

# THE ROLE OF ARCHITECTURE IN PROVIDING PHYSICAL & SOCIAL WELL-BEING FOR THE YOUTH:

## A YOUTH CENTRE FOR WENTWORTH, DURBAN

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## 1.0 Challenges and Opportunities:

The importance of recreation facilities in promoting physical and social wellbeing is gaining continued recognition in modern society (Amusa, 2012). Collective and individual development of youth participating in sporting and educational recreation activities has become a catalyst in disadvantaged community improvement.

Architecture of recreation facilities acts as a bonding agent between the youth and the environment. The growing trends in environmentally responsive design offers mental, physical and social rehabilitative possibilities for inhabitants participating in various recreational activities. In the case of South African townships such as Wentworth, these ideas could mobilize youth campaigns against substance abuse, gang related crime, pollution and high HIV/ AIDS rates.

Originally planned as the industrial hub of Durban, Wentworth is the home of a large business node and a petrochemical refinery that produces approximately sixty percent of South Africa's petroleum (Peek, 2000). The overburdened low-income community is challenged with environmental stress and public health costs issues. Youth centres have proven to offer healthy distractions from daily adversities, and promote a positive lifestyle.

Limited government aided skills development and youth recreational facilities have resulted in current negative socio-economic activities amongst Wentworth youth. The scarcity of recreational spaces and inadequate public school facilities force youth interaction to dangerous township peripheries, exposing them to negative social norms (ENCA, 2016). This research aims to explore the potential that youth spaces have in stimulating a healthy lifestyle that tends to the specific needs and interest of youth in Wentworth.



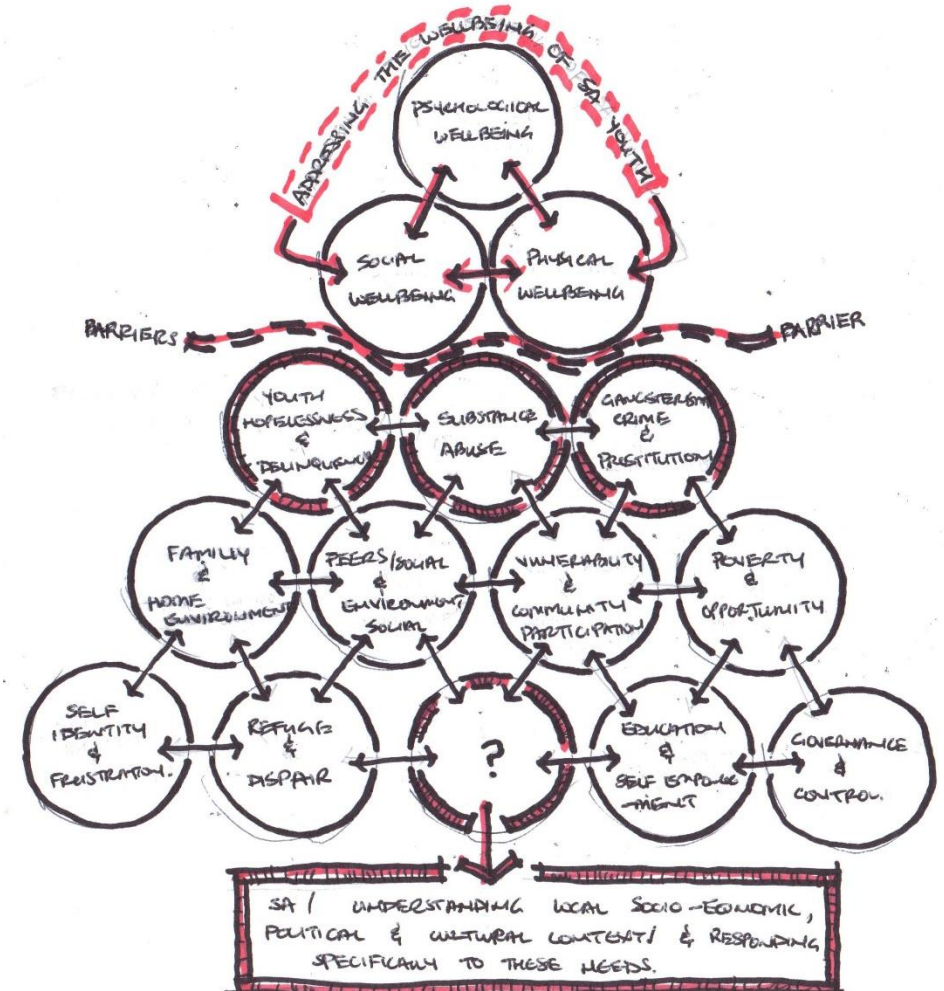
## 2.0 Motivation and Justification of the Study:

Limited architectural design research has been carried out in the South African township youth context. The social nature of this type of research is commonly explored in social geographical studies, in the areas of youth delinquency, crime, drug and substance abuse rehabilitation.

The common discourses of youth subcultural identity, development, class, gender and race are heavily influenced by South Africa's socio-political context. Proposing a context specific framework for designing South African youth spaces. Combining a range of separate but related factors that encourages sustainable youth culture in Wentworth. Aiming to empower the youth by utilizing existing cultural assets and pro-actively creating an environment that improves the lives of youth and greater community.

“At-risk” youth in Wentworth are affected by social, physical, and physiological challenges (Sprouse & Klitzing, 2005), which will be identified and responded to through analysing previous theoretical research and interpreting collected experiential data. Formulating an architectural design response that works with modern youth development programs for this specific context.

Wentworth has proven great potential in recreational interests and accomplishments in the form of local sporting icons, art club achievements and community empowering recreational events. The identity of this community can be easily recognized by its affinity for sport and art (Desai, 2017). Disadvantaged townships such as Wentworth, are centred on existing informal public nodes such as sports grounds, streets and informal social spaces. There's an opportunity for this culture to be explored architecturally.

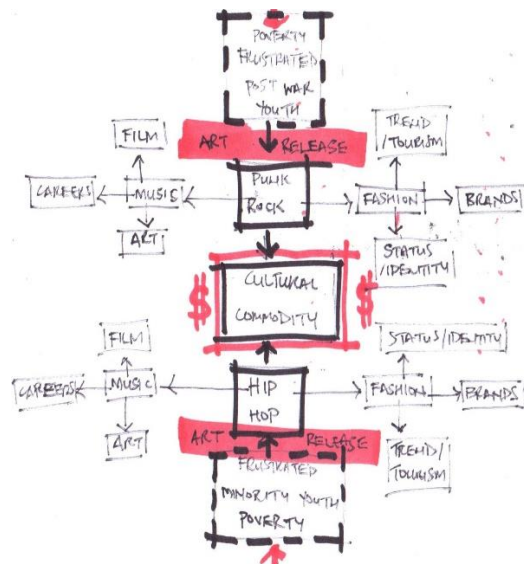
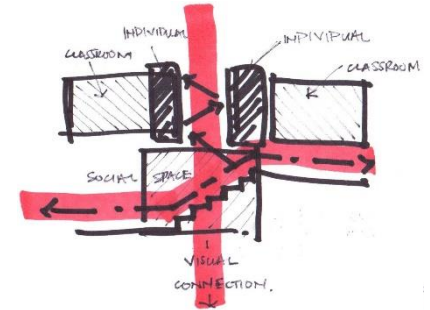
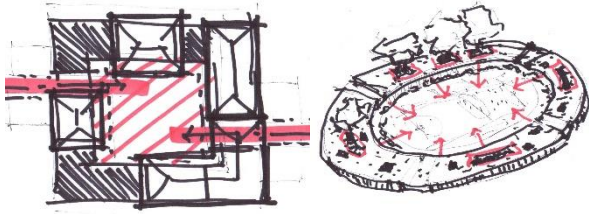


### 3.0 Theoretical and Conceptual Background:

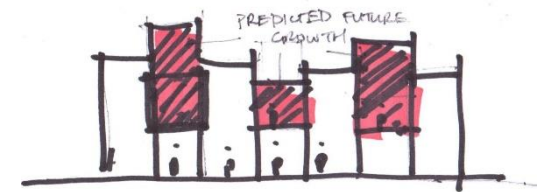
#### CULTURE THEORY AND 'YOUTH CULTURE':

**Culture Theory** is a broad field of research incorporating all aspects of human behaviour, social practices, history, art, ritual, religion, and technology found in society. Hegel states an understanding of culture is imperative for sustainable urbanisation (Marques, 2015). This philosophy is concurred through analysis of the built environment and human behaviour from function and form of the urban fabric and architectural patterns (Rapoport, 1969). Modern architects such as Hertzberger (1991) and Tezuka (Gregory, 2007) use this philosophy to design youth spaces.

Hertzberger uses concepts of the social and introverted individual to provide holistic spaces for youth development in school environments (Hertzberger, 1991). Tezuka reinterprets Japanese Edo period courtyard form to design culturally relevant learning environments for kindergarten youth (Gregory, 2007). Aravena uses co-operative planning to gain cultural understanding in disadvantaged community housing, providing empowering spaces and shaping the future development of the urban environments (Watkins, 2014). Critical in producing efficient public spaces amidst our post-apartheid South African context (Narunsky-Laden, 2008).

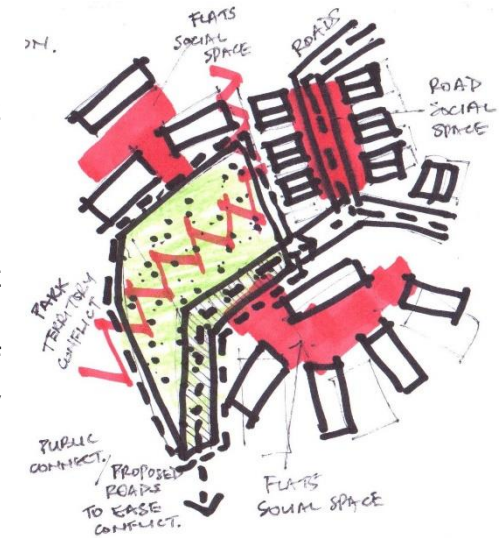


**Youth culture** refers to the presence of a sub-culture autonomous of collective community culture, describing youth interest, values, practices and lifestyle. This concept is explained from contrasting perspectives (O'Connor, 2004), proving the presence of a culture that responds to the discourses of youth in society such as class segregation, identity crisis, independence pursuit, and cultural expectation. O'Connor highlights the opportunity for establishing **cultural capital**, using 'punk rock' culture as an example that provided economic cultural commodity, status and self-identity for inundated post WW2 middleclass youth (Navarro, 2006). This idea can trade cultural commodity with other youth centres in various sporting, artistic and entrepreneurial talents and skills of youth in Wentworth. This proposes permanent **opportunity and diversity** in the youth centre. Uplifting the socio-economic identity of local youth, rooted in the permanent progression of sustainable youth culture in Wentworth (Brown & Lohr, 1987). Establishing a unique status, image and brand identity in an already established global youth community (Kawasaki, 1994).



## EMPOWERMENT THEORY AND 'PROACTIVE DESIGN':

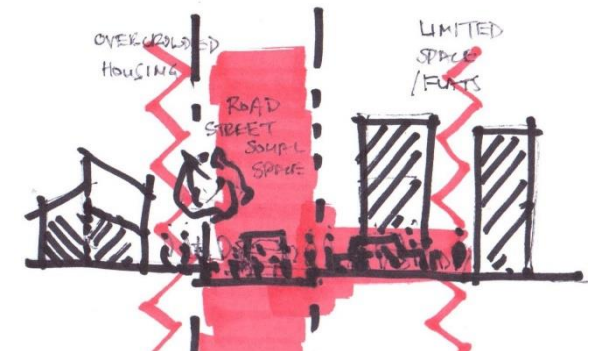
**Empowerment theory** is a broad theory exploring community's social, economic, infrastructural, and well-being self-sustaining capabilities. Zimmerman (1992), Warschausky and Rappaport (1984) describe empowerment as the **orientation and theory** for working in the community, understanding process and outcome (Zimmerman, 2000). Architecture of empowerment emphasizes the process and philosophy of managing development, such as scope, modification and processes of architecture in order to **address the specific needs of the poor in communities** (Serageldin, 1997). Dealing with various methods of stakeholder collaboration, from concept design through to construction to achieve specific community goals. Gardner (2015), Robinson (2010), Leadbeater (2010) and Freire (2015) suggest interesting concepts in dealing with development of disadvantaged youth, through fun-first, discovery and practically orientated learning models. Allowing youth to engage in programs that place **economic, skills and cognitive gain as a priority**. Empowering the community through the youth.



