

Illus. 2: Woman selling Bananas (Michael Tallman Photography)



# Chapter 1: Orientation & General Background

## Introduction: Project Context

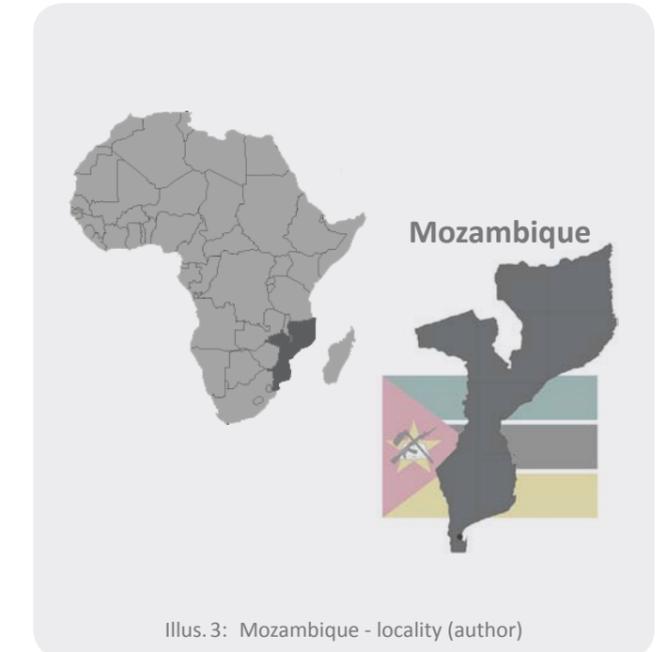
### Study Region

The Baixa, literally the 'low lying' land in Portuguese is the Central Business District (CBD) of Maputo, Mozambique, has been selected as the study area for this dissertation, as part of an architectural approach that endeavours to draw inspiration from the existing built and un-built context.

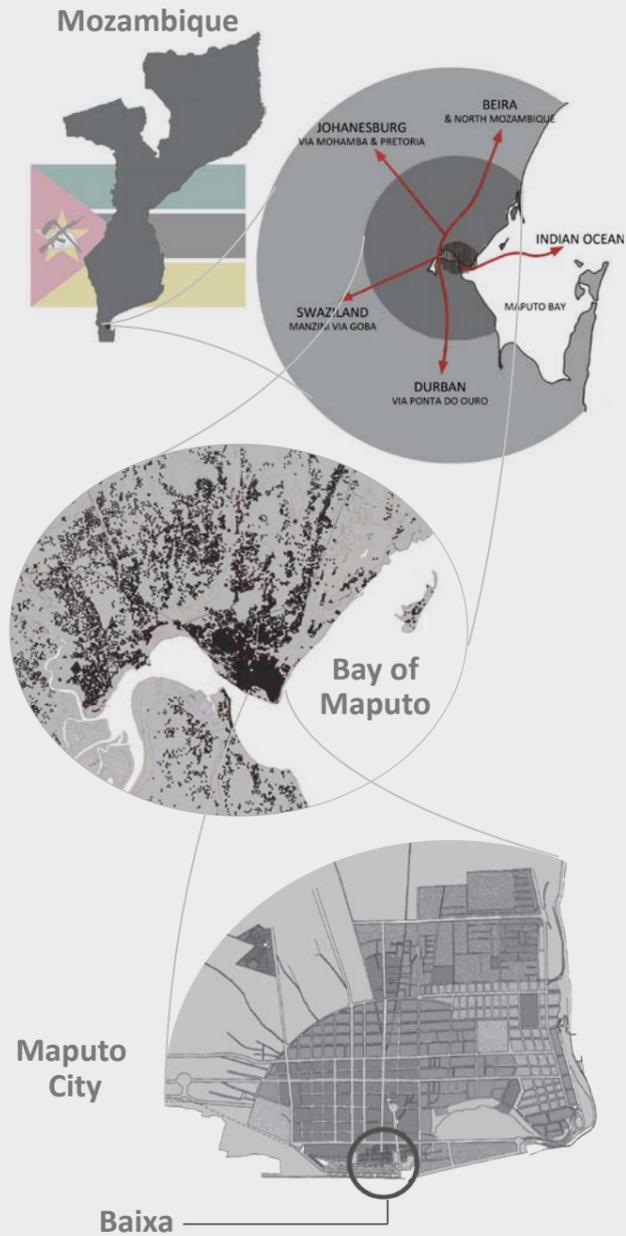
### Mozambique

The country of Mozambique, located on the east coast of southern Africa is a mainly tropical biosphere. The United Nations estimates the total population of the country to be 22,8 million people, with an adult literacy rate of 44.4% (Cravinho, J.G., De Sousa, A.N., George, E. and Pelissier, R., 2011: 860 & 865)

