

REVITALISATION OF
BAIXA'S HISTORIC CORE
THROUGH THE CONTEXTUAL
RE-INVENTION OF
RUA DE BAGAMOYO
AS A
NIGHT-LIFE PRECINCT



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DEDICATIONS

To two grandmothers;

Bobbie Owen for making tertiary education possible and for her endless concern about the tonic.

To Bella Setuki for showing me how to understand without judgement.

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PREFACE

To explain a normative position for this dissertation, one project changed the way in which at least one architectural student observes and understands the context of an African city. The Slovo Park project took place between July and November 2010 within an informal settlement to the south of Soweto Johannesburg and involved community based participative research, design and construction components, where students engaged with a community for the duration of the project collaborating on everything from initial mapping to detail resolution during construction.

Because of the 1:1 nature of project, the architecture needed to be accessible to everyone involved, this includes drawings, construction methods and presentations. The lessons learnt in Slovo park include that of a deeper and richer understanding of context using informal and conversational techniques of understanding rather than the colder more academic methods.

Various methods were employed in Slovo Park to great success. For the purposes of this dissertation taking place in another country with a different language a different method would need to be employed but the logic remains to understand all sides of context.

However, from the perspective of research, lessons learnt were those of using the context to inform decisions and gaining a fuller understanding of the needs of the client.

From the perspective of design it became apparent that communication to create accessible architecture was very important. Usually the simplest methods of explanation are better.

From the perspective of construction it was overwhelming that the knowledge of construction that comes from people who build their own houses surpasses architecture students, even those with many years working experience.

An extension of the contextual argument is to respect the vernacular, the vernacular of the current of the existing and of the poor. When finance is not readily available the same spatial qualities can be achieved when the choices of construction method and materiality are manipulated and the design is distilled to its simplest elements. This simplification is by no means a modernist approach to creating minimalist design but rather understanding of exactly what is needed and applying it using minimal interventions.

This technique can be applied to any design solution in the current world situation where materials and energy are valued resources being depleted.

To further investigate the validity of such a claim the intention of the dissertation is to use the principles of informal architecture and 1:1 interaction and apply it to an historical and urban context.

www.slovo-park.blogspot.com



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ABSTRACT

This dissertation investigates the possibility of exploiting the Genius-Loci (Spirit of Place) to revitalise an urban environment in a state of decline. To establish and understand what the Genius - Loci entails Jane Wolford's contextual theory is explored and expanded upon. Additional parameters are explored namely; heritage and social theory as well as the exploration of the mathematical theory of harmonics to rationalise intangible elements of energy . The theoretical basis is then used to create a framework for the analysis of the context.

Two scales of intervention are propped. The first is to create continuity and express the identity of the street and the second; a more detailed example of how new buildings can be implemented into a complex urban facility.

The urban response is to consolidate existing functions within Rua De Bagamoyo (A street in the historical Baixa region of Maputo, Mozambique) as a night- life precinct through the introduction of gaming as an extension of the night- life activity.

The architectural response is to create a building that houses the new functions proposed and challenges the private-public relationships of place by extending the street into the built form and the form into the street through a series of threshold spaces that explore the notions of visual and physical access.

FIGURE LIST

CHAPTER 1

Image 1.1 Photograph of Rua de Bagamoyo at sunset
 Photograph by Author July 2011 1

Image 1.2: Photograph showing decaying state of buildings
 within Baixa . Photograph by Author 2011 Rua Consiglieri
 Pedroso 1

Image 1.3 Photograph Showing Maputo Shopping, A new
 development within Baixa that has insensitively gentrified the
 area. 2

Image 1.4: Photograph showing
 vacant sections of Rua de Bagamoyo .
 Photograph by Author 2011 Rua De Bagamoyo 3

Image 1.5: Photograph of the tourist market which has
 replaced the general Saturday market at Praca de 25 Juhnno .
 Photograph by author February 2011 Praca de 25 Juhnno
 4

Image 1.4: Rua de Bagamoyo's Ladies of the night. Photograph
 by Author 2011 Rua De Bagamoyo 5

CHAPTER 2

Figure 2.1 Example of a Palimpsest. (FROWDE ;1896) 9

Figure 2.2 Conceptual Palimpsest of Rua de Bagamoyo.
 Photograph by Author 2011 and R.Rangel 1970. (RANGEL, 2004.
 35) 10

Figure 2.3 Contextual architecture as a method of fitting a
 building where it belongs. Graphic by Author 11

