



V D M M A

VAN DER MERWE MISZEWSKI ARCHITECTS

PRACTICE PROFILE 2023

Van Der Merwe Miszewski Architects | VDMMA

VAN DER MERWE MISZEWSKI ARCHITECTS Pty Ltd was founded in 1991 by Anya van der Merwe and Macio Miszewski and is located at 161 Longmarket Street, Cape Town in a Grade 1 listed building.

VDMMA has completed a wide range of building types, including educational, cultural, commercial, retail, restoration & residential projects - including group housing, apartment buildings and individual residences.

The company has received numerous awards, including SAIA Awards, (South African Institute for Architecture, regional and national), SAPOA Awards (South African Property Owners Association), SAISC Awards (South African Institute of Steel Construction), The Fulton Award, as well as various media awards.

VDMMA has been recognised internationally, including the prestigious AR+D award hosted by Architectural Review Journal (London) - in 'recognition of excellence in executed designs', the World Architecture Award for the Best Building in Africa/Middle East and the Chicago Athenaeum / European Centre for Architecture Award for 'architectural excellence'. Numerous awards have been received for the V&A Silo Precinct and Zeitz MOCAA Buildings which have enjoyed extensive publication internationally.

The Tree House was voted the "Best Building in South Africa" in a public opinion poll hosted by VISI Magazine and CTICC1 was voted Cape Town's "favourite building" by KFM Radio listeners.

Publications include features in books, journals and periodicals. Publishers include Phaidon, Rizolli, Architectural Review (London), Wallpaper, Casamica, te Neues; Häuser and others.

VDMMA is a member of the Green Building Council of South Africa and has been involved in a variety of energy efficient design projects, most recently as lead designer for the 6 Star rated Allan Gray Headquarters (Silo 1) and the Silo 5 Building in the Victoria & Alfred Waterfront.

We continue to contribute to academic life. Directors regularly participate as External Examiners or visiting Lecturers at a variety of institutions nationally. Directors are often called upon to deliver key note addresses at Conferences.

We place great emphasis on the close collaboration of the professional team together with the client. A holistic approach addresses all aspects of the project, including interiors and landscaping, from commencement through to completion. The central binding philosophy of the practice concerns a shared dedication to the pursuit of excellence in design – to weld together appropriate design within carefully established financial parameters and return on investment. The goal is to best interpret the unique requirements of each client, brief and site, through creativity and inventiveness, formally striving towards the creation of an architecture which suggests timeless simplicity and elegance.

Please refer to our website: www.vdmma.com for a view of the work of the Practice.

CONTENTS

RESIDENTIAL A-Z

MULTI UNIT RESIDENTIAL

CORPORATE

PUBLIC

EDUCATIONAL

SUSTAINABILITY

COMPETITIONS

HERITAGE

SMALLER PROJECTS



RESIDENTIAL

VDMMA has completed a variety of residential projects, ranging from small renovations in urban contexts to large residences in the landscape. While the scope varies, the

The methodology of the practice hinges on 'design process'. Central to this methodology is our firm belief that no two sites, briefs or clients are the same, and that 'to make it work' - a project must be based on and sustained by an idea or set of ideas.

The design process is underpinned by a belief in "truth to materials" - in their application, strength, durability and purpose. Equally a great deal of time is spent researching and investigating new materials.

We do not believe that there is any separation between interior and exterior architecture. In the vast majority of our buildings we fulfil both roles in order to achieve a beautifully coherent building.





BOX HOUSE

Residence - Glen Avenue, Higgovale, Cape Town
2008

The Box House, as it eventually became known, is built on what probably was the last remaining vacant stand in Higgovale.

The site is very steep, positioned below the road, adjacent to a public open space containing a pine forest and has spectacular views up to the Mountain and over the City, bay and landscape beyond to the north.

The Bridge House, completed by the same practice a few years ago, stands adjacent to the same public open space – across the way. By extension, the Box House forms part of a composition with the Bridge House, which in itself is a group of structures in a garden setting.

The primary form of the building is expressed as a 'cube' – enclosing the dwelling spaces contained within.

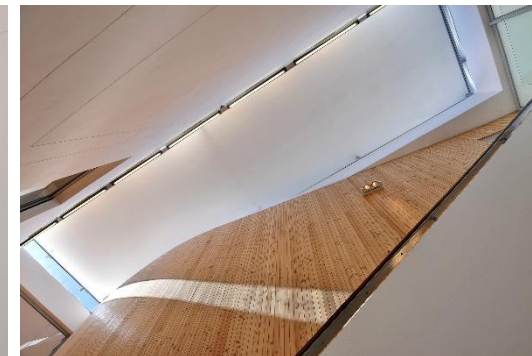
The 'Cube' is 'white': brick, concrete and white paint. The 'inner' spaces are enclosed by timber cladding (larch), full height glazing and timber shutters (meranti) and are expressed on the street and north facades.

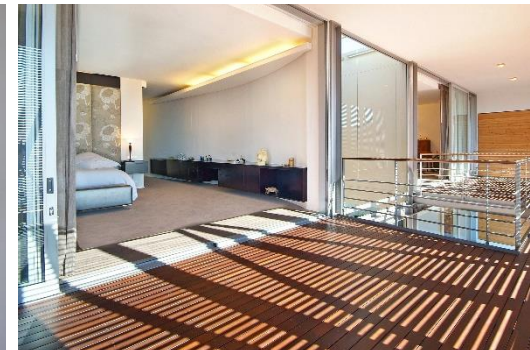
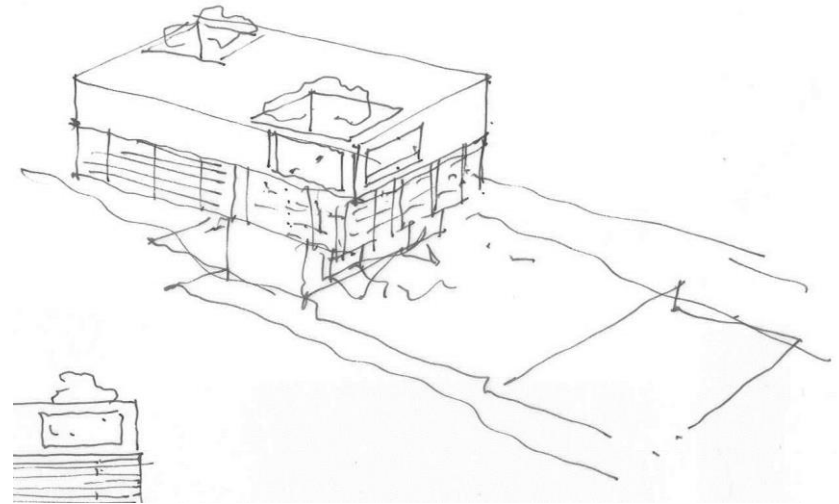
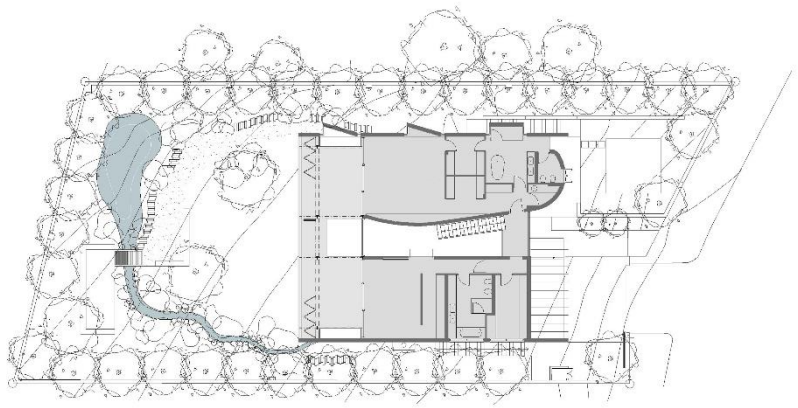
The Cube is poised on the natural ground slope, allowing on-grade access from the street. The front entrance is centrally located at the middle level and at the central stairway that links the 3 levels of the house.

The living spaces and garage are grouped at the entrance level; the bedrooms at the top level and studies at the lower level.

The entrance façade is recessed; the entry leading directly into the entrance hallway and stairway within. The external timber cladding of this façade is continuous with the internal hallway and stairway space.

The living spaces at all three levels exit onto deep north view facing verandas, consisting of timber slatted floors and are screened by the full height adjustable timber shutters.







BRIDGE HOUSE

3 Residences - Glen Avenue, Higgovale, Cape Town
2001

The site consists of three separate but adjacent sites forming one entity, located in the heart of Higgovale, which lies upslope from the Cape Town CBD and below Table Mountain.

All three sites are traversed by a "DONGA" – a dry river course. The overall site, roughly triangular, is bounded by Glen Avenue to the South and East, public open space (a Pine forest) to the West and houses to the North and East.

The site slopes, in places steeply, from Glen Avenue down towards the North. There are views of Table Mountain, Devils Peak, Lions Head and Signal Hill, the adjacent Pine forest, the City, the Harbour, the Atlantic Ocean, and beyond.

The site contains large and mature specimens of exotic and indigenous trees, set amongst rocks and moss covered boulders, which help to form the DONGA and its banks, which are covered by tangled undergrowth.

We discovered in amongst the rocks, fallen tree trunks and undergrowth; traces of a previous use of the site in the form of, stone steps, pathways, platforms and broken down stone walls.

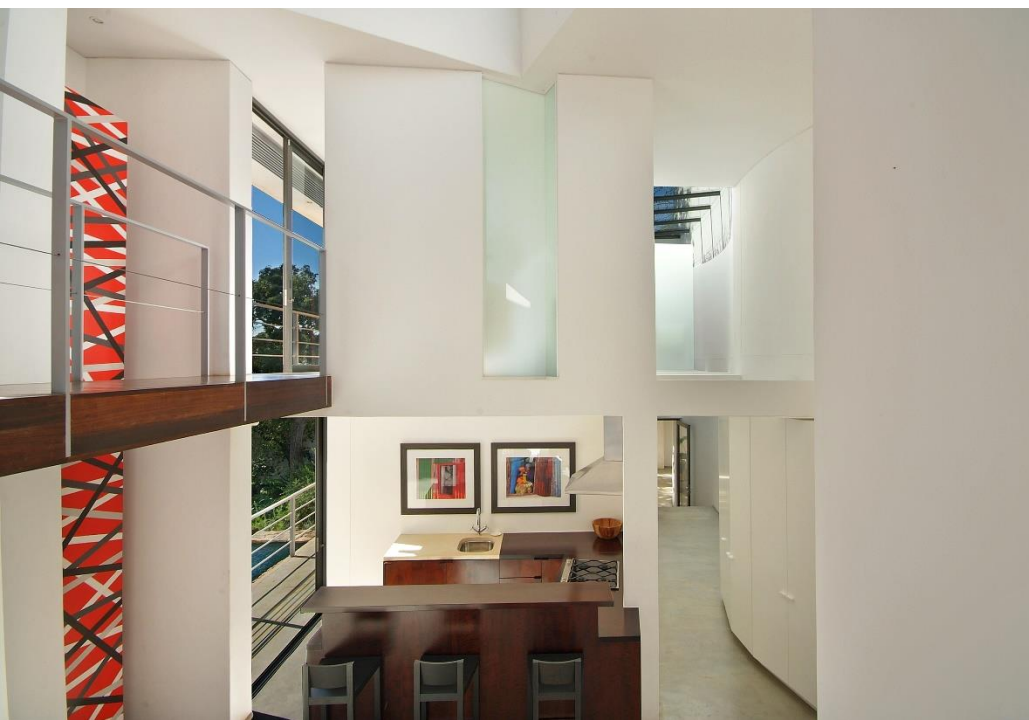
We undertook the task to re-invent this "ancient" garden in this "found valley" on the slopes of Table Mountain. It was decided to place the structures along the perimeter of the three sites, thus allowing the inner areas to be landscaped in a manner which would emphasize the natural DONGA, the natural and inherent beauty of the site and the views towards the MOUNTAINS and the SEA.

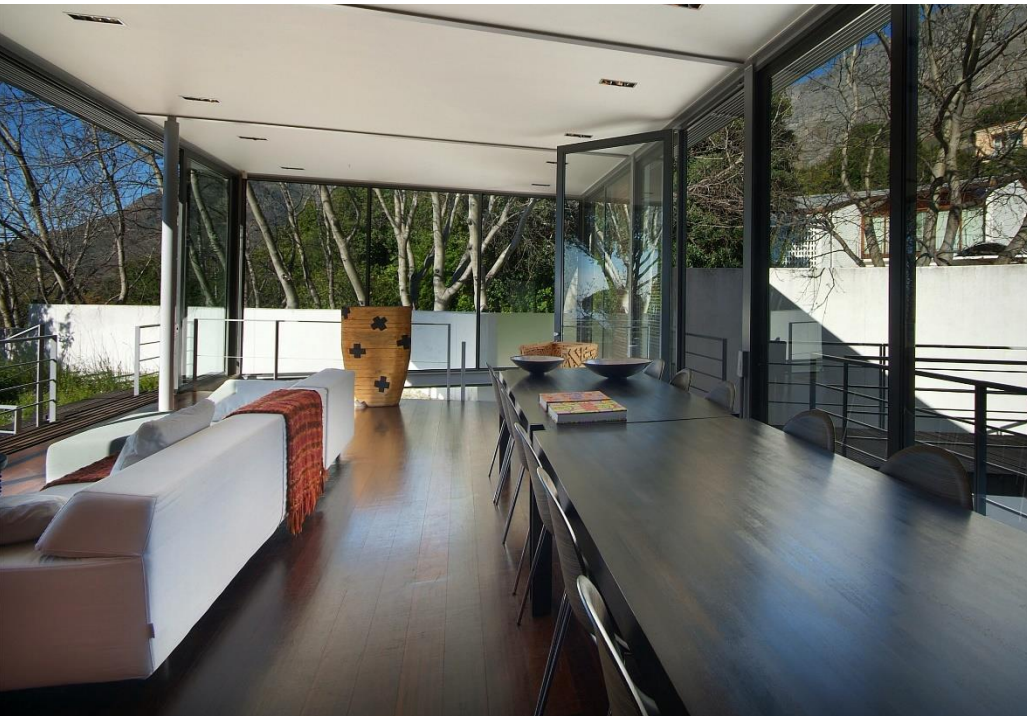
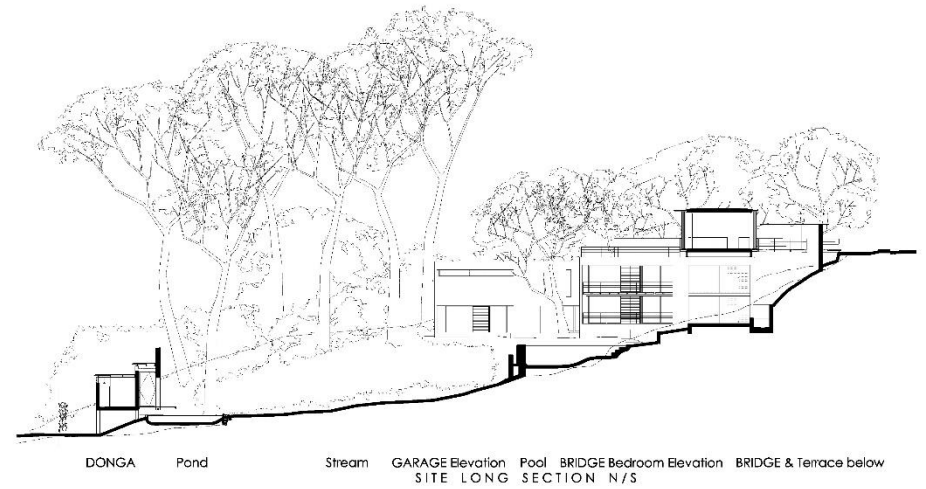
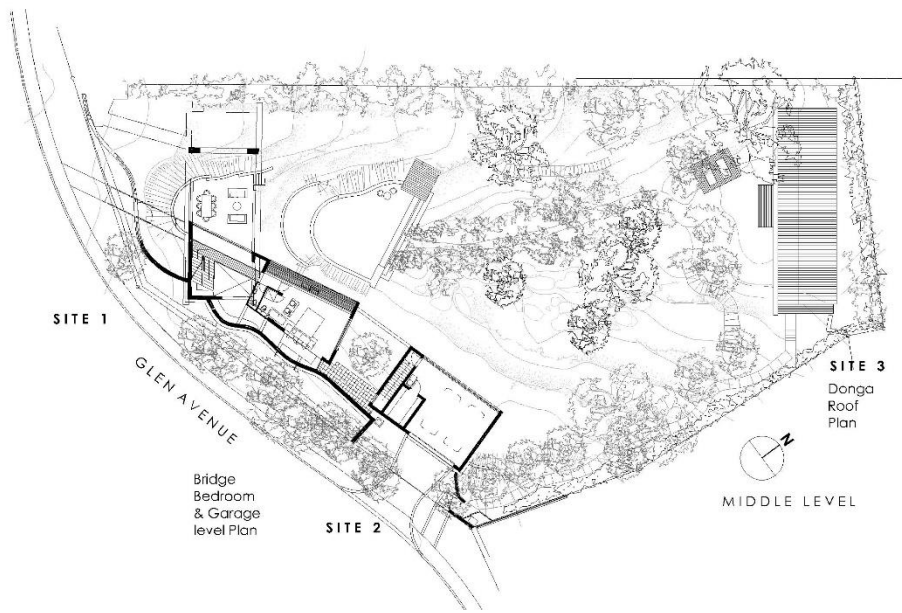
The structures form the boundary between the street (public space) and inner landscape (private space), of which the adjacent Pine forest also forms a part.

At the uppermost end of the site, a BRIDGE was placed across the DONGA, allowing the DONGA to remain below. A POOL and STREAM, flowing to a POND, were inserted into the dry riverbed. The flow of water is dammed by the POOL, then runs freely in the stream and settles in the pond at the base of the site. Intensive planting will regenerate the garden. Found pathways and steps have been reinstated and added to.

The BRIDGE is the "Main House" (SITE 1); containing entry, living spaces and main bedrooms. Adjacent to the bridge are the GARAGE and Guest quarters (SITE 2). At the base of the site, the DONGA House (for visitors) spans over the POND (SITE 3).

The owners, LINTELOO from Holland, presented a very clear brief to us, which in essence remains unchanged since the inception of the project in mid 2001. LINTELOO's sophisticated understanding of the design process, as evidenced by the furniture they produce – resulted in a powerful and collaborative partnership between the client and the architect. In addition to the loose furniture, LINTELOO have also assembled a significant collection of Art Works by local Cape Artists, for display in the house







CLIFTON BEACH HOUSE 52

Residence - Bungalow 52, Fourth Beach, Clifton, Cape Town
2012

Clifton is a proclaimed special area in terms of the Zoning Scheme. Severe restrictions apply to all aspects of design and construction in the Precinct. Generally, the restrictions govern the permissible bulk envelope, (length, height, breadth), all external finishes, extent of glazing and canopies, and even the angle of roof pitches which are required to be symmetrical and double pitched.

