

Design Dissertation Submission

SEEKING SANCTUM
A SPACE FOR HEALING

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Paper submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the completion of the Masters in
Architecture Professional Course

Supervisor- Alta Steenkamp
APG 5079W, 2022 - Design Dissertation
13 September 2022

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ABSTRACT

Bearing witness to domestic violence and the crippling nature of trauma drives the interest in designing healing spaces for women and children. A person of inspiration and countless similar stories have resulted in the dissertation topic of a sanctuary, for women and children, as a space of healing and protection.

The proposal is informed by research into feminist perspectives on space-making, phenomenology as a design tool to bring meaning to spaces, and responsive architecture as a way of deeply understanding and responding to site, context, and the community in an impactful and connected way.

Two key issues are highlighted from the research and experiences of others, firstly that of needing to provide a space that feels homely and safe, not sterile and clinical, and secondly, that of providing access to facilitated healing and empowerment: with access to support, skills training, workspaces, connections, and nature.

The resulting proposal is situated in Hout Bay, adjacent to a wetland, offering accessibility, access to nature, as well as an inherent sense of sanctuary. The design explores the juxtaposition between protection and openness by layering spaces to offer varying degrees of privacy, also using materials to explore solidity and transparency, heaviness, and lightness. Protective thresholds frame and enclose spaces, giving way to openness. Grounded programme is contrasted by the lifting of the most private spaces. More broadly the juxtaposition between public and very private is also explored, where the normative practice of radically disconnecting healing process from 'normal' daily life is challenged. Important to the design as a whole is for the sanctuary to offer nurturing to both the inhabitants and to the landscape.

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INTRODUCTION

The story outlined in the abstract sets the scene for my investigation into the problems of gender-based violence, marginalisation, and the limitations of available 'facilities, programmes, and shelters'.

It is my intention to understand the role of architecture in the process of healing from the trauma of abuse. To do this, I will examine four things:

- Architectural works that exemplify moments of home, sanctuary, phenomenology, responsiveness (to site, climate, society, material availability, etc.), understanding of place, careful responses to the landscape, and craft.
- The notions, teachings, and experiences of architects who in their work pursue the above.
- Theoretical works that speak to concepts of space, feminism, trauma, healing, and phenomenology.
- And existing shelters in South Africa.

The paper begins with an examination of the meaning of sanctuary, culminating in my search for an appropriate site that offers sanctuary.

Hereafter, I delve into feminist perspectives on space-making by exploring Elizabeth Grosz' writing on the "*in-between*"¹, which offers a way of accessing the potentials of non-binary space-making. I will relate this work to Elizabeth Grosz' "*Embodied Utopias*" essay, which speaks of the limitations and prescriptions in architectural space-making².

Following the idea of sanctuary and related spaces I will go on to explore the meaning of sanctuary in the context of Grosz' 'in-between' and Gaston Bachelard's writing on home and phenomenology³. Taking inspiration from this exploration, I will introduce my conceptual approach to the project through text and imagery.

Phenomenology will then be expanded upon to provide an understanding of its origins and development. In supporting my understanding of sanctuary, I will look at three case studies that exhibit phenomenological qualities, and one with a lack thereof. This examination of case studies will be guided by the principles of phenomenology and home, providing examples of making in architecture that exemplify spatial qualities aligned to my understanding of sanctuary.

From this point I will look more specifically at shelters by examining reports, South African examples, and some statistics. This leads to a theoretical exploration of the process of healing, in which I reference the writing of bell hooks, which speaks to trauma and wounds⁴. Following this the theory looks directly to architecture, instructed by the writing of Beatriz Colomina⁵ and her book, *X-Ray Architecture*, which outlines the relation of modernism to the ailing bodies of the twentieth century⁶. This goes to understanding the austerity of typical facilities and provides a base point for what I aim to counter in my design.

As a further juxtaposition I will look at responsive architecture, which frames our problematic disconnection from nature (looking at the work of Grosz, hooks, Murcutt, and Bachelard), the lack of sensory stimulation and craft apparent in much of architecture today, and the loss of poetic/phenomenological appreciation for space-making. Responsive architecture will be illustrated with a technological investigation into three case studies, which exemplify in their making and technology a responsiveness to site, climate, the community, available materials, and sustainable practices. The teachings of Glenn Murcutt and Mariam Kamara will guide the examining of the case studies and will assist in my outlining of the scope of responsiveness.

The tethered nature of someone dependent on support is something which I aim to find ways of mitigating in my research. I aim to explore an architecture which provides the opportunity to heal and work through trauma, provides the opportunity for making connections and finding support, provides autonomy and a sense of belonging, and provides the opportunity to break through dependencies and begin to rebuild and repair.

¹ Grosz, E. 2001a. Chapter Six- In-Between: The Natural in Architecture and Culture. In *Architecture from the Outside: Essays on Virtual and Real Space*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press. 91-105.

² Grosz, E. 2001b. Chapter Eight- Embodied Utopias: The Time of Architecture. In *Architecture from the Outside: Essays on Virtual and Real Space*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press. 131-150.

³ Bachelard, G. 1994. *The Poetics of Space*. United States of America: Beacon Press Books.

To illustrate this, I made an artefact (see figure 2) and conceptual model (see figure 3 & 4). Both consist of rudimentary frames made from salvaged MDF board, into which I explored textures and patterns and planes by weaving embroidery cotton through drilled holes in the frame.

The crossing of the embroidery cotton in the artefact results in a tapestry which illustrates the layering of experiences and stories. Whereas within the uneven cube in the conceptual model, spatial opportunities arise. These interior moments/spatial opportunities became the most interesting in the making of this conceptual model and allowed for the imagining of many kinds of spaces (see figure 7). These conceptual underpinnings will be explored more rigorously in my conceptual framework and design development, which will conclude the paper.

Keywords: Healing, home, autonomy, sanctuary, phenomenology, and responsive design.

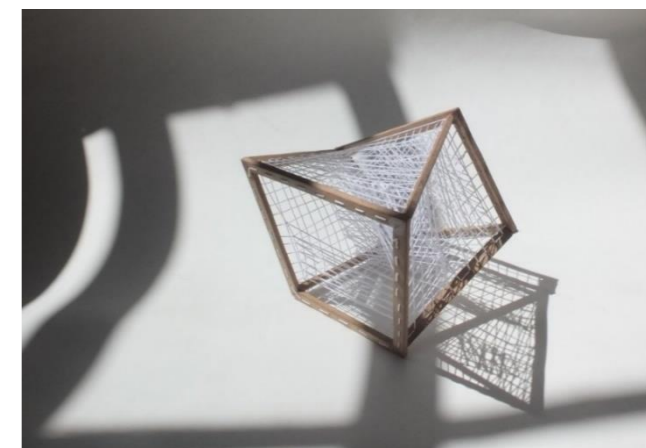
Figure 01: Initial poster of thesis proposal by author



Figure 02: Artefact for thesis proposal by author



Figure 03: Archi Maki 3x3 model by author



⁴ hooks, b. 2009a. *Belonging a culture of place*. New York: Routledge, 2009. Chapter 18: Returning to the Wound. Pg 174-183 and hooks, b. 2009b. *Belonging a culture of place*. New York: Routledge, 2009. Chapter 18: Healing Talk; A Conversation. Pg 184-201

⁵ Colomina, B. 2019. *X-ray Architecture: Illness as Metaphor*. Zurich, Switzerland: Lars Muller Publishers and Beatriz Colomina.

⁶ Colomina, B. 2019. *X-ray Architecture: Illness as Metaphor*. Zurich, Switzerland: Lars Muller Publishers and Beatriz Colomina.

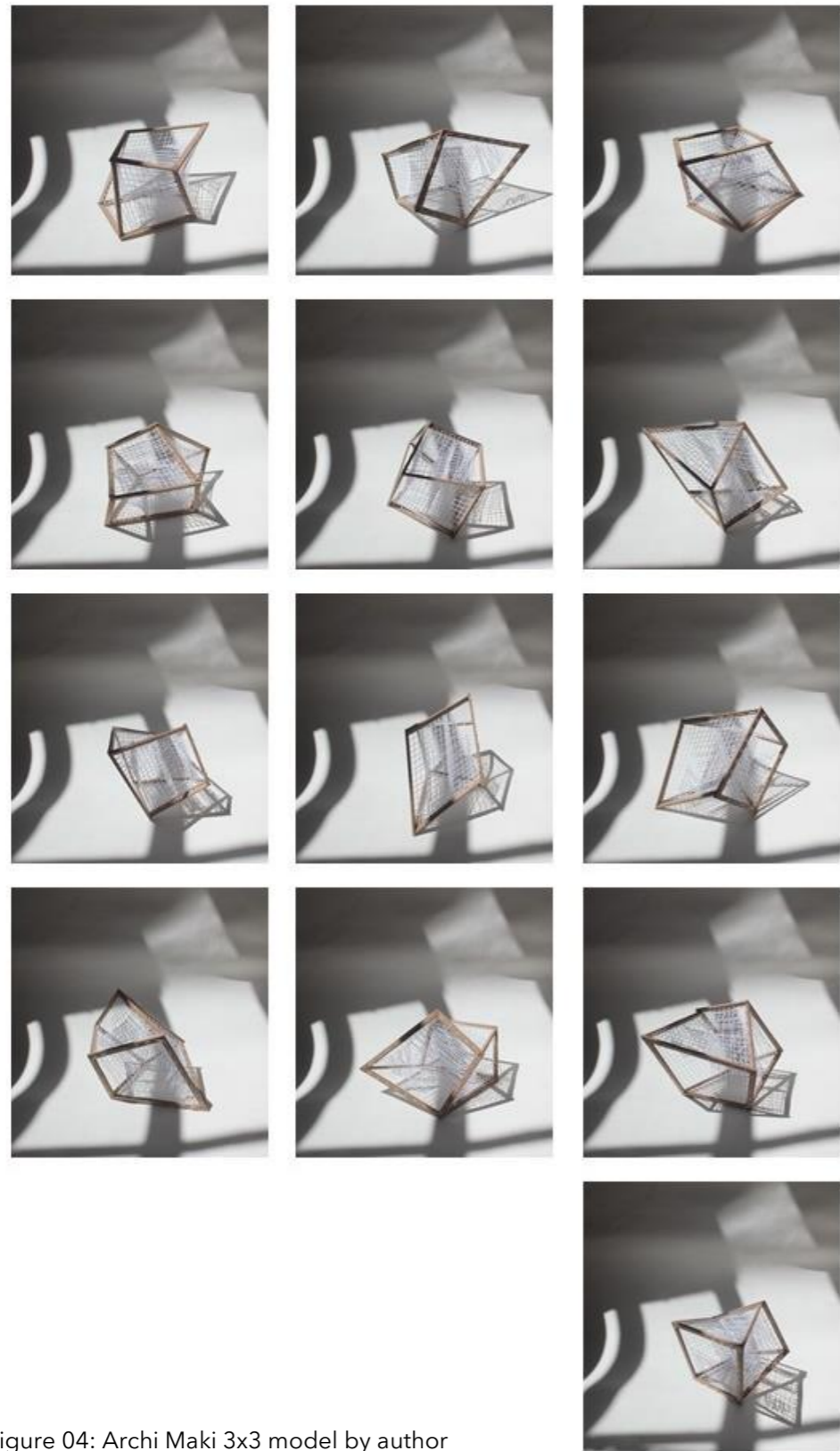


Figure 04: Archi Maki 3x3 model by author

SANCTUARY AND SANCTUM - TRACING THE HISTORY AND MEANING OF THE WORDS

Sanctuary and Sanctum have become the words which encapsulate my intentions for a space that offers healing for women. Because of this, it is interesting to trace the history and changing meaning of these words. To do this I will outline the etymology of the words and try to articulate what they mean to me.

Medieval Latin used the word *sanctus* to mean "a church or cemetery; right of asylum", which has links to the words *saint* and *sacred*⁷. This evolved in Late Latin to become *sanctuarium*, meaning "a sacred place, shrine". In parallel, from the Jewish faith and temple, the word *sanctum* can be found to mean "a holy place"⁸.

In the early 14th century, the word sanctuary found form as *seintuarie*, *sentwary*, meaning "consecrated place; building set apart for holy worship; holy or sacred object"⁹. The Anglo-French root being *sentuarie*, and the Old French being *sentuaire*. This use of the word was in the context of immunity from arrest by taking refuge within the church or other holy places.

The first use of the word apart from the church is found in the 1560s, where the meaning was a "place of refuge or protection". In 1706, *sanctum* is used to mean "a person's private room or retreat"¹⁰. In 1879 sanctuary is recorded in the context of "land set aside for wild plants or animals to breed and live"¹¹.

To me, the meanings of *sanctum* and *sanctuary* have become more interchangeable. They both suggest a place of refuge, a safe, sacred, tranquil space, a space of deep comfort and security, a space which offers poetry, beauty, and harmony, which evokes emotion, which offers the opportunity for rejuvenation and healing. However, it is useful for my purpose to use both sanctuary and sanctum independently, to subtly distinguish spaces within the design.

Sanctuary to me encompasses the potential to offer a space for women and children to heal from the trauma of abuse. Through my theoretical and technological studies to follow, I will illustrate the principles which I believe to be vital in the creation of sanctuary. I will often refer to the shelter at large as a sanctuary, but will also turn to the following spatial and privacy distinctions, which distinguish four zones of space within the design:

- The Sanctum: the accommodation units, which are afforded the highest degree of privacy.
- The Refuge: the shared/communal spaces, which are afforded the second most degree of privacy.
- The Ancillary: the supporting spaces, such as employee offices, which require a lesser degree of privacy.
- The Public: publicly accessible spaces which open to the community but also help to frame the shelter.

⁷ Online Etymology Dictionary. *Sanctuary*. Accessible from: <https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=sanctuary> [Accessed 3 April 2022]

⁸ Online Etymology Dictionary. *Sanctum*. Accessible from: https://www.etymonline.com/word/sanctum?ref=etymonline_crossreference [Accessed on 03 April 2022]

⁹ Online Etymology Dictionary. *Sanctuary*. Accessible from: <https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=sanctuary> [Accessed 3 April 2022]

¹⁰ Online Etymology Dictionary. *Sanctum*. Accessible from: https://www.etymonline.com/word/sanctum?ref=etymonline_crossreference [Accessed on 03 April 2022]

¹¹ Online Etymology Dictionary. *Sanctuary*. Accessible from: <https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=sanctuary> [Accessed 3 April 2022]

SANCTUARY SITE

My approach to siting this project was to identify places that naturally and already can be perceived to be sanctuaries- places which can be visited for clearing one's mind and accessing beauty, places which were natural/found sanctuaries, but which could also accommodate to created and curated built sanctuary. From this, a number of sites emerged, which I then tested in terms of the following criteria:

- Connection to nature- in the context of healing, a connection to nature is particularly helpful/advantageous.
- Accessibility- the connection to nature should not result in a remote site, since the sanctuary need offer emergency services, making accessibility paramount.
- Sense of sanctuary- the site must offer beauty, peacefulness, tranquillity.

The photo below (see figure 05) represents the site that fulfilled the criteria, which is what was settled on for my project. It is a small open space adjacent to the expansive Hout Bay wetland. It is tucked behind houses and finds itself next to the Ambleside school. The space offers reprieve from the suburb, and offers a connection point to the wetland, the river, and the walks along this green corridor.

Being in this space, the houses to the back of one are forgotten because of the captivating views and sounds- numerous frogs, birds and other small animals fill the air with song. And the tall reeds brush in the wind in a lapping-water or soft waves-crashing kind of way.



Figure 05: Photograph of Sanctuary site taken by author

C O N N E C T I O N T O N A T U R E – A C C E S S I B I L I T Y – S E N S E O F S A N C T U A R Y

SITE MAPPING

The site is located in Hout Bay, along a green corridor which follows the Disa river (sometimes referred to as the Hout Bay River). The map here (see figure 07) shows in orange the location of the site, with indication of the Disa River adjacent to the site. The map serves to locate the site and Hout Bay in the greater context of the Atlantic seaboard and peninsula portion of Cape Town.

The map on the following page (see figure 08) shows in yellow the areas that I consider to naturally offer sanctuary. These are the areas that I tested against the criteria of accessibility, connection to nature and sense of sanctuary. Highlighted in green are the areas that are protected and of particular sensitivity or significance. The pink and purple circles identify public places of safety in Hout Bay, which include things like clinics, rehabilitation centres, a police station, disaster relief, centres for troubled youths, and one office which offers therapy to people who have experienced abuse.

Finally, the orange shows sites that I specifically explored as potentials, the process of which led me to the choice of the site circled in blue, which is located adjacent to the wetland and the Disa River, along the green corridor that cuts through Hout Bay.

Also identified on this map in varying purples are the public places of safety in Hout Bay, which include things such as a police station, clinics, rehabs, disaster relief organisations and youth centres.

No shelter for women and children exists, though there is one organisation that offers access to social work and therapy. The greens indicate natural resources that are currently protected. The wetland, surprisingly, does not fall under any formal protection, despite its vital role in Hout Bay.

We were required to test a site for an en-loge task (see figure 06), which resulted in my testing of a river-side site in Hout Bay, similar to the wetland adjacent site except for it being far less accessible. The model was an exploration of connecting a building to nature and the building existing in harmony with the landscape, which I identified as being necessary in the context of healing.

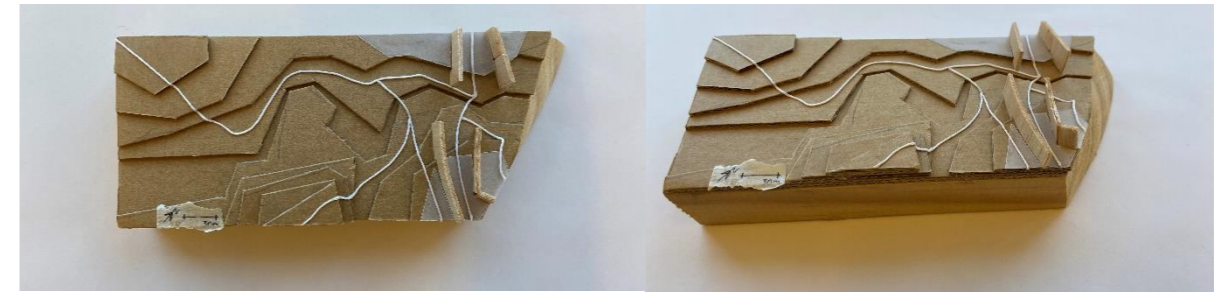


Figure 06: Abstract en-loge model by author

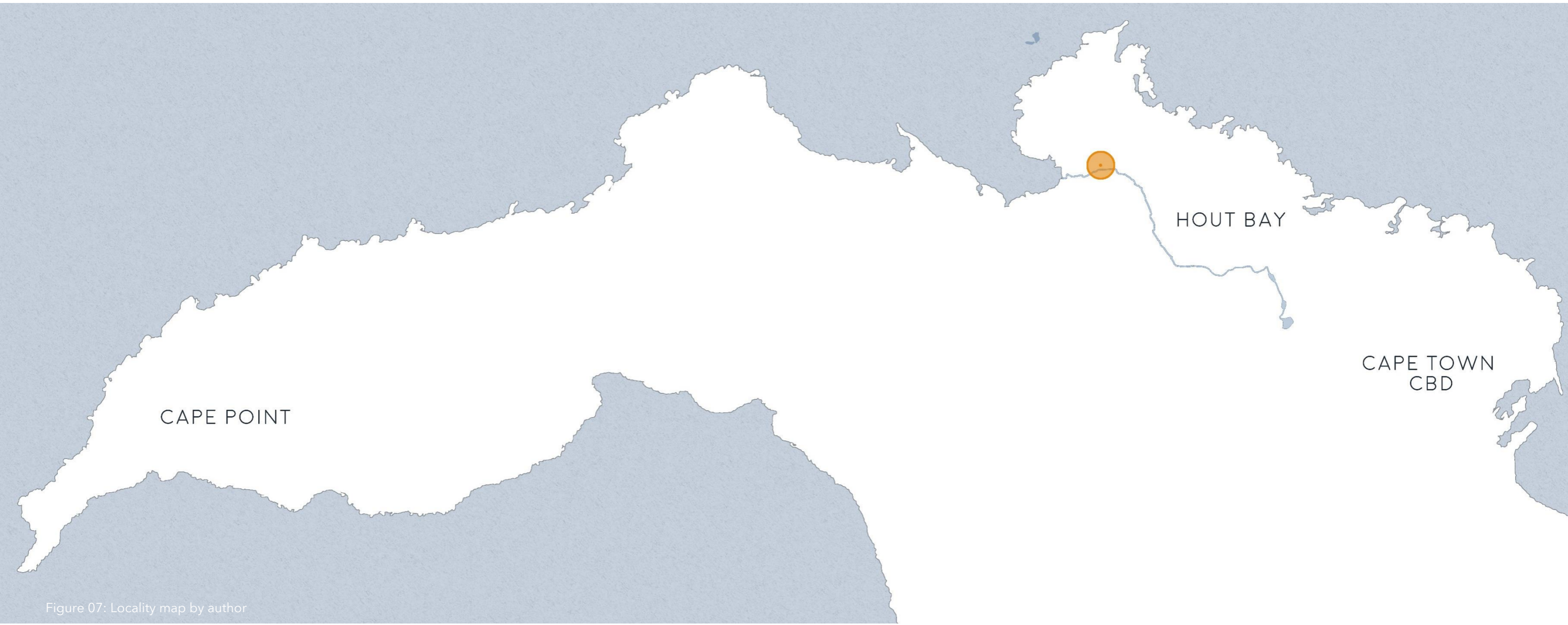


Figure 07: Locality map by author

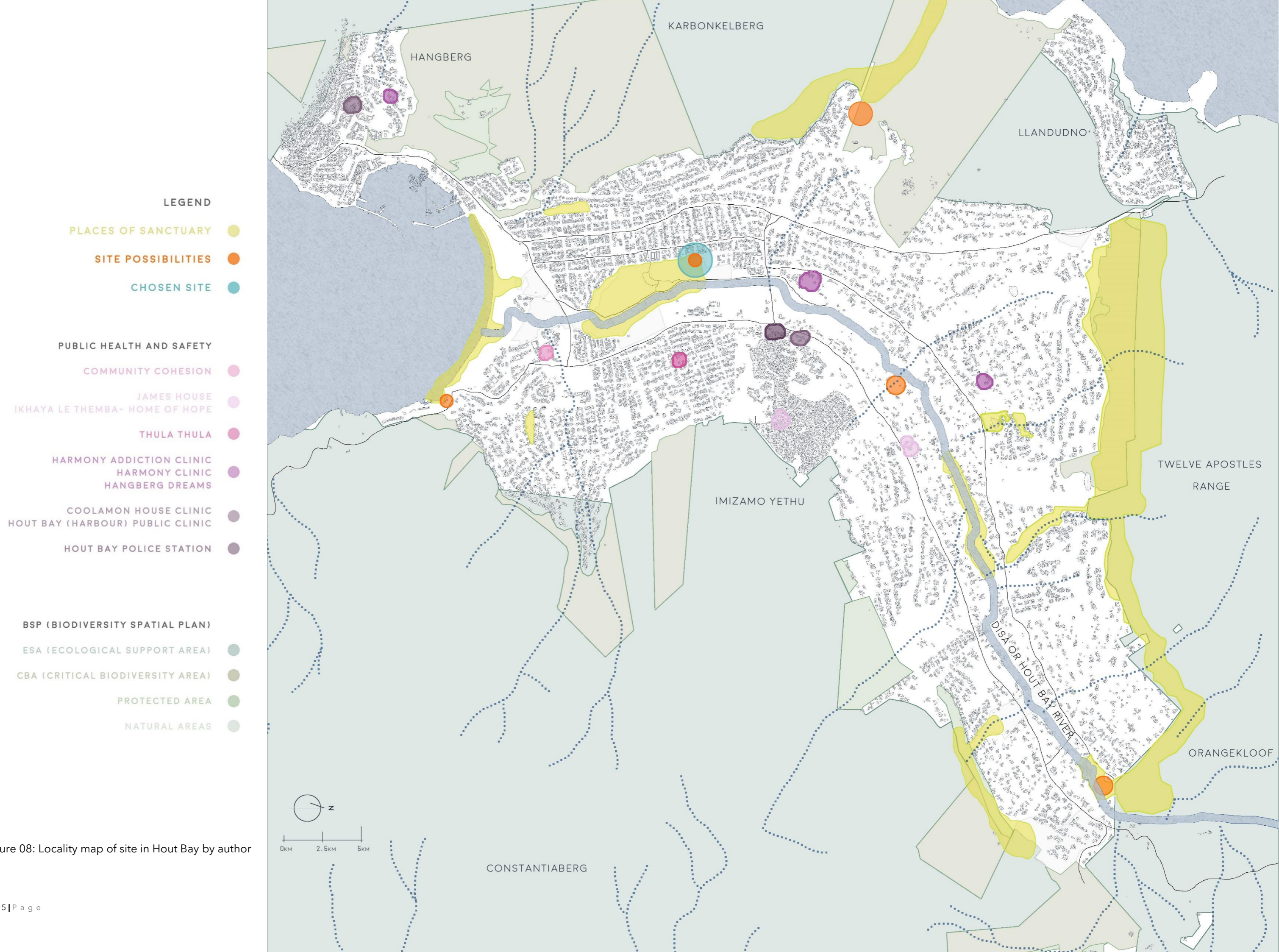


Figure 08: Locality map of site in Hout Bay by author

SITE FLORA

The first three images portray the immediate site and its flora, consisting of a range of grasses and ground cover and shrub mixes.

