

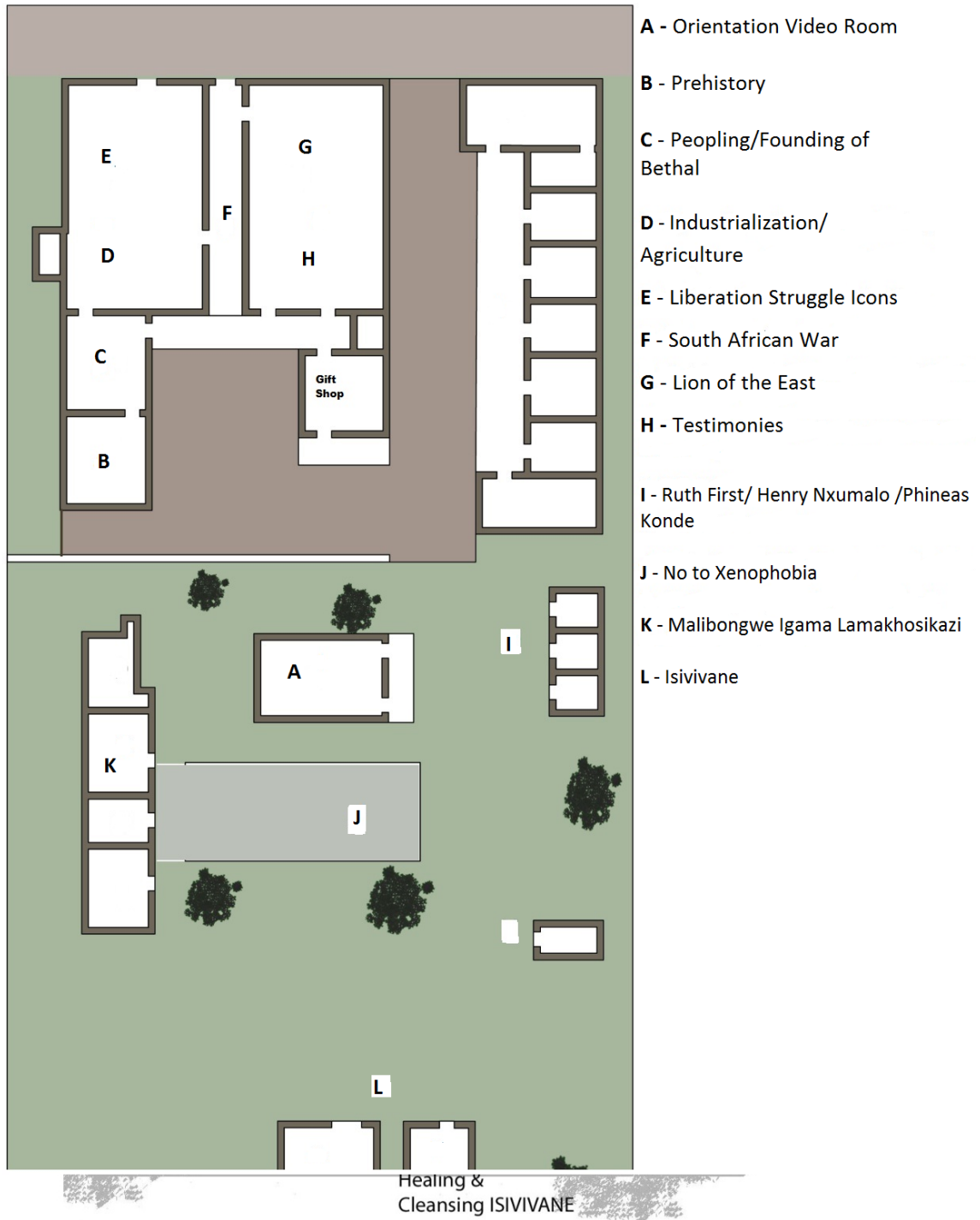
The Regeneration of Nomoya Masilela



The regeneration of the Nomoya Masilela Museum is a project that, at its heart, aims to revolutionise the lives of people in present day Bethal.

Commissioned by Mpumalanga's Govan Mbeki Municipality, the project's uniqueness is in its quest to establish a contemporary rural African people's shrine, transforming a space steeped in the history of apartheid into a vibrant space of healing, history and livelihood.

