5.1 Introduction

Current trends in African architecture range from the new perspectives taken by multiple designers, and mostly the change of their overall approach to design. These new approaches can be found from an urban scale to the very intimate housing structures.

The approach towards the precedents studies was to look at designs and then critically analyze the approach and the designs relevance to the proposed project in Mamelodi.

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Precedent Studies

Figure 55 : *The DNA of a fragmented society, Collage,*
Author (2015)

5.2   Urban insight

Simone *(Graafland 2012:45-47)* states that the physicality of the African city represents the fragmentive state seen between its social networks. The city becomes an expression of the intangible collective of the masses. This is due to a lack of an overarching *institutional logic or public discourse, capable of tying its heterogeneous residents together in some conviction of common belonging or reference (Graafland 2012:45-47).*

Hence the city has become a patchwork of decay and renewal, Simone *(Graafland 2012:45-47)* therefore argues that urbanism should be concerned with the creation of platforms where different social networks can engage with one another. And that these platforms would assist in the forming of the city's identity.
It concerns how connections are built across cities in ways that circumvent the dominant histories, frameworks and policies (Graafland 2012:45-47).

When the process towards the outcome becomes celebrated rather than focusing purely on the outcome, allowance for greater enquiry towards sustainable development is made *(Pieterse in Graafland 2012)*.
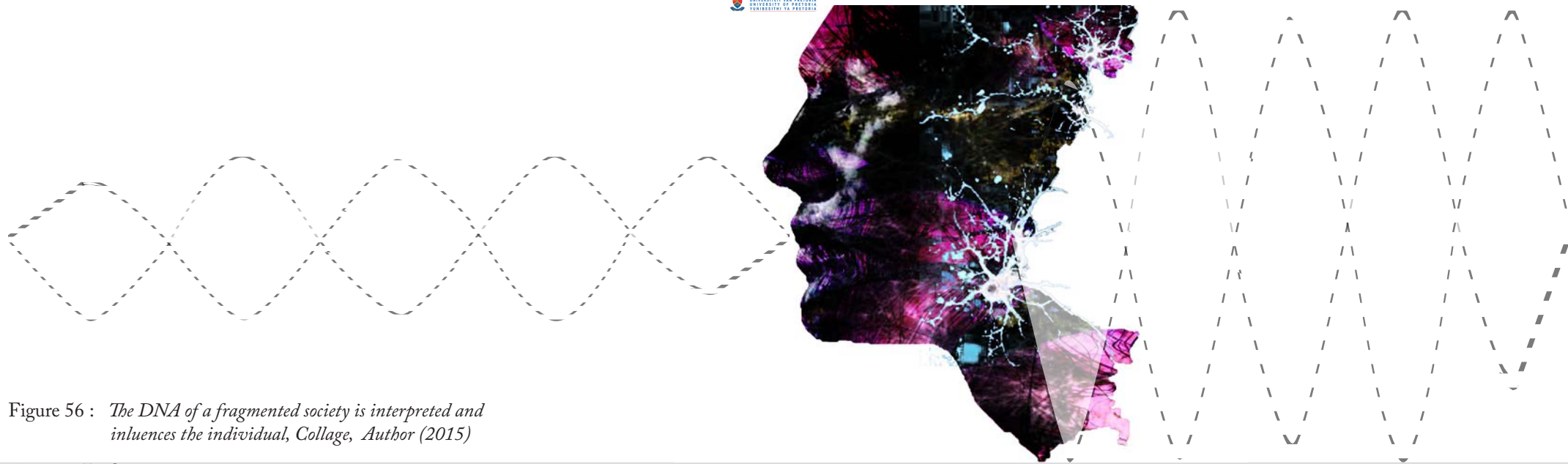
Figure 56 : *The DNA of a fragmented society is interpreted and inluences the individual, Collage, Author (2015)*

5.3   Informants

Lokko states that there are three issues that influence the Built environment in Africa
- The role culture plays in helping a society make sense of itself and its place in the world.
- The observations relating to place; and what forms place rather than space.
- And, *the role of education as a mediator and translator between culture and tradition, helping us to question our relationship to urban culture and development (Lokko in Graafland 2012).*

Lokko expresses that *culture is a process rather than a fixed unchanging state and part of its unique character is its ability to shape, shift and transform itself and the society (Lokko in Graafland 2012).*

Other informants include the question of built heritage, as argued by Lagae *(Graafland 2012)*, built heritage is the relationship between memory and heritage. Significance can become attached to any entity which has become symbolic to a community *(Nora 1984)*.