The adjacent set of six images portray the variety of conditions found in the wider context of the site, with the reeded wetlands, the river and its grassy banks, ponds with a variety of plants, a number of grasses and some pockets of treed areas.

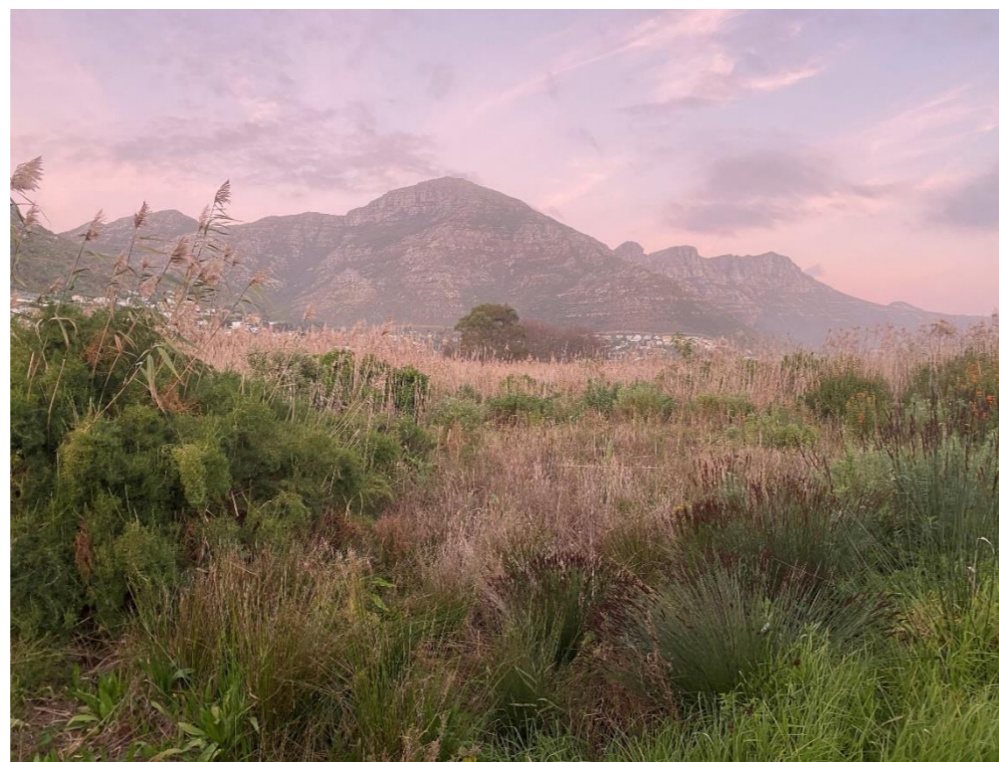


Figure 09: Photographs of site and surrounds by author

SITE CONTEXT

Zooming in, outlined in yellow is my site, which occupies a portion of two erven zoned Community Two. The yellow indicates the area of the two erven which is not wetland. The green shows the extent of the wetland.

To the West (left in this map view) of the site is a solely residential area, besides the Ambleside school located to the North of the site.

The Wetland is cut by a dirt track which offers a useful and North-South connection, most accessed by people walking, cycling, and riding horses (vehicular access is restricted to maintenance vehicles that do clearing of green waste). This dirt track follows the river almost to the estuary. Across the river is the international school, a horse-riding centre, and other businesses along the main road, with a residential area above. To the southern end of the site is a pathway through the wetland, which is used for walking and horse-riding and connects the residential area to the dirt track and river.

To view the site from above, see figures 11 and 12 which offer aerial views looking northwards and southwards.



Figure 10: Map of site and surrounds by author



Figure 11: Aerial view of site, looking northwards towards Sandy Bay and Llandudno by author



Figure 12: Aerial photograph of site outlined in yellow, looking southwards towards the sea, by author

SPECIAL CONDITIONS

Pictured here (figure 13) is the site during heavy rains, where Milner Road, currently a dirt road on the Western edge of the site, becomes rather waterlogged. The water eventually drains across the site to the wetland. For this reason, thinking about ways to not disrupt this absorption/seepage of stormwater becomes very important to the design.

The second image (figure 14) is taken from the dirt track at the river, looking towards the site, which is outlined in yellow. As you can see, the height and density of the reeded wetland largely screens the site, offering privacy and protection.



Figure 13: Photograph of site in heavy rain condition by author



Figure 14: Photograph of site viewed from river by author

FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES ON SPACE - THE IN-BETWEEN

Having identified a site, I turn next to an exploration into theory about space-making. My project is focused on the making of space in such a way that its effects, both physical and psychological, be evident and explored in my work. The search for the creation of a sanctuary for women and children is deeply rooted in how the women and children will feel in and intimately perceive the moments and spaces in a proposed building and landscape. It is therefore instructive to examine the theoretical perspectives on space, in terms of its opportunities and limitations, from the viewpoint of the feminist.

Beginning with the 'in-between', Elizabeth Grosz explains that: "The space in between things is the space in which things are undone"¹². She describes the 'in-between' as being a space constituted by the bounding and unbounding of identities, as being a complex space between binary conditions, where conditions, identities and states of being can become and can be shifted.

This links directly to my desire for what a sanctuary could offer- a space in which to unravel trauma and allow a person to become more than someone afflicted by trauma, more than a victim of the abuse. It should be a space offering the opportunity to re-write one's story, to express and to be oneself, and to break out of the shackles of control.

The 'in-between' is an important and popular term in feminism and postmodern discourses, Grosz says, because it challenges the dominant western knowledge and allows for the undoing of binary privileges. Grosz refers to Gilles Deleuze's work on the 'in-between' where difference and the 'in-between' can be attributed to allowing for processes of becoming. The recognition of difference and ability to practice, express and feel confident in one's difference is to me an important component of being able to recognise one's strengths and weaknesses, one's individuality and worth, and ultimately of being able to heal from trauma.

It is *nature* that Grosz identifies as offering a counter to binaries and prescription.¹³ Binaries erase the "autonomous or contained terms", such as the subordinated, dependant, complement or supplement, as the term 'woman' is to 'man'. Here Grosz identifies *nature* as being a term which can often be identified in architecture and culture as an ignored and less important term. *Nature* is often a "reprieve from culture" or an opposite of architecture, its definition reliant on its difference to either culture or architecture. Grosz encourages the appreciation for the randomness and unexpectedness of *nature*, "who's plasticity and openness, accounts for the rich variability of cultural life".

It is precisely this nature which Grosz accredits to architecture entering the 'in-between'. 'Nature' here is to Grosz what 'difference' is to Deleuze in accessing processes of becoming and an openness to futurity. I deeply resonate with this and find the concept of *nature* and the *in-between* to be significant components in facilitating processes of healing. In the context of healing and sanctuary- each person's story is different, each person's process of healing is different- therefore it is vital that the sanctuary allow for individual expression, be able to mould itself to the desires and needs of the inhabitants, in a way like that of Grosz' *in-between*, and thus allow the best opportunities for healing.

The in-between also speaks to dualities, which for me are particularly relevant in the creation of a sanctuary which need offer protection whilst not being imprisoning. The sanctuary needs to protect the women from the public, but also connect them to it. Being connected to the public realm is paramount in creating a space that does not other the women, or make them feel like societal outcasts. To me, this suggests a layering of spaces to achieve degrees of privacy, as well as a number of threshold conditions, either offering outwardness or inwardness.

¹² Grosz, E. 2001a. Chapter Six- In-Between: The Natural in Architecture and Culture. In *Architecture from the Outside: Essays on Virtual and Real Space*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press. 91-105.

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ Grosz, E. 2001a. Chapter Six- In-Between: The Natural in Architecture and Culture. In *Architecture from the Outside: Essays on Virtual and Real Space*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press. 91-105.

¹⁵ Bachelard, G. 1994. *The Poetics of Space*. United States of America: Beacon Press Books.

¹⁶ Grosz, E. 2001a. Chapter Six- In-Between: The Natural in Architecture and Culture. In *Architecture from the Outside: Essays on Virtual and Real Space*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press. 91-105.

SANCTUARY - THE IN-BETWEEN AND HOME

To address processes of healing by providing a sanctuary-like space, I turn now to the work of both Elizabeth Grosz on the "In-Between"¹⁴ and of Gaston Bachelard on the phenomenology of home¹⁵. I turn to their work here to further explore and describe the possibilities of what sanctuary could offer to a person processing trauma.

It is useful to refer again to the In-Between where Grosz explains that: "The space in between things is the space in which things are undone"¹⁶. Understanding the In-Between as a complex space where conditions, identities and states of being can become and can be shifted, proves very useful to me in thinking of a sanctuary where trauma can be processed, and agency can be regained or found.

Where the In-Between allows for the "excluded middle" to be heard by the undoing of binary privileges, the sanctuary would allow for the establishment of agency in the woman who has faced abuse. What I find useful, especially with regards to the subject matter of sanctuary and the abused, is to read across the work of Grosz, Spivak and Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Ndlovu:

Who Grosz refers to as the "**excluded middle**", Gayatri C. Spivak refers to as the "**subaltern**"¹⁷, and Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Patricia Ndlovu refer to as the "**colonised human**"¹⁸.

Though considered in differing contexts and narratives, the common relationship that I identify between these three references is an importance placed on providing agency to these marginalised groups, following a deep understanding of the repressed/ignored value that these groups possess. Another commonality across all three references is the identification of a "general erasure of difference"¹⁹ in the dominant and privileged, which produces extremely damaging and marginalising effects.

We know that abuse and sexual violence employs systems of control by the abuser. What is often spoken of as being a long-lasting effect of abuse is the continual grappling of the abused with their own identity and self-definition. Part of the healing process thus needs to involve redefining oneself beyond the control that was enforced and freeing oneself of feelings of guilt and blame.

The space of sanctuary and healing is therefore required to provide opportunity for the vital process of "self-re-writing"²⁰. This redefinition of self seems critical to overcoming the crippling effects of an abuser. The space should allow for the processing of one's history, experiences, and trauma whilst learning about one's limits and potentials in a process of redefining self and re-writing one's story.

The sanctuary should allow for the defining of a place, space, community, state of being, etc. in which one finds belonging. It should allow a person to recognize what they both need and desire to feel like they belong, it should allow a person to feel at home, both within their surroundings and within themselves. This sense of home is what I feel is pivotal to the establishment of autonomy within a person overcoming trauma- it is what would allow for the person to make their place in this world, rather than just withstand and survive the harsh realities of it.

¹⁷ transform! europe. 2020. *The Left Reflects on the Global Pandemic: Gayatri C. Spivak*. Available at: https://www.transform-network.net/en/webinars/detail/?tx_news_pi1%5Bnews%5D=9119&cHash=8c27e82e81400bab8e2de1dfbeac2ee8 [23 August 2021].

¹⁸ Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. & Ndlovu, P. 2021. The Invention of Blackness on a World Scale. In *Decolonising the Human: Reflections from Africa on Difference and Oppression*. M. Steyn & W. Mpofu, Eds. South Africa: Wits University Press. 25-45.

¹⁹ Grosz, E. 2001a. Chapter Six- In-Between: The Natural in Architecture and Culture. In *Architecture from the Outside: Essays on Virtual and Real Space*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press. 91-105.

²⁰ Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. & Ndlovu, P. 2021. The Invention of Blackness on a World Scale. In *Decolonising the Human: Reflections from Africa on Difference and Oppression*. M. Steyn & W. Mpofu, Eds. South Africa: Wits University Press. 25-45.

CONCEPTUAL COLLAGES – ESSENCE OF CONCEPT

Conceptually the creation of a sanctuary needs both to provide utmost privacy and protection, as well as allow for a safe and cultivated connection to the public realm. Architecturally this to me translates as gradations of privacy, of layered spaces (from inviting, to contained/protected, to sacred), courtyards, voids, roof lights, and spaces that hold inhabitants in a protective embrace.

The importance of a connection to the public is not only due to the nature of the site, but also due to the need to naturalise healing, to destigmatize it, so as not to present it as being something shameful or secretive.

The sanctuary works to nurture on two levels, one that facilitates healing in women and their children, and one that rehabilitates and protects the sensitive landscape. The collage below abstractly represents the relationships between the juxtaposing spaces, the different materiality depending on the spatial qualities required, the containment of private spaces and the thresholds that separate and contain.



Figure 15: Conceptual collage of the sanctuary by author

CONCEPTUAL COLLAGE - NURSERY AND CAFE

Part of my proposal includes a wetland research and rehabilitation centre which addresses the sensitivity of the wetland as well as the need for a public element/offering within this project.

In South Africa there are many efforts to conserve and protect the natural landscape, such as:

- Friends of the River, Hout Bay. A non-profit organisation dedicated to the monitoring and protection of rivers and wetlands in Hout Bay, as well as initiating public participation and learning.
- Working for Wetlands, a City of Cape Town governmental initiative to rehabilitate, use wisely and protect wetlands.
- Ramsar, or the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance.

The intention is for the nursery to offer activities for the community, the school children, and the sanctuary women and their children. This opportunity for collaboration and participation will be strengthened with the design development, to illustrate what activities would be on offer and how these would be accessed. For now, the collage below explores the coming together of people in a space that connects them to nature, specifically the wetland.



Figure 16: Conceptual collage of the nursery and cafe by author

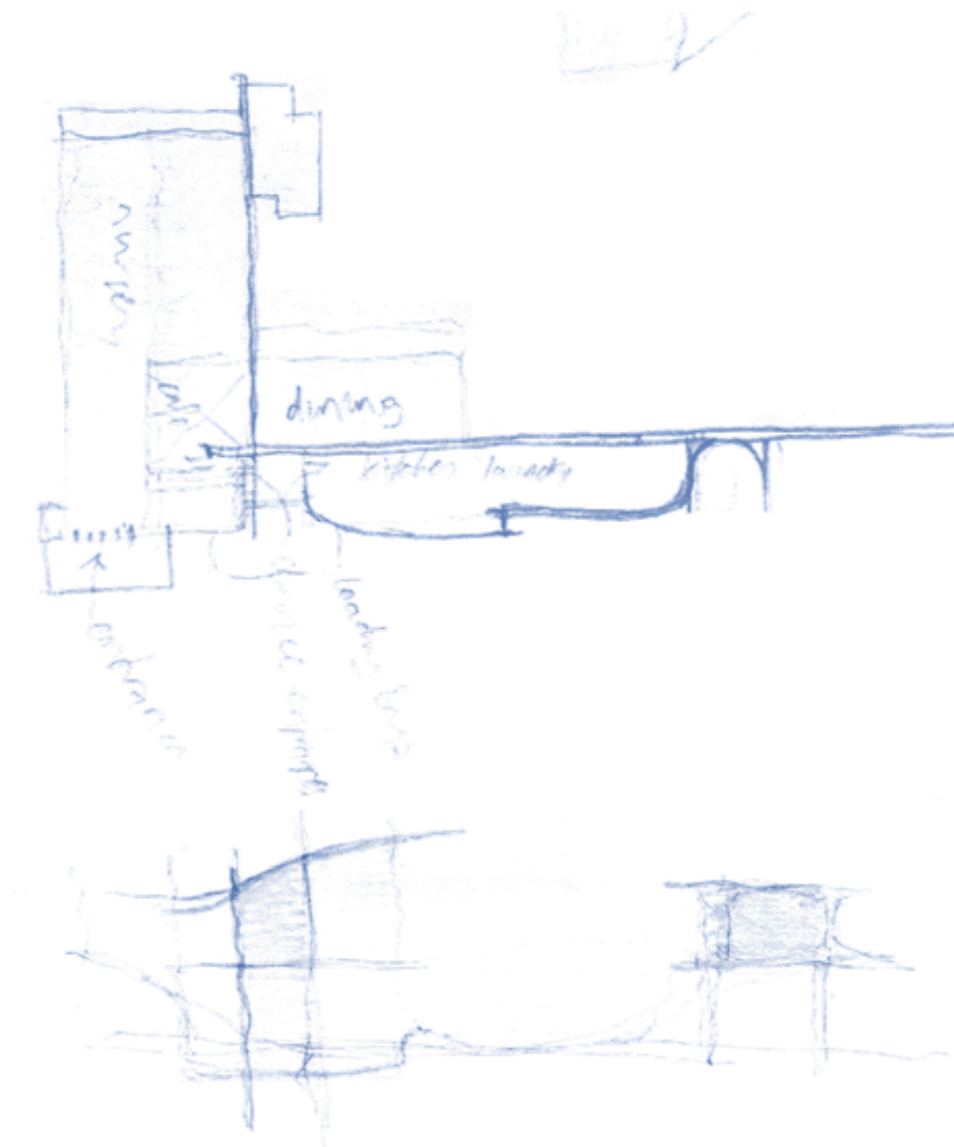
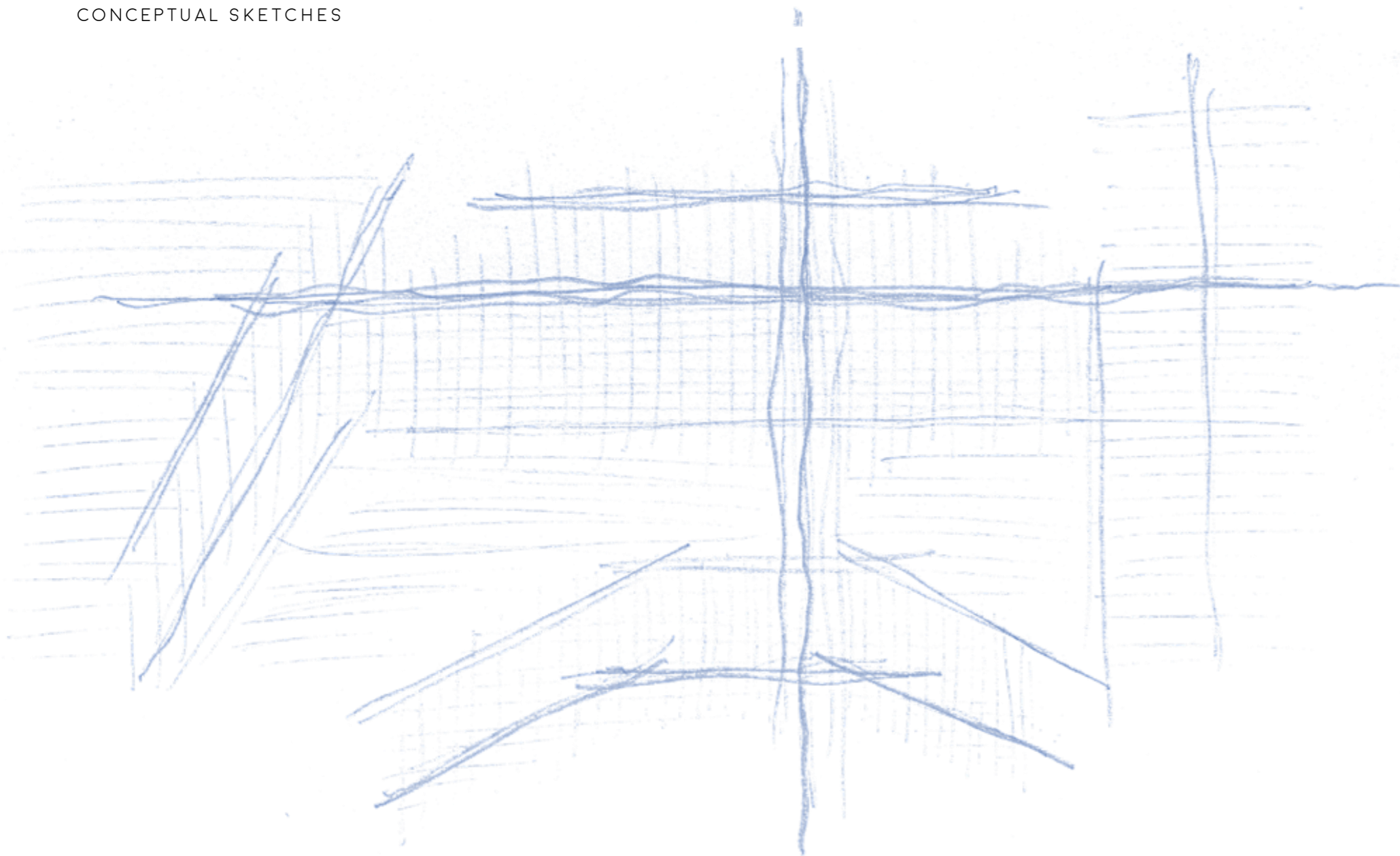
CONCEPTUAL COLLAGE - ENTRANCE TO SANCTUARY

This collage explores the provision of an entrance which must at once provide welcome as well as a way of penetrating the protective enclosure. This street façade or enclosure is the barrier between the outside world and the internalised world of the sanctuary. It is important that this façade be read to an extent as impenetrable, so that it offers safety to the internalised world. At the same time, one must think of the women and children arriving at the sanctuary for the first time- they should not be met with hostility and should feel both welcome and protected by the sanctuary. Therefore, this façade must offer duality in its expression. It should be thick and heavy enough to offer fortress-like protection but should be visually interesting in terms of texture and moments of penetration that either break the form or give a glance to what is beyond.

The entrance is a very important transitional space; this is where one would be enveloped by the sanctuary and pulled into its protective embrace. This transition needs to be symbolic and meaningful and must guide the women and children into the new and distinct phase of healing. This must be the moment of first being embraced by the sanctuary.



