

**ARCHITECTURE INFORMED BY SOCIAL IDENTITY,  
MEANING AND MEMORY: A PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE  
FOR PIETERMARITZBURG, KWAZULU-NATAL**

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A Dissertation Submitted in partial fulfilment of  
the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Architecture

August 2011

## DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation is my own, unaided work and carried out exclusively by me under the supervision of Mr Dumisani Mhlaba. It is being submitted for the partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master in Architecture at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

.....

Vivian Miller

.....day of.....year.....

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I owe a great deal of thanks to my parents, brother and fiancé. Mom, Dad, Laurence and Rob, without your continuing love, patience and support I would not be where I am today. Rob, I am forever yours.

I am extremely thankful to my supervisor, Mr Dumisani Mhlaba for judiciously and professionally guiding this study to successful completion.

I thank Mr Robert Brusse for his guidance and lifelong influence which has had a profound and enlightening effect in my architectural journey.

Thank you to the Northern Cape Legislature and especially Mr Lebogang Mokoto, Mr Mali Mosikare and Mr E. Homan for going out of their way to organize and conduct a private tour of the complex.

I extend my appreciation to the rest of my family and friends. Thank you for your kind words of encouragement and interesting perspectives on my architectural issues.

My gratitude goes out to the friends that I have made along this journey. Thank you for all the laughs, tears, debates and coffee breaks.

Special thanks go out to everyone who has played a part in my education both formal and informal. Thank you for ensuring I push the boundaries, ask the questions, and never just accept what I am told.

## **DEDICATION**

To the architect in all of us

“Architecture is a small piece of this human equation, but... we believe in its potential to make a difference, to enlighten and to enrich the human experience, to penetrate the barriers of misunderstanding and provide a beautiful context for life's drama.” – Frank Gehry

## ABSTRACT

All architecture carries a message that may be positive, negative or indifferent depending on the individual's experiences and background. In order for a message to be effective it needs to be understood and the primary way of achieving this is through identification with meaning and memory. South Africa needs a contemporary architectural expression which makes use of clear rational decisions. A positive architectural message needs to be understood by the collective whole of society, and with the careful use of meaning and memory, it will carry identification for all.

Urban landscapes and the built environment have the power to nurture citizens' public memory and encompass shared meaning in the form of shared territory and identity. The built environment needs to incorporate elements of social relevance in order to achieve a more successful, and prosperous building. Architecture is perceived as an expression of society and culture at a certain time. In South Africa new frames of reference need to be formulated which encapsulate the spirit of change within the country. A new democracy needs an appropriate architectural image, centered on the aspects of social identity, meaning and memory, to encourage society to redefine its image.

Identity, meaning and memory have been split apart by the previous political situations in South Africa, destroying the sense of community. By combining meaning and memory with the new democratic South Africa, society can be reconstructed, creating places that evoke a sense of pride and belonging.

Identity is intimately tied to meaning and memory, both individual and collective. People need to be able to identify with a building in order to create a relationship with it. If the public are unable to understand or experience the contribution of the element, it has failed in every way.

Meaning is created as a biological response to the physical environment. It is a cultural creation, and without it there is no sense of civic identity and shared history bringing the community together. It is only through order and recognizing mutual dependence that elements become meaningful.

The history of an urban landscape is connected to memory which is rooted in place. This memory needs to be transposed into architecture without losing any of its meaning. Architecture is a form of visual communication, which is perceived and interpreted in an individual capacity. Every memory and association is affected by past experiences and events.

Architecture expresses the systematic and inter-human aspects of symbolization, through the meanings, values and needs inherent in public life. A meaningful environment is a fundamental part of a meaningful existence and the purpose of architecture is to assist in making human existence meaningful (Norberg-Schulz, 1974: 427-434).

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Fig. 5.9 (<http://blog.makedesignedobjects.com/>) Overview of Dhaka Capitol complex

Fig. 5.10 (Taylor, 1986: 164) Sri Lanka Parliament

Fig. 5.11 (Malan & McInerney, 2003: 98) Speaker's tower,

Fig. 5.12 (Deckler *et al.*, 2006: 20) Exhibition Gallery

Fig. 5.13 (Vale, 1992: 138) Position of new capital in centre of country

Fig. 5.14 (Malan & McInerney, 2001: 49) Open colonnaded walkway

Fig. 5.15 (Malan & McInerney, 2001: 10) Similarity of complex (below) to granite outcrops (above)

Fig. 5.16 (Malan & McInerney, 2003: 112) Similarity between natural rock formations and legislature complex

Fig. 5.17 (Malan & McInerney, 2003: 67) Brass floor insert

Fig. 5.18 (Unknown, 2004/2005: 21) Interior of foyer

Fig. 5.19 (Malan & McInerney, 2003: 106) Overview of legislature complex

Fig. 5.20 (Ranger *et al.*, 2006: x) Urban design of Constitutional Hill

## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background

The 1990's was a decade of worldwide change (Malan & McInerney, 2001: 15). It marked the end of The Cold War and a determined increase in the globalized economy and political environment. As a result, internal conflict arose in several countries as they struggled with their own identity and position within the 'new' world. The approach of the end of the millennium, and the year 2000, brought an increased awareness of political, social, religious and environmental debates and especially their impact on the world.



Fig. 1.1 (<http://samanthathornhill.blogspot.com/>) Conflict during apartheid



Fig. 1.2 (<http://themorningsidepost.com>) Areas segregated with barbed wire

The Republic of South Africa was one of the countries affected by internal conflict, and 1994 marked the fall of the oppressive, exclusive apartheid regime and the development of a new more democratic and inclusive system of governance (Fig. 1.1). The transformation was tense but generally peaceful at the constitutional level, however it takes some time for these new approaches to filter through into society. As a result, South Africa is still greatly influenced by the decisions made during apartheid era (Malan & McInerney, 2001:15).

The history of South Africa has shaped distinctive social spaces to meet economic and social needs. Political territorial divisions generally point to places of social importance, which were purposefully segregated leading to a fragmented society in which ideas of a greater community identity and comprehensive whole, were lost (Fig. 1.2).

Within the new democratic structure of South Africa there was a need to centralize the formerly fragmented provincial government functions. To promote constructive communication, collaboration, efficiency and transparency, legislature complexes were established in the capital city of each province. The current legislature complex in KwaZulu-Natal is fragmented, with different functions scattered throughout the city. A new legislature concept needs to be established, which focuses on creating a comprehensive identity for KwaZulu-Natal, which incorporates elements that contribute towards greater meaning and memory for the province.

## 1.2 A South African Problem



Fig. 1.3 (<http://www.roomsforafrica.com>) Colonial City Hall, Pietermaritzburg



Fig. 1.4 (<http://home.hcnet.nl>) Traditional Zulu homestead

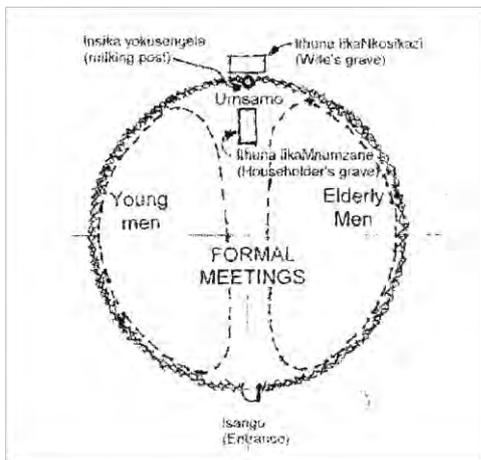


Fig. 1.5 (Mhlaba, 2009: 117) Layout of iSibaya

It is generally accepted that all architecture carries a message. These messages may be positive, negative or indifferent depending on the individual experiences and background of the viewer. To be effective a message must be understood, and the primary way of achieving this effectiveness is through identification with meaning and memory. Problems posed by mixed architectural messages can be seen in buildings in cities throughout South Africa. For example, a Colonial City Hall (Fig. 1.3) has different meanings for different people. For some it is a symbol of a time of safety, organization and order, for others it is a symbol of pain and oppression. Both views express identification through meaning and memory; however the overall message conveyed is not always positive or promoting a way forward. Similarly, within a Zulu homestead (Fig. 1.4), the *iSibaya* is the space reserved for formal meetings. The *iSibaya* (Fig. 1.5) carries significant value and meaning as a central meeting place where the elders and young men make important decisions and safeguarded their most valuable possessions: cattle, grain and the graves of their ancestors (Mhlaba, 2009: 119). However, to others the *iSibaya* is simply viewed as a fenced in area. To some, the same area holds so much importance and conveys a solid message while to others its meaning is obscured. From these examples the problem of architectural message is obvious.

### **1.2.1 Aim and Objectives**

South Africa needs an architectural expression which relates to the contemporary, not one in which the message is confused, either through overt abstraction into a frame of Modernism or the incorporation of African elements into a traditional frame of reference. An in between standpoint must be defined, one in which all the complex influences informing design are internalized and understood. Clear rational decisions of functionality, structural logic and environmental conditions should be considered along with their more subtle counterparts like the impact of the conscious and unconscious elements; through historical precedents, stylistic references, a greater awareness of the world, society and culture, spirituality and artistic expressions (Malan & McNerney, 2001: 15).

Contemporary South African architecture must convey a positive message to all. The meanings and memories of architecture need to be freed of negative connotations, portraying only elements of positivity and national pride. Everyone should be able to identify with this new architecture, and be proud of its message irrespective of individual backgrounds and opinions. A positive architectural message needs to be understood by the collective whole of society. Architectural messages which make use of meaning and memory, without ignoring its roots, carries identification for all.

### **1.3 Hypothesis**

It is the author's belief that urban landscapes and the built environment have the power to nurture citizens' public memory and encompass shared meaning in the form of shared territory and identity. Every area has a unique identity which is created and reinforced by the community. The built environment needs to incorporate elements of social relevance in order to achieve a more successful and prosperous building. Public history, art and environmental awareness should also be incorporated and perceived as parts of a wider urban landscape and collective whole. Historic sites and places have the power to trigger and reinforce shared identity, meaning and memory, and this power can be incorporated into buildings through design. Natural features, streets, buildings and settlement patterns frame the lives of many people, outlast many lifetimes and create the basis for identity, meaning and memory on both individual and collective levels.

Architecture is perceived as an expression of society and culture at a certain time. In South Africa new frames of reference need to be formulated which encapsulate the spirit of change within the country. A new democracy needs an appropriate architectural image to encourage society to redefine its image.

## **1.4 Key Questions**

The primary question this research seeks to answer is, whether the abstract ideas of identity, meaning and memory can be translated into a physical, architectural form?

What defines appropriate architectural expression for South Africa?

Can modern technological advances and local cultural expression be integrated into a complex whole?

How does identity influence the success of a civic building?

Can the collective memory of an entire community be encompassed in one design?

How can identity synthesize with meaning and memory to form a coherent complex?

Will a new building be more successful in capturing multifaceted social memory as compared to old buildings for legislative and parliamentary functions?

## **1.5 Research Methods and Materials**

### **1.5.1 Primary Data – Case Studies and Interviews**

To date there are several public buildings within South Africa that partially or wholly fulfil the criteria of social identity. These include: The Baobab Toll Plaza (Matthews & Associates); Millennium Tower (SoundSpacceDesign Architects); Mpumalanga Provincial Government Complex (Meyer Pienaar Tayob Schnepel Architects and Urban Designers); Northern Cape Provincial Legislature complex (Luis Ferreira da Silva Architects); Apartheid Museum (Mashabane Rose Architects); Hector Pieterse Museum (Mashabane Rose Architects); Walter Sisulu Square of Dedication (StudioMAS Architects); Red Location Museum (Noero Wolf Architects); and Constitutional Court (OMM Design Workshop and Urban Solutions). In choosing appropriate examples for case studies the museums, the Baobab Toll Plaza and Millennium Tower were excluded because they are buildings that one can choose to interact with or ignore. It was felt that they were not an integral part of government and the running of the country and therefore had less of an impact on the overall identity of the country. The Mpumalanga Provincial Government Complex, the Northern Cape Provincial Government Complex and the Constitutional Court were felt to be the most appropriate buildings for case studies. All three actively participate in the formation of identity in the country through laws being passed and tested. Each of the buildings portrays social identity in unique and relevant ways which reinforce the ideas of meaning and memory in the formation of identity.

While conducting the case studies the appointed guides were informally questioned regarding their ability to identify with the building and their thoughts and feelings regarding meaning and memory. In some instances the replies were helpful, but generally the answers were superficial. Without being able to interview anyone further, due to circumstances out of the authors control, personal observations and the general atmosphere of the area and the staff were carefully noted. When contacting the architects to arrange formal interviews the author was directed towards books published as a source of information.

### **1.5.2 Secondary Data – Literature Review and International Examples**

A lack of social identity in public buildings was identified and analyzed in terms of contributing factors, primarily a lack of meaning and memory. Together these issues formed the basis of the research document. Research was conducted into regional, social and ethnic identities; existential and architectural meaning; modernism, post-modernism, deconstruction and semiotics; politics, national identity and post-colonial hybridity; the space surrounding public buildings; issues and elements of public buildings; and the development of the legislature typology. Contemporary authors in South Africa and those writing within a similar frame of reference were given special attention and added importance. The literature review, in chapter three, further defines the issue of identity and then proceeds to use elements of meaning and memory to strengthen the argument and provide possible solutions through international examples of governmental buildings. Issues of contextualism, country development, political unrest, ethnic and social diversity and iconism were taken into account when choosing international examples to ensure a direct relationship with the South African situation. The examples chosen were Brasilia, Brazil (Oscar Niemeyer); Chandigarh, India (Le Corbusier); Sri Lankan Parliament (Geoffrey Bawa); Bangladesh Parliament (Louis Kahn); and Abuja, Nigeria (Kenzo Tange).

### **1.5.3 Methodology**

The researched information and the empirical data were combined to form case studies which analyze the buildings in terms of the scientifically researched issues of identity, meaning and memory. All the information was then combined to form a qualitative analysis, which highlights the most relevant points, and recommendations for instilling a sense of identity in architecture.

## **1.6 Chapter Outline**

This document is compiled in two parts. The first part deals with theoretical aspects of identity, meaning, memory and politics through a literature review and case studies, concluding with an analysis and recommendations which can be directly applied to an architectural design. The second part documents the process of the design of a Legislature for KwaZulu-Natal, through site selection, client's requirements, brief formulation, and the urban and architectural design.

Chapter Two sets the theoretical framework for the research. The primary concepts are defined and examined regarding their position within the research.

Chapter Three is the Literature Review. This is further broken up into seven sections:

The first section deals with issues of regional, social and ethnic identity. Concepts of *genius loci* and critical regionalism are analysed through the writings of Hough (1990) and Frampton (1983). Social identity is examined through the writings of Zegeye (2001) and Comaroff in Zegeye (2001). Ethnic identity looks at the formation of group identity and its effect on the individual and their behaviour through the writings of Romanucci-Ross *et al.* (2006).

The second section deals with existential and architectural meaning. The writings of Lynch (1960) and Norberg-Schulz (1971, 1974) are compared and contrasted in dealing with issues of proximity (centre and place); continuity (direction and path); and closure (area and domain). The interaction between these spaces are analysed and related to a global context.

The third section deals with signs, symbols and memory through the post-structuralist theory of semiology and the post-modernist theory of deconstruction. The related work of Jencks & Baird (1969) and Broadbent, Eco and Koenig in Broadbent *et al.* (1980) are applied to architectural codes and communication. This is compared and contrasted with the work of deconstruction theorists, Derrida (1985) and Moss in Noever (1992). The relationship between semiology and deconstruction is analysed as a means to design with memory.

The fourth section discusses the relationship between architecture and politics primarily through the writings of Vale (1992) and Goodman (1985). The effective communication of a national identity is discussed and concludes with the issues of designing power and identity.

The fifth section examines the space surrounding public buildings. The writings of Alexander *et al.* (1987), Carr *et al.* (1992), Marcus and Francis (1998) are analysed and combined to create criteria against which public spaces can be measured: responsive, democratic and meaningful.

The sixth section deals with predominant issues and elements of public building design according to the Project for Public Spaces (2010) and Alexander *et al.* (1977). These issues and elements include: access, linkages, inclusiveness, comfort, image, democratic, transparent, uses, activities, effectiveness, sociability and efficiency.

The seventh section looks at the legislature typology. There is a brief history of the typology according to the writings of Pevsner (1976) and Sudjic & Jones (2001), followed by a brief analysis of the existing KwaZulu-Natal Legislature in Pietermaritzburg.

Chapter Four analyses three case studies. The first case study is the Mpumalanga Legislature complex in Nelspruit. The second case study is of the Northern Cape Legislature complex in Kimberley. The final case study is of the Constitutional Court in Johannesburg.

Chapter Five draws from the information obtained in the Literature Review and case studies to analyze the issues of identity, meaning, memory and the influence of politics

Chapter Six concludes the theoretical aspects of this research and provides recommendations which would enhance the overall identity, meaning and memory of an area or building.

## CHAPTER 2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.1 Introduction

Society is characterized by the environment, which one is free to shape as one pleases. The success of this environment is directly related to mankind's ability to reach beyond the individual situation through abstraction and generalization. Humans are capable of recognizing similarities and relationships between phenomena and abstracting these phenomena to create existential meaning. The meaning of any phenomenon is understood within its context and interrelationships. Through symbolization humans are able to transcend individual situations and live a social, purposive life. Identity, meaning and memory are interdependent, together with the careful positioning and use of signs and symbols they unite communities and strengthen national ties.

### 2.2 Identity

Identity is intimately tied to meaning and memory, both individual and collective (Fig. 2.1). People need to be able to identify with a building in order to create a relationship with it. Issues of aesthetics and politics (architectural and social) need to be addressed, as they are both closely linked to the history of urban landscapes. In *The Barnhart Concise Dictionary of Etymology* (1995), identity is defined as "sameness or oneness." The modern English version replaced the earlier word form of *idemtitie* in 1570 from the earlier Medieval Latin word *idemtitas* (Barnhart, 1995: 371). In the *South African Pocket Oxford Dictionary* (2002: 444), identity is the "fact of being who or what a person or thing is." It expresses "a close similarity or feeling of understanding."



Fig. 2.1 (<http://damanodysey.blogspot.com>)  
Social Identity and inclusivity

According to Frampton (Jencks & Baird, 1969: 158), the new concept of the human's individual nature and the growth of scientific knowledge have resulted in the disintegration of the classical universe. As this occurred, all structures and related built fabric elements lost their identity and importance in the urban fabric. The metamorphosis of a city, through dispersion and attenuation has created an unrecognizable city, devoid of all public significance and identity, which is incapable of embodying a collective human idea or identity. Identity is very closely linked to the success of a structure or city. If the public are unable to understand or experience the contribution of the element, it has failed in every way.

### 2.3 Meaning

In *Meaning in Western Architecture*, Norberg-Schulz (1974: 427-434) discusses the relationship between existence, meaning and symbolism. Humans are able to abstract and generalize, and through this they are capable of recognizing similarities and relationships between elements. The abstraction of these elements creates existential meaning and the ability to grow and become aware of meanings. *The Barnhart Concise Dictionary of Etymology* (Barnhart, 1995: 466) defines meaning as a “sense or interpretation.” It was derived from the Middle Dutch word *menen*, to mean. According to the *South African Pocket Oxford Dictionary* (Soanes, 2002: 557), meaning is “what is meant by a word, idea or action.” It creates a “sense of purpose.”

Meaning is created as a biological response to the physical environment. It is a cultural creation, and without it there is no sense of civic identity and shared history bringing the community together. Symbolization enables humans to transcend the individual situation and live a social and purposive life. Symbols bring order to the relations between humans and the environment. It is only through order and recognizing mutual dependence that elements become meaningful. Meaning consists of all relations to all objects and is experienced as part of all situations connected with other objects. Relations create structure and meaning. According to Norberg-Schulz (1974: 427-434), public values are the most important element in society. They promote stability and create a meaningful environment rich in possibilities.

The Gestalt psychological principles can be applied to space and architecture as they deal with the idea of creating a unified whole through visual perception. The Gestalt principles include similarity, continuation, closure, proximity and the figure ground (Fig. 2.2). Similarity includes looking at objects that appear similar, often perceived as a group or pattern. The proximity of elements is then perceived as a group. Continuation is where the observer continues through the experience; closure, often of incomplete objects, where enough of the space is indicated to perceive the whole, and the figure ground, where the eye differentiates between an object and its surrounding area. The Figure is perceived as the building or object, whilst the ground is the surrounding area (<http://graphicdesign.spokanefalls.edu>).

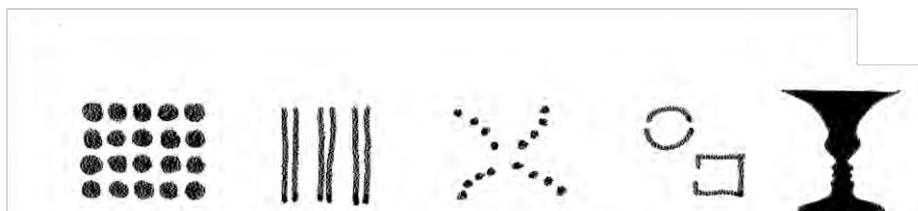


Fig. 2.2 (Miller, 2010) Gestalt Principles of Similarity, Proximity, Continuity, Closure and the Figure Ground

Space is a dimension of human existence rather than a dimension of thought or perception. Existential space is organized in terms of proximity (centre or place); continuity (direction or path); and closure (area or domain). The levels of existential space find physical counterparts in architectural space through places, paths and domains (Norberg-Schulz, 1971: 14, 37-39).

## **2.4 Memory**

According to *The Barnhart Concise Dictionary of Etymology* (Barnhart, 1995: 469) memory refers to “remembrance, faculty of remembering.” The word comes from the Anglo-French *memorie* and the Latin *memoria*. In the *South African Pocket Oxford Dictionary* (Soanes, 2002: 561) memory is “the faculty by which the mind stores and remembers information.” The history of an urban landscape is connected to memory which is rooted in place. This memory needs to be transposed into architecture without losing any of its meaning. There is difficulty in finding a common meaning in urban landscapes, but when one is found it contributes to inner-city reconstruction and redevelopment. According to Jencks (Jencks & Baird, 1969: 11-26), every memory is different and each particular case needs to be understood in context. Elements of form (colour, texture, space and rhythm), function (purpose, use, past connotations and style); and technic (made up of a structure, materials and mechanical aids) influence the perceived memory of a structure or city. Meaning is either conveyed through opposition or association. Memories of association are often used together to build up a society creating a ‘treasure of past memory’ (Jencks & Baird, 1969: 22).

Within the post-structuralist paradigm, semiology is the study of signs operating through human communication and phenomena that transcend the process of intentional communication. There is a focus on the difference between producer and consumer, and their approach to an architectural or urban object. Semiology reduces signs to objects and is capable of providing precise descriptions of how a building or city becomes a message (Krampen, 1979: 91).

Architecture is a system of signs; a building can be the sign, the signifier and the referent. Effective communication is only possible when certain codes are followed and understood. Significant forms in architecture need to remain relevant under different codes, thus a building to be considered iconic it must be a cultural symbol, it must build in cultural references which users can read and contain a set of values that are understood by all members of the culture.



Systems of symbols are created by culture, and participation within a culture implies personal knowledge of how to use symbols through perception (experience) and representation (expression). Individual and cultural development is very significant in indicating the natural course of the development of human understanding. Meanings need to be sensitive and socially valid to ensure perception, which is primarily achieved through symbolization. The perception of an articulate symbol and the experience of identification, gives the individual existential meaning by relating it to a complex of natural and human dimensions. Architectural form is the concretization of certain existential meanings defined in terms of social, cultural and physical objects.

Architecture expresses the systematic and inter-human aspects of symbolization, through the meanings, values and needs inherent in public life. A meaningful environment is a fundamental part of a meaningful existence and the purpose of architecture is to assist in making human existence meaningful (Norberg-Schulz, 1974: 427-434).

## CHAPTER 3 LITERATURE REVIEW

### 3.1 Identity

#### **3.1.1 Introduction**

Identity begins with understanding and is expressed through the context of time and place. Identity is a source of meaning that needs to be adequately enforced over time to ensure that it becomes an experience (Alexander *et al.*, 1987: 281). Regional, social and ethnic identity, the three major forms should be enhanced and strengthened on all level. However this has to be carefully handled. Identity also exists for different ends: aspirations for cultural, political and economic independence foster a strong desire for realizing identity (Frampton, 1983: 148), but although it is within the nature of groups to differ, it does not mean they cannot co-operate. A middle ground needs to be established between different identities, one that is based on respect and understanding instead of dominance.

#### **3.1.2 Regional Identity**

Regional identity refers to the greater community's position within the country or world. Old cities have an undeniable sense of identity because the site, urban form, architecture and landscape have become one. In order for a city to maintain its identity it needs to be able to adapt to the constraints and opportunities of the changing landscape.

In contemporary society there is a worldwide lack of identity in both architecture and urban design. Rudofsky (in Hough, 1990: 5-26) refers to Pedigree Architecture as main contributor to a lack of identity. This is the outward formal manifestation of the way a settled culture perceives its identity. The materials used have no connection to the local site and there is a denial of regional identity. Identity can be restored through aesthetic appreciations, the use of the vernacular, having social and institutional linkages and an interaction between humans and the environment. Through aesthetic appreciation the natural history of places is understood and a non-consumptive attitude towards the regional environment is developed. Vernacular forms grow out of the practical needs of the inhabitants. These forms are shaped by nature, culture and history and evolve through necessity. Social and institutional linkages promote cultural regional identity and tie people to a place creating stability and a sense of investment in the land. The interaction between humans and nature creates distinct regions. The inherent natural character is shaped into the cultural landscape through human activity. The landscape develops a sense of place from understanding natural land patterns and human scale (Hough, 1990: 5-26).

According to Hough (1990: 5-26) identity in contemporary cities is dependent on the character of the indigenous landscape; however the conditions to create identity have been lost. The landscape is fragmented with a lack of distinction between places. There are a number of reasons for the loss of identity including the expansion of development outwards resulting in a very harsh edge between city and country where industrial parks and housing subdivisions occur. Urban sprawl results in placelessness and unbuilt spaces which are not integrative or provide for any productive functions. Developments are isolated and lack recognizable connections with the surroundings. Modern architects have designed inward opening buildings, which were singular, isolated structures, in which the street life around the building was a second class activity. There is little recognition of climate and according to Hough (1990: 91) “every tower block and every windy street creates hostile winter and summer environments, while at the same time a comfortable uniform climate is artificially maintained indoors.” Social and perceptual issues have also contributed to a lack of identity, as streets are full of cars but empty of people. The essential nature of the street has been lost and as a result, life is a series of isolated events within isolated nodes of activity. The street has become a separator rather than an integrator.

Principles of regional design as defined by Hough (1990: 5-26), can be used to restore identity. Creating a sense of place is a conscious decision which strengthens the bond between people and nature. Identity can be restored by knowing and understanding the place, creating identity through the landscape, maintaining a sense of history, promoting environmental learning, and by keeping the scope of the intervention to a minimum.

People use different places. Identity is strongly connected to the characteristics of location which leads to an understanding of the social and physical environment. Both the natural processes of what nature has created and social processes of what humans have established form the collective reaction of people to the environment. Different people identify with different places, and in order to ensure the continued identity of a place, all identities need to be preserved. By maintaining a sense of history, the reuse and integration of old into new is promoted, thus keeping a link with the past and enhancing knowledge and cultural roots. Understanding and learning from the environment is a direct experience which leads to greater place awareness, and the need to enhance the identity of places. People need to create their own social and political environments to ensure continued regional identity (Hough, 1990: 179-193).



Fig. 3.1 (<http://www.flickr.com>) Cotxeres de Sarria, Barcelona designed by JA Coderch

Spanish architect JA Coderch and Portuguese architect Alvaro Siza y Viera are both regionalist in approach, making use of the local context and topography. Coderch, employs vernacular brick and *avant garde* neoplastics to create a Mediterranean style approach. Cotxeres de Sarria in

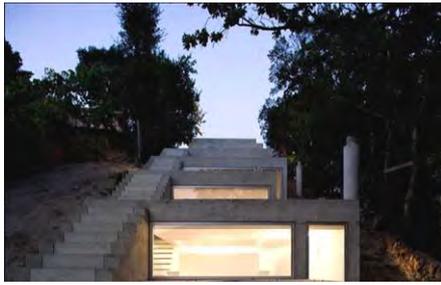


Fig. 3.2 (<http://cubeme.com>) Tolo House designed by Alvaro Siza

Barcelona (Fig. 3.1) has articulated full height shutters and overhanging cornices.

Siza y Viera designs respond to the tight urban fabric of the Porto region in Portugal. The Tolo House (Fig. 3.2) shows sensitivity to local materials, craft work and light. He has a tactile and materialistic approach rather than a visual and graphic one (Frampton, 1983:149-151).

Critical Regionalism is a contemporary architectural theory, predominantly formulated by Kenneth Frampton focusing on the understanding of place and tectonics (1983: 149-151). It is a response to the new problems posed by contemporary global development, which is strongly critical of modernisation and a universalizing architecture. Frampton strongly asserts that it is not an embrace of vernacular stylistic elements, nor an opposition towards modern architecture, rather it is the “capacity to condense the artistic potential of the region while reinterpreting cultural influences coming from the outside” (Nesbitt, 1996: 469). Critical regionalism creates a connection between the political consciousness of a society and profession, and creates a dialectical expression in which universal modernism is deconstructed in terms of values and images which are locally cultivated. The central principle in critical regionalism is a commitment to place rather than space. Buildings are both self-reflective and self-referential, within a region that is not static or closed. There is a strong desire for realizing a regional identity, through cultural, economic and political independence (Nesbitt, 1996: 471, 483, 485).



Fig. 3.3 (<http://www.comitenorte.org>) Luis Barragan's Tacubayas

Architects Luis Barragan and Mario Botta are classified as critical regionalists. Barragan is a Mexican architect who has a sensual, earthbound approach using water, rock and vegetation. The Tacubayas (studio houses) (Fig. 3.3) in Mexico portrays his opposition to the invasion of privacy. He employs changes in level and the use doors and corridors to define insular spaces. His criticism of the subtle erosion of nature, through large openings into green courtyards creates a constant connection between architecture and nature. Botta's designs are preoccupied with the building site and the loss of the historical city, thus House Riva San Vitale (Fig. 3.4) is orientated towards the village rather than the landscape. His houses are markers in the landscape either as points or boundaries, harmonizing with the nature of the region (Frampton, 1983: 152, 156-157).



Fig. 3.4 (<http://www.dugan.ca>) House Riva San Vitale designed by Mario Botta

According to Hough (1990: 179-193), site does not shape the urban form nor create a sense of place. It is rather the organizing influences of the people, the availability of materials and the effects of the climate that shapes the form and creates an organic sense of place. Critical regionalism is a commitment to placeness and the use of regional design elements to confront the universalisation of architecture, which is both dominating and oppressive. It is dependent on a high level of critical self-consciousness and inspiration; from the range and quality of local light, tectonics forming a structural mode and topography of the site (Nesbitt, 1996: 486, 490).



Fig. 3.5 (<http://www.minimalismic.com>)  
Azuma House designed by Tadao Ando

Tadao Ando is a well-known architect using the critical regionalism conceptual framework. The use of natural light and elements combined with modernistic concrete typify the work of Ando. Azuma House (Fig. 3.5) exemplifies the tension he perceives between universal modernization and the idiosyncrasy of rooted culture. The small courtyard house is situated within the dense urban fabric. The richness of Ando's work lies in its tactile value, which is crucial to spatial revelation (Frampton, 1983: 158-159).

### 3.1.3 Social Identity

Social identity refers to the group's position within the greater community. Individuals make up their society, and their choices change themselves and society. Individuals have the choice to take responsibility for their position in society and are capable of changing their surroundings. These choices can be positive or negative, but it is the outcome of these choices that shapes society for everyone (Distiller & Steyn, 2004: 117). Zegeye, in *Social Identities in the New South Africa* (Zegeye, 2001:1) describes identity as "open-ended, fluid and constantly in a process of being constructed and reconstructed as the subject moves from one social situation to another, resulting in a self that is highly fragmented and context-dependant." A sense of identity is a conscious part of an individual. It is an internally socialized continuity (Romanucci-Ross *et al.*, 2006: 386-387).

During the apartheid era, identity was suppressed and distorted by excluding all elements except race and ethnicity (Zegeye, 2001: 3). Race is an important factor in identity, and this is especially evident in South Africa. According to Comaroff in *Social Identities in the New South Africa* (Zegeye, 2001: 51), there are three differences which were enforced by the colonial state: distinction; discrimination and dualism. By enforcing these dimensions, the differences between groups of people were brought

to the fore. The colonial state placed itself in a position of supremacy by highlighting the perceived weaknesses of other social identities. These differences created a country with very separate identities and exaggerated diversity.

After 1994 statues in South Africa were removed from public places, and streets and cities were renamed to reinstate African names and erase colonial, settler and apartheid history. According to Marschall (Bakker & Müller, 2010: 48), in South Africa there has been a post-apartheid fascination with identification, celebration, evaluation and reassessment of heritage. The New South Africa is a pluralistic society with a rights-based constitution, allowing each individual society a right to cultural expression and commemoration. At the same time, the state has an obligation to promote cultural diversity and sustain cultural identities. The image of the 'rainbow nation' has been used as an attempt to embrace the multiplicity and dynamism of different groups by creating a whole that is made up of very different elements. Each group is fighting to be on top, to be the dominant, and most important, most influential group. This has resulted in tension and unrest, instead of building a solid foundation for the country. The process of creating a single national identity occurs between subjects "located on axes of cultural identification determined by class, race, sexuality, gender, ability and region (Distiller & Steyn, 2004: 30)." The process is complex and needs to be subjectively mediated in every context to ensure meaning. Conflicting cultural messages need to be pieced together into one identity that is sustainable and enabling.

### **3.1.4 Ethnic Identity**

Ethnic identity refers to an individual's position within a group. Ethnicity can be used to dismantle and understand societies, and provide information into the way people identify themselves and are identified by others. Parallel to social identities ethnic identity is not static and it changes over time. It is both psychological and social, providing the individual with their need for collective continuity and a sense of survival through historical continuity. According to De Vos in *Ethnic Identity* (Romanucci-Ross *et al.*, 2006: 3-12), there are six elements of ethnic identity: uniqueness, territoriality, economic base, religion, aesthetic cultural patterns, and language.

Uniqueness refers to the genetically inherited differences between individuals that may be real or imagined. It is these differences that are often used to create a system of exclusion and the formation of minority groups. These minority groups often persevere to be assimilated into the majority group but are withheld on the basis of race. The minority group can either accept their inferior status as part of their self definition, or they can define their situation as one of economic and political oppression. However, it is possible for groups to redefine themselves creating a new sense of dignity and worth (Romanucci-Ross *et al.*, 2006: 5).

According to De Vos (Romanucci-Ross *et al.*, 2006: 6), social and political problems in world history are a result of territoriality. Throughout time there has been a tradition of territoriality, it is still a source of conflict today. Territoriality is central to the maintenance of ethnicity, which can be used to unite or rip countries apart.

The economic base of a particular group can contribute to ethnic divisions and identity maintenance. According to Hagen, quoted in *Ethnic Identity* “Minority groups may compensate for a prior downward shift in status by economic activities that lead to a resurgence that benefits the relative status of their members” (Romanucci-Ross *et al.*, 2006: 7).

Religion can be used to unite people of a certain belief, especially through sacred texts which enhance and maintain a sense of identity. However, the differences between religions are exploited to enhance the power and dominance of one religion. An individual could change their status by ascribing to a different, more dominant religion, or through a religiously orientated social revolution. Changes to religion are not always voluntary, especially in cases of tribes being captured and colonized by more powerful groups, and then being forced to ascribe to their beliefs. In these cases the defeated groups often lose their ethnic identity, instilling anger and depression in the individuals (Romanucci-Ross *et al.*, 2006: 8).

Patterns are used symbolically as a basis for self and social identity, when they relate to the aesthetic traditions of the group. These patterns are primarily cultural and are identified through specific kinds of food, dance traditions, clothing styles and definitions of physical beauty. In order to maintain group ethnic identity the aesthetic cultural patterns of the group need to be upheld (Romanucci-Ross *et al.*, 2006: 9).

According to De Vos (Romanucci-Ross *et al.*, 2006: 3-12), language is the most characteristic feature of ethnic identity. However it is often the symbolism of belonging to a certain language that is more important than the actual articulation of the language. Some languages are spoken by a sufficiently small group of people that group identity can be easily maintained. In the case of more widely spoken languages like English, group identity is maintained through minor differences in linguistic patterns and gesture.

In South Africa, architecture is simultaneously reasserting and reinventing itself. The former minister of Public Works, Mr. Jeff Radebe stated, “...what we in government wish to see more of in the planning and design of the built environment [is] the ability for African trends to reveal themselves, for Africanness to find expression in the physical environment around us. This is not the route of the copy cat; it is the route of the artist, of the African that beats within all of us” (Joubert, 2007). Some of the contemporary architecture in South Africa is starting to portray notions of identity and translation.



Fig. 3.6 (Deckler *et al.*, 2006: 128) Baobab Toll Plaza designed by Matthews & Associates Architects

The Baobab Toll Plaza (Fig. 3.6) on the N1 highway towards Limpopo, designed by Matthews & Associates Architects, has a rich symbolic intent as the gateway border between South Africa and Zimbabwe. The Millennium Tower (Fig. 3.7) above Durban harbour, KwaZulu Natal, designed by SoundSpaceDesign Architects, is a traffic control tower at the mouth of the harbor and a gateway to the oceans. Both carry a strong metaphor of semiotic power, either as an abstraction of a baobab tree, or a highly technical interpretation of a sugar cane shoot. Both designs meet the need for a threshold and other practical demands (Joubert, 2007).



Fig. 3.7 (O'Toole *et al.*, 2010: 269) Millennium Tower designed by SoundSpaceDesign Architects

The Mpumalanga Provincial Government Complex (Fig. 3.8) in Nelspruit, designed by Meyer Pienaar Tayob Schnepel Architects and Urban Designers, purposefully avoided a sense of monumentality by fragmenting the multipurpose brief. The site is in complete harmony with its surroundings and the regional culture (Joubert, 2007).

The Northern Cape Provincial Government Complex (Fig. 3.9) in Kimberley designed by Luis Ferreira da Silva Architects, makes use of a fragmented, anthropomorphic model of spatial organization. There is an independent architectural character to each building function through different forms, materialism, finishes and details. The design has a diverse character through the use of local art from the cultural history of the area (Joubert, 2007).

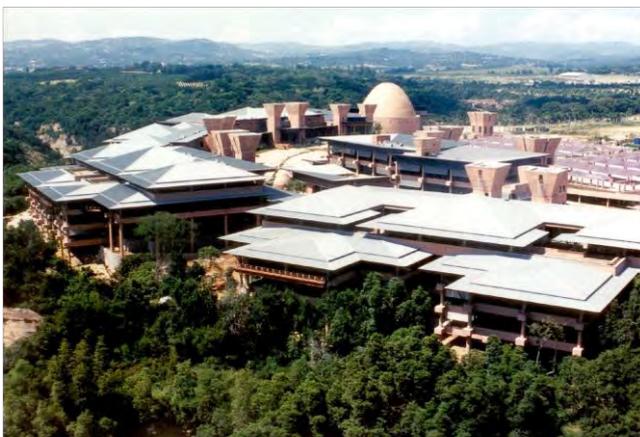


Fig. 3.8 (Deckler *et al.*, 2006: 14) Mpumalanga Provincial Government complex designed by Meyer Pienaar Tayob Schnepel Architects and Urban Designers



Fig. 3.9 (Deckler *et al.*, 2006: 10) Northern Cape Provincial Legislature complex designed by Luis Ferreira da Silva Architects



Fig. 3.10 (Deckler *et al.*, 2006: 38) Apartheid Museum designed by Mashabane Rose Architects



Fig. 3.11 (Deckler *et al.*, 2006: 30) Hector Pieterse Museum designed by Mashabane Rose architects



Fig. 3.12 (<http://www.botleguest.co.za>) Walter Sisulu Square of Dedication designed by StudioMAS Architects



Fig. 3.13 (Deckler *et al.*, 2006: 42) Red Location Museum designed by Noero Wolf Architects



Fig. 3.14 (Deckler *et al.*, 2006: 18) Constitutional Court designed by OMM Design Workshop and Urban Solutions

The Apartheid Museum (Fig. 3.10) in Johannesburg, Gauteng, designed by Mashabane Rose Architects *et al.*, and the Hector Pieterse Museum (Fig. 3.11) in Soweto, are situated in an international discourse of demoralization. Both are neutral formal containers, filled with rich sensory experiences. The Walter Sisulu Square of Dedication (Fig. 3.12) in Soweto, designed by StudioMAS Architects, has prompted the development of commercial and residential projects and transport infrastructure to the area. The Museum of Struggle, Red Location (Fig. 3.13) in the Eastern Cape, designed by Noero Wolf Architects, is an entirely interactive museum, with a large entrance portico as a semi sheltered space for congregation and interaction (Joubert, 2007).

The Constitutional Court (Fig. 3.14) in Johannesburg, designed by OMM Design Workshop and Urban Solutions, is a symbol of South Africa's new democracy. The design is an amalgamation of multi-narratives. The historic siting is expressed through differing formal treatments, varying the spatial experiences and a large variety of tactile sensations. It allows for broad interpretations through extraordinary diversity and paradoxical cohesiveness. By closely capturing the notion of South African identity, it is the epitome of the country's multi-cultural constitution and socio-political aspirations (Joubert, 2007).

### 2.1.5 Identity and Behaviour

Ethnic identity is closely linked to behaviour. According to De Vos in *Ethnic Identity* (Romanucci-Ross *et al.*, 2006: 390-398), behaviour can be either instrumental or expressive. Instrumental behaviour is goal-orientated including elements of achievement, competence, responsibility, social dominance, and mutuality. Expressive behaviour is the result of an emotional need such as harmony, affiliation, nurturance, pleasure, and suffering.

Definitions of achievement are found in every society and are often used to emphasize belonging on a personal level. Issues of exclusion and inclusion begin with the admittance or non-admittance into trade groups in which the individual can reach a level of achievement. The exclusion of individuals in these circumstances is the direct result of ethnic prejudice. The expectation of these individuals is shaped by the group, which increases their competence. Feelings of personal inadequacy are counteracted by the group's collective confidence, which in turn helps to assert the individual with their own competence. Responsibility is an internalized, moral dimension of an ethnic group. Ethnic identities are interrelated, and by being a member of a group the individual needs to obey their moral code. Ethnicity is closely related to concepts of social and political power, thus groups assess each other determining their relative positions and attitudes towards one another. Furthermore, group dominance is often used to hide individual inability. Ethnic traditions define cooperation and competition, which is encouraged between members of different groups, but is avoided within the group in order to create a bond of mutuality (Romanucci-Ross *et al.*, 2006: 390-394).

Harmony is the emotional need for peacefulness within group relations. Conflict and contention are avoided, and hostility is placed on members outside the group. Religious groups advocate a strong sense of harmony and spiritual well-being, whereas minority groups are often in search of harmony and as a result they start social movements, affiliation to which provides a mutual sense of contact. Individualism and isolation can threaten sanction from the group and thus inhibit the individual's sense of belonging. Nurturance is the transmission of care, help and comfort from old to young only in times of need. However, this nurturance does not extend over ethnic boundaries and is not intended as continual support. Appreciation towards a group is closely related to pride. Each group wants humanity, dignity, self respect and proper status. Difficulties between groups arise due to a lack of appreciation, which is strongly linked to cultural differences. Pleasure and suffering are the direct results of social life. At times individuals and groups will experience satisfaction as well as suffering. It is important that both the individual and the group can comprehend these emotions and are able to deal with them in a mature manner (Romanucci-Ross *et al.*, 2006: 394-398).

### 2.1.6 Combining Identities

Regional identity is primarily an aesthetic, portrayed as an investment for those who work and live there. It is based on the continuity of the built environment and is a combination of culture, natural and economic history, relating to a variety of different groups and their development patterns. Each of these groups has a unique social identity and a definitive perception of others. The three predominant social groups in South Africa are defined according to the language spoken. English is the language of school and politics. It is a colonial language but due to its prevalence worldwide it is considered neutral. Afrikaans is the language of oppression and apartheid. Zulu and other indigenous African languages represent ethnicity. They are considered neutral local languages indicating ignorance and illiteracy (Zegeye, 2001: 203).

Identity is an integral part of life. People are constantly identifying with their surroundings, and creating meaning and memory from these interactions. Identification with places, people and situations forms the vital link between a given meaning and a lasting memory. Regional, social and ethnic identities need to work together to create a comprehensive whole. A design that correctly responds to the surrounding environment, community and individual is destined to be a success. Identifiable places are functional, richly diverse and environmentally beneficial to the health and productivity of people. The inherent diversity of places needs to be recognized and built upon to ensure identity now and into the future (Hough, 1990: 179-193).



Fig. 3.15 (<http://www.therepublicofless.wordpress.com>)  
Overview of Three Powers Plaza

The new capital complex for Brazil (Fig. 3.15) was seen as a move away from the Portuguese ruled cities along the coast. Rather than trying to find a solution, an alternative was designed (Vale, 1992: 115-127). The new capital Brasilia, was intended to forge a unified Brazil promoting and instilling the idea of national identity. Designed by Oscar Niemeyer, Brasilia was to be socially different.



Fig. 3.16 (Malan & McInerney, 2003:59)  
Secretariat building

New and modern were at the heart of Brasilia's symbolism. The use of modern architecture is seen as a symbolic break away from colonialism. The national assembly is simply a national architectural symbol based on future aspirations, which demonstrates the power of the legislature. The three powers are sculptured symbols of government's power over people (Fig. 3.16) (Vale, 1992: 115-127).

According to Vale (1992: 115-127) the design of the capitol complex is completely iconic. The Three Powers Plaza (Fig. 3.17) is one of the most well-known architectural images. The Plaza accommodates the three branches of government: Congress, including legislative halls and secretariat, Plateau Palace, including the executive offices, and the Supreme Court. The 28 storey secretariat is positioned between the dome and bowl of the assembly chambers. This portrays the symbolic dominance of bureaucracy over the assembly. The capitol complex rises above the monumental axis with the plaza, or fourth power, and panoramic landscape as termination (Fig. 3.18). The working city of Brasilia has been blocked from sight and is treated as secondary.



Fig. 3.17 (Ellis, 2010: 87) Three Powers Plaza, Brasilia

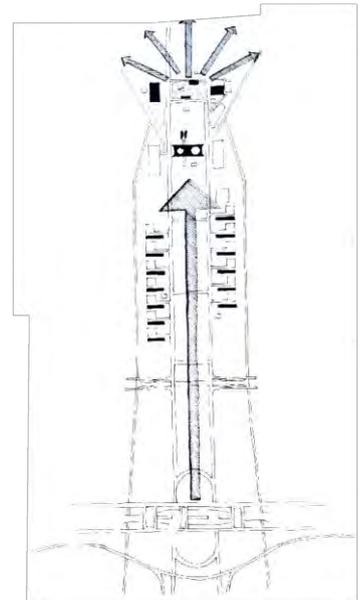


Fig. 3.18 (Vale, 1992: 124) Monumental axis



Fig. 3.19 (Ellis, 2010: 84) Overview of complex showing formal relationship between buildings

The formal relationship between the buildings is more important than political relationships among the government branches (Fig 3.19). The plaza is triangular in plan, with the palace and Supreme Court at the base and congress at the tip. The plaza appears open but instils a sense of enclosure. The plan emphasises the connection of the city to the larger landscape of place, however it isolates the capitol complex from the residential, commercial and recreational parts of the city (Vale, 1992: 115- 127).



Fig. 3.20 (Ellis, 2010: 87) Sculpture of Kubitschek on museum facade

The president at the time of construction, Juscelino Kubitschek wanted to preserve his presence in the complex. Instead of leaving a prominent building to be used by his successors, he placed a large sculpture of his head on the museum building (Fig. 3.20). The head is orientated towards the landscape, presidential palace and lake, and not towards the city (Vale, 1992: 115- 127).



Fig. 3.21 (Ellis, 2010: 87) Modern interior of chapel

According to Vale (1992: 115- 127), Niemeyer claims that the design of Brasilia links to Brazilian colonial architecture, but these links do not make use of obvious elements. The curves could link the design to Brazilian baroque, although they are more closely related to modern architectural developments (Fig. 3.21). “Brasilia is only Brazilian because it’s in Brazil, designed and built by Brazilians (Vale, 1992:126).” The modernness places Brasilia at a specific moment, however it cultivates a Brazilian-ness in abstract ways.

The complex has an illusion of equality. This is because residential areas were designed as mixed income and Brazilians from all regions were encouraged to come to Brasilia and participate in this historic event. The radical spatial politics instilled in the design were not matched in society and soon the mixture of different incomes resulted in class and status conflicts. The minority groups turned to political mobilization and violent confrontation which led to the creation of satellite towns. Over three quarters of the population of the Brasilia Federal District now live in satellite towns, whilst due to deliberate high land prices, the very poor have been pushed right out of Brasilia. The class distinctions in Brasilia are now worse than any other city in Brazil (Vale, 1992: 115-127).

Identity in South Africa is a widely debated, popular issue. In the past it was used to discriminate and divide, to claim dominance and power. The effects of these actions are still being felt, and only time will heal the wounds. Civic architecture can act as a catalyst in the healing process, as it has the ability to reconceptualise and change the perceptions of a nation. Through continual, careful observations of society, appropriate conclusions can be drawn and implemented into the realm of architecture.

## 3.2 Existential and Architectural Meanings

### 3.2.1 Introduction

Existential and architectural meanings are derived from the direct relationship between man and his environment. Throughout time, human interaction with the environment has been captured in symbols. The first fully integrated symbol system was Ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics which formed the base of phonetic reading and still play an important role in learning to read (Norberg-Schulz, 1974: 433-435).

Norberg-Schulz (1971) looked at the relationship between existential and architectural space. Existential space is a psychological concept concerning the interaction of humans and their environment. The goal of existential space is to construct permanent objects within an immediate perception, in an attempt to improve existing conditions. These permanent objects are connected by causal relations, interdependent of the subject placed in space and time. The importance of different aspects in life and ways of perceiving reality are visibly expressed through buildings and settlements. A world of similarities should be constructed, connecting recognized things and places whilst situating them in a comprehensive space. The conceptual development of place and space as a system of places, is essential for existential understanding. Space is a product of interaction between organism and environment.

