

ANNEXURE I

DESIGN INTENT PRESENTATION



NEW CITY HALL DISTRIBUTOR SUBSTATION



Proposed work

The eThekweni Architecture Department has been requested by Governance (City Hall Management) to build a new Distributor Substation to replace the existing substation which is old and is failing to supply adequate power to the City Hall complex (primarily for additional air conditioning needs within the City Hall complex). This substation is proposed to be built within the City Hall complex parking lot. The structure is to incorporate provision for existing security guard office.

The proposed location for this Distributor Substation is to be between the Durban City Hall building and the Local History Museum Building. The Substation is proposed to be situated alongside the Anton Lembede Street Entrance where the existing power cable supply is located. This placement also minimises the loss of existing parking bays which are scarce and need to be retained where possible.

The Local History Museum and City Hall Complex is of historical importance and is protected by AMAFA. Completed in 1866 and 1910 respectively, these structures house the office of the Mayor, City manager, the Local Government Parliament a Performance hall, the Natural Science museum, Libraries and Reference Archives.

It is therefore important that the City Hall Complex's character and heritage is conserved, by proposing a substation aesthetic that will be sensitive to the heritage of the precinct. The aesthetic sought must compliment the City Hall building and complex without over shadowing or detracting from its iconic structure.

The proposed Distributer Substation building shell, location and services reticulation was specified by the Electricity Department and the Architecture Department has provided a drawing of their standard building proposal which has been approved by their Electricity Department.

All modifications made to the proposed structure to acknowledge the heritage of the site and have been approved by the Electricity Department.



1. Embassy Building



2. Shell House/Albany Hotel



3. Durban Playhouse



4. The Playhouse Company



9. Methodist Church



8. Department of Public Works



7. Central Post Office




6. Royal Hotel | Modern Office blocks & Banks

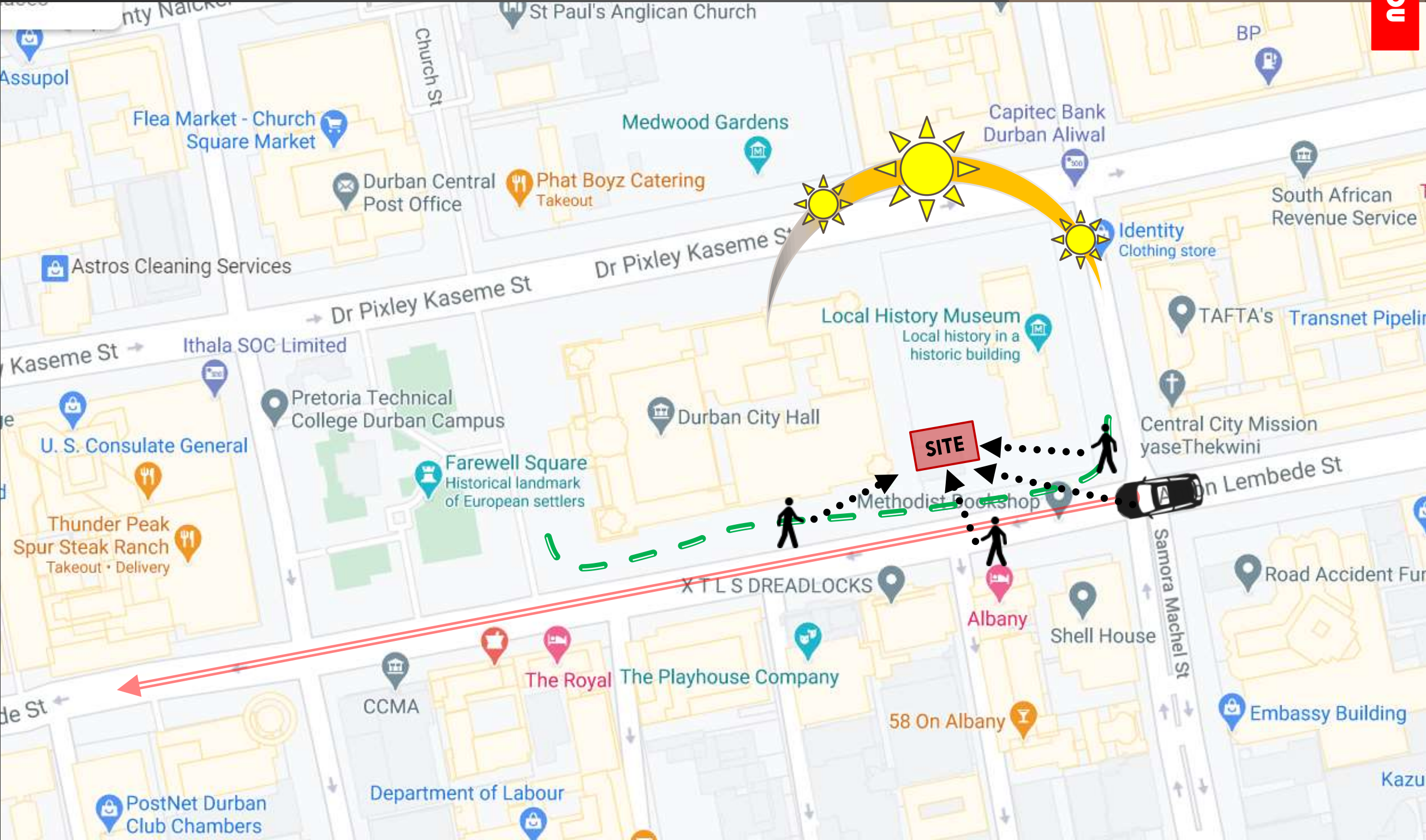


5. eThekweni Treasury



Locality & Proposed Site

 Vehicular Movement
 Pedestrian Movement



City hall



The Durban City Hall is an **Edwardian-Imperial-Baroque style**, civic building constructed between 1905-1910; a time of great interest in the English baroque architectural style. It is a highly decorative building abounding in motifs, columns, decorative cornices, sculptures and statues. It is constructed of Natal sandstone cladding to the lower ground floor facades of the building, fence posts on the exterior of the building, sandstone balustrades to the porte-cochere of the building, and sundry sandstone parapets and cornice details on the upper levels.

Baroque characteristic qualities include grandeur, drama and contrast (especially in lighting), curvaceousness, and an often, dizzying array of rich surface treatments, twisting **elements**, and gilded statuary.

The **Grandeur** architectural scale is fitting for a City hall.



