

Aerial view from harbour

# Museum of New Zealand, Te Papa Tongawera

This project is a competition entry for the Museum of New Zealand, Te Papa Tongawera: it is both the National Museum and a National Marae. In addition to the complexities and problems that have recently characterised the design and administration of museums this project must also engage with another architectural discourse, one no less problematic, the Marae. The question of the formal arrangement of the two is made all the more difficult because they have been set as tokens of Pakeha (museum) and Maori (marae); the two dominant cultures in New Zealand. The importance of the Maori/Pakeha was underlined by the brief – that the project be a bicultural institution. It would seem therefore that the project is expected to represent Maori, Pakeha and the relationship between them both: to commemorate the relationship between the two as much as each individually.

The project is begun by exploring the boundary between land and water. In a two fold action the land in a form, resembling a sea wall, is extended out into the harbour and the water is let in, by way of excavation, to flood the land. Possible new shore lines are proscribed and conversely, possible lost shore lines are traced. The results is an overtly constructed, artificial site, somewhat dislocated but which because of these qualities provides a condition appropriate to a project such as this: a no-man's land. Further and as a direct correlation to the manufactured qualities of the 'site', readings perhaps previously illegible, repressed, may be made apparent, such as the tenuity that characterises the relationship between land and water: tidal patterns, reclamation, erosion, geo-tectonic movement replete with tangential allusions to the respective Maori and Pakeha accounts of the formation of the land. As such the site is not only the physical base for the project, it is also the basis of the representation programme of the project.

The Museum-Marae complex must participate actively in the city of Wellington. Through a process of teasing out of the city those force lines which govern its form – between monuments, natural features, economic zones, patterns of movement etc. – and using them to plot lines of organisation – form/structure, movement – the project is woven into the fabric of the city. It offers itself as a machine for reading the city/harbour interface and has potential to assist in the future construction of the greater urban environment.

The order of the Museum proper is established with the siting of a linear sequence of pylons which serve as the project's structural and spatial skeleton. In a figurative sense the potentially infinite length of this sequence of pylons is expressive of the

*Competition entry for the  
Museum of New Zealand, Te  
Papa Tongawera*

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*Project architects: Kevin Brewer,  
Julie Stout*

systematic categorisation and measurement of the world which most critics defined as perhaps the most telling characteristic of Western Culture. A process of which, the institution of the Museum may be considered one of its most accomplished manifestations. Around and within this sequence are woven two volumetric figures.

The first volume, a  $\sqrt{2}$  prism, accommodates the majority of the display spaces, including the Maori collection, and the various support spaces. The gallery spaces will be characterised by numerous openings in the vertical and horizontal planes which allow for visual connections, altering volumetric conditions and a possible plurality of narrative sequences. The other volume – a cylinder – principally provides accommodation for two typological spaces: an auditorium and the Marae complex. The Marae itself is structured along a sea-land axis which bisects the cylinder and obliquely intersects with the major axis of the Museum. The oblique angle at which the two axes – Marae, Museum – intersect instils a sense of movement, of the two axes oscillating, changing their positions with respect to each other. This sense of movement which may be transfigured to a sense of resistance on the part of Maori and Pakeha against being fixed, is re-enforced by the offsetting of the locus of the cylinder from the intersection of the two axes.

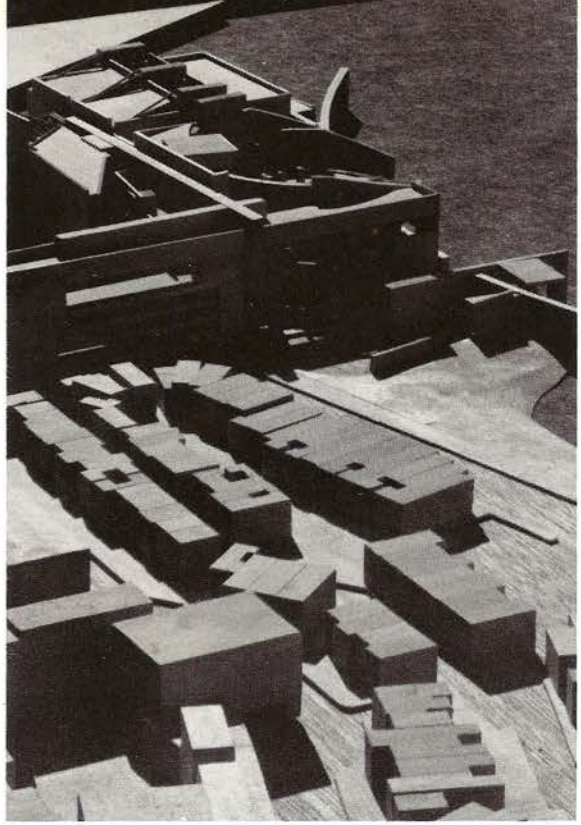
The Marae complex itself is set into the upper level of the cylinder with the whare-nui settled in the mass of the building and the Marae-atea in an open relationship to sky and the harbour landscapes; one that breaks the confines of the projected shore line. The relationship between the Marae-atea and surrounds will be recognised as traditional, however, the extended elevation, almost suspension of the Marae effects a displacement, a break between the two, recognising the special conditions of this Marae: a national Marae, a marae in which all the peoples of Aotearoa New Zealand can stand as hosts, and further anticipates the continued development of the urban Marae as something which is part of the traditional Maoridom, yet through circumstance removed from it.

