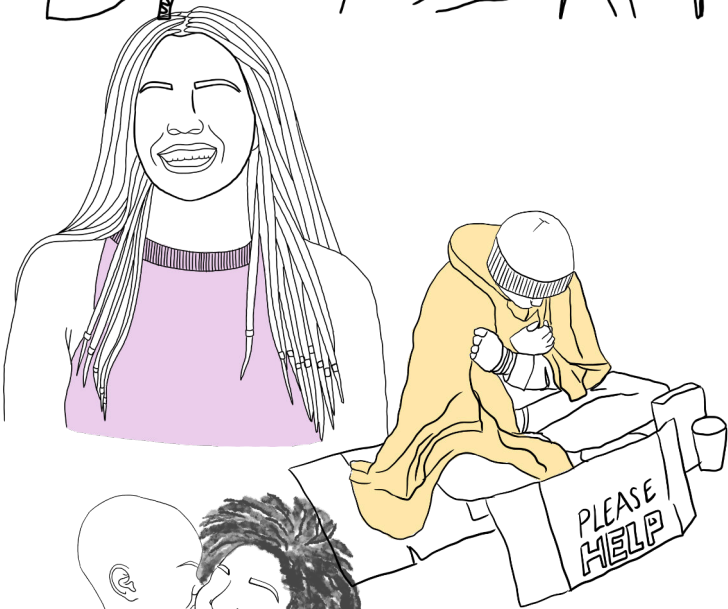


The Sunnier Side

Safer Spaces for Vulnerable Groups in Sunnyside



Robyn J. Wolmarans

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Supervisors:

Dr Nico Botes & Janri Barker

Departmental Research Field:

Inhabitation of Place

To the Masters Interior Studio - you ladies are incredible and inspire me daily. From our collaborative work sessions, coffee walks, and much-needed vent sessions, I wouldn't trade any of it for the world. The lessons I've learned from you all, not only about architecture but life, are truly invaluable.

To Janri and Nico, thank you for your wisdom and wealth of knowledge you've so generously shared with me during my time in Boukunde. Your insights and guidance will forever shape my path, and I intend to carry these lessons into everything I do and stand for as a designer. I am privileged to have started this journey under your guidance six years ago, and to now complete it with your supervision. I hope that I am able to make you proud and display the growth you nurture in us all during our first year of architecture school.

To Anika and Janri, thank you for being endless wells of kindness. Thank you for every tissue offered in tough times, for each gentle word of encouragement, and, ultimately, for helping me feel understood and heard as I navigated bringing my visions to life. Thank you for giving me the courage I needed throughout my postgraduate years.

To Jason, a true IT wizard. Boukunde would probably collapse without you. I am forever grateful for the endless hours of technical support and to you for helping me expand my software skillset - even when I didn't pick the best time to teach myself Revit!

To Jess and Miré, my rocks - thank you for being my voices of reason when I couldn't find the way forward, for bringing sunshine on the rainy days, for reminding me there is life outside of this degree, for all the laughter and joy, and for helping me fend off all the gremlins when they threatened to creep in. Your friendship has become my greatest gift from this journey, and if nothing else, Boukunde has blessed me with lifelong friendships I could only have dreamed of.


To my parents and my sister, thank you for teaching me to believe in myself and that no dream is beyond my reach if I am willing to work for it. Thank you for bearing with my late nights and all the many hours I've spent locked away working in my room (I promise to be more present now). My family's support is boundless, and words cannot express the gratitude and love I have.

To Boukunde - to all the staff, and students of every year, and to everyone that I've had the privilege to cross paths with - this experience has been profoundly enriching and educational in all facets of life.

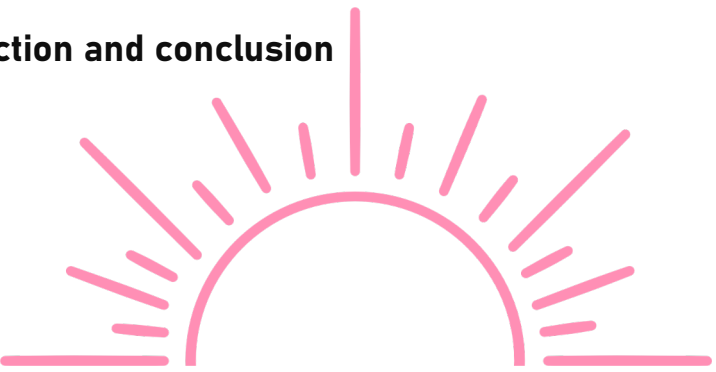
'Thank you' does not feel grand enough to express the depth of my appreciation for your unwavering support, care and guidance. Everything I am today is because of all of you, and none of this would have been possible without each one of you. I count this experience and each of you as one of my greatest blessings that I have ever received and will always cherish my time here at Boukunde.

acknowledgments

contents



sensitivity & dedication	1
overview	3
abstract	4
context	6
DIT integration	7
design focus	11
key terminology	12
project brief	13
stakeholders	13
programme and users	14
site analysis	15
statement of significance	15
spatial informants	16
adaptive reuse strategy	16
theoretical framework	17
material and construction strategy	19
concept	20
design development	21
design resolution	23
critical reflection and conclusion	25
references	26





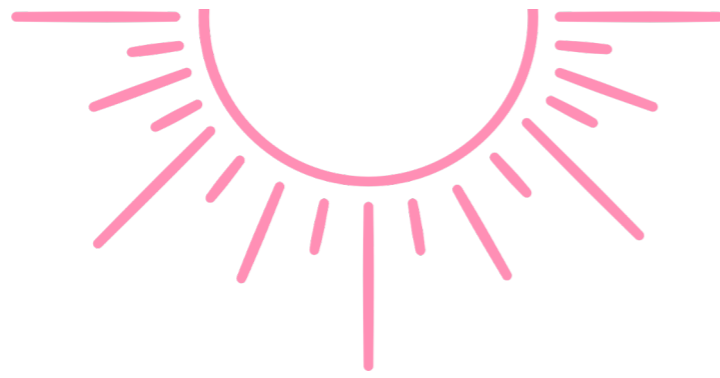
This project delves into sensitive and distressing topics, including gender-based violence, focusing on the experiences of vulnerable groups such as women and children. The content may include descriptions and statistics of violence, abuse, and trauma, which could be triggering for some individuals. Viewer discretion is advised.

Please prioritize your well-being and seek professional support if needed.



This project is dedicated to anyone who has ever felt unsafe or harmed at the hands of another, to anyone who has ever felt the need to hide or make themselves smaller for the sake of their own safety, to anyone who has found courage in the #MeToo movement or feared if they were next, and to anyone who would choose to bear the weight of this reality so others might be free.

May this work honor your strength and bring light to the urgent need for a world where every person feels safe, valued, and heard.



Student:

Robyn J. Wolmarans
MInt Arch (Prof) | u19061693

Supervisor:

Dr. Nico Botes

Co-supervisor:

Janri Barker

Project Title:

The Sunnier Side

Building Type and Programme:

Mixed-Use Development focusing on Healthcare

Location:

78 Troye Street, Sunnyside, City of Tshwane, 0001

Departmental Research Field:

Inhabitation of Place

Client:

The City of Tshwane Municipality

This project aims to enhance the physical, emotional, and financial safety of women, children and vulnerable groups in Sunnyside by transforming the Sunnyside Galleries, a mixed-use building on Robert Sobukwe Street. This area, characterised by high-density residential areas and socio-economic disparities, faces significant crime rates and exclusionary spatial measures that negatively impact the community.

Women and children, in particular, suffer from a lack of safe social gathering spaces, forcing them into retail areas (atypical social spaces) while men dominate social spaces linked to liquor and incidents of crime. Addressing these disparities, the project reimagines the Sunnyside Galleries as a central node for safety and inclusivity. Built in 1961 in the Late Brazil Modernist style, the Sunnyside Galleries has both historical and social significance but is currently underutilised and poorly maintained. Its revitalisation offers an opportunity to create a safe, inclusive urban oasis.

The Sunnier Side employs principles of adaptive reuse to renovate the building to foster physical safety through improved infrastructure and various spatial strategies identified to promote user comfort, well-being and security such as those based on trauma-informed design. By recovering the heritage building and enhancing green spaces the project aims to create a welcoming environment that encourages community interaction and deters crime.

Emotionally, the project aims to provide safe spaces where women and children can gather without fear. Incorporating salutogenic and holistic design principles, the building features accessible and inclusive areas such as a library, health clinic, skills-building workshop and transitional housing. These spaces offer a sense of security and support, addressing the emotional needs of vulnerable groups.

Financial safety is addressed through the inclusion of retail spaces, a green-grocer and service providers, creating opportunities for local entrepreneurship and job creation. Informal vendors will be integrated into the design, promoting economic activities that benefit the broader community.

Overall, the project leverages the architectural, historical and social significance of the Sunnyside Galleries to create a beacon of safety and inclusivity. By enhancing physical infrastructure, providing emotional support spaces and fostering economic opportunities, this project aims to transform Robert Sobukwe Street into a safer, more equitable environment for all residents.

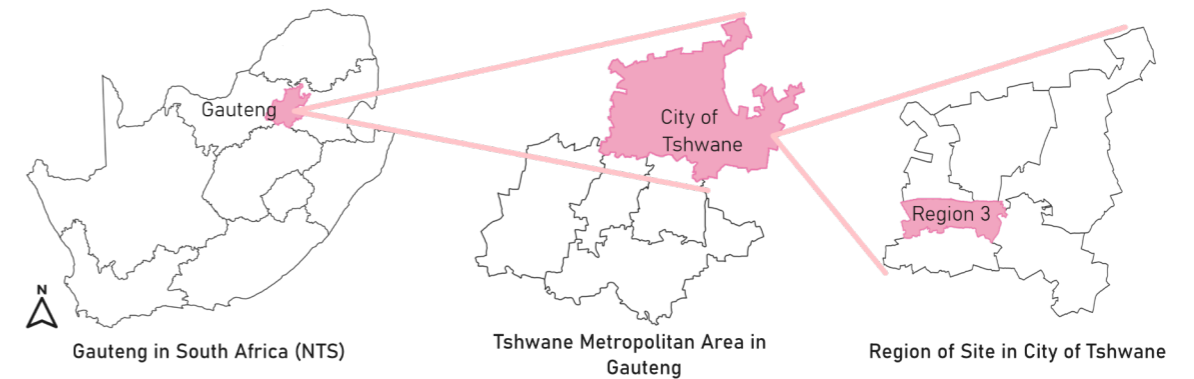
Keywords:

Safety and Security, Inclusive Environments, Salutogenesis, Health and Well-being, User Experience, Urban Oasis, Beacon, Nested Layers

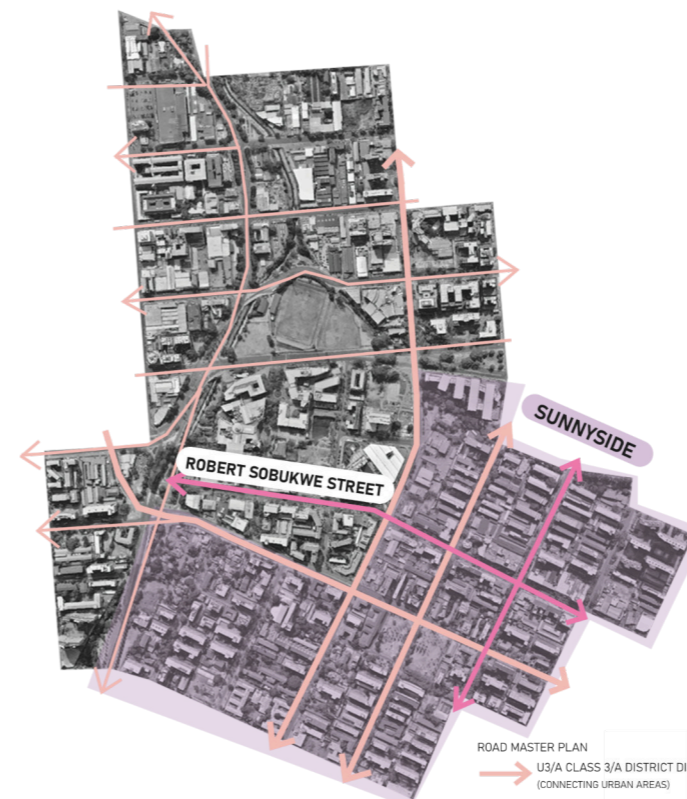


CONTEXT

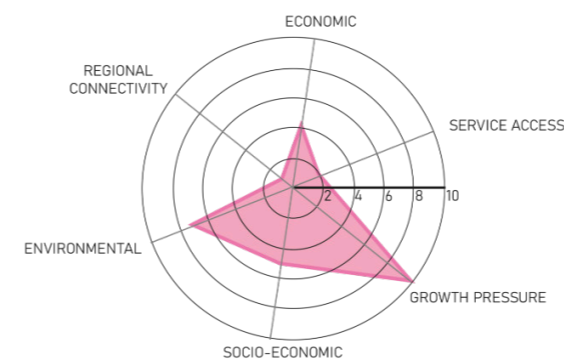
This design project is situated in Robert Sobukwe Street. Robert Sobukwe Street is located in Sunnyside, in the City of Tshwane and is located close to central development nodes and major transport routes. The street is a strip of mixed-use commercial-residential buildings flanked by a high-density residential area with little to no urban public space, specifically that which is natural. The area has a diverse and vibrant community, however, the community experiences multiple measurable vulnerabilities such as growth pressures and socioeconomic disparities.



