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4.1 INTRODUCTION

A place is a space which has a distinct character. Since ancient times the genius loci, or 'spirit of place' has been recognized as the concrete reality man [Women] have to face and come to terms with in daily life". (Norberg-Schulz, 1980:5) The genius Loci of a place is brought out when meaning is imbued, in order to investigate the current reconfiguring of the segregated township of Mamelodi the need to analyse precedent studies at different levels and scales is crucial. The scales range from the very public male dominated/ urban scale down to the extremely intimate female dominated spaces found in the back yards of the Indlu's found in Mamelodi. The abstraction from the vernacular to the contemporary at various scales and how the principles can be applied to the proposed project is the approach of the precedent studies. Critically analyzing the design principles and their relevance to the proposed womens center in Mamelodi.

4.2 URBAN INSIGHTS

The Space needs to be a transition threshold between the rural and urban, a transition between the past, present and the future. The design of the building needs to display the theory, allowing the architectural theory and narrative to become material in defining the spaces. The spaces need to be an unfolding of layers from the urban scale to the intimate spaces that are very private. The Revealing layers of hierarchy in the spaces as one progresses from the taxi rank (Urban) through a series of spaces that filter out users to a very private (Traditional) ritual space beginning to define the journey of the user. Defining the spaces through layers in this manner is important in order for the theory behind the design to become the kind of spaces with potential for rich interaction and human experience (Norberg- Schulz 1980- 18).

4.3 INFORMANTS

"Architecture was always seen as an instrument of mediation between the cosmos and men, divinities and mortals
"Pallasmaa.

This could be seen in the rural settlements the layout and the specific placing of certain architectural elements were all for the mediation between the ancestors. The mediation between the ancestors gets lost as people "leave their ancestors behind at the "Ikhaya" When it came to the urban context the architecture gets reduced to availability of materiality and space the haptic qualities get lost as the transition takes place. The relationship between person and space gets diluted as architecture becomes more focused on aesthetic rather than human experience .

"In our time, however, architecture is turning into mere visual aesthetics The hegemony of the visual realm has gradually strengthened in Western perception, thought and action; this bias, in fact, has its origins already with the ancient Greeks." Pallasmaa

The main informants of this project look at drawing from the past, present and future. The Past informants are theoretical applications rather than structural principles in application. Present and future principles are seen in the thresholds, the language and the progression of the journey of the user.



Figure 4.1 Informants from Context

04 The Rufisque Women's Centre Location: Rufisque, Senegal

Precedent Related to Programme

Programmatic Response

This precedent study is not focused on the aesthetics of the building or the design but it studies the intangible value the project has added to the community.

The Approach to the centre is rooted in the local architectural tradition found in Senegal. Looking to the construction of the local construction and layout as precedent. From an in depth analysis the strongest element the project uses is the notion of defensible spaces. The Centre has a strong clear boundary between private and public albeit flexible (Varanda 2004:4), through the use of spaces that create public spaces for the community and defensible spaces for the women that live out internally into a U shaped courtyard. The project has managed to create a safe haven for the women.

The Women's centre addresses the community's social needs directly by providing a space where women are protected and can get together to exchange skills to supplement a meagre income for their families through knitting, sewing, and product making. The centre also has a day-care for the mothers that need to leave to trade at the markets.

The Centre is a place where the role of the women in their society can be enhanced it has been reported that through the provision of such a space the community has largely benefited and not only the direct beneficiaries being the women, teenage girls and the toddlers(Varanda 2004: 4).

