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FIGURE 1.1 *What should the role of a museum in Pretoria be?*, Digital Collage



01

INTRODUCTION



FIGURE 1.2 The Guggenheim Art Museum in Bilbao, Spain designed by Frank Gehry. FIGURE 1.3 The museum of wood by Tadao Ando (Ohtake, 2010). FIGURE 1.4 Interior of the Hector Pieterson Museum (Soweto) as an example of a contemporary museum in South Africa (Deckler, Graupner & Rasmuss, 2006).



FIGURE 1.2

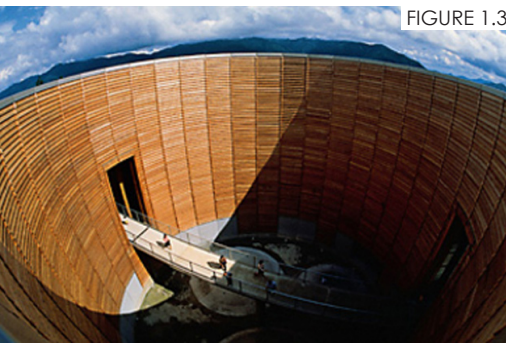


FIGURE 1.3

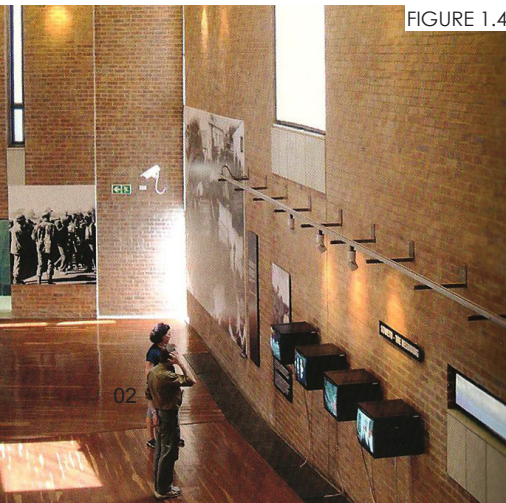


FIGURE 1.4

1.1. Introduction

This dissertation originated from an interest in museum architecture. At present the definition of the term 'museum' is blurred. According to the International Council of Museums a museum is a non-profit making, permanent institution in the service of society and its development. A museum is open to the public (Teichert, 2004:70). A museum acquires, conserves, researches and exhibits material evidence of man and his environment, for the purpose of study, education and enjoyment. Josie Appleton (2005:48) disagrees with this definition, stating that the definition of a museum as a place where artifacts are collected, studied and put on display is no longer applicable in our time. The idea of the museum has been turned upside down, with museums aiming to entertain as well as educate, with an additional focus on social events and social work.

This dissertation considers what a contemporary museum in the inner city of Pretoria should be in terms of function and architectural implementation. The dissertation will investigate how a museum can be established in the public realm and become part of everyday life by positioning the museum inside a building with commercial and corporate activities. The current use of the building accommodates pedestrian movement through it and the design intervention will create a 'chance' museum experience. The placement of the museum in an unusual commercial environment raises the architectural question of threshold spaces that define the museum and retail space.

The study reveals how cultural objects can be displayed in a contemporary manner in order to allow cross-reference between the objects and the context.

1.2. Problem Statement

On an international scale people are becoming more attentive to museums and the value they can add to a city. This statement is supported by the Bilbao Guggenheim museum designed by Frank Gehry, which is said to have started 'museum mania' and is responsible for the renewal of the city's centre (Jodidio, 2010:6). The trend of the 'museumification' of seemingly every phenomenon known to mankind has an impact on the increase of museums worldwide (Newhouse, 1998:8). Examples of this trend are the Museum of Wood in Japan designed by Tadao Ando as well as the Swiss Transport Museum in Lucerne by the architectural firm Gigon Guyer.

After a thorough study of South African contemporary museums, the author has come to the conclusion that these museums do not portray the diversity and cultural richness of the country. There is in fact an emphasis on the lack of cultural integration and museums reflect the divided history of the country, instead of representing the current state of the nation.

In contrast to world happenings, museums in Pretoria do not play a relevant role in people's lives. Of the museums scattered throughout the city, the Ditsong: Kruger Museum is the museum that receives the most visitors, while the Ditsong: National Cultural History Museum is the museum with the largest storage space (Naudé, 2010). Both these museums are connected to a strong Afrikaner culture and are not reaching their full potential with the outdated exhibitions and limited target market. Freedom Park, a cultural landscape that does not currently have an open museum building, can be seen as the only example of a successful attempt to reconcile people from different backgrounds and ethnicities.

