1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROLOGUE

1.2 OBJECTIVE

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT
   1.3.1 CHARACTER AND IDENTITY

1.4 SUB-PROBLEMS
   1.4.1 ECONOMY
   1.4.2 COMMUNITY
   1.4.3 ECOLOGY

1.5 LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS

1.6 NEEDS ASSESSMENT
   1.6.1 ECONOMY
   1.6.2 COMMUNITY
   1.6.3 ECOLOGY
1.1 PROLOGUE

"Perhaps the major challenges facing architecture today is one of identity”
(Farmer 1993:3).

Lydenburg, a town in Mpumalanga is set for large-scale expansion as a result of
the opening of more than five platinum mines in the area. The frantic development
is putting stress on infrastructure and services. Four dilemmas are identified as a
result of this growth: Physical town planning and urban layout, the current economy,
the issue of identity, and the architectural character of Lydenburg.

1.1.1 Physical town planning and layout

The town’s composition has resulted in physical fragmentation and has been the
cause of injustice to fringe communities. This situation calls for an investigation on
an urban level and a planning and design framework aimed at creating coherence
between the subdivided districts of the town.
.1.1.2. Economy

Another problem that is identified from this expansion is the nature of the economy that is promoting this growth. As this community is geared towards a second industrial economy, the rest of the world is trading in the dominating knowledge and service based economy. The question arises as to whether Lydenburg will be able to take part in a larger, global economy after the mines get to the end of their life expectancy. A community with a sole economical dependency on a primary industry is undesirable. This is proven by towns like Welkom, Kimberley, and more recently Stilfontein. These are all towns that were once thriving mining communities, only to be left desolate after the closure of the mines.
.1.1.3. Identity

The dynamics of the town have already shifted: Lydenburg has changed from a largely farming community into a thriving town of commerce and mining. This leads us to the dilemma of identity. An identity shift happens because of a changing economical climate, which remolds and changes the dynamics of the town. A previously quiet settlement which has always been popular as a retirement village, suddenly can find itself becoming a hustling and bustling growing location, attracting new businesses and younger, dynamic newcomers. The identity of a place not just connected to the physical qualities of town, but also in its services rendered towards its community.

A younger community will be reflected in the amenities that are hosted within it, as well as activities that are related to the place. In gearing new development towards a single identity for Lydenburg, a marketable product is created in a town, which can attract visitors, or just generate pride amongst the residents of the town.
1.1.4. Architectural character

The physical architectural quality of Lydenburg has not been a priority in the planning of this expansion so far. The quickly constructed group housing schemes that are already gracing the Lydenburg townscape has added to the architectural incoherence found within the town fabric. Architectural quality relates to the stylistic architecture found in the town, but also refers to the general town layout and planning. This needs to be addressed to create a sense of coherence and in bring the identity, character and a sense of history, or ‘story’ across to the visitor.

1.2 OBJECTIVE

The objective of this dissertation is to investigate the current trend of branding, specifically destination branding, and to consider the role of architecture in this phenomenon of branding. The proposed development is to bring about a new economy and paradigm without turning its back on the history of the community. The
author agrees with David Lowenthal, who writes: “We can use the past fruitfully only when we realise that to inherit is also to transform: what our predecessors have left us deserves respect, but a patrimony simply preserved becomes an intolerable burden; the past is best used by being domesticated—and by our accepting and rejoicing that we do so” (Lowenthal 1993:181).

The programme of the proposed development is to be derived from a study of current and global economic trends and is to ascertain the relevant development from which Lydenburg will benefit. This program will be re-evaluated as needs change. As a result, the building becomes a threshold which signifies change, accommodates change and growth, and is a changing entity itself. This dissertation supports a holistic view in determining the product Lydenburg is required to become in the eyes of the nation and, ultimately the world.
1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

1.3.1 CHARACTER & IDENTITY

Branding, according to Kotler and Gertner (2004:39), is an important focus of marketing, and also a key component of foreign and domestic policy international relations and economic and cultural development, trade and tourism.

