

Little Eden
Society for the Care of Persons with Mental Handicap

A New Home in Prinshof, Pretoria

by

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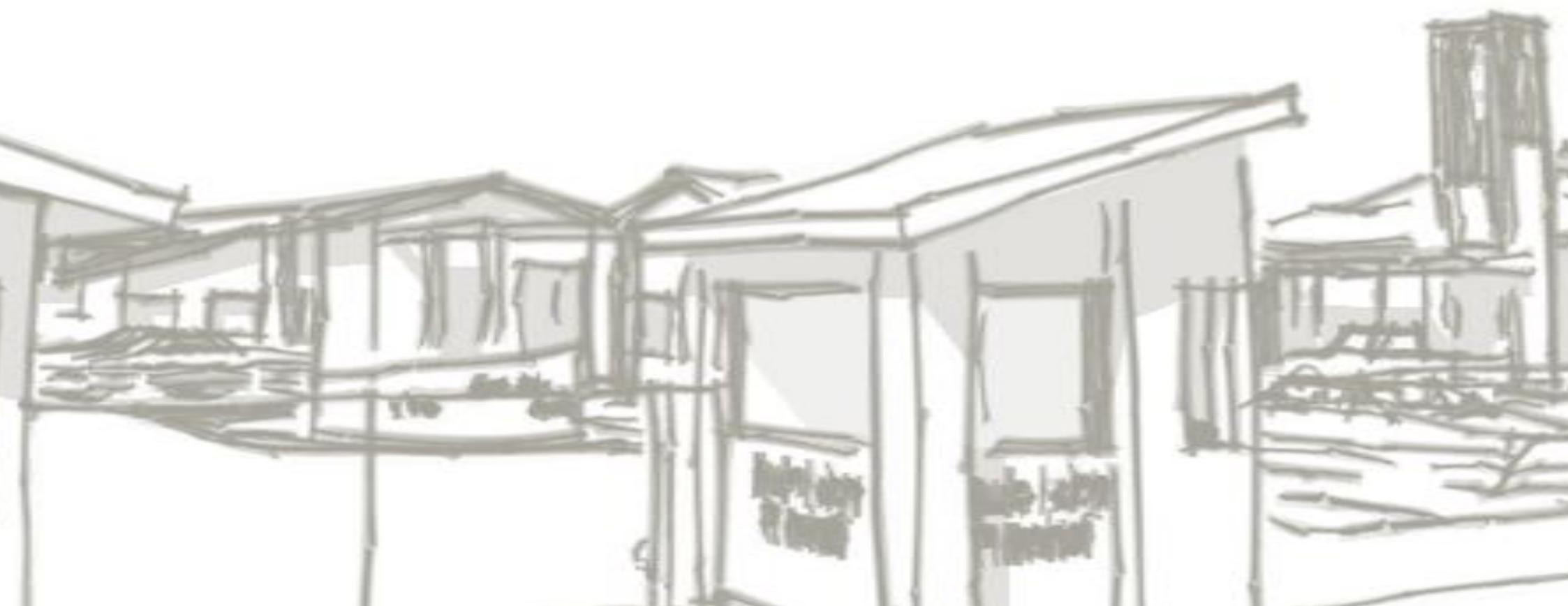
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Study leader: P. T. Vosloo



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.



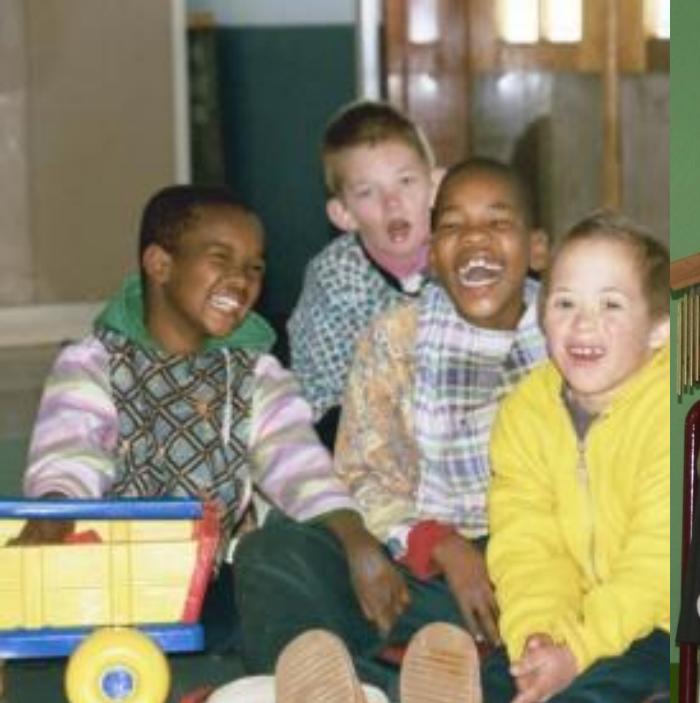


Preface

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)

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