

theoretical exploration_03

theoretical exploration_

lost and abandoned space_

The traditional role of the street is one of public interface, with a variety of uses which serve to form part of a network of spaces defined on their edges by built fabric. Historical urban patterns formed dense, tightly knit fabric which then formed a collection of a series of spaces such as streets, parks and commons - voids defined by the solid nature of the built fabric. Opening up onto this network were a series of lobbies and entrances on ground floor which served as transition spaces between the public street and the layering of private functions as one moves away from it. As defined by Trançik (1986; 4), lost urban spaces are generally made up of leftover and unstructured spaces within the urban environment, commonly including parking lots, edges of freeways, sunken plaza's and vacated sites resulting from change in land use and functions within an urban environment. This results in the creation of "anti-space" (Trançik, 1986; 4) and results in spaces which have no contribution to the creation of positive urban spaces within the city.

Due to an increased privatisation of the built environment as well as continuous change in functions of buildings and spaces, many of

these threshold spaces become lost to the public realm. This results in a lack of continuity between external and internalised spaces and has gradually resulted in the illegibility of public space.

This lack of layered environments often results in secondary abandonment of public space as buildings fail to take ownership of the street frontage. As part of this dissertation, the ability to reincorporate these lost pockets of space back into the public realm so as to strengthen existing paths and nodes to recreate legibility in the built environment will be explored.

weak versus strong architecture_

Lefebvre defines space on three levels: as practised, conceived and lived spaces (1991, 39) all of which play a role in the definition and subsequent occupation of space. The first deals largely with material and functional reproduction of a city, the everyday habits and rituals of users as they make use of a space. The second being the perceived language of the space and the way in which one sees their role within it, while the third relates to a sensual understanding of the world in which the way we appropriate and seek to change its character is limited only by the imagination

(Van Rensburg, 2007; 4).

The role of the built environment is to create a series of rooms which the user can inhabit, the formation of a backdrop or frame around which the public will carry out their lives. Theorists such as Jonathan Hill and Juhani Pallasmaa have suggested that, given the tendency for contemporary lifestyles to be largely ocular-centric, there has been a subsequent limitation in the ability of the user to inhabit space. Pallasmaa (2005; 20) cites the ocular-centric nature of contemporary life as one of the main departures from an architecture of sensuality and meaning. He breaks down the experience of architecture and space into two categories; That of the peripheral unfocused vision, which allows one to become submerged in the world around us, and a more tactile experience, a "hapticity" (Pallasmaa, 2005; 15) which in his opinion is paramount to the true architectural experience.

Pallasmaa further defines architecture as being able to be measured in sense and scale by the eye, ear, nose, tongue, skeleton and muscle (2005, 70), the latter of which have become secondary thus resulting in an architecture of the eye, a strong image-based product which becomes

graphic qualities of “strong” vs “weak” image in architecture_

consistent in form and therefore limited in terms of future adaptability.

Gianni Vattimo, a theorist synonymous with “deep ecology” (a holistic approach to ecological thinking) proposes the idea of “fragile architecture” (2005, 63), an architecture of weak image which is largely contextual and responsive in nature. Vattimo suggests that the architectural image can further be weakened through weathering and ruination, which allows for the ability for the architecture to engage with time and memory in a way in which it is argued that architecture of the image cannot.

In an attempt to connect with materiality, the search for architecture beyond that of the mere image as promoted by the modernist architects has been explored by architects such as Alvar Aalto, Sigurd Lewerentz and Carlos Scarpa. Selected precedent explorations will be undertaken later in this dissertation in an attempt to critically analyse and establish a subsequent architectural language to inform the design development.



