



## Little Eden

Society for the Care of Persons with Mental Handicap

# A New Home in Prinshof, Pretoria

by

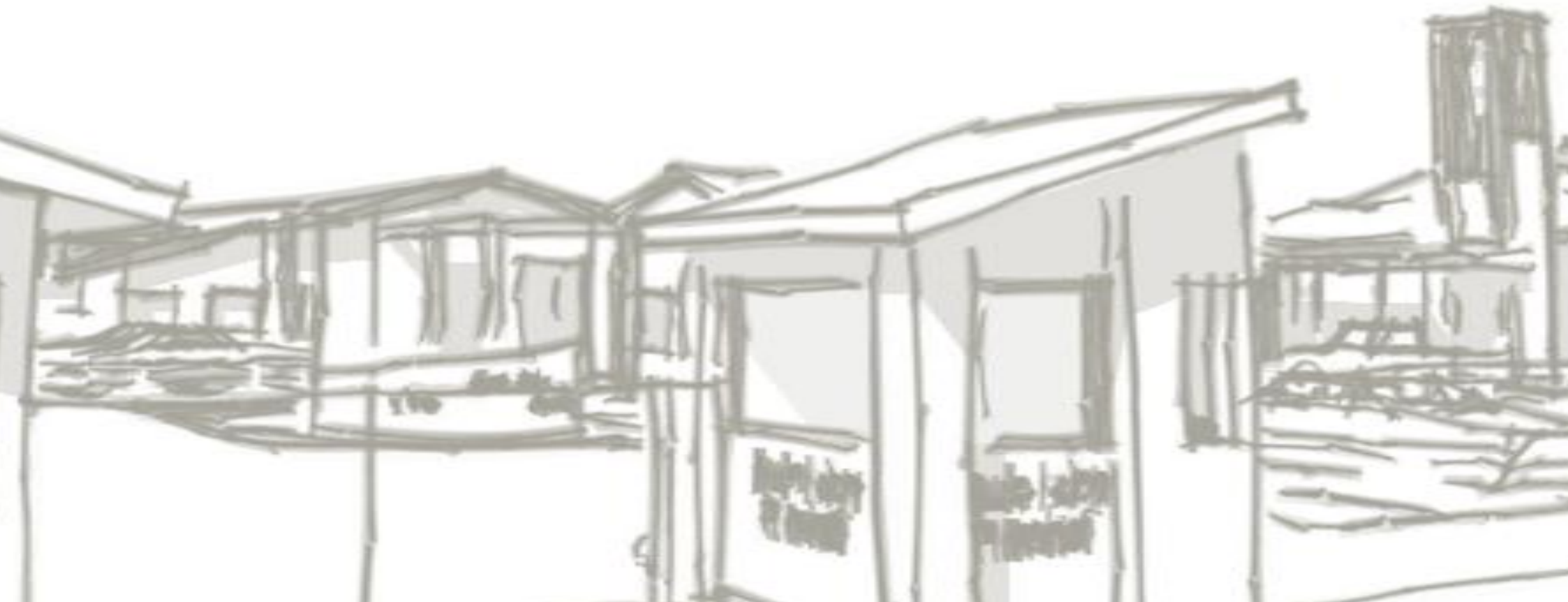
Danielle Maria Toldo Jensen  
27256759

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Study leader: P. T. Vosloo

## Abstract

This discourse deals with the establishment of a third facility for the Little Eden Society for the Care of Persons with Mental Handicap in Prinshof, Pretoria. The Little Eden Society cares for persons with profound intellectual disability who require intense care and stimulation. A description of intellectual disability and mental illness, as well as the history of the treatment and social attitudes towards people afflicted by them, has been undertaken. This is reviewed together with the evolution of the architecture of various facilities for the care and treatment of intellectually disabled and mentally ill people. A number of precedent studies were undertaken of contemporary architecture, relevant to various aspects of the new facility. Finally, the client's existing facilities and needs were examined and understood in the context of the new facility. With these studies as grounding, the design of the new facility could be undertaken. The resulting design seeks to embody the Little Eden Society's ethos of complete care, addressing the needs of the mind, body and soul; seeking to stimulate and develop each person to their own individual potential.





