

**The Revival of Heritage and Culture in the Creation  
of New Urban Space:  
A Proposed Museum in Port Shepstone**

By

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requirements for the degree of Master of Architecture to the  
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## **DECLARATION**

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

I hereby declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. It is being submitted to the School of Architecture, Planning and Housing, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, for the degree of Master in Architecture, and has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other University.

Signed by the researcher on this 18th day of June 2012

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## **DEDICATION**

To the courageous Norwegian settlers that began a new life in Africa.

## ABSTRACT

Heritage and culture are invaluable assets whereby human beings can define themselves. Through the careful preservation of past and heritage, people have a reference point in which to define their belonging; a lineage that traces their being. However, heritage and the elements that make up a place's identity are often not preserved. The question posed in this dissertation asks what becomes of a space when its particular heritage and history falls into a state of decay? Why is it necessary to try to preserve the elements that define the very foundations of a place? Furthermore, it is asked what can be done, in terms of an architectural intervention, to rectify this issue.

Architecture has a role far beyond the necessity of basic shelter. It defines a framework in which human activity occurs. It encompasses something greater than the functional and its vast impact on the physical, emotional and psychological aspects of its users should not be overlooked; especially when the architecture has a way of harking back to a past memory and time. This dissertation looks into an appropriate response to architectural design that merges the significance of the past, the inherent culture of a collective society, the defining characteristics of place, setting and climatic elements and built form that captures the essence in an architectural celebration.

The research culminates in an analysis of a revival and rejuvenation approach to architecture in the local context of KwaZulu-Natal. Conclusions are drawn from the research carried out through conducting interviews, a review of literature and analysis of case studies and precedent studies. The outcome of this dissertation is a set of recommendations, principles and an understanding of the criteria necessary to inform the design of A Proposed New Museum in Port Shepstone.

*There is nothing better than that a man should rejoice in  
his own works, for that is his heritage - Ecclesiastes 3:22*

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## **1.0 CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1.1 BACKGROUND:**

Architecture has a role far beyond the necessity of basic shelter. Worldwide, it defines a framework in which human activity occurs. It encompasses something greater than purely the functional: its vast impact on the physical, emotional and psychological aspects of its users result in an architectural vernacular that responds differently from region to region. Throughout the history of architecture, buildings have inspired people - be it from small residences to larger public structures, all have some kind of meaning beside their function.

In South Africa, the incredibly diverse cultures and wide-ranging ethnicities have resulted in architecture that encompasses a wide range of style and meaning. In addition, influences from other foreign countries have contributed to the variety of its architectural landscape.

*Considering that, in a society where living conditions are changing at an accelerated pace, it is essential for man's equilibrium and development to preserve for him a fitting setting in which to live, where he will remain in contact with nature and the evidences of civilization bequeathed by past generations, and that, to this end, it is appropriate to give the cultural and biophysical heritage an active function in community life and to integrate into an overall policy the achievements of our time, the values of the past and the beauty of nature.*

The above extract is taken from the UNESCO Recommendation Concerning the Protection, at National Level, of the Cultural and Biophysical Heritage at the UNESCO General Conference in 1972. Nations across the globe have been active in implementing conservation strategies to protect their heritage and national interests. South Africa introduced the National Monuments Act in 1969, showing that as a nation, steps to protecting our past were already in motion. The National Heritage Resources Act 25 of 1999 added to the previous act, with this extract:

*This legislation aims to promote good management of the national estate, and to enable and encourage communities to nurture and conserve their legacy so that it may be bequeathed to future generations. Our heritage is unique and precious and it cannot be*

*renewed. It helps us to define our cultural identity and therefore lies at the heart of our spiritual well being and has the power to build our nation. It has the potential to affirm our diverse cultures, and in so doing shape our national character.*

*Our heritage celebrates our achievements and contributes to redressing past inequalities. It educates, it deepens our understanding of society and encourages us to empathise with the experience of others. It facilitates healing and material and symbolic restitution and it promotes new and previously neglected research into our rich traditions and customs.* (<http://www.dac.gov.za/acts/a25-99.pdf>)

These passages and in particular, the last sentence of the passage above sums up the importance of the preservation of one's history and culture: future generations will one day become the guardians of this knowledge, and without a plan to showcase and celebrate it now, it faces the very real possibility of being lost forever.

*"As no man is an island, neither is any structure an isolated example that exists apart from its society or the culture that produced it."*  
(unknown; Borden 2000)

The issue of connection and belonging to place and inclusion amongst fellow inhabitants is something that is core to every single person. Without a base for belonging and public integration, man is stumped and progress ceases. Various types of historic renewal and adaptive re-use upliftment schemes are present today, but each one is unique and has its own set of rules to abide by; the question arises as to what culture existed in years gone by, and how it can be restored through the rejuvenation of the built environment.

The lower south coast of KwaZulu-Natal has a rich history that centers around Port Shepstone and its harbour. It was one of the entry points for parties of European settlers immigrating to South Africa, as well as being the hub of the local industrial and agricultural trade, including marble and lime stone quarrying, tea and sugar farming and trawling and fishing enterprises all having a strong connection to the port. It has untapped potential to recapture the history of the area and celebrate it with a structure that is inclusive of all the various cultures, races and people dwelling on the South Coast.

The research will aim to understand the effects which restoration and renewal will have on people that have lived in and around the coastal town of Port Shepstone and how it changes their view and connection to it. Also key to the research are the questions of how architecture can be created to foster feelings of *cultural* and *social identity* as well as the incorporation of gathering and interactive spaces.

### **1.1.2 JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY:**

Until recently, national preservation schemes have been mostly upper-class and urban in their emphasis. Because of this bias, most of the artifacts studied and conserved have been obviously significant and monumental structures, such as forts, palaces, cathedrals and parliaments - iconic structures for the rich, powerful and famous. As a result of this, entire categories of humble, yet no less important history and artifacts have been excluded from national databases, and hence, forgotten and left to decay (Fitch, 24). Thankfully there are now organisations present today at international, national and provincial levels that implement measures to preserve and protect heritage and culture, but examples of these are more often than not reserved for the most prestigious examples and ones that usually stand alone in their splendor; not much has been explored in terms of using history and culture for the basis of a *larger scale renewal of an urban space*. There is now a consciousness and public attitude that recognises the importance of heritage and cultural preservation, and it is the aim of this study to apply it to a setting that will impact and benefit the local residents in a positive manner; to ultimately improve their quality of life and allow for a continuation of traditions, memories and respect.

Identity and revival are the two major themes that form the basis of this dissertation. Without a connection to "place", people feel a distinct lack of belonging to the land. Architecture is an incredibly powerful means whereby people can root themselves in a settlement - using it as a tool of self and cultural expression. It is crucial that architecture respond to a particular identity of the place so that people may feel a connection and belonging to their surroundings.

The particular setting and topic holds a personal meaning for the researcher, who, having lived in the area for a number of years, has an in-depth understanding of the workings (both current and past) of the area the history and culture that belongs to it.

## **1.2 DEFINITION OF THE PROBLEM, AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

### **1.2.1 DEFINITION OF THE PROBLEM:**

Generally, there seems to be a lack of understanding when confronted with a possibility of reviving and renewing an area. Meaning, place and memory are usually forgotten and replaced with quick profits and faceless architecture. Decay, and specifically urban decay, is a challenge many built up areas are facing. Revival and rejuvenation is a timely yet immensely satisfying route to restoring something that creates unquantifiable character and meaning to a specific place steeped in history. The research therefore aims to insert a comprehensive collection of data detailing an understanding of how environments should be designed to take cognisance of the past, the present and the future.

A larger connected issue is that of environmental and economic stability and the role an upliftment scheme will have on the people that use the area. It has to be able to benefit and prosper the inhabitants; not subtract from them. At the same time, it has to be sensitive to the fragile environment - taking precautions so as not to alter the landscape or affect any of the existing natural characteristics of the area.

Port Shepstone faced two issues that were the main contributors of its harbour falling into disuse. The primary reason was the extension of the rail network to the lower South Coast, which negated the need to transport goods to Durban via ships. It also faced the issue of urban sprawl and the business surrounding it moved outwards - leaving the area under-used and becoming run-down. The old framework from the mid-late 1800's still exists to this day, although it isn't at all obvious that Port Shepstone once boasted a harbour. This is to the detriment of the town, as utilising it and reviving it would add to its heritage, culture and identity.

### **1.2.2 AIMS:**

The aim of the research is to understand the issues forming the backbone of this project, such as memory, identity, revival and decay, and ultimately, understanding how they can enhance a place and people's lives. Furthermore, the aim is to restore and bolster a cultural identity and revive lost heritage for the community of the South Coast; creating a completely democratic and inclusive space that people can feel equal and have a genuine sense of belonging; a connection to the spirit of the place.

### **1.2.3 OBJECTIVES:**

There is great potential to revive the area. There is a rich framework to work with, and various options in terms of what built form will eventually be constructed that can add to the culture and identity of the town. It will not only benefits the users today, but provides a framework whereby future generations can be aware of what came before, so that a strong sense of heritage develops. Furthermore, a sensitive approach to the natural and contextual elements will ensure the prolonged and sustained continuation of this effort.

## **1.3 SETTING OUT THE SCOPE**

### **1.3.1 ISSUES INFERRED BY THE RESEARCH**

Memory and identity are important elements in architecture, and a sensitive and thoughtful approach to the history of the region has to be undertaken before reviving or highlighting it. The best theory that supports this notion is Critical Regionalism. Globalisation has made everything so accessible and it is increasingly entering every part of our lives. It has resulted in many things, including architecture, becoming homogenised. Critical Regionalism strives to counter the 'placelessness' and lack of meaning in Modern Architecture by connecting and drawing on the surrounding and contextual forces to impart a sense of *place and meaning*. (Lefavre, Tzonis: 9)

Towns are largely dependent on their geographical position which strongly affects their relationship with the outside world. It can be argued that the strongest factor affecting urban location and growth is transport and transport nodes. (Hoyle: 137) Ports, as places where trade between sea and land happen, is the earliest type of transport node known to man. This has led them to become financial and industrial hubs, which go on to spur social, cultural and economic development. (Hoyle: 138)

Public space within a revival development needs to be considered in terms of the various happenings and functions the nature of the project brings. How it responds to a multitude of various cultures and people will be the success or failure of the revival scheme.

Climate change is a major factor in any new seaside development. The unpredictability in the weather systems have resulted in buildings needing to be far more structurally resistant. They have to be positioned carefully to best cope with unusual high tides, storm waves and even tsunamis. Studies in rising sea levels and floodplains must also be carried out to determine if it is a safe development or not.

Proximity to the body of water will result in calculated structural design and material use considerations to be hardy and resist the harsh off-shore conditions.

### **1.3.2 DELINEATING THE RESEARCH PROBLEM**

Small coastal towns will be analysed to see how they have responded to a combination of sea-side attractions the ocean provides, as well as how they respond to the heritage of the town itself. Old historic towns like Knysna and Plettenberg Bay could be possible places to explore. A key aspect to look at will be how land-based transport (road and rail) has affected its development (possibly looking at towns that have 'died' as a result from being cut off from a water artery) in regard to the port as an economic generator.

The area that will be analysed will be confined strictly from the river mouth of the Umzimkhulu River up to Spiller's Wharf - a kilometre upstream. Photographs and sketches of the site will be done to graphically illustrate the necessary information that is required in the assignment. Comprehensive research will be undertaken on many different fronts; from internet research, library research, interviewing locals and built environment professionals to get a good, solid background to work from. Assessment will be carried out at various times during the day and night to gain a comprehensive knowledge of the area and its possible varying character.

### **1.3.3 ASSUMPTIONS**

For this research to take place, it is assumed that the residents of Port Shepstone will not only appreciate the revival of a part of their history, but also embrace an economic opportunity a harbour-front redevelopment will provide to the area. It is also assumed that there will be a distinct feel and vernacular to draw from to tie the new structure in with the existing urban fabric.

### **1.3.4 KEY QUESTIONS**

**PRIMARY QUESTION:** How can architecture renew the cultural and historical heritage of a place?

**SUB QUESTIONS:**

- What is the definition of culture and heritage?
- How can an iconic structure uplift and create excitement throughout a larger/urban scheme?

- What impact does the built environment have on its users and their perception and memory?
- How can the focus not only be on revival and rejuvenation of the existing but prepare and cater for the prolonged use of the development; that a new history can unfold?
- What cultural or heritage laws exist, and how might they shape the development?
- What type of building/development will showcase the area's culture and heritage?

### 1.3.5 HYPOTHESIS

It is hypothesized that architectural revival can be a key element in aiding the historic and cultural significance and would bring renewed interest to the residents and visitors of the area. Simultaneously, such architecture uplifts the community through the provision of a reference point from which their progression can be traced, as well as promoting future growth with an understanding of the past and their connection to it.

### 1.3.6 DEFINING THE TERMS

**Adaptive Re-use** - the process of turning an old and disused structure into something new that doesn't adhere to its original intended purpose.

**Catalyst Development** - an inception in a strategic location that will encourage growth and development of the surrounding areas.

**Cultural Identity** - the identity of a group or culture, or of an individual as far as one is influenced by one's belonging to a group or culture.

**Cultural Integration** - Culture is not a random assemblage of skills, customs, values, and beliefs. These elements are woven into a definite pattern and are somehow related to one another.

**Environment** - circumstances or conditions that surround one; their surroundings.

**Heritage** - Something that is passed down from preceding generations; a tradition.

**History** - the discovery, collection, organisation and presentation of information about past events.

**Placelessness** - an environment that does not have any distinctive personality or sense of place that marks it unique.

**Revival** - restoring something to make it new again; to bring new life.

**Social Identity** - a person's sense of who they are based on their group membership(s).

**Spirit of Place** - *Spirit of place* refers to the unique, distinctive and cherished aspects of a place; from intangible cultural aspects to physical and tangible man-made or natural features.

## **1.4 CONCEPTS AND THEORIES**

### **Culture and Heritage**

Culture and heritage is something integral to mankind's existence. It defines people and their societies and is often something expressive and linked to a platform in which to express it. These platforms can be tangible or intangible, and the unique formulas that constitute one's culture and heritage becomes one's identity. This theory explores the importance of protecting and keeping culture alive-and-well in a modern age and how it can benefit society.

The concepts of culture and society are closely related. Culture is defined as all the products of society - material and nonmaterial. Society consists of interacting people living in the same territory who share a common culture. One without the other is not possible. People in society create culture; culture shapes the way people interact and understand the world around them. (Ockman; 1968)

### **Revival and Rejuvenation**

There are many renewal and upliftment schemes occurring today. These schemes root themselves in a theory of Revival and Rejuvenation and can be seen in the opposite light of Ageing. It has the benefit of using an existing framework to build from, and thus provides many links and threads to tap into to provide greater meaning and connection to place rather than building a new development. By the nature of what has gone before, it possesses a character that cannot be replicated with a brand new development. It thus imbues the rejuvenated space with restored meaning and identity. (Taylor, M and Levine, M; 2011)

### **Identity**

The aim is to restore and bolster a cultural identity for the community of the South Coast; creating a completely democratic and inclusive space that people can feel equal and have a genuine sense of belonging to the spirit of the place. There is great potential to revive the area. There is a rich framework to work with, and various options in terms of what built form

will eventually be constructed that can add to the culture and identity of the town. Identity refers to the ways in which individuals and collectives are distinguished in their social relations with other individuals and collectives. Architecture plays a significant role in a person's or community's identity, and through an upliftment, scheme can bolster their individual or collective identity. (Norberg-Schulz, C; 1971)

### **Semiology**

Semiology can be defined as the study of signs: how they work and how people use them. Almost anything can signify something for someone or a group of people - that it is common to all members of the same culture who share the same language. Barthes extended this idea to all kinds of world and image related spheres, and the built form is a prime feature in everyone's daily life where people attach meaning, and more importantly, memory, to it. (Munro, C; 1987)

### **Critical Regionalism**

The exploration of *Genius Loci* and *Phenomenology of Place* have lead to the architectural theory of Critical Regionalism. Critical Regionalism gives priority to the value of a physical, social and cultural setting. Comprising of the theory are the engagement and accentuation of the site, the use of local materials and response to factors such as light and climate. The combined result of these elements can be used to improve and enhance people's experience with buildings and the space they create; thus creating a sense of place, identity and meaning. (Lefavre, L and Tzonis, A; 2003)

### **New Urbanism**

New Urbanism is a modern and important planning movement, which focuses on improving the way people go about their lives. It is an international movement to reform the design of the built environment, and is about raising our quality of life and standard of living by creating better places to live. New Urbanism is the revival of the lost art of *place-making* and is essentially a re-ordering of the built environment to form wholes - complete environments. New Urbanism involves improving and infilling cities, as well as the creation of compact new towns and villages. This is a very relevant theory to employ as it is sensitive yet active in making changes to areas of need. By placing emphasis on *walkability*, *connectivity*, *mixed use developments*, *increased density*, *efficient transportation* and *sustainability*, the quality of life experience by the users are greatly increased. (Taylor, M and Levine, M; 2011)

## **1.5 RESEARCH METHODS AND MATERIALS**

### **1.5.1 Primary Research**

A primary (qualitative) research methodology will be used to analyse appropriate case studies which will be chosen in terms of their relevance to the topic and their potential outcomes. The case studies will include museums, galleries, tourist centres or information centres. The various people running these places will be interviewed for in-depth information: Mrs Riana Mulder, a museum curator to gain an understanding of the nature of displaying artefacts and information to the public; Mr Naidoo, a floor manager to understand positioning of displays and public space; and managers at tourist and information centres to understand how one caters for visitors. However, first-hand observation by the researcher will occur in order to gain a more accurate and descriptive account of the case study and eventual outcomes. Observations will be detailed in the form of recording devices.

