

POETRY OF FORGOTTEN WASTELANDS:
Transforming a wasteland in Salvokop into a designed enigmatic landscape

by
Gloria Di Monte

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Project summary

Site description: Salvokop's abandoned wasteland
Client: The current owner is Transnet Ltd, the proposed client will be a private developer
Users: Salvokop community, visitors and workers in the area and the general public.
Site Location: Pretoria town and townlands, farm number 351-JR, portion 406 (remaining extent), Salvokop, Pretoria.
Address: Skietpoort Avenue, Salvokop, Pretoria, South Africa.
GPS Coordinates: 25°75'85. 03"S, 28°18'44. 38"E

Landscape Architectural Theoretical Premise: First, on a planning level, wastelands can become the healing tissue that a city needs to reverse urban decay of form and fabric. These wastelands can be used to introduce nature in the city and encourage densification. Second, on a spatial and experiential level, waste lands can be used to design enigmatic landscapes in reaction to the 'non-place' of modernity.

Landscape Architectural Approach: Transforming Salvokop's wasteland into a designed enigmatic landscape.
Research field: Landscape urbanism and cultural landscapes

In accordance with Regulation 4(e) of the General Regulations (G. 57) for dissertations and theses, I declare that this dissertation, which I hereby submit for the degree Master of Landscape Architecture (Professional) at the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other tertiary institution.

I further state that no part of my dissertation has already been, or is currently being, submitted for any such degree, diploma or other qualification.

I further declare that this dissertation is substantially my own work. Where reference is made to the works of others, the extent to which that work has been used is indicated and fully acknowledged in the text and list of references.



Gloria Di Monte

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores wastelands on two levels: an urban planning level and a poetic spatial level. As a real world problem, people move to suburbs (notably in the form of low density housing estates) in search of nature; as they move they destroy nature and contribute to the decay of urban form and fabric of the city. Due to the ensuing urban sprawl and other factors, cities are punctured with wastelands that lie abandoned, neglected and forgotten. On a planning level, this dissertation investigates if wastelands can become the healing tissue that a city needs to reverse urban decay of form and fabric. However, once identified for redevelopment or re-use, the intriguing enigmatic character and richness of wastelands are often ignored and erased in a process akin to gentrification - the sterilisation of wastelands results in 'non-place'. Thus, on a spatial and experiential level, this dissertation explores the potential of wastelands to become enigmatic landscapes in reaction to the 'non-place' of modernity. Wastelands in Pretoria are mapped in order to identify potential areas that can be re-imagined to serve a decaying city with open space, yet not be reduced to 'non-place' - a site in Salvokop is selected for the study. The design follows a hypothetical process that start with spatial explorations followed by planning considerations; not *vice versa*. Technical investigations test the validity of the proposed intervention and refine it. A portion of the site is resolved to a detailed sketch plan.

SAMEVATTING

Hierdie verhandeling ondersoek afvalgebiede op twee vlakke: 'n stedelike beplanning en 'n poëtiese ervaringsleer en ruimtelike vlak. Wêreldwyd ontstaan die probleem dat mense na voorstede verhuis, uitbeweeg uit die woonbuurte na stedelike randgebiede, wat minder bevolk is, op soek na natuur, sodoende vernietig hulle die natuur en dra by tot verrottende gebiede en die vernietiging van die stad se struktuur. As gevolg van die daaropvolgende stedelike uitbreiding en ander faktore, word stede gevul met afvalgebiede wat verlate, verwaarloos en vergete lê. Op 'n beplanningsvlak, ondersoek hierdie verhandeling of afvalgebiede die genesende weefsel kan word wat 'n stad benodig om stedelike verval om te keer. Sodra die afvalgebied geïdentifiseer word vir herontwikkeling of hergebruik, word die enigmatiese karakter en rykdom geignoreer en uitgewis in 'n proses soortgelyk aan verburgerliking - - die sterilisasie van afvalgebiede dra by tot 'n 'nie-plek'. Dus, op 'n ruimtelike en ervaringsleer vlak, ondersoek hierdie verhandeling die potensiaal van afvalgebiede om enigmatiese landskappe te word in reaksie op die 'nie-plek' van moderniteit. Afvalgebiede in Pretoria is gekarteer ten einde potensiele afvalgebiede te identifiseer, wat gebruik kan word om 'n vervalde stad met oop ruimte te dien, en nog nie verminder is tot 'n 'nie-plek' nie - 'n afgebied in Salvokop is geïdentifiseer vir die studie. Die ontwerp volg op 'n hipotetiese proses wat begin met ruimtelike verkennings, gevolg deur oorwegings, nie andersom nie. Tegnieese ondersoekte toets die geldigheid van die voorgestelde ingryping en verfyn dit. 'n Gedeelte van die afvalgebied is in 'n gedetailleerde plan weergegee.

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DEFINITION OF TERMS

LANDSCAPE

“The combination of ‘land’ and ‘-scape’ indicates an area, an expanse, a space, that has been created or shaped, is visible as such, and therefore can be represented” (Vroom, 2006: 177). Landscape is a term that implies human intervention.

WASTELANDS

According to Curulli (2007: 32) “wastelands are the leftover spaces and buildings from the industrial age. Void of role or function, they leave gaps in landscapes and urban fabric, which are targeted for recycling”. For the purpose of this study part of the formation of wastelands as defined by Alan Berger includes waste, wasted places and wasteful places (2006a:14).

WASTE SITES

For the purpose of this study includes municipal solid waste, scrap metal, sewage plants and landfill sites (see page 43).

WASTED SITES

For the purpose of this study includes abandoned sites that have been leftover and forgotten (see page 44).

WASTEFUL SITES

For the purpose of this study includes oversized parking lots, inappropriate uses and divisive places that disconnect and scar the landscape (see page 45).

NON-PLACE

According to Marc Augé “[i]f a place can be defined as relational, historical and concerned with identity, then a space which cannot be defined as relational, or historical, or concerned with identity will be a non-place” (1995: 78). Non-places include shopping centres, gyms, hotels, airports and large retail outlet (see page 25-27).

NON-SITE

For the purpose of the study non-site is the landscape equivalent to non-place as described by Marc Augé. A controlled, predictable landscape. These include recreational parks, theme parks, formal gardens, leisure parks, golf courses, housing estates, street edges and roads (see page 25-27).

PEDIGREE LANDSCAPE

A ‘pedigree’ landscape of lawns, flowerbeds and planned places (Hough, 1984: 6). For the purpose of this study pedigree landscapes refer to controlled landscapes that have a low biodiversity. These landscapes are completely sterilised of past references, existing character, quality and ecological diversity (see page 25-29). These landscapes fall under the definition of non-place (non-site) as defined by Marc Augé (see page 25-27).

ENIGMATIC LANDSCAPE

“... [a] fortuitous landscape of naturalised urban plants and flooded places left after rain, that may be found everywhere in the forgotten places of the city” (Hough, 1984: 6). Enigmatic landscapes refer to landscapes that are mysterious and unpredictable. For the purpose of this study this type of landscape is rich in biodiversity, character and quality. It highlights existing natural processes, ecological systems and has an aspect of exploration and adventure to it. These landscapes fall under the definition of place as defined by Marc Augé (see page 25-29).