ANTICIPATED INFORMALITY
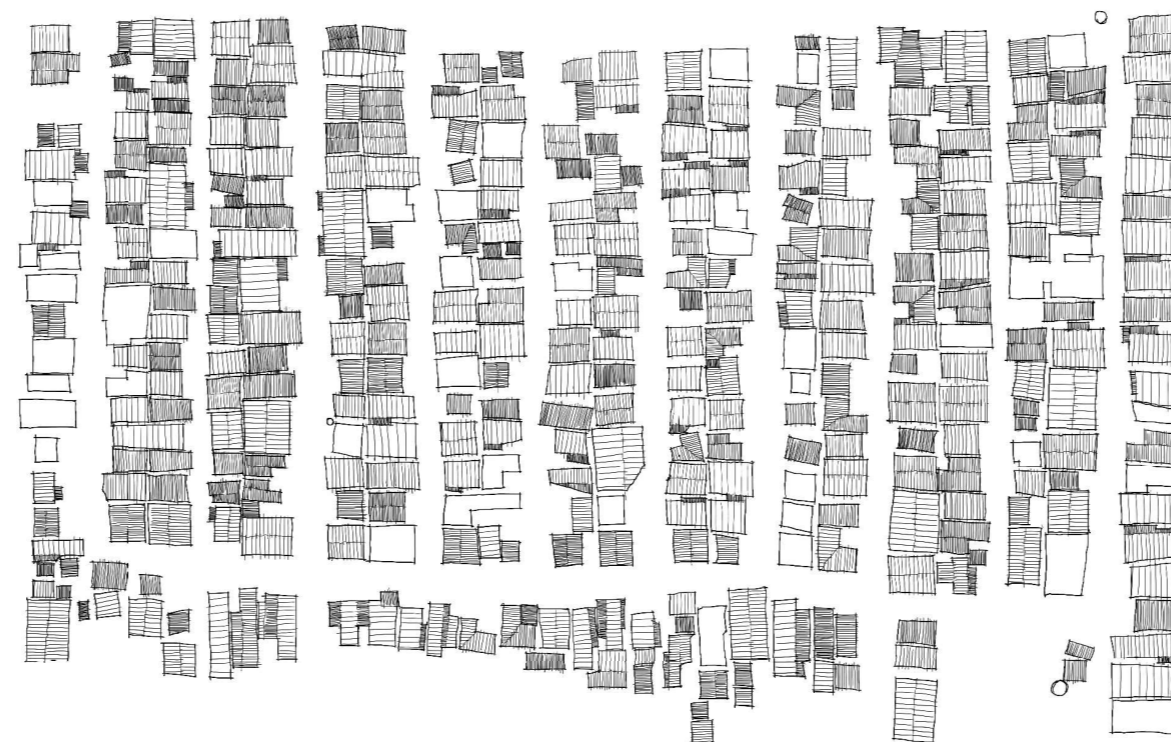
The incremental development
of resilience in the marginalized
community of Plastic View

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PROJECT SUMMARY

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Student number	16148356
Dissertation title	Anticipated informality: The incremental development of resilience in the marginalised community of Plastic View
Degree	Master of Architecture (Professional)
Study leader	Dr. Jan Hugo
Co-supervisor	Dr. Carin Combrinck
Year coordinator	Dr. Arthur Barker
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Site	Plastic View informal settlement Pretorius Park, Pretoria Gauteng 0042
GPS coordinates	25°83'06.1"S 28°30'85.5"E
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DECLARATION

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CHAPTER **00**

PREFACE

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ABSTRACT

The informal settlements of South Africa are commonly marginalised urban systems existing within larger formal urban landscapes. Due to their marginalisation, informal settlements often lack formal infrastructure, socio-economic opportunities and a sense of permanence, which in turn challenges their resilience. Focusing on the Plastic View informal settlement in Moreleta Park, the dissertation investigates architecture's ability to contribute towards the settlement's capacity to adapt or transform to desirable states when disturbed. The "safe-to-fail" system approach (Ahern 2011) is used to develop an architectural response that caters for continuous appropriation and adaptation by the local community. In order to understand and reinterpret Plastic View's innate socio-spatial organisation and construction knowledge, a pattern language of the settlement is documented. This framework informs the design process from initial explorations through to technical and material resolution. The investigation into Plastic View's internal resilience and prevailing vulnerabilities leads to a multifunctional intervention along the settlement's emerging high street. The architecture addresses the settlement's critical infrastructural deficit, whilst proposing diverse responses to housing and public space demands. The various avenues discussed in the dissertation, including community engagement, transformative participation, incremental upgrading and anticipated settlement growth, collectively assist with the improvement of Plastic View's resilience and local living conditions.

GLOSSARY

Adaptive capacity The extent to which a system can handle and respond to a shock after it occurs, either by avoiding shifting into an undesirable state or successfully shifting into an improved state (Walker & Salt 2012:213).

Adaptive cycle A framework that breaks down the continuous evolution of a social-ecological system into four phases of operation; rapid growth, conservation, release and reorganisation (Walker & Salt 2012:213).

High street The communal hub of a neighbourhood (or settlement in this context) that fosters social interaction, pedestrian accessibility and small businesses, whilst often expressing the local identity of the community (Griffiths, Vaughan, Haklay and Jones 2008:1155).

Open building An economical, user-dependent approach to design and construction that separates the architecture into two levels; the 'support' level, consisting of the load-bearing structure; and the infill level, consisting of walls, services and fixtures (Habraken 1988:12).

Resilience The capacity of a system to maintain a quality of life and functional integrity in spite of disturbances, whether that is in a return to original condition or transformation to a new equilibrium (Peres, du Plessis & Landman 2017:692; Walker & Salt 2012:215).

Sustainability The state of a system in which its function and integrity can persist without the depletion of resources and ecological subsystems (Peres, du Plessis & Landman 2017:692).

Social-ecological system Complex living structures comprising human beings and nature (Peres & du Plessis 2013:3).

Third space The public area between the home and the workplace where people gather and interact (Oldenburg & Brissett 1982:269).

Transformative participation An approach to community engagement that recognises the imbalances of power and knowledge between architects (experts) and end-users (non-experts), and responds with transparency, inclusion and two-way knowledge sharing (Till 2005:4).

Urban resilience A branch of resilience that specifically addresses attributes of systems that make up cities, to improve the resilience of the city as a whole (Peres & du Plessis 2014:1).

Vulnerability The measure of a system's exposure, prevention and response capacity to cope with shocks and disturbances (Weichselgartner & Bertens 2000:6).