A sequence of shifts, displacements, traces and doubles characterise the formal relationship between the Marae and the Museum. This relationship is developed in the functional and figurative interconnection of the two volumes. The Marae-atea, as will be more fully discussed later, doubles as the ceremonial forecourt of the Museum and this in a sense it is an annex of the latter. Yet because the Marae is on the same level as the Maori collection the Museum space is enclosed within the space of the Marae as a paataka (store hut). The rotunda which from the description given so far could be construed as emblematic of the Maori world in contrast to that of the Pakeha as represented by the prism is also, however, located within the typological experience of Western architecture and of the Museum in particular: the crossed axis surmounted by a dome. The already observed misalignment of the axes and the dislocated drum is emblematic of a shaking of the nineteenth century conception of the museum space, a kind of modern pantheon into which everything

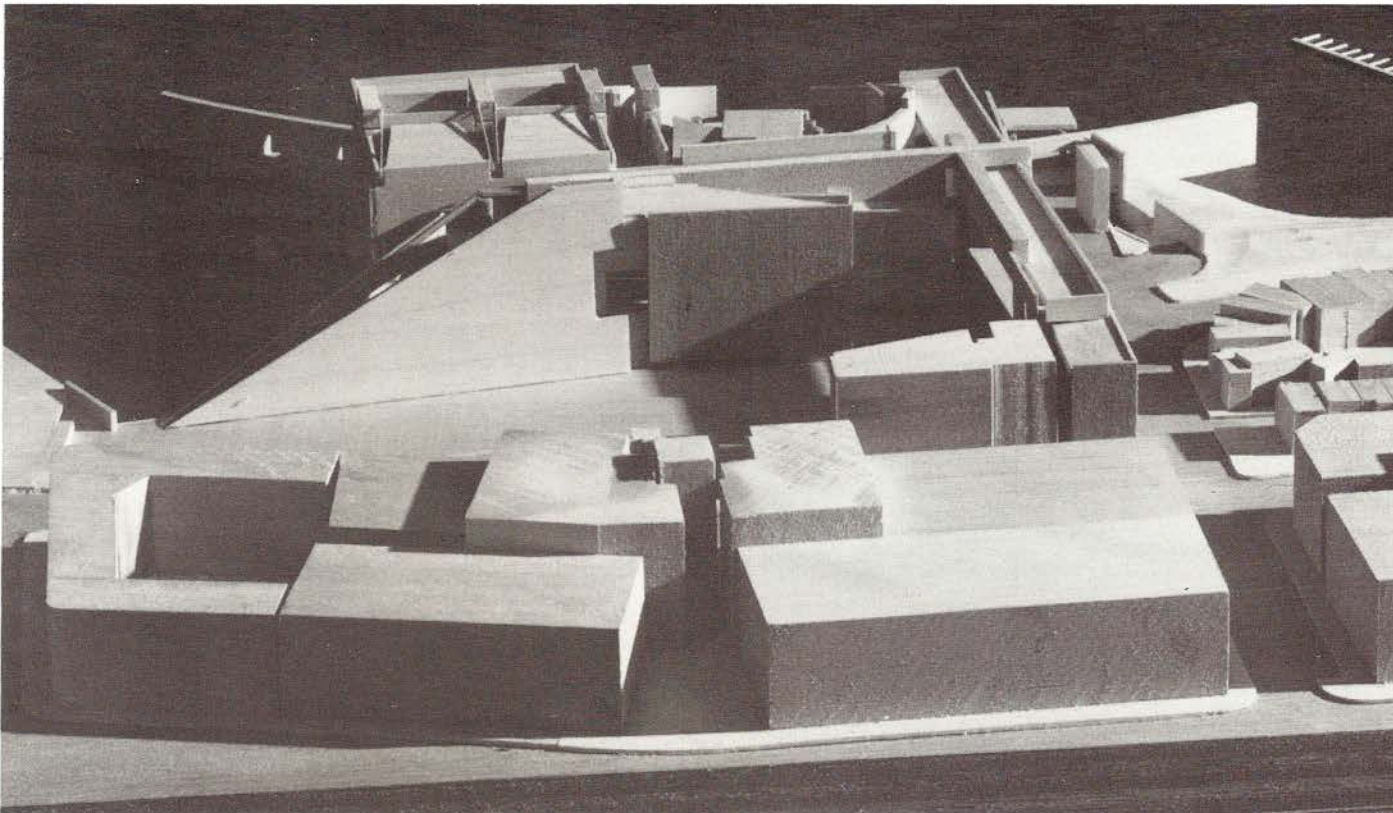
can be placed, ordered. If this project resembles a pantheon it is a ruined pantheon. A pantheon voided of any pretension of representing the heavens, that no longer encloses. It is in these metaphorical ruins that marae and the museum are camped.

