

Precedent studies

Precedent studies are presented to explore the theme of the discourse and must show innovative ways for problem solving in connection with problems associated with this thesis.

Downsview Park, Toronto, Canada

Downsview Park is the first-created national park in Canada, and was built on the site of the former Canadian Forces Base in Toronto. The objective of the design is to be responsive to the social and natural history of the site and also to develop its potential as a new landscape. This new landscape must be capable of sustaining new ecologies and an evolving array of public uses and events (including ones of national and international distinction). The design intention is to structure the transformation of the site and remain open to change and growth over time.

A design competition was held in two stages: the first phase was about the expression of interest, from which five teams were chosen for the second stage. For the second stage, the design teams were asked to prepare a schematic design of the park to include the green spaces, cultural campus and perimeter. The design proposal should cover the entire site and include strategic implementation within three phases, of which the first phase must be designed in detail. The three phases must be individually coherent, with its own integrity and stand-alone character. The teams were provided with a program that was composed through the consultation of the people and included park elements and themes.

Tree City was the winning design team and concept. The concept was brilliant and was able to link the current living conditions to the reality of a twenty-first century park, and, through the phase planning, change the appearance from former Canadian Forces Base to modern parkland. Tree City creates a special personality for itself and its surrounding community. The first phase begins with the preparation of the soil, path making and planting. Through the growth of old

vegetation and the increase of new vegetation over a period of 15 years, the physical site will develop. Eventually the site will be covered with 25% forest, in addition to meadows, playing fields and gardens.

Tree City will become a self-sustaining park in every sense and its natural network will appreciate as the park matures. Future development on the site, as well as gradual renovations of existing structures, will add value to the park, while providing income for its continued maintenance. One thousand crossing paths for cyclists, joggers, rollerbladers and pedestrians will complement the park and add to its accessibility.

By continuing its landscape clusters and extensive pedestrian pathways into adjacent areas, Tree City can link up with the Black Creek and West Don river systems and ravines, integrating Downsview into the system of wooded river valleys, parks and public paths currently existing in Toronto's urban domain.

The Relevance of the Precedent:

Design must be responsive to the social and natural history of the site while establishing its present identity and openness to future change. Downsview Park also manages the transformation through phases where vegetation and movement form the first phase and the structure for the other phases. Movement also creates the link between internal parts and adjacent areas.

Fig. 17. www.pdp.ca/International_Design_Competition_4130.html



Sacrifice and Give
 Tree City opts to grow now and build later. It "sacrifices" the construction of costly new buildings in order to "save" funds for an infrastructure of landscape elements. A medium capable of developing mass with greater economy and feasibility, the landscape will be prioritized over the realm officially known as architecture. Shearing the vegetal over the colossal, Tree City makes "the ultimate sacrifice" to save Downsview from premature fiscal disaster with the beauty of nature.

Sacrifice and save
 +
 Grow the park
 +
 Manufacture nature
 +
 1000 pathways
 +
 Curate culture
 +
 Destination and dispersal
 =
 low density metropolitan life

Fig. 18. www.pdp.ca/International_Design_Competition_4130.html

The tree city as a selfsustaining park

Fig 14 : <http://time.mystiek.net/>

La Tourette is an architectural masterpiece where different shapes and identities are brought together with a contrast between the horizontal layered monastery and the vertical church mass.

La Tourette - Le Corbusier

“To dwell in the silence of men of prayer and study and to construct a church for them –this was the program proposed to Le Corbusier in 1952 [...], by the Provincial chapter of the Dominicans of Lyons [...]” (time.mystiek.net).

Le Corbusier’s inspiration for the design of La Tourette was influenced by the Charterhouse of Ema in Tuscany, Italy. This building has great influence on both of his later architecture and urban theories. At Ema, his idea about humane architecture arose. This he defined as harmony, resulting from the interplay of the individual and the collective. He was driven by communistic ideas and therefore didn’t believe in God. The reason why he designed La Tourette is explained by the author of the website as the wish to examine new architectural problems, and especially for Tourette, it was the opportunity to build a “micro community”; to express his urban ideas in an actually built plan for the first time. He built a closed city of the spirit.

