

## **INTERPRETATION CENTRE**

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Submitted as part of the requirements for the degree of Magister in Architecture (Professional) in the Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment and Information Technology, University of Pretoria, Pretoria.

November 2003

## SUMMARY

The Cradle of Humankind World Heritage Site covers an area of over 47 000 hectares in the north-western corner of Gauteng, straddling the boundary between Gauteng and North West Provinces. The area is of outstanding universal value as it contains a complex of palaeontological and palaeo-anthropological sites which have yielded some of the most valuable evidence worldwide of the origins of modern humans.

Embedded in the rocks found in the numerous dolomitic caves in the area are the fossilised remains of hominids, their lithic remains and fossils of other plants, animals and pollen. These give a complete picture of the hominids and their surroundings dating back over 3.3 million years. The richness and variety of these deposits, their excellent preservation in the caves, and the age of the specimens, make this area of world significance.

The aim of this dissertation is the development of an architectural product that aids interpretation of the meanings and values inherent in the COH WHS and its context. The design approach is rational and simplicity is explored in order to develop the building as communication medium and introduction to the context.

By its design, the building becomes an unobtrusive line in the landscape, focusing attention on the natural setting and exposing visitors to the unique character of this heritage site.

All architecture, without exception, is created to function in the time of the future. The future is uncertain, and human nature, changeable and inconstant, yet architecture must even then perform usefully throughout its lifetime. What we can do is gather fragments of life in the uncertain future and reconstruct them in the present. Architecture resembles archeology in this endeavor. Archeologists assemble an overall picture of the past using small fragments from ancient times. Architects assemble architecture using fragments from the future. The design of architecture thus involves a paradox it traces back to the future. Our clues in this endeavor vary from person to person, and our choices depend on the future life a building is expected to lead. Just as archeologists find their clues in topography and materials, I, too, look to topography and materials for the solid footing, the dependable fragments, on which to build my architecture. Topography, the foundation of a building's landscape; and materials, the compositional elements of its detailing, are macro and micro. Neither is easily disturbed by the vicissitudes of human affairs. For architecture, as an object of human desire, they are problematic dimensions, hard to control and impossible to ignore. This shows, all the more, how topography and materials are architecture's basic contours.

Hiroshi Naito

*[JA, 2002, Issue 46.pg4]*

**CONTENTS**

Basis  
List of figures  
Abbreviations

<b>PART ONE</b>	<b>PART TWO</b>	<b>PART THREE</b>	<b>PART FOUR</b>
HISTORICAL CONTEXT	PROJECT FRAMEWORK	PRECEDENT	THEORY
Timeline 101	Client 201	Apartheid Museum 301	Philosophical framework 401
<b>IMMEDIATE CONTEXT</b>	Operating Framework 204	Chikatsu-Asuka Museum 303	
	Funding 207	Nelson Mandela Museum 305	
	Users 208	RVU Broadcasting HQ 307	
Introduction 105	Interpretation Centre 209		
Framework 108	Socio-Economic 210		
Brief 109	Community benefits 211		
Site location	Employment 212		
macro-SA context 111			
meso-COH WHS 112			
micro-Mohale's Gate 113			
<b>Biophysical</b>			
site boundaries 113			
access 116			
topography 117			
climate 119			
sun angles 120			
hydrology 121			
noise 122			
<b>Site analysis</b>			
interpretation centre 123			
tourism planning 123			
land use planning 124			
infrastructure 125			