#### **RECORDING DEVICES:**

- Note-taking and box-ticking for interviews and questionnaires
- Sketching of floor plans, diagrams or maps for the observation of people in a general area
- The use of photographs
- Observing physical traces by using recording devices

In terms of the historic research of the area, the researcher will focus on events beginning from the creation of the port in Port Shepstone by Europeans up to present day. Nothing before that time, as the area was undeveloped. Small coastal towns will be analysed to see how they have responded to a combination of sea-side attractions the ocean provides, as well as how they respond to the heritage of the town itself. Old historic towns like Knysna and Plettenberg Bay could be possible places to explore.

The area that will be analysed will be confined strictly from the river mouth of the Umzimkhulu River up to Spiller's Wharf - a kilometre upstream. Photographs and sketches of the site will be done to graphically illustrate the necessary information that is required in the assignment.

### **1.5.2 Secondary Research**

The background research to the project will use a secondary research approach, which involves the collection of information from studies which have been done by other researchers. This will be outlined in the literature review and the methods or sources that have or will be employed to obtain the information are:

- The libraries and its various resources
- The computer and internet
- Various books and journal articles
- Unpublished theses
- Articles reproduced online

Precedent studies will also be provided to further explain the concepts and theories set out in the literature review and these will be critically analysed to ascertain elements of design which are relevant to the research topic, thus gaining an understanding of the practical use of these theories in everyday life and whether or not they work. The literature review will provide the backbone to the research, providing a foundation with which to proceed with the design of a building which captures the essence of the research.

### **1.6 CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE**

The purpose of this dissertation is to contribute to the body of literature regarding historic and cultural revival as an architectural design tool. Architecture is to be explored as an all-encompassing experience where memories of history, culture, place and time can be set in. A contribution is to be made regarding the benefits of historic, cultural and urban revival and how designers can utilise an existing framework and reinterpret it in a modern day and age.

### **1.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Due to the nature and the process of a dissertation, factors such as time constraints and distant locations of examples for case studies will unfortunately limit the study.

### **1.8 CONCLUSION**

An architecture of revival is so much more than merely recreating a piece of lost built environment. It harks back to a time where memories are embedded and communities once thrived, yet interpreted in a way where it caters for a new time: a new beginning.

The following chapters provide a review of existing literature pertinent to the topic of architecture as a tool for historic and cultural revival. The research presented here is grounded on the fundamental concepts and theories discussed, and strives to draw closer to answering the key questions stated. In doing so, it is anticipated that one will gain insight into an approach to the built environment that views architecture as part of the conserver of regional identity, and its culture and history. Furthermore, it is expected that the following literature review will reveal how this approach can benefit people's connection to their past and facilitate a greater level of interaction as a community.

The literature reviews begins with outlining the broader aspect of what 'culture' is, how South Africa is defined by its 'multi culturalism' and what impact it has on society. It then moves onto history of regions and the remnants that remain and remind one of what has gone before. This combination of culture and the past is woven together to form a particular *regional identity* that is intrinsically linked to people's memory and perception of place.

The second part of the literature review focuses on how architecture can be a catalyst for revival. It draws on more site specific theories such as Critical Regionalism and New Urbanism to root the built form *in* its context, drawing on heritage and culture while utilising local resources and environmental considerations to boost the sense of honesty and integrity one experiences.

The key precedent study and case studies follow in chapters three and four, with the discussion and analysis following in chapter five. The research is concluded in chapter six, with a set of recommendations listed.

Chapter seven and eight provide any relevant pre-fieldwork data and a set of answered questionnaires that links in with the research compiled in chapter four. A comprehensive list of references and sources end the written document.

## **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW: CONCEPTS AND THEORIES**

### **2.1 CULTURE, HERITAGE AND SYMBOLISM**

#### **2.1.1 Introduction**

This literature review will comprise of concepts and theories that substantiate the need for a revival development to take place and why it is important. It will form the groundwork of the researcher's approach and delve into ideas that ultimately make for better spaces for humans to live and enjoy their lives. The literature review can be seen in two parts: the first dealing with and understanding culture, heritage and symbolism and then moving into how that can inform an architecture that aids in the revival of said culture and heritage.

Culture is something integral to mankind's existence. It defines people and their societies and is often something expressive and linked to a platform in which to express it. These platforms can be tangible or intangible, and the unique formulas that constitute one's culture and heritage becomes one's identity. This chapter explores the importance of protecting and keeping culture alive-and-well in a modern age and how it can benefit society.

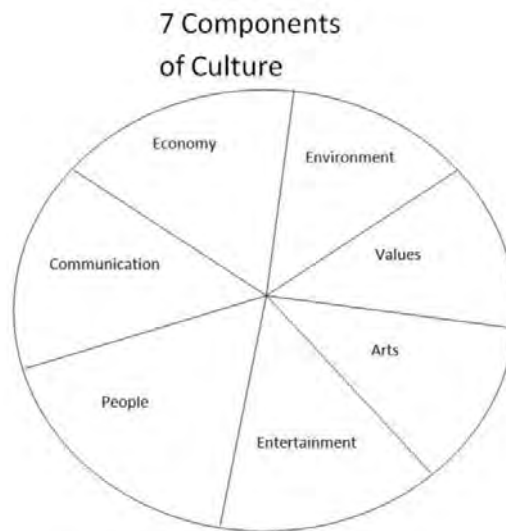
#### **2.1.2 The Importance of Culture in Society**

The word "culture" has many different meanings, but for the intended purpose of this study, it has to do with the field of anthropology and other behavioural science: *culture is the full range of learned human behaviour patterns*. The term was first used in this way by the pioneering English anthropologist Edward B. Tylor in his book, *Primitive Culture*, first published in 1871. Tylor says that culture is "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society." Since Tylor's time, the concept of culture has become the central focus of anthropology. (Kroeber; 1978)

Unity amongst people: The concepts of culture and society are closely related. Culture is defined as all the products of society - material and nonmaterial. Society consists of interacting people living in the same territory who share a common culture. One without the other is not possible. People in society create culture; culture shapes the way people interact and understand the world around them. (Ockman; 1968)

Culture is critical to the survival of the human race, but it is a fragile phenomenon. It is constantly changing and easily lost because it exists predominantly in our minds. Our written

languages, governments, buildings, and other man-made things are merely the by-products of culture of a particular time and place - they are not culture in themselves.



**Figure 1** - The seven components of Culture. When one or more of the pieces are missing, the resultant Culture of the area is jeopardised. SOURCE: [www.docstoc.com](http://www.docstoc.com)

There are three layers or levels of culture that are part of man's learned behaviour patterns and perceptions. First would be a dominant layer of culture, i.e. European. It is the body of cultural traditions that distinguish one's specific society. When people speak of their various cultures, they are referring to the particular shared language, traditions, and beliefs that set people apart from one another and become their defining character. In most cases, those who share that culture do so because they acquired it from their upbringing (Holmes; 8).

The second layer of culture that exists and adds to one's identity is a *subculture*. In complex, diverse societies in which people have come from many different parts of the world, they often retain much of their original cultural traditions. As a result, they are likely to be part of an identifiable subculture in their new society. The shared cultural traits of subcultures set them apart from the rest of their society. Examples of easily identifiable subcultures in South Africa include Indians, Malaysians and a wide range of Europeans. Members of each of these subcultures share a common identity, diet, dialect or language, and other cultural traits that come from their common ancestral background and experience. As the cultural differences between members of a subculture and the dominant national culture blur and eventually disappear, the subculture ceases to exist except as a group of people who claim a

common ancestry. That is generally the case with European and Indian settlers in South Africa today. Most of them identify themselves as South African first (Holmes; 15).

The third layer of culture consists of *cultural universals*. These are learned behaviour patterns that are shared by all of humanity collectively. No matter where people live in the world, they share these universal traits. Examples of such "human cultural" traits include:

- communicating with a verbal language consisting of a limited set of sounds and grammatical rules for constructing sentences
- using age and gender to classify people (e.g., teenager, senior citizen, woman, man)
- classifying people based on marriage and descent relationships and having kinship terms to refer to them (e.g., wife, mother, uncle, cousin)
- raising children in some sort of family setting
- having a sexual division of labour (e.g., men's work versus women's work)
- having a concept of privacy
- having rules to regulate sexual behaviour
- distinguishing between good and bad behaviour
- having some sort of body ornamentation
- making jokes and playing games
- creating art
- having some sort of leadership roles for the implementation of community decisions

Culture and society is not the same thing. While cultures are complexes of learned behaviour patterns and perceptions, *societies are groups of interacting organisms*. Societies are groups of people who directly or indirectly interact with each other. People in human societies also generally perceive that their society is distinct from other societies in terms of shared traditions and expectations (Stephens; 57).

While human societies and cultures are not the same thing, they are inextricably connected because culture is created and transmitted to others in a society. Cultures are not the product of lone individuals, but are continuously evolving products of people interacting with each other. Cultural patterns, such as language and traditions make no sense except in terms of the interaction of those people, and how people adapt and grow in a community.

## Culture in South Africa:

The essence of the nation's new understanding of its cultural heritage is captured not only in the title of the statement, "I am an African", made by former President Thabo Mbeki to the Constitutional Assembly of South Africa on 8 May 1996. It also appears in the new coat of arms of democratic South Africa, launched on Freedom Day in 2000, as well as in the White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage of the same year.

Mbeki's statement, made particularly to white South African's on the occasion of the adoption of the South African Constitution Bill in Cape Town, set the tone and laid the basis for a non-racial understanding and appreciation of the new nation's diverse heritage. The statement had a tone which South Africans of different backgrounds and cultures could identify. It was a political statement in conciliatory terms, embracing the being and 'African-ness' of all South Africans irrespective of their background. (Bredekamp; 2)

In the early part of his statement and referring to the first indigenous people of the land, Mbeki acknowledged:

*I owe my being to the Khoi and the San whose desolate souls  
haunt the great expanses of the beautiful Cape – they who fell  
victim to the most merciless genocide our native land has ever  
seen, they who were the first to lose their lives in the struggle  
to defend our freedom and dependence ... (Mbeki, 1996)*

The statement also recognises the historical contribution of other South Africans that made Mbeki and his broad constituency African. Thus, "I am formed by the migrants who left Europe to find a new home on our native land. Whatever their own actions, they remain still, part of me", and "In my veins courses the blood of the Malay slaves who came from the East". Mbeki saw himself as part of a lineage of Bantu-speaking and Afrikaner (white) heroes who fought and died in the South African wars of resistance for their respective freedoms. F.W. de Klerk, the leader of the New National Party which ruled South Africa for over 40 years, was inspired by these words of wisdom and responded in a similar voice to the challenge of redefining his identity and heritage:

*Although my people came from Europe more than 300 years ago, I  
became an African through the blood of my forebears (sic) which*

*drenched our soil in fighting for freedom. I became an African through the dedication and hard work of my forebears ... (De Klerk, 1996)*



**Figure 2** - The Linton Panel, a slab of rock art dating back to the 18th or 19th century, was removed from the farm of Linton in the Eastern Cape in 1917. The complex paintings reflect the intangible beliefs and cosmology of the San people, the earliest inhabitant. SOURCE: [www.dissanet.com](http://www.dissanet.com)

These statements, and the subsequent adoption of the Bill and realisation of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa later the same year, paved the way for debates at national, provincial and local levels of government and in civil society about the meaning of "I am an African" in different spheres of society, including the heritage sector. (Bredekamp; 5)

The launch in 2000 of the new Coat of Arms was a further step initiated by national government to give further backing and direction to the national debate about culture, nation-building and social cohesion. The Coat of Arms represents a South African dialogue of heritage symbols of Africa, the West and humanity. The nation's heritage, rooted in the creativity of the first indigenous people, is depicted in the centre of the national symbol.

The only human figures depicted are two images derived from the Linton Stone, a world-famous example of South African rock art on display at one of the Iziko Museums in Cape Town. The motto, *!ke e: /xarra //ke*, is derived from a saying in the almost extinct language of the /Xam Khoisan people, meaning; "*people who are different joining together*", i.e. unity in diversity. It is a call from our earliest African ancestors to strive towards building a uniquely prosperous nation conscious of its diverse heritage. (Bredekamp; 5)

### 2.1.3 What Society Learns from its Past

What is it that makes history so important to man?

- It is the only link to our beginning - our origins.
- We can understand who we are and how we got to be that way is by studying the past. On the same token, the only way we can understand others is by studying their past.
- It has been said that he who controls the past controls the future. Our view of history shapes the way we view the present, and therefore it dictates what answers we offer for existing problems.

The city of Dresden in Eastern Germany was completely destroyed in WW2. Despite not being a threat to the Allied Forces as it didn't have a military or industrial component at the time, massive bomb raids obliterated the heart of the city, including the Frauenkirche - arguably the most beautiful building in the Baroque city. The ruin remained visible in the centre of the city until 1990 when funding had been secured and work on its restoration commenced. After 15 years of work, the church was once again complete. This restoration wasn't for purely nostalgic reasons. The significance and meaning runs far deeper than just the architecture. The Dresden Bishop, Jochen Bohl, said in a sermon during the consecration service: *"A deep wound that has bled for so long can be healed. From hate and evil a community of reconciliation can grow, which makes peace possible."*

Even though memories of devastation resulting from WW2 still exist, the process of rebuilding something lost to us has untold restorative powers for man. Dresden is colloquially referred to now as the "Phoenix City" as it has, quite literally, risen from its ashes.



**Figure 3** - The ruins of the Frauenkirche  
SOURCE: [www.wordpress.com](http://www.wordpress.com)



**Figure 4** - The rebuilt Frauenkirche standing today  
SOURCE: [www.cleanme.us](http://www.cleanme.us)

## 2.1.4 Memory, Experience and Emotions

With regard to areas of historic and cultural importance, the link to people's memory, experience and emotions cannot be overlooked. Essentially, it forms the background structure or a stage where experiences play out and it bases the memory in reality.

Semiology is the broad study or science of sign making. Semiology in architecture offers a mechanism by which the built environment can be 'read' and 'decoded'. Much has been written about the legibility of the environments man lives in today, where Barthes (1915) and Greimas (1917) studied the effect and impression left on users by built environments they lived in. In the context of this study, the aim is to focus on the elements of memory signs that affect people in a way that conjures up the past and their connection to it.

According to Charles Jencks, there are three classifications of the processes whereby humans interpret signs:

- Signifier/Signified
- Context/Metaphor
- Langue/Parole

Signifier versus Signified:

The signifier is a representation for an idea or thought which is signified. In language, the sound would be the signifier and the idea the signified; whereas in architecture, the form would be the signifier and the content the signified.

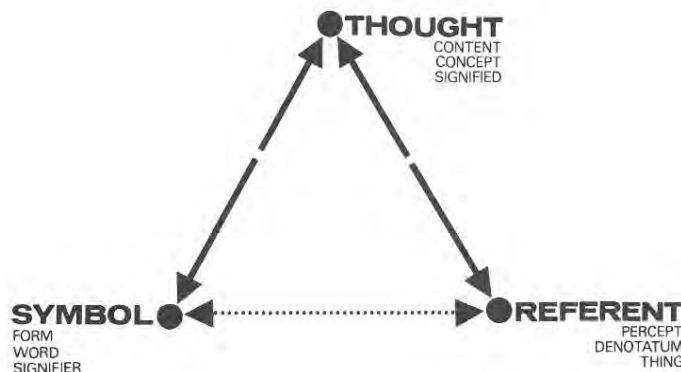
Context and Metaphor:

There are two basic ways a sign achieves meaning - both through its relation to all other signs in a context or chain, and through the other signs for which it has become a metaphor by association, or similarity. The synonyms for context are chain, opposition, syntagm, metonymy, contiguity relations, contrast: for metaphor they are association, connotation, similarity, correlation, paradigmatic or systemic plane.

Langue/Parole:

All the signs in a society taken together constitute the langue or total resource. Each selection

from this totality, each individual act, is the parole. Thus the language is collective and not easily modifiable, whereas the parole is individual and malleable.



**Figure 5** - Diagram showing how thought, symbol and referent are all inter-related. SOURCE: [www.members.westnet.com](http://www.members.westnet.com)

Jencks goes on further to state that memory has three strong defining components:

- A memory represents a specific event at a particular time and space/place.
- A memory contains a detailed account of the rememberer's own personal circumstances.
- Memory details and sensory images link with a particular moment or moments of phenomenal experience

Broadbent (1980) states that all architecture has meaning. Although, in the principles of semiotics this is true, it has not always been the preferred outlook. Meaning in architecture only really came to light as a result of Modernism. A move away from functionalism, which was key to the workings of Modernism, brought about a new, more humane, way of viewing and understanding buildings that had been lacking in the past. "The functionalist ethic has been with us for so long that most people still have a sneaking feeling that it was morally right" (Broadbent, 1980: 125). If not obvious in the architecture of day-to-day, then it is certainly prominent that architecture steeped in history and culture has meaning.