The author has identified a need in South Africa for museums that are uplifting, inspirational and that offer a space where people can learn about various aspects of our country or can be informed about topics relating to the arts and culture.

1.3. Statement of Research Questions

The main research question asked is:

What should the role of a contemporary museum in Pretoria be and how does one design such a museum?

The following sub-questions are asked:

- a) Within the context of Pretoria, how can a museum be designed in order to make museum visits part of the regular city user's daily routine?
- b) How does a contemporary museum respond to earlier museum typologies?
- c) How are museum objects displayed in a contemporary manner so that the visitor can relate to them?
- d) How is a space created where objects communicate with the observers, considering that the main focus of a museum is the encounter between object and observer (Brawne, 1965:7)?
- e) How should the thresholds of a museum's spaces be designed?

1.4. Client Profile

The design program is based on the assumption that the Ditsong: National Museum of Cultural History requires a satellite museum for additional exhibition space. In order to address the problem of low visitor numbers, the satellite museum is part of a marketing and public awareness scheme for the existing museum. The existing museum will provide the satellite museum with resources and be responsible for its management. The Ditsong: National Museum of Cultural History will continue to function as it is currently does and will not form part of the design intervention. The Ditsong: Northern Flagship Institute will be responsible for the development, management and administration of the new satellite museum (Ditsong: Northern Flagship Institutions, 2010).

The Department of Tourism and Environmental affairs as well as the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology will be the financial sponsors of the project. Standard Bank will contribute to the sponsorship of the museum as part of their Social Corporate Responsibility.

1.5. Context of the Study

The dissertation presents a critical analysis of the Cultural History Museum, located in Visagie Street. The collected information will be used to design a museum that will expose the Ditsong: National Cultural History Museum to the people of Pretoria; allowing the museum to reach out and connect with the users of the city.

FIGURE 1.5 Entrance to the Ditsong National Cultural History Museum.



FIGURE 1.6 The Standard Bank Centre with Lilian Ngoyi Square in front of it. FIGURE 1.7 View of Lilian Ngoyi square from Church Street. FIGURE 1.8 Digital collage portraying users of the city with stories to tell.



FIGURE 1.6

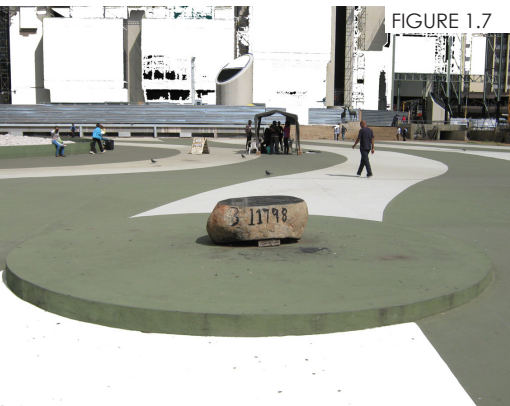


FIGURE 1.7

The museum intervention takes place inside the Standard Bank Building, on the corner of Church Street and Van der Walt Street. The building was designed in 1977 by the architectural firm Stauch Vorster and Partners. The building complies with the requirements for a contemporary museum site, being located next to a public space (the Lilian Ngoyi square) and having three entrances onto different streets that facilitate movement through the building. The Standard Bank Centre consists of eight floors of which the ground floor, lower ground floor mezzanine and lower ground floor are currently used as retail space while floors one to five are used as rentable office space. The focus of the design intervention encompasses the ground floor, lower ground floor mezzanine and lower ground floor as well as the central atrium space.

1.6. Project Aims:

- a) Define a contemporary museum in Pretoria.
- b) Create a museum experience that people from diverse backgrounds can relate to and learn from. This museum experience should become a part of the public's every day routine and would continue to have an impact on the city users in the future.
- c) Provide a museum exhibition facility that will focus on the general users of Pretoria's central business district, but will also accommodate tourists.
- d) Encourage a public custom of museum attendance and increase the public's awareness of the importance of heritage and remembrance.
- e) Introduce a new layer of meaning and culture into an existing building.

1.7. User Profile

Lizelle Cloete (2009:56) identified three types of users in Pretoria's CBD: regular users, unfamiliar users and periodic users. The regular users come to the city centre on a daily basis to use offices, shops and other facilities in the city. The unfamiliar users live in the greater Tshwane area, but do not use the city regularly for security reasons and psychological barriers. The periodic users are tourists who come to the city for a specific reason and stay only for a short period of time.

