

A Sense of Place and Belonging

Creating Good Neighbourhoods through Productive Social Infrastructure

by Siyabonga Lunga Mahlangu

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Creating Good Neighbourhoods through Productive Social Infrastructure

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Submitted in Partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree Magister of Architecture (Professional).

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Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment and Information Technology,

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South Africa

Pretoria, South Africa 2016

PROJECT SUMMARY

- Title:** A Sense of Place and Belonging- Creating Good Neighbourhoods through Productive Social Infrastructure.
- Project Programme:** Bokamoso Service Centre, Thusong Service Centre, administration and consultation facilities for the CPF (Community Policing Forum) and the COPC (Community Orientated Primary Care), Community Centre, Public space
- Address:** **ERF 32996**, C/o Hector Peterson Road & Tshukudu Road , Lusaka, Mamelodi East, Tshwane, Gauteng.
- Site Location (GPS Coordinates):** Latitude: 25°43'25.31"S; Longitude: 28°25'15.02"E
- Research Field:** Human Settlements and Urbanism
- Clients:** Community of Lusaka, The COPC (Community Orientated Primary Care) + South African Department of Health and CPF (Community Policing Forum) + SAPS (South African Police Service) and Tshwane Municipality
- Keywords:** Public space, Public amenities, Access, Catalyst, Place making, Social infrastructure, Temporality, Permanence.
- Site Description:** Victory soccer field, Lusaka , Mamelodi East

Acknowledgments:

Thank you to all those that made this possible:

Camilo Mogni and Lina for the support and encouragement and the office of ST Nubian Architects for their resources.

Khutso Chuene and Gontse Segone for dealing with me through my journey to completing this dissertation.

Dr. Emmanuel Nkambule for his vision when mine was diminishing.

Petrus (Peet) Wolmarans for the hours of help and entertainment throughout the year and lastly thank you to Bollard Management for the laughs that carried us through this tough yet rewarding journey.

A special thanks to my mother and sister for pushing me through and helping me in my time of need.



Social infrastructure:

“Refers to the range of activities, organisations and facilities supporting the formation, development and maintenance of social relationships in a community” (Futurecommunities.net, 2016).

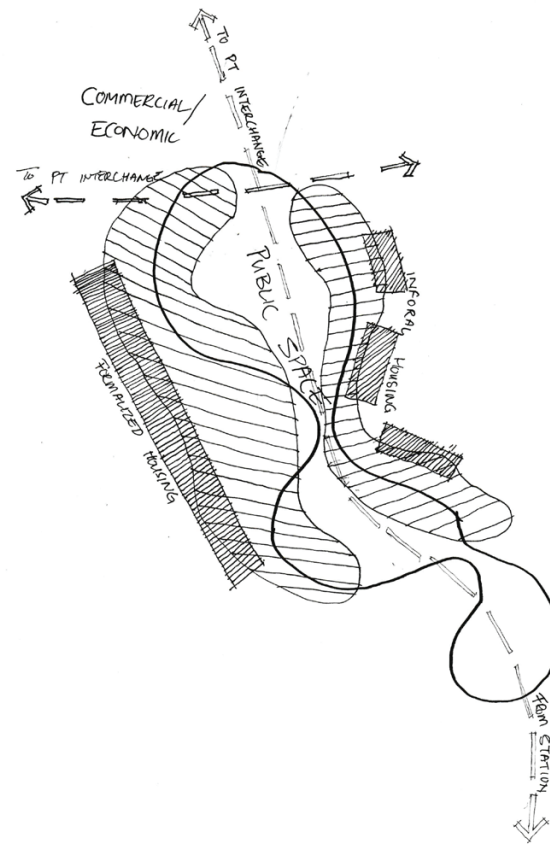


Figure 1: Diagram illustrating a new way of conceptualising the interaction between a public building and a public space (Author 2016).

ABSTRACT

The township in the South African context is a unique consequence of Apartheid spatial planning. Envisaged as settlements for black labourers on the outskirts of the city, they have become home to many South Africans. Mamelodi was established as an effectively designed township for labourers working in Pretoria, and grew at an exponential rate, leading to a sizeable demand for housing. A mass provision of housing was implemented then and, post 1994 to meet this demand. The same strategy of housing is still continuing through the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). This provision of housing has not been complimented by a provision of public amenities and has led to monotonous neighbourhoods filled with housing and no public space.

The ever growing community of Lusaka, in the east of Mamelodi, is a community with a landscape of housing without public amenities and public spaces. This neighbourhood has large amounts of people moving in and out, with some people seeing it as a place of permanence and some as a temporary detour. This influx of people and the duality of temporality and permanence creates a very dynamic society, one that the current architecture cannot respond to. The new architecture has to address the above mentioned issues, providing the community with access to public amenities and public spaces that add value to their environment. The solutions derived can be discussed and used to address similar problems plaguing townships around South Africa.

