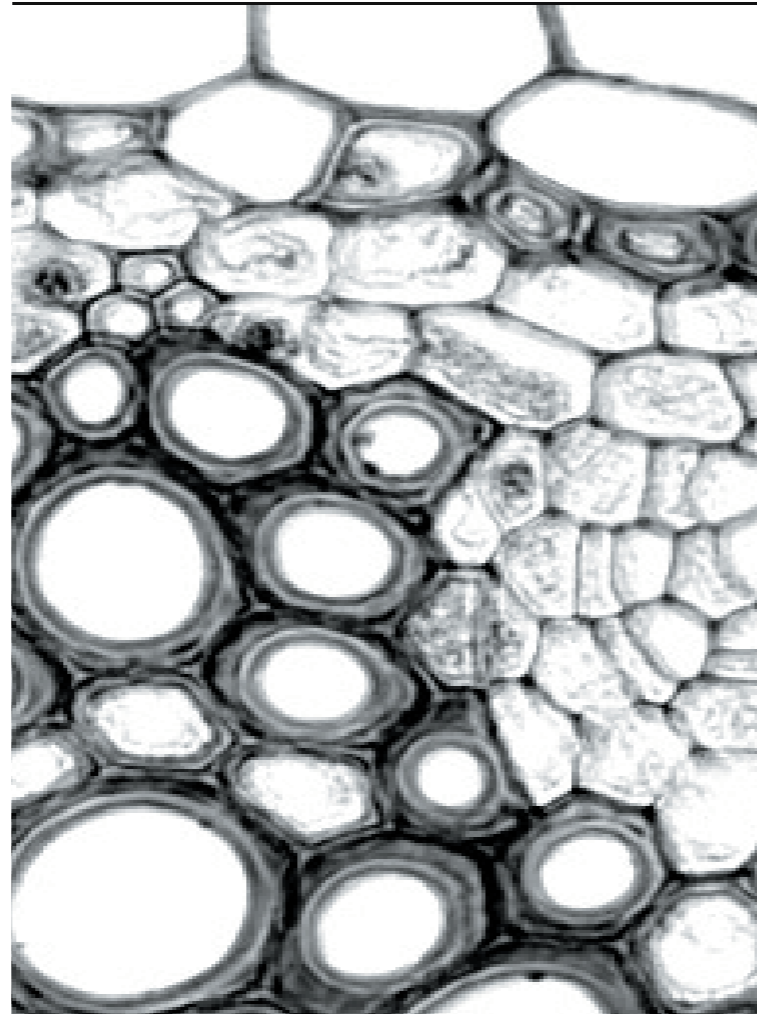


**production
of space**

DEFINING CULTURE

Clyde Kluckhohn, a prominent American cultural anthropologist, describes the concept of culture as 'a complete design for living, the total way of life of a people' and even as 'learned behaviour'. The essential or core meaning in social interaction. Culture patterns are mechanisms for the perceptions, understanding, judgement and manipulation of the world...they provide a blueprint for the organisation of social and psychological processes (Hare in Sennet 1990:130). Provocations of otherness, surprise and stimulation. The French Poet Charles Baudelaire saw the possibility for transcending cultural forces in the city. He believed that the modern city can turn people outward, not inward and rather than wholeness, the city can give them experiences of otherness. The power of the city to reorient people in this way lies in its diversity; in the presence of difference, people at least have the possibility to step outside themselves.

How to create space which can appeal to the cultural diversity eminent in South Africa? One should not aim to unify or fuse these cultures within an architectural landscape, as unity can be gained only at the price of complexity. As Sennet (1990:131-132) illustrates the essence of developing as a human being is developing the capacity for more complex experiences. The fear of differences should not lead to the production of architecture which walls off differences between people thereby making bland, neutralising space. Spaces which remove the threat of social contact. Sennet adverts the creation of weak boundaries, wherein spaces can intersect and connect, exploring the notion of cross-pollination and exchange.



Culture:
 (an)
 evolving/enabling
 reservoir
 of
 'values'
 through which one makes continuing choices
 about one's own intended self-development
 and about one's
 broader commitment to the well-being of
 nature and the well-being of others;
 metaphorically-speaking,
 (a)
 'filtering lens'
 (of relationships and resources)
 through which one perceives
 and thinks about his/her
 surrounding reality
 and his/her status
 within

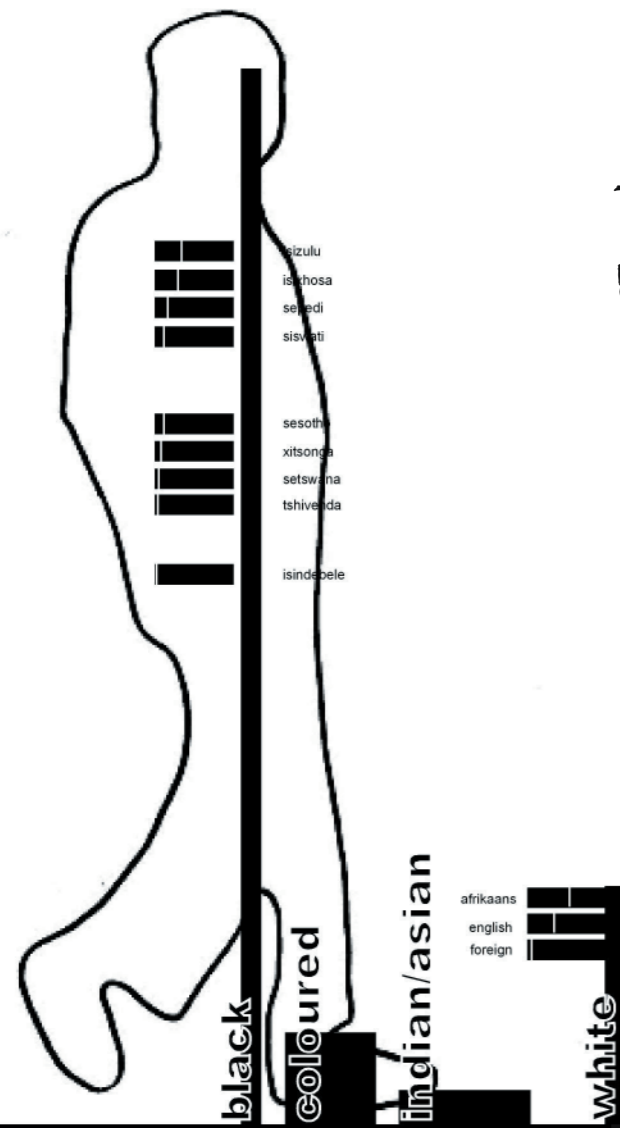
Environment:
 The boundless sum of Creation's primary energy fields-
 community/nature/spirituality/human cultural systems, etc;
 a dynamic and encompassing whole within which 'life' is
 sustained...or
 diminished (and within which each of us must, first, imagine
 and,
 then, seek to create 'places' for 21st century living)

