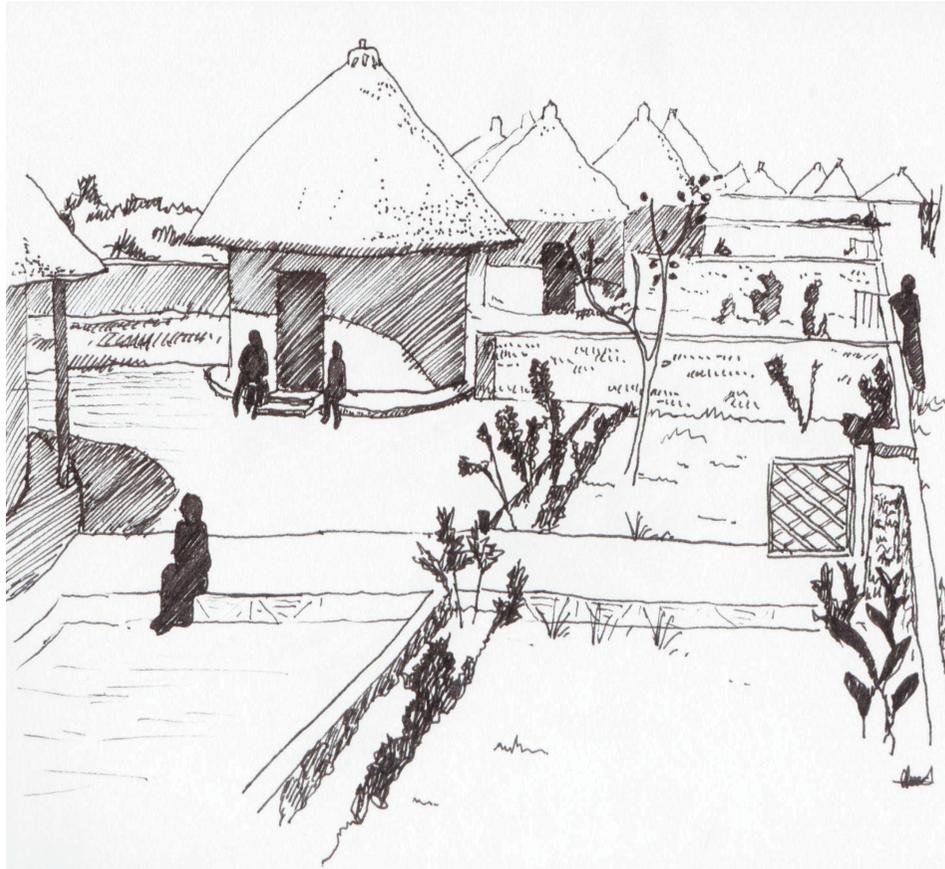


- 54 Vlakfontein Rondavel Housing Scheme ■
- 55 Zolani Community Centre ■
- 56 Soweto Careers Centre ■
- 57 Bopitikelo Community & Cultural Centre ■
- 58 Marcovia Community Centre ■
- 59 Education & Care Centre, Durban ■
- 60 Stanza Bopape Adult Training Facility ■
- 62 Cardboard Church ■
- 63 Anton du Toit ■
- 64 Bogata School Chapel ■
- 65 Urubo Church ■
- 66 Allston Library ■
- 67 Sandton Library ■

Precedents

Vlakfontein Native Housing Sceme, 1947

Malan, Prinsloo, Hertzog



fFig. 29

The first housing project undertaken by the Pretoria City Council (CCP) in Mamelodi was a rather dismal failure, but its failure provide meaningfull insight.

The architects, E. Malan, CW Prinsloo and A Hertzog went to Bechuanaland in order to study typical native housing patterns. By 1947 about fifty of these houses had been build. They consisted of a round “rondavel” with a thatch roof extended to form a “stoep” around the house, which was placed within a “traditional” yard. The “Vlakfontein Native Housing Sceme” resulted in a massive public outcry. The Pretoria News of 6 September 1947 wrote “primitive kaffir housing... which was causing considerable racial conflict and feelings of hostility”. According to the National Council of Woman 2000 “Natives” consulted by the Native Advisory Board passed a vote of no confidence in the architect. One of the main reasons for the huge resentment against the scheme was due to its inhabitants. Most of the residents were forcefully removed from the Lady Selborne area and relocated to Vlakfontein. Most had been urbanized for at least a generation, and the return to such ‘rural’ and ‘tribal’ surroundings were seen as inapropriate and insulting.

Due to the strong public resentment the scheme was thus abandoned and the rondavels torn down two years later (Walker et all 1991, p10).

The strong lessons contained within this historic episode warns against the use of overtly ‘rural’ architecture in an urban context. People are very easily alienated when they consider the architecture to be patronizing.

