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**A COMMUNITY FACILITIES BUILDING
IN BOKAAP**

78/17a

Stephen Townsend

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AN ESSAY DESCRIBING THE DESIGN PROCESS
FOR A COMMUNITY FACILITIES BUILDING
IN BOKAAP

B. ARCH. THESIS

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN.

JUNE. 1978

STEPHEN STEWART TOWNSEND



1. O Newman. ed. "CIAM '59
in Otterlo". London. Alex Trant
Ltd. 1961.

"You said that the shape or form of this house was communicated to you by these people and by the pattern of life you saw there at that moment. But the roots of the evolution of the way in which families are living around a fire or in a landscape, or together washing a car or other such things, this evolution is a stream and you took only a moment of it here, but there could well have been a moment somewhere else which would have been more directly related to these roots. It could be that what you have is a kind of camouflage, a kind of facile form which is dividing what has grown from the roots and what could act tomorrow as a new leaf. Are you sure that in using this big picture-window you are really realizing what the pattern of family life is or should be? Or did you make these big windows because you are working in a modern environment and big windows are an expression of the modern aesthetic?"¹

Ignazio Gardella in discussion at CIAM Conference in Otterlo, 1959.

| <u>Contents.</u> | | <u>Page</u> |
|------------------|---|-------------|
| 0. | Preliminary. | 5 |
| 1. | The People/ Client/User | 7 |
| 1.1 | Introduction | 7 |
| 1.2 | Historical Background | 7 |
| 1.3 | Community Structure | 8 |
| 1.4 | Aspirations and Attitudes | 9 |
| 1.5 | The Client | 9 |
| 2. | The Function/Use | 10 |
| 2.1 | The Origins of Community Centres | 10 |
| 2.2 | The Community Centre Architype | 10 |
| 2.3 | The Need for a Community Facilities Building in Bokaap | 10 |
| 2.4 | The Existing Community Centre | 11 |
| 2.5 | The Community Facilities Building | 11 |
| 2.6 | The Facilities | 12 |
| 2.6.1 | The Community Hall | 12 |
| 2.6.2 | The Meeting Centre | 13 |
| 2.6.3 | Early Learning Facility | 13 |
| 2.6.4 | The Library | 13 |
| 3. | The Place/Site | 14 |
| 3.1 | Relation to the City | 14 |
| 3.2 | The Community Facilities Building Site | 15 |
| 3.3 | Vehicular Traffic and Parking | 15 |
| 3.4 | The Pedestrian System | 17 |
| 3.5 | Aspect and Prospect | 17 |
| 3.6 | Existing Structures on and Surrounding the Site | 18 |
| 3.7 | Climate and Vegetation | 19 |
| 4. | Style/Aesthetic | 20 |

| | | |
|--------|---|----|
| 4.1 | Introduction | 20 |
| 4.2 | Issues of Conservation | 20 |
| 4.3 | Patterns of the Architecture | 23 |
| 4.3.1 | Building Technology | 23 |
| 4.3.2 | Courtyards | 23 |
| 4.3.3 | The Facade | 23 |
| 4.3.4 | Stoeps | 24 |
| 4.3.5 | Views through to Courtyards | 24 |
| 4.3.6 | Glimpses and views | 24 |
| 4.3.7 | Steps | 24 |
| 4.3.8 | Walls | 24 |
| 4.3.9 | Thick Walls | 25 |
| 4.3.10 | Outdoor covered areas | 25 |
| 4.3.11 | Trees | 25 |
| 4.3.12 | Specialness of certain sites | 25 |
| 4.3.13 | Activity nodes | 26 |
| 4.3.14 | A Local Town Hall | 26 |
| 4.3.15 | Thresholds | 26 |
| 4.3.16 | Decentralized parking | 26 |
| 5. | Precedent | 27 |
| 5.1 | University College, Urbino by G.de Carlo | 27 |
| 5.2 | Cultural Centre, Wolfsburg by A. Aalto | 28 |
| 5.3 | Law Faculty, Urbino by G de Carlo | 29 |
| 5.4 | Faculty of Education, Urbino by G. de Carlo | 30 |
| 6. | Conclusion/Solution | 31 |
| 7. | Appendices | 34 |
| 7.1 | Appendix A. Photographs of Site | 34 |
| 7.2 | Appendix B. Accommodation Schedule | 39 |
| 7.3 | Appendix C. Schedule of Societies, Clubs, Activities | |
| 8. | Bibliography | 41 |
| 8.1 | Books | 41 |
| 8.2 | Periodicals | 42 |
| 9. | Acknowledgements | 44 |

0. Preliminary.

Any part of the built environment reflects the relative importance, or lack of importance, of four categories of determinants as experienced by the makers of that environment. These four categories are the People, the Function, the Place and finally the Style, Aesthetic or Vernacular of the makers.

