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YAKWAZULU-NATALI

**SOCIAL CHANGE AS AN INSTIGATOR OF ARCHITECTURAL  
DESIGN TOWARDS A CONSTITUTIONAL COURT IN  
HARARE, ZIMBABWE.**

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Dissertation submitted to the School of Built Environment and Development Studies,  
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Master in Architecture

Durban

## **DECLARATION**

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Architecture, in the Master Programme in Architecture. University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa.

I declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. All citations, references and borrowed ideas have been duly acknowledged. I confirm that an external editor was / was not used and that my Supervisor was informed of the identity and details of my editor. It is being submitted for the degree of Masters of Architecture in The School of Built Environment and Development Studies, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa. None of the present work has been submitted previously for any degree or examination in any other university.

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Bokanibuhe Munodawafa BAS

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I am truly thankful.

## **DEDICATION**

Dedicated to my mother, Mrs. Janet Immaculate Munodawafa. Your love and support has been, and continues to be my source of inspiration. Thank you for always putting me in your prayers, I am truly grateful.

Regards

Your last born son.

## **ABSTRACT**

As a new social paradigm emerges from political change, its effects should be echoed through architecture. A new democracy needs an appropriate architectural image, centered on the aspects of social change, particularly that of identity, to encourage society to redefine its image. The built environment therefore needs to incorporate elements of social relevance in order to achieve a more successful and prosperous building. Architecture can be perceived as a relative manifestation of society and culture at a certain time. Political architecture can influence the political compass of the people exposed to it through abstract architectural expression. For that reason, new frames of reference need to be devised which sum up the social change within a country. The architecture of nations that embrace the concept of democracy should be a reflection of this political ideology. Therefore, the post-colonial architecture of Zimbabwe should be the expression of an 'open' democracy, one of transparent and accessible government buildings.

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## **CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION**



## **CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1.1 Background**

The character of the built environment epitomizes the nature of popular aesthetics during the time it is produced (Bragdon, 1971). Therefore a subsequent connection exists between public perception of the architecture and the political ideologies at the time of conception. As a country emerges from internal conflict, it struggles with its identity and position within a “new world.” However, as time progresses, this country develops an increased awareness of its political, social, and religious environment (Miller, 2011: 1). Architecture is a dynamic process rather than a neutral activity that reflects the society from which it emerges in terms of values, economics, politics and every other area of human experience (Davids, 2007). This research will focus on how the issues pertaining to social change influence architecture and the greater built environment.

Daniel Vinsand (2004) observes that politicians sometimes try to affect national sentiment through architecture because they believe there is a correlation between the effect of public buildings on national sentiment and politics. However, a specific style of architecture does not represent a specific polity. It is generally accepted that all architecture presents a message. These messages may be positive, negative or indifferent depending on the individual experiences and backgrounds of viewers (Miller; 2011; 1).

### **1.1.2 Motivation/Justification of the study**

Zimbabwe’s colonial history still impacts its political, economic and social development, and generates many of its current obstacles to effective democracy (Ndulo; 2010). Zimbabwe has recently adopted a new constitution that seeks to address the rights and needs of the people by building a united and prosperous nation founded on transparency, equality, freedom, justice, honesty, Christian values, and the dignity of hard work (COZ, 20, 2013). This new constitution creates an opportunity to embody these founding principles through the built form in a way that positively affects the nation at large: the issue of a post-colonial architectural expression. Therefore, this research seeks to document how architecture can play a role in creating, reflecting and supporting democratic processes and national identity through the built environment. It will be used to formulate criteria for the design of a meaningful and identifiable Constitutional Court of Zimbabwe.

## **1.2 – DEFINITION OF THE PROBLEM**

### **1.2.1 Definition of the Problem**

Given that the political and social context of Zimbabwe is one of a nation that has emerged from colonization, major branches of the government such as the judiciary and parliament should not be housed in buildings inherited from the colonial era. These institutions' current infrastructures have become inappropriate for a contemporary Zimbabwean society that continually seeks to celebrate its significant cultural and political progress since 1980; current government buildings are antiquated. Little or no attempt has been made to develop an architecture that is congruent with Zimbabwe's post-colonial identity as an independent democracy, nor its reactionary preoccupation with transparency and accessibility. Therefore this study is interested in filling the gap that exists in Zimbabwe's post-colonial identity. It intends to create an infrastructure that is representative of contemporary Zimbabwean society. This will bring about greater social significance because the post-colonial society at large will be able to relate and find meaning in a building that symbolizes their generation and modern culture.

### **1.2.2 Aims**

The main the aim of this study is to investigate how architecture can be used to represent social change through a better understanding of Zimbabwe's culture, democracy and national identity.

### **1.2.3 Objectives**

- To investigate and understand the issues of social change.
- To investigate the social changes within the Zimbabwean context.
- To explore political architecture and its relation to social change.
- To identify elements of architecture that have been used to represent and implement social change.
- To formulate recommendations as to how issues of social change should influence civic architecture.

## **1.3 – SETTING OUT THE SCOPE**

### **1.3.1 Delimitation of Research Problem**

The following will describe which materials relating to the research topic will be covered in order to outline the boundaries and limitation of the study. The research will be limited to issues relating directly to the built environment; political, economic, and social issues in the research area will be mentioned but not explored. The focus will be to create an architectural statement that personifies the aspirations of Zimbabwe's democratic, political and legislative future.

### **1.3.2 Definition of terms**

The following are some of the key words and terms used in the research document. Defining these key words and terms will elucidate their use within the scope of the research.

Democracy;

Democracy is a government in which the people rule themselves, either directly as in the small city-states or through elected representatives. It is derived from *demokratia*—*demos*: the people or the citizenry, and *kratosrule* (Sudjic, 2001: 12).

National Identity;

National identity is a theory of political legitimacy which holds that the political and the national unit should be consistent (Vale, 1992: 45)

National Sentiment;

National sentiment is at the core of nationalism and developed as a product of looking to the past for the answers to national unity (Vinsand, 2004: 32)

Political Architecture:

Political Architecture comprises public buildings whose intent is to represent governmental ideologies, whether past, present or future (Sudjic & Jones, 1999).

### **1.3.3 Stating the Assumptions**

- The built environment is a 'record' of political ideologies established through form, space and time.

- Architecture can be used to convey a message that can influence society.
- Since political buildings represent certain aspects of that society's identity, they hold a special significance to society.

### **1.3.4 Key Questions**

- How does social change instigate architectural and urban design?
- How does social change manifest through architecture and the greater built environment?
- What is the national identity of the Zimbabwean people, and how can it influence the built environment?
- What is the impact of society on political architecture?
- How can the issues of social change in a nation influence civic architecture?

### **1.3.5 Hypothesis**

As a new social paradigm emerges from political change, its effects should be echoed through architecture. The built environment therefore needs to incorporate elements of social relevance in order to achieve a more successful and prosperous building. Social change can therefore be used as a design generator of architecture.

## **1.4 – CONCEPTS AND THEORIES**

### **1.4.1 Introduction**

Many theories can be used to express social change through the built form. This dissertation will focus on two theories: critical regionalism and space syntax theory. This is because of their relation to identity, power and democracy. The following sub-chapter explains the research approach that will be taken by the study to establish an outline for the appropriate framework suitable for the research problem.

### **1.4.2. Critical Regionalism**

Critical Regionalism originates from architect Alexander Tzonis and historian Liane Lefaivre's need to break away from an architecture that was mindlessly reproduced for the sake of cultural or vernacular concerns (Lefaivre & Tzonis, 2003). Its approach to the making of buildings is based on the credence that buildings should respond to and reflect specific local surroundings-

-this can be seen as developing an understanding of a region's 'deep structure.' Critical Regionalism acknowledges the local environment and draws forms from its context. It is the concern for place and the use of regional design elements by synthesizing culture and civilization, as well as nature and technology (Nesbitt, 1996: 483). Its methods emphasize the identity, the *genius loci* of the region (the particular atmosphere of a place), rather than adopting universal doctrines. Critical Regionalism mainly addresses the social, cultural and physical constraints of a region in order to create a diversely responsive architecture (Lefavre & Tzonis, 2003).

Critical Regionalism considers contextual elements such as scenery and historic references, without falling into imitation, thereby emphasizing the importance of 'place-ness' (Lefavre & Tzonis, 2003). It does not seek to create reinstallations of a strong vernacular, but aims to vernacularize modern elements. There is an emphasis on place rather than space, as well as architectonics rather than scenography (Nesbitt, 1996: 469, 486). This achieves a dialectic expression of architecture comprising historical and topographical attributes imbedded in the built form. Critical Regionalism ultimately addresses issues of local identity and expression by dealing with the social, political, cultural and phenomenological issues of a region (Nesbitt, 1996).

Architects such as Alvar Alto, Le Corbusier and Tadao Ando are recognized as Critical Regionalists. They seem to possess a deep understanding of the places surrounding their buildings. This is evident in the form of their buildings and how they are placed on their sites. Critical Regionalists often represent the culture and identity of the areas in which they build.

### **1.4.3. Space Syntax**

Space Syntax is a term that is used to describe a family of theories and techniques concerning the relationship between space and society. It came from a dynamic research group in London, led by Professor Bill Hillier (Hillier & Hanson, 1984). Primarily, it is a method of investigating spatial complexes in an effort to identify the particular structure that exists at the level of the entire configuration. It is thought that by holding a spatial configuration to be an object of the society that constructed it, then by examining such a system of spaces, it should be possible to fully understand the society itself (Dalton & Hölscher, 2006: 10). Moreover, the link between society and space is reciprocal; not only does a society form the spatial systems it uses, the

public is directly affected and influenced by the spaces they use. A configuration of spaces could affect its users through pedestrian movement. The configuration forms a spatial hierarchy where some spaces become more strategic and others less so. These strategic spaces are more accessible and tend to attract more pedestrian movement than other, more segregated spaces (Bafna, 2003).

Another aspect of Space Syntax theory is the non-discursivity of space which describes the spatial configuration of a building as how it interacts with society through constrained spaces, be it physically in height, depth, sound or light. This subliminal interaction is registered by the society as rule systems that suggest how to behave in a socially acceptable and recognizable way in that particular space (Hillier, 2007). Hillier suggests that architecture is a science with an opportunity for an artistic aspect in its manifestation (Hillier, 2007).

Space Syntax theory relates uniquely with the *genius loci* concept and Critical Regionalism by providing concrete scientific validity to both; it justifies the importance for a building to be contextually responsive.

#### **1.4.4. Conclusion to Concepts and Theories**

Political architecture has a social significance particular to itself, therefore the architecture must respond accordingly to the physical, spatial and social attributes of the context (Yaneva, 2012). The historical and topographical attributes of the region contribute to the expression of local identity. Neglecting these regional elements would result in architecture that the public cannot familiarize with. In addition, architectural expression should not dwell in the past, but use these historic elements to innovate new designs that relate to the context. A clear understanding of the above mentioned theories will inform the research topic with more specific methods of interpreting socio-political views through the built environment.

### **1.5. RESEARCH METHODS AND MATERIALS**

#### **1.5.1 Research Process**

This section summarizes the methods that will be used to gather and examine the research for this study. It shows the scope and also denotes the methods that will be used for selecting and analyzing the research to inform the study. The intention of the research is to establish a

methodical technique for the compilation and evaluation of relevant information to clarify and resolve the problem identified in the problem statement.

### **1.5.2 The Study Area and Setting**

The study area will focus on the city of Harare firstly because it is the nation's administrative, economic and legislative capital. It is also the location of most government departments. Harare is situated at a longitude of 31° 5' East and a latitude of 17° 48' South, with a sub-tropical climate of mild winters and warm summers. Rainfall is normally experienced in the summer season from November to April (Mercuri, 1985).

### **1.5.3 Primary Research**

This includes investigations focused on the design approaches, contextual settings, historical background, urban studies, cultural implications and the buildings' impact on its surroundings. The research will make use of the following techniques:

- Observing environmental behavior

This involves systematically watching people use their environment; individuals, small or big groups, and observing what they do. It also involves observing how a physical environment supports or impedes behaviors that take place within it and the effects the setting has on how people interact with each other. Observing environmental behavior is simply looking at how people behave in and use space (Hall, 1966).

- Observing physical traces

This is the systematic observation of the physical surroundings in the quest to find reflections of previous activities. Traces may either be conscious or subconscious changes people have made to the environment. Such data begins to assume how an environment came to be, how it was designed, the use of the space and above all how that environment meets the needs of its users. This gives researchers a better understanding of the people who use the space (Zeisel, 1984: 89).

- Focused interviews

Focused interviews are a means of probing questions methodically used to ascertain how people think, feel, know and behave. They can be used to discover how people

delineate a situation, the value they place in their actions, as well as the thought and emotional processes relating to their behavior in the specific situation. (Zeisel, 1984: 137).

- **Standardized questionnaire**

By asking the same questions to a large number of people in a standardized questionnaire, researchers identify similarities in the opinions of groups of people. It is important to have a clear problem, and to understand the underlying concepts and issues the researcher's wishes to probe. Study of questionnaire responses yields useful data (Zeisel, 1984: 157).

#### **1.5.4 Secondary Research**

Secondary research involves the collection of information from studies done by other researchers that will add towards a resolution of the research problem (Dawson, 2009: 41). The section will gather information from multiple sources: books, journal articles and structured reports by relevant sources. The information will be relevant to this study area to ensure that the information gained builds on existing research that adds value to the relevant fields of architectural study.

#### **1.5.5 Methodology**

The study focuses on aspects regarding the national identity and political nature of public buildings within their urban contexts. The buildings will be analysed critically according to the concepts, theories and the conclusions obtained from the literature review. The researched information and the empirical data will be combined to analyze precedents from Southern Africa and abroad, case studies from Southern Africa, and all buildings that reflect some aspect of social change, particularly of a social-political nature. All the information will then be combined to form a qualitative analysis which should highlight the relevant points and recommendations for instilling a sense of national identity and democracy in architecture.

#### **1.5.6. Chapter Outline**

The findings of the research have been structured into ten chapters, the first of which provides the background and introduction to the subject of social change as well as the definition of the problem and aims and objectives. It also sets out the scope of this research. The various concepts and theories relating to social change are also discussed within this chapter. The broad



literature review is covered in chapters' two to five, with chapter two mainly focusing on the theoretical framework of social change. All the social, political and cultural dimensions of social change are then linked to architecture in chapter three, focusing on issues of democracy and identity with regards to their relation to architecture. Chapter four looks at how similar nations and architects around the world have dealt with social change within the built environment. The chapter gives a more practical understanding of the subject. Chapter five and six follow with a critical analysis of precedent studies and case studies that investigate examples of civic buildings that deal with issues of social change around the world and within South Africa. The studies deal with the background and historical issues, design brief, site and contextual specifics as well as how the society at large is affected. The analysis of the results of the precedent and case studies will be discussed in chapter seven, drawing links between the primary research and literature reviewed in order to explore the issue the relationship between social change and architecture. Finally, chapter eight concludes the research by summarizing the main issues emanating from the research. This re-evaluates at the research question while providing a response to the hypothesis in order to formulate recommendations for further study.

## **CHAPTER 2 THEORISING SOCIAL CHANGE**

## **CHAPTER 2 THEORISING SOCIAL CHANGE**

### **2.1. INTRODUCTION**

All succeeding generations are associated with changes which give them a distinctive mark in history. Often these changes are of such minor importance that there is little to differentiate generations from each other. Every social situation, regardless of its origin, may become the rallying cry of a social change (Elmer, 1951). With so many social changes occurring at such a rapid pace, social researchers are more than ever trying to explain and interpret these events. These attempts are not new, but are actually as old as man himself. Every theory of society has a built-in stability-change dimension. Some sociological theories take change in a social item as the phenomenon to be clarified, while others regard the re-establishment of some stable state of a social item as the phenomenon to be clarified (Strasser, 1977). Change in the case of the latter is taken as a shift from one state of a social item to another. Other theories still don't stress either aspect. The objective of this chapter is to engage in an in-depth study of the principles and theories of social change, in order to achieve a better understanding of the phenomena, particularly focusing on developing countries (*ibid.*).

### **2.2. DEFINING SOCIAL CHANGE**

Social change is the transformation of culture and social organization/structure over time. Society is never static, thus social, political, economic and cultural changes occur constantly. There are a whole range of classic theories and research methods available within sociology for the study of social change (Macionis, 1997).

There are four main characteristics of social change:-

1. It happens everywhere, but the rate of change varies from place to place.
2. Social change is sometimes intentional but often unplanned.
3. Social change often generates controversy.
4. Some changes matter more than others do (*ibid.*).

Social change builds community-based responses that address underlying social problems on an individual, institutional, community, national and/or international level. Social change can transform attitudes, behaviors, laws, policies and institutions to better reflect values of inclusion, fairness, diversity and opportunity. Social change involves the collective action of

individuals who are closest to the social problems to develop solutions that address social issues (*ibid.*).

### **2.2.1 Causes of Social Change:**

1. Technological and economic changes.
2. Modernization.
3. Urbanization.
4. Bureaucratization.
5. Conflict and competition.
6. Political and legal power.
7. Ideology.
8. Diffusion of culture.
9. Acculturation: the process in which a minority is absorbed into the majority and entirely loses its distinctiveness (Cragun R & Cragun D, et al, 2006).

## **2.3 GOALS OF SOCIAL CHANGE ACTIVITY**

**Resistance:** - this is when a society acts to defend and or protect itself from new, outside oppression in order to restore things to normal. Societies are said to be “more free” when they feel safer from new oppression (Schutt, 2001).

**Liberation (social justice):** - this is when a society acts to overcome on-going, traditional oppression in order to achieve the full measure of everyday rights and opportunities promised in the social charter (*ibid.*).

**Democratization**— action to spread decision- making power broadly available to everyone affected by those decisions. (*ibid.*)

**Humanization** — action to ensure that society will defend or protect the rights of everyone in society, especially those who cannot do so on their own behalf. (Schutt, 2001).

## **2.4. THEORIES OF SOCIAL CHANGE**

Change is such an obvious characteristic of social reality that any social-scientific theory, whatever its hypothetical starting point, must eventually address it. Social change over the

years has been identified in various ways, furthermore, conceptions of change appear to have reflected the historical realities of different epochs in large degrees (Haferkamp and Smelser, 1992). Giesen (1980) shows that even though ideas of time existed and evolved over thousands of years, stability and order were the norm and changes were exceptional. However, the dominant conceptions of change itself have changed in more recent centuries. The French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution in England marked the inception of social change as a concept for comprehending a continual dynamic in social units (Haferkamp and Smelser, 1992). Widespread change became the norm, and, congruently, social philosophers and later sociologists progressively substituted the older ideas of natural limitations and the contractual constructions of natural and rational order with impressions of social change, despite the slow development of precise formulations. For these philosophers, social change was “a property of social order, known as change” (Luhmann, 1984: 471). As a result, observers began to look in retrospect at the dramatic changes that had occurred in earlier eras such as the development of the Egyptian Empire.

In an attempt to explain far-reaching processes of change in the past and present, contemporary theories of social change have now become more generalized. Hermann Strasser and Susan C. Randall (1981: 16) in a review of contemporary theories of change, identified the following aspects for these changes: "magnitude of change, direction, rate of change, time span, and amount of violence involved." Any theory of change must contain three main elements that must stand in definite relation to one another:

1. Structural determinants of social change, such as population changes, the dislocation occasioned by war, or strains and contradictions.
2. Processes and mechanisms of social change, including precipitating mechanisms, social movements, political conflict and accommodation, and entrepreneurial activity.
3. Directions of social change, including structural changes, effects, and consequences

Graphically, these may be arranged as follows:

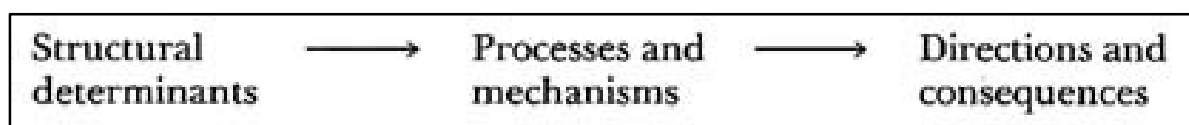


Table 2-1 Directions of social change Source: (Haferkamp and Smelser, 1992: 2).

This interpretation of the metaframework for models of change is overly simple, for among the structural causes of different processes of social change are the accumulated consequences of previous cycles of change (Haferkamp and Smelser, 1992).

According to Purohit and Mohan (1976: 372), theories of social change should reflect four basic orientations:

- Social change is of little significance
- Social change is inherently progressively disadvantageous
- Social change is evolutionary or progressive and moves towards positive ends.
- Social change is a cyclical process.

Martindale (1962) states that social change in the twentieth century has been interpreted as either cyclical, positively progressive, or denied the importance of social change just like functionalism. Pitirim Sorokin's (1928) view of rhythms of social phenomena as the only source of generating 'social laws' was among the early twentieth century explanations of social change. His theory assumed built-in mechanisms of adjustment by which one super system is replaced by another. There was no sequence to the replacement of the super systems (Purohit & Mohan, 1976 cited from Boskoff, 1972). Moore (1963: 3) defines social change as the significant alteration of social structures, including consequences and manifestations of such structures embodied in customs, values, cultural products and symbols. The broadness of this definition is sufficient enough to include cultural change, which is commonly distinguished from social change, although both could be classified as social systems (Martindale, 1962).

Wiswede and Kutsch (1978, vii) see the analysis of social change as the touchstone of sociology despite the study still being underdeveloped to this day. Cipolla (1978) and Opp (1976) agree to this deduction and go on to give two reasons for it. The first reason for the underdevelopment of the study of social changes is that mono-causal theories survive in one form or the other, theories such as cultural emanationist theories, materialist theories, and more specific examples such as the explanation of social changes by the size and composition of the population of a society, or by changes in key actors' attitudes, despite the fact of them not being able to explain comprehensive social changes. Such theories generally fall short when facing the challenge of explaining unexpected changes, or when they are used for prognostication. The second reason is that those who recognize the necessity of multi-causal explanations are faced with the

challenge of coming up with sufficiently complex interactive and predictive models. Simple theories are easier to create though they tend to be inadequate, whereas complex theories are difficult to construct formally but are more likely to be realistic (Haferkamp and Smelser, 1992).

Comprehensive theories of the sociological masters tend to inform the research of many scholars, despite the limited focus of these scholars. Focused studies of changes in economic structure and stratification are found in the works of Goldthorpe, Haferkamp, and Münch; examinations of changes in political and social structures are found in the works of Touraine and Eyerman (Haferkamp and Smelser, 1992).

Vast volumes of literature have been organized around general themes in the contemporary study of social change. These themes are the tenacity of evolutionary thought, cultural change and structural differentiation, theories of modernity, modernity and new forms of social movements, modernity and social inequality, and international and global themes (*ibid.*).

#### **2.4.1 The Functionalist Theory of Social Change**

The Functionalist theory was widely criticized for its ostensibly static character and its inability to deal with conflicts and change during the 1940's and the 1950's (Smith, 1973). The functionalist response to the changing social and political scene was to expand its theoretical formulations in order to cope with social change and to explore the theoretical issues raised by the dramatic changes taking place all over the world. The main gist of the functionalist effort to cope with the change has been a restoration of 'neo-evolutionary' theory (Smith, 1973). The major aspects of the theory are as follows:-

- Differentiation
- Reintegration
- Adaptation.

Studies have led to the assumption of various sequences that serve to explain such phenomena as the origins and development of civilization, modernization, revolution and social movements (Smith, Routledge and Paul, 1973). Smith argues that the main flaws in the functionalist theory of change are the vagueness of the concepts that are used and the broadness of their outcomes, the reduction of the evaluation of change to merely an explanation and ordering of structural

types, as well as the prominence upon endogenous sources of change that lead to the disdain of exogenous features such as diffusion, exchange, invasion and conquest (Chinoy, 1975).

Concepts such as Differentiation and integration, which are in line with factionalism, are so broad that they obscure significant distinctions. If modernization refers to the related process of integration and differentiation, then just about any period of social change could be so described such as development of new nations in recent years and the evolution of the Roman Empire (Chinoy, 1975 cited from Smith 1973). Changes that take place during particular historic periods and policies linked to the transformation of developing countries are often associated with the term 'modernization'. Smith sees this as a flaw in the analysis because of the comparative nature of functionalism that compares structural sequences without effectively identifying how social structures are transformed. He also believes that neo-evolutionary functionalism cannot present suitable sociology of historic change. Smith then suggests that an exogenous theory would prove more useful (Chinoy, 1975).