Space:
 a human conception of environment; specifically,
 a way of perceiving and comprehending 'environment'
 such that its totality can be selectively engaged and organised
 as a resource for human activity

Chaffers 1995:49



culture 'is what counts as culture for those who participate in it'



Man only knows himself insofar as he knows the world. The world which he only comes to know in himself and himself only in it. - Goethe

(Chaffers 1995:40)

CULTURAL DIVERSITY

The problem is that culture in South Africa is extremely diverse, so which culture does one subscribe to? Even in contexts which have dominant cultural majorities there is still always a danger of creating marginalised spaces to the minority. Cultures are also always evolving and redefining, which dates the relevance thereof. Production of cultural inclusive space should align with the concept of 'events' prescribed by Tschumi and various other protagonists of the free spirit in architecture. These events are never fixed but rather offer a combination of space, action and movement which invites the user to constantly rethink and reformulate ideas of identity (Denet 2002:59).

The emphasis being on the making of environments that helps to uplift the public and to integrate South Africa's multicultural society while simultaneously celebrating, facilitating and accommodating the diverse cultures of the groups within it. The public realm should be a place where people of different cultures can interact and share in the experience of the mix and cultural differentiation that define the South African context. The cultural diversity in South Africa should be used as a tool for reviving local economies, nurturing community cultural identity, and fostering social equity.

The essence of culture is thus realised as a unique life force vested in each of us. Cultural diversity is a significant sociological characteristic of a city. City regeneration should aim to celebrate the rich culture of South Africa and include diversity of the population, as it has the potential to play a vital role in producing an inclusive, pluralistic urban society.

fig. 2.03. Population and language groups in South Africa

South African cities were born in the category of spatialities Lefebvre (1991:49) refers to as 'abstract space'. These spaces did not only dominate the form of the modern city, but more particularly the composition of meaning and identity within the cities. It signified a space of separation and power, which promoted sterility and became a tool in political power, as the government exploited modernist notions in a quest for racial purity and segregation (Denner 2002:61).

The struggle for freedom reached a new intensity in the early fifties, when the African National Congress (ANC) saw the need for a clear statement on the future of South Africa. The idea of a Freedom Charter was born, and the Congress of the People Campaign was initiated.

During this campaign the ANC and its allies invited the whole of South Africa to record their demands so that they could be incorporated in a common document, and became the Freedom Charter. Thousands of people participated in the campaign and sent in their demands for the kind of South Africa they wished to live in. These demands found final expression in the Freedom Charter.

Three thousand delegates gathered at Kliptown, Soweto on 25 and 26 June 1955 including workers, peasants, intellectuals, women, youth and students of all races and colours. The Congress of the People constituted the most representative gathering in the history of South Africa. It adopted the Freedom Charter, a vision for a united, non-racial and democratic South Africa. The Charter envisions a South Africa that belongs to all who live in it and became the common programme protecting the hopes and aspirations of all the progressive people of South Africa, remaining relevant till date.

The demand that 'the people shall govern' realised with the adoption of democratic elections and the current democratic constitution of South Africa. The 50th anniversary of the signing of the Charter was celebrated in June 2005. It remains an inspiring and visionary document that has shaped the development of democracy in South Africa. It represents an integrity in approach to community, equality and inclusiveness which are all essential in creating hearty public places for happy people. The key issues addressed are used as generator for a programme to express the vision of freedom embodied in the event 50 years ago.

We, the People of South Africa, declare for all our country and the world to know...

...and therefore, we, the people of South Africa, black and white together equals, countrymen and brothers adopt this Freedom Charter.

'Sparing neither effort nor strength, we can and shall build a South Africa that truly belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity'.

