

## 5.0 PRECEDENT STUDY

## 5.1 INTRODUCTION

Precedents are studied with the aim of finding relevant information which can play a role in the forming of conceptual decisions with regard to the design thesis. The following precedents were chosen on their functional, typological and architectural qualities.

## 5.2 THE BAT CENTRE- DURBAN

Architects: Collaborative cc assisted by RAP Studio.

### RELEVANCE-Function

The BAT Centre share similar ideas towards the upliftment of the Arts training in South Africa and promotion of community involvement. The BAT Centre focuses on promoting public awareness towards the arts in general, providing the opportunity to those less fortunate to receive training and education in the arts.

The scheme shares the approach of using any available materials to their disposal, leaving the surfaces unfinished where possible, and built with funding from the private sector.

The design tries to create a place within the urban fabric where all arts and other related functions can interact with one another. Many of the aspects mentioned influenced the design of the Construction Centre but were applied in an individual manner. For example the involvement of the community, mosaics finished outside of the building and being a private funded Centre.



Fig.38: Façade of the BAT Centre (KNIA1996:4)

There is a series of interlinked studios for the sculpture, ceramic, graphics and movement. Shops set on the principal façade on the ground level, sell articles made by South African artists, as well as articles produced at the BAT centre itself. The same idea will be employed at the Construction centre where shops will be along the main roads. The restaurant and shops generates income for both centres. Local artists use the BAT gallery for exhibitions and a small flat on the second floor provides the accommodation for the visiting lecturers and artists. All activities within the centre revolve around a central courtyard onto which nearly all the spaces front consciously planned to link and overlap different functioning spaces.

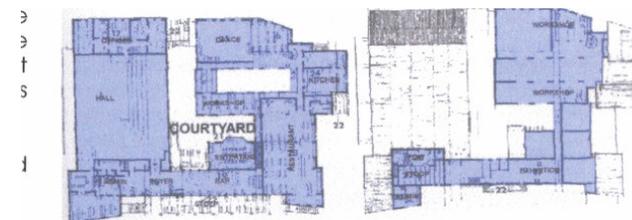


Fig.39: BAT Centre floor plans (KNIA1996:4)

The courtyard becomes the heart of the centre, from where the internal orientation can easily take place and functions as the central circulation space of the centre. The courtyard makes the spatial flow within the centre transparent and the user of the centre at all times aware of the activities taking place around the courtyard.

The building intends to be a model to show that good buildings don't have to be excessive or expensive, but can use the simplest, cheapest often re-cycled materials and be built by the unskilled without affecting the quality of the experience.

There is nothing fixed or solid about this building, it is meant to be tinkered with, to change and adapt as the need changes. Materials used to contrast with each other, as well as contrast in form, light and function.

The rich textures and colours of the buildings are overwhelming and the whole surface of the building is alive with interest, making you want to touch and admire simultaneously. The building in itself becomes the work of art.



Fig.40: Murals and portrait bust on façade (KNIA1996:4).

### 5.3 THE AFRICAN CRAFT CENTRE-ROSEBANK, JOHANNESBURG.

Architects: Kate Otten Architects

#### RELEVANCE-TOPOLOGICAL

Both Construction and The African Craft Centre projects propose space for traders to sell of local products and situated on very public sites with major pedestrian activities in and around the site /buildings are a major concern for both projects.



Fig.41: View of African Craft Market (SA Digest, 2001:161).

The use of different materials and detailing was observed and will be done at the Construction Centre even though standard profiles and members were used. The following was observed and used in the proposed design:

- the handling of surfaces and texture
- the use of steel structures in combination with plastered bricks
- the use standard window section and corrugated steel sheeting.



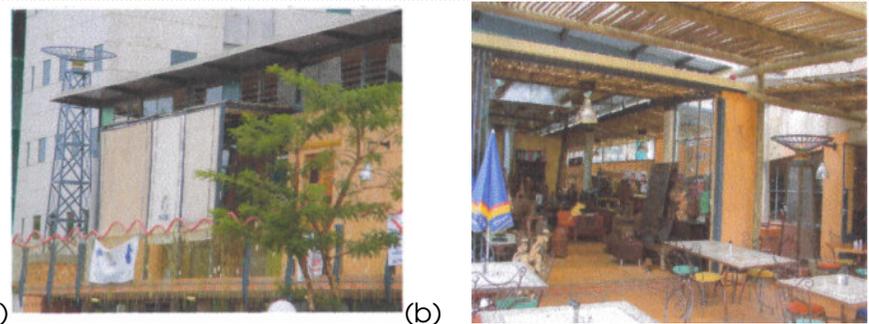
Fig.42 Façade of the building (SA Digest, 2001:161).

The building is a long, narrow, and simple, two storey structure that responds directly to the site, client and user constraints. A double volume space links the path where the street used to be.



