

# Healing Environments

ARCHITECTURE AS THERAPY AT THE MOWBRAY TOWN HALL SITE

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## Abstract

My design dissertation project is an investigation of Architecture as Therapy - a means with which to heal the environment (including peoples) as well as re-integrate them, especially those who have been marginalized. The design utilizes place-making design elements that would encourage their participation, by borrowing good ideas and examples from existing work/ projects. The project is focused on three main important key factors:

- Fixing a site (through a strategic choice of site as urban rather than sub-urban).
- Giving back the space to the people especially those who have been marginalized.
- Proposing an architectural typology that seeks to fix both the site and people.

This dissertation proposes an alternative; architecture as therapy, with the programme of a half way home to explore how architecture might reinvigorate Mowbray Town Hall site and operate with respect to pre-discharged patients / out patients from Valkenburg the state's psychiatric hospital nearby Observatory. The building is not a psychiatric Centre such as Valkenburg psychiatric hospital but rather promote the idea of therapy, a means with which to heal urban environments and re-integrate people. Architecture as therapy provides the conceptual grounding for the project. The purpose of the work is not only focused on patients or to challenge notions of therapy processes and healthcare facilities but to address the on going ill-treatment of public urban spaces due to negative human behavior and also encourage positive human participation within their environments. Architecture as therapy suggests the potential to generate a new architectural typology with which the design of its spaces and elements within an urban public environment produce therapy and positive treatment of urban public spaces. Both the people and site will receive holistic treatment with a view to promoting recovery.

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## INTRODUCTION

### Architecture as therapy

My design dissertation project is an investigation of Architecture as Therapy - a means with which to heal the environment (including peoples) as well as re-integrate them, especially those who have been marginalized. The design utilizes place-making design elements that would encourage their participation, by borrowing good ideas and examples from existing work/ projects. The project is focused on three main important key factors:

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The purpose of the work is not only focused on patients or to challenge notions of therapy processes and healthcare facilities but to address the on going ill-treatment of public urban spaces due to negative human behavior and also encourage positive human participation within their environments.

Architecture as therapy suggests the potential to generate a new architectural typology with which the design of its spaces and elements within an urban public environment produce therapy and positive treatment of urban public spaces. Both the people and site will receive holistic treatment with a view to promoting recovery.

My design dissertation project; Healing Environments: Architecture as Therapy at the Mowbray Town hall site in Cape Town is intended to celebrate a public space, reinvigorate the street and create a square as an urban institution. It acknowledges the importance of historic buildings and suggests a new therapeutic urban building typology - with which to heal both Mowbray Town Hall site and the people (local and out-patients).

This is intended to address our post-modern conditions- shopping malls, theme parks and security villages make up much of our sub-urban environments. As a result South African cities are increasingly lacking a sense of urbanity. The project advocates other ways of urban living, therapeutic public spaces and appropriate medium density building typologies. These are envisaged as viable places of engagement and interaction, spaces where differences can become meaningful rather than sources of division.

## Architecture as Therapy – Site & Programme

### 1. Site Analysis

The chosen site is in Mowbray in Cape Town. Over the last decade this area has undergone a transition becoming more cosmopolitan and more mixed in terms of land use and race. Due to its central locality in terms of public transport, an association with places of secondary and tertiary learning (UCT, Damelin College etc.) and a transient community (of students, teachers, the homeless etc.), the area has acquired a vibrancy and vitality. Mowbray is a dynamically growing urban environment. It accommodates Cape Town's economic and cultural life, of lively commercial, international and cultural contacts. Its future development should acknowledge the visible architectural wealth of its history, in order to bring them again to life and thus make them eternal.

Architectural monuments from the late 1800-century to the 1900-century surround Mowbray. These monuments are public and private buildings (town hall, churches, private/commercial and residential areas). These impressive architectural ensembles are already objects of admiration by lovers of old architecture. These public buildings and spaces, private houses and the streets form part of Cape Town as a contemporary city, in other words as alive today but not as in the past. "A past that we can still experience in the present." (Aldo Rossi 1994)

There will in future be a still greater desire, to point out Mowbray's age-old architectural achievements, ever more fascinating and beautiful and to demonstrate and include them architecturally in the environment and against the background of the future city. Considering the future of Mowbray Town Hall site, the rule to adapt the old architecture (Mowbray Town Hall) to contemporary life assumes a wider scope and significance. Which is tantamount to unity and harmony between old architecture and new life (the youth), between old and new architecture (my architectural proposition).

This is implemented with the greatest possible spatial and functional site strategy choices founded on the deep roots of humanism and a respect for the fruits of man's daring and creative work. The choice of site (Town Hall site) is a strategy involving Valkenburg, the state's psychiatric hospital in Observatory and its possible relocation of the pre-discharged unit to the area that includes the Mowbray Town Hall, Mowbray Library and Cansa Association for South Africa, Standard Bank and the adjoining open site (Erf 28519) (see attached site analysis map fold over).



**Fig. 1** Valkenburg psychiatric hospital site



**Fig. 2** Mowbray Town Hall site

Looking at **Fig. 1** above shows that Valkenberg psychiatric hospital is sub-urban (excluded) from the urban environment setting. Valkenburg was initially envisioned to be a correctional facility to keep away lunatics “lunatic asylum”, as it was then called. Mowbray Town Hall site and its position (unlike Valkenburg) is more urban (see **fig. 2** above) and composed of public-civic institutions opening to a public open space (with a potential to be re-defined as a square) which then spills out to the sidewalks of Mowbray Main Road. These structures include; Mowbray Town Hall, Mowbray Public Library, Centre for Cancer Association for South Africa. The Standard Bank building is the only building which does not have any active interface connection to the public open space, moreover Standard Bank Building is ugly<sup>1</sup> and I propose to demolish it to reinforce the idea of defining the street and square (see attached site analysis map fold over). Moreover Standard Bank might have been one of the reasons why vagrants made it their home at Mowbray Town Hall site considering the fact that vagrants got a habit of asking strangers for money, therefore Town Hall site was convenient to target people passing by or from Standard Bank ATM machines and going inside Standard Bank.

Vagrants at Mowbray Town Hall in Main Road have become a public nuisance. They defecate, loiter, walk around naked, drink alcohol and clean themselves and do their laundry on the premises . . . the eight to fifteen group that has made it home there has turned the area, into an eye-sore . . . it has been a problem for the last four years .... As it stands the land on which the town hall, library and cancer association is housed is not fenced and anybody has access to the area. The residents association has received complaints about the state of that area. Christians 07-12-2006 pg. 4-5

The authoritarian approach by fencing and gating Mowbray’s open public space shows a lack of concern for the wishes or opinions of others. Because it excludes and also deactivates the space after working hours and weekends when there is no one on duty on the premises. There could be another better way of addressing the issue of vagrants being a nuisance and turning the area in to an eyesore. Understanding how people make sense of the city as a particular place or space is more important than ever for city authorities, architects, landscape designers, planners and urban critics. As they make decisions that affect the way in which we experience a city on an everyday basis. People come into cities in order to experience the economic, social, cultural, educational and recreational opportunities and facilities, which can be generated through the physical agglomeration of a large number of people. When the economy is simply unable to absorb new entrants, these people have no options but to seek survival. Finding places to live at free costs, a low overhead within the urban system is vital to the survival chances of these people.

Towns, like humans, have distinct personalities. And they endear themselves in different ways. There are those who glamour comes forth instantly. And there are those whose charm can only be found after a prolonged acquaintance. Mowbray’s personality resembles neither of the two. It has never been an instantly engaging town. If it can, let’s say, be compared to a girl it could be one of those girls who typically don’t spend hours in front of a mirror in the morning, lacing themselves up with various beauty accessories in a quest to leave their opposite kind breathless. Abel Mputing, Cape Argus 05-09-2005

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1. If let’s say all these Town Hall site buildings can be compared to beauty contest entrants, judged as to physical beauty, personality, and skill. Standard Bank would not make it in the last three finalists considering its body language and gesture

Mowbray is not an instantly engaging place, when one walks along Main Road and it needs some type of facelift so a passersby can instantly engage with it, not only because the architecture looks beautiful, and active but also because the architecture communicates and teach its society things, because essentially architecture should communicate through its design visually. Historical evaluation of the site shows that Mowbray Town Hall is approximately 30m (thirty meters) away from Klipfontein/ Main Road transport node, and it is adjacent to the building once Mowbray Town Hotel now offices for the University of Cape Town. It is claimed that the Mowbray Town Hotel building developed as a tavern, and from this tavern Mowbray got its first name “Drie Koppen” or “Three cups”.

“In 1723, a burger Johannes Beck, who held the wine and spirit licence at Rondebosch, was granted a simmlar licence and permission to build a tavern near Cape Town. The following year, three escaped slaves killed two settlers there. The murderers were captured, tried and tortured on a wheel, then beheaded and their three heads were exposed on stakes at the scene of the crime. The name “Drie Koppen” was adopted by the tavern and by the village that grew around it, in June 1850, the name was change to Mowbray but Driekopen remains the name of one of the men’s residence of the Univercity Of Cape Town.” Cape Times 30-08-1973

Nineteen years later Southern Suburb Tatler newspaper articles re-wrote the same story and events that lead to the naming of Mowbray “Three Cups” their story reads as follows:

Three slaves murdered the family at Welgelegen. . . the murderers were caught and condemned, broken on the wheel and beheaded. Their heads were mounted on stakes and exposed to the public at the scene of the crime and Mowbray gained its first name; “Drie Kopen” after the British Occupation the name was incorrectly translated as “Three Cups”. Southern Suburbs Tatler, 12-02-1987: How Mowbray got a Town Hall

As I have already stated that Architecture as Therapy should be viewed as a conceptual piece, in other words driven by the power of imagination, as Aldo Rossi says; “The connection between imagination and reality lies on a par with freedom and reality arising from imaginary based on the factual.” I was intrigued by stories about how Mowbray got its first name and I intend to re-brand the development or the site “Three Cups”, which alludes or recalls the history of the site. For an example a guy (A) can call another guy (B) somewhere else and say “ hey mai bru! Can u meet me at “Three Cups restaurant” then guy (B) ask “were the hell is that?” guy (A) answears “Mowbray, by the junction when u heading north you will see a building named “Three Heads”-Half Way Home”.

