

Shades of Durban: Past and Present

KZ-NIA



Journal of the KwaZulu-Natal Institute for Architecture



Nature will thank you.





■ UKZN School of Architecture

UKZN Architecture Learning Site

At a prize-giving ceremony held on 24th November 2011, KZ-NIA prizes were awarded for the best students of 2010 as follows:

First Year (BAS 1), Barrie Biermann Prize: **Tomlin Bradley**.

Second Year (BAS 2), Gordon Small Prize: **Julie Enamen**.

Third Year (BAS 3), Calvert McDonald Prize: **Ian Rall**.

Fourth Year (MArch 1), Clement Fridjhon Prize: **Laila Tickley**.

Fifth Year (MArch 2) Sonny Tomkin Prize: **Lidia Breetzke**.

Recipient of the Sherwood-Bond Bursary was **Nokuthula Ngcongco**.

At a graduation ceremony on 19th April 2012, 57 students were awarded the degree Bachelor of Architectural Studies and 27 the degree Master of Architecture, the degree on **Dieuwke Nightscales** being awarded with distinction.

At the same ceremony the degree Ph.D. was awarded **Anthony Alabi** for his thesis entitled *Housing Delivery Systems: An Evaluation of Public-Private Partnerships toward Provision of adequate Housing for the Middle-Income Group in Lagos, Nigeria*, supervised by Prof Ambrose Adebayo.

■ 2011 Corobrik Architectural Student of the Year

This year's event marked the silver jubilee of the annual and most prestigious entry in the calendars of architectural students and their teachers. It took place at Wanderers Club in Illovo, Johannesburg, on Wednesday, 7th March 2012.



Judges and Directors of Corobrik pictured with the seven finalists of the 25th Corobrik Architectural Student of the Year competition.

Front row from left: **Mohammad Bilal Haq** of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, **Mofulatsi Rampou** of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, **Meghan Ho-Tong** of the University of Cape Town and **Dwayne Saldanha** of the University of the Witwatersrand. Back row from left **Dirk Meyer**, Corobrik Managing Director, **Pieter Jonkers** of Tshwane University of Technology, juror **Dr Amira Osman**, **Jurie Swart** of the University of the Free State, **Clifford Gouws** of the University of Pretoria who was announced winner, juror **Nina Saunders**, **Peter du Trevou**, Corobrik Chairman, and juror **Jeremy Rose** of Mashabane Rose Architects.

Before the event, the best final year students from each of the seven accredited architectural learning sites presented their design theses to a jury tasked with identifying the national winner. After keynote speaker **Claire Janisch**, a biomimicry professional, addressed the audience on 'Innovation inspired by Nature', **Clifford Gouws** of the University of Pretoria was announced 2011 Corobrik Architectural Student of the Year.



Gouws's thesis entitled *Magazine Hill: A Weathered Continuum* concentrated on an abandoned historical military site on Magazine Hill, Pretoria. The project questioned the static notion of heritage commemoration through the typologies of museums and memorials and, in turn, focused on commemoration through everyday

use, with a brass foundry to recycle spent ammunition shells and thereby introducing brass craftsmanship as the public interface.

Dirk Meyer, Corobrik managing director, described the project as "imaginative and intelligent while treading lightly on our earth" before handing Gouws the honour

with purse of R50 000 to add to his regional winnings of R6 000.

■ Exhibition

In March KZ-NIA hosted an exhibition marking 35 years of practice by **Ivor Daniel**.

Commencing in 1976, **Ivor** merged his practice with **Stauch Vorster**

Architects in 1985 where in the Durban office he later served as Managing Director, before, in 2008, re-establishing his roots as **Daniel & Associates**. With such an innings, the theme of the exhibition was aptly chosen, *Architecture as a pragmatic Art*.

Architecture is a Pragmatic Art....
Ivor Daniel....a retrospective of 35 years of practice



THE KWA-ZULU NATAL INSTITUTE FOR ARCHITECTURE PRESENTS AN EXHIBITION OPENING ON FRIDAY 24th FEBRUARY, 17:30 for 18:00 RUNNING FOR THE FOLLOWING MONTH AT KZ-NIA 160 BULWER ROAD R5VP KUBASH 031 201 7590 | ADMIN@KZ-NIA.ORG.ZA

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This journal, now in its 37th year of publication, has since inception been sponsored by Corobrik.

EDITORIAL

Guest Editors

BRIAN JOHNSON was chairman of the editorial committee of *KZ-NIA Journal* since 1989. His recent resignation after twenty-two years has left an invaluable legacy.

On assuming the chair, Brian realized the need and value of involving members in the shaping of issues on topics of their choice and this dialogue is a hallmark of *KZ-NIA Journal*. It's not a huge job, Brian persuasively argued, it's a privilege to assemble material on a topic a member has a particular interest in, which is then approved by the committee and produced under the direction of the substantive editor.

The success of his mission is not only measured by the variety of themes covered but can be quantified by the 38 members who joined the guest editor's queue, a high proportion of the tri-annual frequency of the Journal, leaving only issues documentary in nature for general editorship.

Besides Brian's concept of guest editorship, there was someone objective, distanced from the coalface, who could intervene if necessary, deal with budgets, plan ahead and carefully listen to the sponsor's views. For this KZ-NIA members and I in particular, owe a debt of gratitude to Brian Johnson.

Having accepted that there is indeed a time for everything, the KZ-NIA regional committee has entrusted chairmanship and custodianship of sole sponsorship by *Corobrik*, now in its 37th year, to Nina Saunders. Congratulations Nina, you have a sound foundation to build upon!

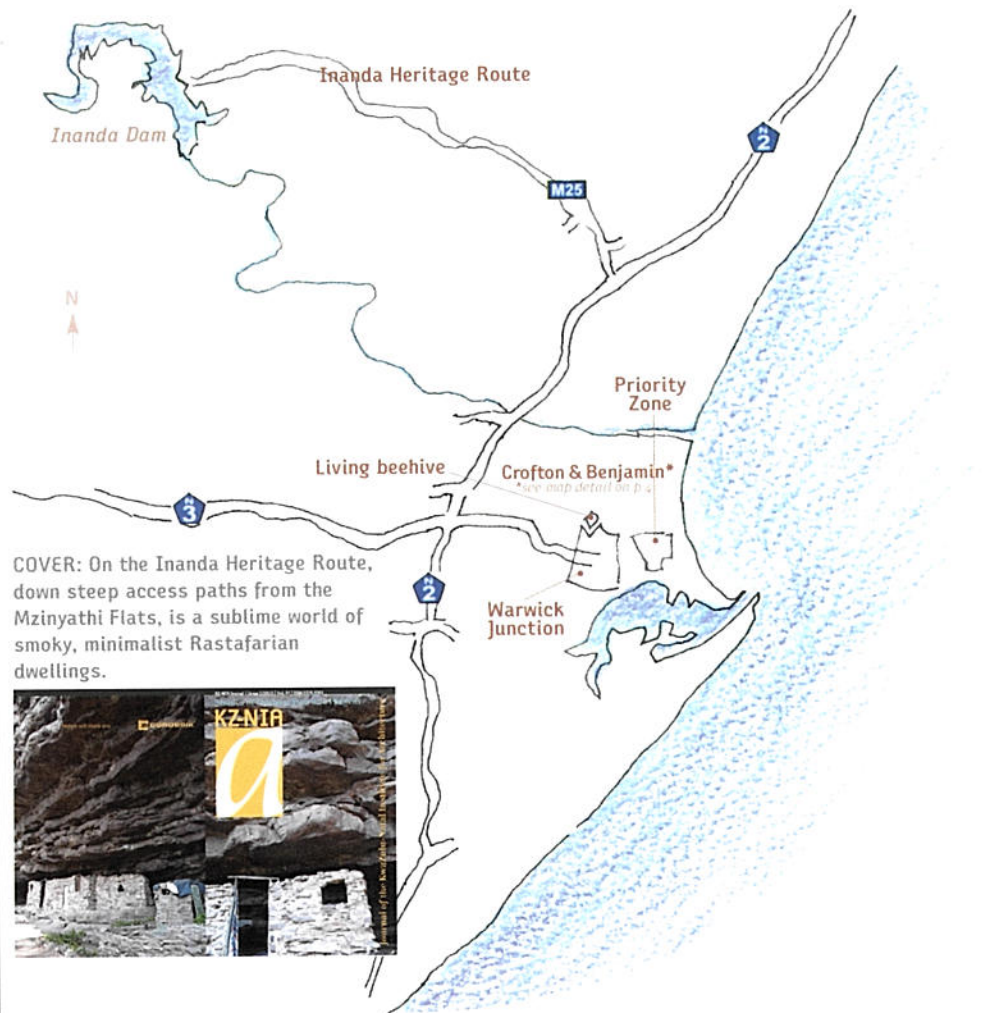
Shades of Durban

THIS ISSUE is without guest editor, not that none was planned but when balancing editorship with the vagaries of practice, this is what sometimes happens.

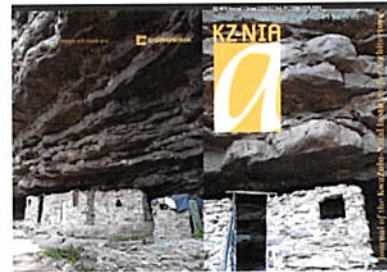
Of the featured less well known environments of Durban, some projects have been concealed from the general public because of their location which in the South Africa of old lay in the shadow of their 'colour bar' like Warwick Junction and Inanda Heritage Route. Others have to do with the curatorship of the environment now democratized and available to all like Priority Zone and which together with the Living Beehive aims to provide a link between past and future, while others shine as they always have: the architectural heritage of Crofton & Benjamin.

I trust this exposure will add depth if not breadth to any guide to Durban's built environment.

Walter Peters, Editor



COVER: On the Inanda Heritage Route, down steep access paths from the Mzinyathi Flats, is a sublime world of smoky, minimalist Rastafarian dwellings.



