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The public realm: part of a balanced city

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A DESIGN PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PART FULFILLMENT FOR THE DEGREE

OF MASTER OF URBAN DESIGN AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND

JOHANNESBURG OCTOBER 1989

25×

THANKS TO ALL THOSE WHO MADE THIS POSSIBLE-- I APPRECIATE ALL YOUR HELP AND SUPPORT GREATLY

FLOW DIAGRAM OF STRUCTURE

Before venturing into the water, it is advisable to have some idea of how to swim. Death by drowning is not the purpose of this exercise. To assist one in wading through the murky depths of the following pages, here are some waterwings.

The following flow diagram shows how the parts relate to one another and where they fit in the order of things.

FLOW DIAGRAM OF STRUCTURE

LEGEND: ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF AN APPROACH TO THE DESIGN OF THE PUBLIC REALM FOR INFORMAL URBAN OPPORTUNITY

- ☆ ROUTES & GENERATORS OF FLOW
- ○ THE NETWORK OF MUTUAL SUPPORT
- □ ENABLING OPPORTUNITY
- △ PLACE MAKING
- ✚ CITY STRUCTURING

ABSTRACT

The public realm

Part of a balanced city

INTRODUCTION TO THE THEORY

CITIES.

□ - The need for them

□ - As places of exchange

○ - Their nature

☆ - Urban components

THEORY

□ - Economic theory

□ - Enablement

△ - Movement systems

△✚ - Urban morphology

△✚ - Districts

△ - Participation theory

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The components of an approach to the urban design public realm intervention

Making space for informal urban opportunity

☆ ○ □ △ ✚

THE PROJECT

Context ☆ ○ □

Opportunities & constraints ☆ ○ □ △ ✚

Concept ☆ ○ □ △ ✚

Detail development ☆ ○ □ △ ✚

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The need for space for informal opportunity and concern in future planning for the provision of this sort of space at the right location

APPENDICES

Change in the environment □ ○ ☆

Current trends in change □ ○ ☆

The role of the urban designer in changing society □ ○ ☆ △ ✚

The function of urban design □ ○ ☆ △ ✚

Symbolism and meaning in the environment △ ✚

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ABSTRACT : THE PUBLIC REALM

PART OF A BALANCED CITY

This project deals with the public realm. In particular it deals with two aspects of the public realm. Firstly it deals with the networks of mutual support that operate in the public realm, and secondly it deals with the ability of the mutual support network to afford opportunity. The full potential of this ability has not been realised in Johannesburg. Viewed against the private realm, in terms of realised potential, the public realm is found to be operating inefficeintly.

Encouraged public realm use through design and relaxed legislation is aimed at enabling the realisation of public realm potential. With both the public and private realms realising their full potential it is possible to view the city as balanced.

From the thecry we find,

1. Patterns of use or routes in the city form part of the network of mutual support.
2. This network enables social and economic opportunities.
3. Patterns of use in the public realm support the private realm and assist in its expansion.
4. Legislation and lack of space restrict informal activity.
5. The public realm has a role to play in structuring the city around the patterns of use and the networks of mutual support.

This indicates that patterns exist in the public realm and that these patterns can be harnessed for social and economic advancement. It also indicates that the private realm is enabled by the public realm. The public realm's potential isn't realised through legislation and lack of space in the right place.

The application of theory to the city revealed that the lack of space for informal activity is a problem. Streets where informal trade is allowed become pedestrian streets only. In order that flows are not dissipated to a point where economic and social advantage can not be taken, these streets must be those that are clustered around the station, particularly those on the south side of the station.

The public realm potential for realising social and economic potentials is dependent on generators of flow. The public realm on its own, without sufficeint flow, cannot generate the social and economic potentials. It can only house them.

In view of this it is suggested that areas where high flow occur in the city be sought and that their potentials be maximised. One suggestion is that space be made at the station by decking the railway in front of Park Station for this purpose. Another is that in the planning of new cities and towns, public realm areas and places of expected high flow be reserved for the function of realisation of informal social and economic opportunity.

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