This is what people do in the cities they get to know their special places, with spaces were they feel more comfortable, these are notional meeting places that make a city workable. Mowbray is one of the well-connected urban environments through Klipfontein/Main Rd junction, from this node one can either go to: the City Center, Southern Suburbs, and the marginalized Cape Flats. I can only imagine what kind of a “joint” “Three Cups” tavern was at times when I get dropped off by the junction, thinking in my mind and asking myself “ That’s why its like a taxi rank today? Because that’s where one would get off and grab a drink or while waiting to go somewhere hence the name Three cups?”

## 2. Programme

The development or my proposal (which is made up of many buildings and spaces) accommodates a variety of uses. New buildings on the site include a half-way house for patients who have been released from the nearby Valkenberg psychiatric facility. The half-way house includes: administration, therapy rooms and housing as well as a new restaurant, a new gallery and a new informal market. Existing buildings (whose original use has been retained) include: The Mowbray Town Hall, Mowbray library and Cancer Association for South Africa building. These spaces are connected by a series of active outdoor courtyards.

The design of the development focuses on creating a barrier between the busy Mowbray Main Road traffic with a building that turns around the corner where Standard Bank building is located to create a square. The architecture began to be designed around a square as a central space, a courtyard with an intention to create separate buildings for each individual activity or use. Therefore the building looks as if different designers or architects designed it. The building is composed of the following spaces:

1. The administration and therapy rooms
2. A gallery
3. An informal trade market/ Restaurant/ Entertainment space
4. Accommodation or living areas for patients who have been released from Valkenburg psychiatric hospital.

I sketched out the plan of having three separate buildings, which held the different programming elements all connected by a walkway on the Mowbray Main roadside-walk/ streets (see **Fig 3& 4** below) and a cloister on the inner courtyard or square. The buildings, designed around a central space of a square, took their reference from the existing shape of the Mowbray Town Hall public open space and reinforced the idea of a protected public space. As a result the design is divided into three portions or parts, emphasized by existing entry or access points that lead into the Mowbray open public space, with which my design intention is to make it a protected public square (courtyard).

The building is divided by program elements of (starting from the top counterclockwise) is a restaurant/ entertainment area, accommodation areas and below these spaces or areas there is, an informal market, a gallery and administration block.

The accommodation area is divided into two, there are three bed duplex units or apartments and one room apartments that are combined with bachelors units /apartment. The administration block is made of a double volume space and it includes; consultation rooms, seminar room, physiotherapy spaces, reception and a pharmacy.

The gallery space is also a double volume space with a mezzanine floor that houses the office for the gallery and the informal market is also a double volume space with a platform that becomes the living room for the public and community to congregate. The development of the central area (square / inner courtyard) connects all three programmatic buildings together.

My design project intention strives to respond creatively and sensitively to the specifics of the site, its setting and context. By this I don't mean to mimic the existing order but to interpret the context in response to new requirements that society requires. As Eugene Raskin says; *"You must give your observer things that he knows no matter how much it hurts your advanced soul"*. Eugene Raskin 1965

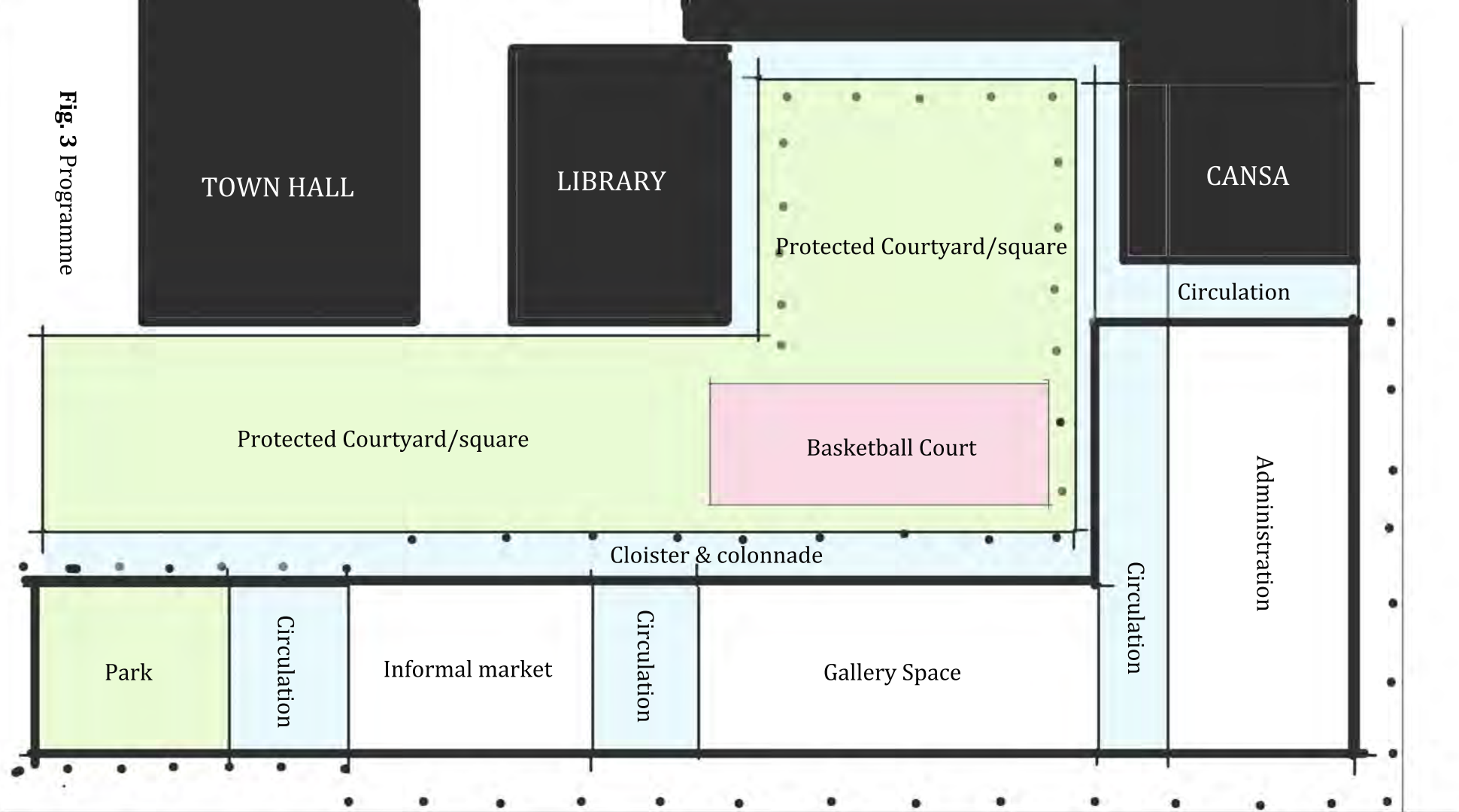
The area is characterized by Victorian architecture and my buildings borrow elements from that tradition, by shift paradigms (ideas) about place making building elements from their norm of traditional usage is an approach such as Aldo Rossi's; *Progressive Architecture*, which sees architecture as a dynamic process of tradition wherein buildings are a reproduction of the site of the city. In other words a city is composed of universally valid order of building types, and there is no necessity for each age to invent a new architecture; all that is required is to interpret the traditional canon rationally in the light of the current requirements. With that being said, I understand we cannot change history but architecture is part of a living tradition with which buildings can be given new life.

The spaces in between buildings are very fundamental to make the urban environment work, that's where people meet the buildings. Revitalizing the spaces in between and making them great spaces to live, and feel a sense of community is key to ensure that people don't live enclosed or indoors all the time which is bad to their health. People must be able to play, socialize, enjoy and celebrate life. This is what people do in the cities they go to cafes or restaurants and meet with one another and so on.

The place-making elements forming my proposal involves the hierarchy between small spaces, big spaces, public and private spaces, where people can hide away for a minute and talk one on one or as a congregation of a large group. Old cities have always got that, for example Mowbray Town Hall site is privileged to have civic buildings in close proximity partly defining an open public space, with which my main design intent is focused on reinforcing, by re-defining the street and creating a protected square that becomes a center for the community. By introducing a building typology that engage the people with the site, and does not exclude them.

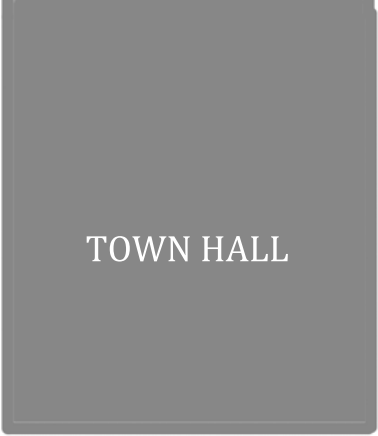
Each corridor is a street, each inner courtyard a square. In my designs for dwelling I relate to the basic types of living spaces, which have evolved in the course of a long process of urban architectural development. Aldo Rossi 1994

Fig. 3 Programme



Main Road Mowbray

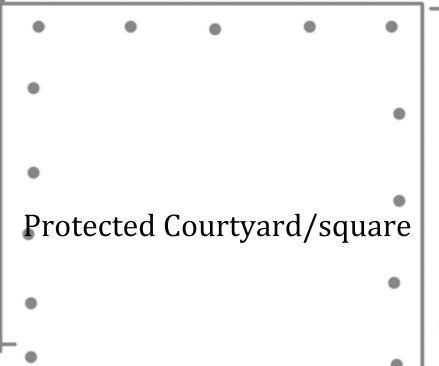
Fig. 4 Space relation



TOWN HALL



LIBRARY



Protected Courtyard/square

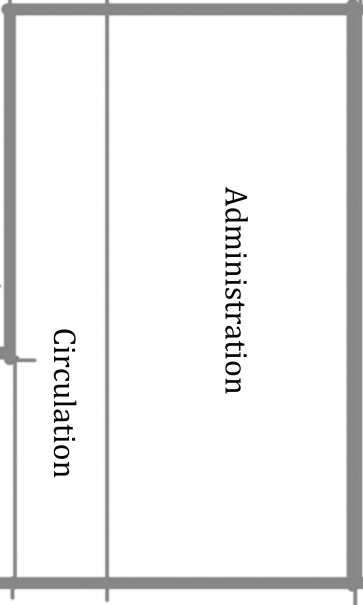


CANSA

Circulation



Basketball Court



Administration

Circulation

Cloister & colonnade



Park

Circulation

Informal market

Circulation

Gallery Space

Main Road Mowbray

### 3. Site Strategy

#### Courtyard / Square



**Fig 5.** Place des Vosges (original place Royale) (Paris, France)

The main concept for my proposal is to design a building fronting the open public space in harmony with the existing buildings creating an inner courtyard/square that would bring Mowbray town hall site buildings all together in unity. Moreover I am also proposing to demolish Standard Bank building to reinforce the notion of creating a courtyard by turning the corner where Standard Bank is located, with a building that opens into the courtyard so as to have an interactive edge towards the courtyard. Furthermore to make a complete functional courtyard there should be no car parking provided within the courtyard (as there is as present). Therefore it makes sense to have an underground basement for car parking and that would allow enough fresh air for the courtyard. Because I am proposing to bring more people into the site (residential units) there needs to be extra parking bays.