In addition to the two major volumes there are three minor volumes and a set of interstitial spaces which complete the project. Contiguous with the volume of the museum are two irregular volumes. On the sea-ward side is a rhombic prism which will accommodate touring or temporary exhibitions. On the land, helping define an urban space which in itself denotes the public status of the projects, is an imploded pentagon which will accommodate the art collection. Tangentially connecting with the rotunda along an implied intersection with the Museum axis is the administrative wing. Skewed from the axis of Tory St, the elongated form of the administration wing extends out into the immediate urban fabric and encloses from the south the public square which has the potential to be developed into a double of the Marae-atea. The directional force of Tory St is continued through, intersecting with the Museum axis then penetrating the sea wall and passing out into the harbour. Conterminous to these volumes are the interstitial spaces. Foremost of these spaces is the great hall, between the prism and the cylinder.

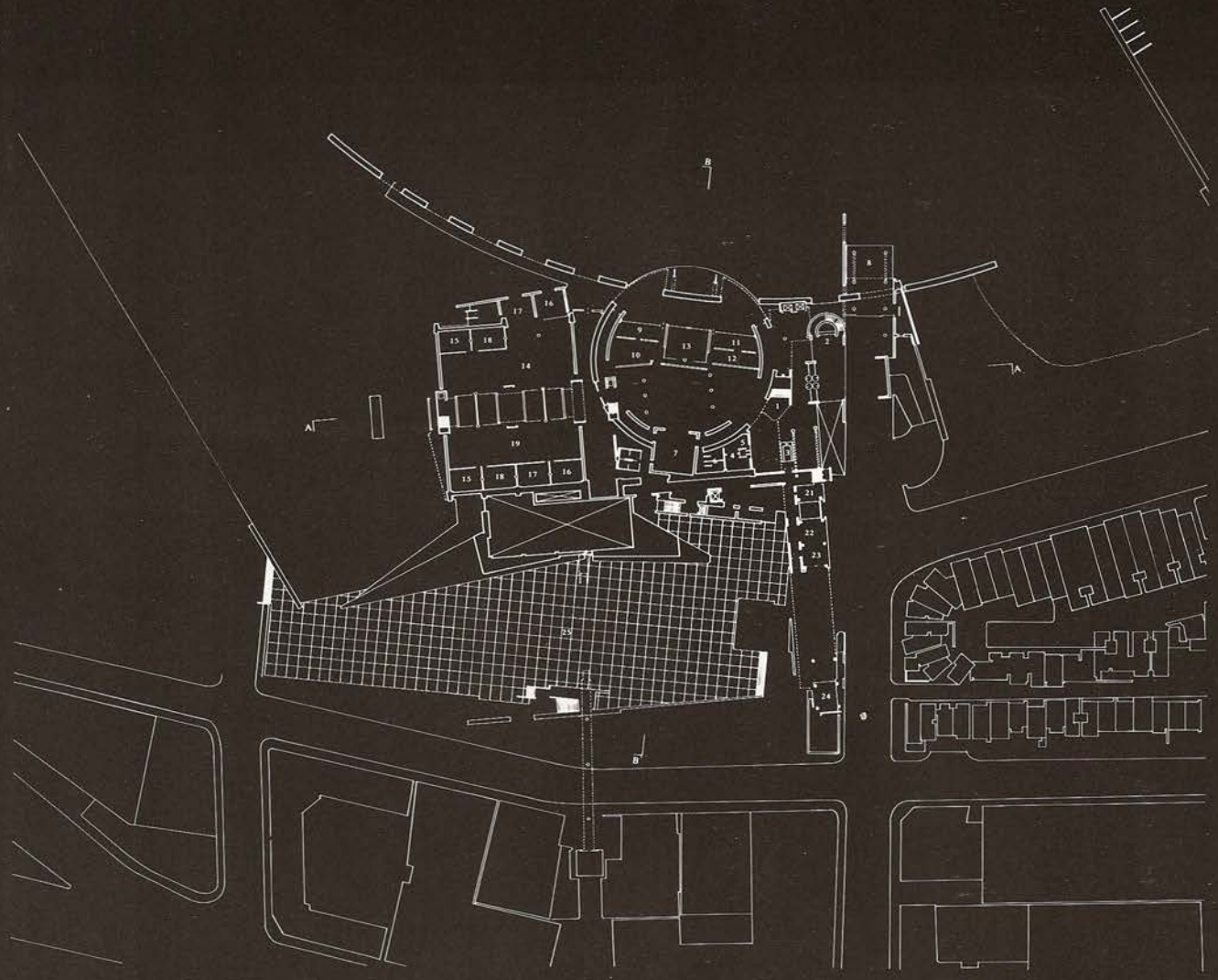
For the most part entry to the Museum and the Marae is from the south, entering on a line that transverses the rotunda, from whence two routes of circulation are provided. The main ceremonial entrance follows the protocol established for passage onto a Marae and is from the west. This has been achieved by the use of a sequence of ramps which first move out towards the harbour before returning to face the Whare-nui and hosts: accomplishing the movement from outside to inside involved in a Maori welcome. To avoid any breach of protocol that may occur should guests to the Marae be seen to turn away from the hosts, the movement out into the harbour is so handled as to ensure the first sighting of the guests as they prepare to enter upon the Marae-atea. As mentioned, the Marae-atea space is open to the environment, however, shelter for the whare-nui and immediate surrounds is provided in the form of a glass enclosure to ensure continuity of functions in moments of inclement weather. From the Marae-atea one enters the spaces of the displays across the various halls. As already indicated the display spaces and the interrelation between these possess a labyrinthine quality that is emblematic of the condition of contemporary knowledge. This interrelationship between the Marae rotunda and the display spaces is the most critical condition in the design. By insertion into the fabric proper of the Museum, circular paths around the Marae organise a journey through the exhibits. Through this the Marae becomes a living part of an integrated complex, not a mere forecourt to a Pakeha museum.



