Chapter 6  
Design Methodology

The aim of this chapter is to consolidate the theoretical position, case study analysis and programmatic needs to arrive at a system of guiding principles and priorities.

This discussion will be split into two parts.
- The first part will review the progress of the thesis thus far highlighting critical arguments and distinguishing ideas in order to make key recommendations that will inform the urban and architectural design exercises.
- The second will assess the programmatic possibilities of the site, the programmatic needs of the three user groups previously identified and the programmatic needs of the PAP in order to arrive at an inclusive program.

The expected outcome of this chapter is thus clear guidelines for design decisions and programmatic guidelines which will be used to inform the design decisions to be taken at the urban and architectural design stages.

Part 1: Reviewing the theoretical position

This part of the discussion will look back at the flow of the theoretical discourse thus far, highlighting critical arguments and distinguishing ideas. The core idea of the discourse presented is represented in its title: “when power stepped off its pedestal.” The implication here is a return to basics, readiness to meet halfway and the acceptance that positions of power do not need the associated hierarchies and ‘throne mentality’ to be successful. Rather, in the opinion of this thesis, the objectives of power positions are easier achieved when the institutions of power are approachable and within reach. As such this thesis has adopted an anti-elitist standpoint.

Chapter 1 illustrated how the African Union, of which the PAP is a part of, was both conceived and is perceived as a top-down elitist organization resulting in an architecture that portrays this. A key idea was viewing the organization and the architectural edifice from three perspectives in order to gain an objective picture. These perspectives were from the organization, the media/visitor to the building and the perspective of ordinary locals.

Above: to arrive at inclusive program, Part 2 will consider the programmatic potentials of the site, the needs of the 3 main user groups as well as the PAP’s requirements.
Chapter 2 explored the vision and downfall of the Pan African Parliament. This chapter highlighted the potential of the PAP to live up to its core mandate, of becoming an inclusive platform for the involvement of all Africans in continental deliberation and decision making. The downfall highlighted was the stifling of this potential by the design competition brief for the PAP's permanent home. This brief reciprocated an elitist position and was based on existing spatial hierarchies that perpetuated this elitist stance. The key idea in this chapter was identifying the challenge against both the competition site, as well as the perpetuation of these hierarchies.

In chapter 3 the challenge against the proposed competition site was fully explored. The main problem the thesis has with this site is:

- It is isolated, away from the everyday life of ordinary Africans.
- It perpetuates escapist post colonial tendencies to leave the center of activity in order to symbolize a new beginning
- Although it is adjacent to a busy highway connection to the site is merely visual

Chapter 3 also proposed alternative sites and derived a site selection criterion that emphasized physical and psychological accessibility to the 3 main user groups identified.

These are the politically powerful elite, the visiting continental/international dignitary and the ordinary local. The other important criteria was that, to achieve sustainable levels of interaction the site should not function solely as a destination point. The proposed Johannesburg site was chosen as it best complied to this.

Chapter 4 explored the challenge against the perpetuation of existing hierarchies embodied in the PAP competitions architectural guidelines. From a theoretical perspective the problems identified by the thesis was that:

- It sought to purposefully create a commonality in order to legitimize its political position
- It perpetuated the status quo by elitist space making recommendations that overemphasized visible security and separation devices
- It sought to use architecture as a tool of novelty, in order to create a highly visible monument that expressed change
- In attempting to differentiate itself from the past, it actually recouped the same architectural and spatial methodologies it tried to escape from

Five case study buildings were identified and analyzed showing how the above applied to existing legislative architecture.
These buildings used a variety of site related and architectural strategies to highlight themselves from the context they were built in, the most important of which are highlighted below:

- At the Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature the buildings were joined to create a larger footprint and the profile of the complex echoed the surrounding landscape linking the architecture to the idea of the natural.
- The Northern Cape Legislature contrasted the flat landscape by creating tall iconic structures with bold building profiles. The complex also made use of highly visible perimeter security to distinguish itself from the surrounding context.
- The Dhaka National Assembly Complex used monumental scale and vast landscaping to distinguish itself from the tight urban fabric.
- The Australian Parliament House also made use of monumental scale as well as wrapping the landscape over it in order to link onto ideas of the natural and distinguish itself from the surrounding context.
- The European parliament amassed all of the functions under a single roof creating a large, tall single monumental entity.

Chapter 5 looked at the selected site in greater detail, and read the site and surrounding context from the same three perspectives as previously mentioned. This methodology of three point perspective site reading followed through from the earlier chapters.

**Part 1: Conclusions and Recommendations**

- The core idea expressed in this thesis is against elitism, as it is of the opinion that the objectives of the positions of power, especially legislative functions, are easier achieved when these institutions of power are approachable and within reach.