## **2.5 ARCHITECTURAL MODERNISM, AND THE CREATION OF DEMOCRATIC SPACE**

Sociologists are known to have long acknowledged architecture's significance. One would assume architecture to be of paramount interest to sociologists because of its means of organizing social space and coordinating social interaction, yet very few have investigated systematically the role of architecture in creating the spatial dynamics of social reality. This may be because of the sociologist's emphasis on the temporal dimensions of social life (Abbot, 2000). Giddens (1981) believes that focusing on the temporal to the extent of excluding the spatial is to betray social reality (Abbot, 2000 cited from Giddens, 1981). Architecture's public temperament gives it symbolic significance (Sarfatti-Larson, 1993: 16). Despite sociologists having ignored the social significance of architecture, architects are known to have understood their craft as central to societal wellbeing. Architects, through the decades have seen themselves as social engineers, devoted to resolving problems and improving society at large. (Abbot, 2000). Louis Sullivan is a good example of an architect who worked towards leading society to a glorious democratic future. He is commonly considered as the prophet of architectural modernism. Seeing himself as some kind of social practitioner, Sullivan believed that sociology was the most urgent of the disciplines.



Abbot (2000: 65) believes in the significance of what social actors think and do. Furthermore, he is convinced that leading architects throughout the world have been influential in improving society. He believes individuals such as Sullivan who changed the course of architectural design through the power of their ideas, thereby altered the social environment.

When the city of Chicago was engulfed and destroyed by fire, Chicago's post-fire architects and engineers saw themselves positioned to design an urban environment consistent with and encouraging of democratic society. The future they envisioned was nothing short of a democracy triumphant (Abbot, 2000). Sullivan saw this as an opportunity to let humans control the real circumstances of their lives; a truly novel human democratic experiment. He understood democracy to partially depend on man's capability to unite circumstances with human ambitions (Abbot, 2000 cited from Duncan, 1989). If democracy were to be fulfilled, each citizen must be positioned to transform situations in accordance with his or her ambitions, provided that these are consistent with the dignity and sovereignty of self. He considered this to be everyone's moral obligation and he believed that the 'artist' would bear the most burden, in which role he saw himself (Abbot, 2000). Sullivan blames artists of the past for creating environments that denied humans their humanity. Chicago was to be his gateway to forging an architectural environment that would awaken the democratic possibilities that had been lost through feudal mystification. Sarfatti-Larson (1993:32) believed that European Modernists had two things in common. The first being that they assumed progress demanded an escape from the past. Secondly, the Europeans assumed that art was a vehicle of positive transformation and that through architecture, brave and better worlds could be created. All this had been revealed decades before by Sullivan. His work inspired the likes of Frank Lloyd Wright and Mies van der Rohe (Abbot, 2000).

Sullivan interpreted the skyscraper as the ideal expression of democracy, the new world on the horizon. It established man's freedom from history eventuating in his control over situations in communion with his peers. However, the evaluation of the tall building has taken a different direction in the past few decades. Sullivan's view of the "proud and soaring" towers as antithetical to democratic principles and aspirations was summarily dismissed by a wide range of ideologies. (Habermas, 1985).

The work of photographer Berenice Abbott was quite relevant to this particular critique. His images depicted the tall building giving a foreboding expression to a world over which humans had lost control. The skyscrapers overpowering dominance over the landscape stripped humans of their agency. The organic link between humans and their physical environment had been lost, rendering humans incapable of communing with it. In the end, Abbott frames a world in which the skyscraper inspires the attenuation of selves, each standing as an island, overcome by a kind of bewilderment that would have astounded Sullivan and his colleagues (Abbot, 2000). A skyline was the outcome of the skyscrapers (Warner, 1984). Symbols of power, rendered as abstract art were the outcome of this transformation, creating an imagery that was the urban dweller's pride, one that they mistakenly believed offered hope for the future. This illusion deflected attention from the source of urban problems and subdued those victimized by them. The skyscrapers created social problems such as poverty, unemployment and class cleavages; problems that were hidden beneath artful yet deceptive images that were in fact the source of the problem. In a few decades, the notion of the skyscraper transformed from being a symbol of democracy and individual freedom, to one that imprisons humans within corporate bureaucracies, becoming the force over which no one has any control (Abbot, 2000). Sullivan's dream never materialized, but crushed was by the very structure he assumed was its fulfillment.

The central difficulty with the design and construction of democratic architecture remains one of transforming the theoretical notion of democracy into a tangible democratic space. The concept of raising interaction around a building through its landscape was favored by Jane Jacobs and William H. Whyte. Whyte (1988) particularly lauded the interaction achieved as a result of the varying architectural and geographic landscapes in urban Europe. The difficulty of catalyzing meaningful interaction was encountered by Sullivan, but the way each architect deals with this problem is different. The first step towards designing a democratic space and envisioning its possible interactions is always the crystallization of democratic concepts in the architect's mind. The political hopes, ideologies and goals of the proletariat, as well as the gentry, in the specific region are shaped and reflected by successful democratic architectural landscapes. Sullivan's attempts to articulate the notions of democracy in building form are similar to the activities of contemporary sociologists who seek to expose power by exhaustively scrutinizing societal systems (Abbot, 2000).

## **2.6 ARCHITECTURE IN A SOCIALLY CHANGING WORLD**

Changes that occur in architectural style can be regarded as a form of social change and can also be incorporated under the study of social change since it has transformed from the dialectic notions of the ancient Greeks to the modern theories of the nineteenth and twentieth century philosophers and social scientists (Gutenschwager, 1996). A structure such as this one would regard the culture of postmodernism including its artistic and architectural styles as a response to political-economic changes taking place throughout the world. Thus greater importance should be given to the dialectical role of architecture in constructing reality. Gutenschwager (ibid) believes that architecture, as an art form has undergone minimal transformation over the past century as compared to artistic and literary styles, however the emergence of the two architectural styles, postmodernism and deconstruction marked a change in architecture and calls for an interpretation that will locate recent architecture within the larger social and cultural context (Gutenschwager, 1996: 246, cited from Jameson, 1984).

Some architectural objectives require substantial degrees of technical and or artistic skill. A clear organization of materials, analysis of structures and a clear articulation of functional spaces is required in determining the success of even the simplest shelter. Architecture at an abstract level provides an aesthetic experience by designing spaces into compositions of symmetry or asymmetry and so on. In the end, all these intentions are embodied in a building or buildings that act as a social artifact. This lead Gutenschwager (1996) to the belief that architecture is purely symbolic, an aspect best seen in monuments such as the Eiffel Tower in which other functions are present but suppressed. He explains that this symbolic aspect is present in all architecture, regardless of the scale. Architecture, like symbolism suggests social relations, predominantly hierarchical ones, consequently intersecting with the social world in both a political-economic sense and a moral sense. (Gutenschwager, 1996). To have a better understanding of this role of architecture as a symbol, an analysis of the nature of symbols and their social constitution needs to be done.

## **2.7 SYMBOLS IN SOCIETY**

The capacity for representation was a key evolutionary change that established the beginning of human existence (Gutenschwager, 1996). Homo sapiens gained an enormous advantage over other forms of life by being able to imagine and represent phenomena that were not present. We live in a world of representations and abstractions that we humans have created, most of

these predate our personal existence, and symbol making will go on after we are gone. This is a trans-historical process in which humans play a passive role, however in this role humans have actively engaged in learning, using, and, in some cases, altering these symbols. Moreover, evidence from archaeological and anthropological research seems to point to the resilient nature of symbolic systems and their close relation to the maintenance of culture. The overall structure of meanings and behavior that together constitute a culture are always incorporated by change (Foster, Botscharow, 1990). This illustrates that symbol making is essential to human existence. Communication based on common symbols and their meanings is indispensable to human survival given the obvious material independencies that characterize human societies. With this in mind, it is essential to highlight here that the creation, use, and continuation of symbols is not a decisive process--it cannot be deduced to a scientific or mechanistic metaphor. In fact, the dialectic process whereby symbols are created and used is filled with ambiguity (Gutenschwager, 1996). Human behavior cannot be explained by a set of rules except in an empirical way, which is, of course, also the space in which one can speak of human freedom. It is from this freedom, this ambiguity that anxiety has emerged in human existence: that the social order will fall apart. The maintenance of symbol systems became a matter of human survival because of the lack of a natural source of meaning or order in human affairs. Natural is meant in the sense of being genetic or biological. Ambiguity gives rise to the possibility of societal breakdown, and there lurks chaos and death (ibid.). Humans are caught in this dilemma and this can be summarized in the following continuum:

Center	:	Dialectic	:	Decadence
Order	:	Contradiction	:	Anarchy
Structure	:	Irony	:	Nihilism
Dominance	:	Ambiguity	:	Chaos
Oppression	:	Uncertainty	:	Death

Table 2-2 Source: Gutenschwager, 1996

The issue is in maintaining the social order without losing sight of the inherent dialectical nature of that order. (Gutenschwager, 1996).

Those who make up a community should collectively agree on the meanings of symbols necessary to perform the interdependent tasks for the community's survival. Hierarchical classification systems based on shared perceptions of object characteristics are used to organize

symbols. The human world would be chaotic, and humans literally would not be able to exist, without shared and agreed upon hierarchical systems. In other words, public communication and classification systems must naturally occur (Botscharow, 1990). Language therefore is controlled, collectively, making communication possible. Symbols are socially ordered and controlled in the same way, as representations of the collective consciousness. The system of controlled symbols and meanings is referred to as a social paradigm or a conceptual framework. This social paradigm is the subjective reality of a community context (Gutenschwager, 1996: 247, cited from Berger, Luckmann, 1967).

Human society in its evolution, has developed specialized divisions of reality with independent symbol systems. Architecture can be categorized as one such division and can therefore be regarded as a community with its own specialized language and symbols, despite it being a part of the larger social reality. Architecture is both product (artifact) and process (design). Architectural symbols are both professionally and socially meaningful, as architects work both for themselves and for society (Gutenschwager, 1996). Thus architectural artifacts as symbols are meaningful at both levels. This symbolic meaning is associated to, but separate from, the technology and functionality of the building. Despite architects being able to read more into buildings than members of the larger society, they must somehow share a common discourse at the symbolic level. In other words, the intra-community discourse of architecture may take place within a professional paradigm of shared technical meanings related to the professional objectives of architects, but however, as buildings become social artifacts meant for (and often paid for by) members of the greater society, the outcome or final product becomes part of the greater discourse linking the artifact socially and symbolically (Gutenschwager, 1996: 248). Changes in architectural style are therefore regarded as a product of both a professional and a larger social paradigm. As with all sub-sectors of society, change in architectural style and social change must be concurrently interpreted.

## **2.8 SOCIAL CHANGE**

The social paradigms that humans made have changed a great deal over the past fifty thousand years of cultural evolution, yet it has not been easy to theoretically interpret the change process. This is because social change takes place slowly, in ways that are not obvious in daily activities. The twentieth and twenty first centuries experienced extremely rapid technological innovation where technological symbols acquired great value, however the actual social change associated

with these innovations is not as significant as might be supposed, which makes the rapid changes in architectural style related to postmodernism all the more outstanding (Gutenschwager, 1996: 248).

According to Gutenschwager (1996), social change has been explained in two different ways, evolutionary and cyclical. These two systems have been equated to the idea of an evolutionary spiral that emanates a repetitive form of change which is always evolving into higher levels of complexity. Philosophers such as Georg Hegel and Karl Marx shared the same opinion when it came to theorizing social change. They both suggested that change resulted from a crisis in an existing paradigm (Burke, 1970), though it has been argued (see, in particular, Hill et al., 1999; Kelly et al., 1999) that postmodernism can have no agenda for social justice as it refuses to commit itself to any one political standpoint or ideological position. Taking a Marxist stance, Kelly et al. (1999) argue that whereas Marxists give equal value to theory and action in order to change the world, postmodernism privileges theory over action and achieves nothing. This view is echoed by Hartsock (1990: 172), although not from a Marxist perspective: the point is to change the world, not simply to re-describe ourselves or to reinterpret the world yet again.

Since there is a disconnection between the subjective and objective reality, symbols that describe reality are no longer suitable. This particular crisis extends over a period of time, shorter in the scientific community, but longer in the political-economic sphere. In most cases the ones who suffer the contradictions normally organize to identify and eliminate them, in a context that suppresses any action on the contradictions for as long as possible (Gutenschwager, 1996).

Change is both intentional and unintentional. It is sometimes a mere unintended consequence of intended actions. When a society and its paradigm get too complex, it is more likely to have outcomes that are separated from the actions. This makes it hard to ascertain the effectiveness of intentions and the symbols that explain them. Those who establish advantaged positions in a society often try to control the symbols that explain that reality, and by doing so, distort its understanding by manipulating the symbol system to push their own agendas and interests, thwart efforts to resolve the issue in the process. Eventually, the intended solutions are sought after although having competing efforts is rather chaotic (Gutenschwager, 1996). Rhetoric thrives in such situations serving to uphold or change paradigms. Change is not automatic in

any case, nor is stability. Communication is essential when upholding a social order. Art is also important because of its function in the creation and use of symbols. Further than that, the oratorical use of symbols is perpetual, used either to sustain an existing paradigm or to make way for new ones by criticizing the current paradigm, and this is similarly true in the community of architects and in the larger society itself (*ibid.*).

## **2.9 POSTMODERN ARCHITECTURE**

Architecture is said to be turning away from its material substance to playfulness in its postmodern forms, and to an abstraction on its playfulness in its deconstructionist forms (Gutenschwager, 1996: 255). Postmodern architecture has shifted from its Cartesian separation associated with modern architecture, towards a more universal representation that incorporates history (Perez-Gomez, 1983). By possessing a historical tension, it is thus more social in its irony. Deconstruction architecture poses a more abstract or ambiguous tension, placing it closer to a modernist context. Both Postmodern and deconstruction architecture appear in the postmodern period, representing a critique on modernism though their approaches differ in their own respect. Kenneth Burke (1965) interprets postmodernism as a comic critique on modernism because of the way it represents modernist anomalies in a playful way. On the other hand deconstruction architecture is regarded to be more serious in its rhetoric and intent, and thus it is interpreted as a tragic critique on the current material reality. These two styles of architecture represent a challenge to the normal architectural paradigm that evolved over the past two centuries, giving rise to architecture that is caught up in a new symbolism that represents a rupture within the dominant modernism paradigm (Gutenschwager, 1996).

This rupture has been represented as a form of fragmentation, by doing so, becoming an important symbol of architectural design under postmodernism. This is seen in the collocation of incoherent elements in its postmodern form, as for its deconstruction form, it centers on the tension between the existing and the possible. This would constitute a professional skill of never committing to a final design in architecture, allowing the possibility of the suppressed to reappear by involving one's self an endless erasure. The postmodern architectural paradigm is often viewed as some sort of madness. Gutenschwager (1996: 255) posits postmodern culture doesn't know what lies beyond its play with symbols, just as how capitalism did not know whether its restructuring would lead to another historic compromise. The theoretical and cultural problem is one of imagining, theoretically and artistically, ways of moving beyond this

system altogether. It is a problem of imagining a new social paradigm. Postmodern architects are content to symbolize the tension between the troubling ambiguities of postmodern space. Jameson (1990) refers to the architecture of Frank Gehry which has an overall effect that creates spaces that cannot be synthesized, as a way of dramatizing the impossibility of representing the postmodern condition.

## **2.10 CONCLUSION**

This is not just a problem of representing the ‘anti-theoretical’ and unmeasurable qualities of abstract space, of a state of multinational capitalism (Jameson, 1990), but is more a problem of going beyond this contradiction, both materially and symbolically. Modern and postmodern have failed according to Gutenschwager (1996) by withdrawal in the former instance and by submission in the latter. A failure that resulted from the incapability of art to incorporate the material intricacy of modern society, an acknowledgement that would involve linking the two realms of science and culture. A quest for a new form of interpretation under postmodernism could lead to this linkage. For instance, an incorporation of both realms in an organized complexity could be achieved by a break-down of the separation between artist and audience. Creating this organized complexity could open up a world of new symbolic forms, an opportunity for architecture to take advantage of social change and contribute to society by creating spaces as scenes on which the evolving socio-drama of the twenty-first century will be played out, understood, and symbolically represented.

By undergoing a research about social change, one can have a deeper understanding of its origins, theories and its causes. One then grasps a deeper understanding of a particular society, thereby understanding the region’s “deep structure” which is directly related to critical regionalism. By further application of the space syntax theory, this would bring about and understanding of the relationship between space and society with the aim to fully understand society itself. This knowledge will become the underpinning driving force that will instigate Architectural design for society.



**CHAPTER 3: A THEORETICAL DISCUSSION OF  
NATIONAL IDENTITY.**

## CHAPTER 3 A THEORETICAL DISCUSSION OF NATIONAL IDENTITY

### 3.1. INTRODUCTION

*“...the construction of great national buildings has always been closely allied to the construction of national identity,”* (Freschi 2006: 155).

Zimbabwean civic architecture needs relevant and appropriate expression. The civil war, which ended the colonial era in 1980, alone indicates the necessity for a new political architecture; Rhodesian government buildings cannot function as expressions of a post-colonial Zimbabwe. Thirty-three years later, the newly adopted 2013 Constitution of Zimbabwe provides excellent impetus for the development of a new political architecture that can impact current national sentiment and generate a new national identity.

An examination of the 2013 Constitution of Zimbabwean will determine which constitutional objectives can be applied to Zimbabwean political architecture. The preamble, the constitution’s most concise explication of intent follows:

*“We the people of Zimbabwe,  
United in our diversity by our common desire for freedom, justice and equality, and our heroic resistance to colonialism, racism and all forms of domination and oppression,  
Exalting and extolling the brave men and women who sacrificed their lives during the Chimurenga / Umvukela and national liberation struggles,  
Honoring our forebears and compatriots who toiled for the progress of our country,  
Recognizing the need to entrench democracy, good, transparent and accountable governance and the rule of law,  
Reaffirming our commitment to upholding and defending fundamental human rights and freedoms,  
Acknowledging the richness of our natural resources,  
Celebrating the vibrancy of our traditions and cultures,  
Determined to overcome all challenges and obstacles that impede our progress,  
Cherishing freedom, equality, peace, justice, tolerance, prosperity and patriotism in search of new frontiers under a common destiny,*

*Acknowledging the supremacy of Almighty God, in whose hands our future lies,  
Resolve by the tenets of this Constitution to commit ourselves to build a united, just and  
prosperous nation, founded on values of transparency, equality, freedom, fairness, honesty and  
the dignity of hard work,  
And, imploring the guidance and support of Almighty God, hereby make this Constitution and  
commit ourselves to it as the fundamental law of our beloved land” (COZ 20, 2013).*

Firstly, this preamble delineates the criteria necessary for every Zimbabwean citizen to form a national identity. Its mention of a “heroic resistance” to imperialist rule, and “liberation struggles” even contains the conflicts and tensions Pradip attributes as necessary to the formation of national identity (Pradip, 2007, and COZ 20, 2013). For Zimbabwean political architecture to function effectively, that is to say, relate to national sentiment and identity, it should address most of the qualities mentioned in the preamble. Therefore, a Zimbabwean government building should express:

- Freedom, justice, equality, progress, commitment, transparency, unity;
- Resistance to colonialism, racism, domination and oppression;
- A retention and promotion of Zimbabwean tradition and culture;
- A response to the natural resources and geographical context of the country;
- Honor for war veterans and forbears (COZ 20, 2013).

The main goal of this chapter is to comprehend ways in which architecture can support the objectives mentioned above. Particular attention will be paid to the representation of democracy and national identity in architecture and how these representations achieve these objectives.

### **3.2. CONCEPTUALIZING IDENTITY**

Defining identity has been a challenge in social science circles due to its heavily contested nature and because identity is always in flux. In spite of this, identity has been defined as a collective self-image shared by members of a community as well as forms of individual personhood (Zegeye and Harris, 2002: 244). Issues such as uniqueness, differentiation and continuity have been associated with the definition of identity in numerous citations by Zegeye and Harris (2000). What links all these definitions is the fact that they are not fixed because of the continuous restructuring performed by the people who construct and share them. Eventually

the conclusion to the analysis done by Zegeye and Harris (2002: 245) states that the concept offers a significant tool for comprehending the connection between behavioral patterns, personal views and individual experiences and the greater social, political and cultural processes in which they are involved. This is then linked to Tajfel's (1978) debate on the theory that looks at the link between personal and social identities in which national identity is an instance of the latter. Personal identity refers to the social qualities which associate a person or group. The physical attributes which persons in a group share create their social identity. Further investigation into personal and social identity is necessary for this research because they both contribute to national identity

### **3.2.1 Theoretical background to identity, nationalism and national identity**

Fearon explains the concept of identity as the set of characteristics and aspects which govern the entire universe. Identity defines and distinguishes one creature, place and person from the next (Fearon, 1992). A critical understanding of identity, nationalism and national identity cannot be achieved in isolation. Ravenburg (2000) states that the social identity theory gives a discussion of personal identity and then assesses group identities in which national identity is categorized. Social identity is thus relevant as it acts as a starting point in the quest to understand national identity.

### **3.2.2. Social identity theory**

The principle that a person's self-concept comprises both social identity as well as personal identity aspects is the basis of social identity theory. In cases where a certain in-group identity becomes prominent, individuals will, as an intellectual and behavioral pattern, strive to protect and or improve that group identity (Tajfel, 1978: 64). The theory suggests that the society's social identity is determined by the groups to which people belong. Social identity theory has been defined by Tajfel (1978: 63) as that element of a person's self-concept which originates from his awareness of his association with a social group/s, as well as the value and emotional importance attached to that association. We gain both a coherent awareness of how to act toward in-group and out-group members and a positive sense of who we are by comparing characteristics of our own groups with those of out groups.

### 3.3. EXPRESSION OF IDENTITY IN ARCHITECTURAL FORM.

Critical Regionalism suggests that specific geographical constraints addressed by architecture create common characteristics exclusive to that particular context. In 10 BC, Vitruvius defined regionalism as a response to climate constraints and the human dimension, “where natural causes and human rationality determine architectural form” (Tzonis & Lefaivre, 2003: 10 & 11). Tom Heath goes further: regionalism aims to preserve the identity of visual and cultural harmony within regions (Ganis & Holden, 1996: 10).



Plate 3-1 Sri Lanka's Island Parliament (Vale, 1992:191)



Plate 3-2 Vernacular traditional architecture of Sri Lanka-19th century Kandy's Temple of the Tooth (Vale, 1992: 198)

An example of a synthesis of vernacular traditions with modern sensibility is the Parliamentary complex (Plate 3.1), Sri Lanka, 1971 by Geoffrey Bawa (Sudjic, 2001: 56). It appears to float on a crescendo of terraces above the lake. The design was meant to create a sense of accessible

democracy, cultural harmony, continuity and progress. However the intended image is compromised by the security cordon around the complex (Sudjic, 2001: 57). Sri Lanka itself is an island that rises from the water like a sacred fortress. This topographical feature was translated into the design of the parliament and it signifies the ancient habit of Sri Lanka's classic waterfront temples (Plate 3.2) (Vale, 1992: 198).



Plate 3-3 Red Army Theatre in Moscow  
(<http://en.wikipedia.org>, 2013/06/13)

Romantic Regionalism is derived from the link between emancipation and identity. The link was first seen through the eighteenth century picturesque movement in England and Germany. Materials and details were used to evoke an awareness of the past (Msomi, 2011). Romantic regionalism creates architecture identifiable with the region and the historical context, making it a source of pride for the people. It was often used as a political tool,

creating an image of regional unity and identity, but politics were favored over ethnic emancipation. This is seen in totalitarian regimes that propagated political populist propaganda (plate 3.3) and advanced national dictatorships. (Tzonis & Lefaivre, 2003: 10-11 & 16).

Conflicting identities are aspects of a postmodern condition. It is believed that the days of nation-states are numbered, however the opposite seems to be the case in South Africa, where the government has worked out a basis for a common national identity for all its multi-cultural citizens (Pradip, 2007: 2).

The constructing of national identity arises from the need to either;

- determine a set of symbols and customs to enforce the feeling of community among its citizens;
- establish a set of rules and regulations whether civil, legal, political or socio-economic which afford a sense of security to its members and encourage national sentiment and loyalty to the state;
- determine external threats that could threaten the community therefore, encouraging citizens to unite against a common enemy or to;

- Create national education and media systems to advance national heritage and image through the promotion of symbols, customs, values, and principles the particular community holds dear (Guibernau, 2007: 25).

National identity has made nations more tolerant and accepting of foreign influences due to globalization, immigration and devolution, while nonetheless staying true to their roots (Guibernau, 2007: 61).

### **3.6. COMMUNICATING A NATIONAL IDENTITY**

The term 'national identity' refers to abstractions that exist in thought-form. It consists of a body of ideas that form the basis of shared loyalties to the nation-state. The ways in which this adherence is made, communicated and purported over time, are the means and ends of national identity (Pradip, 2007). National identity is founded on fact and fiction that form a story of origins. It is the glue that binds all citizens to a wider sense of belonging to the nation-state. Pradip (2007) describes national identity as a means by which a state educes loyalty and solidarity from its nationals, often at times of crisis. National identity stands above all other identities ascribed to place, belief, gender and ethnicity and it ought to be derived from dominant and less dominant communities. However, many nations often base their national identity on majoritarian identities, giving rise to conflicts (*ibid.*).

National identity can be formed in four trends that are political and economic.

- Conflicts between internal expressions of privileged identities and national identity.
- Tension between national and supra-national identities.
- The break-up of national states
- The conflicting identities and rootlessness caused by globalization (Guibernau, 2007).