Figure 2.4 Wolfords twelves points of contextualism (WOLFORD;
 2004, 153) 12

Figure 2.5 Table showing the process of using the Burra charter
 (ICOMOS; 1999) 8

Figure 2.6 Photograph showing relationship of street trade to
 building edge in Maputo, Photograph by Author 2011 9

Fig 2.7 Sine wave with time on x-axis 10

Fig 2.8 Sine wave with place replaced with time on the x-axis
 10

Fig 2.9 Example of how a complex wave is separated into
 harmonics (VAN ZYL; 2001) 11

CHAPTER 3

Figure 3.1 Photograph showing Complexity in the context of
 Rua de Bagamoyo. Photograph by Author 2011 14

(Inset) Fig 3.2: Aerial Photograph showing Position of Maputo in
 the African Continent. Google Earth 2011 15

Fig 3.3: Diagrammatic Representation of Maputo Bay and
 Surrounds .Google Earth 2011. 15

Fig 3.4 Diagrammatic representation of the cities development
 . (Casson et al 2011) 16

Fig 3.5 Aerial Photograph Showing Baixa as defined by
 topography and historic character within the context of
 Maputo. Google Earth 2010 17

Figure 3.6 Map Showing Rua de Bagamoyo in the context of
 Baixa. Google Earth July 2011. 18

Fig 3.7 Mapping of Formal functions contained within buildings.
 Drawing by Author 2011 20

Fig 3.8: Mapping of informal functions that occur outside of built
 form. Drawing by Author 2011 22

Figure 3.10 Map based on Nolli's map of Rome showing publicly
 accessible spaces in white and private spaces in black for
 daylight hours along Rua de Bagamoyo. Drawing by Author
 2011 24

Figure 3.9 Photograph showing the lack of activity in the streets
 at some places at night. Photograph by Author 2011 24

Figure 3.12 Map based on Nolli's map of Rome showing publicly
 accessible spaces in white and private spaces in black for the
 night along Rua de Bagamoyo. Drawing by Author 2011
 25

Figure 3.11 Photograph showing pedestrian activity during the
 day. Photograph by Author 2011 25

