

Abstract

“Youth offending has been and still is a social problem across many countries; it is a problem that affects and shapes the very fabric of society. The problem with the youth in modern society is both a national concern and an important subject for academic study” (Siegel, Welsh and Senna, 2003:9).

Since the conception of young people’s deviant behaviour as a social problem, efforts have been made to put measures in place to reduce young offending through research and community prevention programs, which seem to be very unsuccessful. Consequently, young offending exists in alarming rates, and offenders end up in correctional facilities which are problematic institutions and inhumane environments as will be discussed in due course. The creation of Juvenile Detention Centers was aimed at rehabilitation and protection of young offenders from adult offenders’ influence. However noble these intentions were, it has become worrying that these centers in South Africa are dehumanizing and not conducive for rehabilitation.

This thesis interrogates Juvenile Correctional Centre’s as an architectural typology, and explores their Panoptic design philosophy and its effects. It investigates the architectural and spatial qualities that can facilitate the rehabilitation of young offenders. Further more, it explores the concept of community integration through the introduction of youth rehabilitation centers within communities and creation of spaces that allow communities to participate in rehabilitative activities for young offenders.

This thesis culminates in the proposal a ‘Young Offenders Rehabilitation Center’, a new architectural typology for the rehabilitation of young offenders that becomes a platform for community participation and integration in Alexandra Township, Johannesburg.