## Preface

The reason I have chosen this client and topic for my dissertation is due to my personal connections to this organisation. My grandmother, Domitilla Rota Hyams, together with the support of my grandfather Danny Hyams, founded the home for the intellectually disabled forty years ago. Her apparition of the Madonna, placing these children in her care, reassured and confirmed for her that Little Eden would be carrying out God's work. Hopefully this dissertation provides some form of aid to the Little Eden Society, even if only creating awareness of the work done by this remarkable organisation.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my thanks to:

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“...notwithstanding their inability to communicate as we do, my experience tells me that the souls of these children possess the same desire of the infinite as we do. Even with a reduced mind and understanding the soul is complete.”

(Hyams 2007a: book cover).



Figure 1 - Images of residents and staff of Little Eden (photographs courtesy of Little Eden Society)

## Table of Contents

<b>1 INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>- 1 -</b>	<b>3 THE CLIENT</b>	<b>22</b>
1.1 Overview	2	3.1 Social, political and economic roots	23
1.2 Formal problem statement	2	3.2 Precedent study – Little Eden	24
1.3 Research methodology followed	2	3.2.1 Overview of Little Eden	24
1.4 Assumptions	3	3.2.2 The Edenvale home	25
1.5 Limitations	3	3.2.3 Elvira Rota Village, Bapsfontein	30
1.6 Drivers for the establishment of the new facility	4	<b>4 THE SITE</b>	<b>35</b>
1.7 Solution principles	5	4.1 Identified sites evaluation	36
<b>2 CONTEXT OF INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY WITHIN THE DISCIPLINE OF ARCHITECTURE</b>	<b>6</b>	4.2 Selected site overview	39
2.1 Intellectual disability	7	4.3 Context of the site	40
2.1.1 Terminology and definition of intellectual disability	7	4.3.1 Site photographs	40
2.1.2 History of the treatment of mental illness & intellectual disability	8	4.3.2 Architecture of the surrounds	47
2.1.3 Current trends and thinking	10	4.3.3 Zoning	47
2.1.4 The architectural evolution	11	4.3.4 Services	48
2.2 Precedent studies	16	4.3.5 Transport	48
2.2.1 Chapel of Light	16	4.3.6 Geography	50
2.2.2 Church of Light	17	4.3.7 Hydrology	51
2.2.3 Saheti School	18	4.3.8 Climatic context	51
2.2.4 Constitutional Court	19	4.3.9 Historical context of the site	52
2.2.5 Legislature and Office Complex for the Mpumalanga Provincial Government	20	4.3.10 Mental health services in the region	53
2.2.6 Baragwanath Public Transport Interchange and Traders Market	21	4.4 Site analysis – opportunities and constraints	54
		4.5 Legal and regulatory context	55
		4.5.1 Alignment with the Mental Health Care Act, Act 17 of 2002	55
		4.5.2 Alignment with the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality's 'Tshwane's City Strategy'	55