SHADES OF DURBAN: PAST AND PRESENT

Inanda Heritage Route

"Inanda. From isiZulu: eNanda – a pleasant place. A place that has woven together extraordinary people, and produced extraordinary stories. When you journey through this landscape you will uncover a history of struggle and resistance, but also of hope, faith and liberation. You will find that cultural and ethnic and religious differences are not necessarily obstacles to finding common ground and a shared humanity." (Totem Media)

In 2010 a consortium was formed to produce a Development Framework and Marketing Strategy for the Inanda Heritage Route for the eThekweni Municipality. One of the principal findings was that the route needed to be marketed as a broader cultural experience and not exclusively as a heritage experience. The framework conceptualised the project as 'beads along a string' with key short, medium and long-term initiatives for the route itself, as well as the six destinations of Phoenix Settlement (a), Shembe's Village at

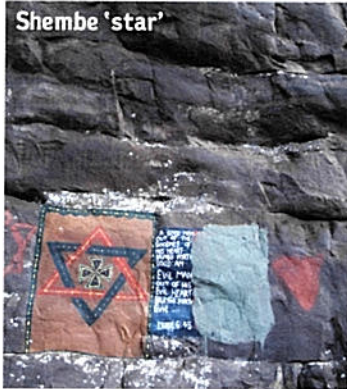
Ekuphakumeni (b), Ohlange Institute (c), Inanda Seminary (d), Mzinyathi Falls (e) and Ebuthleni (f).

In December 2011, five Interpretation Centres were completed on the route. At the introductory Centre at Phoenix Settlement, the focus is on the commonalities of the key figures of Rev John Langalibalele Dube (1871-1946), Isaiah Shembe (1870-1935), and Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948), all of a similar lifespan. Dube hailed from eNanda, Shembe grew up around Harrismith in the eastern Free State and Gandhi in India, but all of them chose to establish their respective settlements in eNanda, in close proximity to one another. While they each brought different and unique experiences to the place, they also shared important values and influenced each other in a network of cross-pollination.

The Excursion

Everyone should make the effort to visit the Inanda Heritage Route to learn something about South Africa's socio-political richness. This compact experience reveals insights into colonial politics

(Gandhi), the origins of the ANC (John Dube and Pixley Ka-Seme), the role of missionaries and the *amaKholwa* (Inanda Seminary) and African religions (Shembe sites). Apart from these one can view architecture ranging from dense shack settlements to stately Victorian schoolrooms, see the modest homes of Gandhi and Dube and even Rastafarian dwellings. The 'mechanomorphic' creations of bus body manufacturer Dookie Ramdarie are a tonic to all who battle with cultural restraints! This scenic drive winds up in spectacular topography with the Mzinyathi waterfall and the Inanda Dam at the upper end. Call in for a snack at a *shisanyama*, hire a mountain bike or canoe. Go there!



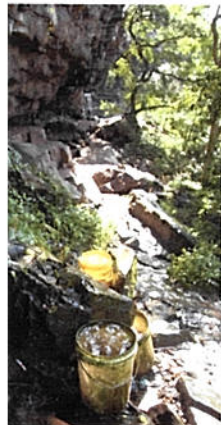
Angela Buckland

How to get there? Turn inland at Exit 77, off the N2 Ring Road around Durban. The route is defined



with coloured boulders to highlight features. Pass the KwaMashu turn-off, Bridge City business estate and the dense hillside settlement of Besters. Turn right at the first traffic lights you encounter, cross over the stream and up the short road to the Phoenix Settlement (a), the former home of M K Gandhi. Here one finds secure parking, refreshments, ablutions and an informative Interpretation Centre for the overall route.

Dookie Ramdarie erected his 'aeroplane house' at Duff's Road, near his bus factory and the later 'ship house'. See if you can spot them!

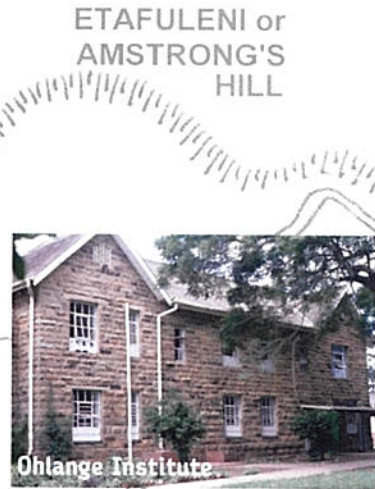


Angela Buckland

a. Phoenix Settlement

At this destination visitors are invited to revisit the legacy of the three eNanda pioneers and to imagine the conversations and exchanges they might have had. The exhibition captures the extraordinary synchronicity of the thinking of Dube, Gandhi and Shembe on matters ranging from self-sufficiency to social justice to peaceful resistance.

traditional African culture. Dube's legacy is encapsulated in the exhibition in the JL Dube Hall, where the early histories of the school and of the ANC are set out. The contributions of two other sons of Inanda who became fathers of the ANC, Pixley ka Seme and Richard Msimang, are also



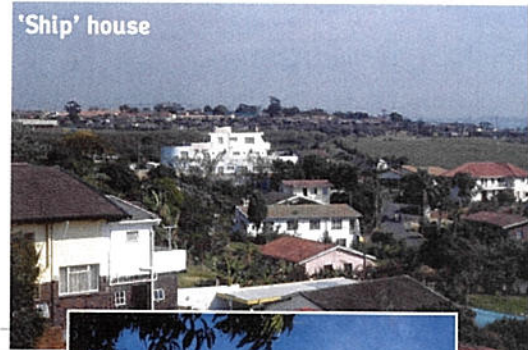
Ohlange Institute



'Aeroplane' house



'Ship' house



b. Ekupakameni

The Prophet, Isaiah Shembe, established the eclectic amaNazarene church just after the turn of the last century. Visit the original Ekupakameni site as well as the later break-away group at Ebuthleni (f), where one can witness spectacular dancing on special occasions.

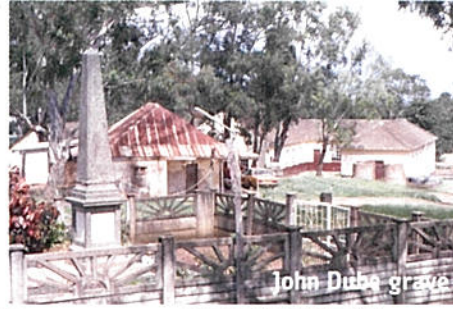
c. Ohlange Institute.

This institute founded by Rev Dube in 1901 houses two exhibitions. The first, in Dube's original mud home, gives visitors a glimpse into the early life of a man who was a preacher, teacher, writer and leader, a man who all his life steadfastly held on to two ideals, to empower black South Africans to fully participate in mainstream political, economic and social life, and to preserve and celebrate

acknowledged in this exhibition. It was at this site that Nelson Mandela symbolically chose to cast his vote in 1994.

d. Inanda Seminary

The fifth exhibition is at this Seminary for Girls, in the historic Lucy Lindley Hall archives. The first school of its kind for African girls in southern Africa, it was founded by Daniel and Lucy Lindley.

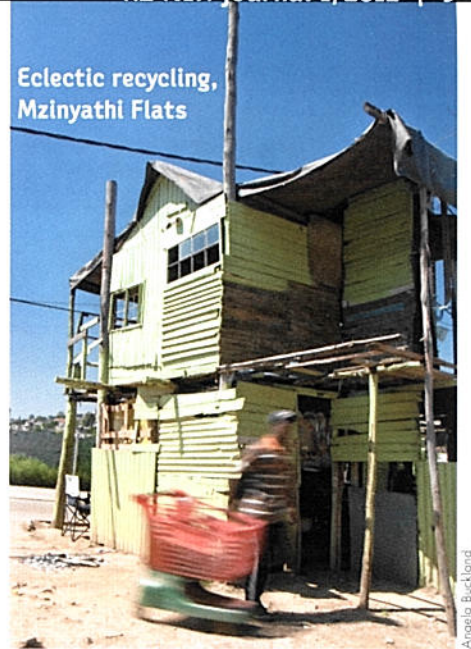


John Dube grave



Inanda Seminary

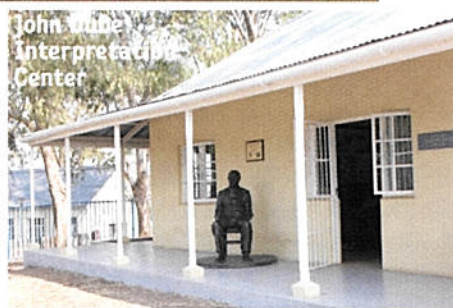
Eclectic recycling, Mzinyathi Flats



Angela Buckland



Mawothi



John Dube Interpretation Center

LEGEND

- 1. Sasol Service Station with info.
- 2. Corobrik Head Office
- 3. Dookie Ramdarie's 'aeroplane' house, 'ship' house and 'bus' factory
- 4. Inanda Magistrate's Court
- 5. Bridge City
- 6. Besters' Camp
- 7. Nthlungwane Hall
- 8. Bhekezulu
- 9. Shembe 'star' on hillside
- 10. Mshiyazafe
- 11. Sizimisele Centre
- 12. African Congregational Church
- 13. Congregational Church (1849)
- 14. Dr Gumede's surgery and Post Office (original)
- 15. View site
- 16. Intathakhusa Retreat
- 17. Original Lindley homestead (1847)
- 18. Pixley kaSeme's Store
- 19. Rastafarian dwellings
- 20. Sports field
- 21. Ebuthleni turnover, at school
- 22. Bike & canoe hire
- 23. View site

American Board missionaries based at eNanda in 1869. This was one of the very few mission schools which survived the imposition of Bantu Education, and 140 years later it is still producing fine South African women who 'shine where they are'.

e. Mzinyathi Flats

The falls by the same name are sacred to Shembe rituals. The adventurous could follow the path away from the falls for 100m, turn sharp left and climb down a steep access path to emerge into a sublime world of smoky, minimalist dwellings.



f. Ebuthleni

The break-away group of Shembe members established a dense settlement about 1km in diameter in 1980. It commands the plateau of Ebuthleni meaning 'place of beauty', with men and women separated on either side of a stall-lined access road.

Rodney Harber, *Harber & Associates*
Nina Saunders, *eThekwin City Architects*



Phoenix Interpretation Center



SHADES OF DURBAN: PAST AND PRESENT

Intelligent Design... A Life in Architecture

This is a transcript of a lecture Isaac (Issy) Benjamin delivered in Durban on 13th May 2011. — Editor

After graduation, a student asked his professor:
"How will I get on in life?"
"Jump at every opportunity".
"How will I recognize opportunity?"
"You won't! Just keep on jumping".

This is the story of my life. I jumped at every opportunity and at 85 I'm still jumping. I am not going to give a 'linear talk' showing pictures of building after building, rather I am going to describe my journey, how someone from a backwater town in a backwater country came to be an architect, who fulfilled his dream and had fun doing it. However, there is an old saying "If you want to make God laugh, tell him your plans". I was reluctant to become an architect as I wanted to be a commercial artist! But providence took a hand ... no one would employ me.

Childhood

As you probably recognize from my accent I was born in Germiston, a small industrial town, way back in 1925.