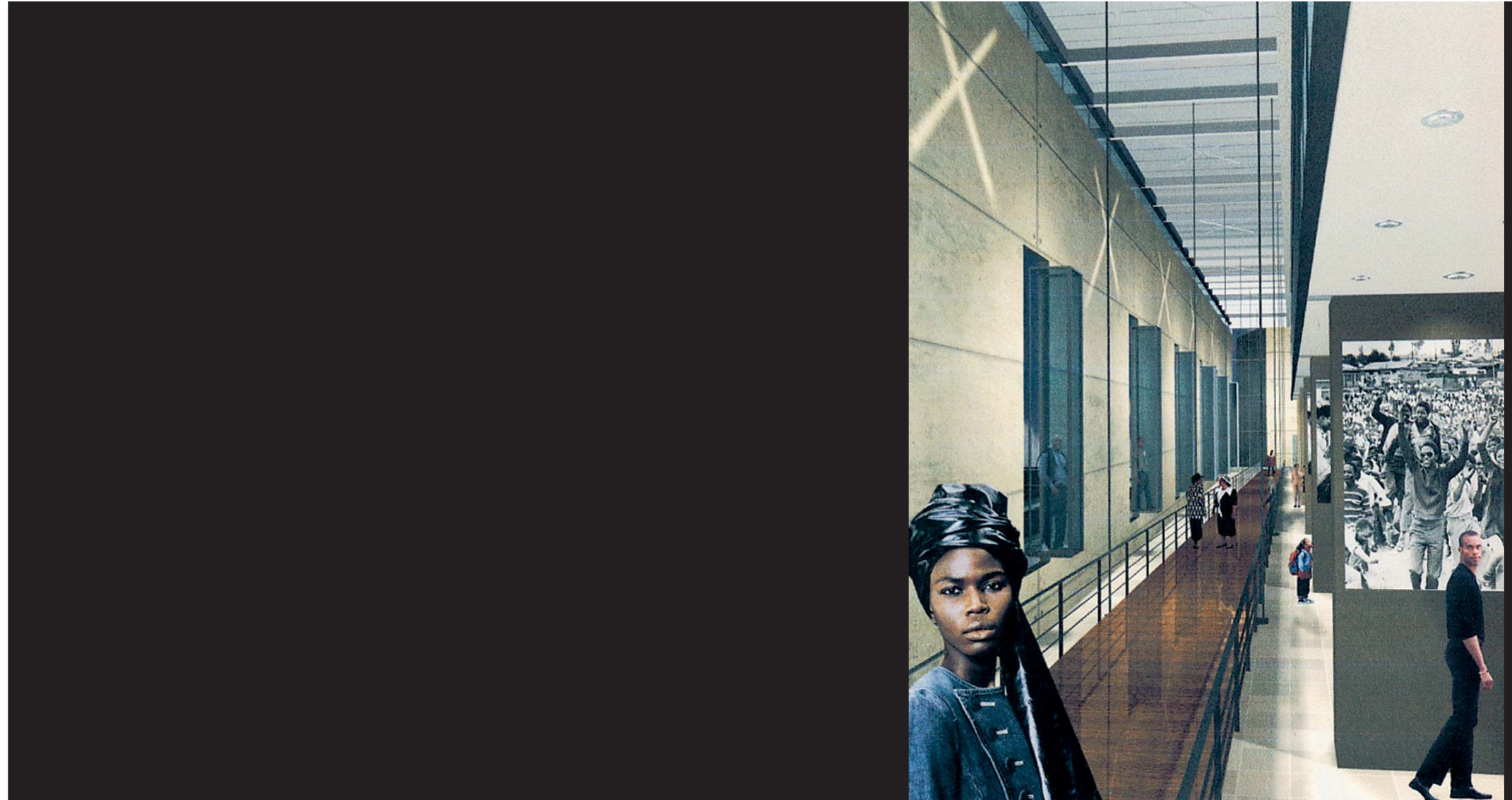
President Thabo Mbeki, 11 February 2005

The people shall govern. All National groups shall have equal rights. The people shall share in the country's wealth. The land shall be shared among those who wrote it. All shall be equal before the law. All shall enjoy equal human rights. There shall be work and security. The doors of learning and culture shall be opened. There shall be houses, security and comfort. There shall be peace and friendship. The people shall govern. All National groups shall have equal rights. The people shall share in the country's wealth. The land shall be shared among those who wrote it. All shall be **The Freedom Charter.**

WALTER SISULU SQUARE OF DEDICATION
Soweto South Africa
studioMAS Architects and Urban Designers
completed 2005



fig. 2.04. Site map
fig. 2.05. Interior of the Museum Complex



2.04

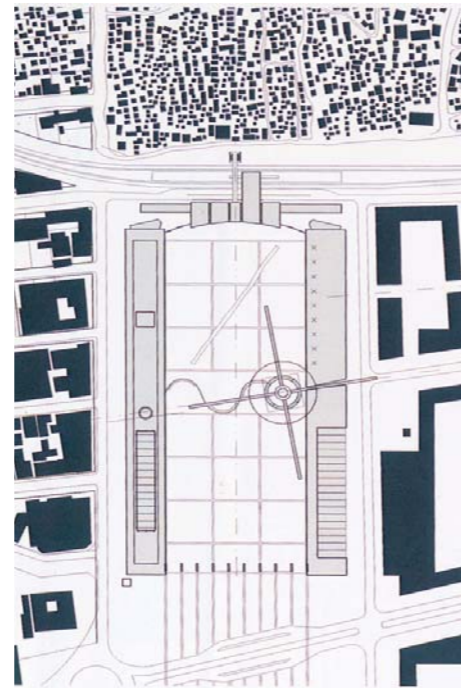
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‘The fundamental principle of democracy is equality. Through equality, unity and diversity, sameness and difference, oneness and individuality are acknowledged, preserved, respected and continually balanced. This is the essence of the new South Africa as a country unified by single identity, and in which the individual identities of the manifold cultures, customs and traditions are respected and preserved. The primary aim of the design is to embody these ideas in the architecture and urban design of the Freedom Square Precinct.’

