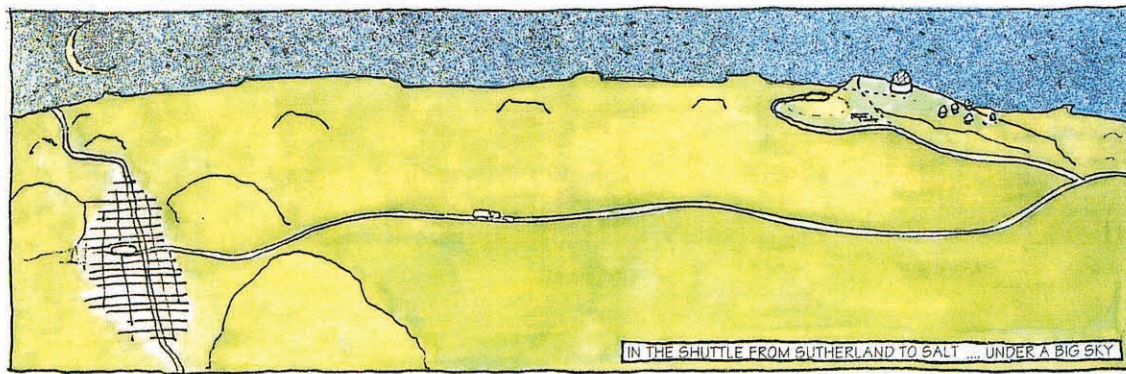


1. Auditorium
2. Exhibition hall
3. Spectroscope
4. Workshops/classrooms
5. Main courtyard

A new visitors centre for a large telescope near Sutherland

This scheme oozes fun, fantasy and architectural competency. The project is delightfully illustrated in a series of evocative cartoon sketches that takes one on a journey into this 'constellation of activities'.



Architect: Jane Visser - Mark Thomas Architects

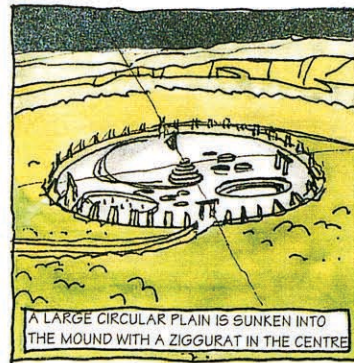
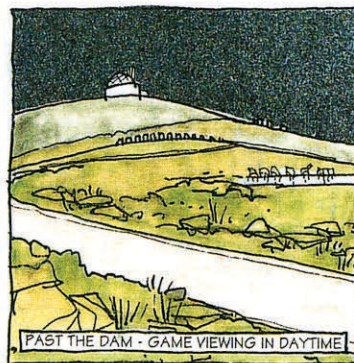
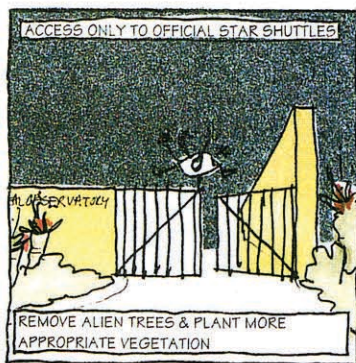
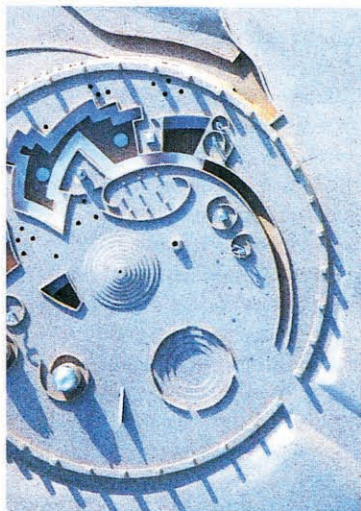
The sensitive setting of the building in a disused quarry has not only helped restore a visible scar in the rocky hillside but also allowed the building to be discretely tucked into the landscape.

