

SECTION H: DESIGN PHILOSOPHY

SECTION SYNOPSIS

This section provides the philosophy of the design and the various thoughts, elements and principles that influenced the design.

8. DESIGN PHILOSOPHY

“ Clearly the problem of man and nature is not one of providing a decorative background for the human play, or even ameliorating the grim city: it is the necessity of sustaining nature as source of life, milieu, teacher, sanctum, challenge and most of all, of rediscovering nature’s corollary of the unknown in the self, the source of meaning.” (McHarg 1999:34)

8.1 THE MAN VERSUS NATURE RELATIONSHIP

From “Individual vs. Community” to “Humankind vs. Nature”

According to Markus Wischermann, the controversies of the last three decades have prevailed both in social philosophy and in environmental ethics (<http://www.aynrand.org/medialink> 21 Oct 2003). In social philosophy, it is argued that an individual needs the values of a community to develop his or her personality and thus to live

out their freedom. In ecological ethics, the dispute was about the higher priority in human actions, human interests (anthropocentrism) or Nature (physiocentrism). While the two controversies took place separately from each other, structural parallels are obvious. Combining both the arguments provide a new approach to environmental ethics.

Human beings are related to Nature in a complex network of interaction, e.g. in the exchange of O₂ and CO₂ with plants. So human actions influence natural processes and vice versa. In this way, the relationship between Humankind and Nature is very similar to that between individuals and a community: it is in Humankind’s own interest if Nature continues to flourish, as much as it is in the human individuals’ own interest if their community “functions” properly.

On the other hand, individuals have a right to satisfy their own needs and fulfill their own wishes, or, to develop freely. Equally, it can be argued, Nature also needs to develop in some degree of freedom from human interference.

Perceptions of the relationship between people and their environment range from one being dominated by nature, and therefore servant to nature, to one of people as being dominant over, therefore, master of nature.

Currently a more holistic systemic approach with a systems management emphasis is being combined with grass-roots appropriate-technology approach into an expanded and enlightened view of sustainable development.

It is therefore necessary to understand the interrelated components, environmental and social, that constitute a particular landscape before one can successfully design and develop a particular landscape.

8.2 DESIGN AS A STATEMENT OF HUMAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL RELATIONSHIPS

The Gourits River Catchment environment and its landscapes are highly variable. The site and the environment were related through similarity, compatibility or contrast. It is suggested with this proposal that the degree and nature of these relationships were consciously managed so as to develop the appropriate human-environment relationship.

The site and the environment can be synergised by expressing themselves in more naturalistic forms, implying an attitude of people in nature as shown in zone 3 of the Kannaland Tourism Node (Fig 87). Nature dictates where the developable areas are, and what type of development should take place.