In a paper presented by Mogorosi Makolomakwe at a CAM workshop in September 2002 he described lessons learned from his involvement in the renovation of the Nyanga Community Centre.

The centre evolved out of a process which spanned 7 years from 1993 to 2000. Initially the process was established through the “Black “ Council of Ikapa Town Council, but failed due to the politically volatile community of Nyanga. Only after another project launched by the City of Cape Town for the upgrading of roads in the area took place, did the community approach the contractor with plans for the centre. This illustrated one of the key lessons in community architecture, that those processes initiated by the community and supported by the authorities, have a better chance of success.

The design population include babies, children, youth, adults and the physically challenged in facilities for pension payments, youth support programs, programs for the elderly, a chreche, community meetings, visual and performing arts, karate and bodybuilding. When the design caters for the design population and its different functions the facility will be in use and alive with activity throughout the day.

Makolomakwe considers community empowerment as an important aim in community development to ensure that development of the community does not fall to external factors (M. Makolomakwe 2002, p47-51)

This precedent supports some of the thoughts already expressed within the study, namely that a diversity in approach and activities increases use, over all vitality and appropriateness. Community involvement throughout the entire process ensured a sense of ownership. The implied threat of resistance warns against programs which are enforced ‘top-down’ without consideration.

Soweto Careers Centre

Joe Noero

Situated near the Baragwanath Hospital, the centre is placed in a large, vacant piece of land. With its soaring roofscape, and industrial approach, the centre proclaims hope in an environment heavily burdened by poverty and unemployment.

A very strong hierarchy exists between the different spaces and volumes. Each space and its function is clearly articulated in the scale, volume and bright sign writing. Entry points are clearly defined and facilitates the transition between spaces. But the spaces do not exist independently. The intermediate links and transitions appear to be achieved effortlessly. A strong connection between indoor and outdoor spaces are established. The space open unto an indoor court, which is used for special functions.

One section of the central hall's wall slides away to open towards the court. A connection with the environment outside the complex is established through a grill block wall in the courtyard, through which the veldt outside is visible. This strong connection with the outside promotes a sense of wellbeing, air and light, as well as a strong sense of place, a connection with the context.

The success of the project is proved by the pride and joy with which the community uses the facility (Slessor C. 2004. p. 22-29).

The expression of hope distinguishes this facility from others. It illustrates how a community facility uplifts a community by being a beacon of hope.

The use of scale, hierarchy, and defined entrances to communicate use and function indicates a mastery of the architectural language. An understanding of people's interaction with the natural environment contributes to the success of the project and people enjoy using the facility. A range in indoor, outdoor and transitional space, the inclusion of natural elements as well as the connection with nature contributed to the creation of a viable, pleasant and healthy place.

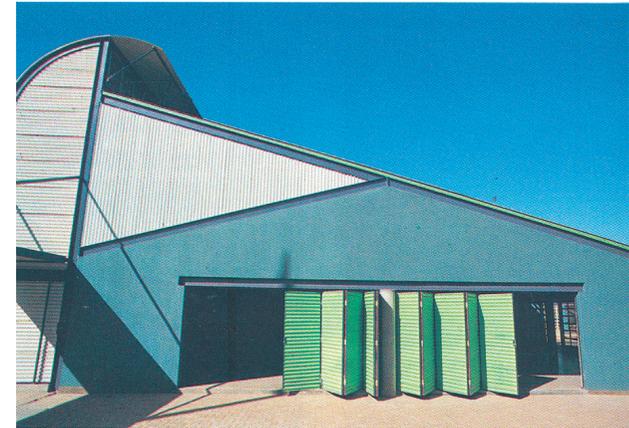


Fig. 30

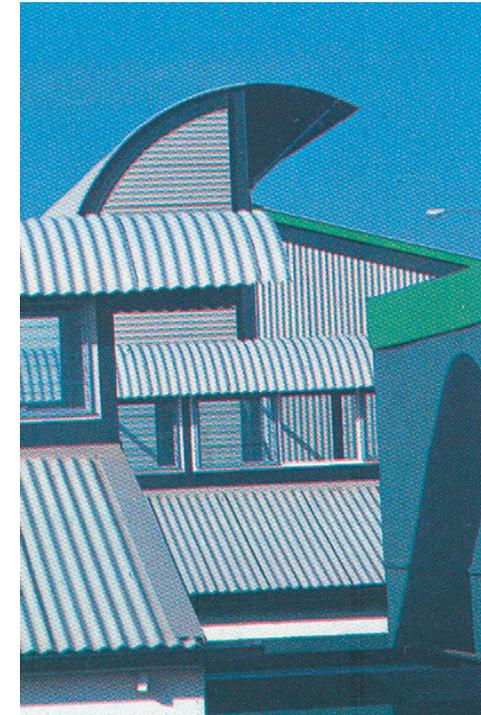


Fig. 31