

Figure 10.1: A conclusion - architecture , public spaces and 'dispositifs'; a pluridisciplinary and polydirectional approach. How 'dispositifs' blur the lines of what is produced and what produces- a shift in power-scaling (Author 2021)

CONCLUDING THE JOURNEY

Formulating a technology language for the intervention served as an extension and physical embodiment for the narrative of recreation. The technology attempted to reflect the notions of the twin-phenomena and the in-between by using the four dimensions (i.e., space, environment, time and human) into the structure and the environmental systems by contrasting, continuing and meshing components. Each of the latter often facilitates more than two purposes - whether it be wayfinding, skill displays, activities, services or environmental processes.

As an 'outreach precinct' founded on various gleaned networks, technology and services serve their pragmatic functions while simultaneously -through the relations established with other systems and elements- create places for people to occupy, interpret and explore, thus, also acknowledging their contribution to the precinct and beyond.

Ultimately none of the technology used is completely novel and is mostly incorporated in best practice principles. Nonetheless, the merit is found in the translation and configuration of these techniques in a manner that is subservient to the showcasing of the community's current and future endeavours and the contextual response to open public spaces in townships.

As a concluding step to this research paper, the initial design question has to be answered:

"How can recreational spaces in the township of Mamelodi East be designed as devices to contribute towards a socio-culturally sustainable and cohesive urban environment?"

10- RECREATION AND THE ARCHITECTURAL DISCOURSE

Indeed, the issues at hand in the township were the following: 1) a lack of balance between economic; 2) cultural and environmental livelihood; 3) an issue of recreational spaces' provision and maintenance and finally 4) the sheer number of interpretation and values attached to typologies; the latter often secluded.

Therefore, to be able to present reach an answer one should foremost reflect upon the design journey which began with **THE PROCESS OF DISCOVERING THE QUOTIDIAN.**

The design enquiry began with a pragmatic world view, based on the understanding that the topic of recreational spaces, due to their very nature, would benefit from this approach. The researcher's intent was to pursue the research as a 'detective'. The research demarche meant trusting a process to look for answers by searching attentively and observing the context to identify the socio-cultural sphere of Ma-

melodi East and decide upon a sustainable strategy and a way forward to achieve cohesion.

In the field of architecture and throughout the years, one can observe many returns to the everyday as a source. This common place is revisited as a rhetorical contrast to high-tech endeavours, for contextual integrity, economic reasons or practical responses as well as gestures to reconnect cities with people (Haddad & Rifkind 2016: 190-205).

In the case of this dissertation, the search into the quotidian was undertaken to capture 'flow'; the various linked interactions or activities that may be conspicuous or not. Unearthing 'flow' portrays another outlook for architecture's character and opportunities. In the latent South African segregated setting, this was captured where people made use of the spatial agency principle of "initiating" (Awan *et al.*: 72). Although initially not purposefully intended as architectural gestures, the hospitality and the

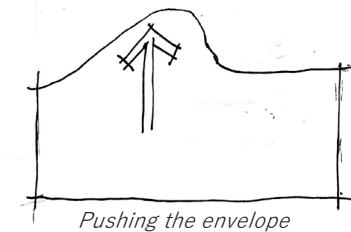
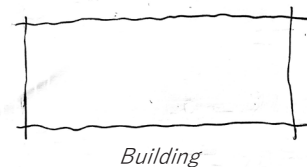


Figure 10.2: Building sharing its façade with the public and the city (Author 2021)

clever multiuse of existing spaces already presented socio-cultural resolve and certain levels of cohesion. This was internalised as an extension of the community's culture and values. In response, the researcher aimed to design a recreational place as a 'dispositif' to enhance the uncovered 'flows' as "a network which is sometimes expressed into a built space" (Dascalu 2013: 207). The 'flows' were many, varied from different points of origins, overlapping and constantly influenced one-another (Figure 10.1).

The eclectic nature of these 'flows' is where **ARCHITECTURE IS AT A CROSSROAD.**

The unexpected connections gleaned required a flexible arsenal of knowledge to be able to make sense of the milieu and create space out of networks. From the methodology to design and technology, one could understand that the immersion into the realms of sociology, urban landscape and even interior design, allowed to rediscover the 'humane' at different scales and from various positions while approaching sustain-

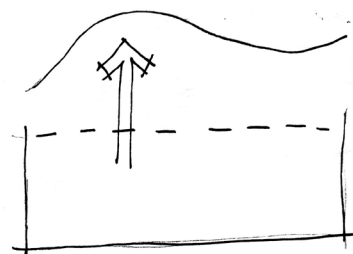
ability as a systemic whole.

The above process is reminiscent of Mostafavi's (2010) points on Ecological Urbanism. This paradigm sitting within the greater scheme of sustainability, promulgates the notion that architecture should not be isolated. When practice becomes interdisciplinary and even transdisciplinary, challenges regarding sustainability are better perceived as a holistic picture.