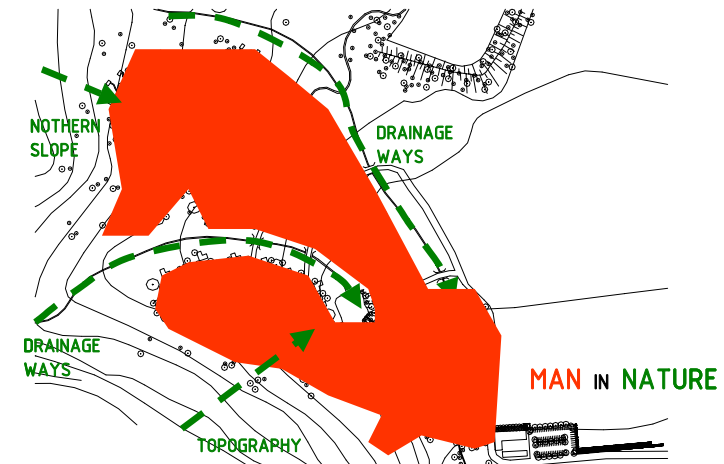


Figure 87: Environmental relationships – Zone 3

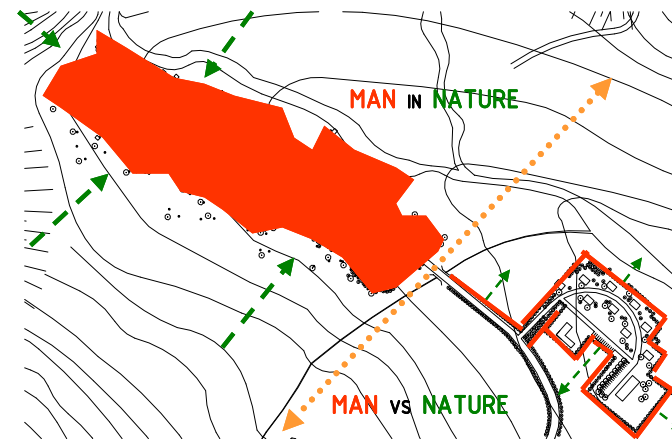


Figure 88: Environmental relationships – Zone 4

It was also expressed as discrete elements, different in character but coming together in a compatible manner, implying humans and nature in coexistence (Fig 88).

They even come together in a condition of contrast implying an attitude of people forming nature shown in zone 2 of the Kannaland Tourism Node (Fig 89).

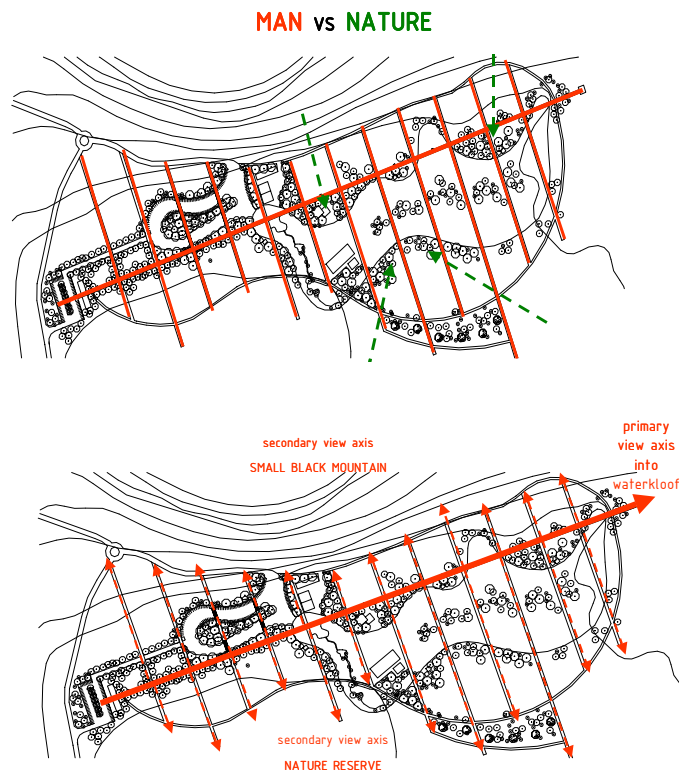


Figure 89: Environmental relationships – Zone 2

8.3 ELEMENTS AND PRINCIPLES OF THE DESIGN

8.3.1 DESIGN ELEMENTS

A variety of design elements are used to create the desired site-nature relationships. In zone 2, a combination of point and line elements are used to create visual prominence as well as implying human assertion into the environment (Fig89). The alignment of elements (such as the trees) as well as strong linear lines created by the paving is used to create the effect. Naturalistic lines are used in Zone 3 and 4 to imply nature's dominance over people (Fig 87 and 88).

Colour and texture are major elements in creating a sense of place as well as a sense of scale that provides character to the place.

8.3.2 DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The main design principles used in this project is unity, focal points, balance, scale and rhythm.

The design guidelines in Section G as well as the lines, points, form, colour and texture can be consciously managed to unify site, buildings and nature. These elements are used to create a sense of unity between the three sites as well as to the surroundings.

Zone 2 was designed symmetrically and was placed in an informal site. The sense of formal symmetrical onto informal unsymmetrical, created a dynamic interplay between site and environment as well as between people and nature.

Scale played an important role in the design of the three sites. There is interplay between human scale and the scale of the surrounding mountains and this creates interest within the site and surrounding landscape..

The dominant lines in zone 2 and 4 convey a rhythmic character. Conversely, they can be irregular, such as in zone 3 and 4, conveying a naturalistic feeling to the site.