



CHAPTER THREE



ARCHITECTURE & IDENTITY

FORMATION OF IDENTITY

MANIPULATION OF SPACE

TYOLOGY

CONCLUSION

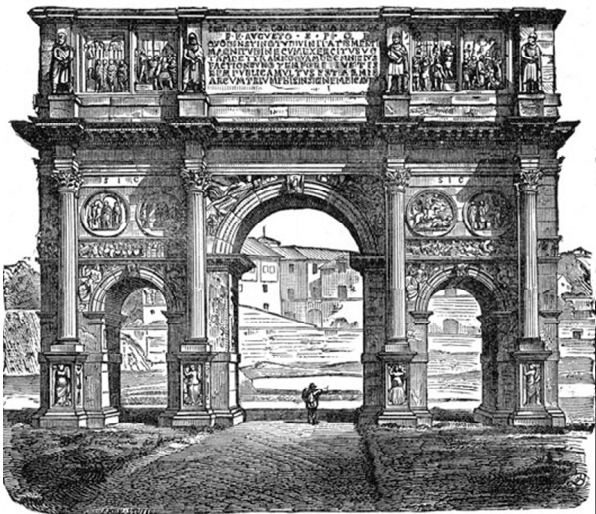


FIG 12



FIG 13



FIG 14



FIG 15



FIG 16



FIG 17

17. CHAPTER 3- IFORMULATING IDENTITY

IDENTITY CONSTRUCTS

The schools of thought regarding identity, state that: “(a) In philosophy, identity (also called sameness) is whatever makes an entity definable and recognizable, in terms of possessing a set of qualities or characteristics that distinguish it from entities of a different type (Wikipedia: 2010). (b) Social identification stems from the categorization of individuals, the distinctiveness and prestige of the group, the salience of out groups, and the factors that traditionally are associated with group formation”. (Ashforth ,E, etal, Mael, F, 1989; 20). The aforementioned descriptions of identity, aim to indicate as to how the discernment, configuration and acknowledgment of identity form the cognitive rationale behind group formation and group perception. The following narrative aims to highlight how through the use of architecture, one can begin to redefine identity, by re-interpreting and re-evaluating the building blocks that led to the formulation of the initial view of identity.

Social Identity

In beginning, one has to understand the parameters that are required in the formulation of identity, as well as the manner in which to appropriately articulate those parameters to best represent identity. For the purpose of this thesis an understanding of social, individual, constructed and perceived identity has to be reached in order to present an irrefutable identity. From this stand point, one can begin to examine the doctrines stipulated in the book “Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory”, which state. “When formulating identity, one has to structure the identifying elements in a manner that is indicative of the entity they are intended to represent”. By this, the authors imply that the formulation of identity is the direct result of the grouping of distinguishable elements that pertain to a particular group or society. Thus from the aforementioned statement one could assume that identity theory, or social identity is created through the coherent articulation of all formative, and descriptive elements that pertain to a particular group or entity.

With an understanding of how social and individual identity, are created or metaphorically formulated, one can then commence and decipher how constructed and perceived identity are created.

Architecture and Identity

Thus in addition to identity theory the next measure in understanding identity design is to comprehend how, firstly built structures can create identity, and secondly how social perceptions help formulate identity. In continuing, the content will exam two uniquely definable architectural types that have built structures the exuberate identity. The first type is from the time of classical architecture, with particular emphasis on Roman architecture. Roman architecture derived its identity through the use of symbolisms and meaning (Grandtradition.com; 2010). The primary intention (mostly inspired by political propaganda) behind Roman architecture was to impress, instill a sense of dominance as well as perform a public function (oneonta.edu, 2010). Although originally most of the forms used to create Roman architecture spawn from Greek architecture, the forms have been modified to better represent the imperialist nature of the Romans. The sheer scale and ornamentation of their buildings became what best represented their architecture and thus what helped them define their identity. In essence, it can be argued that the Romans began creating architectural identity through the use or re-interpretation of architectural typologies. The success of which is made evident by the immediate recognition of all its architectural forms, from its churches to bridges to social spaces. In all of which, there is a unique architectural language that remains constant, and thus invariably re-enforces Roman identity.

In further examining the use of built structures, to represent identity, (in a modern context) a comparative analysis is made between two



FIG 18



FIG 19



FIG 20



FIG 21

ARCHITECTURE



FIG 22



FIG 23



FIG 24



FIG 25

modern building types, that both follow a particular typology to convey a particular identity. The first structures in comparison would be the design of modern religious structures. Of the religious typologies, none has transformed over the ages more than the Catholic Church, this reason could be attributed to a number of controversial reasons, namely the need to appeal to a larger audience. Churches, do however still maintain a sense of grandeur and religious logic, which still make them readily recognizable as religious structures. Although their primary forms have changed from a cross to more elaborate modern forms, they still make use of the same symbolism to convey their identity. The symbolism and their recognition of, are further enforced by the use of re-interpreted even re-defined typology of earlier church typologies. Although other religious typologies have made less of a drastic change over the years, they have made use of technology and modern materials to remain current. Moreover, although some designs have shifted from earlier trends, they still maintain the same form, orientation, and religious paraphernalia, which enable them to be easily identifiable as the structures they are trying to represent. In essence, religious structures although they have transformed over the years, still maintain their identity by using or re-interpreting specific typologies or symbols that are indicative of the religions they are intended to represent.