Figure 17: Conceptual collage of the entrance to the sanctuary by author



KITCHEN STORAGE
 OVER HEAD
 TRAY
 CONVENTIONAL DESIGN -
 2014-2017

WHEN IT
 REFLECTS
 SPECIFIC
 CULTURE

KITCHEN, KITCHEN
 RELATES TO WORKING
 SHARED DINING AREA
 CULTURE

OFFICE
 DESIGN WITH VERTICAL
 SPACE, EMPLOYING THE
 CONCEPT OF VERTICALITY
 IN DESIGN. ARCHITECTURE

CONCEPTUAL SKETCH OF DUALISMS - PUBLIC-PRIVATE - PROTECTOR-OPEN - MINARD-DEF-JARD

16-07-2017

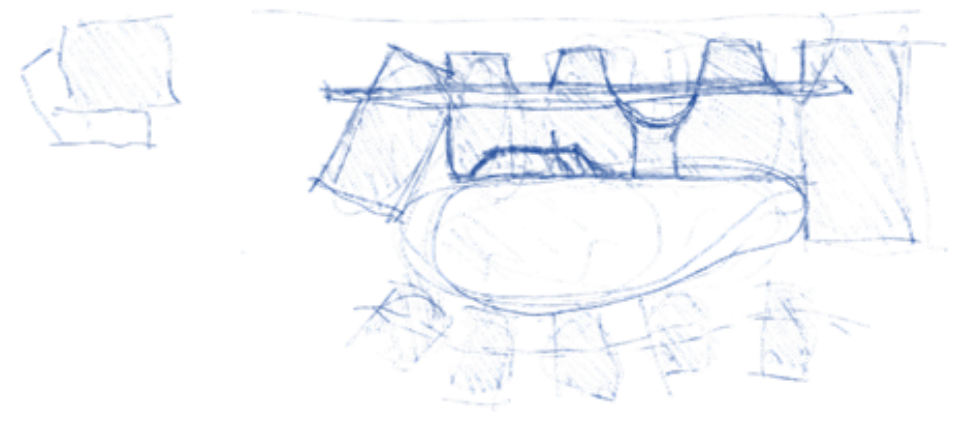
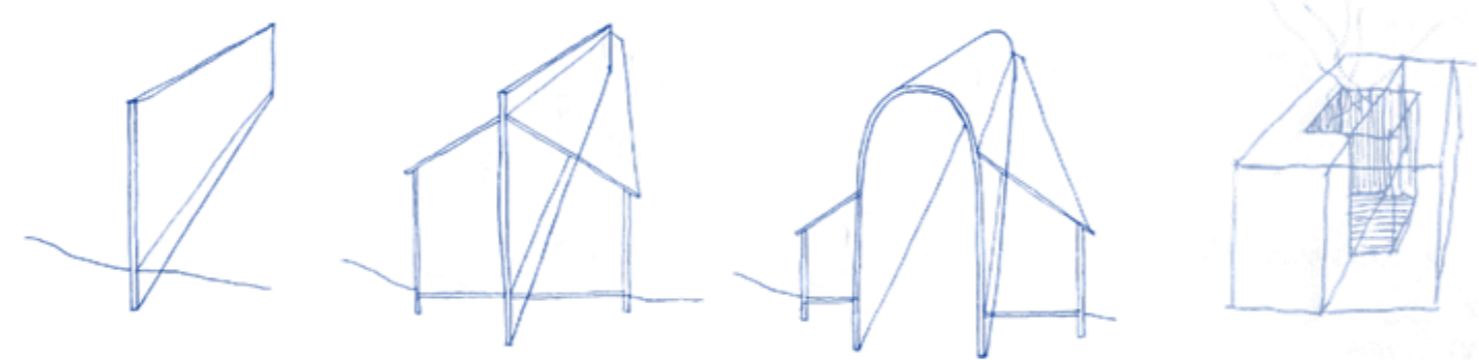


Figure 18: Conceptual sketches exploring thresholds, spatial layering, gradations of privacy, and heaviness versus lightness by author

PHENOMENOLOGY AND UNDERSTANDING HOME

Important to my idea of sanctuary is the inclusion of phenomenological design. What phenomenology offers to architecture is an appreciation for and focus on the feeling of a space, better expressed in poetic terms than in the typically emotion-less language of our everyday. It is that which evokes feeling and meaning in one's experience of a space that phenomenological design so highly values.²¹

The word phenomenology has been in use for quite some time, but it was popularised by philosopher Edmund Husserl, at the beginning of the nineteenth century.²² It was Martin Heidegger, however, who explored phenomenology to more suitably answer the question of what it means to be human.²³ As Tao Ruspoli's movie, *Being in the World*, explains, Heidegger's exploration of phenomenology undercut the traditional Plato and Descartes driven philosophical thinking of the time. Plato's answer to the meaning of being was that humans think rationally and intellectually, which is also what determines the way we experience and measure the world around us. Descartes' answer was that human beings are thinking things, which involves a mind, feelings, and the processing experiences. This is what Descartes thought distinguished us.

Being in the World identifies that both of these traditional thought patterns distinguished subjects (humans) from objects (the rest of the world). This individualises the subject to such a degree that value is merited solely from the individual and not in relation to its relationships with other humans or objects. Heidegger disagreed with the placement of value on thinking and posited that humans can be distinguished rather by their investment and involvement in things, by the way that they surpass being thinking beings because of their nature to care about things.²⁴

Phenomenology was largely rejected in philosophy and humanity discourses for being too vague and contradictory.²⁵ Haddad explains that this culminated in a dissatisfaction with what phenomenology purports to be founded on; namely experience and evidence, because by definition, it seems "beyond experience" in its spiritual nature. Despite this, phenomenology still proves useful in architecture for privileging an exploration into and focus on the way that we experience the built environment.

Gaston Bachelard has been a prolific source for phenomenology in architecture, with his book *The Poetics of Space* (1958), in which he describes phenomenology as the way in which we consider, understand, and process images (poetic images) in our individual consciousnesses. Bachelard says that phenomenology can allow for a restoration of subjectivity, or the celebration of different experiences, viewpoints, and stories. Here subjectivity is prized, much like when Grosz and hooks speak of the importance of difference and individual (and collective) experiences that differ to those of people in different contexts.

Haddad examines Christian Norberg-Schulz' work on phenomenology as also being prolific within architecture, with his trilogy of work *Existence, Space and Architecture* (1971), *Genius Loci* (1980), and *The Concept of Dwelling* (1985). He worked to classify different architectures and landscapes into relatable terms, namely romantic, classic, and cosmic, with the combination of terms resulting in complex versions.

I find Norberg-Schulz' classification of spaces and landscapes to be of lesser use today, however I do appreciate his rich description of those spaces and landscapes and what emotions they evoke in us. What I most resonate with is Bachelard's notion of home. Bachelard says that any and all "really inhabited space[s]" contain essences of home. Inhabitation of a space evokes memories and feelings of inhabitation and home. As humans we daydream, and it is through daydreaming that Bachelard says we fix memories of comfort, protection, and home. It is the house that provides shelter for us to enjoy remembering, daydreaming, and dreaming, which is why home is such an important place and concept to us as humans.

This poetic and primordial importance of home is what I believe to be lacking in current facilities for those that have been abused. Knowing where and how we feel at home is what I instinctually feel is so important in the processing of trauma and in finding healing.

If we reduce phenomenology to the poetic, instinctive, emotion-evoking description and experience of spaces and landscapes, without being bound by the normative rules of phenomenological classification as determined by Norberg-Schulz, then it becomes useful in acknowledging the subtle, nuanced experiences of spaces and landscapes. This is the value I believe phenomenology can add to the life of a building, from design inception to inhabitation to the remembering of space.

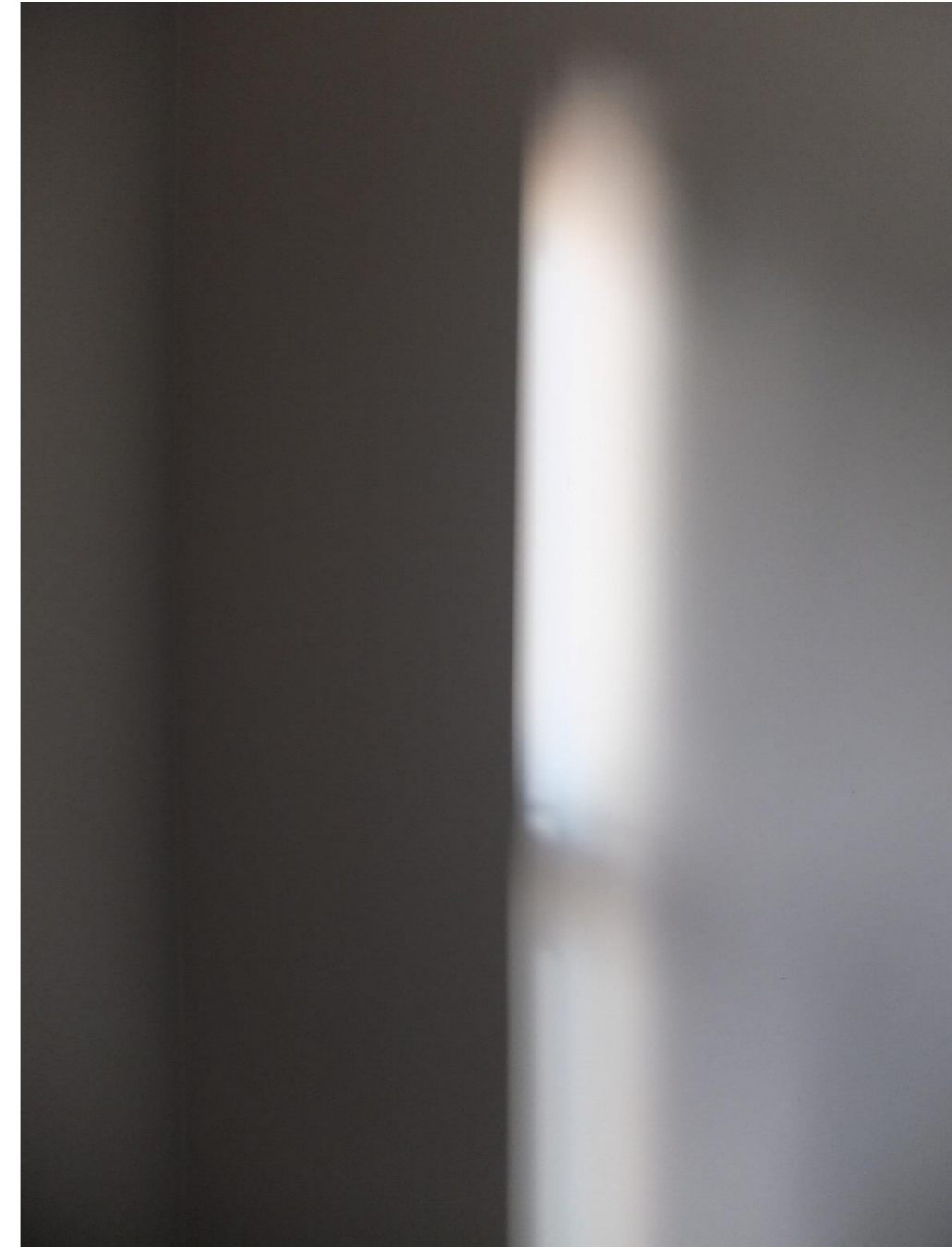


Figure 19: Photograph of piece of home by author

²¹ Bachelard, G. 1994. *The Poetics of Space*. United States of America: Beacon Press Books.

²² Smith, D. W. 2003. *Phenomenology*. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2018 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.). Accessible from: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/phenomenology/> [Accessed on 20 July 2022]

²³ Ruspoli, T., Canavesio, G., Carman, T., Dreyfus, H.L., Wrathall, M.A., Kelly, Sean (Sean D.), Taylor, C., Manuel et al. 2011. *Being in the world* [DVD]. Available:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fcCRmf_tHW8&list=PLaytmTMepb7MciB87MENrCTi3Oz27S4FD&index=14 [Accessed on 20 July 2022]

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Nenon, T. 2017. The end of phenomenology. *Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology*, 17(1), 2.

PHENOMENOLOGY
- A CASE STUDY EXPLORATION

To explore expressions of phenomenology and home I will examine four case studies. Each case study has been chosen because of an element of poetic expression within the building, with one case study being the exception; it illustrates a lack of poetic expression. These case studies are of inspiration to the design development of this project and will assist in the endeavour to produce a sanctuary-like space with elements of home and phenomenology.

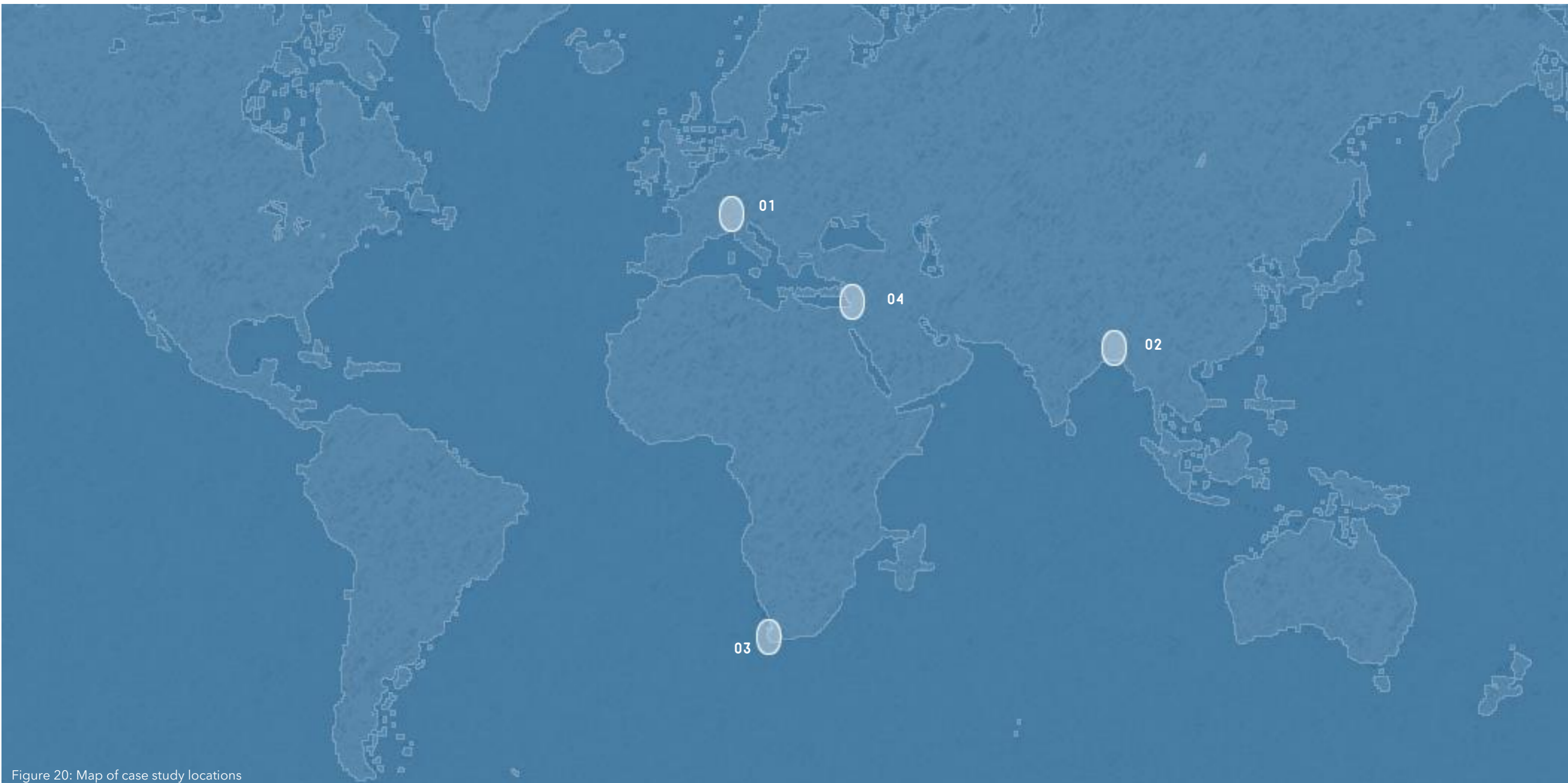


Figure 20: Map of case study locations

01 - THERME VALS BY PETER ZUMTHOR

Location: Vals, Switzerland

Architects: Peter Zumthor

Date of Completion: 1996

Project Outline:

As part of the hotel complex, Therme Vals is a series of hot baths constructed over a natural thermal spring²⁶. Locals, hotel guests, and other visitors frequent the baths for their relaxing and healing effects. Due to the topographical conditions of the site, the building is half submerged into the slope, with a flat green roof that forms a continuation of the hotel lawn.

With the use of a striking yet simple material palette, stone, water, natural and artificial light, steel, and glazing. In this way, the beauty of water is celebrated. By juxtaposing scales, solid and void, light and dark, hot, and cold, Zumthor creates spaces which evoke emotions and trigger a range of senses. Interleading spaces and narrow pools navigate between two main baths/pools, one internal and one external.

During the cold months, dramatic visuals are evoked with the meeting of the steam and cold air. Similarly, careful positioning of lights creates dramatic visuals with the passing of the day, at night the building is mostly lit from fixtures in the water. The mass of the stone walls and darkened interior spaces evokes feelings of protection and refuge, which can only be comforting to the act of bathing and relaxing. The result being a building/series of spaces that, just through photographs, encapsulates a sense of poetry.

The building's ability to transport the inhabitants to a wholly different world, one which allows for self-care, distraction from the stresses and doldrums of everyday life, and introspection, is what gives the space such gravity and meaning. This is also what is so useful to examine in relation to the design of a space for healing.



Figure 22: View from the external bath



Figure 21: Passageway between external and internal baths

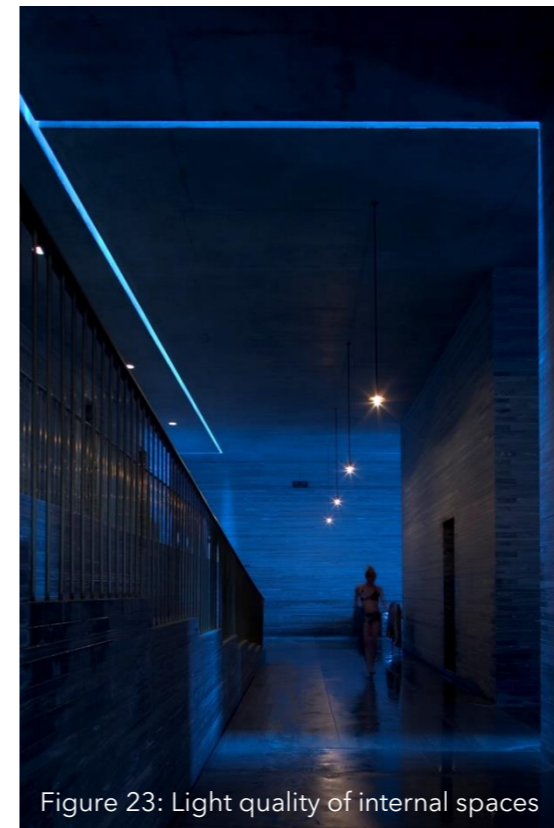


Figure 23: Light quality of internal spaces



Figure 24: Internal loungers with view of mountain slopes

²⁶ Souza, E. 2016. Peter Zumthor's Therme Vals Through the Lens of Fernando Guerra. Available: <https://www.archdaily.com/798360/peter-zumthors-therme-vals-through-the-lens-of-fernando-guerra> [Accessed on 18 March 2022]

02 - BAITUR RAUF JAME MOSQUE BY MARINA TABASSUM

Location: Dhaka, Bangladesh

Architects: Marina Tabassum Architects (MTA)

Date of Completion: 2010

Project Outline:

Tabassum designed the Baitur Rauf Jame Mosque without use of archetypal mosque symbols and typology, rather, by using light and materials she designed a sacred space more than worthy for the act of prayer. The main material is exposed terracotta bricks, typical of the area, which create mass, perforated screens, and frame openings, all of which carefully guide the flow of natural air and the filtration of natural light²⁷.

The simple material palette, which juxtaposes light, dark and brickwork, results in a profoundly spiritual space. That the simple celebration of something such as light can create such an evocative space is remarkable. Not only does this design produce a sacred space, but it also exhibits brickwork and light in a way that is both humble and momentous.

The desire to distil the elemental qualities of a mosque, whilst achieving the sanctity of the mosque typology without following typological norms and features verbatim, is where the strength of this case study lies in the context of the sanctuary project. The manipulation of space and form which prepares one for the sanctity of the mosque provides instructive clues for the designing of a sanctuary.

