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Context Study

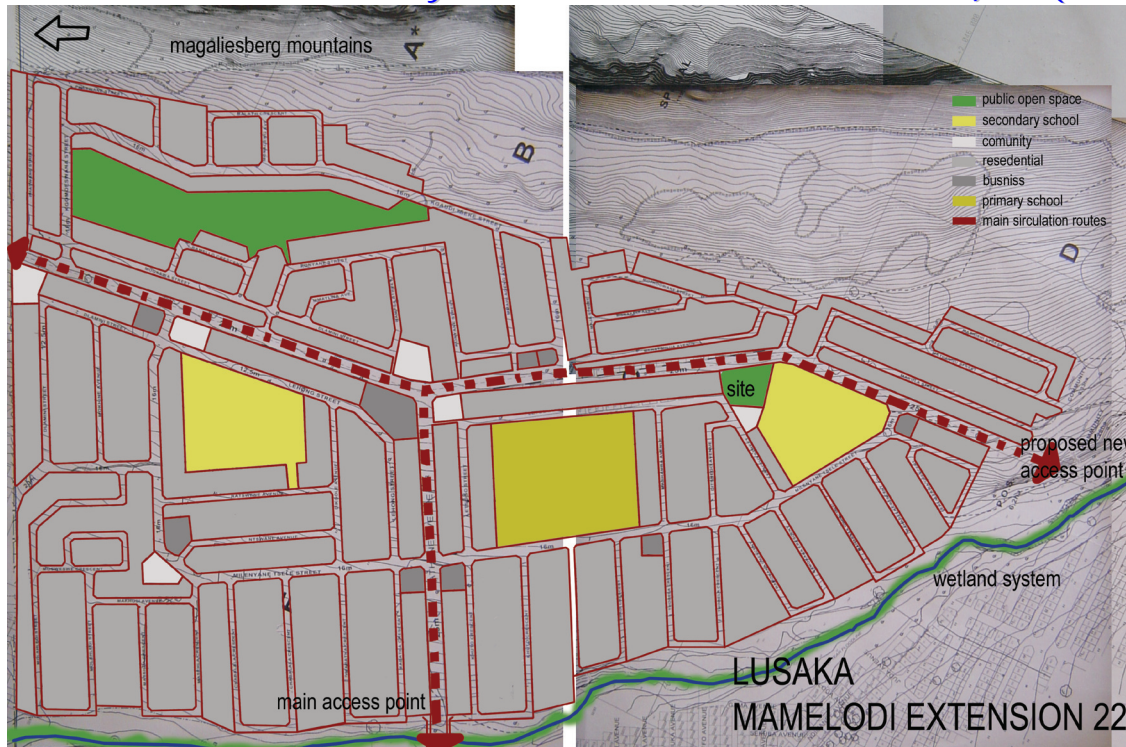


Fig. 15 Townplan layout of Lusaka (Pretoria City Council PCC)

Lusaka

Lusaka, established around 1999, is the locally given name for Extension 22, Mamelodi. It hugs the slopes of the Magaliesberg Mountains on the eastern border of Mamelodi. On its western border the Moretele river forms a wetland boundary. The only vehicular access is a bridge across the river.

The urban fabric grain is extremely small scale and dispersed. There are no nodes and no anchors.

Lusaka is well provided with running water, paved streets, electricity and sewage as this is a new township in the process of proclamation. A town plan for the area indicates areas set aside for businesses and community facilities. In reality these sites are now mostly occupied by squatters who were left over after the new area was established.

The government provided flush toilets on each stand. The residents each own their plot, and it is possible to see this ownership reflected in the homes and gardens.

Facility has to be designed as a node in the urban fabric

Fig 16 Aerial Photograph of Lusaka (PCC).

Many plots boast lovingly tended gardens and homes, even if the owner apparently has very little money.

Access to Lussaka is via a bridge across the river. Another access point is proposed to the south, to link with future development on the area currently occupied by informal settlements. The site is not on any bus routes, but a lot of taxi activity is evident.

Lusaka is perceived as a very pleasant place to live. The mountain form a scenic backdrop to the East, while a view of Mamelodi lies spread out to the West

Despite this rather pleasant picture, Lusaka is still a poor community with very little resources. It is situated very far from any economic activity, although a few self-employed businesses have cropped up. These small businesses, which



Figures from top right

Fig. 17 Ext. 9 Clinic

Fig. 18 House with garden

Fig. 19 Spaza shop

Fig. 20 Water closets

Fig. 21 Ext. 9 school

Fig. 22 Vegetable shop

Fig. 23 Wetland

Fig. 24 Day care

include a daycare center, a vegetable shop, a tuck shop and a home mechanic, are all run from private stands. Apart from these home-run businesses there are no other economic, social or community services such as churches, shops, schools and doctors available in Lusaka itself. Children attend school in Extension 9, and all medical problems are taken to the Clinic in Extension 9. The only recreational area is a large open field with an informal soccer pitch.

Just across from Lusaka, beyond the stream is an informal settlement called RDP. The name refers to the fact that these people are still waiting for redevelopment and the proclamation of a township. They were relocated to this area in 1996 to make room for other developments. The settlement is in a wetland area. There are no services and no roads. When it rains the children stay away from school as the footpaths become impossible to walk and people have to queue for water at the few water taps. Plans for development in this area have already been considered, but it is unknown when they will be implemented.

