

**SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL EXPERIENCE AS A  
GENERATOR OF SPACE AND FORM: Designing an Orientation  
Centre for Migrants in Durban**

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

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## **DECLARATION**

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

I declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work and carried out exclusively by me under the supervision of Professor Ayse Gulcin Kucukkaya and Mr Dumisani Mhlaba. All citations, references and borrowed ideas have been duly acknowledged. It is being submitted for the degree of Masters in Architecture in the Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social Science, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa. None of the present work has been submitted previously for any degree or examination in any other university.

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In loving memory of my father, Nic Bekker,  
and my grandfather and grandmother, Mick and Barbara Collocott.

*"May God bless and keep you always,  
May your wishes all come true,  
May you always do for others  
And let others do for you.  
May you build a ladder to the stars  
And climb on every rung,  
May you stay forever young,*

*May your hands always be busy,  
May your feet always be swift,  
May you have a strong foundation  
when the winds of changes shift.  
May your heart always be joyful,  
May your song always be sung,  
And may you stay forever young."*

— **Bob Dylan**

## **ABSTRACT**

Durban has often been referred to as one of the fastest growing cities in the world. During the Post-Apartheid years, migration of people from other parts of South Africa as well as African countries to Durban has drastically increased. However, the challenges migrants face in the city vary from mild antagonism, to the difficulties of finding employment, to aggressive xenophobic outbreaks. There is a need for orientation for these migrants to help them adapt and feel more at home in the unfamiliar setting.

This research dissertation explores the various approaches to creating a new type of architecture to aid the transition of migrants into the city of Durban. The psychological and social changes that they are experiencing in their transitional state have been translated into a set of architectural place-making methods that explore the possibility of an architecture that orientates and promotes transition, as well as provides a place where migrants can find temporary refuge. The dissertation aims to ultimately result in the design of an original architectural typology; a landmark that facilitates orientation and adaption of migrants, both physically and psychologically, and also educates and promotes inter-cultural understanding and appreciation amongst communities of migrants and locals.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background

Migration and immigration of people has occurred since the beginning of mankind. In search of better resources and living conditions, the human instinct for survival continues to push people onwards, often across continents. Much of Africa's history is based on migratory patterns, with most of the original inhabitants of Africa being nomadic hunters and gatherers, following the seasonal cattle migrations. Migration forms the backbone of Africa's history.

Only with the development of specialised skills did people start to settle in more permanent locations, creating the towns and cities we live in today. But people still frequently move to new locations in search of a better life and employment. If anything, migration is happening on a much larger scale today than ever before. With the world's urban population having just passed 50% (Landry, 2006: 19), we are inexorably leaving the rural world behind and everything in the future will be determined by the urban. This turning point is already starting to take its toll here in South Africa; cities such as Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban are growing rapidly and the reach of the cities extends far out into what was once rural.

In South Africa, the pull to the city continues unabated, fed by desperation, hope and need. Durban, in particular, is fast becoming known as a city where



**Plate 1.1.**  
(Web 3) American migrants moving to cities at the beginning of the 20th Century



**Plate 1.2.**  
(Web 19) Suburbs on the outskirts of Mexico City

migrants are more tolerated than in other South African cities. However, the stresses suffered by these people as they try to establish themselves in the unfamiliar environment are causing huge social problems in the city. This research focuses on understanding how migrants may better make the transition into the new city by aiding their psychological, social, and physical orientation.

## **1.2. The Challenges of Migration**

In today's cities that have grown and spread over time, the city appears confusing and illegible to the migrant. Way-finding and orientation becomes a near impossibility. The result is that people are often harassed, manipulated and cheated out of money and belongings whilst they attempt to settle down, establish a place of dwelling, and find employment because they do not know where to go for the help they need.

Beyond the provision of temporary housing after times of war, there has never existed a formal place where migrants can be helped to set themselves up in their new environment. There is now a need amongst the South African migrant society for such a facility to be established, especially in a society where cultural, religious, and language barriers exist and may form obstacles to those wishing to join the community of Durban. To do this, certain circumstances need to be fully grasped. These would include understanding the needs and problems faced by new city users, and how their disorientation can be eased. It would also be essential to determine what would need to be incorporated into an orientation facility at a prominent entry-point into Durban that will help orientate new-comers, and how their socio-psychological experiences of being in a state of transition could translate into an urban form and architecture that aids the orientation of people within the city.

A contradiction emerges, however, when designing for migrants; people who are in a state of movement and transition. Architecture has always been considered a permanent, immovable thing. A tangible, static object. But migrants need an architecture that expresses the psychological and physical state of movement and liminality that they are in at their time of arrival into the unfamiliar city. This is a rather unexplored aspect of architecture, but needs to be looked at in this research. Thus ways of using architecture to orientate and promote movement need to be investigated.

The research will focus on the requirements of an orientating facility in terms of scale, location and connection with the rest of the city structure, as well as how abstract elements such as interpretation of heritage and history of the city, the socio-psychological experience of migrants in the city, and the importance of cultural metaphor and ritual can be translated into an urban and architectural form within

the city. A set of recommendations for the design of a successful orientation destination facility and interactive public space for migrants to the city will be established from the investigation.

### **1.3. Hypothesis**

It is the author's belief that the urban and built environment can play a crucial role, through appropriate design, in orientating the unfamiliar person within the confusing city. Through an architecture that expresses the liminal or in between state of mind that the migrant is in, and is socially and psychologically relevant, orientation may be positively enhanced. Organizing and orientating elements that connect with the urban fabric, respond to it, and encourage movement onwards into it, can result in a designed space that aids the unfamiliar city user within the confusing environment and can potentially reduce some of the social problems amongst migrants.

By paradoxically embracing movement and liminality, migrant architecture may redefine the traditional notions of dwelling, shelter and stasis that are associated with architecture. The image of migrant architecture must be relevant to the cultural rituals, memory, metaphor and heritage of the city's occupants, but also allow for the changes that come with migration and change. Migration must be accepted as a very common way of life in the years to come, and the urban landscape and built environment must start to respond to this ever-increasing phenomenon.

### **1.4. Key Questions**

Primary key question:

How can the social and psychological perspectives and experiences of migrants translate into an architectural and urban form that makes the visitor's experience of a new city a more successful one?

A seemingly daunting task, it can be broken down and understood further by asking:

1. Who are the new-comers entering the unfamiliar city, and what are their requirements and needs upon entering?
2. What is an appropriate architectural expression for migrants to Durban?
3. How can the urban landscape and built environment capture the state of movement and transition that migrants are in, as well as provide the essential services they require?
4. How would an architectural complex respond both to movement and the unfamiliar, as well as the local setting and context of Durban?

## **1.5. Methods and Materials**

### **1.5.1. Introduction**

The research was inspired when the need for facilities that would help deal with the problems of ever-increasing numbers of migrants in Durban was brought to the attention of the author by members of the City Architecture Department towards the end of 2010. They envisaged the establishment of what they referred to as "resilience centres", that would be strategically situated at major entrances to the city of Durban, and would provide essential services to aid the transition of migrants into the City. A lack of exploration into architecture specifically for migrants (that responds to the psychological, social and physical orientation needs of migrants) was identified and then further analyzed in terms of the lack of an expression of liminality, encouragement of movement and way-finding elements in the architecture.

### **1.5.2. Primary Sources**

Informal interviews were carried out with a range of professionals, aiming to answer relevant questions and gain information about current trends in migration, locally and globally. Personnel from the City Architecture Department were approached to find out about current research about migrants in Durban, as well as prospective projects that are being developed to help promote the adaptation of migrants into the unfamiliar city.

Great difficulty was faced when finding local examples of architecture for migrants, so instead, attention was given to architecture that captures some of the elements of an appropriate architecture for migrants. The architecture would have to be transitory in some sense (i.e. be an in between place that is used by people moving from one destination to another), orientational (i.e. introducing a place and providing information about it), or allow and express movement in some way. There are only a few examples of architecture that fulfils these requirements in and around Durban. The three case studies chosen are not selected for their success, but rather to analyze which elements of them are successful, and where transitional elements could have been improved upon. They are: King Shaka International Airport, with specific emphasis on the arrivals and welcoming areas which are the areas a migrant or visitor would pass through, the transport hub of Warwick Junction in Durban which deals with high numbers of people in transit daily and is already home to hundreds of migrants, and The Tourist Junction in central Durban which deals with the orientation of tourists, who are, essentially, temporary migrants. Each of these studies deals with varying degrees of movement, liminality and orientation, but are all crucial to the introduction of people to the city of Durban. Whilst conducting these case studies, people working and visiting the buildings or areas were informally questioned regarding the effectiveness of orientation and

way-finding in the designs. Some of the answers were slightly helpful, but in general rather superficial. Instead, the atmosphere, areas designed for movement, and people's involuntary reactions to the architecture were closely observed and provided enough clues to the success of the designs.

The researched information and firsthand observations were combined to form case studies that analyze the buildings and designs in terms of liminality, gateway and transitional elements, movement and response and connection to context. All the information was then combined in a final analysis, highlighting the most pertinent findings and issues, to recommend the creation of architecture for migrants.

### **1.5.3. Secondary Sources**

The three major issues of liminality, movement and way-finding elements in architecture formed the spine for further research. Scientific research was conducted into the establishment of gateways in existential and architectural theory, the anthropological theory of liminality, modernism, deconstruction, constructivist theory and way-finding techniques as well as phenomenology and place-making theory. Contemporary authors with new understanding in migrant place-making and liminal architecture were given special attention in this rather under-researched aspect of architectural theory. This formed the basis of the literature review research, and was combined with more conventional aspects of place-making, threshold design and architectural movement devices as a means of strengthening the argument, as well as possible solutions through examples of international buildings that fulfill certain aspects that may help develop a migrant architecture.

Instead of formal interviews with leading researchers in migration to Durban, I was referred to their published documentation on problems of migrancy into Durban which thoroughly covered the subject. Books, and recent journal articles and newspapers with published information pertaining to migrants' experiences and difficulties within the city were studied. Published research in local and national government newsletters and policies were looked at as well as statistics on migrant movement and experiences in the city, numbers of migrants entering the city, and their places of origin. International examples of cities that have had success with the integration of migrants into host cities were also briefly researched to understand the difficulties faced internationally and how other local authorities and architects have dealt with encouraging integration of new city users. Findings from the research were then applied to the dissertation and an architectural solution in the context of Durban explored.

## **1.6. Chapter Outline**

This document is comprised of two parts. The first part deals with the theoretical exploration of an architecture for migrants through the research of gateways, liminal architecture, architecture that encourages mobility, and migrant place-making in a literature review and case studies, concluding with an analysis and recommendations that can be applied to an architectural design. The second part of the document leads directly to this architectural design, in this case a Migrant Orientation Centre for Durban. Issues of architectural and urban design are identified and investigated further in precedent and case studies. The client is identified and a brief formulated, whilst three possible sites for the design are looked at and compared in terms of the required urban and architectural design issues, resulting in an identification of the site.

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 which is broken up into sections.

Section one deals specifically with information collected on migrants in Africa, and in particular, Durban. The writings, research and statistics collected by Baruti Amisi (2010) of the School of Development Studies at the University of KwaZulu Natal and Maharaj and Moodley (2000) form the basis of this part of the investigation. In particular, the xenophobia problems and needs of Durban's migrants are looked at.

Section two deals with city gateways, starting off with an investigation of historical gateways into cities through the writings of Kostof (1991). This is elaborated on and contrasted with the orientating and symbolic elements of gateways through a discussion of the writings of Alexander (1977) and Phillips (2003).

Section three deals with the anthropological theory of Liminality as it relates to physical and psychological gateways and thresholds. The writings of the principal anthropologists Turner and Van Gennep (1969) are discussed and then applied to the design arts and architecture. Some initial research into the application of this theory to architecture has been carried out by Paredes (2010), Repenning (2003) and Smith (2001) and is discussed and compared in this section.

Section four investigates the influence and incorporation of movement into architecture as a means of a relevant application of the theory of Liminality into architecture. The writings of Paul Carter (2004) on Mythopoesis, Bernard Tschumi (1983) on Sequences (which forms a part of Deconstruction) are then

applied in a more practical manner to the exploration and design of threshold devices and activated surfaces by Unwin (2007) and Stickells (2010).

Section five builds on the idea that even migrants require place-making and buildings that they can identify with. Based on the psychological interaction of the user with the environment, the writings of Lynch (1972), Norberg-Schulz (1971) and Carmona (2003) are compared and built upon each other to investigate existential and architectural meaning. The theory of Constructivism as a means of creating an engaging and orientating place as discussed by Resnick and Chi (2002) is explored along with its application to the Contextual Model created by Falk and Dierking (2002). This is compared with similar models and ideas by the Project for Public Spaces (2010) and Barbeau (2007).

Chapter four analyses three case studies. These are, King Shaka International Airport, the Tourist Junction, and Warwick Junction. All three are in Durban.

Chapter five draws on the information discussed in the literature review and the case studies to analyze the issues of liminality, mobility and migrant place-making in architecture for migrants.

Chapter six draws conclusions with regards to the theoretical side of this research and provides recommendations for the appropriate design for migrants that would capture aspects of liminality, mobility and orientation in the transitional architecture.

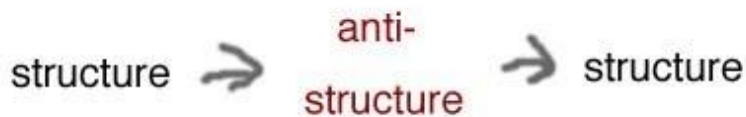
## CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The idea of an architecture, form, or space that may aid and enhance the experience of the migrant in a period of change is what stimulates this research. The social and psychological state of mind and experiences of migrants needs to be investigated to explore how an architectural and urban design intervention could aid the migrant in his or her orientation within the unfamiliar city. The theoretical framework aims to "unbox" the psychological, social and physical issues of migrant place-making.

### 2.1. Liminality

A migrant is in an in between state when he chooses to leave his place of origin and find a new home. Geographically and physically he is no longer part of his home town or land, but he is also not yet a citizen of his chosen host city. Socially, he no longer has the same social status that he had at home, but instead has to reestablish himself in the new town and psychologically adapt and understand his new home city. Whilst he comes to grips with his new life, he is in period of transition. The period of transition that new-comers to the city experience when entering a new environment draws strong parallels with the anthropological and psychological theory of liminality.

Charles Kurr van Gennep, an ethnographer, introduced the concept of "liminality" in his book, *Rites of Passage* (1909), to describe this time in which people are on the threshold of entering a new phase in their life, having left the previous one behind (Turner, 1969: 94-95). It is the spot between one structure and another structure. Victor Turner (1969) defined this phase as ambiguous and where rules and traditional hierarchy no longer apply in the usual ways. However, with time, you eventually pass from the state of liminality into a new structure. A study of this theory would help in understanding the state of mind and needs of new-comers in transition, and aid in the generation of an architecture for orientation of new-comers into

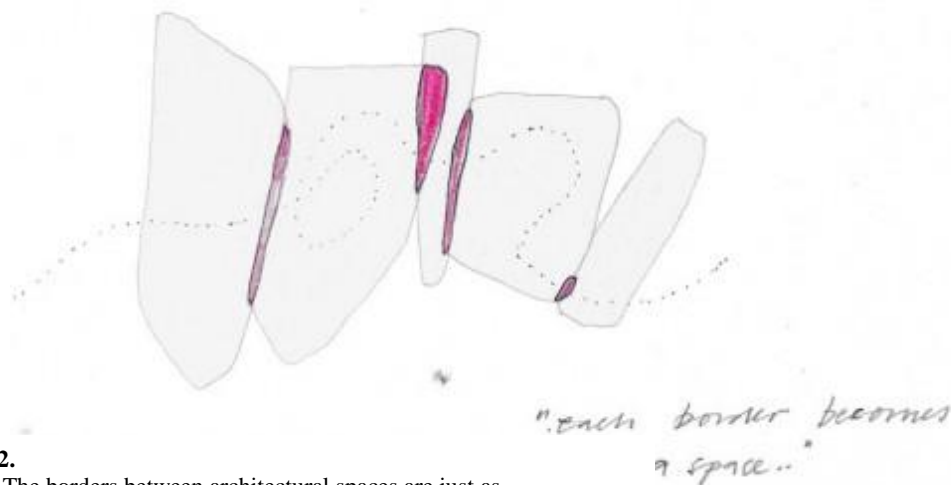


**Figure 2.1.**

(Web 31) Liminality is described as the area between one structure and another

The liminality that the migrant experiences is one of disorientation when entering the unfamiliar city environment. This period of "limbo" associated with liminality is the period in which people make

adjustments to adapt to the lifestyle, status or environment of the unfamiliar city where their existing identity dissolves and a new one is formed. The concept of liminality is closely linked with ritual society, folklore and culture with physical symbols, actions and objects that are used symbolically to represent the different liminal phases (Turner, 1969: 95). In the same way, architectural space may start to represent the liminal phases that migrants are in. It is not an easy thing to take a social and psychological state of mind that is indeterminate and marginal and translate it into a tangible space. Thus the basic elements of liminality need to be looked at in terms of architectural and urban space, although this may seem paradoxical. The traditional notion of architectural space as an independent container defined by walls and openings needs to be re-examined. It is essential to see the city as being made up of separate architectural spaces that are all connected. The borders between them are just as important as the spaces the borders define. By carefully defining these borders, thresholds and gateways, the liminal spaces can start to reflect the liminal status of the migrants' minds.



**Figure 2.2.**  
(Web 24) The borders between architectural spaces are just as important as the spaces they define. These are transitional or liminal spaces.

Although an anthropological theory dealing rather with people and the stages and processes in their lives, the theory of liminality was the conceptual starting point for this thesis on which all other research was based. Liminal space needed to be investigated in two ways: firstly as a spatial environment that encourages movement, defines the state of the 'in between' and aids psychological and physical transition. Secondly, to avoid the creation of structureless, anonymous space that speaks to everyone but no one in particular. For this, the relationship between the liminal entity and the liminal space needed to be understood: how can a space that is previously undefined, and transient, be made into a meaningful space for undefined, transient people?

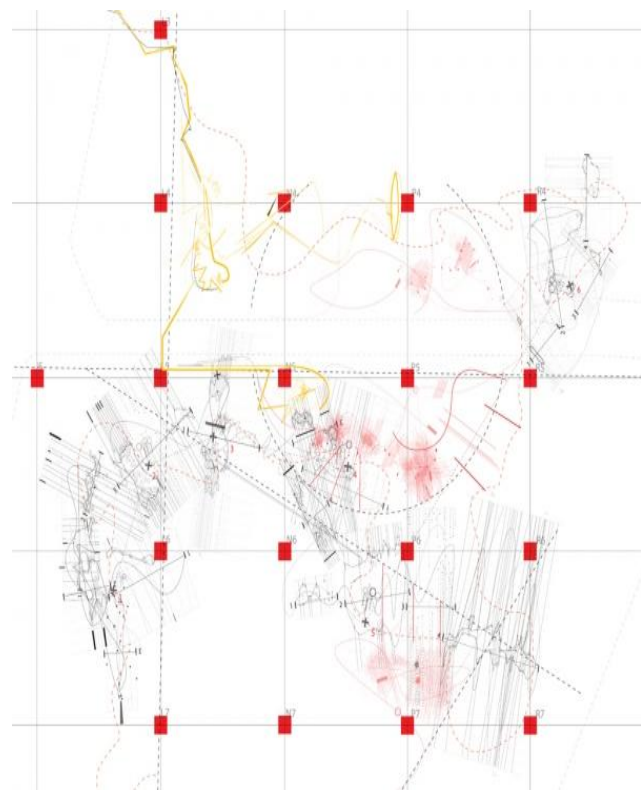
## 2.2. Mobility and Transition

Liminality is closely associated with the movement from one place to another; the journey between places. Thus it makes sense to incorporate ideas that encourage movement through the urban landscape and on into the city, into architecture for migrants. The physical make-up of the architecture itself remains static, but by creating links and visual movement patterns within and between the spaces created by the architecture, movement can be motivated.

Paul Carter (2004, in Cairns, 2004: 84) believes that mobility and migration can bring about the creation of unique spaces. According to him, migrants create places in two different ways: from the subjectivity of the migrants themselves built around nostalgia and actual circular journeys between homeland and host-land, and when people anchor themselves by means of "stopping-off" at places which are constructed to still encourage further movement and transition. The second type is what this research delves into to enable the migrant to have a place where he or she feels they belong and can identify themselves in. Although created as a result of movement, this is a place that allows migrants to feel grounded.

According to Wallace (in Cairns, 2004: 85), the successful creation of a place for migrants depends on the capturing of the *Genius Loci* as well as placing some sort of ordering grid on the site that all may relate to. There must be a close relationship between the linear grid and the curvilinear in the existing landscape.

Paul Carter (2004, in Cairns, 2004: 92) links the idea of movement traces in the landscape to the theoretical concept of Mythopoesis to develop a migrant place-making technique. This uses myth and the historical past to inscribe what has gone before, rather than erasing it. Usually it depicts a specific time of crisis and upheaval (such as migration) within the developing community. The creation of meaningful tracks allows people to walk and migrate where others have walked before them.



**Figure 2.3.**  
(Web 16) A notated, gestural drawing juxtaposes an ordering linear grid with the curvilinear aspects of the existing landscape fabric

Another way of using tracks and movement to create mobility in architecture can be seen in the architectural theory of Deconstruction as explored by Bernard Tschumi (1983: 31) in an area of his research related to sequences. Initiated by his observations of sequential film images in the 1970's, Tschumi explores the relationship between events, architectural spaces and transitional devices of a sequential nature. According to Tschumi (1983: 31), architecture is just as importantly linked to event and action as it is to space and form. Sequences can be used to lay out spaces, and as a method of grouping spaces to encourage movement and orientation. Linked to ritual, the experience of movement through the sequentially structured spaces creates a route of the whole, rather than importance placed on individual steps of the journey. However, importance should also be placed in the designing of discrete architectural elements that enable transition through the whole sequence, such as threshold details and surfaces that allow for movement. Each of these transitional elements is a border or threshold that helps to emphasise the sequence even more. This gap becomes a space of its own and must be designed as such.



La Villette - Bernard Tschumi

**Figure 2.4.**  
(Web 10) Sequences carefully structured along pedestrian routes through the Parc de la Villette

Deconstructivist designs place an emphasis on disorder and the creation of "non-places". Tschumi (in Lang, 2005: 106) believes that by having no links to historical precedent or the surrounding city fabric, a "non-place" is more likely to be explored by the migrant and allow them to use the space as they desire.

Instead of being prescriptive in the way visitors may use the spaces, the architecture becomes a frame for culture and interaction. Whilst this does encourage movement and exploration, architecture designed in this manner is often criticised for its lack of sensitivity to human scale and context. We return here to Wallace's ideas that sequences and organising elements in migrant place-making should be accompanied by a response and sensitivity to the *Genius Loci* and contextual environment.

### **2.3. Psychology of Space**

Through a response to *Genius Loci* and the contextual environment, architecture may respond to other more psychological needs of migrants in the host-city: the need for a temporary dwelling and place of orientation where they feel connected to the city. The two notions of migrancy and place-making, however, do seem to contradict each other. Migrancy deals with movement, change and transition, whilst place-making links with the Western concept of dwelling (explored largely by Heidegger), based on permanence and grounding. However, it is recognised that amongst all migrant communities there is a desire to create a home-place in their host-cities, and to feel rooted and stable in times of upheaval.

Martin Heidegger's thoughts lead to a more unitary notion of "being", and focus on the spatial quality of containment by which architecture demarcates a place. To understand the psychological and sub-conscious impact of architecture on the new city user, one needs to explore these more fluid and ephemeral qualities in the urban context, and understand the impact that certain spaces have on the built environment. This in turn would aid the design to create an architecture that teaches new-comers who are in a state of disorientation about the city (Nesbitt, 1996: 440-442).

Christian Norberg-Schulz interprets Heidegger's thoughts further in his own work that examines the phenomenology of architecture. He identifies phenomenology's potential in architecture as the ability to make the environment meaningful, and in this case meaningful to new people in the city through the creation of specific places (Nesbitt, 1996: 412-414). Kevin Lynch (1972: 7) also investigates the meaningful relationship between people and their surrounding environment, and how this may help people perceive the new city positively. The "environmental image" is the product of a person's immediate sensation and the memory of past experience. Recognising one's surroundings, one remembers an ordered environment which serves as a broad frame of reference and helps to organise activity, belief and knowledge. It also plays a social role, furnishing our minds with raw material for the symbols and collective memories of group communication. This helps establish a sense of emotional security and wellbeing.

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The architecture and spaces provided should also serve an educational purpose that helps inform the new city user of the identity, character and cultures of the city, as well as the more practical services, orientation and ways of society and economy. Educational theories and the Constructivist theory which investigate the most successful ways of educating are researched. These theories are based on the premise that learning is situated as a dialogue between the individual and their environment which in turn means that architecture and the experience of form and space directly influences the success of learning. The Constructivist theory in particular provides a useful avenue of research into the context that affects learning. By understanding and enhancing the personal, socio-cultural and physical contexts in a particular design area, successful engagement, experience and learning can be encouraged (Resnick & Chi, 1992: 80).

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## CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW

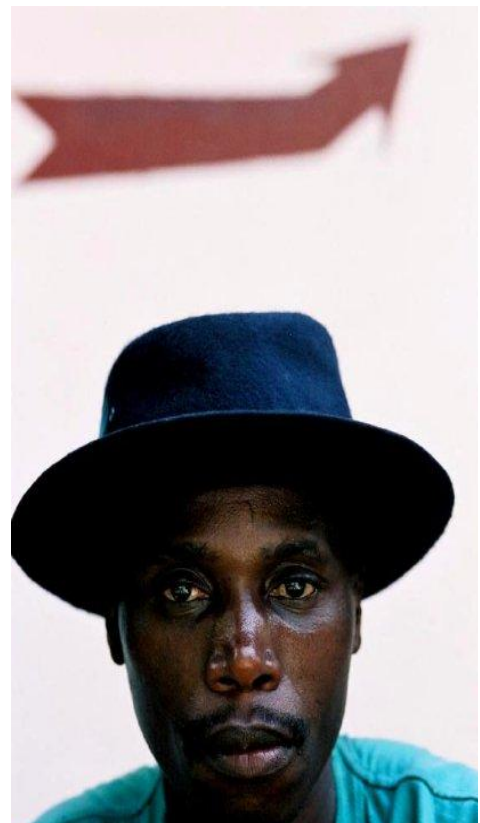
### 3.1. MIGRATION TO DURBAN

Migrants face particular problems in their host countries and cities. The situation that migrants face in Durban is unique to the area, therefore the city needs to create an orientation centre that caters for these people's needs.

#### 3.1.1. Who are Durban's Migrants?

According to Baruti Amisi of the School of Development Studies at the University of KwaZulu Natal, "Migrants" can be defined as people who move between nations, or within their own country (Amisi, 2010).

In the context of this research, the word migrant refers to an individual who moves from one location, country, or region to another by "chance, instinct, or plan". This includes refugees and asylum seekers. Migrants are either legal or illegal, depending on their financial capital and the method of gaining entry to the host country (Amisi, 2010: 6).



**Plate 3.1. & 3.2.**

(Web 23) Photographs of migrants in Durban taken by photographer, Peter Mckenzie

Durban is one of four major cities in South Africa, and as such has seen a rapid increase of migrants from other parts of KwaZulu-Natal to the region over the past two decades. Often referred to as one of the

fastest growing cities in the world, Durban's socio-economic problems are typical of the country, with the delivery of housing and the creation of employment being the most dire. There are also high levels of crime and violence in the region resulting in inhibited investment and disruptions to development projects. The development crisis in the Durban region is illustrated by the rapid population growth rate, housing backlogs, unemployment rate, and an inadequate supply of basic services to the majority of the population (Maharaj & Moodley, 2000: 151).

Durban was never traditionally a city of in-migration from outside the country. Whilst migrants from Lesotho, Swaziland and Mozambique have worked for many years in secondary industry in the Durban region, most return home at the end of their migrant careers. The 1990's however, witnessed three major changes in African migration to Durban. Firstly, the number of immigrants in Durban from other African countries, legal and unauthorized, increased. Secondly, the number of source countries for immigrants has grown to encompass the entire continent (see Table 6.1.). Thirdly, many of Durban's immigrants did not come directly to the city from their home countries and areas (Maharaj & Moodley, 2000: 151).

Table 1	
Country of Origin of Surveyed Immigrants	%
<b>SADC</b>	
Angola	2
Botswana	3
DRC	9
Lesotho	3
Malawi	6
Mozambique	17
Namibia	4
Swaziland	3
Tanzania	8
Zambia	5
Zimbabwe	6
<b>Non-SADC</b>	
Algeria	1
Burundi	2
Ghana	7
Kenya	7
Nigeria	5
Senegal	7
Uganda	3
N = 100	
Note: Columns may not add up to 100% due to rounding	

**Table 3.1.**  
(Maharaj & Moodley, 2000)  
Country of origin of surveyed migrants: The percentages of different immigrants living in Durban.

Almost half of the immigrants interviewed in Durban had been in one or more intermediary countries *en route* to South Africa, with many living in Zimbabwe, Swaziland, and Zambia before moving to this country. Over eighty per-cent spent less than two years in the transit country. This stepwise migration is also replicated once migrants arrive in South Africa, with many migrants first trying to establish themselves in Johannesburg and Cape Town before moving on to Durban (Maharaj & Moodley, 2000: 152).

Most migrants made their entry into South Africa via the land border and legal points of entry, especially the border posts with Mozambique and Swaziland. Whilst Durban's port and international airport do provide easy access, most people do not use these to enter Durban. This is because most immigrants come to Durban via other South African towns and cities.

Up until 1996 when the first census after the end of the apartheid regime was conducted, South African censuses

failed to record migration data such as the place and timing of migratory moves within and to the country. South Africa's population densities and movement are unique in that they are not related to the extent of urbanization, but are still severely influenced by restrictions enforced during the years of apartheid. The *Group Areas Act, Act No. 41 of 1950*, a segregationist policy passed during Apartheid, restricted certain population groups to certain areas. The result was that the population was very unevenly distributed, with densities greatly varying between and within provinces. In the former designated homelands, these comparatively undeveloped rural areas had the highest population densities in the country. This factor still severely influences migration patterns today. (Kok, O'Donovan, Bouare and Van Zyl, 2003: 1-2).

### 3.1.2. Reasons for Migration

The choice to migrate is not lightly made. It is the decision that must change the lives of whole families and households. It is taken for granted that most people choose to migrate for economic reasons, however there are also major non-economic factors that play a part. Migration is expected to take place from low-wage rural areas to urban heartlands. In South Africa, labour migrants are also seen to be primarily black males (a long association stemming from the days of migrant mine workers). The dominance in the belief that economics is the main cause of migration has resulted in a strong association of migrants with poverty (Kok *et al.*, 2003: 19).

	%
Find employment	70
Escape war/conflict	10
Study	7
Business	5
Find/live with relatives/friends	4
Poverty at home	2
Live in a democratic country	2
N = 100	

	%
More job opportunities	40
Relatives/friends in Durban	19
Safer/less violent	16
Better business opportunities	4
Climate/scenery	5
Forced to move	4
Cheaper accommodation	2
More study opportunities	2
Easy to integrate	2
Other	6
N = 100	

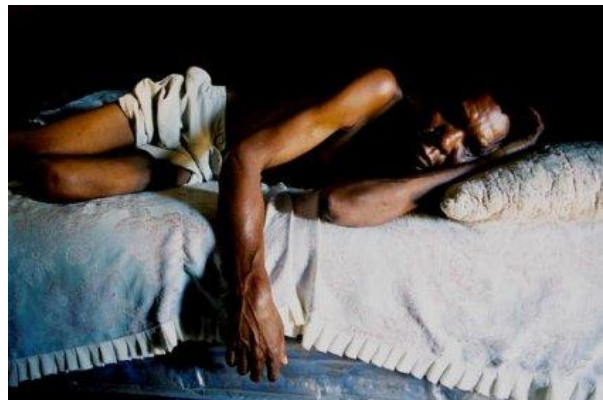
Economic motives are, however, the main pull-factor for immigrants. According to surveys done, seventy percent of migrants come to South Africa to find employment (see Table 6.2.). Another ten percent are refugees, and seven percent come to South Africa to further their studies. Once in South Africa, their further migration to Durban in particular is prompted by a greater variety of factors, but all involved a perception of Durban being better than where they were living (see Table 6.3.). About forty-four percent moved to Durban because of better job and business prospects. Nineteen percent cited social networks as the primary reason for their move.

**Table 3.2 & 3.3.**  
(Maharaj & Moodley, 2000) Tables showing reasons for migration to South Africa and Durban respectively

Several migrants have found levels of violence and crime and the threat to personal security lower in Durban in comparison to other South African cities. People in Durban were found to be friendlier towards foreigners and state policing more benign. Durban's favourable and enabling economic environment, as well as the relative tolerance towards foreigners, has made it a popular destination for onward migrants (Maharaj & Moodley, 2000: 154).

### 3.1.3. Problems Faced by Migrants

Migrants generally choose environments in which to live that are conducive to adaptation, integration, and assimilation into the local community. Up to seventy-seven percent of the migrants interviewed in the survey stated that they had "*adapted to life in Durban*". More than half lived in informal dwellings rented from South Africans, either in backyards of formal houses, or in informal settlements. Another one-third lived in inner city flats. Sixty percent of migrants reported cordial relationships between migrants and locals in the workplace. On the other hand, forty percent reported that the relationship was hostile. This is a problem that will be looked at more closely later on, as this is one of the key issues that the Orientation Centre will deal with. Adaptation to the new environment is essential, especially considering that most migrants are unenthusiastic about returning home and see South Africa, and Durban in particular, as their permanent residence (Maharaj & Moodley, 2000: 154).



**Plate 3.3. & 3.4.**

(Web 23) Photographs of migrants in their poor living conditions, Durban, taken by photographer, Peter Mckenzie

No matter how little they earn, immigrants tend not to complain about high housing rates despite high levels of exploitation and poor living conditions, and for the most part they are reliable tenants. Housing is one of the major challenges that migrants face, as one Mozambican informant put it:

*We don't want to talk about our landlord. But, no I am not happy with this room. Look how small it is. Yesterday it was raining, and the roof was leaking,*

*as you can see that spot on the floor. The room is not only small, but also dirty, look at the mud on the floor. I have a single bed here, nothing else. I keep my suitcase on my bed because there is no space for it in here. The room can accommodate only the bed. Look at the door, it's not even safe living here. But I pay R350 per month. But what can I do? The only good thing here is that, as you can see, we are all from Mozambique here, so we feel that sense of community... yes, but you see, I cannot live anywhere else, I don't want to leave my fellow countrymen here. It's safer. Besides, my salary is not so good. I get R50 a day. So I cannot afford a better place anywhere else. I have a family at home. I get R1200 per month. I take half of that home, and use the rest for rent and food here (Amisi, 2010: 9).*

As “aliens” in an unfamiliar environment, migrants are faced with many other challenges too. These need to be explored to understand and design for the services and support required in the orientation centre. One of the main problems surrounding migrants is that they are seen as a negative economic threat to South Africans; a problem not only unique to South Africa. Worldwide, immigrants are stigmatized as people who undermine economic development and take jobs that would otherwise be taken by locals. The opposite, however, may also be argued. International experience suggests that immigrants actually contribute to the economic development of their host countries:

*“skilled immigrants invest savings and add entrepreneurial talent to the economy, while unskilled immigrants accept jobs unwanted by resident workers” (Maharaj & Moodley, 2000: 150).*

The already existing major problems of a lack of infrastructure create a disgruntled local community, and the increasing number of migrants not only puts further pressure on housing and essential services, but gives locals someone to pin the blame on.

As already stated, most migrants come to Durban in search of better economic prospects. Most of Durban's immigrants are young, male adults with a reasonable level of education and are relatively well placed in the job market. However, South African formal sector unemployment is high, with unemployment rates in the thirty to forty percent range. Therefore, whilst immigrants seem to find no difficulty in finding casual or regular employment, the majority find that they have very little opportunity to utilize their skills and experience, and given their “illegal” status, they have no choice but to take any job that is available in order to survive (Maharaj & Moodley, 2000: 155)

Table 4 Immigrant Employment by Sector	
	%
Casual work	28
Restaurant	12
Manufacturing	10
Construction	8
Domestic service	6
Butchery	5
Filling station	4
Retail	3
Taxi	3
Unemployed	12
Other	9
N = 100	

**Table 3.4.** (Maharaj & Moodley, 2000) Table showing the different types of employment for immigrants in Durban

Most immigrants find employment (or are self-employed) in the informal sector. The main businesses that migrants work in are hair salons, supermarkets, taxis, shoe repairs, carpentry, and welding. In the survey, almost half of the immigrants obtained their present jobs through networks and associations they had established. However, wages are very low. Whilst the state may not tax the immigrants, most of them are undocumented and many have admitted to paying bribes to Home Affairs officials, the police, and “persons unknown”. Most bribes were under R300, but a few were over R1000. Low wages and the costs of victimization leave many immigrants with limited disposable income. This is unfortunate for those many migrants who still try to send money home to their family in their home countries (Maharaj & Moodley, 2000: 157).

