interspace

interspace (in'-ter-spās) *n.* a space in between; intervening space

conclusion

The aim of this dissertation was to exploit the concept of social integration and advancement of previously disadvantaged people through designing an adequate public transport facility for Marabastad, to create a social facility with a sense of place for the community as well as establishing a sense of permanence and integration. The aim was to upgrade existing transport systems, to promote public transport and to provide legible, more organized facilities through focusing on “interfaces”.

An interface is a crossing point and a meeting place, where interaction occurs between processes, systems and people. These crossings are found everywhere; at city markets, transport interchanges, on street sidewalks, etc. In most cases; these nodes are extremely successful as meeting places, but often lack sufficient public facilities. The proposed intervention provides the community with social spaces that allow for communal interaction. The proposals made merely form the beginnings of a model for dealing with public meeting places. The concepts explored could be applied on a larger scale throughout the city, to provide basic facilities needed. Small interventions can provide opportunities for evolution and appropriation, so that a sense of place may be spawned from existing fabric over time.

An interface as an in-between functions as un-programmed space; space to be appropriated by the user. The project manages to focus simultaneously on the formal and informal aspects of places for social gathering, such as transport interchanges. The building acts as an envelope creating spaces which allow activities to develop unofficially and spontaneously while bearing a great sense of formality and certainty. The building and the spaces it creates, provides flexibility for a variety of building functions while adhering to existing movement and functions on the site. A program is generated for a building through the superimposition of existing rituals and processes occurring on and around the site. The site acts as a catalyst for future development of this in-between that is Marabastad.

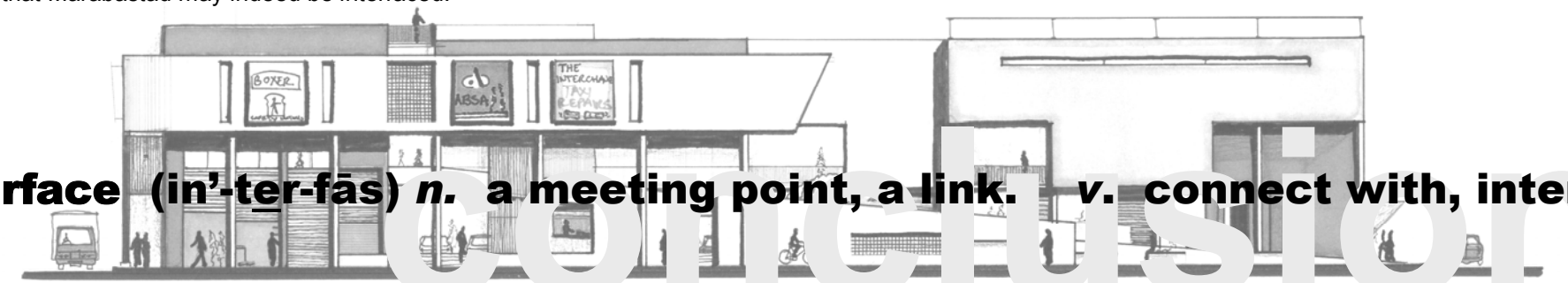
The interface becomes the generator of new events for this part of the city. The development provides urban renewal in an area in need of “urgent urban intervention” (Pretoria ISDF 1999:2). This dissertation provides solutions that will improve the quality of life for the residents, users and visitors of Marabastad. The building is integrated with the surrounding environment and enhances the unique social, cultural and historical attributes that are Marabastad. The building becomes a landmark in the precinct and could exploit this area as an important destination for tourists, inhabitants and commuters to the city. Other transport related facilities should however be upgraded and links between transport related functions need to be strengthened throughout the precinct. The proposed intervention will hopefully re-activate the suburb through stimulating commercial activity and planting the seed for future investment. The functional diversity of the facility, as a gateway for so many people to the city, creates an overlay of systems and functions. This manifests in the spaces created by the building.

a crossing point and a meeting place
an in-between
the generator
conclusion

Constructed of the amalgamation of different parts, **the building itself becomes an interface**. The built form echoes the fine grain of Marabastad, while reflecting the multiple layers of the program. Although the building has a flexible loose fit plan with a wide central space, its façade emphasizes the street-block-relationship through definite built edges. The perimeter building restores the historic character of the precinct through reinstating the unique grid which distinguishes Marabastad from the rest of the CBD. Besides providing an enclosure for the ranking facility this transition between sidewalk and building acts as a multi layered threshold; introducing a variety of complementary functions. The permeability of the enclosure provides links with the surrounding fabric and promotes interaction between spaces and people. Thresholds varying in physical and visual permeability regulate these levels of interaction. Covered walkways and canopies provide transitions between inside and outside, extending the boundaries between public and private to form spaces for interaction. These also offer shade and shelter against heat and precipitation.

