

**MANIFESTATION OF POLITICAL POWER AND
IDENTITY ON THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT:
Designing of a New Port Shepstone Civic Centre**

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DECLARATION

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

I declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. All citations, references and borrowed ideas have been duly acknowledged. It is being submitted for the degree of Masters of 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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Signature

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this to my parents and family for their love and support over the past years. None of this would have been possible without your constant encouragement and faith.

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ABSTRACT

Architecture and political power have long been interrelated throughout history and weaved into the fabric of the built environment. Politics in the past was preoccupied with the expression of power; however, there has been a paradigm shift in favour of the expression of identity, particularly national identity. Local as well as international precedents reveal the extent to which past regimes have manipulated architecture and urban design in the service of politics. Exemplary to this is South Africa, a nation in transition emerging from Western colonization and more recently, the Apartheid regime. It is a country still haunted by ghosts of the past and the spatial organisation of the 'Apartheid city'. However, South Africa post 1994 is not without examples of contemporary architecture which is a reflection of an "open democracy" in efforts to facilitate renewed interaction and hope in politics and civic architecture. Germany, also emerging from an unsavoury past has embraced the concept of democracy in its political systems and architecture. As a result, the built environment is a record of past together with the present thinking existing in unison, creating rich and meaningful places and spaces rooted in the history of place and time.

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

1.1.1 Background

Politics is a topic that people invariably engage in whether in agreement or disagreement with the current policies while in the same degree; the built environment is the space and form that people are in constant interaction with. The influence of politics is either conscious or subconscious, and both emotionally and physically. The effects have a bearing on the daily lives of the citizens as well as in the physical moulding of the built environment. Hence, the relationship between politics, architecture and man is undisputable, however, to what extent, that remains a subject up for debate.

Architecture is a field influenced by numerous factors; social, economic and political however in this research emphasis is on the latter. Architecture is not a neutral activity, but rather a dynamic process, which reflects the society from which it emerges in terms of values, economic life, politics and every other field of human life (Davids, 2007: 24).

The character of built environment is an expression of character of thinking of the time it was produced (Bragdon, 1971: 1). Hence, there is a subsequent connection between the image of the architecture and the political ideologies of the time of conception.

Architecture and political power have long been allied throughout history (Vinsand, 2004: v). Architecture and other art forms in the political realm have been used as a tool to create national identity and raise the national sentiment of a people. Architecture has and continues to be used to represent the ideas of a political system to the masses either by the creation of new architecture or the destruction of symbols contrary to the current polity. Thus, aesthetics in the service of politics have been used both during the nationalist period as well as in newly democratic nations such as Berlin and South Africa. However, it has been argued that a specific style of architecture does not represent a specific polity (Vinsand, 2004: 5).

1.1.2 Motivation/ Justification of the Study

South Africa is a nation that has overcome huge racial obstacles and turmoil. However, even after 16 years of democracy the country remains divided along racial lines and the effects of the “Apartheid City” still define the country’s landscape.

Although plans to mend the built environment are underway with attempts to construct a “democratic” society, a collective identity and civic pride; transformation is slow and isolated. However, democratic architecture is making its mark in South Africa, it remains limited to museums and buildings of a commemorative nature which are more often inaccessible to the public they intend to serve.

1.2 DEFINITION OF THE PROBLEM, AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1.2.1 Definition of Problem

In newly democratic nations such as South Africa, there has been an attempt to create architecture synonymous with the current polity hence the term, ‘democratic architecture’. However, the term has become a catch-phrase yet the vision is seldom realised.

Given the political and social context of South Africa, a nation emerging from colonisation and Apartheid, architecture post-1994 seeks to represent a democratic society. Currently, civic architecture is concerned with the expression of democracy and identity- regional, transparent and accessible public buildings. However, most of the new public buildings in Port Shepstone and the greater South Africa fail to represent the current political dispensation.

Therefore, this research seeks to document how architecture can be a historical and social narrative where buildings evoke memory and express either national or regional identity. It will be used to formulate criteria for the design of a meaningful and identifiable Civic Centre for Port Shepstone.

1.2.1 Aims

As countries gain independence and emancipate themselves from the rule of their foreign predecessors there arises the need to create new symbols aligned with the current polity and an identity divorced from the colonial regime or any such oppressive political order.

Therefore, the aim of this study is to explore how architecture has been used to represent political power and more recently in the pursuit of national identity.

1.2.3 Objectives

- To document the influence of politics on the built environment
- To identify elements of art and architecture that have been used to propagate politics
- To list down aspects of aesthetics and semantics that have been used in the expression of power and identity in civic architecture
- To formulate policies that may link the design of the built environment to politics

1.3 SETTING OUT THE SCOPE

1.3.1 Delimitation of Research Problem

As nations emerge from colonial rule or any other oppressive control, they seek to create works of architecture which reflect such freedoms and emancipation. The concept of democracy for most countries is still in its infancy stage therefore few examples of truly democratic architecture exist.

The embracing of democracy is usually accompanied with the need to represent identity whether national or regional. The issue of identity becomes challenging when it is to be used to represent a multi-cultural people often emerging from a history of racial and spatial segregation. In such contexts such as South Africa, the challenge is how to represent a national identity and embrace a collective memory in this recently democratic setting.

1.3.2 Definition of Terms

To avoid any misinterpretations and to clarify any ambiguities, certain terms have been defined solely for the purpose of this research.

Democracy;

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

Meaning;

- Meaning is the idea that any form in the environment, or sign in language, is motivated or capable of being motivated (Jencks, 1969: 11)

Myths;

- Myths are religious practices such as sacrificial rituals, and the need to respect and honour the gods (Barringer, 2008:1)

National Identity;

- National identity is a theory of political legitimacy which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent (Vale, 1992: 45 cited from Gellner, 1983).

National Sentiment;

- National sentiment is at the core of nationalism and developed as a product of looking to the past for the answers to national unity (Vinsand, 2004: 32 cited from Schulz, 1996).

Rituals;

- Rituals are a motor activity that strives on the involvement of its participants symbolically over a common interest thereby promoting conformity and subsequent satisfaction in conformity (Edelman, 1967: 16).

Symbols;

- Symbol are signs which refers to the object that it denotes by virtue law, usually any association of general which operates to causes that symbol to be interpreted as referring to the object (Ngubane, 2010: 10 cited from Preziosi 1979).

1.3.3 Stating the Assumptions

- The built environment is a ‘record’ of political ideologies manifest through form, space and time.
- Architecture and urban design is not only the reflection of the society which produced it but also the producers.
- Aesthetics and symbols are used to express political power and identity.

1.3.4 Hypothesis

The architecture of nations embracing the concept of democracy should be reflection of this political ideology. Therefore, post-apartheid architecture should be the expression of an ‘open’ democracy, creating transparent and accessible national as well as local government buildings. Moreover, the built environment is a reflection of the social, economic and political circumstances of the society which brought it into being but not without international influence.

1.3.5 Key Questions

- How does political power and identity in manifest through architecture and the greater built environment.
- How do aesthetics and symbols to express national identity and reinforce a sense of unity and community.
- How can civic spaces be used as an extension of the architecture.

1.4 CONCEPTS AND THEORIES

Architects in recent decades have become increasingly aware of the environment through promoting climatically, geographically and culturally responsive architecture. By the same token the architectural expression and tectonics, combining the best of both old and new technology have been used as a vehicle for creating and affirming the spirit of the place or *Genius Loci* and a sense of place or identity (Horn, 1998: 3). Such architecture stresses the synthesis between nature and architecture as well as symbiosis between nature, human beings, the environment and architecture. On the other hand, emphasis is placed on drawing inspiration from the region, context and site and the use of local elements as design generators, encouraging the deconstruction and reinterpretation of historical forms however, disputing the recreation and return to vernacular architecture. What becomes important is creating a dialogue between the architecture and the environment and man and the built form.

Therefore, the conceptual frameworks explored in this study will address issues pertaining to the environment, socio-economic and human needs, key concepts linked to politics and identity. The concepts and theories will in turn inform the literature review, precedent and case studies and the subsequent design of the proposed Civic Centre.

PLACE THEORY

The theoretical framework with which this research is centred is that which is extensively dealt with by Roger Trancik in his book "Finding Lost Space: Theories of Urban Design" (1986). For the purpose of this research, the Place Theory will be further explored in relation to the sense and spirit of place (or *genius loci*). Place Theory is a theory which deals with human needs in both the historical and cultural context. Emphasis is also placed on the *genius loci* of a place where each place is unique to its given context. "Architecture means to visualize the *genius loci*" of a place (Trancik, 1986: 114). A sense of place is essentially the identity of the place. And identity is closely linked to the idea that each place has features and characteristics that enable us to recognize and recall it as a place, distinct from others (Righini, 2000: 257).

Genius Loci is a Roman Concept. According to ancient Roman belief, every 'independent' being has a *genius* or its guardian spirit. This spirit gives life to both people and places and accompanies them from birth to death, thus determines their character or essence. Louis Kahn states that; the *genius* represents 'what a thing is or what it wants to be'. Ancient man viewed his environment as consisting of definite characters particularly that it is of great existential importance to come to terms with the genius of the locality where his life takes place. When man dwells, he is concurrently located in space and exposed to a certain environmental character to get an existential grip. Man has to be able to orientate himself in order to know where he is, he has to identify himself with the environment and environmental image. A good sense of environmental image gives its inhabitants a sense of security (Nesbitt, 1996: 422).

All cultures have developed 'systems of orientation' (nodes, paths, districts) or spatial structure which aid in the development of a good environmental image. Often these systems are based and/or derived from the natural setting. Where the system is weak, the imageability of the place is difficult to achieve and man feels 'lost'. Shape, colour and/or arrangement help in making vividly identifiable, powerfully structured and highly useful images of the environment. Therefore man dwells when he is able to concretise the world in buildings and things. The making of practical towns is not enough, the purpose of architecture is to help man dwell. Therefore the main objective is to concretise the genius loci by means of buildings which encompass the properties of the place and bring them closer to man. The basic act of architecture is to understand the 'vocation' of the place. In that way, we protect the earth and ultimately become part of the whole. Lack of synthesis between man and the environment would lead to the human alienation and the disruption of the environment. To belong to a place means to have an existential foothold in a concrete everyday sense (Nesbitt, 1996: 425-426). "The quality of a place is due to the joint effect of the place and society which occupies it". (Lynch, 1981: 111)

The significance of place in architecture cannot be denied nor ignored. The characteristics of region are an integral part in celebrating the identity and 'spirit of place where each place is unique to its context. Place Theory stresses the importance of looking at the historical and cultural context in order to create meaningful and identifiable societies. Similarly, the concept of

Critical Regionalism highlights the acknowledgement of the local environment and places emphasis on identity.

CRITICAL REGIONALISM

The term Critical Regionalism was coined by architect Alexander Tzonis and historian Liane Lefaivre. It is the concern for place and the use of regional design elements. Critical Regionalism is the acknowledgement of the local environment- “It draws forms from the context”. Critical Regionalism is a synthesis between culture (a local, particular phenomenon) and civilisation (a dominant, universal phenomenon) as well as between nature and technology. In the United States for example, the emphasis is on nature rather than culture. Frampton states that Critical Regionalism “is to mediate the impact of universal civilisation with elements derived indirectly from the peculiarities of a particular place” (Nesbitt, 1996: 469, 483 & 490).

Critical Regionalism is a method which emphasizes the identity, the *Genius Loci* of the region rather than promoting universal doctrines (Tzonis & Lefaivre, 2003: 10 & 11). Critical Regionalism is also not concerned with the expression of prosperity but rather identity- cultural, economic and political independence (Nesbitt, 1996: 471). Mumford clarifies that Regionalism does not suggest a return to the primitive or the traditional picturesque or Romantic Regionalism however; it opposes the adopting of ‘narcissistic dogmas’. He further stresses that regionalism is more than the mere use of locally available materials and methods of construction. Critical Regionalism and the architecture of identity address the physical, social and cultural constraints of the region in order to create a diverse and responsive architecture although not without influence from universality (Tzonis & Lefaivre, 2003: 19 & 20). Frampton reiterates that Critical Regionalism does not encourage the nostalgic regressions to the stylistic elements of vernacular nor oppose modern architecture. It does however seek an architecture which encapsulates the “artistic potential of the region while reinterpreting cultural influences...” thus creating architecture which that expresses the political identity through the “clarification of place” (Nesbitt, 1996: 469).

Regionalism favours the individual and local architectonic characteristics above the universal and abstract ones. However, it is not without its ambiguities- sometimes lending itself towards reform and liberation movements while at times known to be associated with repression and chauvinism, a critique Tzonis and Lefaivre dispute (Frampton, 1983: 20). Critical Regionalism is a commitment to 'placeness' and the use of regional design elements. It emphasizes place rather than space (Nesbitt, 1996: 481-82 & 486), as well as tectonic rather than the scenographic. It is a dialectic expression, the 'cultivating' of the site as opposed to the 'placelessness' produced by 'cut-and-fill' sites- instead, it is the 'building the site' as Swiss architect Mario Botta puts it. Therefore, the historical and topographical attributes of the region become embedded in the built form. Frampton believes that; "it has to root itself in the soil of its past, forge a national spirit, and unfurl this spiritual and cultural revindication before the colonial personality" (Frampton, 1983: 16, 26 & 27).

Critical Regionalism is concerned with the specificity of place whether phenomenological, political and cultural, ultimately addressing issues of local identity and expression. Critical Regionalism is based on the two key elements of architecture- an understanding of place and tectonics. Therefore, the architecture produced is both site specific (responding to light and climate) and a composition of appropriate building materials (the use local materials and craftsmanship) thus promoting an architecture which is spatial and experiential rather than purely aesthetic. However, Frampton argues that the use of local materials (tectonic and tactile) does not distinguish building from place to place (Nesbitt, 1996: 468 & 475).

The historical and topographical attributes of the region contribute to the expression of local identity. The disregard of the regional elements and influences can result in architecture which is alien and an image the people cannot identify with. A single work of architecture should not only relate to site within its boundaries but also consider the greater urban context thus, creating a sense of continuity within the urban fabric. Hence, a building should be designed not in isolation but as part of the wider built environment.

BUILT ENVIRONMENT AS ECOSYSTEM

In essence a building is an organism and the city the ecosystem where each organism is in some relation to others of its own kind as well as other species. Its elements are connected through an immense and intricate network, which can be understood only as a series of overlapping local systems, never rigidly or instantaneously linked and yet part of a fabric without edges. Each part has a history and a context which shift and move from part to part. Each part contains information about its local context and thus by extension about the whole (Lynch, 1981: 116 & 117). Sullivan also states that; a building is an organism and should follow the law of organisms, which decrees that the form must everywhere follow and express the function, the function determining and creating its appropriate form (Bragdon, 1971: 26).

There is or should be a link between form and performance and therefore a link between spatial form and quality and the nature of human beings and their cultures. The form and quality of the space must satisfy the important goals and basic values of any given culture. Therefore, the image of a given city or settlement may vary from one observer to the next (Lynch, 1960: 6 & 112).

The environmental image is divided into three primary components; identity, structure and meaning; firstly, the identification of an object or its distinction from others, secondly its spatial relation to the observer and other objects and finally, its meaning to the observer whether practical or emotion. The image must be both legible and visible (Lynch, 1960: 8).

ARCHITECTURE AS ANOTHER NATURE

Given the recent shift towards ecological design, architecture has responded well to the environment. However, the human dimension should also be addressed since both people and nature are a part of the global ecosystem. Special consideration should be paid to both region and the presence of human beings in the built environment. The result then is rich and meaningful architecture and built environments.

The concept of 'Architecture as another Nature' aims to reconsider the past which was adaptable to climate and the land and allows human existence with nature and sees human beings and architecture as a part of the earth's ecosystem. It also aims to restore architecture to the people in society who will use the architecture or occupy the buildings while exploring ways of allowing the users to participate in true dialogue with the architect.

Because a building is used by many people, regardless of scale, it ought to be designed not in isolation but as part of the whole and must have a quality of urbanity. Another aim of is to bridge the gap between the community and the architecture by giving architecture a new social character especially in public architecture. In creating spaces we must recognise that human beings are a part of nature. Architecture must be response to the ecosystem as all human existence is ultimately encompassed by nature. Jencks states that; "Any new building must make up for the topography and space that is altered because of its introduction and help create a new nature in the place of the one that was there where any new building ought to commemorate the nature that had to be destroyed because of it and serve as a means to communicate with nature" (Jencks, 1997: 113).

We need to pay respect to both what is international and what is local in order to create architecture of the society and the future. Because the city is a changing multifaceted entity that is a composition and juxtaposing of even opposing elements it is important to create an inclusive architecture that caters to a multiplicity and diverse spectrum of issues as well as raise consciousness in the people through the creation of spaces that are both natural and comfortable to human beings (Jencks, 1997: 114).

The influence of globalisation cannot be denied but should be acknowledged therefore, contemporary architecture cannot be purely local or global but should be a hybrid of both. This is often achieved through the use of historical forms and local materials, however, using new methods of technologies in the construction. Migration has also contributed to the negation of representing one culture and posed challenges for the expression of national identity in favour of intercultural built environments.

PHILOSOPHY OF SYMBIOSIS

Philosophy of symbiosis draws influence from Buddhism, biology and a characteristically Japanese view of technology as a natural component. The intercultural architecture generated exhibits different cultures which exist in symbiosis, a hybrid architecture that exists in symbiosis with the environment through the symbiosis of tradition and technology. This theory stresses the symbiosis of different cultures and ecology. Often referred to as the 'Architecture of the Age of Life', it expresses meaning. This pluralistic representation of different cultures creates meaning. "Differences are precisely the proof of life's existence." Much like the plurality of life is created by heredity; architecture acquires plurality through the inheritance of its historical tradition. This inheritance takes place on many levels. For example the Japanese style of architecture known as *Sukiya* uses a method in which historical forms are employed but new techniques are introduced to promote a gradual change. Alternatively, the method of inheriting or recombining tradition is through dissecting fragments of historical forms and applying them to contemporary works of architecture. Following this method, the meaning of historical forms is lost therefore; in their recombination they acquire new multivalent significance. However, this method is not to be confused with recreating historical architecture. Another method of inheriting principles from the past is to express the invisible ideas, aesthetics, lifestyles and historical mind-sets behind historical symbols and forms. Hence the visible symbols and forms are manipulated to create a form of expression characterised by abstraction, metaphor, symbolism etc (Jencks, 1997: 106).

The Architecture of the Age of Life will be architecture compatible with the regional contexts, urban contexts and nature and the environment. It will move towards a symbiosis of nature and human beings and of the environment and architecture. Symbiosis in essence is different from harmony, compromise, amalgamation or eclecticism. Symbiosis is manifest through recognising the relevance of the sacred zone between different cultures, opposing factors, different elements between extremes of dualistic opposition. Another provision necessary for achieving symbiosis is the presence of intermediary space such as streets, plazas and parks. This intermediary space is crucial as a common or neutral ground for opposing elements of dualism and act as a stimulus that make possible the existence of individual buildings (Jencks, 1997: 107-108).

1.5 RESEARCH METHODS AND MATERIALS

The relevant material is a compilation of data from various sources where data is unlikely to be collected using one source. The decision on which research methods and materials to use is dependent on the aims and objectives therefore, it is crucial to select the right method as a means of achieving your objectives rather than because you like the idea of using it or feel most comfortable with it as a methodological tool (Brewerton & Millward, 2001: 69). Theoretical and case study approaches have been used in this research to investigate and understand the applied concepts. There are two types of background research, namely *primary* and *secondary* sources;

- **Primary research;**

Primary research is a study of a subject through *firsthand* observation and investigation (Dawson, 2009: 40). Primary sources are a major component of the research in order to answer the research questions posed and attempt a point of departure for the investigation. The main data collection tools used in this research is research observations (physical traces and environmental behaviour), standardized questionnaires and focused interviews.

- Observing physical traces;

Observing physical traces is the systematic observation of the physical surroundings to find reflections of previous activities. Traces may either be conscious changes people have made to their surroundings or left behind unconsciously. For researchers, such environment-behaviour traces begin to assume how an environment got to the way it is, what decisions its designers and builders made about the place, how people actually use it, how they feel toward their surrounds and ultimately how that particular environment meets the needs of its users. Researchers therefore begin to form an idea of what people are like who use the place, their culture, affiliations and the way they present themselves (Zeisel, 1984: 89).

- Observing environmental behaviour;

Observing environmental behaviour is systematically watching people use their environment; individuals, couples, small or big groups. What they do? Alternatively, it is observing how a physical environment supports or hinders behaviours taking place within it and the effects the setting has on relationships between individual and groups. Simply put, it is looking at how people behave in and use space (Hall, 1966). Observing environmental behaviour generates data about people's activities and the relationships needed to sustain them, regularities and irregularities in the behaviour, expected uses, new uses and misuses of a place and about behavioural opportunities and constraints that the environment provides (Zeisel, 1984: 110).

- Focused interviews;

Focused interviews is a means of posing questions systematically used to find out what people think, feel, do, know, believe and expect. The can be used with both individuals and groups to find out in depth how people define a concrete situation, what they consider important about it, what effects they intended their actions to have in that situation and how they feel about it (Zeisel, 1984: 137).

- Standardised questionnaire;

Standardised questionnaires are used to discover regularities among groups of people by comparing answers to the same set of questions. Questionnaires provide useful data when the researcher begins with a well- defined problem, knowing what major concepts and aspects they want to deal with. The analysis of questionnaire responses can provide an accurate numbers to check. Skilled researchers use standardised questionnaire to test and refine their ideas by beginning with their hypotheses about which attribute relate to each other (Zeisel, 1984: 157).

- Secondary research;

Secondary research involves collection of *information* from studies done by other researchers that will contribute towards a resolution of the research problem (Dawson, 2009: 41). Secondary sources are primarily used in the construction of a conceptual framework and the literature review component of the research. Hence,

provide background information on the area and to supplement and interpret the primary data. This information is collected the following sources; books, journal articles, report/ documents, maps/plans and the internet.