Architectural space is the concretization of both public and private existential space and it is the tangible, physical aspect of the existential process. Its goal is to integrate structure and the individual as architecture. Architectural space has a pronounced public character and its symbolic form mediates a higher object of man's world through structural similarity. In man's world, the private world generally has imprecise boundaries and a low degree of articulation, whereas the public world is a stable, generalized structure. Architectural space integrates an intended form of life in the environment. It is not a function of experience, but rather a structure to be experienced and expresses the basic properties of human existence (Norberg-Schulz, 1971: 15, 37-39).

Kevin Lynch (1960) understood space as a view of the exterior physical world that has been conditioned by an environmental image imposed by man. The image created is a product of past experiences, and the interpretation of information which guides human action. This image is an interpretation of the environment in relation to existential space and creates an important sense of emotional security. According to Lynch (1960) the world is organized around a set of focal points, each broken down into named regions and linked by remembered routes (Fig. 3.22).

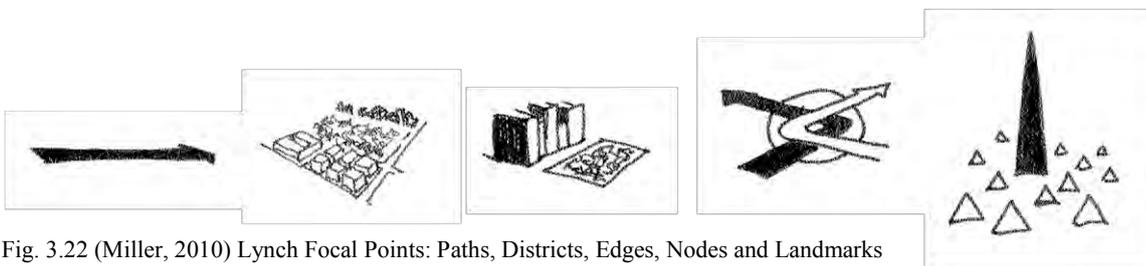


Fig. 3.22 (Miller, 2010) Lynch Focal Points: Paths, Districts, Edges, Nodes and Landmarks

Within KwaZulu-Natal there are three predominant indigenous homestead layouts: circular, rectilinear and organic (Mhlaba, 2009: 119). Each layout can be directly linked to an existential and architectural meaning. Proximity and the creation of centre and place in space are predominant in the circular homestead layout, continuity through direction and path are relevant to the rectilinear homestead layout, and a closure through areas and domains is expressed through the organic homestead layout.

### 3.2.2 Proximity – Centre, Place and Space (Fig. 3.23)

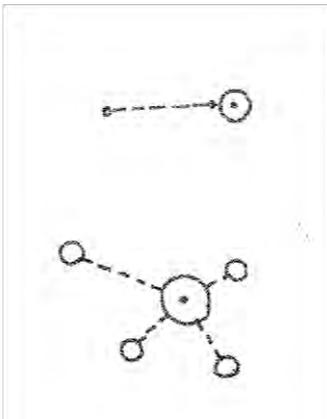


Fig. 3.23 (Miller, 2010)  
Norberg-Schulz's Centre and Place

According to Norberg-Schulz (1971, 1974), existential space is made up of centres, which are externalized points of reference in the environment, such that a tree or pillar can symbolize a vertical axis and 'the centre of the world.' A centre represents the known, a point with an acquired position in space. Place is limited by man and is characterized by its size. It is understood that actions are only meaningful when in relation to a particular place, however places are situated within a larger context and cannot be understood in isolation. Every place in which meaning manifests itself is a centre, which is an ideal, public goal.

A concrete concept of place implies inside and out, and is created through notions of proximity, centralization and closure. Places are goals where meaningful events and experiences occur. A place is also a point of departure from which one can either orientate oneself or take possession of the environment.

In architectural space, a centre is defined as the creation of a place. Place is defined by the Gestalt principles of proximity and enclosure, in which the former is the clustering of elements and concentration of masses, whilst enclosure determines a space separated from its surroundings, forming a particular place. An enclosure is man's attempt to take possession of the environment and is expressed by a coming together and the formation of a node (Norberg-Schulz, 1971: 39-49).

According to Lynch "nodes are strategic foci into which the observer can enter, typically either junctions of paths, or concentrations of some characteristic" (1960: 47). Conceptually a node is a small point in the image of a city, however in reality it may be a large element. Nodes are often found at junctions where decisions are made, e.g. major railway stations. A city should not have too many nodes as this weakens the strong physical form and mental recognition that creates a memorable space. Thematic concentrations can be seen as nodes; however the ordinary street intersection is

generally insufficient in prominence to be imaged as more than just the crossing of paths. Nodes can be either introvert or extrovert, depending on the surroundings (Watson, 2003: 2.9-1 - 2.9-8).

Place is the synthesis of arrival and departure, with a clear distinction between in and out, being essential to the character of the place. A landmark reinforces the character of the place and indicates boundaries and directions within the space. It is an external point of reference for the observer, which is generally a simple physical element. A landmark is a single element that is unique or memorable and stands out from its surroundings. It is easily identifiable through a significant clear form, in contrast to its background. Spatial prominence allows the landmark to be seen from many locations. Landmarks situated at decision junctions on paths strengthen the essence of the landmark. Historical associations and other meanings increase the value of the landmark (Watson, 2003: 2.9-1 - 2.9-8).

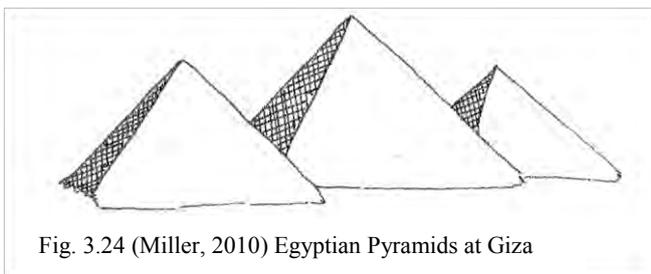


Fig. 3.24 (Miller, 2010) Egyptian Pyramids at Giza

The Egyptian Pyramids at Giza (Fig. 3.24) are a good example of centre, place and space in architecture. The pyramid serves as a centre, which is strengthened by its continuous bounding surface and symmetry. A vertical axis is implied by raising it in relation to its surroundings, isolation enhances the concentration of the pyramid as a specific place. The pyramids are also landmarks which are internationally recognized and admired (Norberg-Schulz, 1971: 39-49).

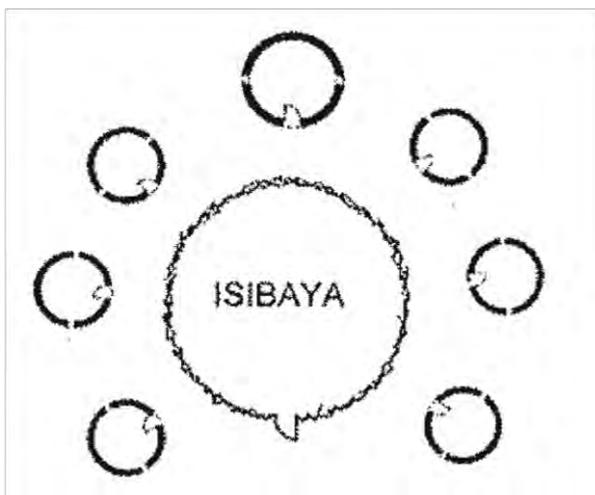


Fig. 3.25 (Mhlaba, 2009: 120) Circular homestead layout

The circular Zulu homestead layout (Fig. 3.25) is considered the primary and most historical layout, focusing on the centre and the creation of a sacred place, the *iSibaya*. It is comprised of a central space surrounded by free standing buildings. The circular layout defines a hemisphere with the eldest son positioned at the bottom right of the hemisphere guarding the entrance. The royal homesteads are also circular in layout but are completely enclosed by the surrounding buildings protecting the *isibaya* (Mhlaba, 2009: 119-120).

### 3.2.3 Continuity - Direction and Path (Fig. 3.26)

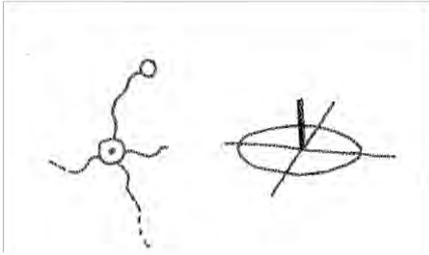


Fig. 3.26 (Miller, 2010) Norberg-Schulz's Direction and Path

Direction in existential space is determined by actions in nature. The horizontal direction is the simplest, most common feature in existential space, representing man's concrete world of action. Horizontal directions are equal and form a plane of infinite extension. The vertical direction is perceived as the sacred dimension of space, and is the archetypal symbol of crossing one cosmic region to another.

The primary model of existential space is a horizontal plane pierced by a vertical axis. The human possession of the environment is achieved through a departure from the dwelling, along a journey on a path leading in a direction determined by the purpose and image of the environment. The path is the basic form of human existence. It is characterized by continuity and is determined by the proximity of defining elements and closure as an organizing axis in linear succession (Norberg-Schulz, 1974: 430-433).

The path is the primary direction to be followed towards the goal in a journey of events. According to Lynch (1960) a path has both destination and origin points. It must be clear where the path has come from and where it is going. A clear, well-known path will have a strong identity, helping to tie the city together and give bearings to the observer (Norberg-Schulz, 1971: 20-23). Path and axis are linked to the Gestalt principle of continuity, and similarity of mass and space of composition. The character of a path is determined by its relation to places; they are interdependent. A path either leads to a destination from a point of departure, or forms a ring. Lynch defines a path as "channels along which an observer customarily, occasionally or potentially moves" (Lynch, 1960: 47). Path and axis are identical, one is real whilst the other is abstract, but both have horizontal and vertical components. An axis is not intended for real movement, but rather represents the symbolic direction which is used to unify elements and relate them to a larger totality. A street is a path that provides a space for physical and social actions. A bridge is also a kind of path. Water divides the land and defines spaces common to both shores. The bridge is the communication between both sides and provides the ability to take further possession of the river-space (Norberg-Schulz, 1971: 49-52).

A path is the predominant element in the city image. The concentration of specific uses or characteristics along a path creates identity. A lack of identity within the paths leads to confusion which affects the entire city image. Each end to a path should be terminated by specific elements which encourage the use of the path. Paths can be imaged together creating a simple structure, however there needs to be a consistent general relationship between all paths (Watson, 2003: 2.9-1 - 2.9-8).

The interior space of San Apollinare in Classe (Fig. 3.27; 3.28), an Early Christian Church, is seen as a place different from the world outside. The transition from outside to in is interpreted as a path and is the essence of existence. Once inside, the nave leads towards the altar in the apse. This sacred path has a definite beginning and end, which depicts the path of life ending with Jesus Christ (Norberg-Schulz, 1971: 51).

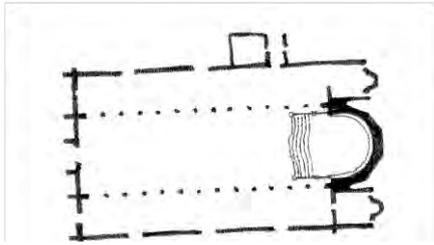


Fig. 3.27 (Miller, 2010) Plan of San Apollinare in Classe

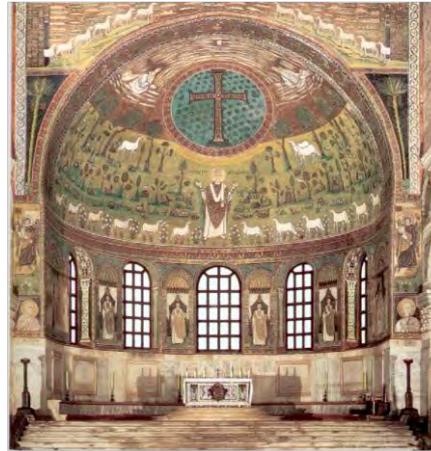


Fig. 3.28 (Kleiner & Mamiya, 2006) Interior of San Apollinare in Classe

The rectilinear Zulu homestead layout (Fig. 3.29) has been determined to be a younger settlement with a hybrid composition of circular and cubic forms. The landscape is often very steep and hilly making a dense settlement with a focus on direction and path. There is no hemispherical shape to define the overall space, however the main building is still related to the *iSibaya* and the eldest son is still positioned close to the entrance way in a position of responsibility (Mhlaba, 2009: 123).

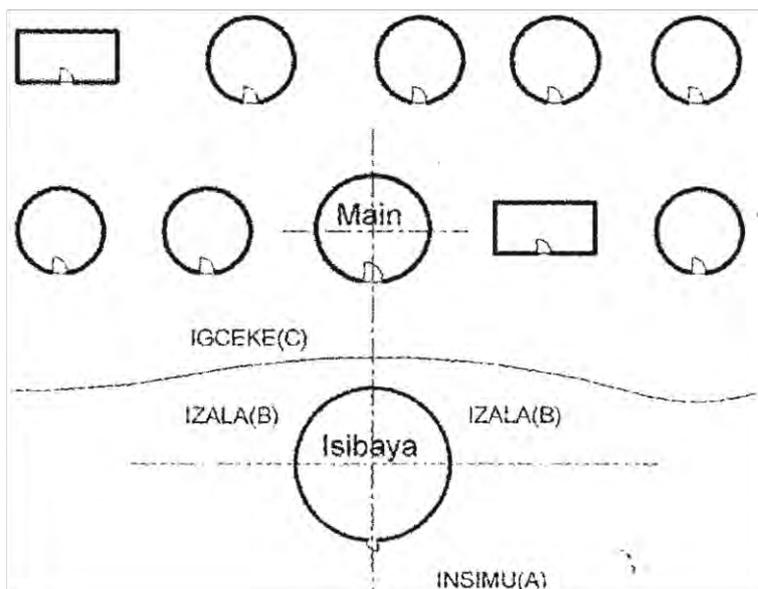


Fig. 3.29 (Mhlaba, 2009: 122) Rectilinear homestead layout

### 3.2.4 Closure – Areas, Domains and Districts (Fig. 3.30)

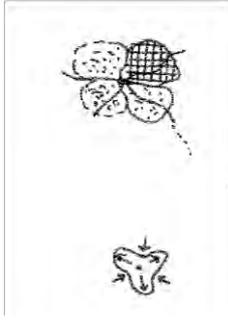


Fig. 3.30 (Miller, 2010) Norberg-Schulz's Area and Domain

As discussed, paths divide the environment into areas. A properly defined area is a domain. A domain is a place defined by closure, proximity and a similarity of constituent elements. Domains are relatively unstructured ground, where places and paths appear as more pronounced figures. Domains have a unifying function and create coherency in existential space. When a domain forms a solid identity it is often referred to as a district.

They provide a potential place for activities and an opportunity to take possession and structure the environment through paths and places. Existential meaning manifests itself as characters which create meaning in a particular place. 'To be somewhere' implies more than location and involves primary identification with the character of a place, its paths and domains. Character is defined through articulation and described via concepts of closure, width, openness, etc. and is dependent on proportion, rhythm, scale, dimension, material, texture and colour (Norberg-Schulz, 1974: 430-433).

An important element of a domain is the edge. According to Lynch (1960), an edge is a linear element not considered as a path, but usually forms the boundary between two areas. A domain could also be defined by a particular activity that is carried out in the area, by the social conditions creating a specific character, or the climatic features of the area. Often the domain is a combination of different elements reinforcing the image. The image of a domain is influenced by physical, functional, social and cultural factors (Norberg-Schulz, 1971: 23-24).

Boundary and texture are the basic defining properties of a domain or district. According to the Gestalt principles of closure and similarity, boundaries define domains in relation to their surroundings, and texture provides knowledge of the district's character. Lynch defines a district as "an area where the observer can mentally go inside of, and recognizable as having some common, identifiable character" (Lynch, 1960: 47). These characters include texture, space, form, detail, symbol, building type, use, topography, activity and inhabitants. Districts are recognized internally, however they are occasionally used as external references. Social connotations and class overtones can be associated with different districts and the reinforcement of clues will produce a strong city image. Districts are distinctive, and in contrast to the rest of the city have various types of boundaries, hard and definite to soft and uncertain. Edges play a secondary role in defining a district, and they can either reinforce or fragment the city (Watson, 2003: 2.9-1 - 2.9-8).

As stated by Norberg-Schulz (1971), boundaries reinforce districts and provide a place to fulfill the need of belonging through defining both the physical and psychic environment. Edges are not as dominant as paths, but they are important in terms of organizing features, holding general areas together, and outlining the city. Edges unite rather than isolate and are often paths reinforced by boundary characteristics. Continuity and visibility are very important in creating an edge; however it does not have to be impenetrable. Edges are often paths as well and act as lateral reference points. The transition between domains is critical in creating a positive image. For example, gates are commonly used to symbolize the transition from rural to urban.

The Propylae (Fig. 3.31; 3.32) is the main entrance used to control entrance into the Acropolis in Athens. People who were not ritually clean were often denied entrance. There is a sense of balance in the composition of the gate and it is aligned to run parallel with the Parthenon. (Roth, 2007: 233)



Fig. 3.31 (Miller, 2010) Overview of Acropolis, Propylae at top of stairs



Fig. 3.32 (Kleiner & Mamiya, 2006) Interior side of Propylae

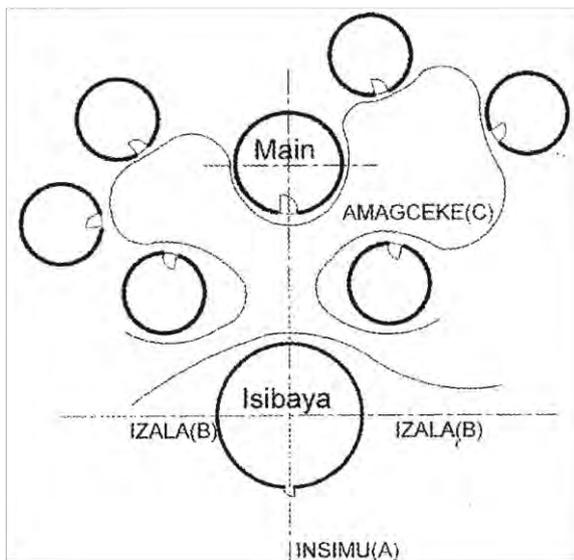


Fig. 3.33 (Mhlaba, 2009: 121) Organic homestead layout

The organic Zulu homestead layout (Fig. 3.33) carefully expresses the ideals of area and domain. These homesteads are primarily old and have evolved and transformed over time. There are generally very few site restrictions, allowing the homestead to spread out over the landscape. There is no obvious definition of the hemisphere but the symmetry between the main building and *iSibaya* has been observed as well as locating the eldest son close to the formal entrance. Due to the complex cultural planning principles the homestead still reads as one coherent domain and not as groups of isolated buildings (Mhlaba, 2009: 122).

### 3.2.5 Interaction in Space

Places, paths and domains form the basis of orientation. They are the constituent elements of existential space, but only when they are combined does space become a real dimension of human existence. The relationship between place and path creates a basic dichotomy. Different places have different characters and in some cases the character is so strong it determines the basic environmental image of the place. Character is the product of interactions with the surroundings, which strengthens the centralization of the space and the need for belonging. Domains are a less structured unifying ground, in which elements can be combined in different ways to achieve the concept of *genius loci*. Longitudinal movement should express certain openness to the world, both physically and spiritually. A system of paths and topography create domains of varying mass, a higher mass is expressed through shapes, while a lower mass is expressed as ground (Norberg-Schulz, 1971: 24-27).

Existential space needs to be understood as a result from the interaction between humans and the environment. It is a complementary process directed both inwards and outwards. Existential space is relatively stable, and serves as a frame of reference for perceptions as it turns them into experiences. Public existential space is very stable as the common properties belong to a large number of private existential spaces. Societal participation implies that private existential spaces have common properties. Public space has a character of cultural tradition, undergoing a slow process of change and development. Existential space consists of several overlapping, interacting systems and facilitates the creation of architectural space (Norberg-Schulz, 1971: 32-33; 1974: 430-433).

Architectural space is a structured totality. Humans exist and interact with different objects on different levels: physical, physis, social and cultural. Within a system of centres there is generally one dominating centre, and on each level the centres are related to one another through paths. Everything is focused through concrete buildings and elements, which articulate the environment and create a precise character. The basic functioning of a space is in the details of the surroundings. Domains are made up of smaller domains each with individual places and paths. The detail explains the environmental character and creates a meaningful space (Norberg-Schulz, 1971: 32-33).

The work of Norberg-Schulz and Lynch is vital in obtaining an understanding of existential and architectural space. However, in today's society the effects of globalisation and urbanisation need to be taken into account. The idea formulated through Gestalt's psychology implies that a small settlement with clear boundaries fitting into its surrounding is a pleasant place for existential meaning. This view is too simplistic and needs to be refined. Place analysis is a value loaded interpretation of a mixture of presumed cause relations behind a phenomenon. In order to understand the effects place has on a culture, the cultural background, understanding and preferences of the society have to be set against the presumed casual relations and global issues (Van Nes, 2008: 114-124).

In the work of Norberg-Schulz, the spatial concepts of place character are clear but there needs to be a redefinition and adjustment to relate to today's society. The relationship between space and society needs clarification. The pattern of space is related to socio-economic processes. Using a configurative approach to concepts of place structure is helpful. Issues of place experience are clearly defined by concepts of space and spatial relationships and are useful for analysing hidden spatial structures and determining the degree of safety of the built environment and urban areas. Place character identifies the formal aspects of the built environment's spatial components. Describing place structure is more challenging and often spatial models and mathematical calculations, in a spatial configurative approach yield the best answers. Urban morphologists can then identify how the urban landscape has been shaped through the transformation of society. Place character, structure and order are all related to societal activities and need to be analysed and understood within their context. The spatial structures of places, order and character have a huge impact on society, human feelings and existence.

Meaning is one of the most fundamental elements of life. The human brain is constantly making connections in order to understand and orientate oneself within any situation. In architecture the need for meaningful spaces and places is amplified through the need to possess and control one's surroundings. South African society is charged with meanings, individual and collective, positive and negative. Great architectural and existential meaning comes from a broader outlook on society, and through the use of particular elements and arrangements. This type of meaning will transcend common situations, creating a connection on a higher level, where the individual is only seen as part of the greater whole.

### **3.3 Signs, Symbols and Memory**

#### **3.3.1 Introduction**

Each use of signs and symbols is unique as it is directly related to the context. Memory consists of relations between all objects in a situation and is conveyed either through opposition or association (context or metaphor). Relations build structure through objective and subjective public values. Public values are the most important element in a society and through them, social stability can be achieved. Man is only able to understand and appreciate signs and symbols through order, orientation and identity. Environments need to be rich in possibilities, while maintaining defined structures that are able to define a wide range of understanding. Elements of form (colour, texture, space, rhythm), function (purpose, use, past connotations, style), and technic (made up of structure, materials, mechanical aids) are vital in creating and sustaining architectural symbolism and memory (Jencks & Baird, 1969: 13-22; 223-229).

#### **3.3.2 Modernism to Post-modernism**

Modernist architects idealise the primitive and elementary over diversity and sophistication. The complexity of the modern programme is in the simplicity of the form. Modernist architecture is aimed at creating a mathematical abstraction of the city as well as the extinction of the symbolic meaning. However, according to Nesbitt (1996: 72), modern architecture is too reductive. There needs to be a renewed consciousness of history which underlies post-modernism and distinguishes it from modernism.

Post-modern architecture rejects the modernist ideas of order, intelligibility and tradition. It strives to create architecture of experience through failure and crisis. According to the post-modernists (Nesbitt, 1996: 94), modernism produced buildings, not architecture, and in order to create architecture three principles need to be followed: contextualism, allusionism, and ornamentalism.

Contextualism is to create an individual building as a fragment of a larger whole. It is an explicit recognition of growth of buildings over time. Allusionism refers to acts of historical and cultural response, either lessons learned from history or technological innovation. Appropriate references to historical architecture enrich the architecture and make it more familiar, accessible and meaningful to others. Ornamentalism is a medium of architectural meaning. Accordingly the decoration of certain places does not need to be justified in historical or cultural terms; it is an innate human need for elaboration. The articulation of building elements are in relation to human scale. Modernism may have rejected ornamentation, but they never abandoned the ornament itself.

Post-modernist buildings are designed to mean something, while modernism strives for absolute domination, post-modernism is a realization and experience of the end (Nesbitt, 1996: 103- 105, 147).



Fig 3.34 (Prakash, 2002: 64) Imposing isolated complex



Fig. 3.35 (Malan & McInerney, 2003: 56) Water as barrier

The Chandigarh Capitol designed by Le Corbusier creates a powerful, imposing image symbolising the dominance of the government over the people of India (Fig. 3.34). The position of the complex is isolated, removed from the city through a canal and boulevard. Trees, pools, sunken roadways and a manmade horizon block the view of lesser structures and the city. The complex is a political ideogram with the Assembly building and High Court facing each other across an uninviting pedestrian plaza. Although the plaza has a democratic intention, it is mainly used as a place of transit. The openness of the plaza creates an ironic closure and sense of oppression. The plan of Chandigarh expresses hierarchy and segregation instead of the desired expression of equality and unity. The complex aims to be modern and evocative of Indian culture and climate, but its detachment from the city creates further segregation (Fig. 3.35). Le Corbusier achieved a new symbolism for government buildings; however in Chandigarh, it remains an empty gesture (Vale, 1992: 107-114).

According to Wattas (2005: 33, 35), the Chandigarh Capitol complex can be evaluated on two levels: the success and failure of the master plan, and the architectural idiom it developed within the city. These two elements have a symbiotic relationship which created a very bold planning experiment. However, the capitol complex is too abstract for general appreciation, and exhibits the gap between the public perception of architecture and the architect's perception.

Le Corbusier felt that a Capitol was a sacred place, similar to the Acropolis in Greece. It should be monumental, powerful and sculptural. Le Corbusier's plan can be interpreted as an ideogram of the democratic process, one in which the gap between East and West/ancient and modern is bridged through the generating principles of a previous architectural language (Curtis, 1983: 190).

According to Le Corbusier (Antoniou, 1998: 74), Chandigarh can be broken up into three distinct areas which relate to the human form: the Capitol is the head, the commercial centre is the heart, and the industrial area is the hand. According to Antoniou (1998: 75), "[the] Capitol stands in splendid isolation from the rest of the city and its people (Fig. 3.36)." The overall organisation of the complex combines a portico, a processional route, a centralized domical space and a fringe of secondary

functions. The Le Corbusier principles of free plan and curved partitions to define main functional areas are contextualised through a grid of supports (Fig. 3.37) (Curtis, 1983: 187, 190).



Fig. 3.36 (Prakash, 2002: 60) Assembly building in isolation

There is a ceremonial approach to the Capitol which is separated from the city by vast distances and is generally a prohibited area for most citizens. The conventional symmetry of traditional parliaments has been avoided. Obelisks and masts have been used to mark squares and position buildings within a cosmological vastness. Pools, platforms and level changes further express the idea of a sacred landscape which is in line with the cultural traditions of India. Each building has its own approach, entry, solids, voids and textures (Antoniou, 1998:74).

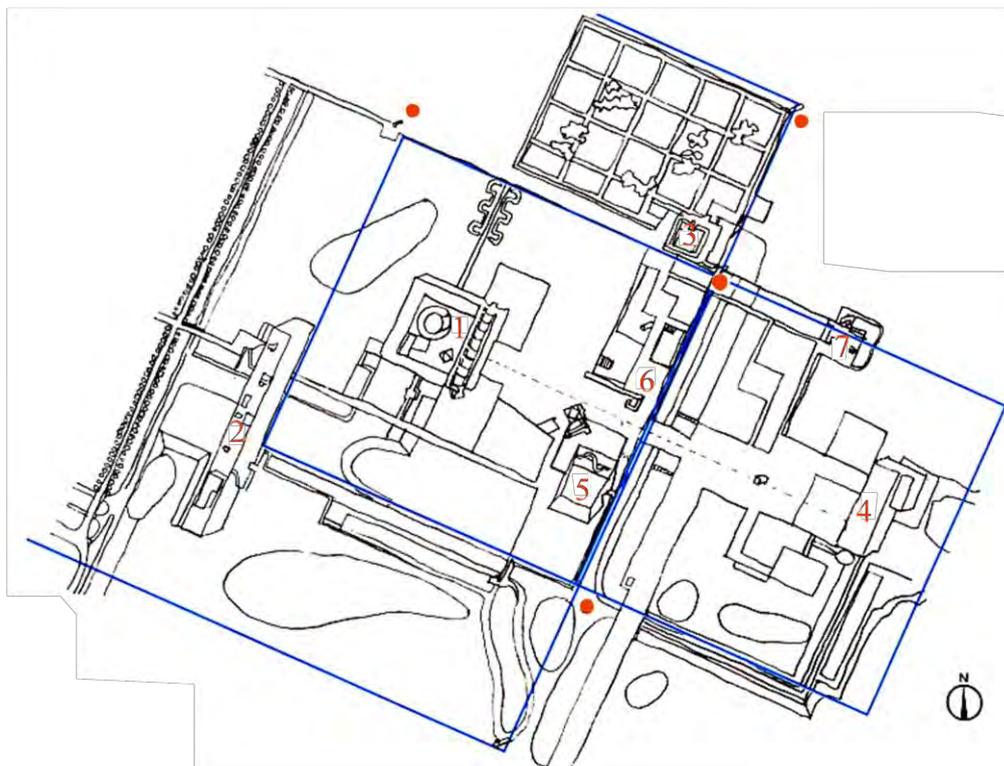


Fig.3.37 (Antoniou, 1998: 72) Plan of Chandigarh Capitol complex, 1- Assembly; 2- Secretariat; 3- Governor's Palace; 4- High Court; 5- Tower of Shadows; 6- Martyr's Monument; 7- Open Hand; Red Circles- Obelisks

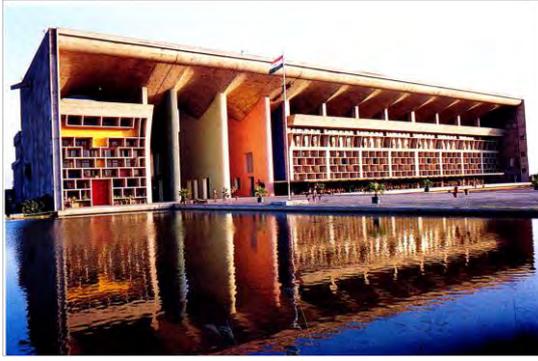


Fig. 3.38 (Prakash, 2002: 50) Palace of Justice, High Court



Fig. 3.39 (Wattas, 2005: 39) The Assembly Building



Fig. 3.40 (Sagar, 1999: 118) The Secretariat Building



Fig. 3.41 (Prakash, 2002: 61) Monument of the Giant Hand

The Palace of Justice (Fig. 3.38) symbolises order and power through eight law courts and one High Court. The entrance is through a four-storey open hall which is divided by full height, brightly painted panelled piers. The orientation of The Palace is based on the direction of the prevailing winds and sun. The Assembly Building (Fig. 3.39) is surrounded by water, in which its reflection is observed, visually doubling its overall size. The main doors to the building are brightly coloured, ensuring they remain a dominant feature of the complex. Once inside a dark hall leads to a bright and colourful chamber which is circular in plan. The design sought to convey cosmic forces which rule human life. At significant times throughout the year, the sun and moon penetrate into the building, reinforcing the cosmic influences (Antoniou, 1998: 74).

The Secretariat Building (Fig. 3.40) is behind the Assembly Building (Antoniou, 1998: 74). It has a distinctive facade which creates interplay of light and dark. The building houses seven ministries and each floor is reached by two giant ramps. The offices are arranged on either side of a central corridor while the undulating roof creates an area for recreation.

The sculptured Monument of the Giant Hand (Fig. 3.41) dominates the landscape as it forms part of the sunken court for public gathering. The sculpture turns in the wind, symbolizing an Indian ideal of giving and receiving (Antoniou, 1998: 74).

Parallel to the Monument, and commanding the third edge of the space, with a mountainous backdrop, should have been the Governor's Palace. This palace was never built as it was thought to be symbolically inappropriate (Antoniou, 1998: 74).

The distance between the Assembly Building and the Palace of Justice is 450m (Fig. 3.42). The area between remains stark and untreated, and more recently each building has been fenced off for security reasons. The complex gives the impression of a living ruin, frozen in time.



Fig. 3.42 (Mead, 2010: 46) Expansive distance between Assembly Building and Palace of Justice

It is argued that if the Chandigarh cCpitol really expressed government's aspirations, there would have been attempts made to complete it and positively add to the desolate, rough and worn surfaces of the urban design. However, the general population still does not show any civic pride and the ideas of cosmology and mysticism are too cryptic and esoteric. The Chandigarh capitol is not a practical success; the issues of climate were not mastered especially in the use of un-insulated concrete in an area ravaged by hot winds and seasonal monsoons (Antoniou, 1998: 75).

### 3.3.3 Deconstruction



Fig. 3.43  
(<http://myarchitecture diary.blogspot.com>)  
Primary feature of questioning everything

Deconstruction is a philosophy which takes the stand point of 'question everything,' (Fig. 3.43) and in particular the assumptions on which western thought and philosophies have been developed. The chief proponent of Deconstruction is Jacques Derrida. Deconstruction is not a technique or a method, it is more a way of thinking. Most definitions will list what Deconstruction is not, rather than what it is. Even Derrida himself uses this method when asked to define Deconstruction. However, he has also said, "Deconstruction analyses and questions conceptual pairs which are currently accepted as self evident and natural (Mugeraur, 1996: 185)."

These conceptual pairs, also known as binary oppositions date back to Plato. Examples are good/evil, true/false, speech/writing, inside/outside. According to Derrida these pairs have a detrimental effect on our way of thinking particularly as the first term of the pair is the preferred term and seems to take precedence over the second (Derrida, 1985: 1).

Deconstruction in architecture does not follow the modernist concept of form follows function. According to Eric Owen Moss (Noever, 1992: 61), “architecture is a sign to the next guy – the one who isn’t born yet. So architecture isn’t art or shelter or progress of the form of cities, it’s the first sign on the road from nothingness.” Deconstruction in architecture begins with the brief. The nature of the aesthetics, the relationship between building and function, and the nature of habitation need to be questioned (Glusberg, 1991: 67).

Derrida’s standpoint against the fundamental truths is relevant to both architecture and philosophy. Derrida (Noever, 1992: 66) asserts that there is no ‘one best way,’ no International style, no ‘roots’ from which all architecture has grown. He focuses on Logocentrism pointing out that there is not only one meaning but many meanings. Deconstruction represents the failure of a universal modernism. It explores the impossibility of mastering the diversity of languages and there being a universal translation (Nesbitt, 1996: 147). The most important piece of thinking behind, around and supporting deconstruction in architecture is to rethink and redefine everything. New signs and symbols need to be created and interpreted which are relevant and substantial.

### 3.3.4 Semiology



Fig. 3.44 (<http://www.amandinealessandra.com>) Alphabet in the form of items of furniture. Communication has transcended initial purpose

Semiology is the study of signs operating through human communication and phenomena that transcend the process of intentional communication (Fig. 3.44). There are varying definitions and applications of semiology in architecture. Saussure, one of the theoretical founders of semiology, argued that everything came in pairs through his division of the sign into signifier and signified. The signifier refers to the physical building form, while the signified refers to the concepts and ideas that the signifier ‘stands for’ (Broadbent *et al.*, 1980: 2).

Pierce's semiotic ideas translated into trichotomies rather than Saussure's dichotomies. His divisions were in terms of icon, index and symbol. An icon reminds the viewer of another object through complex resemblance. The index refers to the physical relationship between man and the object, in this sense the meaning is 'read'. A symbol carries meaning in a cultural context; however this meaning is something that has to be learned (Broadbent *et al.*, 1980: 3).

Broadbent *et al.*'s (1980) division included signified, signifier and referent, of which a building could be all three. The signified is a set of concepts portrayed through words, drawings, photographs etc. The signifier is where, when and how it was built, and the referent is the physical object.

Issues of function and communication are predominant in Eco's debates. According to Eco (Broadbent *et al.*, 1980) the majority of architectural objects function and do not communicate. Functions however can be interpreted as being related to communication. Phenomenologically, architectural objects are experienced through communication, whilst the functionality is recognized. A roof serves to cover, but it is an act of communication that has been characterized as a possibility of the function. Function is the primary meaning in signified architectural elements and by removing the signified element, architectural communication is destroyed (Nesbitt, 1996: 79). According to Koenig (Broadbent *et al.*, 1980: 17), architecture is a system of "sign vehicles that promote certain kinds of behaviour." Eco agrees that architecture is a system of signs, however he disagrees with Koenig stating that his definition will not work in conjunction with architecture. Eco rewords the definition to state that, "architectural sign is the presence of a sign vehicle whose denoted meaning is the function it makes possible" (Broadbent *et al.*, 1980: 19).

Architecture as communication is viable through structural models of communicative relations, both denotative and connotative. Meaning has a physical behaviour and the actual object becomes irrelevant. Only concrete objects of relevance are significative architectural forms. Form follows function, but the process of codification needs to be understood. The symbolic capacity of an object is as important as its functional capacity (Broadbent *et al.*, 1980: 2-24). According to Nesbitt (1996: 178), architecture has always assumed it has signs. Figuration is representational; however the idea of rhetorical figuration is not representational. A representational figure only represents something in absence, something outside, where the rhetorical figure contains the absence and the open-endedness. Architectural presence is dominated by the aesthetic, the absence of the repressed rhetorical quality.

### 3.3.5 Architectural Communication

Architecture communicates the functions it permits and promotes (Broadbent *et al.*, 1980: 46). Architecture achieves mass communication through:

- A general aim at mass appeal
- Psychological persuasiveness
- Inattentive expression
- Irregular interpretations
- Coerciveness and indifference
- Belonging to the realm of everyday life
- Behaving like a business

However, architecture is more informative than mass communication. It can move in the direction of innovation and higher information content.



Fig. 3.45 (<http://adventure.howstuffworks.com>)  
The Parthenon, Greece



Fig. 3.46 (<http://arhdecor.com>) Antique lamp  
in modern setting

Architectural function has been divided into primary and secondary functions. Primary functions are denoted, while secondary functions are connotative. Throughout history both primary and secondary functions undergo losses, recoveries and substitutions. This is common in all situations however it often appears more striking in architecture due to the common view of architectural objects as being functional and not communicative. There are six main possibilities when examining primary and secondary functions in history (Broadbent *et al.*, 1980: 28-29):

- Sense of primary function lost, majority of secondary function remains. For example the Parthenon (Fig. 3.45) is no longer understood as a place of worship; however the symbolic connotations are still understood.
- Primary function remains, secondary function lost. For example an antique lamp (Fig. 3.46) still serves its primary function to illuminate, however there is no regard for the original connotative codes as the lamp is positioned in a different stylist context.



Fig. 3.47 (<http://worldtourismblog.com>)  
Egyptian Pyramids and Sphinx



Fig. 3.48 (<http://oleole2u.blogspot.com>)  
Originally cradle form, now magazine holder



Fig. 3.49 (Malan & McNerney, 2003:59) Plaza  
of Three Towers, Brasilia

- Primary function is lost, most of the secondary functions are lost, original secondary functions replaced through codes of enrichment. For example the Pyramids (Fig. 3.47) are no longer experienced as tombs and most of the symbolic codes of the Ancient Egyptians have been lost. The Pyramids now connote new functions like tourism
- Primary function becomes object of secondary function. For example a selected object is used as an object of contemplation, which ironically connotes its original use, like an artwork.
- Primary function is lost, a new primary function is defined, and secondary functions are deformed through codes of enrichment. For example a cradle from a village is suddenly used as a magazine holder (Fig. 3.48). The original village connotations are deformed, whilst new connotations of contemporary art are defined.
- Primary functions are vague, secondary functions are imprecise and deformable. For example the Plaza of Three Towers, Brasilia (Fig. 3.49), the concave and convex amphitheatre forms appear as pieces of sculpture and do not denote their primary function. There are no generally recognized positive connotative meanings.

Architectural forms need to be designed for variable primary functions and ‘open’ secondary functions. Architectural objects following this ideal would be a continuing stimulus, communicating a wide possibilities of operations in which the object could be reworked to fit the developing situation. These open objects could be ideologically restructured to “change the way they are used, change ways of thinking, and how forms are seen in the broadest context of human activity” (Broadbent *et al.*, 1980: 34). Meanings would no longer be a look back into history, but rather an invention of new, different codes.

### 3.3.6 Architectural Codes



Fig. 3.50  
(<http://www.cascadehandcrafted.com>)  
Structure as a technical code

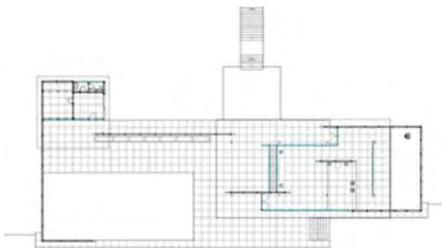


Fig. 3.51 (<http://thearchitext.blogspot.com>)  
Syntactic code through the Plan of the German Pavilion at the Barcelona Exposition in Spain designed by Mies van der Rohe. His designs focused on open plan configurations



Fig. 3.52 (<http://dreamhomedesignusa.com>)  
Semantic code of a main entrance through triumphal arch arrangement into entrance hall

Architectural signs are denotative and connotative according to codes. Architectural codes are limited in their operational possibilities, however architecture cannot entirely depart from its codes. Without a code basis there is no effective communication. Significant forms need to remain relevant under different codes of reading. According to Eco (Broadbent *et al.*, 1980), there are three predominant architectural codes: technical, syntactic and semantic.

Technical codes (Fig. 3.50) deal with the structural elements of a building. The architectural form is resolved in terms of beams, columns, reinforced concrete, flooring systems etc. This code is based on structural expression and communication is through the structure. Generally there are few meanings attached to technical codes, but there are certain formal signification conditions. Syntactic codes (Fig. 3.51) are portrayed through typological codes, where concern is placed on the articulation of spatial types: circular plan, open plan, labyrinth, high-rise amongst others. Semantic codes deal with the relationship between individual sign-vehicles and their denotative and connotative meanings. Semantic codes (Fig. 3.52) can denote primary functions through roof, window, and stairway and have a connotative secondary function such as triumphal arch or neo-Gothic arch. They can also connote ideologies of habitation such as dining room and lounge and by having typological meaning at a larger scale through certain functional and sociological type, schools, hospitals, palaces etc (Broadbent *et al.*, 1980: 38-39).

Scalvini (Broadbent *et al.*, 1980: 87-110) argues against Eco (Broadbent *et al.*, 1980: 87-110) stating that architecture is part of connotative semiotics. She believes the basic functional aims of architecture should be incorporated, but that they are secondary to the primary aim of aesthetic significance. According to Jencks (Broadbent *et al.*, 1980: 87-110), the two approaches need to be combined. Although it does play a part, the role of actual function is not absolutely essential, whilst the primary level of signification is only relevant when it is aesthetically and ideologically relevant. Scalvini's architectural codes include aesthetic codes, codes of content and codes of expression (Broadbent *et al.*, 1980: 87-110).

The aesthetic code can be achieved through:

- Fetishism and self-reflection, in which the content is the expression of the connotative system.
- Distortion and disruption, which calls attention to certain elements. These elements take longer to perceive and as a result they lengthen the perceptual act which may be essential to the code.
- Redundancy and miniaturization focuses on the details, repetitions and the transformation of patterns. Cross-referencing with details creates architecture which is endlessly decodable.
- Imaginative transformation makes things strange and different.
- Multivalent and plural implies openness to new interpretations. Architectural objects are reinterpreted by each generation, forming a history of organic unity.

Codes of content are obtained by:

- A way of life through ethnic domain, sign of habitation and comfort.
- Building activity implies a process of change and possibilities for personal involvement.
- Traditional ideas and beliefs found throughout history and commonly referred to as iconography.
- Various functions such as social activities, environmental servicing and building function.
- Socio-anthropological meaning, as architecture signifies conventional distances between people and groups.
- Economic and social classes affect location due to the positioning of subtle cues.
- Psychological motivations, which are either hidden or overt.

Codes of expression are portrayed through:

- Spatial manipulation within a specific architectural medium.
- Surface covering, which refers to the last layer of construction through rhythm, colour, texture, proportion etc.

- Formal articulation is the three dimensional shape taken up through mass, volume, density etc.

These architectural codes do not establish new possibilities, but rather formulate solutions. Each code is equally important, and all codes do not need to be present in a single building to make it a memorable piece of architecture (Broadbent *et al.*, 1980: 110).

### **3.3.7 Designing with Memory**

Broadbent *et al.* (1980) defined four types of design which have originated from the different architectural codes. Glusberg (1991) proposed four ways of thinking which architects employ when they are conceiving three-dimensionally. Both theorists have used the same set of points, only Broadbent related them to semiology and Glusberg related them to deconstruction. The types are: pragmatic, iconic, analogical and geometric.

Pragmatic design is based on trial and error. Different materials are used until the most suitable material is found and a form emerges. This form directly serves the designers purpose. Most buildings start as pragmatic. Iconic design emerges from a specific culture, in which there is a fixed, shared mental image of what a design should be. Iconic design is often found in traditional cultures where there has been a mutual adaptation between a way of life and a building form. Craftsmanship conventions could also promote iconic design. Building techniques which take a long time to learn are often difficult to abandon. Analogical design draws on visual analogies with existing structures. It encourages a mechanism for creating architecture from art. Analogical design requires the use of abstract philosophical concepts and a medium on which the designer will design. Geometric design uses mathematical systems of grids, axes, proportion etc. to order and guide the design of architecture. Grids and axis are either imposed on the site or taken from the existing urban fabric in order to create unity. Da Vinci's Vitruvian Man and Le Corbusier's Modulor Man are often used to understand proportion and how to apply it to human scale in buildings.

In terms of meaning, iconic and analogical designs are the most important. Iconic design is understood as a set of values which are understood by every member of a specific culture. Analogies are used to generate an architectural form which is full of meaning (Broadbent *et al.*, 1980: 124-163).

According to Graves (Nesbitt, 1996: 84), "what finally gives us our sense of identity within a place, a building, or a room...character and characteristics of buildings are part story-telling, part memory, part nostalgia, part symbol." It is complex cultural, social and philosophical demands slowly developing over centuries, making an architectural form of knowledge in and of itself.

The similarities between semiology and deconstruction are evident. By understanding the signs and symbols used in human interaction along with the ability to break them down into their simplest form, we are allowed the opportunity to re-examine and reinterpret symbols to ensure their relevance. Within South Africa a multicultural nature of society provides a real opportunity to execute these theories simultaneously. Applying semiology and deconstruction to architecture would mean analyzing all cultures, histories, stories and traces within the country. Each element would have to be equal to the other, creating a new way of seeing society. Deconstruction in architecture does not always mean a rejection of what exists; it is just another way of looking at things.

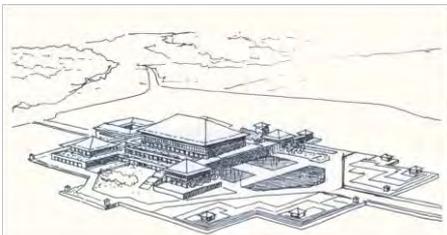


Fig. 3.53 (Malan & McInerney, 2003:59)  
Central dominant building surrounded by smaller buildings



Fig. 3.54 (<http://www.andrewcusack.com>)  
Similarity to monastic architecture

The Sri Lankan Parliament (Fig. 3.53) was designed by Geoffrey Bawa, a Sri Lankan. Post independence Sri Lanka suffered from nationalistic and democratic politics which were worsened by ethnic conflicts in a country of very complex ethnic, religious, linguistic and political affiliations. The need for a new parliament building arose out of these internal party politics. The Sri Lankan parliament is synonymous with the government, and in spite of all efforts, the parliament does not serve all segments equally. The final building designed by Bawa, appears to advance the idealized golden age of the Sinhalese supremacy, especially in the way the urban design has been manipulated to serve political ends (Vale, 1992: 190- 208).

Bawa's design for the new capitol complex synthesizes vernacular traditions and modern sensibility. There are references to classical precedents, traditional monastic architecture and Kandyan temples (Fig. 3.54), combined with a gridded rationality creating a contemporary architecture. Bawa has created a parliament complex which has a sense of accessible democracy, cultural harmony, continuity and progress (Sudjic & Jones, 2001: 56).

The complex is made up of a series of buildings with a clear hierarchy. The parliamentary chamber dominates the centre with smaller buildings around it. Spaces are interconnected by colonnades and arcades suggestive of colonial streets, however the colonnades are constructed using traditional craft techniques accompanied by intricate timberwork (Vale, 1992: 190- 208).



Fig. 3.55 (Robson, 2002: 155) Predominant roof feature of Sri Lankan Parliament

According to Vale (1992: 190- 208), the dominant architectural element of the Sri Lankan Parliament is the roof (Fig. 3.55), which is an identifiable constant throughout the different cultures in Sri Lankan history.

The building is fully integrated with the landscape; however the final arrival at the building is disappointing. The details of the building are irrelevant to Sri Lankans and are not deemed appropriate.



Fig. 3.56 (Taylor, 1986: 164) Parliament complex on manmade island

The architecture of the Sri Lankan parliament may be open to influences but its siting was purely political (Fig. 3.56). There is a single causeway to reach the building, keeping the public at a distance. The complex was intended to house the principal democratic institution; however the design recalls inclusivist forms of government.

The Sinhalese character of the building is made obvious and the parallels between the parliament and a 15<sup>th</sup> century fortress city are significant (Fig. 3.57). Both are positioned on islands, acknowledging an obsession with security and both are dominated by places for ceremonies. The architecture of the Sri Lankan parliament is one of walls and temples. The landscape defies an acknowledgement of cultural pluralism as only one culture is acknowledged (Vale, 1992: 190-208).

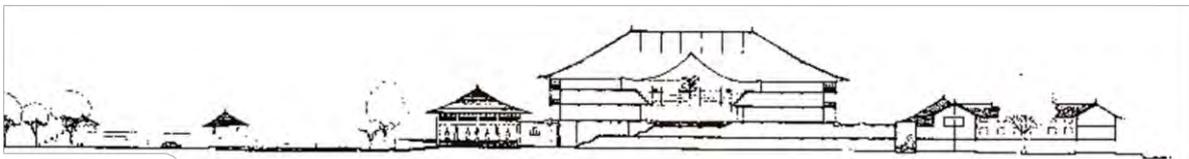


Fig. 3.57 (Robson, 2002: 149) Section through debating chamber showing similarity to 15<sup>th</sup> century fortress cities

The main pavilion (Fig. 3.58) housing the debating chamber, is at the end of a tree-lined causeway and across the public piazza. Along the way there are waterfalls, steps and ramps rising to the entrance in a slow procession. The main pavilion is surrounded by five satellite pavilions, each defined by a copper roof rising out of the plinth.