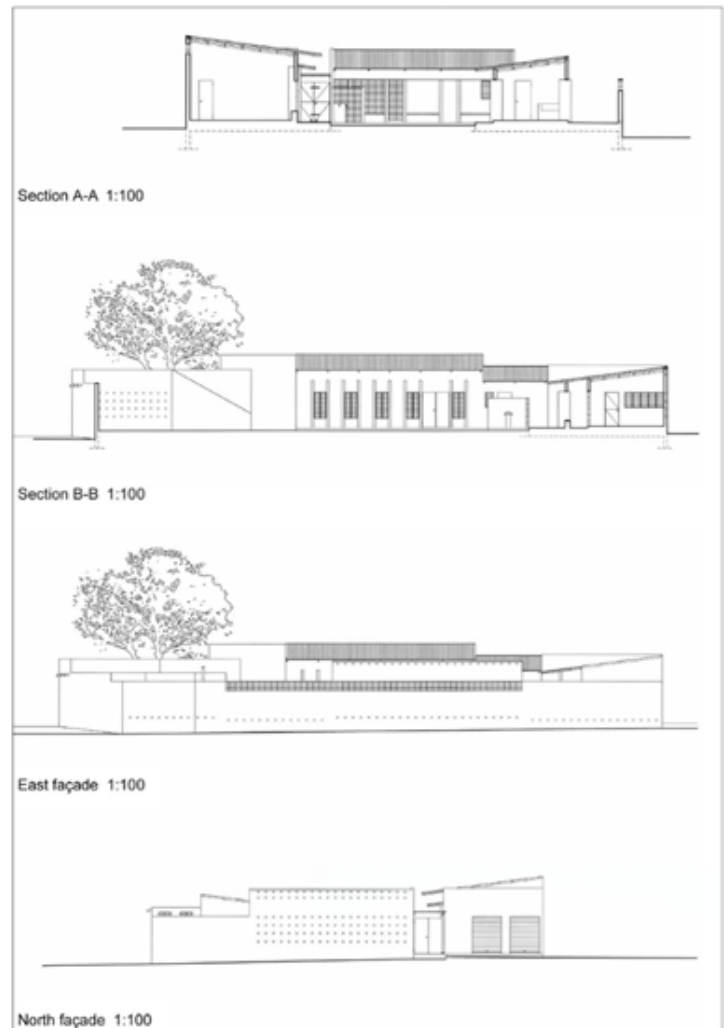


Figure 4.1 - Elevations of Womens centre (Varanda 2004: 11).



Figure 4.2 - U-shaped central courtyard. Translation of principles from local architecture (Varanda 2004: 11).



Figure 4.3 - Solid walls to protect the women with no openings except recessed entrance (Varanda 2004: 11).



Figure 4.4 - Creating a social gathering space for women to engage and exchange skills Varanda 2004: 12).

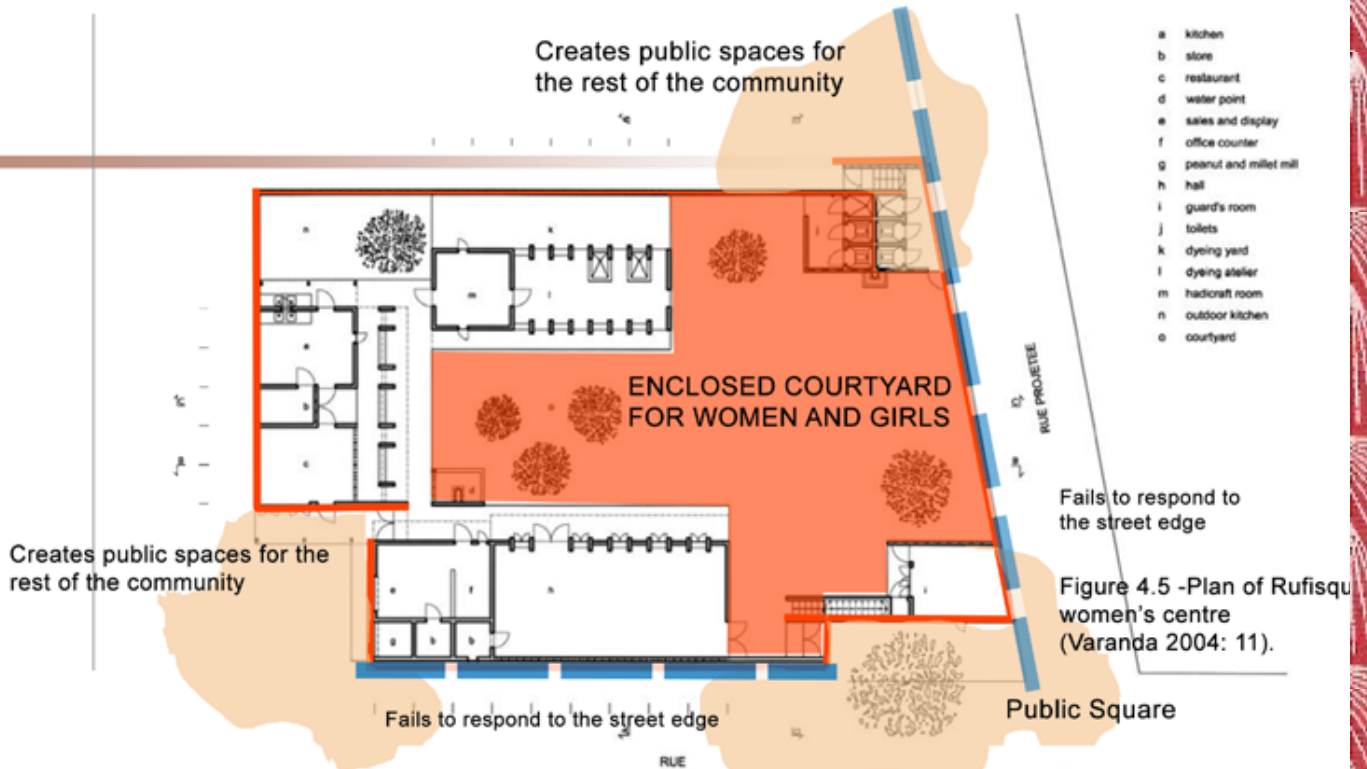


Figure 4.5 -Plan of Rufisque women's centre (Varanda 2004: 11).