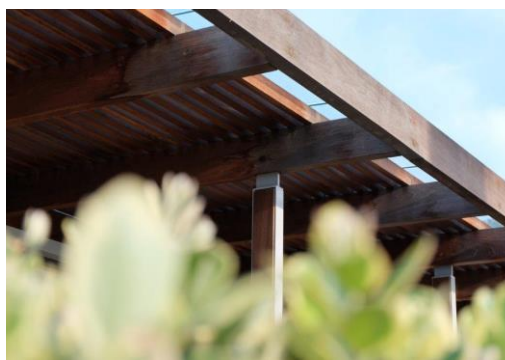
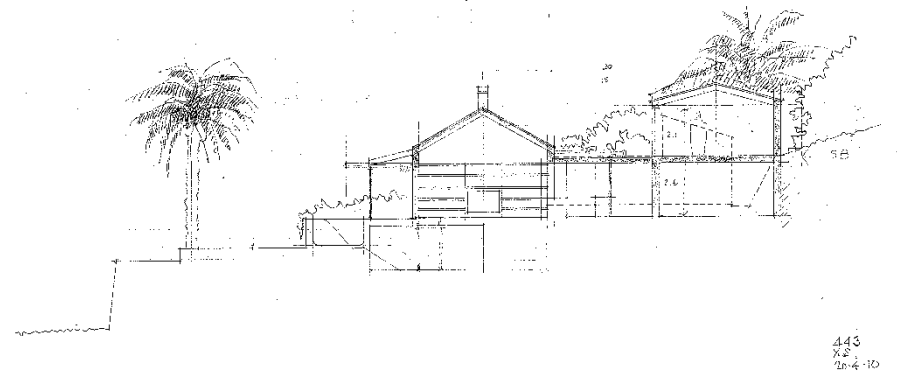
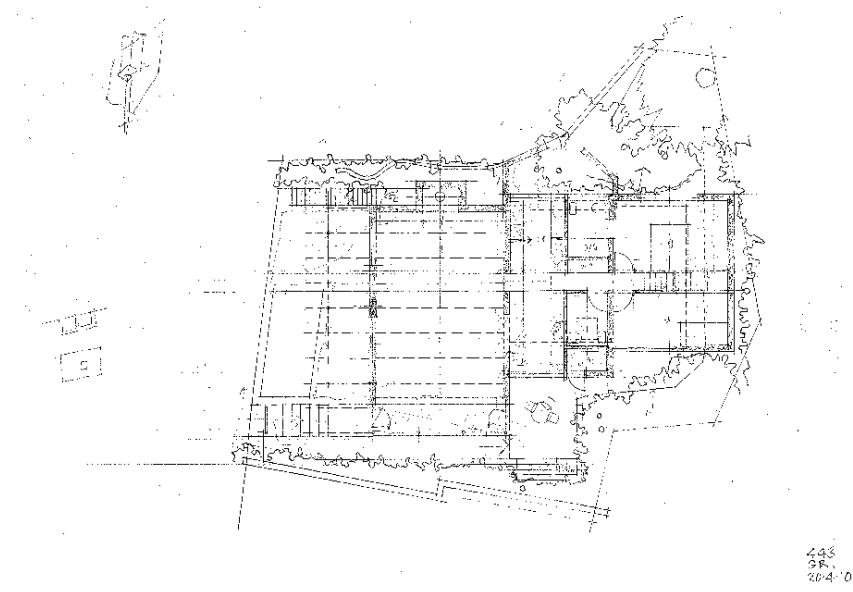
The onerous conditions serve the purpose of preserving the 'ethos' of the neighbourhood and as such are worth supporting.

The value of the land is very high, and hence maximising the potential of the property is inevitably a prerequisite. A dilapidated and decaying existing bungalow was demolished to make way for the new structure.

The new Bungalow comprises of : two en suite bathrooms, a third bedroom and bathroom, entry hall, kitchen, dining and lounge, terraces, pool and basement 'media room' – all within a footprint of less than 140 sqm.

Taking into account the given and highly restricted palette of materials, finishes and space limitations, the 'bungalow projects' rely on intensive attention to detailing.







HIGHVELD HOUSE

Residence - Gauteng
2008

This is a description of a holding idea for a new house in the landscape. The landscape is the South African Highveld, located in Gauteng.

The site for the house consists of a collection of diverse environments: an oak forest, open meadows and poplar groves, a river, lake and weir, a white stinkwood forest, a koppie environment and open veld.

The brief referred to 'integration with the Landscape'. An elevated site was chosen, allowing long views to the distant hills, where the white Stinkwood Forest meets the open veld.

The house is conceived as a series of pavilions arranged between two planes – the floor and the roof. The planes are located in the forest, at the edge of the veld, and elevated above natural ground by a 'random measured' forest of skew columns – abstract tree trunks. The columns support a grid, about which the planning and layout of the pavilions and their functions is ordered.

Enclosure is transparent and shaded terraces project into the forest and over the veld. The landscape and the building overlap.

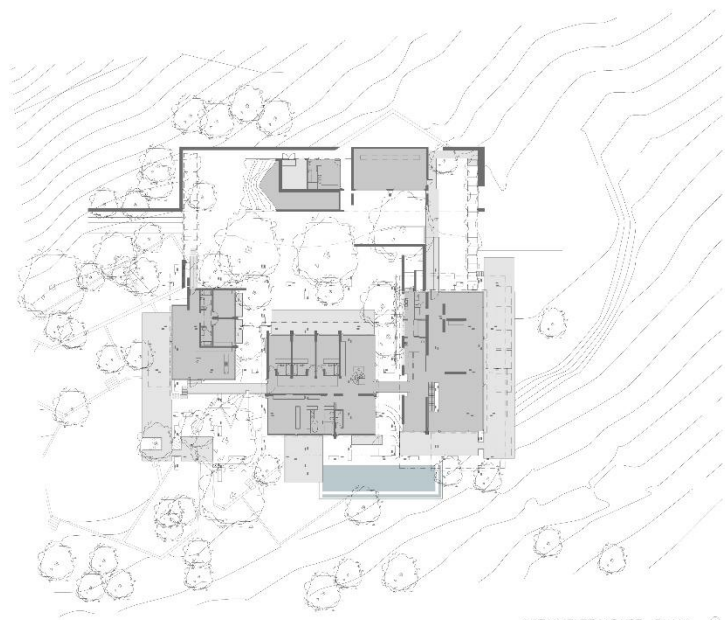
The structure of the building relies on a steel frame, clad in part by timber, and fixed to scattered concrete bases.

EXTRACT FROM THE GAUTENG INSTITUTE FOR ARCHITECTURE (GIFA) REGIONAL AWARDS 2009: CITATION NOTES

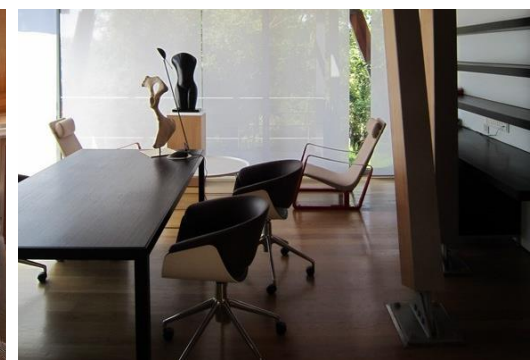
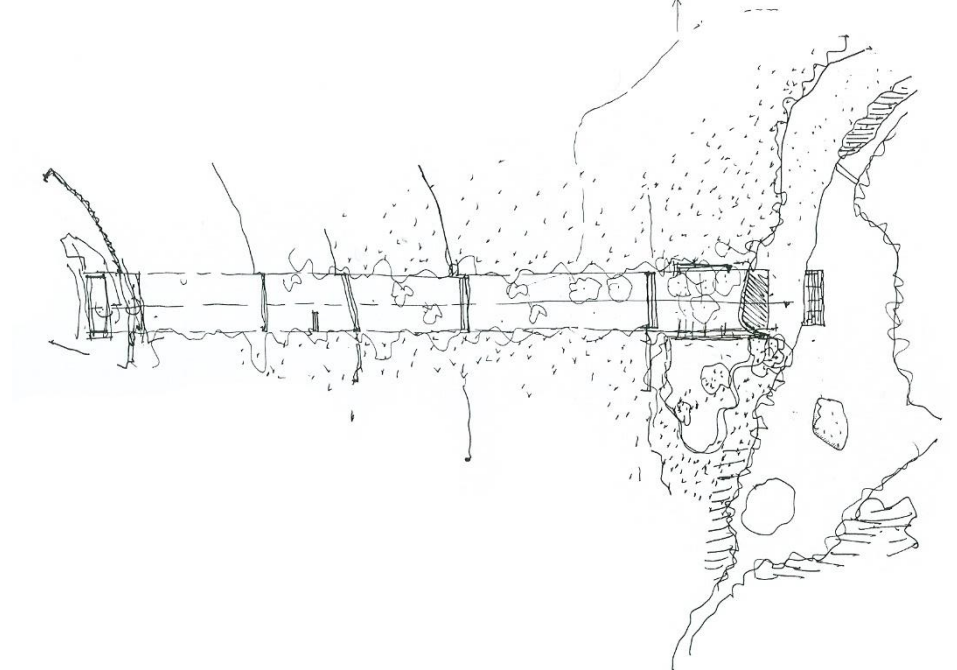
"Highveldt House - van der Merwe Miszewski Architects:

Located on a relatively remote and expansive estate, this site touches the indigenous landscape very lightly. The plan, essentially a platform on stilts that fans out to embrace existing flora, achieves minimum site disturbance and brings interior in close dialogue with exterior. The tilted steel columns (with timber veneer) and the all-glass cladding create an aesthetic that simultaneously blends with the environment while refreshingly contrasting it. In both plan and section, the house harmonises with its context. The detailing of the exterior and the interior are exquisite."





HIGHVELDT HOUSE - PLAN
VDMMA





MAISON

Residence - Franschhoek, Western Cape
2009

The Project site (± 10 HA) is located in the heart of the Franschhoek Valley, between the road into Franschhoek, (the north boundary of the site), and the Berg river (the south boundary of the site).

There were two existing structures on the site; a 1920's house and a barn dating from \pm the 18th century. The scope of this proposal included the re-utilization of the barn, which is more or less centrally located on the site and is surrounded by several magnificent and ancient Oak trees.

It is intended that the barn and its trees become the focus of a new home, both in the programmatic and structural sense. The barn itself was repaired and inhabited to form the heart of the home – being the living, dining and cooking spaces.

The long facades are covered with verandas; one open and planted and the other covered over, (in place of an existing lean to structure which was demolished).

Two additional wings of accommodation have been placed adjacent to the barn (at the 'short ends') – containing bedrooms, bathrooms etc and creating an enclosed external space – the WERF.

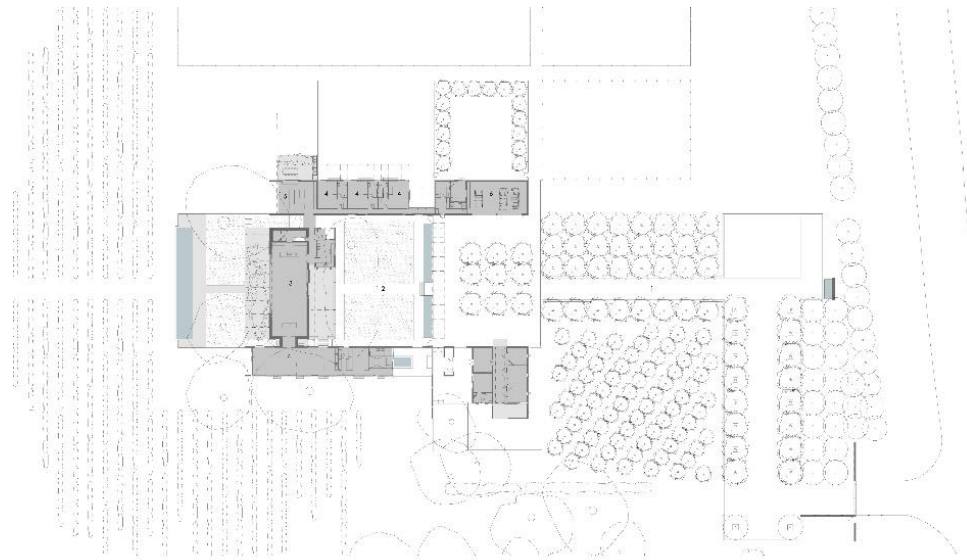
The WERF provides; (in 2 areas, which are separated by a level change, an harbour and a water feature), private open space and motorcar access.

The purpose of the proposal was to retain the barn structure as the significant built form – by keeping the new adjacent structures low, with flat roofs, as well as retaining the existing trees planted many years ago around the barn.

The primary form of the house consists of walls in the landscape – providing both habitable space as well as an ordering device for external farm space. Openings in the walls are punctured and can be closed over by external shutters. Panoramic view windows (also with shutters), are located at the ends of the accommodation wings which look out over the vineyards.

A long pool separates the barn from the vineyards, which together with new paddocks, surround the new house. The owners collaborated closely with the architects on all aspects of the design, and particularly so with regard to internal fit out and furniture.







MOUNTAIN HOUSE

Residence - Oranjezicht, Cape Town
2011

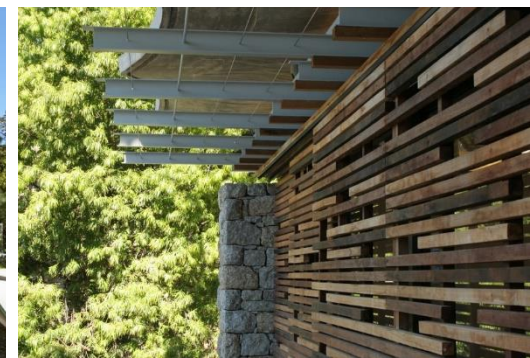
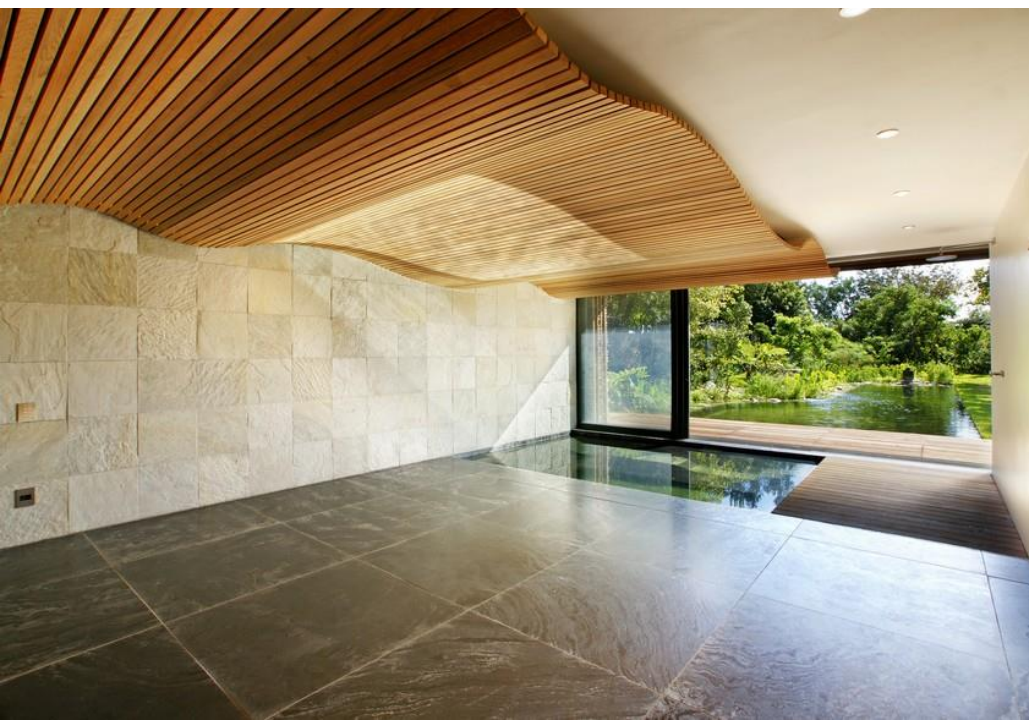
Mountain House is located on a steep sloping site on the foot of Table Mountain bordering Table Mountain National Park.

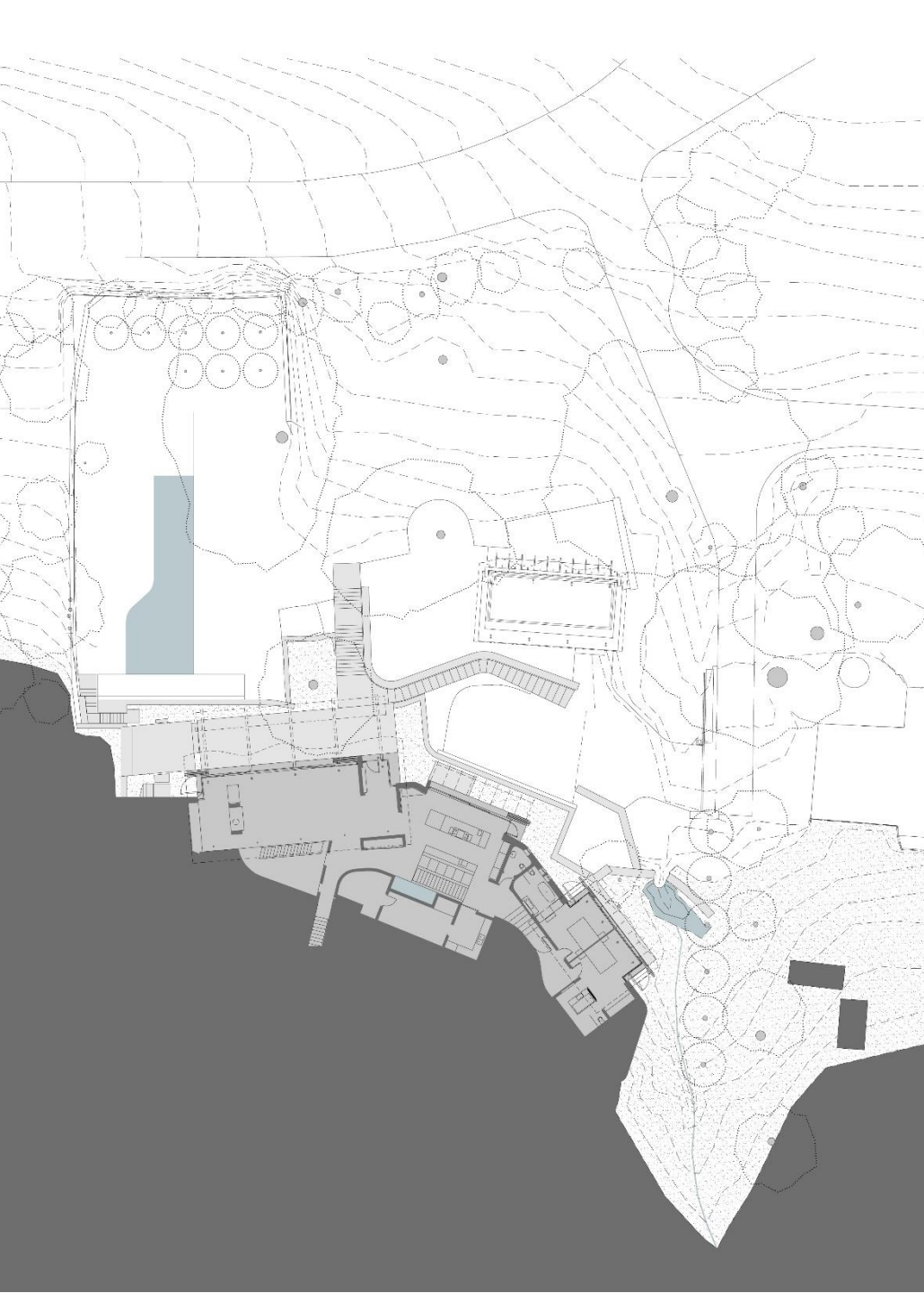
In order to achieve the least impact on the site, the house is comprised of five pavilions which are tucked into the sloping terrain surrounded by the existing natural fynbos which stretches from the mountain slopes above the site to the road below. The five pavilions mimic the lie of the land and lie like leaves that have fallen down the mountain. The pavilions are in sympathy with the surrounding context in order to achieve as little visual impact as possible on the existing natural landscape.

Habitable spaces have been created by using the age-old tradition of inserting stone walls into the landscape, thereby creating usable terraces and platforms. The colours of these stone walls emulate those of the cliffs of Table Mountain above and its presence anchors the design into the landscape.

The wavy roof is like a piece of the site lifted off the ground, settling over the habitable spaces and platforms. The concrete roof curves in both directions and takes its cue from the curved nature of the cliff faces on Table Mountain above and the contouring slope of the site below. The roof therefore simulates the curve of the mountain face and the lie of the land.

Glass is used to enclose these platforms to create habitable spaces within the indigenous natural surroundings.







