

Allston Library, Boston, USA
Machado and Silvetti

Fig 54: The entrance on the street front is accentuated by cracking the plane with a fragment jutting out to the street (Campbell 2002, p. 86-91)

Fig. 55: The childrens reading garden (Campbell 2002, p. 86-91)

Fig. 56-57: Textures and Materials
Left: Blue gray Vermont slate topped by wood
Right: Norwegian slate (Campbell 2002, p. 86-91)

The design of the library was done in collaboration with the local community. The neighbors were very much against what they called 'modern architecture' and any building which would over scale the surrounding houses. What the community got was a building sensitive to context without compromising on its own integrity. Due to efficiency considerations the library consists of only one floor, but a double volume is create on the street front. The street facade is broken in two, which reminds of the Boston two-family houses, and the modest wood frame buildings surrounding the library (Campbell 2002, p.86 -91) The relationship between the building and the street is very open. A thin patina of honey locust trees, and the textured, two-tone facade provides a barrier at certain points, while in other areas the streetscape is allowed to flow through to the building. The result is a building honest in function and its relationship to the outside. A large amount of glazing provide for interiors awash with light. The combination of light and planted courtyards establish a link with the natural environment, something which is not traditionally associated with libraries. In this case it provides for a pleasant place full of light, air and the serenity of waving green leaves.

Sandton Library and Civic Offices
GAPP Architects & Urban Designers

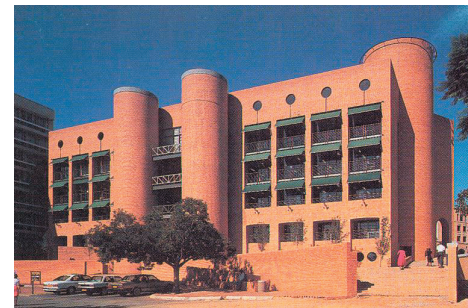
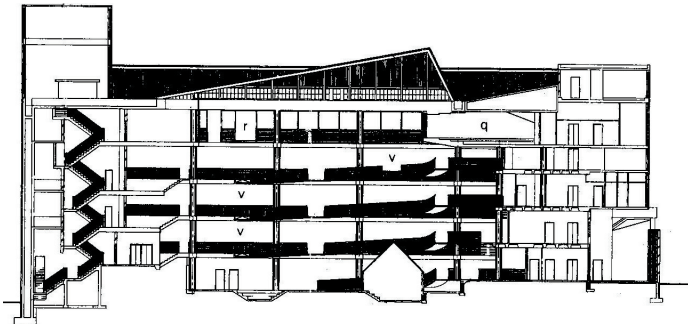
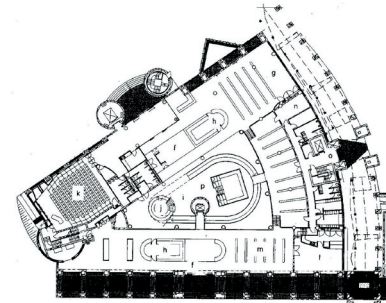
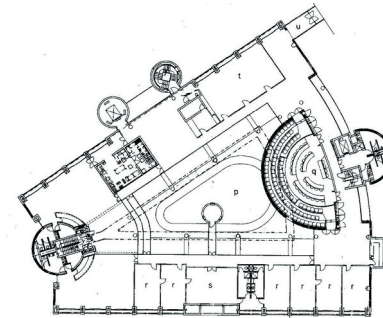
Strongly reminiscent of Khan, the facades exude a sense of civic duty and grandeur without overbearing the individual. The deep setbacks in the facade offer protection against the East West sun, as well as hinting at the light interior. The interior is planned around a central triangular court. The central court is glazed over to create an airy and light-filled space.

Careful attention to scale attributes to the success of the building. Quite intimate spaces such as reading rooms are inviting and intimate, while the public and council areas are more civic in scale (Slessor 1995, p50-54)



Images, from top
Fig. 58: West elevation overlooking the public square
Fig. 59: Fourth floor plan
Fig. 60: Ground floor plan

Left
Fig. 62: Longitudinal section



Conclusion and Application to Design

Reference to history and context provide for interesting and relevant architecture (Bopitikelo Community Centre) but recreating historic architecture, especially African methods in an urban context, is insensitive to the present. The memory of the past does create depth and meaning, however. African space making, with strong connections to the environment and well defined outdoor rooms are appropriate to present day urban application.

Sacred space and the emotional experience there off is achieved through enfolding the space in a number of layers, separating the inner sanctity from the outside world. This separation does not imply a complete break with the environment, but rather an implied separation. The approach to the inner sanctum is very important. Progression and redirection separates the sacred space from the mundane.

The separation of experience must not become a barrier to the flow of space. An effective combination between space continuity and space definition calls for an implied separation, without breaking the visual connection.

The emotional value of spaces needs consideration. A variety of spaces diverse in size, and scale will stimulate a greater variety in activities. The spaces needs to be interesting, sheltered and include indoor and outdoor spaces as well as transitional spaces.

Incorporating both indoor and outdoor spaces helps in establishing a sense of place. The connection with the outdoors creates pleasant indoor spaces. Even library spaces can be awash in natural light and have vistas of nature.