### **3.4. COMMUNICATION THROUGH ARCHITECTURE**

Architecture is often manipulated by politics to create an expression based on social and cultural conditions. Many elements of national identity are entrenched in the design of government buildings. There are multiple influences that require careful attention in order to achieve an appropriate architectural expression of national identity. These include subtle elements and rational design decisions. Subtle elements focus on historical precedents; cognizance of the context, society and culture; and notions of spirituality and artistic

expression. Rational decisions are based on function, structural logic and environmental conditions (Malan & McInerney, 2001).

Architecture communicates the functions it sanctions and fosters (Broadbent et al., 1980: 46).

Communication methods achieved by architecture are through:

- A common aim at mass appeal
- Psychological influence
- abstracted expression
- random interpretations
- Coerciveness and indifference
- Belonging to the realm of everyday life
- Behaving like a business (Miller, 2011; 41)

There are four ways in which a building communicates: denotation; exemplification; expression; and mediated reference (Goodman, 1985: 642-653). Denotation is the representation or labeling in any application of a symbol to an object. Its primary form is often through noticeable representation. Exemplification is the manner in which works of architecture acquire meaning. It is an elemental variable of symbolism. Buildings can alter the environment physically through numerous forms of meaning, however the interpretation of architecture is not easily differentiated from the work itself. Architectural meaning is implicit in the same factors that determine whether or not a building functions effectively (Goodman, 1985).



Plate 3-4 Bangladesh National Assembly Building  
Expressed monumentality (<http://architectuul.com>,  
2013/06/13)

Architect Louis Kahn is known for designing buildings that symbolize certain aspects of nations. One example is his design of the Bangladesh Parliament Buildings (plate. 3-4). Kahn assimilated both the vernacular and monumental archetypes of the region, and abstracted and transformed them to a degree of utter purity, using architectural ideas from many eras and civilizations (Hasan, 2013). The buildings were originally designed as the capitol for East Pakistan before the civil war broke out



and lead to the formation of Bangladesh. Initially, the building symbolized the unification of east and west; however the buildings soon functioned as a positive symbol in its new political context due to the abstraction in Kahn's architectural language. The fact that the building was completed after the war enabled the building to be a symbolism of independence for Bangladesh (Vale, 1992: 236-251). Kahn's key design philosophy optimizes the use of space while representing Bangladeshi heritage and culture. External lines are deeply recessed by porticoes with huge openings of regular geometric shapes on their exterior, shaping the building's overall visual impact (Hasan, 2013).

Khan's architecture of connection has four main discontinuities:

- Emphasis on the National Assembly as locus of political transcendence;
- Inappropriateness of capitol design that overcompensates and underestimates climatic demands;
- Strong reliance on the connection between the mosque and National Assembly;
- Disjunction between city and citadels.( Vale ,1992: 236-251)

The geometric shapes found on the different faces of the façade add a dramatic impact to the overall composition of the building. The geometric shapes are abstracted forms found in traditional Bangali culture that are meant to create a marriage of old and new cultural identities, as well as, serve as light wells and a natural environmental control system for the interior (Kroll, 2010).

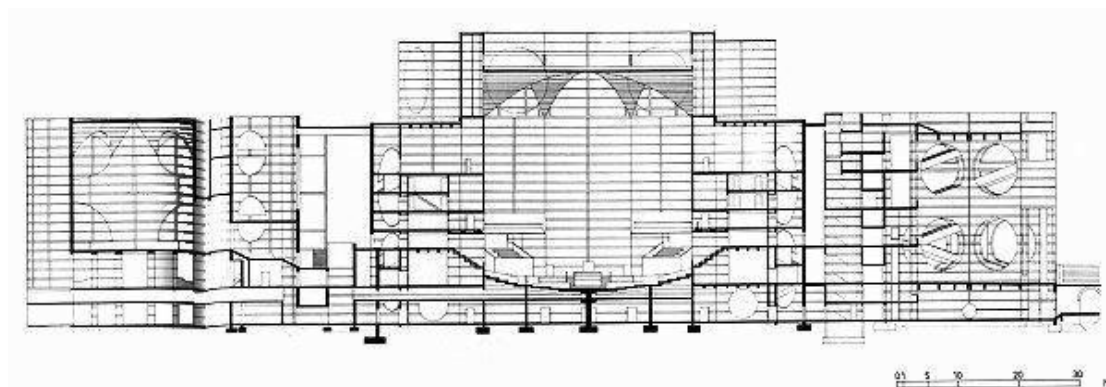


Figure 3-1(Vale, 1992: 246) Section through Assembly Building, Dhaka.

The Assembly Building expresses powerful monumentality and stark simplicity (fig 3-1). It is described by McCarter (2005: 276) as a world within a world. There is an idealization of a social order linked by a set of symbolic forms. The internal hierarchy is defined on the exterior, forming tension and opposition. The use of specific materials such as concrete and rough brick responds to the local geographic and labor conditions (Curtis, 1983: 193)

### **3.5. DESIGNING POWER AND IDENTITY**

The task of representing the diversity of cultural groups that coexist in a state through government buildings is quite problematic. Architects can respond to symbolizing the unstable political system of a pluralist state in three ways;

- designing the complex as beyond politics;
- the complex as a microcosm or
- the complex as an idealization (Vale, 1992: 273, 274)

Vale believes that architects tend to design buildings with political disinterest when designing buildings that serve the needs of political leaders. He then suggests that architects should make an effort to study the politics and cultures of the country to be symbolized in order to produce a building that is relevant to the people. Thus there is a need to understand the group-biases of the client and the level of honesty with which the client pursues the goals of parliamentary democracy (Vale, 1992: 274).

The changing and unflattering nature of some existing power politics can make the task of designing a microcosm impossible or undesirable. It is in these cases that Vale urges architects to attempt an idealization of the political institutions and intergroup relations; after all he believes that every design solution is to some extent an idealization of the political realm (Vale, 1992: 277).

### **3.6. DEMOCRACY AND TRANSPARENCY**

Space Syntax theory can be used to explain the way people perceive spaces. Space configurations affect their users through pedestrian movement. People perceive comfort and images differently because of their backgrounds and cultural differences. Responses to such elements are personal; however there are some standard characteristics (Miller, 2011: 19). Historic and spiritual aspects are included in a building to enhance its image. A safe, attractive and clean building would attract more pedestrians (Bafna, 2003). Comfortable circulation routes are essential, badly designed circulation significantly decreases the comfort and perceived image of the building. Democracy relates to the need for neutral ground where history is valued but not essentially the main feature of the area. Transparency refers to the openness of the urban design and building. Issues of visual prominence and the use of glass facades need to be addressed (Miller, 2011: 19).

### **3.7 CONCLUSION**

A review and analysis of literature relating to issues of social change, particularly of political democracy and national identity indicate that the built environment can exert a powerful influence on citizens. The literature reveals that national identity is achievable and is essential in nation building, the aim of which is to create a unified, positive and forward focused population. The following chapter will focus on how other nations have dealt with the issues of social change through architectural expression. The following chapter focuses on how social change has manifested itself through architecture in nations similar to the research area, analyzing how architects around the world have dealt with social change within the built environment, giving a more practical understanding of the research topic. An analysis will be made in relation to the concepts and theories mentioned in chapter one.

**CHAPTER 4 MANIFESTATION OF DEMOCRACY  
THROUGH ARCHITECTURE IN EMERGING NATIONS**

## **CHAPTER 4 A MANIFESTATION OF DEMOCRACY THROUGH ARCHITECTURE IN EMERGING NATIONS.**

### **4.1. INTRODUCTION**

The entry of Western democracy into multiple nations represents one of the most significant dimensions of the global cultural dialectic. The transformative formal and intellectual influences of Western democratic concepts on Asian, African and South American urbanity and identity formation therefore remain paramount to the discourse on such cities today (Bharne, 2010). Architects in the third world are faced with a challenge of creating “culturally” relevant environments by means of integrating regional spatial qualities and forms with local vernacular elements (Abel, 1997: 153). Architectural works on the African and Asian continents, as well as the Asian subcontinent symbolize a progressive path inspired by the concept of social change in the third world that is relevant to this study considering the features of the architectural developments in the regions and their treatment of issues of space syntax and critical regionalism. This chapter explores the search for democratic space in these former colonies of the West. By tracing the evolution and shifts of public space over the last six decades, it attempts both a re-reading of post-colonial cities as a democratic construct, and of democracy itself as a culturally appropriated model (Bharne, 2010).

### **4.2. MODERNISM AND IDENTITY IN CHANDIGARH, INDIA**

The internationalization of modernism started a debate about the extent of the integration of vernacular content into the built environment on the Indian sub-continent, particularly regarding public architecture (Mthethwa, 2001: 79). At a time when Ghandi’s rural development plans were being replaced by a greater emphasis on city development, the Indian Prime Minister, Pandit Nehru, aspired to build a new modern city, free of existing traditions that symbolized India’s freedom. Le Corbusier was commissioned to design a city that expresses the nation’s faith in the future. Built at the time when India was partitioned, Chandigarh was a manifestation of India’s dream of realization of self-determination, designed to symbolize the rise of a great nation using moral regeneration to put India on the international map (Everson, 1971: 98). The site was finally located just off the main Simla to Delhi line, between two seasonal rivers, Patiali-ki Rao and Sukhna Choe, where the great plains start to fold in to the Himalayas, at a safe distance from Pakistan (Curtis, 1986: 188).

The name Chandigarh came from the Hindu word “Chandi” which means “the goddess of power” and this was befitting for the symbolic significance of the city. Le Corbusier introduced a biological component to the city layout. The master plan of Chandigarh was conceived as similar to the human body, with a clearly defined head: the capitol complex, heart: the city center, lungs: green spaces, intellect: the educational and cultural institutions, circulatory system: the road network and viscera: the industrial zone (Architectural Review [AR], 3, 2003: 73). Le Corbusier used trees to give the city form and identity, making use of the various blossom colors according to the seasons. The main vehicular routes divided the city in a proportional Cartesian grid formation that could be linked back to the space syntax theory (see Fig 4-1).

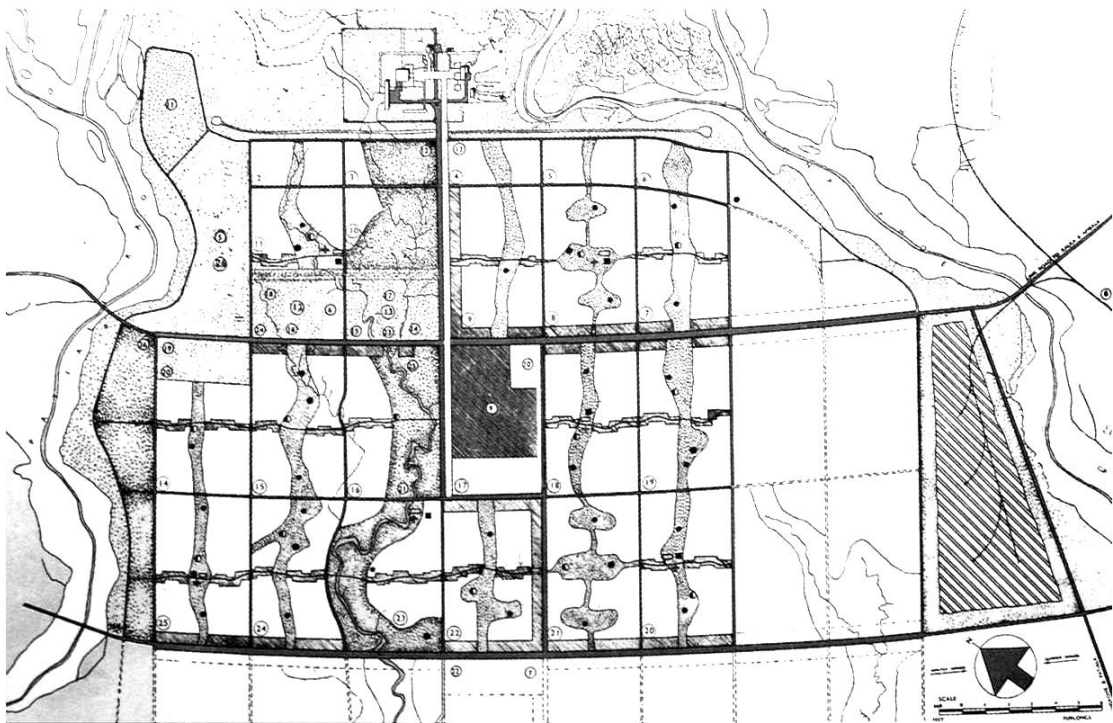


Figure 4-1 Schematic Plan of Chandigarh designed by Le Corbusier in 1951 (Source: Curtis, W. J. R. (1986: 190)

Curtis (1986: 190) states that Le Corbusier’s admiration of Lutyen’s Viceroy House, despite its emphasis on imperial dominance, enabled him to create a fusion of Indian and Grand Classical traditions with a hint of modernity. Le Corbusier’s design became a poetic yet powerful realization of architectural modernity in the creation of a democratic institution. Although suitable for Chandigarh’s residential setting, Le Corbusier has been criticized for not adequately addressing the way in which Indian street life is lived (Sudjic, 2001: 98). It has been argued that vernacular Indian buildings comprise of a somewhat dense pattern of inward-oriented courtyard houses with narrow streets that relate to a predominantly pedestrian environment, elements that are lacking in the design of Chandigarh (Everson, 1971: 105).

Le Corbusier utilized symbols to portray his sensitivity to Indian culture and tradition. These symbols comprised of the bull and horns, the wheel, the “open Hand” and the protective roof (parasol). Le Corbusier’s work is said to display the concept of national identity because of his use of relevant symbols, this is thought to be more culturally significant as compared to Lutyen’s work (Mthethwa, 2001: 88). He believed that the future of India lay in a synthesis of traditional rural and modern values. The symbol of the bull horns was used in the roof structure of the Legislative Assembly building (Plate 4-1) its design was to convey the cosmic forces that govern human life (Arch Rev, March, 2003:73).



Plate 4-1 Chandigarh Legislative Assembly with bull horn shaped roof.  
(source:<http://landlab.files.wordpress.com/2011/04/chandigarh-qt8.pdf>)

The High Court building’s overhanging parasol roof (Plate 4-2) represents an ancient symbol of state authority, also found in Islamic monuments as well as on top of Buddhist stupas. (Mthethwa, 2001: 88). The “open hand” monument (Fig 4-2) became India’s symbol of giving and receiving, and international peace. It was meant to be parallel with the Governor’s Palace, the crown of the Capitol, dominating the dramatic landscape, but because Nehru thought of it as being extravagant and symbolically inappropriate, it was never built. (Arch Rev, March, 2003)

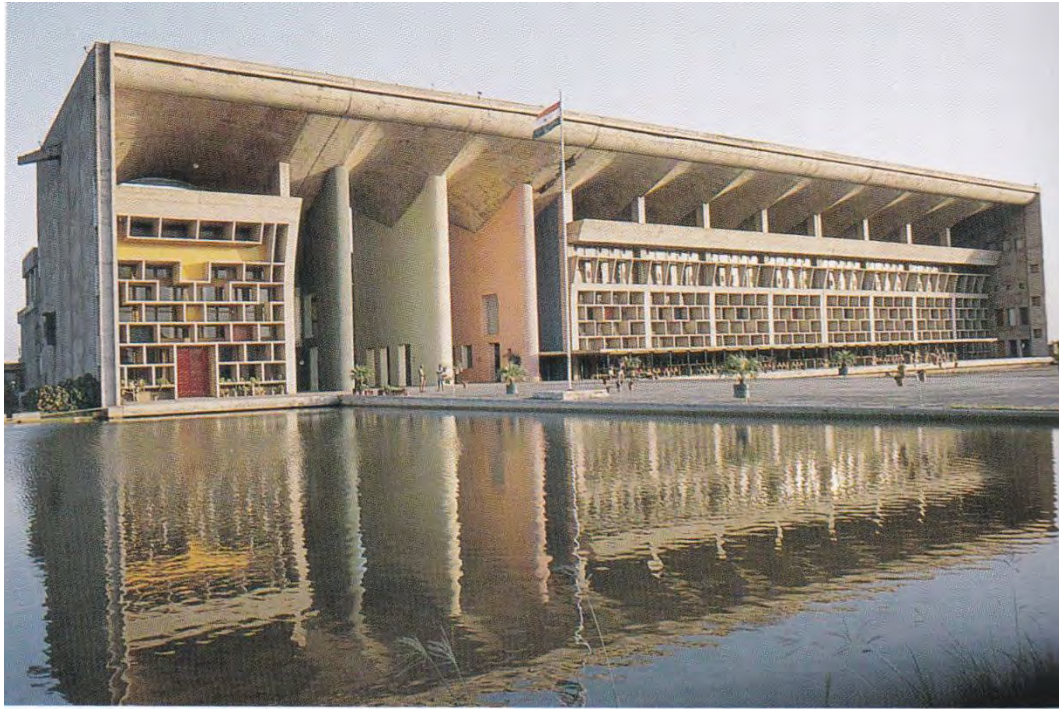


Plate 4-2 The High Court, showing the Overhang parasol roof. (Source: Prakash, 2002)

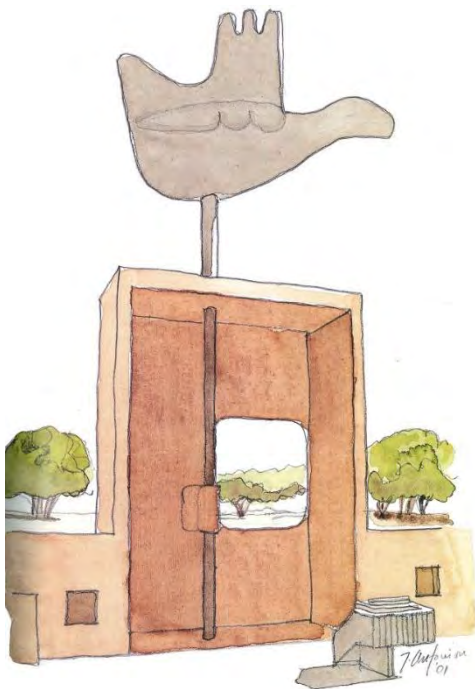


Figure 4-2 The Open Hand Sculpture (source: (Arch Rev. March, 2003: 71)

Although Le Corbusier took bold risks at design level, the city with its buildings were not a practical success. It has been argued that the Capitol is not a place for people to show their civic pride. Le Corbusier is said to not have mastered the Indian climate in terms of the monsoon, hot breezes and uninsulated concrete, in addition, the zoning regulations together with the isolation of the avenues and routes at city scale do not foster urban activity (Arch Rev. March, 2003). Chandigarh is the product of post-colonial division and can relate to post-colonial Zimbabwe.



### 4.3. MEMORIALIZING AND FORMALIZING DEMOCRACY IN JAPAN

#### 4.3.1 Memorializing Democracy: Public Memory as Catalyst

In Japan, the Hiroshima bombing site was memorialized in 1949 into a public space, the Hiroshima Peace Park. The construction period was from 1949 to 1955, designed by modernist architect Kenzo Tange. The triangular site was designed as a radial plan centered on a large trapezoidal green between the Cenotaph to the north and the Memorial Museum to the south (Fig 4.3 & Plate 4.3). Large semi-public gardens and parks have been an inherent part of Japan's traditional social patterns for centuries, so the idea of a park as a large social space is not new to Japan. The peace park honored a chronicle for public memory where the images and reminiscences of the nation's citizens would be converted into a single public location of national importance, a first for the nation of Japan. This became a spatial emblem of peace and of Japan's democracy (Bharne, 2010).

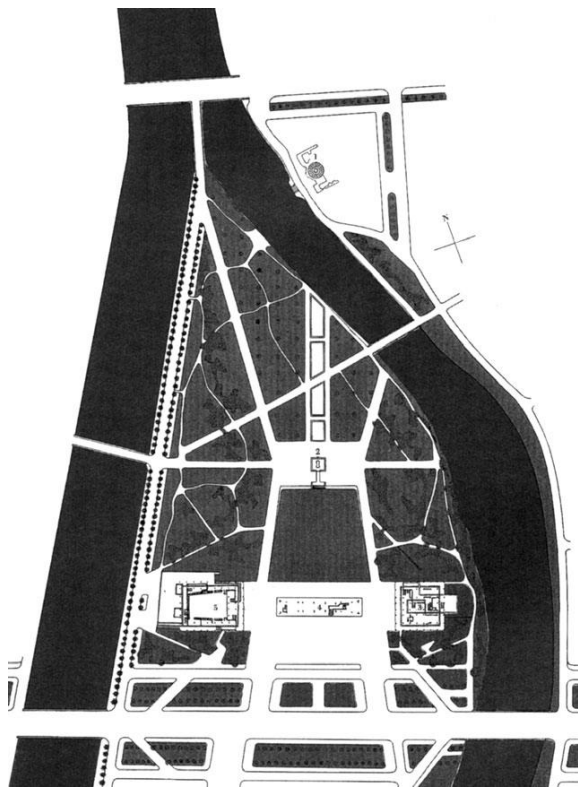


Figure 4-3 Hiroshima Peace Park, Site Plan. (Source: Isozaki, 2006.)

The developers of the park decided to prohibit public grieving for the effects of the bombing, a directive that would have significant social consequences, and is rather ironic so to speak. John Dower (1996) wrote that the suffering was intensified by: the unprecedented scale of the disaster; the fact that public struggle with this traumatic incident was not tolerated; how the surviving victims could not grieve in public; and how they could not be offered public counsel and support. Other forms of public expression where permitted, mainly the discourse of peace, aimed to portray the bombing not as a catastrophe, but as a teleological end to the war, a notion strategically supported by the Americans (Bharne, 2010).



Plate 4-3 Hiroshima Peace Park, Central Cenotaph with Memorial Museum in background (Bharne, 2010).

The design of the Peace Park was controversially known for seeking out a selective voice in the name of peace, eluding the struggle against a variety of injustices. Particularly the legacy of *hibakusha*. The Hibakusha where the survivors of Korean descent who had moved to Hiroshima as forced labor. They were unfortunately marginalized after the bombing by being given inferior treatment for both psychological and physical

injuries. As a result, the hibakusha, outraged as they were, hosted a gathering at the Peace Park in 1985 to organize a plan to renovate the museum to register their continued predicament. The general narrative from bombing to peace was eventually retained after considerable debate, but it was significantly subdued by the acknowledgement of the way the hibakusha were mistreated (Bharne, 2010).

The Hiroshima Peace Park is said to be full of complexities. As the inaugural spatial expression of Japanese democracy, it embodied patriotism and peace, as well as the failure to comprehend the complicated ways in which a victimized nation tries to convey its loss and trauma. Peace remains the dominant message of the Peace Park, but its repressed forms of ‘*publicness*’ are evidence of a young democracy’s weak cultural translation, and the conflict between a general need for critical memory and a less sanitized display of history (Bharne, 2010: 40).

#### **4.3.2. Formalizing Democracy: The Plaza as Import**

The idea of the plaza was nostalgic in the Western architectural awareness of the early 1950s and was adopted in Japan during the post-war boom of urbanization. The plaza as a symbol of western democracy became a fundamental sub-theme of the clashing cultures. The rhetoric on urban cores moved toward political proceedings as an aftermath to the war, and the plaza became the preferred location for rallies and demonstrations. The Congrès International d’Architecture Moderne (CIAM) held their eighth gathering In 1951, in Huddleston, England, with the theme “Heart of the City: Towards the Humanization of Urban Life,” calling for strategies on post-war urban construction (Bharne, 2010: 40). The organization was influential in formalizing the architectural principles of the modern movement, as well as projecting

architecture as an economic and political tool with the aim to improve the world through the design of buildings and through urban planning (Bharne, 2010).



Plate 4-4 Imabari City Hall Complex, Kenzo Tange  
(Source: <http://fieldwork1.tumblr.com/page/2>)

Japanese architects, now under the willful embrace of Western modernism, became eager to recover the role of the plaza and its traditional urban functions. Architects such as Kenzo Tange began developing new public space typologies, an attempt to fill a void in the formerly non-democratic Japanese architectural vocabulary. His design for the Imabari City hall complex (Plate 4.4) completed in 1959, included an auditorium, office center, and town hall

densely structured around a public plaza. The western plaza concept was an urbanist import unfamiliar to Japan's authentic traditions. The center of civic life in traditional Japan had been the labyrinthine tenuous street, and not the square. There was a lack of any conscious expression of any formal community space in historic Japanese towns like Heijokyo where the social structure had the emperor at its head, a lack of communion in the democratic sense (Bharne, 2010). The cities comprised of grid like streets with only one prominent formal community space in the form of a royal avenue that would bisect the city and end in the palace complex.

According to research done by a group called Japanese Urban Space, no Western style tradition of picturesque urban scenery was found in the fifteenth and sixteenth century cities of Japan, but the makings of public spaces had been present in the past (Isozaki, A. & Stewart, D. 2006). The main pavilion of the imperial palace (Shi-Shinden) was where they would invite the gods as well as making and declaring policies in ancient Japan, where as in the Western tradition, the plaza was deemed the city core because of its use as the daily market setting and a place for religious rituals (*ibid.*).