**Proactive** behaviour involves acting in advance of future situations, requiring control strategy and outcome determination. This concept was explored as an early psychological concept to describe a person who took responsibility for his or her life, despite existing circumstances (Frankl, 1946). In the design of youth spaces, proactive design refers to the **program and functionality** of architecture to meet the desired goal (Farell Review, 2015). Co-operative, intelligent, and sustainable architectural design notions defined as "proactive" seek to combine **local resources, technology and environmental context** to achieve desired outcomes (Almusaed et al, 2006).

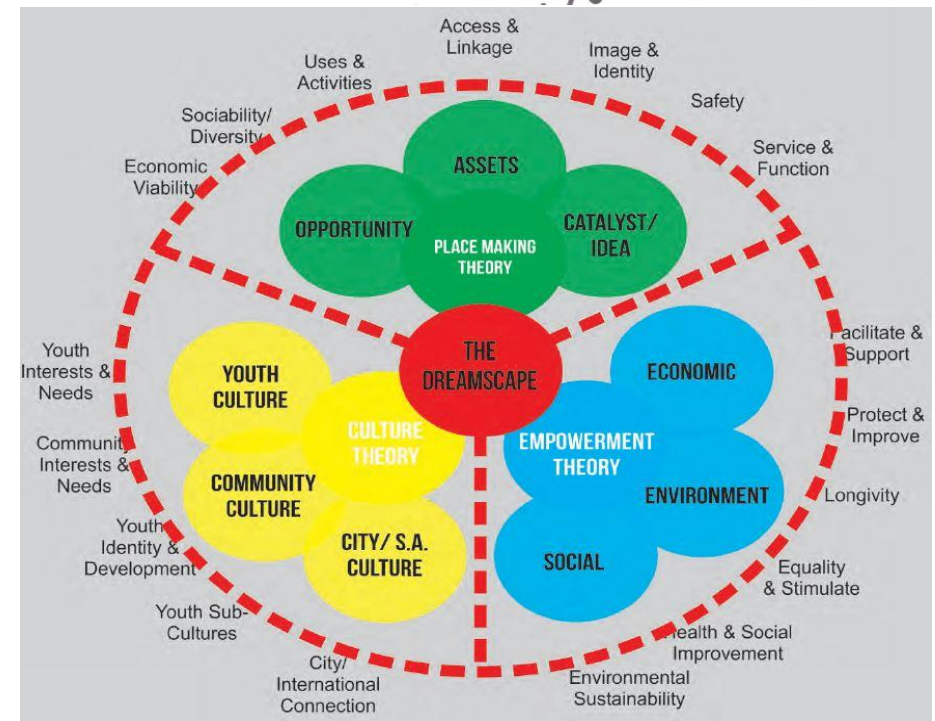
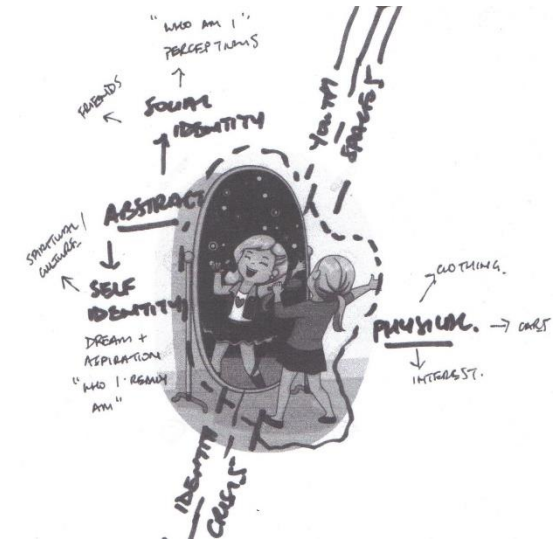
## PLACE MAKING THEORY AND 'THE DREAMSCAPE':

Lefebvre defines space by its social, political, and contextual identity. Defining space as both physical and abstract (Lefebvre, 1991). Jacobs (1965) and Gehl (2010) define place making theory as a both a **process and philosophy of planning, designing and managing public spaces to capitalize on local community assets**. Incorporating metaphysical notions of place attachment, identity, and sense of place (Najafi & Shariff, 2011). Place making is practiced through specific processes of designing public spaces combined from various contributing place making principles (PPS, 2017). In the context of this research place making theory will be referred to as a complete model with attention given to using these principles



and capturing the identity of the space. Markusen & Gadwa (2010) state place making for socially uplifting development must be centred on goal driven ideas. Proactive **short-term need driven interventions** that catalyse **long-term urban change**.

**Dreamscape** is a compound word made up of the stems dream and landscape meaning a fantasy world. This combined concept will represent the **physical and abstract production of space** required of youth spaces. The combined philosophies of Lacan (Menard, 2012), Soja (1996), Foucault (1984) and Derrida (Leach, 1997) prove this necessary in understanding the **conflicted presence of youth**. Surrealist art, deconstructive architecture (dematerialisation) and late Brazilian modernist art represent a physical metaphor of dreamcapping (Cardona, 2007). All of which represent an **avant-garde** interrogation of cultural norms, imagery, identity and functionality of architecture and art (Brown et al, 2006).



## 4.0 Research Aims & Objectives:

### DELINEATING THE PROBLEM

Existing popular youth social spaces in Wentworth consists of streets, flats and abandoned building spaces due to the social and physical attachment in relation to surrounding living spaces. Existing Open parks & public infrastructure in the area are not safe for youth recreation due to isolation and exposure to dangerous social elements.

Recreation facilities in Wentworth do not respond to the needs of youth and contextual elements. Therefore there's a need for context specific public space.

### AIM

To cultivate a **sustainable** youth culture.

Lasting and resilient

Progressive and contextually

### OBJECTIVES

To establish a **hub** for youth **cultural expression**.

Destination and satellite point for local of local youth culture

To establish a place of **refuge**.

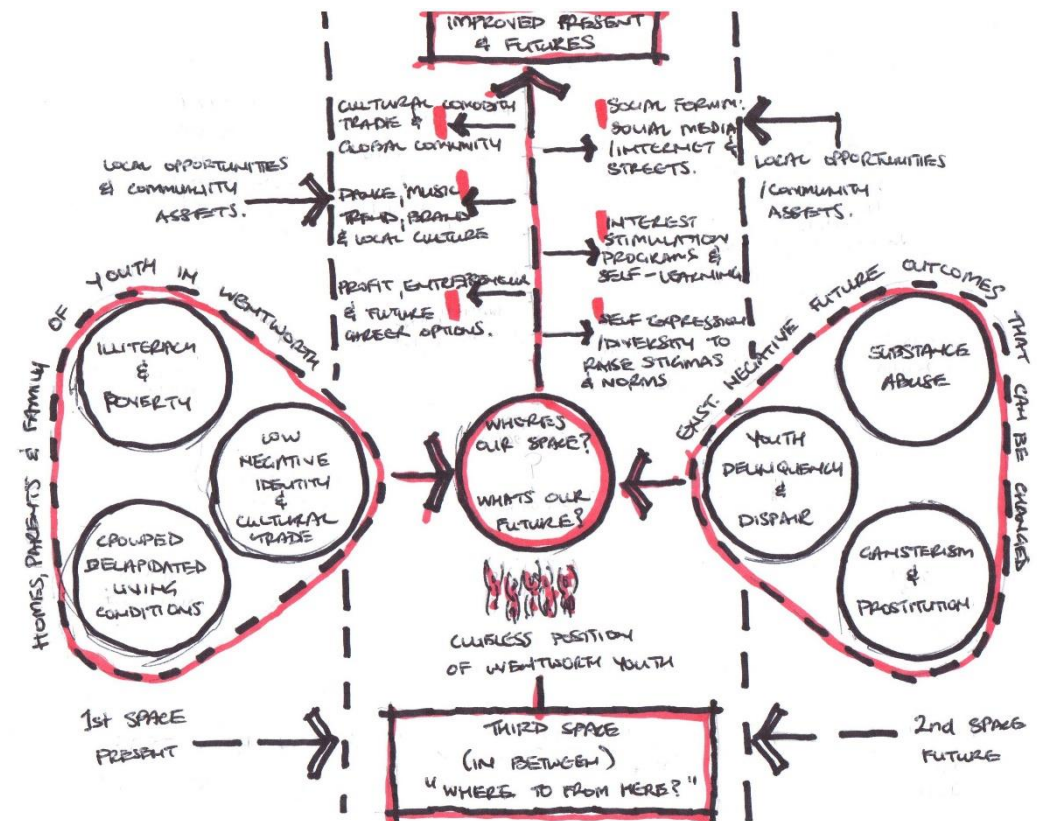
Place of safety & security

Escape from daily difficulties & realities

To establish a **gateway** of opportunity & upliftment.

Means of improving life & inspiration

Connection to global youth community & support programs





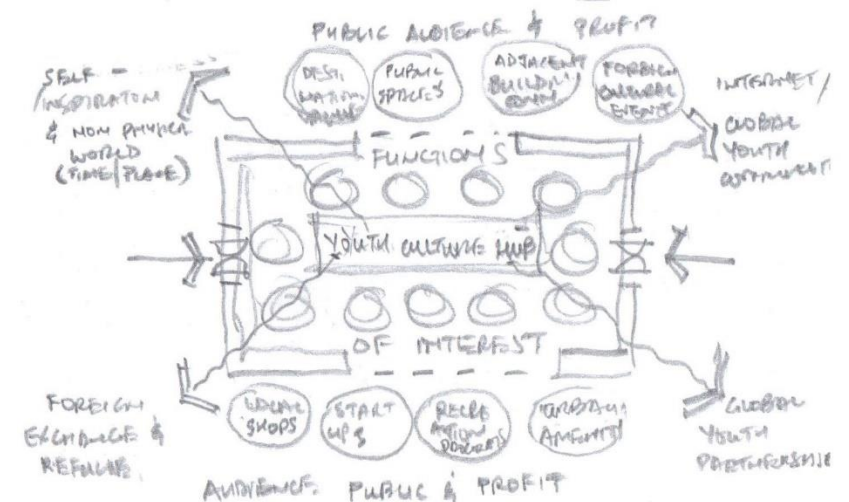
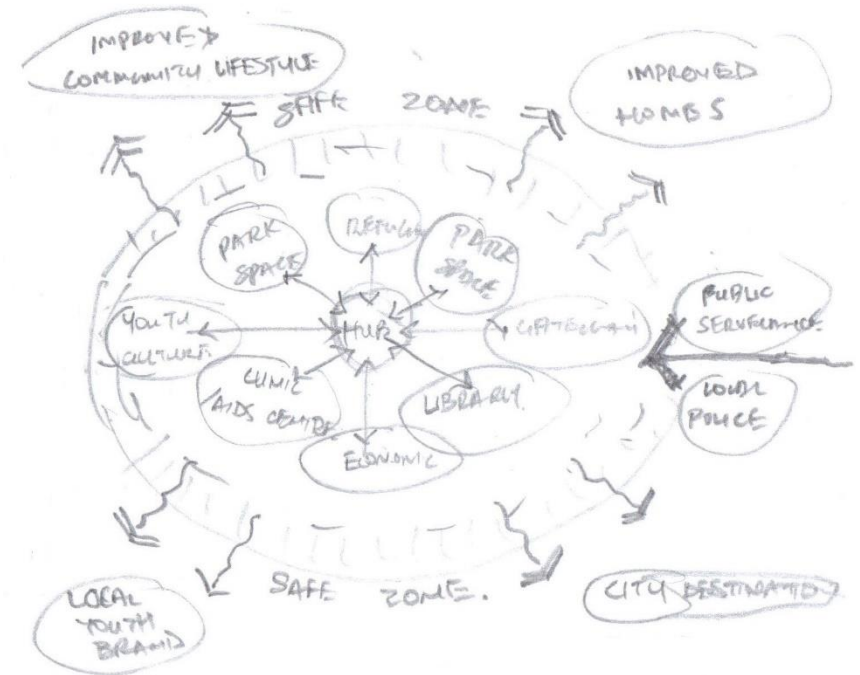
## 5.0 Design Brief:

### URBAN INTERVENTION

The urban proposal must uphold the primary research objectives to establish a hub for youth cultural expression, refuge and establish a gateway of opportunity. The urban fabric of Wentworth characteristically consists of densely populated social housing and residential typologies with popular informal community forums in streets, front yards and recreational park spaces. The urban master plan should seek to harness this inclusive community potential to promote social change by defensible safe zoned public spaces around the proposed precinct. The urban spaces that surround the youth centre should extend interior youth centre spaces and functions forming a complementing relationship between the program of the youth centre and park precinct. The site should be well located and supported by surrounding public infrastructure to promote economic and functional sustainability required of public spaces. Adjacent infrastructure should enhance the functioning of proposed spaces and the new interventions should add value to the existing infrastructure. Drawing principles from empowerment, place-making and culture theories and related concepts.