I look back and marvel at the education we had in that poverty-stricken cultural backwater. At age



A panel of the exhibition on the work of Crofton & Benjamin researched by Leon Conradie and curated by Angela Shaw and Stefan Mostert with supporting photography by Denis Guichard, 2011. Details of this panel are shown on the pages 6–8.

six in primary school we had teachers who taught us Greek mythology about the heroes of old. I am sure it was not on the curriculum. These were dedicated and inspired teachers determined to transcend their and our limited horizons and expectations. They opened us up to a wider world.

At Heder Hebrew School in the afternoons we lived Old Testament lives. Genesis, Exodus, parting of the Red Sea, forty years of wilderness, everything vivid and real, a life of imagination and adventure. At twelve I started gym, weightlifting, wrestling, boxing, and later also attended art school, part-time. As I said, I had no intention of becoming an architect but providence was looking after me.

Studies for Life

Though I became a student of Architecture, I was involved in a new world of music, poetry, literature, charismatic intellectuals and politics beyond Trotsky.

Le Corbusier was the hero of the modern movement but as part of a small coterie of maverick students we were influenced by Frank Lloyd Wright, Gaudi, Luis Barragan and, of course, the book *Brazil Builds*. At Wits we were taught 'plan is the generator' but, that was wrong, 'dream is the generator'.

I met Arnold Dover, a ballet teacher who needed a stage manager. "You'll do", he said, and so I landed in the realm of set and stage design, combining architecture and theatricality, which stood me in good stead later as an interior designer. Nothing in life is wasted.

Just before graduation I was offered a six-month tour as stage manager for Great Lyle and his Cavalcade of Mystery, a magician and illusionist. What do you think I did? Right, I jumped, and left my studies. "You'll finish up feeding rabbits" said my mother. She was right ... and I also had to pension them off when they became too big for the "magic" cigar box.

Acts like *Sawing the Lady in Half* or the floating lady hovering 2m above the floor, I know how they are all done but my oath forbids me from telling you!

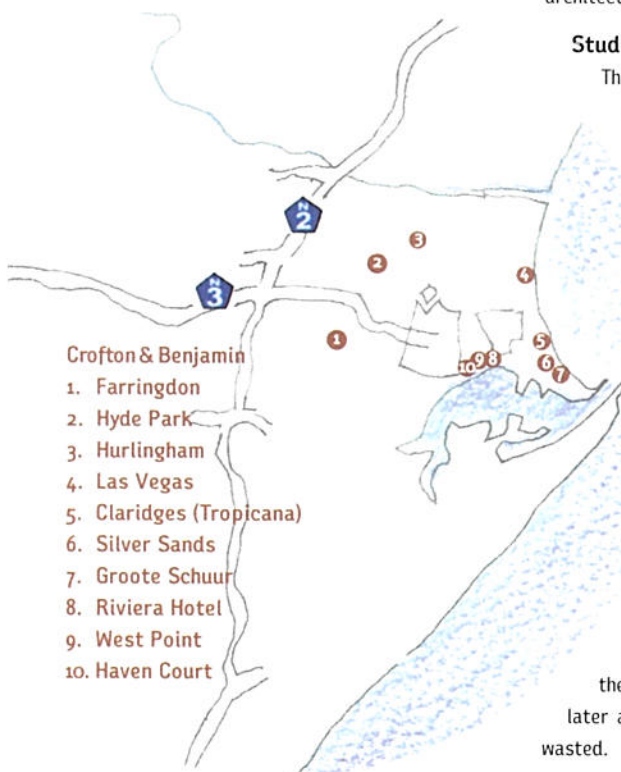
But six months of doing the same thing at the same time night after night took away the glamour and I went back to university to complete my studies.

Practice

I can divide my lengthy career into three phases. As a young architect in South Africa, Derek Crofton and I did good work because we loved doing good work. When I came to England, Ted Levy and I did good work because we feared doing bad work and when in Portugal I reverted to doing good work because I loved doing good work.

My first house was for my brother designed on the principle of a cave, opening up in front to the view while becoming darker and more intimate to the rear. I put my heart and soul into the design and even painted murals like cave paintings on the rear walls. A year later I asked Lionel what it was like living in the house and he said "It's like being on holiday".

Many years later this phrase became the *Leitmotif* of mine when I was advisor to a project, the Home of the Future. If we can have 'home like a holiday', why not also 'work like a holiday' and by extension, why not 'life like a holiday' (or Holy Day)?



Partnership with Derek Crofton in Durban

The sketch plans for Claridges Hotel (Tropicana) were designed to Beethoven's Fifth, tall classical columns spaced "Da da da da, Da da da da!" Light, shade, rhythm.

Work had to start within a month and it did! I flew from Johannesburg, met with the city planner, talked leftwing politics for half-an-hour, promised the building would look exactly as the perspective, and left with his stamp of approval.

I moved onto site in a tin hut preparing working drawings just ahead of construction. I was 26 and fearless because I had nothing to lose, no insurance, no possessions, not worth suing, not like today.

The building had a great voluptuous spiral stair like a seagull in flight, as you ascend the progression of views, architecture as caress, informal free plan reception area full of surprise vistas, and shady verandas echoing old colonial style. Our secretary, Penny Coelen, Miss South Africa, and in 1957 Miss World, even chose Claridges for her reception!

While on my own romantic Med dream honeymoon, painting, drawing and learning Spanish, the foundation for the rest of my life, came the big breakthrough. Las Vegas with its sweeping façades was designed on a kitchen table on a cliff top flat overlooking the blue Mediterranean, that early dream come true.

I returned to Durban, Hyde Park, Riviera Hotel, Haven Court, West Point, Hurlingham and Salt Rock Hotel followed. West Point with 77 flatlets was built on a site smaller than a tennis court.

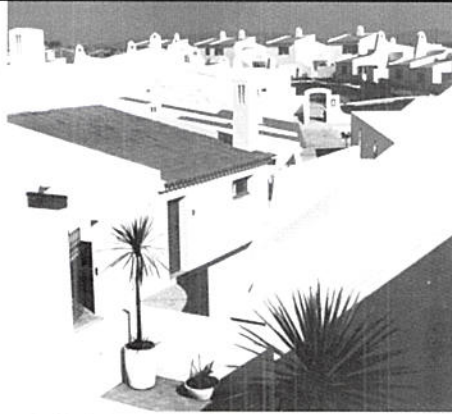
However, I had gone as high as I could in South Africa and having been warned that, for political reasons, it was time to leave. Only Gem and Derek knew I would not return. In 1964 I left the family I loved, the country I loved, the work I loved, the people I loved, black, brown and white to enter an unknown future.

Europe

After a spell on an archaeological excavation in Israel, I left for Rome where American firms were opening up.

Fortune favours the prepared mind. I found a position on a Friday to start on Monday working on housing and two hospitals, in Libya of all places. But, once I realized I was 'on contract' with no continuity, I left for London to start a new life age 40. I recommend it to anybody ... South Africans don't know the word 'failure'.

I answered an ad asking for 'architect, landscaper, interior designer & town planner', not with love of success but fear of failure. Fortunately it was a time when English banks started investing in Europe. 'English architect speaks Spanish' got around and I was back in demand. Ibiza was the foundation of my third architectural phase, once more doing good work because I loved doing good work. Mediterranean people love curves and soft shapes, they have 'feet that dance and voices that sing', and I could respond.



In Prainha on the Algarve in Portugal two local architects had already spent six months designing and wanted another three for a presentation when I heard: "Benjamin you're architect! By tomorrow morning?" Again I jumped and overnight prepared the master plan for a village of 1000 units. Back in London I set myself an impossible brief with every unit having a sea view ... which I accomplished! However, I am told that when a leading Portuguese architect visited Prainha, he was heard to comment "I hate the architecture, but I'm going to fetch my colleagues to see an intelligence at work". He spotted the underlying principles of the design.

Retirement 1987

I recommend 'early' retirement to 'keep on jumping' in pursuit of other interests. Osaka and Kobe, a hotel in Islamabad, Al-Faisal, a large housing complex in le Touquet and in 1994, not a dream, but a prayer came true. I was called from Spain to Dublin by old clients to advise on a £6m site they had bought, a disused bakery sprawling on the edge of Herbert Park. I agreed to two days of consultancy and on the way to Barcelona airport impulsively I bought a box of child-size wax crayons.

After arrival, having inspected the existing buildings and found it impossible to get a thorough overview, we went back to the office where I found myself seated at the boardroom table with a sheet of tracing paper over the survey plan, five pairs of eyes upon me awaiting some stroke of genius and nothing came, no inspiration, nada!

I offered a little prayer 'Dear God, by this time tomorrow I will have to have done something brilliant.

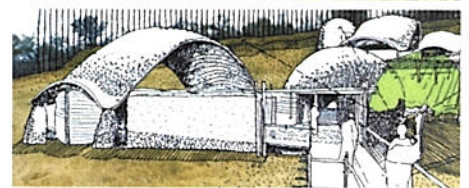


please show me now". And suddenly I picked up one of the crayons, made 5 strokes and the whole concept was there, curved apartments, hotel and office block. I drew an aerial sketch view ... working drawings were produced by an associate architect and now the buildings are built.

Conclusions

My talent was not great but I made the most of it. My brother once said "If you work very hard, you get very lucky". Consequently I am well content, and I continue to design with a soft pencil, but only after I have engaged in 'dream time'.

I want to close with a piece of advice, I am a great believer in narrative ... let the land speak to you, and I want to use Pines Calyx and Mapungubwe as the examples.



In 2005 I designed a conference centre near Dover with the first timber vaulted roof in England. On a visit to South Africa I met Peter Rich and could not stop enthusing about the concept ... the walls were built out of the chalk that the building stood on. The tiles that form the dome (no concrete, no shuttering, self-supporting while it is built) were similarly formed from the chalk that came out of the excavation. The building literally grew out of the ground.

Now Mapungubwe could have been expressed as a glass box with all the rationalizations and justifications to go with it, 360 degree views, ephemeral, less is more, it sits lightly in the landscape... the *architectural* narrative. However, the *site* narrative says "I am millions of years old, I am the cradle of humanity, I am at the end of a centuries-old gold trading route from the Nile down the spine of Africa. I am rock and sand and scrub, a sacred site. I call for a structure that grows out of my ground, implicitly present here over the centuries waiting to be given form, timeless and time-full." Peter Rich recognized that narrative and justifiably won the award for World's Best Building of 2009.

Thank you for sharing my journey.