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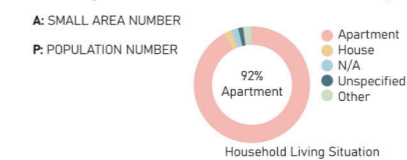
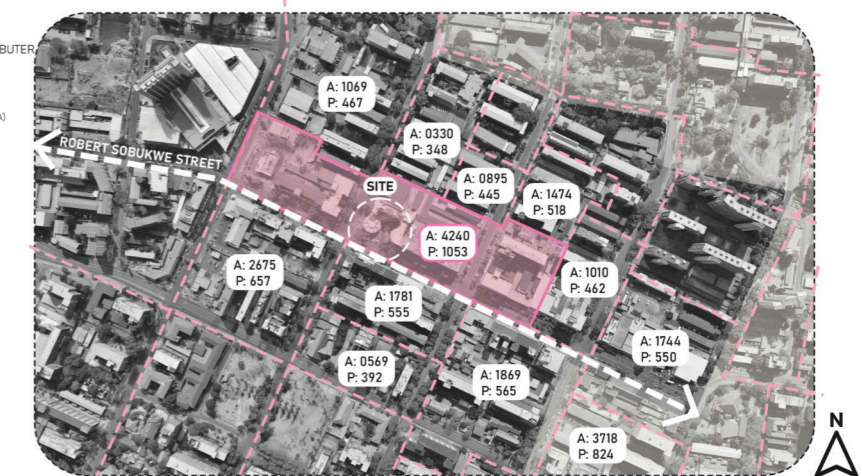
Location & Roads of Ward 81 in Region 3 (NTS)



City of Tshwane Vulnerabilities (CSIR 2024)



Area Zoning (NTS)



Population Distribution (NTS)

DIT BACKGROUND

South Africa, a relatively young democracy, has seen 30 years since its first democratic elections in Tshwane. Despite constitutional promises of freedom, security, and dignity, the city remains divided. This research investigates exclusionary spatial measures (and their perceptions) in urban public spaces, aiming to create an annotated visual lexicon of these measures. The study examines both remnants from the Apartheid era and post-1994 phenomena to understand spatial prejudice in architecture.

DIT RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This study aims to highlight and understand exclusionary measures in urban public spaces. Secondly it advocates for human-centric and accessible design to democratize and dignify urban environments. This research focuses on Robert Sobukwe Street in Sunnyside, Tshwane, as a case study to identify, document, and analyze these exclusionary devices in public spaces.

DIT RESEARCH - DESIGN INTEGRATION

In conclusion of the research study it was determined that Robert Sobukwe Street houses numerous exclusionary spatial measures and devices. Most of these are identified as being implemented as an architecture of fear for crime and social control. The analysis noted that the measures are largely visually austere and excessive in their implementation - leading to a generally negative environmental experience. Additionally, the fear these measures aim to dispel is often inadvertently compounded as their presence encourages others to adopt similar measures.

Crime within the Sunnyside area has increased from previous years (Republic of South Africa 2024). The high numbers suggest a correlation to the high number of hostile design elements documented in Robert Sobukwe Street as these measures and devices may have been implemented out of fear and as an attempt to deter incidents of crime.

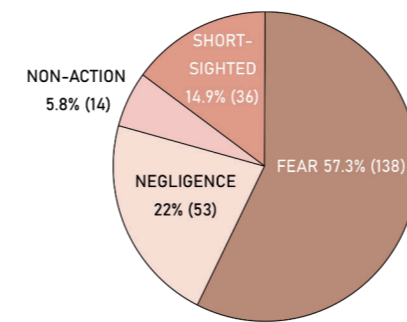
Further analysis of crime statistics and personal experience reveals that negative environmental experiences and socio-economic disparities disproportionately affect vulnerable groups, especially (and particularly in the case of Sunnyside) women and children.

In the street, men were observed to spend more time socially gathering at liquor-related spaces such as taverns, restaurants and bars. These are typically male social-gathering spaces. However, women were observed to spend more time at places of service or retail offering. These are not typical social-gathering spaces. These female social-gathering spaces are distanced from the high number of male-dominated social spaces which typically correlate to domestic violence and other crimes. Of which, SAPS has reported high crime rates of bodily assault, rape, and murder that largely target women in domestic violence situations.

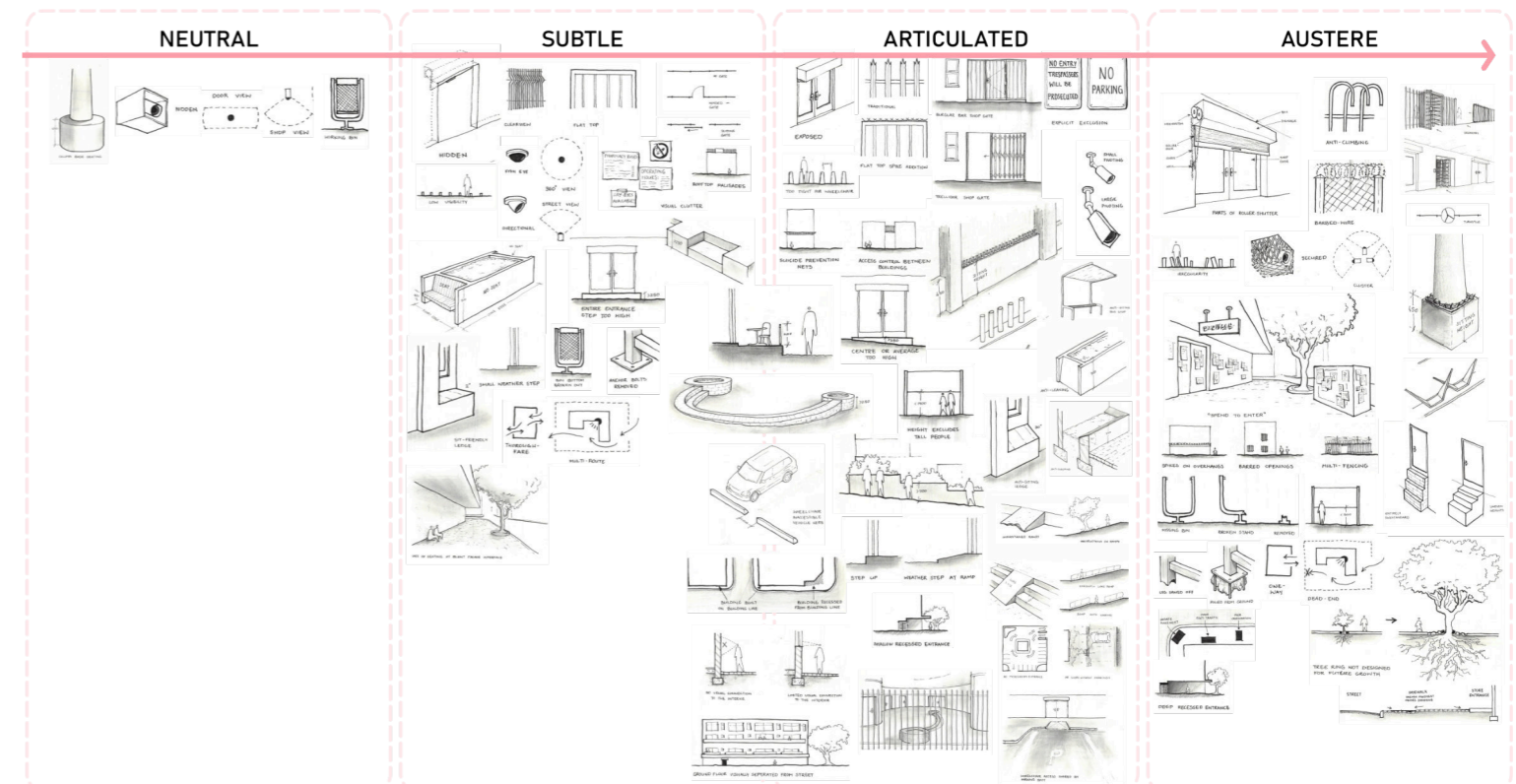
It appears that women are not safe in the streets, nor are not safe at home. Therefore, this design project asks the demanding question of where are they safe?

EXCLUSIONARY SPATIAL MEASURES AND DEVICES (Ernst & Wolmarans, 2024):

Good urban spaces of a public nature are those created to provide opportunities for citizens to affirm their shared rights to the city (Safer Spaces 2004; Harvey 2003) in a democratic manner (Landman 2020). 'Exclusionary measures and devices in urban public space (UPS)' refers to **material entities** in UPS that **prohibit individuals or groups from actively participating in the city's benefits with dignity and on a level equitable with that of others**. Such instances **act in opposition to universal design** (South Africa 2016) and **could lead to social alienation**. Apart from non-action, such measures and devices result from intentional to unintentional actions, hostile and negligent design (Rosenberger 2019), short-sighted design and design that does not acknowledge particular groups (South Africa 2016). Although cyclical and often inseparable, 'measures' refer to physical or non-physical processes towards exclusion, while 'devices' refer to physical or non-physical products that perpetuate exclusion. Processes toward exclusion impair spatial democracy, while products towards exclusion impair democratic space (Makakavhule & Landman 2020). **Both go against the fundamentals of publicness as they are not for 'everyone', nor are they 'transparent' in their motive or existence.**



Aggregated Location of Exclusionary Spatial Measures and Devices (NTS)



Note: A copy of the DIT Research Report and the full visual lexicon of identified exclusionary spatial measures are available at the end of this report for your interest.

Look Left, Look Right, Eyes averted Low.

Dodge the lurking gaze,
Follow the street to unravel the city maze.

Our feet hasten their stride,
But, I pause to catch the smile supplied.

Another woman's presence provides a comforting glow.

Look Left, Look Right, looking all around.

Our journey begins to slow,
Curious about where next to go.

My mind starts to wander,
Over all the people and architecture we ponder,

Exploring the opportunities that within the street, abound.

Look left, look right, unwanted attention grows,

His attention we decline,
We keep vigilant full-time.

He begins to follow like a wolf might stalk a sheep,
Look Left, Look Right, in my mind, anxiety starts to creep.

It is not all men, but there is always the thorn among the roses.

Look left, look right, more inappropriate comments he begins to throw.

My heart's rhythm begins to pound,
In my mind alarm bells are screaming loud.

We can't outpace the serpent-like slither,
Look Left, Look Right, our visit can end now, no need to reconsider.

As female students we've found everything we'd like and need to know.

Hey, let go.
No, let go.
Stop!

LET ME GO!