This category of Style is perhaps the expression of meaning or value in physical form.

The first three of these, though complexly inter-related and inter-dependant, can be analysed and understood as separate categories.

The People, Client or User can be analysed in terms of demography, historical background, technological development, societal structure, culture, religion, aspirations and attitudes. The Function, or Usage involves the understanding of both the specific need of the user and also the universal or archetypal prototype of the typical user. The Place, or Site must be understood in terms of movement to/through/around it, aspect and prospect, topography, relationships to the surroundings, climate and vegetation.

Each of these three categories of given information must be analysed and fully understood by the makers of the environment. Simply to be useful the environment must satisfy all these factors fully.

However, the designer or maker of the environment is free to interpret these factors in any way he chooses. Whether he likes it or not, he assigns relative values and he makes arbitrary decisions of which he is not even vaguely conscious. Thus even the supposedly objective analysis of determinants is riddled with subjective evaluations.

The fourth category, that of Style or Aesthetic is rather less tangible than those just mentioned, and consequently even further removed from rational decision-making process, but at the same time inextricably tied to determinants like technology,

culture, use and site. Thus the designer or maker of the environment gives it expression that has very little to do with the pragmatic demands of User, Function and Site (though he often, even usually, rationalizes architectural expression in terms of the givens).

This essay is a modest attempt to show the interplay of objective and subjective, rational and irrational decision making in the process leading to the design of a Community Facilities Building in Bokaap.

The form that the essay will take is as follows: Each of the four categories of determinants will be treated in turn; with an objective description of subject matter concerning the category being found in a wider column on the right side of each page. In the smaller column on the left is commentary of a subjective nature on design decisions taken and various miscellaneous observations.

LOCATION: BOKAAP



TAFELBAAI
TABLE BAY

KAAPSTAD
CAPE TOWN

LOCATION : BOKAAP

1 : 50 000

1. The People/Client/User.

1.1 Introduction.

The community of Bokaap (better known as the Malay Quarter of Cape Town) numbered approximately 8000 in the 1970 census, and it is estimated that this number has increased to just less than 10,000. The area has a large number of derelict or underdeveloped sites. If these sites were developed at similar densities to the existing fabric the area could accommodate up to 14,000.

This community is made up of three groups: a small number of "coloured" (as different from "malay") people living in the western part, an even smaller number of squatters living in derelict houses in the eastern part of the quarter, and a large number of muslims of "malay" descent who actually constitute the only community, and it is for this last group that the Community Facilities Building is being specifically designed.

1.2 Historical and Religious Background.

The story of how these muslim people came to the Cape, how Islam developed here, how they came to regard Bokaap as their traditional home and how the muslim community developed is described in Appendix 1.²

This second group are a cause of considerable social tensions as they run shabeens and the like, upsetting the righteous muslims. The last group is further discussed in section 1.3 Community Structure.

² To avoid duplication of work already covered, the book "Bokaap... Faces and Facades". Howard Timmins. Cape Town. 1978, produced in conjunction with my wife, Lesley Freedman, will be frequently referred to, and included as Appendix 1. For details on the historical and religious background see pages 9-13.

1.3 Community Structure

There are numerous community based organisations, sports clubs, etc., each of which requires an office for its own administrative purpose and which could share multi-purpose rooms with each other.

There is an irony in the differing identities these two groups hold. The traditionalists are proud of the appellation "malay"... the name by which the white overlord has always distinguished them from the "lesser" coloured". The progressives prefer the term "muslim", both because they recognise that their identity is tied to that of their more (and this is the irony) religious opponents.

However the resolution of these tensions within the community cannot be resolved except by communication, and it is unlikely that the form of the community facilities building can be adapted in any way to accommodate or appease these tensions. It is only in the use and administration of the complex that fair and equal sharing can be ensured.

The importance of the historical background as described above is that the community of Bokaap is well organised, cohesive and fairly well defined. By virtue of their racial origins they do not have the vote and consequently have no political power, and like the rest of the greater black community have little economic power. Thus, despite their cohesiveness, they rely on the white local authority to provide whatever built facilities they may require.

There are, however, within the community several rifts. The most important is that between the older traditionalists and the younger, often university educated, progressives. The traditionalists, who see life in terms of the social rituals surrounding Islam, the mosque, the prayers, their large extended families, often, even usually, accept apartheid; and their traditional station in society. The progressives, however, naturally reject the present political dispensation, they want better and more education for themselves and their children, they are more involved both with the greater Muslim community and the rest of the politically active black community.