Local History (Court) Museum



The Local History Museum (Court House) is done in **Early Victorian Style**, typical of the history of the early colonial settlers. The Old Court House was originally the central part of the building. Designs were prepared by Mr. P. Paterson, a Colonial Engineer, and the contract was awarded to a Mr. Freeman of Pietermaritzburg. Building work began in September 1865, and by April 1866 the Court House was completed.

The two wings, one at each end, was constructed in 1896.

The Old Courthouse and Government Offices in Aliwal Street, in its original form, had a simple veranda to its front façade and deep eaves to its generous roof. The central square turret was also capped with a deep eaved roof and spiked a decorative finial – these being typical Victorian features. The style falls into the Classical group with its plaster simulating stone in the detailing of quoining, window surrounds and keystones.



Stone clad boundary wall

The boundary wall is low at around 1m high. It is constructed off brick with stone cladding. See current view (2021) and historic view to try and ascertain the age of the wall.

In the historic view, the building in front of the City Hall has been demolished. This photograph must have been taken after 1948 because of the Mark I Land Rover parked in the road production only started in 1948. This implies that the current low stone boundary wall cannot be older than 73 years.

The existing planter behind the wall in the location of the proposed new Sub-Station building is the only one on this precinct and extends along the side of the pedestrian link between Anton Lembede and Dr Pixley Kaseme Streets. It is desirable to retain this planter to retain the continuity and use it to hide/camouflage the proposed substation with indigenous low maintenance plantings.



Shot taken of the Site in 2021



Milton House, long since demolished, which housed a section of the City Engineer's Department

Photo in a book called "They built a City" – About the City Engineers Dept.

Theoretical Construct – *Genius loci*

According to Schultz, Place is an extension of nature and consists of the physical, ecological, environmental but also intangible phenomena such as feelings. *Genius Loci* or “spirit of place”, has been recognised as the concrete reality man has to face and come to terms with in his daily life. Architecture means to visualise the *genius loci*, and the task of the architect is to create meaningful places, whereby he helps man to dwell...within an ‘inside’ place as an extension of the nature outside.”

The building is intended to serve nothing more than its intended substation function while unobtrusively encompassing the existing security guard house.

The building is intended to disappear and become part of the natural urban edge.

Like a garden sculpture!...but done as a shadow in dark tones.

Proposed Architectural Style – *Modernism*

According to Wikipedia, “**Classical architecture** usually denotes **architecture** which is more or less consciously derived from the principles of Greek and Roman **architecture** of **classical** antiquity”. Christian Norburg Schulz postulates that character is determined by the material and formal constitution of a place. Robert Venturi further elaborates that usually character of a “family” of buildings which constitute a place, is “condensed” in characteristic *motifs*, such as particular types of windows, doors and roof. Such motifs may become “conventional elements”, which serve to transpose a character from one place to another.

The City hall and Local History Museum are done in classic styles and were in many ways the result of industrialisation in the standardisation of components and its transfer from England to KZN.

In a way, classic architecture has been transposed from Greek and Roman architecture. In the same spirit to try and establish local character, we propose a simple modern building with local cultural inclusion in the form of patterns, motifs, styles, materials, construction techniques etc.

Modernism was heralded by the Bauhaus movement which began in 1919, which is 10 years after the City Hall was completed during the tail end of the Edwardian era.

Bauhaus was entirely apolitical and was marked by the absence of ornamentation and by harmony between the function of an object or a building and its design. This became the new international style that influenced modernism throughout the world which aims to shrug off international borders and usher in a new world order of austerity, simplicity and pragmatism.

The simple austerity of the modern style is intended to not compete with the surrounding historic architecture.

The proposed structure must co-exist with its simple shape without a style that is intended to merge with the natural surroundings.

The “Modern Style” is apt to **quietly co-exist** with the historic buildings and heritage precinct.