Issy Benjamin

Readers also are referred to:

Butler, A Issy Benjamin. Aspects of his Durban

Architecture. *NPIA Journal* 1/1987.

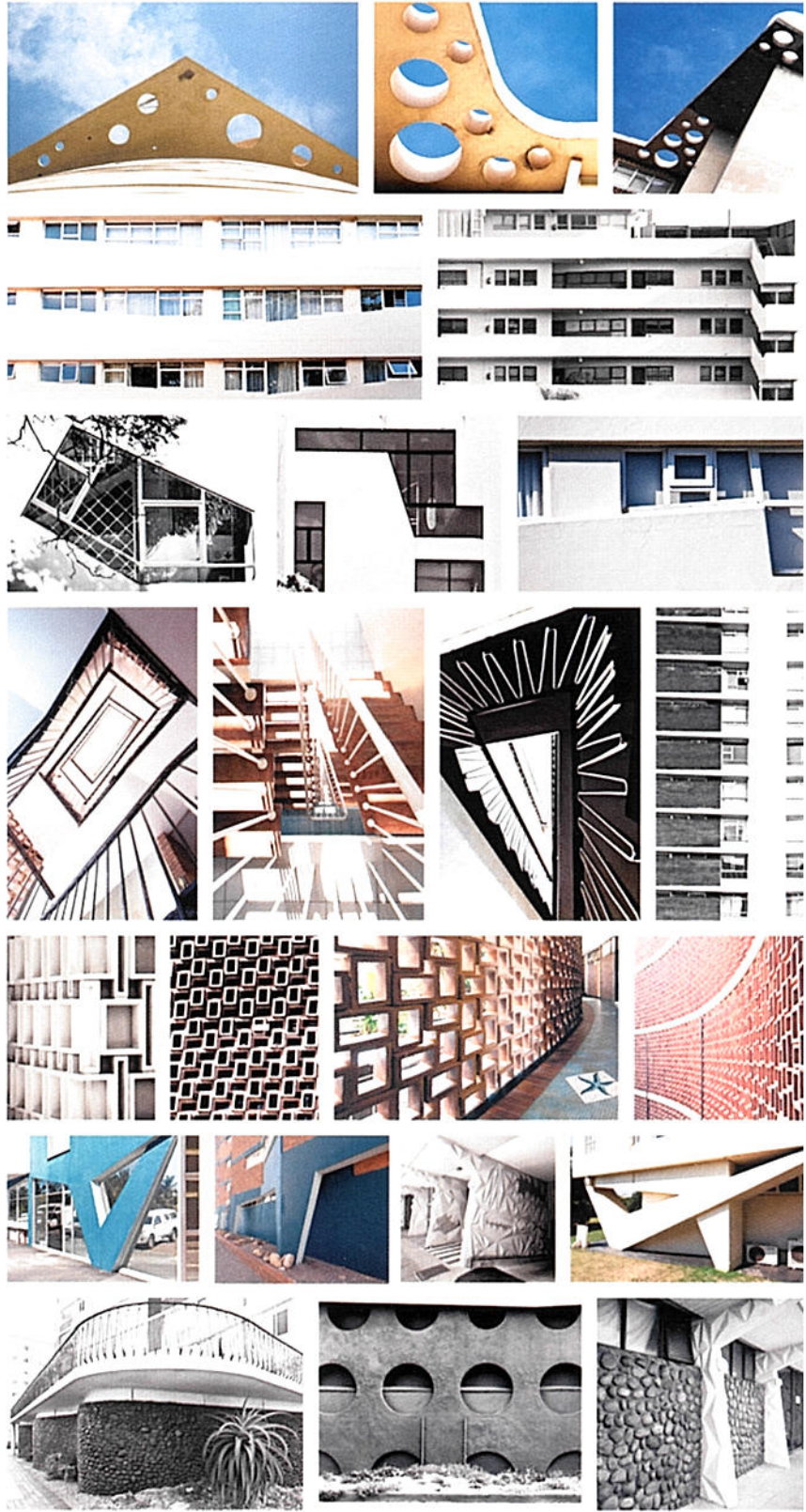
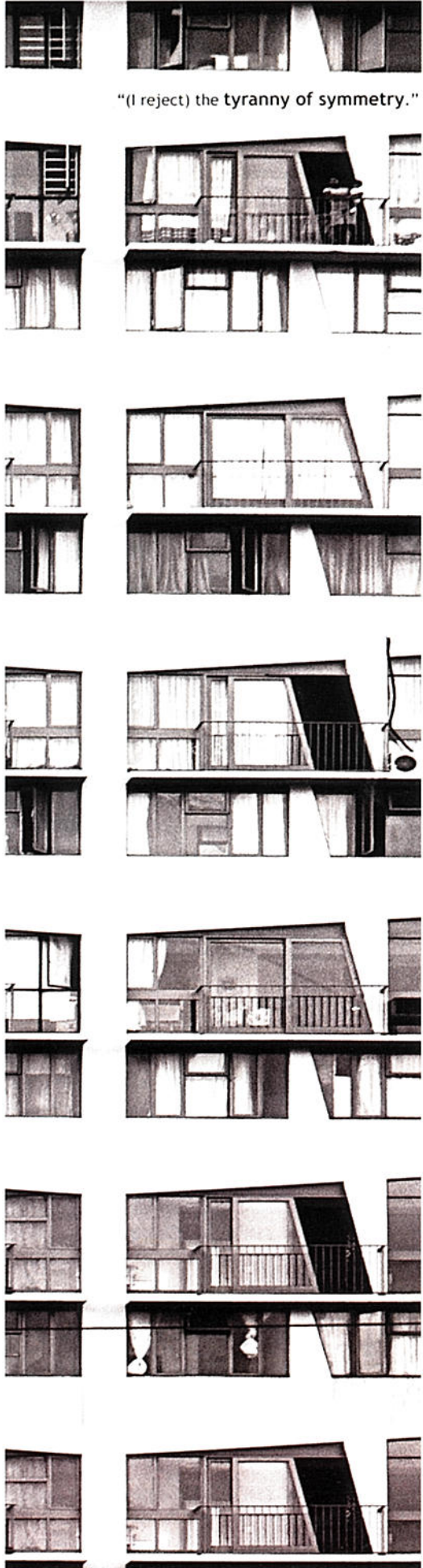
Benjamin, I Durban, my Kind of Town, my Kind of People.

KZ-NIA Journal, 2/1997.

HAVEN COURT

ESPLANADE, DURBAN

"(I reject) the tyranny of symmetry."



SELECTED DETAILS AND ELEMENTS OF THE OEUVRE OF CROFTON & BENJAMIN

"My earliest memory is lying in a cradle looking up at a pressed steel ceiling, with its intricacy of pattern and detail..."

*There was always an intricate pattern to follow.
There was a module, order, repetition. It was a lesson in complexity.
The design was not complicated, merely complex which taught me that there was great diversity possible within an overall simplicity.*

It must have been my first lesson in design."

WESTPOINT ESPLANADE, DURBAN



HURLINGHAM
ESSENWOOD, DURBAN



"Westpoint...was a very narrow site, end on to the sea. We aimed for as sea view as possible for each apartment."

We succeeded with a zig-zag façade."

"The building seemed to sit 'inevitably' in its setting."

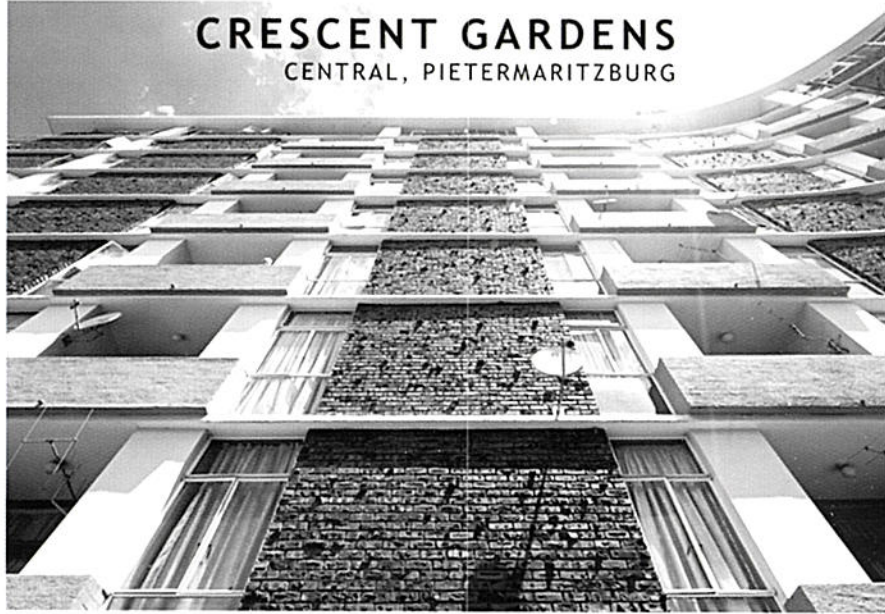


CROFTON & BENJAMIN ARCHITECTS
A Regional Mid-century Modernism on the South African East Coast 1955 - 1964

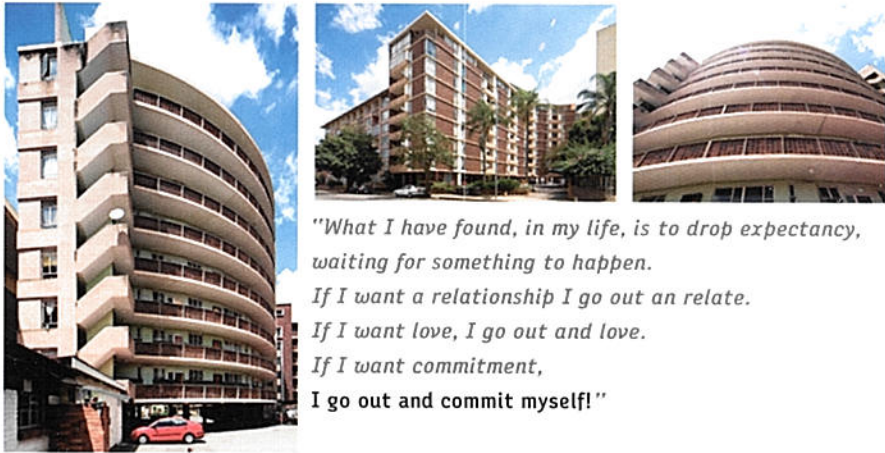
HYDE PARK TOLLGATE, DURBAN



CRESCENT GARDENS CENTRAL, PIETERMARITZBURG



GROOTE SCHUUR ADDINGTON BEACH, DURBAN



"What I have found, in my life, is to drop expectancy, waiting for something to happen. If I want a relationship I go out and relate. If I want love, I go out and love. If I want commitment, I go out and commit myself!"

