

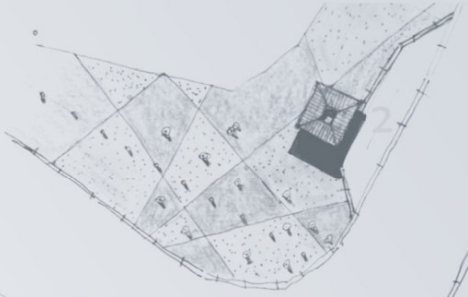
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# Architecture of empowerment

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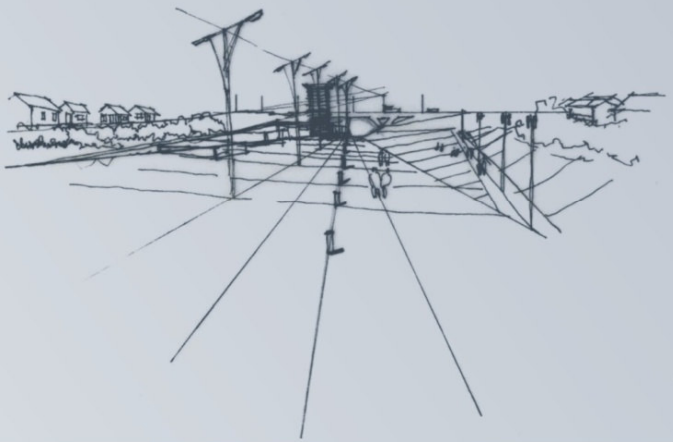
Student: Sphelele Nxumalo

# Architecture of Empowerment:

## Socio-economic empowerment in a Contemporary Marginalized Society of Thokoza




Supervisor: Ms. Anne Fitchett




ARCHITECTURE OF EMPOWERMENT

**ARCHITECTURE OF EMPOWERMENT**

SOCIO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN A CONTEMPORARY MARGINALIZED SOCIETY OF THOKOZA

S'phelele Nxumalo

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Engineering and Built Environment, University of the Witwatersrand, in fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Masters in Architecture.

Johannesburg, 2007

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Please note that all sketches, drawings, illustrations and photographs are taken by the author unless otherwise stated.

**Dedications**

This document is dedicated to my Mother **Badelile Muriel Nxumalo**
(1949-11-21 to 2003-07-24) and her sister (my second Mother) **Fikile Makhaya** (1939-04-01 to 2007-05-22)

Without your love and guidance
This journey would have been nightmarish than pleasant
I might not see you anymore
But I feel your presence around me even more
I still hear your voices inside my head everyday
Have peaceful lives…after life

Bhungane, Mthimkhulu,
Mashiy' amahle njengenyamazane,
Sgoloza es'mehl' abovu
Esabhek' umuntu samjamela,
Umfaz' omabele made,
Owancelis' ingane ingale komfula.
Ubhungane ongamakhulukhulu
Angangoboya benyathi.

Niphumule ngok'thula

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I hope I'm not forgetting anyone, if I did please understand that thesis is a mind bugging exercise, I cannot be held responsible. Thanks again may God bless you all in every way.

**Declaration**

I declare that this thesis '*Architecture of empowerment in a marginalized society of Thokoza'* is my own, unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Masters in Architecture in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

_____
(Signature of candidate)

_____day of

_____20_____



# 01. Introduction

# CHAPTER 01: INTRODUCTION

## ARCHITECTURE OF EMPOWERMENT

### Socio-economic empowerment in a contemporary marginalized community: *Thokoza*

The focus underpinning this thesis is empowerment in previously marginalized communities. The inspiration for the choice of study area is an interest in social behavior, the stimulation of the environment (both built and natural), versus the human response.

The governments' attempts to provide **urban black housing** initially in the early 1920's, in the 1950's and later in the mid 1990's within different periods of political systems has contributed to contemporary Johannesburg's issues around **urban dilapidation**. A brief history of urban black housing in South Africa will be provided in the next chapters, however Apartheid planning principles implemented in the 1950's will be looked at in finer detail. The impacts of the urban housing strategies on the social and built dimension of the city will be analyzed according to the provision of 'facilities' in relation to the user's needs.

The **deconstructive** concept of the **centre and the margin** strongly manifest itself in South African city planning; part of the thesis is pinned at establishing balance between these extremes. Segregation, separation of the margin from the center achieved by the techniques (built and natural buffers) of Apartheid planning to obtain socio-economic, cultural, and racial divide, is one of the oldest and major problems in the city. However with

the fall of apartheid this divide is no longer along racial lines but has become a separation between economic groups. Achieving balance between these worlds of polar socio-economic class separated by city planning principles is the reasoning behind this thesis document to focus on socio-economic empowerment.

**Human behavioral studies** show that the environment has direct psychological links with human behavior, which in return humans also have influence on the environment giving rise to an infinite vicious circle. This study demonstrates that architecture cannot be dealt with in isolation with regards to the needs of the end user.

It is indispensable that one defines the concept of **empowerment** in fine tune detail for the reader to understand the angle at which this thesis is projected. One needs to clearly evaluate what it means to empower and how providing the means of empowerment can help solve current township and city problems. It is also important to note that the township has a complex hierarchy of socio-economic levels and classes that need to be taken into consideration and cannot be dealt with in isolation.