TREE HOUSE

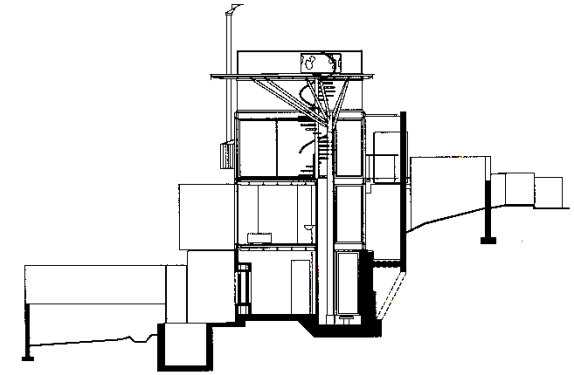
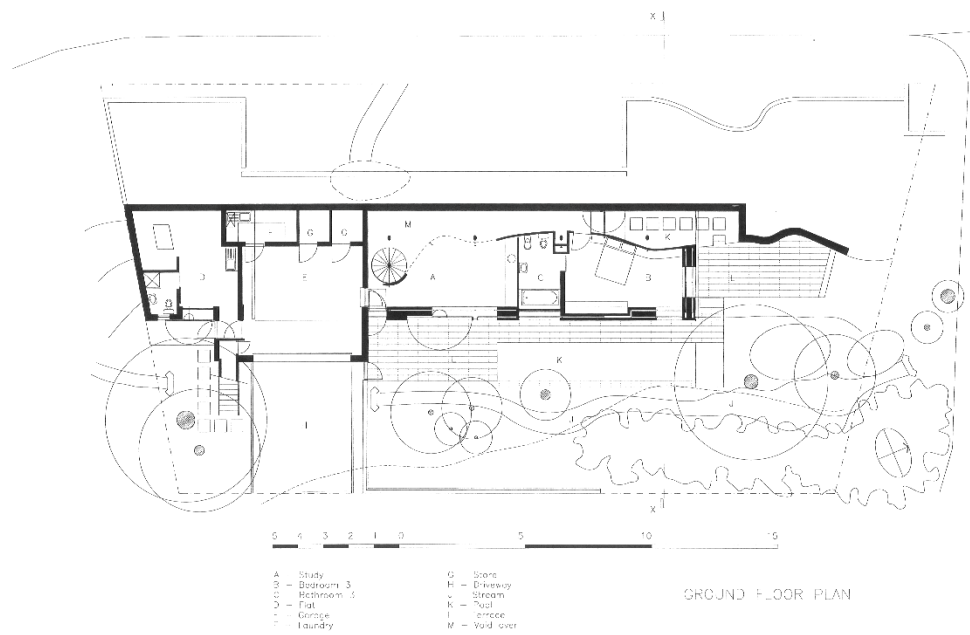
*Residence - Higgovale, Cape Town
1999*

Trees are precious in Africa. They provide shelter for the elders at meeting time, for school children in the midday heat, for all to shield against the unrelenting elements. In a sense the tree has become iconic, almost mythical.

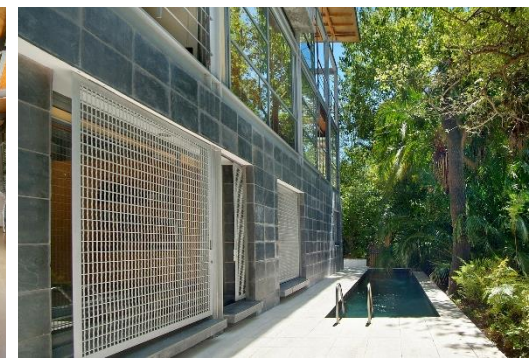
A commission to design a house on the slopes of Table Mountain in Cape Town created an opportunity to test our concerns and searches for contextual responsiveness and connectivity. The site, adjacent to a valley and stream, has a canopy of magnificent spreading umbrella Pines. These trees, majestic and sculptural, provided the primary reference and ultimately the structural concept for the house. Five tree-like structures anchor the roof to the ground and provide shelter for the functions gathered under. These trees are surrounded by an entirely separate lightweight transparent steel and glass enclosure supported on a heavily rusticated stone base.

The design of the house incorporates themes of narrative, of layering and of expressed threshold. The visitor is invited to take part in a journey of discovery, requested to participate in the unlocking of experiences within the house, the unpeeling of layers. We tried to heighten the experience of unveiling and of delicate exposure, to create within the house sensuality and moments of intense intimacy - a folly immersed in, and closely linked with, the majestic beauty of the African landscape - a simultaneous dialogue between inside and outside and outside and inside, neither taking precedent over the other.





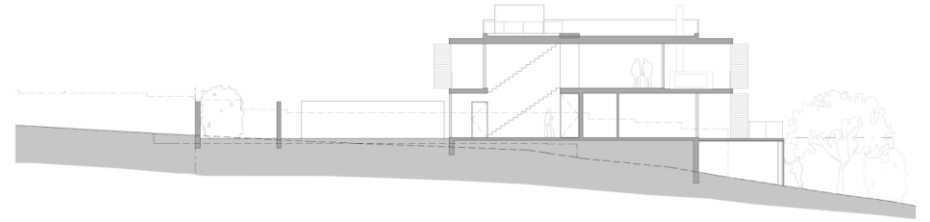
Cross Section





VOëKLIP

Residence - Hermanus, Western Cape
2015





SHANKLIN | CHEVIOT

Residence - Camps Bay, Western Cape
2015





YZERFONTEIN

Residence - Yzerfontein, Western Cape
2022





OCEAN VIEW

Residence - Bantry Bay, Cape Town
2006

The site of this house is situated high up against the slopes of Table Mountain, overlooking the ocean. The extensive site slopes steeply down hill from the access road and is bounded along its entire length by a forest of magnificent "Bloekom Bome" in a donga.

The project initially commenced as a refurbishment of an existing house. However, the desire to maximize the sea view and to integrate the gum trees into the project resulted in a virtual new build.

Due to the steep slope, the house consists of several levels and contains 4 bedrooms, 5 bathrooms, open plan lounge, dining, kitchen, study, basement pool room and a flat for staff. There is also a dedicated studio.

The two primary aspects of the site are the OCEAN and the FOREST.

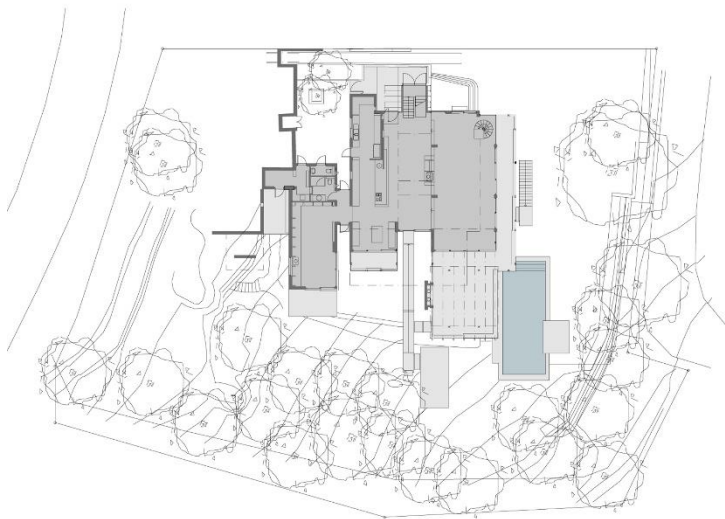
All the accommodation is enclosed with full height glazing, creating an uninterrupted relationship with this unique environment. In response to the characteristics of the local climate, all the accommodation is also screened by full height South African Redwood steel framed shutters, mounted on the external perimeter of the verandas, which are attached to the two primary elevations of the house. The verandas are accessed from each level.

The primary internal space is a three story open void, containing the vertical circulation and high level connecting bridges. A timber and steel frame walkway links the open void space with the FOREST, terminating in an open deck platform, some 8m above the forest floor and positioned amongst the branches of the trees.

Being a multi level structure, the verandas allow for an indoor/outdoor living experience at each level. The lowest level consists of a lawned platform – 'place to kick a soccer ball' and contains the pool.

The palette of the interior is rendered in light timber & porcelain tiling with neutral tones to accommodate a substantial collection of South African artwork.

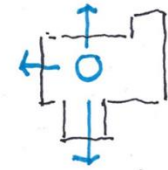
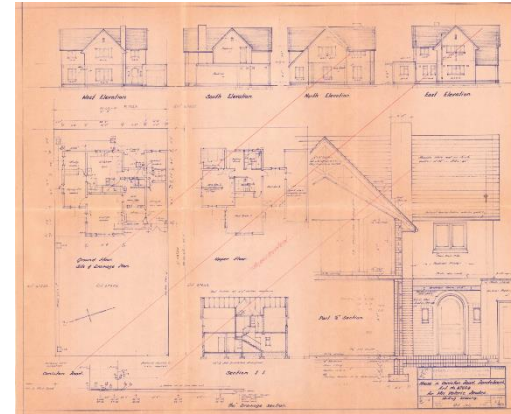






CONISTON ROAD

Residential reconstruction - Rondebosch, Cape Town
2021



Where the outside
Remains much
As is (repainted)
and it all happens
INSIDE

'INSIDE OUT HOUSE'





MULTI UNIT RESIDENTIAL

VDDMMA's approach to any brief rests in a methodology focused on the design process. Central to this methodology is our firm belief that no two sites, briefs or clients are the same, and that 'to make it work' - a project must be based on and sustained by an idea or set of ideas.

Each building is a unique opportunity, which also needs to meet unique and very real program and budget parameters. Excellent ideas and concepts can only be built and appreciated if realistic parameters are understood and enforced.

We believe that architecture is the product of a team of designers and client,. Shared communication, skill and experience within a team are vital to the successful creation of buildings.

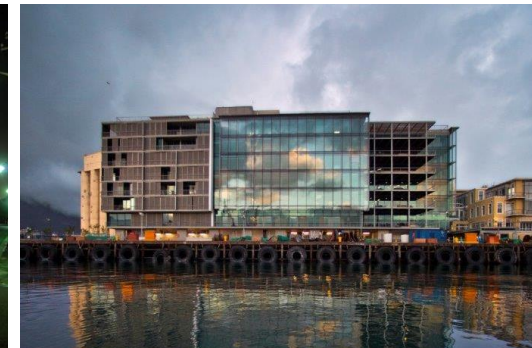
A holistic approach addresses all aspects of the project - construction methodology, cost parameters, services reticulation and integration, and including 'green thinking', landscaping and interior fit out - from commencement through to completion.

Projects featured

Lighthouse

Silo 2 & 3

Battery crescent (unbuilt)





NO 2 SILO

New Residential and Retail Development in the
V + A Waterfront – Silo Precinct
2013

VDMMA in association with RBA

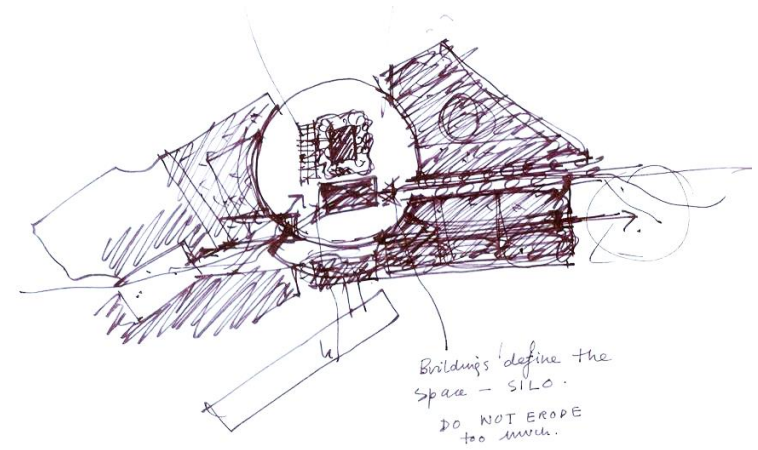
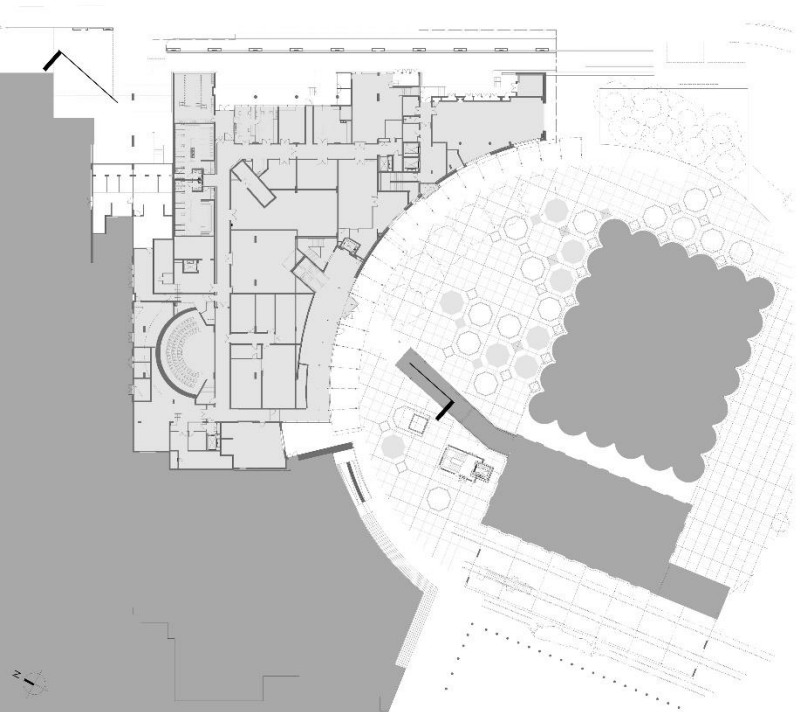
No 2 physically abuts No 1, and continues the Silo Precinct idea first proposed at the inception of No 1, the Allan Gray Headquarters Building.

The form of the building is literally an extension of the Allan Gray 'envelope' – only rendered in a different and consciously more domestic way. In terms of Urban Design, No 2 emphasises the intention commenced within the planning of No 1 – to act as a catalyst for the development of the idea of the Precinct. The Historic Grain Silo holds primacy in the Precinct, and No 2 proposes the further continuity of enclosure and identity for the new Precinct. No 2 was constructed at the same time as No 1.

The building consists of 8 levels, the base being occupied by retail, the upper levels containing 31 apartments of varying size and room numbers, all with generous terraces. Two orientations are available – one overlooking the new Silo Public Realm about the base of the Historic Grain Silo building and the City beyond, and the other overlooking the working harbour, bay and mountains beyond. An external layer of sliding shutters encloses the terraces. Similar to No 1, and subsequent other buildings in the Precinct, the roof space of No 2 is utilised for leisure space and includes a communal swimming pool and terrace.

No 2 is a 4 Star Design Rated building.





1a) SILO "Square"/"Circus"/Court/Place





NO 3 SILO

*Apartment Building & Gym – V&A Waterfront
2017*

VDMMA in association with MDL

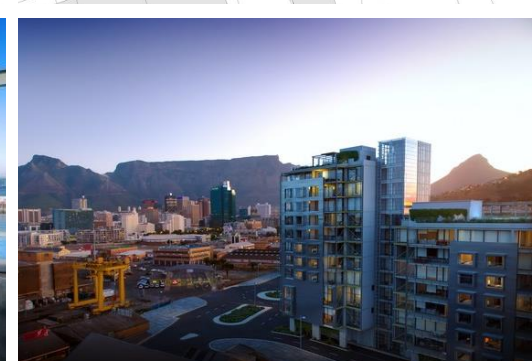
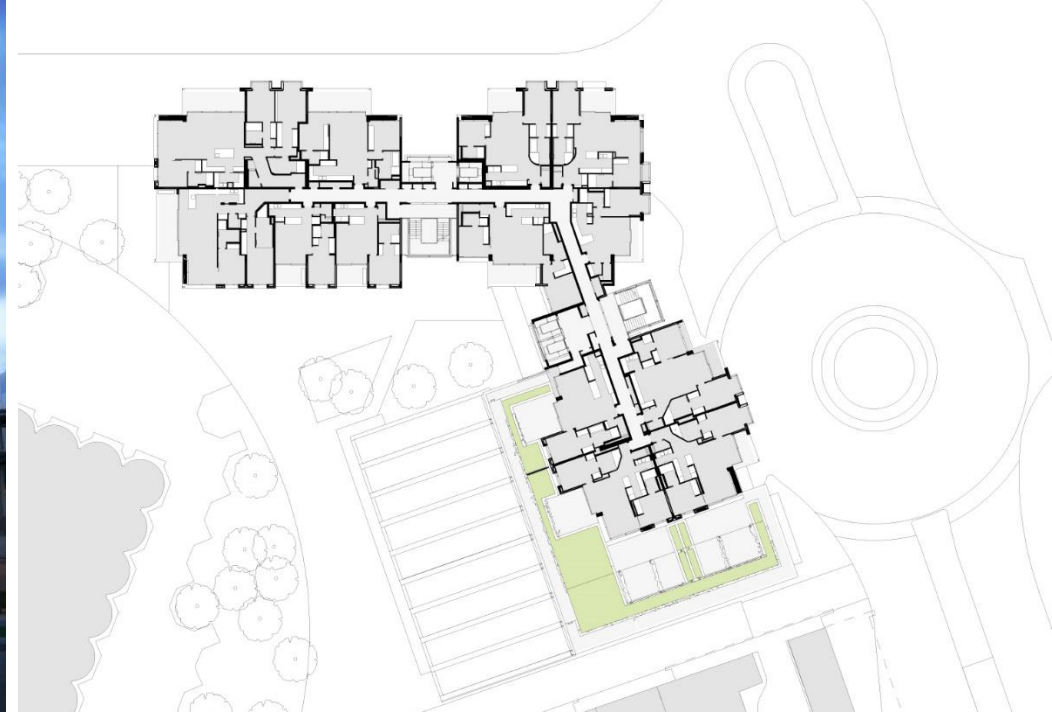
No 3 Silo consists of a varied mix of 78 Apartments, ranging from 1 Bed to 5 Bed Penthouse and also includes retail at grade.

The design idea for the Silo Precinct simultaneously guided and influenced many of the design decisions made during the resolution of Buildings No 2, 3, 4 and 5. The intention for the Public Realm Urban Space design is twofold: to secure by design the 'space' about, and encircling the base, of the 1920's Historic Grain Silo building and to obviate the 'condition' referred to as SLOAP – 'Space Left Over After Planning'

The idea sought to create a multiplicity of Urban space types. This was reinforced by fragmenting the buildings which enclose the space in order to avoid monolithic and only one dimensional interfaces between the buildings and the Public Realm open space. This intent was overlaid with extensive wind analysis, sun projection studies, anticipated uses and circulation patterns. The proposals put forward that the 'front doors and addresses' of each building in the Public Realm, should be clearly identifiable and understood.

With VDMMA being responsible for the design of No's 2, 3, 4 and 5, this allowed for the simultaneous design development of all the thresholds enclosing the space of the Public Realm. The view was taken that the fragmentation of the surrounding buildings would allow for variety, eschew monotony and it is hoped, allow for the unexpected within the Public Realm.







LIGHTHOUSE

*Apartment Building – Greenpoint, Cape Town
2017*

Building development in and around the Cape Town CBD has over the past few years seen the re-emergence of the 'Apartment Block'. The recent 'boom' has resulted in this 'type' appearing both centrally in the CBD and as much elsewhere, in the form of refurbishments as well as new builds. The project became an opportunity to contribute to this developing discourse.

The brief required the maximum utilisation of permissible bulk with on-site undercover parking. The design had to allow for flexibility in the layout for the apartments. Initially a mix of studio, 1 bed, 2/3 bed and penthouse apartment types was required - providing prospective owners with different options to choose from – albeit 'under one roof'.

The site is located in the 'High Level Road strip', which, for some time, has appeared to be continuously under re-furbishment. The location is desirable – close to the CBD, the Somerset Road/De Waterkant precinct, the Waterfront and Giovanni's. There are spectacular views of the bay, harbour and mountains; the true attributes of Cape Town, further accentuated by a sense of the weather – when the cold fronts come in (or the fog horn...)

