

The criteria for place-making: architectural and urban interior materiality of the Constitutional Court, Johannesburg

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This article investigates the variables (principles) that can be used as criteria to enrich the static, physical model of space in the built environment. The social reading of place-making is excluded in this study. This is decided in order to isolate spatiality to determine whether place with a strong historical character and symbolism can qualify as a meaningful place when new developments are included in an integrated design. The physical attributes of space are examined as variables, focusing on both architectural and urban interiors. Theories on place and place-making support the investigation, by including spatiality and historicity. The Constitutional Court sets the location (place) for this investigation.

Keywords: place-making, vocabulary, architectural and urban interiors, symbolism

Die kriteria vir plekskepping: materialiteit van die argitektoniese en stedelike interieurs van die Konstitusionele Hof, Johannesburg

In hierdie artikel word die veranderlikes (beginsels) wat gebruik kan word om die statiese, fisiese model van ruimte in die bou-omgewing te verryk, ondersoek. Dit is besluit om sodoende ruimtelikheid te isoleer vir analise en te bepaal of 'n plek met 'n sterk historiese karakter en simbolisme kan kwalifiseer as 'n plek van betekenis, veral wanneer nuwe ontwikkeling geïntegreer word in 'n nuwe ontwerp. Teorieë oor plek en plek-skepping ondersteun die analise deur ruimtelikheid en geskiedenisundigheid in te sluit. Die Konstitusionele Hof bepaal die plek en ruimtes vir die ondersoek.

Kernwoorde: plekskepping, woordeskat, argitektoniese en stedelike interieurs, simbolisme

The creation of place deals with the meaning and value, spaces add to people's lives, spaces within the built environment that contain a specific identity and are communicated visually within a specific environment.

The aspects regarding space and place in this article focus on the physical built environment within a historical context. The social reading of place is excluded even though spaces ultimately facilitate activities and interaction between people.

The historical presence of the Constitution Hill site and buildings provide extensive evidence of heritage content in terms of 'place'. Due to the important history of the site, it was deemed appropriate to exclude other factors with regards to 'creating place'. The notorious Old Fort at Constitution Hill, referred to as the Number Four high security prison alternated functions as prison, fort, artillery storage and watch tower between 1893 and 1983 and stood empty until 1996 when the site was chosen for the location of the new Constitutional Court of the country (Ranger, Thorney & Shoolman 2006:5-6). The investigation analyses the sensitive inclusion of new building structures within the rich context of the Old Fort complex. "The integration of the new building with the existing site structures captures our history, bringing the past into contact with the present" (Law-Viljoen 2006:24).

Soja (1996) explains the trialectic approach to human life: spatiality, historicity and sociality. This article follows the trialectic thought as captured in Soja's *Thirdspace* (1996). A relation to Lefebvre's trialectics can be identified: spatiality (physical), spatial thinking (mental) and spatial imagination (social). Soja (1996:74) argues that "...each term appropriately contains the other two although each is distinguishable and can be studied in splendidly specialised isolation...", therefore the isolation of spatiality and historicity, as indicated in figure a.

Spatiality
(Lefebvre and Soja)

Physical static model
of space

t

Trialectics of space and place
(architectural and urban interiors)

n >

Spatial imagination (social)
(Lefebvre)
Sociality (Soja)

Spatial thinking (mental)
(Lefebvre)
Historicality (Soja)

Social production and appropriation
of space (dynamic model)

Contextual and external influences
and context

Figure a
Trialectic context: Adapted from (Soja 1996:74)

It is on this premise that the study focuses on the spatial environment that is static and contains meaning and has a physical presence. It is for these reasons that the philosophy of space production by Lefebvre (1991) as a social construct of place is not addressed. In addition the focus is on the description of verbal and non-verbal codes that can be used to make space. Verbal implies connection to words and meaning; non-verbal codes, on the other hand, include physical aspects, such as architectural constructions (Lefebvre 1991:47-48).

The philosophical approach of place and non-place by Auge is complementary and forms a basis from which the idea of place-making is developed. Place is identified as "relational, historical, and concerned with identity" (Auge 1995:77-78).

Additional factors that influence the production of space and the creation of place cannot be ignored: "...people form meaningful relationships with the locales they occupy, how they attach meaning to space and transform 'space' into 'place.'" Philosopher Edward Casey also explains the process of transforming 'space' into meaningful 'place' (Low & Lawrence-Zuniga 2003:13, 17). This investigation includes historical, political, cultural and national external influences (Lefebvre 1991:8), as these have a direct influence on the meaning and context of the design interpretation.

The preceding article to this investigation (The criteria for spatial-definition: architectural and urban interiors of the Constitutional Court, Johannesburg) (Grobler 2006) focused on the spatiality of the Constitutional Court and the elements required to defining space. The criteria for spatial definition were pointed as point, line, plane and volume and can be applied in both architectural and urban spaces (Grobler 2006:48). The conclusion indicated that one could refer to both spaces as 'interiors', regardless of the location. It is on this basis that this analysis of interior place-making is conducted.

The aim of this article is to further the previous investigation by determining the elements or variables that can be identified as criteria for place-making by looking at architectural and

urban interiors. Can the static, physical model of space (the spatial framework) be 'furnished' by the application of spatial variables (elements) to create place?