LAS VEGAS NORTH BEACH, DURBAN



SILVERSANDS ADDINGTON BEACH, DURBAN



"... topped with one of those roofs with holes (that allowed a glimpse of the sky to come through the solid. Knitting the structure symbiotically with the blue sky beyond."

SHADES OF DURBAN: PAST AND PRESENT

Warwick Junction Precinct: A City within a city

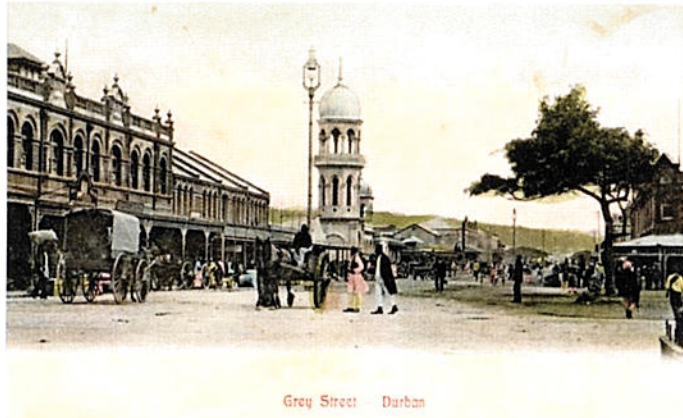
Although Durban has been a multi-cultural city for more than a century, very little history is published on the urban experience of Blacks, who were collectively referred to as 'non-Europeans' and were generally not considered to be part of the city.

While the heart of the city was formed on the site where Francis Farewell first set up camp in 1824, on the northern end of the bay on a dry portion of land flanked by the Eastern and Western Vleis (Brookfields and Tatham, 1968: 54), a 'dual CBD' was developing to the north-west of the city centre towards the Western Vlei (Rajah: 1981). The town plan that was commissioned in 1840 formalised the settlement that had grown around Farewell's camp, and introduced a grid layout with three main east-west streets, named Smith Street, West Street and Pine Terrace, a market square and a series of short cross streets (Kearney, 1984: 22). In 1895 Police Superintendent Alexander, recommended that no licenses be granted to Indians to trade in these three main streets (Mayors Minute: 1895) which subsequently developed into Durban's white CBD whilst Indians settled north and north-west thereof. Although it is an old part of the city, shaped by colonialism and apartheid and referred to as the WARWICK JUNCTION PRECINCT (WJP) in this article, little is documented on its history and spatial development.

The segregated city that emerged from the 1870s to the 1940s was shaped to a large extent by the attitudes of colonial society towards the indigenous population and the new Indian immigrants.

Indians

The importation of Indian labour from 1860 under the indenture system, and the aftermath of 'free' and 'passenger' Indians settling in the city from the 1870s, played a significant role in the subsequent character and growth pattern of the city. By 1893 Indians had acquired 229 properties and 128 stores (Mayor's Minute: 1893). The mosque had been established in 1881 in Grey Street, and another soon followed on the west end of West Street. The 'free'



Grey Street: Durban

Indians started market gardening, fishing and hawking and set up a market on the Grey Street Mosque premises in 1890 (Vahed, 1999:34). The area was referred to as 'Coolie location' by the 1880s, with Grey Street becoming the hub of Indian commercial activity by the 1890s (Swanson, 1983: 418).

The Wholesale and Retail Dealers Licensing Act of 1897 was used as a means to keep Indians away from the three main streets and tended to confine Indian commercial activity to the Grey Street area, the first move toward communal segregation in Durban (Swanson, 1983: 416). Indian commercial and residential areas were thus confined to the Grey Street area, religious sites for Muslims, Hindus and

Christians were established there, and Christian missions built churches and schools for Indians and Coloureds (Nair and Naidoo, 2010: 14).

Currie's Fountain

An underground water source was tapped in the low-lying 'flat' area on the southern boundary of the Botanic Gardens in 1878, by Councillor H W Currie, which became the town's first reliable water source, named Currie's Fountain (Mayor's Minute: 1879). This flat area lent itself to the playing of

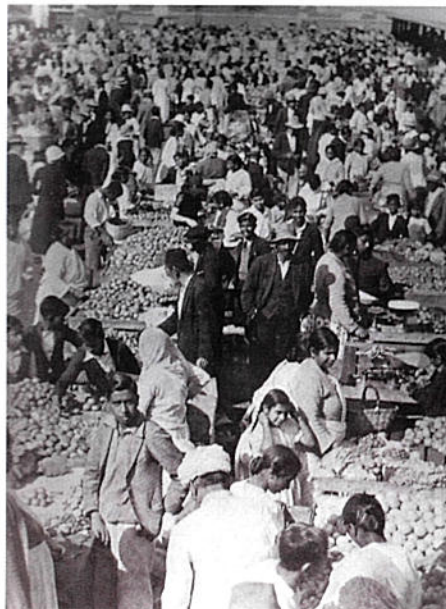
sports and became formalised as a sports ground for Indians in 1925 and was also named Currie's Fountain.

Market

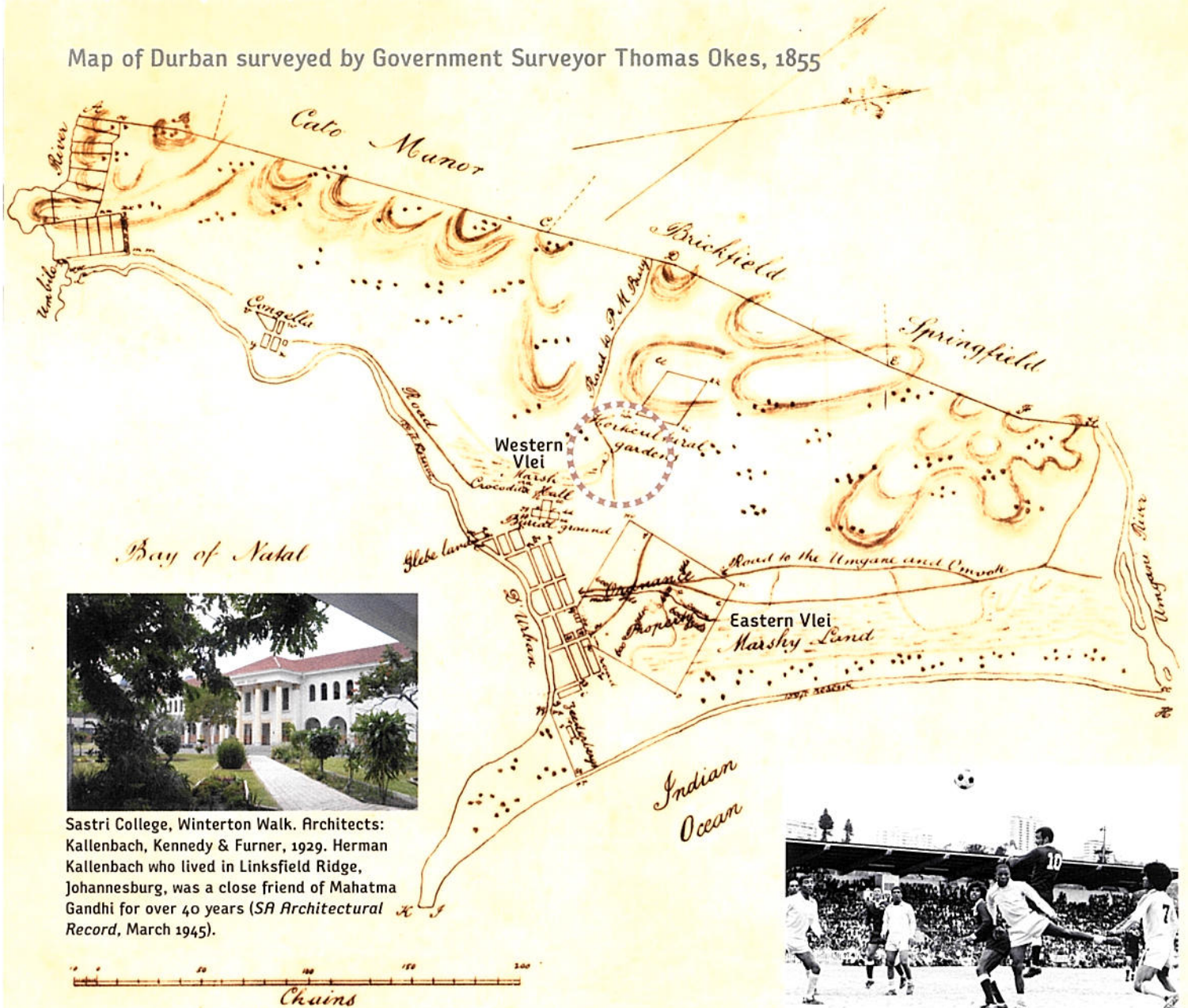
After a dispute between market gardeners and the Grey Street Mosque trustees, the Durban Council established a street fresh produce market in 1910 in VICTORIA STREET which was closed off to traffic from 4am to 9am daily while market gardeners traded from carts, parked along the street, or on the ground. The street market, referred to as the Early Morning Market (EMM) or 'Squatter's Market' because the farmers squatted on the ground, existed informally in the street under trying circumstances for 24 years, before it was finally relocated and formalised in a walled enclosure on Warwick Avenue in 1934 (Vahed: 1999).

Institutions and Businesses

A number of important institutions were established in WJP in the 1930s. Sastri College, the first Indian high school in the country, was built next to Currie's Fountain in 1929, followed by St Anthony's church and school and St Aidan's Hospital which relocated there in the mid 1930s. The increased activity generated by Currie's Fountain sports ground, the schools, the hospital and the EMM, led to an increase in commercial activity on WARWICK AVENUE and the area prospered sparking a gradual change in property ownership from White to Indian in 1930s and '40s. Consequently the area developed into a new commercial zone to the west of Grey Street. However, the dense residential-commercial zone adjacent to the EMM and the bus ranks became identified as part of a number of Slum Zones in the



Map of Durban surveyed by Government Surveyor Thomas Okes, 1855



Sastri College, Winterton Walk. Architects: Kallenbach, Kennedy & Furner, 1929. Herman Kallenbach who lived in Linksfield Ridge, Johannesburg, was a close friend of Mahatma Gandhi for over 40 years (*SA Architectural Record*, March 1945).