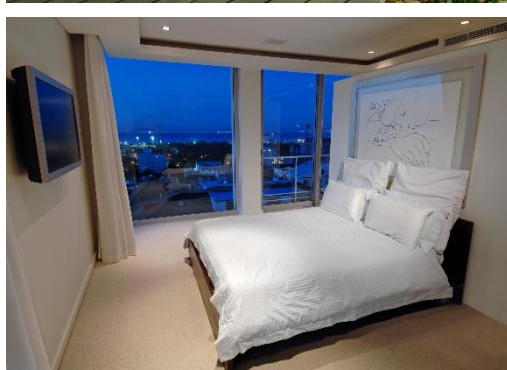
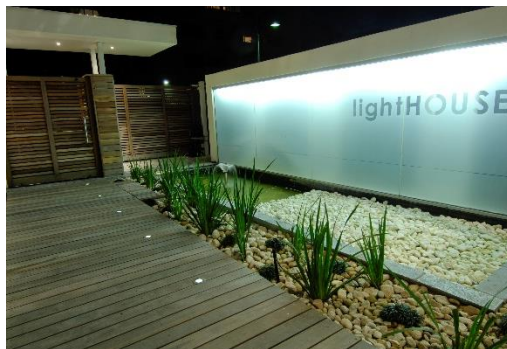
The site is zoned R4 - General Residential. This zoning category allows for two methods to calculate the height of the building. One method leads to the layered 'Wedding Cake' outline, the other to a 'uniform' outline – i.e. straight up. The decision was taken early; to eschew the 'Wedding Cake' and pursue a more autonomous form. The resulting structure comprises one level of basement parking, with six levels of apartments.

The form has been further articulated by clarifying the front, back and two sides of the building.

The front, facing the sea, consists primarily of full height glazing and deep terraces. The internal configuration maximises this orientation – all the primary spaces face out towards the views. The back, or street and entry side, contains all the means of access – being the elevator (with direct internal access to the apartments), 'back doors' from kitchens onto access walkways, which in turn are contained between the expressed fire escape stairways. In contrast to the front, the back elevation consists of punctured openings and is layered by means of the access walkways, escape stairs, the balustrades, and a stainless steel wire grid onto which a Jasmine creeper has been trained.

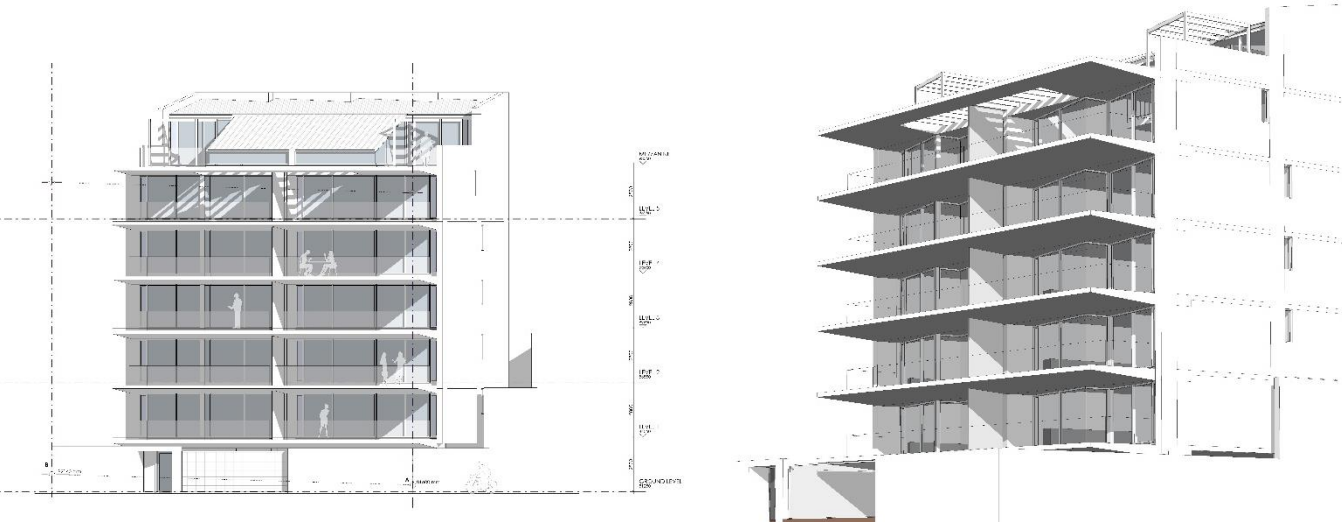
The east/west sides are screened with full height timber shutters.

Each apartment, has been individually fitted out and decorated in accordance with each occupants brief – creating individual diversity within the singular, holding form of the LIGHTHOUSE.



37 OCEAN VIEW DRIVE

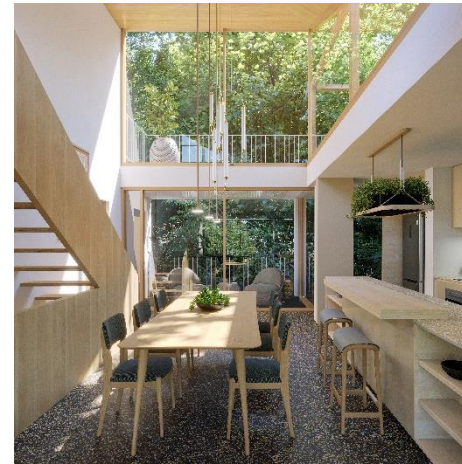
Apartment Building – Greenpoint, Cape Town
2021 – current





36 HIGGO CRESCENT

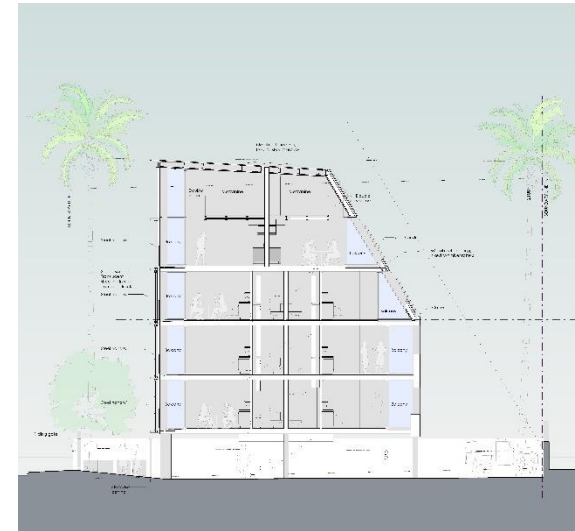
Apartment Building – Higgovale, Cape Town
2021 – current





29 QUEENS ROAD

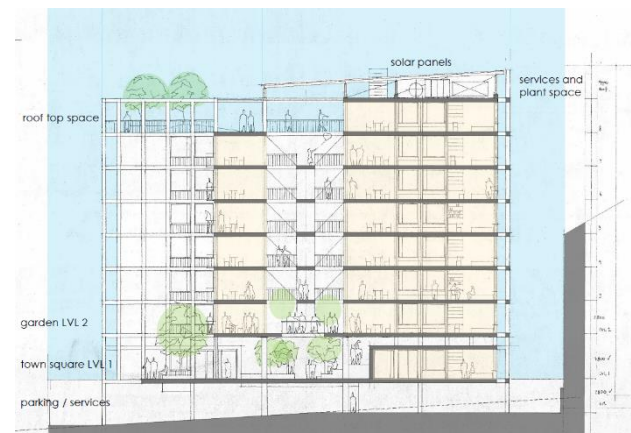
Apartment Building – Bantry Bay, Cape Town
2021 – current



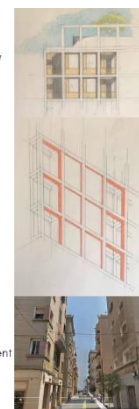


9 BRICKFIELD ROAD

Student Residence – Salt River, Cape Town
2021 – current



facade / structure sketch studies



structural system and spatial integration – study - typical cross section



CORPORATE

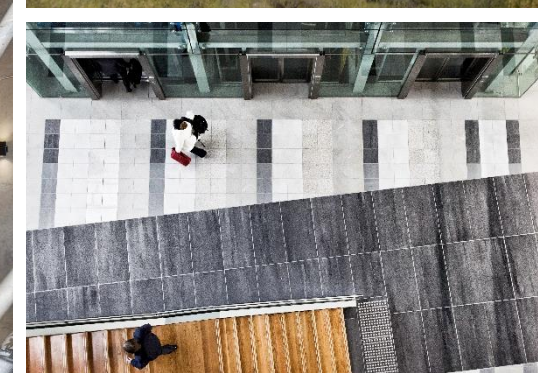
VDMMA believes firmly that an effective and healthy working environment contributes directly to the performance and feel of a company. We have been involved in a number of corporate headquarters and buildings.

These buildings owe their success to the collaboration of many professionals and craftsmen in their various disciplines to achieve a building that is holistic in fulfilling the needs of their users and employees. Creating office environments that are livable, productive and sustainable.

We believe the design process consists of both poetic and pragmatic thinking and so, program and budget plays an integral role in developing a concept and aesthetic.

Projects featured

Silo 1 – Allan Gray Headquarters
Silo 5
De Beers Headquarters
Gondwana Lodge





NO 1 SILO

Allan Gray Headquarters, V&A Waterfront, Cape Town
2013

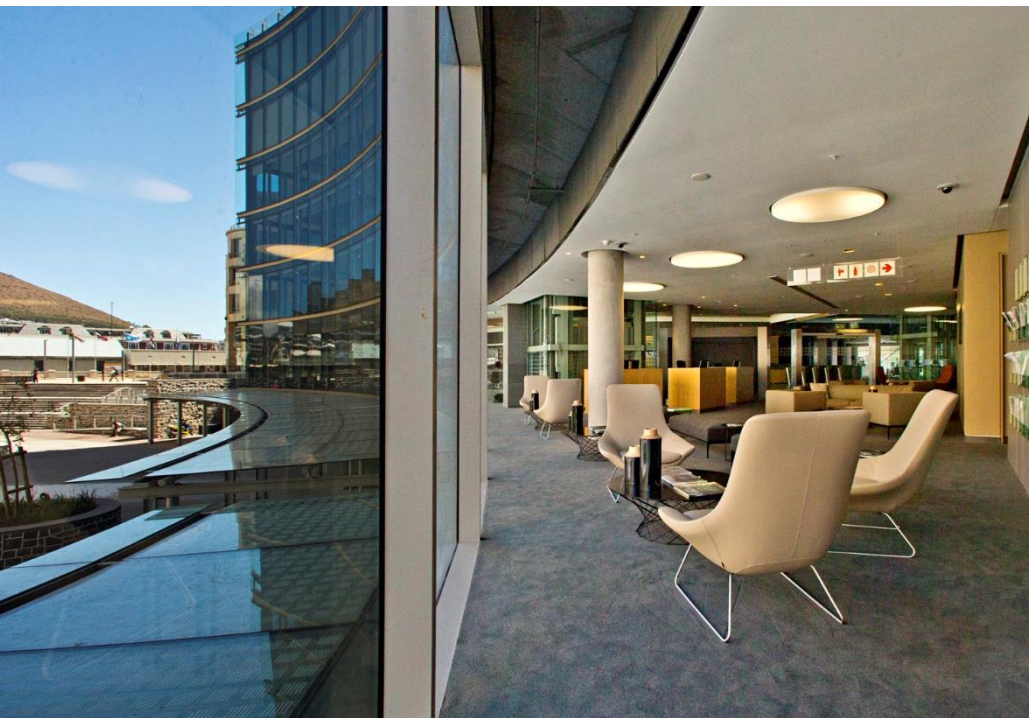
VDMMA in association with RBA

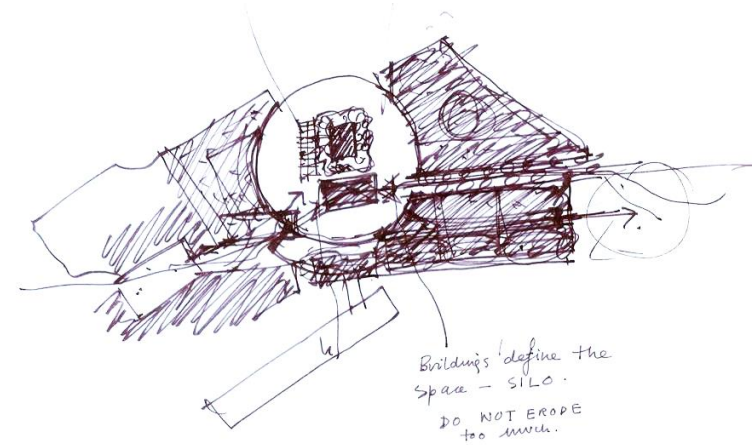
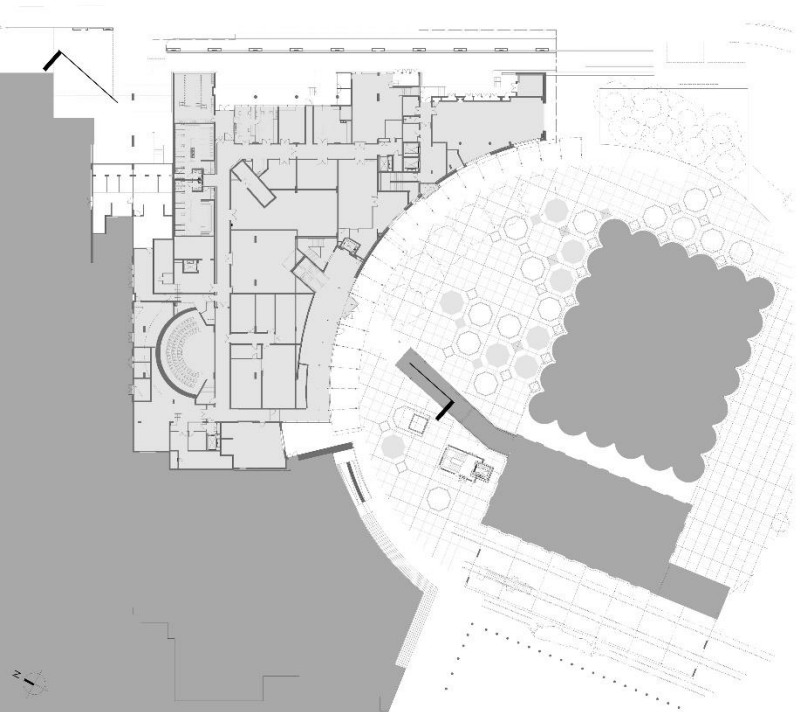
Silo 1, together with its neighbour Silo 2 (7 floor residential and ground floor retail) define the northern edge of the new Silo Precinct and are the first phase of the new Precinct at the V&A Waterfront in Cape Town, South Africa. They are informed by an urban design concept which gives significance to the existing, historical 1920s Grain Silo (home of the Zeitz MOCAA gallery) positioned at the heart of the Precinct.

The building's conceptual foundation and façade resolution were informed by the integrity of the industrial and historical V&A Waterfront buildings, whose character was functionally efficient and honest, giving priority to practicality over image. The new building reflects these principles to achieve authenticity and contextual sensitivity.

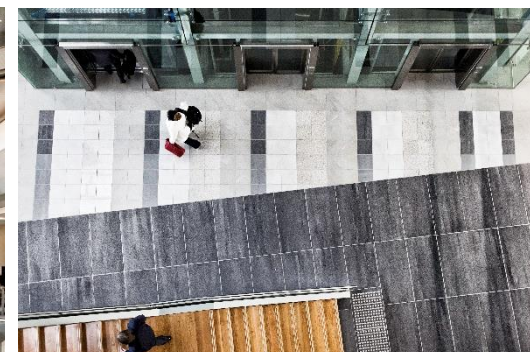
The main entrance to No 1 is aligned with the historical grain conveyor belt axis, which linked the Silo to the quayside. This axis leads into the atrium, a key space in the building. This atrium includes the primary circulation elements, maximises internal transparency and facilitates communication within the building. The main office spaces are arranged across five levels around it, looking both into the atrium and out towards the harbour. Meeting rooms, some of which project as pods into the atrium space, are easily accessible throughout.

Sustainable design was implemented without compromising on functionality, aesthetics or occupants' comfort, and the building achieved the second Office 6-star as-built rating from the Green Building Council of South Africa. Key sustainability features of the building include the triple glazed skin façade with automatically controlled blinds between the skins. This reduces heat gain and glare whilst providing occupants with light, comfort and views. This, along with a sophisticated sea-water cooling system and 'displacement' ventilation, substantially reduces the energy demand of the building.





1a) SILO "Square"/"Circus"/Court/Place





NO 5 SILO

New Commercial Office space and Retail Development
V + A Waterfront – Silo Precinct
2016

VDMMA in association with JPA

The development of the design idea for No 5 went hand in hand with the intentions commenced at No's 1 + 2, and thereafter with the development of the ideas for No's 3 + 4. Including also, the overall Public Realm Precinct design and the Historic Grain Silo.

No 5 was earmarked for 'speculative office space'. This called for expansive and open 'foot prints' to floors, a rigorously economic structural system, achieving a maximum number of floors within the Town Planning prescribed height restrictions, (to match the top of the Grain Silo 'bins'), car entry and exit, and services access from the new Phase 2 parking basements below and South Arm Road. An open shaft of 'Urban' space between No 5 and the future No 6, aligned with the South façade of the Historic Grain Silo Elevator building, stretching from the Grain Silo to South Arm Road. Primary Entry was required from the open shaft of space, as well as a shuttle lift for pedestrians directly from the basements without entering the Public Realm.

The recurring design themes of 'fit for purpose', 'workman like', 'dockside warehouse', expressed materiality and in detailing were considerations equally as important as resolving the functional and programmatic requirements of the brief.

Two planning options were developed and tested –

'the Street option', being a public circulation route through the building, linking with Precinct wide circulation and compartmentalising the Office floor plates into North and South parts. The 'Street design' proposal included materials such as flagstones, cobbles, kerbs, bollard lighting and overhead circulation bridges criss-crossing across a 7 storey high space with natural light and ventilation introduced at roof top level.

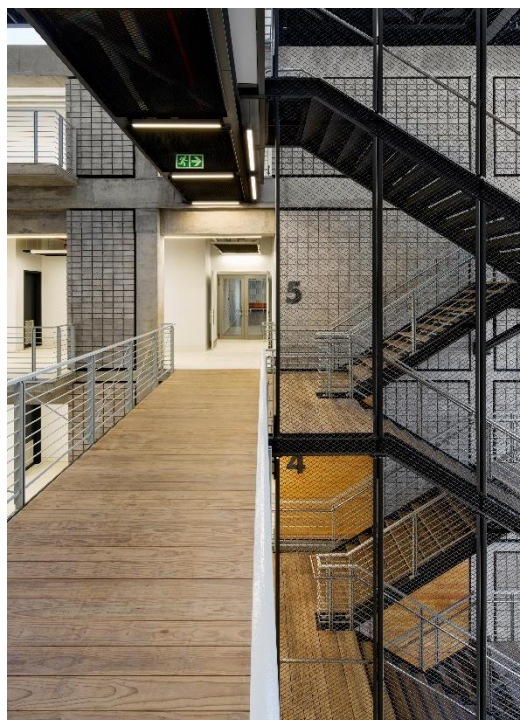
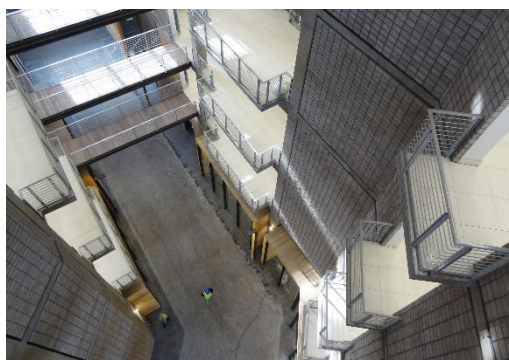
'the Atrium option', allowed for greater foot plates and a 5 to 6 storey high Atrium facing South towards the City and Table Mountain.

Upon the securing of tenants, the more 'flexible' option of the 'Street' was chosen and implemented including for multiple tenancies and retail at the base Precinct floor level.

Materials chosen for the building consist of raw concrete block work, unitised glass and tile cladding, sheer glass curtain walling, rough cut timber panelling, exposed steel structural members, steel framing and grillages, cobble and flagstone paving, bold 'warehouse signage' and 'street lighting'. The brief also called for natural ventilation, as far as was deemed feasible.

The green landscaped roof space has been utilised as breakaway space for the Office users.

No.5 Silo has been awarded a 6 Star Green Star Design Rating.





DE BEERS HEADQUARTERS

Headquarters & Support Services Unit - Ormonde, Johannesburg
2002 - 2004

In association with Gapp Architects & Urban Designers and Lucien le Grange Architects.

The global headquarters of De Beers is located in Ormonde, South of Johannesburg. This was a conscious decision taken by De Beers – placing the building in the area regarded as the home of the diamond mining industry in Johannesburg.