La Tourette was built as a Dominican priest’s school.

This meant to Le Corbusier that he had to design a machine to enable one hundred men to live together in a community with strict rules – men who are preparing for their priesthood through study and meditation. Dominican rules and daily routines had to be the basis for the program. There is a balance between work and prayer, solitude and gathering. Le Corbusier successfully created a silent place of meditation, study and peace. The simplicity and “poverty” of the place seems to match the monastic ideals perfectly. La Tourette is located on a lonely site on a hillside, because of the function of the place as a monastic college, a place of study and prayer. The silent location seems to serve these needs perfectly.

The building

In its basic shape, La Tourette recalls the typical Christian monastery with its rectangular “U” circulating around the courtyard and the church on the open side. The shape is punctured by glazed walkways, skylights and prismatic objects. Private cells for the monks and students circulate on the two top floors with windows to the outside

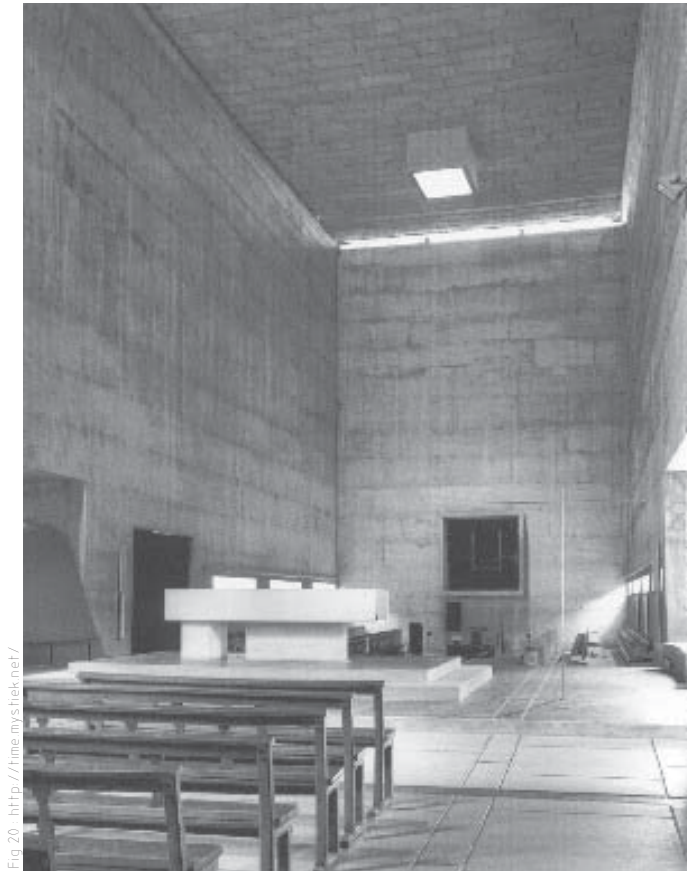
A play of solid mass punctured by glazed walkways, skylights and prismatic objects.

Fig 19 - <http://time.mystiek.net/>

The inside impression

The monastery is designed using traditional church elements to relate to the identity of the place, but through the use of light, solids and voids, Le Corbusier designed spaces that stimulate the activities and movement of people in the building. The entrance area is designed to remind a visitor of the dignity of the place which he is entering, but also to have an inviting character, since Tourette is a teaching institution and one would not want to cut it off from the surrounding world. La Tourette is standing open on a hill and symbolises these aspects together with the bridge behind it. Within this entrance area Le Corbusier

The heavy masses and careful use of light create a mystic atmosphere with total devotion