Principles

-Defensible space (social, skills and local entertainment) that lives out into the courtyard. Protecting the women yet flexible by benefiting the entire community through the public spaces it creates around the centre.

- Local Tradition: The constant linking back to local tradition and learning from the concepts of the area is strongly evident. These were used to enhance climatic response. The local tradition consists of simple concrete block, one storey construction with tile gabled roofs that all live out to an internal central courtyard.

-Response to the local single storey Scale to the urban scale of the town has resulted in the building blending into the urban fabric.

Simple approach by directly addressing the social condition by working with the fabric.

The project fails to respond to the street edge. After analysing the project approach of sealing the building off from the public realm with solid walls, the fact that it fails to respond to the street condition on all edges is a short coming. Could there be a way of creating defensible spaces in architecture that does not result in solid blank walls with no openings? A way of incorporating men into the space yet ensuring the women remain safe?

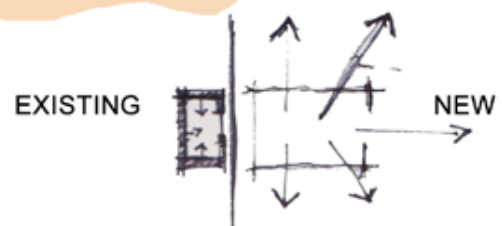


Figure 4.6 - Same function as existing context but serves the greater community (by Author).

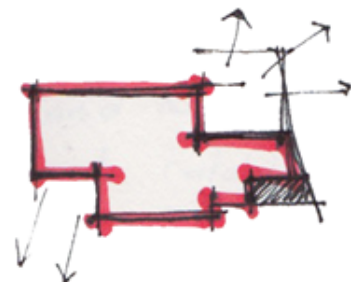


Figure 4.7 - Defensible space with clear boundaries yet flexible to serve the community (by Author).



Figure 4.8 - questioning if this is the best way to create defensible spaces (by Author).

PRECEDENT STUDIES

05 Thapar University: Campus extension Location: Patiala, Punjab

Precedent Related to Programme

Programmatic Response

This is an example of an architecture derived from context. The approach of the campus extension was to view the whole university as a landscape with covered routes moving from one high concentration point to the other. The project used the routes people use from one pole of activity to the other as the main defining axis with two core building groups that support this concept. The project's use of the landscape as its main informant is quite evident in the way one progresses from the natural landscape into the building through a seamless transition. Covered planted walkways, shaded valleys are created as one progresses through the campus in a whole new sensual yet functional way (Thapar University upgrade 2016).

The main student accommodation consists of 7 'L' shaped towers rising from the ground to provide 2000 student rooms and common room spaces; they face different directions of the compass (Thapar University upgrade 2016), all living out to different directions of the landscape. The buildings are all linked by the podium on the ground floor that serves as gathering spaces.

The rooms are found on the higher levels with screened balconies allowing for direct daylight into the living spaces. The Project addresses defensible spaces in a different way through the use of volume changes and enclosed garden spaces that help in the transition between public and private.

Internally, spatially diverse common rooms are interlinked with double height spaces to casually link student groups, and many bedrooms have screened balconies. Women students' accommodation for 500 are provided in a separate building in a garden landscape (Thapar University upgrade 2016).

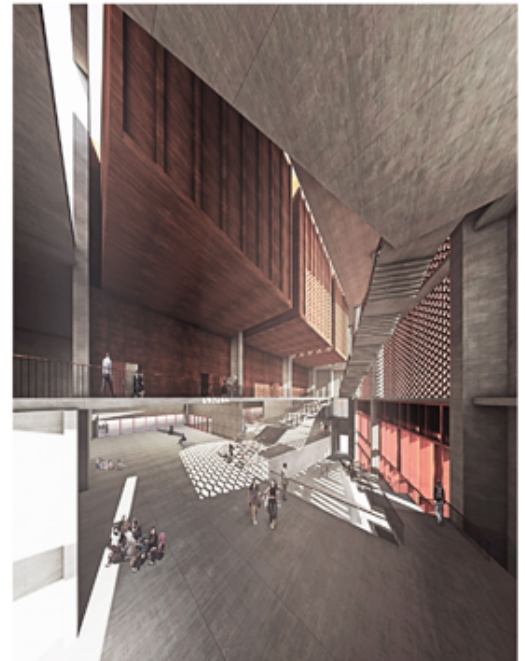


Figure 4.9- A series of gathering spaces are formed on the ground floor podium. (Archdaily :2016).



