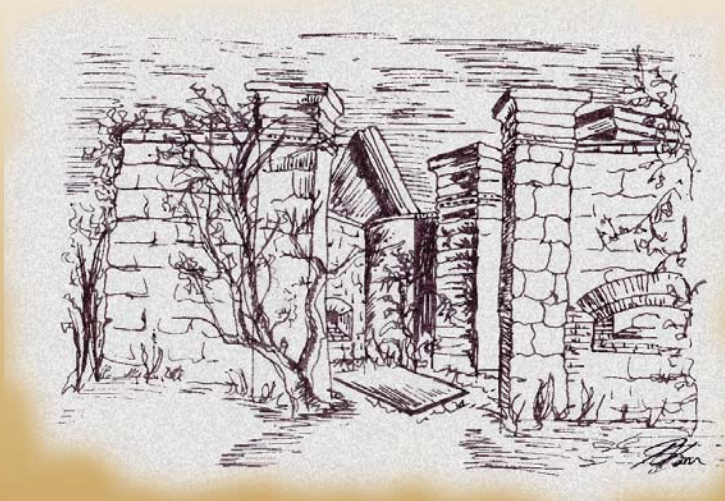




*Illus. 314: Detail within the vegetation of Wonderboom Nature Reserve. These natural details strengthen the site's identity. (Author, 2011)*

# CONCLUSION 09





*Illus. 315: Nature's beauty and elegance. A view from the Wonderboom fort at the sunset (Author, 2011)*

Wonderboom Nature Reserve is rich in natural and cultural heritage, a magnificent place. It is a nature island, a sanctuary surrounded by development, the perfect place to escape from the city. It is important to preserve this site and provide public access for people to be able to appreciate this multifaceted place. It has so much to offer the visitor and by designing the site to create awareness, access and understanding of these significant features it will attract more people. More people will ensure the sustainable future existence of the site for generations to come.

The Wonderboom fort ruin speaks of past events and times, it is very emotionally evocative. If it were to be restored, the visitor's imagination of what might have been will be lost together with the genius of the place.

The Burra charter was used mainly in the dissertation to determine how to treat the ruin on the site and the Ename charter was used to decide on how the ruin should relate to the public. This resulted in a two-pronged approach to the design, namely:

- A. Heritage - Preserving the physical through the Burra charter
- B. Public - Awareness, education, experience, and meaning through the Ename charter

Theory was used to enhance the design approach as a narrative in communicating the original meaning and – also explored through the Ename charter - public: awareness, education, experience, meaning and identity.

Wonderboom Fort was intended to stimulate the imagination of the visitor so that the structure is reconstructed to its original state in the mind's eye of the visitor. To ensure that people do not find it difficult to imagine, a better understanding of the ruin was provided through 'semiotic resources' – namely physical information boards (glass), and further reference to certain historic events, structures and/or memories through landscape elements or signs and symbols placed in the landscape design.

The fort was preserved in such a way that people will get the chance to take note of it and the history which it presents the evidence of. The design intervention was done in an intelligible way to teach and instruct the onlooker and to enrich the experience of the ruin/place.

The more knowledge one has, the more appreciation and understanding one will have for the ruin. This is why awareness of the Wonderboom fort was so important as well as the education regarding the history and the ruin itself. (Didactic approach as discussed in the research)

Semiotics, narratives and didactics were used as communication tools in this research to "speak" of the site's cultural and biophysical elements and the history thereof.

The existing spirit of place, the place's identity and its meaning - that of a refuge (which

is intangible and unconscious) was strengthened through a narrative approach (a tangible approach) that engaged with the cultural and biophysical history of the site (the tangible world) by means of didactics (education/ teaching) and semiotics (experience with added meaning that gives identity).

Specific design goals - better access, heightened awareness and heightened interest was accomplished through complexity and coherence in design.

The user is engaged with the physical/conscious experience through didactics – teaching about the physical aspects of the site (nature and culture), Furthermore, the user is engaged with the unconscious experience through semiotics) –by using symbols that give meaning and identity

Coherence was established by means of unity in the design. Firstly the narrative of the site and linking the different activities created coherence. A minimum material pallet of steel, concrete and glass further provided coherence. The design was made legible through the different colour and texture pathways with a clear hierarchy. The use of straight lines and squares provided a similar geometry which in turn provides legibility, and unity of the design.

Complexity in the design was obtained through the semiotic resources used to stimulate memory, provide education and to create meaning. These resource elements are connected via the narrative trail (pathways). Details such as different textures, colours, shapes and sizes of different elements and pathways on site also provided complexity.

How can a design narrative create awareness of the cultural and biophysical aspects of a site and ultimately create meaning and identity?

A didactic narrative can create interest and discovery and through experience communicate the cultural and biophysical aspects of the site which as a result will strengthen the local identity of the site and of the user.