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5. Conceptual Precedents _ 6. Design Informants



FIGURE 7.1 *Concept Development, Digital collage*



07

DESIGN CONCEPT

Sella stool
Achille Castiglioni

FIGURE 7.2 Diagram showing museum space in relation to existing building.
 FIGURE 7.3 Diagram as an explanation of the architectural concept.
 FIGURE 7.4 Diagrams of concept intentions.

7.1. Introduction

This chapter explains the theoretical and architectural intentions behind the design concept. The concept statement is a rationalization for the design decisions that have been made and is portrayed in following chapters. The conceptual precedents influence the notion of a 'museum in flux'. The design informants provide a summary of theoretical aspects addressed in previous chapters and clarify how the theory informs the design.

7.2. Theoretical Intention

The program of the intervention is a new satellite museum for the existing Ditsong: National Museum of Cultural History.

On a functional level the satellite museum provides additional exhibition spaces for the Ditsong: National Museum of Cultural History. This creates more space in which to display objects stored in the existing museum. The satellite museum is part of a marketing strategy of the Ditsong: National Museum of Cultural History to create exposure for the museum.

Based on research, the theoretical intention of the design intervention is the following:

1. To challenge existing and out-of-date views about museums and exhibition spaces and to create a contemporary museum experience that fits into the context of Pretoria.
2. The dissertation investigates how the museum can be established in the public realm and become part of an everyday routine.
3. To expose inhabitants of Pretoria to culture as a social practice (as defined in Chapter 3) by displaying everyday cultural artifacts.

7.3. Architectural intention

With the introduction of a museum into a building with commercial and corporate office spaces, the challenge arises to create a link between the existing commercial spaces and the new museum spaces.

The in-between spaces become important, as these spaces are the link between the existing public space and the museum experience. The continuous relevance of the museum in everyday life is enhanced by the visual or actual links between the museum and the existing spaces.

The architectural intention described in this thesis is the following:

1. To challenge and explore the thresholds of the museum, firstly by positioning the museum in a location outside of the existing museum building and Museum Park and secondly by reinforcing or disregarding boundaries between the new satellite museum and the Standard Bank Centre.
2. To explore the adaptive re-use of an existing atrium building. The intervention should become an additional layer in the Standard Bank Centre that enriches the atrium and gives a new public function to the space.

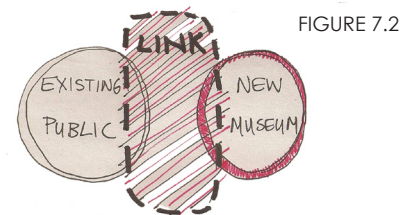


FIGURE 7.2

OPTIONS:

MUSEUM ABOVE EXISTING



MUSEUM ACROSS FROM EXISTING



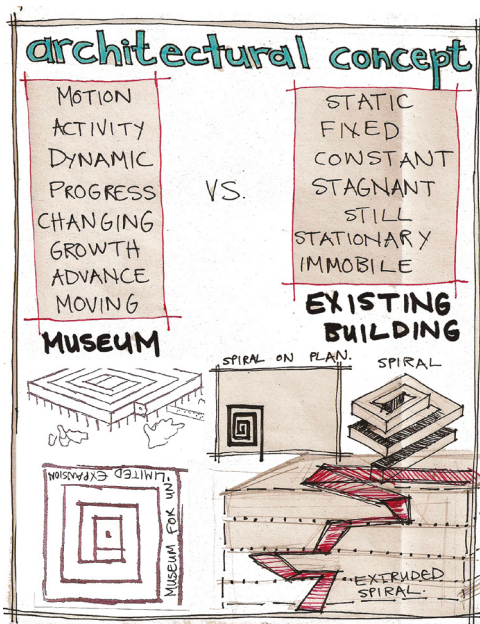


FIGURE 7.3

7.4. Concept Statement

The conceptual approach to the design intervention is to create a museum in flux. This means that the museum experience is constantly changing. This concept can be applied in the functioning of the museum with changing exhibitions.

A contemporary museum experience opposes the idea of a museum being built and portraying the same message for a hundred years to come. A contemporary museum should be constantly changing; growing or shrinking according to the needs of the visitors or the types of exhibitions on display. A contemporary museum should make the cross-reference between exhibited objects and the building that functions as a 'living museum' possible.