Lipstadt reminds us of the spatiality of memory and the need to address not only the tangible but also the intangible aspects of built form (Graafland 2012). These culturally significant structures have the ability to take up new meaning over time in the same manner which culture can adapt. Hence adaptability of space to suit a cultural and communal need becomes influential when designing.

Memory takes root only half in the folds of the brain half is in the concrete streets we have lived along – Lionel Abrahams (1928-2004)
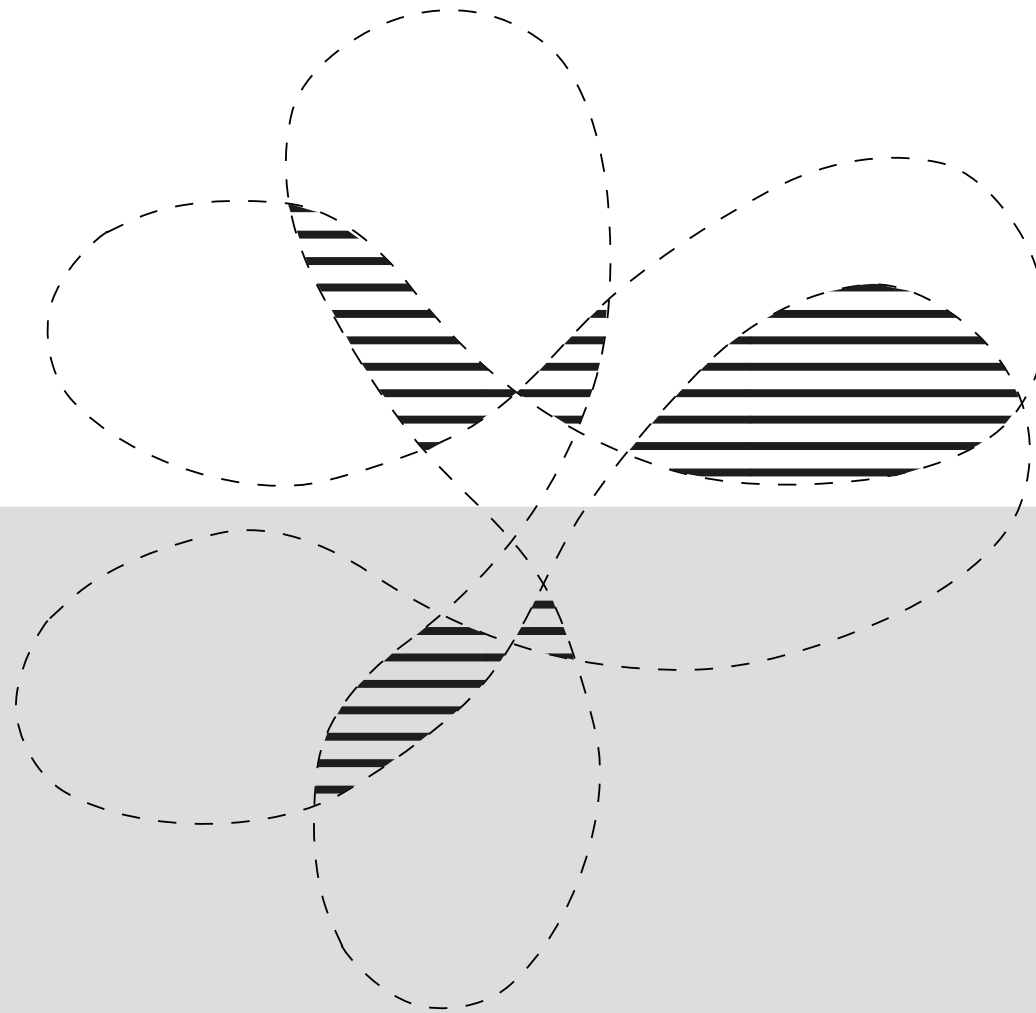
Figure 57 :   *Social Networks overlap and share a collective ,*
            Diagram, Author (2015)