Figure 4.10 - level changes and double volume space allow natural light into the building (Archdaily:2016).



Figure 4.11- The project uses the existing high energy concentration points to direct movement (Archdaily :2016).

All the buildings are linked by a podium sheltering facilities at ground level, but is different in intensity– promoting interdisciplinary research and study by merging and blending each facility into the next to create a flow of space and exchange of information and ideas (Thapar University upgrade 2016).

Analysing the flow of movement on the site the project allows for free circulation on the ground floor, which results in a well-integrated environment. The buildings facing different directions has a good effect on the integration of the urban fabric as it does not result in back alleys and narrow corridors of left over space. The irregular shapes of the volumes also enhance movement on and through the site. Forming clearly defined defensible spaces without sealing the building off from its surrounding urban fabric.

Principles:

- The context is one of the most important informants in a design. Using what is already there is one of the key concepts in this project. Man made desire lines and the natural elements all help in defining where the building should be on the site and how it should function and live out.
- The use of concrete in this building is excessive and appears very sterile in this warm lush context but is complimented with the use of the timber screens softening its facades and interiors.



Figure 4.12 -Translation of principles of the surrounding landscape inform the architecture (Archdaily:2016).

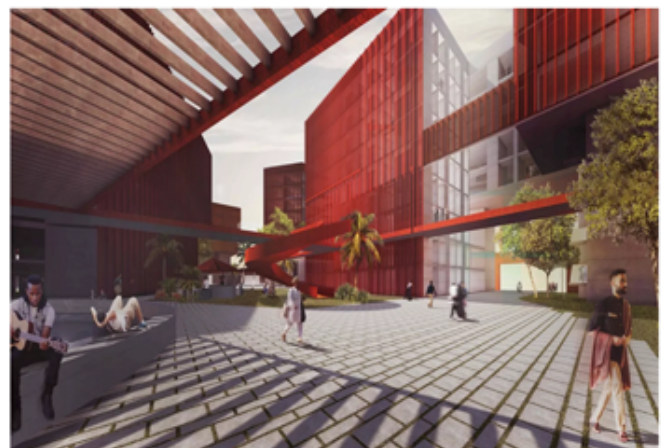


Figure 4.13 -Movement through site on ground floor (Archdaily:2016).

06 Leca Swimming pools Location: Spain

Precedent Related to Context

Contextual Response

Is an architectural classic by Alvaro Siza and is the example of a carefully considered reconciliation of nature and design. The project is about the journey, moving through different levels and spaces to get to the end goal of the pools through dark and light spaces. The project is sunk into the landscape to preserve views for the user from the street level. The project is a very simple series of spaces that have different effects on the user as she moves through a series of spaces leading to the pools. The project is a sensory experience with a play on the visual and audible experience of the user being the main focus. The small building serves as a threshold for the user to move through space to arrive at the pools, a portal between the busy street and the beach.