Fig. 3.13 Mapping of Spaces of opportunity drawing by Author
 2011 26

Fig 3.14 (opposite page) Table of Materials Photographs by
 Author 2011 28

Fig 3.14 Sketch showing typical single story with historical
 facade 28

Fig 3.15 Sketch showing typical additive street arcade. 28

Fig 3.16 Sketch showing typical shaded facades and roof terrace	28	2011	43	Figure 3.51. Photograph showing the enclosure and domination of Rua de Bagamoyo by uncontrolled parking.	53
Fig 3.17 Sketch showing typical subtractive arcades	28	Figure 3.33. Rua Araujo: who guards the entance to my desire (1974). Rangel 2004	44	Figure 3.52.. Sectional diagram showing the relationship between the vehicles a a space defining element and the position of a vendor. Diagram by Author 2011	53
Fig 3.15 Street Elevations showing Proportion, size and scale of buildings in relation to each other. Photographs and diagram by Author 2011	31	Figure 3.34. Analysis "Rua Araujo: who guards the entance to my desire (1974)". Author 2011	44	Figure 3.53. Photograph illustrating the spacial defining characters of a parked car. Photograph by Author 2011.	53
Fig. 3.16 Photographic Timeline compiled from archived photographs (RUFINO, 1929), (RANGEL 1960- 1970) aqnd Author 2011	32	Figure 3.35. Shallow facade. Author 2011	45	Figure 3.56. Photograph showing the sex- worker client interaction. Photograph by Author 2011	54
Fig. 3.17 Cover page of Ricardo Rangels Photographic Collection.(RANGEL; 2004)	33	Figure 3.36. The "final " Bread? (1975).Rangel 2004	46	Figure 3.58. Sectional diagram showing the sex workers occupying the recesses in built fabric. Diagram by Author 2011	54
Figure 3.18. Steps emerging in to the illusion-world (1962). Rangel 2004	34	Figure 3.37. Sex workers on Rua de Bagamoyo. Author 2011	47	Figure 3.57. Photograph showing street occupation at night. Author 2011	54
Figure 3.19. Analysis of "Steps emerging in to the illusion-world (1962)". Author 2011	34	Figure 3.38 Owners of the street mapping. Photographs by Author 2011	48	Figure 3.59..Diagram showing the spacial layout of the Copa cabana strip tease bar. Diagram by Author 2011	55
Figure 3.20. Rua de Bagamoyo at night. Author 2011	35	Figure 3.39. Luis, A man Sleeps on the urban surface. Photograph by Author 2011	50	Figure 3.60. Photograph showing the position of the Copa Cabana Photograph by Author 2011	55
Figure 3.21 Embarking on the pleasure of the night (1969). Rangel 2004	36	Figure 3.40. Homeless women rests in a small patch of shade. Photograph by Author 2011	50	Figure 3.61. Sketch showing the sex- workers use of reflective surfaces to indirectly look for clients. Author 2011	55
Figure 3.22 Analysis "Embarking on the pleasure of the night". Author 2011	36	Figure 3.42. Sectional diagram showing the position of homeless in trelation to the position of shadows. Diagram by Author 2011	50	Figure 3.62..A sex worker hiding her face from the camera. Photograph by Author 2011.	55
Figure 3.23. Hotel Central Today. Author 2011	37	Figure 3.41..Women and child Sleep in a shaded area. Photograph by Author 2011	50	Figure 3.63..Photographs showing pedestrians. Photograph by Author 2011	56
Figure 3.24 Rua Araujo: all embraces shine more under neon light (1970). Rangel 2004	38	Figure 3.43. Photograph showing Vendors in the presence of parking on the opposite edge. Photograph by Author 2011	51	Figure 3.64. Mobile Nail parlours,. Photograph by Author 2011	56
Figure 3.25. Analysis "Rua Araujo: all embraces shine more under neon light (1970)". Author 2011	38	Figure 3.45. Sectional diagram showing the position of vendors when no parked car is present on the street edge. Diagram by Author 2011	51	Figure 3.66. Sectional Diagram Showing pedestrians preference to walk on the northern side of the street in great building shadows..Photograph by Author 2011	56
Figure 3.26. Luso Today. Author 2011	39	Figure 3.44. Vendors attracting business by creating a raised platform. Photograph by Author 2011	51	Figure 3.65..A trader sells cooked food using mobile cooking equipment. Photograph by Author 2011	56
Figure 3.27. Rua de Araujo: what crazy wine am I seeking? (1970). Rangel 2004.	40	Figure 3.46. Street trader. Photograph by Author 2011	51	Figure 3.67..Graphic Modelling of Light, Sound and Activity harmonics. Photograph by Author 2011	59
Figure 3.28. Analysis "Rua de Araujo: what crazy wine am I seeking? (1970)". Author 2011	40	Figure 3.47. Tchova rental store, Combatente Photograph by Author 2011	52	Figure 3.68..Street lights suspended and attached to buildings Photograph by Author 2011	60
Figure 3.29. Topazio Today. Author 2011	41	Figure 3.48. A tchova salesmen sells bananas Photograph by Author 2011	52	Figure 3.69. Standing street lights on poles. Photograph by Author 2011	60
Figure 3.30. Euphoria of Arriving in the Rua Araujo (1969). Rangel 2004	42	Figure 3.50 .Sectional diagram Showing the positioning of tchova salesmen. Diagram by Author 2011	52		
Figure 3.31. Analysis "Euphoria of Arriving in the Rua Araujo (1969)". Author 2011	42	Figure 3.49. Dimensions of a tchova sketch by author 2011.	52		
Figure 3.32. Night traders sell their wares. Photograph by Author					

Figure 3.70. Lights in arcades light the pavement .Photograph by Author 2011 60

Figure 3.71. Signage as lighting Photograph by Author 2011 61

Figure 3.72. Photograph by Author 2011 61

Figure 3.73. View towards Mercado Central Rua de Mesquita. Showing proximity to the mosque Photograph by Author 2011 62

Figure 3.74 CFM train station and transport hub . Photograph by Author 2011 62

Figure 3.75 National School of Dance. Photograph by Author 2011 62

Figure 3.76 Car washing business where music played from cellphones and radios..Photograph by Author 2011 63

Figure 3.77 Harmonic Mapping of sound on the place. 63

Figure 3.77 Night life activities where music is played. Photograph by Author 2011 63

Figure 3.78 Vendors sell food in the shade. Photograph by Author 2011 64

Figure 3.79 Night Vendors concentrated in well lit spaces Photograph by Author 2011 65

Figure 3.80 .Harmonic Mapping of activity on place 65

CHAPTER 4

Fig 4.1 Google earth Aerial Photograph showing how Gleaneagles road relates to its context. 70

Fig 4.3 Typical night out as indicated by user that are mostly single between the ages of 18-30 but within this the timeline the users will change and different groups occupy spaces at different times. 71

