

## Refurbishment of the Nelson

## Mandela Centre of Memory

Johannesburg, Gauteng

Architects: **office 24-7**

Project Team: **Nabeel Essa, William Dewar, Nerali Patel, Clive van den Berg**  
Structural Engineers: **MVW Consulting Engineers**

Mechanical Engineers: **SPN Consulting Engineers**

Landscaping: **Clive van den Berg**  
Quantity Surveyor: **QuanCo Quantity Surveyors**

Artwork: **Clive van den Berg**

Contractor: **Ryandev**

Photographer: **Renelle Rampersad**

Text: **Nabeel Essa**

26° 08'55.6"S

28° 03'30.6"E

The Nelson Mandela Foundation, through a grant from the National Lotteries Board, commissioned the renovation of Nelson Mandela's former office that houses the foundation's archived collection in a secure facility to international archival standards.

Through researcher facilities and temporary and permanent exhibition spaces, the project has created a space where the public can engage with this collection. The refurbished building creates greater awareness of the foundation and its activities and presents its public face in an environment conducive to memory and dialogue.

Standard office partitions and access ceilings were removed, exposing the pine trusses and ducting. The project worked to make this exposed infrastructure an aesthetic of complexity and layering that espouses the way things are made and function rather than hiding them. The generous volume that was uncovered through this process was more fitting to the stature of the content in the exhibition spaces.

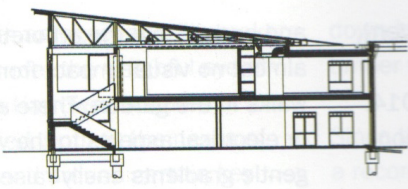
The material choices for the interior spaces – from solid African teak, exposed sandblasted concrete columns, printed glass and Rustenburg flamed granite to South African pine – were chosen to reflect the patina of time, as well as integrity and authenticity.

For the archive, custom-designed mobile shelving and drawer systems were installed to accommodate the storage of paper, framed art and objects. A new bulkhead was constructed to contain services and demarcate the researcher area. A custom steel-and-glass library-shelving wall was built to define the researcher area within the exhibition space, while at the same time acting as an exhibit in its own right. A granite wall in the reception area demarcates the conference room and engages the weighty and textured content housed in the building.

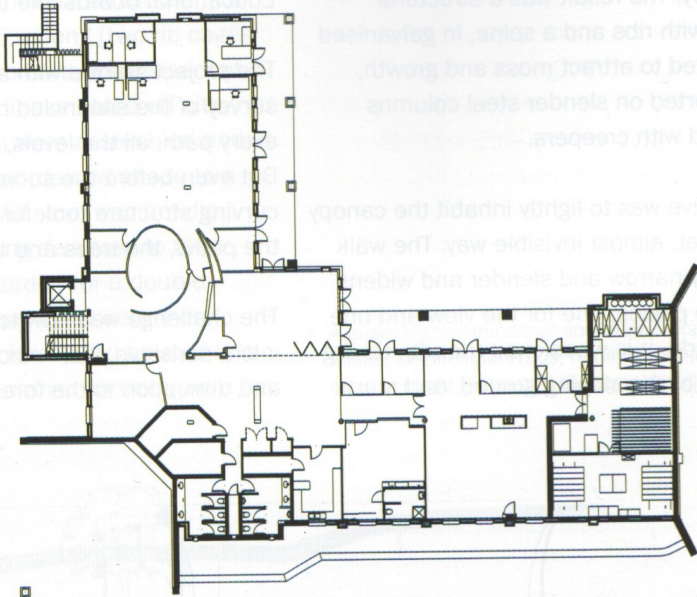
The front-of-house area has been refurbished into a light and open reception area, a flexible temporary exhibition space and a multipurpose conference room. A new passenger lift allows for better wheelchair and general accessibility between floors. The street-facing front door and reception area have been interpreted as a flush-glazed billboard. The lines of Nelson Mandela's handprint on this glass greet visitors upon entry.