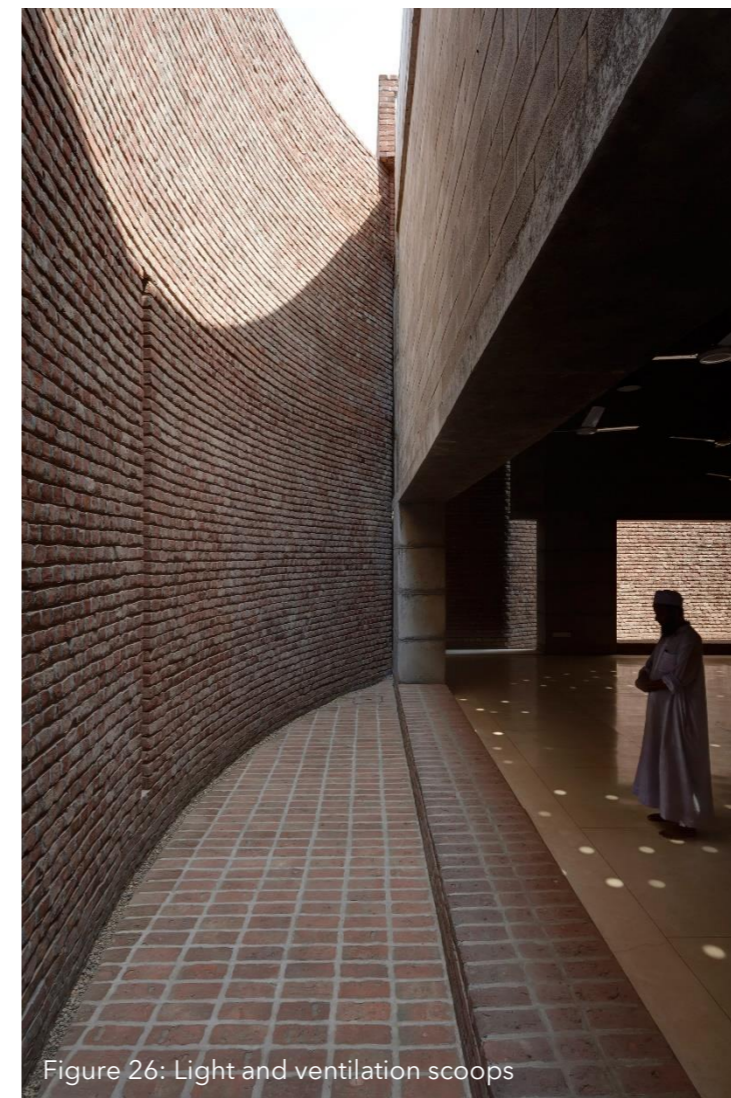


Figure 26: Light and ventilation scoops

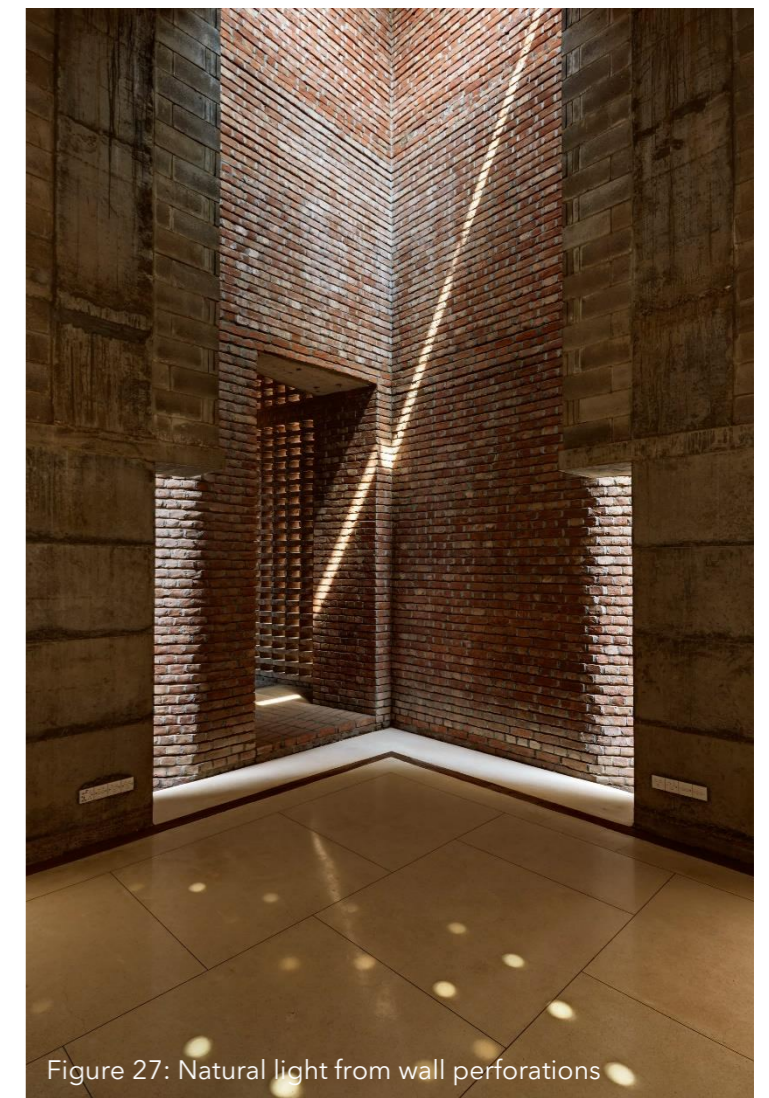


Figure 27: Natural light from wall perforations

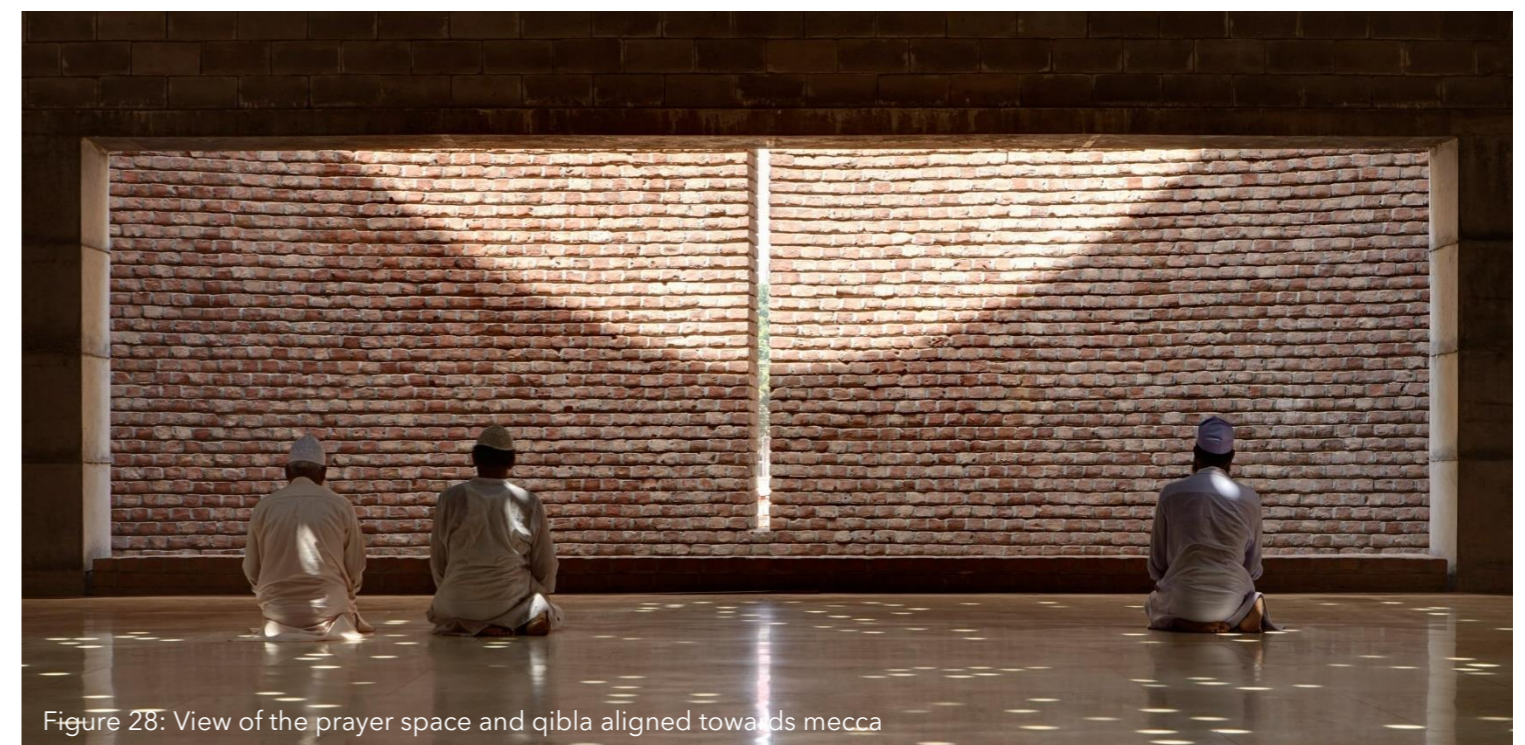


Figure 28: View of the prayer space and qibla aligned towards mecca

²⁷ Griffiths, A. 2017. Daylight filters in through the roof and walls of Bangladeshi mosque by Marina Tabassum. *Dezeen*. Available: <https://www.dezeen.com/2017/03/05/bait-ur-rouf-mosque-dhaka-bangladesh-marina-tabassum-brick-aga-khan-award/> [Accessed on 18 March 2022].

03 – 17 GLEN BY STUDIOMAS

Location: 17 Glen Avenue, Higgovale/Gardens, Cape Town

Architects: studioMAS

Date of Completion: 2012

Project Outline:

17 Glen is an effort to radically extend the relationship between built form and nature; where nature is expected to fuse with the building, and small animal life is expected to inhabit the building. The structure becomes a frame upon and around which nature can grow, with the result of the building being enveloped by its surroundings, instead of the building existing in stark contrast to them. studioMAS describe it as a “long-term urban experiment with the aim of encouraging conditions for life”.²⁸ The goal of the project is to achieve the harmonious co-habitation of humans, built form, small wildlife, and plant life.

Textured facebrick offers itself as a climbing frame on to which plants can attach, but also is reminiscent of the colours and textures of the granite found on the site. The planted roof, with wild grasses like that found elsewhere on site, lifts the ground-scape up so as to allow for the building to totally retreat behind nature. The building seamlessly blends in with the landscape, appearing as a rock like that of the surrounds, only suggesting its difference in moments of sharp lines and framed openings.

What was so valuable in finding this project was firstly, being able to appreciate the experimental nature and the willingness for the building to synthesize and become part of the landscape, and secondly, for its use of materials that so closely aligned to what had been envisioned for the sanctuary project already- the rough brick and wild grass planted roof. Seeing the actuality of the materials reinforced the first instinctual responses made for the sanctuary. The sympathy that this project demonstrates to its site and surrounds is most inspiring and impressive.



Figure 30: View of the naturally filtered pond between the granite boulders on site

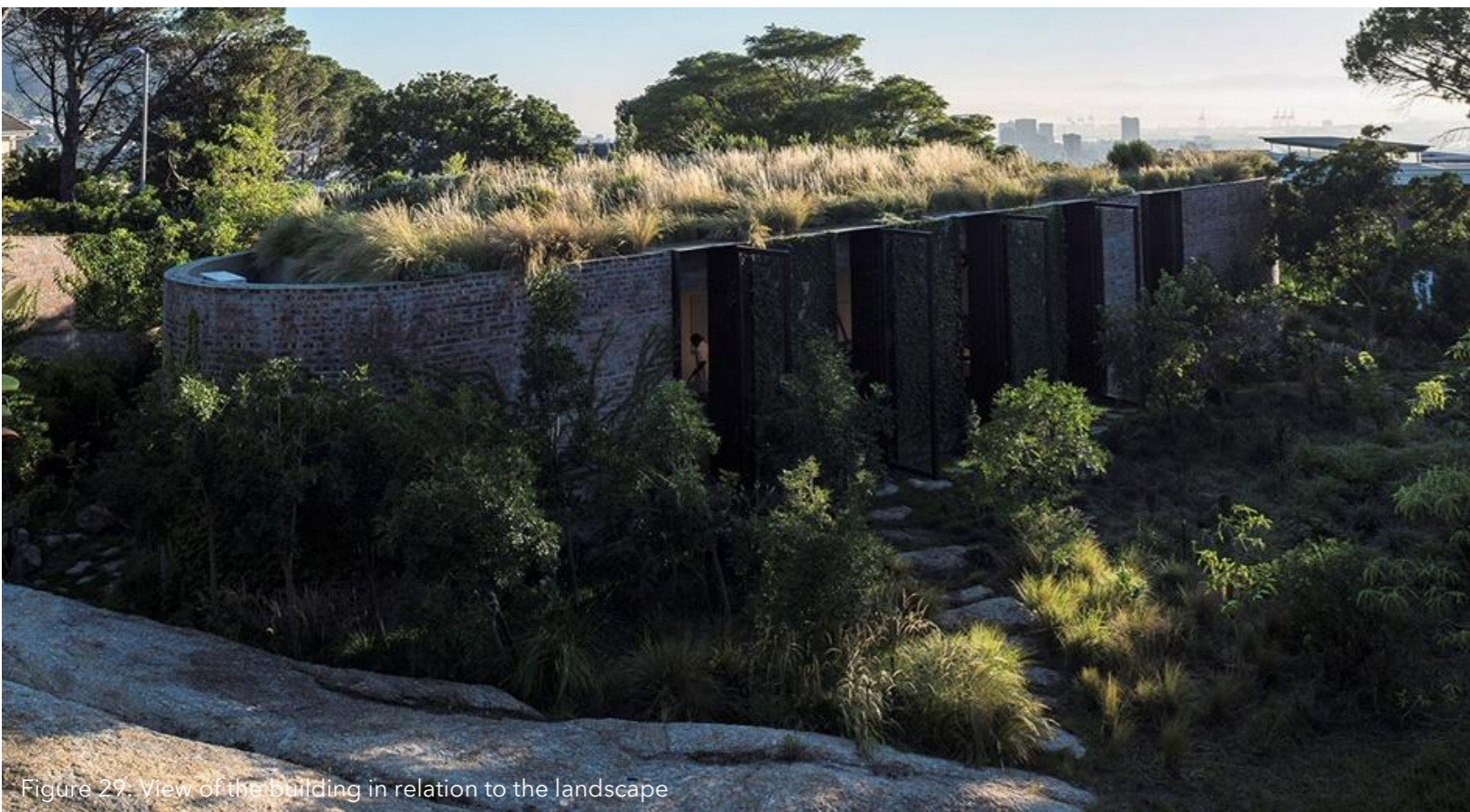


Figure 29: View of the building in relation to the landscape



Figure 31: View of the interior office space



Figure 32: The celebration of water

²⁸ studioMAS. 17 Glen. Online project description, publish date unknown. Available: <http://www.studiomas.co.za/17-glen.php> [Accessed on 03 August 2022]

04 - SHELTER FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE BY AMOS GOLDREICH ARCHITECTURE AND JACOBS YANIS ARCHITECTS

Location: Israel

Architects: Amos Goldreich Architecture and Jacobs Yanis Architects

Date of Completion: 2018

Project Outline:

Out of all the case studies chosen, this is the one which illustrates what I find problematic in most facilities for survivors of abuse. This project set out to be a far more home-like space as is evident in the published renders (see figure 33 and 34),²⁹ however, the execution of the project resulted in a space that appears cold, uninviting, sterile, and characterless. Information regarding whether the shelter has proven successful amongst the women who inhabit it has not been found, no such report has been published yet, however judging it purely aesthetically, I do think that the building lacks a softness and level of comfort that ought to be present in a space of healing. This case study therefore serves as a reminder of what is intended to be avoided.

See images below to observe the disjuncture between the proposed renders and the resultant building.³⁰



Figure 33: Rendered internal perspective



Figure 34: Rendered birds eye view

²⁹ Oh, E. 2015. *No to Violence Shelter / Jacobs-Yaniv Architects + Amos Goldreich Architecture*. Online article published by ArchDaily on 6 September 2015. Available: <https://www.archdaily.com/773055/firms-from-london-and-israel-design-a-shelter-for-domestic-abuse-victims-in-israel> [Accessed on 18 March 2022]



Figure 35: Photograph of internal courtyard

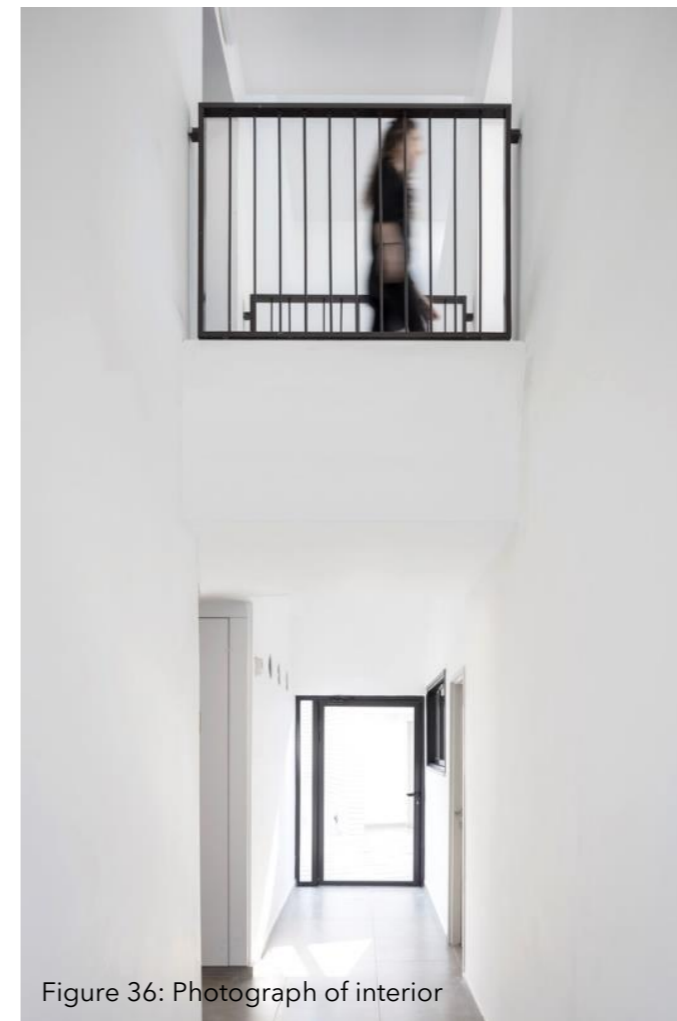


Figure 36: Photograph of interior

³⁰ Gonzalez, M. 2018. *Shelter for Victims of Domestic Violence*. Available: <https://www.archdaily.com/894042/shelter-for-victims-of-domestic-violence-amos-goldreich-architecture-plus-jacobs-yaniv-architects> [Accessed on 9 March 2022].

To understand the structure and operations of existing facilities I had initially intended to examine a few reports regarding trauma-based design, issues of homelessness, and providing shelter/refuge for women and children, thinking that the basic principles outlined would leave gaps worthy of discussing here. However, I have since come across two reports which leave fewer gaps than expected, compelling me to outline some of their most salient points rather than to examine a range of less helpful reports.

The first report is written by Samantha Donnelly, an Australian architect and PhD candidate, whose report is titled *Design Guide for Refuge Accommodation for Women and Children*. Donnelly identifies that inhabitation of existing buildings without adequate retrofitting for the purpose of an abuse shelter proves to serve the inhabitants poorly- where purpose-designed buildings and renovations can offer better safety and wellbeing through the thoughtful use of light, quality of space, and materials.³¹

What Donnelly identifies from her research is that facilities often provide inadequate thermal comfort, inadequate landscape design, inadequate furnishing of communal spaces, do not allow for flexibility, and do not sufficiently cater to the accommodation needs of children and teenagers. One of her key findings is that “tailored design responses” benefit the inhabitants and process of healing remarkably, as opposed to being constrained by an existing building that was intended and used for different purposes. The design principles which Donnelly extracts from her research and engagement are as follows: “Safety, privacy, dignity, flexibility, accessibility, child-focus, sustainable, therapeutic environments and sense of home”.

The nature of reports in general presents very dry, scientifically produced information, which this report does feel heavy with. The presentation of information is very linear and does not feature narrative elements, though Donnelly does concede that she did not obtain ethics clearance in time for publication of her interviews. What I do appreciate in Donnelly’s report is her architectural lens, which identifies the importance of space-making in terms of materials, light, connection to nature, thermal comfort, spaces that foster self-worth, and providing a sense of home, which all aligns with my intuitive responses.

The second report is written by Jill Pable and Anna Ellis, both American authors writing for the Design Resources for Homelessness organisation and knowledge resource. The report is titled *Trauma-Informed Design: Definitions and Strategies for Architectural Implementation*.

The report is written from the perspective of professionals outside of the built environment, though contribution has been provided from a range of professions. The report is written for the purposes of informing architectural design.³² The way that a range of contributions is included in their research is admirable, and Pable and Ellis emphasize the importance of cross-disciplinary research in the context of trauma-informed design.

Pable and Ellis define dignity and self-esteem, empowerment and personal control, stress management, a sense of community, beauty and meaning as being “primary human needs” to which trauma-informed design must respond. They expand these “primary needs” by exploring topics such as privacy, confidentiality, individuality, choice, sensory and dynamic spaces, connection to nature, community, and stress reduction.

As with the previous report, this one is quite dry and clinical. However, there are a number of responses identified in the report with which I strongly align. In both reports there is much for me to learn, in terms of the ‘on the ground’ research that both have relied on. There are insights to be gained regarding everyday responses to things like a shared kitchen or a child’s play area, which will prove impactful in my understanding of this topic.

³¹ Donnelly, S. 2020. *Design Guide for Refuge Accommodation for Women and Children*. UTS Shopfront Community Research Fellowship. Pg 5

³² Pable, J. & Ellis, A. 2010. *Trauma-Informed Design: Definitions and Strategies for Architectural Implementation*. Design Resources for Homelessness.

³³ Lempert, L.B. 2003. Shelters: For Abused Women, or Abusive Men? As Aids to Survival, or as Rehabilitation Sites? *Agenda: Empowering Women for Gender Equity*, 2003, No. 57, Urban Culture (2003), pp. 89-100

³⁴ Woodward, N. 2017. For women experiencing violence, refuge is not the answer. TEDx Christchurch. Online video published 16 November 2017. Accessible from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i0S043ZgitM&list=PLaytmTMePb7MciB87MENrCTi3Qz27S4FD&index=11> [Accessed on 04 July 2022]

Useful abbreviations:

NSMSA – National Shelter Movement of South Africa

VEP – Victim Empowerment Programme

DSD – Department of Social Development

GBV – Gender-based violence

IPV – Intimate Partner Violence

WCSM – Western Cape Shelter Movement

Shelters for women who have experienced abuse are certainly not a cure to the problem of gender-based violence. However, shelters exist and remain necessary because we, in society, are unable to eradicate the broken behaviour of some of our fellow human beings. It is far more sustainable to approach the issue of abuse preventatively and focus not only on the abused but on the abusers, those that are unable to understand the consequences of their actions and are unable to behave in a regulated way.

There are a number of arguments against shelters for this very reason, because they do not address the source of the problem. Women like Lora Bex Lempert in her article titled *Shelters: For Abused Women, or Abusive Men? As Aids to Survival, or as Rehabilitation Sites?*³³ and Nicola Woodward in her TEDx talk titled *For Women Experiencing Violence, Refuge is Not the Answer*,³⁴ provide some such arguments compellingly. Though I wholeheartedly agree that more work needs doing at the source of the problem, I do recognise and believe in the need for shelters in South Africa, where violence is entrenched in our society in a way that cannot be eradicated quickly enough to warrant the abandonment of shelters.

To understand what brings a woman to the point of seeking refuge, Norah Casey’s identification of the four stages of abuse provides a succinct explanation:

- First is the stage of “seduction”, this is the beginning stage of a relationship in which one perceives the other person as infallible. This is where feelings of love and loyalty are developed.

Second is the stage of “delusion”, where one misdirects blame onto oneself and makes excuses for the abuser.

Third is the stage of “re-awakening”, where one grows aware of the wrongness of the situation.

Lastly, is the stage of “leaving”, often the most difficult and most dangerous stage, in which one is ultimately fighting for one’s own survival and that of any dependents.³⁵

Shelters generally deal only with the last stage, offering healing but not necessarily prevention. They offer reparative healing but cannot assist sooner unless approached to do so. There are currently 23 shelters listed on the Western Cape Government website, one of which I will briefly examine in closer detail to provide a window of understanding into the processes and spaces involved. Thereafter, a summary of findings published by the National Shelter Movement of South Africa (NSMSA) in 2021 will be included to provide insight into a range of shelter conditions across the country.

NSMSA- RAISING WOMEN’S VOICES IN SOUTH AFRICA #3

Shelters work together across the country to provide safety and healing opportunities, with efforts such as the National Shelter Movement of South Africa in conjunction with other organisations, to provide as much care and safety as possible for survivors of abuse. This third report by NSMSA covers the experiences of 36 willing ex-residents from 13 shelters across South Africa.³⁶

³⁵ Casey, N. 2018. *The Courage to Leave*. TEDx Dublin Institute of Technology. Online video published 6 February 2018. Accessible from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i0hij-L5c-A&list=PLaytmTMePb7MciB87MENrCTi3Qz27S4FD&index=12> [Accessed on 04 July 2022]

³⁶ Marie, M. and Meer, Shamim. (2021) *Raising Women’s Voices in South African Shelters #3*. Report published by the National Shelter Movement of South Africa in November 2021. Available: <https://www.nsmsa.org.za/2021/11/23/raising-womens-voices-in-south-african-shelters-book3/> [Accessed 27 May 2022]

The table below (see figure 37) collates information gathered from 36 women across 13 shelters (in the Western Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, and Limpopo). These show that the reason for women coming to the shelters was not limited to intimate partner violence, the commonality being the presence of trauma for each woman, regardless of the reason for seeking help.

The process of accessing a shelter is varied, but most commonly begins with a traumatic escape. Escape is often found with a friend, social worker, family members, a clinic, a police station, or a hotline. It is rarer for a woman to go directly to a shelter without referral because many people are unaware of a shelter’s existence, role, offering or location.

The age of women accessing shelters ranged from under twenty years old, up to under 60 years old. Women accessed the shelter for a range of period from as little as a week, up to a year and a half, for both emergency and long-term/transitional accommodation. Twenty women were accompanied by their children, and those that weren’t either did not have children, or had left their children to stay with family, friends, or others.

The report is invaluable for the wealth of information which it contains, from that information on funding, to testimonials from the women on how they got to the shelter and what their experience of the shelter was, to the informal listed below in the table (see figure 37). It is truly worth a read if more information regarding shelters is desired. There are many other helpful publications by the NSMSA, as well as equally helpful publications from the Heinrich Boll Stiftung organisation.

WHITE DOOR CENTRES

It seemed relevant to speak briefly on another initiative that responds to the rise in gender-based violence, in conjunction with VEP, the White Door Centres. These centres offer emergency help and are defined as “localised victim reception centre[s] that [are] located as close to the community as possible”.³⁷ The centres offer very short-term assistance, preferring that a women stay no longer than three to six hours before being referred or taken to a shelter that can provide longer term assistance and accommodation. It is referred to as a local reception-assessment-referral site. Basic care, non-professional support, emotional containment and referral is offered mostly by volunteers.

Shelters generally offer therapy with social workers and psychologists, access to healthcare, education on anything from human rights, to caring for children, to skills training. They offer access to job opportunities and legal support. They also offer connections to support and sympathetic, relatable people.

Escape from a violent or traumatic situation is often followed by threats and danger, which is why shelters require such a careful security. Security is offered in four common ways; firstly, with physical barriers, secondly by not publishing shelter locations. Thirdly, with human surveillance, and lastly, the placement of a woman in a shelter is carefully considered in terms of risk and her needs, so a woman escaping a home from Hout Bay for example will likely not be sheltered in the area but might be taken to a shelter in Claremont, or further if required.

1 in 5 partnered women over the age of 18 experience physical violence.

Every 8 hours a woman is murdered by an intimate partner.

