PRINCIPLES
Architectural Principles

Introduction

The principles link the theoretical argument to the architectural expression. The themes of the principles are those used to analyse the context study. Each principle begins with the theoretical argument. This argument becomes the basis for the principle. New authors have been referenced to provide an academic foundation to the context study, interviews and mappings.
Fragmentation is part of how we perceive an entire building or neighbourhood, i.e. in fragments. Aldo Rossi describes his experiences in Italy in his book, ‘A Scientific Autobiography’ as fragments and objects. The intervention will have a discernable identity created by the building language and the overall object. The streets of the existing urban fabric will run into the site, fragmenting the site into parts. The memory aspect will be fragmented and scattered throughout the site. The removed buildings will be superimposed onto the new buildings. This will fragment the massing of each building. Large columns and their shadows will fragment the massing further.

Norberg-Schulz said that we gradually construct an image of our structured world (1986:29). The intervention creates a single image at first glance. Through a process of layering, the form and structure of the building becomes more complex and fragmented. The intervention will be structured with a hierarchy of spaces. It will be business at the busier end of the site and housing at the quieter end. The business section will border a large, active public square. The housing will surround a quieter, smaller, semi-private square.

A series of layered columns creates a hierarchy of structure. A colonnade at ground floor would be smaller, more structured and define the colonnade edge.
Layering

Layer the new buildings over and around the existing buildings to create a rich layering of physical memory on site.

From the context study, layering is a subtle yet common phenomenon in Marabastad. Over time, spaces have been layered and expanded. Additions have been made to the original structure to suit the situation. These additions are made possible by the original, generic building and the set space around it. The intervention will allow additions and layering of space onto existing structures on the site, thus continuing the existing pattern of layering building additions with generic structures and space allowance.

Legibility

Towers and squares create landmarks and legibility

In the theory, Norberg-Schulz said that there are general structures common to all personal spaces. These are similarity, continuity, closure and proximity (1986:29). Buildings with continuity contextualise better with their surroundings. The buildings should have a perceivable proximity to one another. This creates legibility through space, which helps one structure one’s environment. Each building will respond to the surrounding buildings through scale, function and language.
RECREATE FUNCTIONS

Functions from the existing Marabastad will be continued into the new site to provide continuity.

A mixture of functions re-create the diversity associated with historical Marabastad.

MARABASTAD

Marabastad was once diverse in function. There were various gathering places in: mosques, churches, temples, cinemas, swimming pools, dance halls. There were schools, police stations, jail houses. Houses had shopfronts, tenants and backyard kitchens. The present lack of homes has left Marabastad without all of that diversity. Now, everything is retail. There is very little mixed use. The intervention will reintroduce many of the functions that have been erased in the forced removals.

SERVICES

Pockets of daily functions mix private life into the public realm.

Young said that memory should fuse public and private memory (1993:15). Jane Jacobs in ‘Life and Death of Great American Cities’ describes the street on which she grew up. There was a relationship between the private and public realm. The connection was in the lobby spaces, visual connection to the street and a relationship of trust between residents and shopkeepers. There is a distinction between private and public life though the more they mix the richer the environment. I experienced this in the interviews. The interviewees all talked of friendly relationships within a neighbourhood. Pockets of private activity are intertwined into the public realm. These include services like wash areas, public phones and clusters of seating where eating occurs.
HUMAN SCALE

The scale of the buildings and the material sizes will be scaled according to human proportions. A person can relate to the total size of the building by measuring their body in relation to the building.

WEATHERING

Materials that record the passage of time over many years will be used. Thereby evolving its character and anchoring the building in that environment.

In the South African case studies, human scale is maintained in the buildings. In the context study, human scale is inherent in all the old buildings. The single- and double-storey buildings in the surrounding context relate to the street. They create steps and thresholds. The roofs are almost touchable. The materials and objects, like columns, allow one to measure one's own body, as opposed to it being lost in the grand scale of the train station. These forms of scale will be applied to the intervention.

Materials change over time. Young said (in relation to static, polished granite monuments) that we must remember that memory is not as static as these monuments (1993: 30). Materials can be used to record the passage of time, the change over time. New character appears in older materials. Wood slowly decays. It traces the sun's rays at the end of the wood. It becomes polished by the touch of many people. Copper oxidises to a unique green colour over time. Brass takes the fingerprints of people who touch it. Materials that record time will be used. To avoid the perception that these materials or the detail have failed, the material change will be controlled. It will appear as patterns, lines and points.
THRESHOLD

Threshold spaces facilitate interaction between public and private realms, fusing 2 opposite types of memory.

TACTILE MATERIALS

Tactile materials will be used where people engage with the building linking the building to memory of the body.

In the context study, it became clear that verandas and colonnades were transition spaces between the public and private realms. The concept of verandas and colonnades would be carried through into the new buildings. Where these were not applicable, other transition spaces would be used, for example, lobby spaces and staircase landings. Verandas, colonnades, lobbies, communal corridors and large landings create spaces for social interaction to occur. Dewar, in ‘South African Cities: A Manifesto for Change,’ said that places of interaction are vital to making urban systems (1991: 27). Interaction would occur between the residents in semi-private and semi-public thresholds. Covered streets with plenty of urban furniture would help make the streets more inhabitable. People could inhabit the streets as they do at the taxi rank east of the station.

Juhni Pallasmaa, in ‘Eyes of the Skin,’ said that architecture is mediated through our senses. Pallasmaa also stated that we transport all the places we experience into the incarnate memory of our body (1996:50). Therefore our senses are strongly attached to memory. Tactile materials experienced through the body become memorable, for example, the warm, smooth touch of polished wood that hints at a textured grain. Tactile materials will be used where people touch the building. Materials and textures that allow one to measure one’s own body will be used.