or by material deformation and alteration conceiving the notion of dynamic interaction.

Megahed further argues that kinetic proposals offer a wide range of possibilities for people and architecture in their application as internal, external, or structural elements, the main motivation for these approaches being demands for comfort, flexibility, and adaptability (2016). The application of these approaches in the renewal of the House of Cohen pushes to create a more functional and exciting interaction for users.

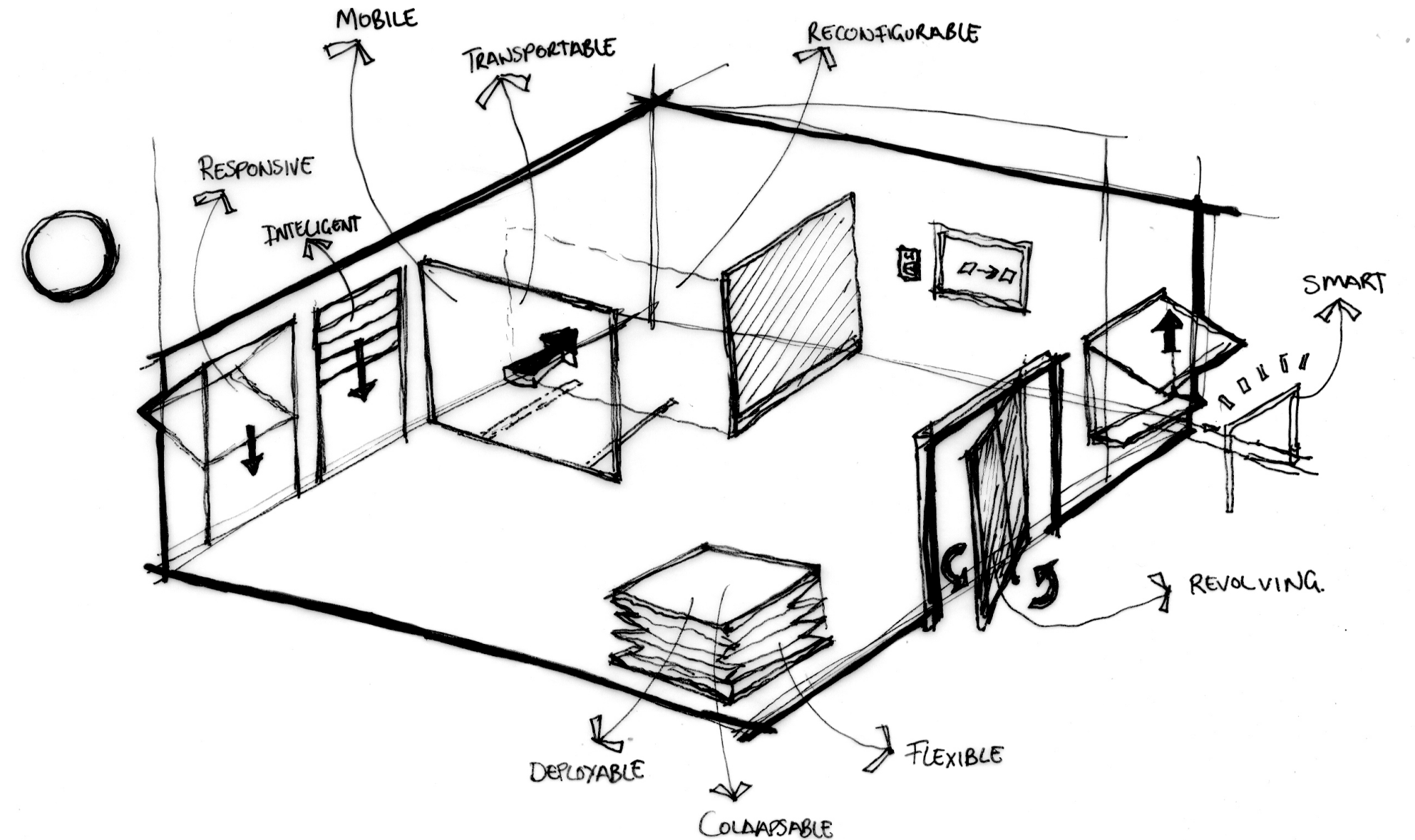


Figure.41: various forma of kinetic intervention

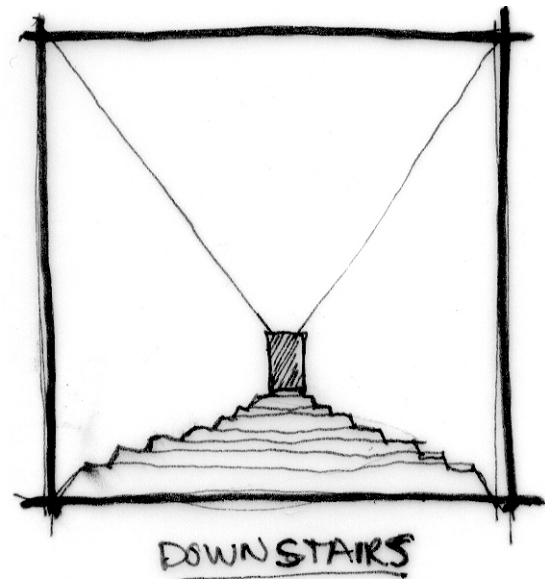
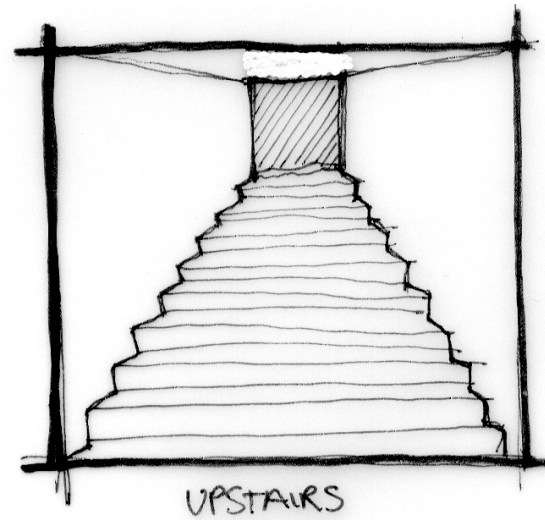


Figure.42a: Movement Represented by object

4.5 HARDY

Movement Expressions

Adam Hardy builds on human perceptions and kinetic approaches by outlining their interactions with each other as either contained movement or represented movement (2011). This refers to architecture that is stationary but thought to be moving by the eyes, the mind and the imagination, and by represented movement, where there is an

illusion involved with representing architecture in motion.

The two concepts are similar in dealing with perception; however, they allow architecture to be approached and understood differently. For this section, we align with theories relating to Hardy's case study analysis on movement in the temple structures of India (2011).

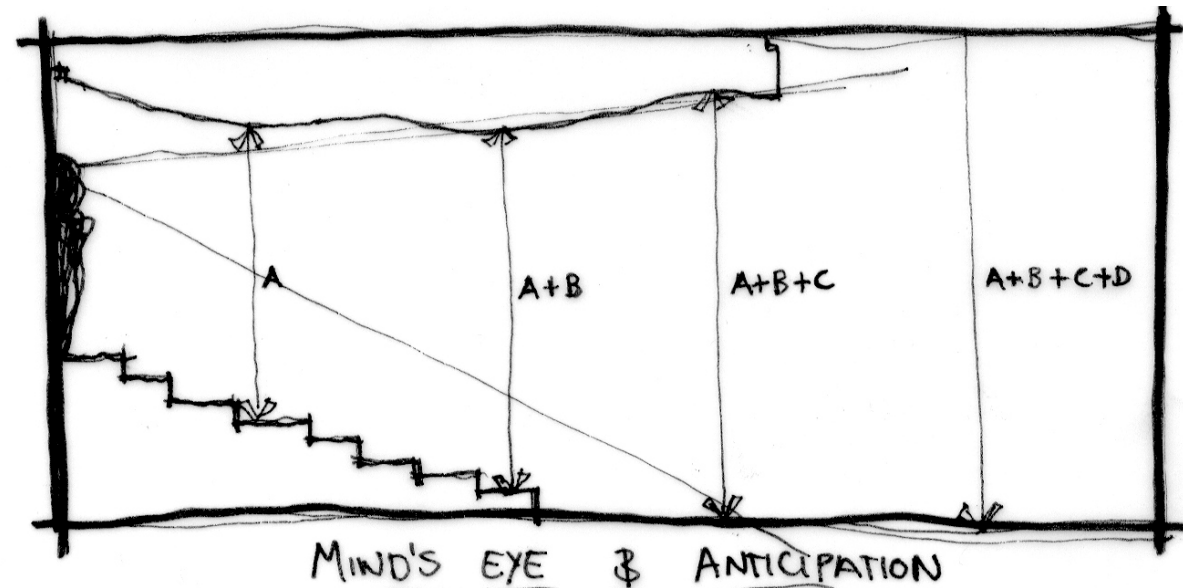


Figure.42b: Spatial depiction of movement by perception.

With literal movements acknowledged in the previous section, we delve into movement and dynamic processes that may, but do not require, physical movement. The notion that movement exists in architecture without physical movement is argued to be taken for granted by Hardy, and this conventional practice is fundamental in realising the dynamic nature of architecture (2011). Contained

movement, identified as the movement of mind and eye, is the perception of movement in architecture, whereas represented movement is the perception of movement by the architecture. Both these versions of perception will be addressed in the proposal for the House of Cohen, building on engagement with the community in various ways. With this strategy, as outlined by Hardy, dynamism will be reinforced by

multiple clues advocating for mechanisms of harnessing, strengthening, and choreographing interactions (2011).

Analysing movement in the built form, Hardy highlights that the eccentricity of lines leads the eye in an unpredictable way, with no apparent strict path the eye should follow. This encourages exploration,



Figure.43a: Temple Artwork representing dance of Shiva. Source: Hardy, A. (2011). The expression of movement in architecture. The Journal of Architecture, (Issue 4), 471-497. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13602365.2011.598698>

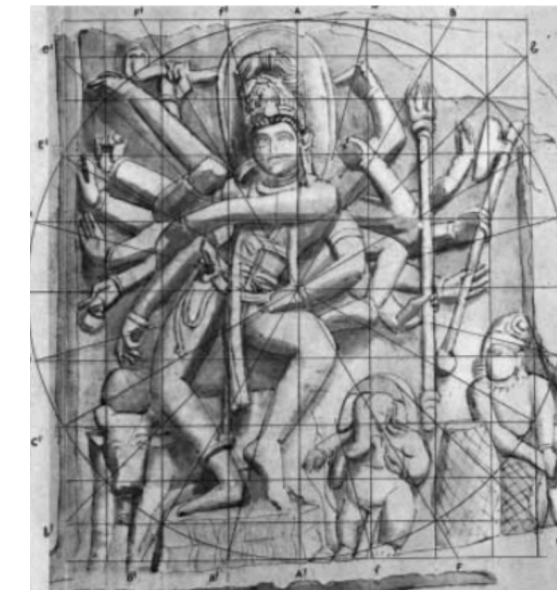


Figure.43b: Temple Artwork representing dance of Shiva. Source: Hardy, A. (2011). The expression of movement in architecture. The Journal of Architecture, (Issue 4), 471-497. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13602365.2011.598698>



Figure.43c: Temple Artwork representing dance of Shiva. Source: Hardy, A. (2011). The expression of movement in architecture. The Journal of Architecture, (Issue 4), 471-497. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13602365.2011.598698>

leading to spontaneous discovery and engagement (2011). Figures 44a and 44b of Selby Abbey and Lincoln Cathedral drive this notion by having characteristic lines that not only pique interest but guide the exploration of perception, having the lines

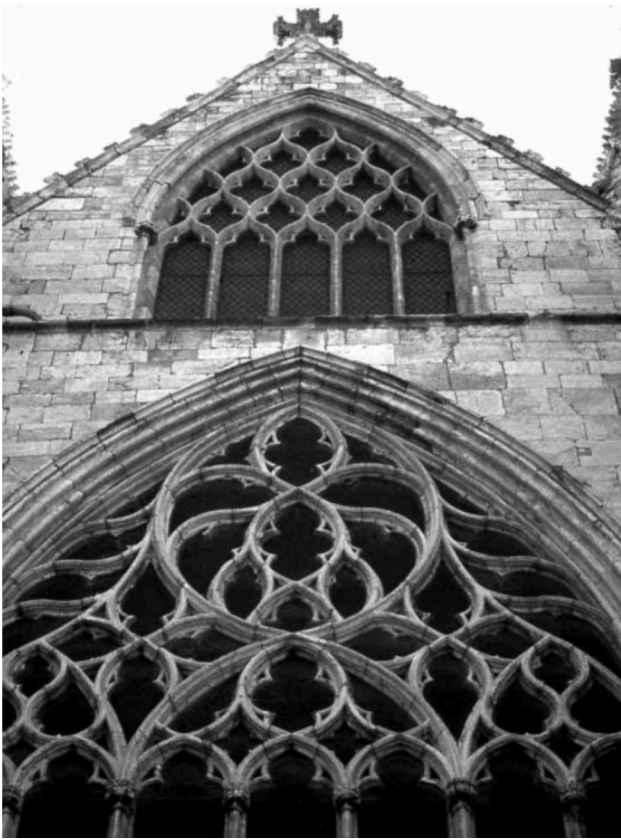


Figure.44a: Lines of the East Window at the Selby Abbey. Source: Hardy, A. (2011). The expression of movement in architecture. The Journal of Architecture, (Issue 4), 471–497. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13602365.2011.598698>

borrow energy from the viewer to trace the elements. Similarly, geometries such as circles in an amalgamation of elements emphasise their importance within a setting, drawing on significant meanings within a context. This notion is conveyed



Figure.44b: Lines within the Lincoln Cathedral. Source: Hardy, A. (2011). The expression of movement in architecture. The Journal of Architecture, (Issue 4), 471–497. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13602365.2011.598698>

in figure 44c, the Indian temple, with projections pushing forward, splitting forms, bursting boundaries and expanding reparative elements. Singularly, the effect of motion is not indicative of motion; combined, however, they reinforce the



Figure.44c: Lines of suggestion from the tower of Galaganatha temple. Source: Temple Artwork representing dance of Shiva. Source: Hardy, A. (2011). The expression of movement in architecture. The Journal of Architecture, (Issue 4), 471–497. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13602365.2011.598698>

sculptural depiction of movement, in which the dynamic quality of the elements can enforce motion within the House of Cohen.

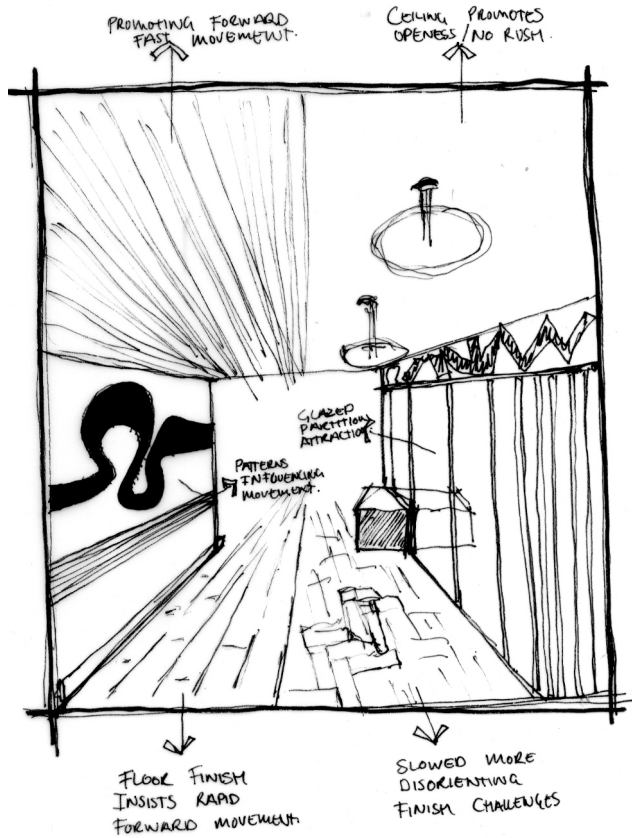


Figure.45: Culmination of kinetic perception.

4.6 KEY INSIGHTS

The conceptual framework that drives the exploration of the Cohen Building highlights the necessity of engaging with the human experience through sensory interaction with the environment. A key tenet of this approach is the recognition that a building can influence experiences by stimulating the senses—sight, sound, touch, and movement—thus crafting a more immersive and memorable environment for its users.

This theoretical underpinning emphasises the importance of designing spaces that are both captivating and occasionally distracting, which encourages users to explore and be curious. This perspective supports the belief that architecture can foster interaction, drawing people to different areas and functions within the building. Engaging components, such as dynamic visuals, tactile materials, and interactive installations, facilitate moments of connection and discovery, cultivating a sense of belonging and involvement.

Through these insights, the vision for the Cohen Building positions it as a hub where the human experience is paramount, embedding design elements that promote interaction and sensory engagement. By harmonising functionality with features that invite exploration, the building seeks to establish a lively atmosphere, ensuring that users play an active role in its spaces rather than merely occupying them. This approach will elevate the Cohen Building into a vibrant and welcoming landmark in Windhoek's CBD.



This chapter presents the concept, using DJ equipment and song as a method of understanding, alongside an exploration of the site through a custom device designed to make marks and capture spatial insights

5.1 THE CONTINUITY OF THE HOUSE OF COHEN

To link the dynamic kinetic elements of the conceptual framework to the adaptive reuse of the House of Cohen, we employ the concept of dynamism through the workings of the DJ decks and mixer setup, linking to our initial inquiry on the beat of the street.

The workings of the setup closely relate to the intended workings of the building. The setup consists of two decks and a mixer. The deck setup consists of an input source, where music can be loaded via various methods and tracks/songs selected via the selector. Before playing the music, the tempo slider is used to match the tempo or speed of the selected song to the current playing

song, and the cue button allows for “testing” the incoming song before eventually playing and proceeding with a song choice to mix.

Mixing operations happen on the mixer, where music is tuned to the preferred levels and sound. Channel adjustments allow selection of different channels in which different songs or tracks are output; the fader

allows quick switching between outputs, and the effects selector and adjuster allow variations in effect curated for the desired outcome. The mixer highlights much of the process.

The jog-wheel spins as the song plays, acting as a vinyl record telling the story, and the information display provides feedback and critical insight into

the processes involved in producing the beat on the street.

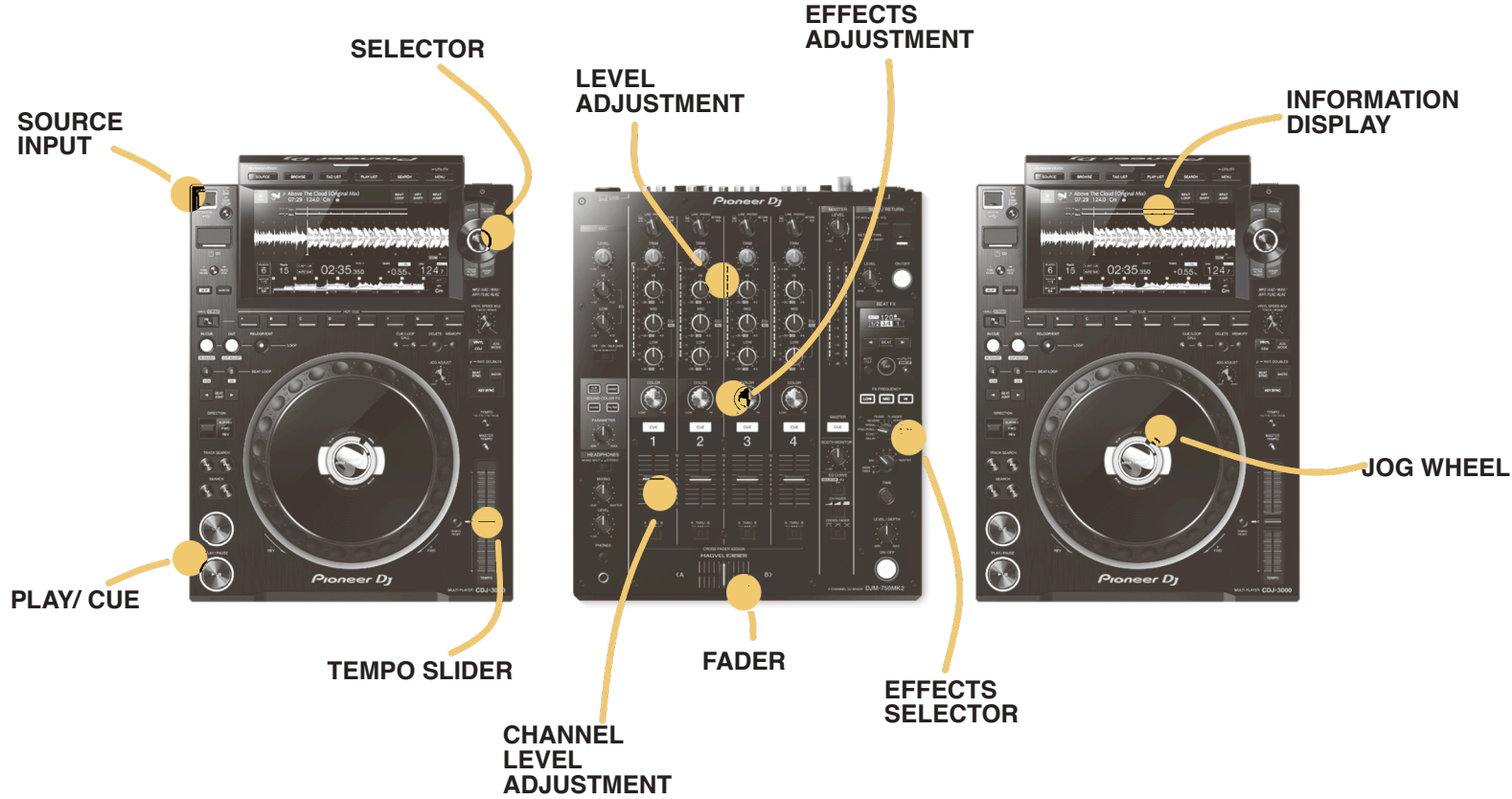


Figure.46: The DJ Decks

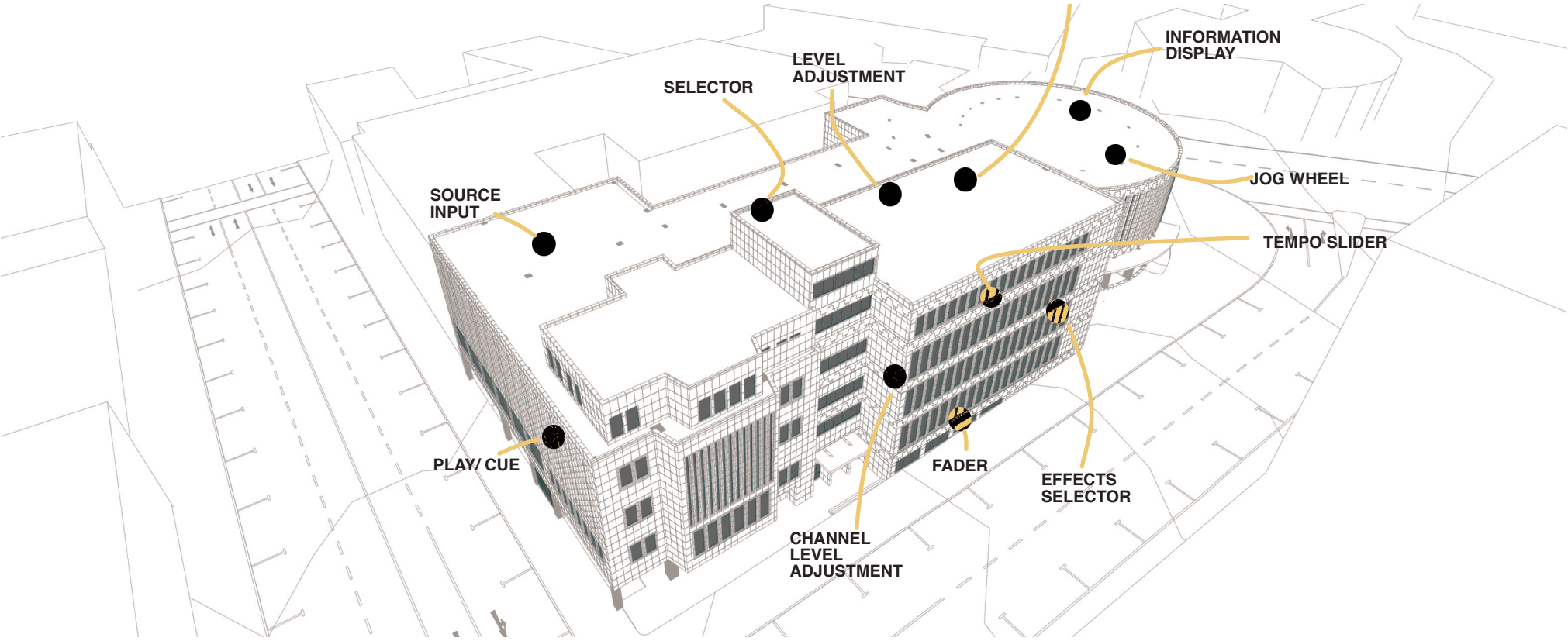


Figure.47: Cohen Building with Deck functioning remapping

The building comprises three distinct sections, each representing a unique function corresponding to input, process, and exhibition. The input section serves as the gateway, capturing resources, ideas, and individuals—facilitated through

collaborative workspaces, offices, or creative pod clusters. At the heart of the building, the process section transforms ideas and resources through vibrant interactions, studios, and production areas, symbolising the building's role as a centre of activity

and innovation. Lastly, the exhibition area functions as the output, showcasing the results of the work via displays and interactive spaces accessible to the public, fostering engagement and feedback

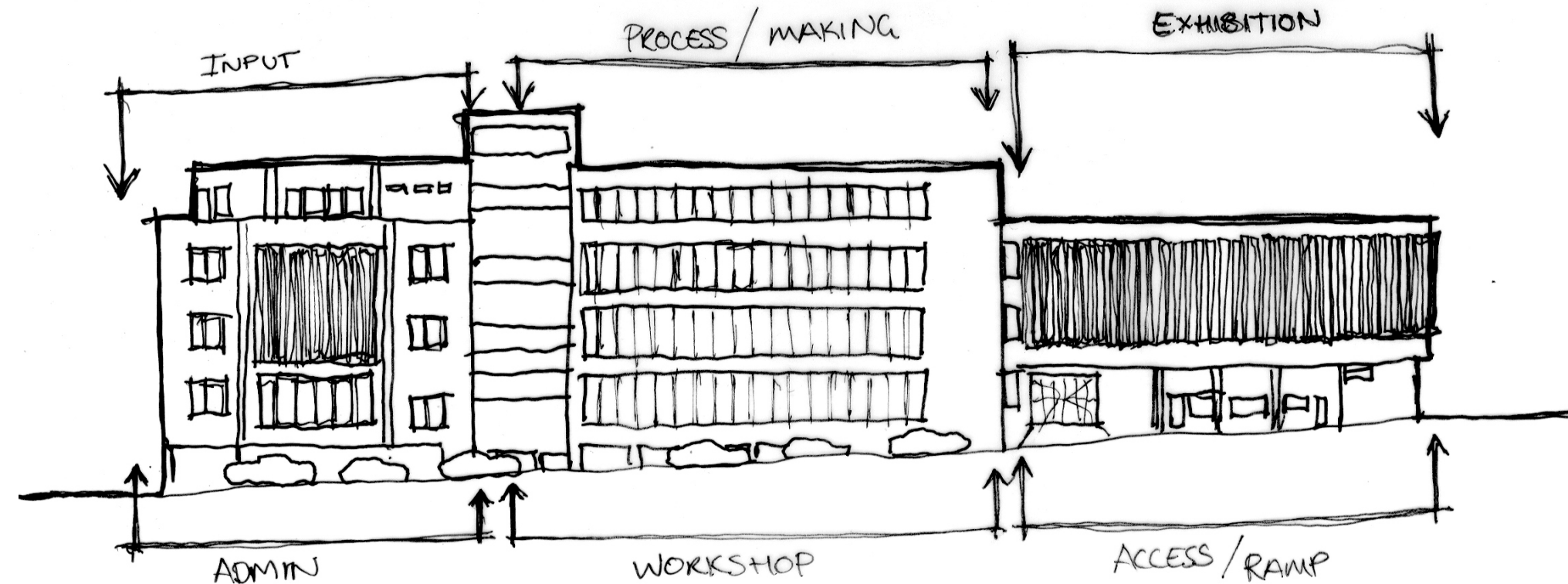


Figure.48: Function and Form

The journey through the building unfolds like a song, divided into three distinct stages: input, process, and exhibition. The input section begins with soft, subtle sounds and gentle melodies, with light and ambient tones setting a mood that invites listeners

into the building. As the song transitions to the process section, energy intensifies, peaking with powerful beats and layered instruments, capturing the high point of the piece. Lastly, the exhibition section acts as the outro, where sounds gradually

diminish and the intensity eases, echoing lingering melodies and conveying a sense of resolution.

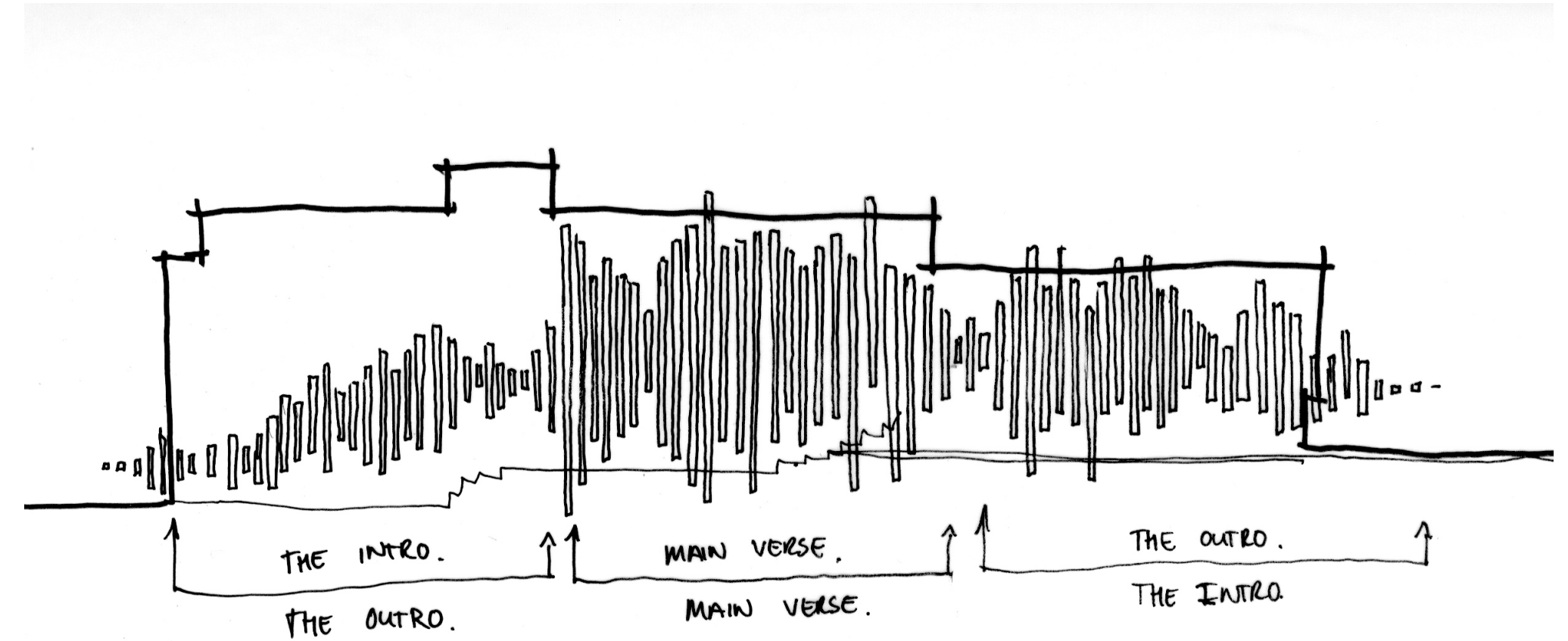


Figure.49: The Spatial Song.

The building comprises three distinct sections, each representing a unique function corresponding to input, process, and exhibition. The input

section serves as the gateway, capturing resources, ideas, and individuals—facilitated through collaborative workspaces, offices, or creative pod

clusters. At the heart of the building, the process section transforms ideas and resources through vibrant interactions, studios, and production areas,

symbolising the building's role as a centre of activity and innovation. Lastly, the exhibition area functions as the output, showcasing the results of the work via

displays and interactive spaces accessible to the public, fostering engagement and feedback

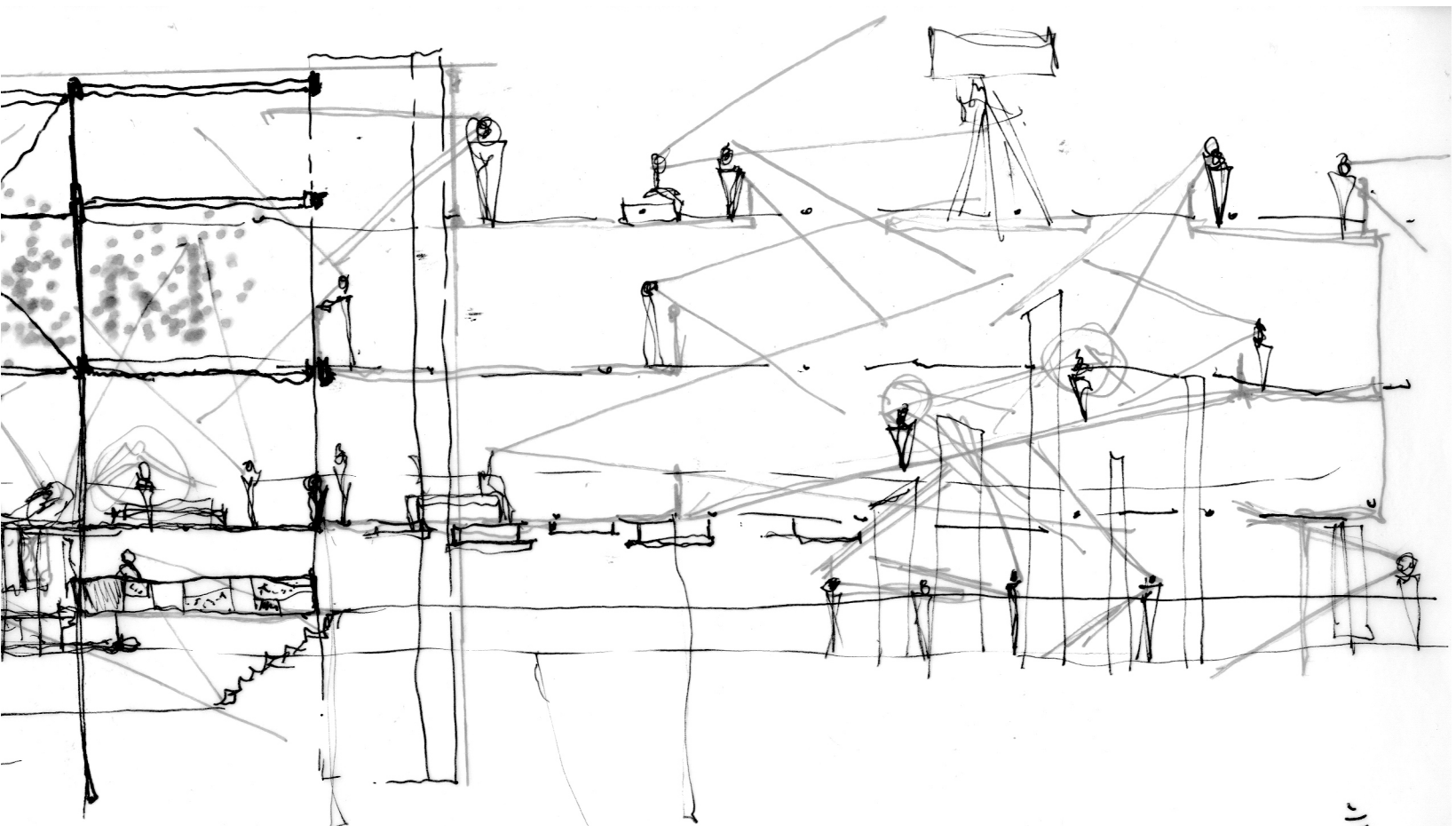
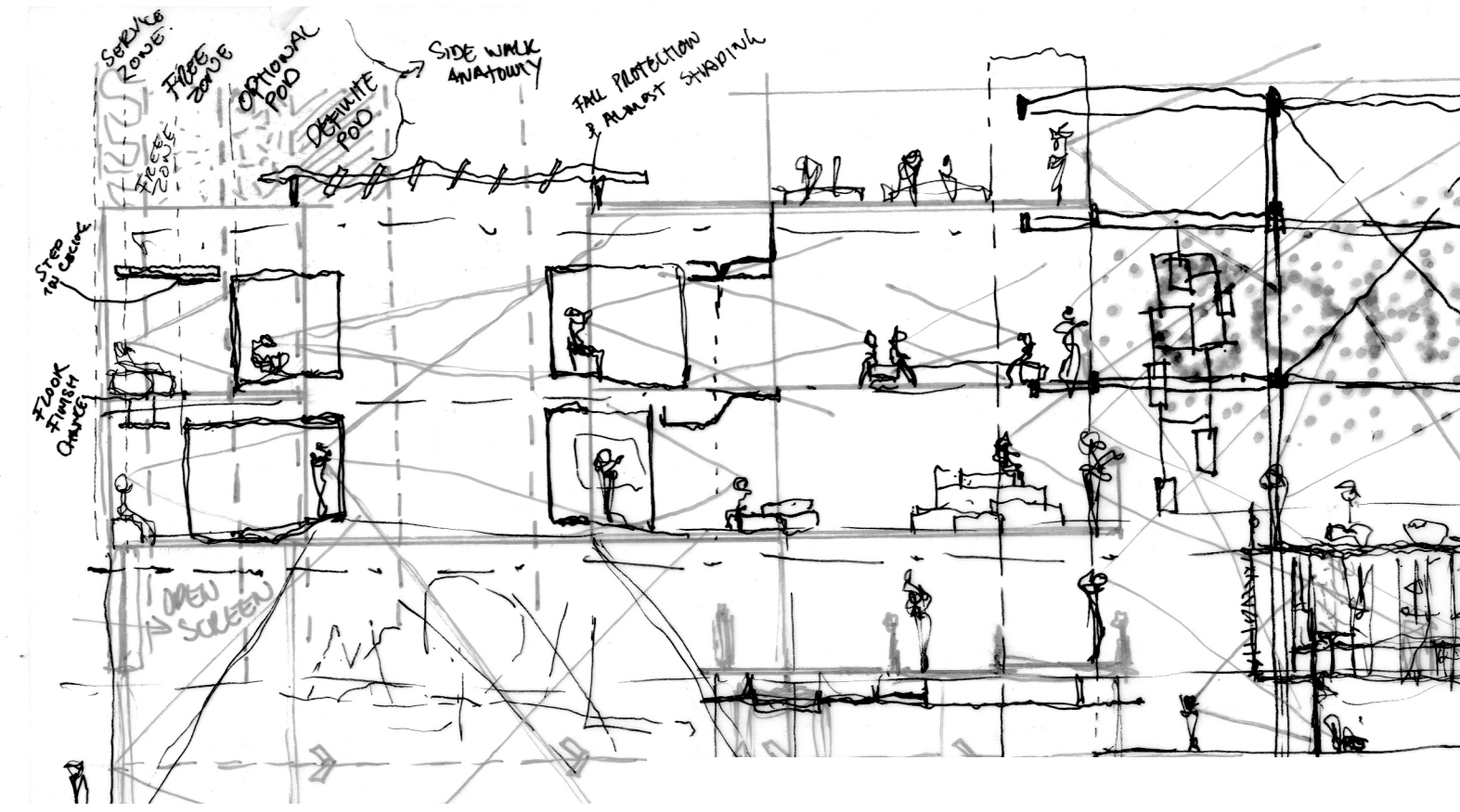


Figure.50: Section in Action.

