

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Abstract

The dissertation considers contemporary theory with regards to unprogrammed space and the impact of such space on the urban environment. The intrinsic relationship between programmed and unprogrammed space is defined, resulting in a formal translation in terms of an architectural intervention.

Lost space is the evidence of inept urban planning and this study attempts to reintegrate an entire city block into the urban fabric of the city. The exploration of a new programme into the area, takes the form of a sports and education facility in an urban park.

The final proposal creates a place of relief in the city, with Pretoria's inherent vernacular used as a generator of form. The design unifies a disparate community by using sport as a bridge builder and providing a canvas for urban exchange.

The Tshwane inner city has limited pedestrian orientated public spaces, places that exist simply for resting or that provide recreational opportunities in the form of community activities. Existing public spaces in the capital have either limited accessibility, are flawed in their design or are badly managed, resulting in many spaces having only seasonal use. The city is designed for the motor vehicle, not the individual. It is almost impossible to find respite from the hustle on the street. This does not hinder inhabitants of the inner city from claiming parts of the city as their own. People meet in empty parking lots while abandoned warehouses are revitalized for recreational use. Taxi owners simply wash their vehicles in the streets, between the flow of pedestrians to the city.

The premise is therefore that open spaces are available, and people make do with the little that is available, however lacking this may be.

The Tshwane Inner City Development and Regeneration Strategy (City of Tshwane, 2005:13); identifies aspects of identity, entertainment, public space and safety as some of the immediate needs of the city. It identifies the need to promote "the development of inner city housing and the necessary social infrastructure or parks" (City of Tshwane, 2005:18).

This dissertation aims to understand the relationship between unprogrammed space and the necessary fixed program that gives such a space direction and identity. The proposed design of an urban park with a sports and education centre at its core, leads to the investigation of this dual relationship, and the subsequent creation of a catalyst that can uplift and promote individuals and their community. Regarding the latter, emphasis will be placed on the role of sport as a community builder in the South African context, bridging boundaries between cultures and the many different groups of people that can benefit from sport and its inherent qualities. These theoretical principles will then be tested on a problem area in the inner city of Tshwane.



Fig 1.1 Streets and sidewalks are dominated by cars

Fig 1.4 Leftover space in a parking lot is used as a kitchen



Fig 1.2, 1.3 Streets are appropriated as public space

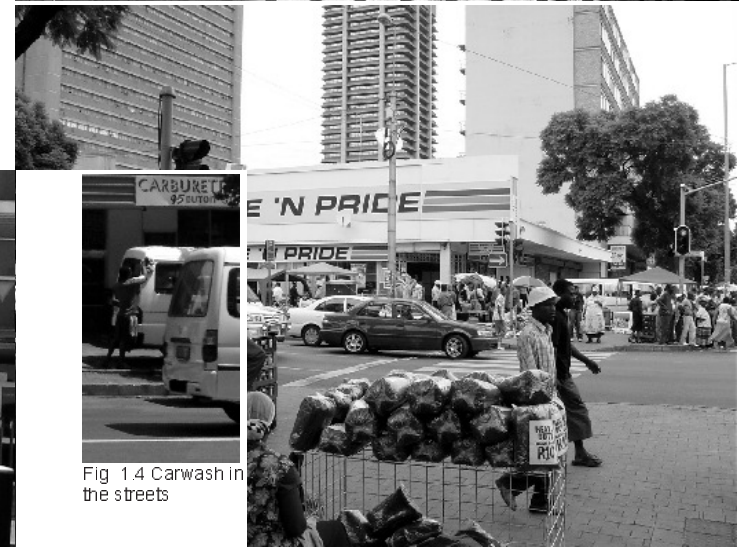


Fig 1.4 Carwash in the streets

Fig 1.5 A Vendor selling her wares in the hustle of the streets

Chapter 2 - Theoretical Context

2.1 Introduction

While considering different themes upon which to base a dissertation, a researcher inevitably considers the design of a new building on an empty stand, an object in space - possibly a health clinic or an aids awareness centre. Yet upon closer study of the city and its elements, one questions the state of the inner city and its urban sprawl and the resulting back-alleys and rubbish areas, the leftover spaces. Is it not these "between" spaces, this lost space, that harbours crime elements and results in many regarding the city as unsafe?