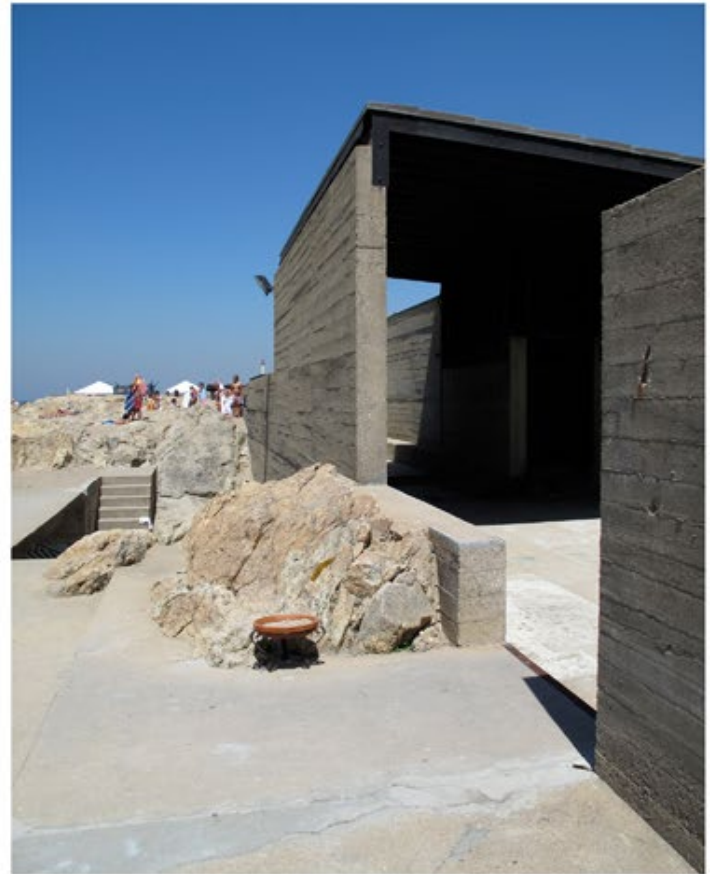


Figure 4.14- The building uses a robust concrete pallet shade lighter than the rocky outcrops to distinguish between the man made and the natural (Archdaily 2016).

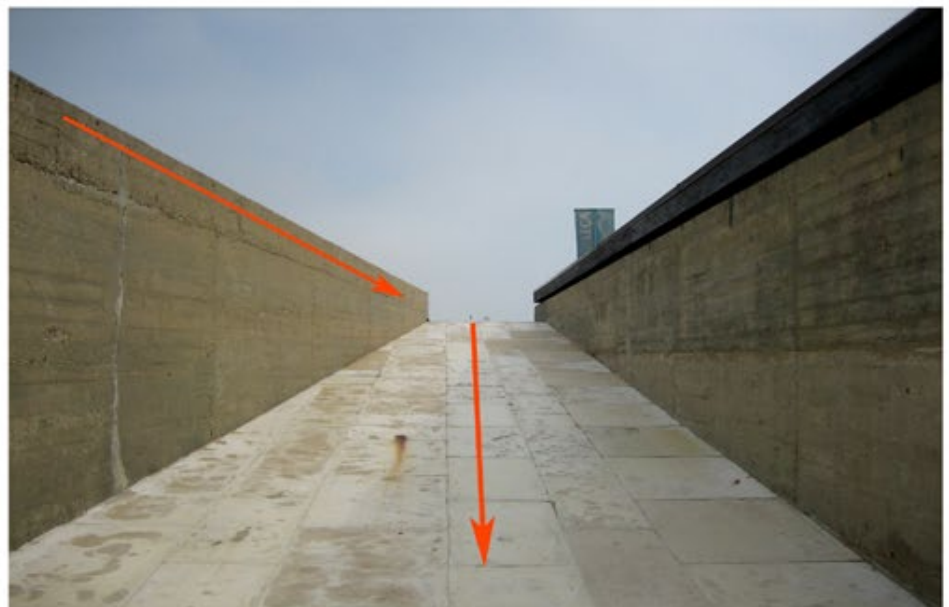


Figure 4.15- Slow transition from the busy street into the building through a series of ramps (Archdaily 2016).