Concept 01

Offers a main attraction to Independence Avenue, and Activity within the Central Processing space. An intimate Exhibition space for sharing.

Internal Engagement.

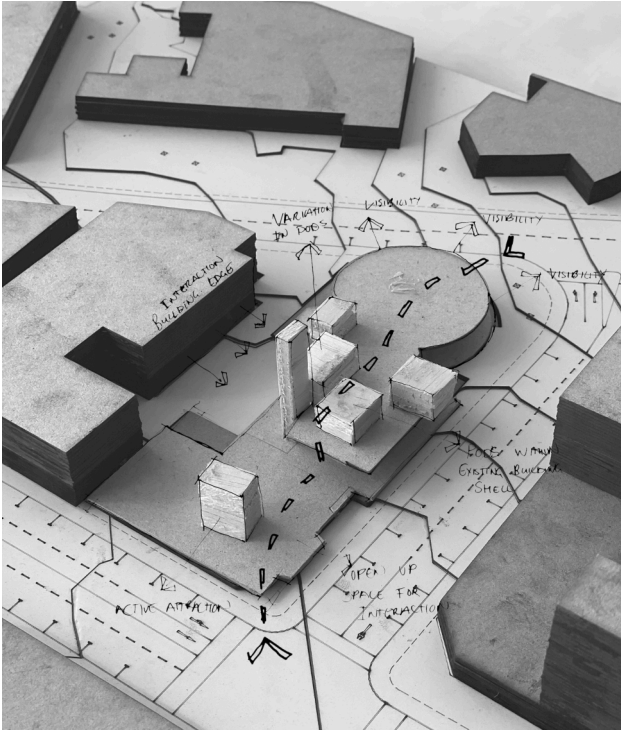


Figure.51a: Concept Model 01

Concept 02

Offers a multiple attractions to Independence Avenue, and Activity popping into Kasino street and an open Exhibition Space space. An intimate Exhibition space for sharing.

External Engagement

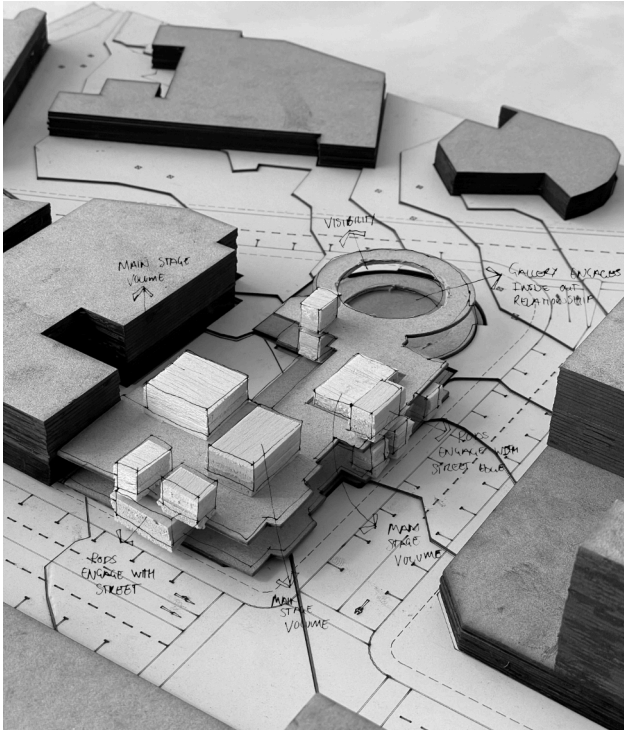


Figure.51b: Contextual Model 2.

Lively Arcades Concept

The concept of arcades and alleys plays a vital role in enhancing the vibrancy of urban spaces by creating inviting areas for public interaction and social exchange, which lines up with the notions of Fialko and Hampton for lively cities (2011). In the context of Windhoek's CBD, expanding a network of arcades aligns with UN Sustainable Development Goals by increasing accessible public areas, fostering inclusivity, and promoting sustainable economic urban growth (UN, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2023). These arcades

and alleys serve as sheltered, walkable spaces that draw foot traffic, support local businesses, and encourage community engagement. By building on Windhoek's existing arcade network, the CBD can be revitalised to create a lively, interactive environment that contributes to a connected and sustainable city centre.

Fostering arcades aligns with UN Sustainable Development Goal 11, which aims to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and

sustainable by addressing abandonment and slum conditions, expanding access to public amenities, and dedicating greater space to public areas and streets (UN, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2023).



Figure.52a: Photo of closed-off path through alleyway



Figure.52b: Proposed opening of path through alleyway

5.2 ALLOWING CONTEXT TO DRAW IN SITE DATE

The main stars of the show, the knowns of a flash party, facilitate a flash mob in which creators are invited to combat neglect and abandonment by hosting on site, creating a flash mob for a dance where the instruments offer facilities for engagement through music. A 'st/influencer' crowd facilitates the co-creation of the knowns, making marks within the crowd.

The 'site date' works with a device that allows the influencer to influence a creator into engaging with them and capturing this shared experience within a space uncommon for the influencer.

The 'site date' marks the engagement and exchange. Ultimately, the process begins with a catalyst on site, the gateway to engagement, the guiding influence, starting the flash mob through

social media, garnering foot traffic. Channeling undivided attention to the task, representing a clear sign of flow actively subscribing to the content, this subscription follows the presentation of the 'influencer' crowd, formed by these new subscribers, influencing participation in the knowns' co-creation process.

After making marks, the crowd is shared with the next subscriber to make a mark, engaging with site and user.

The knobs, much like a following, participate in the mark marking as they see fit. They move and stay stagnant in the crowd to mimic following and unfollowing the influence, making the remarks they

choose to like. Follower counts are measured on a data sheet capturing the engagement.

The stepping stone adds an additional device, additional content curated by the influencer, relating to the insights of the attraction quality of the influencer. The knobs attach to the influencer and participate in flow theory, "performing challenging tasks characterised by interest, control and intense

focus" (Csikszentmihalyi 1990). This process smooths the conceptual dynamism of designed pay-off pods within the building.Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990) Beyond boredom and anxiety. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.



Figure.53a: DJ deck knobs and buttons as instruments of drawing. By Author.



Figure.53b: Helmet device from experiment on Site drawing. By Author.



Figure.53c: Data collected from experiment on Site drawing.

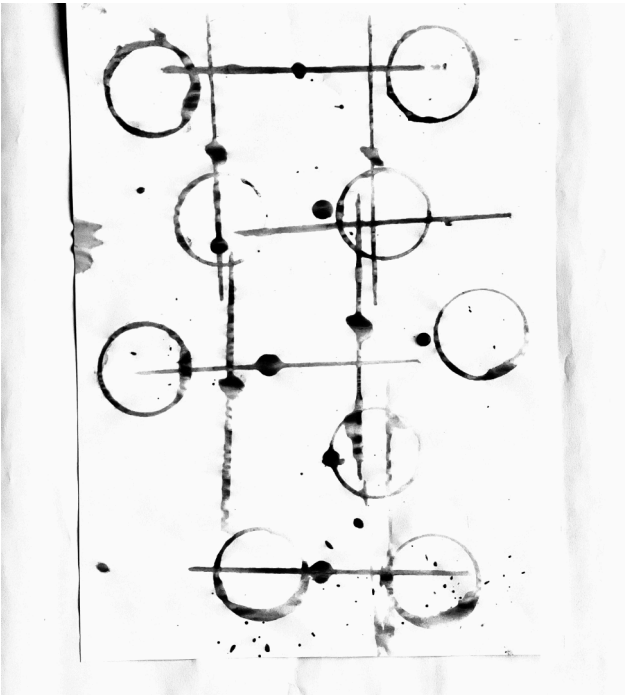


Figure.53d: Exploration on the data collected from investigation.

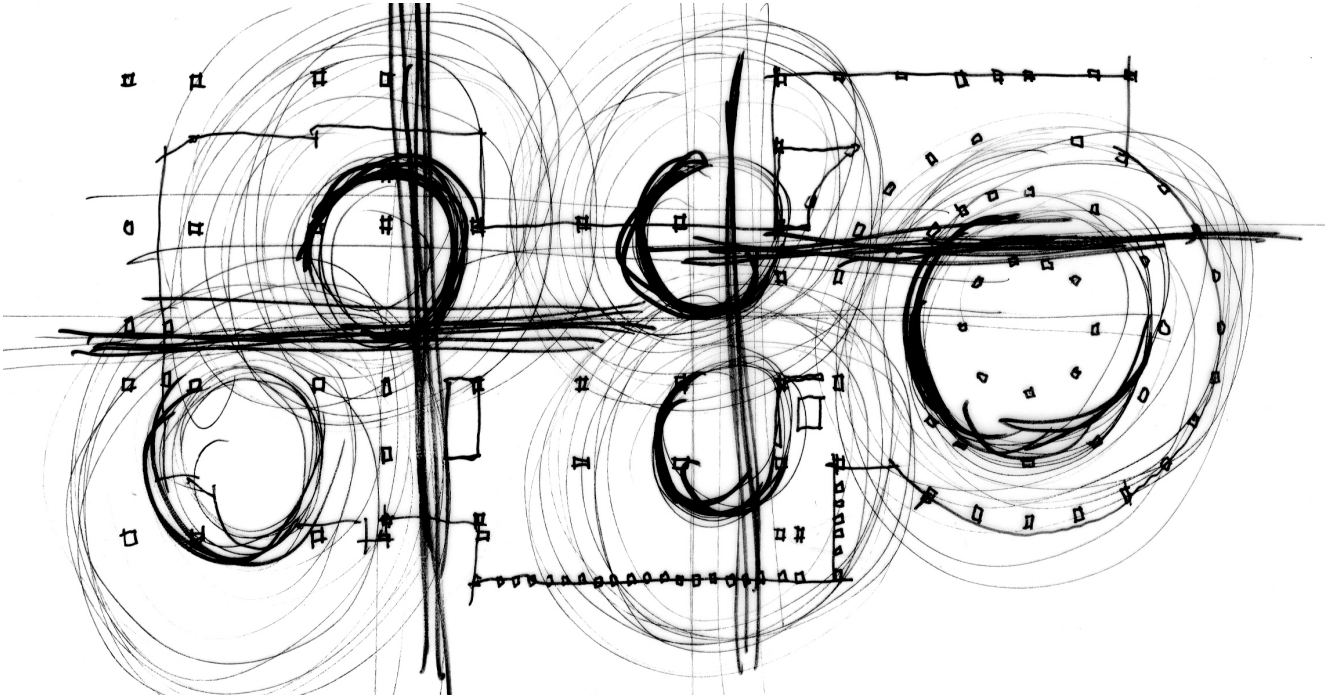


Figure.53e: Spatial exploration on the data collected from investigation.



This chapter examines the context, exploring the history of Sam Cohen and his philanthropic efforts, the original building's significance, and site investigations that highlight the causes of its abandonment

6.1 CONTEXT AS DYNAMIC AND RESPONSIVE

Context is the basis for departure from an architectural investigation; it forms the necessary tangible and intangible connections to produce responsible architecture. Following the research in the article A Global Sense of Place, Doreen Massey highlights important connections with context that stretch beyond the physical parameters of space. The argument follows that context is not static; space is not made up of a singular, essential identity, nor is it solely constructed from history and past origins. It is rather a dynamic amalgamation of layers, both past and present, that interact and exchange with all influences, including potential futures (Massey, 1994). An additional condition to Massey's view on context taps into the ability of a place to serve as a portal to another place or period of time through media and ornamentation related to various other places (1994). Much like social media platforms allow a virtual space for interaction, which could serve as an extension of context. The context can recognise the multiple identities within current space to unravel richness or conflict within a space (1994). This understanding of context prevents a uni-dimensional view of site approach and provokes a holistic investigation into the site to understand how to approach it. In addition to this investigation on the importance of context, Norbert Schultz investigates the idea of the spirit of the place, which brings about the significance of history and narratives of a place that enhance a sense of continuity; the idea that the multiple identities add to the enrichment of experience (1980).

6.2 HISTORY AND COHEN

Sam Cohen, the author of the Cohen Building on Independence Avenue, was born in 1890. He was a trailblazer, patriot, and philanthropist whose influence profoundly shaped Namibia (Fraser 1956).

Serving in multiple significant positions, Cohen was a councillor in the Windhoek Municipality for eight years before World War II and was a man of the people, devoted to his community.

In 1933, after his public service, General Motors appointed him as the exclusive distributor of their vehicles in Namibia. Under his tenure, he oversaw the sale and distribution of more than 68% of the country's motor vehicle transactions (Fraser 1956).

He also ventured into the radio and electrical appliance markets, offering only the highest quality brands. Cohen became well known for accepting items like firewood from Rehoboth, salt from Swakopmund, livestock, and other farm produce from various farms around Namibia in exchange for cars, earning him the nickname "Cohen for Cars."

This reflected his dedication to helping individuals acquire the necessary means to enhance their businesses and lives.

His philanthropic efforts extended beyond commerce, venturing into educational institutions, community centres, museums, hospitals, and sports facilities throughout Windhoek and Swakopmund (Fraser 1956). Cohen's legacy endures within these spaces, highlighting his significant impact on the nation.

The House of Cohen, the abandoned base of operations, is reimagined in his likeness in line with the arguments of safeguarding against the loss of lineage and heritage while ensuring longevity (Nursanty et al., 2023).



Figure.54: Sam Cohen. Source: Gill, F. (Ed.). (1956). Cohen of South West Africa. South West Africa Commercial Holdings Limited.

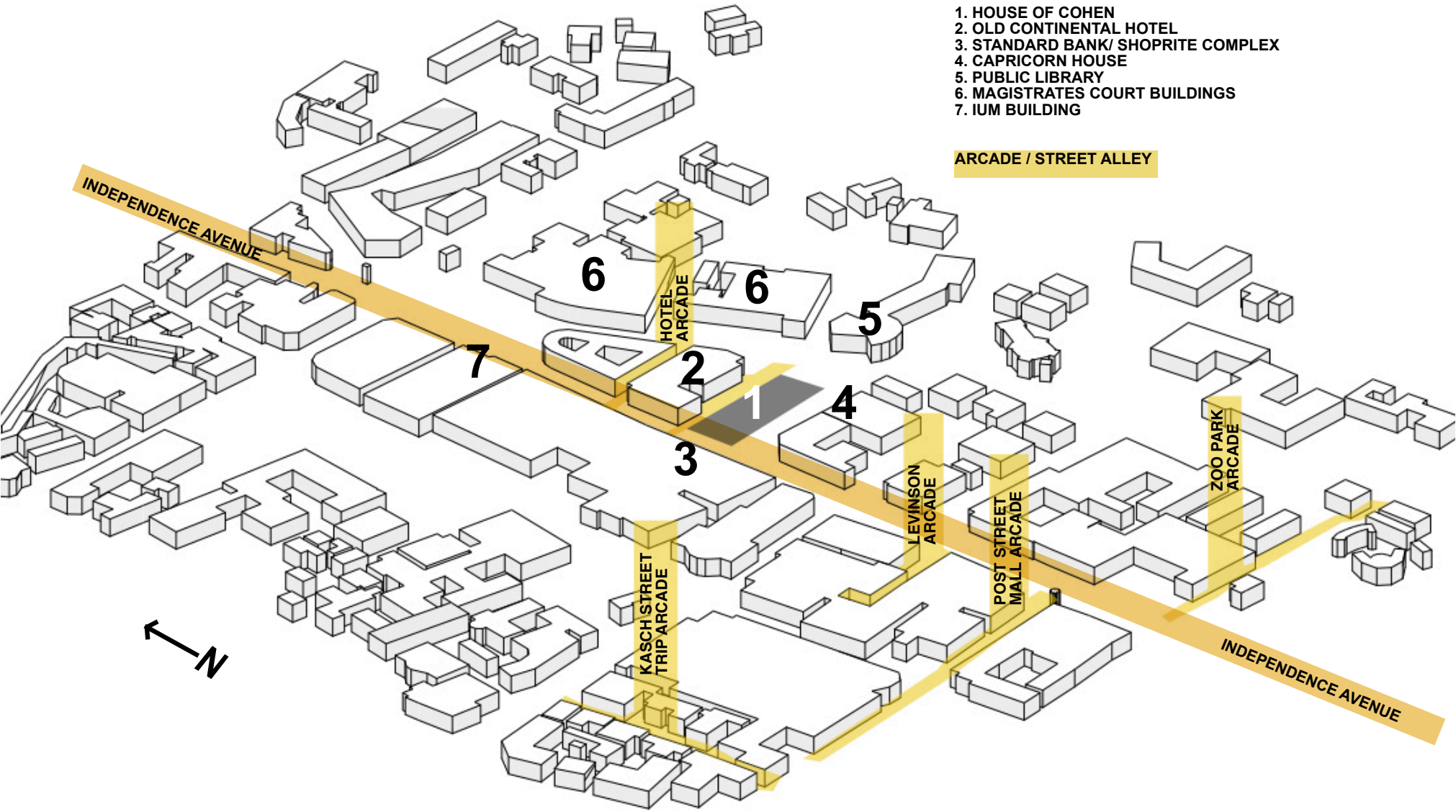


Figure.55: Contextual layout of Independence Avenue with Cohen Building.



2. Old continental hotel building, unoccupied building in the CBD area.



3. Standard Bank on Independence Avenue, building undergone renovation.



4. Capricorn building evacuated 2024 in favour of new headquarters outside of CBD area.



5. Public Library experiencing little use in light of digital media preferences.



6. Court Buildings currently holding proceedings in CBD.



7. IUM education facility, use of open space within building for teaching purposes,.



Figure.57: Cohen Building after Completion. Source: Gill, F. (Ed.). (1956). Cohen of South West Africa. South West Africa Commercial Holdings Limited.

Figure.56a: Continental building adjacent to the Cohen building (Top Left).

Figure.56b: Public library opposite Cohen Building (Bottom Left).

Figure.56c: Standard bank on Independence Avenue (Top Middle).

Figure.56d: Magistrates Court on Fonnies K. Street (Bottom Middle)

Figure.56e: Capricorn Building on Kasino Street (Top Right)

Figure.56f: IUM Building on Independence Avenue (Bottom Right)

6.3 COHEN BUILDING

The House left by Cohen, completed in 1955, symbolises, an innovative leap to modernity, reflecting Sam Cohen's pioneering spirit.

Cohen was notably among the first to adopt caterpillar tractors in agriculture, advising northern farmers on advanced ploughing techniques that surpassed traditional oxen usage.

True to this progressive vision, the building was crafted as one of the era's most advanced facilities. Covering 108,000 square feet, it included offices, showrooms, workshops, a service station, packing areas, storage, and other departments under one roof. The innovative engineering permitted heavy vehicles on the top floor without requiring a lift, showcasing state-of-the-art engineering and design.

Eventually, ownership shifted to the government, perhaps indicative of Cohen's political ties.

This building stands as a testament to legacy, following the observations of our lineages, culture, and heritage section.



Figure.58a: Cohen Building Status in 2024.



Existing building entrance on Independence Avenue, entrance closed off to public after home Ministry of Home Affairs moved out of CBD.

Figure.58b: Cohen Building entrance on independence Avenue



Existing building entrance on Kasino Street, closed off to public after home Ministry of Home Affairs moved out of CBD.

Figure.58c: Cohen Building entrance on Kasino Street



Existing building entrance on Fonniesburg Road, mainly for vehicular access to the building ramps.

Figure.58d: Cohen Building entrance on Fonniesburg Road

The House of Cohen is notable for its unique concrete aggregate cladding and skilfully arranged tile-work, which imparts a bold, textured quality that sets it apart from neighbouring structures.

The façade features repetitive vertical slit elements that establish a rhythmic architectural style, giving the building a vibrant presence while efficiently managing solar exposure and shading its interiors. This synergy of design and practicality not only boosts the building's visual appeal but also

enhances its environmental efficiency. Among its striking architectural traits, the radio section stands out as particularly significant, highlighting its historical importance and connection to the community's heritage. This aspect links the building's robust architectural identity to its cultural history, emphasising its enduring influence in the urban setting.



Figure.59a: Cohen Building view from Independence Avenue



Figure.59b: Cohen Building view from C/o Kasino and Fannie K street.



Figure.59c: Cohen Building view of Radio Tower from Fannie K. Street.



Figure.59d: Cohen Building view from Fannie K. Street.

6.4 THE OBSERVED AREA

The House of Cohen occupies a sloping site, resulting in entrances at different levels along its perimeter. This variation in entry points enhances public accessibility from all surrounding streets, allowing for a seamless flow of movement in and around the building. Despite the lack of green or landscaped public spaces on the site, the existing open areas surrounding the building present an opportunity for transformation. Currently, these gathering spaces have become occupied by

antisocial activities, undermining the building's potential as a community hub.

These spaces could be reimagined to create positive, engaging environments that support the building's adaptive reuse purpose. Incorporating public dry landscaping and activating these open areas would enrich the site's urban fabric, providing engaging spaces that encourage social interaction, creativity, and community involvement. This transformation could shift the dynamic nature of the

site, making it a focal point for positive engagement and a supportive environment for public life in the CBD.

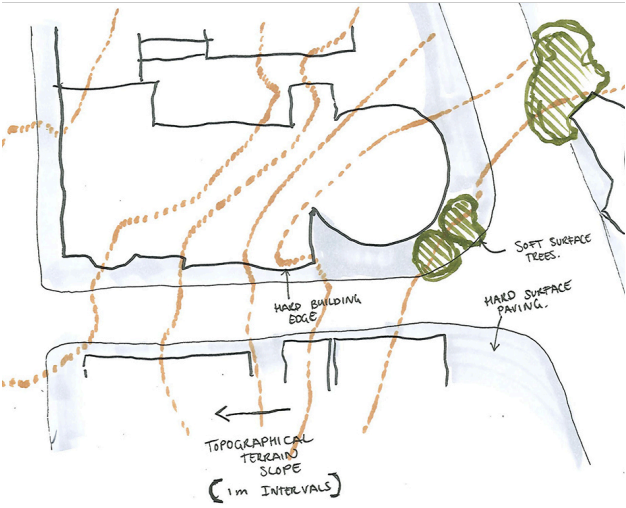


Figure.60a: Graphic illustration from on site investigation of levels.

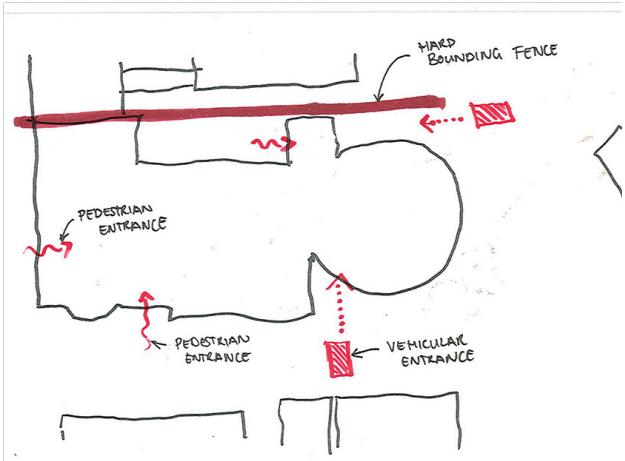


Figure.60b: graphic depiction from on site investigation of entrances.

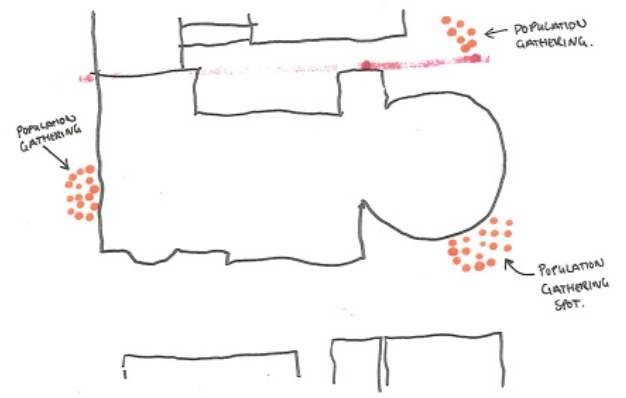


Figure.60c: graphic depiction from on site investigation of activity.

6.5 HOUSE OF COHEN IMPACT

The engagement significance of the Cohen Building of 1955 is evident in its innovative design, which promotes transparency and interaction between the public and its operations. Visitors approaching from Independence Avenue are welcomed by a private pavement and expansive glass display windows. Behind these, a revolving platform in the car showroom showcases products. Visible to passersby, salesmen and the tyre department actively engage with them, while a service lift enables mechanics to work in plain view, ensuring ongoing visual interaction between the building's activities and the public.

On the mezzanine, deep-set windows display used cars, further bridging the gap between the building's interior and the street. At the centre of the structure, grease bays and the service department anchor the workspaces, highlighting the building's function as an automotive service hub. Located on the former Lüderitz Street, now Fonnies Karuhaie Street, the building features a distinctive circular section with

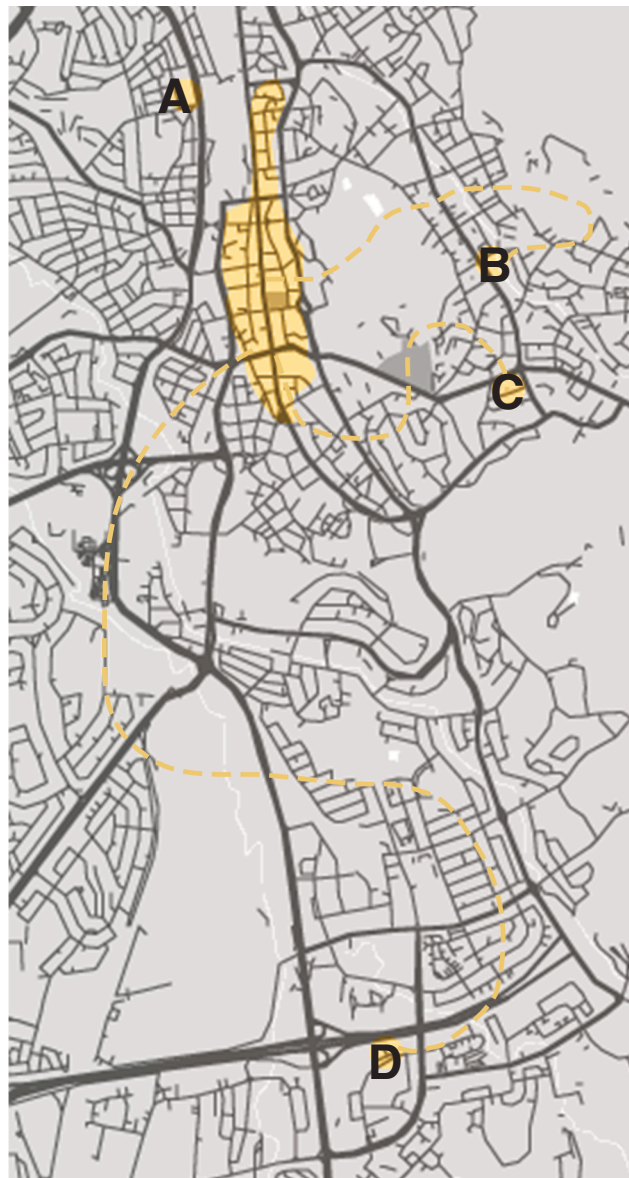
two intertwined spiralling ramps, allowing efficient customer movement to the various vehicle-related departments. This architectural brilliance showcases Cohen's dedication to functionality, accessibility, and innovation, establishing the building as a landmark in urban design and commerce.



Figure.61: Radio Tower of Cohen Building. Source: Gill, F. (Ed.). (1956). Cohen of South West Africa. South West Africa Commercial Holdings Limited.

6.6 THE URBAN EXODUS

The exit of larger companies creating the swell of socio-economic distress touched on earlier can be visualised in Figure 48. The map diagram represents the various businesses and their new locations indicated by the letters. A is the newly constructed Home Affairs building, responsible for the abandonment of the Cohen building. The Government ministry left the Cohen building on independence in preference for a larger building outside of the city centre. B and D are representative of major financial institutions that have set up their base of operations outside the CBD area. Bank Windhoek and Standard Bank have migrated to bigger, more modern buildings in which their departments can be consolidated and internal operations can work more efficiently. C represents PAWA Plaza, a newly developed office building within a residential district offering rentable office space for smaller businesses. These measures have caused the CBD to lose traction due to the removal of necessary services from the financial institutions, government institutions, and small business operations, fueling the abandonment.



New Home affairs building taking public service out of the CBD area.



A

The New capricon House, Corporate business of Bank Windhoek Migrated outside of the CDB area.



B

Pawa Plaza, a new Residential and Office building complex erected in a residential setting



C

New Standard bank head office migrated out of the CBD into periphery busines are out of CBD.



D

Figure.62a: The Exodus Map.

6.6.2 PEOPLE AROUND THE HOUSE OF COHEN

Around the house of Cohen is a network of micro-economy that is slowly diminishing as a result of the exit of businesses within the area. Linking to the socio-economic challenges posed by the abandonment of the city centre, the area has seen a loss in its financial system, with banks moving out of the area. Observed in figure 49 are the current stakeholders, mainly made up of lawyers, vendors and car-guards; this system currently functions off the position of the high court, which feeds on the micro-economy and sustains a global economy due to the lawyers in the area.

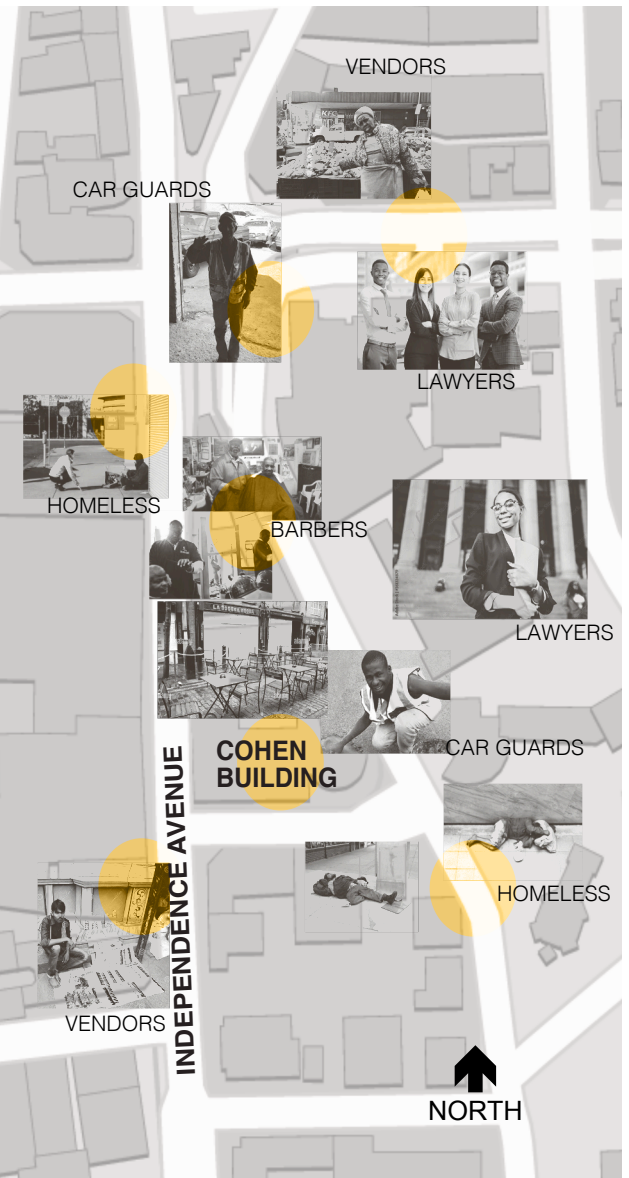


Figure.62b: The demographic situation.

6.6.3 BUILDINGS AROUND THE HOUSE OF COHEN

The majority of the buildings around the Cohen Building have the potential to support the new development of an industry of digital entrepreneurs. However, the buildings will require adaptive strategies. Figure 50 represents the buildings the proposal aims to affect in its capacity as a catalyst for change. Retail outlets, educational facilities, hotels, and the public library are some of the infrastructures that could see improvement after the development of the House of Cohen.

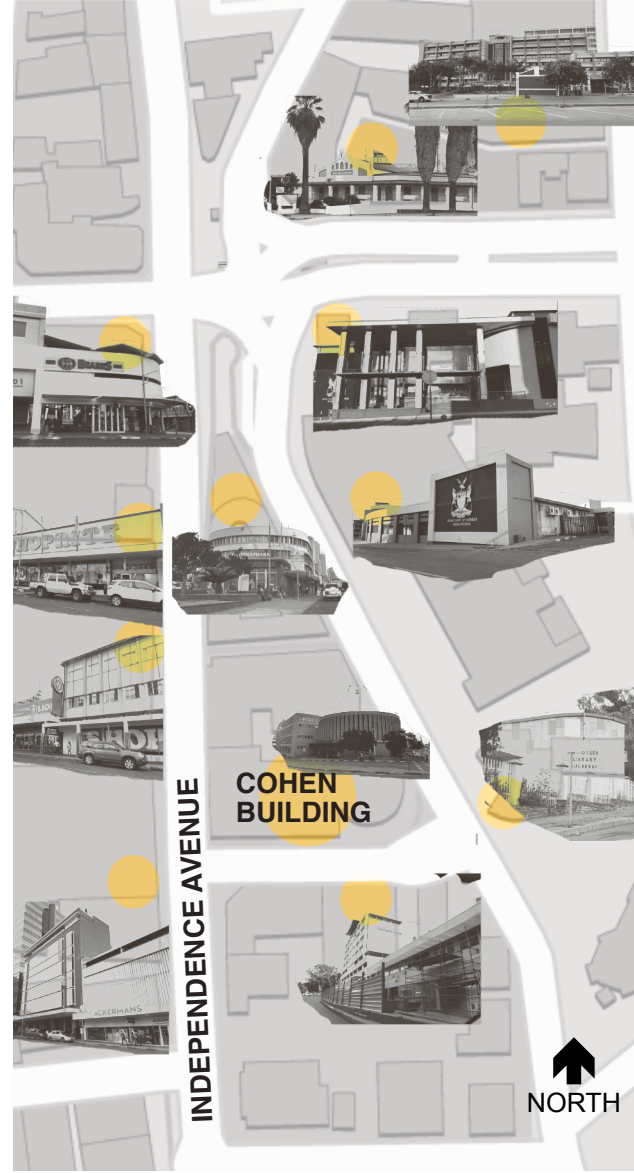


Figure.62c: The buildings that remain.
By Author.

6.7 COHEN'S ENVIRONMENT

The house of Cohen is one of the tallest structures in the area, consideration of solar interference to internal functions should be considered. The topography also lends itself some challenges in limitations for spatial planning, and these are of the major environmental influences of the site.

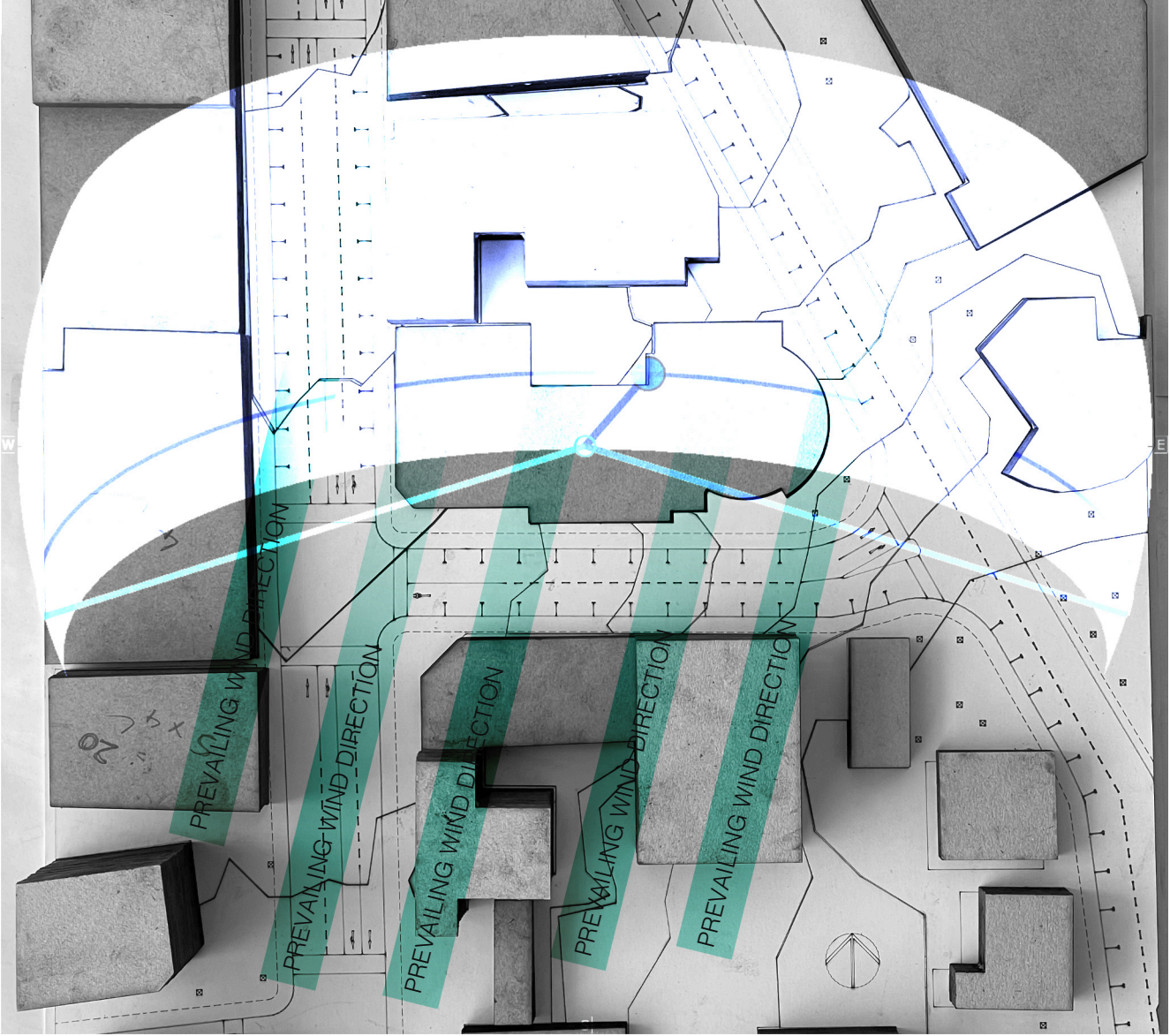


Figure.63: Site and Context Model illustrating
light exposure of sun and prevailing wind
direction.

6.8 KEY INSIGHTS

The House of Cohen reflects the legacy of founder Sam Cohen, recognised for his innovation and philanthropy. As a key businessman, Cohen designed the building to support growth and prosperity in the city centre, with a focus on trade and technology, strengthening Windhoek's economy.

However, the city centre has declined due to the economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, leading to project cancellations and many businesses leaving, resulting in an area of inactivity and neglect.

Looking ahead, revitalising the city centre presents an opportunity to reposition the House of Cohen as a vital part of urban renewal. Transforming it into an interactive digital hub can create a public space that fosters digital innovation and community engagement, drawing people back to the city. This concept aligns with an arcade model, connecting various initiatives for the city's rejuvenation.

