

# SOMKHELE STUDENT HOUSING

## Somkhele, KwaZulu-Natal (2007)

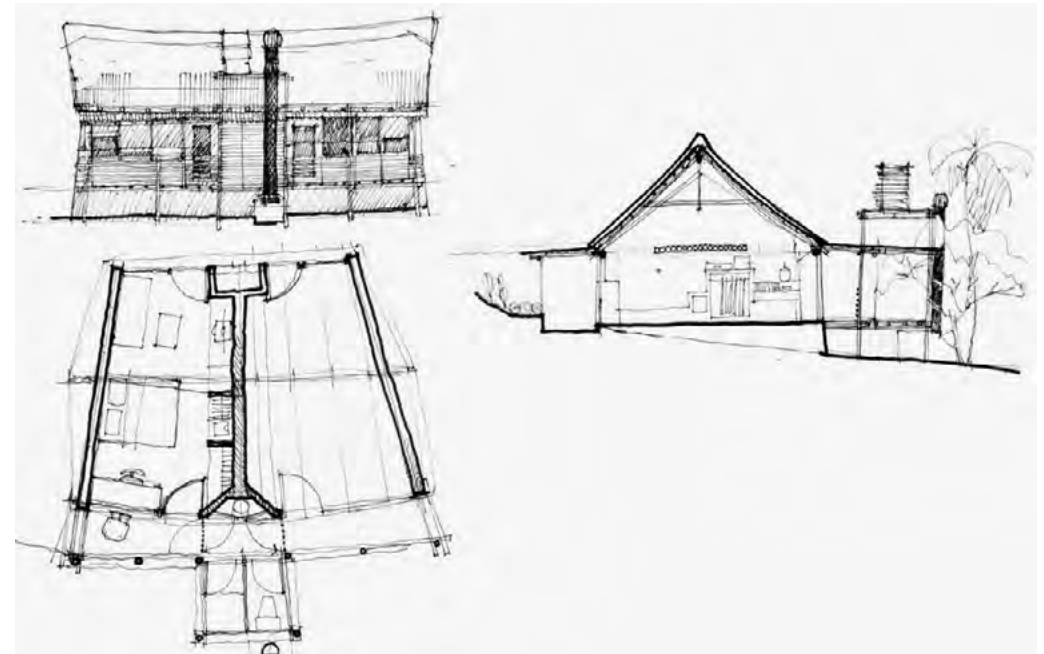
From the earliest schemes presented for the Africa Centre our master plans always suggested a residential presence on the Somkhele Campus and in 2004 we were asked to make proposals for 'student' accommodation for foreign visiting interns. There was also discussion at that time to add a 'data' centre to the already crowded research offices. The extremely clayey soils of the Somkhele site and the consequent high stormwater run-off rate prompted the proposal of a pair of 'swales' upslope from the centre, both for protection of the centre as well as harvesting additional run-off water for landscaping.