5.4   *Social architecture*

New design approaches and the success of these designs are greatly due to their contextual responses. *Public and housing designs have started to recognize the formal, physical and embodied space of their users (Graafland 2012:143).*

Social architecture responds to the temporal condition of process. Process includes research and community participation. This shift in the architectural paradigm was greatly due to social transformation. Theoretical ideas around alternative settlements such as *Turner, Kroll, Habraken and Hertzberger (late 1960's)* have been reinterpreted to suit the South African context.

Once again the similarities between architecture and culture can be drawn. Both have shifting boundaries.

Habraken argued that *Open Building* was founded in the *conviction that individual responsibility for one's own environment represents an essential precondition for environmental health (Bosma, Hoogstraten and Vos 2000).*

This argument became interpreted in a manner that architecture should become the supportive structure as opposed to the controlling element. This could be achieved through the accommodation of social space within a structure, which inherently hands over the control of the space to the influencing users. The users then have the capacity to alter the reality of the space as they need. Thus making allowance for a clear distinction to be made between institutional space and communal space through programme *(Graafland 2012).*

Figure 58 :   *Thusong Service Centre (Khayelitsha), Photograph,Makeka Design Lab (2008)*
               Acting as a catalyst for growth in the context

Figure 59 :   *Khayelitsha Service Centres And Pay Points, Photograph, Piet Louw*
               Architects (2015)   Providing for public interaction.

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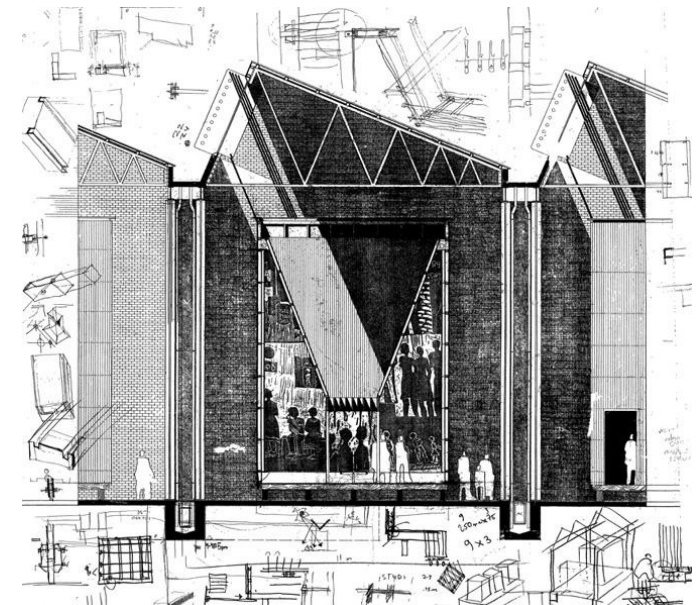Figure 60 : *Street view of Red Location Museum, Photograph, Architectural Record (2012)*

Figure 61 : *Memory Box Working Section, Drawing, Noero Architects (2005)*

5.5.1 *Precedent 1 – Contextually relevant*

Red Location Cultural Precinct
Architects   Noero Wolff Architects
Location   New Brighton, Port Elizabeth, South Africa
Date   Since 1998 after winning a competition in
            1992
Client   Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality
Programme   Cultural centre and precinct.

The project was developed to have a phased approach. During the first phase, "The museum of Struggle" was constructed and opened in 2006. Phase 2 and 3 consists of an Art gallery, Library and archive, of which the construction was finished in 2011. The fourth phase will host a Performing arts centre and School for the Performing arts. The complex will also house 210 new living units for people working within the precinct *(Eicker 2012) (Lepik et al. 2013)*.