The Mozambican currency is the *Metical* (singular, *meticais* -plural), with MZN 26.78 equal to one US Dollar (Currency Converter, 13 Oct 2011). The average annual income of Mozambique citizens is of the lowest in the world and economically the country is fairly dependant on foreign aid. In 2009 the Mozambican government spent 86 900 million Meticais of which 37.06% was grants received from external sources (*ibid*: 862).



Illus. 3: Mozambique - locality (author)



Illus. 4: Maputo Baixa - locality (author)

## History

Mozambique recently gained independence from Portugal, who was the colonial power in Mozambique since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and who made Mozambique a province of Portugal in 1951. During 1964 the nationalist movement *Frente de Libertação de Moçambique* (FRELIMO) resorted to a war of independence against colonial Portugal, and on the 25<sup>th</sup> of June 1975, after a military coup d'état in Portugal, Mozambique gained its independence. (Cravinho, et al., 2011: 842 - 844)

The independence of Mozambique was followed by an exodus of the majority of the European population, and a period of tranquility, but this was to be short lived as the ruling party's 'socialization of the countryside' campaign "...succeeded in antagonizing most of the country's peasantry..." (*ibid*: 842). The country was then plunged into a protracted civil war, in which thousands of Mozambicans were killed, or maimed. The Communist ruling party, FRELIMO, was fighting a guerrilla war against the *Resistência Nacional Moçambicana* (RENAMO), partly supported by the Apartheid South African Government. The war lasted until October 1992, when a Peace Agreement was signed, after FRELIMO abandoned its 'Marxist-Leninist' principles and embraced free-market, FRELIMO also allowed for the registration of political parties, and for elections to be held in 1994 (*ibid*: 844)

The end of the civil war left Mozambique crippled; during the fighting the country's infrastructure had been badly damaged. The architecture, although sometimes riddled with bullet- and shell- holes, was in most places exactly as it had been before the war of independence. The significant reduction in construction of buildings and infrastructure during the civil war period is visually evident, contributing to the particular sense of place.

## The Region & the City

Since 1992 the government of the 799,380 square kilometer country has focused on the development of 'transport corridors', linking places of importance together, and encouraging development and investment. This includes the Maputo Corridor, crossing the Maputo province and linking Johannesburg in South Africa (Mozambique's principal trading partner), to the port at the city of Maputo (Cravinho, et al., 2011: 849 - 850)

Maputo is the capital city of Mozambique; this city is the largest in the country, with a population of just over 1 million people (*ibid*: 860). In the city itself, much of the evidence of war that was apparent at the turn of the century has been erased, leaving a modernizing, rapidly expanding, and vibrant African city.