This poem is written as a reflection of collective personal experiences that various women have shared with me about their encounters with men during their time within Robert Sobukwe Street and South Africa as a whole.

Concerning this research and design project, on multiple occasions, while on site conducting data collection, multiple female students, including this author, recount being followed, catcalled and harassed by men within Robert Sobukwe Street. These were unpleasant and lasting experiences that have created negative connotations with the Sunnyside area and it is now a space that these women avoid, unless accompanied by a trusted man, to maintain their personal comfort and safety.



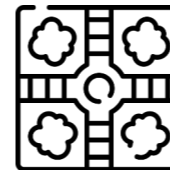
In the second-quarter crime statistics for 2023/2024, Police Minister Bheki Cele unveiled disturbing levels of gender-based violence (GBV) in South Africa, citing 10,516 reported rapes, 1,514 cases of attempted murder, 14,401 assaults against females, and 881 female murders between July and September (South African Government, 2023a; Felix, 2023 in Mpako & Ndoma 2023).

South Africa grapples with one of the world's highest rates of violence against women and girls, with official data indicating that one in five women in relationships endures physical violence from partners. Globally, GBV remains pervasive, affecting one in three women in their lifetime (World Bank, 2019.).

Many fighting for liberation believed that ending apartheid would "lead to a country free of all oppressions and discrimination based on race, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, language, geographical location, ability" (Gqola, 2007: 114).

However, the country that they worked for, fought for, and hoped for does not yet exist if vulnerable groups are not included. Women, children, and vulnerable groups disproportionately experience both public and private spaces as unsafe due to the pervasive threat of harm. This ongoing risk restricts their agency and comfort in occupying these spaces, infringing on their fundamental human and constitutional rights. Both locally and globally, there is a shortage of safe spaces for women, children, and other vulnerable groups, particularly in urban public areas.

URBAN PUBLIC SPACE



Urban public spaces in the context of this study refers to the areas within urban environments that are accessible to and intended for use by the general public. These include any spaces whose interfaces and interactions fall in the thresholds between the street and the immediate entrances of buildings (refraining from entering semi-public, semi-private or private areas).

QUASI & PSEUDO-PUBLIC SPACE



Quasi-public spaces refer to those that are recognized as being privately controlled with some public functions. They are open for public use however there are acknowledged restrictions and regulations clearly outlined by private owners.

Pseudo-public spaces may also be privately owned and controlled; however, this is not openly acknowledged. These spaces can create discomfort in urban environments as although they appear to be public they may have hidden restrictions or surveillance that subtly limits or influences the experience, behaviours and freedom of its users.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE



The United Nations defines violence against women as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life."

SALUTOGENESIS



The salutogenic approach is a concept used in health sciences, and increasingly in other disciplines, to describe an approach to well-being that emphasises health rather than disease (Antonovsky 1979). In the 1990s, architect Alan Dilani suggested extending the salutogenic approach beyond medical treatment to the architectural design of healthcare facilities, aiming to promote good health. Drawing from Antonovsky's research, Dilani developed the concept of Psychosocially Supportive Design, which uses physical space to alleviate anxiety. This framework identifies stress triggers and introduces wellness factors to facilitate healing.

While salutogenic design is applicable to various structures, as is primarily influenced by physical environments, it is well adopted by the architectural domain where it can be enhanced through thoughtfully designed spaces. Subsequently it is further beneficial in healthcare design where the environment influences patient recovery and fosters natural healing processes.

SAFETY & SECURITY



Safety is a condition in which risks and factors that may cause physical, psychological, or material harm are managed to protect the health and well-being of individuals and communities. It is a vital resource for daily life, enabling people and communities to realise their aspirations. It emphasizes the absence of risk or threats that could cause physical or emotional harm, often focusing on prevention and protection. Achieving a high level of safety requires contributions from individuals, communities, governments, and other entities to establish and sustain the following conditions in any context:

- A climate of social cohesion, peace, and equity that upholds human rights and freedoms at family, local, national, and international levels.
- Prevention and control of injuries and harmful consequences from accidents.
- Respect for the values, physical and emotional integrity, and material well-being of individuals.
- Provision of effective preventive, control, and recovery measures to support the three conditions above (INSPQ 2024)

These conditions can be fostered through initiatives that target environmental factors (physical, social, technological, political, economic, and organizational) and promote safe behaviors.

Security is the protection against intentional harm or threats posed by others, often involving measures to prevent crime, violence, or attacks. It typically includes strategies, systems, or policies designed to protect people, property, and information from deliberate harm or unauthorized access.

PROJECT BRIEF

This project focuses on the design of a health clinic as part of a holistic intervention that aims to revitalise the Sunnyside Galleries as a community-based safe space for vulnerable groups in Sunnyside, in the City of Tshwane.

The Sunnier Side, is a mixed-use development designed as a Safe Space for Women, Children and vulnerable groups that aims to revitalize under-performing public heritage spaces by adapting and reusing them to foster inclusive, safe, and equitable public spaces.

It emphasizes the creation of safe spaces that are not only physically secure but also psychologically inclusive as it explores the role of architecture in promoting social justice, community belonging, and personal significance through design.

The focus of this design proposal will be on the health clinic facilities.

STAKEHOLDERS

THE CLIENT

The City of Tshwane Municipality is the primary client as the project addresses key issues with which the City struggles such as the protection of citizens and the reduction of crime rates, including gender-based violence.

This project supports the Tshwane Integrated Development Plan (2030 Vision) to be a city that:

Pillar 1: Facilitates Economic Growth & Job Creation

Pillar 2: Cares for Residents & Promotes Inclusivity.

Pillar 4: Keeps Residents Safe.

INVESTORS

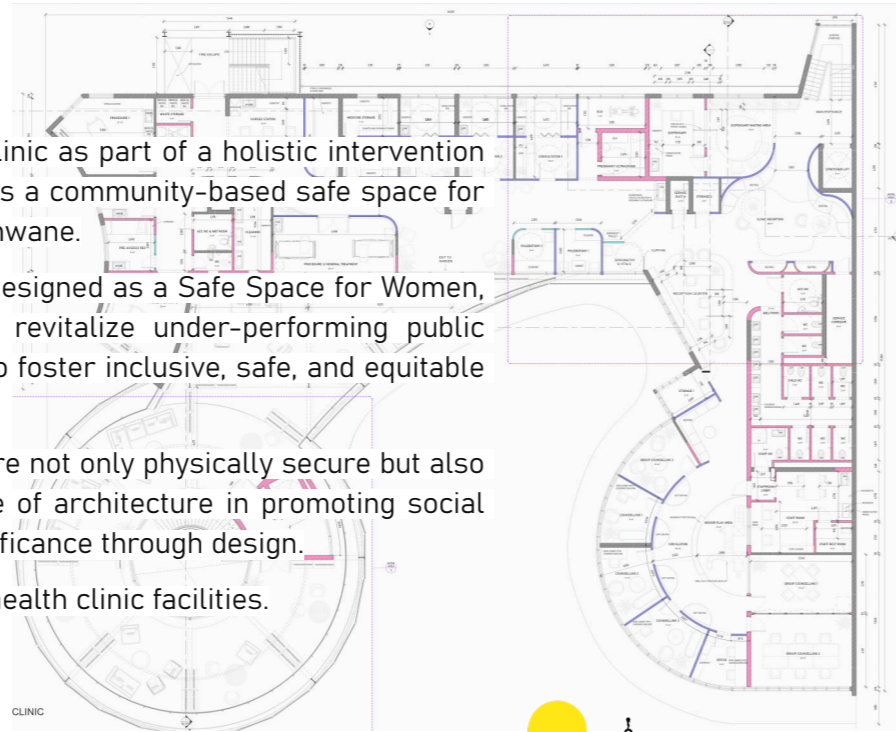
Investors include the United Nations Women and the South African Department for Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities as locally and internationally this project supports multiple Sustainable Development Goals as outlined by the United Nations.

PARTNERS

This project can partner with **Thuthuzela Care Centres** which 'one-stop facilities' that provide legal, psychological, social and emergency medical assistance to women who have experienced violence. Led by the NPA's Sexual Offences and Community Affairs Unit (SOCA) Unit, these centres focus on protecting women and children and enhancing prosecution in sexual offences and related cases (National Prosecuting Authority 2019).

The University of Pretoria School of Medicine may be able to contribute to Primary Health Care initiatives on site through practical placement of students and medical staff.

U-turn is a South African organization focused on helping homeless individuals overcome their circumstances through a phased approach. Their Christian-based program provides basic needs, rehabilitation, and work-readiness training. Participants, called "Champions," receive therapy, skills development, and access to social enterprises like retail or digital work. With a high success rate, U-turn helps many regain independence, employment, and sobriety, aiming for long-term reintegration into society.

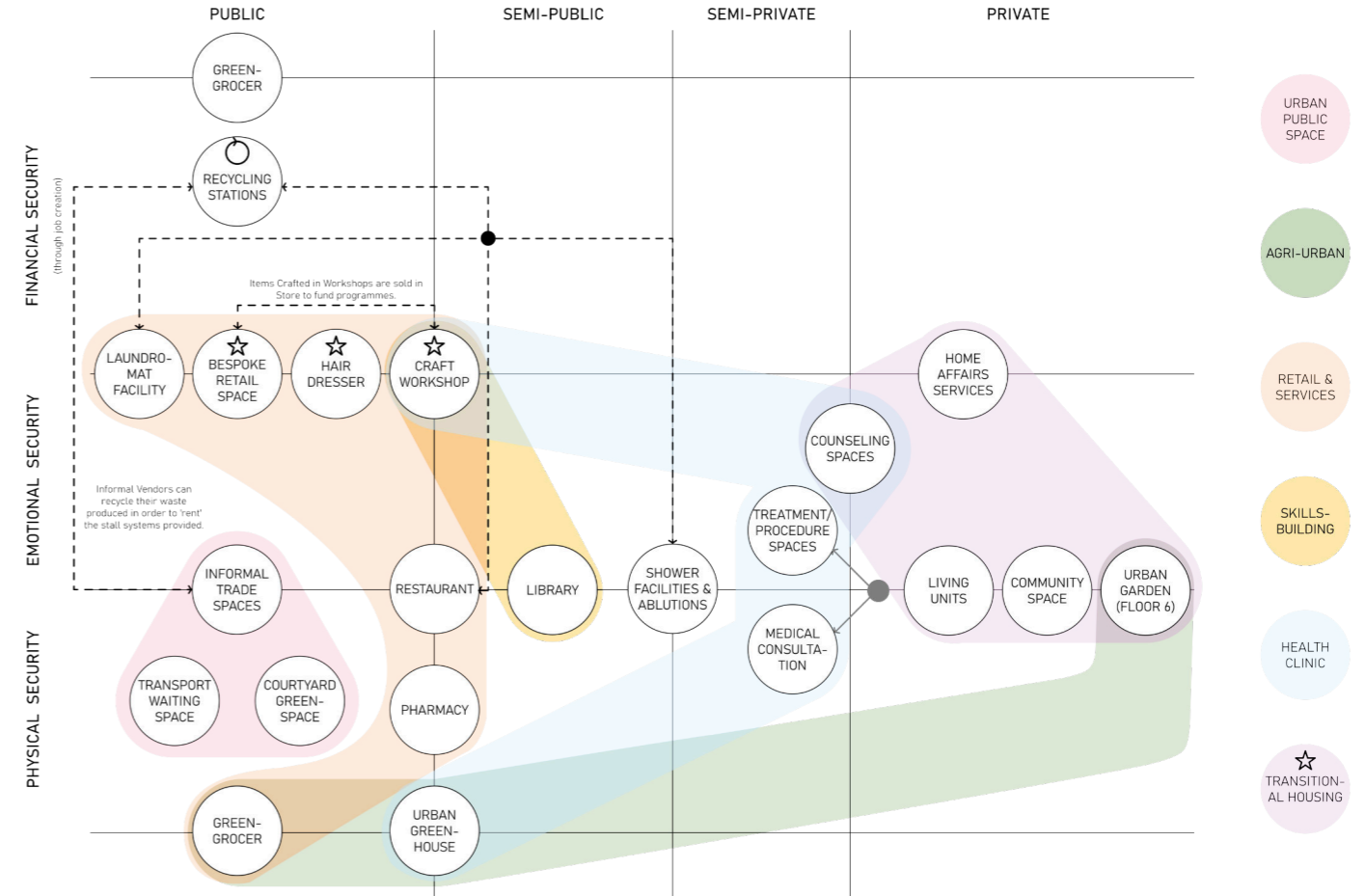


project brief

PROGRAMME & USERS

Emotionally, the project aims to provide safe spaces where women and children can gather without fear. Incorporating salutogenic and holistic design principles, the building features accessible and inclusive areas such as a library, health clinic, skills-building workshop and transitional housing. These spaces offer a sense of security and support, addressing the emotional needs of vulnerable groups.