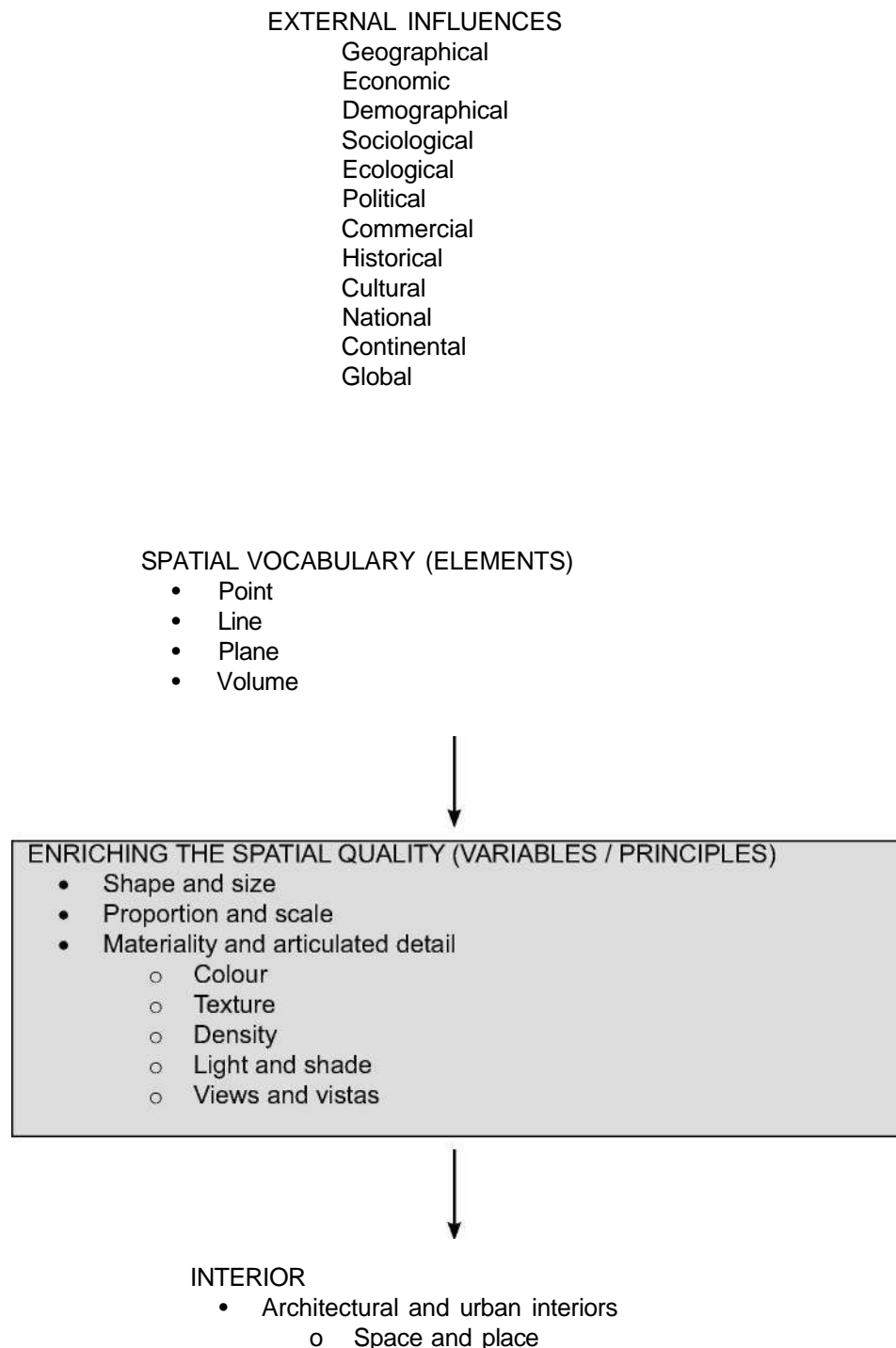


Figure b
Physical static model of space: (Grobler 2005:xii)

The analysis of the public architectural interiors (Foyer and Exhibition Steps) and urban interiors (Great African Steps and Courtyard) of the Constitutional Court in Johannesburg are explored in an integrated investigation with the use of theoretical vocabulary and a literature study, supplemented with visual observations. The criteria as variables for spatial modulation

and place-making are addressed concurrently for architectural and urban interiors and integrated with symbolism and meaning associated with the site and buildings.

The Constitutional Court: heritage and symbolism

The historical setting of the Constitutional Court at Constitutional Hill needs to be understood in order to signify the historical significance and symbolism in the design interpretation. The Court complex is situated at the Old Fort Prison precinct that was proclaimed a national monument in 1964 (Ranger et al 2006:36). The result of a design competition, won by omm design workshop and Urban Solutions, addresses the mission to preserve history of the Old Fort complex within the "already rich and diverse urban fabric" (Ranger et al 2006:41) and as a result contribute to the regeneration of the inner city of Johannesburg (Law-Viljoen 2006:15).



Figure 1
The Old Fort in the early 1990s
(Ranger et al 2006:12)



Figure 2
The Old Fort complex
(Ranger et al 2006:35)

The design addresses a democratic approach by opening up the previously isolated prison precinct and integrating it into the city grid of Johannesburg. Masojada explains:

"... a connection between the city - the people - and the Court Chamber... to commemorate the building and to incorporate its history into the new Court, to recognise that the Constitutional Court is the outcome of a historical process" (Law-Viljoen 2006:39).

This indicates Foucault's perception on political power and enclosure, in this case, the opposite is achieved. A symbolic interpretation of freedom in built form.

"The urban design strategy for the new Constitutional Court and Constitution Hill determined that the previously isolated and impenetrable prison precinct should be reintegrated into the Johannesburg city grid. What was closed by apartheid should be opened (Law-Viljoen 2006:21).

The building also refrains from ethnic or colonial references in the design translation (Makin & Masojada 2004:10, 11). Instead the detail and content of the design reflect the subtle qualities of the rich design in the African landscape that extends beyond colour and texture by acknowledging spatial layering and transitions between spaces and courtyards, between inside and outside (Strauss 1994:51, 64, 69).

History as external factor is represented in the process and product of place through spatial production. Foucault argues that power structures control space use and behaviour and that this is driven by the political power over enclosure (or accessibility in this instance) and the organisation of space (Low & Lawrence-Zuniga 2003:30). The space that was once hidden and feared has now become open and accessible to all.

The development takes cognisance of the past by preserving elements of the old buildings and integrating new structures and materials. Fragmentation of spaces and buildings subtly links public and private spaces (Lipman 2004:17). Symbolism extends in the representation of a tree that represents knowledge and wisdom, a place for communal gatherings for a community to have social exchange. This can be seen in the interior application and the emblem of the South African Constitutional Court (Makin & Masojada 2004:12) and (Noble 2004:20).

"That democratic impulse pervades the development: from its ready accessibility through its many implicit symbols... Here the sentry boxes at the ramparts of the Old Fort are represented by a large quasi watchtower topped by the Court's logo, its depiction of justice being administered openly - under a shady African tree..." (Lipman 2004:18).

The context and location play an important role in the place-making of the architectural and urban interiors. It links the "most depressed part of Johannesburg with the most economically powerful in the country" (Law-Viljoen 2006:31).

"The Court overlooks the different lives of Johannesburg - the opulence of Lower Houghton, Rosebank and the northern suburbs, the squalor and liveliness of cosmopolitan Hillbrow, the brain and buzz of Braamfontein. The court seems to be at the centre of this - weaving all these diverse lives together and reminding them of the oneness of their rights" (Law-Viljoen 2006:28).

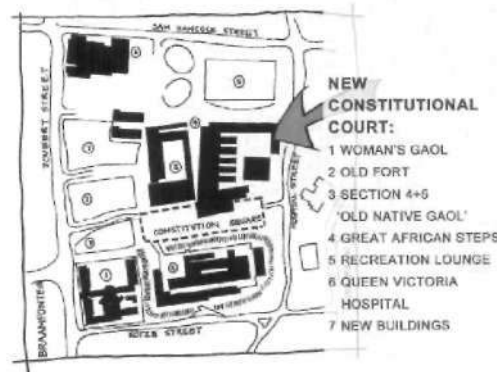


Figure 3
Constitutional Court location (Makin & Masojada 2004:9)

Place-making: an integrated approach

Place-making has been described as a design approach that includes the identity of place in the visual environment, a space with a strong character (Schwartz, Verhagen & Singleton 2003:16). By combining the old and the new, a multi-layered intervention can be achieved that elicits aesthetic enjoyment with the combination of quality of spaces that show respect for the environment, imagination and creativity, sustainability and a vision of the future (Broto [s.a.]:47). Trancik (1986:219-220) further says that inclusion and integration of the spatial environment, the connections and the sense of place are all important for interiors of human habitation.