ILLUS. 60 Walt Disney Auditorium by Frank Gehry (arcspace, 2011) (available at <http://www.arcspace.com/architects/gehry/disney2/>)



ILLUS. 61 Säynätsalo town hall by Alvar Aalto (Britannica online, 2011) (available at <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/media/34845/Saynatsalo-town-hall-group-Finland-designed-by-Alvar-Aalto-1950>)



ILLUS. 62 Olympic Aquatic Hall by Zaha Hadid (Zaha Hadid Architects, 2011) (available at http://www.tate.org.uk/40artists40days/zaha_hadid.html)



ILLUS. 63 Brion cemetery by Carlos Scarpa (Oames, 2009) (available at <http://layeredtraces.blogspot.com/2009/02/carlo-scarpa.html>)

historical charters_



ILLUS. 65 Heritage conservation area (Google earth, 2011).
ILLUS. 66 site location (Google earth, 2011)

introduction_

Mozambique legislation states that any building built before 1920 falls under the protection of the historical heritage act. In addition, any building falling within the designated historical area as illustrated in figure ##### is subject to application for permission for any alterations or demolitions to be undertaken. A specially convened panel of both local and international heritage experts, architects and government officials must approve all proposals for works which fall within the above mentioned criteria (Perez, 2011).

While this differs from the South African heritage Resources Act of 1999 which protects all built structures older than 60 years, there are many guidelines that can be drawn from both local and international heritage charters that can inform the design intervention. Three main sources of reference have been identified from which a set of design principles will be drawn to take forward into the design process.

the Burra charter_

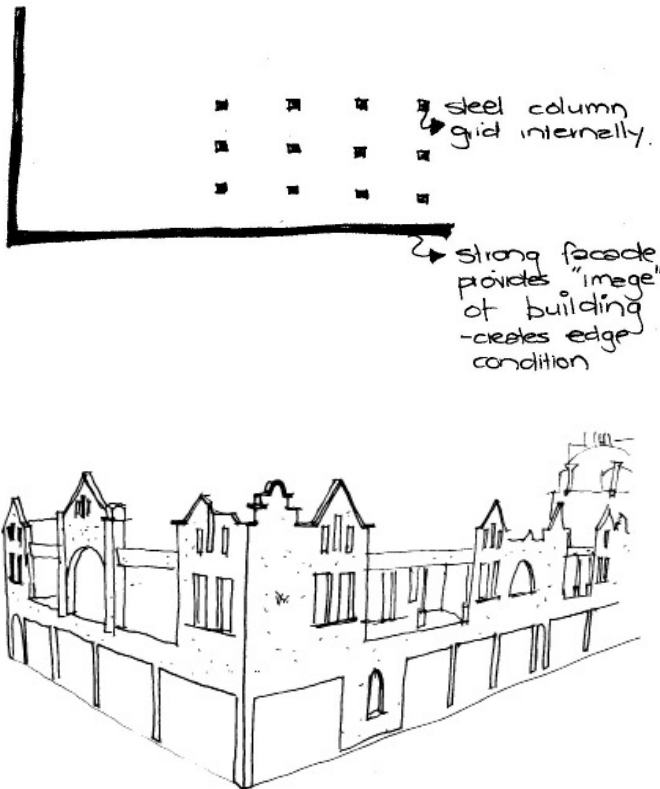
The Australia ICOMOS charter for places of Cultural Significance (1999)

The Burra Charter, adopted in Burra, Australia in 1999, is largely concerned with maintaining the cultural significance and links to both community and landscape which forms a large part of the cultural