Many employers believe it is cheaper to employ migrants than locals as the former are prepared to work long hours. They are willing to work hard and they contribute to increased production in some businesses. However, most employers avoid registration and the provision of benefits to immigrants, therefore they are vulnerable to retrenchment whenever business is poor. Migrants do not belong to unions and local unions are often hostile to the migrants who are seen to be taking the jobs of South Africans (Maharaj & Moodley, 2000: 157).

Life in Durban is uncertain and precarious for many immigrants. As undocumented migrants they are always vulnerable to arrest, deportation or extortion. As many as twenty-eight percent cited crime and violence as their primary reason for disliking Durban, sixteen percent cited racial and ethnic differences with the inhabitants and fifteen percent South African hostility. They are also denied access to certain jobs and are therefore limited to casual jobs for which they are not trained or skilled. As a result of their irregular employment status, migrants are subject to high levels of exploitation and lead a tenuous existence exacerbated by the absence of employment contracts and benefits.

### 3.1.4. Xenophobia

Although there is more tolerance towards migrants in Durban than there is elsewhere in South Africa, the majority of migrants believe that South Africans are hostile. Xenophobia is the biggest threat that migrant communities face in their new homes in South Africa. Xenophobia refers to “*unfounded and unverified fears concerning foreigners; it inclines people to stereotype foreigners as the cause of certain social and economic problems that are being experienced in the host country*” (Abisi, 2010: 8).



**Plate 3.5.**  
(Web 23)  
A local lady's reaction to a migrant trader, photograph taken by Peter Mckenzie

According to Maharaj and Rajkumar (1997 in Abisi, 2010: 8), xenophobia has developed and intensified because of the high expectations of the poverty-stricken masses and the inability of the new democratic government to deliver:

*“the enemy was no longer the apartheid state, but foreigners who were undermining and exploiting local opportunities”* (Maharaj & Moodley, 2000: 159)

Xenophobia also thrives when there is competition for employment, and immigrants “become tempting scapegoats for alienated citizens” (Maharaj & Moodley, 2000: 159).

The South African government has not aided the migrant’s plight by devising plans to root out unauthorized migrants by playing on the fears and phobias of South Africans. Existing xenophobic rhetoric and the subsequent attacks on foreigners that occurred in South Africa in 2008 may have begun with politicians’ anti-immigration speeches, and can be traced to leadership decisions (or vacuums) as well as to explicit discourses in both the apartheid and post-apartheid era governments. Politicians everywhere have long utilised divide-and-rule strategies and, in South Africa, the history of organized,

top-down xenophobia includes an appeal made by the then Prime Minister, Jan Smuts, to Parliament in the 1930s:

*“We will prevent aliens from entering this land in such quantities as would alter the texture of our civilization. We intend to determine ourselves, the composition of our people. [...] South Africa runs the danger of being flooded by undesirable elements of all kinds [...] Owing to the extent of the borders of our country, it is easy for aliens to enter from Angola, from Bechuana-land and from Southern Rhodesia or from Lourenço Marques. [...] We know that there are a great number of aliens in this country who are not legally here”* (Amisi, 2010: 26).

In the same spirit, the first post-apartheid Home Affairs Minister, Mangosuthu Buthelezi, made the following claim (without supporting documents) to the National Parliament in 1997:

*“With an illegal population estimated at between 2.5 million and 5 million, it is obvious that the socio-economic resources of the country, which are under severe strain as it is, are further being burdened by the presence of illegal aliens. [...] Citizens should] aid the Department and the South African Police Services in the detection, prosecution and removal of illegal aliens from the country. [...] The cooperation of the community is required in the proper execution of the Department’s functions”* (Amisi, 2010: 17).

The worst period of xenophobic violence South Africa has experienced was in May – June 2008, with 62 people including 21 South Africans killed, 670 wounded, dozens of women raped, at least 100, 000 people displaced, and property worth millions of rands looted. This was followed by a period of latent hostility to immigrants, some of which manifested in attacks during ‘service delivery protests’ in small cities across the country, as well as an explicit January 2009 attack on a United Nations place of Safety in Durban, and dozens more incidents (mainly in the Western Cape and Gauteng) immediately after the World Cup ended in July 2010 (Amisi, 2010: 1).

One of the more infamous cases in Durban during intense incidents of xenophobia in early 2009 was the killing of a Zimbabwean and a Tanzanian by a mob led by a city councillor who pushed the men out of a sixth floor window at the Venture Africa building in Albert Park. Durban’s Central Business District was affected with xenophobic violence recorded in Albert Park to the south to Warwick Junction trading area in the northwest.

Whilst Warwick Junction is one of the most ethnically varied areas in the Durban informal economy, the major confrontation between local and foreign traders did not happen here. Traders, both local and foreign, have shown unity when the Municipality has tried to close the Early Morning Market. Warwick Junction presents challenges to the traders and foreign traders in particular because of competition over trading space, willingness or refusal to pay rental to the eThekweni Municipality, trading in perceived stolen goods, and retail business competition (Maharaj & Moodley, 2000: 11).

Originally, non-South Africans did not have any right to trade in the Warwick Junction area and were threatened with removal. The Siyagunda Association consisting of 242 barbers in the area, many of them foreigners, appealed to City Officials and finally gained trading permits (Amisi, 2010: 11). Since then, trade conducted by immigrants has grown in Warwick Junction. However, competition over space, retail prices, and customers creates potential for conflicts among non-South African traders and between the latter and local traders. According to a Congolese trader (cited directly):

*“Ethiopians represent the first group of traders who kill our business. They sell goods to us in bulk and then they begin to sell per unit below the price that we bought the goods from them. As result, we do not sell. Remember that we do not work like Pick ‘n pay, Cheecker, or SPAR which retail items for producers. When the products e.g. bread or apples expire, the producers are paid from the quantities sold. The rest is a loss to the producers non- retailers. We buy once for all. If I do not sell, I lose... All traders are not happy with Ethiopians and Somali traders. I do not really know what will happen one day...”*



**Plate 3.6.**  
(Web 23) Herb Traders' Market Warwick Junction, photograph taken by Peter Mckenzie



**Plate 3.7.**  
(Web 23) One of the migrant traders, Warwick Junction, photograph taken by Peter Mckenzie

*Somalis, the second group of traders, work like Ethiopians. They are also destroying other people market niches.*

*Let me give an example. I sell on the streets. I used to sell my goods in bulk from a Somali shop owner at R45 per unit. I would like to sell it at R55 or R60. After buying at R45 per unit from Somali trader, he/she will resell the remaining goods at R30 per unit. Obviously, buyers will go to Somali and Ethiopians traders rather than buying from me. That is why traders in the formal and informal economy are not happy with the two nationalities...*

*The two groups of traders are so powerful that they own several businesses around the market, and in streets other than West and Smith they own up to 60% of businesses. South Africans have only 40 percent except big brands like Edgars, Woolworth, and others. The two nationalities are so powerful in this business that even Chinese are buying from them rather than importing all their goods from China...” (Amisi, 2010: 11).*

### **3.1.5. Durban’s Xenophobic Awareness**

Migrants have been both individually and collectively active in creating awareness about the challenges they face in South Africa and in lobbying different strata of the South African community to be compassionate and supportive when it comes to the migrants’ struggle to rebuild their shattered lives. Individually, refugees continue to highlight the challenges they face on a daily basis in terms of their lack of access to proper identification documents, primary health care, decent jobs, and family planning. However, their livelihood strategies are often compounded by the difficult task of acquiring trading permits and business sites in the informal sector. Nevertheless, migrants try to integrate themselves into their host community through, but not limited to, intermarriage, friendship, and moving to townships where the majority of poor live (Abisi, 2010: 13).

Some migrant groups have established organisations to deal with xenophobia. These include the Schooling Solidarity for Women and Children Project (SSWC), the Refugee Women’s Forum Project (RWP), the Refugee Pastoral Care Project, the Union of Refugee Women, the Siyagunda Association, and the KwaZulu-Natal Refugee Council (KZNRC). The groups are founded on various principles; some of the groups are origin-country-specific whilst others represent several nationalities. A number are non-political and non-religious, whereas others are shaped by religious beliefs and memberships. Some are gender-centric whereas others are more inclusive. However, almost all share the same weaknesses: divisiveness, self-interest, and mistrust among and between migrant communities. The strength of these

communities is derived from members' diversity, divergent skills and experiences, which could assist these communities in achieving their goals.

During the 2008 xenophobic attacks, Durban civil society organizations emerged to address the crisis (Amisi, 2010). Most visible were the churches of various denominations which took in displaced people, housing and feeding them, sometimes for weeks at a time and with limited facilities and resources. The Red Cross took on the role of collecting, coordinating and delivering material aid in the form of food, clothing and basic hygiene supplies. They were supported largely by student volunteers and donations from the public, though they did receive financial support from the eThekweni Disaster Management fund. Most organizations first acted in the belief that the City of Durban and the provincial government would step in and lead the efforts. When this did not occur, efforts became haphazard, often overlapping and largely undocumented. The Red Cross was mainly supported by donations from members of the public and help from three networks in particular. These were, firstly: the **Durban Refugee Service Providers Network (RSPN)**, which worked on material relief alongside the main representatives of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees which provided Human Rights Lawyers and Social Services during the crisis period. Secondly the **Durban Action Against Xenophobia (DAAX)**, which originated as a group of students and lecturers who rallied via Facebook and volunteered their time to stand with trolleys at local shopping centres to collect and deliver goods to and from the Red Cross headquarters. Thirdly the **Coalition Against Xenophobia, Racism, Ethnicism, and Poverty (CAXREP)** was formed, which was a more politicized body).

Xenophobia is an ongoing battle and there are organizations in place to help migrants. Most of the organizations respond to xenophobia by providing legal advice, playing an advocacy role, providing material support (although limited) and helping to educate and train migrants. There has also been an attempt by groups to promote integration through inclusive membership of immigrants and South Africans, through programs that assist migrant and South African orphans together and through activities that bring together South African and other African youth. One program called Afri-South even provides computer training, English, and sewing lessons to anyone (including locals) to help them develop skills and possibly find or create a job for themselves. However, most of these organizations fail to achieve most of their objectives due to a lack of support, funding and antagonism and competition amongst the different migrant groups (Amisi, 2010: 11-13).

### **3.1.6. Tension Amongst Migrants**

The migrant community has many weaknesses that hamper efforts to reduce xenophobia, three of which will be addressed because they are at the root of all the others. First of all, there is a lack of trust between different migrant communities and ethnicities. Migrants leave their home countries for various reasons. However, all migrants monitor the social, economic and political developments in their home countries; sometimes migrants might be exiled politicians or have networks with government officials, or else be connected with the official opposition. Thus any development in migrant-sending countries sends shockwaves to the migrant communities living in host countries. In other words, political tension or reconciliation at home may hinder or strengthen ties between migrants in exile.

Secondly, exploitation and abuse is rife among the migrant community. Exploitative practices also include those that are accepted by the recipient and are, in this sense, 'voluntary' rather than 'forced'. Sexual exploitation, for example, affects females more negatively than it does their male counterparts and it frequently results in pregnancies, which increase women's dependency on men (Crisp, 2002 in Amisi, 2010). Sexual exploitation contributes also towards the spread of HIV/AIDS, and many of these children will end up living on the streets. This situation is particularly disturbing as women can be powerful agents of change in addition to being primary caregivers. Other exploitative practices include irregular and/or low wages, and child labour. Thirdly, there is a general lack of commitment among the migrant community to the cause of the poor and to providing the funds necessary to deal with xenophobic violence. Wealthy migrants, whether they have South African citizenship or not, have to some extent lost their migrant identity and any interest in migrant-related issues. They are therefore uninterested in investing money in migrant causes (Amisi, 2010: 13-15).

### **3.1.7. Conclusion**

It is apparent from the investigations that Durban's migrants and immigrants are ill-catered for. Up until now, there has been very little intervention from the municipality and government to aid them, and Durban's civil society has only been partially successful in organizing short-term crisis response. No long-term solutions have been created. Responses and possible solutions need to be established, and these are the problems that an orientation centre for migrants and immigrants will have to address.

Problems that need to be dealt with in the design of an orientation centre are:

- The lack of initial shelter or housing and the establishment of social connections in the local community
- The provision of basic services such as water, ablutions, and food

- The lack of education and training to help with the learning of the local language, customs and economics
- The lack of economic opportunities in the form of development of basic skills, and provision of trading spaces
- The lack of expression and sharing of cultural beliefs and traditions by migrants and immigrants
- The provision of legal and union services

The major barriers to unity amongst migrants are the different migrant communities' divergent interests and mistrust within and between these communities. This is because there is often a fear of the unknown amongst people who do not know each other and see each other as different. Their differences need to be transcended so as to build a strong and responsible organization that can promote the development of its members and community. This can only be achieved by education and the sharing of ideas, experiences and cultures by migrants.

It is generally agreed that reintegration is the only realistic solution to the problem of xenophobia and anti-migrant behavior. Up until now, not enough has been done to engage displaced people and community members in education, response and reintegration proposals. This cannot be successful without engagement with “host” communities and well-facilitated dialogue between communities and migrants.

## 3.2. CITY GATEWAYS

### 3.2.1. People on the Move: Entering Today's Cities

*"At the end of 2007, there were more people living in towns than in the countryside... In 2030, they will account for 60 % of the world's population. Most of them will be living in developing countries. But if there are more and more megacities, there are also more shanty towns where about a third of city inhabitants live."* (Web 19).

Migration is not a new occurrence. It is a process with which the human race is very familiar as most of our ancestors were migratory before they came to develop specialised skills and settle in more permanent locations creating the towns and cities we live in today. People frequently move to new locations in search of a better life and employment. With the world's urban population having just passed 50% (Landry, 2006: 19), we are inexorably leaving the rural world behind and everything in the future will be determined by the urban. This turning point is already starting to take its toll here in South Africa; cities such as Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban are growing rapidly and the reach of the cities extends far out into what was once rural. For example, the perceptual reach and physical impact of London stretches seventy kilometers in all directions and the same is true for even smaller settlements; each has a catchment area or dynamic pull around itself. Our entry into the city actually starts far beyond the recognisable borders laid out on maps. When these magnetic maelstroms and catchments are added



**Plate 3.8.**

(Web 3) American migrants moving to cities at the beginning of the 20th Century



**Plate 3.9.**

(Web 19) Suburbs on the outskirts of Mexico City

together, nearly nothing is left of what was once called nature; the overarching aura is the city (Landry, 2006: 20).

In the developing world, which South Africa forms a part of, the pull to the city continues unabated, fed by desperation, hope and need. We are witnessing the largest movement of people in history. Waves upon waves of migrants are entering the city and the vast majority are poor. The psychological stress and trauma suffered by these people as they try to establish themselves in the unfamiliar and hostile environment causes social problems in our cities. Increasing numbers of people have also led to a demand for more dwelling space, so existing settlements expand and new ones emerge. Empty space becomes ever more scarce. Open space is rapidly developed and new estates are built with an ever-expanding physical infrastructure, whilst roads are widened to cater for the increasing number of cars. The impact of the intensification of land use and movement is dramatic resulting in the erosion of the distinction between the natural and built environment. The once well-defined route and entry point into the city is no longer so easily distinguishable (Landry, 2006: 23-24).

### **3.2.2. A City Gateway**

Historically, cities were usually walled with gateways situated at strategic points as a method of controlling entry into and exit from the city. They would normally mark the intersection of a major transport route with the edge of the city and help orientate one within an unfamiliar environment. Gateways into cities still exist today, but perform a new role. They are no longer mechanisms of control, but rather act as symbolic entrances into the city.

Various elements are widely understood to make an entry into a city successful. Physically, an entry point should celebrate termination, meeting and entry in the vertical form and create a public gathering space that introduces you to the city. These nodes also need to capture the image and identity of the city and encourage the viewer to physically take part in the entry into a new space. At this point new city users should also be able to obtain help in their orientation of the city. The node should inform people of the various public facilities available in the city to ensure their awareness of the services that would aid them in their relocation. The node should also read as a clear architectural and spatial language that is relevant to all people moving through it. To do this, the image it creates should sum up abstract elements that define the city and have a social and psychological impact on people, such as the history and culture of the people native to the area, the memory of individuals and the community's collective memory, as well

as the rituals and metaphors associated with gateways in important processions, visitations and arrivals into the city.

A gateway that not only acts as a physical orientating device or landmark, but also acts as a centre that aids the route of migrants into the city, seems necessary in the growing cities of today. A migrant orientation centre's purpose is for the dissemination of knowledge pertaining to the culture, natural history and lifestyle of a particular area, as well as to provide a level of social welfare and counselling to migrants who are often poor and in need of aid. It needs to be closely situated to the city so that visitors are able to see the link between the orientation centre and the city. The centre should encourage people to continue their journey into the city. One of the most important aspects of the orientation centre is that the building does not attempt to become a destination in its own right. The centre should be packaged and marketed as a destination which portrays and explains the surrounding area. Sue Phillips writes that by providing a packaged destination, '*through its very completeness, it discourages rather than encourages visitors to explore the region*' (Phillips, 2003: 64-65).

An orientation centre needs to be designed in such a way that it encourages visitors to continue on their journey to visit the local sites. For this reason, the concept of a route or journey, or a space of transitioning needs to be explored. How does one design a building in such a way that it encourages people to continue into the surrounding sites? Perhaps the building needs to take on a linear approach and move the visitors through spaces and lead them on towards the site. A linear progression intuitively means that there is something more to come.

Glen Murcutt believes that the visitor's (or in this case, the migrant's) journey does not end with the Orientation Centre, but it continues into the surrounding environment and thus the building has no end. Therefore, the Orientation Centre is not a destination centre in its own right – but it looks forward to the surrounding sites. The Orientation Centre acts as a gateway into the area (Sammons, 2007).

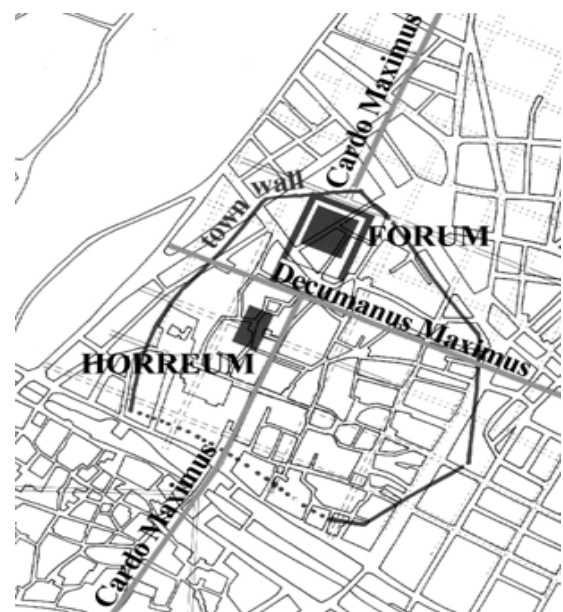
Now that the building has been established as a gateway, the concept of “gateways” and how people use them must be investigated. How can one design a building in such a way that it becomes a gateway into an area? The history of how cities were entered and what was used to mark city entrances will be looked at to further investigate an appropriate architecture for a gateway to a city.

### 3.2.3. The History of Gateways

It is useful to understand how early towns were initially laid out, and how the original entry points were set out to better develop a successful city gateway. A town is made up of many parts called precincts (Alexander, 1977: 277). The entry point to any precinct is crucial. It is where paths and boundaries of precincts intersect and one gets one's first impression of the area one is entering. The most important feeling one should experience at a gateway is the feeling of transition; of passing from one distinct area to the next. This needs to be captured in a physical form that suggests a boundary landmark that demonstrates that one is moving from one precinct to the next.

The gateway has always been an important part of town planning throughout history. During the Hellenistic Period, the main city gate usually marked the beginning of a strategically-placed path through the city. For example, the city of Pergamon (3<sup>rd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC), laid out on a narrow mountain ridge in Western Asia Minor, was entered through the city gateway announcing the main road through the city. The road was positioned to give the effect of an integrated series of visual and kinetic experiences that enhanced the processional experience derived from the irregular climb up the mountain ridge as one moved through the town. The main compositional feature was a set of terraces forming a fan of platforms on to which public buildings were grouped. The platforms were edged along the ridge drop with multistoried stoa units. The paved esplanade through the town connected the platforms, zigzagging up the hill in sharp bends ( Kostof, 1991: 213).

Under the Roman Empire, urban design was further developed with the introduction of orthogonality to town planning. The city form was anchored to an armature of thoroughfares (the *Cardo* and *Decumanus* axes that ran North-South and East-West through the city) and open spaces that created an uninterrupted passage throughout the town (Kostof, 1991: 214). The town was usually walled, with a main road from another town meeting at a major gateway in the circuit of walls. Once inside the walls, this road transformed itself into a paved urban avenue with sidewalks and covered porticoes, moving through densely built up ground to the forum. The gateway would frame the vista into the town and ease the newcomer's approach



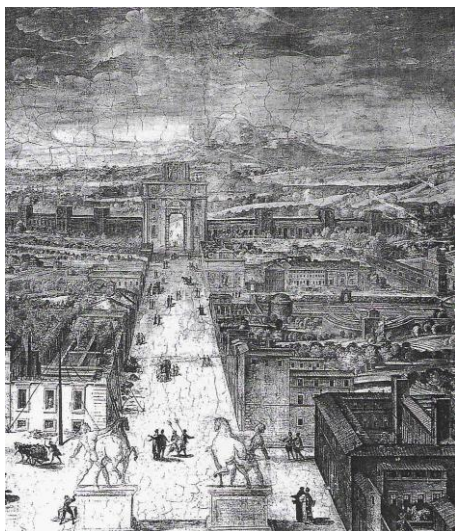
**Figure 3.1.**  
(Web 6) A Roman town at Narbonne showing the *Cardo* and *Decumanus Maximus*

into the heart of the town. This concept was carried through into town planning for centuries to come.

Gateways were usually practical in nature, forming a break in the large defensive walls that surrounded towns. The entry of visitors was controlled at this point, and in some cases custom was also collected there. The arched gateway spanning a roadway to a town was also a very common vista-framing device; creating a terminal feature for one of the main axes in the town. The Romans also used “nymphaea” and other such hinge buildings to provide a climax at the end of an approach, or to conceal a bend in the street line. Also typical are four-sided markers for major crossing points, that did not hinder one’s movement along a path. Other elements such as obelisks and columns were also used as vertical accents to fix the terminal point of a straight street without blocking the vista beyond. Whatever the device, the vista is usually terminated in one of three ways:



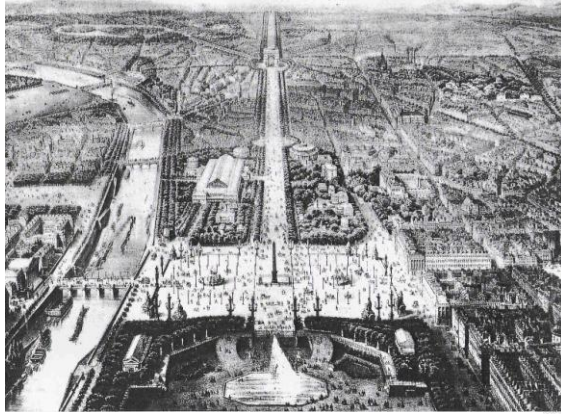
**Plate 3.10.**  
(Web 11) Porta Nigra, Trier, Germany. One of the best preserved Roman gateways still standing today.



**Plate 3.11.**  
(Kostof, 1991: 264) Rome, Strada Pia, designed by Michelangelo. The terminal feature is a gate set against an ancient fortified gate.

- It is *closed* as by a curtain
- It is *framed* by means of flanking or spanning features that allow for throughviews beyond (such as a gateway or triumphal arch)
- Or it is *fixed* by means of some tall, unconcealing marker with a slender silhouette (such as an obelisk)

The experience of any of these markers will depend on a range of factors, such as their size, the proportions of the avenue itself, and position along its path (Kostof, 1991: 265).



**Plate 3.12.**  
 (Kostof, 1991: 269) Looking northwest from above the Tuileries Gardens towards the Arc de Triomphe

## Triumphal Arches

Triumphal arches are probably the most well-known examples of important gateways and entrances in history. The beginnings go back to the Roman Republic, in the early 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC. The purpose of the arch, according to Pliny, was “to raise the men whose statues stood upon them above all other mortals.” The first arches were simple with a single opening. Later, monumental versions articulated by columns and architraves and elaborated with sculptural ornament made their appearance. They

were erected, both within cities and on the high roads of the Empire, on the occasion of an emperor’s triumphal passage or in honour of an imperial visit. Later they were also erected to form entrances to enclosed spaces like fora. In the 17th century, the triumphal arch was resurrected both for its architectural form and its political connotations. To enter a city through triumphal arch was to celebrate the myth of a transcendent regime (Kostof, 1991: 267).

In the 1670’s, Colbert called for a systematic application of the triumphal arch for the city gates of Paris. A century later, Laugier asked for triumphal arches to mark all major entrances into a well-ordered town instead of the mundane toll stations that existed. Some city gates gained historical legitimacy for their triumphal form by commemorating an actual victory. One of the most famous examples of this, set on an



**Plate 3.13.**  
 (Kostof, 1991: 263) Timgad, Algeria. The colonnaded main east-west street and the Arch of Trajan, 2<sup>nd</sup> Century BC

eminence on an official approach road to the city, was the Arc de Triomphe in Paris which was a key image in Napoleon Bonaparte’s revival of Roman imperial iconography. At the opposite end of the Champs-Élysées another triumphal arch marked the main entrance to the court of the Tuileries (Kostof, 1991: 268).

### **3.2.4. The Theory of Gateways**

A crucial point of any precinct is where you enter it. Alexander writes that various paths which run through towns connect different precincts to one another and where these paths intersect a natural entry point to the precinct can form. It is essential that these points of entry or gateways are distinctive in the environment. A gateway can take on many forms: a bridge, a passageway, a literal gate, a natural gateway such as an avenue of trees or a building (Alexander, 1977: 277). A gateway needs to be defined as a solid element in the town's fabric. In this dissertation, one can see that the Orientation Centre best suits the form of a gateway into an area because it physically needs to introduce and lead people on into the city fabric. Later on, it will be discussed how such a gateway, just as importantly, needs to mentally and psychologically prepare people to enter the city. Christopher Alexander writes that the most important feeling which a gateway must create is the feeling of transition. Gateways should be visible from every line of approach and a person needs to feel as though they are passing through from one precinct to the next. It can be concluded that the design of the Orientation Centre needs to facilitate the feeling of entry. It needs to be visible from a distance, and almost become a landmark in the townscape demonstrating that one has moved from one precinct into another.

### **3.2.5. A New Peripheral Business District and Gateway to Paris: La Defense, Haut-de-Seine, France**

La Defense is Paris's new business district located just outside the city's jurisdiction west of the Seine. The name comes from the statue, "La Defense de Paris", erected in the area in 1883 to commemorate the war of 1870. The Grande Arche, which forms the focal point of La Defense, is a modern example of a gateway built on the scale and principles of ancient city gateways. Although widely considered unsuccessful, in principle the idea of a new district and gateway into Paris should have worked, with the hope that it would create some kind of order in the disorganised outer districts of Paris (Davey, 1989: 45).

#### **3.2.5.1. Urban Design Principles**

The new district was kept on the city outskirts west of the Seine so that the central historical heart of Paris, with its building height restrictions of 31 metres, and strict urban planning standards, could remain free of large scale office blocks. La Defense can be termed an "edge city". It falls just on the periphery of the main city, and it is also symbolically connected to the heart of Paris by the Champs Elysees, Paris's historic boulevard spine, the Metro system, the regional express line and the A-14E motorway. It was designed to contrast with historical Paris (Lang, 2005: 217).

The original conceptual design is based on Le Corbusier's design and ideals of a modern city and is therefore, in many aspects, very modernist in layout and aesthetic (Lang, 2005: 218). Large office buildings are placed on either side of a vast central esplanade that is orientated along the main axis running through the new district. In keeping with the grand east-west axis that runs through Paris, La Defense is orientated in line with Le Notre's great projection for the Louvre, through the Tuileries to the Champs-Elysees. However, the visual relationship of La Defense with historical Paris is rather strange. Looking west from the Louvre along the East-West axis, one can only see a few of the office towers in the La Defense area. Only from the historical Arc de Triomphe can one see both the Louvre in one direction and La Defense in the other. It was felt that a landmark was needed to terminate the western vista somehow, something that would be as iconic and imposing as the Arc de Triomphe itself (Davey, 1989: 45).

The termination of the axis from the *boulevard peripherique* is formed by the La Defense Arche designed by Danish architect Johan Otto von Spreckelsen. The axis runs from the original Arc de Triomphe in the centre of Paris, through to the new arch which is a modern image of the historical arch.

The development of the La Defense Arche was part of French President Francois Mitterand's *Grande Travaux* (or Great Works) which set about trying to preserve such Parisian monuments as the Grand Louvre, as well as new developments such as the Cite des Sciences at Parc de la Villette that will be examined at a later stage. A decked bridge west of the Arche continues the axis to St Germain-en-Laye (Lang, 2006: 220).



**Plate 3.14.**  
(Web 7) View of the Grande Arche



**Plate 3.15:**  
(Web 7) Vast esplanade at La Defense



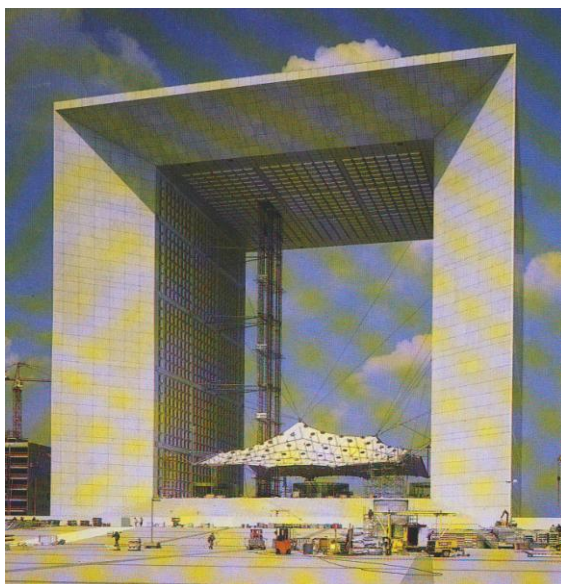
**Plate 3.16.**  
(Web 7) View from Arc de Triomphe down the Champs-Elysees to the Grande Arche

### **3.2.5.2. A Landmark and Gateway**

The modern Arche fulfils all the requirements of a landmark and gateway. Though not the tallest building at La Defense, its massive scale and bulk ensures its success as a termination point of the East-West boulevard. Its simplicity, elegance and pure design makes it stand out in contrast to its neighbours in the district. Termed the "Open Cube" or "Grande Arche", it is a huge 100 metre square block, hollowed out in the centre to create an opening as wide as the Champs-Elysees.

To further enforce the solidity and volume of the building, the structure was simply and smoothly clad with white Carrara marble on the angled inner walls, with glass units on the side walls. Human scale is only evident on the inner walls with almost storey-height square paned windows set in a grille structure (Davey, 1989: 47).

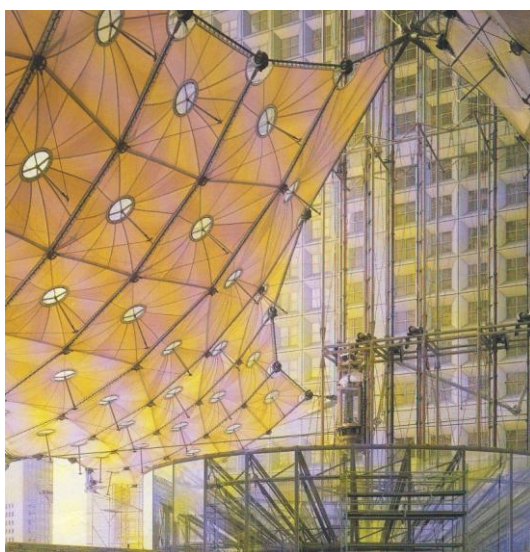
Strangely enough, the functions that would fill the monument were never carefully considered. Eventually it was decided that the New Foundation for the Rights of Man and Human Sciences (which was established to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the French Revolution, 1789) would occupy the roof with its offices below. Besides offices, auditoria are also found in the building as well as a rooftop viewing area for tourists to view the dramatic view down the grand axis (Davey, 1989: 49).



**Plate 3.17.**  
(Davey, 1989: 47) A close-up of the Grande Arche

Spreckelsen, the designer, intended the design to be monolithic, but with a sense of ephemerality and spontaneity surrounding it to contrast with the solidity and bulk of the monumentality. The area under the canopy is used as a public gathering space. Above hovers a stretched fabric tent which represents clouds. This is the ephemeral element Spreckelsen hoped to achieve. At times these clouds are echoed by similar fabric clouds on the esplanade in front of the arch. There is, unfortunately, a lack of delicacy and the fleeting quality of clouds in the design (Davey, 1989: 47).

Whilst the arch is a landmark and a termination point, it is also seen as a temporary stop to the axis. By being an arch and a gateway, it encourages people to look and move beyond it. At the moment, it does act as a termination of the grand axis as the Arc de Triomphe once did. However, whilst the original Arc de Triomphe celebrated the honour and glory of France, the new Arch is supposed to celebrate humanity. This is problematic. The arch has no symbolism attached to it, and seems to have no meaning to it. It instead simply frames a patch of sky and creates a large void (Davey, 1989: 51)



**Plate 3.18.**  
(Weston, 1989: 51) A close-up of the Grande Arche

The idea of creating ephemeral glass clouds on the plateau under the canopy also was not implemented. Instead, Peter Rice designed a teflon canopy that has been criticised as stiff, over-structured and technologically showy, which does not really evoke the evanescence of clouds. The spaces have been criticised as uninviting, with the emphasis on scale and awe rather than human comfort. The interiors are bland and ordinary, in stark contrast to the rather overwhelming heroic gesture of the exterior (Weston, 1989: 51).

It seems that a lot of the original ideas were changed resulting in a less pleasant overall-effect. Original

urban design ideas gave way to ordinary offices. The concept was to create an abstracted, almost fantastic, landscape projected as an ideal world within an enormous Cartesian plane. The reality is stiffness, formality and the enormous expanse of the plateau is unwelcoming and inhospitable for the informal activities that were originally hoped for. Spreckelsen clearly hoped for more, but due to changes and significant alterations through its long period of development, the feeling is one of a vast, empty, and meaningless monument.

### 3.2.6. Gateways and Routes

A gateway can also become the starting point of, or a point along a pedestrian circulation path (Alexander, 1977: 586). Visitors to Durban will begin at the Orientation Centre and possibly be able to proceed on foot into the town. Therefore, the Centre is also the starting point of a pedestrian circulation. The paths that the visitors will take into the city need to be clearly defined and well designed. How does one design a path in such a way that it persuades people to continue along it? How does a path avoid becoming too long and uninteresting? The paths between the Orientation Centre and sites within the city need to celebrate a sense of journey and discovery.

*“The layout of paths will seem right and comfortable only when it is compatible with the process of walking. And the process of walking is far more subtle than one might imagine”* (Alexander, 1977: 586).

Christopher Alexander writes that essentially there are three complementary processes:



**Figure 3.2.**  
(Author's sketch) Intermediate destinations along a path draw the visitor along

1.) Firstly, when a person is walking along a path, they scan the landscape looking for intermediate destinations which occur before the final destination they are walking towards. The intermediate destinations give the person something to look forward to along the way. One also tries to walk, more or less, in a straight direction towards the intermediate destinations. This makes the path towards the destination more direct.

2.) Secondly, these intermediate destinations need to keep changing, and draw people from one to the next. The further a person walks, so more interesting features are revealed to them. Also, if the path is on a slight curve, as one moves towards the final destination, so these intermediate destinations create interest along the path.

3.) Often if one has the final destinations in sight, the length of the path can discourage people from heading to the furthest point. Therefore, the intermediate destination becomes a temporary “goal”. The intermediate destinations must be clearly visible and so as one moves from one to another, the route ahead is defined and visible.

Therefore, the proper arrangement of a path has intermediate goals along the way to draw people through an area. With sufficient intermediate goals, the process of walking becomes less difficult and more of a journey of discovery than an effort to get to the final destination. Alexander’s understanding of what a pedestrian spine should be could be implemented along the path which the visitors have to take. This would give visitors and the local community an opportunity to interact with one another. It may also encourage the visitors to explore small public spaces and the local houses which are accessed off the pedestrian path.

### 3.2.7. Creating a Meaningful Route: The Freedom Trail, Boston, Massachusetts, USA

The Freedom Trail that runs through the heart of Boston is a 4-kilometre pedestrian route that links sixteen sites of historical interest in the city. Most of the sites are places of importance in the United State’s independence movement but the trail also links to a couple of twentieth century developments.

The trail begins at Boston Common which was once a cattle pasture, and leads via important buildings such as the Old State House (once home of the British colonial government prior to independence), the location of important events (e.g. the Boston Massacre site), a site of literary importance (Old Corner Bookstore), burial grounds (e.g. Granary Burial Ground), the Quincy Market/Faneuil Hall area (an 18th century public meeting hall revitalized as part of a shopping district in the mid-20th century) to an ending at the Bunker Hill Monument across the Charles River (Lang, 2005: 84).