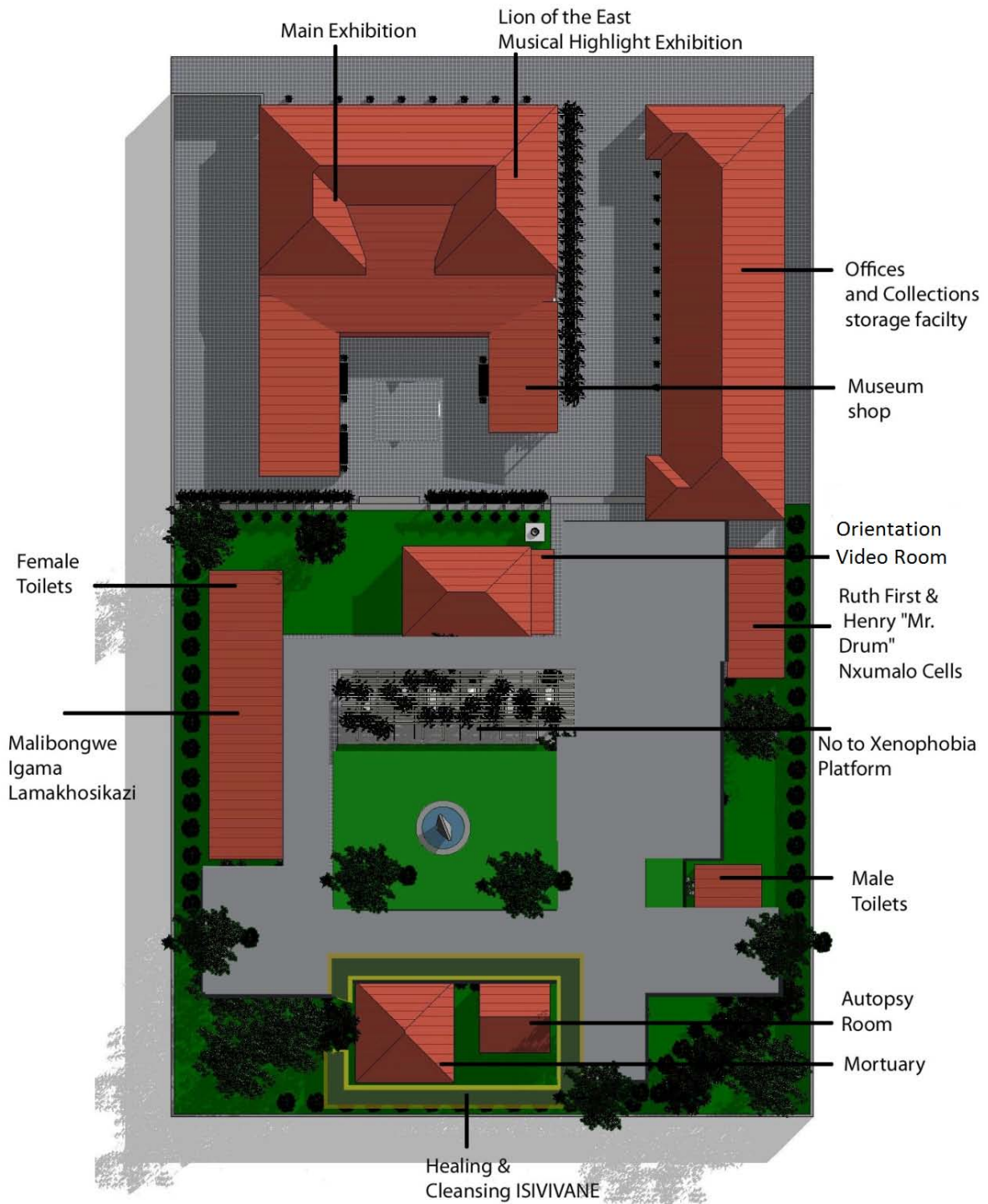
The primary brief for the project was to celebrate the 1950s Potato Boycott and the African National Congress struggle icons from the 1950's to the 1990s, while incorporating the founding of Bethal and highlighting the role of played by blacks coloureds and Indians in its development. Ultimately, it is an endeavour that also showcases the paleontological significance of the Mpumalanga province as a whole.



BETHAL MUSEUM SITE PLAN

The Nomoya Masilela Museum campus is a place of a skewed, brutal but rich history. In its past, the space has functioned as an office for Paul Kruger's Zuid Afrikanne Republic, a courthouse and police station complex, a clinic and also a preserve of local Afrikaner history. In all these incarnations, it was

a venue where Africans were detained, punished and excluded. Olusha Communications and Events were awarded the tender to carry out the restoration and renovation of this site and procured the services of heritage solutions company House of Memory to carry out the research and project management duties.



BETHAL MUSEUM SITE PLAN

A team of four, comprising the curator, researchers and writers collaborated closely for about eight weeks to develop the grand narrative for the Nomoya Masilela Museum, to integrate compelling stories, and to debate a language and style for the text of this exhibition. The University of Witwatersrand

History Department, was called in as quality controller, to identify the gaps, suggest additional materials to be considered, and to supply the books, the paper clippings, the DVDs and the films. The experience and the knowledge base of Wits, clearly elevated the gathering and arraying of information.



The Sidewalk Productions film crew interview Mr Nkosi, a key informant.

Gege Leme, who recently worked on the Samora Machel Museum in Mbuzini, was introduced to this special project once the stage of developing the overarching story, made up of individual narratives was nearing completion. She has been on site several times, going through the collections, and busy with the design process.

A number of relevant informants, family members, were visited on site, interviewed and photographed, on a number of occasions. Possible artifacts, memorabilia and materials were identified during this undertaking, and noted for further use when the show proper is coming up.

House of Memory remains committed to telling a balanced historical tale, not shying away from the contestation, and will integrate the story of the Afrikaner tale of Bethal and surrounds. Most current collections of the museum amply cover and depict this aspect of our history.

The project team

House of Memory/ Olusha – Project Management, Research, Narrative Development

Sirrechie Building Contraction – Renovations and Alterations

Siphelele Nxumalo – Architect and Urban Design

Gege Leme – Graphic Design, Exhibition Development

Sidewalk Film Production – Development of Orientation video

Rapuleng Production – Still Photos

Amos Hlatshwayo – Museum Manager (skills transfer beneficiary)

The project is slated for completion in June 2010