Public squares and parks are the most vital public urban spaces that form the focus of various social as well as economic activities of urban life for an example: (musical-events, informal trader markets, informal theatre and so on). There are many forms in which appropriate infrastructure can be provided: permanent or periodic markets in squares or streets; container shops (small kiosks which can be “clipped” onto otherwise dead walls; meter serviced manufacturing sites; factory flats; and so on).

Cities are made of people, public/private institutions like libraries, schools, clinics/hospitals, parks, plazas, streets etc. These structures make up the urban fabric in relation to each other as neighbors and they are the expression of the public and they also have a logic that people understand and hold the memory of places. Understanding of their structural logic enables people to behave responsibly or in a positive manner.

## Forecourt / verandah



**Fig 6.** Medieval cities (Prague Czech Republic)

With a respect for the fruits of man's daring and creative work, Today Mowbray Town Hall building is still standing the ground romanticizing the ordinary of the past (the Flemish Renaissance details showing the grapevines and a bowl of fruits).

With regards to Mowbray Town Hall, there is a sense of absence of a spirit of the place and it's dead and beautiful and "*what is beautiful is complete and finished.*" As it is now, a monument resembling a state of "permanence" and on that note it demands some type of formal respect towards it, considering my intent to design a proposal which would produce therapy, in order to heal the Town Hall and ensuring that the Town Hall remains significant to the context. For example Mowbray Town Hall falls under what can be termed "*pathological conservation*" as according to Aldo Rossi and by this he refers to a manner that seeks to retain the building closely to its measures of original conditions, regardless of the functions and requirements society throws up in it, its space must be left as originally intended.

The picture above is a "bad" design as good an example of lack of geometrical regularity and shows fragmentation and disorganization rather than coherence and connection. Considering Mowbray Town Hall and the Library (see attached **site analysis map fold over**). However with regards to the picture above as an activated threshold by adding a verandah with a market in front of the building it is good because it allows people to engage the building. Therefore for that matter I intend to propose a forecourt in front of Mowbray Town Hall, framing it to the observer against the backdrop of my design proposal.

The idea of proposing a building that encloses the public open space into a courtyard is very critical to confronting Mowbray Town Hall without aggression, therefore some sort of intervention is necessary. And that would help to resolve the problem of exclusion created by putting up a fence wall, and bring back or resurrect into the current life requirements. So that it is enlivened and get activated through positive behavior of human beings.

## Cloister and Colonnade



**Fig 7.** Brunelleschi's Foundling Hospital (Florence, Italy)

In order to connect my design proposal with the existing structures in a sense that gives uniformity to read as one big civic space, my intention is to use the idea of a cloister wrapping around the courtyard from the Mowbray library's north facing edge and linking it to the Cancer Association for South Africa building, as well as my design proposal. This would create a hierarchy of connected spaces (big and small), in between spaces that opens out to the inside or outside spaces.

These are thresholds and places where people meet/greet the building or say goodbye and exit the building. Spaces that allows temporary occupation, welcomes back people who haven't seen each other in a while, as they bump into each other inside a building get excited and take it outside for one on one catchup conversation.

The picture above is one of Brunelleschi's Foundling Hospital, Piazza Annunziata (Florence, Italy) showing the first sign of connected action through generations to create spatial harmony. The picture does not necessarily indicate a cloister in its formal sense as a covered walk with an open colonnade on one side, running along the walls of buildings that face a quadrangle. My design proposal is to create a square or courtyard with a cloister that would ensure that the Mowbray Town Hall site buildings are all connected and read as united civic institutions, even though they are separated. By creating a cloister it would also allow for shaded walkways ensuring protection from the elements. It would be nice for people to just sit watching other people play from these spaces, (a basketball court) within the square can activate it through people participation, someone can just sit and watch a basketball game. Therefore I also intend to provide a basketball court within the square for people to play and utilize the open public space

## Redefining the Street



fig. 8 Weishaupt Forum (Schwendi, Germany)

The notion to redefine the street is to change it into an urban space, from a place of transit into a place to be, from a mechanism that segregated into a medium that integrates. The main focus is to make the street as a central aspect of architectural, urban, economic, technical and socio-cultural developments. In which technology, society and art can be united in architecture and the city. My design proposal is to create an architecture that encourages more positive and new interactions among the passerby. People walk past each other everyday, very little communication occurs. By redefining the street with a colonnade and a forecourt that leads into the square or courtyard, is a strategy to design an architecture that can frame and house these interactions.

The picture above is a good example of how I intend to create a covered walkway on the edge of Main Road Mowbray but still allow people passing by to see through beyond the building into the square or courtyard in order to invite people to occupy it. I used the similar idea of a colonnaded walkway as in the picture above in my design, but instead of only having a colonnaded walkway, the gallery space is located in between the colonnade on the street edge and at the back of the gallery where the colonnade forms a cloister (see Fig. 3 & 4), the gallery space is glazed all around to create a sense of transparency and allows people passing by to have a view beyond the display into the square or courtyard.

I am proposing a basketball court in the courtyard, the intention is to create a (static/dynamic) play between the gallery display and the activities that would take place in the courtyard e.g (a sequence of views of people playing basket ball, gesture posed against the gallery panels display). As one moves along Mowbray Main Road he would see for example art display about sports and as he moves ahead he will then see a person dribbling with a basketball beyond the gallery, visible in between the gallery display panels (the clips or sequence can start by dribbling and ends with a slam dunk).

The idea is to create interactive spaces, that would capture the observer's attention and attract the observer to engage with the building. At present Mowbray Town Hall site is fenced on Main Road Mowbray and the site is exclusive and hardly utilised other than been used as car parking. If the space could be revitalised or reinvigorated people can have a reason to use the space productively. Students and workers near by the site as well as the local people ( can refresh and play a game of basket ball while on lunch break or go and have lunch meals in the park as well as invited to use the Mowbray Library more often or go to the Centre for Cancer Association for inquiries).

## Architecture as Therapy – Design & Technology

### 4. Architectural Strategy

#### Victorian architecture

The majority of buildings or houses around Mowbray are Victorian architecture in style. Although there are many different types of Victorian buildings, they all shared many of the same detailed architectural features. My design proposal borrows ideas from the architectural styles round Mowbray, my intention is not to mimic the existing order around Mowbray, but rather to use my own order of interpretation. The following features are used in the design of my project as a design strategy to blend in my project in harmony with the existing context of Mowbray:

#### Bay Window

In my design the accommodation units has got bay windows on the street edge of Main Road Mowbray, the bay windows sticks out of the building to create a rhythmic pattern and make the building dynamic. (**Fig.9** a general bay window detail)

#### Dormer

I used the idea of dormers in my design to enhance the interior of the accommodation units; the dormers are glazed to throw in the sunlight inside the rooms. ( **Fig.10** a general dormer detail)

#### Wood Siding

The main façade of the building on the Main Road Mowbray is clad with timber and is partly masonry wall and plaster. I used timber cladding to make the dormers and bay windows, this ensured flexibility of the façade. Therefore the timber clad elements can be clipped on to the masonry wall and can be made in different shapes.