<b>5 DESIGN DISCOURSE</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>5.9 Application of design principles</b>	<b>105</b>
5.1 Hypothesis	58	5.9.1 Residents' needs first	105
5.2 Requirements	58	5.9.2 Secure but open environment	108
5.3 Design principles	58	5.9.3 The safety of the residents	109
5.4 Experience of the architecture	60	5.9.4 Practicality	110
5.4.1 Safety, care, comfort and belonging	61	5.9.5 The economy and environment	111
5.4.2 Simple, quick and easy routes	62	ig	114
5.4.3 Mind, body and soul	63	5.9.6 Community integration	114
5.5 Site layout approach	64	<b>6 LIST OF WORKS REFERENCED</b>	<b>115</b>
5.6 Core building and element identification	65	<b>7 APPENDICES</b>	<b>118</b>
5.7 Site layout design	66	7.1 Appendix A – Accommodation schedule	119
5.7.1 Site layout	68	7.1 Appendix A - Accommodation Schedule	119
5.7.2 A village layout	68	7.2 Appendix B - SBAT (Sustainable building assessment tool)	120
5.7.3 Security and privacy layout	69	7.3 Appendix C – Norms and standards	124
5.7.4 Circulation	70	7.4 Appendix D – Wind roses	125
5.8 Design	71	7.5 Appendix E – Group research	126
5.8.1 Common elements	71	7.6 Appendix F – Snoezelen room	133
5.8.2 Design overview	74	7.7 Appendix G - types of handicap	134
5.8.3 Administration	95	7.8 Appendix H - Little Eden Information	135
5.8.4 Chapel	96		
5.8.5 Hall	97		
5.8.6 Therapy centre	98		
5.8.7 Garage and service yard	99		
5.8.8 Services	100		
5.8.9 Dormitories	101		
5.8.10 Walkway	103		
5.8.11 Gardens	104		

## List of Figures

Figure 1 - Images of residents and staff of Little Eden.....	iv		
Figure 2 – A view from the south of the proposed new Little Eden facility at Prinshof in Pretoria .....	2		
Figure 3 - One of the Little Eden - Bapsfontein residents making music.....	3		
Figure 4 – The three key drivers for the establishment of a new home: low capacity, increasing demand, geographic need.....	4		
Figure 5 – The 3 core solution principles upon which the new home should be based, namely: facilities, location and operations.....	5		
Figure 6 - Impacted capabilities of intellectually disabled persons.....	7		
Figure 7 –Bedlam by Hogarth, William. 1735.....	9		
Figure 8 – McMurphy (played by Jack Nicholson) receives electro-shock therapy in the movie “One flew over the cuckoo's nest”.....	10		
Figure 10 - The Narrenturm Asylum in Vienna, Austria .....	11		
Figure 9 - Bentham's panopticon.....	11		
Figure 11 - The Hanwell Mental Asylum established in 1831 and located in Middlesex England.....	12		
Figure 12 – The Kirkbride plan .....	13		
Figure 13 – The King Park Psychiatric Hospital in New York .....	14		
Figure 14 - Norwich State Hospital, Connecticut. Pavilion site layout .....	14		
Figure 15 – Various views of the Chapel of Light – (a) external view from the north west of the building (b) a plan of the chapel (c) a low angle view of the free standing wall and tower (d) external view of the chapel office .....	16		
Figure 16 – Church of Light, collage: (a) a view of the cruciform cut into altar wall (b) an external view of the cross form in the east wall (c) a high level layout of the site (d) the Sunday school extension of the church.....	17		
Figure 17 – Various views and sketches of Saheti School: (a) sketches showing brickwork and junctions (b) courtyard at classrooms in the primary school (c)view from courtyard of roof (d)sketches of roof design (e)sketches of screened courtyard with brickwork (f)new sports centre with splayed hipped roof and creative brickwork.....	18		
Figure 18 – Photos of the Constitutional Court detailing: (a) different styles of brickwork to create different textures (b) a sketch impression detailing the brick work (c) and (d) external views of the southern side of the foyer and tower (e) the brick finish and windows at the external ground level of the main court chamber .....	19		
Figure 19 – (a) (b) and (c) – views of the walkway. (d) view of the complex (e) plan (Deckler et al. 2006: 14-16) .....	20		
Figure 20 - Various views of the Baragwanath Public Transport Interchange and plan .....	21		
Figure 21 - The founders, Danny & Domitilla Hyams, during a visit to Little Eden - Edenvale by Nelson Mandela in 2002 .....	23		
Figure 22 - Current Little Eden Society homes.....	24		
Figure 23 – Zoning of the Little Eden Edenvale facility .....	25		
Figure 24 – Layout of the Little Eden - Edenvale facility .....	25		
Figure 25 – A view of the precast structure of the dormitories .....	26		
Figure 26 – A view of the sun room in yellow wing .....	26		
Figure 27 – External views of the therapy centre at Little Eden - Edenvale (photographs courtesy of Little Eden Society) .....	27		
Figure 28 – An external view of the chapel as well as a close-up of its timber ceiling .....	27		
Figure 29 - Layout of the Elvira Rota Village in Bapsfontein .....	30		
Figure 30 – A view of the dormitories as well as the adjoining walkways (photographs by author) .....	31		
Figure 31 – Inside a dormitory and view down a corridor.....	32		
Figure 32 – The residents with challenged behaviour are housed at Pino's Place .....	32		
Figure 33 – View of the inside of the hall.....	32		
Figure 34 – A view of Nicky's Nook as well as part of the adjoining covered walkway .....	33		
Figure 35 - The labyrinth.....	34		