By preserving elements of the original structure, this adaptive reuse honours the House of Cohen's heritage while creating a progressive space that encourages exploration and involvement, ensuring it remains a landmark that respects Sam Cohen's legacy and enhances Windhoek's future.

6.9 EXISTING ARCADE TYPOLOGY

An arcade is typically described as a covered walkway adorned with arches, often housing shops or stalls along its sides (Ching, 2014). These usually provide sheltered paths that link different areas, promoting social engagement and commercial activities by offering convenient routes in urban environments. Ching notes that arcades are essential architectural elements that improve pedestrian flow and create protected public spaces within cities (2014).

In the Central Business District (CBD), arcades infuse life into alleys and pathways, transforming them into lively spaces where commerce and social interactions flourish. This architectural typology plays a crucial role in energising areas and fostering foot traffic, making paths vibrant and attractive. By leveraging this well-established typology, the House of Cohen aims to adopt the arcade model to develop a network of engagement both internally and externally in the proposal, creating areas that promote interaction and economic activity. Within the surrounding context, a few arcades facilitate the flow between areas.

Post Street Mall



Figure.64a: Photograph of post street mall.

Levinson Arcade



Figure.64b: Photograph of Levinson Arcade.

Hotel Arcade



Figure.64c: Photograph of Hotel arcade

Kasch Street/ Trip Arcade



Figure.64d: Trip Arcade, ,Kasch Street

Zoo Park



Figure.64e: Zoo Park Passage



CHAPTER
SPATIAL EXPLORATION

This chapter focuses on spatial exploration, synthesising insights from the concept, context, and case studies to investigate spatial relationships, sensory experiences, and dynamic design strategies through iterative site engagement and experimentation.

7.1 SPACIAL CONTEXTUAL RELATIONS

Exploration of the abandoned space nestled between the old hotel and the Cohen Building creates an opportunity for the revitalisation of the Cohen Building. The space offers an opportunity to transform into a publicly accessible area that fosters engagement with both buildings. By opening a pathway from Independence Avenue to Fonnie

Karuaihe Street, the space can serve as a vibrant corridor, inviting movement, interaction, and exploration. The design emphasises that increased access enhances community interaction and collaboration opportunities, creating a dynamic environment that bridges the two structures while supporting social and economic revitalisation.

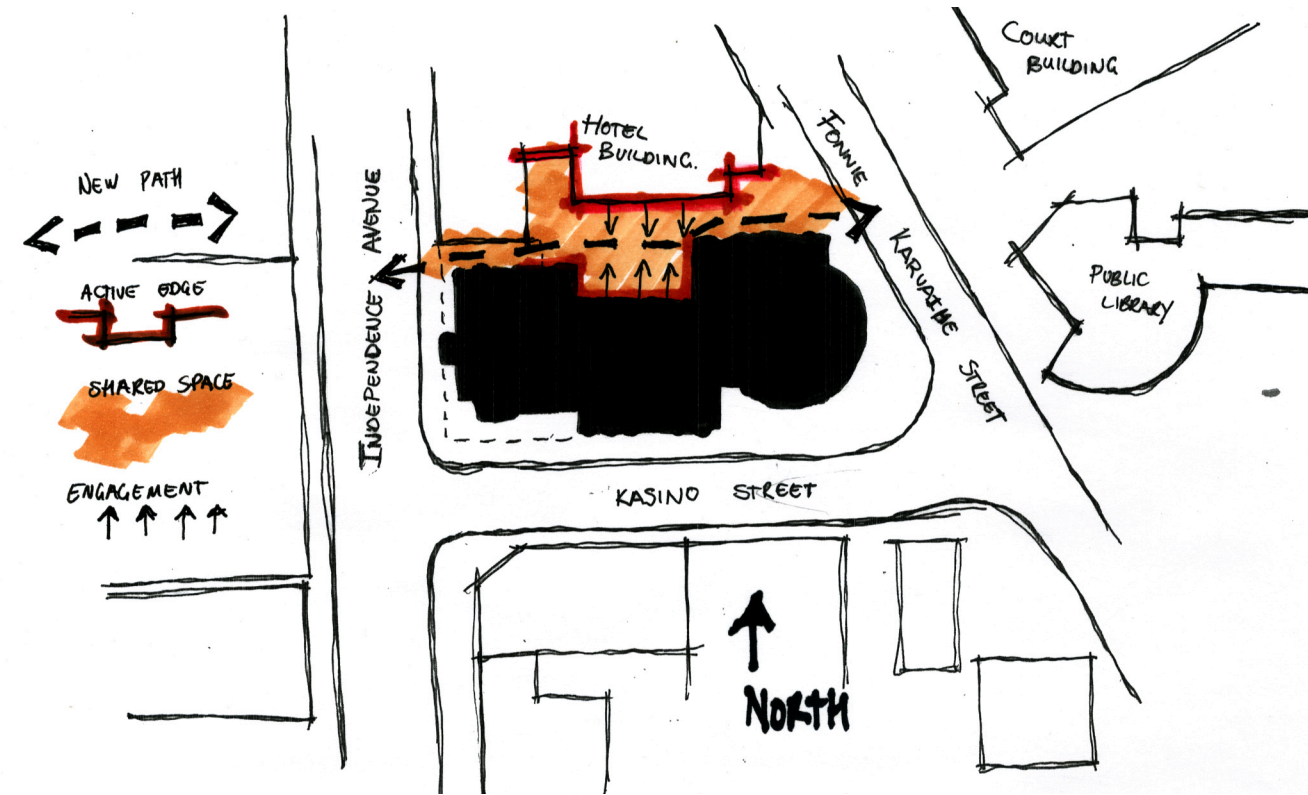


Figure.65: Explorative sketch investigating opportunities offered by adjacent Hotel Building.

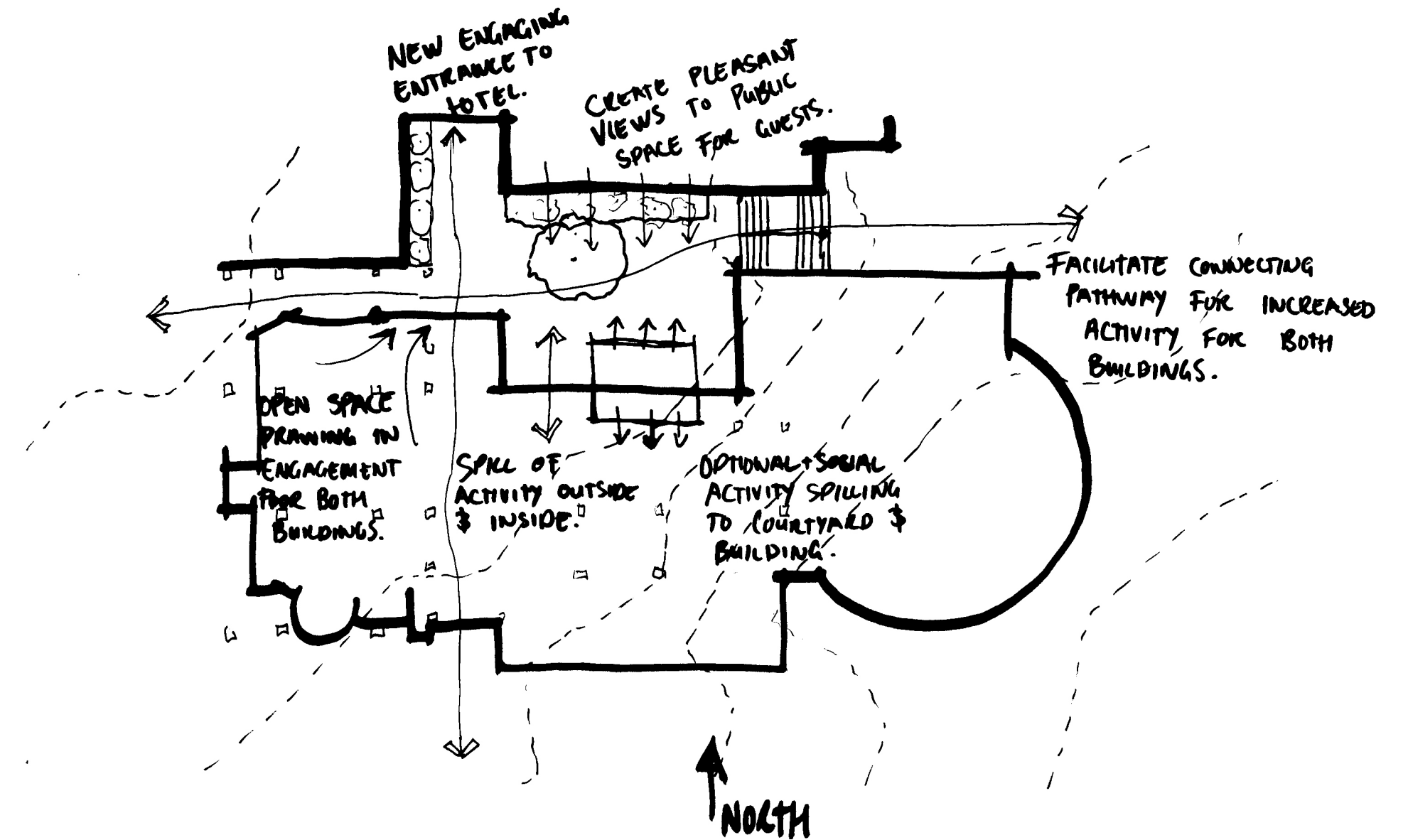


Figure.66: Explorative sketch investigating opportunities offered by adjacent Hotel Building.

The space between the House of Cohen and the library across the street holds significant potential for activation. By introducing spill-out activities from both buildings, the area can become a shared zone of engagement, encouraging community interaction and movement between the two sites. This dynamic

flow would not only enhance the usability of both buildings but also invite the public into these spaces, fostering greater connection and participation from the surrounding community.

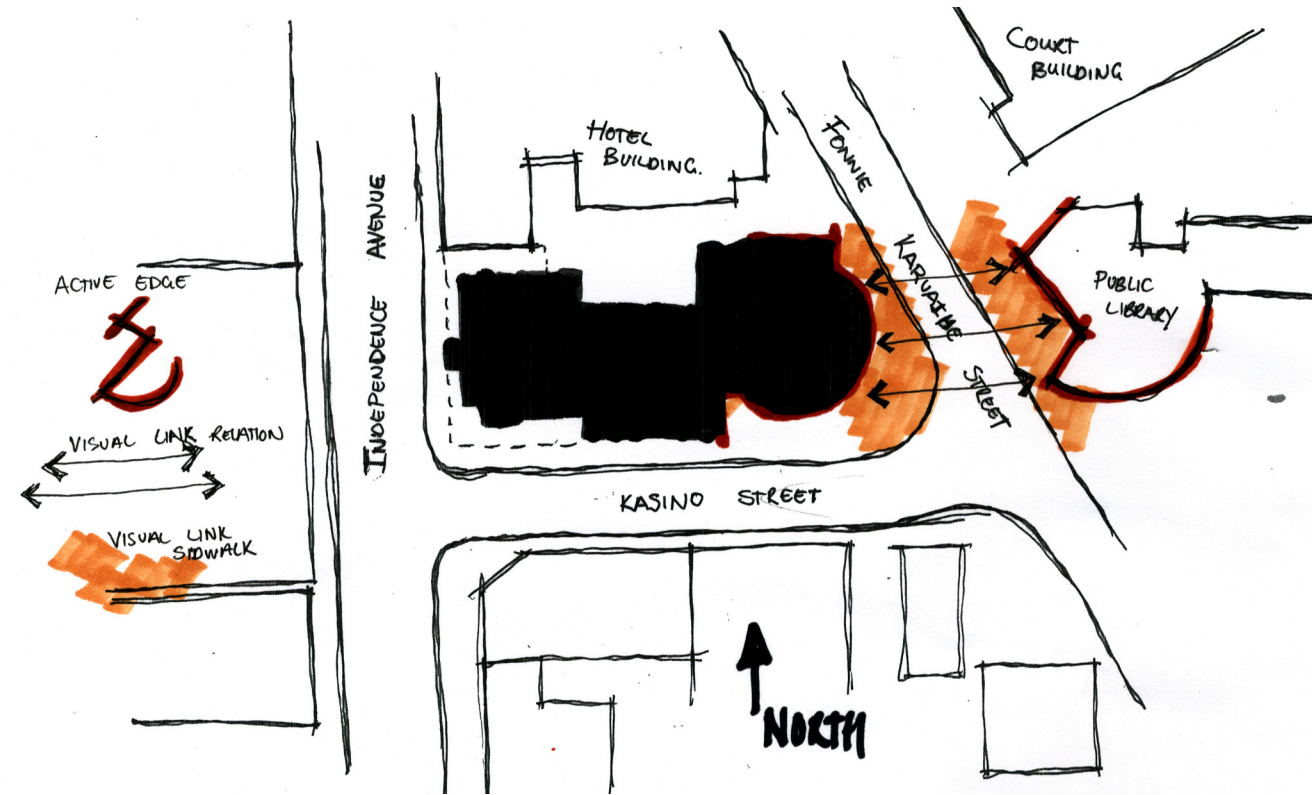


Figure.67: Explorative sketch investigating opportunities offered by adjacent education institution.

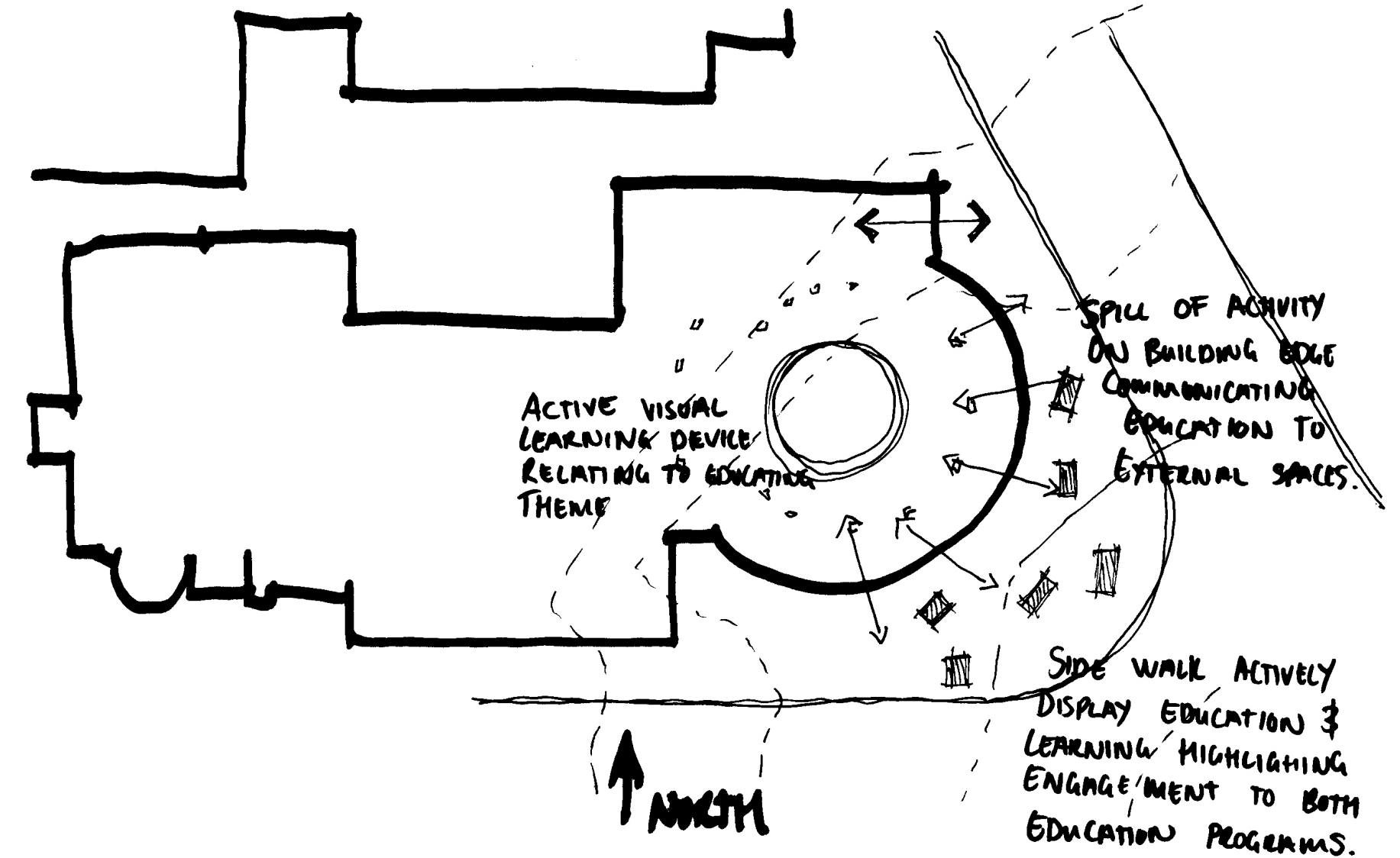


Figure.68: Explorative sketch investigating opportunities offered by adjacent education institution.

The House of Cohen has the potential to engage the public on three sides, all directly accessible from the street edge. With the integration of kinetic facades, the building can actively draw in engagement from a broad community, creating a dynamic interface with its surroundings. This openness would foster interaction across multiple access points, extending

the building's influence beyond its immediate context and positioning it as a catalyst for revitalisation within the CBD. By inviting movement and participation, the design aims to strengthen its connection to the public and stimulate urban renewal.

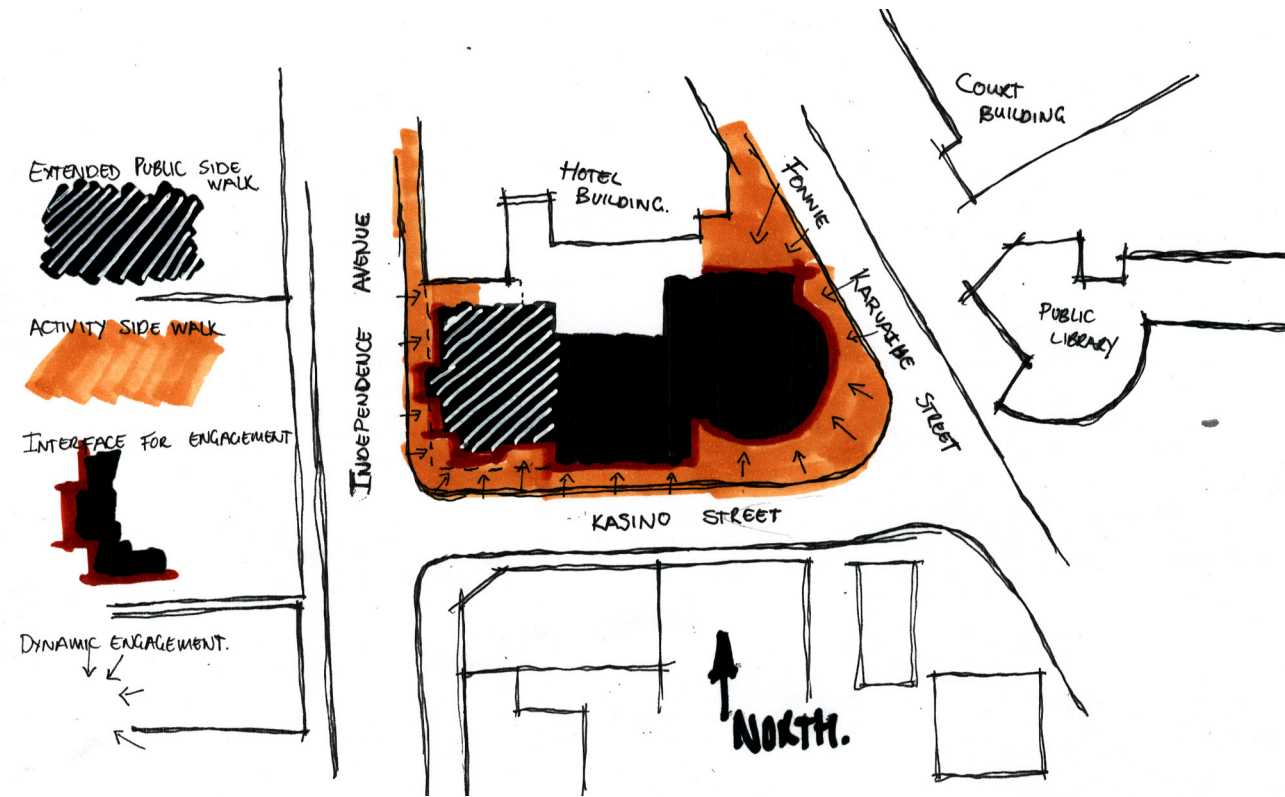


Figure.69: Explorative sketch investigating opportunities offered by street edge

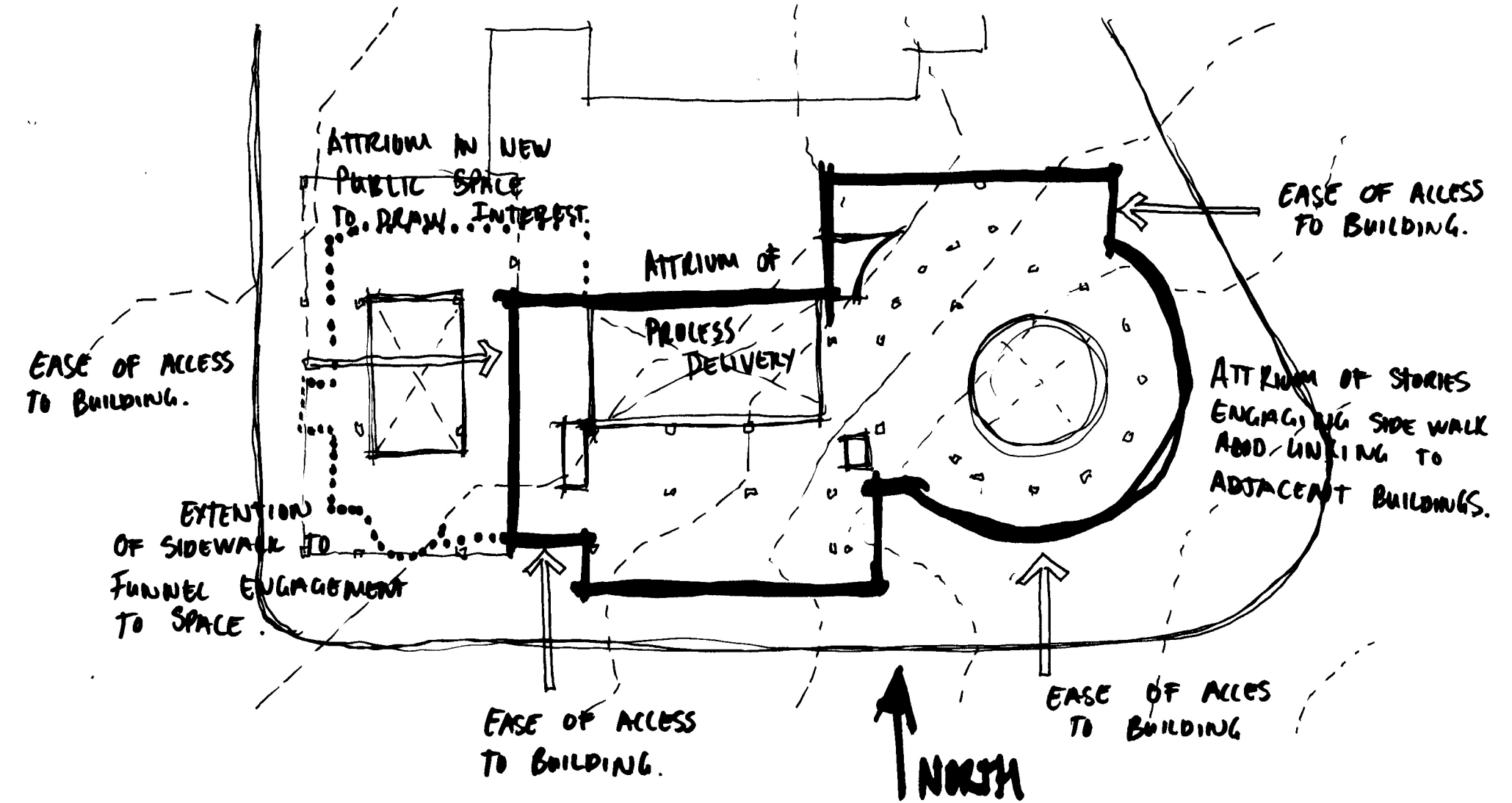


Figure.70: Explorative sketch investigating opportunities offered by street edge

7.2 WANTED VIBRANT SPACE

The goal for this revitalisation is to create engagement opportunities throughout the building by incorporating overhead attractions and multiple kinetic structures. These elements aim to stimulate the senses through a variety of dynamic

experiences, inviting interaction at different levels. By activating the space with diverse sensory stimulants, the design encourages continuous exploration and participation, transforming the

building into an immersive environment that fosters engagement and connection with its users.

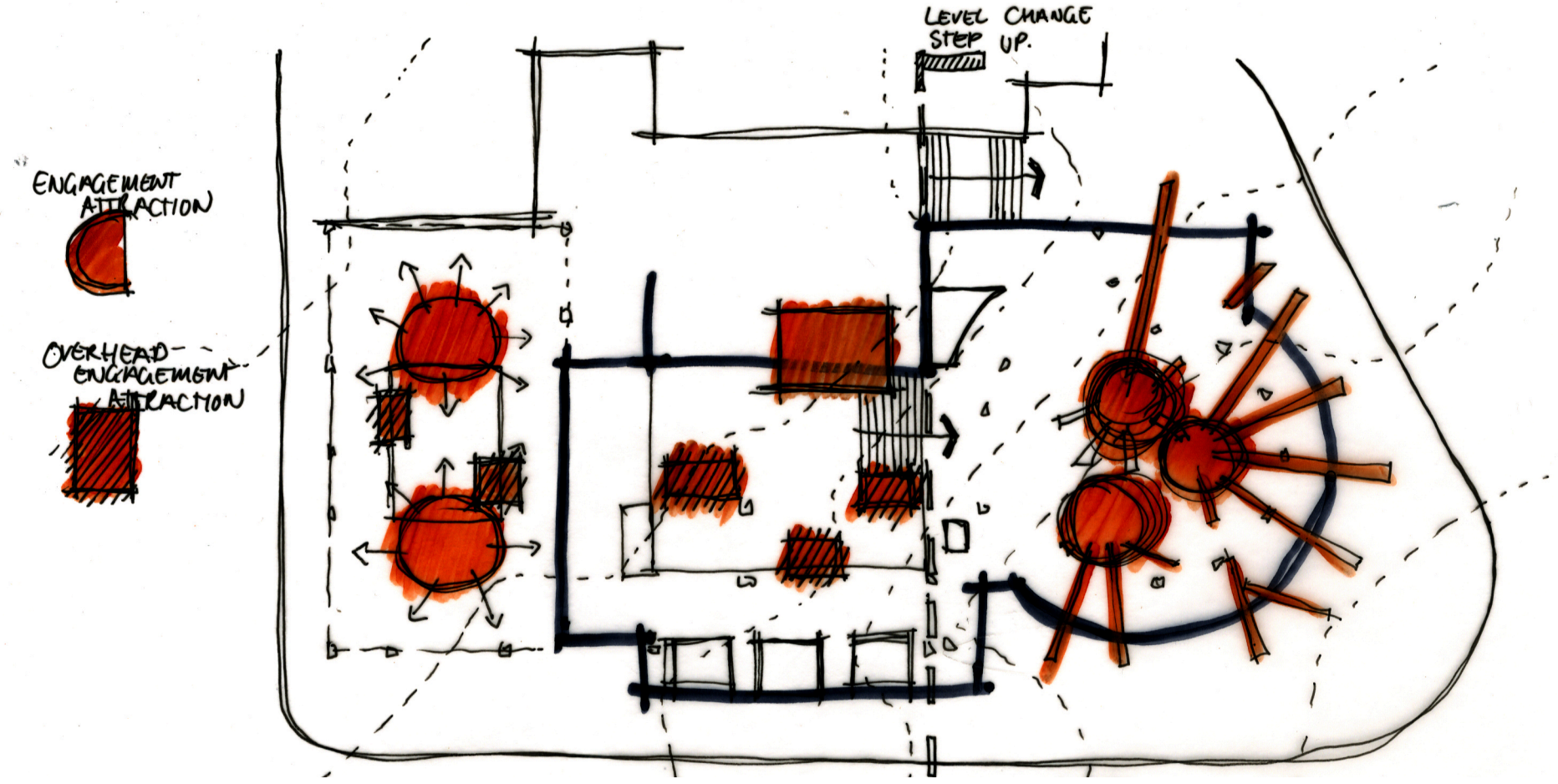


Figure.71: Explorative sketch of Points of attraction along route of engagement through Building.

7.3 DESIRED ROUTE OF EXPERIENCE

Attractions will be strategically placed along a carefully designed route that guides visitors through the building, ensuring they encounter key areas of engagement. This pathway will connect essential

activities, drawing people naturally from one space to another while maintaining interest and interaction throughout the journey. The integration of kinetic elements along this route not only enhances the

sensory experience but also encourages deeper exploration, making the building a vibrant and continuously engaging environment.

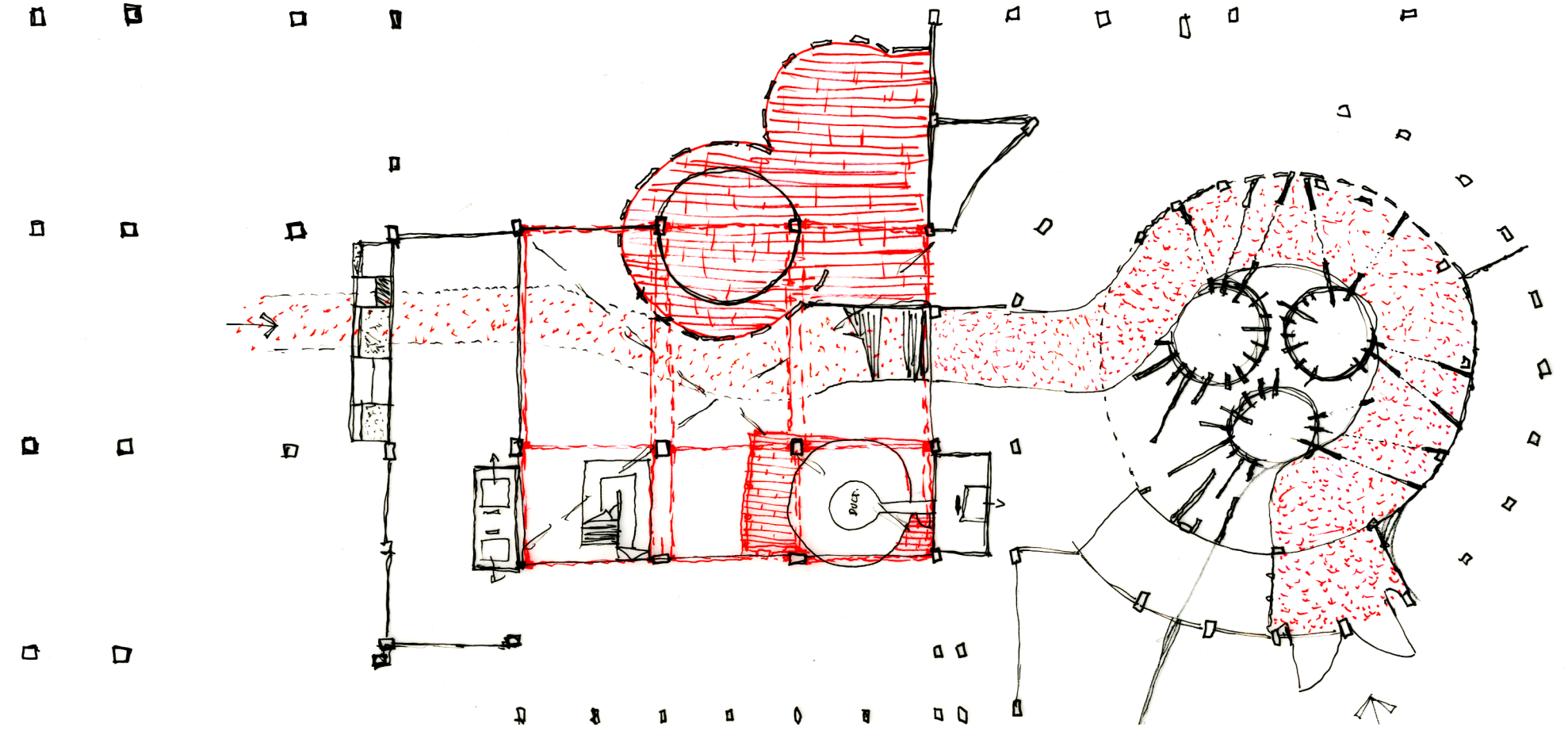


Figure.72: Explorative sketch of Necessary Route of engagement through Building.

7.4 NECESSARY, OPTIONAL AND SOCIAL

The spatial exploration facilitates engagement through four key strategies, each intended to create meaningful interaction within the building. 1. Necessary Route: This route guides users through a sequence of three key atriums—an Atrium of Influence, an Atrium of Collaboration, and an Atrium of Exhibition. These spaces not only maintain the

essential functions of the building but also convey the legacy and vision behind Industry 4.0. Each atrium plays a specific role in fostering engagement, with influence inspiring visitors, collaboration promoting interaction, and exhibition showcasing achievements and ideas. 2. Optional Route: The optional route follows a newly established public

courtyard, weaving between the spaces of the building. It provides an opportunity to engage with the ideas presented along the necessary route but from a distance, offering a more relaxed, exploratory experience. This route also features curated social spaces designed for gathering and interaction, encouraging spontaneous participation from the

community. 3. Social Activity Areas: Throughout the building, specific spaces are curated to promote social interaction, fostering a sense of community and collaboration. These areas serve as hubs for informal gatherings, events, and networking, enhancing the building's role as a social catalyst within the CBD. 4. Optional Activities: In addition to

the primary functions, optional activities are incorporated throughout the building to spark additional interest. These dynamic elements offer visitors extra opportunities for engagement, reinforcing the building's adaptability and drawing in a broader audience.

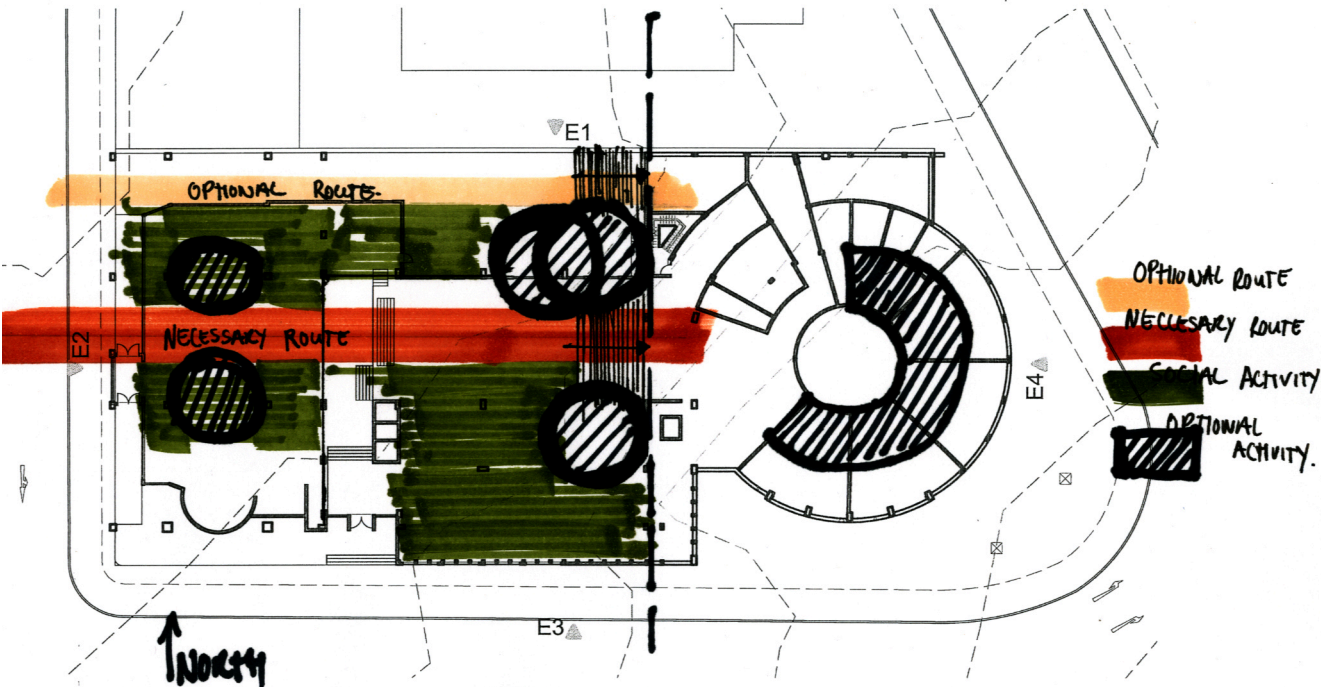


Figure.73: Explorative sketch of activity and interaction opportunities.

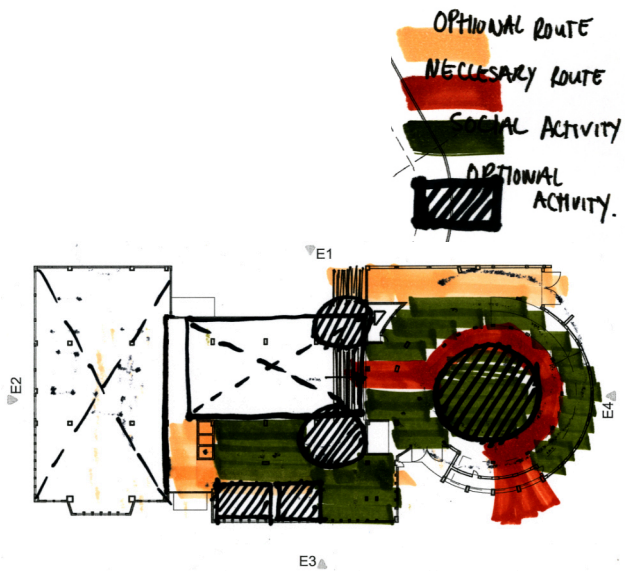


Figure.74: Explorative sketch of activity and interaction opportunities.

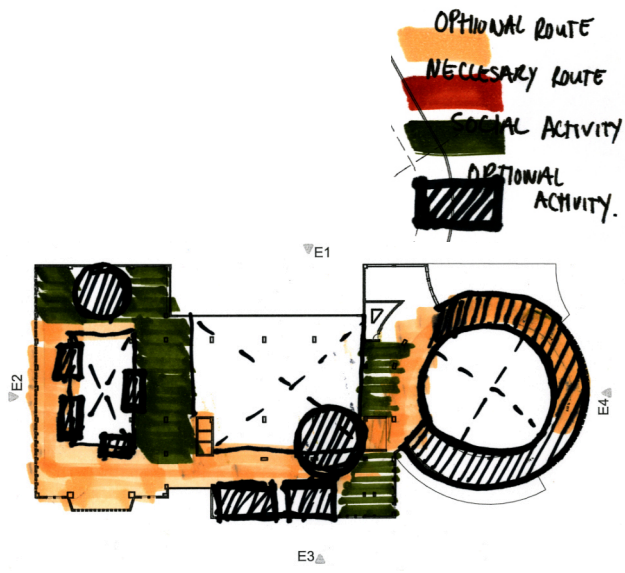


Figure.75: Explorative sketch of activity and interaction opportunities.

