

RE/CLAIMING THE RIVER'S EDGE

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Full dissertation title: **RE/CLAIMING THE RIVER'S EDGE:** *The role of landscape architecture in creating meaningful places for a shared sense of community in Mamelodi*

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Project summary

Programme: Community Park
Site description: Pienaar's River – Mthunzini Park -Mamelodi Technical High and Vlakfontein Secondary School
Client: Open Space Planning Section, City of Tshwane
Users: Members of the community

Site Location: Erf 329 JR
Address: Mthunzini Park, Mamelodi, South Africa
GPS Coordinates: 25°42'22.10"S, 28°22'02.68"E

Architectural Theoretical Premise: Community Design
Architectural Approach: Creating a new community linking and connecting space between Mamelodi West and East
Research filed: Urbanism and human settlements

In accordance with Regulation 4(e) of the General Regulations (G.57) for dissertations and theses, I declare that this thesis, which I hereby submit for the degree Master of Landscape Architecture (Professional) at the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other tertiary institution.

I further state that no part of my thesis has already been, or is currently being, submitted for any such degree, diploma or other qualification.

I further declare that this thesis is substantially my own work. Where reference is made to the works of others, the extent to which that work has been used is indicated and fully acknowledged in the text and list of references.

Willie Ofentse Mothowamodimo

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dedicated to the memory of my sister Evelyn Abueng Mothowamodimo who passed away in my 1st year, 2006.

Abstract

Rivers once had meaning to societies. This meaning was associated with agricultural practices, spiritual connection with nature, social interaction and the combination of all these different activities and functions which were enjoyed by the whole community. Today these rivers have little (if any) meaning to society. Meaning has been lost due to neglect, pollution and crime. The spirit of community once associated with these rivers is now under threat.

The purpose of this study was to explore the potential of a river system in creating meaningful places for a shared sense of community. It therefore presents an attempt at re/claiming this meaning, through the application of community design theory, with a river's edge intervention that connects people with others, and communities with the river.

The design process started with a site analysis to highlight the challenges and opportunities of the study area, local framework area, masterplan area and focus site. Existing frameworks and precedent studies assisted in compiling guidelines and design principles for the project. The study found that by dealing away with the current negative image of the river and re-introducing activities that the community values, these spaces can be re/claimed as meaningful people spaces. Community design, informed by the concept of place-making, is an appropriate theory for revitalising the river systems which cut through urban landscapes and disconnect communities.

This study suggest that a landscape design based on community ethics, aspirations and cultural values i.e. social aspects of landscape architecture, is most likely to succeed in the long run as it creates a sense of belonging and ownership.

KEYWORDS

Agriculture, community design, Mamelodi, meaningful, Pienaar's river, sense of community, value

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