The building was designed with a long term vision; it is of a high standard and extremely robust. It is designed to accommodate a variety of uses over its lifespan, and is therefore a sustainable solution. The intervention underpins the understanding that the architect intervenes in a short time interval after which the space is layered and defined by a number of people over time. The level of public participation through all phases of the development is extremely important. Through input and choice, the community will feel an immediate ownership of the facility, which will bring about pride and conservation of their property. The success of this project greatly depends on interpretation by its users.

Whereas the principal spatial agenda of apartheid was (racial) segregation, the spatial agenda for the new democratic era is evidently one of integration. The proposed public transport facility becomes an obvious place for integration, affording the possibility for a range of human encounters. Ranging from the private everyday routine of eating, to the ceremonial type preparation and consumption in a public restaurant located in a temporary tent-like structure, rituals determine space. Spaces are furthermore activated by the bodies that populate them.
One can only hope that the spaces and surfaces created become reflections of the remarkable ability of communities to respond to space, so that Marabastad may indeed be interfaced.



interface (in'-ter-fās) *n.* a meeting point, a link. *v.* connect with, interact

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Sources

list of figures

Figure 1 and introduction the greater Tshwane area 7

Figure 2 context 11

Figure 3 Tshwane CBD 12

Figure 4 siting of Marabastad on the border of the CBD 12

Figure 5 present Marabastad 13

Figure 6 Marabastad 1947. Pretoria Inner City Partnership. 1998:16 13

Figure 7 back of Tamil temple. Photograph taken by the author 14

Figure 8 unveiling of the Paul Kruger statue after the construction of the station building. Pretoriana, acquired from an ISDF for Salvokop 14

Figure 9 main routes, nodes and stations 15

Figure 10 images of Marabastad.* Photograph taken by Markus Meyer (fellow student), edited by the author 15

Figure 11 main roads through CBD. Illustration by author and image acquired from ISDF for Marabastad 1998 16

Figure 12 images of public transport throughout Marabastad.* 17

Figure 13 Belle Ombre station* 17

Figure 14 Belle Ombre station bus rank* 18

Figure 15 bus rank west of Maraba shopping complex* 18

Figure 16 retaining wall at Belle Ombre and informal taxi rank (corner of Bazaar and 7th)* 18

Figure 17 shebeen on the corner of Seventh and Bloed. Photograph taken by the author 19

Figure 18 Site and surrounding city blocks. 19

Figure 19 existing site and surrounding Land Use 20

a corner of Jerusalem and Grand looking north-east*

b run-down vacant building and illegal shacking on site*

c from Jerusalem looking east towards the Mariammen Temple Photograph taken by the author

d typical Marabastad sidewalk; covered walkways and trade*

e inadequate ranking– and hawking facilities leads to unhygienic circumstances in Marabastad. Photograph taken by the autor

f north-west corner of Jerusalem and Grand*

g view to the east down Grand Street*

Figures

All graphics that are not referenced were created by the author.

All aerial photographs were acquired from the Geology Department of the University of Pretoria, edited by the author

All photographs referenced to Markus Meyer, were taken on a site visit conducted together with the author

Figure 20 the corner of Jerusalem and Bloed* 21

Diagram illustrating ISDF proposals. Background image acquired from the ISDF for Marabastad 1998, overlay by author 22

Figure 21 selected site bordered by high volume activity streets 23

Figure 22 proposed typical section through Bloed street. Traced by the author from drawing in the ISDF for Marabastad 1998 23

Figure 23 proposed typical section through Jerusalem street. Traced by the author from drawing in the ISDF for Marabastad 1998 24

Figure 24 D F Malan a high-volume arterial route. Edited from image in the ISDF for Marabastad 1998 24

Figure 25 illustrating views down present Jerusalem– and Fifth Street with location of proposed Mariammen square.* 25

Photographs taken by Markus Meyer (fellow student), edited by the author

Figure 26 transport as ritual 26

a looking south down Van der Walt Street. Photograph taken by the author

b small encounters*

Figure 27 daily rituals 27

a western elevation of Mariammen Temple. Photograph taken by the author

b having lunch*

c getting a haircut*

d shopkeepers on the corner of Grand– and Jerusalem Street*

e pre-school in 7th Street*

Figure 28 possible events occurring on the same site 28

Figure 29 accommodating possible events occurring on the same site 29

Figure 30 Esselin Street, Pretoria. Simple interventions can accommodate traders while creating opportunities for interaction and appropriation 31

