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An architecture of meaning

The design of the headquarters for the National Department of Home Affairs

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Magister in Architecture (Professional) in the Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment and Information Technology

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The project explores the expression of meaning in architecture against the backdrop of the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality as post-apartheid capital city. The architectural aim of the project is the consolidation of the National Department of Home Affairs and the design of the headquarters of this department.

The project starts with a brief exploration of the context of a post-colonial and post-apartheid city, and the aims and identity linked to an African democracy in the context of multiple cultural identities. The search for a national identity is linked to the existential question of 'being', which is related to an experiential understanding of physical surroundings.

Case studies include recent public buildings that form part of an era of searching for identity and contribute to the discovery of an underdeveloped element of multi-sensory experience in recent architectural projects related to the new democratic government.

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