Japanese modernists where eagerly compelled to create spatial parallels when they realized the futility of seeking anything reminiscent of a western plaza in their historic cities. The center of the 1970 Osaka Expo is a good example. It featured an entity that existed neither in Japan nor the West, the *Omatruri hiroba*, translated "Festival Plaza", placed at the core of the 815 acres "Future City" exhibit (Plate 4.6). The world's largest translucent roof of its time covered this

enormous 350x1000 feet space. It was made out of a gigantic space frame, 100 feet high, supported by six pillars. A 230-foot-tall sculpture called the Tower of the Sun by Japanese sculptor Taro Okamoto was its center piece. Bharme (2010: 41) reasons that if the Expo's objective was to represent Japan's emerging modernist ambitions, then its new desires of nationalism, democracy and hope are symbolized by the "Festival Plaza", 25 years after the war.



Plate 4-6 The Festival Plaza (Source: <http://fieldwork1.tumblr.com/page/2>)



Plate 4-5 Fukuoka Bank's head office, Kisho Kurokawa (1975) (Source: <http://fieldwork1.tumblr.com/page/2>)

New forms of the idea of the plaza as a big gathering space emerged within the urban context. The Head Offices of the Fukuoka Bank were designed by Kisho Kurokawa (Plate 4.5) around an immense ten-story high "engawa" envisioned as an "intermediate space for new kinds of urban life" in 1975 (Isozaki, A. & Stewart, D. 2006: 100). This became the cover of the exterior zone with irregular fountains, planting beds and scant street furniture acting as buffer zones, meant to create a space with interior and exterior characteristics (Isozaki, A. & Stewart, D 2006: 19).

The transformation of the Japanese plaza confirmed its conceptual shift from an optimistic democratic symbol into a culturally residual representation. It remained alien despite its random propagation in the Japanese city, failing to anchor itself in a culture that seemed continually unforthcoming towards it. The Japanese plaza never achieved success by becoming

an intellectual reference point in Japanese urbanism as a metaphor of publicness (Bharne, 2010: 42).

### **4.3.3. Democracy and the Japanese City**

By studying the evolving identity of the Japanese city through focusing on the relationship of democracy and its public space manifestations amidst its ever-changing present and recent past, the conclusion is that this identity remains both elusive and complex. It has been diluted to the point that it is neither wholly Japanese, nor wholly Western, but rather a culture of imports dating back to its prehistoric Chinese influences. (Bharne, 2010). Democracy has always been part of this long tradition. Isozaki (2006) acknowledges the cultural challenges faced by Japan when synthesizing its democratization with westernization and therefore suggests the contemporary Japanese city to be viewed as a half century long struggle to develop Japan's democratic identity within the restraints of an imposed and irreversible East-West idiom, in order for it to be understood.

## **4.4. ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE AND POST-MODERNITY IN ZIMBABWE**

Fontein (2003) posits that many of Zimbabwe's post 1990 architectural monuments exhibit some sort of reaction against the universalizing forces of modernism, its abstraction and functionalism, and the crisis of urbanity. He goes on to say that the loss of the sense of territorial identity, public space and urban community were caused by these forces, creating a break with the past. This critique of modernism sparked a belief among scholars that inequality, segmentation and alienation caused by the urban modernization crisis led to the loss of purpose, function and meaning of cities. With this in mind, it could be argued that Western colonization led to an abrupt urban-rural divide, and related crises of identity in Zimbabwe (Pikirayi, 2006). As a response to the challenges generated by urbanization, some local architects opt for an over-centralized, exclusive and dominating modernist culture, at the expense of the rural and local culture (ibid.). Postmodernism on the other hand invokes identity and community and represents personal as well as collective roots by attempting to establish ties with the past (Harvey, 1990).

A good example of Zimbabwean architecture that evokes African history would be the Kingdom Hotel. Pikirayi (2006: 759) describes it as "a legendary world, Africa's ancient allure, and as bridging the hazy divide between comfortable reality and extravagant fantasy".

Completed in 1999, The Kingdom Hotel is a four star themed resort, located within the Victoria Falls National Park and only a ten minute walk away from the Victoria Falls world heritage Site. It is built around a man-made lake that creates an illusion of floating. The entire complex resembles an atmosphere of an iconic African spectacle, with a host of water features, towering domes and wonderful landscape features. The use of curvilinear structures and rounded shapes complements the ancient architectural heritage of the region found at the Great Zimbabwe Ruins (Pikirayi, 2006). The architect made use of statues of warriors and carvings of the Great Zimbabwe bird (Plates 4-7, 4-9 & 4-10) in an attempt to portray the notion of a well-defined African place that is protected by spiritual powers (Huffman, 1996). The use of well-shaped stone blocks (Plate 4-7) is also found in the cladding of walls and columns, mimicking the rich artistic architectural tradition found in the stone walls of Great Zimbabwe, as well as the chevron pattern on the spear headed iron stakes throughout the exterior of the complex creating a stockade that secures the complex (ibid.).



Plate 4-7 The Kingdom Hotel main entrance with columns that resemble the Great Zimbabwe Conical Tower. Source: [www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com)

Huffman (1996) interprets this artistic display of architecture as symbolic of a regal image with the stakes representing guards. Another common traditional African architectural style featured in the design of the hotel is the use of timber beams for roofing (Pikirayi, 2006). Scholars have compared the architecture of the Kingdom Hotel to that of the Lost City in Sun City South

Africa, an architecture that invokes ancient legends. It can be seen as a narrative of an ancient civilization (ibid.).



Plate 4-9 The Conical Tower inside the Great Enclosure, Great Zimbabwe. Source: Pikirayi, 2006: 763



Plate 4-10 the Kingdom Hotel. Source: www.flick.com



Plate 4-8 The Kingdom Hotel. Source: www.flick.com

“[The] political and economic power of the postcolonial state of Zimbabwe” has been symbolized in two significant buildings in the country, inspired by the pre-colonial Zimbabwe culture (Pikirayi, 2006: 761). These are the Harare International Airport by Mutumwapavi Vengesayi, and the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe by Mike Clinton.



Plate 4-11 The Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe. Source: [www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com)

The Reserve Bank is right in the central business district of Harare, marking the financial nerve of the country. Opened in 1996 by President Robert Mugabe, the Bank is arguably the most technologically innovative building of post-modern nature in the country. It has been described by Pikirayi as robust, sturdy and imposing. It was the most expensive building of its generation to be constructed in Zimbabwe. The architect conceptualized the conical Tower found at Great Zimbabwe in the Great Enclosure (Plates 4-9 & 4-11). The 28-storey high rise building also exhibits imagery from the Shona traditional culture as well as from Great Zimbabwe. The building is clad in granite panels that with rural image engravings and continuous bands of the chevron pattern at the base and crown of the tower (fig 4-14), bridging traditional Zimbabwean architecture with post-modernity. (Pikirayi, 2006).



Plate 4-12 the new terminal at the Harare International Airport. Source: [www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com)

The site is of great significance in terms of history and culture. It is believed to be the place where the first Chimurenga spirit medium, Nehanda was hung. It is also the site where a former colonial building, Jameson House was demolished thus the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe “also represents a re-affirming of pre-colonial African values over colonial ones, in a postcolonial, modernist context” (Pikirayi, 2006: 762). Critics view the bank to be out of context perhaps because of its imposing nature and post-modernist outlook, nevertheless the



Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe is a national reserve that symbolizes survival and national continuity (*ibid.*).

The new Harare International Airport terminal by Vengesayi Architects is also a complex post-modernist building that invokes memories of the pre-colonial past separating it from other terminals in the world. The brief from the government required a ‘Zimbabwean flavored’ airport terminal that would market the country to the world by boosting its image through travel, business and tourism. The control tower (Plate 4-12) of the airport terminal is yet another abstraction of Great Zimbabwe’s conical tower found in the Great Enclosure, with windows in the shape of the chevron pattern. The design takes its inspiration from the decorative motifs. Critics have argued that too much effort was dedicated to traditionalizing the exterior facades at the expense of the interiors. There is little reference to Zimbabwean culture within the interiors that would separate this airport from ones all over the world (Pikirayi, 2006).



Plate 4-13 The new terminal at the Harare International Airport. Source: [www.wikipedia.com](http://www.wikipedia.com)

The control tower is such a prominent feature in the design of the terminal and rather imposing so to speak (fig 4-16). Pikirayi (2006) suggests that it may have been an attempt to symbolize the power and might of the state over and beyond the capital. He compares it to the way the conical tower acts as a focal point at Great Zimbabwe as a symbol of state power. As much as it may resemble the conical tower at Great Zimbabwe, one could argue that the proportions are much different from each other. The tower at Great Zimbabwe blends in to its surroundings

(see fig 4.10) and it does not impose itself while still maintaining its importance as the focal point of the Great Enclosure. If the control tower does indeed represent the power of the state, then it bears little connection to its people, and is seen as an overpowering force over the populous. This may have not been the architect's intention, but could be the case. Whatever the architect's motivation, the design of the new terminal at the Harare International Airport provides a good example of how prehistoric architectural elements can be conceptualized in post-modern architecture (*ibid.*).

#### 4.5 CONCLUSION

A review and analysis of literature relating to issues of social change, particularly of political democracy and national identity indicate that the urban and built environment can wield a powerful influence on citizens. The literature reveals that national identity is achievable and is essential in nation building, the aim of which is to create a unified, positive and forward focused population.

The city of Chandigarh can relate to the space syntax theory of spatial perception in the way it was designed. The composition of the master plan was clearly articulated, adopting the system of the human body. The designers also made use of the theory of critical regionalism by incorporating the culture and identity of the Indian people, though this has been criticized by some. Overall, the city is a good example of how the two theories mentioned in chapter one can be manifested through architectural and urban design. Japan also shares the same sentiment when it comes to the two theories, with more influence coming from the space syntax theory. Great attention was given to how spaces relate to each other as well as how people move through these spaces. The urban design favoured interaction of civilians in order to improve the well-being of the society. However, when looking at Zimbabwe its postmodern architecture, one may question the response to context and social issues. There seems to be a cliché as to how Zimbabwean architecture should be. In most cases, reference is taken from the Great Zimbabwe ruins. In this particular case, all the examples in this research have taken their inspiration from the ruins. This, in the opinion of the author shows lack of creativity, surely there is more to Zimbabwe than the ruins. The Kingdom hotel however incorporates the culture of the Zimbabwean people and utilizes local materials. It is a good attempt at critical regionalism. The other examples are vaguely abstract in nature, and pay no attention to the

immediate context. Indeed these precedents are products of social change however, they can be good examples of a negative critique to this discourse.

In the following chapters, precedent and case studies informed by the debate in this literature review will be used to examine the concepts and theories mentioned in this document. The outcome of the empirical research will be harnessed to validate conclusions and to investigate emerging issues in more detail to clarify the evaluation of the precedent and case studies and to add credence to the conclusions that are to follow.

## **CHAPTER 5 PRECEDENT STUDIES**

## CHAPTER 5 PRECEDENT STUDIES

### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapters engaged in a theoretical discourse to investigate the effects of social change on society and the built environment at large. In this chapter, international precedents will be used to investigate the issues of social change discussed in the literature review, as they relate to architectural expression in existing public buildings. Issues such as the buildings' response to urban and environmental context, national identity through architectural expression, and how the building uses its symbols to communicate the political views of the nation, will be used to analyse and assess the two precedent studies: the Chandigarh High Court in India as an example of political architecture with a focus on symbolising the future; and The Australian Parliament House as a modern contemporary example of a political building in its vernacular context as well as its unique qualities of synthesizing the old and the new.

### 5.2. A MANIFESTATION OF SOCIAL CHANGE IN CHANDIGARH, INDIA: CHANDIGARH HIGH COURT

#### 5.2.1 Setting of the Precedent Study



Figure 5-1 World map showing location of Chandigarh. Source: Author

As mentioned in chapter 4, Chandigarh was a result of social change, a Hindu-Muslim division at India's Independence back in 1947 (Tanner, N & Joy, J, 2011). Chandigarh's city plan is a fusion of modern city planning and ancient ideas (Khan, 2002). Located in the North West India, near the base of the Himalayas, Chandigarh covers an area of approximately 144 square kilometers, sharing borders with Punjab in the north, south and west, and Haryana states in the east (fig 5-2). When designing the city, Le Corbusier discovered "that the city had always been dependent on central government" (Kempe, 1992: 24).



Figure 5-2 Map of Chandigarh showing neighboring states. Source: <http://www.mapsofindia.com/maps/chandigarh/>

The capitol complex was normally located at the northern outskirts of the city (Tanner, N & Joy, J, 2011 cited from Wikipedia, Chandigarh). The High Court, The Secretariat and the Assembly are the three primary buildings within the capitol complex (fig 5-3). According to

Coloquhoun (2002: 214), they were all designed “as a vast acropolis of separate monumental structures, set against the backdrop of the Himalayan foothills”.



Figure 5-3 Plan of The Capitol Complex designed by Le Corbusier. Source: Gines, J (2011)

## 5.2.2 Space Conception and Ordering System

The monumentality of Paul Otlet's hypothetical word campus is echoed in the High Court. The ordering system with regulating lines that bring about connections between the primary structures is followed by both buildings (fig 5-4) (Frampton, 2001). The concept of the High Court has been described by Charles Correa as "four boxes for the judges' courtrooms and a fifth double height box for the Chief Justice court (Kahn, 2002: 140). The intended use of the vast open space in front of the court was meant for pedestrians only, vehicular access was from behind, at a lower level (Scheidegger, 2010).

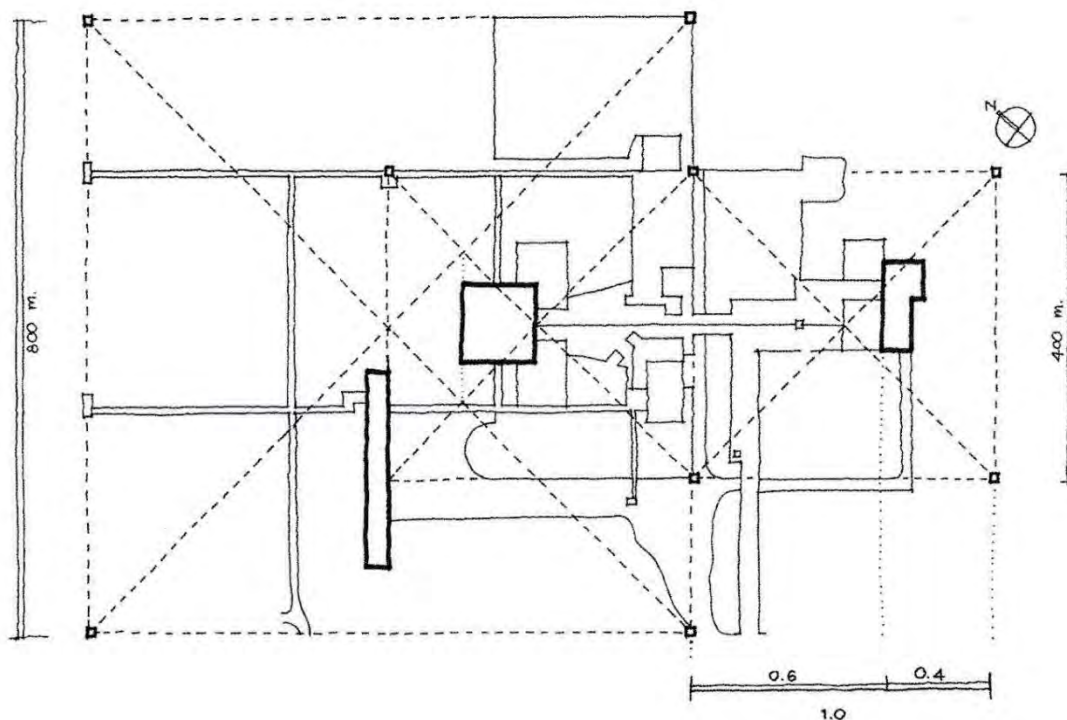


Figure 5-4 The golden section in the plan of the Capitol Complex. Source: (Prakash, 2002: 101)

Regulating lines were created from the modular squares where the dimensions were derived. Le Corbusier made use of a golden section (fig 5.3) in a 400 meter square to position the High Court Building within the Capitol Complex (Prakash, 2002). The juxtaposition of the High Court with The Assembly, proposed by Indian architect Balkrishna Doshi symbolized "the independence of justice from politicians". Doshi was part of the design team put together by Le Corbusier to help design the city of Chandigarh. There are no imposing steps in the High Court Building, implying that buildings are not meant to be put on platforms in Democracy. Without a platform to sit on, the building is seen to be rising directly from the earth with its



main façade defined by the arch shaped underside of the roof and a full height concrete brise-soleil (Kemme, 1992: 28).

### 5.2.3 Tectonics and Formal Expression

The Capitol Complex has been described by Le Corbusier as “a great architectural venture using very poor materials and a labor force uncommon to modern building techniques”. The main challenges were the harsh sunny and rainy conditions of the region and the need to prioritize Indian ideas and needs, instead of imposing “Western ethics and aesthetics” (Boesiger, 1953: 114). With a clear understanding of critical regionalism, the architect addressed the social, cultural and physical constraints of the region in order to create a diversely responsive architecture.



Plate 5-1 Elevation of the Chandigarh High Court. (Source: Gines, 2011: 10)

It has been noted that “It was inevitable for the Indian people to get used to such bad habits of siesta and laziness”. This in turn affected working hours in certain seasons including the rainy season. This realization motivated Le Corbusier to come up with a design that would allow the government to function throughout the year at Chandigarh, in essence putting an end to the customary migration to the hills during harsh weather conditions (Boesiger, 1953: 114).

As a response to the harsh Indian climate, Le Corbusier incorporated two climatically based tectonic devices into the cast-in-place concrete of the High Court. The first being an eleven bay, long vaulted Parasol roof that shades the whole structure (Plate 5-1). The second is the rhythmic brise-soleil that is distinguished between the main tribunal and the eight standard courts (fig 5-6 & 5-7). In addition, the Entrance was given asymmetry and treated as a “four story breeze hall” that is off centered and divided by three full height painted piers (fig 5-5) that support the vaults above (Frampton, 2001: 189). Le Corbusier made use of a cross

ventilation technique to allow air to flow between the underside of the parasol roof and the flat roof of the office block by leaving space open between the two roofs (fig 5-8). The High Court was oriented in such a way that the main façade faces northwest in order to limit the amount of direct sunlight to later in the day, at a time when court sessions are over. The Court thus makes use of reflected natural light, diffused by sun breakers. Despite all this effort, judges have been known to move their benches to avoid facing the light. In addition, the rear façade where the offices are housed, is exposed to the south-eastern sun making it rather uncomfortable for the occupants despite having the brise-soleil (Blake, 1960).



Plate 5-3 view of the rhythmic brise-soleil from the exterior. Source: (Gines, 2011: 13)



Plate 5-2 view of the rhythmic brise-soleil from the interior. Source: (Gines, 2011: 17)

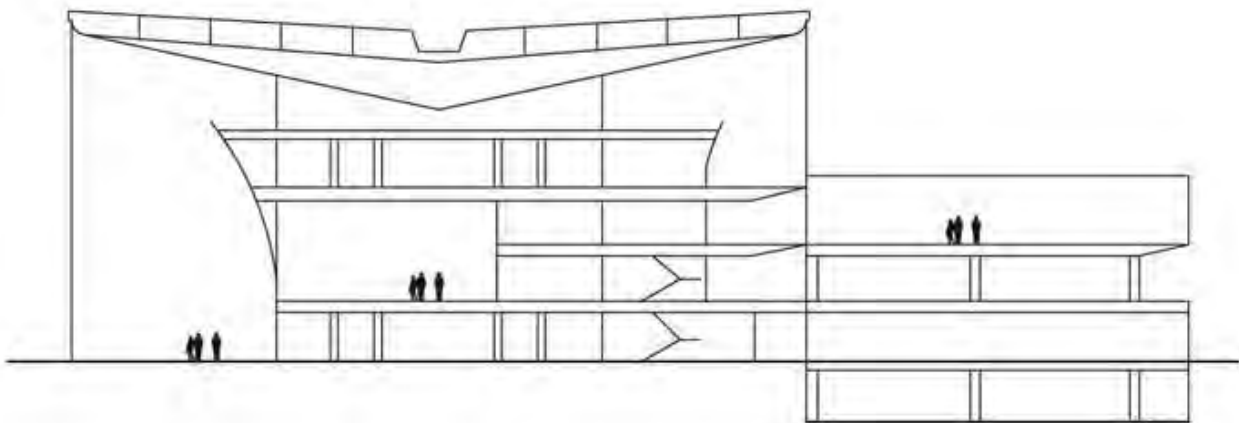


Figure 5-5 Section of the High Court showing parasol roof, which shades the main structure (Source: Gines, 2011: 10).

## 5.2.4 Form and Space Configuration

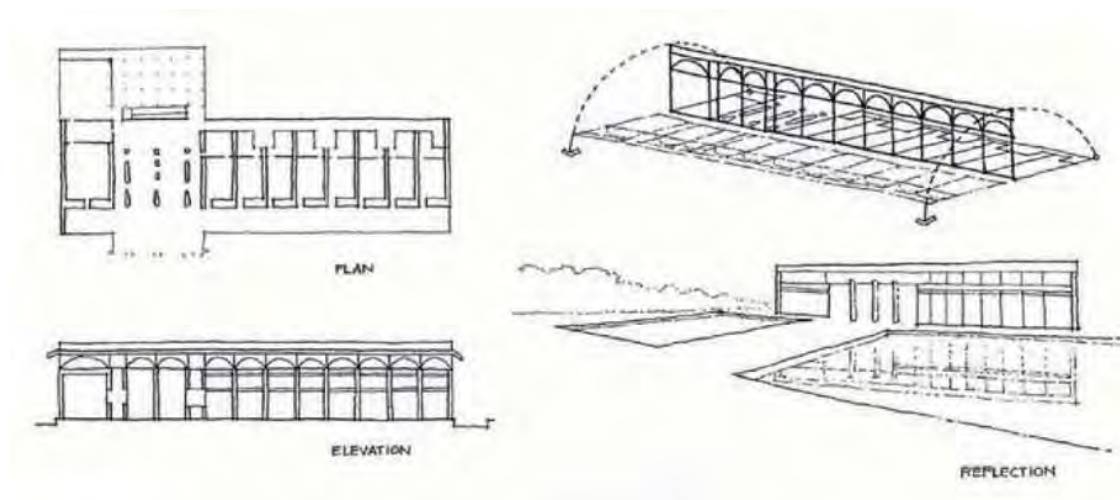


Figure 5-6 Plan and elevation drawings of the High Court illustrating their reflective relationship. Source: Gines, 2011: 14

The brief required eight law courts and a high court, with adequate office space. The courtrooms were situated on the long facade facing the capitol plaza. A small rear extension was added to accommodate offices, giving the plan an L-shape (fig 5-6). Le Corbusier differentiated the high court from the eight law courts by identically expressing the law courts on the main facade using the brise-soleil as well as physically separating them by incorporating a monumental columned entrance elongated to the full height of the building. The design of the High Court developed into an expression increasingly massive, plastic, and abstract (Prakash, 2002).

Le Corbusier's purist painting history is seen in the reflective relationship of the plan and elevation of the High Court when the parasol arches are removed (fig 5-9). This effect is conveyed "when the elevation is viewed in front of the reflecting pool" (Gines, 2001: 14). According to Le Corbusier, the brise-soleil gives the main facade its overall unity, to give the building the perception of a "single entity of plastically interwoven elements", in which the horizontality of the main facade is countered by the bold verticality of the entrance piers and the pillars between the eight law courtrooms (Prakash, 2002: 107).

Chandigarh as a whole was designed at a time when the political nature of the country was on a transition from the traditional empirical rule to that of the British colonial rule. The ruling systems did not value the ordinary citizen and this did not change even after India's emancipation from British rule. Subsequently the architecture reflected this privatization of

state issues in its functional composition. This is evident in the plan of the High Court through the physical separation between the public facilities and the courtrooms. The public and private interface of the courthouses appears to be much smaller than the administrative offices in terms of proportion, yet they are of similar size in reality. This is arguably the architects attempt to represent political intent through the building by abstracting the separation of the state from its citizens (Mtshali, 2013 cited from Boesiger, 1953).

### **5.2.5 Materials and Aesthetics**

The particular architectural style of the building was of a modernist and brutalist nature. Le Corbusier gave the High Court an exposed concrete finish to match the rest of the buildings in the Capitol Complex. He favored the plasticity of the concrete as well as its strength and unique thermal qualities. The windows behind the brise-soleil, are of fixed glass. Solar shutters that open and close on hinges are found in narrow vertical spaces in between the glass and brise-soleil. The elongated piers at the entrance were initially left bare until Le Corbusier felt the need to give the high court an emphatic color scheme to enrich its “visual weight across the monumental plaza” (plate 5-1). He believed color was culturally significant in India. Critics argue that the addition of color altered the monochromatic harmony that gave all the capital buildings a sense of unity (Architectural Review [AR], 3, 2003). An acoustic problem arose because of the exposed concrete surfaces inside the courtrooms prompting the need to introduce a sound absorptive surface. Le Corbusier proposed a solution which was to cover the interior walls with a series of large tapestries that were to be done by a Kashmir firm (Prakash, 2002).

