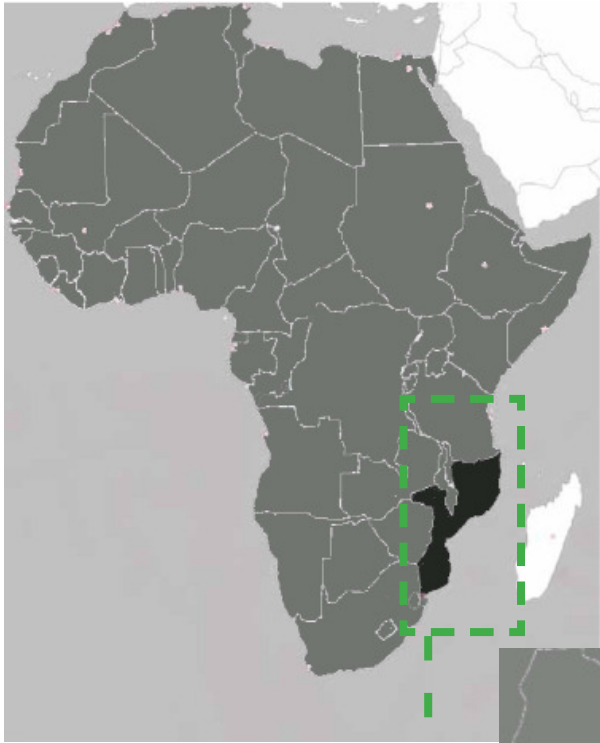
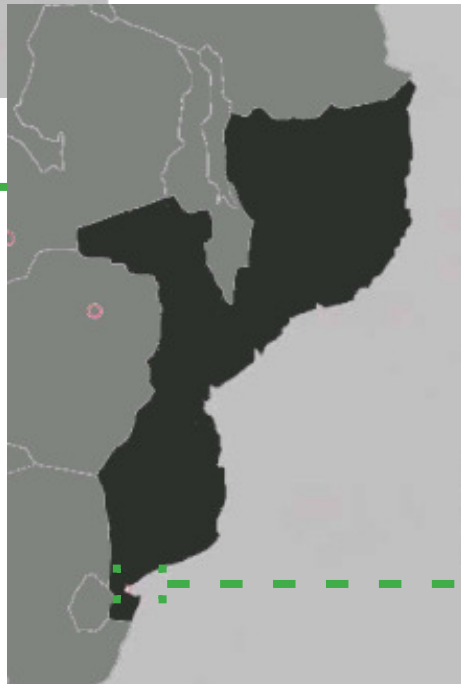


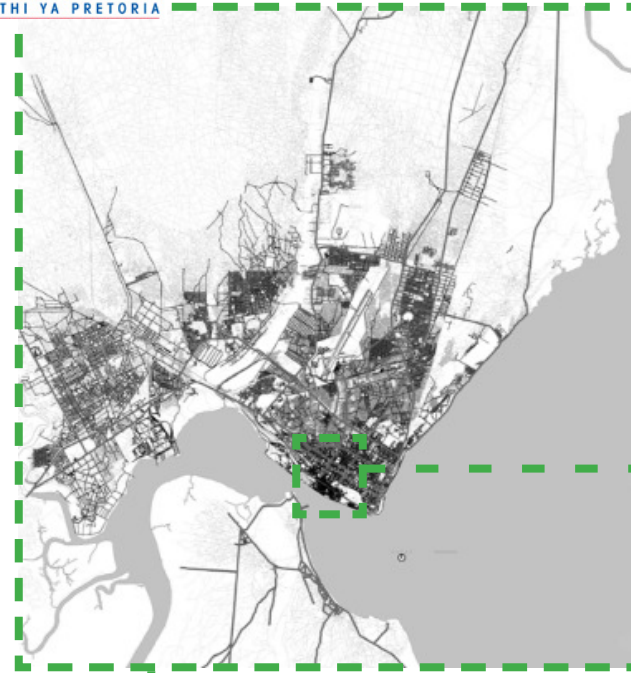
project brief and client_01



africa_



mozambique_



maputo_ capital city



introduction_



The Baixa, literally translated as lower city, forms an integral part of the city of Maputo. It teems with people who make the long journey into the city in search of economic opportunities. Once the historic core of the citadel, the lower lying parcel of land, was separated from the mainland by marshlands, with only a narrow connection between the two bodies of land. While in later years the citadel grew and gradually reclaimed land between itself and the mainland, it has maintained its unique identity in part due to its topographical deference, but largely due to its distinctly compact urban form and cultural vibrancy. As the entrance portal to the larger Maputo urban centre, the Baixa becomes an important threshold space through which thousands of people move each day. It is a place bustling with people and chaos, in which the economic pursuits of both formal and informal traders are lived out in the streets and on the pavements. It becomes a place of transient opportunity, set within a historic background of built and cultural heritage.

Dense urban environments provide not only opportunities for advancement but also opportunities to interact with spaces and built fabric which can be vastly different to the more sprawled and rural areas known by the multitude of users within the Baixa. As such, the compact streets and constant

street edge need to be balanced by open public spaces which allow for pause and repose.

Serving as recreational areas for residents of the city, these areas provide a vital injection of vegetation and life into the rigidity of the built environment. A result of increased privatisation is that the legibility of the built environment becomes less pronounced. Following this the definition of the public realm, traditionally at street level, becomes vague and eventually void of richness (Trancik, 1986; 22).

