Building Social Justice | Architecture’s Contribution to Positive Rural Development
Gary Oliver van Lieshout
0407431M

This document is submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree: Master of Architecture [Professional] at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa in the year 2009.

Building Social Justice | Architecture’s contribution to Positive Rural Development
Declaration

I, Gary Oliver van Lieshout (0407431M) am a student registered for the course Master of Architecture (Professional) in the year 2009. I hereby declare the following:

I am aware that plagiarism (the use of someone else’s work without permission and/ or without acknowledging the original sources) is wrong. I confirm that the work submitted for assessment for the above course is my own unaided work except where I have explicitly stated otherwise. I have followed the required conventions in referencing thoughts, ideas, and visual materials of others. For this purpose, I have referred to the Graduate School of Engineering and the Built Environment style guide. I understand that the University of the Witwatersrand may take disciplinary action against me if there is a belief that this is not my unaided work or that I have failed to acknowledge the source of the ideas or words in my own work.

All photographs and sketches used in this document are produced by the author unless otherwise stated.

Acknowledgements

Praise and thanks to my Lord and saviour Jesus Christ for the adventure that has been, and is to come; to God our father, master creator, for the guidance in design, and Holy Spirit for counsel, direction and abundant life.

This thesis has been a joy in committing 2009 to as it has engaged all my passions through field research in rural communities involving travel and meeting new people, writing and photography as a tool for conveying life, and architectural design that can enable and empower. Special thanks to those listed below for your valuable contribution to this season of my life:

Supervisor Randall Bird for your encouragement, guidance and expertise and assistance in the editing process;
mentor Ludwig Hansen for your direction, appropriate pressure and guidance in these early years of my architectural career;
design professionals for their time in critiquing the design of the JLV;
parents for their unconditional support and understanding, and the example of inspiring work ethic;
siblings (and spouses) for all their support and enthusiasm;
beautifully spirited girlfriend and best friend, Chelsea Hall, for your companionship, support, encouragement and comfort and assistance in the editing process;
Gavin Armstrong for your advice, encouragement and direction;
Jason Viljoen for your support and enthusiasm, coffee during the long nights and assistance in the editing process;
Pat Hill for your excitement and assistance in the editing process;
friends and body of Christ, for their true friendship, encouragement, prayer and contribution into my life;
Piet & Leah Mathebe for welcoming me into their home on my many visits to conduct fieldwork;
Kgosiki Chakie Mathebe for welcoming me in the community and assistance in the research process;
Ace Mathebe for the valuable hours sitting, learning, correcting and redirecting during the research;
all the families included in ‘Architectural Flair’ for welcoming me into your homes for a brief moment in time, and affording me the opportunity to learn from your lifestyles; and lastly,
the children of Ntwane for welcoming, accepting and teaching me.
“[an] architect’s goodness is more important than their greatness, their compassion more eventful than their passion.”

Samuel Mockbee

fig. 4.1. A new beginning.
Photograph taken at home of Mrs. Leah Monageng in Ntwane, Limpopo South Africa, on the 18th November 2008. Note: figures have been numbered throughout this thesis according to their respective page numbers.
The morality of architects referred to on the title page for ‘Begin’ as regarded by Samuel Mockbee, founder of Rural Studio, is often underplayed in its quantitative contribution to lasting positive rural development and effectiveness in the associated cause of social justice (Dean 1998:3). In today’s architectural world we find many ‘great’ and ‘passionate’ architects, without ‘goodness’ and ‘compassion’ to stabilise their ego. Thus, their work, albeit tremendous pieces of architecture, becomes a matter of empire building rather than beautifully and elegantly fulfilling basic human needs. Mockbee’s conviction represents a paradigm shift in the understanding of some architects and their roles as professionals in the field of rural development. Andrew Shepherd, Senior Lecturer of the Development Administration Group at the University of Birmingham agrees by saying that “the conventional rural development paradigm is facing a serious challenge from an alternative set of ideas focusing on justice, and environmental and institutional sustainability” (1998:021). This versus a development state of mind that has, in the past and until now, “stood for material progress, with or without justice, depending on ideological standpoint” (1998:173).

Here, it is not specifically architecture in the sense of bricks and mortar that literally enables positive development, but rather the systems that the architecture facilitates; for without the architecture, there would be nothing to hold and carry the social systems of empowerment. Here, fighting the social justice cause, architecture’s true function finds peace in its contribution to positive rural development.

The rural community located in Tabakhubedu in the Moutse region of Limpopo province of South Africa has been selected for architecture to make its positive contribution to rural development in the form of a church complex called the Jubilee Life Village (JLV) (logo by Graphic Designer Heather Nell, watermarked on title pages).

**Begin**

The journey of discovering architecture’s contribution to positive rural development, begins by a general introduction to the urgency of rural development and its link to social justice. Amartya Sen, 1998 Nobel prize winner in Economics, regards development as “the removal of substantial ‘unfreedoms’”, such as poverty as well as tyranny, poor economic opportunities and systematic social deprivation (Sen 1999:xii). The removal of such ‘unfreedoms’ is of utmost urgency and ought to be the ultimate motivation for development and thus yielding a sustainable positive result, whereas in the past “the intangibles of development - autonomy, freedom, dignity, peace - were omitted”, argues Shepherd (1998:003). The fight for freedom of a people occurs on the battlefield of a collection of people, community, or civilisation.

Believed by some to be the face of any civilisation, the built environment would be the recipient of such positive development, and in so doing, also become the primary mover for further development. However, growth or development in the built environment should never occur without developing the skills, intuition and capacity to effect change, of the people constituting the civilisation. This kind of ruthless development led Shepherd to consider spirituality to be a casualty of growth in much the same manner that environmental conservation has been in the past (1998:264). It is certain that “a sensitivity to man’s social needs and the nourishing of the human spirit” like that of Hassan Fathy during his time in New Gourna is needed in the pursuit of positive rural development. (Polk. 1973:1) To neglect these human potentials in the pursuit of development would epitomise social injustice propagated by the built environment.

A developed society/civilisation cannot exist without some sort of governance and neither can a governing body exert leadership without followers, depicting a ‘chicken and the egg’ scenario. Therefore, the discourse of the need for government, or State’s involvement in development, has been included in this chapter and leads into the exploration of ‘stars’ and ‘dust’ which will conclude ‘Begin’.

**Stargazing and Covered in Dust**

The main body of research of this thesis consists of two parts, called ‘Stargazing’ and ‘Covered in Dust’. The former is a collection of design principles pertaining to the process of development in rural areas, and is aptly named for the way in which these principles form direction for positive rural development, much the same as stars would guide disoriented navigators. The latter is the process of gaining an accurate cultural understanding of the rural community that has been selected, and has thus been named to illustrate the hands-on, feet-on-the-ground process of meeting the community and literally being covered in its dust. Both parts, their meanings, constituent topics and significance of their inclusion in this thesis will be briefly explained in further detail later on in this chapter.

This twofold research approach represents the nature of what Paul Oliver, Chair of the Master’s Course in International Studies in Vernacular Architecture, at the School of Architecture at Oxford Brookes University, alluded to in describing a hypothetical discipline of the study of vernacular architecture, saying “it would probably be one that combines some of the elements of both architecture and anthropology with aspects of history and geography” (2003:013).
Begin Again

By having a dualistic understanding of rural development, the pilgrim will be adequately prepared to ‘Begin Again’, moving forward and designing a positive architectural contribution to the development of a rural area. As a chapter, ‘Begin Again’ briefly summarises the research component of this thesis and draws out the main themes therein that will be applied to the design of the JLV. It also reviews development as applicable to the rural environment.

Lema, Pêu and Leungô

The design for the JLV is the architectural culmination of ‘Stargazing’ and ‘Covered in Dust’ and will be this thesis’ contribution to positive rural development. The three chapters of the design section of the thesis have been titled in Northern Sotho, because application is made within the specific context of the BaNtwane, who are a Northern Sotho speaking community.

The first chapter has been entitled ‘Lema’, which means plough, and introduces the site through interrogation of the forces that act upon it. This is so that the ground is adequately prepared for the next chapter called ‘Pêu’, which means ‘seed’. This chapter relates to the fundamental nature of design inception nurtured by the application of the main themes from ‘Stargazing’ and ‘Covered in Dust’. The final design chapter has been called ‘Leungô’ which means ‘fruit’, obviously as the product of the thesis in its entirety.

A prominent underlying theme used throughout this thesis is the rural mat (fig 7.1). It is presented in various forms, such as in the title blocks on each page, and will be explained in further detail at the appropriate junctions. The rural mat was, and in some instances still is used for varying parts of rural BaNtwane life. It is made by the woman of the community out of grass that has been woven together by either plastic thread, wool or grass. In a similar fashion, this theme is used as a means of unifying and binding the thesis together as a whole.

Selah

Unostentatiously contributing to the whole are two selahs which invite the reader to take a moment to pause and consider the writing thus far and its contribution to the rural development discourse and its application in designing a rural church village. Selah, is of Hebrew origin and is an exclamation that occurs frequently at the end of a verse in Psalms and Habakkuk in the bible. Its meaning is uncertain, but some bible commentators believe it to mean ‘pause, and calmly think of that’ (Amplified Bible). It is in this spirit that it has been used in this thesis.

The first selah appears after ‘Stargazing’ and is in the form of a travel journal which was compiled during a trip in which I tracked the migration of the rural community from their original home in Botswana to their present location. It is included as an investigation into one of the design principles and explained in further detail at the end of ‘Stargazing’. The second selah takes the form of a questionnaire on rural development and appears after ‘Begin Again’ and concludes the research component of this thesis. It provides the reader with a diverse perspective on rural development and the implications of a successful rural development strategy and is explained in further detail after ‘Begin Again’.

The structure of this thesis could be understood by Shepherd’s prescription for such a discourse saying, “what is required is a process, with a strong element of research and evaluation, the adoption of a holistic perspective and methodology, and an awareness of the range of issues which may need to be considered at various points in time” (1998:178). President of Bennington College in Vermont U.S.A., Liz Coleman’s synthesis can also be used in describing the structure of this thesis saying that “deep thought matters when you’re contemplating what to do about things that matter...rhetoric: the art of organising the world of words to maximum effect; design, the art of organising the world of things” (www.ted.com).

fig. 7.1. Rural mat as prominent thread used throughout this thesis, binding it together as a whole. Photograph taken in Johannesburg, Gauteng SA on the 30th of September 2009.
Development etc.


Positive rural development is a state within the rural built environment that creates a self-sustaining developmental progression so as to enhance the economics, skills and capacities of rural community members. Shepherd defines positive development as “sustainable development”, saying it “refers to improvement in livelihoods which does not undermine the livelihoods of future generations (environmentally sustainable) (WCED), and which can be sustained over time (institutional sustainability). Livelihoods refer to more than just income and wealth: quality of life and of society, security, and dignity might be just as important to those whose livelihoods need improving” (1998:003).

Although efforts in the past, such as the government’s Reconstruction and Development Program of 1997 (RDP), envisioned development of rural areas as “happening through a combination of land reform and rapid delivery of infrastructure and services to the rural population” (www.sascis.org.za), the fact remains that presently, over a decade later, the previously disempowered members of the national community remain disempowered in their rural contexts through service delivery failure and sub-standard infrastructural support (fig. 9.1). This, despite rural development having been identified as one of the top five priorities for the next five years at the African National Congress’s (ANC’s) Conference in Polokwane in December 2007 (www.sacis.org.za). However, hearing rural developments inclusion in the State of the Nation Address by His Excellency JG Zuma, President of the Republic of South Africa, at a joint sitting of parliament, in Cape Town on the 3rd of June 2009, does give hope to the future of South Africa’s rural areas.

Perhaps as a consequence of under-delivery from the pre-Zuma government, there is a general discouraged and pessimistic attitude in most rural areas today. However, Urbanist, AbdouMaliq Simone explains the apathy of many in dire situations as “conveying a sense of preparedness. If we do not care about anything that is conventionally taken to be ours- i.e., our religion, our politics, our authority systems, our sense of the egalitarian achieved through our social mores, our national identity, etc.- then we are prepared to take on anything we need to be in order to get us beyond the rut in which we find ourselves” (2000:238).

Senior Traditional Member Ace Mathebe (appendix B.1.1, pg. 152) describes the generation of the 1990’s in the BaNtwane community as one that has lost all tradition, such as building techniques and social mores, dismally concluding that they merely exist and care for nothing. There are many theories for the cause of disinterest and apathy of this generation which would appropriately be added to the discourse of architecture’s contribution to positive rural development. What is important in the apathetic mentality is its capacity for enthusiasm, which, if directed could radically transform and revolutionise any rural community into a dynamic place of new possibilities, realising Shepherd’s thoughts that “the notion of development is still a powerful one in terms of orchestrating a human response, mobilising resources, and getting things done” (1998:264).

There are two aspects to the transformative capacity in the field of rural development. First: the revolutionary potential energy of an apathetic, anarchist generation geared toward social change; and second: a paradigm shift regarding the responsibility of the architect. Mockbee’s deep conviction in this regard is that the architectural profession “has an ethical responsibility to help improve living conditions for the poor” (Dean 1998:1). Or, in the view of architects being agents for change “Our ways of approaching agency and authority, turn inside-out to reflect the reality that: No one has the answers to the challenges facing citizens in this century and everyone has the responsibility for trying and participating in finding them” (Coleman www.ted.com).

In order for this kind of transformation, a radical change is required in the design and construction processes involved in rural development. Hashim Sarkis, Professor of Architecture at Harvard’s Graduate School of Design, noted how architect Christopher Alexander found change necessary “in order to make small projects, or incremental and user-motivated growth, the norm in development culture” (2000:99).

Obviously change occurs in the space-time continuum, to which director, Albert Bates, of the Ecovillage Training Centre in Tennessee, observes how “time is most often thought of as a progression, a movement along an axis from past to future. We think of human progress in the same terms - today we are better or worse off than we were yesterday or collectively were a century ago. We feel trends afoot. Tomorrow will bring another step. Some aboriginal societies-and- by ‘aboriginal’ I mean any culture still grounded in its origins- look at time as a circle. The earth spins on its axis and another day is born. The moon goes around and a month has passed. We circle the sun as seasons come and go, then come again” (2002-xi). Perhaps in this discourse of sustainable development it would be best to consider time as the ‘aboriginal’ would, noting how “sometimes change is circular” (Shepherd 1998:128) (fig. 9.2), especially as we consider the relationship between development and social justice.
Development and Social Justice

Looking at the relationship between rural development and social justice, we consider the birth of Democratic South Africa. Since 1994, the rainbow nation has accomplished much that we can take great pride in. Most celebrated perhaps, is being one of the most dynamically diverse nations of our time. However, this diversity is not only evident in our multi-cultural communities but also in a sector in which we cannot celebrate.

The range of current living conditions in South Africa is presently at inhumane disproportions, from a world of unprecedented opulence, to a world of deprivation, destitution and oppression (Sen 1999:xii). These disproportions are usually most evidently expressed in built form in one way or another (fig.9.3). In such an unbalanced national situation one cannot disagree with how Robert M. Feldman, architectural educator at the University of Illinois, implores professionals not to “dismiss design’s contribution to social justice” (2004:111).

Christian activist Shane Claiborne describes social justice as being about “falling in love with a group of people that are marginalised and struggling and being with those people, and not just being a voice for them but with them and joining their voice” (2005).

This empathetic voice synthesised with ‘design’s contribution’ will ultimately translate into sustained development for the cause of social justice achieved through positive rural development, rather than development out of duty or obligation. According to Sen, “a sense of justice is among the concerns that can move people and often do” (1999:261). He goes on to analyse social justice as having “a strong case for judging individual advantage in terms of the capabilities that person has, that is, the substantive freedoms he or she enjoys to lead the kind of life he or she has reason to value”. It is in the light of “deprivation of basic capabilities” that we are to view rural development, and omit the more traditional perception of rural areas “as lowness of incomes, which is the standard criterion of identification of poverty” (1999:87).

Environmental activist Vandana Shiva agrees that “poverty need not be material poverty: subsistence economics which serve basic needs through self-provisioning are not poor in the sense of being deprived” (1988:10).

It is into this socio-economic climate that the morality and humanity of professionals, as motivated by Mockbee, becomes significant. When professionals, who are empowered members of society and able to make a change, stand by and simply observe the current unjust living conditions of marginalised communities, they are themselves contributing to the inequality. Furthermore, as Professor of Global Sociology, Jan Nederveen Pieterse would argue, their apathy could suggest an “endorsement of the status quo” (2001:106), which in most rural situations is a dismal portrayal of a civilisation, albeit, one part of the whole.
Development and Civilisations

Architecture's contribution to positive rural development ought to be paramount in the development discourse as one considers civilisations and the representation of development therein.

In all civilizations - such as the ancient Roman, Greek or Egyptian empires - it is the built environment that is the face of development. We contemplate the Colosseum, the Parthenon and the Pyramids respectively, all architectural wonders in their own right. It was the architects that had the privilege of being primarily responsible for those built forms. Architects today have that same privilege of affecting positive development in any given context (including rural) and at any given scale. It is not only in the grandeur of the major built forms that a society qualifies as being developed, but it is also in the smaller scaled elements of a society that its true measure of development is sometimes found.

It is here, at the smaller scale, where the measure of an architect's 'goodness' and 'compassion' translates into being enablers rather than providers who presume to know best and consequently disregard any local knowledge or craft. A professional who can dedicate time and facilitate development in a rural area, rather than dictate from the top-down is what is required in this new development paradigm.

There is a proverb that best expresses our role as architects, artists within the built environment, “a civilization is as great as its dreams, and its dreams are dreamt by artists” (Anon). As such an artist, we must concur with how Bryan Bell, founder of Design Corps, notes how “architecture, more than any other art form is a social art, and for those of us who design and build, we must do so with an awareness of a more socially and physically responsive architecture” (2004:156).

In order to achieve such an architecture, one must consider Sen’s views of an adequate approach to development as being not centred solely around those in power (1999:247). Some may argue that, if it is the face of any civilisation, as mentioned earlier, that reveals its development, then those in power would be the only place to initiate development. However, in the prior rural development paradigm, as Shepherd argues, “reliance on the community leadership, in the name of participation, was a vehicle for exclusion as much as inclusion” (1998:185). Also, if one considers that a chain is only as strong as its weakest link, then surely those not in power, that is, those considered the bottom of any particular society's social ordering system, must be the initial recipients of architecture that would enable positive rural development. The fact that we choose to sculpt for any rural community ought to be one that promotes and facilitates positive development, and often that piece of art begins with those in the ‘dregs’ of society (as explained earlier on page 8). “In general,” Shepherd argues, “the new rural development paradigm shies away from mega-projects and massive social engineering” (1998:154).

Development and Government

Having considered the broader picture regarding development and civilisations, we finally look at the involvement and participation of the State in the rural development project.

“Alternative development thinking,” according to Professor John Friedmann, “primarily looks at development from the point of view of the disempowered, from the bottom-up, along a vertical axis. It combines this with a perspective on the role of the state; in simple terms: a strong civil society needs a strong state” (1992).

If architecture’s contribution to rural development is in any way to be substantial, it would, to some extent, need to rely on the Government as the ‘conventional agent’ in the development. However, in its historical under-performance in providing adequate facilities, its agency, according to Nederveen Pieterse, “is being overtaken by the role of international institutions and market forces” as well as NGOs and other philanthropists (2001:1).

As professionals we cannot linger until development happens from the top-down, nor can we move ahead without government’s participation. Therefore we must acknowledge Sen’s observation how “political participation and dissent are constitutive parts of development itself” (1999:36). Meanwhile, development should, and often does, happen sporadically and out of an urgency for transformation. This is best understood in the origins of man. If one simply considers a simple house - its roof is developed out of the urgent need for shelter and shade. It is not put into place because bureaucracy has stipulated the action, it happens almost naturally. Therefore, the most crucial starting point of development has to be within the community itself, with the support of the State and professionals.

Having been briefly introduced to development as applicable to the rural environment, and considered its relationship with social justice, civilisations and governance, we can begin considering architecture making a significant contribution toward positive rural development. However, before moving ahead, such a development needs to be steered by an accurate perception of place (‘Covered in Dust’) as well as appropriate guiding design principles (‘Stargazing’).
Stars and Dust

Appropriate guiding principles, contained in the chapter ‘Stargazing’ paint a specific landscape from which to consider their application. “An enquiry into the semantics of social theory by Anne Salmond (1982) shows, first, that knowledge is a landscape, i.e. knowledge has spatial existence; secondly, that intellectual activity is a journey” (Nederveen Pieterse 2001:26). As a starting point of that journey, ‘Covered in Dust’ engages the reader in the adventure of intellectual activity. Since “development is intrinsically contextual” (Nederveen Pieterse 2001:155), both parts have been purposefully considered in order that the context into which architecture makes its contribution to positive rural development is holistically represented.

Stargazing

This chapter will partly ensure architecture’s contribution to rural development being positive, and can be viewed as fundamental design principles apart from an appropriate cultural understanding of a given context. It is the combination of ‘stars’ and ‘dust’, that together contribute to the success or failure of an architectural intervention in a given context. In essence, they “supplement one another, and can furthermore reinforce one another” (Sen 1999:40). The design principles mentioned for this thesis will only be briefly covered as applicable to the context, as each could be considered a separate thesis on its own. They have been chosen as specific to the rural development environment and are interconnected and dependent on one another, where “holism is the systemic or scientific recombination of fragments in a new totality” (Nederveen Pieterse 2001:133).

These principles are:
- ‘Empowerment’, increasing the capacity of the community members to initiate lasting change;
- ‘Community Buy-in’, gaining the support of the community in the preferred construction technology and vision for the project;
- ‘Network’, considering existing rural development projects, future projects, as well as resource networks;
- ‘Sustainability’, social, economic and environmental;
- ‘Regionalism’, place appropriateness;
- ‘Architectural Lab’, the freedom from building codes to explore different and more sustainable building options;
- ‘Precedent’, learning from other similar rural development projects; and finally,
- ‘Memory’, the sometimes unconscious prescriber of built form, lifestyle, and tradition.

In Shepherd’s mind “the new rural development paradigm does not yet (nor never will) constitute a rural development theory,” in his view “rural development...is necessarily too context-specific to be encompassed in one grand theory.” In acknowledgement, these guides do not prescribe an all encompassing model for all rural development in any context, “however, the new paradigm does present an approach and a set of interconnected theories and ideas which can be used to address most of the issues and problems faced by policy-makers and programme managers” (1998:265) in most rural communities.

Covered in Dust

In the attempt to gain a significant cultural understanding of the rural BaNtswane community, a process of being ‘covered in dust’ has be embarked upon, and constitutes the final part of the research. Oliver notes that “to western European eyes, some forms of indigenous building are of great beauty, well-regarded for the evidence of a highly developed design sense, or for their refined craftsmanship and attention to detail. Architects, in particular, admire the ‘vernacular’ for its demonstration of the fundamental organisation of form and space in satisfying the demands of function” (2003:193).

fig. 11.1. Stargazing and covered in dust at the house of Mrs. Monageng during a visit to the community. Photograph taken in Ntwane, Limpopo SA, on the 18th of March 2009.
The research will focus on documenting the spatial significance of the differentiated designed spaces of this under-discovered BanTswane community, recognizing how Dr. Ron Eglash, an ethno-mathematician, resolves that “design themes are like threads running through the social fabric” (2005:4). Oliver supports this by noting that “the ways in which dwellings are organised and used, and the forms and plan types that they assume, are expressive of the specific cultures that have developed them and whose ways of life they accommodate to serve. Nevertheless, it is evident, too, that kinship patterns, environmental conditions and economic systems have a considerable bearing on the physical form and spatial organisation of the dwelling” (2003:166).

This process of cultural discovery took the form of numerous visits to the community to conduct informal meetings with the appropriate and significant members of the community, such as the traditional leadership and other prominent members of the community. This, as a manifestation of Professor in the History of Consciousness at the University of California Santa Cruz, Jim Clifford’s observation that, “anthropologists, as Geertz has written, don’t study villages, they study in villages” (1992). On a deeper and more personal level, beyond the academic perspective, residence was obtained to better understand Claborn’s definition of social justice mentioned earlier, to experience what it meant to struggle and be with them, not just being a voice for them, but joining their voice.

Having lived in the community for just over two weeks, I was more able to fully grasp the “diversity and elaborateness of African vernacular architecture [that] remains widely unknown, both to the general public and to architects” (Bourdier 1985:29). American Journalist Charleyne Hunter-Gault further motivates for health and education can be achieved, it is necessary to have precise and accurate knowledge of the existing scene” (1977:1). Without extensive research into rural communities in South Africa, architectural interventions therein can become alienating, “disempowering” and oppressive and often negate the possibilities for further development. Author Kaj B. Anderson further emphasizes the need for such an understanding as, “before effective means of improving rural life by bringing more employment and better amenities for health and education can be achieved, it is necessary to have precise and accurate knowledge of the existing scene” (1977:1).

The research is separated into three parts which are:
- ‘Home’, as a state of being versus house as an object;
- ‘BanTswane’, tradition which often expresses itself in the built form; and lastly,
- ‘Architectural Flair’, the actual built form, its local signature character.
Having a holistic understanding of development in the rural context, and recognizing the need for ‘gazing at the stars’ as well as being ‘covered in dust’, we are ready to begin the journey of discovery into what constitutes the different guiding design principles and later, delve into the cultural exploration of the BaNtwane community, so that the contribution that the Jubilee Life Village makes as an architectural intervention may have a maximised positive effect on its rural community.

**Coda**

As an addition to ‘stars’ and ‘dust’, photographs will be used to convey my understanding of the different spatial themes, traditions and layouts of the cultural research and assist in telling the narrative of the BaNtwane community. They are, as photographer Cervin Robinson observes, “in part a report and in part a creation; the representation is not the same as the original, and if we change the selection of photographs, we change the place created” (Dean, 1998:173).

Heeding Robinson’s observation as a warning to the authenticity in representing the rural community to a distant audience, one is pushed to a greater understanding of the objects being photographed. A similar level of understanding is required as an anthropologist who would have, according to linguist and anthropologist Roger Keesing, “a disciplinary vested interest in portraying other people’s culturally constructed worlds as radically different from our own” (1987:168).

It is not only in the portrayal of different contexts that photography finds its effectiveness and purpose, but more importantly, as photo director for National Geographic, David Griffin believes, that “photography can make a real connection to people and can be employed as a positive agent for understanding the challenges and opportunities facing our world today” (www.ted.com). Such powerful, ‘real connections’ can only be made through photographs presenting themselves as art and not merely as a documenting tool.

Challenges that society is faced with are hardly ever necessarily in ‘our’ world but more often in others’ worlds, and it is in this unfamiliar realm that these challenges often instil a certain sense of fear in people, immobilising them from any appropriate course of action. Sen would argue that “the culturally fearful often take a very fragile view of each culture and tend to underestimate our ability to learn from elsewhere without being overwhelmed by that experience” (1999:243). This could also be a main contributor to the misunderstanding of South Africa’s cultural diversity (as previously mentioned).

Accompanying the photographs will be sketches of certain household layouts as this is a valuable tool for furthering one’s understanding of the object under scrutiny and helps ensure that architecture’s contribution to rural development is positive.

We have ‘begun’ this journey of discovering architecture’s contribution to positive rural development through a brief introduction to development and the urgency thereof concerning social justice. In as much as “David Livingston passionately believed that what was missing in the African interior was the light of the gospel,” professionals have the opportunities to “call out in the heart of the Congo jungle that there should be light,” and do what is required in the cause of social justice to provide that light and, indeed, the systems and architectural implementations to positively develop rural areas (Nederveen Pieterse, 2001:26).