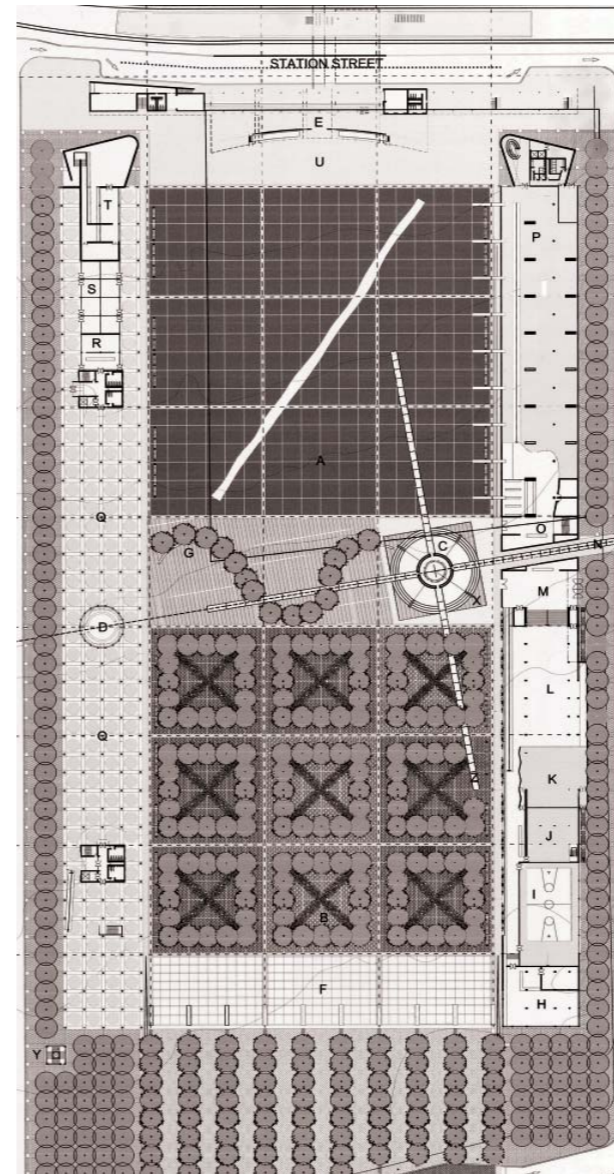
studioMAS Competition Entry, June 2002

The Kliptown Renewal project celebrates the 50th anniversary of the adoption of the Freedom Charter and centres on the heritage site of the R160 million Walter Sisulu Square of Dedication. The square symbolises not only the Charter, but also attempts to restore Kliptown’s dignity in the process, through infrastructural, environmental and economic redevelopment aimed at transforming it into a significant destination and heritage site. The project, by studioMAS Architects visually symbolises the Freedom Charter in a creative and original way.

The Freedom Square is a clearly identifiable and legible public place of symbolic importance. The aim of the design is to make the square a site of local, national and international significance. On the one hand Freedom Square is intended to be a public domain in the tradition of great squares and piazzas that evokes a sense of monumentality and the symbolic heritage of the site and the Freedom Charter itself. On the other hand it is also a domain that is accessible, open and inviting, one that has facilities and which creates opportunities for the people of Soweto. The architect’s aim was not to design another museum, but rather a place which the community can use. A place where employment is generated and people encouraged to start their own businesses.



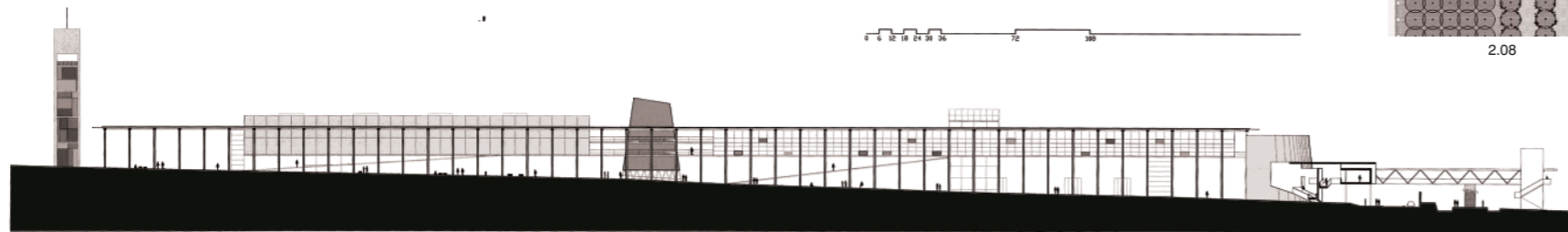
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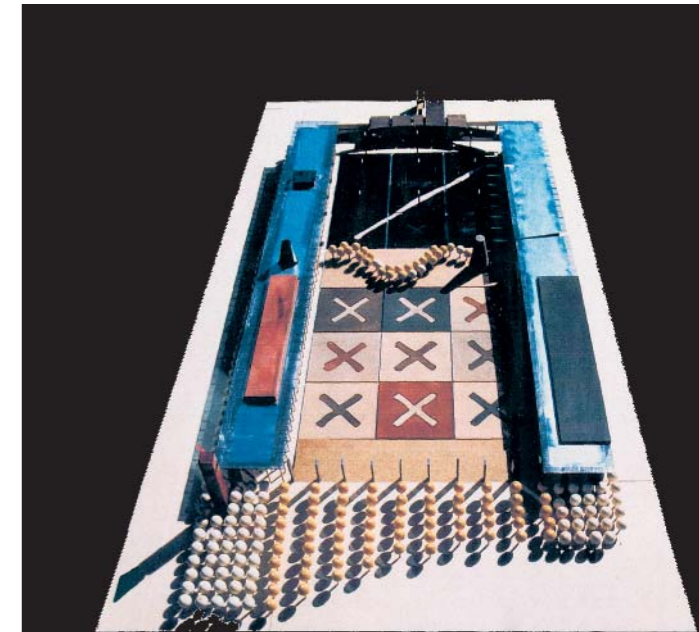
2.08

The square can be seen as an open room in the city, defined on three edges. Central guiding principles of democracy inform the various aspect of the design, from disposition and interrelationship of the buildings surrounding the square, to the access to opportunity that the square holds. Programme includes a museum complex, training facility (freedom of education), market (freedom of trade), multipurpose and performing arts centre (freedom of speech), and incorporates the existing Kliptown railway station. The buildings hold adaptability and expandability as their core principles in the design. Each building or element is interdependent on one another yet self-sustaining. As one function becomes redundant, it should never have to remain as dead space. The robust building framework allows for the ease of design interventions and the flexibility to facilitate change. The buildings are off-shutter concrete skeletons which add to their robust nature.

fig. 2.06. Market elevation
fig. 2.07. Urban variety
fig. 2.08. Plan of Freedom Square
fig. 2.09. Model



2.06



2.09

The articulation of the symbolism of the site is achieved through a number of motifs and forms. The X: as a symbolic mark of one's vote and hence freedom, the X is one of the central motifs of the scheme. It is used in various ways including the X of light in the Freedom Charter Monument, the X on the paving and seating of Freedom Square, and the X bracing in the Museum complex and Performing Arts Centre. The Paving: in the Old Square, the original site of Freedom Square, black paving with a stark white grid laid over, symbolises the harshness of the old regime. The grid symbolises not only colonial architecture and city planning but also prison bars. In the new Freedom Square, the Rainbow Nation is represented in the stone from the nine regions laid in a grid of Greek white marble symbolising South African democracy. The area prior to the entrance of Freedom Square, is dedicated to Nelson Mandela who is commemorated in the Mandela fountain.