Fig 4.3 Timeline showing organic lifecycle of nightlife within the city 71

Fig 4.4 Stched Photograph of street facing facade of Gleaneagles road. Photograph by Author 2011 71

Figure 4.5 Strip Development of Las Vegas (Image Google Earth 2010) 72

Figure 4.6 3-dimensional building as a per Google Earth (2010) showing the scale of buildings along the strip 73

Figure 4.Learning from Ls Vegas 2.jpg 73

Figure 4.Learning from LAs Vegas 4.jpg 73

Figure 4.Learning from Las Vegas.jpg 73

Figure 4.Fremont Street Street Slots.jpg 74

Figure 4.8 Photo- Montage of images showing the interior space of the Fremont Street Experience see Fig list for References 74

Figure 4.9 Fremont Street Golden Nugget 74

Figure 4.10 goldennugget_ 74

Figure 4.11 Diagram showing connections to existing. 75

Figure 4.12 Photograph showing Fremont street experience from east. Photograph. Feurtes (2003) 75

Figure 4.13 Photograph showing Fremont street experience and dimensions from east. Photograph. Feurtes (2003) 75

Figure 4.14 IMG_4115.JPG 76

CHAPTER 5

Figure 5.1 .Map Showing the position of Rua de Bagamoyo in context of the Baixa . Google Earth Image February 2011 81

Figure 5.2 Diagram showing the concept of incrementality. Diagram by Author 2011 82

Figure 5.3 Conceptual sketch of creating atmosphere with light Sketch by Author 2011 83

Figure 5.4 Drawing showing possible interventions as masses with the street view elevation on the southern facade. Drawing C.Filipe 2011 85

Figure 5.5 Graph showing the process of a big night out through time. Refer to Chapter 4 Greenside case study. by Author 2011 86

Figure 5.6 Graph showing the process of a big night out as applied to space. by Author 2011 86

Figure 5.7 Graphic Explanation of how the Energy wave is manipulated and how a harmonic is generated. By Author 2011 87

Figure 5.8 Development of energy wave in the site 87

Figure 5.9 Conceptual sketch showing layers of enclosure about the street as Palimpsest and threshold derivation. By Author 2011 88

Figure 5.10 Stewart Brands "six s's" (BRAND, 1994.) 88

Figure 5.11 3-dimensional implementation of the concept on Rua de Bagamoyo. 89

Figure 5.12 Conceptual model of tensile structures as an enclosure and element of Continuity. by Author 2011 90

Figure 5.13 Conceptual model where the tensile structure can be seen as a skeleton 91

Figure 5.15 Conceptual Section Showing South Facade of Rua de Bagamoyo where the form volume is generated by heritage value and the permeability of the structure is generated by the proposed and existing functions below. Drawing by Author 2011 91

Figure 5.16 Conceptual Section showing Northern facade of Rua de Bagamoyo drawing by Author 2011. 91

Figure 5.14 Conceptual Model where service spaces are included into the space and tensile structure creates a uniform

enclosure below. 91

Figure 5.17. Aerial Photograph of Montecasino (Google earth September 2011) overlaid by the store directory. www.montecasino.com95

Figure 5.17 Photograph of small gaming spaces off a larger passage. Photograph by Author 2011. 96

Figure 5.18 Emperors palace map. www.piermontglobal.com 96

Figure 5.19 Sketch plan of Polana Casino. drawing by Author 2011 97

Figure 5.20 Photograph showing security at the polana casino and the inaccessibility by pedestrian, Photograph by author 2011 97

Figure 5.21 Map showing existing functions. Google Earth February 2011 edited by Author 2011 101

Figure 5.22 Photographic Elevations with overlaid from on site interviews. Photograph by Author Documents (Maputo Workshop, 2010) 102

Figure 5.24 Sketch showing conceptual Entrance lighting and signage at Praca de Trabalhadores. 104

Figure 5.23 Plan Showing position of public entrances to the precinct. 104

Figure 5.25 Conceptual sketch of entrance from Praca de 25 Junho 104

Figure 5.26 Conceptual sketch showing entrance from Rua de Mesquita104

Figure 5.27 Plan showing positions of services areas. 105

Figure 5.28 Photographs of existing alleys to be used as service entrances. Photographs by Author 105

Figure 5.30 Photograph showing uncontrolled parking. Photograph by Author 2011 106

Figure 5.29 Plan showing areas for allocated parking. 106

Figure 5.31 Conceptual parking lot , with controlled access taking layering of structure into the design. 106

Figure 5.32 Plan showing the introduction of new functions to complete the precinct.. 107