Observing physical traces as well as observing environmental behaviour involved the researcher observing how people interact with the existing civic centres and spaces adjacent to it and in the case of the civic centre in Port Shepstone, the parking in front of the building. In order to do a conclusive study, it was important to view all sides of the building to get the overall level of interaction between the viewer and the building. It was also important to make the observations at different times of the day and different days of the week. Therefore, the observation was done one during the week and the other on the weekend and secondly during peak times (morning or lunch) and again off-peak.

Focused interviews were conducted in either the form of structured, semi-structured or unstructured interviews depending on the setting though the basic outline of questions was established beforehand. The number of respondents per session ranged from a minimum of one person where the respondent was not influence or intimidated by other members of the group to an average group of about 5 people in order to get different points of view.

Standardised questionnaires (and focused interviews) required the respondents to supply the researcher with some background information such as sex, age, race, educational level, occupation as well as citizenship. The latter was important in establishing the perception of South Africa according to an 'outsider'. It also proved crucial to get a wide range of respondents, old and young, and some familiar with the area and others foreign to it, therefore both locals and tourists were be interviewed. This ensured that the data collected is neither biased nor influenced.

1.6 CONCLUSION

Architecture and society are not mutually exclusive- the region, the people as well as the past cannot be ignored as design generators for new works of architecture. Louis Sullivan says that as man thought; they built, leaving records of their thinking therefore, the built environment is a tapestry of layer upon layer of past thoughts manifest in the urban fabric. Bragdon claims that; “the building is always the expression of the thinking. Whatever the character of the thinking, just so was the character of the building” (Bragdon, 1971: 1).

Architecture is a vehicle for expression through the use of semiology and aesthetics to produce an appropriate architectural image. The use of symbols and meaning in architecture is undisputable. Jencks explains that in semiology, the “creation is dependent on tradition and memory where the concept of meaning is multivalent and has many meanings and each use of the meaning is different from the next” (Jencks, 1969: 13). Therefore, it is important to be sensitive in the use of symbols and their subsequent meaning, bearing in mind that one symbol can mean different things to different people depending on their life experiences and past associations with the sign or symbol.

Similarly, semantics have been utilized in the political domain; however there seems to be a paradigm shift from the representation of political power to the search for national identity. However, the term even in published literature is vaguely defined. Therefore, the question that arises is whether such a concept is purely a utopian phenomenon or is it achievable and if so what ‘collective’ identity (not to be confused with ‘neutral’ identity) could represent a diverse and multi-cultural country like our own?

Furthermore, in the context of South Africa, a nation emerging from decades of political, economic and social injustice; is it possible to abstract and reinterpret historical forms previously associated with either the colonial or Apartheid regime into meaningful symbols in a democratic society? Therefore, the research is seeks to answer these questions as well as others incurred by the topic.

Chapter one is an introduction, a basic outline the issues to be investigated in the research. The chapter defines the problem, issues and objectives for the dissertation, asking questions about the influence of politics on the built environment and the subsequent expression of identity. Key concepts and theories that will guide the course of the research are stated in the latter part of the chapter as well as the research methods and materials that outline exactly how the research will be conducted.

Chapter two investigates the relationship between architecture and politics. This chapter looks at how art and architecture has been used at the service of politics as well as how the image of power is manifest in government buildings. Chapter three explores the use of semiology in the built form and the subsequent manifestation of identity on the built environment. The chapter begins by defining symbols and meaning, and myths and rituals and how they have been used in architecture through the years. This chapter goes on to explore issues of identity, examining how architecture has been used to create or reinforce regional and national identity. Chapter four studies the influence of politics on the built environment. The chapter examines how memory is and can be used in the making of meaningful places and spaces. This chapter looks at examples of post-colonial capital and capitols, and their expression of independence and democracy in both the architecture and civic spaces.

Chapter five and chapter six examine the expression of memory and democracy in civic architecture with particular reference to two precedents- the Reichstag in Berlin, Germany and the Constitutional Court in Braamfontein, South Africa.

Chapter seven is the critical analysis of the inner working of a civic centre, the Cape Town Civic Centre. The case study is an investigation of how to appropriately house the seat of the local government.

Lastly, chapter eight and nine are a summary of the findings, an analysis and conclusion of the research. These chapters are basic discussions and recommendations of ways in which political power and identity can be manifest in the built environment.

CHAPTER TWO
ART AND ARCHITECTURE IN THE SERVICE OF POLITICS

CHAPTER 2 ART AND ARCHITECTURE AS A POLITICAL STATEMENT

2.1 INTRODUCTION

“Politics like religion, love and the arts; is a theme that men cannot leave alone: not in their behaviour, nor in their talk, nor in their writing of history. In all countries and cultures men dwell on lore about the state: what it is and does and should be” (Edelman, 1967: 1).

Only a few men are involved in politics directly. People are mere spectators of government processes except through the voting process. For most, politics is just images abstracted into symbols, placed in their mind by television news, newspapers, magazines and discussions, images that may be removed, detached, or intangible to the masses (Edelman, 1967: 6). The newspapers and television reports on political acts are the very vehicle for symbolization in its most raw form. Often over-dramatised and often devoid of any realistic details however create unchallenged symbolic meaning. The public is constantly bombarded with symbols not news (Edelman, 1967: 8-9). Unlike politics, architecture strives on the involvement of people because ultimately the users and viewers of these buildings is the public. It is these people who are in constant dialogue with the built environment hence the image of the city should be reflective of the people it intends to serve not the egos of the architects and urban designers manifest in the built environment.

2.2 ART AT THE HEART OF POLITICAL DISCOURSE

Art is and has been at the heart of social and political discourse of most countries, highlighting socio-cultural issues. It is “the expression of the ideals and spirit of democracy and human rights culture”. Art is the exhibition of freedom of expression, an inherent part of culture and politics. In a democratic setting, it ensures that the public viewpoints and tolerances never remain stagnant, but evolve with the changing times (British Council South Africa: 2003: iv).

Art form can be used as an expressive political symbol where in most cases consists of condensation symbols and functions in a similar way to abstract political symbols as they function as a platform for expression, both for the artist and the audience and not as ‘an instrument for changing the world’. The expressive power lies in the artist creating a world removed from the reality of the audience making it easier for them to engage with the artistic symbols (Edelman, 1967: 11).

Political statements have been made through art and architecture from antiquity to the present day. Richard Stapleford in his essay “Constantinian Politics and the Atrium Church” states that “Architecture through its political content can influence the course of events and at the same time determine historical attitudes that obscure the alternate paths history might have taken”, for example the appearance of standardised Christian basilica.

There are close ties between Emperor Constantine’s use of church architecture and his program to Christianise the Roman state. However, throughout history, the image of the Christian basilica has been distorted from its original purpose and meaning in the emperor’s plan.

Over the past centuries the Christian basilica has accrued meaning but when stripped of such meaning, reveals the revolutionary character of Constantine’s. It is a document of the emperor’s decisions not only in the organisation of a new imperial but also in establishing a set of design principles that shaped history and continue to do so even today (Millon & Nochlin, 1978: 2).

Carol Duncan in her essay “Ingres’s Vow of Louis XIII and the Politics of Restoration” describes Ingres’s Vow of Louis XIII (Plate 1) as faithfully reflecting the religious sentimentality of the Restoration and the counterfeit piety of official state religion. Ingres’s Vow of Louis XIII, apart from its origins in Restoration, fulfils certain political and ideological intentions. As a state-financed commission for the Montauban Cathedral, it benefited a specific group of politicians. During the Restoration, it was not uncommon for politicians to commission religious art for local churches (Millon & Nochlin, 1978: 84).



Plate 1: Ingres's *Vow of Louis XIII*, Cathedral Of Montauban (www.michaelarnoldart.com, 2011/08/25)



Plate 2: Rude's *Departure of the Volunteers of 1792*, Arc De Triomphe L'Etoile, Paris (www.assemblee-nationale.fr, 2011/08/25)

Similarly, four works by François Rude are the most exceptional political sculptures in France during the nineteenth century; the *Departure of the Volunteers of 1792* (also known as *La Marseillaise*), the *Awakening of Napoleon to Immortality*, the *Tomb of Godefroi Cavaignac* and the *Marshal Ney*. The *Departure of the Volunteers of 1792* (Plate 2) and the *Marshal Ney* were commissioned by the government hence similar are in 'spirit' (Millon & Nochlin, 1978: 92). Rude translated his response to politics in his works thus giving clues on the meaning of events in those times, especially the lives and deaths of Cavaignac, Ney and Napoleon (Millon & Nochlin, 1978: 93).

The subject matter depicts the response of thousands of men to the threat posed by the Allies, the Prussians and Austrians against France in 1792. These men, clerks, shopkeepers, and other workers came together from all over France to form the first volunteer army in modern Europe. In a letter to a friend, Rude writes “My warriors hastened to defend their country not in search of la gloire” (Millon & Nochlin, 1978: 96). The composition depicts the complex masculine response and juxtaposition of the call to war and the spirit of the nation. The figure to the left blowing a trumpet is a symbol for the “Call to War” whilst the “Genius of Liberty” is an embodiment of the spirit of the nation. The composition is dominated by the great winged female figure. Her face expresses intense force, a cry of anguish, of war and even a call to liberty and to unity, a ferocious symbol of the “Marseillaise”. Below this figure, he placed men of different ages, all capable of responding to the call (Millon & Nochlin, 1978: 98).

Art in the service of politics is twofold- either in favour of politicians or protestors, whereby the powers of politicians and government are constantly questioned by artists, cartoonists and ad agencies. Political graphics are “an emotional reminder of a shared period of political history” and “...concerns, a mirror of our times” Political graphics play a seminal role in communication, carrying messages of information, propaganda, polemic or sheer provocation (British Council South Africa: 2003: 1). A vital instrument of communication and change was the ‘radical’ or



Plate 3: ‘PLO IRA’ (1982), Republican mural, Belfast
(British Council South Africa: 2003: 31)

alternative press such as the network of presses, publishers, graphic workshops and individuals who spread new ideas and attitudes in magazines, comics, posters and postcards all in the hope producing materials to promote solidarity.

Visual propaganda is a political tool employed by both sides of conflict in the form of graphics and wall murals to promote their cause. The Loyalist murals have often relied on historical imagery and symbolism while the Republicans (Plate 3) tended to depict a struggle against imperialism, highlighting solidarity through hunger strikes and liberation movements with other countries (British Council South Africa: 2003: 29).

Britain's political parties, among others, both during campaigns as well as when in office, strive on the powers of persuasion afforded by posters and billboards in the streets. Methods of persuasion range immensely, from provocative copywriting to exaggerated imagery, gimmicks or even shock tactics. Britain's political and social satire, though sometimes irreverent, has played a major role in "*testing the limits of tolerance of both the public and politicians*", however humorous the criticism or attacks might be. Although, often bordering on bad taste or outright offense, its value as an important 'freedom' [of speech and expression] is unquestionable. Saatchi & Saatchi's 'Labour Isn't Working' campaign billboard is considered instrumental in bringing Margaret Thatcher's and the Conservatives into power in the 1979 general elections (Plate 4). Considered an icon of its time, the powerful subject matter was effective at a time when many people feared strikes and losing their jobs under a re-elected



Plate 4: 'Labour Isn't Working' (1979), Saatchi & Saatchi
(British Council South Africa: 2003: 4)

Labour government (British Council South Africa: 2003: 3). Photomontage graphics by Peter Kennard reflected the 'spirit of the time' and have become the trademark of CND and other demonstrations (British Council South Africa: 2003: 17).

In 1997, as a means of political awareness, posters targeted the previously marginalised sectors of the public; those prone to alienation or cynical towards politics, by urging them to engage in the democratic process and vote. The non-partisan, 'Use Your Vote' campaign (Plate 5 & 6), commissioned by the renowned Ministry of Sound nightclub, employed extremist views to shock

young people out of their apathy and into the polling stations in the 1997 General Elections. The campaign aimed to persuade young people to exercise their right to vote and offset the statistics of which only 40% of 18-24 year olds participated in the 1992 General Elections (British Council South Africa: 2003: 3).



Plate 5 & 6: 'Use Your Vote. You Know He'll Use His' (1997), BMP
(British Council South Africa: 2003: 14)

Prior to the 2001 General Elections, Operation Black Vote (OBV) developed as a nonpartisan campaign dedicated to achieving greater political involvement of black people by encouraging them to vote. The 'Spot the Black MP' billboard campaign (Plate7) is a visual expression of OBV's view that a strong political voice for Africans, Asians, Caribbean and other ethnic minorities is crucial to acquire greater representation and subsequent equality of opportunity (British Council South Africa: 2003: 3).



Plate 7: 'Spot the Black MP' (2001), Lee Jasper & Simon Woodley
(British Council South Africa: 2003: 15)

The September 11th 2001 or 9/11 terrorist attack, sparked a renewed influx of visual statements, anti-war graphics and artist displays from artist and press. The British anti-war movement expressed their disapproval of the global 'war on terrorism' initiated by US President George W. Bush and quickly joined by British Prime Minister Tony Blair by staging protests and marches. Anti-war groups such as the 'Stop the War Coalition' (Plate 8) and many artists created posters, placards, and costumes displaying phrases of discontent or ridiculing the new Bush and Blair alliance (Plate 9) (British Council South Africa: 2003: 17).



Plate 8: 'Stop the War Coalition' (2003), Peter Kennard (British Council South Africa: 2003: 23)

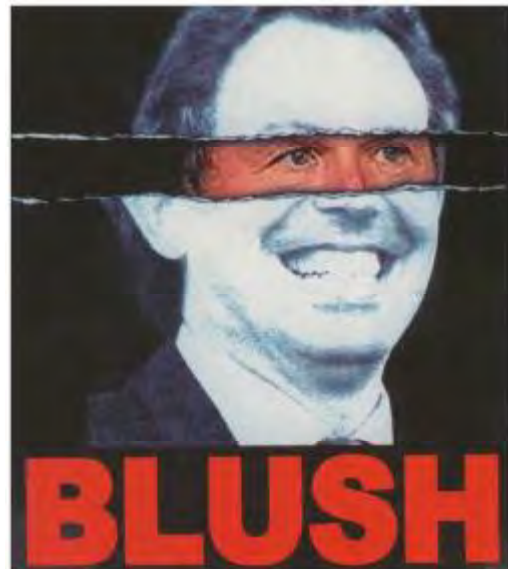


Plate 9: 'Blush'- highlights the Bush/ Blair relationship, (2003), Blaise Hesselgren & Gabriel Alexander (British Council South Africa: 2003: 26)

Political Graphics in the South African context are “a modest showcase of the resilient robustness of South Africa’s young democracy from anti-apartheid protest to post-democratic challenge, South Africa’s rich and tumultuous history of social and political activism has yielded diversity of cultural and media expressions”. South African activists, designers, artists and activist designer artists have given a voice to issues that have “captivated, enraged, engaged and provoked public imagination”. Such images fuelled with political underpinnings are a bold expression of the social, economic and political concerns of a nation in transition.

For example ‘The Last Supper (1999) by Rebecca Goldberg, created as part of the ‘African Renaissance’ series of postcard depicts Da Vinci’s painting however, replacing the original characters with South African political leaders both past and present (Plate 10). On a lighter note, political posters, caricatures and visual satire raise the national sentiment of the public whilst simultaneously challenging and encouraging the new South African leadership to laugh at itself (Plate 11) (British Council South Africa: 2003: 73).



Plate 10: The Last Supper (1999), Rebecca Goldberg (British Council South Africa: 2003: 98)



Fig. 11: Zapiro’s provocative caricatures (British Council South Africa: 2003: 93)

2.3 ARCHITECTURE AND THE IMAGE POWER

Architecture has been and continues to be used in the political realm to represent political power but before discussing how, it is necessary to make the distinction between government and politics. Government is the “institutional framework” of a country. Basically, it is the structure and procedures that govern the legislative body, the Cabinet and other local government departments. Politics on the other hand is the conduct of groups and individuals in matters that affect the course of government for example voting as well as the forming and running of political parties. Raphael theorises that the sphere of politics is divided into two parts; either power or conflict but for the purpose of this research, the latter will be discussed further. He also notes that often politicians say that “politics is about power” or that “politics is the seeking and exercising of power”. Therefore, the “political” is whatever concerns the state, where political affairs are concerned with seeking power and asserting influence on its citizens (Raphael, 1990: 30-33).

In relation to the history of designed capitals, the capital complexes in Papua New Guinea, Kuwait, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh represent a wide range of attempts to symbolise political power and design national identity. To varying degrees, the architects have adapted their designs



Fig. 1: Capitoline Hill, Rome (www.the-romans.co.uk, 2011/08/12)

to the challenges of cultural pluralism. Capitol originally denoted a citadel on a hill as in Rome’s Capitoline Hill (Fig. 1), a site of the ancient Temple of Jupiter, in which the Roman Senate sometimes assembled, give clues of the political and topographical origins of the word (Vale, 1992: 11).

A capital city is expected unlike other cities, is expected to be a symbolic centre, as “in the ceremonial meeting place that serves as a goal for pilgrimage” as Lewis Mumford puts it. Capital cities have become larger, more complex with a shift from autocratic political power towards democratic participation in comparison to ancient examples; however, retain their symbolic centrality and importance (Vale, 1992: 12).

The creation of Brasilia (1956-60) in Brazil; a collaboration between Oscar Niemeyer and Lucio Costa (Plate 12) was a result of a stipulation of the Brazilian constitution. The capital was to be relocated from coastal Rio de Janeiro, the creation of the Portuguese colonists to a city in the interior. The new capital is a celebration of Brazil’s new found independence from European colonial power. Brasilia is hailed as a monument to modernist urban planning where in 1989 it was recognised as a UNESCO World Monument.

The masterplan conceived by Lucio Costa resembling a bird or an aeroplane. Costa disregarded the existing opting for a plan organised along two main axes (Fig. 2) (Sudjic, 2001: 96).



Plate 12: Brasilia, Oscar Niemeyer, 1956-60
(Sudjic, 2001: 97)



Fig. 2: Brasilia masterplan, Lucio Costa
(Sudjic, 2001: 96)

Similarly, Chandigarh (Plate 13) is the product of post-colonial division and Le Corbusier’s most complete attempt to build a modern city. When India and Pakistan were divided, so too was the Punjab region where the old administrative capital remained on the Pakistani side forcing India to build a new state capital. The capital is arranged in a series of buildings and monumental plazas, each which is a defined entity.



Plate 13: Chandigarh, Le Corbusier, 1951-62 (www.cactusjungle.com, 2011/08/12)

The main Capitol Complex consists of a progression of spaces and buildings that are terminated by the Place of Assembly, a U-shaped office block with a substantial front portico often referred to as the its “democratic roof” The design by Le Corbusier is the monumental heart of the new city, a poetic yet powerful realisation of architectural modernity in the creation of a democratic institution. Although appropriate in Chandigarh’s residential setting, Le Corbusier has been criticised for not properly addressing the way in which Indian life is lived in the street (Sudjic, 2001: 98).

In South Africa, the Union Buildings in Pretoria (1910-1913) by Herbert Baker is a symbol of power and the Apartheid regime (Plate 14). The building, although houses the government of a



democratic nation, the original intentions and imagery is apparent in the style and siting of this Neo-classical building (Davids, 2007:33)

Plate 14: Union Buildings, Pretoria (www.phaphamatours.co.za, 2011/08/11)

Contemporary political philosophy often depicts politics as an activity governed by rational procedures and involving rational individuals. Rawls and Habermas, two key political philosophers agree in saying that image of politics is a “sphere of human life” in which one constantly relies on the rationality of those involved. However, people act on the basis of arational elements- powerful symbols and images; sometimes subtle but often inconspicuous. That being said, not all that is symbolic is arational (Bottici, 2007: 1 & 4). For example, the ostentatious parades of totalitarian regimes both made use of and displayed the effectiveness of arational elements such as myths and symbols. According to anthropologists, the occurrence of arational elements in traditional societies was more obvious due to the thin line between politics and religion in those cultures since the rulers shared the same attributes as the gods (Bottici, 2007: 2).

Bragdon claims that; “Architecture is the index of the inner life of those who produced it” (Bragdon, 1971: 68). Therefore, whether successful or not, architecture is always the reflection of the thing that produced it. A building is revealing even though contrary to the intended image. It reflects the circumstances which brought it into being (Bragdon, 1971: 1 & 147).

As a man thinks, he acts according to his thought, and if that act takes the form of a building it is an emanation of his inmost life, and reveals it (Bragdon, 1971: 149). Louis Sullivan says that as man thought, they built, leaving records of their thinking therefore, “the building always the expression of the thinking. Whatever the character of the thinking, just so was the character of the building”. For example, a skyscraper towering above its more humble neighbours is a symbol of the will-to-power and aggression of the client and characteristic of the period which produced it (Bragdon, 1971: 1).

Political power can take on many forms. It is not manifest only through the power of a leader, the military, an established bureaucracy but also through the symbolic use of the physical environment. Throughout history and all over the world, architecture and urban design have been manipulated in the service of politics. Vale argues that government buildings are an attempt to build governments and to support specific regimes as they serve as symbols of the state.

Therefore, we can learn much about the political regime by observing what they build and more importantly, the government buildings (Vale, 1992: 3).

Owens states that the political, economic, social and religious state of a city is reflected in its public buildings and their location in the built environment. For the Greeks and Romans, the political and administrative functions of the city are witnessed most in the agora and forum. They were the heart of the Greek and Roman city, linked to the rest of the town by a network of streets. He goes on to say that much like the acropolis, the agora and the forum were indicative of the city's political and administrative independence well into the height of the Roman Empire. However, the forum or agora also functioned as the social centre of the town where entertainment, competitions and other leisure activities took place until the development of specialised building (Owens, 1991: 3).