Changing functions, political flux and change in ownership within the area have allowed for pockets of land and built fabric to be abandoned, resulting in derelict spaces which begin to corrode the once tight knit urban fabric of the Baixa. These areas detrimentally impact the relationship between buildings and users and often become sources of unease and perceived danger, thus becoming isolating elements within the consistency of the built fabric.

The dissertation will explore the importance of an architecture which begins to address the definition of the void created in the urban, public realm and the ability of architecture to explore and address the thresholds between public landscape and architectural intervention.

aims_

The aims of the dissertation are threefold. Firstly it will explore the various levels of threshold conditions which exist between historical, social, architectural and urban environments. Secondly it will explore an architecture which serves to form a bridge between architecture and the landscape of the urban realm. Thirdly it will critically assess the viability of the redevelopment of heritage architecture within the urban environment and its potential role as a catalytic developmental generator.

problem statement_

Dereliction and increasing vacancy resulting from changing functions within the area results in degrading urban fabric. These abandoned spaces are gradually neglected to the point where they become detrimental to the overall functionality of the urban fabric and eventually lead to illegibility in the urban form.

The current method of redevelopment of abandoned built fabric within the city favours demolition, at

the cost of a large amount of wasted embodied energy.

The exploration of an architecture which seeks to re-appropriate and reclaim abandoned fabric within the urban realm, with specific reference to the adaptive reuse of heritage architecture, will be made in an attempt to question the current status quo with regards to dilapidated built fabric.

delimitations and assumptions_

1. The exploration of food and eating as a means of expression within the architectural intervention will not be explored in the body of this dissertation.
2. The use of vertical gardens and urban agriculture as a support mechanism for the program of culinary school will not be explored in terms of its viability and social responsibility. As such it will be assumed that the benefits of the practice remain limited to the use for the school and not for the surrounding community.
3. The existing structure of the building is assumed to have been analysed by a structural engineer

and assumed to be sound.

4. The proposed urban intervention will be placed within the greater Maputo development strategy and all proposals shall be accepted unless stated otherwise

research questions_

1. How can architecture redefine lost and abandoned spaces within an urban context to re connect urban fabric with the reuse of heritage fabric as a major design driver.
2. How can the palimpsest of historical, urban and architectural layers of the building and city through time be translated into a built intervention
3. What determines the thresholds between space and occupation of space by the user and what potential role can architecture play in the definition thereof.
4. How can the adaptive re-use of historical buildings be used as a means for the enhancement of cultural identity.

ILLUS. 3 Aerial view of Predio Pott. (Hart, 2011)



The chosen site, the Prédio Potts building, which lies on an important axis linking the Baixa to the mainland Maputo, once played an active role in the economic and cultural enrichment of the area. However, following a fire in the early 1990's, it has steadily degraded into ruin.

Although physically littered with waste and crumbling debris, the building has been re-appropriated by both nature and informal residents filling the void created by this abandoned shell.

Inherent in this reclamation of the private, in favour of the public realm, is the creation of an opportunity for the space to become re-defined in a manner which not only reflects the monumental historic and cultural significance of the site but also contributes to the creation of usable urban space within the city.

The prominence of the site, as well as its link to the proposed pedestrian boulevard, “las ramblas”, facilitates a programme which combines both economic generators and the creation of public space.

program/brief_



A large part of both the formal and informal trade in the area is based around the sale of food. Many of these traders travel large distances daily, with bags packed full of homemade bread and baggia's to sell on the pavements. As such the food workshop is seen as a site of facilitation, an area in which local people can be given opportunities to develop and grow their small businesses as well as contribute to the cultural flair of the area. It is envisaged as a place which could serve as both temporary cooking facilities to be used by the local traders, as well as a place of skills interchange and improvement affording the users of the building opportunities to learn from local and international leaders in the culinary feild. With the *Merçado central* (fresh produce market) as well as the more informal fish market both being located within walking distance of the site, it is perfectly situated to make use of locally sourced and locally based economies and resources allowing for future sustainability.

The incorporation of a restaurant/ deli facility that will be managed and staffed by "students" of the food workshop will allow for economic generation. In addition to this, a small portion of the building will remain residential for temporary accommodation or tenancy.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT:
ILLUS. 4 Mercado Central (Hart, 2011), ILLUS. 5 Nerina Trojan Restaurant ambiance (Hart, 2011), ILLUS. 6 Restaurant ambiance (Hart, 2011), ILLUS. 7 Freshly caught prawns (Hart, 2011), ILLUS. 8 Fish market traders (Hart, 2011)

research methodology_

Through an empirical analysis of the site and context to establish urban patterns and a theoretical investigation into the idea of architecture as threshold, a liminal space between the public and private realms and social and cultural significance of the site and context, this dissertation will aim to establish a relevant architectural intervention and expression for the Baixa area.

Key concepts as explored by theorists Lefebvre, Pallasmaa, Lynch and Trancik will be included in an attempt to establish an understanding of the definition of space. This will be done on both a physical and social level.

Conclusions can be drawn from which an architectural palette may be formed so as to best inform an appropriate intervention within this complex cultural landscape.

outline of document_

The dissertation will seek to analyse the contextual and historical significance of the area and will draw upon relevant precedent studies and theoretical approaches to establish a course of architectural intervention suitable to the building and programmatic function.

The interpretation of this analysis will then be taken forward into design informants for the proposed intervention and developed from conceptual formation up until the point of technical documentation.