We have also looked at how the built environment is the face of any civilisation, with its people needing foremost development.

Not to neglect the role of ‘state’ or ruling body, we have briefly uncovered their role and responsibility in the rural development project.

---

![fig. 13.1. Photograph of a local community member taking a photograph after being briefly taught by Craig Patterson. Photograph taken in the local rural community in Coffee Bay, Eastern Cape, SA, on the 17th of January 2009.](image)
This was followed by an introduction to the research and the significance of its inclusion in considering architecture’s contribution to positive rural development. The research consists of two parts which are grounded in academic ‘Stargazing’ design principles, and practical cultural fieldwork of ‘Covered in Dust’.

The JLV as the architectural product of the research will require harnessing lessons learned from ‘Stargazing’, while simultaneously working in a way that resonates with the understanding gained through ‘Covered in Dust’ in order to produce a positive, sustainable and empowering development for future generations.

In closing, ‘Begin’, as an opening chapter to this thesis, resonates with Shepherds’ sentiments regarding “the main line of improvement ‘from within’,” saying it “is to make project analysis increasingly sophisticated and get the plan ‘right’, in particular by adding social, cultural, political and environmental analysis, moving towards a holistic approach. This tendency stretches the project to and beyond the limits of its capacity as a concept” (1998:138).

It is the desired outcome for the Jubilee Life Village as an architectural implementation, to stretch the boundaries of rural projects and help motivate other projects to achieve more in their contributions to positive rural development.

---

Endnotes

1 Rural Studio was launched in Southwest Alabama in 1992 to create homes and community buildings for rural people while offering hands-on education stressing community service.

2 The RDP faltered as resources dried up following the adoption of GEAR [Growth, Employment and Redistribution program] in 1996, and as top-down technocratic methods of delivery replaced mass participation as the driver of development. (www.sacsis.org.za)

3 The diversity of living conditions ranging from the abundantly wealthy having many lavish homes to the rural/township dweller cramming a family of generally six in a three room tin shack or mud-hut is reaching unjust proportions.

4 Peter Mogobane’s 
BaNtwane: Africa’s Undiscovered People
is a well assembled collection of photographs and text unveiling cultural aspects of The BaNt- wane. This collection unveils some aspects of the BaNtwane culture, however not the built form.
“This extraordinary experience has once more confirmed the importance of the designer’s role in enabling communities to achieve social change by providing tools to help them shape and control their own destiny.”

*Maurice D. Cox*

fig. 16.1. The little people. Photograph taken at the David Mohlamonyane household on the 3rd of April 2009.
Mayor of the city of Charlottesville in Virginia, U.S.A., Maurice D. Cox’s confirmation through his extraordinary experience, mentioned on the previous page, reinforces the importance for professionals to be involved in the design processes of developing rural areas, while guided by fundamental design principles (2004:108).

In order that architecture’s contribution to rural development enjoys sustained success, a firm understanding of certain guiding design principles is required. Or as Nederveen Pieterse illuminates, “a comprehensive, holistic approach to development is not only multidimensional but also multiscale, such that development efforts at different levels are cumulative and interconnected” (2001:17).

The cumulative and interconnected guides which are briefly covered in ‘Stargazing’ in regard to the rural development context are ‘Empowerment’, ‘Community Buy-in’, ‘Network’, ‘Sustainability’, ‘Architectural Lab’, ‘Regionalism’, ‘Precendent’ and ‘Memory’. These topics have been recognised as the fundamental guiding design principles in ensuring architecture’s contribution being positive in the development of rural areas. While some of the guides pertain to intangible elements, such as systems and relationships that are required in the implementation of a design in a rural context, other design principles will often manifest themselves in a more tangible sense design.

The Jubilee Life Village (JLV) as this thesis’ architectural contribution to positive rural development will reveal, in different ways through implementation strategies, forms, materials and arrangements how these different guiding principles can be used in ensuring its positive contribution to the development of the rural community chosen for this thesis.

In considering any rural development project, a holistic approach to these topics is vital so that a project’s success is sustainable, meaning that future generations are able to reap the benefits and continue on in the positive development trend. Each section is supplemented by photographs taken en-route to Moutse, Limpopo, as different elements of the trip inspired (to some extent) each of the different sections. Here “the new paradigm does not have clearly competing theories of global significance: it will have sets of meta-theories for much more historically and geographically specific circumstances” (Shepherd 1998:018).

‘Stargazing’, as the grouping of such ‘meta-theories’ has been used for two reasons: firstly, as much as rural areas are avoided by those having no need to venture into them, rural areas provide an opportunity (unavailable elsewhere in places like city centres) to experience the limitless African skies. Explorers in Africa have long been astounded by the darkness of the nights and the vivid light of the day. The darkness of the night, albeit due to the lack of electricity, allows the full canvas of starry skies to be revealed. Many a visit to the rural areas of South Africa has left me mesmerised by the astounding beauty of its night’s skies, ‘unbrightened’ by ambient artificial light. In the revolutionary’s mind, the potential for transformation seems unhindered with the endless starry night’s ‘sky being the limit’. Secondly, the stars have long been a compass to explorers, always faithfully guiding toward a true destination. The true destination for the purposes of this thesis is for architecture to make a positive, sustainable contribution to rural development.


Overview
Empowerment

As the first of the guiding design principles, empowerment presents itself as the main motivation for development, especially regarding architecture’s contribution to rural development. Author Jonathan Cook describes empowerment as having “to do with power, which is manifested in an individual when s/he grows in the subjective sense of feeling able to do things hitherto out of reach; when s/he develops the ability to do things which were not previously within his or her competence; and when doors of opportunity which were previously closed swing open to allow access to information, influence, and opportunity” (1995:294).

These ‘feelings’ and ‘opening opportunities’ rarely happen in a vacuum of human interaction, which emphasises perhaps the most important theme of empowerment and that is relationships.

Former South African president, Nelson Mandela, seems to have arrived at the appropriate conclusion regarding one person’s role with regard to those around him/her and the opportunity, or responsibility of empowering one another. “I seem to arrive more firmly at the conclusion that my own life struggle has had meaning only because, dimly and perhaps incoherently, it has sought to achieve the supreme objective of ensuring that each, without regard to race, colour, gender and social status, could have the possibility to reach for the skies” (Hopkins 2003).

Empowerment, which is often viewed as giving someone the tangible tools needed for the completion of a task, can rather become a matter of instilling self-confidence in that person through believing that he or she already has the tools to admirably accomplish the task at hand. The task at hand may have many effects, often intangible (such as self-esteem), and tangible, such as monetary or skills extensions. If the empowered person does not benefit in these arenas then the motives of the development could become questionable.

The most important motive for any development must “not [be] to develop things but to develop man” (Esteva 1992:14). Here, Sen lists political freedoms, economic facilities, social opportunities, transparency guarantees and protective security as distinct types of rights and opportunities that helps to advance the general capacity of a person (1999:10). However, the notion of developing people may seem to be a misnomer in the light of architecture, but one must remember that architecture and space are defined and shaped by social influences, which, in turn, are defined by people.

As an architectural intervention, the JLV will provide many different means of empowerment for the community. The members of the community that are willing to be involved in the entire life-span of the project will be empowered through job creation through the various construction techniques and crafting of the finishes in the church complex, as well as in maintenance and operation of the JLV. Small business ventures that will occur as spin-off effects of the complex will ensure sustained positive impact into this community. Such ventures could for example be a Hydraform construction company formed by a group in the community who would rent the block-making machine from the JLV, and sell the bricks to the community. Ideally, this business venture would be instigated by the project’s conception, therefore allowing the JLV to directly impact the new company by using their bricks made on the site. This would require those community members to buy-into the vision and sustainability of the above mentioned example.

fig. 19.1 Traffic jam en-route to Limpopo. People in cars are disempowered on busy roads when the size of their vehicles inhibits easy passage in between the lanes. Photograph taken at the Elands interchange, Gauteng SA, on the 13th of March 2009
Community Buy-in

This second design principle regards the support of the community members as crucial to the success of architecture’s contribution to the development of rural areas.

In the past, “economic criteria dominated decision-making; social, environmental, political ‘factors’ were relatively unimportant, and participation of the ‘beneficiaries’ of this development was only included as an afterthought” (1998:002), according to Shepherd, regarding the old development paradigm. Architect, Chris Harnish (appendix B.1.2, pg. 152), revealed the vital importance of community buy-in, especially in rural development projects that involve new building technologies that on the surface look to be regressive building technologies to the average rural dweller. He stated the futility of attempting to positively develop rural areas without getting the community ‘on board’ with the vision for the project.

This principle of the community accepting the design vision is best illustrated by a metaphor used by Doctor Nobs Mwanda of COPESA (appendix B.1.3, pg. 152). She highlighted an important aspect in the development of rural areas as comparing it to a candle. If one considers a candle from the perspective of someone in an urban environment, it is often viewed as quite a romantic gesture, candle-lit dinners, bathing by candlelight etc. However to a person from a rural/township context, the candle is the ultimate expression of poverty, signifying lack of electricity and ultimately disempowerment or ‘unfreedom’. Although this is the opposite of a community buying into the image of the candle, the principle is highly effective in communicating perspective and the need to understand the rural environment.

This is especially relevant for the JLV as one considers building with rammed earth for example. In many ways it is a superior building material for the complex, such as strength, aesthetics, environmental and economic sustainability. However, the community could see it as simply building with mud which is regressive, rather than progressive in terms of development.

Scott Grometer, supervisor of Skilful Means, sees how “people often overlook earth building in the search for environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable building technologies. They associate the term ‘earth building’ with primitive materials and techniques, limited to the most arid of climates” (2002:177). In this sensitivity, Shepherd argues that “if an agency is seeking to advance the participation of the rural poor, it must develop a capacity to learn from its experience and from the wider environment in which it operates” (1998:138).

It is for this reason that a comprehensive rural strategy needs to include ‘Community Buy-in’, in order to adequately ‘sell’ the project to the builders and members of the community. Also, architecture’s contribution to the development of rural areas has greater impact if the community believe in the vision of the development project and can themselves carry it forward in the spirit of sustainability. Oliver notices that “community involvement in the planning stage is often minimal and the means to facilitate community development without restrictions given little consideration” (2003:222).

Sarkis reveals how important buy-in is as a contributing factor of architecture in rural development “through grass-roots participation from conception to construction” (2000:99). The responsibility for participation and inclusion occurring at the appropriate level falls solely on the planners and architects according to Bell (2004:13). The importance of inclusion at multiple levels and scales during any rural development project is so that a representative architectural product is achieved, in accordance with Shepherd’s thoughts that “local contexts are infinitely varied and can be known only by local people” (1998:180).

In this light, Pastor Mable, pastor of a church in Tabakhubedu, has been consulted in finalising a programme for the JLV so that the functions and facilities are well suited to the communities current and foreseeable needs (appendix B.1.4, pg. 152).

In development, there is a tendency for outsiders to impose ‘their’ models onto a community and force ‘them’ to conform to our prescribed ways of living. This mentality cannot exist in the effort to enable positive development in rural areas. Anthropologist Arturo Escobar (1985) would rather describe an encompassing network of people and inter-relationships by invoking a “we” that, following Esteva (1985), comprises ‘peasants, urban marginals, depprofessionalized intellectuals’. What they share is an ‘interest in culture, local knowledge’, ‘critique of science’ and ‘promotion of localized, pluralistic grassroots movements’ (Nederveen Pieterse 2001:108). It is through this kind of equitable matrix of value-adding participation from both the outside and within the community that the solutions to the problems in rural areas can be found within the spatial coding of the community. If the relationship persists in its exclusionary agenda, development cannot be fully achieved as it would have missed the valuable expertise of the client regarding “their use of space and their priorities in terms of allocation of resources” (Bell 2004:30).

In this, there is a “growing acknowledgement that development is not an intrinsically or dominantly economic phenomena” nor is “development...something that can be done for or to people, but has to be done by them” (Beukes
1994:30). This is not to say that professionals must leave the rural areas to develop themselves, but it is about sourcing the members of the community who have the capacity to implement an architectural intervention efficiently. According to Sen, “a person’s ‘capability’ refers to the alternative combinations of functionings [reflects the various things a person may value doing or being] that are feasible for her to achieve” (1999:75). This would ensure empowerment of the community through skills development/enhancement for the purposes of the construction of the project and building self-esteem in the members of the community that can contribute anything (arts, craft, materials etc.) towards a project.

Fundamentally, Shepherd argues that “while participation has been generally seen by development agencies in terms of collaboration, and as a means to project success, as bringing additional human resources into the project process, participation increasingly is about civil society playing roles which development agencies and governments cannot play, and in particular about the rural poor associating together to defend common interests and challenge structures which keep them in poverty” (1998:181). Ultimately, having the community’s input into a project will enhance the sense of community ownership, as well as produce a well-networked united community, which in turn will ensure its own sustained positive development.

**Network**

As the third part to ‘Stargazing’, network appears as a sub-surface entity, pertaining more to the systems, structure or skeleton of architecture’s contribution to rural development. However, as will be discussed, it also relates to the built environment as well.

Networking today is possibly the most powerful force driving new business ventures in as much as one person or entity can only accomplish as much as its own ability, whereas if accompanied by others with different backgrounds and skills much more can be achieved “with less, even in sheer financial terms” (Kolokoto, 1998:61). This is of utmost importance in any developing society as resources are not necessarily readily available to all its members. A network needs to exist in order for a community to efficiently develop itself, connected or supported by an extra-network of professionals (and students, in the case of Rural Studio) to ensure a project is competently achieved in a sustainable manner.

In the built environment, the professional-client relationship “does not mean, however, that design is a patronizing gift from architects to communities...there is a mutual exchange between the designer and the client, and, in the best cases, a mutual benefit for both” (Bell 2004:13). This mutually beneficial relationship can be viewed as one party helping another. However, this is often distorted and becomes a dominatory relationship. Educationalist Paulo Freire describes the only praxis negating this distortion of being “all who are involved help each other mutually, growing together in common effort to understand the reality which they seek to transform” (1996:136).

In order for the appropriate transformation to occur, professionals and students coming from more economically stable environments than those in which development is so direly needed, need to seek a common ground and a value therein in order to ensure a properly functioning relationship. Fundamentally, Bengali poet Rabindranath Tagore explains interdependence as “whatever we understand and enjoy in human products instantly becomes ours, wherever they might have their origin. I am proud of my humanity when I can acknowledge the poets and artists of other countries as my own. Let me feel with unalloyed gladness that all the great glories of man are mine” (Sen 1999:242). This has traces of the African principle of *Ubuntu* which fundamentally says “I am, because we are”, which encompasses the universal objective appreciation that can serve as a common ground on which professionals and clients can meet.
Bell breaks the process of fostering a productive working relationship between professionals and clients into two principles: a full disclosure of the entire process and sharing the decision making (2004:30). It is through such a sharing of decisions that the programme for the JLV has been developed as mentioned in ‘Community Buy-in’.

Networking does not only pertain to the relationship realm of a project but also to how projects themselves are often linked. This is the most obvious space through which development in the broader sense can be gauged, in that if a project is a single entity instead of impacting the broader built environment, the architecture itself becomes somewhat alienating and exclusive. This situation can be seen as negatively developing a rural community, where the motivation for development is short-sighted and private, only serving the interests of a single entity.

As will be seen in the long term development vision for the JLV in the chapter called ‘Pêu’, its impact on the community will instigate other civic projects to be developed over time. Also, the building technology and thus the general aesthetic for the JLV, is inspired by some of the work at the YWAV Centre (to be discussed in ‘Precedent’ later in this chapter), combining to form a united development front.

Rural Studio is a stellar example of networked development in that they rarely do a single project in a community, but rather adopt a community at large and implement a number of architectural solutions to societal obstacles. The Yancey Chapel and the Goat House exemplify how a project can inspire another, adopting similar styles thus producing development on a much broader scale. “The Yancey Chapel of 1995, is an open-air pavilion set into a scenic overlook on Morrison Farm in Sawyerville...On the same property, shortly after the Chapel’s completion, Jeff Cooper and Ian Stuart designed and built the Goat House, a study in alchemy...A homely structure became a pleasing one, and showed how one studio building tends to grow from another” (Dean 1998:10).

Similarly, the built form, as well as the new construction techniques that have worked well at similar rural development projects in the area, such as the YWAV Centre (to be discussed later in this chapter), will be used in the design and construction of the JLV.

The work of Rural Studio also shows a very important network that is often underestimated, that being universities. A large portion of the success of the Studio can be attributed to the energy and willingness of the students from Auburn University working on the projects in rural areas of America.

The Yancey Chapel example provides us with perspective into how networking development is a two-way street. In as much as the Chapel inspired the Goat House, the Goat House was inspired and ‘plugged-into’ the existing developing framework. This aspect of networking is important in any developing community to provide a united front, the built environment as a whole being developed and not isolated instances, thereby inspiring a general spirit of development in the community. Jae Cha, founder of nonprofit corporation Light, describes the characteristics of any significant sustainable development through networking as “capitalizing on existing resources for a community that is already in need. Partnering with local skilled labour to produce efficient building systems that do not require continual external input, such as self-generating energy sources...can reduce long-term maintenance costs and extend the usage of the building” (2004:188).

It is in viewing network in this partnership light, both relationally and in built form, where architecture’s contribution to positive rural development is truly significant and most likely to be sustainable.
Sustainability

Sustainability through environmental, economic and social arenas now enters as one of the guiding design principles assisting architecture’s contribution to positive rural development.

From a networking perspective, sustainability becomes far more than the substance-less marketable catch-phrase is has become. When defined by The Brundtland Commission as “meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the needs of the future”, sustainability becomes a matter of networking with a generation that is yet to be, ensuring they have adequate resources to sustain themselves ‘without compromising the needs of the future’ (www.sustainablemeasures.com).

Some integral features of social sustainability are intra-generational equity and inter-generational equity (Fakir & Cooper). While the latter concurs with the aforementioned definition, the former addresses social justice within the existing generation. This generational network is merely the umbrella under which the three major arenas of sustainability fall: social, economic and environmental sustainability. It is the equal presence of these three aspects where architecture’s contribution to rural development is positive and sustainably enables further development.

Architect Joseph Kennedy finds harmony between environmental and social sustainability by identifying natural buildings as “any building system that places the highest value on social and environmental sustainability. It assumes the need to minimize the environmental impact of our housing and other needs while providing healthy, beautiful, comfortable, and spiritually uplifting homes for everyone” (2002:006).

At the heart of the JLV will be Pastor Mable who plays a critical role in the perceived social sustainability of the church complex. She has numerous accolades and acknowledgements for her work in rural areas during the xenophobic violence as well as the work she is doing though empowering the older, uneducated generation through ABET (Adult Basic Education and Training) schools so that they can be empowered and financially contribute to their families.

In any rural context, financial resources are generally hard to come by which places utmost importance on a development being environmentally sustainable, that is, using materials which are replaceable or mendable with little or not added cost, ensuring economic sustainability. For this reason, local building materials as well as using the land itself as a building material have been selected as construction techniques for the JLV.

In the frenzy of creating architecture that is economically sustainable in its ability to generate income, we tend to forget how Dr. Mizanur Rahman Shelly of the Centre for the Study of the Global South (1994:82) rationalises, “economic growth does not cause an increase in the quality of life, but increase in quality of life does lead to economic growth” (Nederveen Pieterse, 2001:126).

This is a vital point of view that we cannot afford to dismiss in the discourse of rural development, as what often is presumed to be the case is that people who live in rural areas are miserable because they have no economic freedom. This is in most cases far from the truth, and life in rural areas can actually be considered more fulfilling because of its simplicity and independence from economics.

These two arenas (environmental and economic sustainability) need to exist in such a way that a project is socially sustainability: that is, the project needs to be able to facilitate normal social behaviour of the particular society and provide a space for development opportunities. Where “social opportunities refer to the arrangements that society makes for education, health care and so on, which influence the individual’s substantive freedom to live better” (Sen, 1999:39).

Mary McLeod, Associate Professor of History and Theory of Architecture at Columbia University defines such a space for development opportunities as “consist[ing] of our exchanges, encounters, conflicts, and connections with one another - that is, human interaction not as abstract citizens or as economic agents but as real people relating to each other in the flow of daily life. Social life doesn’t imply a rigid boundary between the public and private domains but rather a continuum that includes both, ranging from sharing a park bench with a stranger or nodding hello to an acquaintance on the street, to arguing politics or enjoying holiday festivities with friends and family. The everyday world is the stage on which we conduct our daily lives, and thus the place of social interaction” (2000:170). It is on such a ‘park bench’ that a formidable networking relationship could emerge prompting further development.

As much as Kolokoto notes that “an activity is socially sustainable if it conforms to social norms or does not stretch them beyond the community’s tolerance for change” (1998:57), conformity can often lead to uniformity, which in its blandness could stifle development. However his point is duly noted and expanded on in the ‘Architectural Lab’ guiding principle. It is through the experimental interrogation of the social spaces revealed in ‘Covered in Dust’ that the JLV considers social sustainability for the rural Tabakhubedu community.
The world-wide Caring for the Earth has proposed nine principles for building a sustainable society (Tregoning, 1994), namely: respect and care for the community of life; improve the quality of human life; conserve the earth’s vitality and diversity; minimize the depletion of nonrenewable resources; keep within the earth’s carrying capacity; change personal attitudes and practices through the education of individuals and groups; enable the communities to care for their own environment; provide a national framework for integrating development and conservation; and create the global alliance of all nations of the world so as to enable sustainable living. It is important in considering these principles, that they are held in equitable esteem in order to afford any sustainable change.

In order for architecture’s contribution to rural development to be positive, one needs to bear these principles in mind when considering sustainability as well as ensure that the architecture “be made where it is and out of what exists there” (Dean 1998:107) so that its carbon footprint is minimal and the ‘language’ of the new development is not estranged in its environment.

Just as change may be circular, as discussed earlier, designing and living in a sustainable environment forces, in many ways, one’s lifestyle to become circular. Consider as ecologist Ianto Evans does, “if you use your excrement as the Chinese do, use your own urine for the fertilizer, and grow your own vegetable seeds from the plants you raise, the cycle is complete; you have inserted yourself into a completely visible ring of cause and effect” (2002:012). It is a far stretch for some to comprehend this circular way of living, but for many it is the most efficient and responsible way of life, especially as we consider specific lifestyle trends of different regions in the diverse array of cultures that South Africa exhibits.

fig. 24.1. An open-pit mine just outside Bronkhorstspruit, touching the earth heavily with no environmental sustainability consideration. Photograph taken near Bronkhorstspruit, Gauteng SA, on the 13th of March 2009.

fig. 24.2. Lapa culture perfectly facilitates social interaction but is not sustainable in contemporary modernised houses with social activity only occurring around the TV. Photograph in Ntware, Limpopo SA (to be discussed), on the 25th of April 2009.

Regionalism

Suitably following sustainability as a guiding design principle, regionalism is introduced into the discourse of architecture’s contribution to positive rural development as an interrogation into ‘place appropriateness’.

The notion of an object being estranged in its environment comes from neglecting regionalism, which are those certain and definable characteristics (also known as vernacular) of any community. These definable characteristics could include space differentiation mechanisms such as low walls for example, which are used to separate public and private space as will be discussed in the ‘Covered in Dust’ chapter to follow. One cannot consider application of these certain characteristics in design without an understanding of critical regionalism as argued by architect Kenneth Frampton as finding “its governing inspiration in such things as the range and quality of the local light, or in a tectonic derived from a peculiar structural mode, or in the topography of a given site” (1981:1).

Oliver cites the responsibility of builders (and designers) in considering regionalism in light of sustainable development, saying “they must learn how to construct according to the norms, values and aspirations of their communities, acquiring the relevant knowledge from the traditions of the past and, in turn, transmitting it to succeeding generations” (2003:082).

Bell offers a way in which we can evaluate how successful a development has been in its representation within a community. If we were to view the object through the eyes of an archaeologist and successfully determine the characteristics and specifically the spatial codes and social life therein, then the object has been true to its region and its representation thereof (2004:177).

Mockbee would put this authenticity down to the architecture having naturally evolved out of the culture and place, paying attention to the region and seeing how it can be reinterpreted using modern technology (Dean 1998:2-9). However paying attention to the rural region requires more effort than meets the eye as “our understanding of the presence of diversity tends to be somewhat undermined by constant bombardment with oversimple generalizations about...‘African cultures’ “ (Sen 1999:247).

The level of research that is required in order that the JLV is not undermined in its attempt to contribute to positive rural development is seen and explained in ‘Covered in Dust’, later in this thesis.

Mockbee’s transformative evolutionary architecture illuminates a very important aspect of regionalism, in that it is not merely about reproducing what exists in the area, but in order for development to happen, reinterpretation is required. It is also important to note that there may be other newer forms of social coding imposed on a community (often in the name of development), which intuitively are not true representations of the culture of the place.

It is here that special attention and interrogation has been made regarding the spatial arrangements and functional arrangements of the JLV, as well as the forms enclosing such spaces. This special attention is to ensure that the vernacular is not merely taken and superficially plated on a foreign social coding mechanism, which is in actual fact an abomination of the vernacular. Such as example is given in figure 24.2 where the traditional African hut is replicated and arranged in a ‘Western’ or rather ‘non-African’ grid.

This reveals the need for due consideration for all aspects of the rural region, in the well-intended process of its development. If the consideration is neglected “the articulation of culture and development” presents itself as “a new brick in the wall of clichés” (Nederveen Pieterse 2001:60).

To avoid the tendency of new buildings in rural areas simply becoming clichés, Frampton suggests that “it is possible to argue that ‘building the site’ the specific culture of the region - that is to say, its history in both geological and agricultural sense - becomes inscribed into the form and realisation of the work. This inscription, which arises out of ‘in-laying’ the building into the site, has many levels of significance, for it has the capacity to embody, in built form, the prehistory of the place, its archeological past and its subsequent cultivation and transformation across time. Through this layering into the site, the idiosyncrasies of place find their expression without falling into sentimentality” (1981:3).

On a more tangible and understandable level, Oliver tells us that “dwellings are built to serve a variety of functions, but one of the most important is to create living conditions that are acceptable to their occupiers” (2003:130). Acceptable to the users but sometimes designed by ‘strangers’ or ‘outsiders’. In such a distanced relationship between user and designer, the designer needs to, in a sense, own the foreign culture or at least their perception thereof. Here critical regionalism, as Frampton believes, “seeks to complement our normative experience by readdressing the tactile range of human perceptions” (1981:5).
Architectural Lab

Experimentation and innovation are also import to consider in recognising the different spatial describers of a particular region, thus ‘Architecture Lab’ has been included in the discourse of architecture’s contribution to positive rural development.

There is a great dormant creative opportunity that exists in rural areas as there are usually no building regulations, nor building inspectors censoring the kinds of structures that can be built (fig. 27.1). This is not a licence, however, to lose regard for common sense in design as people will nevertheless be occupying the buildings.

In choosing a campus site for his Rural Studio, Mockbee found in Hale County’s “lack of building codes and building inspectors a good laboratory” (Dean 1998:7). This provided the perfect platform for some of the Studio’s most memorable and bold architectural interventions. This in a perfect blend of regionalism and experimentation, “even the most futuristic constructions look anchored in their neighbourhood, because their scale fits and their shapes spring from the vernacular” (Dean:1998:10). The most important aspect here mentioned is the futureistic conceptions were informed by what was existing in the area while meeting the needs of the community, which made each intervention unique and masterfully appropriate in their different contexts.

Here, Nederveen Pieterse agrees that “culture and development is not simply a matter of including culture but also of interrogating culture as a terrain of power, culture as ideology” (2001:72).