Recent writings on architecture and urban design state that all buildings are products of social and cultural circumstances. Vale on the other hand, states the power and identity embedded in the design of national parliament buildings and the districts which surround them in various capital cities around the world. He further says that grand symbolic state buildings need to be understood in terms of the political and cultural contexts that helped to bring them into being. The postcolonial complex is arguably the best building typology to explore these issues as it is an act of design expresses the power and identity of both the government client and the designer (Vale, 1992: 3).

The design of government building interiors gives clues about the nature of bureaucracy at work within. In comparison, the deliberate locating of the leader's office or main debating chamber so that it is open to public view if not open to the public. The latter can however be an attempt to convey the government as approachable, whether that genuine or illusory (Vale, 1992: 8).

Charles Goodsell even goes on to analyse the distribution of political power of single rooms in the layouts of American city council chambers. The relationship between the positions of the

speaker's podium, council members' seating and public galleries in the design of seventy-five chambers constructed during the last 125 years. Goodsell identifies two key and interconnected long-term trends in democratic governance; firstly, the trend away from "personalistic rule" expressed by the "shift of central focus away from the rostrum's presiding office to the council's corporate existence" and secondly, a trend towards the "downgrading of geographical representation" shown by a move from separated aldermanic desks to a common dais table. Similarly, with public spaces which have shown a shift in the orientation of the council's seating in such a way that the members communicate with the public instead of with each other, the downgrading or removal of barriers between the government and the public, the increase in the amount of public seating and lecterns.

Design manipulation can either promote a sense of alienation or empowerment. These range from the layout of a new capital city to the layout of a parliamentary chamber. The design of government building interiors gives clues about the nature of bureaucracy at work within. For example the privileged location of a high official's office and the series of security checkpoints one must go through to reach it also give further clues of the structure of authority. In comparison, the deliberate locating of the leader's office or main debating chamber so that it is open to public view if not open to the public. The latter can however be an attempt to convey the government as approachable, whether that genuine or illusory (Vale, 1992: 8).

2.4 CONCLUSION

Politics is a subject that cannot be viewed in isolation, it is complex and in order to understand such it is important to look at the various strategies employed by the government to reassure its citizens as well as exercise its power. Symbols and meaning as well as rite and myth, are just some of the mechanism used in the service of politics. Art has also been and is still being used in the political domain to show ruling party in a favourable light while on the other hand, as in the case of political posters, it questions the state of politics and becomes a 'voice' for the masses.

The issue of political power is also manifest in architecture and the greater built environment. The built environment has been manipulated to serve political agendas. Parliamentary buildings and capital/ capitol complexes are just some of the examples of how states employ signs and symbols to represent power and identity. The symbolism behind government buildings is best understood in terms of the political and social contexts that brought them into being.

The use of symbols and meaning has become increasingly important in democratic states as they seek to create new identities to celebrate independence and emancipation from colonial rule.

CHAPTER THREE
ARCHITECTURE AND IDENTITY

CHAPTER 3 ARCHITECTURE AND IDENTITY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

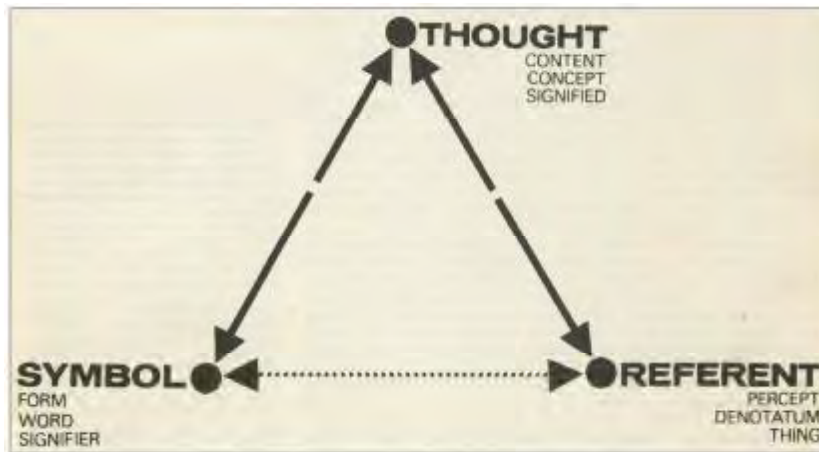
Identity is a subject that has interested many theorists, all in pursuit of a true definition of the word. Identity is often confused or assumed to be synonymous with culture, however these words are mutually exclusive at best therefore it is important to make the distinction. The concept of identity needs to be defined in the context of the research in order to clear up any prior misconceptions and ambiguities.

Identity is goes beyond just ethnicity or race but it is dependent on the “functional and symbolic” attachment between the people and the environment. It is far more complex than being defined by language, religion, tradition and region. Identity is closely associated to symbolism and meaning (Mthethwa, 2001: 51).

3.2 SYMBOLS AND MEANING

The presence of symbols and meaning in our lives and the built environment is undeniable. The ubiquitous presence and relevance of symbols and signs is an integral part of understanding and abstracting meaning from our environments. Jencks states that the basis of semiology and meaning in architecture is that any form in the environment is motivated or has the ability to be motivated- semantization is inevitable and every use becomes a sign itself. He continues to say that when of a new form is ‘invented’; it inevitably acquires meaning through society. Baird argues however that it does not need to be invented just noticed. Jencks further adds that every act and statement that man perceives is meaningful. He claims that in semiology, the “creation is dependent on tradition and memory where the concept of meaning is multivalent and has many meanings and each use of the meaning is different from the next (Jencks & Baird, 1969: 11 &13).

Semiology in the past was concerned with “what happens when man perceives a sign through one of his five senses however, architecture appeals to more than one of the senses giving rise to the semiological triangle (Fig. 3) - thought, symbol and reference. For example when one sees a building, they interpret it then translate that into words- a percept, concept and representation.



However, there is no connection between the word and the object. The semiological triangle is the relationship between language, thought and reality but one does not determine the other (Jencks & Baird, 1969: 15 & 16).

Fig. 3: The Semiological Triangle (Jencks & Baird, 1969: 15)

The subject of signification and symbolization is complex and has been the subject of much debate amongst scholars. Barthes argues that everything that has signification is a sign. Nauta believes that every form acting as a communicative tool is a symbol. Mounin on the other hand theorizes that a symbol is a sign and the product of its interpreter. Hayakawa states that a symbol is the process whereby man uses one thing to mean another. He also states that a symbol is different from a sign in that a sign is ‘plurisituational’ or that it means the same thing in different contexts. Similarly, Grabar agrees that a symbol and a sign are not the same. A sign signifies something, an image which represents it. A symbol on the other hand denotes something, something tangible but is not defined by it. The character traits of a sign are fixed while those of a symbol are variable depending on the viewer’s mood or feeling. Hence, the symbol needs to be viewed in context, time and place of conception as well as the social context in which it was produced (Katz, 1980: 5). Arkoun also makes the distinction between a sign and symbol. He defines a symbol as ‘rich and mobile’, a product of man, its users and creators with its meaning linked to a time and place. He affirms by stating that without man, there would be no symbols. A sign on the other hand is dependent on the signification linked to the symbol itself (Katz, 1980: 42-43). Fathy’s reinforces the words of Arkoun in his definition of a symbol. He defines a

symbol as a form which expresses natural phenomena for man. He continues to say that if the form is not true to its environment then that symbol is false (Katz, 1980: 82 &90). Malinowski theorises that; “Symbolism is founded not in a mysterious relation between the sign and the contents of the human mind, but between an object and a gesture, and an action and its influence upon the receptive organism (Katz, 1980: 12).

Every symbol stands for something other than itself, and it evokes an attitude, a set of impressions, or a sequence of events associated in time and space through symbols. Edelman points out that these symbols are divided into either referential or condensation symbols whereby referential symbols are where the elements are identified in the same way by different people while condensation symbols evoke emotions associated with the situation, condensing them into a symbolic event, sign or act of patriotic pride, anxieties, remembrances of past glories or a promise for a better future. Successful condensation symbols are created in conjunction with social consciousness (Edelman, 1967: 6 &20). The choice of signs and symbols, symbolic value and meaning, rites and rituals form the conceptual framework for shelter, settlement patterns and the basic way of life for any given society. The way we identify and extract meaning from signs and symbols is directly linked to the human psyche of the people of a given community, sharing the same belief systems (Oliver, 1975: 8-9).

Jamieson on the other hand defines symbol from a traditional point of view in which he states that a symbol is a rich and meaningful sign in tradition. In tradition, the sense of remembrance has its roots in the expression of culture and place rather than a nostalgic response to region- “it responds specifically to its place and time, its culture and belief, its light and landscape”. Traditional and regional objects are true symbols though sometimes ambiguous, their role is always linked to its function- “it is concerned with the subtle, fine, vital and ambiguous issues that are regional” (Ganis & Holden: 1996: 48-50). Traditional forms and spaces are an integral part in the understanding of symbolic meaning and value however, only relevant in a cultural context where continuity with the past is evident. The value of the symbol is dependent on the visual impact on the individual or a group of people and although the symbolic meaning of a form may change and still be accepted, the introduction of new forms divorced from the past has however proved unsuccessful. Therefore, the challenge lies in proving that a historic form is

relevant to the present society as well as how to adapt such forms into modern societies without imitation, subsequently diluting the symbolic meaning and losing the symbolic value since the value of a symbol without function is significantly lessened. Grabar argues that preservation in a sense is the preserving of a meaningless past (Katz, 1980: 2, 81-82 & 93). The simple reproduction of historical forms becomes meaningless if the cultural context at the time and place in which they are created is not understood. Yet with the understanding of what the form represented in a particular culture, a sense of meaning can be achieved (Ganis & Holden: 1996: 68).

Oliver argues that all things that man comes into contact with are abstracted signs and messages that are seen by those who are conscious of their existence. Professor Roger Brown states that signification and symbolization is the process of identifying, naming and determining symbolic value and meaning. Therefore, language and culture not only define but determine the way cultures see themselves and the world around them (Oliver, 1975: 9). Grabar concludes by saying that the symbolic meaning of an artist creation is defined by the viewer or referent. Therefore, the repetition of a particular form over centuries loses its cultural and traditional symbolic meaning hence; the symbolic meaning associated with a form will not necessarily always be associated with that symbol. Symbolic systems are best understood “in time rather than across time”. Symbol and sign systems are not only restricted to architecture but also decoration where the motifs are often culturally unique. The symbolic extent of decoration though divorced from the physical attributes of the architecture are however linked to the function of the building, the identity; whether symbolic or signified, they are closely linked to the setting and man rather than the forms (Katz, 1980: 9-10).

Ogden and Richards, in *The Meaning of Meaning*, theorize that any ‘sign-situation’ involves a sign, place and being. Simplified, this means that any sign communicated from one person to the next is best viewed in a given context, hence symbols. Therefore, signs are the basis for symbolism (Oliver, 1975: 9).

Philosopher, Charles Peirce defines a sign as something which stands for something else to someone. A symbol on the other hand, he defines as “a conventional sign depending on habit”.

He goes on to say that signs are not used in isolation but in relation to others, where each sign is dependent on other for its interpretation (Oliver, 1975: 9-10). Grabar points out that, symbols do not become forms but it is the forms through cultural and psychological associations that they become symbols. He goes on to say that spaces and forms are neutral and multifunctional but it is through the specific function that they acquire meaning. In other words, “the symbol of the present is the sign of the past” since a sign may evolve over time according to knowledge and belief systems. Therefore, symbolism is better understood in the context of the human psyche at the time of conception and may be linked to a specific form but it is not the core of the symbol or meaning. Symbolic meaning must be able to be explained in verbal terms or its abstract significance can be misinterpreted or missed entirely. The meaning stems from the human needs, whether cultural, functional or economic. The symbolic value of forms is their reliance on human perception, how they see them and the value of the symbol is measured by how the symbolic meaning is perceived and accepted by the masses since “symbols cannot exist without preceptors. Burckhardt gives this example to explain this further. A circle can either mean unity, totality, time etc depending on the level of understanding. By this example, he demonstrates that although the form, the circle remains unchanged; its meaning changes according to the level of understanding and the context in which it is used (Katz, 1980: 13-16 & 42).

Edelman clarifies that the meanings are not in the symbols however that they are in society and man himself. Political symbols represent certain meanings and emotions in which members of a group create and reinforce in each other. Cassirer states that the common characteristics of all symbolic forms are that they can be applicable to any object (Edelman, 1967: 11).

Meaning, much like symbols is divided into two categories, intrinsic and extrinsic. The intrinsic theory of meaning argues a direct connection between man and the universe. In Renaissance architecture, ‘absolute’ forms were believed to carry intrinsic meaning. For example, a circle signified harmony and repose. The extrinsic theory stems from the environment which gives it meaning, the main stimuli being language. Therefore, the perception we have of something is determined by the concept we have of it, since man is not passive to stimuli but conceives them in accordance to prior expectations both inborn and acquired.



Fig. 4: Duck-rabbit (Jencks & Baird, 1969: 18)

A good example of this is the duck-rabbit image (Fig. 4) where the viewer either sees the duck or rabbit, sometimes both but never simultaneously (Jencks & Baird, 1969: 17 & 18).

Architecture much like fashion, language and food convey meaning either through opposition or association, Jencks calls 'context and metaphor'. He comes to the conclusion that the height of meaning is proportional to the level of unexpectancy in a given context. Therefore, the less expected the meaning the less cliché it becomes. On the other hand, meaning conveyed through association and metaphor is a product of society or the individual relating one thing to another and since people are different due to their memories, so too will the meaning (Jencks & Baird, 1969: 21 & 22).

Government buildings serve various symbolic purposes simultaneously. Some may be traceable to the designer's or politician's intentions and the collaboration of ideas of the two, although often inseparable. Others are a result of perceptions and supposed meaning and symbolism not of the individual but incurred by social associations. For example in the United States, citizens have come to consider Lincoln Memorial (Plate 15), the most prominent neo-classical structure in Washington as the reassuring symbol of the concepts of "equal justice under the law" and a government "of the people, by the people and for the people". Governmental institutions are subconsciously perceived and associated with utopian and democratic governments worthy of the citizens' trust and confidence in the government and political system (Vale, 1992: 7).



Plate 15: Lincoln Memorial, Washington (Vale, 1992: 7)

It can be concluded that semiology and meaning is dependent on tradition and memory and is best viewed in the context of time, place and the human dimension. Symbolic value and meaning are closely linked to human perception since symbols and meaning cannot exist without preceptors. Furthermore, the symbolic value and meaning is also dependent on the preceptor's past experiences and associations with a particular symbol or sign. Therefore, the question that arises is what symbols and forms would be appropriate in the making of meaningful architecture and built environments. In a polarized landscape like South Africa where memory and past experience can be on opposite ends of the spectrum, how then will certain symbols and forms be received and perceived by the masses?

3.3 RITE AND MYTH

Symbolic forms that saturate our political institutions are rite and myth. Rites and myths much like elections, discussions of politics, patriotic holidays and legislatives are best understood in the context of permanent rather than temporary institutions (Edelman, 1967: 16).

Ritual is a motor activity that strives on the involvement of its participants symbolically over a common interest thereby promoting conformity and subsequent satisfaction in conformity. Much like a rain dance in primitive societies where men collectively and symbolically act to achieve what they need and want by "reaffirming their common interest, denying their doubts and acting out the result they seek". The collective act reassures everyone who participates in the ritual thus

bringing pride incurred through working together to achieve a common goal. As a result political practices (elections, political discussions, legislatures, courts and administration) much like rituals reaffirm the faith in the “fundamental rationality and democratic character of the system”. The collective participation reassures the masses that the political system is designed to translate the needs of the individual into public polity (Edelman, 1967: 16-17).

Myth, on the other hand functions with symbols. Bottici clarifies that myths and symbols do not correspond and that not all symbols are myths. Cassirer believes it is some kind of “enchanted mirror” while linguistics state that it is “a world of signs and images”. Psychologists have described myth as “a product of the unconscious” while philosophers say it is “a form of primitive philosophy” (Bottici, 2007: 4). Bottici however, explains that myth is more than a mere tale because many tales are not mythical. He states that myth is not a legend either since not all myths are legends and vice versa. Blumenberg defines myth as not just a product but a process of a continuous “reworking of a basic narrative core or *mythologem*” (Bottici, 2007: 5-7). Myth though functions in much the same way as rituals, they are however dissimilar, although rite and myth reinforce each other. Edelman says that myth is learned not through stories but the actual living in a society that believes in it (Edelman, 1967: 18). Barringer, on the other hand states that myth is neither arbitrary nor simply ornamental but has meaning. “Myth expresses and reveals cultural values” but only when viewed in their original cultural context. She reinforces her point by saying that the interpretation of a given myth is reliant to its context- physical, historical, religious, political and social whereby the context determines the meaning of images. In other words, the same myth can mean different things in a different context (Barringer, 2008: 2). Oliver believes that myths, beliefs and religion among other things are the concepts “through which man comes to terms with the phenomena of the world of his existence”. They determine how he sees the world- people and things which exist in his environment (Oliver, 1975: 9)

In Ancient Greece, myths were an integral part of their history, with gods often the subject of such; having complete control over the daily lives of the citizens- health and wealth. Religious practises such as sacrificial rituals as well as the need to respect and honour the gods were often explained in terms of myths and narratives about deities. However, not all myths are religious and not all religious practises are connected to mythological narratives. Myth and religion were

the *raison d'être* for many examples of Greek art throughout history however politics did play an important role in many public projects. But before the Hellenistic period (c. 323-31 B.C), many Greek sculptures had religious connotations while architecture sculpture was composed of mythological figures including Greek divinities and/or mythological narratives (Fig. 5) (Barringer, 2008: 1-2). Political myth and religious myth went hand in hand in ancient societies whereas in contemporary societies, there is a clear distinction since in a democratic setting, the role of political myth has become more prominent (Bottici, 2007: 6-7).



Fig. 5: West pediment, reconstruction Temple of Zeus, Olympia (Barringer, 2008: 15)

Sociologist Weber says that modern politics are more rational and bureaucratic since there is little influence of myths and symbols. Suffice to say the role for myths and symbols has been lessened in favour of identity politics and the renewed interest in nationalism. The mythical and symbolic dimensions of power have in recent decades been replaced with the symbolic dimension of social phenomena (Bottici, 2007: 3). Similarly, Kuran feels that myths and rituals much like symbolism and its visual application are not as relevant today as it was in the past due to among other factors, colonization, western industrialization and technological advancements (Katz, 1980: 92).

In conclusion, myths and rituals are not the same but similar. Myth is a narrative while ritual is a symbolic act. In addition, myths are not symbols and vice versa however, they function in a same way. Myths use symbols and have meaning; their interpretation is dependent on context whether physical, historical, political or social. They reveal clues of the cultural context from which they emerged therefore, the same myth can mean something in one context and something else in another, much like symbols and meaning.

So, although myths and rituals were highly regarded in ancient societies, their use in the contemporary setting is questionable if not irrelevant.

3.4 EXPRESSION OF IDENTITY

The concept of identity as explained by Fearon; is the set of characteristics and attributes which govern the entire universe. Identity defines and differentiates one creature, place and person from the next. Fearon, states that identity is divided into two categories; social and personal. Social identity refers to the physical attributes with which an individuals of a group share. Personal identity, on the other hand is the social attributes an individual or group associate with. However, regional and national identity, concepts pertinent to the research will be investigated further as they include both attributes of social and personal identity (Ngubane, 2010: 23, cited from Fearon, 1992).

Regionalism in architecture suggests geographical constraints in which the architecture addresses thereby giving rise to common characteristics not found or arranged differently in other contexts Vitruvius in 10BC defined regional style as a response to climate however; he does go on to say that, in addition to climatic constraints, the human dimension also influences the architecture where, “natural causes and human rationality were to determine architectural forms” (Tzonis & Lefaivre, 2003: 10 & 11). Rapoport also reiterates by stating that climate is not solely responsible for the occurrence of regional style (Ganis & Holden: 1996: 8). According to Tom Heath; “Regionalism as a movement in architecture aims at the preservation of threatened group identity, of visual and cultural harmony within regions, and of cultural variety globally” (Ganis & Holden: 1996: 10).

Regional architecture is not a matter of style, argues Tom Heath where style is defined by a series of common characteristics. Style is closely linked to traditional means of construction where the forms only remain relevant in that particular or given social structure. Style is a powerful form of “*non-verbal communication*”. Style has been used to strengthen group and national identity in which a visually cohesive built environment was believed to denote a

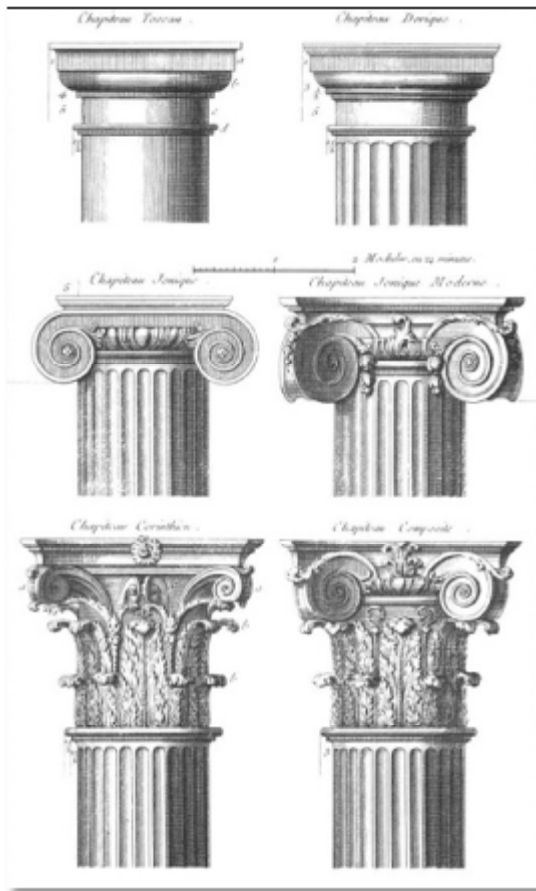
cohesive society. Alternatively, visual diversity signified social diversity. Ronald Lewcock states that, “Style must involve a transformation that fixes an original confrontation of man with nature” (Ganis & Holden: 1996: 8-9 &37).