Soccer at Currie's Fountain Sports Ground.

city in the late 1930s and was the subject of a commission of enquiry to investigate the claims of Indian 'penetration' into White areas. This resulted in the 'Pegging Act' (The Trading and Occupation of Land Restrictions Act) followed soon after by the 'Ghetto Act' (The Land Tenure and Indian Representation Act No 28 of 1946) that was introduced in the 1940s to effectively contain Indian property ownership to the areas that already existed (Maharaj: 1992). Natural growth outwards was contained.

This containment resulted in a search for over a decade for suitable land to build Muslim and Hindu Schools and an Indian Technical College. The City Council which owned the land occupied by Currie's Fountain sports ground, agreed to make the land available to St Augustine's Coloured School, Gandhi-Desai and Manilal Valjee Hindu Schools, the Orient Islamic Institute and ML Sultan Technical College, resulting in radically reduced sports fields. This school building activity of the mid 1950s supplemented and complemented the educational establishments built in the 1930s, compressing eight schools in one area to create an educational zone.

The cluster of rudimentary facilities for Africans which consisted of barracks and sports grounds in the Eastern Vlei, did not include any major commercial or communal activities and all the other facilities for Africans such as a beerhall,

eating houses, African meat market, St Faith's church, a women's hostel, the Bantu Social Centre (which became the YMCA) and a few African owned businesses were located in the Grey Street complex.

Pedestrian bridge across the railway tracks to Early Morning Market and bus ranks. Photograph from Victoria Street south-westward to the Berea, 1967.



Durban: 1980s



LEGEND

1. Currie's Fountain Sports Ground
2. St Augustine's School
3. Kathiawad Schools
4. Orient Islamic School
5. ML Sultan Technikon
6. Sastri College
7. St Aidan's Hospital
8. St Aidan's Church
9. St Anthony's School & Church
10. Indian Girls' High School
11. Women's Hostel
12. Hindu Tamil Inst.
13. St Faith's Church
14. Red Square
15. Grey Street Mosque
16. Madressa Arcade
17. Emmanuel Cathedral
18. Indian Market rebuilt
19. Cemetery & Shrine of Hazrath Badsha Peer
20. Berea Station
21. Incomplete Freeway (became Muthi Market)
22. Early Morning Market
23. English Market
24. Oldham House
25. Technical College
26. West Street Mosque
27. "Duchene" residential area cleared by Group Areas Act
28. Technikon Natal on ex-residential land
29. Mansfield High School
30. Mansfield Primary School
31. Epsom Road School
32. 'Bantu' Social Centre (became YMCA)

Transportation

The city's bus service which served primarily European areas and was segregated, converged on the centre of the city. Indian entrepreneurs who had developed a bus transportation system serving Indian and African areas since the 1920s (Jackson: 2003), provided a much needed alternative public transport service. The Warwick Avenue area became a convenient and strategic location for the informal bus 'ranks' that developed near Currie's Fountain, the schools, the hospital and especially the EMM.



Change in the 1980s

In 1983 Indians were once again allowed to live freely in the Grey Street area. Informal trading and in particular muthi and fruit and vegetables, were

once again seen on the streets. The 1980s witnessed apartheid structures starting to implode, and marked the beginning of the end.

The precinct is the "non-European town" with sites, buildings and spaces, that represent the residential, religious, educational, commercial, sports, transport and struggle sites of "non-European" Durban and is of cultural and socio-political significance. Together with the political events in the precinct, it is a part of the heritage of multi-cultural Durban. Spawned in the aftermath of indenture, many of the institutions identified represent the struggle for political emancipation. The area could therefore be collectively considered to be a 'struggle precinct' and has a substantial part that is still intact which can be viewed as a living museum of colonial and apartheid city planning.

Leonard Rosenberg

This article draws on the M.A. dissertation by the author, A City within a city: Vestiges of the socio-spatial imprint of colonial and apartheid Durban, from the 1870s to the 1980s (UKZN, 2012), as well as on the ROCS Research Project based at Durban University of Technology, which was funded by the National Lotteries Distribution Trust Fund. — Editor

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SHADES OF DURBAN: PAST AND PRESENT

Living Beehive Project Durban Botanic Gardens

mankind seems to be particularly adept at leaving things to the last minute. Let's wake up and stop Global Warming. Save the Trees, the Whales, Architects etc.

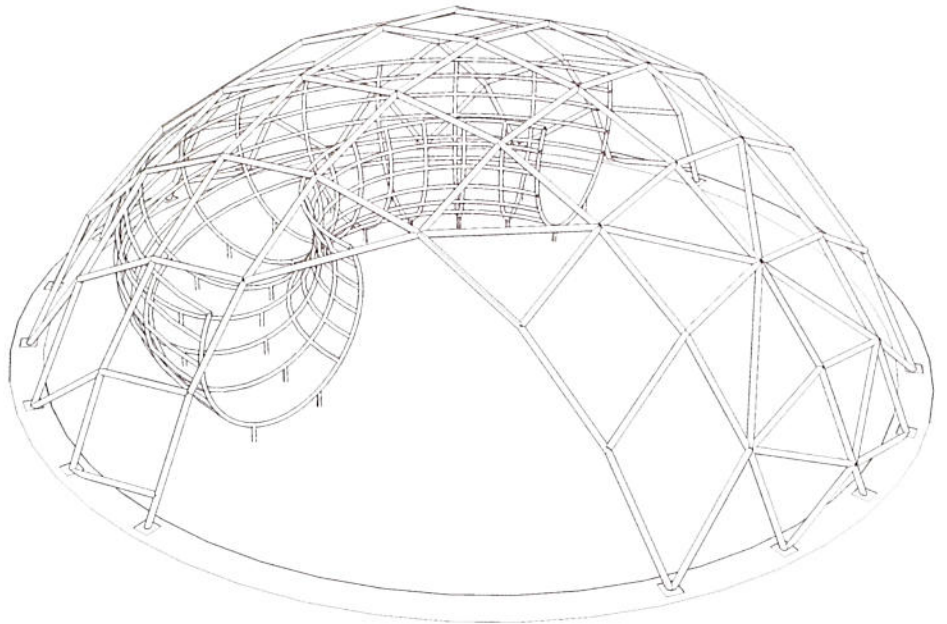
In the case of this project, it was no different. Suddenly COP 17 was around the corner, and in mid-September 2011 this caused stirrings with murmurs of "Hmmm, if we are going to build this thing, shouldn't we get serious?"

The idea for the dome sprouted in February 2011. The SA Department of the Environment was willing to donate a sizeable budget through the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) to leaving a Legacy Project from the COP17 experience (Well, at least something was left behind!). SANBI in turn approached the Durban Botanic Gardens Trust chaired by architect Ivor Daniel. My brief was simple: "Here are some concept drawings, some work has been done on a steel structure, please make sure it is delivered by end November for COP17, non-negotiable."

My role was to be project manager, but I guess I became all sorts of things over the next ten weeks, including architect, foreman, earth-mover, paymaster etc. We really did not have time for niceties and protocols and refining design – it was all 'seat of the pants'. As an aside, I have had the pleasure as an architect of working with some excellent project managers, whether they had technical, financial or engineering fortes. But in this case, a design background was essential in order to make key design decisions quickly.

A Planted Dome

The concept of the dome was interesting. Naturally, the choice of form had cultural significance in that it resembled the traditional Zulu beehive, but this dome was to become a fully planted structure, both to the roof and the ceiling, irrigated with nutrients, and had to be as energy-saving as possible particularly in the recycling of water. As a completed structure it would symbolise the partnerships between engineering and human resourcefulness in



being able to take on the challenges of our ailing planet, great ideas.

And we are all aware of great planting projects, from vertical walls, to flat or undulating roof gardens, all of which are attaining a 'new age' ubiquity. But not many people have done a planted dome. And the form has its own inherent problems, particularly because water tends to want to fall downwards and go with gravity, and a dome form, especially to its soffits makes that complex.

The original concept for the dome came from two capable designers, David Davidson and Leon Kluge, both well known for landmark landscaping and





the intricate planting membranes themselves, and were committed and tireless in directing the installation of the vast numbers of plants.

The steelwork was erected at pace by Impact, before we covered the whole structure with a stainless steel mesh as a means of holding the planting membranes together and to provide a safe and long-

lasting working platform. I begrudge not the inventor of cable ties who may sit aboard his sleek yacht in Monaco – we must have used over 3000 ties of varying sizes. Once the mesh was in place the team selected a fabric that combined plastic sheeting with a 40mm growing medium surmounted with hessian netting. This was all stitched together on the ground then hoisted into place. The geometry of the dome made for some interesting junctions, but finally we had the roof on and the planting could begin.

Internally, to hold the planting, we devised a series of concentric rings in 100mm ribbed pvc pipe which were strapped to the roof. These all had 100mm diameter holes drilled out at 400mm centres (2 000 holes!) which would act as homes for the ceiling plants to sit within. Inside these pipes are feeder fertilisation pipes, and each plant has its own drip feeder.

To irrigate the plants, we split the project into four zones: roof, walkway, and two ceiling zones. The water from the irrigation system is collected into piped, ground drains, or into the sloped sub-floor system. This all flows to a manhole that then gets pumped back to the three main holding tanks for recirculation. Inside the pump house a sophisticated pump combines nutrient in pre-set quantities and then sends the water back to the various zones at pre-set intervals.

To experience the inside, a walkway was designed to skirt one side of the water collector, for which access points were shaped by omitting segments from the dome. The walkway has layers of *bidem* affixed onto steel 'whalebone' frames, and plants are inserted in cuts made to this fabric. Internally the walkway has its own irrigation system.

plant related projects like the SA entry for the Chelsea Flower Show. Leon, in particular, has pioneered a number of vertical gardens. But, whilst the concept for the dome was there, with a need for a steel structure to hold everything together, technically we didn't have much to go with beyond that as this was new territory for us all.

How do we build it, how do we support the plants on the roof, how do we irrigate it, how do we maintain it?

Realisation

Well, you aren't going to find out if you don't jump in. So, having got the site allocated, situated adjacent the Botanic Gardens Visitors Centre (Derek Sherlock's legacy), the first thing was to get a ring beam foundation in. This also quickly told the not un-few cynics that we were into serious mode, and that this was going to be a relentless process. From mid-October, when the foundations went in, we had six weeks left to build this thing of 17m diameter and 9m height.

So then we dug a big hole in the middle, which we drained to fall, to act as a collector for any water falling within the dome's footprint.