### **5.2.6 Relation to Indian Tradition and Identity.**

Le Corbusier designed the parasol roof by abstracting the arches of the Diwan-I-Am Red Fort in Delhi (Plate 5-4 & 5-5), although the general public fail to recognize this reference. The use of art in the architectural design is prominent throughout the entire complex. The use of abstract artwork, in genuine modernist tradition, is used to reference the nature of India’s historic heritage (Prakash, 2002).



Plate 5-4 The Parasol roof shown in reference to the Diwan-I-am Red Fort below. Source: Prakash, 2002: 22



Plate 5-5 Diwan-I-am Red Fort, Delhi, early 17th century. Source: Prakash, 2002: 22

According to Khan (2009: 20), Le Corbusier “was certainly affected by the spiritual aspect of India when using such symbolic elements in his buildings.” He made use of sketches to get a better understanding of the ancient discourse, Vastu Shastra that talks about the connection between architecture and its environment and the society around it. In order to achieve balance in life, one must follow certain rules.

### **5.2.7 Conclusion**

The High Court is a work of art and visually impressive, despite its flaws and criticisms. Critics have noted how the building fails to work but they do acknowledge that it is a great work evocative of sculpture. It could be argued that its primary effectiveness lies in its poetic, sculptural characteristics. The theory of critical regionalism is echoed though out the architecture of the building in the way it responds to surroundings. The building is culturally relevant and it responds well to the climate. It also pays homage to the Indian Identity by incorporating traditional Indian art within the building. The entire Capitol Complex symbolizes the combined effort of a nation embracing western ideals that have been adjusted to suite their

local Indian cultural beliefs. The city itself was a result of social change and it is in this representation of social change that the architect found inspiration to design architecture that prioritizes Indian ideas and needs, instead of imposing “Western ethics and aesthetics”. The material choices made by the architect lead to the weathering and aging of the buildings in a manner that symbolizes the country’s independence.

## **5.3 AUSTRALIA PARLIAMENT BUILDING**

### **5.3.1 Introduction**

*‘This building will become for our nation both the forum for our differences and the instrument of our unity. A building for all Australians, a Parliament reflecting the diversity of our entire society and responding to the needs of the whole community’*

- Australian Prime Minister Bob Hawke

The Australian Parliament House in Canberra houses the federal parliament. The building serves as a meeting place for members of parliament as well as a symbol of Australia’s democracy. The site is for celebration, memorial and in some cases protest, but overall a building for the people. It is a place where decisions that shape the nation are made (Spence, 1988). An international design competition was held in 1974 by the Australian government for a new parliament house in Canberra to replace the old existing building (RSTCA, 1990). The winning scheme was done by Italian-American architect Aldo Giurgola who abstracted elements of Walter Burley Griffin’s original plan for Canberra by incorporating the major axis of the city’s plan into the form of the building (Architecture Australia [AA], volume 2, 1988).

### **5.3.2 Setting of the Precedent Study**

The building is located on Capitol Hill with reference to the 1912 plan for the Parliamentary Triangle by Walter Burley Griffin. Careful articulation of the design enabled the building to reaffirm the hill’s original profile. It completes the Parliamentary Triangle, creating “both a powerful and legible heart of the city, and symbolically, for the continent” (Spence, 1988: 45). The architect also made use of large curved walls to link and embrace the existing radial avenues that act as the city’s primary axes. (Plate 5-6 and fig 5-9). A strong visual connection and linkage was created between the Parliament house and the historic War Memorial by

placing the building on the land axis (AA, 2, 1988). The area has been associated with Australia's cultural life and national identity since 1941 (AHC, 2003).



Figure 5-7 World map showing location of Canberra, Australia. Source: Author

### 5.3.2 Building Analysis

The building exhibits a powerful architectural concept clearly expressed in the building's form, plan and massing. Parliament House has become an icon of the city of Canberra. Its location was strategic in that it became elevated to the point that it can be viewed from multiple locations in the city. The building is a unique symbol of nationhood that is moulded sculpturally in the landscape (AHC 1999).



Plate 5-6 View of Parliament House. Source: <http://www.tastimber.tas.gov.au/species/pdfs/03s.pdf>



Plate 5-7 Aerial view of Parliament House before completion in 1988. Source: [http://www.peo.gov.au/uploads/peo/docs/closer-look/CloserLook\\_Parliament-House.pdf](http://www.peo.gov.au/uploads/peo/docs/closer-look/CloserLook_Parliament-House.pdf)

## The Design

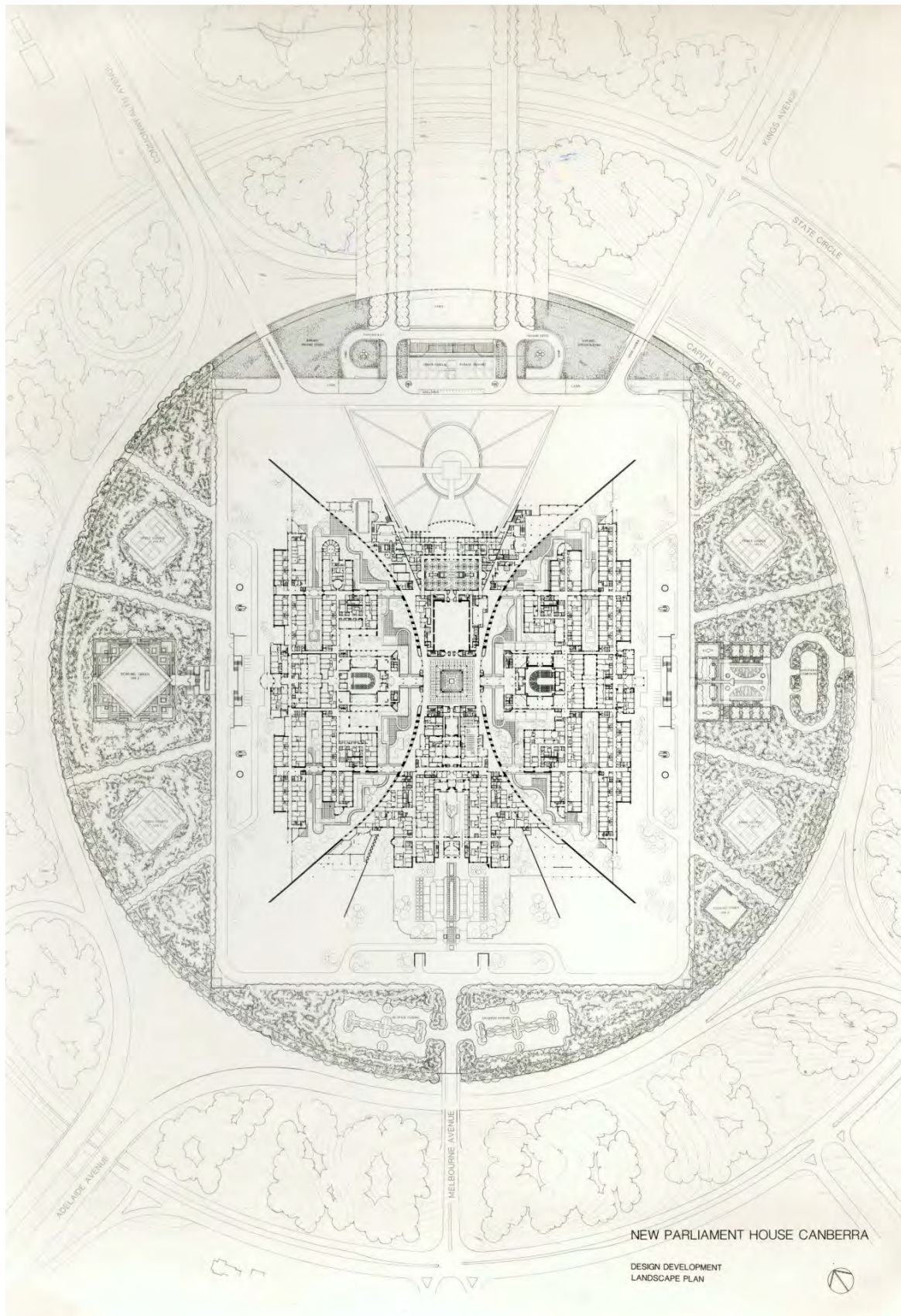


Figure 5-8 Plan of the Australian Parliament House. Source: [http://docomomoaustralia.com.au/pdf/Fiche\\_2009/PARLIAMENT%20HOUSE.pdf](http://docomomoaustralia.com.au/pdf/Fiche_2009/PARLIAMENT%20HOUSE.pdf)



The design is based on two 460m curved walls, which split the Parliament House into four segments:

- 1) Eastern sector housing The House of Representatives chamber and offices
- 2) Western sector housing The Senate chamber and offices.
- 3) The central zone which includes ceremonial and public facilities.
- 4) The southern sector housing The Executive Government (see fig 5.15) (Spence, 1988: 46)

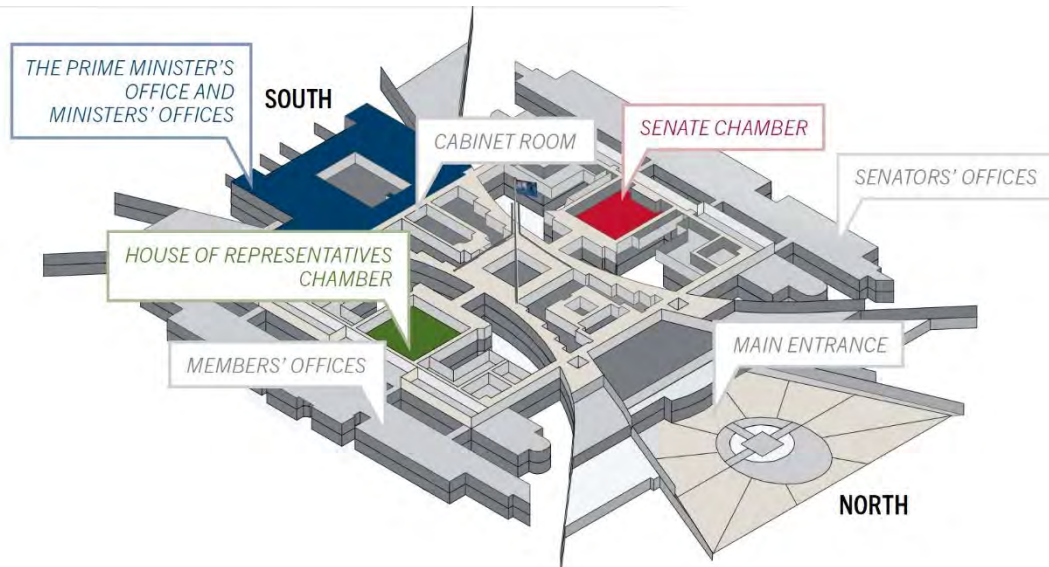


Figure 5-10 3D plan of the new Australian Parliament House. Source: [http://www.peo.gov.au/uploads/peo/docs/closer-look/CloserLook\\_Parliament-House.pdf](http://www.peo.gov.au/uploads/peo/docs/closer-look/CloserLook_Parliament-House.pdf)



Plate 5-8 The old and the new Australian Parliament House. Source: [http://www.peo.gov.au/uploads/peo/docs/closer-look/CloserLook\\_Parliament-House.pdf](http://www.peo.gov.au/uploads/peo/docs/closer-look/CloserLook_Parliament-House.pdf)



Figure 5-9 Griffin's plan for Canberra, showing the Capitol building as a stepped pyramid Source: [http://www.peo.gov.au/uploads/peo/docs/closer-look/CloserLook\\_Parliament-House.pdf](http://www.peo.gov.au/uploads/peo/docs/closer-look/CloserLook_Parliament-House.pdf)

Incorporating the building into the landscape was a key element of the design. This idea relates to the initial concept done by Walter Burley Griffin that integrated the infrastructure into the landscape (fig 5-10) (ibid.). Griffin's plan for the city used Canberra's land formation as a basis

to define symbolic axes including a land axis that runs through the site of Parliament House: Capitol Hill, from Mount Ainslie. The central zone of Parliament House was placed in line with Griffin's land axis. It extends from the Forecourt to the ministerial wing, and links the people to the executive government. The spatial configuration of these axes is a clear indication of how the architect applied theory of space syntax within the design. The concept of critical regionalism is also applied on an architectural design by using earth to cover the building, enabling it to blend in to its environment, creating an illusion as if the building is emerging from the ground (fig 5.17) (Architectural Review[AR] , volume 10, 1988).

### 5.3.2 Materials



Plate 5-10 Ground floor with extensive parquetry flooring.  
Source: AR, volume 10, 1988: 56



Plate 5-9 Top level showing the turpentine clad columns.  
Source: AR, volume 10, 1988: 57

The primary materials used to construct the Parliament House were concrete and masonry. Australian native timber and stone (Plates 5.10 & 5.9) were used to give the interiors a sense of warmth (ibid.). The structure makes use of a reinforced concrete frame with non-load bearing precast. Internal and external claddings are of granite and marble. The exterior structure is covered by earth to blend the building to its immediate environment. A flag mast made of stainless steel sits at the center of the building (ibid.).

### 5.3.2 Social and Cultural Response

The very function of the building is socially significant to its nation and the events hosted there are directly linked to the decision making process that shapes the nation's future. Numerous design elements have been incorporated into the design of the building resulting in a symbolic evocation of the connection between the people and the Parliament, the natives and Europeans, as well as between nature and man (Spence, 1988). By fitting well within the overall form of Capital Hill, The Parliament House was able to evoke unique imagery in the northern section

of the establishment. As the old Parliament House, located at the lower part of the northern side of the hill, is nested inside the curvilinear walls of the new Parliament building above it, it is viewed as if the two buildings are one entity (see Plate 5-7) (*ibid.*)

### 5.3.3 Symbolizing democracy and national identity

*'We built an example of democracy where the people who visit the place are as important as the politicians within.'*

-Richard Thorp.

The architect designed the forecourt (fig 5.21) in a welcoming and inviting way, so as to draw people in to observe the democratic process. A large ceremonial pool is placed at the center of the forecourt, paved in granite mosaic, symbolizing the Australian continent. The architect's intention was to design the forecourt in such a way as to represent the historical era of the country prior to European settlement, using natural colors and hard surfaces to evoke the prehistoric land (AA, 3, 1987). The large ceremonial pool has similar features to the reflective pool in front of the Chandigarh High Court and Kahn's Bangladesh National Assembly Building.



Plate 5-12 The Forecourt. Source:  
[http://www.peo.gov.au/uploads/peo/docs/closer-look/CloserLook\\_Parliament-House.pdf](http://www.peo.gov.au/uploads/peo/docs/closer-look/CloserLook_Parliament-House.pdf)



Plate 5-11 Forecourt with Aboriginal mosaic in colored granite.  
Source: Arch Rev, volume 10, 1988: 53

The distinctive pyramidal flag mast structure of Australia is arguably the most identifiable symbol of the parliament House (Plate 5-13). Located right at the center of the building, the flag is one of the largest stainless steel structures built by man, reaching a height of 81m, weighing 220 tons. It unifies the design, mimicking the mountains in the background, symbolizing unity in Australian democracy (*ibid.*). It also forms a “climax to the composition and defines a symbolic people’s place on top of the Parliament House” (Spence, 1988: 45).



Plate 5-14 Flag Mast. Source: [http://www.peo.gov.au/uploads/peo/docs/closer-look/CloserLook\\_Parliament-House.pdf](http://www.peo.gov.au/uploads/peo/docs/closer-look/CloserLook_Parliament-House.pdf)



Plate 5-13 The Great Hall. Source: [http://www.peo.gov.au/uploads/peo/docs/closer-look/CloserLook\\_Parliament-House.pdf](http://www.peo.gov.au/uploads/peo/docs/closer-look/CloserLook_Parliament-House.pdf)

More than 60 major artworks were commissioned for the Parliament House in an attempt to represent the nation’s artistic expression. These works of art, according to the Parliament House Construction Authority (PHCA), were to be perceived as voices that express the identity of Australia as well as its diverse character. This linked the building with the past cultural traditions of Australia (Spence, 1988). The architect resolved the architecture together with the “Art Program” and the symbolism associated with the spaces. Architecture, art and craft were integrated by the architect because of his belief that art and craft have “the same creative basis as architecture” therefore they should be developed simultaneously in a dialectic manner (*ibid.*: 47).

The Great Hall is located within the central part of the building, in the public sphere (plate 5-14). Known as “the room of the land,” the hall is designed for ceremonial and official occasions. It portrays a sense of how Australia has been shaped by its physical environment. The great hall has an Australian wood finish and tapestries based on a painting of a dense eucalyptus forest done by Australian Artist, Arthur Boyd. The painting gives the impression of

a never ending forest, symbolizing the relationship between Parliament House and the Australian landscape (ibid.).



Plate 5-15 The Great Verandah. Source: [http://www.peo.gov.au/uploads/peo/docs/closer-look/CloserLook\\_Parliament-House.pdf](http://www.peo.gov.au/uploads/peo/docs/closer-look/CloserLook_Parliament-House.pdf)



Plate 5-16 Altes Museum, Berlin by Schinkel: a friendly peopled portico similar to the Great Veranda. Source: Spence, 1988: 48)

Another symbolic depiction of Australian culture is found in the design of the Great Veranda that is found on the northern part of the building next to the entrance (plate 5-15). It symbolizes the tradition of the verandah in Australian residential architecture, which provides shelter from the harsh weather, as well as a space to welcome guests and bid them farewell. Spence (1988: 48) defines The Great Veranda as a portico that accommodates vertical circulation from the public car park below as well as doubling as a “Porte cochere” for the VIPs. He compares it to the deep portico of the Altes Museum in Berlin by Schinkel (Plate 5-16) which similarly reveals its double volume nature.

Another design aspect that plays an influential role in expressing Australia's national identity is the use of timbers collected from all over the country. Timber was incorporated in the color scheme of the building used to "interpret the traditional Westminster colors" of green and red for both the lower and upper parliamentary houses as well as to reflect the landscape's natural colors (AA, 2, 1987: 55).

### **5.3.3 Conclusion**

The underlying importance of the new Parliament House originates from the concept of making a national place. Its multi-functionality allows it to be a symbolic ceremonial place of national importance, as well as a work place for those elected by the citizens. It is a true symbol of national unity and commitment to the democratic process of government. Australian history and cultural diversity is well represented through the integrated works of commissioned art and craft, reflecting the nations' aspirations (Eric Martin and Associates, 2000). Both theories of space syntax and critical regionalism play big roles within the design of Capitol Hill. Great effort was put in mimicking the original shape of the hill. Not only does the building relate to its surroundings, it blends into the landscape. The use of local wood and timber within the building also anchors it within its context. The spatial configuration of the paths and the spaces created invite the public to the new parliament, creating a building for the people. The strong visual connection and linkage created between the Parliament house and the historic War Memorial by placing the building on the land axis also reinforces the space syntax theory of spatial perception. The building also embraces the existing radial avenues that act as the city's primary axes. The Australian Parliament building is a great symbol of the Australian democracy.

## **5.4 CONCLUSION TO PRECEDENT STUDIES**

These buildings are truly effectors of social change because of the public interest invested in their design, construction and ongoing use. They also illustrate the importance of a nation's history, culture and identity within civic buildings as these issues sum up the characteristics of a nation, making it possible to represent all societies that make the nation. In an effort to further understand the representation of social change through architectural expression, case studies of contemporary buildings will be investigated and the findings documented in the following chapter.

## **CHAPTER 6 CASE STUDIES**

## CHAPTER 6 CASE STUDIES

### 6.1 INTRODUCTION AND SELECTION CRITERIA

In this chapter, case studies will be used to understand the way in which social change inspires architecture by analysing the efficacy of the techniques to symbolize the identity of a nation as well as its political views and also linking these techniques to the concepts and theories discussed in chapter one. The particular case studies chosen are: Constitutional Hill located in Braamfontein, Johannesburg and The Northern Cape Legislature located in Kimberly. The Constitutional Court was chosen because of its unique qualities of synthesizing the old and the new as well as the political nature of the building that is symbolic of the future. The Northern Cape Legislature was chosen because of its ability to spatially and socially reintegrate a former colonial city, as well as the way in which it synthesises ancient African architecture into a modern political context. The analysis of these case studies will be according to the buildings': response to urban and environmental context; national identity and democracy through architectural expression; and how the building symbolises issues of social change. Plans, photographs and sketches will be incorporated as part of the discussion for further clarity.

### 6.2 CONSTITUTIONAL COURT

#### 6.2.1 Introduction

*“The Court is a symbol of democracy, perhaps the cornerstone of democracy, because it protects the Bill of Rights, which is the cornerstone of the Constitution.”*

-Justice Yvonne Mokgoro

The words of Justice Yvonne Mokgoro are a clear indication of how important this building is to South Africa's new democracy. The Constitutional Court signifies a new political exemption that treasures human rights, creative expression and transparency of government (Law-Viljoen, 2006). When a new Constitutional Law containing a Bill of Rights was passed in 1996, it marked a major milestone of democracy in South Africa that prompted the need for a building to house the Constitutional Courts (Lipman, 2004). An open design competition launched in 1997 with the intention of searching for an adequate architectural expression to manifest a new style of public architecture depicting this new democratic institution (Peters, 2004). The competition was won by Durban based firm, OMM Design Workshop. Constitution Hill was to develop into a symbolic place for a nation as well as a public space for the city, “where the



new Constitutional Court and Human Rights Commission sit in harmony with the historic prison buildings,” merging the old with the new (Peters, 2004: 2), similar to the Reichstag in Berlin (Giesen, 2002: 7).

### 6.2.2 Setting of the case study

Chosen by the eleven justices who served in 2004 because of its connection to South Africa’s political past and symbolic meaning, the site named Old Fort Prison is situated in the heart of Johannesburg’s old central business district in Braamfontein (Figure 6.1), right next to the notorious Hillbrow district (Du Toit, 2004). The 12.5 hectare site is situated on the northern slope of Braamfontein Ridge. The fort was built here because of its vantage point that was of great strategic importance to the military. Often referred to as the Robben Island of Johannesburg, Constitutional Hill comprises of the old Fort, the Women’s Prison, Sections Four & Five (the notorious ‘Native Gaol’) and the Constitutional Court (fig 9) (Giesen, 2002: 6).



Figure 6-1 Constitutional Hill location map. Source: <http://www.sa-venues.com/maps/gauteng/braamfontein.php>

The Old Fort was designed by Paul Kruger to protect the South African Republic from being invaded by the British. The Anglo-Boer war ended with the Boer military being imprisoned by the British in the fort leading to its extension to include Section Four and Five, and the women’s jail in 1907 (Tickley, 2011). The prison detainees included political activists, common criminals and many civilians (Wohler, 2010).

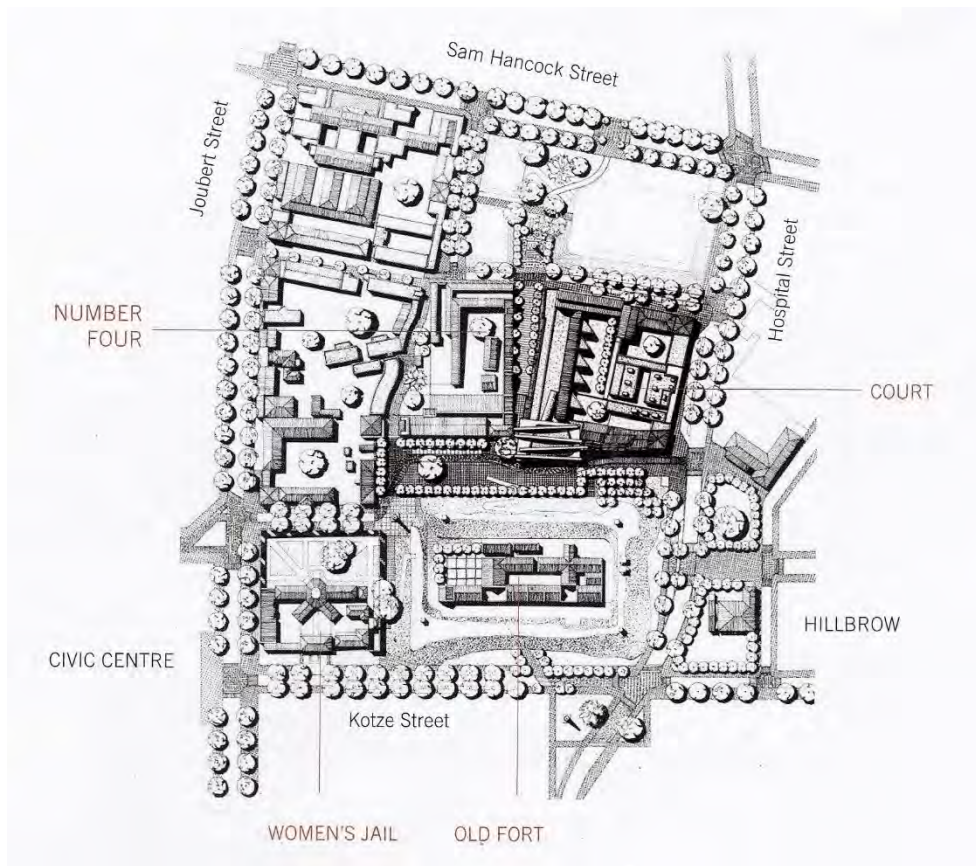


Figure 6-2 Locality plan of Constitutional Hill. Source: Law-Viljoen, 2006: 16

The background and history of the chosen site present a good perception of the region's context and aid its transformation from the harsh and oppressive memories of the apartheid regime to a future of unity, democracy and freedom which the new South African nation is pursuing (Tickley, 2001: 54).