The Parliamentary complex, Sri Lanka, 1971 by Geoffrey Bawa appears to float on a crescendo of terraces above the lake (Plate16). The Sri Lankan Parliament is a synthesis of vernacular traditions with modern sensibility synonymous with Bawa. There are references to classical precedents, traditional Sri Lankan monastic architecture and Kandyan temples with the gridded rationality of contemporary architecture. Bawa’s aim was to create a sense of accessible democracy, cultural harmony, continuity and progress however the intended image is compromised by the security cordon around the complex. Like many parliamentary buildings, the chambers are at the heart of the parliament complex (Sudjic, 2001: 56 &57).



Plate 16: Parliamentary Complex, Sri Lanka (Sudjic, 2001: 56)

Regional architecture has a distinct identity associated with an identifiable group or used to manipulate that group’s identity. Regionalist architecture aids in the construction of group identity. According to Tzonis and Lefaivre; “Regionalist architecture incorporates regional elements in order to represent aspirations of liberation from a power perceived as alien and illegitimate”. Such a concept has its roots as far back as in ancient Greece. The Greeks, as a form of political control and competition between their polies and colonies used certain architectural elements to represent the identity of a given group of people in a given region (Tzonis & Lefaivre, 2003: 10 & 13).



Doric, Ionic and Corinthian capitals (Fig. 6) are more than just abstract decorative motifs but are fused with political meaning and regional identities. The motifs have their origins in Greece. For example, the Doric style originated from Anatolia but was used by in the Greek colony of Marseille thus, denoting the Anatolian identity. Hence, the regional design motifs represent the identity of the region of origin rather than that of their current users (Tzonis & Lefaivre, 2003: 11).

Fig. 6: Greek classical orders
(www.kamp-koren.si, 2011/08/12)

Regional architecture in a political context is associated with the construction of group identity and is more a process of emancipation rather than of power or control. Vitruvius argues that Roman temperate architecture can be universally applied since it is more balanced, reflective of a stable environment characteristic of the region they inhabit. However, such a statement is contradictory to the very essence of critical regionalism which is a retort against universal trends in favour of local influence and response (Tzonis & Lefaivre, 2003: 11).

Roman classical architecture, responding to both the regional and local influences, is considered the first political architecture associated with an emancipation movement. Niccolò de Crescenzi, leader of the ‘regionalist’ popular republican party in the mid-twelfth century Rome led the struggle for the emancipation of Rome from the papal regime. He used architecture as a means of manifesting his political stance. He erected the Casa de Crescenzi (Plate 17), a brick tower near



Ponte Rotto to which he incorporated classical Roman elements to the façade, the most prominent a feature reminiscent of the Roman colonnades. Therefore becoming a patriotic and meaning of regionalist architecture as a political statement, a campaign for the freedom of Rome (Tzonis &Lefaivre, 2003: 12).

Plate 17: Casa de Crescenzi, Rome
(www.clas.ufl.edu, 2011/07/27)

An important aspect in the construction of communities together with social or economic factors is that mentioned by Arkoun, the political dimension. Correa asserts by saying that signs and symbols are not just the result of cultural, religious or traditional system but also socio-political systems. Place-making and aesthetics are largely dependent on the decisions of political leaders, not necessarily the political regime but the political processes which impact on the daily lives of man. For example, the leaders can consciously decide either to preserve the old or impose the new on the built environment despite the disapproval or lack of consent from the masses either to create a new or strengthen an existing regional or national identity or even to express power and an image of modernity. Arguably, the constraints employed by the government are stronger than ecological constraints. In the words of Arkoun, “Ecological constraints inspire creativity, while political constraints eliminate creativity”. Serageldin claims that architects and engineers in the service of the government become desensitized to the needs and aspirations of the people whereby a prototype is draughted and applied on various sites with little consideration or

awareness of the identities of the different region. And generally, government institutions are dominated by Western models and motifs (Katz, 1980: 99-100). However, the role of architects and designers is to create architecture and built environments in which the society can identify with and identify as its own by creating a specific identity through careful selection, interpretation and creation of appropriate forms and spaces. More importantly, the forms and spaces should encourage a non-verbal sense of belonging (Katz, 1980: viii & ix). Ruskin says that architecture reinforces a sense of unity by creating works people can identify with thus improving and celebrating the sense of community through drawing influence from the culture and region in which it is built (Ganis & Holden: 1996: 37).

The connection between emancipation and identity could be first seen in the picturesque movement in England but more vividly in Germany, giving rise to Romantic Regionalism, using materials and details that evoke an awareness of the past. The aim is to create an architecture which is identifiable with the region and its historical context making it a source of pride for the people. Early eighteenth century, Romantic Regionalism placed emphasis on the pursuit of political goals of emancipation of a suppressed group as well as on the characteristics of the group in relation to time, having shared ancestors and origins, using memory and artefacts to “maintain the identity of a group, its ethnos, its right of existence and the autonomy of the nation”.

Romantic regionalism was a political tool, creating the image of regional unity and identity



however, in the service of politics it had little connection to ethnic emancipation but aimed at advancing national dictatorships as in the case of Seville Palace (Plate 18) or was used mostly by totalitarian and chauvinistic regimes as a form of political populist propaganda (Tzonis & Lefaivre, 2003: 10-11 & 16).

Plate 18: Seville Royal Palace (www.travelpod.com, 2011/08/25)

Goethe states that Romantic Regionalism forces a dialogue between the viewer and the building and between man and the material fabric of the built environment. What then follows is “a sense of emotional familiarization, an awareness of the past, the region and past community”, thus familiarizing the spectator with the past as if they were living in those times. Ultimately, the viewer becomes aware of their identity divorced from outside influence. Therefore, the past and present become design generators, where the old and the new speak the same language. Although restoration is a method used to evoke memories of the past, Ruskin favours conservation as opposed to in arguing that the former “erases the skin which together with the traces of dirt, carried the human touch of the people that lived next to it or passed along it before” (Tzonis & Lefaivre, 2003: 10-11 &15-16).

In authoritarian societies, the expression of individual identities was stifled by legislation resulting in regional style being used as a repressive tool (Ganis & Holden: 1996: 10). Similarly, individuality in traditional cultures was not encouraged in favour of community life based on gender, age and other social hierarchies. But in the late Middle Ages, individuality and the concept of the single human life became a widely practiced and accepted way of life. However, the early twentieth century saw the return of the community, placing emphasis on the collective identity of the group. Identity defines the individual or group both socially and psychologically. “They involve permanence and unity of a subject or of an object through time” thus, allowing all identities the ability to be recognized by others (Guibernau, 2007:9-10).

Nationalism according to Ernst Gellner; is a theory of political legitimacy which holds that the political and national unit should be congruent. He says that the construct of national identity is reliant on national continuity. Lawrence Vale on the other hand states that; national identity is not a natural attribute that preceded statehood but a process that must be cultivated for a long time after a regime has gained political power (Sudjic, 2001: 42-43).

National identity as defined by Guibernau is “the collective sentiment of belief of belonging to the same nation and sharing most of the attributes that make it distinct from others” or alternatively, a political institution ruling over its citizens. It is aimed at constructing and strengthening its own identity. This belief is founded on a common culture, history, language,

territory and collective memory. The concept of national identity is employed to either to form a community, share common culture, occupy certain territory or to share common history and future aspirations (Guibernau, 2007:7 & 11).

National identity is founded on five key principles; psychological, cultural, territorial, historical and political dimensions. The psychological dimension stems from the 'sense' of closeness amongst the members of a group. The cultural dimension is based on shared values, beliefs, customs and language passed down from one generation to the next. Sharing the same culture promotes a sense of unity amongst the members of a specific community by acknowledging the individual as part of the whole.

The historical dimension looks towards past events to celebrate the strength and resilience of the nation to survive the test of time where others have not. Nations commemorate both events triumphs and moments of despair. For example Greeks are proud of their classic legacy (art, architecture and philosophy), being the founders of democracy and the Olympic Games. On the other hand, the Jews commemorate through the use of collective and selective memory certain dates and sites of concentration camps where millions lost their lives during the holocaust. History not only connects members of a community but also connects them to their roots and ancestors. The sense of continuity with the past and future reinforces the sense of unity and community.

The territorial dimension is defined by the boundaries of a specific territory in which the members of a community live, work and practice other social duties therefore, their subsequent contribution to its identity. The shared identity is shaped by the landscape (topographic and climatic constraints, the history linked to the site, important landmarks which evoke memory and define the unique character of the place- the *Genius Loci*). The landscape is seen to be layer upon layer of the tradition, history and culture of a nation with shared ancestry and heritage thus giving rise to a powerful connection between the people and the place. These attributes or the combination thereof contribute to an image of uniqueness and evoke a strong sense of national belonging.

Lastly, the political dimension, an aspect pertinent to this research is aimed at “the cultural and linguistic homogenization of an otherwise diverse population”. This is when the state imposes the dominant culture and language on the masses in an effort to create a single nation with one identity. National identity in the political arena refers to government strategies designed to create a cohesive society with a singular culture and language therefore, a collective national identity (Guibernau, 2007: 13-25& 29). Freschi states that; “the construction of great national buildings has always been closely allied to the construction of national identity” (Freschi 2006: 155).

Perhaps, the best example of the topographical dimension as a tool to solidify national identity is the annual assemble for the Norse Vikings met and still meets at the site of Tynwald Hill. Similar to the concept of an open-air assembly Icelandic *Althingi*: a Law Hill enclosed and surrounded by green, with a pathway on the east to a Court House and a place of worship, St John’s Church (Plate19). The twelve foot high man-made mound covered in turf is believed to contain the same soil of the seventeen ancient parishes of the Isle of Man, thus a national symbol was created on a site significant to the place and the people (Sudjic, 2001: 46).



Plate19: Tynwald Ceremony, Tynwald Hill, Isle of Man (Sudjic, 2001: 46)

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

- establish a set of symbols and rituals to enforce the feeling of community among its citizens;
- create a set of rules and regulations whether civil, legal, political or socio-economic affording a sense of security to its members and encouraging national sentiment and loyalty to the state;
- establish external threats that could threaten the community therefore, encouraging citizens to unite against a common enemy or to;
- create of national education and media systems to advance national heritage and image through the promotion of symbols, rituals, values, principles the particular community holds dear(Guibernau, 2007: 25).

Globalization and the realization of democracy have however threatened the manifestation of national identity where nation-states have either opted to declare themselves as democratic or conceal non-democratic structures and policies, although the latter is harder to achieve. Failure to do so has resulted in the breakdown on social cohesion and often resulted in devolution in various parts of the world as was the case in Spain, following the Francoist regime. Democracy forces countries to acknowledge the different culture that exist within the nation-states.

Therefore, in the construction of national identity, the state should be sensitive to the ethnic diversity and the rights of the minority where multicultural, not neutral communities are created. Globalization poses challenges to the cultural and linguistic homogenization synonymous with the creation of national identity imposed on the masses (Guibernau, 2007: 27-28).

National identity, due to globalization, immigration and devolution, has made nations more tolerant and accepting of foreign influences however, managing to stay true to their roots. In the globalised world, nations are founded on the promotion and preservation of its own culture, language and traditions while respecting the cultural and ethnic diversity of its citizens (Guibernau, 2007: 61).

Similarly, Vale argues that any work that claims to be purely international where international is often confused with universal is somewhat an active denial of local influence. However the work is a joint product of local construction, climate and culture which dictate the image and meaning

of the work even in a seemingly global context. Vale theorises that; “A work that is in every respect international is a logical impossibility to design because no building actually constructed can avoid being a product of its place and producers” (Vale, 1992: 273).

Hence, Vale’s statement draws similarities to the ‘Theory of Place’ and ‘Critical Regionalism’ which both stress that since each place is unique hence the building will be a reflection of such characteristics and identity.

Jamieson states that internationalism or globalism has trivialized factors that have an effect on identity linked to region and tradition thus leaving commercialized works devoid of ‘symbolic integrity’. Since people generally love old things, old cities, buildings and artefacts, the authentic has been replaced by the artificial thus leading to built environments lacking ‘a sense of symbolic meaning’ (Ganis & Holden: 1996: 46-48). However, the mere preservation of the old, as previously highlighted by Grabar, is simply preserving a meaningless past (Katz, 1980: 2).

The Budapest Parliament, Hungary built in 1906 is a reflection of the underlying issues of Hungary within the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The Hungarian Parliament was built as a powerful architectural interpretation of the state and national identity of Hungary at the time. Designer, Imre Steindl states his intention for the parliament was not to create a new architectural style for the parliament because for such a monumental building ephemeral details simply would not suffice. With Steindl’s understanding of the relationship between architecture and the nation, the national and unique spirit to this medieval style building is carefully and modestly expressed.

The parliamentary building is an eclectic mix of the old and new, Gothic inspired detailing with nationally specific references such as the stone carvings based on Hungarian plant motifs. Additionally, majority of the building employed the Hungarian craft techniques and materials to strengthen national identity and tug at the heart strings of its citizens increasing national sentiment.



The exterior is also reminiscent of the Palace of Westminster (Plate 20), both in composition and the manner in which it addresses the waterfront (Sudjic, 2001: 52).

Plate 20: Budapest Parliament, Hungary (Sudjic, 2001: 53)

Another example is the collaboration of Delhi architects in their attempt to create and reinforce an identity unique to Delhi. Raj Rewal has managed to create a sense of place through the use of local materials, the red and white stone that clad the building and the proportion system of architectural forms, reminiscent of some of the great works of Islamic Architecture in Delhi and Agra (Plate 21 & 22). His work however, is by no means replicas of past examples but a reinterpretation of historical forms in modern way for a modern setting. The architecture, though a composition of modern construction, materials and spaces, does reflect an identity unique to Delhi (Ganis & Holden: 1996: 38).



Plate 21: Central Institute of Educational Technology, New Delhi (www.rajrewal.org, 2011/08/24)



Plate 22: National Institute of Immunology, New Delhi (www.biotechnika.org, 2011/08/24)

3.5 CONCLUSION

Identity is so much more than just race and ethnicity; it is the setoff characteristics and attributes which differentiate one thing from the next whereas national identity is aimed at cultural and linguistic homogenisation and a sense of community and continuity.

In ancient societies, political myth and religious myth were interrelated since politics and religion were regarded almost equal. However, in contemporary societies, politics have become more rational and bureaucratic hence, the role of myths and symbols has become secondary to identity politics and nationalism. Symbols are an important part of architecture although meaning is subject to the context and the observer and their experience and past associations with the sign or symbol.

CHAPTER FOUR
INFLUENCE OF POLITICS ON THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

CHAPTER 4 INFLUENCE OF POLITICS ON THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The Greeks have long been a democratic society and their political stance is reflected in the built environment and architecture. South Africa on the other hand is a nation of recent democratic political systems. In many countries, classical elements have been used in government buildings to represent symbols of political emancipation and equality. However, are these elements and principles appropriate for the South African context?

4.2 PLACE AND MEMORY

The words 'tradition' and 'regionalism' often go hand in hand and denote both a sense of place and the past and a sense of meaning where things of the past are thought to contain certain values therefore we look to the past and patterns or habits of place to validate the present. "Our architecture has become, since it does, as the idea goes, reflect its time". Architecture is a reflection of a community's collective view of itself and the world, and 'newly accepted values' and 'collective memory' (Ganis & Holden: 1996: 32& 46).

Proust describes idea of the building as a vehicle for memory, encapsulating the past in them in the present. In a society that has identifiable regions and social structures to identify with, an awareness of the past or the seeming revival of it becomes important (Tzonis & Lefaivre, 2003: 17). "The collective memory of a place consists of people's shared values that persist over time, usually at a subconscious level. It forms the basis of a community's identity and distinctiveness." (Ganis & Holden: 1996: 31)

The Greek concept of the *topos* stresses the connection between the rhetoric and place, placing emphasis on memory. Rhetoric uses memory as a method for commemorating place, ensuring the presence of the past in the present thus creating a sense of continuity. This was a result not of political power but rather the joint effort of architects and urban designers to create not just architecture but communities, a trait unique to the Greek 'spirit' (Ganis & Holden: 1996: 37).

Katz states that; “The ability to memorize and to remember past experiences has been the basis for the development and survival of society.” (Katz, 1980: 16)

Places of memory were traditionally created to glorify the past of a nation but more recently to forget. Therefore, the creation new social spaces on past sites redefine the place now determined by social hopes and dreams for the future. The landscape is ultimately a lattice of layer upon layer of memories and representations of the past together with the contemporary. Till affirms that the built environment is a time-space formation where the past and present are interwoven and organised to create a rich urban fabric. He continues to say that places are not continually under interpretation but are haunted by structures and the presence of past meaning. Therefore, places of memory narrate national pasts and future aspirations through space and time as he believes that places without a history, are empty. According to Walter Benjamin; memory is not simply the recollection of historical ‘facts’ and stories being told in the present but an act of contextualized self-reflection on the past through place (Till, 2005: 10-11).

Germany is perhaps one of the exemplary nations of place-making that evokes memory in an attempt at reconciliation. Although it has undergone major reconstruction and renovation since the 1990s, the post-unification of the urban landscape however, still displays clues of the undesirable past (Till, 2005: 6).

Currently, the city of Berlin is marketed as a heritage and cultural site, preserving artifacts and ruins of historical significance through the creation of museums and memorials that at times arouse the still sensitive history of the former unstable social and political landscape of the Nazi regime. And although, new developments such as the Jewish Museum by Daniel Libeskind and the Memorial to the Murdered Jews by Peter Eisenman are an effort at establishing a positive image post National Socialism, they continue to awaken of the past. In conclusion, such commemorative initiatives evoke conflicting social desires- to mourn and commemorate, “to remember and to forget the national past that still lingers in the present (Till, 2005: 7-8).



The Jewish Museum (Plate 23) in Berlin, Germany, according to Daniel Libeskind, “exhibits the social, political and cultural history of the Jews in Germany from the 4th century to the present”. (www.daniel-libeskind.com, 2011/08/26)

Therefore, the question is then, which past should be remembered and which to be forgotten?

Plate 23: Jewish Museum, Berlin
(www.daniel-libeskind.com, 2011/08/26)

4.3 ARCHITECTURE IN A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY

Democracy is derived from *demokratia* (*demos*- the people or the citizenry and *kratos*- rule), therefore it is a government in which the people rule themselves, either directly as in the small city-states of ancient Greece or through elected representatives such as the members of Westminster. Pericles states that; political power became the property not of one man or the minority but of all citizens where each individual is interested not only in his own affairs but those of the state as well. The Ancient Greeks created an organized civilization based on the political ideal of liberty and equality among its citizens, as well as respect for the law and justice. These ideals have also shaped Western political thinking and the modern liberal notion that human beings are ‘individuals’ with ‘rights’ (Sudjic, 2001: 12).

The architectural image of democratic buildings ranges from utopian ideals of Chandigarh, Brasilia and Dacca to the restoration of historic buildings as is the case with the Reichstag. While the form ranges from the amphitheatres of classical civilisation of the Greeks and Roman to the outdoor Viking assemblies, the annual Icelandic *Althingi* and the Isles of Man Tynwald. Parliaments successful in their symbolic representation capture the ‘spirit’ of the people they intend to serve. Examples include the Gothic Palace of Westminster by Charles Barry and A.W.N. Pugin as well as the monumental dome of the US Capitol (Sudjic, 2001: 8).

The Pnyx in Athens (Fig. 7) was one of the earliest meeting places for the Athenian political assembly, a fitting location on the hillside, west of the Acropolis in Greece, responding to the natural landscape of the hillside site. Democracy founded during the classical period not only influenced the formation of later institutions, it also created an architectural precedent which has dominated both the style and form of present day parliament buildings (Sudjic, 2001: 12).



Fig. 7: Pnyx, Athens (Sudjic, 2001: 12)

A further instance of a democratic meeting place originates from the middle of the first century in Ireland. The outdoor Viking assemblies influenced the Scandinavian political tradition and national approach to parliamentary architecture, however the practical and symbolic meaning and value originated in Athens 2500 years ago (Sudjic, 2001: 12).

Iceland’s early Viking settlers established one of the earliest democratic society whose founding principles are used in modern Western parliamentary design. The Icelandic *Althingi* or the voting assembly met annually from about 930 uniting an entire country under a single legal system without a monarch. The *Althingi* continued to meet at *Pingvollr* (Plate24) until it was disbanded



Plate 24: Icelandic Viking Assembly Plains
Althingi, *Pingvollr* (Sudjic, 2001: 17)

in 1799 however; in 1843 a new *Althingi* was established due to a royal decree. Then in 1880-81, Danish architect Ferdinand Meldahl designed the present building to formally house the Icelandic *Althingi*. Built of hewn basalt and located in gardens acts a reminder of the open-air Viking assembly from which Iceland's democratic traditions originate (Sudjic, 2001: 17).

The US Capitol, originally designed by William Thornton is a neo-classical design admired by George Washington for “its grandeur, simplicity and convenience”. While Thomas Jefferson the then president wrote that the work when complete would be a durable and honourable monument

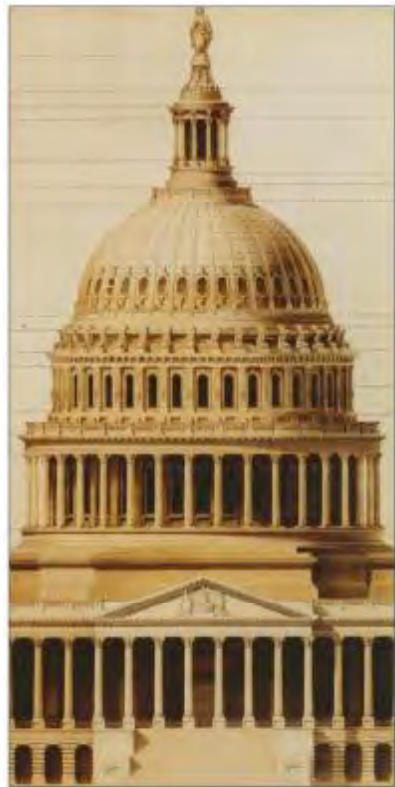


Plate 25: US Capitol, USA
(Sudjic, 2001: 29)

for the newly formed republic and will bear favourable comparison with ancient Greek and Roman republics (Plate 25). Similarly, Irish poet Thomas Moore draws comparison between Washington and Rome, describing Washington as the “second Rome”.