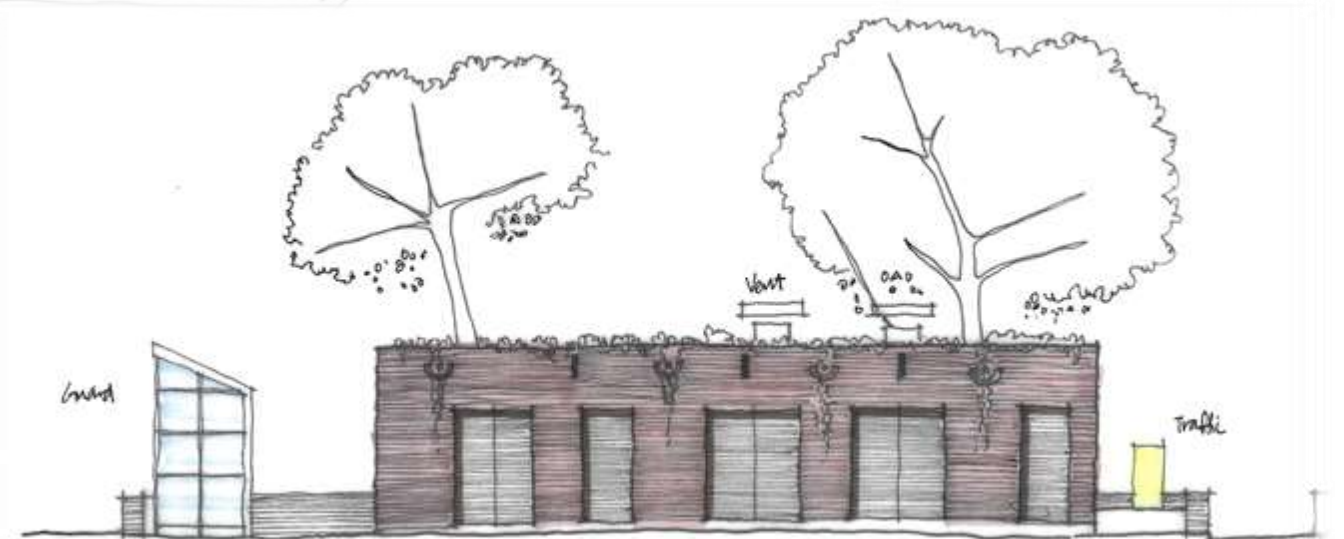
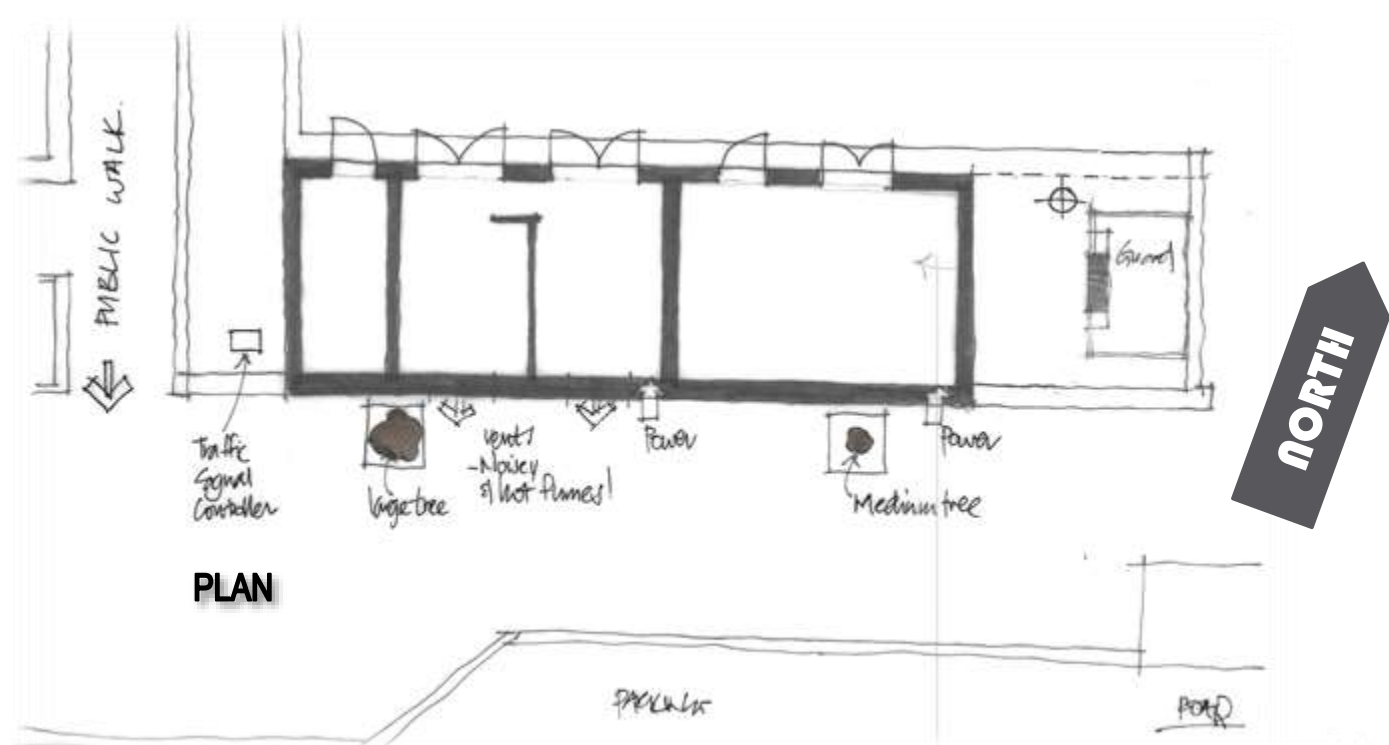
OPTION 1

Siting:

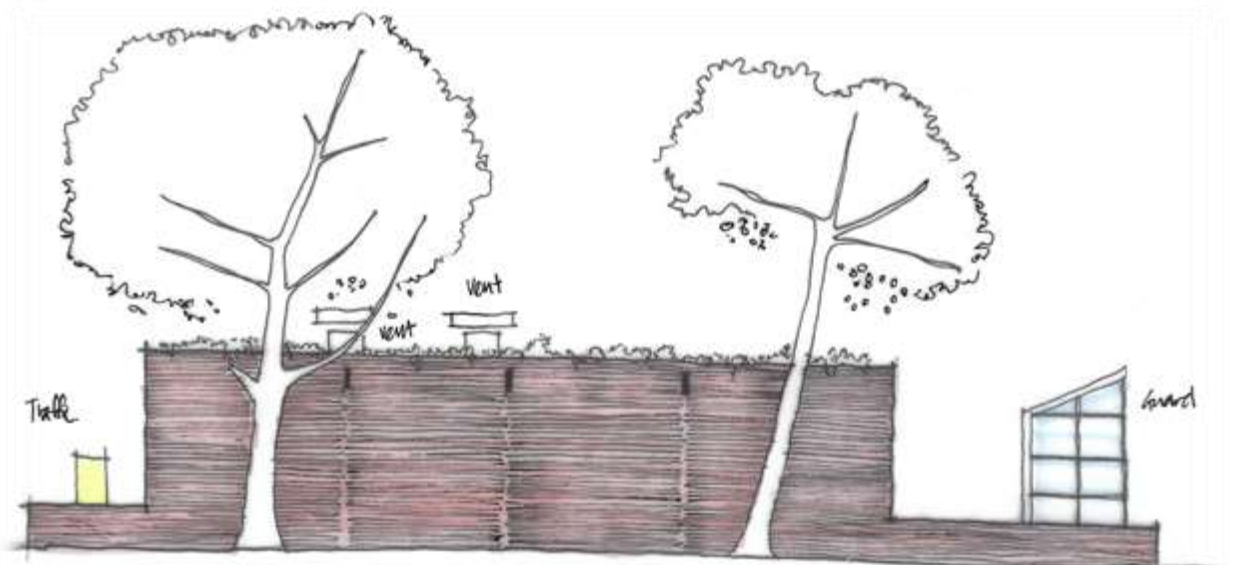
- Structure placed as extension to low stone clad boundary wall.
- The guard hut is separated to retain the continuity of the low stone boundary wall beyond.
- Vents relocated as chimney stack on the roof to enable a clean façade on the urban edge with no sounds or heat.
- Risk
 1. Damage to the stone wall during works.
 2. Structure does not engage with the urban edge well with an overbearing intrusion into the side walk

Finish:

- Stone cladding to match existing boundary wall.
- Risk
 1. The structure will alter the historic fabric, scale and continuity of the boundary wall.
 2. Re-use of the existing stone which may be damaged.
 3. Sourcing matching stone may prove to be difficult