- In order to gain an objective viewpoint, it is important to consider the situation from at least three perspectives, relating to the main user profiles:
  - the politically powerful elite
  - the visiting continental/international dignitary
  - the ordinary local

- For sustainable levels of interaction both the site and building/s should not function exclusively as destinations
• The design of the building/s and spaces should not be based on the intentional construction of commonality nor intentional references to an idealized past, present or future. These buildings/spaces should emerge from dealing with the constraints at hand, and responding to the core tenets of the theoretical position.

• The basis of any design decision made should consider the question of inclusively and accessibility. The core assessment to be made should be whether the proposed decision would make the PAP more approachable, or whether the decision would impede this goal.

• In the case study analysis it was revealed that majority of the buildings used monumentality of scale to highlight and differentiate itself from the surrounding context. In chapter four it was shown that this strategy was used by colonialist to create ‘citadels of hope’, this was in turn adopted by the post colonialist and perpetuated by later generations. (Elleh 2002:162) The thesis is against such monumentality at it replicates the elitist status quo. As such for this thesis to pursue its inclusive agenda such monumentality will be subverted, celebrating the void as opposed to the iconic monument.

• Chapter four’s case study analysis also revealed that the buildings studied were largely monolithic in function. In certain cases, as in the Northern Cape Provincial Legislature, the architects attempted to create dual functions such as free open public space. However these efforts were cut short post occupation as the security fences were erected around the site. The recommendation is thus to carefully consider these security requirements and achieve security from the most inclusively possible perspective, using built form, 24 hour active multifunctional spaces and active surveillance as key security elements. Strategies need to also be developed for occasions of heightened security, such as parliamentary openings, that are inclusive as possible without exposing the arriving dignitaries and users to security risks.
Part 2- The Search for an Inclusive Program

This section will consider the programmatic possibilities of site, programmatic needs of the three user groups as well as the programmatic needs of the PAP to arrive at an inclusive program.

The Programmatic Possibilities of Site

Chapter 5 concluded that major pedestrian routes existed along the western boundary of the site and on the opposite Harrison Street on the eastern boundary. These pedestrian routes existed because of the proximity of public transport interchanges on the southern and eastern boundary of the site, as well as the proximity to the Bree Street spine. It was also noted that a large open air taxi rank currently on the site serves as a spill off from these transport interchanges. If this pedestrian flow could be channeled onto the site, larger scale retail activity could be a viable option. This could be an ideal site for large grocery, wholesalers as well as smaller outlets related to convenience trade. Alternatively the edges of the site could be developed to accommodate similar retail activity at possibly a small to medium scale.

The good highway linkages (Carr Street on and off ramps onto the M1), public transport infrastructure as well the north south corridor created by Nelson Mandela Bridge, makes the site an attractive option for office development. This could either be in the form of corporate headquarters (example SAPI in Braamfontein) or sectional title offices (such as the Mills of Newtown). This could either be situated above the commercial function, where the offices are dependent on clientele from passers by, or towards the interior and northern edge of the site where passing trade is not an important consideration.

Light industrial functions are also feasible; however this may not be as compatible with the parliamentary function. There are light industries within the area (west of Metromall) however most of the industrial and warehousing functions are clustered to the west of the M1 motorway where rental and land value may be more
reasonable.

There is also potential for multi-story residential buildings, given the proximity of public transport interchanges and the current drive in the area to introduce 24 hour activity by introducing residential use in the area. Examples of this are the Brickfields Housing development (west of the site), apartment and loft conversion projects such as ‘The Newtown’, and a number of other similar projects across the railway in Braamfontein. Student accommodation is a viable option given the proximity of Wits University and other smaller tertiary institutions in and around Braamfontein. Another trend is higher income apartment conversions in the CBD, an example being Corner House.

As such, the site has the potential to become a bustling mixed use environment. However as highlighted in chapter five, the topographical constraints of the ‘valley-cove’ site needs to be carefully dealt with, as this will have a definite impact on the viability of certain functions.

The Programmatic Needs of the Three Main User Groups

Throughout this document the three user groups has served as a constant theme, due to the inclusive agenda of this thesis. This is to be extended into this exploration for an inclusive program, where the needs of these three groups will be considered. The three groups identified are:

- The politically powerful elite
- The international dignitary
- The ordinary local

The Politically Powerful Elite

In chapter five, the site and surrounding context were read from the perspective of this user group. This analysis revealed important nodes in the surrounding context were predominantly governmental, cultural and educationally based. The proposed PAP precinct would also form an important node in this regard. The means of transit to/from and between the nodes was the private vehicle. As such the experience of the city is behind the steering wheel of the vehicle, except where moving through these nodal buildings. The proposed precinct could potential allow the user of this group to leave his/her vehicle behind and experience the city, if only a snippet of it, by foot. Auxiliary functions that would cater to this group could be accommodated within the
proposed precinct. Examples of these are business meeting facilities, restaurants, coffee shops and eateries, travel agencies, health spas, business communications franchises and the like.