The museum experience will largely be aimed at the regular users to enrich their daily routine and to inform them about the existing Ditsong: National Museum of Cultural History. Additionally the museum experience aims to provide an exhibition that will draw unfamiliar and periodic users into the city centre and enlighten the users about the role culture plays in their lives.

Functioning within the existing commercial and corporate space of the building, the museum will deal with two types of user groups, namely paying visitors whose main purpose is to visit the museum and regular users of the building and city who will interact with the museum in a public, casual way.

FIGURE 1.8



FIGURE 1.9 Photograph of the entrance of the Ditsong: National Museum of Cultural History. FIGURE 1.10 Photograph of conservator Jan Middeldjans during an interview in a storeroom of the Ditsong: National Museum of Cultural History.



FIGURE 1.9



FIGURE 1.10

1.8 Delimitations

The limitations of the design project have been set out according to the following criteria:

- a) Designing and implementing a contemporary museum experience in an existing commercial building in the city centre of Pretoria.
- b) Designing the necessary auxiliary spaces associated with the satellite museum.
- c) Designing an example of an exhibition that will be on display in the museum space.
- d) Designing the threshold spaces between the museum space and the retail space.

The limitations that have been set out fall within the scope of the interior architecture profession and the focus lies with interior space making.

1.9 Research Methodology

The Ditsong: National Museum of Cultural History is an example of an existing museum that represents the shortcomings of museums in Pretoria. Data of the museum is collected through site visits, interviews and historical documentation. The knowledge gathered from the analysis of the Ditsong: National Museum of Cultural History will be applied in the design of a satellite museum.

The theoretical component of the study investigates the character and typology of the museum through history in order to define a contemporary museum. The work of four museum architects are analysed in order to determine what the author's approach to museum architecture is. The

design solution that is presented at the end of the dissertation is a result of the information collected and the studies conducted.

An investigation of culture and the relation of the satellite museum to its context also make up part of the theoretical component.

Site visits to museums and exhibitions in Gauteng informed the author about the character of museums and the experience of the museum visitor. The information gathered during these excursions are reflected in the museum analysis chapter of the dissertation. The study considers a number of museum precedents, focussing on the aspects of circulation, thresholds, the exhibition of cultural objects and the transfer of information in museums. Other projects that are not museums, but which are applicable to exhibitions and museum design are also investigated.

Personal interviews make up an important part of the research methodology. A large number of experts in the field of museums and culture which include researchers, architects, curators, conservators and exhibition designers were interviewed. The information gathered through these interviews provided the author with a complete view of the functioning of a museum and informed the design process.

1.10 Dissertation Outline

The order in which the dissertation chapters are arranged in the book is a reflection of the process the author followed with the project, starting with the theoretical component and allowing this to inform the selection of site and subsequently the design.

Chapter 01 gives a concise outline of the project and provides an overview of the scope of the dissertation.

Chapters 02 and 03 contain the theoretical component of the dissertation. Chapter 02 reflects the research the author has conducted pertaining to museums. Chapter 03 explains the author's understanding of culture and how it informs the design.

Chapters 04 to 06 focus on the context of the design intervention. Chapter 04 offers a detailed description of the physical site and building in which the intervention takes place. Chapter 05 explains how the design is a reaction to the atrium building. A thorough study of museums in Pretoria is documented in Chapter 06 as well as an analysis of the Ditsong: National Museum of Cultural History.

Chapters 07 to 09 contain the concept development, a documentation of the design process and the technical resolution of the final design.

Chapter 10 is the conclusion to the dissertation.

1.11 Project Summary

As a conclusion to this chapter, a summary in the form of a short description of the project's major elements is provided.

Program

A contemporary satellite museum specifically aimed at the regular users of Pretoria's Central Business District.

Site

The design intervention takes place inside the Standard Bank Centre, on the South-Western corner of Church Street and Van der Walt Street.

Client

The Department of Tourism and Environmental Affairs as well as the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology will be the financial sponsors of the project.

The Ditsong: Northern Flagship Institute will continue to manage the existing Cultural History Museum as well as the new satellite.

Users

The museum experience will be aimed at the regular users of the city.

Theoretical Premises

Contemporary Museum Architecture
Culture
Adaptation of Atrium space

Main Research Question

What should the role of a contemporary museum in Pretoria be and how does one design such a museum?

Research Field

Heritage and Cultural Landscapes