NORTH WEST ELEVATION



SOUTH EAST ELEVATION



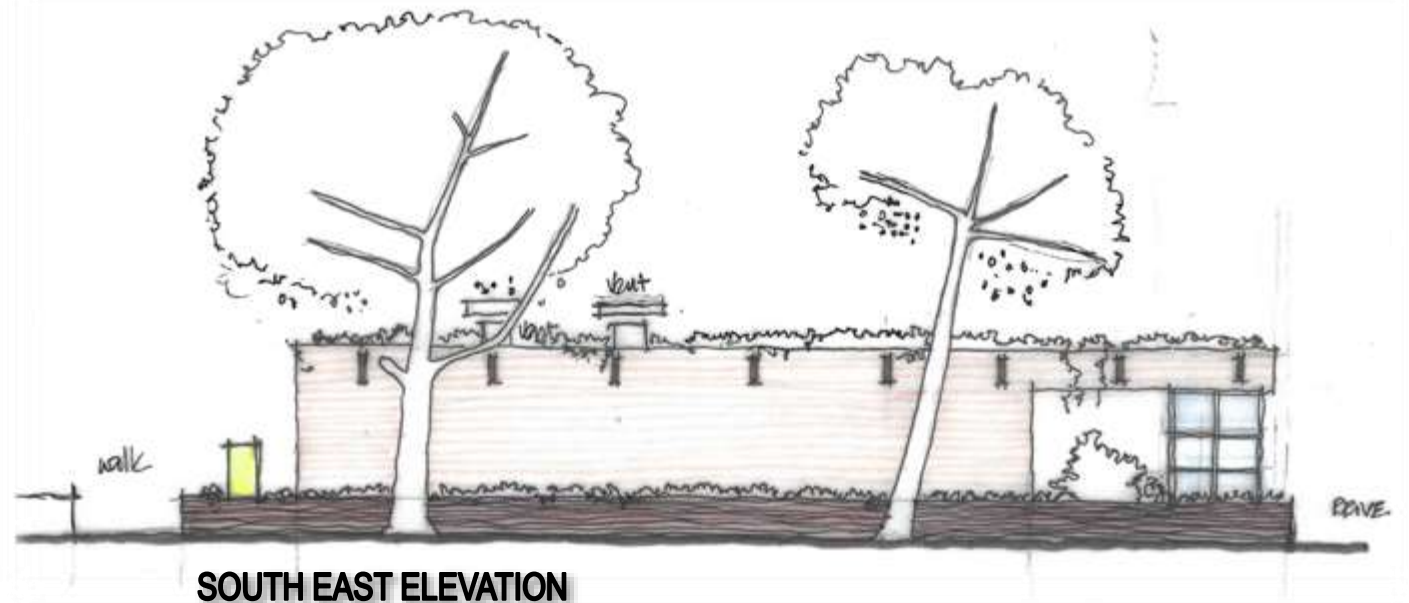
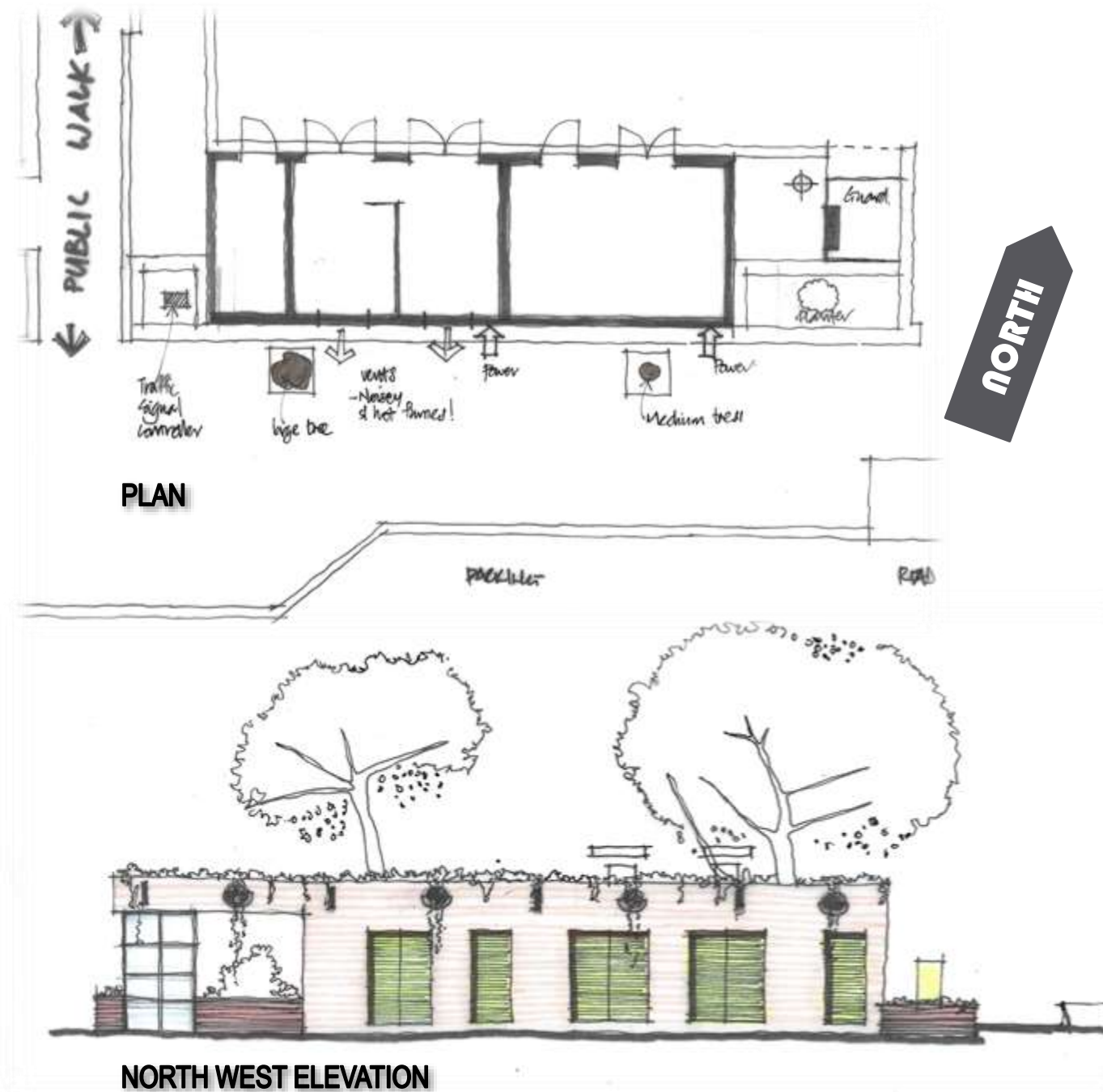
OPTION 2

Siting:

- As per eThekweni proposal. Structure placed against the low stone clad boundary wall.
- Incorporate the guard hut to simplify the visual effect.
- Vents relocated as chimney stack on the roof to enable a clean façade on the urban edge with no sounds or heat.
- Risk
 1. Damage to the stone wall during works
 2. Structure does not engage the urban edge well with an overbearing intrusion into the side walk

Finish:

- Off Shutter concrete in either panels or horizontal timber shutter impressions.
- Risk
 1. The colour will match the sandstone finish to the City Hall and may form part of the continued historic aesthetic.
 2. Depletion of the sovereign heritage identity.