A C initial sketches

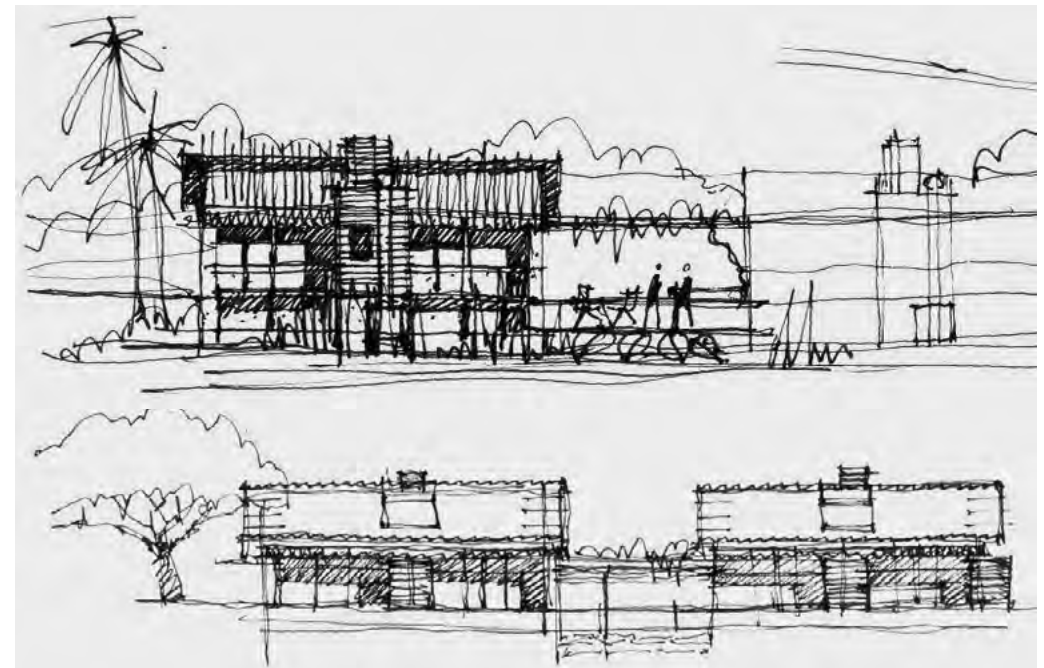
B site plan of the Africa Centre Campus



B



A



C



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## Somkhele, KwaZulu-Natal (2007)

- A outdoor shared space
- B plan
- C basic section

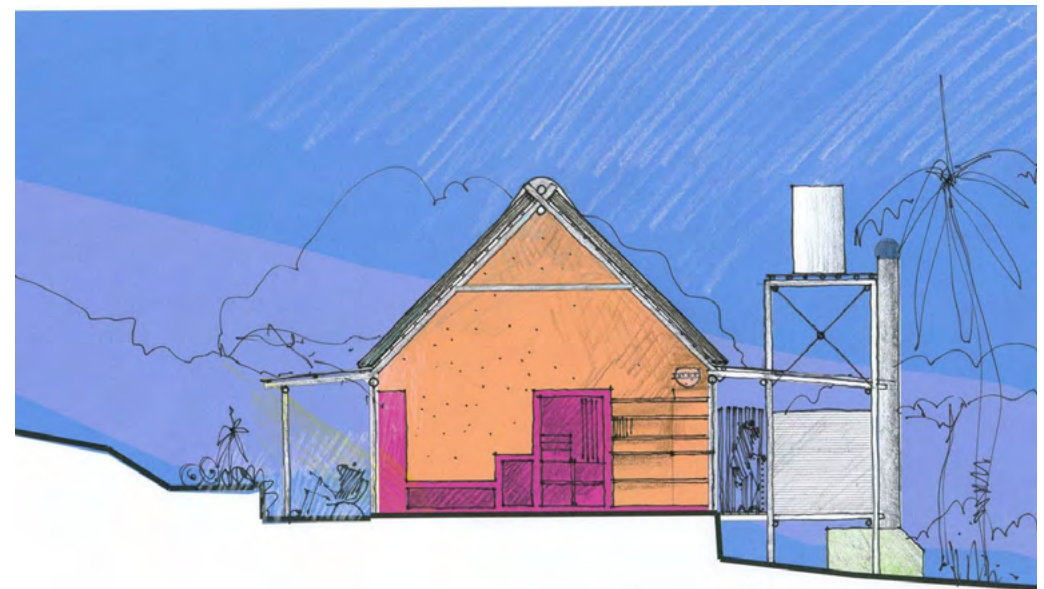
These seasonal ponds provided a sense of separation for the proposed houses which we located on the northern bank of the eastern swale. The proposed new Data Centre was located 'over' the western one. The arrangement suggested the extension of the existing bisect wall up the site - creating a division between 'work' and 'play' - with the thatched roofed, earth walled, row of single rooms growing out of this (now stone gabion) wall. Rooms each have private toilets and showers with a common room/kitchen/dining room and laundry facility on the eastern end, all overlooking the wetland/swale dam. Conceptually the proposed houses were seen in contrast to the research centre buildings and have more in common with the homesteads that surround the centre. The proposal fell victim to funding shortfalls and a general lack of will - Africa Centre staff for the most part lived on the Illala Residential Campus in Mtubatuba and drove or were bussed to the centre daily.



