

Design Influences

The following chapter deals with precedents that have influenced and informed the design process as well as the proposed building.



Local Design Precedents

The Faculty of Law - UP Campus, Pretoria

The new Faculty of Law Building by StudioKrugerRoos Architects Urban Architecture Design is situated on the main campus of the University of Pretoria and was completed in 2005. The building is located on a major north-south pedestrian axis in the north-eastern corner of the main university campus. Required to embody the “principles of transparency and gravitas”,¹ it accommodates a large library , lecture and study facilities as well as the staff of the Faculty of Law at the university.

The building sits strategically on the university’s grounds focusing on the surrounding campus space.² The glazed entrance foyer has a courtyard on either side of it which acts as a gathering space located directly on a major north-south axis of the campus. The visual transparency is further emphasised by the tower of one of the ladies’ residences, situated just north of the building.

The bulk of the building runs in an east-west orientation which is emphasised by the circulation routes running parallel to the building right the way through. At the eastern end of the axis, the building frames the view of a two-storey house. Moving along the circulation bridges, the user subtly passes through enclosed and open spaces without being aware of the transition from indoor to outdoor spaces. Vertical circulation and lifts are located adjacent to the axis and are accessed via bridges. These protrude into communal outdoor courtyards.

In the main Oliver Tambo Library, adjacent to the central covered walkway, the library material and study area is located on a large ‘bridge’ that is separate from the skin of the building. Circulation routes step out into the multi-storey atriums. This allows for the transition from a more intimate space to an experience of the whole library. The interior has ample northern light, while the glazed southern façade exposes the campus grounds and a panoramic view of the mountain range south of the city.

Influence

1. Deckler et al (2006:105) The transparency and ‘openness’ allows the user to experience the time of day, seasonal changes as well as the transition between indoor and outdoor spaces. This is emphasised by the deciduous trees planted in
2. Le Roux & Botes (2005:37)

the indoor-outdoor courtyards. The natural light ensures a pleasant atmosphere which is mutually enjoyed by staff and students.



Figure 9.01 Southern entrance to the Faculty of Law



Figure 9.02 Vertical Circulation



Figure 9.03 East-west orientation circulation routes



Figure 9.04 Main Library & Atrium



The Hector Pietsch Memorial - Soweto



Figure 9.05 Strategic window



Figure 9.06 Exterior view of museum



Figure 9.07 Entrance to museum



Figure 9.08 Openings as part of the exhibition



Figure 9.09 Elements in the urban landscape

The Hector Pietsch Museum, designed by Mashebane Rose Architects, is located 600 m away from where the original shooting of Hector Pietsch took place on 16 June 1976. On that day, the students of Soweto took to the streets in protest against the Bantu Education policies and the fact that the official and compulsory language of education was Afrikaans. Hector Pietsch, a 12-year-old boy, was the first of hundreds of students to be killed by the police during the protest. Today, this event is commemorated on Youth Day.³

Design approach

According to Deckler⁴ the building is designed from the inside out and tells of the tragic events that took place on this day. The build-up is emphasised by the continual ramp that rises around a central courtyard as the visitor to the museum progresses through the space. The central courtyard symbolically represents a graveyard in memory of those children that died ruthlessly at the hands of the authorities, and acts as a constant reminder of the horrific events that took place. Openings punched into the shell of the building relate to specific places and form part of the exhibition. Elements in the landscape contribute to contextualising the museum experience as they draw the eye to strategic points in the surroundings. The foreign shape of the building as perceived from the exterior is a direct reflection of the interior progression.

The red brick exterior of the Hector Pietsch Museum echoes the surrounding houses remaining from the 1950s on the square.

Influence

The museum-experience extends beyond the physical boundaries of the building and allows the surrounding urban landscape to echo the exhibition within the museum. The focus of the museum is on the past events that took place in the vicinity. The building is securely anchored in its context and forms a means of contextually communicating the history of the area.