But what is lost space? Roger Transik (199X:1); identifies lost space as the vacant, unused land in city centres, the land that is not integrated into the urban fabric, where design decisions were made in two dimensions. Lost space is land nobody cares about and no one takes ownership of. It results in disjointed pedestrian links and a disjointed experience. However, lost space in city centres provides the ideal opportunity to create an urban centre, so that it attracts people to these areas (Transik, 199X:21).

Oscar Newman (in Broadbent, 1990:149); developed the concept of defensible space, being "a living environment which can be employed by the inhabitants for the enhancement of their lives, while providing security for their families, neighbours and friends". Should one perhaps aim at transforming these unused spaces, these lost spaces, reprogramming them into a new whole, adding a new layer that could regenerate a part of the city?

It is the opinion of the author that an urban generator in a South African context should allow for the growth of the community by providing options that were previously unavailable. Powell talks of interventions that "are for the benefit of local people" and "contribute hugely to improving the quality of life...often transforming the area within which they function" (Powell, 2004:6). Attributes mentioned are the need to create opportunities for new businesses and sources of employment and education. In an urban context, these interventions can be used to give a new identity to an area and express the inherent genius loci - the spirit of the place.

The questions now arises as to what component of daily life has the ability to uplift, to unify individuals, and create a strong sense of community and identity, creating opportunities for people to interact.

2.2 Sport and the community

It is a generally accepted fact that sport contributes positively to the development of the individual and the community. The United Nations classifies participation in sport and recreation as a fundamental human right, which all governments must provide to their people. Prof. Keim Lees of the University of the Western Cape (University of the Western Cape, 2007); an expert in the role of sport in a South African context, is of the opinion that sport is increasing in importance in a society driven by imagery and the media. Such is the role of sport in modern society, that the average individual will be more exposed to sport and its related intrigues, than to political and economic issues. "Sport forms an integral part of life whether as active participants or passive spectators" (University of the Western Cape, 2007).

In a statement released by the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the authority assigned by the United Nations to manage sports development in third world countries, the author identifies sport as being able to play an important role in creating a safer society, through its educational values and its inherent worldwide network (De Vidy, 2007). Further attributes of sport are discussed as the ability to help bridge the gap between cultures and reinforce social integration. Additional positive community benefits of sport include the empowerment of disadvantaged groups, reduction in crime and vandalism, encouraging pride in the community, generating employment and income, as well as improving health and education.

Thus empowerment through sport means to equip people with skills to act on their own behalf as they gain some control over their future. However, the simple act of participating in sport cannot achieve this, and the study emphasizes the organization and necessary skills needed by the community to ensure that regeneration and empowerment become a sustainable and achievable reality (Gratton and Henry, 2001:189).

Fig 2.1 Zanele Situ - The first black South African to win a Paralympic gold medal



Fig 2.2 Steve 'Kalamazoo' Mokone. Often rated as South Africa's finest footballer ever, Steve "Kalamazoo" Mokone was forced to play football in the Netherlands and Italy during the apartheid years. He learned his skills juggling a tennis ball as a child. These skills resulted in many referring to him as the Pele of Africa.



Fig 2.3 Basil D'Oliviera - Basil D'Oliviera is a South African born cricketer who was forced to go abroad to follow his cricket career. He ended up playing for England for seven years and it was his inclusion in the England team in 1968/69 that was to lead to the cancellation of their tour to South Africa and ultimately South Africa's suspension from international cricket. It was the first solid step towards normalising the sport in the country.



Fig 2.4 Sport as an event



Fig 2.5 An urban sports park in Rotterdam



Fig 2.6 Expression on the field



Fig 2.7 Social interaction



Fig 2.8 Social Interchange



Fig 2.12 Sport creates community



Fig 2.9 Space for the individual



Fig 2.10, 2.11 Sport as a cultural bridge builder



2.3 The role of sports administration

The focus shifts from sport as an act of expressing oneself to sport and its administration. Therefore, provided that one is able to properly manage the process of sports participation and the social interaction connected to it, it is the opinion of the author that the presence of sport in a community can provide the community with new opportunities and choices that are in some way related to the ritual of sport and its inherent infrastructure - choices in life that were previously unavailable.

This argument is in keeping with that of the International Olympic Committee, who approach community development in Africa by focusing on sport at grass-root levels. "The aim is not only to encourage recreational activities and promote healthy lifestyles, but also to consolidate the community structure" (de Vidy, 2007). Regarding crime and youth development, the presence of organized sport is proven to provide youths with positive alternatives to the use of drugs and facilitates the opportunity for adults to build up relationships with young people, helping them to question their own behaviour and understanding the consequences of their actions (Gratton & Henry, 2001: 200).

