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reflection & conclusion

“Heritage is, as much as anything, a political act and we need to ask serious questions about the power relations that ‘heritage’ has all too often been invoked to sustain.”

(Association of Critical Heritage Studies 2012).



Figure 268: East Facade: (Author 2021)

REFLECTION & CONTRIBUTION

General:

This dissertation addressed the general problem of heritage landscapes sustaining past engrained power relations through their reuse. This issue is highlighted particularly in Johannesburg, where certain places of heritage have become privatised enclaves that only a portion of the population can afford to engage with or exist in (Dirsuweit 2009: 86-87).

As an alternative, this dissertation has provided several urban, architectural, ecological, and technological ways in which heritage landscapes can subvert past engrained power structures in space, and foster social exchange and inclusivity.

Urban:

Infrastructural visibility, through the process of daylighting the existing canal, is demonstrated as one way in which power (particularly infrastructural power) can be subverted through the reuse of heritage (figure 270). This intervention has enabled the site's previously lost relationship to water to be restored. Furthermore, this urban strategy ecologically and socially aims to revive Rivertown Precinct and foster social exchange through a public space of heritage that is open to and shared by all.

Heritage:

In addition to the urban contribution another way in which inclusivity and social exchange could be furthered in heritage landscapes, was found particularly, to be through the transmission of intangible heritage (UNESCO, not dated). A new contribution was constructed, called 'surfacing the hidden' (figure 269) which enabled suppressed intangible value, in the form of cultural traditions around sorghum, to rise in value and provide impetus for functional, formal and spatial change to occur. The subversion of power was then achieved as the building's past layers of value were reordered with new significance in the reuse of this heritage.



Figure 271: Decalcomania, social exchange (Author 2021)

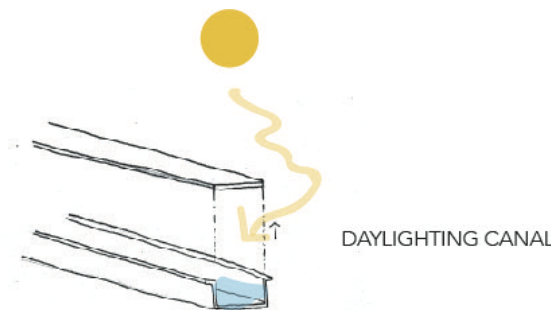


Figure 270: Daylighting the canal (Author 2021)

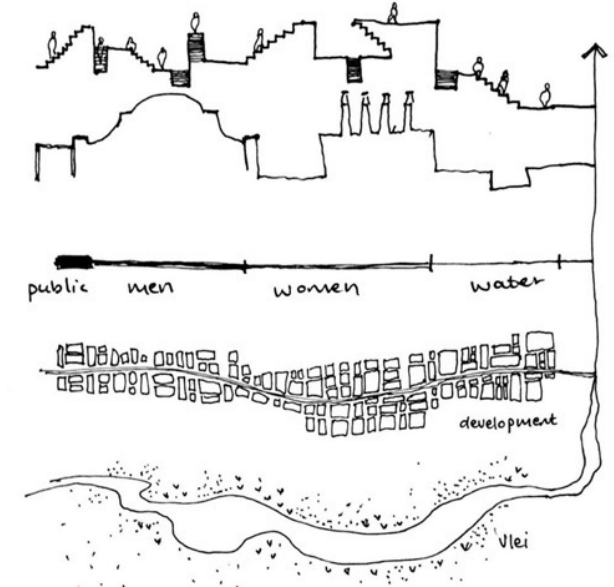


Figure 269: Surfacing the Hidden (Author 2021)

REFLECTION & CONTRIBUTION

Architecture & design:

When working with heritage architecture in South Africa, power, hierarchy, and inequality will inevitably exist as layers of each place owing to our exclusive history exacerbated by Apartheid. Consequently, it is pertinent for architects specialising in heritage to have the necessary spatial and design methods for dealing with such contested landscapes. As such, the main architectural contribution of the dissertation addressed the issue of how to spatially and formally subvert tangible and intangible power relationships perpetuated by layers that make up the place.

Decalomania (Deleuze & Guattari 1988) acted as a guiding theoretical response to power which advocates for free movement, exchange and encounter across thresholds in space. Furthermore, the theory of the 'Social Logic of Space' (Hillier & Hanson 1984), demonstrated that inclusivity or exclusivity, and the reinforcement or reversal of engrained social roles results from the configuration of spaces within a building. Through the application of such theory, this dissertation demonstrates a spatial solution or alternative to working with past engrained power and hierarchy explicit in South African spaces.

This contribution involved analysing the inhabitant-visitor relationship of the Rivertown Beerhall and improving the level of social exchange, and therefore transmission, between the two users through movement across historically defined boundaries in space. Furthermore, this method of spatial analysis enabled the subversion of power through using the site's most subservient spaces and most suppressed layers of value as the functional, formal, and spatial drivers of the design process going forward.