3. Deckler et al (2006:31-33)

4. Deckler et al (2006:33)



International Design Precedents

Exhibition-Assembly Building - Ulm, Germany

The Exhibition and Assembly Building (*Stadthaus*) on the *Münsterplatz* in Ulm in Germany was built from 1986 to 1993. Situated on this historically contested square⁶ the building houses a large public assembly hall, exhibition spaces and a tourist information centre.⁶

On an urban level the *Stadthaus* responds directly to the Ulm Münster Cathedral, which boasts the highest church spire in the world.⁷ While the building forms a space which is “secular response to the sacred space of the Cathedral”, it also reduces the scale to that of the pedestrian, defining recreational spaces.⁸ “The design of the Square aims for a spatially consolidated space composed of different, yet coherent, individual areas”.⁹

5. Bächer (1995:21)

6. Jodidio (1995:131)

7. Bächer (1995:21)

8. The Stadthaus at Ulm and the Cathedral Square (1995:11)

9. The Stadthaus at Ulm and the Cathedral Square (1995:11)

10. Bächer (1995:21)

11. The Stadthaus at Ulm and the Cathedral Square (1995:10)

12. Bächer (1995:21)

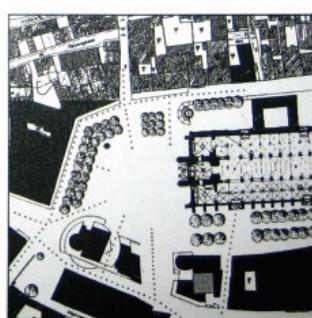
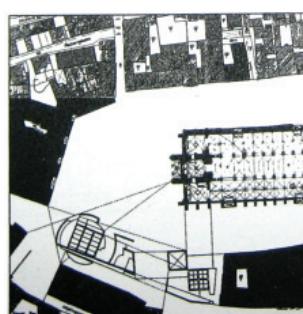
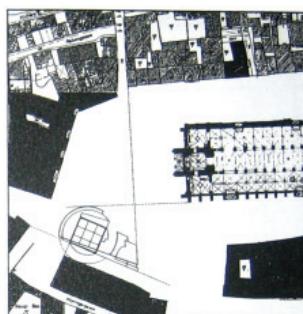
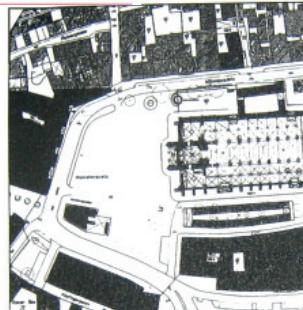


Figure 9.11 ‘Perspective View of Cathedral Square’ (Academy Edition 1990:145)

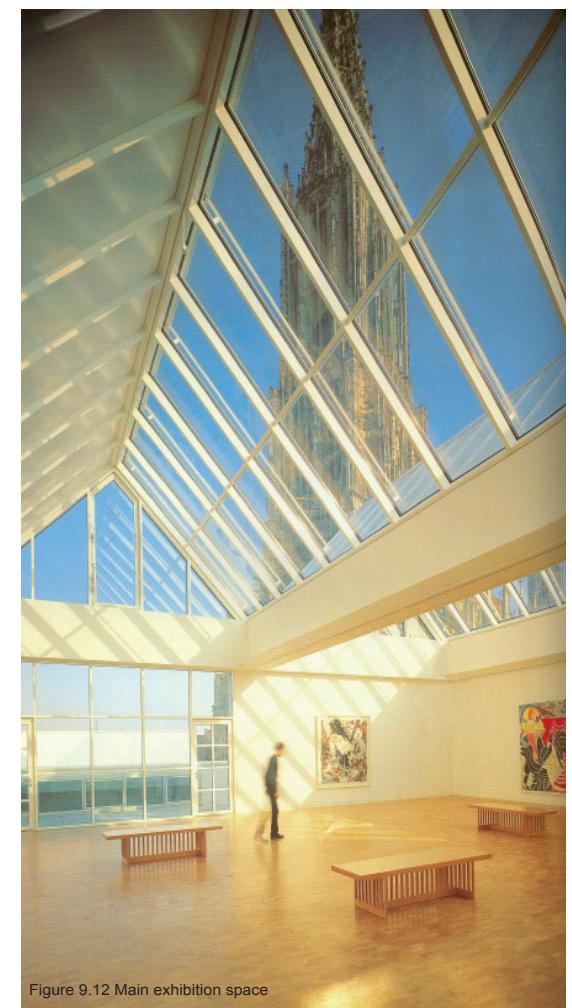


Figure 9.10 Analysis of placement



Figure 9.12 Main exhibition space