

Architectural Hybridity In Democracy

Reactivating Pretoria City Hall as
a political civic centre

T.Mc Donald 2017



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Tristan Mc Donald

In accordance with Regulation 4[e] of the General Regulations [G.57] for dissertations and these, I declare that this dissertation, which is hereby submitted for the degree Master of Architecture [Professional] at the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other tertiary institution.

I further state that no part of my thesis has already been, or is currently being, submitted for any such degree, diploma or any other qualification.

I further declare that this thesis is substantially my own work. Where reference is made to works of others, the extent to which that work has been used is indicated and fully acknowledged in the text and list of references.

Tristan Mc Donald

Abstract

In this paper commentary is offered on the role of architecture in a democratic society, as manifested in its use as a tool in the creation of spaces through which the public has equal opportunities for expression and interaction, at both the micro and macro scales. How the public connects to the city is questioned, and the value of politicized South African architectural symbols to the current political environment, in which a higher level of transparency is being sought, is considered. The value of a localised platform acting as a mediator between architecture, the public and the political powers is argued for. Consideration is given to the greater continuum of architectural thinking by discussing modern examples of political 'democratic' architecture and comparing them to those seen in the South African context. Furthermore, an understanding of democracy in both the social and spatial realms becomes an important informant in establishing value to society.

The intention with the paper is to contribute to a way of thinking when designing within the confines of buildings that have past or present political value, such as the Pretoria City Hall, by addressing the question of how politics shapes architecture and how architecture, through politics, shapes the political environment. The focus is on how architecture is able to change meaning by inverting past symbols, so that the existing is enabled to become more representative of and responsive to the current socio-political environment.

Ekserp

In hierdie referaat word kommentaar gelewer op die rol van argitektuur in 'n demokratiese samelewing, waar dit gebruik kan word as 'n instrument vir die skep van ruimtes wat aan die publiek gelyke geleenthede vir uitdrukking en interaksie verskaf, op beide die mikro- en makroskale. Hoe die publiek met die stad konekteer word bevraagteken, en die waarde van verpolitiseerde Suid-Afrikaanse argitektoaniese simbole vir die huidige politiese omgewing, waarin 'n hoër vlak van deursigtigheid nagestreef word, word oorweeg. Daar word ten gunste van die waarde van 'n gelokaliseerde platform wat as bemiddelaar tussen argitektuur, die publiek en die politieke magte kan optree, geargumenteer. Die groter kontinuum van argitektoniese denke word oorweeg deur moderne voorbeelde van politiese 'demokratiese' argitektuur te bespreek en met dié binne Suid-Afrikaanse konteks te vergelyk. Verder word 'n begrip van demokrasie op beide die sosiale en ruimtelike terreine 'n belangrike informant in die vaslegging van waarde vir die samelewing.

Met die referaat word daar beoog om by te dra tot 'n manier van dink wanneer daar ontwerp word binne die grense van geboue met teenswoordige of geskiedkundige politieke waarde, soos die Pretoria Stadsaal, deur die vraag aan te spreek oor hoe politiek die argitektuur vorm en hoe argitektuur, deur politiek, die politiese omgewing vorm. Die fokus word geplaas op hoe betekenis deur middel van argitektuur verander kan word deur simbole van die verlede om te keer, sodat die bestaande meer verteenwoordigend van en responsief tot die huidige sosio-politiese omgewing kan word.

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Department of Architecture.
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Programme:
Oppositional Parties Headquarters and Debate Arena &
Museum of Democracy

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document

WE, THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH AFRICA
declare for all our country and the world to know;



Figure 0.2 We. The People of South Africa (Author 2017)



We, the People of South Africa declare for all our country and the world to know:

That South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white, and that no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of all the people;

That our people have been robbed of their birth right to land, liberty and peace by a form of government founded on injustices and inequality;

That our country will never be prosperous or free until all our people live in brotherhood, enjoying equal rights and opportunities;

That only a democratic state, based on all the will of all the people can secure to all their birth right without the distinction of colour, race, sex or belief;

And therefore, we the people of South Africa, black and white together equals, countrymen and brothers adopt this Freedom Charter. And we pledge ourselves to strive together, sparing nothing of our strength and courage, until democratic changes here set out have been won.