Architecture is for the people.

SAMEVATTING

Informele nedersettings in die Suid-Afrikaanse konteks is 'n unieke gevolg van Apartheid se ruimtelike beplanning. Oorspronklik in die vooruitsig gestel as nedersettings vir swart arbeiders het hulle 'n tuiste vir baie Suid-Afrikaners geword. Mamelodi was gestig as 'n effektief ontwerpde informele nedersetting vir arbeiders wat werk in Pretoria en het teen 'n eksponensiële koers gegroei wat gelei het tot 'n groot aanvraag vir behuising. 'n Massa voorsiening van behuising was toe en ná 1994 geïmplementeer om hierdie aanvraag te voorsien. Dieselfde strategie van behuising word steeds voortgesit deur die Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). Hierdie behuisingsvoorsiening was nog nie aangevul deur 'n voorsiening van openbare geriewe nie en het gelei tot eentonige woonbuurte wat gevul is met behuising en geen openbare ruimte.

Die steeds groeiende gemeenskap van Lusaka, in die ooste van Mamelodi, is 'n gemeenskap met 'n landskap van behuising sonder openbare geriewe en openbare ruimtes. Hierdie woonbuurt het groot getalle mense wat in en uit beweeg, met sommige mense wat dit sien as 'n plek van blywendheid en ander as 'n tydelike ompad. Hierdie instroming van mense en die dualiteit van tydelikheid en blywendheid skep 'n baie dinamiese samelewing, een wat die huidige argitektuur nie op kan reageer nie. Die nuwe argitektuur moet die bogenoemde kwessies aanspreek om die gemeenskap toegang te bied tot openbare geriewe en openbare ruimtes wat waarde toevoeg tot hulle omgewing. Deur dit te doen kan die oplossings wat afgelei is bespreek en gebruik word om soortgelyke kwessies aan te spreek wat informele nedersettings regoor Suid-Afrika teister.

Argitektuur is vir die mense.

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INTRODUCTION

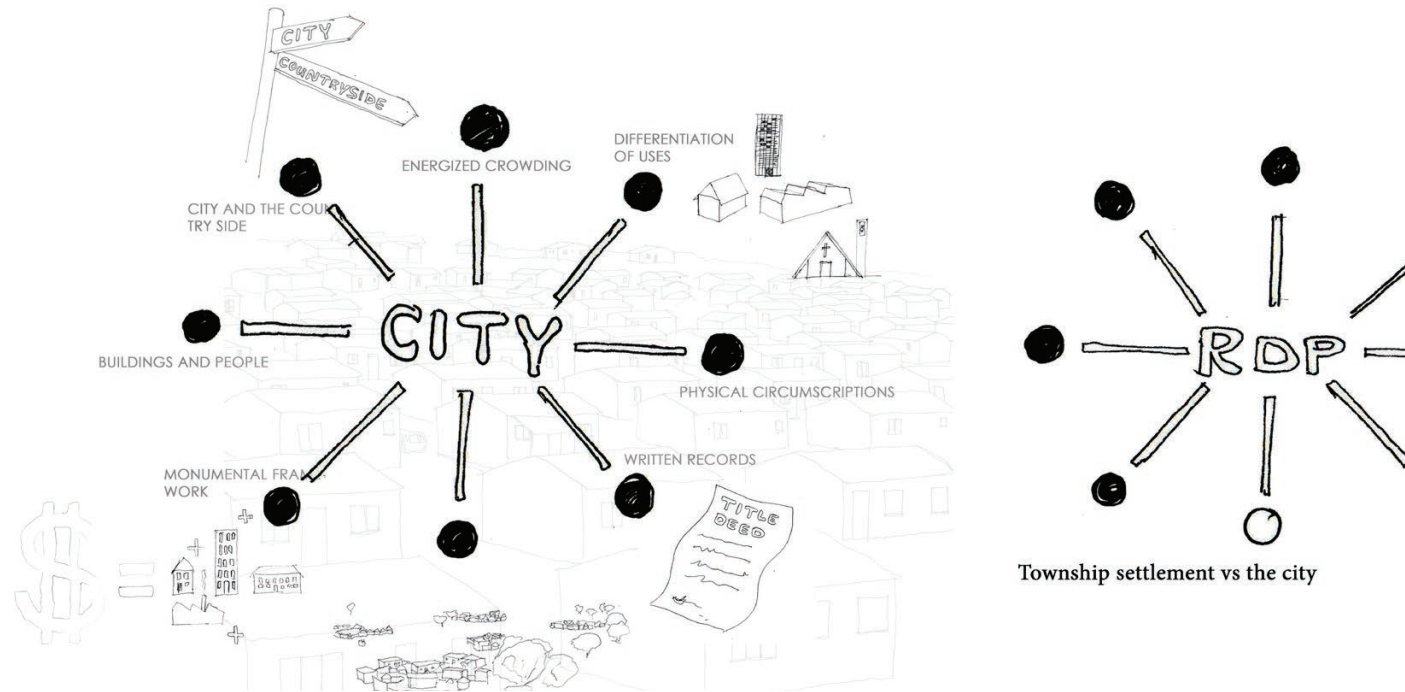


Figure 2: Components that make up a city (Author 2016).