Discussing the impact of an informal event organized in a rural area, Thabo Mkhize reminisces "for a day, crime is defeated and shebeens are nearly empty – and yet another platform for sports development has been firmed up" (Mkhize, 2007:15).

The relevance of sport in community development has been identified, but how does this translate to architecture?

The opportunity arises to establish fields of possibility that will allow for the successful administration and facilitation of sport and its related events. Provided with such a relevant infrastructure, sport will allow for the "generation of opportunity and increasing participation through involvement and creating events" (Gratton & Henry, 2001:190). These events are not simply about the practice of sport, rather allowing for opportunities to meet new people in the community, as well as exposing individuals to alternative ways of uplifting themselves.

The architectural point of departure is therefore not simply the creation of only sports fields, but rather the creation of areas and opportunities for social exchange.

Thus, the chance emerges to combine sports and education: Firstly, the presence of sport events can expose individuals to alternative ways of uplifting themselves by benefitting from the opportunities created by the events. To this end a platform needs to be established that allows entrepreneurs to display their products.

Secondly, the infrastructure provided could include educational facilities, using the lure of sport to attract attention to the benefits of education in a positive environment. As an example of the positive influence of sport on the community, a study by Lang and Sanderson identified the skills developed by individuals of a target community that were involved in organizing simple sports events and sports club administration. These community members were able to not only "make presentations, run meetings, write applications, set-up events and run clubs" (Gratton & Henry 2001:195); they were now able to start new initiatives to the benefit of the community.

2.4 Architecture of the event

Bernhard Tschumi, in his seminal *Event Cities*, discusses the concept of events, where one ceases to focus simply on the spaces of a building, but also on the events that are to take place in and around them. Tschumi advocates the need to view architecture with regards to its ability of shaping spaces around it and allowing relevant events. In this process it influences the city on a larger scale. "There is no architecture without the city, no city without architecture" (Tschumi, 2004:8).

Tschumi proposes a collision of programmes and space wherein the resultant architecture will allow for the occurrence of events.

Discussing urban generators, Tschumi (2004:193); talks of the importance of cross-programming (the provision of multi-programmed space) and the possible events that such a program can generate. Often the scale of the building alone ensures it being a generator of new events, yet it can also simply cater for current events. Strategic placement of buildings on locations where multiple routes converge can also allow them to provide momentary pauses along these routes.



Fig 2.13 Architecture of the Fanfest, Germany 2006



Fig 2.14 A reprogrammable square in the Landshaftspark, Germany

Inherent to the success of such cross-programmed spaces, is the presence of sufficient infrastructure and buildings that provide a sense of permanence in a field of unprogrammed space. The occurrence of an annual event also creates in the participant a feeling of permanence and stability. Thus, despite the flexibility inherent in unprogrammed event spaces, such an intervention requires the need of several elements with a fixed program. Ben van Berkel (Van Berkel & Bos, 1999:46); in a project that combines a sports stadium with a wide range of additional programmes, talks of the folding bicycle versus the racing bicycle of architecture. The folding bicycle entails that part of the building that is reprogrammable, allowing for several uses and programmatic environments. At the same time it needs the presence of the racing bicycle - the fixed sports fields in this case - which positions the development in a certain context and provides a stability which informs and supports the reprogrammable fields (Van Berkel & Bos, 47). The present and future events of a site can help narrowing the design to a certain range of possibilities.