Branding, character and identity are components of Economy, but also relate to social and ecological issues. In order to create a sustainable economy, environmental sustainability and a sustainable society should also be achieved in order to reach equilibrium. Character is an existing element of the town, while Identity is viewed as a chosen perception that the town wants to project to the outside world.

A strong identity creates faith in a product, which, in this case, will be Lydenburg. In turn, faith in Lydenburg will lead to investments that will encourage economical growth. Lydenburg’s original character is largely determined by its natural environment.
and location. To preserve this character, visitors and residents alike should be made aware of the natural environment of the town. For this reason, the chosen site is located between the very busy intersection between the two main axes and the Sterkspruit River that meanders through the town and that is currently fenced off and inaccessible to the local community.

Members of the public need to be made aware of their built environment, and initiatives to involve the community should be staged. This action will ensure a greater awareness of the influence that identity and character can have on the economic prosperity of the settlement and will create a sense of involvement among members of the community.

The current architectural character of the town will be analysed to determine the direction the rapid new developments should follow.
1.4 SUB PROBLEMS
1.4.1 ECONOMY
1.4.1.1 Service Economy and Knowledge

“A principal feature of contemporary society is disaggregation; it follows that resultant technologies are essentially concerned with decentralization. We live in a society with rapidly diminishing heavy industrial base and an increasing service economy” (Smith 2004:261).

The disaggregation of the industrial economy as noted by Smith is an important point of departure for this dissertation. The author is concerned with the results of this changeover as it will lead to a situation where many workers will be forced into early retirement, should industrial restructuring of employment reform happen. This will be due to a lack of formal skills and adequate schooling (Gilmore 2004:174). If an educational, skills development and schooling system is put into place now, the long-
term benefits could lead to a more sustainable economy for Lydenburg. Therefore, one of the focuses for the proposed development will be the promotion of a culture of life-long learning and the development of a knowledge economy.

The current trend of decentralisation is evident in the pattern of urban development found in South African cities such as Pretoria and Johannesburg. Previously towns and cities developed around the industrial infrastructure such as railways, harbours and mines, and the cities grew around these amenities. Today, because of the shift towards a knowledge-based economy, businesses can be located practically anywhere, as long as an information-base is accessible. This includes access to Information Technology, (the internet and other communication networks) and places of education, such as universities and companies which invest aggressively in their human capital. The change in the urban fabric as a result of this decentralisation is experienced in a defunct city centre, such as seen in Hillbrow, Johannesburg and Pretoria.
“In all the major developed cities of the world, core growth is based on the knowledge industries. The metropolis has been replaced by ‘ideopolis’ in which economic prosperity and competitiveness depend not on the ability to make things, but on generating ideas that can be sold to the world. In this age of intellectual capital both insight and innovation is more highly prized than physical wealth or infrastructure” (Gilmore, 2004: 176).

The author’s proposal for Lydenburg is an ‘incubation node’ which will nurture and develop intellectual capital, insight, ideas and innovation. The knowledge gained is to be applied on a local level to help the community prosper. Most of the knowledge and information in the node will be geared towards creating a sustainable economy and ecology, focusing on primarily on tourism and local business development.

This dissertation focuses on strategy rather than on economics. Dorrian identifies that: “Economic thinking ought to be treated as a component of a more holistic
framework, rather than being employed as the primary force behind national development” (Dorrian, 2005:3). In this holistic view, the social and ecological issues that accompany expansion and development are also addressed.

1.4.2. COMMUNITY

1.4.2.1. Community Fragmentation

Lydenburg is a typical post-apartheid town and is fragmented into four main settlements that are also sub-divided. The elements separating these communities from each other are the river flowing through the main town creating a barrier on the western edge, and the industrial area, also located on the western side. These fringe communities have no access to independent economic activity, except by trading on a small scale on a local level or by travelling to the main town. They therefore depend on transport for livelihood, as well as on a host community for economical activity.
1.4.3. ECOLOGY

1.4.3.1. Awareness of Natural Environment

A unique quality of Lydenburg is that it is situated inside a nature reserve, the Gustav Klingbiel Reserve. This natural environment reveals itself through parks within the town and a river that meanders through it. Although the river plays an important part in the character and identity of Lydenburg, recent years have seen properties along the river’s edge being sold by the council to private developers who have, in turn, fenced off the areas. The town has turned its back on the river, and its existence is no longer acknowledged.
1. INTRODUCTION

1.5 LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS

The theme and sub-themes of the dissertation, namely branding and identity, urban planning, economic trends and social and sustainable development, are each treated within context of and relevance to the proposed project. The investigation is therefore limited to information applying to intervention in programme and outcome.