Semiotics deals with a system including the pragmatic and the semantic side of meaning in architecture. The pragmatic takes the view of "looking at all the ways in which architecture, as a sign system, actually affects those who use the buildings" (Broadbent, 1980: 127). This is of importance as it shows that buildings are created to have a specific - but sometimes unintentional - effect on the users of that building. The psychological impact can be on those users working or living in a building, or even the people coming into contact with it. Architecture does this in certain ways: in the use of association, of form, location or space, or in the creation of the design to stimulate the senses - buildings carry messages that are perceived by the users. This is revealed in the 'semantics' of semiotics. Semantics determines a *signifier* and the *signified*. This looks at how buildings carry meaning, between the stimulus or object and the meaning attached to it.

*"The minute a new form is invented it will acquire, inevitably, a meaning."*

(Jencks, 1969: 43)

Everything becomes a symbol that represents a greater meaning. It is by attaching meaning to things, objects, food, music, words and architecture, that they define their value. The theory of semiotics explains this by the use of linguistics. Each language has a series of letters that makes a word that is attached to a specific object. The word is often different for each language although describing the same thing. Therefore, the word becomes a symbol of the object and provides a meaning for that object. This idea of a symbol is reiterated within architecture. Areas of historic and cultural significance often have many facets that become symbols, or something like a building in its entirety becomes a symbol, so as to send out a message. When people perceive buildings they are essentially using their senses to interpret what the message may be and then form some type of meaning with which they will relate to the building.

*"Any building is constantly sending out messages, visual, acoustic, thermal and so on, which can be received by one of the senses and decoded according to the observers personal experience"*

(Broadbent, 1980: 127)

From this theoretical background, it becomes clear why historic buildings and zones of rich cultural heritage hold such power. Jencks (1969) states that architecture holds a much greater meaning as it becomes a metaphor for something much greater than just itself.

In understanding the ways in which symbols are given meaning in architecture, it is important to delve deeper into how and why people see these symbols and signs as becoming defining characteristics in their identity. The following chapter explores the notion of identity and guides the study into how people ultimately see themselves as rooted or *belonging* to a place, and the built form that is to be protected and nurtured for the links to their past to be sustained.

### 2.1.5 Resultant Regional Identity

Identity is intricately linked to culture as a result of individuals from certain groups or societies sharing common values and ways in which they perceive the world around them. It is therefore safe to assume that identity is the product of a set of factors and influences through which individuals see themselves and through which others see them. Jenkins (1996) defines identity in the following way:

*“Identity refers to the ways in which individuals and collectives are distinguished in their social relations with other individuals and collectives”* (Jenkins, 1996: 4)

There are theorists who believe that modern identities are becoming disjointed and broken up. They argue that a distinctive type of structural change is transforming modern societies (Hall, 1992: 274). This is fragmenting the cultural landscape of class, gender, sex, ethnicity, race and nationality, which previously gave us firm locations as individuals. These transformations are shifting our personal identities, undermining our sense of ourselves as integrated subjects (Hall, 1992: 274). In order to understand the changing perspectives on the nature of human beings, Stuart Hall (1992) gives the following, very differing, historical definitions of identity:

- The first definition of identity is derived from the enlightenment subject. It was based on the concept that human beings were considered to be fully centred, unified individuals, equipped with the capacity of reason, consciousness and action, and a stable central inner core. In this instance an individual's identity first emerges when the subject is born. The identity then evolves and develops as the individual grows older, but still remains the same at the core. The individual is endowed with a fixed identity from birth to death by means of ethnicity amongst others. This was a very 'individualist' conception of identity. (Hall, 1992: 275)
- The second definition is derived from the concept of the sociological subject, whose inner core is formed in relation to significant others in their lives, who mediated to the subject the values, meanings, symbols - the culture - of the world that he or she inhabited. According to this view, identity is formed through the interaction between

self and society. In this situation, identity is something that is passed down from one generation to another, and from contacts outside the immediate social world. This definition bridges the gap between the inside and outside - between the personal and public. (Hall, 1992: 276)

- The third definition of identity is derived from the post-modern subject, conceptualized as having no fixed, essential or permanent identity. Identity becomes formed or transformed continuously in relation to the ways we are represented or addressed in the cultural systems that surround us. It is historically defined, rather than biologically. The consequence of this position is that identity can be selected, imposed, assumed, or rejected according to how subjects perceive themselves, or how they are categorised by others. This kind of identity is variable in space and time, and a wide range of cultural resources can be used to construct such identities. (Hall, 1992: 277)

These transforming ways of defining identity can be traced back to the treatment of identity in South Africa. Historically, identity was considered to be fixed forever, through ethnicity. Taylor (1997) argues that the concept of identity based on race has origins traced back to the eighteenth century, where scientists began producing classifications of humans according to race. By the nineteenth century writers were not simply classifying humans according to physical differences such as skin colour, hair type and facial characteristics, but were also beginning to suggest that certain races were superior to others (Taylor, 1997: 111). These classifications of persons according to physical differences gave rise to racism.

It was no coincidence that these ideas on race emerged at the same time that European nations were developing colonial empires and the slave trade between Africa and America was flourishing. If Europeans had accepted that Africans were human beings of equal significance and importance then it would have been extremely difficult for them to justify the slave trade. Africans had to endure torrid conditions, and were forced to adopt the language and religion of their masters. Racial theories suggested that Blacks were inferior to Whites, and less intellectually developed, suggesting they were better suited to manual labour. In these cases it was seen fit for the Whites to dominate and the Blacks should act as their servants (Taylor: 1997, 116).

When biological features are used to define identity, it understandably tends to be inflexible. Hall (1992) argues that this inflexible approach has less of an influence on an individual as a result of social processes occurring in modern society.

*“The adult social identity one forms depends on (a) available resources derived from the community, (b) how an individual packages these resources into a configuration that has meaning in that community, and (c) how that person then strategically invests these resources in the lives of people in that community,”* (Cote & Levine, 2002: 123).

Compared to identity construction through the historical definitions previously mentioned, this approach provides flexibility in that the individual could either define their own identity, in the private sphere, or their identity could be defined by and in relation to others, in the public sphere. These two types of identity formation may be similar, but can also be contrasting, as social identity is based very much on the public's perception of the individual. Personal and social factors relating to identity, can also be related to architecture, in terms of creating relevant and meaningful environments which guide and allow mankind to develop their personal identities effectively.

A further aspect of the issue of identity relates to the emergence of post-modern culture, in particular to the process of globalisation and its impact of cultural identity. Postmodern theorists claim that the boundaries between cultures are becoming blurred. According to McGrew (1992) globalisation refers to those processes, operating on a global level, which cut across national boundaries, integrating and connecting communities and organizations in new space-time combinations, thus making the world in reality and in experience more interconnected. This of course has a huge impact on an individual's sense of identity. Individuals are exposed to far more resources than ever before, and can therefore draw on influences from infinite sources. Postmodern theorists will argue that who we are as individuals and where we belong have become much less certain because of the rapid change occurring around us. Ernesto Laclau (1990) uses the concept of 'dislocation' when describing modernity. He argues that modern society has no centre, no single articulating or organising principle, and society does not develop according to the unfolding of a single cause or law. It is constantly being 'de-centred' or dislocated by external forces.

Culture has many definitions and interpretations. In social settings, it is often used broadly to represent entire ways of life. Included in such ways of life are rules, values, and expected behaviors and at its most basic level, culture can be seen as the shared products of a society. These products have a common meaning that accumulates over time which can also reflect shared attachments among community members.

Culture can be seen as consisting of ideas, rules, and material dimensions. Ideas include such things as the values, knowledge, and experience held by a culture. Values are shared ideas and beliefs about what is morally right or wrong, or what is culturally desirable. Such values are abstract concepts and are often based in religion or culture in that they reflect ideals and visions of what society should be. Such values often shape expected behavior and rules. These rules are accepted ways of doing things and represent guidelines for how people should conduct themselves and how they should act towards others.

Values and rules are often taken for granted and are assumed to reflect a common understanding. Both have direct origins and developed in response to conflicts or needs. At the core of such values and norms is a process of interaction that led to their emergence and acceptance. This process shapes the actions of individuals and social systems within their communities.

Culture provides belonging and an arena in which residents can define and shape their existence. It is clear that culture plays a critical role in local community action and personal identity.

### **2.1.6 Conclusion**

Culture, identity, heritage and the symbols pertaining to them - that we relate to as a society - is something integral to mankind's existence. It defines people and their societies and is often something expressive that is linked to a platform in which to express it. In terms of South Africa, our cultural diversity is something to be celebrated. These platforms of celebration can be experienced in tangible or intangible states, and the unique formulas that constitute one's culture and heritage becomes their identity. Architecture can facilitate this and help to preserve a regions particular identity, and this will be explored in the following sections.

## **2.2 ARCHITECTURE OF REVIVAL AND REJUVENATION**

### **2.3.1 Introduction**

The second section of the literature review deals with how architecture can gather and make reference to the memory and emotional forces discussed above. From understanding the importance of culture and heritage from a memory and meaning perspective, it gives direction and opportunity to designers and architects to draw upon these forces to make connections with the users of that space: that their feelings and emotions will be brought into play.

### **2.3.2 The Environment and the Importance of Place: Spirit of Place**

Modernism turned the world on its head. It approached life, and architecture, with a deductive and abstractive approach, stripping away the 'unnecessary' - leaving, theoretically, whatever was left of 'meaning and significance'. The failure and shortcomings of Modernism is notoriously well known; but it left designers with a new challenge of where to turn next. Within Postmodernist thinking, the theory of Phenomenology (and subsequently Critical Regionalism, which will be discussed in the following chapter) is vaunted for its approach in "returning to things" (Nesbitt, 412).

Christian Norberg-Schulz adapted Martin Heidegger's writings on phenomenology to create a method in which architecture has the ability to make the environment meaningful through the creation of specific places. The argument of historic and cultural preservation and rejuvenation fits in very well with the notion of phenomenology: the Roman concept of *Genius Loci*. It essentially means "the Spirit of the Place" and emphasizes the inherent character and feel of the place and why people are drawn to. Fitch, a phenomenologist and historian, suggests in his writings that historical and cultural sites have intrinsic value to people - something that transcends the physicality of the built environment: the Spirit of that place. (Borden, 54)

Norberg-Schulz and Pallasmaa (Nesbitt, 412) define dwelling as 'being in peace in a protected place'. It suggests an underlying safety, an enclosure, to lead our lives in a given environment. Our world is made up of concrete phenomena. It is made up of objects, natural and man-made. These concrete things are often, if not always, interrelated in complex and

unique ways. When these components come together, an *environment* or *place* is formed. Delving further into the totality of concrete things, with each possessing a substance, shape, texture and colour (Nesbitt; 414), it forms an environmental character, that, due to its unique assemblage of its parts is individual and unlike any other place.

Man's need for meaning, order and rationalisation makes for an environment that becomes symbolic of human existence; a process of carving out a niche whereby he exists in harmony and protection. Therefore, architecture can be viewed as the enclosure - the act of marking and differentiating a place within a space. Pallasmaa goes on to state that, Architecture being a form of expressive art, the physicality of the form itself does not represent the meaning the user experiences - it only forms in the user's consciousness.

*“Form only affects our feelings through what it represents.”*

(Nesbitt; 449)

Thoughts on his Post-Modernist responses follow:

"The efforts being made today to restore the richness of architectural idiom through the diversity of form are based on lack of understanding of the essence of art. The richness of a work of art lies in the vitality of the images it arouses, and - paradoxically - the images open to most interpretations are aroused by the simplest, most archetypal forms. Post-Modernism's return to ancient themes lack emotive power because these collages of architectural motifs are no longer linked with phenomenologically authentic feelings true to architecture." (Nesbitt, 412).

Architecture exists in another reality from our everyday life and pursuits. The emotional force of ruins, of an abandoned house or rejected objects stems from the fact that they make us imagine and share the fate of their owners. They seduce our imagination to wander away from the world of everyday realities. The quality of architecture does not lie in the sense of reality that it expresses,

When revitalisation schemes plan to raise the environmental quality of urban developments and central districts, they need to adapt to not only meteorological, geographic and botanical factors but social and cultural physiological and psychological factors as well. The most

valuable buildings in the nation, from a historical point of view, are usually centered within urban districts. The urban areas surrounding these structures, however, due to their conception in an age where building technology is worlds away from what exists today (and the poor durability of these materials) are often abandoned and left to decay. Today Venice is the prototype of this paradox: large sectors of the city is in an advanced stage of physical deterioration - most of the housing is substandard. Yet, within this framework is some of the world's rarest and most important architectural heritage. Added to this, it is the basis of Venice's largest industry: tourism.



**Figure 6** - Venice has some of the richest history and the most beautiful structures in the world, yet it is fraught with the constant issue of decay due to the nature of being situated on water. SOURCE: [www.eurobuildings.info](http://www.eurobuildings.info)

Humans do not just 'exist' within a physical environment. As a society, mankind not only interacts with the environment but derives significant meanings from it. The built environment in which people interact with and conduct their lives are deeply embedded with symbolism, and evoke various sentiments, meanings, emotions and ultimately have an impact on peoples experience.

When creating an environment that enhances or draws from a historical and cultural background, it is important that the main goal when designing environments for this purpose is to take into account the Spirit of the Place; it has a significant impact on the individual experiencing it, and will form the basis of the memory of that space. Placelessness, according to Relph's book "Place and Placelessness", refers to an environment as not having any distinctive personality or sense of place that makes it unique. He states that urban designers and architects ignore the meanings that places can evoke. Architects and designers disregard and destroy authentic places and replace them with inauthentic ones (Relph, 1976; Preface).

The genius loci, spirit of place as well as sense of place all mean the same thing, even though the terms used are different. Many authors like Cullen (1961), Conzen (1966), Sharp (1969), Worskett (1969), Steele (1981) and England (1983) have discussed the issues of character using terms such as spirit of place or genius loci and how every person perceives the environment in their own way according to their reactions and emotional experiences (Jiven & Larkham, 2003: 68-69). Schulz (1980:6-8) shares a similar view point to the above mentioned authors and defines place as an environment that is made up of concrete things, which all have a variety of different material substances, shapes, colours and textures. These concrete things create a character in the environment. It is this character that gives place an atmosphere. Cullen (1961: 9) expresses his view point on the genius loci as:

*"... to take all the elements that go, to create the environment: buildings, trees, nature, water, traffic... and to weave them together in such a way that drama is released. For a city is a dramatic event in the environment."*

A *sense of place* is a concept that has evolved which describes the quality of peoples relationships with a place. It is usually defined as the way in which people feel about a place and the impressions that they encompass, the way they sense it, as well as assigning values to it. The importance of creating a sense of a place is highlighted by in maintaining the quality of the environment as well as the integrity of human life that takes place within it, as this can have an impact on people who use the space if a sense of place is not maintained or achieved. (www.waset.org) A sense of place is peoples subjective perception of their environments and their conscious feelings about those places. The sense of place is both interpretive and emotional - a significant aspect of environmental experience. The emotional relationship between people and places is the sense of place; the physical attributes as well as the

activities and meanings of a place all contribute to creating a sense of a place. The physical attributes are the attributes and the characteristics of a landscape environment and these features define the kind of place it is. Furthermore, it is not only the physical attributes that contribute to a sense of place but it is also activities in encompasses. Every place is built for a specific purpose so that some sort of activity can partake within the space of place.

Meaning is the last of the three elements that contribute to a sense of a place. It refers to the peoples experience of a space and place (environment) both perceptually as well as the impact it has on them psychologically. Peoples past experiences of a place, backgrounds, memories, knowledge, culture, age, gender as well as their beliefs have an influence on the sense of the place. Every person perceives a place differently. It can be summed up that the interaction of humans and the environment is what creates a sense of place. (www.waset.org)

The word spirit in the spirit of the place is created by peoples actions, thoughts, values and emotions who live and work within a specific place. (Day, 2003:40). It is the users experience of space and his or her relationship with the environment where a spirit of the place is brought about. Everyone's spirit of the place can ultimately be different as everyone experiences and perceives places and spaces in their own way. Different places emanate a variety of different auras and it is this aura that creates a spirit of a place in one's head (Day 2003:41). However the spirit of the place also influences and affects our behaviour, attitudes as well as our moods:

*“It is spirit-of-place that affects us in places”.*

(Day 2003:41)

The spirit of the place is created through our five senses and experience of place. Lynch shares a similar view to that mentioned by Day. Lynch's concept of "sensed quality of place" is interpreted as being the overall perception of a place based on the separate sensations one experiences in a place. He argues that the sensed quality of a place has an effect on well-being. He justifies this by mentioning that many physical processes (e.g. breathing and hearing) are mediated by sensory cues. Backing this up, he argues that a sensed quality of place affects an individual's well-being.

*....what one can see, how it feels underfoot, the smell of the air, the sounds of bells and motorcycles, how patterns of these sensations make up the quality of places, and how that quality affects our immediate well-being, our actions, our feelings, and our understandings....*

(Lynch, 1976:8-9)

It is therefore important for architects and urban designers to consider the role that senses play in the architectural environment. The design of the built environment should enhance the sensory experience of an environment as this plays an important part in the well being of an individual. Essentially, environments that enhance the sensory experience in a delightful manner will be the environments which enhance the well being of its user and will ultimately offer many opportunities for social interaction to occur.

