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Beyond the park: an architectural fusion of urban cultures and inner city space

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Beyond The Park

ABSTRACT

The changing faces of cities are defined by icons and landmarks from specific eras. Over time these characteristic features can either increase in sentimentality or decline into lost memories. The cultural history of inner city Johannesburg has roots in foreign imports, imposed on what was termed “the colonial philistine”. European examples set the standard and local representations were deemed inferior. The intended grandeur of Joubert Park is one prime example. The first green space planned for a rough mining town was to be the cultural centre of Johannesburg, a rose amongst the thorns. This ideal has been over time, lost. The remnants of a bygone age sit within guarded fences and empty car parks.

This paper serves to investigate the relationship between an inner city park and its contemporary urban culture. Highlighting the significance of inclusive urban planning the existing framework is critiqued in terms of what is appropriate in the present day context. Through the introduction of new infrastructural linkages the landscape is re-defined, incorporating historical landmarks in conjunction with functioning community systems.

By extending functions beyond their confining borders, synergies are created and captured. Integrating the consumption of popular culture with ‘A’rt serves as the theoretical underpinning that inform a new archetype for urban spaces and users.