In order to get to a ‘terrain of power’, the usual naive, innocent façade of culture needs to be experimented with and hopefully enhanced. However, working in a rural environment that has deep traditional social coding mechanisms, especially in the built environment, can be an exasperating task. If change is required to tradition, a certain level of decorum is essential to ensure positive development, and not abrasive, arrogant development. “For smoothing the process of transition, there also have to be opportunities for retaining and acquiring of new skills (for people who would otherwise be displaced)”, and those opportunities offer a perfect laboratory for architectural experimentation (Sen 1999:240). Oliver agrees, saying that “any advance in the quality of building construction largely depends on the range of tools available, or the tools that can be made with the resources at hand, and also on the knowledge and skill in handling them” (2003:081).

In many rural areas the development landscape has been polluted with RDP housing, which does not necessarily promote development in communities, but rather mutes any sort of potential creative expression (fig. 27.2). One of Mockbee’s strongest convictions regarding designers and the process of development is that they should “challenge the status quo into making responsible environmental and social changes” (Dean 1998:1). This is an urgent mandate for the architectural profession, for, so long as there is no development happening independently from government, the rural landscape will continue in the insensible sprawl of identity-denying, individualism-crushing RDP housing, homes that seems to have been merely rolled-out as a means to an end (that end being providing rural areas with ‘adequate’ housing) with no cultural consideration nor inspiration regarding the space that constitutes a community.

Sarkis seems to have the strategy of transcending such blind programs or functions by addressing inhabitation as having “to do with the need to question conventional associations between programme and form. It aims to leave the association between form and function open to revision based on the experiences of the emergent groups and their habits” (2000:101). Shepherd agrees in motivating that “the challenges for the project as the major form of development have been: to move from a blueprint to a process approach (with analytical techniques to match - the logical framework, Participatory Rural Appraisal, etc.); and to incorporate environmental, social and political analysis into a holistic approach” (1998:014). These guiding design principles briefly discussed in ‘Star-gazing’ would constitute such incorporations.

Revision must not only be left open between form and function, but also in considering building materials as well. In rural areas, the usual urban building materials may be hard to come by because of distances from major building supply warehouses as well as economic freedom. In this light new and unusual materials need to be considered and experimented with, and could possibly be more climatically advanced than the usual construction materials as well as assisting the buildings functioning in terms of passive cooling (fig 27.3).

Architectural historian Stanford Anderson understands this and says regarding the procurement of materials and their performance that “‘Tektonik’ referred not just to the activity of making the materially requisite construction...but rather to the activity that raises this construction into an art form...The functionally adequate form must be adapted so as to give expression to its function” (1981:4). Furthermore, Frampton esoterically describes this ‘form following function’ as the “structural poetic rather than the [mere] representation of a facade” (1981:5).
Professionals involved in the development of rural areas must apply themselves with the same rigor and creativity as if they were designing for high profile members of society at large. The reward of positively developing a rural community and enabling empowerment of its people must outweigh the prestige that is so highly sought after in urban contexts. M. Scott Ball, co-executive director of the Community Housing Resource Centre, Inc. sees the significance as revolutionary to the architectural profession. “In applying our skills to society’s needs in new ways, we will reinvent architecture. It is my hope that in so doing architects will recognize why the well-being of all communities is inherently valuable to the health of our profession” (2004:135).

The JLV as a complex will have a number of different buildings on the site existing in a state of tension between ‘the sacred and the profane’ (Eliade 1959). It is the sacred spaces that will be explored, developed and experimented with, in terms of function, form and materials.

fig 27.1. Inventive brick arch over the entrance to a pub, only possible in the absence of building codes. Photograph taken approximately 30km outside of Moutse, Limpopo SA, on the 20th March 2009.

fig 27.2. Creative extent of previous government’s RDP housing solution. Photograph taken near Pietermaritzberg, KwaZulu-Natal SA, on the 31st of August 2009.

fig 27.3. An example of discarded materials that could be used as unusual building materials. These materials are usually found locally and are less expensive and more climatically responsive than conventional construction materials in rural areas. Photograph taken at near Witbank, Mpumalanga the 13th March 2009.
Precedent

As one would scrutinise traditional design and use of material in the experimental spirit, one should also consider ‘Precedent’ in order to learn from the successes and failures in the present work in the rural development realm. In as much, Mockbee argues that “what is necessary is a willingness to seek solutions to the community in its own context and not from the outside” (2004:153). This is of vital importance as there are many excellent international rural projects, however to best be informed of the entire process of rural development, designers must look to local examples for solutions to local needs.

One such local project that has been considered as a precedent for the JLV is the Youth With a Vision (YWAV) centre near Philadelphia in the Moutse region of the Limpopo province in South Africa. The Centre is an AIDS-orphaned children’s haven about 20km from the area of investigation (fig. 29.1), and is an excellent example of architecture that has positively enabled development. It has achieved this through: a) its built form which provides a home for orphaned children in the area and empowers the children to develop themselves (through the guidance and mentorship programs of the facility); and b) its construction which has provided jobs for the locals and enhanced and broadened their technical construction horizons (through skills development workshops in new alternative building methods). It not only teaches that architecture can enable positive rural development, but also, shows the negative consequences of international aid.

All photographs used to illustrate aspects of this section were taken at the YWAV Centre on the 13th March 2009 unless otherwise stated.

The construction efforts at YWAV are funded by an international organization called NextAid, which is an American based charity organization. The orphan village was designed by American architect Joe Kennedy, author of the book called ‘The Art of Building Naturally’. Kennedy spent two weeks training the locals in natural building methods, and empowered the community to build the project themselves. However, NextAid has also used this project to showcase different ‘natural building’ construction techniques, and in so doing, sometimes pushed their own agenda above the sensible local knowledge to the detriment of the project, as will be discussed later. This is a clear example of how development can have negative effects if ‘Stargazing’ is not considered.

The project itself is fairly new, having started in 2005 with inadequate facilities, and continuing now (as at 23 May 2009) with further development. It was founded by Cynthia Nkosi and co-ordinated by her husband Jabu Nkosi (appendix B.1.6, pg. 152). As an orphanage complex it currently houses 25 children ranging from 3 to 22 years old and has future development plans for a multimedia centre and more accommodation for more children. The complex has a feeding scheme, serving about 25 vulnerable children within the surrounding community. It is in this light that JLV strives to be the heart and haven for the Tabakhubedu community.

The orphan houses were designed to be clustered into fours, forming a central space to be used as a vegetable garden for those four families (fig. 29.2). Each family consists of 6 orphaned children and a house parent couple. The houses have four bedrooms and each child has their own bed, desk and clothes cupboard, in accordance with local social services. The children are not necessarily only from the same family as they try to create a balanced nuclear family in each home. The house parents are members of the community who are also in need, further empowering the community through positive support systems.

YWAV would prefer a male and female couple to lead the home, but as is often the case, the men of the community are living in the major city centres and therefore cannot live on site, so often it is just a single mother looking after the children. The mothers are paid by the centre, which means they invest everything they are into the children because they do not need to work far from the home in order to supply for their new family’s needs.

There are currently three different natural building techniques used on this site. The first method was the constructing the kitchen and eating area out of earth-bags. The bags used for the earth-bag construction method are sourced from Britz, a nearby town, and are similar to the plastic weaved bags in which corn is supplied, only smaller, about 30cm x 50cm. The earth is dug on the site, water is added, and the earth is compacted into the bags. The bags are then placed end to end on the ground, with two barbed-wire lengths placed on top acting as mortar (fig. 29.3). Then on top of this the next layer of earth bags are stacked and so on. Once the wall is at the desired height, a wire mesh is placed on the outside of the bags, and plaster is applied to give the walls a smooth, plastered finish. The Administration offices are also constructed using this method (fig. 30.1 & 30.2), which is said to be an extremely good insulator, perfect for this region where summer days can get up to 40° C.

The earth-bag construction technique will be used in at the JLV in the seating in and around the lapsas. It has been chosen as a building material for a number of reasons: a) its soft, comfortable finish, b) its environmental consideration, c) the availability and abundance of suitable soil on the site, and d) the opportunity to enhance the traditional building technique of building with mud.
fig. 29.1. Aerial view of portion of Moutse showing YWAV Centre (yellow) in relation to accommodation (green) and site (black outline). Image by Google Earth, annotated by Author

fig. 29.2. Photograph of site plan of the YWAV Centre showing clustered arrangements of orphan homes (yellow), allowing communal vegetable gardens.

fig. 29.3. Diagram showing earth-bag construction technique. Image by Kennedy (2002:131)
fig. 30.1. Administration offices at YWAV built using earth-bag construction and finished with wire mesh and plaster and paint for smooth rounded edges.

fig. 30.2. Interior of the administration building of the YWAV Centre showing detail of earth-bag construction (window) and earth-bags used as roof insulation.

fig. 30.3. Performance Centre (right) and the playground (left) donated by the Oprah school.

fig. 30.4. Interior of the Performance Centre with stage and Peace Tiles for Hope. Performance Centre is also used for church services on Sundays.

fig. 30.5. Highly efficient Bengali stove used in the kitchen at the YWAV Centre for electricity-free cooking.

fig. 30.6. Highly efficient oven based on the Bengali stove used in the kitchen at the YWAV Centre for electricity-free cooking.
After the earth-bag construction method they moved to bales of hay as the next method for building naturally, as they wanted to conserve enough soil for a vegetable garden which would be to sustain the YWAV village and used as an income generator.

The straw-bale construction method was used in the construction of the first orphan house, which is currently being used for offices and baking classes. The straw was provided by the Department of Land and Agriculture based in Pretoria and arrives as 40cm x 30cm x 60cm bales. The bales are stacked much like one would lay bricks, then reinforcing bars are placed on the outside and tied together across the wall’s thickness for stability. There are a number of layers of plastering, the first being a watered mixture to seep into the hay, thereafter a thicker plaster mixed with lime for strength and waterproofing is applied.

Before this method was initiated on the site, Cynthia warned Kennedy and his team that it would not work as there are termites in South Africa. They did not take heed of her warnings and went ahead with this experimental building method because, according to Wendy, a NextAid representative, they wanted this site (which was their pilot project) to be an exhibition in different natural building techniques. Now that the building has been completed, upon inspection, it is evident that the termites are in fact, slowly eating the building from the inside out!

This is not to say that straw bales cannot be used in South Africa, however, the grass needs to be first treated with an insecticide, and then used as a building material.

After the bales of hay, YWAV bought their own Hydraform brick-maker, and built their next orphan house using sand from the site. After building their third orphan house the machine has more than paid itself off in saving on what would have been spent on buying bricks.

This shows the economic viability of using Hydraform blocks as a building material, and will therefore be adopted in the construction of the majority of the buildings at the JLV. The small business ‘spin-off’ opportunities for using this building material has already been covered in ‘Empowerment’, earlier in this chapter.

The Performance Centre has been constructed using earth-bags and has a large thatch-roof (fig. 30.3). The space has tiered seating with a raised performance stage where the children perform acts teaching each other about serious issues faced by children in today’s context such as sexuality, peer-pressure and AIDS (fig. 30.4). The stage has a backdrop called ‘Peace-tiles for Hope’, which are ceramic tiles decorated by children from all over the world sending messages of hope and encouragement to the children at YWAV.

Jabu is also a Pastor and he conducts services every Sunday morning in the performance space as well.

Behind the performance building is a very colourful playground which was donated by the Oprah School Of Leadership in late 2008, where the children travelled, some for the first time out of Gauteng, to meet the children of YWAV (fig. 30.3).

The kitchen is also constructed with earth-bags and also has a large thatched roof. It has been designed in a horseshoe shape, with the cooking staff on the inside and the children receiving the meal on the outside, where after they move to the eating space which is also designed in a horseshoe shape with a fire stove in the middle for winter months (fig. 32.1 & 32.2). The kitchen is completely electricity-free, with two Bengali fire stoves and a wood-fired oven. The Bengali stoves are native to the region and are constructed with only one hole in which a burning log is placed. With the fire burning air is sucked in through this single hole, fuelling the fire (fig. 30.5). The oven works on a similar principle, with a single hole in the back under a metal drum which is covered with brickwork (fig. 30.6). Both methods of cooking are extremely effective and efficient for this context.

Initially the ablution facilities were separate facilities to the main buildings, but with the new houses, the toilets are in the houses (fig. 33.1 & 33.2). They are not the usual flushable toilet system as water is a precious resource here, and to waste it on flushing a toilet is not viable, nor is there a sewage system to be able to flush into. The long drop toilets are not sustainable due to the volume of people living on the site, although, this option has been used on the site in the past. Typically when the hole in the ground becomes full, it gets covered with grass and a tree gets planted on the site.

There was a potentially sustainable toilet solution which was a raised slab, with the solid waste falling into a catchment place underneath (fig. 33.3). When this becomes full, it is closed up and another toilet is used next to the full one.

This system did not work as the two toilets ended up being used at the same time as male, and female, which did not allow one to be blocked up and ‘cook’ while the other one was being used.

The toilet system used now at the site is called the Enviro-loo, which is a waterless system (fig. 33.2). It works on air being drawn in the chamber through the whirley bird at the top of a vent stack (fig. 33.4). This causes the urine to evaporate and the faeces to dry up. Once the solid waste has completely dried...
fig. 32.1. Eating area (left) and outdoor kitchen (right), both constructed using the earth-bag technique.

fig. 32.1. Interior of the eating area (left), and kitchen (right), both constructed using the earth-bag technique.
The Enviro-loo waterless waste system will be used in the ablution facilities at the JLV because of its environmental sustainability.

With water being such a precious commodity, there is a pit that has been dug for water to be used for the construction, as well as collected rain water, which is also used for irrigation. The government has managed to supply this area with water, so their is drinkable water direct from taps.

YWAV Centre, as a local rural development project is an example of how architecture can enable positive development in a rural area. It has done this through providing jobs and training for the locals through the building industry as well as the kitchen and training staff employed by the centre. It has also provided the neglected and destitute children of the community a second chance to be able to develop themselves and one day become valuable contributing members of the society.

The Centre also shows the negative effects of international aid or rather external aid in not considering the vernacular, or being willing to learn from it.

**Memory**

The final part of ‘Stargazing’ has special significance especially in considering architecture’s contribution to positive rural development as it enters the development discourse at the level of traditional value systems and the interrogation thereof.

Oliver understands the process of memory and its influence on the built environment, saying “all dwellings have, or soon acquire, a history which may sometimes be relatively static, but which may also bear the evidence of considerable transformation” (2003:016). It is this narrative that dwellings relay which informed this closing section.

In the modernisation process, much of the richness within the social fabric of our rural communities is slowly being forgotten and neglected as Oliver observes, saying that “moves to destroy building traditions have been associated in some countries with a drive to modernise” (2003:014). Oliver goes on to notice a similar trend in many other rural communities worldwide. “Much has
been threatened, damaged, or lost within recent memory as individuals, families or even whole communities have been forced to abandon the rural areas and often with no homes to go to, have migrated to the cities. With the migration from rural regions some of the acquired knowledge and experience of living in the world’s diverse regions and environmental conditions has been lost. Beyond the traditional aspects of dwelling, the impact of globalization and its effect on rural economies, rapid urbanisation and the unprecedented scale of housing problems which confront the peoples of the world in the 21st-century bring a new urgency to the study of the vernacular and the recovery of much accumulated wisdom” (2003:017). It is the desire to be able to learn from this ‘wisdom’ that drives this final section of ‘Stargazing’.

Simone simplifies the motivating force driving of development within a rural community as memory, “for it is the capacity to remember that enables individuals to affirm that the present isn’t the only thing or the only condition that has to be” (2000:240). In contemporary times, a young and restless generation has arisen that is not content with the depravity in which they find themselves and their families in. The most common remedy for this restlessness has been the substantial migration from rural areas into urban city centres. This cannot be considered a plausible solution as the only way that the rural community ends up ‘benefitting’ is through the males or older children sending home money. This is especially damaging to the social fabric of the rural community which then ends up consisting of old women and young children, which fundamentally negates development, especially since in some cases, the older generation fall prey to different levels of mental illnesses due to the lack of family social interaction. This becomes, as discussed in the beginning chapter, a matter of redirecting the frustration into development of the rural community, and it is the delicacy with which development is implemented that is important here as one considers memory as a design principle.

Many rural architectural interventions are thoughtlessly imported and asserted into a community with no considerations of tradition, and short-sightedness into the possible value that tradition may add. This having been said, there are some aspects of cultural tradition that could be considered a hindrance to development itself, and with it comes the basic instinct of professionals to do away with those elements of tradition (when they has been considered).

This is not an appropriate response of professionals, as it is based on the assumption that someone from the outside is more knowledgeable with regard to development of the rural lifestyle than the citizens themselves. This domonatory relationship has already been covered in the ‘Network’ and ‘Precedent’ part of ‘Stargazing’.

What becomes important in this instance is to ensure that the choices of what is to be kept and what can be discarded, be the right of the community itself. This is supported by Sen in stating that “if traditional way of life has to be sacrificed to escape grinding poverty or miniscule longevity (as many traditional societies have had for thousands of years), then it is the people directly involved who must have the opportunity to participate in deciding what should be chosen. The real conflict is between: 1) the basic value that people must be allowed to decide freely what traditions they wish or not wish to follow; and 2) the insistence that established traditions be followed (no matter what)” (1999:32). ‘No matter what’, could perhaps even be “at significant economic cost” (1999:241). If the above second scenario persists, then the role of the professional shifts somewhat to mediator (if the rights to do so have been earned) between those stubborn members of a community and development in order to advance the cause of social justice (if it is believed that the traditional aspect is socially unjust). In order to earn the right to mediate between tradition and development, one must reasonably comprehend a rural community’s authentic culture and traditions and be welcomed into the community through having built sincere relationships with its members.

It would be irresponsible to honour the traditional building technique of using just plain mud in any new rural development project. Therefore, in the design for the JLV, it has been enhanced in various ways and will be used as the primary building material. The strong traditional spatial forms that will be discussed in the ‘Covered in Dust’ chapter will also be used at the JLV.

According to Nederveen Pieterse, “Local culture,..., is not an uncontaminated space but a field criss-crossed by traces of migrant, travellers, traders, missionaries, colonizers, anthropologists” (2001:64). This is especially true for the BaNtwane community. According to Ace Mathebe, the BaNtwane community are originally from Serowe in Botswana. They left their original tribe over a traditional altercation regarding a bull in the late 18th century. They crossed the ‘Mogala Kwena’ (Crocodile river: the crocodile later became the totem of the BaNtwane) to arrive in Thabazimbi, whence they then moved onto Modimolle and finally settled in Moutse (fig. 35.1). There are eleven heritage sites of the first settlers to the region, tracking their passage into South Africa, the most significant one found at Modimolle and another in this community in the form of a cave (to be discussed).
In beginning the journey of discovering their traditional uniqueness one must bear in mind how “in much traditional ethnography...the ethnographer has localised what is actually a regional/ national/ global nexus, relegating to the margins a ‘culture’s’ external relations and displacements” (Clifford, 1992:100). This localisation process requires an understanding of the culture of the community in its own context and also the culture from whence it came.

Revolutionary, Amilcar Cabral, writes in National Liberation and Culture that “a people who free themselves from foreign domination will be free culturally only if,...they return to the upward paths of their own culture, which is nourished by the living reality of its environment, and which negates both harmful influences and any kind of subjection to foreign culture”. In the nostalgic narrative of the BaNtwane community, who were not necessarily under foreign, culturally oppressive rule, it is important to consider the ‘commanding heights of its own culture’. In tracing the BaNtwane community from Botswana into South Africa, and finally their home, Moutse, it becomes evident that there may have been a number of different cultural influences defining the traditions they enjoy as a community today, producing a certain “cultural mixing and hybridity” (Nederveen Pieterse 2001:70).

Similarly, eco-architect Michael G. Smith observes how “for thousands of years, our own species followed this same path, building shelters out of locally available materials. Each group to settle in a new area developed a new culture with its own architectural style, which developed through small improvements from generation to generation, becoming more and more suited to specific local needs and opportunities” (2002:001).

The stargazing process has been embarked upon in the realisation that the rural development process exists in a matrix of various dimensions and design themes as Nederveen Pieterse finds, saying it takes place “on a physical level, in an ecological framework, as shifts in social relations, changes in emotional landscapes, on a mental plane, in a political field, a historical context, on a moral plane, and in a universe of meaning” (2001:129). This process has produced “a comprehensive, holistic approach to development [which] is not only multidimensional but also multiscalar, such that development efforts at different levels are cumulative and interconnect” (Nederveen Pieterse 2001:17).

Through ‘gazing at the stars’ we have seen how ‘Empowerment’, ‘Network’, and ‘Community Buy-in’ work together as abstract themes ensuring a positive impact on the people of the rural community. The fundamental design principles that followed, ‘Sustainability’, ‘Regionalism’, ‘Architectural Lab and ‘Precedent’, were somewhat more tangible in their application to positive rural development. Lastly, ‘Memory’, as a reminiscence of the past, specifically of the built environment and the significance behind the different social ordering systems that prescribe certain forms and enclosures, concludes the fundamental design principles of ‘Stargazing’.

Each topic has been covered in brief detail as applicable to the rural development context, and chosen for its suitable contribution in assisting architecture’s contribution to rural areas to be of a positive nature. The success or failure of any rural development project would rely on the sensitivity and balanced approach to each topic as pertinent to each individual and unique rural context.
fig. 35.1. Map tracing the BaNtwane’s movements out of Botswana, into Thabazimbi, then to Modimolle and finally resting in Moutse. Image by Google Maps, annotated by author.

fig. 35.2. Reference image of Southern Africa with enlarged portion in red. Image by Google earth, annotated by author.
1. In an attempt to gain a first hand understanding of how community buy-in would look like in a rural context I visited community worker Roger Galloway in the beginning of September 2009 (appendix B.1.5 & B.2, pp. 152 & 154 respectively).

2. *Umuntu, Ngubuntu, Ngabantu*: loosely translated into: I am suffering, because you are suffering, because we are all suffering. "A person with ubuntu is open and available to others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good for he or she has a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed" (Tutu 1999)

3. “The United Nations set up a commission to look at environmental issues in 1983. It was headed by the Norwegian Prime Minister, Gro Harlem Brundtland. It quickly became known as the Brundtland report. The Brundtland commission researched into environmental and economic issues before publishing its final report, Our Common Future, in 1987.” (www.sustainability-ed.org)

4. Phrase by Swiss Architect Mario Botta in Frampton

5 Problems do however arise with this outreach initiative as members of the community who do have sufficient resources often come to receive free food, and the centre then has to exercise some discernment as to the validity of the claim.

6. Lecture delivered on February 20 at Syracuse University as part of the Eduardo Mondlane Memorial Lecture Series. Eduardo Mondlane, was the first President of the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO) who was assassinated by Portuguese agents on Feb. 3, 1960. www.historyisaweapon.com

7 Doing a long distance motorbike ride is a great time to detox my mind. I am forced to focus on the road, which disallows day-dreaming and empties my mind of the hectic ‘Jozi city life’ pace.

8. Before departure I hypothesised that through the influence of memory, the architecture that I will find in Serowe would somewhat represent the architectural flair found in Moutse, shaped and moulded by the architecture at Thabazimbi and Modimolle. This shall be proven wrong, and discussed in the journal. This antithesis does not render the trip invalid and ‘memory’ not a useful part to the
Concluding ‘Stargazing’, and as an exploration of memory, is a travel journal from a trip I undertook to visit the origins of the BaNtwane community which is in Serowe, Botswana. The trip traced their movements from Serowe, through Tabazimbi and Modimolle and was done on my motorbike (fig 38.1), which afforded me a ‘brain de-tox’ and an opportunity to deeply consider architecture’s contribution to positive rural development’. In the travel journal I wrote my thoughts about rural development, as well as a commentary to my hypothesis on memory and its contribution to life and the built environment. The travel journal is presented here as the first *selah*.

All photographs accompanying the journal were taken by the author and correspond to the place and date of the journal entry. All accompanying scripture provide examples of the use of *selahs* in the Psalms, and are taken from the English Standard Bible version (www.bibleresources.bible.com). The rural mat, which is often used while lying down on the ground to rest, has been used as a background to the *selah*, conveying the attitude of restful contemplation.

*fig. 38.1: Trusty steed and tent used during the ‘Memory’ trip. Photograph taken near Modimolle, Limpopo SA on the 4th of July 2009.*
selah! [se-la]:
pause, and calmly think of that
Selah

fig. 40.1. Shack with netting attached for protection against the flies in summer and thus allowing comfortable outdoor socialising.

fig. 40.2. Axial symmetry upon entry, with netting attached to the front of the shack.

fig. 40.3. Trees used for shade and fruit produce. Definitely a different quality to townships that have greenery compared to those without.

fig. 40.4. Lifeless social environments of the RDP housing across the road from the informal settlement.

fig. 40.5. Advertisement for the RDP housing near the CBD of Modimolle.

fig. 40.6. Pride in keeping the front yard neat and tidy. This would be a visitor’s first experience of the home.

fig. 40.7. Born into the bondage of social ‘unfreedoms’.

fig. 40.8. A sheet metal lekgotla.

Psalm 24: 3-6, ESV

He will receive blessing from the LORD and righteousness from the God of his salvation. Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek the face of the God of Jacob. Selah”

selah
Day 01: Modimolle 04/07/09

"Arriving at Modimolle, I was a bit disappointed to not have found what I was expecting to find. When I planned this trip, in my mind I was expecting to visit places that looked, in some way at least, like the community of BaNtwane.

Modimolle itself is just like any other small South African dorpie, with its bustling main street with shop verandas filled with products and people. It was at this point that I became disillusioned with the trip and the chances of finding anything that may contribute to the built form of the BaNtwane community.

I continued through the town wondering where people lived, specifically the marginalised members of the broader community. Where better to find them but on the margins. On the outskirts of the town I first noticed large sprawled RDP housing development, desolate despite its colourful roofs’ attempts at inviting the community in to the ‘Affordable, Modern Sustainable/ Quality houses to match your lifestyle.’

Across the road from this ‘development’ was the life, flesh and bones of the community. Hoping here to find parts of the BaNtwane vernacular, but again disappointed to find the usual South African informal settlement. To be fair, it did have its own character and identity apart from the norm. Many of the houses had netting attached to the front of the house, presumably for summer-time relaxing outside and to keep the flies away. There did appear to be a very distinct communal/ cooking space outside the house (or shack), but nowhere near as formalised as the lapa of the BaNtwane community. Perhaps in this case, the BaNtwane community passed something onto this community and not visa versa as I was expecting.

I’m not convinced that the community on the margins will eagerly inhabit the new development. It is simply ‘raw’ housing with no gardens, that is, nowhere to plant their sustenance, which is clearly evident and part of the life of this community.”

Day 02: Modimolle – Grobler’s Bridge 05/07/09

"Having spent a restless night in a tent, I am glad to be sleeping under a roof tonight as the weather is particularly bleak today.

While riding through some of the most beautiful scenery today, I thought about camping yesterday and how my choice of site was unmistakably informed by memory. Memories of camping with my family when I was young, my father choosing the best site so that we were sheltered from the night’s dew, had our tent open to the ‘public realm’ and shrubbery to protect us from the wind.

Memory is in fact a very large part of who we are, how we live and how we interact with each other and our surroundings. Call it tradition, call it nurture, but whatever it’s called- its essence remains. We are, we live, we express ourselves based somewhat on our past.