**Figure 3.3.**  
(Web 25) Plan showing the walking route through Boston

The trail was sponsored by the Government of the City of Boston, and since 1976 (spurred by the bicentennial of the American Declaration of Independence) the National Park Service has spent more than \$50 million on capital improvements along the trail. The project was first initiated as a result of public pressure led by a journalist, William Schofield of the *Boston Herald-Tribune*. It was felt that there was a lack of recognition of the role of Boston in the history of the United States. The development of the trail illustrates the power of simple, workable ideas in fostering a variety of public realm designs. Although the trail has been added to continuously over the years, its development can be said to have taken place in two phases. The first was somewhat casual with a red line painted on the surface of the ground leading from one site to the next; however this was considered aesthetically displeasing.



**Plate 3.19.**  
(Web 8) Line marking the route along the pavements

During the second phase more attention was paid to the landscape quality of the trail. The red line was replaced with red paving stones, pedestrian ramps were installed, signage quality was improved and bronze medallion location markers were put in place. The trail is regarded as a major success. Over 4 million people walk it each year and the visitors to each point along the trail increased as soon as it was put into place (Lang, 2005: 84).

Walking along the trail is not only a physical experience, but an emotional one for patriotic Americans and many international tourists alike. It has enhanced the knowledge that Boston's citizens have about their own city's history and, particularly, in the historic preservation of significant buildings. The existence of the trail has directly raised the city's profile, as well as served as a catalyst for further redevelopment in the city.



**Plate 3.20.**  
(Web 27) Freedom Trail route marker

However, with change to the urban fabric comes the threat of increasing numbers of skyscrapers being built overshadowing the trail. There is a conflict of sorts between development and preservation of the city. Whereas the historic core has been preserved by placing a limit on the scale of buildings and limiting all new development to the periphery of the city, its not clear whether this has or has not been implemented in the rest of the city (Lang, 2005: 86).



**Plate 3.21.**  
(Web 9) Part of the Freedom Trail Route

## **2.8. Conclusion**

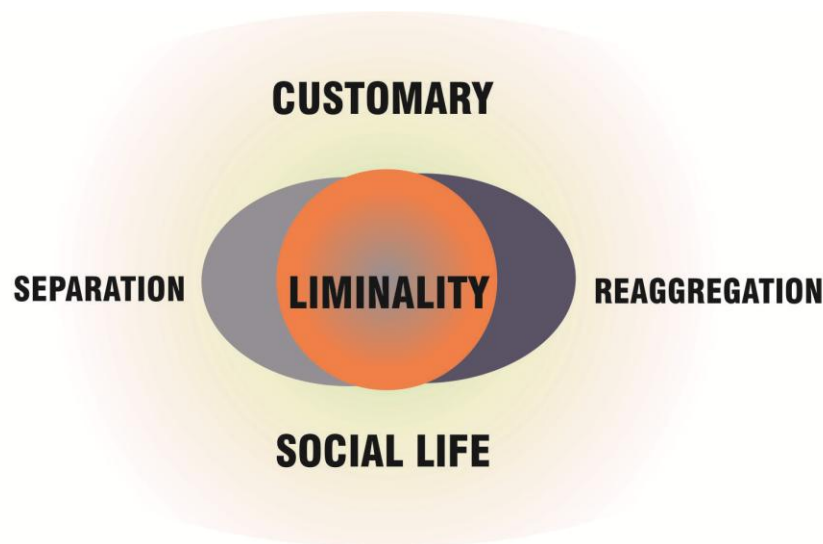
We have looked at how gateways may be physically placed and linked into the urban fabric to facilitate the orientation of newcomers in the new city. However, a deeper understanding of the psychological state of people in a state of transition whilst migrating to the city needs to be examined to create a socially successful and meaningful gateway and orientation centre. The feeling of transition that is important when passing through a gateway or boundary can be likened to the state of liminality that was introduced by ethnographer, Arnold van Gennep. To understand the perception of people who are passing from one place to another that they are unfamiliar with, the theory of liminality needs to be investigated.

### 3.3. LIMINAL ARCHITECTURE

The underlying theme of this research is understanding people who are in a state of movement and transition between places, between lives and between social standings. The person in a state of transition is faced with physical, social and psychologically changes that take time to come about. There is a stage in-between where transition and learning takes place. In town planning, this is where a gateway would occur, and in our case, a centre that would aid the transition into the city. Liminality is a way of defining this "in-between", and although usually used in anthropological and psychological circles, it is now also being used in art and architectural theory to describe a space that is both ambiguous and ambivalent and that provides links and defines boundaries that facilitate the transitions we are investigating.

#### 3.3.1. Liminality and Ritual Practice

Arnold van Gennep, an ethnographer and folklorist, was the first to introduce the concept of liminality to describe the time in which people are on the threshold of entering a new phase in their life having left the previous one behind. It is defined as a transitional state or identity wherein conceptual, ephemeral relationships between people and spatial environments exist. (Paredes, 2010: 2).



**Figure 3.4.**

(Author's drawing) Liminality is a transitional time period set apart from customary life

Rituals have been used throughout history to illustrate a series of myths and cosmological narratives important to particular cultures. They are also closely linked to periods of liminality as they often mark the progression from one status to the next. "Ritual", as defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary*, is a

“prescribed order of performing religious or other devotional service”, as a “social convention or habit”, and as a group of “ceremonial acts”. Therefore, a ritual can be further described as a sequence of events that are specifically arranged to bring about an understanding or a realized transformation. Liminality is this period of transition that brings about a new understanding or way of life. In this period, ritual participants gain new personal and cultural awareness, participate in new activities and share in new common friendship, also known as *communitas* (Turner, 1969: 202).

Rituals take place as ceremonies, celebrations, and trials; both in groups and individually. The building blocks of the ritual are symbols, actions, physical articles that are used symbolically, or words, and the ritual is inseparable from the totems and symbols of its culture. For example, in the Ndembu ritual context, researched by Victor and Edith Turner to investigate liminality qualities and transformations, every article used and every gesture employed, every song or prayer, every unit of space and time, by convention stands for something other than itself. It is more than it seems.



**Plate 3.22.**  
(Repenning, 2003: 19) A girl's coming-of-age  
Ritual ceremony in the Ndembu tribe of Zambia

The Ndembu are aware of the expressive or symbolic function of ritual elements, which they call *chijikijilu*. Literally, this word signifies a “landmark” or “blaze”. This term is drawn originally from the technical vocabulary of hunting, a vocation heavily invested with ritual beliefs and practices. It can also mean a “beacon”, a conspicuous feature of the landscape, such as an anthill, which distinguishes one man's gardens or one chief's realm from another's. Thus, it has two main significations: (1) as a *hunter's blaze* it represents an element of connection between known and unknown territory, for it is by a chain of such elements that a hunter finds his way back from the unfamiliar bush to the familiar village; (2) as both *blaze* and *beacon* it conveys the notion of the structured and ordered as against the unstructured and chaotic characteristic of the liminal phase. Its ritual use is already metaphorical: it connects the known world of sensorily perceptible phenomena with the unknown and invisible realm of the shades. It makes intelligible what is mysterious and dangerous. Single symbols may represent the

points of interconnection between separate planes of classification. They play a “nodal” role with reference to intersecting sets of classifications (Turner, 1969: 14-15).

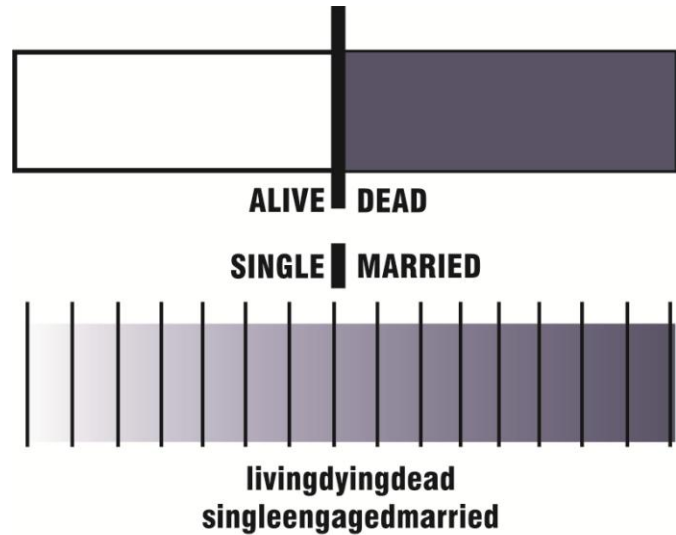
Victor Turner (1969: 94-95) further investigates what Arnold van Gennep termed the “liminal phase” of “*Rites of Passage*” to refer to the transition that takes place from one stage of life to another. These rites of passage appear in all cultural ritual observances and accompany every change of place, state, social position and age. Birth, baptism, circumcision, naming, birthdays, adulthood, marriage, and death are significant rites of passage commonly accompanied by rituals. Van Gennep has shown that all rites of passage or “transition” are marked by three phases: separation, margin (or *limen*, signifying “threshold” in Latin), and aggregation. These tripartite stages are also known as “preliminal”, “liminal”, and “postliminal”.

The first phase of separation comprises symbolic behaviour signifying the detachment of the individual or group either from an earlier existing fixed point in the social structure, from a set of cultural conditions (a “state”), or from both. The distinction of “*sacred space-time from mundane space-time*” (Turner, 1969: 202) first occurs in this stage. Sometimes even violent acts, such as circumcision, knocking out of teeth, shaving hair, and animal sacrifice, separate the novice from his former socio-cultural state, symbolizing a sort of death. During the second “liminal” period, the characteristics of the ritual subject (the “passenger”) are ambiguous; he passes through a cultural realm that has few or none of the attributes of the past or the coming state. This is the main part of the transformation, and the initiate balances on the edge of naïveté and knowledge. In the third phase (re-aggregation or reincorporation), the passage is consummated. The ritual subject, individual or corporate, is in a relatively stable state once more and, by virtue of this, has rights and obligations vis-à-vis others of a clearly defined and “structural” type: he is expected to behave in accordance with certain customary norms and ethical standards binding on incumbents of social position in a system of such positions. It is seen as a celebration for the initiate and the culture as a whole, symbolizing the continuation of the society’s principles (Turner, 1969: 202).

### **3.3.2. A Stage of Transition and the Period of Liminality**

Arnold van Gennep viewed a ritual sequence as a two-part before-and-after course. He proposed it as a straightforward set of binary opposites, such as alive/dead and single/married. Other anthropologists such as Richard Huntington and Peter Metcalf have viewed ritual progression as a tripartite occurrence of events. They asserted that the progression is more flowing and inclusive, such as living, dying, dead, and single, engaged, married. These intermediate stages apply to each phase of separation, transition, and reincorporation (Repenning, 2003: 19).

The period of liminality is a time of indeterminacy and marginality. People in a liminal state elude or slip through the network of classifications that normally locate states and positions in cultural space. Liminal entities are neither here nor there, they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial. As such, their ambiguous and indeterminate attributes are expressed by a rich variety of symbols in the many societies that ritualize social and cultural transitions. Thus liminality is frequently



**Figure 3.5.** (Author's drawing) Van Gennep viewed liminality as a binary set, while Huntington and Metcalf saw it as a progression

linked to death, to being in the womb, to invisibility, to darkness, to bisexuality, to the wilderness, and to an eclipse of the sun or moon (Turner, 1969: 95).

Liminal entities, such as neophytes in initiation or puberty rites, may be represented as possessing nothing. There is usually a symbolism employed to show their lack of status, property, insignia and position, so that nothing may distinguish them from their fellow neophytes or initiands. They are reduced to a uniform condition to be fashioned anew to cope with their new station in life. Their behavior is usually passive and humble, and they must obey their instructors implicitly, and accept arbitrary punishment without complaint. Among themselves, neophytes tend to develop an intense comradeship and egalitarianism. Secular distinctions of rank and status disappear and are homogenized (Turner, 1969: 96).

What is significant about liminal phenomena for our present purposes is the blend they offer of lowliness and sacredness, of homogeneity and comradeship. We are presented, in such rites, with a “moment in and out of time,” and in and out of secular social structure, which reveals, however fleetingly, some recognition (in symbol, if not always in language) of a generalized social bond that has ceased to be and has simultaneously yet to be fragmented into a multiplicity of structural ties. These are the ties organized in terms either of caste, class, or rank hierarchies or of segmentary oppositions in the stateless societies beloved of political anthropologists. It is as though there are two major models for human interrelatedness, juxtaposed and alternating.

The first is of society as a structured, differentiated, and often hierarchical system of politico-legal-economic positions with many types of evaluation, separating men in terms of “more” or “less”. The second, which emerges recognizably in the liminal period, is of society as an unstructured or rudimentarily structured and relatively undifferentiated *communitas* or community who submit together to the general authority or the ritual elders. This is an essential and generic human bond, without which there would be no society. Each individual’s life contains alternating exposure to structure and *communitas*, and to states and transitions. Social life is a type of dialectical process that involves successive experience of high and low, *communitas* and structure, homogeneity and differentiation, equality and inequality. The passage from lower to higher status is through a limbo of statuslessness. In such a process, the opposites, as it were, constitute one another and are mutually indispensable (Turner, 1969: 97).

Anonymity is another characteristic of liminal entities. Symbolically, all attributes that distinguish categories and groups in the structured social order are here in abeyance; neophytes are merely entities in transition, as yet without place or position. Liminal entities are also characterized by their submissiveness and silence. Speech represents not merely communication, but also power and wisdom, which the neophyte, as yet, does not possess. The neophyte in liminality must be a *tabula rasa*, a blank slate, on which is inscribed the knowledge and wisdom of the group, in those respects that pertain to the new status. They are to be shown that in themselves they are clay or dust, mere matter, whose form is impressed upon them by society. Liminality aims to promote the bond of *communitas* and humankindness and bring people closely in touch with beliefs in the protective and punitive powers of divine beings or powers (Turner, 1969: 105).

### **3.3.3. Liminal Space in Installation Art and Architecture**

Capturing the energy of transition is essential to creating powerful and compelling spaces where the integral focus is transition. The architectural implications of liminality are revealed in an appropriate language for all spaces emphasizing transition, such as churches, theatres, museums and transportation facilities, or in the case of this thesis, an entry point for migrants and tourists entering the city.

Architects have usually been more concerned with defining space as an independent container ordered by walls and openings. This has led to the production of architecture that allows itself to be removed from the environment in which it is situated, a modern urban pattern made up of independent projects juxtaposed against each other. Like common building blocks with no common edges to connect them, nor any adhesive to bind them, it is only a matter of time before they come crashing down on us. There is a need for an adhesive to connect these blocks and create architecture that connects rather than creates boundaries that separate urban blocks even more (Arnheim, 1977: 18).

In Mical, 2002, Kisho Kurokawa notes that:

*“Coexistence in architecture is not the resolution of conflicts; it means the development of a third space which enables conflicts to exist side by side in harmony while remaining at variance.”*



**Plate 3.23.**

(Web 32) Urban Prosthesis: A conceptual Tourist Information Centre that creates a link where there is a break in the existing urban fabric, China

Liminal space is the in-between space that delineates boundaries, forges connections, and effects transitions between key spaces. It is essential to the fundamental understanding of spaces and their true meanings. These relations are often apparent in our everyday perceptual experience even though we do not give any special attention to them. Liminal space establishes a particular ratio of separation and connection, which in turn affects the architectural process as a whole (Arnheim, 1977). It is in the way that these spaces effect transitions that we may deal with the notion of liminal space. The in-between space is apparent in the way in which we understand and perceive space. It is part of our space conception; it forms links, delineates boundaries, connections, separations, and transitions from space to space (Paredes, 2010: 3).

Liminal space represents a possibility for a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy. In urban studies, liminal space is defined as an emerging character of the contemporary city (Zukin, 1995). A new genre of architecture has risen to fill in the gaps between spaces, places, people, and events. Terms such as “filler” or “in-between” architecture have been coined to

address the phenomenon of liminal architecture. Such architecture is constructed of spaces caught between the permanent and the ephemeral. As people move through these spaces, so too do these spaces adapt to accommodate the shifting demands of the populace for spaces of liminality (Paredes, 2010: 3).

Theories of liminality have only been connected to architecture to a limited extent. There is only minimal recognition of philosophies of liminality within architectural discourse, and even less indication of how liminality may be put into practice. However, in this thesis, some attempt will be made to create architecture that captures the essence of liminality to create a place for people in a state of liminality.

Liminality is associated with transitional passages and areas between alternative states. In the context of architecture, liminality refers to transitional space or a third space of the in-between. As we move from one distinct place or space to another, we constantly transition through a “third space”

between, which is liminal. It is believed that architects and designers can learn from contemporary installation art practices that reinforce user experience and design process over modernist conceptions of architectural form. The way people occupy and appropriate architecture is described as a liminal space (Smith, 2001: 1).

Installation art denotes a place of slippage for architectural practice, revealing ways of looking at space and user experience as a form of art in itself. Architect Catherine Smith (2001: 3) describes her experience with liminal art installations:

*“In my experimental praxis at a local street festival, I wondered if architects could encourage people to not only inhabit and occupy structure but to create their own spaces. The installation contained boxes that were appropriated by people to make social spaces for eating and chatting, as impromptu stages for dancing, and at the initiation of a performing stilt walker, as objects for destruction by gleeful children.*

*In this sense, I want to extend architecture beyond a definition of a subject occupying an object to one of a subject creating, occupying, and even destroying a space. Hill hints at this by stating that “architecture may,*



**Plate 3.24.**  
(Web 18) An architectural installation acting as a liminal device between two city blocks

*paradoxically, be most suggestive when we do not know how to occupy it.” Perhaps, if users can do more than occupy architecture, but create their own spaces over time, we can develop possibilities for a praxis of liminality between people and space.”*

Architecture has always been strongly associated with the fixed nature of structure, conception and procurement. However, liminality is associated with open conceptual possibilities. How then would an architect make space in non-structural, open ways? For some, this involves more than the direct, metaphoric translation of physical openness and flexible structure, it involves a reconceptualisation of architectural relationships using different media rather than traditional, fixed conceptions of building form.



**Plate 3.25.**  
(Web 13) An example of a liminal installation:  
Reconceptualisation of a dumpster as a living room



**Plate 3.26. & 3.27.**  
(Web 13) More examples of reconceptualisations: A dumpster used as a swimming pool in the middle of a public street

The context of installation artworks contribute to their liminality. When it first emerged in the 1960s and 70s, installation art was a politically engaging, radical art form that defied the formal setting of traditional art galleries. Installations were therefore sited in alternative spaces to the spaces of mainstream art society. It is believed that work which occurs in non-gallery contexts can maintain its marginality more

than gallery works whose political effectiveness is often negated by gallery curators and policies (Smith, 2001: 4-6).

To explore architecture using a praxis of liminality requires a re-conceptualisation of architecture from building object to person-environment relations. As designers, we need to explore new ways of making space that facilitates this conceptual zone of blurring between people and place. This will be investigated further by looking at the architectural threshold as a liminal device that separates two zones by the use of a third, in-between space.

#### **3.3.4. Conclusion**

The research into methods of creating architecture with liminal characteristics appropriate to migrants splits into two directions from here. As discussed above, the relationship between the person and the spatial environment needs to be investigated. This leads to a scrutiny of place-making and phenomenological aspects of architecture. The other is more directly linked to architecture of the in-between and elements that provide for and incorporate movement between two different states (or in the case of architecture: spaces). An architecture that encourages movement and speaks of migrancy is appropriate to liminal entities who are still in a transitional state. On an urban scale, devices that track typical movement routes across the landscape and site need to be investigated. On a smaller scale, the use of architectural elements such as the threshold, doorway and use of ramps will be investigated. This would help create a set of design "tools" that may be used to help translate the anthropological theory of liminality into architecture.

### 3.4. AN ARCHITECTURE OF MOBILITY

Liminality is closely related to movement. To be in a state of liminality, one has to be undergoing some sort of a transition, which implies movement of some kind. How can we create architecture, something usually associated with permanence and stability, that implies and encourages movement?



**Plate 3.28.**

(Web 14) A literal type of mobility for architecture: A billboard on a building announcing its future demolition

Despite the apparent contradiction, various architects have experimented with the conception of an architecture of movement. Various ways of capturing and promoting mobility in architecture investigated by architects, urban designers and theorists, will be analysed. These include:

- the evidence of movement over time in the landscape
- the use of sequences in architecture to suggest movement in urban and architectural design
- the threshold and doorway as a liminal and transitional device, and
- the use of the ramp as a device for movement through architecture.

### 3.4.1. Movement Traces in the Landscape

Appropriate migrant place-making should incorporate movement. As a gathering point along a path of mobility, a place for migrants should possess no fixed or permanent point of perspective, but rather continue to initiate movement on into the rest of the city.

Archetypal migrants are track-makers and track-followers. The original migrants to a town or place would have had no prescribed road. There would be no pre-destined line to follow. The path can be thought of as a mode of spatial production, as a placing tradition in the making. Paths would be created along the easier routes, requiring an attention to the lie of the land. New movement lines would fuse with old paths and historical traces, asserting the value of ephemeral architecture and redefining places and their memories. The place is made after a 'story' or event, in which histories, instead of being represented monumentally and statically, are inscribed as tracks (Cairns, 2004: 83).

According to Paul Carter (2004, in Cairns, 2004: 84), there are two types of mobility that bring about the creation of places. The first kind develops when migrant subjectivity is built around nostalgia and actual circular journeys between homeland and host-land. Mobility of the second kind develops from the active process of anchoring, by means of which "stopping-off" places are provisionally constructed which allow for further movement and change. Together these two types of mobility enable the migrant, firstly, to create a new place of belonging for him or herself and secondly, to identify it and him or herself with a place. By these means, migrants become 'grounded' and create a place where they temporarily feel they belong.

Placism is the application of the picturesque landscape aesthetic to the design of new places. But, the capturing of the *Genius Loci* depends to some extent on placing a conceptual organising grid over the site. According to Carter, our fear of the ephemeral place slipping away from us causes us to try to "fix" the scene. This desire to "fix" the scene is haunted by a fear that nowhere is fixed. Placism not only presupposes "placelessness", but identifies it with the nightmare of anchorless movement to which the migrant may so easily become a slave. Both terms thus involve an act of environmental erasure, repressing the observer's subject position or orientation, and the movement history informing it. To better illustrate this point, the following example will be used:

*"In the 1870's zoologist Alfred Russel Wallace toured Canada and the US. On both aesthetic and utilitarian grounds, he deplored the way in which 'the whole country had been marked out into sections and quarter-sections (of a mile, and a quarter mile square)'. There had been 'no natural development of lanes and*

*tracks as they were needed for communication between villages and towns that had grown up in places best adapted for early settlement'. Instead, 'the only lines of communication are along these rectangular section-lines, often going up and down hill, over bog or stream, and almost always compelling the traveler to go a much greater distance than the form of the surface rendered necessary'. Wallace compared the colonial landscape unfavorably with the 'picturesque' English countryside – 'the narrow winding lanes, following the contours of the ground, the numerous footpaths which enable us to escape the dust of the high-roads', and so on. He thought the former landscape 'raw and bare and ugly'; the latter he prized because it was richly clad, its buildings worn and coloured by age" (Cairns, 2004: 85).*



**Plate 3.29. & 3.30.**

(Web 15 & Web 26) Typical English countryside with winding roads following the contours of the land (right) and the American countryside with a straight road cutting across the landscape (left)

Wallace's observations reveal placism's basis in a close relationship between the linear grid and the curvilinear in the existing landscape. Migrant approaches to place-making are similarly organised around these same principles.

### **3.4.1.1. Migrant Tracks**

Just as the vacant, orderly, modern towns and public squares drawn up by an engineer depend on erasing the traces of earlier, ‘poorly proportioned’ cities, so it is with the modern line of thought: drawn out, its discourse is designed to cancel out every trace of former occupation, every memory of movement at that place. So often today, memory of a place is ignored and forgotten in the new design, and in place of memory, modern architects substitute drawing. Le Corbusier contrasted the modern man who “*walks in a straight line because he has a goal and knows where he is going*” with the “pack-donkey” (or pre-modern man) who meanders and zigzags in order to avoid the larger stones. The point is that the architect may not simply rely on the modern line as a method in place-making. Anthropomorphism and humanism is as essential to design as geometry. It is the violence of this lack of concern for the human scale and senses that Wallace registers in North America; the sense that there is nowhere to stop, anchor, and make your home (Cairns, 2004: 88-89).

Anchoring occurs when the mobile subject is comfortable enough in his surrounds to begin to settle down and find a way of telling his story. Places are discursive constructions, but they need not necessarily conform to Cartesian projections. Etymologically, discourse runs hither and thither and implies the zigzag gymnastic of dialogue. On this criterion, the migrant subject’s mobility makes him pre-Modernist and in the architectural design, linearism and geometry should thus be avoided. The interest in the material trace has developed a new way of recording these tracks in designs. The ‘language’ of simple track lines is translated by the designer into seemingly spontaneous marks on the site – blots, grooves, folds and scatters. In relation, though, to the elucidation of migrant place-making, the salient property of the trace is that it indicates a movement that can never be explained in terms of former presence. The trace has no origin because its materiality differentiates it from whatever made it. As an act of tracing (as opposed to drawing out the line) migrant place-making disturbs the order of history. A migrant is often represented as one without a history in terms of local history. Yet, as the maker of the trace, he has a past. The migrant's past is a condition of always coming from elsewhere and the trace is the sign of that unending approach (Cairns, 2004: 91).

### **3.4.1.2. Mythopoetic Design: Nearingnew, Federation Square, Melbourne, Australia**

We expunge pasts from sites, but this does not prevent new stories from rushing in to fill the vacuum. In the ideologically leveled terrain of the nationalist narrative space, though, the difference of such stories is neutralized. In a way, public art programmes recapitulate the techniques of the 19<sup>th</sup> colonial surveyor, throwing a grid of equivalence over unlike historical topographies. The result is a picturesque multiculturalism in which every story has a place (Cairns, 2004: 91).

Australian artist, Paul Carter, has experimented with capturing movement histories in urban artwork, which he describes as mythforms. Mythic or symbolic thinking has to do with a past that cannot be expunged. Instead, it is used in place-making techniques. The transposition of ancient stories into symbolic form has usually occurred in periods of crisis, of cultural transition, or when faith in the authoritative structure is waning. Mythopoesis is the mode of invention that inscribes what has gone before, rather than erasing it. It is invention with memory. This is specific and refers to the history of what happened at a *particular place*. It also usually refers to a time of crisis or loss confidence and direction within the host urban design and development community (Cairns, 2004: 92).

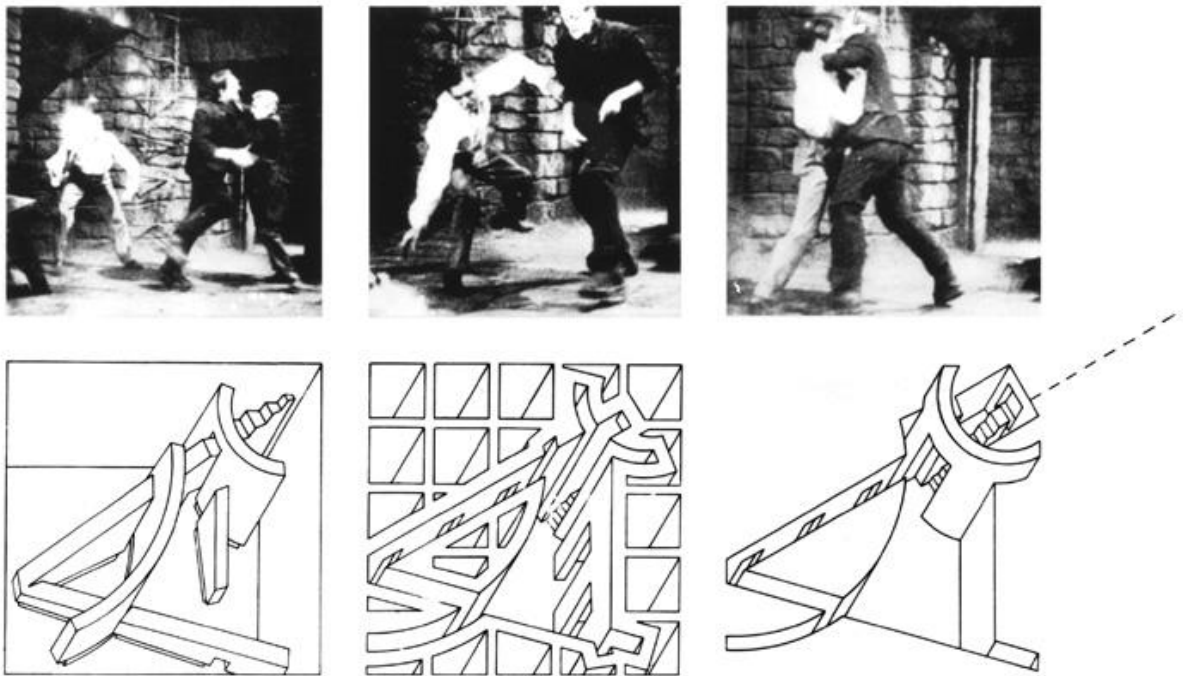


**Plate 3.31.**  
(Web 1) Some of the texts inscribed in the ground in an entangled manner. This emphasises the ever-changing patterns of movement in places

The above plate is part of a project for the Federation Square plaza in Melbourne, Australia. The artwork itself was designed by Paul Carter and covers the entire floor surface of the plaza. Using words placed along various lines heading in all directions, the project is a catalyst for movement and encourages people to walk, explore and gather. Although the lines themselves do not trace actual historical lines of movement, by encouraging people to read and move along as they do so creates the sensation of having walked where many others have walked before. There are nine image texts incorporated into the stone floor that symbolise the conditions necessary to remobilise the relationship between people and place, and reading and discussion with movement and transition. The multi-layered, entangled nature of the texts is deliberate and draws parallels with the nature of places which are constantly changing patterns of people criss-crossing and creating new meanings in the place (Cairns, 2004: 92).

### 3.4.2. Bernard Tschumi: Sequences

Sequences are made up of a set of related things (scenes, events, shapes, figures, spaces, etc.) that occur one after the other. Closely related to time and space, they also imply movement and have often been used in architectural designs to suggest mobility. Bernard Tschumi, a famous architectural theorist and designer, uses sequences in his designs to create a sense of movement and transition. His interest in sequences was sparked in the 1970's during the observation of sequential film images. He used them to explore the relationship between events, architectural spaces and transitional devices of a sequential nature.



**Figure 3.6.**  
(Tschumi, 1983:31 ) Screenplays. A translation of motion, time and events into architectural space and form to create sequential architecture

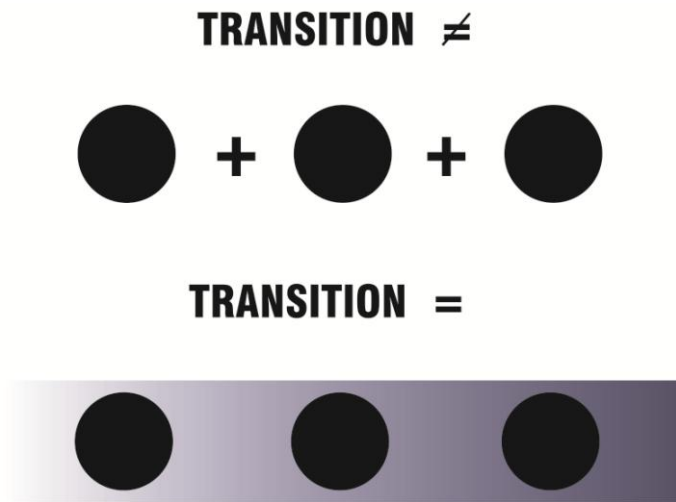
By investigating Bernard Tschumi's sequencing techniques, we can gain a better understanding of how to create an architecture for migrants. Tschumi believes that architecture is not just about space and form, but also about event, action, and what happens inside the space. This is intrinsically wound up with time, movement and sequences. He categorises sequences themselves into three groups: *Transformational*, *Spatial*, and *Programmatic*. The *transformational* sequence is a device or procedure used for laying out spaces. The *spatial* sequence is a method of grouping the spaces and is founded on typological precedents

and their morphological variations. The *programmatic* sequence is the usage and the occurrence of events planned for the spaces (Repenning, 2003: 46).

Tschumi views ritual as a framework held in place by its spatial and event sequences. It calls for a highly structured programme that orders movements, events, and spaces into a progression. When design is connected to a ritual sequence, the route in the design as a whole is more important than any of the individual steps or events in the journey. The overall program dominates the character of any one single space.

The transformational sequence is based on rules and discrete architectural elements. Passage through this sequence becomes its own theoretical object. The process must become the result, with the sum of transformations being at least as powerful as the ultimate transformation. Transformational devices, or rules of transformation, include compression, rotation, insertion and transference. These transformational devices provide sequences with emotional and sensory value (Tschumi, 1983: 31).

Spatial sequences are calculated organizations of particular spaces, such as *configuration-en-suite*, *enfilades*, and spaces along a common axis. Each



**Figure 3.7.**  
(Author's Drawing ) The route of the whole design is more important than any one individual element on its own



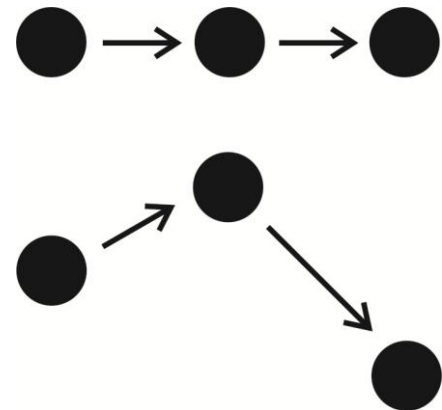
**Plate 3.32.**  
(Web 20) An example of a spatial sequence: Rooms arranged *enfilade*

emphasizes a planned path with fixed points and pauses. Separating each space is a border or threshold that helps emphasise the sequence even more. Similarly a programme is a formal notice of proceedings, celebrations, or courses of study. Programmatic sequences are events, uses and activities that fit into and animate the series of spaces. They are generally inferential, and their usage and events are concluded from their décor. Spatial sequences are generally structural and their experience is independent of the meaning evoked by the programmatic sequence.

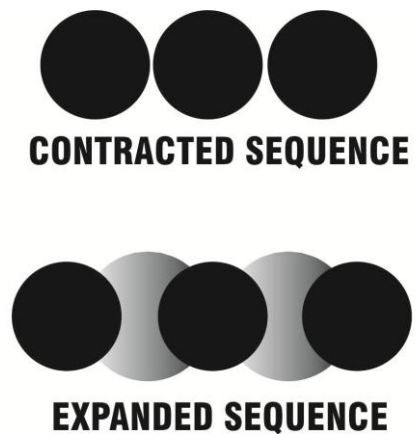
One must note, however, that not all architecture is simply linear or made of clearly defined parts. Some fragmentary experiences without beginnings or ends produce a jumble where meaning is derived from the order of experience, rather than from the composition as a whole. The order of experience refers to time, chronology, and repetition and may not be obvious at first glance. Only the experience of moving through the sequence of spaces may bring about a full understanding of the architecture as a whole (Tschumi, 1983: 33-35).

Sequences may either be contracted or expanded. Contracted sequences split up individual spaces and actions. A use in one space is followed immediately by the beginning of another use in the next space. An expanded sequence *“makes a solid of the gap between the spaces. The gap thus becomes a space of its own, a threshold, corridor, or doorstep – a proper symbol inserted between each event.”* Expanded and contracted sequences used in combination can form coordination or rhythmical series (Tschumi, 1983: 35).

Bernard Tschumi's first practical experimentation with sequences can be seen in his award-winning design of Parc de la Villette in Paris which will be examined next. The park's layout is based on three organising systems, which include sequences, layered over each other. The complex superimposition of sequences creates an architecture that must be explored in full to be understood.



**Figure 3.8.**  
(Author's Drawing ) Not all architecture is linear. Some is fragmented and the meaning is derived from the experience of the whole.



**Figure 3.9.**  
(Author's Drawing ) Contracted sequences place spaces one directly after the other, while expanded sequences provide a break between spaces, usually in the form of a threshold.

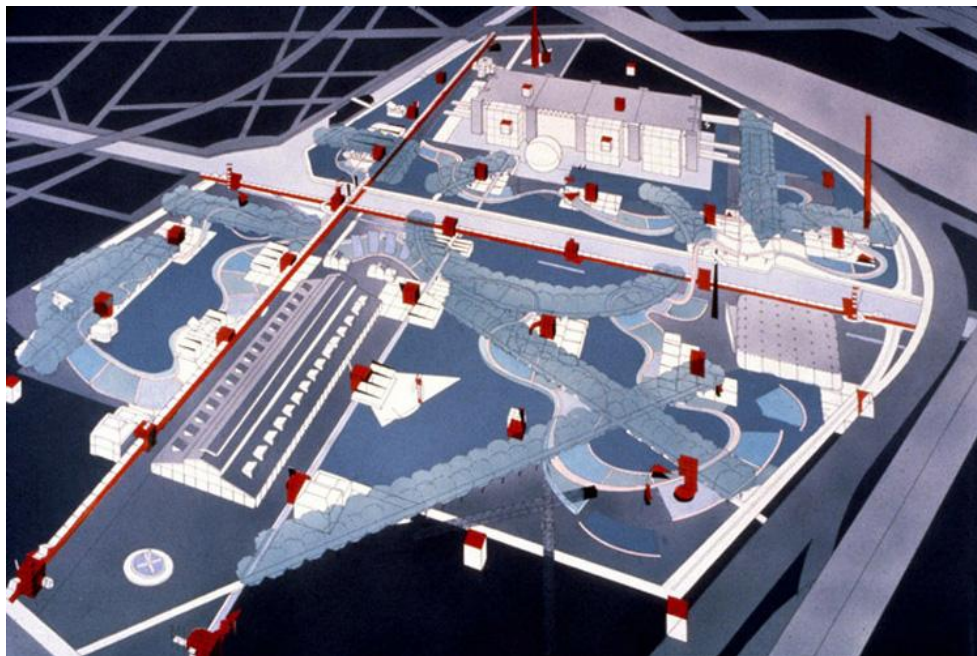
### 3.4.2.1. Disorder and Movement in Urban Design: Parc de la Villette

Bernard Tschumi's Parc de la Villette is an urban facility demonstrating the notion that "chance" turns space into something indeterminable and unpredictable.