Figure 5.33 Photograph showing the types of transport vehicles

creating damage in the narrow streets. Photograph J.BENNETT 2010 107

Figure 5.36 Conceptual sketch of open space designed to celebrate the existing trees 108

Figure 5.35 Plan showing position of open spaces to be created as public spaces. 108

Figure 5.37 Conceptual sketch showing an event space design next to the national School of dance. 108

Figure 5.38 Example of existing portuguese stone paving found across the city. Photograph C.DEACON 2011 109

Figure 5.39 Diagram showing possible patterns using hexagonal concrete pavers. 109

Figure 5.40 Conceptual detail of new roof surface taking into account flooding and poor storm water infrastructure. 109

Figure 5.42 3-dimensional indication of additive shade structures 110

Figure 5.41 plan showing positions of additive shading structures 110

Figure 5.43 Sectional diagram showing shade structure layered on the horizontal plane. 110

Figure 5.44 Sectional diagram showing shade structure when attached to non-heritage building 110

Figure 5.45 Plan showing positions of shading structures and new light and entrances 111

Figure 5.46 Detail sketch of lights in pergola structure 111

Figure 5.47 Photograph showing Rua de Bagamoyo at twilight Photograph by Author 2011 112

Figure 5.48 Photograph of conceptual model showing servant spaces and public spaces 112

Figure 5.49 Photograph showing existing threshold treatment,. Photograph by Author 2011 112

Figure 5.50 Diagram showing transition of thresholds and obscured sight lines 113

Figure 5.51 Photograph showing a policeman and a prostitute talking in the recess of a window. Photograph by Author 2011 113

Figure 5.52 Diagrammatic sketch development into a parti

113

Figure 5.53 plan showing gradients of public- private relationships 114

Figure 5.54 plan showing all new functions interspersed with the existing, superimposed on a noll-type map showing precinct inclusive spaces in white and non-precinct functions in black. 115

CHAPTER 6

Figure 6.1 Photograph showing position of architectural intervention site plan. Photograph by Author 2011 118

Figure 6.2 Plan showing layout of new intervention 119

Figure 6.3 Map showing positions of large markets within baixa and surrounding areas.(Google earth 2011) 120

Figure 6.4 Sketchplan of market layout diagram by Author 2011 120

Figure 6.5 Photograph of the alcohol section . Photograph by M BOHEEMAN 2011 121

Figure 6.6 Stacks of crates mark the entrance to the market . Photograph .M. BOHEEMAN 2011 121

Figure 6.7 Food stalls and alcohol stalls use tables and chairs to spill out into the street. Photograph M. BOHEEMAN, 2011 121

Figure 6.8 The market becomes a recreational space. Photograph M. BOHEEMAN 2011 121

Figure 6.9 Sales woman selling beer and cold drinks. Photograph by Author 2011 122

Figure 6.10 Sales woman sells hot food with a mobile kitchen. Photograph by Author 2011 122

Figure 6.11 Food sales occurs in the shade. Photograph by Author 2011 122

Figure 6.12 Parti development with the inclusion of functions. 123

Figure 6.12 Collage showing various sectional exploration. 124

Figure 6.13 Initial attempt at showing a duality between masculine and feminine spaces as stereotomic and tectonic expressions. 125

Figure 6.14 Expression of concept into a form exploring light as a method of creating atmosphere. 126

Figure 6.15 Simplification of form based on where light reaches. Further expression of the street as a vibrant place with the introduction of the mask and veil through 127

Figure 6.15 Further simplification to allow for photovoltaics on the north and the introduction of natural light to the tectonic spaces. 128

Figure 6.16 Section showing a building solution as a direct response to the conceptual development 129

Figure 6.17 3-dimensional exploration showing the roof structures as a series of tapestries weaving an enclosure. 129

Figure 6.18 Section showing simplification of form through triangulation 130

Figure 6.19 built concept model in context to show the translation of simplification 130

Figure 6.20 Section showing the re-introduction of a continuous element spanning across the street 131

Figure 6.20 Computer model;ling of the structural implications of a dual roofed structure. 131

Figure 6.21 Section showing roof as a method of creating implied continuity 132

Figure 6.22 3- Dimensional exploration of the simplified structure expression in volume the thresholds of transition. 132

Figure 6.23 Section showing an even further simplification expressing the continuity by the tapering of the soffit. 133

3- dimensional exploration of the simple solution showing layering in the horizontal plane to continue the thresholds as enclosure. 133