The civic structures were designed in a manner which allows them to be as close as possible to the streets to activate the public realm, whilst visitors and locals can move through the site. Certain elements of the structures spill outdoors. The intention thereof is to allow people to take ownership of the street, especially as commercial and social growth escalates *(Lepik et al. 2013)*.
To reinforce the precincts connection to the social context, the fine grain is incorporated and facilitated within the formal design context. Noero responded to the residential scale by articulating his buildings with pergola structures and arcades that reach out to their neighbors while serving as thresholds to the larger civic spaces inside *(Eicker 2012)*.
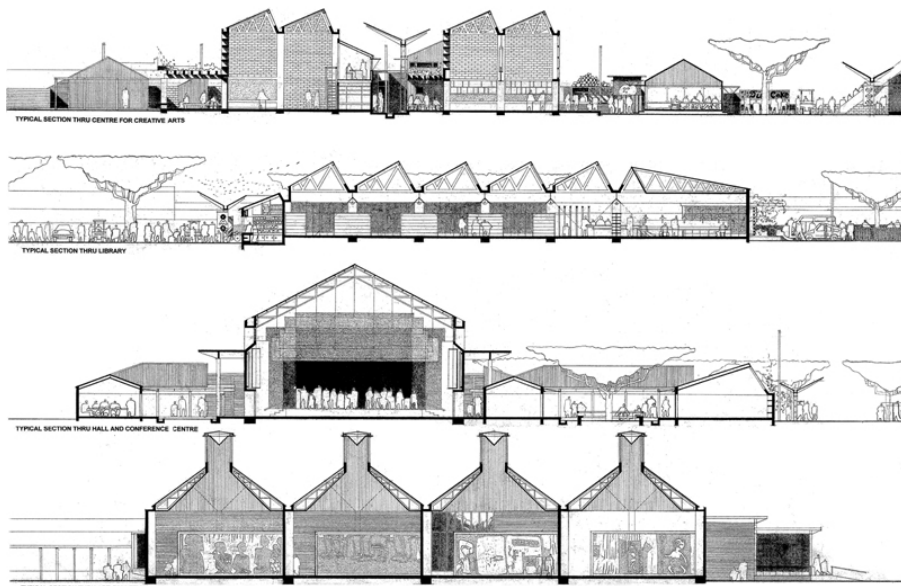
Figure 62 :   *Museum Sections, Drawing, Noero Architects (2005)*
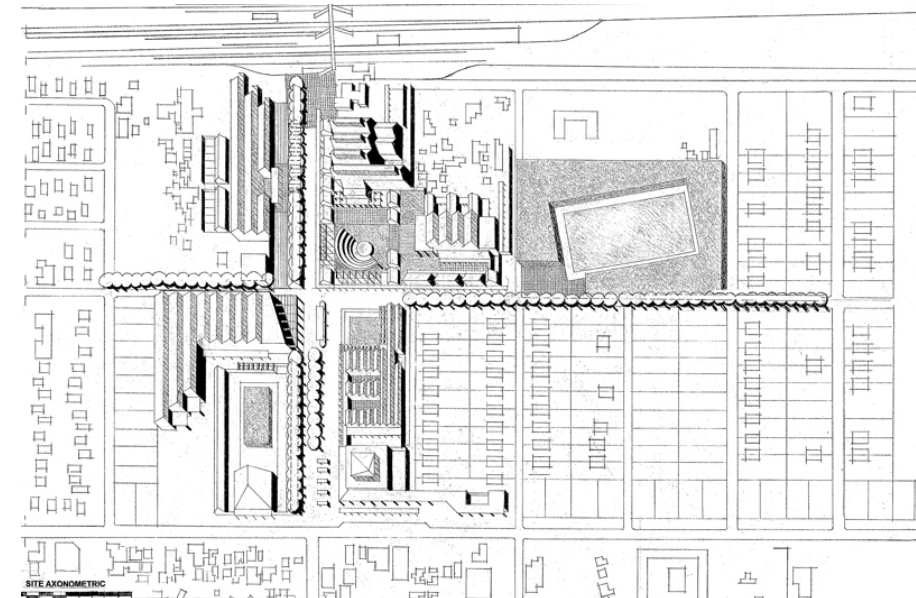

