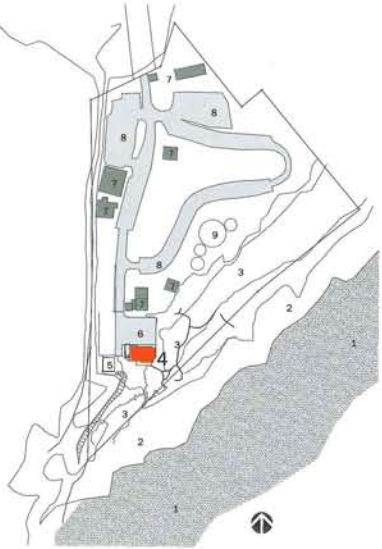


Reunion Aquatic Centre

Durban, KwaZulu-Natal

Architects: City Architecture Department, eThekweni Municipality with Michael Watts Architects
 Project Team: Michael Watts, Tiffany Murray, Seth Naidoo
 Structural Engineers: City Architecture Department, LSC Brunette
 Electrical Engineers: City Architecture Department, SNA Consulting Electrical Engineers
 Quantity Surveyor: City Architecture Department
 Environmental: Alan Smith Consulting & Sustainable Development Projects
 Contractor: C&R Contractors KwaZulu
 Photographer: Angela Shaw
 Text: Michael Watts

29° 59'33.75"S
 30° 57'7.14"E



Context plan

Context plan legend

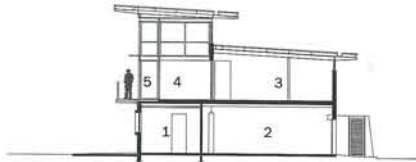
- 1 Indian ocean
- 2 Reunion beach
- 3 Dune bush
- 4 Reunion beach aquatic centre
- 5 Boat wash - upgraded
- 6 Ex ski-boat club parking
- 7 Ex building
- 8 Ex road/parking
- 9 Ex pool

The Reunion Aquatic Centre at Reunion Park, Isipingo, Durban was designed in response to the severely storm-damaged beach life-saving facility located at the mouth of the Isipingo River. After the original building was declared unsafe and eventually demolished, the decision was taken not to redevelop on the same site due to the risk of future wave-action damage.

An Environmental Impact Assessment [EIA] informed the relocation of the lifesavers' facility to the existing ski-boat club – a simple, largely single-storeyed brick structure bordering the dune vegetation at the southern edge of Reunion Park. This building, while structurally sound, had been vandalised and fallen into disuse.

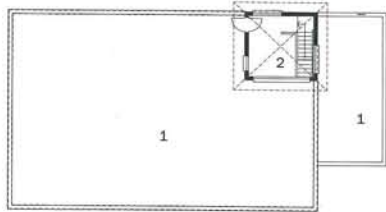
The eThekweni Parks and Recreation Department required the centre to accommodate club and professional lifesavers, the ski-boat club and beach maintenance personnel. While the existing structure could expand upwards, no increase in the building footprint was permitted. This posed a significant planning challenge as most of the proposed functions and facilities were more practically located on ground level with direct access to the beach.

The upper level was extended to accommodate lifesavers' change-rooms, training and duty rooms, and the ski-boat control tower and change-rooms. The remaining unused decked area was refurbished as viewing platforms.



Cross-section

- Cross-section**
- 1 First-aid room
 - 2 Store - lifesaving club
 - 3 Social/training room - lifesavers
 - 4 Duty room - pro lifesavers
 - 5 Observation deck



First floor plan before alteration

- First floor plan**
- 1 Flat roof
 - 2 Duty room



Ground floor plan before alteration

- Ground floor plan**
- 1 Ski-boat bar
 - 2 Ski-boat entertainment
 - 3 Store
 - 4 Kitchen
 - 5 Female toilet/change-room
 - 6 Male toilet/change-room
 - 7 Uncovered deck
 - 8 Tuck shop

The face-brick of the existing structure had weathered well and was retained to reduce maintenance and acknowledge the building's past and its relationship to context. In contrast, the new first-floor masonry component was plastered and the new lifesaving tower constructed in steel and glass.

The tower, notably taller than the original structure, acts as a beacon when viewed from the beach. The tower is accessed via a new stairwell, which creates a transparent double volume through the building's narrow north-south axis, articulating the lifesaving and ski-boat club components.

Roof forms were kept as simple as possible, with large overhangs to protect walls. Mosaics

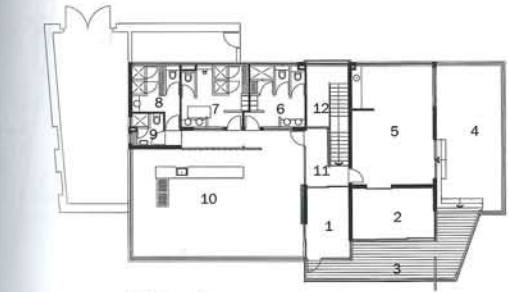
along the beach shower walls provide texture and interest. Dune vegetation, coastal red milkwoods and other indigenous tree species were reinstated along the building perimeter.

The development of the Aquatic Centre has provided a landmark for Reunion Park, rejuvenated the ski-boat and lifesaver clubs, upgraded facilities for a previously marginalised community, and is encouraging greater use of one of Durban's most beautiful beaches.



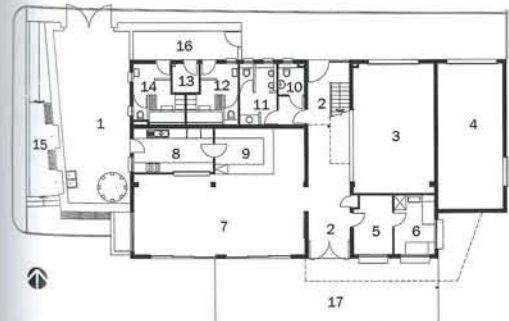
Longitudinal section

- Longitudinal section**
- 1 Tractor store - ski-boat club
 - 2 Female change-room - cleaners
 - 3 Male change-room - cleaners
 - 4 WC - ski-boat club
 - 5 WC - ski-boat lobby
 - 6 Store - lifesaving club
 - 7 Store - pro lifesavers
 - 8 Social/training area-lifesavers
 - 9 Entry (double volume)
 - 10 Female change-room - lifesaving club
 - 11 Male change-room - lifesaving club
 - 12 Female change-room - ski-boat club



First floor plan

- First floor plan**
- 1 Control tower - ski-boat club
 - 2 Duty room - pro lifesavers
 - 3 Observation deck
 - 4 Deck - pro lifesavers
 - 5 Social/training room - lifesavers
 - 6 Female change-room - lifesaving club
 - 7 Male change-room - lifesaving club
 - 8 Male change-room - ski-boat club
 - 9 Female change-room - ski-boat club
 - 10 Entertainment deck
 - 11 Landing
 - 12 Double volume



Ground floor plan

- Ground floor plan**
- 1 Tractor store - ski-boat club
 - 2 Entrance
 - 3 Store - lifesaving club
 - 4 Store - pro lifesavers
 - 5 Office - pro lifesavers
 - 6 First-aid room
 - 7 Entertainment area - ski-boat club
 - 8 Kitchen
 - 9 Bar
 - 10 Female/disabled WC - ski-boat club
 - 11 Male WC - ski-boat club
 - 12 Male change-room - cleaners
 - 13 Cleaners' store
 - 14 Female change-room - cleaners
 - 15 Public showers
 - 16 Cleaners' yard
 - 17 Uncovered deck

