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Rehabilitating broken youth: Archi-therapy

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abstract

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:archi-therapy



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This thesis aims to explore the powerful synergy between the architectural constructs of a rehabilitative children's home in collaboration with both clinical and non-clinical therapeutic approaches – particularly with regard to treating sexually abused children in their school-going years. Sadly, with the rising number of sexual child abuse cases in South Africa, there is a very dire need for such a facility as the care provided in a standard children's home is not enough.

The use of space to ensure a reciprocal and beneficial relationship between architecture and healing is ultimately what this thesis wishes to achieve and it will thus focus on how the treatment affects the building and how the building affects the treatment.

Archi-therapy expands on the consideration of recent discoveries in the treatment of trauma in sexually abused children. Initial treatments were heavily based on a clinical aspect, not really considering the people and the place in which this healing occurs. Only in recent years has the importance of environment, activity and social interaction been considered. In addition to the clinical aspects of the healing process, certain hobbies and pastime interests also play a significant role as they can form part of an on-going, multi-faceted therapeutic process to assist with the overcoming of the trauma. In turn, this creates a positive developmental and rehabilitation platform for these broken youth, in a manner that goes beyond the limited realm of clinical therapy.

Through interviews, literature and site visits, I hope to bring to light that architecture can be interactive, and more than a mere container of a variety of therapeutic activities. Architecture and the nature of the context can be part of the healing process and assist with the sustainability of the specialised children's home that is proposed.

Archi-therapy considers the nature of the architecture, activities, people and therapies (clinical and non-clinical) alongside their significant roles in the healing process of these precious children.