### ARCHITECTURAL INTERVENTION

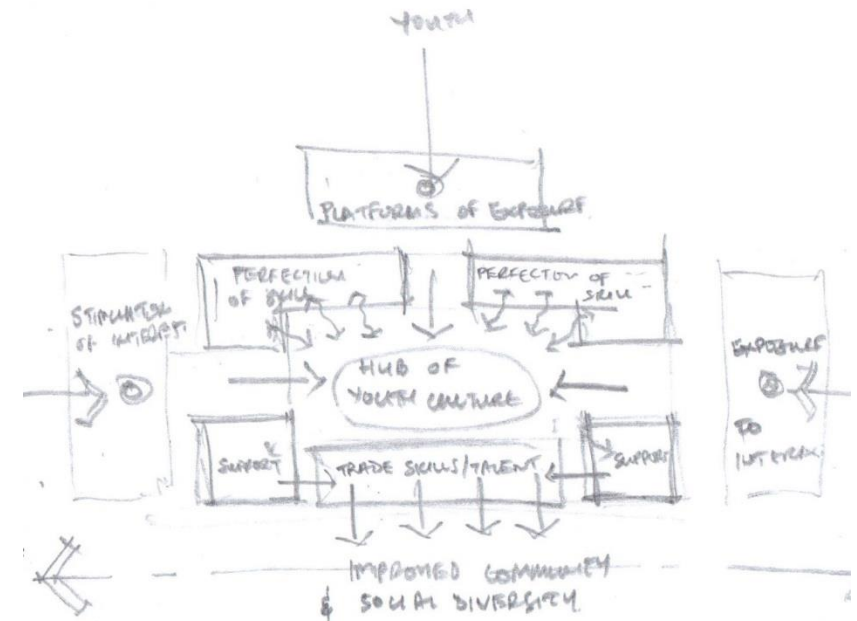
The design of the building should be based on a combined concept of proactive design strategy, dreamscaping and youth culture stimulation. The idea is the building becomes a gateway to the world and place of opportunity for the inundated youth. Opportunity and youth development should be based on the specific needs challenges and strengths facing the youth in the community. Embracing this unique character, should aim to develop a cultural commodity that can be traded as a means of economic gain to change their lives. It should be a place for youth expression, refuge and inspiration. The programs facilitated in the centre must aim to address the specifics challenges of youth in the area some of which are substance



abuse, gangsterism, teen pregnancy, school dropout, poverty, neglect, abuse, gender discourses and hopelessness. The architecture should be responsive to the architectural fabric of the area responding to the materials and architectural language existing in the area. Community infrastructure in the area should strive to develop an architectural language that can form part of a built identity that adds destination value to Wentworth. The tectonics should respond sustainably to the skills available in the community as well as environmental challenges of sustainability, use and sculptural representation of the youth in the community.

### SOCIAL INTERVENTION

The social culture of Wentworth consists is of a very conservative community closely related through living in close proximity with each other as well as isolation the greater Durban context. The youth centre should act as a gateway for youth in the area to be exposed to diverse opportunities and culture. The cultural commodity of Wentworth and skills of the youth must form the basis of programs that are run in the centre, allowing for future career opportunities through exploring local interests in sports, the arts and entrepreneurship. Allowing the youth centre to be used as a canvas for youth to map out their desired future trajectory, regardless of cultural norm and living realities. The building should become the drug and place of refuge to promote a social culture of progression, excitement and ambition amongst youth. Connecting them to far beyond destinations and time through the ability to dream of their desire futures and work towards active life realities.



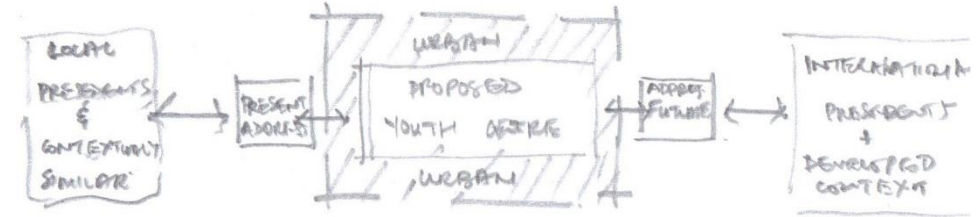
## SCHEDULE OF ACCOMODATION:

URBAN SPACE:		GROUND FLOOR PLAN:		FIRST FLOOR PLAN:	
OUTDOOR TURF/ CONCERT VENUE	1400m <sup>2</sup>	ENTRANCE FOYER	180m <sup>2</sup>	SOCIAL STEPPED PAVILLION	
POLICING SAFE-ZONE SATELLITES	30m <sup>2</sup>	RECEPTION	150m <sup>2</sup>	STUDIO ROOF CORRIDOR	126m <sup>2</sup>
STREET AUDITORIUM	555m <sup>2</sup>	EXISTING WELLNESS/ AIDS CLINIC		SOCIAL ROOF RECREATION SPACE	950m <sup>2</sup>
URBAN PLAZAS	1872m <sup>2</sup>	STREET AUDITORIUM		YOUTH BACKPACKERS HOSTEL	590m <sup>2</sup>
EXISTING LANDSCAPED PARK		ABLUTIONS	75m <sup>2</sup>	DIGITAL, GAMING, FILM & PHOTOGRAPHY STUDIOS	225m <sup>2</sup>
ADJACENT URBAN NODES		CAFFETERIA	225m <sup>2</sup>	RADIO & MUSIC RECORDING STUDIO	75m <sup>2</sup>
		SPORTS/ CONCERTS ARENA & PARK OFFICES	55m <sup>2</sup>	INDOOR MULTI USE STUDIOS	230m <sup>2</sup>
<b>BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN:</b>		SPORTS/ CONCERTS ARENA SEATING	460m <sup>2</sup>	OPEN-AIR STUDIO COURTYARDS	175m <sup>2</sup>
PARKING RAMP	440m <sup>2</sup>	GALLERY EXHIBITION	190m <sup>2</sup>	ROOF CIRCULATION CORE	140m <sup>2</sup>
TENANT PARKING (23 BAYS)	710m <sup>2</sup>	GALLERY STORAGE	25m <sup>2</sup>	SEATING POCKET SPACES	50m <sup>2</sup>
AC/ ELECTRICAL ROOM	23m <sup>2</sup>	BOX OFFICE	25m <sup>2</sup>	ADMINISTRATION OFFICES	125m <sup>2</sup>
BINS/ DELIVERY AREA	13m <sup>2</sup>	YOUTH SHOPS	260m <sup>2</sup>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2700m<sup>2</sup></b>
CIRCULATION CORE	175m <sup>2</sup>	SOCIAL STEPPED PAVILION	75m <sup>2</sup>	<b>ROOF GARDEN PLAN:</b>	
AUDITORIUM STAGE	75m <sup>2</sup>	CIRCULATION CORE	175m <sup>2</sup>		
AUDITORIUM STORAGE	25m <sup>2</sup>	MEZZANINE COURTYARD	225m <sup>2</sup>	PLANTED ROOF GARDEN	245m <sup>2</sup>
AUDITORIUM CONTROL ROOM	6m <sup>2</sup>	EXISTING REPOSITIONED SHOPS	350m <sup>2</sup>	ROOF COURTYARD	55m <sup>2</sup>
MAINTENANCE & PUMP ROOM	50m <sup>2</sup>	PARK SPORTS CAFE	200m <sup>2</sup>	CIRCULATION CORE	220m <sup>2</sup>
WATER HARVESTING TANKS	280m <sup>2</sup>	RESTAURANT	263m <sup>2</sup>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>520m<sup>2</sup></b>
STORAGE	110m <sup>2</sup>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2930m<sup>2</sup></b>		
MULTI USE HALL VENUE	600m <sup>2</sup>			<b>TOTAL FLOOR AREA</b>	<b>10485m<sup>2</sup></b>
MULTI USE HALL OFFICES	40m <sup>2</sup>			<b>TOTAL COVERAGE</b>	<b>4350m<sup>2</sup></b>
ABLUTIONS	130m <sup>2</sup>				
VISITORS PARKING (45 BAYS)	1080m <sup>2</sup>				
VISITORS CIRCULATION CORE	63m <sup>2</sup>				
SECURITY OFFICE	40m <sup>2</sup>				
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4335m<sup>2</sup></b>				

## 6.0 Case Studies:

### CASE STUDY EXPLORATION STRATEGY

The youth centres in this study will be analysed firstly by similarity, in social, economic and urban challenges. Secondly to global youth culture and the rapidly developing future urban context. Exploring the relevance of the youth centre in the digital age.



### RESPONSE TO THE LOCAL CONTEXT

Local youth centres such as the Manenberg Youth Safe- Hub (RSA), Chatsworth Youth Centre (RSA) and Alexandra Interpretation Centre (RSA) below are well rooted in the surrounding community culture. Serving much needed basic amenities to the community as a primary aim, and hub for youth culture as secondary. Due to the basic needs of the developing South African context, these buildings set a framework for urban planning, defensible spaces. Addressing the primary needs of the youth-community, practical functionality of spaces and its relation to program of the buildings. These ideas share similar principles to examples in Brazil (Guilherme, 2017). The Espaço Alana Youth Centre (Brazil) expresses the need for impactful architecture that can extend far beyond its perceived capability, servicing a large “favela” community with similar diverse challenges and very limited resources.