Fig.43: Double volume space for trade and exhibition as in exhibition hall at corner of Construction centre (SA Digest, 2001:161).

The building has rich, earthy colours and textured plastered walls, juxtaposed with steel structure in charcoal blue. Light, texture and colour play an important role in the expression of the building, which is appropriate to its scale and design. The African Market is a building that encourages movements through and around, and the architecture reflects this in its openness and lightness.



(a) (b)

Fig.44: (a) and (b) mixed use of materials to be used at the Centre as well (SA Digest, 2001:161).

The building in itself becomes a craftwork and invites one to experience it both visually and physically through one's senses by touching it, listening to the activities inside, smelling the different material from which the articles sold inside is are made, almost as if giving one a taste of Africa.

On the southern end of the building is a cluster of towers, answered by three light shafts at the northern end, all of which are an interpretation of the craft aspect of the market through their steel basket caps tiled necks, textured plastered shafts and bases. The three towers are designed to be important urban makers of the building. In the Construction centre, the towers are for the circulation and landmark.



Fig.45: Steel basket tops (SA Digest, 2001:161).

The northern end of the building has a large curvy outside balcony that looks onto and links into the public pedestrian space that connects the craft market and the mall and ends in a grandiose flight of stairs. The stairs are an important design element to invite one into the building and open up the building as to make it part of the public activities and make them likewise part of the market. In the Construction Centre the exhibition on the intersection invites one into the centre and make it part of the public activities.

#### **5.4 THE DURBAN STATION INFORMAL MARKET**

**ARCHITECTS: OMM DESIGN WORKSHOP ARCHITECTS**

#### **RELEVANCE-INNOVATIVE WAY OF USING MATERIALS**

This is a superb example of successful fusion between western and African culture through architectural intervention which the proposed Construction centre will use in some of the building structures. A highly innovative combination of bamboo/reed cladding and steel as

structural material create a low-key, low-cost, yet effective intervention with much aesthetic appeal. The economic use of steel and a concrete structure is brightened up with a selective use of a basic colour.



Fig.46: The combination of steel construction and reed cladding reflects the influence of traditional African building techniques within modern day African context (KZNA Journal vol3 2001:31).

#### **5.5 UTHANGO LOTYEBISELWANO LEARNING CIRCLE**

**Cape Town, 1989**

**Architect: CS Studio**

#### **RELEVANCE**

The design is based around a movement route that becomes at the same time a link, as well as a space in its own right.

Another important design that was taken into consideration was the skills level required and the materials used. **Bright colours** were used to identify the building as a public facility and to liven up the environment.

Local people were trained to perform the construction. The centre is spatially arranged around the inner courtyard, which becomes a vehicle for communal affairs and illustrate the importance of the balance between inside and outside.

**The success of the project** lies within the fact that the community was actively involved in the design process. It inspired a sense of ownership and pride in the centre, as well as in the community itself - which led to the achievement of the main goal: the empowerment of the community (Smuts, 1996:34-35).

## 5.6 COMMUNITY MURAL PROJECT

Two Durban-based artists, Terry-anne Stevenson and Mikula, founded the project in 1990. The project aims to bring public art to the community and to public places.

### RELEVANCE

The main figure in the mural depicts Nomkhubulwana, a mythical figure in Zulu history associated with agriculture and good luck. The mural project is an example of the uplifting effect of **beauty through art** upon people's lives. The power of art and beauty is however not restricted to the more conventional visual arts. It should be implemented to the full as a powerful instrument in the visual experience of space (Slessor, 1995, p.98). The murals will be part of decorations to certain parts of the buildings like the arts workshops and main facades of the Construction Centre.



Fig.47: Mural project in Durban (author unknown).

## 5.8 GEHRY RESIDENCE SANTA MONICA, USA

Frank O. Gehry, 1978

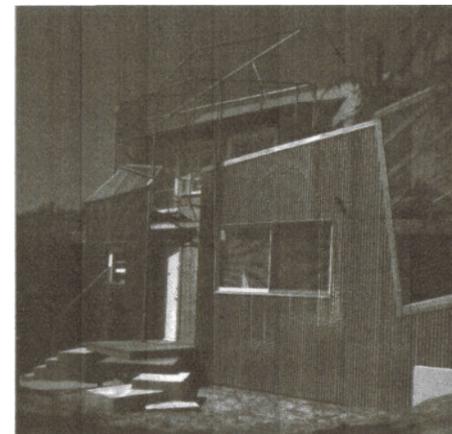


Fig.48: A bold, innovative use of materials(Gehry, 1993:37).