Fig 20 - <http://time.mystiek.net/>

placed four conversation cells. Uncomfortable benches and the dark atmosphere inside convey a temporary impression that discourages visitors from staying any longer than they need to. These rooms are needed because the monks are not allowed to take visitors into the monastery or even to their cells. The entrance area seems to be outside of the monastic district, but is the first step in the transition from the normal world to a spiritual place. Le Corbusier lets this transition progress in a long, narrow corridor that leads into an even narrower corridor with both of them ending in a blank concrete wall. They circulate around the outside of the building. These halls give a cold impression and are, again, meant to remind one of the dignity of the place one is entering. All of the college functions and the oratory are on the entrance level. The oratory is a cubic form on a cross-shaped support topped

The simplicity and austerity of the place successfully creates a silent place for meditation, study and peace.

with a pyramid roof. It has an important position in the courtyard in order to show its importance in the life of the young Dominicans. It is the room of private prayer and its form is meant to help the student concentrate his mind on prayer exclusively. By positioning the oratory as a solitary form in the courtyard, Le Corbusier points out its special importance and also recalls the traditional positioning.

Le Corbusier created a mystic atmosphere of total discipline and devotion with the heavy wall masses and the careful use of light, which comes in through low slots by the stalls, and through cracks between the wall and the ceiling.

The Relevance of the Precedent:

La Tourette shows the play of materials, light and spaces to express feeling movement, character and identity that is imprinted on the user to stimulate activities and movement of people.