The designed museum spaces should be able to accommodate changing exhibitions as designed by curators. The intervention should make provision for alteration and variations.

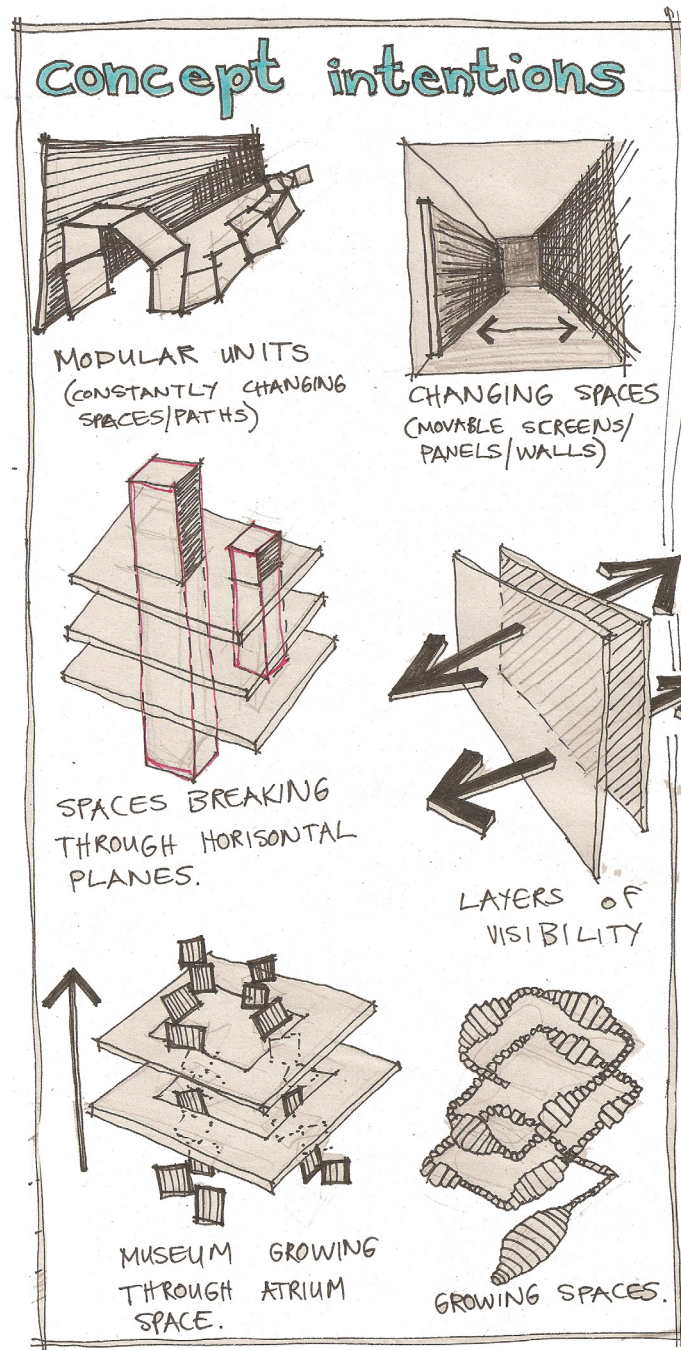
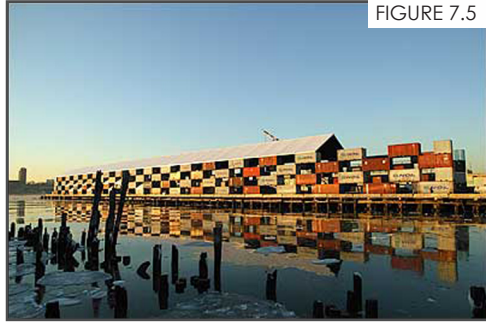



FIGURE 7.4

7.5. Conceptual Precedents of Temporary Museums

FIGURE 7.5 The Nomadic Museum (Pogrebin, 2005).
FIGURE 7.6 The Chanel Mobile Art Structure (Jodidio, 2010).