Financial safety is addressed through the inclusion of retail spaces, a green-grocer and service providers, creating opportunities for local entrepreneurship and job creation. Informal vendors will be integrated into the design, promoting economic activities that benefit the broader community.



Middle-Aged Women
Regulator & Inhabitant
I am a 45 year old woman and I live at The Sunnier Side.



Mother & Child
Inhabitant
I am a 32 year old mother with a 5 year old child. I had to leave home because it became dangerous for us.



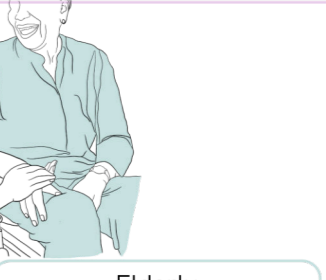
Young Women
Inhabitant
I am a 25 year old UP student living in Sunnyside and I study Social Services.



Adolescent Girls
Inhabitant
We go to school nearby and come here after class to do homework because there is no one at home in the afternoon.



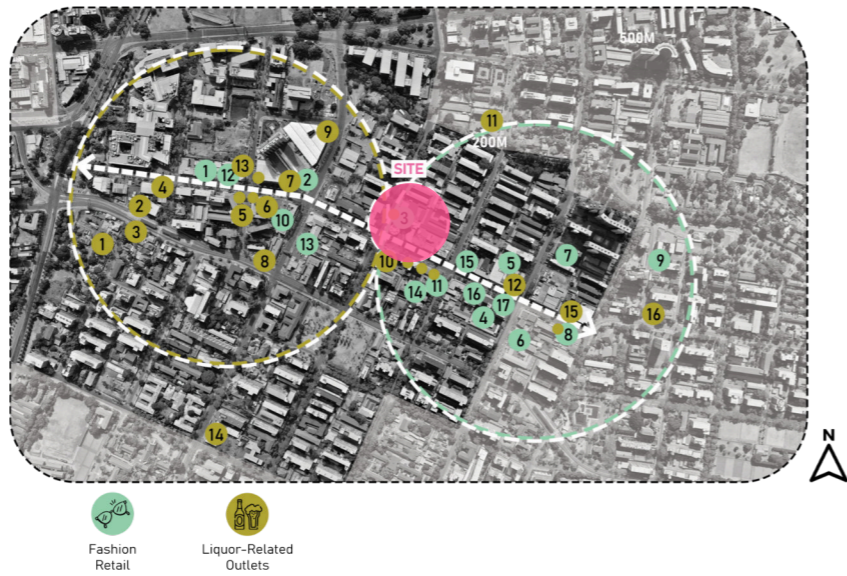
Medical Staff
Regulator & Inhabitant
I am a 30 year old nurse and I work in the Healthclinic.



Elderly
Inhabitant
I am 65 years old and I come to the clinic for check-ups & spend time in the urban gardens.

SITE ANALYSIS

The Sunnyside Galleries, centrally located on Robert Sobukwe Street, acts as a threshold between social gathering spaces for men and women respectively located on the corner of Robert Sobukwe and Troye Streets. Current users include formal retailers, informal vendors outside the fence, men gathering around the tavern and restaurant, and pedestrians using the courtyard as a thoroughfare or waiting space. Once a thriving social and retail hub, the site now stands underutilised and largely vacant on the ground floor, isolated from street activity.

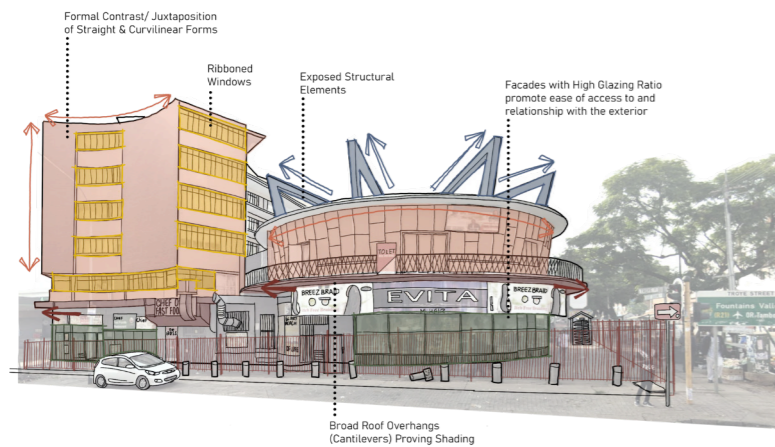


STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

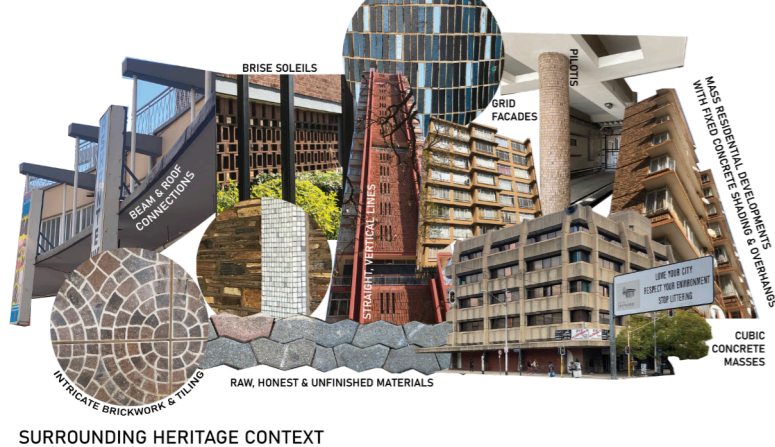
The design of the Sunnyside Galleries was originally commissioned by Mr. T Kleyhans from architect, Paul Voutsas in the 1950s and, was finally constructed in 1961 (Voutsas n.d. in de Villiers 2014). Paul Voutsas is a prominent architectural figure having contributed a large majority of buildings towards Sunnyside's urban fabric in the mid to late 20th century.

Today the building is considered a heritage artefact of the modernist era as it is older than 60 years of age and contributes to the definition and architectural language of Robert Sobukwe street as an urban and public space. The entire building is stepped back from the street edge and has been enclosed by a fence (between 2015 - 2020) forming a fortified enclave housing various retail and service spaces such as a hair salon, fashion retailers, a butchery, fast food, a tavern and small clinical practice. This is similar to the original tenant mix and programme which consisted of the Grapevine, a bakery and restaurant, a records store, and a stage for impromptu music and arts circa 1980 (de Villiers 2014), among others. The building has retained its original retail-residential, mixed-use typology.

The site has significant value as an aesthetic and heritage artefact (due to its architectural style and nostalgic evocations for previous generations), and as a social space within the densely populated area of Robert Sobukwe street.



Architectural Style: Brazil Modernism



ADAPTIVE REUSE STRATEGY

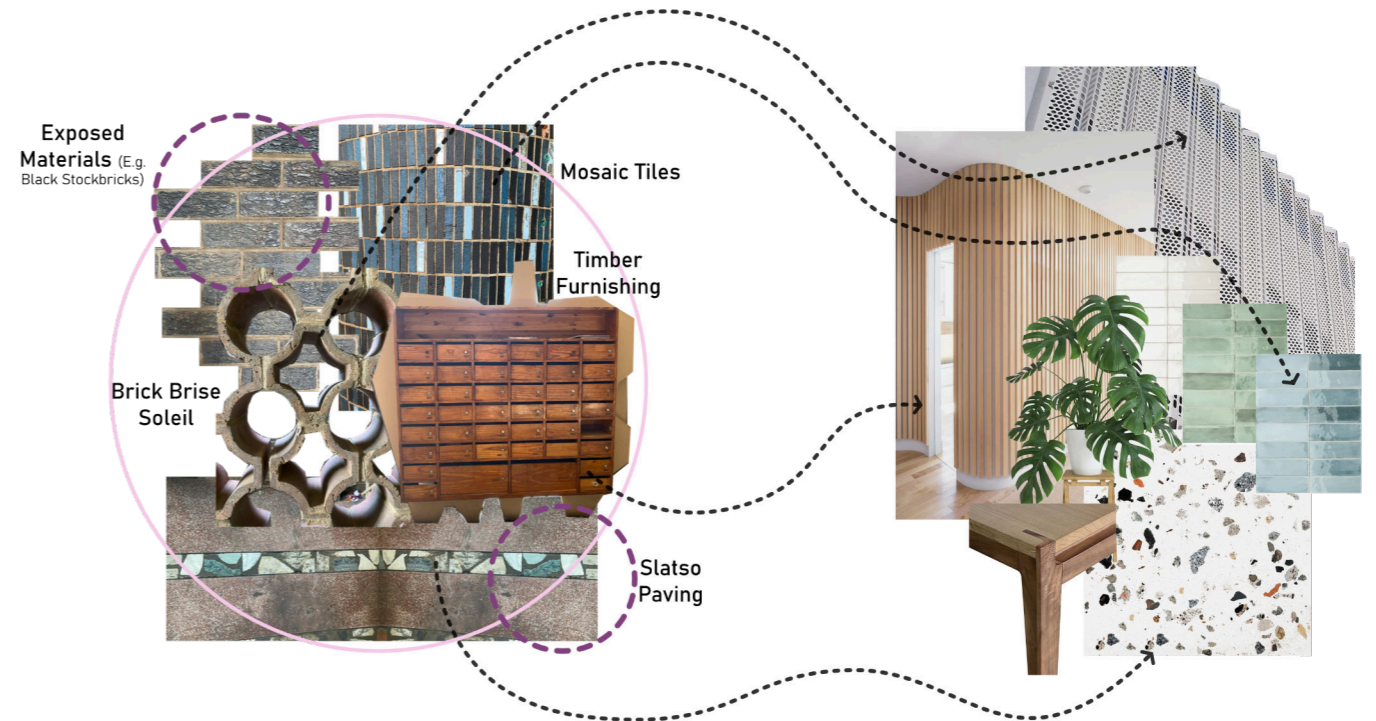
The surrounding urban fabric of Sunnyside consists of mainly heritage structures with many in various stages of neglect and deterioration with very few new developments to revitalise the area. The concerns with the current state of the Sunnyside Galleries stem primarily from lack of maintenance and inhabitation of the building rather than those that are more heritage-related. The building presents as an under-utilised resource that does not meet current standards of construction, climate adaptation and consumes more resources than it currently provides.

Although lacking large-scale development the Sunnyside Galleries has seen significant changes, including the removal of the brise soleil and slatso paving, and the enclosure of the cylindrical drum's second floor. However, the interior remains largely unchanged with many original 1961 finishes.