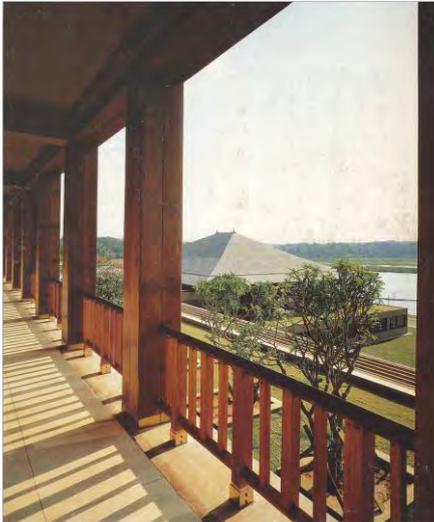


Fig. 3.58 (Taylor, 1986: 169) View from main pavilion

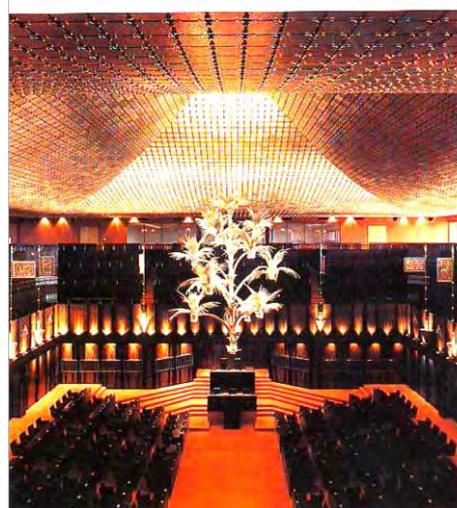


Fig. 3.59 (Sudjic & Jones, 2001: 57) Interior of debating chamber

The debating chamber (Fig. 3.59) is a symmetrical hall with equal government and opposition benches. It is flanked by glazed lobbies and only in the one and upper most public galleries are there views to the outside. The five smaller pavilions create an asymmetry, allowing each to retain its own identity (Fig. 3.60). Arriving in the public piazza, the first pavilion to the east is an open colonnaded audience hall for public meetings and gatherings. The first pavilion to the west is used as the public entrance into the rest of the pavilions and the security checkpoint. On the western side there is a semi-private square defined by the second pavilion housing staff facilities. The pavilion on the south side of the site is the service core and is directly connected to the shore via a causeway. The final pavilion is on the south east corner and is the Ministers of Parliament's dining room above a car park. This defines a large garden court which faces east across the lake and is connected to the member's terraces by a monumental open staircase (Robson, 2002: 140-141).

Bawa produced a hybrid idea, which paid tribute to the history and culture of the area through a contemporary interpretation. He managed to achieve an architecture which uses the indigenous forms of many cultures without creating pastiche.

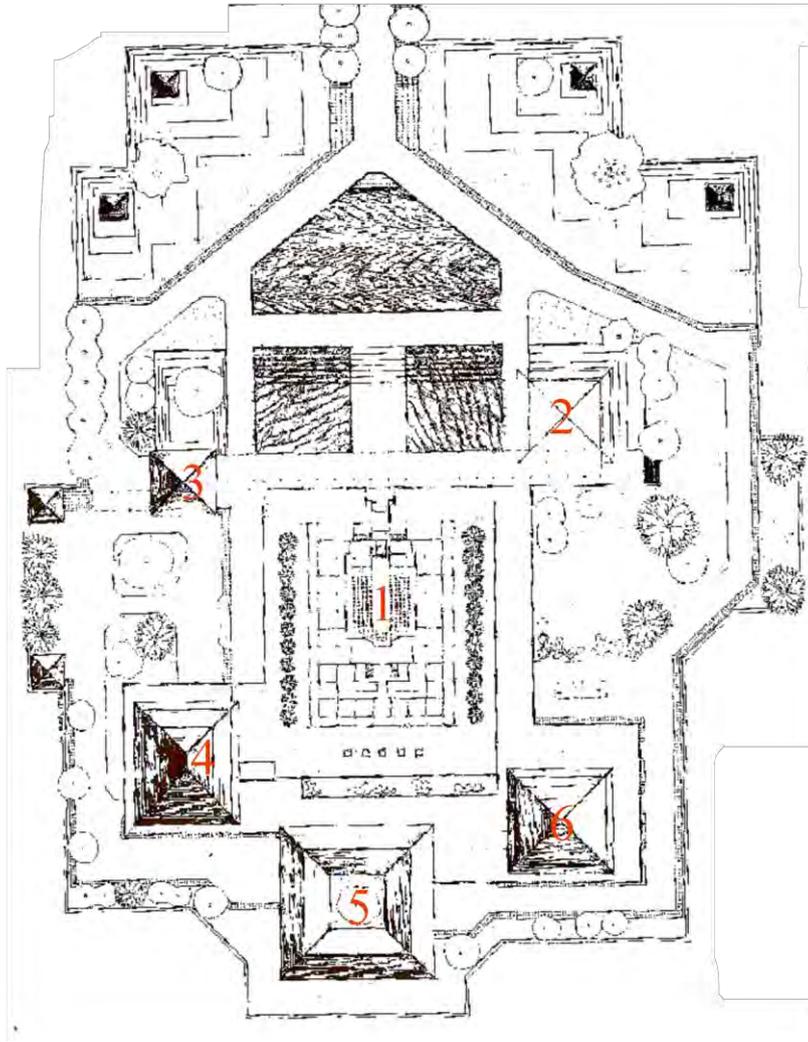


Fig. 3.60 (Robson, 2002: 148) Plan of Sri Lankan Parliament, 1- Main Chamber; 2- Audience Hall; 3- Public Entrance; 4- Staff Facilities; 5- Service Core; 6- MP's Dining Room

Bawa's design emulates an acceptance and transformation of different architectural languages. The potential monumentality of a parliamentary building is mitigated through recognizable iconography, which is rooted in Sri Lankan traditions. The dominant architectural element of the Sri Lankan Parliament is the roof, which is identifiable throughout the different cultures in Sri Lankan history. The success in Bawa's design is achieved through not trying to capture all cultures into a single image, but the strength in the multivalence of references drawing on many parts of Sri Lanka's history (Vale, 1992: 190- 208).

Architecture is a form of visual communication which is perceived and interpreted in an individual capacity. Every memory and association is affected by past experiences and events. The social memory of South Africa is considered by many to be painful and as a result, attempts have been made to forget rather than accept. However, memories are not easily forgotten, and there is very little chance for new positive memories to form if the older ones have not been acknowledged. Some civic architecture in South Africa is taking this standpoint of acknowledging the past, dealing with the present and focusing towards the future. These buildings are portraying a very positive message of the direction that South Africa architecture should be taking, and serve as an example to the world.

## **3.4 Architecture, Politics and Communication**

### **3.4.1 Introduction**

South African civic architecture needs to find an appropriate expression. The end of apartheid marked the beginning of major changes in South Africa. This transformation started at a constitutional level, but it is suggested it will take time and determination to reach the social levels. These moments of transformation are easily expressed through the built environment, and as a result the development of relevant architecture plays an important role in the overall growth of the country. South Africa is comprised of many cultural groups and the search for constants has the potential to infuse human endeavours and creative dynamics (Malan & McInerney, 2003: 7, 45).

### **3.4.2 Communicating a National Identity**

The 1990's was a period of global transformation, with nations trying to re-identify and re-position themselves within the world. Urban design and architecture were manipulated by politics, to produce a product based on social and cultural conditions, and at the same time power and identity are embedded in the design of government buildings. However there are many complex influences which need careful attention in order to achieve an appropriate national identity. They include rational design decisions and, in order to obtain increased meaning, identity and memory' the more subtle elements need to be included. Rational decisions are based on function, structural logic and environmental conditions, whereas the more subtle elements focus on historical precedents, stylistic references, awareness of the world, society and culture, notions of spirituality and artistic expression (Malan & McInerney, 2001: 15).

A new national identity needs to be fostered internally, within the individual and the new state group. It is not an easy concept to express as it is moulded from what precedes it, whilst highlighting the identity of the dominant group. Post-colonial capitals are often intended as visual evidence of the existence of the state, but when the capital is interpreted, it is often reduced to a cultural symbol which is detached from the social and economic forces that helped create it (Vale, 1992: 3, 48-49).

According to Goodman (1985: 642-653), there are four ways in which a building communicates: denotation; exemplification; expression; and mediated reference.

“Denotation is the naming, prediction, narration, description, exposition, portrayal, representation or labelling in any application of a symbol of any kind to an object, event or other instance (Goodman, 1985: 644).” In architecture, the primary form of denotation is often through salient representation. Exemplification is the major way in which works of architecture obtain meaning. A building can

represent anything, but it will only exemplify certain properties. References within a building are either literal or metaphorical exemplifications. Representation, exemplification and expression are the elemental varieties of symbolism. For example, a church represents sailboats, and sailboats exemplify freedom from the earth, however this freedom from the earth exemplifies spirituality, which in turn means the church refers to spirituality. The mediated reference of a building to complicated ideas often follow homogenous or heterogeneous chains of elementary referential links.

The interpretation of architecture cannot be easily distinguished from the work itself, and the meaning of architecture is embedded in factors that affect the judgement of their effective functioning. Successful communication in each of these areas enhances the possibilities for multi-dimensional interpretation. A great architectural work is a matter of enlightenment rather than pleasure. “A building alters our environment physically through various avenues of meaning, [which] inform and reorganize our entire experience” (Goodman, 1985: 652). Architecture can give new insight, advance understanding and participate in the continual remaking of the world (Goodman, 1985: 642-653).

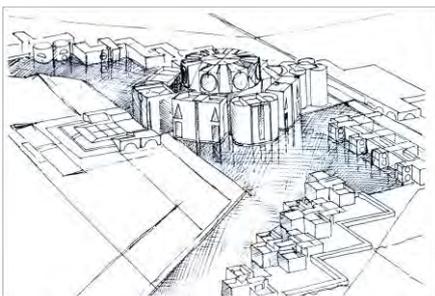


Fig. 3.61 (Malan & McInerney, 2003:58)  
Internally focused complex

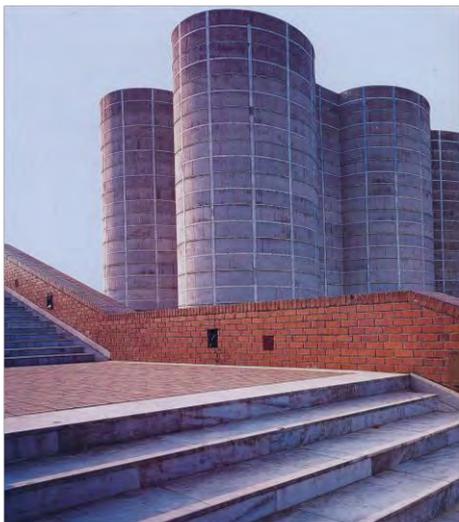


Fig. 3.62 (McCarter, 2005: 264) Expressed monumentality, no references to Pakistan

The Bangladesh Parliament buildings (Fig. 3.61) were originally designed as the capital for East Pakistan by architect Louis Kahn. A civil war broke out during the construction of the complex and in 1971 East Pakistan became known as Bangladesh. The cruciform plan originally symbolised the uniting of east and west, however due to the abstraction used in Kahn’s architectural language the building complex soon functioned as a positive symbol in its new political context. There are no references to Pakistan in the architecture and the predominant building, the National Assembly, was only completed after the war (Fig. 3.62). Gradual shifts of association, confirms and intensifies the symbolism of the complex. In the Bangladesh Parliament identity is the product of independence and symbols are needed to support this idea (Vale, 1992: 236-251).

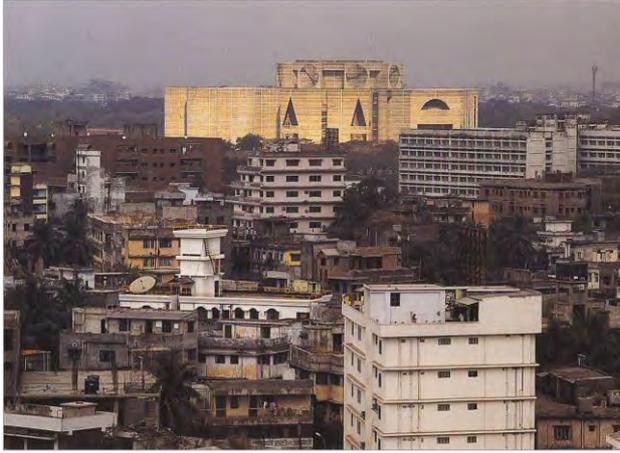


Fig. 3.63 (Unknown, 2001: 14) Monumentality of Dhaka Capitol complex



Fig. 3.64 (<http://blog.makedesignedobjects.com/>) Overview of Dhaka Capitol complex

According to Vale (1992: 236- 251), Kahn attempted to restore meaning to monumentality in architecture (Fig. 3.63). He defined monumentality as a spiritual quality, inherent in structures and conveying a feeling of eternity. It is a recognized symbol that creates membership for a timeless, universal civilization, thus Kahn wanted to convey a religious feeling.

Within the Dhaka, Bangladesh, Capitol complex the Assembly Building and Prayer Hall are on an island in a lake (Fig. 3.64). They are framed by diagonally positioned hostels to the east and west, with the Supreme Court on the northern lake shore. Hostels for the secretaries and ministers are to the east, and members of the assembly are to the west. The octagonal Assembly Building comprises a series of independent, rotated square buildings which are interlocked and braced by a cruciform shape, housing the services (McCarter, 2005: 262).

The primary axis links the Capitol complex to the landscape over platforms and changes in level. The axis of the Assembly chamber is at 90 degrees; however it is still the dominant element. There are large elevated plazas to the north and south. To the north of the Assembly Building is the enormous plaza reserved for ceremonial events, its brick surface lined with marble strips and flanked by stepped marble seating.

From the south plaza the Assembly Building is approached by crossing the lake on an arched brick bridge, and then entering into the lower level of the Prayer Hall building. A large cylindrical stair chamber feeds into an ambulatory running around the centre of the Assembly Building, connected to the individual buildings. The Assembly Building roof is made of parabolic concrete shells with eight clerestory openings.



Fig. 3.65 (McCarter, 2005: 274)  
Ambulatory and clerestory lighting



Fig. 3.66 (McCarter, 2005: 263) Entrance portico

The ambulatory (Fig. 3.65) is covered by a flat roof with clerestory windows on outer ends set in the cardinal directions of the four primary buildings: Prayer Hall, Stair Hall, Ministers Lounge and Ministers Dining hall (McCarter, 2005: 267, 274).

The entrance hall (Fig. 3.66) is located in the north and is a rotated square void within a stair block. It is signalled by a long, low portico over a large door. The central passage runs north/south through the entry hall. A second layer of walls wraps around the east and west sides of the Assembly Building, in which the stairs are located. The central hall and stairs receive light from a narrow slit running from the ground to the roof (McCarter, 2005: 265).

The Prayer Hall is cubic in volume and has four cylindrical light towers on the corners and is entered from the ambulatory. The Ministers Lounge is in the east and is identified by two semicircles separated by a rectangular hall and stairs at the centre. The Ministers Dining Hall is in the west and is formed by two cubic blocks and three massive brick cylinders. The floors have been recessed behind a semicircular light court. It is connected to the Assembly Building by two semicircular walls. There are four office blocks, each formed by a double square with a shared hall and stairs in between. There are smaller square light courts in the outer corners resulting in an 'L' shaped plan. The offices overlook and receive light from the openings at the top of the square light courts and from the large openings cut into the exterior walls (Fig. 3.67) (McCarter, 2005: 265).

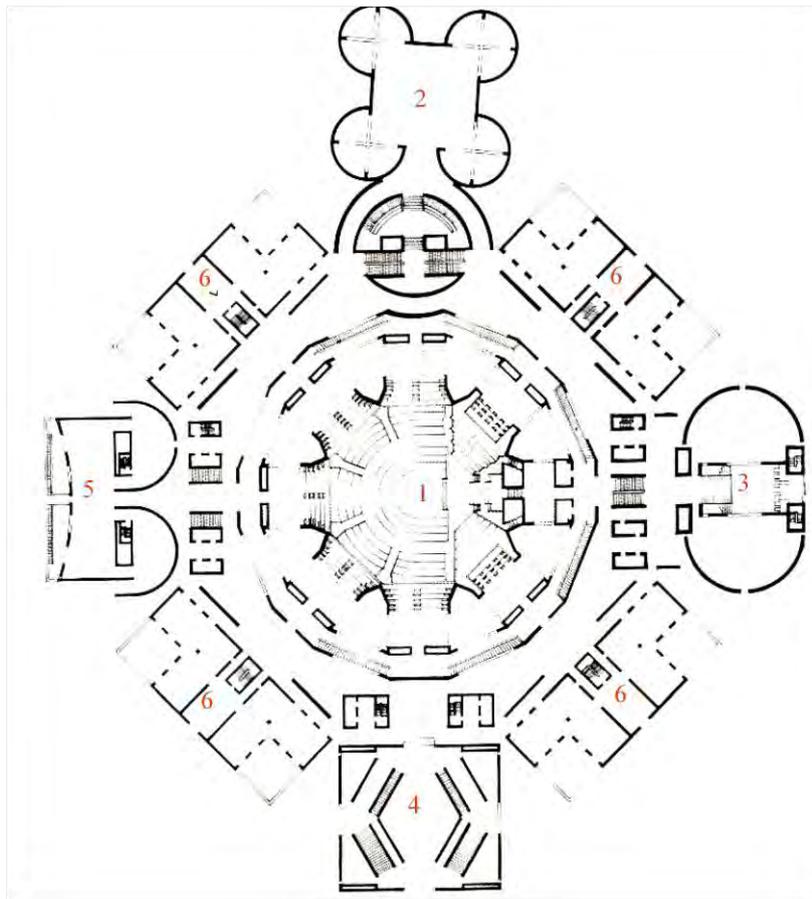


Fig. 3.67 (McCarter, 2005: 261) Plan of Dhaka Capitol complex, 1- Assembly Building; 2- Prayer Hall; 3- Ministers Lounge; 4- Public Entrance and Stair Hall; 5- Ministers Dining Hall; 6- Office Building



Fig. 3.68 (McCarter, 2005: 271) Large opening in concrete and marble horizontal bands

The large square, triangular and circular openings may be of monumental scale, but they reveal a human scale through the timber frames behind. The marble horizontal bands occur every 1,5m enabling the viewer to read the scale of the floors (Fig. 3.68) (McCarter, 2005: 270). The volumes project verticality in a robust and sculptural expression (Curtis, 1983: 191).

According to Vale (1992: 236-251) there are four major discontinuities in Khan's architecture of connection:

- 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.

Although Kahn attempted to achieve an architecture that transcended politics, what he achieved were three types of confused transcendences: architectural form over temporal and social circumstance, nature of assembly as an abstracted ideal, and the power of the National Assembly as an institution. The complex is fortress like; internally focused on the full height central space. The centre point is the focus of activity. Kahn wanted to achieve architecture of connection, but he only made use of solid and void, whilst emphasizing the distinction between served and serving areas. He made strong political assumptions which had implications including spatial and social disjuncture (Vale, 1992: 236- 251).

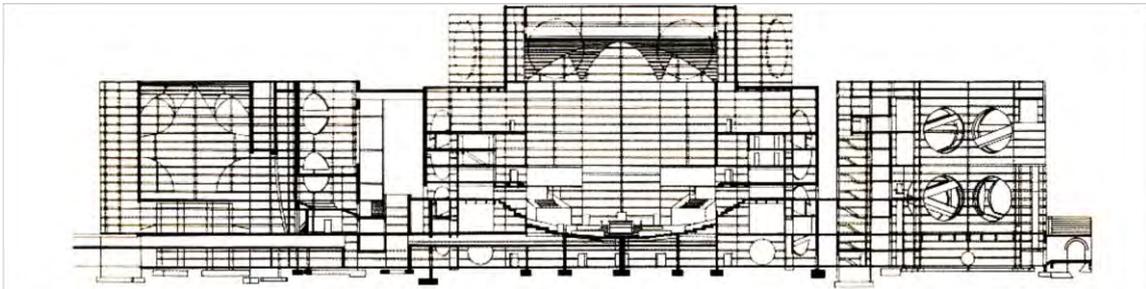


Fig. 3.69(McCarter, 2005: 261) Section through Assembly Building

According to McCarter (2005: 276), the Assembly Building is a world within a world (Fig. 3.69). It expresses powerful monumentality and stark simplicity. It is rich in institutional and cosmological meanings, which creates an archaic character. A set of symbolic forms have been created which link to the idealization of a social order. The internal hierarchy is expressed on the exterior and forms constant tension and opposition. The heavily weathered concrete and rough brick exemplify the local geographical and labour conditions, whilst giving the building an ancient, primeval character and solid dignity it was finally completed nearly ten years after the death of the architect (Curtis, 1983: 193).

### 3.4.3 Post-colonial Hybridities

Architectural hybridity is being used by some contemporary South African architects as a means of creating a new identity for the country. Some of the public building designs have made extensive use of imaginative dialogues with history, often through craft, tectonic and sculptural elements. The layering of these elements is either spatial or material, with multiple narratives through different time scales. The hybridization of architecture allows for new dialogues across divided subject positions. According to Noble (2008: 71-88), there are three types of architectural hybridity: post-modern hybrid architecture, post-colonial hybridity, and architecture and hybridities.

Within post-modern hybrid architecture, the architectural sign is heterogeneous, hybrid and complex. According to Jencks (Noble, 2008: 73), it supports the ideas of popular architecture, which are against the elitist purity of the modern state. However Jencks pays little attention to questions of power and as a result his theory of post-modern design supports a system of elitist culture. Jencks has a disconnected concern towards social politics and states that “the primary strategy [of post-modern] architects have created to articulate the pluralism of culture is that of double-coding: mixing their own professional tastes and technical skills with those of their ultimate clients” (Jencks, 1991 in Noble, 2008: 73). This double coding covers the opposition that emerges between divided subject positions.

The central issue of post-modern hybridity in *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*, by Venturi (1977), is the sign and structure and how to develop a theme of hybrid duality. Venturi developed his own sense of aesthetics through historical works, focusing of the architectural ambiguity through double functioning elements, convention, adaption, juxtapositions and inside-outside relations. His mixing and matching of complex differences enriches architecture and the message it portrays. Both Jencks and Venturi paid very little attention to social discourse and as a result questions of power and dominance remain prevalent in their theory of post-modern hybridity (Noble, 2008: 73).

The major difference between post-modern hybridity and post-colonial hybridity is that post-colonial hybridity confronts the dominant discourses within a specific cultural or political condition. Accordingly, architecture does not exist as an interpretation of language and practice, but rather as an interpretation producing significance and association within the object. Bhabha is one of the predominant post-colonial theorists, who writes about new realms of opportunity and the disturbance of the exclusionary allowing marginalized subjects to individually position themselves (Noble, 2008: 75). “[h]ybridity is a problematic of colonial representation and individuation that reverses the effects of the colonialist disavowal, so that other ‘denied’ knowledges enter upon the dominant discourse and estrange the basis of its authority – its rules of recognition” (Noble, 2008: 75). Hybridity breaches the exclusionary power of discourses, the focus is on the process rather than the product and, according to Bhabha it cannot be reduced into stylistic or aesthetic categories (Noble, 2008: 75). The crucial point is not the creation of a complex form, but rather the subversion of dominant modes of cultural representation, including the oppressed narratives.

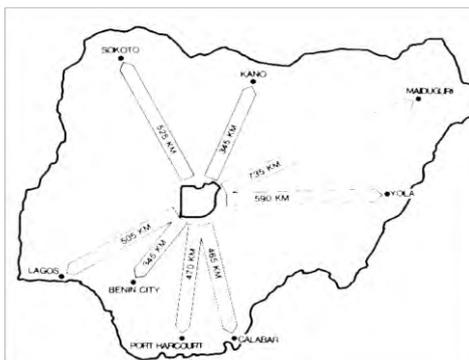


Fig. 3.70 (Vale, 1992: 138) Position of new capital in centre of country

The African capital in Abuja, Nigeria is a product and expression of post-colonial independence. Architect Kenzo Tange emphasized the Capitol as being a product of national identity. The capital city is centrally located (Fig. 3.70) for two reasons. The first was to move away from the colonial port cities,

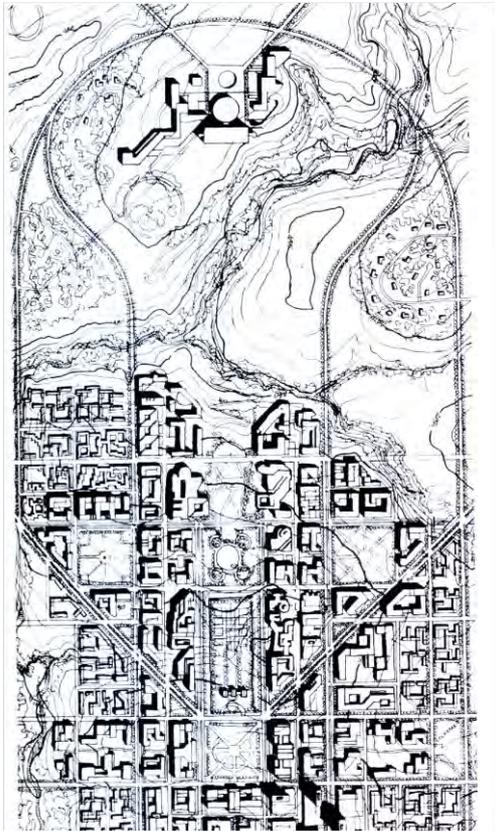


Fig. 3.71 (Vale, 1992: 138) Position of new capital in centre of country

and the second reason was to be more centralized within the country to provide spatial and political equality to all regions. In theory the new complex is to serve as mediation between the diverse cultural groups of the north and south. However, Abuja is perceived as a Northern capital and not a Nigerian capital, which places further tension on the north/south discord (Vale, 1992: 134-147).

According to Vale (1992: 134-147), the Nigerian constitution is based on the constitution of the United States of America, and as a result the Capitol has been designed as form and forum of an American style democracy. The master plan for Abuja revolves around a single centred city, with the focus being on the important federal buildings. A broad Mall, such as that found in Washington D.C. (Fig. 3.71), is lined with high rise ministries. It is axially focused on the national assembly at the apex, with *Aso* hill rising up behind it. The major government buildings are situated around *Aso* hill and are grouped, similarly to Brasilia, around a plaza which is not intended for public use. The Three powers should be equally majestic, however in the case of Abuja the executive and judicial buildings are less important, leaving the legislative building, or National Assembly, as the primary focus.

Architecture and hybridities can be broken up into three sections: conscious and unconscious hybridity, momentary and sublimated hybridity, and overt and hidden forms of hybridity. All sections emphasize the momentary and disruptive nature of hybridity especially in relation to social and political situations. It suggests the mixing of different sources to create a new architecture, however the nature of the elements, circumstances under which they exist, how they are combined and why is often ambiguous and ignored (Noble, 2008: 80).

According to Young (Noble, 2008: 80), “unconscious hybridity gives birth to new forms of amalgamation rather than contestation.” Conscious and unconscious hybridity are not easily distinguished. Often street traders in South Africa set up in front of disused shops, making use of

rudimentary tables, sometimes spilling over the pavement and forcing pedestrians to walk in the street or squeeze through on pavements. This example is a collision between the conscious city street plan and the unconscious development of street traders, resulting in a collision of informality and modernity.

Bhabha refers to hybridity as a dialogical process, emphasizing the momentary, ever present, inevitable character. Architecture exists in time and the hybridity is located in the momentary domain. Buildings are appropriated and modified through the clear asymmetry of momentary and sublimated hybridity (Noble, 2008: 82).

Overt and hidden forms of hybridity are related to the socio-historical problems which face contemporary South African public architecture. According to Noble (2008: 83), there are three ways to deal with the hybridity of Western architecture: the first solution is to find an appropriate Western architectural form that relates to both Africa and the West, the second solution is to completely reject Western architecture and design from new principles and the third solution is to hybridize Western architecture and Africanize it through adaption to local needs and aspirations. Hybridity is obviously the most sensible way forward (Noble, 2008: 83).

“African identity in design should not re-run the dismal legacy of closed, racist and puritanical thought that typifies modern past” (Noble, 2008: 87). Political significance can be found in hybrid cultural forms and through simultaneous appropriation and rejection a truly unique and relevant architecture can be created.

#### **3.4.4 Designing Power and Identity**

Government buildings are a product of place and people. The primary problem in the representations of government complexes is the issue of representing the diversity of cultural groups coexisting in a state, and how to spatially represent the political system. According to Vale (1992: 273), there are three ways in which the architect can respond to symbolizing the unstable political systems and the depiction of a plural state: designing the complex as beyond politics; the complex as a microcosm or the complex as an idealization.

In designs following the first approach, the politics and culture of the country need to be studied and suitable symbolism defined. The architecture is the product of the political conditions prevailing at the time of commission and construction. In order for the architecture to retain or regain a position as an integral part of culture, the dynamics of the relationship between the building and society needs to be carefully reviewed (Vale, 1992: 274-275).

According to Vale (1992: 275-277), the complex as a microcosm denies pluralism and stresses the presence of the dominant state. The design of these complexes promotes and defends corporate power. In order to achieve a completely successful design using this approach, the complex would have to be made up of a “series of interlocking, moving parts where positions of executive, legislative and judicial government can change positions (Vale, 1992: 276).” This kind of project would instil institutional relationships and cultural pluralism. Often in these cases, the government does not care about the accuracy of symbolic representation of the balance of political power.



Fig. 3.72 (<http://www.corbisimages.com>) Three Powers Plaza



Fig. 3.73 (<http://www.banglacricket.com>) Bangladesh Parliament



Fig. 3.74 (Taylor, 1986: 164) Sri Lanka Parliament

The “complex as an idealization” is to some extent found in every design. Often the design of a new government complex is to promote a new political realm, one which has not been fully accepted by the community. However, ideals often come across as mixed messages. In Brasilia the Three Powers Plaza (Fig. 3.72) has a democratic depiction, however in reality the strength was held by the executive. The visual importance of the building prefigures its future institutional weight and as a result the executive, legislative and judicial sectors are grouped together but separated from the city (Vale, 1992: 274, 277).

Throughout history government buildings have had to take on new functions and are then evaluated with a new set of contexts. The Bangladeshi and Sri Lankan complexes designed by Kahn and Bawa respectively appear as self-contained, completed objects (Fig. 3.73, 3.74). There is a definite resistance to expansion, and a conscious gap between present and future. In these cases the adaption of iconographic preferences is too literal and in time has not retained its iconographical associations. Kahn and Bawa used ambiguity in their designs so that the buildings do not serve one faction nor are they so neutral that they could exist anywhere (Vale, 1992: 279, 283).



Fig. 3.75 (Unknown, 2001: 693) Bangladesh Assembly Building



Fig. 3.76 (Sudjic & Jones, 2001: 56) Sri Lanka Parliament

According to Vale (1992: 281), the pluralism in Kahn's Bangladesh Parliament went beyond the current group divisions. Instead of dealing with cultural pluralism he used the idea of timeless institutional absolutism. The Bangladesh Assembly Building (Fig. 3.75) does not belong to one dominant group and as a result the symbolic representation is flexible. Kahn's work does not transcend the politics it just makes a different kind of statement.

In the Sri Lankan Parliament (Fig. 3.76), Bawa observed the traditions of past civilizations, assimilated them and tried to bring forth a new generation of forms, one that recalls the past without mimicking it. However the parliament building is more prominent in the landscape than the parliament institution is in the Sri Lankan culture (Vale, 1992: 282).

New government buildings need to be viewed within the context of the government that preceded them, and seen as visible symbols of economic and political development. There is often a major contradiction in the design of a government complex as the complex is intended to advance the consolidation of political rule and advance the cause for national identity. Changes of power within South Africa have created opportunities for new spatial identities. Highly visible public works promote national pride and international recognition. The traditional architectural elements of a country's culture can be abstracted and combined to form new, inventive hybrids that play a progressive role in the modern world. However, the challenge faced by South Africa is to find a balance between cultural self-determination and international modernity (Vale, 1992: 3, 51-53, 283, 284).

## **3.5 The Space Surrounding Public Buildings**

### **3.5.1 Introduction**

The elements used to create successful civic open space can be divided into two broad groups: physical and abstract. Physical elements are responsive and they serve the needs and wants of the users. Abstract elements include the meaning created by a space and ways in which it protects the rights of its users. The psychology of the space is important allowing for strong connections between place, personal lives and the larger world, whilst ensuring that the space is owned and accessible to all. (Carr *et al.*, 1992: 85)

Christopher Alexander has one overriding rule in his *New Theory of Urban Design* (1987). The rule states that “Every increment of construction must be made in such a way as to heal the city.” (Alexander, 1987: 22) In order to achieve this rule, he created seven sub-rules one of which refers directly to open space as “the basic rule of positive urban space” (Alexander, 1987: 30). Alexander focuses on physical elements which he defines as pedestrian space, buildings, gardens, streets and parking. He argued that the building itself is almost insignificant and that it is just a tool used to create a space. The space created by a building should have a positive character; every building must create coherent and well-shaped public space next to it. (Alexander, 1987: 66)

*The Design Guidelines for Urban Open Space*, set out by Marcus and Francis (1998), strongly agree that urban open space needs to be responsive, democratic and meaningful in order to be successful. Designs for open urban space need to be grounded in social understanding and have a responsibility to understand and serve the public. In order to create a successful open space the design or redesign should be a participatory process. There should be as many people involved as possible, especially those who live in the surrounding area and will directly benefit from the open space.

The value of civic outdoor space should grow out of an understanding of why people go there, how they use it and what it means to users over time. Visual and environmental motives need to satisfy people’s needs and protect their rights. An under-designed space is devoid of interest, whereas an overdesigned space will eliminate opportunities for modification and personal use programming.

### 3.5.2 Responsive to People's Needs

Responsiveness is vital in the creation of a successful civic outdoor space. According to Carr *et al.*, (1992), there are five elements in responsive design: comfort, relaxation, active engagement with environment, passive engagement with environment, and discovery.

Comfort infers shelter from the elements such as shade, covered areas from the rain and protection from the wind. Seating needs to be comfortable on both a psychological and social level. The comfort of the space directly effects how long people will remain and whether they will return. Relaxation is achieved through natural elements like water, trees and greenery. The element of respite is important for the human psyche, creating a getaway from the busy city. Both passive and active engagements with the environment need to be catered for, and it must be remembered that needs of one person differ from the needs of another: provision for this diversity is necessary. Some people prefer passive engagements in which they are watching a passing scene, often from a vantage point; it involves looking rather than doing. Active engagement is the opposite, providing a need for spaces for strangers to meet and interact. Often active engagements happen around a statue, a shared point of interest, a festival, celebration or market. Discovery is the stimulation of new satisfying experiences. It provides opportunities to observe and participate, to follow or take the lead. Diversity in the physical design of the space will provide a greater stimulation for discovery. If places do not meet people's needs they will be underused and unsuccessful (Carr *et al.*, 1992: 87-136).

The steps of the New York Public Library (Fig. 3.77, 3.78) are a significant example of a responsive place. The steps were not originally designed to be a civic outdoor space but as the need arose, elements were added to create a more responsive environment. The steps are referred to, by Carr *et al.* (1992) as "found space." They fit casually into people's lives and require very little effort to use. This outdoor civic space has become a part of daily life for a lot of New Yorkers, simply because the steps happen to be in a convenient place.



Fig. 3.77 (Carr *et al.*, 1992:109) Steps of the New York City Library in the 1990's

In terms of comfort, the steps offer many alternatives for sitting, standing or gathering, depending on personal or group preference. In milder weather cafes and food kiosks provide chairs, tables and umbrellas in the upper porticoes. People come to the steps prepared to stay or meet others, and there are many return users. The steps successfully accommodate the different needs of people within the city and the community (Carr *et al.*, 1992: 108-110).



Fig. 3.78 (<http://murrayhill.gc.cuny.edu> ) Steps of the New York City Library in the 2000's

Between the platforms and planted areas, there are many opportunities to relax and sunbathe or read a book. People are welcome to stay as long as they like, for some it may be ten minutes to rest and watch the world pass, for others it may be hours talking to friends or reading a good book (Carr *et al.*, 1992: 108-110).

There is the provision for both active and passive engagement with the environment. People can actively talk to one another, eat in groups, feed the pigeons, play a musical instrument, or take photographs. In a more passive engagement people can watch a passing scene or entertainers, read or sunbathe (Carr *et al.*, 1992: 108-110).

The steps as a civic outdoor space were a discovery serendipitous. Someone started by sitting there, the idea spread, and now people lean, sit, stand, and watch. Due to their good vantage point and landmark status the steps are an amphitheatre for the street, at which people can learn and discover new things. They have given people a platform from which they can play out their lives in public territory (Carr *et al.*, 1992: 108-110).

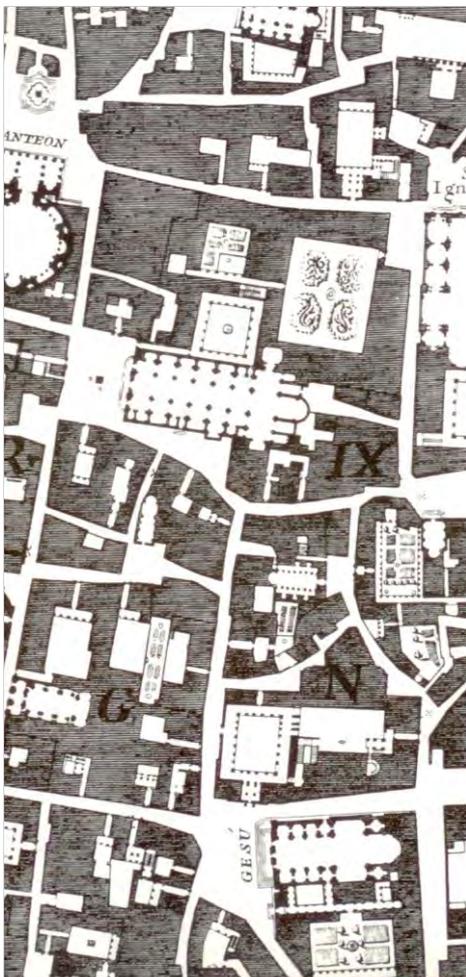


Fig. 3.79 (Alexander, 1987:64) Nollis plan of Rome showing the importance of space.

Alexander (1987) argues that buildings surround space and that each building needs to be shaped and placed in such a way as to create good pedestrian space. A successful civic open space would be well dimensioned and shaped, dominating the design. It would define new pedestrian space, creating a new system of nodes (open squares) and street. The size of the open space is dependent on the importance of the building. Gardens would be provided at intervals between the buildings; however these gardens must make functional sense in terms of the surrounding buildings, should never be adjacent to roads or parking lots and need to have an attractive shape. In order for a garden to be successful it needs to be more than a green space, it has to have a harmonious structure. The rule simply follows that “Buildings surround space not space surrounds buildings” (Alexander, 1987: 67).

Alexander uses the Nolli plan of Rome (Fig. 3.79) as an example, in which space is clearly made up of simply-formed buildings. The shape of the buildings are irregular and loosely shaped, but their primary function is to surround and create a beautifully dimensioned space (Alexander, 1987: 66-77).

The criteria for successful people places, as defined by Marcus and Francis (1998), provides a simple checklist that relates directly to the responsiveness of a civic outdoor space as illustrated by the Santa Monica 3<sup>rd</sup> Street Promenade. This is easily accessible, it can be seen by potential users and passersby, whilst clearly conveying the message that place is available and meant to be used. There is a diverse group and range of users who use the 3<sup>rd</sup> Street Promenade: old, young, shoppers, and browsers. The message of availability and easy accessibility is clear through the people already using the area, the partially pedestrianized streets and the ground floor retail and entertainment areas.

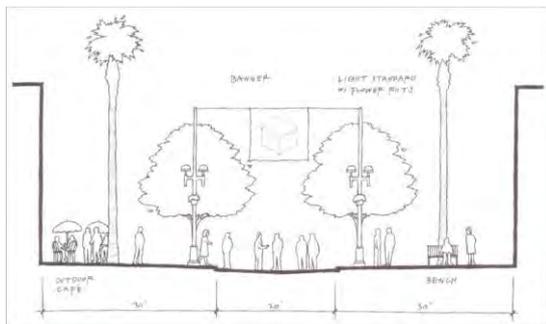


Fig. 3.80 (Marcus & Francis, 1998:73) Typical Cross Section, showing how pedestrian scale is achieved



Fig. 3.81 (Marcus & Francis, 1998:C-6) Public performance on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street.

A civic outdoor space needs to be engaging from inside and out. This is achieved through human scale, variations in paving and multiple access points. The issue of scale, both vertically and horizontally, has been carefully dealt with in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Street Promenade (Fig. 3.80). The promenade has been described by Latham (in Marcus & Francis, 1998:69) as a “street turned into what amounted to a sidewalk the size of an aircraft carrier. Pedestrians soon learned how ants felt crawling around on normal sidewalks.” To combat the verticality of the space, trees with low canopies, street lighting, hanging banners, and deep building setbacks were used to “flatten” the space. Horizontally, mid-street islands occupied by newsstands, cafes, statues and water features were introduced (Fig. 3.81). The street was divided into three zones which help in creating a human scale: from the building to the edge of outdoor eating, lined by palm trees, the promenade space, marked by raised planters, and the central narrow roadbed. There is a variety of different paving surfaces used to break up the area and avoid a parking lot quality.

Parallel alleyways offer access to parking and delivery functions which often clutter up and detract from the attractiveness of the place (Marcus & Francis, 1998: 9, 69-73).

The Marcus and Francis (1998) criteria further state that a successful civic outdoor space needs to support most of desired activities, especially those of the immediate neighbourhood whilst providing a feeling of safety and security for all people interacting and passing the space. The constant, casual presence of police in the Promenade helps to create a safe environment. In addition, a city by-law was passed that no new movie theatres could be built anywhere other than in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Street Promenade. Which resulted in a boom of movie theatres in one district, thereby creating a focal point for the area. As a result there is constant activity late into evenings in the movie theatres, the restaurants and bars. Some shops are open till late to capitalise on the evening activity, especially over weekends.

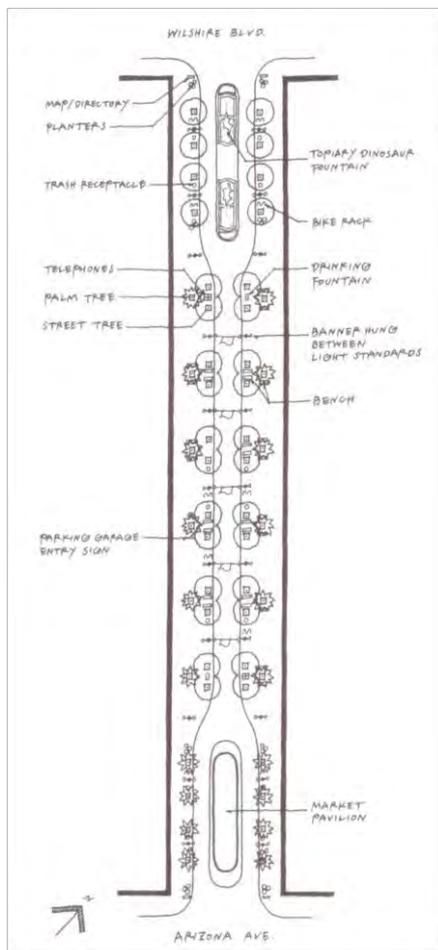


Fig. 3.82 (Marcus & Francis, 1998:72)  
Typical detail showing part of 3<sup>rd</sup> Street Promenade.

A further criterion is that the area should offer relief from urban stress and enhance the health and well-being of all who use the civic outdoor space (Marcus & Francis, 1998: 9, 69-73). From Figure 3.82, one can see that the sidewalks along the 3<sup>rd</sup> Street Promenade have drinking fountains, public telephones, bike racks and raised planters. Formal and informal seating options are provided in the form of benches, fountain and planter ledges. Benches are an important element in offering relief to passersby and their positioning has to be carefully dealt with. Benches break space into smaller, more manageable segments and in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Street Promenade the benches have been positioned perpendicular to the store fronts in order to avoid a territorial space being created between them.

A civic outdoor space needs to be geared towards the needs of user groups and encourage use by different groups to create greater social awareness and tolerance. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Street Promenade has a mix of retail, restaurants and entertainment. Mixed use housing developments have been encouraged to supplement the hotels, banks and office buildings in the area. The street serves as a local and regional tourist draw, where vendors and entertainers are supported and integrated (Marcus & Francis, 1998: 9, 69-73).

The area has allowed users the option of becoming attached to the space through involvement in design, construction and maintenance. In 1961 the promenade was closed to all traffic, which resulted in a very unsuccessful civic outdoor space. In 1988 the promenade was redesigned but this time with extensive community participation, resulting in a successful space. The city learnt an important lesson, no cars does not mean lots of people, and that the surrounding communities need to be involved to ensure that their needs are met. Easy and economical maintenance is very important for the continued upkeep and success of a place. In the case of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Street Promenade there is a centralized management unit, which controls the maintenance, cleaning, landscaping upkeep, security measures, and oversee special events (Marcus & Francis, 1998: 9, 69-73).

According to Marcus and Francis (1998) equal attention needs to be paid to the expression of visual art and as a place for social setting. Too much focus on one approach may result in an unbalanced, unhealthy place. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Street Promenade has used colour in their hard surfaces, together with the planting of seasonal flowers, and banners. Topiary dinosaurs are a major attraction to the site and help create a balance between art and social environment.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Street Promenade is physiologically comfortable with regard to the elements, especially at peak use times, providing ample seating either under umbrellas or trees. The variation of tree heights and lines of trees form a windbreak, which protects people walking along the promenade. The area is accessible to children and the disabled with ramped curbs when necessary. Having cars in the area means that pedestrians do have to be careful when crossing the road and children cannot run freely around the place. There is provision of some seating that can be repositioned but it is only for restaurant patrons (Marcus & Francis, 1998: 9, 69-73).

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Street Promenade is a successful civic outdoor space. It is responsive in terms of the needs of the community, it provides attractions for tourists, and is a central hub of activity and interaction.

### **3.5.3 Democratic, Protecting People's Rights**

Kevin Lynch (in Carr *et al.*, 1992: 138) defined the five dimensions of spatial rights, which can be directly applied to the rights of people in civic outdoor spaces. Lynch's five dimensions are: presence, use and action, appropriation, modification, and disposition. These dimensions were reworded by Carr *et al.* (1992) to better suit their point of 'spaces needing to be democratic.' Their dimensions are: access, freedom of action, claim, change, and ownership and disposition.

Access refers to the ability to enter and use a space. There are three types of access: physical, visual, and symbolic. Physical access refers to the actual ability to enter the space, the times when is it open to the public and the uses allowed for the space. It also refers to barriers and safe access by the

disabled, elderly and children. It provides for the connection of all entrances to circulation paths and the provision of easy access from sidewalks, streets or buildings. Visual access is the visibility onto and across the space. People need to feel free to enter a space and have some visual understanding of the space before entering. Visual access is important in terms of safety and the need for privacy. Both points need to be carefully designed together so that both situations are satisfied. Symbolic access is found in the form of cues (design elements) that suggest who is and is not welcome into a space. Shops and vendors indicate that a space is public and form a social symbolic access to the space (Carr *et al.*, 1992: 138-150).

Freedom of action is the ability for people to carry out activities and use a space with the recognition that it is a shared space. Personal satisfaction comes from responsible freedom; however it is very difficult to achieve since there needs to be psychological comfort for all concerned people with a clear balance of users and activities. Freedom of action is a product of conditions and designs which maximise the ability to engage in rewarding activities, without disturbance, interference or threats. There have to be reasonable rules in place, adequate choices made, opportunities for a wide range of uses, and a design that supports the needs of all of the users (Carr *et al.*, 1992: 151-158).

Claim is a direct form of spatial control which may restrict the freedom of others. Spatial control is sometimes necessary or desirable and sometimes it unduly restricts the freedom of other groups; the issues of privacy and territoriality are an example. Four states of privacy are solitude, intimacy, anonymity, and reserve. It is almost impossible to achieve solitude (privacy, isolation) and reserve (distance, detachment) in a public space as they generally require the space to be abandoned, but anonymity (freedom from interaction) and intimacy (close communication) are attainable. Territoriality can either be to a whole or part of an open space, and can be permanent or temporary. Where there is a shortage of space, areas may need to introduce the time sharing of space for different groups. The design and management policies need to be carefully compiled as they can either help or hinder spatial control (Carr *et al.*, 1992: 158-169).

Change is an important quality for a good environment. A successful civic outdoor space needs to evolve and change over time. There should be the opportunity for elements to be added either permanently or temporarily as the needs of the users change. The success of a site can be directly related to the degree by which the outdoor space is modifiable and adaptable (Carr *et al.*, 1992: 169-176).



Fig. 3.83 (<http://mylittlenorway.com>) Gagate Street during the holiday period



Fig. 3.84 (Carr et al., 1992:143) Gagate Street temporarily claimed by children and adults

Ownership and disposition means that the space is owned by the public, they have a permanent right to the space. However, this can result in parks being locked and the eventual privatization of public space. Community ownership is encouraged as it is generally positive and helps in the maintenance and safety of the space. There is a strong link between change and ownership; if people own a public space they have the right to change it, which can be both positive and negative depending on the situation, the group of people and their position within the affected community (Carr *et al.*, 1992: 177-185).

An example of a space that fulfils Lynch's five spatial rights is the Gagate Walking Street in Røros, Norway, which is a small commercial street in the downtown area (Fig. 3.83). The street has limited access. It is closed to vehicles during summer days and weekends, but is open to cars and trucks in the evenings and winter. The limited vehicle access means that the area maintains its local character. Restaurants set up picnic tables in the street and shops spill out onto the sidewalks. These retail entities are free to temporarily claim and use the street, provided they pack away their tables etc. when the street returns to having vehicular traffic. The area is also temporarily claimed by children and adults (Fig. 3.84) with portable children's equipment providing a place to play and for adults to interact and socialise.

The street changes dramatically from day, when it is full of people gathering and interacting, to night, when it appears as a normal street with narrow sidewalks, parking and moving vehicles. It is an area of shared ownership. The community and pedestrians own the area and use it during the day and the vehicles own and make use of the street at night. It is a successful amalgamation of both pedestrians and vehicles in an attempt to interact harmoniously together in the city (Carr *et al.*, 1992: 142-144).