### **2.3.3 The Essence of Place-making: Critical Regionalism**

The exploration of *Genius Loci* and *Phenomenology of Place* have led to the architectural theory of Critical Regionalism. Critical Regionalism gives priority to the value of a physical, social and cultural setting. Comprising of the theory are the engagement and accentuation of the site, the use of local materials and response to factors such as light and climate. The combined result of these elements can be used to improve and enhance people's experience with buildings and the space they create; thus creating a sense of place, identity and meaning. (Lefaivre, L and Tzonis, A; 2003)

The drive for more meaning in modern buildings has had many followers, but most famously, are the views expressed by Kenneth Frampton. In his book "Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points of an Architecture of Resistance." he asks questions of how to move concurrently with a modern and advancing world, while still retaining the core source that makes the region unique and special. Frampton believes that Critical Regionalism should accept the advances that modern architecture has brought, but at the same time, architects should regard the responses and impacts the structure will have on the physical context *and* the human social aspects. Many of the issues brought up have to do with an architecture that deals with the geographical aspects of the area, such as topography, climate, light etc. He also states that

emphasis should fall on tectonic form rather than the scenography, and that the connection to the tactile sense is of more importance than the visual aspects.

### **Culture and Civilisation**

"Modern building is now so universally conditioned by optimised technology that the possibility of creating significant urban form has become extremely limited." (Frampton, 1983: 17).

"Coupled with this is the demise of the city fabric, which leads to the demise of the corresponding urban culture. With the onslaught of universal civilization stirred by increasing hunger for development, freestanding high-rises and freeways more concerned with utility, culture's expression of its being and collective reality is squandered." (Frampton, 1983: 17).

Frampton discusses the nature, or the state of the building, to be controlled or conditioned by the building industry to the point where it becomes restrictive. This eventually leads to stripping the building down to its bare elements and structures that try to hide their "nothingness" with concealing detail and over-analysed facades. The world has become so globalised that the possibility of creating a unique form (individual to the region/country) is limited. Due to technology, buildings have become a mass-produced item. Some of the architects that design in this vein is Richard Rogers.

Frampton (1983) then compared the city fabric of a traditional European city and a modern megalopolis like Los Angeles. It exposes the fact that without culture being introduced early on in its development that the transformation will be extremely detrimental. The responsibility doesn't lie solely on the architect's shoulders, but is something that the entire community need to be a part of. Frampton states that the two causes to the decay of the city fabric are the freestanding high-rises and the serpentine freeways. This is very true, as the need to access everything immediately (so many roads) has taken up so much space that it is limiting the natural growth of staying close to the ground. It has forced the city to soar skywards. This high and powerful image of the city, for example, the skyline of New York, is very impressive; but is it to the detriment of the culture? Is it not saying one thing: bigger is better? But the main issue is the link with media and the portrayal that developing countries should strive for an "image" of a city like that of New York. They are given the message to attain the image of this foreign culture - one that has nothing or very little in common with

their own culture. It has reached a point where people are being dazzled with technology and the characteristics and intricacies of that particular region are overpowered and neglected.



**Figure 7** - The skyline of New York is unquestionably impressive and powerful, yet it is representative of one single country. SOURCE: [www.liveskyline.com](http://www.liveskyline.com)

### **The Rise and Fall of the Avant-Garde**

The Rise and Fall of the Avant-Garde is basically the rising and falling of the Modern movement (as it is rooted in Modernism). It stands for "cutting edge" and is an inseparable aspect of society and architecture in Modernisation and the important role it has played to a universal civilisation. It has played differing roles over many centuries, whereby it started as a progressive, liberating force, yet lead to the alienation of the middle class (bourgeois culture).

This separation of class has contributed to people wanting to attain a different life situation - striving for something that is foreign but appealing.

"The avant-garde becomes a self-referential entity whose role in societal change is minimised." Despite this stance, however, Frampton states that "the arts have nonetheless continued to gravitate, if not towards entertainment, then certainly towards commodity and - in the case of that which Charles Jenks has since classified as Post-Modern Architecture - towards pure technique or pure scenography."

The basis of what Avant-Garde is, is a string of never-ending *newness*. Every commodity has a lifespan that will inevitably become old and outdated in a very short period of time. The insatiable craving that it represents is only fed by the time it takes to bring out something new. And in terms of Architecture, the Modern movement has been the movement that began the trend for copying the technology and appearance of a building and simply pasting it in a new country; irrespective of the change in climate and especially context and culture. Critical Regionalism is an attempt to preserve the ideal of what has been or what is today's culture. It is opposing of the avant-garde ruling of what *it* states as culture.

### **Critical Regionalism and World Culture**

The name given to a new strategy for a recognition of the culture accepting their place is called "arriere-garde". It is situated equally between the 'Enlightenment myth of progress' and the reactionary return to vernacular forms of the particular region. Frampton suggests that the arriere-garde position will generate a "resistant, identity-giving culture ... having discreet recourse to universal technique." (Frampton, 1983: 36).

It is in this point that Critical Regionalism speaks famously about a balance between advancing with the world and needing to have a connection to one's culture and history. In this point, Frampton also discusses World Culture and Universal Civilisation. The world culture is the 'now' while the universal civilisation is more abstract - relating to 'what has come before' Again, his guide through the notion of Critical Regionalism is to have a balance between the two opposites.

Tzonis states: "...no new architecture can emerge without a new kind of relations between designer and user, without new kinds of programs. Despite these limitations, Critical Regionalism is a bridge over which any humanistic architecture of the future must pass." (Tzonis; Lefavre 1992: 27)

Critical Regionalism will be a mediator of the relationship between universal civilisation and the nature particular to the region or place. To maintain its critical edge, it is important to be aware of the draw of Populism. This movement seeks to take the place of reality with information often found in the form of imagery that is found in advertising. Critical Regionalism's stance is that there should be a recognition of both world culture and universal civilisation. This recognition must mediate the world culture by deconstructing the

eclecticism of acquired alien forms and the universal civilisation by limiting the economy of technological production. (Frampton, 1983: 26).

### **The Resistance of the Place-Form**

"...the condition of "dwelling" and hence, ultimately "being" can only take place in a domain that is clearly bounded." (Frampton 1983; 24)

The megalopolis is taking over the urban areas. It replaces the place bound urban form with theoretical networks and distributive logistics. The universal technique generates 'placelessness' that cannot be made to feel special or unique. Frampton also states that development is being ruled and driven by a set of written rules. The city and urban fabric is growing in a manner now that is disregarding the context or culture. The city form is derived from text rather than the immediate context.

The Megalopolis is something that is consuming endless cities. It is a fluctuating phenomenon as it is purely based on the ever changing progress in the universe. If a bounded area is defined and developed it will resist the continual fluctuation.

"As we move into the unknown territories of the twenty first century, the unresolved conflict between globalisation and diversity and the unanswered question of choosing between international intervention and identity, are increasingly leading to crises as vital as the threat of nuclear catastrophe in the middle of the last century. The task of critical regionalism is to rethink architecture through the concept of region. Whether this involves complex human ties or the balance of the ecosystem, it is opposed to mindlessly adopting the narcissistic dogmas in the name of universality, leading to environments that are economically costly and economically destructive to the human community. What we call the critical regionalist approach to design and the architecture of identity, recognises the value of the singular and circumscribes projects within the physical, social and cultural constraints of the particular, aiming at sustaining diversity while benefitting from universality (Tzonis; Lefaivre 1992: 20)

## **Culture versus Nature**

Culture versus Nature deals with the respect of nature and its elements.

The first issue that Frampton brings up in the modernist way of treating the site: to completely flatten it to maximise on economy of use and to have an easy and rational layout of a building. removing the lay of the land to make a greater profit from the building (only one of the reasons) is a universal technique that leads directly to 'placelessness'. Critical Regionalism instead embraces the land as a recognition of the regions geologic and agricultural history. This will lead to the building interacting with its site - not merely sitting on top of it. The building would become entwined with its site.

"...'in-laying' the building into the site has many levels of significance, for it has the capacity to embody, in built form, the prehistory of the place, its archaeological past and its subsequent cultivation of transformation across time. Through this layering into the site the idiosyncrasies of place find their expression without falling into sentimentality." (Frampton 1983: 26)

The physical aspects of a building's performance (light and climate) is another aspect that is important to deal with in a regional manner. The acceptance of climate and the challenges it will bring is something that should not be shielded away from. The integration of techniques that capture or divert the prevailing winds, for example, will be an element of the building that will be true to itself. Dealing with the elements with design will make buildings real and true to context.

"Despite the critical importance of topography and light, the primary principal of architectural autonomy resides in the tectonic rather than the scenographic. It is obvious that this discourse of the load borne (the beam) and the load bearing (the column) cannot be brought into being where the structure is masked or otherwise concealed." (Frampton 1983: 27) Buildings which are honest will connect better with the occupants and the people who experience the building firsthand - that the structure should be an expression of the function.

## **The Visual versus the Tactile**

This final point is where Frampton suggests a way of resisting the domination of universal technology. When the material and technology is not specific, it becomes impersonal. To read ones surroundings without only one sense, the visual, and to embrace the area with touch would result in people reacting better and more deeply with their environment.

"One has in mind a whole range of complimentary sensory perceptions which are registered by the labile body: the intensity of light, darkness heat and cold; the feeling of humidity; the aroma of material; the almost palpable presence of masonry as the body senses its own confinement; the momentum of an induced gait and the relative inertial of the body as it traverses the floor, the echoing resonance of our own footfall." (Frampton 1983: 28)

Ando's words: "Light changes expression with time. I believe that the architectural materials do not end with wood and concrete that have tangible forms but go beyond to include light and wind which appeal to our senses. Detail exists as the most important element in expressing identity. Thus, to me, the detail is an element which achieves the physical composition of architecture, but at the same time, it is a generator of an image of architecture." (Nesbitt: 475)

The building must be about the experience. To create architecture that will heighten our sense, other than sight, will have a much deeper effect on the people in that space. In this way, Critical Regionalism seeks to compliment visual experience by readdressing the tactile range of human perception.

Cultural Centre Tjibaou (Jean Marie Tjibaou Cultural Center)

New Caledonia

Renzo Piano Building Workshop 1998



**Figure 8** - The line of "huts" in keeping with the Kanak Culture. SOURCE: [www.worldofluxury.ro](http://www.worldofluxury.ro)

The cultural centre is dedicated to Jean-Marie Tjibaou, who died in 1989 while leading the fight for his country's independence from the French government. It is devoted to the cultural origins and the search of identity of the native Kanak people of New Caledonia and the South Pacific Regions.

The layout of the centre has direct correlations to the social functioning of the Kanak people in their tribes and villages: everything has a hierarchy attached to it to distinguish the different functions and roles of the people, and most importantly, an organisational layout to link the tribe using a central path which the huts are dispersed.

The cultural centre is composed of three 'villages' made up of ten "great houses" of varying sizes and functions (exhibitions spaces, multimedia library, cafeteria, conference and lecture rooms). The 'Great Houses' are linked by a long, gently curving enclosed walkway, reminiscent of the ceremonial alley of the traditional Kanak village. The 10 Great Houses have a consistent form of vertically positioned shell-like structures which resemble the traditional huts of a Caledonian village. They were given a deliberate unfinished appearance as a symbol that the Kanak culture is still in the process of 'becoming'.

This outlook epitomises the view of Critical Regionalism: to aid a country and community that was in political upheaval and clouded by violence, and turn it around to revive its ailing culture and restore its identity. Since this country is newly independent, the process of 'becoming' is very important. This process will aid the people in rediscovering their past and what makes their culture unique and special.

### **2.3.4 Architectural Responses to Decay**

Why do spaces fall into disuse? Traditionally town centers have been at the heart of urban civilisation, where a multitude of commercial, retail, cultural and governmental activities and functions are uniquely concentrated. Recently however, a series of powerful economic, demographic, social and cultural trends have detracted from their crucial role. Pollution, congestion, unsafe streets and the closure of long established shops have resulted in a loss of identity and appeal. (Evans; 15)

Adaptive re-use is a route in bringing new life to an old structure where the intention isn't necessarily to adhere to its original purpose and operation. Adaptive re-use is seen by many as a key factor in land conservation and projects can assist in the reduction of urban sprawl. However, adaptive reuse can become controversial as there is sometimes a blurred line between renovation, facadism and adaptive reuse. For cynics, it can be regarded as a compromise between historic preservation and demolition; but the value of bringing an old, abandoned building into the 21st century to make it relevant once again, can only add to the character and meaning of the building.

What are the benefits of adaptively reusing heritage buildings?

Adaptive reuse of buildings has a major role to play in the sustainable development of communities. When adaptive reuse involves historic buildings, environmental benefits are more significant, as these buildings offer so much to the landscape, identity and amenity of the communities they belong to. ([www.environment.gov.au](http://www.environment.gov.au))

One of the main environmental benefits of reusing buildings is the retention of the original building's embodied energy. Embodied energy is the energy consumed by all of the processes associated with the production of a building - from the acquisition of natural resources to product delivery, including mining, manufacturing of materials and equipment, transport and administrative functions. By reusing buildings, their embodied energy is retained, making the project much more environmentally sustainable than an entirely new construction. New buildings have much higher embodied energy costs than buildings that are adaptively reused. Studies done by the Australian Greenhouse Office notes that the reuse of building materials usually involves a saving of approximately 95 per cent of embodied energy that would

otherwise be wasted. In this context the reuse of heritage buildings makes good sense. (www.environment.gov.au)

Keeping and reusing historic buildings has long-term benefits for the communities that value them. When done effectively, adaptive reuse can restore and maintain the historical significance of a building and help to ensure its survival. Rather than falling into disrepair through neglect, heritage buildings that are sympathetically recycled can continue to be used and appreciated. Increasingly, communities, governments and developers are seeking ways to reduce the environmental, social and economic costs of continued urban development and expansion. The quality and design of the built environment in our towns and cities are vital to our standard of living and our impact upon natural resources. In the context of local government planning, heritage has merged with more general environmental and quality-of-life concerns in recent years. Communities increasingly recognise that future generations will benefit from the protection of certain places and areas, including heritage places. Our lifestyle is enhanced not just from the retention of heritage buildings, but from their adaptation into accessible and useable places. (www.environment.gov.au)

Town planners and councils that recognise and promote the benefits of adaptive reuse of heritage buildings will be contributing to the livability and sustainability of their communities.

There are several financial savings and returns to be made from adaptive reuse of historic buildings. Embodied energy savings from not demolishing a building will only increase with the predicted rise of energy costs in the future. While there is no definitive research on the market appeal of reused heritage buildings, they have been popular because of their originality and historic authenticity. A study for the NSW Heritage Council that included four adaptive reuse or redevelopment sites revealed that "the combination of financial incentives and the commercially oriented nature of the adaptive re-use schemes outweighed any extra heritage related costs and project risks". The study also concluded that "these sympathetic adaptive re-use schemes have created commercially viable investment assets for the owners".

Adaptive re-use as being a challenge and a way for promoting innovation:

The adaptation of heritage buildings presents a genuine challenge to architects and designers to find innovative solutions. As development pressures increase in cities, more heritage buildings are being reused, producing some excellent examples of creative designs that retain heritage significance.

In summation, the six benefits are listed below:

- Recycles an existing building
- Conserves embodied energy
- Saves useful materials from the landfill
- Revives under-utilised resources
- Becomes an alternate to sprawl & greenfield development
- Preserves historical landmarks

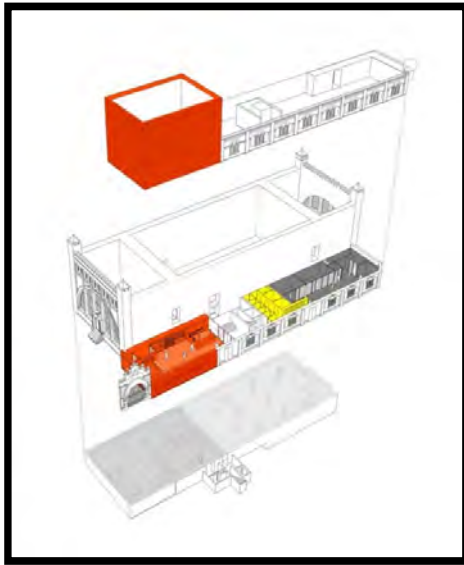
The case of the Moderna Museet in Malmö, Sweden shows how the old industrial architecture of a former Electricity plant dating back to 1900 can be re-used in a way that can create a new node within the city, thus fulfilling an even bigger role than the preservation and reinterpretation of a cluster of buildings. The existing buildings were positioned alongside a canal that utilised the water in the cooling of the machinery. Now disused, the banks of the canal were empty and dead. With the re-use of the building into something that would attract people, uplifting the adjoining spaces and the community, it has successfully alleviated the abandoned and dead sense of the precinct.