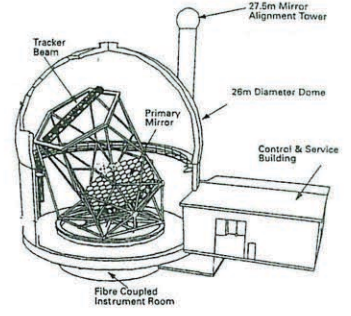
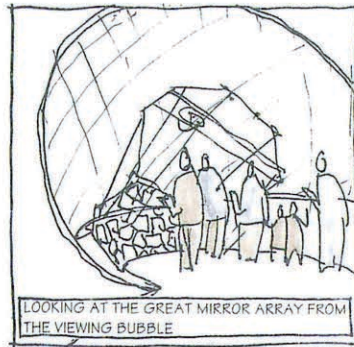
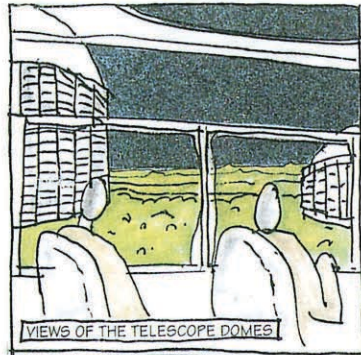
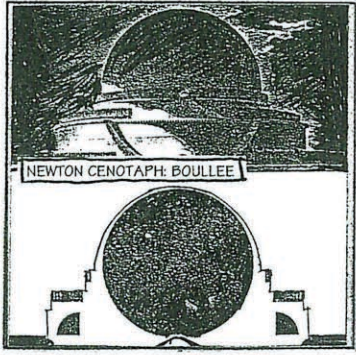
Having experienced the expansive Karoo by day and the vastness of the starlit sky by night, the "astronomical plan" welcomes and embraces the visitor with its sense of scale and enclosure. The formality of this circular plan is offset by the playful sculptural designs of the central ziggurat, amphitheatre, ramp elements and sunken courtyards.

By housing the public activities and educational facilities in the base of the building, the authors have successfully managed the potential problems of dealing with the area's extreme climatic conditions and the control of artificial light at night.

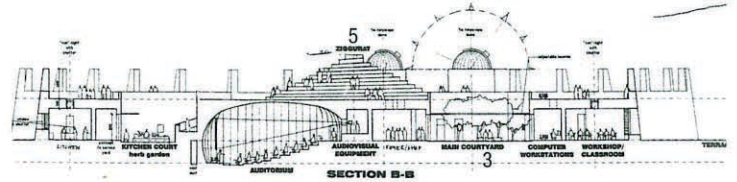
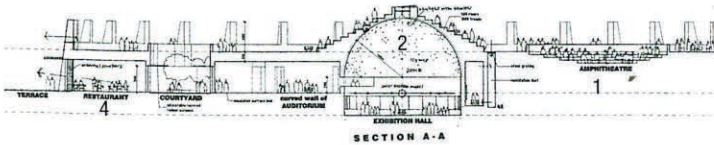
The proposed implementation of appropriate technology to maximise on the use of passive solar energy and the awareness of local building techniques is to be commended. The dialogue set up between building and site is inspiring and with its simplicity of structure, circulation and detail make it an exciting and believable building.

The level of presentation of this submission



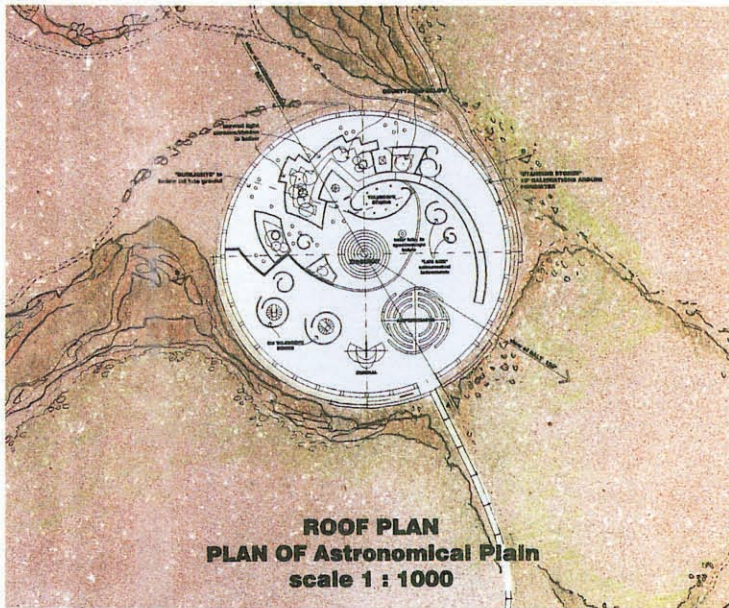


A cutaway view of the Hobby-Eberly Telescope facility, essentially identical to the proposed design for the Southern African Large Telescope.