Fig. 3.85(<http://www.aho.no>) Colonial Dar es Salaam



Fig. 3.86 (<http://www.aho.no>) Post-colonial Dar es Salaam



Fig. 3.87 ([3.bp.blogspot.com](http://3.bp.blogspot.com)) Thriving street life in Dar es Salaam

Dar es Salaam in Tanzania is an African example of the influence of politics on a civic outdoor space (Fig. 3.85, 3.86). In Lewinson's (2007) article she states that the social class shapes the character of the space. There are promises of open access, community, cultural enrichment, democracy and emancipation; however, in a post-colonial African context this is rarely achieved. Civic outdoor spaces are potentially open to everyone, but class connotations and different social groups will use the space differently, and thus include and exclude. In Dar es Salaam and other post-colonial cities the civic outdoor spaces are not politically neutral and this power shapes the location and activities within the space. Rituals occurring in civic outdoor spaces like weddings, communions, etc. are inclusive, they bring everyone together and necessitate the participation of numerous communities. These inclusionary activities are integrating and consolidating the social worlds. This vibrant transition is an indication of an emerging contemporary culture. Smaller civic spaces, like streets, are on a smaller scale but just as important. It is in these transportation corridors which are significant spaces of social interaction, where one can experience city life, gathering spots for commerce, performance, entertainment and are an essential arena for urban life (Fig. 3.87).



Fig. 3.88 (<http://imagecache2.allposters.com>) Street vendors along an ill-defined space in Johannesburg

Bremner (2002) identifies ambiguous, ill defined civic outdoor spaces with no defined territory in the contemporary Johannesburg landscape (Fig. 3.88). The streets and parks are where new livelihoods are created, new experiences of the city are found, and are the places of the invention of new social and economic roles. Johannesburg is retreating into itself, into safe, gated communities, but at the same time the city is being remade by the informal small practices of people trying to survive. In the process, they claim space. “The ordinary people using the urban spaces are transforming the social and economic character of the city and connecting the divided landscape. It is only through the reimagining and remaking of lives on the streets, that the apartheid spatiality is redrafted” (Bremner, 2002: 171).



Fig. 3.89 (<http://www.nayd.org>) Cotton Tree completely surrounded by roads and buildings in the centre of Freetown.

In Freetown, Sierra Leone, colonial domination and control created strong cultural and political divisions. As a result Freetown lost all its civic outdoor spaces to ghettos (Fig. 3.89). There is no recreational space and the only public park was converted into a market place. The citizen/subject dichotomy of the colonial city has disappeared, only to be replaced by accommodation for the collective interests of a select few. The city centre should be a place for all citizens with full rights and obligations, not a housing facility (Abdullah, 2002: 201-214).

In an ideal city a civic space would be completely democratic. The space would be open to all citizens, and bring freedom to all, creating a more inclusive society. Some civic spaces achieve these ideals, with the help of specific societies and historical monuments, but every civic space has an intended audience, where only some people will feel more welcome. A civic outdoor space can be liberating and inclusive and can effectively exclude groups by only privileging the targeted. The line between the two is very narrow and only careful design will create a space that is more inclusive than exclusive. “Through social practices and the uses of space, contemporary Africans are making socially connected, culturally complex lives in their cities” (Lewinson, 2007: 199-215).

### **3.5.4 Meaningful, Shaping Public Life**

Meaningful spaces relate to both the physical and social context. There needs to be connection to one’s history, culture, biological and psychological realities and other worlds. A successful civic outdoor space is one in which individual shared experiences and memories overlap creating a space that is sacred to the community. Meaning in a space can be created through comfort, positive connections to people, and the ability to claim and change space. According to Lynch (Carr *et al.*, 1992: 187) an important element is the legibility of a space, in which there needs to be recognizable cues that are universally understood which would communicate what type of space it is and who is allowed to access it. A space may not attract every passerby, but in order to be successful it needs to attract some. Downtown plazas that are mainly open and unarticulated are often “mere concourses for random pedestrian movement” (Carr *et al.*, 1992: 175, 187-188).

Cultural forces play an important role in creating successful civic outdoor spaces. They need to be social, providing multipurpose spaces where various activities focused on the social life of the community can occur. Functionality is important especially in how people move along paths and what types of shelters are required. There are shared meanings for physical settings, places that have spiritual or mystical importance in terms of rituals or natural, religious or historical events. The significance of a space can communicate the kind of space and who is welcome in it (Carr *et al.*, 1992: 190).

A civic outdoor space should connect to people on an individual level. Links to one’s childhood can create a relevant space. As more memories become apparent within a space, the more significant the space becomes to the individual in terms of spatial or place identity. Group level connections are held together by the product of social relations, either between groups or cultures, subcultures, or national bodies. Group participation will enhance the meaning of the area, and may result in street fairs, festivals and other events which strengthen the space’s meaning (Carr *et al.*, 1992: 193-206).

Connections on a larger scale include places that are sacred or ceremonial. A space belonging to a particular faith or belief system, is often imbued by the followers who have instilled a feeling of awe, reverence and connectedness. A special experience is created for the participants, that was either symbolic from the outset, developed symbolism over time, or has lost its importance through changes in society. Symbolic value can be both positive and negative; it may enhance the memory creating feelings of pride and nostalgia, or conversely bring about depression or hurt like opening an old wound (Carr *et al.*, 1992: 207-222).

Biological and psychological connections are created through the natural environment, being mimicked in civic open spaces through natural features from nature, like trees, mountains, beach, water and the sky that enrich the lives of the users. These features create a special meaning for the space and provide a connection with the physical connections of past experiences, and can be restorative, refreshing and sharpen the senses. Natural features provide a sense of wholeness, tranquillity and improve self-esteem, whilst being able to observe the natural life cycle of plants and their importance in the urban environment (Carr *et al.*, 1992: 223-228).

Connections to other worlds should also be enhanced through fantasy and imagination. Often these spaces are built as attractions like Disney World, but it can also be what has been left behind by past cultures like Stonehenge, the Egyptian Pyramids or the ceremonial Mayan, Inca and Aztec structures. In past cultures, connections to the cosmic realm were very important, through the sun, planet, stars and universe. The importance of these elements were transposed into the design of civic spaces as a means of creating greater meaning and a sense of mysticism (Carr *et al.*, 1992: 231-233).



Fig. 3.90 (<http://geology.com>) Pasto community of Cumbal

The Northern Andes Pasto community of Cumbal (Fig. 3.90) is an example where indigenous and colonial culture have been used together to create greater meanings and connections within the civic outdoor spaces. The civic outdoor space of the Pasto community was seen as the zone of interaction between the indigenous people and the Spaniards, both physically and metaphorically. In this space colonial culture and the indigenous society overlapped. The civic outdoor space itself was originally conceptually void, but it was bound by sacred and secular institutions like the chapel, major administrative offices and



Fig. 3.91 (<http://journeynation.net>) Colonial Architecture



Fig. 3.92 (<http://api.ning.com>) Colonial and indigenous spatial order together

homes of important officials (Fig. 3.91). Through time the space framed by surrounding buildings, enclosing a multiplicity of practices and people engaged in different social activities, defined a political, social and religious civic space. Ideological structures were added to the space to further reinforce its meaning to the community, but never removing the symbolic link to colonial knowledge and power. In line with indigenous culture the hierarchical organization of the space follows the path of the sun between June and December. The Spanish colonial spatial order has been reworked by an indigenous structure and in new ways has created a unique social formation that is constantly changing in line with their beliefs and culture (Fig. 3.92) (Cummins & Rappaport, 1998: 174-180).

The creation of meaning is an interactive process between the space and a person which evolves over time. It is a transactional process whereby both the user and the setting are impacted upon, and connections will only develop through repeated experiences with the space. A personal relationship with the space needs to be established and developed. The meanings of a space will change as the user grows and experiences more, just as the space will change over time as its functions and context alter change. As long as the two change and grow together, the meaning of the space will remain and grow. Meaning is more than a personal vision; it is a shared understanding between designers, managers and users. People need to create a bond with the space in order to enhance its meaning (Carr *et al.*, 1992: 233-237).

## **3.6 Issues and Elements of Public Buildings**

### **3.6.1 Introduction**

According to the Project for Public Spaces (PPS) (<http://www.pps.org>), the success of public places and their buildings can be assessed in terms of the following criteria: Access and Linkages, Comfort and Image, Uses and Activities, and Sociability. The South African government strives to attain the following principles in every sector: Inclusiveness, democracy, transparency, effectiveness; and efficiency (<http://www.kznlegislature.gov.za>). The combination of these elements could create a highly successful public space and building, reinforcing an image of one cohesive whole for South Africa.

### **3.6.2 Access, Linkages and Inclusiveness (Fig. 3.93)**



Fig. 3.93 (Sudjic & Jones, 2001: 103)  
Overview of Canberra Capitol, Australia  
showing strong linkages

A successful public building needs to enhance the connectedness and continuity of the existing public space. It needs to be located in close proximity to other buildings and within walking distance of other public and private buildings. The building needs to be in a convenient location and easily identified as a building of public significance. Quantitative research that should be conducted in order to determine the success of a building in terms of access and linkages includes traffic data collection, transit usage, pedestrian activity, and parking usage patterns (<http://www.pps.org>). Inclusiveness refers to the ability of the design both on an urban and building scale to bring the area and greater community together. The design needs to focus on integration not segregation.

According to Alexander *et al.*, in *A Pattern Language* (1977), the main entrance to a building is of vital importance. The position and shape of the entrance need to be carefully analysed. It needs to be clearly visible from the main pedestrian avenues and consist of a bold, visible shape that stands out. There needs to be a strong link between the building and the pedestrian avenue, as the avenue provides the starting platform for social intercourse within society. Once inside the building all smaller entrances should be visible and clearly marked to minimize confusion. Internal circulation needs to be carefully laid out to minimize disorientation. Alexander *et al.* (1977) suggests using a series of similar looking realms and gateways which get smaller and smaller as you get further into the building (Alexander *et al.*, 1977: 480-484; 489; 499-502; 540-544).

### 3.6.3 Comfort and Image, Democratic and Transparent



Fig. 3.94 (Sudjic & Jones, 2001: 56) Democratic seating arrangement in The Hague Parliament



Fig. 3.95 (Sudjic & Jones, 2001: 106) Transparency of Bonn Parliament, Germany



Fig. 3.96 (Sudjic & Jones, 2001: 97) Striking image of Brasilia Capitol, Brazil

The perceptions of comfort and image differ greatly among people. Different perceptions are mainly due to different backgrounds and cultures. Responses to comfort and image are very personal; however there are definitely some standard aspects.

A building that is safe, attractive and clean is a starting point. To enhance the image of a building, historic and spiritual aspects should be included. Places to sit both in and around the building need to be provided. Comfortable circulation routes are vital, poorly designed circulation drastically decreases the comfort and perceived image of the building. Crime statistics, building conditions and environmental data should be collected to obtain a greater understanding of the comfort and image of the area (<http://www.pps.org>). Democracy relates to the need for neutral ground, a place where history is respected and appreciated, but not necessarily the predominant feature of the area. The Hague Parliament is a completely democratic institution (Fig. 3.94). 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. The Bonn Parliament has a completely glazed façade, whilst the Brasilia Capitol exerts a strong visual prominence over the city (Fig. 3.96).

In *A Pattern Language*, Alexander *et al.* (1977) states that long passageways should be avoided at all times. Passageways should be designed more like rooms with interesting generous shape and plenty of light. If a building has no natural light, people are unlikely to spend the entire day there. People are drawn to natural light and in order to achieve a successful building natural light needs to be carefully integrated into the overall building design. Built-in seats immediately create a sense of comfort and luxury within the building.

A sense of importance can be instilled within the people, simply by providing comfortable seating, which is more than just adequate (Alexander *et al.*, 1977: 524-530; 632-636; 924-926).

### 3.6.4 Uses, Activities and Effectiveness

A building with lots of uses and activities will attract a larger crowd of people from a wide range of different backgrounds. However, different uses and activities within a building need to be relevant to the surrounding community in order to create a successful building. The Project for Public Spaces (<http://www.pps.org>) suggests that a building be fun, exciting and special. It is important that the uses and activities within the building are real, useful and vital to the upliftment and social integration of the community. A need for each use and activity should be carefully defined in order to ensure its sustainability and continued use over many years. Moreover uses and activities specific to that community will help in creating an identity for the building and securing its role in society. Land use patterns, surrounding business ownership and property values will provide further insight into what types of activities and uses are needed in the area. An area or building is effective when it makes use of historical and social value to enhance experiences. An effective design, relating to the immediate community will be more successful and uplifting to the greater community.

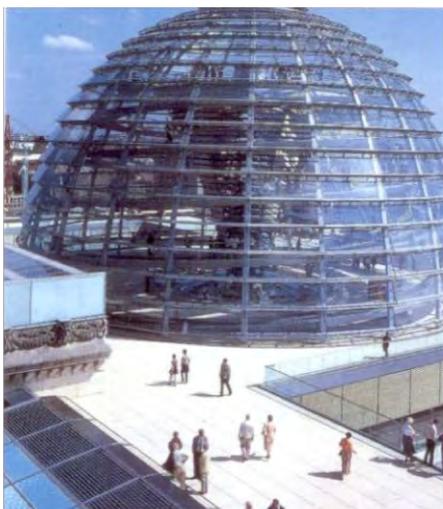


Fig. 3.97 (Sudjic & Jones, 2001: 108)  
Pedestrianized roof area on top of Reichstag,

Space for informal contact between the different community activities needs to be provided so that interaction between groups is encouraged. The intimacy of the spaces designed needs to be carefully configured. As people move farther into the building, so the hierarchy of space moves from public to semi-public to private. In each area, the space needs to be treated in its three dimensional form. The height of the ceiling plays a very important role in the perception of space and its use. Public spaces have high ceilings, while more private spaces have lower ceilings, enhancing the intimacy of the space (Alexander *et al.*, 1977: 610-613; 618-621; 876-882).



Fig. 3.98 (Sudjic & Jones, 2001: 56)  
Temporary structure for the Isle of Man Parliament, only erected for ceremonies

The Reichstag Parliament creates an interesting dynamic between formal and informal contact. The public are encouraged to walk on top of the parliament building and interact with the large glass dome over the chamber. The top of the building allows for different activities to take place (Fig. 3.97). The Isle of Man parliament is a temporary structure which is only erected in the landscape when needed.

The landscape has multiple uses and is not formally structured and defined for a singular use (Fig. 3.98) (Sudjic & Jones, 2001: 56, 108).

### 3.6.5 Sociability and Efficiency

According to the Project for Public Spaces (<http://www.pps.org>), there needs to be an element of sociability in a successful public building. In order to achieve this, buildings need to be friendly and interactive. They should welcome people off the street and provide for a diverse crowd. Successful public buildings should promote community interaction and convey a sense of pride for what they are trying to achieve and their role in society. Demographic, gender and age statistics of people using the area will give a strong indication of its sociability. Evening use and street life should also be observed to determine how comfortable people are in the area and if there is a continuous sense of place throughout the day and night. Efficiency is directly related to accessibility. An accessible area will increase linkages and destinations within the area, while potentially serving as a catalyst for the area, either through new developments or renovation of existing ones.



Fig. 3.99 (Sudjic & Jones, 2001: 109) Inside public viewing gallery of Reichstag, Germany



Fig. 3.100 (<http://www.ask.com>) Palace of Westminster centrally located in London, adjacent to public transport routes

A good way of creating sociability is by using the stairs into the building as potential seats, like the stairs of the New York public library. From these vantage points, people are able to sit or congregate and watch what is happening in the public space. According to Alexander *et al.* (1977), the building should not be set back as this destroys the social aspect of the street. However around public squares and other activity nodes, set backs would enhance the environmental factors, by allowing in more sun and serving as wind breaks. The staircase inside the building should be seen as a stage and more than just a means of circulation. A staircase is a space and part of the building's volume. It is important that the vertical circulation remains alive, and not a dead space in the design. To achieve this, Alexander *et al.* (1977) suggests placing the staircase in a key position that is both central and visible. The bottom steps should be flared out so that people walking down the stairs feel like they are a part of the room before they have reached the bottom.

Alive stairs would also be used as seats and places to watch the functions of the building being performed.

The circulation inside the Reichstag dome is a successful example of circulation that remains alive and promotes interaction (Fig. 3.99). Public transport routes have been established adjacent to the Palace of Westminster in order to provide utmost efficiency to the palace and surrounding areas. As a result the area is constantly busy and alive (Fig. 3.100).

Movement between spaces is very important and greatly affects the overall sociability of the building. Long, cold corridors and passageways are not conducive to social interaction. Movement should rather be facilitated through public, common rooms, where there is plenty of space to stop and interact with other people along the way (Alexander *et al.*, 1977: 593-595; 603-605; 627-631; 637-640).

To conclude this section, in addition to these elements, further focus will be placed on an appropriate architecture, scale, accountability and equality, a participative government, and security.

An appropriate architecture needs to be defined, in which symbols are carefully referenced and ideologies are avoided. Monumental scale does not allow for a modern governmental expression. By making use of human scale there will be added interaction between individuals and government. Accountability and equality can be achieved through the communication of physical ideals rather than specific symbols. The idea of a participative government is linked to accessibility and the clear signification of the function of the legislature to serve the public. Stringent security measures are needed, with a clear separation of routes for the public and the members of parliament.

The above issues and elements need to be taken into consideration when designing any public building and are especially relevant in the design of a legislature, which is directly accountable to the public. Through a positive provincial identity, the role of the public is validated, which in turn boosts the image of the province. The relationship between people and the government is symbiotic, greatly dependent of the successes of each. The above points can be used to enhance the meaning, memory and political relevance of any design and ultimately enhance its identity.

### 3.7 The Legislature Typology

#### 3.7.1 A Brief History

A legislature or parliament reflects national traditions and democratic aspirations. It is a place for democratic debate and allows the citizens of the country to reveal themselves and realise how they would like to be seen. The building itself is a physical expression of mankind's relationship with the ideals of democracy. It expresses the relationship between the government and architecture whilst demonstrating a certain faith in the cultural identity of a nation.

This type of building has two symbolic purposes: firstly, to create an internally potent symbol of political power and secondly, to be an external example of confidence in the nationhood (Sudjic & Jones, 2001: 8, 9, 42).



Fig. 3.101 (Sudjic & Jones, 2001: 12)  
*Pnyx*, Athens

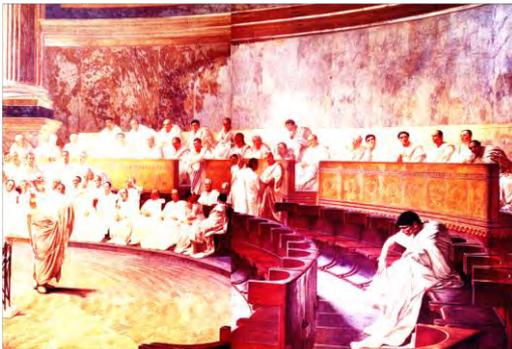


Fig. 3.102 (Sudjic & Jones, 2001: 14) Modern fresco of Italian State in 50 BC



Fig. 3.103 (Sudjic & Jones, 2001: 17) *Pingvollr*, Assembly Plains, Iceland

The word democracy is derived from the Greek word *demokratia*, *demos* meaning the people or citizenry and *kratos* meaning to rule (Sudjic & Jones, 2001: 15). It is believed that Athens, Greece is the oldest democratic society, beginning over 2,500 years ago. The site for the meeting of the political assembly was west of the Acropolis in an area called *Pnyx* (Fig. 3.101). Originally *Pnyx* was a completely outdoor hillside area, but by the 5<sup>th</sup> century retaining walls had been built to support theatre style seating for the masses. The Roman Senatorial Assembly was located in the Senate House, west of the Forum Romanum (Fig. 3.102). It is believed that the original Senate House was built by the Etruscan king Tullus Hostilius, but was rebuilt several times, including by Julius Caesar, before it was destroyed in a fire. The building was restored and is now the church of Sant' Adriano. The Icelandic Vikings is the third group of early democratic societies.

They met annually on a small grassy hill, referred to as *Pingvollr* from 930 AD up until 1799 (Fig. 3.103) (Sudjic & Jones, 2001: 12- 17).

The 18<sup>th</sup> century marked the beginning of a split in government buildings. Up until then town halls were the predominant building with council meeting, administrative functions and courts of justice all occurring in the same building. As the population grew so did the demand on each function, which eventually resulted in the splitting of functions in to separate buildings for a more practical governance.



Fig. 3.104 (Sudjic & Jones, 2001: 22) Irish Parliament House,

The Irish Parliament House in Dublin (Fig. 3.104), ca.1725, was the first specifically designed two chamber legislature. The facade has two short wings with giant detached Ionic columns along the centre and inner side of the wings. The centre projects into a portico and pediment. The middle block was the House of Commons which was octagonal in shape with Ionic columns and a Pantheon style dome. The House of Lords was to the right and was oblong in shape with a narrow apse. It was the first purpose built parliament with a circular debating chamber, and after the Act of Union with England in 1801 the building became redundant and was adapted to house the Bank of Ireland (Sudjic & Jones, 2001:22 and Pevsner, 1976: 35).



Fig. 3.105 (<http://www.flickr.com>) Washington Capitol, United State of America

According to Sudjic & Jones (2001: 28), the Washington Capitol in the United States of America (Fig. 3.105), 1792, is one of the most widely recognised buildings in the world. It is synonymous with the American government system and has a direct design connection with *Ecole de Chirurgie* designed by Gondoin in Paris, one of the most influential French buildings of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The House of Representatives is in the left wing in an oblong room with an elliptical colonnade. The Senate House is in the right wing and is much smaller and semicircular in shape. The central dome rises out of a portico and central rotunda base. It was destroyed by the British Navy in 1814 and was finally completed in 1826 (Pevsner, 1976: 36). Since then multiple additions have been made to accommodate an ever increasing number of politicians.

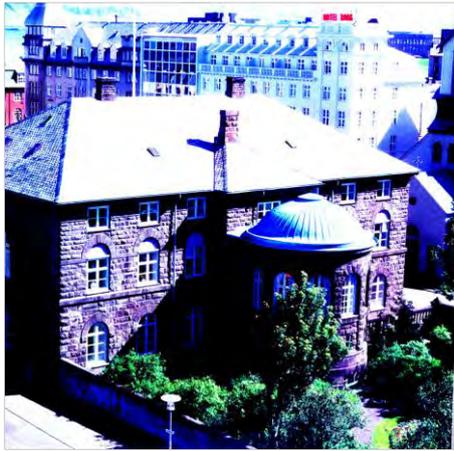


Fig. 3.106 (Sudjic & Jones, 2001: 44)  
Althingi House, Iceland



Fig. 3.107 (<http://www.alovelyworld.com>)  
Palace of Westminster, United Kingdom

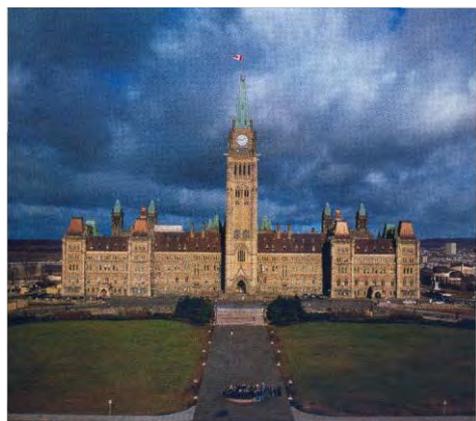


Fig. 3.108 (Sudjic & Jones, 2001: 51) Canadian  
Parliament building

In the 1800's Iceland needed to find a new form for their Parliament. Originally the Parliament building, *Althingi* House (Fig. 3.106) was combined with the National Library, the Antiquarian Collection and the National Arts Gallery. As space became an issue, the rotunda annex was added and eventually the other functions were relocated, leaving the building for the sole use of the parliament. It is located within lush gardens as a reminder of the original outdoor Viking assemblies (Sudjic & Jones, 2001: 44).

According to Sudjic & Jones (2001: 60), the Palace of Westminster (Fig. 3.107) is one of the best known buildings in the United Kingdom. It was redesigned and built in 1835 after a fire destroyed the original building. This is a good example of a state representing themselves through architecture and the assertion of a national character of the nation. The main entrance leads through St. Stephen's Hall, which is now a chapel, and into a polygonal central hall. From the hall, left is the House of Commons, which is oblong, and on the right is the House of Lords. Beyond the House of Commons are the Speaker's Court and House; whilst beyond the House of Lords are the Royal quarters and Royal entrance under the Victorian tower. Along the riverside there are two libraries and committee rooms, and towards the Old Palace Yard there are smaller offices. The complex creates a tension between the asymmetry of the towers and spires and the symmetry of the river side (Pevsner, 1976: 42).

In 1860, Queen Victoria described the parliament buildings in Canada (Fig. 3.108) as a "Westminster in the Wilderness" (Sudjic & Jones, 2001: 50) because of their similarity in design. There was however a stipulation that all construction materials were locally sourced, and significantly the building still functions and is the symbol of Canadian nationhood.



Fig. 3.109 (Sudjic & Jones, 2001: 53) Budapest Parliament, Hungary



Fig. 3.110 (Sudjic & Jones, 2001: 34) New Zealand Parliament



Fig. 3.111 (<http://www.hindu.com>) Chandigarh Capitol, India



Fig. 3.112 (<http://www.senado.gov.br>) Brasilia Capitol, Brazil

The Budapest Parliament in Hungary (Fig. 3.109) clearly reflects the underlying issue of Hungary's status within the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Designed in 1882, it is an eclectic mix of old and new. The exterior composition recalls the Palace of Westminster, especially in the way it addresses the river. The Gothic inspired parliament also makes use of nationally specific references, Hungarian craft techniques and local materials (Sudjic & Jones, 2001: 52).

The 20<sup>th</sup> century marked the construction of many parliament buildings including the parliaments of New Zealand, India, Brazil, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Australia and Germany.

The New Zealand Parliament (Fig. 3.110) opened in 1922, is based on the layout of the British House of Commons with the heart of the building being the House of Representatives. The Executive wing, housing the Cabinet Room and ministers offices, was a later addition as a circular building on a rectangular podium. Chandigarh, India (Fig. 3.111), designed in 1951, was a product of post-colonial partition between India and Pakistan. It was designed to be a monumental heart of a new city. Each of the buildings and monumental plazas has a defined entity. Brazil (Fig. 3.112) sought to end its relationship with colonial power and in 1986 the Brasilia capitol complex was recognized as a UNESCO world monument and hailed as a monument to modernist planning. The Dhaka Parliament (Fig. 3.113) was originally designed as a complex for East Pakistan in 1962, however during the construction process East Pakistan gained its independence and formed the state of Bangladesh. Due to the nature of the design the complex was still suitable for the new government as it transcended the fundamental issues and created a special nature within the assembly. It is well suited to the environmental conditions of Bangladesh. The Sri Lankan Capitol complex (Fig. 3.114) was designed and built in the late 1970's during a civil war in which the idea of a national identity was greatly contested. The site chosen was near one of the country's ancient capitals and is situated on a



Fig. 3.113 (<http://www.ewubd.edu>) Dhaka Parliament, Bangladesh



Fig. 3.114 (<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com>) Sri Lanka Capitol complex



Fig. 3.115 (<http://www.acrossoceania.com>) Canberra Capitol, Australia



Fig. 3.116 (<http://archide.wordpress.com>) Reichstag, Germany

manmade island. The building appears to float and has references to both classical precedents and traditional Sri Lankan architecture. The new federal capital of Australia, Canberra (Fig. 3.115) was designed in 1980 and has symbolic resonances with the capitols of both Washington and Westminster. It is a modern interpretation which is both monumental and accessible. The original Reichstag (Houses of Parliament) in Germany (Fig. 3.116) was built in 1872. It portrayed a classical symmetry with a triumphal arch type portal. Along the left and right were a long row of detached upper giant columns with a blocky building behind (Pevsner, 1976: 44). It was destroyed by fire in 1933, marking Germany's descent into totalitarianism. During the split of East and West Germany the building was stripped of all remaining period detail and converted into a convention hall and exhibition space. In the 1990's, Reichstag was reopened as the parliament for the newly reunified Germany. This was a symbolic act which forged a new national identity. Additions were made to the parliament, which now boasts an impressive transparent cupola as a public viewing gallery in the shape of a dome (Sudjic & Jones, 2001: 34, 56, 94- 108).

Throughout time the outer structure and the inner spaces have embodied the voice of democracy and provided a platform for its debate. The building that houses this debate is a vital component to any city and country. Throughout history the importance of these parliamentary buildings is obvious and as issues of identity and nationhood become more complex, the need for an appropriate building increases. Within Africa and especially South Africa there is a desperate need to forge new identities and unite the people. A parliament or legislature is only the beginning, but it is a vital step in the right direction for national identity.

### 3.7.2 KwaZulu-Natal



Fig. 3.117 (<http://www.kznlegislature.gov.za>) Map of KwaZulu-Natal showing position of major cities

KwaZulu-Natal has three politically important cities, Durban, Pietermaritzburg and Ulundi (Fig. 3.117). Durban is the third largest city in South Africa and hosts the major port for the country. Founded by colonial explorers in 1824, it is now one of the most cosmopolitan cities in the country. Pietermaritzburg was founded in 1838 by the Voortrekkers, who later travelled towards the isolated town of Durban. Ulundi is further north and inland of both Durban and Pietermaritzburg. From 1994 to 2002 the capital of KwaZulu-Natal alternated between Ulundi and Pietermaritzburg. After a referendum in 2002 Pietermaritzburg became the sole capital for the province (<http://www.polity.org.za>) (Erasmus, 1995: 122, 134, 150).

### 3.7.3 Existing KwaZulu-Natal Legislature, Pietermaritzburg



Fig. 3.118 (<http://www.kznlegislature.gov.za>) KwaZulu Natal Legislature

The legislative seat of KwaZulu-Natal is in Pietermaritzburg (Fig. 3.118). In order to make space for the legislature, the original St Mary's Church was demolished in 1887. The foundation stone for the new legislature was laid on 21 June 1887 to commemorate Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee (Fig. 3.119). The building was completed in two years and the first Legislative Council session was opened by Sir Arthur Havelock, the Governor of Natal. Extensions were made to the building when it changed function from Legislative Council to Legislative Assembly for the governance of Natal in 1893. During the Anglo-Boer war the chamber was used as a military hospital, and as a result the building was used without being officially opened until 1902.



Fig. 3.119 (<http://www.kznlegislature.gov.za>) Statue of Queen Victoria



Fig. 3.120  
(<http://www.kznlegislature.gov.za>) KwaZulu-Natal Mace



Fig. 3.121 (<http://www.kznlegislature.gov.za>) Debating chamber



Fig. 3.122 (<http://www.kznlegislature.gov.za>) Wooden throne

The Natal Parliament was disbanded in 1910 when the Union of South Africa was formed and as a result the Assembly was only used for the meeting of Natal's Provincial Council. This was disbanded in 1986 and from then until now has functioned as a provincial legislature. The chamber is still used for parliamentary sittings.

The symbol of the KwaZulu-Natal legislature is the Mace. The Mace is used by the Speaker of the Legislature to assert his/her authority. It (Fig. 3.120) is made up of six different parts each with their own symbolism. The crown of the mace depicts a Zulu hut, symbolizing the birth place of Zulu culture and customs. The mystical coil is a symbol of National unity. The beer pot and beast head are symbols of traditional hospitality of the kings and people of KwaZulu-Natal. The grain basket and knob stick are symbolic reminders of the origins of the leaders, and the importance of protecting the integrity of the nation. The polished head ring is a symbol of maturity, wisdom, dignity, respect and wise counselling. The white ostrich feathers symbolise the adornments favoured by the old Zulu regiments (<http://www.kznlegislature.gov.za>).

The Kwazulu-Natal legislature building is a Heritage Landmark and is an important part of the architecture and history of Pietermaritzburg and KwaZulu-Natal. The Chamber (Fig.3.121) is made of yellowwood in the Victorian herringbone style, with carved and fretted roses. The railings and supporting pillars of the galleries are cast iron, forged by the esteemed Victorian manufacturers W. McFarlane. The wooden throne (Fig. 3.122) dominating the Chamber is adorned with the Royal Coat of Arms of Great Britain and the Natal Colonial coat of arms carved into the canopy.

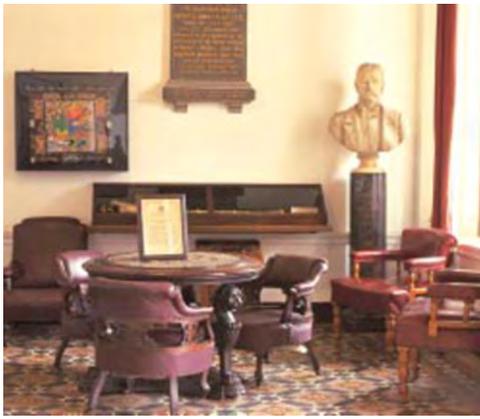


Fig. 3.123 (<http://www.kznlegislature.gov.za>)  
Items of historical interest

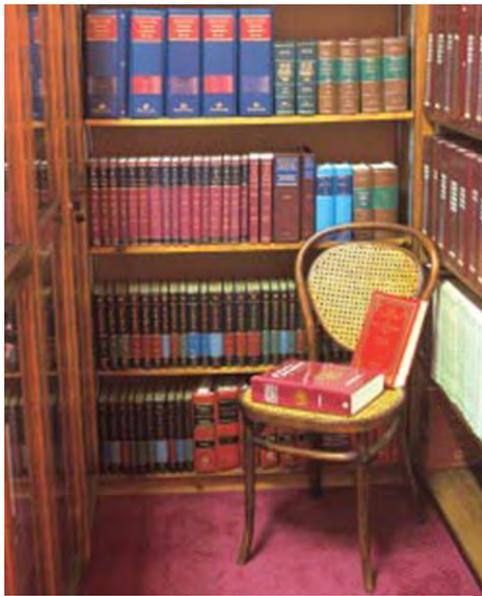


Fig. 3.124 (<http://www.kznlegislature.gov.za>)  
Book cabinet with visitors book



Fig. 3.125 (<http://www.kznlegislature.gov.za>)  
Members reading room

The large oval oak table was used by the Executive Committee between 1893 and 1973. It is now on display in the entrance foyer. A replica of a Roman table, with ancient Roman mosaic tiles in a sheet iron casing on an English tripod base is also on display in the entrance foyer. There are memorials to the second and third Prime Ministers of Natal as well as a bust of Sir Henry Binns. There are display cabinets (Fig. 3.123) containing significant items from Natal's history including the ebony black rod, dress swords of the Speaker, lace ruffles, shoe and breeches buckles, and the Great Seal and official Seal of the Natal Parliament. Another cabinet contains a visitors book (Fig. 3.124) with signatures from the British Royal Family on their visit to the Provincial Council in 1947, crockery used during their visit and other items of glassware belonging to the old Natal Parliament. There is a billiard room, still fitted with the original furniture, billiard table, score board and accessories. In the Member's Reading Room (Fig. 3.125), latest newspapers and publications are displayed. On the walls are portraits of Zulu kings and early British settlers (<http://www.kznlegislature.gov.za>).

According to the Vision and Mission Statement of the KwaZulu-Natal Legislature, the Legislature recognizes the unique culture of the province and by incorporating traditional values and institutions the Legislature is committed to creating a province of peace and prosperity, focusing on improving the quality of life for all. The Legislature is working in co-operative governance supporting the achievement of the province's priorities. They are striving to fully meet their constitutional responsibilities, including law making and public participation.

The Legislature is aspiring to be a modern, dynamic Provincial Legislature reflecting professionalism and responsibility. They are providing a model to a civil society of ethics, inclusiveness, democracy, transparency, effectiveness and efficiency. The Legislature hopes to demonstrate a people-centred focus on service and accountability to the public and fostering public confidence and pride in the Legislature.

The existing Legislature is full of interesting artefacts which are not easily accessible to the public due to the enforced security measures. People wishing to visit the Legislature need to make appointments ahead of time and a guide will be organised. The typology of the building is better suited to a museum, than a Legislature.

The building does not express any of the new developments in South Africa after 1994, and therefore the kind of identity created by this provincial icon needs to be questioned. The Vision and Mission Statement (<http://www.kznlegislature.gov.za>), refers to a modern, dynamic Legislature. A building built in 1887, commemorating Queen Victoria is by no means modern. Outdated coat-of-arms are still represented on the throne in the Chamber. The Chamber itself is too small to house all the members and public, especially for the opening of parliament, which has to be held at the Royal Showgrounds. The Legislature building is predominantly empty and is only used when the Chamber is in session. The offices for the staff are across the road in the old Witness building, and the Premier is located quite a few blocks away in offices of no iconic value. The whole Legislature complex is fragmented and does not express a vision of unity or social or national identity.

## CHAPTER 4 CASE STUDIES

### 4.1 Mpumalanga Legislature, Nelspruit

Designed by Meyer Pienaar Tayob Schnepel Architects

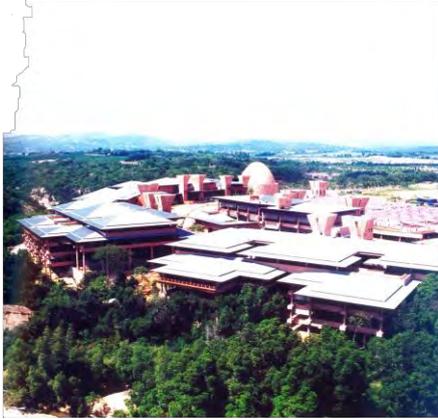


Fig. 4.1 (Malan & McInerney, 2001: 101)  
Overview of legislature complex

The Mpumalanga Legislature was one of the first major civic buildings to be commissioned after 1994 through a competition (Fig. 4.1). The commission arose from the need to centralize the legislative and executive functions of the newly formed province. The aim was to create an architecture which captures South Africa, and one that all citizens from different cultural backgrounds could identify with. The site for the Mpumalanga Legislature is at the confluence of the Nels and Crocodile rivers, formerly a citrus plantation, overlooking the Botanical Gardens. This site is easily accessible from the capital city of Mpumalanga, Nelspruit, however there is no formal link between the capital and the 'hidden' legislature complex. The complex expresses scenic views and biodiversity, capturing the character of the province (Fig. 4.2) (Malan & McInerney,

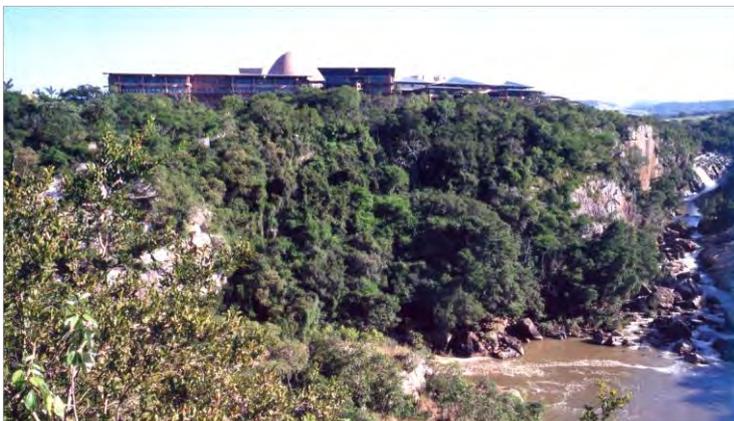


Fig. 4.2 (Malan & McInerney, 2001: 20)  
Relation of complex to environment

#### 4.1.1 The Winning Concept

There is a danger that the scale and first world character of government buildings can overwhelm people, making them feel insecure about the environment. In the Mpumalanga Legislature complex, issues of insecurity have been reduced through the careful use of scale and tactile elements (Britz, 2002: 26).

The legislature complex is comprised of four major conceptual elements. The first element is the dominant legislature building with its plaza forecourt. The second is the administration component, made up of modular pavilions for different departments all linked by a broad open walkway. The entrances to each department are defined by tall brick sculptural towers which state the title of each department. The third is the space between the departmental pavilions which widens at the centre, allowing for connection and views of the Botanical gardens, and is the location of the central technical services, banks and restaurants. The fourth is the large parking garage (Unknown, 1998a: 36).

The concluding statements by the jury of the competition said that the scheme by Meyer Pienaar Tayob Schnepel Architects and Urban Designers (Unknown, 1998a: 38) was the most appropriate and cost effective scheme. It created an unique group of buildings which are closely linked to the character of the region, along with maintaining a dignified and democratic approach to government.



Fig. 4.3 (Malan & McInerney, 2001: 49)  
Open colonnaded walkway

#### **4.1.2 Democratic Influence**

The Legislature complex is a dynamic, asymmetrical composition which expresses the character of a free democracy. The primary concept for the complex is the gathering of democratic forces through an open engagement with public. This is visible through the colonnades (Fig. 4.3) and terminates at the circle, the universal symbol for gathering. The verticality of the legislative assembly dome and colonnade dominate space, and enforce the power of the assembly, not the power of the individual. The dome itself is very overpowering from a distance and close up. However the colonnade becomes more important in the middle ground emphasizing the gathering of democratic power (Fig. 4.4).

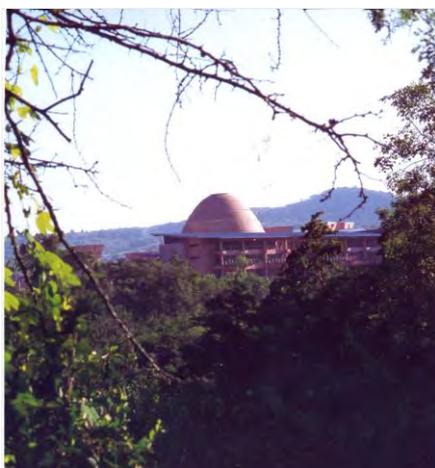


Fig. 4.4 (Malan & McInerney, 2001: 132)  
Prominence of dome from a distance

According to the architects (Noble, 2008: 76), the form of the dome gives the design a distinct African identity which is informed by the notion of *genius loci*. However, Mr Motha from the local town council felt that the monumental dome did not engage with the African imagination, and that a symbolic reference to the old African ways needed to be recognized.

Dialogue with the cultural roots of African democratic consciousness is encouraged to ensure universal acceptance and understanding of the symbols. As a result the civic forecourt to the legislature was designed around the incorporation of symbolic trees, stepped seating and sounds of flowing water. The traditional and the contemporary stand side by side, as witness to the divided histories and subjectivities of the past.

#### **4.1.3 Symbols of Earth and Water**

Large granite rocks are a predominant feature of the Mpumalanga landscape. The roof over the legislative chamber symbolizes a granite rock and thus serves as a symbol and image for the province, and is the most prominent feature within the complex (Fig. 4.5). The confluence of the two rivers is symbolically expressed through fragmented grey planes which reflect light from the roof as they follow the rivers' path to culminate at the dome (Malan & McInerney, 2001: 27).

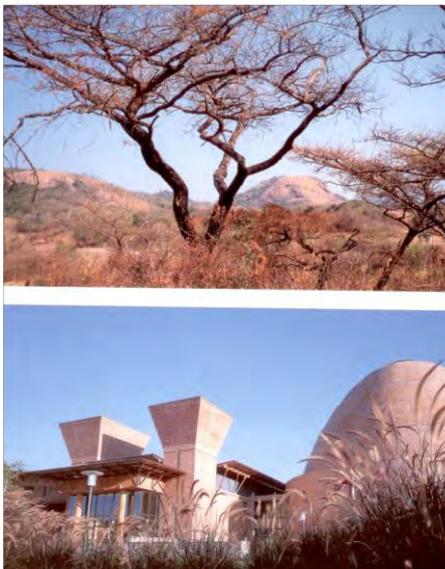


Fig. 4.5 (Malan & McInerney, 2001: 10)  
Similarity of complex (below) to granite outcrops (above)



Fig. 4.6 (Malan & McInerney, 2001: 65)  
Water feature in civic square

The dome resembles the traditional 'beehive hut', whilst the colonnaded walkways resemble the verandah around the 'cone-on-cylinder' typology. Throughout the complex there are abstract, stylistic, subtle gestures of the local culture and environmental context. The circular lines of enclosure, clear expression of hierarchy and organisation within structures expresses the use of African principles (Malan & McInerney, 2001: 18, 20). There is a definite integration of built and natural environment, as well as a gentle transition between building and nature seen through the orientation and rationalist approach to spatial and functional integration.

There are two water features within the complex. The first is situated in the civic square and directly responds to the importance of the space for the public (Fig. 4.6). It is a patterned granite sculpture with a stainless steel base, linking to the African motifs used on the facades reminiscent of a stylized bowl. The sculpture is strongly connected to the region through the use of Iron Age shards, a woven basket, a piece of pottery, and a gold mining pan.



Fig. 4.7 (Malan & McInerney, 2001: 65)  
Water feature in outside parliamentary foyer

The second water feature is a sunken garden situated in the open air extension of the parliamentary foyer (Fig. 4.7). The feature is a retreat capturing rivers and gorges in a stylized manner. Within the pool there are large granite boulders and elongated planters to simulate natural river flow (Malan & McInerney, 2001: 61-64).

#### **4.1.4 Interaction Zones**



Fig. 4.8 (Malan & McInerney, 2001: 43)  
Relationship between building and site

The office buildings follow the natural site contours, stepping up and down along the natural ground line, engaging with the forest in different ways (Fig. 4.8). The inner edge of the complex is more solid with a crescent-shaped facade. The legislature colonnade defines public space and emphasises movement. It is the primary circulation zone for people and services and is shaded from the afternoon sun.

The edge encloses a semi-circular space in which the central facilities are positioned resulting in optimal efficiency. The southern portion of the complex is similar, with the building interacting with nature along the outside edge, and forming a circulation zone on the inner edge which defines a civic square. The civic square is the primary place for outdoor gathering and is on axis with a boulevard which links the complex to the town (Fig. 4.9) (Malan & McInerney, 2001: 22, 33).



Fig. 4.9 (Malan & McInerney, 2001: 40) Civic square



Fig. 4.10 (Malan & McNerney, 2001: 55)  
Open colonnaded walkway

The design of the complex encourages planned and spontaneous social interaction in a variety of spaces on both the macro and micro levels. The civic square terminates the boulevard axis: on the macro scale it is splayed open, welcoming the public whilst on the micro level there are smaller elements like seating under trees, fountains and colonnades to provide more intimate settings for interaction.

An open walkway along the administration building symbolically links it to the adjacent office park complex and provides places for social interaction both through the layout and the detailing (Fig. 4.10). Within the office spaces there are pause areas and outside decks to encourage casual contact (Malan & McNerney, 2001: 40).

#### **4.1.5 Meaning and the Human Dimension**

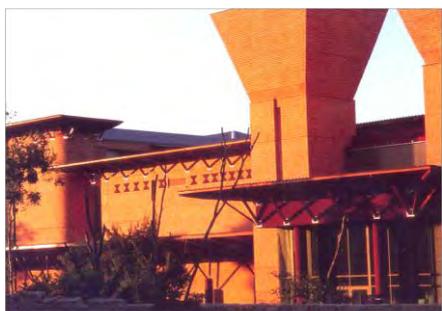


Fig. 4.11 (Malan & McNerney, 2001: 28)  
Play of sun on brick facade

The complex has made use of a holistic approach to human dimension through scale, orientation and tactile experience. The colonnade reduces the building to a suitable public human scale. The textures and details in the paving and wall create interest which results in identity through providing a scale of experience. The large brick walls are subtly patterned to create a play of light and shade as the sun moves throughout the day (Fig. 4.11). The use of timber adds a very tactile element to the complex, which softens the otherwise hard building shell.

The wide, overhanging eaves give shade to the lower floors, and are reminiscent of the umbrella tree shapes in the region. The overall organization of the complex uses universally understood notions of organisation to create human scale. Within the complex there is a distinct head (legislative assembly) and two separate arms (executive functions). The use of symmetry along with identifiable zones for services, working, moving, recreating and meeting create an understandable complex (Malan & McNerney, 2001: 41).



Fig. 4.12 (Malan & McInerney, 2001: 45)  
Textured surfaces



Fig. 4.13 (Malan & McInerney, 2001: 90)  
Regionally specific basket weave pattern on floor

Details and finishes within the buildings are the result of traditional motifs translated into a contemporary language (Fig. 4.12). Colours and textures respond to the surrounding landscape and where possible, materials were locally sourced. The finishes can be divided into three categories: earth, grass and reed (Malan & McInerney, 2001: 45- 47). Earth elements include the use of rock, mud and clay. Grass elements are evident through the woven fabrics and patterns from traditional weaving. Reed elements are aesthetic and structural, seen through the reeded panelling, colonnades and features on the timber roofs. The creativity of varying cultures, colours and textures has been brought together in a legible, integrated response. Authentic art has been incorporated into the design and is specific to the region (Fig. 4.13).

The complex is made up of four different kinds of space: the first is the African space of the civic forecourt with trees and seating, the second is the classical space providing imageability of a Greek temple through the universal dome symbol, the third space is that of the interiors. These spaces, open or roofed, are well articulated and provide easy orientation for users and visitors. The fourth space is the parking garage, which is unfortunately positioned too close to the buildings and ruins the primary approach to the building (Britz, 2002: 28).

#### 4.1.6 Design Elements

The Mpumalanga Legislature complex is based on the idea of campus architecture through flexible, robust and future enabling spatial and system solutions. In the complex the legislative and executive functions have been expressed differently within a clear services concept. Throughout the design there is a strong focus on sustainability, and elements of nature conservation, indigenous landscaping and an arts and crafts programme greatly enrich the overall design (Deckler, *et al.*, 2006: 15).



Fig. 4.14 (Deckler *et al.*, 2006: 16)  
Colonnaded walkway around public piazza

The overall layout is flexible in configuration and exhibits an efficient reticulation of services. The main walkway goes from the northern entrance, where the gate house and visitors centre are tucked into the forest, and terminates at the chamber. A smaller colonnaded walkway (Fig. 4.14) travels from the chamber around the public piazza on an axis with the linking boulevard.

The entrance colonnade has been scaled up to give the building a strong presence from the main vehicle route, whilst a spacious curved terrace on the other side outside the dining room defines the edge and links the building to the administration complex. Pergolas link the building to the slightly sunken parking area (Figs 4.15-4.17) (Malan & McInerney, 2001: 25, 32, 49, 51).