**PART FIVE**

LIST OF SOURCES

List of sources 501

**PART SIX**

ADDENDUMS

Legal Review 601  
Accommodation Schedule 605

**PART SEVEN**

BASELINE DOCUMENT

**PART EIGHT**

TECHNICAL DOCUMENT

**PART NINE**

DESIGN DISCOURSE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## PART ONE

1-01	Mrs. Ples [ <i>Dacel booklet, Unearthed so far, 2000. pg5</i> ]
1-02	View to east from site
1-03	Entrance to Sterkfontein cave
1-04	Swartkrans "ApeMan" Australopithecus robustus, about 1,7 million years old [ <i>Dacel booklet, Unearthed so far, 2000. pg8</i> ]
1-05	Map of South Africa [ <i>Maskew, Miller, Longman, 1996. pg7</i> ]
1-06	Map of Gauteng province [ <i>Maskew, Miller, Longman, 1996. pg10</i> ]
1-07	Aerial photo of site [ <i>Landsurveyor General</i> ]
1-08	COH WHS [ <i>Dacel Master Planning Document</i> ]
1-09	Aerial photo of site indicating site borders and orientation
1-10	Section through site indicating the angle of slope at the location of the main building mass
1-11	Aerial photo of site indicating direction of views
1-12	View facing east from the lowest part of the site
1-13	View facing west towards site position at base of hill
1-14	Panorama view to the east from upper western part of building site
1-15	Image collage of COH WHS context
1-16	Map indicating routes surrounding site
1-17	Aerial photo indicating main entrance to site from the R563 road
1-18	3D Topographical model of site and surrounding area
1-19	3D Topography models of site and surrounding area
1-20	Contour map indicating various view directions
1-21	Table indicating min & max temperatures annually
1-22	3D Topographical site model used to study sun-shade patterns
1-23	Aerial photo of site indicating water drainage patterns
1-24	Diagram indicating annual rainfall figures
1-25	Views of the R563 road in the COH WHS context
1-26	Aerial photo of map indicating road noise source
1-27	Table-Interpretation centre
1-28	Table-Tourism planning
1-29	Table-Land use planning
1-30	Table-Infrastructure
1-31	Table-Infrastructure

**PART TWO**

- 2-01 COH Logo [*Dacel booklet, Unearthed so far, 2000, front cover*]
- 2-02 Stone tool [*Edey, 1973, pg124*]
- 2-03 Table-Visitor figures [*Dacel Master Planning Document*]
- 2-04 Informal settlement in COH WHS

**PART THREE**

- 3-01 Courtyard view of museum
- 3-02 Design concept sketch [*Urban green file, 2001, vol 6. no 5. pg25*]
- 3-03 View of the ramp [*Urban green file, 2001, vol 6. no 5. pg27*]
- 3-04 View of temporary exhibition space of museum
- 3-05 View of "Hall of remembrance" [*Urban green file, 2001, vol 6. no 5. pg28*]
- 3-06 South façade seen from beyond the pond [*JA, Issue17, 1995. pg14*]
- 3-07 Site plan of the museum [*JA, Issue17, 1995. pg12*]
- 3-08 Sections of the museum [*JA, Issue17, 1995. pg15*]
- 3-09 Interior of the foyer on the basement floor [*JA, Issue17, 1995. pg15*]
- 3-10 Aerial view of the museum seen from the southwest [*JA, Issue17, 1995. pg12*]
- 3-11 The exhibition hall on the basement floor seen from the first floor level [*JA, Issue17, 1995. pg15*]
- 3-12 Mvezo Pavilion [*Digest of South African architecture, 2003. pg14*]
- 3-13 Qunu Pavilion [*Digest of South African architecture, 2003. pg17*]
- 3-14 Screened shelter, Mvezo [*Leading architecture & design, February, 2003. pg46*]
- 3-15 Qunu Pavilion, water source [*Leading architecture & design, February, 2003. pg47*]
- 3-16 Landscaped roof from upper level [*Leading architecture & design, February, 2003. pg 38*]
- 3-17 Architect's perspectives [*Leading architecture & design, February, 2003. pg 39*]
- 3-18 Office roof plans [*Leading architecture & design, February, 2003. pg 39*]
- 3-19-21 Staircase connecting park to upper level via entrance [*Leading architecture & design, February, 2003. pg 39*]