Partial view from South



Aerial view from city



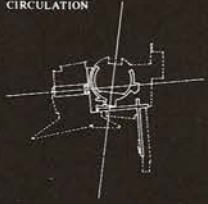
MARAE



STRUCTURE



CIRCULATION



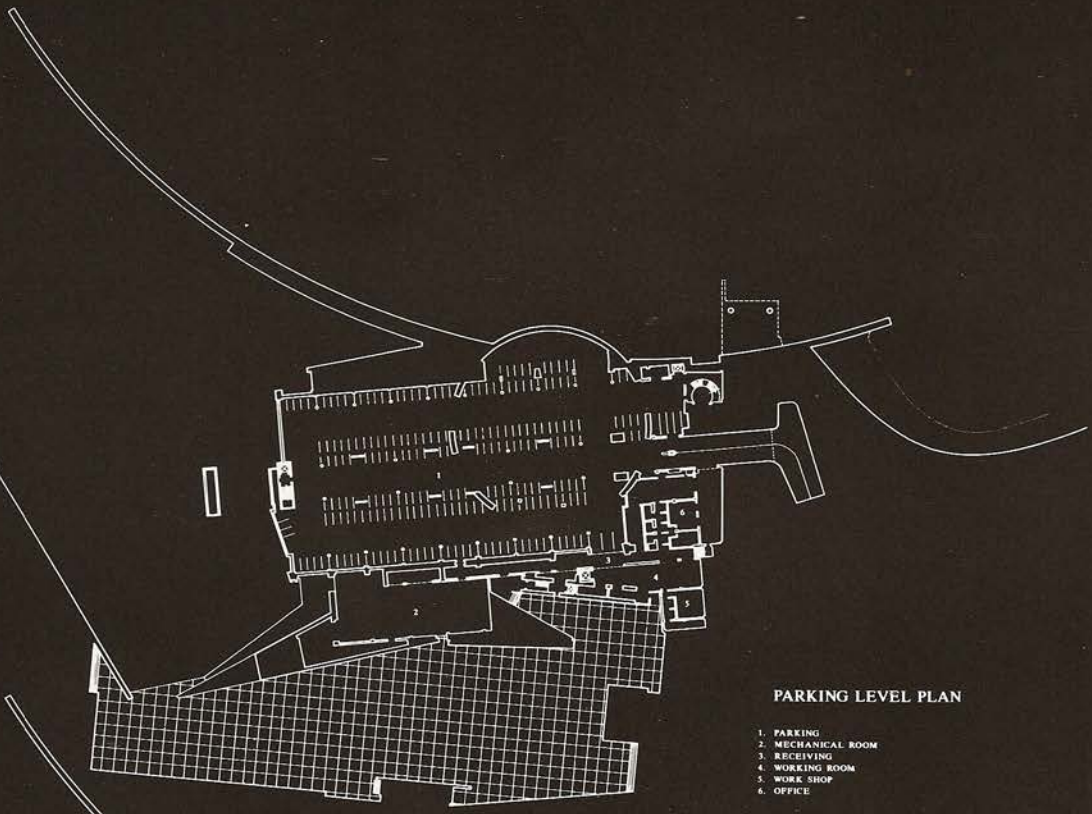
URBAN CONNECTION



GROUND FLOOR PLAN

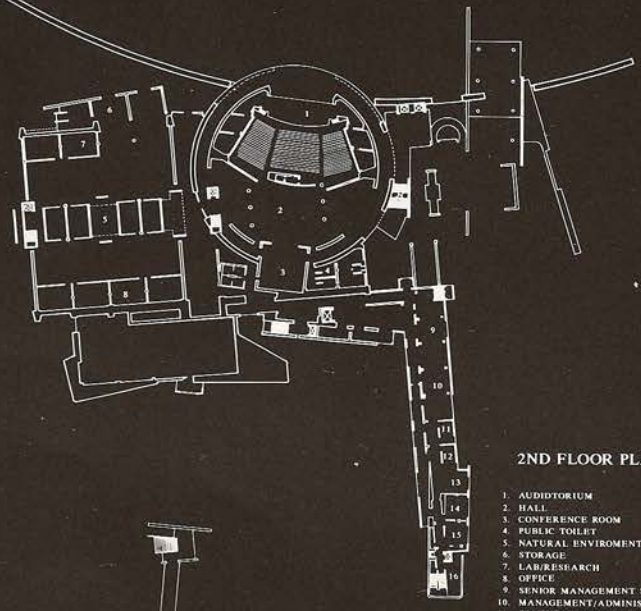
- 1. ENTRY HALL
- 2. TICKET SALES AREA
- 3. INFORMATION DESK
- 4. COAT CHECK
- 5. LUGGAGE LOCKER
- 6. PUBLIC TOILET
- 7. MUSEUM SHOP
- 8. CAFETERIA
- 9. CLASS ROOM/SENIOR ROOM
- 10. CHILDREN'S LEARNING CENTER
- 11. DEMONSTRATION LAB/ CLASS ROOM
- 12. STUDIO/ARTS CLASS
- 13. LIBRARY
- 14. ART COLLECTION
- 15. STORAGE
- 16. OFFICE
- 17. WORK ROOM
- 18. MATERIAL STORAGE
- 19. HISTORY COLLECTION
- 20. MAORI ART HISTORY COLLECTION
- 21. SUPPORT SPACE OFFICE
- 22. VISITOR AREA
- 23. CONFERENCE ROOM
- 24. MANAGEMENT OFFICE
- 25. PLAZA