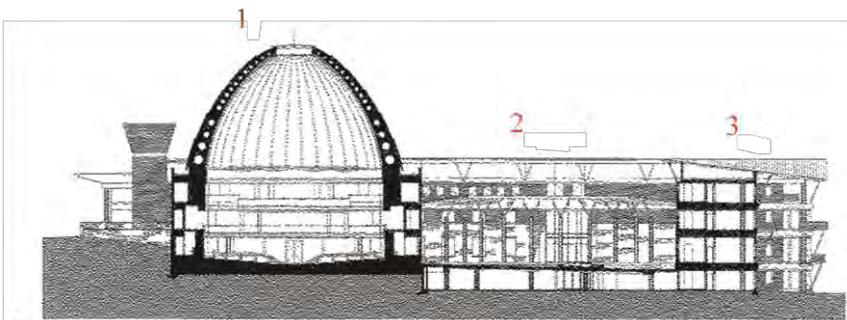


Fig. 4.15 (Deckler *et al.*, 2006: 17) Section through legislature, 1- Chamber, 2- Public Piazza, 3- Open Plan Offices

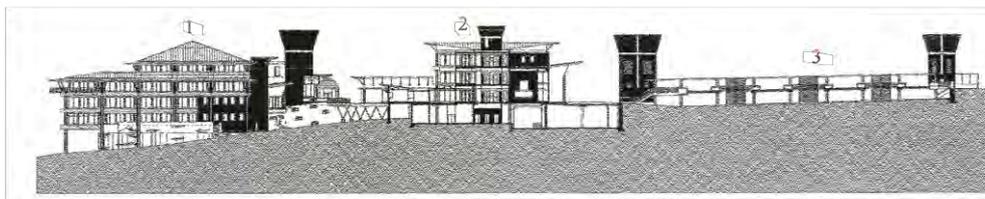


Fig. 4.16 (Deckler *et al.*, 2006: 17) Cross section through site, 1- Typical Administration Building, 2- Central Services, 3- Parking

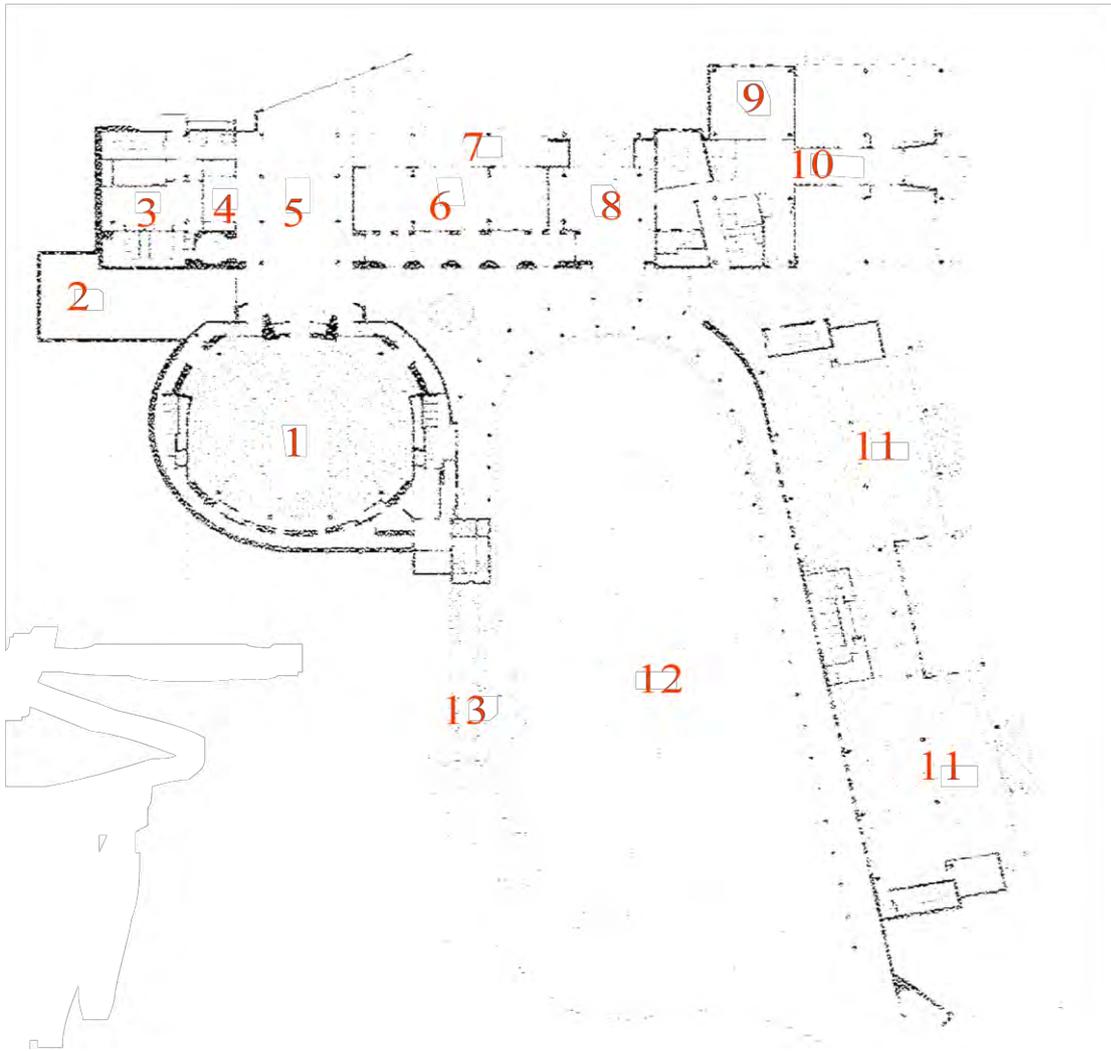


Fig. 4.17 (Deckler *et al.*, 2006: 17) Plan of Mpumalanga Legislature complex, 1- Legislature, 2- Garden, 3- Kitchen, 4- Servery, 5- Foyer, 6- Committee Rooms, 7- Timber Deck, 8- Entrance Reception, 9- Traditional Leaders, 10- Committee Rooms, 11- Open Plan Offices, 12- Public Piazza, 13- Fountain



Fig. 4.18 (Malan & McNerney, 2001: 39) Interior of debating chamber

The shape of the land was used to reduce the visual impact of the complex on the environment, and as a result the complex almost completely blends into the environment, with only the entrance towers and dome over the chamber creating a vertical emphasis. The domed chamber is the dominant feature on the site and is seen as the centre of power. It is organised for co-operative, consultative gathering with the public galleries as close to the chamber floor as possible. The provincial motif of the rising sun is expressed through the interior design of the space (Fig. 4.18) (Malan & McNerney, 2001: 33-41).



Fig. 4.19 (Deckler *et al.*, 2006: 16) Glazed eastern facade

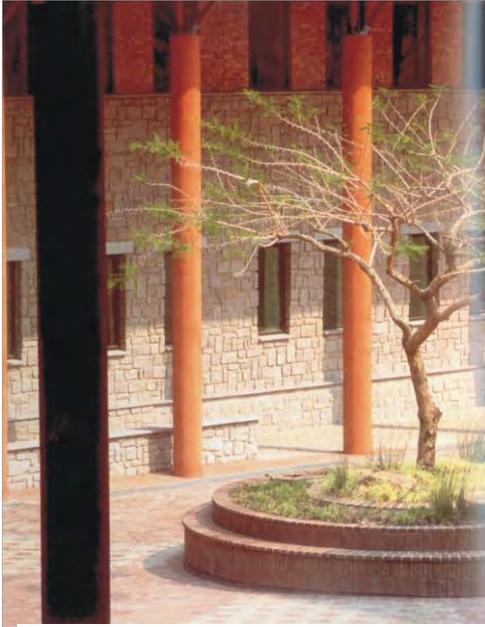


Fig. 4.20 (Malan & McInerney., 2001: 34) Civic western facade



Fig. 4.21 (Deckler *et al.*, 2006: 16) Different materials on external facade

The predominant facades are to the east and west. Both are very different in composition due to the climatic conditions. The eastern facade is completely glazed and shaded by overhanging decks (Fig. 4.19). It engages with the landscape through recessing and projecting in both plan and section. It is a direct response to the site and the stepped profile minimizes the impact of the building on the river front. The western side is more civic in character. The facade is fairly closed, with small opening protected by the colonnade (Fig. 4.20).

The vertical cores are situated along the western side of the complex, along the curved walkway. Through this positioning it allowed for open, flexible floor plates and by providing additional solar protection it enabled the east to be completely open. The cores have different angled sections, textured patterns and perforations in the wall which create a play of light and dark through different hues. This creates an interactive architecture that changes throughout the day (Malan & McInerney, 2001: 27-32).

Throughout the complex the choice of finishes, both internally and externally, have been carefully considered. In the public areas natural stone mosaic and stone tiles have been used, with carpets and slate in the more private areas. The internal walls are predominantly plastered in rich colours leaving areas of stone and facebrick to a minimum. The roof is predominantly lightweight sheet metal, with deep overhangs supported by timber poles (Fig. 4.21) (Malan & McInerney, 2001: 45-47).

There are shared staff facilities between the pavilion-like office sections. These shared services include training and conference rooms, the library, central plant and workshop areas.

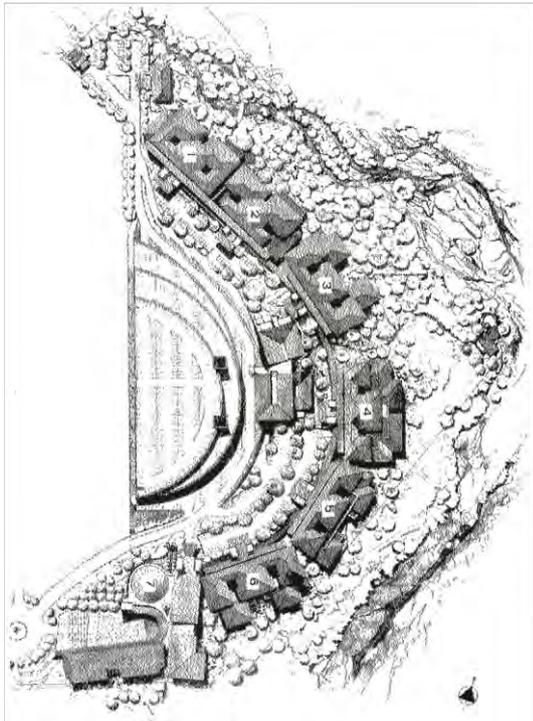


Fig. 4.22 (Deckler *et al.*, 2006: 15) Plan of administrative pavilions

The basement area is the nucleus of all the services for the complex, with cores running both horizontally, under the main walkway, and vertically, through the expression of the cooling towers as visual anchors. The horizontal service core contains the distributed plumbing, electrical, mechanical, data and telecommunications services both north and south. When the horizontal tower passes a vertical core, the required services are routed through either ceiling or floor voids. The service articulation in the complex is efficient, cost effective, flexible and easily maintained which increases the success of the scheme (Malan & McInerney, 2001: 49-55).

The workspaces within the complex are very flexible. In the administrative building they have been designed on a planning module of 600mm and a structural module of 8,4m. This configuration allows for optimal flexibility both in open plan and fixed office space. Each administrative block has a basic footprint of 2 400m<sup>2</sup>, which is focused around two garden courts. The edge along the river frontage is stepped forward and back in modular increments. Each building is accessed through a foyer with security and information point, which is accessible both by stairs and ramps from the parking area. The idea of a healthy working environment was the focus on the office design, which led to specific choices in materials and quality of light through large windows, balconies, overhangs and carefully detailed sunscreens which create a play of texture and light. The positioning of offices was based on functionality, cost and an efficient use of space rather than positions and status. Emphasis was placed on functional workflow rather than pyramidal hierarchies. The individuals who spend more time at their workstations have a closer contact with the forest and eastern side of the building, whilst the senior staff who are often either away or in meetings, and are more likely to be involved with direct public interactions are located around the central garden courts and closer to the entrances (Fig. 4.22) (Malan & McInerney, 2001: 57).

Sustainable decisions predominantly directed the design, especially through the use of renewable materials. Brick is the predominant structural element due to its exceptional structural, thermal and aesthetic properties. Bricks were sourced within the province and the colours chosen were those that would blend into the natural environment.

The exposed structural timber is saligna, and local pine was used for the roof timbers. The granite walling came as waste from a local quarry, which was an economic benefit. Large glazed facades tried to strike a balance between thermal performance and economy by using three different transmission co-efficients depending on the orientation. Deep roof overhangs, timber decks, dedicated sunscreens and internal blinds also help in reducing the solar gain from the glazed facades, without completely removing all natural light. Central chiller plants distribute chilled water to small, localised air handling units which allow for direct control at the point of use. Windows also open allowing for natural ventilation. During construction there was a focus on empowerment through skills transfer and training, and proactive community involvement through craft workshops and hands on creative input (Malan & McInerney, 2001: 58-60).

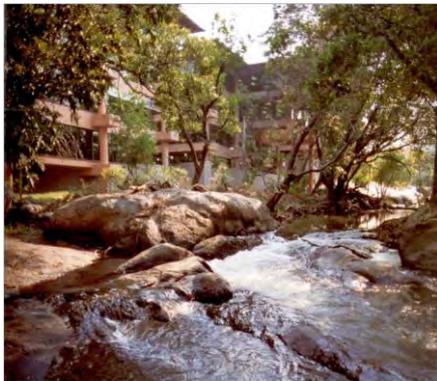


Fig. 4.23 (Malan & McInerney, 2006: 131)  
Nels river very close to building

As for the landscape there was a strict policy to protect the existing. An Environmental Impact Assessment was carried out and led to the formulation of the Environmental Management Plan which included the maintenance of the ecological balance around the river and the use of indigenous plants and trees to keep the site as natural as possible (Fig. 4.23) (Malan & McInerney, 2001: 61-64).

Arts and crafts were integrated throughout the interior of the complex through carved woodwork, tapestries, plaster reliefs, beadwork friezes and craft basket weaving motifs (pl. 53). The shape of the Assembly Chamber is based on the organic shape of woven baskets, which formed the generator for the geometry of the interwoven panels on the chamber's ceiling. The woven mesh inside the dome both reflects and disperses light, from the roof light, whilst also creating a sense of enclosure without detracting from the overall volume. It also aids in acoustic control and is strong enough to act as a service platform (Malan & McInerney, 2001: 85-87).

The architects achieved a synthesis of diverse considerations (functional needs, financial constraints and pragmatic decisions, appropriate response to site, climate, context and the desire to meet the expectations of the South African public), whilst creating a South African character through the construction detailing, appropriate technologies and use of local materials. The Mpumalanga Legislature complex is the synthesis of a building rooted in place and time. The response integrates the complex into the immediate physical context. The overall complex is modest and unimposing, providing light and exposure to the site (Malan & McInerney, 2001: 27, 47).

## **4.2 Northern Cape Legislature, Kimberley**

**Designed by Luis Ferreira da Silva Architects**

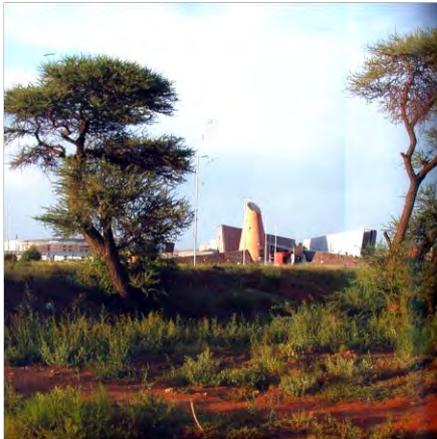


Fig. 4.24 (Malan & McInerney, 2003: 106) Overview of legislature complex



Fig. 4.25 (Malan & McInerney, 2003: 46) Horizontality of township pierced by legislature complex

The city of Kimberley has two distinct residential areas which developed during the early diamond mining rush and were reinforced by apartheid. These are the colonial white area and Township Number Two. The direct namelessness of Township Number Two resulted in severe placelessness, and in an attempt to create a sense of place the township was eventually renamed Galeshwe. In an attempt to bridge the spatial and social divide a site situated between these two distinct areas was chosen for the design competition for the Northern Cape Legislature (Fig. 4.24). The decentralised node created by the Legislature complex is in competition with the city's centralized civic and business node and as a result creates an interesting dynamic. The development of the legislature complex is an iconic development aiming to be a catalytic intervention aimed at spatial re-integration for the city. The Northern Cape is characterised by a relatively flat landscape in which the horizon serves as a datum. The horizontality in townships was further enforced by apartheid in which there was an absence of landscape diversity (Fig. 4.25) (Malan & McInerney, 2003: 15, 46).

### **4.2.1 The Winning Combination**

The site chosen for the legislature complex was critical for the setting up of power relations. However, according to Low (Malan & McInerney, 2003), the democratic principles lie in pre-conceptualisation and interpretation of the project and not solely on the designers.

The judges of the competition for the Northern Cape Legislature awarded the project to Luis Ferreira da Silva Architects, because they captured the spirit and aspirations of the Northern Cape people. Their design comprised unique, evocative forms with careful interrelation of volumes and spaces. A dynamic tension is created through differentiated scales of composition similar to local landmarks rooted in tradition and place (Malan & McInerney, 2003: 27).

According to the Architect's Design Report (Malan & McNerney, 2003: 31), the "concept is attempting to interpret traditional responses to shelter, open space, ceremony and celebration through a language of African architecture..." The concept was developed with a strong consciousness of the local availability of materials and skilled labour, to create a complex that grasps the issues of scale, form and facade in order to meaningfully fulfil its requirements within the immediate environment.



Fig. 4.26 (Malan & McNerney, 2003: 112) Similarity between natural rock

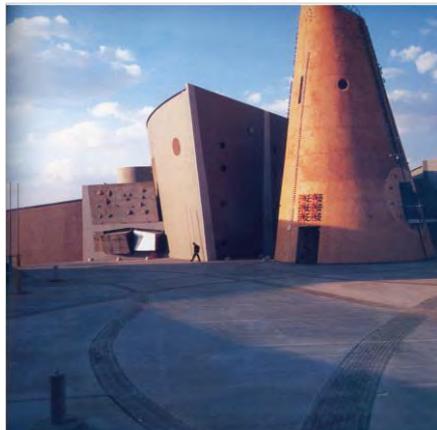


Fig. 4.27 (Malan & McNerney, 2003: 135) Earth toned finishes

#### **4.2.2 Contextual Symbolism**

The complex blends into its surroundings in an organic manner. From a distance the building is so much a part of its surroundings that it appears to be a pile of rocks. When approaching the building, this pile of rocks takes on an interesting and unique shape with the tower creating strong verticality (Fig. 4.26). The complex exhibits wide contextual reference to natural, cultural and political heritage. Value is placed in the use of local flora and fauna, and the pre-colonial settlement patterns of the region.

The primary buildings of the complex frame a pivotal space for the activities of the people in a symbolic centre. Each of the buildings has a different function, emphasizing the individuality of different components. Throughout the complex there is a common architectural language, but each building responds to it on an individual level. The buildings are informally positioned around People's Square, the main civic space of the complex (Malan & McNerney, 2003: 26). Context was a very important element in the conceptualization of the complex and as a result the finishes are earth toned echoing the top soil found across the province. The surfaces make reference to indigenous craft and decorative traditions (Fig. 4.27).

The facades of each building explore different textures and tectonic resonance related to the semi-desert, rock formations, flora and fauna and with the pre-colonial forms and local traditions. The use of mosaics, sculptural elements, detailed surfaces and earthy colours are symbolic of the beadwork, basket weaving and traditional skin decorations found in the province.

By including these elements the public is able to connect with the building and identify with it as a representation of land and future (Noble, 2009: 56).



Fig. 4.28 (Malan & McInerney, 2003: 129)  
Corrugated iron elements of legislature complex (in background) relating to corrugated iron sheets on houses (in foreground)

Throughout the complex different types of materials have been used which relate specifically to the history and identity of the Northern Cape (Fisher, in Malan & McInerney, 2003: 66, 69-71). The engraved and chiselled rocks and materials are reminiscent of traditional African techniques. The use of weaving is also incorporated into the assembly hall where it doubles as acoustic dampening. Corrugated iron forms part of the administration building facade and relates back to the mines and shantytowns whilst the exposed steel structure of the administration building expresses utilitarian and industrial functionality (Fig. 4.28). Rock filled gabions reflect the classical tradition of a rusticated plinth, whilst the use of concrete links the complex to contemporary culture.

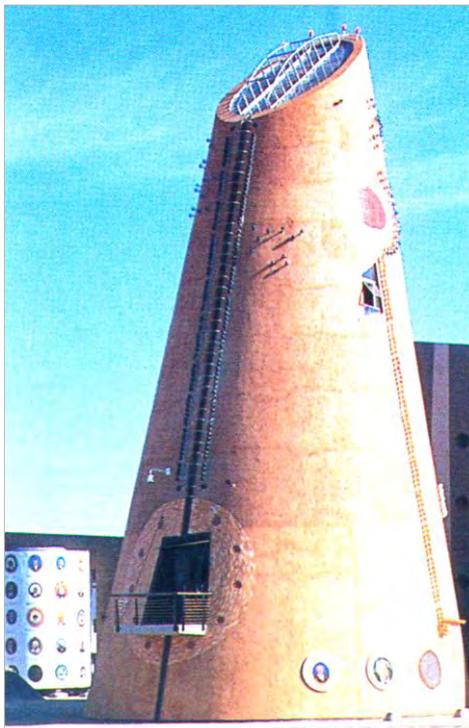


Fig. 4.29 (Malan & McInerney, 2003: 98)  
Speaker's tower, portraits of presidents (bottom right), floating head (towards the top)

The principle artist for the complex, Clive van den Berg (Noble, 2009: 56), “did not want to hang paintings on the wall, in the manner of a Western Neo-Colonial government building.” Van den Berg was inspired by indigenous African and pre-colonial traditions. On the speakers’ tower (Fig. 4.29), Van den Berg created mural spaces for portraits of the country’s presidents. Only the initial mosaic portraits of President Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki are present, whilst the remaining mural spaces remain blank, implying that idea is unsustainable. Towards the top of the tower there is a disembodied head symbolizing the spiritual realm of the ancestors. The notion of ancestors is still an important part of African tradition. According to tradition the gaze of the ancestors contains the ethical notion of good; and the living are obliged to acknowledge the wisdom and teachings of the dead.

Lower down on the Assembly Building’s facade there are metal plate sculptures of everyday elements, i.e. a book, a house, the head of a child, a bowl of food, and a HIV- Aids ribbon, which remind the elected powers that the needs of the people must not be neglected (Noble, 2009: 64).

### 4.2.3 Meaningful Places

The speakers' tower is the primary landmark for the complex, and serves as a point of reference to the surrounding areas. The shadow cast by the tower closely relates to the time on a sundial, portraying the role of nature in the natural landscape. The tower is reminiscent of African corbelled huts, portraying a similar conical shape.



Fig. 4.30 (Malan & McInerney, 2003: 44)  
Looking towards axis and doors to assembly chamber

The Legislature Assembly is the most important building and is therefore in the most prominent position on axis with the boulevard and approach. Inside the Assembly building the columns provide a direct axis across the foyer and into the Administrative buildings behind (Fig. 4.30). To the left of the axis is the foyer. The dramatic textured contrasts of rough surfaces and light streaming in through deep reveals draw the viewer into the space. The interior is cave-like with brass inserts in the floor imitating actual rock formation and San engravings (Fig. 4.31). The foyer successfully plays with ideas of light and dark, inside and out, past and present, modern interior and pre-colonial cave (Noble, 2009: 60).



Fig. 4.31 (Malan & McInerney, 2003: 67)  
Brass floor insert

The front elevation of the Office of the Premier overlooks People's Square in an energetic, embracing form, symbolizing the role of the Premier on behalf of the people. The predominant theme portrayed in the building is the responsibility of government to the people. The Members of Legislature building is isolated for symbolic and practical reasons. This building differs from the other buildings in the complex as it represents the democratic right of the people and their affiliation with different political parties. Each building maintains its individual identity through scale, position and tectonics. However, they are conceived within the same frame of forms, materials, colours and response to climate. Each of the ancillary buildings has its own identity which still falls within main parameters (Malan & McInerney, 2003: 35, 39, 43).

Kevin Johnson, an architect involved in the project (Noble, 2009: 52), explains the design process as being influenced by the traditions of Sangomas. At an early stage in the design, the brief was translated into a number of different buildings. Each building was moulded out of plasticine and then thrown onto the ground. The positions from multiple throws were analysed, their patterns studied, rationalised and translated into a plan. He notes however, that the plan could also be interpreted as a sculptural way of capturing the fluidity of pre-colonial archaeological finds in the region.

The overall perception is one of the co-existence of difference. The ground plane and spaces between buildings bind the complex together and create a cohesive unit (Low, in Malan & McInerney, 2003: 47-51). The complex merges different dimensions of civic life, establishing a strong urban fabric.

#### **4.2.4 Interaction vs. Identity**

The landscaping of the complex resembles a stylized semi-desert with a windswept motion of space between the buildings. These interactive, in-between spaces were conceived as areas where buildings, sculptures and human figures would metamorphose into one (Noble, 2009: 52). The circular mass of the Assembly implies that a chunk was cut out for the central gathering space, People's Square. This is a bland, uncluttered, circular gathering space enclosed by the terraced seating and the building complex. It is a completely outdoor and neutral communal space. The tower anchors People's Square as a place of gathering with its balcony used for public address.

According to McInerney (Malan & McInerney, 2003: 128-130), identity is an important element in People's Square (Fig. 4.32). The raised area covered in grass is symbolic of village centres where the elders gathered. The patterns in the paving across the Square mimic the footpaths created in the veld. The Square is a place of orientation and identification, and contains an existential knowledge of belonging which encourages participation.



Fig. 4.32 (Malan & McInerney, 2003: 49) Overview of People's Square

The positioning of the buildings is similar to traditional African Kraal planning: the debating chamber and public foyer are on the primary axis, – in the traditional position of the chief, and the complex is surrounded by a fence similar to a kraal. This fence however, has severed the link between the city centre and the township, and excludes people from the complex and People’s Square. The architects had intended for uninhibited access to the site, however this was not realised and access is restricted through a security check point (Malan & McInerney, 2003: 130).



Fig. 4.33 (Malan & McInerney, 2003: 37) View from Madiba Park back at Office of the Premier

The Office of the Premier overlooks the private Madiba Park, for use by staff members (Fig. 4.33). However, the park is rarely used as it is too far away from the main administrative buildings. Within the Park and the complex all planting is indigenous to the Northern Cape. The major problem with the gardens is maintenance. The different species of plants need to be carefully monitored to ensure that certain types do not overrun the entire area (Homan, 2011, pers. com.).

### **3.2.5 Democracy through Form**

The complex captures a sense of struggle through the twisted, deformed shapes. However it also engages in the continuity of harmonious forms to create a balanced, dynamic composition (Malan & McInerney, 2003: 127). The Northern Cape Legislature expresses architecture as a canvas for representing rich heritage through social, political, economic and natural icons employing a dynamic sense of colour, spirit, movement and vibrancy.

Through detachment and restricted height the complex does not overpower. If the complex had been one large building it would create a symbol of weight and government dominance. Instead the playful and eclectic blend of forms and imagery create “architecture both of Africa and for Africa” (Rich and Manning, in Malan & McInerney, 2003: 114). The Legislature complex represents the reciprocity of democracy and its interdependent relationship to Kimberley and Galeshwe.



Fig. 4.34 (Malan & McNerney, 2003: 43) Serpentine walls of Members of Parliament building

Each building is conceived in a different way: the snake-like walls of the Members of Parliament building display mosaic portraits of significant people in South African history (Fig. 4.34, 4.35), the fluid semi-circular foyer and Assembly, the block like solid walls of the Premiers building (Fig. 4.36); the modernism of the Administrative building (Fig. 4.37), the symbolic cone juxtaposed against the Assembly façade, and the Premiers Support building which, as a later addition to the scheme, resembles a little bit of everything (Noble, 2009: 55).

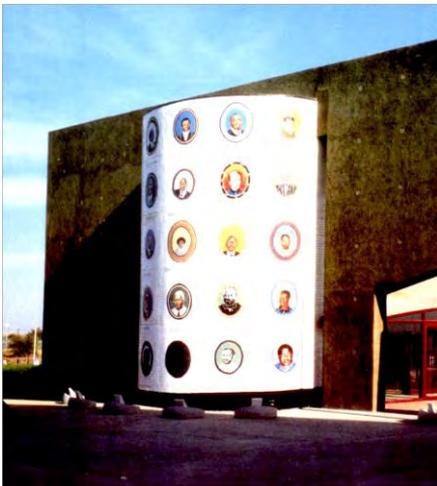


Fig. 4.35 (Malan & McNerney, 2003: 54) Significant figures on Members of Parliament building



Fig. 4.36 (Malan & McNerney, 2003: 99) Entrance to Office of the Premier building



Fig. 4.37 (Malan & McNerney, 2003: 40) Modern Administrative building facade

#### 4.2.6 Design Elements

The Northern Cape Legislature Complex relates specifically to its historic context in order to avoid a single interpretation. The position of the buildings is determined by their function and interrelation. The use of artwork created by residents of the province has been integrated into the buildings and allows for multiple readings and interpretations of the complex (Deckler, *et al.*, 2006: 11, 13).

The complex is on an axis with the main gate. Once through the gate, pedestrians remain on this axis, whilst cars veer left to the parking area. There is a determined shift in scale throughout the site from the vehicle to the pedestrian. It is obvious that the spatial hierarchy is orientated towards people which improves the human-centredness of the architecture (Malan & McInerney, 2003: 112).

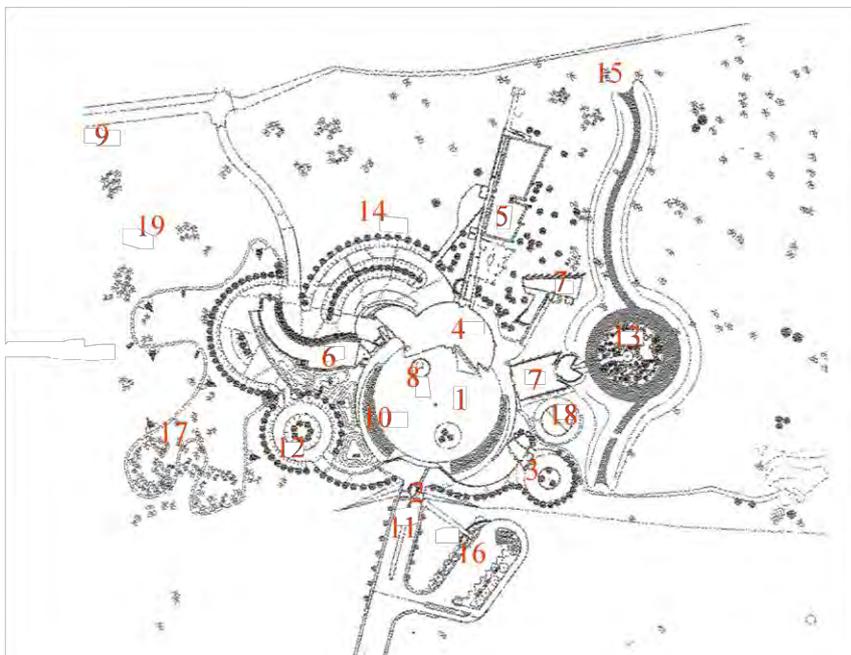


Fig. 4.38 (Deckler *et al.*, 2006: 11) Northern Cape Legislature Complex, 1- *Patlelo*, 2- Gatehouse, 3- Delivery goods building, 4- Main chamber and ancillaries, 5- Members of the Legislature, 6- Members of Parliament, 7- Office of the Premier, 8- The tower, 9- Substation, 10- Amphitheatre, 11- Controlled staff access, 12- Parking area, 13- Shaded rest area, 14- Staff parking, 15- Controlled staff access, 16- Tram station, 17- Shaded rest area, 18- Helipad, 19- Heroes Mile statue

The buildings are grouped around a central gathering space, referred to as the *Patlelo* or People's Square. The Tower visually dominates the square and is the landmark for the complex. Its shape instils the idea of a kind of sundial which marks the passage of time and pays homage to the sun as a defining force in local Northern Cape life. It also chimes at significant times throughout the day: such as sunrise and sunset as a reminder of the land and country. The Tower also functions as a pulpit for formal speakers to address the crowd in the *Patlelo*, and is also a good vantage point for security cameras to survey the entire complex (figs 4.38- 4.40) (Malan & McInerney, 2003:34, Deckler *et al.*, 2006: 13).

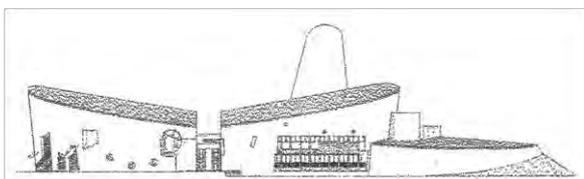


Fig. 4.39 (Deckler *et al.*, 2006: 11) North elevation

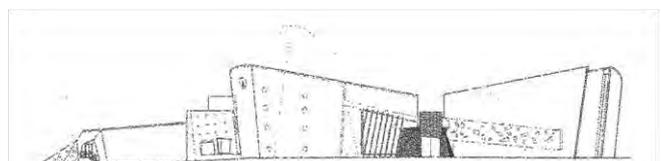


Fig. 4.40 (Deckler *et al.*, 2006: 10) South elevation

The Legislative Chamber building is the predominant area of public interest. It is situated in the main axis that runs through the site and is the predominant route for people moving through the building. Once through the entrance, the space becomes a kind of cave reminiscent of the mining influences in the province. To the right is the entrance to the Debating Chamber with ramps, stairs and lifts up to the Public Gallery level. To the left is a Great Hall and exhibition space, used for banquets and other large events. There is also a smaller auditorium and library which floats overhead. The thick exterior walls of the debating chamber create ideal spaces to sit and relax in refuge from the harsh climate (Malan & McInerney, 2003:32).



Fig. 4.41 (Deckler *et al.*, 2006: 12) Axis to Legislative Administrative Building

The axis through the Chamber building terminates in the Legislative Administration Building (Fig. 4.41). This building is partially rectangular in shape and has been broken up into a number of wings and series of individual, interrelated and vaulted spaces.

The Office of the Speaker is vital in terms of position, accessibility, facility of movement and aspect: as a result this office has prime position. It is accessible from the underground parking and the Legislative Chamber through a dedicated horizontal and vertical spine (Malan & McInerney, 2003:40, 80).

The Office of the Premier overlooks the *Patlelo*, with its support building behind. The original brief did not include the support functions and as a result they were later additions. The Premier no longer resides in this building and has chosen to move back to a more central location within the city of Kimberley. The building now stands empty with part of it being used as a staff gym facility (Homan, 2011, pers. com.).

The Members of Legislature is the third building enclosing the *Patlelo*. Issues of flexibility were very important in the design of internal spaces which need to allow for the expansion and contraction of different political parties at different times. The offices hinge around the party leader and secretary with any number of divisible offices depending on the size of the party (Fig. 4.42) (Malan & McInerney, 2003: 43).

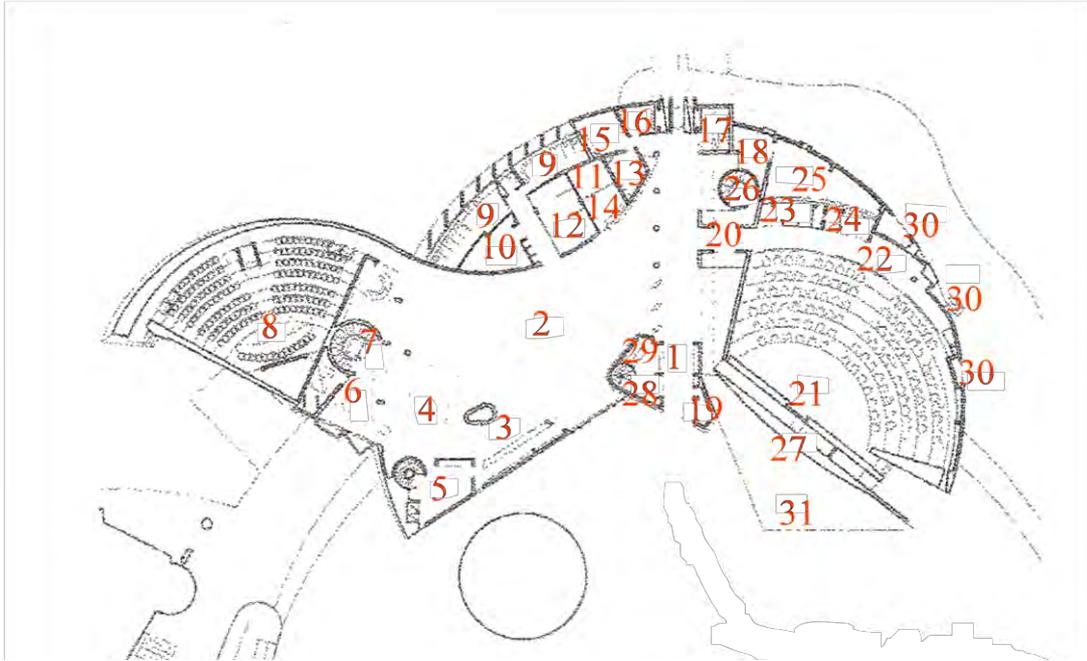


Fig. 4.42 (Deckler *et al.*, 2006: 13) Plan of Assembly building, 1- Main entrance, 2- Lobby, 3- Bar, 4- Canteen, 5- Satellite kitchen, 6- Tuck shop, 7- Reception desk, 8- Auditorium, 9- Ablutions, 10- Furniture store, 11- Services, 12- Media office, 13- Public relations, 14 & 15- Security office, 16- Sick bay, 17- Stairs to public gallery, 18- Hansard lounge, 19- Messengers lounge, 20- Chamber lobby, 21- Debating chamber, 22- VIP gallery, 23- Translators booth, 24- TV desk, 25- Hansard office, 26- Speakers stairs, 27- Ramp to public gallery, 28- Inspection room, 29- Staff stairs, 30- Hawkers niches, 31- Reflection pond

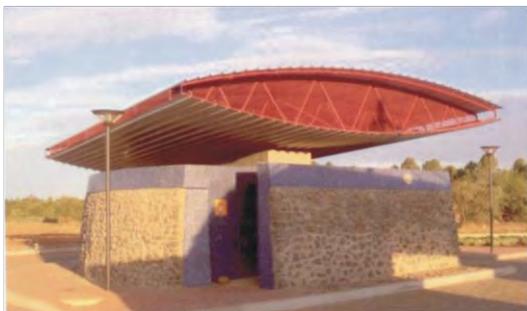


Fig. 4.43 (Deckler *et al.*, 2006: 12) Public ablutions

There are also a number of ancillary buildings on the site including a bus stop, gate house, goods delivery and refuse area, public ablutions (Fig. 4.43) and a substation. Each building has its own identity and contributes to the overall complexity and harmony of the scheme. The buildings appear to be complex and distinctive, but they have been designed to be simple, enabling small local contracting businesses to participate and improve the local skills base (Deckler *et al.*, 2006: 13).

### **4.3 Constitutional Court, Johannesburg**

#### **Designed by OMM Design Workshop**



Fig. 4.44 (Le Roux & du Toit, 2004: 64)  
Juxtaposition of old and contemporary buildings

In 1995 a competition was held for the design of the Constitutional Court of South Africa. The site chosen was an old prison complex known for its harsh treatment of prisoners and termed by Judge A. Sachs, one of the jurors of the Constitutional Court competition as “the Robben Island of Johannesburg” in *Light on a Hill* (Law-Viljoen, 2006). The site and setting for the Constitutional Court of South Africa is in an area formerly referred to as The Fort. It was declared a National Monument in 1964, however it continued as a prison until 1987. After this the buildings were abandoned and left to decay. This site was chosen for the new Constitutional Court as it had the power to symbolise both new and old South Africa and bridge the historic division between black and white on either side of the hill (Fig. 4.44) (Giesen, 2002: 7).

#### **4.3.1 The Winning Scheme**

The brief for Constitutional Hill stated that there needed to be an acknowledgement of local human needs and social values. The scheme needed a physical relationship with the cultural and historic landscape and there needed to be a definite response to climate and weathering, whilst making best use of immediate local labour and resources (Le Roux & du Toit, 2004: 64).

The judges awarded the competition to OMM Design Workshop (Unknown, 1998b: 34). Their scheme fragmented the complex and de-segregated the built form to the scale of the surroundings. It exhibited a conscious response to context and a definite hierarchy of space developing quality, variety and character. Their scheme was also the only scheme that did not demolish all of the existing buildings on the site, but rather worked with them integrating as much as possible.

OMM Design Workshop formulated their scheme around two central points: the correct position of the building in the precinct, and a building design that physically and experientially represented the values of constitutional democracy without reverting to ethnic or colonial reference (Unknown, 2004/2005: 18).

### 4.3.2 Spatial Democracy

The Constitutional Court is comprised of four major building components: the court foyer and chamber, the library, administration areas, and exhibition space and judge's chambers.

The court foyer and chamber are the focus of Constitution Square, which is a freely accessible public space just outside the foyer (Fig. 4.45). The foyer is completely glazed reiterating an open and transparent democracy. Inside bricks from the demolished "Awaiting Trial" Building have been cleaned and stacked to form a curved wall 'floating' on a glass strip, symbolising the openness of the chamber (Fig. 4.46). The library is the second building of public importance and is placed at the bottom of the site, at the opposite end to the foyer and chamber (Fig. 4.47). The library is the tallest structure on the site and acts as a glowing beacon. There are two major axes on the site: one from east to west linking Hillbrow and Braamfontein, and the other from north to south now serving as a link between the "beacon of knowledge" and the "chamber of wisdom". The administration areas link the library and the chamber on three levels as the staff need equal access to both sections (Fig. 4.48). The Judges' chambers are located to the west and perpendicular to the administration area (Fig. 4.49). In between the chambers there are water and garden areas for the private use of the Judges. Public circulation is kept to the other side of the administration area through either the exhibition space or the Great African Staircase. The words 'human dignity, equality and freedom' in the eleven official languages of South Africa, have been inscribed on the concrete beams at the entrance to the foyer in each of the original Judge's written hand (Unknown, 2004/2005: 18-19).



Fig. 4.45 (Unknown, 2004/2005: 21)  
Interior of foyer

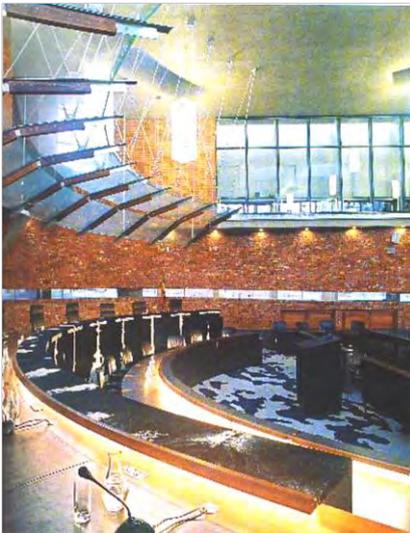


Fig. 4.46 (Unknown, 2004/2005: 21)  
Interior of chamber

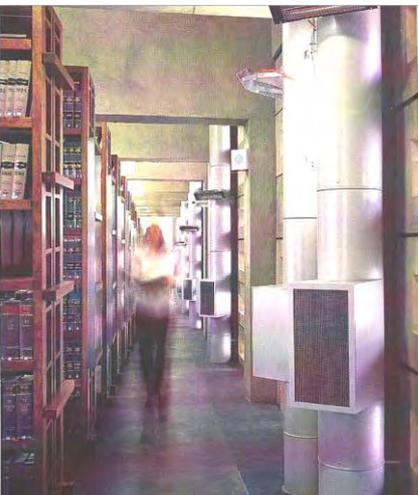


Fig. 4.47 (Buckland in Noble, 2004: 20)  
Interior of library



Fig. 4.48 (Unknown, 2004: 34)  
Administrative wing

The planning of the Constitutional Court is sensible, modest and coherent. The building has a modernist appeal juxtaposed with low-tech elements generally found in informal settlements. The landscape and buildings restrict spaces, make places and give meaning to the site (Noble, 2004: 20).



Fig. 4.49 (Unknown, 2004/2005: 20) Garden spaces between chambers

### **4.3.3 The Symbolic use of Light and the Tree Emblem**

Within the Constitutional Court there is a balance between the sense of a symbolic presence and contextual sensitivity. There are two predominant symbols in the Constitutional Court: the symbol of the tree and the experiential quality of light.



Fig. 4.50 (Le Roux & du Toit., 2004: 69)  
Tilted tree like columns

In South Africa trees are used by all, either for communal gathering at school, work or in the community, or as a place for rest and quiet contemplation. As a result of the continued interaction with trees, the emblem of the South African constitution is the tree (Unknown, 2004/2005: 18). Under this tree emblem, justice is openly administered as it should be especially in the Constitutional Court. The feeling of being under a tree has been interpreted in the design for the court foyer. The roof is supported by tree-like slanting columns, which have been richly adorned in mosaics reminiscent of leaves and seed pods (Fig. 4.50). The concrete roof in the foyer has thin slits cut into it which allow for a dappled light effect, as that under a tree (Fig. 4.51). The slits have been carefully positioned to allow for maximum diffusion during the winter months, whilst screens restrict the diffusion during summer.



Fig. 4.51 (Unknown, 2004: 34) Dappled light in foyer

The experiential quality of light has been achieved through the specific placement of solid objects in relation to the sun's movement. Specific materials were chosen so that light would fall and reflect colour, coolness and warmth, light would show scale, volume, silhouette, relief, smoothness and shine.



Fig. 4.52 (Le Roux & du Toit, 2004: 67) Light tower of library

The library tower is a depiction of both the symbolic presence of the tree and light (Fig. 4.52). The tower is illuminated like a watchtower, except in place of the clock face is the tree emblem (Lipman, A. 2004: 18).

#### **4.3.4 Activity in Open Spaces**

The architecture of the Constitutional Court revives and reinterprets African cultural values (Noble, 2004: 20). There is an acknowledgement of history in the split and fragmented building which does not appear as an overbearing monolithic structure, or private institution.

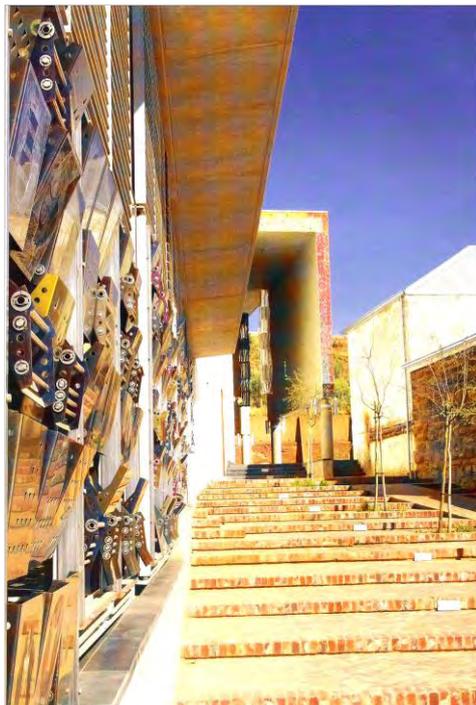


Fig. 4.53 (Unknown, 2004: 30) Great African Stairs

The democratic fragmentation and lack of rigidity are evident through the use of vernacular materials, crafts, the construction process, methods of climate control, indigenous planting and the reuse of material for the prison buildings.

There are areas for communal activity on the edges of paths and open spaces e.g. the court foyer and the Great African Stairs (Fig. 4.53). There are also a number of footpaths, smaller plazas and courtyards for public use. The architectural space has been transformed into public space for civic participation. The humane promise of this scheme lies in the spaces open for public use (Lipman, 2004: 18).

#### 4.3.5 Design Elements



Fig. 4.54 (Deckler *et al.*, 2006: 18) Constitutional Court, Johannesburg

The Constitutional Court (Fig. 4.54) seeks to express freedom, democracy, equal opportunity, diversity, responsibility and respect through architecture. The site chosen between the city centre of Johannesburg and Hillbrow, a high density residential area, is full of symbolism as it is the site of a former prison used extensively during the Apartheid era (Deckler *et al.*, 2006: 19). According to Makin, “the new constitutional court building of South Africa should powerfully and convincingly represent the highest aspirations of our society (Law-Viljoen, 2006: 46).”

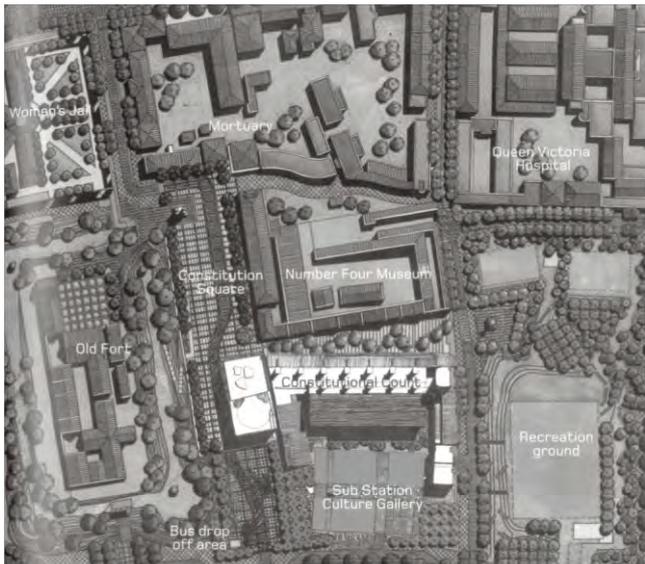


Fig. 4.55 (Ranger *et al.*, 2006: x) Urban design of Constitutional Hill

The site is easily accessible to ordinary citizens and through the urban design (Fig. 4.55), a previously isolated, impenetrable prison precinct was reintegrated into the city grid. The integration of new buildings with the existing prison structures captures history and brings the past into contact with the present. Part of the Awaiting Trial Block had to be demolished but the stair towers still stand marking the footprint of the original building, creating a symbolic and physical connection of history and place (Law-Viljoen, 2006: 7, 21-24, 39).