The aim with any approach for appropriate design and the creation of identity and place is to ultimately acknowledge the static, physical components of place, together with the context and the local ingredients.

Spatial definition is the first step in the process of creating meaningful enclosures in the human environment. The investigation continues in a search to determine the variables that could enrich the criteria to create place by enriching physical structures. Supplementary to this, a sense of place is connected with historicity that has an influence on the spatial content and

quality. Rudofsky (1969:16) strengthens this approach: "We lack a city sense. There is nothing to awaken love, affection, interest..."

Trancik (1986:66) indicates the relation between the character and spatial properties by the way a space is enclosed and as a result the link between spatial definition and place-making is indicated. According to Norberg-Schulz (1980:5, 6) and Jacobs (1993:10) physical elements add to the spatial and distinct qualities of a place as seen in the Constitution Hill precinct. Norberg-Schulz integrates intangible feelings into this equation, as a response to a positive spatial experience. Rudofsky (1969:118) echoes the importance of the creation of a special atmosphere in urban environments: "...a communal living room, so to speak - not a decorative empty lot or a barren 'civic center', but a lively, populated historical setting."

In addition historicity relates to the physical context and associations of a space. Trancik (1986:112) explains that: "...it only becomes place when it is given contextual meaning derived from cultural or regional content." The history of Constitution Hill adds value to the content and experience of the site. Symbolism in the design interpretation links old and new and combines past, present and future.

Visual richness and spatial encounters are interrelated with sensory experiences and observations. Day (2002:155) states that: "Places speak to us. What they say affects us and influences our behaviour." It is argued that atmosphere, smells and light, materials, colour and the physical form, as well as the people and the physical surroundings are all important in the creation of place. These will be explored in greater depth in relation to the architectural and urban interiors of the Court. Day (2002:158) states: "Forms, and spaces, colours and light; sounds and smells, work on us, as we know."

Principles or variables that can be applied to enrich place for this analysis have been selected by identifying alternatives from various literary sources. Canter (1977:9-10) indicates that spatial experience is formed by aesthetic and systematic qualities in the environment. Jacobs (1993:10, 11) supports this notion in *Streets for people* by adding the physical elements that affects the "magic" of a place: size, shape, scale, pattern and direction. Motloch (1991:127-135) extends this list by adding variables that determine the richness and character of a place: colour, texture, scale and proportion, variety and unity, and form. Canter (1977:158) describes the constituents of place as the relationship between activities, conceptions and physical attributes. Physical parameters can be identified as: weight, size, colour, shape, form, texture or these in combination (Canter 1977:159). These physical attributes are integrated to form the focus of this investigation.

These physical aspects are identified as some of the variables that are responsible for spatial modulation and need to be interpreted to achieve a meaningful spatial quality.

Vocabulary for the enrichment of spatial quality

The terminology for the criteria in the creation of place is identified as variables for the analysis and description of the architectural and urban interiors of the Constitutional Court: shape and size, proportion and scale, materiality and articulated detail (colour, texture, density, light and shade, views and vistas) and sensory experience. Is it possible to 'furnish' architectural and urban interiors with this vocabulary and as a result add value to the space experience?

The variables (principles) for enriching the spatial quality have been identified to influence spatial modulation in architectural interiors. Can this vocabulary be applicable to urban interiors as collective terminology? These visual properties are not constant and change according to variants in contextual conditions as variables in a space (Ching 1979:51).

Shape and size

Interior spaces (Exhibition Steps and Court Foyer) are concerned with the shape of defining elements: planes, openings and silhouettes as shapes are made visible by the edge contour of the plane that defines the volume (Ching 1979:52). Similarly, Cheatham, Cheatham & Haler (1983:48) state that shape is defined as boundaries or outlines of two-dimensional components, and form that of three-dimensional mass or volume.

Form in urban space (Great African Steps and Courtyard) is made possible when surrounding building facades define the edge (Curran 1983:104, Hedman & Jaszweski 1984:76-77). Both architectural and urban interiors use the word 'edge' to define the boundary of the spatial form. Hedman & Jaszweski (1984:77) argue that simple forms elicit the most comprehension in a space with the use of most recognisable shapes to articulate a unified whole.



Figure 4
Courtyard containment
(Deckler, Graupner & Rasmuss 2006:18)



Figure 5
Great African Steps containment
(Law-Viljoen 2006:173)

Simple recognisable forms are identified as linear and cluster spaces. Curran (1983:71, 103) indicates that shape, scale and the organising of the defining surfaces as variables affect the spatial quality of urban space. Use messages are indicated with the form of the space, the Great African Steps and the Exhibition Steps are linkage devices and the clustered spaces, the Court Foyer and Courtyard, are spaces of containment due to the nodal qualities (Curran 1983:103). Both architectural and urban interiors can then be described according to Curran (1983:103): "...while the basic containing space of the room can be described as the most elementary extension of the human body..."

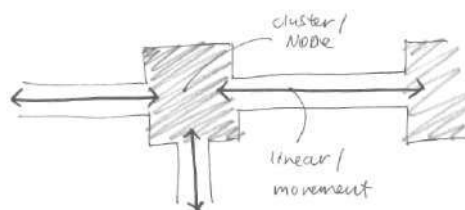


Figure 6
Cluster and nodal spaces (Grobler 2005:67)

Emphasis due to size is achieved, relating the Courtyard to the rest of the site. Ching (1979:351) points out that size, together with shape and placement are used to create emphasis amongst elements or spaces within the organisation of an environment. The shape and size allows for the gathering of people in the public spaces of the Court due to the containment by surrounding structure and the location centrally to the site.

The tower of the Court emphasises hierarchy in the composition of the layout and serves as a landmark (Lynch 1960:48) related to the Courtyard space. According to Hedman &

Jaszweski (1984:72), the creation of a three-dimensional effect is more difficult within a large space, therefore the width-height ratio is aiding in the establishment of scale and proportion as a landmark.

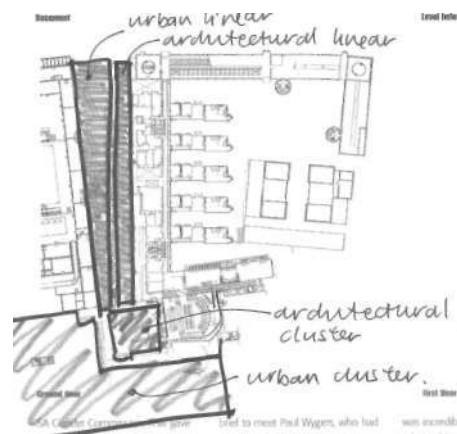


Figure 7
Constitutional Court plan - architectural and urban linear and clustered spaces
Adapted from (Makin & Masojada 2004:10)

"The architects wanted to create a tower on Constitution Hill that would be a beacon of light without being monumental and that would join the chorus of towers on Johannesburg's distinctive skyline" (Law-Viljoen 2006:27).