## RELEVANCE

The use of recycled materials create not only a visually stimulating combination of the old and the new, but it also relates specifically to the architectural context in the South African township, where the re-use of materials is essential. (Gehry, 1993: 37-38). Some recycled materials will be used on the centre to reduce the cost of construction and to be used as a practical example of the use of recycle material to the students of the centre.

### 5.9 INDIAN INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT.

**Architect: BALKRISHNA DOSHI (Bangalore, 1977-1985).**

#### RELEVANCE :Function

The campus for the Institute of Management includes administration offices, classrooms, laboratories and a library is arranged in a ladder-like plan along a longitudinal axis. The open spaces are occupied by pavilions used as teaching spaces, and therefore have irregular shapes. The striking features of the building are the corridors, or covered pedestrian streets that join the different elements together. In Doshi's words, "the width of the corridors was modulated in many places to allow for casual eating and interaction to take place" (Steele 1998:67).

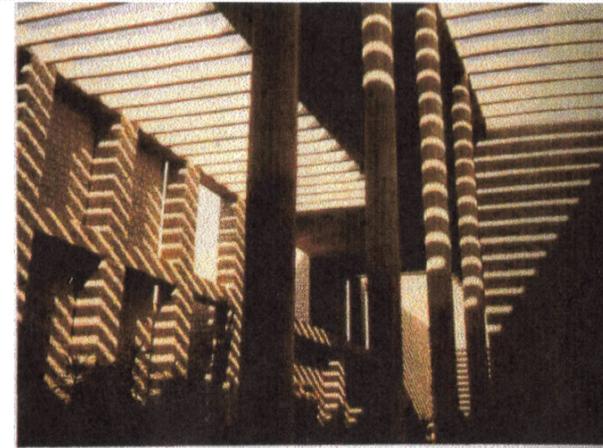


Fig.49:A view of the covered walkway space. The space is contained by horizontal concrete beams which cast shadows in a linear pattern onto the walls and floor (Steel, 1998:48).

The identity of the Centre as an educational building is important to differentiate it from other public buildings. The diverse functions accommodated in the complex will be combined by a main pedestrian walkway from which secondary covered walkways will branch off to the various functions. The walkways will promote interaction and communication. The height of colonnade will give it the sense of importance.

The Centre will be a very social building and so it will be important to provide spaces large enough for group gatherings and demonstrations.

The materials used in the building will be low of maintenance and very robust. The structure will be concrete columns and beams, with shading devices.

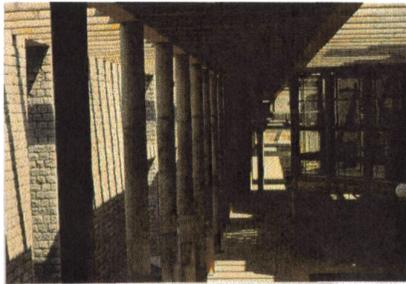


Fig.50: View down one of the covered walkways (Steel, 1998:48).

## 5.10 JN CENTRE FOR ADVANCED SCIENTIFIC

Bangalore, 1990-1994

Architect; CHARLES CORREA

### RELEVANCE

The centre for scientific research provides facilities for living accommodation and research facilities for visiting scientists and scholars as proposed at the Construction centre. The research laboratories, lecture halls, library and accommodation on the other side of the wall are informally arranged around open courtyard spaces. The wall binds the different parts of the building together. In the Construction centre all workshops and classrooms will be open to courtyards which will function as additional work area and gathering places.

Both projects proposes a tree-lined pedestrian walkway which will form the edge of the site on all street edges on intersection and parking area on the southern and eastern side of the building. This green space will become a community space in an urban environment where people can move away from the busy streets and sit and eat lunch or take a break in the shade of the trees. There will be an interaction between the informal green space and the building.

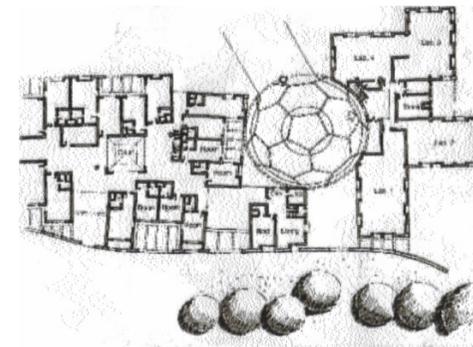


Fig.51: Part of the plan of the Centre for Scientific research showing the informal arrangement of spaces around internal courtyards (Steel, 1998: 8).

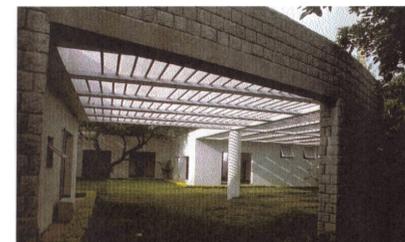


Fig.52: a view of one of the private green places between the wall and the work area (Steel, 1998:48).

