

chapter **02**

design planning: review and reasoning



02_design planning

2.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Evidence exists of the repercussions of population increase, urban sprawl and climate change, causing concern for the future environmental condition (Dodman, 2009:1). The built environment community is one part of society that can play a major role in the mitigation of environmental damage.

In terms of architecture, adaptive re-use must facilitate the sustainable regeneration of dormant buildings, thus enabling these to respond to the urban landscape and contribute to sustainable urban growth. Proof of the success of utilising old buildings for new uses can be seen in developed countries such as Holland and Australia.

The goal of this project is to show that the **adaptive reuse of an existing building** that demonstrates the points below:

- beneficial and adapted to the client's NEEDS and IDENTITY
- to use principles that are sensitive to the existing building and the environment
- to provide a working design that contributes to the urban fabric

2.2 HYPOTHESIS

The adaptive re-use of a dormant building is inspired by the need for space, the relationship between function and space, accommodation requirements, and processes that will occur in the building. It is also informed by principles of sustainability and heritage.

2.3 MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION

Can the dormant Agrivaal Building be adaptively reused to serve the needs of the new European Commission in South Africa?

2.4 SUB RESEARCH QUESTION

1. What is a dormant building?
2. Why is the Agrivaal Building dormant?
3. What is adaptive re-use?
4. How will the European Commission be represented in a contemporary South African context?

2.5 VISION

This dissertation envisions the adaptive re-use of an existing modern building in an attempt to contribute to the mitigation of the changes in the environment, i.e. climate change, population change and economic pressure. Its heritage value must be commemorated and must contribute to the historical memory of the city. The building must relate to its surroundings, allowing public interaction as well as secure offices for the European Commission.

The chosen site, the Agrivaal Building, is an unused and derelict government building. It was previously used as the headquarters of the Maize Board, which regulated the sale of all maize produced in South Africa. It was the only legal buyer of maize from farmers and set the price paid to farmers each season. It is no longer in use and wasn't a priority for development until 2008/9. A classified proposal was put forth to the Department of Public Works concerning new offices for an unnamed company. However, to date very little has physically materialized. Subsequently the Agrivaal lies dormant.

The Agrivaal Building represents architectural progressiveness in the design of the original two phases, and the 1963 Council Chamber displays the consolidation of power in Nationalist South Africa. The building is part of a historical and cultural landscape that has value and adds richness and layering to the urban fabric of the precinct and Pretoria.

This dissertation will focus on the adaptive re-use of the Agrivaal Building. The design will be informed by theoretical premises of sustainability, heritage and adaptation. The architectural intervention intends to demonstrate virtues of climatic responsiveness. The program, the headquarters of the European Commission in South Africa, is also a major informant of design, as the link between South Africa and a European organization needs to be expressed in a South African context.

2.6 INTRODUCING THE CLIENT

The Delegation of the European Commission for South Africa

The Delegation of the European Commission (EC) is currently located in Pretoria, on George Storrar Drive in Groenkloof. This is in close proximity to a number of embassies in Pretoria, namely those in Arcadia, Hatfield and Brooklyn. However, the problem for the client is not the location of the building, but rather the need for more functional space. The current premises consist of a number of detached buildings on the property. The main concern is that different departments need to be housed in one building, thus assisting in the accessibility and inter-dependence of the different departments. Additional concerns include the lack of a large meeting space, where dignitaries, heads of states and members of parliament can convene with the EC, and a need for communal ‘rest’ areas, where staff can relax, communicate and brainstorm.

2.6.1 CLIENT’S ROLE IN SOUTH AFRICA

According to the EU publication on ‘European Union and South Africa’ (2009), the Delegation provides humanitarian, political and trade assistance in the country. The EU is South Africa’s largest trading partner. Economic co-operation covers both private and public sector activities. Capital investment takes place in both directions, both from and into South Africa.

Much of the focus is on poverty alleviation. The EU is South Africa’s largest donor, committing over R 1 billion per annum in three focal areas: Social Development, Economic Development and Governance Programs



Fig.216:European Union and South Africa Development Partners Logo [Source: European Union and South Africa, 2010]

designed in close co-operation with the Government (EU, 2009).

2.6.2 CLIENT’S BRIEF

- _all departments to be housed in one building
- _security
- _additional offices for each department
- _meeting rooms for each department
- _large meeting space for convening EU representatives and other larger meetings
- _canteen
- _coffee shop
- _storage areas



Fig.215:President Zuma and EU Development and Humanitarian Aid Commissioner Karel de Gucht (representing European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso) at the 2nd SA-EU Summit in Kleinmond, South Africa, in September 2009 [Source: European Union and South Africa, 2010:2]

2.6.3 INTRODUCTION TO THE SITE

The proposed site is located on the corner of Edmond Street and Hamilton Street. Chapters 4 and 5 will provide an in-depth context and site analysis.



Fig.217: Location of the Agrivaal Building, corner of Edmond Street and Hamilton Street [Source: Municipality of City of Tshwane, edited by author 2011]



Fig.218: 3D interpretation of the site [Source: author 2011]



2.6.4 DELIMITATIONS

This study will specifically investigate ‘dormant’ buildings in the City of Pretoria. The choice of building was narrowed down to the Agrivaal Building. However, virtues of sustainability and heritage can be applied to many other buildings and should be part of all design interventions.

2.6.5 ASSUMPTIONS

It is assumed that the government will grant the permission of the use of the site on of merits of regeneration of government buildings and the inner city renewal as identified by the Re-Kgabisa framework.

2.7 OBJECTIVES

- Revitalize the Agrivaal Building, to contribute to and activate the surrounding urban fabric
- Respond to sustainable architectural issues
- Enhance and commemorate the heritage value of the existing building
- Achieve an iconic and contemporary building that is indicative to the European Union image but respectful of the contemporary South African context
- Provide a platform where interaction between of the European Commission and the South African government, non-governmental organizations, and the public can convene.
- Provide private, secure office space for the delegates of the European Commission
- Create a public realm: an informative, educational ‘rest point’ in the city

DEFINITIONS



recycling_

1. to convert into usable material
2. to return to a previous stage in a cyclic process



dormant_

1. alive but not actively growing.
2. temporarily devoid of activity
3. temporarily in abeyance capable of being activated
4. to be asleep



cultural heritage_

1. the things, places and practices that define who we are as individuals, as communities, as nations or civilisations and as a species. It is that which we want to keep, share and pass on (University of Canberra, 2009)



sustainability_

1. sustainability is the long-term maintenance of well being, which has local and global action on environmental, economic, and social dimensions as inseparable and interdependent components of human progress (European Commission Environment, 2009)



sustainable heritage_

1. the use of principles pertaining to sustainability and cultural heritage.
2. coexistence of the principles of sustainability and cultural heritage



cultural significance_

1. The Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter, refers to cultural significance as “aesthetic, historic, scientific or social value for past, present or future generations” (The Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter, 1999:1).

conservation_

1. All the processes of looking after a place so as to retain its cultural significance (The Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter, 1999:2).

adaptation_

1. modifying a place to suit the existing use or a proposed use.