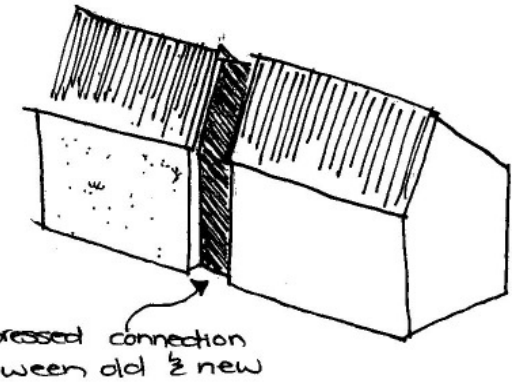
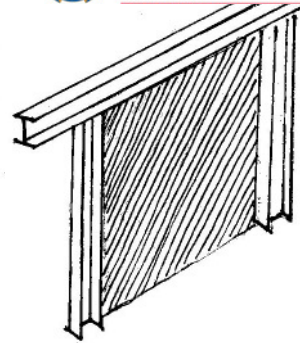
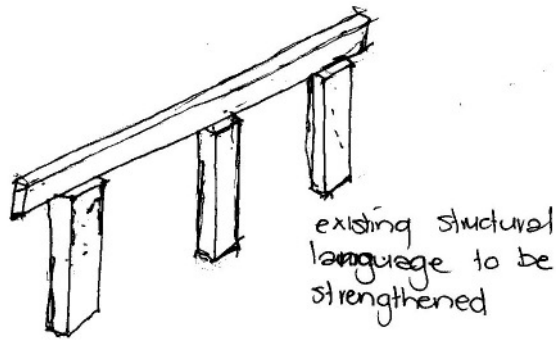
heritage of a site and the surrounding inhabitants. Outlining procedures which can be followed through the conservation process, the charter aims to facilitate the holistic research, design and management process so as to ensure that sites retain their cultural significance. The motto “do as much as necessary to care for the place and to make it useable but change it as little as possible” (ICOMOS a, 1999; [3]) is highlighted in the meticulously detailed process which can be followed from project inception until completion.

The process involves the identification of the values and significances inherent in the site from which a plan can be established which takes into consideration future needs, current resources, physical condition etc. Where appropriate, the charter encourages the use of the building to be maintained where significant and for the visual and physical setting as well as associated relationships to the surrounding context to be maintained. In addition, the encouragement of local participation is stressed so as to involve the community in both the reconstruction and future management of the resource.

The charter makes a clear distinction between restoration and reconstruction. The former describes original materials and construction techniques are used with no distinction between old and new. The latter implies a restoration to its original state but with the introduction of new materials which can be identified as such (ibid, 1999; [5]).



ILLUS. 67 Diagram of building significance (Hart, 2011);
ILLUS. 68 Historical facade element (Hart, 2011)



ICOMOS Charter- Principles for the Analysis, Conservation and Structural Restoration of Architectural Heritage Act (2003)_

The charter aims to establish a set of guiding principles and recommendations to ensure that rational methods of analysis and subsequent conservation measures can be established which are appropriate to the specific cultural context in which the building is found. Encouraging a multi-disciplinary approach, the charter emphasises the importance of not merely the outward appearance of the monument, but also the integrity of the components, building techniques and materials of the time in an attempt to prevent the implementation of 'facadism' whereby the external skin of the building is maintained as a superficial layer to a new development which is totally removed from the original significance of the structure.

The approach requires a comprehensive understanding of the structure and material characteristics in both original and altered states, including an investigation into the safety of such built fabric so that a picture of the significance

can be drawn. As such, the choice of the use of traditional methods and materials as opposed to the use of new and innovative methods and materials is largely based upon the most compatible approach in line with the significances established before. "Restoration of the structure in Architecture Heritage is not an end in itself but a means to an end, which is the building as a whole." (ICOMOS b, 2003; [2]) Critically, where possible, any new alterations or additions to the structure should be removable to the greatest extent possible or, failing this, not limit any further intervention (ibid, 2003; [3]). In addition, any distinguishing qualities of the surrounding environment or structure should as far as possible be maintained, with deterioration being repaired as opposed to replaced. In this way the imperfections occurring over time become layers of history over the structure, allowing the structure to act as a palimpsest of its historical past.

The Norms of Quito (1967)_

This charter, adopted in Uruguay in 1967, proposes that conservation measures for objects of historic and artistic value should include not only the object, but to a large extent the space and place surrounding the object from which it draws its