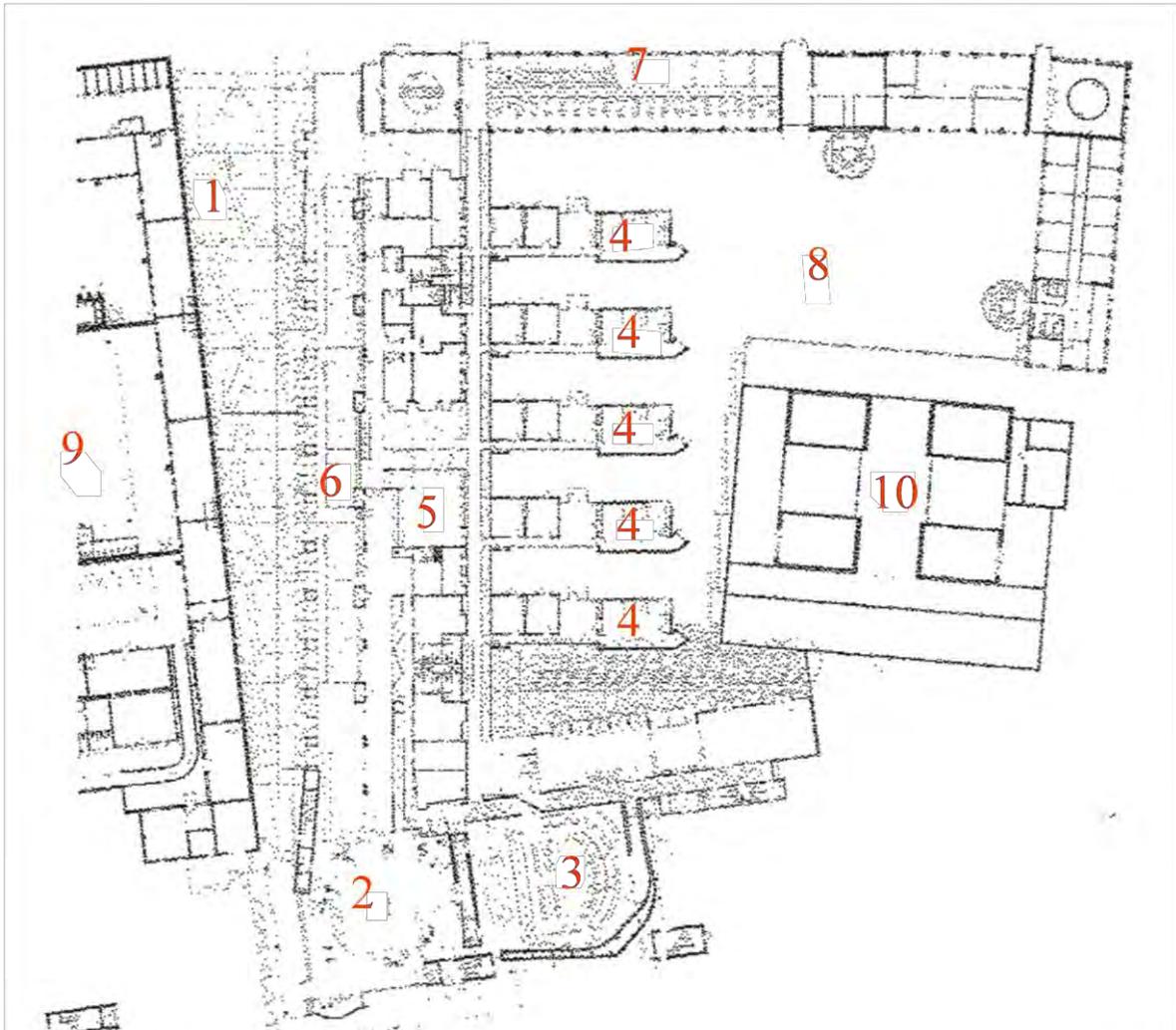


Fig. 4.56 (Deckler *et al.*, 2006: 19) Plan of Constitutional Court, 1- Great African Steps, 2- Entrance foyer, 3- Court chamber, 4- Judges chambers, 5- Administration, 6- Public gallery, 7- Library, 8- Private courtyard, 9- Section 4 & 5 prisons, 10- Hillbrow substation

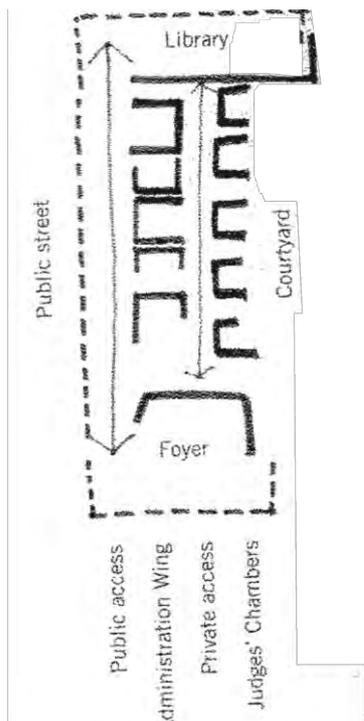


Fig. 4.57 (Law-Viljoen., 2006: 134) Diagram of spatial divisions

Public functions were used to structure the building with the public foyer and chamber in the south wing and the library (with partial public access) in the north wing. Both sides of the building are completely visible and easy to reach either through the internal stairs, which also function as a gallery space, or the external Great African Steps, both on the western side of the building. These steps form an external procession touching the walls of the new court building and the old section 4 and 5 prisons. The stairs are a place between, a wandering route with places to pause and sit in the form “a pathway between what was and what is hoped for” (figs 4.56, 4.57) (Deckler, *et al.*, 2006: 21).

The Exhibition Gallery (Fig. 4.58) and Great African Steps (Fig. 4.59) are separated by glass and permeable shutters which blur the line between inside and out, creating a public street (Law-Viljoen, 2006: 156, 165).



Fig. 4.58 (Deckler *et al.*, 2006: 20) Exhibition Gallery

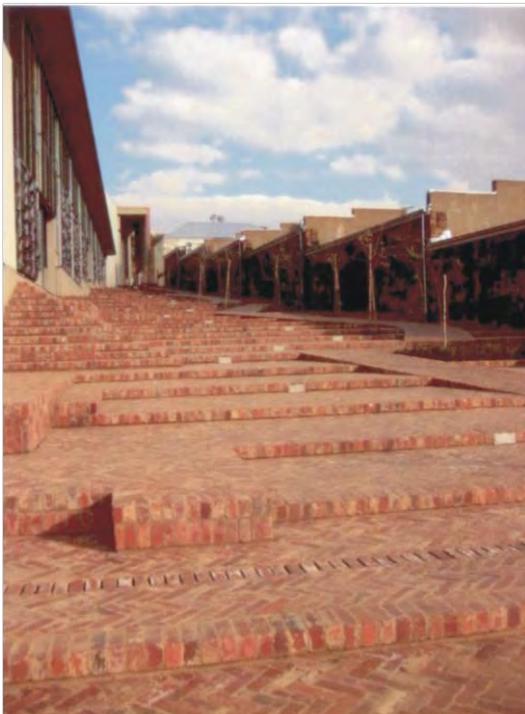


Fig. 4.59 (Deckler *et al.*, 2006: 18) Great African Steps

The symbolic intent of the foyer was to express meaning in a void; it is a continuation of the square which is reiterated by the angled columns and tree-like atmosphere created in the foyer, it is a place for gathering. The Court is where democracy is protected in an internal, contained environment. The Library is the repository of legal knowledge and wisdom and the Welsh Tower over the library is the dominant landmark of the court. It also houses the Rex Welsh book collection on the upper levels accessed by a series of Escher-like staircases (Law-Viljoen, 2006: 94, 114).

The Library, Exhibition Gallery, Entrance Foyer and Court Chamber wrap around the site forming an internal courtyard. The Judges chambers extend like fingers into the courtyard and through their positioning they create more intimate gardens with ponds of water, indigenous trees and grassy areas. This is the most private area of the court and is only accessible to residents. There are three components to a chamber: researcher's accommodation, secretary's office and judge's office. In the judge's office there is a study, lounge area and a contemplative niche which opens up into the courtyard. Although the chambers symbolise autonomy they are all under one roof which extends over the courtyards. The judges also have a conference room off of the chamber, which is physically, acoustically and visually the most private place. It has glass doors which open up into a small courtyard with steel screens for protection from the sun and privacy.

The combination of separateness and connection are used in an attempt to align and bring together both functionality and symbolic references (Law-Viljoen, 2006: 102, 114, 124).



The building portrays an African grandeur (Fig. 4.60) through dignity, scale and grand voids rather than solids. There is no ostentation or monumentalism and its strong presence, reflects the hopes and aspirations of the people forming a kind of gravitas (Deckler *et al.*, 2006: 21, Law-Viljoen, 2006: 46).

Fig. 4.60 (Deckler *et al.*, 2006: 20) African grandeur

The overall design for the Constitutional Court is simple in diagram and yet highly detailed. The tectonic language engages with the hard urban character of the site and city context. It represents freedom, dignity and equality through a confident aesthetic. The most significant element of the site is the traces of political memory, which contribute to the concept of human rights (Noble, 2004: 20-21).

## CHAPTER 5 ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

### 5.1 Fostering an Identity

Identity is defined in the context of time and place. It respects and understands aesthetic issues, vernacular elements, and social and institutional links. Identity is created through a direct interaction between man and the environment. History plays an important role in defining identity, whilst contemporary issues are constantly redefining identity. Social and institutional links promote a cultural regional identity which tie people to a place, creating stability and a sense of environment. In the South African context, the environment, culture of the people and history have combined to create distinct regional identities. The environment and especially the landscape can be used to develop a sense of place and identity, considerations in terms of human scale can be achieved by understanding natural land use patterns and local techniques (Hough, 1990: 5-26).



Fig. 5.1 (Malan & McNerney, 2001: 28) Play of sun on brick facade



Fig. 5.2 (Malan & McNerney, 2001: 90)  
Regionally specific basket weave pattern on floor

Recognition of cultural and regional identity is evident in the Mpumalanga Legislature which portrays a holistic approach to human dimension through scale, orientation and tactile experience. Colonnades are used to create human scale, textures and details in paving create interest, and the large, locally sourced brick on the towers have been subtly patterned to create a play of light and shade throughout the day (Fig. 5.1). Traditional motifs have been translated into a contemporary architectural language for the detailing and finishes. Colours and textures of importance and relevance to the province were chosen and the majority of materials were locally sourced (Fig. 5.2). The various cultures, colours and textures of the province have been carefully brought together in one integrated response (Malan & McNerney, 2001: 45-47).

The design of the Northern Cape Legislature also takes regional culture into consideration. It focuses on the People's Square and the identity that the space holds. The circular space is enclosed by terraced seating on one side and the building complex on the other.



Fig. 5.3 (Malan & McInerney, 2003: 49)  
Overview of People's Square

Off-centre in the circular space is a grass mound which symbolises the village centre and the place where elders would meet (Fig. 5.3). It is a place for orientation, identification and through an existential knowledge of belonging the space encourages participation. The layout of the complex resembles the layout of an indigenous African homestead with a primary axis and defined enclosure (Malan & McInerney, 2003: 130).

Modern cities often have harsh, industrial edges between the city and country. To integrate the city into the country and *vice versa* these edges need to be blurred. This can be achieved through mixed-use developments and local attractions, including public buildings. The nature of the street and city centre has been lost (Hough, 1990: 179-193). Cars, tar and concrete form unfriendly barriers which need to be softened with the focus being placed on the pedestrian and an environment that will benefit their wellbeing. Cars need to be made secondary in the civic areas of a city centre and areas should be scaled down to that of humans.



Fig. 5.4 (Malan & McInerney, 2001: 55) Open colonnaded walkway

In the Mpumalanga Legislature complex, pedestrian movement has been considered with colonnades defining the public space and the civic square and an overall emphasis on movement (Fig. 5.4). The civic square is on axis with a boulevard which links the complex to the nearby town, Nelspruit, the capital of the Mpumalanga province. The planning of the complex encourages spontaneous interaction between people and elements. The open walkway along the administration building symbolically links the complex with an adjacent office park and within the offices there are spaces for casual interaction (Malan & McInerney, 2001: 22, 33, 40).

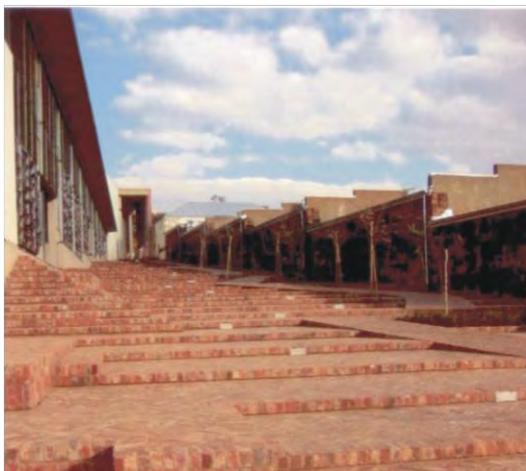


Fig. 5.5 (Deckler *et al.*, 2006: 18) Great African Steps

The architecture of the Constitutional Court revives and reinterprets African cultural values. The building acknowledges the split and fragmented history of South Africa through the use of local materials, crafts, construction processes, methods of climate control, indigenous planting and the reuse of



Fig. 5.6 (<http://murrayhill.gc.cuny.edu> ) Steps of the New York City Library in the 2000's

materials. The Great African Steps and Exhibition Gallery create a public street with areas for communal activity along the edges (Fig. 5.5). Public functions structured the building and as a result architectural space has been transformed into public space for civic participation (Lipman, 2004: 18). A successful public space is responsive, democratic and meaningful. A good example of a responsive space are the steps of the New York Public Library. (Fig. 5.6). The steps were not originally designed to be a civic space, but as the need arose, the environment was altered as so required (Carr *et al.*, 1992).

Identity is a collective reaction and is the outcome of choices. A fragmented identity is the outcome of distinction, discrimination and dualism (Zegeye, 2001: 51). All of these elements are prevalent in South Africa, especially during the apartheid era in which there were separated identities and exaggerated diversity. It is important that everyone consciously plays a part in the redefinition of identity through both natural and social processes.

The redefinition of identity starts with the individual. Everyone is faced with issues of exclusion and inclusion in the search for humanity, dignity, self respect and a proper status. The individual needs to be able to identify with their surroundings, which can only happen when they are happy and generally satisfied with their social position. Once this first step is achieved, the individual will then respond to their surrounding environment and the community, creating meaning and memory through these interactions (Romanucci-Ross *et al.*, 2006: 390-394).



Fig. 5.7 (<http://imagecache2.allposters.com>) Street vendors along an ill-defined space in Johannesburg

The majority of Urban spaces have been influenced and shaped by politics at their time of inception. Promises of open access, community, cultural enrichment, democracy and emancipation are rarely achieved in post colonial Africa. According to Bremner (2002: 171), civic outdoor spaces in Johannesburg are ambiguous and have no defined territory (Fig. 5.7). As a result many Johannesburg residents have retreated into safe, gated communities creating a massive divide between their environment and the greater context.

However, the city is being remade by the small practices of ordinary people who are transforming the character of the city and bridging the divide.



Fig. 5.8 (<http://api.ning.com>) Colonial and indigenous spatial order together

An example of a colonised and divided community that has overcome their situation is the Pasto community in the Northern Andes. They have succeeded in merging both individual and colonial culture to reinforce meaning in their civic spaces. Their primary civic space is a zone of interaction between the indigenous people and the Spanish conquerors. Indigenous society and colonial culture have overlapped through the addition of secular institutions, administrative offices and homes of important officials all looking on to one carefully defined political, social and religious civic space (Fig. 5.8) (Cummins & Rappaport, 1998: 174-180).

Within South Africa there is an inherent diversity which can be built upon and fostered into a strong identity. This new identity would be functional, richly diverse and environmentally beneficial forming an example to the world community. History cannot be ignored. It is vital when attempting to understand the dynamic character of identity and is an integral part of its development.

## **4.2 Creating Meaning**

According to Lynch (1960), there are five focal points which can be used to enhance the meaning of a space or place: paths, districts, edges, nodes and landmarks. Each of the international and local design schemes analysed made use of at least one of these points, and in some cases all five. Norberg-Schultz (1971) defined existential and architectural meaning in terms of proximity, continuity and closure. He also described the types of architectural tools that could be used to achieve these types of meaning, which include Lynch's focal points.

Proximity is the use of centres as externalized points of reference. In every place where meaning is manifested it is, in itself, a centre. It is the creation of a place in which there is a synthesis of arrival and departure (Norberg-Schultz, 1971: 39-49). An example of the design of a public building that emphasises the process of arrival and departure is the Bangladesh Parliament. The building is fortress like and internally focused (Fig. 5.9). The complex is one monumental building in which the centrally located chamber is the focal point.



Fig. 5.9 (<http://blog.makedesignedobjects.com/>) Overview of Dhaka Capitol complex

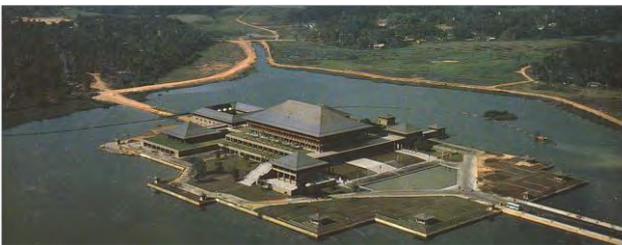


Fig. 5.10 (Taylor, 1986: 164) Sri Lanka Parliament

The Parliament is isolated from the city by water emphasising the process of arrival and departure. Louis Kahn attempted to achieve an architecture of connections, and achieved this through the use of solid and void (Vale, 1992: 236- 251). Water also plays an important part in the design and placing of the Sri Lankan Parliament which is completely surrounded by water. Access is via a single highly visible causeway reinforcing the process of arrival and departure (Fig. 5.10). The complex comprises a series of pavilion-like buildings, with the focus resting on the dominant parliamentary chamber in the centre (Vale, 1992: 190- 208).

A landmark reinforces the character of the place, ensuring that it is either unique or memorable. Continuity occurs on both horizontal and vertical planes. The horizontal direction is a common feature, representing man's concrete world; the vertical direction is a more sacred and mystical dimension, linking to sky and man's determination to achieve greater things (Norberg-Shultz, 1971: 430-433). The combination of horizontal and vertical creates a clear well known path with a strong identity.

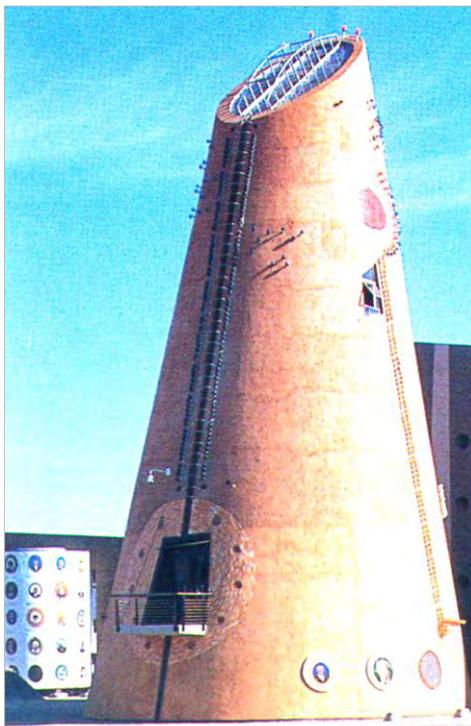


Fig. 5.11(Malan & McInerney, 2003: 98) Speaker's tower, portraits of presidents (bottom right), floating head (towards the top)

Within the Northern Cape Legislature the main outdoor civic space, or People's Square, is visually dominated by a tower, which serves as a landmark for the complex and as a speaker's podium for public address (Fig. 5.11). Reference to the ancestors and the important spiritual role that they play in African society is indicated by images fixed to the tower. The shape of the tower is reminiscent of a kind of sundial which pays homage to the sun, and a more modern 'clock' which chimes at significant times throughout the day.

The tower can be seen from a distance and is a constant reminder of land and country to the people of the Northern Cape (Malan & McInerney, 2003:34; Deckler *et al.*, 2006: 13).

Path and axis are essentially the same; the path is real, and serves as connections between two points; whilst an axis is abstract, a symbolic direction which unifies elements.



Fig. 5.12 (Deckler *et al.*, 2006: 20) Exhibition Gallery

In the Constitutional Court the Exhibition Gallery (Fig. 5.12) and Great African Steps (Fig. 5.5) form two adjacent, parallel paths. These are separated by glass and permeable shutters, blurring the line between inside and out. The Great African Steps are lined by the new court building and the old prisons that were originally on the site. Along the stairs there are places to sit, pause and contemplate the past, present and future (Deckler, *et al.*, 2006: 21)(Law-Viljoen, 2006: 156, 165).



Fig. 5.13 (Vale, 1992: 138) Position of new capital in centre of country

In the Northern Cape Legislature People's Square, patterns in the paving mimic human and animal pathways through the veld.

An example of a post-colonial African public building using an axial design is the Nigerian national complex at Abuja, which is closely based on the purely axial design of Washington D.C in the United States of America (Vale 1992: 134-147). The focus in the city of Abuja is the federal buildings. The broad mall lined with high rise ministries, is axially focused on the national assembly at the apex with a hill rising up behind it (Fig. 5.13).

Closure refers to the unifying function of domains, which are places for potential activities. Domains are defined in terms of closure, width, openness, proportion, rhythm, scale, dimension, material, texture and colour. An edge is a boundary between two areas or domains. The image of a domain is influenced by physical, functional, social and cultural factors. Within a district there should be a common, identifiable character whether through texture, space, form, detail, symbol, building type, use, topography, activities or inhabitants (Norberg-Schulz, 1971: 430-433).



Fig. 5.14 (Malan & McInerney, 2001: 49)  
Open colonnaded walkway

The Mpumalanga Legislature is made up of different domains: the African civic forecourt, the classical Greek temple through the universal dome symbol, the interior space and the parking garage. The main walkway defines the edge between public and private spaces, with open squares on one side and administrative buildings on the other (Fig. 5.14) (Britz, 2002: 28).

In order to create meaning, these elements need to be combined in a way that expresses the nature of the area, it is a direct product of interactions with the surroundings. Detail is a vital part of meaning in architecture as it explains the character and creates meaningful spaces.

### **4.3 Instilling Memory**

Memory is conveyed through opposition and association which are directly related to signs, symbols and context. Architectural theories of deconstruction and semiology deal with issues of memory and perception through what a building or design 'says'.

Deconstruction in architecture begins with the brief, and an attempt to understand the fundamentals of what is needed. Deconstruction does not rely on historical precedents or other forms of reference. The aim is to create something new, a new set of symbols for a new interpretation. Semiology can be broken up into a series of different codes and elements which can be used to instil memory. There are three main elements: icon, index and symbol. Icon refers to resemblance, index is a physical relationship, and symbol is the meaning in the cultural context (which has to be learned). The symbolic capacity of an object is just as important as its functional capacity, which can be broken down into primary and secondary functions. Primary functions are denoted whilst secondary functions are connotative. There are three main codes in the application of semiological thought to architecture: technical, syntactic and semantic. Technical codes refer to the structural elements of a building, syntactic codes, or typological codes, refer to the articulation of spaces, and semantic codes which deal with the relationship between individual sign vehicles and their denotative and connotative meanings. By denoting primary functions and having connotative secondary functions, ideologies of inhabitation can be connoted with typological meanings (Jencks & Baird, 1969: 13-22; 223-229).

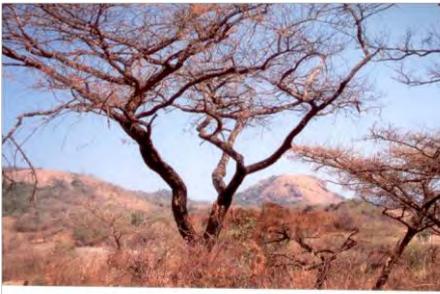


Fig. 5.15 (Malan & McInerney, 2001: 10)  
Similarity of complex (below) to granite outcrops (above)



Fig. 5.16 (Malan & McInerney, 2003: 112)  
Similarity between natural rock formations and legislature complex

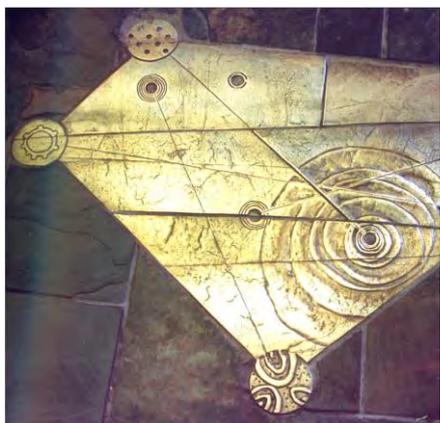


Fig. 5.17 (Malan & McInerney, 2003: 67)  
Brass floor insert

The two primary symbols used in the Mpumalanga Legislature are earth and water. The dome over the chamber is symbolic of the large granite rocks, prevalent in the Mpumalanga area, and serves as a prominent feature of the complex (Fig. 5.15). The dome also resembles the traditional ‘beehive hut’ and the circular lines of enclosure, clear expression of hierarchy and organisation are closely linked to traditional African planning principles. The confluence of the two rivers surrounding the complex are symbolically expressed through fragmented grey planes which reflect light from the roof and through a water feature in which the two rivers are stylized. The second water feature symbolizes human transition through time with elements which strongly connect the sculpture to the region: iron shards, a woven basket, pieces of pottery and a gold mining pan. Throughout the complex there are abstract, stylistic, subtle gestures of the local culture and environmental context (Malan & McInerney, 2001: 18, 20, 27, 61-64).

The Northern Cape Legislature integrates into its surroundings so much so that from a distance, the building appears to be a pile of rocks (Fig. 5.16). Each façade is unique and makes use of mosaics, sculptural elements, detailing and earthy colours symbolising the beadwork, basket weaving and traditional skin decorations found in the province. This clearly connects the building with the public and represents the land and future. Within the buildings engraved and chiselled rocks are symbolically linked to traditional African techniques (Fig. 5.17) (Fisher, in Malan & McInerney, 2003: 66, 69-71). The use of corrugated iron sheeting is symbolic linking the complex to the neighbouring informal settlement and the original mining town. The detailing of the Speakers Tower provides detailed insight into the symbolic intentions of the complex. Towards the top of the tower is a disembodied head symbolizing the spiritual realm of the ancestors who still play an important role in African tradition.

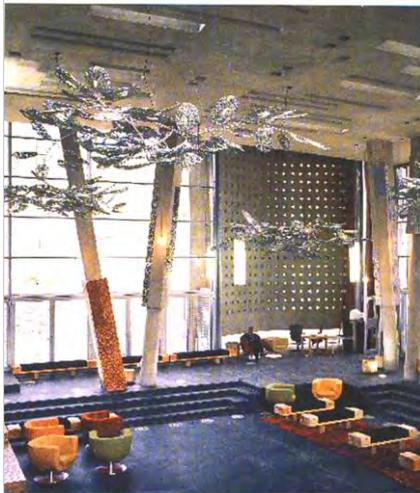


Fig. 5.18 (Unknown, 2004/2005: 21)  
Interior of foyer

It is believed that the gaze of the ancestors contains the ethical notion of good which needs to be followed by the living.

The Constitutional Court has two predominant symbols: the tree and light. The tree symbolises communal space and gathering and as a result is the emblem of the court. The idea of a tree was symbolically interpreted into the court foyer, in which the roof is supported by slanted tree like columns and light is dappled through slits in the concrete to create the atmosphere of being under a tree (Fig. 5.18) (Unknown, 2004/2005: 18).

Iconic and analogical designs are very useful in instilling memory (Broadbent *et al.*, 1980: 124-163). With an iconic design, the set of values is understood by every member of the culture, whereas in analogical design, analogies are used to generate a form full of meaning. Elements of form such as colour, texture, space and rhythm, combined with elements of function, (purpose, use, past connotations and style) and technical elements such as structure, materials and mechanical aids, can all be used to instil a greater sense of meaning within the scheme and in its public perception (Malan & McInerney, 2001: 15).

There is a concern that the scale and character of government buildings can overwhelm people and instil insecurity. The Mpumalanga Legislature complex combated these issues with the use of scale and tactile elements (Britz, 2002: 26). In the case of the Northern Cape Legislature the design captures the spirit and aspirations of the people through unique, evocative forms and a careful interrelation of volumes and spaces. Tension is thoughtfully created through differentiated scales of similar composition in local landmarks (Malan & McInerney, 2003: 27). The Constitutional Court scheme exhibited a conscious response to context and used a definite hierarchy of space to develop quality, variety and character (Unknown, 1998b: 34).

#### **4.4 The Issue of Politics**

Power and identity are embedded in the design of government buildings, and because of their prominence within a city, rational decisions need to be made regarding issues of functionality, structural logic and environmental conditions. The more subtle elements of historical precedents such as stylistic references, awareness of the world, society and culture, notions of spirituality and artistic expression also need to be considered in an attempt to create an unbiased design.

Political buildings are moulded from what precedes them and communicate their intentions through denotation, exemplification and references (Goodman, 1985: 642-653). Denotation refers to the application of a symbol to an object, exemplification refers to an architecture that has meaning and can represent anything, (but only exemplifies certain features) and references refer to the literal or metaphorical exemplifications. Representation, exemplification and expression are all varieties of symbolism with varying degrees of meaning and memory.

According to Vale (1992), there are three ways in which a building can deal with politics: by going beyond politics, viewing politics as a microcosm, or processing politics as an idealization. Going beyond politics is where both the politics and the culture are studied and a suitable symbolism defined. In these cases the architecture is a product of political conditions and the relationship between the building and society needs to be carefully reviewed. The building could deal with politics by being a microcosm which denies pluralism and stresses the presence of the dominant state. Here the government does not care about the accuracy of symbolic representation or the balance of power. Finally the complex could chose the path of idealization, which to some extent is in every design where a complex promotes a new political realm.

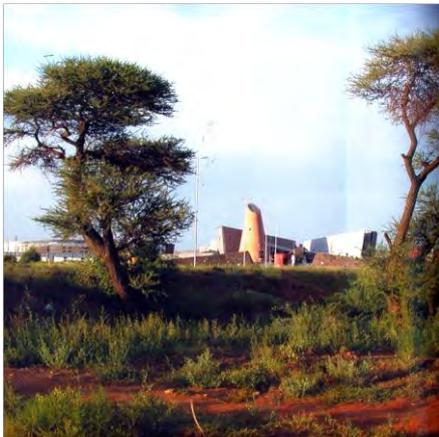


Fig. 5.19 (Malan & McInerney, 2003: 106)  
Overview of legislature complex

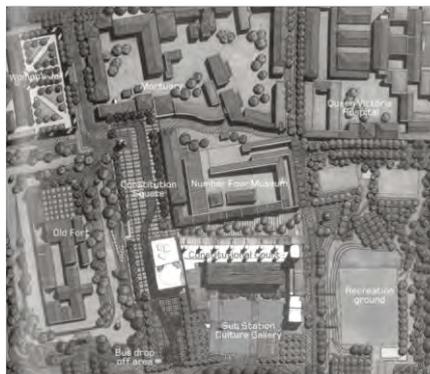


Fig. 5.20 (Ranger *et al.*, 2006: x)  
Urban design of Constitutional Hill

The site chosen for the Northern Cape Legislature was critical for setting up new power relations in the province and already the positioning is proving problematic with the Office of the Premier moving out of the complex and closer to the city centre. The complex currently isolates the informal settlement from the city and only in time will we observe the overall success in its positioning (Fig. 5.19) (Homan, 2011, pers. com.). Site selection for the Constitutional Court was a long and careful process taking into account numerous factors and elements. The site chosen between the city centre of Johannesburg and Hillbrow is full of symbolism and easily accessible. What was once an impenetrable prison precinct has now been reintegrated into the city grid (Fig. 5.20) (Deckler *et al.*, 2006: 19).

A balance needs to be found between cultural self-determination and international modernity. Traditional architectural elements from specific cultures can be used but they need to be abstracted and combined to form new, inventive hybrids that can participate in a progressive role in the modern world.

## **CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The hypothesis for this thesis is that urban landscapes and the built environment have the power to nurture their citizens' public memory and encompass shared meaning in the form of shared territory and identity. A review and analysis of literature relating to issues of identity, meaning and memory indicate that the urban and built environment can exert a powerful influence on citizens. Unless citizens can identify with and create some form of meaning from their urban environment they will feel alienated and reject it. Creating shared identity is allied to nation building, the aim of which is to create a unified, positive and forward focussed population.

To support the hypothesis, three post-apartheid public buildings were analysed in terms of identity, meaning and memory. Two of the buildings are Legislatures and the third is the Constitutional Court. The two legislatures that were studied are the Northern Cape Legislature, designed in 1998, and the Mpumalanga Legislature designed in 1997. These are the only two provinces that have post-apartheid designed legislatures. The third building, the Constitutional Court (designed in 1995) was chosen for study because of the iconic significance of the site. All these buildings are relatively young, consequently it is too soon to decide whether the designs will stand the test of time. The Constitutional Court appears to be the most successful. It is freely accessible by the public with very little access restricted for security reasons. Both Legislatures have restricted access for security reasons. Visits are by appointment, are fully escorted and no photographs may be taken. The position of the Northern Cape Legislature is problematic in terms of public transport and the distance from Kimberley city centre. The relative remoteness of the site has meant that the Office of the Premier has already moved from the complex and relocated to an office in the city of Kimberley. Additional problems are the long term sustainability. When visiting the complex, deterioration of some of the mosaics and art works was evident, in addition the guide indicated that maintenance of the landscaped areas was proving difficult (Homan, 2011, pers. com.). Gardens were developed using plants indigenous to the whole of the Northern Cape, however because of its locality some of the plants were growing faster than others and as a result the slower growing plants were being smothered. A further issue regarding maintenance of the artworks revolves around the spaces left blank for mosaic images of future Presidents of South Africa: thus far only two Presidents have been commemorated – Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki. It is not known when the two later presidents' images will be added to the tower. The Northern Cape Legislature complex is visually appealing and exciting and creates a sense of identity, meaning and memory, whilst many of the symbols reference history they also create an atmosphere of breaking with the past and moving forward.

The Mpumalanga Legislature is also removed and hidden from the town of Nelspruit. The complex is made up of modular pavilions linked by broad open walkways. The design is democratic with an emphasis on the people and not the institution. The buildings have both traditional and contemporary

elements, with reference being made to identity, meaning and memory through decoration, artworks and water features.

Through the analysis and study that has been undertaken it appears evident that for public buildings in post-apartheid South Africa to be acceptable and sustainable the concepts of identity, meaning and memory must be considered. South Africa is now a full democracy and new public buildings must reflect this fact. Accessibility, openness, paying homage to all citizens of the country and/or province is required for the building to be accepted, respected and enjoyed. A building that emphasises only one aspect of South Africa's history or diversity is likely to be controversial and cause one or more group to feel alienated. The challenge is to understand what South African identity, meaning and memory is and how to incorporate it into the architecture of public buildings.

During this study a few problems were encountered. Access to the legislatures was restricted and only with a guide. This meant that no photographs could be taken or measurements made. Consequently all images are from a third party and no hand drawn images could be included in the document.

A major challenge for architects in South Africa is to understand and interpret the South African identity. South Africa is a country of multiple cultures and languages, some indigenous and others emigrant. Cultural identity appears to take precedence over national identity and for each culture there will be different meanings and memories. Commonalities need to be found and fostered without losing the value of the cultural identity. South Africa is part of Africa and the predominant images and symbols are African, however imagery and symbols that have meaning to all cultural groups need to be found.

Identity, meaning and memory have been split apart by the previous political situations in South Africa, destroying the sense of community. Identity has been fragmented, meaning has been disregarded, and memory distorted. By combining meaning and memory with the new democratic South Africa, society can be reconstructed, creating places that evoke a sense of pride and belonging. Group differences can be celebrated and combined to form one comprehensive whole, a truly new South Africa.

The message portrayed in some of the contemporary civic South African Architecture is on the right track, infused with references to the past, but focused on a celebration of the present and hope for the future. These examples can compete on an international architectural scale and are seen as positive prospects for the country. Architecture is directly related to the country's perception, and when the architecture is portraying a positive, encouraging message it is understood that the country must be feeling the same way. Through cooperation and community involvement a new identity could be formed for South Africa as a truly proud and united society.

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# APPENDIX A – DESIGN REPORT

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## **CHAPTER ONE      INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Introduction**

Social and aesthetic perspectives on the historic built environment in South Africa have traditionally been fragmented. By combining aesthetics, politics and social history a more unified approach can be found. Ordinary landscapes have the power to nurture citizens' public memory and encompass shared time in the form of shared territory. Through a cultural landscape and meaningful architecture the essential character and identity of the place can be reinforced and celebrated.

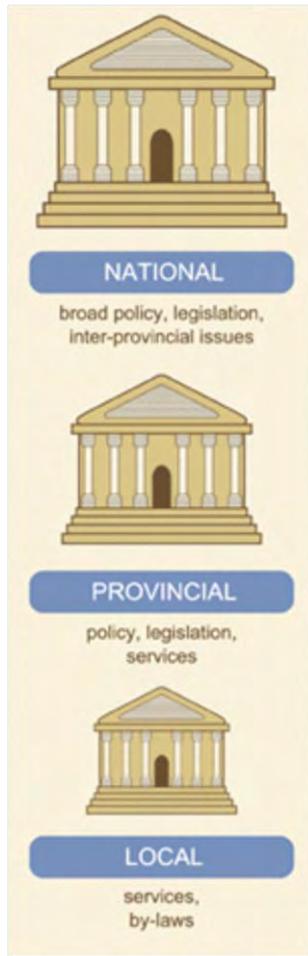
A new Legislature building in KwaZulu-Natal would create a strong centre of focus for the Province. A building that would reflect the multifaceted social memories and identities, both shared and separate, that make up the people of the province. A new iconic and cohesive building, that will contribute to nation building and the creation of a sense of pride in the Province. A building that will reflect a new social identity, embody memories and is rich in meaning. A building that would become a central area of interest to be visited by residents and tourists alike.

### **1.2 Project Description**

A legislature complex is a place that has social, political, cultural and physical dimensions. It is a building funded by the government for the people. Access to a legislature building is restricted, but the outdoor spaces should be unrestricted and free. A legislature complex should be seen as a social enterprise, an integral part of the physical or public infrastructure and key to promoting community upliftment (Buschman & Leckie, 2007: 136).

### **1.3 The Notional Client**

The client is the Provincial government of KwaZulu-Natal, and in particular the legislature. There are three arms to the state: executive (cabinet); judiciary (courts); and legislature (parliament). The government structures derive their powers and functions from, and serve to protect, the South African constitution. 1994 saw the start of the first democratic government in South Africa. By 1996 the Constitution and the Bill of Rights had been formalized. The constitutional democracy of South Africa consists of three government structures: national; provincial and local governments (pl. 74). ([www.kznlegislature.gov.za](http://www.kznlegislature.gov.za)).



The National Assembly is South Africa’s law-making body. Laws and policies made by the National Assembly and Cabinet of National government are applicable throughout South Africa. The primary functions of National Government are broad policy; legislation and inter-provincial issues. Legislative authority is shared with the provincial legislatures, of which there is one in each province. Parliament consists of two Houses: the National Assembly and the National Council of Provinces (NCOP). Each province has equal representation in NCOP, with ten provincial delegates from each legislature. The delegates are a reflection of the relative strength of the province’s parties. Smaller committees encourage discussion which is a vital part of effective functioning ([www.kznlegislature.gov.za](http://www.kznlegislature.gov.za)).

Provincial governments can develop their own laws and policies within a framework which binds them to the national laws and policies. The primary functions of the Provincial government are policy; legislation and services.

Figure 1.1 ([www.kznlegislature.gov.za](http://www.kznlegislature.gov.za))  
Government Structure

The legislature discusses submitted bills, makes changes and passes them in accordance with the constitution. The members of parliament need to be accountable as they are the direct representatives of the people. Legislatures need to encourage public access and involvement with parliament ([www.kznlegislature.gov.za](http://www.kznlegislature.gov.za)).

Municipalities take on the role of local government. The primary function of Local government is to be a democratic and accountable government for the local communities. They also provide services and promote economic and social development ([www.kznlegislature.gov.za](http://www.kznlegislature.gov.za)).

### 1.3.1 The Client’s Requirements

A Legislature building should portray the collective memory of South Africa which can be passed down through generations. It should take cognisance of positives and negatives in order to create a progressive future. Contemporary South African identity and aspirations will be used as design generators, including elements of breaking free from the past; deconstructing indigenous knowledge,

life patterns, cultures, customs and beliefs; and interpretations of richness and diversity through patterns, rhythm, symbol, texture, colour and language. The debating chamber is the nucleus of the complex and should be portrayed as a symbol of democracy. Special consideration needs to be taken regarding the hierarchy of spaces and other ordering devices, especially in terms of efficient circulation. It is important to have a small building footprint and take cognisance of other environmental factors in order to create an environmentally friendly and efficient building. The complex should be a landmark, visible at all times.

### **1.3.2 Detailed Client Brief**

There are four main components in a legislature complex: the council chamber; outdoor public precinct; administration and the members of parliament. The Premier is a fifth component, however accommodation for the Office of the Premier is not included in this brief. The council chamber is comprised of a non-hierarchical, democratic seating arrangement for delegates, with no party segregation. A public gallery is to be provided, there needs to be a separate VIP area, with separate access, and a separate area and room for press broadcasting. The speaker occupies a special position in the centre of the chamber, with the secretary, assistants and mace carefully positioned nearby. The lectern is in a prominent place for addresses made to the floor by ministers and the premier. The outdoor public precinct is a public square used as a formal gathering space dominated by the building. This area should be pedestrianized with easy vehicle access. The chamber needs to be accessible by the public whereas the outdoor public precinct needs to be open to the public at all times. The office components (administration and members of parliament) need to be in close proximity to one another and able to relate to the council chamber. There is a strong public to private privacy gradient within the complex resulting in very careful positioning of functions.

Other areas of importance include:

The entrance, which should be formal, but not overpowering, a ceremonial point of arrival, orientation and meeting. It needs to have a direct relationship with the chamber and exhibition space, while being able to accommodate large groups of people who are using either of the facilities. The entrance needs to be easily accessible by transport routes and drop-off areas.

An exhibition space, which is an informal platform from which government departments can inform the public of their activities. Exhibitions should be informative, educational and create awareness. The space will be used on special occasions and needs to relate to the entrance.

The library is a collection place for legal books, government gazettes, recorded parliamentary debates, etc. It is the resource centre for the staff and members of parliament. Strict public access needs to be

separated from the area for staff and members. This library should relate to the existing library and even work in conjunction.

A restaurant needs to be provided serving of refreshments and lunches between sessions or at exhibitions. It is a place of relaxation which directly relates to the entrance space. A special dining area needs to be provided for members of parliament, staff and guests. There needs to be a bar area as well as a separate VIP function room. Access to the dining room should be through the offices and the chamber. This dining room should relate directly to the restaurant to minimise the need for two separate kitchens.

The auditorium is a smaller space for public address, mainly used for special hearings for public opinion. At times public may be invited to comment, so it needs to relate to other semi-public areas.

Within the office components party caucus rooms need to be provided for the members of parliament. The rooms need to be easily accessible from their offices, but restricted from the public. Privacy and sound-proofing are necessary. The committee rooms are smaller meeting rooms used by committee members. These meeting rooms should not be publically accessible.

Underground, access-controlled parking needs to be provided. Parking lot needs to directly relate to the offices and have a direct access. Public parking and bus areas also need to be provided with access into the public precinct. There needs to be a drop off area right in front of the entrance, but only used for special occasions.

### **Schedule of Accommodation**

The schedule of accommodation has been broken up into five different sections: council chamber and ancillary space; legislature administration; members of parliament; premier and support services; and ancillary buildings. The numbers in brackets refer to the number of people employed in that position according to the KwaZulu-Natal Legislature organogram ([www.kznlegislature.gov.za](http://www.kznlegislature.gov.za)).

<b>Legislature Chamber and Ancillary Spaces</b>	<b>3440 m<sup>2</sup></b>
<b>Debating Chamber</b>	<b>1500m<sup>2</sup></b>
- Chamber (to seat 100)	600 m <sup>2</sup>
- Entrance Foyer/ Exhibition space	400 m <sup>2</sup>
- Gallery (public, press and VIP's to seat 50)	300 m <sup>2</sup>
- Tea Room for members	100 m <sup>2</sup>
- Members lobby	180 m <sup>2</sup>

- Translating booths	20 m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Library</b>	<b>440 m<sup>2</sup></b>
- Library space	300 m <sup>2</sup>
- Research offices (6)	40 m <sup>2</sup>
- Librarians offices (5)	30 m <sup>2</sup>
- Members reading room	40 m <sup>2</sup>
- Public reading room	30 m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Ancillary Spaces</b>	<b>1400 m<sup>2</sup></b>
- Auditorium with translating booths (to seat 50)	300 m <sup>2</sup>
- Media briefing room	50 m <sup>2</sup>
- Members restaurant	200 m <sup>2</sup>
- Public dining	200 m <sup>2</sup>
- Function room	60 m <sup>2</sup>
- Kitchen	350 m <sup>2</sup>
- Bar	40 m <sup>2</sup>
- Security	15 m <sup>2</sup>
- Switchboard (2)	15 m <sup>2</sup>
- Shop	25 m <sup>2</sup>
- Storage	30 m <sup>2</sup>
- Sound System room	20 m <sup>2</sup>
- Chauffeur and body guard rest room	40 m <sup>2</sup>
- Ablutions	55 m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Hansard and Language Services (14)</b>	<b>100 m<sup>2</sup></b>
- Journalists	30 m <sup>2</sup>
- Interpreters	30 m <sup>2</sup>
- Translating Office	40 m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Legislature Administration</b>	<b>1690 m<sup>2</sup></b>
<b>Legislature</b>	<b>455 m<sup>2</sup></b>
- Waiting area	15 m <sup>2</sup>
- Security	15 m <sup>2</sup>
- Office of secretary (4)	25 m <sup>2</sup>
- Office of speaker and personal assistant (2)	50 m <sup>2</sup>

- Office of deputy speaker and personal assistant (2)	35 m <sup>2</sup>
- Chief financial officer (4)	50 m <sup>2</sup>
- Chief operations officer (4)	50 m <sup>2</sup>
- Organizational performance (3)	30 m <sup>2</sup>
- Communication services (5)	50 m <sup>2</sup>
- Information technology services (5)	50 m <sup>2</sup>
- Institutional transformation (2)	20 m <sup>2</sup>
- Media transfer room (photocopier, scanner etc.)	15 m <sup>2</sup>
- Storage	15 m <sup>2</sup>
- Kitchenette	15 m <sup>2</sup>
- Ablutions	20 m <sup>2</sup>

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**Legislative Services** 565 m<sup>2</sup>

- Research and library services (11)	(see above)
- Public participation (7)	70 m <sup>2</sup>
- Legislative operations (2)	20 m <sup>2</sup>
o Office of Chief Whip (2)	20 m <sup>2</sup>
o Procedural services (4)	40 m <sup>2</sup>
o Hansard services (8)	(see above)
o Language services (6)	(see above)
- Constitution and legislative legal services (6)	60 m <sup>2</sup>
- Committees (26)	260 m <sup>2</sup>
o Office of the chair of chairs (2)	20 m <sup>2</sup>
- Media transfer room (photocopier, scanner etc.)	15 m <sup>2</sup>
- Storage	15 m <sup>2</sup>
- Kitchenette	15 m <sup>2</sup>
- Ablutions	30 m <sup>2</sup>

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**Corporate services** 670 m<sup>2</sup>

- Financial services (16)	160 m <sup>2</sup>
- Risk management (3)	30 m <sup>2</sup>
- Supply chain management (2)	20 m <sup>2</sup>
o Transport, logistics and store management (archives, registry) (11)	250 m <sup>2</sup>
o Procurement, bids and contracts (6)	60 m <sup>2</sup>
o Facility management (18 outsourced)	

○ Asset management (2)	20 m <sup>2</sup>
- Human resource management (6)	60 m <sup>2</sup>
- Security services (5)	(see above & below)
- Media transfer room (photocopier, scanner etc.)	15 m <sup>2</sup>
- Storage	15 m <sup>2</sup>
- Kitchenette	15 m <sup>2</sup>
- Ablutions	25 m <sup>2</sup>

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**Members of Legislature** **1105 m<sup>2</sup>**

- Waiting area	15 m <sup>2</sup>
- Security	15 m <sup>2</sup>
- Party secretaries (6)	60 m <sup>2</sup>
- Party leaders (6)	120 m <sup>2</sup>
- Members offices (40)	400 m <sup>2</sup>
- Committee rooms	500 m <sup>2</sup>
- Party caucus rooms	120 m <sup>2</sup>
- Media transfer room (photocopier, scanner etc.)	15 m <sup>2</sup>
- Storage	15 m <sup>2</sup>
- Kitchenette	15 m <sup>2</sup>
- Ablutions	30 m <sup>2</sup>

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**Premier and Support Services** **420 m<sup>2</sup>**

- Waiting area	15 m <sup>2</sup>
- Security	15 m <sup>2</sup>
- Secretary (2)	20 m <sup>2</sup>
- Press conference room (to seat 20)	50 m <sup>2</sup>
- Premiers office and personal assistant (2)	50 m <sup>2</sup>
- Deputy Premiers office and personal assistant (2)	35 m <sup>2</sup>
- Offices for members of executive council	150 m <sup>2</sup>
- Office for directors general	20 m <sup>2</sup>
- Media transfer room (photocopier, scanner etc.)	15 m <sup>2</sup>
- Storage	15 m <sup>2</sup>
- Kitchenette	15 m <sup>2</sup>

- Ablutions	20 m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Ancillary Buildings</b>	<b>365 m<sup>2</sup></b>
- Gate house	50 m <sup>2</sup>
- Bus stop	65 m <sup>2</sup>
- Goods delivery	50 m <sup>2</sup>
- Refuse removal	50 m <sup>2</sup>
- Substation	50 m <sup>2</sup>
- Public toilets	100 m <sup>2</sup>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>7020 m<sup>2</sup></b>

#### 1.4 Conclusion

The complex needs to be a synthesis of land and building, solid and void, vertical and horizontal, light and dark, past, present and future (Choromanski, 2005: 54- 56). The different elements need to be carefully combined to ensure efficiency and functionality. Issues of security need to be incorporated into the overall scheme. The finished result needs to be a complex that expresses its function in an iconic manner while relating sensitively to its surroundings and creating a working node for the centre of Pietermaritzburg.

## CHAPTER TWO SITE SELECTION, SURVEY AND ANALYSIS

### 2.1 Introduction

Research into the precedent and case studies has indicated the importance of an appropriate site in the success of a government building. Issues that need to be taken into account when positioning a public building are: inclusivity, the ability for the site and building to join areas together, decreasing the effects of segregation; democracy, a position on neutral ground; transparency, visual prominence without being overbearing; effectiveness, a place of historical or social value; and efficiency, easily accessible by pedestrian, car and public transport. The existing KwaZulu-Natal Legislature and Office of the Premier is fragmented across the city, not by original design, but due to increased democratisation, an increase in staff numbers and insufficient office space in the old colonial legislature buildings (fig. 2.1).



Fig. 2.1 (googleearth) Location of legislature buildings across city

## 2.2 Three Site Options

Three potential sites have been identified within the greater Pietermaritzburg area for the siting of a new Legislature complex (fig. 2.2). Site Option One is located in the central business district (CBD). The site is currently a park, known as Freedom Square, which has been completely fenced off from the public and neglected. Site Option Two is located at the World's View heritage site. From this vantage point the whole of Pietermaritzburg is visible. Site Option Three is situated between the central area of Pietermaritzburg and the townships of Imbali and Edendale. It is a completely open site with views towards the township and the city. Each site has been examined in terms of the above mentioned issues.