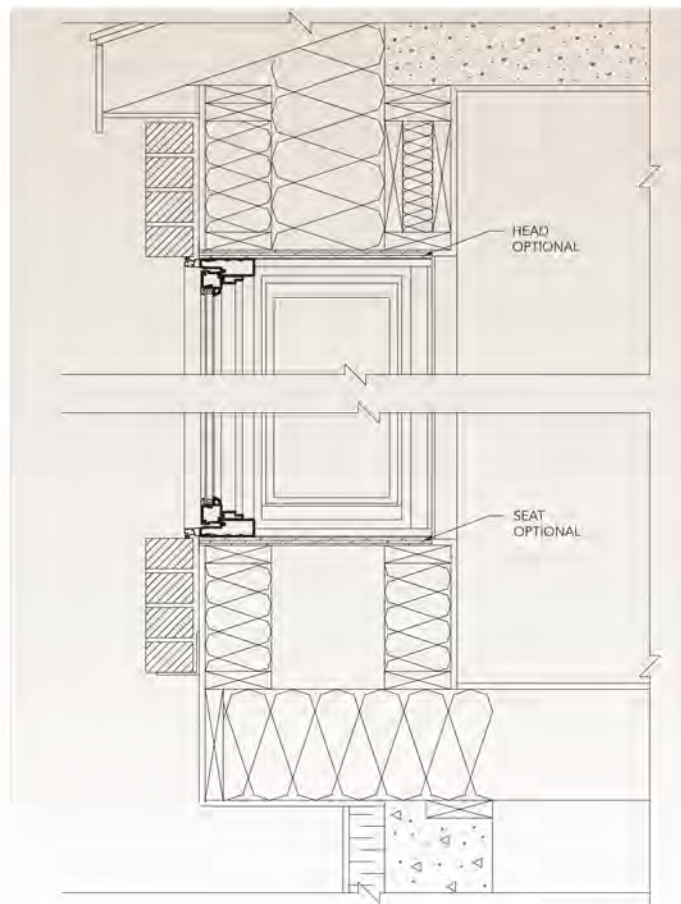
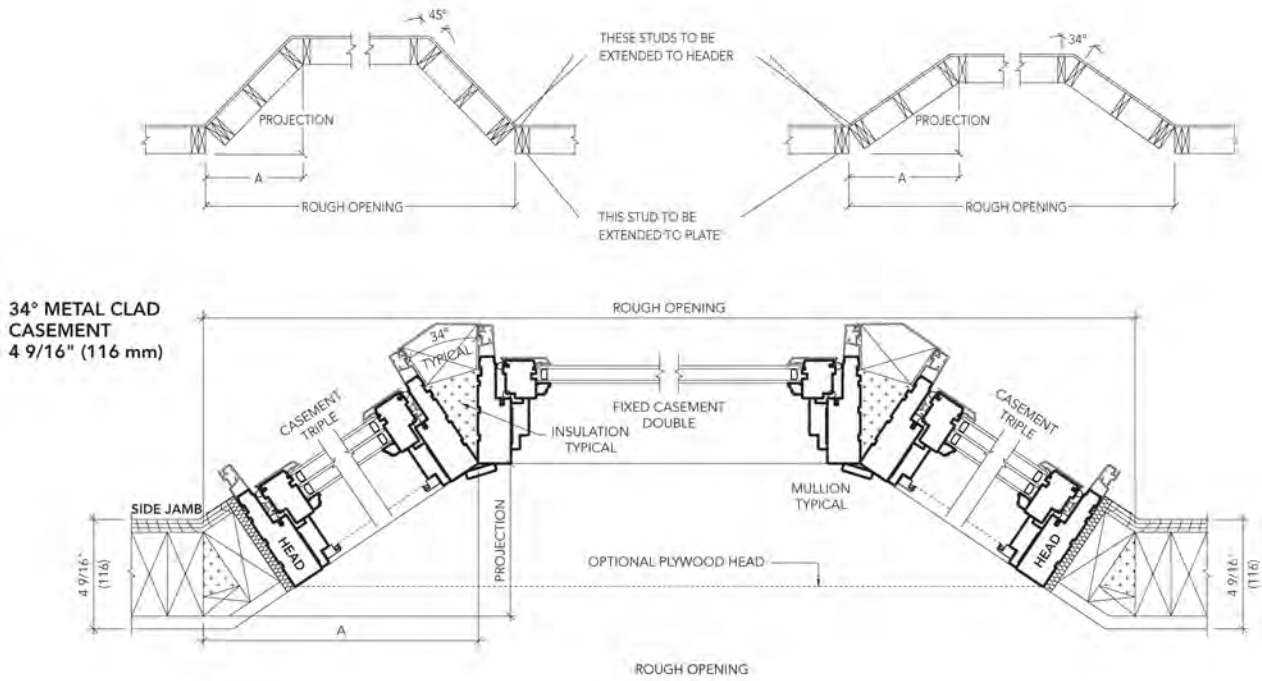
#### Veranda

I used the ideas of a verandah to create a forecourt in front of the Mowbray Town Hall so that it is enlivened and given significance as a monument. The forecourt is a big double volume verandah with a corrugated iron roof held on parasol structures. The main idea is to open the building on the park or square and also let the park come into the building. ( **Fig.11** a general Verandah detail)

#### Shelter and Light + shadow

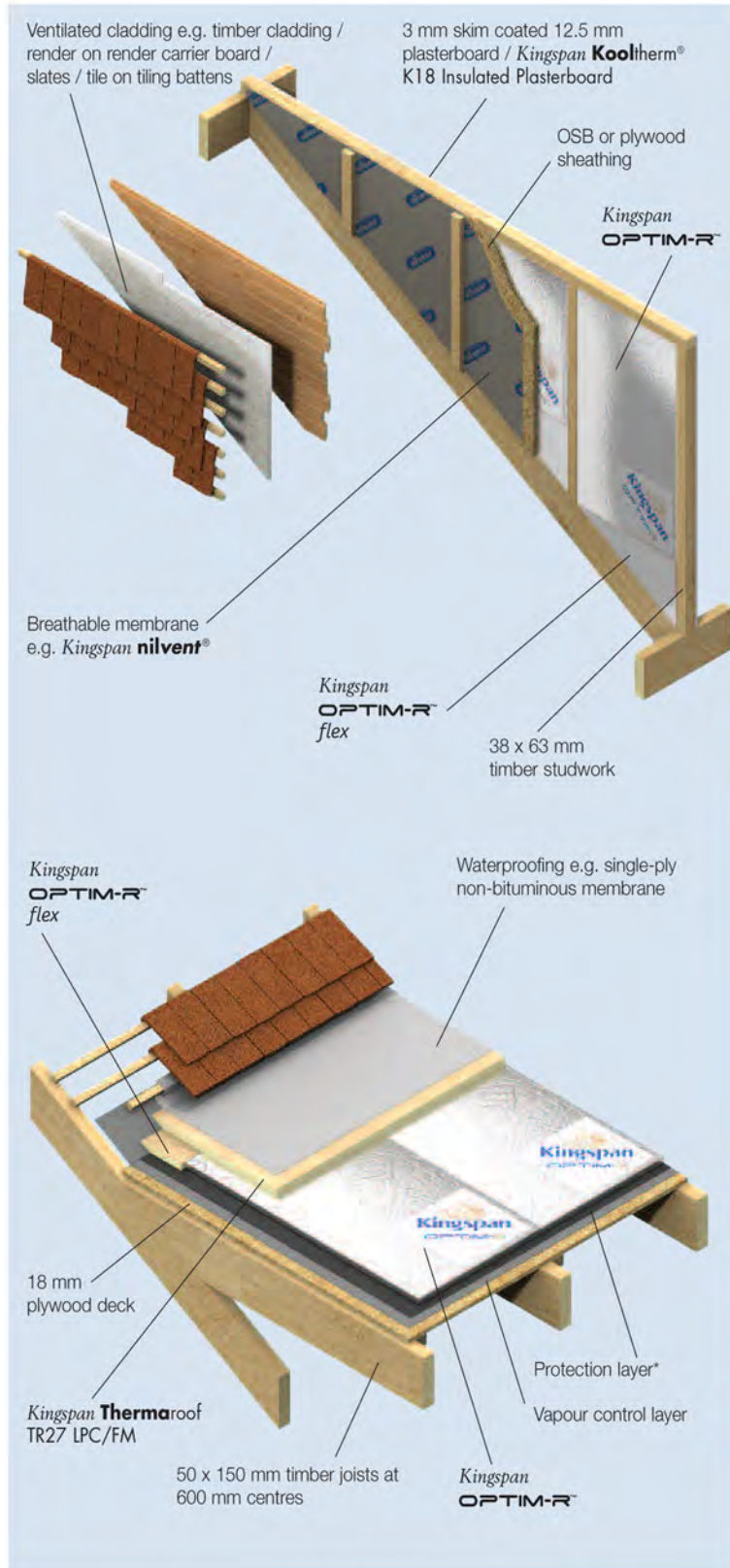
Elements of buildings such as sunshades, screens, louvres, are used in my design to cast shadows which have shapes (timber sliding screens on balconies). The dynamic nature of the shadows cast by sunlight gives an immense potential to effectively design and create shades and shadows. The openings along the facade create patches of light and shadow, and break the monotony of the repeated elements in the facade. Light falls on a relief perpendicular to its surface (the bay windows that stuck out of the facade), creating a play between light and shadows.

Bay Window Construction Detail



**Fig. 9** Bay window detail: [http://www.loewencentre.com/architect\\_pdf/F\\_Bow\\_Bay.pdf](http://www.loewencentre.com/architect_pdf/F_Bow_Bay.pdf)

**Dormer Construction Detail**



**Fig. 10** Verandar detail: <http://www.kingspaninsulationco.uk/getattachment/b081609f-2f87-4fbd-a32d-6030c6c5dd59/OPTIM-R-Dormer-System.aspx>