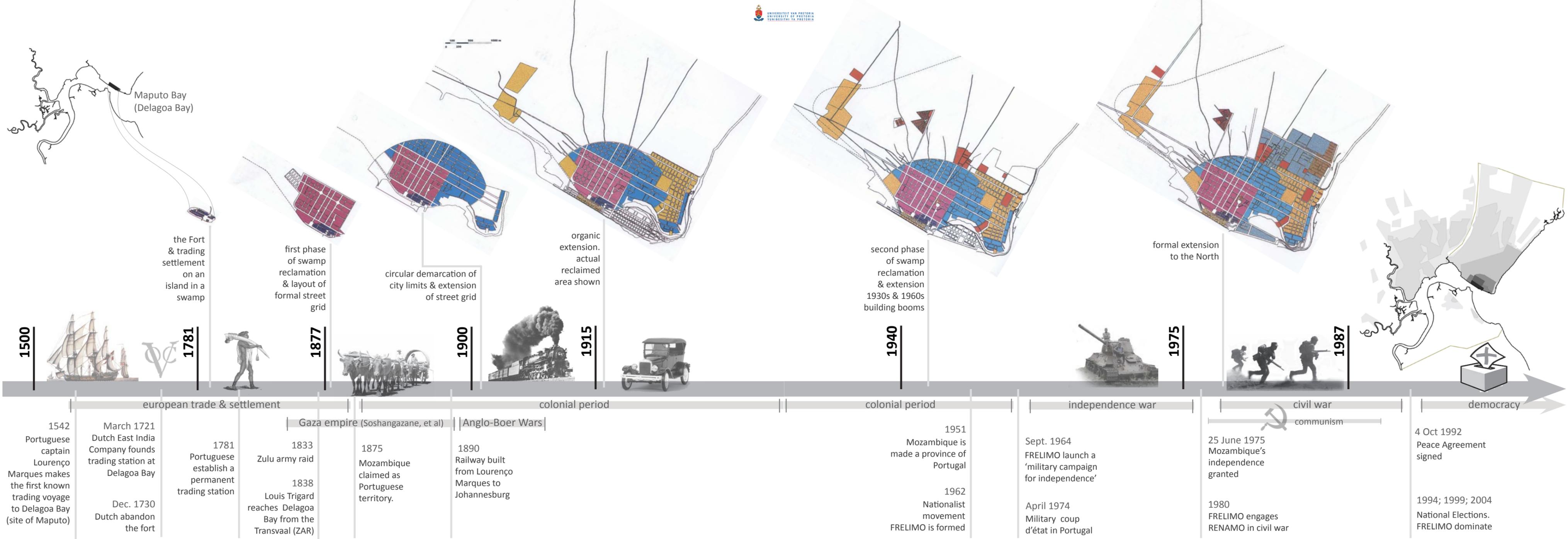
## The Baixa

Downtown Maputo is known as the 'Baixa', referring to the low flat land around the harbour which is the historical centre of the city and the site of the initial Dutch, English and Portuguese island trading stations and forts. Built predominantly on reclaimed marshland, it is defined by a low crescent shaped escarpment to the North and East, and the Maputo Bay to the south (historically Delagoa Bay).

As the site of the colonial forts, and more importantly the original site of the Portuguese (*Fortaleza Nossa Senhora Da Conceição*), the Baixa is the point where the formal western city began, and developed around, as shown in the Time Line on the following pages. It is therefore the historic core of Maputo, and the part of the city with the highest density of historic buildings (Joaquim, 2011) and the embodiment of the historic involvement and interests of the Afrikaans, African, British, Dutch, and Portuguese peoples in Mozambique and the port of Maputo.

Like the rest of the city, much of the built fabric remains exactly as it was half a century ago, remnant of the colonial construction boom of the late 1960s, albeit with the beginnings of a new contemporary layer of development (Le Grange, 2009: 10-17). This has resulted in an unique built fabric, one where the contemporary sometimes contrasts strongly with the historic fabric, in terms of form, fabric, texture, and especially the scale of the building.

The Baixa is a cosmopolitan area, with residents from across Africa and the globe; this has resulted in a mix of building ideologies, with Arabic, European, and African influences evident. It is the heart of formal and informal trade of the city –and of the country– containing many levels of enterprise, banks, ministries, and various small formal and informal markets, and shops ranging in age from days old to a century old. It is this melting-pot of built-fabric, memories, peoples, cultures, religions, economies, aspirations, and dreams that has been selected as the study area of this dissertation.



Maputo as a port city, and the Baixa situated in the city centre beside the harbour, is major centre of commerce in southern Mozambique (Cravinho, et al., 2011: 849 - 850). The Maputo Baixa, as the commercial centre of Maputo, also supports a large number of micro enterprises and traders; these people act as ‘wholesalers’, who repackage large bulk shipments into manageable portions, which they then sell locally. These micro-enterprises are a crucial part of the economic activity of Maputo and Mozambique, and in the Maputo Baixa they are accommodated in the *Mercado Central de Maputo* (Maputo Central Market), managed by the Maputo Municipality.