Figure 63 :   *Precinct Site Axonometric, Drawing, Noero Architects (2005)*

Planned next to the New Brighton railway Station, the area has a rich industrial heritage. These contextual elements are acknowledged in the design through the saw-tooth roofs, which echoes that of the surrounding factories. The context is also recognized through the material pallet of concrete blocks, galvanized roof sheets and steel frame windows. (Lepik et al. 2013).

Noero states that, *The language and form are explicit yet simultaneously ambiguous, using pragmatic measures like volume and the quality of light to express the various purposes of the spaces.* As well as, *To create architecture, particularly social architecture within complex communities, you need to properly understand the processes and relation-ships (Eicker 2012).*
The complexity of the design allows for the mixing of the formal and the informal, very successfully. And the intention is to serve as an example of the potential future of Africa. The civic structures acknowledge the pedestrian user through the articu-lation of threshold spaces, allowing a new society to rise from the old *(Eicker 2012)* *(Lepik et al. 2013).*

This precedent relates to the thesis, through it's contextually appropriate response, as well as its recognition of cultural history. Through recognising the complex network of social relationships the project attempted to create a place which acknowledges *The Forgotten* of the New Brighton community.

The project was considered within a greater framework and vision and became a symbol of change to come. The greater framework aids in the development of a collective memory being established, which grows from the dormant po-tentials of the existing fabric and its history.

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Figure 64 : *Eerste Treetjies Community Centre, Photograph, CS Studio Architects (1990)*
            Investing in the community to catalyze growth

Figure 65 : *Nyanga Bathhouse, Photograph, Piet Louw Architects (2015)*

Figure 66 : *Gugulethu Central Meat Market, Photograph, CS Studio Architects (1998)*
            Strengthening an existing social network.

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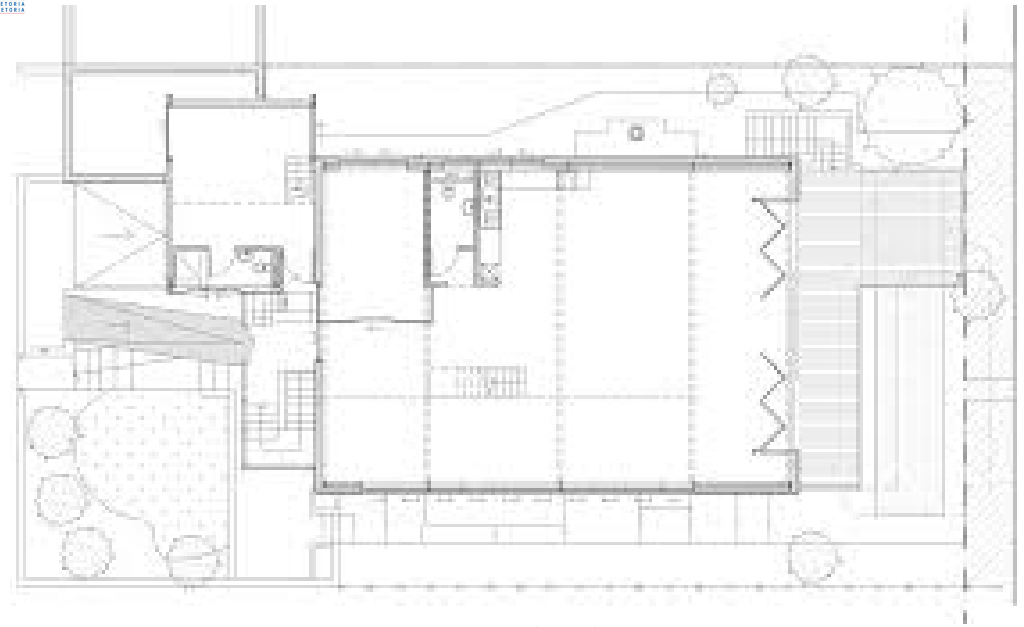Figure 67 :   *Contextual Perspective, Photograph, CS Studio Architects (2010)*