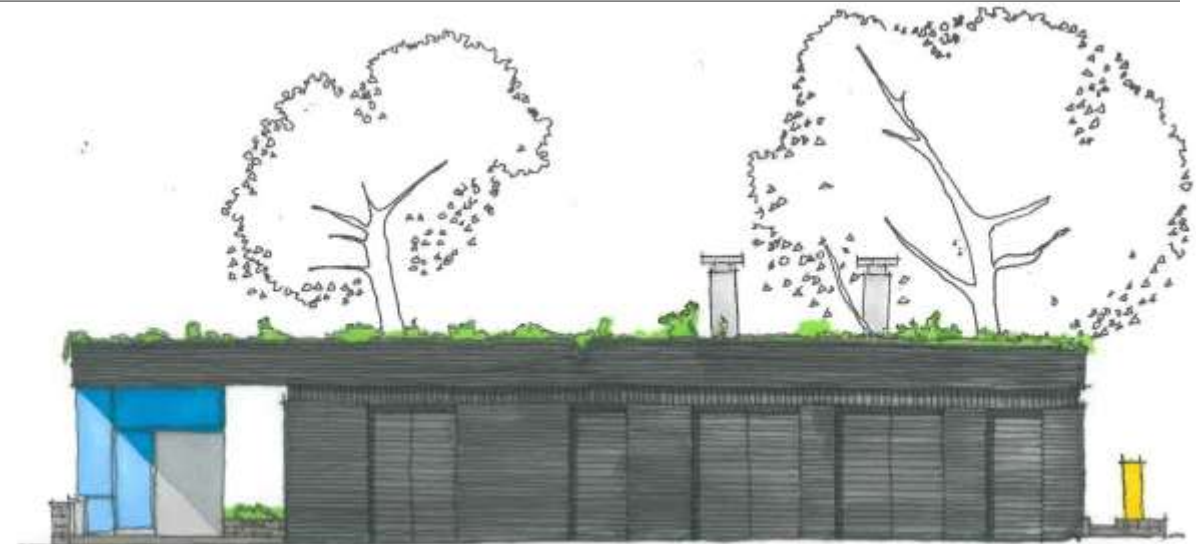
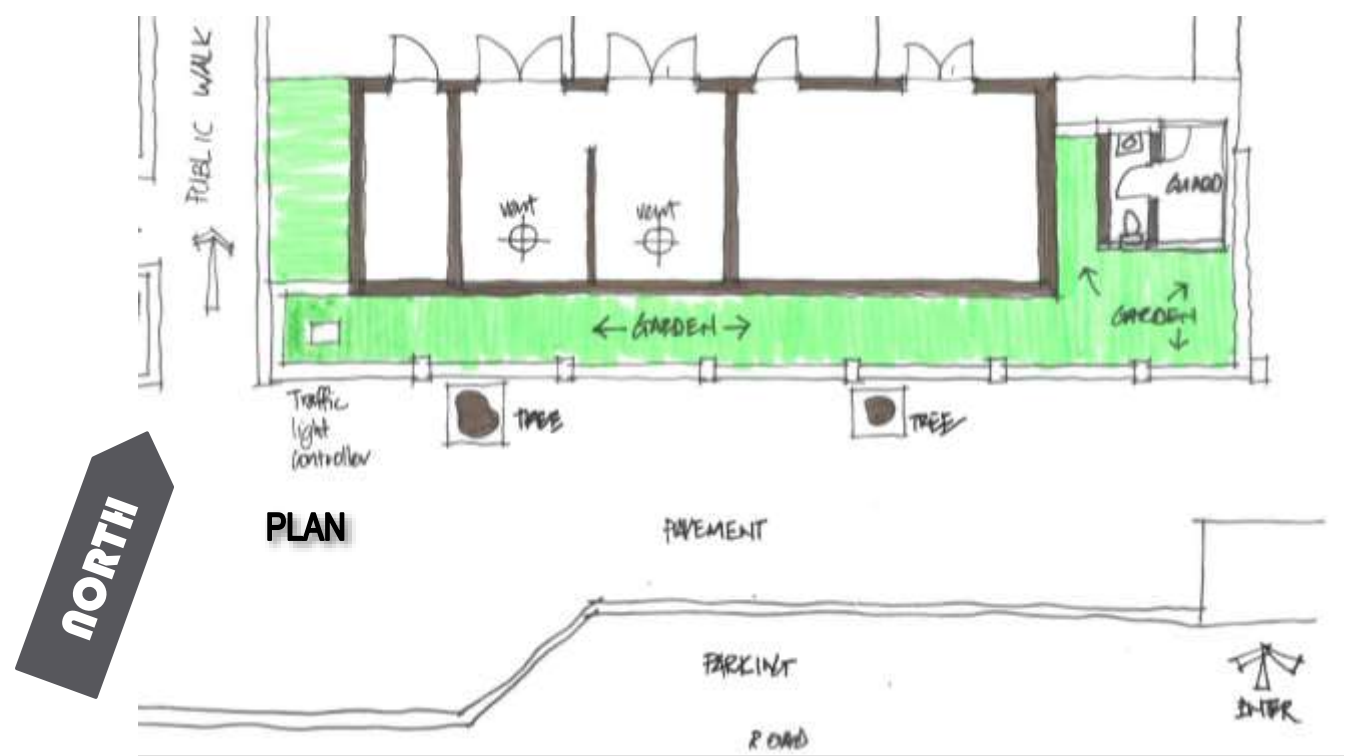
OPTION 3

Siting:

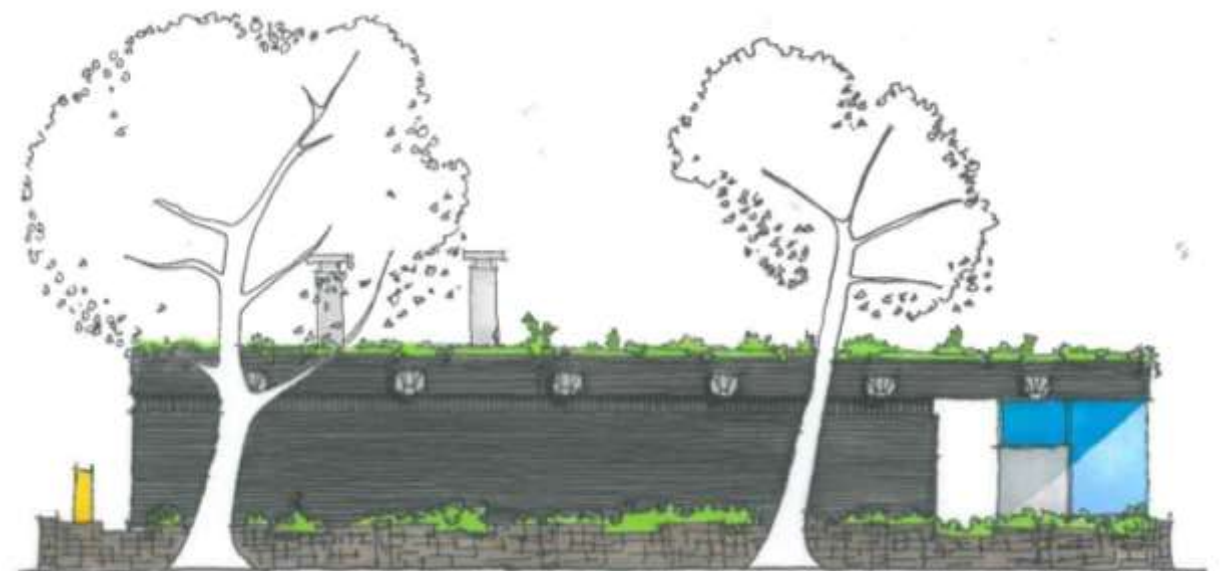
- Structure set back to retain the existing garden.
- Incorporate the guard hut to simplify the visual effect.
- Building engages the urban edge with relief from pedestrians.
- Vents relocated as chimney stack on the roof to enable a clean façade on the urban edge with no sounds or heat.
- Risk
 1. Transformer Heat Vent Stacks
 - Stormwater exposure
 - Requires maintenance to avoid blockages
 2. Reduced no. of parking bays from 7 to 3.

Finish:

- Black brick with anthracite grouting.
- The structure is intended to be a sculptural element that is set back behind the foliage.
- Brick patterning recommended (Brick patterning stretcher bond may be dull).



NORTH WEST ELEVATION



SOUTH EAST ELEVATION

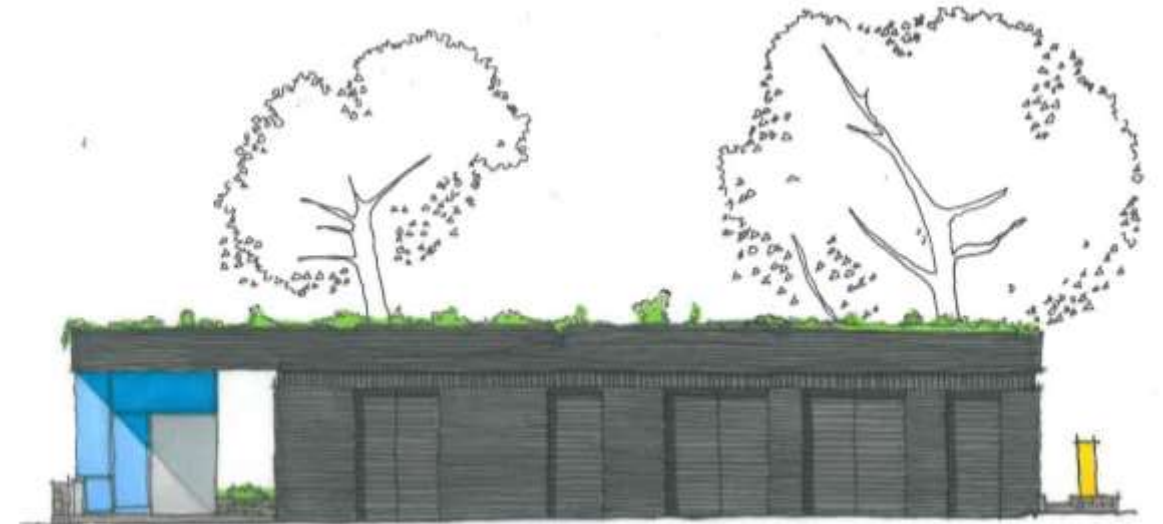
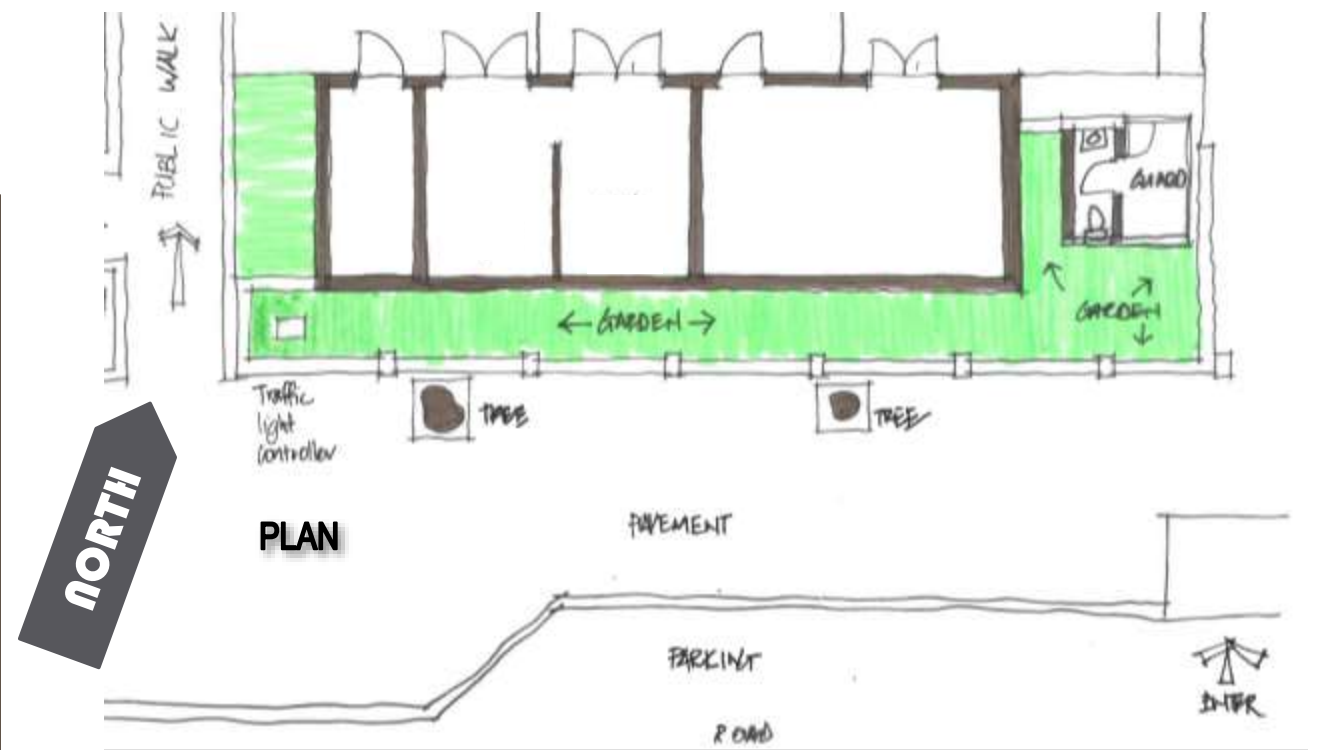
OPTION 4