The community

2. The Function/Use.2.1 The Origins of Community Centres.

Community centres derive from the settlement houses founded in the late 19th century in England by a socially concerned upper class group of religious and university people who hoped to ameliorate the appalling conditions in which the poorer classes lived.

The various settlement houses had a tremendous social and cultural influence in their communities, the emphasis being placed on association and co-operation in the pursuits of arts and crafts and also in relaxation and recreation.

Authorities in all parts of the world were influenced by the ideas and activities of the settlement houses and similar projects were instituted.

2.2 The Community Centre Architype.

What has come to be the general, universal or typical goal of community centres is to serve as a meeting place for all groups living in the neighbourhood, and to provide facilities for activating the variety of interests of these people. It should be regarded as an essential amenity of the community, and occupy congenial premises where all interested residents can spend their leisure time in a constructive manner, and so develop their individual potentialities within the group. Also important, a community centre should have an educational purpose, in order to make a lasting contribution to the community.

2.3 The Need for a Community Facilities Building in Bokaap.

Bokaap was always a part of the city. Its street pattern was and is simply an extension of the city street grid, and for a century at least the area was different from the city only in scale and in the frequency (or infrequency) of commercial and light industrial usage. However, two trends in the 20th century tended to separate this essentially residential area from the city. The first was the increasing use of the motor car with its demands for space, which turned the

3. Lesley Freedman. A Cultural Centre for the Malay Quarter. Unpublished thesis. Cape Town. 1970.

The project title "Community Facilities Building" rather than Community Centre has been preferred to emphasise the point that the community already has a focus that is Islam, and that the mosques are the traditional community centres.



The existing community centre, Pentz Street

Also the concept of a Community Centre has come to be associated with a building style of some pomp and formality (supposedly as an object of civic pride), which I wish to avoid. This building simply houses various secular activities of the community together in one building; a series of spaces which are related or connected by a system of shared open spaces and walkways.

As the community is a very tightly knit one and lives in a fabric of considerable consistency it was felt that the building to be designed should not obtrude in either physical or psychological terms.

Buitengracht into a barrier between Bokaap and the city. The second was the increasing polarisation of races, and as Bokaap had always had a relatively high percentage of "malay" inhabitants, it became increasingly muslim until in 1953 the quarter was proclaimed a "Malay Group Area".

The effects of these two phenomena was that the inhabitants of the area were both cut off from and excluded from the amenities of the nearby city, and their need for community facilities of all kinds within Bokaap became an issue for the first time.

2.4 The Existing Community Centre.

For reasons just stated the term "Community Centre" is a misnomer in Bokaap, but in the existing facility going by that title, it is especially so.

The existing building has a small hall seating 120 (or 200 on benches), some kitchen space, 3 or 4 W.C.s, and a cellar acting as office space.

The centre is run by the Boorhaanol Recreational Movement and serves as a creche and nursery school by day, and as a multi-purpose hall by night for the various sporting, cultural, political, religious gatherings.

