

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Labour : In the context of this thesis “labour” refers the way in which architecture can benefit its surrounding context, through cyclic processes; evident at all levels of intervention, further where processes are elevated above product.

This dissertation aims to investigate how architecture can labour from what it has consumed, in order to be of benefit to surrounding contextual events.

THE NEED FOR PRODUCTION

The proposed investigation originates from the functional identification that there is a lack of local small-scale production facilities in the city of Pretoria.

Under the architectural premise, buildings of production naturally consume resources in order to function; this imperative to consume and function in isolation without labouring is damaging to the immediate urban context.

It is necessary to initiate a primary layer of urban intervention, which would generate opportunities and integrate activities around a system of consumption and labour, in order to capitalise on urban opportunities within the city of Pretoria.

The aim of this proposal is to address this situation by inserting a catalyst which would connect to existing systems within the city, through exploring the inherent properties of architecture as that which labours through what it consumes.

Places of production are generally viewed as exclusive environments; this proposal would apply an experimental quality to an environment which allows a measure of public permeability, with the intention of adding a social and economic asset to the urban fabric of Pretoria.

The programme proposes a small-scale clothing production facility, in reaction to the influx of imported apparel wear. This facility would promote the local manufacture of a common consumer product within an urban setting. Clothing manufacture employs relatively clean production processes, allowing both production and product public accessibility.

The definition of a production facility is crucial, as it forms a base for the interpretation of this investigation. Historical, contemporary and local precedents which are considered core to a production facility are identified, considered and adapted to the proposed context. A model of superimposing contemporary advantages onto the ideals of a place of production is investigated, avoiding the imposition of an inappropriate intervention.

In western culture, places of manufacture as an architectural typology such as James Watt's Spinning Mill in 1801 originate from the ideas of the industrial revolution, symbolising the dynamic and rational imperatives of that time.

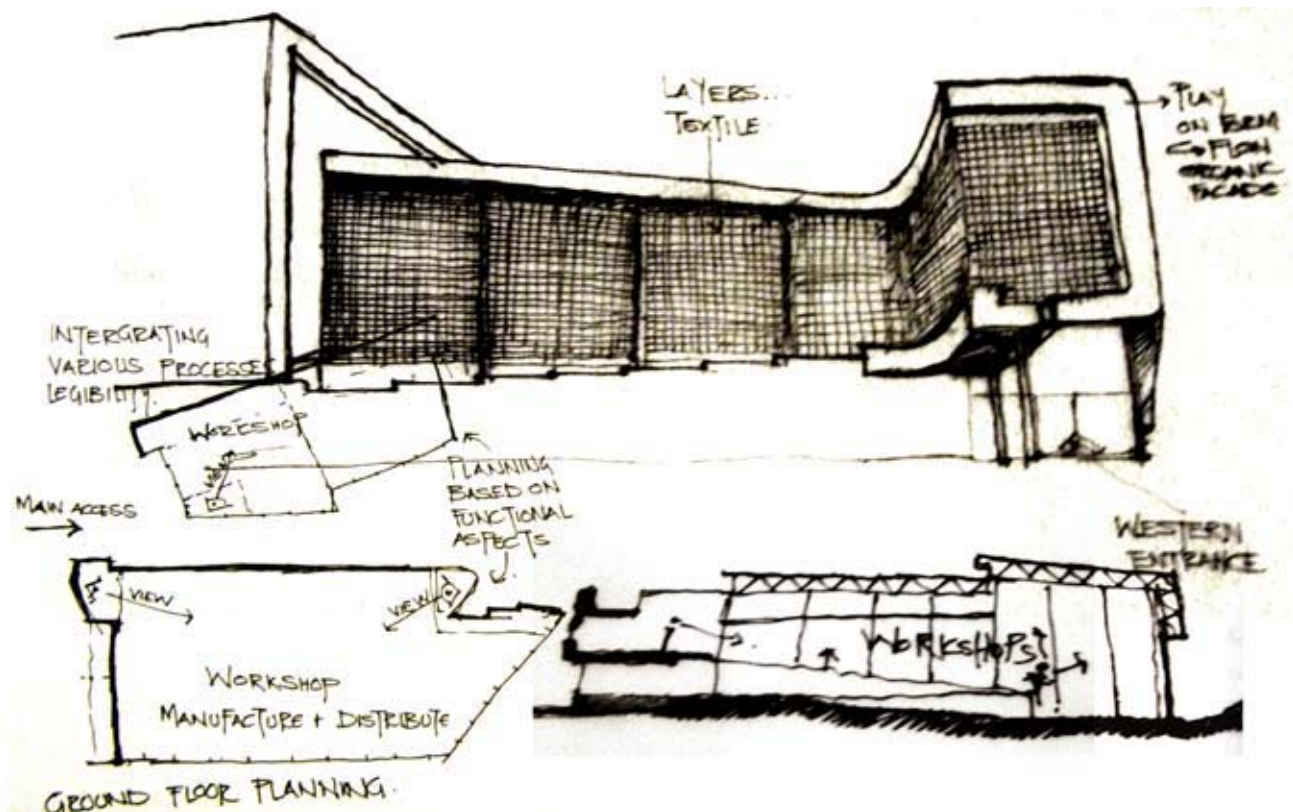
During the development of the workhouse as a place of production in the late eighteenth-century, secrecy and moral improvement was fully instituted, where the workhouse was not classified as architecture, but rather as a building of function. The workplace was invariably a closed world which only served to emphasise the essential wordlessness of labour. In order for the workforce to behave in an advantageous way, workers were forced to commit to the act production. Jeremy Bentham's panopticon as an instrument of observation provided an efficient form of control for a highly developed workhouse type. This form of control focused on improving labour output by workers whose skills and morals could not be depended on. The exclusive environment, in which factories were situated, arose primarily out of industrial secrecy.