SA’s femicide rate is 5x higher than the global average.³⁸

Age of women (years):	U/20 years	20-29 years	30-39 years	40-49 years	50-59 years	unspecified								
	1	10	15	4	4	2								
Length of stay (months):	18 months	10 months	9 months	8 months	7 months	6 months	5 months	4 months	3 months	2 months	1 month	2 weeks	1 week	
	4	1	1	2	1	5	3	4	7	1	5	1	1	
Reason for taking shelter:	IPV	To end sex work	Rape	Family conflict/violence	Homeless after burglary									
	24	1	5	5	1									
Women with accompanying children:	1 child	2 children	3 children	5 children	None accompanying									
	5	10	4	1	16									
Referral from (25 of 36 women):	Social Worker	Police	Community Member	Psychologist	Pastor	Brother								
	11	8	3	1	1	1								
Self-referral from (11 of 36 women):	Talks attended	Radio	Wellness programme at work	Lived in proximity to shelter	Previously volunteered at shelter	Knew a member of staff	Unknown							
	2	1	1	1	1	1	4							

Figure 37: Table representing statistics of women in shelters from the National Shelter Movement of South Africa’s *Raising Women’s Voices in South African Shelters #3*.

³⁷ Al Fidaa Foundation. *White Door Centre*. Website article published by Al Fidaa Foundation, publish date unknown. Available: <https://www.alfidaa.co.za/white-door-centre/> [Accessed on 19 July 2022]

³⁸ Africa Check. Accessible from: <https://africacheck.org/fact-checks/reports/femicide-south-africa-3-numbers-about-murdering-women-investigated> - <https://africacheck.org/fact-checks/reports/five-facts-femicide-south-africa> - <https://africacheck.org/fact-checks/reports/violence-against-south-africas-women-children-verifying-claims-mens-summit> [Accessed on 27 May 2022]

To further understand trauma, I turn to the writing of bell hooks, and her book *Belonging: A culture of Place*. Two chapters, *Healing Talk*³⁹ and *Returning to the Wound*⁴⁰ are of particular relevance and have expanded my understanding of emotional pain and the potentials for healing. In *Returning to the Wound*, hooks introduces us to Wendell Berry who is of prolific inspiration to her. hooks and Berry both come from Kentucky and share a deep connection to their native land, despite being in many respects very different, most notably with regards to age, class, and race. It is from Berry that hooks adopts the term *belonging*- which she expands as a *culture of place*. This notion of belonging, or a culture of place, consists of a rootedness in a place that one calls home, being rooted in the community, earth, and life of the place.

It is this rootedness that hooks identifies as mitigating the racial traumas that she has experience. hooks says that racism and white supremacy persist so dominantly in America because of the profound silence in and around the topic. The silence, hooks says, accounts for the “rewounding and marking of black people in America”, which must be countered by bravely tackling the topic and developing a language adequate for the task.

Berry and hooks both identify the power of intimacy in being able to persist in American societies despite the segregation and fracturing nature of racism. Intimacy is so profound here because it humanises the dehumanised. When hooks asked a number of people what most armed them in standing up against racism, the common answer was love. Beyond the importance of love and intimacy as bridging elements, what hooks posits as being most important in dismantling racism and navigating trauma is a critical awareness of one’s native place. This allows for an understanding of one’s [and others’] needs and desires. This relates very neatly to the words of Spivak, which echo the importance of an intimate understanding of place in combating the ills of marginalisation⁴¹.

hooks discusses Berry’s revolutionary identification of white supremacy’s role in and link to the destruction of the earth⁴². Berry says it is the dominant nature of the colonial white supremacist that has disconnected us from the earth, at the same time it has rendered the colonial white supremacist dependent on the marginalised for the performing of vital tasks which are deemed ‘beneath them’.

Berry and hooks discuss how the domination of people resulted in psychic wounds to the marginalised, and physical wounds to the earth. They speak of the condition of white supremacy and dominator culture being one of dominator and victim- a harmful binary. hooks discusses that ‘victim’ has become the definition of the marginalised, which is so damaging in that it limits one’s understanding of oneself and poisons one’s self-worth. hooks says it is vital to know that “we are more than our pain”.

Both hooks and Berry favour the agrarian history of the racially marginalised, which provided an intrinsic connection to the land and armed people with a set of capabilities that the dominating white supremacists did not possess⁴³. Where most people viewed the agrarian black folk as just victims, agrarian practice provided a symbiotic relationship with the land which empowered the marginalised. hooks here speaks of the “power of redemptive suffering”, of knowing honest, hard work and connecting to the divine by the connection to things far greater than them. She says that the land acted as a place of spiritual renewal for agrarian black folk, and it provided “ecstasy” in the achievement of hard work.

Berry and hooks both believe in a world that is able to transcend race by connecting to land, place, and community. To this hooks says that “the diversity of a place need not matter if difference were to enter a world of a beloved community, a place of welcome and a place to belong”. These abilities and knowledges hooks identifies as being powerful tools in the dignity of people, which enables them to process their grief and trauma from a place of entrenched self-worth and capabilities. This I find to be very relevant and profound, where the knowing and defining of self plays an active role in the processing of trauma.

³⁹ hooks, b. 2009a. *Belonging a culture of place*. New York: Routledge, 2009. Chapter 18: Returning to the Wound. Pg 174-183

⁴⁰ hooks, b. 2009b. *Belonging a culture of place*. New York: Routledge, 2009. Chapter 18: Healing Talk; A Conversation. Pg 184-201

⁴¹ UC Berkeley Events. 2010. *BRRG PRESENTS: Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak on Situating Feminism*. Columbia University. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=garPdV7U3fQ> [Accessed on 9 March 2022]

⁴² hooks, b. 2009a. *Belonging a culture of place*. New York: Routledge, 2009. Chapter 18: Returning to the Wound. Pg 174-183

⁴³ hooks, b. 2009b. *Belonging a culture of place*. New York: Routledge, 2009. Chapter 18: Healing Talk; A Conversation. Pg 184-201

What can be commonly said about facilities for healing is that they can be functional to the point of being austere. Austerity and functionality are certainly not attributes that come to mind when considering healing processes. In view of this I find it useful to examine feminist perspectives of spatial limitations, to expand on the spatial opportunities and limitations explored in the previous section.

In considering prescriptiveness, I think of how Grosz writes of the need to acknowledge our inability to predict and know the future⁴⁴. With regards to this, Grosz identifies across many examples, the way that ideas of utopia attempt to freeze time by posing a finite solution to an issue of the present. Utopia thus, as Grosz explains, becomes a place without place, it exists beyond known spatiality and as an enclosed, self-governing, isolated place with no real relation to the rest of the world.

Having read Thomas More’s *Utopia*⁴⁵ and Perkins Gilman’s *Herland*⁴⁶, I can appreciate this criticism of utopia from Grosz. In both examples, political and societal problems were simply resolved by a distancing from the problems, resulting in a community who had forgotten about the rest of the world and the way that it works, who developed in isolation from the rest of the world, in a world governed by homogeneity. In both examples, uniforms, rules, and a desire for egalitarianism result in very controlled, binary ways of being. This leaves little to no room for individual expression.

The isolation response of Utopia is exactly what I would like to avoid in my project- the sanctuary should not exist in isolation from society in a way that harbours feelings of shame when seeking help in processing trauma. Healing should be a natural, shameless, and supported process.

An example of a prescriptive movement in architecture is modernism. Here, Beatriz Colomina’s writing becomes invaluable in understanding the principles and limitations of prescription and modernism⁴⁷. In her book, *X-Ray Architecture*, Colomina is fascinated by the little spoken of relationship between illness and architecture. In the 1980s Colomina began to recognise architecture in terms of all the pathologies related to it, or to which it related.

By looking specifically at Tuberculosis, Colomina identifies the way in which architecture in the twentieth century was produced in response to disease and medical technologies. This bond, Colomina identifies, between architecture and illness can be traced back, for example, to Vitruvius in the first century BC, with his compulsion to respond architecturally to the four humours. Modernism here too provides a very clear example of architecture being driven by the health of the body and of the mind.

Colomina outlines the context of Modernism as being plagued with war and illness. The medical response was to sterilise, anaesthetize and numb those shocked and ill. The modernist response was also to produce sterile spaces, which allowed for the anaesthetization and quietening of the mind, and for the prevention of disease by the prioritising of sunlight, constantly moving/changing air, and a lack of germs.

Modernism also prized “visual hygiene”, rejecting ornament, colour, and texture, as Colomina examines (see figure 38). I find this useful to liken to today, where we consume the world most often through fast moving cars, trains, and digital images. Any detail or ornament is therefore less consumable unless we are curatorially shown the detail of something. We lose tactile experience from the consuming of the world on screens, so much so that trends have developed which exhibit macro photography, ASMR videos (“autonomous sensory meridian response”) celebrating the sounds of everyday objects, and fascinations with hand-crafting objects. What I notice is a deprivation of the senses in society, resulting in people finding therapeutic value in pursuit of sensory stimulation.

⁴⁴ Grosz, E. 2001b. Chapter Eight- Embodied Utopias: The Time of Architecture. In *Architecture from the Outside: Essays on Virtual and Real Space*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press. 131-150.

⁴⁵ More, T. 2012. *Utopia*. 5th ed. Great Britain: Penguin Classics.

⁴⁶ Perkins Gilman, C. 2015. *Herland and the Yellow Wallpaper*. Great Britain: Penguin Random House UK.

⁴⁷ Colomina, B. 2019. *X-ray Architecture: Illness as Metaphor*. Zurich, Switzerland: Lars Muller Publishers and Beatriz Colomina.



Figure 38: Excerpt from Colomina's X-Ray Architecture, pages 28 - 29

RESPONSIVE ARCHITECTURE

- A DEEP UNDERSTANDING OF PLACE, HEALING, AND HOME

Responsive architecture is something which to me provides great opportunity for addressing issues of the sterility and 'coldness' of institutional spaces. To respond through a design is to pursue a deep understanding of a broad range of concerns. It requires an understanding of place, people, the landscape, and more. To achieve an understanding of these things is to position oneself as a designer most suitably for responding appropriately and thoughtfully to a project. And it is appropriate, careful, and thoughtful responses which I think are missing in many of the facilities currently offered to survivors of abuse.

To better understand and provide scope to responsive architecture in this paper, I look to the words and writings of Glenn Murcutt. I will not be examining his architecture, but rather the profundity of his thinking and teachings. I will also refer to Mariam Kamara's explanation of how her practice, atelier masōmī, tackles a new project, by first focusing on acquiring as much information about the context as possible⁴⁸.

The reason for my reference to the work of Murcutt and Kamara is largely due to the way in which I deeply relate to both of their ideals. Murcutt was introduced to me in the context of vernacular architecture, a typology which he disputes by saying that he is not at all concerned with producing an "Australian architecture", rather, he is focused on finding an "architecture of place"⁴⁹. To produce an "Australian architecture" is to design by following a style, rather than following a process of careful consideration, this level of "thought" is what Murcutt endeavours to hold at the core of all of his work.

Responsive architecture is a term which I think far more appropriately describes the work of Murcutt. His intentions are to intimately know the site and respond to it with the most harmonious, site specific and sustainable design possible.

Kamara's work provides example of a far more socially responsive design, as compared to Murcutt who speaks mostly of landscape and less of humans. Kamara also focuses on a deep, intimate knowledge of the site, but whether due to designing in more densely populated areas or due to differing priorities, Kamara's knowledge of site is deeply entrenched in knowing the people of the site in terms of their histories, present circumstances, and desires⁵⁰.

To learn from both Murcutt and Kamara I think is to gain a more well-rounded understanding of responsive architecture. Their work complements each other's and provides inspiring lessons of what responsive architecture can encompass and achieve.

Their words will become the framework for reading and critiquing the case studies that I have chosen in representing the making of responsive architecture. These references will both inspire and provide measures for my own work.

INTIMATE KNOWLEDGE OF SITE

Glenn Murcutt tells Peter Thompson in an interview that aesthetics in his architecture is "this or that" - in other words, the aesthetics of a building is not his priority⁵¹. Far more important to Murcutt is an intimate knowledge of the site. Paying close attention to orientation, cooling winds, and weather patterns, for example, prevails above aesthetics. Murcutt says that he would like to be able to observe, in all buildings around the world, a response to the specific location/place of a built work⁵². To Murcutt, responses should also be to "colour, texture, scale, the form of the land, the shapes of the trees, the structures of the trees, the delicacy of the trees, and the delicacy of the landscape".

Similarly, Mariam Kamara of atelier masōmī explains in an interview with designboom that understanding the context of a site is of utmost importance to her at the start of a new project⁵³. Kamara says that understanding the context in terms of historical background, a site's materials, demographics, connecting with a sample group or representatives from the area, etc. is always her first move (some commercial projects being the

⁴⁸ Barandy, K. 2021. A Dialogue with Mariam Kamara of Atelier Masomi: First, do no Harm. Available: <https://www.designboom.com/architecture/mariam-kamara-atelier-masomi-interview-09-30-2021/> [Accessed 18 March 2022].

⁴⁹ Murcutt, G. & Drew, P. 1999. *Touch this earth lightly: Glenn Murcutt in his own words*. 1st ed. Sydney: Duffy & Snellgrove.. Pg 69

⁵⁰ Barandy, K. 2021. A Dialogue with Mariam Kamara of Atelier Masomi: First, do no Harm. Available: <https://www.designboom.com/architecture/mariam-kamara-atelier-masomi-interview-09-30-2021/> [Accessed on 18 March 2022].

⁵¹ Vinnitskaya, I. 2012. Interview: Glenn Murcutt Talking Heads. Available: <https://www.archdaily.com/210184/interview-glenn-murcutt-talking-heads> [Accessed on 17 March 2022].

⁵² Murcutt, G. & Drew, P. 1999. *Touch this earth lightly: Glenn Murcutt in his own words*. 1st ed. Sydney: Duffy & Snellgrove.. Pg 69

⁵³ Barandy, K. 2021. A Dialogue with Mariam Kamara of Atelier Masomi: First, do no Harm. Available: <https://www.designboom.com/architecture/mariam-kamara-atelier-masomi-interview-09-30-2021/> [18 March 2022].

exception). She always holds off on sketching until she has collected information about the site, because sketching involves decision-making and turning back from a decision can prove difficult. This, she says, is so important for the insights and surprises which the learning process yields.

In speaking of the role of an architect, Kumara describes that it is "about actually being mindful that what we do has an impact and to make sure that, kind of like doctors, that we do no harm. So first do no harm, and then, what can we do better?". This I believe is intrinsic to responsive design.



Figure 39: Murcutt's Henric Nicholson house, Mt. Irvine. Photo by Philip Drew (Drew, 2001;166).

MATERIALS

In an interview with Glenn Murcutt for Living Steel's third International Architecture Competition for Sustainable Housing, Murcutt says early on that the technological solutions within architecture today are not sustainable⁵⁴. This notion aligns directly with my desire to turn to passive and responsive systems. Murcutt identifies that current understandings of sustainability in architecture are very much surface level; there is little understanding of the creating and harvesting of materials for example. Here Murcutt outlines the importance of knowing what goes into the making of a timber member as opposed to a steel one, from harvesting to processing to accessing the materials⁵⁵.

Materials that can return to the earth are prized by Murcutt, being able to effectively recycle and re-use a material is a priority of Murcutt's, but these processes require extra energy, where materials that can naturally be consumed by the earth present the ultimate sustainability⁵⁶. In Murcutt's practice, knowing what goes into each material helps him to apportion materials within a building- he reduces or increases a material in a building depending on its sustainability to increase the overall sustainability of a building.



Figure 40: Kamara's (of Atelier Masomi) market in Dandaji, Niger.

MAKING

"I admire anyone who does anything in architecture- or, for that matter, any other creative pursuit. I admire them more if the work is... inventive... I mean inventive in terms of solving beautifully, naturally, some problem which exists."⁵⁷.

Murcutt quoted above speaks of the labour and effort that goes into solving problems beautifully, thoughtfully, and by hand, which is something he identifies as being present less and less in the twentieth century. He says that a lack of craft in buildings results in a lack of gentleness and lack of signs of being shaped by the human hand.

This sentiment is exactly what I had been trying to articulate in my developing of my thesis topic. I am very aware of the loss of tactility, character, texture, and craft in buildings, which I believe resists providing any sense of home or belonging in a space. For this reason, in the context of healing, creating a home-like space, or sanctuary by means of privileging craft and making is one of my priorities.

Herewith I will examine four case studies to illustrate moments of responsiveness. Whether that be in terms of materiality, sustainability, understanding of place, situation in landscape, construction methods, affordability of materials and/or construction, or harvesting of natural energy/resources. The case studies have been carefully chosen for the way that they respond to of one or more of the above.

⁵⁴ Winstanley, T. 2012. *Flashback: Glen Murcutt on Sustainability*. Available: https://www.archdaily.com/198616/flashback-glen-murcutt-on-sustainability?ad_medium=widget&ad_name=navigation-next [17 March 2022].

⁵⁵ Vinnitskaya, I. 2012. *Interview: Glenn Murcutt Talking Heads*. Available: <https://www.archdaily.com/210184/interview-glenn-murcutt-talking-heads> [17 March 2022].

⁵⁶ Murcutt, G. & Drew, P. 1999. *Touch this earth lightly: Glenn Murcutt in his own words*. 1st ed. Sydney: Duffy & Snellgrove.

CONCEPTUAL COLLAGES - SANCTUM

The collage below explores what the very private sanctum (accommodation units) might look like for the women and children, which connects them directly to the wetland and offers views/outlooks into the landscape. The material palette would need to offer both serenity and warmth, with a strong avoidance of sterility. Therefore, the collage explores timber as a way of softening the space, whilst offering a calming quality.



Figure 41: Collage of Sanctum by author

MAKING. CRAFT. MATERIALS AND SITES

- A TECHNOLOGICAL EXPLORATION

To investigate methods of making, crafting, responding to site and applying materials, three case studies have been chosen. The case studies cover a range of locations, social contexts, uses and economic conditions. Each has been chosen as an example of making, crafting, responding to site or applying materials that I resonate with and find inspiration from. Each example has been modelled in 3D by me to illustrate and explore the different technological strategies of the projects.

The case studies offered elements such as a harmonious relationship with nature and context, the empowerment and sheltering of humans, dis-assemblage and re-assemblage, uniqueness, and an acknowledgement of the site's history.

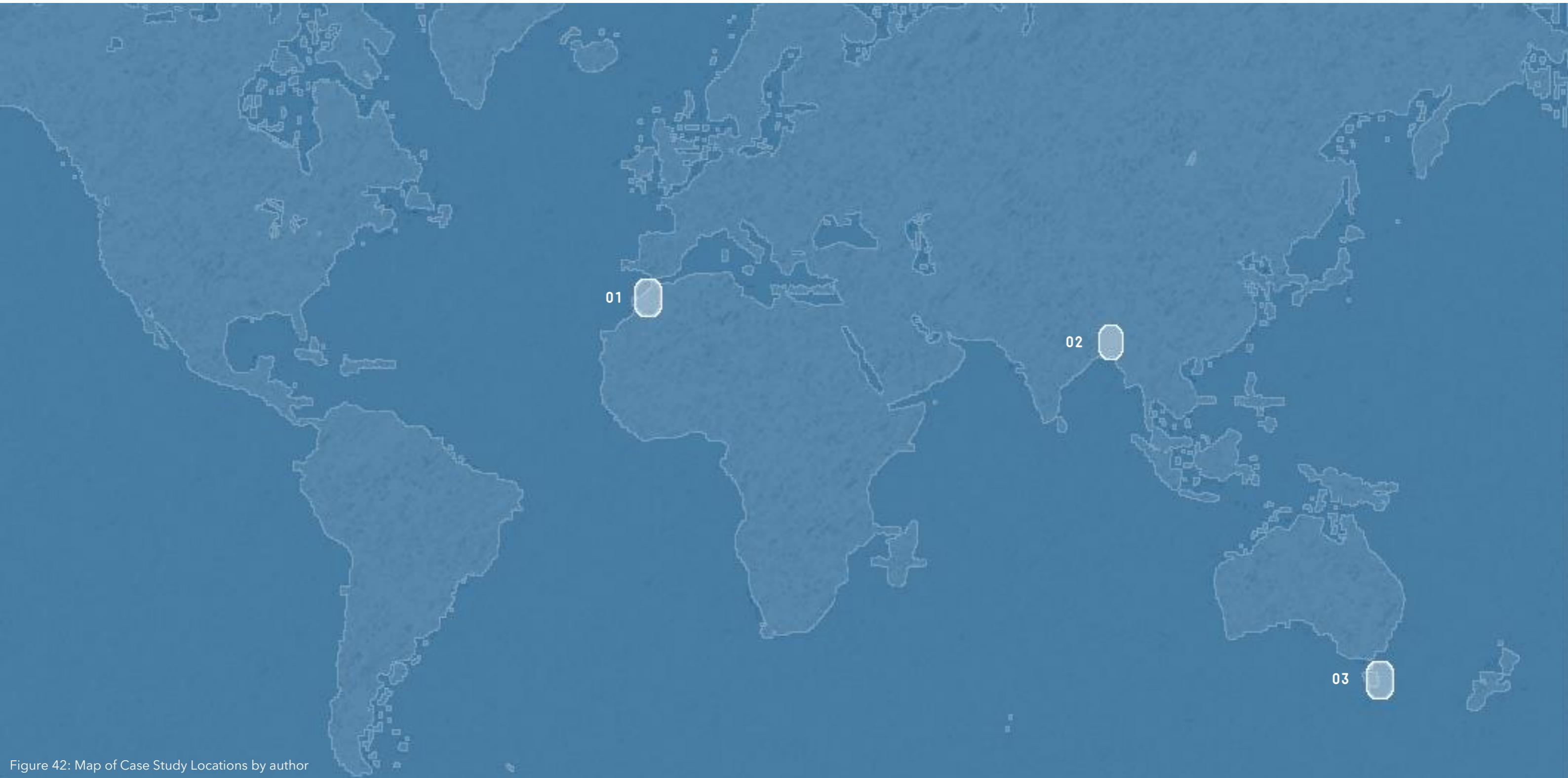


Figure 42: Map of Case Study Locations by author

Location: Ouled Merzoug, Drâa-Tafilalet, Morocco

Architects: BBB Architects and Studies, and BC Architects

Date of Completion: 2019

Project Outline: **EMPOWERMENT/UPLIFTMENT**

Women's House provides a space for women of the Ouled Merzoug community to meet, learn and work together⁵⁸. It was developed in collaboration between students of the UHasselt university and the residents of Ouled Merzoug. The community determined the programme and were involved from beginning to end. The community was asked what space they require or desire in the town, which resulted in the choice to create a space for textile related activities such as weaving (the 'atelier des femmes'), an area for bakery and cooking (the 'boulangerie'), and courtyards, the central one being a space for meeting (the 'cour').

In terms of materials, granite rock pieces, dug from the surrounds, were used for the peripheral walls. Mud/adobe brick was used for the 'inner' walls and mud/adobe was used for the roofs. Eucalyptus timber sourced from the local market was used for the structural beams. The lengths of the beams available restricted the span of the building. Reeds that grow in the "Palmeraie" (meaning palm groves) of the area were used for the ceiling. And different mixes of local earth, river sand, lime and straw were used for the wall and floor finishes. All of these techniques and materials are vernacular to the area, and commonly practiced by the craftsman of Ouled Merzoug. Therefore, the building celebrates the local craftsmanship and harmoniously blends in with neighbouring buildings, offering a homely familiarity to the occupants/users.

When I came across this project, I was immediately struck by the beauty of the simple material palette and the relation of the building to the human scale. The spaces are both intimate and open. Purposeful openings in the wall allow for views and natural ventilation. The peripheral stone walls provide directionality to the experience of the space and the views. And the use of local materials and construction methods allows for the building to appear natural in the landscape, almost as if it had always been there.