(Congress of the People and the Freedom Charter 1955)

Acknowledgements

Abstract

Freedom Charter

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Figure 8.8

Level 1 (Author 2017)

Figure 8.9

Level 2 (Author 2017)

Figure 8.10

Level 3 (Author 2017)

Figure 8.11

Visualization 5 (Author 2017)

Figure 8.12

Display 3D (Author 2017)

Figure 8.13

Debate 3D (Author 2017)

Figure 8.14

Spectate 3D (Author 2017)

Figure 8.15

Visualization 6 (Author 2017)

Figure 8.16

Visualization 7 (Author 2017)

Figure 8.17

Main Sections (Author 2017)

Figure 8.18

Detail Sets 1 & 2 (Author 2017)

Figure 8.19

Detail Sets 3 & 4 (Author 2017)

Figure 8.20

Elevations (Author 2017)

Figure 8.21

Model Perspective 2 (Author 2017)

Figure 8.22

Model Perspective 3 (Author 2017)

Figure 8.23

Model Perspective 4 (Author 2017)

Figure 8.24

Model Perspective 5 (Author 2017)

Figure 8.25

Model Perspective 6 (Author 2017)

Chapter 9 - Conclusion

Figure 9.1

Western edge of Pretoria City Hall
(Hoffman 2017)



Architecture is a thing of art, a phenomenon of the emotions, lying outside questions of construction and beyond them. The purpose of construction is to make things hold together; of architecture to move us. Architectural emotion exists when the work rings within us in tune with a universe whose laws we obey, recognize and respect. When certain harmonies have been attained, the work captures us. Architecture is a matter of harmonies; it is a pure creation of the spirit.

(Le Corbusier 1986)

Figure 1.1 View from City Hall Porte Cochere to Pretorius Square with Chief Tshwane (Hoffman 2017)

01

Introduction



1.1 - Preface

The South African context is one of great personal interest and intrigue for this author. Its past has led to the formation of a country which has seen scattered growth and a skewed distribution of wealth, which acts as an important indicator of the long-term welfare of its people (Orthofer 2016). From the townships that grow larger each day to the poor distribution of school textbooks, this imbalance is a daily occurrence which we are all learning to live with.

What is it that, twenty-two years into democracy, we can say defines South Africa as a democratic state? Is the implementation of the constitution enough to right the wrongs of the past and allow us to move forward as a nation in order to develop and grow?

It is argued that our present national reality has been developed around what we have been fighting against rather than

for what we desire (Zibi 2012). It could be suggested that some of the progress South Africa has witnessed as a democratic state was more of a temporary band aid solution, rather than a direct attempt at dealing with the issues at hand. Though there have been changes in government, it did not automatically bring a solution to the many years of injustice prior to apartheid.

In this dissertation it is argued that more must be done with architecture in order to identify what it is that makes architecture democratic. It is argued that it is through the study of the past and how our values have changed over time - due to political progress and activity, international events and public interaction - that we are able to start to develop an understanding of today's context, and therefore design for our current political climate.



1.2 - Proposed Context

Architecture, like other art forms, allows for the expression of the creator as well as that of the viewer. The innate ability to develop an opinion or understanding is key to the further development of architecture in society. In order to achieve this, architecture can look at bodies in motion (Imirzian 2010) as a means of creating platforms for expression to improve the connection of the inhabitant with the city, thus allowing for the development of a dialogue between building and public space which may help connect people, spaces and events. Everything we do occurs within space and, therefore, it is important to understand this choreography to be able to create spaces which are more appropriate to both the intention of the design and the user.

Lefebvre (Simonsen 2005) argues that, due to the strong focus on visual stimuli in architecture, our occupation and use of space become secondary to architectural understanding. It

could be suggested that this is a result of the inherent need to assert our presence in our cities. On walking through the Pretoria city centre, the chosen context for the dissertation, the way people express themselves through the occupation of space becomes evident in the way shops and street vendors manipulate the sidewalk.

The position taken when dealing with the dissertation is that similar to Nobel's (2008) suggestion of hybridity's in architecture, arguing for the merging of Western and African ideals so to better facilitate the development of African identity and narratives. Therefore, the stance taken is that of using the existing in the creation of the new. It is the intention that the existing act as the foundation onto which the new can be developed, allowing architecture to focus on that which is desired rather than that which is rejected through its ability to facilitating the merging of different ideals.





Figure 1.4 Above; Occupation along Pretoria city streets (Author 2016)

1.3 - Normative Position

The focus of the dissertation will be Pretoria City Hall and Pretorius Square.

As a way to celebrate Pretoria officially becoming a capital city (Herring 1935) a competition was held in 1926 for the design of a new city hall. It was designed to be a civic building intended to instil a sense of pride and honour for those living in the capital city as well as act as seat for the mayor and local government (Herring 1935). Its positioning as a civic centre and the seat of the mayor emphasised the importance of the structure in the new capital city.

The building was to be representative of the political structure of the time, in which the existing Government was mandated to establish an institutional identity, separating

it from the rest of the population. The establishment of an institutional identity was used to distract the rest of the world from the injustices and racial separations experienced in South Africa at the time (Mabin 2012).