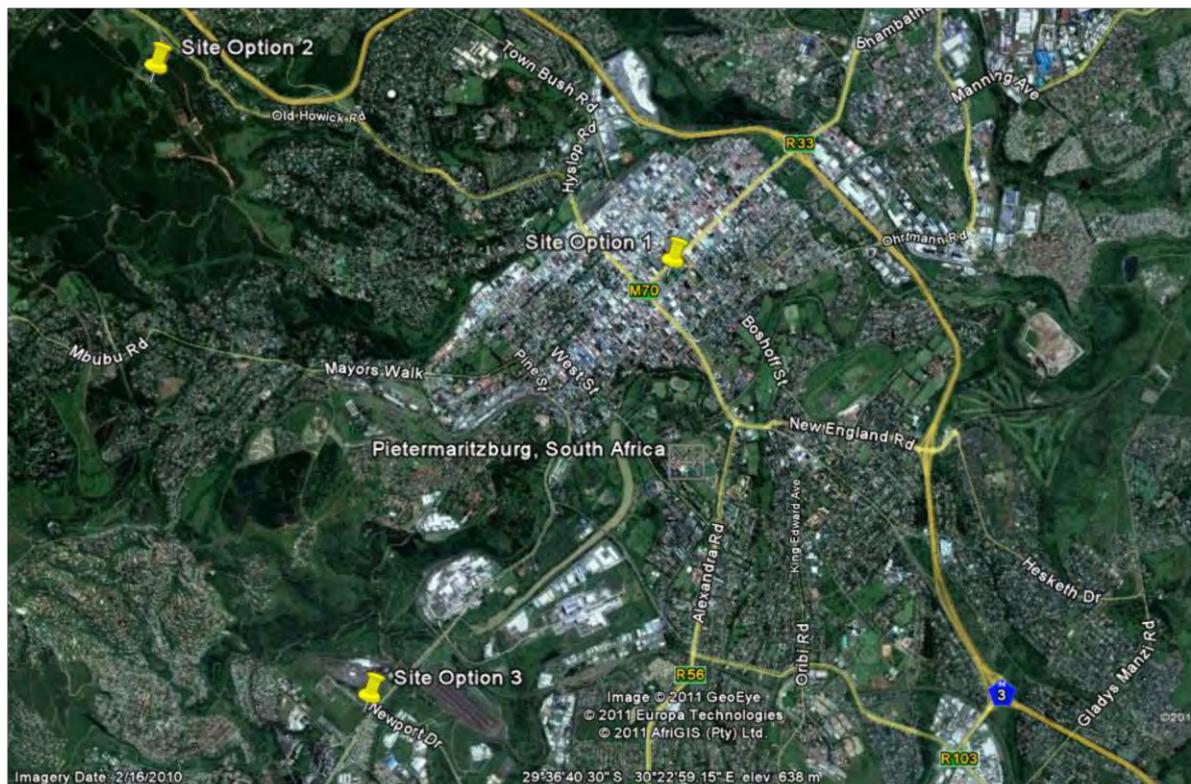


Fig. 2.2 (googleearth) Possible site selections

### 2.2.1 Site Option One, CBD(fig. 2.3)



Fig. 2.3 (googleearth) Site Option One

#### Advantages

- Within existing civic centre
- Land is currently neglected and not used to its full potential
- Very accessible site
- Potential for renewed historical and social importance

#### Disadvantages

- Land is currently a park
- Site at centre of Colonial city
- Very built up area affects prominence and potential views of building

### 2.2.2 Site Option Two, World's View (fig. 2.4)



Fig. 2.4 (googleearth) Site Option Two

#### Advantages

- Prominent placing and exciting views from building
- Site has historic and social importance

#### Disadvantages

- Not easily accessible
- Important Voortrekker site
- Visual inclusivity not physical

### 2.2.3 Site Option Three, CBD Outskirts (fig. 2.5)



Fig. 2.5 (googleearth) Site Option Three

#### Advantages

- Neutral ground
- Catalyst for further development
- Join townships and city centre
- Close to airport

#### Disadvantages

- Not easily accessible by car, pedestrian or public transport
- Site is of no historical or social importance
- Not an existing destination, at road junction to other places
- Very close to main industrial area

### 2.2.4 Table Comparison of Three Site Options

Criteria	Site Option 1 (CBD)	Site Option 2 (World's View)	Site Option 3 (CBD outskirts)	
Inclusive	3	2	4	1- Absent
Democratic	2	2	4	2- Poor
Transparent	5	2	2	3- Average
Effective	4	4	2	4- Good
Efficient	5	2	3	5- Excellent
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>15</b>	

Site Option One has the most advantages and the least disadvantages; it also scored the highest in terms of the criteria. The fragmented components of the existing KwaZulu-Natal Legislature are all located within the city limits, reinforcing the need for the new legislature complex to be situated within the same area.

### 2.3 Historical Background of Selected Site

Pietermaritzburg was initially laid out by Voortrekkers, (Dutch settlers who had left the Cape) in the early 1800's. The original Voortrekker 'dorpe' consisted of eight parallel long streets and five shorter cross streets which formed a drainage grid. Water was led down long streets and used to irrigate large erven (city blocks). Each erf was the size of a small holding approximately 0.6 of a hectare or 1 ½ acres. A central space, dominated by the Dutch Reformed church, was set aside for public purposes. By 1906, after the British takeover, the central space was dominated by the Town Hall and a fresh produce market, the site become known as Market Square, it is now known as Freedom Square. The Market buildings were demolished in 1972 despite vigorous protest from the residents of Pietermaritzburg.



Fig. 2.6 (Leband & Haswell: 1988) Market Square

The Voortrekker erven were too large for commercial or residential use, and as a result cross streets, arcades and lanes were introduced to shorten pedestrian movement. After British control and influence, Pietermaritzburg was then subjected to the Nationalist Party legislation in the form of the Group Areas and Border Industries Acts (Daniel & Brusse, undated:1-9).

### 2.4 Site Survey

The chosen site is located in the centre of Pietermaritzburg surrounded by the main civic administration buildings and the three primary arterial roads in the city. Located within the same city block as the chosen site is the city hall, the city library, tourism centre and the main city taxi rank. The primary arterial roads are Chief Albert Luthuli Street (formerly Commercial Road) along the western side of the city block; Langalibilele Street (formerly Longmarket Street) along the southern side and Church Street along the northern side.

The tourism centre is currently being expanded along the southern edge of the city block, and a children's section was added to the library in 2005. As part of the additions to the library, the area between the library and the city hall was redeveloped. The water feature, seating and vegetation were modernised creating a small, accessible oasis in the city. There is a small war memorial park between

the city hall and the tourism centre which is used by the public and is often full over weekends and during lunch time. The rest of the city block is used for parking, and majority of the parking is fenced off for officials, leaving almost no parking for public visiting the library, city hall and tourism centre.

On the other side of Church Street the Supreme Court, Magistrates Court and the City Engineers Building are situated, on the other side of Langalibalele Street, Natalia and part of the Premiers Office. Across Chief Albert Luthuli Street, the Tatham Art Gallery, existing Legislature buildings and Colonial Building are situated. Majority of the surrounding buildings have heritage status which is unique to the area and promotes tourism in the city.

The site is now a park but is completely fenced off and inaccessible to the public. All the benches have been removed and the area is in serious need of upkeep. Currently the public are throwing litter into the area and show no respect for the potential green oasis. Along the Southern side of the site taxis are illegally being parked and washed.

## **2.5 Site Analysis**

The first figure ground analysis deals with the relationship between built and unbuilt spaces, focusing on the strength of the urban fabric and the immediate edges around the site. The analysis points out that the site does not enhance the urban fabric.

The site is surrounded by hard edges, which need to be broken and softened. This can be done through landscaping on the road frontages and by creating openings from the site into the taxi rank.

The density of the civic centre is broken, with the most central space empty and non-functioning. In order to create an identity for the city, this space needs to be filled and needs to fully function within its context.

The presence of water and street furniture is minimal, resulting in very little relief from the hard urban fabric. The area is dominated by parking lots which were once open green spaces.

The second analysis looks at the relationship between built, tarred and green spaces. The areas surrounding the site contribute to the majority of the tarred spaces. The site is the major green space; however it is fenced off and not easily accessible. There is only one water feature in the area, situated in the newly landscaped garden adjacent to the library.

The third analysis examines the pedestrian, vehicular routes and taxi waiting areas. Church Street is the busiest street in the area. Majority of the congestion is caused by the taxis that make use of Church and Langalibilele Streets to reach the new taxi rank and the informal waiting areas.

The predominant pedestrian routes are often congested with street traders. The street traders need to be formalised and positioned within the new urban framework and along the new pedestrian links.

Vehicular routes are very congested especially by taxis and at rush hours. Informal taxi drop off areas need to be relocated and controlled in order to ensure smooth flowing traffic. The taxi rank adjacent to the site has eased congestion and works successfully within the urban framework.

Illegal parking, along Langalibalele Street and Church Street increases congestion and implies a definite need for more parking facilities within the area. An underground parking lot, under the complex would provide a much needed commodity.

The fourth analysis identifies the major linkage in the area which runs along Church Street and adjacent to the site.

The predominant city link runs east to west, linking into the historical and partially pedestrianised section of Church Street. Moving pedestrian flow onto the site will ease congestion on the pavements and link the green spaces in the centre with the partially pedestrianised section of Church Street.

Pietermaritzburg city centre has a high concentration of civic buildings; provincial government, local government, judicial, library, art gallery and museums. In amongst these buildings are private sector offices and commercial buildings. This strong urban fabric is weakened by the non-functioning park in its centre. Replacing this park with an iconic and prominent civic building will strengthen and bind the city centre.

The environmental analysis identifies the position of the sun rising and setting and the direction of the prevailing bad weather. Areas of noise and air pollution have been noted, together with the general state of neglect as seen by the broken and abandoned street furniture and large amounts of litter. The park is inaccessible as it is completely surrounded by a fence, which is unfortunate as there is a definite need for an open public park in the centre of the city. The only space used for recreation is a small memorial garden adjacent to the city hall. This garden is always full of people, and owing to its size is clearly inadequate for the city office workers.

The site has a definite 'back' which faces onto the taxi rank. The harshness of this back wall and the lack of direct access needs to be addressed and a solution found.

There is a strong pedestrian flow along the roads parallel to the site, and around the park. However narrow pavements and street traders cause congestion.

Many of the surrounding buildings are old and dilapidated. Publicity house and the new tourism centre will address the problem on the Chief Albert Luthuli and Longmarket Street sides. Buildings opposite the site on the Church Street side need attention.

Two access roads run through the city block adjacent to the site. Currently these roads are used for taxi and bus drop off. These functions need to be formalised and moved to a more convenient location. They currently create severe congestion and confusion across the city block. Closing off the roads, creating underground parking and moving the drop off areas to a more convenient location would improve pedestrian flow through the city block, which would also ease the pedestrian congestion along the roads and strengthen the urban fabric.

The site is fully exposed to the sun throughout the year. The building needs to act as a shielding device for the pedestrian plaza without creating a cold, damp space.

The site has the potential to uplift the area and be a catalyst for area rehabilitation. The quality of the urban fabric could improve by increasing the pedestrian areas and 'walkability' of the area. By removing the ground floor parking lots, and positioning the parking underground, along with pedestrianizing certain sections of streets would create a seamless continuity between the City Hall, the library, the legislature complex and the new taxi rank.

## **2.6 Conclusion**

The close proximity of the Freedom Square site to the major provincial and local government offices as well as the Office of the Premier makes this an ideal site for a Legislature complex. It is also an integral part of the city centre infrastructure. In addition the site has many historic connotations.

The Freedom Square site has been used as a meeting place since the arrival of the Voortrekkers in the early 1830s. It has been the centre of numerous changes and events, hence its name 'Freedom Park'. The area is currently neglected, the surrounding roads and sidewalks overcrowded and any sense of historic importance, dignity or pride has been lost. The site is in dire need of redevelopment and restoration

Developing a new Legislature complex on the Freedom Square site has the potential of revitalising and upgrading this important and historic site. It will create visual and physical links with the city and other administrative centres, it will also create a park like area that will attract both residents and tourists.

The site is in close proximity to the major provincial and local government offices as well as the Office of the Premier. It is also part of the centre of the city of Pietermaritzburg, close to the new tourism centre and other city attractions.

## CHAPTER THREE DESIGN DEVELOPMENT AND RESOLUTION

### **3.1 Introduction**

All buildings carry an identity and architects should understand the process by which such meaning is ascribed. Once the process is understood, appropriate signs and symbols can be incorporated to create meaningful architecture, which enhances its identity in the public realm (Nesbitt, 1996: 110-140). Architecture expresses the systematic and inter-human aspects of symbolization, through the meanings, values and needs inherent in public life. A meaningful environment is a fundamental part of a meaningful existence and the purpose of architecture is to assist in making human existence meaningful (Norberg-Schulz, 1974: 427-434).

### **3.2 Theoretical Issues**

The four main theoretical issues dealt with are: fostering an identity through regional, social and ethnic identities and behaviour; creating existential and architectural meanings; instilling memory through signs and symbols; and the issue of politics and communication in architecture.

Identity can be used to create a sense of history through the reuse and integration of old into new. By maintaining the old parts a link is kept to the past and enhances knowledge and cultural roots. Zegeye, in *Social Identities in the New South Africa* (Zegeye, 2001:1) describes identity as “open-ended, fluid and constantly in a process of being constructed and reconstructed as the subject moves from one social situation to another, resulting in a self that is highly fragmented and context-dependant.” Regional, social and ethnic identities can create a comprehensive whole which responds to the surrounding environment, community and the individual. Elements of orientation, identification, human scale, tactile experiences, and the knowledge of belonging within an overlapping of society and culture create stronger identifications.

Actions are only meaningful when they are in relation to a particular place, these places cannot be understood in isolation and need to be incorporated within a larger context. A centre is a place where meaning manifests itself; this is an ideal, public goal. Historical associations will increase the meaning and value of a landmark. Architectural and existential meaning comes from a broader outlook on society, use of particular elements and arrangements. Meaning transcends common situations, creating a connection on a higher level, where the individual is only seen as part of the greater whole. Landmarks, edges, districts, nodes, connections, access, proximity, the public-private gradient, path and axis can be incorporated to enhance associated meanings.

Architectural forms should be designed for variable primary functions and ‘open’ secondary functions. Architectural objects following this ideal would be a continuing stimulus, communicating

a wide possibilities of operations in which the object could be reworked to fit the developing situation. These open objects could be ideologically restructured to “change the way they are used, change ways of thinking, in how forms are seen in the broadest context of human activity” (Broadbent, 1980: 34). Meanings would no longer be a look back into history, but rather an invention of new, different codes. There are three main ways to enhance the memorability of a building: contextualism; allusionism; and ornamentalism. Through contextualism an individual building is created as a fragment of a larger whole. It expresses an explicit recognition of the growth of buildings over time. Allusionism refers to a response to historical and cultural acts, either through lessons learnt or technological innovation. Appropriate historical references can enrich architecture, making it more familiar, accessible and meaningful to others. Architectural meaning can be enhanced through ornamentalism, which fulfils an innate human need for elaboration. There is no need for ornamentalism to be justified in historical or cultural terms.

The issue of politics is evident throughout the history of parliamentary type buildings. The communication of national identity in a postcolonial state is often overrun with political agendas and the expression of power. “[h]ybridity is a problematic of colonial representation and individuation that reverses the effects of the colonialist disavowal, so that other ‘denied’ knowledges enter upon the dominant discourse and estrange the basis of its authority – its rules of recognition” (Noble, 2008: 75). Hybridity breaches the exclusionary power of discourses, the focus is on the process rather than the product and, according to Bhabha (Noble, 2008: 75), it cannot be reduced into stylistic or aesthetic categories. The crucial point is not the creation of a complex form, but rather the subversion of dominant modes of cultural representation, including the oppressed narratives.

An architectural form is the concretization of certain existential meanings defined in terms of social, cultural and physical objects. Meanings need to be sensitive and socially valid to ensure perception, which is primarily achieved through symbolization. The perception of an articulate symbol and the experience of identification, gives the individual existential meaning by relating it to a complex of natural and human dimensions.

### **3.3 Conceptual Development**

#### Interconnections and Reflections

The four theoretical issues of identity, meaning, memory and politics are completely interlinked. Each is dependent on the other to enhance the relevance of public architecture in South Africa. Public architecture should be a reflection of society and hint at a new way forward.

#### Interconnections definition -

The people and the government need to work together and this needs to be expressed both in the building and in its development. Public participation has to be encouraged and the scheme should express a focus on the public.

#### Reflections definition -

The context and siting of the legislature is very important and is vital to its success. The building needs to be centrally located and easily accessible, however it needs to create its own identity and contemporary response to politics, which should stand out as an object of change, creating debate and encouraging interaction on every level. By being interactive and educational, people will learn things about each other and as they become more aware of their surroundings there will be greater understanding which ultimately leads to greater acceptance. Meaning and memory need to be expressed through the details and require a sensitive approach.

The combination of interconnections and reflections will carefully deal with issues of access, linkages and inclusiveness to the complex and within the complex. Comfort and image will be addressed through the visual perception of the complex and its surroundings. It is important that the complex appears democratic and transparent, reinforcing the image of a New South Africa. To enhance the sustainability of the complex and its continued use and enjoyment, different uses and activities need to be introduced so that the complex is effective on more than one level. It is very important that the building expresses sociability and efficiency. It needs to be a place where people can meet and interact, but also where serious decisions are made in the most efficient manner.

The complex needs to express responsiveness towards the public through comfortable seating in different areas, protection from the wind and rain, trees, water features and points of interest. It is important that the surroundings allow for comfort, relaxation, discovery and both active and passive

engagement with the environment. Focus needs to be placed on the democracy of the complex. The five dimensions of spatial rights need to be incorporated through the ability to enter and use the space through physical, visual and symbolic access; the public need to be able to carry out different activities and assert aspects of spatial control. There needs to be an opportunity for elements to be added, removed and changed as the area should feel as if it is owned by the public. The complex needs to be meaningful both on physical and social levels through a comfortable context, positive connections with other people and legibility. Individual and group connections occur mainly through history, whereas biological and psychological connections are enhanced through natural features, which can be used to enhance the imagination and create connections with a cosmic realm.

### Regional, Social and Ethnic Identity and Behaviour



Orientation Identification Knowledge of belonging Play of light and shade Spontaneous interaction



Human dimension - Scale, orientation, tactile experience Traditional motifs in contemporary setting Overlapping of Indigenous society and colonial culture

### Existential and Architectural Meanings



Visual landmark Proximity Edges Continuity Nodes Path and axis Closure Districts

### Modernism, Post Modernism, Deconstruction and Semiology



Signs Interpretations Deconstructions Symbols  
Symbolic image of granite outcrop Integrates into surroundings, appears as pile of rocks Foyer reminiscent of outdoors under a tree

### National Identity, Post Colonialism and Communication



Identity Political agendas Power  
Unsuccessful siting trying to link city and township Seemingly democratic depiction separated from city Successful siting integrating and strengthening city fabric

TYPOLOGY DEVELOPMENT



- Oldest democratic society believed to be Athens, Greece.
- Political assembly meeting west of Acropolis, in area called *Pnyx*
- Outdoor hillside with retaining walls for theatre style seating



Washington Capitol (1792) in USA one of the most widely recognised buildings in the world, synonymous with American government



New Zealand (1922)



Australia (1980)



Irish Parliament House in Dublin (ca. 1725) - the first specifically designed two chamber legislature with circular debating chamber



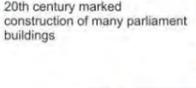
Palace of Westminster (rebuilt 1835), obvious example of state representation through architecture and assertion of national character



Germany (1990)



Canada (1990)



20th century marked construction of many parliament buildings

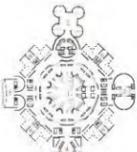
### Brasilia, Brazil - Oscar Niemeyer



- Intended to unify and instill idea of national identity
- 28 storey secretariat - symbolic dominance of bureaucracy
- National Assembly demonstrates power of legislature
- 3 powers- sculptured symbols of government's power over people
- City of Brasilia blocked from view
- Monumental axis
- Iconic complex

### Bangladesh Parliament - Louis Kahn

- marble horizontal bands enable viewer to read scale of floors
- large square, triangular and circular openings create a monumental scale, but reveal human scale through timber frames behind
- robust, sculptural expression
- monumental
- Assembly building and prayer hall on island in lake framed by diagonally positioned hostels to the east and west with the Supreme Court on the northern lake shore
- primary axis links capitol complex to the landscape
- fortress like, internally focused



1- Assembly Building; 2- Prayer Hall; 3- Ministers Lounge; 4- Public Entrance and Stair Hall; 5- Ministers Dining Hall; 6- Office Building

### Chandigarh, India - Le Corbusier



1- Assembly; 2- Secretariat; 3- Governor's Palace; 4- High Court; 5- Tower of Shadows; 6- Martyr's Monument; 7- Open Hand; Red Circles- Obelisks

- Isolated from city
- Assembly building faces High Court across uninviting pedestrian plaza
- Plan expresses hierarchy and segregation
- Too abstract for general appreciation - gap between public and architect perception
- Monumental, powerful and sculptural
- Ceremonial approach, obelisks mark squares
- Each building has own approach, entry, solids, voids and textures
- Powerful, imposing image

### Sri Lankan Parliament - Geoffrey Bawa

- Design manipulated to serve political ends
- Clear hierarchy - one dominant building, surrounded by smaller buildings
- Central building is debating chamber, five smaller pavilions create asymmetry creating individual identity
- Spaces interconnected by colonnades and arcades
- Synthesis of vernacular traditions and modern sensibility
- Roof is dominant architectural element and can be identified throughout different Sri Lankan cultures
- Sense of accessible democracy, cultural harmony, continuity and progress



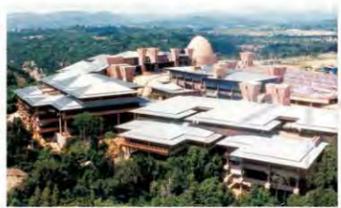
1- Main Chamber; 2- Audience Hall; 3- Public Entrance; 4- Staff Facilities; 5- Service Core; 6- MP's Dining Room

CASE STUDIES

### Mpumalanga Legislature, Nelspruit Mayer Pienaar Tayob Schnepel Architects



- Dynamic, asymmetrical composition
- Entrances defined by tall brick sculptural towers
- Dome forms results in distinct African identity
- Site is easily accessible from the capital city but there is no formal link
- Abstract, stylistic, subtle gestures of local culture and environmental context
- Concept of gathering forces through open engagement with the public
- Holistic approach to human dimension through scale, orientation and tactile experience
- Shared staff facilities between the pavilion like office sections
- Complex expresses scenic biodiversity and captures character of province
- Based on campus architecture - flexible, robust, future enabling spatial solutions



### Northern Cape Legislature, Kimberley Luis Ferreira da Silva Architects



- Wide contextual reference to natural cultural and political heritage
- Each building has separate function and informally positioned around open civic space
- Context was important element in conceptualisation - earth toned finishes, use of indigenous craft techniques and decorative traditions
- Building positioning result of function and interrelation
- Human orientated hierarchy of space
- Tower visually dominates square, serves as a landmark
- Legislative Chamber in line with main axis
- Each building has own identity and contributes to the overall complexity and harmony of the scheme
- Aimed to be catalytic intervention creating spatial re-integration



DESIGN BRIEF AND SCHEDULE OF ACCOMMODATION

### Constitutional Court, Johannesburg OMM Design Workshop



- Experiential quality of light
- Modest, coherent planning
- Symbolic presence and contextual sensitivity
- Revives and reinterprets African cultural values
- Expresses freedom, democracy, equal opportunity, diversity, responsibility and respect through architecture
- Combination of separateness and connection used to align and bring together functionality and symbolic references
- Tectonic language engages with hard urban character of site and city



### The Legislature's position within the Government:

- There are three arms to the state - executive (cabinet); judiciary (courts); and legislature (parliament)
- Within South Africa there are three levels of government - national, provincial and local
- Provincial governments develop their own laws and policies but are bound by national laws and policies
- Primary functions are policy creation, legislation and services
- Members need to be accountable
- Public participation needs to be encouraged



### The Provincial Legislature

- Has social, political and public dimensions
- Funded by government for the people
- Integral part of the public infrastructure
- Key to promoting community upliftment
- According to KwaZulu-Natal Legislature Vision and Mission Statement, the legislature recognizes unique culture of province and is committed to creating peace, prosperity and improving the quality of life
- Aspiring to be modern, dynamic institution reflecting professionalism, responsibility and basis to action
- Providing a model to a civil society
- People-centred focus on service and accountability, fostering public confidence and pride

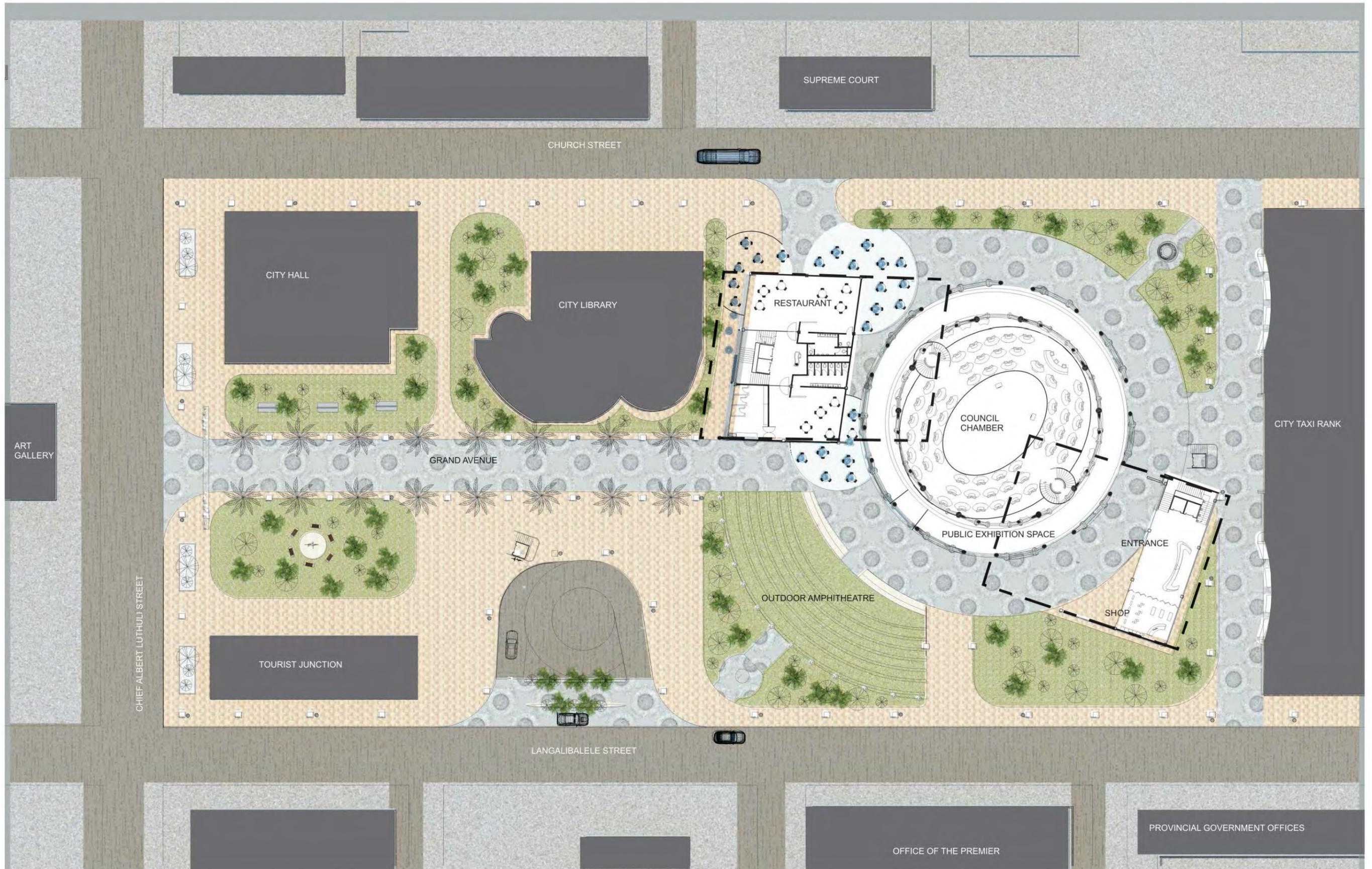
### The Existing Kwa Zulu Natal Legislature

- Situated in Pietermaritzburg, built in 1887
- Chamber is occasionally used and is too small for the opening of Parliament
- National monument
- The current complex is fragmented across the city and does not express a vision of unity or social or national identity
- Building does not express any new developments post 1994 and the identity created by the building as a provincial icon needs to be questioned

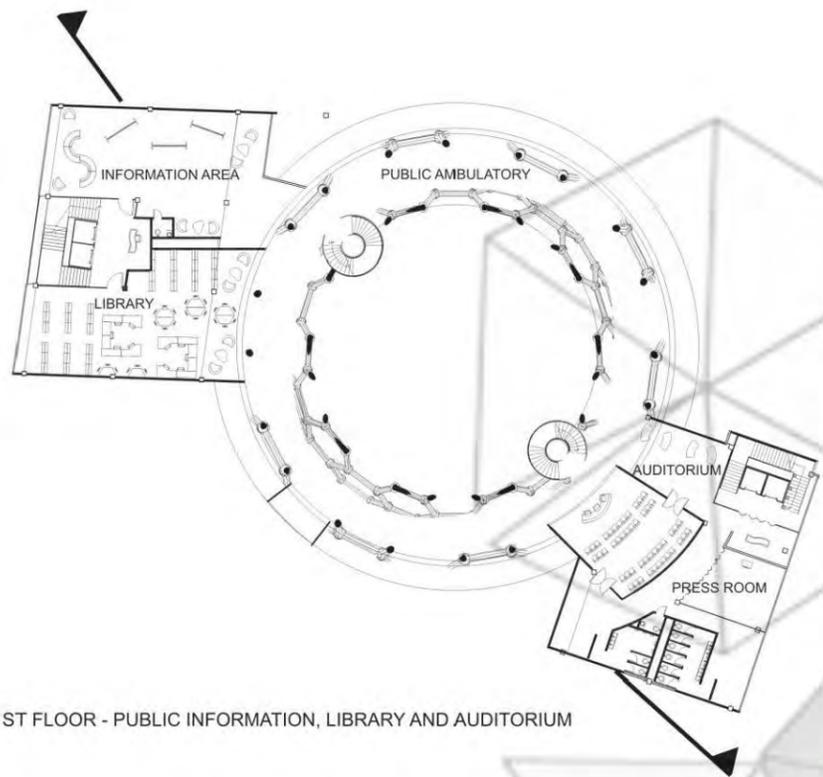


Legislature Chamber and Ancillary	3442 m <sup>2</sup>
Speaker	1540m <sup>2</sup>
Debate Chamber	1540m <sup>2</sup>
Library	400m <sup>2</sup>
Ancillary Offices	1400m <sup>2</sup>
Legislature Administration	2590 m <sup>2</sup>
Legislature	2020 m <sup>2</sup>
Legislative Services	365 m <sup>2</sup>
Constituent services	3100 m <sup>2</sup>
Each Office Area Size:	
Media Transfer Room (Photocopier, scanner, etc.)	15 m <sup>2</sup>
Meeting Rooms	400 m <sup>2</sup>
Storage	15 m <sup>2</sup>
Kitchenette	15 m <sup>2</sup>
Alcove	30 m <sup>2</sup>
Members of Legislature	1188 m <sup>2</sup>
Waiting area	15 m <sup>2</sup>
Security	15 m <sup>2</sup>
Offices for Party secretaries (6)	60 m <sup>2</sup>
Offices for Party members (6)	120 m <sup>2</sup>
Members offices (6)	400 m <sup>2</sup>
Committee rooms	500 m <sup>2</sup>
Party caucus rooms	120 m <sup>2</sup>
Media transfer room (photocopier scanner etc.)	15 m <sup>2</sup>
Storage	15 m <sup>2</sup>
Kitchenette	15 m <sup>2</sup>
Alcove	30 m <sup>2</sup>
Ancillary Buildings	415 m <sup>2</sup>
Open house	15 m <sup>2</sup>
Entrance	100 m <sup>2</sup>
Shrine	65 m <sup>2</sup>
Govts delivery	65 m <sup>2</sup>
Public removal	65 m <sup>2</sup>
Substation	65 m <sup>2</sup>
Public toilet	100 m <sup>2</sup>
Parking 600 bays	
Legislature Precinct	
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>8423 m<sup>2</sup></b>

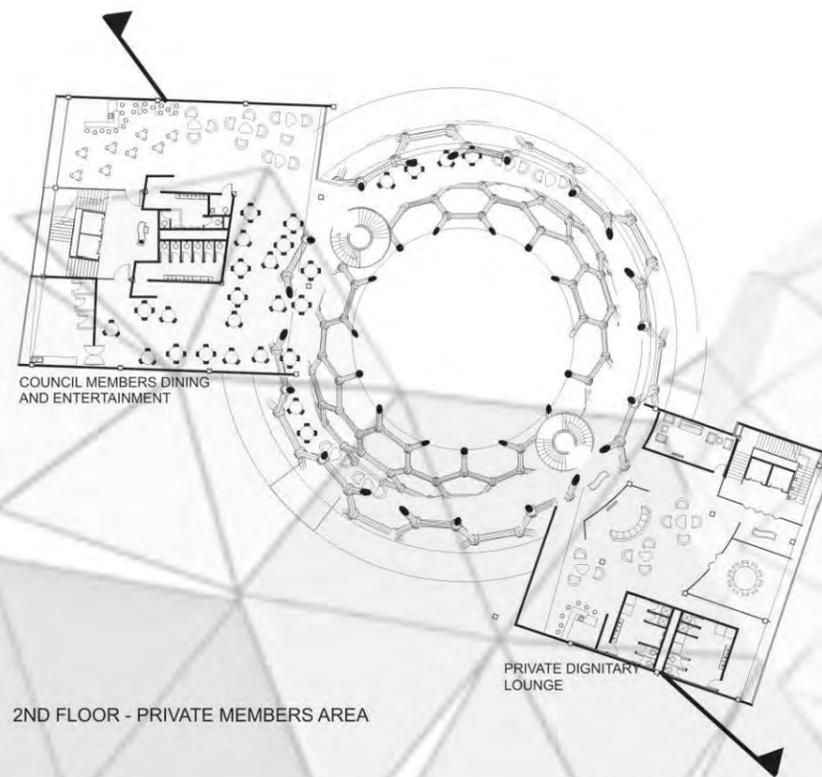




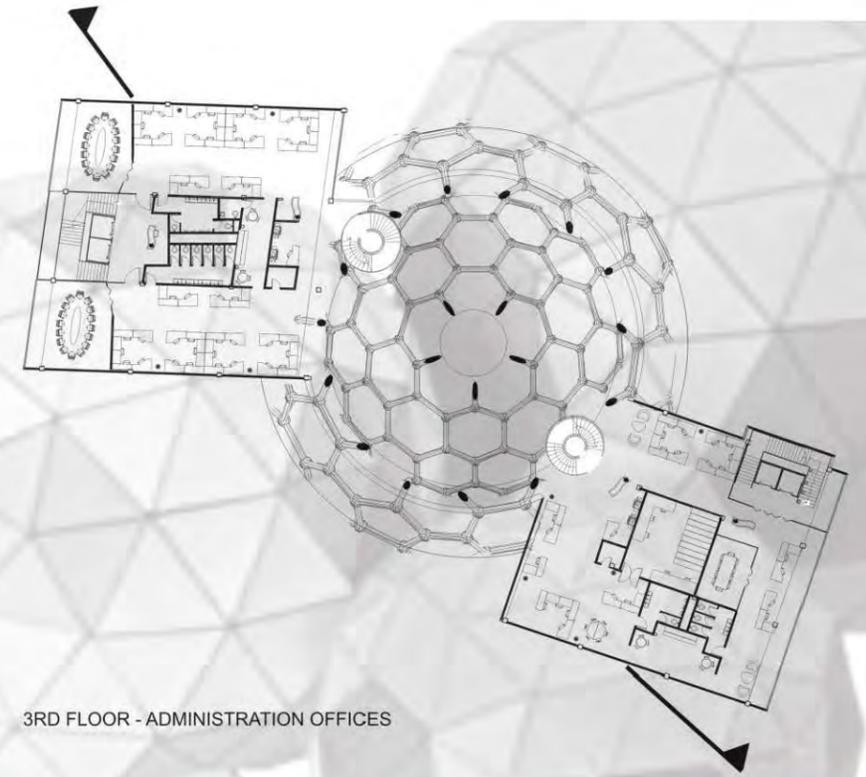
GROUND FLOOR PLAN



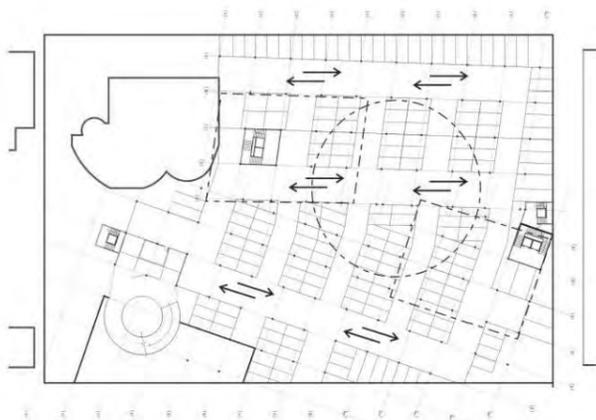
1ST FLOOR - PUBLIC INFORMATION, LIBRARY AND AUDITORIUM



2ND FLOOR - PRIVATE MEMBERS AREA



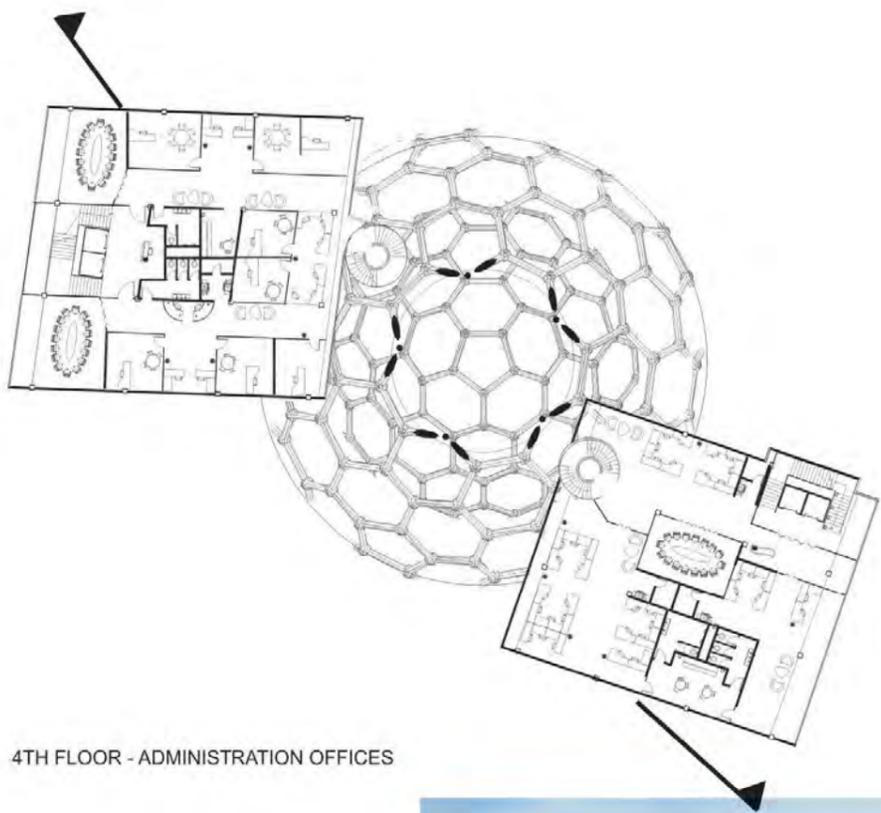
3RD FLOOR - ADMINISTRATION OFFICES



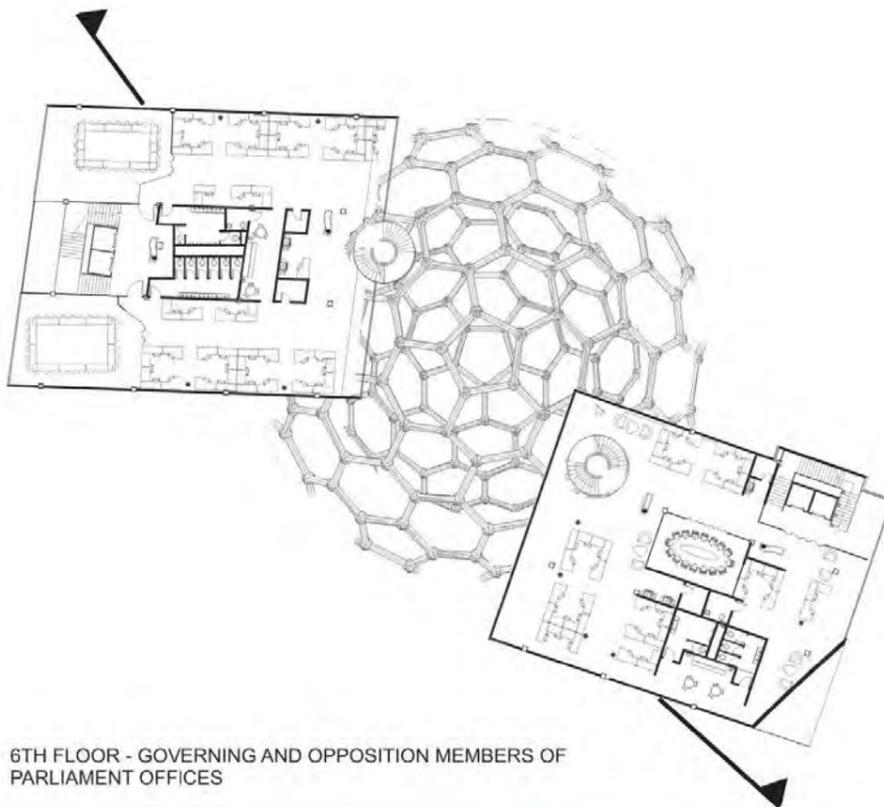
UNDERGROUND PARKING



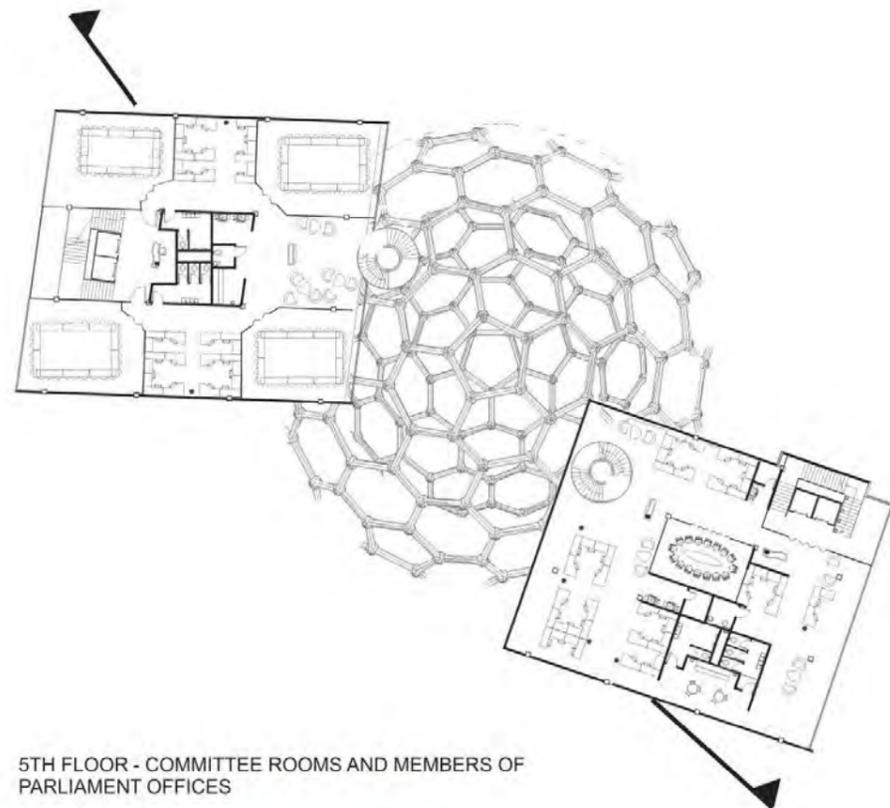
SECTION



4TH FLOOR - ADMINISTRATION OFFICES



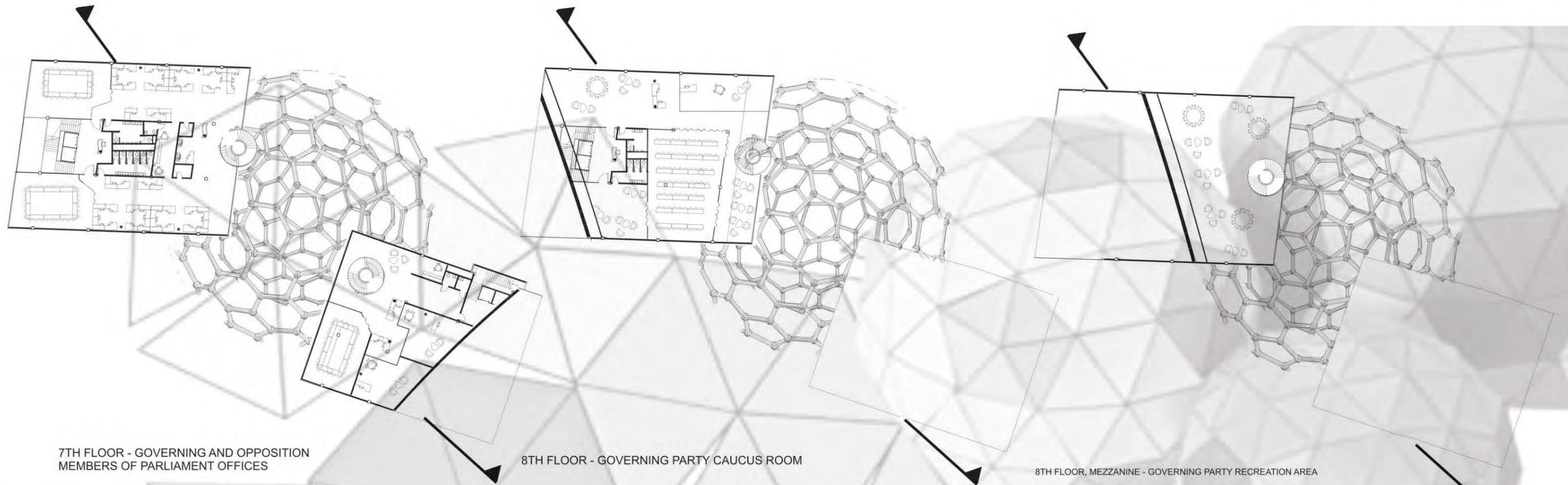
6TH FLOOR - GOVERNING AND OPPOSITION MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT OFFICES



5TH FLOOR - COMMITTEE ROOMS AND MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT OFFICES



