

BLUE ROOF HEALTH CARE CENTRE

Wentworth, KwaZulu-Natal
(2008)

A empty steel portal framed structure

B artist impression of the interior double volume internal space



A



B

Keep A Child Alive (KCA) is a US-based NGO that rolls out Anti-Retrovirals (ARV's) to children infected at birth and has established a unit in Austerville, Durban. This led to the acquisition of an existing large steel portal framed building in Wentworth known as 'Blue Roof' – originally built in the late 80's as a sports hall but more recently used as one of the infamous 'Wentworth nite clubs' - which over the past year has been altered to its new incarnation as the Blue Roof Health Care Centre (BRHC).

Our design brief for the alterations centred on the following:

- provide a home for KCA and for BRHC for the distribution of ARVs
- create an inviting space where youth would feel 'at home'
- provide community-based space for groups to meet – workshop and conference space.

All on an extremely tight budget! From early analysis of the anticipated programme it became clear that there was too much, rather than too little space. This allowed for a generous expression of the 9m high volume and led to early decisions to create an

'internal forest', verdant with life. This in turn allowed us to conceive the building as a centre of LIFE – a fun place that kids would look forward to visiting. Early suggestions were that the centre be more 'youth club' than 'health centre', a place where space could be 'non rational' and in some cases exuberant and wasteful, where colour and light could combine to create vibrancy and excitement. The brief, as it developed, talked about the inclusion of juice/snack bars, pool tables, soccer games and pinball machines, all filling the space with youthful 'noise' and chatter rather than the hushed tones of grief and despair that most hospitals exude. Vegetable gardening on the north of the building – existing pre-mix surfaced car park – was suggested as a way of both cooling the building down and adding a positive nutrition base to the centre.

Phase 1 was completed and occupied in January 2009. Phase 2 should include the acquisition of adjacent unused property and the creation of additional parking as well as service access to the 'back of house'. This will also create a 'way through' from Austerville Drive to Lubbe street and will help to face the centre away from the busy Austerville drive. The removal of the parking from the north side will allow the vegetable gardens to expand.

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- A artist impression of the interior double volume space showing roof lighting and internal bridges acting as circulation
- B another artist impression
- C ground floor plan
- D first floor plan



A



B



C



D

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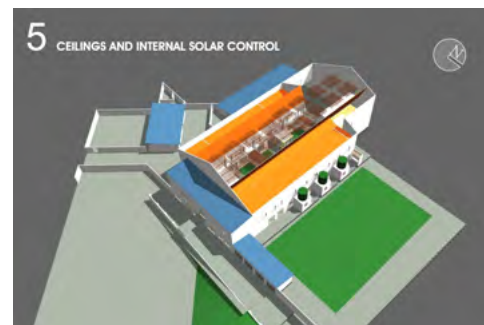
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A another artist impression

B below; the existing empty layout, the build up of the internal rooms on the ground floor, first floor area, rooms on the first floor, ceiling and finally the roof



A



B

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A one of the care centre rooms

B central space full of light and plants

B bridge walk ways connect the rooms



A



B



C