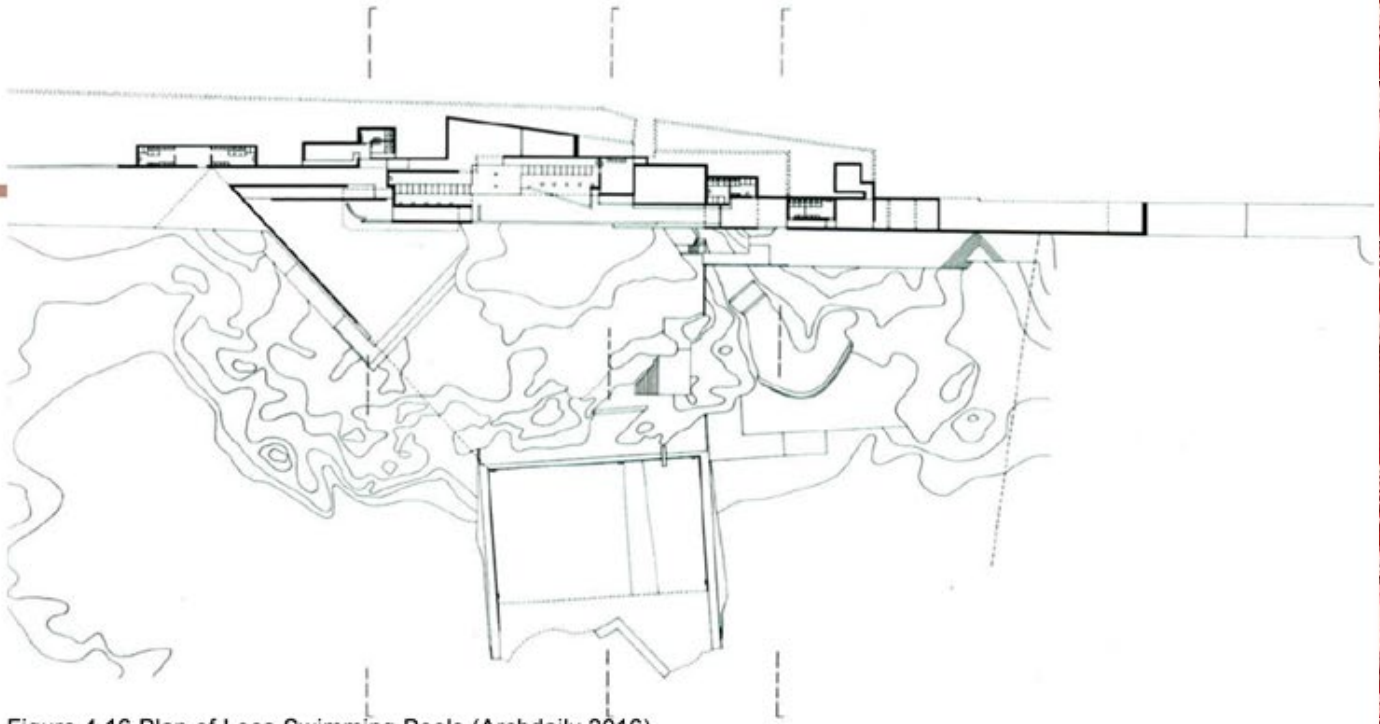


Figure 4.16 Plan of Leca Swimming Pools (Archdaily 2016).

Principles

- The small building serves its function very well, allowing the user to move between two spaces through a set of transitional spaces. Circulating from the top of the street down the rocky pools.
- The building is very robust and has been the same since 1966 using concrete and the natural rocky outcrops as its main pallet blending into its natural surrounding.
- The project has maintained its integrity through a very clear incision in the landscape by gently drawing users in through a gentle ramped walkway that separates the user from the busy street gently into the quiet small building.



Figure 4.17- Seamless transition into the landscape. (Archdaily 2016).



Figure 4.18- Movement through (Archdaily 2016).

07 Zolani Multi-Purpose Centre

Location: Nyanga, Western Cape

Date: 1997 - 2002

The Zolani Centre is a multi-purpose centre that sits 15km out of Cape Town in one of the oldest townships called Nyanga. The surrounding area is characterised by informal trading of household goods, clothing, fruit and veg. The project is inspired by the movement on the site where pathway systems order the in-between spaces creating gathering spaces for the community.

The project used the Participatory process of including the community key role players in the design process. Through a combination of a bottom up and top down approach the members came up with a design the community received very well resulting in community ownership of the centre.

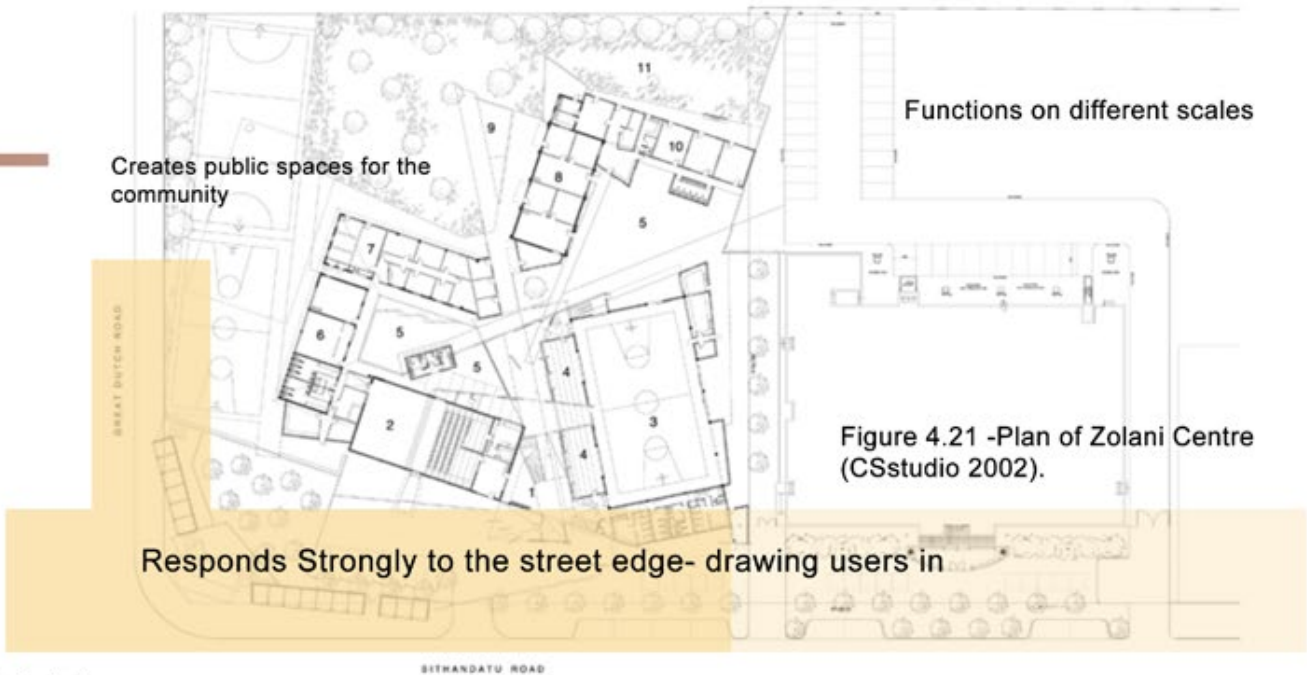
The project sits opposite one of the townships busiest taxi ranks where thousands of commuters move through the crossroads on a daily basis. The angled plan creates a tension with juxtaposed geometry with the existing rectilinear urban grid.