The building tradition of the BaNtwane was no doubt past down from generation to generation, with varying styles from different families. If the first row of houses at the Moshate is to inform me of what I am to find in Botswana, I am expecting rich culture of courtyards and community well connected with one another. The first row at the Moshate were the first houses built by the original settlers that left Botswana. It is most likely (and hopefully) that these settlers made their roots in Ntwane in the form of and as a representation of their home, Se-rowe, informal by memory.”
fig. 42.1. Accommodation at the Khama III Memorial Museum for the two days spent in Serowe.

fig. 42.2. Traditional Tswana house with low moulded mud wall enclosing lolwapa.

fig. 42.3. 'Modernised' home with lolwapa wall made from different visual permeable materials.

fig. 42.4. Traditional Tswana home. Non load-bearing mud walls due to roof supported on posts. Walls need occasional repair due to rain damage.

fig. 42.5. Postcard of Serowe as it was when it was established in 1902.

fig. 42.6. Elderly lady who looks after and cares for three generations of her family on the same household.

fig. 42.7. Four walled 'modern' house built by construction men with traditional thatch roof.

fig. 42.8. Museum curator, Scobie during an interview with an elderly member of the community. 60 year old traditional house built by the elderly lady in the background.

“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, through the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling. Selah.

God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God will help her when morning dawns. The nations rage, the kingdoms totter; he utters his voice, the earth melts. The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Selah.”

Psalm 46: 1-7
"Have I found what I have been expecting to find? To some extent, yes, but not in the fullest. It appears that 'modernism' as the project to move away from mud-huts and thatch roofs, has bull-dosed almost all traces of traditional building in Serowe.

The traditional hut is a rondawel made with mud walls and a thatch roof, with posts and beams on the outside of the hut. Some of the houses have lapas, but not nearly as prevalent as the BaNtwane community. Of those lapas, most are very beautifully created, not simply a low wall, but a wall made of different materials such as bottles and air bricks etc. There are kgoros in most of the houses, which are places outside to meet. Here they are called kgotlas. They are made with living branches and usually have different found objects in them, like an old fridge for example.

I am staying at the Khama III Memorial Museum, which by my understanding was the house of the grandfather of the current President. It is an old colonial style house with a veranda that wraps all the way around the house. Scobie, the museum curator has offered to be my assistant during my stay here as I seek to find traditional Tswana houses. He very kindly loaned me three books to read about Traditional Housing: 'A Documentation of Twelve Tswana Dwellings' and 'Traditional Tswana Housing, by Anita and Viera Larsson; 'Decorated Houses in Botswana', by Sandy and Elinah Grant.

Across the road from the museum is the first church and missionary station in Serowe, or their ruins at least. The missionaries were from London and the architecture is clearly from foreign origins as it in no way represents any style or lesson that could have been taken from the locals.

As I rode into Botswana and passed many sparsely spaced rural households I wondered at what scale does rural development begin, and where does it end? According to Scobie, we have, in the pursuit of development, lost the essence of Ubuntu. Mother nature can more than provide for everyone's need, but not for their greed, and often greed is synonymous with development. In this paradigm the sense of community is lost as people begin to behave individually and not in the best interests of the community as a whole. The effect of the 'modern' or 'western' tar road has had on rural communities propagates development but can also (and has here) devastated the sense of community. Before, when houses were arranged communally, people could freely and easily communicate with one another. Since the tar road houses have turned their backs on each other with in this culture is highly offensive, signalling that you no longer want to talk to or have anything to do with that person."

"There is one thing about staying in rural areas, one thing that truly eludes me and keeps me up at night in mystery, that is, why do roosters start crowing at 22:00 and carry on until the morning?!?"

After a restless night, the day has proven to be magnificent. Scobie took me on a tour of Serowe this morning to show me some of the few remaining traditional Tswana houses. The houses themselves are unique to Serowe and have not continued in tradition amongst the BaNtwane. The lapa, or lelwapa here, also is unique in its character material verses the mud-walls and seating of the BaNtwane. Also there is only one lelwapa in front, no rear lelwapa for more private functions as found in the BaNtwane. Perhaps they picked up the bi-lobial arrangement from the Ndebele during their escapade to present day Moutse.

One thing that has definitely continued is the Kraal arrangements of the homes. There is one main Kraal here that can be likened to the Moshate, as well as smaller kraals called 'wards' here. Within each ward there is a cattle kraal at the entrance as well as a kgotla (kgoro) for meeting/ discussions etc.
fig. 44.1. Letter of encouragement from researcher and author, Anita Larsson.

fig. 44.2. & fig. 44.3. Typical households in Serowe. Often three different generational building techniques reveal the transitory nature of the built form in any ‘modernising’ rural village.

fig. 44.4. Four walled home with thatch roof and front lolwapa.

fig. 44.5. Rondawel in state of disrepair.

fig. 44.6. Traditional Tswana hut and ‘modernised’ home connected by lolwapa.

fig. 44.7. Traditional Tswana hut in the process of being repaired, with low-walled lolwapa.

fig. 44.8. Lolwapa connecting two separate houses on one household. Lolwapa wall made from visibly permeable material.

“Clap your hands, all peoples
Shout to God with loud songs of joy!
For the LORD, the Most High, is to be feared,
a great king over all the earth.

He subdued peoples under us,
and nations under our feet.
He chose our heritage for us,
the pride of Jacob whom he loves. Selah”
Psalm 47: 1-4
I was reading through one of the books that Scobie had lent to me and in it I found a note from the author, Anita Larsson, wishing me well with my research! I also found a postcard of what Serowe was like in 1902, which was the year it was formally recognised as a town. The picture shows an incredibly sparse and barren land with a few huts and their respective yards.

If Ntwane came into existence in 1902 as well, then the original members must have left the tribe very early on from Serowe to have settled in Limpopo that same year.

There are many homes here that exude the modernist progressive development project as one stand can have all three generations of building process. The rondawel with thatch supported on posts, the square thatched house and the ‘modernised home’ with a tin roof.

One lady we visited was the eldest of four alive generations living in one household. This great-grandmother said she much rather preferred staying in the rondawel that she built over 50 years ago because if something went wrong with it, she could repair it. This was clearly evident in the patched thatch roof and mud-walls that had new layers added to it. We met in her front lelwapa and were welcomed as guests in this public realm. To the side of her house there was another smaller and informal lelwapa where she was busy cooking. This would have been the rear lelwapa in the BaNtwane community.

As we walked towards the shops in Serowe, Scobie continued to speak about rural development. He motioned toward the newly erected ‘commercial’ buildings that would be taken as ‘development’, and said how in their place, there used to be homes, just like all around us. The people staying there needed to relocate themselves and build brand new houses in this new location. The displaced community could apply to the government for compensation. Is this what rural development is about? Displacement for revenue? Main roads for ex-communication?

When we were still with the elderly woman, Scobie mentioned how ‘development’ was devastating for the elderly. Before, when the family was at home and homes needed to work the land for food, the elderly were a very strong part of the life of the community. Now with the supermarkets and tarred roads, their children are taken to city centres to earn money which they send home to their parents, no longer taking time to visit them anymore.

The rural brain-drain needs as much attention as the national brain-drain!

In some cases, where the elderly are left on their own with supermarkets supplying sub-standard foods, they go ‘mental’ for the lack of a better word. When one considers the cost of negative development, it should be alarming enough to caution one before wanting to ‘change the world’, and make ‘rural’ into ‘western’ which is so often the case in rural development paradigms of the 21st century.

Scobie was expecting some German tourists to the museum today. He commented that they have developed their country to the point where there is no natural beauty to enjoy, and that is why there are so many German Tourists. Interesting perspective on the negative repercussions of development.”

Day 05: Serowe- Grobler’s Bridge 08/07/09

“Riding back towards South Africa, as I passed the single households, alone without neighbours for miles, I wondered if they would want to be ‘developed’? I have only experienced this kind of rural living in Mozambique, and for the most part life seemed good, enjoyable and people seemed fulfilled.

I remember a school talk when I was in first year as a BAS under-grad. It escapes me who the speaker was but I remember he was talking about how when the fuel and water shortage crisis hits, it will be rural dwellers (underdeveloped) who would thrive and succeed while the rest of the carbon/fossil fuel driven world collapsed around them. It was because the rural dweller knew how to live harmoniously with
fig. 46.1. Main road entering the mining town of Tabazimbi

fig. 46.2. Mine dump on the outskirts of the town.

fig. 46.3. Mine dump dune.

fig. 46.4. Rural home made from mud by gentleman in the photograph as taught by his mother.

fig. 46.5. Entrance lolwapa walls made from mud.

fig. 46.6. Artistic expression displayed on the rear wall to the main house.

fig. 46.7. Rural dwellers preferring a tin shack to a mud building.

fig. 46.8. Donkey shower by moonlight.

Psalm 48: 4-8

For behold, the kings assembled; they came on together. As soon as they saw it, they were astounded; they were in panic; they took to flight. Trembling took hold of them there, anguish as of a woman in labor.

By the east wind you shattered the ships of Tarshish. As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the LORD of hosts, in the city of our God, which God will establish forever. Selah.
the land. Not over-burdening it or poisoning it, knowing when is enough and how to provide for a family with what the earth around you has provided.

Sustainable development must happen from the inside out, not the outside prescribing what the inside needs and must have.”

Day 06: Grobler’s Bridge- Thabazimbi 09/07/09

“Thinking more about my time in rural Mozambique and the ministry we were involved with, highlighted the importance of sustainability.

If we went on this short term mission on our own, into the bush telling people about Jesus (and discussing other issues) our effect would have been inconsequential because we left and never returned. However because we partnered with the local pastors, they were able to continue the ministry and follow-up with the people we had chatted to.

In the same way, if outsiders come into rural settings and inject an architectural intervention and leave, without having involved and partnered with the locals, the effect of that intervention will also be inconsequential.

I arrived in Tabazimbi to find no traces of BaNtwane culture. If there had been any, it had probably been bulldozed to provide uniform RDP housing on the fringes of the community.

Past the marginalised, we found a delightful camping spot with a donkey- so exciting! Not an ‘ee-aw’ type of donkey, but rather the kind that boils water outside so you can have a shower outdoors in the middle of the bush under African Skies. So exciting! It is sitting beside this donkey, watching the sunset over Tabazimbi, and indeed this trip, as I conclude this travel journal with its final entry.

The owner of the campsite took us to a few of the remaining traditional homes that were quite far out from the CBD. The first home was made completely out of mud and had a front lapa, with three rooms facing the inside of the lapa. The style of home was like nothing I’ve ever seen before, however the lapa was a welcomed familiarity. The owner of the house built it in 1997 and said he was taught by his mother in the craft of home building.

I left these rural homes to return to the campsite where the owner began telling me of caves in the Mountains. I would propose that the few BaNtwane people that were headed for Modimolle, most probably stayed in caves as they passed through Tabazimbi. That is, if they didn’t build and stay for a while (which I doubt). The assumption is also based on the fact of the heritage cave in Ntwane, which was where the founding ancestors first sought refuse before settling in present day Ntwane.

In closing, my original hypothesis was that I would find a vernacular architecture in Serowe that somewhat represented the BaNtwane’s current style. Tabazimbi and Modimolle were expected to have influenced/ been influenced somewhat by the original style.

In Tabazimbi and Modimolle I found very faint (if any) traces of the lapa/ communal style that so characterises that founding the BaNtwane community. The Tswana home of Serowe are unique to Botswana and certainly aren’t reproduced in the BaNtwane community.

The bi-lobial arrangement that is so ‘signature-esce’ at Moutse has not been found anywhere on this trip. It is my assumption that the founding members of the BaNtwane community picked up this tradition from the Ndebele, somewhere during their escapades in arriving in Moutse, Limpopo- SA.

Perhaps my travelling partner and wonderful girlfriend put it best by saying that ‘people and cultures are forever changing and adapting, but you will always find footprints, albeit faint footprints of their traditional history.”

Gary van Lieshout
Roots Tour July 2009
JHB-Modimolle-Serowe-Thabazimbi-Home
“It was here that my education as an architect, as a place-maker, began to find meaningful direction.”

Kristine J. Renner Wade

fig. 48.1. Resourceful broom.
Photograph taken at the Kenneth Mathebe Household in Tabakhubedu, Limpopo SA, on the 1st of April 2009
Vista member of Design Corps, Kristine Wade’s revealed purpose as stated on the previous page, ultimately produced a fulfilling personal experience of the architectural profession (2004:39). It is here, in the midst of dust, doing fieldwork in order to gain an appropriate understanding of the rural BaNtwane community, that my undergraduate training at The University of Witwatersrand began producing a fulfilling personal experience of architecture. The fulfilling fieldwork as presented in ‘Covered in Dust’ is the second component to maximising the positive contribution of architecture’s to rural development, with the first component being ‘Stargazing’.

Shepherd understands the need for such a perspective and realises that “social analysis is the development of an understanding of the key social relationships which may have an influence over people’s behaviour, attitudes and states of mind” (1998:147). So why use the metaphor ‘Covered in Dust’ to title a chapter dedicated to social analysis?

‘Covered in Dust’ has two origins pertaining to the cultural exploration required for architecture’s contribution to rural development to be a positive one.

The first and most obvious root is through spending time in the community, one inevitably gets covered in dust. The cultural exploration undertaken here, found me spending over two weeks in the community of the BaNtwane, sleeping where they slept, eating what they ate, and really growing a heart of compassion for the community. My refuge for the duration of my visits to the community was the house of Mrs. Monageng (appendix B.1.7, pg. 152 & fig. 51.1, 51.3 & 51.4). Upon every visit to the community, she would greet me with a genuine ‘welcome home’ (fig. 51.2).

In the two weeks that I spent in the community and being covered in its dust, I was afforded the honour of documenting, first hand, the different social systems and characteristics of the BaNtwane community, that make it such a unique rural community in South Africa. Shepherd, in describing how “projects should aim for a good ‘sociocultural fit’ between project interventions and the way local society is organised,” lists certain important factors in considering what one should focus on during such a cultural research visit into a community. They “would include: the structure of family life (demography, relationships, division of labour, etc.); the labour requirements of meeting basic needs and allocation of labour to ‘non-basic’ activities; values and preferences (eg. on meeting subsistence needs, security, income generation and expenditure, individuals’ roles in public etc.); concepts of rights; existing forms of co-operation among individuals, households and communities; incentives and returns to activity; accessibility of the project to the target group and its influence over it.” It is from this perspec-

tive, acknowledging that sometimes “facts” about these elements are often assumed in the project design, because planners feel they know what the situation is, or because they typecast the situation and transfer assumptions from elsewhere”, that my investigations found structure during my time in the community (1998:153).

Architect Frank Lloyd Wright perfectly understands and recognises the value of this kind of fieldwork saying, “folk building growing in response to actual needs, fitted into the environment by people who knew no better than to fit them with native feeling...for us better worth study than all the highly self-conscious academic attempts at the beautiful throughout Europe” (1910).

The second root of ‘Covered in Dust’ is best described in an explanation by pastor Rob Bell of the intimate relationship between a rabbi and his disciple. In order for the disciple to learn as much as he possibly could from his rabbi, he would need to follow his rabbi very closely all throughout the day. Through this intimacy, the disciple would quite literally be covered in the dust of his rabbi (Bell 2005).

It is in this light that the discovery process has been undertaken in order to produce an appropriate understanding of the culture of the rural community, concurring with anthropologist and professor Nestor Garcia Canclini that “to analyse culture was equivalent to describing the manoeuvres of dominant forces (1992:21)”.

This chapter is broken into three parts, namely: ‘Home’, ‘BaNtwane’ and ‘Architectural Flair’, and has been compiled through numerous visits to the community conducting interviews with important members of the community such as traditional leaders and well-established members of the community (appendix B.1.8, pg. 152). During interviews and conversations with the members of the community, notes were taken which were later transcribed (upon returning to my home) in Johannesburg. These transcriptions, once the dust had settled, constitute this chapter and has been proof-read by Senior Administration Officer of Traditional Affairs, Ace Mathebe to ensure no misrepresentation. All photographs accompanying the text were taken in Ntwane, Limpopo SA unless otherwise stated.
fig. 51.1. Sketch of second generation house of the Monageng family, used as a residence during visits to the area to conduct research. Sketch drawn at the Piet Monageng household on the 12th of March 2009.

fig. 51.2. The late Mr. Piet Monageng and his wife Mrs. Leah Monageng. Photograph taken at their home on the 17th of November, 2008.

fig. 51.3. Kitchen of my home during visits to conduct research. Photograph taken at the Piet Mathebe household on the 19th of March 2009.

fig. 51.4. Bedroom during visits to conduct research. Photograph taken at the Piet Mathebe household on the 19th of March 2009.
Home

This section of ‘Covered in Dust’ firstly locates and briefly describes the BaNtwane community and then deals with introducing the socioeconomic climate that the community finds itself in. Finally, an interrogation of the idea of home in a rural context concludes this first part.

The BaNtwane community is located in two areas within Moutse, namely Tabakhubedu (the location of site for design intervention), and Ntwane (my accommodation during site visits), which are two neighbouring communities on either side of the main road (fig. 52.1). Moutse is approximately 180km due NE of Johannesburg and is located near Loskop Dam (fig. 52.2). Currently there are approximately 2250 individual home units.

This particular rural community has been selected because of the unique spatial codes defining the built forms as well as the community’s socioeconomic plight, and therein the maximum potential for positive development to take effect.

Today, the cultural identity of the community is not exclusive but rather houses several different cultures, such as BaPedi, isiZulu and seTswana, which tells of the original tribe’s accepting nature, recognizing a common humanity. This revelation only came after years of fighting off indigenous South African tribes since their arrival in the area in the early 19th century, whereupon they were appropriately named The BaNtwane, which means ‘fighting people’. Today however, the people of the community are generally very friendly towards visitors, especially the children.

The RDP defines ‘rural’ rather vaguely as “the scarcely populated areas in which people farm or depend on natural resources, including the villages and small towns that are dispersed through these areas” (www.anc.org.za).

Jacqueline Novogratz, founder and CEO of Acumen Fund, defines poverty as pertaining to the moral issues of “choice and the lack of freedom” (www.ted.com) rather than a fiscal condition, which seems a far more appropriate description to the current socioeconomic condition of rural Moutse.

According to the 1997 RDP’s table on ‘Indicators of Poverty in South Africa’; Mpumalanga (which was at that time, the province into which Moutse was located) is at a poverty risk of 47%. This means that 47 out of 100 people are living in poverty, which, when analysed through Novogratz’ definition, paints a despairing picture for the community in Moutse.

Bearing in mind Mockbee’s advice that “the architect’s primary emotional
Home is defined by Wade as “a complex association of meanings connoting both a physical place and a more abstract sense of ‘a sense of belonging’. It embodies both a house and household, a dwelling and a refuge” (2004:39).

When I stayed in the community, I lived in the second generation building of the family household, which will be spatially explored in further detail in subsequent pages. As much as I stay in one of the houses on the property, the sense of home is tangible in every part of the property as Frescura note that “the rural house is often entered before access is gained to any one of its components; the household is often the ‘house’ as a whole and just because an area is not bound by a wall or is roofed over, it does not detract from its qualifications as ‘house’ “ (1981:162).

Oliver supports this observation of the broader ‘home’ saying that “the dwelling is more than the site it occupies, the materials of which it is made, the know-how of its construction, the labour that has gone into the building, the cost and time in money that has been expended upon it.” As much as the dwelling is all these things, more importantly, “the dwelling is the theatre of our lives, where the major dramas of birth and death, of procreation and recreation are played out, and in which the succession of scenes of daily life are enacted, and re-enacted in the process of living” (2003:017-18).

It is here that the rural mat design theme finds its fulfilment in the design of the JLV. The complex as a whole is weaved together as each of the different functional elements of the mixed association of buildings and spaces compliment one another and harmoniously unify the project (this will be explained in further detail in ‘Peû’). It is not only in the buildings and spaces, but also in the carefully considered materials and their procurement that the JLV will be perceived as a ‘dwelling’ and not simply a mundane, arbitrary collection of buildings, houses or spaces. From this foundational aspect, the JLV as a dwelling, will become the heart of the community, it will become the stage which hosts the ‘playwritten’ lives of the community.

Oliver distinguishes between house and dwelling by noting that “all houses are dwellings; but all dwellings are not houses. To dwell is to make ones abode: to live in, or at, or on, or about a place”, where “dwelling as the activity of living and residing, and dwelling as the place or built form which is the focus of residence- which encompasses its manifold cultural and material aspects” (2003:015).

Simply put, there are buildings that people live in, but would not consider their home. An example of this is with the rural-urban migration of young people to find jobs. For the specific BaNtwane community, this working class generation may live and work in Pretoria or Johannesburg during the week, but on weekends they come home to their families.

This discrimination between house and home (dwelling), is definitely noticeable by the different spatial forms, barriers and enclosures denoting special places for inter-personal encounters that, by-and-large, are void in most ‘western/developed’ societies. These spatial barriers will be covered in more detail in the following section, ‘BaNtwane’, as we uncover their significance and meaning in the lives of the community.

BaNtwane

This section of ‘Covered in Dust’ is broken into two parts. The first part deciphers specific spatial coding systems of the rural community, such as: ‘The Kgogo’, ‘The Household’, ‘The Lapa’, ‘Land Acquisition’, ‘The Local Building Industry and finally, ‘The Transportation System’. The second part describes parts of the intangible cultural aspects of the BaNtwane community such as: ‘Community Leadership’, ‘The Royal Families’, ‘Inter-cultural Relationships’ and finally, ‘The Ancestors’.

This will inevitably produce a holistic understanding of the BaNtwane community thus allowing architecture’s contribution to rural development to be positive. This positive contribution will, if viewed through the eyes of an archeologist, describe characteristics and specifically the spatial codes and social life of the BaNtwane, thus being a true representation thereof (Bell 2004:177).
In Architect Demetri Porphyrios’ commentary of the vernacular and the study thereof he argues that “vernacular has nothing to do with stylistics. It rather points to the universal ethos of constructing shelter under the scarcity of materials and operative construction techniques” he wrote, arguing that the essential meaning of the vernacular referred to ‘straightforward construction, to the rudimentary building of shelter, an activity that exhibits reason, efficiency, economy, durability and pleasure.’ “Oliver, however, criticises this definition for its exclusion of culture from the discipline (Porphyrios cited in Oliver, 2003:013). Here we realise that both realms deserve exploration in the journey of discovering what it truly means to learn from the vernacular.

The kgoro

The royal horseshoe - the Moshate (fig. 55.1, & fig. 149.1 & fig. 151.1 in appendix A.2.1 & A.2.2, pg. 149 & 151 respectively) exemplifies the structural manifestation of the social hierarchy present within the built form of the BaNtwane.

When the community first arrived and settled in Ntwane, the community began with the original Kgoshi (chief) Mathebe’s house in the centre, and his eleven wives on either side, that is five wives on each side, with the main wife remaining in the main house (fig. 55.2). To the left is the first of three arms of growth, the Mathebes of Motsoni, and to the right, the second arm, the Mathebes of Mpubeame, which constituted the origins of the horseshoe shape. The final arm shows the linear growth directly backward (to be discussed) from the original Kgoshi house and constituted the final arm of the Mathebe’s, that is, the Mathabes of Mathebe (fig. 149.1 & fig. 151.1 in appendix A.2.1 & A.2.2, pg. 149 & 151 respectively).

Kgоро, which means ‘place of meeting’, is a space enclosed by some built form or another in which people can meet. At the largest scale is the Moshate kgoro (space enclosed by houses) and then within the Moshate kgoro there are smaller kgoros (annotated on fig. 149.1 in appendix A.2.1, pg. 149), which are spaces enclosed by a low lying stone wall for each of the individual royal families. Inside the kgoro there are also other important cultural spaces such as the ancestral and cattle kraal. This enclosed space not only exists in the Moshate, but also smaller with the families on the periphery (fig. 55.3).

Another important element within the Moshate, is a shading structure under which people can gather and have meetings outside (fig. 55.4). This structure is sometimes referred to as a lekgotla.

The family kgoro, of which there are three in the Moshate kgoro, all have their open side facing the Chief and head of the family (fig. 55.4). If the Chief had an important issue to discuss with the community, he would first call a meeting in his family kgoro, where all the other family representatives would come together. Thereafter the issue would either be taken back to each of the families and addressed in their respective kgoros or the entire community would return to the Kgoshi’s kgoro, where he would address the matter. It is in these social spaces “that different sections of the society (and not just the socially privileged) should be able to be active in the decisions regarding what to preserve and what to let go” (Sen 1999:242), in regarding memory from the ‘Stargazing’ chapter as discussed earlier.

The main kgoro is also used during the initiation ceremonies of the young boys and girls (kgoma) of the community. The boys’ passage is a process whereby the men of the community teach and discipline a young boy of the community about the ways of becoming a man. Kgoma for the boys used to take a period of three months, two of which were spent in the mountain and thereafter moved into the family kgoro for a period of one week, and then two weeks in the royal kraal (indicated on figs. 149.1 & fig. 151.1 in appendix A.2.1 & A.2.2, pg. 149 & 151 respectively). Today, because of school terms and marketing, the time for kgoma is less, with the boys only spending one month in the mountain, and five days in the family kgoro and thereafter moving to the royal kraal for ten days.

The woman’s place of initiation (fig. 149.1 & fig. 151.1 in appendix A.2.1 & A.2.2, pg. 149 & 151 respectively) is a space within the kgoro that is completely forbidden to all men of the community. After the initiation ceremony is complete, the boys and girls return to their respective family’s home as men and women.

The household

The arrangement and growth of the houses is especially significant in the BaNtwane culture, and can be most clearly understood in analysing the houses in the Moshate. The houses on the inner edge of the Moshate kgoro would be the first generation homes, those homes of the original families that settled in the area in 1902, with subsequent buildings growing linearly away from the centre of the kgoro, and main house thereafter (fig. 55.5 & indicated in figs. 149.1 & fig. 151.1 in appendix A.2.1 & A.2.2, pg. 149 & 151 respectively).

The progressive backward development of individual households happens when the eldest son gets engaged, which then puts into motion the building process of his house for his new family, with its own ‘bi-lobial’ configuration, usually connected to the main house (fig. 55.6 & fig. 57.1). The second eldest son upon engagement would then move out to the right of his elder brother, and so on within this generation. As each family grew more rooms could be added onto the main house for the young children or a separate building onto the lapa, as is the case with older kitchen arrangements (indicated on fig. 55.6).
fig. 55.1. View of the Moshate looking Southwards towards Tabakhubedu in the distance.
Photograph taken on a hill behind the Kgoshi’s house in on the 25th April 2009 (refer to fig 50.1 in appendix A.2, pg. 50 for exact location). Annotated by author.

fig. 55.2. Schematic diagram showing the initial housing layout when the first Kgoshi of the BaNtwane arrived in Ntwane.
By author.

fig. 55.3. Aerial photograph of the smaller family kgoros with cattle kraals (red). Located on the Western periphery of the Moshate.
Image by Google Earth, annotated by author.

fig. 55.4. The Mathebe family kgoro with the open side facing the Kgoshis house.
Photograph taken in the Moshate kgoro on the 25th of April 2009.

fig. 55.5. Schematic representation of the linear family progression backwards, away from the main house.
Sketch by Kgoshi Chackie Mathebe on the 3rd of April 2009, annotated by author.

fig. 55.6. Sketch showing initial family progression with main house and first born’s directly behind and cook-house (indicated by red dot) in front corner. This household typology is most evident used in the Moshate.
Sketch by author on the 6th of April 2009.
When this new generation has sons and they are of the age to get married they then move backward in similar fashion (fig. 57.1). This continues with all the sons of the household, except the youngest son who remains in the original house to care for his parents.

This linear progression applies with all the brothers and their children, which gives the community the unique self-sustaining family household typology.

The household of Kalane Benson Mathebe, which will be investigated further in ‘Architectural Flair’, reveals a flaw to this linear progression, as in his case there was already an established household to the right of the family, therefore they could not grow backward and to the right.