Figure 2- Manenberg Youth Safe- Hub (RSA) by Safe- Hub Organisation

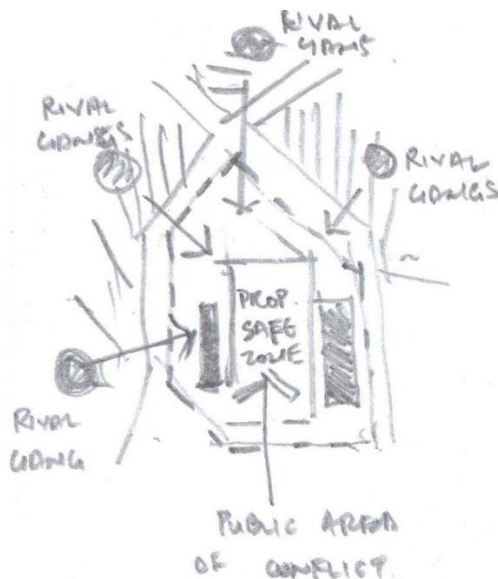


Figure 1- Chatsworth Youth Centre (RSA) by Equilibrium Architects

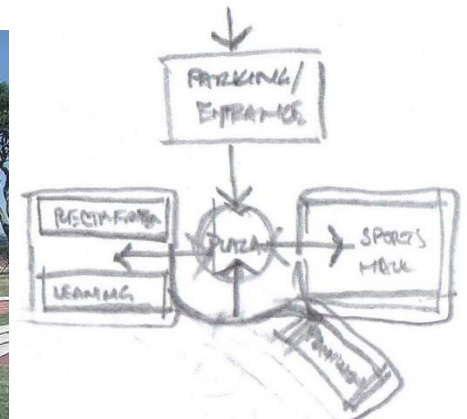




Figure 4- Alexandra Interpretation Centre (RSA) by Peter Rich Architects

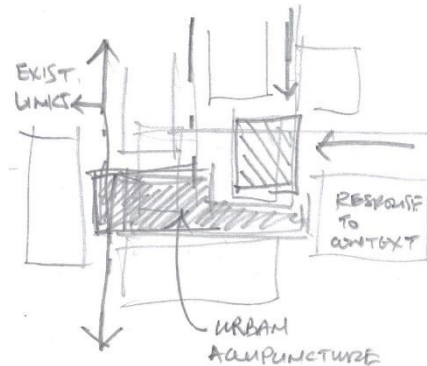


Figure 3- Espacio Alana (BRA) by Rodrigo Ohtake arquitetura e design

## THE INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE OF THE YOUTH CENTRE

The international interpretation of a youth centre represents spaces that are dynamic reflecting the vibrancy of youth culture. The Gary Comer Youth Centre (USA), responds to the western youth culture that Wentworth youth have adopted through international brand affinity. The youth centre works with territorialism, ghetto masculinities and socio-economic pressures that result in negative youth trajectory in South Side Chicago. Extending context specific programs through foreign and local administrative stakeholder support, inform concepts for designing the youth centre (GCYC, 2018). Characteristically designed around a prominent drum majorette and basketball multiuse hall. Rooting the design in the interests of youth in the community. Incorporating music and art studios supported by local colleges to ensure progression of aspiring youth.

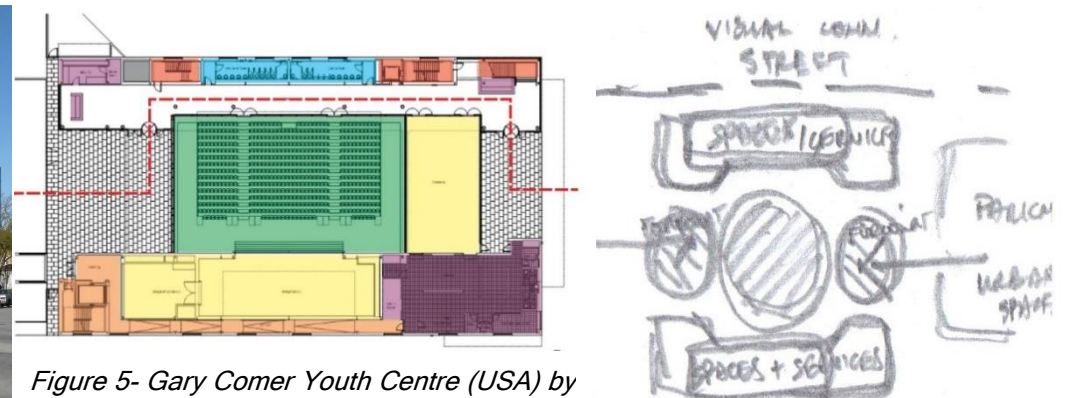
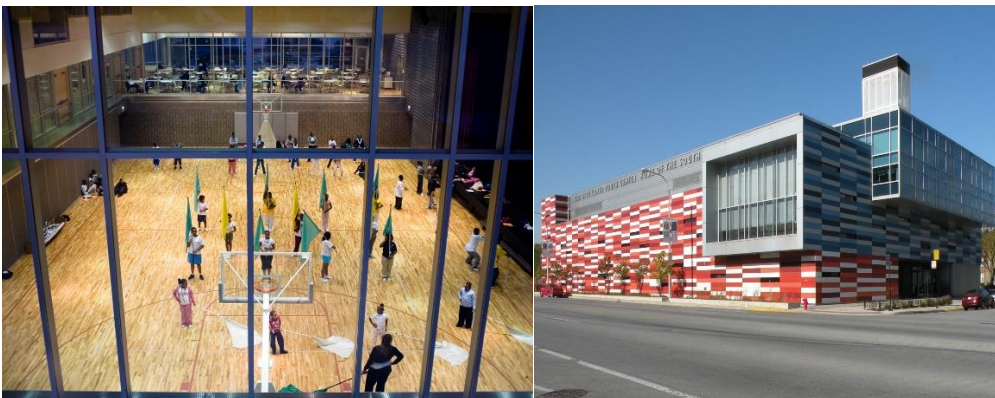


Figure 5- Gary Comer Youth Centre (USA) by John Ronan Architects

The Dynamo Youth Centre (NL), represents an advanced hybrid of the previously discussed centres. The European urban context is well facilitated with living amenities, international connectivity, and technological literacy. Usually absent in developing countries. Therefore presenting a sustainable model for addressing the complexities of youth in a later developed urban context. The youth centre acts as a hub for local youth culture stimulation, individual competencies and development programs that compliment later professional trajectories. The youth centre acts as a satellite destination for youth culture integration and international exchange, providing the potential for greater cultural diversity and economic platform in the Eindhoven city precinct (Dynamo, 2018).

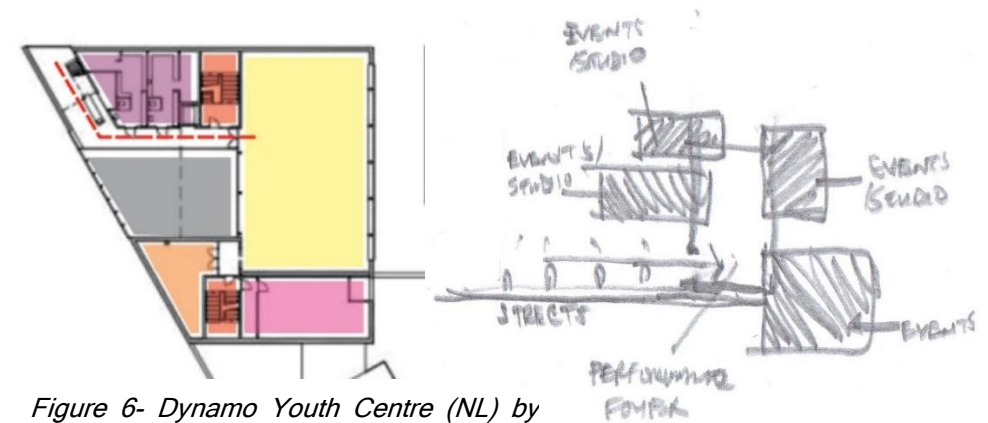


Figure 6- Dynamo Youth Centre (NL) by Diederendirix

## 7.0 Site Discussion:

### SITE SELECTION CRITERIA:

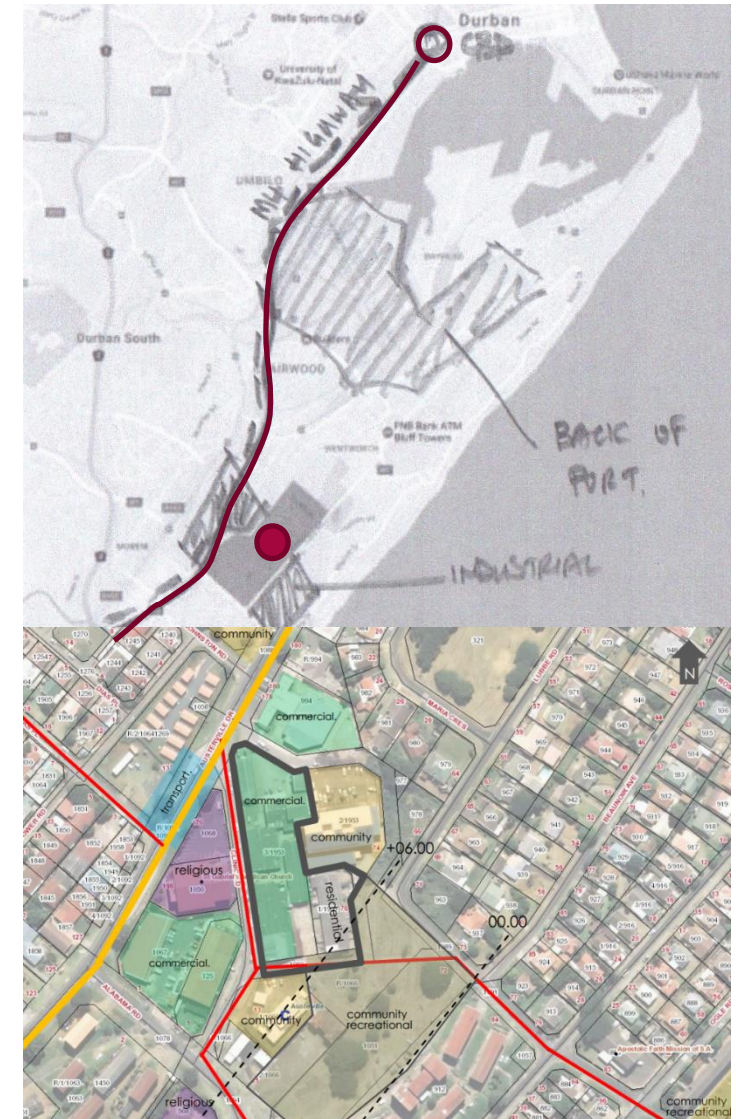
**Proximity to Transport Nodes:** The sites proximity needs to have close relation to the main urban/ city public transport nodes so that it is publicly accessible.

**Diverse Cultural & Contextual Location:** The site infrastructural context should be conducive for the design of integrated public space by central location to all cultural nodes within the community.

**Scale & Viability:** The ideal site should be big enough to accommodate a wide variety of youth recreational facilities and potential community responsive economic drivers for viability of the intervention.

**Land Use Mix:** The site should be in close proximity to zones of different urban density, socio economic classes and relation to existing youth points of collection.

**Orientation & Environmental Location:** The site location should be conducive to environmentally responsive design possibility for natural lighting, ventilation and environmental quality. To complement the aim of the research and successful use of spaces. Site topography and environmental conditions should be conducive to successful recreational spaces for youth.