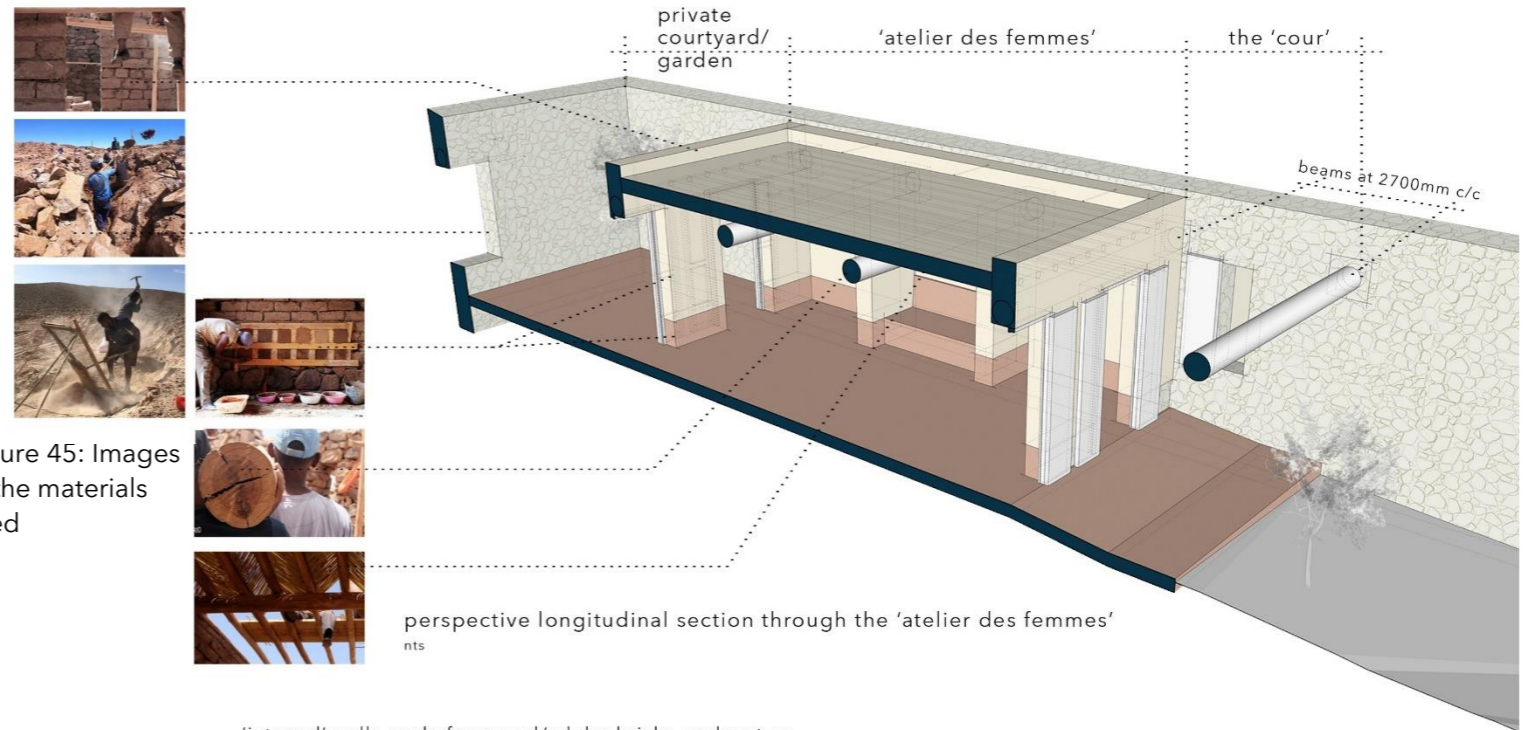


Figure 45: Images of the materials used

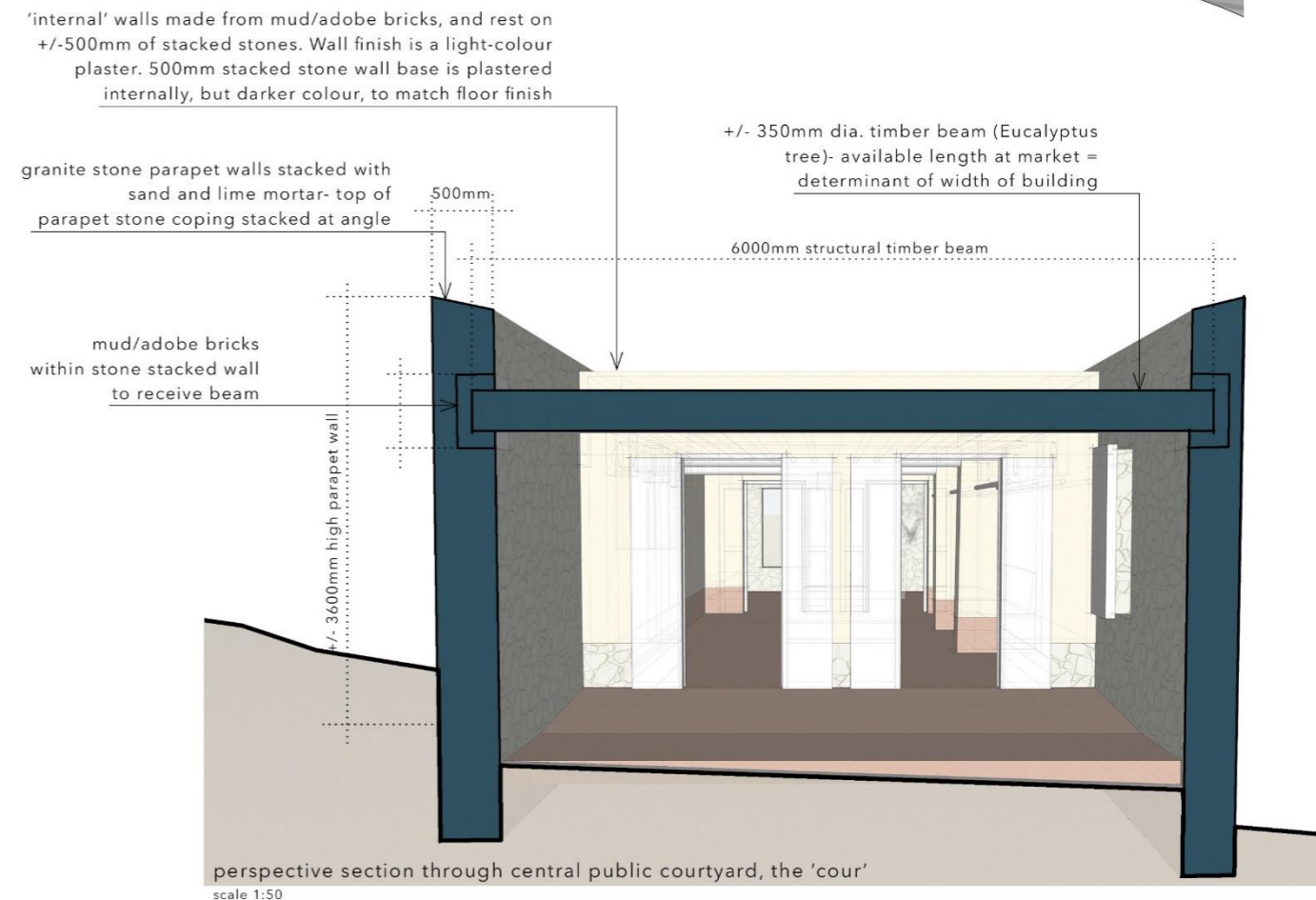


Figure 46: Perspective sections by author



Figure 43: Inside the 'atelier des femmes'



Figure 44: The building in the landscape

⁵⁸ Arvaniti-Pollatou, M. (2020) *Women's House of Ouled Merzoug in Morocco* | *Building Beyond Borders - U Hasselt University + BC architects & studios*. Online article published by Archisearch.gr on 6 May 2020. Available:

<https://www.archisearch.gr/architecture/womens-house-of-ouled-merzoug-in-marocco-building-beyond-borders-uhasselt-university-bc-architects-studios/> [Accessed on 07 March 2021]

Location: Char Hijla, Chandpur, Bangladesh

Architects: Marina Tabassum Architects (MTA)

Date of Completion: Ongoing

Project Outline: **ADAPTABILITY**

Khudi Bhari is a project intended to provide shelter to refugees and people displaced by flooding⁵⁹. The concept was developed in the time of the pandemic, to offer an affordable and simple “lightweight modular spaceframe” structure with the use of bamboo and steel joints. The project addresses both the shortage of housing and the ever-more relevant issue of displacement and destruction of homes due to flooding.

The structure consists of bamboo fitted into two types of steel joints to form an eccentric dodecahedron structure. The two steel joints are prefabricated and welded off-site and offer either four or six connections points for the bamboo members, which correlate with two levels of the structure. Metal and rope ties as well as simple nails are then used to attach the cladding structure, which makes use of bamboo purlins to support steel roof sheets and bamboo ‘reeds’ for panels and opening sections.

The structure creates a raised and protected sleeping level, with a covered ground level that can be closed in with bamboo ‘reed’ panels or can be left open for sleeping, eating, and relaxing. The ground level is raised on compacted earth to offer protection from floods. The ease of disassembly allows for residents to reposition their homes as needed. Despite the eccentric structure, the use of materials and scale of the enclosure allows for any inhabitants to assemble, modify, and reposition as needed. This is the beauty of the collaboration between MTA and those affected by the shortage of housing and the rising of sea levels. The adaptability and accessibility offered by this project is what is most valuable in the context of the sanctuary design.



Figure 48: One of the double bay prototypes

compacted and raised earth level for foundations and protection from flooding

structure can be repeated as required for a larger protected first floor level and a larger ground storey platform/summer sleeping area

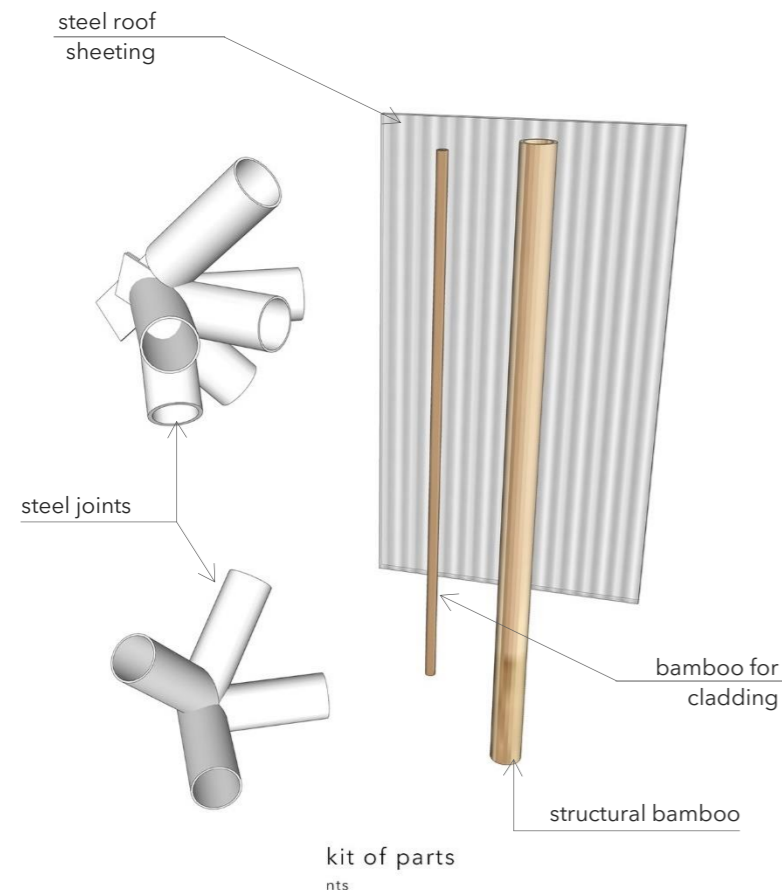
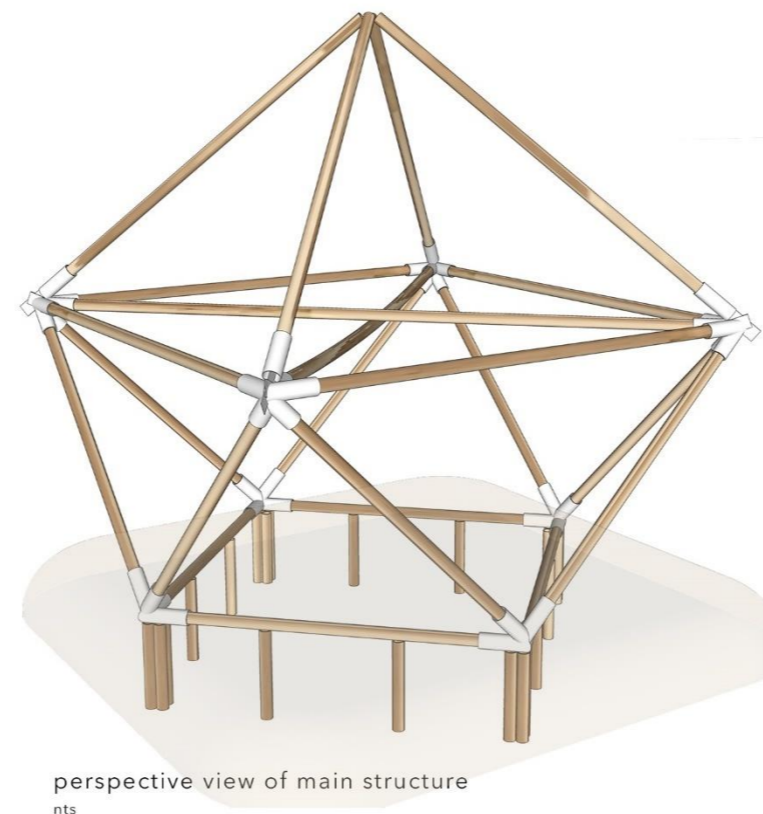


Figure 47: Perspectives of structure and components by author



perspective view of main structure



perspective view of main structure with cladding

⁵⁹ Soane Medal Lecture. 2021. 2021 Marina Tabassum [Video of Interview/Lecture]. Available: <https://www.soane.org/soane-medal/2021-marina-tabassum> [02 March 2022].

03 - SHEARER'S QUARTERS BY JOHN WARDLE ARCHITECTS

Location: North Bruny Island, Tasmania

Architects: John Wardle Architects

Date of Completion: 2011

Project Outline: **ROOTEDNESS**

Shearers Quarters continues its site history by referencing and replacing an original shearing shed that was destroyed by a fire.⁶⁰ It was built ten years after John Wardle and his wife began stewardship of the extensive property.⁶¹ The ten-year process of tending the site prior to construction of Shearer's Quarters included sheep rearing for wool production and the replanting of thousands of indigenous trees to return the site to its former, non-agricultural state. The building refers to shed typology by being "skinned" in corrugated iron and by making use of a pitched roof. The exception to the corrugated iron skin is the bunk room at the one end, which is clad with timber louvres. This space in particular pays homage to the traditional living quarters of the shearing team who were usually given lesser accommodation on the farm.

Timber was sourced from various farmers in the area who ordinarily have collections of "pinus macrocarpa" (used for old-style windbreaks), it was used for both the cladding and joinery. Apple box crates sourced from old orchards in the surrounds were used to clad the bedroom walls. More durable Eucalyptus timber was used for flooring, which receives more wear.

The complexity of the project was increased with the discovery of the high order skill levels of Tasmanian craftsman. The site itself also accommodates skill development of the John Wardle Architects staff as they annually engage in a process of making along the site's water edge, producing objects such as an open-air bath and kiln.

What I appreciate in particular in this project is the dedication to understanding the site and to acknowledging its history. The response to site, the landscape and the history is considered ever so carefully, resulting in an expression of materials and site conditions that honours and respects the story of site and context. This is the kind of respect to site that the sanctuary should embody.



Figure 49: View from the kitchen



Figure 50: Southern view of Shearers Quarters

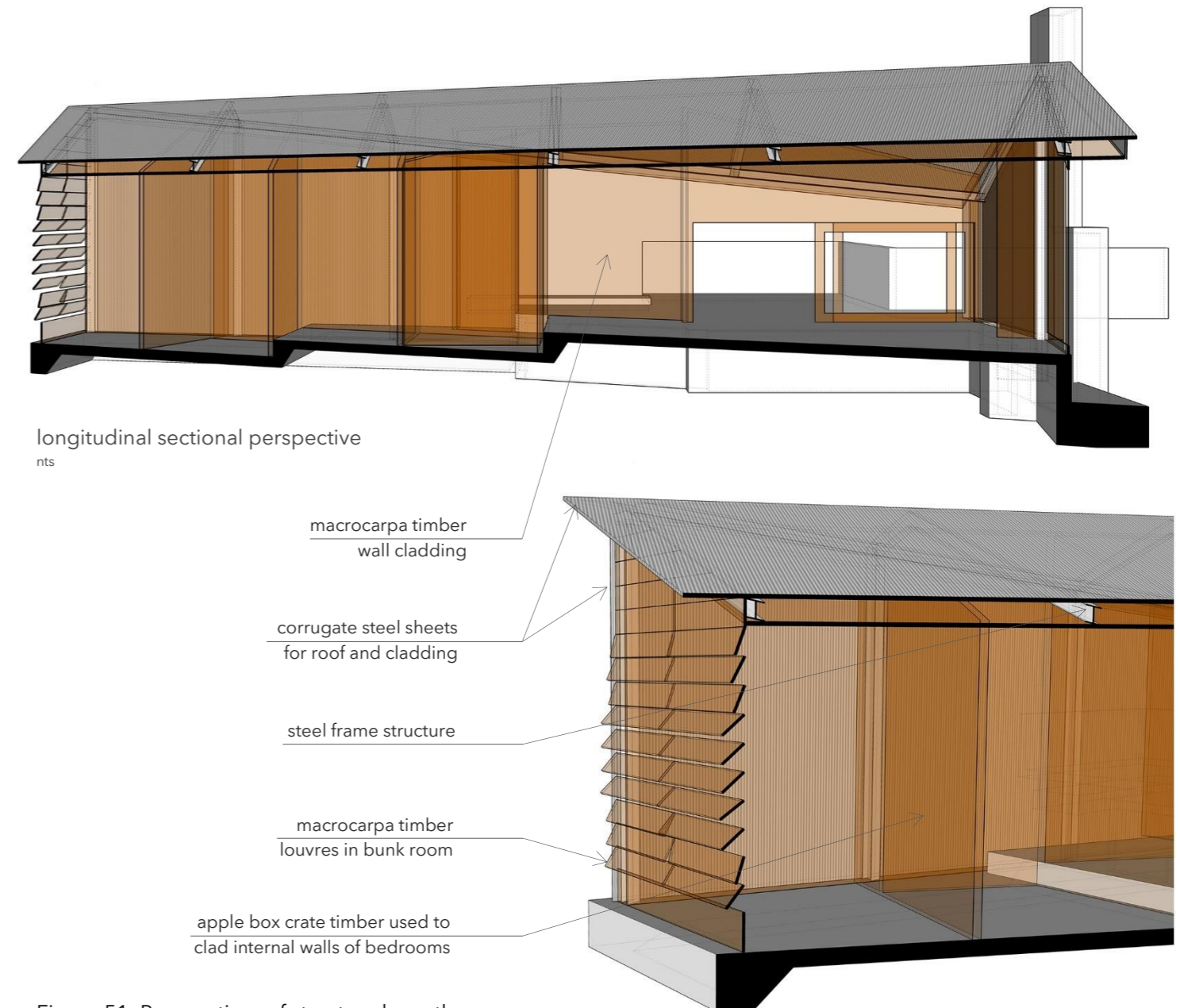


Figure 51: Perspectives of structure by author

⁶⁰ John Wardle Architects. *Shearers Quarters*. Available: <https://www.johnwardlearchitects.com/projects/shearers-quarters/> [7 March 2022].

⁶¹ The Local Project. 2021. *A Remote Off Grid Cabin Designed by an Award-Winning Architect (Cabin Tour)* Published on 8 October 2021. Available: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mQ_8-KulUA&list=PLaymTMepb7MciB87MENrCTi3Qz27S4FD&index=1 [Accessed on 7 March 2022]

CONCEPTUAL COLLAGES - PARK

The collage below explores one of the site-specific responses in the project, that of needing to provide public amenities to the site and public connections to the wetland and its walks. This explores ideas of formalised walkways which offer a carefully chosen journey through the landscape, as well as benches and viewing platforms which allow for pause and observation.

An attempt at exploring the interface between the building and this space was made here, though more to activate the boundary needs to be done in the design development, so as not to create a dead, blank, or unwelcoming edge.



Figure 52: Conceptual collage of park by author

DEVELOPING PROGRAMME

Many reports, videos, and testimonies have been published online about what shelters offer, how they are run, and who benefits from them. From this I was able to develop my programme quite carefully. Because of the site's zoning (Community two), my desire to destigmatise this kind of healing practice, and because at either end it is flanked by a school and a pathway, providing a public function is very important. The other programme includes a sanctuary which offers communal and shared spaces to the women (the Refuge), and the Sanctums- or private units for the women, as well as facilities for children and supporting functions (the Ancillary), and something which maintains and conserves the sensitive wetland.

Specifically, the programme includes staff areas, a housemother or caretaker's two-bedroom home, communal spaces which include things such as a kitchen, tv room, laundry, group therapy room. Accommodation units offering temporary stay, or transitional stays. And a public facility, consisting of a nursery for wetland conservation and research, with a small public tearoom, and a day-care for children accompanying their mothers at the sanctuary but also children from the neighbourhood (see figure 54 for accommodation schedule).

To really understand the required programmatic components, I needed to test them on the site, which is what the sketch below indicates (see figure 53). The sketch takes the estimated square meters and tests the coverage of it all at one level on the site- no double storeys. This was just for me to get a sense of the area requirements and whether it would be achievable on the relatively small site.



Figure 53: Test of areas sketch by author

PUBLIC

SANCTUARY - SHARED PLACES OF
COMFORT AND HEALING

SANCTUM - PRIVATE ROOMS

CHILDREN

WETLAND CONSERVATION

ACCOMMODATION SCHEDULE

ENTRANCE (50sqm)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •WC (3sqm) •Reception (10sqm) •Waiting area (5sqm) •Kitchenette (4sqm) •Storeroom (8sqm) •Offices (20sqm)
CARETAKER (57sqm)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Bedroom x2 (20sqm - 10 each) •Lounge + dining (15sqm) •Kitchen (7 sqm) •Bathroom (5sqm) •Courtyard/garden/balcony (10sqm)
SICK ROOM (18sqm)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Room with bed, chairs, desk, prep bowl, shelves (10sqm) •Storeroom (5sqm) •WC (3sqm)
COMMUNAL SPACES (285sqm)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Shared kitchen (40sqm) •Lounge/tv room (50sqm) •Laundry (15sqm) •Group therapy room (35sqm) •Dining room (50sqm) •Daycare and kids indoor play area- reading area, toy space, learning space, etc. (80sqm) •Ablutions (15sqm) •Garden
ACCOMMODATION UNITS (375sqm)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Short term, smaller x5 (15x5= 75sqm) •Transitional/more long term x7 (15x7= 105sqm) •Bigger units in the case of multiple kids eg. x3 (40x3 = 120sqm) •Balcony/garden x15 (+/- 5x15= 75sqm)
CONSULTATION ROOMS (38sqm)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Room with desk and chairs/couch x3 (10x3= 30sqm) •WC (3sqm) •Waiting area (5sqm)
PUBLIC FACILITY (105sqm)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Nursery/greenhouse (65sqm) •Tea/coffee room (30sqm) •Ablutions (+/- 10sqm) •Park (remainder)
STAFF (50sqm)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Changerooms- wc, shr, lockers (20sqm) •Kitchen (10sqm) •Common room (20sqm)
TOTAL= 978sqm	

Figure 54: Accommodation schedule by author

INITIAL MODEL EXPLORATION – 1:1000

With quick models I explored the placement of programme on site, trying to balance the public with the private, trying to enclose the private spaces and trying to efficiently make use of the long and narrow site.

The images here show three iterations of exploration, as well as the base model which provides context to the site and will receive a final small model at the end of the design development. The context model is at a scale of 1:1000. It shows how the contours form a basin-like moment in the wetland, the extent of the wetland being illustrated by the white textured paper. The model spans from the residential area, across the wetland, to the dirt road and river, and the properties beyond.

The model in the top left image explored the placement of blocks at irregular orientations which contained and framed spaces whilst offering views through the site to the wetland.

The model in the middle left image explored the unification of programme into a form that winds around an internal courtyard.

The model in the bottom left image explored a variety of forms that more fluidly inhabit the site.