Siting:

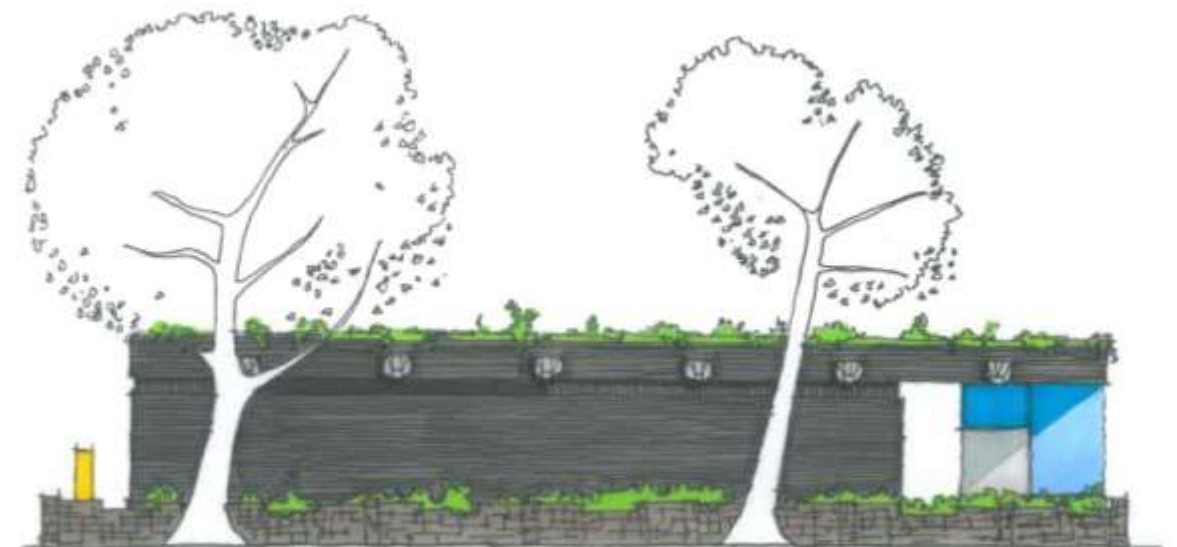
- Structure set back to retain the existing garden.
- Incorporate the guard hut to simplify the visual effect.
- Building engages the urban edge with relief from pedestrians.
- Vents revised from standard 1460x660x2 to 6000x330 to enable a clean façade within the horizontal brick banding detail.
- Risk
 1. Reduced no. of parking bays from 7 to 3.

Finish:

- Black brick with anthracite grouting.
- Galvanised steel louvres & doors to be enamel coated black.
- The structure is intended to be a sculptural element that is set back behind the foliage.
- Brick patterning recommended (Brick patterning stretcher bond may be dull)



NORTH WEST ELEVATION



SOUTH EAST ELEVATION



Scale

To test the scale of proposed structure we drew reference to the historic building styles.

- City Hall
Edwardian-Imperial-Baroque style. Baroque exudes grandeur and large scaling, evident in the building openings and oversized columns.
- Local History Museum (Court House)
Done in **Early Victorian Style**, which is a more domestic scale albeit ceilings between 3 and 4m in height.



OPTION 1 - overall precinct Elevation study

The scale height of the building is as per the Electricity Departments minimum practical requirement.



OPTION 2 - overall precinct Elevation study

The scale height of the building is increased by 500mm to test the visual impact on the historic buildings

Scale - Evaluation

The proposed structure is located closer to the City Hall and is a functional requirement of it.

Hence the scale is tested more especially against the City Hall.

Furthermore the scale is to be tested closer to the site since the site lines are largely from passing vehicles and pedestrians when in close proximity.



OPTION 1 - Close up Elevation study of the lower building height

The scale height of the building is as per the minimum practical requirements and taking into consideration the drainage requirements and invert levels of the stormwater system. The scale height of the building sits comfortably relative to the City Hall and also has a comfortable human scale.

The roof foliage in close proximity to the ground may present a better relationship with the urban edge - fostering a good harmony of scale.



OPTION 2 - Close Up Elevation study of the structure height raised by 500mm

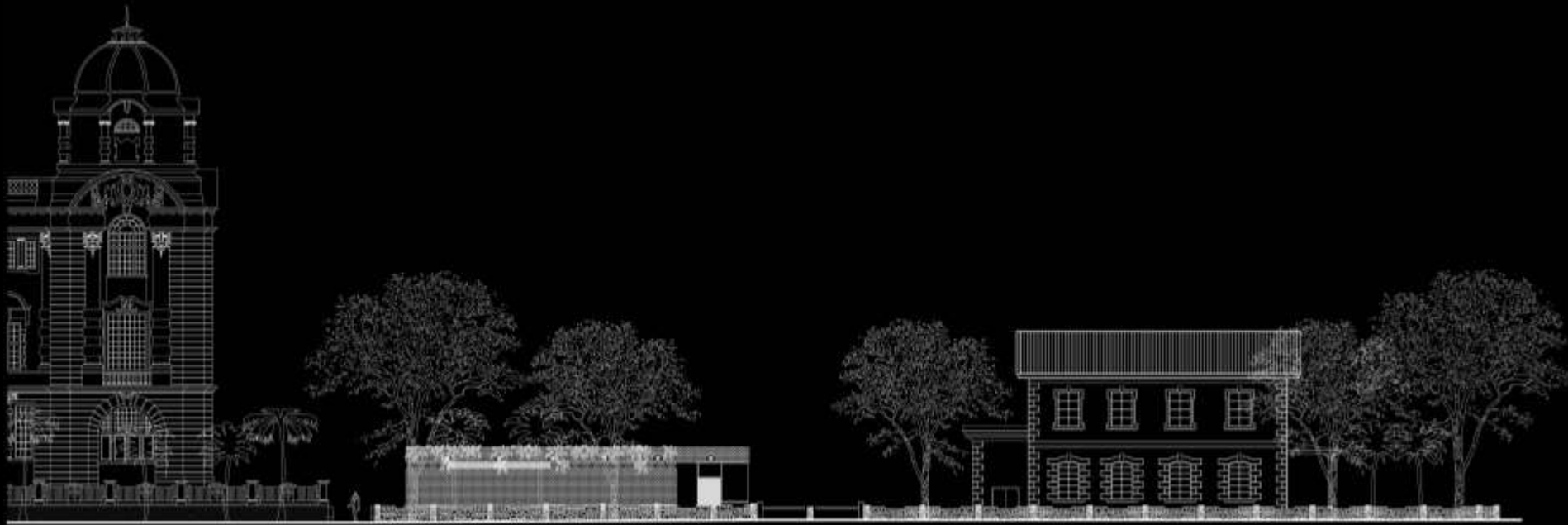
There is no visible improvement to the City Hall scale and the scale height presents as oversized and overbearing to the human scale.