2.10

2.11

The market is designed as a forest of columns under which informal trading can take place. The slanted columns are reminiscent of trees as an African meeting space in the forest. The columns give the users the opportunity to use the structure to support signage, a temporary roof or even in future a mezzanine level above the trading stalls. This flexibility also accommodates any future changes and expansion. Existing buildings are incorporated in the design, and commercial activity carried unhindered on during construction. This exemplifies how the old becomes useable for the new.



2.18

Local materials were used as a source of inspiration, and also incorporated into the project. Community involvement created an opportunity to foster a sense of ownership. Pierre Swanepoel (Swanepoel 2005) from studioMAS Architects believes that the use of local material can 'weave the town back together'. Local tradesmen made concrete acoustic panels and breeze blocks for the multi-purpose hall, whilst the community's women weaved shade-net for the market area. Using the skills available creates opportunities, but also translates into the aesthetics.

The Square demonstrates how intimately involved design is with political and social relationships. The approach to the design allows each visitor to embrace the future and freedom. The complex illustrates how to build democracy: by constructing identity, and embodying equality.



2.12

2.13



2.17

2.16



2.14



2.15

fig. 2.10. X-motif of light in Freedom Charter Monument
 fig. 2.11. Detail of perspex inlay on entrance pillar
 fig. 2.12. Market complex
 fig. 2.13. Kwashisanyama (food preparation area)
 fig. 2.14. Looking west with the Museum on the right and the Monument on the left
 fig. 2.15. Looking east towards the Monument with the Museum on the right
 fig. 2.16. Entrance columns
 fig. 2.17. Multi purpose hall
 fig. 2.18. X-motif of seating on the square

Theoretical departure is based on Henri Lefebvre's ideas on the production of space, and the relationship of time, space and the social being. Architecture is both produced and reproduced, designed and experienced, and is at once social, spatial and temporal. The main design objective is to incorporate the conception of space as a social product in the city. Space is treated as a reflection of society shaped through the social processes and practices of economies, politics and culture.

According to Lefebvre (1991:137), it is not a question of localising in pre-existing space a need or a function, but of spatialising a social activity, linked to the whole by producing an appropriate space. Activity in the urban centre concretises the life-world which keeps different social space-times together. Lefebvre insists, 'only action can prevent dispersion, like a fist clenched around sand. Generating not simply users or experiencers of, but produced by and productive of, the architecture around them' (Lefebvre 1991:320). He sees different forms of social construction as central to the production of space, in terms of class, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, family relations and age. Abstract space tends to erase these, and should be directed towards restoring them. Central to his thinking on this matter is the body, not just of cultural endeavour but also of self-appropriation and adaptation. The body is useful for thinking about the triad of the perceived, conceived and lived: Spatial practices (perceived), presuppose the use of body, hands, sensory organs, and gestures. Representations of space (conceived), describe the representations of the body, derived from scientific and anatomical knowledge, and relations with nature, while representation (lived experience) express bodies imbued with culture and symbolism (Lefebvre 1991:38-39).

Lefebvre's (1991:33) formulation for the production of space:

SPATIAL PRACTICE

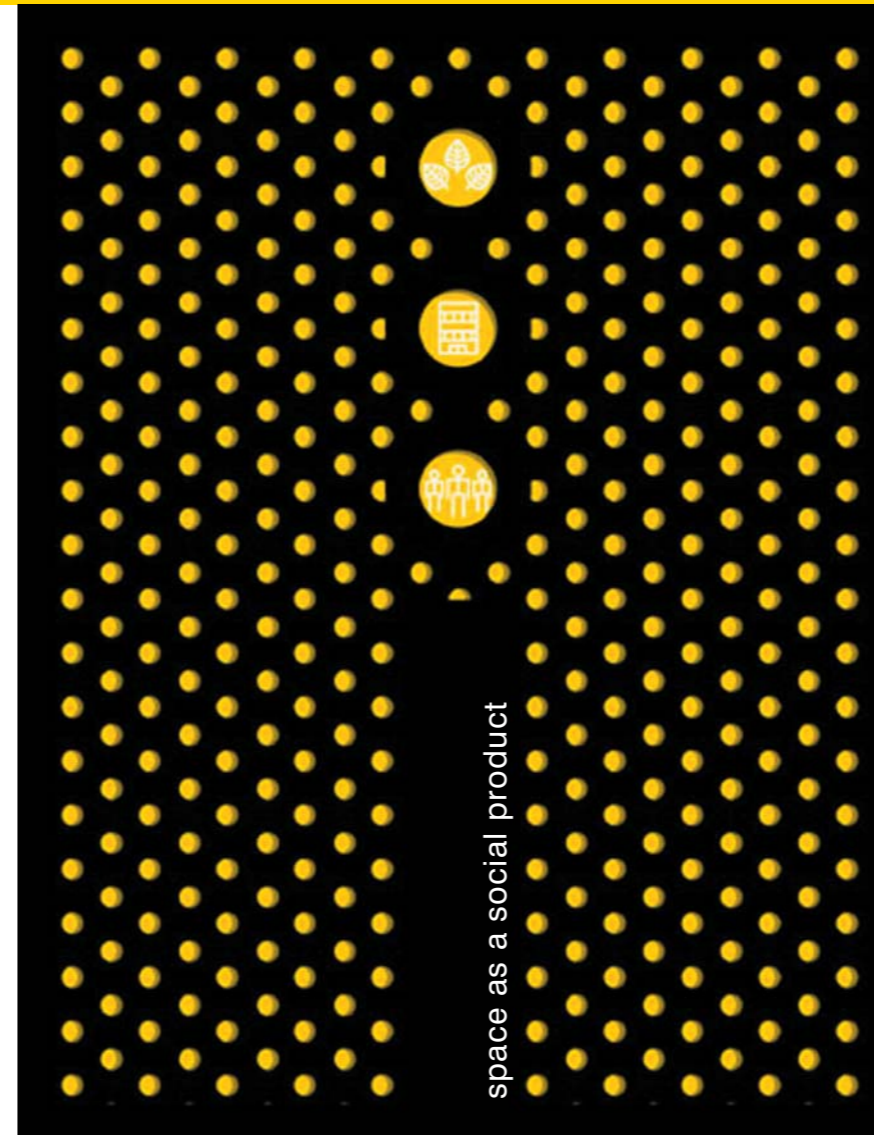
Involves the production and reproduction of material life, including everyday life and urban activities, resulting in various functional spaces. Producing the spatial forms appropriate to different activities, it thereby defines spaces of the everyday. Both a space of objects and things and a space of movements and activities. Lefebvre considers it as perceived space before considering experiences.