Plate 6-1 View of the city from Constitution Hill. Source: [http://www.gauteng.net/attractions/entry/constitution\\_hill/](http://www.gauteng.net/attractions/entry/constitution_hill/)

### 6.2.3 Building Analysis

The Neo-Classical style has often been used in court designs found in former Western colonies. The courthouse typology itself is associated with a supreme dominance over public architecture (Tickley, 2001: 54). By designing a building that is sensitive to human scale, OMM opposes the typical authoritative architecture in favour of a more contemporary, artistically free

architectural expression (Mtshali, 2013). This expression softens the intimidating image of the justice system, making it appear more welcoming and accessible to the community. The hope for this more approachable image is that it will alter the negative perception the courts have in the public eye (Law-Viljoen, 2006). The design encourages public participation and freedom of movement. Barriers and fences are purposely excluded from the site in order to make the entire precinct open and freely accessible to the general public.

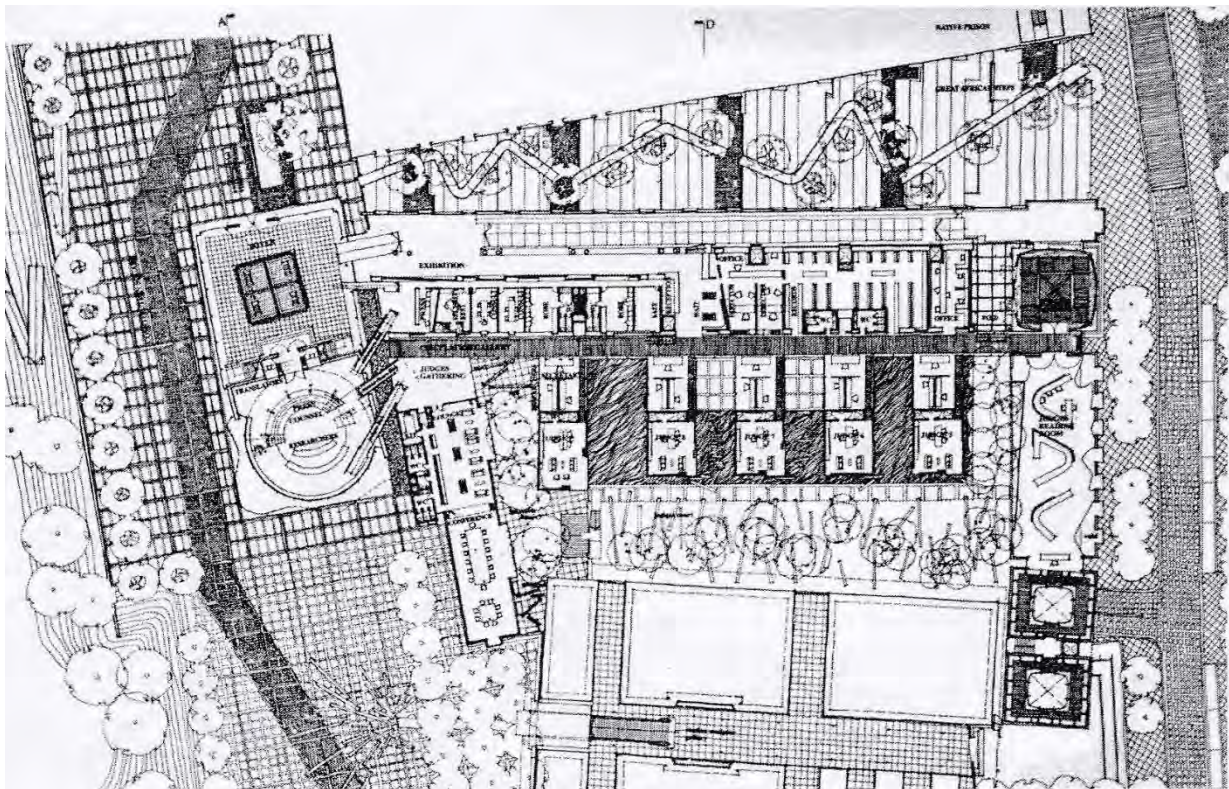


Figure 6-3 Plan of the Constitutional Court of South Africa. Source: (Noble, 2011)

The building was structured according to public functions with the library located at the northern wing and the public foyer and chamber in the southern wing respectively. The corresponding facades are easily reached from the western side of the building through the Great African Steps on the exterior (Plates 6-2 & 6-3), and internal stairs and ramps that double as gallery space (Deckler, *et al.*, 2006). The facades are also visually transparent. This transparency portrays an image of an accessible justice and accentuates the notion of transparency and openness (Msomi, 2011 cited from Architect & Builder, 2004). Orientation was the deciding factor for the public square's main access pass along the southern façade from Hilbrow (fig 6-5). The Great African steps also act as the link between the old and the new--the old Section Four and Five prisons and the new court building--creating an external procession that symbolizes the progression of a formally oppressed nation (Deckler, *et al.*, 2006: 21).

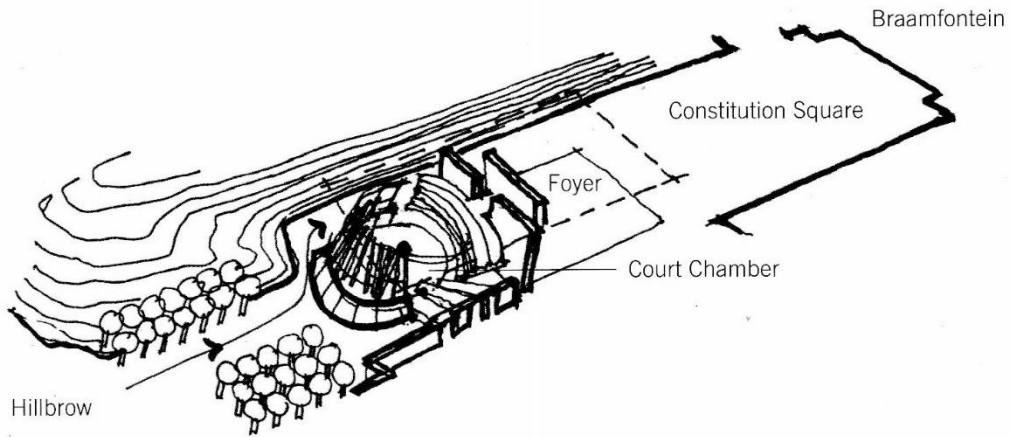


Figure 6-4 A sketch showing public access route to Constitution Square from Hillbrow. Source: Law-Viljoen, 2006: 39.



Plate 6-2 The Great Steps. Source: Author

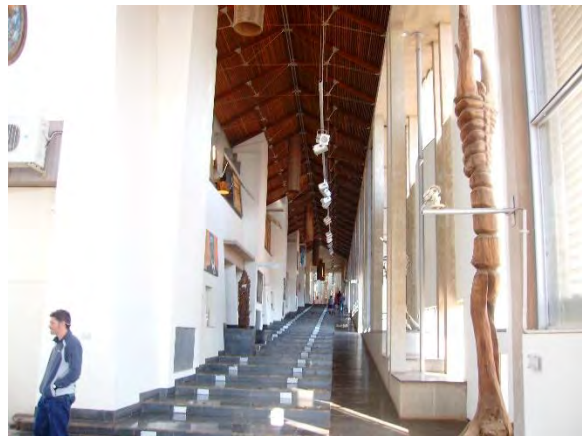


Plate 6-3 Internal stairs and ramps that double as gallery space. Source: Author

### 6.2.4 Spatial Democracy

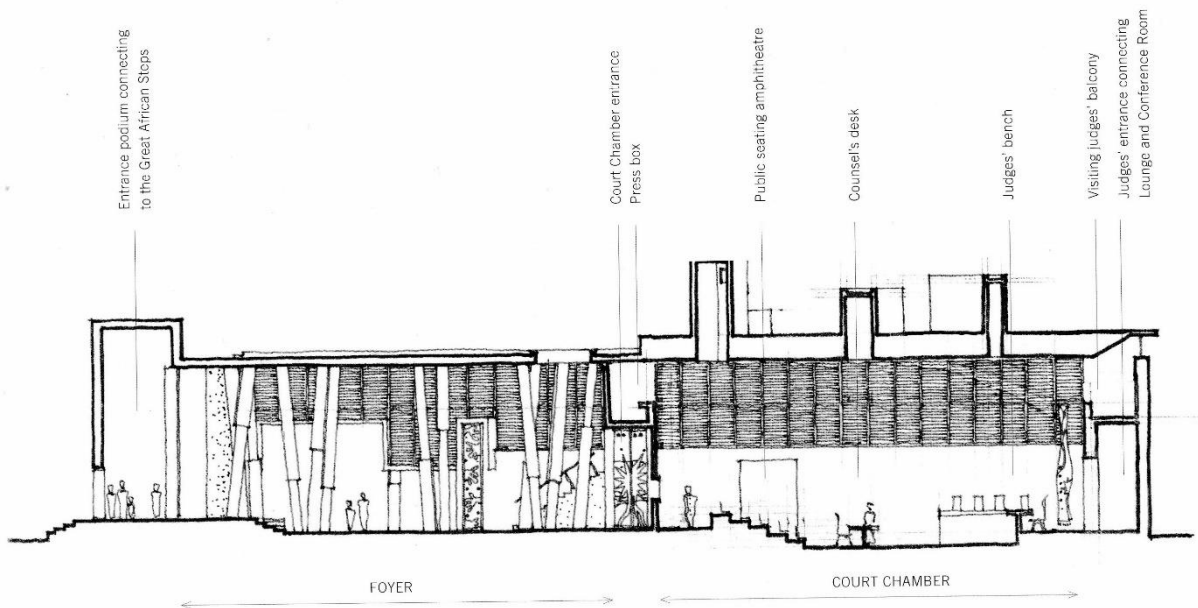


Figure 6-5 Cross-section showing spatial relationship between the various functions of the Constitutional Court. Source: Law-Viljoen, 2006: 63

Four major components make up the constitutional court building. These are: the court chamber and foyer; the administration; the library and exhibition space; and judge’s chambers (Miller, 2011). The Public Square (plate 6-4) found at the southern side of the building is freely accessible and focuses onto the court foyer and chamber. (Plates 6-3 & 6-4) and (fig 6-6). The notion of a transparent democracy is expressed by glazing in the court foyer. This concept is carried over to the court chamber where the architect achieved the effect of floating bricks by molding the chamber with bricks stacked over a glass strip (Plate. 6-6), also making the chamber visible from outside. This symbolized the openness of the chamber and the bricks used were from the demolished awaiting trial blocks (*ibid.*), creating a link between the old and new, as well as creating a new purpose of “justice opposed to its previous function of oppression” (Tickley, 2011: 58).



Plate 6-6 the court square. Source: Author

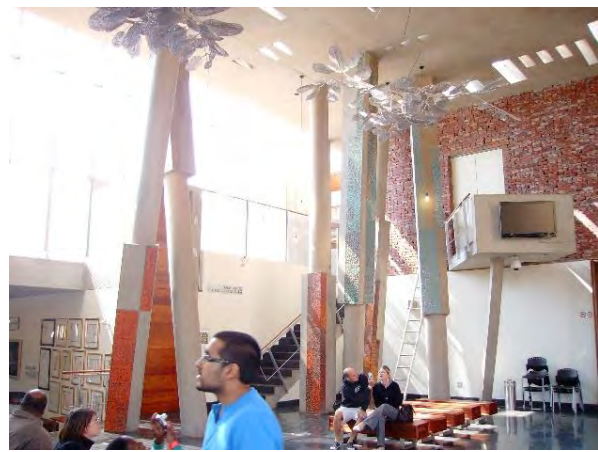


Plate 6-4 the court foyer. Source: Author

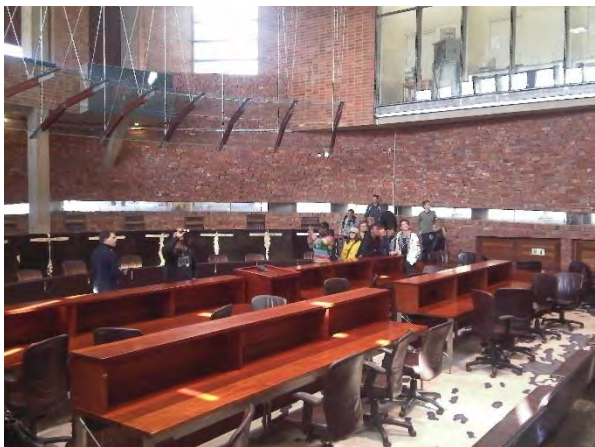
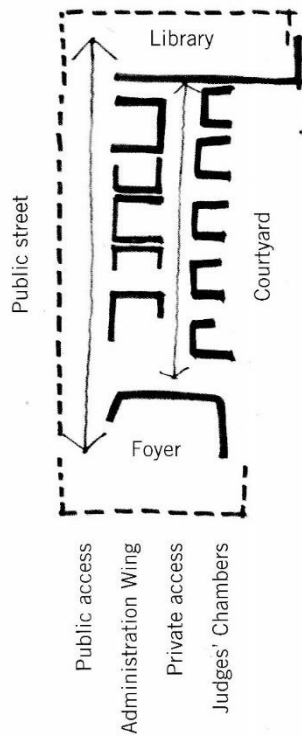


Plate 6-7 the court chamber. Source: Author



Plate 6-5 the Court Library (Buckland in Noble, 2004: 20)

The library, (Plate 6-5) located at the bottom of the site, acts as a glowing beacon being the tallest building on the site. It is placed opposite to the court foyer and chamber (fig 6-6) and linked by the administration area (plate 6-8) on three levels giving the staff access to both sections. The judges’ chambers are located to the west of the site. (fig 6-7). They protrude out



into ponds like fingers, creating private courtyards for the judges. The ponds are one example of how the architect separated private functions from the public by restricting pedestrian circulation to the opposite side of these blocks by using stairs, ramps and exhibition space (fig 6-6) (Law-Viljoen, 2006).

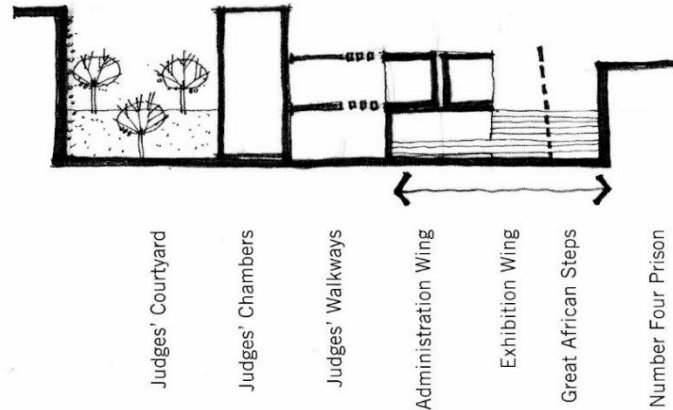


Figure 6-6 Illustration of the public to private routes in the court. Source: Law-Viljoen, 2006: 134

Figure 6-7 Sectional sketch illustrating the public to private transition through the building. Source: Law-Viljoen, 2006: 102

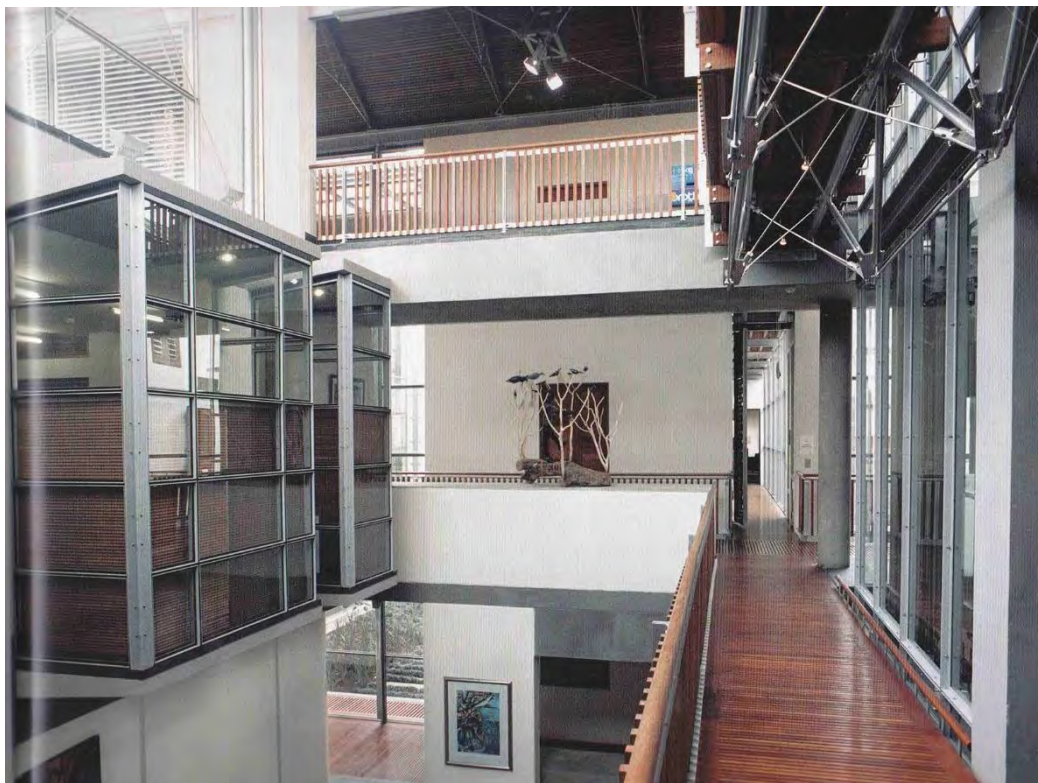


Plate 6-8 The administration wing, in-between public and private circulation routes. Source: Law-Viljoen, 2006:134

## 6.2.5 Aesthetics and Climatic Response.

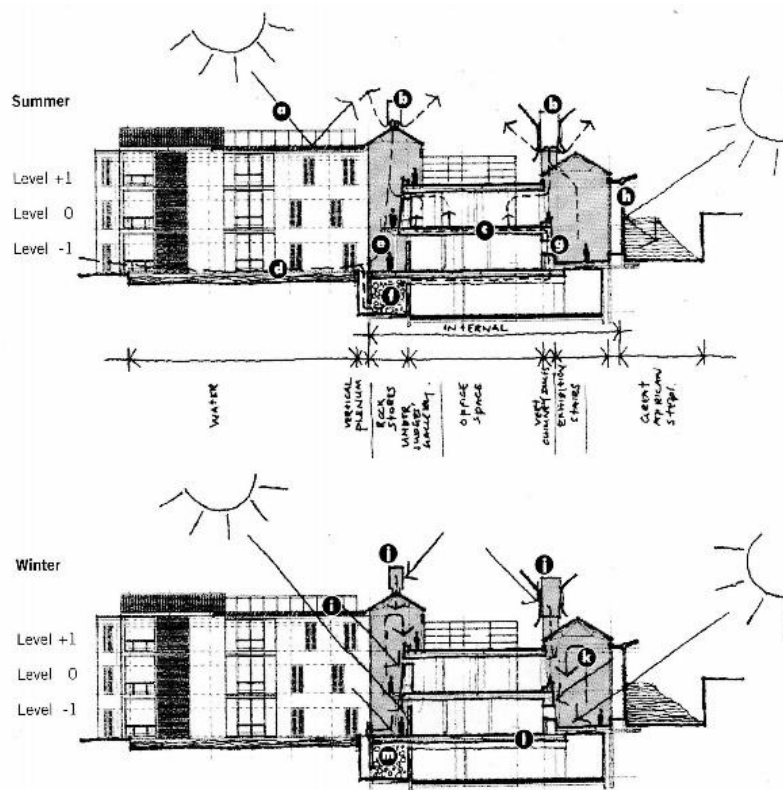


Figure 6-8 diagram of the Court's passive cooling and heating system. Source: Law-Viljoen, 2006: 140

The building responds well to local climatic conditions. The architect incorporated energy conservation principles into the design, as well as those of natural ventilation though some areas are air-conditioned, such as the auditorium and court chamber. Principles of passive cooling were applied into the building to cool the structural mass and interiors to maximise thermal comfort. In case of extreme heat conditions, air is circulated through the rock compartment using automatic fans (Peters, 2004) (fig 6-8).



Plate 6-9 north, east and west facing facades with solar shading control. Source: Author

The facades that receive the most direct sunlight have been provided with solar shading devices such as balconies and brise-soleils, as well as deep overhangs (Plate 6-8). Bigger openings have been put on the southern façade to allow for more transparency (Plate 6-10). The main materials used in the construction of the Constitutional Court were brick, concrete, steel and glass (Plate 6-11).



Plate 6-11 Southern facade with large fenestrations to allow for internal and external transparency. Source: Author



Plate 6-10 Image showing the typical materials used throughout the building. Source: Author

## 6.2.6 Symbolism of Social Change, Identity and Democracy



Figure 6-9 the linocut entitled *Making Democracy Work* by Sandile Goye that became the source of inspiration of the justice under a tree logo. Source: Law-Viljoen, 2006: 60

The Constitutional Court is seen as a manifestation of national identity and justice in built form, thus it is a state symbol to its citizens (Law-Viljoen, 2006). The architects came across an interesting concept during the early design stages, inspired by a linocut done by Sandile Goye, entitled “making democracy work” (fig 6-9) (Law-Viljoen, 2006: 60) that represented a traditional court where elders would gather around a tree while discussing matters of the community (Le Roux & Du Toit, 2004: 64). Goye’s work inspired the concept of “justice under a tree” (Plate 6-12) that became symbolic of the Constitutional Court building, literally through a logo and artwork, and abstractly through the building’s architectural expression (Law-Viljoen, 2006: 60). The Constitutional Court is praised for its attempt to interpret national





Plate 6-12 Justice under a tree logo. Source: Author

identity through the built form, however, there seems to be a clash between the “Western judicial system practiced and the cultural tribal law” derived from the concept of justice under a tree (JSAIA, 2004: 81). In response, the architects state that the design of the Constitutional Court is based on “a sense of heritage, the recognition that people aspire to a better future, and the optimistic view of a world free of oppression that nurtures a dignified human spirit” (Makin & Masoiada, 2004: 9).

An indigenous African theme is felt throughout the interiors of the Court. The Court Chamber incorporates a cattle hide (Plate 6-14) in its design, while the columns in the foyer are reminiscent of trees (Plate 6-13). (Plate 6-14) Various pieces of art in the Court also convey a general African aesthetic (Architect & Builder, 2004). The art collection created by Albie Sachs gives the Court its identity as a ‘people’s place’ rather than a place reserved for authorities and law enforcers (Fernandes, 2004: 33).



Plate 6-14 Columns in the Court Foyer reminiscent of a tree. Source: Author



Plate 6-13 the cattle hide found in the interior detailing of the Court Chamber Source: Law-Viljoen, 2006: 66

*“The humanist architecture of the new Constitutional Court--and the incredible art collection housed within it--is a triumphant reflection of our cultural diversity and profound societal changes.”*

-Alexandra Fernandes



Plate 6-16 The words 'Constitutional Court' in the eleven official South African languages. Source: Author



Plate 6-15 A wall of panels made by local artists. Source: Author

## 6.2.6 Conclusion

The Constitutional Court, regarded as a successful civic building in post-Apartheid South Africa, has been criticised for its fragmented design, modest scale, and somewhat domestic detailing; however, this fragmentation could be a symbol of South Africa's fragmented past (JSAIA, 2004). It is an architectural representation of the social changes that occurred in South Africa, pre and post-independence. The building critically responds to issues of society, culture, identity, democracy and transparency, it is also a response to environmental factors, the region, and the people at large, creating a structure that represents a national identity, a critical regionalist approach to architecture. The significance of the site to the history of the South African people adds significance to the building and its purpose. Placing the building on this site not only ensures the public of a reminder of the past, but also provides them an aspiration for a better future. The urban design of the entire precinct is seen as a correction of the fragmented planning implemented by apartheid (Japha V & Japha D, 1998: 32). Great attention was given to the spatial configuration of space, its use and accessibility. Various components of the building were carefully distinguished from each other through the use of space syntax. This enabled the designers to create a building that is public friendly and very accessible. One of its greatest attributes is its ability to seamlessly fuse historic and modern elements into one great composition. The integrated contemporary composition of the built form, local art and public participation found in the Constitutional Court deeply expresses the overall identity of the region, in contrast to the intimidating and inaccessible civic buildings built by the previously autocratic and oppressive state. The diversity of South Africa and its democratic society inspired the design of the constitutional court as well as its location, making a great example of a critical regionalist approach to South African architecture (Tickley, 2011).