The US Capitol remains one of the most recognisable political icons in the world where the building is synonymous with the American government system. The classical design of the monumental is known as America's “Temple of Freedom”, a physical manifestation of the democratic aspirations of the people of America (Sudjic, 2001: 28).

On democracy, Bragdon stresses that it should not to be imposed on the built environment but it is to be realised in space and time in the built environment. It is not to be interpreted in terms of existing idioms and ancient forms whether classical or romantic but through the experience in which democracy manifested, thus determining and creating new forms. He continues to say that architecture should be the product not of self-assertive personalities but the product of the realisation of the *genius loci* of place, organizing the nation into a spiritual democracy (Bragdon, 1971: 40 &57). According to Bragdon, materialism and mass production is the very negation of democracy while shallowness is the nemesis of democracy; surface without depth where the underlying abstractions and symbolism is lost in the composition of concrete and steel (Bragdon, 1971: 32).

The Finnish Parliament reflects the self-conscious creation of a new independent nation, emerging from its past as an intermittent dependent of Sweden and more recently of Russia. While still a province of imperial Russia, Finland opted for a unicameral parliament. After the formal act of independence, the Finnish Parliament designed by Johan Sigfried Sirén in 1924 conveyed the spirit of the austere neo-classical influence being described a “monumental cube” with a “stern outline” by the judging board of the design competition. The monumental and



classical design with an imposing façade clad in Kalvola granite, dominated by fourteen columns crowned with Corinthian capitals (Plate 26) clearly reflects the influence and study of classical architecture of the architect. Further, the composition elevated on a stepped platform is strongly reminiscent of the monumentality of classical design.

Plate 26: Finnish Parliament, Finland

(www.dailytelegraph.com.au, 2011/08/12)

The building embodies both the political and architectural ambitions of several generations. The design at completion exhibited influence of the Modern Movement’s obsession with

functionalism together with the initial 1920's classical style. Sirén stressed the notion of designing the Parliament House as a forum of political power and not as an office block to house the Members of Parliament (Sudjic, 2001: 32).

Goodsell's take on democracy is that it promotes concepts independence and democratic rule and viewing the people as individuals rather than an undifferentiated mass thus establishing moral equality between the rulers and the ruled and treating the public as part of political debates rather than mere spectators. He does however question whether this seemingly positive trend towards democracy is in fact not just an insidious deception, something he has termed an "empty, hypocritical ritualism that only masks the powerlessness of the ordinary citizens" (Vale, 1992: 9).

In Greek and Roman societies, the city was an important in the political, religious and social life. It was viewed as "synonymous with civilisation in opposition to barbarity and chaos" to the point that Homer said that the uncivilised Cyclopes "had no assemblies for making laws and they had no sense of community beyond their immediate families"- qualities considered crucial for an orderly urban life. According to the Greeks, the city or *polis* was a community of citizens, sharing common political, religious and social beliefs and practises, placing emphasis on the people, although the physical composition of the city was also acknowledged (Owens, 1991: 1-2).

The fundamental difference between the Romans and the old Greek concept of the *polis* (Fig. 8) is that the Greeks stressed the importance of the city as a community while the Romans were more concerned with the material well-being of the citizens and the physical amenities of urban life through the empire. The need for security and natural defence was paramount in the location of new cities. But after the realisation of the *pax Romana*, the acropolis and arx (the Roman equivalent) continue to become symbol of the city's independence and refuge after the introduction of the city walls (Owens, 1991: 2).



Fig. 8: Plan Athens Akropolis, fifth century B.C. (Barringer, 2008: 64)

The creation of new towns can also be accredited to either colonisation or synoecism. Greek and Roman colonisation began in the Middle of the eighth century BC onwards. Greek-states sent out groups of permanent settlers who founded new towns, initially throughout the Mediterranean then later along the coast of the Black Sea. Similarly, the Romans expanded their colonies in Italy and later throughout the Mediterranean. Synoecism as defined by Owen is a political act in which a new town is artificially created or an existing city is increased in size due to the influx of the local population as in the case of Attica. The political union was of people and not the physical concentration in one place. However, the alternative method of synoecism is the creation of a new urban centre or the refurbishment of an existing one. An example of this is the synoecism of Messene and Megalopolis and the reconstruction of Mantinea by Thebes to act as a bulwark against Sparta (Owens, 1991: 7).

However, the process of colonisation and synoecism are not always mutually exclusive. In founding new colonies, the Greeks used to force out the existing native population. On the other hand, the Romans opted to incorporate the natives rather than driving them out into the new settlements. The colonising and establishment of new cities and towns were influenced by political, economic and strategic factors. Greek and Roman towns were located on the basis of trade, to take advantage of the agricultural or natural resources and even for military reasons. Alternatively, existing towns were moved to new locations according to changing geographical or economic factors. Examples include Priene, Knidos and Astypalaia on Cos in the fourth century CB. The *pax Romana* also enabled cities to move from their defensive to more accessible

locations. Following the battle of Issus, Alexander the Great celebrated his victory by creating a new town, Nicopolis. The concept of a 'victory' city set a precedent for his successors as well as Roman generals and emperors. According to Owens, "The city became a symbol of power and prestige, reflecting and enhancing both the regime and the individuals who built it (Owens, 1991: 8).

Stormont House in Ireland now known as the National Assembly is a new parliament building with a Greek revival style which according to *The Builder* magazine affords the building a "dignity associated with Parliament". The Palladian architecture favoured by the architect Arnold Thornly creates a monumental image for Stormont (Plate 27). However, there is a lack of either Irish or British symbolism in the interior detailing which bear classical Greek motifs. The site is



also significant with the history of the place deemed central to the political heart of Northern Ireland. Ultimately, the building fulfils its intended purpose as the centre of political power in Ulster (Sudjic, 2001: 26-27).

Plate 27: Stormont, Ireland (Sudjic, 2001: 27)

The siting of the Parliament House (Plate 28) (formerly the Council House) in New Delhi is a reflection of the political development where the seat of the British India's government was moved from Calcutta to the new imperial capital of New Delhi in the early twentieth century as an attempt to make British Rule appear more closely identified with Indian traditions. Since Calcutta was the product of European colonisation, the relocation to New Delhi was more appropriate as both a former Moghul city as well as one of the oldest urban centres of India.



Plate 28: Parliament House, New Delhi (Sudjic, 2001: 31)

Conceptually the aim of Sir Herbert Baker for the Parliament House was to build according to the great elemental qualities and traditions of classical Greek and Roman architecture while incorporating structural features of the architecture of India to express the myths, symbols and history of its people. The intention was to create a 'pure' classical structure however synthesis of Western and Indian architectural motifs was favoured together with the use of indigenous materials and Indian labour as an attempt to increase national identity and national sentiment. The circular colosseum-like form was however criticised by Sir William Marris, Home Secretary in the Government of India for not representing parliamentary principles and unaffectionately nicknamed the 'bullring' and compared to a gasometer (Sudjic, 2001: 30).

Alternatively, a rectangular plan was proposed, however, was decided against as it might encourage a two party government and creates divisions along the lines of religion between Hindus and Muslims. Currently, the House of Parliament is divided into two semi-circular chambers, each housing the *Lok Sabha* (House of the People) and the *Rajya Sabha* (Council of the States) respectively (Sudjic, 2001: 31).

In the pursuit of democratic architecture, the best expressions stems from the consideration of the people as he is a part of it and it of him and ultimately both the problem and the solution as in the

words of Winston Churchill; “We shape our buildings and afterwards our buildings shape us”. Hence government practises are influenced by the buildings in which they are housed and vice versa (Bragdon, 1971: 152). Sudjic further states that; “Parliament buildings reflect the way countries see themselves, or more accurately, they are the three-dimensional realization of how countries would like themselves to be seen”. (Sudjic, 2001: 8)

Architecture in the political arena such as parliamentary buildings is (or should be) the physical manifestation of a nation’s aspirations, the values of democracy and nationhood, and a reflection of the political ideologies. The architectural image portrayed by parliaments is a reflection of national tradition and democratic aspirations. The outer structure and inner spaces of forums both present and ancient are the embodiment of the ‘voice’ of democracy and a platform for it (Sudjic, 2001: 8 & 9).

Recent writings on architecture and urban design agree that all buildings are products of social and cultural circumstances. However, as Vale points out, the power and identity embedded in the design of national parliament buildings and the districts which surround them in various capital cities around the world are not always a response to such circumstances. He states that grand symbolic state buildings need to be understood in terms of the political and cultural contexts that helped to bring them into being. The postcolonial complex is arguably the best building typology to explore these issues as it is an act to design and express the power and identity of both the government client and the designer (Vale, 1992: 3). Mark Swilling (1991, x) argues that cities are a product of the ever-changing and sometimes unpredictable socio-political and economic factors. However, the change can be divorced from the change from one urban regime to the next. Such change manifests itself on three basic forms; industrial times, urban space and political citizens.

The South African landscape is a reflection of the masterminds who brought it into being post colonisation and following the Apartheid system of governance. In South in the 1980s, following the 1976 uprising, South Africa underwent reorganisation and restructuring. Urban reconstruction resulted in new urban pacts based on a post-apartheid articulation of time, space and citizens.

Urban apartheid was a direct realisation of the articulation between industrial time, urban space and political citizens. The organisation of industrial time was supported by the racially motivated spatial structure of the apartheid city, enforced by urban regulations such as influx control and the Group Areas Act. The division placed 'migrants' in rural areas linked to the city by hostels while the 'urban insiders' rented 'matchbox' houses and granted formal temporary status. This urban system gave rise to formal disenfranchisement of the black majority from the 'nation-state'. As a result, the 'nation-state', dependent on urban apartheid was solely for the benefit of those who favoured such an urban system. Hence white citizens were the only citizens qualified for full political, industrial and urban citizenship (Swilling, 1991: xi).

The apartheid system affected the whole urban system. It was based on policies aimed at decentralising and deconcentrating employment on both a macro and micro scale by dividing the city into residential areas along racial lines and similarly, the town and the countryside. The Land Acts and the Group Areas Act have regulated land use on both the macro and micro level. In terms of the housing system, the subsidized market met the housing needs of the white population while the state delivery system met only some of the basic shelter needs of the black population. However, very little housing was provided for the urban blacks since the state was not providing mass housing, therefore the market could not cater for the housing needs of the urban poor in the development of shack settlements (or scatter camps) on the urban periphery. The apartheid concept of citizenship gave rise to a popular societal reaction towards the concept of democracy that defined South Africa's citizens as having equal rights in the workplace, the city and polity (Swilling, 1991: xv-xvi).

4.4 CVIC SPACES AS EXTENSION OF ARCHITECTURE

"Quality urban spaces in front of, around and between public buildings are essential. Ultimately, this is where the public interacts with architecture" (Archi-technology, 2009: 12). According to Jeremy Rose of Mashabane Rose Associates (MRA) Architects and Urban Designers, "Public Architecture and spaces should really be about improving the city; healing the fragment urban environment, making cities more comfortable for people to use". Rose continues by saying: "It can be argued that the public space where the building sits is more important than the building

itself'. The public places in front of public buildings are immediately accessible to all users. Therefore public architecture is not only a concept to be addressed by architects but landscape architects alike. A successful landscape design ensures that the people served by the building are given 'a place to be' (Archi-technology, 2009: 9).

Civic outdoor spaces constitute part of the public realm where pedestrian movement is compatible with the notion of the street as a 'social space (Plate 29) (Carmona, 2003: 67). A 'public space' or public realm functions as a either a forum for political action and representation, a neutral or common ground for social interaction, intermingling and communication, or as a stage for social learning, personal developments and information



exchange. The public realm has a physical (space) and social (activity) component. The physical spaces and settings facilitate and encourage public life and social interaction. Social spaces should provide opportunity for interaction and exchange making the developments facing onto these spaces more 'socially active (Carmona, 2003: 109).

Plate 29: 'Street' as extension of 'social life'

(Carmona, 2003: 112)

Open spaces should be integrated and part of the urban design vision of place even as the key focus for public life (Carmona, 2003: 189).

In order to design successful public spaces, it is essential to understand movement especially that of pedestrians. The connection between places is important to pedestrians this why successful public spaces are generally integrated with local movement systems (Carmona, 2003: 169).

Alexander believes that a public space without 'middle' is likely to stay empty therefore something should (fountain, statue) stand in the middle where natural paths cross the public space (Carmona, 2003: 173).



Plate 30: Piazza San Marco, Venice
(Carmona, 2003: 160)

Civic outdoor spaces can include both ‘hard’ pavements (brick, stone, cobbles, concrete) and ‘soft’ landscaped (planting and vegetation) areas. Floorscapes add scale both human and generic; modulate the spaces by organising it into a series of hierarchical elements, reinforcing existing character or aesthetically organising and unifying it. Floorscape patterns visually break down the scale of large, hard surfaces into more manageable, human proportions. They can also be used to manipulate the size of the space. The addition of detail and modulation tends to make big spaces seem smaller while give a sense of adornment to simple spaces.

In Piazza San Marco (Plate 30), Venice, the scale of the space is modulated and humanized by a simple grid of white travertine and black basalt. The hard landscaping patterns can give a space a sense of scale, unifying the space by linking and relating the centre and edges and acts as an ordering element for the surrounding buildings. For example parallel lines along the length of the street reinforces the sense of movement and direction alternatively non-linear paving tends to slow the visual pace and reinforces qualities of place to stop and linger (Carmona, 2003: 160).

It is important to design spaces compatible to people’s socio-economic needs (Gold, 1980: 33-34). Public spaces need to satisfy basic human needs such as comfort, relaxation, passive engagement, active engagement with the environment and discovery (Carmona, 2003: 165).

4.5 CONCLUSION

The landscape is saturated with history hence, it is impossible to ignore the presence of memory in the present urban landscape. The built form and built environment, whether intentional or otherwise is an embodiment of the past. Therefore, places of memory narrate national pasts and future aspirations through space and time thus creating a sense of continuity within the urban fabric.

Even in democratic societies where nations are embracing democracy and emancipation from colonial rule, the omnipresence of the past needs to be acknowledged. Architecture and civic spaces successful in their symbolic representation capture the 'spirit' of the people, national aspirations and values of democracy and nationhood. Therefore, they are designed as a response to the socio-economic needs of the public although some are known to have been manipulated by governments to represent power.

CHAPTER FIVE
DEMOCRACY AND MEMORY

CHAPTER 5 DEMOCRACY AND MEMORY

5.1 INTRODUCTION

“Commemoration is about making present and giving memory to historic events that serve our present. Integration across scale, time, experience, culture, function and use in both the site and building design commemorates the passage of our past.” (Japha V & Japha D, 1998: 34)

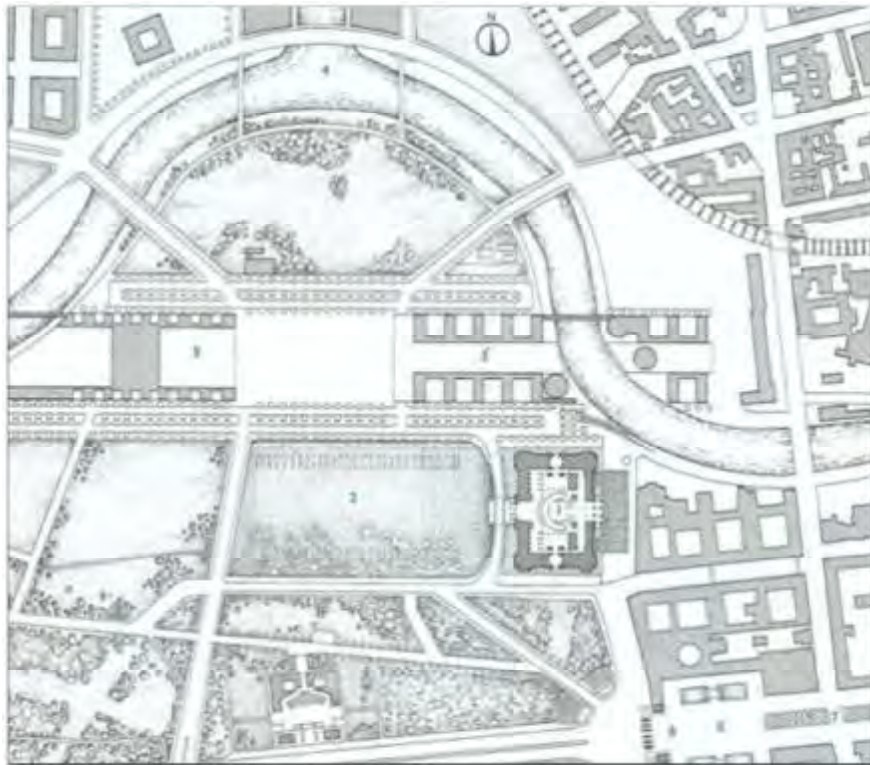
Memory is a powerful tool in ensuring that a country is celebrated and remains relevant in the present. The past is the foundation for the future whereas if a place denies its past, it is then founded on soil with no roots. Even in democratic societies, the presence of the history in the landscape cannot be ignored as it gives clues to the past way of life, way of thinking and the ancestors who roamed the land before. Therefore, there should be careful synthesis between the old and the new in any given built environment.

5.2 ARCHITECTURE AND MEMORY

Germany was divided into four military occupational zones; American, British, French and Soviet and after the World War II into West and East Germany by the Berlin wall. As a consequence, the historical background of the nation has had major implications on the social, political and physical landscape of the present society. (www.tulane.edu, 2011/08/). The landscape is an embodiment of the past - a city defined by the trauma of National Socialism and a future imagined where the architecture following National Socialist rule (or *vergangenheitsbewältigung*) tries to construct social memory and identity thus, ensuring people can confront issues of the past and promise for a better future (Till, 2005: 5).

After unification and the demolition of the Berlin Wall, Berlin became the capital of Germany and the new home for the Bundestag, the Reichstag. And, although Berlin is marketed as ‘new’ and democratic, it is still haunted by memories of the past and the image of the city is an expression of what Koshar terms an “unstable optic identity” (Till, 2005: 9).

The Reichstag is the new home for the Bundestag or national parliaments in the German capital of Berlin. The Reichstag was originally located on the other side of the eighteenth century customs wall which separated the Russian and Western territories and was isolated from the old city centre (Fig. 9). However, with the demolition of the Berlin Wall, the Reichstag was



suddenly in the centre of the city and political life of Berlin. Therefore, the parliament decided to move the Bundestag of the united nation from Bonn to Berlin and the Reichstag became, once again, the centre of political debate and the symbol of new found democracy (Architectural Review, 1999: 36).

Fig. 9: Site plan of Reichstag in context (Architectural Review, 1999: 36)

The once isolated and derelict Reichstag (Plate 31) was transformed into the “real focus of democratic political and national life” of Germany. The original Reichstag built in 1894 by Paul Wallot was neo-Renaissance structure reminiscent of the “heavy, aggressive burgeoning of the newly unified German state in the late nineteenth century”. The Reichstag, at the time of conception, was the symbol for liberation; as a result, it was despised by Kaiser Wilhelm because it was the symbol of democracy and a criticism of imperial power (Architectural Review, 1999: 34).



Plate 31: Paul Wallot's 1894 Neo-Renaissance building
(Russell, 1999: 103)

In 1933, the Reichstag was destroyed by a fire set by arsonists and bombed during the Second World War. Restorations were then done by Paul Baumgarten in the 1950s and 1960s prior to being 'rebuilt' in 1999 by Sir Norman Foster (RIBA, 1999: 25).

The Reichstag is now the new home for the German parliament, with renovations done by Sir Norman Foster (Plate 32). The parliament is a powerful symbol of democracy. More importantly; the Reichstag is highly practical as the new home for the German parliament. The



Plate 32: Reichstag with Berlin as a backdrop (Russell, 1999: 103)

presence of history undeniable and for many, the Reichstag is a reminder of the Kaisers, Nazism, the Second World War and a time when Berlin was divided by the wall (RIBA, 1999: 22 & 24).

The proposal by submitted by Sir Norman Foster addressed four key issues; symbolism, integrating the old and the new while respecting the old and the creation of a memorial and a new home for the German parliament. Foster, in the reconstruction of the Reichstag, focussed on 'light and lightness' with the use of materials both contrasting and complementary. Santiago Calatrava, the joint winner of the competition sought to create a new space for the representation of the people while equally respecting the original building which is to enclose the new structure (Architectural Design, 1995: 63).