The brief to the Architect was that the building should reflect De Beers' position as a global company with its roots firmly in South Africa...be of a first class contemporary design that is both restrained and sophisticated. The brief also required that the new facility, the 'Cornerstone' building, be located adjacent to the existing HQ and contribute to and be integrated with the overall campus-like context of the site.

The resulting design was an Atrium building. The atrium, flanked on two sides by utilitarian wings of flexible office space, creates the entry into Cornerstone and contributes externally as a linking device with the existing HQ. The atrium is the central holding idea and space of the building. At ground level it is surrounded by facilities such as flexible meeting rooms, a travel office, a convenience shop, a corporate gifts store, the dining & cafeteria spaces, a bar/functions area and a virtual library which displays facts about mining and diamonds. Tables in the atrium are wired for IT requirements.

The atrium is the primary circulation space for the building, containing the main staircase, suspended steel bridges linking the wings of the office accommodation and two glass elevators in steel framed 'shafts'.

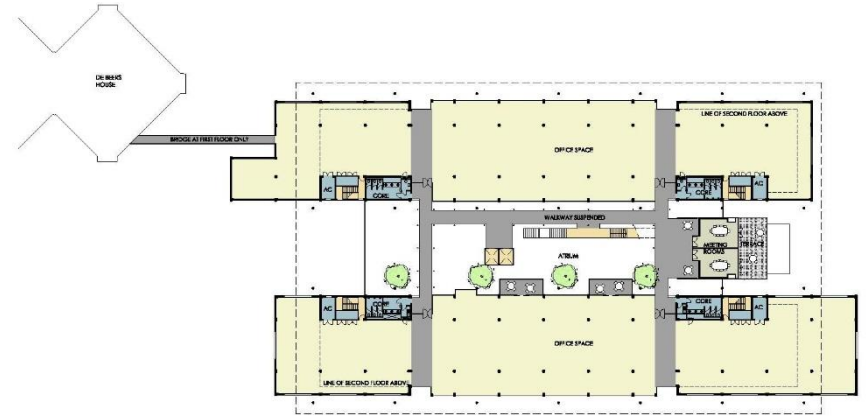
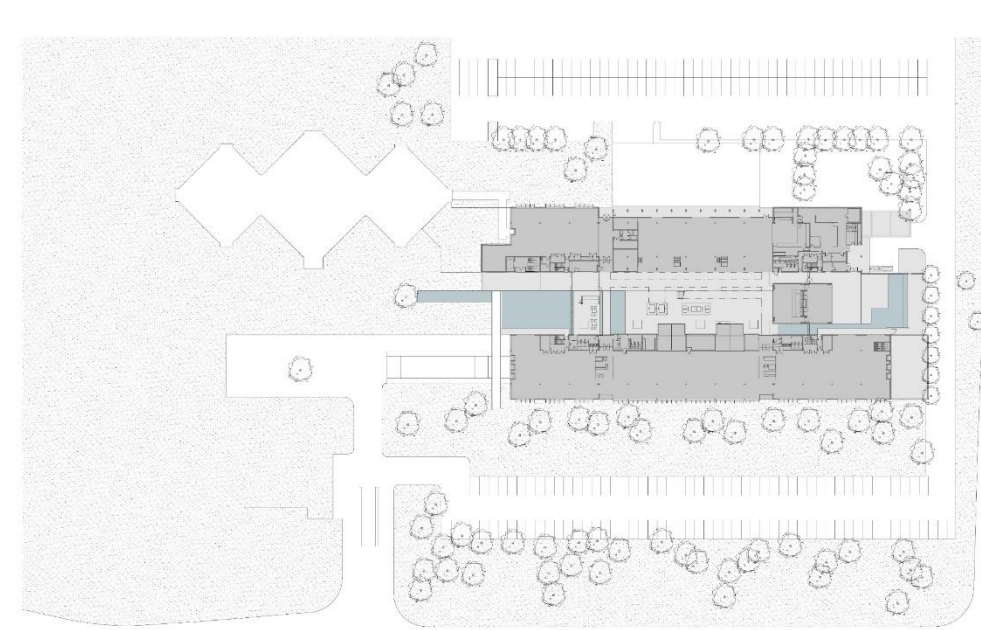
The office space is free of structures allowing for maximum flexibility with transparent partitioning. Each floor plate of office accommodation contains two 'pods' – spaces containing necessary equipment and space to sit and relax away from the workstation. The 'pods' are personalised – each being furnished in a unique way and colour coded. The building has various formal meeting rooms of varying sizes as well as an abundance of informal venues for person-to-person interactions.

Water is an essential component of the diamond mining process. A water trough at the atrium reception slips beneath the entry façade and contrives in the linear direction, established by the atrium, out and past the entrance to the existing HQ building.

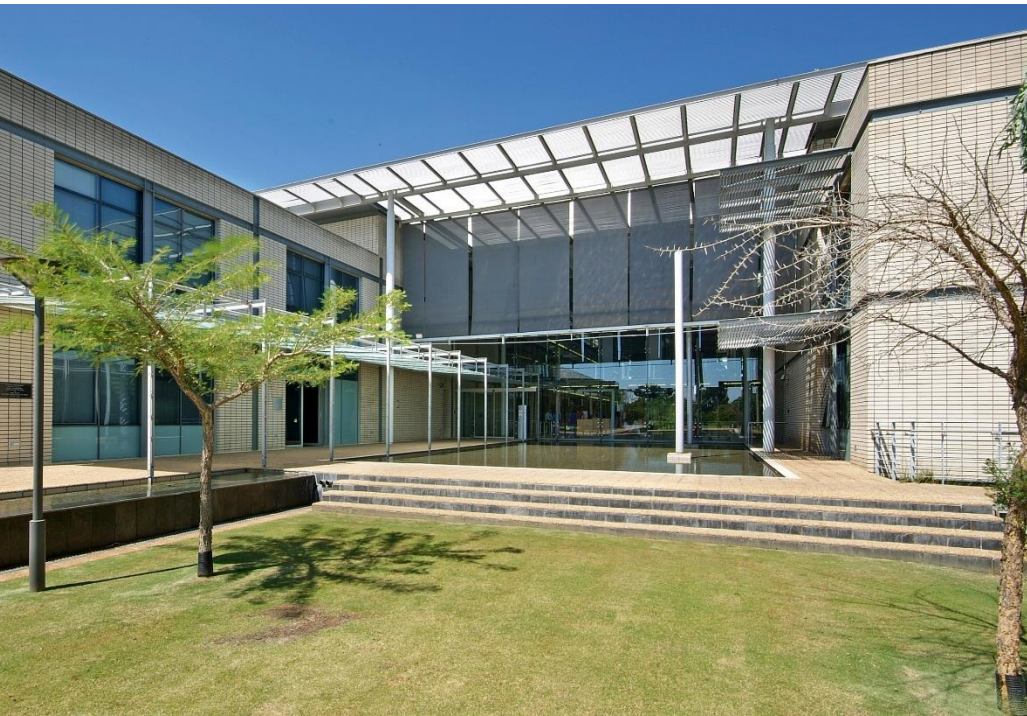
A terrace at the north side, (also accessible from the atrium), and terraces at eaves level under the overhang of the flat and over-sailing roof, provide views of the Johannesburg CBD in the distance, as well as mine dumps and the headgear of past era mines.

Landscaping, predominantly to the south of the new group of buildings, recalls the natural landscape of the Highveldt – long grasses, acacia trees and outcrops of rock – the landscape which gave birth to the industry.





FIRST 3E-100 1:400
DERHSSU / QVDMMLG(AA) 18-09-01





CDH HEADQUARTERS

Headquarters , Portwood Ridge, V + A , Cape Town
2019





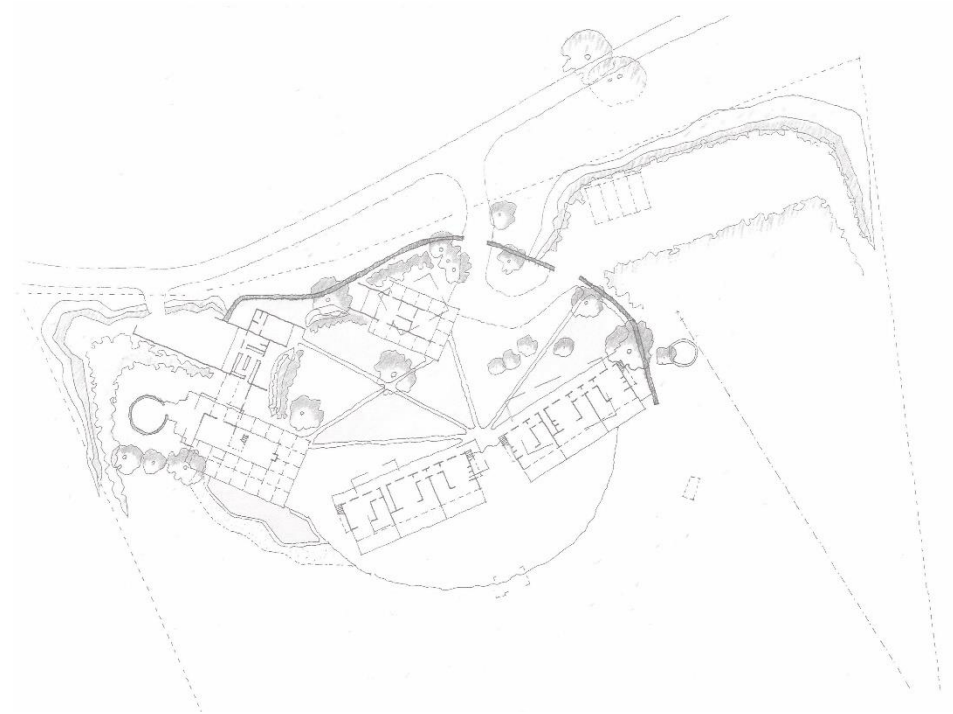
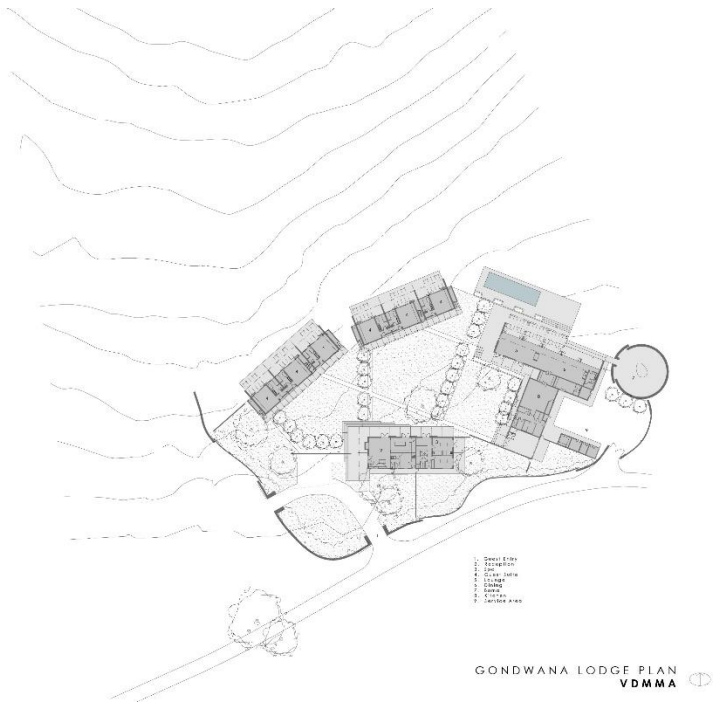
GONDWANA

Luxury Game Lodge in the Sanbona Wildlife Reserve - Barrydale, Western Cape
2009

Extract from: BUSINESS DAY, Wanted 01 Nov 2009 Page 50
"Enjoy the Silence" by Gary Cotterall

"The architecture of Gondwana Lodge is restrained, with an almost Zen-like quality. Its thatched roof and thick walls keep the inside cool during the heat of the day. The lofty interiors of the public areas are more Cape barn than traditional Karoo dwelling, but their exposed rafters and thatch add a sense of grandeur to the space. The crisp white walls and screed floors are offset by splashes of colour in the furnishings that reflect the intense palette of the Karoo landscape: the bright magentas and yellows of the succulent vygies in spring, the olive- and yellow-greens of spiky shrubs, and the earthy hues of rock and gravel."







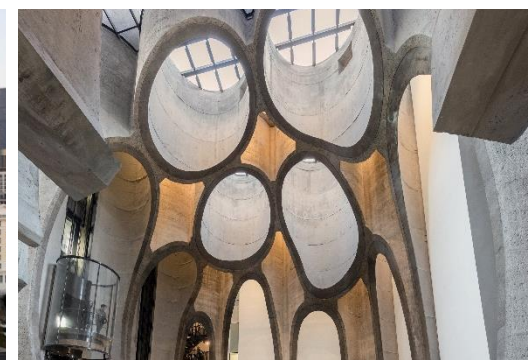
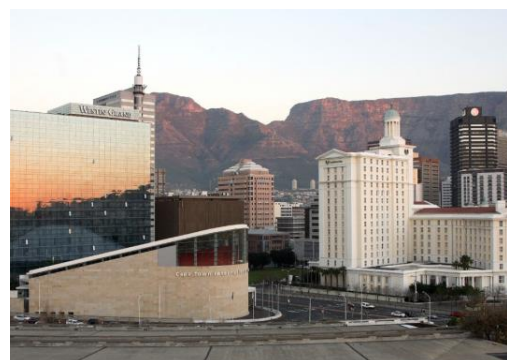
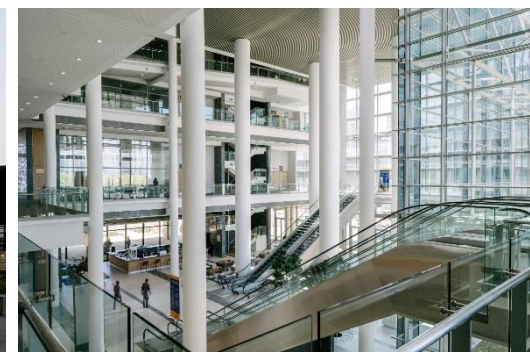
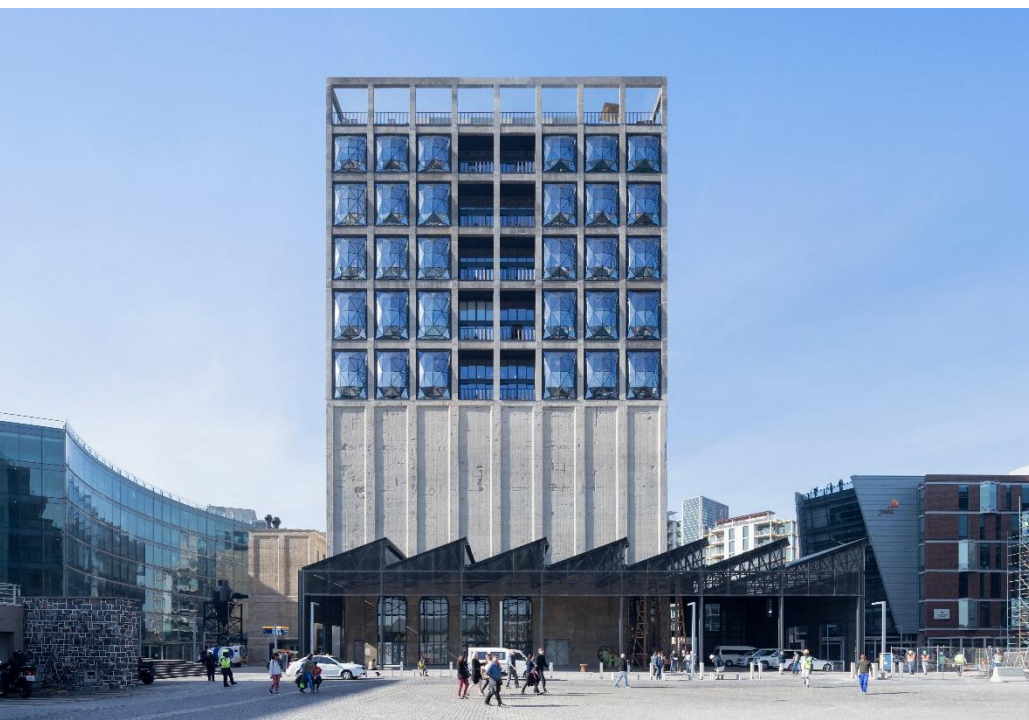
PUBLIC

As professionals we have a responsibility to serve the broader community. By providing infrastructure for people from all walks of life, and contributing to building a better future is one thing that VDMMA is passionate about.

With the construction of new public buildings "Scale" is not determining. We view master planning and urban design thinking, as being consistent with design thinking for a single building project. In the method of the practice, design thinking does not discriminate between 'small' interiors renovation and fifty thousand square meters of mixed use urban precinct.

Projects Featured

CTICC
CTICC East wing
Zeitz Mocaa
Silo District





SILO PRECINCT

'Public Realm' - V&A Waterfront
2017

VDMMA in association with Heatherwick Studio and MDL

The Design intention for the Public Realm Urban Space design is twofold –

To secure by design the 'space' encircling the base of the 1920's Historic Grain Silo building

To prevent any 'Space Left Over After Planning' therefore developing the entire precinct.

The development of the Precinct idea rests with the premise originally established for the 'siting' of SILO No 1, which in turn became the catalyst for the Precinct. The decision to give primacy to the Grain Silo during the commencement of the design for No 1 Silo, had been well established and understood by the multiple teams of Professionals working in the Precinct. The design idea for the Precinct simultaneously guided and influenced many of the design decisions made during the resolution of Buildings No 2, 3, 4 and 5 and importantly, visa versa.

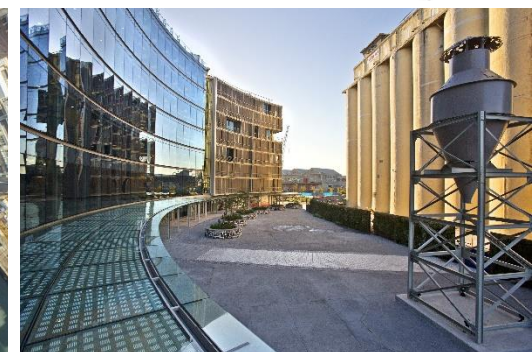
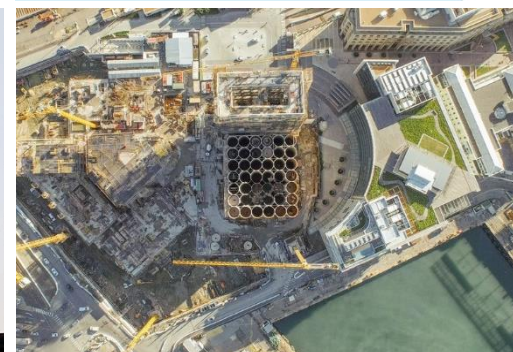
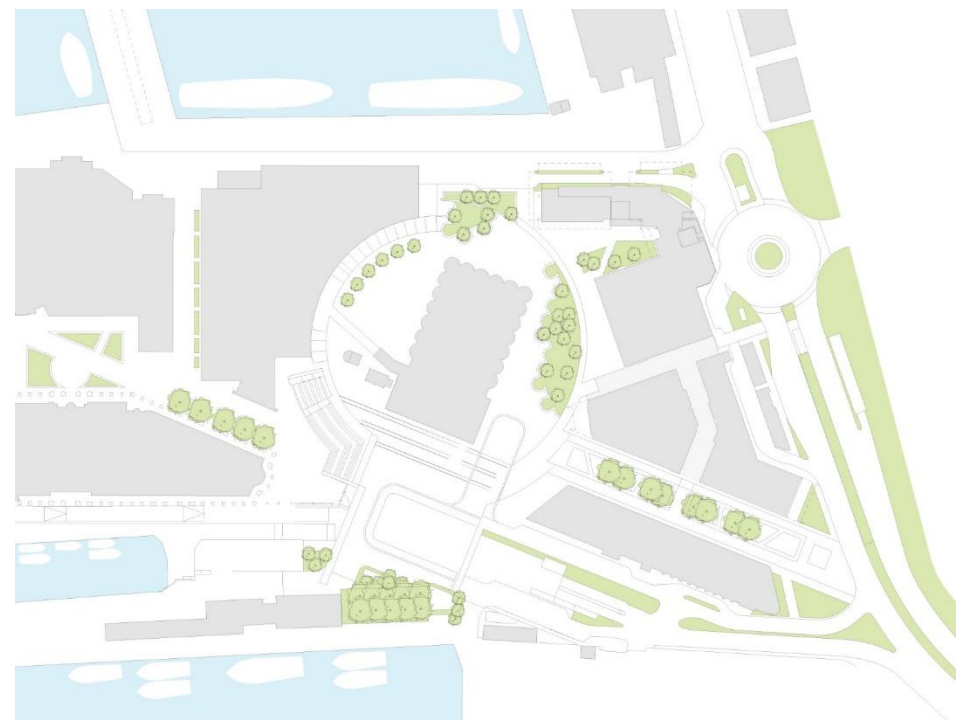
The idea sought to create a multiplicity of Urban space types. This was reinforced by fragmenting the buildings which enclose the space in order to avoid monolithic and only one dimensional interfaces between the buildings and the Public Realm open space. This intent was overlaid with extensive analysis. The proposals put forward that the 'front doors and addresses' of each building in the Public Realm, should be clearly identifiable and understood.