### Veranda Construction Detail

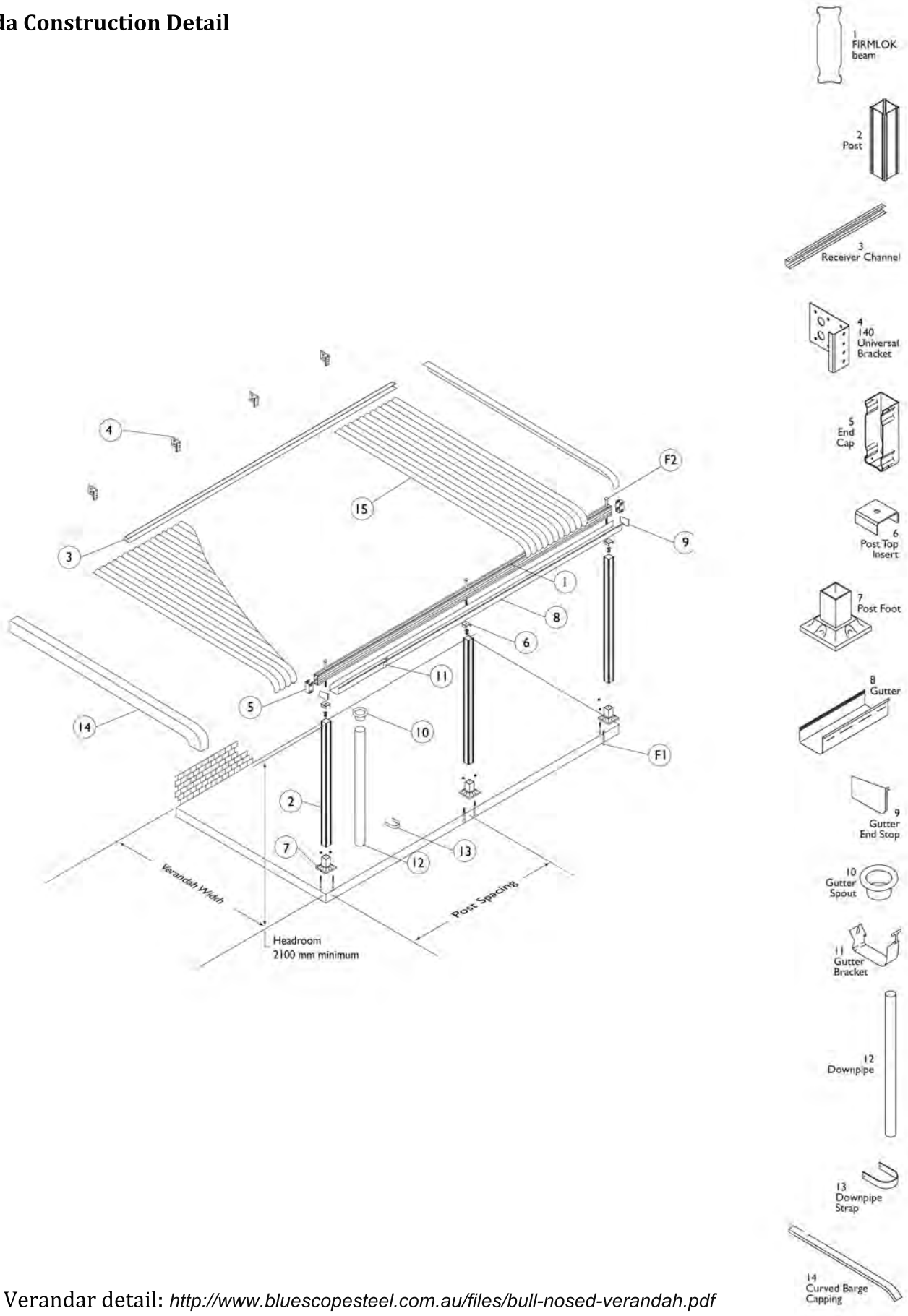
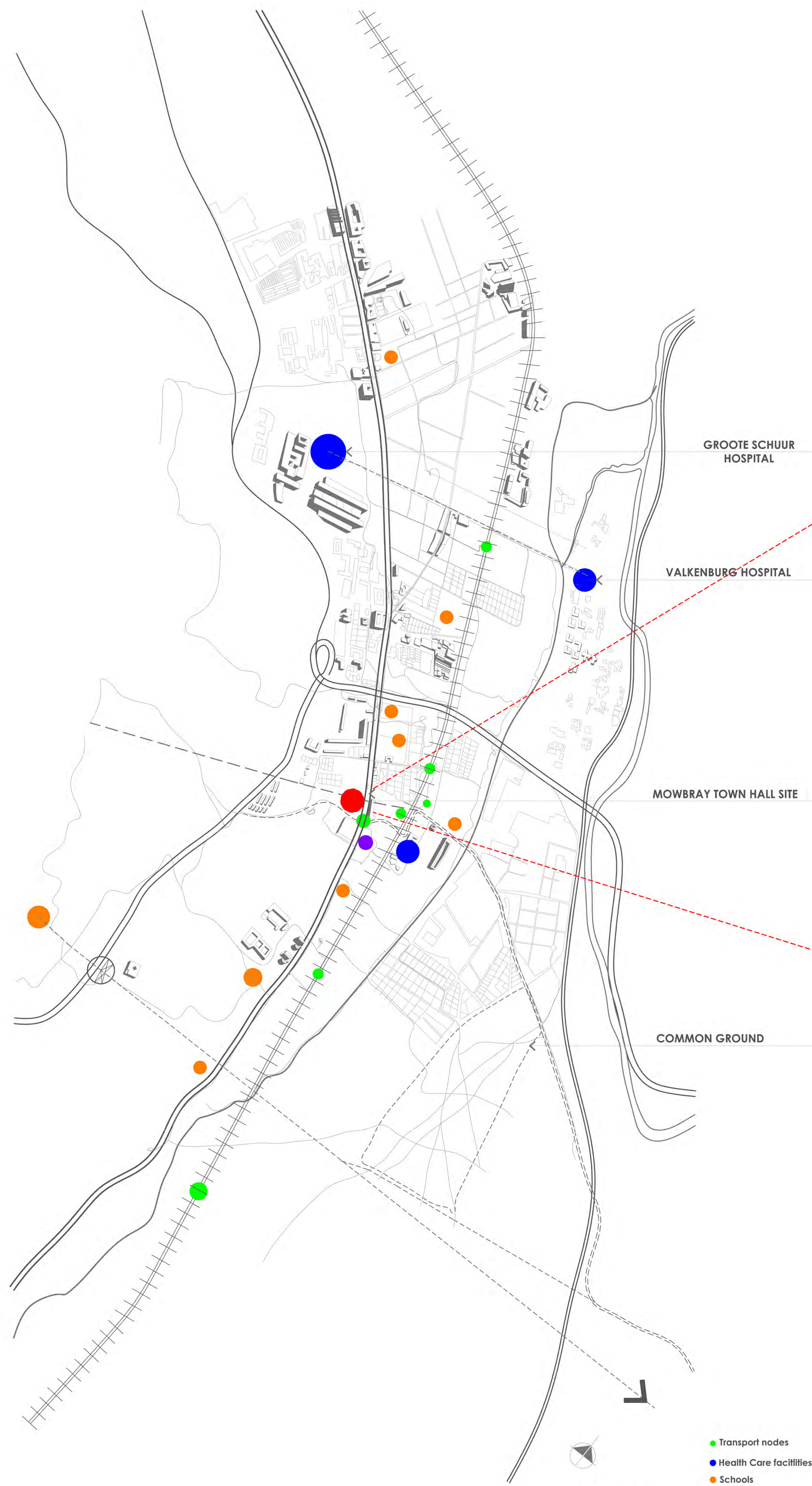


Fig. 11 Verandar detail: <http://www.bluescopesteel.com.au/files/bull-nosed-verandah.pdf>

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- <http://www.kingspaninsulation.co.uk/getattachment/b081609f-2f87-4fbd-a32d-6030c6c5dd59/OPTIM-R-Dormer-System.aspx>
- [http://www.loewencentre.com/architect\\_pdf/F\\_Bow\\_Bay.pdf](http://www.loewencentre.com/architect_pdf/F_Bow_Bay.pdf)





**Nadine Christians**

Vagrants at the Mowbray Town Hall in Main Road, have become a public nuisance.

They defecate, loiter, walk around naked, drink alcohol and clean themselves and do their laundry on the premises. They pester people visiting the library, the Cancer Association and the municipal offices and the eight to 15-strong group that has made its home there has turned the area, including a parking lot and the grassed area, into an eyesore.

Jonathan Hobday, chairman of the Mowbray and Rosebank Residents' Association, told the Tatler it has been a problem for the last four years.

Letters to council and the health department have been written to sort out the problem, said Mr Hobday.

"They defecate. There's a booze problem with their public drinking. They're loitering and washing their clothes in public. This is a serious blot on Mowbray.

"The civic association has written to various authorities to complain. It's council property and they need to take the necessary measures.

"It has become worse and worse over the last few months," Mr Hobday said.

As it stands, the land on which the town hall, library and Cancer Association is housed is not fenced and anybody has access to the area.

The residents' association has received complaints about the state of that area.

But Mr Hobday said that he has seen the public works department cleaning up the area once or twice.



"We are following the Central Improvement District models in Cape Town and Sea Point where they have successfully tackled the vagrancy problem. They have had an 80% success rate," said Mr Thomas.

The Metro Police's displaced persons unit has looked into the problem.

Joseph Ross said that special operations were carried out in the area by the displaced persons unit every weekend for five weeks to address the matter by patrolling the area and removing the vagrants to shelters.

Said Mr Ross: "There was buy-in from the local community which paid off, but the focus of the unit's operations has shifted from Mowbray/Observatory to Woodstock."

He said that the number of vagrants in the area is likely to remain constant as long as there are offers of soup and hand-outs from residents.

He said the lack of public amenities results in their anti-social behaviour.

**MOWBRAY TOWN HALL** is a status symbol. It was built as a symbol of Mowbray's superiority in Rondebosch, and it is necessary to go back into history to see why. Peter James Smith researched its history.

The first building erected in the present Mowbray suburb was a tavern, built about 1820, on the site of the present Mowbray. It was owned by a barber, Charles, and named Johannes Beck. Wynberg, and Mowbray held the wine and spirit licence for Rondebosch and Wynberg in 1823. He decided to expand his business and he held another tavern, a drinking saloon away from the main road near the present Mowbray.

The tavern was destroyed by fire in 1825. The following year three slaves murdered the owner of the tavern in his own right, as of course did Rondebosch, except for one child who was taken by a faithful nurse in a brick house.

The mother of the slaves, who were of mixed race, were of mixed race. Their heads were moved on stakes and exposed to the public at the scene of the crime, and Mowbray gained its first name, "Don Key-pon".

After the British Occupation the name was incorrectly translated as "The Three Cops".

During the 19th century the population grew and the name was considered to be a little odd, and in 1880 the residents successfully petitioned for the name to be changed to "Mowbray".