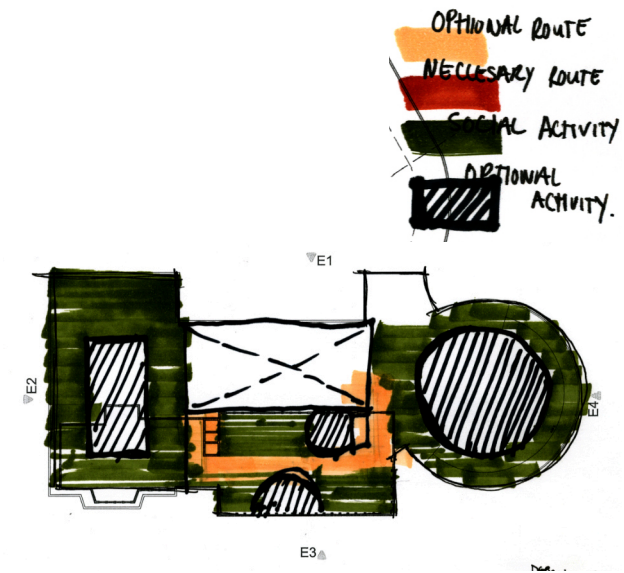


Figure.76: Explorative sketch of activity and interaction opportunities.

7.5 INTERACTION VOIDS

The Atrium of Influence is situated along an extended public sidewalk, designed to act as a threshold between the urban street edge and the building's entrance. Its primary purpose is to draw people closer, inviting them to engage with the space and experience the essence of the building even before entering. Overhead structures are strategically positioned within the atrium, offering glimpses of the activities and attractions inside. These elements create intrigue, providing a "sneak peek" that entices passersby to explore further.

The design leverages the open voids within the atrium, enhancing the connection between the street and the building interior. From the sidewalk, pedestrians are offered direct visual access to the inner workings of the space, blurring the boundaries between the public realm and the building. This interaction encourages curiosity, fostering an organic flow of movement toward the entrance. The atrium thus serves not only as a transitional zone but also as a vibrant, engaging space that bridges the exterior and interior environments, reinforcing the building's role as a dynamic hub of interaction and discovery.

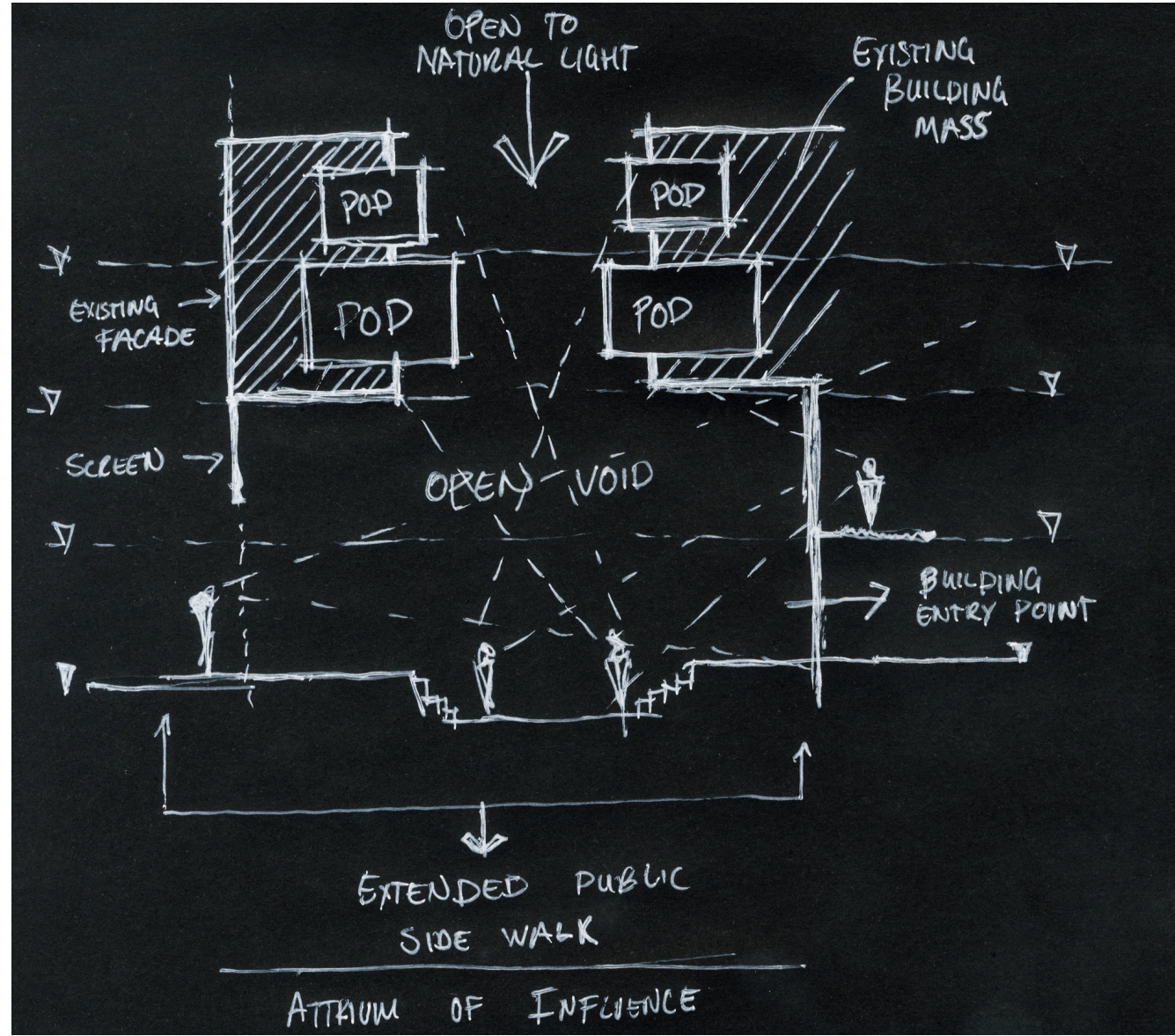


Figure.77: Explorative section sketch of atrium of influence.

Following engagement with the Atrium of Influence, visitors are guided into the Atrium of Collaboration, a vibrant space where the core processes of the building come to life. At the heart of this atrium are pods designed to facilitate digital creation, moving along conveyor systems inspired by the flow and precision of an automotive workshop. These pods not only emphasise efficiency but also symbolise the fusion of industry and creativity central to the building's purpose.

Throughout the space, various dynamic systems of engagement are present, offering opportunities for real-time collaboration and interaction. The arrangement encourages movement, teamwork, and the exchange of ideas, fostering an environment that aligns with the spirit of Industry 4.0. The Atrium of Collaboration serves as an interactive hub where users actively participate in the creation process, making it a space of continuous innovation and communal effort.

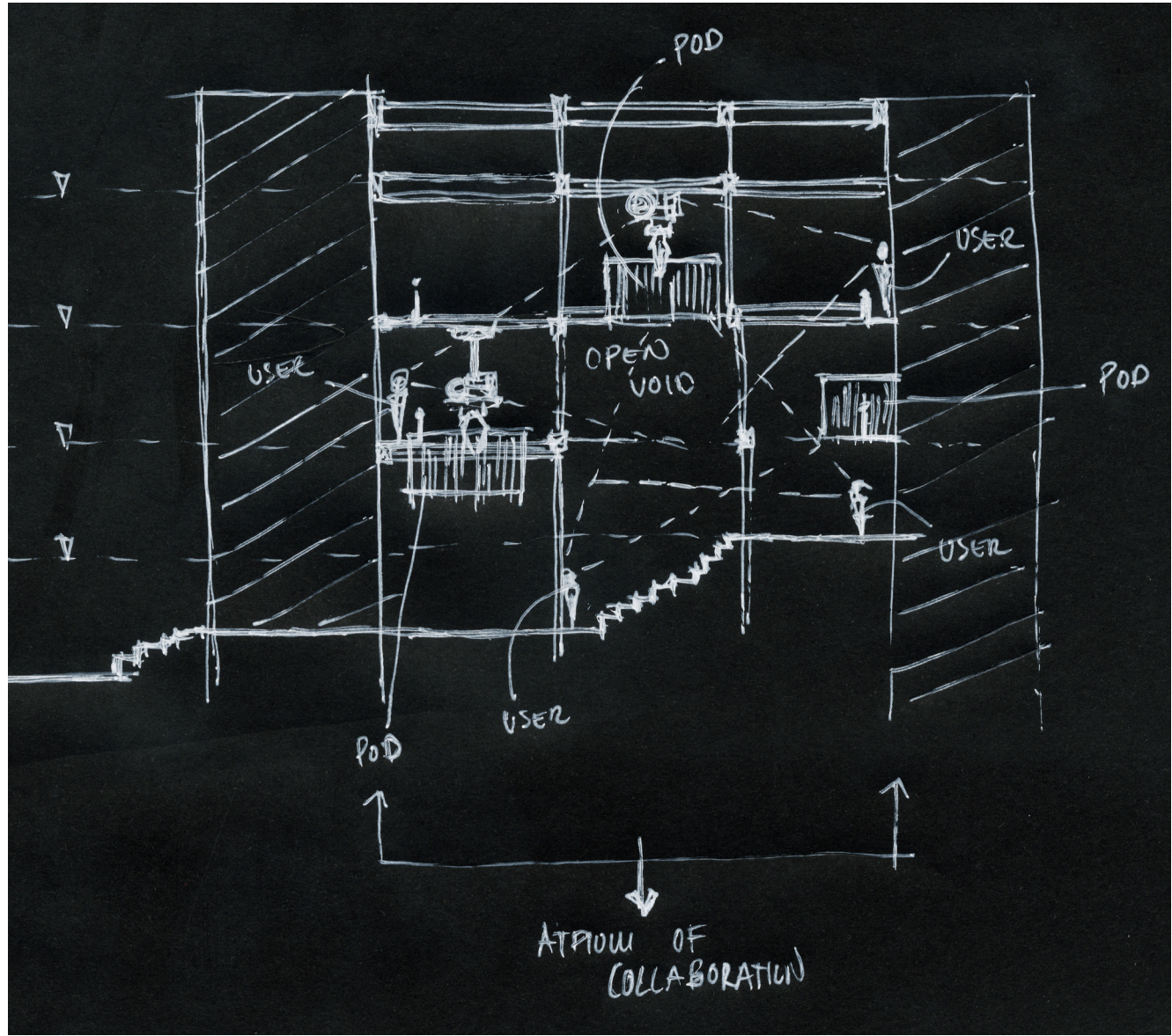


Figure.78: Explorative section sketch of atrium of collaboration.

The procession continues into the Atrium of Exhibition, where the works produced within the building are shared and displayed. This space is designed to emphasise the dynamic nature of the building, with moving parts and kinetic screens showcasing the creations in engaging and ever-changing ways. These elements reinforce the concept of dynamism, inviting visitors to interact with the architecture and the displayed content.

The exhibition is intended to be experienced from multiple vantage points—visitors on the street can catch glimpses through large openings, those inside the building can engage with it across various floors, and overhead views are offered through skylights on the roof. This multilayered visibility enhances the sense of openness and accessibility, ensuring that the exhibition is not confined to a single space but is integrated throughout the building, engaging visitors at every level.

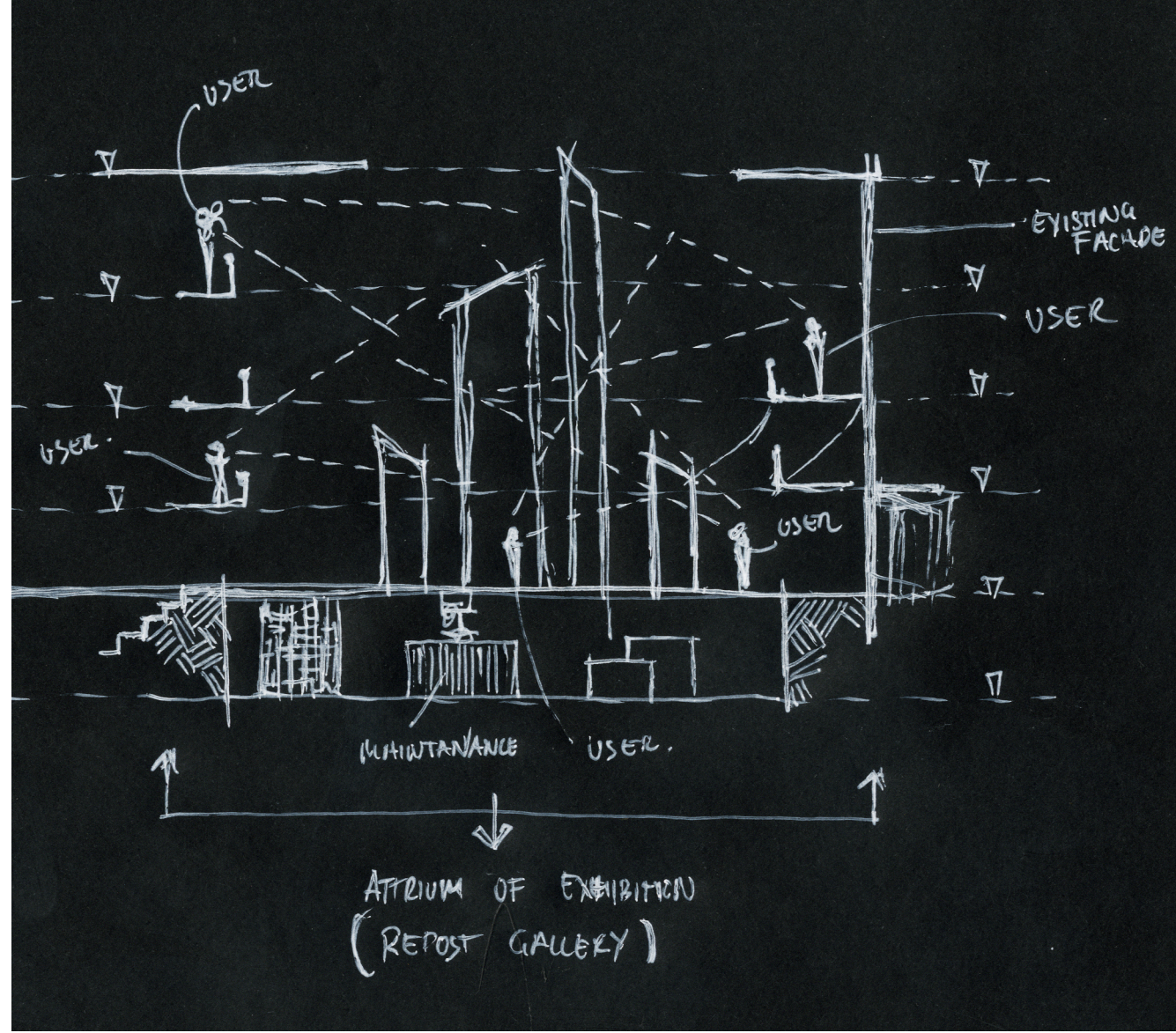


Figure.79: Explorative section sketch of atrium of exhibition.

The goal of the engagement route is to create an activity that is joined spontaneously, guiding visitors on an immersive journey through the building. Designed to spark curiosity and invite exploration,

the route encourages movement driven by impulse, allowing people to naturally discover different spaces and experiences as they progress. This fluid path fosters organic engagement, making each

interaction feel intuitive and connected to the building's dynamic environment.

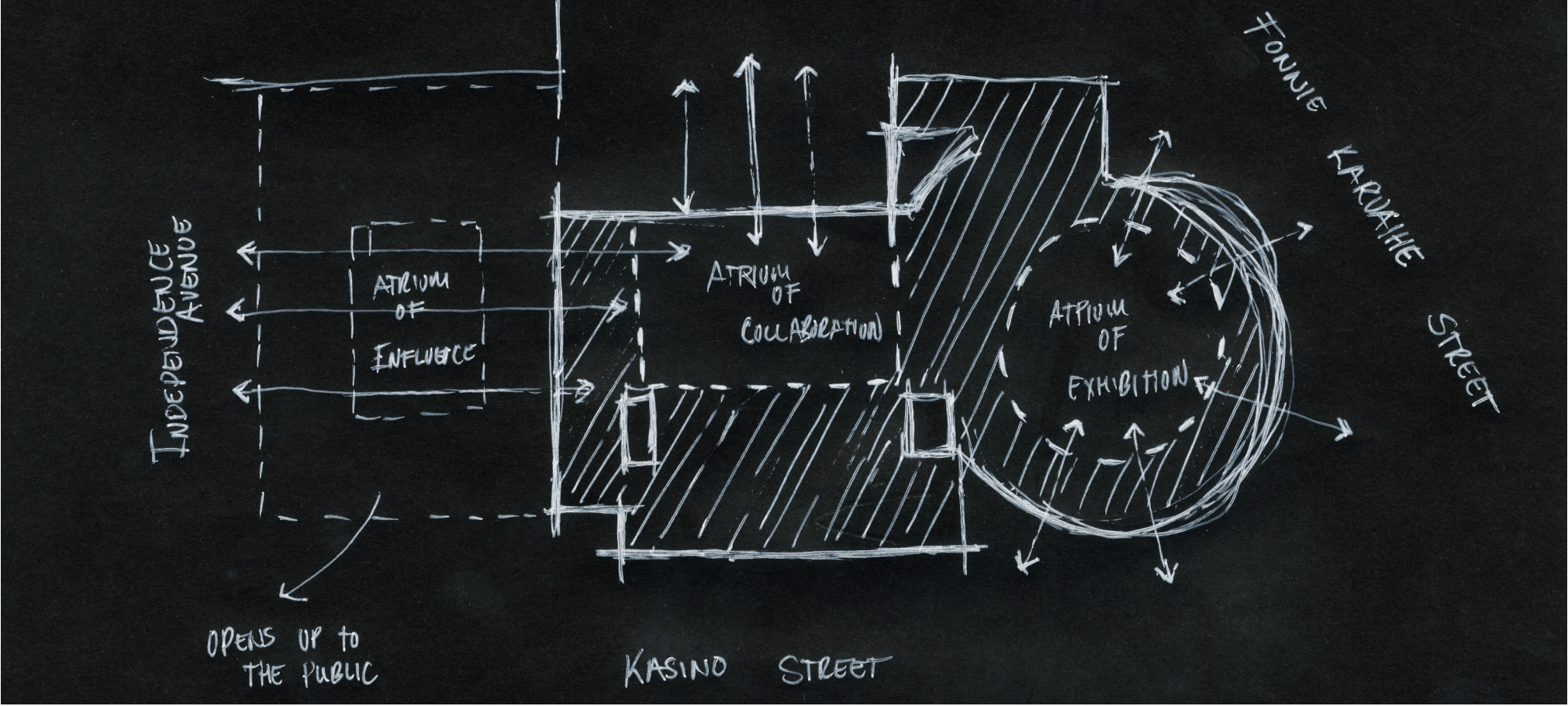


Figure.80: Explorative sketch of spatial quality of interaction.

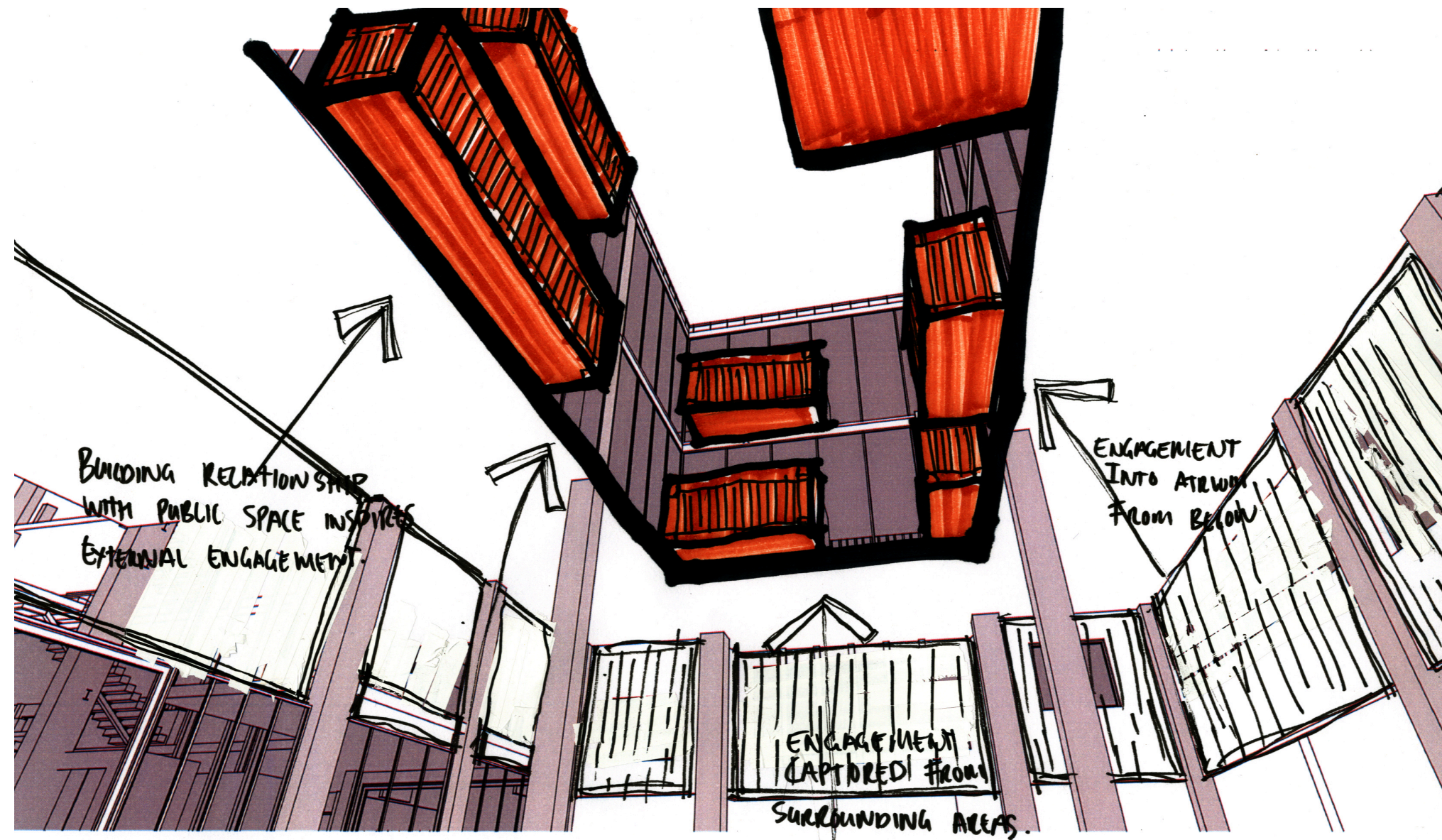


Figure.81a: Explorative 3D sketches of Atrium of influence.

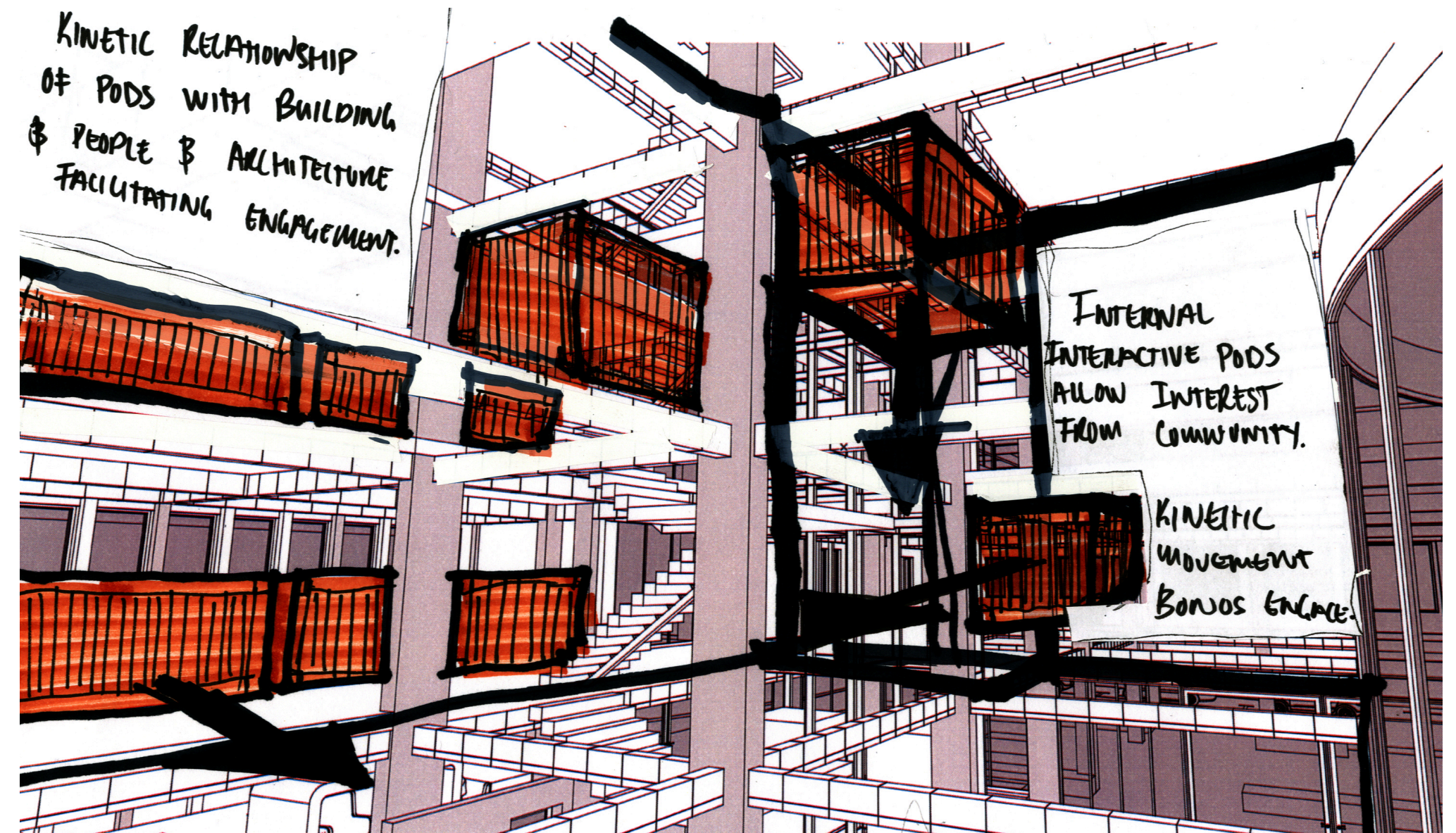


Figure.81b: Explorative 3D sketches of Atrium of collaboration.



CHAPTER
DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

This chapter covers the design development, refining concepts and spatial strategies through iterative processes, informed by the context, conceptual framework, and case studies, to create a responsive and contextually grounded adaptive reuse proposal.

8.1 ELEMENTS OF PRESERVATION

Incorporating circular elements into the House of Cohen's adaptive reuse design emphasises cycles and renewal and creates a vibrant space that connects the building's historical roots with its future potential as a centre for digital creativity and collaboration.

The reuse of the building's striking façades is vital for preserving its historical value while adapting to modern needs. The front elevation along Independence Avenue, which serves as the main public face, captures the interest of pedestrians with its visually captivating design. This façade features a series of repetitive longitudinal windows set in a rhythmic pattern, fostering a sense of continuity and order. This repetition resonates with Adam Hardy's idea of architectural rhythm, where recurring features create a cohesive relationship between structure and movement, guiding the eye and enhancing spatial flow (Hardy, 2007).

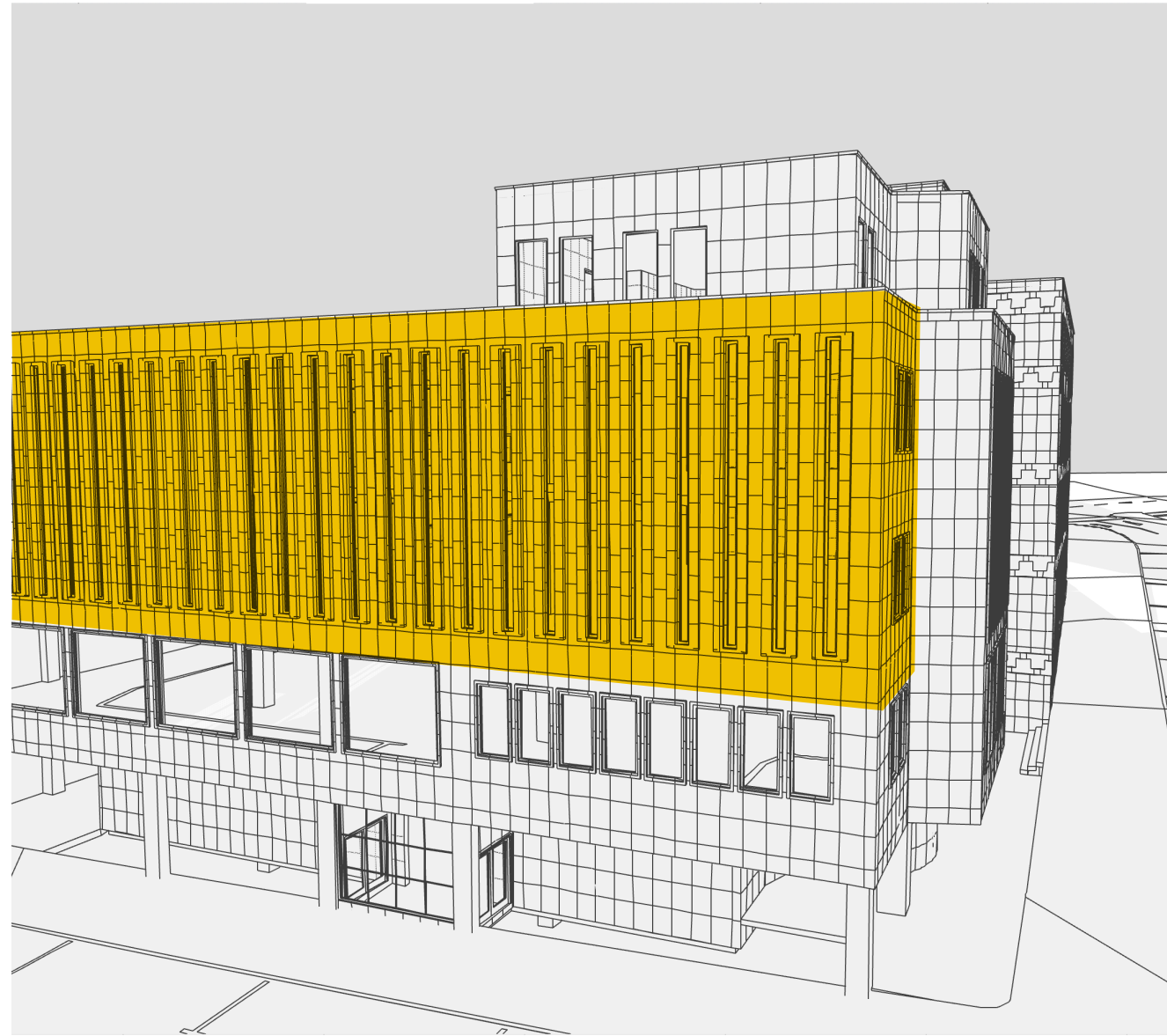


Figure.82: Existing Building with Highlighted prominent facade character to be retained in Proposal.
By Author.

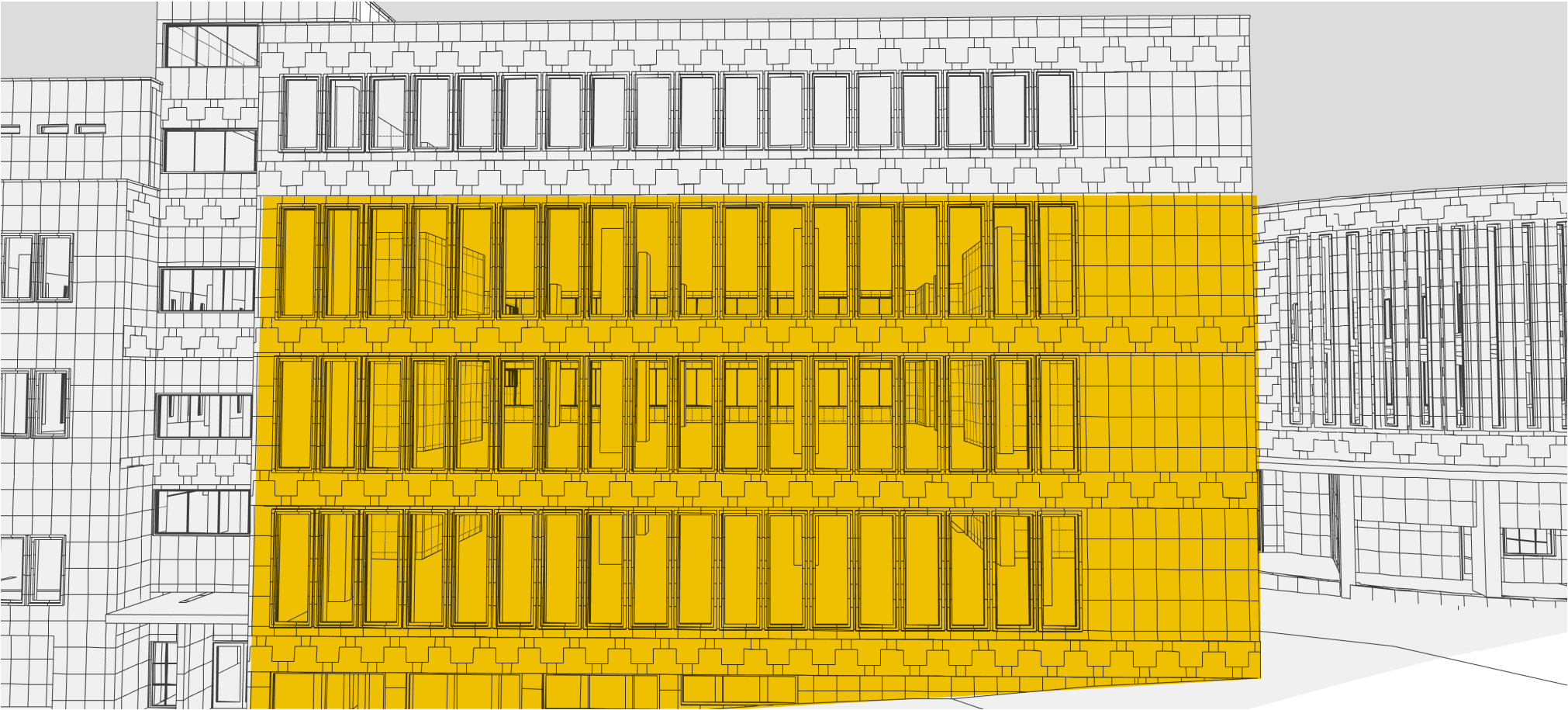


Figure.83: Existing Building with Highlighted prominent facade character to be retained in Proposal.
By Author.

By keeping this arrangement of windows, the façade not only safeguards the building's architectural character but also increases engagement with those passing by. The transparency of the windows facilitates a visual link between interior activities and the street, promoting interaction and attracting foot traffic. In the adaptive reuse approach, the façade serves as both a historical reference and a gateway for the new functions within, encouraging a lively exchange between inside and outside. This careful reuse ensures the building remains pertinent to its urban environment while preserving the architectural qualities that make it a recognisable landmark.

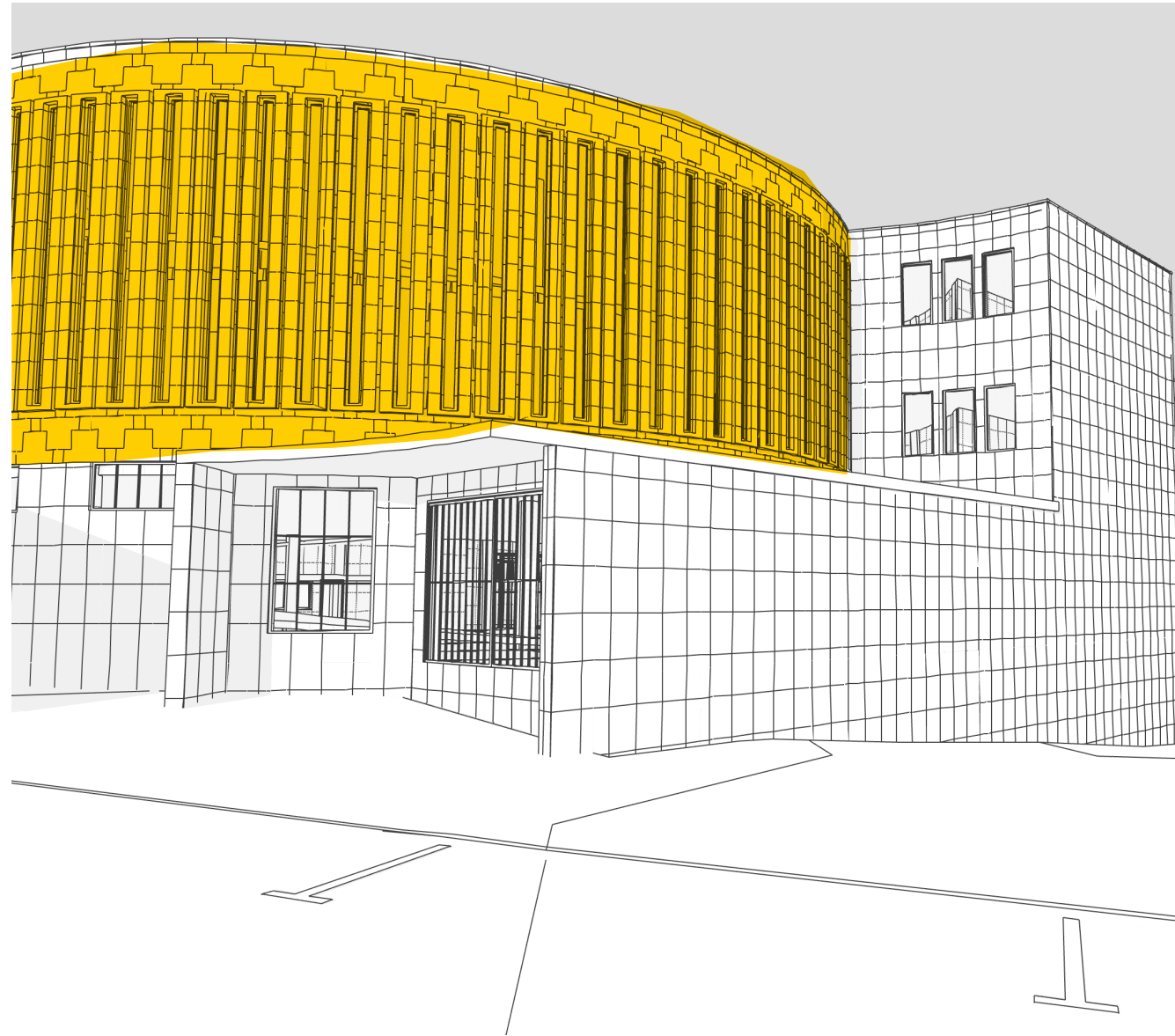


Figure.84: Existing Building with Highlighted prominent facade character to be retained in Proposal.
By Author.

8.2 FORM DEVELOPMENT

Existing Building view From Independence Avenue.

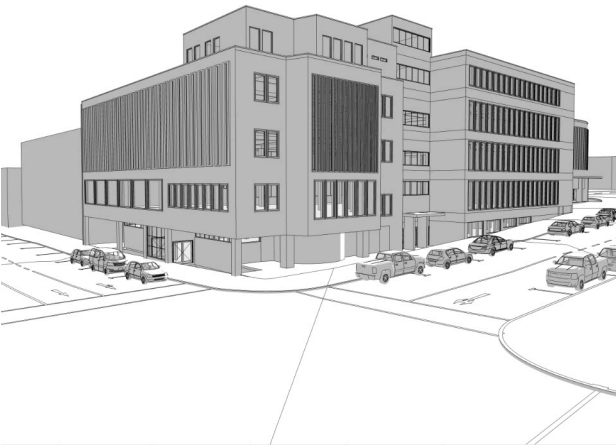


Figure.85: Existing House of Cohen intervention
By Author.

