

BRIDGING THE GAP

An In-Vocational Training Centre for the Physically Disabled



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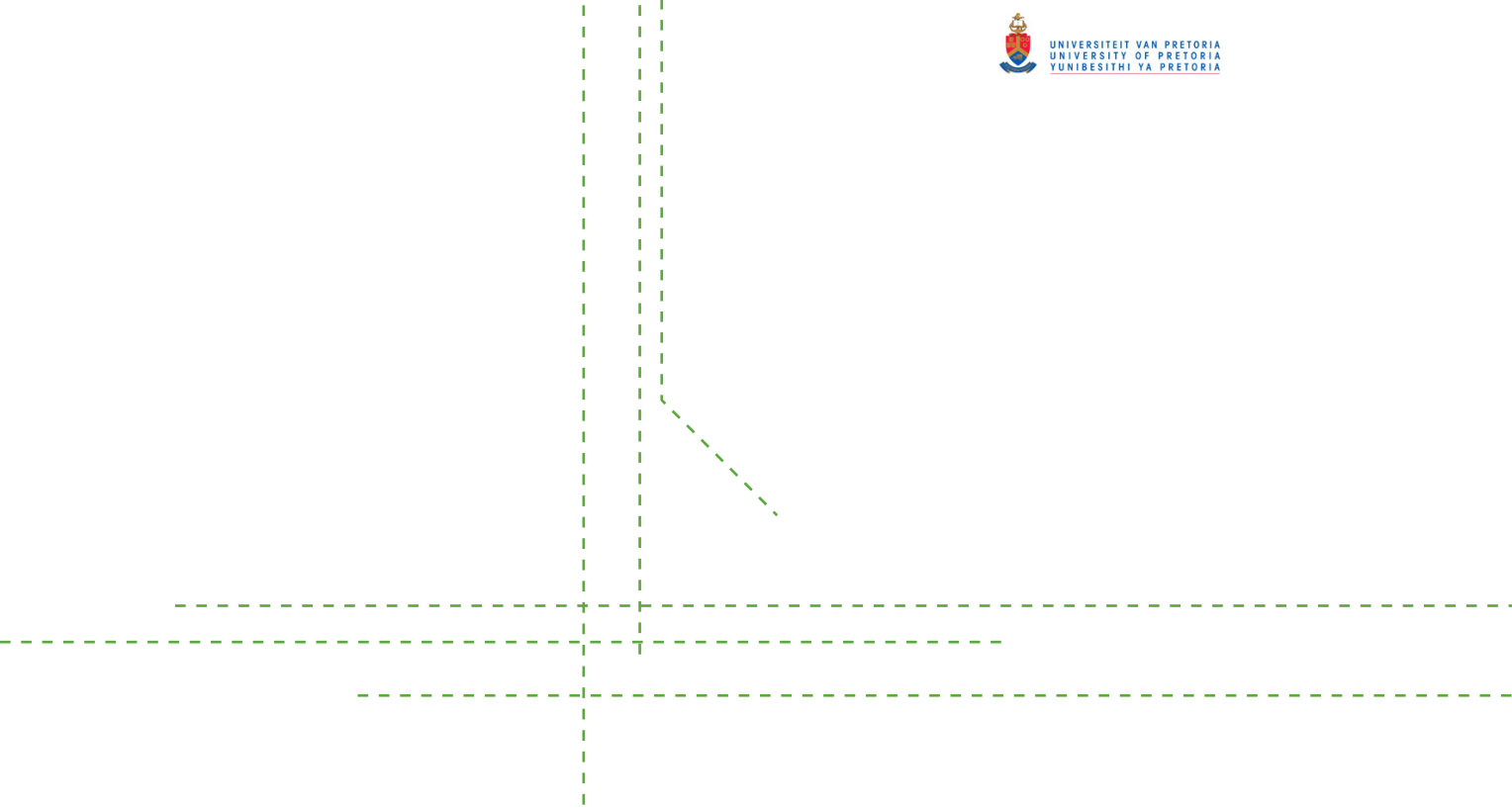
Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Masters of Architecture (Professional)

In the Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment and Information Technology

University of Pretoria

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Oppedra aan:
My Here, Lood, Mamma & Pappa



INTRODUCTION

“Will we muster the intelligence and love, to craft a future that all living beings can share? This is the choice each of us makes every day.”

L. Hunter Lovins, 2004 (Van der Ryn, 2005:59)

This dissertation concerns itself with the plight of the disabled, having been “invisible” in society for so long. We recognise the disabled in the constitution, but in society only manage scant recognition of their existence.

The disabled must be integrated into the normal, able-bodied society and become financially and economically self-sufficient. Their special needs must become the standard infrastructure of the able-bodied. Industry must accommodate them, for their impairment can be mitigated.

Not only has society turned its back on the disabled, but we are realising, to our great amazement, how we are raping our Mother Earth. Current knowledge is urging us to preserve the earth for future generations. Therefore, project planning was done against this background to qualify for Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) status in terms of the Kyoto Protocol.

Society’s perception and past is not changed with a magic wand and requires a conscious decision:

“Be the change you want to see.”

Mahatma Gandhi

An *In-Vocational Training Centre* is proposed to economically and socially integrate the disabled into, what is generally perceived, normal society. The Centre focuses on training people for specific skills required in the open labour market and specialises in food production and packaging for a specific target market. Locating the Centre on the inner city’s edge, in close proximity to the zoo and fresh produce market, not only creates a bridge between the dense built environment and the less dense edge, but places it close to its input supply (fresh produce market) and an off-take consumer (herbivores in the zoo). With the incorporation of green houses as a productive element for urban agriculture, the building respects the natural environment it is placed in and optimises the natural and economic resources it requires to sustain itself. It attempts to reduce its ecological footprint to the minimum.

Research indicated the specific infrastructure need for the disabled and therefore the Centre is located close to transportation and city amenities. Furthermore, the planning respects the city’s history, its plans for the future and society’s needs. The building is designed to be a quiet building which unobtrusively, yet noticeably marks the inner city’s edge without denigrating its natural surround. It thereby functions as the subtle entry (bridge) for the hitherto ignored into the city and society.

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