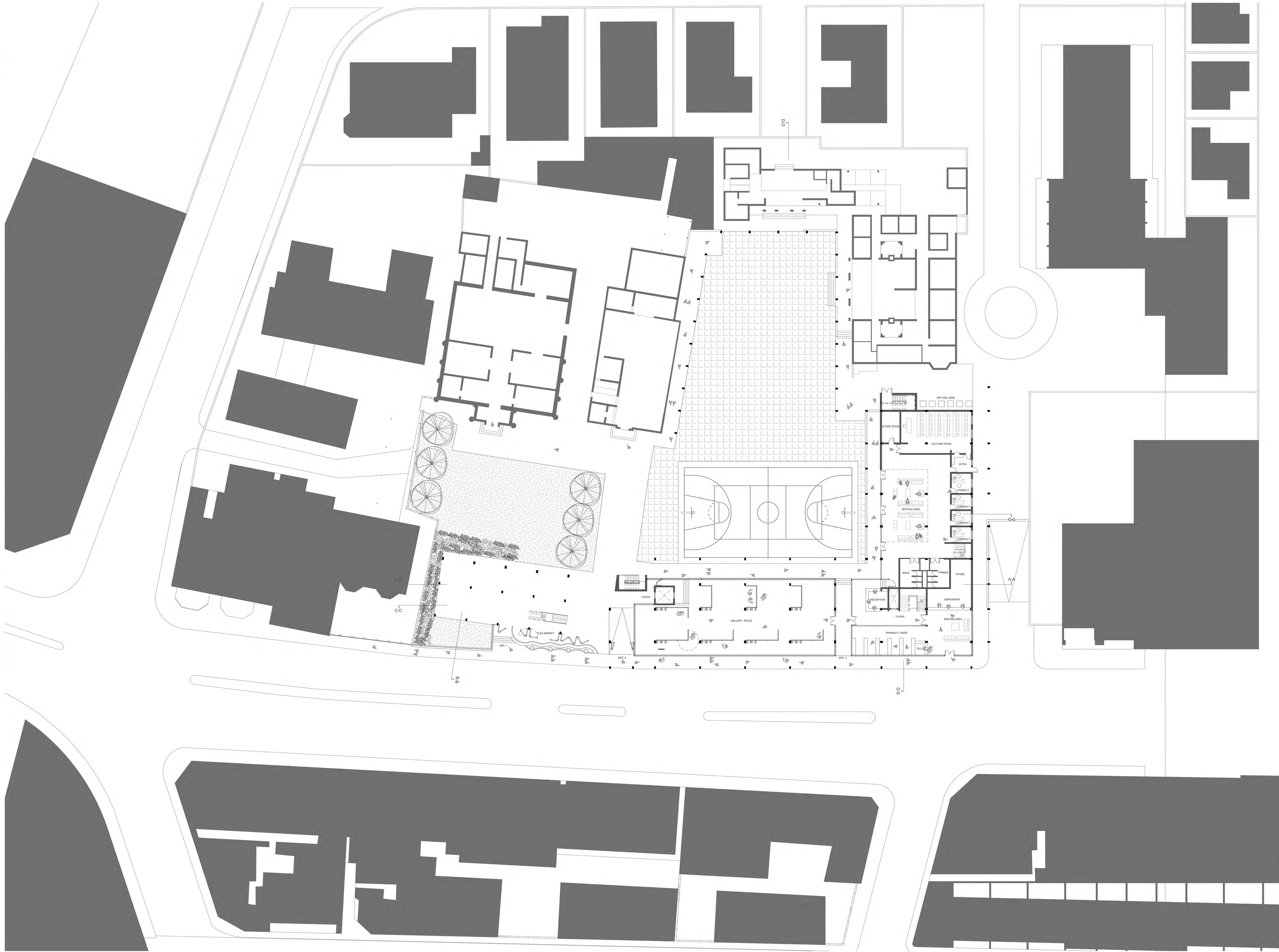
As many of the houses were built on part of the Mowbray estate which owner was swept away and came from Melton Mowbray in England.

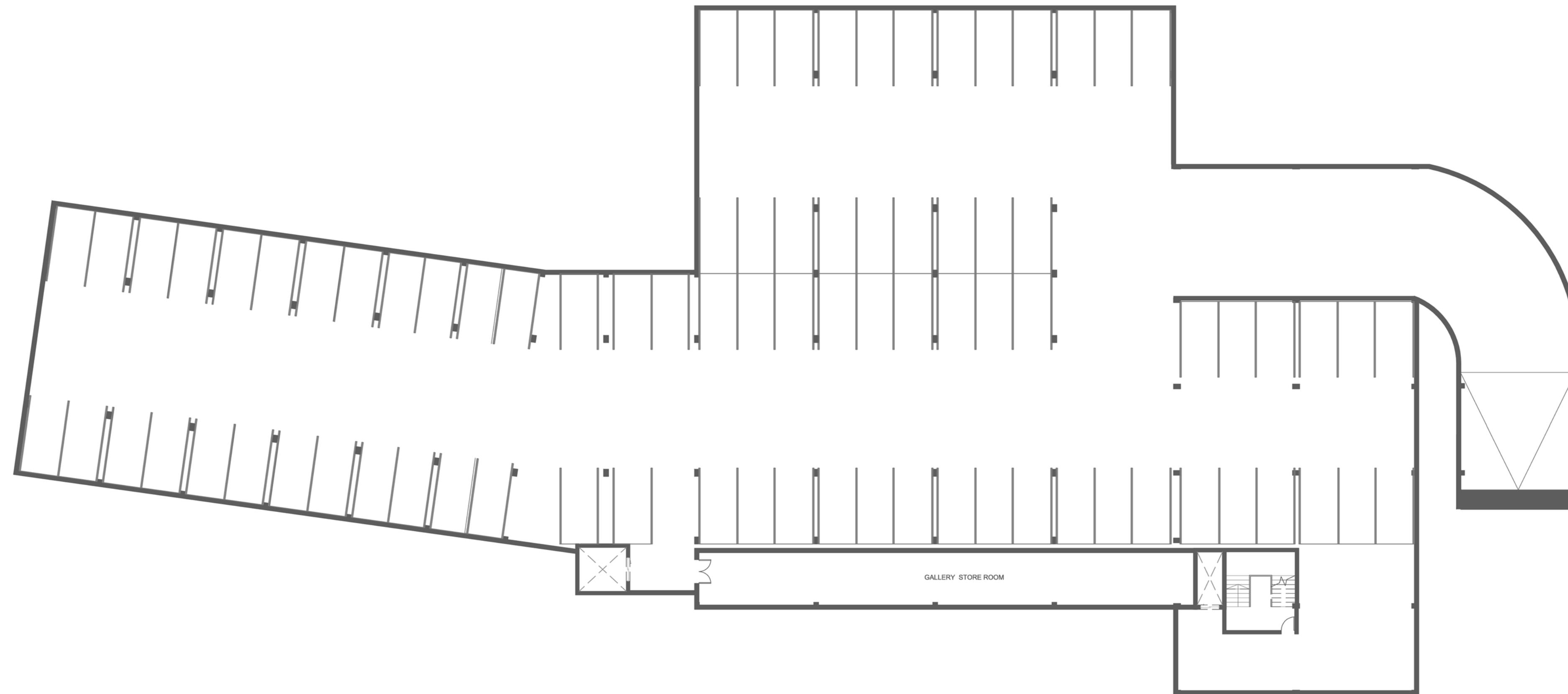
The year later the present Mowbray Municipality was formed including almost certainly the village of Mowbray, Rondebosch, Wynberg, and Mowbray. The name Mowbray was granted a coat of arms showing the three and in 1823 he decided to expand his business and he held another tavern, a drinking saloon away from the main road near the present Mowbray.

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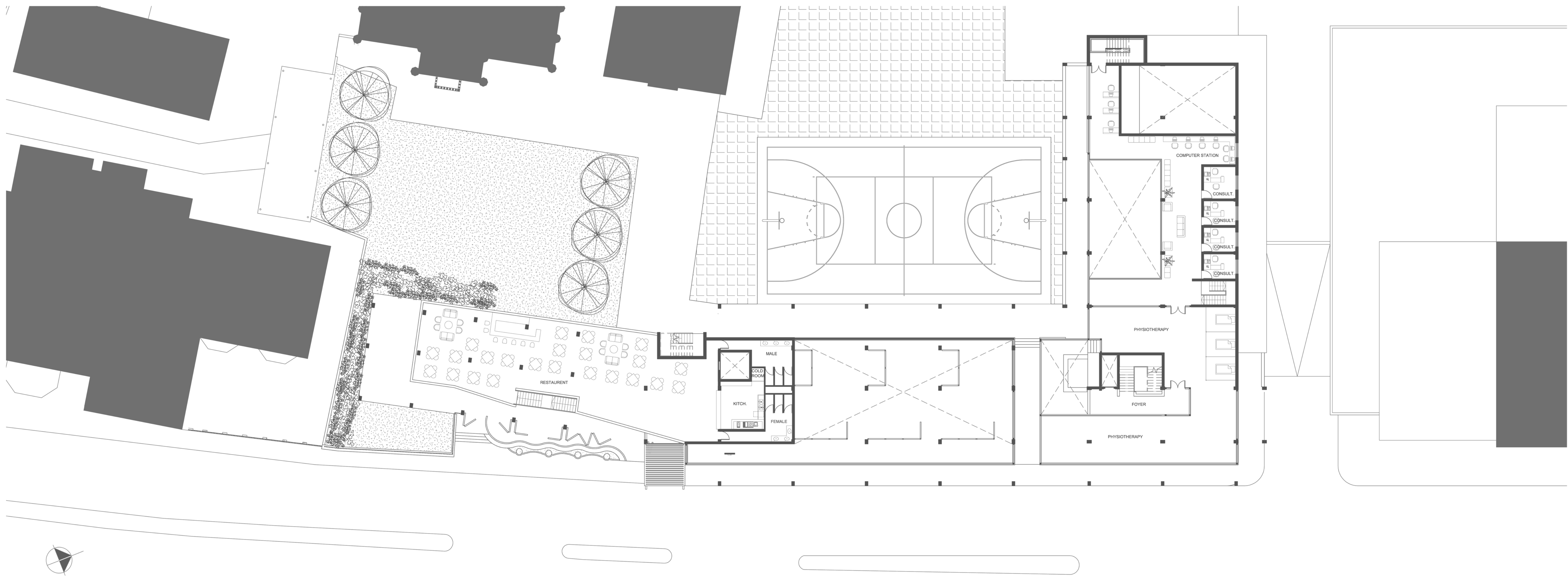
**GROUND FLR. PLAN**