1.1 BACKGROUND

Townships and informal settlements are the neglected parts of South Africa and as such are deprived of the opportunities enjoyed by many developed areas. As the most evident manifest of the Apartheid legacy, the township becomes an opportunity to start subverting the ramifications of the **Apartheid planning legacy**. The insufficient provision of **public amenities** provides an opportunity of engaging these issues to produce new **civic/public precincts** that become a catalyst of the change in townships.

Spiro Kostof's good characteristics of a good city (Kostof 1991: 37-38) highlights principles that make up a well-functioning city. Mamelodi is a township with many net-

works, intersecting and then leaving the settlement, functioning as a city. In eco systemic thinking, a city has many parts and Pretoria is a mechanism, with Mamelodi being one of its smaller gears that can help make the city function better.

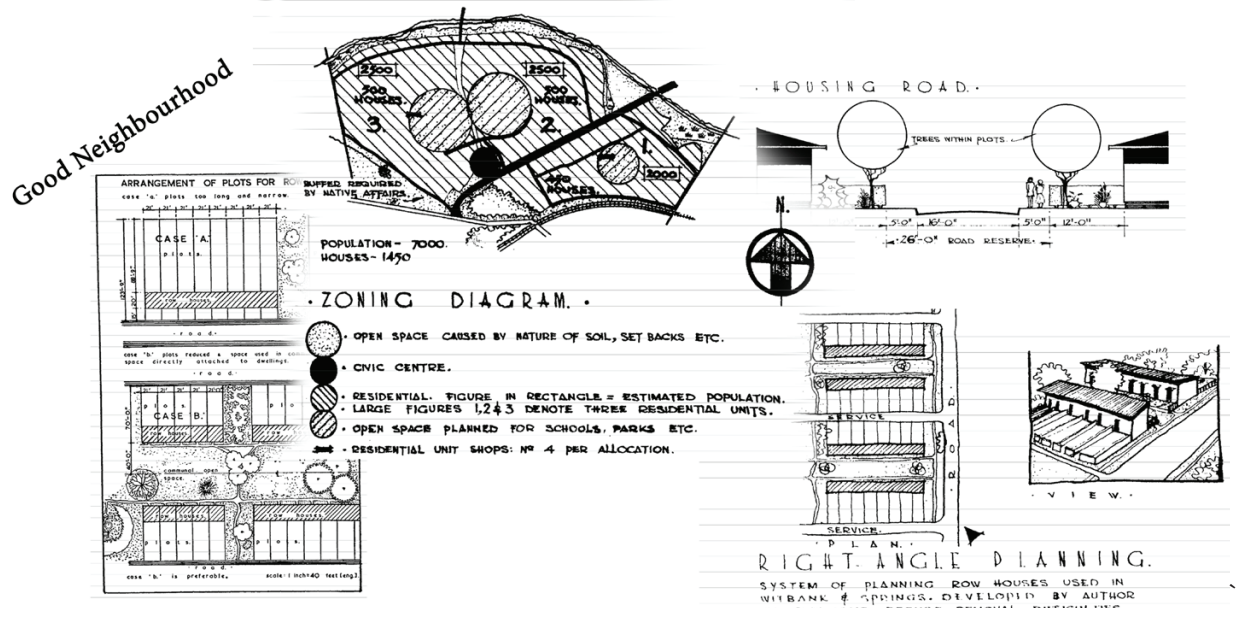


Figure 3: Calderwood's plans of black native townships and the infrastructure required to make it a good neighbourhood (Calderwood 1953).

Calderwood (1953) developed his thesis together with CSIR (Council for Scientific and Industrial Research) for alternative ways for housing black people in townships (See fig.2). When he was researching and analysing various housing typologies for these townships, the house designs were not designed in isolation but as part of functional components including green spaces, public amenities and civic spaces that would make up great neighbourhoods for the natives migrating and living

in these settlements. His research outcomes were then subverted by the National Party of 1948, where only his NE-51/9 was used by the government and implemented at a large scale in townships to create 'Model native township'(Haarhoff 2011: 191).