SITE ANALYSIS AT MACRO SCALE

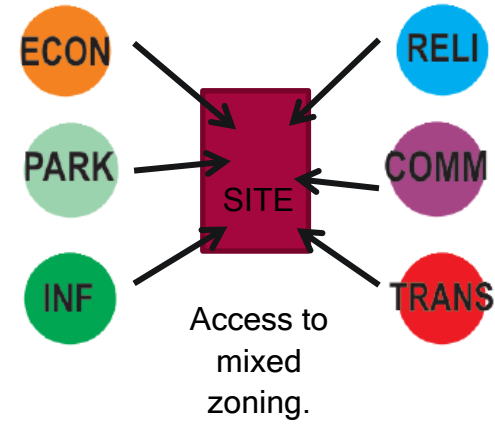
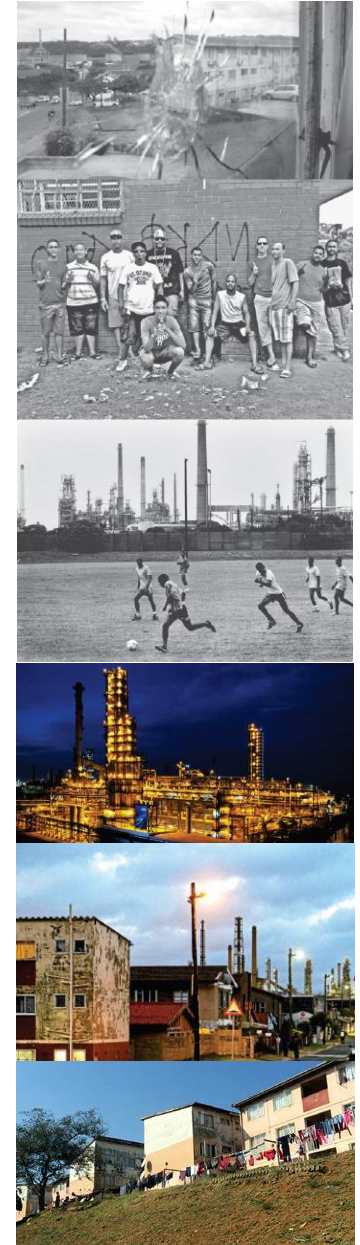
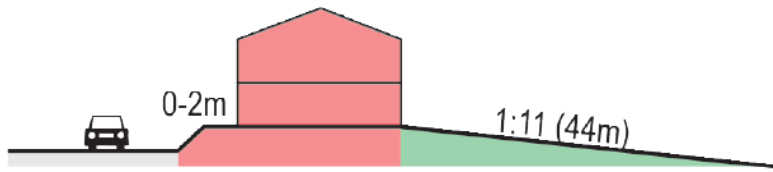


Figure 7- Urban fabric of mixed typologies/ scale (industrial vs residential)

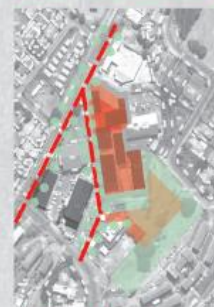




# SITE ANALYSIS AT MICRO SCALE



pedestrian friendly landscape and public spaces + self surveillance



pedestrian friendly re-use of degraded buildings & parks spaces



attention to public and private nodes & connection to neighboring buildings



attention existing function & youth-community relationships.

EXISTING STRUCTURES RETAINED

↕

SENSE OF PLACE NEW/OLD

PUBLIC SERVICE AMENITIES.

VISUAL AXIS & OPPORTUNITY FOR DESTINATION VALUE

PEDESTRIAN CONNECTION TO SOCCER GROUNDS

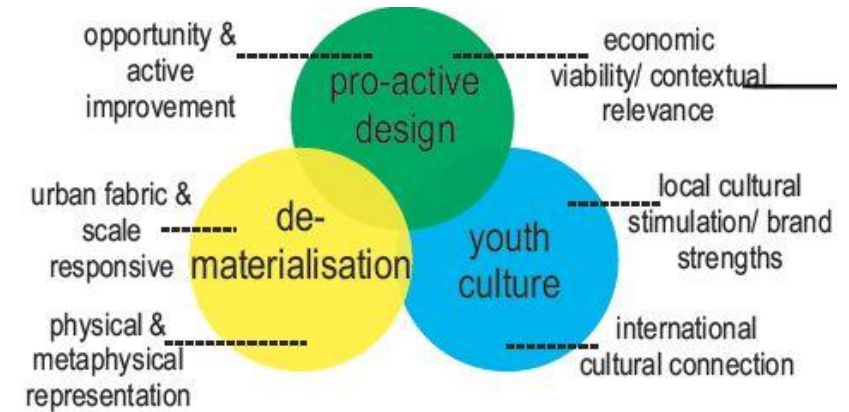
HIGH GROUND COMMUNITY BEACON & SAFETY.

## 8.0 Conceptual Development:

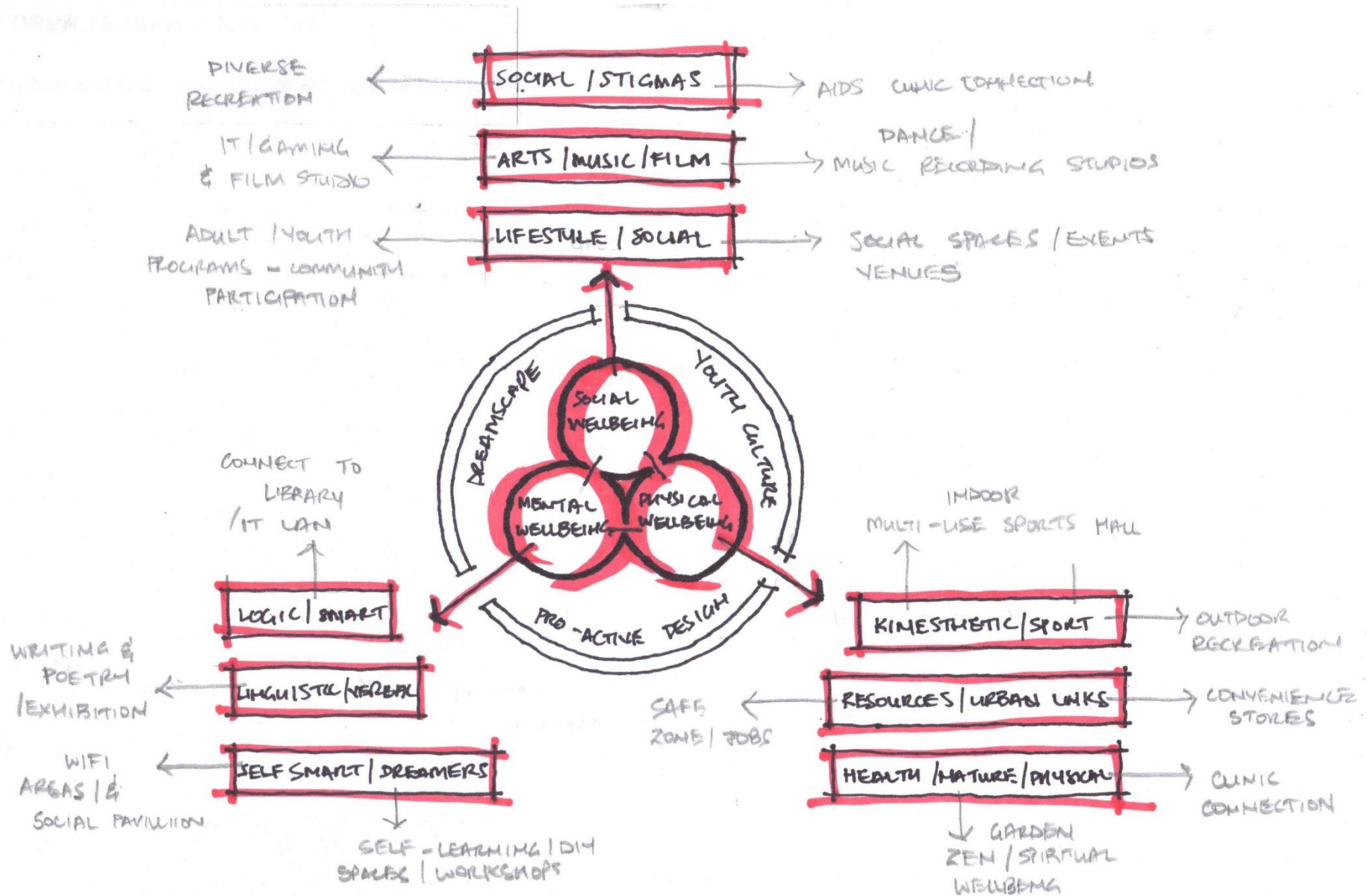
### THE DREAMSCAPE NARRATIVE:

The dreamscape metaphor describes a space that **connects youth** from all different locations around the world, functioning as an **airport of youth culture and opportunity**. Depicting a **physical and nonphysical presence**. This is proven to address physical and nonphysical public spaces challenges in such contexts. Allowing the youth centre to become the drug addressing stagnation, obsolescence, territorial possession, and negative place making. A positive **alternative to the present methods of escape** such as crime & addiction.

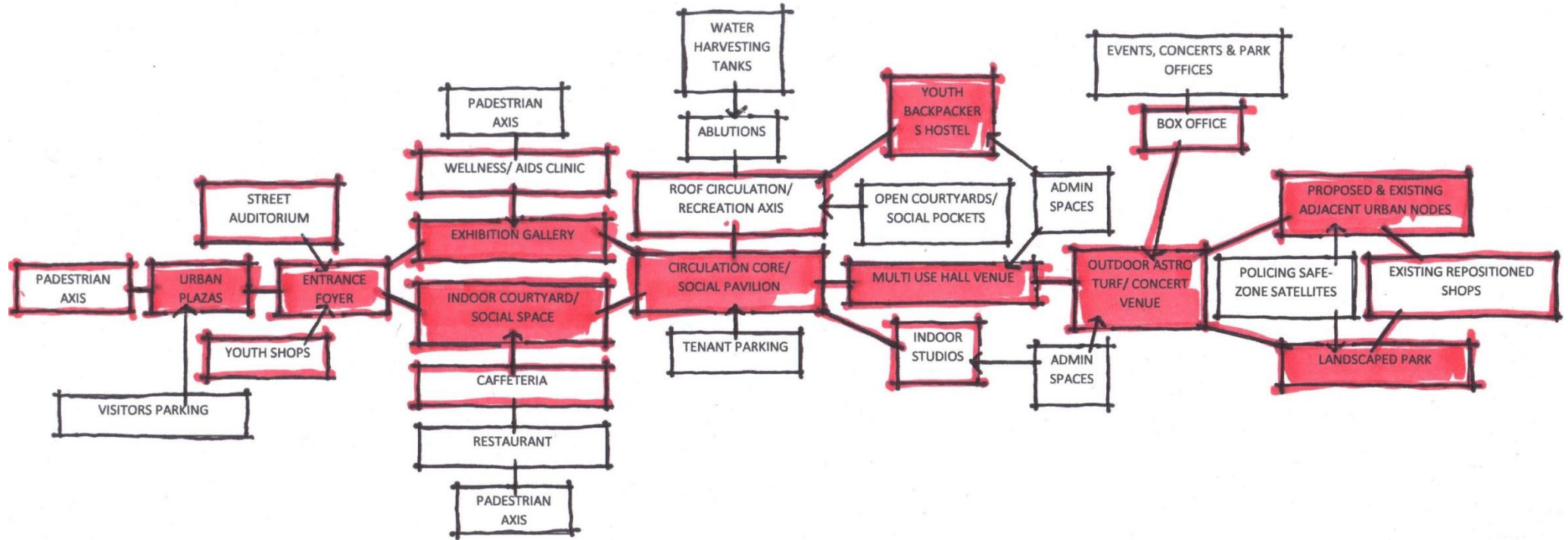
The diverse function, experience and perception of spaces around the youth centre generates an **ambitious brand** that **uplifts the youth cultural identity** in Wentworth (Adhikari, 2005). The dreamscape youth centre will be a place where youth can engage in their interests regardless of community and society expectations. Spaces will expose youth to recreational programs that sparks interests to develop **self-sufficient skills development, entrepreneurship and career trajectory** (Chari, 2008). The spaces **prioritise multi-use functionality** to facilitate and adapt to the different requirements of the youth events taking place.