REPRESENTATIONS OF SPACE

Relates to the conscious codifications of space labeled by abstract understandings by disciplines to understand abstract space. Representations of space provide the various understandings of space necessary for spatial practices to take place. Space imagined as, 'the concept without life'.

SPACES OF REPRESENTATION

Concerns those spaces experienced as nonverbal symbols and images. Space can be invented and imagined, and are thus both the space of the experienced and the space of the imagination, as lived. Spaces conceived as, 'life without concepts'.



Desired criteria for the production of socially suitable public space, is formulated according to Dewar and Uytendboogaardt's (1991) performance criteria for successful place-making. A core set of needs acts as the basis on which planning, design policies and actions can be evaluated:

- >> A concern for balance, promoting the notion of maintaining dynamic balance in cities – between social and spatial dynamics.
- >> The promotion of freedom for people. Design should provide the minimum necessary constraint required in a particular context to achieve positive settlement form.
- >> Equitable access.
- >> Promoting intensity, diversity and complexity through minimalist approach to design intervention.
- >> Spatial integration of communities and activities to promote choice and flexibility.
- >> 'Community'-place of identity that facilitates positive social interaction.

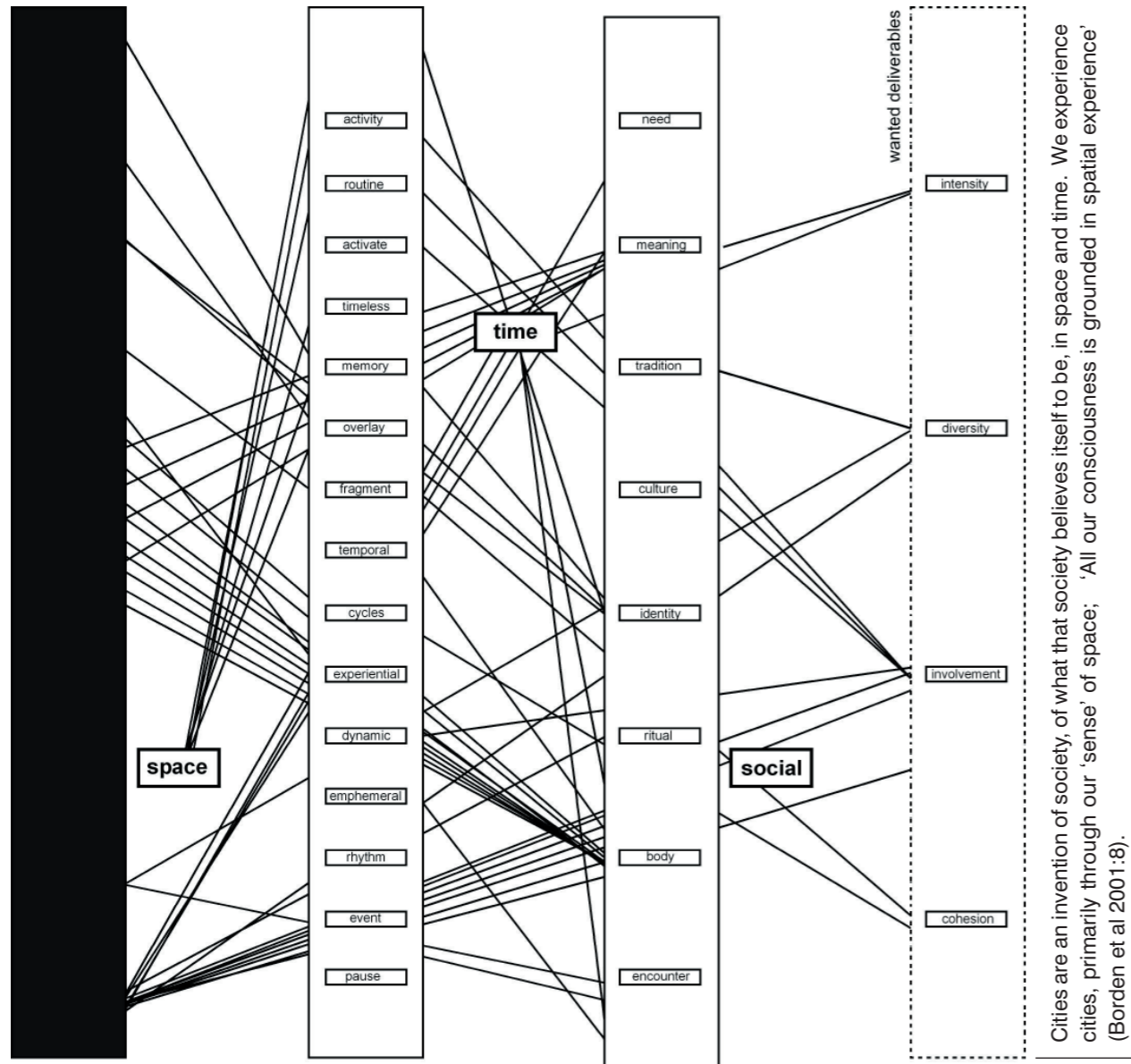


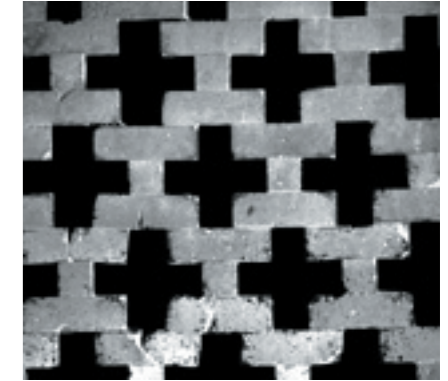
fig. 2.20. Diagram illustrating the relationship between space, time and a social being



2.21



2.22



2.23

'They live time, after all; they are in time. Yet all anyone sees is movements. In nature, time is apprehended within space, in the very heart of space' (Pallasmaa, 1974:95). The notion of 'time in and through space' is essential to Pallasmaa's understanding of social or lived space. He describes social space as 'not a thing, but rather a set of relations between objects and products.'