In the Apartheid Era, the NE-51/9 was the housing typology that was used when many townships were expanding as a cheap option to housing the masses of people needed to be near the city. This same pattern of monotonous residential type of houses still persists in post 1994

South Africa through the RDP (Reconstruction and Development Programme) housing scheme. In These neighbourhoods peoples housing needs are provided for, but the lack of public spaces and amenities make for unsustainable urban areas.



Figure 4: Service Provision Collage (Adapted by Author 2016).

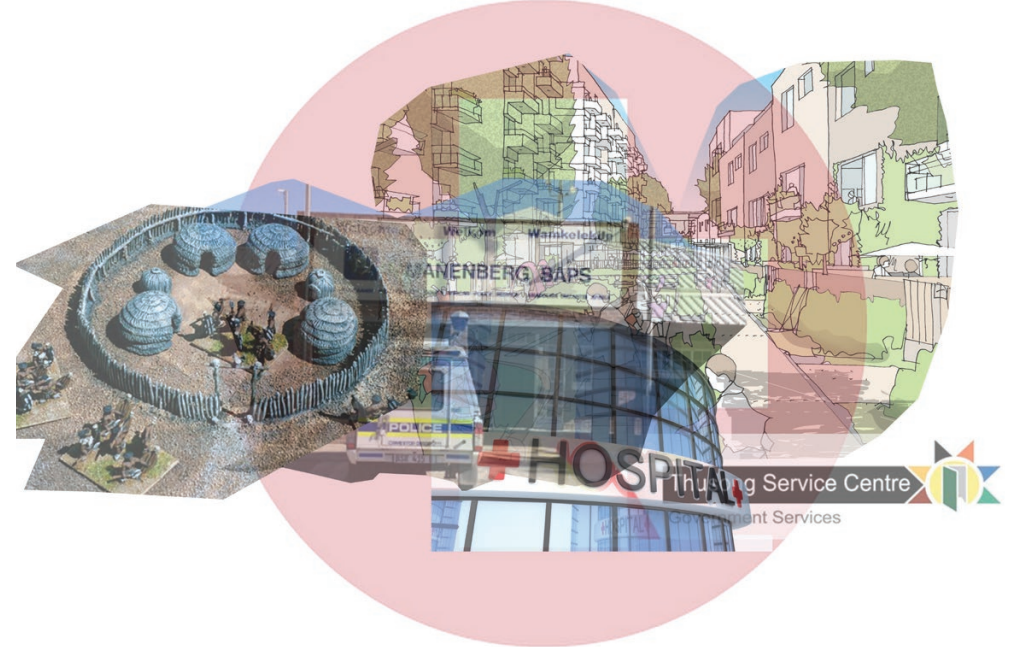


Figure 5: Architectural Intention Collage (Adapted by Author 2016).

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Social infrastructure, a subset of the infrastructure sector, ‘typically includes assets that accommodate social services (New Zealand Social Infrastructure Fund [NZSIF] 2016)’ has existed as isolated entities in the built environment. People’s access to basic social services has been conceded. People need for public space is also negated and only have their fundamental need of shelter being satisfied.

1.3 HYPOTHESIS

Lusaka is a Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) settlement and its massing is made up of social housing with very few **public amenities** and **public spaces**. As a **catalyst** of urban and social change, issues such as monotonous settlement housing pockets, privatisation of public amenities and centralised service provision can be addressed. Architecture has the potential of providing these basic services and also the need for public spaces which are needed for the growing community

1.4 PROJECT INTENTIONS

This dissertation will seek a solution to collaborative working environments between citizens and authoritative and **government entities** that service them. It becomes imperative to foster a different relationship between a community and the people that serve them. The architecture will attempt to answer what a **post-apartheid public and civic space** can be and how it can function to better serve the people who the space is made for.



Figure 6: The intervention as the “in-between” formal and informal (Author 2016).

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTION

How can the provision of public amenities in a highly public interface allow for a different relationship between people of the community and the people who serve them?

What potential does architecture have in creating social cohesion in a Township with both informal and formal settlements which lack sufficient social infrastructure?

1.5.1 Sub Questions

- What is the **civic architectural identity** in our post-apartheid society?
- How to address the multi-layered scales of fragmentation of our environment through **various scales of intervention**?
- How to incorporate a highly authoritative government entity into the **public sphere**?

1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Site and context analysis will be performed to uncover:

- o The social networks around the site and to get a better understanding of them.
- o A better understanding of the use of public spaces currently to know how to intervene appropriately without introducing an alien concept

Precedents studies comprising of South African examples of civic and public infrastructure will follow. They will be critically

analysed to understand their underlying principles to see where they succeeded or failed. International examples will also be looked at to better understand how such topics have been tackled in communities with similar challenges.

A study of programmatic relationships between public amenities will be conducted to understand which public amenities are complimentary. These will form the programme for the project.