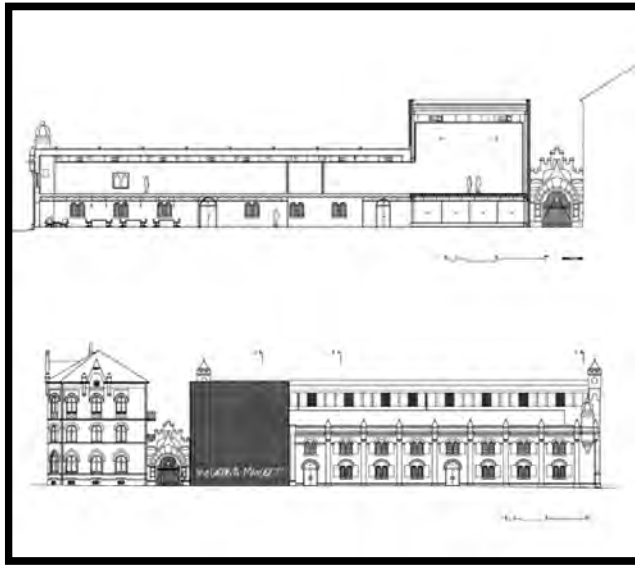
**Figure 9** - The red dot marks the location of the museum - along a public strip beside the canal. SOURCE: [www.archdaily.com](http://www.archdaily.com)



**Figure 10** - The new, minimal steel clad façade is in stark contrast to the masonry buildings that neighbour it. SOURCE: [www.archdaily.com](http://www.archdaily.com)



**Figure 11** - The exploded view of the structure shows how new meets old, where the old building provides the underpinning, and the new has clothed it with a new look, denoting its new function. SOURCE: [www.archdaily.com](http://www.archdaily.com)



**Figure 12** - A section and elevation showing the juxtaposition of new and old, and how they can successfully merge to become a new building, yet steeped in meaning and memory. SOURCE: [www.archdaily.com](http://www.archdaily.com)

The success of the Moderna Museet is that the permeable interface between the internal and external is very well executed and the modern and 'new' it has brought to the precinct; validating the old buildings by showing that they need not be destroyed but reinterpreted in a new time and space.

Adaptive reuse has been successful in South Africa too, including projects such as the Victoria and Alfred Waterfront Development, the historic district of Braamfontein, Cape Quarter and areas of Knysna.

The Thesen Island development in Knysna retained two of the historic wood mill buildings and revived them to cater for a changed time and economy. The Turbine Boutique Hotel and the Weylandts building have been saved and transformed to respond to the exclusive island. The Turbine Hotel's structure is renewed and the distinctive plumes and exposed materials lend it a distinctive character and presence in amongst the mixed-use buildings and residences of the island. The Weylandts building is a protected saw-tooth building that was once dedicated to ship building and other things pertaining to the maritime industry. The fact

that it is now an interior design showroom is unfortunate, but the listed building has been lovingly restored and lives again, lending the interior space a unique quality and expansive volume for displays.



**Figure 13** - Approaching the Turbine Boutique Hotel - distinctly characterised by retaining the chimney plumes. SOURCE: image taken by author



**Figure 14** - The side entrance into the Island Café has a combination of old and new materials, effectively showing how the two can successfully mix. SOURCE: image taken by author



**Figure 15** - The exposed brickwork adds to the tangible history of the structure, yet it is paired with modern fixtures and fittings to bring the building up-to-date. SOURCE: image taken by author



**Figure 16** - The eastern wing of the boutique hotel has a new extension that employs the use of modern materials yet shares the same silhouette as the old structure, tying the two together. SOURCE: image taken by author



**Figure 17** - The exposed brickwork adds to the tangible history of the structure, yet it is paired with modern fixtures and fittings to bring the building up-to-date. SOURCE: image taken by author



**Figure 18** - The eastern wing of the boutique hotel has a new extension that employs the use of modern materials yet shares the same silhouette as the old structure, tying the two together. SOURCE: image taken by author

Catalyst developments are specific in that the inception of a centered programme causes ripples of impact and upliftment in a wider context. They not only benefit the users in the 'epicentre' but affect a wide-ranging set of industry and business, bringing new life to these areas. Successful cases of these type of developments in South Africa include, Melrose Arch, Gateway and Dube Tradeport which are of significant importance to the growth of the country.

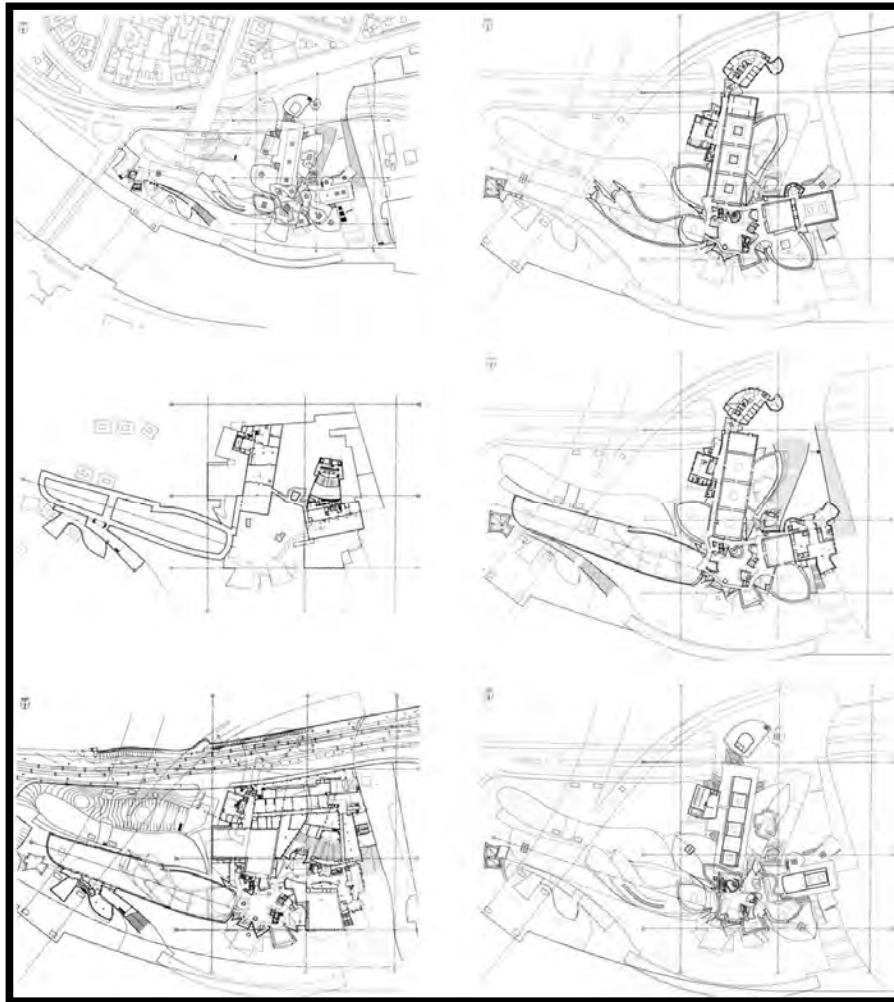
The case of the historic port city of Bilbao is one of particular interest as its wide-ranging effects go beyond the city bounds, and benefit the region and Spain itself. The museum has challenged the adjoining spaces to improve too, most notably being Calatrava's bridge beside the museum. The eccentric, curvilinear form of the museum has become a symbol of the effort to revive Bilbao, and its success in this regard is something to be celebrated.



**Figure 19** - The distinctive curvilinear form of the Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao. SOURCE [www.rosemariestillarch1390-2010.blogspot.com](http://www.rosemariestillarch1390-2010.blogspot.com)



**Figure 20** - The distinctive curvilinear form of the Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao. SOURCE [www.rosemariestillarch1390-](http://www.rosemariestillarch1390-2010.blogspot.com)



**Figure 21** - The planning development and systems employed to integrate the museum with the rest of the city. SOURCE [www.rosemariestillarch1390-2010.blogspot.com](http://www.rosemariestillarch1390-2010.blogspot.com)

### 2.3.5 New Urbanism Principals

New Urbanism is a movement against the Modernist planning methods; ones that encourage urban sprawl and buildings that do not fit into their contexts. Jane Jacobs states that New Urbanism is a step forward in comparison to the arrangement of buildings, streets and public spaces that Modernism produced.

*“The architects who created Modernism had continued to produce one masterpiece after another, but Modernism had not been able to produce an average street that came alive”.* (Hale 1994:136)

In opposition to Modernism, New Urbanists believe that there is a place for great, free standing architectural masterpiece - buildings of civic importance such as theatres, museums, libraries, art galleries. However, the importance of these structures lies behind the way in which the environment is planned and organised. New Urbanist planners produce environments that enhance the public realm in their designs, regardless of the architecture of a specific building (Cliff 2002: 274).

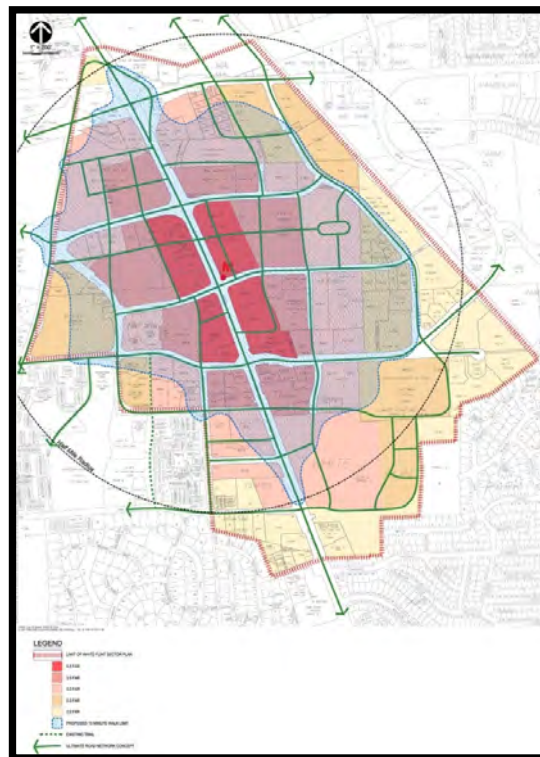
New Urbanism aims at creating friendly, walkable, compact, vibrant, mixed use communities that address the physical health and social wellbeing of its users. In terms of the principles that guide the theory behind New Urbanism, these can help create environments that enhance the wellbeing of the users as well as creating more opportunities for people to interact, to enliven social bonds and create a community. New Urbanism has a strong emphasis on community and maintains this with the creation of parks, open spaces, and community gathering spaces like public squares which are crucial to the wellbeing of the users in the urban environment ([www.newurbanism.org](http://www.newurbanism.org)). New Urbanism aims at creating a high level of quality physical world of buildings, streets, plazas and parks that encourage social interaction among people from all walks of life. It upholds inclusive and democratic spaces, and therefore is very applicable in South Africa's context, where, as a nation, there is still a big social divide.

Solomon (1992: 46) further defines New Urbanism as not focusing specifically on architectural style but rather on the spatial structure of beautiful cities and towns. He emphasizes this point as the most important:

*“buildings alone don’t matter; it is only the ensemble of streets, lots, and buildings, and the way they fit together that comprise the basis of town making”.*

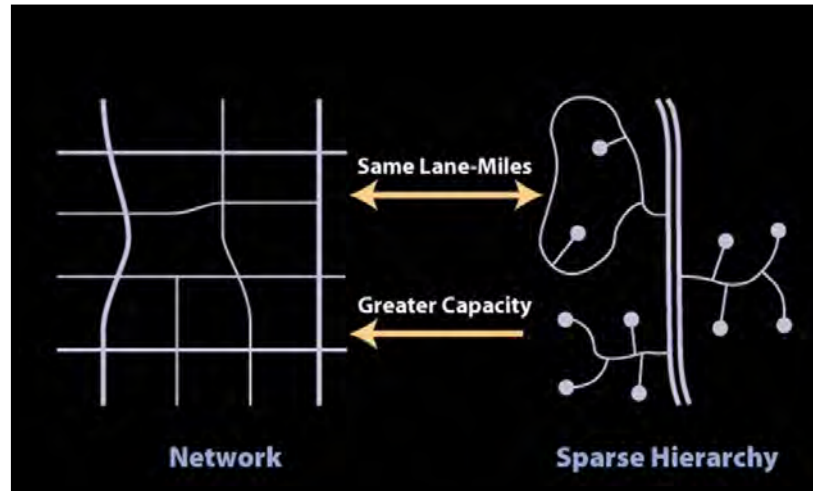
The ten key principals to a New Urbanism approach:

**Walkability:** The first principal is to create environments where walking is encouraged and mixed use facilities are close by to avoid the use of cars. Physical activity is enhanced which is beneficial for the health of the users. By creating environments that are pedestrian friendly as opposed to vehicle dominated conditions, stress levels of the individuals are reduced and it enables people to interact, mingle and form social bonds. (www.newurbanism.org)



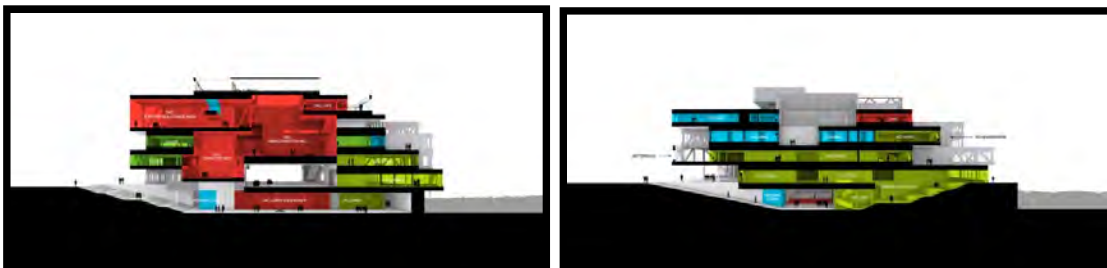
**Figure 22** - Walkability: By designating an epicentre and placing activities around it, it shows how people will be encouraged to walk to a place rather than use a car or other forms of transport. SOURCE [www.whiteflintpartnership.com](http://www.whiteflintpartnership.com)

**Connectivity:** A high quality pedestrian network and open public realm encourages walking and makes for a pleasurable experience for users. To achieve this, a simple interconnected grid system that disperses traffic by providing should be considered, allowing for a variety of pedestrian and vehicular routes to and from any destination. ([www.newurbanism.org](http://www.newurbanism.org))



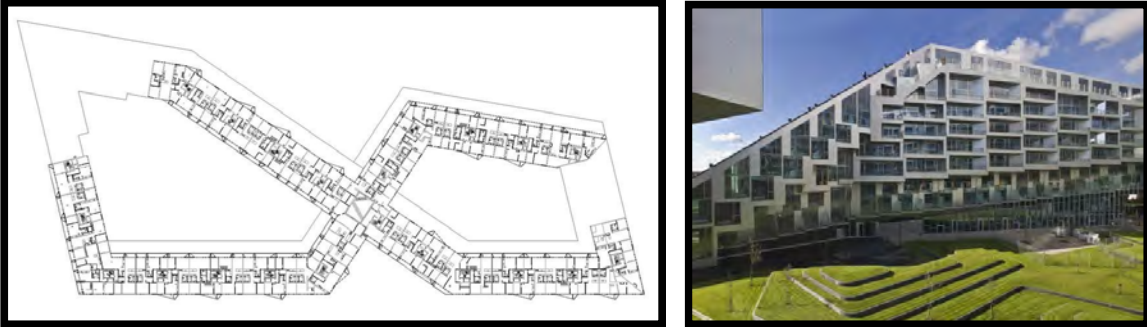
**Figure 23 - Connectivity:** A regular grid allows for simple way-finding and doesn't create dead spaces. SOURCE [www.pedshed.net](http://www.pedshed.net)

**Mixed-Use & Diversity:** By creating a built environment that encourages a mixed use of functions i.e. shops, offices, apartments and public facilities that encourage a diversity of people, spaces will become more vibrant and active. This spin off will have economic benefits as well as socially integrating people from differing age groups, race groups and cultural backgrounds. It also has a passive benefit of creating a safer environments where people can feel relaxed and free in public space. ([www.newurbanism.org](http://www.newurbanism.org))



**Figure 24 - Mixed Use:** Mixed use buildings become structures that are used 24 hours a day with multiple functions being housed in them. SOURCE [www.floraw.com](http://www.floraw.com)

**Mixed Housing:** Creating a range of types, sizes and pricing of housing within a close proximity allows for a diversity of users as well as different socio-economic backgrounds to be able to live in the same environment. ([www.newurbanism.org](http://www.newurbanism.org))



**Figure 25 - Mixed Housing:** This example of BIG Group's 8 House showcases the ability and success of creating apartments that cater for a range of users, allowing effective social integration with a close living quarters.  
SOURCE [www.kuiper.nl](http://www.kuiper.nl)

**Quality Architecture & Urban Design:** People respond well to aesthetically pleasing structures. An architectural aesthetic that is true to its region and one that is of human scale results in human comfort and optimises the *sense of place* of the area. Well thought out and calculated placement of public facilities and public spaces allows for easy accessibility to the broader community. Architectural environments that are of a correct scale, injected with life and pedestrian friendly nourish the human spirit which is importance for the well-being of the individuals. ([www.newurbanism.org](http://www.newurbanism.org))

**Traditional Neighbourhood Structure:** Creating environments that have a definite public space at the centre with permeable edges. This central space is usually a square or a park. The buildings are to contain a variety of uses and densities and are to be in close walking distance to the rest of the community. ([www.newurbanism.org](http://www.newurbanism.org))

**Increased Density:** Buildings, residential places, shops and offices should be designed to be close together in order to create a more efficient use of services and resources. It also has the benefit of creating environments that promote walking (point one). By increasing the densities of buildings and their functions allow for a more convenient, enjoyable place to live because everything is easily accessible and available. ([www.newurbanism.org](http://www.newurbanism.org))

**Smart Transportation:** By creating streets that are relatively narrow and are shaded by rows of trees, it naturally slows traffic down and creates an environment that is far more pedestrian and bicycle-friendly. In some instances parking is made available parallel to the streets to create a buffer between pedestrians and cars. A pedestrian friendly environment is created to encourage a greater amount of people to use walking as a form of transport which has positive impacts on peoples overall health. It also allows for social interaction to occur and for one to experience the spirit of the place in which they work and live.

