The site also functions as a destination point, although geographically strategized as a link. As such, it perpetuates the existing elitist notions, despite the best efforts and intentions of the architects to symbolize otherwise.

**Architectural response: form, function and the portrayal of power**

The complex houses two arms of provincial government, namely the legislature and the executive. The complex favors centrality on the site with all major civic related facilities facing the ‘patleleo’ or ‘peoples square’, which is circular in plan. The more private spaces including the office wings are located along radials from the central ‘patleleo’

The legislative building and conical tower are the highest and most dominant buildings. The conical tower serves as a landmark, and incorporates restrooms for the patleleo, a museum of the history of the Northern Cape, as well as speaker’s platform that looks out onto the patleleo and to the suburbs and town of Kimberly.

The tower is earth colored and adorned by artwork in the form of colored glass balls that symbolize scarification and refer to local history. (Page ed. 2003:22). Several journals have made mention of the symbolic ‘sundial’ function of the tower. (after Page, low, Shepard and Woode) the legislative building seen from the patleleo seems symmetrical in its overall form although the facade treatments of the two wings vary. The supposed axis of symmetry marks the movement path through the building, which is used by both the parliamentarians and the public, however the parliamentarians are more likely to use the northern entrance that links directly to their office wing. The legislative building also houses a separate auditorium and large multi-functional foyer space capable of staging events.

The premier’s office fronts the patleleo and is symmetrical about its central movement path. The front facade to the building feature two prominent ‘horns’ that is thought to symbolize welcoming arms. This elevation is also decorated with artistic symbols that communicate “the prestige of its function, symbolizing the role of the premier on behalf of the people”. Various decorative symbols communicate the responsibility of government to the people and this acts as a public visual narrative. (Woode ed 2005:53)
The complex includes many other symbolic references to the anti-apartheid struggle. One of these are mosaic portraits of key figures in the history of the Northern Cape. Incorporated into the facades of the buildings. Another two are the Madiba Park and heroes mile. Madiba park is a circular garden space incorporating local and exotic plants that symbolize the diverse and varied composition of the national community. The heroes mile is a path scattered with concrete figureheads of local anti-apartheid icons. (Woode ed. 2005:53)

Security is achieved in the complex by the use of perimeter fencing, a security checkpoint for processing visitors, security guards at the entrance to the legislature and premier’s office and c.c.t.v cameras that are mounted on the tower for “scanning the perimeter of the site.” (Page ed 2003:22)

North elevation, South elevation, Plan of Legislative building (Shepard ed. 2006:12)

From the above we see the use of architecture to portray power. From the many ways, which the complex achieves, this, 3 are highlighted:

- The use of strong vertical elements such as the conical tower and high volume of the legislative building create iconic landmarks in the predominantly flat landscape.
• The use of perimeter security fencing and visible security guards creates the impression of the importance of the institution housed.
• The orientation of the main legislative building to the point of entry, and the use of perceived symmetry creates a strong axial view on approach. The high volumes and unique shapes of the buildings create a strong building profile, the use of a vast empty space in front of the building, adds to this axial view.

Analytical sketch: strong building profile

Analytical sketch: strong axial view

The building in relation to the theoretical context

The use of architecture to construct nationalism
The building is a deliberate attempt to distinguish itself the architecture of the apartheid state. This is achieved by means of location, building arrangement and architectural articulation that creates a strong contrast to the past:

• The complex locates itself within the historic apartheid buffer zone between the ‘white’ town of Kimberly and the ‘black’ township of Galeshewe
• The arrangement of buildings is not based on an orthogonal street grid but arranged around a large circular civic square with buildings radiate out form it.
• The language of the architecture favors circular and free form geometry that contrast the flat roofed modernist governmental buildings associated with the apartheid state.

The building uses application of artwork and symbols onto the building that direct a visual narrative. An example of this is the heroes wall where mosaic portraits of key figures in the history of the province are displayed. It is interesting to note that these portraits exclude figures associated to the apartheid government even though it is a strong part of the history of the area. The narrative shows portraits of the founders of Kimberly to important political and social activist, anti apartheid icons and the current leaders of the province and county. In this way a narrative is created that selectively blocks out aspects of the past that are contrary to the current political opinion of the patron.

The use of indigenous plants, surfaces, textures and colours resonate with the surrounding landscape imply a connection to the natural, which is setup in contrast to the apartheid cityscape, hence legitimizing the political position of those currently in power that financed the buildings.

**The role of the elite in the production of an architecture that reinforces the political status quo**

Although the rhetoric is unity, the site selection simultaneously reinforces the association to the township by geographically locating itself closer to it than to

Below: Photos of the complex (Shepard ed. 2006:13)
Kimberly, as well as keeping the township at a distance by locating the entrance and orientating the complex to this point that faces away from the township and securing itself with high perimeter fences. Even when the architects propose certain pedestrian paths that would link into the township, the perimeter fence blocks them, and even if the fence did not exist the entrance sequence favors the motorist by keeping him on the strongest composed view axis.

Analytical sketch: view sequence favoring motorist

The use of high perimeter fencing reinforces elitist perceptions of the government by excluding the majority of people access to the spaces that were supposedly designed for them. Special reference is made to the patiele which due to the tight security and mono-functionality of the complex is reduced to a civic square used for the commemoration of certain events.

The postcolonial post apartheid project that in attempting to differentiate itself from apartheid and colonial era spatial and architectural legacies actually recoup the methodologies in the creation of a new architectural identity.