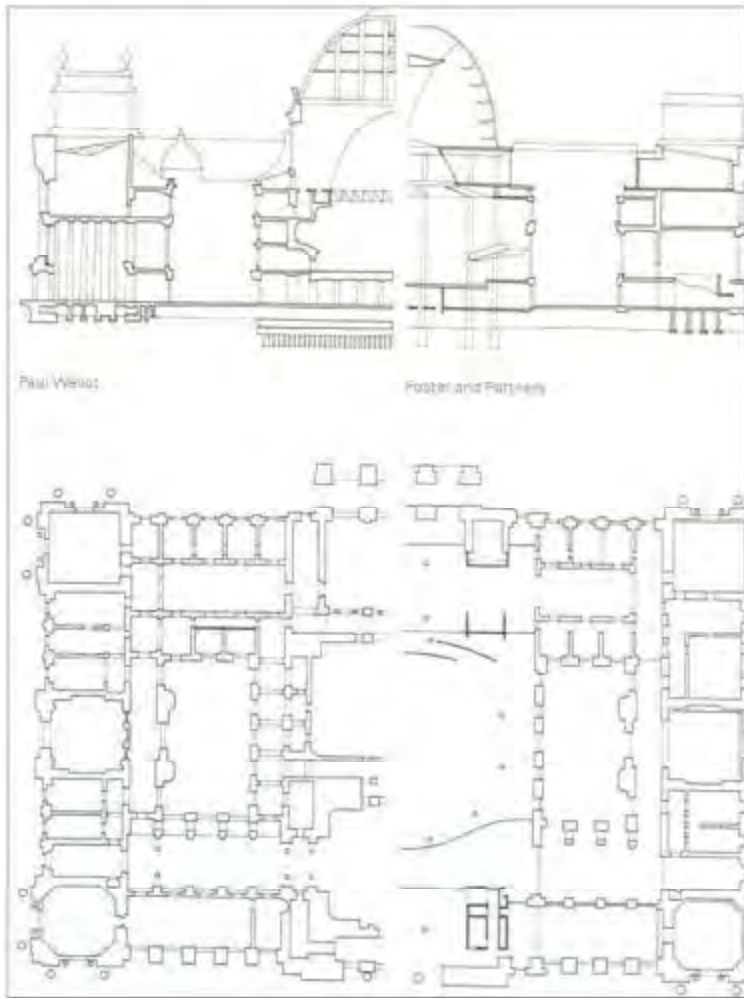


Fig. 10: Plan and section of Paul Wallot's design and Foster's alterations (Baumeister, 1999: 50)

The outer structure of Wallot's Reichstag was preserved as much as possible (Fig. 10), and stripped off all layers of ornamentation added during the 1960 alterations leaving the building 'bare' and revealing 'true' stone walled structure (RIBA, 1999: 25).

The Chamber is symbolically placed at the 'heart' of the building beneath the position of the old dome. However, the dome, which was purely aesthetic and had no relation to the interiors, was replaced by transparent hemispherical dome (Architectural Review, 1999: 34 & 40).

5.3 THE ROLE OF MEMORY IN A DEMOCRATIC LANDSCAPE

The new Reichstag proudly bears the scars of the past- a subtle synthesis of the old and new. Partly demolished walls of the old structure stand side by side with the newly plastered walls of the new structure. Even the graffiti of the Russian soldiers from 1945, though hateful has been preserved (Plate 33). The building is an embodiment of the country's bitter past and future aspirations (Architectural Review, 1999: 44).

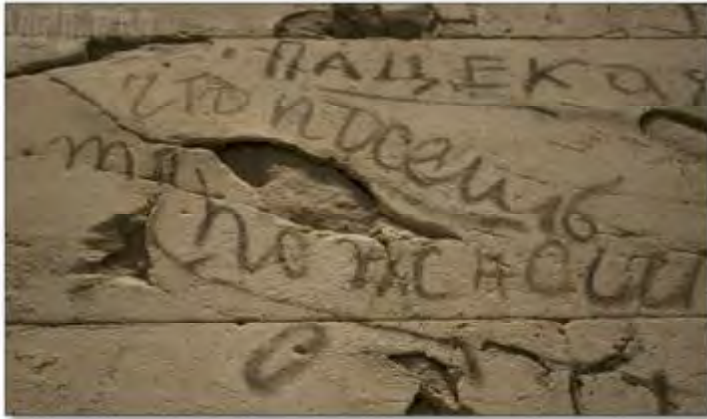


Plate 33: Demolished walls with graffiti of the Russian soldiers (www.riowang.blogspot.co.za)

Foster describes the reconstruction of the Reichstag as “a way of transforming a famous national monument, full of melancholy and stirring memories into an optimistic symbol both of the new Germany and the new Europe” (Sudjic, 2001: 108).

Foster believed the Reichstag needed a focal point to announce the building on the Berlin skyline, one that is symbolic as well as function, hence, the glass dome (RIBA, 1999: 25). The dome is a symbol and expression of the transparency of politics and accessibility of the government of West Germany post the Fascist regime (Russell, 1999: 108 & 111).

The new glass dome in Sir Norman Foster’s Reichstag is not only an innovative design solution but “an icon of Berlin’s rebirth as Germany’s capital”. The dome functions to allow light into the chamber below while the mirrored funnel (Plate 34) both reflects the light and extracts warm air (Fig. 11). The dome is the ultimate symbol; transparency, accessibility and openness (Baumeister, 1999: 48). Interlocking helical ramps along the perimeter of the dome allow citizens to look down at the proceedings below Foster refers to this as putting Germany’s Bundestag “under literal scrutiny by its electorates” (Russell, 1999: 103).

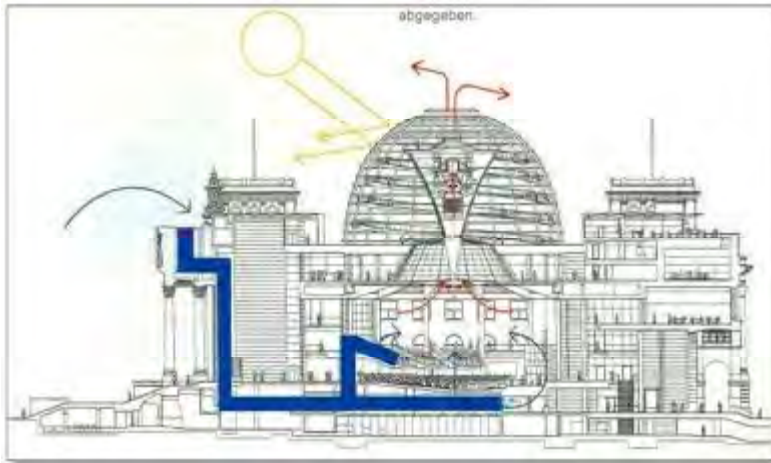


Fig. 11: Diagrammatic section showing the workings of the dome (Baumeister, 1999: 53)



Plate 34: Mirrored 'cone' hanging from the dome (Arch. Rev, 1999: 37)

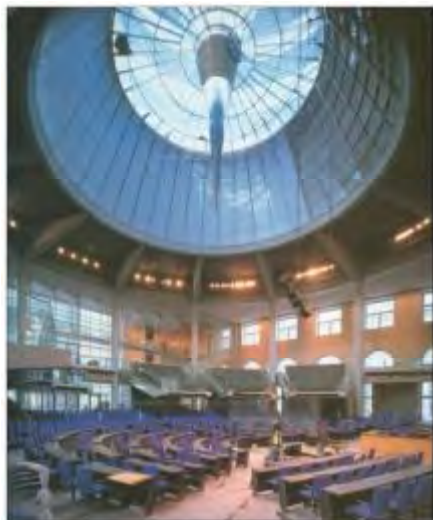


Plate 35: Chamber below the great dome (RIBA, 1999: 24)

An inverted cone hangs from the centre of the glass dome; a feature covered with mirrors which direct and diffuses the daylight into the chamber creating well-lit and airy interiors (Plate 35). The funnel also allows cool air down into the chamber then symbolically draws the air 'heated' by the politicians, out through the dome. Then, at night, the dome glows whenever the chamber is in session or when not; bright spotlights illuminate it and serve to remind the people of the presence and power of government (Architectural Review, 1999: 40 & 42).

Civic outdoor spaces are also well considered in the overall design. The front porch is designed as a social for both the public and the politicians while the great steps of Wallot's design are now used politicians and the general public alike ensuring civic pride and a sense of interaction between the electors and the elected (Architectural Review, 1999: 34 & 40). A civic plaza is also provided as a platform of expression for the public to voice their grievances (Russell, 1999: 113).

5.4 CONCLUSION

The Reichstag however is not without controversy. Critics argue that the tragic history embedded in the building is subjecting future generations to the guilt of past injustices while others view it as trivial attempt at an apology. These critics believe that individuals should no longer have to reflect on this part of the nation's history which continues to wake ghosts of the past (Russell, 1999: 113).

The new Reichstag is an innovative in its use of modern technology and materials to compliment the old and inject new life into a seemingly dead building. It is delicate balance of power and democracy, the past and the future hopes of the nation (RIBA, 1999: 27). In the words Foster, "the building has been lightened", to which he explains that this is not achieved simply by the addition of glass but by representing Germany as an open and transparent demnation. Foster sough to represent Germany's new vision of a democratic, peace-loving nation devoted to ecological design (Russell, 1999: 103 & 113).

The Reichstag is Germany's most important government building, a reminder of the country's tragic history as well as a positive image for the future (Russell, 1999: 103).

CHAPTER SIX
CIVIC ARCHITECTURE IN A DEMOCRATIC SETTING

CHAPTER 6 CIVIC ARCHITECTURE IN A DEMOCRATIC SETTING

6.1 INTRODUCTION

“As this country transforms its systems of governance, bold architectural expressions are needed to reflect new institutions and profound changes in our society and culture”
(Fernandes, 2004: 34).

The passing into law of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa in 1996 gave rise to the need for a building to house the Constitutional Courts. Hence an open design competition was launched by the Department of Public Works in 1997 in search of an "appropriate architectural expression to reflect this new democratic institution"(Peters, 2004: 2).

Constitutional Court is considered the first major building post-1994, an icon encompassing the hopes and values of a post-apartheid South Africa. The design expresses the values of the Constitution, a response to the social and political past of the nation (Architect & Builder, 2004: 28).The Constitutional Court (Plate 5.1) is probably the second most important political building in South Africa after the Union Buildings(JSAIA, 2004: 81) however; this Neo-classical building lacks an identity unique to South Africa.According to the judges, Constitution Court “has the potential to express a new architecture rooted in the South African landscape, both physically and culturally”(Peters, 2004: 3).

Constitution Hill was opened officially and inaugurated by the then President Thabo Mbeki on 21st March 2004, Human Rights Day (Peters, 2004: 3).

6.2 SYMBOLISM AND MEANING IN ARCHITECTURE

In 1996, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa was recognised as the highest authority in the country hence a decision was made to build a Court of Justice. The brief called for “a building that physically and experientially represents the values of our constitutional democracy without reverting back to any ethnic (or colonial) reference”. It also stipulated that Court of Justice should acknowledge the needs and social values of the local people, relate to physical and cultural or historical landscapes and respond to climate. The new Court is to represent “the transformation of an authoritarian system to a constitutional democracy” while the design sought to be a catalyst for the freestanding structures on the site (Le Roux & Du Toit, 2004: 64). Constitution Hill was to become a public space for the city and a symbolic place for a nation where the new Constitutional Court and Human Rights Commission sit in harmony with the historic prison buildings (Peters, 2004: 2).

Constitution Hill, often referred to as the Robben Island of Johannesburg is located on a site of the notorious Old Fort Prison complex in Johannesburg between Braamfontein and Hillbrow



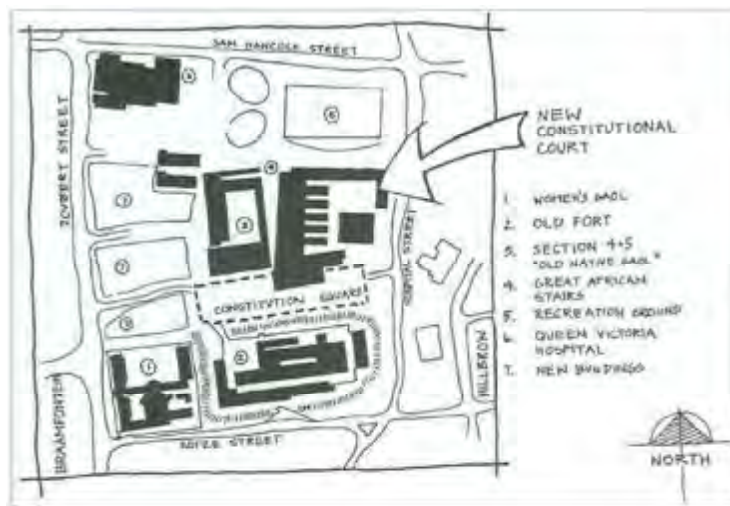
Fig. 12: Site plan of Constitutional Hill
(Giesen, 2002: 6)

(Fig. 12). It is part of the revitalisation derelict and unpopular area in Johannesburg into a vibrant heritage site and tourism hub. The precinct comprises of the old Fort, Section 4 and 5 (the notorious ‘Native Gaol’) and the Women’s Prison Constitution Hill, Constitution Hill, a prime location for a world-class heritage building (Giesen, 2002: 6). Although derelict and difficult to integrate into the city grid, it is however accessible, prominent and symbolic on its location on the hill (Le Roux & Du Toit, 2004: 64).

The site is highly symbolic, an embodiment of an important part of the country's history with the potential for urban regeneration. It is easily accessible and visually prominent (Japha V & Japha D, 1998: 26& 29). The site was formerly a military fort that was later converted to a prison. It is associated with a history of the confinement and suffering which took place during the apartheid years and in spite of this, the Constitutional Court aims to bring freedom to the site. The visual images around the site are mnemonic; aiding learning through evoking emotions and the memories of the place while representing a renewed commitment to peace and freedom (Giesen, 2002: 7).

Designed by architectural collective OMM Design Workshop and Urban Solutions, the building sought to address the important question of “what might constitute an appropriate public architecture for the New South African democracy?” - everything old South African courts are not (Du Toit, 2004: 38, 39).

Constitution Court is at the ‘heart’ of the precinct (Fig. 13) while Constitutional Hill sits at the ‘heart’ of Johannesburg (Du Toit, 2004: 38). Constitution Hill represents the South African Constitution in all its aspects, and the Constitutional Court is “an icon for the free republic” (Le Roux & Du Toit, 2004: 64). Similar to the Reichstag in Berlin, Constitutional Court is also a



symbol and juxtaposition of the old and the new, “a living monument to the atrocities and the fear of the past and the hope for the future”. The new building and function sought to bridge the gap between the “memories and ghost of the past” and hopes for the future (Giesen, 2002: 7).

Fig. 13: Diagram showing the Constitutional Court in context (KZNIA, 1/2004: 2)

The precinct is at the centre of the South Africa's major metropolis, Johannesburg which was historically the division between poor black township of Soweto and the rich white suburbs of the north. The Constitutional Court is placed at the convergence of human and physical environments, on the northern slope of Old Fort (Le Roux & Du Toit, 2004: 64). Constitutional



Plate 36: Glowing beacons as landmarks in Johannesburg skyline (DSSA, 2004/2005: 19)

Court represents a transparent and accessible public building, commemorating the historic as well as celebrating of the modern (Plate 36). The transparent and welcoming new building gives an image of an accessible justice. The extensive use of glass reinforces the idea of transparency and openness (Architect & Builder, 2004: 35).

Constitutional Court is the physical symbol of hope. It enshrines South Africa's Constitution and human rights and seeks to be a place where the Constitution is applied in every sense; where it is cherished, protected and nurtured (Giesen, 2002: 8). The Constitutional Court is a symbol of the accessibility and transparency of the new democratic nation, yet, still respects the presence of the past. It is a symbol of power without monumentality, a building representing an "open and



Plate 37: Entrance to the Constitutional Court (JSAIA, 2004: 9)

democratic society, expressing the dignity, freedom and the equality, echoing the words inscribed in the entrance to the foyer (Plate 37). The words 'human dignity, equality and freedom', in all eleven official languages in the handwritings of the Court Judges can be seen at the entrance of the building (Architect & Builder, 2004: 31-33).

The main feature of the Chamber is the gabion wall constructed from bricks from the demolished ATB, thus reinforcing the presence of the old in the new. The Awaiting Trial Block (Plate 38) on the south side was demolished to make way for the public square, a physical emancipation from the oppression it represented. Spatially, the seating in the Court Chamber has been arranged in



such a way that the Judge is seated on the same level as the other member, thus promoting a sense of equality amongst the members. In the Court Foyer, an elephant bone is a symbol of the memory of an elephant ensuring the country's bitter past will not be forgotten (Architect & Builder, 2004: 28 & 35).

Plate 38: Preserved Awaiting Trial Block in Constitution Square (JSAIA, 2004: 8)

The Constitution Square is the focal point of the site and the main 'entertainment hub' as well as the point of departure for many routes around the site. There is also the Parade Ground which is a large and flat area which can be used for large events or rented out for corporate functions (Giesen, 2002: 8, 9). It was crucial to create an inviting civic space at the centre of Constitution Hill, in front of the Constitutional Court. Urban design decisions ensure that the public are in constant dialogue with the building giving it prominence and providing passive surveillance and security from and for those both inside and out (DSSA, 2004/2005: 18). The square acts as an east-west thoroughfare intersected by a north-south walkway linking the court chamber in the south and the law library in the north overlooking basketball courts and soccer field. Access to entrance foyer and court chamber is also from the square (Du Toit, 2004: 38). The square is also a place for reflection- "It is here that the individual stories of all the people who have ever stayed here come together across social, cultural and time barriers." (Giesen, 2002: 9).

Literal and metaphorical paths have been strategically placed to ensure that the journey and experience of one does not interfere or distract another's. However, a single starting point has

been created to act as a form of orientation and a point of departure, a pivotal point for the whole site. Almost all the paths radiate from the Visitors' Centre. The Centre is a combination of both old and new buildings surrounded by outdoor spaces together with other related facilities (Giesen, 2002: 8).

The Great African steps (Plate 39) are a symbolic focal point linking the upper and lower



sections, prison, linking the old Native Prison to the new Constitutional Court. The primary function of the steps is act as an outdoor entertainment area and a natural meeting area and a preliminary waiting room for the Court and the Commissions. The stairs are also constructed from bricks from the old demolished (Giesen, 2002: 6& 9).

Plate 39: Great African steps linking the old Prison and the Court (Le Roux & Du Toit, 2004: 67)

6.3 EXPRESSION OF IDENTITY AND THE SPIRIT OF DEMOCRACY

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

Although, the Constitutional Court is admired for its attempt at national identity, there is however, conflict between the Western judicial system practised and the cultural tribal law from which the concept of ‘justice of tree’ stems from (JSAIA, 2004: 81).

Andrew Makin and Janine Masoiada point out that they designed the Constitutional Court with “a sense of heritage, the recognition that people aspire to a better future, and the optimistic view of a world free of oppression that nurture a dignified human spirit”(Makin & Masoiada, 2004: 9).

The emblem of the South African Constitutional Court is a tree (Plate 40), a concept prompted by a wood carving by Sandile Goje, depicting a tree as a place used for communal gatherings (DSSA, 2004/2005: 18). This is reminiscent of the age old African practice of setting disputes and other matters under a significant tree (Le Roux & Du Toit, 2004: 64).



Plate 40: Interiors of the foyer echo the concept of the tree (Le Roux & Du Toit, 2004: 67)



Plate 41: Interiors of the Court Chamber (Le Roux & Du Toit, 2004: 69)

The interiors have an indigenous African feel to them; the columns reminiscent of a tree, the cattle hide in the Court Chamber (Plate 41) and various pieces of art in the Court (Architect & Builder, 2004: 35). The chamber, a place where the values of society will be debated is placed at the 'heart' of the building. The library, the source of knowledge was treated with extreme importance only second after the chamber is located at the bottom of the slope, at the opposite end of the foyer and chamber, the library was designed as the tallest structure creating a 'glowing' beacon on the north, a beacon of knowledge opposite the chamber of wisdom on the south (DSSA, 2004/2005: 18-19). A simple palette of materials and modest details were employed while obvious symbolism was avoided (Planning, 1998: 8).



“The humanist architecture of the new Constitutional Court- and the incredible art collection (Plate 42) housed within it- is a triumphant reflection of our cultural diversity and profound societal changes”- Alexandra Fernandes. The art collection created to Albie Sachs gives the Court its identity as a ‘people’s place’ rather than a place reserved to the authorities and the law enforcers (Fernandes, 2004: 33).

Plate 42: Local art works
(Architect & Builder, 2004: 31)

6.4 CONCLUSION

"distinctly South African buildings would have to acknowledge local human needs and social values; respond to local climate and environmental factors; achieve excellence with limited means; and employ technology appropriately to make best use of local labour resources" by Jeffrey Radebe (Japha V & Japha D, 1998: 26).

The complex has been criticised for its modest scale, fragmented design and ‘domestic’ detailing, however, the fragmentation could be a symbol of South Africa’s fragmented past. The statement expressed by the critic in the JSAIA (2004) is that the building should be “salute to the future...not a memorial of the past” contrary to that expressed in the Reichstag, however, a building of this nature should honour the past whether favourable or not (JSAIA, 2004: 82).

The Constitutional Court is a very successful building in the post-Apartheid nation. The structure addresses issues of identity, transparency and democracy. The site is also important in that it is a place significant to the people of South Africa. The decision to place a democratic structure on a

site previously associated with the past ensures that the public do not disregard it yet simultaneously aspiring to a better future. The building is a response to the people, region and environmental factors to create a structure to represent a nation- national identity
Constitution Hill is a monument on the hill, a 'living museum' ensuring that the district's history is neither forgotten nor repeated (Giesen, 2002: 8). One of the judges, Ablie Sachs says, "...it symbolises the 'never-again' principle in our national life" (Fernandes, 2004: 33).

The new precinct aims to reconnect with the city and seeks to become the central meeting point for the divided city (Fernandes, 2004: 34). The urban design, on the other hand, sought to correct the fragmented planning of the apartheid city (Japha V & Japha D, 1998: 32). The greatest success of the development is the 'seamless' cohesion between the historic and the modern elements (Giesen, 2002: 8).