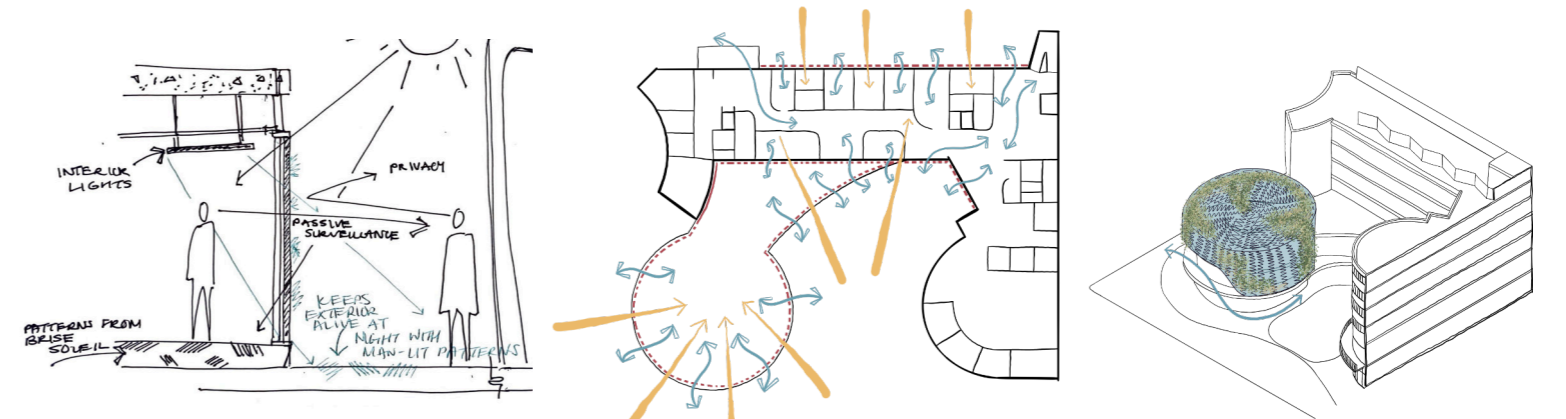
Therefore the project investigated various heritage strategies from restoration to creating new interventions, that could potentially enhance the functionality and appeal of these spaces.

Considering that which had been removed; the project determined that simply restoring these elements would not do justice to the changes that occurred over time. Rather the current state of the building becomes a palimpsest to which this reuse project can contribute.

In response to heritage the design replaces that which was 'lost' without replication by drawing inspiration from the original material palette for use within interior spaces and on the exterior facades.



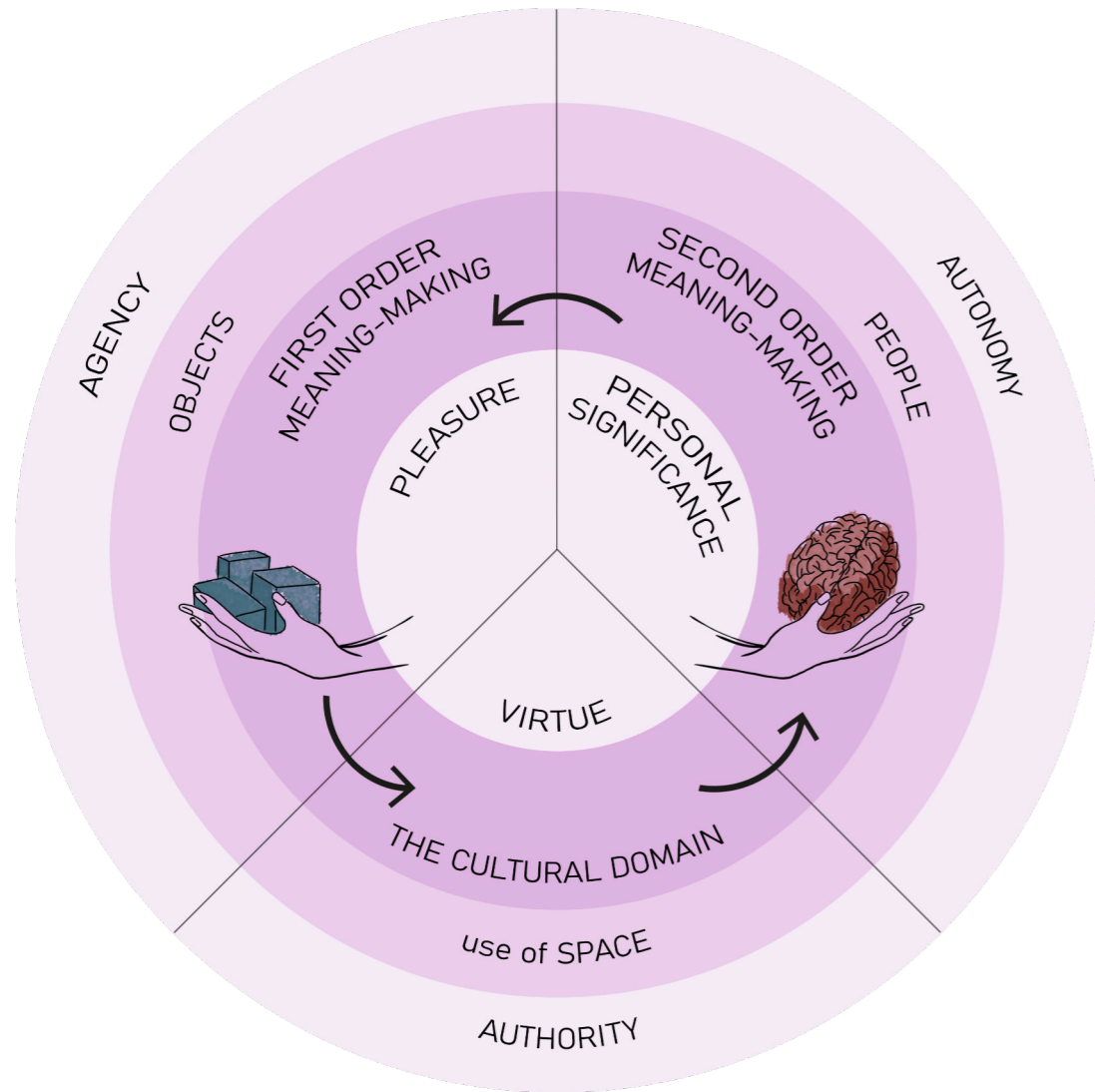
Additionally, the design remodels and re-imagines the original brise soleil as a new lantern/ beacon of light that provides balance between past and future aesthetics while maintaining its functionality. Although these elements speak to the existing heritage fabric, it is important to make clear distinction between that which can be considered old and new. The 'old' finishes and fixtures that remain are cleaned and rejuvenated, while new interventions contrast and transform the building.



spatial informants

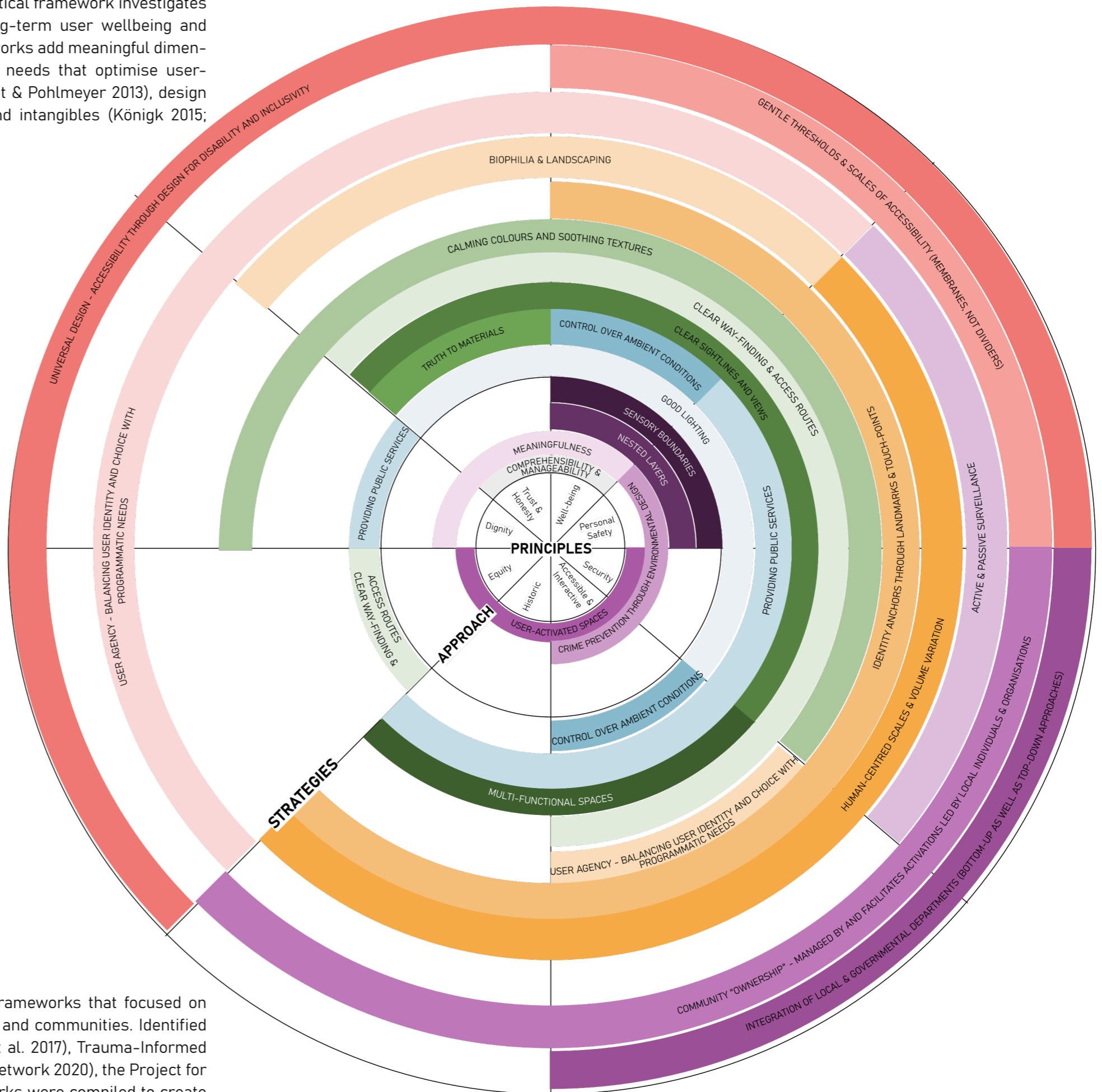
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

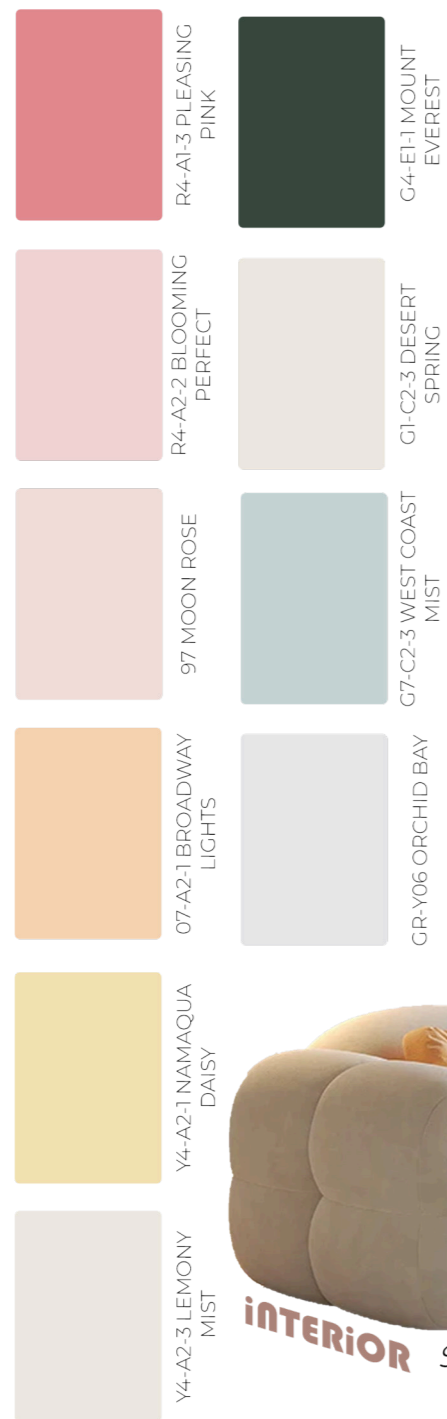
The pervasive threat of harm and discomfort that vulnerable groups experience in urban public spaces restricts their agency, user experience and wellbeing in occupying these spaces. Therefore the theoretical framework investigates various frameworks focused on providing positive user experiences, enhancing long-term user wellbeing and allowing for spatial agency as a means to regaining authority. Additionally these frameworks add meaningful dimensions to the design that consider emotional, ethical and practical human-centered needs that optimise user-experiences. Frameworks investigated include: the positive design framework (Desmet & Pohlmeier 2013), design for human flourishing (Stevens et al. 2019), meaning-making between tangibles and intangibles (Königk 2015; Grobler 2018).