If there is a young unmarried woman with children that still lives with her parents, she will be relocated to a household within the community of a married couple who have no children, a process which can be likened to adoption. This is done to keep the childless adults alive within the social map of the community, especially concerning the house itself (a self-sustaining family lineage).

The young lady will be ‘adopted’ into the family with all the necessary contributions following, such as cattle and money. The young lady together with her children will receive new first names and family names as given by the ‘adoptive’ parents. At this time the traditional leaders, together with the new family, would cook a traditional beer in order to inform the ancestors of the new family. This is followed by a mini-ceremony where a goat is slaughtered and a drainage channel to outside the lapa, usually to a fruit tree of sorts. The lapa floor is treated with boloko (wet cow dung), so that there is no dust, as would be the case if it were just left as dirt (fig. 59.1).

Protruding out of the front lapa, is a crafted platform (fig. 57.4 & 59.2) which is the first sign that you are entering a home as well as the first level of progressive privatization of space.

At a more international and general scale, Oliver notices how “numerous dwellings have porches, verandas and upper-storey balconies, which make spatial connections with the world outside while preserving their functional purposes as extensions of the domestic living space.” He suggests that “how societies regard the relationship of internal to external space is often a measure of the importance they place on privacy”. Furthermore, he deduces that “whatever the organisation and utilisation of its internal and external spaces may be, it embodies the values of the group to which it belongs” (2003:167).

During the period of research I experienced the value that this community places on privacy. However, this privacy was not in a secretive sense, but more in a respectful sense in that only in certain instances did I earn the right to be invited beyond the public realm and into the family realm indoors.

Figure 59.2 shows a typical house with ‘bi-lobial’ configuration with additional rooms added onto the lapa such as additional bedrooms, and a fire-house (indicated) for when cooking outside is not possible due to frequent rainstorms. The second lapa (mafuri) at the back of the house is used for more private functions, such as washing and private cooking.

These attributes of the ‘bi-lobial’ arrangements of the houses are slowly working their way out of the social fabric of the community as families move in the direction of modernizing their houses. Where families can afford a TV, the significance of the lapa as a gathering space loses all importance as the TV now
fig. 57.1. One single family household expressing linear progression backward. Main house (red), eldest son (blue), second eldest son (green), third eldest son (yellow) with additional rooms (red dot). Sketch by author on the 24th of April 2009.

fig. 57.2. Low seat securing the lapa wall. Photograph taken at David Mohlamonyane’s household on the 3rd of April 2009.

fig. 57.3. Front public lapa. Photograph taken at the Monageng household by student Pieter Crous, on the 18th of November 2008.

fig. 57.4. Beautiful carved sebésô in the lapa floor. The four corners are to hold the four main logs. Drainage to the outside of the lapa through the carved duct. Photograph taken in Tabakhubedu, Limpopo SA, on the 1st of April 2009.

fig. 57.4. Interlinked lapas of different houses within one household complex. Photograph taken at David Mohlamonyane’s household on the 3rd of April 2009.
becomes the new ‘socialising’ space.

The kitchen’s evolution through families being able to afford stoves, has also moved the activity of cooking indoors, causing the beautiful carved cooking areas in the lapa to become redundant.

The acquisition of land

The process of acquiring land in Ntwane is often quite an involved procedure. As an interested builder, you would typically apply for land from the foreman, whereupon he goes to the Headman who goes to the lekgotla laKgoshi (court of the Chief, explained in further detail later on in this chapter) and someone from the lekgotla laKgoshi will then go to a site and point out the boundaries within which one can build. On the surface it appears to be a very simple process, but can become complex in this context.

There are two different types of land. The first being ‘Trust Land’, which is land previously confiscated by the Apartheid regime, and has since been reclaimed and returned to the indigenous people. There are no deeds for this land, the lekgotla laKgoshi allocates a plot on which to build a house or business and thereafter the building can be sold, but not the land. The other type of property is ‘General Land’ which is bought by the community, paid for in cattle, and thereafter property of the community. This was previously certified under the P.T.O. (permission to occupy) principle. However they are trying to move away from this kind of land ownership to a proper ownership because having land ownership based on verbal contracts can hinder progress in terms of investors needing security that the property is in the ownership of their clients.

The micro-building industry

The construction industry in Moutse is currently the only vibrant and prosperous industry in this rural community, with builders getting paid weekly by their contractual employers.

The contractor is only responsible for the labour while all building materials are brought to the site by separate contractors who are sought out by the client. The client in this context could vary from a simple home owner to a school principal to the lekgotla laKgoshi. The client is also responsible for sourcing his/ her own door and window frames, toilet fixtures etc.

The actual building process is very different from that in urban centres both in terms of materials used and procedures. The concrete floor is mixed on site, with a shovel (as there are no resources for mechanized mixing machines) and carried by wheelbarrow into the appropriate space. The bricks can be made on site with a brick-mould and a mixture of river-sand and cement (fig. 61.1 & 61.2), or they can be bought from a local supplier. If the bricks are not purchased from a supplier and rather made on site with the soil from the site, one can expect to find either a sandy clay soil or dark clay soil. The bricks are left to dry in the sun, and each day for three days water is poured into the trough within the brick to strengthen it (fig. 59.3).

The bricks are three times larger than ordinary bricks, which makes them more difficult and labour intensive to work with. Also, because of the brick sizes, the houses are built with a single skin for external as well as internal walls.

There are a number of private building material contractors who make bricks away from site and then deliver, such as Philip Madisa, owner of Motlakho Tuck-shop for 15 years. He supplies cement, gum poles and bricks, and is located on the main road to Elandsdoring, which is approximately 5km from the site for the Jubilee Life Centre. Other smaller local building material suppliers are Moraqkgwate Hardware and Pomolang Trading Store, also on the main road to Elandsdoring.

The main building supplier for the Moutse region is Cashbuild in Elandsdoring, in the Shoprite Complex, 11km from the Jubilee Life Centre site. They make free deliveries, but they could take a while as they first wait for the lorry to be full before they make deliveries.

Bushveld Hardware is about 50m down the road from Cashbuild, but they have a very limited stock (just cement and brick-moulds) and seem to have become redundant since the building of Cashbuild. The predominantly used brick-mould is bought from either Bushveld Hardware or Build-It in Groblersdal.

In an attempt to understand Cashbuild’s impact on the building industry, I spoke with Aubrey Tshwane, the store manager. He explained how Cashbuild are very prominent in the community, as every year they have an ‘Art-at-heart’ community build. Projects include many of the schools in the area who are annually invited to apply for a further building grant for any additions or new buildings.

Contractors who spend up to R60 000/ month at Cashbuild, become V.I.Cs (very important customers) and get discounts on their goods. For smaller contractors or private community members, a discount can be obtained if they manage to find the price to be cheaper anywhere else. In terms of building materials, Cashbuild get sand, bricks, and stone from Groblersdal, but will still be free delivery within 30km of Cashbuild.

Since the 1960’s, construction has moved away from building in mud as it is does not hold up well against rain storms that frequent the area (fig. 59.4).
fig. 59.1. Front lapa with boloko treatment. Photograph taken at Benson Mathebe’s household on the 2nd of March 2009.

fig. 59.2. Typical ‘bi-liobial’ household with additional rooms. Front public lapa (blue) and back private lapa (red), both with carved out cooking spaces. Sketch by author on the 13th of April 2009.

fig. 59.4. All the traditional home in the area are built out of mud, which doesn’t hold up very well in the rain. Photograph taken at the local pastor’s house in Tabakhubedu, Limpopo SA on the 19th of March 2009.
Houses are built with bricks made with river-sand and cement, as mentioned.

The roofs of the homes have also moved away from thatch to the tin roof because of how quickly one can erect a roof. In this move towards modernizing building methods there is still the acknowledgment that thatch is better to use for insulation from the sound of rain that hammers on the tin roof and heat that is generated from the tin roof. Similarly, Anderson argues that “the universal rediscovery of vernacular housing methods has coincided with a growing realisation that modern architectural design in its enthusiasm for innovation has too often ignored the social and environmental disadvantages of high technology” (1977:4).

The transportation system

The move towards modernizing the home can largely be attributed to the availability of transport and roads connecting parts of the community with Moutse Mall locally, and major city centres such as Johannesburg and Pretoria further afield.

Samson Kholobe has been driving his own taxi for 20 years now and was very helpful in the process of garnering information. The taxi industry is the predominant mode of transport for the Moutse region with the primary point of contact being the Moutse Mall complex (fig. 60.4), and fares are within the means of most members of the community. There are typically two types of taxis one can find working in Moutse, the local and the long distance taxi. The local taxis are in a very poor condition (which means they cannot function as long distance commuters) whereas the long distance taxis are the new Iveco mini-buses. The long distance taxis do a long trip definitely once a week, maybe twice a week depending on the season. While there are still a large number of unroadworthy local taxis on the waiting list for a newer model, the only local vehicle accident in a very poor condition (which means they cannot function as long distance commuters) whereas the long distance taxis are the new Iveco mini-buses. The long distance taxis do a long trip definitely once a week, maybe twice a week depending on the season. While there are still a large number of unroadworthy local taxis on the waiting list for a newer model, the only local vehicle accident in 2007.

If you were a visitor from Johannesburg, for example, a taxi could bring you to Elandsdoring (Moutse Mall), where you would get on a local taxi to take you to whichever region was your destination. If you were a visitor from Pretoria, you would first get dropped nearby at Moteti, then get a local taxi to Elandsdoring, and then another local taxi would take you to your destination.

There are two stops on the main road between Ntwane and the Moutse Mall, and then one stop at Ntwane and again at Tabakhubedu. While the taxi will deliver you to your door, you would need to walk back to the main road in order to catch a taxi to get back to Moutse Mall.

The only bus to Johannesburg travels on a Sunday from Elandsdoring to Benoni, otherwise the buses all serve Pretoria and travel to Philadelphia and Tabakhubedu.

Community leadership

From a cultural perspective, the BaNtwane community is a rural community not unlike many of South Africa’s other indigenous communities in that they are self-governing. Heading the governance of the BaNtwane people is the ‘Kgoshi’ (chief), with his brotherly body of advisors called the Senior Traditional Members who are also members of the lekgotla laKgoshi (court of the chief) who oversee the Traditional Council (fig. 60.5).

The Kgoshi remains in office until death, whereupon the eldest son of the QueenMother takes the throne. The QueenMother is chosen from another royal house of a different community and the community of the Kgoshi pays the labola: in a sense the community itself marries her.

The eldest son, or heir to the throne, is born for one specific purpose; to lead the BaNtwane community. If the heir is too young when his father dies, an acting Kgoshi, who will usually be an uncle of the QueenMother herself, will lead the community until the heir is old enough to rule. The only other way a Kgoshi’s reign would be terminated is upon the return of Jesus Christ.

If the Kgoshi is unable to attend a meeting or official ceremony, he would send one of the Senior Traditional members as a representative. This representative would then be called Kgoshi-name. For example, Kgoshi Chakie Mathebe is currently representing Kgoshi Mohlamme Mathebe III who is not available to handle community concerns.

The Senior Traditional Members, who are each a representative of the nine royal families in the area, meet in an informal room (fig. 60.6) in one of the houses in the Moshate. This is due to their formal offices being burned down on 20th September 2005 by the members of the community during the riots regarding the rezoning of Moutse into Limpopo from Mpumalanga.

The members of The Senior Traditional body can also be members of its subordinates, that is the lekgotla laKgoshi and the Traditional Council. The lekgotla laKgoshi meet with the Kgoshi in the kgoro to address the public regarding community concerns. They decide on the ultimate public opinion and validate the decision of the general consensus. If the community rejects any proposal, it is this body that would settle disputes through negotiations. The Traditional Council is responsible for all administration of the Traditional leadership structure.

Within the broader community, that is, areas within Moutse such as Tabakhubedu and Elandsdoring, there are different Headmen for different areas,
fig. 61.1. A building site where Jeffrey, a local building (appendix B.1.9, pg. 152) is working, with finished, stacked bricks that have been made on site. Photograph taken in Elandsdoring, Limpopo SA on the 3rd of April 2009.

fig. 61.2. Local builder using the brick-mold to make bricks from riversand, cement and water. Bricks are left to dry in the sun for approximately one week. Photograph taken at the Motlakho Tuck-shop on the 3rd of April 2009.

fig. 61.3. For three days after the bricks have been moulded, water is added into the trough to increase strength. Photograph taken at the Motlakho Tuck-shop on the 3rd of April 2009.

fig. 61.4. Initial taxi destination at the Moutse Mall. Photograph taken at the Moutse Mall Complex in Elandsdoring, Limpopo SA on the 1st of April 2009.

fig. 61.5. Depiction of the BaNtwane governance system. By author.

fig. 61.6. Temporary offices of the Senior Traditional Leaders, until the proper offices are complete. Photograph taken at the Moshate on the 25th of April 2009.
each with his own committee. Community resolution would happen at the Head-
man level first for minor altercations and thereafter it can be taken to the lekgotla
laKgoshi. This having been said, there are still local government councillors for
each area and if there is a problem that needs resolution and a community
approaches the councillor, he or she more often than not would take the issue to
the lekgotla laKgoshi, and not local government.

The Senior Traditional Members have a very good relationship with SAPS,
who only ever come into the community for sporadic checks, whereupon they
report to the Kgoshi and sign a register that everything is in order. Other than
this weekly visit, the police stay in Elandsdoring, unless there is a more serious
crime committed in the area.

The royal families

Other than the traditional governing system, there is a certain traditional hierar-
chy in the community based on birthright. As mentioned, within the Moshate are
the three highest families: the Mathebe Family, then in succession, the Math-
abathes and the Makittas (figs. 149.1 & fig. 151.1 in appendix A.2.1 & A.2.2, pg.
149 & 151 respectively). The other important families located near the Moshate,
are the Monagengs and the Maropas. Directly next to the Moshate are the next
two families in succession, the Mohlamonyanes and the Ditsegos. Thereafter to
the west of Ntwane the family name becomes insignificant in relation to the hier-
archy. However there are families within the unstructured matrix of households
that are related to the families listed here.

This has occurred in the case of an oldest son living in the Moshate needing to
move out, but due to spatial restrictions or someone occupying the house
directly behind his father, he moves out of the greater arrangement altogether.
If there is an important ceremony, the displaced family member would go to the
respective family kgoro in the Moshate 

According to Mrs. Monageng, the story behind the royal lineage, is that the
original family was the Mathebe family, and the mother of that family gave birth
to the four highest family names. So the top three families (Moshate) one could
say are of blood relation to one another. This seems like folklore rather than the
truth compared to Kgoshi Chakie Mathebe’s reasoning. All the families were
originally one name (Mathebe) and, as the family expanded, they changed their
family names to be able to identify one another. The Monageng family is not
a part of this original bloodline but is included in the royalty as their ancestors
were related to the then King of Botswana.

Polygamy is a social norm in this community, and is often expressed in the built
form of one house for the husband and many houses to his left and right for his
wives. The Kgoshi can have as many wives as he wishes. However it is only
through the wife chosen by the Senior Traditional Members, the Queen Mother,
that an heir to the throne is provided.

The intercultural relationships

At the time when the lapa was well utilized and houses were built in the rondawel
fashion, each house had a single small door through which one entered
the house. This was a defensive mechanism which forced any intruder to
bow his head upon entry into the hut, which gave the inhabitants the opportunity
to kill the intruder (fig. 63.1 & 63.2).
The kgoro system, as well as the low-lying door, were both defensive strategies,
but since the 1950’s there has been peace and no more tribal wars.
The rondawel with its small door has been abandoned for a four-corner mod-
erized house, which is made of bricks and a tin roof, constructed by builders in
the community and no longer the mothers. The kgoro shape still prevails, as this
space still functions as an important meeting place for the community.

The peace has come upon the community through it becoming more “civilized"
and through integrating external families by extension and bond through mar-
rriages, which was according to Kgoshi Chakie Mathebe, “an intelligent African
decision”.

The ancestors

Ancestral worship is a major part of the culture of this community, but not with
all its residents as there are many church-goers in the area as well. That having
been said, the predominant church denomination in this community is the Zion-
ist church which practices both ancestral worship and worship of Jesus Christ.
They generally meet in the open, normally near a tree.

The place of the Ancestors is located in the cattle kraal; which is at the centre
of the kgoro (indicated on figs. 149.1 & fig. 151.1 in appendix A.2.1 & A.2.2,
pg. 149 & 151 respectively. It is not only with the Moshate kgoro that this is the
case: all kgoros, no matter the size or influence of the family have kraals in
the middle where the ancestors lie, and the cattle are kept (fig. 63.3 & fig. 63.4).
The kraals and property are generally fenced in wood as a metal fence is con-
sidered more ‘western’. It also simply has to do with availability of materials: if
a fence needs to be built, the family would cut down a nearby tree, and make a
fence instead of having to pay money for a metal fence.
fig. 63.1. Low entrance to one of the older houses in the Moshate (approximately 60 years old). The door was kept low as a defensive mechanism. Photograph taken at the Moshate on the 24th of April 2009.

fig. 63.2. Sketch showing the scale of the entrance to some of the older buildings in the Moshate. Sketch by author on the 25th of April 2009.

fig. 63.1. A cow inside the cattle kraal/kgoro of a smaller family household. Also used as a burial site for the ancestors. Photograph taken at the Monageng household on the 24th of April 2009.

fig. 52.3. The royal ancestral kraal, used as a burial for the ancestors, to keep cattle, and during the kgoma ceremony. Photograph taken in the Moshate kgoro on the 13th of March 2009.
In some cases there is a smaller kraal next to the main one to keep the goats and sheep, but this will never hold the remains of the ancestors, as goats and sheep are not nearly as highly valued as cattle. The coexistence of cattle and ancestors in the same space is indicative of how highly both these elements are valued within the BaNtwane community.

If there has been an unnatural death in the family, such as a murder or car accident, the individual will not be buried in the ancestral kraal, but rather buried in a grave located outside the main kraal. In contemporary times however, there has been a move to burying the dead in mass graveyards, as the number of people that can be accommodated in a kraal is restricted by the space in the kraal.

The heritage

To the north-west of the Kgoshi’s house in the mountains is one of the afore-mentioned ancestral heritage sites of the community.

The cave is believed to have been the hiding place for the woman and children and livestock during the fighting (“colonizers, anglo-boer and black-on-black” according to Kgoshi Chakie Mathebe) in times past (fig. 65.1 & fig. 65.2). There were utensils, and fireplaces once believed to have been used by the Ancestors. It is still believed that today the cave is used by the ancestors as one can smell cooked porridge from time to time and there are often fresh ashes from a fire.

The Department for Arts and Culture has been approached by the community leaders to make this into an official heritage site to protect the cave and also so that the community can benefit from tourism.

It is an impressive cave with a very large opening. When the community comes to the cave they approach reverently, dressed in the best traditional clothing they own. Everything in me wanted to explore the rest of the cave, but my companion would not allow it saying it was too dangerous and he would need to go with me, which he was not willing to do.

The rock at the entrance of the cave is red in colour and in the past it used to be taken back to the town and crushed to be used as a floor polish. The women also used to put the powdered rock in their hair and they called it tlopo (fig. 65.3). However they have since modernized and are ‘net soos wit mense’, as my companion so eloquently put it, and subsequently they have disregarded this practice. It was also known to have been used as blush and sun protection by the woman as well.

By uncovering of the different social systems and their meanings, the design for the JLV will be able to incorporate the appropriate elements into its design so that the space is not an estranged foreign environment, but rather one that feels comfortably part of the vernacular. The main elements are: the kgoro, the lapa, the lekgotla, the sebēšō, and the celebration of entry, which will help define the spaces in the JLV. The household will assist in explaining the phased approach of the design to the community. Having an understanding of the local building industry will assist in the procurement of materials while the understanding the transportation system will be crucial in informing the process of arrival and thus the celebration of entry.

Architectural Flair

The vernacular architecture for the Moutse region is culturally rich in its signature lapa flair and it has been a joy in uncovering the social systems that underlie its use, as well as other systems that are foundational in this community.

Author Jean-Loius Bourgeois defines vernacular as “local, folk, or popular architecture. Vernacular is now seen as an ideal of purity: architecture in practical, spiritual harmony with its site and society” (2002:023). The study of the vernacular and its significance in this thesis on architecture’s contribution to positive rural development is validated through seeing how Architect Hassan Fathy believed that the “result of the human-environment interaction constitutes culture and has led to the development of a multitude of cultures by different people in different environments. Vernacular architecture is one of the most concrete manifestations of this interaction” (1986:69).

All of these manifestations have presented themselves through the local precedent of vernacular, and shall be emphasized, and further explored at a more intimate level in the ever-enticing architectural flair of individual households (compared to the international influence as discussed in ‘Precedent’ in the ‘Stargazing’ chapter).

The use of the word households in this thesis, considers the entire site including all the building on the site as well as cattle-kraals and other culturally specific buildings that constitute the entire home, as discussed earlier.

This section consists of five different examples of homes in which we learn about the role of architecture in defining and explaining social norms, as well as the different spatial codes governing the current built environment (locations of...
fig. 65.1. The opening of the heritage cave, situated near the top of a nearby mountain. Photograph taken 2km North-east of the Moshate on the 2nd of April 2009.

fig. 65.2. Inside the ancestral cave. The community don’t allow any children or youth to go down the cave for safety reasons. Photograph taken near the entrance of the cave on the 2nd of April 2009.

fig. 65.3. Tlopo, hair conditioning. Photograph taken at David Mohlamonyane’s household on the 31st of March 2009.

fig. 65.4. Vernacular celebration of entry. Main ceremonial courtyard entrance of David Mohlamonyane’s household. Photograph taken on the 13th of March 2009.
different households indicated on fig. 148.8 in appendix A.1, pg.148. The first households are those of Piet Monageng, David Mohlamonyane, Benson Mathibe and Kenneth Mathebe. The final exploration of space in the built form is that of the local Baptist church. Oliver notices how “the phrase ‘what can we learn from the vernacular’ or its equivalent, seemed to imply humility and respect” (2003: 011) and it is in this spirit that the research for this section of ‘Covered in Dust’ has been conducted.

The homes elected are all examples of the different spatial forms and enclosures as discovered in ‘BaNtswane’, and help to define their significance and meaning in considering such forms in the design of the Jubilee Life Village (JLV)

All households and the church are located in the unstructured matrix of Ntswane, Limpopo SA, unless otherwise stated. All photographs and sketches accompanying the households were produced during March and April 2009.

The Piet Monageng household (appendix B.1.10, pg. 153)

The current piece of land where the Monageng family resides has three different houses on it (fig. 66.1). The first, was the house in which Mr. Monageng grew up and which today is home to his 90+ year old mother. When he got engaged to Mrs. Monageng he built the second house. This house has undergone significant transformations over the years (fig. 66.2 & distilled in fig. 66.3). It started out as a two room house (kitchen & living, and a bedroom). When the family began to grow and they had their first child they divided the kitchen in to two and made an extra bedroom, and built a living room. As the family grew, they added two extra bedrooms on and converted the one bedroom into the kitchen. At this juncture there was a terrible wind storm that blew the house down leaving only the two most recently added rooms. They built the house as it was once again, this time adding a living room on, the lapas, and the garage. In both construction phases, the entire house was built out of mud which was shuttered and compacted. Traditionally the woman build the walls with the mud, and the men take over to build the roof.

The family then decided they wanted to build a brick house for their children so they built the third house, which is their current house with no plans. Mrs. Monageng describes the building process as, first they drew in the sand, and when the foundation were dug, they decided if the rooms were too small and altered the sizes of the rooms. The intention was that they would, upon completion of this house, demolish the second house to build a double story for Mr. and Mrs Monageng. But now the situation stands that the children are in Pretoria, and they have run out of money to build their double story house. Mr. Monageng insisted at the time of the interview, though, that this plan will still happen.

There is one other house within the fence of this property, and this house belongs to Mr. Monageng’s brother, who has children and grandchildren who often come to the ‘mission house’ to play with lekgowa (white man).

The second generation house, which is my home during the visits to the community, enables me to experience the privacy gradient of the lapas. The front lapa is used when the children come to play, and when I go to the private lapa at the back, the children do not follow as this a space not used for playing (fig. 67.1 & 67.2).
fig. 67.1. The front public *lapa* with *sebéêsôs* (firepits), of the second generation home of the Monageng household, with the third generation home built out of bricks (left) in the distance.

fig. 67.2. The rear of the second generation home on the Monageng household with private *lapa*. 
The David Mohlamonyane household (appendix B.1.11, pg. 153)

I consider the Mohlamonyane household to be an excellent case study in vernacular architecture in terms of its lapas and the complexity of the arrangement of buildings. The complexity was due to it being a traditional healer’s household, where he both practiced and taught. The complex is located next to the main road in Ntwane.

Upon arrival, I was told to wait outside of the lapa outside David’s house and that someone would come to greet us shortly. One of the students of Doctor David ‘Kwena’ (which means crocodile) came out to greet us, and bowed very low, and held his hands together (this is the appropriate cultural greeting and is a sign of respect for the person you are greeting). Once greetings where exchanged we were invited into the main house. This was the first very distinct exposure to the privacy gradient created by the lapas of the houses. Frescura describes the process as follows: “The visitor approaching a household space made loud noises, clicking sounds with his tongue or clapped his hands to attract attention. Once on the edge of the first territorial statements, the gates or a bushwood fence or even a slightly stepped-up shelf, he paused and awaited to be asked in. In some cases entry was accompanied by praise-words or the hands being clapped lightly as thanks for the visitor. Once inside the visitor was offered a seat according to his adjudged status, the higher the seat, the higher the status. The offer of a drink of beer was also received with praise words and the light clap of hands. A small libation to the ancestral spirits was often poured to the ground before the first sip was taken. When departing the visitor paid his respects to the head of the household and then left.” (1981:163)

The house complex is known and referred to as David’s household, which is peculiarly not referred to as David’s father’s house. However, it was explained that when the first son moves out into his own house for his own family, the entire responsibility of the family becomes that of the eldest son. Another reason was because David’s father had passed away and therefore responsibility fell onto David.

The house complex (fig. 69.1) grew, as is the nature of houses in the area, from the original house (indicated as ‘mom and dad’ in fig. 69.1). The original home is David’s mother’s and his sister’s, and their children. David’s house is to the right of the original house and here forth, referred to as the main house with his first wife’s house to the right of his house.

The separate houses are because David’s mother and the Makoti (wife) cannot use the same house, solely for the sake of privacy. Behind the first wife’s house are the children of that wife.

Directly behind the main house is the only circular building on the premises; the surgery (fig. 69.2 & indicated on fig. 69.1), which is wonderfully fragrant from all the different spices inside for treatment of different ailments. There is no spiritual significance to the surgery being a circle, but the use of thatch for the surgery is significant in that the ancestors would not approve a tin roof.

Directly behind the original house are the learners’ rooms, as well as their kitchen. The students studying under David are all referred to as his “children”, even though there may be a 70-year-old woman being taught by a man in his early 30’s. Not only are the students referred to as David’s “children” but they also refer to David’s mother as their mother.

Each of the houses has its own lapa which vary in size and are interlinked with one another. The lapas are treated with boloko, which is a mixture of manure and water polish applied every week to the floors of the lapas, to keep the floor from cracking (fig. 69.3). The original house has the biggest lapa which is used for all ceremonies, and celebrations.

As mentioned earlier, on arrival at the house, any visitor would speak to one of the Doctor’s students first, and then they would go and speak to David. This social privacy gradient is further emphasized by the arrangement of lapas and their function in separating space. As much as there are lapas behind the individual houses (all intricately interlinked), there is no lapa behind the entire complex as would be expected, but rather the leshaka which is the place for the livestock, and is merely an open field.

