Common Ground

Finding commonality in a place of learning

MProf (Arch) 2016
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Project Summary

Programme: Community Vocational Facility (CVF)
Client: Moreleta Park Church congregation in association with the Department of Education.
Site location: Plastic View, Moreleta Park, Pretoria East
Theoretical Premise: Common Ground investigates the process in which a Community Vocational Facility can be integrated within the context of Moreleta Park and specifically Plastic View through an extroverted approach.
Architectural Approach: The dissertation identifies that citizenship education , which is a key component of educational policy, can be addressed spatially by considering three main principles; to define spaces for interaction, consider the urban condition and address the multifunctionality of space.
Research Field: Human settlements and Urbanism.
Keywords: Community Vocational Facility, citizenship education, extroverted educational approach, Integration, social cohesion

Fig 0.1 Site of conciliation, Author (2016)

Abstract

Common Ground investigates the process in which a Community Vocational Facility is integrated within a community through an extroverted approach. This responds to the current educational typology which are formed from introverted spaces that help aggravate inequality within South Africa. The dissertation explores how an educational facility can be spatially organized to encourage social exchange among learners, parents and the community and by doing so contributing to a common and equal society within Moreleta Park and specifically Plastic View.

Abstrak

Sentrums vir onderig in Suid-Afrika is geskoei op 'n argitektuurmodel wat ruimtelik na binne keer en gevolglik uitsluitend is. Hierdie modelle ondersteun nie prosesse om 'n meer gelyke samelewing te skep nie. 'Common Ground' ondersoek die moontlikheid om 'n Gemeenskaps-beroepsentrum beter in 'n gemeenskap te integreer deur 'n alternatiewe ruimtelike benadering toe te pas.
Die verhandeling ondersoek hoe 'n onderwysfasiliteit ruimtelik georganiseer kan word om interaksie tussen leerders, ouers en die gemeenskap aan te moedig. Op hierdie wyse word argitektuur ingespan om by te dra tot 'n gelyke en geintegreerde gemeenskap in Moreleta Park en Plastic View.

