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PICA AWARD WINNER



Ubuntu Centre

Zwide, Port Elizabeth

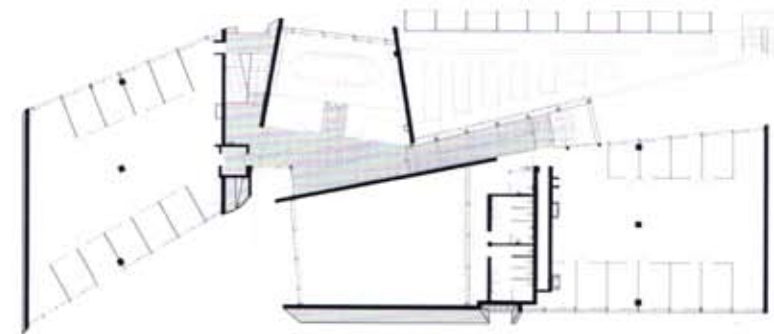
In order for architecture to resonate the meaning of ubuntu, which literally means, 'I am because you are', the forms of Ubuntu Centre were to be synonymous with the programmes that the organisation is running, providing spaces that uplift and empower. The architecture of Ubuntu Centre is a highly public vehicle through which to provide world-class health and education services, while inspiring hope throughout the township community.

The centre, located in Zwide township on the outskirts of Port Elizabeth, lies at the intersection of a vast pedestrian network of paths which overlay the rigid vehicular grid. The pathways carve the mass of the building into individual volumes, which allow pedestrians to continue their path through the building. The resulting plan is distributed and provides space for residents to walk through the centre and access any

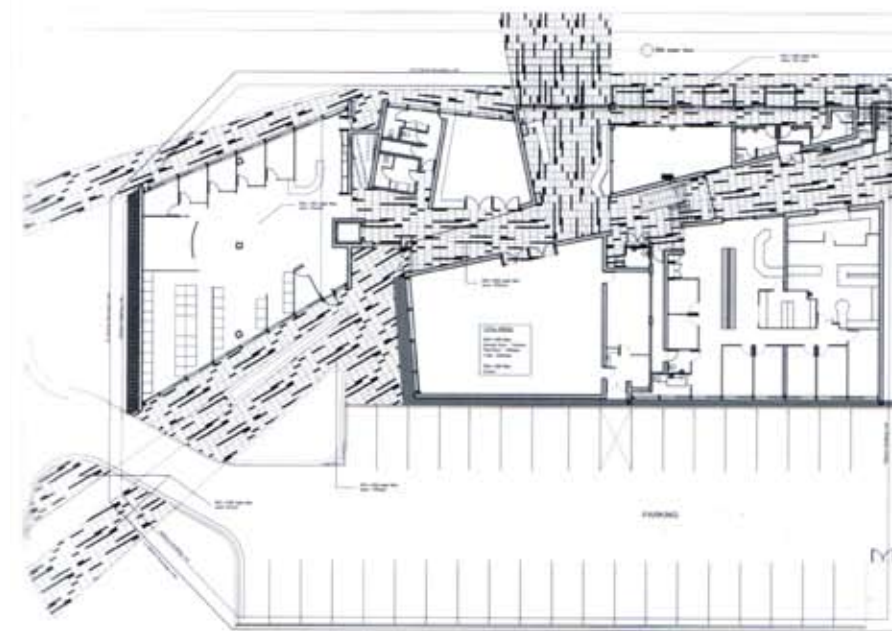
combination of Ubuntu's critical programmes on their way.

Concrete, the age-old material of infrastructure, creates a sense of permanence and safety. The large, smooth surfaces fold to double as roof and walls, which envelop the spaces along the length of the site. The resulting shapes are open on either side, extending a welcome to the community rather than forming a barrier. The large openings are massive window walls, which allow natural light to penetrate deep inside the spaces of the building. The translucent glass window walls are draped with a screen made of local gum poles, providing both shading and security. The folded concrete surfaces assert the building as a permanent part of the modern world, while the gum pole cladding is inspired by the familiar woven-thatch craft. The combination of the two initiates a material dialogue between the modern

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Electrical Engineers: Clinkscales
Landscaping: Patrick Watson
Landscape Contractor: John Elliott, Matt Elliott
Quantity Surveyor: Anton Rousseau, RPE
Contractor: SBT Construction
Photographer: Richard Mills, Jess Field
Text: Stan Field