The aim of this development was to make Paris the art centre of the world once more. The specific objectives were:

- To create a product of international note
- To build a national museum of science and technology, and
- To create an urban "cultural" park

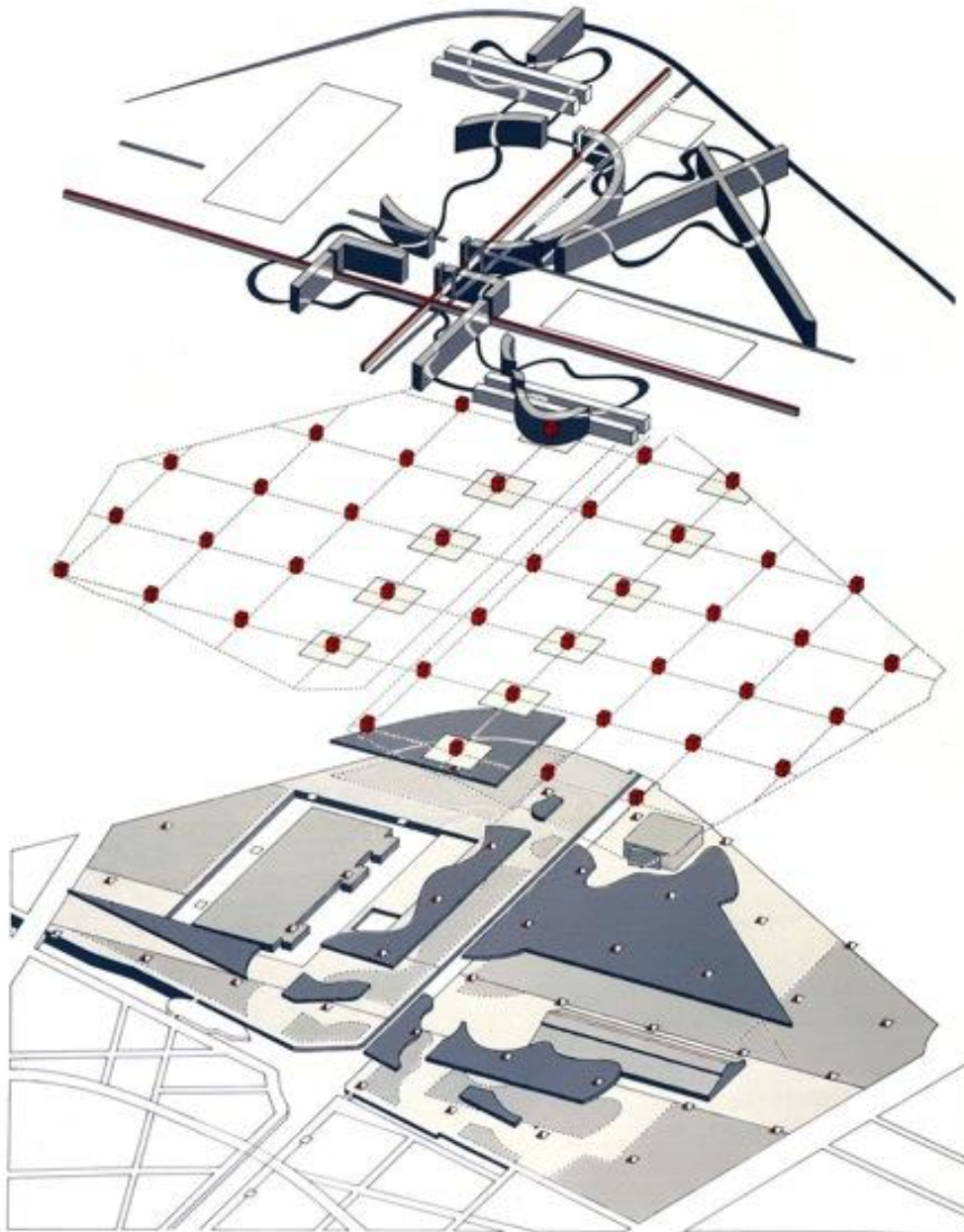
The site comprised 55 hectares of semi-abandoned industrial land, including a non-functional slaughterhouse and a cattle hall and sales yard, in the northeast corner of Paris. A canal divides the site into two and another borders much of the site on the west. The brief for the design, which was opened up to international architects as a competition, was to include a large museum of science and industry, a *cite'* of music, a major hall for exhibitions, and a rock concert hall as well as the park. It required two existing structures on the site to be reused. The hope was that the development would be a bridge between city and suburb, and act as a "gateway" to Paris from the east (Lang, 2005: 105-106).



**Figure 3.10.**

(Web 5) A 3D drawing of Parc de la Villette with the main axes and grid points marked by follies in red. The superimposed grids allow movement in a variety of directions.

The design consists of three independent systems superimposed on each other and each layer acts as an ordering device within its own logic. These three systems are namely: points, lines and surfaces.



**Figure 3.11.**  
(Web 22) A deconstruction of the Parc de la Villette showing the system of lines (top), the system of points or follies (middle), and the surface system on the site plan (bottom).

### Points:

The system of points lies on a 120 metre grid, with eight squares running from north to south, and five squares running east to west. At the intersections are a series of follies designed by Tschumi. The basic form of these is a 10x10x10 metre cube or three-storey construction of neutral space that has no prescribed functions. The idea is that anyone may use these structures as they see fit. Their structural envelope is covered by bright red-enamelled steel sheets. The follies were produced to establish an easily recognisable symbol for the park. The grid that they denote provides an overall image and shape for the vast site and also acts as a simple orientation device for visitors (<http://thearchiblog.wordpress.com>).



**Plate 3.33.**

(Web 5) An example of a folly at Park de la Villette marking an intersection point in the grid design.

### Lines:

Lines demarcating routes and boundaries form the second layer. These are paths of pedestrian movement organized in two interconnected systems. One consists of cross axes of covered galleries. One axis runs North-South linking two Parisian gates and subway stations, whilst the other runs East-West joining Paris to its western suburbs. The second system of lines is made up of a meandering “cinematic” promenade presenting a sequential series of vistas and enclosures. Tschumi's axes and pathways do not possess the same controlling, authoritarian function that they would in a traditional park. They are not limited to a particular domain nor lead to meaningful sights, but are simply tracks through a park. The design attempts to accept the world as it is, relying on chance simulating ad-hoc urban growth to a certain degree, with its forces of randomness, chance, fragmentation and complexity (Lang, 2005: 106).

### Surfaces:

The park surfaces are large areas of horizontal space left open and undefined so that visitors may use them in multiple ways. It was intended that playing, sports activities and exercising, as well as music

concerts, mass-entertainment shows and markets could all take place on these surfaces. On summer evenings, the central green becomes an open air film theatre that can cater for up to three thousand people (Lang, 2005: 106).



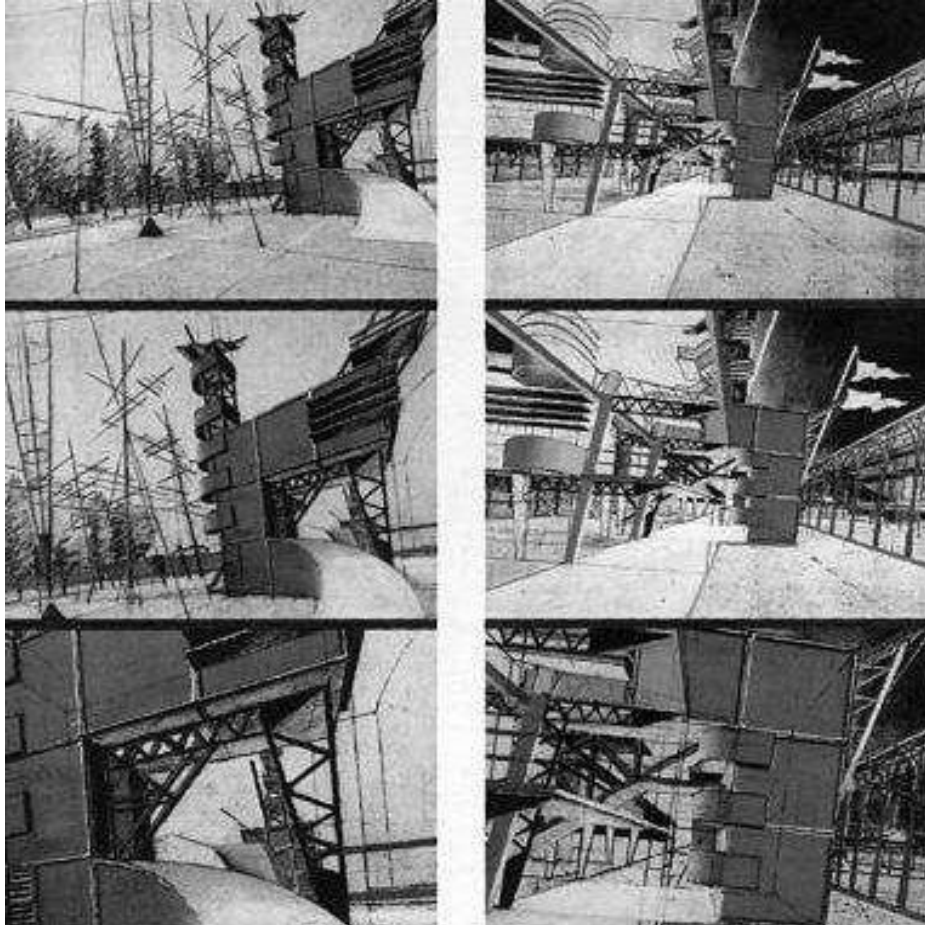
**Plate 3.35.**

(Web 5) One of the covered walkways along a main axis and a follie at one of the grid points.

The park contains a mix of facilities. The Cité des Sciences, a science and technology museum, is housed in what was the largest of the old Villette's slaughterhouses. The park also contains La Géode (a giant entertainment sphere with a high hemispherical screen), the Grande Halle (an old cattle shed converted into exhibition space), the Cité de la Musique, l'Argonautes (a navigation museum with a submarine parked outside it), and the Zenith Theatre which is a polyester tent designed for audiences of 6000 attending pop-music concerts (Lang, 2005: 106).

### **Praise and Criticism**

The park attracts international acclaim, and more importantly, attention. The praise the park has received is based on its intellectual aesthetic ideology as a work of art and its intellectual under-pinning. It has been embraced by the architectural cognoscenti and has been extraordinarily widely published. The vast open spaces and the lack of sensitivity to the human scale has been criticised by many. However, it is important to remember what Tschumi was trying to achieve in this design. He intended the park to have no links with historical precedent or the surrounding historical city fabric, but to rather strip down the



**Figure 3.12.**  
 (Web 10) Sequences can be seen along the major paths in Parc de la Villette. These sequences of spaces and structures help to encourage movement through the park.

signage and conventional representations of parks to allow for the existence of a "non-place". Tschumi believed that in a non-place the visitor would be more likely to explore and use the space in the particular ways he or she desired. This would mean that activity and interaction was more spontaneous. The impact and relevance that randomness and the reliance of chance that non-place has on architecture, place-making and identity is immense. Instead of being prescriptive in the way you may use the spaces, the park becomes a frame for culture and interaction (<http://www.imageandnarrative.be>).

Because of this unpredictability, visitors are forced into exploring the whole, moving along the lines and axes. Only through movement can they fully understand the design. This is one way of encouraging movement through a space on an urban scale in an urban setting. When applying ideas of movement to a single work of architecture, the scale of transitional devices is smaller and somewhat discrete. Devices such as thresholds and areas that allow for movement need to be investigated next.

### 3.4.3. “At the Threshold of Architecture”

"At the Threshold of Architecture" is the title of a design studio course introduced at Bilkent University's Department of Interior Architecture and Environmental Design. It tackles two of the leading assumptions about space in the discourse of modern architecture. The first is that the site is devoid of any prior images, meanings or connotations. The second is that the user is similarly devoid of subjectivities, perceptions, or imaginations. Much architectural design rests on the false premise that living, thinking, perceiving, and feeling are universal conditions, or that it is possible to start from zero and liberate a given situation from prior context of significance (Altinyildiz & Nalbantoglu, 2001: 195-204).

Major conceptions of space were first addressed in the studio. It is a relatively new idea to think in terms of composing space. Historically, architectural design positioned positive elements (floors, ceilings, walls) around a negative element (space). Space took precedence when architects were given the duty of designing for a manner of living, rather than simply designing buildings. Many designers chose to view space as a “*tabula rasa*”, free from any connotation or mental constructs. This is a flawed view, as ‘space, real or imaginary, is always loaded with memories, sensations and traces.’ (Ibid, 2001: 196).

It is key to acknowledge that spatial design does impact the user's manner of living and being. Moreover, as in the findings of Bruno Zevi and Sigfried Gideon in the 1950's, “there are deliberate links between qualitative attributes of space and the mental disposition of its occupiers.” (Ibid, 2001: 197). That is, space has the ability to inspire mood and emotion.

One of the main aims was simply to study the architectural elements of wall, window, and door without being burdened with constructs of subject or space and how these may influence the mood in the space positively. The result was the realization that wall, window and door are all categorized under the common theme “threshold”.

*“Works of architecture always embody thresholds, like those between bedrooms and bathrooms, or between public and private realms. Yet, design priority is often given to functional spaces separated by thresholds. The design of the threshold itself where interaction actually occurs remains secondary”* (Ibid, 2001: 167).

It was found that concepts of threshold raise the element to the rank of a designed space. It helps establish a link between two spaces but is, in itself, a space that should not be ignored. In the studio, thresholds were shown to provide shelter as a space for interaction and the place where relationships actually take place. Analyses of the architectural threshold attest to the possibilities for capturing and highlighting the energy inherent to domains of crossing and transition. Thresholds encompass physical, mental, sensory and spiritual passages, as will be discussed later in the theory of phenomenology and how this may positively impact the psychological experience of an architecture of the in-between. For now, a particular threshold, the doorway, will be investigated to see how it may be used as a liminal device that promotes movement and transition (Ibid, 2001: 203).

### 3.4.3.1. The Doorway as a Liminal Device

Doorways are thresholds that allow movement from one domain to the next. We use doorways all the time without giving them much thought, and yet, they are a fundamental element in spatial organisation. They help define and enhance the use and experience of space. Doorways are most importantly an element of transition and affect our states of being, resulting in a change of identity. They are, in essence, liminal devices and many even aid the transition of a liminal character (Unwin, 2007: 3-5).

A doorway is a device that helps organise the architectural world and distinguish inside from outside. It is also a catalyst of our own transformation and state of being, i.e. moving through a doorway, we transition from one state to another. It also gives us a view or point of reference to the place on the other side of the doorway. The doorway divides a world and gives us the advantage of looking back and reflecting on the place we have come from. It is the absence of material, or gap that a doorway provides, that makes it useful to us and allows us to move through it (Unwin, 2007: 14).



**Plate 3.36.**  
(Web 17) Doorway of a Tuscan villa.

Doorways are used in various ways to help position ourselves in the architecture:

### **The Doorway as a Picture Frame**

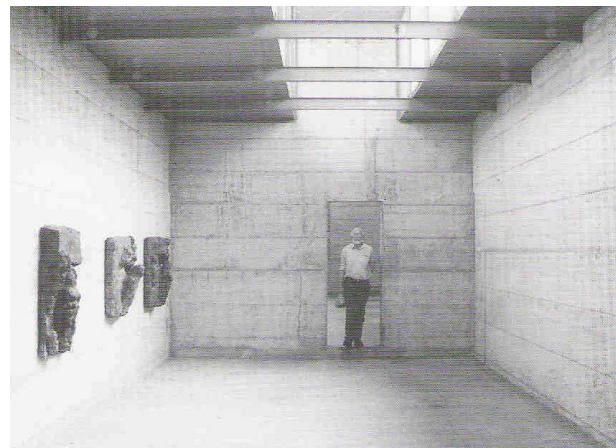
The doorway may act as a picture frame, framing the views beyond it. It acts as the pivotal point between the space you are standing in, and the world on the other side of it. Its straight lines and geometry impose themselves on the view and frame the natural scene beyond it. It also helps to compose a particular picture of the world beyond (Unwin, 2007: 32).

### **The Doorway as a Point of View**

Being an element of architecture, a doorway is a fixed point with a stable threshold and positioning. As you first enter a room, it is the place at which you get your first view and impression of the area you are entering. This can be manipulated by the architect to control ones first psychological impression of the area. In turn, once you are through the doorway, it also acts as a point of reference showing you how to get out of a place (Unwin, 2007: 35).



**Plate 3.37.**  
(Unwin, 2007: 33) A doorway framing a view of the room beyond it



**Plate 3.38. & 3.39.**  
(Unwin, 2007: 34)

Doorways that give you an initial view of room you have entered, and indicate where to get out again.

## The Doorway Axis

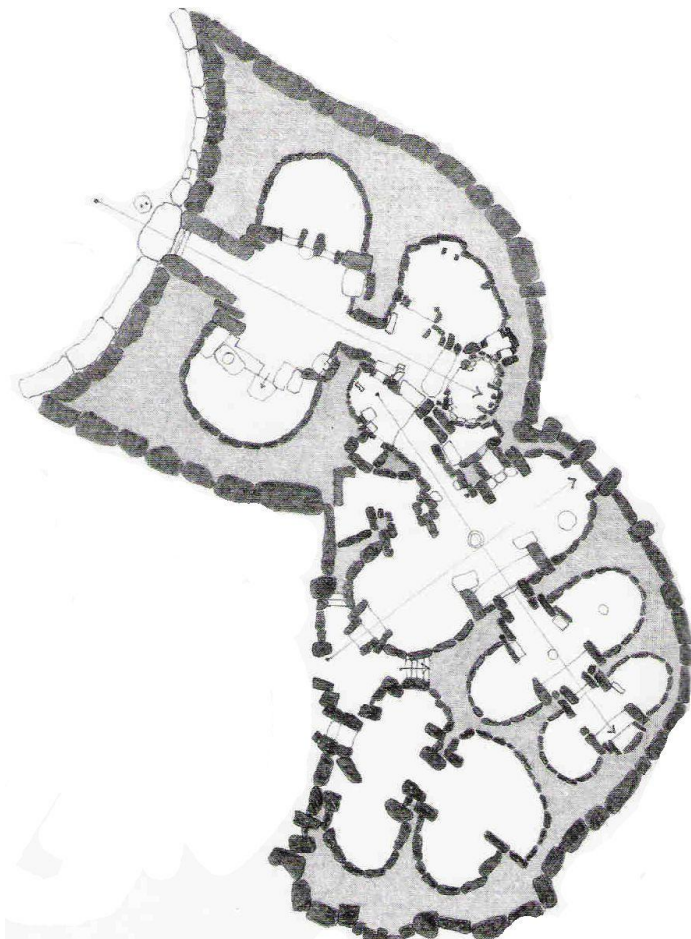
Maybe the most important way doorways may be used is as a tool for creating links by establishing and linking axes. This helps create a sequence that encourages movement along a route and it also is an effective way-finding and organising technique. A doorway suggests movement in two directions along a single line of movement. This is the axis along which movement occurs; a powerful architectural tool that generates a visual link and movement along it.

The doorway axis establishes a link between the spaces into which it stretches. When a person moves through a doorway, they in turn are placed in a special relationship with the two spaces. Axes are used in various ways to add subtle meanings to the architecture. Different examples of axes will be used to illustrate the way in which they can be used to generate movement through architecture (Unwin, 2007: 38-40).

### Progress to a goal:

#### The Maltese Temple at Tarxien

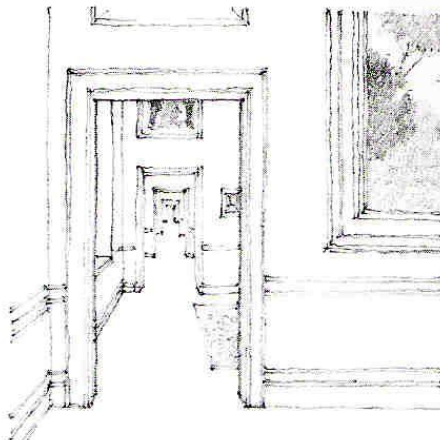
Although this temple dates back to about 3000 BC, the principles of the axes remain relevant today. In Maltese temples, doorways held special importance and were built as part of ceremonial sequences screened from the outside world by megalithic walls banked around with earth. The sequential doorways of a Maltese temple are arranged along their collective axis. One doorway leads to the next, and the doorway axis of one doorway is reinforced by those of the others. In this way, a person is drawn along from one area of the temple to the next.



**Figure 3.13.**  
(Unwin, 2007: 40) Drawing of Maltese Temple showing doorway axes

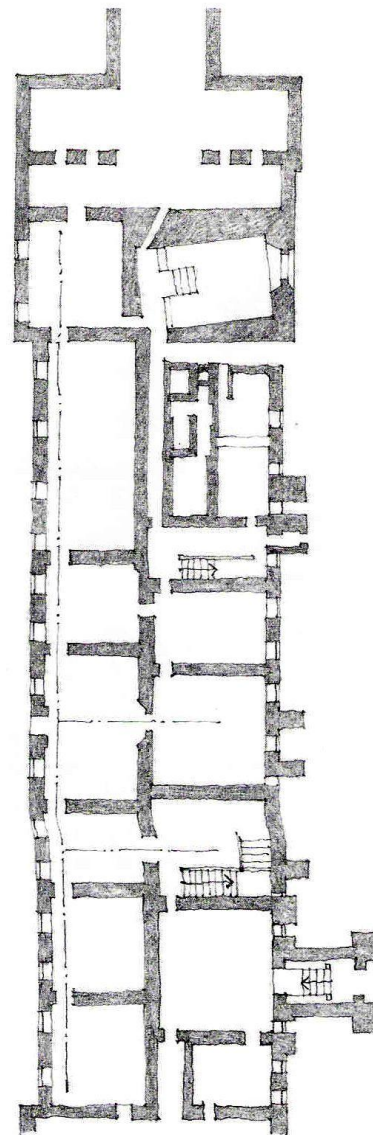
At Tarxien, two sequences of doorways collide in a seemingly unresolved way. The sequence begins at the uncomfortable collision of axes near the centre of the plan and stretches through three doorways to a fourth, which is the altar at the focus and end of the axis. This creates a strong draw and sense of progression along the axis towards a goal. The axis here is internally focused, and does not seem to extend onwards into the landscape. The pull they create is focused inwards and moves towards an altar. It is possible, although no proof exists, that passing through each doorway may have been associated with different stages in initiation ceremonies, or different levels of spiritual separation from the outside world (Unwin, 2007: 40-41).

***Enfilade*: Doorways that draw you forward**



Originating in French Baroque palaces in the 17th century, this technique was often used in large historical houses. *Enfilade* is an arrangement of rooms in a long interconnected sequence rather than off a corridor. The example given here is the English house of Petworth.

The rooms along the front of the house facing the gardens (to the left in the plan) are arranged *enfilade*. In this arrangement, doorways are typically aligned so that they display to best effect when all left open, creating an impressive view from one end of the house



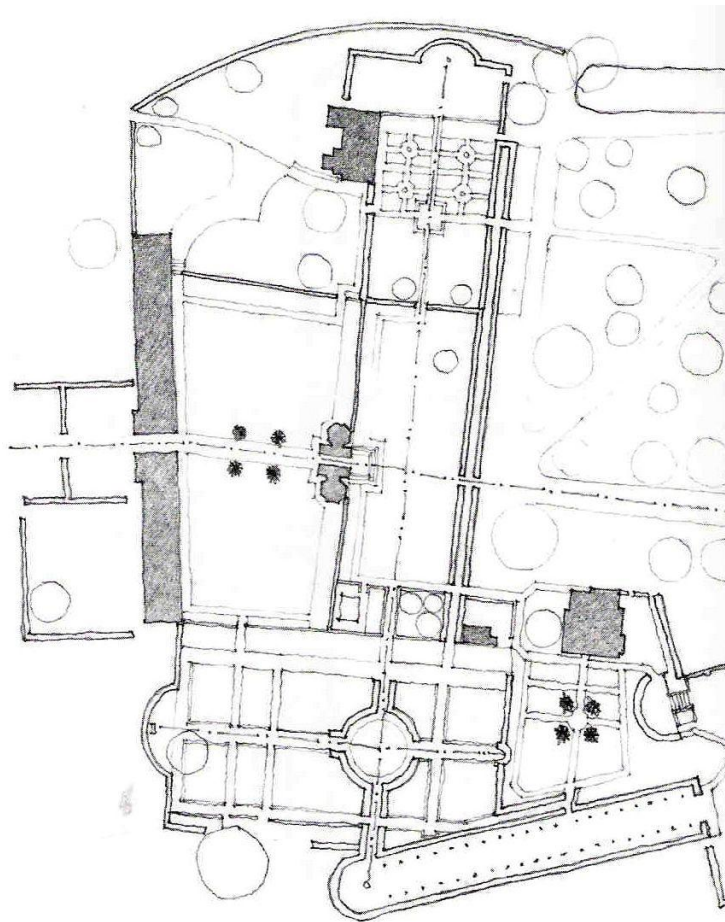
**Figure 3.14. & 3.15.**  
(Unwin, 2007: 44) A view through the doors arranged *enfilade*, a plan of a house with rooms arranged *enfilade*

to the other. These doorways would not usually run through the middle of the rooms, but rather placed closer to the side where the windows overlooking the garden were. This positioning was probably for practical reasons. It was impractical to have a circulation route running through the centre of the rooms, and placed on the window side they would be furthest from the fireplaces along the centre wall of the house, leaving the warm and light sides of the room open for occupation.

Today, most of these houses are open to visitors, and when the doors *enfilade* are left open, the sequence they create draws people along the route from one room to the next. This is a powerful way of generating movement (Unwin, 2007: 44).

### A doorway axis as an armature

Often in an architectural complex consisting of multiple areas and buildings, axes may be used to create an armature that holds the complex together and generate movement from one area to the next. Sissinghurst Castle in Kent dates from the 15th century, however in the 20th century, its gardens were restored and laid out, resulting in its becoming one of the finest gardens in Britain. The layout of the garden takes up some of the doorway axes created by existing buildings on the site, especially making use of the tower in the centre of the garden. Some new focal points were also added to help reinforce some of the axes. Together these were the main organisational devices of the garden and provide routes and sight lines that stretch its length and breadth.



**Figure 3.16.** (Unwin, 2007: 46) A plan of Sissinghurst Castle complex with axes created to connect together the individual spaces of the building complex

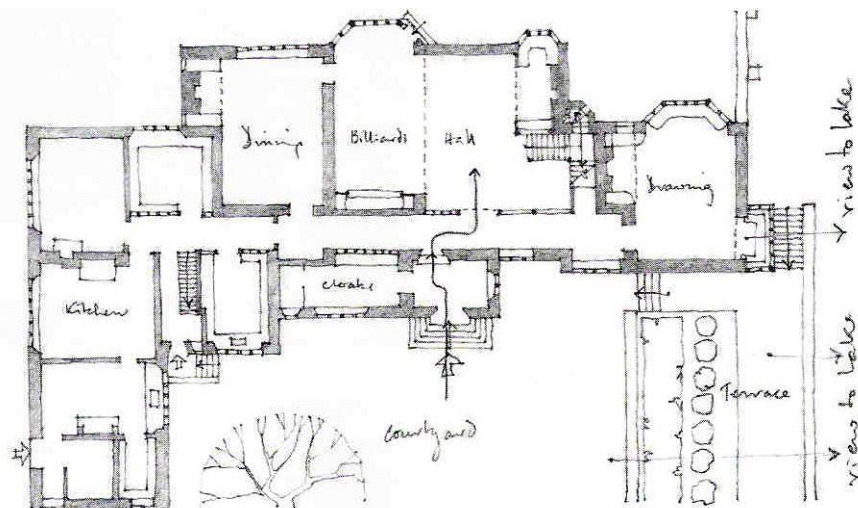
In plan these axes give the garden a geometric discipline that helps create a sense of continuity between the group of old buildings and helps them to work together with the new hedges and flower beds. As you move through the garden, this helps you to move from place to place and explore the whole. Where axes intersect, nodes have been created but these are not points where you feel you should stop. You are encouraged by the arrangement of axes and points of interest along these to continue onwards. The doorway axes are about movement and drawing the visitor from one "room" to the next. There are no political or religious connotations attached to these axes. Instead, these axes are about creating sensual enjoyment in architecture, design and nature. They use the magnetic pull of the doorway and the dramatic potential of the axis to achieve this (Unwin, 2007: 46).

### The Interrupted Axis: Chicane

Doorways along an axis often have a very overwhelming and powerful effect that may affect one psychologically. When we occupy and move along an axis that leads towards a goal, such as a leader's throne, we may often feel uncomfortable and intimidated. This is an extreme example, however, the same may apply in more ordinary architecture. In some cases the alignment of a doorway axis with another significant axis is avoided by rotation through ninety degrees or parallel offset.

Blackwell, a house designed by the Arts and Crafts architect M. H. Baillie-Scott and built in 1900, could have had its main entrance aligned with the entrance to the hall. Instead, Baillie-Scott was interested in asymmetry and avoided the axial alignment of doorways. The intention was to create a variety of experiences and allow the house to be explored in a relaxed way. In this instance the chicane prevents one from going straight across the corridor into the hall. Instead, you have to turn for a moment towards the lake which you can see in the distance through the bay window in the drawing room (Unwin, 2007: 61).

**Figure 3.17.**  
(Unwin, 2007: 61) A plan of Blackwell House showing the chicane axis through the front door, forcing one to re-orientate themselves as they enter



### 3.4.4. Ramps as a tool for movement

According to Stickells (2010: 41), architects' concepts of movement in architecture have changed over the last century along with our own increase in movement and the rise of migrancy. It was really in the modern architectural era of the early 20th century that ideas about movement became important. In early modernism, movement was articulated in terms of technical, functional circulation and aesthetic experience. In later practices, the focus changed to the relationship between programmatic elements, and these are articulated by dynamic coexistence, continual variation, and fluid interconnected space. There has been an ever-increasing emphasis on movement which is not simply functional.

Stickells (2010: 42) uses two projects (one by Le Corbusier, and a later one by Bernard Tschumi) to illustrate the different ways ramps can be used in a building to promote movement. Both architects are known for their architectonic approach that is strongly connected to movement, and in both cases, ramped surfaces are used to spatially articulate movement.

Both the Carpenter Centre (designed by Le Corbusier) and the Lerner Hall (designed by Bernard Tschumi) are intensely concerned with the movement of people. Both are university campus buildings that provide a dynamic urban interface along with their diverse communal functions. However, their approaches to circulation, flow and formation of public spaces differ.



**Plate 3.40.**  
(Stickell, 2010: 41) View of ramp at the Carpenter Centre

#### 3.4.4.1. The *Promenade Architecturale* in the Carpenter Centre

Le Corbusier's architecture is based on an architecture developed through a fluid, three-dimensional orchestration of spaces that relates to the meandering active nature of human movement. To him, the movement of the observer through a building is critical to the visitor's perception and understanding of it. Le Corbusier often used ramps in his architecture to link spaces and volumes, as well as functionally circulate people. This was important to the aesthetic, perceptual appreciation of the architecture; the aim of the architectural experience being the moving of the spectator through the space and his or her happening upon strategic views and architectonic compositions designed and conceived by the architect. The ramp is a clearly defined route along which one's perception and experience evolves. It is associated with the concept of the promenade and sequential unravelling of a building's formal and spatial qualities (Stickell, 2010: 44).



**Plate 3.41.**

(Stickell, 2010: 46) Controlled view and movement on the ramp at the Carpenter Centre

The Carpenter Centre for Visual Arts at Harvard, is a project in which circulation and the configuration of ramping surfaces were conceived in experiential terms. The building is built adjacent to the Harvard Yard, and anchored by a cubic volume extended and penetrated by other rectilinear and curved secondary volumes. An S-shaped ramp, the most striking element of the design, cuts through the building. It connects with the adjacent streets and grounds the building to the site (Stickell, 2010: 45).

The concept of the S-shaped ramp that crosses the site and plunges through the building was important from the very beginning of the project for two reasons:

1. It follows an existing desire line, a shortcut connecting two streets, that was already present on the site, and
2. It would act as a defined promenade that conveys people through the building to best showcase its activities and architecture. This would most effect peoples' perception of the design and functioning of the building.

The idea was to draw the public and students together and promote education in visual arts. Le Corbusier envisaged people moving through the site and building both day and night with the activities of its users and passersby visually integrated by the architecture. The conception of mobility, and more specifically the articulation of the ramp, focused on controlled, visual exposition for a moving spectator: the movement reveals the architecture as one moves through it, but it does not generate it.

The ramp remains detached from the sociality of the interior and its connection with the primary volumes is controlled. This control is maintained through four design devices:

- physical disconnection with the social spaces and functions within the building
- framed observation, which limits visibility of certain areas and prospects



**Plate 3.42.** (Stickell, 2010: 49) The Carpenter Centre: Ramps flowing in and out of the building mass but remaining disconnected from the functions within the building.

- spatial separation, through distance and spatial restriction between ramp and interior spaces, and
- visual interruption, when one's view of the interior architecture is cut off .

The intersection between the main building and the ramp is limited. As the ramp ascends above the ground floor it becomes a strong formal gesture, whilst still distancing the building and the building user from each other. Whilst moving along the ramp, observation of the interior spaces and their activities is closely controlled. The active studio spaces are either positioned unreachably above the ramp, or screened by *brises soleil*. Their facades only communicate activity when the ramp traverses the interior of the building, but even then it is with the effect of tunneling a space through the volume without socially engaging with it (Stickells, 2010: 46).

The ramp organises a succession of visual compositions of site and building; a well-understood aspect of the *promenade architecturale*. Movement along its length creates the perceptual effects activated by the motion of the user. The ramp is not a device that creates a full awareness and understanding of the Centre's spaces and functions; instead it remains almost oblivious to the building's internal qualities due to its disengagement. As Stickells states (2010: 47):

*"The ramp is in essence a concrete ribbon that intersects, brushes, floats over, and interacts with the active volumes of the building, but is always an observational domain."*

In contrast to Le Corbusier's utilisation of a ramp that is functional and linked to perceptual implications of movement, in the last few decades, architects have started to focus on other possibilities generated by movement in architecture and the deployment of ramped surfaces. These are ideas of ramped surfaces that blur their programmatic status and are used for other modes of occupation, developing into what can be called "activated surfaces". Instead of simply channeling circulation, the surfaces of ramps are seen to support motion as well as non-linear occupation of space that promotes productive, informal interactions and events (Stickells, 2010: 47).

Bernard Tschumi has developed a production of complex "event spaces" that have employed ramped surfaces to activate and encourage social occupation of inbetween or liminal spaces. Whilst his architecture is similar in some ways to Le Corbusier's, it works through a different sense of mobility, and the qualities of movement and effect differ (Stickells, 2010: 47).

### 3.4.4.2. Activated Surfaces in the Alfred Lerner Hall

The Alfred Lerner Hall is a student centre for Columbia University, and an example of a building where the ramp is designed and used as an activated surface. Two rectangular volumes book-end the large volumes of the auditorium, theatre and large glazed lobby space traversed by a number of ramps known as the "Hub". This is the area that we will focus on in particular to see how it is used as a large social meeting space and how the ramps physically connect the various areas (Stickells, 2010: 48).

The central void and its dynamic circulation of ramps is highly visible from various areas of the building. Tschumi, however, takes the phenomenal aspect of ramps one step further and develops their social potential. The positioning of the ramps is important in terms of their functioning as the main circulatory system, their relation to topographical conditions, and their articulation as spaces of social exchange. These ramps, however, do not limit one to a particular prescribed route as Le Corbusier does in the Carpenter Centre, but act as a network of paths that bridge the void. Their interconnection with further stairs and landings is intended to even further enhance the sense of connections and multiple routes.



**Plate 3.43.** (Stickell, 2010: 42) Central lobby area with ramps connecting spaces

Instead of limited views between ramps and spaces, the ramps move between half-floors, emphasising their visual presence and creating a dynamic visual relationship between diverging planes. Constantly shifting floor plates create a sense of continual flow. Most importantly, the ramps are proposed as "social condensers". That is, they accommodate multiple functions. To promote this, spaces such as student lounges, practice spaces, and computer labs are directly adjacent to and accessed from the ramps,

interlinked by the ramps, or in some cases, part of the ramps. These are not just part of the *promenade architecturale*, but are most importantly activated, dynamic surfaces (Stickells, 2010: 49).