Figure 36 - Locations of the existing and proposed Little Eden Society homes .....	36	Figure 61 – Transport infrastructure and services in the immediate area: (a) pedestrian walking times (b) vehicle access (c) bus routes (d) taxi routes .....	49
Figure 37 – Designated area and medical and institutional precinct .....	37	Figure 62 – Section along the west boundary and contour plan .....	50
Figure 38 - Possible sites .....	38	Figure 63 – Illustration of the flood lines for the Apies River to the north of the site .....	51
Figure 39 – Overview of the selected site and immediate surrounds .....	39	Figure 64 - Wind rose showing the year average.....	51
Figure 40 - Camera positions for the subsequent photographs .....	40	Figure 65 - Plan of Pretoria in 1889.....	52
Figure 41 - Position 1 - Panoramic view of end of Prinshof Street .....	41	Figure 66 – Opportunities and constraints of the site .....	54
Figure 42 - Position 2 - Position of proposed access.....	41	Figure 67 - Tshwane’s City Strategy .....	55
Figure 43 - Position 5 - 360 ° Panoramic view of site.....	41	Figure 68 - The conceptualisation of the experience that the facility should provide .....	60
Figure 44 - Position 3 - Panoramic view of site from school access.....	42	Figure 69 – Evaluation of various characteristics of the site .....	66
Figure 45 - Position 6 - View towards existing access .....	42	Figure 70 – Site plans showing (a) initial rough layout (b) final site layout design .....	68
Figure 46 - Position 7 - View along boundary fence towards refuse heap.....	43	Figure 71 – A site plan illustrating the application of the village concept .....	68
Figure 47 - Position 8 - Refuse heap at the northwest corner of the site .....	43	Figure 72 – Site plans showing (a) security lines and (b) public and private areas .....	69
Figure 48 - Position 9 - View along west boundary with Zoo .....	44	Figure 73 – Site plans showing (a) initial circulation layout and (b) final circulation design .....	70
Figure 49 - Position 10 - View through fence towards Zoo .....	44	Figure 74 – A view of the modelled dormitory building roofs.....	71
Figure 50 - Position 11 - View along Apies River from Soutpansberg Road.....	45	Figure 75 – cross section of Brownbuilt roof sections .....	71
Figure 51 - Position 4 - View along east border .....	45	Figure 76 - A view of the modelled brick and plaster finish for the dormitory buildings.....	72
Figure 52 - Position 13 - View east along Apies River from opposite bank .....	45	Figure 77 – Photographs of various brick bonds .....	72
Figure 53 - Position 14 - View across Apies River towards site .....	45	Figure 78 - A modelled view of the cottage pane windows used in the facility .....	73
Figure 54 - Position 15 - View west along Apies River from opposite bank .....	45	Figure 79 - Cross section sketch illustrating concept of the concrete walkway with foundation and drainage detail .....	73
Figure 55 - Position 16 - View east along Apies River from Zoo.....	46	Figure 80 – A view of the modelled facility from the northern end of the site .....	74
Figure 56 - Position 12 - View of Apies River from opposite bank .....	46	Figure 81 – A modelled view from the south west corner of the site .....	75
Figure 58 - Existing uses around the site (class group work 2007).....	47	Figure 82 – Various modelled views of the facility: (a) a top or roof view (b) a view from the western side of the site (c) a view from the eastern side of the site .....	76
Figure 57 – A collage of images of various buildings in the immediate area, around the site (class group work 2007).....	47	Figure 83 – Locality plan.....	77
Figure 60 - Overview of services’ in the immediate area .....	48	Figure 84 – Site plan.....	78
Figure 59 - Street map showing the proposed Little Eden Society Prinshof site (Map Studio 2006) .....	48	Figure 85 – North elevation .....	79