Upper Floor Plan



Ground Floor Plan

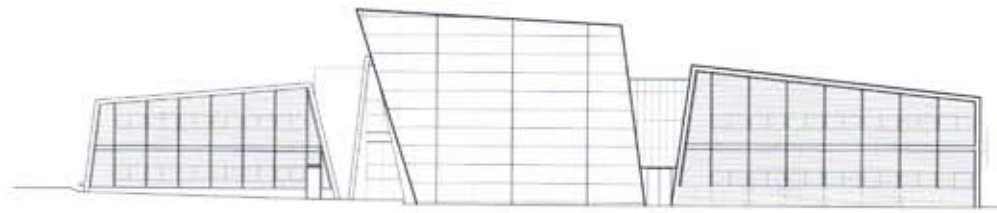
and the ancient, the formed and the crafted, and is continued throughout the building in every detail.

Ubuntu Centre houses a multi-purpose hall with a gathering space for singing, dancing, concerts and exercise. A cafeteria and open kitchen offer seasonal soups created from a rooftop vegetable

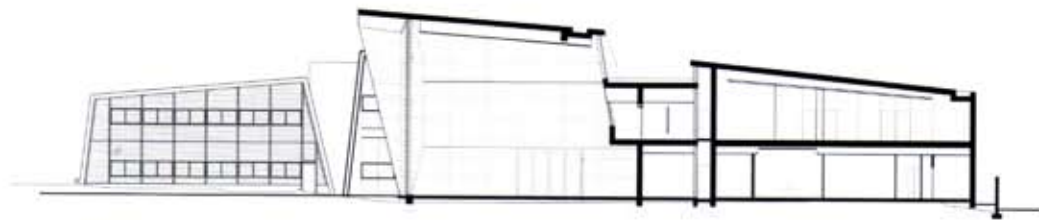
garden and are open daily for children. The interior spaces are luminous and uninterrupted, and house outreach programmes, community education, health resources, a computer centre and career guidance area. A wellness centre provides tuberculosis and HIV counselling, plus a state-of-the-art testing laboratory and paediatric treatment facility.



Bird's Eye Perspective



South Elevation



Section aa



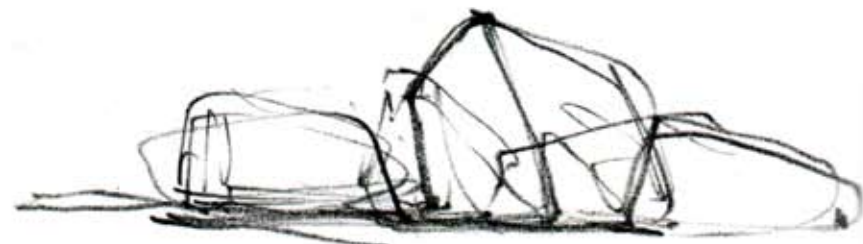
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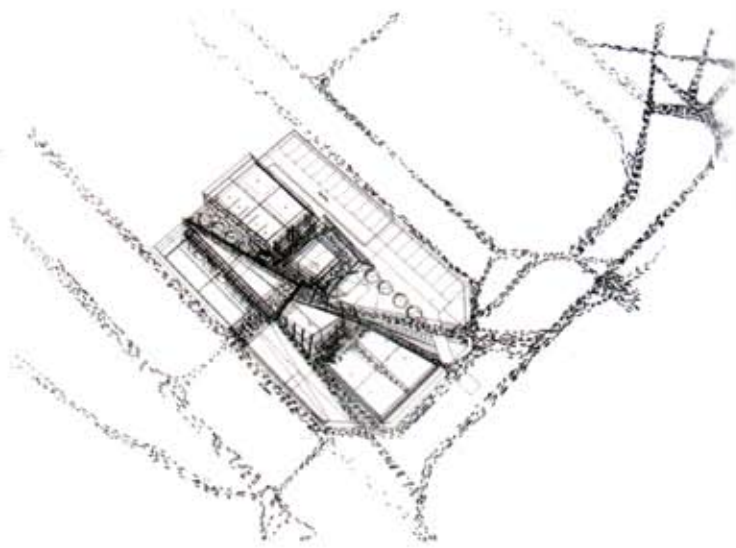
Section dd



Section bb



Zwide Pathways



Pedestrian Movement