**Plate 3.44.** (Stickell, 2010: 47) Central lobby area with ramps connecting spaces

Here we have looked at two major contrasting ideas of embodying movement in architecture. One is concerned with the experience of an observer on an isolated route; the other with the exploration of intensified interaction and spatial superimposition (the intersecting and overlapping of social activity).

We must remember that the ramp at the Carpenter Centre is open to the public at all times and it reinforces an existing connection between two streets. All people are meant to move through it at any time. On the other hand, the Lerner Hall is meant to be accessed by staff and students only. It is more like a beehive with all activity happening in the privacy of the interior.

### **3.4.5. Conclusion**

Mobility is more complex than choosing one type of ramp or another, or developing one type of concept of movement. Decisions for the incorporation of movement into architecture must be based on issues around access and flow from the urban to the more detailed scales within a project. These would develop from observing the history of movement patterns on the site, the design of certain points of access, and the level of interaction with the public outdoors as opposed to the level of privacy needed. The use of ramps may be based on a decision to create a contemplative experience whilst moving through the building, or it may become a generator of activity and sociability. One method is never better than the other, but is rather developed according to the needs implications of the site and the requirements and desires of the building design itself. All in all, the design of thresholds, doorways and ramps are an opportunity to delight the observer and user of the building, but any implementation in a design requires

sensitivity to many factors, both site and human. These physical ways of incorporating movement into architecture also need to respond to human needs, the character of the surrounds and the *Genius Loci* of the site. Despite being an architecture that encourages transition and movement, the architecture also has to be, at least temporarily, a place where migrants feel comfortable and at home. The next chapters look at the phenomenological and psychological impact of design on people, especially those who are unfamiliar to an area.

### **3. 5. THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SPACE**

Man's awareness, perception and experience of space is fundamental to creating successful architecture for orientation. To create an architecture that educates people about their new environment and makes people feel comfortable in their new homes, we must investigate how peoples' perceptions of places are formed. However, "migrancy" and the notion of place-making contradict each other. Migrancy deals with movement, change and being separated from your original place of belonging, whilst "home" fits with the Western concept of dwelling, based on stability, permanence, belonging to and being rooted, in a place.

With increasing displacements of people around the world today, some say it is impossible to conceive of any notion of home anymore, thus migrancy has become a metaphor for a supposedly universal feeling of alienation and homelessness. However, amongst some migrant communities there is still a profound desire to recreate a home-place in their new homes. Kurdish women from Turkey living in state-allocated housing in London, England, display efforts of reconstructing a sense of stability and continuity in their dwellings (Menin, 2003: 103).

To feel rooted and stable in some place has always been important to people. Western culture promotes that by staying in ones national setting, this spiritual need of belonging is fulfilled, and that there is a natural tie between peoples' identities and particular geographical territories. This underlies a need for stability, permanence, and fixity in conventional conceptions of home, from the scale of the homeland to that of the house. This has in turn led to the idea of "home" being a fixed place with unchanging character (Menin, 2003: 100).

#### **3.5.1. Migrant Place-Making**

The opposite may also apply: with displacement and change comes a loss of identity and homelessness. However, with massive displacements occurring globally today, we must reconsider whether it is really impossible to create a home in an adopted land. According to Kilickiran (Menin, 2003: 101), it has been shown in various communities globally that a sense of home may be created after displacement. One migrant community in particular was investigated: a Kurdish community in London.

Since the founding of the Turkish Republic in 1923, much emphasis was placed on Turkish culture and identity, with a consequent neglect of the Kurdish culture, language and identity. A repression of the Kurdish language led to feelings of alienation amongst the Kurdish community leading to outbreaks of rebellion and deaths of both Turks and Kurds. A large number of Kurds fled Turkey (Menin, 2003: 102).

In a study of home-making techniques of Kurdish refugee women from Turkey living in council housing in North London, Kilickiran found that these women adapt their new homes in various ways, to renew a sense of stability and continuity. Two different practices have been witnessed. Firstly, women transform the architectural space by displaying mementoes and cultural or ethnic objects to remind them of home. They also, however, change aspects of their homes, usually in decoration, to represent the change in character they have undergone since moving to England (Menin, 2003: 103).

### **Material Links**

When a repressed people move to another land, it becomes important to them that their home culture, history and identity stays a part of them in their adopted country. In Kurdish homes in London, visual materials related to their pasts are displayed as a reminder of where they come from. These may be family photographs, religious pictures or scenes of Turkey. Objects made by friends such as lace cloths and hand-woven rugs may also be displayed for sentimental cultural value. There is also a desire for links and news from their previous life. A particular UK-based television channel, Med-TV, that broadcasts programmes in Kurdish and Turkish, helps to link displaced Kurds with their culture and identity. To many, it is also a freedom of expression that they never had at home (Menin, 2003: 103).

### **Transformation of Architectural Space**

Kurds have adapted the spaces in their homes so that they use them in the same manner as they did back at home. Bringing back memories of home, many families still have their meals on cloths spread on their living room floors. Often, the kitchen takes up the role as the centre of the home where relaxing, cooking and entertaining occurs. Balconies are turned into garden areas and private outdoor spaces, redefining the public/private threshold space (Menin, 2003: 106).

### **Creating Anew**

Kurdish homes not only link to the past, but also show a continual effort to create better lives and living conditions than they had in their previous homes. It is with a sense of pride that many have modernised and decorated their homes in a modern way, often changing wallpapers and furniture. This shows the change in the individuals and their lifestyles since moving to London. Many of them see it as a natural part of moving. While they remain very much Kurdish, they borrow ideas and elements of their host culture. This shows an adaptation in their identities and expresses the changes they have undergone psychologically since their move. According to Kilickiran (Menin, 2003: 109):

*"The 'art' in their dwelling practices is grounded in this simultaneous existence of a search for stability, and a desire for, and acknowledgement of, change; and in their ability to create a sense of home in the space that exists between loss and recuperation."*

The idea of migrant place-making challenges the Western view of homes being stable and permanent places. We are also faced with the challenge of creating homes and a place of initial orientation for migrants. How do we create an architecture that allows migrants to display their own cultures whilst still introducing the concept and character of their new homes? It seems clear that some sort of flexibility needs to be allowed for in the design of the architecture to allow migrants to adapt and add their own personal touches from their culture. Besides this, we have to investigate the more typical notions of place-making that relate back to the character and identity of the adopted "home city". We also need to look at how architecture may educate people about the new city they are in. To do this, we must investigate the phenomenological ways of constructing meaningful and didactic spaces.

### **3.5.2. The Creation of an Environmental Image**

Man's relationship with his surrounding environment is symbiotic. That is, we affect the environment, and in turn, the environment affects us. For this to happen, there has to be a level of perception (stimulation by sight, sound, smell or touch) unique to that particular environment. Perception also involves the gathering, organising and making sense of information about the environment. This all works together to create a cumulative perception of our environment and this becomes our environmental image (Carmona *et al.*, 2003: 87).

This perception, however, concerns more than just seeing or sensing the environment. It is a complex processing and understanding of various stimuli. Ittelson (1978, Carmona, Heath, Oc and Tiesdell., 2003: 88) identifies four dimensions of perception that operate simultaneously:

- *Cognitive*: This involves thinking about, organising and keeping information. In essence, it enables us to make sense of the environment.
- *Affective*: This involves our feelings, which influence perception of the environment - equally, perception of the environment influences our feelings.
- *Interpretative*: This encompasses meaning or associations derived from the environment. In interpreting information, we rely on memory for points of comparison with newly experienced stimuli.
- *Evaluative*: This incorporates values and preferences and the determination of "good" and "bad".

The overall "environment" can be considered as a mental construct, and environmental image, created and valued differently by every individual. Kevin Lynch (1972) was a major researcher in the field of urban imagery. For him, the environmental image resulted from a two-way process in which the environment suggested distinctions and relations, from which observers selected, organised, and endowed with meaning what they saw. The moving elements in a city, which are essentially the people and their subsequent activities, are as important as the stationary, physical parts which all combine to form a whole image.

The “environmental image” is the product of a person’s immediate sensation and the memory of past experience. If one recognises and patterns one’s surroundings, one remembers an ordered environment which serves as a broad frame of reference and helps to organise activity, belief and knowledge. It also plays a social role, furnishing our minds with raw material for the symbols and collective memories of group communication. This helps establish a sense of emotional security. When a person experiences something that is familiar and distinctive, it heightens the sense of home and makes people feel comfortable and safe in a space. The environmental image is made up of “public images” which are common mental pictures recognised by the majority of the public (Lynch 1972: 7).

Lynch's main focus of study was based on city legibility and how people orientate themselves and navigate within cities. Lynch argued that the ease with which we mentally organise the environment into a coherent pattern of "images" relates to our ability to navigate through it. His interest in city orientation grew into an exploration of the city's mental image. Despite the possibility that images may differ from person to person, he came up with a set of key components to try and identify a city's collective public image. Focusing mainly on the physical qualities of cities relating to identity, he identified aspects of the environment that left a strong impression or image in the observers' minds. These are, briefly:

- *Paths*: the channels along which movement occurs (streets, transit lines, canals, etc.). These were often the predominant elements in people's images with other notable elements arranged along the route.
- *Edges*: the linear elements that are not paths, but form boundaries between areas or linear breaks in continuity (shores, railroad cuts, walls). These are important organising features and may hold together or separate



**Figure 3.18.**  
(Web 21) Path



**Figure 3.19.**  
(Web 21) Edges

various areas. The strongest ones are visually prominent.

- *Districts*: the medium-to-large parts of a city which have distinct characters and thematic continuities in terms of space, form, detail, uses, inhabitants, etc. Usually the character of a district would be recognisable to one more familiar with the city.
- *Nodes*: point references and strategic spots that the observer may immediately recognise or even enter such as junctions or public squares.
- *Landmarks*: These are also point references, but highly visible and typically seen from many angles and distances over the tops of smaller elements. Successful landmarks are singular and spatially prominent such as towers, sculptures, or large historic landmarks.

None of Lynch's elements exists in isolation. All combine to provide an overall image. Districts may be structured as nodes, defined by edges, penetrated by paths and contain landmarks. Elements would always overlap and strengthen the image of each other (Carmona *et al.*, 2003: 89-90).

Critics accuse Lynch of a lack of exploration of some other aspects of the environmental image that are also important to the formation of a meaningful image. One of these areas of criticism has to do with meaning and symbolism in architecture and urban design. Lynch did not deeply explore what the urban environment means to people and how they felt about it. According to Gottdiener and Lagopoulos (1986, from Carmona *et al.*, 2003: 92), social and emotional meanings attached to, or evoked by, elements in the urban environment and architecture were at least as important (and often more so) than the structural and physical aspects of peoples' imagery.

### 3.5.3. The Construction of Meaningful Space

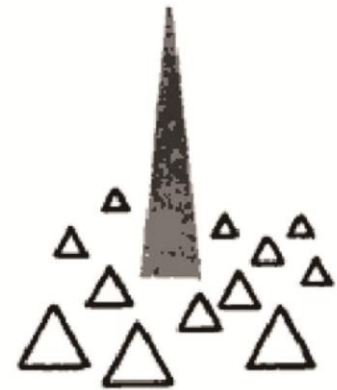
Existential space can be defined as a relatively stable system of perceptual schemata, or an “image” of the environment. Everyone develops their own of concept of place, and of space as a system of places,



**Figure 3.20.**  
(Web 21) Districts



**Figure 3.20.**  
(Web 21) Nodes



**Figure 3.21.**  
(Web 21) Landmarks

starting from childhood as one becomes aware of the structuring of space and one's place within it. This is a necessary condition for finding an existential foothold. The universe is imposed upon one to the extent that it comprises the organism as a part in a whole. Space is therefore the product of an interaction between the organism and the environment in which it is impossible to dissociate the organization of the universe perceived from that of the activity itself (Norberg-Schultz, 1971: 17).

Space forms a necessary part of the structure of existence. This structure must be described in two aspects: The "abstract" and the "concrete". We have already discussed the concrete aspects of space to an extent, but the abstract, emotional side is also necessary if we want to capture a "sense of place". A sense of place is based on the social and emotional meaning of space. It is often discussed in terms of the Latin concept of *Genius Loci*, which suggests that people experience something beyond the physical and sensory properties of places and can feel an attachment to a spirit of place (Jackson, 1994, from Carmona *et al.*, 2003: 96).

The *genius loci* is difficult to pinpoint and explain. Through major social, cultural and technical changes, however, the spirit of the place usually persists and remains unchanged. It is subtle and not easily analysed in formal and conceptual terms, but it is nonetheless obvious. The examination and understanding of the *genius loci* has often drawn on a theory of "phenomenology", which is based on Edmund Husserl's notion of "intentionality" which aims to describe and understand phenomena as experiences wherein human consciousness takes in "information" and makes it into "the world" as they understand it. Meanings of places are rooted in their physical setting and activities, but they are not a property of them, but rather of human intentions and experiences (Carmona *et al.*, 2003: 96).

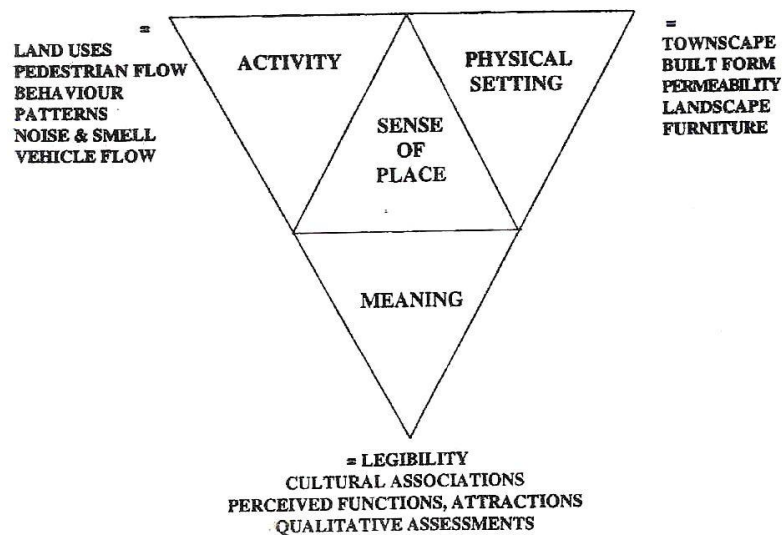
It is often understood that people need a sense of identity, or belonging to a specific territory or group. Crang (1998, from Carmona *et al.*, 2003: 97) suggests that "places provide an anchor of shared experiences between people and continuity over time". People need to express a sense of belonging to a collective entity or place which may be achieved if the sense of entering a particular area is enhanced. Norberg-Schulz (1971: 25) investigated the idea of inside versus outside as the primary idea of the "place" concept. For him, the essence of place lay in the often unconscious experience of the "inside" (of a city, district, dwelling, etc.) as distinct from the "outside". This is most easily understood in terms of "territoriality", i.e. people's definition and defense of themselves both physically and psychologically by the creation of a place where they feel safe. This is what migrants arriving in an unfamiliar city would try to achieve. Their own identity and individuality would also start to show in these spaces. Personalisation of a space would typically be seen in the design of the threshold or transitional space between public and private areas. This has already been seen at the beginning of the chapter in the discussion of migrant

place-making. Although spaces are built by someone else, individuals need to be allowed to adapt and modify them, even if it is just by rearranging the furniture (Carmona *et al.*, 2003: 98).

Von Meiss (1990, from Carmona *et al.*, 2003: 98) identified three ways of designing a space that still allowed for people, or groups of people, to create a sense of identity in them:

- Through a deep understanding of the values and behaviour of the people concerned, a designer could create an environment that is suitable to them and has all the environmental features crucial to their lifestyle. This does, however, pose problems when the designer is not closely acquainted with the people he or she is designing for, or is designing for a variety of cultures, as in the case of migrants.
- Allowing the future users to directly participate in the design process and to give their input. This also has difficulties posed by the designer-user gap.
- Although also potentially problematic, the most common method would be to create environments that the users can modify and adapt. Herman Hertzberger (Carmona *et al.*, 2003: 98) advocated an "architecture of hospitality" that catered for the adaptation of architecture to the individual's tastes and needs. The architecture has to be robust and also take into consideration the time frames that certain people would use the building for. Thus, all the various possibilities for changes that groups or individuals may require need to be considered within the design process.

Various ways of creating a sense of place that allows for personalisation have been investigated. According to Relph (1976, from Carmona *et al.*, 2003: 98), a sense of place is made up of three things: "physical setting", "meaning", and "activity", and most importantly, the human



**Figure 3.22.**  
(Carmona *et al.*, 2003: 99) Diagram drawn by Punter (1991) illustrating how design actions may contribute to the sense of place.

interaction with these elements. Others, such as The Project for Public Space (1999, from Carmona *et al.*, 2003: 100) have identified four key attributes of successful places: "comfort and image", "access and linkage", "uses and activity", and "sociability".



**Figure 3.23.** (Carmona *et al.*, 2003: 100) The Project for Public Place Making's diagram for creating successful places

Making successful places is not a simple procedure. There is no particular formula that will always create a successful place every time you design. However, by using initiative and applying some of the above methods of place-making, the likelihood of people finding and adapting a place so that they feel at home in it increases.

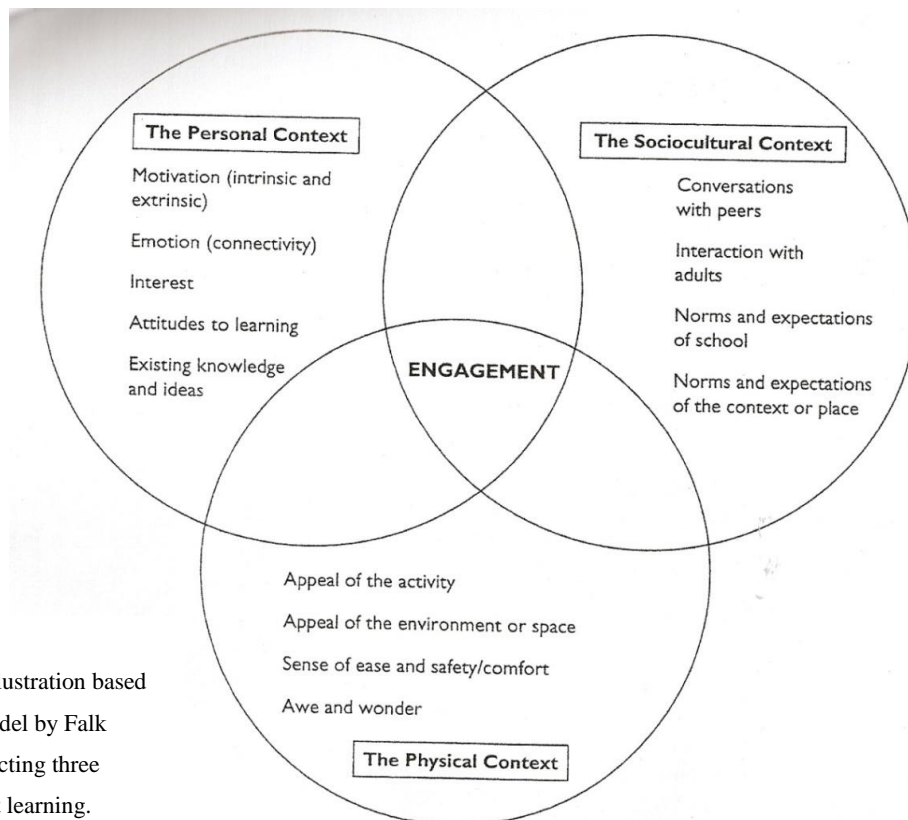
### 3.5.4. The Didactic Role of Architecture

Any public building's most important role is that of serving and educating the public, whether it is about culture, politics, history, or science. This is even more true in a centre for orientation, where people come for help to establish themselves in their new environment.

It has been discovered that people learn best through experience of a phenomenon or concept, rather than through books or research in the library or classroom environment. Based on Piaget's theories on learning, Yahya argues that effective learning only occurs from manipulation and interaction with the environment (Yahya, 1996: 131). By making learning fun and easily attainable, it encourages curiosity and love of learning. A level of interactivity should be introduced in the architecture of orientation to hold peoples' attention and encourage learning. Giving people a level of control and freedom also helps achieve a sense of discovery of knowledge by oneself and lets people feel less restricted.

### Constructivist Theory

The constructivist theory has generally been used for the basis of many museums and education centres, but may be applied in the case of a centre for orientation. This theory holds that people construct their knowledge for themselves; that people interpret new knowledge based on their existing understanding and build onto it (Resnick & Chi, 1992: 80).



**Figure 3.24.**  
(Barbeau, 2007) Illustration based on Contextual Model by Falk and Dierking, depicting three contexts that affect learning.

Based on this, the Contextual Model was drawn up by Falk and Dierking which seeks to examine the factors which impact upon learning in a free choice learning environment. This is a model for thinking about the best possible way in which learning takes place. It is based on the premise that learning is situated as a dialogue between the individual and their environment. The model consists of three overlapping contexts consisting of different factors which interact to impact on the quality and quantity of people's learning and what they gain from the experience. These contexts contribute to and influence visitors' interactions and their experiences.

The personal context deals with the person's attitude or approach to learning, the socio-cultural deals with the interaction with the surrounding people and social norms. The third context is the physical context which is the focus of this research. It includes:

- Advance organizers and orientation
- Design
- Reinforcing events and experiences outside the museum

It must be noted that learning does not occur isolated from the objects and experiences of the real world. The physical context also includes the architecture and atmosphere of the situation i.e. the sights, sounds and smells and the design features of the experience. A range of architectural and design factors including lighting, colour, sound and space influence the learning experience. The ambience and comfort of the



**Plate 3.45.**  
(Web 30) University of Iowa student building: Large glass windows and doors allow students to connect with the outdoors, and natural lighting creates a comfortable ambience.

environment impacts on the quality of the learning space (Dierking, 2002: 6-9).

Orientation within a centre for orientation would be highly influenced by the features of the setting. Learning is strongly influenced by how successfully visitors can orientate within the space.

The appeal of the building's atmosphere, the sense of ease and safety that people feel in the environment and the ability of the physical context to create feelings of awe and wonder as factors of the physical context also affect learning. The quality of the environment directly affects the amount of engagement and learning that takes place.

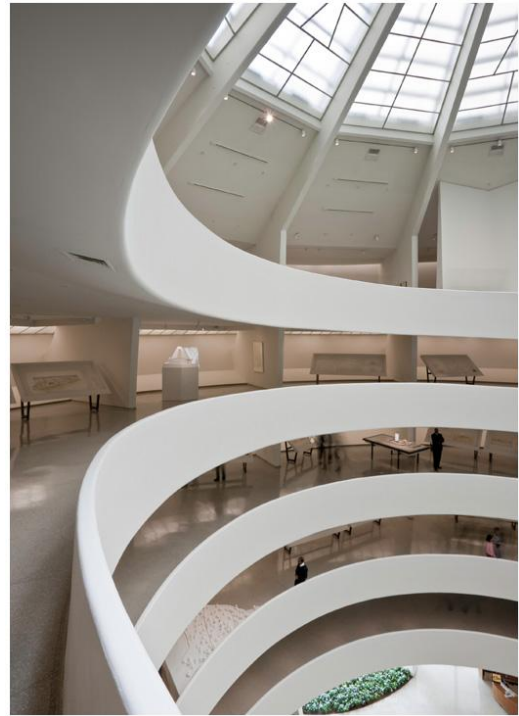
The contextual model highlights and identifies the physical environment as something that impacts upon the learning experience. The aspects of the physical environment which affect how people learn can be summarized as:

- Orientation and navigation
- Safety, security and comfort
- Design: the appeal of the environment

These elements will be considered carefully to help develop an understanding of attributes that contribute towards the successful design of a centre for orientation.

**Plate 3.47.**

(Web 4) Myongi University Library, Seoul, South Korea: The design ambience is conducive to learning. Natural daylighting and materials as well as open spaces for gathering and discussion appeal to students.



**Plate 3.46.**

(Web 29) The Guggenheim Museum, Frank Lloyd Wright. The gallery spaces are organised along open ramps that allow people to easily orientate themselves within the building.



### 3.5.5. Principles of organization and way-finding

There should always be a certain amount of free choice as to what people learn, the sequence they choose to follow and the amount of time spent in certain areas of the building. Visitors should be free to choose what they learn and to develop their own route. They should be able to browse as they see fit, and the architectural design should allow for this to occur (Barbeau, 2007: 31).

In order to provide for this free choice, it is essential that the building be clearly and simply organized to allow for way-finding and orientation. Way-finding can be defined as the ability to navigate through a building, and orientation as the ability to locate oneself within it. Getting lost can cause considerable stress and it negatively impacts a person's ability to learn. Disorientation affects a person's ability to focus on anything else. A suggestion to assist in orientation is for circulation that overlooks other areas and allows visitors to orientate themselves. Clear visual linkages should be maintained that also allow for objects to be viewed from another perspective (Barbeau, 2007: 32).



**Plate 3.48.**

(Web 2) Interior of a school in the US. Spaces overlooking learning areas and large windows facing the outdoors allow for easy orientation

## Planning

Easy way-finding should:

- allow for free choice by providing multiple routes and allowing people to view the various options available to them
- Provide spaces that can be overlooked so people can orientate themselves.
- Provide views into the surrounding context outside so that visitors can orientate themselves in the greater context and therefore give clues as to where they are in the building
- Create gathering spaces and provide visual clues with landmarks and nodes to allow for people to form a mental framework
- Use simple circulation routes that are easily understood
- Use established or expected patterns which allow people to easily find required elements



**Plate 3.49.**  
(Web 11) An outdoor communal gathering space that can be used for a variety of functions

The layout and structuring of orientation centres should be likened to that of urban planning, and Kevin Lynch's framework for cognitive mapping can be used to aid in legibility of the space (Lynch, 1972: 52). A coherent framework can be established as a series of paths, nodes, districts, edges and landmarks that helps people navigate unfamiliar space. Though an urban design theory, it can be applied to an orientation centre by considering public spaces where people gather as nodes, the circulation routes as paths, the various exhibition spaces as districts and vertical circulation points or large exhibits as landmarks. By clearly arranging and relating these people could easily navigate by forming a coherent pattern.

### **3.5.6. Conclusion**

This research is based on creating an architecture appropriate to ideas of migrancy; to people who are in a state of transition and are far away from their homelands. This chapter deals with two aspects of place-making: The first is the creation of a sense of place in the architecture that can be created through borrowing elements from the local host culture as well as the migrants' culture. The second is the design of an architecture that helps migrants to learn about their new homes and to orientate themselves within the unfamiliar setting. Creating an architecture that is relevant to people from a variety of cultures and lifestyles may seem like an impossibility, but studies show that even though migrants are away from their places of origin, they still feel a need to adapt their new spaces to suit them, their lifestyles and their culture. A level of flexibility within the architecture needs to be maintained so that the migrants may use rooms as suits their needs and may display some of their cultural artwork and keepsakes from their old lives. To help them orientate themselves in their new contexts and to create successful learning spaces, the architecture of museums, schools and libraries shows us how, through the careful design of interior spaces that also link with strategic points in the outside world, this may be achieved. The next step would be to better understand the particular migrants that come to the city of Durban, the challenges they face, and the needs they have. This will be investigated in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 4: CASE STUDIES

Whilst places of refuge, centres for counselling and temporary housing for migrants do exist in various parts of the world, there is no single building that provides all these services and also introduces the culture, history and lifestyle of the city, all in one. In South Africa especially, there is no building that provides shelter and help to migrants beyond that of informal temporary housing. Therefore, the case studies that have been investigated in this chapter focus as best as possible on a few specific elements that are pertinent to the creation of an architecture of orientation.

These are:

1. Way-finding and orientation in Durban's International Airport,
2. Warwick Junction: the Gateway to Durban and the generation of movement and reference to local culture through urban design intervention, and
3. An orientation and information centre: Durban Tourist Junction.

The application of the theory of liminality, the use of architecture in the creation of a gateway, the promotion of movement and the capturing of the essence of Durban in the designs will be looked at in each of these examples.

#### 4.1. First Stop: King Shaka International Airport

King Shaka International Airport is Durban's new place of arrival for people travelling by air, and in these modern times, air travel has become our main mode of transport over long distances. It is located 35 kilometres north of the main city of Durban at La Mercy.



It is the third airport in the life of Durban. The first was the Stamford Hill Aerodrome at King's Park (also known as the Eastern Vlei), started in 1921, which was just north of the city centre. The second airport, Louis Botha (later known as Durban International Airport) was opened in 1955 and located 10 kilometres south of the city. The airport there was in use until 2010, when due to geographic and capacity restrictions, all air transport was moved to King Shaka International Airport (Peters, 2010: 1).

Today's air terminals are meant to be functional, rectilinear and designed for expansion.

*"The world's best airports allow for clear circulation, and direct passengers through a retail concourse on one or two levels to a large column-free space often with a swooping roof supported by giant angled struts. There are kerbside drop-off and pick-up points and pedestrian and vehicular routes do not clash, but visitors cannot even see the planes."* (Peters, 2010: 1).

Durban's new airport clearly fits into this category.

Durban has decided to place the airport where the strategic value of a runway and surrounding land can be maximized by using it for manufacturing and processing for export by air. Durban has included a trade zone, commercial support zone and an agricultural zone to cultivate and export

**Figure 4.1.**

(Ultria, 2010: 1) Plan of the KwaZulu-Natal coast showing Durban International Airport's proximity to Durban

vegetables, flowers and other perishables. The result is a “cluster of commerce around a crossroad”, which in this case is an airport.

#### **4.1.1. Linking to the Urban Context**

The previous airport just south of Durban reached capacity many years ago, and the only other large area of available space for a new international airport was north of Durban. The site chosen was at La mercy on the north coast. The site is 20,6 square kilometres in area, and situated about 30 kilometres north of Durban city centre and 5 kilometres inland from the coastline. The surrounding area is quite undeveloped, with the airport itself sitting in the middle of sugarcane fields. Although this apparent isolation from the city helps reduce the negative effects of noise and air pollution on residential areas, the visual and contextual link between city and airport is indistinct. It is also quite a distance between the city centre and the airport resulting in strong reliability on private and public transport to take you between the two nodes. The unclear link and legibility between the airport (which is essentially a “gateway” for one’s initial arrival to the city) and the city itself causes confusion and irritation amongst people who are unfamiliar with the urban fabric and are not too sure where they are going or meant to be going (Utria, 2010: 1).



**Plate 4.1.**

(Utria, 2010: 1) Aerial photograph of the airport with Durban barely visible in the distance

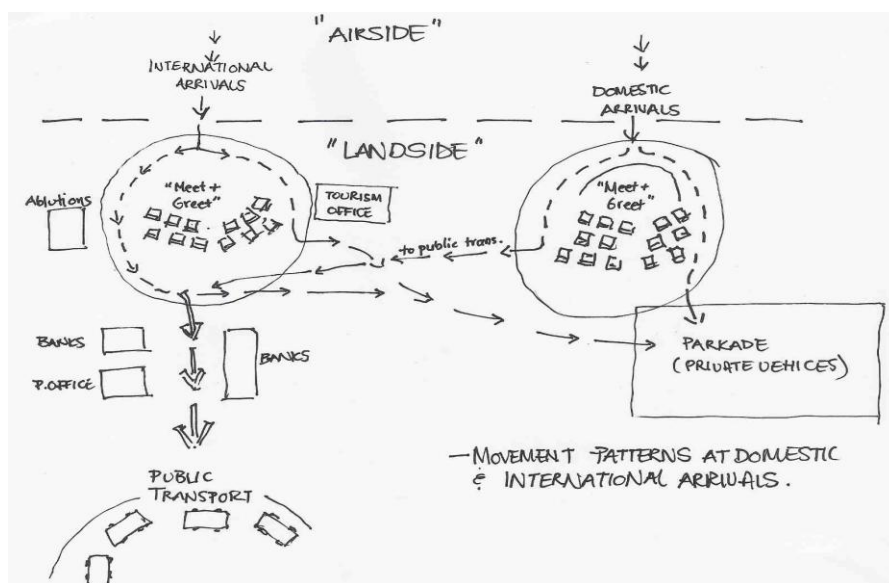
The long distance between the airport and city also leaves people arriving in the unfamiliar city open to being swindled by public transport operators. According to the Tourist Information Centre attendants at Durban International, a trip to the centre of Durban from the airport can cost anything between R70 (which is the fee for the airport shuttles) to R350 (with public transport).

#### **4.1.2. Layout of Spaces and Functions**

Whilst the airport is made up of a complex variety of functions, for the purpose of this case study, only the passenger terminal and specifically the arrivals area, will be investigated. The airport as a transport interchange facility that enables the movement of passengers on into the unfamiliar city environment will be studied to see how affective the architecture and planning is in helping visitors find their direction and move onwards into the unknown urban fabric comfortably and safely.

The Passenger Terminal precinct includes the terminal itself, parking facilities for over 6000 vehicles, offices, car rental facilities, a public park and the road system that connects all these components. The terminal is the largest and most complex building on the site. The processor accommodates all the facilities to process passengers and baggage, as well as the retail, administration and technical spaces and the airside corridor that constitute the circulation route and interface element between the processor and the aircraft. The ground floor houses the arrivals areas, the first floor houses departures, and the upper floors are less public and house airline offices, administration areas, and the Terminal Operations Centre. The ground floor and departures area will be looked at more closely (Ultria, 2010: 6).

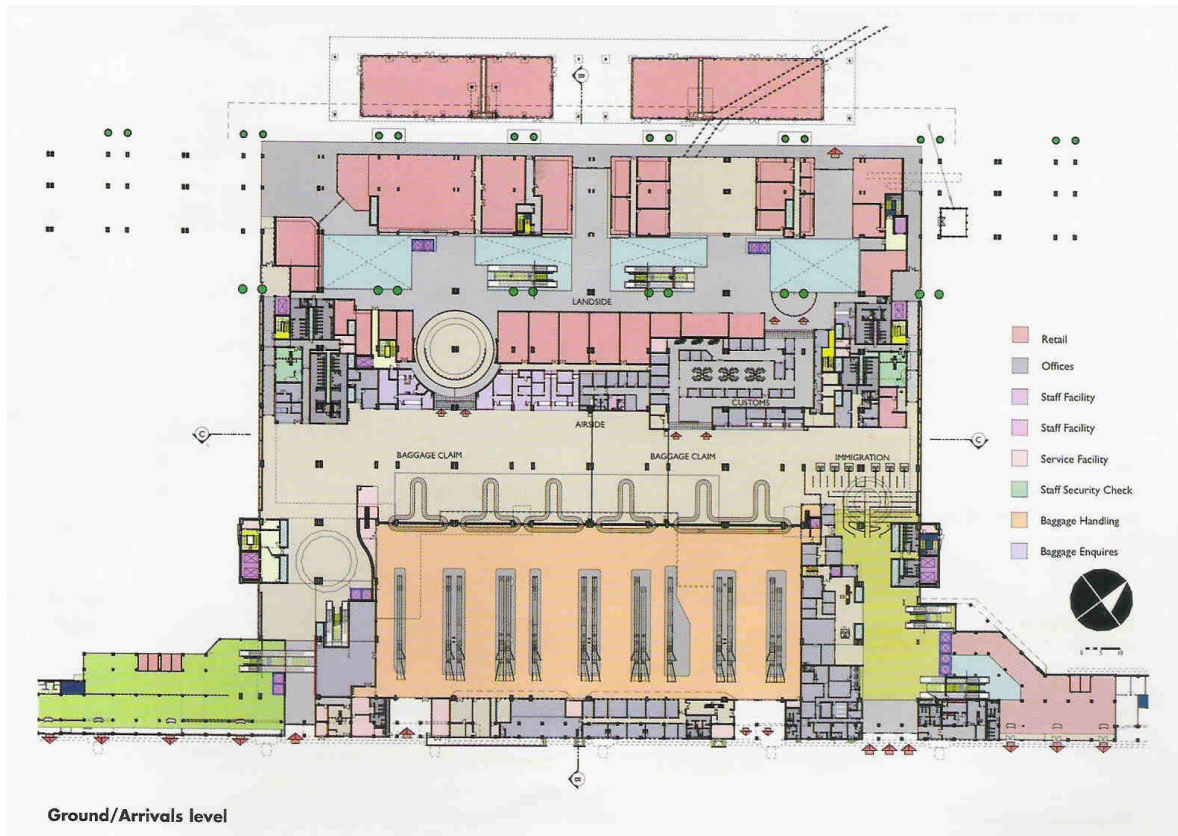
The building is long and linear, facing roughly east with a large double volume atrium space that is spacious and made walkable by the limitation of columns. The arrivals area can be separated into two as it contains two separate areas, one for domestic arrivals (on the southern end), and one for international arrivals (on the northern end). The concourse acts as an access route and generates easy movement and transition from one function to the next. At international arrivals, the visitor's process involves immigration, health and security screening, baggage collection and customs. This all happens on the "airside" of the terminal behind a wall unbeknown to the general public. The process at domestic arrivals is considerably shorter with only collection of luggage being necessary. Both processes are as streamlined and clear as possible to avoid confusion amongst passengers. The baggage-handling hall is located on the airside of this level to eliminate the need for vertical transport of arriving baggage and expedite the delivery of processed luggage to departing flights. The strip located between the landside retail facilities and the airside arrivals areas is zoned for the accommodation of airline support services and government agencies, of which there are not many and the services they provide are not clear.