## 6.3 NORTHERN CAPE LEGISLATURE, KIMBERLEY

### 6.3.1 Introduction

The Northern Cape Province, as part of a post-independence national commitment, was chosen to benefit from a development grant from the state to construct legislative buildings. Inspired by the provinces' historic and cultural heritages, the development project had an aim to socially, culturally and economically develop communities. The symbolic purpose of the development was to represent pride and democracy (KZNIA 01, 1997). Funded by the National Treasury and the Independent Development Trust, the local Department of Public Works promoted a national competition in 1998 that required a building which articulated a strong relationship between identity, space and power (Noble, 2011). The project was awarded to Luis Ferreira da Silva Architects who conceptualised the “spirit and aspirations of the Northern Cape people.” Their design was of unique, evocative forms with unified volumes and spaces achieving a dynamic tension derived from “differentiated scales of composition” comparable to local landmarks anchored in location and tradition (Malan & McInerney, 2003: 27).

### 6.3.2 Setting of Case Study

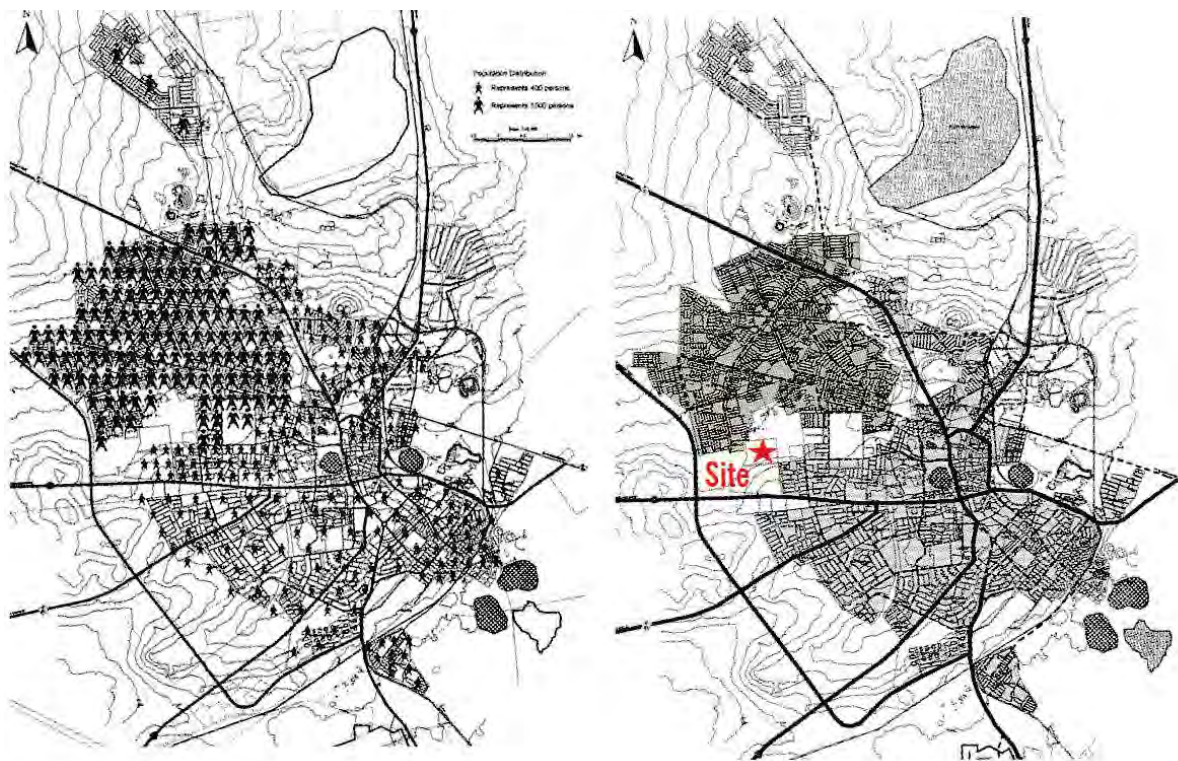


Figure 6-10 Map indicating population densities of the Galeshewe Township against former white owned Kimberley, and the location plan of the Northern Cape Legislature between the township and the city. Source: Malan & McInerney, 2003: 14

The Northern Cape landscape is generally flat with the horizon serving as a point of reference (Malan & McInerney, 2003). The diamond mining rush in the city of Kimberley resulted in the creation of two dislocated residential areas, namely the colonial white suburb and the black Township Number Two, later named Galeshewe. This divide in the city was reinforced by the apartheid regime (*ibid.*). In an effort to bridge the social and spatial gap caused by apartheid, the buffer strip site separating Galeshewe from the town was favoured over other possible sites. The idea was to promote development and integration towards this previously segregated area of Kimberley (Noble, 2011). The Legislature Complex created a decentralised node as it is located on the outskirts of the city resulting in an unusual dynamic that unfortunately compromised the intention of promoting development further into the township region (KZNIA 01, 1997). Ten years later, not much has changed in terms of development in the immediate precinct around the legislature. Despite the criticism, The Northern Cape Legislature is still seen as an iconic development designed as a catalyst to spatially re-integrate the city of Kimberley (Malan & McInerney, 2003).

### 6.3.3 Building Analysis

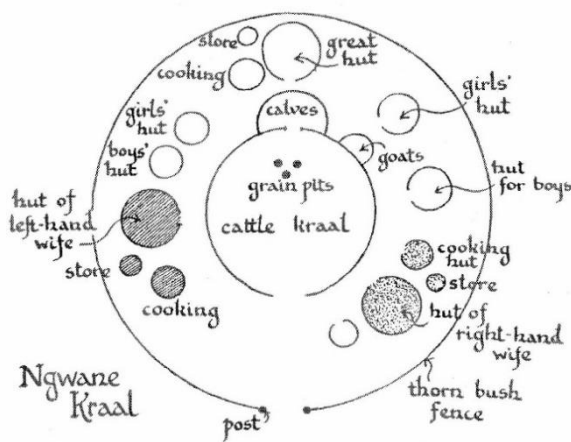


Figure 6-11 A Ngwane homestead and cattle byre. Source: Noble, 2011: 69

The Northern Cape Legislature Complex is not contextual, according to Noble (2011: 63) in terms of the “established architecture of the town,” but relates specifically to its historic context (Deckler, et al., 2006). The Architects went for a unique and visionary expression that would conceive a new identity (Noble, 2011). The concept’s aim is to interpret traditional responses to open space, through an African architectural language, while acknowledging

the context in terms of its materials and skilled labour (Malan & McInerney, 2003). The fundamental function of the development is to encourage openness and fluid public access, therefore buildings were fragmented throughout the site to achieve this idea (KZNIA 01, 1997). Building function and interrelation influenced the positioning of buildings around the site (Deckler, et al., 2006). The complex is based on an axis that relates to the main entrance with a spatial hierarchy that is human oriented, giving rise to an architecture of human-centeredness (Malan & McInerney, 2003). The forms of the buildings were envisioned to evoke

bone fragments and rocks, which assisted in achieving an individual response for each building (KZNIA 01, 1997). The architects scheme was commended for the design of the Peoples Square (*Patlelo*) which was a thoughtful use of open space, a concept that is understood to be of African origin, based on spatial traditions like that of the “traditional homestead and cattle byre, which is characteristic of the central cattle pattern” (fig 6-11) (Noble, 2011: 69). Reference to the iconic Great Zimbabwe (discussed earlier in chapter 4), has also been noted with regard to the tower of the Northern Cape Legislature (*ibid.*).

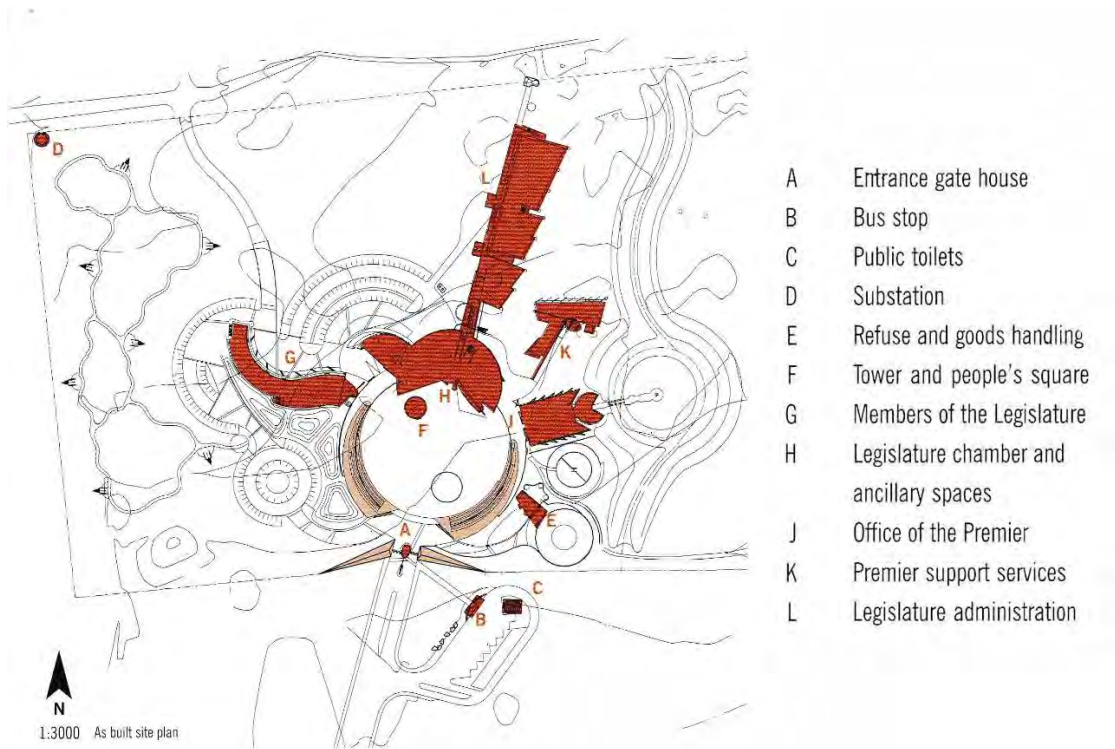


Figure 6-12 site plan of the Northern Cape Legislature. Source: Malan & McInerney, 2003: 27



Plate 6-17 the Tower. Source: Author



Figure 6-13 North elevation. Source: Deckler et al., 2006: 11

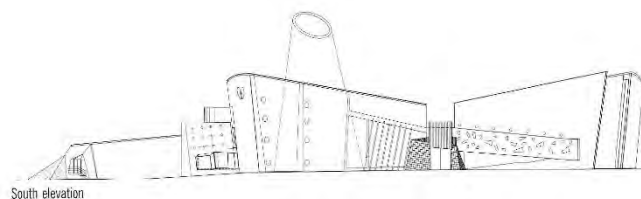


Figure 6-14 South elevation. Source: Deckler et al., 2006: 10

The buildings are spread around a focal point being the People’s Square or *Patlelo* with The Tower visually dominating the square as the landmark of the establishment. The Tower provides a good vantage point in terms of security, allowing cameras to survey the entire site. It also provides a podium for speakers to address the congregation in the People’s Square (Malan & McInerney, 2003: 34, Deckler *et al.*, 2006: 13).

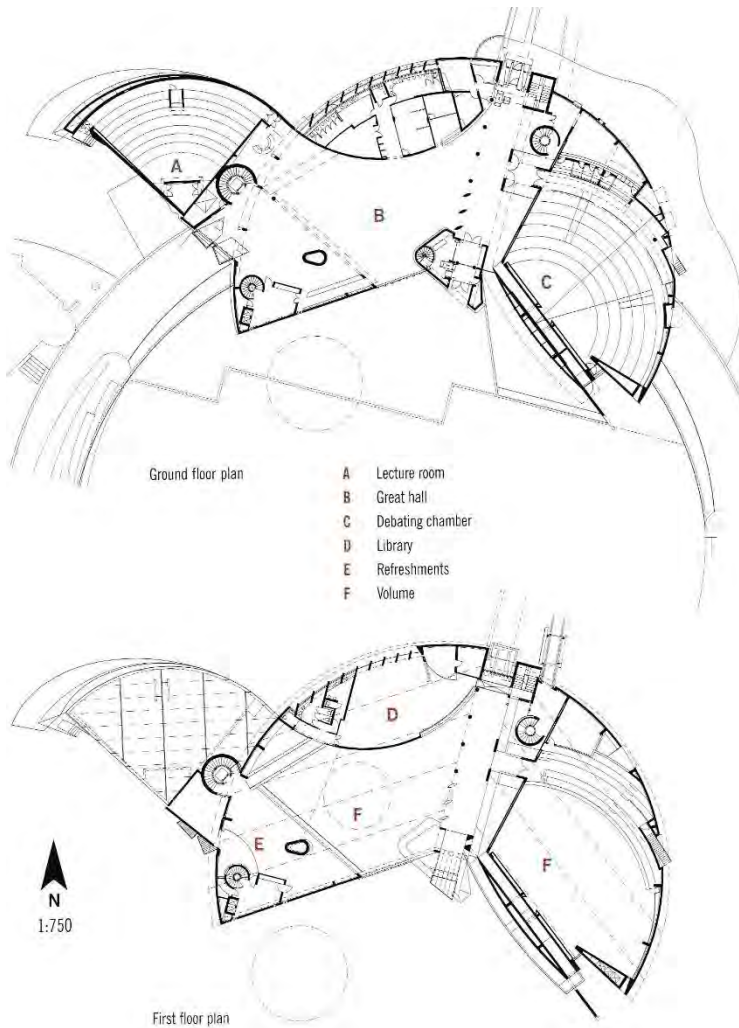


Figure 6-15 Plans of The building that houses the Legislature Chamber, Library and Ancillary areas. Source: (Malan & McInerney, 2003: 33)

The building that houses the Legislature Chamber, Library and Ancillary areas, houses the “core of the precinct” (Malan & McInerney, 2003: 32). The public aspect of the debating chamber (plate 6-20) is of greater superiority as compared to the rest of the buildings, therefore great attention to detail was paid when designing public areas in terms of circulation, access, scale and security. The great hall (plate 6-21) found on



Plate 6-20 Entrance to the Legislature Chamber, Library and Ancillary areas. Source: Author

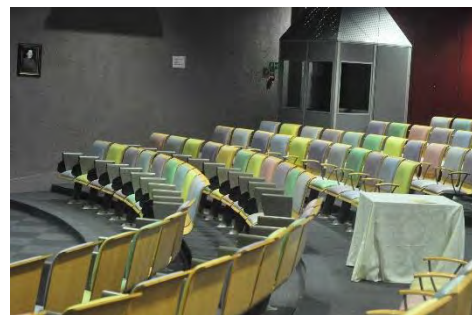


Plate 6-19 The lecture room. Source: Author



Plate 6-18 The Debating Chamber. Source: Author

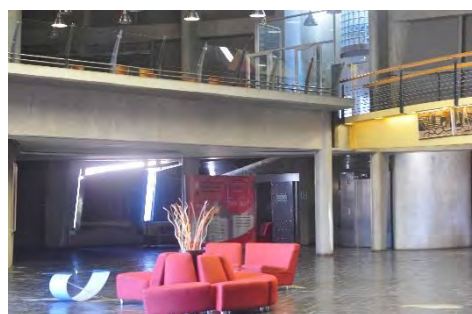


Plate 6-21 the Great Hall. Source: Author

the left side of the building, was designed to be flexible in both plan and volume for various functions and gatherings (ibid.).

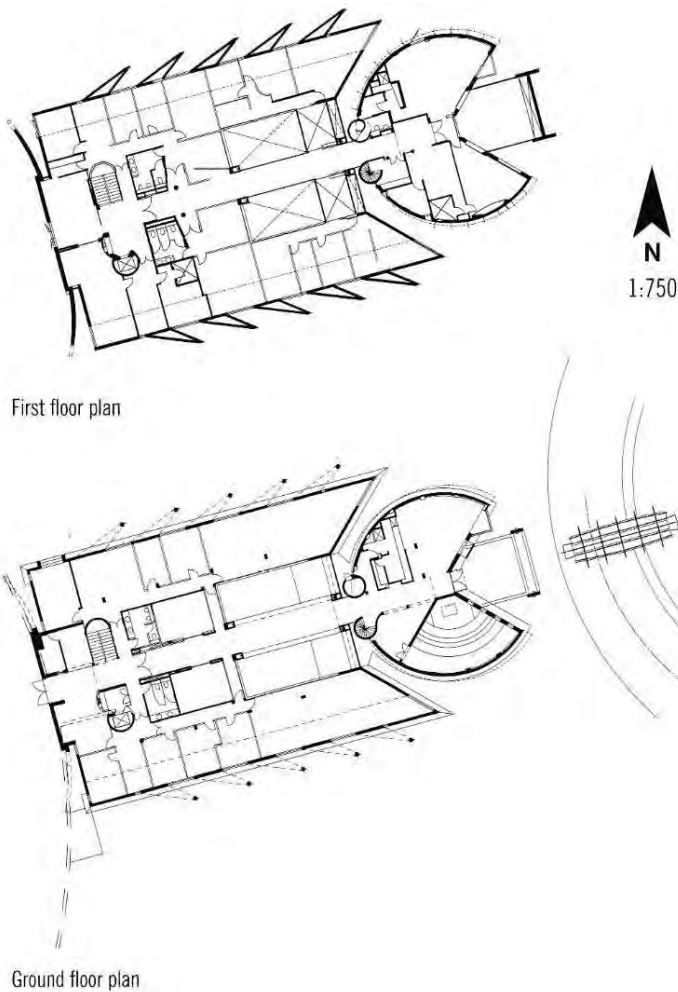


Figure 6-16 Plans of the Premier's Building. Source: (Malan & McInerney, 2003: 36)



Plate 6-24 Partial south elevation of the Premier's Building. Source: Author



Plate 6-23 Entrance to the Premier's building. Source: Author



Plate 6-22 View of the back of the Premier's building from Madiba park. Source: (Malan & McInerney, 2003: 37)

The Office of the Premier reflects the prestige of its function, which is to represent the people. It overlooks the Madiba Park (plate 6-22) on one side, and the People's Square (plate 6-23) on the other, in an all-embracing form, emphasising its role.

The Legislature Administration building that houses the office of the speaker is considered to be the most important with regard to its position and accessibility, therefore it has been placed in such a way that it is accessible through a vertical and horizontal circulation spine (see plate 6-25 and fig 6-17), directly from the basement parking area and the legislative chamber.

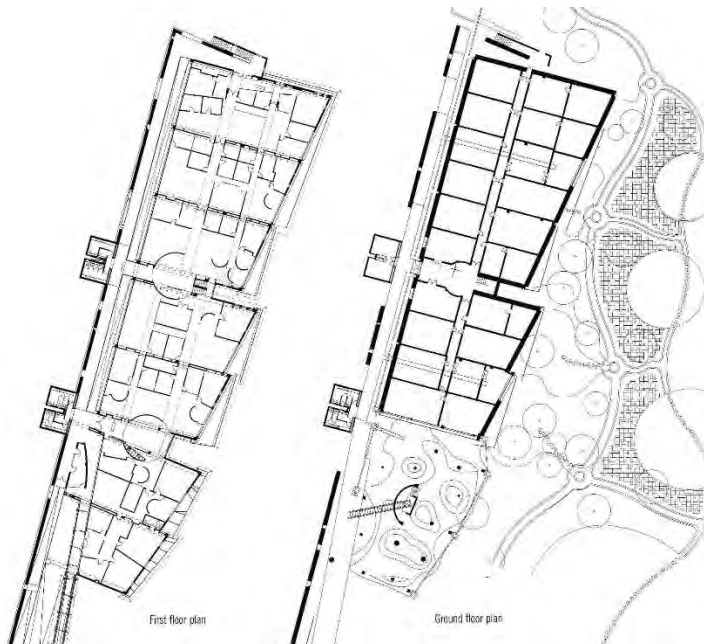


Figure 6-17 Plans of The Legislature Administration building. Source: (Malan & McInerney, 2003: 41)



Plate 6-25 circulation spine, bridging the Legislature Administration building to the Legislative Chamber. Source: Author



Plate 6-26 Source: (Malan & McInerney, 2003: 68)

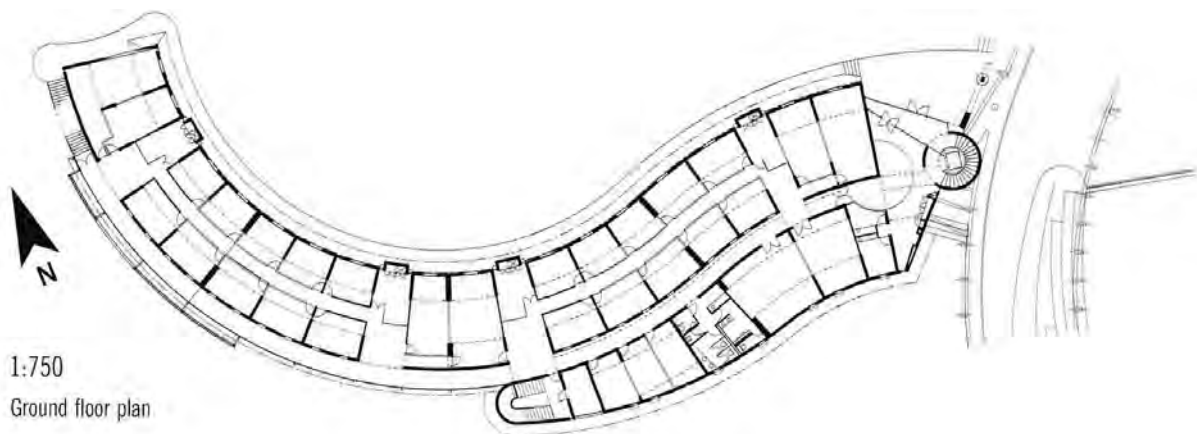


Figure 6-18 Plans of The Offices of Members of the Legislature building. Source: (Malan & McInerney, 2003: 42)



The offices of the members of the legislature building seem to be isolated from the rest of the office buildings in the entire complex (see site plan fig 6-12). This is because of the building's symbolic purpose according to Malan and McInerney (2003: 43)--symbolic in the sense that



the building represents the “democratic right of people agreeing to disagree through their affiliation with the different political parties.” Because of this issue, the planning of the building had to be as flexible as possible, to cater for the ever changing nature of politics. This has proved to be quite a tedious exercise as the structure of the members of legislature changes every five years when The Republic of South Africa holds its major political elections. The south elevation is well glazed and allows a lot of natural light into the building. This has caused many maintenance issues regarding leakages and molding within the walls.