The scale and proportion of the spaces are determined by the demolition of the Awaiting Trial Block (Ranger et al 2006:59-60), the Section Four prison, the new Court Building and the Fort mounds on various sides.



Figure 8
Constitutional Court scale and beacons
(Constitutional Court 2004:84)

Proportion and scale

The architectural and urban spaces at the Court are proportioned with relation to anthropomorphic proportions (proportions of the human body). Ching (1979:324) points out that: "They are predicated on the theory that forms and spaces in architecture are either containers or extensions of the human body and should, therefore, be determined by its dimensions."

The aim of utilizing this theory is to create comfort and add value to the daily functions that need to be performed (Ching 1979:325). Human scale is related to interiors (architectural interiors). Urban spaces (urban interiors) however, consist of generic space. The majority of spaces have various purposes outside the purpose of human habitation and refers to the relation between building elements and that in the surrounding context (Ching 1979:326).

The appropriate size and proportion for creating comfortable urban spaces should relate to the human body in order to be effective.

"Defined spaces are capable of having strong emotional connotations, based on their perceived size, scale, or proportion. The scale of a space consists of two components: the size of the space in relation to the size of its context, and its size in relation to the observer" (Motloch 1991:110).

Dewar & Uytendogaardt (1995:17) emphasise the importance of humanly scaled public spaces for place-making. Scale in the urban environment is determined by the height of the defining facades. The height to width ratio in the definition of street space is critical in the creation of an appropriate scale and "... a relatively uniform height of street space must be defined to give the street cross section the strong unifying proportions of a well composed room..." (Hedman & Jaszewski 1984:60). The viewer should be able to visually determine the height and length, vertical and horizontal properties of a space to achieve positive closure. The spaces at the Court allow for sufficient distance to visually observe and conceptualise spatially.

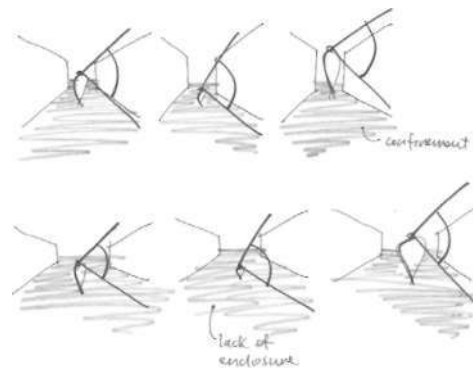


Figure 9
Urban enclosure (Grobler 2005:72)

Hedman & Jaszewski (1984:58-59) state that the ratio of 1:2 provides adequate spatial definition for street space. This containment enriches the spatial quality when the articulation is enhanced with other design elements. The experience is heightened with the application of surface treatments to enhance the emotive qualities.

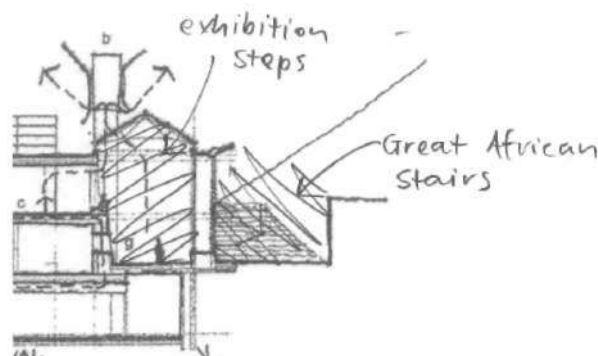


Figure 10
Scale and proportion of the Great African steps and exhibition steps
Adapted from (Constitutional Court, Johannesburg 2004/2005:20)

The linear spaces of the Constitutional Court, the Great African Steps and the Exhibition Steps, have been designed with appropriate vertical enclosure as 'streets' with relation to the height-width ratio. This spatial containment enriches spatial quality when the articulation of the space.

The triple volumes of the Court interior have been designed to represent respect and a style that is open, even though it might seem imposing (Law-Viljoen 2006:31). The clustered space

of the Court Foyer is contained with the articulation of slanted columns that inhabit the space, together with the slotted ceiling and glazed facades. This allows for a spatial definition in which people are welcomed and can feel comfortable (Law-Viljoen 2006:51). The transition into the foyer by means of the 'portico' accentuates the spatial experience (Law-Viljoen 2006:63).

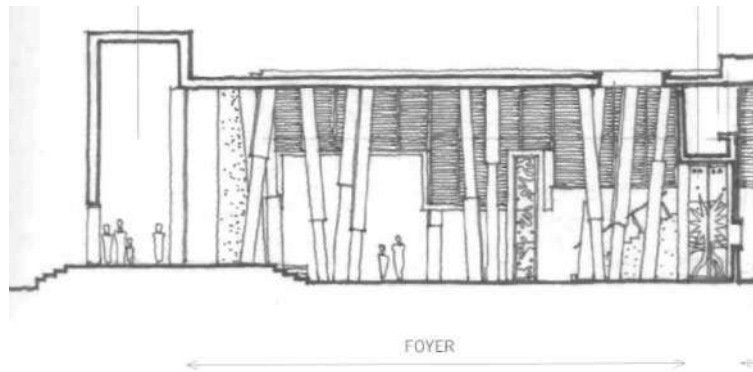


Figure 11

Court Foyer scale and proportion (Law-Viljoen 2006:63)

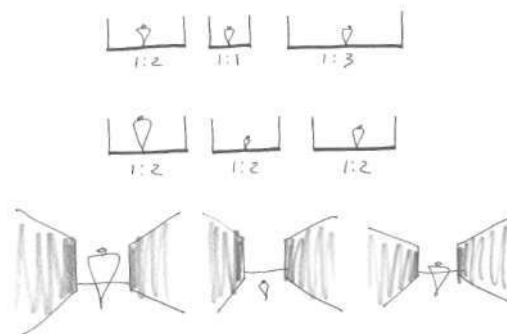


Figure 12

Ratio 1:2 (Grobler 2005)

Materiality

Materiality encapsulates the totality of the quality of the architectural and urban structures. The colour, texture and density of finish materials with articulated detail are discussed in conjunction with the result of light and shade, and views and vistas. Sensory experience of the physical space of the architectural and urban interiors is integrated herein, excluding experience through movement as it falls outside the scope of this study.

The inclusion of pertinent artworks in these public spaces is acknowledged, as these contribute to the enrichment of place. However, these are not identified, as the investigation does not want to single out selected artworks over others. The focus therefore remains on the integration of custom designed interior elements which are artworks in themselves and suit the aim of this investigation of architectural and urban interiors as place. These are highlighted in order to complete the articulated detail of the spaces and as a result, the language of materiality reaches beyond just an application of materials, to something that adds meaning and value to it as static, physical structures.

Materiality is analysed in an integrated manner that links public architectural and urban interior of linear (Great African Steps and Exhibition Stairs) and nodal (Courtyard and Foyer) nature respectively.