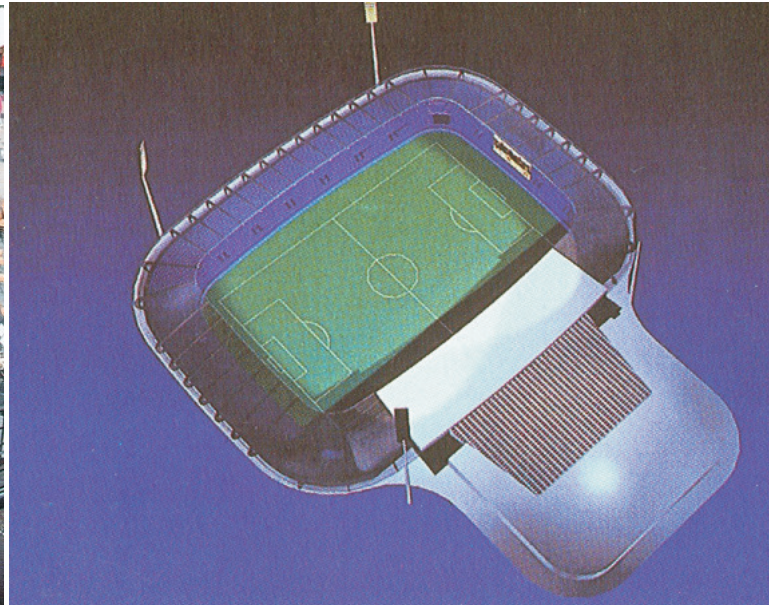


Fig 2.15 Stadium Rotterdam, Holland

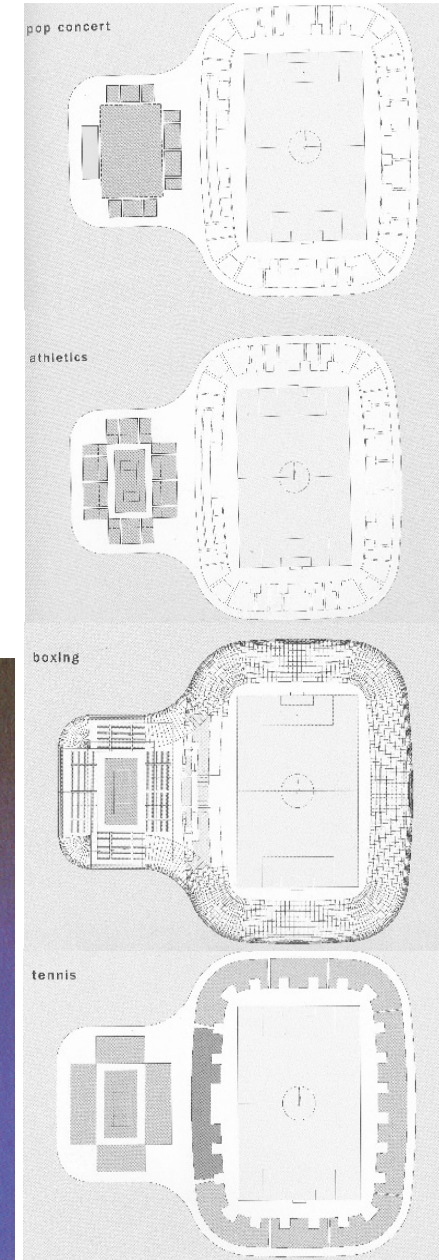


Fig 2.16 The relationship between the two bicycles of architecture

2.5 The intervention at an urban scale

Tschumi (2004:194); talks of the increasingly important relationship between the urban environment and the individual building. The building should relate to its immediate environment and be relevant to its district in the city. Rem Koolhaas does a study of modern urbanism, describing what he perceives as being the main problem with dealing with the constant change of cities. He states that "professionals of the city are like chess players who lose to computers" (Koolhaas & Mau, 1995:963). He describes the city as being immovable, and of the professional as being unable to efficiently shape the many factors that shape a city. Ultimately, the city judges the success of any new intervention. Similar to Van Berkel, Koolhaas discusses the concept of a new urbanism, an approach where one surrenders a certain amount of control to chance". If there is to be a new urbanism it will not be based on the twin fantasies of order and omnipotence; it will be the staging of uncertainty; it will be more concerned with the arrangement of more or less permanent objects but within the irrigation of territories with potential." (Koolhaas & Mau, 969).

Designing unprogrammed spaces is therefore not about designing a building that is able to cater for every single possibility, neither is it the anticipation of all possible changes. Rather, it is the design for a certain range of possibilities that could possibly occur on a certain site. This is where the presence of fixed program is important, as it will be an indicator of the possibilities of the precinct as a whole. Saunders (2006:3); in an article on successful multi-use precincts, identifies compatible diversification in the use of buildings as an integral element by emphasizing that the "key to the process is determining which types of facilities are best suited to mixed uses and what type of functions are compatible".

One could therefore maintain that a successful unprogrammed space has the correct fixed programme at its core. In large developments of reprogrammed fields, sufficient infrastructure should therefore form an integral part of the approach.

From the above, one can therefore suggest that for the successful intervention of reprogrammable fields, there needs to be sufficient infrastructure of a fixed nature to complete the intervention and give it meaning. There is a dual need of programmed and unprogrammed space for a successful urban intervention.