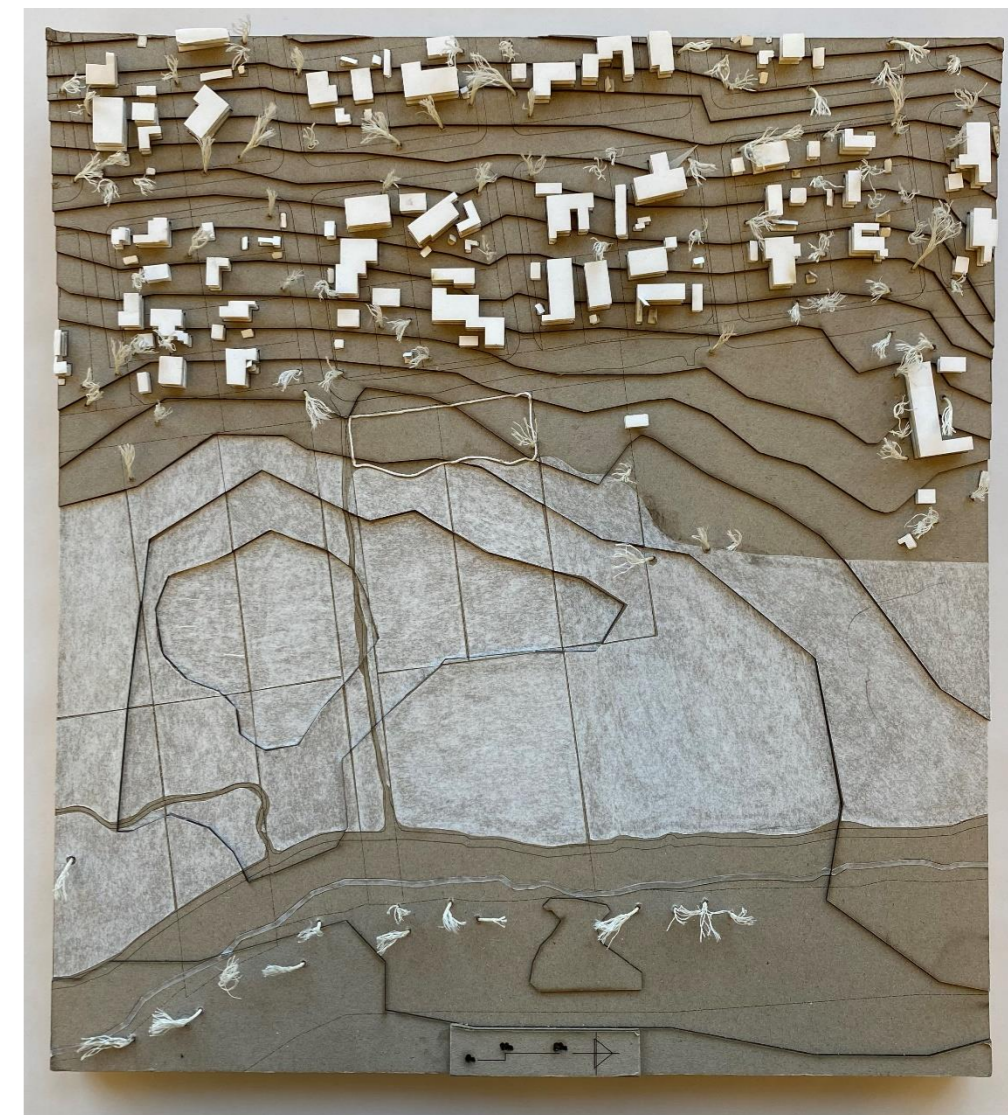


Figure 55: 1:1000 conceptual model exploration by author

INITIAL MODEL EXPLORATION – 1:250

Models at a scale of 1:250 were then explored, working from very rough ideas of desired framing, and overlapping of spaces, to the testing of height, and finally the testing of a more detailed form.

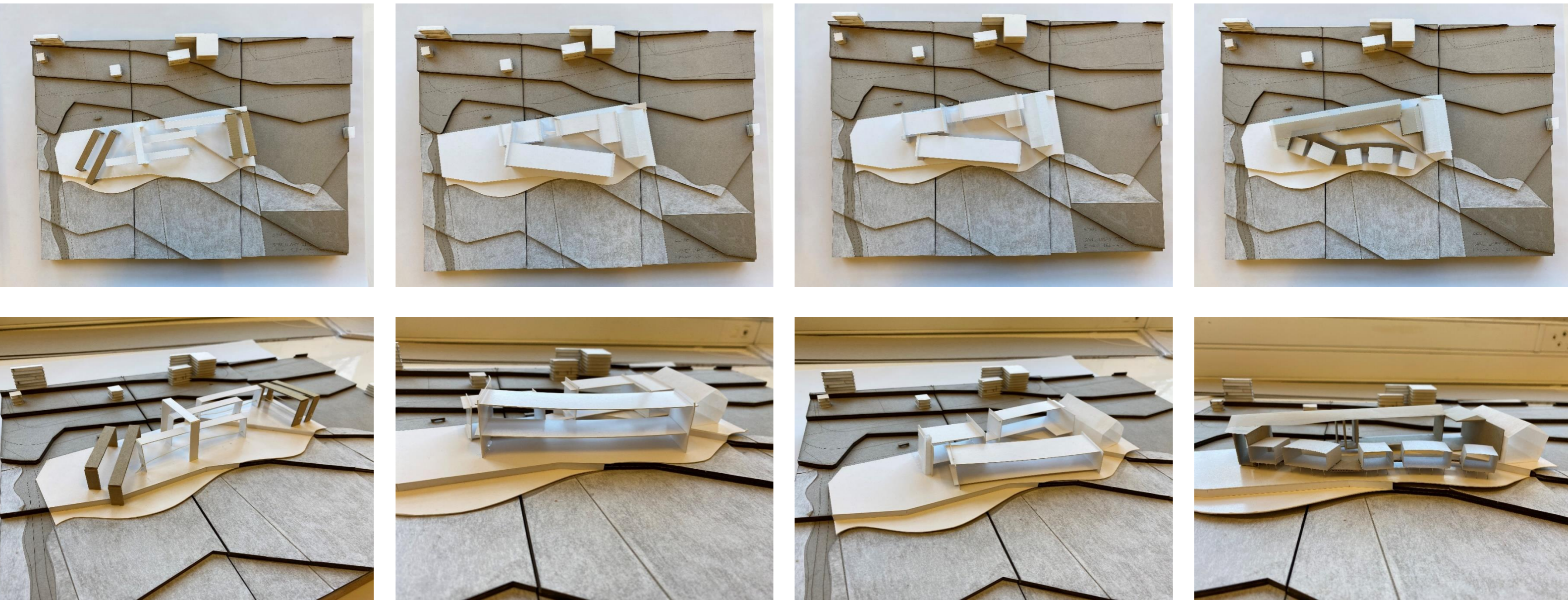


Figure 56: 1:250 conceptual model exploration by author

INITIAL MODEL EXPLORATION 1:50 DETAIL

This sectional model cuts through a strip of the site and design, through the neighbouring building, the road, entrance to the sanctuary, the internal garden courtyard, the gap between sanctum units, and a portion of the expansive wetland. This cut takes one through the ancillary functions, the refuge (communal spaces), the internal garden courtyard and the sanctums. This is to illustrate the change in thresholds, change in levels, and change in spatial qualities as one travels through the gradations of privacy. The model shows the use of lifting programme at the closest point to the wetland, so as to touch the earth lightly at this point, but also to afford privacy and distance to the sanctums.

What the model does not clearly illustrate is the structural logic and does not provide enough lightness in tectonics and form to the sanctums. It was however instructive in terms of exploration and process work and provides a sufficient base from which to develop the design.



Figure 57: 1:50 detail model exploration by author

DIAGRAMS OF ORDERING PRINCIPLES

To concisely explain the ordering principles of the initial design phase, the following diagrams were produced (see figures 58 to 61). These diagrams show my incorporation of conceptual ideas, and the ordering logic that followed.

Below is a brief summary of the challenges of the site and the programme, which will be expanded upon and responded to in depth with the furthering of the design development:

- Sensitivity of the adjacent wetland
- The north to south length of the site- in terms of the narrowness of the site and reduced exposure to sunlight.
- The privacy of the sanctum.
- The overall safety required for the sanctuary.
- The relationship between public and private.
- Risk of fire.

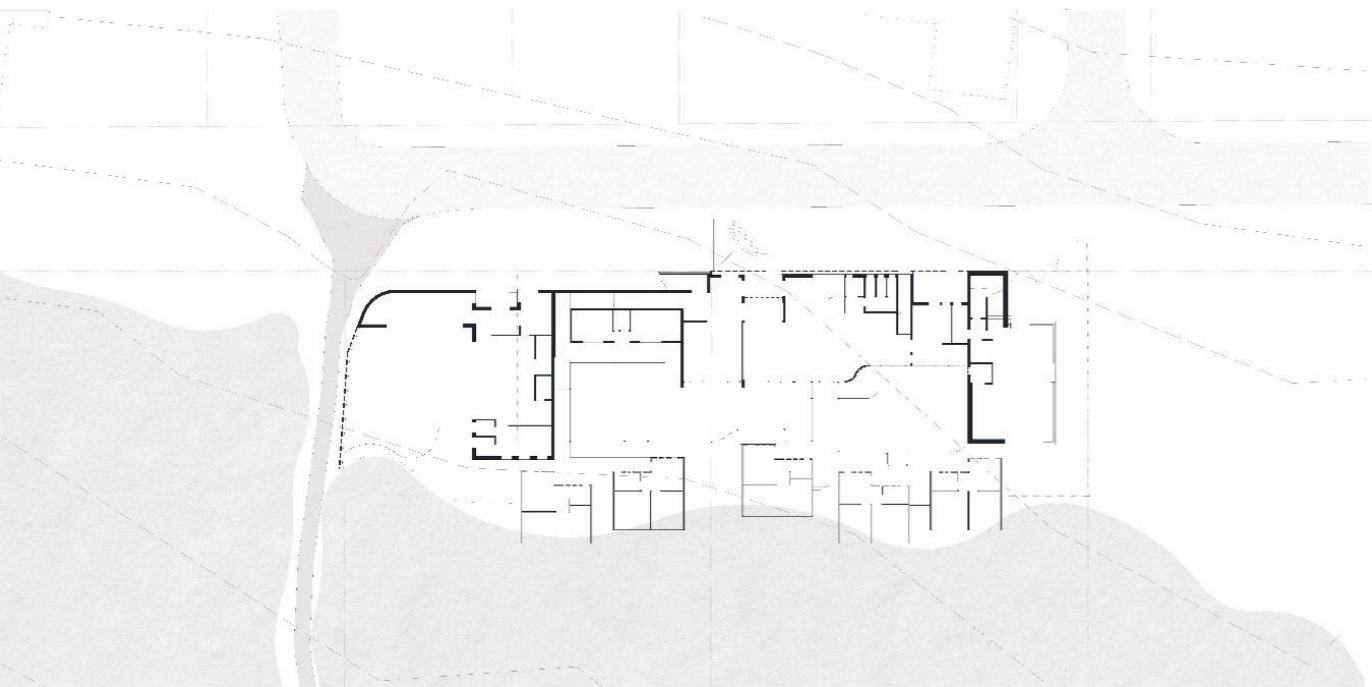


Figure 58: Diagram of **enclosure** by author

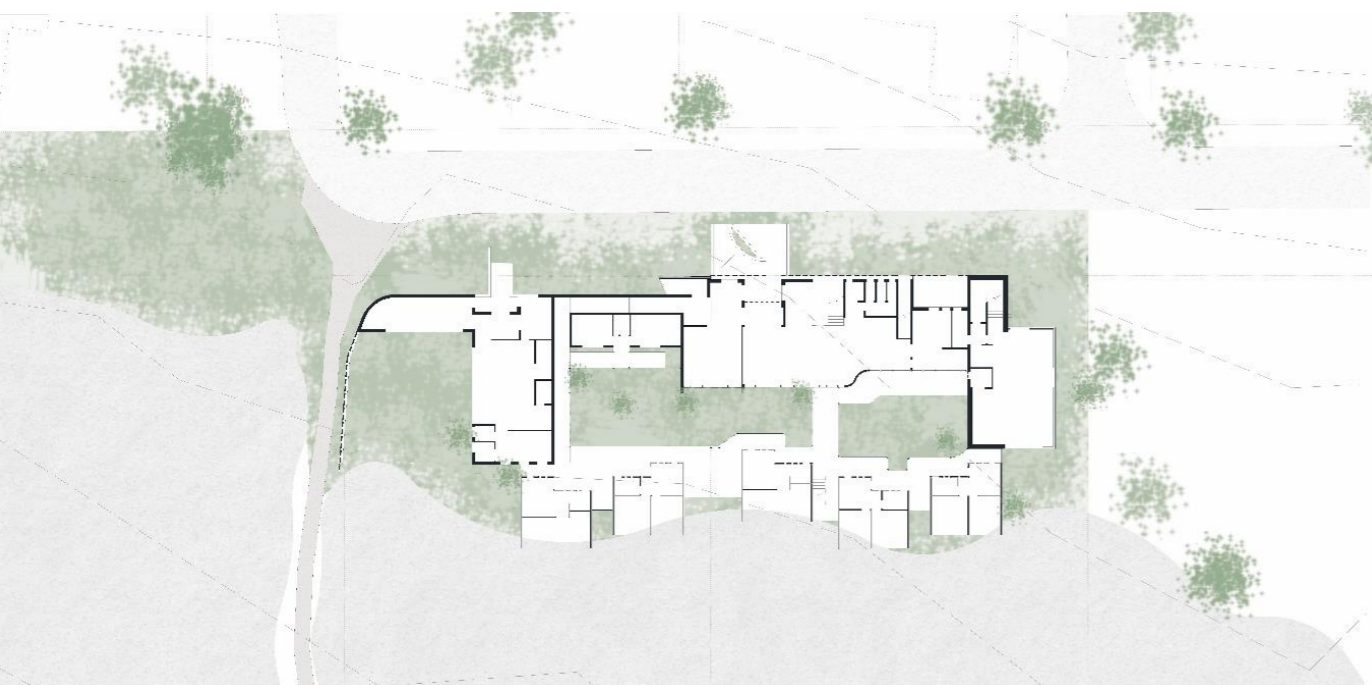


Figure 60: Diagram of public and private **garden spaces** by author

The first speaks of enclosure and indicates the protective and hard edge towards the street which encloses the private spaces (see figure 58). The next diagram indicates the placement of public and private functions- you can see that the public day-care and nursery, shown in blue, are placed so as to contain the sanctuary and the park (see figure 59). The caretaker's apartment is placed on the far right to afford them privacy and distance from their work. Green space is thus carved out between the enclosure and programme, where in the sanctuary and the caretaker's apartment, it is surrounded by built form to offer utmost protection and privacy (see figure 60). Circulation in the form of paraplegically accessible ramps as well as staircases surround the sanctuary, and are used to cut through the protective enclosure at specific junctions (see figure 61).

The way in which I approach the issue of safety is by exploring enclosure (see figure 58). By creating a hard edge, a barrier which contains an internalised world, by juxtaposing the solid barrier with elements that open out to the landscape, and by exploring spaces that lift above the ground plane and separate the private spaces. Programmatically, this is explored with degrees of privacy in terms of spatial ordering that follows a logic of more administrative and communal spaces tending towards the most private spaces.

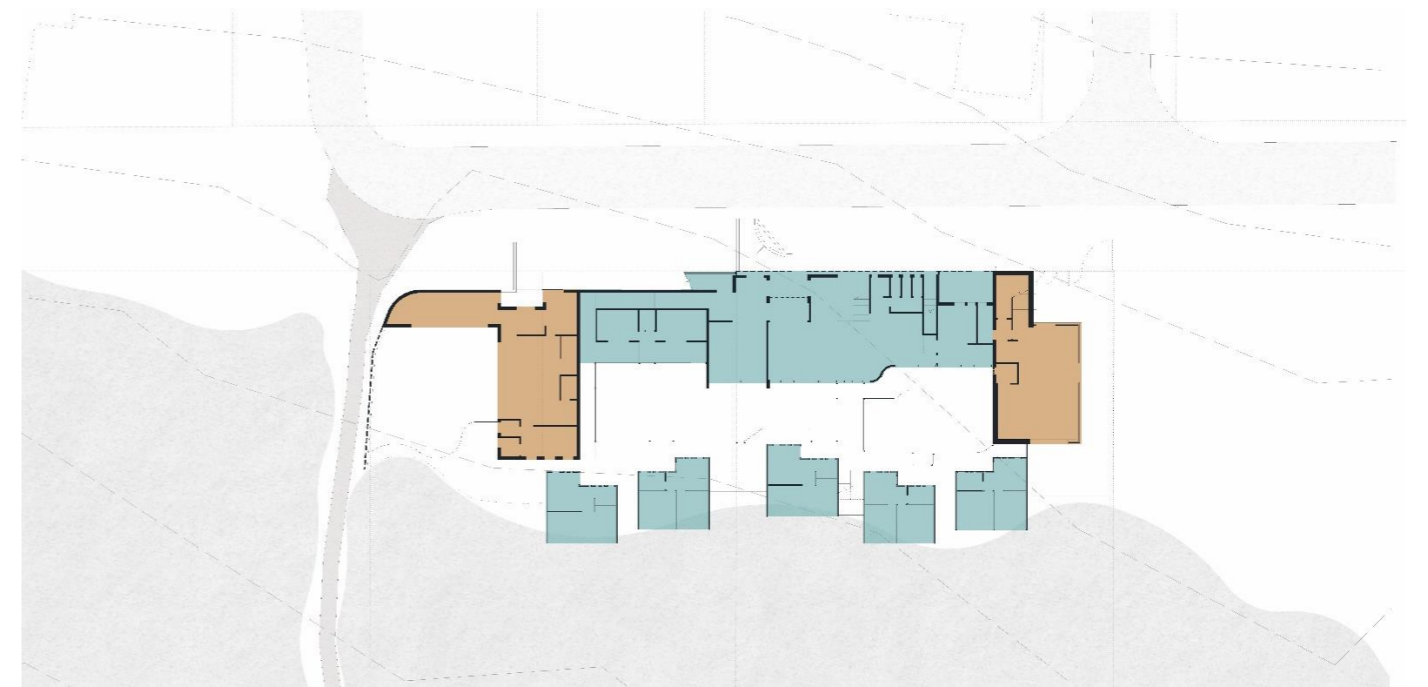


Figure 59: Diagram of **public versus private** by author



Figure 61: Diagram of **circulation** by author

SKETCH PLANS AND SECTIONS

Our third quarter review featured our first real attempt at presenting a design, over and above presenting conceptual frameworks, programmatic decisions, and massing explorations. This work here is my attempt at synthesizing architectural responses within my conceptual framework, as well as decisions about placement and progression of programme.

What was most instructive was producing a series of diagrams to explain the ordering principles, a component suggested to me by my supervisor. These diagrams, see figures 58 to 61, helped me to decide on the most salient and important features of my project, to explain the resultant design through them, and for them to inform the resultant design.

My design exploration was bound in a very cautious and overly rational and rigid response, which does not capture the moments and spaces that I hope to produce, it does not capture a sense of phenomenological design or even craft, however, it did provide me with a good base from which I can better explore crafting evocative and beautiful spaces. What was useful was getting a very good sense of space in terms of what is required and what I can accommodate. Having done this, I feel I am in a good place to now explore the spaces from a different perspective. As suggested to me in the review, I should now be bolder in my design, and I should use my collages as my method for crafting the spaces, which far more effectively represent my intentions. Instead of designing through plan and section, I should design through the collages so as to not be restrained by the nitty-gritty details and by the three-dimensional modelling programme in which I work.

The ground storey plan (see figure 62) shows programme placed on split levels which follow the contours in an ordering that distinguishes degrees of privacy. This is enclosed in a hard edge, which results in the creation of an internalised world that explores lightness and openness. The day-care is separated from the most private of spaces and leads to the public park which flanks raised sanctum units. The nursery and tearoom provide another protective edge to the internalised sanctuary, and is bordered by the caretaker's courtyard apartment which looks for independence from the shelter whilst still offering accessibility/proximity for the caretaker.

The first floor (see figure 63) continues the narrative of the ground storey but offers views into the expansive landscape and further vertically privatizes spaces.

Section 01 (see figure 64) shows how the slope affords the existing houses unobstructed views across the site. Most importantly, it explores the raising of the sanctum units, to elevate them and offer an immediate connection to the wetland whilst touching the earth lightly at that point. A strong but narrow base not only supports the lightweight girder framed units, but also provides another impenetrable barrier at ground level. This section cuts through the entrance, which is framed to have an uninterrupted view across the site into the wetland, the units step aside for this, so that upon entering the sanctuary, one is met with containment and protection but also an immediate view outwards, connecting one to the landscape.

Section 02 (see figure 65) cuts along the length of the site, showing the split levels and relation between programmatic distinctions, from caretaker, to nursery, to sanctuary to day-care. This shows the intent to be sensitive to context in terms of height, with only the nursery extending higher above the rest of the buildings. This section also illustrates the split levels, which follow the contours but also reduces the rise required for the ramp, making the ramp more manageable.



Figure 62: Ground storey sketch plan by author

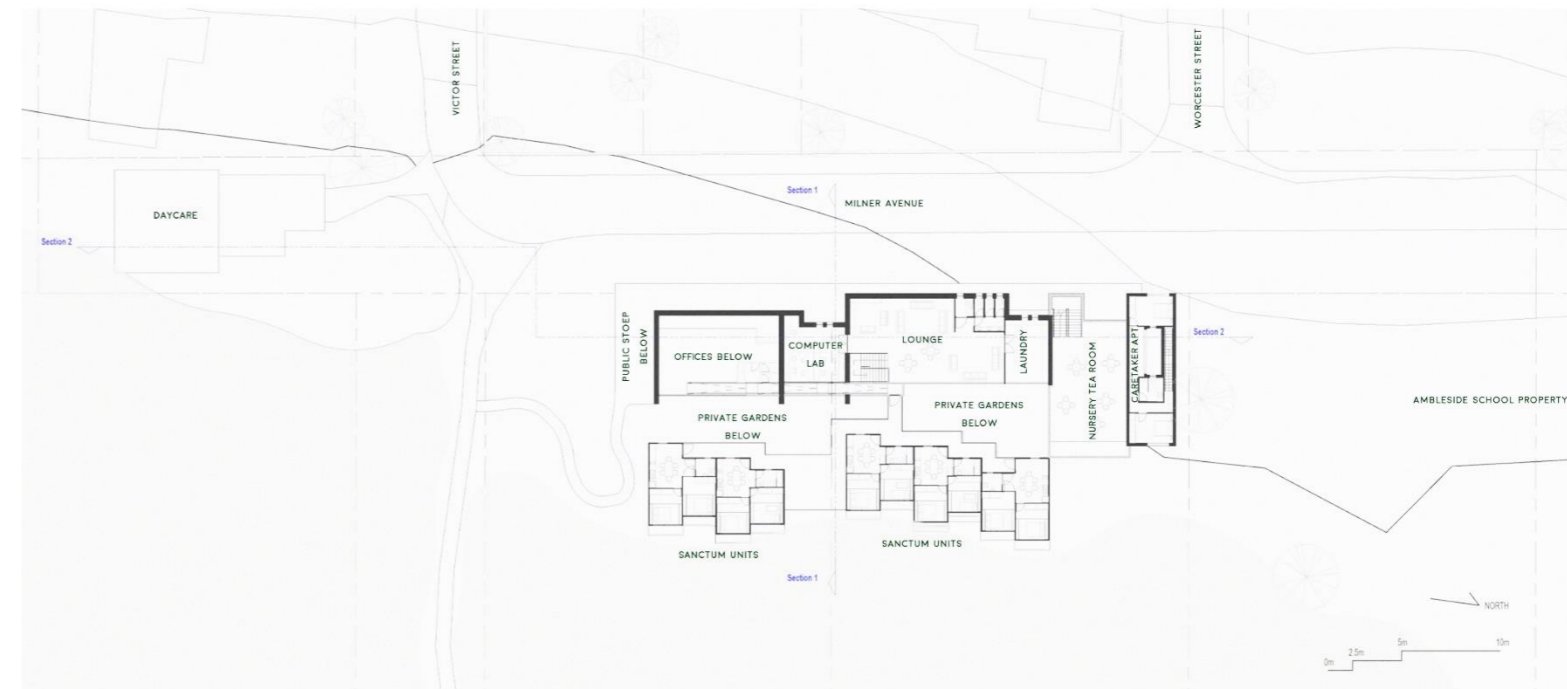


Figure 63: First storey sketch plan by author

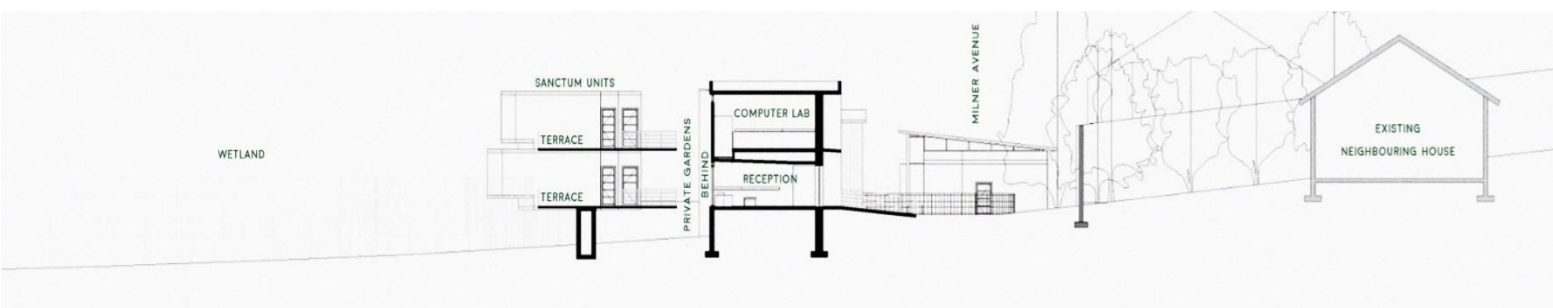


Figure 64: Sketch section 01 by author



Figure 65: Sketch section 02 by author

MATERIAL PALETTE

To guide the design into the next phase of development, a number of collages were drawn to indicate material palette choices (see figures 66 to 69).