CHAPTER 7

Figure 7.1 Photograph showing how thresholds are occupied and articulated through screening in the existing. Photograph by Author 2011 136

Figure 7.2 Site plan showing area of focus including surrounding structures 137

Figure 7.3 Site plan showing interventions and their relationship to the street. 137

Figure 7.4 .South Elevation. of the gaming space. 138

Figure 7.5 Plan of the gaming space showing various layers of public and private relationships through transition. 139

Figure 7.6 Sketch showing interaction between street -pavement and entrance ramp. 140

Figure 7.7 Sketch showing ramp and interior interaction with allowance for reflection and views into the interior space. 141

Figure 7.8 Sketch showing initial interior space (slots) 142

Figure 7.9 Sketch showing tables floor and screen circulation space. 143

Figure 7.10 Sketch showing the circulation space and private entrance. 144

Figure 7.11 PPlan showing service spaces, Redline and general. 145

Figure 7.12 First floor plan of gaming facility Showing services and private. 146

Figure 7.11 Sketch showing interaction of circulation to Private slots 147

Figure 7.11 Entrance to table through the slots as an articulation of threshold 148

Figure 7.12 First floor street interaction Screening elements exist on horizontal and vertical planes. 149

Figure 7.13 Photograph indicating method of appropriating space employed in the existing. 150

Figure 7.14 Site plan indicating position of "food court" market and food service spaces. 150

Figure 7.15 North Elevation of market and sex-worker facilities. 151

CHAPTER 8

Figure 7.16 Sketch showing "tourist friendly" bar and food outlet. 152

Figure 7.17 An actress prepares for perform at the wits theatre. Photograph by Author 2003 153

Figure 7.18 Sketch showing recessed entrance to the sex worker facilities 154

Figure 7.19 Sketch showing entrance lobby and private stair 155

Figure 7.20 Sketch showing transition through the courtyard and outside access to the street. 156

Figure 7.21 Sketch showing the reflective surfaces of window and mirror leading into the communal changing space 157

Figure 7.22 Showing the protrusion of the shower block screened and lit from the interior emphasising the silhouette of the body. 158

Figure 7.23 Sketch showing the final make up check space and exit towards the street. 159

Figure 7.24 Sketch showing the final make up check space and exit towards the street. 160

Figure 7.25 Rendering showing the Gambling Facility entrance. 161

Figure 7.26 Section through both sides of the street 163

Figure 8.1 Map Showing the extent of the historical border between "cement city" and the informal 167

Figure 8.2 Photograph showing concrete masonry and concrete frame construction. Photograph by Author 2011 168

Figure 8.3 Photograph showing a concrete block manufacturing within a houses yard. Photograph by Author 2011 168

Figure 8.4 Photograph showing a man standing on a thin concrete edge. Photograph by Author 2011 168

Figure 8.5 Photograph showing Concrete air clocks as ventilation and decoration. Photograph by Author 2011 168

Figure 8.6 Photograph showing concrete frame construction with concrete block infill and steel screens as burglar bars and security doors. Photograph by Author 2011 169

Figure 8.7 Example of a connection between the timber and concrete. Sketch by Author 2011 170

Figure 8.8 Sketch of timber column sketch by Author 2011 170

Figure 8.9 Sketch of concrete column and its connection to the ground and roof. Sketch by Author 2011 170

Figure 8.10 Photograph showing layering of roof structure. (DECKLER et al, 2006; 44) 170

Figure 8.11 Photograph showing roof extension and underlay (DECKLER et al, 2006; 43) 170

Figure 8.10 Collage showing materials to be used. By Author 2011 171

Figure 8.11 Map showing proximity to Mpumalanga and other Mozambican provinces. Adapted from Google maps 2011 172

Figure 8.11 Table of timber production per province in Mozambique. (Gatto, 2003: 2) 172

Figure 8.12 Diagrammatic 3- D view of structure and skin 173

Figure 8.14 Sectional diagram showing progression of column into the private 174

Figure 8.13 Diagrammatic plan showing transitional nature of column structure 174

Figure 8.15 Section through gaming facility showing position of transitional columns and threshold barriers. 175

Figure 8.16 Detail development of street- pavement threshold 176

Figure 8.17 Detail development of Pavement- Entrance ramp threshold 177

Figure 8.18 Detail Development of inside-outside boundary 178

Figure 8.19 Detail development of the solid concrete columns as threshold between interior spaces 179

Figure 8. 20 Detail development of services spaces construction. 180

Figure 8.21 3- Dimensional sketch to show thickness of foundation beneath columns 181