SPATIAL FRAMEWORKS

To define, identify and design safe spaces this project investigated various spatial frameworks that focused on aspects such as wellbeing, safety, agency, authority and autonomy of both individuals and communities. Identified spatial frameworks include those from the Handbook of Salutogenesis (Mittelmark et al. 2017), Trauma-Informed Design principles (Grabowska et al. 2021), the Urban Safety Brief (South African Cities Network 2020), the Project for Public Spaces (PPS 2023) and investigating Placemaking (Hamdi 2010). These frameworks were compiled to create the Spatial Guidelines (right) to which the project aspires.





interior soft, feminine, like talking to a friend in their living room

glazing of various opacities



MATERIAL & CONSTRUCTION STRATEGY

The material and construction strategies are guided by the spatial frameworks identified as well as various health and safety resources, regulations and guidelines as published by the government and various healthcare representative institutions.

The aim is to utilise sustainable building materials with low embodied energy and high durability to lower the project's carbon footprint.

The material approach stems from the existing modernist palette on-site that utilises timber furnishing, durable tile and brickwork finishes, precast concrete brise soleil and the shopfront glazing. The material and technical approaches are to reuse existing materials wherever possible, provide contemporary sustainable alternative materials for components which are redesigned or to any new additions, and favour lightweight dry joinery construction that is suitable for ease of assembly and disassembly..

The project follows the mantra of designing spaces that are simple, yet significant - this focuses on keeping details and spaces simple while maintaining critical aspects of the proposal such as those aligned with the comprehensibility, manageability and meaningfulness outlined in the spatial frameworks.

CONCEPT

Conceptually, the design acts as a 'beacon of safety' that employs the landmark nature of the new brise soleil facade to guide those that require aid to the site. Secondly, the use of light within the brise soleil acts as a lantern in the night that illuminates the surrounding environment to create safe and lively space.

Upon arrival to site the programme unfolds through a series of layers, thresholds and interfaces that strive to create positive user-experiences across multiple levels of engagement. The building is also spatially arranged to guide the user from the most public interface of the urban public realm to the most private, intimate and vulnerable experiences of the health clinic consultation rooms or transitional housing, providing opportunities for support at each stage.

Through the implementation of urban green spaces and agriculture, the site becomes an oasis of rest, environmental rejuvenation and connections to nature amongst the high-rise urban canyon that is Robert Sobukwe Street.

THE DESIGN PROCESS

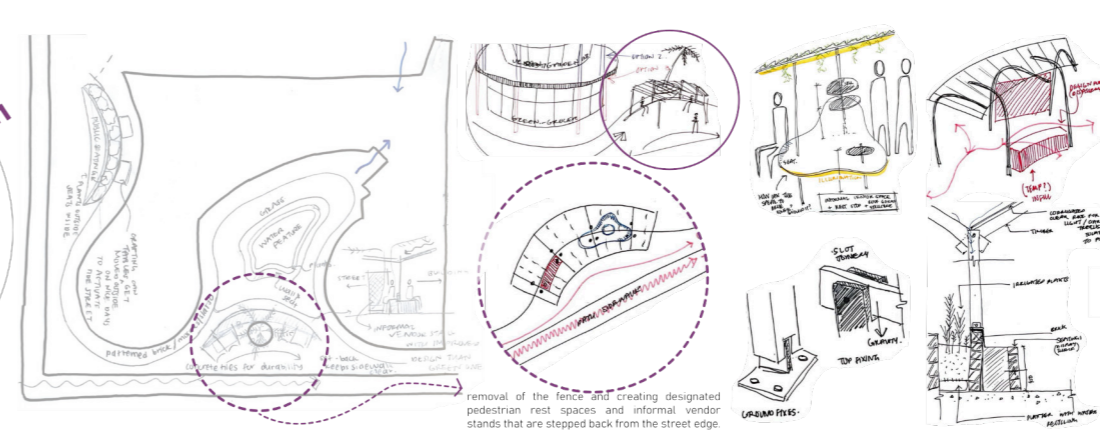
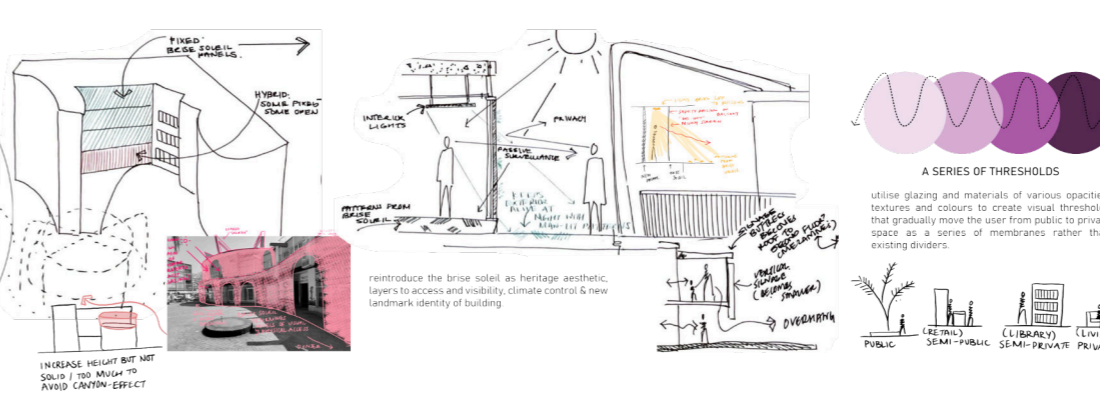
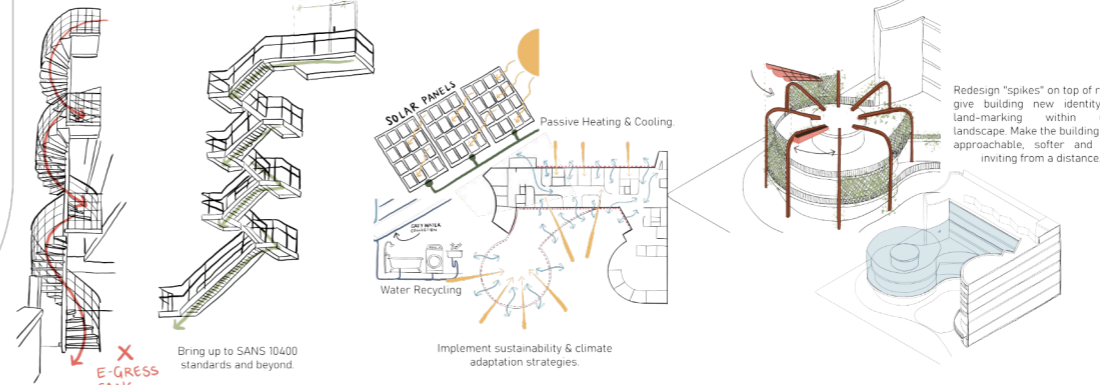
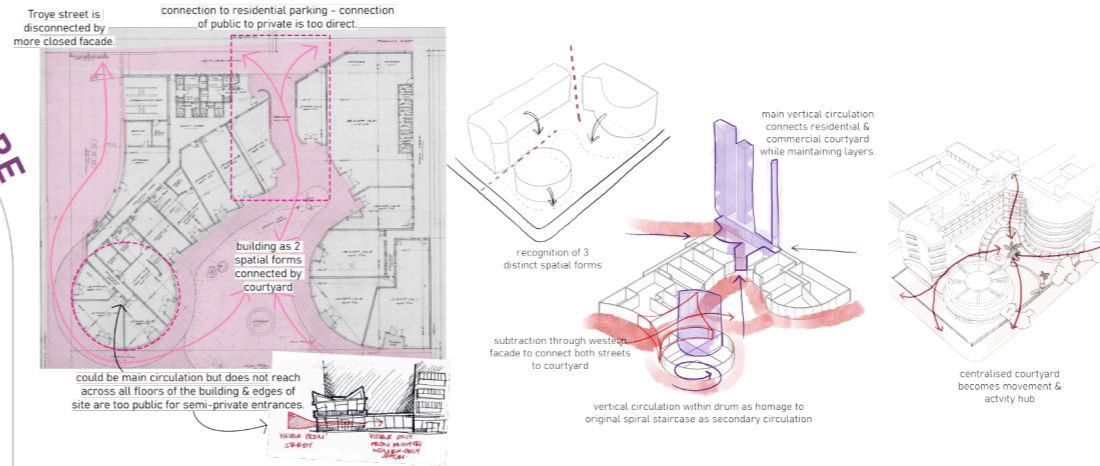
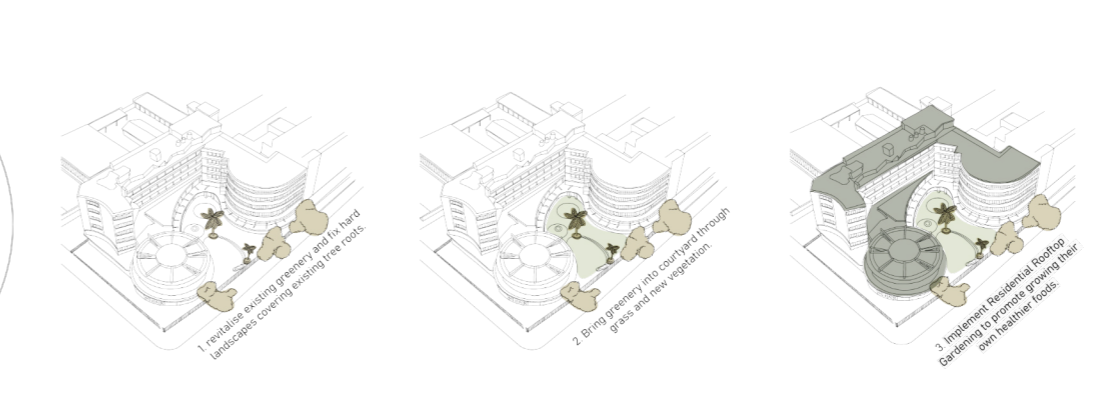
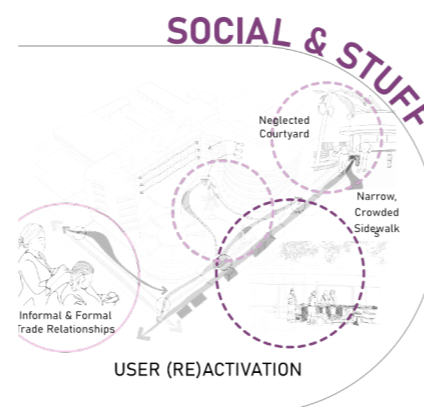
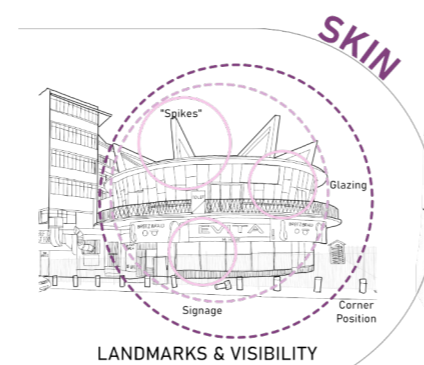
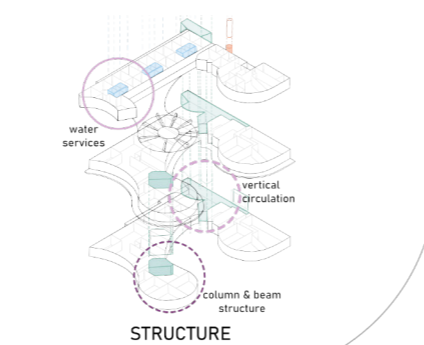
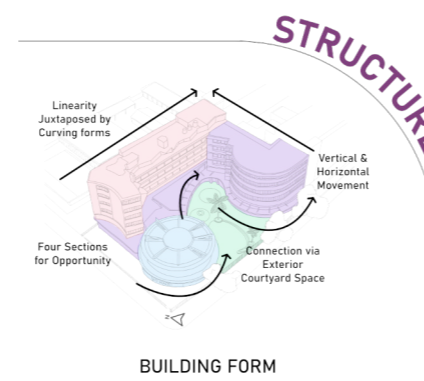
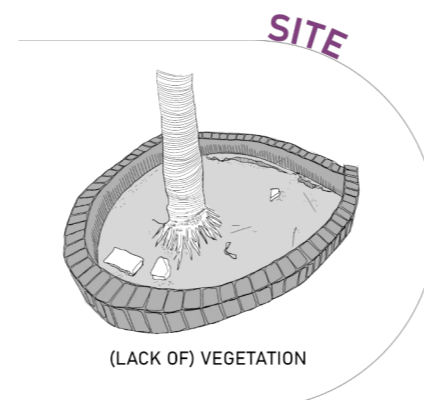
The existing context and building presented numerous challenges and influential factors, and while a variety of intervention opportunities were available, a central, yet challenging task in the iterative design process was to identify and distill the critical aspects.