The children and learners do not have a privatized outdoor space for washing and cooking which indicates the lack of independence and emphasizes the lifestyle of living as a community within the complex.

The entire complex was intuitively designed by David by hand in the dirt of the ground. David’s father was from Matshipe, which is very close to the kwaNdebele culture, from which the lapa culture is very well documented (‘Pride of the Ndebele’, by Peter Rich and “M’Pogga”, by Betty Spence) However, “the major difference”, according to Frescura “can be said to exist between the Tswana and the Ndebele ‘bi-lobial’ is that while the former sets out to define a territorial statement, the latter clearly sets out to impress” (1981:26).
fig. 69.1. Mohlamonyane household, showing David’s parent’s house, David’s house, David’s wife’s house, David’s child’s house, the ‘surgery’, and the learner’s rooms. Kgoro also shown with fire in the centre. Sketch by Max Mohlamonyane on the 6th of April 2009.

fig. 69.2. The only circular building on the Kwena’s property - the surgery.

fig. 69.3. Boloko treatment of the courtyard floors.

fig. 69.4. The realm of the man: the kgoro.
In terms of food preparation for a celebration, a cow would be slaughtered by a professional in the *leshaka*, from where the raw liver would be taken directly to the elderly men sitting in the *kgoro*, where they would proceed to cook it on the open flame. The liver is taken directly to the men so they can have the first taste of the cow. The rest of the food would be prepared in the kitchen by David’s sisters and their female friends. The *mogodu* (insides) of the cow would be cooked and brought out to the men where they would eat it in the *kgoro*.

The students practice their traditional ceremonies (which involves dancing, and singing to the rhythm of the *djembe* or African drum) in the evenings, twice a week in the *lapa* between the surgery, the original house and the learners rooms. The older woman (not those studying under David) sat behind the dancers (seen in the background in fig. 71.1), beating the drums. The dancers (all in their traditional clothing) stood in a line and sang and moved to the rhythm of the drums (fig. 71.1). The dancing is not very intricate and complex, more repetitively significant.

On the shins of the students are ‘noise-makers’ made from hundreds of worm cocoons filled with tiny stones all tied together (fig. 71.2). During an actual ceremony, David wears the skin of an animal over his shoulders (fig. 71.3), and a cap also made from an animal.

A muddy, cement mix is usually applied to the female *songomas* hair and is called *tlopo*. As one reads from the note of the heritage cage, this *tlopo* was once made from the rock from the cave itself.

This household provides is an example of what the architectural forms and relationships of buildings are within a complex of diverse functions. Its use of *lapas* for privacy, celebrations, and socialising is very inspiring for the design of the JLV.
fig. 71.1. Traditional healers practicing their ceremonial dancing.

fig. 71.2. ‘Noise-makers’ tied around the ankles of the dancers. The older woman can be seen in the background beating the drums.

fig. 71.3. ‘Kwena’ in his traditional healer’s wear.

fig. 71.4. David ‘Kwena’ Mohlamonyane and author after ceremonial dance practice. Photograph taken on the 31st of March 2009.
The Benson Mathebe household (appendix B.1.12, pg. 153)

As explained in the linear growth progression of a household, Benson's household is a deviation of the norm, but still represents the principle behind the progression.

The entire household consists of four main homes, with each home having its own smaller buildings.

The eldest brother is directly behind the main house (indicated in fig. 72.1 red, green, and blue respectively), with the second eldest behind him. This backward move (instead of sideways for the second brother) is due to the fact that there was an already an established household to the right of this family, which prevented a sideways move as is explained previously by Kgoshi Chakie Mathebe. The third eldest brother now moved to the left of the second eldest (indicated yellow in fig. 72.1) because there is a road at the back of the house which would prevent any further backward growth. Benson, being the last born of all his brothers, remained in the original house to look after his parents until they passed away (fig. 73.1).

Because the usual progression, as described by Kgoshi Chakie Mathebe, could not be applied here, this progression only works in terms of family growth for one generation. If the eldest brother for instance has a son, that son cannot move out of the house backward because his uncle and his family is in that house. So the eldest son in this new generation now moves out into a completely new site (Tabakhubedu for instance) whose layout is completely random and not clustered and progressive on a Moshate scale.

This household shows the intricate nature of progression within the built form of one family. Since the homes in this community all evolve as time passes, the JLV and its phased design approach should be expected and welcomed by the community.

fig. 72.1. Linear progression of Benson Mathebe's household. Benson is the youngest of his brothers (green), with his eldest directly behind him (red), the next oldest behind the eldest (blue) and finally the third eldest to the left (yellow).
Sketch by author.
fig. 73.1. Benson Mathebe outside his house (the first generation home in the linear progression).

fig. 73.2. Stabilising seat and wall made out of mud in the 3rd generation home of the household. *Boloko* treatment on the floor and protection of the fruit tree against goats.

fig. 73.3. Three ladies cooking at the *sebêsô* in the private *lapa* at the back of the household.

fig. 73.4. Courtyard in-between houses used for storage and vegetable gardens.

fig. 73.5. Crushing stone in the private *lapa* at the back of the household used for grinding corn into ‘*pap*’.

fig. 73.6. Wall made out of mud, which does not perform adequately in the rain.
The Kenneth Mathebe household (appendix B.1.13, pg. 153)

This household is located in the unstructured matrix of Tabakhubedu, Limpopo SA., directly across the road from the site for the Jubilee Life Village. All photographs and sketches were taken and produced respectively on the property on the 1st of April 2009, unless otherwise stated.

This particular household was chosen for its signature *lapa* arrangement (fig. 74.1), and its proximity to the site for the Jubilee Life Village (fig. 74.2).

The first house (indicated in fig. 75.1) was built in 1983 out of mud and is currently home to the youngest boy and his two younger sisters, who share a bedroom with their grandmother. One of the rooms is also used as a storeroom/shop where the mother’s handmade dresses are kept to sell.

The second house to be built was to the left of the first house, and belongs to the mother (indicated in fig. 75.1). It is built out of bricks, and has a thatched roof. The roof makes it thermally more comfortable to live in as well as negating the noise of rain on a tin roof. The third house (indicated in fig. 75.1) that was built is home to Kenneth and his pregnant sister and is made out of brick.

The family has plans to demolish the first house and extend the third house to the second house, the only problem being lack of finances. The extra rooms were added so that each child has his/her own space to live. The family have their own vegetable garden, with mielies, beans, nuts, and melons.

This household shows again how the homes in this community have evolved as the need arises. The JLV’s phased construction has been defined by the urgency of the different functions and will be elaborated on in ‘Pêu’.

---

fig. 74.1. Sketch of Kenneth Mathebe’s house. By Kenneth Mathebe, date unknown.

fig. 74.2. Entrance to the household looking East to the site for the Jubilee Life Centre.

fig. 71.3. Three generations of the Mathebe family and author (eldest daughter is pregnant with the fourth generation)
fig. 75.1. Plan of Kenneth Mathebe's household, showing original house (1), main house (2), and third generation house (3). By Kenneth Mathebe, annotated by author.

fig. 75.6. All three generation houses with vegetable garden in the foreground.

fig. 75.3. Public realm with 1st generation home (left with thatch roof) and 2nd generation home (right with tin roof).

fig. 75.5. Main entrance to the public lapa of the household.

fig. 75.4. Private lapa at the back of the house.
The Baptist Church (appendix B.1.14, pg. 153)
This church is located in the unstructured matrix of Ntwane, Limpopo SA. All photographs and sketches were taken and produced respectively on the property on the 31st of March 2009, unless otherwise stated.

The Baptist Church, across the main road from Kwena’s home in Ntwane was analysed to get a better understanding of the culture and functioning of churches in the area. The site of the Church has the old church (fig. 76.1, indicated red on fig. 76.2b) which has now become a crèche for about 98 children between 2-6 years old. Directly next to the crèche is an expansion project for the crèche (fig. 77.1, indicated smaller red dot on fig. 76.2b).

Towards the bottom end of the site is a mission house (indicated blue in fig. 76.2b) for people who don’t have a house, a temporary accommodation for those in need. The mission house is in great need of maintenance, as it is in a very bad condition according to Elsie, who lives in the house with her three children.

On the opposite end of the site are long-drop toilets. One can see the effects of the long-drop on the landscape as one full toilet is taken down, covered up and rebuilt elsewhere (fig. 77.2). For a building complex such as a church with a congregation of 100 people, the amount of ‘waste’ is too much for this site to handle.

The new church building (indicated green in fig. 76.2b, fig. 76.1a & fig. 77.3) is the current church, which seems far too sanitized a space for such a culturally rich community. It is an open hall, with a tin roof with no insulation, which makes going to services in the summer midday understandably unbearable. At the front of the hall is a stage from which sermons are delivered every Sunday (indicated red in fig. 76.2a). To the left of the hall are the adults, in the middle are the youth, and on the far right are the children. Behind the stage are the background functional spaces for the church, that is the kitchen, storeroom and offices (indicated green in fig. 76.2a).

The congregation is made up of about 100 people of which 12 are men and the rest are women, children and youth and they come from as far as Elandsdoring to worship.

Outside the church are some fruit trees (guava, mango, and paw-paw) and an open space which is used for events such as weddings, to share a meal at, and have lunch after church on a Sunday (fig. 77.4 & indicated yellow in fig. 76.2b).
fig. 77.2. After a long-drop has been filled up, the toilet is removed and the hole is covered with whatever can be found. Usually a tree would be planted on the site of a full long-drop. Completely unsustainable waste management system for the volume of children/people using this property.

fig. 77.3. New church building with foreign, imported and inappropriate form placed into this culturally rich rural landscape.

fig. 74.4. Fruit trees outside the church to provide shade during celebrations at the church, as well as for Sundays once the service has concluded.
In conclusion, the homes analysed in ‘Architectural Flair’ have assisted in gaining a better understanding of the social mores that were initially discovered in ‘BaNtwane’.

The Monageng household shows exceptional use and functionality of the lapas for privacy, as well as the use of the sebēsōs in the public lapa. It also reveals how the household and individual homes undergo phased construction.

The household of David Mohlamonyane was analysed for the intricate nature of the many lapas and their different uses. Also, it was selected as it had an interesting collection of buildings with different privacy gradients and individual lapas, which all seemed to exist as one entity.

Benson Mathebe’s home was an example of the linear progression of the homes within a household, with the spaces and lapas connected the different homes together.

The Kenneth Mathebe household, next to the site for the Jubilee Life Village, showed good utilisation of the front public lapa as it opened to the street, as well as revealing again, the progress of the built forms that constitute a household.

Lastly, the Baptist Church near the Mohlamonyane household presented the typical functionings and requirements of a church building, and how a building can be sterile in its implanted foreign forms.
1. My passion for extensive fieldwork was birthed in first year BAS whilst listening to Peter Rich present his research of the Ndebele.

2. For the story describing the generosity of the Monageng family in allowing me to make their home my home see appendix B.1.7, pg. 152.

3. “Acumen Fund is a nonprofit global venture fund that uses entrepreneurial approaches to solve the problems of global poverty.” (www.acumenfund.org)

5. The family reside in the newly completed third generation house.

6. Peter Magubane’s “Africa’s Undiscovered people” covers most of the cultural ceremonies in great detail.

7. Royal family kgoro made up of the Mathebe, Mathabathe and Makitla families, with approximately 270 houses, as recorded by Ace Mathebe.

8. The land purchased for the site of my design intervention is the latter form of land, however nothing on paper can confirm this- the Kgoshi give their word that the property is owned by the church, and should any discrepancies arise- the Kgoshi will intercede on the churches behalf and affirm their ownership of the land.

9. Cost as at 1 April 2009: PTA-Moteti (R40), Moteti-Philadelphia (R7), Philidalia- Elandsdoring (R7), Elandsdoring-Ntwane (R7), Ntwane-Tabakhubedu (R7); JHB-Elandsdoring (R70).

10. “Lobola is an age-old African custom that is as alive today as it was 100 years ago. Both the families of the bride and groom would be scandalized if they did not adhere to this custom. On the surface, Lobola is a complex and very formal process of negotiation between the two families to come to a mutual agreement of the price that the groom has to pay in order to marry the bride. This may seem like a purchase and a sale, but this custom is the very opposite of a commercial transaction. What makes Lobola so important for marriage is that it is based on a process that brings the two families together. Mutual respect and dignity are woven into this process, and the love between the man and woman is expanded to include the immediate and extended families. But, like all traditional customs, it is open to abuse and distortion in the modern world.” (www.essortment.com)

11. Since I find myself staying with the Monageng family, and we’re not in the Royal kgoro, I decided to find out why. When Mr. Monageng was young, him and his family lived and worked on the farms in Vermelen, and upon their return to this area, they decided to live not in the Royal kgoro, but rather in the community.

12. Such is the case with the kraal at the Monageng household. It currently holds, Mr. Monageng’s father, his father’s 2nd wife, his brother and his brother’s wife. There is no more space in the kraal for the entire family, so they have reserved the last spot for Mr. Monageng’s 90+ year old mother, who currently lives in the first generation house on the property.

13. This information was conveyed by the ancestors.

14. Upon my visit to the cave, one of the members of the Traditional Leadership accompanied me so that he could tell the ancestors of my intentions. It was a strange experience because as we were climbing the hill there were two birds that where ‘squawking’, and when my companion spoke to the ancestors, the birds fell silent.

15. Which is the house in which I stay when I am conducting research in the area. It also serves as a base for any missionary teams visiting the area.

16. I ignorantly went to him and tried to shake his hand. He shook his head and explained the appropriate manner in which one should greet in this culture, and that was to bow down on bended knee.

17. It is interesting to note in Max’s drawing of the household, that the kgoro is grossly out of proportion to the rest of the buildings, perhaps unconsciously signifying the respect and importance of the space within this culture.
“Philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways. The time has come to change it.”

Karl Marx
We have arrived at the end of the journey of academically discovering how architecture can enable positive development in rural areas, and now, the opportunity of changing the world as Philosopher, Karl Marx commands on the title page to this chapter begins (Marx cited in Nederveen Pieterse 2001:4).

It is at this point where the question of this thesis has become a certain mandate for the profession, a mandate governed by the need to create a self-sustaining positive developmental progression within the realms of the built environment, so as to enhance the economics, skills and capacities of the community to better empower future generations. Professor Jonathan Crush notes the potential of such an empowered generation as being able to “transform old worlds” and “imagine new ones” (1996:2).

As hopeful and optimistic as the prospect of rural development may seem there is however a certain level of negativity surrounding the discourse of development as researcher and author, Wolfgang Sachs, notes that “delusions and disappointment, failures and crime have been the steady companions of development and they tell a common story: it did not work” (1992:1).

At this point of the journey, such a demoralising statement could potentially derail all hope of positive development. However, Senior lecture in Development Studies, R Kiely would argue that this bold statement somehow “ignores the rise of East Asia and the near doubling of life expectancy in much of the Third World” as having been achieved through development (1999:17). Besides ignoring the advances of entire empires, “what is the point of declaring development a ‘hoax’ without proposing an alternative?” (Norberg-Hodge cited in Nederveen Pieterse 2001:111).

This thesis attempts to provide a road map for architecture to enable positive development in rural areas not merely as a rebuttal against such pessimism, but in true unashamed belief that positive development can happen, and surely must, in the cause for a social justice. “Development”, according to Sen, “requires the removal of major sources of unfreedom: poverty as well as tyranny, poor economic opportunities as well as systematic social deprivation” (1999:3). In so doing, development finds its significance in being carried by social justice (Nederveen Pieterse 2001:3).

The process of uncovering different design principles as pertinent to development of the rural context, as well as their interrelatedness has been covered in ‘Stargazing’. As fundamental guiding design principles, ‘Empowerment’, ‘Community Buy-in’, and ‘Network’ presented themselves as intangible motivations and guides to the process of development in rural areas. Then, ‘Sustainability, ‘Regionalism’ and ‘Architectural Lab’ were introduced as more tangible design initiators. Thereafter ‘Precedent’ provided a quantifiable example of an exercise in community empowerment in rural development. Lastly, ‘Memory’ was presented as the sometimes unconscious prescriber of built form, lifestyle, and tradition.

‘Empowerment’ as a design principle revolved around the empowerment of individuals within the community and increasing their ‘capacity’. Sen writes that “with adequate social opportunities, individuals can effectively shape their own destiny and help each other. They need not be seen as primarily as passive recipients of the benefits of cunning development programs”, but rather in this case, as active participants and contributors to the design and construction process of development (1999:11).

This principle has helped to keep the motivation for the JLV focused on people development. The JLV will empower its immediate community through supporting the local economy by purchasing building materials and crafts for the construction of the buildings. The projects inception will also assist in job creating and skills development and training which will further empower the community members.

With these opportunities on offer, the community will hopefully buy-into the vision for the JLV, and be able to contribute to its construction, operation, and maintenance. ‘Community Buy-in’ uncovered the essential element to the success or failure of a rural development project, that without the support, involvement and participation of the community, any rural development project that is brought in from the outside, will fail. The main elements of the JLV vision that the community needs to own are the enhanced building techniques, as well as the diverse program that was developed in a network relationship with Pastor Mable.

‘Networking’, as discovered can be a powerful force of transformation through mutually beneficial relationships between community members and designers in the rural development realm. In such a relationship, both parties need to seek a common ground in order to be as effective as possible. A more humane light is shed on the role of networks through the principle of Ubuntu, in that the power of a united people cannot be overshadowed by the attempts of a single person working for development. “People themselves must have responsibility for the development and change of the world in which they live...As people who live- in a broad sense- together, we cannot escape the thought that the terrible occurrences that we see around us are quintessentially our problems. They are our responsibility- whether or not they are also anyone else’s” (Sen 1999:282). Such ‘terrible occurrences’ are presented in this thesis
as the current inhumane disproportions of living conditions.

In this light of humanity as a whole ‘hurting because one hurts’, professionals cannot but be actively involved in the cause for social justice especially in the built environment. The power of a new development mentality must align itself with Nederveen Pieterse’s sentiments that “the strength of alternative development is its regard for local development and social agency, from grassroots groups and social movements to NGO’s” (2001:152).

As a precedent for the JLV, the YWAV Centre was analysed in light of networking through the built environment. Different sustainable building techniques where discovered there that will be incorporated in the design for the JLV, presenting a united development front.

‘Sustainability’ in regarding positive development of rural areas is of utmost importance as there is a tendency for development to be injected into a community as an isolated instance, whereas what is needed is environmental, economic and social sustainable consideration.

An important role within sustainable development is the idea of trust, and the realisation that it is to be earned, not assumed to be the right of intellectuals. “In social interactions, individuals deal with one another on the basis of some pre-sunption of what they are being offered and what they can expect to get. In this sense, the society operates on some basic presumption of trust” (Sen 1999:39).

This trust can be earned in a number of different ways, but probably the most effective would be through building authentic relationships with the local community members at all levels.

From a social sustainability point of view, the JLV will incorporate many of the social mores, however stretching their current uses to endure a changing society. The project’s social sustainability will also be ensured through the work of Pastor Mable who is very involved in the community as a social worker. Environmental sustainability within the community will be ensured through the use of repairable materials and their proximity to the site, which has an effect on the economic sustainability which will be influenced by job creation.

Through building meaningful relationships with community members, an outsider would gain a true sense of the region, which would allow design to be appropriately implemented into the regions style. ‘Regionalism’ looked into understanding the regions building processes as well as the matter of representations. Through sufficient first hand research of a region’s culture, the special spatial codes would manifest themselves naturally instead of having the superficial text book experience of the regions traditions.

The JLV will incorporate some of the significant spatial arrangements as discussed in ‘Covered in Dust’ so that as an architectural implementation, the complex would be represent the region.

In considering architecture enabling positive development of a rural area, “what is needed is to find a sense of balance that does not yield to futures mapped from above not to nostalgia for the rear exit, a new sense of balance between universalism and localism” (Nederveen Pieterse 2001:72).

In the fight for this balance one must concur with Sen’s reasoning how “the pointer to any real conflict between the preservation of tradition and the advantages of modernity calls for a participatory resolution, not for a unilateral rejection of modernity in favour of tradition by political rulers, or religious authorities, or anthropological admirers of the legacy of the past” (1999:32).

‘Architectural Lab’ dealt with the freedom for creativity due to the lack of building codes. This freedom is not a licence for architectural bravado, but rather allows design to explore new and more efficient ways of building in a particular rural community. Such experimentation should always begin at the local level, with local building methods, following on from a regional survey so that the design will be somewhat familiar to the community.

Within the tension of the JLV’s diverse programme, experimentation takes the form of building material interrogation and enhancement such as earth-bags, rammed earth and Hydraform. Also an interrogation into the form and function of the worship hall within this rural community will lead to an iconic building within the JLV complex.

As the penultimate part of ‘Stargazing’, ‘Precedent’ briefly introduced the value of studying local rural development projects and learning from their successes and failures.

One of the main lessons gained from studying the YWAV Centre as a precedent for the JLV, was the importance of listening to the client, and not pushing for a personal/ alternative agenda, other than empowering the members of the community. Within the built fabric of the YWAV are stellar environmental and economically sustainable building techniques such as earth-bags and Hydraform which will be used in the construction of the JLV.

‘Memory’ concluded the chapter by testing what is necessary to keep of the tradition and what should be discarded in order to enable positive development in a rural community. In the past there was not sufficient consideration of tradition in development of rural areas which resulted in many of the cultural clichés represented in the built environment today. Culture was merely incorporated into development studies as an after-thought, in a sense- add culture and stir” (Nederveen Pieterse 2001) was deemed the perfect recipe for development.

Most of the spatial forms and enclosures designed for the JLV were included...
American anthropologist Conrad Phillip Kottak shows the importance of being 'covered in dust' as "the first cultural dimension of development is the local level" (1985:46), and therefore a thorough understanding of its built environment and the significance behind its forms is needed. This guided by fundamental design guides as discussed in ‘Stargazing’ will ultimately ensure that the Jubilee Life Village, as an architectural intervention will have a positive contribution to the development of the rural BaNtwane community.

From this new starting point, architecture cannot be alienating, disempowering and oppressive, and should naturally progress into the future to propagate the possibilities for further development. While it is important to be able to evaluate such development, one must bear in mind that “freedom is not only the basis of the evaluation of success and failure...Greater freedom enhances the ability of people to help themselves and also to influence the world” (Sen 1999:18). This is the true result of successful positive development, that of enabling communities to help themselves and develop their respective communities from the inside out, independent of outside help.

Finally, Nederveen Pieterse reasons that “primitivism betokens purity, reminiscent of paradise, development brings corruption and decay, while redemption only lies in the completion of the development” (2001:26). It is in the final holistic representation of ‘Stars’ and ‘Dust’ in the built environment that architecture can truly enable positive development in a rural context. The JLV stands as the architectural manifestation of the main themes discussed in these chapters, and is this thesis’ architectural contribution to the positive development of the rural BaNtwane community.

At such an intimidating threshold of affecting positive development in rural areas, Coleman’s advice regarding taking giant leaps of action is encouraging. "If the question of where to start seems overwhelming, you are at the beginning, not the end of this adventure. Being overwhelmed is the first step, if you are serious about trying to get at things that really matter on a scale that makes a difference. So what do you do when you feel overwhelmed? Well you have two things: you have a mind; and you have other people. Start with those and change the world" (www.ted.com).
Before zestfully thrusting into the design of the Jubilee Life Village, the second *selah* is presented here as a rural development questionnaire intended on gaining an understanding on what the general public believe rural development to pertain to, as well as gain a perspective on how the success or failure of development is measured.

A diverse audience has been strategically chosen in order to ensure the most comprehensive, holistic response to the questions regarding rural development from a national perspective as presented by President Jacob Zuma’s State of the Nation Address on the 3rd of June 2009. Among those chosen where:

- Senior Administration Officer in Traditional Affairs, Makitle J. Ace Mathebe living in Ntwane, Moutse
- Doctor Nobs Motjuwadi, full time volunteer at COPESA in Protea Glen, Soweto.
- Associate Professor for Rural Health and Community-based Education, Centre for Rural Health at the University of KwaZulu natal, Steve Reid
- Entrepreneur working near Coffee Bay, Roger Galloway
- Full time ministry worker for Arise Ministry Group, Richard Allen.
- Khama III Memorial Museum curator, Scobie L, living in Serowe, Botswana.
- Teacher and Principal, Leah Monageng living in Ntwane, Moutse

The *selah* contains the original scanned documents as answered by the individuals mentioned, as well as the transcribed responses for easier reading.

The questionnaire read as follows:

In President Jacob Zuma’s State of the Nation Address on the 3rd of June 2009, he briefly commented on Rural Development, saying:

“As you would be aware, the fight against poverty remains the cornerstone of our government’s focus. On the 9th of May, during the Presidential inauguration, we made a commitment to our people and the world that: “...For as long as there are communities without clean water, decent shelter or proper sanitation; For as long as there are rural dwellers unable to make a decent living from the land on which they live; We shall not rest, and we dare not falter, in our drive to eradicate poverty.”

He went on to say that,

“As part of social infrastructure development we will provide suitably located and affordable housing and decent human settlements. We will proceed from the understanding that human settlement is not just about building houses. It is about transforming our cities and towns and building cohesive, sustainable and caring communities with closer access to work and social amenities, including sports and recreation facilities. Working together with our people in the rural areas, we will ensure a comprehensive rural development strategy... as our third priority.”

1) What is your understanding of Rural Development

2) How would you determine whether “a comprehensive rural development strategy” has been successful in developing a rural area?
selah! [se-la]:
  pause, and calmly think of that
Rural Development

In President Jacob Zuma’s State of the Nation Address on the 3rd of June 2009, he briefly commented on Rural Development, saying:

“As you would be aware, the fight against poverty remains the cornerstone of our government’s focus. On the 9th of May, during the Presidential inauguration, we made a commitment to our people and the world that ‘...’ For as long as there are communities without clean water, decent shelter or proper sanitation, for as long as there are rural dwellers unable to make a decent living from the land on which they live, we shall not rest, and we dare not falter, in our drive to eradicate poverty’.”

He went on to say that,

“As part of social infrastructure development we will provide suitably located and affordable housing and decent human settlements. We will proceed from the understanding that human settlement is not just about building houses. It is about transforming our cities and towns and building cohesive, sustainable and caring communities with closer access to work and social amenities, including sports and recreation facilities. Working together with our people in the rural areas, we will ensure a comprehensive rural development strategy...as our third priority.”

1. What is your understanding of Rural Development?
2. How would you determine whether “a comprehensive rural development strategy” has been successful in developing a rural area?

1. **Rural Development**
   - The comprehensive enhancement of life in rural areas and socio-political changes.
   - Change in social behaviour: schooling and employment.
   - Infrastructure development for communities in the former TBVC states; Improvement of living conditions; Preparation of basic needs.
   - Health and social awareness improvement.
   - Improved and standard services delivery: water, access roads, housing, youth centres, community centres.

These are key indicators for rural development to be seen as successful in developing a rural area.

Rural Development

In President Jacob Zuma’s State of the Nation Address on the 3rd of June 2009, he briefly commented on Rural Development, saying:

“As you would be aware, the fight against poverty remains the cornerstone of our government’s focus. On the 9th of May, during the Presidential inauguration, we made a commitment to our people and the world that ‘...’ For as long as there are communities without clean water, decent shelter or proper sanitation, for as long as there are rural dwellers unable to make a decent living from the land on which they live, we shall not rest, and we dare not falter, in our drive to eradicate poverty’.”