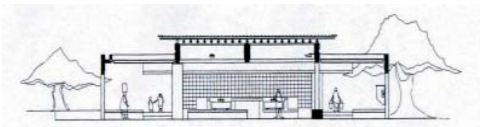
Potential for space identity emerges from an understanding of everyday place experience and the relationship between people and the built environment. Morojele (2002:105) argues for a sanctioned impermanence as a strategic approach to the development of spatial identities in a transitional environment. It requires 'the promotion of baggy space; space that may be experienced as being significant without being prescriptive'. Multiple social uses simultaneously provide different interpretations and increase the potential for ownership of and identity with, new urban spaces. It also weaves space into an existing cultural continuum.

The objective is to articulate space which allows accommodation for the informal, the unintended and the unanticipated, by providing a background for the production of space, enabling a platform for human activity where the architectural meaning can reside in the human experience. Programme should be able to accommodate projects to contribute not only economically, but also by continuous human activity as generator of shared public space. Multiple social uses will provide simultaneously different interpretations and increase the potential for ownership of, and therefore identity with, new urban spaces. Ian Borden believes that social existence should enable self-production and self-determination - so that people make lives for themselves, and not simply adapt to the natural circumstances. He adds that as a social being must inevitably involve space, it follows that it must also involve consciousness and experience of space (Borden et al 2001:8).

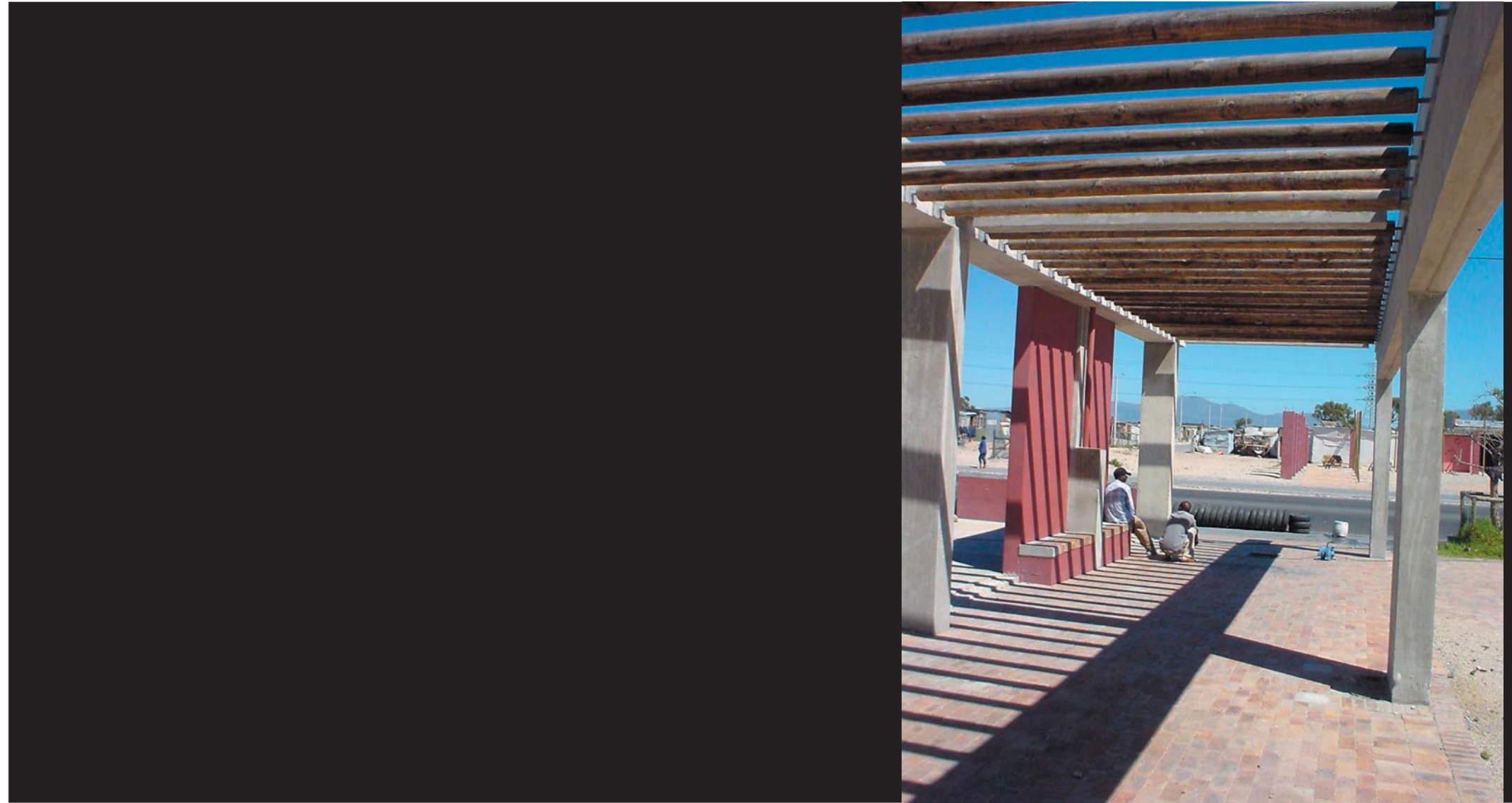
Space is temporal because we move through it; time is spatial because space can be constructed. It is through space that we are capable of addressing time. But time also exists to activate our spaces, occasionally transforming them by challenging perceptions of their boundaries (Bernard Tschumi 2000:19).