Considering the site as a whole, the iterative process began by exploring each part of the site independently and envisioning how the spaces could be improved. This process was guided by the Adaptable futures' eight layers hierarchical theory for sustainable retrofit architecture, which builds upon Brands' original six shearing layers of change (site, structure, skin, services, space plan and stuff) (Li et al. 2019).

The initial programmatic development allowed for multiple overlaps that activate all parts of the site. These overlaps allowed for shared facilities and resources to improve the sustainability of the design proposal and present the most benefit to all users. However, this presented issues as the project was over-optimistic about what can realistically be achieved in a single construction proposal without compromising the heritage nature of the site and the integrity of the design. Similarly, for the purpose of this master's project, it would have been too many programmes to develop and detail to the level of care that a project of this nature deserves.

Therefore it was important to distill the project to its core concerns and prioritise smaller programmes with higher levels of care. Recalling the initial objectives to foster emotional, physical, and financial security within a salutogenic framework, the project succeeded in pinpointing key intervention areas on the site, establishing a phased implementation strategy. Focusing on phasing strategy, this project prioritizes the health clinic component, as it represents the most conceptually intensive and intricate portion of the proposal to develop, detail, and hypothetically construct. The health clinic is pivotal to the project's intent, particularly as a safe haven for women, children, and other vulnerable groups facing domestic violence, abuse, and other threats. This facility stands as a critical element within The Sunnier Side building, designed to offer comprehensive support and promote well-being for those in need.

The final iterations for the Health Clinic followed a cyclical systematic approach of drawing from inspiration, consulting relevant healthcare spatial guidelines, and lastly designing spaces accordingly. The final design presents a cohesive interior space where each interface, colour, material, texture and potential user-experience was carefully considered and scenario-tested to achieve an optimal spatial experience and the most feasible design possible at this time and for the relevant scale of the project. (This is not to say that these spaces could not be further tested, designed and improved upon).



★
TRANSITION-
AL HOUSING

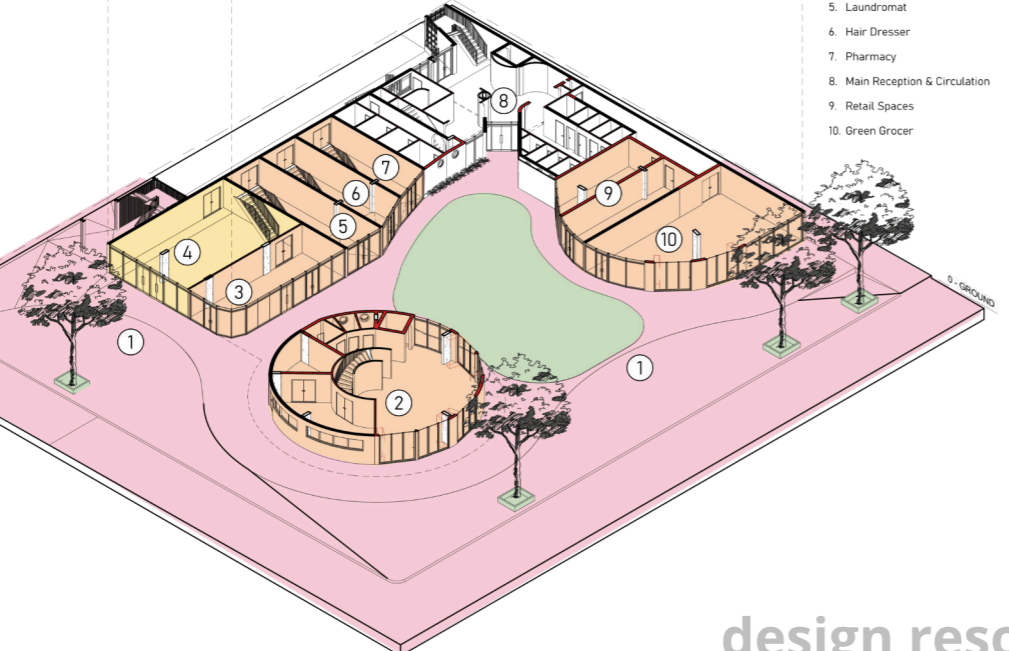
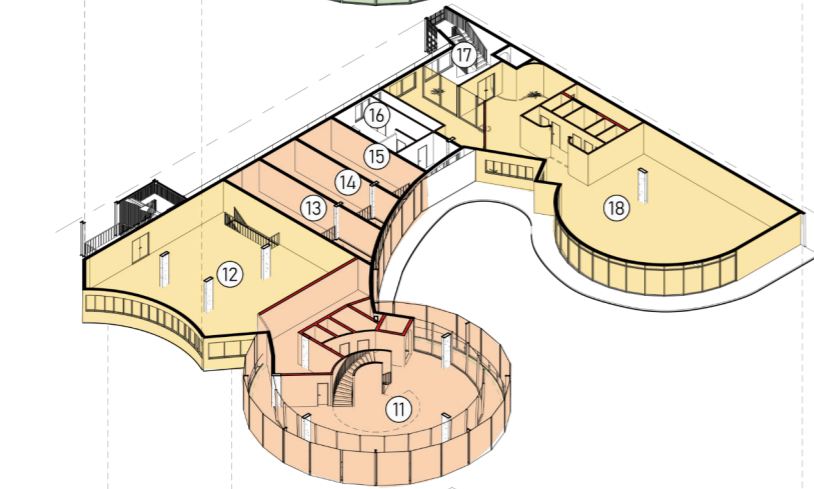
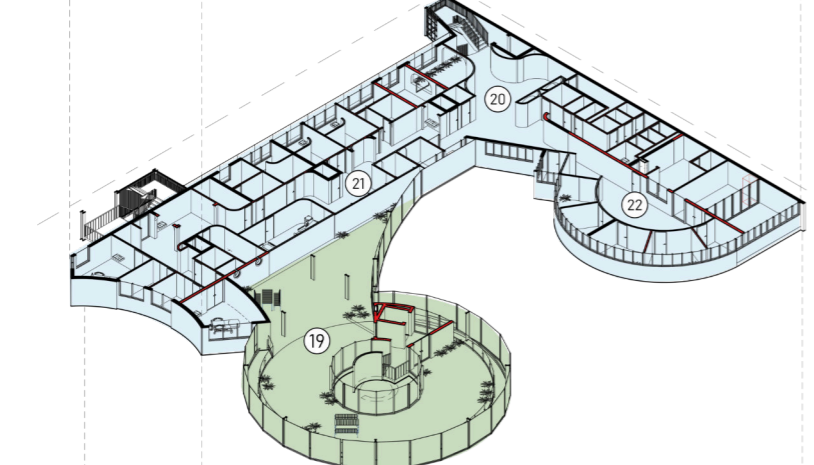
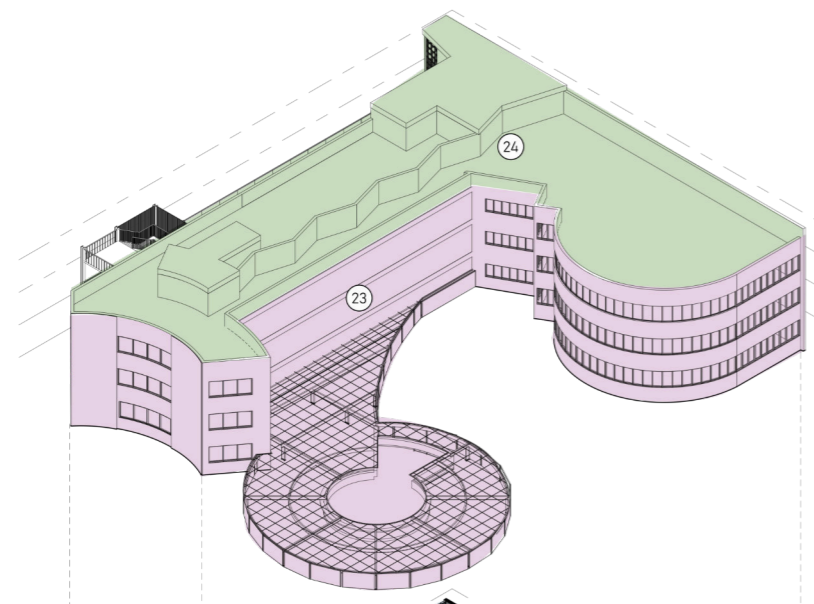
HEALTH
CLINIC

SKILLS-
BUILDING

RETAIL &
SERVICES

AGRI-URBAN

URBAN
PUBLIC
SPACE



3 - 6 Upper Levels

- 23. Transitional Housing
- 24. Residential Rooftop Garden

2 Health Clinic

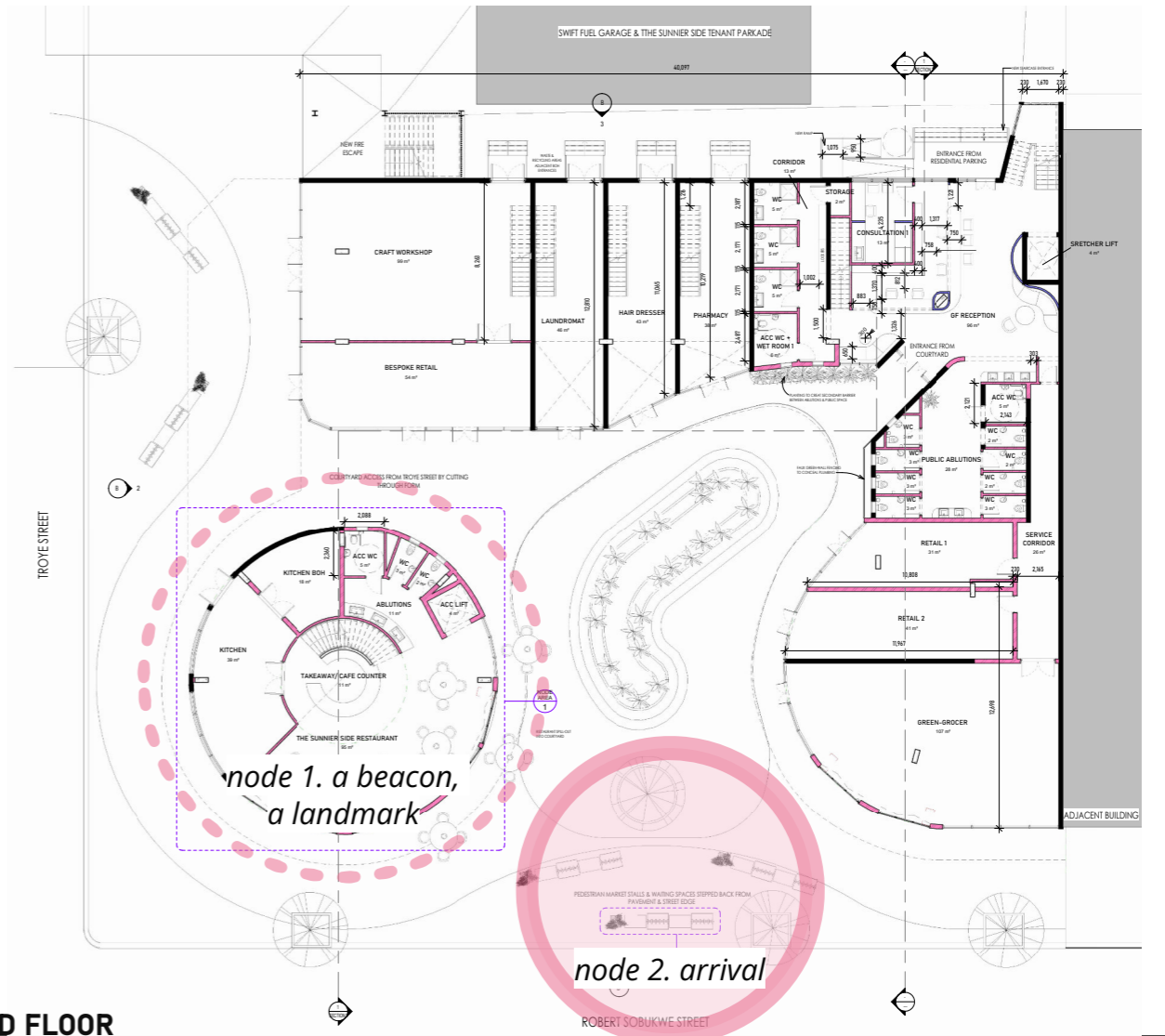
- 19. Rooftop Garden Accessible from Health Clinic
- 20. Health Clinic Reception
- 21. Physical Wellness Wing
- 22. Psychological Wellness Wing