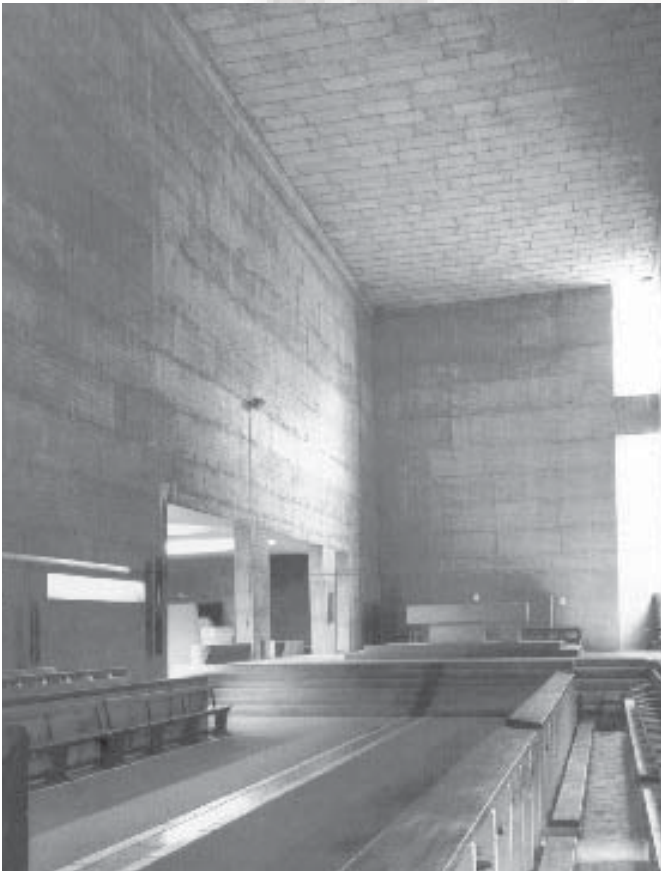
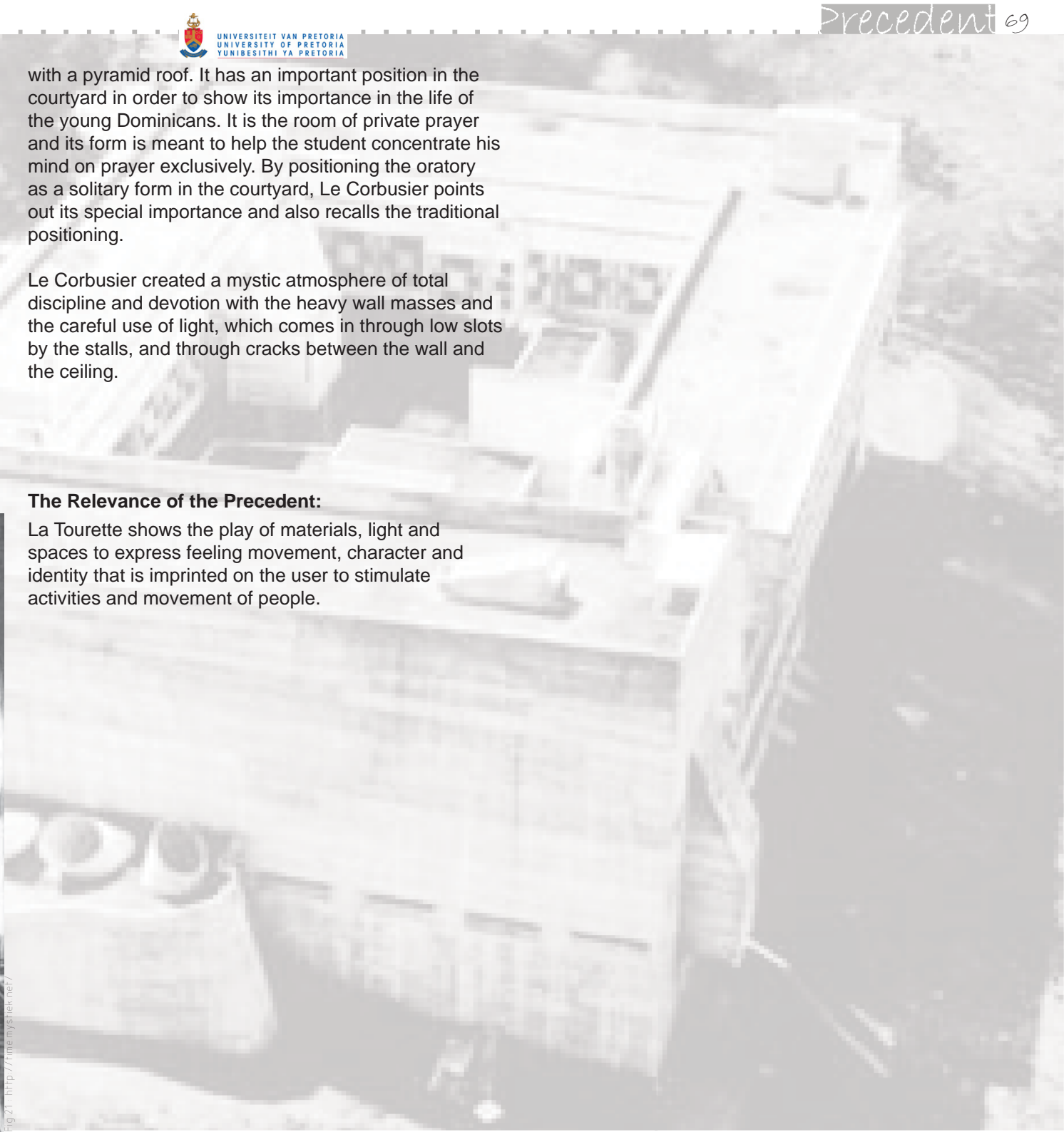


Fig 21 <http://dimeinystreak.net/>



The Conservation and Development of Genadendal

The mission station in the Western Cape, Genadendal is established as a Moravian mission settlement in 1737. The picturesque village of Genadendal is located about 140km east of Cape Town, nestled in a fertile, water-rich valley at the foothills of the Riveirsonderend mountain range. George Schmidt, a Moravian priest from Herrnhut, Germany, was the initiator of this mission which soon developed rapidly to the largest settlement in the old Cape Colony, after Cape Town. Its pioneering spirit and unique advances in important fields of human endeavour soon distinguished it from other rural settlements in the country.