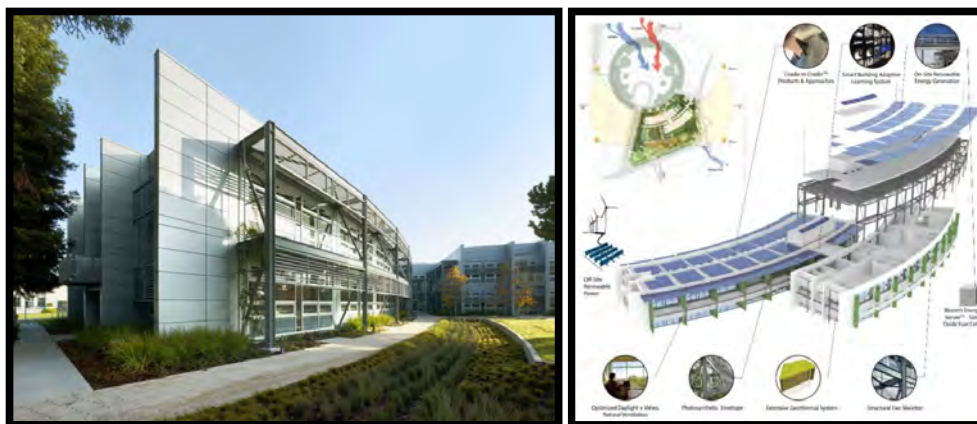
([www.newurbanism.org](http://www.newurbanism.org))



**Figure 26 - Smart Transportation:** efficient and clean transportation is a major component in developing a sustainable and liveable environment. The San Diego Trolley is both efficient and can transport a large number of people with ease. SOURCE [www.upload.wikimedia.org](http://www.upload.wikimedia.org)

**Sustainability:** For sustainability to be taken seriously and done correctly, new developments are to have minimal impact on the environment and respect nature and the environment. Materials and resources need to be energy efficient and less harmful to the environment.

([www.newurbanism.org](http://www.newurbanism.org))



**Figure 27 - Sustainability:** The new NASA headquarters employs a wide variety of sustainable methods and techniques in the building. A drive to create efficient and green buildings is essential as our natural resources are a finite commodity. SOURCE [www.archdaily.net](http://www.archdaily.net)

**Quality of Life:** When combined, the above principles that New Urbanism adheres to creates a 'whole' that results in architectural environments that offer a high quality of life. These environments are well worth living for that enrich, uplift and inspire the human spirit. All these elements are important in the overall feel of the space and affect the users in a positive manner. ([www.newurbanism.org](http://www.newurbanism.org)).

### **2.3.6 Conclusion**

New Urbanism aims at the well-being of the collective society, and the ten principals for the basis of creating such inclusive spaces. The need for public transport and decreasing vehicle dominated contexts increases the opportunities for people to interact with each other and different spaces. It creates healthier environments only improve the lives of people.

New Urbanistic environments aim to create a higher quality of life, ideal places to live, work and play. Less traffic congestion and driving creates a healthier lifestyle with more walking and less stress, with the added convenience of the availability and proximity to everyday retail and services. Most importantly, New Urbanism strives to create communities by creating pedestrian friendly environments which give people more opportunities to get to know each other, resulting in meaningful relationships with more people and creating a friendlier environments for the users. New Urbanism can revitalise city centres that are ailing and can bring life back to the heart of the city creating a sense of place worth living for. Currently many cities all over the world are confronting the problems of sprawl, traffic jams, deteriorating downtowns, environmental degradation and sheer ugliness. These environments are dangerous, cause stress and are a detriment to the people that use it. Through architecture and careful design, one can revitalise these environments and transform them into places that are beautiful and bring life back to towns and cities, creating an experience for the user that is healthy and creates opportunities for social interaction.

### **3.0 CHAPTER THREE: KEY PRECEDENT STUDY**

#### **Genova's Historic Waterfront Redevelopment, Genova, Italy.**

##### **3.1 Introduction**

The international example that best suits this study is Genova's Old Harbour redevelopment by Renzo Piano Design Workshop. It has a combination of catalyst and adaptive reuse structures that combine to revitalise the old and disused harbour, and in doing so, evoke memories and transport people back in time to celebrate the history and heritage it possesses. The reason why this is an important and relevant precedent study is the fact that there is a wealth of history and meaning attached to the port, and the purveyors of this significant site went about reviving it in a sensitive and thoughtful way. There are many physical and emotional parallels with regard to the author's personal study, and learning from Genova's Historic Waterfront Redevelopment will be of significant benefit.

##### **3.2 Analysis:**

###### **3.2.1 Background**

For more than a century Genova has been an industrial city. It has a strong tradition of public services, and it is still the most important Mediterranean port for goods and passengers. When many city services relocated to the upper parts of the city, and harbour activities moved to another area of the waterfront, the area that was the 'heart' of the port city became neglected. To rectify this, the port authorities and the municipality reached an agreement which has led to the revival of the waterfront and the creation of a common development strategy. Several revitalisation and redevelopment schemes have taken place, chief of which is Renzo Piano's contribution to making the Old Harbour an interactive civic space.

###### **3.2.2 Historic and Cultural Framework**

Genoa dates back many hundred years when a number of wealthy merchant families capitalised on the positioning of the port in the Mediterranean for trade with the East and as a basis for explorations in the West. The most famous story to emerge out of Genova is Christopher Columbus' discovery of the new World. Life revolved around the port and the trade of goods. (Cruickshank 1993; 36)



**Figure 28** - The historic city of Genoa in the 16th century. SOURCE: Architectural Digest, Cruickshank 1993; 36

The historic nature of the city means that it has a very strong *genius loci*, rooted in the architecture and aesthetics of the ancient streets. The position of the area close to the waterfront and the city centre, with good transport links, are an invaluable asset.



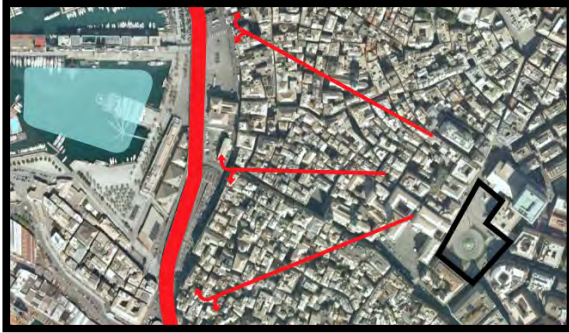
**Figure 29** - The Bigo is the new symbol of the regenerated harbour. It is inspired by the derricks that rise from the decks of the cargo ships. Attached to the tallest 'arm' is a type of cable car that gives visitors a bird's eye view of the historic city. SOURCE: [www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com)



**Figure 30** - The Biosphere dome is the most recent addition to the upliftment scheme and houses the most varied collection of ferns in the world. SOURCE: [www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com)

### 3.2.3 Reasons for its Decay

The old harbour fell into disuse as trade and the shipping industry advanced. Bigger vessels meant that they could not enter the relatively small harbour confines. The odd cruise liner came into port, but not nearly regularly enough to keep the area bustling with people. Added to this, a new road effectively split the harbour from the town center. It acted as a barrier from people using the harbour edge. This was a major factor in rectifying in order to reestablish links with the town centre and the rest of Genoa. (Cruickshank 1993; 37)



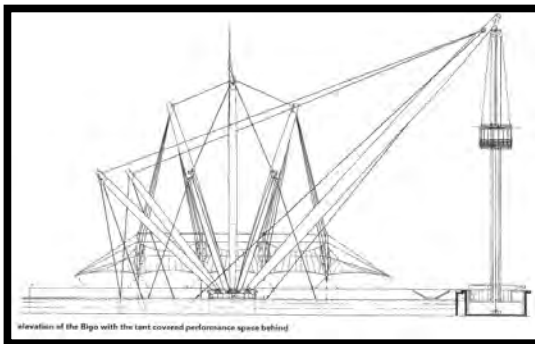
**Figure 31** - The red illustrates the new road and how it separated the town centre from the harbour. SOURCE: www.googleearth.com



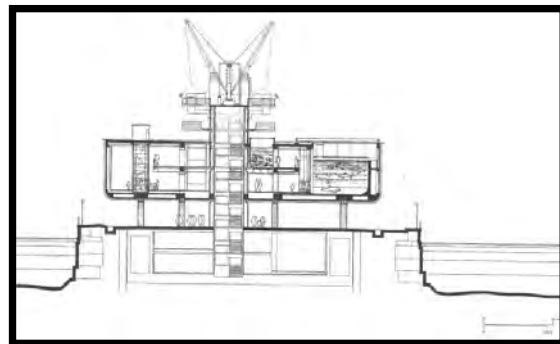
**Figure 32** - The solution to the issue was to create a bypass for the vehicles. The red line indicates an overpass and the dotted black line is a new tunnel. The green indicates how the two halves are now joined. SOURCE: www.googleearth.com

### 3.2.4 Rejuvenation of the Old Harbour

The overall approach to regeneration has been based on gaining public interest and investors' focus in the city of Genoa. A comprehensive regeneration programme in the historic centre has restored the most important ancient palaces; improved dwelling standards; reduced social problems; supported the local economy; and has improved public transport. In addition, a complete renewal of the waterfront is taking place. This process is converting the industrial port into a series of new urban spaces with converted warehouses and a new parking and traffic management system. Together, the regeneration of the old harbour and the development of new buildings have improved the attractiveness of Genoa as a tourist destination which proudly celebrates their heritage and culture.



**Figure 33** - The Bigo. SOURCE: Architectural Digest Cruickshank 1993; 38



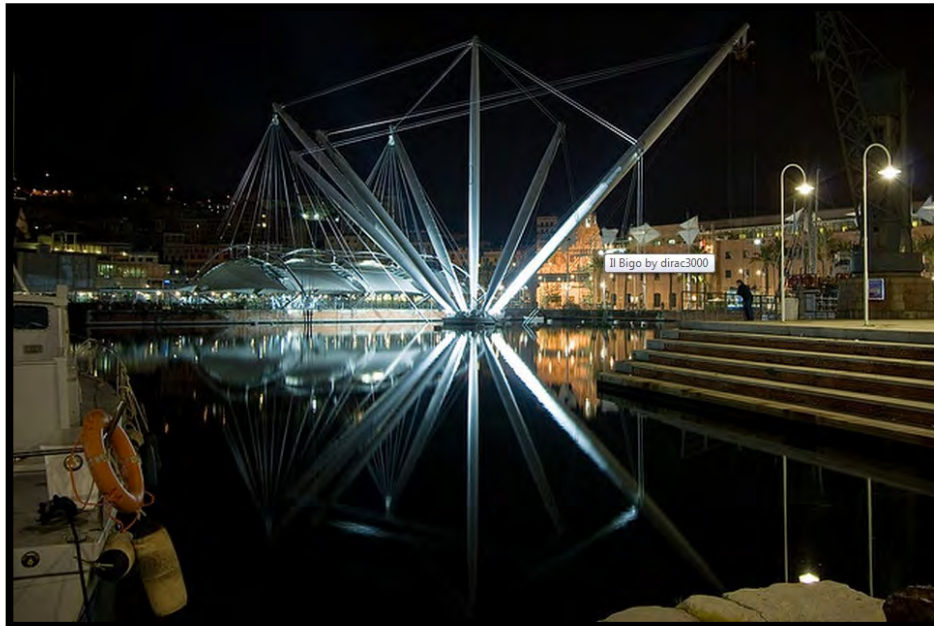
**Figure 34** - the new addition is the ship-shaped aquarium. SOURCE: Architectural Digest Cruickshank 1993; 38

### 3.3 Maps and pictures

Genoa's successful regeneration approach has been praised as a model for other revitalisation schemes to follow.



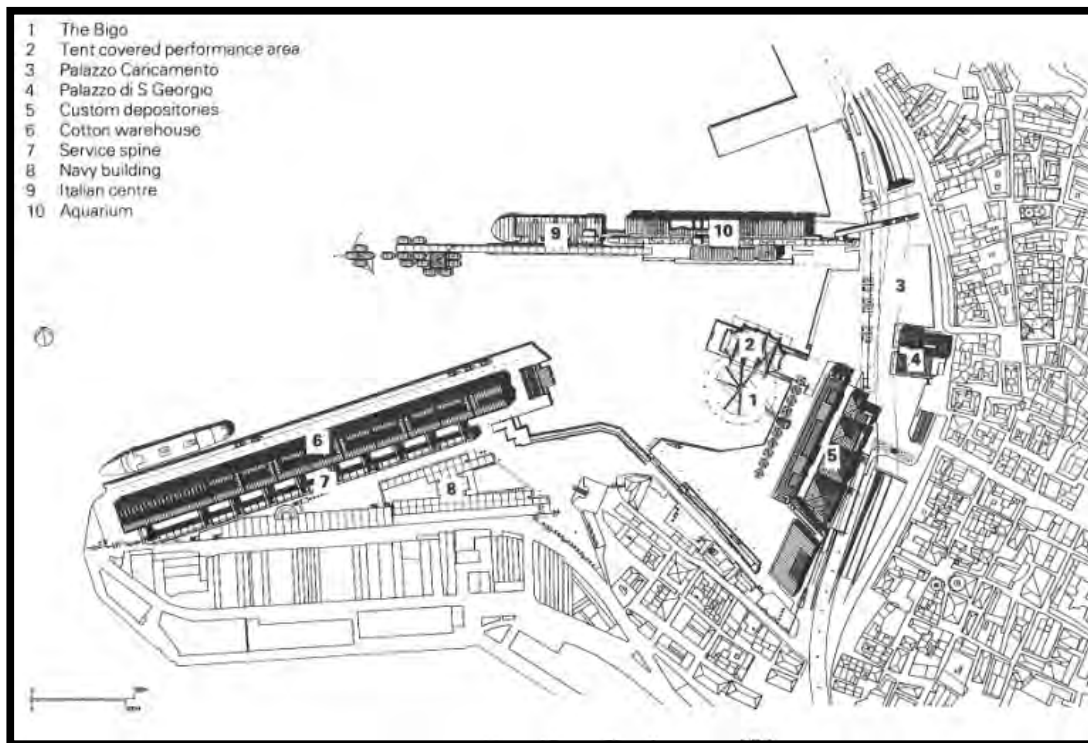
**Figure 35** - The Acquario di Genova is the largest aquarium in Europe. SOURCE: [www.petanqueandpastis.com](http://www.petanqueandpastis.com)



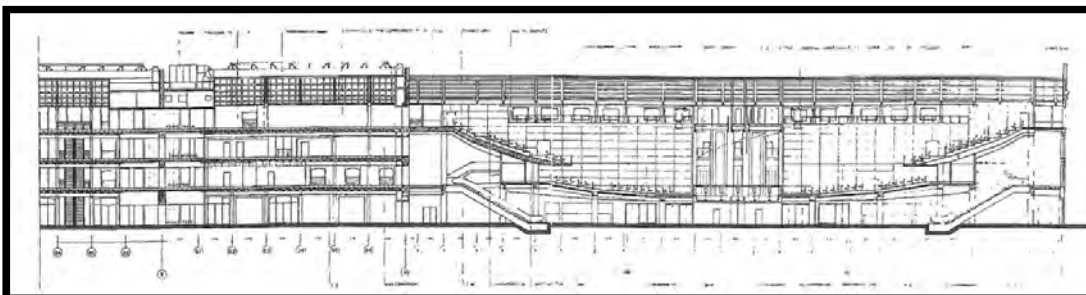
**Figure 36** - The Bigo illuminated at night. SOURCE: [www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com)



**Figure 37** - The Acquario di Genova is the largest aquarium in Europe. It is a long and slender structure that was inspired by vessels. People walk below its "bow" to enter. SOURCE: [www.petanqueandpastis.com](http://www.petanqueandpastis.com)



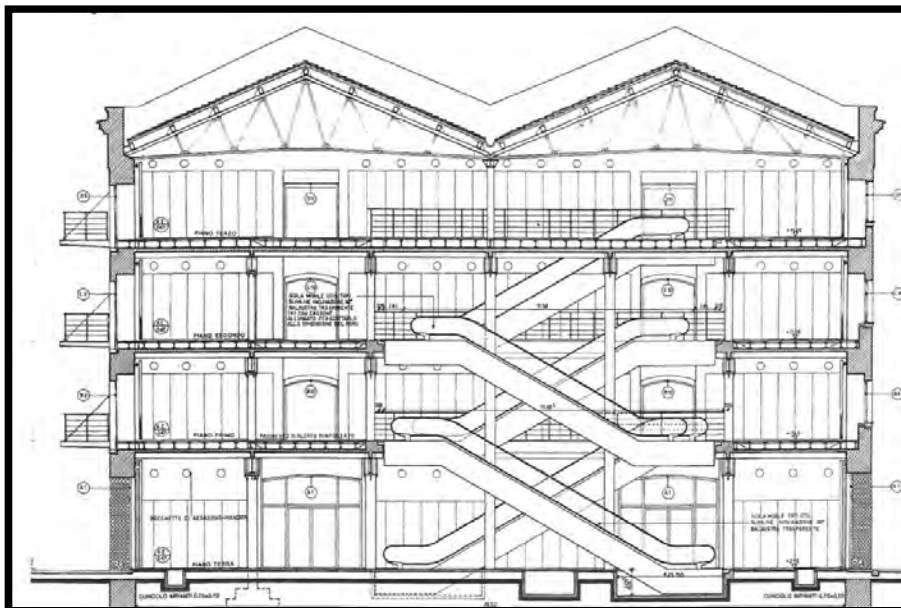
**Figure 38** - The plan of the new harbour development. SOURCE: Architectural Digest Cruickshank 1993; 36



**Figure 39** - A section taken through the Cotton Warehouse and a new addition auditorium addition. SOURCE: Architectural Digest Cruickshank 1993; 41



**Figure 40** - A view of the Cotton Warehouse that faces the harbour. The old building was constructed in 1902 and now has been revived, adding a retail and display/performance component to the harbour, while still retaining the historic feel and heritage. SOURCE: [www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com)



**Figure 41** - A section through the old cotton warehouse building. The old building was constructed in 1902 and has now been revived and adaptively reused to cater for a different time and need. The addition of a staircase and new floors makes occupation and use of this building better, yet the character and feel of the building still remains intact. SOURCE: Architectural Digest Cruickshank 1993; 41

### **3.4 Discussion**

The redevelopment of the Old Harbour has significance to this study not only in the built responses that have resurrected the area and brought new life to the harbour edge: it has drawn on memory, emotions and symbols to define and distinguish this port from any other. Renzo Piano has cleverly approached the redesign in a sensitive and thoughtful manner, employing theories of Critical Regionalism - moving forward with the advances in technology and construction that is afforded to our time - while drawing on the context to conjure up memories while showcasing its history and heritage. It's most important asset is the Spirit of the Place it has properly defined and enhanced. It has a character unlike any other harbour due to its particular history and heritage, but now people can access and enjoy it within a safe and secure public realm.