The main 'foyer street runs from the Southern entrance of the site to the Northern exit weaving internally and externally through the old and the new. The project is an integration of old and new through the desire lines that govern the design and movement through the existing and new ,it allows the old façade to have a presence, therefore reminding one of the past (CSStudio 2002).

There is thus a constant play between what was and what is. Concrete fin walls with angled openings knit these aspects together, creating thresholds between spaces (CSStudio 2002).



Figure 4.19 & 4.20 - Through Community engagement and participation the centre has a strong sense of ownership from a private to a public level (CSstudio 2002).



Principles

- The angled plan that creates tension that is governed by the existing desire lines on the site in contrast to the old existing building. This concept is closely linked to the proposed project in Mamelodi where the old grows out of the existing rectilinear grid of the township and the new sits angled in juxtaposition with spaces created around the movement on the site.
- The project uses the high concentration energy points on the site simply harnessing the existing energy and designing around these points.
- The project aims to provide a space where cultures and people of different heritages can integrate and socialise in a safe protected space. The building has no back of building effects where the building operates on both edges of the buildings creating private spaces that live externally and internally.
- On a precinct scale the project incorporates vehicular access and it functions on different scales of urban public spaces to very small intimate private spaces.



Figure 4.22 -Zolani Multi- Purpose Centre Operates from a very Intimate to a very Public Urban scale serving its community at different scales (CSstudio 2002).

PRECEDENT STUDIES

08 Art A Cultural Centre

Location: Arnhem, Netherlands

Date: 2016

Kengo Kuma & Associates

The Art A Cultural centre is a regenerative project that reconnects the city of Arnhem, Netherlands to the Rhine river from an urban scale down to an intimate approach. The project is a landmark with different volumes in height. The whole project is based on the idea of engaging with the existing context and the users. Drawing people in from the outside through sweeping ramps that lead to the inside of the building, engaging directly with the users of the space.

The Art A centre uses a filigree system with red tiles as a facade protecting the artworks from direct sunlight making it appear very light tectonically. The building draws water in from the river in small cascading pools forming reflections of the building.

The centre is a generator of culture, rather than a container of culture, capable of hosting art installations, movie projections, fashion shows, theatre performances, public lectures, music concerts and parties. (Designboom: 2016) The centre is designed with flexibility in mind and the spaces can be appropriated in various ways for different functions.