Figure 86 – South elevation.....	80	Figure 114 - Application of principles: secure but open environment .....	108
Figure 87 – East elevation.....	81	Figure 115 - Application of principles: safety of the residents .....	109
Figure 88 – West elevation.....	82	Figure 116 - Application of principles: practicality .....	110
Figure 89 – Chapel plan .....	83	Figure 117 – The rain water drainage system .....	111
Figure 90 – Administration plan.....	84	Figure 118 – Passive heating, ventilation and cooling .....	112
Figure 91 – Service centre plan .....	85	Figure 119 – A diagrammatic explanation of the passive solar design of the facility. Note the level of shading in the summer simulation images versus those of the winter .....	113
Figure 92 – Therapy centre plan .....	87	Figure 120 - Application of principles: community integration .....	114
Figure 93 – Dormitory ground floor plan.....	87		
Figure 94 – Dormitory first floor plan .....	88		
Figure 95 – Dormitory elevations and sections .....	89		
Figure 96 – Render of the west side of the western dormitory.....	90		
Figure 97 - Render of the walkway and terraced garden with the chapel in the background .....	91		
Figure 98 – Render of the south side of the chapel .....	92		
Figure 99 - Render of the entrance and administration building with chapel in the background.....	93		
Figure 100 - Render of the therapy centre and hall courtyard .....	94		
Figure 101 – Overview of the designs and layout of the administration building .....	95		
Figure 102 - Overview of the designs and layout of the chapel .....	96		
Figure 103 - Overview of the designs and layout of the hall .....	97		
Figure 104 - Overview of the designs and layout of the therapy centre .....	98		
Figure 105 - Overview of the designs and layout of the garage and service yard .....	99		
Figure 106 - Overview of the designs and layout of the services centre.....	100		
Figure 107 - Overview of the designs and layout of the ground floor of the dormitories .....	101		
Figure 108 - Overview of the designs and layout of the first floor of the dormitories .....	102		
Figure 109 - Overview of the designs and layout of the covered walkway .....	103		
Figure 110 - Overview of the design and layout of the gardens.....	104		
Figure 111 – Application of principles: addressing the residents’ needs (1/3) .....	105		
Figure 112 – Application of principles: addressing the residents’ needs (2/3) .....	106		
Figure 113 - Application of principles: addressing the resident’s needs (3/3) .....	107		

## List of Tables

Table 1 – Intellectual disability rating (Encyclopaedia Britannica 2007a)	8
Table 2 - Functions and services provided (derived from information received from Little Eden Society)	28
Table 3 - Schedule of buildings and areas for Little Eden - Edenvale (derived from information received from Little Eden Society)	29
Table 4 – Resident dormitory wing assignment by physical and mental conditions (derived from information received from Little Eden Society)	29
Table 5 - Resident grouping by physical and mental attributes (derived from information received from Little Eden Society)	33
Table 6 - Site evaluation matrix	39
Table 7 - Pretoria climatic data (South African Weather Services 2007)	52
Table 8 - Architectural concepts to achieve the safety, care, comfort and belonging experience	61
Table 9 - Architectural concepts to achieve the simple, quick and easy experience	62
Table 10 - Architectural concepts to achieve the mind, body and soul experience	63
Table 11 – Choice of site layout approach	64
Table 12 – Listing of required buildings and elements for the new facility	65
Table 13 – Ranking of the required buildings against the site evaluation characteristics	67
Table 14 – Building/Element proximity relationship matrix	67
Table 15 - Accommodation Schedule	119