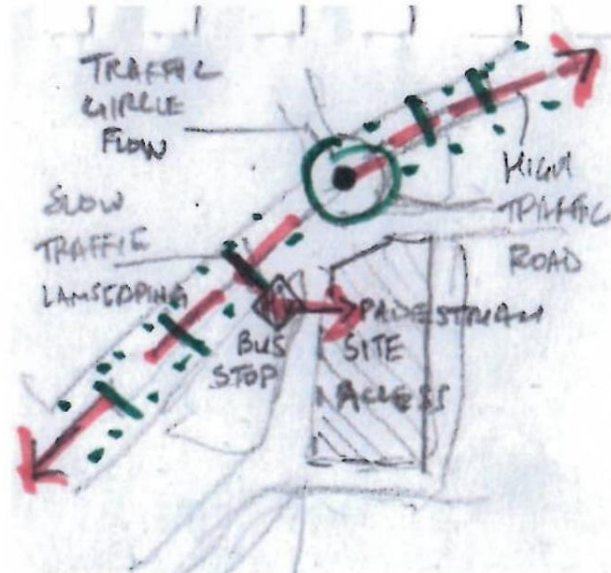
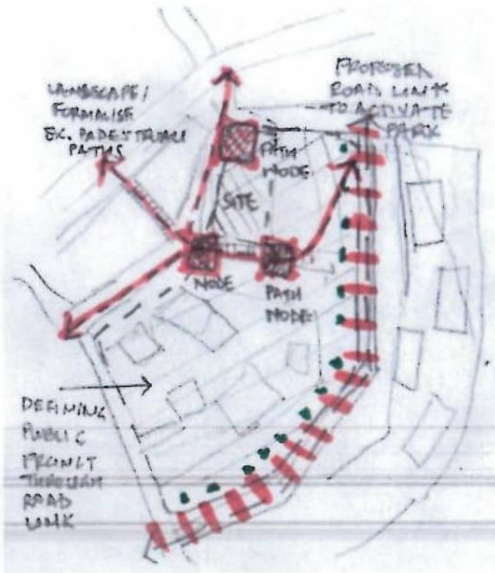
## THE DREAMSCAPE PROGRAM:



## SPACIAL RELATIONSHIPS & PLANNING ARRANGEMENT:



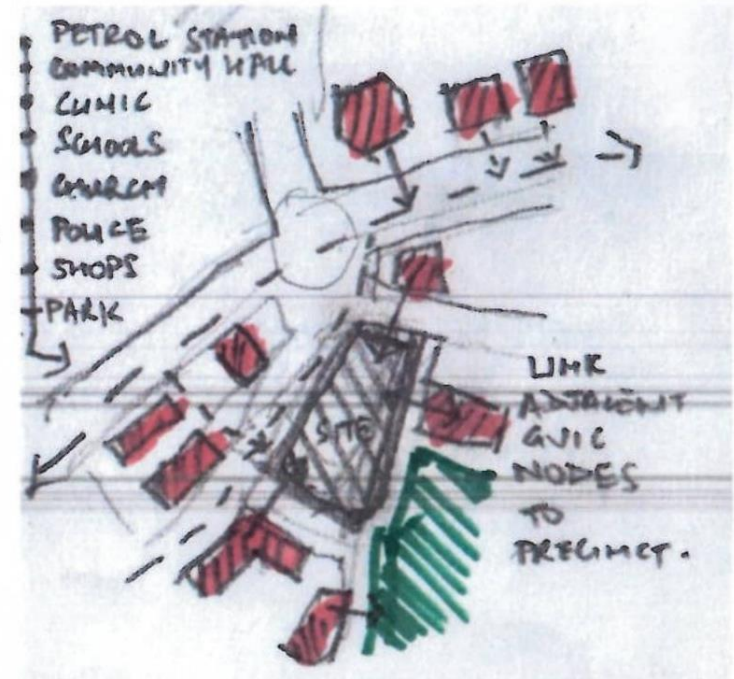
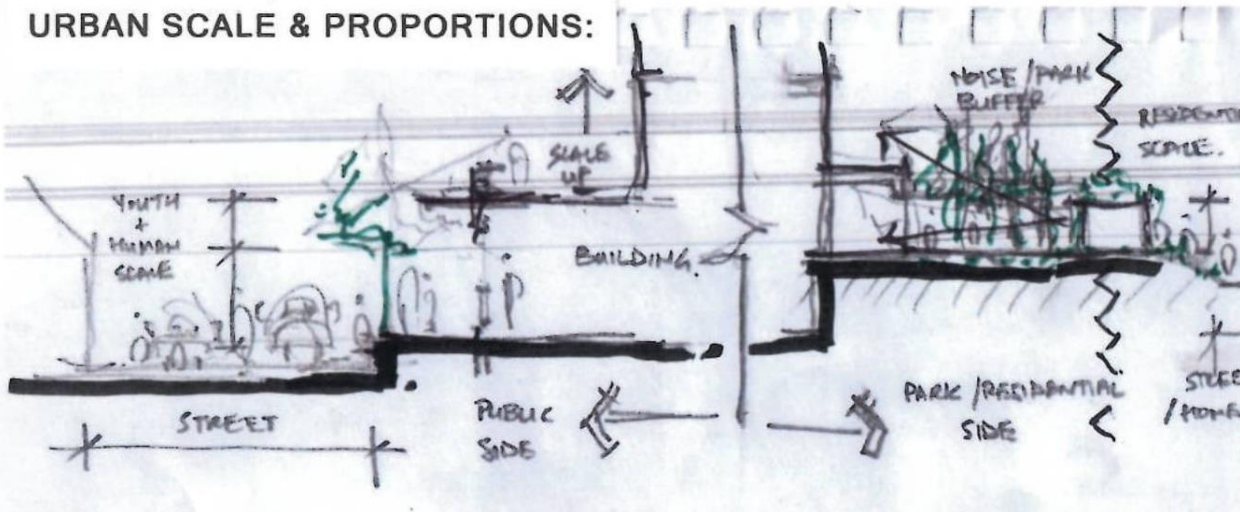
## 9.0 The Dreamscape at an Urban Scale:

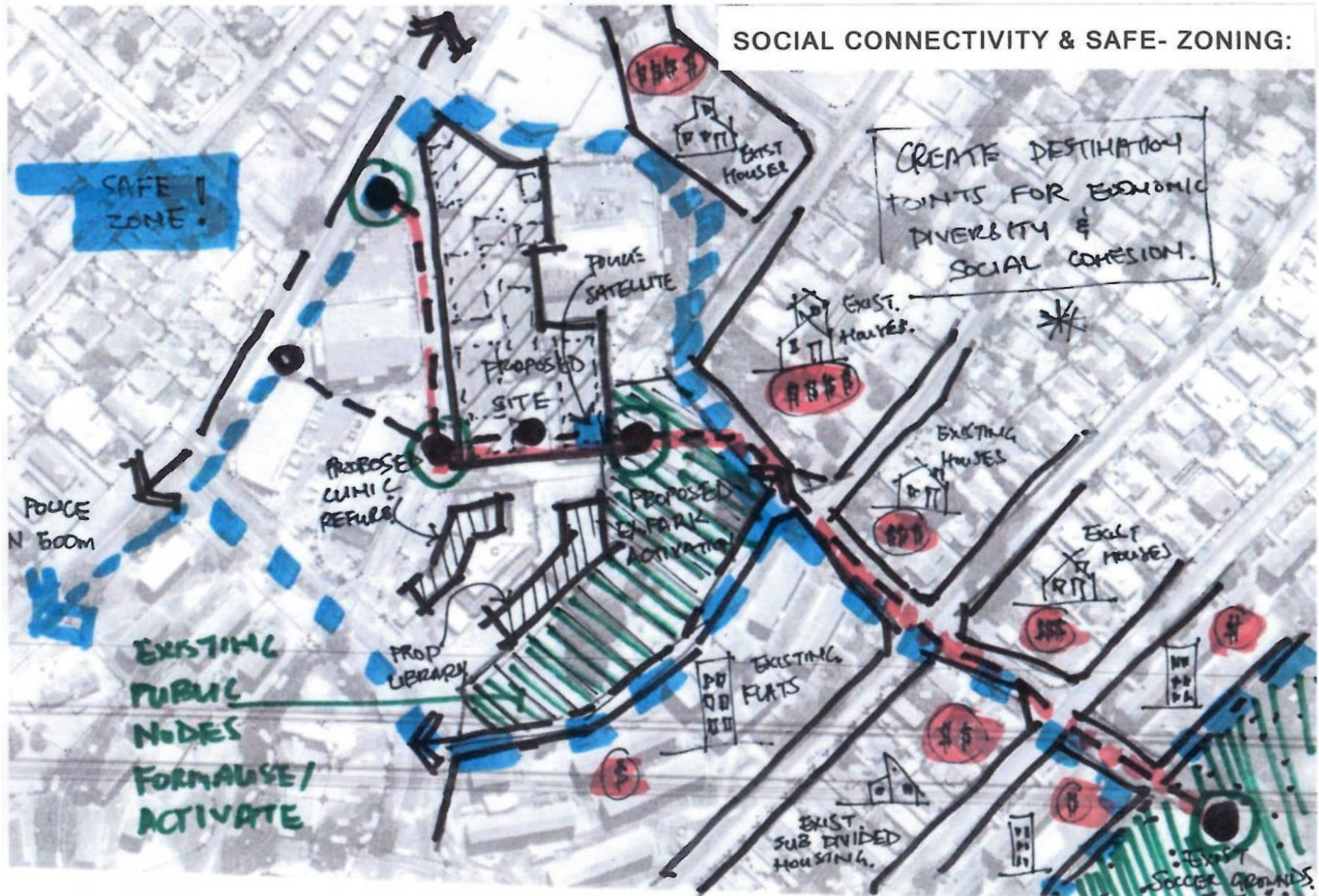


### URBAN RESPONSES & INTERVENTIONS:

### CONTEXTUAL RESPONSES:

### URBAN SCALE & PROPORTIONS:







## URBAN PLAN, CONCEPTS & PRECEDENTS:



### SITE URBAN RESPONSES

-  BUILDING AXIS
-  YOUTH MEETING SPACE (FOCAL POINTS)
-  CIRCULATION CORES
-  COMMUNITY/ STREET EMBRACING FACES
-  PUBLIC MEETING POINTS
-  PEDESTRIAN TRAFFIC ARTERIES
-  PROPOSED DEVELOPMENTS
-  PROPOSED ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE
-  PUBLIC PARK LANDSCAPING
-  PRIVATE OUTDOOR PARK AMPHITHEATER