Existing Building Visualising elements to be Demolished from the original Facade.



Figure.86: Planned demolition (Demolition in yellow) contrasting existing.
By Author.

Existing Building with the Newly planned elements for revitalisation..

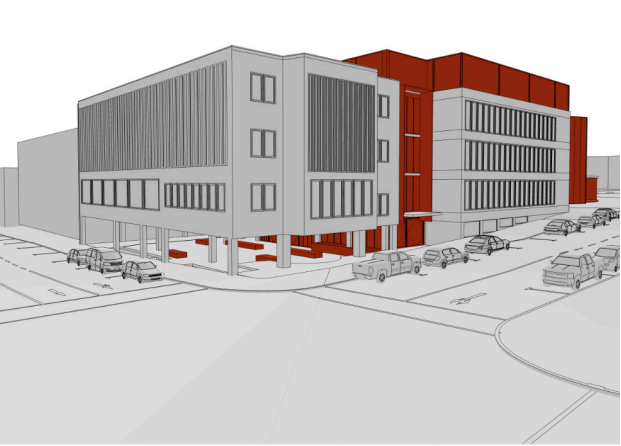


Figure.87: Planned intervention (New in red) contrasting existing.
By Author.

Existing Building view From Kasino Street.

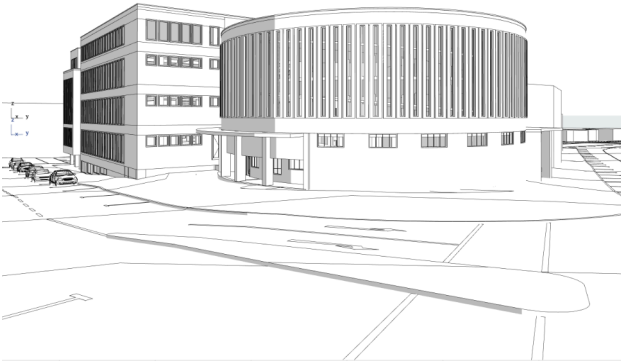


Figure.88: Existing House of Cohen intervention
By Author.

Existing Building Visualising elements to be Demolished form the original Facade.

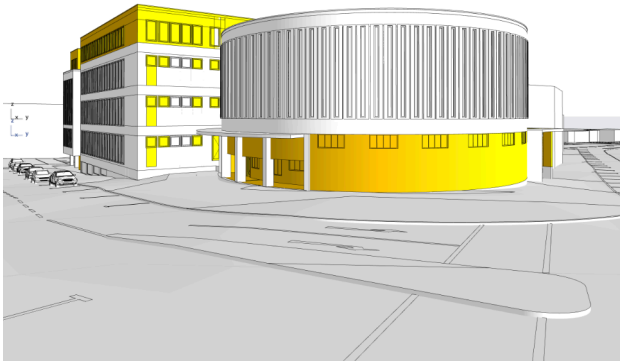


Figure.89: Planned demolition (Demolition in yellow) contrasting existing.
By Author.

Existing Building with the Newly planned elements for revitalisation..

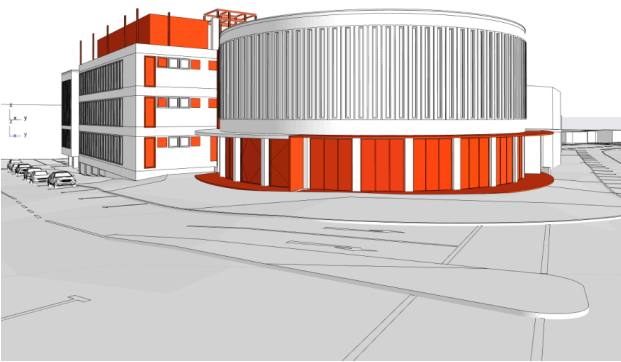


Figure.90: Planned intervention (New in red) contrasting existing.
By Author.

8.3 PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

The adaptive reuse of the House of Cohen reflects the Ministry of Information and Technology's vision to enhance digital creation and innovation platforms. It is designed to empower unemployed youth by providing opportunities in content creation and digital resource production, benefiting both the Central Business District (CBD) and Namibia as a whole. This initiative aims to cultivate a vibrant environment where creativity, learning, and collaboration flourish.

The facility includes various programs, such as exhibition spaces and open atrium areas, which encourage interaction and public engagement. Mobile sound, video, and audio production pods traverse the building, highlighting its flexibility and dynamic nature. Studios on each floor facilitate content creation, with the central area functioning as a collaborative workspace. A library located on the top floor offers research and learning resources, while rooftop access provides an additional space for events and public gatherings.

Administrative tasks are supported by dedicated offices and workshops. A maintenance bay ensures the mobile pods remain functional while additional workshops are available for public use and training. This all-encompassing program merges creativity, technology, and education, positioning the building as a focal point for digital innovation and economic development.

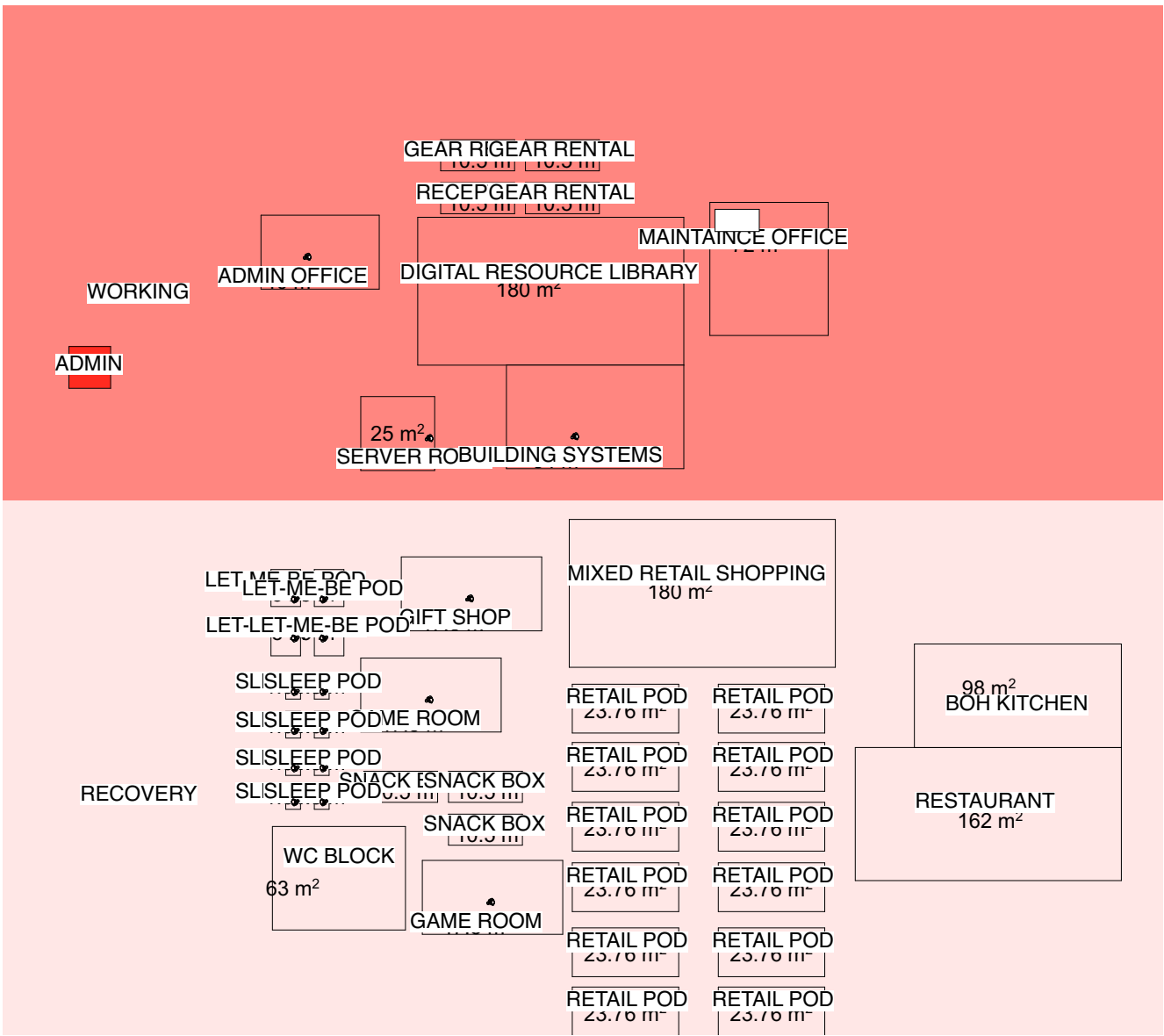


Figure.91a: Explorative programmatic breakdown of spaces. By Author.

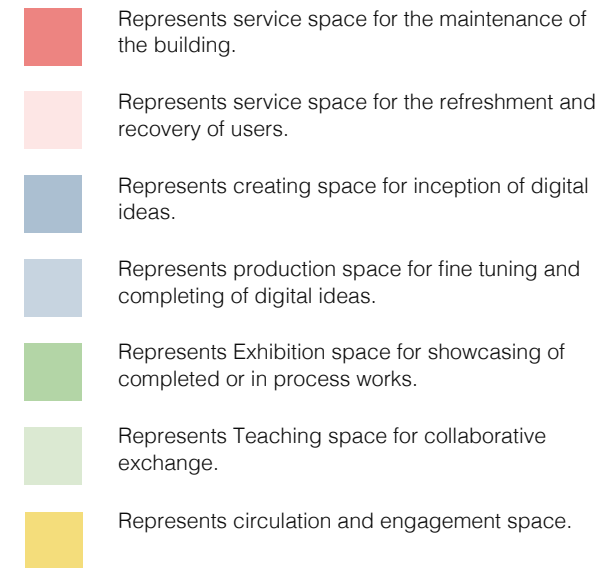
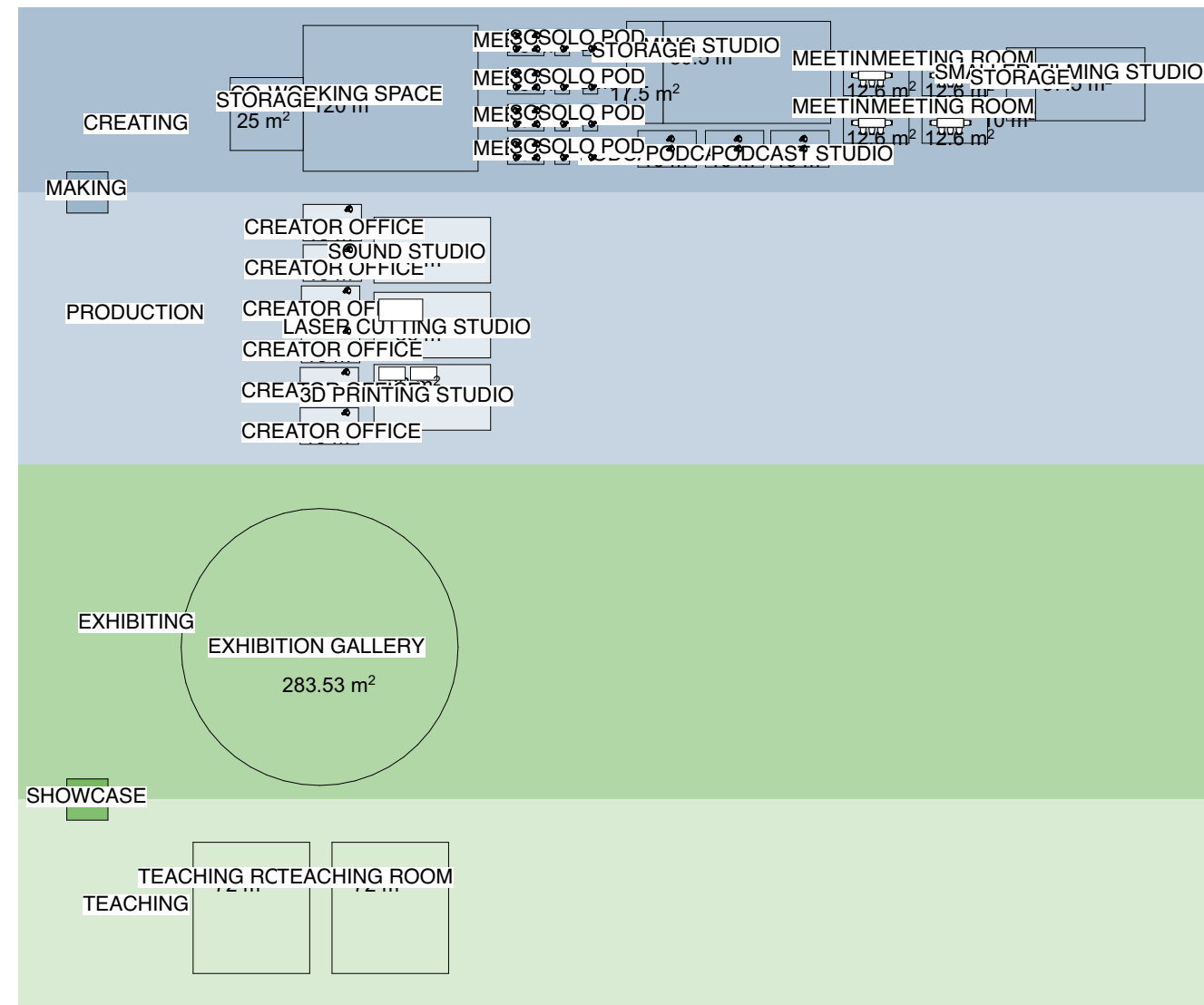
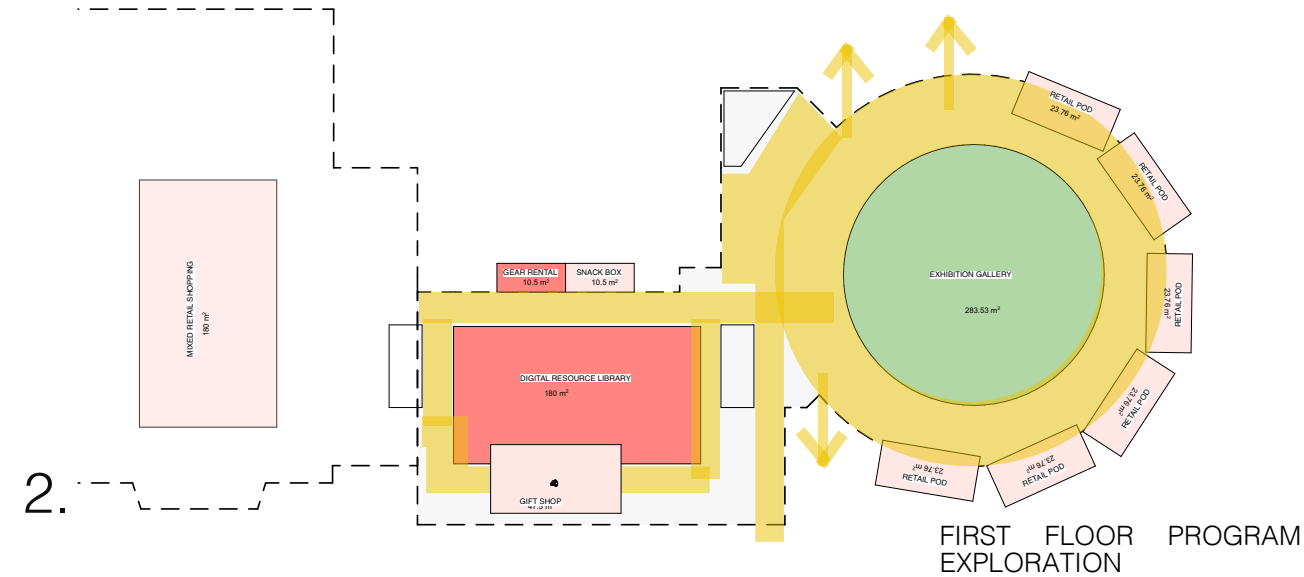


Figure.91b: Explorative programmatic breakdown of spaces. By Author.

Figure.92: Explorative bubble plan diagram
By Author.



2. Initial program development placed one main digital studio in the centre and one large exhibition space.

3. Initial program development placed one main digital studio in the centre and one large exhibition space.

Initial program development space for the second floor created large working spaces surrounded by small corridors to emphasise the interaction between work and exhibition. Along the walkways, users can experience creative spaces.

4. Initial program development placed private workspaces for focused work and exploration and opted for more privacy over engagement.

Initial program development space for the third floor created teaching spaces, solo workspaces and individual office spaces.

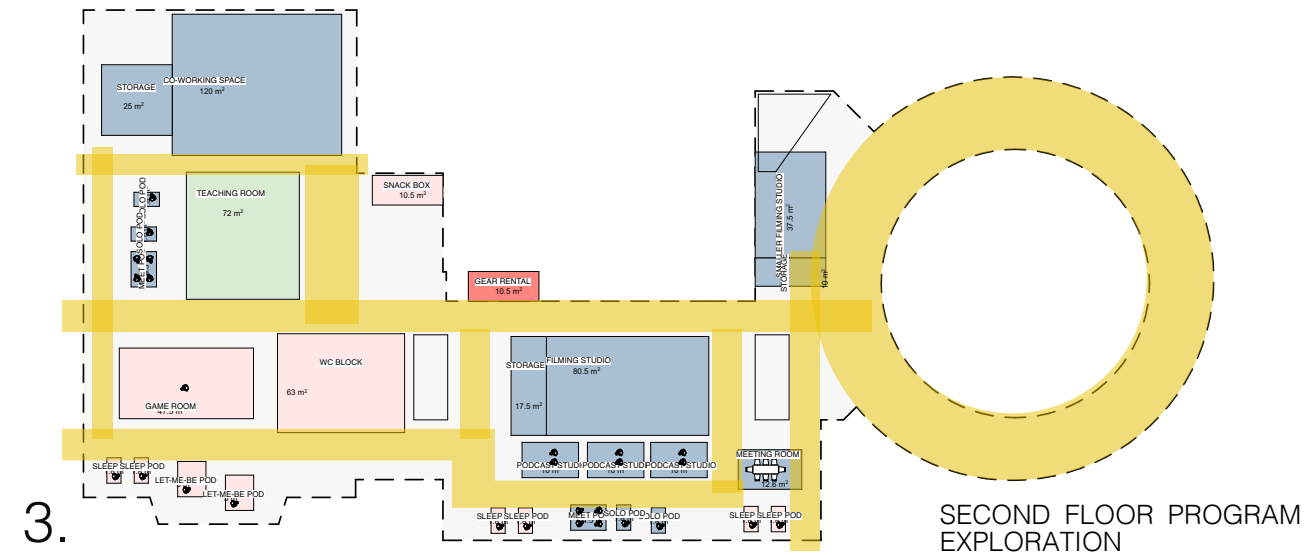
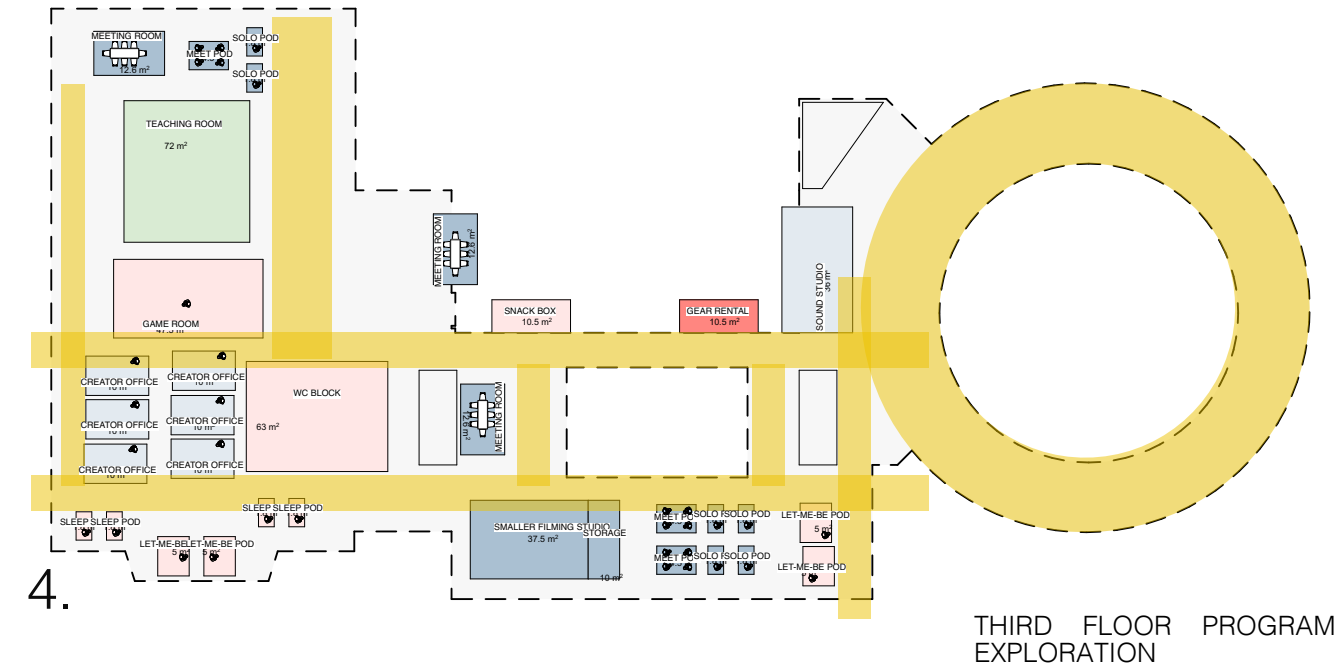


Figure.93: Explorative bubble plan diagram
By Author.

Figure.94: Explorative bubble plan diagram
By Author.



8.6 PROPOSAL PROGRAMME

The proposed building programme is designed to facilitate multiple, overlapping functions that holistically engage users and ensure a dynamic environment within the Cohen Building. Each programme element—whether service areas, collaborative workspaces, or exhibition zones—interconnects to support the building's core goals of influence, creation, and exhibition. By providing spaces for community influence, collaborative making, and public exhibition, the programme fosters a continuous cycle of engagement and interaction. This integrated approach positions the Cohen Building as a catalyst for development,

offering a versatile, multi-functional hub that inspires community involvement and promotes growth within the CBD.

8.6 KEY INSIGHTS

The House of Cohen's programme promotes engagement through dedicated spaces for influencing, creating, and exhibiting. Each area serves a specific purpose, forming a cohesive environment that nurtures interaction, creativity, and community. Influencing spaces allow users to engage with ideas and connect with others. Making spaces facilitate collaboration, enabling individuals to create digital content and work on projects. Exhibition spaces display results, offering a platform for reflection and sharing with the community.

A key feature is the use of versatile pods inspired by precedents showcasing modular design. These pods are flexible, mobile units that can adapt to tasks such as sound production, video editing, and quiet study, enabling tailored use of space while maintaining productivity.

The programme balances engagement and productivity, ensuring the House of Cohen is a vibrant hub for social exchange and focused work. This design creates a dynamic environment that fosters meaningful, productive outcomes while keeping users actively engaged.

Figure.94: Explorative bubble plan diagram
By Author.



09

CHAPTER
HOUSE OF COHEN



This chapter presents the building's design, showcasing the iterative process that shaped the proposal and resulting in the final design, which integrates insights from previous explorations and aligns with the project's objectives.

9.1 ITERATION 01

Design development of the first design iteration followed the ideas behind the program plan exploration, focusing on a variation of programs with aspects for visual focus.

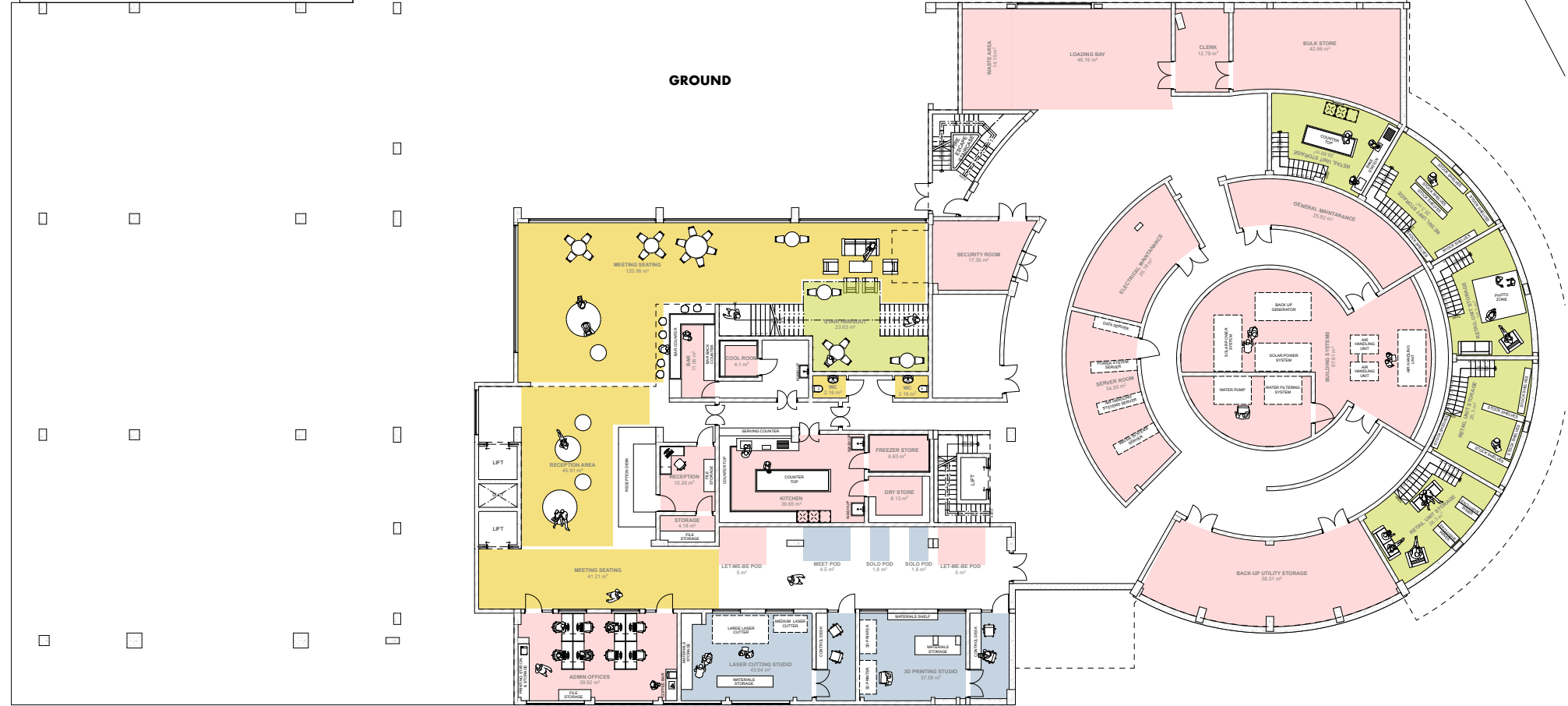


Figure.95: Explorative Building Floor plan
By Author.

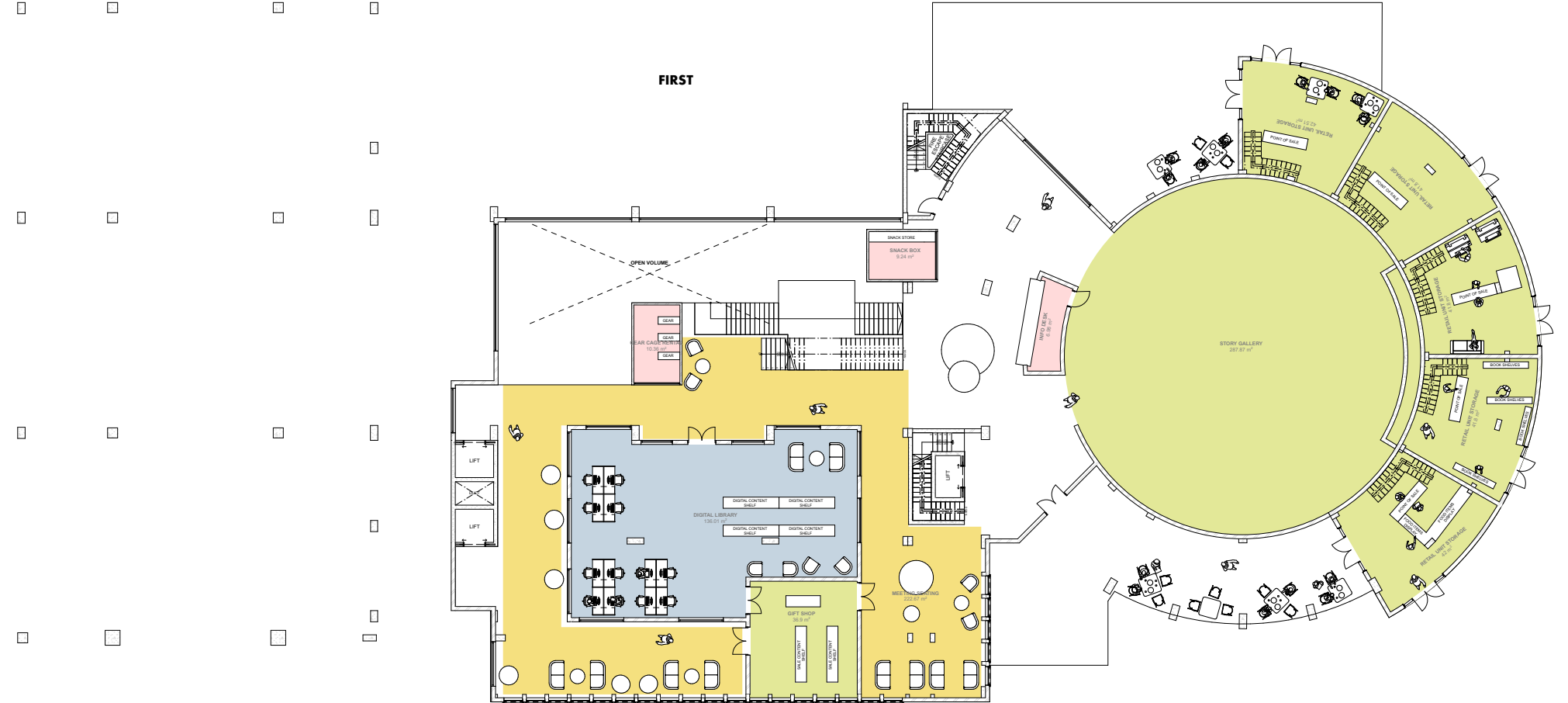


Figure.96: Explorative Building Floor plan
By Author.

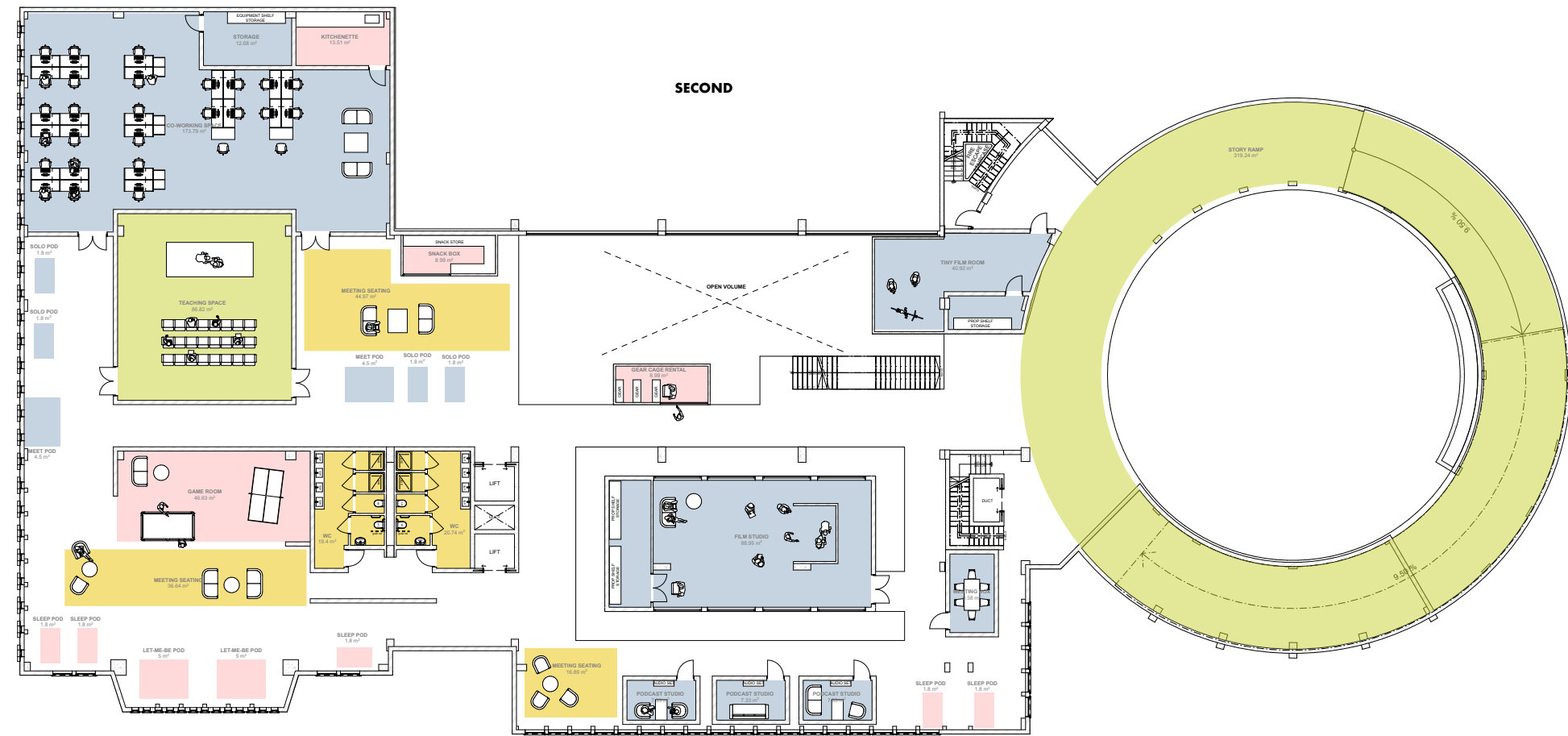


Figure.97: Explorative Building Floor plan
By Author.

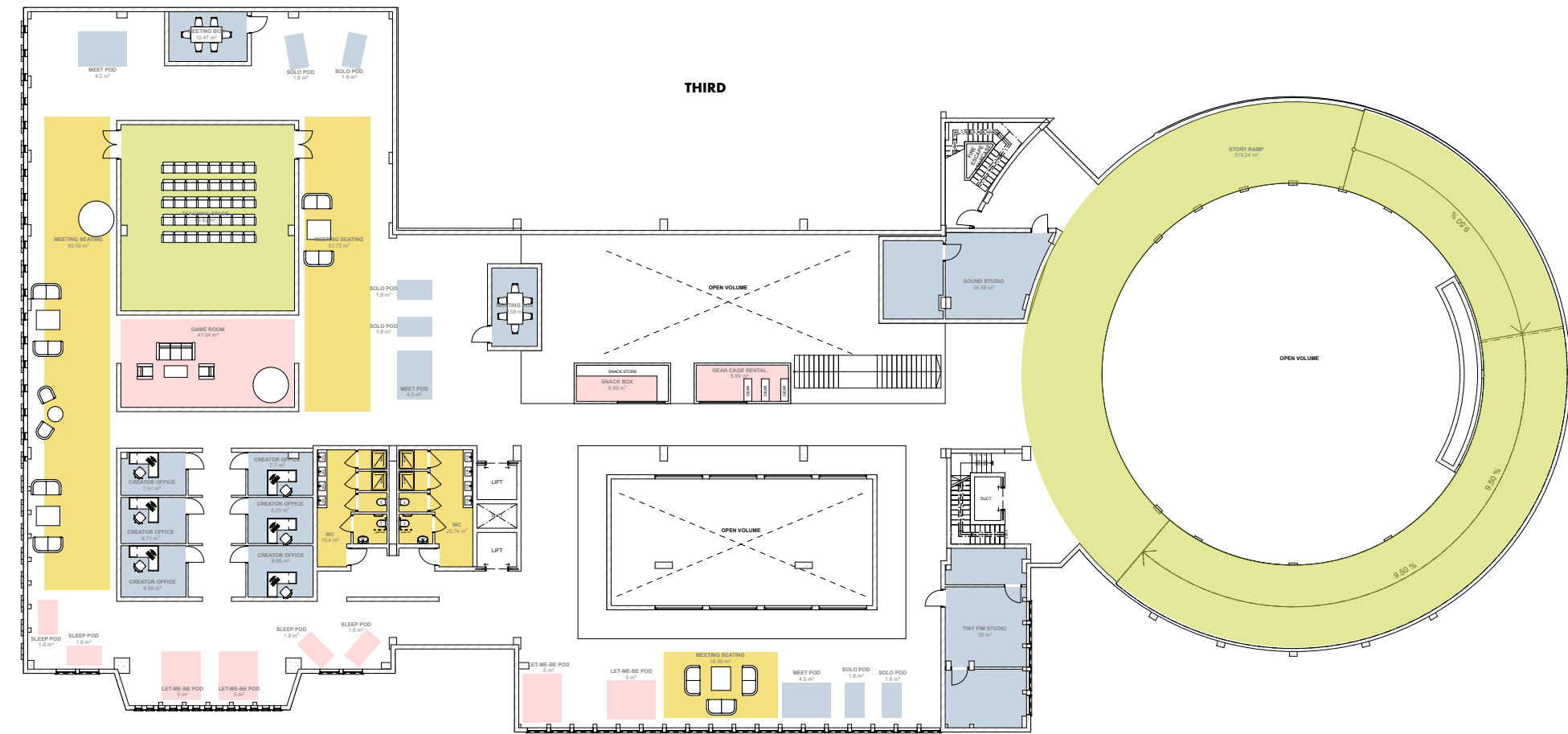


Figure.98: Explorative Building Floor plan
By Author.

9.1.1 KEY INSIGHTS

The key takeaway from the initial design iteration was the successful integration of programmes to promote engagement while preserving the separation of private functions. This design ensures that interactive and communal spaces are strategically located to encourage public interaction,

while private areas remain untouched, maintaining their intended use. A central aspect of this strategy is the creation of a primary pathway for engagement that leads users throughout the building, linking different programmatic elements and enabling a seamless flow of interaction. This

routing enhances the user experience by providing a clear, engaging path while ensuring a well-organised balance between vibrant, communal areas and focused, private workspaces.