Genadendal's earliest achievements were remarkable. The little town led with several firsts since its establishment: The first solid bridge in South Africa, first teacher's training college, first formal school and crèche in the interior, to name a few. Completely self-sufficient at the time with a number of inter-related crafts and industries such as the manufacturing of clothes, leather articles and unique pieces of furniture, as well as the cultivation of agricultural produce. Today, over two centuries later, it is an impoverished rural community, rooted in traditional values, rich in hidden treasures and ripe for development.

A development framework was establish with the main focus on the restoring of the historical buildings,

landscape and environmental features to act as a catalyst for the attraction of tourists, which is a very important aspect of the economy of the Western Cape. This included:

1. Establish workshops for the training of local people in the necessary skills such as traditional 'Genadendal' chairs and Herrnhuter knives, the building of new development, management of nature conservation and tourist related activities.
2. Establishing infrastructure (roads, storm water drainage, water supply, waste disposal and street lighting)
3. Urban development:
 - a. cultivation of its natural heritage

Fig 22 Papendorp et al



- b. Promotion of its cultural richness
 - c. Development of its musical heritage
 - d. Beautification programme to establish a character and image for Genadendal
 - e. Provision of more facilities to accommodate visitors.
4. Architectural restoration
 5. Urban environmental conservation of original character.
 6. Nature experience through hiking trails, mountain bike trails and picnic areas.

The Relevance of the Precedent:

The Mission station, Genadendal, flourished in the Cape Colonial times, but due to a few problems the economical and social situation eroded to only a shadow of the once successful settlement. The character and identity of the “Golden days” are identified and the opportunities of the present age are recognized. These two aspects are combined to find the path of successful and sustainable development for the future. These principles of recognizing the development opportunities of the existing site within its regional context are important for the development on Kwasizabantu. Then the importance of the history as part of the identity of the present is emphasized and must be recognized on the Kwasizabantu mission. Others aspects of the precedent to be used are the holistic approach in the development of the site: the natural, economical and social aspects to be addressed.



Fig 23. Papendorp et al



Fig 24. Papendorp et al

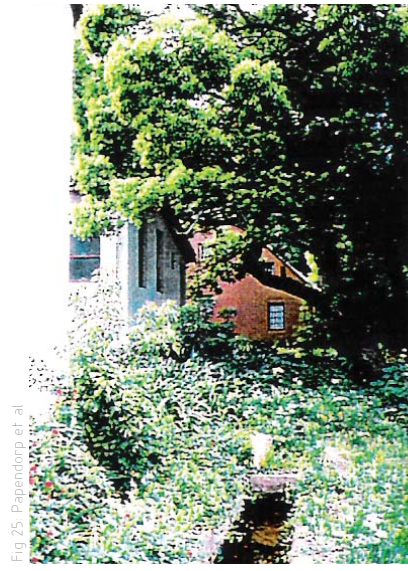


Fig 25. Papendorp et al

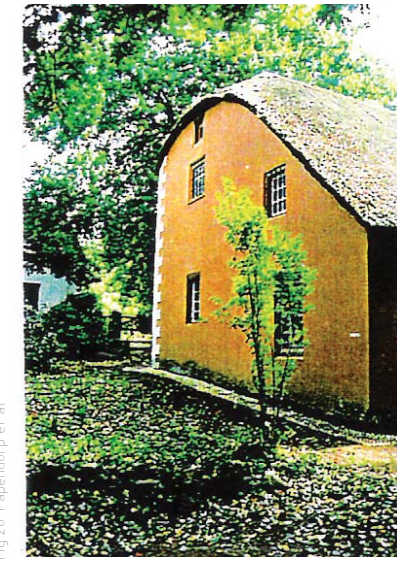


Fig 26. Papendorp et al

Historic buildings
on mission werf