Figure 68 :   *Plan, Drawing, CS Studio Architects (2010)*

5.5.2 *Precedent 2 – Community participation*

Dawid Klaaste Multi-Purpose Centre
Architect   CS Studio Architects
Location   Laingsburg, Western Cape
Date   2002-2005

The site was chosen after a process of community consultation. The main intention was to transform the existing structures on the site into a dynamic environment, which would lure locals as well as travelers *(Dawid Klaaste Multi Purpose Centre 2010).*

The concept development was derived of a series of design meetings with the community. Other considerations included the rich environment (Fauna and flora), the windmill as a symbol and landmark in the Karoo and the train passing through.
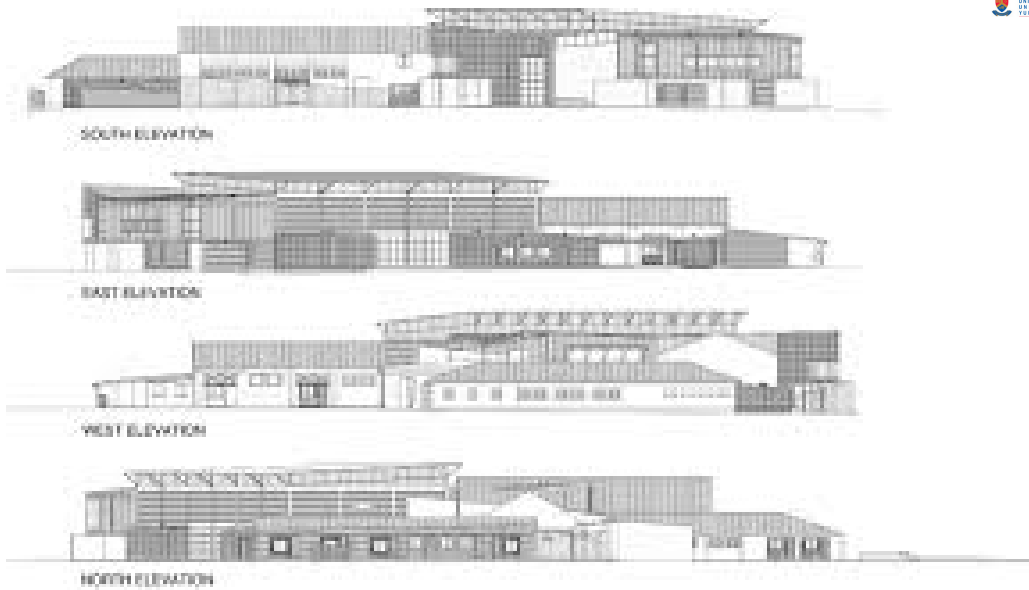
Figure 69 :   *Elevations, Drawing, CS Studio Architects (2010)*

Figure 70 :   *Site Plan, Drawing, CS Studio Architects (2010)*

The incorporation of locally trained and skilled people as well as the teaching of new construction techniques to locals played a great role in the construction process as well as the design considerations taken. The existing shack structures on the site were repurposed and local construction resources were used to respond sustainably *(Dawid Klaaste Multi Purpose Centre 2010)*.

The precedent recognised the important role that nature and the landscape plays for the community and their identity. Thus the precedent relates back to the concept of Biophilic design addressed in the proposed project. The precedent also showed relevance in it's approach to design through the incorporation of local skills and community participation to realise the outcome.