Existing and new circulation routes required to be accommodated and comprise of some vehicular access and egress points, but most importantly – pedestrian access and movement has been prioritised over all other forms of movement.

The choice of materials commenced with the development of detail – including spaces for exhibition, green park landscaping for repose, paving for sidewalk cafés, fixed and flexible seating and bus and taxi waiting areas. The ideas are further underpinned by the proposed Precinct wide finishes chosen to be 'workman like', utilitarian and 'fit for purpose', within the overarching ethos of a multifunctional and working Harbour.

With VDMMA being responsible for the design of No's 2, 3, 4 and 5, this allowed for the simultaneous design development of all the thresholds enclosing the space of the Public Realm. The view was taken that the fragmentation of the surrounding buildings would allow for variety, eschew monotony and it is hoped, allow for the unexpected within the Public Space use anticipates temporary and fixed exhibitions, commuters going to and from work, Office workers breaking for lunch, meeting or avoiding colleagues, apartment dwellers shopping for groceries.

The entire Precinct covers a multi storey parking basement for 2600 cars. Access from the basement to the individual buildings on top is purposely routed via shuttle lifts, which require arriving users to firstly enter the Public Realm, prior to disappearing behind the closed doors of their destinations.





ZEITZ MOCAA

The Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa and The Silo Hotel – V&A Waterfront
2017

VDMMA is appointed as local executive architects together with RBA and JPA for the Zeitz MOCAA Grain Silo in the V&A Waterfront.

The Design Architect for this landmark project is Heatherwick Studio.

From Heatherwick Studio:

Cape Town's prominent grain silo was once used to store and grade maize from all over South Africa. But with the advent of containerised shipping, the huge piece of concrete infrastructure was decommissioned and in need of a new purpose.

Shortly after the Victoria & Alfred Waterfront had approached the studio to develop and adapt the site, an initiative began to create Africa's first international museum dedicated to contemporary African Art.

The two programmes coincided to transform the grain silo into a new permanent home for Jochen Zeitz and Zeitz Foundation's collection of contemporary art as the catalytic starter for the new museum.

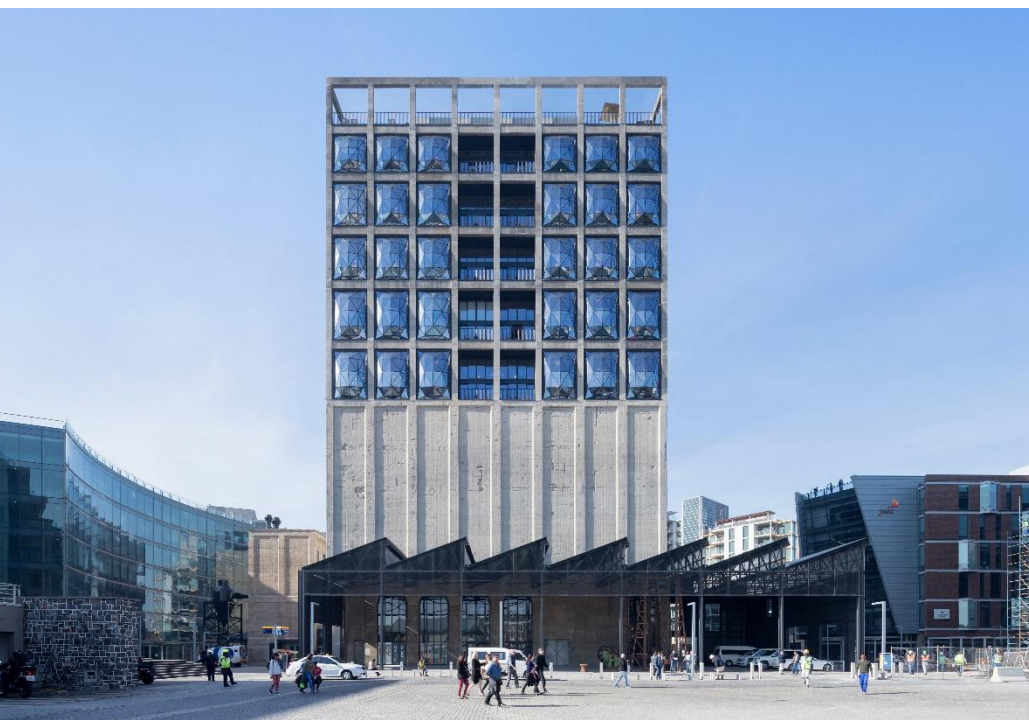
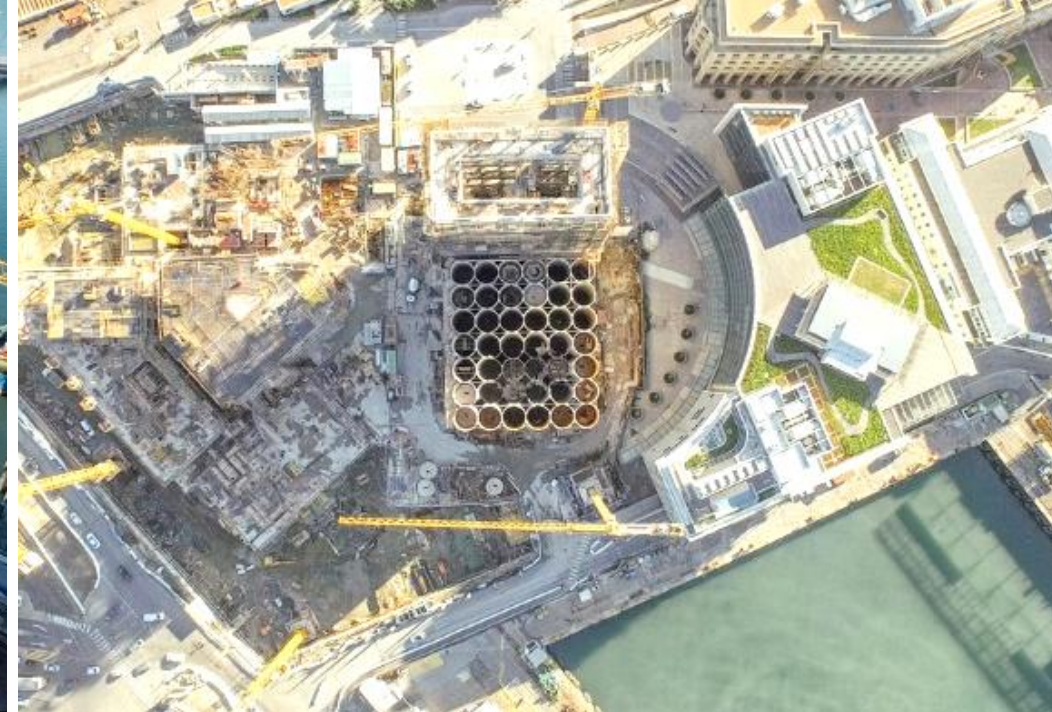
The original building was composed of two main elements – a grading tower and a block of 42 tightly-packed silos. Rather than resorting to wholesale demolition, the studio took on the challenge to convert the multitude of concrete tubes into spaces to display art while retaining the silo's industrial character.

The studio's solution was to carve out a large central space from the cellular concrete structure to form a major social space that reveals the original intersecting geometries in an unexpected way. The perimeter tubes were then substantially cut back and converted into five floors of galleries for permanent and temporary exhibitions.

The finished carved tubes above the atrium space allow daylight in from above through thick layers of laminated glass, fritted with a pattern commissioned from the West African artist El Loko. The frit creates a walkable surface for the upper level sculpture garden, allowing daylight inside while protecting from too much heat building up inside.

In the grading tower, concrete walls were cut away between the structural frame to create new three dimensionally shaped windows that reflects a kaleidoscope of textures and colours that change throughout the day. At night, the glow of lights inside transform the tower into a beacon in the harbor.

(photo credit: Iwan Baan)





CTICC

The Cape Town International Convention Centre, Foreshore
2003

Project in association with Foreshore Architects - Revel Fox and Partners, Van Der Merwe Miszewski Architects, Lucien le Grange Architects, SV Architects, DHK Architects, ACG Architects and Magqwaka Architects.

The architectural concept was a direct response to the operators' requirements and the characteristics of the site.

Efforts were made to open up the design on this large, inhospitable and, in many ways, tricky site. As one example wide entrances were incorporated which have the effect of opening up to invite the city and its people into this new public space. Called Convention Square, this space brings focus on the comings and goings of the Roggebaai Canal, where both the main entrance of the CTICC and that of the Arabella Sheraton Grand Hotel are situated. The Roggebaai Canal extends from Convention Square to the V&A Waterfront. As such, it serves as a visible link between the city and the sea.

Proximity of the adjacent Eastern Boulevard flyover presented an interesting challenge in terms of traffic noise. Yet it resulted in a positive attribute with regard to ease of access. Closed conservatories are used to exclude traffic sounds and the Cape's notoriously strong winds. These also provide the greening that gives visitors a sense of being in a living, breathing, natural environment. This greening of the interiors embraces the Cape's status as one of the seven botanical kingdoms of the world, with indigenous South African species strongly featured.

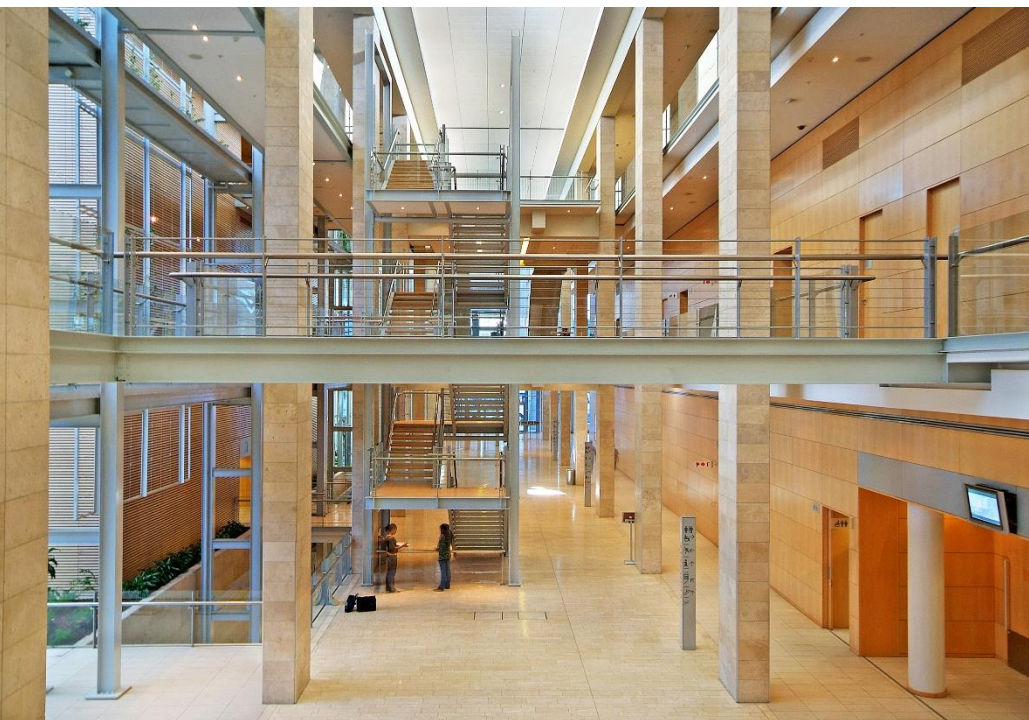
The space under the flyover provides a natural access point for delivery vehicles, catering crew and exhibition infrastructure. Noise sensitive parts of the centre are blocked off from the highway while large sections of the buildings that face onto the city comprise glass curtaining, making the building transparent to the extent that commuters in the city are able to see through the centre to the harbour beyond.

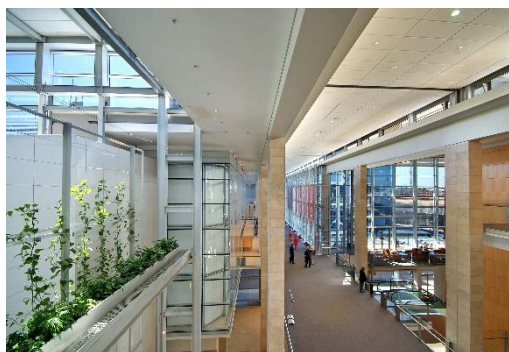
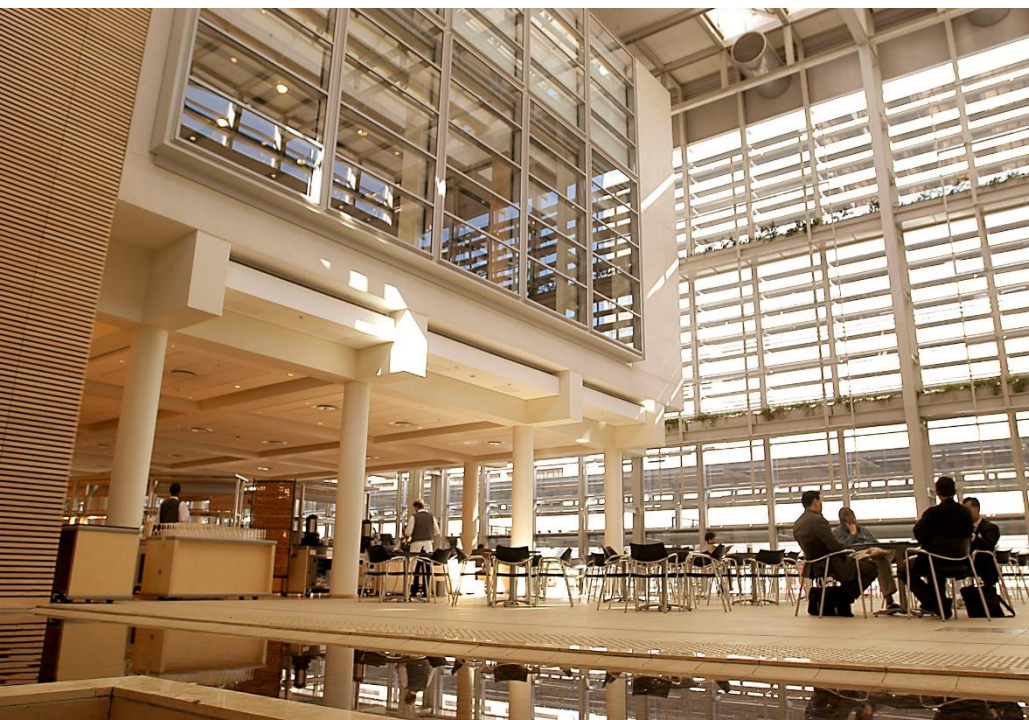
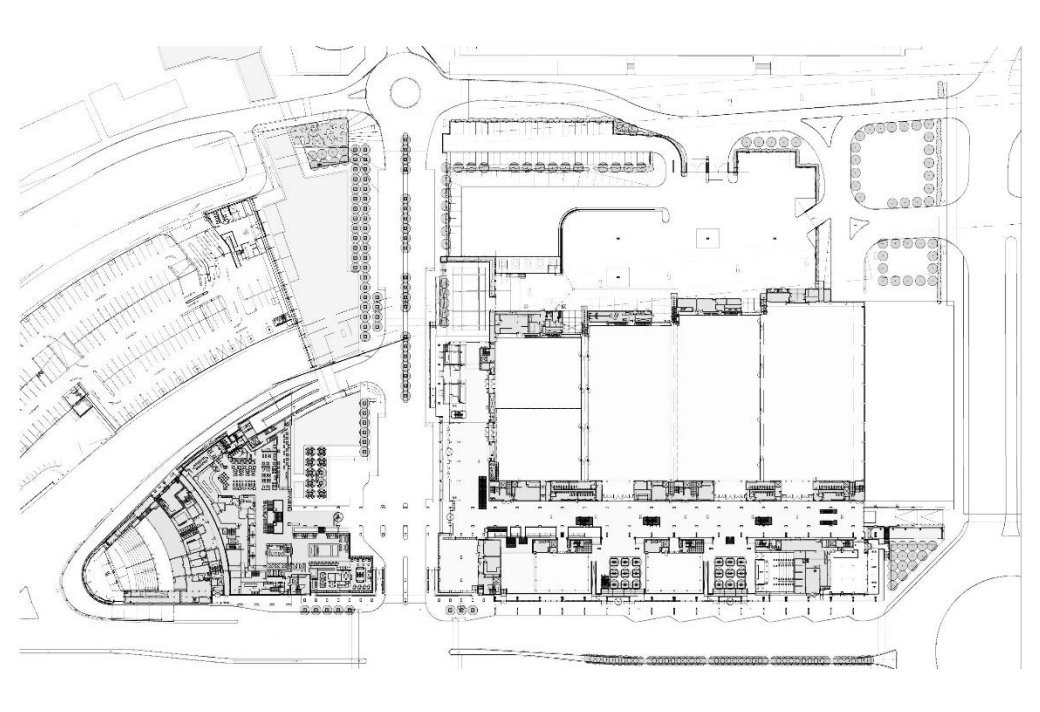
The organisation of the building is logical and relatively simple. Large exhibition rooms are serviced from the hostile area under the freeways, transforming barren space into a marshalling yard.

A triple level gallery or spine is the cohesive element that extends the full length of the centre and links all elements of the building in a logical, unified system.

Logistics called for every aspect of the centre's accommodation offering to be carefully considered for rapid and direct service without interfering with the pedestrian traffic flow.

Practicalities also governed the design style and tone of the interiors. The design brief demanded that they should not only offer a clean, contemporary look as a foil to any style of event, but that they should also be extremely durable and easily maintained.







CTICC EAST

The Cape Town International Convention Centre - East Extension
2012 – 2017

VDMMA in association with SV and MDL

The expansion of the Cape Town International Convention Centre, which opened its doors in May 2003, was anticipated even during construction of the original Centre. It was understood then, that to remain competitive in the International Convex market, future expansion was essential. During this time, several sites for expansion were investigated

The extension building, now referred to as 'CTICC EAST', consists of three primary parts :

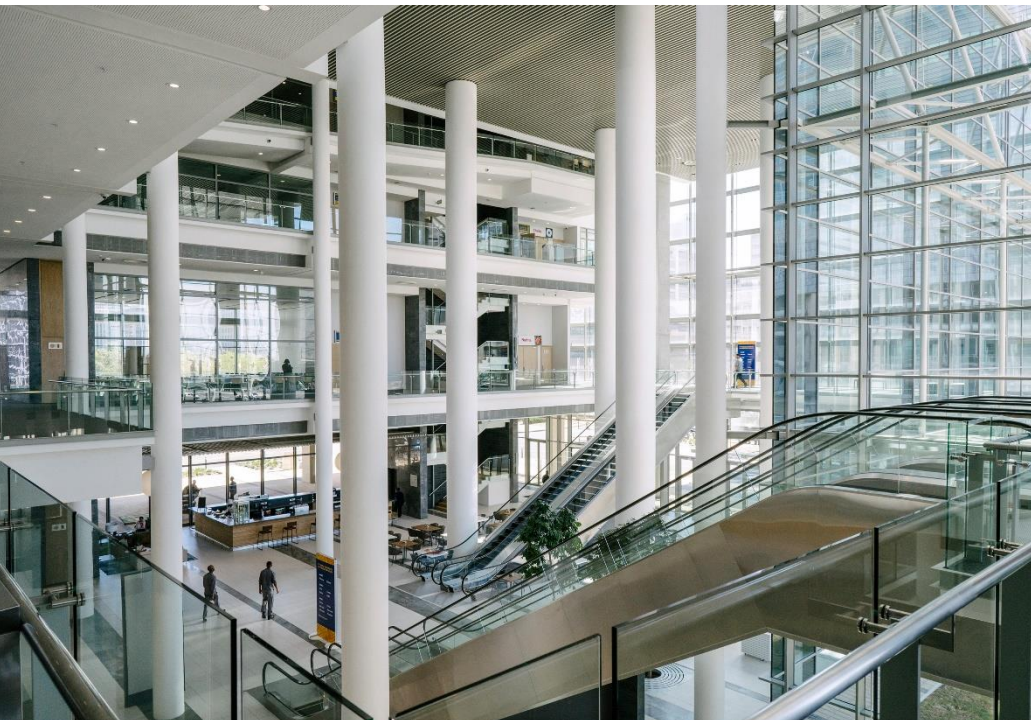
The Halls (10 000 sqm) with adjacent marshalling yards, the Concourse and suites of Meeting Rooms and a portion of the site set aside for a future mixed use high rise development.