CHAPTER SEVEN
ANALYSIS OF CAPE TOWN CIVIC CENTRE

CHAPTER 7 ANALYSIS OF CAPE TOWN CIVIC CENTRE

Client: Cape Town Municipality

Architect: Hannes van der Merwe

City Engineer: J. G. Brand

Main Contractor: Murray & Stewart

Completed: 1979

Budget: R70 million

Alterations: Kruger Roos Architects and Urban Designers

Lucien Le Grange Architects and Urban Designers

ACG Architects and Urban Designers

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Cape Town Civic Centre, a R70 million project completed in 1979; twenty-one years after the architects gained the commission (Wale, 1979: 1).

The building is the largest office building in Cape Town and one of largest in South Africa. The Civic Centre fulfils three major functions; linking the old parts of the city to the Foreshore, bringing all the civic departments under one roof thus ensuring better management of the city's affairs and ensuring greater efficiency between the public and the municipal departments as well as the between one department and the next. It also promotes the rejuvenation of the part of the city that had become isolated from the rest of the CBD through the creation of a business, entertainment and commercial hub. The concept to link the old and new parts of the city arose from the city plan that is bisected by the railway lines and the freeways coming into the city from the suburbs. Further, fragmentation is seen in the appearance of the older buildings in the city centre in contrast with the new on the Foreshore. The architect's overall vision for the Civic Centre meant to design a building that sees Cape Town become one of the few cities which succeed in "marrying the old with new" (Lodge, 1979: 59). However, the main aim of the complex was to bring to all the departments scattered all over the city (Wale, 1979: 4).

7.2 JUSTIFICATION OF CASE STUDY

A civic centre is essentially a building which houses all the functions of local government, ensuring close interaction and easy communication between the various departments, thus promoting fast and efficient administration and service (Wale, 1979: 5).

“...no civic centre can be entirely satisfactory for a community unless its designers have knowledge of the population, principal activities, town-planning and surroundings of the town for which they are building” (Cotton, 1939: 13).

The state of the municipality in Cape Town is similar to that of Port Shepstone with its departments scattered not only in the city but some municipal offices in other parts of the south coast. Therefore, the Cape Town Civic Centre is a worthy precedent.

7.3 LOCATION

The city of Cape Town required a modern civic centre to both complement and contrast the old City hall built in 1905. The ‘new’ civic centre, initially intended to be built on the site adjacent to the old City Hall however, in 1954 the Foreshore Board opted for the ‘new’ Civic Centre to be built on the Foreshore (Lodge, 1979: 61).

The Cape Town Civic Centre is located on a rectangular site wedged between the East Boulevard and the deck of the Cape Town railway station; with no physical link between the isolated site and the other important civic functions- the Nico Malan Opera House and Theatre Centre (now Artscape Theatre), the Grand Parade and the main street, Heerengracht (Fig. 14). Thus the design of the complex sought to revitalise the links between the Civic Centre and these scattered functions, to become a unifying element for the urban fabric and the new ‘home’ for the various City Council departments(Wale, 1979: 4 & Lodge, 1979: 63).

The site overlooks one of the two major traffic arterials approaching the city, the Hertzog Boulevard, a six lane highway between the city and the southern suburbs. A major route used by

commuters coming into to the city daily (Lodge, 1979: 61).

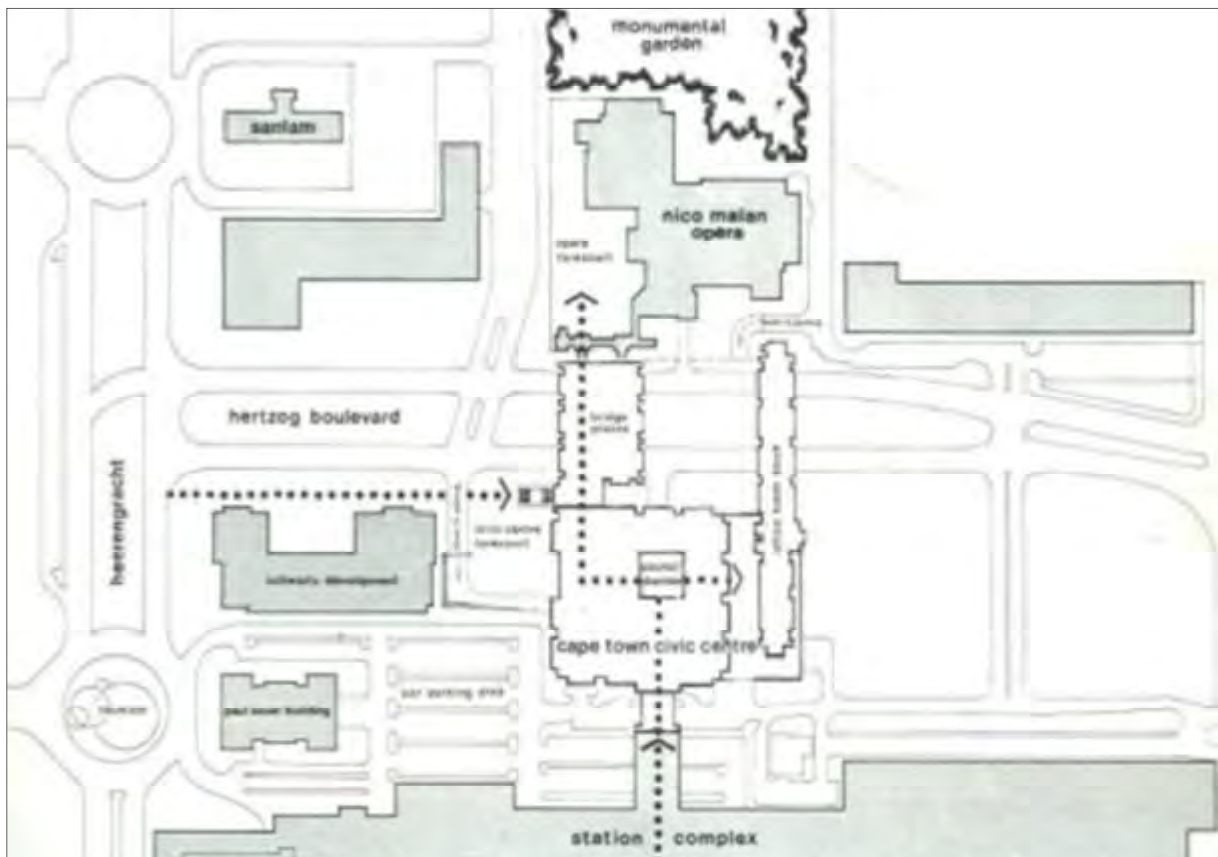


Fig. 14: Plan of Civic Centre showing the links to the Opera House, station and Heerengracht (Wale, 1979: 9)

7.4 HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL CONTEXT OF CASE STUDY

The Cape Town municipal administration outgrew its previous premises in the centrally located city hall, as a result, the different departments spread out along the peninsula. Hence, the Cape Town municipality commissioned a building to accommodate all the various departments under one roof (Wale, 1979: 5).

For many years, the various departments of the City Council were housed in different buildings around the city. As the city grew and more staff employed, there arose the need for more office space hence, the decision to build a new Civic Centre to concentrate the various departments and staff and more importantly, the departments that required close interaction could work together more efficiently to the benefit of the public (Lodge, 1979: 61).

7.5 EMPIRICAL DATA

The Civic Centre was designed at a period when most tourists arrived to Cape Town by sea. Therefore, as one of the key requirements of the brief the view of Table Mountain from the sea



was to be maintained (Wale, 1979: 2). As a result, the centre was strategically placed to cause minimal obstruction to this view- “the knife edge of the tower can hardly be seen” (Plate 43) against the backdrop of Table Mountain (Wale, 1979: 7 & 9).

Plate 43: View of the tower block from the sea with Table Mountain as a backdrop (Wale, 1979: 7)

The aim of the design was to link to the Civic Centre to the Opera House and its garden, the station platform and the city centre beyond (Plate 44), through the use the raised pedestrian piazza and the tower block which both straddle the main arterial leading to the city, the six lane traffic and the central island of the Hertzog Boulevard (Wale, 1979: 12). Hence, the centre was designed to overcome the fragmentation of the city resulting from the railway lines and freeway that divide the city (Wale, 1979: 2 & 12). Special consideration was paid to the new Cape Town train station on the south-west and the Nico Malan Opera House and Theatre to the south-east (Lodge, 1979: 61).

The site of the Civic Centre was conceptualised as the “Gateway to Africa”, a monumental approach to the Mother City, an ideal location for the seat of the local government. However, the concept was not realised since the site was allocated to the Opera House. The adjacent site to the south-east was reserved for future extension to include a concert however, the concert hall was never built instead a pedestrian arcade was created to link the Civic Centre and the Opera House (Lodge, 1979: 61). Therefore, in the design of the new Civic Centre, an underground parking and pedestrian walkway beneath Hertzog Boulevard was designed to restore the link between the

Opera House and the Civic Centre. Similarly, an overheard pedestrian bridge piazza as well as a decision to have the tower block on stilts above the boulevard with the end column on the Opera House site (Plate 45) (Wale, 1979: 4).



Plate 44: Cape Town Civic Centre in context, showing links with the Opera House, Heerengracht and station
(www.maps.google.co.za, 2011/08/12)

The Cape Town Civic Centre claims its place in the urban as the place of local government proceedings and a point of departure for urban regeneration in the city. The linkages created respect and acknowledge the other chief functions in the built environment through connecting them to it and by creating transition spaces, the pedestrian walkways to encourage visual and physical links between them. The design decision at conception aimed to promote a building well integrated into the existing plan while encouraging into the city grid together with forethought for other structures in the future.

However, the dichotomy of the design is that although it aimed to maintain the link between the suburbs and the city via Hertzog Boulevard, the elevated civic centre appears removed from the public domain, the street level they engage with on a daily basis.

The pedestrian bridge piazza linking the Civic Centre with the Opera House across the Hertzog Boulevard provides platform protected against the south-easterly for people to walk and sit with as little disturbance from the traffic below as possible. It was intended to act as an open-air reception area- an extension of the civic centre or a 'stage' for performers (Plate 46)(Wale, 1979: 6 & 10).



Plate 45: Tower Block straddles Hertzog Boulevard, six lane arterial into the city (Wale, 1979: 8)



Plate 46: Pedestrian bridge piazza links Civic Centre to Opera House (Wale, 1979: 1)

The Heerengracht Boulevard was conceptualized to make an impression on the majority of tourists approaching Cape Town from the sea. To be designed with gardens, trees and a fountain together with the old city hall however, the concept did not materialise as the idea proved too grandiose to be achieved in reality and the Nico Malan Opera House was built on this site (Wale, 1979: 2). Therefore, to restore the visual and physical link with the Heerengracht, a substantial pavement and pedestrian walkway leading from the Heerengracht to set of ceremonial stairs at the entrance of the Civic Centre was created. The link was destroyed when the site fronting the Civic Centre was sold to a commercial developer. The ceremonial stairs, pedestrian piazza and other parts of the Civic Centre can be seen by passers-by on the Heerengracht thus reinforcing the connection between the centre and the main street. Moreover, positions of the two civic squares (Plate 47 & 48) relate and complement one another further reinforcing the link between Heerengracht and the Civic Centre (Wale, 1979: 4).

However, although the civic spaces were intended to be square to pedestrians to walk or sit; the execution of these spaces sees very few pedestrians taking advantage of them. The public simply

use the piazzas to get from one point to the other; there is a lack of interaction and engagement with the spaces. This can be accredited to vast expanse of hard surfacing only broken up by a lone sculpture in the centre and the lack of seating further contributes to the lack of pedestrian activity. Equally, the linkages link places where people do not go to on a daily basis.



Plate 47: Pedestrian bridge piazza linking Civic Centre to the Opera House (Photo taken by author, 2011-05-23)



Plate 48: Piazza linking Civic Centre to Heerengracht (Photo taken by author, 2011-05-23)

Furthermore, the link between the ‘new’ Civic Centre and the old city was re-established through joining the deck over the railway station platform with the pedestrian concourse running through the podium block. Future provision was made to link the station deck to the Grand Parade via overhead bridges and later the Sanlam Golden Acre at the far end of the train station, re-instating cohesion and unity in the city (Plate 49). The intention was to create not only a physical connection between the major elements from the city to the Foreshore but also a visual link from the Grand Parade and the Opera House thus encouraging pedestrians to explore their surroundings on foot whether below or above ground without hassle from vehicles and inclement weather. The pedestrian walkways created also connect areas of different activities, the commercial Strand concourse and cultural Nico Malan Centre as well as the civic functions accommodated in the Civic Centre. Hence, the site, shape and design ensure that the Civic Centre is “a catalyst establishing functional and aesthetic cohesion between the multifarious heterogeneous elements on the Foreshore and the old city” (Lodge, 1979: 65).



Plate 49: Cape Town Civic Centre in context (www.maps.google.co.za, 2011/05/31)

The Civic Centre complex consists of a 22-storey tower block on a 102m x 18m footprint, a 5-storey podium on a 98m x 98m floor plan (Fig. 15) (Wale, 1979: 6). The building is designed to

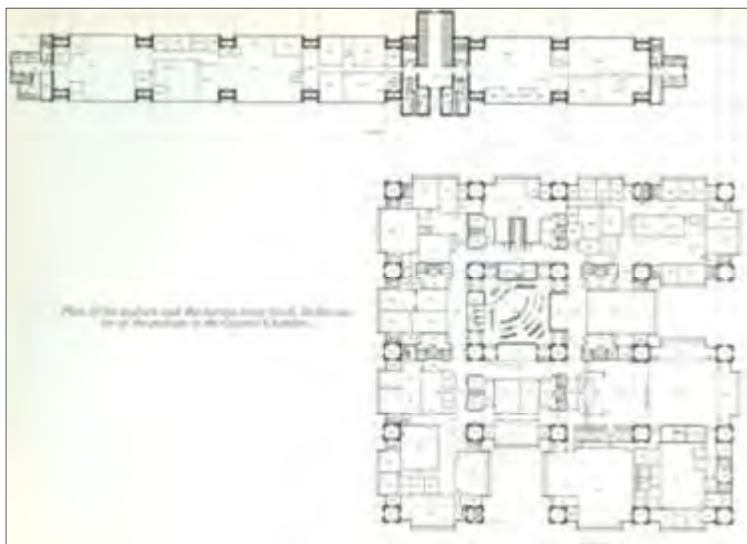


Fig. 15: Plan of the Tower and Podium Block (Wale, 1979: 8)

achieve maximum flexibility in the sub-division of the spaces, access to services and possible expansion of departments without the demolition of the permanent structure. The column spacing is not the conventional economic span but bigger to accommodate the large departments synonymous with civic administration (Wale, 1979: 9).

The podium block is massive low scale building housing the Council Chamber, Councillor's offices, Committee rooms, Banqueting Hall, the Mayoral and Exco suites (on the top floor) and a series of payment halls and other municipal offices in direct contact with the general public—municipal payment and licensing halls. Included in the podium block is also a small lecture theatre and civic museum (Lodge, 1979: 61). The City's Civil Defence office, a multi-purpose hall and a small exhibition hall for Municipal exhibits are located in the podium block. The podium block is bisected at the piazza level by a double and treble volume concourse that leads from the opera house to the tower block and station deck (Wale, 1979: 6 & 12). Extending from the podium block is paved deck leading to the Nico Milan Opera House and the Foreshore beyond (Wale, 1979: 8).



Fig. 16: Diagram showing the various components composing the civic centre

In contrast, the administrative tower is a high-rise office block with large open plan spaces (Fig. 16). However, the office space was not originally designed as open plan but the layout proved to be the better option considering the large size of the various departments, leaving only 5% of the staff is housed in the conventional closed offices (Lodge, 1979: 65). It houses all the departments

not directly linked to the public (Wale, 1979: 6). On the higher floors are two cafeterias, creating a social space for the staff and taking advantage of the panoramic views of Table Mountains, Table View and the surrounding city (Lodge, 1979: 61).

However, the podium floor near the entrance has been converted into a public cafeteria for both the public and the employees of the building. This space proves successful in allowing the staff to engage with the public they serve.

The pedestrian routes (Plate 50 & Plate 51) intersect the podium floor allowing the public access to all the parts of the Podium Block using the stairs, escalators or lifts (Wale, 1979: 3).



Plate 50: Podium concourse with pedestrian and circulation routes leading various municipal offices (Photo taken by author, 2011-05-23)



Plate 51: Public cafeteria in Podium concourse, a very successful civic space (Photo taken by author, 2011 -05-23)



In the centre, the ‘heart’ of the podium block sits the Council Chamber, (Plate 52) below the central pinnacle of the light shaft, naturally lit from above- an indication of the ‘...Chair of Van Riebeeck, the cradle of local and...all government in the Republic’(Wale, 1979: 6-7).

Plate 52: Council Chamber with light shaft above (Photo taken by author, 2011-05-23)

The primary purpose of the building was to create a functional office structure. The architects argue that the building is not monumental, that it is only monumental in the way it successfully links to various elements of the city and the impact it makes on the Cape Town cityscape. The architects continue to reiterate that the building sought not to be a monument like civic centres in the past. They believe that the building is “a functional building in which people do a daily task”, an appropriate image for the “seat of local government” and unlike traditional mayoral offices, in the ‘new’ Civic Centre, the Mayor’s suite is designed as a place of business (Lodge, 1979: 63).

In the facade treatment, the architects opted for a “bold simple elevational treatment...the gigantic scale of the grid is clearly expressed in the robust treatment of the elevations” (Plate 53). The massive free-standing off-shutter concrete columns emphasize the vertical lines of the administration tower block clad in reflective heat-treated glass. The podium on the other hand is treated with precast concrete fins which function as both sun shading devices and aesthetic architectural elements (Fig. 17). The choice of aesthetics sought to “get away from the ‘box’ appearance of most commercial buildings” of the time. Hence, depth on the facades was created



through the use of overhanging balconies casting shadows on the facades and rendering the podium, the symbolic component of the complex a sculptural feature. Another major feature is the white acrylic dome above the Council Chamber to allow natural light into the interior space of the chamber (Lodge, 1979: 61 & 63).

Plate 53: Facade treatment of podium block

(Photo taken by author, 2011-05-23)

Alterations in 2002 saw the introduction of the ‘cone’ above the chamber. The architects believe the sculptural element gives the building a distinct identity and becomes a civic landmark, encouraging civic pride and awareness (de Beer, 2002:30). However, the cone has received much criticism since the building is a landmark in its self and the cone is seen as an unnecessary addition.

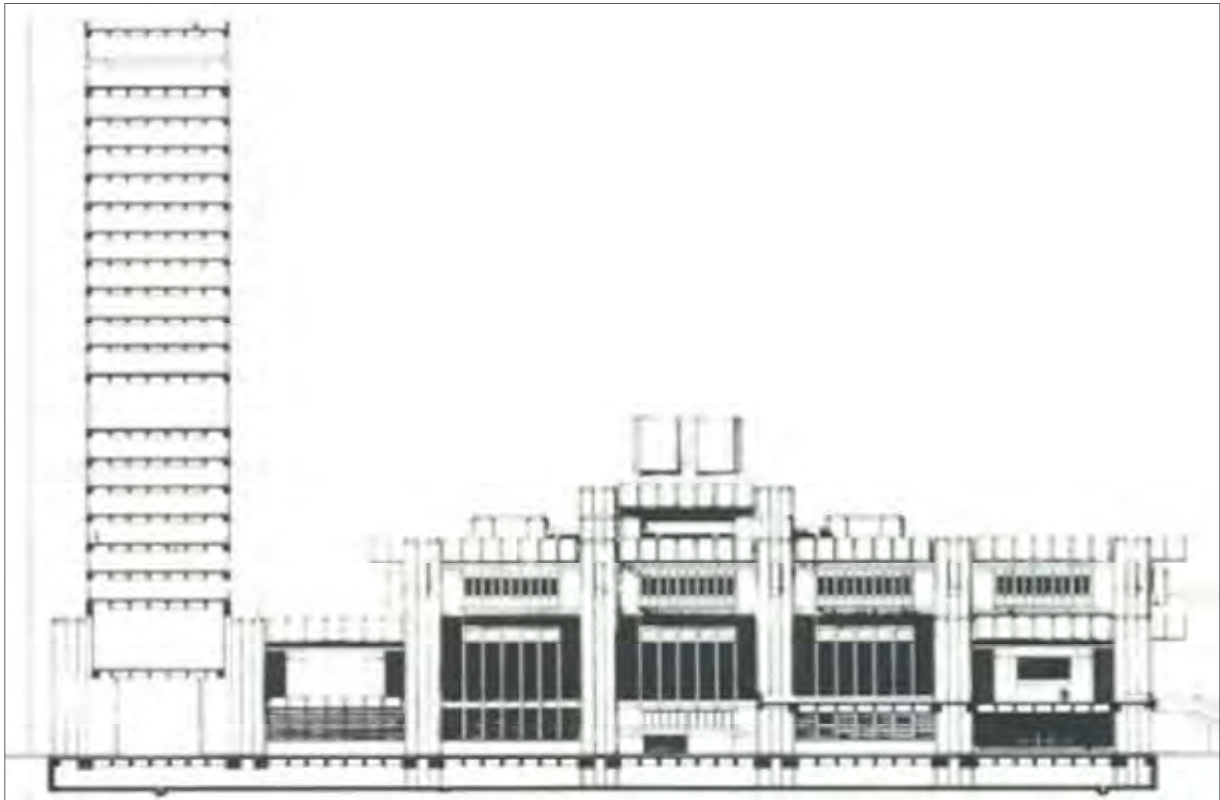


Fig. 17: Elevation of the Civic Centre viewed from the sea. Bold architectural expression (Wale, 1979:11)

The material finish on both the interior and exterior were chosen for their '*naturalness and durability*'. Continuity in the choice and material finish between the Civic Centre and the immediate context creating a seamless transition between the centre and the neighbouring Opera House, of which Meiring, Naude, Papendorf and Van der Merwe were joint architects (Wale, 1979: 13). The architects sought to use simple and cheap finishes however, achieving an expensive and '*stately*' look through the careful and innovative use of colour (Lodge, 1979: 63).