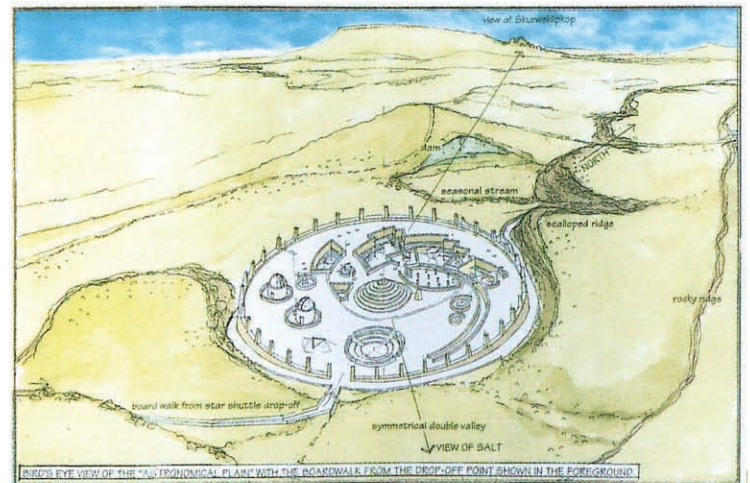
Sections

1. Amphitheatre
2. Exhibition hall
3. Courtyard
4. Restaurant
5. Ziggurat

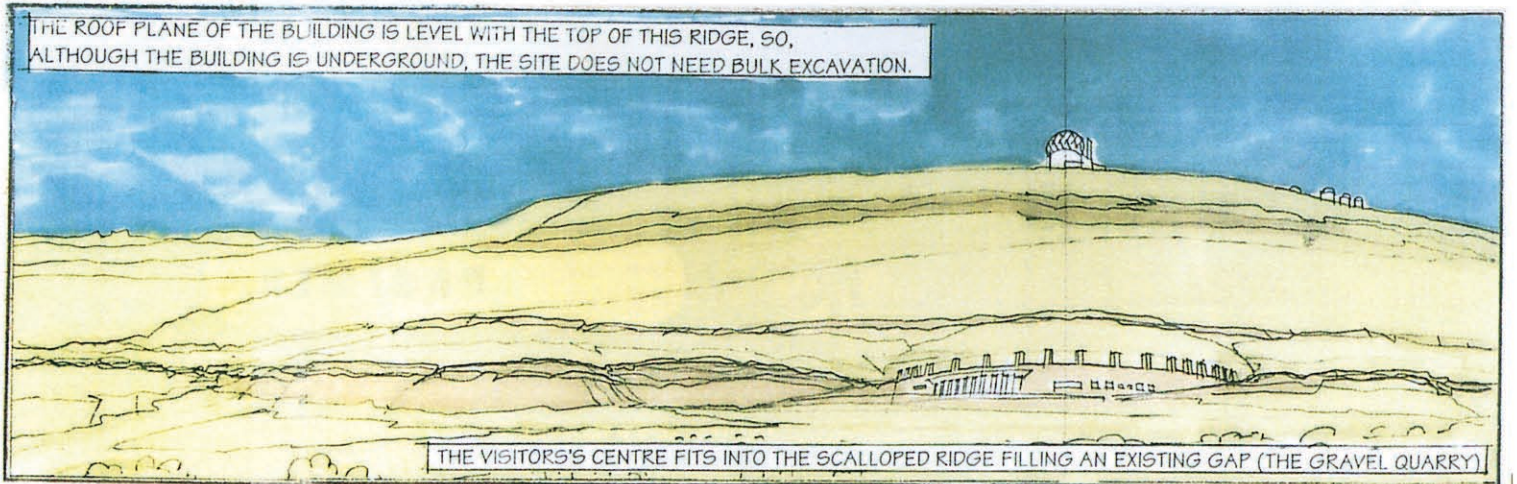


was of a particularly high standard and demonstrates the extensive research and commitment invested in this project. The

conceptual clarity of this submission and design development thereof sparkles as brightly as the stars on a clear Sutherland night. ■



THE ROOF PLANE OF THE BUILDING IS LEVEL WITH THE TOP OF THIS RIDGE, SO, ALTHOUGH THE BUILDING IS UNDERGROUND, THE SITE DOES NOT NEED BULK EXCAVATION.



THE VISITORS'S CENTRE FITS INTO THE SCALLOPED RIDGE FILLING AN EXISTING GAP (THE GRAVEL QUARRY)