"Materials are the basic building substances architects and interior designers use to create built environments and to give form, shape, variety, and distinction to interior spaces" (Kilmer & Kilmer 1992:358). The physical form of spaces is determined by the selection and use of materials, whether surface treatments, elements or components within a space. The intrinsic qualities of materials add to the quality and the experience of the enclosure and result in surfaces applications of pattern, texture and colour. The composition of floor, wall and ceiling materials, as well as the materials found in the elements, fixtures and furnishings are combined to create the final spatial quality (Ching & Binggeli 2005:274).

Ecological consideration in the selection process deals with the environmental impact, recyclability and sustainability of materials as seen in the reuse concept of the Court. All materials have intrinsic characteristics that shape the visual qualities of that material in terms of colour, texture and pattern. "Materials are the basic building substances architects and interior designers use to create built environments and to give form, shape, variety, and distinction to interior spaces" (Kilmer & Kilmer 1992:358, 360).

The material selection and the style of the Constitutional Court have been made to contrast the traditional notion regarding court buildings that alienates and excludes people. In turn the selection encourages an open feeling, participation that represents "...the democratic value of public participation - warmth, welcome to all..." (Law-Viljoen 2006:31). This is made possible by the reusing of materials from the existing buildings, in particular the demolition of the Awaiting Trial Block that made way for the Courtyard. Bricks of this demolition have been used in the Court Foyer and the Great African Steps, a staircase from the old prison also remains in the Foyer and two in the Courtyard. In this way the history of the site and the buildings could be commemorated within the new Court, physically and symbolically (Law-Viljoen 2006:36, 39).

Masojada describes: "There are parts of the Court where new and old stand side by side, indistinguishable from one another" (Law-Viljoen 2006:40).

"...one reads the building as a collage. New and old become one: textured surfaces of reused broken prison bricks, peeling graffitied prison walls, a sturdy, defending curved solid wall floating over strips of light, an impenetrable solid surface and transparent surfaces layered over one another, binding past and present (Law-Viljoen 2006:40).

Great African Steps

"Our past and our present, the fragments, the memories and the dreams are woven together as one collective present experience" (Law-Viljoen 2006:165). The Great African Steps leads up to the courtyard of the Constitutional Court. The vertical enclosures represent the past and the future due to the density and finish materials used. To the right, lies the wall of the Number Four prison, solid stone that defines an impenetrable boundary. To the left is the new Court building that allows for a visual link through the transparent edge. "The new facade is lightweight, transparent, layered and covered with sunscreen panels that are illustrations of life stories as told by local residents" (Law-Viljoen 2006:165). The inclusion of history in a visual narrative is present in these screens and carries the memories of the past, present and future.

The finish materials of the urban spaces relate directly to the site and the existing structures. The paved Great African Steps gradually ascends in warm hues that relates to the existing wall of the Section Four Prison. Bricks of the demolished Awaiting Trial Block have been reused in the route with the steps interrupted by a path following a zig-zag format to the Court (Law-Viljoen 2006:165).

Texture, pattern and detail is achieved by the design of interactive sunscreens that serve as shading devices for the west facing windows of the Exhibition Stairs in parallel to the Great African Steps (Law-Viljoen 2006:165). Texture is defined as the relative roughness, smoothness and characteristics of the surface qualities of materials. Visual texture is observed by the eye and tactile texture is experienced by the skin (Ching & Binggeli 2005:97). The tactile texture surface treatments applied to architectural and urban spaces introduce three dimensional modulations on a two dimensional plane.



Figure 13
Great African Steps visual links
(Makin & Masojada 2004:11)

Artworks have been included in the design of the sunscreens, as the metal is etched by works of various artists¹. Through interaction, the sense of sight and touch is enhanced, by physically observing the colours and textures. It is furthermore heightened by the sounds from the adjacent Number Four exhibition displays that can be heard whilst in the Great African Steps area.

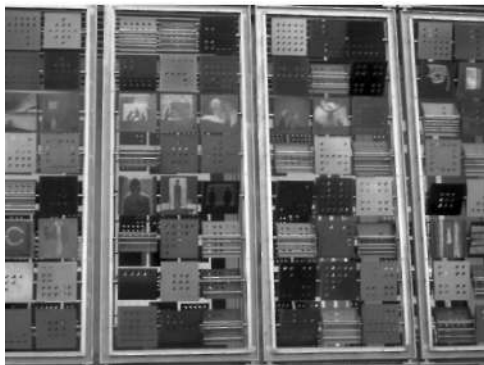


Figure 14
Sunscreens as artwork
(Grobler 2005:77)



Figure 15
Sunscreen detail
(Ranger et al 2996:213)

Exhibition Stairs

The Exhibition Stairs run in parallel to the Great African Steps as architectural and urban interiors respectively. Due to the linear quality of the space and the footlights in the stairs, perspective is enhanced as in the Great African Steps outside.

The modulation of the space is defined by solid and transparent boundaries on either side. Light is radiant energy that illuminates in all directions equally. The quality diminishes according to the distance from the source as it moves through a space. This results in a high natural light quality on the western side of the Exhibition Stairs, as transparent materials allow for non-diffuse transmissions of light (Ching & Binggeli 2005:234). The use of transparent materials,

not only invites in natural light, it also creates opportunities for visual links, in this instance between the Great African Steps and the Exhibition Stairs.

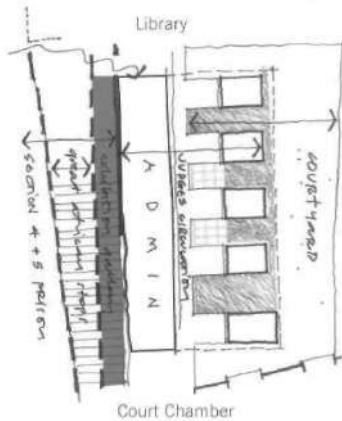


Figure 16
Proximity of Great African Steps
and Exhibition Stairs
Adapted from (Lipman 2004:17)



Figure 17
Exhibition steps visual link
(architectural)
(Law-Viljoen 2006:151)

The size, shape and location of openings or voids affect the sense of enclosure of a room and have an influence on the degree of enclosure. The amount of light emitted into a space, as well as the vista onto which the view is focused is also affected. The transparent edges of the Exhibition Stairs (and Foyer) allows for a continuous connection with the Great African Steps (and Courtyard). Ching (1979:176) explains that windows establish the visual relation between interior and exterior spaces. The natural light quality is also appropriate for the display of the various artworks that that are exhibited in this space as gallery (Law-Viljoen 2006:156) and tells stories in visual format to add to the symbolism of the building and the site. At the library end of the space, a neon light installation represents South Africa with all the provinces highlighted².



Figure 18
Neon installation (Law-Viljoen 2006:162)

The selection of finish materials also affects the behaviour of light on the interior as opaque or solid surfaces block the transmission of light and as a result provides area for artwork in this space (Ching & Binggeli 2005:234) and also provides a solid floor surface finished in wide black slate stairs. The design of the treads display an interrupted rhythm in the fine detailed brass nosing³ that completes the character of the space (Law-Viljoen 2006:56).