The structures and nodes created along the water's edge, for example the Bigo and the new Aquarium, are steeped in meaning and provide ample opportunities for memories to be both evoked and generated by drawing from its past. They are modern symbols that tell a story and link the present to the past in an incredible way.

Due to the historic nature of the port city, limited opportunities to apply New Urbanism principals exist. However, better links and more efficient modes of transport have been implemented and serve to inject life to the old harbour.

### **3.5 Conclusion**

The case of Genova's Old Harbour is an important and successful scheme that has become the most celebrated civic space in Genoa. The combination of new and old structures that have been rejuvenated and re-interpreted for today's society lends the area a unique character and feel that showcases its heritage and is proud of it. By addressing the issues of decay and overcoming them by tapping into its heritage, it serves as a brilliant example to learn from and be inspired by.

## **4.0 CHAPTER FOUR: CASE STUDIES**

### **4.1 Knysna's Waterfront, Knysna, Western Cape, South Africa**

#### **4.1.1 Justification of case study**

When driving down South Africa's coastline, one is struck by the beauty and natural variety of our landscape. Arguably, none is more impressive than the Garden Route. Every town along the Western Cape coastline has a character that isn't purely defined by the sea and "beach culture" like KwaZulu-Natal is. A.W. Wells has this to say about Knysna in his book "South Africa":

*"Knysna's charms are considerable, and embrace forest, mountains, sea and river scenery, and its points of interest are even more varied and numerous than its charms." (Wells; 54)*

Knysna has a long history that has a number of parallels with the town of Port Shepstone. Firstly, it is a coastal town and port. Though it has a much larger water body with the natural enclosure defined by the two "heads" marking the entry point for sea-travelers, it was populated by European settlers in the mid 1800's, of which a significant party were Norwegian and English. An island within the port has been named after one of the most influential families settling there called Thesen Island, formally known as Paarden island.

Industrial activity within the port ceased in 1954 and it took until the early 1990's to transform the working water frontage to something that the residents and visitors could exploit and enjoy. Thesen Island and the waterfront site were littered with disused industrial buildings, and it wasn't until 1992 that plans were put in motion to create a waterfront that brought people to the water's edge. The shift from industrial activity driving the town to tourism has had an impact on the town and its built form, and new buildings were needed to cater for this new need. (Perks 1962; 14)

Like Port Shepstone, Knysna is a very seasonal town. According to the GeoNames geographical database there are 63106 permanent residents, but in holiday season, this reaches up to 150,000 people (mongabay.com). It therefore feeds off of the seasonal visitors and incorporates a lot of activities as well as displaying their history and culture for everyone

to see. The main reason for choosing Knysna's waterfront as a case study is that it employs the concept of revival and rejuvenation while creating something new. It is a catalyst development that has had a major role in transforming the scenic coastal town.

#### 4.1.2 Analysis

##### 4.1.2.1 Site Location

The waterfront is located on the water's edge in front of the historic town of Knysna. The entrance to the waterfront is along Grey Street, but it can also be accessed off of Head and Union Street. Long Street leads to Thesen Island. It takes full advantage of the prime location overlooking the estuary. It is a beautiful space to be in.



Figure 42 - Knysna Waterfront SOURCE: Jawitz



Figure 43 - Knysna Waterfront SOURCE: Jawitz



Figure 44 - Knysna Waterfront SOURCE: Architecture SA, December 1996: 21

#### 4.1.2.2 Vegetation

Knysna was known for its timber industry. It was the financial back-bone of the region until laws were put in place to protect the indigenous forests. The region receives yearlong rainfall and so a wide variety of plant species can be found.

#### 4.1.2.3 Climate

The Garden Route has a Mediterranean Maritime climate, with moderately hot summers, and mild to chilly winters. It is one of the highest rainfall areas in South Africa. Most of the rain occurs in the winter months, brought on by the humid sea-winds from the Indian ocean. The Garden Route's temperate weather falls between two climatic regions of summer and winter rainfall so it rains mostly at night which keeps the area perennially green thus ensuring towns such as Knysna enjoy a wonderful climate year-round.

#### 4.1.2.4 Historic and Cultural Setting

Knysna has a significant and well recorded history that is evidenced from virtually every place in the town. Dotted along the vibrant streets are clues to its heritage in the form of protected buildings and spaces surrounding them. Knysna supports a number of culturally minded-facilitates such as art galleries, museums, flower shows and of national significance, the Oyster Festival and Knysna Hill Climb. But it is the waterfront that attracts and combines much of Knysna's culture and activity in once public space. It not only acts as a tourist attraction - the locals frequent the restaurants and the public space right on the water's edge. It has formed the base for the Yacht Club and the majority of water-related activities centre around it. The 'cupped' shape of the waterfront brings boats into its epicenter - a notion of vessels docking and being protected within its confines.



**Figure 45** - an old boat shed on the water's edge, which doesn't exist today  
SOURCE: Palframan, B, The Lantern May 1990: 68



**Figure 46** - boats and steamers passed through the "Knysna Heads" into the safety and shelter the estuary provided. SOURCE: Palframan, B, The Lantern May 1990: 65

#### 4.1.2.5 Knysna's Waterfront

The waterfront is very unassuming building. It is a long and slender structure that arcs to form a "bay", nestling the boats in its arms. It is only two stories high, with a variety of shops and restaurants. It is well spaced with ample room for people meandering through the space it defines. The materials are varied and include concrete and brick super structure, with steel elements and wooden decking on the first floor. Brick paving has been employed for the ground floor and is extremely durable.

The entrance is defined by two structures that define a pathway to the water. This line is an extension of Grey Street, and forms a definite axis that links the street and the waterfront. The two feed off one another. The open public space has areas where people can sit and enjoy the scenery.

#### 4.1.3 Maps and pictures

The following pages explore the space around the waterfront and



**Figure 47** - The main entrance into the Waterfront. SOURCE: image taken by author



**Figure 48** - The view overlooking the estuary and the boats and yachts that dock in its shelter.  
SOURCE: image taken by author



**Figure 49** - the two-story building that houses recreational and craft shops as well as restaurants.  
SOURCE: image taken by author



**Figure 50** - the axis that continues on from Grey Street. SOURCE: image taken by author



**Figure 51** - The small scale of the development is in keeping with the town. It is human scale and fits into its context very well. SOURCE: image taken by author



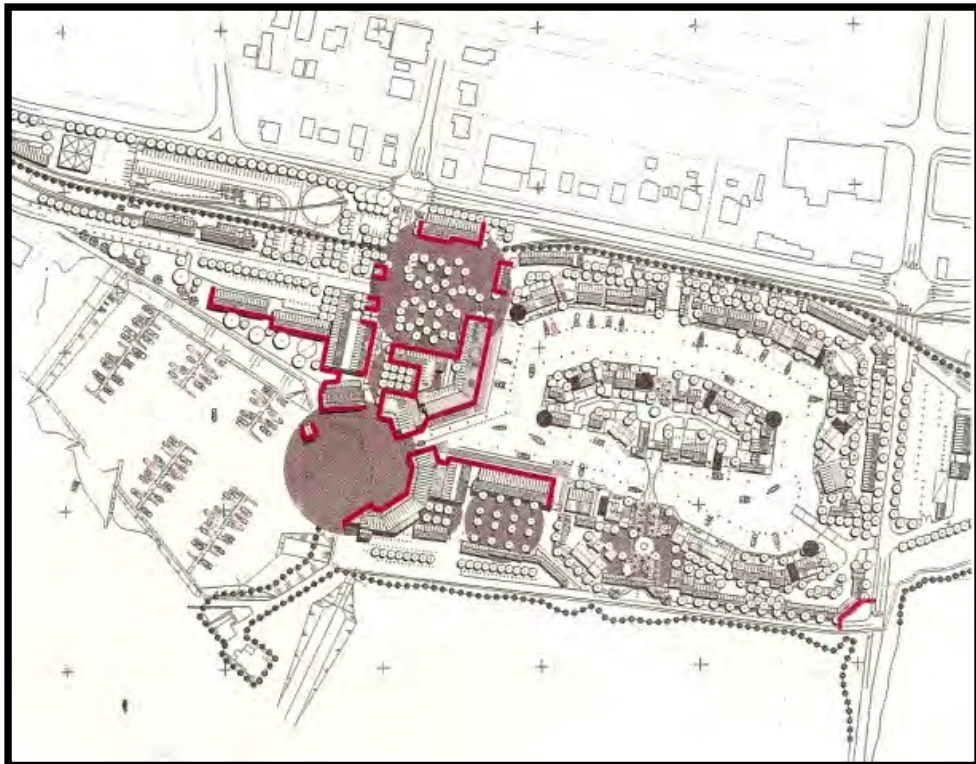
**Figure 52** - the many curio and craft shops that cater for the numerous tourists. SOURCE: image taken by author



**Figure 53** - Grey Street has seen a massive improvement thanks to the waterfront development. The facilities and interest the waterfront garnered uplifted the town and spurred other spaces in the town to improve. SOURCE: image taken by author



**Figure 54** - numerous parts of historic ship machinery is dotted throughout the town. They serve as reminders of its past and become memory links to the port. SOURCE: image taken by author



**Figure 55** - The red represents the active urban edges in the waterfront. SOURCE: Architecture SA

#### 4.1.4 Discussion

According to the qualitative research (see Appendix 1) there is a general appreciation for the waterfront among the local residents. They enjoy spending time at the restaurants and enjoying the beautiful setting. Some express concerns with it only catering for tourists, but this is a minority view. The fact of the matter is that the waterfront is the most visited space in Knysna and generates tremendous activity, interest and revenue.

An aesthetics committee was established and brought in to advise with regard to scale, height and local appropriateness. It is evident that Critical Regionalism theories guided the design of the structures. A focus on the context and environment has resulted in a building that is not dominant and does not overpower its neighbours. It fits into its context well and does not obstruct views over the estuary. In terms of its materiality, it is not very cohesive, but the materials are hardy and weather resistant to cope with the close proximity to the ocean.

There is a variety of land-use and wide-ranging interest for people in the general vicinity. It encourages people to walk, and their well-being and activity is stimulated. Even though Knysna has been a result of continual improvement rather than a clean-sheet town redesign, it has elements of New Urbanism principals where it encourages people to walk and has a mixture of facilities and mixed-use abilities that foster frequent usage. Housing, albeit very expensive and exclusive, is right beside the waterfront, but the majority of the units are holiday homes and do not stimulate the activity in the vicinity. All the activity comes from outside.

The Waterfront has a brilliant connection to the water and vessels that are nearby and pass within the waterfront create a very strong link to the area as it once was a port. Tourist excursions leaving from the waterfront only heighten this connection with the water.

What has not been incorporated into the waterfront is a strong sense of the history of the area and its cultural past. What dominates is that it is, primarily, a successful economic venture. The spin-offs it's had with regard to the Quays and Thessen Island is testament to that fact. The waterfront reflects the shift in focus from Knysna being a working harbour to becoming one of the most recognised leisure and tourism destinations in South Africa: and that in itself has become its new identity.

#### **4.1.5 Conclusion**

Knysna has benefitted enormously from the addition of a waterfront to its town. As an example of architecture aiding in reviving and rejuvenating an area and a town, it is very good. Added to the fact that it has a similar setting to that of Port Shepstone and its histories are relatively paralleled, it serves as a brilliant example in which to learn and draw from when creating new urban space in Port Shepstone. The shortfall of this example is the fact that there is little to no attempt in reusing old structures or preserving elements of the old industrial past, like the precedent study of Geona displayed. However, there are still elements of its former being with the vessels and its connection to the water in conjunction with the intangible *sense of place* that one experiences when visiting.

## 4.2 Case Study: Msundusi Museum Isigcinamagugu Including the Voortrekker Complex, Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

### 4.2.1 Justification of case study

South Africa's rich heritage and diverse cultures are often kept apart and viewed in isolation. This particular museum gathers all the respective histories in the greater KwaZulu-Natal region and displays them in one single location. The buildings within the complex have also undergone adaptive re-use transformations to garner interest and attention while protecting them.

This case study is of relevance as it gives insight in how various cultures and histories can be brought together to be housed and displayed within one complex.

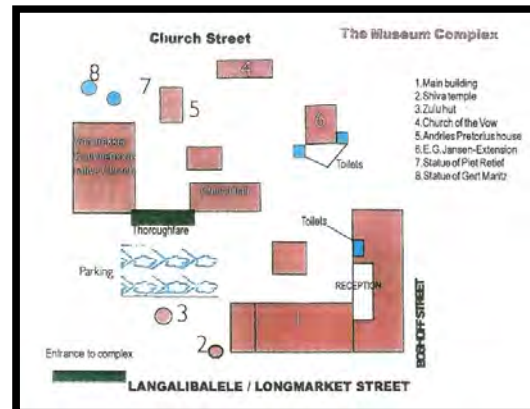
### 4.2.2 Analysis

#### 4.2.2.1 Site Location

The museum is located in the heart of Pietermaritzburg. It is situated between Longmarket/Langalibalele and Church Street. It is an open air museum, meaning that it is a complex that is made up of many structures. The complex is made up of the Main Buildings, the Church of the Vow, the Andries Pretorius House and the E.G. Jansen Extension. The Statues of Piet Retief and Gerrit Maritz, as well as a replica of a Shiva Temple and a Zulu Hut complete the complex. Beside it is the new taxi rank, so the area is bustling with people. Informal traders line the streets that bound the site, yet the complex of buildings remains quiet - a reprieve from the loud and busy city.



**Figure 56** - Aerial view of the Msundusi Museum.  
SOURCE: [www.googleearth.com](http://www.googleearth.com)



**Figure 57** - The historic complex of buildings in relation to one another. SOURCE: Official Msundusi Museum Pamphlet

#### 4.2.2.2 Historic and Cultural Setting

The city of Pietermaritzburg was originally founded by the Voortrekkers, following the defeat of Dingane at the Battle of Blood River. It was the capital of the short-lived Boer republic, Natalia. Britain took over Pietermaritzburg in 1843 and it became the capital of the Natal Colony's administration, with the first lieutenant-governor, Martin West, making it his home. Fort Napier, named after the governor of the Cape Colony, Sir George Thomas Napier, was built to house a garrison. In 1893 Natal received responsibility for their own government and an assembly building was built along with the city hall. In 1910, when the Union of South Africa was formed, Natal became a province of the union, and Pietermaritzburg remained the capital. (www.kwazulu-natal.co.za)

#### 4.2.2.3 Internal versus External Space

The Main Building is Victorian in style and was built in 1902. It has the most voluminous space within compared to the other buildings, yet the main entrance is not ostentatious and grand. The intended use of this building was a girls school, but now it has been adapted to house artifacts and relics of settler history in the region.



**Figure 58** - The sedate main entrance. SOURCE: image taken by author



**Figure 59** - The entrance into the complex parking. SOURCE: image taken by author

Being an open air museum, the experience is all-encompassing as one can walk around as well as into the various buildings. Spatially, it was never intended to become a museum, so the placement of the buildings is as a result of how they were built in decades gone by. There are large spaces in which to gather and more intimate spaces in which to reflect. The buildings themselves are protected and there is limited access some of the structures as they are fragile.

#### 4.2.2.4 Historic and Cultural Preservation

The museum does house very valuable and important artifacts and goods, but it is far from a static display, frozen in time. The education department of the museum, run by Riana Mulder, has a vested interest in having craft market days monthly to give craftsmen the opportunity to showcase and sell their goods. In this way, it is promoting the continuation of our culture and heritage. There are plans to make the displays more interactive as most of the user base are school groups.