Light-coloured facebrick, laid in patterns that maximise texture and depth on the façade, has been chosen for the sanctuary enclosure. This is then broken at distinct points by the ramp, which is to be clad in opaque polycarbonate, engaging the street by hinting to activity within. On the interior of the sanctuary however, steel and glazing open out to the internal courtyard garden, maximising exposure to sunlight and maximising views across the wetland. Metal screens will provide a mixture of privacy and separation from the public at certain points of the courtyard garden, again offering a hint at the internal life of the sanctuary, without compromising a degree of privacy. More lightweight metal grating will be used to connect the sanctuary to the sanctums, also offering a visual connection through to the internal courtyard garden, without blocking sun exposure or views.

The same opaque polycarbonate will be used for parts of the nursery and for the caretaker's apartment. Here, privacy for the caretaker will be achieved by combining timber panels with polycarbonate sheeting, whereas at the nursery, visual accessibility and sun exposure will be gained with more clear polycarbonate sheeting. A steel frame structure will allow for an emphasis on long spans and greater height at the nursery, both for the growing of plants as well as for the impact and useability in terms of the public function. The polycarbonate is chosen so as to provide a neutral backdrop with depth for the growing and displaying of plants.



Figure 66: Material collage of sanctuary by author



Figure 67: Material collage of caretaker and nursery by author

Similar to the sanctuary, facebrick laid in visually interesting patterns is chosen for the daycare, the difference being the inclusion of colourful bricks or tiles interspersed within the façade. The interior will be light and bright, making use of joyful and playful colours, in furniture, wall treatments as well as floor treatments. For the floor, recycled tile fragments will be used to create colourful and fun patterns. For privacy around the playground, breeze block walls will continue the facebrick façade but allow for visual penetration and dappled sunlight.



Figure 68: Material collage of day-care by author

For the sanctums, powder-coated steel girder frames will support the lifted units and offer a pop of colour. Timber cladding is chosen to add a grainy quality to the façade, specifically shou sugi ban treated pine (charred treatment of timber). This is chosen for its low maintenance and durability properties. Additionally, the charring acts as a protective measure against fires- appropriate in the context of a densely wooded area.

Internally, light timber cladding will offer a softness and calmness, and will be used to seamlessly create zones within spaces, such as sleeping platforms. The sanctums will be connected to the sanctuary by metal mesh, which will allow for reduced visual intrusion to the internal courtyard garden, whilst also adding to the sense of the units floating above the landscape.



Figure 69: Material collage of sanctums by author

THE SANCTUARY - CONCLUSION

The following work is the resultant design response, as presented at my final exam.

The renunciation of finding universal solutions was echoed in most of the references I used for this paper. What is clear is that to know the answer is presumptuous and limiting. In this world of binaries, eurocentrism, phallogentrism, stereotypes, and patriarchy, too much of our stories are written for us. To learn what the people one is designing for desire over and above what they need, seems to be the necessary step to producing a thoughtful, responsive, and appropriate architecture. Being open to learning and becoming is vital; and privileging a process of questioning over a process of solution production is what can allow the bonds of spatial limits to be broken.

Defining a space for women as a sanctuary to me allows for the privileging of their desires over just their needs. This presents the opportunity for their self-re-writing, a process wherein agency, self-value and validation, healing, and autonomy can be pursued. Where the inhabitants can be nurtured, as well as the landscape, and in turn, each can find nurture from the other. Where the process of healing is sheltered in a space that provides more than institutional functionalism, and more of a sense of homeliness.

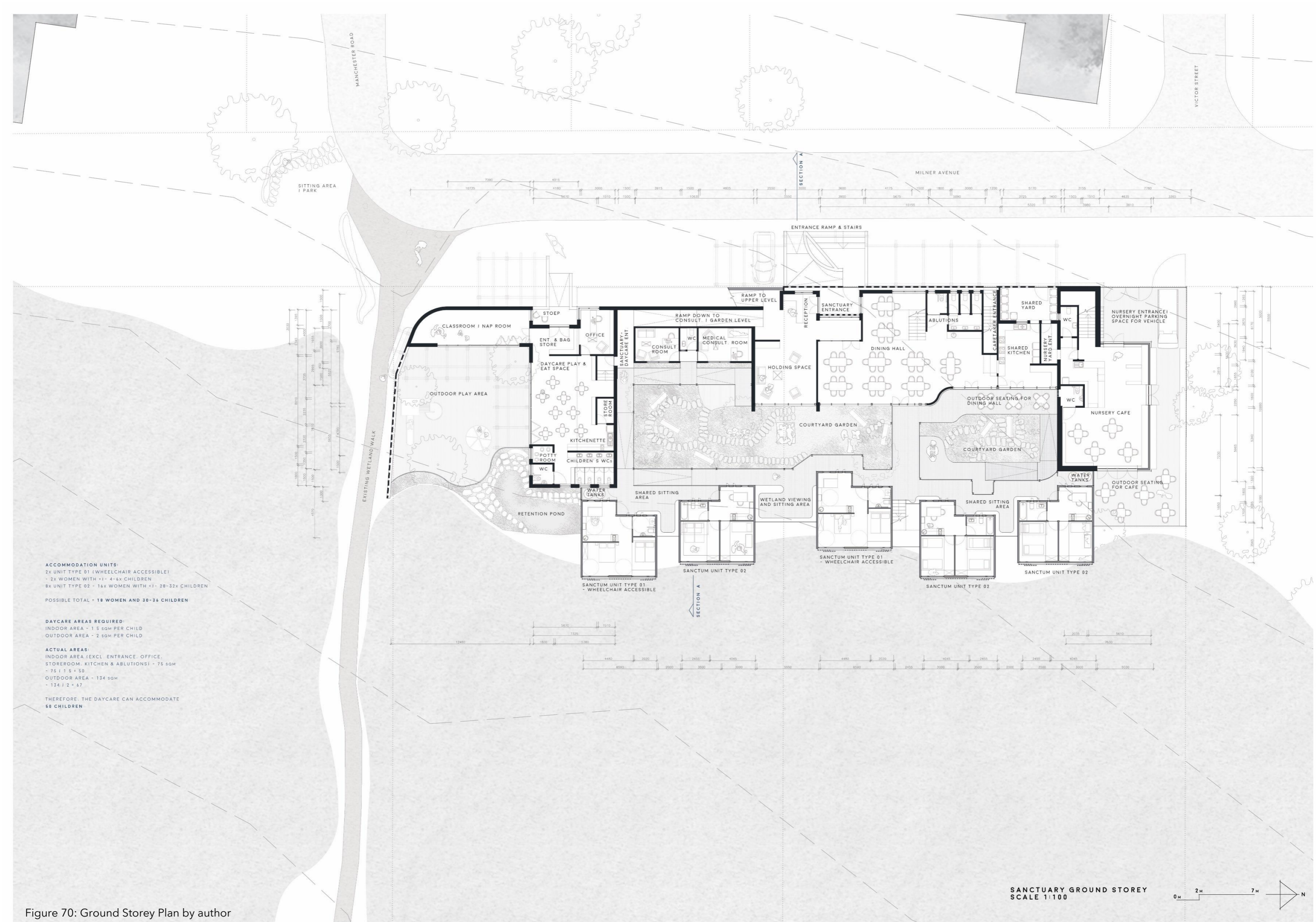
The removal of tactility and nature that we experience today is the opposite of what we require in order to heal. I believe that texture, colour, nature, expression of individuality and difference, and craft can offer ways of reconnecting to ourselves and to the earth. This I see as being encompassed in responsive architecture, craft, and phenomenology. The resulting materials were chosen for being a combination of low maintenance as well as visually and tactilely interesting.

Conceptually the creation of a sanctuary needs both to provide utmost privacy and protection, as well as allow for a safe and cultivated connection to the public realm, one of the critical challenges of the design. The conceptual approach and framework of this project follows principles of fortress-like enclosure giving way to openness and tectonically light forms (with voids, roof lights, raised/stilted units, and uninterrupted views). It follows the framing of spaces and courtyards with the careful placement of programme, further reinforced by gradations of privacy (from inviting to contained/protected, to sacred).

The sanctuary works to nurture on two levels, on one level that facilitates healing in women and their children, and on another level that rehabilitates and protects the sensitive landscape. This relationship introduces the dualism present in the form of public and private elements. The importance of a connection to the public is not only due to the nature of the site, but also due to the need to naturalise healing, to destigmatize it, so as not to present it as being something shameful or secretive. Finding a balance between the public and private was challenging throughout the design process and could be further strengthened. However, elements of conversation between these two components were added so as to attempt to find some cohesion, such as continuous or repeated elements in elevation, or moments of dialogue between spaces where an opening in a wall allows for voluntary interactions.

Careful crafting of spaces, and the relationship between spaces, was a priority in the design, to achieve meaning, beauty, and sanctity, which could in turn facilitate the sensitive healing processes of the women, children, and the landscape. Due to the juxtapositions in the design and the attempt to find balance, this could be said to have been neglected somewhat. Further crafting and detailing of spaces would have bolstered the ideas and the project.

The intention was to reach an architecture that supports healing processes, provides opportunity for redefining oneself, provides secure shelter, creates a safe but not imprisoning boundary, creates spaces that allow for social support, interaction, skill sharing, learning, and teaching, allow for work to be practiced within proximity of the home and any dependents, and creates spaces that uplift and ensure the maximized well-being of inhabitants. With this as the measure, the design does not succeed in achieving all of this, but makes a start towards finding the right balance, and perhaps most importantly, it tries to question what is given as the normative.



ACCOMMODATION UNITS:
 2x UNIT TYPE 01 (WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE)
 - 2x WOMEN WITH +1 - 4-6x CHILDREN
 8x UNIT TYPE 02 - 1x WOMEN WITH +1 - 28-32x CHILDREN
POSSIBLE TOTAL + 18 WOMEN AND 30-36 CHILDREN

DAYCARE AREAS REQUIRED:
 INDOOR AREA - 1.5 SQM PER CHILD
 OUTDOOR AREA - 2 SQM PER CHILD

ACTUAL AREAS:
 INDOOR AREA (EXCL. ENTRANCE, OFFICE, STOREROOM, KITCHEN & ABLUTIONS) - 75 SQM
 - 75 / 1.5 = 50
 OUTDOOR AREA - 134 SQM
 - 134 / 2 = 67

THEREFORE, THE DAYCARE CAN ACCOMMODATE **50 CHILDREN**

Figure 70: Ground Storey Plan by author

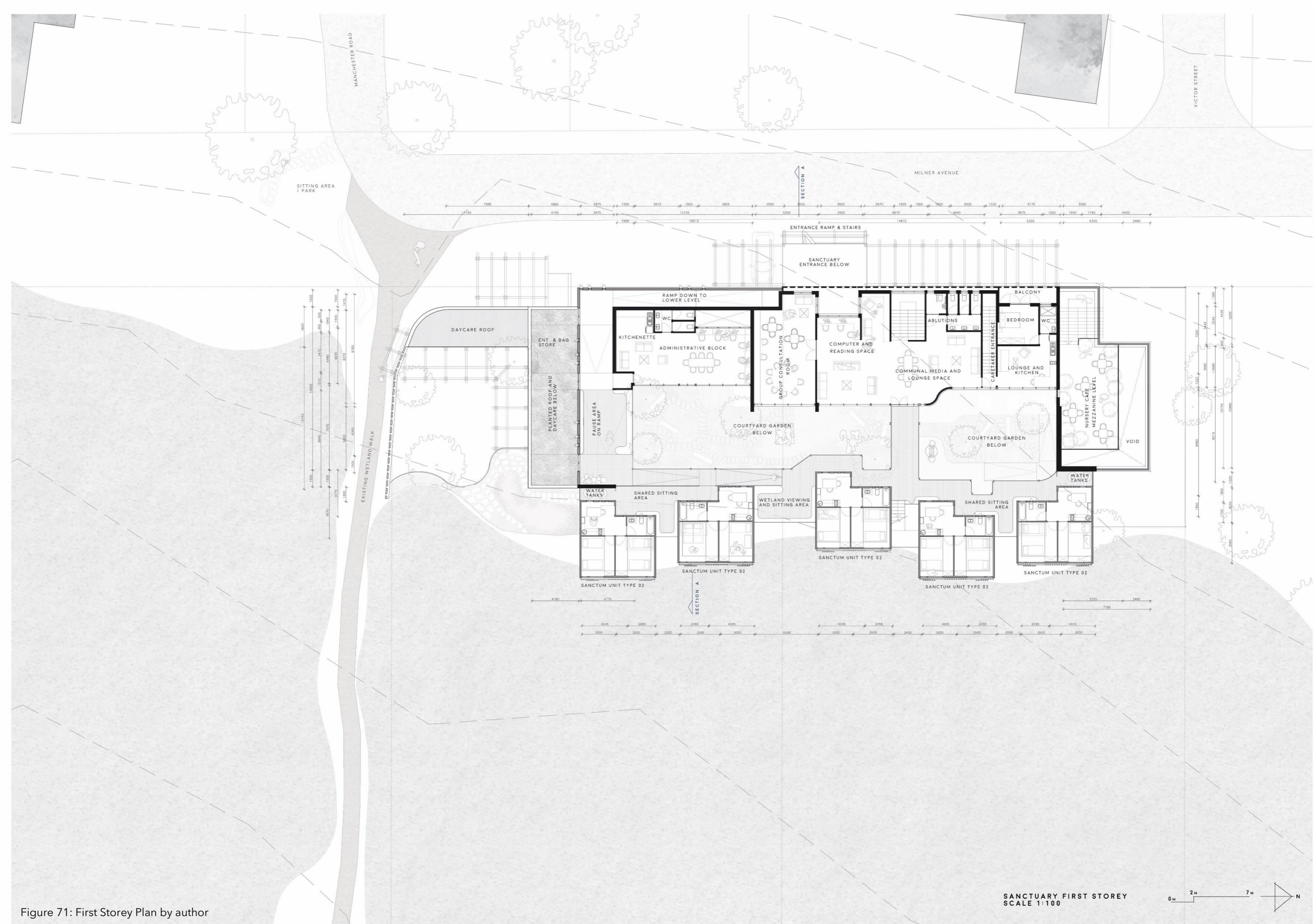
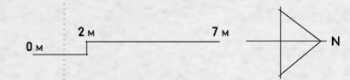


Figure 71: First Storey Plan by author

SANCTUARY FIRST STOREY
SCALE 1:100



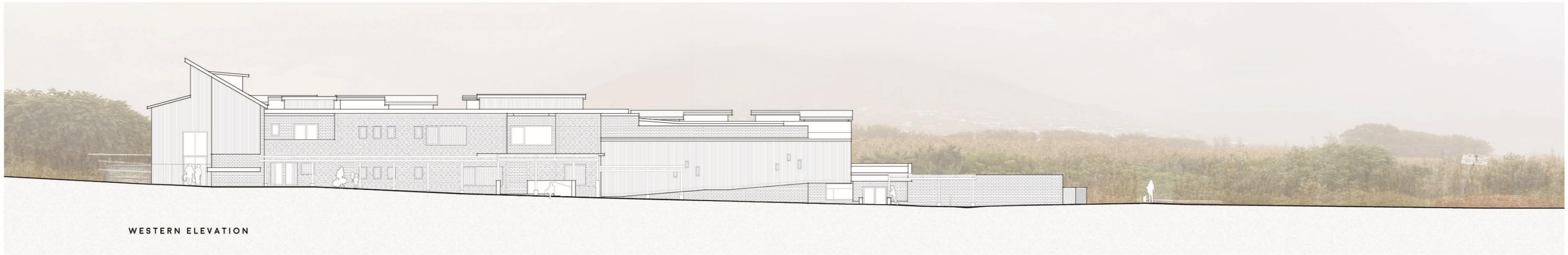


Figure 72: Elevations by author

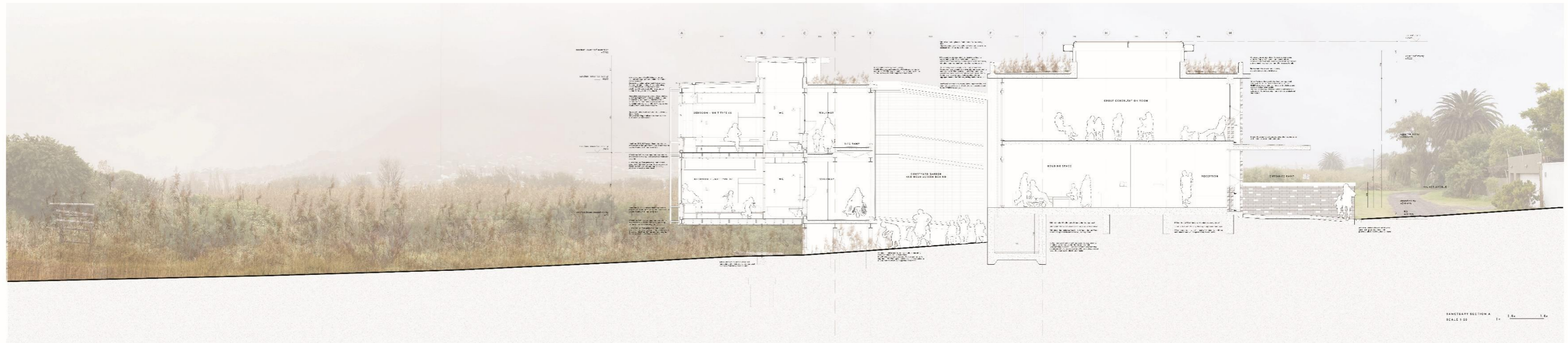


Figure 73: Technical Section by author

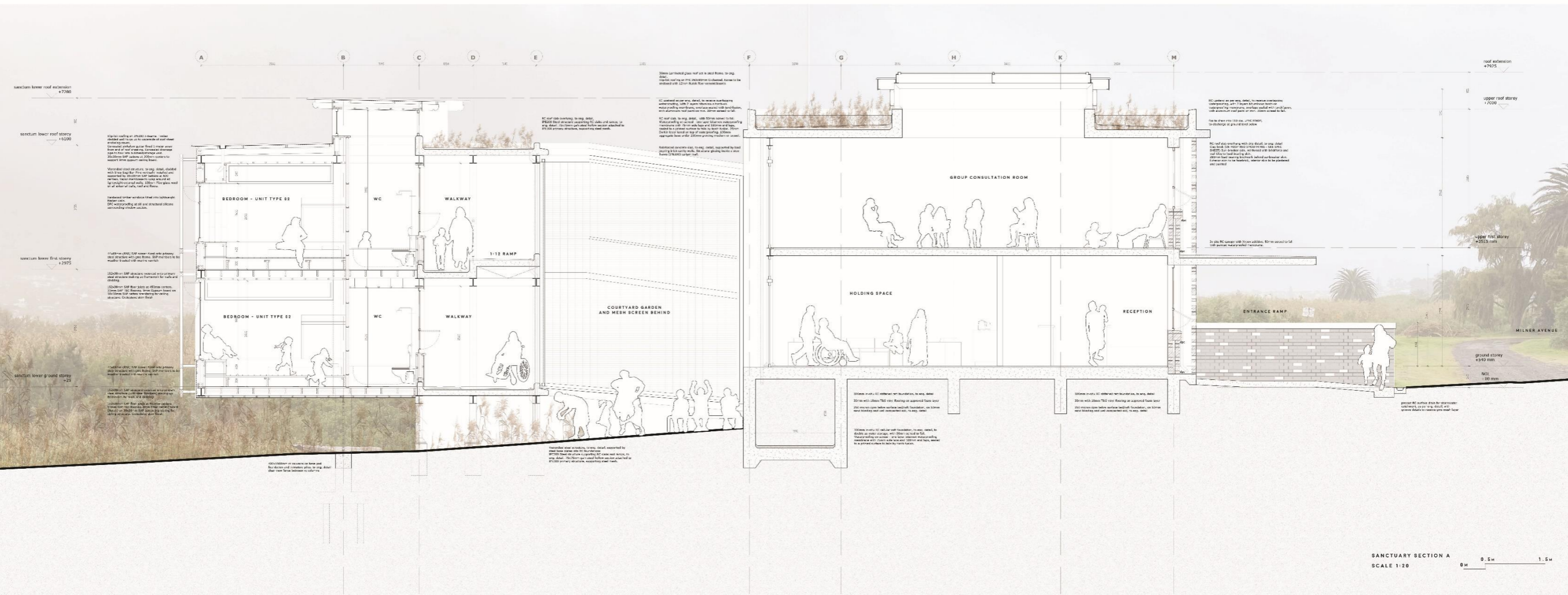


Figure 74: Technical Section Detail View by author



SANCTUMS AND NURSERY RENDER



SANCTUARY COURTYARD GARDEN RENDER



SANCTUARY ENTRANCE RENDER

Figure 75: Renders by author



Figure 76: Exam Pin-Up by author

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Figure 37: Table representing statistics of women in shelters from the National Shelter Movement of South Africa's *Raising Women's Voices in South African Shelters #3*. Information sourced from:
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Figure 38: Excerpt from Colomina's *X-Ray Architecture*, pages 28 - 29. Image sourced from:
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Figure 39: Murcutt's Henric Nicholson house, Mt. Irvine. Photo by Philip Drew (Drew, 2001;166).
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Figure 40: Kamara's (of Atelier Masomi) market in Dandaji, Niger. Photo sourced from:
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Figure 43 to 45: Photographs of Women's House. Photographs sourced from: Arvaniti-Pollatou, M. (2020) *Women's House of Ouled Merzoug in Morocco | Building Beyond Borders - U Hasselt University + BC architects & studies*. Online article published by Archisearch.gr on 6 May 2020. Available: <https://www.archisearch.gr/architecture/womens-house-of-ouled-merzoug-in-marocco-building-beyond-borders-uhasselt-university-bc-architects-studies/> [Accessed on 07 March 2021]

Figure 46: Perspective sections. Author's own

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Figure 48: Photograph of Khudi Bari
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Figure 49 to 50: Photographs of Shearers Quarters. Photographs sourced from:
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