Exhibition Stairs space
(Law Viljoen 2006:156)



Stair nosing detail
(Law-Viljoen 2006:156)

The combination of colour, texture and finishing materials have been considered in the selection of elements in the spatial definition. Texture provides an added quality to the space and has the capacity to influence the appearance and perception through the application of specific finish materials to surfaces.

Courtyard

Curran (1983:52, 140, 142) explains the importance of the treatment of defining surfaces in the public domain and argues the significance of a holistic approach in the selecting of surface treatments appropriate to the function. Areas are delineated by the varying of surface applications to visually organise and demarcate the area. This is achieved in the courtyard by the application of different materials, textures, patterns and level changes. Defining lines with the contrast between concrete edges and paving accentuates the textures and patterns.

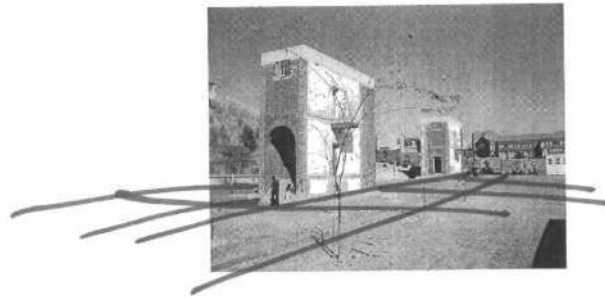


Figure 21
Courtyard lines
Adapted from (Constitutional Court 200:84)

Chromatic distribution is dealt with in accent and emphasis, and tonal distribution allows neutral colours to harmonise with shadows in the space; light values recede and dark values advance (Ching & Binggeli 2005:119). Accent is created with the bright coloured letters⁴ that announce the entrance facade to the Court with 'Constitutional Court' in all eleven languages applied in red, green, yellow, and blue text. "The coloured letters make a decorated surface that speaks to all South Africans... the lettering has its roots in informal street signs" (Law-Viljoen 2006:168). The colours are revealed by natural light, as a visual property of form. The three dimensions of colour, hue, value and saturation are interrelated and influence the environments in which these are applied (Ching & Binggeli 2005:105, 107). Another example of how local identity and character is introduced symbolically, defining an edge to the Courtyard.

The entrance doors to the Foyer are recessed into the entrance facade of the Court building, also facing the Courtyard. The woodcarving represents the Bill of Rights and reaches upwards to the triple volume of the Foyer space⁵ (Ranger et al 2006:214).



Figure 22
Constitutional Court entrance wall
Adapted from (Makin & Masojada 2004:9)



Figure 23
Entrance facade lettering detail
(Law-Viljoen 2006:169)



Figure 24
Court entrance doors (Law-Viljoen 2006:42)

Bell (1993:72) describes colour in the landscape related to a particular local identity and is mostly limited to the surrounding colours and are often used to create colour combinations for man-made structures. The colour combinations for the urban spaces are representative of the landscape surrounding the Court. Natural colours blend into the site. Environmental design deals with colours holistically; colour selections are considered within an area of adjacent and surrounding background colours. The public spaces at the Court integrate colour selections between architectural and urban spaces and achieve harmony and unity in the overall design. Contrast is an effective tool and applied as emphasis in an appropriate and compatible manner to the environment in which it is used (Reekie 1972:18, 22).



Figure 25
Courtyard colours
(Constitutional Court 2004:84)

Texture and grain of the surrounding urban space and landscape on the site is enhanced by the natural aspects: plants and landforms. Coarse and fine textures are observed and the percep-

tion is determined by the distance of the plane or element from the viewer (Motloch 1993:78). The use of texture in the urban spaces allows for unity in the environment and determines the character of Constitution Hill (Reekie 1972:25). The scale of the texture, and the scale and proportion of the spaces in which applied, relate to one another in the architectural and urban spaces. Texture in the urban interiors is also obtained by the contrast of existing and new buildings.

Curran (1983:104) states that public cluster spaces in the urban environment allow for "the movement of the eye, unlike with linear spaces, is not directed away from the viewer, but around." Vistas are established in this regard and allow for visual links between spaces in the city. The experience is on a visual level, but also on a multi-sensory level.

The lighting qualities in the urban spaces contain the same changing character with the movement of the sun. Emphasis and interest is ever transformed within the architectural and urban interiors.

Court Foyer

The concept of the Court Foyer is described by one of the tour guides and illustrates the underlying reasons for the specific design interpretation that creates a place of meaning and identity:

"I grew up in a very traditional setting where every time there were quarrels within families, they would go and report to the traditional leader and then he'd summon elders and they would sit down under the tree. The Foyer, which is modelled on the idea of these lekgotlas or kgoros, allows me (to) explain everything to visitors about African justice under the tree which I grew up with. It is good that it is very visible in the Court" (Ranger et al 2006:204).



Figure 26
Slanting columns
(Law-Viljoen 2006:49)

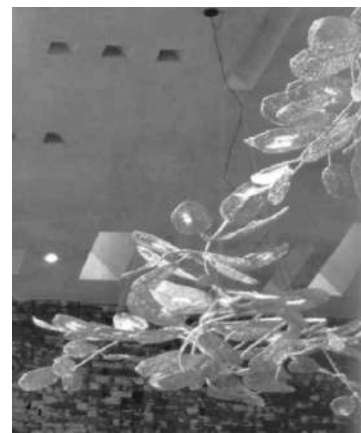


Figure 27
Suspended wire sculptures
(Law-Viljoen 2006:50)

The design of the Foyer translates this concept into spatial form with the use of slanted columns that reach up to the punctured ceiling. The idea of "justice under a tree" was implemented with the columns mimicking trees trunks through which shadows are cast, under which visitors can sit. Shadows fall in the space through wire sculptures suspended from the ceiling, representing a canopy of trees⁶. The columns have been organised in clusters around a clearing and creates a presence due to this occupation of space (Law-Viljoen 2006:204, 48). Within the Court Foyer, the contrast in finish materials defines circulation from seating space in the clearing amongst the columns.

"...the Foyer is the primary mechanism for the communication of the building's symbolic intent. Rather than being an object in a landscape, it is a space. Rather than generating meaning through form, it expresses meaning in its

void. Rather than being embellished on its external surface, either by decoration of surface or daring of technology, its delicacy is expressed on its internal surfaces" (Law-Viljoen 2006:46).

The materiality of the Foyer is evident in the richness and visual interest that is achieved with the selection of finish materials. The main materials in the construction and spaces are visually observed: concrete, steel, timber, glass and stone. Visual richness is enhanced in the use of materials in the raw and natural state and articulated detailing. This follows the concept of the design approach that exposes all in a democratic setting. The perception of finish materials is enhanced through light that reveals the intrinsic qualities. "The result is 'an ambience'.. about the character of place..." (Von Meiss 1990:180).

Makin & Masojada (2004:13) confirm the choice of materials and add that light is another important material utilised, transforming the visual qualities of these materials, "...surfaces onto which light would fall and reflect in colour, coolness and warmth, and would show scale, volume, silhouette, relief, soft whiteness and smooth undulating shininess..." (Makin & Masojada 2004:13).