Teamwork is the lifeblood of these projects – without harmony and focus you get nowhere. Some of the appointed team I already knew. Young & Satharia as engineers were, as ever, creative and competent; Reed Simpson Construction became my sub-contractors, were rock solid as always, and provided some key personnel in Marek and Johan. Step Irrigation, as a new experience, proved to be pro-active and competent, always going the extra mile. The designers, David and Leon, undertook much of the on-site work, particularly in erecting

A design feature of the project is a radially-curved ladder that rolls around the building to allow access to the roof. This came largely as an afterthought for maintenance, but in reality it proved a critical element during the construction.

Some Reflections

Just to make things exciting, and in keeping with the vagaries of new-age weather, we had some stresses. Hoisting 40x3m panels of roof fabric in a 60 knot wind is not fun, neither is 120mm of rain two days before opening. Yep, we probably chose the worst time we could. Mud everywhere.

Whist we delivered the project on time, which was well received and featured abundantly on local and international TV, the COP17 event itself ironically had a bad effect on the project. At the time we did not realise the criticality of regular watering in the early stages of the planting – they rely fully on the system for nutrition and moisture – we found the numerous camera crews and journalists who visited the site did not take kindly to getting themselves and their equipment wet from the various watering systems. Sensitive souls. So, the system was turned off for long periods which had a damaging effect on growth rate and plant survival. This has now been addressed, and a maintenance and plant replacement schedule has been put in place.

The biggest drawback, without being critical of the many successful aspects of the project, is that with a bit more time and a proper design period a lot of the technical issues could have been better resolved. These types of projects have a tendency to be regarded as short-term installations, where they look great for a short period, and then get demolished. In reality, however, the beehive is quite a complex building in its own right and deserved more respect in terms of the time available. It's the old triangle of time, cost and quality – make any one of the three most important, in this case time, and inevitably cost and quality will suffer. Not badly in this case, but they did nevertheless.

Conclusion – well, if anybody out there wants to do another dome, we now know a lot of the questions, and hopefully some of the answers.

Derek Thomas

Project Team:

Client: *South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) in association with the Durban Botanic Gardens Trust.*

Project Direction and Co-ordination: *Ivor Daniel, Durban Botanic Gardens Trust*

Project Design & Co-ordination: *Derek Thomas, Thomas Projects.*

Landscape Design: *Leon Kluge & David Davidson, SANBI Consultants.*

Structural Design: *Rob Young, Young & Satharia*

Steel Contractor: *Impact Engineering*

General Contractor: *Reed Simpson Construction.*

Irrigation Contractor: *Step Irrigation*

Horticultural Contractors: *Staff of Durban Botanic Gardens.*

SHADES OF DURBAN: PAST AND PRESENT

Priority Zone and Repurpose Exhibition

This is an elaboration of the coverage in KZ-NIA Journal 3/2011 to which readers are referred. —Editor

The hosting of COP17/CMP7 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Durban from 28th November to 9th December 2011 created enormous excitement and opportunities for the city to showcase good examples of sustainability.

Priority Zone, located in the area surrounding the Albert Luthuli ICC and Centrum precinct, was perfectly positioned for this event. Initiated by eThekweni City Architects and run through a publicly tendered partnership agreement with facilities management company, Drake & Scull, Priority Zone is a collaboration of area management to supplement and improve operational service standards within the designated area. The headquarters, at 77 Monty Naicker Road (Pine Street), opposite the ICC Arena which hosted the conference, was the ideal venue for REPURPOSE, an exhibition initiated by City Architects, to motivate a more active role for architects in the development and management of public spaces.

The name REPURPOSE was agreed on for the exhibition as it embodies the principles of re-using and improving what exists, rather than discarding and making new from scratch – a significant contributor towards sustainability. It also refers to the ethos of the Priority Zone project, giving purpose and meaning to stakeholders in the precinct and encouraging them to take ownership and pride in its regeneration.

Priority Zone

Established in 2009 by City Architects, Priority Zone pilot project manages and maintains the environmental, economic, social and cultural aspects of the civic, administrative, Centrum and conventions precincts as a place for all.



Rooftop gardens on Priority Zone headquarters building opposite Albert Luthuli ICC.



Priority Zone is geographically bounded by Stalwart Simelane (Stanger) Street on its eastern border, Soldiers Way on the west, Anton Lembede (Smith) Street on the south and KE Masinga (Old Fort) Road on the north. It has since been extended to include the whole of the Old Fort-Municipal complex, the civic precinct around the City Hall and Medwood Gardens, the Playhouse complex and Margaret Mncadi Road (Esplanade) and the result is a transformed, cleaner, safer inner city whose potential has lain dormant for years.

Priority Zone is home to informal trade and flea markets, taxi ranks, shopping centres, commercial and landmark buildings, leading businesses, parks and museums – a full representation of eThekweni's diverse demographics. Through social interventions with local stakeholders, improved maintenance and operational management, and revising the look and feel of the area, Priority Zone's urban management initiatives are creating sustainable and quality living environments in the dense inner city. From the creation of its headquarters, a working green building conversion, to its rooftop 'farm' and the

vegetable gardens at the taxi rank opposite help provide food security for the area.

The vision of this architectural and urban management project is to create a holistically healthy urban environment for all residents of eThekweni, radiating outwards from the Priority Zone and resulting in a city that is efficient and responsive; one that attracts property investment and tourism, and creates opportunities for its citizens whilst always meeting their needs.

Priority Zone is probably best known for the urban rooftop garden on its headquarters building. The immaculately landscaped garden reduces ambient heat in the building while the gutters capture rainwater used to irrigate the crops on the roof. Everything in the garden is made from recycled products, including the wooden pallets on the floor of the roof that were collected from the street. Old tyres house various plants and crops. The drums on the roof are recycled and the tables and chairs are made out of recycled plastic. Nine tunnels house crops of spinach, bush beans, herbs, lettuce and spring onions that are available for staff members and charities and to be sold in markets. Butterflies have been attracted to

the garden and bees have been encouraged, with new hives recently introduced.

A solar heating system powers the geyser. A skylight lets in light to reduce electricity consumption. A solar electricity system powers all the computers, lights and electric appliances within the building.

Accommodating Informal Trade and Commuters

There is a Service Level agreement in place with business support to monitor and report on all



Walkway through Gugu Dlamini (Central) Park.



Vendor units by Koop Design.

activities related to the informal trade sector, i.e. appropriate use of correct stalls, cleanliness within market areas, illegal trading and vandalism of city assets.

Priority Zone partnered with *Asiye eTafuleni*, an existing NGO job-creation programme, to embrace the cardboard sellers in the area. They were moved to the back of the Priority Zone building from their prominent position in the main streets and their trolleys are housed in the building at night.

The mini-bus taxi rank opposite, had its own set of problems. One was resolved with the provision of

a pool table for the use of drivers awaiting the filling of their vehicles. Another was the provision of custom-designed vendor units on wheels to facilitate storage at night. Yet another was the hawkers who capitalise on commuters and whose behaviour had to be engaged with. Since then drinking in public is no longer a problem, nor is smoking, and there appears to be no drug-dealing going on. Besides, commuters who would formerly discard their litter and add to the squalor can now be seen walking some distance to use the bins. Everyone appreciates cleanliness.

Sustaining of Culture, Historic Sites and Buildings

History is our foundation from which we learn and, hopefully, grow. It is also what roots us and gives us a sense of place and belonging, an identity. It is

imperative, therefore, to take good care of our cultural sites and communal gathering places. Priority Zone thus facilitates the preservation and maintenance of cultural sites such as the Cenotaph and Francis Farewell Square (see KZNIA Journal 2/2010), Gugu Dlamini Park and AIDS Memorial, various statues and artwork, the Shembe spiritual site, Pesoa Square and Medwood Gardens. Similarly, the general appearance and environs of the key historical buildings need to be monitored and cared for e.g. City Hall, Post Office, Workshop Shopping Complex, the recycled Old Station terminal building and train shed, the KwaMuhle, Science, Old Fort and Old Court (Local History) museums, and Old Fort Gardens.

The upgrade, landscaping and

beautification of urban park spaces have resulted in a marked increase in users in these public spaces. Office workers and students enjoy their lunch breaks in Medwood Gardens and residents and families picnic in Gugu Dlamini Park over the weekend. There is also greater civil awareness of an amenity that provides sufficient and well-maintained ablution facilities.

Repurpose Exhibition

The area allocated for exhibitions was the 260 sqm former garage space of the headquarters building. It was important that the experience didn't feel like a collection of display boards in a garage and that the space was completely transformed – allowing visitors' perceptions to be changed about what they were viewing. The brief was challenging for many reasons: there could be no permanent structural changes, materials were to be sustainably resourced, be affordable due to the large scale of the installation, be completely reusable after the event and create an inspiring and navigable experience for visitors.

Koop Design chose bamboo as the primary material for the display system as it delivered on many of the project requirements – reusable, durable, strong and environmentally restorative by clearing alien species – and the expressive quality of the poles assisted in the transformation of the space.

Using a simple bolted structure on diagonals, instead of a walk through a garage, it became a walk through a forest of green trunks hanging with overhead 'foliage' of exhibition material. At the same time the versatility of bamboo offered many opportunities to create other products the project needed – easels to display zone signage, light fittings, outdoor shade and serving counters for food and even beauty therapists.

Edited from a text assembled by Angela Shaw with photographs by Greg Lomas.

Professional team

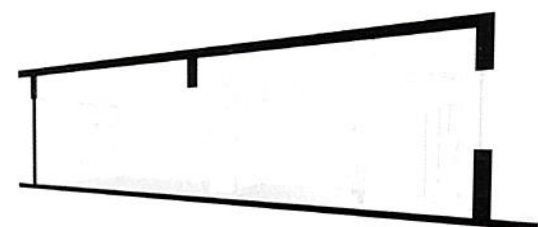
Client: *eThekweni City Architects*

Project Director: *Jonathan Edkins*

Development Managers: *Derek White, Nina Saunders*

Exhibition curator: *Angela Shaw*

Exhibition design: *Koop*





BRAZIL A TRAVEL DIARY

The *D'Urbanistes* had been invited to Brazil, to share ideas, knowledge and experience with the *urbanistes* of Sao Paulo. But first, I had to see Curitiba; then there was that fantastic conference in Porto Alegre, and you just cannot go to Brazil and not go to Rio!

Curitiba

The flight to Curitiba ("kurachibp" for the uninitiated trying to find the right queue at Sao Paulo's Guaralos airport) was just over an hour. Apparently you can do it by bus in three, maybe four.