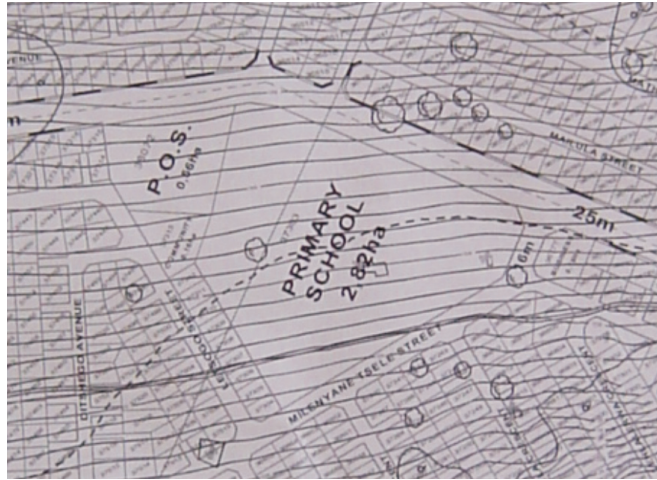


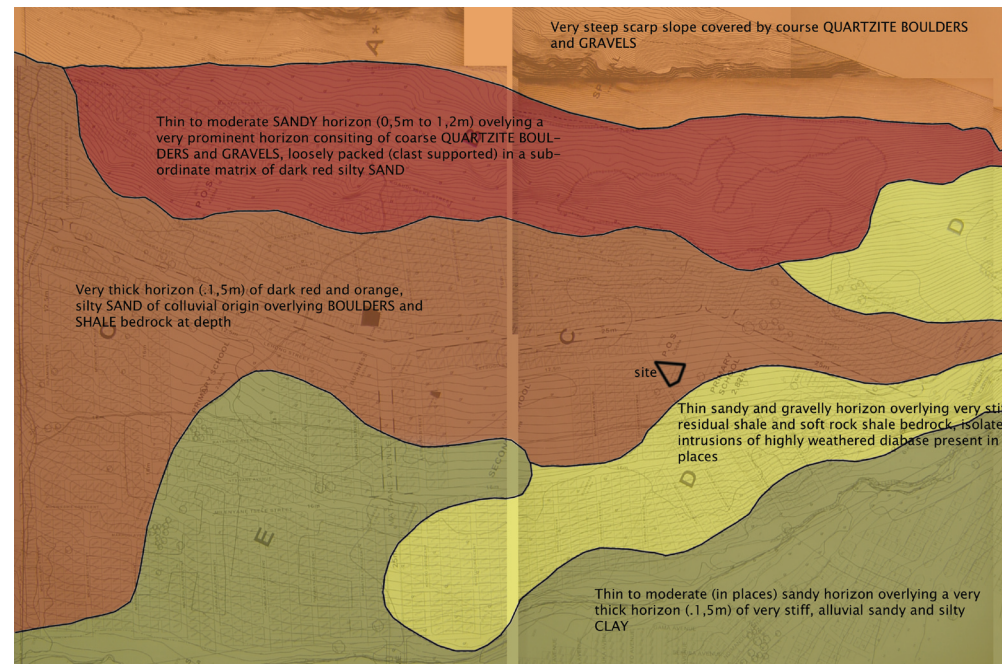
Fig. 25 Townplan layout of site and surroundings (PCC)

The Site

The project site is part of a group of sites which are currently used as an informal soccer pitch as this is the only sizable vacant land. As indicated on the townplan diagram, the site is adjacent to a site set aside for a primary school and to a public open space. The proposal is to consolidate the sites marked as a community facility and a public open space (P.O.S.) as the site allocated for a community facility is too small to accommodate all the proposed model.

The main vehicular circulation route is Mathane Avenue to the east of the site, but as this is a public facility, and a church, it is desirable to have access from all boundaries.

Fig. 26 Geological map of Lusaka (PCC).



The site is situated on a steep slope, falling eight meters from the topmost, eastern boundary to the western boundary. This provides a spectacular view of Mamelodi to the west, with a view of the mountain to the east. The geology of the site is indicated in fig. 26 as a thick layer of silty sand overlaying boulders and shale bedrock. This condition can lead to potentially collapsable soil and unstable side walls to trenches. After consideration the recommended foundation is a conventional strip foundation.



Fig. 27 View of site from Mathane ave.



Fig. 28 View of site from Letsogo street

The context study clearly indicates a deficit in adequate community facilities. Combined with poor home environments, the situation will force many people to seek alternative surroundings. Pleasant surroundings for gatherings, night time study facilities, and the multi purpose hall will provide alternative environments in this regard.

Part of the centre's social role includes strengthening activities and programmes which are already in existence within the community. Apart from contributing to the broader community, the facility increases the involvement of the community as well as creating context specific solutions and dynamics. Utilizing existing dynamics increases the viability of the centre. The number of day care centres within the community, especially those accommodated within church buildings will provide a stable basis from which to expand the centre's activity range.

One aspect touched by the context study is the lack in industry and economic activity. The scale of the facility does not allow for industrial activity, but the local industry can still be supported. By using local craftsmen and products income and experience will be generated within the centre. A limited amount of economic activity, such as a kitchen and Internet Cafe will act a role in generating economic activity within the community. This again underscores the importance of identifying and utilising local dynamics.

Also in this context, the importance of the taxi as transportation medium requires the design to facilitate easy use as well as a large amount of pedestrian activity.

Some of the problems addressed within the centre, such as Aids, orphans and poverty are stigmatised to some degree within society. The danger thus lies in negative perceptions towards the centre preventing wide spread use. An example is the plight of the mentally ill. The situation carries such stigma that nobody wants to be involved, thus the poor attendance and the awareness campaign. A design solution would be to incorporate a wide variety of activities. If the hall were used for community meetings, concerts and weddings, and the support centre with library and computer facility improved the education and knowledge of the community it would be difficult to stigmatise the centre as a place for only the poor and ill. By incorporating the different functions a greater awareness of the difficult issues such as Aids and orphans will be promoted.