"Architectural space exists by the illumination of objects and enclosing surfaces..." (Von Meiss 1990:121). Lighting is the essential element that shapes the character and quality of spaces. Three-dimensional character is enhanced by the changing modulation of the interior planes and elements that is made visible by the sequential changes of daylight within an interior (Ching & Binggeli 2005:266).

The effect of natural light in the Foyer (and Exhibition Stairs) is evident, especially the changing light qualities. The effect of light and shade modulates the space continually throughout the day with the movement of the sun; the interior transforms with the transition of shadows and changing light intensities. The light shining through the clerestory windows, and roof openings or north facing, sunlight modulation slots (Law-Viljoen 2006:59) transform the space as shadows from the columns dance on the adjoining planes of the contained volume. The perspective and depth alternate between planes, voids, elements, colour and texture. The experience relates to the concept of a tree, as the sun casts shadows onto the ground and filter through the branches. Von Meiss (1990:121,126) argues: "Architectural space exists by the illumination of objects and enclosing surfaces."



Figure 28
Interior lighting qualities
(Ranger et al 2006:203)

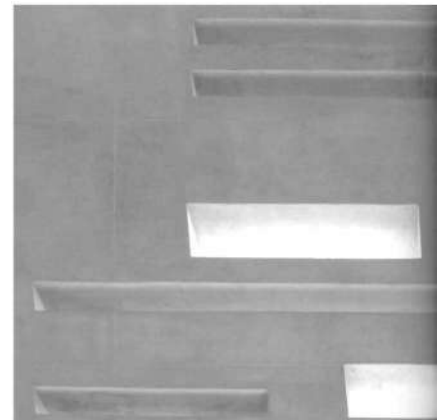


Figure 29
Sunlight modulation slots
(Ranger et al 2006:203)

The effect of light on colour is important in the design of interiors; lighting intensities affect the apparent value of a surface in the rendering of light (Ching & Binggeli 2005:111). Colour and texture enhance the spatial quality, together with the combination of old and new materials. A staircase of the Awaiting Trial Block introduces a strong historical character inside the Foyer

in conjunction with the new building; the varied brown colour and rough texture of the existing brickwork of the original building are offset against the transparent facades and bright mosaic panels on the columns. Textural qualities are applied onto various linear and planar elements. The handmade ceramic mosaics⁷ on the columns consist of various shapes, leaves, lucky beans and grass (Law-Viljoen 2006:48). Warm earth-like coloured mosaics are found closer to the base plane and lighter, colder colours to the upper sections. Kilmer & Kilmer (1992:122) mention space, light and colour as three effective tools to shape interior space visually.

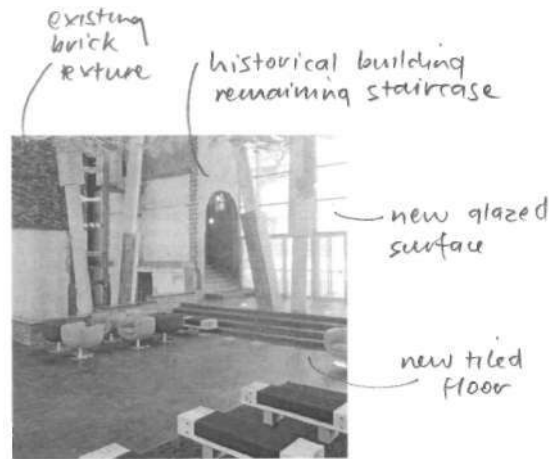


Figure 30
Court foyer finish materials
Adapted from (Lipman 2004:17)

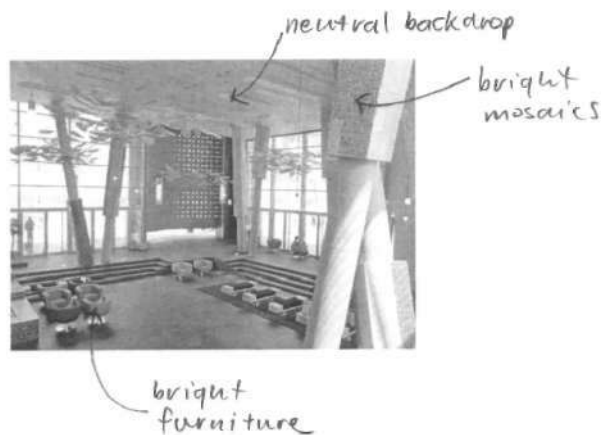


Figure 31
Court foyer colour
Adapted from (Lipman 2004:17)

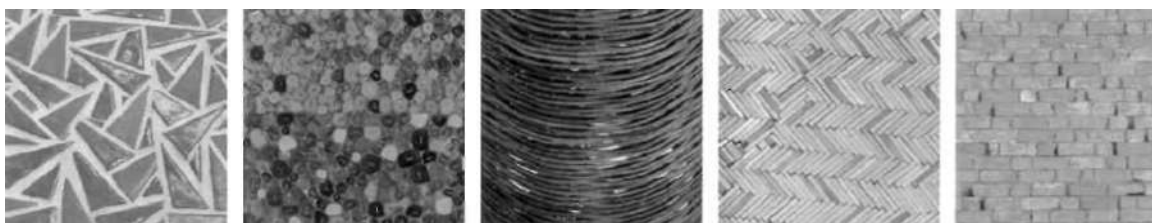


Figure 32
Mosaic detail (Law-Viljoen 2006:55)

The rich texture and colour of the copper panels in the Chamber door that defines one solid boundary of the Foyer is inspired by African textiles⁸. These panels are marked and coloured in a composition that adds to the texture of the space (Law-Viljoen 2006:52). The textural effect

is extended by the curved concrete wall, as a perforated screen with clear, coloured triangular coloured glass inserts representing the colours in the national flag (Law-Viljoen 2006:59).

"As a freestanding plane, the wall contributes to the looseness of the enclosure of the Foyer as a space somewhere between an internal room and an external verandah; an enclosure and a clearing; an empty and an occupied volume; a clearly defined space and a limitless, edgeless, ethereal one" (Law-Viljoen 2006:59).



Figure 33
Chamber door detail
(Law-Viljoen 2006:53)

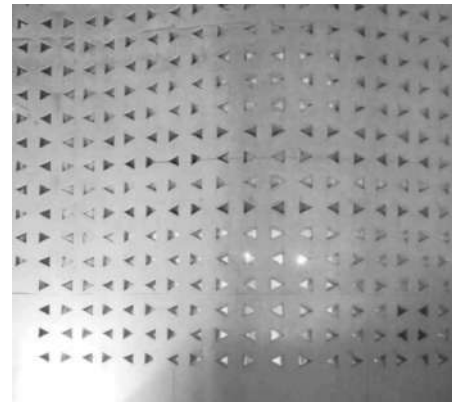


Figure 34
Perforated Foyer wall
(Law-Viljoen 2006:58)

The contrast in textural applications causes the eye to move around, visually absorbing the interior, until the viewer is able to touch and completely experience the richness of the space. Textures within interiors elicit a reaction of "wanting to feel" (Kilmer & Kilmer 1992:110); this encourages people participation and heightens the spatial experience.