Figure 31 community architecture Photograph taken by the author 32

Figure 32 Mbazwane Rural Resource Centre Architectural review 1995: 43 32

Figure 33 hawking facilities at Mansell Road Digest of South African Architecture 2004/2005: 148 33

Figure 34 the shopping/dwelling units with their interior courtyard 34

Figure 35 porticoes provide transitions between the public and the local authority photo by Ronnie Levitan illustrated by the author 35

Figure 36 A section through the building 36

Figure 37 interventions at Eersterivier, Kuilsrivierand Melton Rose stations 37

Figure 38 low walls can serve a variety of functions Digest of South African Architecture 2004/2005:150 38

Figure 39 spaces are not prescriptive in their associated uses Digest of South African Architecture 2004/2005:150 39

Figure 40 images of Metro Mall photographs taken by the author 40

Figure 41 ranking facilities at Metro Mall photographs taken by the author 41

Figures

Figure 42 formal facilities for hawkers photographs taken by the author 42
Figure 43 various streetscapes (diagrams and photographs) by the author 43
Figure 44 investigating possible events 47
Figure 45 conceptualizing Marabastad 48
Figure 46 mapping Marabastad 49
Figure 47 mapping the site: movement 50
Figure 48 mapping the site: objects 51
Figure 49 mapping the site: views 52
Figure 50 mapping the site: activity 53
Figure 51 mapping the site: rituals 54
Figure 52 mapping the site: the place of the possible event 55
Figure 53 conceptual site layout 56
Figure 54 conceptualizing the bathhouse in relation to ranking facilities 57
Figure 55 conceptualizing trade facilities and boundaries 57
Figure 56 conceptualizing the community hall in relation to ranking facilities 58
Figure 57 conceptualizing the community hall as a multi-functional facility 58
Figure 58 conceptual site layout 59
Figure 59 voids become the place for appropriation 60
Figure 60 conceptual sections—public and private realms 61
Figure 61 conceptual elevations 62
Figure 62 buttress walls create opportunities for informal trade 63
Figure 63 conceptual section and elevation illustrating vehicular access 63
Figure 64 layout of taxi rank 64
Figure 65 perimeter block buildings to reinstate the unique historic grid of Marabastad 64
Figure 66 site layout 65
Figure 67 site layout 66
Figure 68 strong links between the two ranking blocks 66
Figure 69 the building corresponds to the scale and character of surrounding buildings 66
Figure 70 east elevation of ranking block 67
Figure 71 west elevation of ranking block 67
Figure 72 ground– first– and second floor plans 67

Figures

Figure 73 ground– first– and second floor plans 68
Figure 74 section 1 68
Figure 75 section 2 68
Figure 76 east elevation 68
Figure 77 the northern façade 69
Figure 78 the corner of Bloed– and Fourth Street 69
Figure 79 a pedestrian ramp frames a space suitable for community appropriation 70
Figure 80 the multi-layered ranking block 74
Figure 81 a section through the block 75
Figure 82 access and services 76
Figure 83 ventilation 76
Figure 84 basic facilities for trade 77
Figure 85 mosaic boundaries Photograph taken by the author 77
Figure 86 current trade practices 78
Figure 87 northern façade shading devices 79
Figure 88 north elevation 79
Figure 89 cavity wall 80
Figure 90 south elevation 80
Figure 91 a walkway connecting two parts of the building 81
Figure 92 a space for meeting and trade 81
Figure 93 The eastern façade as multi-layered threshold 82
Figure 94 east elevation 82
Figure 95 section through Bloed street colonnade 83
Figure 96 fixed elements of the flexible ground floor plan 84
Figure 97 more permanent stall 84
Figure 98 possible configuration plan 84
Figure 99 flexible roof structure 85
Figure 100 west elevation 85
Figure 101 roof structure over the western platform 86
Figure 102 Bloed Street colonnade details 87
Figure 103 elements for visual permeability 88

Figures

Figure 104 site layout 89
Figure 105 ground floor plan 90
Figure 106 first floor plan 91
Figure 107 second floor plan 92
Figure 108 roof plan 93
Figure 109 sections 94
Figure 110 elevations 95
Figure 111 elevations 96

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