7.5.1 The Nomadic Museum

Shigeru Ban
Chelsea, New York, USA
2005
Travelling Art Museum (45000 square ft)
<p><i>Description:</i> The large colourful temporary structure of the museum was specifically built to display an exhibition by photographer Gregory Colbert. When the show is over the entire museum (composed of steel containers, teabag-curtains and paper tubes) is moved to the next site. The installation is a three-part experience that includes 100 photographic images that are suspended between paper-tube columns, a floating library and ends with a film (Pogrebin, 2005).</p>
<p><i>Issues addressed:</i> The design addresses sustainability, as most of the materials used are recyclable. A nomadic museum reaches more people.</p>
<p><i>Strengths:</i> The structure is not intimidating, thus it is accessible to a wide audience. The structure can be slightly changed to adapt to different site conditions.</p>
<p><i>Concerns:</i> The temporary structure does not offer enough protection against the elements. A museum should provide a comfortable environment. The exhibition does not make use of any natural light. This alienates the interior from its context.</p>

7.5.2 Mobile Art

Zaha Hadid
Various locations (Hong Kong & New York)
2007
Chanel Contemporary Art Container
<p><i>Description:</i> The travelling exhibition pavilion serves as a large advertisement for the fashion brand Chanel and showcases the works of selected contemporary artists. The 29 by 45 meters pavilion consists of a series of continuous arch-shaped elements and expresses an architectural language of fluidity and nature (Jodidio, 2010:174). It is a low-impact structure that leaves no trace of its existence after it has been packed and moved.</p>
<p><i>Issues addressed:</i> The design addresses the issue of creating an identity for a museum that has a transitory nature. The museum has to be adaptable to various sites.</p>
<p><i>Strengths:</i> The museum blurs the boundaries between fashion, architecture and art and proves that a museum can be trendy and fashionable.</p>
<p><i>Concerns:</i> Because of the connotation with the fashion brand Chanel, the museum is not viewed in a serious light. A museum should have an identity separate from its sponsor.</p>

7.6. Design Informants

In the design concept, the term 'flux' is understood to mean 'continuous change'. The aim is to design museum spaces that provide experiences that are continuously changing. The following aspects have been identified as the main informants of the design:

7.6.1. Reaction to the Atrium Building

Interior architecture is influenced by the architecture of the building in which it is positioned and the urban context of the building. The design of a museum in an existing building in the inner city is a project that compels the interior architect to become familiar with the urban scale and fabric of the city in order to decide on a conceptual approach for the final design.

The design will activate the central atrium space of the Standard Bank Centre. The shape of the intervention represents a living organic structure that contrasts with the rigid modular structure of the building. The design reacts to the site by contrasting the rigid shape and static character of the building.

The existing entrances and movement patterns will be preserved and enhanced with the design intervention. Circulation is an important aspect of the building and this will be used to strengthen the design.

Authenticity is an important concept of critical regionalism. By promoting participation of the users of the building and city, the museum provides and authentic experience. The use of local materials and craftsmanship is an important aspect of the design.

The museum should be able to grow and change to transform the atrium into a 'living' public space.

7.6.2. Definition of a Contemporary Museum

The program (a museum) was the initial driving force of the design process. This influenced all the design decisions that were made. The author's conception of a contemporary museum is a museum that acknowledges the object as the focus and core around which the museum experience evolves. The museum should make should facilitate cross-referencing between exhibited objects and the context of the museum.

The design intervention is positioned as a point on a regular city user's daily route in order to provide an unexpected museum encounter. This allows the museum to reach people who would normally avoid museums.

A contemporary museum should challenge people's preconceived ideas about museums. The museum should become a cultural environment that facilitates other cultural activities.

7.6.3. Contemporary understanding of Culture

Culture is a set of practices which, in their performance, produce meanings, values and subjectivities. Culture is adaptable, flexible and ever-evolving rather than fixed and bounded (Kreps, 2003:15).

Culture in the central business district of Pretoria cannot be divided into different categories, but is rather seen as a social practice that produces meaning. There is a constant process of 'trans-culturation' (Kreps, 2003:14). 'A culture' is a pool of knowledge to which individuals contribute in different ways and degrees (Delaney, 2004:72).

Popular culture is not static: it is constantly changing and is specific to place and time (Teichert. 2004:68).