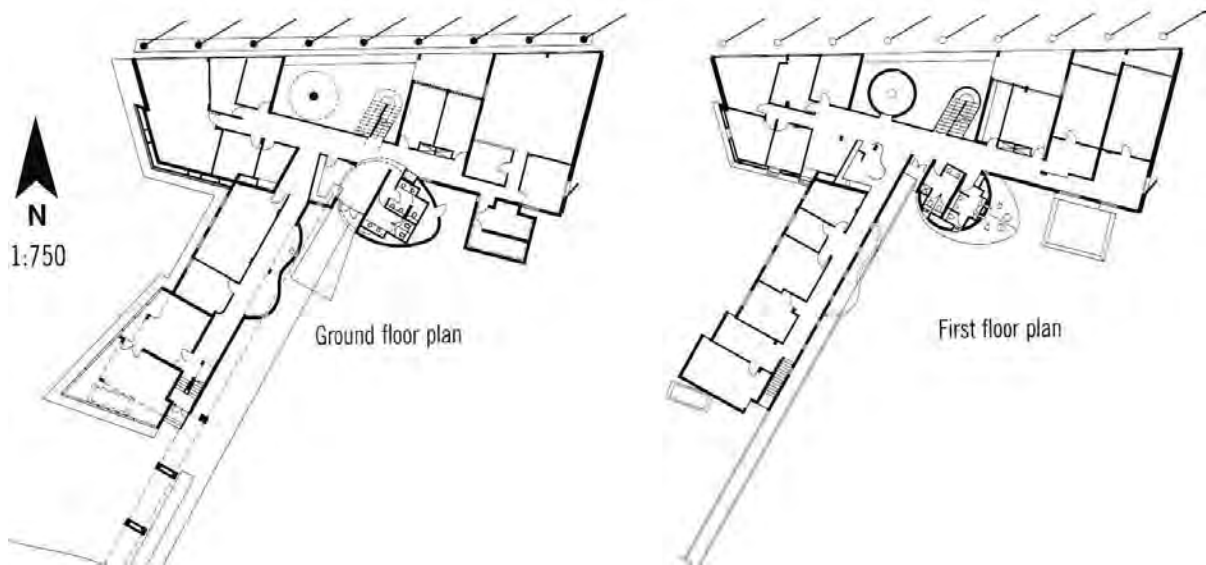


Figure 6-19 Plans of The Offices of Members of the Premiers' Support building. Source: (Malan & McNerney, 2003: 38)



Plate 6-27 The exterior of the Premier's support building. Source: Author

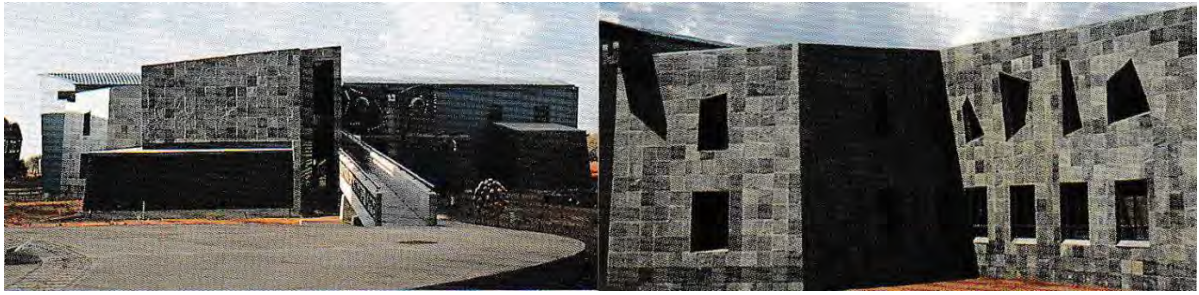


Plate 6-28 The many facades of the Premier's support building. Source: (Malan & McInerney, 2003: 38)

The Premier's support building was never part of the original winning scheme but was only considered at a later stage of construction when the client realised the need for more office space. At this point, the architect had a clear understanding of the architectural language that formed the complex, and with this knowledge, the architect incorporated characteristics of each building in order to synthesise the design of the Premier's support building which sums up the holistic architectural language of the complex.



Plate 6-30 Overview of People's Square. Source: Author

### 6.3.4 Contextual Resolution



Plate 6-29 The natural colors of the rocky landscape. Source: (Malan & McInerney, 2003: 112)



Plate 6-31 Natural earth tone finishes used in the complex, resembling the landscape. Source: Author

A clear understanding of the Northern Cape landscape enabled the architect to blend the complex with its surroundings in an organic manner. Viewed from afar, the building gives the impression of rocks in the landscape (Malan & McInerney, 2003). It also gave Ethne Papenfus the impression of a flower in the desert. Contextual reference has been given to the natural, cultural and political heritage of the Northern Cape. Value is added to the establishment through the use of local flora and fauna, and the precolonial settlement patterns of the region (Noble, 2011).



Plate 6-32 The landscaping of the complex resembles the landscape of the Northern Cape. Source: Author

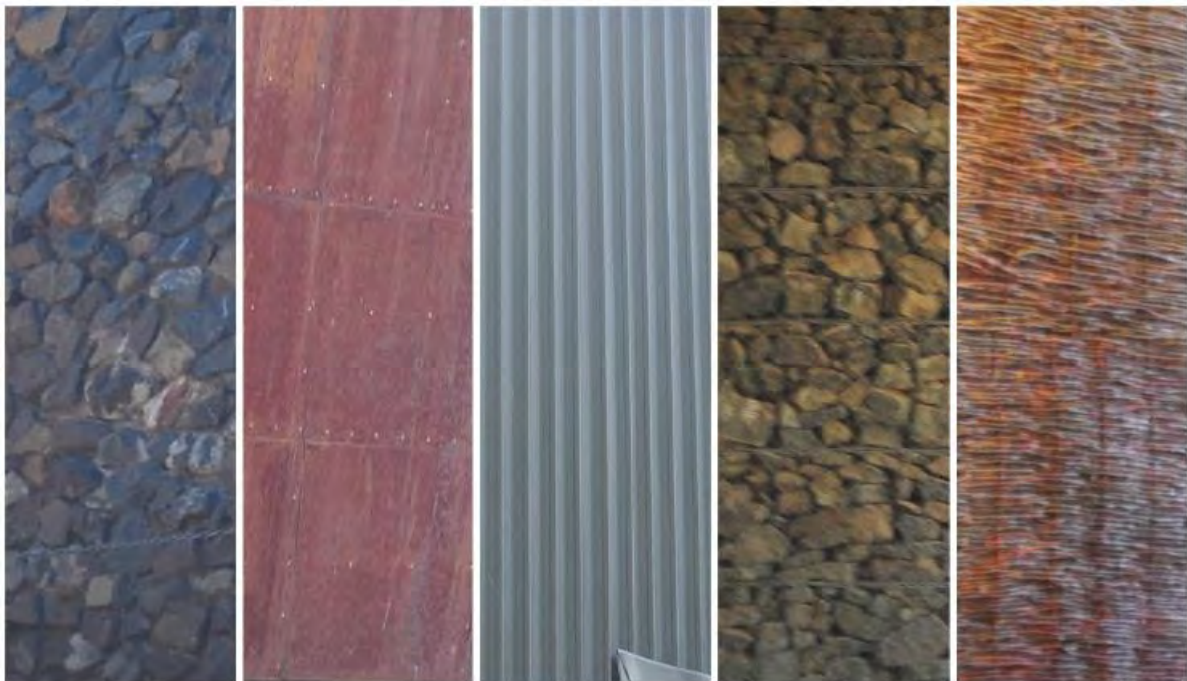


Plate 6-33 Local materials that are used within the legislature are reminiscent of the architecture of the mines. Source : Author

Each building has its own unique architectural response to the context but generally, the whole complex speaks a common architectural language (Malan & McInerney, 2003). A variety of textures and tectonic forms from the Northern Cape landscape have been explored on the facades of each building (plate 6-29 & 6-31), including local traditions and pre-colonial forms. The traditional skin decorations, beadwork and basket weaving found in the province are symbolized by the use of earth tone colours, detailed surfaces, sculptural elements and mosaics in the architectural aesthetics of the complex. This allows the public to have a connection with the buildings and perceive them as a representative of their land and future (Noble, 2009: 56). The landscaping throughout the complex also resembles the nature of the Northern Cape geographic landscape (plate 6-32).

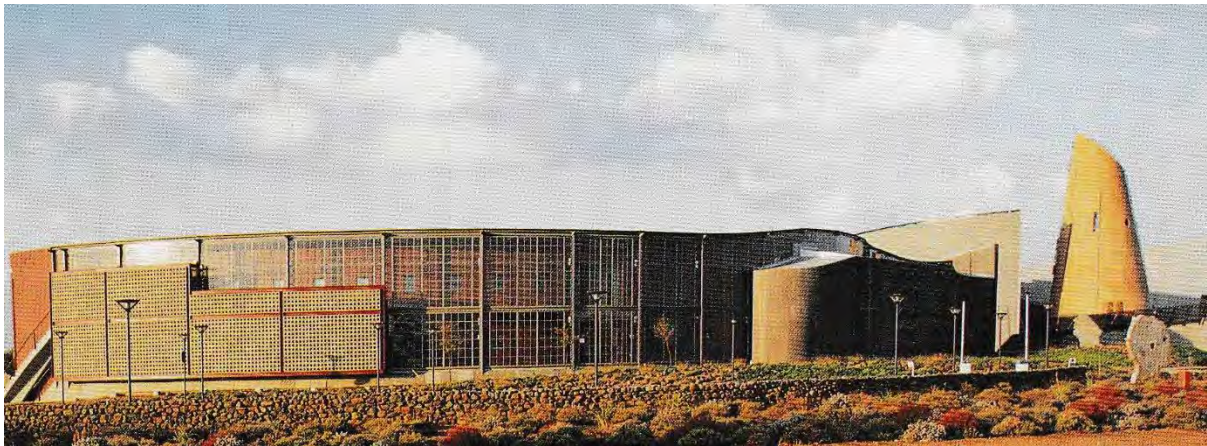


Plate 6-34 Meandering walls of the Members of Parliament Building. Source: (Malan & McInerney, 2003: 130).



Plate 6-36 Artwork of significant political figures on the Members of Parliament building. Source: Author



Plate 6-35 The “all embracing form” on the entrance of the Premier's building. Source: Author



Plate 6-37 Modern Administrative building facade. Source: (Malan & McInerney, 2003: 40)

To further unify the building with the people of the Northern Cape, a special artist-in-residence program was implemented to empower local community members through their participation by instilling their identity within the buildings through art. This cultivates a sense of community ownership over the Northern Cape Provincial Legislature, which is there to serve local needs (Digest of S.A. Architecture, 2004/2005). This artwork created by residents of the province, coupled with the architect's design articulation allows for various interpretations of the complex (Deckler, et al., 2006). For instance, the Members of Parliament Building has meandering walls (Plate 6-34) that display mosaic portraits of important political figures in South African history (Plate 6-36); and the Administrative Building depicts a modernist style (Plate 6-37). The entrance of the Premiers Building is well defined with its block-like solid walls and wings on either side (Plate 6-35) in an "all embracing form" to welcome visitors (Malan & McInerney, 2003: 99). The building that houses the legislature chamber and ancillary spaces is fluid in nature and semi-circular in form with the symbolic tower juxtaposed against one of its façades. The Premiers Support Building on the other hand, incorporates a little bit of everything in its aesthetic form and planning, perhaps because it is a later addition to the complex (Noble, 2009: 55).

#### **6.3.4 Symbolism of Social Change, Identity and Democracy**

The landscaping implemented at the complex has reference to the Northern Cape landscape of semi-desert conditions. The complex is an "architectural reflection" of the province. The architect abstracted a "windswept motion of space" like that of the region, between buildings-spaces where all elements of life and built form could "metamorphose into one" (Noble, 2009: 52).



Plate 6-38 Overview of People's Square. Source: [http://www.solplaatje.org.za/explore\\_attractions.php](http://www.solplaatje.org.za/explore_attractions.php)

The architect prioritized identity when designing the People's Square (plate 6-38). It is symbolic of the gathering spaces of local village centres. The surface of the square has been engraved with random patterns and paths that resemble footpaths created by people and other creatures in the veld sand (Malan & McInerney, 2003). As mentioned earlier, the Tower anchors the Square as a place to address the people, making it a “place of orientation and identification,” a place that “represents the gathering of democracy,” encouraging participation among the people of the Northern Cape (Malan & McInerney, 2003: 130). Similar to the Constitutional Court, the Northern Cape Legislature acknowledges human scale and does not overpower its occupants through its restricted height and detachment. By doing so, the complex creates an architecture both of the people and for the people through its playful and diverse composition of imagery and forms (Malan & McInerney, 2003).

The twisted and deformed shapes and forms that make up the complex capture a sense of struggle throughout the site. However, this notion is balanced by a continuity of harmonious forms, creating a dynamic composition (Malan & McInerney, 2003). The Northern Cape Legislature is a melting pot of a rich heritage, represented through an understanding of the economic, political, natural and social aspects of the region, creating vibrancy, movement, and a dynamic sense of colour (Miller, 2011).

### **6.3.5 Conclusion**

The complex is a source of pride for the Northern Cape people. It represents their cultural aspirations as well as attempts at spatial conversions beyond multiple scales, essentially creating plurality of the kind that is necessary to the duty of democracy. Kimberly as a city, offers an exceptional contribution to the essential discussion around the democratization of

space. The Northern Cape Legislature is a great example of an architecture that engages in the global discourse without losing its local relevance. Its contextual resolution is great at capturing a regions' context within buildings, from the use of materials to resemblance of the flora and fauna of the region. By studying the way Northern Cape people use space, the architect adopted the people's way of life and incorporated it within the spaces of the entire complex. This use of space is well explained by the space syntax theory of spatial perception, with the intent to fully understand society itself.

#### **6.4 CONCLUSION TO CASE STUDIES**

Several characteristics relating to civic buildings have been observed and revealed from the case studies of the Constitutional Court and The Northern Cape Legislature. Noteworthy is the importance of civilian participation in the design process and functionality of civic buildings as they are funded in most cases by tax payers' money. This opens up these institutions to public scrutiny and interest. These buildings also support multiple industries that are not normally associated with construction such as the arts industry. Both buildings are relevant to the research topic as they are products of social change. They give a clear insight of how social change can manifest itself through architecture. The issues that deal with the theory of space syntax as well as the theory of critical regionalism are addressed within each building. These buildings are contextually correct.

The buildings covered in the case studies, as well as the precedent studies, also illustrate the importance of history. This is shown in their site choice and their dynamic integration of new and old. The inclusion of history within a building also educates the public about what the building represents and ensures that the public doesn't forget its history and heritage. An understanding of the nation's culture and identity is also important as it allows all cultures and societies to be represented within the building, making it easier for all citizens to relate to the buildings, encouraging a dialogue between man and the built environment--an attribute that has been absent from political buildings around the world.

## **CHAPTER 7 INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS**

### **7.1 INTRODUCTION**

The influence of social change on political architecture is quite clear based on the discourse on the concepts and theories in chapter one. The outcome of this influence is however dependent on multiple variables. The representation of these social changes is an abstract procedure that architecture may help portray through skilful articulation of design, incorporating elements such as symbols and the utilization of art in order to create the link between the built environment and its context, society and identity. This allows society to relate and familiarise itself with the architecture.

The ideal architectural style for contemporary political buildings is Modernism which symbolizes democracy, freedom of movement and space liberation, although it has negative characteristics such as the lack of place and individuality. This negativity is countered through the theory of critical regionalism which anchors a building to its specific immediate context by use of location-specific design generators, local materials and relevant climatic response in order to blend the design with its context.

When it comes to understanding how buildings communicate and interact with people, a more scientific approach is implemented by the space syntax theory of spatial perception. The theory is founded on the notion that buildings should be experienced space by space in order for their occupants to better understand their meaning and significance. The complete image of perception is derived from each individual, unique function and meaning of each space.

### **7.2 A MANIFESTATION OF SOCIAL CHANGE THROUGH THE BUILT FORM**

#### **7.2.1 Fostering an identity**

Identity is influenced by the history of a particular region, while being simultaneously being constantly redefined by contemporary issues. It is defined in relation to time and place. Issues that sum up identity relate to social links, vernacular elements and aesthetic issues. Identity is therefore derived from human interaction with the environment. Regional identity ties people to a geographical location, establishing a sense of place and introducing stability to that society.



In Southern Africa, specifically Zimbabwe and South Africa, distinct regional identities have been created by the combination of elements such as history, culture and immediate environment. To understand the identity of a region, one needs to study the landscape and the manner in which local techniques and natural land use patterns are implemented (Hough, 1990).

An analysis of the Northern Cape Legislature reveals how the regional culture and identity influenced its design. An examination of the concept behind the People's Square, clarifies how the architect made use of ancient cultural practices concerning a place of gathering within a village. The symbolism is quite specific, albeit abstract. This makes the People's Square a place of identification and orientation familiar to the people of the Northern Cape, making it successful, as it encourages participation and gives the people a sense of belonging. The entire complex is an abstraction of an African homestead, as noted in the previous chapter.

The Constitutional Court is an excellent example of how social change can manifest itself through built form. Arguably one of the most successful, publicized political buildings in the Republic of South Africa, the Court utilizes its public appeal and popularity to convey a message of peace and unity to citizens through its symbolism of the social aspects of South Africa. The diversity of the South African people is conveyed throughout the building by use of culturally related crafts and artworks, local materials, and colours, making it recognizable to different ethnic groups. Each South African can identify with something within the building fabric that directly relates to his or her culture. The Modernist style of the building allows its spaces to be liberated, thereby creating the perception of openness, making it very accessible since it is a public building. The most integral aspect of the building is its connection with South African history and its dynamic representation of the past, present and future. Its seamless cohesion of old and new elements is a true display of great architectural articulation. The historic significance of the site and old prison buildings stands as a reminder of the oppressive past, while the fresh aspect of the court represents a hopeful future. The building successfully represents a timeline of events that took place in South Africa that sum up all the aspects of social change specific to this country.

### **7.2.2 The political power and democracy**

Architecture and politics have been linked throughout civilization. Social change has been used to manipulate and reconstruct architecture with the aim of advancing and encouraging the agendas of regimes and political powers in ways that are symbolic to their particular era. Civic buildings are therefore symbols of a nation state that represent the social, economic and political condition of the nation. Characteristics embedded in such establishments incorporate the identity and culture of the people. In many cases, the design and drive of such civic establishments, particularly those of a political nature, is mainly influenced by the ideologies of the current ruling government. This manifestation of power is often conveyed in the architecture. This limits the design and overall symbolic significance of these buildings to the requirements of political leaders with little or no input from the very people the buildings are meant to represent. The general public is thus treated as a spectator, which should not be the case. Architecture is subject to issues of social change therefore it should represent and respond to issues of society. New works of architecture should be determined by regional influences, unique and specific to that environment. Allowing architecture to be a product of social change would therefore, portray architecture as a true reflection of society at the time of conception.

Art has also proven to be a vital tool in representing social change. It portrays the social and political ideologies of the people, as well as their culture. The public express their views for or against political and democratic issues through creative expression. Art is also used to uplift the community. It has been a major feature throughout the precedent and case studies, clearly indicating its significance to the greater picture of social change. It encourages freedom of expression, allowing the people to voice their socio-political concerns.

Democracy by definition is the representation of the people by their right to a form of government in which power is invested in the people as a whole, usually exercised on their behalf by elected representatives (Microsoft Encarta, 2007). This results in political power becoming the property of the entire nation, encouraging public participation in state affairs. Many developing countries around the world are increasingly embracing the notion of democracy and liberation from dictatorship and colonial rule. Democracy has also promoted concepts and theories of independence, viewing people as equals within a nation, and therefore true democracies cannot be imposed.

Symbolic representation of social change particularly that of a politically democratic nature, is successful when the civic building captures the essence and spirit of the society it serves. These buildings should reflect the political ideologies of a nation as well as its democratic values and national identity, in essence becoming a physical manifestation of these social issues. Civic buildings are for the people, therefore they should carefully consider human scale. This is seen in the design of the Constitutional Court of South Africa. Its response to human scale gives it a welcoming feel, unlike imposing civic buildings that intimidate their occupants.

Civic buildings are a fundamental part of the built environment. The public spaces surrounding these civic buildings are just as important as the buildings themselves, if not more important, considering the fact that they are accessible to the public and provide a first impression of the establishment prior to entrance. The functional use of such spaces is quite broad, ranging from social interaction and informal exchange, to more formal functions such as a platform for political intervention. Public wellbeing and social interaction should be encouraged by civic buildings through articulation of space. The spatial composition of these spaces must appeal to the occupants and be unique from the rest of the spaces without losing the common architectural language of the overall design.

Accessibility is another significant factor in the design of civic buildings, be it, physically or visually. People are said to feel much safer and more comfortable in spaces and buildings that are visually accessible. This supports the notion of increased security and surveillance in and around such spaces. Spaces that lack this characteristic risk becoming dead spaces. Therefore, accessibility is essential in civic buildings; it allows its occupants to fully access, appreciate, and establish a connection with the space.

The end user of civic spaces and buildings is very important; they utilize the space, and therefore the design should be informed by their needs. A clear understanding of relevant issues should be achieved and addressed within the design of a civic space in order to make it socially, politically, environmentally and economically feasible. The importance of designing around the human dimension allows the space to achieve its full potential as well as giving the user the ability to get the most out of the space, enriching their experience. The functionality of the spaces should also directly relate to the design. All these issues need to be addressed through relevant planning principles that take society and era into consideration. Architects can only do

so much in these circumstances. It is up to the planners to make it possible for architects, designers and developers to contribute to their society, for the greater good of the nation.

### **7.3 CONCLUSION**

The two case studies as well as the questionnaire revealed the importance of historical influence is on civic architecture, particularly that of a political nature. Incorporating the historic events leading to the democracy of a nation, allows the society to be in touch with its past and roots, making sure that history is not forgotten. History gives the civic building substance, something that society can relate to and familiarize with. The questionnaire also revealed how (Zimbabwean) locals feel about democracy and post-colonial Zimbabwe. The majority express concern about perceived divisions in the country--not necessarily racial divisions, but class ones between rich and poor--an outcome of structures put in place by the colonial government. Others feel intimidated by the very government that is meant to serve and represent them. Perhaps less intimidating or imposing buildings such as the Constitutional Court of South Africa could change public perception of the government. Zimbabweans are also concerned about the negative impact that westernization has on their culture and identity; a longing for an identity to define the post-colonial nation is expressed in questionnaire responses. Globalization has also affected the way in which political establishments function and are designed, in most cases neglecting the local identity. Their grand forms, often placed on platforms to represent the power of the government, are usually at the expense of the regular man. This lack of representation could also be reinforced by the lack of post-colonial buildings within Zimbabwe. Civilians are the source of funds when building such establishments; it is logical and necessary to design according to their needs.

## **CHAPTER 8 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **8.1 INTRODUCTION**

The findings of this research have revealed that social change can indeed influence and inspire architectural design through an understanding of a nation's identity and social political state of affairs. The political domain continues to utilize architecture and urban design to further its cause. The expression of power, democracy and national identity has been abstracted within the built environment through the use of art and symbols.

### **8.2 THE REALISATION OF SOCIAL CHANGE**

The importance of context within developments of the built environment has been verified by this study through an understanding of the critical regionalism theory, as well as assessing the impact of social change on developing nations within the realm of design. Globalization, as a form of social change, can insinuate new modernism in architecture. This could result in the creation of architecture that doesn't familiarize with its environment, with the intention to create relevant architectural reference for a new nation or society.

Architecture should primarily serve the public through a celebration of the unique character and vibrancy of a region. Passing trends should not be the driving force behind architectural designs, but they should however trigger an appropriate response to the context. Architecture should also aim for relevant modern, functional requirements while still achieving an overall harmony within the built environment.

Critical Regionalism is centred on sensitive, considerate and differential design principles therefore it should be well considered. Social change can be viewed as positive or negative--positive when it generates new ideas, and constantly improves innovation. For example, the technological advances introduced by social change in the form of globalization directly influence the built environment, resulting in better ways for designers to ameliorate society through architecture. However, the same change can also promote cultural shifts that start to dilute the identity of a society, which could lead to lost heritages.

Malan & McInerney (2003: 52) denounce this notion of globalized intervention, stating the importance of respecting and responding to local identity. Despite arguments for the possibility of a world consumed by globalization, each and every region or place will always be unique to the next, be it in environmental, social or economic issues. It is within these unique configurations specific to place that design should be based.

## **CONCLUSION**

This research was based within the context of recently independent nations, no longer subject to colonial rule, still defining their national identity, and requiring a new architecture that represents their newly enfranchised states. National identity is fascinating but difficult to fully comprehend, especially in a world constantly evolving and creating diverse multi-cultural communities. Interpreting this diversity using the basis of critical regionalism presents a formidable challenge for designers. However, this study presents a way to abstractly interpret issues of social change: through symbols that carry and convey these social issues with the primary aim of uplifting the community. Issues of democracy and freedom can physically be represented by applying space syntax theory. An architect can either improve the free flow of movement through various spaces to represent the democracy of the nation, or do the opposite and create barriers that could represent oppression. The challenge of discovering relevant symbols to use within a building is as great as that of being able to interpret and represent society for its benefit, and not for its dominance by the elite.

Political architecture over the years has been associated with power and intimidation. Very little acknowledgment is given to human scale and participation, making it hard for society to engage with architecture and the political realm altogether. The concept of democracy should be present in every sense, physically or mentally for example. Therefore architects must encourage dialogue between society and the built environment, particularly of the civic nature, to ultimately serve its intended audience: society in its entirety.

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## CHAPTER 10 APPENDICES

### 10.1 QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Do you think the architecture, urban design and planning of judicial buildings is indicative of a democratic nation? Explain.

Yes No

.....

2. Should the Colonial Architecture and Planning be preserved or destroyed? Please explain.

Yes No

.....

3. Does the architecture created post 1980 show the true image of the Zimbabwean nation? If not, please explain.

Yes No

.....

4. What defines a democratic building?

.....

5. What possible images or symbols synonymous with Zimbabwe can be translated into a democratic architecture?

.....

6. Are there any other suggestions of what needs to be done to improve Judicial Buildings in your area? (Comments and/ or suggestions)

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.....

.....

Name..... Date..... City/ Town.....

Thank you for your time and co-operation.

## 10.2. INTERVIEW

Key questions:

1. What is your perception of post-colonial Politics in Zimbabwe?
2. Should the memory of past be commemorated or forgotten?
3. Does Zimbabwe live up to its name as a democratic country?
4. How you define democracy?
6. Is the country representative of all its citizens (different cultures and backgrounds)?
5. Does Zimbabwe have an identity which is unique to this county or more importantly, what would be the appropriate identity?
6. Are there any other comments and/ or suggestions you would like to add on the subject?

Respondent..... Date.....

Thank you for your time and co-operation.