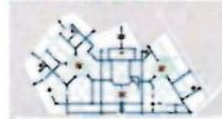
### DIVERSITY OF TYPOLOGY/ ZONING



### DIVERSITY OF PARK SPACES



### PEDESTRIANISED CONNECTIONS & DESTINATION



### PEDESTRIAN FRIENDLY STREET WALL



### RATIONALISING EXISTING PATTERN &



### EFFICIENT ROAD CONNECTIONS



### ESTABLISHMENT OF PUBLIC SPACES PLACEMAKING



### ECONOMIC VIABILITY & MIXED USES



### SUSTAINABILITY & URBAN IDENTITY



### SOCIAL CULTURE & PUBLIC SPACE MAKING



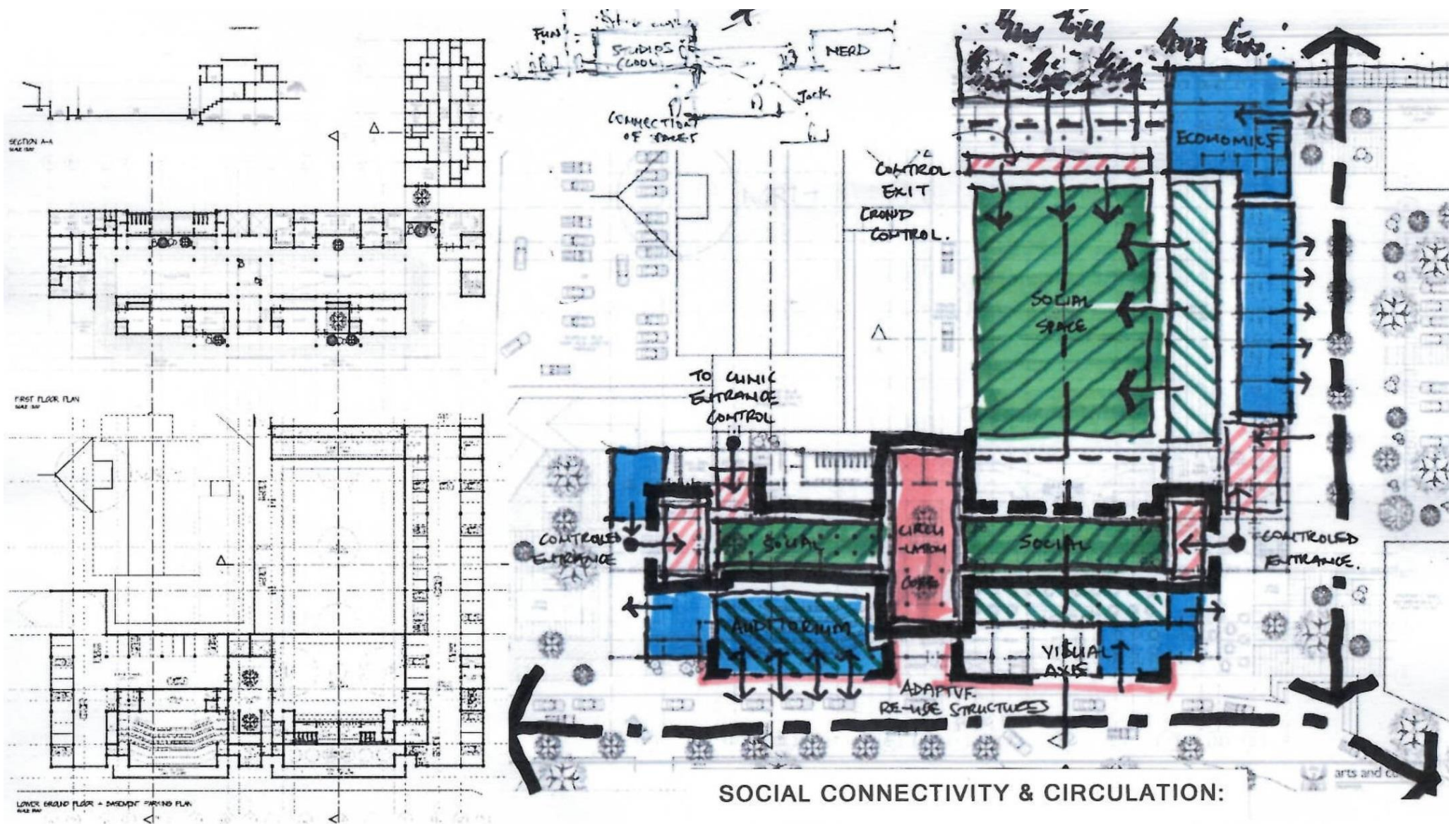
### COMMUNITY CULTURE & EMPOWERING

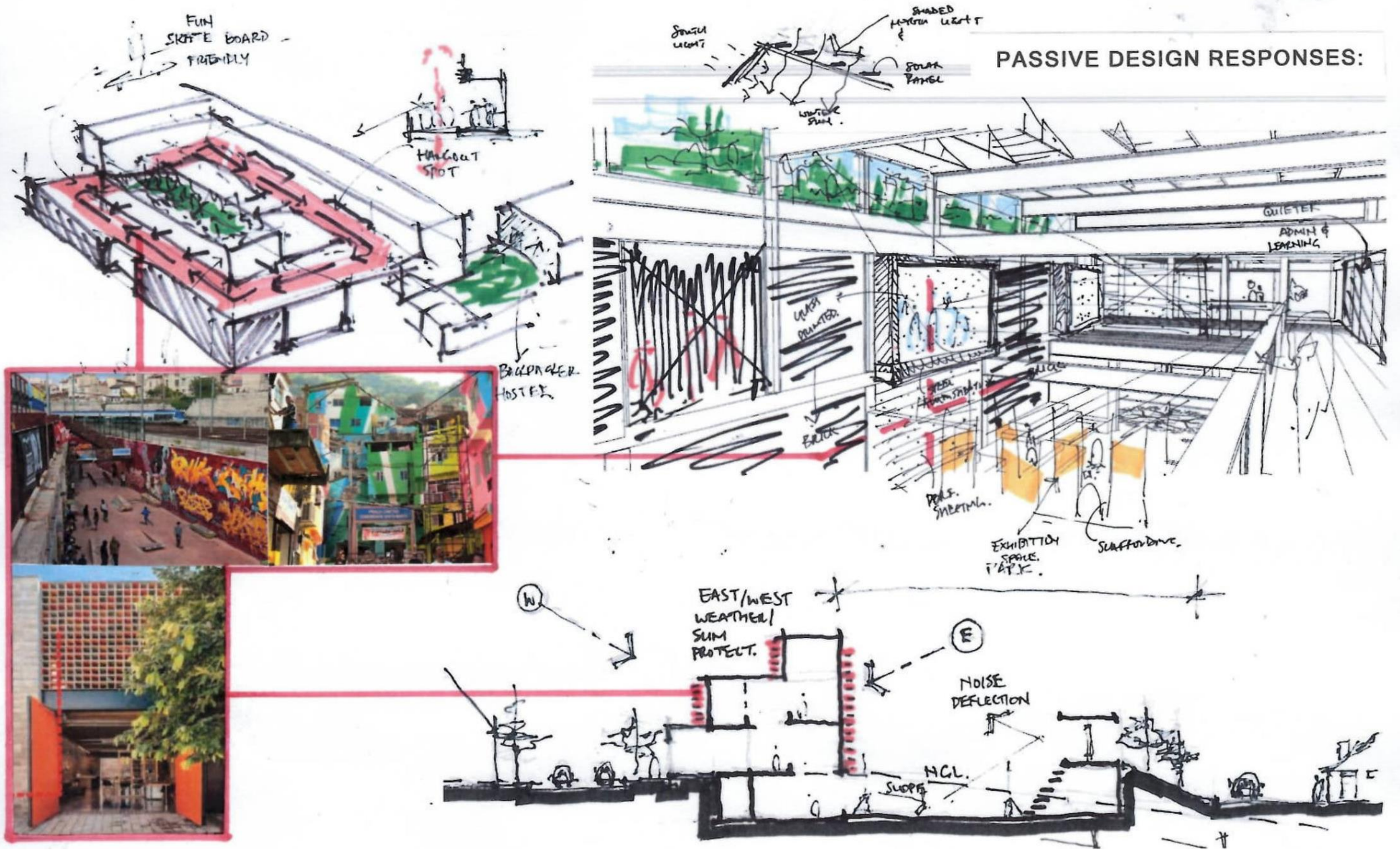


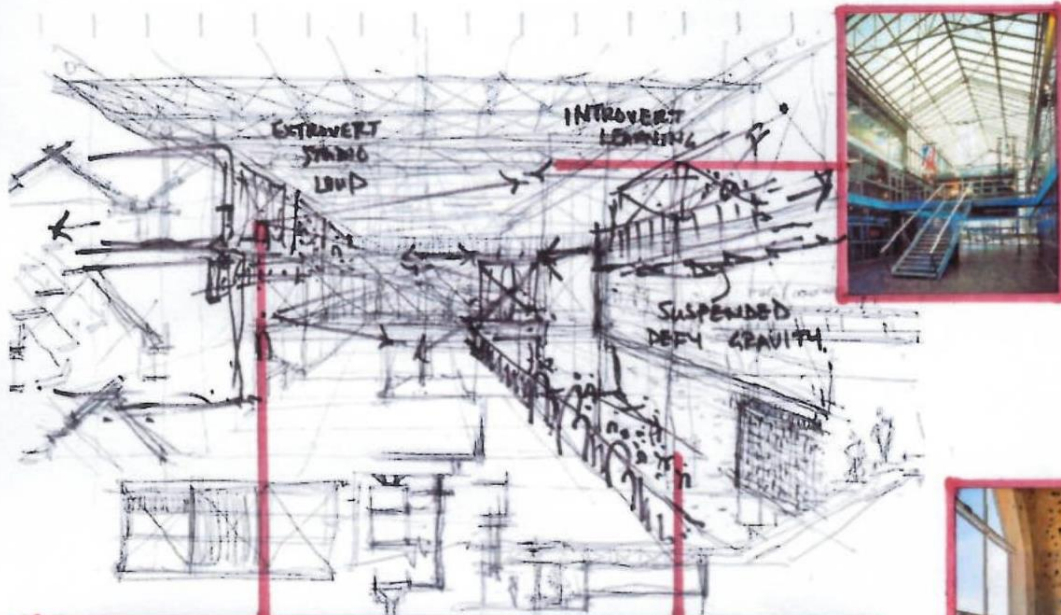
### WALKABILITY-CONNECTIVITY-DENSITY



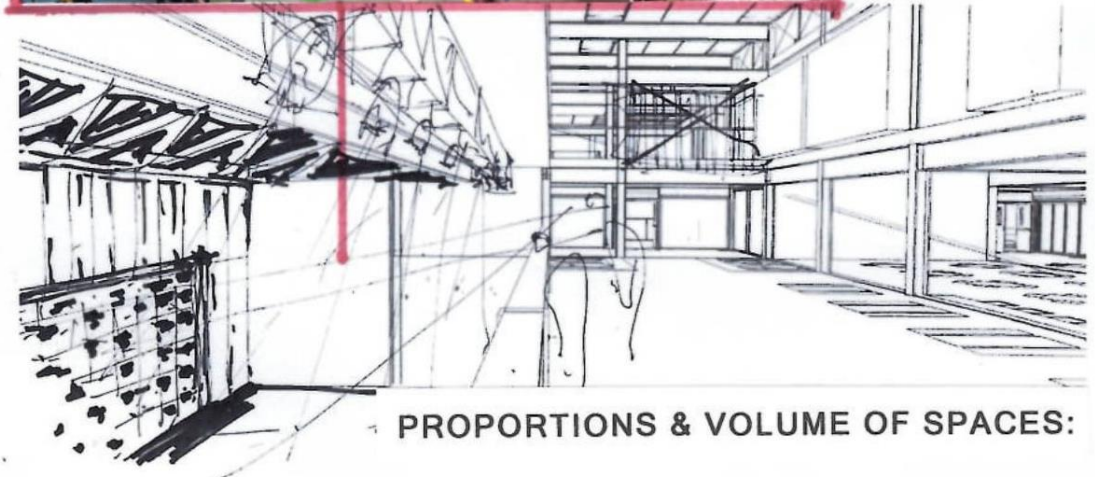
## 10.0 The Dreamscape at an Architectural Scale:



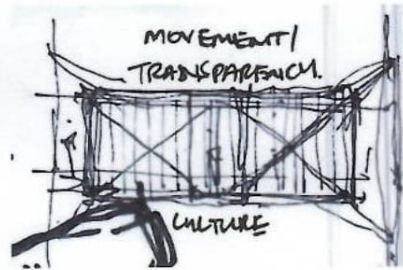
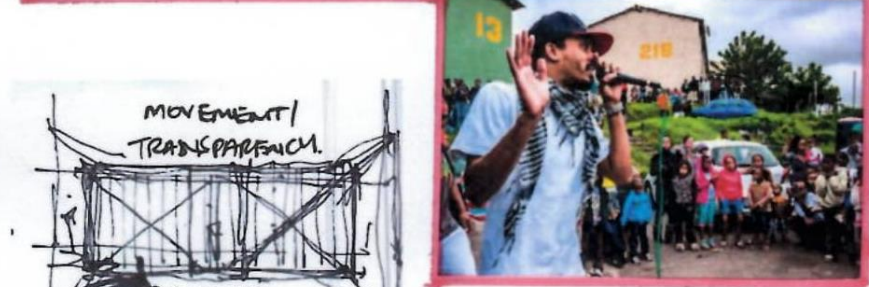