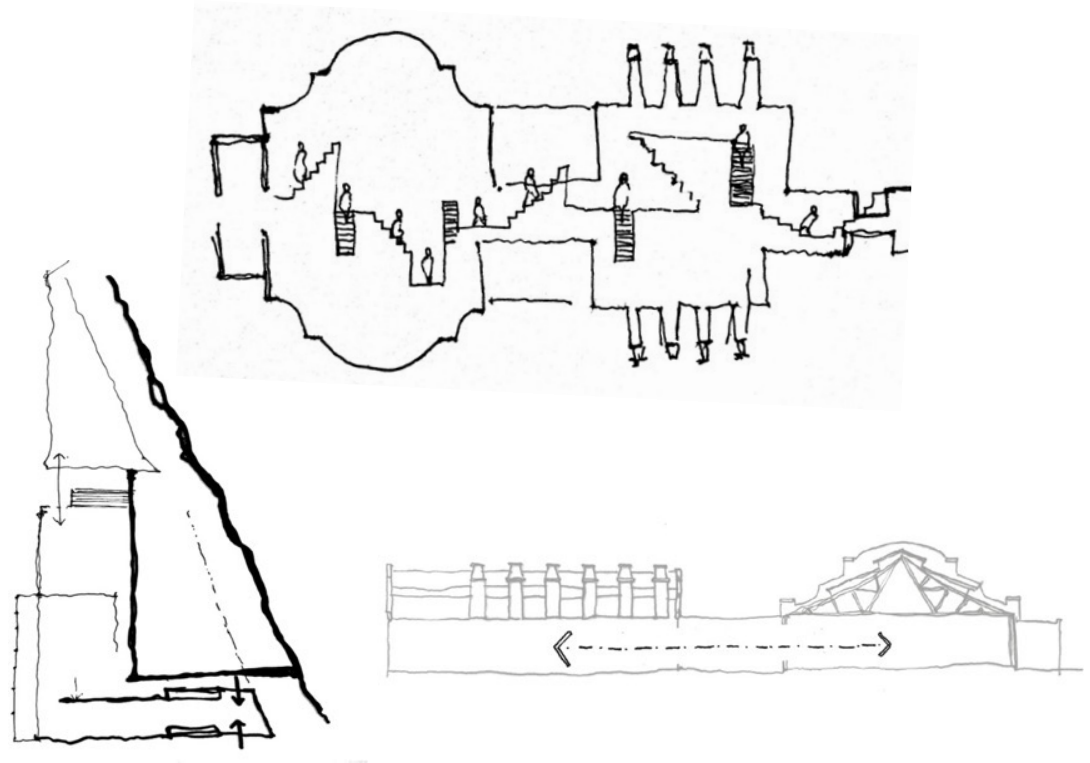


Figure 272: Subversion of power through spatial reconfiguration
(Author 2021)

REFLECTION & CONTRIBUTION

Technology:

The subversion of engrained power structures and spatial hierarchies on site are further achieved through the technological application of the concept of transmission. This concept for technology, provided a way of mediating between old and new fabric and dismantling power between the former eating hall and kitchen through the addition of an independent connection or object that allows air, light or water to pass through it to form a connection between such disparities.

Furthermore, this technological contribution is also ecological and environmental through the harvesting and reuse of rainwater on site for bakery process and in the filtering of stormwater through the canal which provides a public space with increased natural capital, cleaner water and greater ecological value for Rivertown.

In addition, the technological contribution is climatic and sustainable in three predominant ways. Firstly, and in terms of sustainability, the natural daylighting of the eating hall is improved which also reduces the required energy usage of artificial lighting in the space. Secondly, the intervention enables ventilation and a lowering of temperatures to occur in the bakery and eating area through ground cooling, as a reaction to the humidity levels and high temperatures in Durban. Thirdly, the timber screen acts to shade east and west facades of the seed research centre by using locally sourced and sustainable Rhinowood.

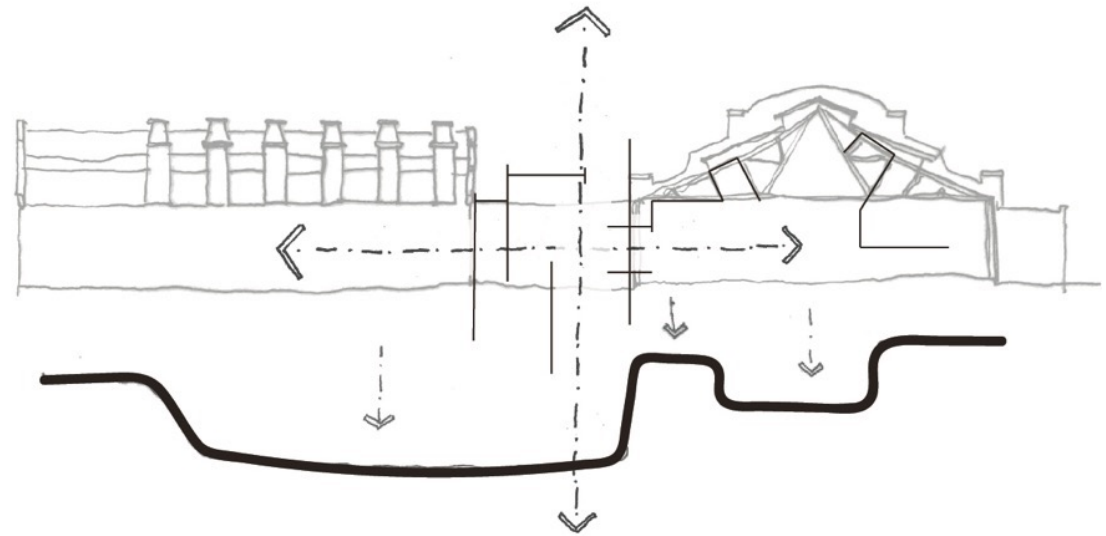


Figure 273: Technological contribution (Author 2021)