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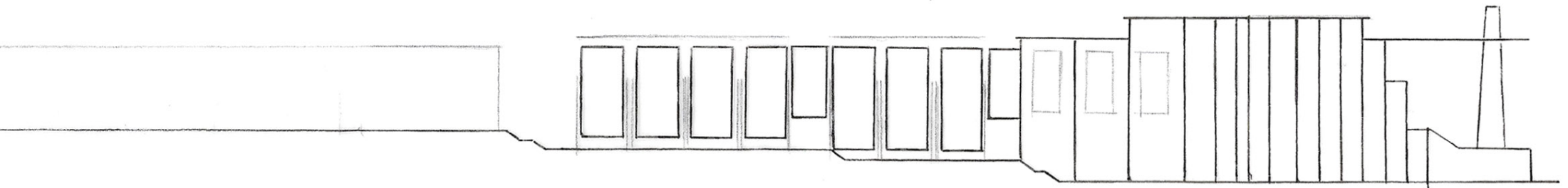
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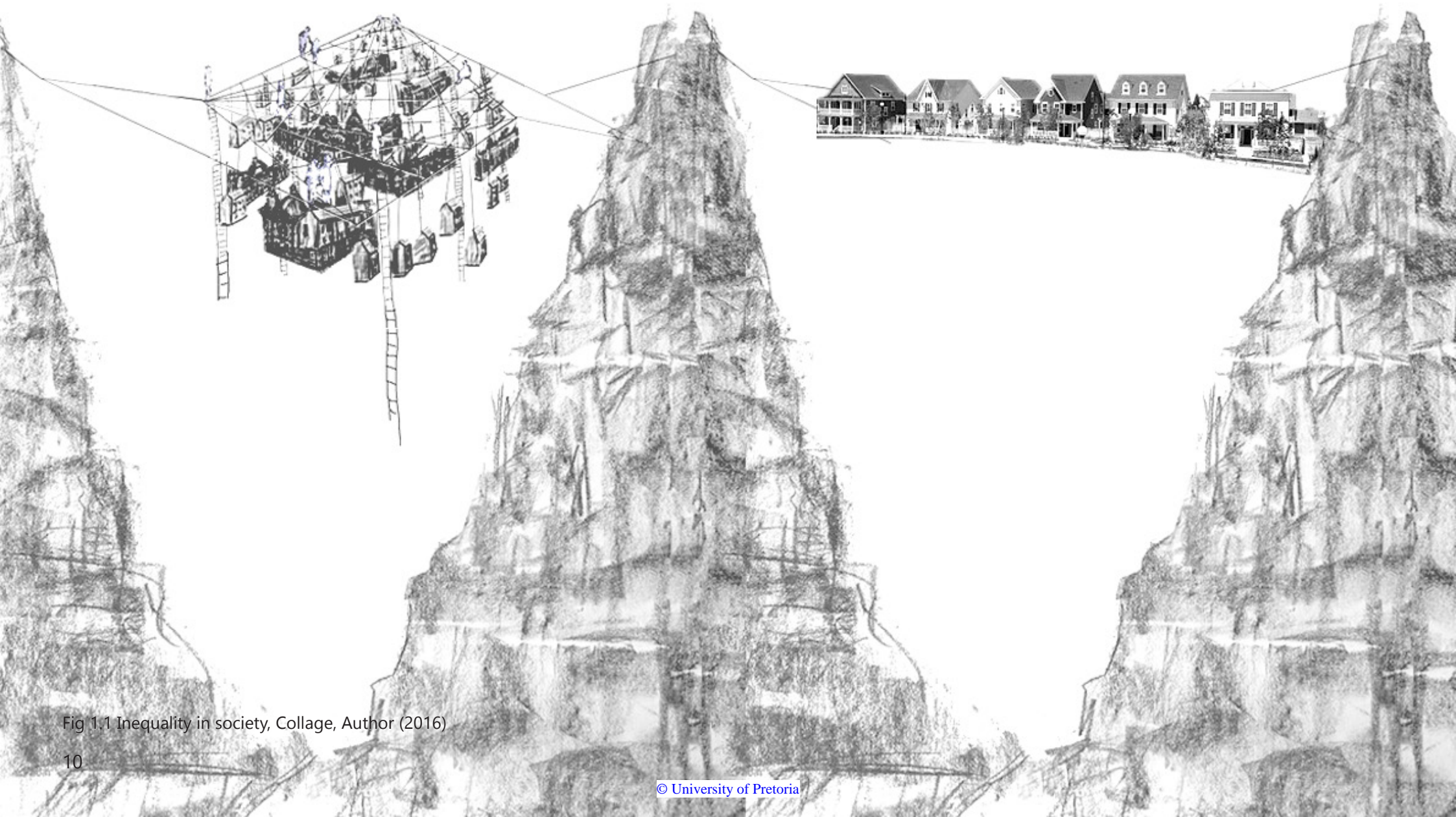
1 Introduction

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."

Nelson Mandela

Fig 1.2 Education is the most powerful weapon, Painting
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Educational facilities have an important role to play in ensuring that learners are well prepared to become active citizens in post-apartheid South Africa. Educational facilities can be seen as a microcosm of society as learners gain knowledge, skills, values and attitudes with which to respond to South Africa's rich and varied multicultural society. However South Africa has failed to use educational facilities to contribute to a common and equal society, highlighting a short-sighted and underdeveloped approach to education in South Africa (SA DOE 2001:3). Therefore this dissertation investigates how educational facilities can begin to contribute to society in order to create a socially and spatially democratic and equal society in order to achieve what the government set out to accomplish in 1994.

After the government was democratically elected in 1994 the Department of Education (DOE) was faced with addressing poor and unequal education opportunities and facilities in socially and physically unequal environments. The government recognized the potential education has on transforming society as it can be used to minimize the gap in inequality by enabling citizens with tools to enter the working world thus in turn creating socially and physically equal societies. Nelson Mandela stated that, *Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world* (usaid.gov 2016). An *education-for-all approach* which supports an education for citizenship and democracy was the way forward in terms of addressing problems of inequality in South Africa. However twenty years after the end of apartheid, South Africa remains one of the most unequal countries in the world (Fintel 2015) as educational policies as well as the physical environment fails to reflect this inclusive approach in the development of learners in South Africa.

> *On the one hand they (schools) are capable of helping individuals gain knowledge and develop skills and values which can be of great benefit to both the individual and the wider society. On the other hand they (schools) reproduce existing inequalities… and reinforce authoritarian attitudes* (Harber & Mncube 2011:241).