**PART SIX**

- 6-01 Table-Accommodation schedule

ABBREVIATIONS

CBO	Community Based Organization
CEP	Community Equity Partnership
COH	Cradle of Humankind
COH-WHA	Cradle of Humankind World Heritage Authority
COH	Cradle of Humankind World Heritage Site
WHS	
DACEL	Gauteng Province Department of Agriculture, Conservation, Environment and Land Affairs
DEAT	National Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism
E & C	Environment and Conservation
EA	Environmental authorization
ECA	Environment Conservation Act
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EIP	Environmental Implementation Plan
EMP	Environmental Management Plan
GPG	Gauteng Provincial Government
GTA	Gauteng Tourism Authority
ha	Hectares
HCMP	Heritage Conservation Management Plan under the NHRA
HRA	Heritage Resources Authority, as described in the NHRA
IAPs	Interested and Affected Parties
IC	Interpretative Centre
ICCROM	International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property
ICOMOS	International Council on Monuments and Sites
IDC	Industrial Development Corporation
IDP	Integrated Development Plan, as described in the LGMSA
IECMP	Integrated Environment and Conservation Management Plan
IF	Institutional Framework
IKS	Indigenous Knowledge Systems
IMP	Integrated Management Plan, as described in the WHCA
IN	Interpretative Network
I&RC	Interpretation and Research Centre
IUCN	World Union for Conservation of Nature
LDP	Land Development Plan
LGO	The Gauteng Local Government Ordinance No. 17 of 1939
LSM	Living Standard Measure
MA	Management Authority
MEC	Member of the Executive Committee
MICE	Meetings, Incentive, Conference and Exhibition
MCLM	Mogale City Local Municipality
m.y.	Million years
NBA	The National Building Regulations and Building Standards Act No. 103 of 1997, as amended
NCO	The Gauteng Nature Conservation Ordinance No. 12 of 1983, as amended
NEMA	National Environmental Management Act
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NHRA	The National Heritage Resources Act No.25 of 1999, as amended
NHS	National Heritage Site formally declared by SAHRA under the HRA



NMA	The National Monuments Act No. 28 of 1969, as amended up to the date of its repeal by the NHRA
NMC	National Monuments Council (now SAHRA)
PDLA	Provincial Department of Land Affairs
PHS	Provincial Heritage Site, as described in the NHRA
PNE	Protected National Environment declared as such pursuant to Section 16 of the ECA
PPAs	The Physical Planning Act No. 188 of 1967, and the Physical Planning Act No. 125 of 1991
	Palaeontological Unit for Research and Education
PWD	Public Works Department
PWV	Pretoria Witwatersrand Vereeniging
RC	Representative Council
SAHRA	South African Heritage Resources Agency
SANHP	South African National Heritage Site Programme
Satour	South African Tourism
SAWHCC	South African World Heritage Convention Committee
SES	Socio-economic Study
SMME	Small, medium and micro enterprise
the area	The area described as the fossil hominid sites of Sterkfontein, Swartkrans, Kromdraai and environs, South Africa
TTO	The Gauteng Town Planning and Townships Ordinance No. 15 of 1986, as amended, which will probably be repealed when the GDPB is enacted
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USP	Unique selling point
VFR	Visiting friends and relatives
VIP	Visitor Information Point
WHA	World Heritage Authority
WHC	World Heritage Convention
WHCA	World Heritage Convention Act No. 49 of 2000, as amended
WHS	World Heritage Site
Wits	University of the Witwatersrand
WTO	World Tourism Organization
WTTC	World Tourism and Travel Council

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

God – Thank You for letting me be part of this

My parents – Thank you for your love and support

Rudolf van Rensburg – Thank you for your guidance and understanding

Roger Fischer

Schalk le Roux

Amira Osman

The class of '03 and especially:

Louis

Sonia

Shawn

Bernard

Cornus

Andrew

Andre'

Frans

FIN