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Adaptability in the design of sports facilities: an adaptive re-use of no.3 square grounds, Alexandra, Johannesburg

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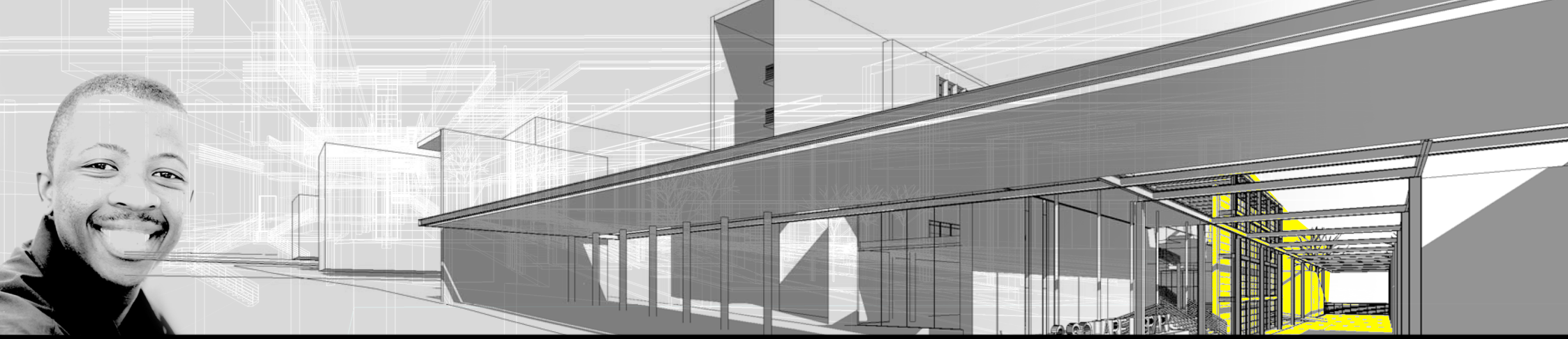

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Adaptability in the Design of Sports Facilities

ABSTRACT

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This dissertation proposes a humanistic (people oriented) approach to architectural design, placing its residents at the focal point of the design process. It is strongly believed that Alex is highly characterized by its people. They create the animated cultural character of the place and should play a vital role in the design of the new facility being proposed. It suggests a humanistic (people orientated) approach to architectural design, placing residents at the focal point of the design process. The researcher holds that Alexandra Township in north-east Johannesburg is highly characterized by its people who create the animated cultural character of the place and who should therefore play a vital role in the design of the new facility being proposed. Architecture should be able to acknowledge and draw inspiration from its surroundings and provide solutions efficient and flexible enough for interaction between the space created and the end-user. As such, in identifying potential public space, one needs to look at variables and attributes with substantial information for concise interrogation of the chosen area. This proposed research paper (dissertation) will be looking at how a well-designed public space can be of importance within a township characterized by a high population density, crime, poverty and social issues. A need for an efficient and adaptable public space with recreational qualities becomes pertinent in addressing the above-mentioned social issues. The problems of contested space and insufficient land for creation of such public space form part of the two core variables necessary for site selection of this endeavour. At No.3 Square Grounds, located in Alexandra Township, there is an existing under-utilised facility identified as a site for this exercise. To facilitate the spatial design of the required programme a comprehensive and context-driven analysis is used to start the design dialogue between this facility and another empty site located to the south of it. In response to the theories investigated in driving the design of a sport and recreational facility, the possibilities are explored of sport as a tool for social inclusion and integration, adaptive re-use of existing space and response to contextual needs, as well as understanding of the built environment in informal and kinetic cities. The design of the facility aims to provide programmes that will redress social and cultural issues, along with those of academic development. The key to the success of the project includes the promotion of health and wellness for residents of the township, physical activity, social interaction, skills transfer, and recreational amenities. Hence, the potential of sport and recreation as a means of Peace-keeping and self-actualisation within a crime-stricken society is an additional variable to the success of the project as an effective social interactive node. Consequently, the proposed design intervention creates a publicly accessible facility, and a user-friendly environment that promotes urban integration in the civic, educational and residential fabric of Alexandra Township.