The choice of materials for the civic centre though very durable, the element of naturalness is questionable, if anything, the building looks solid and cold. The impression is that of a brutalist and unfriendly building. And undoubtedly, the building looks expensive.

The architectural aesthetics employed on the facades of the building are more veered towards the image of power and grandiose and little to do with the identity of the nation. And even after alterations the building is still the image of the government and not the people it serves.

7.6 CONCLUSION

The seat of Administration for a Local, Provincial or Central Government, is generally designed with an air of formality and longevity in comparison to commercial buildings that have a lifespan of about 25 to 30 years. Thus, the centre required plans and elevations designed with an architectural expression to “*withstand the aesthetic and technological onslaught for a considerable period*”. The building was designed to “*serve generations ahead, and to wear a cloak of dignity befitting, not the individuals, but the offices they hold*”(Wale, 1979: 4& 9).

The massing of the various components, elevational expression and overall scheme when viewed in its context, achieved a sense of scale and an appearance “*worthy of the importance and symbolic meaning of the seat of Government of the Mother City*”(Wale, 1979: 13).

The design did however evoke mixed emotions from visitors and met with much resistance from the residents, questioning “*why so large an edifice had to be erected at the cost of the already overloaded ratepayers*”. And since the majority of the tourists would not be approaching the city by sea but by air and when they arrive were met by the bulk of the building. The scheme was also criticized for its grandeur though the architects reassure that although the building looks expensive, the materials used were anything but expensive (Wale, 1979: 4).

Undeniable, the Cape Town Civic Centre makes its mark on the Cape Town sky line, announcing itself to visitors and locals as the seat of Government for the city. However, the modernist buildings ends out of power and authority, an almost brutalist style of architecture with mass of concrete and vast hard-scaped surfaces. Similarly, the complex seems removed from the public domain, having been elevated off the ground and the main entrance approached from the ceremonial stairs to the north east. However, the centre is also successful in linking the key functions of the city as well as appropriately housing all the city council departments.

CHAPTER EIGHT
ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

CHAPTER 8 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

8.1 INTRODUCTION

The theoretical framework of this dissertation highlights primarily matters concerning region and identity. The theories stress the importance of looking at the local environment to form the basis for the expression of identity where the regional and national identity is harder and harder to achieve in this globalised world susceptible to outside influence. The theories stress the extraction and abstraction of symbolism and meaning from the context where they have strong ties with culture and local traditions.

The analyses of the selected concepts and theories, existing literature, precedent and case studies have revealed various findings regarding the relationship between architecture, politics and identity.

Architecture and the built environment are a record of the society and the time it was produced as well as the thoughts of the producers. The image of architecture not only reflects the influence of social, economic and political factors but also the regional, climatic and environmental. More importantly, the works should address such underlining issues in order to create an image the people, local and visitors can identify and associate with a particular place – the *Genius Loci*. However, the reality is that no work can be purely universal or purely in this globalised world.

8.2 THE POLITICAL POWER AND DEMOCRACY

The influence of politics on architecture (and the greater built environment) has been a key theme in this research. As illustrated, the link between architecture and political power can be traced from ancient civilization to the present day urban landscape. The built environment has been manipulated and restructured to advance the agendas of government either through the creation of new architecture and the destruction of symbols of an era past.

Government buildings are symbols of the state which seek to build governments and to support specific regimes where either power or identity (or both) are embedded in the design of national parliament buildings and the districts which surround them in various capital cities around the world. In the past and all over the world, architecture and urban design has manifest in accordance to criteria set out by the government. The manifestation of political power can take on many forms ranging from the requirements of political leader and the nature of bureaucracies at work to the symbolic use of the physical environment. Architecture and the urban landscape are largely dependent on the decisions of political leaders, ranging from decisions to either to preserve the old or impose the new on the built environment despite the disapproval or lack of consent from the masses either to create a new or strengthen an existing regional or national identity or even to express power and an image of modernity. Arguably, the constraints employed by the government are stronger than ecological constraints.

Therefore, the symbolic governmental buildings are best understood in terms of the political and cultural contexts that brought them into being. Also important to note is that the manifestation of political power is not only limited to layout of a new capital city but also the layout of a parliamentary chamber organisation of government buildings, either promoting alienation or empowerment. The public can either be treated as a spectator or as part of political debate however, the realisation of the latter can both be genuine or illusory.

A lot can be learned from the character of architecture is directly linked to the character of thinking of the time of conception. Therefore, the image of the architecture gives clues of the political ideologies of the time it was produced, the 'character of thinking' of both the political leaders and the architects alike. The built environment is a sedimentary of layer upon layer of the past, making the presence of history and memory inevitable in the urban fabric. That being said, the style of architecture and the polity of the time are mutually exclusive. Although cities are a product of the ever-changing and sometimes unpredictable socio-political and economic factors, the change however can be divorced from the change from one urban regime to the next.

Architecture is not only the result of political intervention but is subject to social, economic and regional influences. Ideally, architecture should be a response and reflection of society. The region, the people as well as the past are determining factors in the production of new works of architecture. Architecture and urban design are products of social and cultural circumstances. Therefore, the image of architecture is a true reflection of the time, society and circumstances which produced it, regardless of whether the work of is successful or not architecturally. At times the building reveals the very things it was supposed to conceal.

Furthermore, art in the political realm has been used from antiquity until now either in the service of politics or to express the discontent of the masses against the state of politics. Art is and continues to be at the heart of social and political discourse in many countries, highlighting key social and political issues. It is the exhibition of freedom of expression and freedom of speech ensuring that the public grievances are brought to the political arena, especially in democratic nations. Its use in the political domain has influenced the course of events while documenting events of times past. The images are a bold expression of the social, economic and political concerns with political underpinnings. However, some political posters, caricatures and visual satire raise the national sentimental while challenging and encouraging the leadership to laugh at themselves.

Art in the service of politics is used by both sides of conflict whereby the powers of politicians and government are constantly questioned by artists for public scrutiny. Visual propaganda as a political tool has been used by politicians and protestors alike, to advance their agendas. Political content in the form of art has been used by politicians and the government both during campaigns as well as when in office. The images strive on the powers of persuasion, ranging from provocative slogans, exaggerated imagery and even shock tactics.

In recent decades and in many countries around the world, nations are embracing democracy and the emancipation from colonial rule. By definition, democracy is a government in which the people govern themselves and is founded on the political ideals of liberty and equality between the rulers and the ruled and the public is treated as part of the political debates rather than mere spectators of political practices. As a result, political power becomes the property not of one man

or the minority and elite but of all citizens thus encouraging each individual to be interested not only in his affairs but also those of the state. Democracy as a system ought to promote concepts of independence and democratic rule while viewing the people as individuals rather than an undifferentiated mass. Successful democracies are not imposed on the built environment but effortlessly manifest in space and time.

Parliaments successful in their symbolic representation capture the 'spirit' of the people they intend to serve. Architecture in the political arena such as parliamentary buildings is (or should be) the physical manifestation of a nation's aspirations, the values of democracy and nationhood, and a reflection of the political ideologies and not however the product not of self-assertive personalities. The outer structure and inner spaces of forums both present and ancient are the embodiment of the 'voice' of democracy and a platform for it. Therefore, in the pursuit of truly democratic architecture, the best expressions stems from the careful consideration of the human dimension.

The designing and planning of public spaces also stresses the importance of the human dimension. Public architecture and spaces are an integral part of any built environment. It is even argued that public spaces in front and around buildings are more important than the building itself as they are immediately accessible to the public and passers-by.

The public realm can either function as a forum for political action and representation, a neutral or common ground for social interaction, intermingling and communication, or as a stage for social learning, personal developments and information exchange. In the political domain, civic spaces have been manipulated by leadership to exercise power and to promote the continued quiescence of those who are excluded. Reassuring and discomfoting messages exist in the built environment where both are recognised by the public.

Public spaces should have both physical and social attribute to encourage public life and social interaction. Important factors to be considered in the designing and planning of civic spaces are identity, structure and meaning. This means that the space should be distinguishable from others,

its spatial composition must appeal to the users and relate to other spaces, and lastly, the space's practical and emotional meaning must be recognized by the observer and user. Public spaces should be accessible visually, symbolically and physically. People should be able to see into the space, determine whether the symbols represented by the space are compatible with their personal beliefs and be able to physically access the space. The visual access into the space improves surveillance therefore safety in and around the space. Sensitively designed spaces can give people a sense of identity and territoriality whereas failure to provide these basic needs will result in the underuse or non-use of these spaces.

In the pursuit successful civic spaces, it is important to understand the needs of those who will be using the space because the spaces should be a response to the need of those who will be using them. Therefore, when designing public, the spaces should be people oriented, politically, socially, economically and environmentally feasible. Civic spaces should be based on sound planning principles and must be relevant to people and time. Successful spaces are judged by whether they understand and address the issues inferred by the relationship between the physical design of the space and the function the space is intended to serve. Therefore, a civic space should not be pragmatic or super imposed on an area but must be designed and built taking into consideration the issues raised by those who will be using it. If the human dimension is omitted during the design and planning stages, then the spaces are likely to become misused if used at all. Hence, it is important to design spaces compatible with the people's socio-economic needs. These spaces should be multifunctional thus ensuring variety and richness of experience to cater to the diverse and changing needs of the users as well as being adaptable to dual or multiple uses and/or activities.

8.3 ROLE OF MEMORY IN THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Undoubtedly, the landscape is an embodiment of history therefore, the importance of memory in the pursuit of identity cannot be disputed and the presence of the past cannot be ignored. The sense of remembrance has its roots in the expression of culture and place rather than a nostalgic response to region.

Therefore, the challenge lies in proving that a historic form is relevant to the present society as well as how to adapt such forms into modern societies without imitation, subsequently diluting the symbolic meaning and losing the symbolic value. Preservation and restoration in most cases is not the ideal solution because in a sense it is preserving of a meaningless past. The simple reproduction of historical forms becomes meaningless if the cultural context at the time and place in which they are created is not understood. Therefore, the repetition of a particular form over centuries loses its cultural and traditional symbolic meaning hence; the symbolic meaning associated with a form will not necessarily always be associated with that symbol. Symbolic systems are best understood in a particular time and not over time.

Romantic regionalism in the context of memory created a sense of emotional familiarization. The occupant or visitor in turn becomes aware of the past, the region and even their ancestors. Ultimately, the viewer becomes aware of their identity prior to external influences.

Architecture is a vehicle for memory, encapsulating the past in the present where the presence of the past in the present create a sense of continuity. The built environment is a time-space formation where the past and present are interwoven and organised to create a rich urban fabric because places without a history, are empty. Places of memory are generally created to glorify the past of a nation and an attempt at reconciliation although it displays clues of a sometimes undesirable past. Ultimately, places are not continually under interpretation but are haunted by structures and the presence of past meaning. Therefore, places of memory narrate national pasts and future aspirations through space and time.

Preserving artifacts and ruins of historical significance through the creation of museums and memorials is still a sensitive matter especially if the nation is emerging from a socially and politically unstable landscape. As a result, commemorative initiatives evoke conflicting social desires- to mourn and commemorate past events.

8.4 CONCLUSION

The viewers of the building(s), and city planning patterns also need to be aware of the historical and social context under which the design decisions were made. The questionnaire revealed that the foreigners regard the urban planning of South Africa to be acceptable, a view that can be accredited to their lack or limited knowledge of the context and factors that brought them into being. The locals on the other hand see the landscape as still being divided along racial lines. However, there is mutual consensus that certain aspects of the Apartheid planning should be preserved as it is a part of our history and ultimately the identity of the nation.

There is however, a longing for an identity to define the post-Apartheid nation. The concern is that a majority of political institutions both old and new are a reflection of Western and foreign influence and devoid of a local and national identity. Similarly, such institutions are an expression of power, often intimidating to the ordinary man. The robust and classical style of parliament buildings often placed on a hill or on a platform and approached by ceremonial steps do little to create a dialogue between the public and the building. The solid masses of masonry promote neither a transparent nor accessible architecture, subconsciously reinforcing the power and intangibility of the building and the government.

CHAPTER NINE
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CHAPTER 9 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 INTRODUCTION

This research has revealed that there is indeed a relationship between architecture and politics. Architecture and urban design have been and continue to be used in the political domain. Similarly, art has also been utilised in the service of politics.

Architecture and the wider built environment have been manipulated by architects and urban designers in the past to reflect power and more recently in the pursuit of national identity. Symbols have been abstracted and meaning infused into the built form in an effort to express power and identity.

9.2 SEMANTICS AND ARCHITECTURE

Ultimately, architecture is an expressive art through which sign and symbols, identity and region, and socio-economic and socio-political factors converge to concretize the time and thought into form. Symbols and meaning are an integral part of architecture. However, the meaning incurred by a particular sign or symbol may have multiple interpretation where the meaning can mean different things in different contexts. Similarly, with people, the meaning can differ depending on the individual's experiences and past associations with the sign or symbol.

The presence of symbols and meaning in our lives and the built environment is undisputable and key in the understanding and abstraction of meaning from our environments. The choice of signs and symbols, symbolic value and meaning, rites and rituals form the conceptual framework for shelter, settlement patterns and the basic way of life for any given society. Similar to architecture, semiology and meaning is dependent on tradition and memory and is best viewed in the context of time, place and the human dimension in which it was produced because if a form is not true to its environment then that symbol produced is false. The social dimension is paramount in the understanding of symbolism because without man, there would be no symbols where every symbol stands for something other than itself, and it evokes an attitude, a set of

impressions, or a sequence of events associated in time and space through symbols. Meaning stems from the human needs, whether cultural, functional or economic therefore, the way we identify and extract meaning from signs and symbols is directly linked to the human psyche of the people of a given community, sharing the same belief systems.

Symbols can either be identified in the same way by different people or can evoke emotions associated with the situation, condensed into a symbolic event, sign or act. Therefore, Symbolic meaning is defined by the viewer or referent. The symbolic value of forms is their reliance on human perception, how they see them and the value of the symbol is measured by how the symbolic meaning is perceived and accepted. Perception is reliant on association and prior expectations both inborn and acquired. Furthermore, the symbolic value and meaning is also dependent on the preceptor's past experiences and associations with a particular symbol or sign. Therefore, meaning conveyed through association and metaphor is a product of society or the individual relating one thing to another and since people are different due to their memories, so too will the meaning. Similarly, since a sign is not stagnant but may evolve over time according to knowledge and belief systems, the meaning changes according to the level of understanding and the context in which it is used.

Political institutions are saturated with symbolic forms as well as rite and myth such as elections, discussions of politics, patriotic holidays and legislatives. In ancient societies, political myth and religious myth went hand in hand due to the thin line between politics and religion. However, in contemporary societies, there is a clear distinction between the two. Modern politics have become more rational and bureaucratic due to decreased influence of myths and symbols. The mythical and symbolic dimensions of power have in recent decades been replaced with the symbolic dimension of social phenomena where in a democratic setting; the role of political myth has become more prominent. The role for myths and symbols has been lessened in favour of identity politics and the renewed interest in nationalism. Myths and rituals much like symbolism and its visual application are not as relevant today as they were in the past due to among other factors, colonization, western industrialization and technological advancements.

Ritual strives on the involvement of its participants symbolically over a common interest thereby promoting conformity and subsequent satisfaction in conformity. Men collectively and symbolically act to achieve what they need and want by as is the case with voting. The collective act reassures everyone who participates in the ritual in the promise of achieving what they seek thus bringing pride incurred through working together to achieve a common goal. In the case of political systems such as elections, political discussions, etc. this act reaffirms and restores the faith in the people by making them believe that their collective participation in the political practices will translate the needs of the individual into public polity.

Myth on the other hand, uses symbols and has meaning; their interpretation is dependent on context whether physical, historical, political or social. They reveal clues of the original cultural context from which they emerged therefore, the same myth can mean something in one context and something else in another, much like symbols and meaning.

9.3 THE REALISATION OF NATIONAL IDENTITY

Identity is a complex concept and should not be trivialised by matters of ethnicity or race, language, religion, tradition and region. It is the functional and symbolic relationship between man and his environment. Identity is the set of characteristics and attributes which defines and differentiates one thing, place and person from the next and is closely associated to symbolism and meaning.

Identity is usually associated with regionalism where in architecture it aids the construction of group identity. Regional architecture in a political context is concerned with the construction of collective identity and emancipation from colonisation and other oppressions than it is about power or control. The architecture reinforces a sense of unity and continuity by creating identifiable works of architecture thus celebrating the sense of community through drawing influence from local culture and region. The forms, spaces and overall language of the architecture should promote a sense of belonging. The aim is to create an architecture which 'speaks of' the region and its historical context making it identifiable and relatable thus increasing a sense of pride.

Unlike regional architecture, romantic regionalism was primarily a political tool had little connection to ethnic emancipation of the masses but was used by dictatorships, totalitarian and chauvinistic regimes as a form of political populist propaganda.

National identity is aimed at constructing national continuity and strengthening the national sentiment of the people, the basis being a common culture, history, language, territory and collective memory. The concept of national identity is employed to either to form a community, share common culture, and occupy certain territory or to share common history and future aspirations. National identity is founded on five key principles; psychological, cultural, territorial, historical and political dimensions. Simplified, these points create a 'sense' of closeness amongst the members of a group through shared culture, collective memory, region, and the cultural and linguistic homogenization. The construction of national identity arises either from the need to; establish a set of symbols and rituals, create a set of rules and regulations, establish external threats, create of national education and media systems to advance national heritage thus enforcing the feeling of community among its citizens and patriotism.

However, globalization and the realization of democracy have however threatened the manifestation of national identity where democracy forces countries to acknowledge the different culture that exist within the nation-states. Globalization, immigration and devolution, has made nations more tolerant and accepting of foreign influences however, managing to stay true to their roots in their quest for national identity. Therefore, the state has become sensitive to the ethnic diversity and the rights of the minority.

In the past, the role of architecture and urban design in political arena has been used to expression of power; however, in recent decades, there has been a paradigm shift in favour of the expression of identity, especially national identity. And perhaps the best examples of the expression of both power and identity are postcolonial complexes as well as revealing traits of both the government client and the designers. Capital cities and capitol complexes are an attempt to symbolise political power and design national identity while responding to challenges of cultural pluralism and democracy. The choice of architectural aesthetics and materials has been used to create a sense of continuity within the built environment. However, the recent

phenomenon is not always successful or widely accepted as in the case where the identity of nations is no longer 'pure', having been subject to global trends and immigration. In pluralist, multicultural countries, the simply imposition by governments of a single culture and language cannot suffice in the establishing or reinforcing of a collective identity.

9.4 CONCLUSION

However, in the current context where countries are celebrating their independence from colonial rule and emancipation from foreign canon, so arises the need to create structures that are a reflection of such freedom and new found identity. The concept of national identity is still one that is loosely defined and difficult to achieve. The problem is mostly prevalent in pluralist multi-cultural counties much like our own. How, if at all, is it possible to translate and reflect the cultures and identities of such a diverse nation into works of architecture?

The study has somewhat revealed that national identity is achievable however through the careful abstraction of symbols and subsequent their meaning and if realised can increase national sentiment and civic pride. The challenge is in the choosing of relevant and appropriate symbols since people are different with different experiences and memories, hence so will be their association and interpretation of the symbols.

Unlike politics, architecture strives on the involvement of people because ultimately the users and viewers of these buildings is the public. It is these people who are in constant dialogue with the built environment hence the image of the city should be reflective of the people it intends to serve not the egos of the architects and urban designers manifest in the built environment.

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QUESTIONNAIRE- Politics and Civic buildings

Section A: Personal Information

1. Gender

Male

Female

2. Race

Black

White

Black

White

3. Age group

12 years old and younger

Teenager (13 – 19)

Adult (20 – 59)

Pensioner (60 and older)

4. Occupation

Student

Unemployed

Employed

Pensioner

5. Education

Grade 10 or less

Grade 12

Technikon

University

Other (please specify).....

6. Citizenship

South African

Other (please specify).....

7. Reason for being in South Africa (if not South African citizen)

Permanent resident

Visitor

Other (please specify).....

Section B: Politics and Democracy in South Africa

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

Yes

No

.....

2. Should the Apartheid city planning be preserved or destroyed? Please explain.

Yes

No

.....

3. Does the architecture created post 1994 the true image of the Rainbow Nation? If not, please explain.

Yes

No

.....

4. What defines a democratic building or space?

.....

5. Which building local or international constitutes a democratic building? Why?

.....

5. Is the political power and/or identity of the country reflected in the architecture? Please explain.

Yes

No

.....

6. What possible images or symbols synonymous with South Africa can be translated into a democratic architecture?

.....

Section C: Civic Centres

1. Is there a civic centre in and around the area where you stay?

Yes

No

If yes, how often do you visit it?

Regularly

Seldomly

Not at all

2. And what activities do you engage in when there?

.....

3. Is there a public space (park or square) in front or in close proximity to the civic centre?

Yes

No

If yes, is this space will used?

Yes

No

If not, what can be done to improve this space?

.....

4. Do you feel comfortable at your current civic centre? If not, please specify.

Yes

No

.....

5. Does the civic centre cater to all the inhabitants of the area? If not, which group (s) does it exclude?

Yes

No

.....

Are there any other suggestions that need to be done to improve the civic centre in your area? (Comments and/ or suggestions)

.....
.....
.....
.....

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

Thank you for your time and co-operation.

INTERVIEW

Key questions:

1. What is your perception of South African politics pre 1994 and after?
2. Should the memory of past be commemorated or forgotten?
3. Does South Africa live up to its name as a democratic country?
4. How you define democracy?
6. Is the country representative of all its citizens (different cultures and backgrounds)?
5. Does South Africa have an identity which is unique to this county or more importantly, what would be the appropriate identity?
6. What possible images or symbols are synonymous with South Africa post 1994?
7. Are there any other comments and/ or suggestions you would like to add on the subject?

Respondent.....

Date.....

Thank you for your time and co-operation.