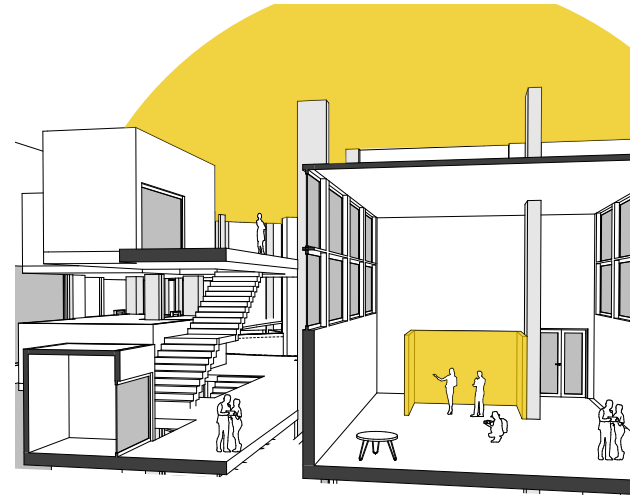
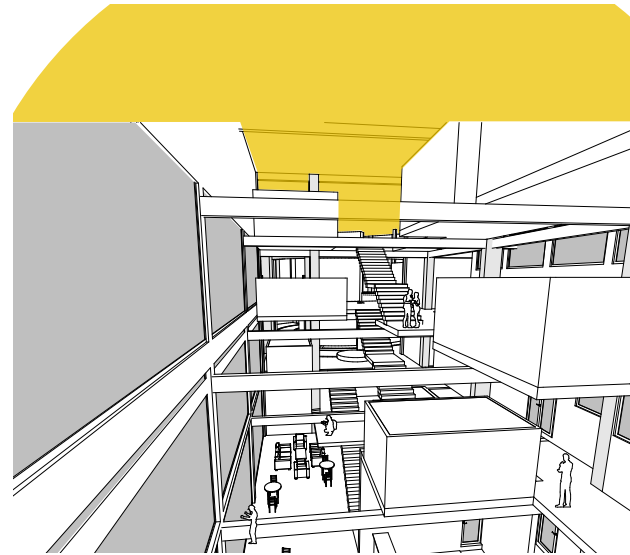
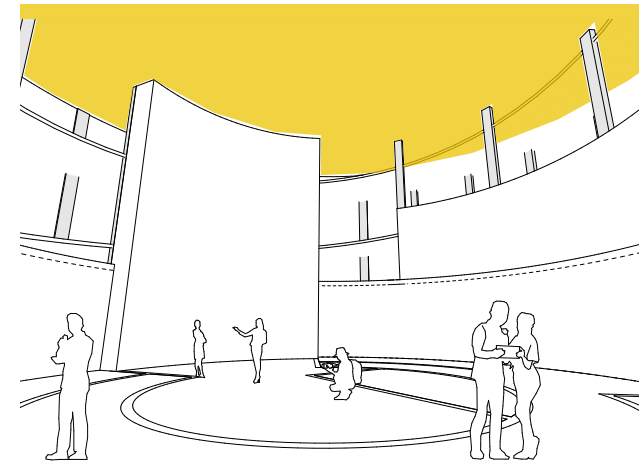


Figure.99: 3D perspective exploration drawings of internal collaborative space. By Author

9.2 ITERATION 02

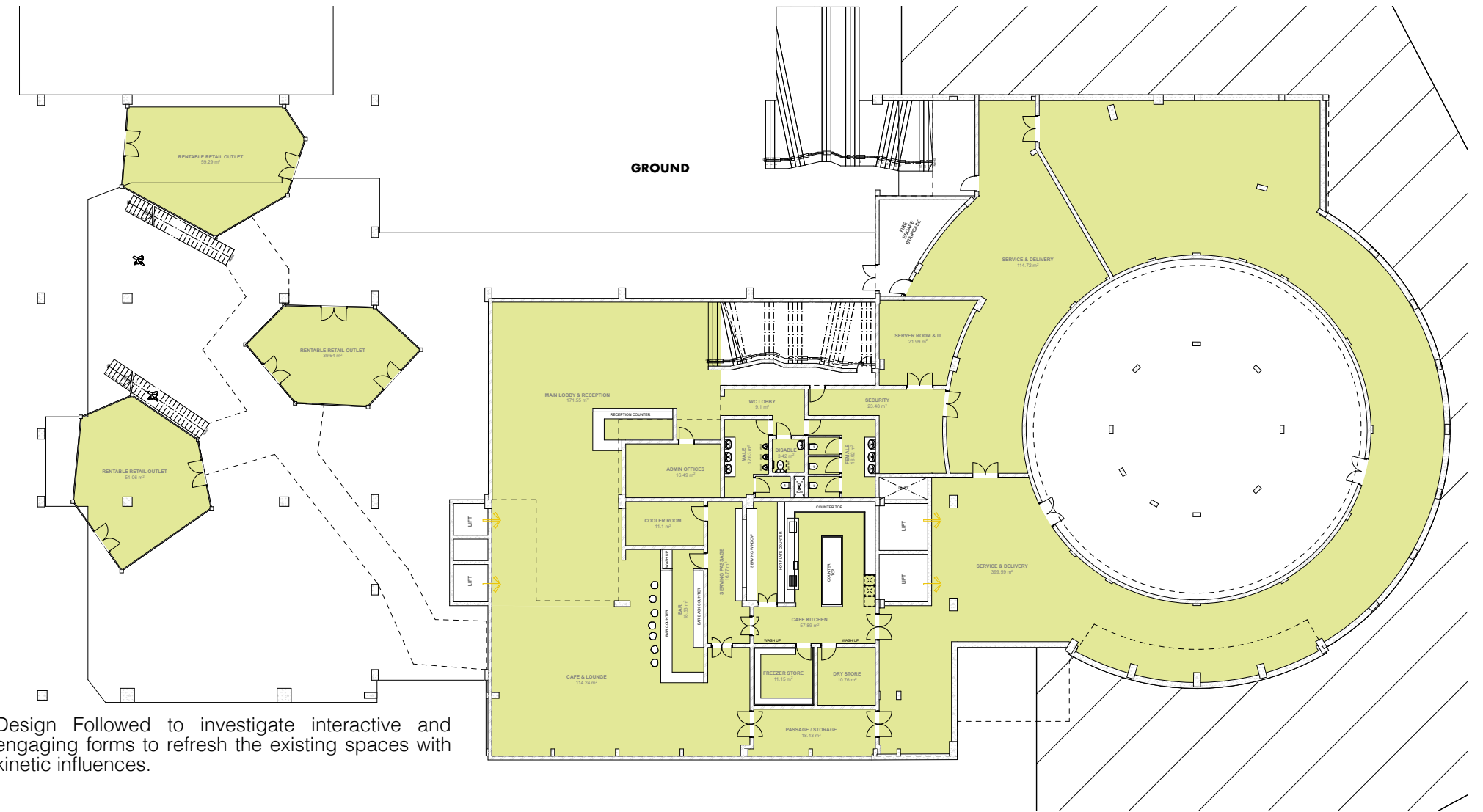


Figure.100: Explorative Building Floor plan
By Author.

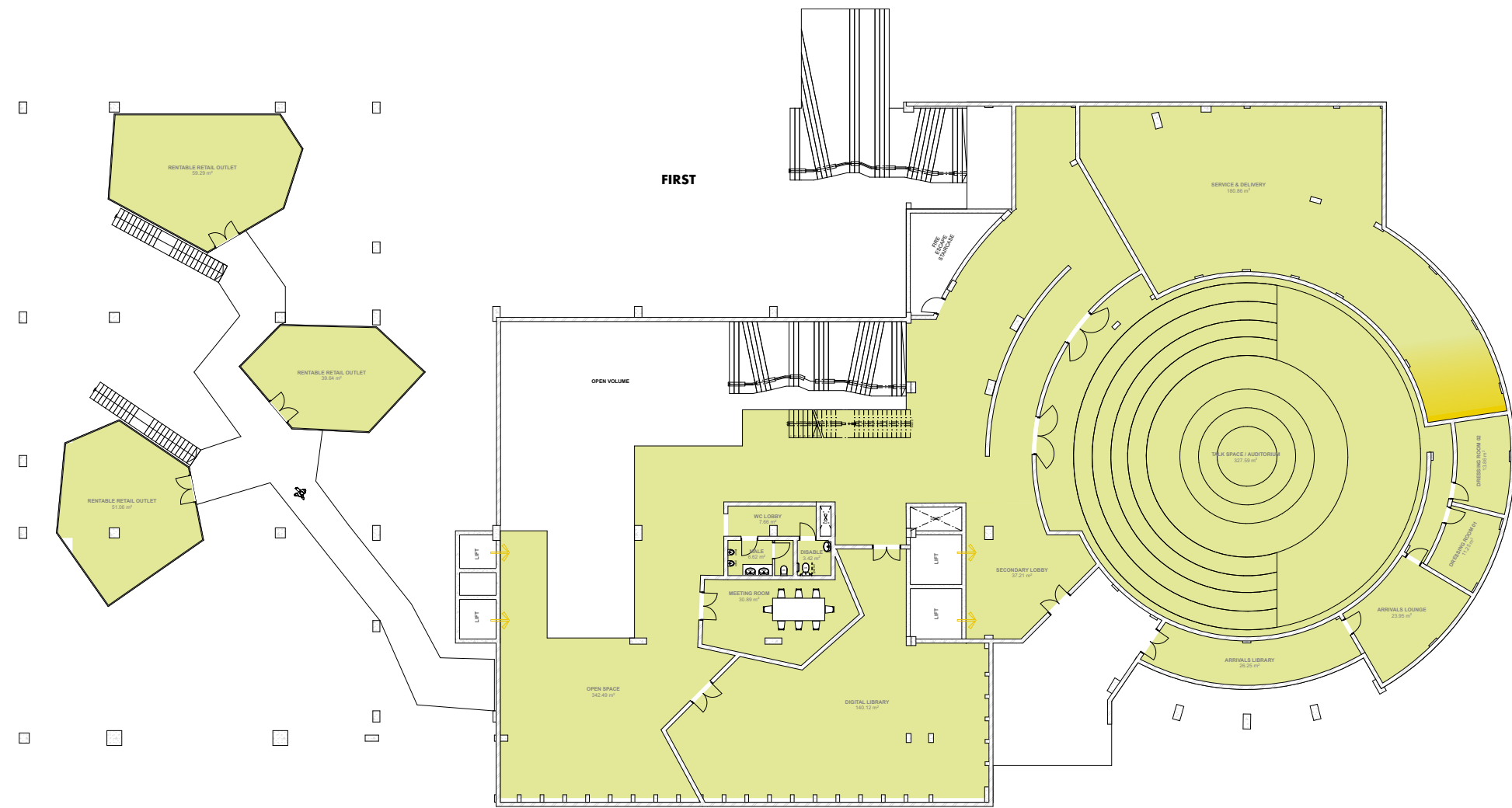


Figure.101: Explorative Building Floor plan
By Author.

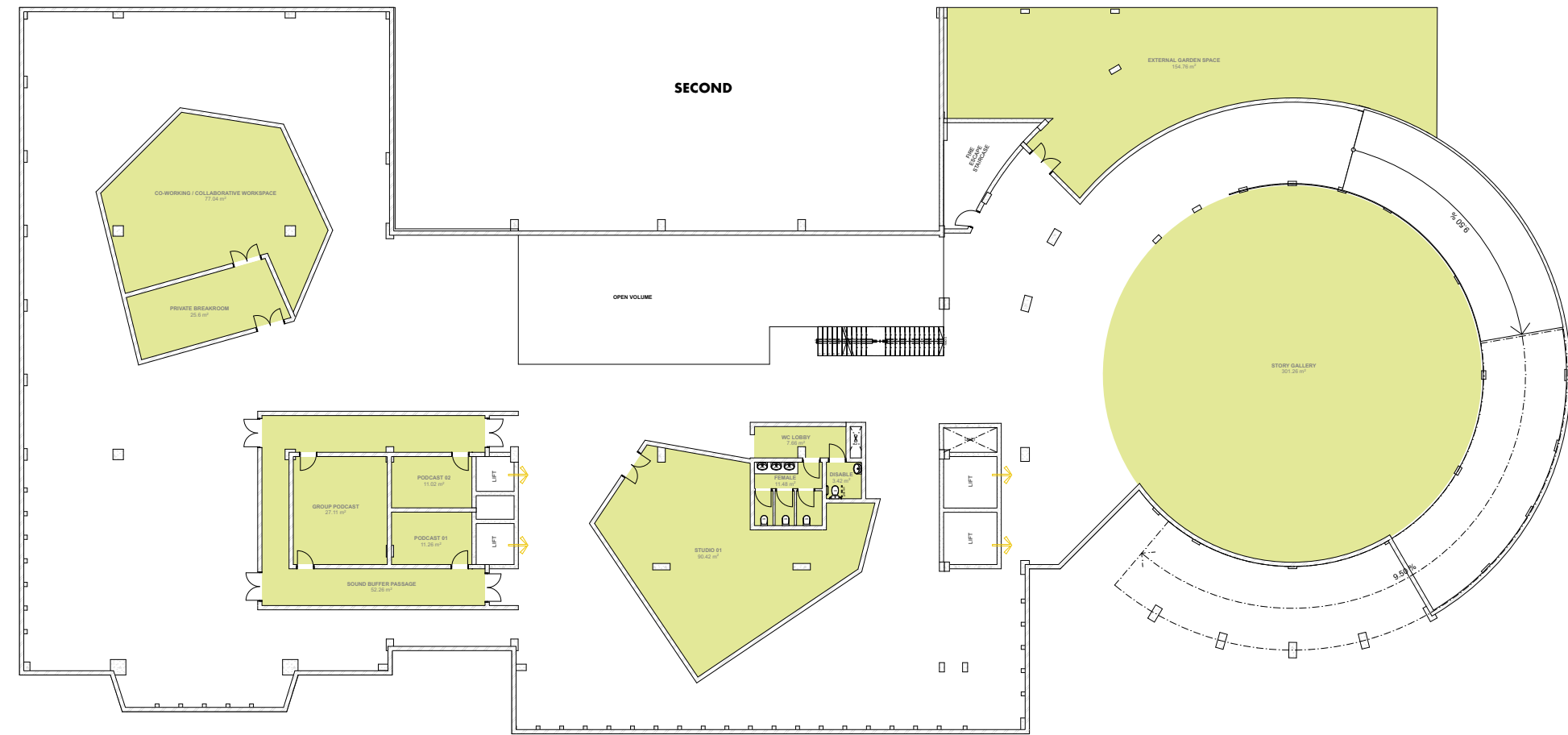


Figure.102: Explorative Building Floor plan
By Author.

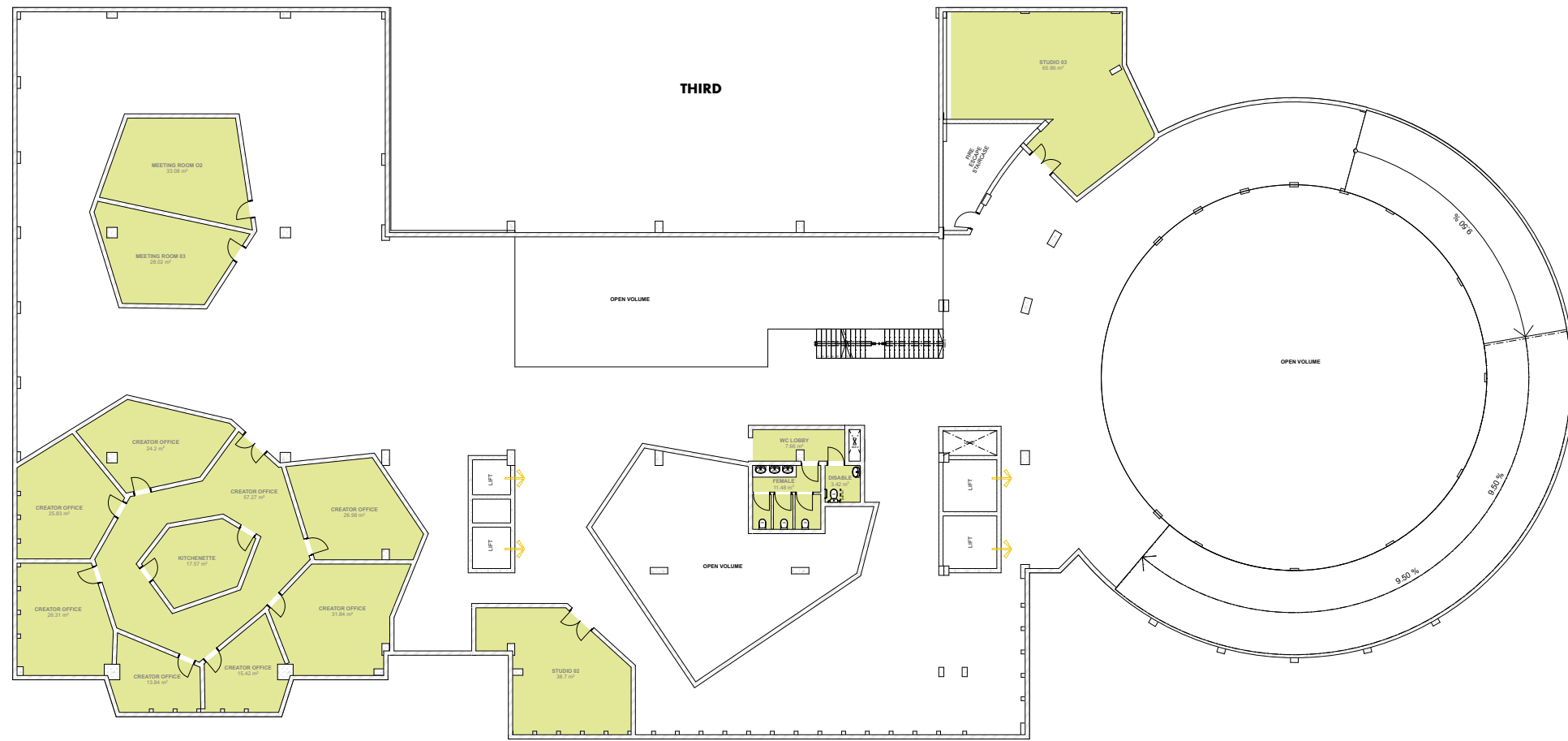


Figure.103: Explorative Building Floor plan
By Author.

9.2.1 KEY INSIGHTS

The primary insight from the first design iteration was the effective combination of programmes aimed at enhancing engagement while maintaining the distinction between private areas. This design strategically places interactive and communal spaces to foster public interaction, while untouched private zones uphold their intended functions. A critical element of this strategy involves establishing a main pathway for engagement that guides users throughout the building, connecting various programmatic elements and facilitating a smooth flow of interaction. This routing improves the user experience by providing a clear, engaging route while balancing vibrant communal areas with focused private workspaces.

The second design iteration sought to expand creative possibilities by examining the use of pods and clusters of spaces, emphasising the relationship between circulation paths and productive zones. Inspired by case studies, this version aimed to cultivate a dynamic spatial experience that engages users through innovative design and movement. This exploration revealed the potential for a lively, interactive relationship between users and spatial forms, with pods designed to support diverse creative processes along the building's main passage.

Nevertheless, this iteration showed that although the forms generated visual interest, they lacked a

sincere connection to the building's heritage and legacy. The design's emphasis on perceived movement distanced it from the historical context and identity of the House of Cohen. This realisation prompted a refinement of the pods' designs, shifting the focus towards mechanical movement and functional adaptability instead of just perceived motion. This change enables the pods to more authentically represent the building's legacy, aligning with its history while fostering a dynamic, purpose-driven user experience rooted in innovation and heritage.

9.3 ITERATION 03

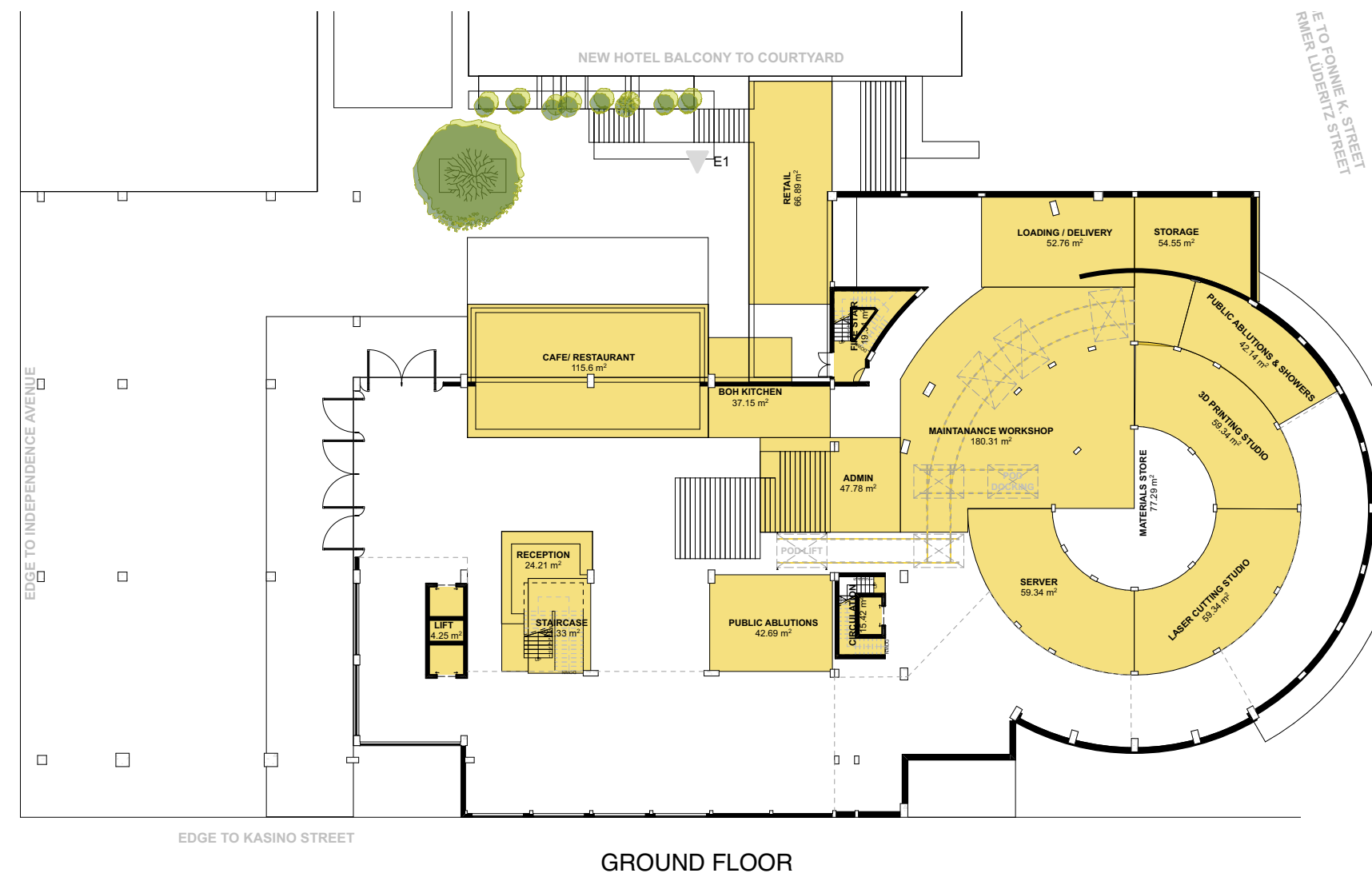


Figure.104: Explorative Building Floor plan
By Author.

To enhance engagement, the design introduces an Atrium of Influence, strategically positioned to invite users into the building from Independence Avenue. This atrium offers transparency and visibility into the ongoing creative processes inside, providing passersby with glimpses of activities such as production, workshops, and exhibitions. By dissolving the boundaries between the interior and exterior, the atrium encourages curiosity and interaction, drawing in users to actively participate in the building's programs.

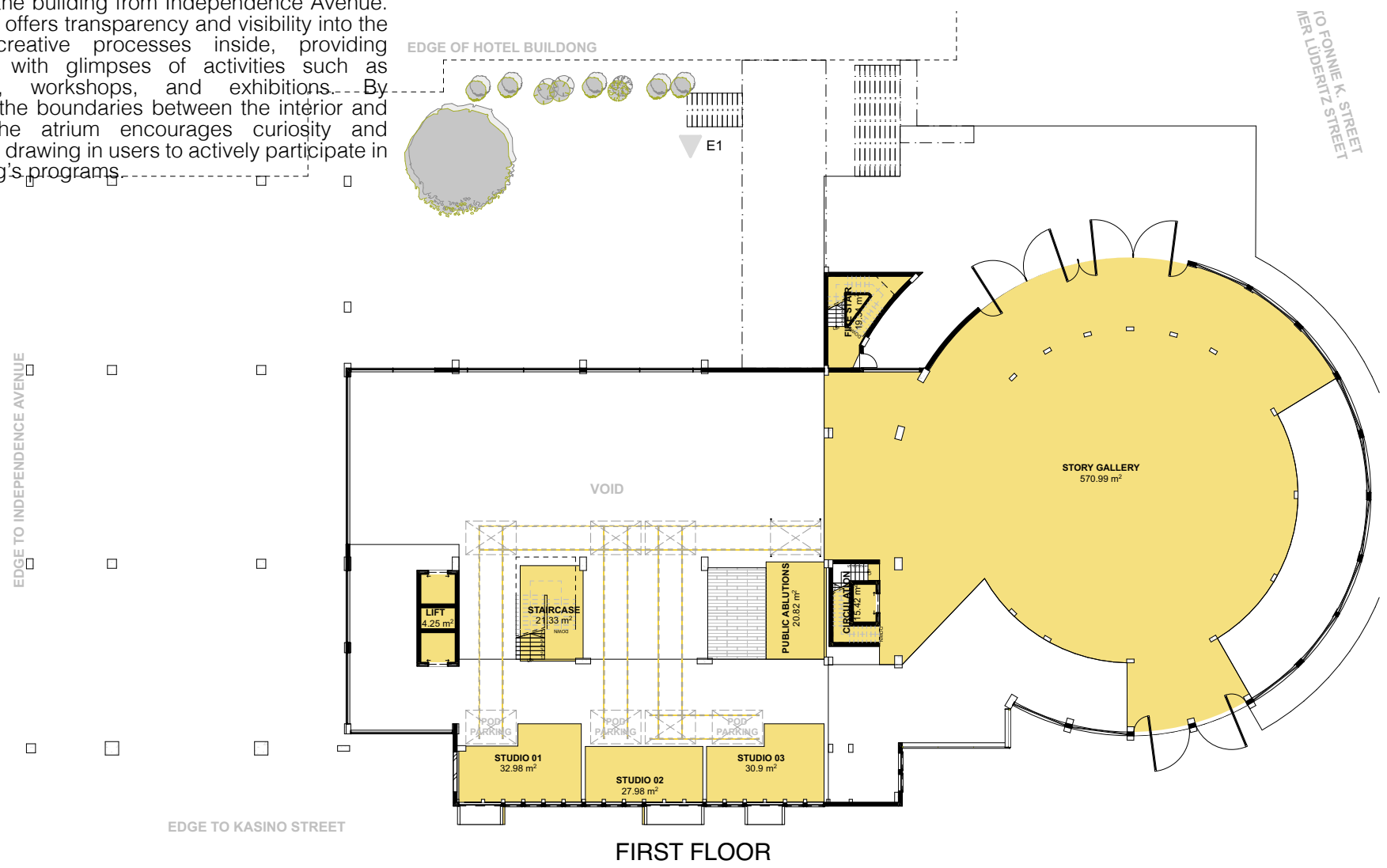


Figure.105: Explorative Building Floor plan
By Author.

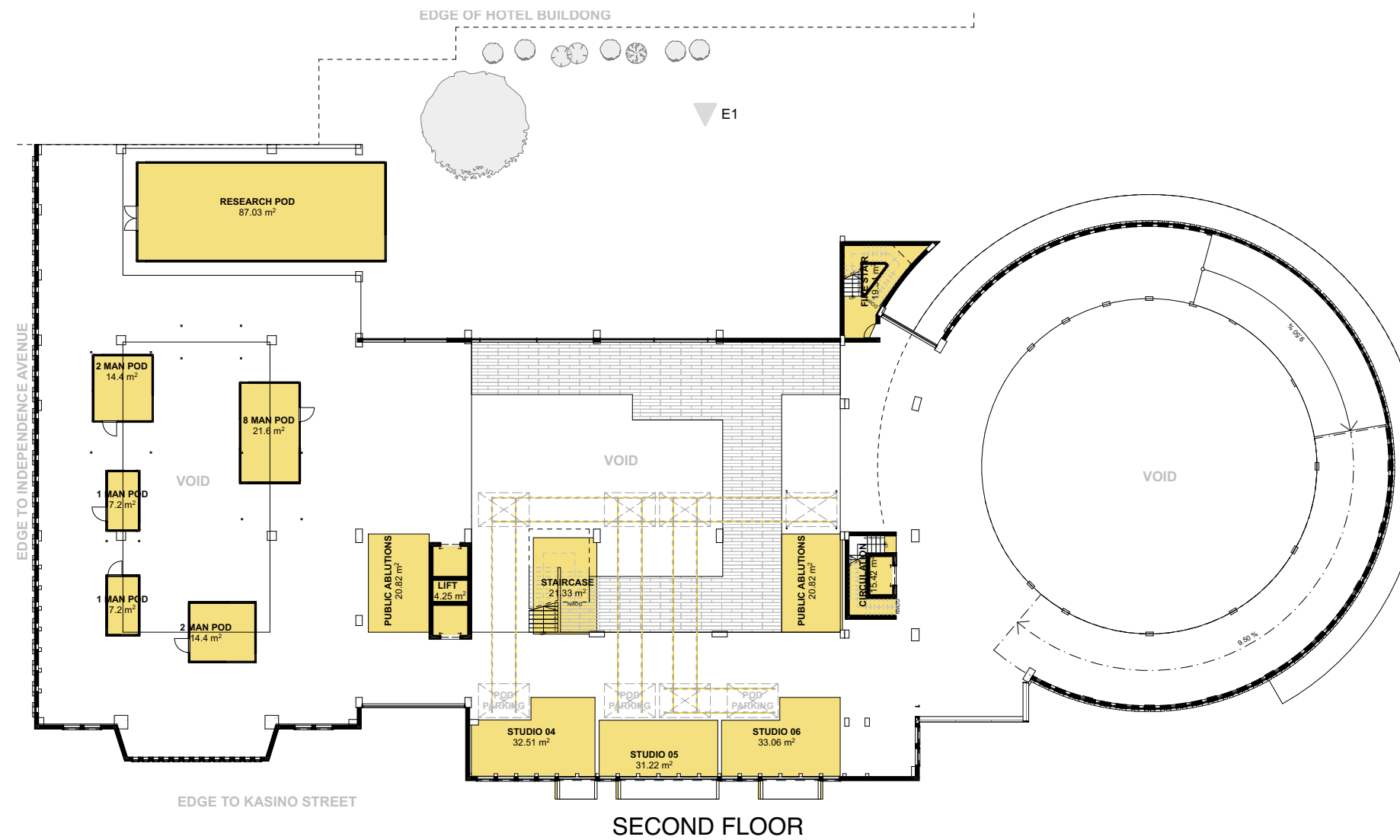


Figure.106: Explorative Building Floor plan
By Author.

9.3.1 KEY INSIGHTS

The third design iteration focuses on creating a spacious, open central area that encourages interaction and flexibility. This phase prioritises openness to boost connectivity among floors and users, allowing the building to function as a lively hub of activity. Central to this idea is the use of mobile pods that move freely within the space, engaging with users in various locations throughout the building. These pods—crafted for sound, video, and audio production—become interactive elements tailored to users' needs, enhancing collaboration and content creation.

The open central area acts as the heart of the building, where activities converge, making movement between different studios, atriums, and collaborative spaces seamless. This design not only enhances the versatility of the space but also aligns with the building's aim of nurturing an environment that adapts to its users, fostering continuous engagement and vibrant exchanges.

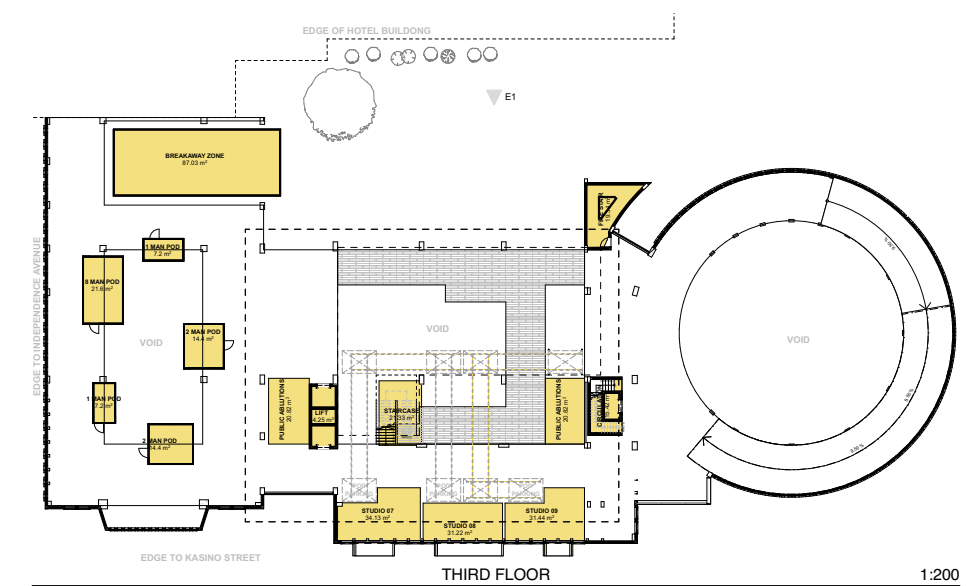


Figure.107: Explorative Building Floor plan
By Author.

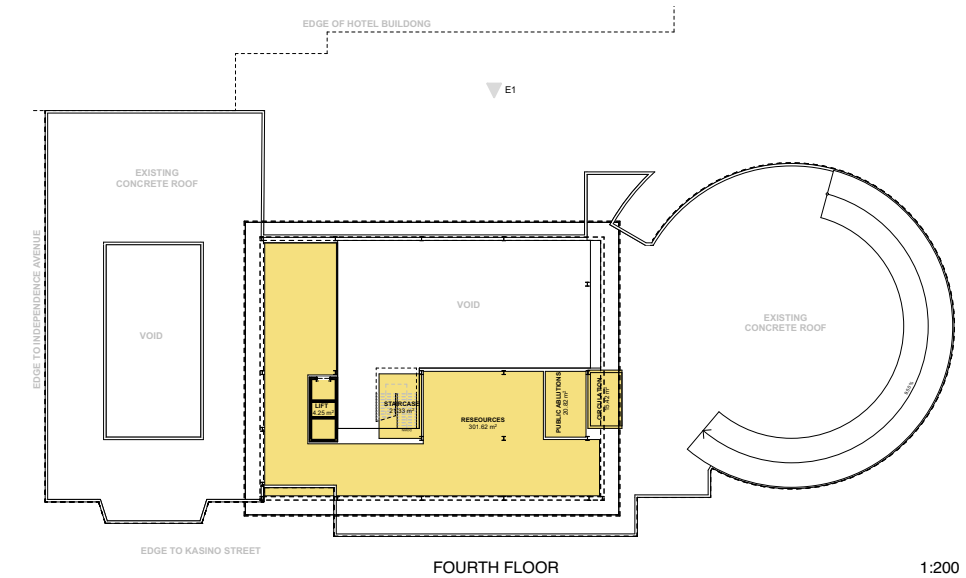


Figure.108: Explorative Building Floor plan
By Author.

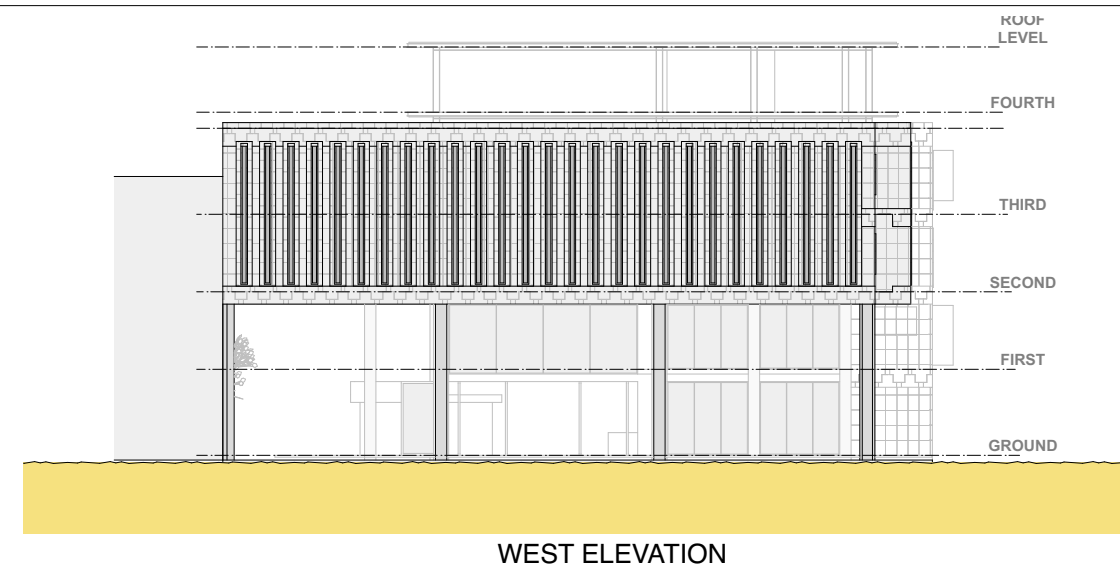
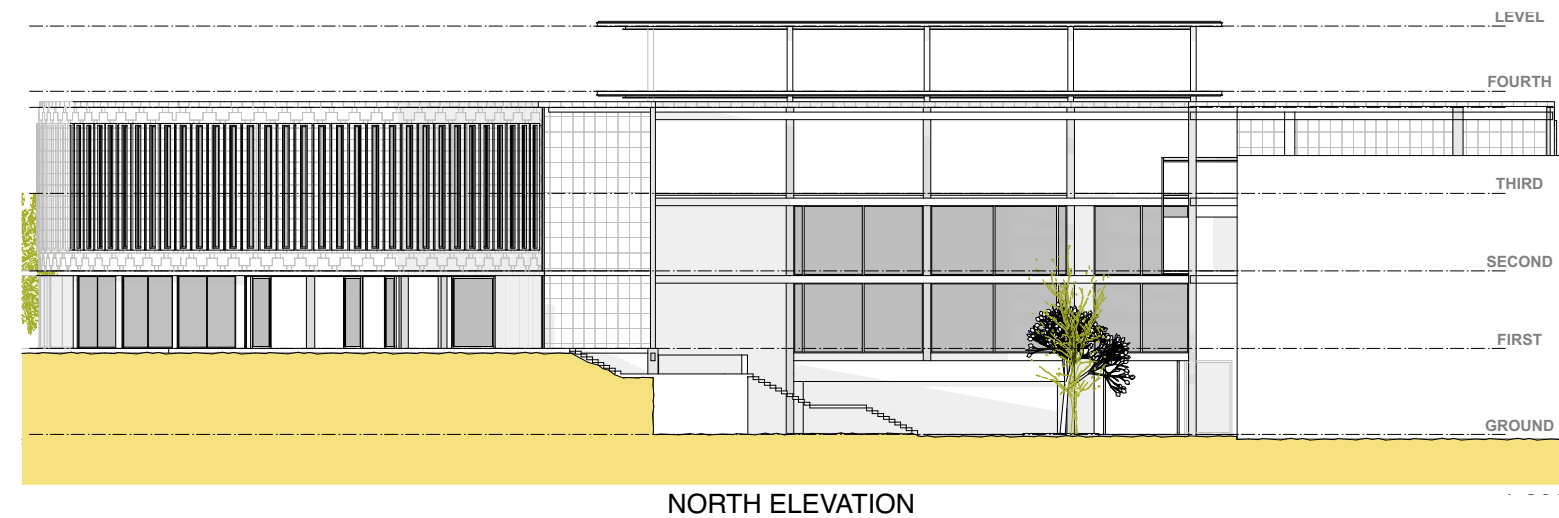


Figure.109: Building Elevation North and West.
By Author.