Scale 1: 200

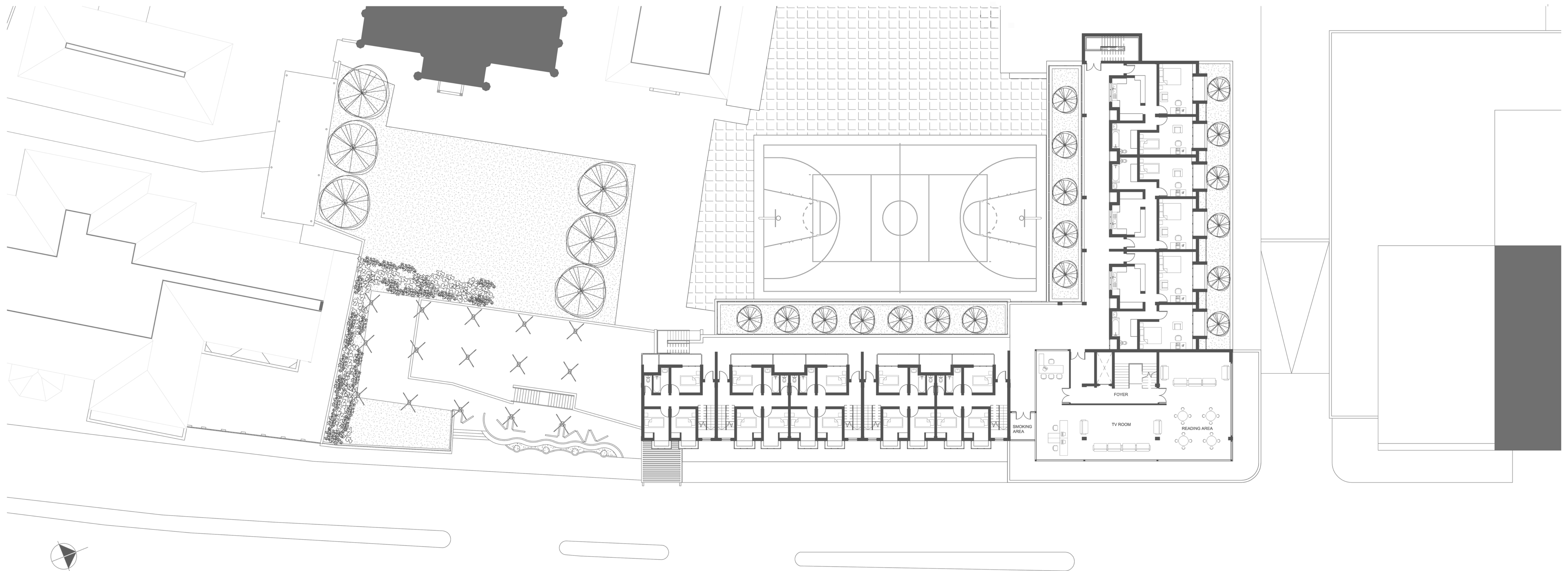




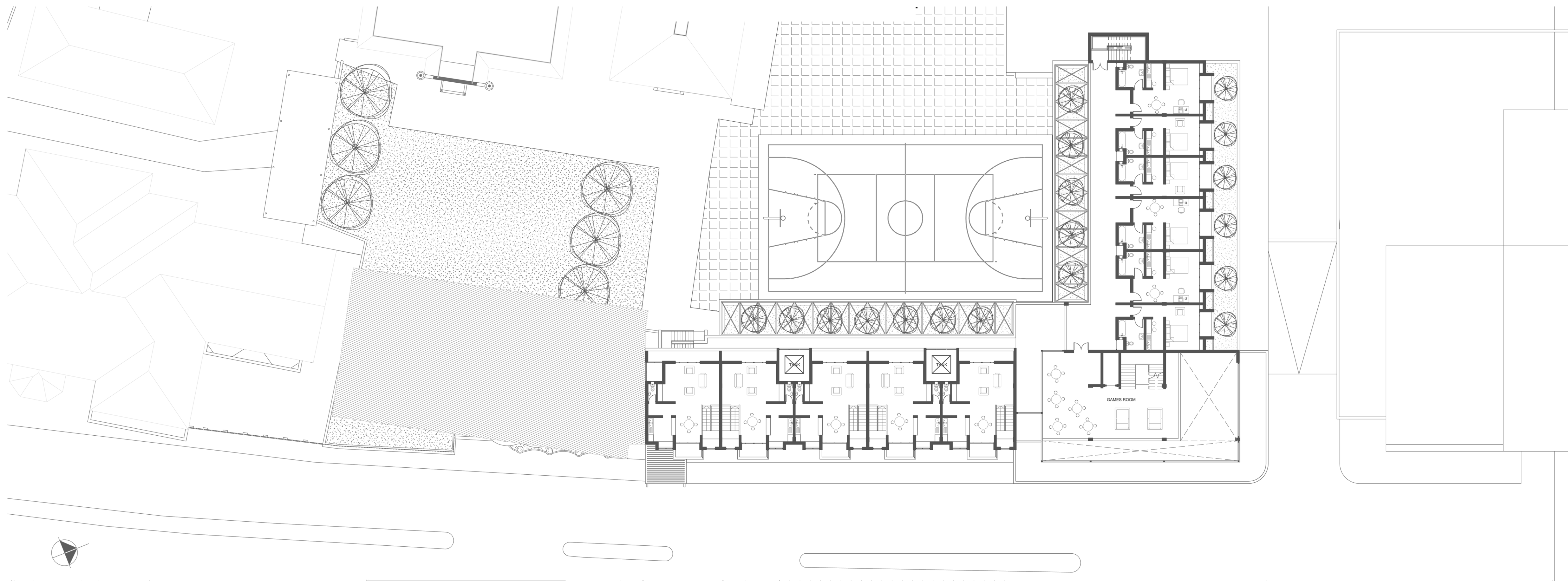
**BASEMENT FLR** Scale 1:200



**FIRST FLR Scale 1:200**



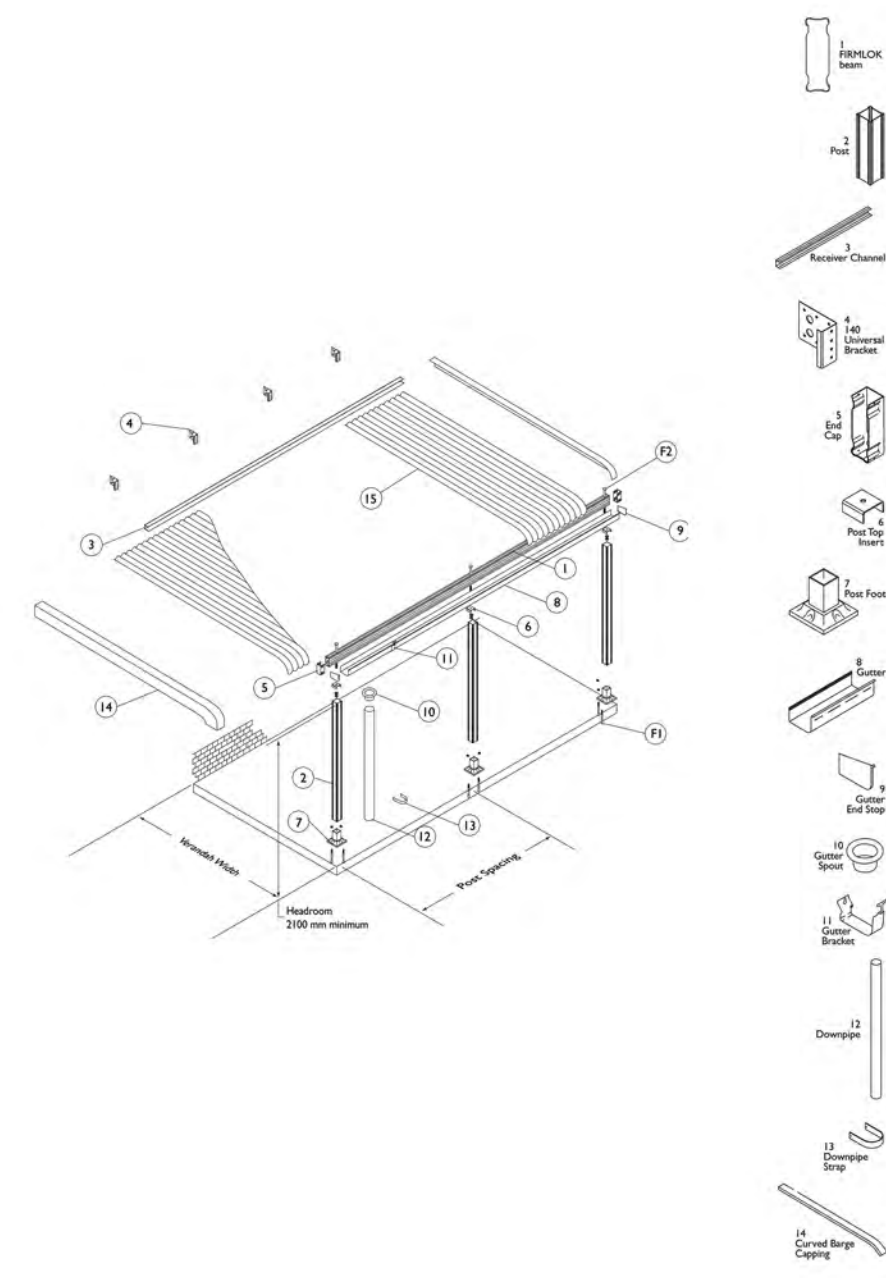
**SECOND FLR** Scale 1:200



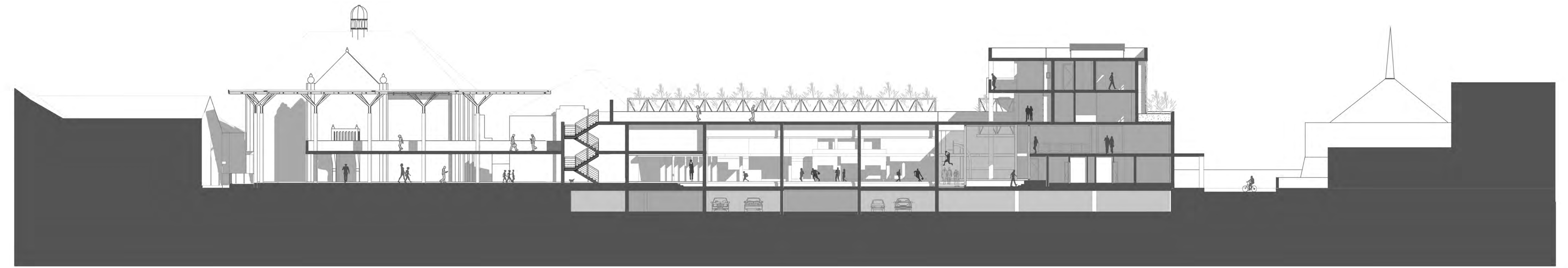
**THIRD FLR Scale 1:200**



1. VERANDAH: PRAQUE, CZECH REPUBLIC



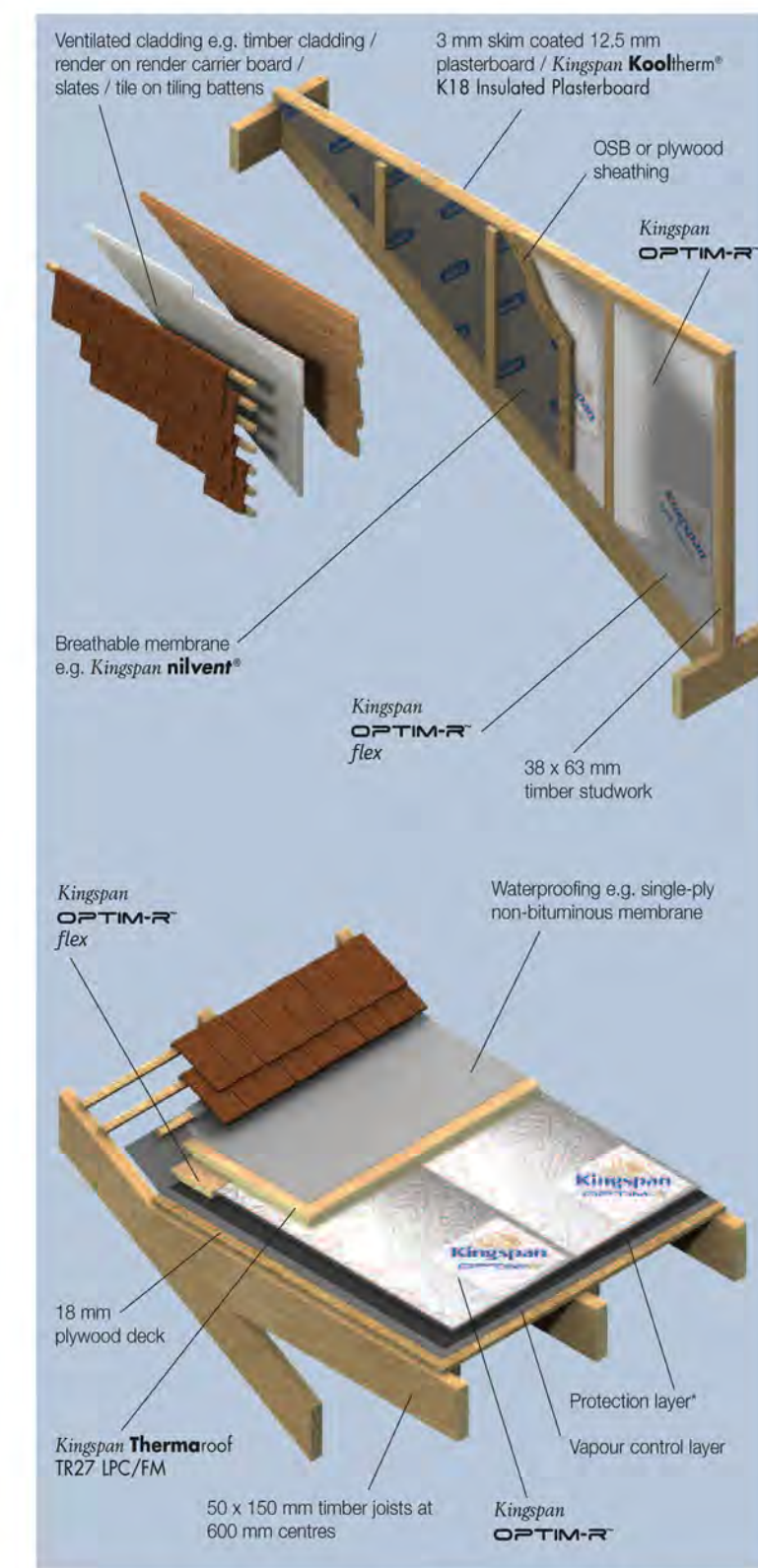