In an earlier portion of this chapter the various colonial architectural strategies used to ‘domesticate’ colonial subjects were discussed. These are:
- Using of a new and different architectural expression to highlight itself and prove supremacy over the existing context
- Using architecture to form and remold collective memories using processors that include neutralization, re-creation and reconstruction of site and landscape in contrast to existing values
- Using architecture as a symbol of hope

We see the project complying to these strategies:
- The architectural language of the complex’s curvilinear and slopped wall geometry contrast the existing modernist flat roofed architectural context associated with the previous administration
- The use of a neutral site in aparantheids buffer-zone, organic building placement and circular central square affirms this
- The building is clearly seen as a citadel of hope, as it “marks a new beginning in the city’s history: as a
symbol of remembrance and healing and as a landscape that connects the city’s people to their divided past and shared future.” (Shepard ed. 2006:11)

**Architecture as an icon of economic development**

- The complex of such a scale and quality has clearly brought attention to the city and province and the city is seen in terms of national and international architectural discourse. Woode concurs as he regards the buildings as “a statement of creative design that will do the Province of the Northern Cape proud on both a national and international level, as an inspired resolution capturing the spirit of its government seat in the province.” (ed 2005:50)

**Conclusion**

Through its deliberate location between the ‘black’ Galeshewe township and the ‘white’ main town of Kimberly the complex intended to stitch the divide created by apartheid segregationist planning. However, from aerial photography the site simultaneously locates itself closer to the township to suggest affinity to it, and turns its back to it by facing powerful axial views in line with an approaching motorist from the opposite direction and securing itself from it using high perimeter fencing and patrolling security guards. The site is thus seen as a destination point and not as a link between segregated portions as many publications suggest. As such the site simultaneously legitimizes the political position of its patrons as it perpetuates the elitist favored status quo.

Symbolic references are extended to the architecture and articulation of the built form. The complex uses a variety of techniques to legitimize the political position of its patron while reinforcing the political status quo. These include the use of natural colours textures and indigenous landscaping; organic arrangement of spaces around the organically shaped patleleo; use of strong building profiles and axial approaches and including visual narratives contributed by local effort.

By the same means it reinforces the postcolonial and post apartheid project and creates a symbol of hope and positive change. However while the complex provokes accessibility it actually distances itself from the everyday lives of ordinary people.
National Parliaments
The National Assembly Complex; Dhaka, Bangladesh; by Louis I. Khan, completed 1983

"Bangladesh’s capital complex in Dhaka is both an important facility for an emerging nation state as a stage in the evolution in an architects work as such it can be seen in relation to both a society and an individual career.” (Vale 1992:236)

The country of Bangladesh, located to the east of India, only came into being following a civil war of 1971. Previously Bangladesh was considered as a province of Pakistan known as East Pakistan. The complex was not designed for Bangladesh but for East Pakistan. The history of this project stands out since the assembly building was built after Bangladeshi independence of Pakistan, using the same design commissioned by the earlier regime. (Vale 1992)

Although the architecture is a result of the architectural career of Louis I Khan, a modernist master, this exploration will focus on the relationship the complex had to the Bangladeshi people as it resonates with the purpose of this exploration

Site Analysis

The site shown to Khan was an “expansive flat site, near a military airport outside the city.” (Goldhagen 2001:167). This raises two important points. The first being its compliance to the postcolonial tendency to move outside of the urban center in order to build on neutral ground for
the purposes of creating a highly visible architectural icon in contrast to the context of the existing fabric. The second point is its proximity to the military airbase. This is significant because majority of parliamentarians that attended the sitting of parliament had to be flown in from West Pakistan, and given the fact that Ayub Khan, the client of the building, ascended to power in Pakistan by military means, is a clear indication of the elitist nature of the site preference.

The site is easily identified off aerial photography given its vastness and contrast to the tight knit urban fabric of the rest of the city. The site is split into 3 portions known as ‘the citadel of assembly’ to the south, the ‘ citadel of institutions’ to the north and a hospital complex to the northwest. Guirgola states that the realized plan was a result of changes to the Khan plan at different stages in the life of the project. What remains common however is the citadel of assembly and its separation of the citadel of institutions. the site in total comprises of a thousand aches, which is monumental both in terms of size and comparison to the urban fabric of Dhaka.

As such we see that the site was as a result of an elitist preference as well as complying to postcolonial tendencies. White in other situations the proximity to an airport of important road or rail link might signify greater regional affinity, the proximity to the military airport is a clear indication of the West Pakistani supremacy and elitist tendencies.
Architectural response: form, function and the portrayal of power

The immediate portrayal of power without seen in the understanding of site, is the sheer grandiose scale of both the building and site. It is interesting to note that the building as it has been realized is a scaled down version of the architects initial designs. “The first perspectives of the national assembly building proposed a scale so huge that the users appeared as barely more than staccato dots at the base of the projected buildings.” (Goldhagen 2001:174)

The citadel of assembly consists of a monumental assembly building located in the middle of the site surrounded by a monumental crescent like reflection pool. To the west of the assembly building, along the banks of this ‘manmade lake’ are the ministers residences and the residences of the secretaries. To the east of the assembly building are along the same lake are the residences for the members of the assembly and connecting dinning halls.

The main assembly building consist of the circular assembly chamber in the center, forming the largest and highest volume. To the northeast, northwest, southeast and southwest are rectangular shaped office wings and impressive height, though less than the main chamber. The hall of delegates is square in plan with the addition of smaller circular spaces at each corner. This forms the southern wing of the building. The square shaped entrance hall is located to the north and fronts the presidential esplanade. The east and west wings consist of on oval shaped chamber for ministers, and a square shaped circulation well respectively. Each of the wings are accessed via the monumental ambulatory which exists in the space between the inner core of the assembly and the outer core of the other wings.