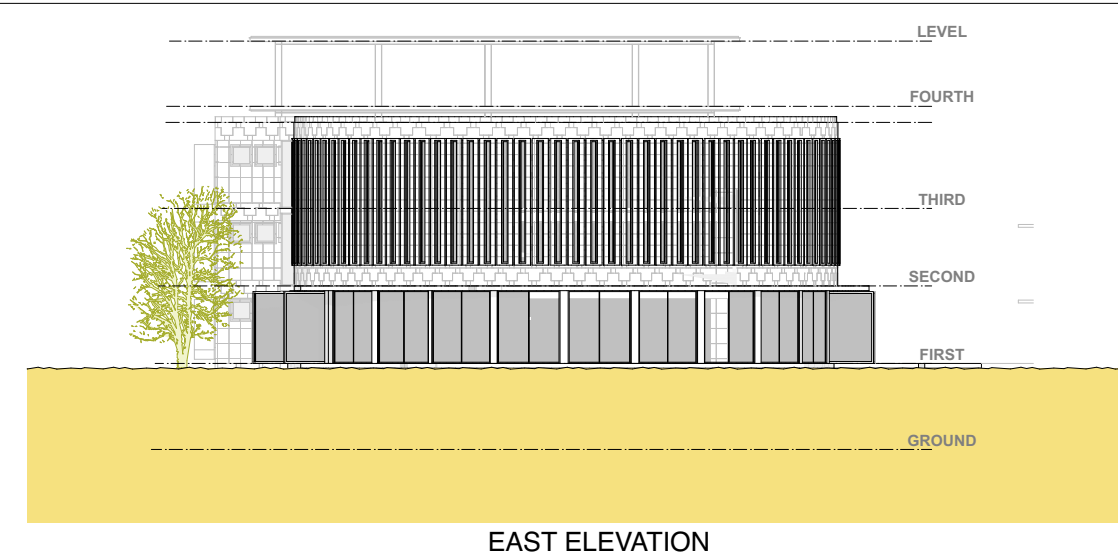
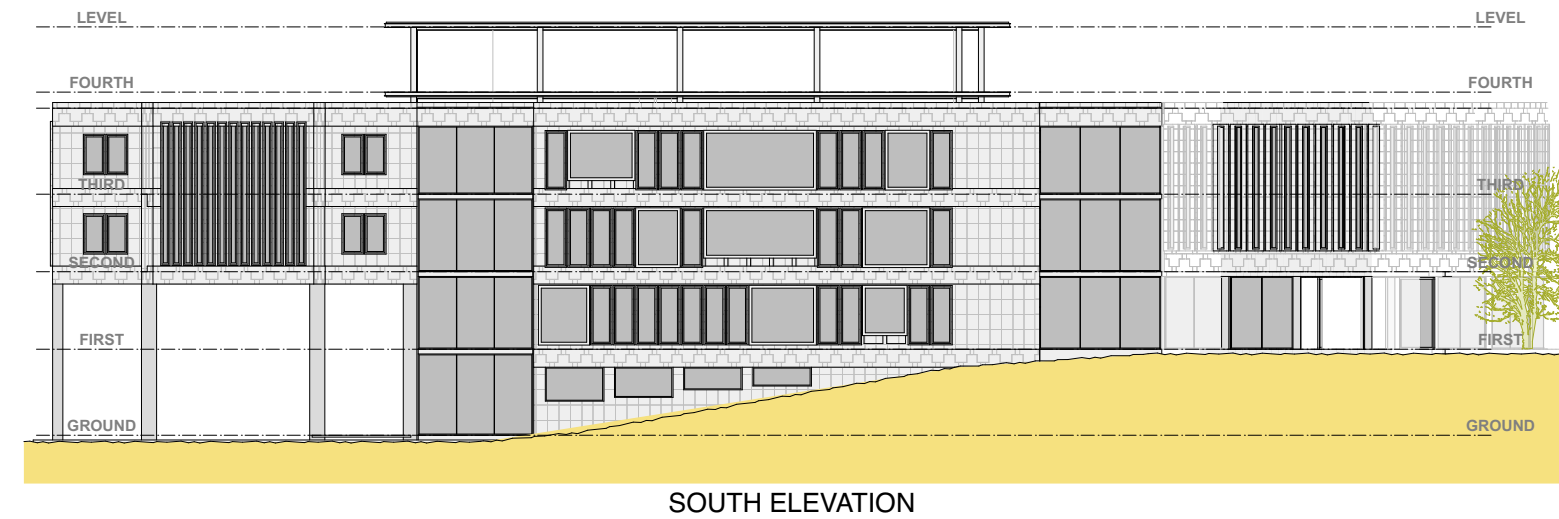
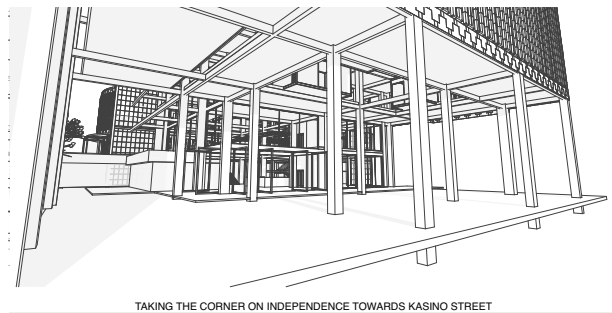


Figure.110: Building Elevation South and East.
By Author.

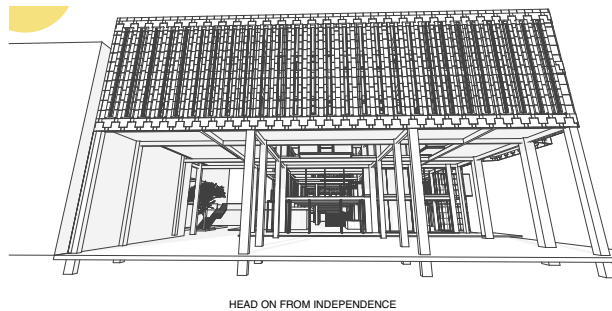


VIEW FROM FONNIE TO INDEPENDENCE COURTYARD

Figure.111: 3D perspective of link walkway between House of Cohen and Hotel. By Author.



TAKING THE CORNER ON INDEPENDENCE TOWARDS KASINO STREET



HEAD ON FROM INDEPENDENCE

Figure.112: 3D perspective elevation of atrium of influence space from Independence Avenue. By Author.

Figure.113: 3D perspective elevation from Independence Avenue. By Author.



Figure.114: 3D perspective from corner of Independence Avenue and Kasino Street. By Author

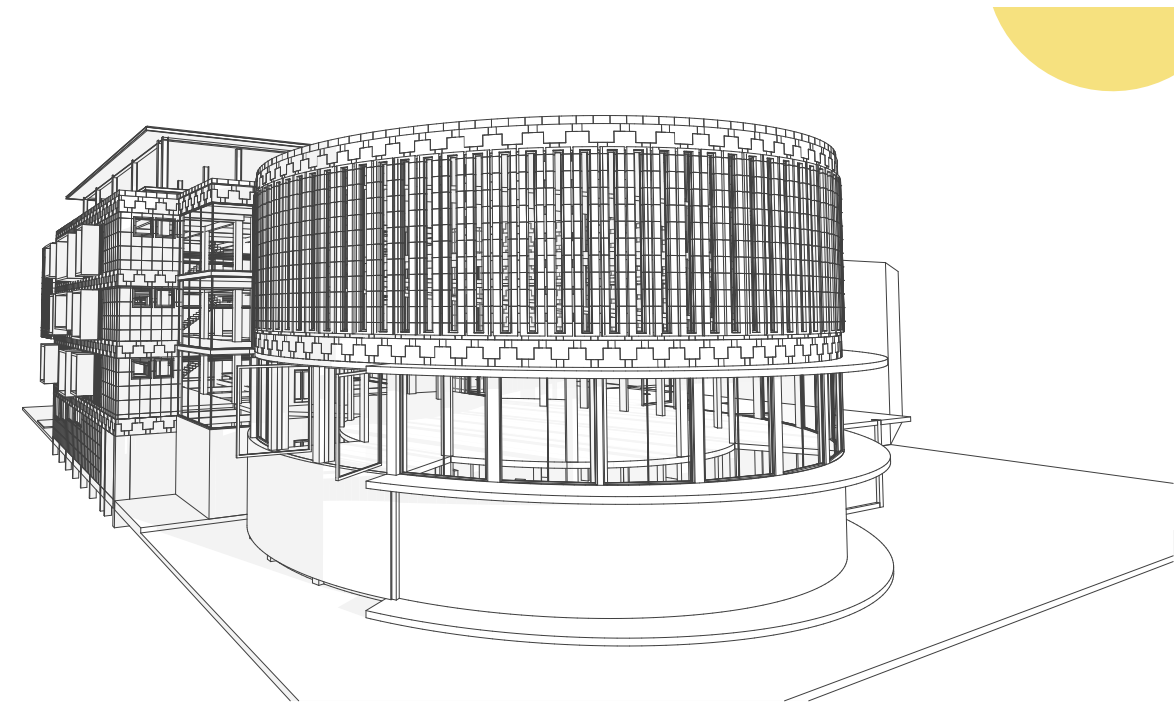


Figure.115: 3D perspective from corner of Kasino and Fonnice K. Street.

9.4 FINAL DESIGN

GROUND FLOOR

The ground floor plan invites users on a journey of exploration, starting at the entrance along Independence Avenue. An extended public sidewalk flows beneath the Atrium of Influence, facilitating a smooth transition from street to building. This atrium provides a glimpse into the building's activities, enticing passers-by to delve deeper. Upon entry, visitors are welcomed by an open-volume space where dynamic, productive processes are on display, immersing users in the building's vibrant atmosphere.

Optional amenities include a café and seating pods on this level, offering areas for relaxation and informal gatherings. The primary route guides movement to the first floor, continuing the exploration through collaborative and creative spaces. Additionally, a lesser-known path on the ground floor leads to workshop areas, allowing users to engage in hands-on activities and develop their skills. This floor plan creates a seamless connection among public, semi-public, and production zones, establishing an engaging and interactive experience throughout the building.

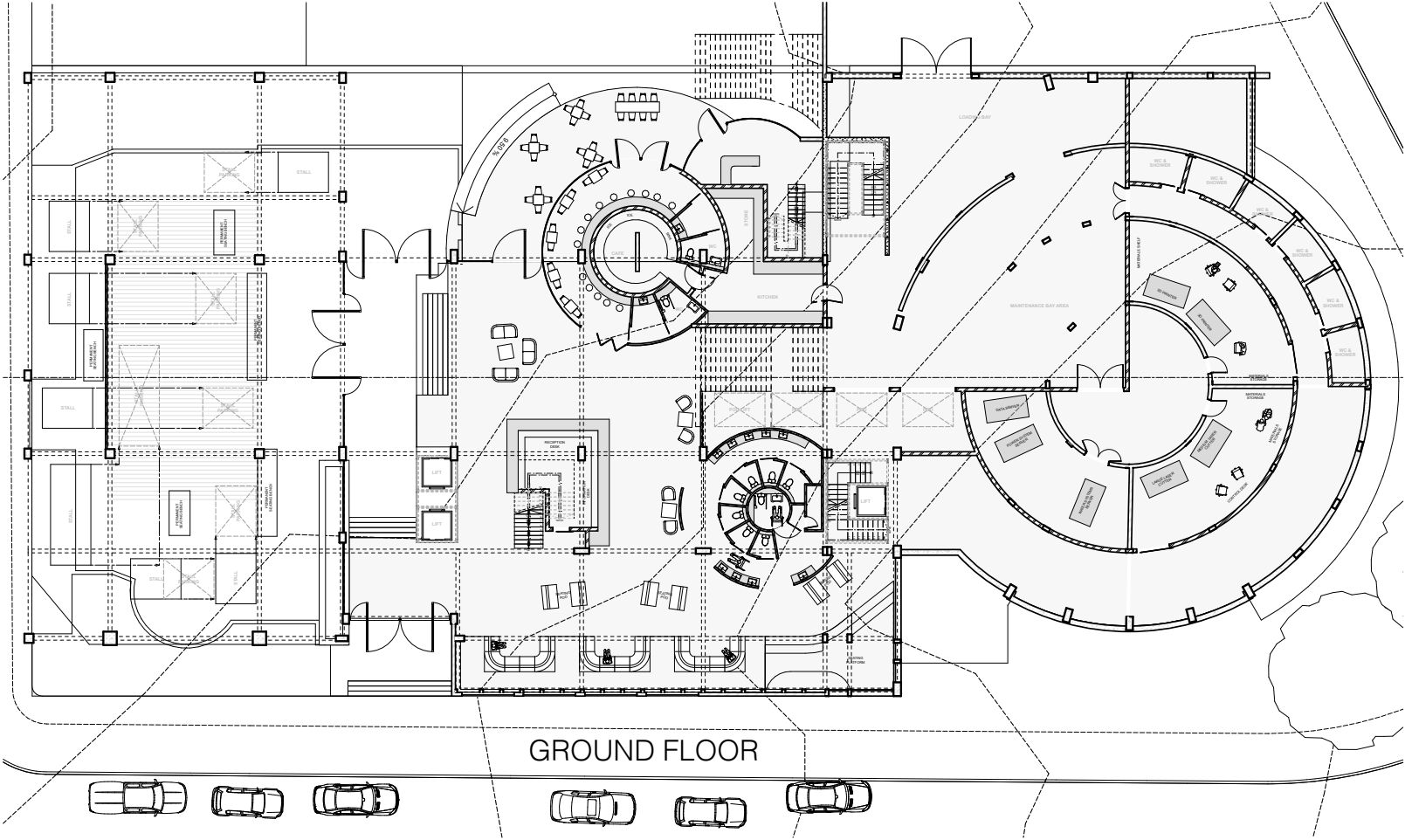


Figure.116: Proposed Building Floor plan
By Author.

FIRST FLOOR

The first floor is primarily accessed via the main pathway from the ground floor, extending the user's exploration. Central to this level is the Atrium of Exhibition, a gathering space where users interact with shared digital content, promoting collaboration and engagement. This atrium serves as a vibrant showcase, enabling visitors to witness the outcomes of the creative activities occurring within the building.

Users can also opt for additional paths to studio pods strategically positioned around the atrium. These pods provide spaces for content creation, directly contributing to the exhibition atrium, thereby reinforcing the building's ongoing cycle of production and display. The design facilitates fluid movement between creation and exhibition, offering users the freedom to explore both the development and sharing of digital content.

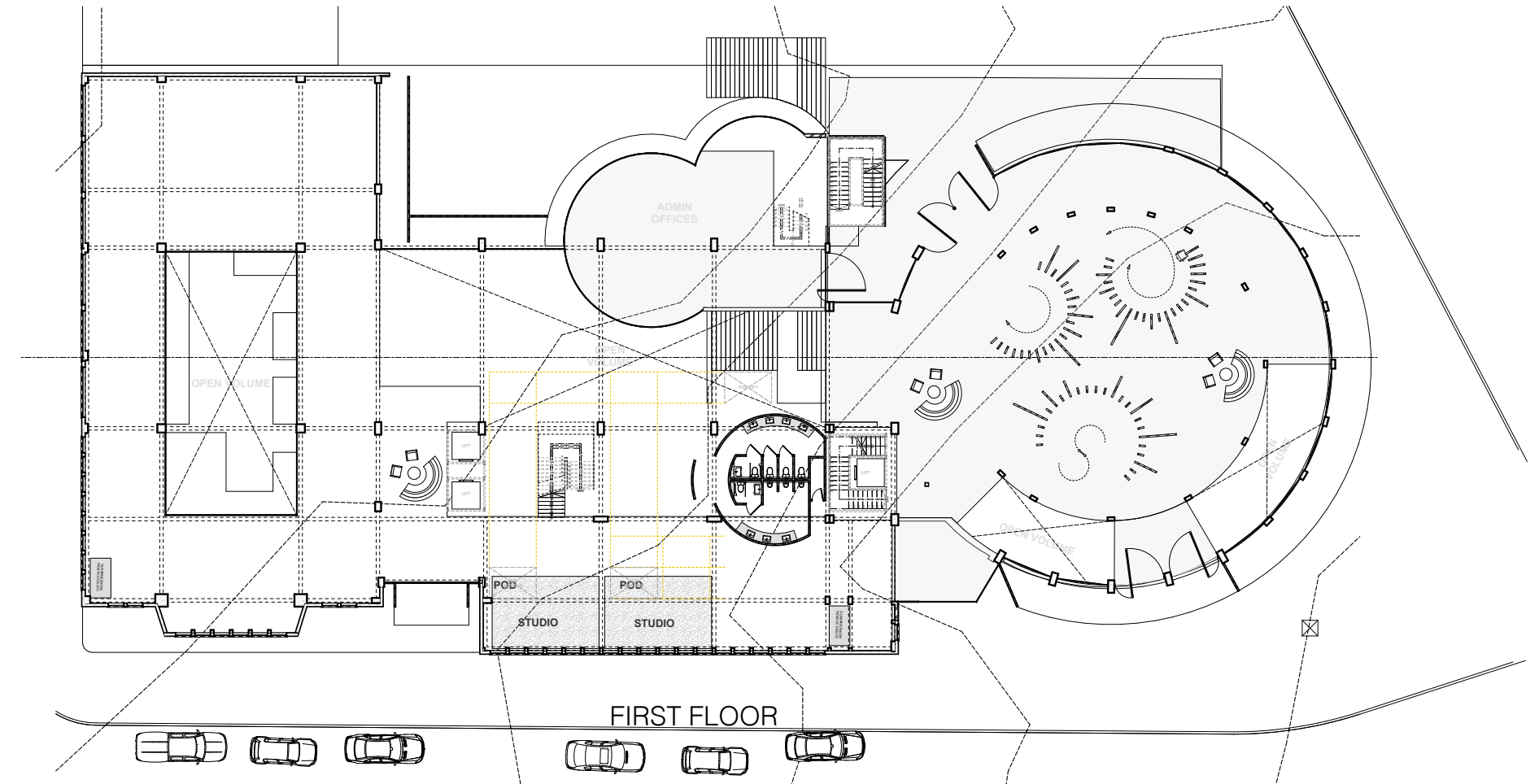
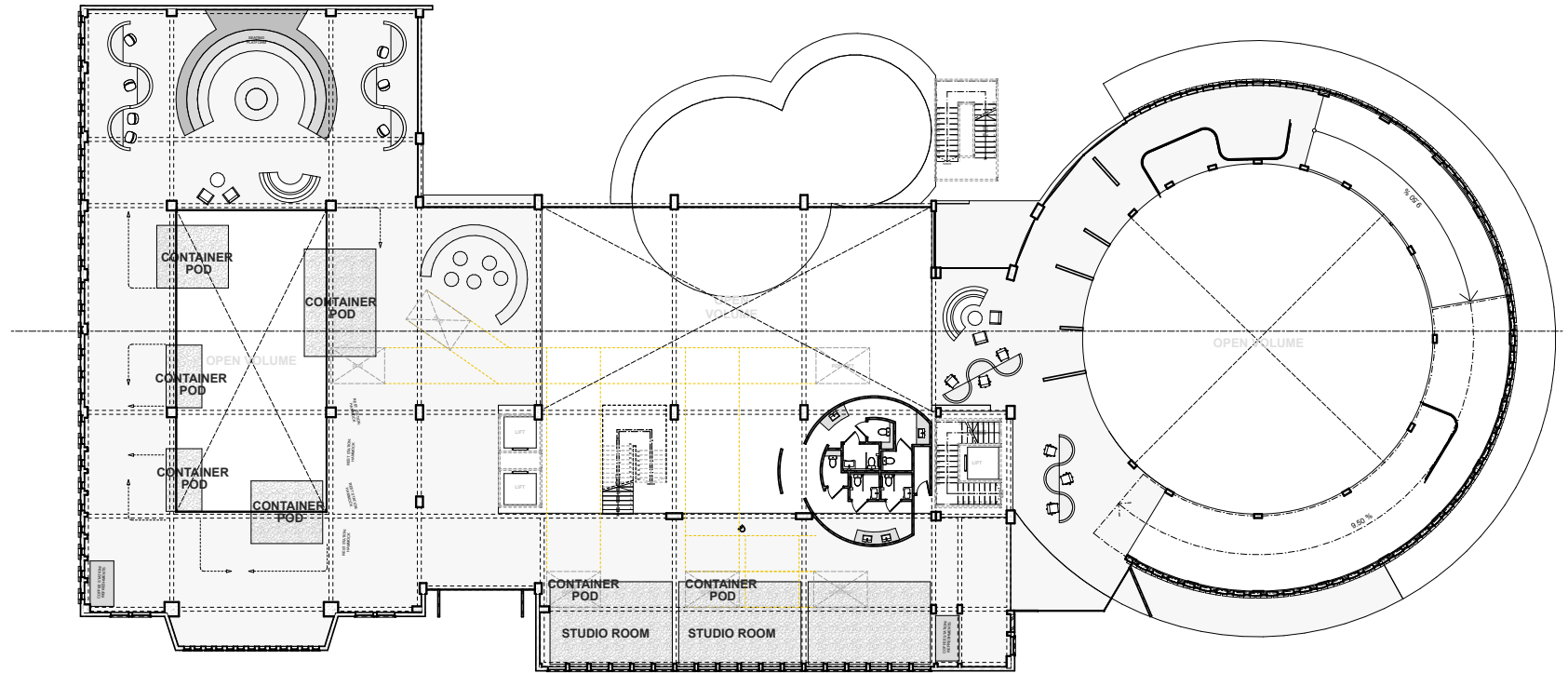


Figure.117: Proposed Building Floor plan
By Author.

SECOND FLOOR

The second floor features various optional activities, mainly through group pods that extend into the Atrium of Influence, providing a visually captivating experience. These pods, visible from lower floors and the street, highlight the building's dynamic character, conveying a sense of ongoing activity and innovation. This design amplifies the feeling of a lively, bustling atmosphere, attracting attention both from within and outside the structure.

At the centre of the second floor is the Atrium of Collaboration, reflecting the processes present in the studio pods and creative areas on the lower floors. In this space, users participate in similar activities, engaging in collaborative environments that promote the sharing of ideas. This layout encourages ongoing interaction between individual work and group collaboration, reinforcing the building's foundational concept of fluid, dynamic processes.



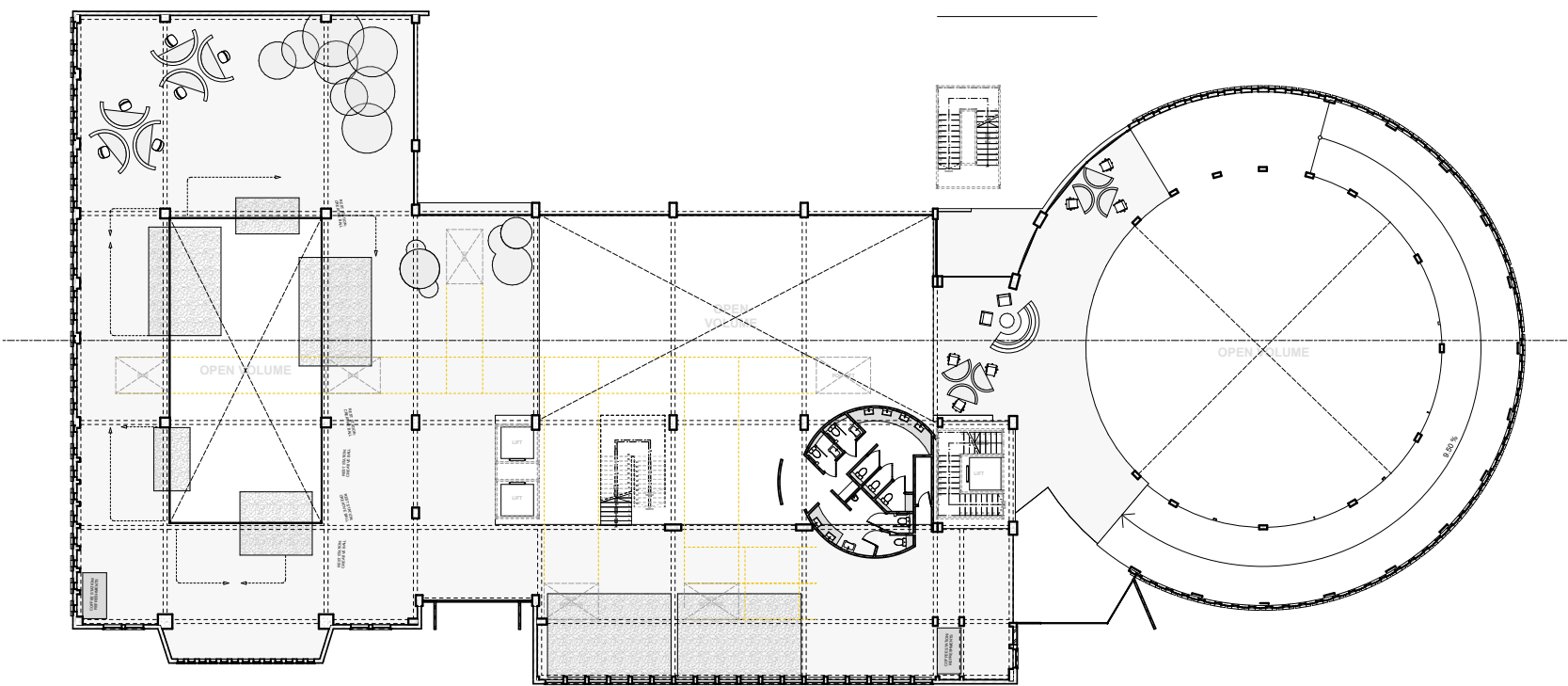
SECOND FLOOR

Figure.118: Proposed Building Floor plan
By Author..

THIRD FLOOR

The third floor replicates the layout and functions of the second floor but offers a more private and introspective environment. While the second floor is dominated by group pods, this level prioritises solo work and individual productivity. The group pods are redesigned to enhance personal focus, featuring enclosed or semi-private spaces to minimise distractions and create a quieter setting.

In the Atrium of Collaboration, similar processes to those on the lower floors are maintained, but with a greater focus on individual contributions instead of teamwork. This design benefits users who need solitude or focused environments for creative tasks, preserving the building's dynamic energy while accommodating a wider variety of work styles. The transition from open collaboration to individual focus across the floors ensures flexibility and meets diverse user needs.



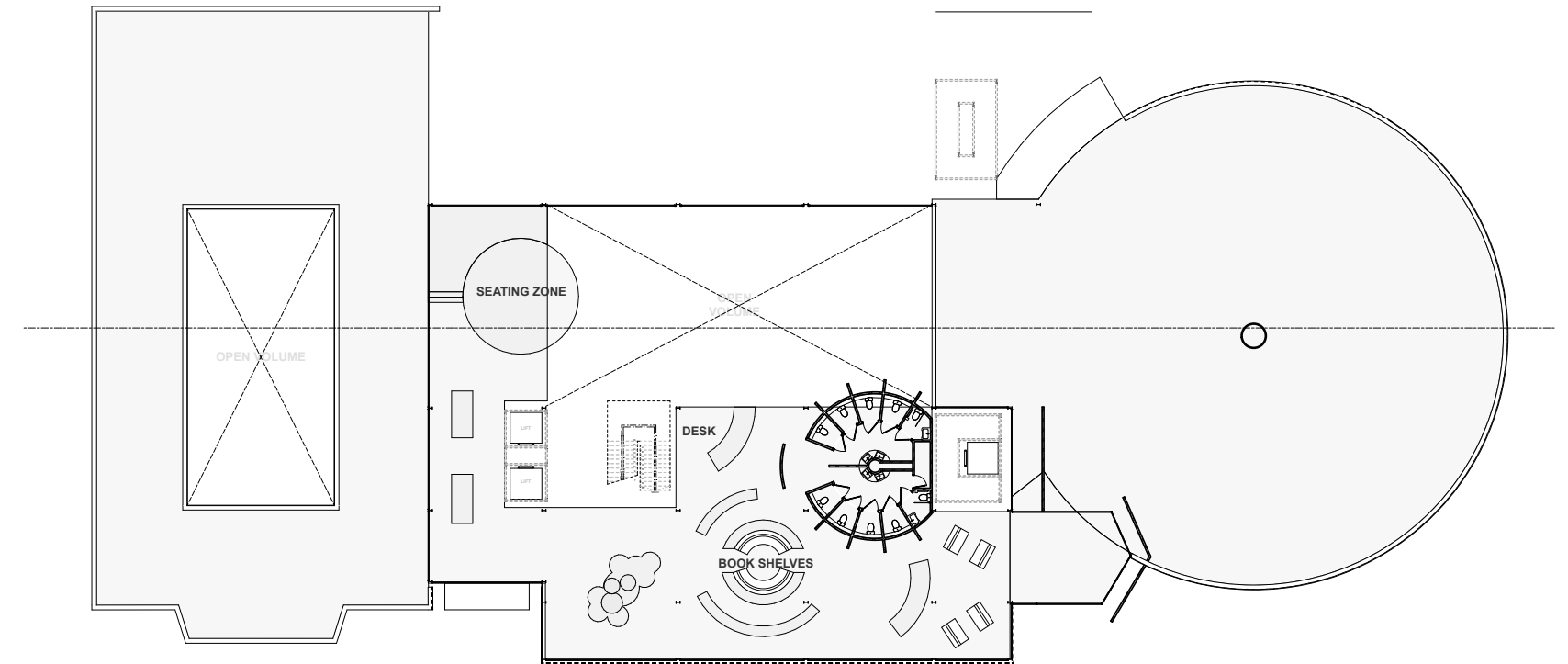
THIRD FLOOR

Figure.119: Proposed Building Floor plan
By Author.

FOURTH FLOOR

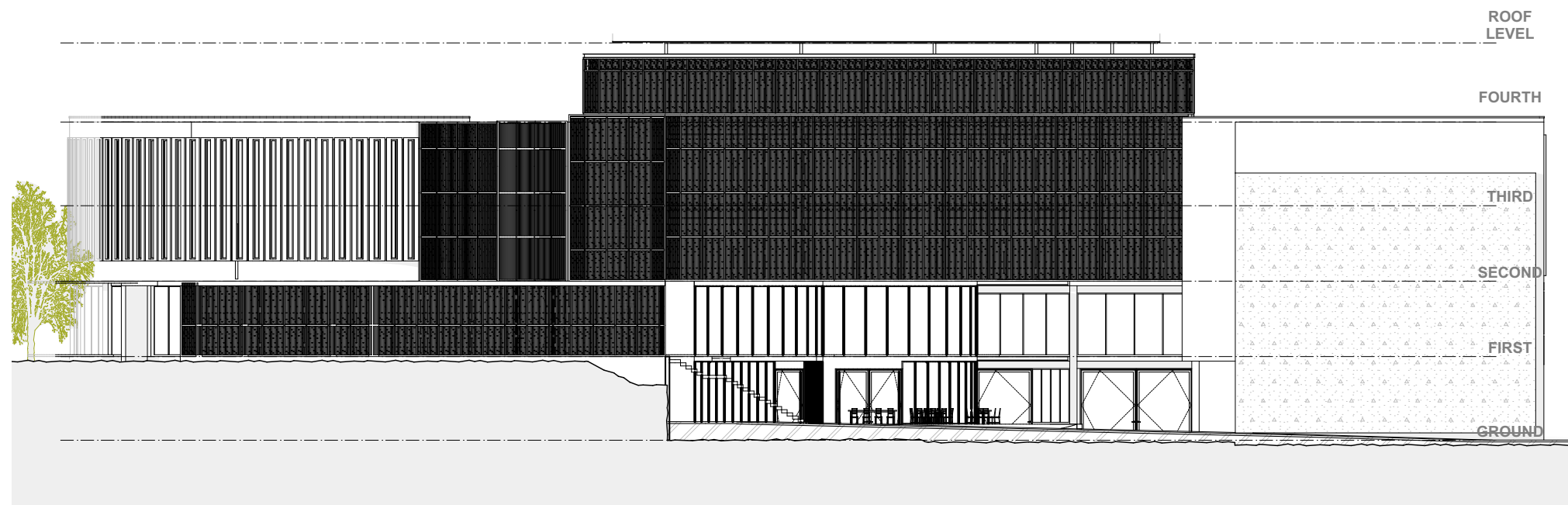
The fourth floor presents a traditional library atmosphere, crafted to foster a quiet, focused setting for individual study and work. This area complements the building's digital learning and collaboration spaces, featuring a carefully curated collection of books and physical resources that support the creative and digital initiatives throughout the facility. It promotes thorough reflection, research, and learning, acting as a refuge from the more vibrant activities on the lower levels.

Moreover, the fourth floor grants access to the rooftop, which serves as an open venue for events, gatherings, and informal meetings. This rooftop area provides a laid-back ambiance, harmonising quiet study with opportunities for networking and social engagement, making it a vital extension of the building's versatile design.



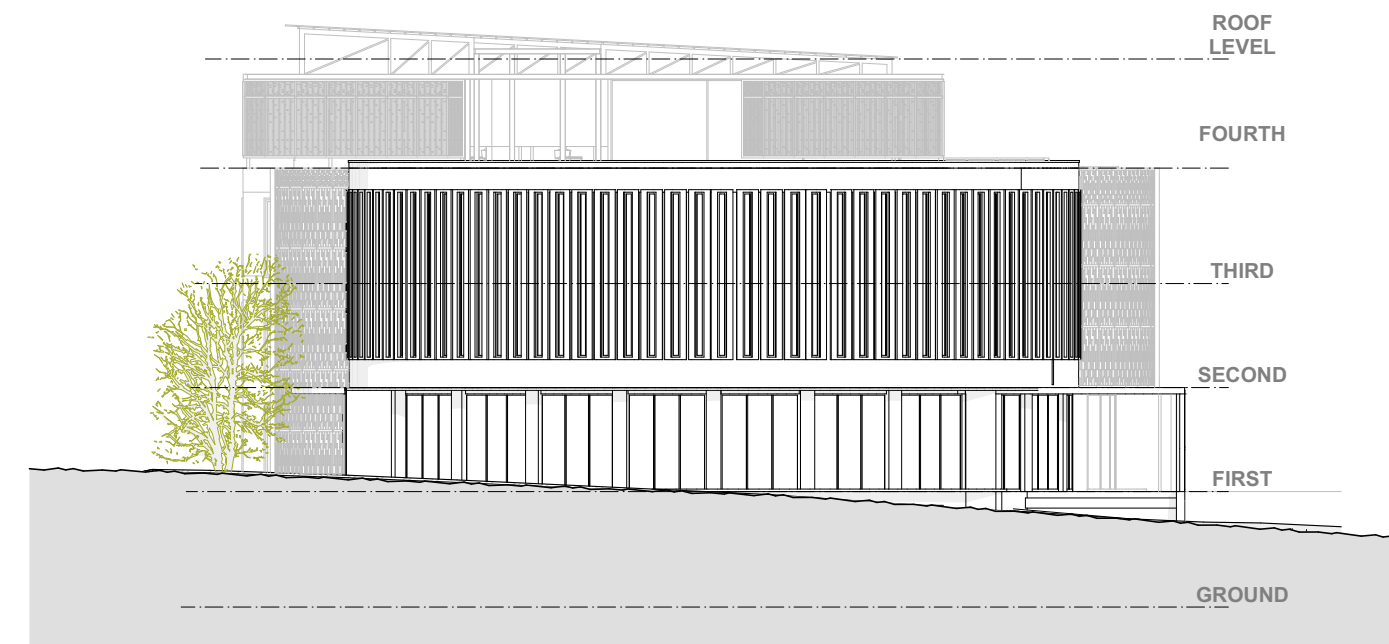
FOURTH FLOOR

Figure.120: Proposed Building Floor plan
By Author.



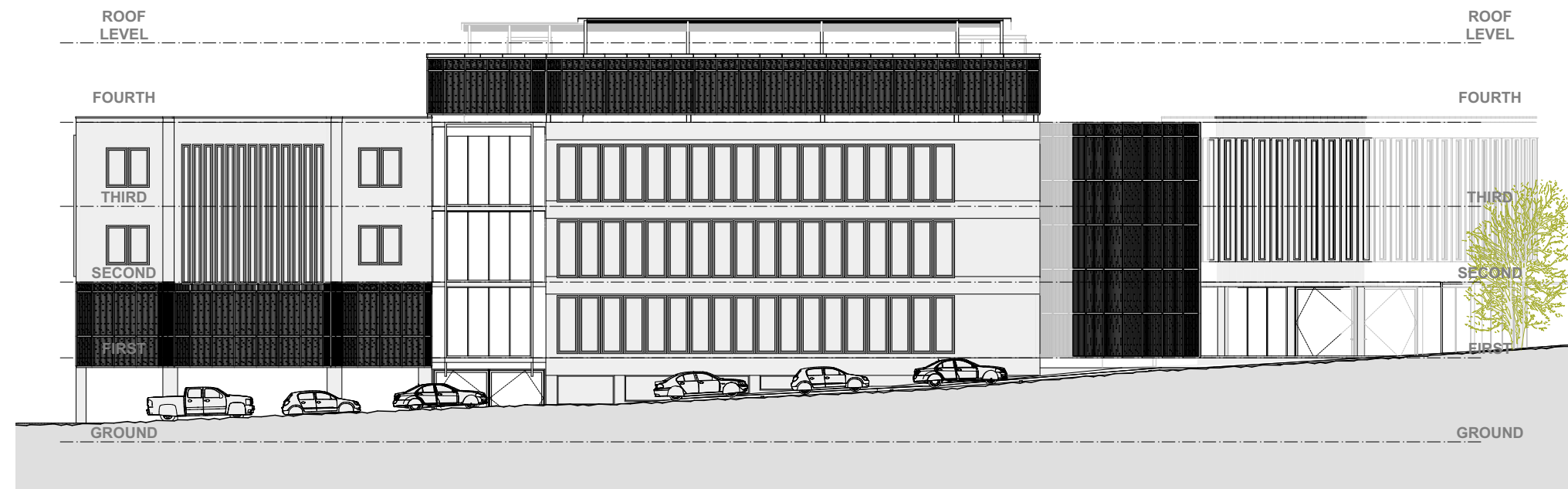
NORTH ELEVATION

Figure.121: Building Elevation North.



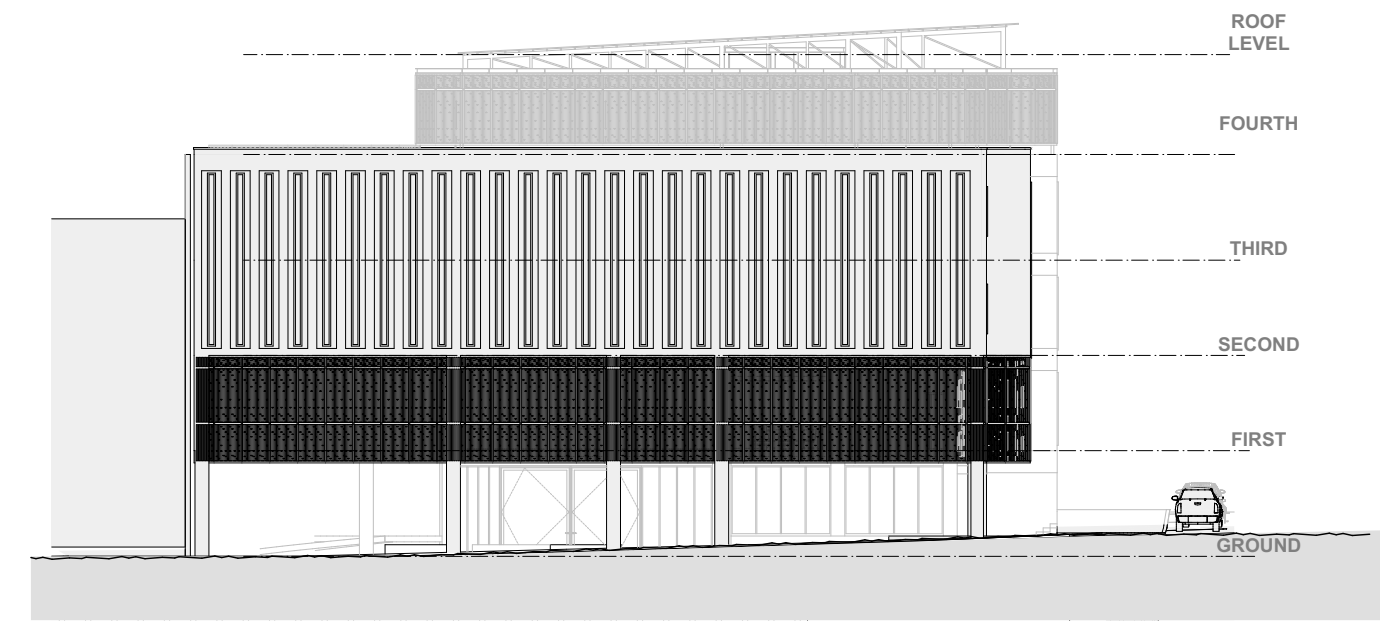
EAST ELEVATION

Figure.122: Building Elevation East.