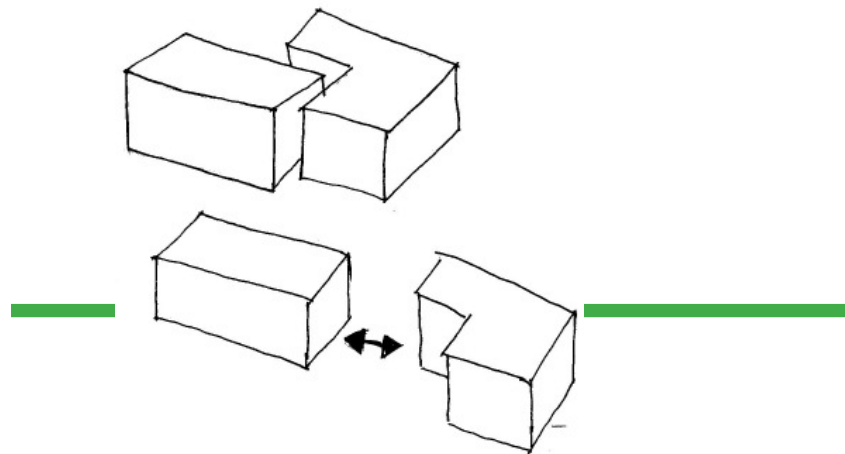
significance. In addition, the charter explores the possible effects that this conservation and its subsequent tourism value can serve as an economic generator for the communities within which these monuments lie.

The charter places the onus on the declaration of significance on the government, as well as holding the view that as a national monument, the function housed within should be of a social nature. As such, the declaration of the monument and the space around it which contributes towards the significances of the building should then be defined as a precinct to which restrictions must be applied. The integration of an object of significance as well as the interests of the surrounding environment is of paramount concern in the subsequent development of urban conditions within this newly established precinct.

Thus the creation of a set of guiding principles, which control development with lowering levels of compliance as one moves outwards from the sphere of influence, have been suggested. This set of guidelines established through thorough research, will make provisions for maintenances and future management of the monument so



ILLUS. 69 Representative structural system (Hart, 2011),
 ILLUS. 70 Connections between new and old fabric (Hart,
 2011), ILLUS. 71 Removability of intervention Images (Hart,
 2011), ILLUS. 72 layered components Images (Hart, 2011)



as to ensure the ultimate sustainability of the resource.

The ability of monuments to provide opportunities for growth of the tourism industry was identified during a study, undertaken by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and the Union of Official Tourist Travel Agencies. The study found that “tourist traffic deriving from the suitable restoration of the value of the monument ensures rapid recovery of the capital invested for that purpose [and that] tourist activity resulting from adequate presentation from a monument that would disappear without such activity entails profound economic transformation of the region in which the monument is set (sic)” (ICOMOS c, 1967; [6]).

To a large extent developing countries caught up in the “fever of progress” (*ibid*; [7]) perceive historical fabric as not belonging to the new vision of a modern city. This often leads to an indifference towards the object as well as the increased vandalism of the structure. Through participation in the conservation process, it is proposed that communities will begin to identify with and take ownership of the monument as well as reap any benefits of

potential tourist activity which may be generated. Every project is unique in nature and thus requires a unique solution (*ibid*; [11]). With interdisciplinary collaborations as well as a thorough investigation and recording of historical significances, this will allow for an appropriate and culturally integrated resource to the benefit of the surrounding community.

The importance of legislation which protects both the monument and the surrounding environment is stressed. In addition, the inclusion of conservation policy into national development strategies is highlighted, with the opportunity and subsequent responsibility of the department of tourism to incorporate such monuments into strategic plans and budgets being encouraged. Suggestions of re-strengthening ex-colonial links as a form of shared heritage are raised as a possible generator of foreign interest and investment.

conclusion_

It is evident from the charters that there are many possible manners of dealing with an adaptive re-use development. Given the nature of the structure of the building as discussed earlier in this dissertation,

a possible approach to the proposed intervention would be one of reconstruction, with the expression of contemporary elements being visible within the building. An element of stabilisation of the existing structure will be required. This approach may provide opportunities for the proposed intervention to be expressed in a manner which can imply both the permanent and impermanent elements of the design.

When analysing the three charters, it becomes evident that a thorough analysis and understanding of the existing building and context needs to be undertaken. This needs to be evaluated on a number of differing scales so as to ensure the specific details within the building as well as within the urban space as a room, are correctly addressed.

One recurring factor in the charters is the encouragement of the use of local participation in not only the restoration, but also maintenance and management of the building. This encourages identification with the structure and cultural significance thereof and will ultimately lead to a more sustainable urban intervention. This interaction can be possibly be drawn into the programmatic elements of the building.