This relates to the theorethical premise of the passing on of existential knowledge. New skills and techniques learned during construction will inherently be passed on and the collective knowledge pool will extend there from.
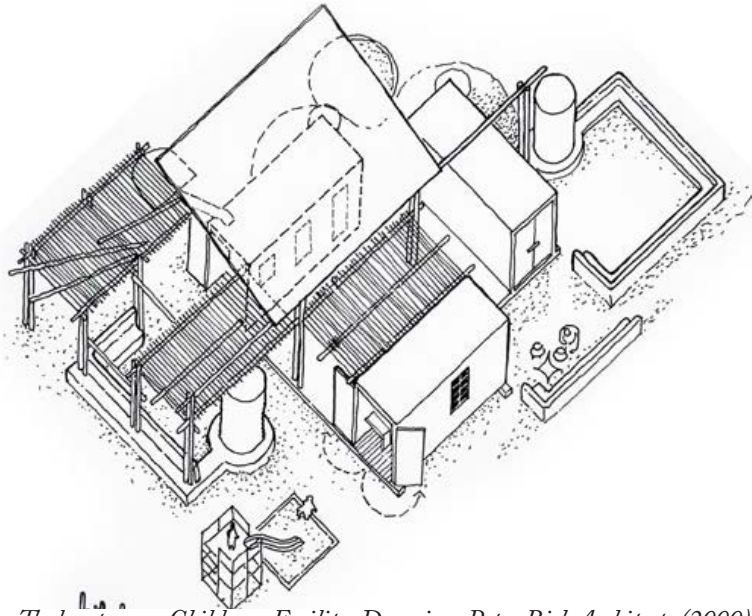
Figure 71 :   *Thulumtwana Childrens Facility, Drawing, Peter Rich Architects (2000)*

Figure 72 :   *Wesbank Primary School, Photograph, CS Studio Architects (2000)*

Figure 73 :   *St. Gobain Social Gain Award, Perspective, Kate Otten Architects (2015)*

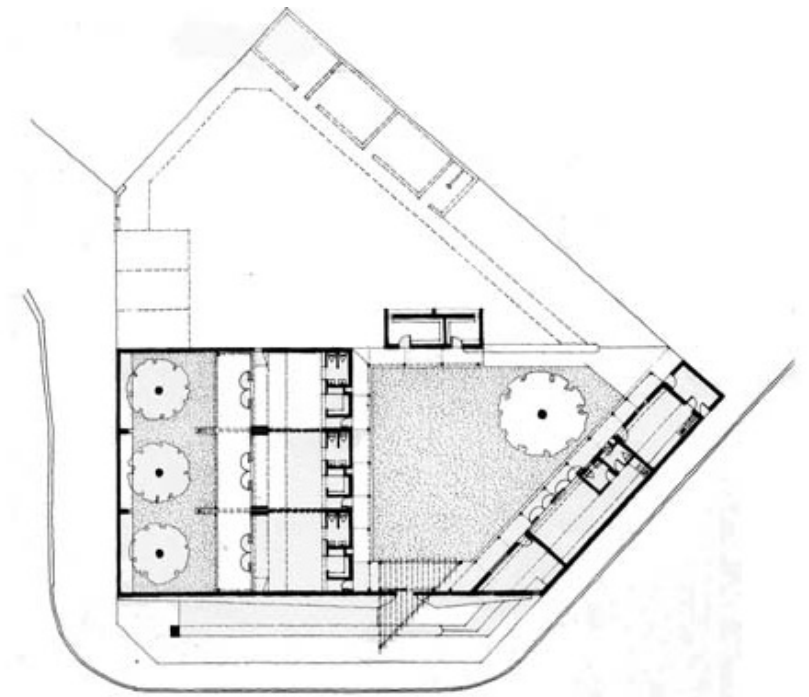Figure 74 :   *Street Entrance, Photograph, Noero Architects (2002)*

Figure 75 :   *Site Plan, Drawing, Noero Architects (2002)*

5.5.3   *Precedent 3 – Programmatic appropriate response*

Delft Daycare Centres I and II
Architects   Noero Architects
Location   Delft, Cape Town
Date   2002