The ultimate limitations for this project is seen in the light of Farmer’s statement (Farmer, 1993:3) that: “Traditionally architecture can be seen to be place-, time-, and culture-specific with logic, practicality and purpose being of central importance and with resource vision, organizational ability, talent and available technology as the ultimate limitations”.

.1_15.
.6 NEEDS ASSESSMENT
.6.1 ECONOMY
.6.1.1 Local and Global Economy

A sustainable and sustaining economical system needs to be built and has to provide equitably for a thriving human and natural community, today and in the future, by

- Encouraging local ownership by developing building skills and promoting entrepreneurial innovation
- Considering distant ownership, seeking out business people who have demonstrated good citizenship in their local communities
- Building local capacity to support the financing of sustainable economic activity
- Considering the full environmental and social impact of economic decisions
1. INTRODUCTION

- Promoting ecologically sustainable businesses
- Encouraging and giving priority to businesses that add to the economic value of regional, agricultural and other resources instead of exporting unprocessed resources for development elsewhere
- Capitalising on the economic opportunity presented by Lydenburg’s proximity to a natural, pristine environment, nature reserves and panoramic, aesthetic views for the tourism sector

Based on the Charter of Sustainability for New Pattonsburg, Missouri,

(Beatly and Manning 1997:104)
The proposed development is a project that will serve the community and act as a catalyst to create a shift towards a more sustainable economy. This undertaking is not in direct competition with the mining industry but should create another avenue for revenue and development for the town. The theme of this dissertation is branding (coupled with identity and image) but in conjunction with tourism, as in destination branding. This topic will be addressed in the programme of the building, the materials used, and the creation of a greater awareness of the natural environment. Moreover, Lydenburg’s key elements or characteristics are identified that act as attractions to make the town an appealing place in which to live or invest or to visit. These elements can be existing ones, such as the area’s rich history and the archaeological finds that originate from the town. Additionally, new elements can be introduced. These are a combination of global trends and local needs, such as a place to meet (local need) combined with educational facilities that cater for the global trends of knowledge management and knowledge economy.
1.6.2. COMMUNITY

1.6.2.1. Community Fragmentation

Lydenburg is a fragmented community, divided by man-made and natural boundaries. Where a sustainable society recognizes interdependence within a framework, Lydenburg needs to create partnership, equity and balance among all parties.

The project aims to remedy greater problems than the mere unharnessing of the potential that the tourism sector offers. To create a balanced, fair and just society, the community should look further than one single development focusing on tourism and education. The river must become the joining factor that knits these separated societies together. Developments along the edges of this river are proposed as the potential of the town will expand and grow. These projects will create equal opportunities for previously disadvantaged and marginalized communities by generating an equal chance of development and by strengthening the economical muscle of the individual through entrepreneurship.
1.6.3. ECOLOGY
1.6.3.1. Awareness of Natural Environment

- A sustainable and sustaining ecological system needs to be put in place; it should provide equitably for a thriving human and natural community today and in the future by
- Preserving the character and health of Lydenburg's natural environment, using and re-using the
- Materials, energy and water needed as efficiently as possible and eliminating waste
- Utilizing clean, renewable resources extracted from and processed by the community whenever possible
- Preserving and expanding the choices of present and future members of the community,
- Providing Information and design alternatives that encourage the use of
1. INTRODUCTION

sustainable resources, technologies and
- Methods suitable for the town’s environment and culture

Based on the Charter of Sustainability for New Pattonsburg, Missouri, (Beatly and Manning 1997:104)