**Figure 4.2.**  
(Author's sketch) Movement Patterns on the ground floor

Once passengers have finished claiming their luggage, they exit the airside area and are discharged into a clearly demarcated “meet and greet” area within the main circulation concourse. Here they may be met by people who are coming to fetch them, or they could make their way on foot to the airport parking facilities or public transport pick-up area located just opposite the international arrivals area.

Dedicated circulation routes deal with the separation of airside and landside areas as well as segregation of international and domestic passengers arriving and departing. Staff and public areas are clearly demarcated. An international passenger transfer area provides a link up to the departures level for transit passengers, making their transfer between the two different areas as smooth as possible (Ultria, 2010: 6-7).

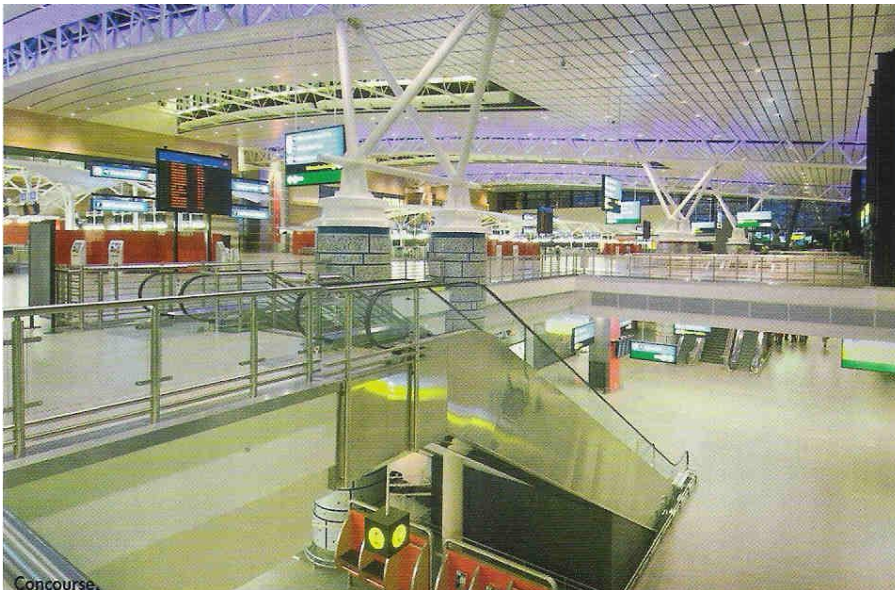


**Figure 4.3.**  
(Ultria, 2010: 3) Ground Floor/ Arrivals Area

### 4.1.3. Way-finding Techniques

Although the airport is seemingly much bigger than the previous Durban International, it is still fortunate in that it is reasonably smaller than some of the major international airports, and therefore less confusing. Whilst the areas between domestic and international arrivals and departures, are long due to the linear planning of the main concourse, the signage is good and the straight and linear routes makes finding one's way easy and reasonably quick. Visual links between the arrival "meet and greet" areas and the exit doors out of the main terminal building are very clear, and the signage pointing towards the public transport is also more than adequate. For foreigners who would find their arrival in a strange airport and country a bit confusing, a Tourist Information Centre and help desk are situated right next to the international arrivals area. The people at the Tourist Information Centre are more than willing to aid passengers with information about getting to the surrounding areas and the city of Durban as well as organizing accommodation for them. The public transport pick-up point is located right in front of the international arrivals area and is clearly signposted and hard to miss. There is a clear visual link between the two. Despite this very simple and logical planning, the Tourist Information Centre administrators still describe the arrival of passengers on international flights (and there are not many; maximum of two a day) as "mayhem and confusion" with passengers unsure of where to go despite all the planning and signage measures taken.

### 4.1.4. The Ambience in a Place of Transition



**Plate 4.2.**

(Ultria, 2010: 6) View from the Departures area down to Arrivals area

The arrivals areas of airports are generally quite sterile places with clean, crisp surfaces and lines. Durban International Airport is no exception, except that the designers have tried to inject a bit of colour and light into the spaces. Red and blue are used as accent colours throughout the arrivals and departures

areas, and part of the roof opens up to let in natural light. Bright blue and yellow signage to show directions to different areas also brightens up the space. Sophisticated acoustics ensure that the large main concourse remains quiet and peaceful. Despite this, the arrivals and departures areas still remain quite sterile and a bit unwelcoming. The use of primary colour combinations with stainless steel (especially the columns clad in perforated stainless steel) is harsh and cold in its treatment. The arrival or departure at a large airport is often a stressful and confusing experience and it could be that through the use of soothing colours and less cluttered signage and design elements the experience may be more pleasurable, and the surrounds more attractive.

The overall structure reminds one in some ways of an industrial shed with the emphasis on structure and maximization of floor space. Whilst this is obviously important in an airport where large clear floor areas, as well as large spans over arrival and departure areas are needed, the emphasis is on pure structure. There has been an attempt at softening through the use of primary colours and natural lighting, but it is not people-friendly and does not encourage one to stay and feel comfortable in the space. The space seems to be purely designed for the movement of people to and from one place to another. Whilst this does suit the idea of an architecture of transition and certainly encourages movement successfully, it is important not to forget to make the experience of one's route through the building as pleasurable and calming as possible. Abstract and psychological impact of colour, shape and scale cannot be ignored and plays an equally important role in the creation of transient spaces.

#### **4.2. Entering the City of Durban: Warwick Junction**

There are two types of people entering the city who would be unfamiliar with the urban fabric and thus be in a state of liminality and in need of orientation: tourists, and (im)migrants. Because the one is only a temporary visitor in entering the city for touristic reasons, the tourist's situation and experience would be slightly different from the migrant's. The tourist presumably has enough money to travel to a chosen destination for a holiday and will set him/herself up in accommodation that they can pay for. Once settled in the hotel room, they would then enquire about tours and local attractions in the area that they could visit for their enjoyment. The migrant, on the other hand, is usually moving to the city to find a home where he can stay permanently (or at least stay for long regular periods of time). The attraction of the city is usually a better life, employment, health services, and to possibly avoid persecution in your previous country or area of residence. The migrant will often arrive in the city with very little money, no employment, and no shelter to go to, because of the harsh situations in the previous area of residence. Whereas the tourist may choose where to go and stay, and pays to make his or her experience as enjoyable as possible, the migrant generally has very little choice and will go where his money can afford him, and where there is most chance of him finding cheap shelter, food and employment.

The most likely way of arriving in Durban is by vehicular transport, since, even if arrival has been by air, one still needs to drive the rest of the way into the city. One would ultimately end up on the main arterial into town, i.e. the N3 freeway. The centre of town can also be reached by the Northern and Southern Freeways, although these are lesser known and usually used by people in surrounding local areas. Regardless of the direction one enters the city, it is more than likely that you would end up travelling over or through the area of Warwick Junction, or even stopping in it if you are using the cheaper form of local public transport, the minibus taxi (in the case of the migrant). Warwick Junction is on the edge of Durban's CBD and forms a "gateway" into the inner city. It contains Durban's primary transport node and on an average day accommodates 460 000 commuters and at least 5000 street traders. As an (im)migrant, it is more than likely that one would end up in this area, or at least spend a period of time in it. As the hub of informal trade in the city, it would be the main place of employment or trade for people with few skills and little money, and it would be where migrants would first begin to try to establish themselves (Dobson, 2001: 6).

#### **4.2.1. Historical Background of Warwick Junction**

Warwick Junction is a run-down area on the periphery of Durban and one of the country's busiest transport and commercial nodes. The area dates back to the 1800's. It was during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century that municipal workers reported the area as beyond their control and a source of "nuisances". This may have just been a reaction to the growth of inter-racial commerce and housing in the area. It is because of its racially-mixed nature that Warwick Junction has been infamous throughout the history of Durban.

Historically, the low-lying site was divided by a creek which drained the Western Vlei. It was bordered on the city side by West Street Cemetery, and on the Berea side by the "Indian" or "Squatters" Market where market gardeners sold fruit and vegetables. Being flat land close to the city centre, the area provided the ideal site for municipal uses such as bush sheds.

During the Apartheid era, the introduction of the Group Areas Act saw the eviction of many tenants from the area and the specific zoning of the area as the "Indian CBD". Out of the way on the periphery of the "White CBD", this helped reinforce racial segregation within the city and keep Indians and Africans out of the main CBD. Warwick Junction has always been the market centre for the city with the Indian Market gardeners in the Early Morning Markey (Est. 1934) and later the English Market. With these markets, the development of the Berea Road Station and bus services, as well as many flats and houses built in the area during the 1930's, the area flourished.

In 1996, the city council launched an urban renewal initiative: the Warwick Junction Project. The first imperative was a "scrub up" of the area, as a post-apartheid response to a neglected inner city district, but the project was mandated to focus on safety, cleanliness, trading and employment opportunities and the efficiency of public transport. The project team initiated substantial capital works and established a number of operations teams to deal with issues as diverse as pavement cleaning, ablution facilities, childcare facilities and homelessness. Within three years, the project had achieved dramatic improvements to the urban environment, however the problems are ongoing and the research of solutions carries on to this day.

With the abolition of apartheid, Warwick Junction boomed in terms of growth, population and movement. The area became illegible and confusing to people as so many more people moved into it. The whole dynamic of the area changed and grew. Although these figures are outdated (research done during 2001), they do show something of the extreme numbers that Warwick Junction caters for: 2000 taxis, 130 000 daily taxi departures, 140 000 daily departures on train and bus, 460 000 people passing through the area per day, concentrated pedestrian counts in excess of 50 000, 8000 market and kerb-side traders, 1200



- 1 Facility for Mielie Cooking: *Matic + Van Zyl*
- 2 Pavement Stalls: *Lee Sanders*
- 3 Traders' Stalls on Leopold Street Pedestrian Bridge: *Langa Makhanya & Associates*
- 4 Market Road Bridge: *OMM Design Workshop*

- 5 Herb Traders' Stalls: *OMM Design Workshop*
- 6 Information Centre: *Laren Beni Architect*
- 7 Hazrath Badsha Peer Shelter: *Kooblal & Steyn*
- 8 Early Morning Market upgrade: *MA Gafoor,*

- Kooblal & Steyn*
- 9 Facility for Bovine Head Cooking: *Lees & Short*
- 10 Pinafore Traders' Stalls: *Mike Legg Architects CC*

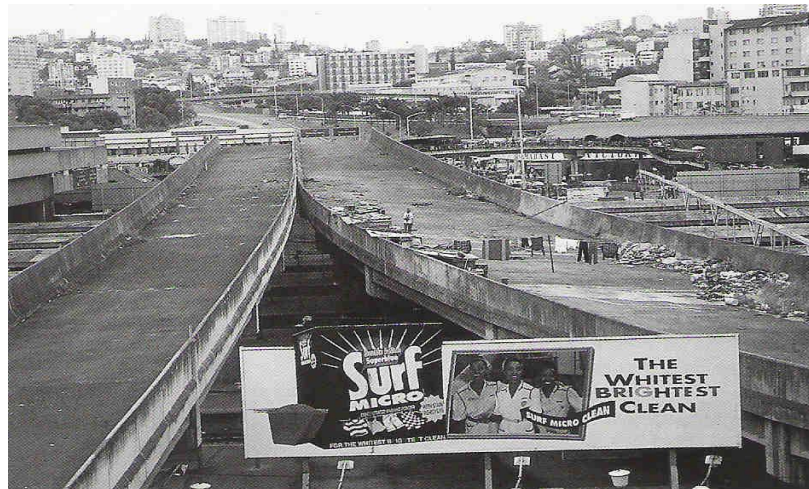
**Plate 4.3.**  
 (Dobson, 2001: 7) Aerial View of the Warwick Junction Area

bags of rubbish daily, and 23 000 weekly customers through a 70 square metre formal sector butchery. The apartheid creation of a modal interchange at the edge of the previously "white" city has had its energy released and the commercial opportunity fed by people movement and public transport has grown enormously. In 2001, the annual turnover in Warwick Junction was R1 billion, based simply on informal trade. Compare this with the turnover of the Pavilion shopping centre at the same time, which was R1,2 billion, and the number is hugely impressive (Dobson, 2001: 6).

However, this sudden and rapid growth led to the development of an area that is overcrowded, confusing and especially difficult to navigate if one is unfamiliar with it. One of the first steps was to refurbish one of the worst buildings in the area as a project centre. This is the iTrump office from which the research team could easily access the project area and witness the daily activities of Warwick Junction. From here staff could easily get on to the street and carry out one-on-one consultation with traders and people moving through the Warwick precinct, thus facilitating interventions genuinely informed by user needs. The iTrump office is a purpose made space for dialogue and consultation. The building became the implementation, consultation, and administration hub of the project, and heralded the commencement of a series of capital interventions. Most of the projects are quite small, but aim to knit the existing fabric of the area and provide essential links. For this reason, they fulfill the role of gateways and bridges, aiding transition from one area to the next.

#### 4.2.2. Gateway to Warwick Junction: Herbalists' Bridge

For a long time, Warwick Junction herb sellers sold their herbs and traditional medicines along the pavements and roadside interchanges in the Warwick area, there being no other space. Pedestrian space is still limited today as it is, and there was a need to create overhead pedestrian paths connecting the Victoria Street Bus Terminus and the various



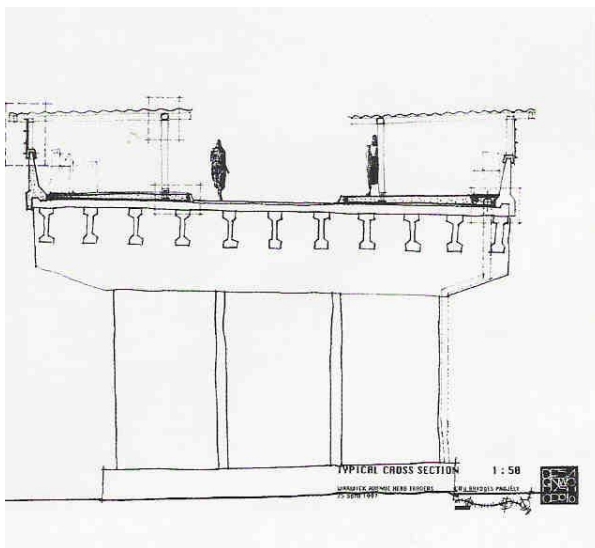
**Plate 4.4.**  
(Dobson, 2001: 9) View towards Tollgate west, the Herb Traders' stall before

taxi ranks of the city. Above the existing railway lines there were the remains of the Queen Street vehicular onramp and the Victoria Street off ramps to a freeway never completed. It was decided to move the herb traders onto the ramps and provide them with sheltered traders' stalls and use the unutilized freeway spurs as safe overhead passages for pedestrians to get between stations and markets.



**Plate 4.5.**  
(Dobson, 2001: 9) View towards the city, the Herb Traders' stall afterwards

### Planning and Functioning



**Figure 4.4.**  
(Dobson, 2001: 9) Typical Cross-section through the herb traders' stalls

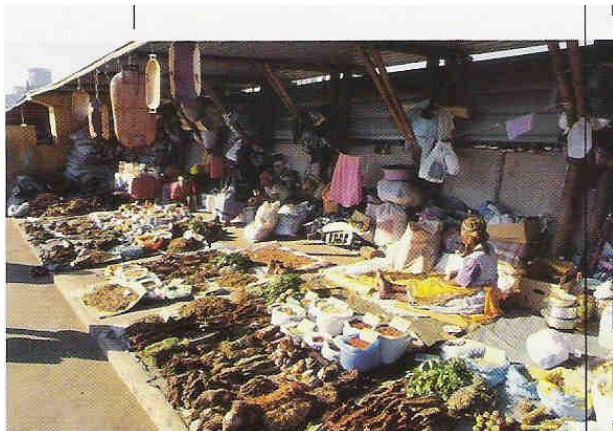
The abandoned freeway is inventively linked to the surrounding markets and stations by a series of footbridges, the Market Road Bridge designed by OMM Design Workshop being one of the most recognized ones (to be looked at later). The stalls are set up on either side of the ramp with the middle space used by pedestrians. The design of the shelters is kept very simple with the floor only slightly raised to denote the floor area of the herb sellers' "stalls" and a lean-to roof to provide some shelter from the sun and rain. The herb traders share larger areas demarcated by a half-height wall that not only provides structural stability to the shelters, but also demarcates different areas of the herb traders market (Dobson, 2001: 9).

## Appropriateness of Materials and Architecture

The materials used to make the shelters are locally-available and reminiscent of the materials used in shanty towns on the edge of the city. Gumpoles are used to hold up the corrugated iron lean-to roofs and the dividing walls are simply made of brick that has been roughly plastered. The architecture thus fits in well in the context of African traders' stalls that are traditionally made of "cheaper" easily available materials. The architecture is low-key and doesn't dominate. The emphasis is rather on the unhindered movement and visibility of pedestrians to their individual destinations and the visibility of the herb sellers' wares.

## Sociability in a State of Movement

The use of as few materials and walls/divisions as possible shows a sense of openness and honesty that is appropriate to an area that was separated from the rest of the city for so many decades. Many herb traders sit side-by-side under the same roof with as few walls between them as possible allowing easy-flowing conversation and camaraderie amongst fellow entrepreneurs. A sense of community is established in a transitory area that is always changing and people are always moving through. The disused freeway was initially designed for the movement of anonymous vehicular traffic, but now achieves so much more than this: pedestrian movement at a slower pace allowing for conversation and trade establishing a sense of *communitas* established. People can learn about their surroundings at a slower and more detailed pace



**Plate 4.6.**  
(iTrump, 2003) Herb sellers' stalls

than that of a motor vehicle. Despite the lack of walling and traditional architectural thresholds such as door and window, the threshold is still made clear by the smallest changes in height and overhead shelters.

At all times, one is aware of what is going on in the immediate environment and the visual link establishing a destination creates an easy orientation and sense of safety. Visibility plays a key role in both the safe transition of the pedestrian from one area to the next, and the successful sales of the herb sellers' wares.

### 4.2.3. Life between places: Market Road Bridge



**Plate 4.7.**  
(Dobson, 2001: 10) Market Road Bridge



**Plate 4.8.**  
(Dobson, 2001: 10) Market Road Bridge ramp

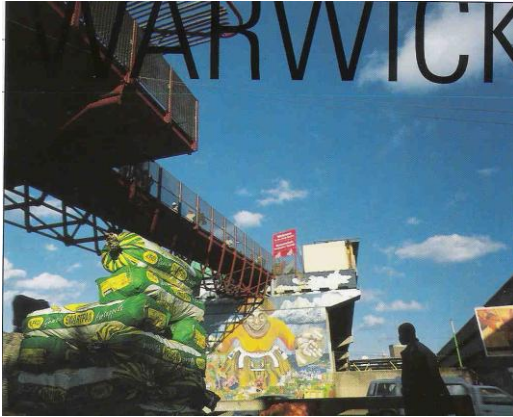
The Market Road Bridge is one of the pedestrian bridges built to connect to the disused freeway on- and off-ramps that were converted into the Herb Sellers' Market. It was conceived as a gateway to the market and as it stretches high over the busy David Webster Street (formerly Leopold Street) it has become an icon marking one's entrance into the Warwick area whether you are on foot or in a motor vehicle (Dobson, 2001: 10).

The bridge is designed to safely take pedestrians up and over the busy streets below and on to the Herb Sellers' Market Bridge and the transport stations surrounding it. The bridge is approximately three metres wide allowing for large numbers of people to utilize it at once. People are protected from falling over the sides by a metal grille that stands almost at head-height. There is a handrail for the elderly or sickly to use to support themselves on either side, and the floor is ramped allowing trolleys and wheelchairs to be

pushed along it. The bridge also links with another pedestrian bridge that already existed in the Leopold Street area now connecting Victoria Street Bus Terminus with the Early Morning Market. By linking these pedestrian bridges, most foot traffic that was level with and alongside vehicular traffic, causing

more confusion to the already busy roads, is moved upwards, and people can easily reach one of the various destinations in the Warwick area.

### **Appropriateness of Materials and Architecture**



**Plate 4.9.**  
(Dobson, 2001) View up towards  
Market Road Bridge

The structure is little more than a pedestrian bridge with some shady pergolas. However, the use of robust materials such as concrete for the floor and steel grilles for the sides of the walkway are appropriate to Warwick Junction which is renowned for its harsh and tough environment, and caters for masses of people moving across the pedestrian bridge every day. The wattle branches, or *iziNtingu*, used on the pergolas to provide shade are a common vernacular and thus create a strong link with the architecture of the users.

The bridge appears lightweight and the irregularity of the wattle branches in the canopy creates a swooping movement that indicates a sense of movement. This transient quality reflects not only the function of the bridge; to aid people moving from one place to another, but also expresses the psychological and social state of the people using it.

These people are in an “inbetween” state, not in one place or another, and they are entering an area with which they are possibly not familiar with, i.e. they are in a state of liminality. The use of bridges and overhead walkways not only knits the existing urban fabric together physically, but also helps people understand and navigate the unknown surrounds, helping to mentally knit together their own map of the spaces as they discover them along the route.

### 4.3. Tourist Junction: Orientation in Durban



**Plate 4.10.**  
(Author's photo) View towards the Old Station, now the TouristJunction

Tourists entering the city should ideally make their way to the Tourist Junction which is located in the centre of Durban in the old historical heart of the city. Appropriately located near one of the most important historical and tourist attractions, the old Market Square which houses the City Hall, Post Office, Museum and Art Gallery, as well as an interesting shopping experience along Church Walk, the visitor can easily make his or her way to the Tourist Junction to find out about more popular attractions.

#### 4.3.1. Context

The Tourist Junction is situated on the ground and first floor of the Old Station, a corner building which used to house the Railway Station when trains and trams used to run into the centre of the town. It is appropriate that a building which encourages the further movement through the city, used to function in a similar manner by encouraging people to use trains.

Since this is an historical building and a tourist attraction, the relevance of the architectural form and expression will not be discussed here, but rather the functions and roles the tourist information centre provides will be discussed.



**Plates 4.11. & 4.12.**

(Author's photos) Entrance to the Tourist Junction

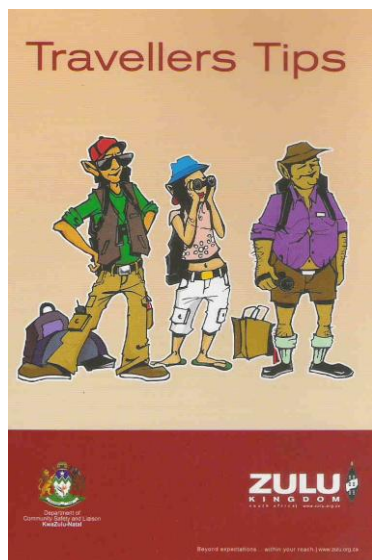


**Plate 4.13.**

(Author's photos) One of the Information Boards assembled for the 2010 World Cup indicating walking routes around the city

As a tourist information centre, the Tourist Junction is well-located in the centre of Durban within walking distance to many historical attractions. The new pedestrian routes marked throughout the city that were introduced during the 2010 Soccer World Cup are easy to get to from the “Junction”, as well as the new “People Mover” bus stops and routes that are a quick form of public transport to get to various tourist attractions around the city.

Upon entering the building the tourist information centre (which is little more than a room) is located to the left of the main foyer. The building interior still has many of its historical architectural details dating back to the early days of the train station, such as the tiled domed ceiling and timber finishing. The main staircase is a central architectural feature. The ground floor area makes available brochures and attendants who can help give you advice for travelling around the whole of the province of KwaZulu-Natal.



**Plate 4.14.**  
(Tourism brochure) Brochure to encourage safe tourism

Upon asking the attendants a few questions, it was discovered that they do not receive many visitors during quiet times. When they do make their way there, tourists however find the services provided at the Tourist Junction helpful. The problem seems to lie in the Tourist Junction not being widely accessible (either because they do not know about it or do not come into the centre of Durban) or because it is possibly not recognizable as an orientation centre for tourists. There is still a fear amongst tourists and locals of venturing into the centre of Durban. Stories of muggings, hijackings and more violent crimes cause people to avoid the centre of Durban, resulting in them never experiencing a vital part of Durban's history and culture.

The Tourist Junction does provide many brochures about how to travel safely and wisely in certain areas of Durban and its surrounds, however, as mentioned above, the problem does not seem to lie in the quality of the services provided in the Tourist Junction, but rather getting the tourists to come to the Junction in the first place. Upon enquiry, one is shown up to the first floor where more specialised tourist information and services focusing purely on Durban are available. The separation of the provincial and city information services is rather confusing. There is no visual link between the two, and they are rather treated as two different services when they should really be placed together. On the first floor, more brochures and information can be found and bookings for accommodation and day tours can be made.

#### 4.3.2. Ambience in the Tourist Junction



**Plate 4.15.**  
(Authors photo) The first floor of the Tourist Junction

The atmosphere on the ground floor is more successful than on the first floor. The ground floor still maintains references to the previous function of the old Railway Station and therefore performs both the role of an information centre and an historical landmark. The second floor is not unpleasant with bright colours and patterns on the carpets, furniture and posters that advertise the typical attractions of Durban and give the tourists' senses a feel for what we would like them to perceive as typically South

African style. However, this is not an honest portrayal of the context, and it forces a single perception of Durban on the tourist that will stay with them for the rest of their trip.

As an information and orientation centre, the building should make more reference to its context even from within the building. Direction should also play a big role in the design to point the tourist in the “right direction” and show them the next step they need to take on their route through the city. An tourist officer sitting on the first floor of a building that only has windows facing in a certain direction can only give directions on a piece of paper, rather than actually showing them firsthand the direction in which they should move. More strategically-placed openings with views out to the city will help orientate the tourist even better, as well as afford them a view of the city that they would not see at street level.

#### **4.4. Conclusion**

What this research has shown is a dire need for orientating architecture in Durban, not only for migrants, but for all people visiting the city. Warwick Junction, despite its apparent confusion, best fulfills the role of the gateway into Durban and also manages to capture the feeling of movement, honesty and openness required from an architecture of orientation and mobility. However, it lacks the iconic element of landmarks: the instant recognition of architecture from a distance. Views between spaces as well as on into the surrounding landscape are highly important to maintain to help visitors unfamiliar with the city to locate themselves in the context of the Durban. So often, an architecture of mobility that provides for a variety of cultures and people seems to become sterile. Elements of the local culture and architecture should be incorporated into the design to add a warmth and meaning so that people feel they belong in it.

## CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this research essentially comes down to the exploration of two things. The one is how architecture and urban design can *physically* orientate migrants coming into the unfamiliar city, whilst the other is how architecture and urban design can have a beneficial *psychological* impact on migrants and help them to adjust to the unfamiliar city concept. Therefore the research focuses beyond the statistics, numbers and origins of migrants entering the city of Durban, and deals with the problems they face and how design can help them deal with these problems and adjust to their new home. Besides understanding their needs, the various methods of orientation, the creation of architecture that caters for transitions and movement along a route, and architecture that helps educate people about their surroundings, were also explored. It is hoped that by looking at and analyzing these various methods together, a relevant architecture of orientation, transition and integration can be created for migrants and immigrants in Durban.

Migrants and immigrants, being mobile, are in a state of transition *en route* to their destination. Even upon arriving at their destination, their journeys are not yet over and they are faced with the daunting task of finding their way around the unfamiliar city. Thus, most of the research was focused on architecture and urban design that aids orientation and mobility. Typically, entry to an area, or place, is marked by some sort of gateway, thus gateways and thresholds as orientation devices were carefully looked at first.

### **Gateways as iconic orientation devices**

Gateways are featured throughout history as a means of orientation upon entry into cities or towns. By placing a large gateway, either marked by pylons, wing buildings, or a triumphal arch along a route at a busy entrance to a city or town, people who are unfamiliar with the area are physically drawn to the gateway and orientated in the environment. The gateway sits at the threshold to the place and creates a feeling of transition. By being visually bold, large in scale and acting as a landmark, gateways are successful urban and architectural elements that perform the role of orientation in the most literal and physical of senses. Understanding the principles of how gateways work helps the designer to create a modern-day gateway that orientates people in the sprawling city. This is crucial to developing a building that acts as a gateway, but it neglects the more subtle psychological aspects of the problems faced by migrants and immigrants upon entering the city. To fully cater for their needs, the mental state of transition and how physical space can start to reflect it needed to be explored.

## **Creating a sense of transition: Exploring liminality**

Without repeating the meanings and consequences of liminality that were investigated in the research, liminality refers to the physical and emotional state of somebody in a period of transition. In this case, the migrant or immigrant is in a period of transition as he or she is between homes, between jobs, and finds him or herself in an unfamiliar environment. Liminality is the boundary between these two places or states, and capturing the energy of transition is essential to creating powerful and compelling spaces whose integral focus is progression and aids migrants in their own change of state. It has already been stated that a gateway is an element of transition; i.e. people move through it to get to a destination. It is also, therefore, a liminal space, or an “in-between” space, and it should connect the spaces between already established spaces or districts. The ideal liminal space is one that is currently undefined and possibly run-down or neglected, but has the potential to form a new link and connect different precincts, whilst still allowing conflicting areas to exist side by side in harmony, maintaining their individuality. The concept of liminal space will therefore play a crucial role on an urban scale in determining the area best suited to a migrant orientation centre. However, within the architecture itself, on a much smaller scale, there are also periods or spaces of liminality between more clearly defined spaces. These are threshold areas.

### **Thresholds as ordering devices**

The architectural threshold is a liminal space and is one of the main elements that expresses transition and acts to join two varying states. Whilst looking at liminal spaces helps us to understand the location of an orientation centre that encourages transition on an urban scale, thresholds provide the framework for spatial movement through smaller architectural spaces. An overall sequence can ultimately develop through the careful design of thresholds and doorways and helps shape routes through the design. Using a ritual or route in the architectural form helps organize the layout of spaces and the visitor's movement through them. The thresholds, be they doors, windows, changes in levels, or changes in material, help emphasise the different fixed points and pauses along the path. Thresholds are the gaps between defined spaces made solid as a proper space of its own. By considering the design of thresholds between spaces, the psychological impact of transition and the sense of mobility of the migrant can be made more interesting and inspire the migrant to continue his or her progress into life in the city.

Attempting to design thresholds relies on acknowledgement of the load of the site. The sites' layers, smell, history and traces of former inhabitants are all important and impact the overall psychological experience of the migrant in the state of liminality. The architectural form should provide shelter as a

place for interaction amongst a variety of people from varying cultures and it should encourage the formation of new relationships and social connections.

However, a contradiction appears when we consider that we are designing architecture, which has always been considered a permanent thing, for migrancy, with its connotations of mobility and temporary state. How does architecture convey and encourage movement towards it and onwards into the city? The orientation centre has to be seen as a “mobile collective viewpoint” and not a destination in itself. The design should allow for further movement and change. This again ties in with the idea of a gateway, but goes further to suggest that the route on which it lies also needs to form part of the design. The mapping of tracks and mobility in urban design and architecture was looked at in more detail to better understand this.

### **Mobility and migrant place-making**

Because the migrant orientation centre is only a “mobile collective viewpoint” and not a permanent destination, mobility and connection with existing routes needs to be established to enable the visitor to move onwards to various areas in the city. Original routes used by migrants and pioneers to the area in the past, as well as more recent existing routes, need to be considered in the design. These routes would be used by all sorts of different people, but encourage all to meet at the point of orientation, or the orientation centre. Through the incorporation of a sequence of forms along these routes, movement is encouraged toward the centre as well as onwards into the city. The design of an orientation centre also needs to encourage as much discourse and interaction as possible without being too predictable, so that each individual can comfortably find their own way onwards and establish themselves. Migrant place-making indicates a movement that cannot be explained in terms of the migrants’ former presence, so no former knowledge will help a migrant find his or her way in the unfamiliar environment. The routes connected to the centre and appearing within the architecture need to be clear enough to tie different precincts together and increase connectivity. Clear and simple sequences and routes that allow a certain amount of free choice also play a didactic role which is crucial to the orientation of a person who does not know the city well.

### **Learning from architecture**

Orientation is not simply directional, it is also educational, and the migrant or immigrant needs to learn about and adjust to the new environment they find themselves in. The Constructivist Theory investigated in the document states that learning is situated as a dialogue between the individual and the environment. Once again, the relationship between the migrant and his new surrounds is emphasized, and his or her

orientation and learning about the new city does not happen isolated from the city in question. Sights, smells, and sounds play a role in the experience and the learning process which ties up again with the architectural threshold as the place where the interaction with the environment occurs. These relationships and experiences are ephemeral, but the architectural form needs to cater for these interactions to provide the migrant or immigrant with an enlightening experience that helps him transition into the new environment.

## CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The need for a facility that caters for the needs of migrants has been established. An orientation centre would provide temporary shelter, some forms of education, and services that would help them establish themselves in the city. Whilst physically, it would be relatively easy for the government to provide shelter, lessons, welfare, and legal services to migrants at various places in the city, the problem of exploitation and orientation of these unfamiliar and somewhat naïve people also needs to be dealt with. The city is confusing to people who are not familiar with it, and it is always changing as more and more people are drawn to the city in search of better lives and employment opportunities. So not only should the orientation centre cater for their initial shelter and service needs, but it should also be an orientating device, and a place where social connections and new relationships can be forged to better prepare them for their new life ahead. By linking design to theories that relate to movement of people in space, and the state of transition or liminality that they are in, a better understanding of the psychological impact spaces have on such people has been achieved and can be integrated into the design of an orientation facility to better equip migrants for their new lives ahead in the city.

The most important aspect of the building is that it should initially act as a gateway connecting two different areas. It should be a highly visible landmark building that ties in with the existing city fabric and creates as many connections with the most important precincts in the city as possible. Once this is established, more subtle elements of the effects of spaces, threshold details, elements that encourage movement, such as ramps, materials and organizing principles can be looked at more closely and incorporated into a successful centre design.

What has been noticeable throughout the research is that most theories consider the relationship between the “user” and the architectural space crucial for the encouragement of learning and transition of people in a new environment. The relationship between the “user”, the architectural threshold, and rest of the city is highly important. There should be clear connections between the architectural facility and the outside, world linked by carefully designed liminal spaces at various scales, so that the further movement of the migrant onwards into the city is made certain to him or her at an early stage. Not only should visual connections with the city be maintained, but also links with existing and new routes that would aid the transition of the new comer into the rest of the city.

Within the design itself, thresholds and sequences in the layout of spaces will need to be looked at more closely and applied where relevant. These will help reinforce the feeling of transition and movement in migrants. Spaces should also allow a certain amount of necessary freedom for migrants to express

themselves either with cultural displays, artworks, singing groups, storytelling and sharing, so that it really starts to become that contradictory thing: a migrant place. Spaces that allow for the interaction between migrants and locals so that stereotypical views and barriers between them may start to dissolve, and tolerance of each other may develop also need to be included in the centre. It is important that the architecture responds both to the local and foreign community so that both groups may feel welcome there and relationships and social connections can start between them. This is where a new sense of *community* will be established, with a new character relating both to the local character of the area, as well as the characters the migrants bring with them from their home countries and imprint in the spaces of the orientation centre. “Character” is more than a purely spatial and visual dimension. It is a quality that emanates from the fusion of a variety of elements such as topography, built form, building materials, street patterns and human interaction with these elements. An area’s character is experienced through its townscape; a network of spaces, both modest and grand, intimate or exposed, revealing views to landmarks or glimpses to secluded alleys and courts. By taking into account the local surrounds and people, and creating interesting and informative routes and spaces within the facility, the building will start to respond and tie in with the existing character of the area. Character is also sensory, and draws from the sights, sounds and smells of the surrounding context, and in this case, also the sounds, sights and smells the migrants bring from their home countries in the form of clothing, textiles, food, songs and speech. Place can only gain real character through the passage of time, when people are able to alter and adapt it, and when they have incorporated their own images of that distinctive place in their minds. The style, proportions of the buildings, colour and materials and the relationship between buildings and spaces, trees and landscaping, down to the design of street furniture, signs and floor surfaces must also start to reflect the pluralistic character of the migrant orientation centre.

A conclusion is reached that although architecture is associated with order and permanence, when designing for people who are in a state of transition and movement, architecture must seemingly contradict itself and a new typology must be created. It must borrow from traces of movement by responding to and growing around routes, as well as capturing so-called “in-between” spaces that are not yet defined by creating threshold spaces, as well as incorporating a mix of characters, both local and foreign. And yet, whilst acknowledging the spontaneous and highly-mobile nature of cities and migrants and expressing movement and transition in architecture, we must also establish the need for place-making and give a sense of rootedness to the space. This is where migrants may find shelter, comfort and a hint of the familiar; a welcome reprieve from the harsh and unfamiliar city.