PHILIPPI LANSDOWNE PUBLIC SPACE PROJECT
Cape Town South Africa
Du Toit & Perrin Associates
completed 2002

fig. 2.24. Elevation of utilitarian area
fig. 2.25. Covered walkway



2.24



2.25



2.26

2.27

2.28

fig. 2.26. Forecourt
fig. 2.27. Informal housing in area
fig. 2.28. Concrete frame of covered walkway

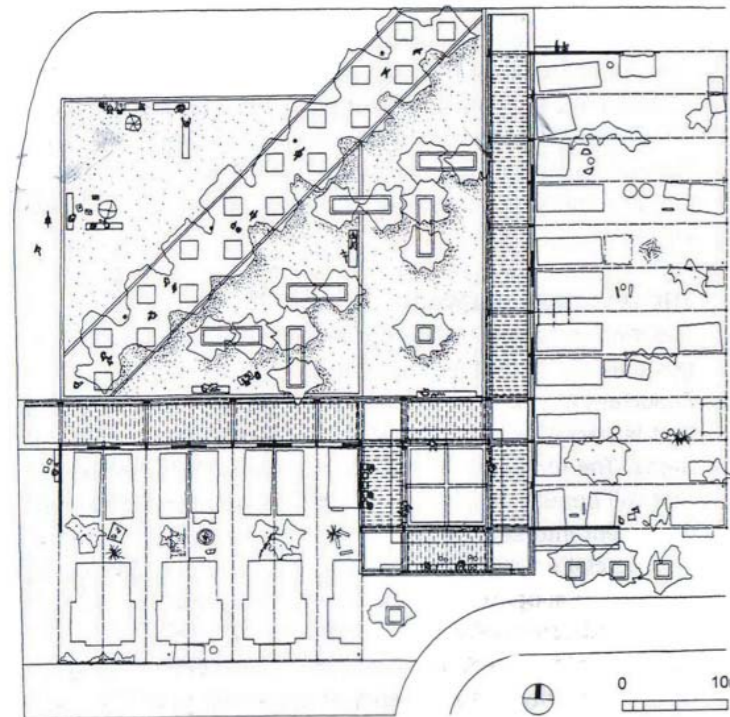


fig. 2.31. Site plan

The success of the public space lies in the habitability of the urban spaces by accommodating everyday activity. Strategies to improve habitability firstly include making public space into furniture, so that people can sit, play, cook and eat on or in it. Design considerations include walls of the correct height and width to accommodate above. Secondly, different kinds of space are necessary with differing degrees of enclosure and shelter. The project provides different components of exterior space (edges, level changes, sheltering elements, lighting) organised to make subtle differentiation for various users to occupy them in various ways. The structure acts as defining element of the public space which announces it. The success of a public project depends on more than design considerations and adaptability. Community participation is needed and should be empowered through the process from initiation to completion. Public ownership is desired in order to ensure occupation.

The Philippi Lansdowne Public Space Project, forms part of the ‘dignified urban places’ programme of the city of Cape Town, launched in 1999. Conceived to transform the ‘black townships’ by redressing the urban poverty established by the impoverished spatiality of apartheid’s policy of segregation, this programme intends to improve these environments by ‘bringing them to the standard’ enjoyed by privileged areas (Low 2005:150). The spatial agenda of segregation inevitably influenced the new spatial agenda to be one of integration. The programme focuses on the public realm through the development of places for integration where a range of human encounters can take place, including a variety of spatially linked interventions in the area consisting of a transport interchange, bathhouse, community centre and social facilities.

Du Toit and Perrin Associates advocate architecture as part of an informal-settlement in the Public Space Project in Philippi Lansdowne. The spatial challenge being the creation of something that will contribute to the broader public and allow the spaces to be appropriated by the community. The solution is an informal urban landscape that provides for a basic level of dignity and well-being at a collective place to gather water, to wash, to learn, to socialise and to set up shops. The design consists of a public forecourt with planted trees and benches, acknowledging the prominent intersection. The forecourt is framed by a number of covered sites (4 by 20 metres) accommodating growth of a range of informal activities to the rear. These sites benefit directly from their location adjacent to the intersection as there is potential for an active commercial environment (Du Toit & Perrin 2005:56). The concrete frame can accommodate the construction of double-storey units and provide opportunity for future live-work arrangements. A covered general well-being area is a place for gathering and supportive of everyday activities containing laundry tubs and public phones. The building provides more than utilitarian facilities, where the footprint creates a place of public significance by interaction to activities around it. The contributing elements are the covered external spaces which provide shade as well as shelter from rain and the use of steps and low rise walls as informal seating and general spaces to congregate.

The framework is geared towards interpretation and the facilitation of growth and adaptation over time. The materials and surfaces articulate a level of robustness to sustain phases of adaptation. There are a number of important urban space-making elements present in the public-space project. Distinctive space has a quality of enclosure which implies that it has clear boundaries defining inside and outside, but can still be visually and physically connected with other space. Boundaries differ from a complete view obstruction to a subtle edge such as screens, trees, paving or even a water channel. Emphasis on boundaries offers importance to openings and thresholds between one space and another. Spatial hierarchy plays a role in how space identifies to the surroundings and built fabric and variety in terms of different kinds of space from formal/informal to centered spaces, in-between spaces and edges.



fig. 2.29. Possible future elevation

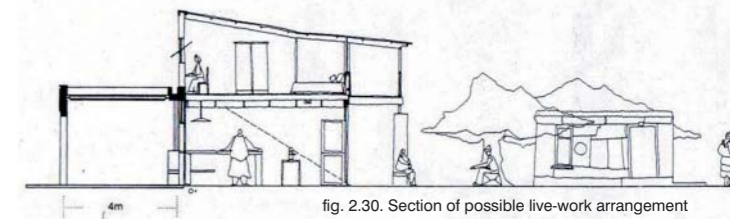


fig. 2.30. Section of possible live-work arrangement