4. VERANDAH: CONSTRUCTION DETAIL



SECTION A-A Scale 1:200



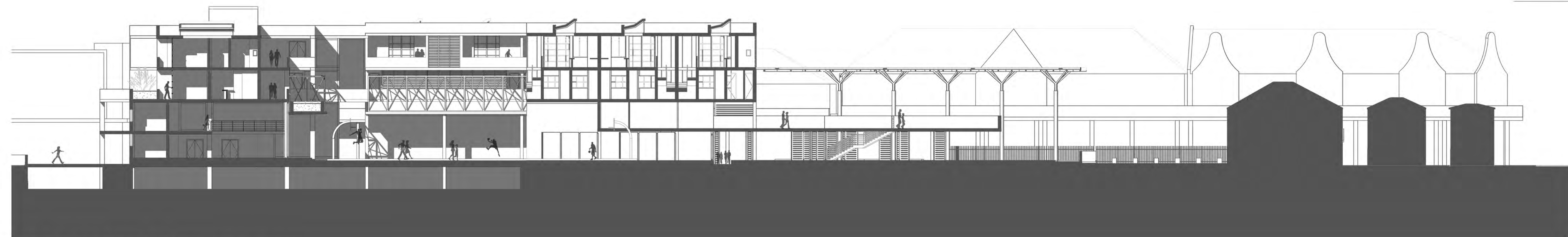
2. CLOISTER: PIAZZA ANNUNZIATA



5. DORMER: CONSTRUCTION DETAIL



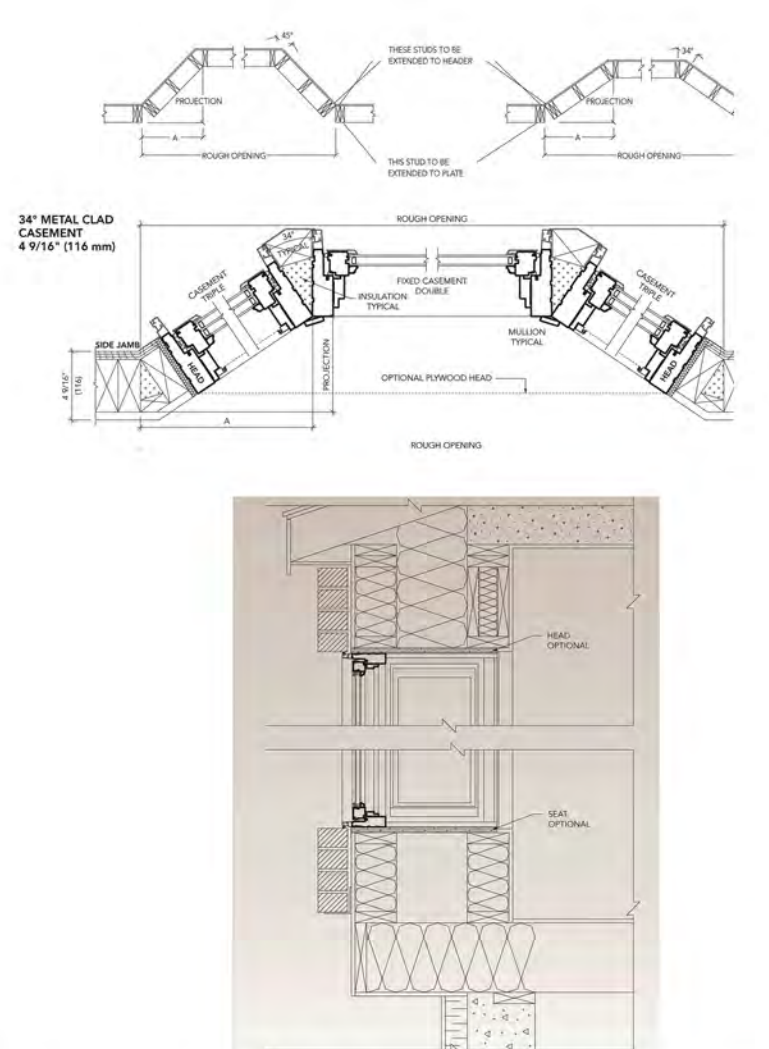
SECTION B-B Scale 1:200



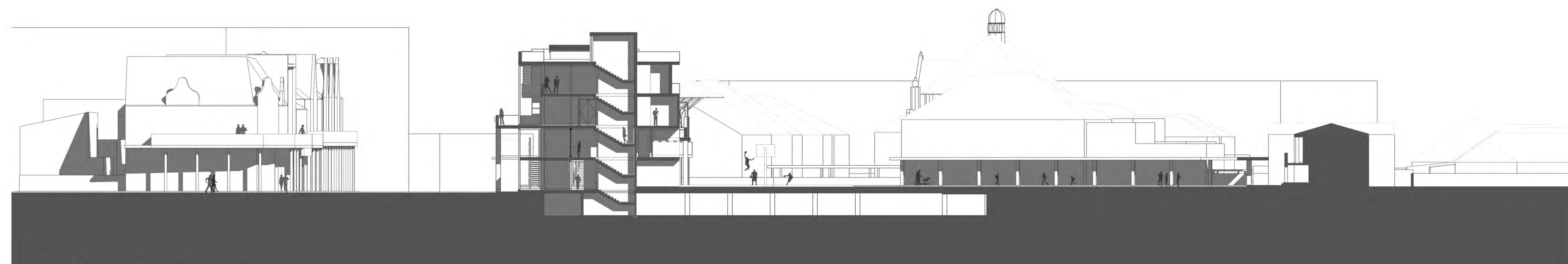
SECTION C-C Scale 1:200



3. COLONNADE: WEISHAUPT FORUM



6. BAY WINDOW: CONSTRUCTION DETAIL



SECTION D-D Scale 1:200