**The Continental/ International Dignitary**

Chapter 5’s context analysis revealed that nodes that attracted this user group were largely cultural or tourist based, the exception to this was the hotels located in and around Braamfontein. However these hotels mainly catered for the medium income clientele, focusing on visiting South Africans and tourists. Larger intercontinental hotels are predominantly found in and around the Sandton area. There is a definite need for such a hotel to be constructed within the proposed PAP precinct, where dignitaries and visitors could be hosted within safe, walking distance of the PAP. Auxiliary functions could include tourist centre, restaurants and coffee shops as well as the potential for taxi cab and limousine services.

**The Ordinary Local**

Chapter 5’s context analysis revealed that main nodes identified were the public transport interchanges, as well as areas of work/trade and study opportunities. This user group predominantly commutes from places of residence through these public transport interchanges to places of work/trade and study. The site sits between the last two, as such the potential exist to provide convenience shopping facilities as well as larger grocery and wholesale outlets. If the site could provide a safe sheltered ‘short-cut’ this could allow for smaller formal and informal businesses and services a passing market to latch on to, further enhancing the convenience shopping experience.

**The Programmatic Requirements of the PAP**

The competition brief highlights the main spaces required in the schedule of accommodation. (See Appendix) This includes a large administrative function, meeting and conferencing spaces, broadcasting facilities, and the main parliamentary chamber. For the purpose of this thesis these will be largely adhered to, except where the recommendations, configurations or make up of spaces contradicts the inclusive agenda. Auxiliary functions would include such functions which make the PAP more accessible and opens it up to a larger audience. An example of this could be exhibition halls for hosting expos and events in a similar manner as the Sandton International Convention Centre. The potential exists for the conferencing facilities to be hired out for external conferences. Another opportunity identified, is the consolidation of all African consulates into a single building. This would serve as an attractor to travelers seeking to apply for travel visas to other African states.
It would also add to the Pan-African spirit of the precinct, potentially earning the PAP additional income from rental.

**Part 2: Conclusion**

We thus see an overlap of certain programmatic functions from analyzing the programmatic potential of the site, programmatic needs of the 3 main user groups and the programmatic requirements of the PAP. Certain functions would act as attractors drawing a mixed user group to the precinct. This could potentially result in a vibrant mixed use urban environment, that makes the PAP accessible, promoting awareness of, and providing PAP with more active participation from the part of civil groups and ordinary members of African society.

**Part 2: Recommendations**

- Both the urban and architectural designs need to firstly carefully consider the topographical constraints of this ‘valley-cove’ site. Not effectively taking this into consideration, and using it as a strategic advantage could result in the failure of theoretically viable functions.

- The careful handling of pedestrian activity; by either channeling it through the site in the form of a safe, sheltered ‘shortcut’ or dealing with the edges of the site so as to draw pedestrians into the site; would allow commercially viable retail space catering for both convenience shopping, as well as larger wholesale and retail stores. This could potentially be used as a device to draw pedestrians towards or pass the parliamentary function.

- The site has the potential to accommodate office functions, given its good linkages. It is recommended that these be sectional title since it would bring a greater mix to the proposed precinct.

- Residential use, in the form of penthouse, and upper floor apartments are recommended, as it would spread the 24hour activity associated with this use type across the site.

- The need for an intercontinental hotel was highlighted as it would host visiting dignitaries, NGO and civic groups in close proximity to the PAP.
• Generally the recommendations for the programmatic needs described in the competition brief will be adhered to, except where these recommendations, space configurations and makeup of individual spaces conflict with the inclusive aspirations and recommendations made in part 1 of this exploration.

• Auxiliary functions such as travel agents, business communication centers, tourist offices and other related services should be catered for within the precinct, on ground floor so as to activate the 'street edges' within the precinct.

• It is recommended that the existing taxi rank should be retained, as this is an important attractor and public amenity.

• The recommended ratio of function mix is 50% for parliamentary and other functions catering for the elite and visiting dignitaries, 25% for public open space and spaces catering for the ordinary local and 25% for multifunctional usages. This ratio is based roughly on the site area minus the area required for PAP functions. The remaining area is equally divided between multi functional and public usages.

Sketch: Recommended usage mix