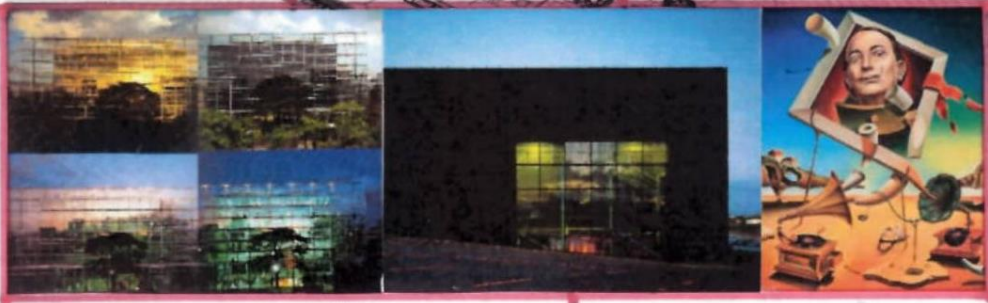
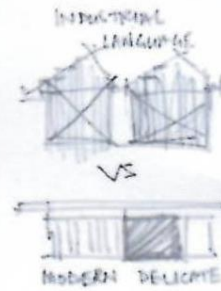


SPACIAL FUNCTION & ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY:

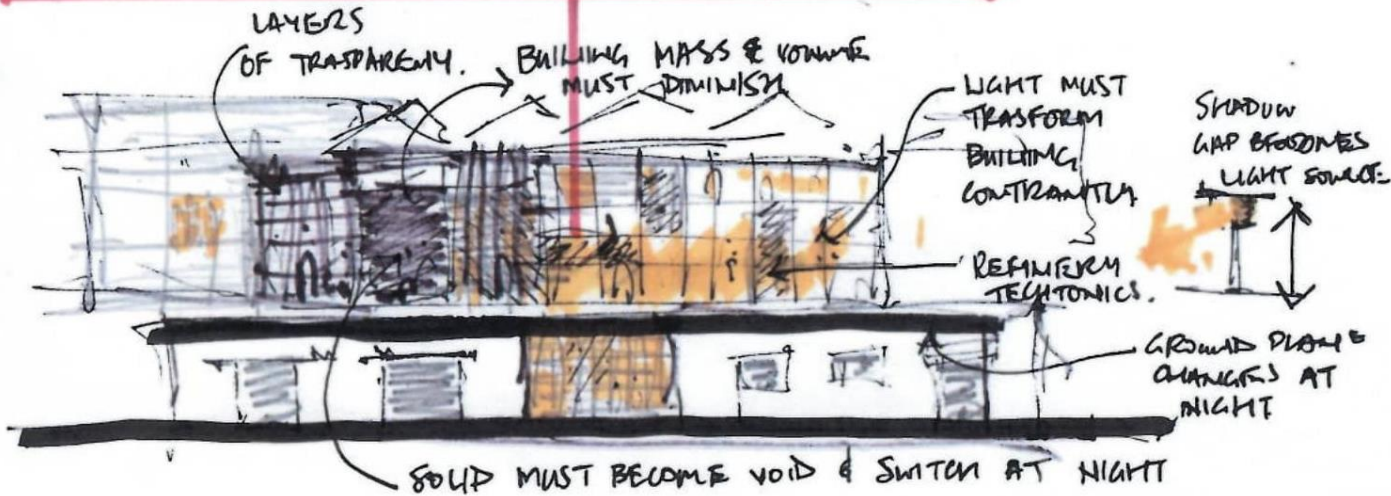


PROPORTIONS & VOLUME OF SPACES:

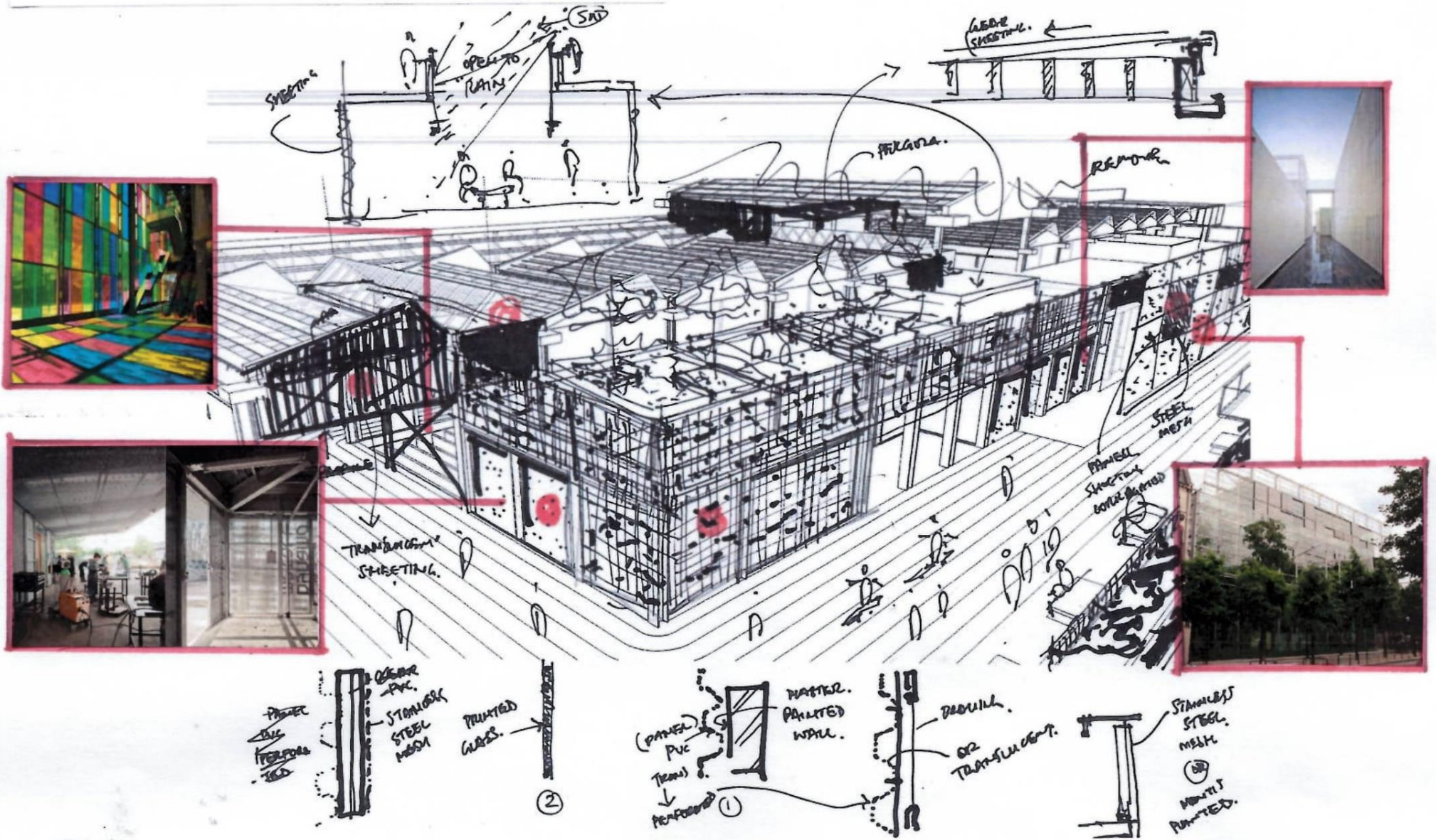


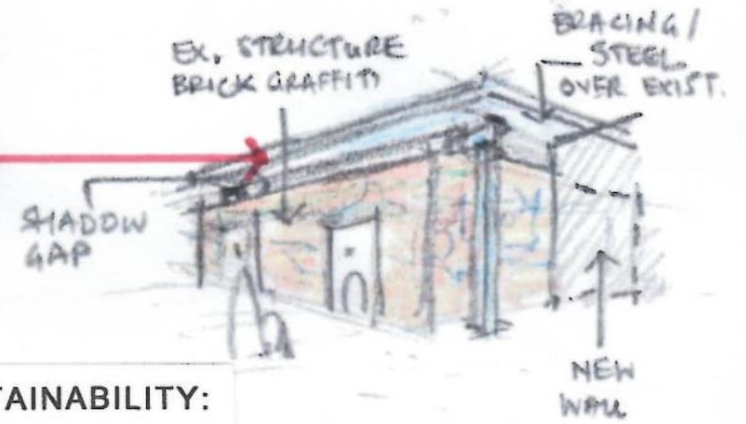
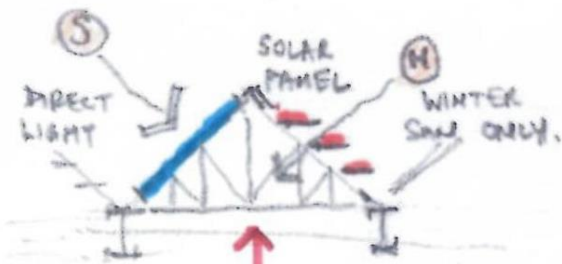


LANGUAGE & FORM COMPOSITION:

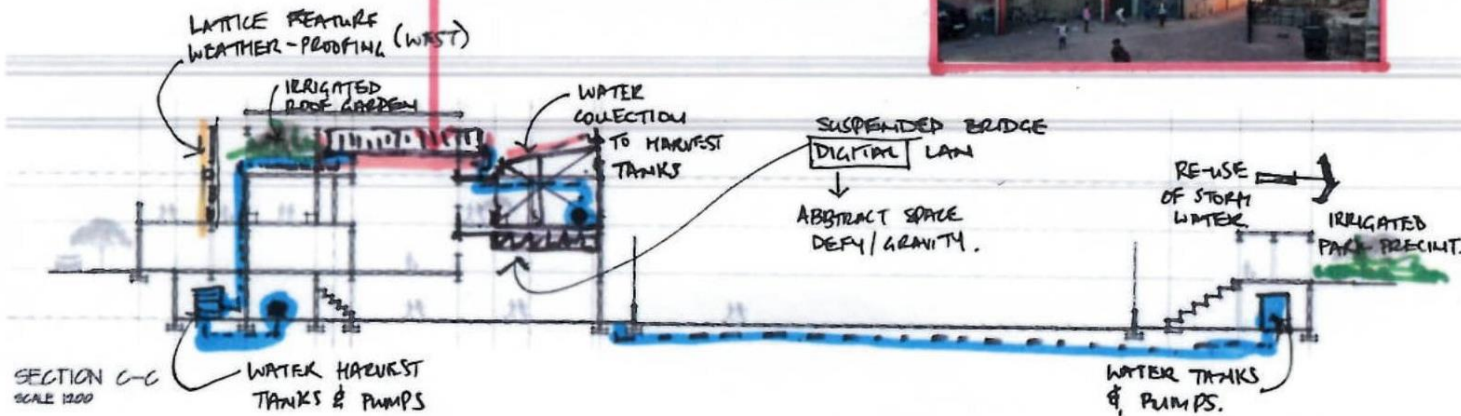
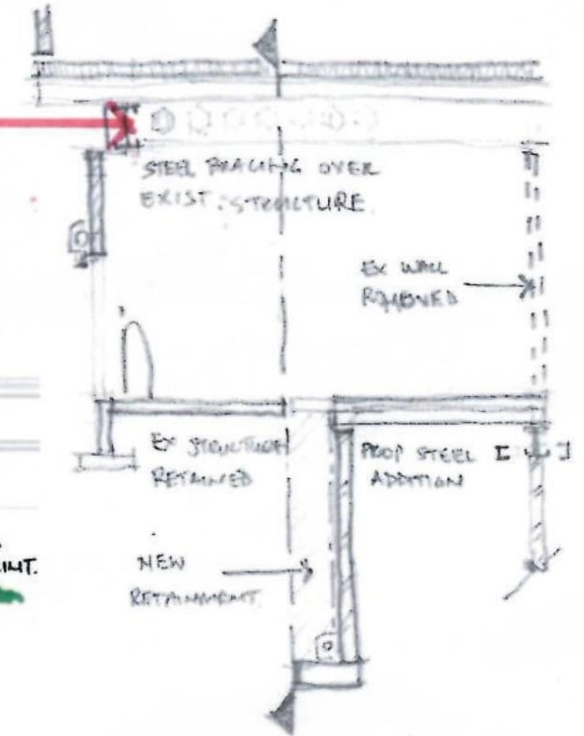


### AESTHETIC QUALITY, TECHTONICS & EXPERIENCE:





STRUCTURE & SUSTAINABILITY:





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