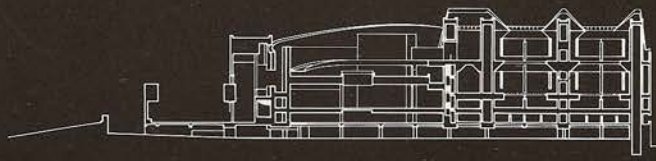
PARKING LEVEL PLAN

- 1. PARKING
- 2. MECHANICAL ROOM
- 3. RECEIVING
- 4. WORKING ROOM
- 5. WORK SHOP
- 6. OFFICE

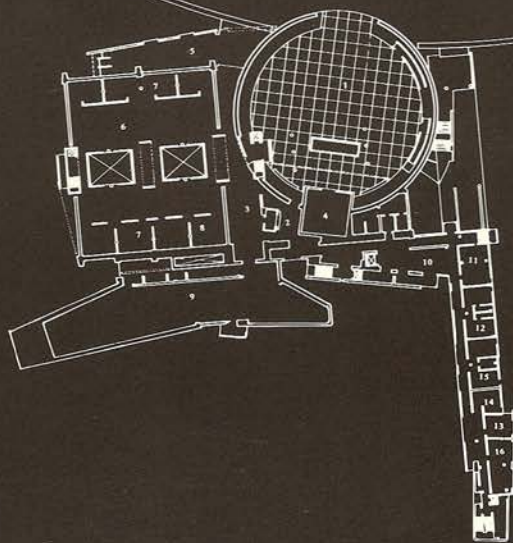


2ND FLOOR PLAN

- 1. AUDITORIUM
- 2. HALL
- 3. CONFERENCE ROOM
- 4. PUBLIC TOILET
- 5. NATURAL ENVIRONMENT COLLECTION
- 6. STORAGE
- 7. LAB/RESEARCH
- 8. OFFICE
- 9. SENIOR MANAGEMENT SUITES
- 10. MANAGEMENT/ADMINISTRATION SECTION
- 11. COMPUTER ROOM
- 12. PUBLICATION
- 13. PUBLIC PROGRAMS ADMINISTRATION
- 14. RECORDS/MAIL
- 15. PERSONNEL
- 16. CONFERENCE

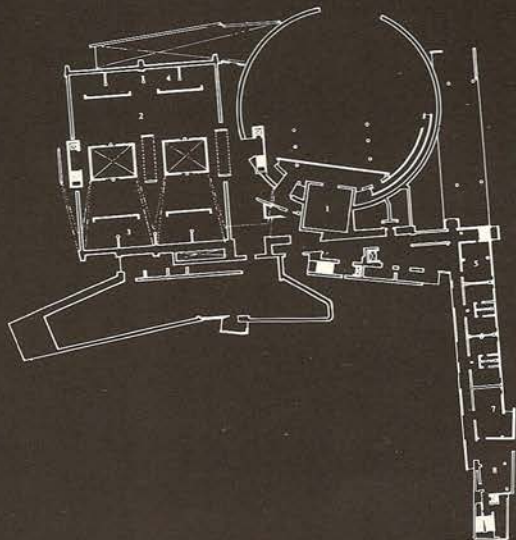


SECTION A-A



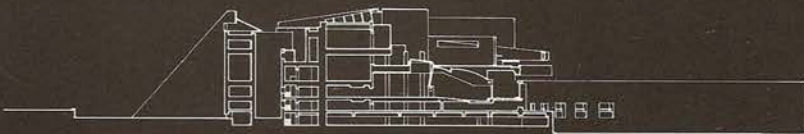
**3RD FLOOR PLAN**

- 1. MARAE (EVENT SPACE)
- 2. RECEPTION
- 3. HALL
- 4. SPECIAL EXHIBITION
- 5. TEMPORARY EXHIBITION
- 6. MAORI ART/HISTORY EXHIBITION
- 7. PUBLIC RESEARCH/RESOURCE AREA
- 8. LIBRARY
- 9. ART EXHIBITION
- 10. LABORATORY/WORKSHOP
- 11. OFFICE
- 12. WORK STATION
- 13. LIBRARY
- 14. TEMPORARY STORAGE
- 15. TREATMENT ROOMS
- 16. PHOTO LAB



**4TH FLOOR PLAN**

- 1. CEREMONY HALL
- 2. HISTORY EXHIBITION
- 3. PUBLIC RESEARCH/RESOURCE AREA
- 4. LIBRARY
- 5. OFFICE
- 6. TRAINERS WORK ROOM
- 7. CONFERENCE ROOM
- 8. SPECIALIST RESOURCE ROOM



**SECTION B-B**