

CHAPTER 9 : CONCLUSION

9. CONCLUSION

South Africa's political history has left scars on many urban environments. When designing on these cultural landscapes it needs to be approach with sensitivity towards its memory of place, space and culture. Marabastad is one of these landscapes. It has a history of racial segregation, forced removal and physical destruction of the building environment but also of being a culturally and socially vibrant part of Pretoria's CBD. Due to the above mentioned destruction, there is little context to respond to. All that remains on the selected site is the memory of place and space. These memories were discovered through historical photographs and publishing on Marabastad history.

This dissertation explored the potential of using memory as a design tool to invigorate identity and meaning in an environment that has undergone political oppression. Marabastad has many memories and the selection process had to undergo many filtering processes. Memories were chosen that were site specific, could be responded to spatially and that contained social importance. The chosen memories are: racial separation (the site was used for housing in the Indian location), forced removal (site consisted of temporary and some permanent structures that could easily be demolished), and physical destruction (use of footprints of previous buildings on site). In terms of creating architecture, spatial memory was an important factor to consider. Compared to the rest of the CBD, Marabastad has a small intimate scale. To keep the integrity of this scale, the footprints of the previous buildings on site was used as parameters for the new structures. This not only kept the spaces intimate but also created private and public courtyards. Craftsmanship introduced through finishes and brick bonds which brings a humane character to the design.

Memory is represented in this post – liberating context to create a reference to the past. "Architecture becomes intelligible through reference" (Wolff. 2009 :175). Reference in return creates a sense of meaning in a place which is more easily identified with than architecture without it.

These memories inspired spaces that allow for choice, visual and social integration and adaptable structures. Materials and finishes where inspired by previously surrounding buildings, Indian religious buildings and materials used on site in the past.

The chosen program, a trade school, was also inspired by the history of Marabastad. People were forced to move away from their homes, communities and employment. The trade school brings back employment opportunities, allows for social integration between students and the public and provides new proposed housing developments with specialised skills like plumbing and electrical services.

Using memory as a design tool can be challenging when choosing specific memories to respond to. A careful filtering process is needed to choose memories that correspond to the new program, the desired atmosphere of space and human interface.