Figure 8.20 diagrammatic exploration of foundation 181

Figure 8.22 Graphic illustrating the mashrabiya 182

Figure 8.23 Collage of decorative screens and burglar bars found within Rua de Bagamoyo 182

Figure 8.25 Humidity table image by B. SNOW 2011 183

Figure 8.24 Maputo average temperatures graph. Generated by Author 183

Figure 8.26 Diagram showing the workings of an absorption chiller. (KWOK and GRONDZIK, 2007:76) 184

Figure 8.27 Diagrammatic section showing HVAC system 184

Figure 8.31 Section Showing air movement space to allow sea breezes to cool the thermal mass of the roof slab. 185

Figure 8.30 Diagrammatic section showing raised roof slab. 185

Figure 8.28 Sea breeze diagram at night. 185

Figure 8.29 Sea breeze diagram at day. 185

Figure 8.32 Sectional diagram showing movement of water 187



Introduction

Dedications v

Preface ix

Abstract xi

Figure List xiii

Table of Contents xv

Chapter 1- Overview and Introduction

1.1 Introduction 1

1.2 Theoretical Position 2

1.3 Exploration of the Problem 2

1.3.1 *Problems in the physical context* 2

1.3.2 *Problems with the social interaction of space* 2

1.3.3 *Problems with tourism* 3

1.3.4 *Problems with reputation* 4

1.3.5 *Real World Problem* 5

1.3.6 *Specific Problem* 5

1.4 Aims 4

1.5 Hypothesis 4

Chapter 2 -Theoretical Basis

2.1 Introduction 9

2.2 Spirit of Place -Genius Loci 10

2.3 Contextualism 11

2.4 Character and essence 12

2.5 Historical Significance and Heritage 12

2.6 Social Understanding 13

2.7 Harmonics 13

2.8 Conclusion 14



Chapter 3 - Understanding Context

3.1 Introduction	15
3.2 General Locale and Specific Siting	15
3.2.1 Mozambique	16
3.2.2 Maputo	19
3.2.3 Baixa	21
3.2.4 Rua De Bagamoyo	21
3.3 Style	21
3.3.1 Type in Program	21
3.3.2 Type in Form and Aesthetic	23
3.4 Materiality	29
3.4.1 Texture	29
3.4.2 Type	29
3.4.3 Colour	29
3.5 Size, Shape and Proportion	30
3.6 Historical Significance	33
3.7 Social Significance	50
3.7.1 Residential Users	52
3.7.2 Static Vendors	53
3.7.3 Tachova Traders	54
3.7.4 Vehicles	55
3.7.5 Sex Workers	56
3.7.6 Mobile Vendors and Pedestrians	58
3.8 Harmonic Analysis	61
3.8.1 Light	63
3.8.2 Sound	65
3.8.3 Activity	67

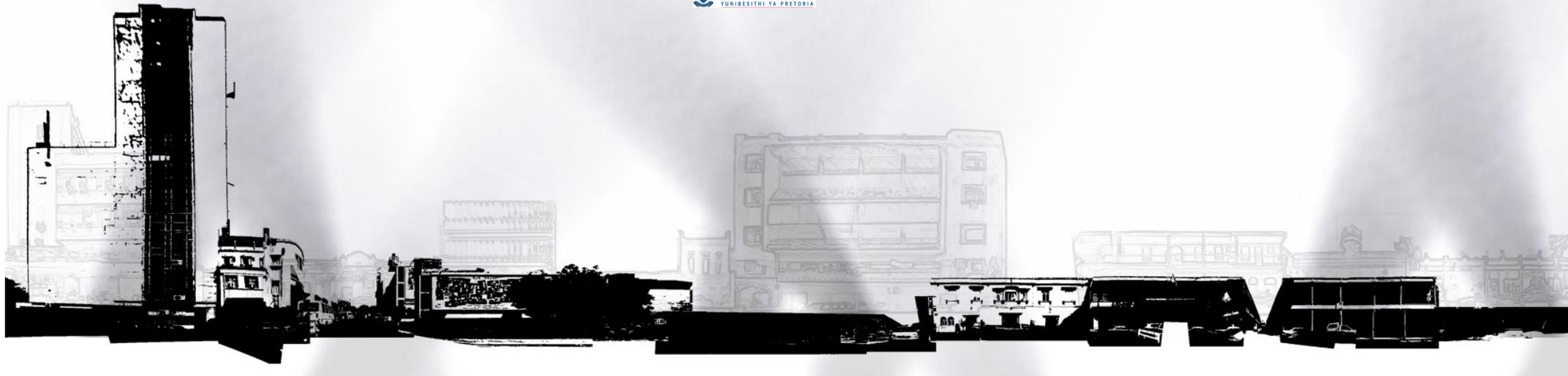
Chapter 4 - Urban Precedent Studies

4.1 Case Study - Night Life and the Street	
4.2 Case Study - Las Vegas	72
4.2.1 Fremont Street Experience	77
4.3 Case Study - Small Street Mall Johannesburg	79