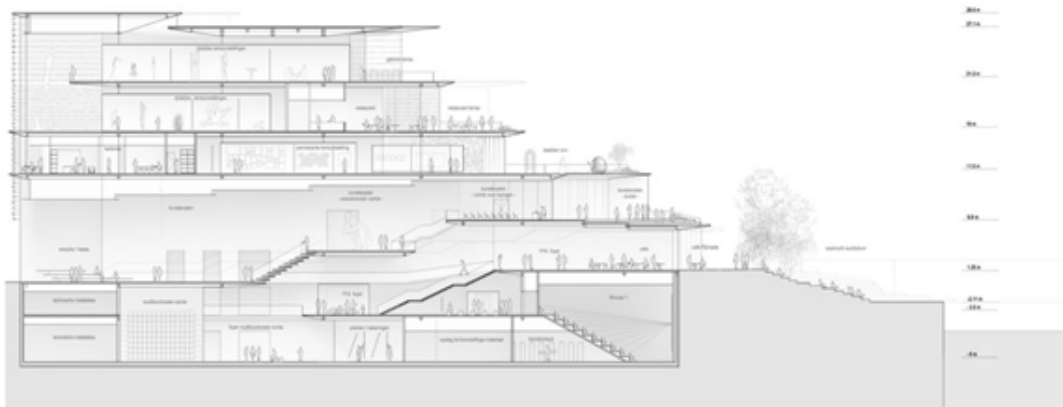


Figure 4.23 -Elevations

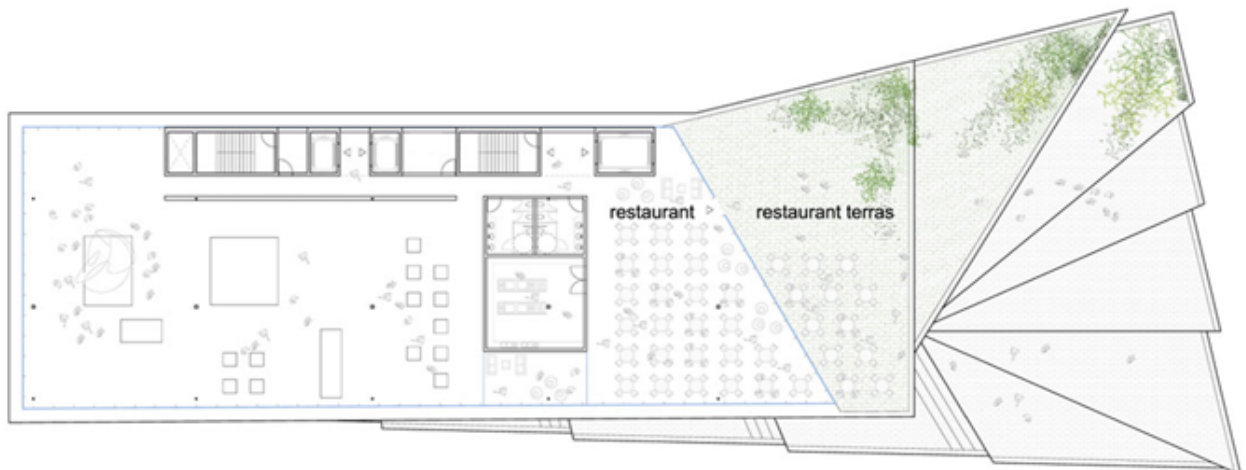


Figure 4.24 Plan (Designboom: 2016)



Principles

The centre is a generator of culture which is one principle that the proposed Women's centre aims to be. It is not a container of culture but rather a space where new cultures can be integrated and formed at the centre. A space that addresses multi- cultural communities and their different needs while serving the individual at a very personal level.

The incorporation of the river through cascading pools that reflect the building façade mirrors the way the building responds to its surrounding context.

The building uses clear glass facades that allows a visual connection between the interior and exterior.

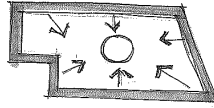
The Transition from a public to a very private scale is very evident in the way one progresses through the different series of spaces down to the rhine river.



Figure 4.26 : Model of the Art A cultural centre (DesignBoom,2016)

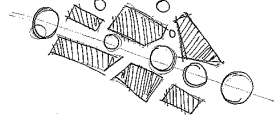


RUFISQUE WOMEN'S CENTRE



STRONG DEFENSIBLE SPACE

THAPAR UNIVERSITY



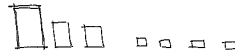
BUILDINGS FORM CLEAR DEFENSIBLE SPACES

LECA SWIMMING POOLS



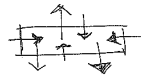
ARC STRONG TRANSITIONAL MOVEMENT SEQUENCE

ZOLANI CENTRE



TRANSITION FROM URBAN SCALE TO VERY SMALL SCALE PRIVATE TO PUBLIC TRANSITION

ART A CULTURAL CENTRE



GENERATOR OF CULTURE

4.8 Chapter 4 Synopsis

Design is rooted in precedent, learning from the past is crucial in designing for future conditions such as the proposed design. The design of the Lekhuleni initiation school for girls is a future condition, one that has not been explored, a possibility, an opportunity. It is crucial to adapt and learn lessons of how to handle a design from an urban level down to an intimate scale that deals with the users experience in creating a space that is of the users and for the users. A space that speak to their bodies as a whole. A space molded from the user for the user.