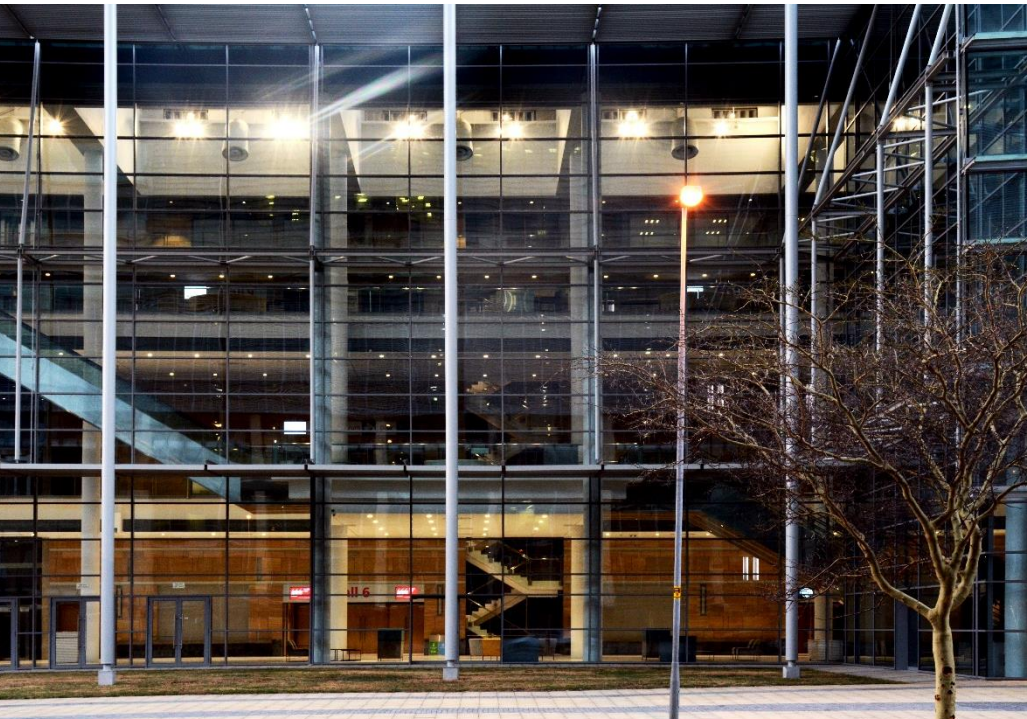
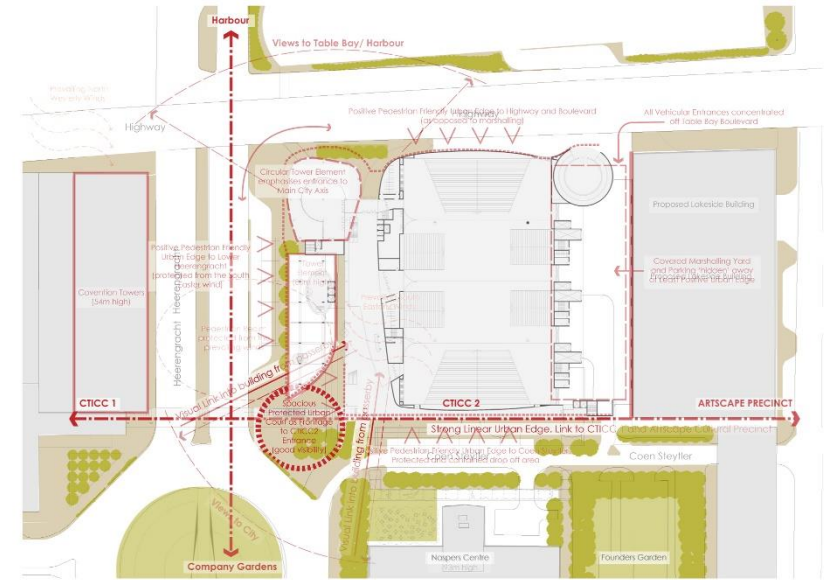
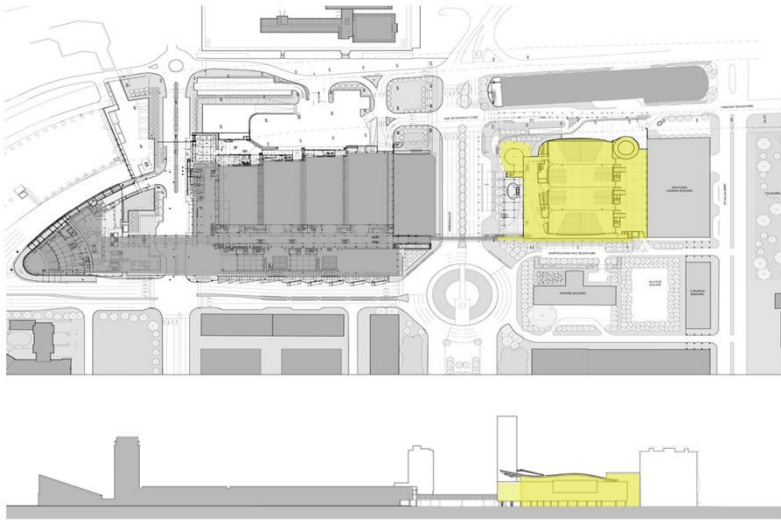
The structure is constructed on two levels of basement parking. The hall's, at 5000 sqm each, are constructed on two levels and further divisible into three smaller halls by means of 9m high acoustic 'operable' walls.

The Concourse, or Atrium space, was added to the original brief after construction was commenced. This space measures approximately 90 x 45 m at grade, effectively one City block in extent. Thus the space is viewed as an 'Urban Room', which in addition is entirely accessible to the man in the street as it is bounded on three sides by pedestrian sidewalks. The space is separated from the Halls by means of a 'collar structure' containing, services, back of house facilities, vertical circulation, (including links to basements below), kitchens, stores, ablutions, Centre Management Office space and Meeting Rooms. A Coffee Shop is situated at grade below the Meeting Rooms structure. It is envisaged that the Concourse will extend at grade, including to beneath the future high rise development, and will serve also as a public entrance to the high rise development which will be positioned above the Concourse. The 'elevation' of the Concourse will enclose the entire 'Urban Room' and is intended to be as transparent as possible, whilst equally as accessible as possible.

The transparency of the Concourse is proposed to be in juxtaposition to the structure containing the 10 000 sqm of Exhibition Halls. The enclosure of the Halls is clad in stone and all the openings within this massive stone surface are 'punctured'. The structural resolution of the Halls and Concourse speaks to the requirement for the Halls to be multi-functional exhibition spaces, which at times require 'black out' or sound proofing, whilst the Concourse presents a transparent and easily accessible Urban space serving as a foyer to the extension building.

The EAST building will be linked to the WEST building by means of a bridge which will span the Lower Heerengracht at Level 1, 6.5 m above grade. The bridge will be constructed of lightweight steel framing and will be fully glazed. A below ground service tunnel will link the EAST and WEST basements.







EVENT SPACE

*Theatre & Event Space – Cape Town
2018*

Unbuilt





EDUCATIONAL

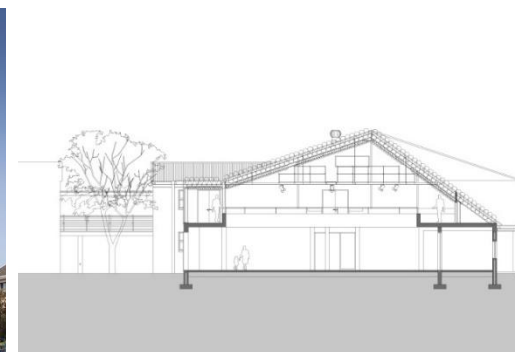
Education is the cornerstone of a society. Therefore by providing the best possible facilities for our young and the generations to come, we are aiding in shaping the future.

As professionals we have a responsibility to serve the broader community. To this end we have participated in a variety of academic activity and teaching and also in the construction of educational buildings.

We believe that research is a vital component to inform appropriate and lasting design solutions. Understanding what the needs of both the client and the students are, results in a holistic approach that stretches beyond the educational needs, but also extends to social and psychological.

Projects featured

Cannon's Creek School
University of Cape Town Middle campus





UCT SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS

University Of Cape Town, Middle Campus
2012

Middle Campus rests on a gentle incline falling away from the M3 highway below Upper Campus. Viewed from afar, the Middle Campus provides a 'green foreground' to the classic Upper Campus composition of buildings.

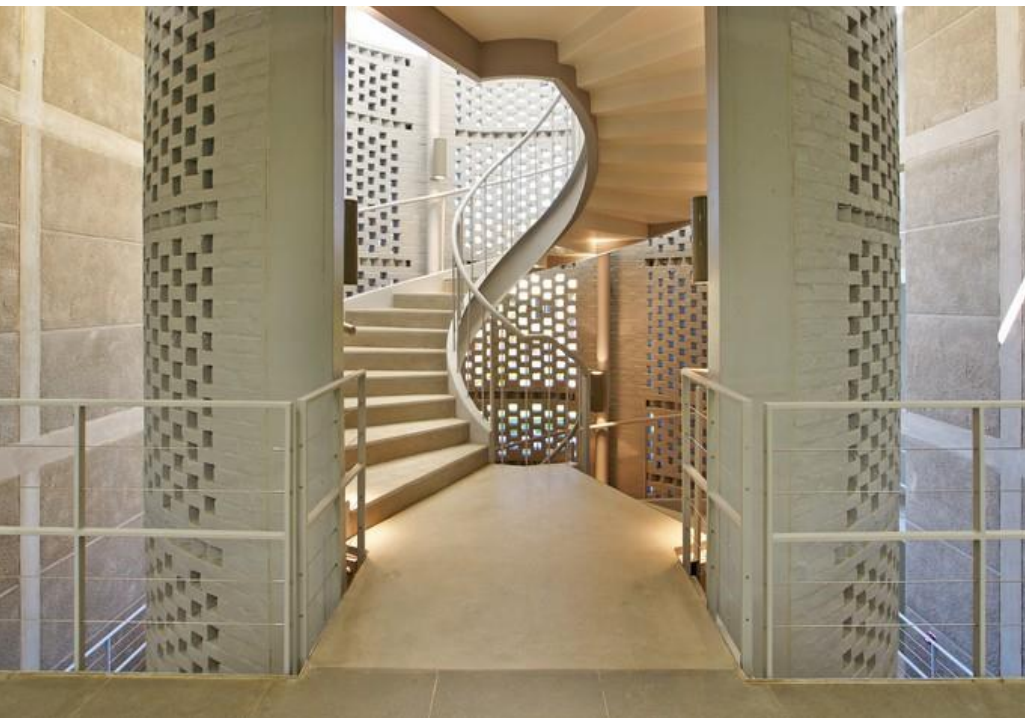
Responding to the urban proposal by ComriWilkinson, we elected to distribute the bulk in rectangular footprints parallel to the contours of the site, thus forming linear shafts of solid structure and open space, some defined as internal atria. The architectural model is, in essence, derived from the spatial structure of the original Upper Campus - however in no way does it attempt to mimic the Upper Campus.

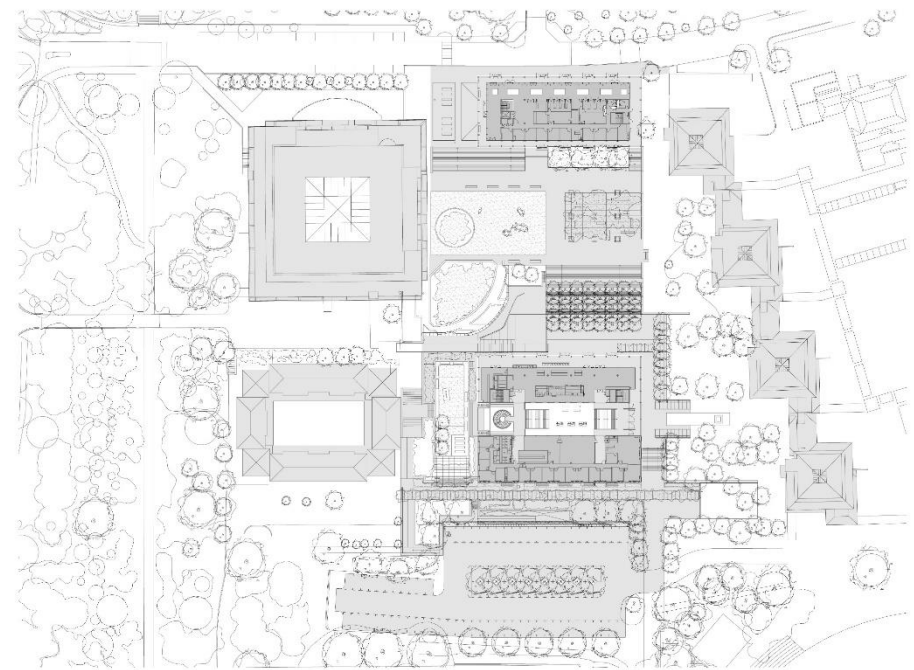
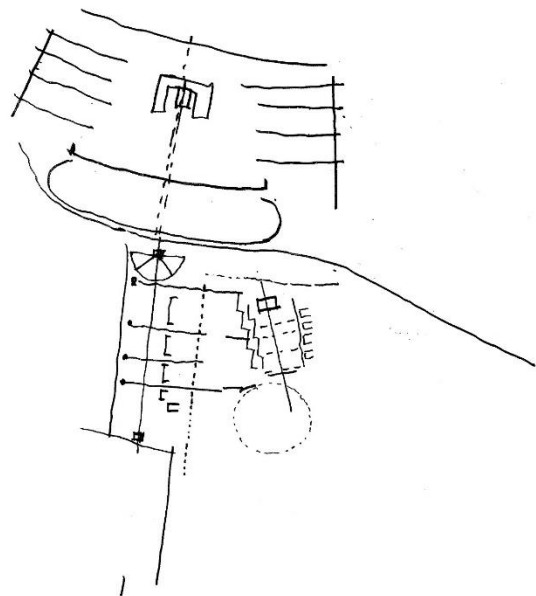
The New Student Administration and School of Economics buildings, together with the associated adjacent external works and landscaping, will assist to complete the in essence 'unresolved and incomplete' Middle Campus portion of the greater UCT Campus. The proposed new development will support the current perception of an intrinsic 'Sylvan Setting', which will be maintained and re-enforced.

The new buildings, external spaces and landscaping are intended to increase the density of the Middle Campus by utilising and improving 'wasted open space' left over after planning in the 1980's. Therefore, the new buildings are not envisaged as 'stand alone edifices', but rather as complimentary infill buildings. The buildings are intended to be 'space making', defining edges and the 'enclosure' of new external spaces. The proposed buildings and external spaces provide for a variety of space types, from single and private cellular offices, to large group teaching spaces, to communal and public gathering spaces.

The arrangement of these 'infill buildings' allows for the positive development of the external spaces – the spaces between the buildings. The focal space will be the New Square between the New Student Administration building and the New School of Economics to the North of the Kramer building. By contrast, a new 'Garden Court' will be created at a lower level, adjacent to the Cafeteria located in the School of Economics building. The space between the New Administration building and the existing Kramer building will be an external 'reception' to the new group of buildings and spaces. Colonnades, planted trellises, planted pergolas and planting will contribute further to provide a variety of other variously scaled spaces.

The proximity of the new buildings to each other, variety of level changes and integrated landscaping are intended to mitigate against the currently held perception of a desolate, unbounded and over exposed terrain. The proposed structural system for the buildings consists of a grid which allows for flexibility in planning as well as any further re-configurations of the spaces as may be required in the future. The enclosure of the buildings consists of "wall with punctured openings", ie: windows, colonnades etc. East and West openings are recessed and shuttered for sun control. The buildings are contemporary, however reflective of the historical context. The base, middle and top (roof-scape) are expressed, as is the use of textures (plaster) and colours.





UCT SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS PLAN
VDMMA



CANNONS CREEK

Cannons Creek Pre-Primary and Primary School,
Pinelands, Cape Town
2011

The new pre-primary and primary school building for Cannons Creek Independent School was completed at the end of 2011, answering the growing demand for more classroom space within the school.

Consisting of an entirely new 'block' of building, the new classrooms are an extension to the 1980's 'Campus' of the School, previously housing both Primary and High Schools in two separate but adjacent buildings.

The main approach to the new building is at a new street gateway. Entry is through a defined 'entrance door and gate' within the Administration block, leading into a central ground floor atrium circulation zone with four classrooms on either side, which terminates at the 'services' block at the rear and includes a kitchen, store room and ablution facilities. Two steel staircases lead up from the ground floor atrium to the first floor atrium with 8 more classrooms.

The new building sets out to establish a private inner world for the children – masked from the street by the Administration block, in which small and controlled punctured openings in the external façade face the street. The class room windows and doors are maximized for views and sun light. The central atrium is naturally top lit.

Projecting roof overhangs and pergolas screen the large sliding doors and windows from the sun, while large concrete gutters channel rainwater from the roofs onto steel spouts. The rainwater is collected in water tanks below the spouts and is stored for irrigation purposes.

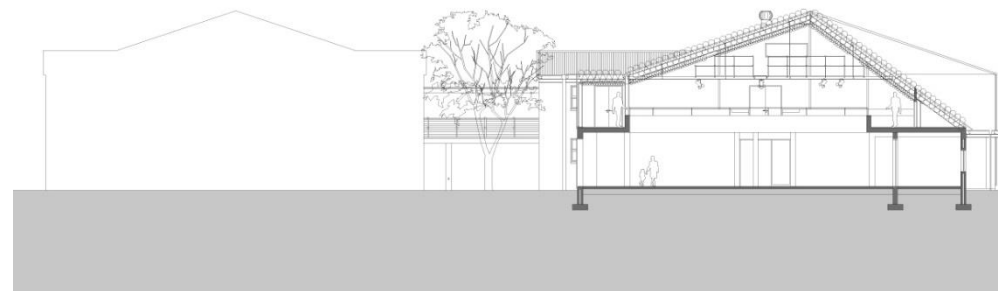
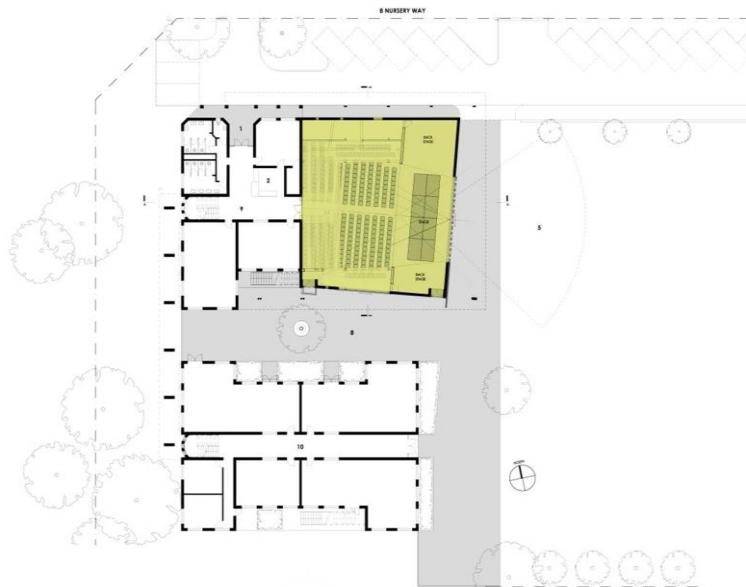
The brief for the cultural centre required a highly flexible and multifunctional space. From inception – the idea was to further 'clarify and complete' the overall Cannons Creek Campus. The brief also required a 'bridge connection' between the two separate 1980's buildings.