SOUTH WEST ELEVATION



7TH FLOOR - GOVERNING AND OPPOSITION MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT OFFICES

8TH FLOOR - GOVERNING PARTY CAUCUS ROOM

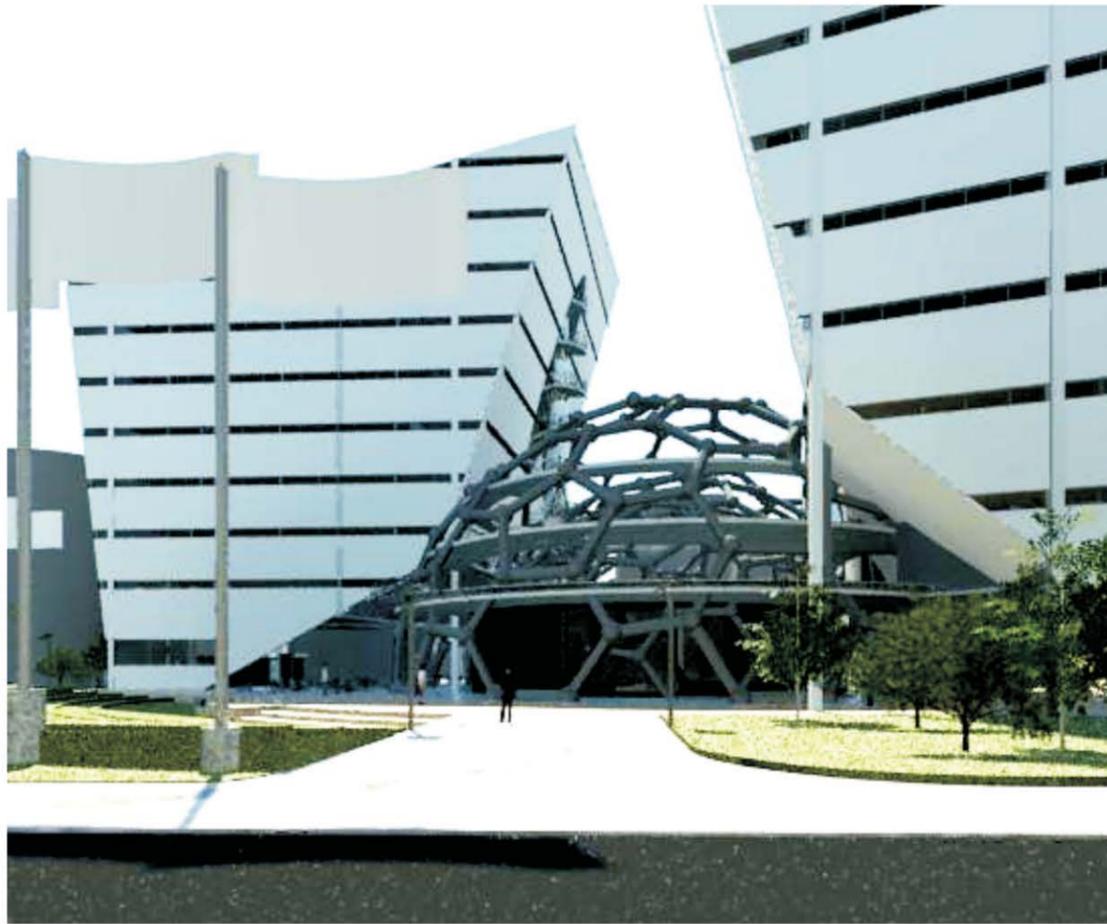
8TH FLOOR, MEZZANINE - GOVERNING PARTY RECREATION AREA



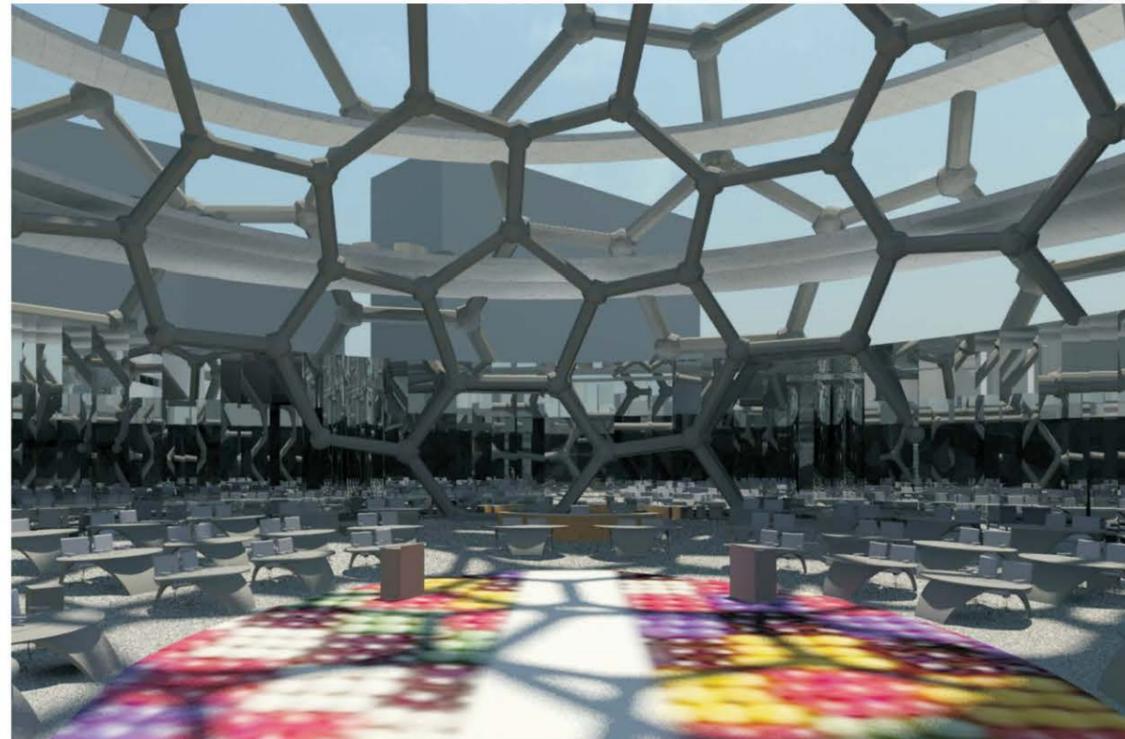
NORTH EAST ELEVATION



VIEW FROM LANGALIBALELE STREET



VIEW FROM PREMIERS OFFICE



COUNCIL CHAMBER



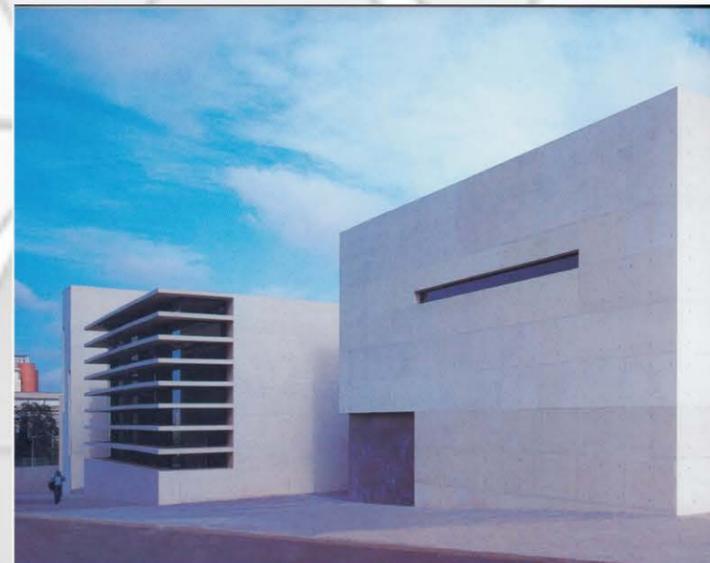
INSPIRATIONAL IMAGES



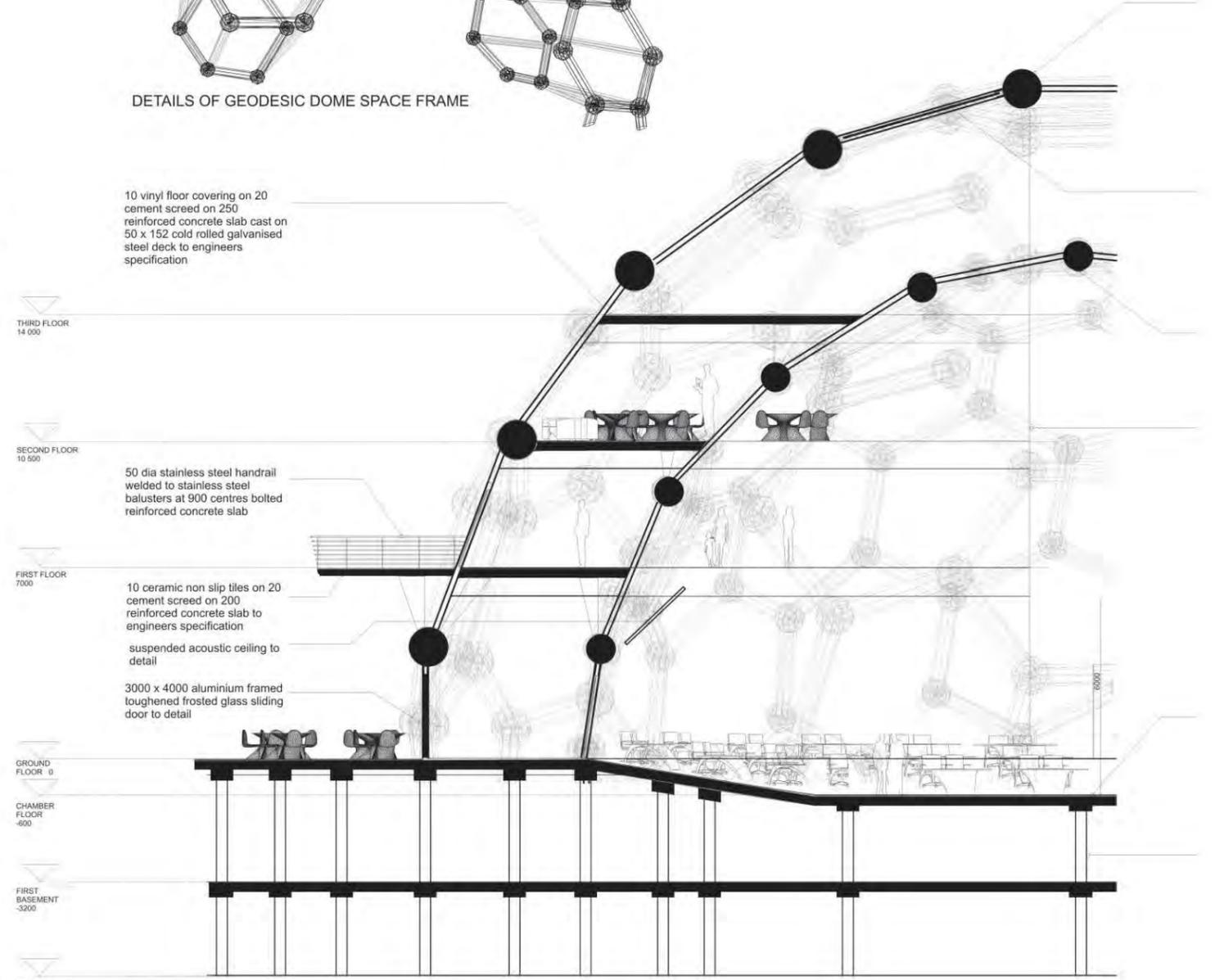
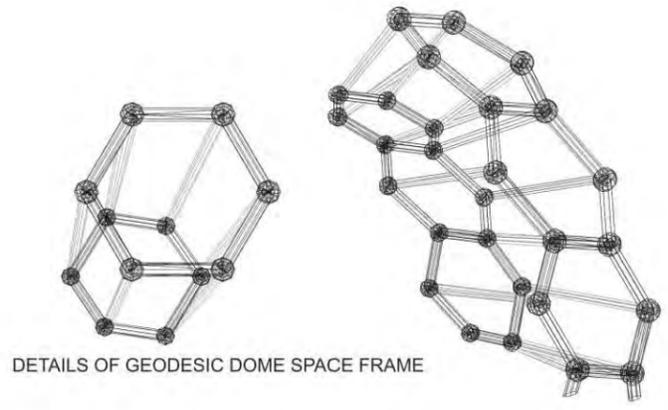
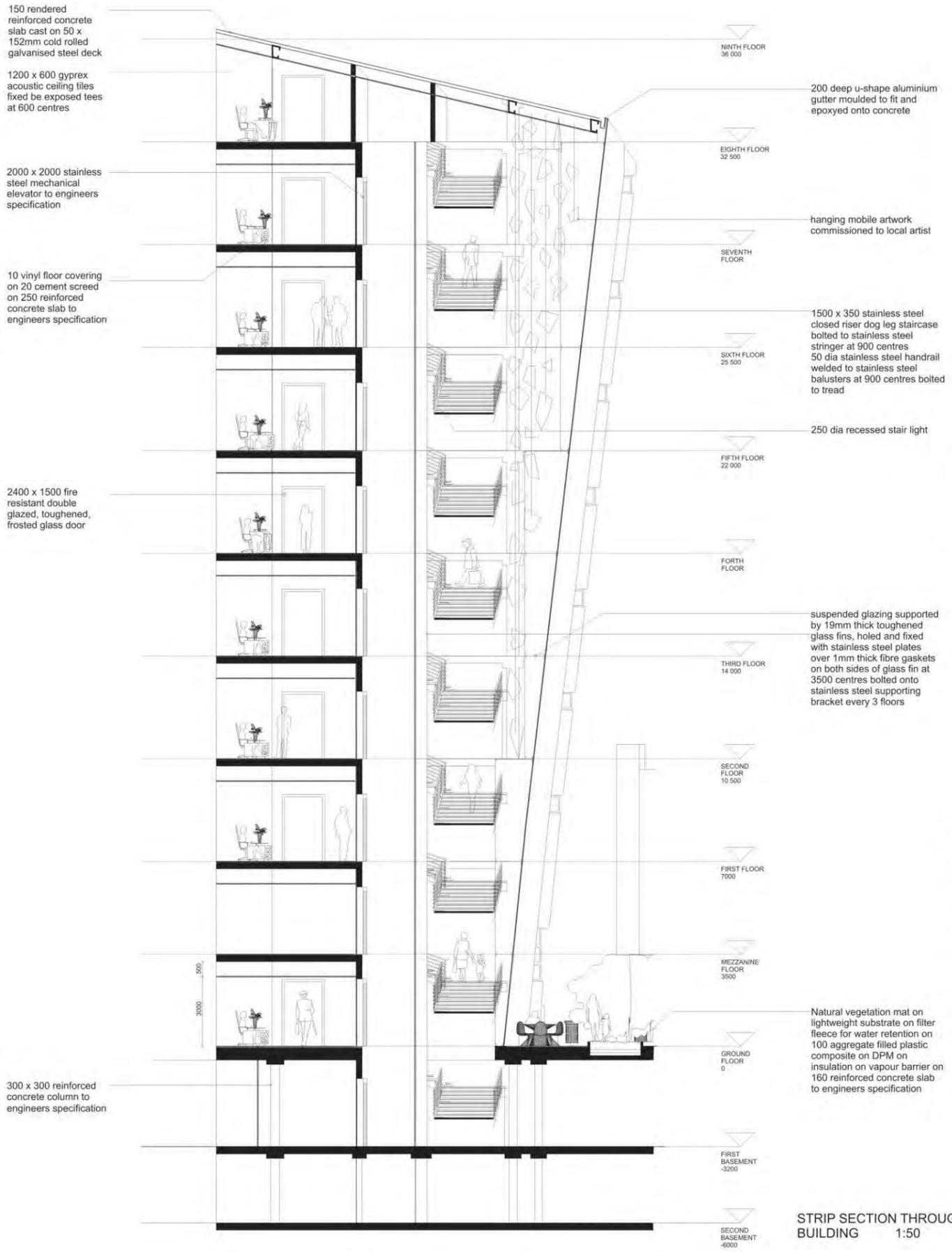
VIEW FROM CHURCH STREET



RESTUARANT

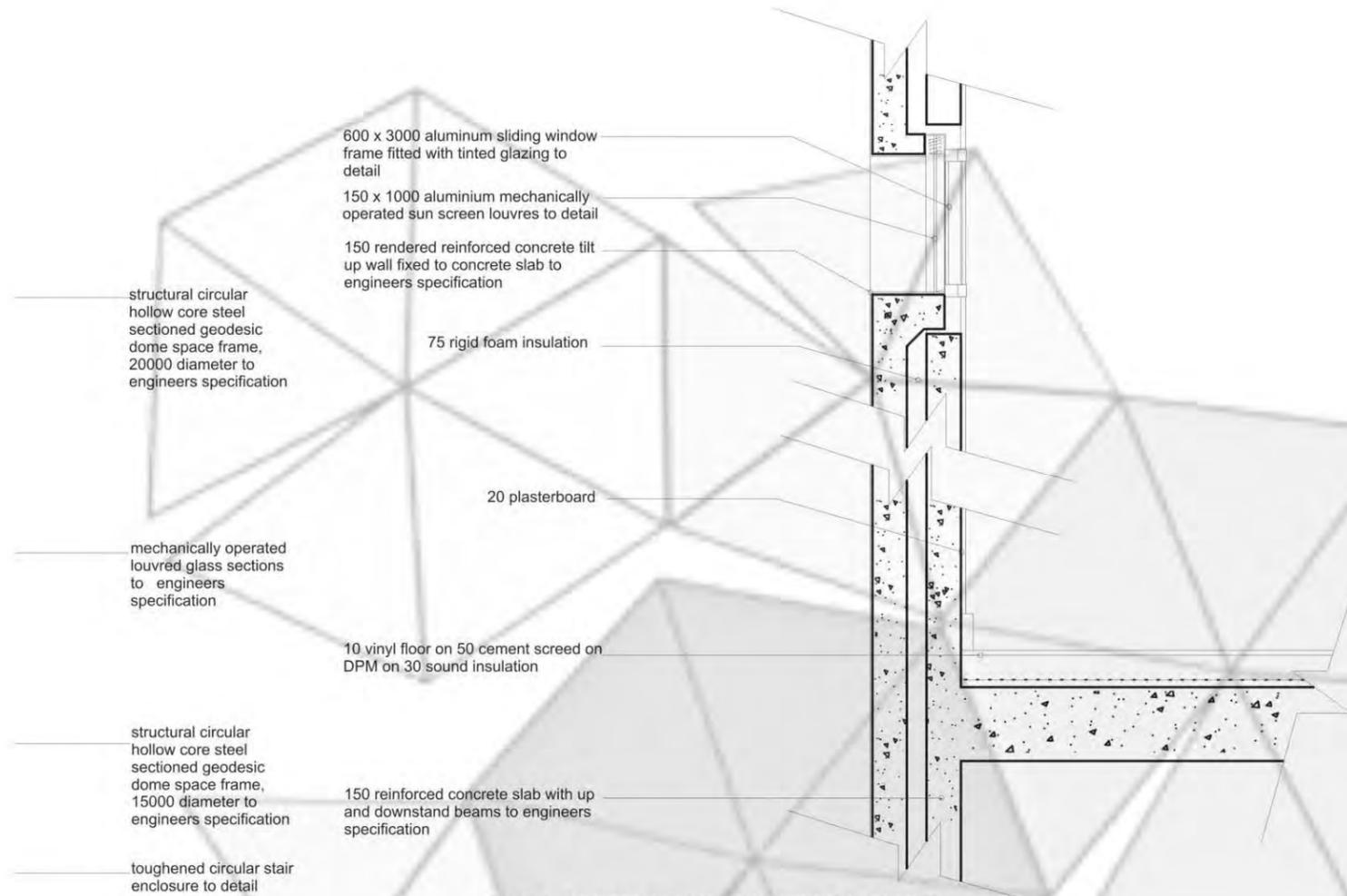






STRIP SECTION THROUGH GEODESIC DOME 1:50

STRIP SECTION THROUGH WESTERN BUILDING 1:50

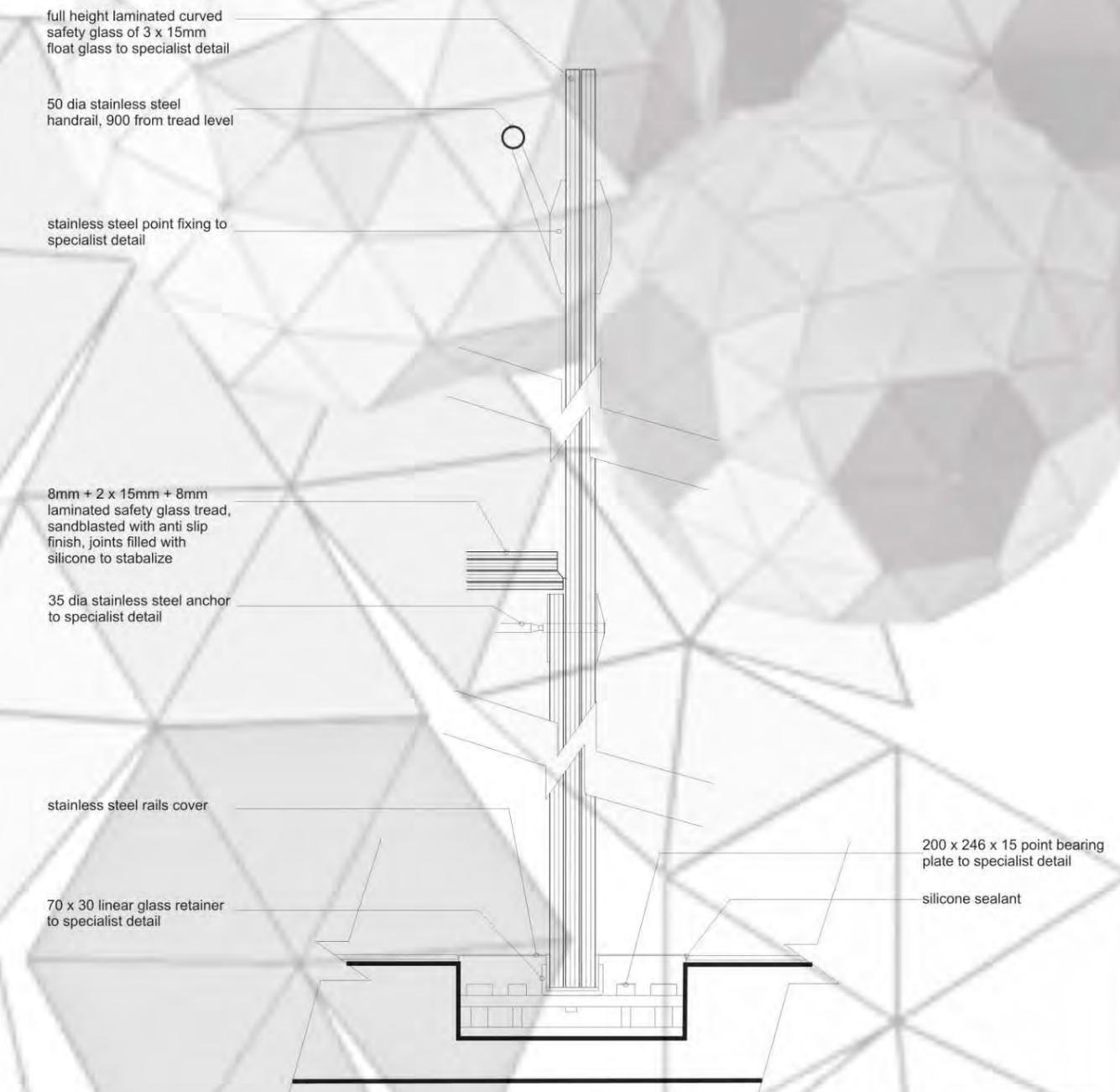


DETAIL SECTION THROUGH TYPICAL FLOOR  
1: 10

- 600 x 3000 aluminum sliding window frame fitted with tinted glazing to detail
- 150 x 1000 aluminium mechanically operated sun screen louvres to detail
- 150 rendered reinforced concrete tilt up wall fixed to concrete slab to engineers specification
- 75 rigid foam insulation
- 20 plasterboard
- 10 vinyl floor on 50 cement screed on DPM on 30 sound insulation
- 150 reinforced concrete slab with up and downstand beams to engineers specification
- 250 reinforced concrete to engineers specifications
- ventilation block
- cavity
- 300 reinforced concrete wall with weep holes every 1m2 and stabilising anchors to engineers specification
- DPM
- 110 brick wall
- 20 cement screed on 150 power floated reinforced concrete slab with 3mm sawn joints into 1/4 slab depth at 4m centres to engineers specification
- 200 no-fines reinforced concrete slab with geopipes laid in herringbone pattern to engineers specification
- sump with cast iron grating and submersible pump
- concrete pile foundation to engineers specification
- structural circular hollow core steel sectioned geodesic dome space frame, 20000 diameter to engineers specification
- mechanically operated louvred glass sections to engineers specification
- structural circular hollow core steel sectioned geodesic dome space frame, 15000 diameter to engineers specification
- toughened circular stair enclosure to detail
- 20 purpose made carpet on 20 cement screed on 250 reinforced concrete slab with a slope of 1: 60 to engineers specification
- 300 x 300 reinforced concrete column to engineers specification

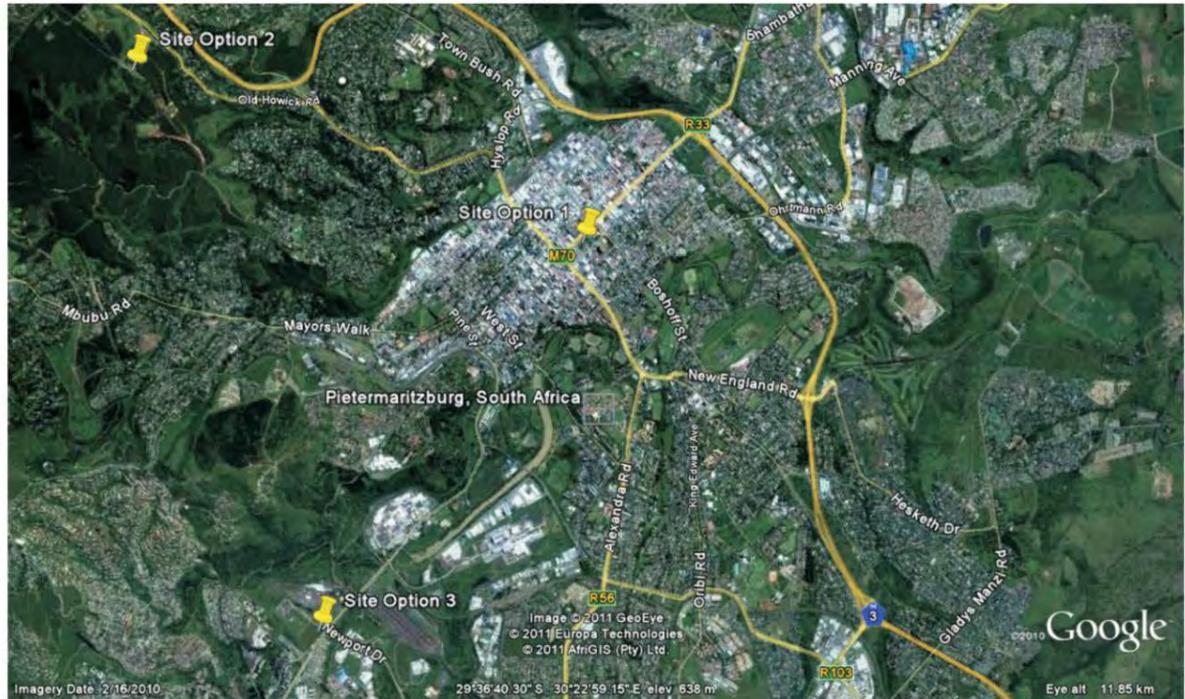
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- sump with cast iron grating and submersible pump
- concrete pile foundation to engineers specification

DETAIL SECTION THROUGH UNDERGROUND PARKING  
1: 20



DETAIL SECTION THROUGH GLASS STAIRCASE  
1: 10

- full height laminated curved safety glass of 3 x 15mm float glass to specialist detail
- 50 dia stainless steel handrail, 900 from tread level
- stainless steel point fixing to specialist detail
- 8mm + 2 x 15mm + 8mm laminated safety glass tread, sandblasted with anti slip finish, joints filled with silicone to stabilize
- 35 dia stainless steel anchor to specialist detail
- stainless steel rails cover
- 70 x 30 linear glass retainer to specialist detail
- 200 x 246 x 15 point bearing plate to specialist detail
- silicone sealant



OVERVIEW OF PIETERMARITZBURG SHOWING ARTERIAL ROADS



PIETERMARITZBURG CITY CENTRE



SITE PLAN 1:500



AMPHITHEATRE



SITE SECTION FROM LANGALIBALELE STREET  
1: 500



QUIET SITTING AREA AROUND LOCALLY PRODUCED SCULPTURES



SITE SECTION FROM CHURCH STREET  
1: 500

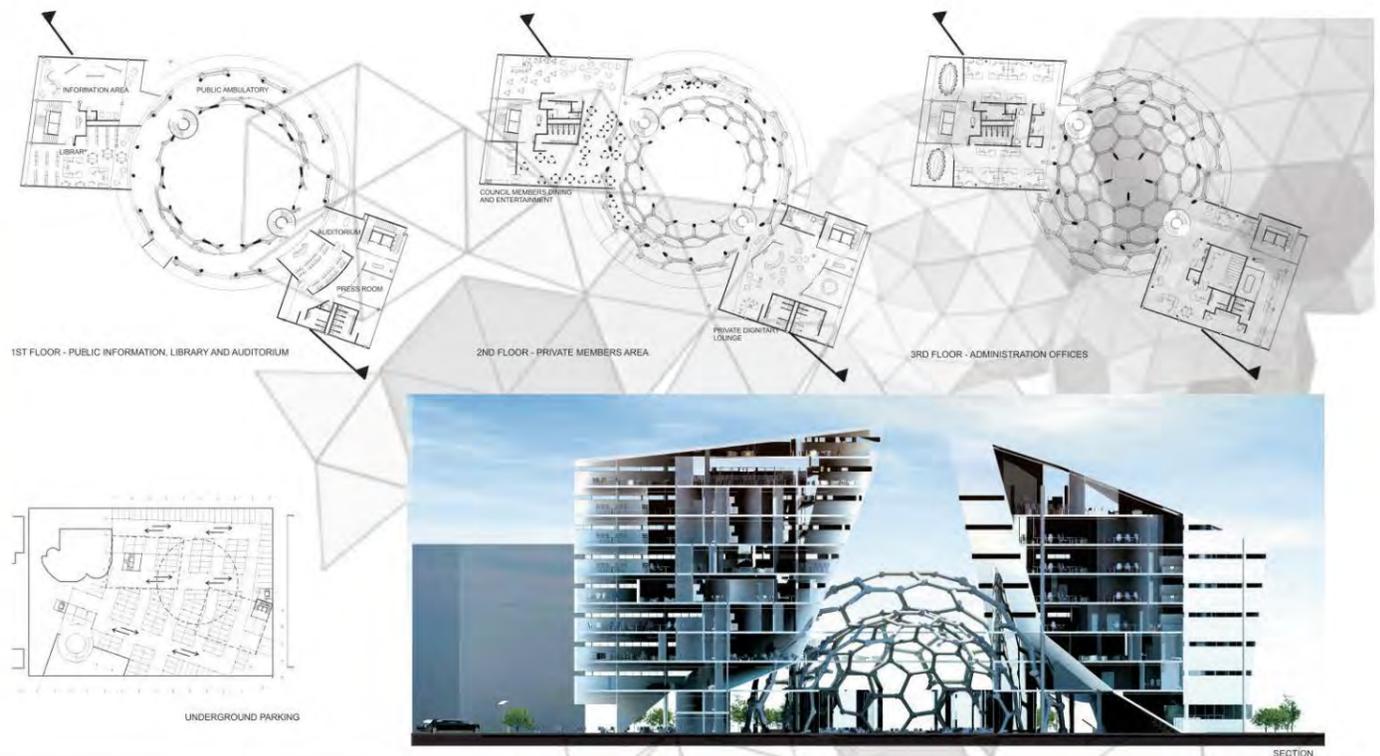
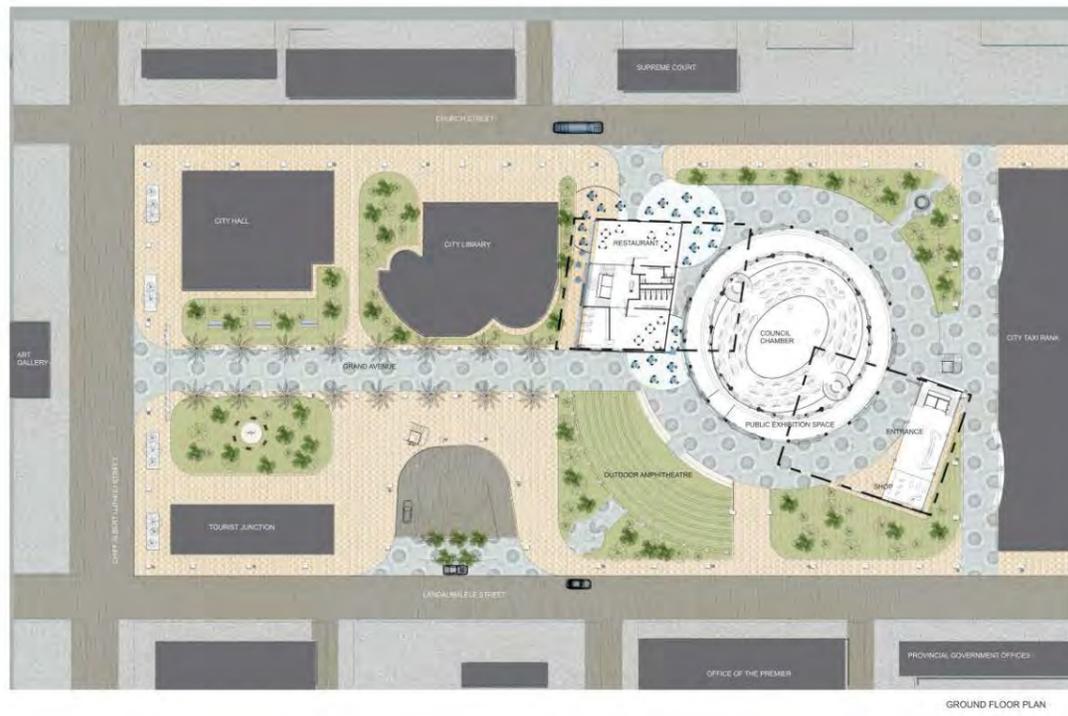


ENTRANCE TO BOULEVARD FROM CHIEF ALBERT LUTHULI STREET



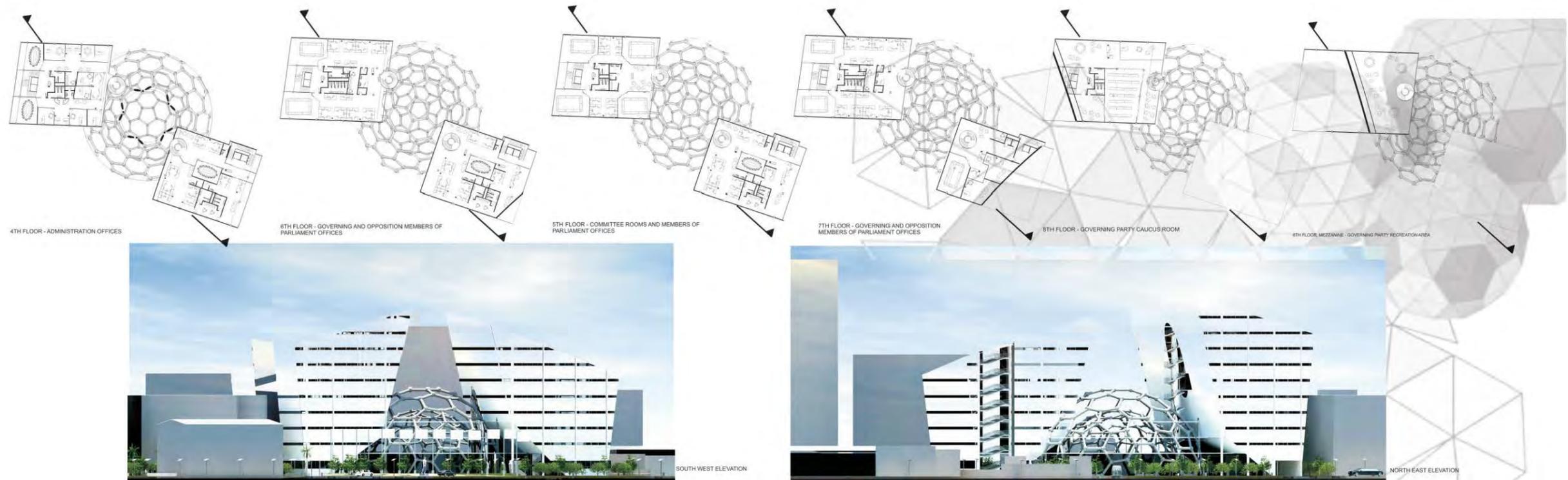
BENCHES ALONG MAIN BOULEVARD





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*SOCIAL IDENTITY, MEANING AND MEMORY:* PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE FOR PIETERMARITZBURG, KZN **PLANS & SECTIONS**

VIVIAN MILLER  
 205507207  
 M\_ARCH FINAL DESIGN  
 DECEMBER 2011



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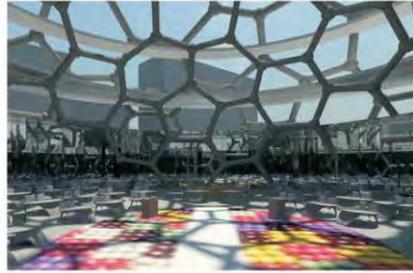
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 DECEMBER 2011



VIEW FROM LANGALIBALE STREET



VIEW FROM PREMIERS OFFICE



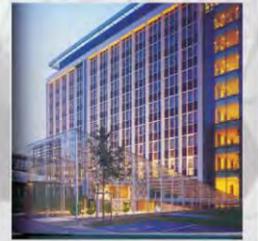
COUNCIL CHAMBER



VIEW FROM CHURCH STREET



RESTURANT



INSPIRATIONAL IMAGES

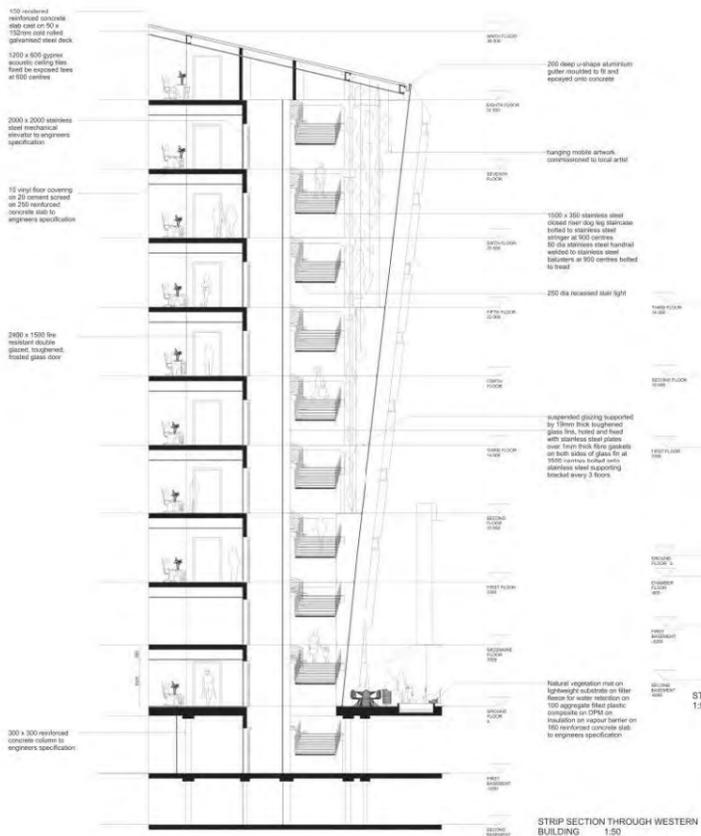
ARCHITECTURE INFORMED BY

SOCIAL IDENTITY, MEANING AND MEMORY:

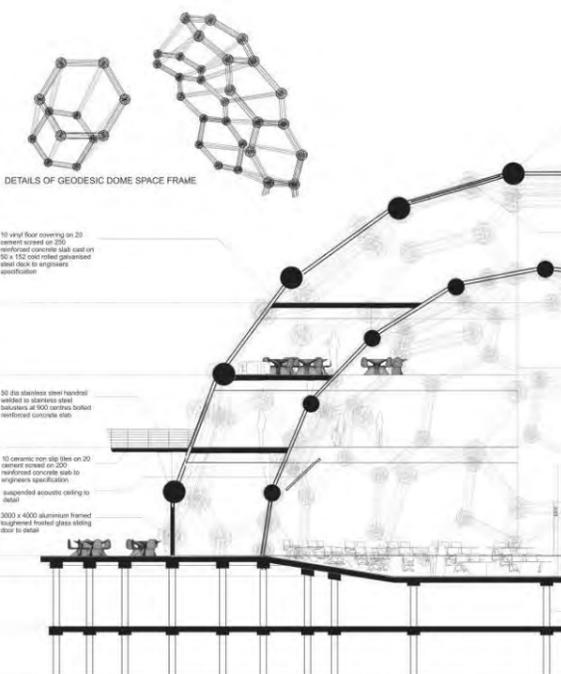
PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE FOR PIETERMARITZBURG, KZN

PERSPECTIVES

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DECEMBER 2011

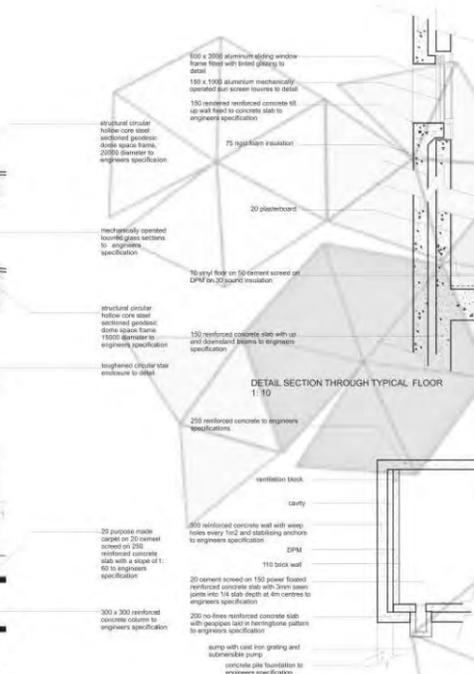


STRIP SECTION THROUGH WESTERN BUILDING 1:50



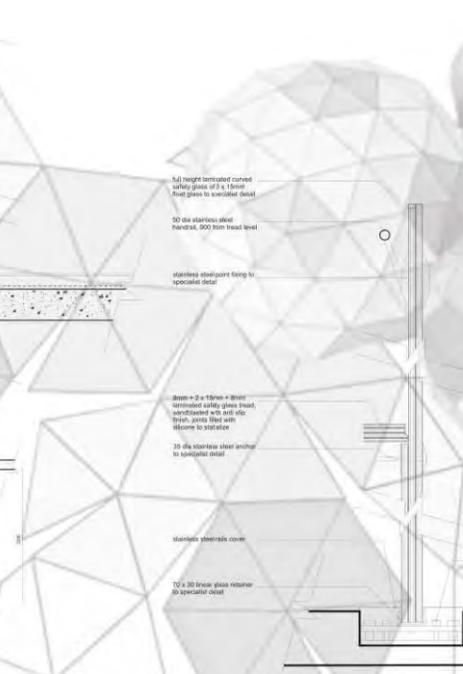
STRIP SECTION THROUGH GEODESIC DOME 1:50

DETAILS OF GEODESIC DOME SPACE FRAME



DETAIL SECTION THROUGH TYPICAL FLOOR 1:10

DETAIL SECTION THROUGH UNDERGROUND PARKING 1:20



DETAIL SECTION THROUGH GLASS STAIRCASE 1:10

PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE FOR PIETERMARITZBURG, KZN

TECHNICAL DETAILING

VIVIAN MILLER  
205507207  
M ARCH FINAL DESIGN  
DECEMBER 2011



# URBAN CONTEXT



**City Hall**

**City Hall**  
Heritage Site  
Landmark dominating major crossroads in city, originally chief structure of Freedom Square



**Colonial Building**

**Colonial Building**  
Heritage Site  
set back from street, monumental, sculptural skyline



**Tatham Art Gallery**

**Tatham Art Gallery**  
(formerly Supreme Court)  
Heritage Site  
one of the oldest government buildings in city, now city's art gallery



**Legislative Assembly Building**

**Legislative Assembly Building**  
Heritage Site  
first local example of a raised temple front, statue of Queen Victoria in front of portico



**Legislative Council Building**

**Legislative Council Building**  
Heritage Site  
Linked to Assembly Building, dome on drum lights council chamber



**General Post Office**

**General Post Office**  
Heritage Site  
last large public building constructed in Colonial era, wide frontage, similar appearance to Colonial Building



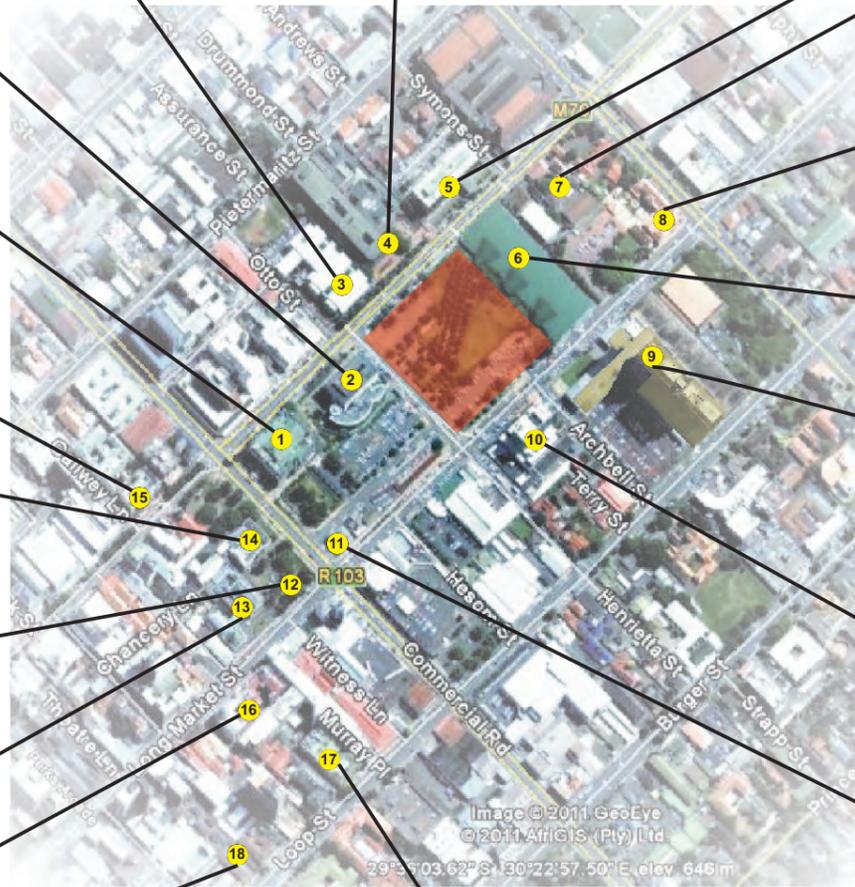
**Bessie Head (Natal Society) Library**



**Magistrates' Courts**



**Supreme Court**  
Built to replace old law courts, modern, functionalist design, small off-centre plaza



**City Engineer's Building**  
Provides extra accommodation for municipality, office block with civic look



**Church of the Vow**



**Voortrekker Museum**



**Taxi Rank**

**Church of the Vow**  
Heritage Site

**Voortrekker Museum** (formerly Longmarket St. Girls School)  
Heritage Site

**City Centre Taxi Rank**

**Natalia**  
Initially headquarters of Natal Provincial Administration, largest office complex in city



**Natalia**

**Half of Premier's Offices**  
(formerly Reserve Bank)



**Half of Premier's Offices**

**Publicity House** (formerly Municipal Police Station)  
Heritage Site  
Now centre for tourist information, classical facade, small belfry in which the curfew bell of Colonial times hung



**Main Police Station**

**Main Police Station** (formerly NGR Engineer's Building)  
Heritage Site  
Prominent temple front, side pavilions with domed towers



**Natal Museum**

**Natal Museum**  
Heritage Site



**Publicity House**

# FIGURE GROUND ANALYSIS

Density of the civic centre is broken, with site being central empty space

Strong urban fabric greatly weakened by non-functioning centre

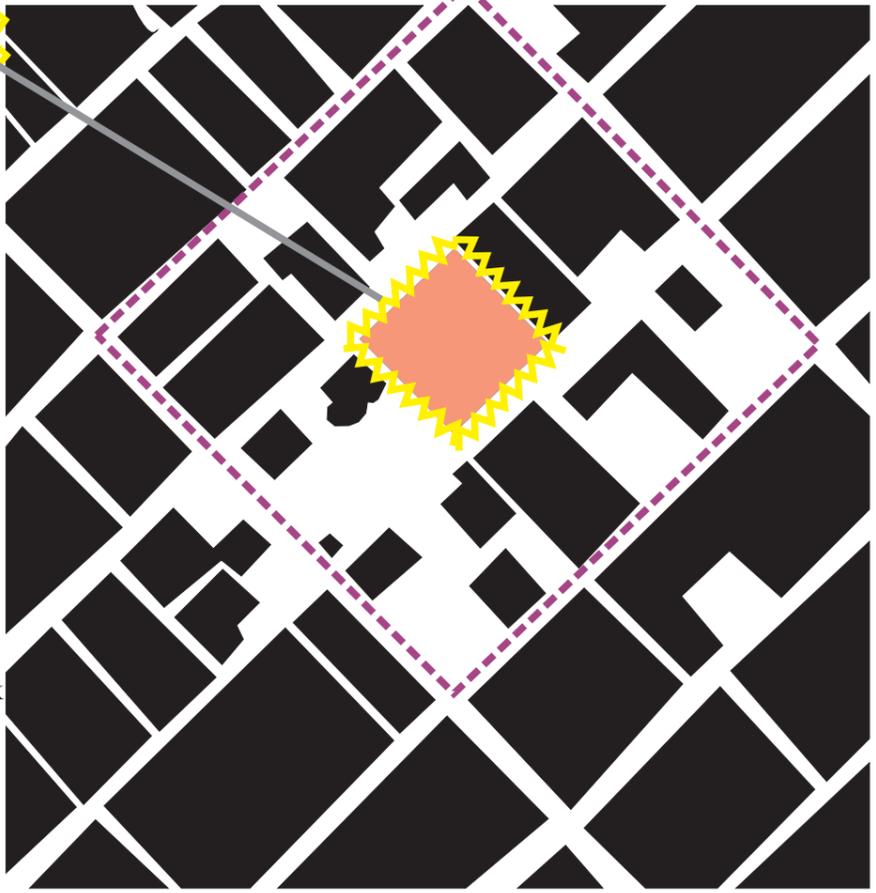
Minimal presence of water, very little relief from the hard urban fabric



Small water feature near library

Site is park however it is fenced off from public use and severely neglected

Very hard edges on all sides



Relationship between Built and Unbuilt Spaces



Relationship between, Built, Green and Tarred Spaces



View towards library



View towards informal taxi rank



View of back wall of taxi rank



Henrietta Street



Fenced off municipal parking lot



Site is isolated from buildings on three sides

Area dominated by parking lots, that were once open green spaces



View towards city engineer's building



Large roads surrounding site



View towards Church Street

# FIGURE GROUND ANALYSIS

The new taxi rank has eased congestion



New taxi rank

Illegal parking by vehicles and public transport operators results in congestion, especially along Langalibalele Street, where 4 carriages are reduced to 2



Concentration of civic buildings in centre of Pietermaritzburg

Civic buildings on the left and private offices/ retail on the right

There are very few mixed use developments in the city centre



City link to the east

Predominant city link: east to west. This route is where majority of pedestrians walk and therefore the major trade route

Predominant pedestrian routes often congested with street traders, especially along Church Street



Pedestrian, Vehicular Routes and Taxi Waiting Areas

Informal taxi areas create congestion and a dangerous area with pedestrians all over the road

Vehicular routes very congested during rush hours



Relationship between Civic, Private and Open Areas



City link past library

Civic buildings are surrounded by private offices



Pedestrian movement along side of site



Langalibalele Street

# ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

Area is heavily populated and there is a definite need for a gathering place

Minimal footprint along east- west of site, allowing for maximum exposure to the north and south

Hierarchy and security defined vertically rather than horizontally

Bad weather predominantly from the south west

Noise and air pollution

Site and surrounding area are covered in litter

Taxis greatly disturb the peace

Site has a definite 'back' onto taxi rank, however harshness of wall and lack of direct access needs to be addressed



Freedom Square (the site) completely fenced off

Potentially close off the top of Henrietta Street to increase civic pedestrian area from new legislature to library and city hall

Move adjacent parking to underground to increase pedestrian areas and strengthen urban fabric

Surrounding buildings are dilapidated and a new development could be a catalyst for inner city rehabilitation

Street furniture has been very badly neglected and in some cases completely removed



Back wall of taxi rank, very hard edge to site



Busy city centre



Strong pedestrian flow along Church Street



Fence around Freedom Square



Henrietta Street



Lots of litter in and around site



Destroyed park benches

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