Chapter 5 - Urban Concept

5.1 Introduction	82
5.2 General Locale and Specific Siting	83
5.3 Type in Program	84
5.4 Spaces of Opportunity	84
5.5 Aesthetic	85
5.5.1 Ground Plane	85
5.5.2 Light	85
5.6 Size, Shape and Proportion	86
5.7 Historical Significance	86
5.8 Owners of the Street	87
5.9 Harmonics	88
5.9.1 Energy	88
5.9.2 Application to Place	88
5.9.3 Increasing the Amplitude	89
5.10 Concept	90
5.11 Development of a Solution	92

5.12 Programme	94
5.12.1 Introduction to Gaming	95
5.12.2 Conforming to urban concept	95
5.12.3 Precedent	96
5.12.4 Friedman Casino Design Principles	100
5.13 Introduction to an Urban Plan	101
5.13.1 Existing	103
5.13.2 Access	106
5.13.3 Service Areas	107
5.13.4 Allocation of Parking	108
5.13.5 Reprogramming of Existing Buildings	109
5.13.6 Open Spaces	110
5.13.7 Ground Treatment	111
5.13.8 Dealing with Facade	112
5.13.9 Light	113
5.13.10 New Buildings	114
5.14 Urban Plan	117



Chapter 6 - Design Development

6.1 Introduction	121
6.2 Programme	121
6.2.1 <i>Museu Market Precedent</i>	122
6.2.2 <i>Informal Sales on Street Level</i>	123
6.2.3 <i>Application to the Park</i>	125
6.3 Sectional Development Parti- Parti	126
6.3.1 <i>The Atmosphere of Rua de Bagamoya</i>	127
6.3.2 <i>Direct Form Translation</i>	131
6.3.3 <i>Triangulation</i>	132
6.3.4 <i>Continuity</i>	133
6.3.5 <i>Simplification</i>	134
6.3.6 <i>Expression of the Palimpsest</i>	135

Chapter 7 - Architectural Intervention

7.1 Introduction	138
7.2 Definitions for the Chapter	139
7.3 The Planning of a Gaming Space	141
7.3.1 <i>Public Spaces and Street Interface</i>	142
7.3.2 <i>Inside-Outside Relationship</i>	143
7.3.3 <i>Gaming Space</i>	144
7.3.4 <i>Entry Level Gaming to High Stakes Tables</i>	145
7.3.5 <i>Floor to Circulation</i>	146
7.3.6 <i>Service Spaces</i>	147
7.4 Prive Space	148
7.4.1 <i>Service Spaces</i>	148
7.4.2 <i>Circulation</i>	149
7.4.3 <i>Stops and Tables</i>	150
7.4.4 <i>First Floor Relationship to Street</i>	151
7.5 Food Court	152
7.5.1 <i>Designing for the Imponderable</i>	153
7.5.2 <i>Provide safety and comfort for tourists</i>	154
7.6 Facilities for Sex Workers	155
7.6.1 <i>Hidden Entrance</i>	156
7.6.2 <i>Security and Acceptance</i>	157
7.6.3 <i>Transition through the Mundane</i>	158
7.6.4 <i>Elegance in the Everyday</i>	159
7.6.5 <i>Celebration of the Shower</i>	160
7.6.6 <i>Collective Transition</i>	161
7.6.7 <i>Final Make-up Check</i>	162

Chapter 8 - Technical Investigation

B.1 Introduction	168
B.2 Construction Precedent	169
B.2.1 <i>Combatentes</i>	169
B.2.2 <i>Real Location Museum</i>	172
B.3 Materiality	173
B.4 Structure	175
B.4.1 <i>Columns</i>	176
B.4.2 <i>Beams</i>	182
B.4.3 <i>Foundations</i>	183
B.5 Skin	184
B.6 Service Systems	185
B.6.1 <i>Thermal Comfort and Ventilation</i>	186
B.6.2 <i>Lighting</i>	187
B.6.3 <i>Water</i>	189



Bibliography and Declaration 192

Appendix

1.1 Urban Model 195
1.2 Final Presentation 196