1 MEZZANINE LEVEL

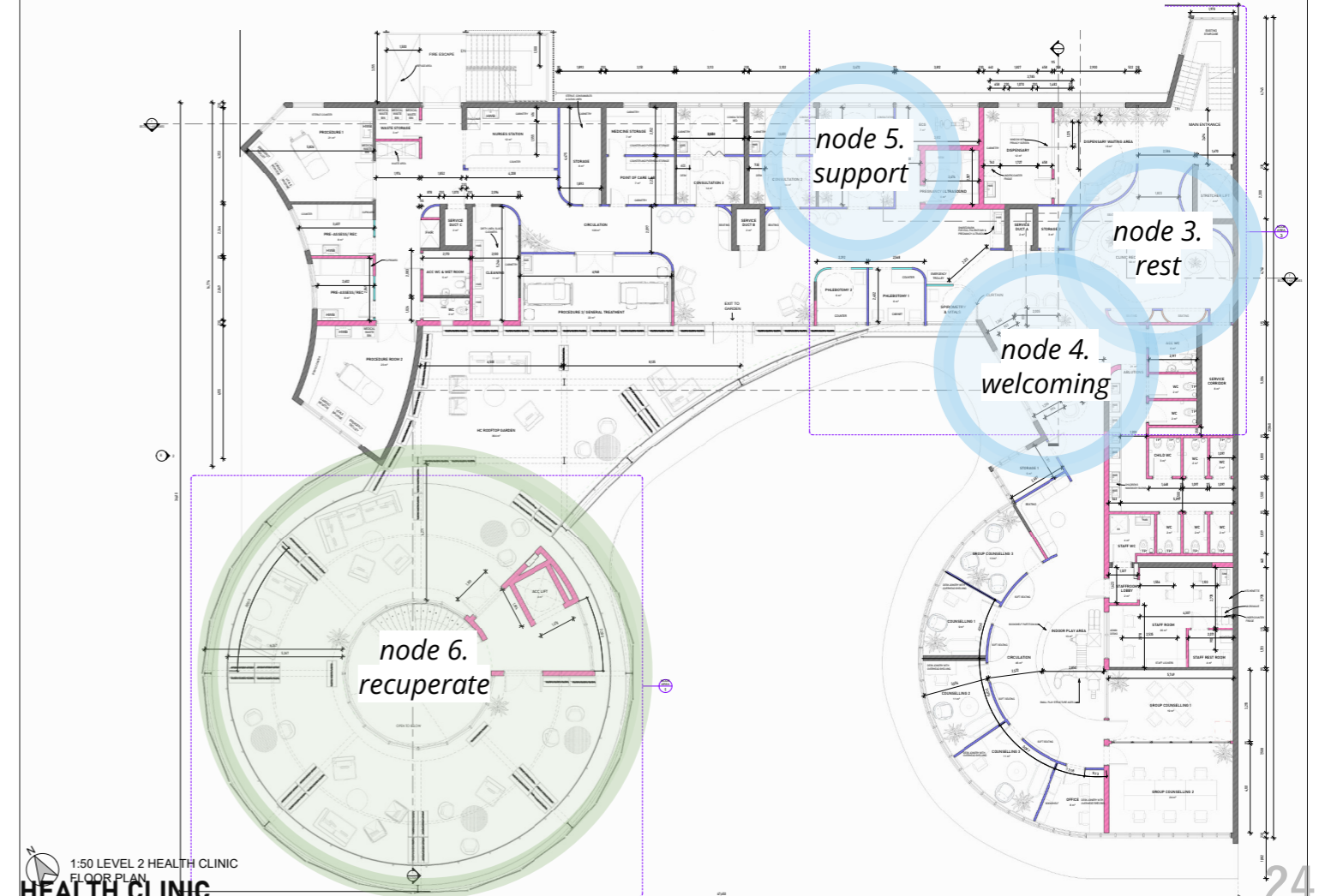
- 11. Restaurant (Upper)
- 12. Craft Workshop (Upper)
- 13. Laundromat (Upper)
- 14. Hair Dresser (Upper)
- 15. Pharmacy (Upper)
- 16. Security Co-Live-Work Space
- 17. Circulation
- 18. Library

0 GROUND FLOOR

- 1. Informal Trade Spaces & Pedestrian and Transport Waiting Spaces
- 2. Restaurant (Lower)
- 3. Bespoke Craft Retail Space
- 4. Craft Workshop (Lower)
- 5. Laundromat
- 6. Hair Dresser
- 7. Pharmacy
- 8. Main Reception & Circulation
- 9. Retail Spaces
- 10. Green Grocer



GROUND FLOOR



1:50 LEVEL 2 HEALTH CLINIC FLOOR PLAN



CONCLUSION & CONTRIBUTION TO THE FIELD

By addressing the urgent need for safer, more inclusive spaces—especially for vulnerable groups like women and children—this project benefits both the architectural field and society at large. Architecturally, the project demonstrates the potential of adaptive reuse to honour and transform heritage sites, fostering new relevance and functionality in underutilised buildings. By merging trauma-informed design principles with sustainable construction practices, the project establishes new guidelines for socially responsible architecture that prioritises well-being, safety and human-centred design; and moves beyond aesthetics to address deep-seated social issues through spatial design.

Locally, this project serves as a vital prototype for addressing safety in urban areas. The creation of safe, inclusive and feminine gathering spaces challenges existing social dynamics, offering alternatives to environments dominated by exclusionary design elements and masculinity. Globally, this project contributes to broader conversations on urban design by promoting an architecture of inclusivity and support, positioning buildings as active agents in the promotion of social justice and dignity. By integrating community resources like clinics, workshops, and transitional housing, the project not only strengthens the local economy but also demonstrates the transformative power of architecture in fostering resilient, equitable, and vibrant communities. The project advocates for human-centred design in urban planning, aligning with sustainable development goals and providing a replicable model for cities worldwide. 'The Sunnier Side' aims to act as one of many examples of how architecture can contribute to social justice and public health, demonstrating the potential for built environments to facilitate healing, community resilience, and inclusivity.

CRITICAL REFLECTION OF PROCESS, EXPLORATION AND FINDINGS

Reflecting on the development of The Sunnier Side, this journey has been both challenging and profoundly insightful, given the project's focus on sensitive social issues involved, like gender-based violence, urban inclusivity, and community safety. This project is crucial, as it brings much-needed awareness and understanding to these issues, which have far-reaching implications for social cohesion and the sustainability of urban spaces. However, tackling these topics, required a careful balance of critical analysis, compassion and commitment to honoring the experiences of those affected by these issues in a truthful and respectful manner. These topics are global, local, as well as personal and significant, which at times has made it challenging to maintain objectivity.

Initially, the project's scope felt overwhelming as the gravity of the issues made it difficult to refine the project's focus amid an overwhelming array of potential directions. The vast scope of proposed interventions—encompassing various programs, technical solutions, and theoretical applications—risked diffusing the project's coherence. Therefore, throughout the development process, it became evident that clarity was essential, especially when navigating through extensive feedback and critique sessions. Yet, with critical refinement, a 'golden thread' emerged which guided the project from multiple parallel streams, and sometimes competing ideas, to a more singular, cohesive phase of development. This singular narrative guided design decisions and shaped the project's vision - ultimately enhancing the project's impact and clarity.

The project is heavily grounded in research, drawing upon a wealth of resources - as healthcare, well-being, and safety-oriented design are well-documented fields within architecture, providing a solid foundation to draw from. This emphasises the evolving nature of architecture for social impact, especially at the intersection of public health and safety. Although there is thorough research available, practical implementation on a local scale remains limited, often due to funding constraints and construction standards that lag behind international best practices. Despite these challenges, this project embodies optimism for raising local construction standards and setting a precedent for safer, more equitable public and healthcare spaces that genuinely support the well-being of all community members.



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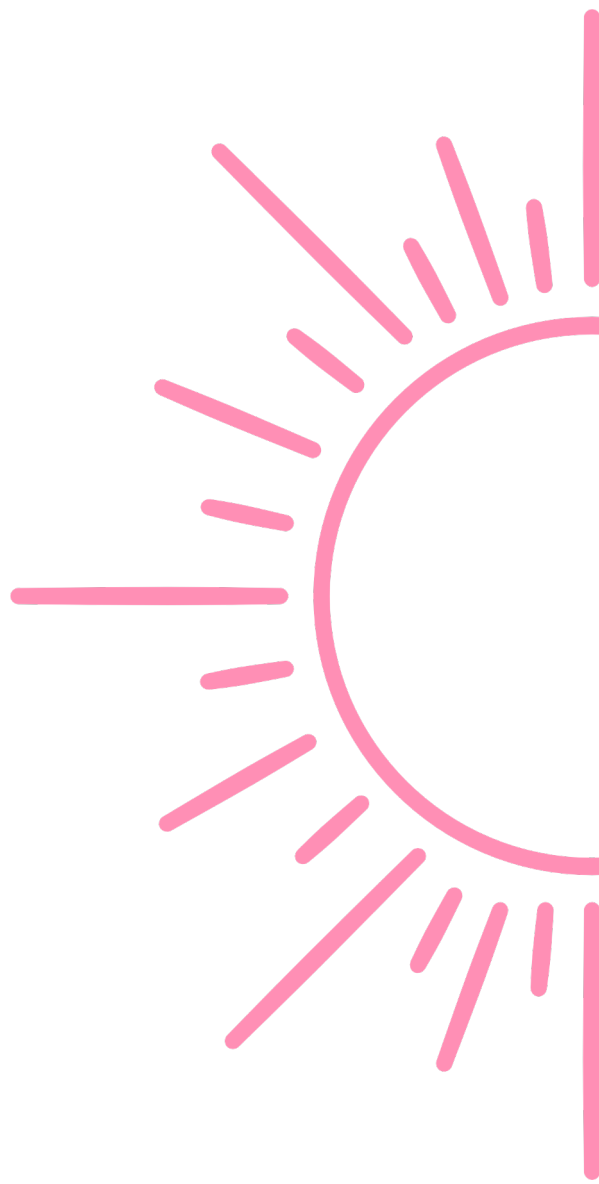
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