Presently it can be suggested that Pretoria City Hall no longer fulfils its role as an important civic centre to the urban inhabitant, as it no longer represents the will and views of our democracy and its people. While still prominent in its presence, it appears to have become more of a folly of heritage value within the city rather than an active civic centre. It could be suggested that part of the reason for this, other than issues of management, funding, lack of public interest and poor upkeep, could be that Pretoria City Hall is viewed to be

representative of South Africa's darker past.



1.4 - General Issue

The current identity of South Africa is based on a fixation with the negativity that arose out of our apartheid and colonial past (Zibi 2012). If this is true, it can be suggested that much of the architecture of the new democracy was done in an attempt to either recreate, repurpose or remove the old as a way of representing the new political control and its rejection of the past (Wolff 2011). This can be seen as an architectural hybridisation which attempts to create new dialogues across previous divides (Noble 2008:71).

In South Africa and more specifically, in the City of Pretoria, public space appears to be changing from that of the square to the occupation of the city's sidewalks (Goheen 1998), as revealed during investigativewalks through Pretoria's city centre. Along the

historic Paul Kruger Street, it was observed that, while the edges of squares such as Pretorius Square and Church square were being used, very few people ventured onto the square itself. The few that do use the square would mainly occupy the periphery, which could be suggested as defensible space along boundary walls as suggested by William Whyte in his film, *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces* (Whyte 1980).

The occupation of the sidewalk becomes the crudest form of confrontation (Goheen 1998; Kotze 2017). It leads to the formation of new public space and therefore can be suggested as an unintentional hybridisation of space (Noble 2008: 81) in which we see two opposite typologies, structured vs. appropriated, coming

together to create a new identity. The sidewalk becomes an active space for both personal development and daily interactions (Kotze 2017).

In this dissertation hybridisation of space with regard to its different forms, conscious or unconscious, is therefore considered as a way of developing an identity through a spatial contestation with the past.

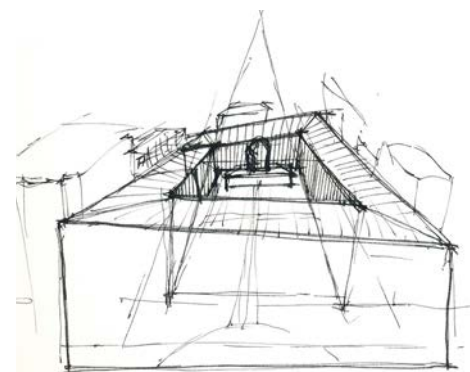


Figure 1.5 Above; General Issue (Author 2016)

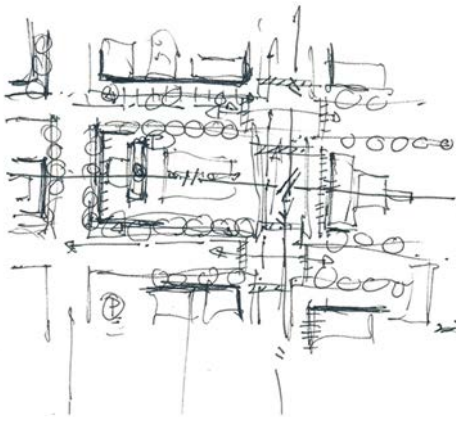


Figure 1.6 Above; Urban Issue
(Author 2016)

1.5 - Urban Issue

The urban issue revolves around making Pretoria the new Capital City of South Africa, based on a call by President Jacob Zuma in his State of the Nation address for there to be a single Capital (Zuma 2016).

In order to create the hypothetical Capital City, it was identified that certain governmental functions would have to be relocated to Pretoria, namely Parliament from Cape Town and the Supreme Court of Appeal from Bloemfontein.

With the creation of Pretoria as the Capital City, the focus of the urban vision (UP MArch(Prof) 2016) was delimited to the historic protest route or Cardo of Paul Kruger Street.

Historically the Cardo referred to the main north-south axis in Roman Cities (Norris 2015). Paul Kruger Street, as identified through investigative walks and a study of past events relating to protest marches in the city that started at the Pretoria Station, changed direction at Church Square and proceeded towards the Union Buildings in the east.