Spatial Layering

A set of spaces mediate between the street and the more private spaces. Hence the centres are part of the public and private realms. Lined with seats and partially roofed on the street edge, the centres form part of the public spheres of the community. Anyone from the neighborhood can utilize these spaces. As well as vertical elements becoming landmarks within the community *(Noero-architects 2002)*.
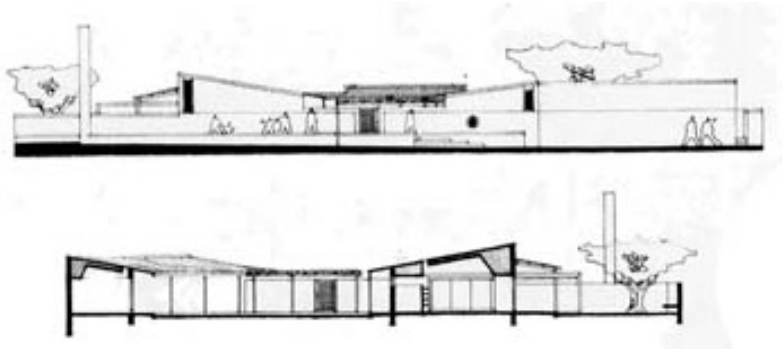
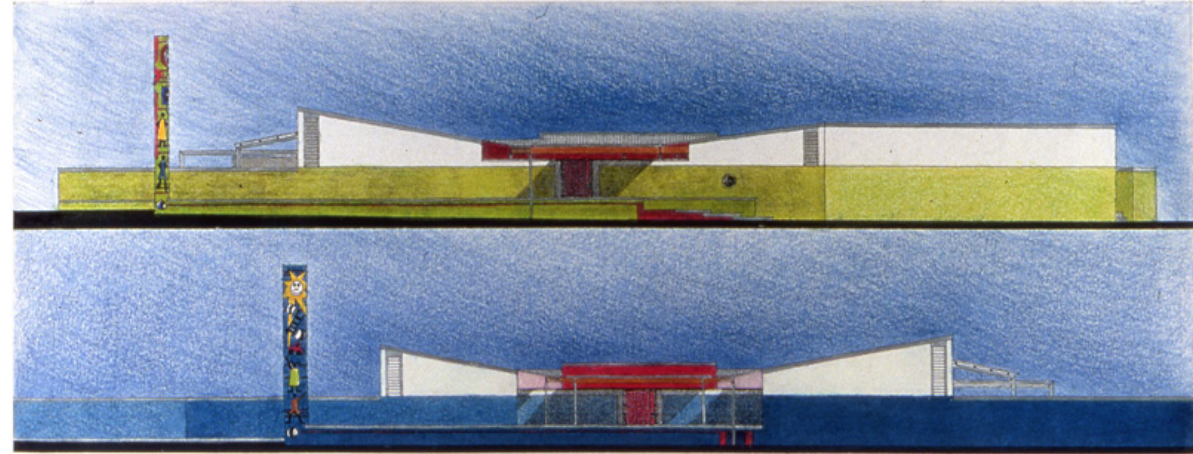Figure 76 :   *Elevation and Section, Drawing, Noero Architects (2002)*

Figure 77 :   *Rendered Elevations, Drawing, Noero Architects (2002)*

Resourcefulness

Achieving the maximum ends with the minimum means. Hence modesty in finishing and design was considered as an appropriate response with conventional details for ease of construction *(Noeroarchitects 2002).*

This precedent was successful in its address towards the public edge condition and is relevant for its programmatic appropriate response. It is a place of nurture devided from the rest of the outside world. It has a very strong security line and except for seating, does not provide much for public users. It is removed from its context and addressed the context through the use of a wall, as well as using the argument of modest finishes, whilst the project could have showed similar promise to the community as The Red Location Museum.

Thus, except for the creation of a daycare on a public interface, the project does not add to the greater collective community nor the empowerment of the collective, as opposed to the individual.

Figure 78 : *An intricately woven extention of being, Collage, Author (2015)*