The oversized façade creates a barrier to the urban edge, and offers more an obstruction rather than people engagement.

Scale - Option I - Recommendation

The scale height of the building sits comfortably relative to the City Hall and also has a comfortable human scale.

The roof foliage in close proximity to the ground may present a better relationship with the urban edge and fostering a good *Genius Loci*



Design Philosophy

The architectural impact of the building re-enforced our original strategy of making the building ‘invisible’

1. Our design philosophy is not to try and match any of the dominant historic architectural styles of buildings within the Sub-Station precinct. Further the building is serving no other purpose than housing essential and functional electrical plant facilities necessary for the City Hall. The building should be neutral in appearance and not attempt to make a prominent architectural statement.
2. In keeping with Modernism, the solution proposed is a simple well-proportioned rectangular form with a cantilever extension over the location of existing guard house, encompassing it with its new separate toilet facility.
3. The selection of external finish to the building to be black brick with anthracite tinted flush grouted joints and with a 2 x ½ skin bond. This choice was primarily to achieve a “No” maintenance finish which can stand apart from the existing stone clad low perimeter wall. Although said wall is not a structurally strong element it is considered significant in that it was constructed in the middle of the last century as a boundary surround to the Local History Museum building and parking lot site on its street perimeter.
4. The existing planter behind the wall in the location of the proposed new Sub-Station building is the only one on this precinct and extends along the side of the pedestrian link between Anton Lembede and Dr Pixley Kaseme Streets. It is desirable to retain this planter and use it to hide/camouflage the building with indigenous low maintenance plantings
5. The whole of the roofed area of the building is proposed to be constructed as a roof garden with indigenous overhanging draped low maintenance plantings.
6. After consultation with client we are proposing retaining the existing palm trees and introducing Baleria Repens plantings in the planter against 3 sides of the building with Star Jasmin and Asparagus type ground cover to the roof garden over. The latter are commonly used in hanging basket plantings All of these plantings together with the two substantial Kiggelaria Africana trees on the pavement adjoining the stone wall are being proposed to often its impact on the precinct.
7. It is also proposed to take measures to protect the two trees on the pavement and to take measures to minimise the current upliftment of adjacent paving elements by natural root growth of these two established trees.

Option 4

BEFORE



AFTER





BEFORE



AFTER

BEFORE



AFTER





BEFORE



AFTER

local fit

The Local Culture in KZN is a melting pot of patterns and colours.

At first glance one see the proposed structure as a black sculptural mass...like a shadow into the foliage.

The initial experience is intended to be surreal.

On approach, the ‘black’ brick building material arrangement has considered pattern making, that is subtly set in the dark jointing but is there upon closer inspection.

The hope is for people to stop and engage either in debate or in an ethereal way (spiritual)

The Brick Bond

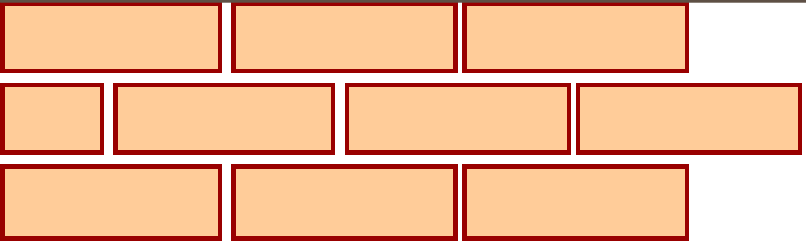
The classical brick pattern styles are:
Flemish bond English bond. Both these styles may bond the wall well but allows for water ingress since there is no water barrier.

The Stretcher bond is modern variant that has a water barrier to the inner skin.

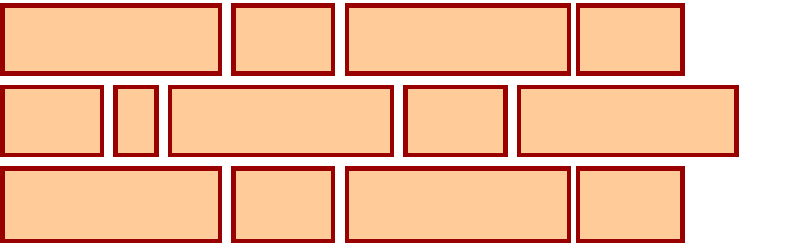
The proposed Substation contains electrical good and hence needs to be water tight.

Recommend **Stretcher Bond** due to:

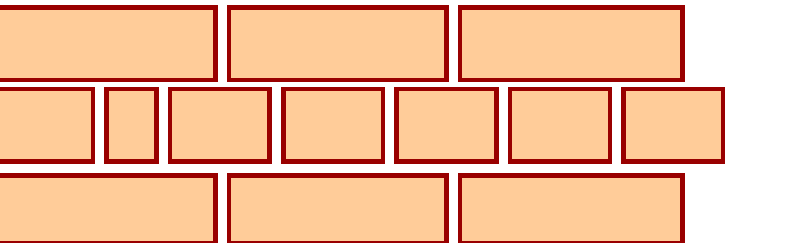
1. A modern pattern fitting for modernism.
2. Incorporates a water barrier



Stretcher bond



Flemish bond



English bond



The Black Brick – with lighting