#### 4.2.3 Maps and Pictures



**Figure 60** - The Voortrekker Commemorative Church. SOURCE: image taken by author



**Figure 61** - The "L" shaped Main Building. SOURCE: image taken by author



**Figure 62-** The statue of Gert Maritz with the new taxi rank behind. SOURCE: image taken by author



**Figure 63** - the traditional Zulu Hut situated in front of the parking lot. SOURCE: image taken by author



**Figure 64** - the Shiva temple also situated in front of the parking lot. SOURCE: image taken by author



**Figure 65** - the Church of the Vow. SOURCE: image taken by author



**Figure 66** - the Andries Pretorius House. SOURCE: image taken by author



**Figure 67** - one of the displays in the Main Building. SOURCE: image taken by author



**Figure 68** - an old wagon from the 19C dominates the floor space with displays around it. SOURCE: image taken by author



**Figure 69** - the encased displays in the "Zulu" section. SOURCE: image taken by author



**Figure 70** - there are a few modern features housed within the museum, such as this TV that displays the events of the Boer war. SOURCE: image taken by author



**Figure 71** - the old buildings were never designed to store and exhibit valuable artefacts. The buildings in the complex have been retro-fitted with air-conditioning units to keep temperatures and humidity levels low. SOURCE: image taken by author



**Figure 72** - another example of one of the niche displays in the Main Building. SOURCE: image taken by author

#### 4.2.4 Discussion

The Msundusi museum is different to most museums as it is not a merely a static display of artifacts from our country's past. It is involving, not only for people who visit, but it actively engages the surrounding communities through their education department. There are market days where the gates are open to informal traders and craftsmen that have the opportunity to sell their merchandise, therefore engaging the public and providing a platform for economic return.



**Figure 73** - an image taken of the courtyard where traders are setting up stalls for a market day.  
SOURCE: image taken by Riana Mulder



**Figure 74** - a "team building" day as part of an educational outreach programme to uplift and inform people of their heritage and culture.  
SOURCE: image taken by Riana Mulder

The buildings themselves are of a historic nature, but the feeling and quality of space that one experiences when visiting is what should be taken from this example. They evoke a sense of history and the artifacts that they house tell a historical story. It is an effective example of showing how the preservation of heritage and culture can aid a community and provide a setting that evokes and generates memories.

The spaces between the buildings have been designed in a way to offer people a chance to reflect upon the information and displays they've encountered. Outside the Andries Pretorius House is a large jacaranda tree with benches underneath, arranged in a circle - very simple, yet a space in which to think and dwell. Being in a space that allows for contemplation and memory generation is a key feature to incorporate into the design. It allows the user to take in what he/she has experienced and have a greater connection to the Spirit of the Place.



**Figure 75** - a circular seating arrangement around a large jacaranda tree provides a contemplative space in which to reflect and dwell on the history and culture experienced at the Msundusi Museum. SOURCE: image taken by author

#### **4.2.5 Conclusions**

The case study undertaken at the Msundusi Museum was extremely beneficial to the research in showing how people from such varied cultural and historic backgrounds can come together to form a complex that works in unison while showcasing the inclusive and accepting identity of a *new* South Africa. It differs from what will result from this study in that it is not a new, contemporary facility, but at its core is the preservation and bolstering of cultural and historic identity for its region, and that is to be brought into the design for a new museum in Port Shepstone.

## **5.0 DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS**

### **5.1 Revival and Rejuvenation**

Without a connection to *place*; a link that roots us in a community and space, mankind loses part of his identity. Much of the world is undergoing this stripping of culture and heritage by becoming consumed with faceless and foreign cultures that do not have those origins in their country or regions. By employing a sensitive approach to design and drawing on contextual and regionally appropriate forces, as designers we can imbue a place or space with meaning; one that showcases an identity particular to the that region. The first step in doing this is preserving what is special, unique and valuable to a place.

Architecturally, a development with interest and quality design that relates to its context (its intangible aspects like history and culture and tangible aspects like scale and typology) will aid renewal and rejuvenation. By creating something that fits in with its surroundings while attaching functions that will interest users, a space will become full of life and vibrancy .

The two case studies examined the different responses in preserving and celebrating their respective cultures and heritage. The case of Knysna captures the essence of rejuvenation of heritage and culture in taking a disused space and turning it into the most visited place in the tow. It has captured the Spirit of the Place. It has brought the water and boats into the development, accentuating the space and creating an environment that is interesting and special. It also employs elements of Critical Regionalism by drawing from its context, while utilising modern building materials and methods. It's an experience that stimulates the senses and provides a backdrop where memories can be made.

### **5.2 Heritage and Spirit of Place**

The case of the Msundusi Museum in Pietermaritzburg is special and relevant to this study in that it gives insight in how various cultures and histories can be brought together to be housed and displayed within one complex, creating an atmosphere of unity. It is evidenced that semiotics play a large role in imparting meaning and symbolism through the various cultures - that people connect to a heritage that relates to their specific background and history.

The buildings within the complex have also undergone adaptive re-use transformations to garner interest and attention while protecting them. Not too much has been changed, as these are protected buildings,

## **6.0 CONCLUSION**

### **6.1 Summary of Findings**

This study has covered a wide range of theories and concepts surrounding what constitutes heritage, culture and identity and how architecture can be brought in to act as a form of celebration. The research findings provide comprehensive literature regarding the problems stated in this dissertation. The objective was to identify the issues and find possible solutions by conducting thorough studies on theories related to architecture. This created a contextual and critical understanding of these issues.

The literature review was crucial in establishing a theoretical base in which to understand the various components that merge together to form a successful revival scheme. By drawing from a grounding of culture, identity and memory, true meaning and significance in the built form will result. Ultimately, what can be described as Genius Loci or the Spirit of Place will be felt – evoking memories and creating an environment that feels unique and special.

The second part to the literature review focussed on the more tangible aspects of a revival scheme. Critical Regionalism and New Urbanism provides essential guides in creating good, quality architecture through a set of basic rules and systems.

One precedent study and two case studies were conducted. They were critical in understanding how the theory and reality meet, and if that connection is tangible, imparting a true weight and connection for the user. It was found that semiotics played a significant role in evoking memories, creating a strong link between environment and meaning. By drawing on cultural factors and boosting the identity of the region, a stronger sense of Spirit of Place results.

The case studies also showed what weaknesses to address and what pitfalls to avoid. Evident in Knysna's waterfront, meaning and culture was not the main focus. Commercial success is what drives the development. However, there are good spaces within and allow for people to connect to their surroundings, even if it is a secondary role.

By visiting the Msundusi Museum, an understanding of how to exhibit a diverse and wide range of cultural artefacts was gained. It gave an exemplary example of how to connect the various cultures and histories into one experience, yet still make each 'sector' significant in its own right.

The interviews conducted with the staff at the Msundusi Museum and the questionnaire from the Knysna study helped form a deeper understanding of the places and how they represent South Africa's culture, heritage and identity. Both places have strong and weak points, and identifying them to avoid potential pitfalls and highlight the strengths was noted.

Through the in-depth research, it is clear that heritage and culture are essential parts of society. The primary question in this study was to find out how architecture can renew the cultural and historical heritage of a place.

## **6.2 Conclusion**

It was hypothesized that architectural rejuvenation can be a key element in aiding the historic and cultural significance and would bring renewed interest to the residents and visitors of the area. Simultaneously, such architecture uplifts the community through the provision of a reference point from which their progression can be traced, as well as promoting future growth with an understanding of the past and their connection to it.

The theoretical information gained and the precedent and case studies examined supports the stated hypothesis. It has been found that architecture is a very powerful tool in which to celebrate culture and heritage, but smaller, regional cultures are often left to decay and slip from the public eye. Architecture's power to represent, provide a basis, and be associated with a particular heritage and culture has been realised; and the best building typology in which to showcase this in a museum where it becomes a gathering point for the region's history. Furthermore, the research has shown how heritage and culture must be reflected in the built environment in order for people who inhabit those environments to connect to them.

A set of Key Questions was posed at the beginning of the research. Through the literature review and the case study, these questions can now be answered:

What is the definition of culture and heritage? Culture is defined as all the products of society - material and nonmaterial. Society is a crucial element of culture. It consists of interacting people living in the same territory who share a common culture, one that over time bears witness to stories and products that mark a peoples existence.

How can an iconic structure uplift and create excitement throughout a larger/urban scheme? Through good design and thoughtful and strategic placement of areas of specific interest, such as transport nodes, vibrant retail sectors and quieter, reflective spaces allow the user to absorb their surroundings and engage with the history and heritage that is on display.

What impact does the built environment have on its users and their perception and memory? A significant impact is felt by the users familiar to the region. Being filled with memory evoking signs and symbols conjures up memories and creates a further level of connection.

How can the focus not only be on revival and rejuvenation of the existing but prepare and cater for the prolonged use of the development; that a new history can unfold? By employing New Urbanist theories, the site will have easier access for people and include areas of mixed-use development where a residential component will be crucial to the sustained use of the area.

What type of building/development will showcase the area's culture and heritage? A Museum will showcase the history and heritage in the best possible way. It allows for large, flexible spaces and gives a user the opportunity to walk through an unfolding story. A development located in the heart of the area of historic significance will be unbeatable.

In echoing the National Heritage Resources Act 25, let us not forget that our heritage is unique, it celebrates our achievements and can contribute to readdressing past inequalities. It educates, it deepens our understanding of society and encourages us to empathise with the experience of others. It facilitates healing and material and symbolic restitution and it promotes new and previously neglected research into our rich traditions and customs.

### **6.3 Avenues for Further Research**

This study was focused on reviving the heritage and culture of a particular area. Part of what constitutes that was Port Shepstone being a working port. A different avenue in reviving it could be explored, by studying the dynamics of twenty-first century transport and how transport interchange affects people. Studies into how that could have an economic payoff and become a means whereby jobs are made available to the low income residents, which takes up the majority share in the economic scale of the region.

## **6.4 Recommendations**

Through the analysis of the research, the following recommendations that should be incorporated into an architectural design follow:

- Enhance open spaces by creating links to experience the specific places where the historic events took place, drawing on emotional chords and evoking memories.
- Within the scope of the built works, make reference to symbolic things that evoke memories and foster feelings of connection to the area.
- Provide the necessary facilities to encourage public participation in outreach and educational events.
- Draw on contextual forces that will imbue the design with meaning and Spirit of Place so that the museum should become one with its context.
- Make special reference to water and use it as a possible design generator, as people have an intrinsic connection to it. It also facilitates a contemplative and quiet aura, benefitting the nature of a museum.
- A public building should be able to cater for all people and all age groups. Displays should be interactive and easily understandable.
- Written information for displays should be in the various languages of the people so that all can understand.
- Static displays and inflexible spaces make for uneventful experience when returning more than once. It should be the aim of the museum to change and rearrange displays fairly often.
- The building should respond to the climate of the region.
- A development should cater for people in all social and income groups - a socially inclusive space that reflects South Africa's rainbow nation.

## **7.0 APPENDICES (Pre-fieldwork data, fieldwork samples)**

CASE STUDY

QUESTIONNAIRE: Knysna and its Waterfront

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

1) How long have you lived in Knysna?

\_\_\_\_\_

2) Do you think the waterfront and surrounding developments have been a success as it stands today? Please motivate your answer.

\_\_\_\_\_

3) Has the waterfront as a commercial and entertainment hub subtracted from the heart of the town itself?

\_\_\_\_\_

4) If the waterfront wasn't surrounded by residential properties, do you think it would survive without those regular users?

\_\_\_\_\_

5) Has the waterfront added to the unique essence that is "Knysna" or is it purely a commercial tourist attraction?

\_\_\_\_\_

6) Would you say that the waterfront is the place with the largest public space in Knysna? Could that be a reason for its attraction?

\_\_\_\_\_

7) The town has a lot of history, and in particular, heritage buildings. Does modern development take this history into account and is it evident in the architecture that is created? Would you say that the waterfront is in keeping with the feel of the rest of the town?

\_\_\_\_\_

8) Do you think the waterfront developments have been sensitive to the immediate environment?

\_\_\_\_\_

9) Is there anything you would change about the waterfront development?

\_\_\_\_\_

The School of Architecture, Planning and Housing

University of KwaZulu-Natal

Durban, South Africa

January, 2012

INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE: Msundusi Museum incl. Voortrekker Complex

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

1) What is the biggest challenge you face when converting an old historic building into a museum?

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2) Is there a chronology in how the displays are set out? Is it meant to read as a journey through time?

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3) What are the advantages of having a complex of buildings as a museum?

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4) What are some of the disadvantages of the complex of buildings?

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5) How many visitors do you get a month? Of that, how many are scholars?

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6) Is there a reflection in the breakdown of race-groups that visit due to the variety of culturally and historically focussed displays?

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7) Does the gift shop turn over a lot of merchandise?

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8) Is there sufficient parking?

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9) How is it ensured that the displays aren't tampered with or defaced?

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10) Is there a need to have displays that are modernised and interactive?

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11) Does humidity and moisture affect the displays? If so, what is done to prevent it?

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12) How has lighting the displays in these old buildings been approached?

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13) In terms of a modern building housing these types of artefacts, what would need to be considered?

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Other relevant information:

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**Figure 13** - image taken by author (27/01/2012)

**Figure 14** - image taken by author (27/01/2012)

**Figure 15** - image taken by author (27/01/2012)

**Figure 16** - image taken by author (27/01/2012)

**Figure 17** - image taken by author (27/01/2012)

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**Figure 26** - Smart Transportation (image online)

[http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/13/San\\_Diego\\_Trolley\\_going\\_through\\_downtown.jpg](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/13/San_Diego_Trolley_going_through_downtown.jpg) (accessed 27/06/2012)

**Figure 27** - Sustainability (image online) <http://ad009cdnb.archdaily.net/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/1335976740-nasa-sustainability-base-exterior---cesar-rubio-courtesy-william-mcdonough---partners.jpg>; [http://www.archdaily.com/231211/nasa-sustainability-base-william-mcdonough-partners-and-aecom/nasa-strategies-diagram-2012-william-mcdonough-partners\\_3/](http://www.archdaily.com/231211/nasa-sustainability-base-william-mcdonough-partners-and-aecom/nasa-strategies-diagram-2012-william-mcdonough-partners_3/) (accessed 27/06/2012)

**Figure 28** - Genoa Drama, Architectural Digest. June 1993. p 36

**Figure 29** - Genoa (image online) <http://www.flickr.com/photos/43355952@N06/galleries/72157622879731337> (accessed 17/03/2012)

**Figure 30** - Genoa (image online) <http://www.flickr.com/photos/43355952@N06/galleries/72157622879731337> (accessed 17/03/2012)

**Figure 31** - goggleearth.com (accessed 12/03/2012)

**Figure 32** - goggleearth.com (accessed 12/03/2012)

**Figure 33** - Genoa Drama, Architectural Digest. June 1993. p 38

**Figure 34** - Genoa Drama, Architectural Digest. June 1993. p 38

**Figure 35** - Genoa (image online) <http://www.petanqueandpastis.com> (accessed 14/04/2012)

**Figure 36** - Genoa (image online) <http://www.flickr.com/photos/43355952@N06/galleries/72157622879731337> (accessed 17/03/2012)

**Figure 37** - Genoa (image online) <http://www.petanqueandpastis.com> (accessed 14/04/2012)

**Figure 38** - Genoa Drama, Architectural Digest. June 1993. p 36

**Figure 39** - Genoa Drama, Architectural Digest. June 1993. p 37

**Figure 40** - Genoa (image online)

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/egosumdaniel/2836556937/sizes/o/in/photostream/>

(accessed 14/04/2012)

**Figure 41** - Genoa Drama, Architectural Digest. June 1993. p 37

**Figure 42** - image courtesy of Jawitz Estate Agents

**Figure 43** - image courtesy of Jawitz Estate Agents

**Figure 44** - Architecture SA, November + December 1996, pg 21

**Figure 45** - Lantern, May 1990, page 77

**Figure 46** - Lantern, May 1990, page 65

**Figure 47** - image taken by author (27/01/2012)

**Figure 48** - image taken by author (27/01/2012)

**Figure 49** - image taken by author (27/01/2012)

**Figure 50** - image taken by author (27/01/2012)

**Figure 51** - image taken by author (27/01/2012)

**Figure 52** - image taken by author (27/01/2012)

**Figure 53** - image taken by author (27/01/2012)

**Figure 54** - image taken by author (27/01/2012)

**Figure 55** - Architecture SA, November + December 1996, pg 22

**Figure 56** - gogoleearth.com (accessed 12/03/2012)

**Figure 57** - Msundusi Museum pamphlet (25/04/2012)

**Figure 58** - image taken by author (25/04/2012)

**Figure 59** - image taken by author (25/04/2012)

**Figure 60** - image taken by author (25/04/2012)

**Figure 61** - image taken by author (25/04/2012)

**Figure 62** - image taken by author (25/04/2012)

**Figure 63** - image taken by author (25/04/2012)

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**Figure 65** - image taken by author (25/04/2012)

**Figure 66** - image taken by author (25/04/2012)

**Figure 67** - image taken by author (25/04/2012)

**Figure 68** - image taken by author (25/04/2012)

**Figure 69** - image taken by author (25/04/2012)

**Figure 70** - image taken by author (25/04/2012)

**Figure 71** - image taken by author (25/04/2012)

**Figure 72** - image taken by author (25/04/2012)

**Figure 73** - image taken by Riana Mullder

**Figure 74** - image taken by Riana Mullder

**Figure 75** - image taken by author (25/04/2012)