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**SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL EXPERIENCE AS A  
GENERATOR OF SPACE AND FORM: Designing an Orientation  
Centre for Migrants in Durban**

**Design Report**

**Mary-Anne Bekker**

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

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## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1. INTRODUCTION**

Since the abolition of apartheid almost two decades ago, migration of people from other African countries and other parts of South Africa to South African cities has increased dramatically. Despite having one of the best constitutions in the world and all the hope and promise of democracy, the inequality and barriers of the past cannot be so easily overcome. Rural and urban poverty affects thousands of people still today. With an increasing number of migrants, further strain is put on our social services and infrastructure. The result is high crime rates, unemployment, homelessness, poor social support structures and an increasing AIDS epidemic. Migrants become the scapegoats for our problems. Thus they not only suffer from housing and service shortage, a lack of employment opportunities, union representation, social welfare, social connections, but intolerance, xenophobia, and inescapable poverty too. The locals' ignorance and fear of the unknown makes the adaptation and orientation of migrants in the new city very difficult. There is a general lack of social and economic support in South Africa for these migrants and therefore they are not sufficiently equipped to deal with the stresses of basic survival in the new city. A facility that provides a place for education, mediation, general shelter and social services is necessary to provide migrants with basic orientation in the unfamiliar city.

### **1.2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

Whilst the client has specific requirements for the orientation centre, the theoretical investigation carried out also produced a set of requirements that need to be taken into consideration. These are:

#### **Urban Design Requirements**

- The orientation centre should act as a gateway along an already existing, well-utilised route. The centre should become the first stop and point of orientation for the newcomer. It should act as a landmark, be highly visible, and have a clear visual link with the rest of the city to enable good orientation.
- As a place that caters for people who are in a state of transition, the centre should also be located in a transitional space. An example of this could be a site that is currently neglected and ill-used, severing the urban fabric of Durban, but has the potential to reconnect districts and precincts and restore the urban fabric to an extent.

- There should be a strong and close connection with all major routes and transport nodes in the city. It should acknowledge and respond to important transport routes in the area. The building should be part of a route rather than a destination in itself.
- People migrate to cities to experience the economic, social, cultural, and recreational opportunities generated by the urban cityscape. In order to obtain these benefits of urbanity, the urban system needs to be legible and accessible. This centre should achieve this by being highly accessible by providing a series of spaces along a route of movement. It should be well-established along a route to and from the CBD; access to the centre should be a matter of course.
- The building itself should respond to its local context and be seen to physically tie itself into the cityscape. It should seem to be an “in-between” space, delineating boundaries and forming new links with the existing urban fabric.

### **Architectural Requirements**

- The building acts as a threshold to the city, but it should also incorporate threshold spaces within its architecture. As architecture that encourages transition, it should also encourage mobility as well as communication and mixing of various groups of people. The building could be designed as a sequence of spaces along a route with informal gathering spaces along this. These may vary from more formal meeting rooms, eating houses where people can meet, to informal performance areas.
- The design should encourage movement and mixing of different cultures and people. The design should have a vibrant mix of activity spaces that embrace diversity and multi-functionality. The building is temporal and therefore the designated functions for certain spaces should be temporal as well. Flexibility is an important design consideration. The needs of the various communities addressed are multiple, and less specialised spaces are required to embrace all their needs. A meeting room should be able to accommodate the activities of the Women’s Sewing Society to the AmaZulu Soccer Team.
- Geometry restricts the play of interaction. The design should allow freedom of movement and be non-linear to encourage more exploration and discourse.
- Special attention should be given to the layout and qualities of space as well as the allowance of views towards the cityscape to always allow the user to orientate him or herself in the urban fabric. Interaction with the rest of the city should be promoted, whilst people should feel comfortable and safe in their new environment. The spaces should not be so pre-determined in use and design as to not allow certain influences from locals and foreigners using the facility.

The orientation centre is more than simply a meeting place and place of orientation. It should be a place where people gather, work, live, rest and play. Not just foreigners and migrants should make their way here, but also locals and tourists so that interaction and sharing of ideas, cultures and traditions can happen on multiple levels. The design process of this centre will encompass and rely on place-making concepts with concurrent association of community involvement, local and regional distinctiveness, history and heritage interpretation and vital public space.

It is hoped that the area will form the backdrop for social gathering, entertainment, cultural and commercial exchange, and provide the chance to access and enjoy the energy and ambience of a special part of the city.

### **1.3. THE NOTIONAL CLIENT**

#### **1.3.1. The Client's Requirements**

The client requires a mixed-use facility that provides shelter, aid and opportunities for migrants in Durban. Most civic, social and educational facilities, which serve the population at large, are located in relation to higher income areas, which are physically and economically difficult to access by the poor.

Therefore, the client's objectives are:

- To create an environment which breaks away from the associations of bureaucratic governmental institutions which are not user-friendly and is integrated with other facilities to adequately address contemporary issues at an appropriate level.
- For various facilities to operate in educating migrants on issues affecting their lives and options open to them in their new homes. Facilities should provide user-friendly access to relevant issues and form the foundation for process to other services.
- For the development to integrate the connectedness of various government provisions, into smaller, more accessible, satellite facilities which serve a certain population or precinct. Similar satellite developments could then be strategically located at other areas, thereby allowing their impact to be greater.

Various educational, welfare and health facilities will be necessary, as well as short-term accommodation.

### **Educational Facilities**

Education is the key to the orientation and adjustment of migrants in the unfamiliar city. It is essential that they learn about their new homes to avoid exploitation and dangerous situations. An integrated approach to education is needed in such a facility that recognises that academic, vocational, skills training, health and human rights awareness are all inter-related in this process of educating people.

### **Welfare and Social Facilities**

These facilities help play a role in aiding migrants socially by providing care facilities for children and the sick, emotional and psychological counselling, legal aid and security, meeting areas for different organisations as well as meeting areas for various groups to mix informally. Instead of taking over the role of clinics, orphanages and hospitals, the orientation centre will rather provide short term relief. Here people can receive counselling and advice rather than a permanent solution. People are encouraged to move on and establish themselves in the local community.

Other facilities such as administration areas, satellite stations for security and police, as well as general eating areas also need to be provided.

### **1.3.2. The Client's Organisation**

The Government views national social development as a collective responsibility and co-operation of civic society. This includes the formal welfare sector, which is state subsidized, religious organisations delivering welfare services, non-governmental organisations (NGO's) such as the business sector, and community-based organisations (CBO's).

#### **Government Organisations**

- Department of Education with assistance from the:
- Department of Welfare, health, justice, and labour.

The co-ordination between these departments is imperative for successful delivery and efficiency of resources.

There are already-existing migrant aid groups and organisations in Durban that deal with the education and facilitation of foreigners into the South African community.

## **Non-Government Organisations**

- **Durban Refugee Service Providers Network (RSPN)**, which works on material relief alongside the main representatives of the United Nations high Commission for Refugees. During the 2008 period of xenophobic attacks in South Africa they provided Human Rights Lawyers and Social Services during the crisis period.
- **The KwaZulu-Natal Refugee Council (KZNRC)** is a voluntary, registered non-profit organization which includes, works for and with seventeen refugee communities from seventeen refugee producing countries and several refugee non-profit organizations. Their main objectives are to promote the human rights of refugees through access to health care, education, employment, identification document and travel document, freedom of speech and movement; and raising awareness within the refugee community around the responsibility and obligations of refugees toward their host county.
- **The Refugee Pastoral Care Project (RPC)**, initially created in 2002 by a few Congolese refugees, ended up being adopted by the Roman Catholic Emmanuel Cathedral in Durban because of the ingenious and tactical strategies of its Christian founders. The project makes a difference to the lives of migrants, both legal and illegal, through provision of food parcels, distribution of used clothes, uniforms and bus fare to the most vulnerable migrant children.
- **Other community-based organisations in the Durban area.** There are many individual community-based organisations that deal with specific problems faced by migrants, such as protection of their trading rights, security and welfare of migrant women. The orientation facility will provide a platform from which such organisations can operate from.

### **1.3.3. Detailed Client Brief**

#### **Administration Area**

Houses the admin department for the overall running of the facility as well as separate administration for the short-term residence.

**Total = 350 m2**

#### **Food Hall**

Serves the public with a seating area. Possibly links to external courtyard. Envisaged to provide a space for residents, transients, and students to use day or night as a relaxation space.

Includes: Food hall = 450 m2

Kitchen = 150 m<sup>2</sup>

Service Areas = 100 m<sup>2</sup>

Stores = 90 m<sup>2</sup>

**Total = 790 m<sup>2</sup>**

### **Studios**

Used by migrants as studio space. Can be rented out

2 studios, 300 m<sup>2</sup> each

**Total = 600 m<sup>2</sup>**

### **Workshops**

For training areas and working on light repairs, furniture manufacturing and mechanical work.

6 workshops, 50 m<sup>2</sup> each

**Total = 300 m<sup>2</sup>**

### **Craft Market Area**

For exhibition and selling of light crafts, jewellery and artwork. High visibility required.

**Total = 300 m<sup>2</sup>**

### **Heritage Museum**

Museum for migrant communities. Rotational exhibits.

**Total = 150 m<sup>2</sup>**

### **Forum Space**

A modern day “agora”. A shared space where informal meetings can happen and views aired.

**Total = 250 m<sup>2</sup>**

### **Classrooms**

Need to be interactive with each other and flexible for various uses.

4 classrooms, 45 m<sup>2</sup> each

**Total = 180 m<sup>2</sup>**

### **Orientation and Security Space**

For a police satellite station. Acts as a control point and orientation space.

**Total = 100 m<sup>2</sup>**

### **Language Laboratory**

Specialised resource and learning centre for learning of relevant languages.

**Total = 75 m2**

### **Performing arts and recording centre**

Activity space for dancing, acting and singing. Recording studio and stage also required for sharing and recording of traditional songs and stories from host countries.

**Total = 200 m2**

### **Resource Centre**

Available to users of the centre and public. Shared facility by different components of the development.

Library component = 150 m2

Internet lab = 40 m2

Staff room = 20 m2

Specialist collections and study area= 150 m2

Computer room = 300 m2

Two offices = 40 m2

Store room = 20 m2

**Total = 20 m2**

### **Crisis Centre**

Women and child abuse awareness, as well as xenophobia counselling.

Counselling areas, 2 offices each = 20 m2 ea.

Overnight accommodation, 4 rooms at 10 m2 each, with ablutions

**Total = 200 m2**

### **Childcare facilities**

Day care and play centre for parents working during the day to leave their children there.

Sleeping area and ablutions included, as well as admin office.

**Total = 150 m2**

**Migrant Organisation Offices**

Offices and meeting areas for various organisations and unions. Requires shaded seating area, meeting areas. Also has a food and clothing distribution facility. May also serve locals by distributing pensions to the elderly, unemployed and disabled in the area.

**Total = 300 m2**

**Post Office**

A service lacking in the area. Includes fax and photocopying facilities.

**Total = 20 m2**

**Retail Component**

Formal trading areas. Also has wholesale shop to provide bulk goods to traders and migrants.

6 small shops, 6 m2 each

One wholesale shop, 35 m2

**Total = 100 m2**

**Recycling Centre**

Accommodates cardboard collectors and sellers in the area. Requires an outdoor yard.

**Total = 200 m2**

**Nutrition and health centre**

Includes a small clinic, training/education spaces and a small community garden.

**Total = 450 m2**

**Storage for centre**

Various storerooms for different components of centre

**Total = 100 m2**

**Laundry and Washing Facilities**

Place for laundry and ablutions to be done for those who commute daily.

**Total = 400 m2**

**Added Overnight accommodation**

Small hostel with rooms for families, mothers and children as well as single people

**Total = 100 m2**

**Gross Floor Area (excluding ablutions and circulation space )**

**TOTAL = 6150 m2**

#### **1.4. CONCLUSION**

There is no precedent for this sort of development that adopts a holistic approach to the physical and psychological orientation of migrants. Yet the ripple effects of the success of such a scheme are far-reaching: as a socially relevant educational building and as a catalyst and model for the revitalisation of the post-apartheid city. It is naive to expect such a model to provide all the solutions to the problems of the city and its migrants. Issues of crime, poverty, unemployment and violence are addressed by the development as being fundamental issues to control, but there is no guarantee that it would have a significant influence as hoped for. Rather it is intended to pose questions and propose suggestions to the extent of the selected problem and ideally provide a model to base future developments on.

It is intended that the proposed development be centred around educating people on the relevant social issues affecting their existence and how they may prevent and relieve their problems, rather than the provision of, for example, an aids centre or TB clinic. It would be unrealistic and far too complex to accommodate and concentrate all the activities into one development. The orientation centre focuses rather on the dissemination of contextual social information that will help migrants adjust to their new homes, as well as provide temporary shelter and essential services to ease their transition into the unfamiliar city concept.

## **CHAPTER 2: SITE SELECTION, SURVEY AND ANALYSIS**

### **2.1. INTRODUCTION**

Durban has a great number of migrants (and immigrants) entering the city. Most of these have already passed through other parts of South Africa where they have initially settled, but then moved on to Durban in the hope of finding better living conditions and employment. The problem is that, although Durban has lower overall rates of xenophobia and unfriendliness towards foreigners than other major South African cities, migrants still find their transition into the new city fabric difficult. There is a need for an orientation centre at a strategic entry point of the city to aid the migrant in this transition. There they would receive directional, orientational, social, educational and initial economic aid to help them enter the city and make it their new home.

### **2.2. SITE SELECTION AND DISCUSSION**

#### **2.2.1 Location and Orientation**

The orientation centre for migrants is essentially a gateway into the city. It is where migrants would stop when entering the city to receive much-needed aid. While this gateway is metaphorical, it is also important that through its location it represents a physical gateway and helps orientates people unfamiliar with the city.

A gateway marks an entrance to a place (in this case a city) along a prominent and visually clear route. It sits on the boundary or edge of the place it is introducing and acts as a place of welcoming. The major routes and entrances of the city of Durban need to be defined and compared and then sites at strategic points along them identified for possible areas for the development of an orientation centre. In this case, the major routes and entrances should be ones known to be used by the majority of migrants and visitors entering the city for the site to be most relevant. The site should however not ignore the rest of the city and its residents. The aim is to integrate the foreign and the local, so there should be a clear link between the city centre and local residences and the site of the orientation centre. By ensuring a clear visual link between the city heart and the orientation centre, the directional and orientating role of the centre will be further reinforced. The orientation centre should become a highly-recognisable landmark on the edge of the city.

To reiterate what has been said before, the orientation centre is not a final destination in itself. By ensuring that the site sits on a predominant route into town, the continuation into the city can be more easily reinforced. The route should be a busy one, preferably linking to the city's major transport nodes to increase flow of people and accessibility. People should be encouraged to use the route and enter the orientation centre and continue into town and the centre should be almost unavoidable for anyone entering the city to make sure that aid is available to anyone who needs it.

### **2.2.2. Liminal Qualities of the Space**

Migrants are liminal entities. That is, they are in a state of transition. They are no longer a part of their previous society and are not yet a part of their new environment. They are between one state and another. In time they will come to adjust and adapt to their new environment and learn a new way of life. The purpose of the orientation centre is to help them adapt and make a smooth transition from one lifestyle to another. Not only the building itself, but the environment it sits in needs to reflect this period of liminality. Liminality, always thought to be an ephemeral and abstract quality, can also reflect in the physical environment. When one enters a city, one passes through the edge or the boundaries of the city. Although this may be difficult to actually pinpoint, one finds that there is an intermediate space, or an "edge" space that is along the periphery of the city. This is a liminal space: a space that lies between the urban and rural, or a fringe urban area that lies neither inside or outside the city. It is often a highly mobile and ever-changing space that appears confusing, encompassing a vast assemblage of interests and activities because people are always moving through it, in or out of the city.

This marginal area is a place that migrants (in fact all people) move through when entering the city. It makes the most sense for the orientation centre to be placed along a route on the periphery of the city where there is constant movement and no doubt of people seeing it and accessing it. Besides the physical benefits of the location on the fringe area of the city, it also ties in metaphorically as a building that lies in liminal space. It is appropriate that people who are in a state of liminal transition find their way to an orientation centre that is itself in a liminal space – an "in-between" space that is currently neglected, but has the potential to strengthen connectivity between the outside and the urban.

### **2.2.3. Social criteria**

People migrate to Durban from all over Africa (see chapter on migration in previous document) While they are all migrants and will all be able to find aid at the orientation centre, they should by

no means be categorized as similar people. They are made up of a rich mix of peoples, cultures, beliefs and religions. Their previous ways of life and lifestyles are as different from each other as they are from the lifestyles of the locals of Durban. The area that the orientation centre lies in should be characterised by an already existing rich mix of people and cultures, possibly with a large population of migrants living or working there. This may be a place where migrants may find opportunities to work or trade, or find essential health and welfare services that will help them adjust to their new home. According to statistics collected by Brij Maharaj and Vadi Moodley in 2000, the majority of migrants come to Durban in order to find employment. Most of them find this in the informal or casual sector as traders or menial service providers. Durban has a booming informal trade sector with lots of opportunities for migrants wishing to make a living in informal trade. The orientation centre needs to acknowledge this and possibly include a component that caters for or helps migrants set up their own businesses and workshops (Maharaj and Moodley, 2000: 154).

The orientation centre should lie close to major transport nodes and interchanges to ensure that migrants can get to the centre easily and without confusion, and make their way from there to other important parts of the city where they can access other services (education, health and welfare). It is more than likely that migrants, who are usually impoverished and escaping poor economic conditions in other parts of Africa, would rely solely on public transport and therefore need easy access to it as well as the orientation centre, so the connection between centre, route and transport nodes becomes all-important.

To sum up, the choice of possible sites for the Orientation Centre will be based on these criteria:

### **Physical Criteria**

The site should be

- on the edge of the city, on a major route into Durban
- clearly visible on the route into Durban
- clearly linked with the CBD to help with orientation
- a currently neglected place that has potential to increase connectivity between different precincts of Durban – an “inbetween” space
- a prominent landmark site

## Social Criteria

The site should be

- on a well-defined route that is used by many (im)migrants when entering Durban
- characterized by a rich mix of people and cultures
- should be close to major transport nodes and interchanges as well as other essential services

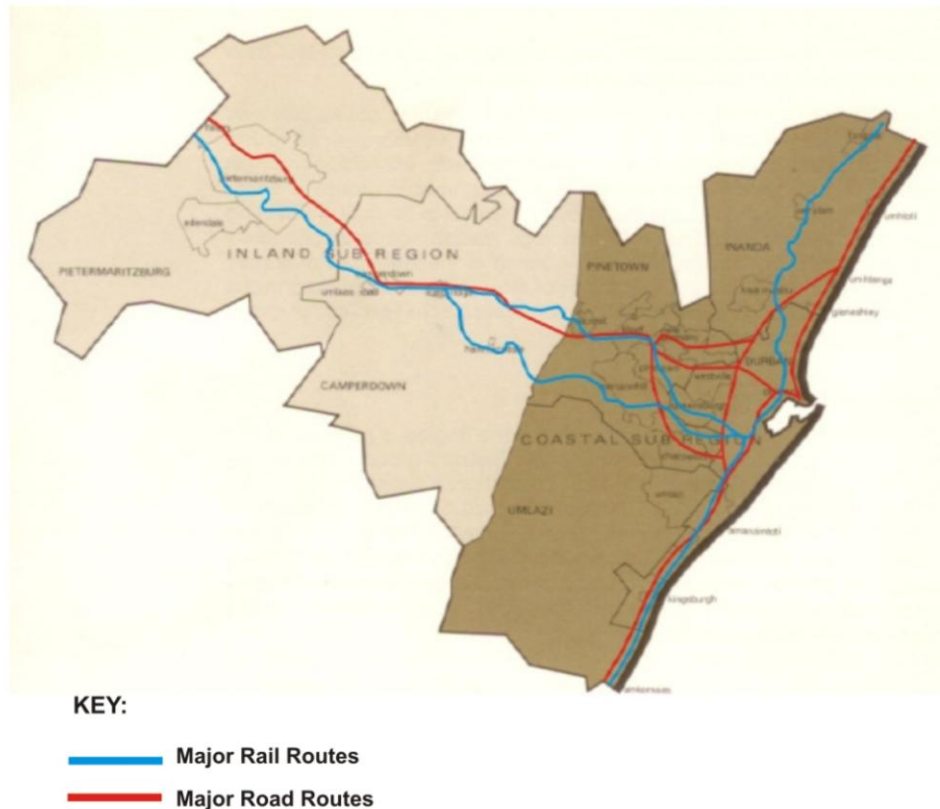
### 2.2.4. The City Fabric

Durban is just one of many South African cities still trying to repair the physical divisions created during the years of apartheid. Poverty, a lack of infrastructure, growing housing demands and economic opportunities for the masses of people entering the city are some of the demands post-apartheid cities have to deal with. This has led to a lack of social and community growth resulting in the development of harsh “fringe” communities on the edge of the city.



Figure 1: (www what, where, when in the Zulu Kingdom) The KwaZulu-Natal Coast

With the rapid rate of urbanization after the abolition of apartheid, the city's boundaries and outer precincts have become blurred. The routes into the city and the connectivity between the various precincts need to be made more clear.



**Figure 2:** (www what, where, when in the Zulu Kingdom) Major routes into Durban

The inner city can be reached by motor vehicle or by train, either from inland, or via northern and southern coastal routes. The most prominent route used is the national freeway (the N3) that enters the city from the west. Most people entering the city would use this road. If arriving by railway, passengers would arrive in the centre of town either at the Durban Station just north of the CBD, or at Berea Station, centrally located in Warwick Junction. The major gateways and the precincts that one arrives in at these various points will be looked at in more detail.

## The City Gateways



**Figure 3:** (iTrump, 2003) Gateways into Durban

There are essentially four major routes into the city:

- the N3 freeway from the west
- the Southern freeway from the south
- the Northern freeway from the north, and
- the harbour from the east

Although Durban is a famous Southern African port city, for the purpose of this research, the harbour was not looked at as a major city gateway because it is used mainly for the import of goods and arrival of tourists (on a rather small scale), rather than the arrival of migrants. It is not a major arrival point for people entering the city.

The investigation focuses on and compares three major gateways into the city. These are, Blue Lagoon in the north, Albert Park in the south and Warwick Junction in the west. All traffic in the city eventually passes through one of these gateways. These areas are places of constriction, where the greatest movement and intersection of routes in the city can be found. It is usually also a place where the highest concentration of people can be found at any time in the city.

### **Site One: Northern Gateway: Blue Lagoon**

Blue Lagoon, as it is known, is an area the southern bank of the Umgeni River, just north of the CBD. A place often frequented by families for picnics on the weekend, it is also fast becoming known for its destination centre for people wishing to learn more about the local natural environment. The eThekweni municipality has just finished building the Eco-Hub to promote environmentally sustainable technologies, as well as organize nature walks and cycling trails in the area.

Blue Lagoon is one of the last remaining areas of central Durban where a much of the natural landscape is still visible, thus making it the obvious choice for any environmental awareness centres and projects. Besides this, it has some potential to be more prominent as a northern gateway into the city as it lies between central and northern Durban.

#### **Strengths:**

- on the edge of the city, on a major route into Durban
- clearly visible on the route into Durban
- A prominent landmark site

#### **Weaknesses:**

- A bit far from the CBD for there to be a clear visual link between the site and central Durban. This does not aid with orientation of people in relation to the city.



**Plate 1:** (Author) Blue Lagoon



**Plate 2:** (Author) Blue Lagoon



**Plate 3:** (Author) Blue Lagoon

- This route is not well-utilised by immigrants and migrants. It is more commonly used by locals from the north coast who commute into Durban daily for work.

**Opportunities:**

- There is a large expanse of open green space making for a very picturesque and relaxing setting.
- The newly built Eco-Hub on the site is the beginning of environmental-consciousness in the area. This is an opportunity to develop more projects linked with environmental sustainability in the area.
- The site has the potential to become a major tourist destination due to its location along the Umgeni River.

**Threats:**

- The site lacks connectivity to the city and social use.
- It is too quiet to attract people who wish to establish themselves in Durban’s informal market.
- It is used as a recreational site, rather than one that initiates welfare and orientational aid to the city.

**Site Two: Southern Gateway: Albert Park**

**Strengths:**

- On the edge of the city, and on a major route into Durban
- Clearly visible on the route into Durban from the south
- A prominent landmark site
- Clearly visible in relation to the CBD which aids the newcomer’s orientation within the city.



**Plate 4:** (Author) Albert Park Precinct

**Weaknesses:**

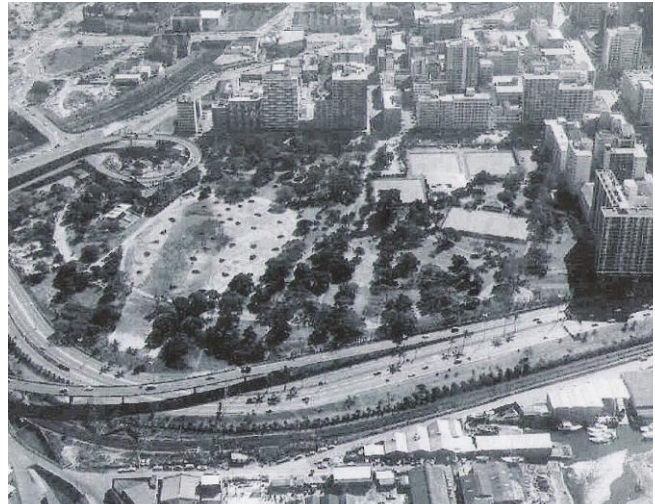
- This route is not well-used by immigrants and migrants. It is used rather by locals from the South Coast who commute to the city on a daily basis.
- Lacks sociability and is considered a “lost space” due to its lack of use.

- It provides no opportunities for informal trade and work opportunities.
- Lacks visibility of the mix of cultures and people that characterize Durban.

**Opportunities:**

- Lots of green space and a picturesque setting, Albert Park is one of the CBD’s few “green lungs”
- There is the potential to create a close link between the park, the harbour and the Victoria Embankment.

However, this would be better suited to tourists as the area is a recreational and entertainment destination.



**Plate 5:** (Author) Albert Park Precinct

- The park is surrounded by residences that house many local students and some migrants. A close connection between these residences and the park could be created.

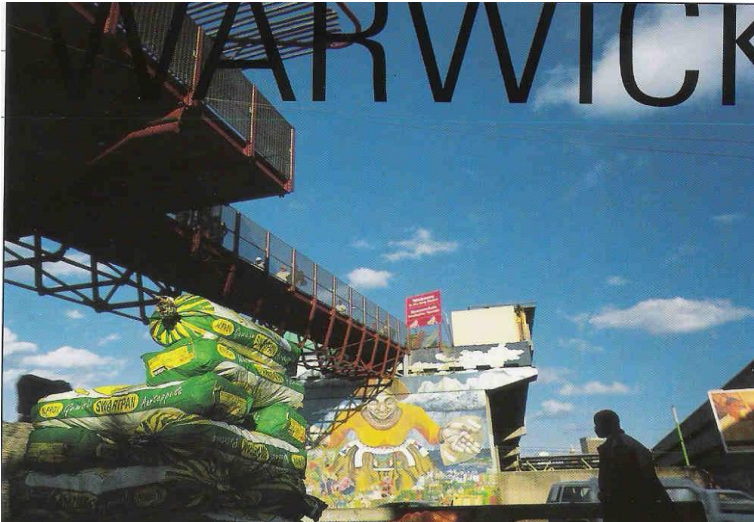
**Threats:**

- The site lacks direct connectivity to the city’s main transport nodes.
- The site also lacks sociability, human activity and the passers-by for an information/orientation centre.



**Plate 6:** (Author) Albert Park

### Site Three: Western Gateway: Warwick Junction



**Plate 7:** (Dobson, 2001) View up towards Market Road Bridge

Warwick Junction is an intense intersection zone for multiple routes in and out of the city on various levels: the Western Freeway flies over above the precinct, the Market Road extension connects the city to the Southern regions, and Leopold Street connects back to the Berea.

The Brook Street extension provides a pedestrian route past the Station into the city. The railway connects regions of the greater DFR with the city. It is the site of convergence of various modes of transport as the Victoria Bus Terminus is situated here with a conglomeration of informal and formal taxi ranks and City Bus depots.

Pedestrian movement in the city is nowhere more concentrated as it is here. There is continuous movement between the Early Morning Market (a fresh produce market), the formal City CBD, and the various modes of transport. The most direct and popular link to the CBD is the route through the Berea Station concourse, accessed by a bridging walkway crossing above Leopold Street. The area is an active and very vibrant meeting place of informal trade and entrepreneurs. Trade occurs along the most-used pedestrian paths for maximum business. The zones of intersection and routes of movement are the sites for herbalists and informal traders. An Indian temple at the corner of the Grey Street Cemetery site and St. Emmanuel along Queen Street with Sangomas and herbalists in the same area also shows that Warwick Junction is an important cultural and religious node.

#### **Strengths:**

- The site is on the edge of the city, on a major route into Durban (N3)
- It is clearly visible on the route into Durban from inland
- It is a prominent landmark site

- It is clearly visible in relation to the CBD which helps orientate the newcomer within his/her new environment
- The City's foremost transport hub (used mostly by daily commuters and many immigrants and migrants) is situated here
- There is constant of movement through the area continuously
- This area links directly with other precincts
- The area is surrounded by transport hubs and other essential services
- There is a great mix of people and cultures, as well as a great opportunity for informal trade in the already existing informal traders market

**Weaknesses:**

- There is great confusion with the large volume of pedestrian and vehicular traffic that is concentrated in the area

**Opportunities:**

- There is currently a large amount of brownfield site land that allows the opportunity to develop and bridge this area with nearby precincts
- The area possesses a unique and rich character and vibrancy that is lacking in the rest of the city
- The historical architecture in the area reflects the diversity of cultures in the area

**Threats:**

- The area is regarded as dangerous by many locals
- There is quite a high level of crime as well as under-serviced and unhygienic public areas.

**Site Comparison**

Site Criteria	Site 1	Site 2	Site 3
Location on city edge	****	****	*****
On major route	**	***	*****
Visibility	**	**	****
Relation to CBD	*	****	*****
Landmark site	***	***	****
Used by immigrants	*	**	***
Rich mix of cultures	**	*	*****
Close to transport nodes	*	*	*****

\* does not fulfill criteria

\*\*\*\*\* fulfills criteria well

From this assessment it is clear that Warwick Junction fulfills most of the criteria necessary to make an appropriate choice for a site suited to an orientation centre for migrants and immigrants. Warwick Junction and its urban context will be looked at more closely.

## **2.3. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF WARWICK JUNCTION**

### **2.3.1. History of Warwick Junction**

Warwick Junction developed into the multi-faceted and vibrant area it is today as a result of Durban's political and racial history and the enforcement of racial segregation during the era of apartheid. It has an interesting history, with its beginnings dating back to the late 1800's, when Durban was still very much a small and developing city. At the turn of the century, Warwick Junction was established as a residential area due to its proximity to Berea Road and the railway. The Indian community there was already well-established, making up one third of the population. Even at this early stage, municipal officials had dubbed the area a source of "nuisances" and beyond their control due to the growth of inter-racial commerce and housing in the area, something that the "Colonists" found alarming and threatening. However, it is the inter-racial nature that Warwick Junction has been infamous for throughout the history of Durban.

In the early part of the 1900's, Warwick Avenue, the main road running through the area, was dominated by Indian businesses and residences, especially after the Victoria Street Market opened in 1928. The Early Morning Market was opened in 1934, followed later by the English Market, that was used by Indian market gardeners for selling fresh produce. This fixed Warwick Junction's position as the market centre of the city of Durban. With these markets, the development of the Berea Road Station and bus services, as well as the many flats and houses built in the area during the 1930's, the area flourished ([sahistory.org.za](http://sahistory.org.za)).

The case of Warwick Junction became even more sensitive in 1950 with the introduction of the Group Areas Act of the apartheid legislation which led to the run-down character that we see in Warwick Junction today. This era saw the eviction of many tenants from the area, with the area rezoned for whites so as not to close off the commercial land interests of close to the market for whites. At this time, a large section of Warwick Junction was predominantly Indian owned and occupied and the proximity of trading amenities was essential to their way of life. In 1961, the area was then declared "unzoned", meaning that change of ownership and occupation required

special permits which were difficult to obtain. This further stifled investment and development in the area and led toward further urban decay.



**Plate 8:** (sahistory.org.za) Mr and Mrs Hafagee just before their eviction from the Warwick Precinct



**Plate 9:** (www.gotravel24.com) Protest signs around the time of the Group Areas Act

In the late 1960's, a major freeway was built running into the city and affectively cut the Warwick area in half, creating lost space under the freeway and further cutting off connections across the area. The result was a mess and caused the destruction of the communal urban fabric. By 1970, the city council was dismayed by the physical decay in the city, especially around the Warwick area, and they attributed this to the mixture of various race groups living and working in the area. 1700 Indian and coloured families were given notice to move out, even though some people had been living there for 50 years. Relocation contributed to the rapid decline of the area, but not everyone moved and the area maintained some of its integrated racial character (sahistory.org.za).

When 2000 residents were again threatened with eviction in 1984, mass protests were held. The Warwick Avenue Interim Committee (later known as Durban Central Residents Association or the DCRA) was created and the community vowed to stand united in opposition to relocation. The Council then conducted a survey to assess the attitudes of the residents to threatened removal. The conclusion of the survey was that residents and traders were well-located and did not wish to move, but wanted to see the upgrading of facilities and services. In later meetings, the DCRA emphasized the "meaning of place" with regard to the area. The outcome was that the area was rezoned for Indian residential and open trade purposes. The DCRA put forward redevelopment goals which also included the establishment of recreational facilities, recognition of commuter needs, the reconstruction of roads, and the renovation of existing dwellings. Some of these goals still need to be further investigated to this day (Saunders, 2004: 6-7).

More recent history has seen the development of the Warwick Junction Project launched in 1997 through the City's Special Architectural Projects Branch. This project has looked at the reconceptualisation of "public space" to try and tie together the isolated parts of the Warwick Junction area as well as provide more definite spaces for informal trading and service-providers in the area. For entrepreneurs in the area, the major economic foothold for them into the city has been through pavement trading. In order to legitimise the use of these public spaces, Durban has developed an informal Economic Policy (2000). The Project Centre is located in the midst of Warwick Junction to enable active participation at all times with the community, and to encourage positive engagement between government and residents and traders in the area. Due to the unique character and problems in the Warwick Precinct, some of the built works in the area have also



**Plate 10:** (Dobson, 2001) Market Road Bridge

challenged existing architectural typologies and have resulted in an architecture that responds singularly to the specific challenges and opportunities in the area. One such project is the Market Road Bridge, designed by OMM Design Workshop in 1998. The Bridge was the first in a series of interventions seeking to knit together some of the structural divides created by apartheid planning (Saunders, 2004: 6-7).

## 2.4. SITE SURVEY

### 2.4.1. Warwick Junction: Urban Context

The core of the Warwick Junction precinct sits at a strategic juncture to the city due to its highly visual profile:

- It sits at the gateway point to the CBD,
- Movement to and from the CBD requires movement through or alongside it,
- It is also one of the busiest transport hubs of the city.

It has great potential because of its strategic position to perform a greater role in the overall city fabric. Its visual upliftment will not only benefit the locals in the immediate area, but the whole of Durban's image as well.

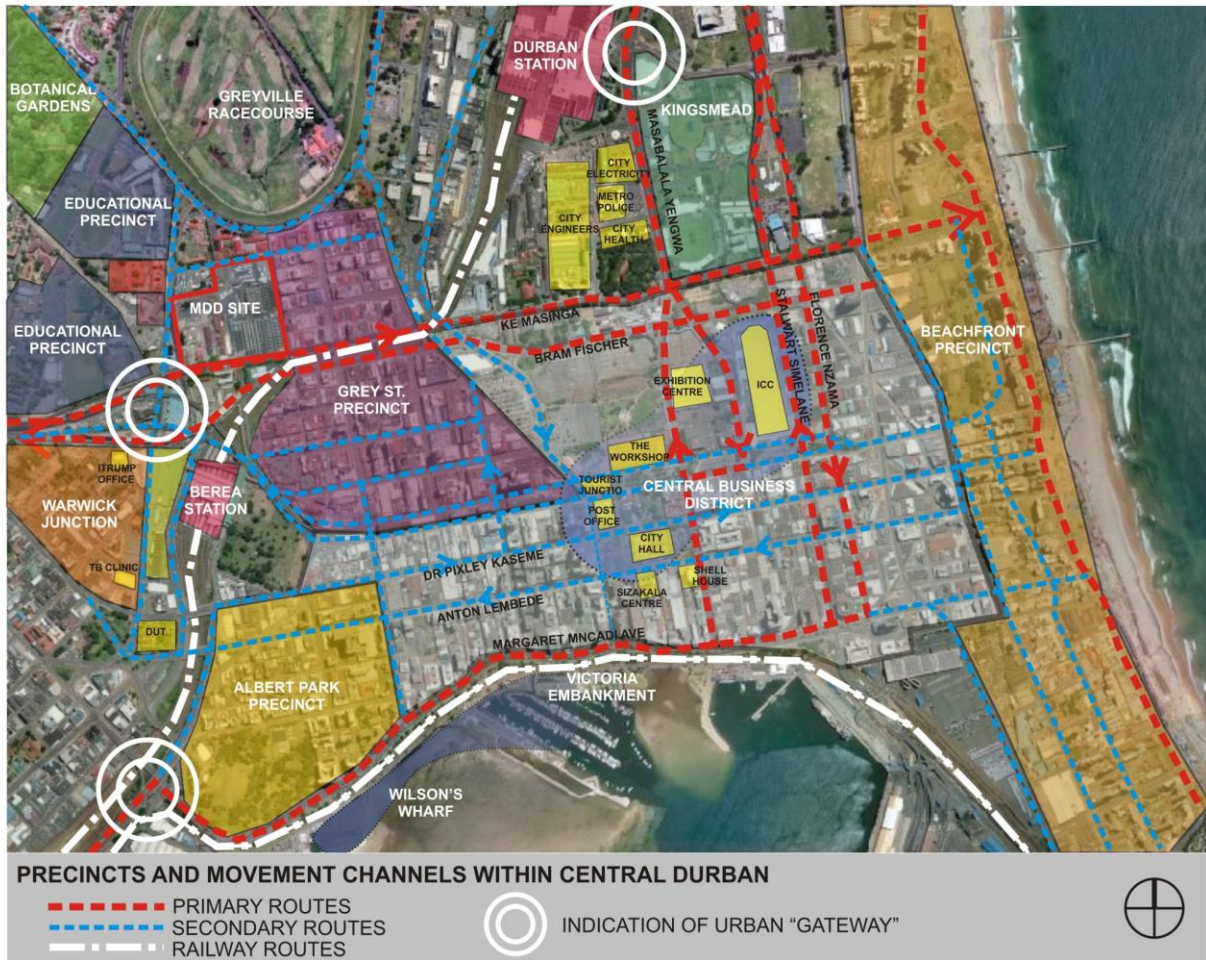
The area is also closely located to other important precincts such as the Durban Station, the Centrum Site, the Albert Park precinct and it is within walking distance to the Esplanade and beachfront. A closer linkage and connection with these other precincts should be created through the urban design framework to allow better movement on into the city.



