



“I don’t have a blueprint for school architecture, but I do know that you have to let people draw the consequences from their ideas about it. I always start by asking a school governing body or director about the changes that they see in the world around them. After that you can ask them about their vision of their own organization in the light of those changes. What is your ambition? What are the activities that will take place there? What are you actually going to do to realize that ambition?”.

Gert Jan Meijer
Verstegen (2009: 73)

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Project Brief

The project will utilize a number of educational institutions present within the eastern part of the inner city, specifically the city block edged by Church Street, Du Toit Street, Pretorius Street and Nelson Mandela Drive, to act as catalysts for the development of an urban educational campus. The proposed campus will contain a rich mix of educational institutions, residential, office and retail functions, which will act as the context for this project.

The Apollo Centre, located on the corner of Church and Du Toit Street, will be adaptively re-used to function as a communal educational facility, and will accommodate a small primary school. The traditional notion of school as a horizontally orientated process will be challenged in its vertical axis. This vertical challenge will partially guide an alternative pedagogic approach towards the potential of urban education.

Design Intervention

The nature of the proposed intervention is an ambitious one. A number of light industrial/automotive building types are proposed to be demolished in order to open up and ease movement to and through the city block. These open spaces will make way for either new mixed use developments, aimed at the inclusion of educational functions, or public spaces that will facilitate educational life within an urban context.

The Apollo Centre, with its visually prominent location on the corner of Du Toit and Church Street, is proposed to be developed into an educational landmark development, that will resonate a contemporary educational process.



fig.8.1. Staff of DANSA International College

Chapter 8

Brief Development

Project Intentions

John Dewey states that much of present education fails because it neglects the fundamental principle of the school as a form of community life. "It conceives the school as a place where certain information is to be given, where certain lessons are to be learned, or where certain habits are to be formed". He continues to suggest that the value of these is conceived as lying largely in the future; "the child must do these things for the sake of something else he is to do; they are preparations. As a result they do not become a part of the life experience of the child and so are not truly educative" (McDermott: 1973).

- The first intention of this project is to establish an educational environment that is integrated with its urban context
- The second intention is to utilize this integration as an educational aspect and promote contextual learning
- The third intention is to investigate the opportunities that vertical education in the urban context offers
- The fourth intention is to investigate the potential of an existing structure to facilitate this vertical, integrated educational process

The project will thus explore the commonalities within the educational spectrum and the everyday life of urban dwellers and attempt to create connections between the two ends of the spectrum.



fig.8.2. Urban dwellers

The Users

The primary users of this project will be children attending the proposed Apollo Primary School (fig.8.3). Additional to this will be the adult staff facilitating the pedagogic process.

Secondary and tertiary students from educational institutions located in close proximity of the Apollo Centre, will be capable of utilizing facilities within the building on a cross-programming basis (fig.8.4).

As the primary intention of this project is to integrate 'real life' situations with the educational process, the general public will thus either be active or passive users (fig.8.2). Public facilities provided will be open to public use on a cross programming basis.

The users of this project thus include the whole spectrum of urban dwellers. It allows for educational interaction between students, working individuals, the elderly or just the odd individual exploring the city or wondering around.



fig.8.3. Primary school children



fig.8.4. Tertiary students from Tshwane North College, opposite the Apollo Centre



Client (s)

The initiator of this project has been identified as Denver Technical College, a Private Further Education (FET) institution, currently located on 210 Du Toit Street.

The client has expressed a need to establish an independent school within the inner city of Pretoria. The client has recognized that their institution is located within a prominent educational precinct, and wants to make use of this quality to provide a school that plugs into the educational processes present within the precinct.

The author has identified the Apollo Centre, located on the corner of Church and Du Toit Street, currently owned by City Property, as only being partially utilized and suitable for the proposed adaptive re-use intervention.

However, the scale of the proposed design intervention within the city block and Apollo Centre itself, and the variety of users that will be affected by this project, requires the political and financial support from the Department of Education as well as Public Works. The Department of Education will thus be nominated as the primary client of this project, supported by the Department of Public Works.

In addition to the clients above, it is also proposed that Public Private Partnership (PPP) be included as secondary clients.

Educational retail functions within the facility will be owned by private companies but managed in collaboration with the Apollo School. CSI (Corporate Social Investment) is thus proposed, and is a way in which companies can give back to communities that they work in. In a recent newspaper article, Beeld (2010: 8), CSI Solutions claimed that an investment done with the heart at the right place, might stabilize the corporate and economic context, help to derive new business ideas and often to public interest of the particular company's business.



fig.8.5. Potential Clients



Required Accommodation Schedule

In 2008 the Minister of Education, Grace Naledi Mandisa Pandor, released a document in the Government Gazette, 21 November 2008, which contains the National Minimum Uniform Norms and Standards for School Infrastructure. This document will be used as a guideline for setting up an appropriate accommodation schedule for the proposed program. It has to be reiterated that it will only be used as a guideline, keeping in mind the intentions of this project and the proposed outcomes.

The document states that a Small Primary School generally consist of 310 students, 7 groups of 40 learners, and 1 group of 30 Grade R learners, @ 1 Group per grade.

The amount and size of accommodation spaces that are required for a typical small primary school are stated in the document referred to as shown in fig.8.6.

An accommodation schedule will be drafted at the end of the project to form part of the analysis as to the result of the project according to the author.

Small Primary School							
Education Spaces	Functionality Norms				Effectiveness Norms		
	No. Units	Unit Size (sqm)	Sub-Total		No. Units	Unit Size (sqm)	Sub-Total
Core Education Spaces							
Classrooms	7	60	420		7	60	420
Grade R Facility	1	75	75		1	75	75
Multimedia Centre	1	120	120		1	120	120
Multipurpose Classroom	0	120	0		1	120	0
Toilets for learners							
Storage Areas	0	15	0		0	15	0
Sub-Total			615				615
Administrative Spaces							
Principal	1	20	20		1	20	20
Administration Office	1	20	20		1	20	20
Reception Area	0	15	0		0	15	0
Toilets for Teachers							
Storage Areas	1	15	15		1	15	15
Strong Room	1	10	10		1	10	10
Printing Room	0	15	0		1	15	15
Staff Room	1	60	60		1	60	60
Pastoral Care. 1. Counseling	0	15	0		1	15	15
2. Sick Rooms	0	15	0		1	15	15
HODs Offices	0	15	0		0	15	0
Kitchenette	1	20	20		0	20	0
Sub Total			145				170
Education Supporting Spaces							
Food Garden	0	20	0		1	20	20
Kitchen	1	20	20		1	20	20
Nutrition Centre	1	15	15		1	15	15
Dining Room	0	120	0		0	120	0
Security/Guard Room	0	6	0		1	6	6
Multipurpose Centre (Indoor Sport)	0	180	0		1	180	180
Sports Grounds		1 Netball, 1 Soccer				1 Netball, 1 Soccer, 1 Volleyball, 1 Rugby	
Parking Space		12 Parking Spaces				12 Parking Spaces	
Caretaker Room	0	15	0		1	15	15
Storage Areas	0	15	0		1	15	15
Sub-Total			35				265
Total Net Areas							
			795				1050
Circulation and Walls (30%) hall included							
			239				315
Total Gross Areas							
			1034				1365
Learners							
			320				320
Unit Area							
			3.2				4.3

fig.8.6. Minimum Space Norms and Standards of Small Primary School Prototype



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