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## Problem Statement

The *Mercado Central de Maputo* (Maputo Central Market) was built in 1901 and is the only built infrastructure provided in to support the micro-enterprises and traders of the city. The market streets that have developed to the north of the Central Market and have become fractured and disconnected from facilities, with the available market building, and market square behind it, filled to capacity and in desperate need of maintenance. The disconnection from facilities hinders clean, comfortable, and hygienic trade. Micro-entrepreneurs and vendors who are excluded from the market facilities, are forced to vend their goods on the streets where they are considered illegitimate, and consequently have no rights as entrepreneurs.

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## Hypothesis

The proposed intervention is intended to contribute to a greater collaboration in which key civic projects in the Maputo Baixa will form part of a greater urban renewal scheme within this area, significant for its built heritage and regional economic importance.

It is proposed that the city needs architectural intervention that offers a solution for the current inadequate micro-enterprise and trader infrastructure while it resonates with the economic importance of the area, and also considering its heritage significance in which economic history is very important.

Promotion and sustenance of micro-enterprise and consequent grass-roots economic growth will hopefully be achieved through an upgrade and expansion of the market related facilities at the Maputo Central Market, allowing a greater number of vendors to occupy formally recognised stands and legitimising these marginalized entrepreneurs.

Consolidation of the fractured market functions aims to solidify the Central Market as a destination within its own right, increasing its drawing power on potential customers; while acting as a catalyst project in the Urban Regeneration of the Maputo Baixa.

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## Conceptual Framework

### Conceptual Approach

According to the architectural theorist Kenneth Frampton, Modernist architects often designed and programmed spaces in detail (1980: 164). This tendency to design in detail often means that modernist spaces can be difficult to re-program, a function essential to the smooth operation of a market building. Modernist architecture’s perceived lack of consideration of human use (Curl, 1999) and its separation from contextual issues (Davies, 1988: 6) needs to be addressed.

The concept of ‘Open Building’ as outlined by Stephen Kendal (1999: 1-16) reacts to this, proposing that a basic framework is provided which the occupants can customize and adapt to their own unique requirements. The product is therefore never finalised, but users are allowed to adapt them to suit new requirements and changing circumstances. This is a situation that is endemic to in a market system in which informality plays such a large role.

A contextually reactive approach is intended for the design, in order to identify existing uses and opportunities in placing contextually relevant architecture.

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## Conceptual Approach

The concept of approaching the building as a 'loose-fit' solution, that can be customised by the user to their specific requirements is therefore proposed. This allows the in-depth knowledge and hands-on experience of the user to 'tighten', hone and adapt small scale spaces to their specific and unique requirements.

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## Proposed Client

The Mozambican government generates 55% of what it spends; 8% of the additional expenditure is money on loan, while the remaining 37% is received in the form of grants and humanitarian aid (Cravinho, et al., 2011: 862).

It is likely that a building of a civic nature, in this location, would be developed with the Maputo Municipality as the implementing agent, in collaboration with the related national ministry and a donor organization providing a soft loan, such as the World Bank.

Current and historical infrastructure, and construction projects in Mozambique appear to illustrate that the perceived limitations of low budgets often require creative solutions to resolve seemingly straightforward problems.

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## Research Objectives

Research needs to focus on the regional character of Maputo Baixa and the following subsidiary aspects:

- How this regional character defines the identity of the building, since the intention is to define the context to which the building relates.
- Identifying the potential and needs within the area, a suitable program and location for an architectural intervention can be identified.
- How the existing fabric could define the appropriate scale, massing, and spatial character of the new fabric.
- If the availability of materials could define the material palette available for use in this location, as well as contributing to the material character of the intervention.

The research aims to outline the requirements of a market building, and show how some of these function related requirements could be implemented.

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## Delimitation of Research or Study

The national identity of Mozambique will not be investigated in depth for this dissertation; as the resulting building is not intended to be specifically Mozambican in character. The regional and urban identity will not be the focus of the study, but will rather be perceived from the availability of materials, local conditions, and historic tendencies, rather than an in-depth study of anthropology, history, regional aspirations.

It is assumed that all necessary community involvement and consultative work would have been done to fine-tune the design, should the building have been built. People in the area, who would theoretically be affected by an architectural intervention, will not be involved in, or participate in this study.

The focus of this study is the *Mercado Central de Maputo* (Maputo Central Market), briefly touching on the related public transport systems, but without going into an in-depth study of them.