GOLDEN THREAD

The concept of transmission has provided the dissertation with a continual golden thread or line of thought to which other concepts and intentions have aligned. This has enabled a focussed investigation into how social exchange can be fostered and power subverted in heritage landscapes from the general and urban, through to the technological (figure 274).

EXTENSION (CAREER)

This dissertation involved the application of certain methods of analysis related to heritage contexts that I was previously unfamiliar with. Through this dissertation I've, particularly been able to interrogate heritage theory, critically review heritage charters, learn how to assign value to heritage landscapes and undertake a heritage impact assessment.

Furthermore, after a review of previous and current attitudes towards heritage, this dissertation has enabled me to formulate my own contribution and attitude towards such contexts, as well as to create a rubric for assessing heritage value in the future.

Heritage architecture is an area of architecture that I would like to specialize in and so this dissertation is the first step towards contributing towards that career and achieving that goal.

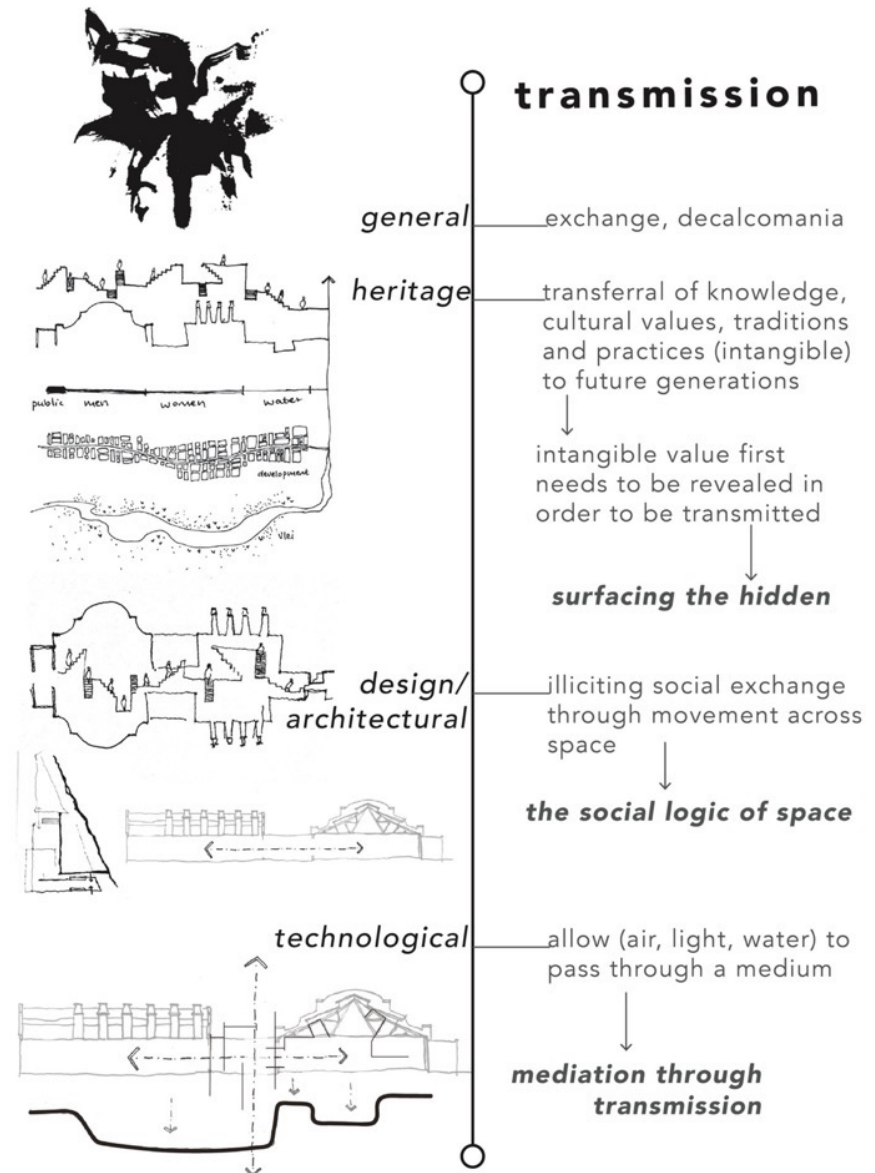


Figure 274: Golden Thread, Transmission (Author 2021)

FINAL MODEL



Figure 275: Final Model (Author 2021)

FINAL EXAM



Figure 276: Final Exam Presentation (Barker 2021)