B



A



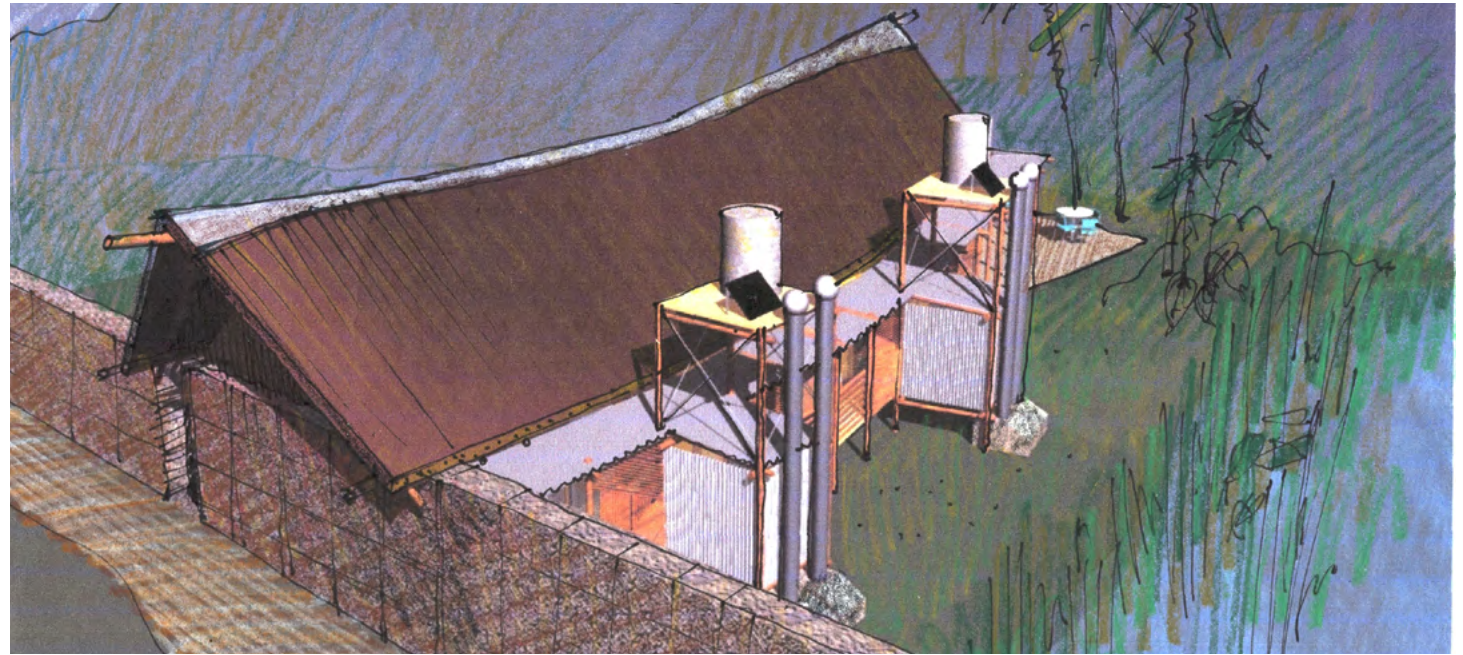
C



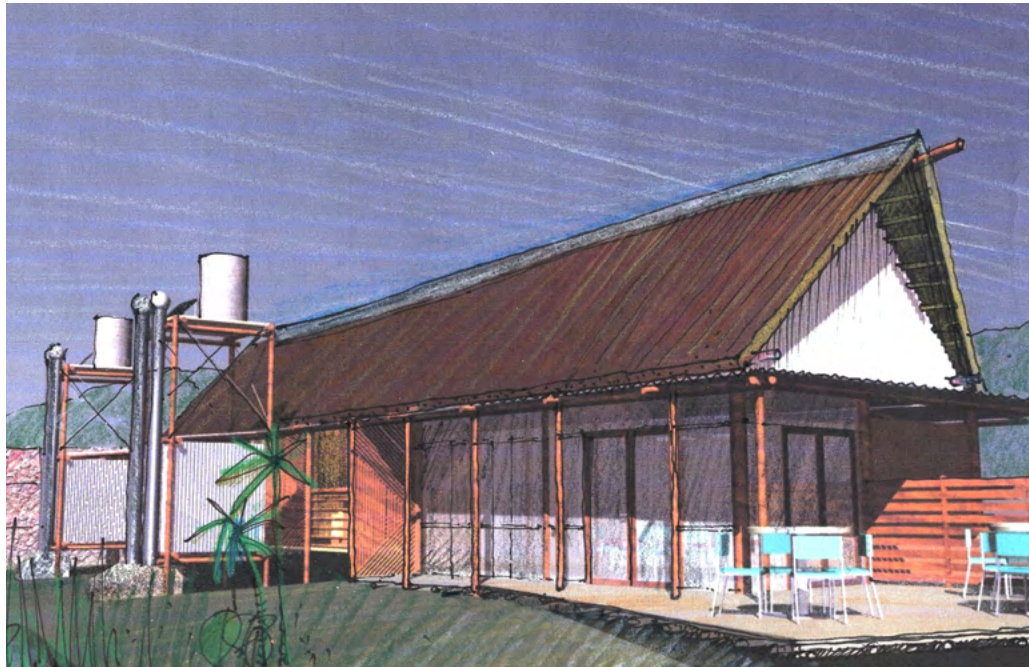
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A B C artist impressions



A



B



C