He went on to say that,

“As part of social infrastructure development we will provide suitably located and affordable housing and decent human settlements. We will proceed from the understanding that human settlement is not just about building houses. It is about transforming our cities and towns and building cohesive, sustainable and caring communities with closer access to work and social amenities, including sports and recreation facilities. Working together with our people in the rural areas, we will ensure a comprehensive rural development strategy...as our third priority.”

1. What is your understanding of Rural Development?
2. How would you determine whether “a comprehensive rural development strategy” has been successful in developing a rural area?

1. **Rural Development**
   - The comprehensive enhancement of life in rural areas and socio-political changes.
   - Change in social behaviour: schooling and employment.
   - Infrastructure development for communities in the former TBVC states; Improvement of living conditions; Preparation of basic needs.
   - Health and social awareness improvement.
   - Improved and standard services delivery: water, access roads, housing, youth centres, community centres.

These are key indicators for rural development to be seen as successful in developing a rural area.
1. “The comprehensive enhancement of life needs and socio-political changes.”

2. “(a) Change in social behaviour—schooling.
   (b) Improved employment intake.
   (c) Infrastructure development.
   (d) Health and social awareness improvement.
   (e) Improved and standard services delivery; water, access roads, housing, youth centres, community centres.

These are key indicators for rural development to be seen as successful in developing rural areas.”

Nobs Motjuwadi

1. “Infrastructural development for communities in the former TBVC state. Improvement of lives, amenities, provision of basic needs.”

2. “When the migration of people from the rural areas is purely out of choice as opposed to necessity. When the life expectancy for people in the rural areas improves in comparison to those in urban areas. When the resources peculiar to and abundant in rural areas such as land, grass, sun, air etc. are optimally utilised in contrast to introducing new and unsustainable ways in developing these communities.”
Rural Development

In President Jacob Zuma’s State of the Nation Address on the 3rd of June 2009, he briefly commented on Rural Development, saying:

“As you would be aware, the fight against poverty remains the cornerstone of our government’s focus. On the 9th of May, during the Presidential inauguration, we made a commitment to our people and the world that: ‘...For as long as there are communities without clean water, decent shelter or proper sanitation; For as long as there are rural dwellers unable to make a decent living from the land on which they live; We shall not rest, and we dare not falter, in our drive to eradicate poverty.’”

He went on to say that,

“As part of social infrastructure development we will provide suitably located and affordable housing and decent human settlements. We will proceed from the understanding that human settlement is not just about building houses. It is about transforming our cities and towns and building cohesive, sustainable and caring communities with closer access to work and social amenities, including sports and recreation facilities. Working together with our people in the rural areas, we will ensure a comprehensive rural development strategy... as our third priority.”

1. What is your understanding of Rural Development?

“Rural Development is a coherent and planned strategy to raise the standards of living and quality of life of citizens living in rural areas, comprehensively across the sectors of housing, roads, water and sanitation, education, health, environment, trade and industry, and local government. It is not just concerned with the provision of infrastructure, but with the sustainable livelihoods of rural people.

From my perspective, health is an integral part of rural development, and is not just a set of services that need to be available when people get sick. A community that is healthy is more likely to develop than one that is unhealthy. And a progressive community is one that looks after its health, individually and collectively. Conversely, ill-health can severely hamper development, as we are seeing with the HIV and AIDS epidemic. And the lack of development and progress leads to a fatalistic acceptance of the situation in rural areas, such that young people are not motivated to look for employment, or get tested for HIV, for example, because they feel that there is no point. So health and development are inextricably linked, and it is plain to see in rural areas.”

2. How would you determine whether “a comprehensive rural development strategy” has been successful in developing a rural area?

“You could measure it through the following indicators, amongst others:
- infrastructural improvements, e.g. roads, housing, water supply, sanitation, digital connectivity
- greater number of formal businesses registered and operating
- employment levels raised
- literacy levels higher
- computer literacy and use higher
- health status improved, e.g. life expectancy, child and maternal mortality rates
- less urban migration, and some return of economically active people from urban areas to rural areas
- care of the environment

You would also see it in the people qualitatively, their sense of motivation and hope in the future, their sense of pride in their community, and of wanting to stay and contribute rather than flee to the cities in search of greener pastures.”
Stephen John Reid

1. “Rural Development is a coherent and planned strategy to raise the standards of living and quality of life of citizens living in rural areas, comprehensively across the sectors of housing, roads, water and sanitation, education, health, environment, trade and industry, and local government. It is not just concerned with the provision of infrastructure, but with the sustainable livelihoods of rural people.

From my perspective, health is an integral part of rural development, and is not just a set of services that need to be available when people get sick. A community that is healthy is more likely to develop than one that is unhealthy. And a progressive community is one that looks after its health, individually and collectively. Conversely, ill-health can severely hamper development, as we are seeing with the HIV and AIDS epidemic. And the lack of development and progress leads to a fatalistic acceptance of the situation in rural areas, such that young people are not motivated to look for employment, or get tested for HIV, for example, because they feel that there is no point. So health and development are inextricably linked, and it is plain to see in rural areas.”

2. “You could measure it through the following indicators, amongst others: infrastructural improvements, e.g. roads, housing, water supply, sanitation, digital connectivity; greater number of formal businesses registered and operating; employment levels raised; literacy levels higher; computer literacy and use higher; health status improved, e.g. life expectancy, child and maternal mortality rates; less urban migration, and some return of economically active people from urban areas to rural areas; care of the environment.

You would also see it in the people qualitatively, their sense of motivation and hope in the future, their sense of pride in their community, and of wanting to stay and contribute rather than flee to the cities in search of greener pastures.”

Roger Galloway

1. “My interpretation of Rural Development is the continual involvement and holistic improvement, of the standards of living of people living in the rural areas.”

2. “Many things are quantifiable: The average grades of matric students significantly improves; HIV drops; Less people are reliant on grants; The percentage of the rural population chooses to stay in the homes, instead of moving to the cities to find work; The environment recovers.”
In President Jacob Zuma’s State of the Nation Address on the 3rd of June 2009, he briefly commented on Rural Development, saying:

"As you would be aware, the fight against poverty remains the cornerstone of our government’s focus. On the 9th of May, during the Presidential inauguration, we made a commitment to our people and the world that: “For as long as there are communities without clean water, decent shelter or proper sanitation; For as long as there are rural dwellers unable to make a decent living from the land on which they live; We shall not rest, and we dare not falter, in our drive to eradicate poverty.”

He went on to say that, "As part of social infrastructure development we will provide suitably located and affordable housing and decent human settlements. We will proceed from the understanding that human settlement is not just about building houses. It is about transforming our cities and towns and building cohesive, sustainable and caring communities with closer access to work and social amenities, including sports and recreation facilities. Working together with our people in the rural areas, we will ensure a comprehensive rural development strategy... as our third priority."

1. What is your understanding of Rural Development?
2. How would you determine whether “a comprehensive rural development strategy” has been successful in developing a rural area?

---

### Rural Development

In President Jacob Zuma’s State of the Nation Address on the 3rd of June 2009, he briefly commented on Rural Development, saying:

"As you would be aware, the fight against poverty remains the cornerstone of our government’s focus. On the 9th of May, during the Presidential inauguration, we made a commitment to our people and the world that: “For as long as there are communities without clean water, decent shelter or proper sanitation; For as long as there are rural dwellers unable to make a decent living from the land on which they live; We shall not rest, and we dare not falter, in our drive to eradicate poverty.”

He went on to say that, "As part of social infrastructure development we will provide suitably located and affordable housing and decent human settlements. We will proceed from the understanding that human settlement is not just about building houses. It is about transforming our cities and towns and building cohesive, sustainable and caring communities with closer access to work and social amenities, including sports and recreation facilities. Working together with our people in the rural areas, we will ensure a comprehensive rural development strategy... as our third priority."

1. What is your understanding of Rural Development?
2. How would you determine whether “a comprehensive rural development strategy” has been successful in developing a rural area?
Richard Allen

1. “Basically, Rural Development is the deliberate work within rural communities to improve living conditions for the inhabitants.”

2. “Based on the aforementioned understanding, the starting point would be: are living conditions for rural inhabitants significantly improves? The use of the word comprehensive is important to note. In the regard, I agree with president Zuma’s stated understanding that ‘human settlement is not just about building houses.’ A comprehensive rural development strategy would, then, be successful in developing a rural area when it has provided the resources necessary for growth and sustainability in a variety of areas. Included but not restricted to: nutrition, housing, education, health care, employment.”

Scobie Lekhutile

1. “Rural Development in my understanding is a form of change meant to better the lives of rural population. This would lead one to think that the bottom up approach ill be the one taken when coming up with rural development programmes. Reality the top bottom approach rules. Masters of development who are responsible for drawing rural development plans are far from the rural areas in distance and time, knowledge and understanding. The rural population’s contribution in the drawing and formulating of these rural development plans is limited.”

2. “One can evaluate the impact the dev. strategy has made/ were the overall objectives met/ compare and contrast before and after. This is always easy if there was a thorough and through pre-situation analysis.”
Rural Development

In President Jacob Zuma’s State of the Nation Address on the 3rd of June 2009, he briefly commented on Rural Development, saying:

“As you would be aware, the fight against poverty remains the cornerstone of our government’s focus. On the 5th of May, during the Presidential inauguration, we made a commitment to our people and the world that “... For as long as there are communities without clean water, decent shelter or proper sanitation, for as long as there are rural dwellers unable to make a decent living from the land on which they live, we shall not rest, and we dare not fail, in our drive to eradicate poverty.”

He went on to say that...

As part of social infrastructure development we will provide suitably located and affordable housing and decent human settlements. We will proceed from the understanding that human settlement is not just about building houses. It is about transforming our cities and towns and building cohesive, sustainable and caring communities with closer access to work and social amenities, including sports and recreation facilities. Working together with our people in the rural areas, we will ensure a comprehensive rural development strategy... as our third priority.

1. What is your understanding of Rural Development?

2. How would you determine whether “a comprehensive rural development strategy” has been successful in developing a rural area?

---

Rural Development

In President Jacob Zuma’s State of the Nation Address on the 3rd of June 2009, he briefly commented on Rural Development, saying:

“As you would be aware, the fight against poverty remains the cornerstone of our government’s focus. On the 5th of May, during the Presidential inauguration, we made a commitment to our people and the world that “... For as long as there are communities without clean water, decent shelter or proper sanitation, for as long as there are rural dwellers unable to make a decent living from the land on which they live, we shall not rest, and we dare not fail, in our drive to eradicate poverty.”

He went on to say that...

As part of social infrastructure development we will provide suitably located and affordable housing and decent human settlements. We will proceed from the understanding that human settlement is not just about building houses. It is about transforming our cities and towns and building cohesive, sustainable and caring communities with closer access to work and social amenities, including sports and recreation facilities. Working together with our people in the rural areas, we will ensure a comprehensive rural development strategy... as our third priority.

1. What is your understanding of Rural Development?

2. How would you determine whether “a comprehensive rural development strategy” has been successful in developing a rural area?

---

1. Rural Development is the ongoing process of providing improved infrastructure (roads, electricity, telecommunications) and services, and improving living standards. This has been done through the construction of houses, schools, hospitals, and other facilities.

2. Specific goals are set with success indicators, often including timelines. These goals were set to address the challenges and needs of the rural areas.

3. Rural development also aims to create employment opportunities and economic growth for people, especially school leavers, so that they can remain in rural areas and not migrate to the cities.

4. Goals for rural development typically include improved access to resources, such as clean water and electricity, as well as increased access to health care and education.

5. Rural development also aims to improve the quality of life for rural residents, including through the provision of social amenities like sports and recreation facilities.

6. Rural development is often implemented through partnerships between local governments, non-governmental organizations, and communities.

---

3. Things should be in place so that people can see that things are improving. The doctors and nurses at the hospital should be there all the time, and the water development is not a good strategy so it needs to be improved.
Erika Nelson

1. “Rural Development is the ongoing process of providing improved infrastructure (schools, roads, electricity, transportation systems) to people in areas lacking these things. Often including land that was part of the Bantustan system, those areas were intentionally left under-developed for the last 60 years, creating the challenges the government faces today. Rural development should strive to create employment opportunities or other livelihoods for people, especially school-leavers, so that they can remain in rural areas and not migrate to the cities.”

2. “If specific goals are set within a set time-frame, then planners can determine whether those goals have been met. Eg. 200 jobs created; improved education resources and more graduates finding jobs, or addition of affordable transport. Other than that, development does not have an ‘end’. An initiative that seems successful can fail after 2 years, while the health of the community is also a cycle.”

Leah Monageng

1. “Rural Development is when a rural area is being developed and improved. It is when the government helps the rural area with things that they need eg. most houses need rebuilding and water.”

2. “Things should be in place so that people can see that things are fine. Eg. the doctors and nurses at the hospital should be there at all times and the water development is not a good strategy so it needs to be improved.”
“Spiritually starved by the impersonal purities of modern architecture, many people are grateful to find in traditional desert building the grace and splendour of the human touch.”

Joseph Kennedy

fig. 96.1. Mielie field.
Photograph taken at Kenneth Mathebe’s household on the 1st of April 2009
Kennedy’s attraction to the desert buildings as mentioned on the title page for this chapter is not reserved for the desert buildings that he has experienced (2002:025). Many of the homes built in the broad rural village of Moutse, Limpopo SA have the same ‘grace and splendour’ that was originally appealing to me and lead to the selection of this community for architecture to make its contribution to positive rural development.

The site for the architecture to make its contribution if the form of the Jubilee Life Village (JLV) is a 17 500m² open piece of land that has been bought by Jubilee Ministries of Brakenhurst Methodist Church in Johannesburg, SA, to be used for the new church for Pastor Mable in the Tabakhubedu community in Limpopo SA.

Lema, which means ‘plough’, introduces the site through an investigation into the site for the JLV. The chapter begins with different views of the site as an introduction to the site.

A broad mapping of different basic amenities in the broader context of Ntwane, Tabakhubedu and Maropong, all within 7km of the site reveals the main active corner of the site (A in fig. 98.1). This corner also gains its significance through its proximity to the newly tarred road indicated on fig. 98.1.

Thereafter a brief mapping exercise then examines the different forces on the site of the site such as natural features, current pedestrian movement, and active/used edges. Current pedestrian movement and active edges will reveal a strong East-West movement of people across the site, and ultimately become a strong design informer.

Finally, a sun study of the site is conducted during the winter and summer solstices to reveal the extreme shaded zones produced by the existing trees on the site.

The summer and winter equinox’s have been selected as time frames to investigate shadows moving across the site because of the intense summer heat and icy winter temperatures. The people living in this community can handle the summer heat far better than they can cope with the winter chill. This is because most of the homes do not have electricity or resources to afford electric heater. For this reason consideration is required in the placement of buildings that will be used during the day so that they are heated by the sun in winter, and are shaded in summer, or at least can open out into shaded areas. Shadows from the trees on the site help to inform the placement of different buildings on the site in order to maximise the passive cooling and heating of the different building.

This having been said, there will be a large quantity of indigenous trees that will be included in the design for the JLV, therefore, the sun analysis is more useful in gaining a better understanding of the site as a whole.

fig. 98.1. Reference image for figures on page 99. Aerial photograph of the site (indicated in red) for the JLV within the Tabakhubedu community and its proximity to the newly tarred road indicated as black line. Letters A-F indicate the positions that the photographs on page 99 were taken. Image by Google Earth, annotated by author.
fig. 99.1. Photograph A looking East
fig. 99.2. Photograph B looking East
fig. 99.3. Photograph C looking South
fig. 99.4. Photograph D looking North
fig. 99.5. Photograph E looking North-West
fig. 99.6. Photograph F looking North
fig. 100.1. Mappings of different basic amenities in the broader context of Ntwane, Ttabakhubedu and Maropong, all within 7km of the site. Line thickness indicates the importance of functional consideration in relation to a church complex. Site for the JLV indicated in red. This mapping exercise of basic amenities reveals that the top North-West corner of the site is the most significant to be considered in the design process.

In descending order those amenities are: transport collection points, general stores, hardware stores, schools, clinics and other churches. Image by Googel Earth, annotated by author.

fig. 100.2. Natural features on the site. Small spruit (indicated in blue), only active through the site because community redirected due to lack of storm water management. Existing trees indicated in green.

fig. 100.3. Current pedestrian movement through the site and on its edges indicated in yellow. Site boundaries indicated in red.

fig. 100.4. Active/used edges indicated in light green. Dark green indicated edges that are not currently being accessed/used by the community.
fig. 101.1. Site for the JLV in the morning. Photograph taken 13th March 2009 at approximately 08:00

fig. 101.2. Birds-eye view of site at approximately 08:00 during winter solstice

fig. 101.3. Site plan showing position of photograph & images

fig. 101.4. Birds-eye view of site at approximately 08:00 during summer solstice
fig. 102.1. Site for the JLV at midday.
Photograph taken 13th March 2009 at approximately 12:00

fig. 102.2. Birds-eye view of site at approximately 12:00 during winter solstice

fig. 102.3. Site plan showing position of photograph & images

fig. 102.4. Birds-eye view of site at approximately 08:00 during summer solstice
fig. 103.1. Site for the JLV in the afternoon. Photograph taken 13th March 2009 at approximately 16:00

fig. 103.2. Birds-eye view of site at approximately 16:00 during winter solstice

fig. 103.3. Site plan showing position of photograph & images

fig. 103.4. Birds-eye view of site at approximately 16:00 during summer solstice
fig. 104.1. Morning summer and winter solstices

fig. 104.2. Midday summer and winter solstices

fig. 104.3. Afternoon summer and winter solstices

fig. 104.4. Full day summer and winter solstices
fig. 105.1. Morning summer and winter solstices

fig. 105.2. Midday summer and winter solstices

fig. 105.3. Afternoon summer and winter solstices

fig. 105.4. Full day summer and winter solstices
“Human beings are at the centre of concerns for sustainable development, including adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements.”

The UN Habitat Agenda
The UN Habitat Agenda’s motivation for sustainable human developments is exemplified in considering the programme, foundational principles and ultimately the design for the Jubilee Life Village (JLV) (www.basehabitat.ufg.ac.at). If this statement is true, then the JLV, as an architectural intervention, will definitely contribute to the positive development of the rural Tabakhubedu community.

‘Pêu’, which means ‘seed’, is divided into four separate parts covering the essential elements for the understanding of the design intention of the JLV. These parts are ‘Programme’, which has been developed through an in depth analysis of the lacking amenities and needs of this third generation BaNtwane community.

‘Principles’ distils the information garnered in ‘Covered in Dust’ into simple and manageable design themes, while ‘Materials’ looks into the different methods and materials that will be used in the construction of the JLV.

Finally, ‘Design Development’ concludes ‘Pêu’ with a presentation of the journey that it took to finalise a site plan and ultimately lead to the final architectural product of the JLV intended on positively contributing to the development of the rural Tabakhubedu community.

**Programme**

The JLV is to have two separate zones: public and private space. The locations of the different buildings in, or around the spaces have been determined by an analysis of public & private functioning within the programme. The construction of the JLV is to take a phased approach according to this table so that the complex can still serve the community even while the whole has not yet been completed.

**Phase 1:**
- **work-shed** (50m²): storage of materials and equipment; the production of building materials such as Hydraform bricks and earth-bag ‘bricks’. Water point for construction purposes (fig. 109.1).
- **toilets** (70m²): 4 x male & 4 x female toilets using the Enviro-loo waterless waste system. Essential that black container on the outside of the building to face north for proper functioning of the system. Water point for communal hand wash area. To be located near the natural composting facility (fig. 109.2).
- **worship hall** (350m²): Simple, open, elegant and iconic building. Multi-functional space to be used for regular Sunday gatherings, scheduled community celebrations as well as community meetings. These different functioning obviously consist of different volume of people, therefore design must respond appropriately (fig. 109.3).
- **administration** (100m²): 3 x offices, 1 x meeting room and storage. Water point for kitchenette (fig. 110.1).
- **pastor’s house** (100m²): Main bedroom with en-suite bathroom (bath/shower, wash hand basin and toilet to french drain), two children’s bedrooms with shared bathroom (bath/shower, wash hand basin and toilet to french drain), guest toilet, study, lounge, dining room and kitchen (fig. 110.2).

**Phase 2:**
- **catering** (65m²): Water point for cooking space (majority of area), storage and indoor and outdoor dining options (fig. 110.1).
- **teaching** (100m²): Open space to allow for variable seating arrangements with option to fold walls away. Storage space for equipment and seating (fig. 110.2).
- **orphan’s homes** (130m²): Two children’s bedrooms for two children each with own desk and cupboard space, shared bathroom (bath/shower, wash hand basin and toilets to french drain); main bedroom with en-suite bathroom (bath/shower, wash hand basin and toilet to french drain); kitchen, dining room and lounge. Homes to share outdoor private communal space (fig. 111.1).

**Phase 3:**
- **clinic** (160m²): 4 separate buildings (each 40m²) to facilitate reception, storage, staff lounge and kitchenette with water point), examination (separate consulting rooms), treatment (separate basic treatment rooms) and overnight accommodation (two bedrooms to accommodate two people each, shared bathroom with bath/shower, wash hand basin and toilet to french drain) (fig. 111.2).
- **shops** (2x150m²): 4 individual internal spaces with public and private interface. Water points for fresh produce (fig. 111.3).
• visitor’s accommodation (2x150m²): 5 separate rooms to accommodate 4 people each; communal bathroom (two Enviro-loo toilets, 3 showers, 1 bath, 4 wash hand basins); and living room to flow into outdoor living space (fig. 111.4).

fig. 109.1. A typical building site with no storage facilities for equipment. Photograph taken in Elandsdoring, Limpopo SA on the 3rd of April 2009.

fig. 109.2. Long-drop toilet at pastor Mable’s house. Photograph taken in Tabakhubedu, Limpopo SA on the 19th of March 2009.

fig. 109.3. Worship during a church service in the tent that used to be at Pastor Mable’s house. Photograph taken in Tabakhubedu, Limpopo SA by student Nicola Crous on the 6th of January 2008.
fig. 110.1. Traditional leadership administration document acknowledging the work of Pastor Mable in the community. Photograph taken in Tabakhubedu, Limpopo SA on the 19th of March 2009.

fig. 110.2. Pastor Mable in her current home with all the church equipment stored in her living room. Photograph taken in Tabakhubedu, Limpopo SA, on the 19th of March 2009.

fig. 110.3. Traditional cooking pot and kettle placed on a fire made in the private lapa at the back of Kenneth Mathebe’s home. Photograph taken in Tabakhubedu, Limpopo SA, on the 1st of April 2009.

fig. 110.4. Teaching around the sebèsõ at Mrs. Monageng’s home. Photograph taken in Ntwane, Limpopo SA on the 19th of March 2009.
fig. 111.1. The AIDS epidemic has left many child headed households in this community. Photograph taken in Tabakhubedu, Limpopo SA on the 1st of April 2009.

fig. 111.2. The Ndlovu Medical Centre is doing truly commendable AIDS awareness and prevention work in the community. Photograph taken in Elandsdoring on the 12th of March 2009.

fig. 111.3. Informal traders at the entrance to the Moutse Mall Complex. Photograph taken in Dennilton, Limpopo SA on the 31st of March 2009.

fig. 111.4. Many visiting teams of volunteers enjoy residence at the Monageng household. Photograph taken in Ntwane, Limpopo SA by Nicola Crous on the 7th of January 2008.
Principles

This section is dedicated to processing the different spatial coding systems and principles that were presented in ‘cover in dust’. Each principle has been extensively examined in the abovementioned chapter, so only brief reference to the form and function are mentioned here as applicable to the design of the Jubilee Life Village.

The kgoro
An enclosed space. Form presents itself in many different scale such as the Moshate kgoro, and then the smaller family kgoros within, with the open sides facing the main family member. Main function being enclosure and security.

Figure 112.1, photograph taken behind Kgoshi Maklamme Mathebe’s house in Ntwane, Limpopo SA on the 25th of April 2009. Photograph analysed in further detail in fig. 151.1 in appendix A.2.2, page 151. Figure 112.2, sketch showing Moshate kgoro with smaller family kgoros within with open side facing the main family house.

The lapa
Spaces enclosed by low walls with seating acting as stabilisers. These spaces are attached to the house defining public and private spaces.

Figure 112.3, photograph taken in front of David Mohlamonyne’s parent’s home in Ntwane, Limpopo SA on the 31st of March 2009. Figure 112.4, sketch showing privacy gradient of a typical individual house, with sebēsōs in the front corners of the public lapa.

The entrance
Entry to the public lapa is celebrated by protruding platform as a gestural ‘handshake’, as well as decorated posts on either side of the gate. There is usually a strong axial relationship between household entry, lapa entry and main building entry.

Figure 112.5, photograph taken at Kenneth Mathebe’s home in Tabakhubedu, Limpopo SA on the 1st of April 2009. Figure 112.6, sketch showing celebration of entry into all lapas.
The lekgotla

Many gatherings/meetings occur outdoors under a shaded structure sometimes referred to as lekgotla. Consider the lekgotla leKgoshi, meaning the court of the chief, or the gathering together for a meeting with the chief. Can be understood in ‘western’ terms as a pergola.

Figure 112.1, photograph taken at the YWAV Centre in Philadelphia, Limpopo SA on the 13th of March 2009. Figure 112.2, sketch showing built shading device with plants growing up the posts.

The sebêsô

Fire pits in the lapa floor for cooking and socialising.

Figure 112.2, photograph taken in Tabakhubedu, Limpopo SA on the 1st of April 2009. Figure 112.4, sketch showing sebêsô with fire burning.

The traditional building material

Mud was traditionally used as the primary building material. It was hand-compacted in layers with no additional cement/strengthening. This building technique does not perform adequately during rain storms.

Figure 112.3, photograph taken in Tabakhubedu, Limpopo SA on the 1st of April 2009. Figure 112.6, sketch of applying new building technology to enhance existing local building techniques so that the building’s life span becomes significant.

The rest of the materials to be used will be covered in greater detail in the following section.
Materials

This second section looks at the different building techniques that have been selected to be used in the construction of the Jubilee Life Centre. All have been considered in the light of ‘Stargazing’ and inspired by ‘Covered in Dust’ to maximise architectures contribution to positive rural development.

The local brick
Bricks made from riversand, cement and water with a brick mould will be used in constructing the work-shed and toilet. This is to support the local building economy as well as get the basic buildings up quickly to be able to store other building material and properly build the rest of the buildings on the site.

Figure 114.1 & 114.2, photographs taken at the Motlakho Tuck-shop in Ntwane, Limpopo SA on the 3rd of April 2009.

Rammed Earth
Taking a traditional building technique and enhancing it results in rammed-earth. This magnificent, iconic building material will be used in the construction of the worship hall.

Figure 114.3 from www.sirewall.com. Figure 114.4, company providing extensive technical support on using rammed-earth. From www.terrafirmabuilders.ca

Hydraform blocks
As a means of economic sustainability and empowerment, a Hydraform block-making press will be purchased and used in the manufacturing of bricks for the remaining buildings on the site. Figure 114.3, photograph taken at the YWAV Centre in Philadelphia, Limpopo SA on the 1st of April 2009. Figure 114.6, company providing extensive technical support on using Hydraform as well as sales and delivery. From www.Hydraform.com
Earth bags

Earth bags have a wonderfully soft finish to them and will therefore be used to construct all the fixed seating and walls for the *lapas* at the JLV.

Figure 115.1, photograph taken at the YWAV Centre in Philadelphia, Limpopo SA on the 13th of March 2009. Figure 115.2, shows seating as currently used however its life span due to the current building technique is not impressive. Photograph taken at the Piet Monageng household in Ntwane, Limpopo SA on the 19th of March 2009.