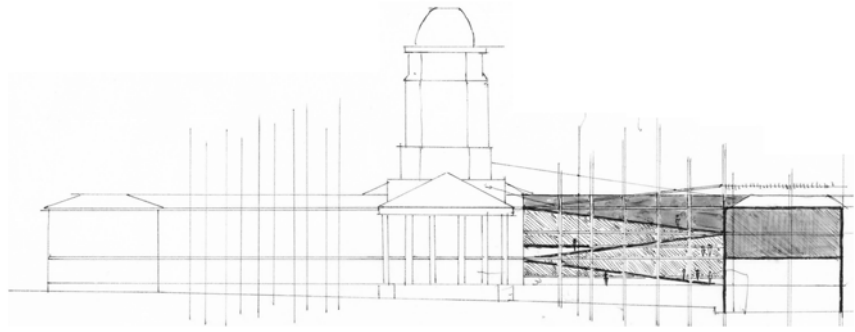


Figure 1.7 Above; Architectural Issue
(Author 2016)

1.6 - Architectural Issue

As suggested, the development of our present national identity has occurred as a rejection of the past resulting in the creation of new monuments and places of memory (Bakker & Müller 2010: 48) in an attempt to create a new layer of heritage. It can therefore be suggested that this push to create a new layer of heritage has led to the deterioration of the existing infrastructure, which could ultimately have led to the loss of that heritage.

How does political heritage architecture respond to the existing context of the past, which is contested against, as well as develop present identity? The question not only responds to the heritage of the existing, but also to the appropriate response of the new architecture and the ability of the existing to strengthen the new identity of society, and then to combine both ideals so as to enable them in the facilitation of the political. Responding to both political climate and site, the architecture proposes to enable the public and government in its facilitation of the democratic processes of protest, debate and management. This is done as

an exploration of the ability of architecture to facilitate political process and encourage transparency

1.7 - Research Question

1. In the South African context, what is the role of architecture in addressing the issues of relevance with regard to the social and political ideals and beliefs of the changing nation as a whole?
2. How have political spaces changed from the inception of Pretoria City Hall to the present day, and what can be done to enable architecture to reactivate the past?
3. How can architecture be used to reactivate political heritage architecture so as to create a new link to the changed society?
4. How can one spatially define the characteristics of democratic space and use it as a tool to manipulate architecture so as to create a spatially democratic space?

1.8 - Architectural Intent

The aim with the dissertation is to investigate whether Pretoria city hall, a pre-apartheid structure, is still relevant in the new Capital City as both a civic centre and political platform. An attempt will be made to develop an understanding of how the notion of space and its value has changed from the inception of the City Hall through to today's issue where past structures, while still visually significant, no longer appear to respond or contribute to the general population.

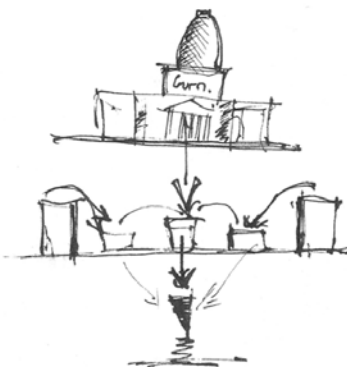


Figure 1.8 Above; Architectural Intent
(Author 2016)

1.9 - Methodology

A combination of the following research methods will be used to help inform the design.

Field Research.

- Site visits
- Mapping
- Investigative walks through the surrounding context

Literature Review:

Literature research is intended to uncover gaps in thought relating to political architecture and its role in facilitating the reactivation of architecture in a changed political climate.

Precedent Studies:

A study will be made of buildings which have a political heritage relevant to the context and have been used as a commentary on the past in the expression and appropriation of the new architecture, and the by doing so, have created an architecture which responds to changing notions of society that use the past as its foundation for growth.

1.10 - Delimitations

All drawings and representations of plans, sections and interiors of Pretoria City Hall are derived from a single viewing of the interior during which photos were not permitted, and on an interpretation of incomplete drawings found in the archive of the State Theatre.

The dissertation will not look at the democratic experience in its entirety, but will rather focus on the ability of architecture to facilitate certain processes of democracy.

In the dissertation only Pretorius Square, and its ability to contribute to the technical aspect of water collection, will be considered in the master plan.

1.11 - Assumptions

The dissertation is grounded in the speculative condition of Pretoria becoming the Capital City of South Africa, which will therefore see the incorporation of the Judicial and Legislative governmental functions with Pretoria.

The Pretorius Square and City Hall precinct including all adjacent block edges in the

context of an assumed urban vision (UP MArch(Prof) 2016), would become known as the Local Government Square. All surrounding buildings would therefore be occupied by administrative governmental functions. These departments may include:

- The Department of Home Affairs
- The Department of Public Service and Administration.
- The Public Service Commission (PSC)
- The Centre for Public Service Innovation (CPSI)
- The Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs
- The Department of Justice and Constitutional Development
- The Department of Finance
- The Presidency: Performance Monitoring, Evaluation and Administration.

It is further established in the urban vision for Pretoria (UP MArch(Prof) 2016) the private vehicular access along Paul Kruger Street will be restricted between Pretoria Station and Church Square. Only public vehicles will be allowed along Paul Kruger Street and parking at Pretoria city hall will be limited to the southern edge of Pretorius Square.