You don't have to stay in the centre to love Curitiba as long as you are somewhere near the *Autobus Touristica* route you can get to anywhere easily and cheaply. For an architect and aspiring *urbaniste*, the city is all it's cracked up to be, and more. The thoughtful, insightful and forceful design imprint of Jaime Learner is everywhere. There is a clarity and simplicity in the city plan, which anyone can easily see and understand, and the infrastructure is fully integrated. Just goes to show what can be achieved if you put the architects in charge!



Sao Paulo

Back to Sao Paulo to meet the eThekwini contingent, consisting of senior members of our Planning, Housing and Engineering Units, lead by Soobs Moonsammy (Head: Environment, Planning and Development). All bundled into a small hotel on the Avenue Paulista, the founding street of the colonial barons from Europe, and now the main street for banking and commerce in this city of twenty million.

Five days of intensive exposure, and revelation after revelation. A multiplicity of "aha" moments, and ideas piling on ideas about how we can and must change what is happening at home. The Sao Paulo Metropolitan Housing Commission architects, managers, planners, social workers, geographers and *urbanistes* gently guiding us through their massive and multiple projects on site and then in multi-lingual fully translated workshops so that you hear and see and feel and experience everything you need to enjoy and exult at the catharsis and freedom of another way of seeing. Damascus Road indeed!

Ranging from interventions to save the city's water supply whilst changing forever the quality of life for millions of residents, through application of careful and patient social strategies, creative and artistic engineering solutions, and above all treating people as people and not numbers to be put in boxes so that the numbers can add up at election time; to intricate and direct and hands-on interaction with people living ten deep in tiny multi-room hovels in the middle of the town to find solutions which tie into the crafted strategies for managing and regularising an urban conglomeration which has reached terminal density and run out of land to live on. Sprawl had to stop. Change had to happen. Long term planning had to take over from short term blindness. And they have succeeded (mostly) in the last fifteen years, and we don't have to go through that trough.

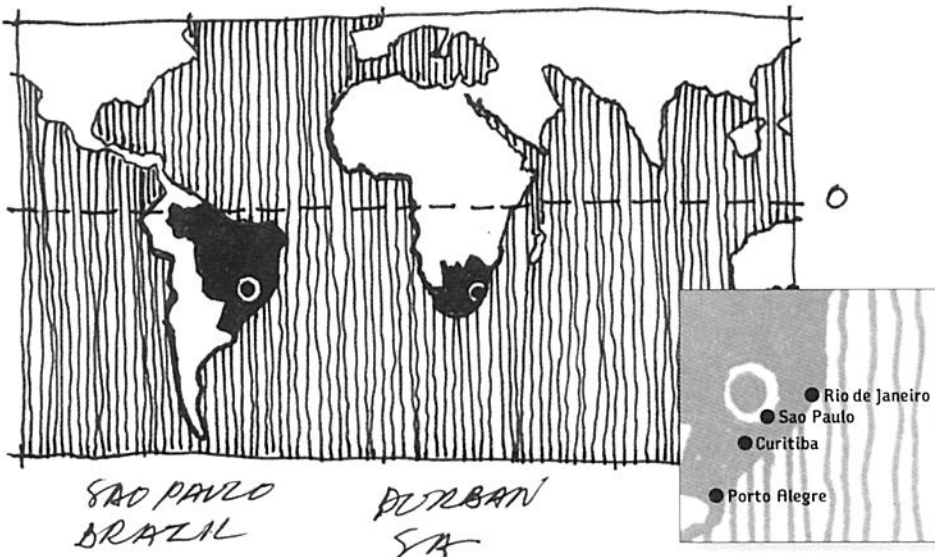
I was surprised to see Thoyandou and the Sacred Hills emerging below the clouds. After a ten hour flight, "Maybe I should have just driven here" flashed through my muggy mind as the plane cruised downwards over the tropical jungle, dirt roads and small settlements, woven together by glistening water courses.

We drifted through the wispy wool over the mountains and quite suddenly the landscape changed to Umtata. More dusty, open veld patches between light industrial sheds, and the shapes of denser settlement struggling through the drizzle in the distance. Horses grazing. But more jungle on the edges.

It is human nature to try to find the familiar in the unknown and the brand new experience. I hadn't known what to expect, and my preconceptions were around deep Amazon jungle, and the massive scale of a city seven times the size of my home town, Durban.



Niemeyer Eye, Curitiba.



To the housing strategy which is all about recognizing the inherent ability in every person, couple and family to be a productive and cooperative social entity within a happy, stimulated and productive society. It is not about numbers and limited costs. There are no handshake houses. There are no RDP houses. It is not possible for everyone to have their own patch of dirt around their house. We have to share. We have to densify, there is no alternative. Architects and *urbanistes* bring creativity, art, social spaces, great architectural solutions, to achieve as good a quality of living environment as can be achieved. It's about taking what people have created for themselves, and reinforcing it, strengthening it, adding to existing societal values, communicating and facilitating solutions without destroying the underlying networks and dependencies which exist in every human colony. A bit like the 'double dig' principles!



Guy Luc Hotel, Sao Paulo.



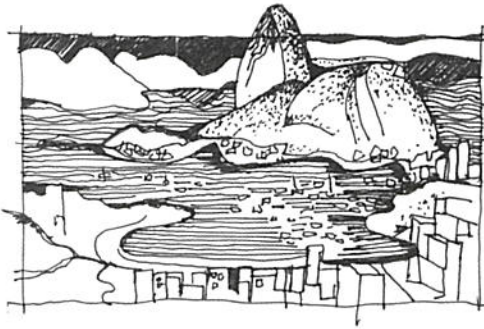
Housing scheme, Sao Paulo.

Porto Alegre

Inspired, motivated and full to the ears with new learning we travel together to Porto Alegre, to hear what others in the world are doing in trying to change their cities and address similar challenges. Soobs has them in the palm of her hand, in her red sari, and with deep understanding of where we have been and where we are going, she brings our experiences to life for the rest of the delegates. I feel proud to be part of this.

Porto Alegre uses all of its limited resources and few public buildings to accommodate the Metropolitan Cities congress. The ornate and beautiful Opera House and more modern Civic Centre are used to capacity. Meals are taken under the arches in the basement of a magnificent colonial edifice at the top of the civic mound. The town is on

a harbour, and built across a dry river bed which has been protected to form a massive green swathe through the town, giving form and structure to an otherwise typically higgledy piggledy port town striving for a bigger place in the world.



RIO - FROM FAVELA
NOV 2011

Rio de Janeiro

It's a romantic city, and needs company to really enjoy. I was on my own over a rainy few days at the end of a long tour, but took comfort from the Redeeming Christ blessing me intermittently through the clouds with His overseeing presence.

Staying at the "Coco, Cocobana, Coco Cabaana ..." has the disadvantage of entrenching the annoying song in your head, but at least it's better than "Girl from Ipanema", from the neighbouring beachfront, which inevitably jumps into your head whenever it finds a vacant space as you walk in sloppy wet shoes down the beautiful pristine boulevards. I can see the genesis of the Golden Mile revamp, but also see the 'Po-Mo' trap which the geographers and planners have fallen into. You cannot successfully copy a few elements or patterns into a wholly different place. Cookie-cutter beachfronts all over the world attest to this. The principles which need to be translated to our own environment are: shade, shelter and succor at regular intervals; management offices combined with lifeguard facilities, ablutions and bars, with distinct but uniformly branded building designs contributing to pedestrian perceptions of scale, safety and orientation; a separation of faster movers from slow strollers be they on foot, bike, or skates; beach sport facilities evenly distributed; pay-as-you-go bikes linked to SMS banking – so clever – and motor vehicle and bus access directly alongside the beach. Besides that, there were greened hillocks pouncing out through the middle of the sea, far enough off-shore to be mysterious, yet close enough to be able to reach. OK, this may be a bit difficult in Durbs!

Rio's Favelas

The Favelas are fascinating. A guided day trip by Combi through the City, past the harbours, and up the hill takes you to another world. Brazil has minimal unemployment, so most people

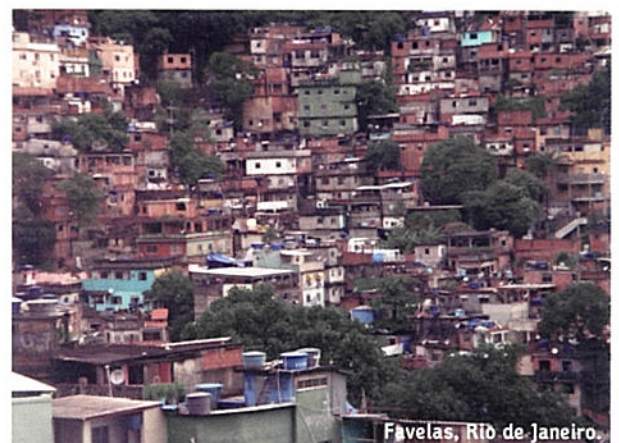
living on the hill work in the city below – many in hotels, an essential part of Rio's modern tourism industry. Families live above, looking down on and over the modern city, and enjoying probably the best views in the world.

We find out that Favela is a climbing legume plant, which grows only in the harshest environments, clinging onto rocks, but producing highly nutritious beans, which were the staple diet of slaves, brought to Rio from Africa. When these slaves were tricked by the colonial leaders into fighting a war for them, in the hope of being rewarded by freedom and land, they took unused land on the hills for their own, and built their own "Favelas", clinging to the rocks and sustaining a strengthened and vibrant community above the city.

Entering a Favela through an anonymous door on a steep and winding street is like entering the basements of the Phantom of the Opera. Deep, dark, echoing, but full of sparking edges as water flows through and chinks of light fall on angled reflective surfaces. Electrical cables tangle their brambled way from ranks of meters into unlikely crevasses and through half seen doorways. We slip through low vaults and enter into sudden bubbles of interaction, with the community shop, bar, kitchen and chairs set out neatly under a paved widening, under a ramshackle ceiling. Up some winding stairs and we're into a community crèche, equipped with banks of PCs, and little kids energetically playing with puppets in a small open garden beyond. Another set of stairs and there's a mini workshop, producing tourist goods, as well as already gearing up to make things for sale during the coming Soccer World Cup in 2014. I whisper my warnings to the guide, who already understands the threat that the 'FIFA-dom' will take everything and give little back. Around a crooked corner, and up again, into someone's garage – how did that car get here? – and through their lounge to the balcony. I could live here. Imagine waking every morning to that view!

Back again Sao Paulo, and home. Refreshed, de-bureaucrated, enthused, and optimistic with many things to take further, including the concepts of architects trained as urbanists and leaders of development.

Jonathan Edkins, City Architect: eThekwin Municipality



Favelas, Rio de Janeiro.