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Varsity

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‘VARSITY

An exploration into a metropolitan university in Springs

The Metropolitan area of Ekurhuleni is experiencing a sluggish transformation in its spatial, economic and social qualities. The deserted infrastructure established in the prosperity of the mining boom now lays dormant with a tentative future.

The town of Springs suffers from a degeneration of commercial and industrial activity, resulting in the general abandonment of social enterprise. Due to the effects of urban degrowth and urban sprawl, it has lost its qualities of community and unified ambition. There is however, still the opportunity to change direction.

Local municipalities have developed a strategic goal of establishing an Ekurhuleni University. Those with authority on the initiative have stated that the “university is no longer a matter for discussion, it’s a developmental imperative for the City’s future and that of the country.”

Their intention realises that the trial of a new generation striving for education is founded in their restricted access to institutions. However, it neglects the re-imagining of the existing infrastructure and facilities.

The intention of this project is to understand how this decline in Springs, can form a solution for the multi-racial, post-colonial town in a changing country. Bound to this intention are the questions around the future of South African tertiary institutions and the realisation of a decolonised university.

Though these questions of an entire university campus, finely inserted into an existing town, cannot be answered with this project, a single inclusive intervention is proposed to form the spine of a future, expansive university. It gives an example and proof that the broader scheme could result in a new direction for Ekurhuleni and its people.