The front-gate areas have been made translucent with a light steel gate and palisade with a three-dimensional geometric pattern. This openness reflects how the building functions as an archive and exhibition space and how the foundation wishes to engage in public dialogue.

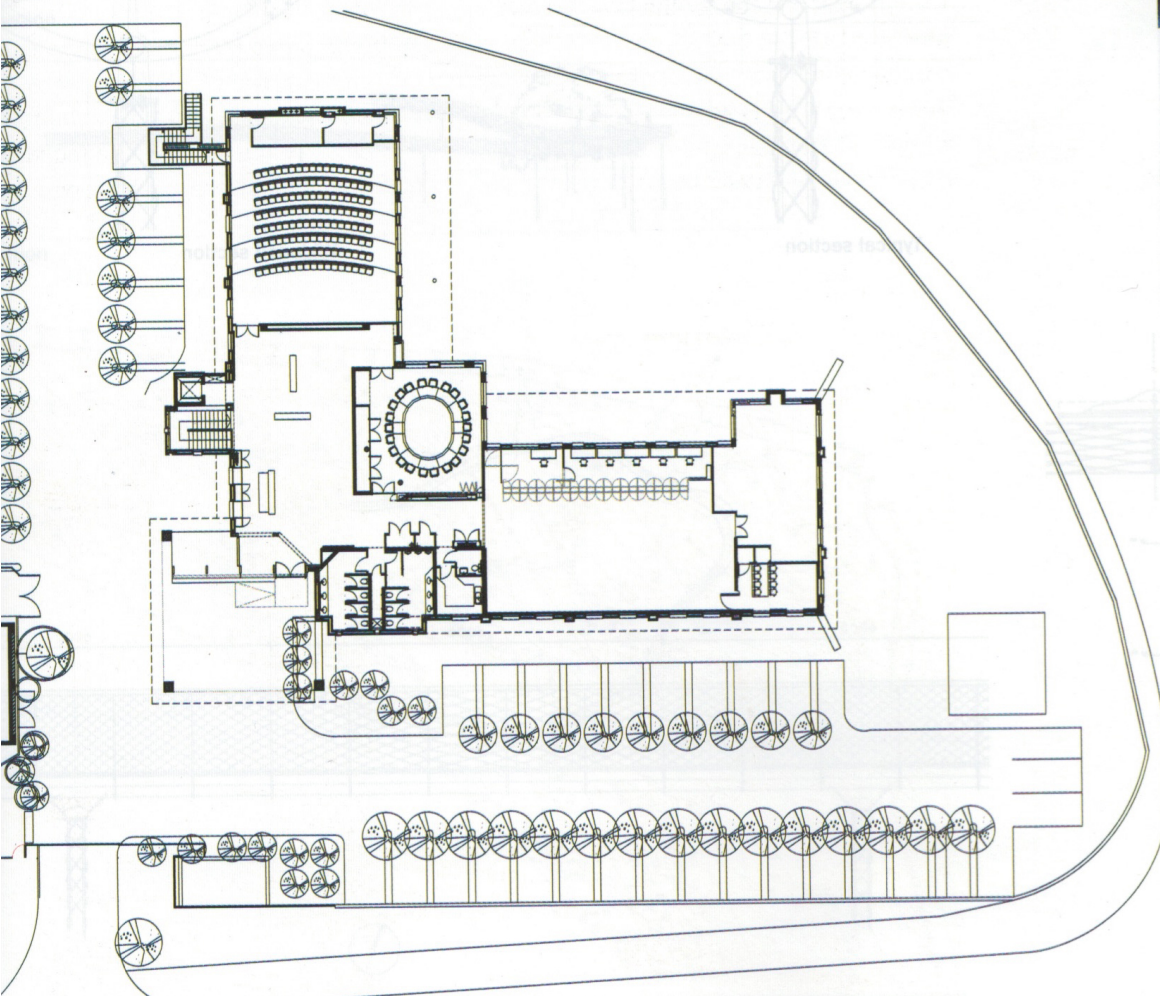




Long section



Lower ground floor plan



Ground floor plan