Galvanised roof sheeting with ceiling

For speed of construction and cost efficiency, roof sheeting will be used, however with appropriate, innovative ceiling insulation against heat and noise from the rain. Figure 115.3, photograph of earth bags used as ceiling taken at the YWAV Centre in Philadelphia, Limpopo SA on the 13th of March 2009. Figure 115.4, sketch showing possibility of altering the floor mats that are currently becoming redundant since the couch, to be used as roof insulation.

Gum poles

Many of the local building material suppliers stock untreated gum poles that will be used in the construction of the *lekgotlas* as well as the supporting structure of the some of the roofs at the JLV. Figure 115.5 & 115.6, photograph taken at the Motlakho Tuck-shop in Ntwane, Limpopo SA on the 3rd of April 2009.
Design development

As the final section to this chapter, ‘design development’ consists of two parts that will portray the process of design for the JLV. These parts are ‘growth’ and ‘journey’.

Growth

Considering the design of the JLV in the grand positive rural development scale, a broad Urban Design Framework was speculatively conceived as to how, if the contribution was significantly positive, growth would begin to happen in this community. It is essentially at this scale that the design began.

Figure 116.1 illustrates how growth could possibly happen in a Northerly and Southerly direction away from the site (indicated in red) along the newly tarred road to the West (indicated by black line). Different civil functions could be allocated along this road, which, through the incorporated environmental development, would naturally densify the area with homes to the East and West of this ‘civic spine’.

The blue dotted line represents figure 116.1. Both figures are not to scale.

Figure 117.1 shows the site and its immediate context with envisioned road network development with incorporated pedestrian routes. This drawing has been developed thorough analysing both current pedestrian footpaths across the site as well as the informal, yet structured current layout of homes in the area.

The site is indicated in red.
The nature of the site being an open canvas in the middle of a sparsely populated community (approx. 300 homes/ km²), meant that the journey of finalising an appropriate site plan for the Jubilee Life Village (JLV), guided by ‘Stargazing’ and inspired by ‘Covered in Dust’, would prove to be a challenging endeavour. Sketches in figure 119.1 represent a few of the many sketches produced during this process.

The design began by trying to work with the stream as well as the current pedestrian movement across the site. The stream separated the site into two, which left the buildings somewhat disjointedly arranged on the site. This stream is by no means a magnificent river, but was rather created recently by the community because the rain would wash away the sand road, leaving them stranded. With the future development plans to be discussed on subsequent pages, storm-water management and proper roads will ensure the efficient channelling of the rain water.

From this, the design searched for something existing to anchor it whilst working with the stream, only controlling it more and using it for rain water collection. The contours and trees became design informers, however they lacked the strength that would endure a changing context (fig. 119.1.1-fig 119.1.3).

Thereafter the water collection points became a focus for the design, while working with the major trees on the site. This produced a ‘zig-zagging’ arrangement which made for awkward spaces along an unnatural path (fig. 119.1.4).

Moving from this point, the water collection point aligned themselves along a North-South axis which brought much comfort to the spaces that were being created. It is from this point that the final design was born. Fundamental elements of this concept that were carried through were, the different scales of the spaces, the agricultural boundaries, celebration of entry, the implied diagonal and the strong North-South axis. This system brought about an almost human proportioning system, which began the process of considering a higher geometrical ordering system to define the spaces (fig. 119.1.5).

With the site divided in two by a pedestrian walkway, the two separate spaces were interrogated with the circle and square as proportioning elements. Still searching for a higher proportional prescriber, the Golden Ratio entered the design mind-space.

The Golden Ratio was considered fairly early in the design process through having looked into the research of Eglash and his prognosis that all African societies design with fractals (the Golden Ratio is essentially a fractal) (2005).

Briefly, the BaNtwane do unconsciously use fractal theory in the design of the kgoros and the lapa spaces, but not to its proper degree.

This stage of the design combined two Golden Sections for the main gathering spaces, which also emphasised the entries into the spaces (fig 119.1.6).

With this solid geometrical foundation the design was comfortable in moving forward in considering the quality of space of the kgoros and the street dividing the two as well as the individual buildings as designed elements (fig. 119.1.7).

Figure 120.1 is the final sketch in the series of journeying to finalise a suitable site layout. This is not the final site layout, as the design of the individual buildings has variably altered the site arrangement.

Figure 121.1 is a sketch that principally introduces the final design site layout with the main theme that ties together all the other design principles from ‘Stargazing’ and ‘Covered in Dust’ as discussed on pages 82-84. This main theme is the principle of the rural mat (fig. 7.1).

The rural mat was, and in some instances still used for varying parts of rural life. It is made by the woman of the community, out of grass that has been woven together by plastic thread, wool or grass. It is a sleeping mat as well as a seat for sitting on the dirt.

The above mentioned sketch shows how the planted rows of the agricultural boundaries on either side of the site, working with the buildings and set up a strong linear East-West dialogue. The stronger North-South lines of the axis, pathways, trees and buildings act as the force that ties the complex together in the same way that the plastic thread, wool of grass would in a mat.

The angled tarred road to the North of the site as well as the angled pedestrian path that bisects the site, are both expressed in the built form as exceptions to the norm of the strong East-West and North-South geometry of the complex. These expressions are welcomed as celebrations of the two main entrances to the Jubilee Life Village.

Figures 122.1 - figures 123.4 on page 122 and 123, were produced as an exploration of the different spatial quality in the different areas of this stage of the design. They have been included as well as the images of the model as they are very close to the final design for the JLV, and, to some degree, represent the spatial qualities as the final design, to be seen from page 128 onwards.

The images of the model conclude the design development journey for the JLV and ‘Pêu’.
fig. 119.1.1 - fig. 119.1.7: A collection of process sketches showing the journey of finalising a site plan for the JLV.
fig. 120.1. Site plan
fig. 121.1. Site plan showing rural mat design theme
fig. 122.1. Sketch of the site plan for the JLV with references for the images to follow.

fig. 122.2. A: West pedestrian entry into the site.

fig. 122.3. B: Entrance of the main public space (public kgoro).

fig. 122.4. C: View across the public space to the worship hall (lekgotla).
fig. 123.1. D: View from the pastor’s house across the private communal space (private kgoro)

fig. 123.3. F: View from the shops under the lekgotla towards the worship hall.

fig. 122.2. E: South-West perspective of the worship hall.

fig. 124.1. G: North-West entrance to JLV with the worship hall.
fig. 124.1. Aerial view of model, with references to figs. 124.2 - 125.4.

fig. 124.2.B: North perspective

fig. 124.4.C: South elevation of the worship hall with visitor's accommodation and shops in foreground.
fig. 125.1. D: South-East perspective of worship hall with street and shops in foreground.

fig. 125.2. E: West perspective of the worship hall.

fig. 125.3. F: West perspective of the street with shops on the left and visitor's accommodation of the right.

fig. 125.4. G: North-West perspective of the worship hall.
“We cannot create modern church architecture in the true sense of the word since the content (the divine service) for which the form was created is an old tradition with no connection with the pressing problems of our time.”

Alvar Aalto
Architect, Alvar Aalto’s discontent with the current design realm of churches reveals an opportunity for design professionals to challenge the status quo of traditional operations of the church (Schildt, 1986).

As an introduction to the design of the Jubilee Life Village (JLV), from the perspective of it being a collection enclosed spaces, German Philosopher, Martin Heidegger, in an essay called ‘Building, Dwelling, Thinking’ notices how “a boundary is not that at which something stops, but, as the Greeks recognised, the boundary is that from which something begins presencing” (cited in Frampton, 1985:24). In order for the JLV to make its presence felt and known in the community, the design must be a welcoming environment and have pure, iconic forms. Aalto realises that and says that “A church...needs pure and devout forms, whatever these forms may be. Purity of form can only arise from careful and highly developed artistic work, which calls for a dedicated and highly developed artist” (Weston, 1995: 198).

‘Leungô’, which means ‘fruit’, is the presentation of such a carefully developed ‘artistic work’ and concludes the thesis and discovery of architectures contribution to positive rural development. The site plan of the JLV is used to indicate where the different aspects, as discussed, have been used in the final design of the JLV, such as programme, principles, and materials (plan not in scale). For a larger version of the site plan, and sections bisecting the site along the North-South axis, refer to the drawing attached to the holder of this thesis.

To be noted: as the site is longer along its North-South axis, the orientation of the site plan shifts by 90° counter-clockwise when compared to the future development image on page 117 (fig. 127.1.).

Concluding this final chapter are plans, elevations and views of the main focal building on the site, ‘the sacred’ building among ‘the profane’, so to speak. This building is the worship hall and will be discussed in further detail on page 142.
Fig 129.1: Site plan rotates 90° on the pages to follow due to the longer North-South axis.

Image by Google Earth, annotated by author.
fig. 131.1. Roof plan showing programme
public kgoro

strong axial relationship between pastor and worship hall

private kgoro
fig. 133.1. Floor plan showing relationship of public and private communal spaces (kgoros) as well as celebration of entrances.
fig. 134.1. A: View across the main public space (public kgoro), with worship hall in the background.

fig. 134.2. B: View across the private communal space (private kgoro) form the Pastor’s house.
fig. 135.1. C: Main entrance into the worship hall.

fig. 135.2. D: East entrance to the JLV with visitors on the left and shops on the right.
worship hall as a lekgotla

leungô | Jubilee Life Village
fig. 137.1. Floor plan showing location of enclosed spaces (lapas) and shaded gathering spaces (lekgotlas)
fig. 138.1. A: Teaching lapa with worship hall in the background.

fig. 138.2. B: Catering lapa with easy access of street for feeding schemes.
fig. 139.1. C: Lekgotla of the shops.

fig. 139.2. D: Lekgotla of the shops, street interface.
Hydraform

Earth-bags

local bricks

rammed earth

Earth-bags

local bricks

leungô | Jubilee Life Village
fig. 141.1. Floor plan showing variety of building materials used at the JLV Jubilee Life Village.
The worship hall, located on the Northern edge of the site for the JLV, is the epitome of Aalto’s prescription of what church ought to be. He says that “the role of the church is as much social as religious, and the majority of churches support a wide range of facilities on their parish centres” (1995:200).

As much as the JLV, as a grouping of buildings fulfilling many different social needs within the rural Tabakhubedu community, the worship hall also exists for such a purpose.

The open lekgotla design allows for many different uses of the space, such as community meeting, weddings and other typical celebrations. Also the relationship that the building has with the public kgoro is vitally important in its ability to evolve according to the function. There are two pulpits from which Pastor Mable can either address her smaller usual Sunday congregation (indicated as A, in fig. 142.1) or address a larger congregation of people seated on the gentle steps of the public kgoro (indicated as B, in fig. 142.1).

As discussed, the lekgotla will be made from rammed earth, in accordance with ‘Architectural Lab’, and experimenting on ways to enhance the local building techniques. Its bold aesthetic nature will contribute in making this an iconic building within the JLV and broader community as well. This design presentation will conclude with selected view (indicated in fig. 143.1 on page 143) of the lekgotla revealing its iconic nature.

fig. 142.1. Site plan of the JLV indicating location of the worship hall and the possibility to host different volumes of people.
fig. 143.1. Floor plan of the worship hall, showing open *lekgotla* style design, with capacity to be used for many different community functions.
fig. 144.1. South elevation as experience from the public kgoro.

fig. 144.1. North elevation as experienced from the street.
fig. 145.1. A: View of the lekgotla from the public kgoro.

fig. 145.2. B: View from the pulpit when service conducted to a larger congregation.

fig. 145.3. C: Interior of the lekgotla looking towards to pulpit that is used on regular Sunday gatherings.

fig. 145.4. D: North-West perspective of the worship hall.
“Societies of all kinds and in every part of the world need to account for the nature of their environment and man’s perceived place in the scheme of things, in order to give meaning, purpose and structure to living.” (2003:170)

Paul Oliver

fig 146.1. Peace at the end of the day. Photograph taken in Ntwane, Limpopo SA on the 18th of March 2009.
fig. 148.1. Aerial photograph of Ntware (red) with Moshate kgoro (indicated in yellow) & Tabakhubedu (blue). Main road indicated. Monageng household (yellow dot), Mohlamonyane household (blue dot), Benson Mathebe household (red dot), Kenneth Mathebe household (orange dot), Baptist church (green dot). Image by Google earth, annotated by author.
fig. 149.1. Aerial photograph of *Moshate kgoro* (dashed line), showing its origins: left- Mathebes of Motsomi (blue dotted line), right- Mathebes of Mpubame (red dotted line) and middle- Mathebes of Mathebe (yellow dotted line). Image also shows smaller *kgoros* (black line), *Kgoshi* meeting room (green dot), family linear progression (arrows), boys initiation (blue dots) & girls initiation (pink dot). Image by Google earth, annotated by author.
fig. 151.1. The *Moshate* with Tabakhubedu in the distance. The ancestor and cattle *kraal* (green), the mens *lekgotla* (dark blue), the place of the woman during *kgoma* (pink). The growth of the original community members: The Mathebes of Motsumi (light blue dotted arrow), the Mathebes of Mpumane (red dotted arrow) and the Mathebes of Mathebe (yellow dotted arrow).

Photograph taken in Ntwane, Limpopo SA (location indicated on fig. 149.1) on the 25th of April 2009.
Interviews

This is a list of the significant members of the BaNtwane community who were interviewed in the process of compiling 'Covered in Dust', as well as other people who assisted in understanding architectures contribution to rural development. The information in 'covered in dust' presents itself in a journal-entry format, due to the nature of garnering information in the field. A total of 12 days was spent in Ntwane, and upon each return the written documentation of the culture (historical and spatial) was transcribed directly into digital format, which also contributes to the journal-entry style in which the information is presented.

1. **Begin.** Ace Mathebe is in the process of compiling a full account of the origins of their community, tracking in detail the passage into South Africa, which is expected to go into publication by the end of 2009. I met with Ace on the 14th May 2009 at the Moshate in Ntwane to finalise the information gather for 'Covered in Dust'.

2. **Stargazing: Community Buy-in, YWAV.** Chris Harnish is the current architect for the YWAV project in Dennilton. He came into the project after Joseph Kennedy, and was forced to deal with the repercussions of a rural development project that began with without sufficient strategies put into place.

3. **Doctor Nobs Mwanda** is full time volunteer doctor at the COPESA crisis centre in Protea Glen, Soweto. Gavin Armstrong (former Wits School of Architecture graduate) and I were approached to submit a sketch design proposal for a community skill centre and library for the COPESA centre in Protia Glen. It was during this presentation where she illustrated the candle metaphor in regard to place appropriate design.

4. **Stargazing: Community Buy-in: Dr. Riba Mable Sibuyi** is a Baptist Union Pastor originally from Witbank. She began working in Dennilton as a teacher, her Aunt being the principal offered her a job as a teacher at the school. Even though she is a Baptist Union Pastor, she is not dogmatic in her approach to church, and the type of people she works with, especially working in Dennilton. She is well respected within the community through the work she has already done in uplifting the community, and is also well respected by the traditional leadership of the area, who believe in Ancestral worship.

   The headman gave Mable the property she is currently living on and conducting church services on because of the good work she was doing in the area, she had no money to pay for the land and the previous owners had died and the house would run into disrepair. Mable started the church in Tabakhubedu in 2007 with home cells, visiting members of the congregation. She was still travelling between Witbank, conducting services etc there and returning to Dennilton to the church here. The Baptist Union Head-quarters sent her a tent in which she could hold church services, which stayed with Mable until the end of 2008. The tent has been reclaimed as it needs to be used by another rural church.

   At the moment, they don't have anywhere to conduct church, so they are using the ruins of the old house on the site as their building, which is not suitable as it does not have a roof - which in an area with so much rain is not ideal. The biggest motivator for Mable needing a building is so that people can come to a place and find her if they need concealing etc. Also to run training workshops for the community she needs appropriate facilities. Such training workshops would include ABET (adults Basic Education and Training) which she was actively involved with in Witbank. She is already working with some of the elderly women in the community in this field, as well as teaching the community on cash generation and skills to do so with.

   Mable believes this is the practical work of Jesus Christ. As a pastor she firmly believes that her work is not only from the pulpit- its 7 days a week job, that requires dedication, and energy.

5. **Stargazing: Community Buy-in:** Roger Galloway is a Graphic Designer and Entrepreneur working with the Lubanzi Village near Coffee Bay.

6. **Stargazing: ‘Precedent’, YWAV.** Cynthia and Jabu Nkosi live on the site with their three children, and have personally adopted three orphaned children from the community. Jabu inherited the land from his grandmother, who insisted that Jabu stay on the land. I met with Cynthia and Jabu on the 13th of March 2009 at YWAV to discuss the YWAV Centre.

7. **Covered in Dust: Home.** Mrs. Monageng tells the story of how she came to donate her house to us. A few years ago, there was a young American gentlemen who was doing some work in the school of which she is the principal. When he returned to America with his fiancé, they got married and Mrs. Monageng was invited to the wedding. This white couple were so hospitable that she realized that we are all one family, regardless of skin colour, economic status etc, the essence of Ubuntu. A brief aside: on social networking- the bride was doing work in South Africa with Cynthia from YWAV (to be discussed in subsequent pages), so Cynthia was also invited to the wedding- to be a bridesmaid in fact. So Mrs. Monageng knows Cynthia well as they stayed in the same room in America.
8. Covered in Dust. Before arriving in Ntwane, my intention for the first visit was to touch base with the people that I would be working with, plant my feet firmly on the ground, *per se*, and consider the most appropriate way in which to proceed with my research on subsequent visits. I decided during the morning of my first visit it would be prudent of me to meet with the Chief of the area, or at least the Headman, as this is still a monarchist society. I left the house with Karabo Monageng who is the eldest daughter (23 years old) of the Monageng family, to find the Chief of the area to meet him and engage in conversation with him concerning the area in general, its history and architectural heritage. The Chief was not in Ntwane during my first visit to the area and therefore most of the following information was garnered from the Kgoshi (the traditional ruling body) as well as individual informal meetings with local residents. My first visit to the area was on the 13th of March 2009.

9. Covered in Dust: BaNtwane. To understand the building process in Moutse, I met with Jeremy- a Zimbabwean Builder who lives in the first generation house at Monagengs. Jeremy met his current employer when he went to a building site where his friend was working. He told the contractor, Mr. Mohlamonyane that he was available to work, and has since been employed by the contractor. The client is a teacher who contacted Mr. Mohlamonyane; who is apparently a very well known and well respected contractor for the area, to build his house for him.

10. Covered in Dust: Architectural Flair. The Monageng family; residing in Ntwane (fig 49.1 in appendix A.1, pg. 49), are a well respected family in the BaNtwane community- ranking forth in the hierarchy of families in the area. The Monageng family consists of Mrs. Monageng; who is the headmistress of a nearby primary school, and her three daughters and one son. All children stay in Pretoria, the eldest daughter, Karabo is working, the son is also staying with his sisters, the next daughter is studying at The University of Pretoria, and the youngest daughter is still in school. The late Mr. Monageng was born in the area where the family now lives. Toward the end of 2008 he suffered a stroke, from which he battled to recover from and in May 2009 unfortunately passed away. In his youth he owned three taxi’s and worked as a driver and this is how he earned enough money to build the houses on the property.

11. Covered in Dust: Architectural Flair. David ‘Kwena’ Mohlamonyane’s is a Traditional Healer who trained as a *sangoma* from 1995-1999 in Tafelkop, and is referred to as ‘Kwena’ by the community. His household is located on the main road as indicated in figure 49.1 (appendix A.1, pg. 49). Max Mohlamonyane, one of the students greeted in the lounge of the home and explained the intricacies of the house complex.

I was invited to attend one of the cultural dancing practice sessions. A chair was placed in front of the group. It was a great honour and privilege to have been able to observe this part of their culture. I left David’s house that evening quite in awe of how welcoming, generous and friendly this often negatively stigmatized portion of society was to us this day.

After three songs I was invited to have some tea and biscuits in the main house. Where Max joined us and we chatted some more, and took some photos. The contrast in contexts is so stark, yet only 5 meters apart. Moving from the lapa outside, with its deep traditional ambiance to the zebra-print covered lounge suite, watching ‘Channel O’ with surround sound inside drinking tea and eating ‘Marie-biscuits’.

12. Covered in Dust: Architectural Flair. Kalane Benson Mathebe is the last born of four brothers and as such, he remained in the original house, the first generation house in the 4 house complex (fig 49.1 in appendix A.1, pg. 49) located in the Moshate kgoro.

13. Covered in Dust: Architectural Flair. Kenneth Mathebe is the eldest born male of his household located in Tabakhubedu (fig 49.1 in appendix A.1, pg. 49). He brought out a picture he had drawn of the house and began to explain the significance behind the specific arrangement of the separate houses. He was willing to draw the house in plan to explain the different functions of the spaces. As he was drawing, the younger brother and his pregnant sister showed me around the house. When I had concluded my visit to the household, the family brought out a melon and we where able to share the fruit together.

14. Covered in Dust: Architectural Flair. The land for the Baptist Church was owned by Mr. Ngodela who was the original minister, but has since passed away. The Baptist church is located 100m away from David Mohlamonyane’s house (fig 49.1 in appendix A.1, pg. 49). Mr. Ngodela’s successor, Mr. Motau built the current church, but has since left to plant a new church at Marapjane. His Successor, Mr. Makena is the current minister from the immediate area and has been leading the church for 3 years now.
I arrived at Roger Galloway’s house at about 19:00 after a 14hr drive from JHB to Zithulele Hospital near Coffee Bay.

From his house, he took us straight to a nearby traditional hut that we would be staying in for that evening. The hut belonged to the Siyephu family and could only be accessed with a 4x4 (in winter as long as you have some clearance a 2x4 is fine but after heavy rains you can’t even do it in a 4x4) as the condition of the ‘road’ would prove impossible for any other vehicle. The house is magically situated on top of a hill overlooking where the river meets the sea. In this area it is illegal to build anything with 1000m of the shoreline / high water mark, which has for the most part, preserved the wild coast’s natural beauty. The land around the house is where Roger intends to initiate his community development project, which will take the form of accommodation/ backpacker etc.

The hut was in Lubanzi village and our accommodation and meal was part of the Lubanzi Project, which is in partnership with the Jabulani Foundation. Roger's Adventure / mission organisation called Cross Country Missions supports the Lubanzi Project. It is part of his community development strategy to take tourists, volunteers and outreach teams to the village and be hosted by different families in the community. The family would / is paid for the accommodation and food and a portion of what the family had earned would go into the community bank account, the treasurer of which was one of the community leaders.

After an incredible nights rest, we discussed the plan for the rest of the day. Roger had a committee meeting with the community leaders, but unfortunately it was cancelled because the only translator for him fell ill. So he took us down to where the river meets the sea (Mncwasa Mouth). From the beach we walked up to a crèche where he has been involved, by facilitating outreach teams through Cross Country.

When we arrived at the crèche we learned that the community leaders had phoned another translator to be able to have the meeting. What Roger thought was just going to be a general meeting, turned out to be a meeting just to discuss his vision for the community. This was a brilliant opportunity for me to experience the excellent manner in which Roger went about fulfilling his vision for the community - and that is through community buy-in. He briefly explained the process of development, and the leaders where all in agreement with him.

Just down the cliff from the crèche is an illegal development of holiday homes, which are built within the 1000m line which is in direct contravention of the DEAT (Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism) protection against the misuse of the shoreline. Subsequently the houses have to be taken down and the owners charged for the cost of rehabilitating the land which they destroyed.

To gain a better understanding of the work that Roger is involved with in this area I compiled a few questions, which he graciously answered as follows:

1. **What is your vision for the community, and associated timeline?**
   “The way I see it, “YOUR vision”, can be birthed independently from a community, but its then imperative that the “product” be readdressed once adequate research has been done. And “your vision” might have to change totally if it wasn’t compatible with the community you are intending to work with. I don’t have a clear picture in my head, it is constantly growing, moulding, refining and clarifying. But, the vision as I currently see it... slowly build genuine relationships with members of the Lubanzi, Zithulele and sea view communities build a database of members of the community, traditional/political/religious leaders and NGOs, so as to be able to network, share and work together with people and so as not to duplicate projects or limit resources to setup 2 households for a “rural homestay experience”, providing direct income for 2 families and indirectly benefitting the greater community and offering genuine African experience for people from a different culture, while exposing both parties to different world view to implement projects, encouraging community mobilization and focusing on evangelical (where appropriate), tourism and environmental issues to setup additional accommodation in the Lubanzi community. Built and run on green technology and techniques while being culturally contextual with part ownership and or profit share going the Lubanzi community. With the purpose of providing accommodation to volunteers and outreach teams who will be working in the local area. As well as for the short term traveller such as the backpacking market. And more permanent accommodation for hospital staff, people in the development industry and missionaries, thereby creating a small community of like minded, positive, proactive people who are able to live in a encouraging, supportive, aesthetic, low impact environment create businesses and employment around accommodation and tourism to setup a the infrastructure to facilitate volunteer groups and individuals all of the above are integrally linked and rely on each other.”

2. **In what ways is your vision “flexible, and do you think it should be (if you do)?**
   “Flexible? It has to be or you will fail. I have already had to change plans and rethink many things such as venue, relationships, focus you need to be open to where God is nudging you, you can force it if you want but you will be settling for a much smaller dream.”

3. **Describe the structure of the ‘vehicle’ for rural development in your commu-**
4. How did you gain entry into the community?
“Mainly through the hospital, through networking, friends of friends, common ground church and just making an effort to meet people in the community motivation?”

5. What is the value in having spent time to observe and learn from the culture of the community?
“Getting to understand the community, the methods of tackling problems, the structure of leadership, problems in the area such as criminal, political, traditional. As well as what the needs are as opposed to what we assume the needs are. And to slowly gain the trust of the community and to learn who you can trust”

6. What is the process of developing the rural community, how is the ‘local person’ going to be developed, as in, his/her capacity to change their current situation being increased?
“It would depend on who the person is we are working in the schools, offering introduction classes to computers changing the spiritual climate through prayer and intercession recognizing potential and trying to support it expanding mind sets and giving hope facilitating resources from more affluent communities providing direct and indirect jobs through the various projects and businesses”

7. In the local term, how will your project have transformed the community? Built form, economics, skills etc.
“One cannot promise change for to change happen is largely dependent on the community we plan to creating opportunity, education (not necessarily in the traditional sense) and support”

8. How will the project get built? (By whom, with what money?) And how will this process be beneficial to the locals?
“Slowly. We will try motivate for funding but failing that we will use our own money if we have to I have already listed how the local community will benefit”

9. How do you think architecture can best contribute to rural development?
“Through spatial layout, environmental awareness and providing a big picture where the layman can only see a part of it as well as creating a space that is pleasant, functional and aesthetic.”
“A broad approach of this kind permits simultaneous appreciation of the vital roles, in the process of development, of many different institutions...and opportunities of open dialogue and debate.”

Amartya Sen

fig. 156.1. Who owns the pot?
Photograph taken in Tabakhubedu, Limpopo SA on the 1st of April 2009
Books


Theses


Internet

Coleman, L. in www.ted.com accessed on 9 October 2009 @ http://www.ted.com/talks/liz_coleman_s_call_to_reinvent_liberal_arts_education.html

Ernst Ulrich von Weizsäcker accessed on 14 September 2009 @ http://www.basehabitat.ufg.ac.at


Tregoning.com accessed on 24 May 2009 @ http://www.tesort.com/all/africanmarriage_rnr.htm


DVD


Audio


Images


www.bennington.edu accessed on 20 August 2009 @ http://www.bennington.edu/images/dmlImage/StandardImage/37%20In%20VAPA.JPG


www.terrafirmabuilders.ca accessed on 14 October 2009 @ http://www.terrafirmabuilders.ca/