**Figure 4:** (Author) Warwick Junction is an area that draws people from other areas



**Figure 5:** (Author) Warwick Junction is closely connected to other important precincts and districts



**Figure 6:** (Author) Precincts and movement channels within Central Durban

### **Movement Patterns in Urban Context and Warwick Junction**

Being the main transport hub and western gateway, Warwick Junction connects to all main transport routes, both vehicular and pedestrian, in the city of Durban. The main vehicular routes that head towards and away from Warwick Junction are the N3 East and West-bound, which actually divide area and create lost spaces underneath the flyovers that head into and away from the city centre. The other main roads that run through Warwick Junction are Johannes Nkosi (previously known as Alice Street), which heads into town, and David Webster (previously Leopold Street) which heads out of town. Connecting these roads in a north-south direction is Julius Nyerere Road (previously Warwick Avenue) and Market Road. All these roads are very busy and form part of the main commuter network into and out of Durban. People use these routes daily to get to and from work.

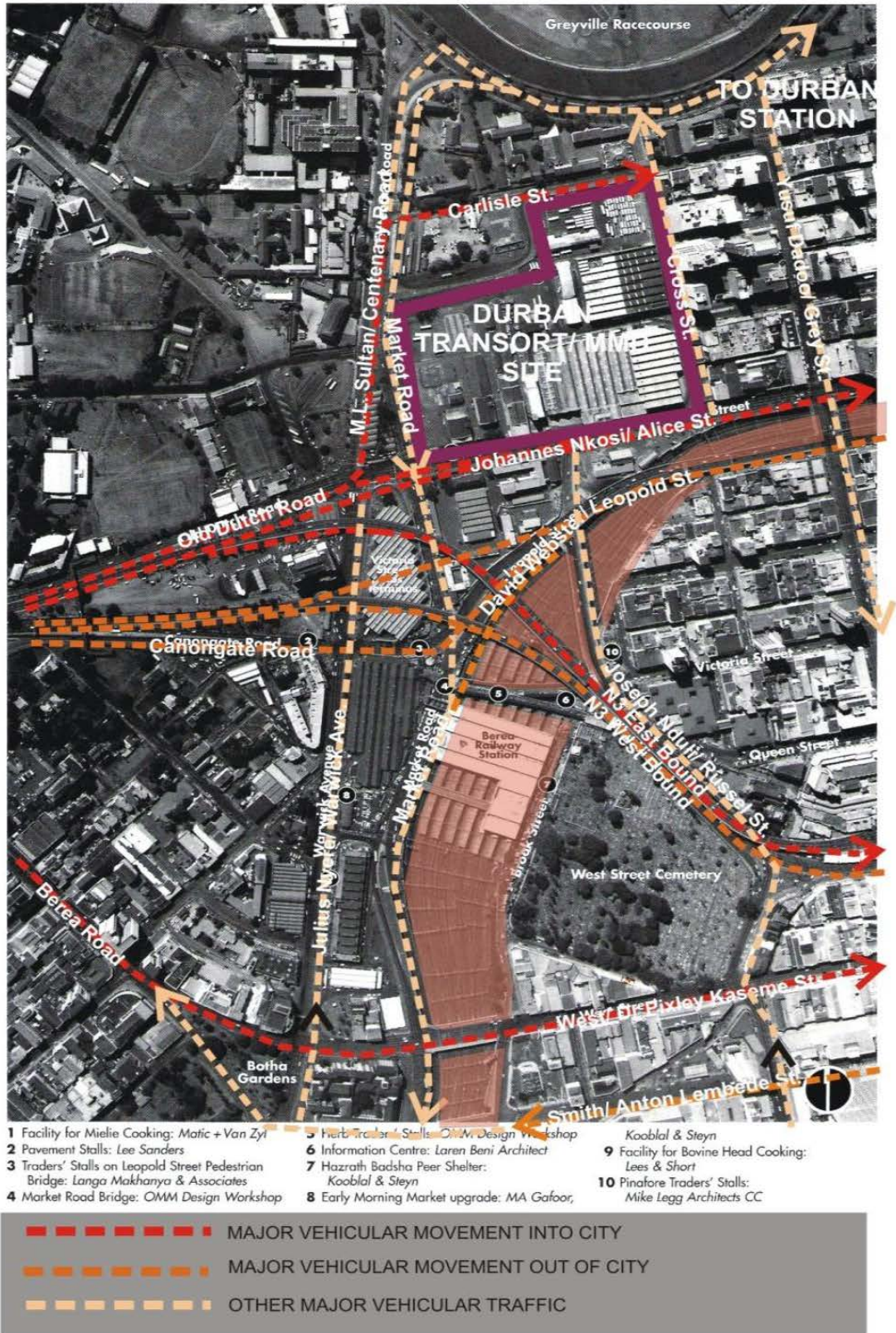


Figure 7: (Author) Vehicular movement patterns

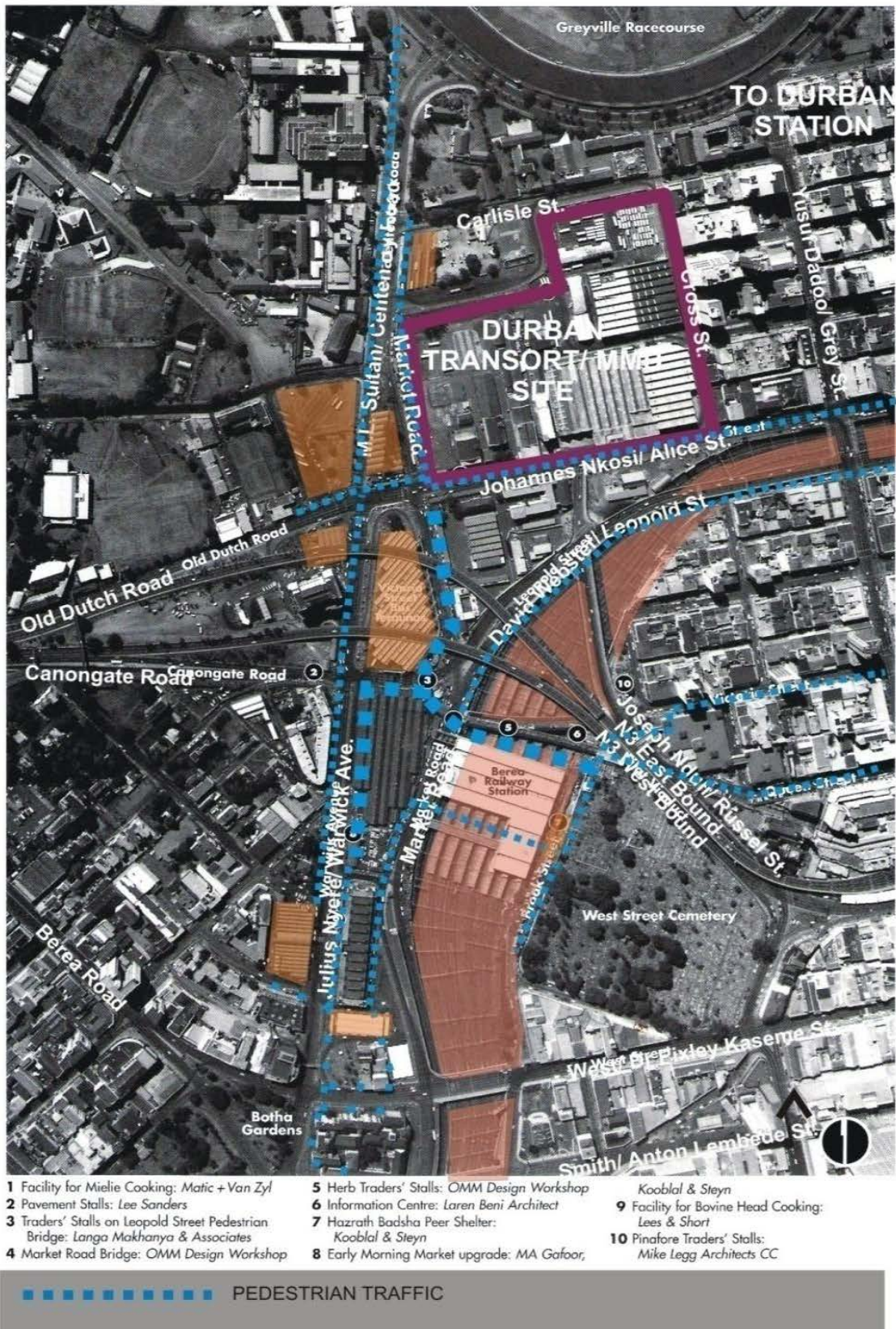


Figure 8: (Author) Pedestrian movement patterns

## 2.4.2. Precincts



Figure 9: (Author) The Precincts around Warwick Junction

The N3 western Freeway divides the area of Warwick Junction, restricting integrated development. On the other hand, apart from making it one of the major gateways into Durban CBD, it has supported the development of the informal economy by providing a form of shelter underneath the flyovers, resulting in sheltered public for trade. The area features various distinctive zones within the precinct, adding to its diversity and character: **The Transport Hub, Warwick Triangle, The Grey Street Area, West Street Cemetery, the Education and Garden Precinct, and the Durban Transport/MMD site.**

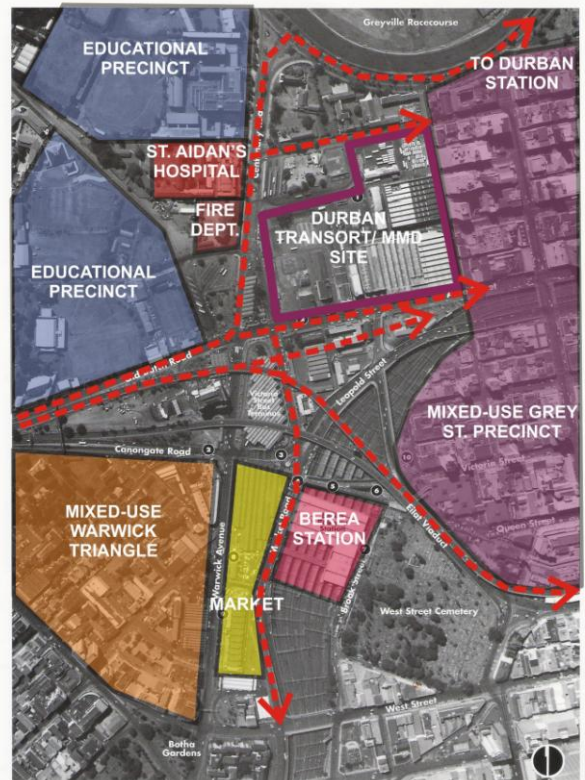


Figure 10: (Author) Warwick Junction Precincts

- **The Transport Hub** is the City's foremost transport node and interchange and the main draw of people and commuters to the area. Here, rail, taxi, and long and short range bus commuters converge. Many of the people who use these facilities use a combination of these transport facilities for daily movement in and out of the city as well as within the city limits. The area is predominantly used to provide access to the CBD especially for African people reliant on public transport, especially those living in townships on the periphery of Durban.



**Plate 11:** (Author) Warwick Junction Precincts

- **The Trading Hub** has developed as a result of the great number of people moving through the area daily. There has been an influx of informal trade alongside the transport interchanges. The fact that apartheid planning did not accommodate for Black business trade in this area has supported the density of informal trade. The major formal trade areas are the City Market, the Victoria Street Market, and the Early Morning Market.



**Plate 12:** (Dobson, 2001) Herb Traders' Market

**The Early Morning Market** was constructed in 1934 for Indian gardeners to sell their produce. It has however changed greatly over the past forty years. In the early 1970's, the customer profile was dominated by Indians, with a substantial number of whites and a growing number of blacks. By the 1980's, there were slightly more blacks, fewer Indians and no whites. Currently, most stalls are owned by blacks with sales almost exclusively to blacks.



**Plate 13:** (Dobson, 2001) View of Early Morning Market and Berea Road Station

**The Victoria Street Market** concentrates on fish and meat sales with tourist shops and is administered by the Small Business Development Corporation. “**Muti**” trade is an increasing form of income and this has become one of the premier centres traditional healing in South Africa. Presently most “Muti” traders are situated on the bridge linking the Grey Street precinct (formal trade) to the Market Area (informal trade).

- **Warwick Triangle** is a long established residential and mixed-use area. Due to its history of marginalization, the previously racially mixed nature of this area has lost some of its original vibrancy. The precinct is run-down with many of the existing buildings worthy of architectural note in a state of disrepair. However, due to the large pro-active residential association, commercial infrastructure along Berea and Lancer’s Roads, attractive residential buildings characteristic of early Durban architecture and a significant amount of undeveloped Council land and tree-lined streets, there is a great potential for its revitalization. It is already the home of the iTrump project office headed by eThekweni Municipality which is the focus of research conducted in the area that is to be used to help revitalize the precinct and provide better social services.

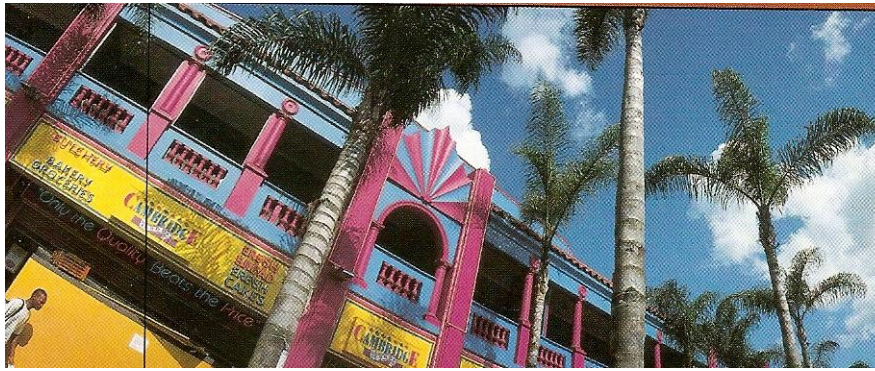


Plate 14: (iTrump, 2003) Warwick Junction

- **The Grey Street Area** reflects Durban's large Indian heritage. It possesses a strong character due to its architectural language: the Grey Street Mosque, Art Deco Buildings, and well-established mixed-use development. A concern within the Grey Street community is the degradation of the area due to crime and competition with increasing informal trade. The overall effect is one of a dirty, unsafe urban environment with loss in retail activity, and taxis disregarding street activity.

- **West Street Cemetery**

forms one of the few green lungs in the city, positioned between the Warwick and the Grey Street Area. Apart from its positive visual contribution, it also has a strong cultural and ecological relevance. It provides opportunity for use as a green space for circulation thus creating a strong link between formal and informal trading precincts.

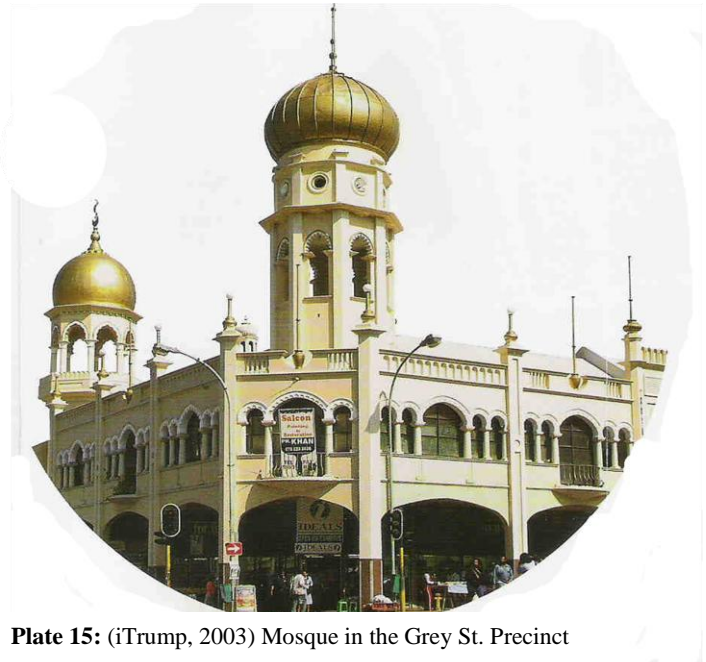


Plate 15: (iTrump, 2003) Mosque in the Grey St. Precinct

- **The Education and Garden precinct**

comprises of Durban University of Technology (the Berea and City campuses), Sastri College, St Aidans Hospital and St Anthony's, and Orient Islamic and other schools along Centenary Road. These facilities serve the broader Durban community with most of the students using the trade and transport facilities in the area.

**Durban Botanic Gardens** is the other major green lung to the city and a major tourist attraction.

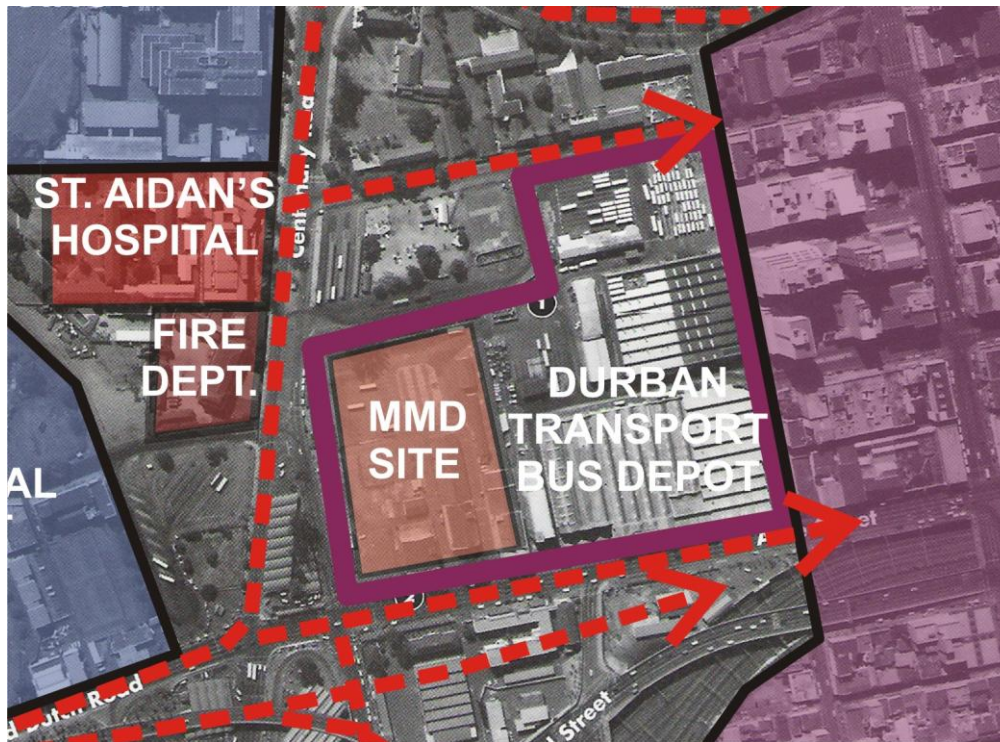
- **The Durban Transport/ MMD Site** will become the major focus of the study from here onwards as it forms a prominent part of the “Gateway” to the CBD. It is identified as a “brownfield” site with vacant land and valuable buildings belonging to the Council. Durban transport takes up a large proportion of the land as a bus depot, utilizing the large sheds which are important to the City’s cultural and industrial heritage. It is presently divorced from its context but has enormous potential for positively impacting physically and economically with the diverse



**Plate 16:** (author) Existing buildings on MMD site

precinct surrounding it. Physical features and existing resources on the site, together with its central proximity combine to offer considerable redevelopment opportunity.

### 2.4.3. Materials Management and Durban Transport Site



**Figure 11:** (Author) Durban Transport and MMD Site

The Materials Management and Durban Transport Site (or MMD) within Warwick Junction, has been chosen as the ideal location for an orientation centre for migrants. This is due to a number of reasons: it is situated along the major route into Durban (N3 West) and frames the vista into the CBD. It currently consists of vast vacant lots and derelict historic warehouses surrounded by high walls that divorce it from the rest of the context of Warwick Junction, but it has the opportunity and potential to add vibrancy to the area. The site has been functionally obsolete for many years, yet it has potential to revitalize and renew the inner city precinct surrounding it.



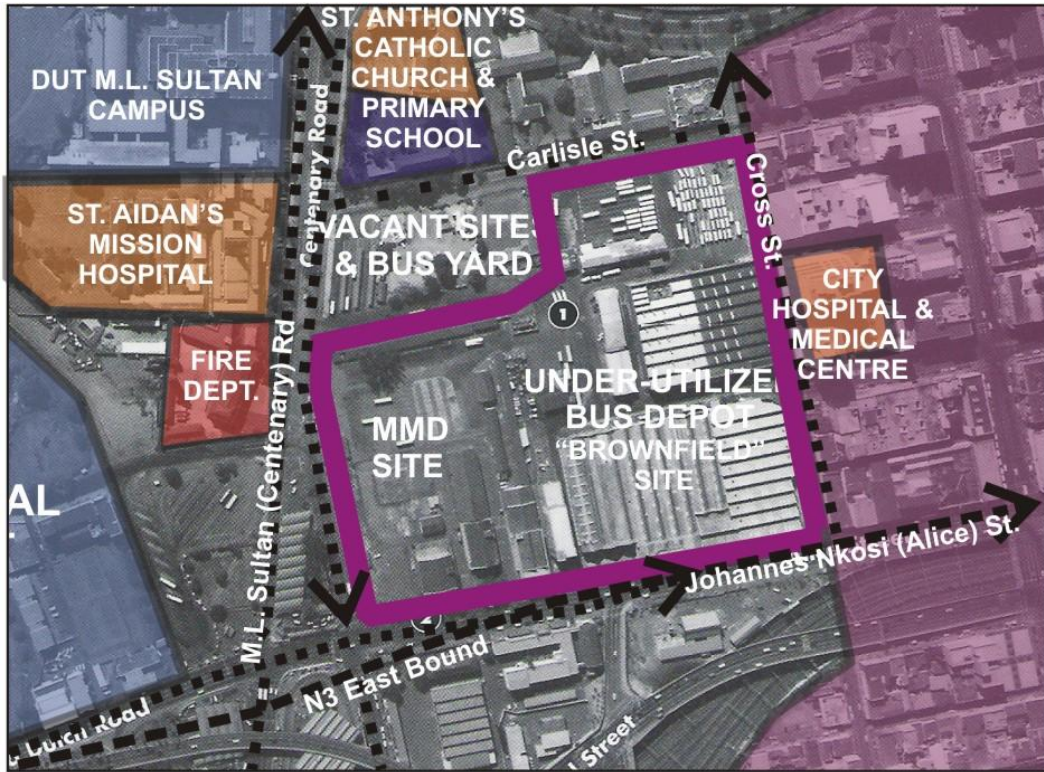
**Plate 17:** (Author) Durban Transport Site



**Plate 18:** (Author) Durban Transport Site on the right

## Site Location

The MMD site is bound by Johannes Nkosi (Alice) Street, Lorne Street, M.L. Sultan (Centenary) Road and the Durban Transport site. It measures approximately 10650 square metres and belongs to the City. Its location is at a strategic node and juncture of the area.



**Figure 12:** (Author) Durban Transport and MMD Site

- It is central to both Umgeni Road and Berea Station, and flanked by bus and taxi ranks.  
This ensures accessibility to a diverse population
- It has a high concentration of pedestrians and commuters in the immediate context which allows maximum exposure and accessibility. It is bounded by bus stations and taxi ranks.



**Plate 19:** (Author) Western Gateway into Durban

- It is at the epi-centre of the Warwick, Grey Street, Berea and Umgeni Road Districts and therefore makes the development relevant to a broader community base. It also has

enormous potential for reinforcing and extending informal trade, circulation and visual links and urban language between the different areas.

- It has high visibility due to its being located at the “Western Gateway” into the city at the corner of Centenary and Alice Street.

### Boundaries and Connections



Figure 13: (Author) Boundaries and Connections around the MMD and Transport site

- Presently the site is a lost opportunity since it has the potential of opening up to the urban context. It is divorced and physically barricaded from the surrounding activities and infrastructure.
- The Centenary Road and Alice Street edges, which are the busiest and the edges you first see upon entering the area, are completely closed off by a high wall that surrounds the site.
- East/west movement routes are blocked by expansive derelict land and buildings.
- Northern areas of Grey Street, Umgeni Road and the beachfront need to be better connected to the area.
- Alice Street, on the southern edge of the site, steers movement away and there is no other major arterial connecting directly to this Northern area of the Warwick Precinct.

- The site is a large open derelict “brownfield” space which has enormous potential to add to the urban quality of the rest of the vibrant context.
- Existing vacant buildings are economic resources that provide opportunity to provide services lacking in area.

### **Existing Buildings on Site**

The presence of historic precincts in cities is often a mixed blessing. Such areas provide character and identity to the city, fixing a meaningful place that has endured over time. However, they also present problems pertaining to the obsolescence of buildings, due to change and the relative fixity of the built fabric. Attempts to revitalise urban precincts must address obsolescence and extend the economic life of the old potentially functional buildings.

In the case of the Transport and MMD site, the historical site is quite rundown and derelict, however it has the potential to become a key area in the urban fabric whilst still maintaining the historical buildings already there.

Revitalisation aims to extend the useful life of an existing building. A couple of the existing buildings on site are historically significant and cannot be demolished due to their heritage value. These include the MMD building, vacant warehouses and old bus sheds.

### **Existing Warehouses**

Warehouses such as these are of particular interest because they have the potential for change of use with consequent implications for their character. Whether beautiful, historic or practical, buildings may be better used than replaced. Their value exists as the investment of resources. As rehabilitation is less expensive in terms of absolute energy usage, the reuse of buildings constitutes the conservation of scarce resources, a reduction in consumption of energy and materials in construction, and good resource management (Tiesdell, 1996: 15).



**Plate 20:** (Author) One of the warehouses on site

## The MMD Building

The MMD (Materials Management Department) building was historically used by the City Council for the storage of the City's materials. It was built in the 1930's and designed by the Head of Architectural services, L. B. Lambert. The building was not significant in terms of its function, but in recognition of its important juncture of entry to the city. It reflects the great wealth of nineteenth-century Victorian industrial buildings that exist in the area. An application for its demolition would be more than likely rejected by the Conservation Committee due to its good condition. It appears to be vacant at the moment, with only an advertisement for a boxing gym on the first floor. It is intended that a new function will be accommodated in the building in the new development.



**Plate 21:** (Author) One of the warehouses and the MMD building on site

### Structure:

The task of refurbishment or conversion of a nineteenth-century utilitarian buildings does not usually hold any problems due to its regular physical structure.

- The building is two-storeys with a footprint approximately 700sqm.
- The concrete frame structure is relatively robust and sturdy, and in good condition.
- It consists of red face brick infill and boasts the early use of steel for the roof truss with corrugated metal sheet, in relatively good condition.
- The steel truss allowed for the long spans achieved which leaves the upper floor open space ideal for a function requiring unhindered clear space.
- The elegant, slender trusses are in good condition and will be left exposed.
- Due to the functional nature of the building it also has a lift, that is operational, and a 600mm high platform surrounding the building.
- Large steel framed windows on the South, North and West, reminiscent of the Modern movement, will need solar control.



**Plate 22:** (Author) View of the MMD building from the North

The conversion of this warehouse offers considerably more freedom than the conversion of buildings of outstanding architectural importance that require scholarly restoration and inhibit changes of use. The solidity of this architecture evokes a powerful sense of character and identity, defining both a meaningful time and place.

### **The Bus Sheds**

The Bus Sheds are also historic buildings of great heritage value. They are currently being used to house some of the city fleet, but is considerably under-utilised. By concentrating the Bus depot on the quieter, less exposed side of the site, the sheds can be used for a more appropriate function that is lacking in the area.

- The quality of the shed spaces with the clerestory lighting, high volumes and large spans makes it ideal for an entertainment and cultural precinct.
- Spaces can be flexible and are appropriate for large gatherings.
- Parts of the shed could also be zoned for mixed-use, introducing a new typology to the diversity of functions, for example, retail on the ground floor with residential above.
- The high volume accommodates for



**Plate 23:** (Author) Bus sheds

mezzanine levels that could add interest to the spaces.

- Separating walls between bays could be broken in areas to encourage links and circulation between the shed bays.
- The existing dead street edges along the bus sheds will definitely be given vibrancy, due to the new activity of the sheds.



**Plate 24:** (Author) Bus sheds

## 2.5. SITE ANALYSIS

There are various options afforded by the site that need to be taken into account when making design decisions:

### Continuity and linkage

The main direction of approach to the site is from the west via the N3 eastbound freeway. The first portion of the site that is seen is the bottom south-western corner which offers itself as a place for potential interaction and connectivity. The design should form a highly-visible focal point in this area and from here connectivity should be increased along the main vehicular and pedestrian routes to the north, south, and east.

### Landmark areas

From the main focal point on the south-western corner of the site, there are various movement patterns through the spaces on the site that are formed by the placement of the existing buildings. There is opportunity to create nodes within the site and to make it negotiable and manageable to the unfamiliar visitor. These would start to allow for secondary routes through the site that will dictate how the cluster of buildings will be placed and interact in the overall "migrant" complex.

### Edge and accessibility

The portion of land for the development is large in scale and bounded by bus sheds to the east, open undeveloped land to the north, a hard road edge separated by a brick wall on the western edge, and a freeway flyover to the south. Whilst there needs to be control of access to the site, the complex still needs to respond and open up to its surroundings,



Figure 13: (Author) Linkage to and from the site



Figure 14: (Author) Creation of landmark areas and nodes and how these spaces may be connected on the site



Figure 15: (Author) Edges need to be visually and physically open and more responsive to the surrounding environment

allow accessibility along its extensive perimeter and provide a welcoming face to the public. The site cannot be considered in isolation. Hard, impenetrable walls need to be removed and replaced with boundaries that allow controlled access to the site and allow someone outside to see the activities and interaction happening within the complex.

The area north of the site is not dealt with within the limits of this research, but it is proposed that this would provide space for expansion of the complex or mixed-use development appropriate to the needs of the area. For the moment, and mainly for safety reasons, the development does not physically connect to the northern bounds of the site as it is not one of the primary areas of arrival to the development area.

The bus sheds to the east will retain their current functions and are very separate entities. Therefore, they are left in isolation as separately functioning units. The migrant complex would respond appropriately to this edge by creating a defined boundary. However, the southern boundary should be highly accessible as it butts up against the most important pedestrian route on the site.

Due to the extent of the scale of this site the migrant complex, which is made up of multiple yet complementary functions and units, will be accessed from a number of points along the busy boundaries of the site. Many of the functions and clusters of the buildings within the development would be semi-autonomous (although run by a central NGO committee) and therefore allow for separate security control measures at various entrances.

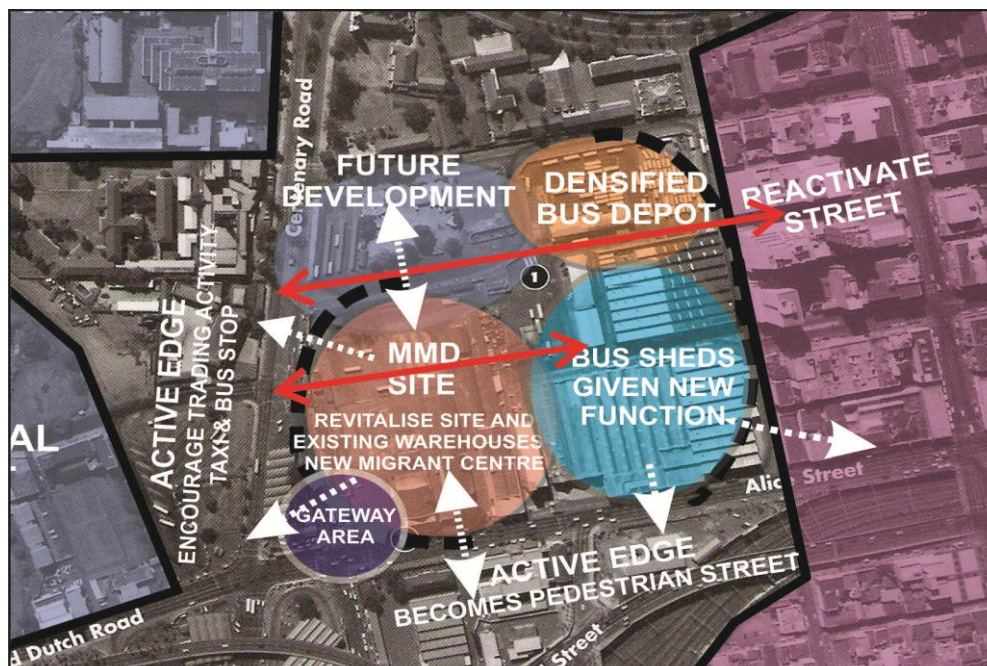


Figure 16: (Author) Plan of site showing development proposals

**Proposals and suggestions:** The site is isolated from its context and needs to be re-integrated into the existing urban fabric.

- Demolish boundary wall, allows movement through site



**Plate 25 and 26:** (Author) Hard edge on eastern side of the site. An opportunity to respond to M.L. Sultan street and its users

- Extend Beatrice St. through site, dividing the site into smaller land parcels that are easy to redevelop. Also encourages movement through site.
- Reinforce pedestrian movement into CBD along southern edge.
- Develop Johannes Nkosi & M.L. Sultan streets corner – landmark area of site.
- Relocate bus depot to northern side of site
- Re-use historic warehouses and MMD building
- Link better to existing facilities in area



**Plate 27:** (Author) Southern edge of site to be opened up more for pedestrians

## CHAPTER 3: DESIGN DEVELOPMENT AND RESOLUTION

### 3.1. THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL ISSUES

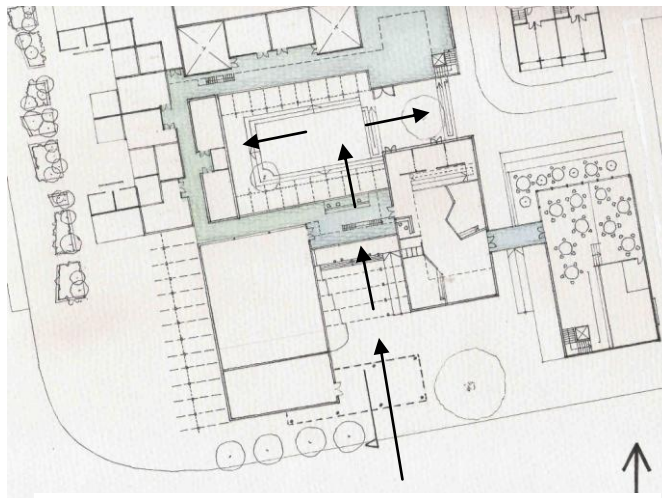
The overriding theory and theme of this research has been liminality. Ways in which transition and movement can be encouraged were implemented in the architectural design. A migrant orientation centre should reflect the migrant's mental and physical state of transition and movement. In architectural terms, liminal space performs the role of a gateway or a bridge, or it restores a "missing link" in the existing urban fabric by developing it to respond better to its context. However, it can also encouragement movement more subtly through:

- unfolding vistas and glimpses of spaces yet to come.



**Figure 17:** (Author) Framing an approach to a complex creates a sense of arrival and continuity to the next space

- the incorporation of spatial sequences in the spaces



**Figure 18:** (Author) Approach, arrival, and continuation into the next spaces within the design

- the manipulation of axes
- the use of screening elements to enclose and yet allow the visitor a view of what is to come



**Plate 28:** ([ungovernable.tumblr.com](http://ungovernable.tumblr.com))  
Use of airbrick screen walls



**Plate 29:** ([www.arnewde.com](http://www.arnewde.com)) Timber  
screens for solar shading

## **1.2. FINAL DESIGN AND RESOLUTION**

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