SOUTH ELEVATION

Figure.123: Building Elevation South.



WEST ELEVATION

Figure.124: Building Elevation West.

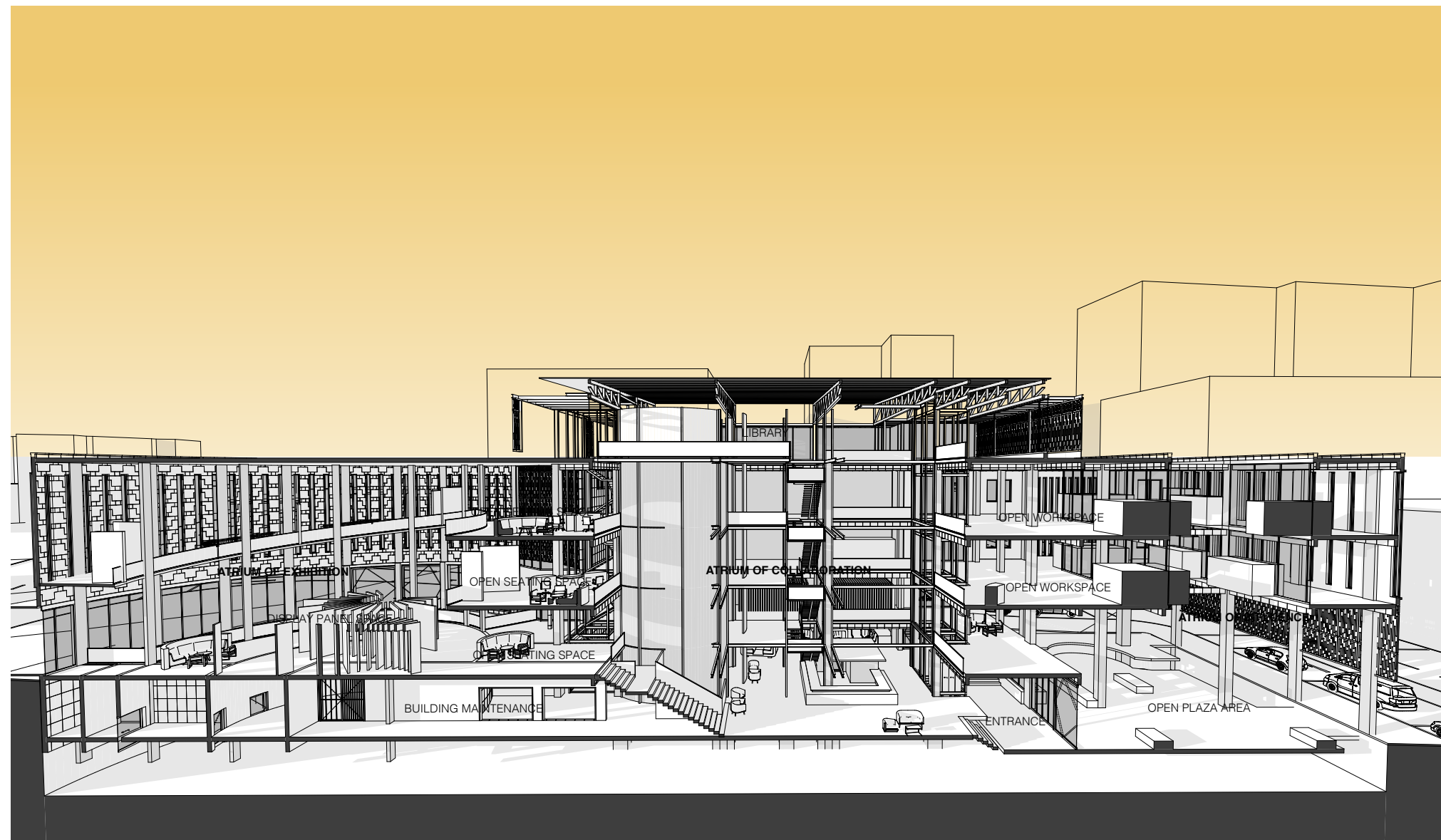


Figure.125: Sectional 3D drawing to illustrate spatial quality

The third design iteration focuses on creating a spacious, open central area that encourages interaction and flexibility. This phase prioritises openness to boost connectivity among floors and users, allowing the building to function as a lively hub of activity. Central to this idea is the use of mobile pods that move freely within the space, engaging with users in various locations throughout the building. These pods—crafted for sound, video, and audio production—become interactive elements tailored to users' needs, enhancing collaboration and content creation.

The open central area acts as the heart of the building, where activities converge, making movement between different studios, atriums, and collaborative spaces seamless. This design not only enhances the versatility of the space but also aligns with the building's aim of nurturing an environment that adapts to its users, fostering continuous engagement and vibrant exchanges.

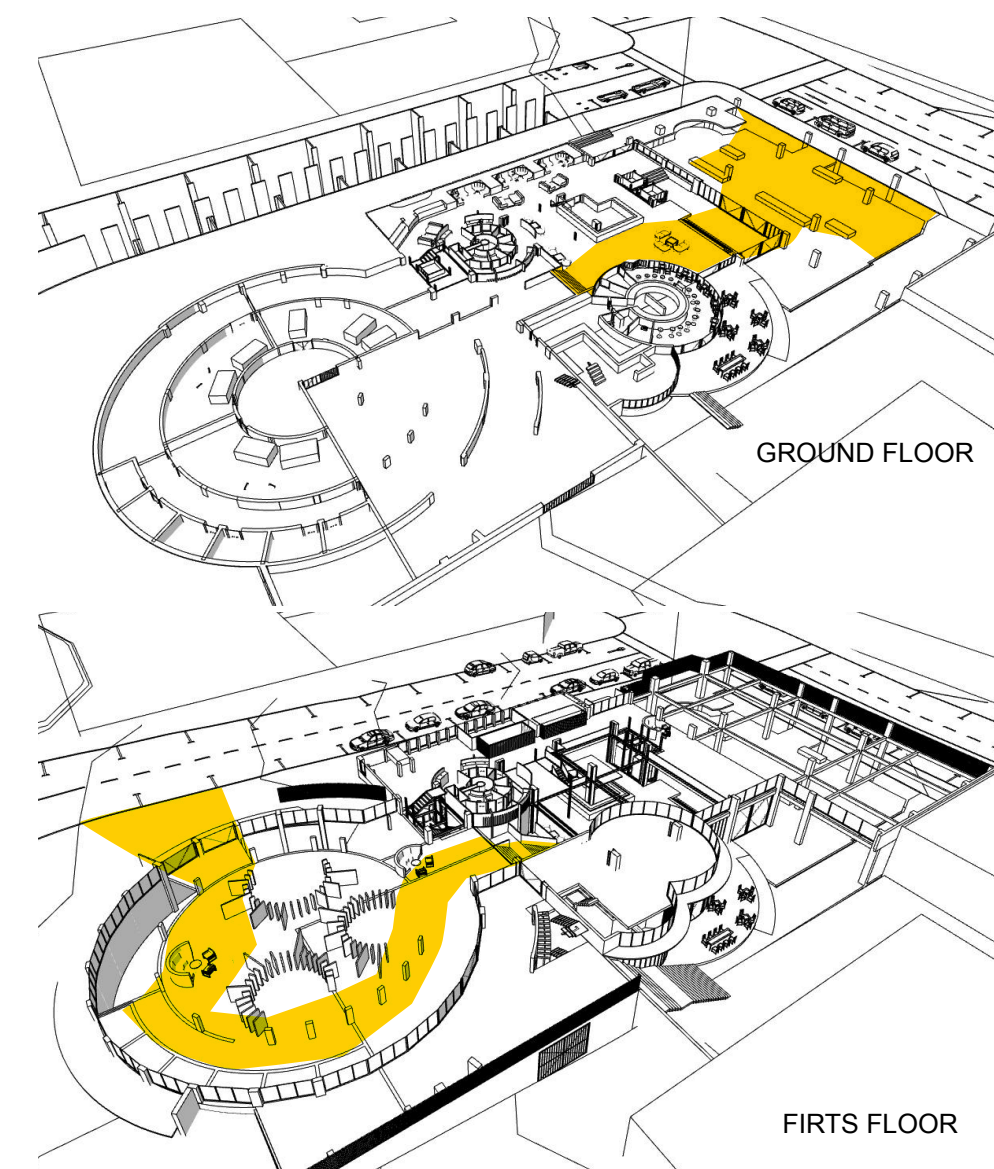


Figure.126: 3D diagrams illustrating the necessary path intended to engage visitors.

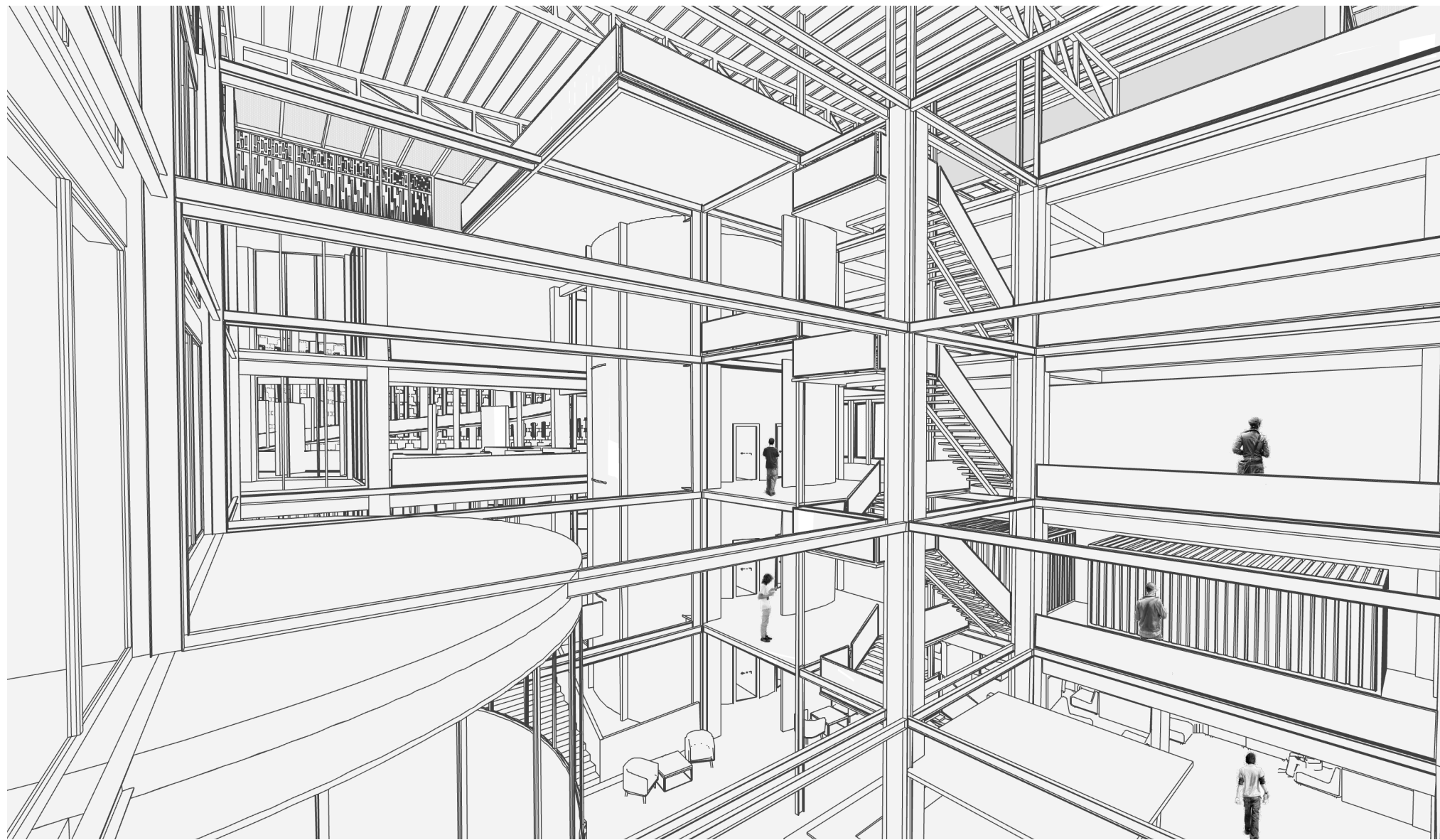
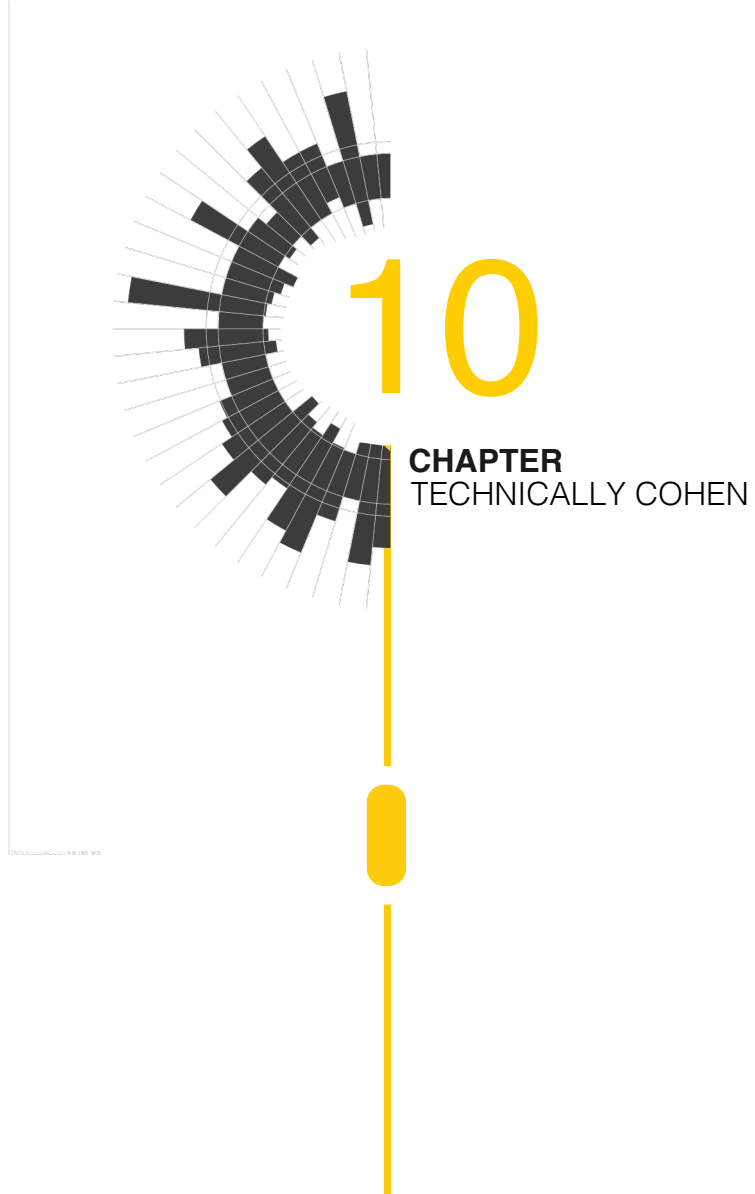


Figure.127: 3D illustrating the atrium of collaboration.



Figure.128: 3D illustrating the atrium of Exhibition.



This chapter addresses the technical considerations of the project, focusing on dynamic design elements and key structural solutions to ensure stability, adaptability, and alignment with the overall vision.

10.1 FACADE TECHNOLOGY

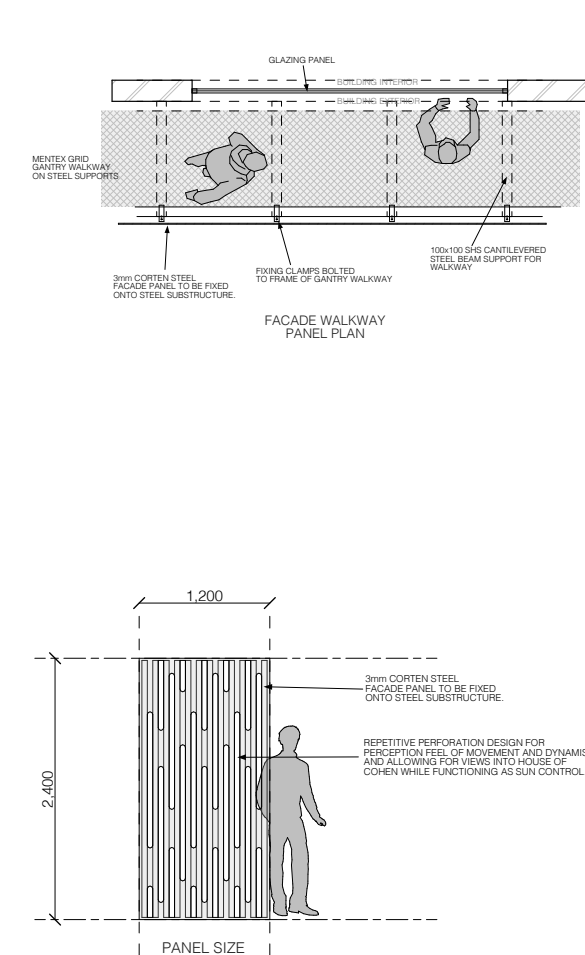


Figure. 129: Gantry walkway plan view
Figure. 130: Facade Panel Elevation

The facade panels of the adaptive reuse design for the House of Cohen are crafted from Corten steel. This steel is chosen for its naturally weathered appearance, which evokes a sense of age and permanence and harmonises with the building's historic character. The rust-like patina of the Corten steel allows the new interventions to blend seamlessly with the original structure, preserving the

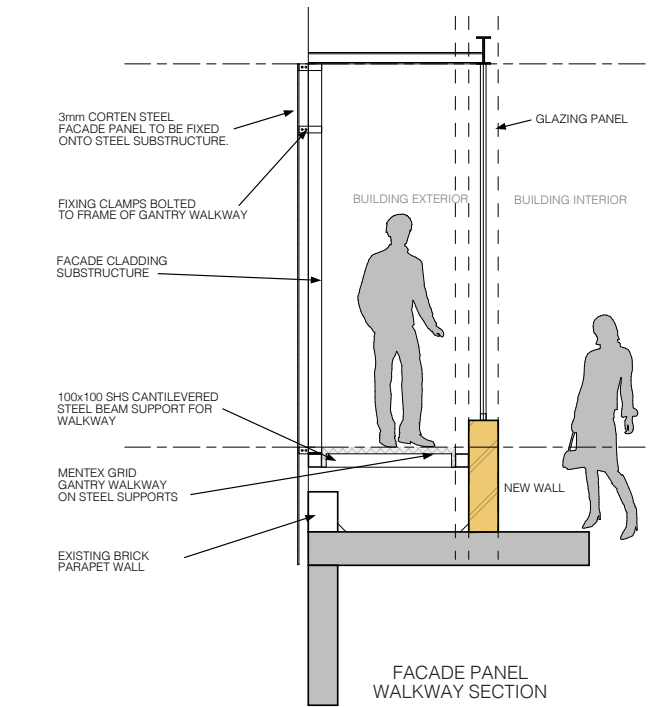


Figure.131: Facade screen strip section.

building's legacy while introducing contemporary elements.

In addition to honouring the past, the panels aim to convey a sense of dynamism and movement. Through the strategic use of patterning and material layering, the facade creates visual illusions that shift with the angle of perception, making the building

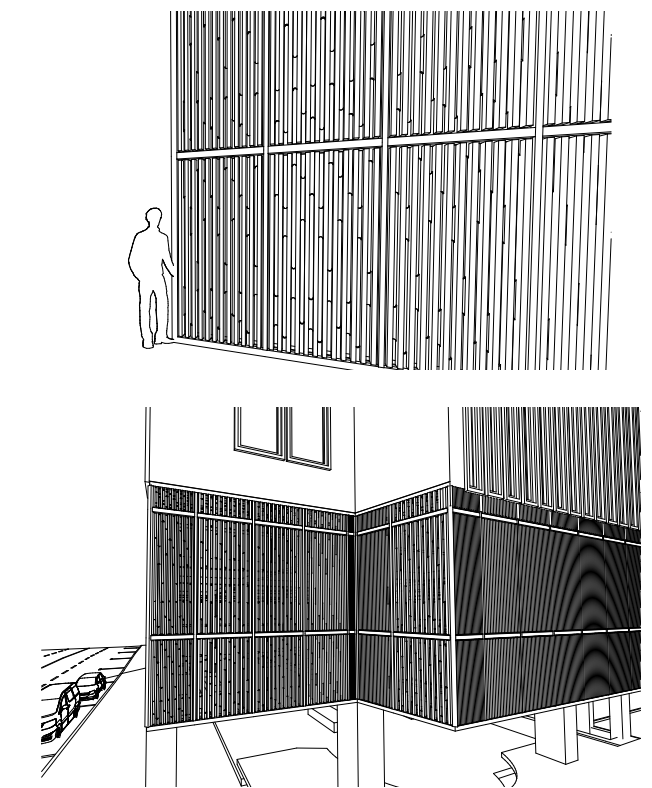


Figure. 132: Facade Screen perspective drawing with human scale representation.

Figure.133: Facade corner perspective drawing.

appear ever-changing as viewers move around it. This interplay between stillness and perceived movement reflects the concept of kinetic architecture and reinforces the building's role as a space of continuous interaction, transformation, and innovation.

10.1 FACADE TECHNOLOGY

The structural approach for the adaptive reuse of the House of Cohen focuses on the relationship between the old and the new, showcasing how heritage can be transformed through modern interventions. Selected areas of the original concrete slabs will be precisely removed to create openings, fostering both spaciousness and vertical connections. These openings will allow for the integration of new steel structural elements, which intentionally contrast with the existing concrete and stone, highlighting the building's evolution.

The production section will see the most substantial changes, featuring extensive slab cutouts to accommodate a new steel framework supporting the mobile pods. This framework facilitates the pods' dynamic movement, representing the building's transition toward flexibility, adaptability, and innovation. The juxtaposition of original and new materials symbolises the dialogue between past and future, demonstrating how heritage can advance and flourish through meaningful interactions with contemporary design.

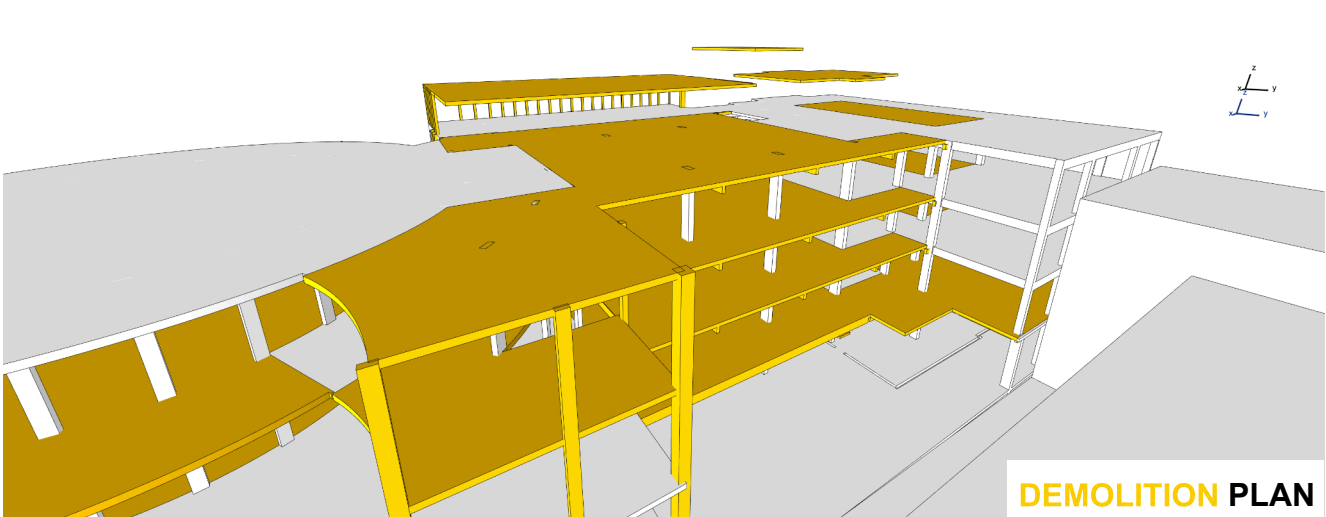


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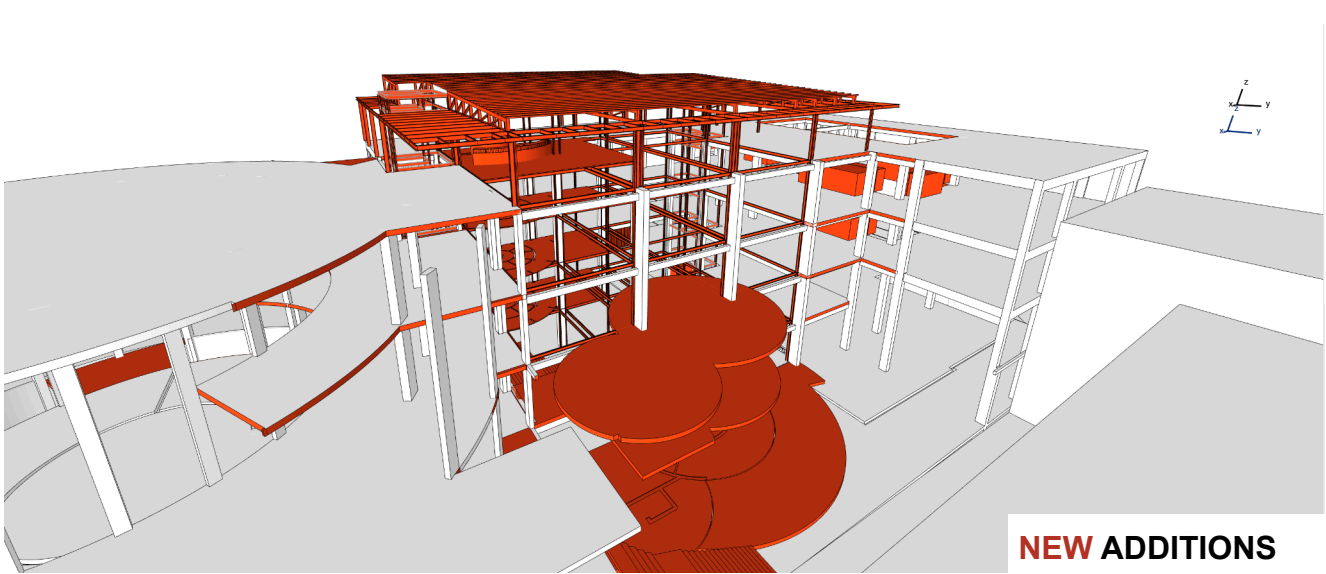


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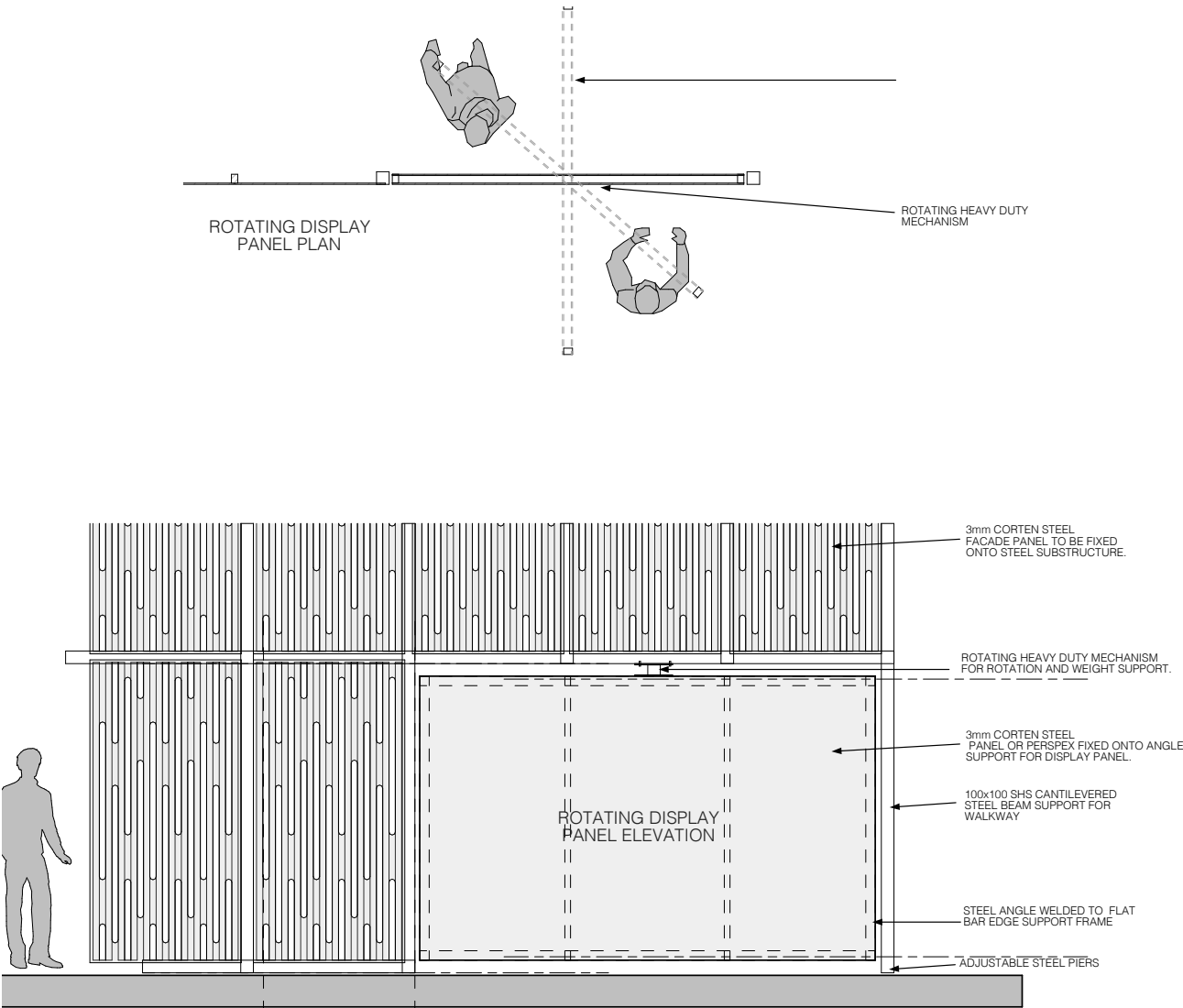


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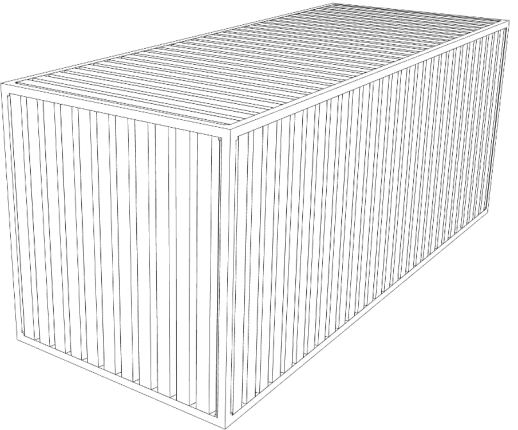


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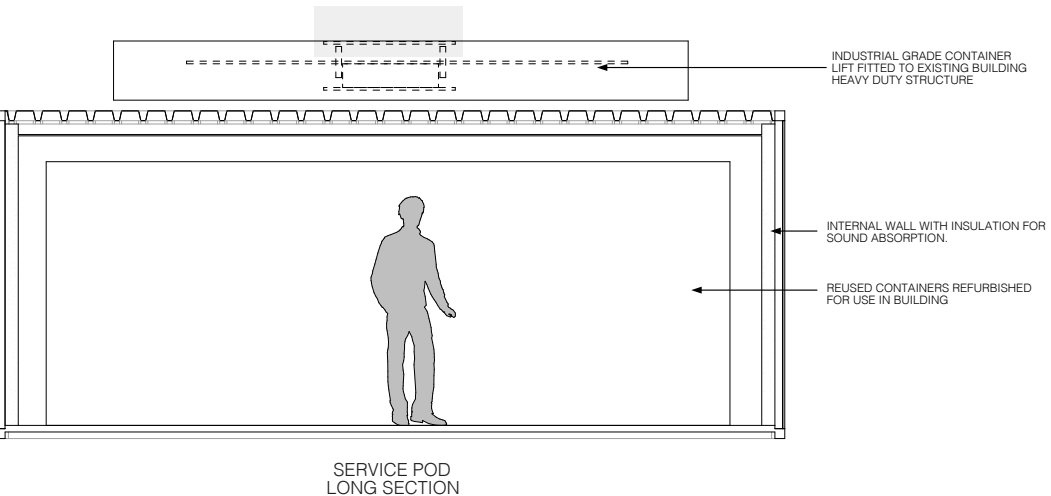


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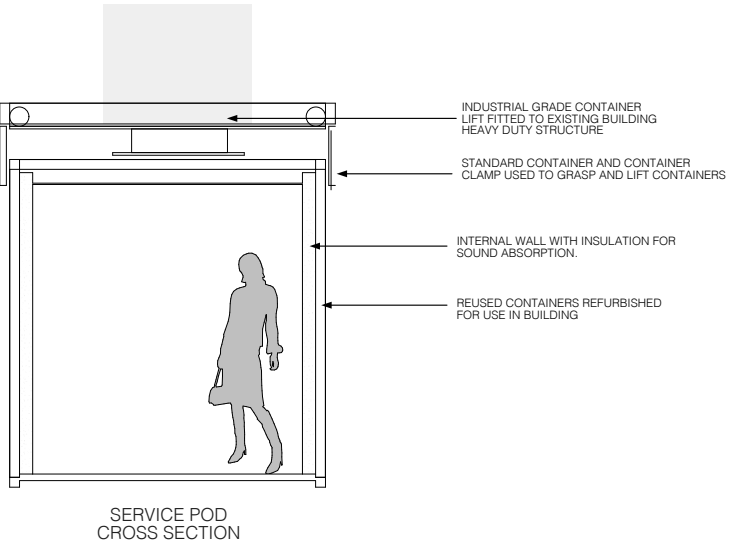


Figure.140: Cross section drawing of Kinetic Pod.



This chapter concludes the study by summarising key findings, reflecting on the outcomes of the design process, and highlighting how the project addresses the research objectives while offering insights for future applications.

11 CONCLUSION

This thesis sets out to investigate the adaptive reuse of the Cohen Building, with the aim of developing design strategies that respond to its socio-economic and spatial characteristics while preserving its historical and architectural significance. The intention is to transform the Cohen Building into a dynamic digital creators' hub that aligns with Industry 4.0 trends and contributes to revitalising the Central Business District (CBD).

The research demonstrates that adaptive reuse, guided by kinetic architectural principles and adaptable design strategies, can effectively balance historical preservation with contemporary needs. Observational studies reveal the challenges of abandonment in the CBD, emphasising the importance of engagement in fostering a sustainable CBD. Designs inspired by kinetic architecture offer innovative solutions for creating adaptable and engaging environments.

This thesis contributes to architectural knowledge by proposing a framework for adaptive reuse that integrates kinetic elements while paying mind to historical preservation and urban revitalisation. It expands the exploration of how typology and movement in architecture can enhance static spaces and transform them into vibrant, interactive spaces. The project provides a case study in addressing the socio-economic challenges brought about by urban decay by offering insights into how architecture can empower communities and stimulate economic development in the digital age.

A limitation of this study is that the adaptive reuse strategies explored are specific to the spatial and

historical characteristics of this building, and further research is needed to test their applicability in other contexts. Time constraints also restrict the exploration of all possible design iterations.

Future research could explore the long-term impact of digital hubs on urban revitalisation, focusing on how adaptive reuse strategies evolve with changing technologies. Additionally, applying the proposed design framework to other abandoned or underused buildings could test its flexibility and broader relevance.

This thesis demonstrates that adaptive reuse offers a powerful tool for addressing urban abandonment while preserving cultural heritage. The transformation of the Cohen Building into a digital creators' hub not only revitalises the CBD but also positions the space as a catalyst for future innovation and community engagement. By bridging historical and contemporary, the project reflects the evolving role of architecture in empowering people and fostering sustainable growth and development.

The Ministry of Communications, Information, and Technology aligns with the proposal as their strategic approach promotes access to information, emphasises financial accountability and sustainability, managing resources effectively in to maximise impact.

In addition, the Ministry and House of Cohen share similar goals guiding ICT and digital transformation following national goals. Through the development of policies and legislation that support the Government's digital agenda, the Ministry aims to foster an environment that promotes ICT growth,

empowering citizens and enhancing digital accessibility across the nation which is a goal to be accomplished by the House of Cohen (MICT, 2023).



Figure.141: 3D perspective drawing illustrating the New face of the building on Independence Avenue.



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CHAPTER REFERENCING



This section provides a list of references cited throughout the study and a catalog of figures used to support the research and design process

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Figure.102: Explorative Building Floor plan

Figure.103: Explorative Building Floor plan

Figure.104: Explorative Building Floor plan

Figure.105: Explorative Building Floor plan

Figure.106: Explorative Building Floor plan

Figure.107: Explorative Building Floor plan

Figure.108: Explorative Building Floor plan

Figure.109: Building Elevation North and West.

Figure.110: Building Elevation South and East.

Figure.111: 3D perspective of link walkway between House of Cohen and Hotel.

Figure.112: 3D perspective elevation of atrium of influence space from Independence Avenue.

Figure.113: 3D perspective elevation from Independence Avenue.

Figure.114: 3D perspective from corner of Independence Avenue and Kasino Street.

Figure.115: 3D perspective from corner of Kasino and Fannie K. Street.

Figure.116: Proposed Building Floor plan

Figure.117: Proposed Building Floor plan

Figure.118: Proposed Building Floor plan

Figure.119: Proposed Building Floor plan

Figure.120: Proposed Building Floor plan

Figure.121: Building Elevation North.

Figure.122: Building Elevation East.

Figure.123: Building Elevation South.

Figure.124: Building Elevation West.

Figure.125: Sectional 3D drawing to illustrate spatial quality

Figure.126: 3D diagrams illustrating the necessary path intended to engage visitors.

Figure.127: 3D illustrating the atrium of collaboration.

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Figure.129: Gantry walkway plan view

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Figure.131: Facade screen strip section.

Figure.132: Facade Screen perspective drawing with human scale representation.

Figure.133: Facade corner perspective drawing.

Figure.134: Drawing illustrating the Demolished sections of existing structure.

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Figure.136: Display screen plan drawing.

Figure.137: Display screen elevation drawing.

Figure.138: 3D perspective drawing of Kinetic Pod.

Figure.139: Longitudinal section drawing of Kinetic Pod.

Figure.140: Cross section drawing of Kinetic Pod.

Figure.141: 3D perspective drawing illustrating the New face of the building on Independence Avenue.

END