The matt, black floor tiles create a horizontal datum for the foyer on base level and establish a neutral grounding. Contrast in the use of texture, smooth and rough against another creates lines of adjacency or intersection where surfaces meet or overlap. This is possible in the use of various finishing materials for interior applications as Ching & Binggeli (2005:102) indicate: "Texture is an intrinsic characteristic of the materials we use to define, furnish, and embellish interior space." The off-shutter concrete structural elements, columns and roof, set a neutral backdrop for the variety in coloured mosaics, and furniture. The sensitivity of the site and the reuse of materials from the historical buildings address the quality and sense of place that link old and new with a creative interplay and juxtaposition of materials. Finish materials play an integral part in the final conception and experience of the space. The composition of floor, wall and ceiling materials as well as the materials found in the elements, fixtures and furnishings combined, create unity in the abstract composition of planes (Law-Viljoen 2006:46).

The space experience of the Foyer and the Court as a whole is enhanced with the perception of all the senses. The arrangement of planes, articulation of elements and surface treatments modulate the space in totality. The experience of the physical environment is heightened by the sensory action of feeling: look, touch, feel, smell and hearing. Von Meiss (1990:15) makes it clear that: "Aesthetic experiencing of the environment is a matter of all our senses and there are even some situations where hearing, smell and tactility are more important than vision; they are experienced with extraordinary intensity."

The challenge within interior applications is to utilise the natural integrity of finish materials. However, the selection always needs to remain appropriate to the application, function and conceptual approach of the space (Kilmer & Kilmer 1992:112). The design approach of the Court integrates these elements within the spaces, both architectural and urban, by being true to the heritage of the site.

Openings between articulated areas are defined as "visual leaks" where the "eye is allowed to move out of the space" (Curran 1983:104). Vistas are established in this regard and allows for visual links between architectural and urban spaces. This is made possible with the transparent edges between the Foyer and Courtyard. Masojada explains the design intent:

"Because of a desire that all sides of the Foyer would connect to the outside, the glass walls and the screens open up to the Square (Courtyard). Although it might happen infrequently, it is a statement of what the Foyer is all about. It is a direct extension of the public space. The crossing of boundaries between the outside and the place where you are formally in the building is almost incidental... What we were trying to do here was to break down those boundaries and to make the zones between public and private much softer, more democratic, less intimidating" (Law-Viljoen 2006:51).



Figure 35
Transparent Foyer boundary (Deckler et al 2006:20)

The degree of enclosure is determined by the density and configuration of the boundary facades defining the Foyer. The pattern and placement of openings determine the spatial quality of the experience. The emphasis is not on the enclosing planes, but extends beyond the boundaries of the room (Ching 1979:178) between the Foyer and the Courtyard. The transition between inside and outside is made possible with the entrance podium linking the architectural and urban interiors of the Court. The symbolism of this intermediate space lies in the text inscribed into the entablature to the entrance presenting the democratic values, human dignity, equality as indicted in the Bill of Rights (Law-Viljoen 2006:42).

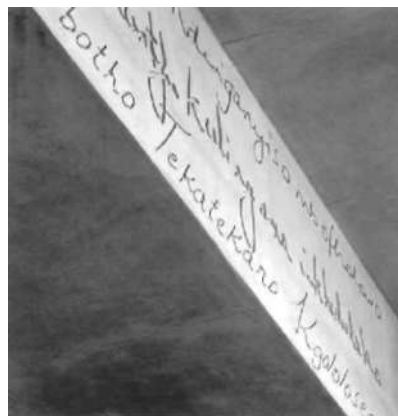


Figure 36
Entablature text (Law-Viljoen 2006:42)

Masojada describes the visual and physical links between the architectural (Foyer) and urban (Courtyard) interiors: "It is an incidental arrival, the Foyer such an easy extension of the adjacent public paths and places" (Law-Viljoen 2006:60). The design interpretation follows the competition brief guidelines: "It should be dignified and serious, but it should have a welcom-

ing, open and attractive character and make everyone feel free to enter and safe and protected once inside" (Ranger et al 2006:70).

The concept of transparency in a democratic setting in the design of the Foyer is described by Makin:

"But transparency is a euphemism. It shouldn't mean simply visual transparency. Architecturally speaking, it would much more accurately be described as accessibility where appropriate, public where appropriate, private where appropriate. Contained where appropriate, open where appropriate (Law-Viljoen 2006:134).

Conclusion

The creation of place at the Constitutional Court integrated spatiality of the physical environment, the architectural and urban interiors, with the history and heritage of the site. In *Number Four: the making of Constitution Hill*, the Constitutional Court is compared to a palimpsest:

"A palimpsest is a surface on which the original writing has been erased to make way for a new writing, but upon which traces of the old writing remain visible. The site is - and must remain - a place where the layers of history contained within it remain visible (Ranger et al 2006:116).

The description here encapsulates a total assimilation between old and new in order to create meaning and symbolism associated with it as place. The materiality of the Court building is representative of the past, by combining elements from past and present with a positive interpretation for the future. The other variables associated with the analyses support this finding. Physical enclosure, character and qualities of the spaces and the historical content of the site are all experienced positively within an integrated design.

The use of terminology from an architectural interior point of view allowed for a collective application of words to both static, physical spaces: architectural and urban. The urban space contributions enhanced the discussions, indicating the congruencies between the use and meaning of the word. Shape, size, scale and proportion, materiality (colour, texture, density, light and shade and views and vistas), indicated all to be variables that are applicable to modulate spatial enclosures and thereby create enriched place.

The nature and modulation of spatial boundaries give meaning to it as place and the place experience. The experience is formed holistically, combining historicity and spatiality that illustrate the integration to create place, in order to ensure positive spatial definition and a sense of place and meaning, physically and symbolically for all.

Notes

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| 1 | Sunscreens on west elevation - artists: Donovan Dymond, Lewis Levin, Partick Rorke | hwa, Lindelani Ndinisa, Musa Ngcobo, Richard Shange, Andrew Verster |
| 2 | Neon installation of 9 provinces - artist: Andrew Verster | Foyer wire chandelier sculptures - artist: Walter Oltmann |
| 3 | Brass stair nosings - artist: Jabu Nala | Mosaics on Foyer columns - artists: Jane du Rand, Zama Dunywa, Paul Figuero, Raksha Gobardan, Elias Lukhozi, Thando Mama, Richard Masoka, Vukani Mpanza, Tanja van Zyl, Patrick Xulu |
| 4 | Constitutional Court lettering - designer: Garth Walker | |
| 5 | Foyer entrance doors - artists: Andries Botha, Smanga Madlala, Richard Maphumulo, Jabulani Mkhize, Dumisani Mthethwa, Ernest Mthet- | Court Chamber doors - artists: Verna Jooste, Myra Fassler Kamstra, Andrew Lindsay, Andrew Ramaboya, Sam Thoka, Mark Zammit |

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