The second typology in question is the automotive industries building typology. Because the buildings have to deal with specific vehicle and exposure requirements, there tends to be a commonality found in all of them. Particular emphasis on this statement will be made in relation to BMW's headquarters building and their standard car dealerships. Looking at the BMW headquarters' building, the architect Karl Schwanzer clearly adopted the automobile as a design concept. The architect did however make a direct reference to motor

vehicle parts, in that the design of the cathedral is meant to resemble a wheel in a race car, and the main building is meant to represent a four spoke car cylinder (wikipedia: 2010). In relation to the question of identity, this form of architectural expression does pose a secondary notion of achieving architectural identity, in the sense that “is identity also created by adopting a “Las Vegas” type of architecture? Of which the answered can be argued both ways depending on ones views on what is appropriate architecture. However, what is undeniable about the design of the building is that it is overtly of the automotive industry, and is able to articulate that without the use of signage. It is from that view that one can begin to argue the merits of using literal representations to formulate identity, in an architectural manner. Thus in gesture further question the validity of ornamented architecture as an appropriate means of formulating overtly obvious identity.

However, for the purposes of this thesis, one also has to take into consideration the notion that buildings do not exist in isolation, and that although a building may be perfect in itself, what gives it urban credence is its relationship with its surrounding context. Thus, a metaphorical question arises in that in formulating identity architecturally, does ones intervention need to exist as itself or does it need to be a part of a whole in order to give it credence. In answering that one has to return to the primary description of the taxi industry, with the answer simply being a “public transport system” and thus through the nature of the word “public” the intervention cannot exist as its own, but needs to respect its immediate and foreign frames of reference.

Upon reflecting on the principals of both architectural types mentioned in the afore text, one does notice certain similarities, in that: both architectural typologies have an innate architectural language, which displays a tacit exemplification of their program, in that their function/identity is expressed without need or use of signage. Secondly, from an architectural point of view there exists more than one way of expressing identity, being it through the expression of construction methods to ornamentation type architecture. Architecture in itself does not provide a definitive methodology of creating identity, but rather relies on existing perceptions and commonly noticeable symbology to express identity. From that statement, one can then deduce that architecture is subservient to existing identities and perceptions, and in itself is a tool to represent those ideas and

ideals. Accordingly in relation to this thesis a notion that can be carried forward from an understanding of the above mention ideals, is that architecture as an enabler can only give credence to a particular idea, if it represents the formative aspects of that idea, and can tacitly express it within its form, program and tectonics.

Architecture and Typology

[Typology is an] approach that isolates the attributes of the architectural coherence, identifies them as characteristics, in order to then compare them with similarly abstracted attributes from other contexts and to define similarities or differences. Since Quatremère de Quincy at the latest the history of architecture has described this kind of approach by the term typology and understands it as the abstraction of formal attributes into a principle, called type, that describes the commonalities of a series of different, but historically concrete models. From the beginning, this systematic and abstracted view includes the possibilities of a guideline for action beyond literal imitation (“imitation par principe”) as well as a tool for comparative architectural criticism (Pfeifer & Brauneck , 2008)

Identity of Place

“Social identification leads to activities that are congruent with the identity, support for institutions that embody the identity, stereotypical perceptions of self and others, and outcomes that traditionally are associated with group formation, and it reinforces the antecedents of identification. (Ashforth ,E, etal, Mael, F, 1989; 20) This statement refers to people and groups, and forms the basis as to what the implications of social identity are. In referring back to the initial concept of formulating an enriching identity for the taxi industry, one has to further explore the concept “identity of place”. The context, in which any architectural intervention takes place, plays a large role in not only suggesting the architectural language, but in also how it should respond to the surrounding fabric. Therefore, in relation to the taxi industry, the intended site needs to be along a rout that has significant importance regarding the industry as a whole, and not just in terms of its modern day perception, but also with regard to its historic value.

“All urban areas have their own logic which derives from their very raison d’etre and from the needs of the people who live there” (Dewar, Uitenbogard: 11). The area around Pretoria station, and Salvakop, is predominantly zoned as a residential, historical/heritage zone and governmental precinct. It for this reason, that it is also the transportation hub of the city of Pretoria. The site chosen for investigation for this thesis is located adjacent Pretoria station, along Bosman and Jacob Mare Street. This location also affords it the proximity to other transport modes such train, bus and BRT, of which all are with in a 200m radius. The proximity to all these transport nodes leads to high pedestrian volumes that move through and around the site. This scenario allows for the manipulation of pedestrian movement through the site, in order to achieve maximum exposure of the intervention, thus enabling more of the public to experience more of the transformations the taxi industry is going through. By locating the intervention near a prominate transport interchange, it allows the taxi industry a larger platform to interact with its stakeholders.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the theoretical investigation explores a number of possibilities in which identity (holistically) can be created, and that architecture in itself does not offer a definitive methodology in which to pursue the quest of formulating identity. Architecture does however serve as a tool in which one can express identity, so long as the architecture implored is indicative and exemplifies the formative principals that pertain to the element in which its identity its trying to represent. Thus in the context of this thesis the sagacious manner in which to achieve its objectives would be through 1: the use of programmatic arrangements to highlight each facet of the taxi industry. 2: To have the architecture relay the narrative of the taxi industry through the use of spatial articulation. 3: Through the use and re-interpretation of architectural typologies that pertain to the transport (more over the taxi industry). The adoption of this methodology should enable one to begin to formulae a quantifiable, visibly expressive identity for the taxi industry. Thus, in essence, the manifestation of an integrated structure that incorporates the industries formative elements into a structured logic, which embody all aspects of the industry, from its social constraints to its architectural manifestation, should sever as the attestation of the strategy adopted.