Due to exposure to the rapid production environment, societies progressed in parallel to the extended co-modification of everyday life; activities involved some form of consumption, as the built environment itself assumed the backdrop of an increasingly ubiquitous consumer culture (Frampton, 2002:34-36).

The nature of places of production has shifted to a more eco-efficient way of managing processes, through the introduction of appropriate technology, passenger comfort and clarity in production systems. In the 1990s there was a need for the workforce to have physiological attachment to the end product, which pre-empted the view of the production process as gestures toward making the producer feel proud of the final outcome (Arendt, 1958:101-104).

A local example of a clothing production facility is the Proud Heritage Clothing Campus(2007), situated in Durban, designed by Don Albert. The form and facades of the buildings are inspired by aspects of the fashion industry, whereas spaces are determined by the functional aspects required for clothing manufacturing processes and deployment of industrial materials. Various processes are either combined or visible from different points within the building (refer to Fig.2). The warehouses allow for flexibility to adapt to changing modes of manufacture and distribution, to enable the possibility of growth or later sub-division (Saunders, 2009:412).

2. THE PROUD HERITAGE CLOTHING CAMPUS (AUTHOR 2010 AFTER SAUNDERS).



A production facility in the South African urban context can be defined as a facility where high numbers of potential users can benefit from the need for a local manufacturing facility. This intervention can act as a social, economic and environmental catalyst, thereby enhancing the immediate contextual conditions.

A facility for production should embody an attitude of accessibility, informing an architectural programme which responds to the dynamic nature of its context. In terms of built form, the building must realise a robust character appropriate to its urban setting.

CLIENT _ STAKEHOLDERS

In the city most consumer products are imported goods, a fact which increases the energy input and resources of the end product, further disassociating the end user from the manufacturer.

The intervention aims to strengthen local networks between the initial supplier, manufacturer and end distribution/user within the city. As the primary supplier of material goods, Shweshwe, a local textile design and manufacture company, will be the main stakeholder .Shweshwe has over the decades become part of various African cultures (refer to Fig.3), The clients that plug into the building would be both private sector investors (clothing designers and manufactures), as well as semi-formal entrepreneurs, e.g. in clothing and shoe repair. The aim is to create a symbiotic relationship between larger sector investors, and semi formal entrepreneurs.



3. SHWESHWE ORIGINS AND NETWORKS MAPPING (AUTHOR 2010 INFORMATION FROM [HTTP://WWW.SHWESHWE.NET](http://www.shweshwe.net)).

First, a theoretical discourse will introduce and define 'Labour' and its relevance in architectural discourse within an urban context.

The next chapter, context, opens with an attempt to understand the current production context. Mapping as a process is used to explore the current condition of urban flux within the city of Tshwane. Thereafter, various processes within the context – physical, historical, social – are explored to gain a better understanding of what gives form to the city fabric.

Ultimately, exploration is based on the theoretical outcomes, mapping and design brief to inform the development of an architectural intervention.

To conclude, a retrospective assessment of the process is discussed in relation to establishing places of production within an urban context.

4. PROCESS REVEALED
(AUTHOR 2010):