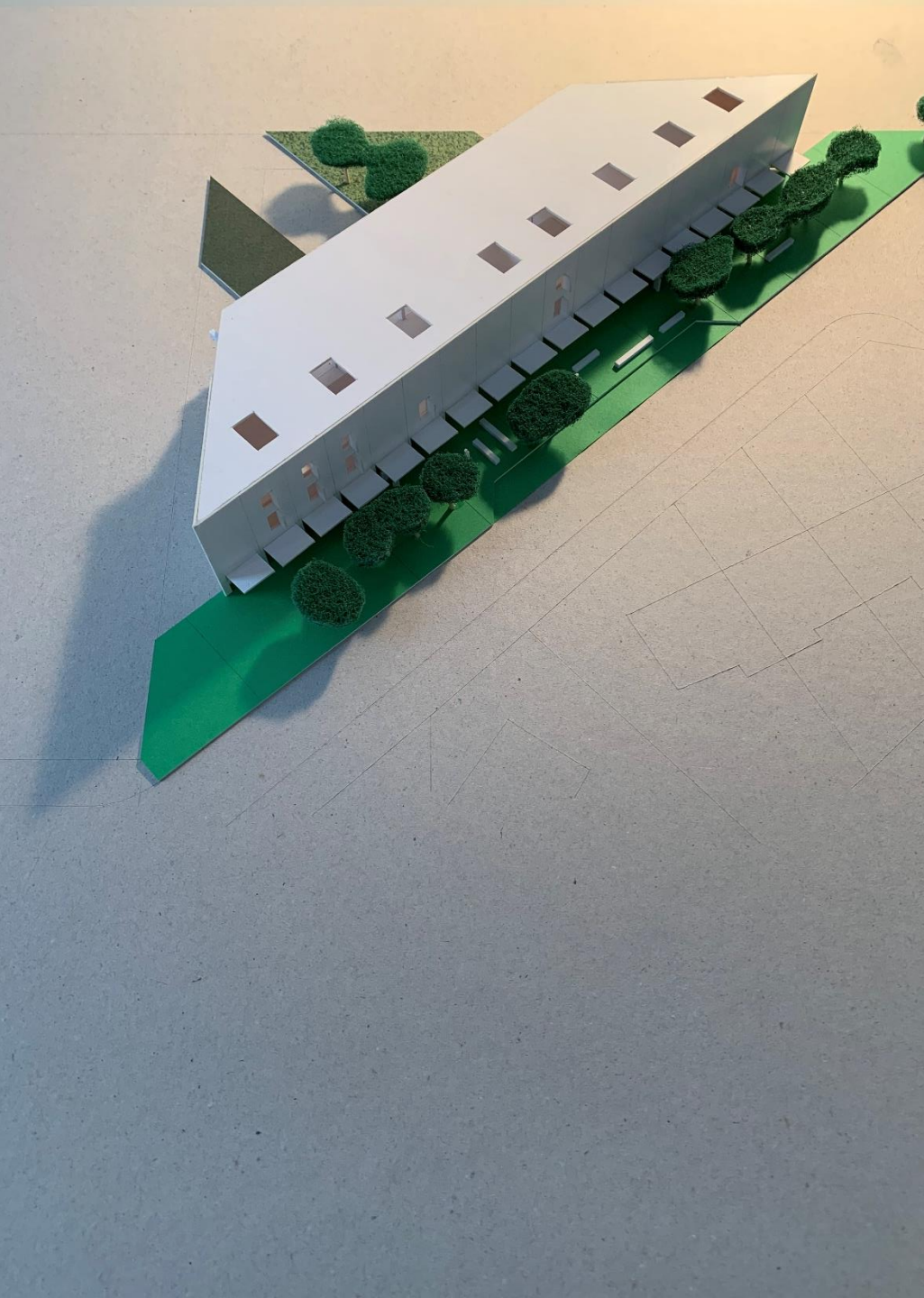
The main internal Auditorium space, at grade and with one mezzanine level, is a direct extension of the adjacent existing building. The roof form however, dips to the same canopy level as that of the Pre and Primary School building, some 40 metres to the North East. Thus the facade of the new facility is proposed as a continuation of the 2011 building. This idea is continued on the South West façade, where a new bridge links the 1980's classroom blocks.

The Auditorium space can be configured in numerous ways, from 'standard lecture room seating' to 'theatre in the round'. Vast sliding doors at back stage can be opened onto the existing playing field, providing an opportunity for external seating for an audience to observe a performance on the stage.

The Schools Main Entry has been retained, a new courtyard between new and old buildings created and 3 new music rehearsal rooms are also included in this phase of new buildings.

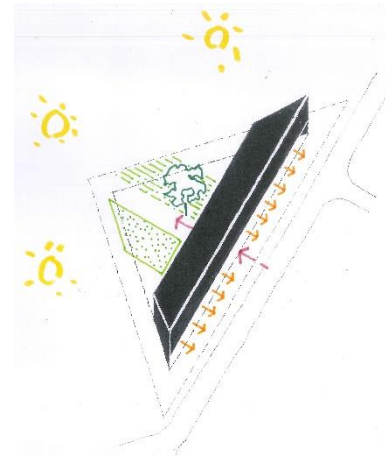
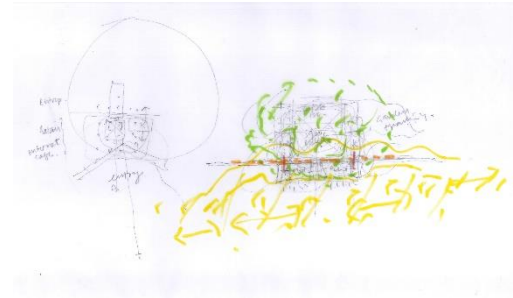






JUST GRACE

NGO – High School Learners
Nyanga, Cape Town
2018 – current



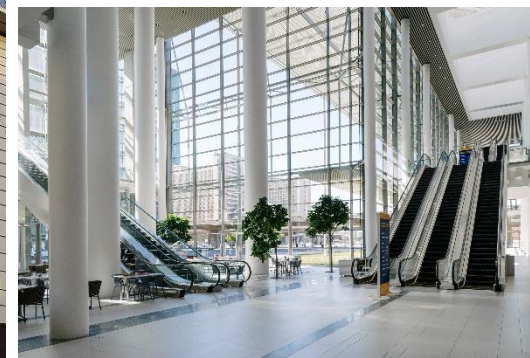
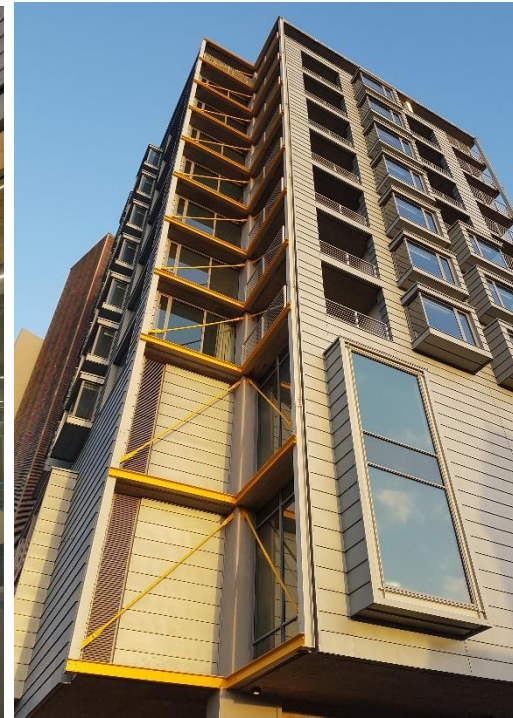
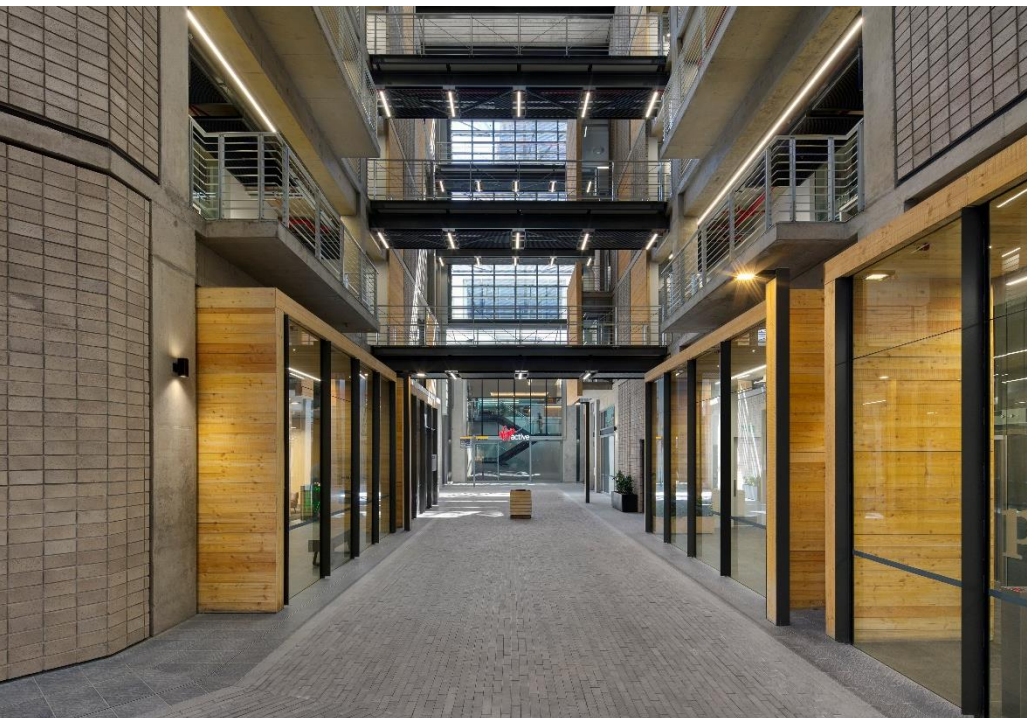


SUSTAINABILITY

VDMMA is a member of the Green Building Council of South Africa and has been involved in a variety of energy efficient design projects, most recently as lead Architect designer for the 6 Star 'as built' rated Allan Gray Headquarters in The Victoria & Alfred Waterfront. We have completed four other projects that have been pre-rated using the green star rating system. The company has participated as part of the team writing the new Public Building Green Star Rating Tool for the Green Building Council of SA.

Buildings with Green star ratings

- 6 Star - Silo 1 Allan Gray Headquarters (as built)
- Silo 5 (as built)
- 4 Star - Silo 2
- Silo 3 (pending)
- Silo 4 (pending)
- CTICC (design rating)





COMPETITIONS

Restaurant at TSWALU, Kalahari - 2019



DSK : new sciences block, Cape Town - 2021



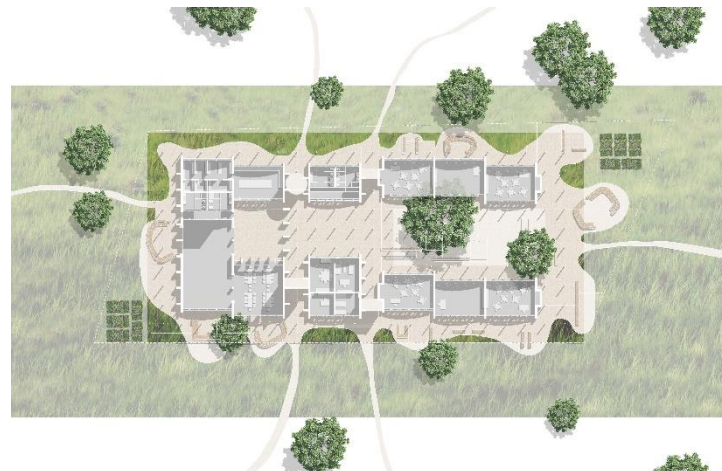


COMPETITIONS

Commonwealth Graves Memorial, Cape Town - 2022



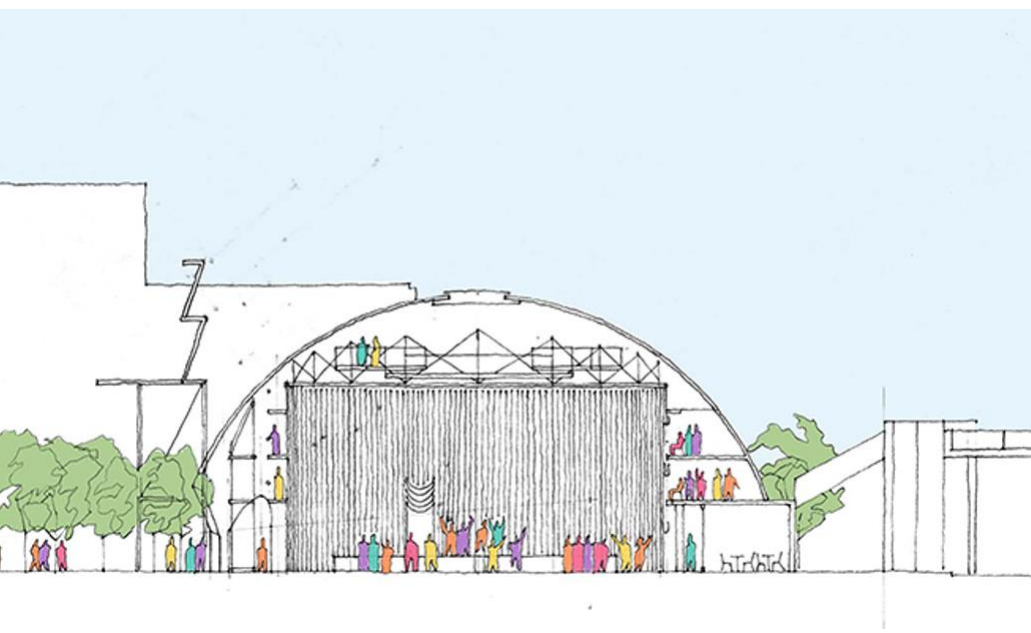
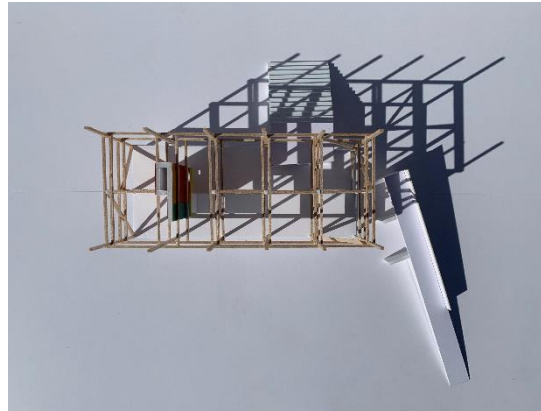
School on Mozambique : for 'Archsource'



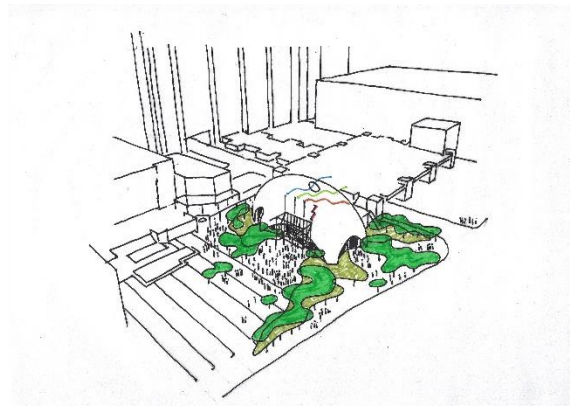
COMPETITIONS



Contemporary African house Tanzania : for 'Archsource'



ZIP ZAP new venue, Cape Town : With MTA (Mark Thomas Architects)



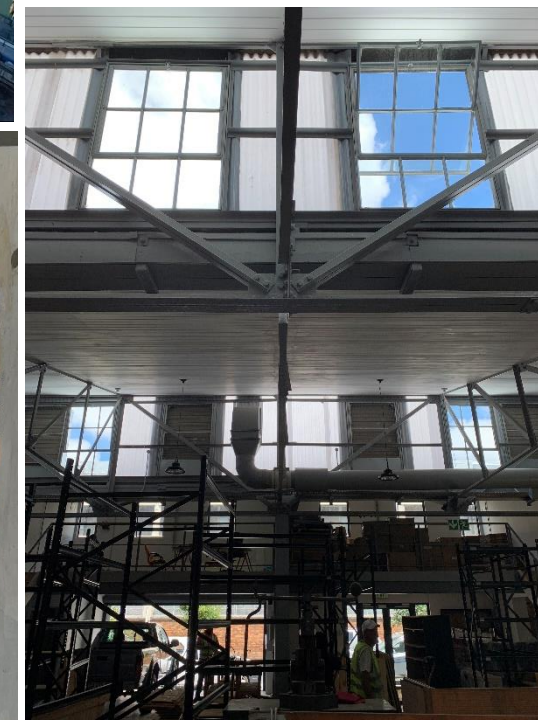
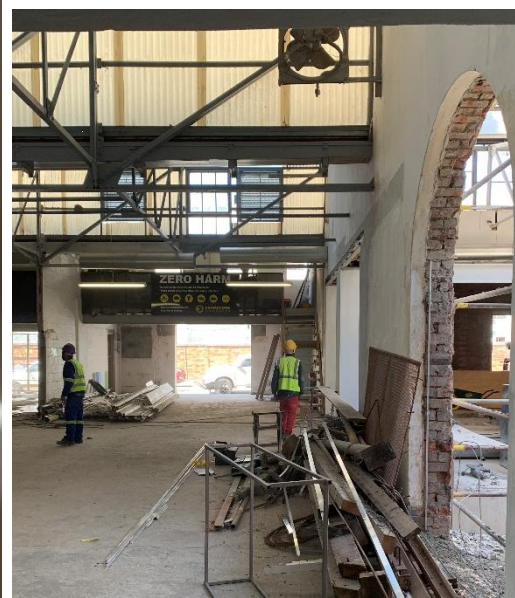
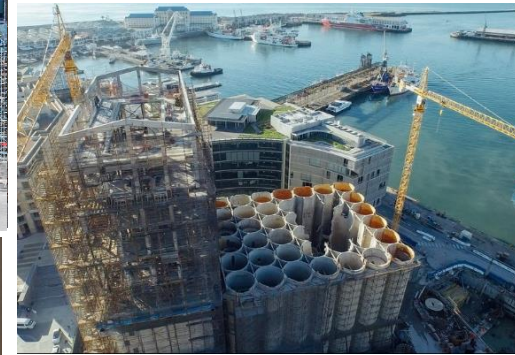


HERITAGE

To move forward, we must respect where we come from. This is something that VDMMA strongly believes in and it is why we have worked on numerous heritage projects, ranging from big adaptive reuse projects to small restorations and additions.

By making progress, we must not only respect but also understand our history. Which is why we cherish and celebrate historic buildings that are special and that add to our urban fabric, whilst being selective by demolishing and making space for future projects where a building does not justify being restored.

We have a history of dealing with the heritage implications of building in sensitive sites that aids us in our understanding and appreciation of the architecture of the past and present.





SMALLER PROJECTS

Whilst VDMMA has been involved with many big and notable projects, we do not shy away from smaller projects such as restorations, additions and renovations. These projects might be less published, but they are nonetheless an integral part of any architecture firm.

Smaller projects are often additions or changes where it matters most – strategic architecture where the goal is to create the maximum effect with the least amount of cost or disruption.

These projects have the potential to change a building or space completely within a shorter space of time with smaller budget requirements.



V D M M A

VAN DER MERWE MISZEWSKI ARCHITECTS

every project is a new beginning
no 2 sites, clients or briefs are ever the same

each project references the experience of the studio,
and all of the theory and history of all architecture