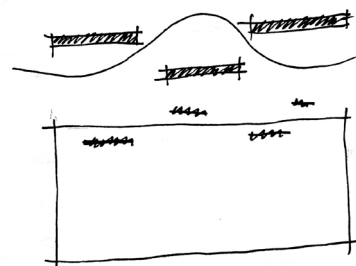
Elements from each disciplines gets reinterpreted, combined in technology and design and can lead to projects that do not stop at the end of construction nor at the primary occupation of buildings. The ingrained systems and strategies serve the future city. When built form becomes a prototype for future endeavours in recreational spaces such as art, shelter or environmental mitigation, it also presents what the community has to offer in including maintenance and healthier public spaces. Moreover, emergent collaborations potentially ignite further innovation inspired by rudimentary technology (Mostafavi & Doherty 2016). This

is reminiscent of recreation as an act of agency and making. In this dissertation plastic bags, glass bottles and clay were used and/or recycled as 'artisanal' materials. Although viewed as small gestures, one can refer back to many more examples where these types of actions (waste reuse) influenced a different manufacturing approach for these banal products. New ones can be designed with attributes suited for a life in the construction industry after their primary use (i.e., the Heneken WOBO bottle) (Hebel *et al.* 2014: 127-145). More than ever, and in alignment with the United Nations (c.2021) goals for healthy environments, architectural practices can look at the banal as a source for innovation and continue conversations with other industries to further the polyvalence of everyday products life for construction and landscape purposes.

When Rowe (Rowe 1987: 53) presents two realms of architecture enquiry, the architecture object (self-referential) and the one finding legitimisation within



Slight detachment



The 'dispositif' threshold

Figure 10.2: (suite) Building sharing its façade with the public and the city (Author 2021)

and outside of architecture, this paper leans into the latter where architecture is not simply self-referential or single-authored (Figure 10.1 and 10.4). It becomes a tool for education, for holistic technology ideation or much more.

This is where the dissertation interrogates and concludes the situation between **PUBLIC SPACE, THE ARCHITECT AND AUTHORSHIP.**

Public spaces are in dire need of epistemic diversity in their making. City dwellers and designers in general have a duty towards the public interface, which do not simply end on designated public space lots.

Every structure designed is encompassed into the city's giant sequence of space and should be treated as such, while acknowledging safety and security and leaving a margin for appropriation. The paper explored an iterative rhetoric between parts, their different nature and their contribution to the whole beyond the space. However, there is a moment when one should

recognise when to design, when to suggest and when to stop. At times, over-designing the 'dispositif' also seemed too reductive; narrowing interpretations (Figure 10.3 and explorations in section 7). The researcher realised that an overly-designed façade loses its affordance and can confuse users by either highly reducing the space to one function or by giving too many queues; in both instances, the playfulness of recreation is hindered. This situation reflects the weakness of the twin-phenomena; being too ambiguous can also result in the extreme opposites with little synergy (Lammers 2012).

It is important to note that buildings' thresholds appeared as appropriate devices between 'city' and 'house' with an array of opportunities (Figures 10.2 and 10.3). They could entice the eye of the child, the democracy of public spaces and exhibit overlooked moments. They can be interpreted as the generous space that many buildings could offer to the public regardless of buildings typologies and programmes

with the right security in place (Figure 10.2). These explorations exemplified an attempt to "expand[ing] the brief" (Awan *et al.*: 69-70) allowing constructions to always give back to the public realm.

The initial position of the 'detective' can also be expanded. It is not simply a question of searching and revealing but a matter of choosing the appropriate design strategy and complementary knowledge to be able to decide where to stitch, facilitate, regenerate or build a new and even recognise when built form is not always the answer.

In conclusion, the 'non-finite' nature of recreational spaces in relation to cohesion transcends the physical, and involves many role-players. In the process, they create places, form new networks and ways of working which can serve other projects with similar challenges at a faster pace. Designing for sustainability, especially while involving a myriad of knowledge sources and methods can be a slow process, and not immediately profitable, nonetheless the benefits seem to far outweigh these concerns.

This topic is wide and full of possibilities, nonetheless, a dissertation such as this is constrained to a time-frame and a built form deliverable. However, the research contributions of this paper does not solely lie in the structural achievement, instead it resurfaces the significance and sustainability potential of the return to the everyday, disciplinary combinations and the generous space that architecture can provide towards the creation of recreational spaces in South African townships.

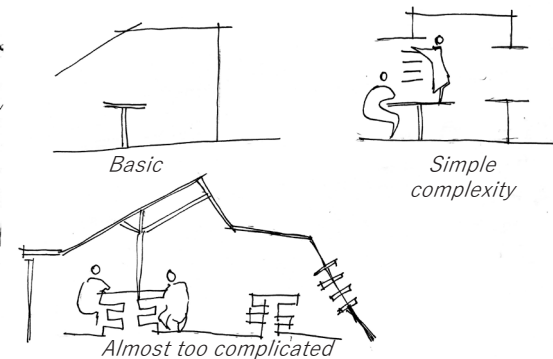


Figure 10.3: From simple to over-designed threshold (Author 2021)

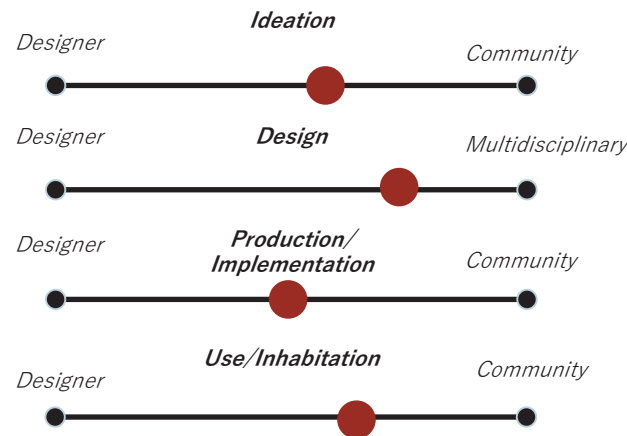


Figure 10.4 : Diagram summary, the spectrum while designing for recreational spaces (Author 2021)