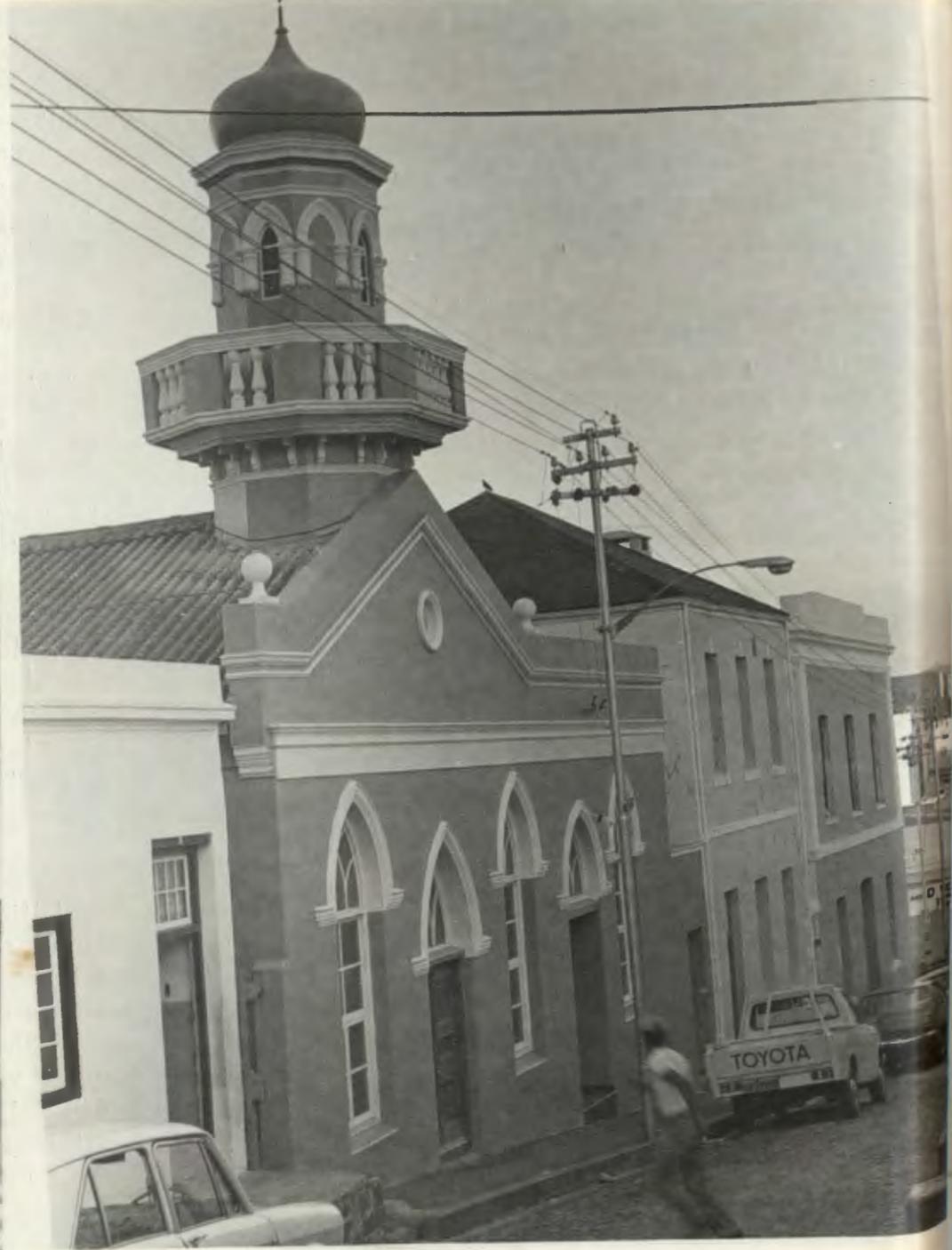
2.5 The Community Facilities Building.

The mosques of Bokaap remain the real community centres, other facilities are naturally required, particularly with the increasing secularisation of the people. Facilities most urgently required include a large hall, a meeting centre for the numerous cultural societies, sports clubs and madressa's, and early learning facilities.

Other facilities that could be provided are a library, market stalls, and a variety of public open spaces (which the area is desperately short of). Also existing local authority facilities like the rent office and clinic could be relocated in such a building complex.



Mosque, Chiappini Street



Mosque, Longmarket Street

- 4 Percy Corry. *Community Theatres*. Pitman Publishing. London. 1974.

The introduction of a volume of this scale in an environment like Bokaap is one of the major architectural problems of this project. The only buildings in the area not of a domestic scale are the traditional centres, the mosques. Their impact on the street scene is either played down by breaking up the facade with mouldings as in the Longmarket Street Mosque, or heightened by setting the building back from the street and putting an even taller element, the minaret, in front of it, as in the Chiappini Street Mosque. Thus the non-domestic scaled building is never allowed to simply be itself... it is always played up or down.

An additional problem of scale arose with the introduction of a large piazza or open square associated with the hall. It was felt the problems of scale arising from these two large public meeting spaces, one open, one enclosed, could be more easily handled at the centre of the site rather than on the typically domestic scaled streets surrounding the site. This was primarily because both these elements are so much larger than any in the quarter.

2.6 The Facilities.

2.6.1 The Community Hall.⁴

The single most important facility is a multi-purpose hall, which would be used for a wide variety of activities (public meetings and lectures, weddings, dances, concerts, local theatrical productions, film shows, and various sports events).

The hall should seat 700-800 people and will need to have a flat floor (perhaps a number of flat floors on different levels) to accommodate all the activities listed above. Storage areas for chairs, tables and sports equipment must be conveniently located.

A stage will be required which can also serve as a smaller meeting room, and must be capable of being completely cut off from the main hall and with its own access.

If a gallery was introduced it also should be capable of separate use. Change rooms must be related to the stage and also be able to accommodate a second use; eg. meeting rooms, etc.

The Foyer should be related to an outdoor area and must be able to serve as a meeting space, coffee bar, etc.

Toilets should be accessible to all these sections. A kitchen will be required, especially for the warming (not preparation) of large wedding dinners.



Children in van der Meulen Street

2.6.2 The Meeting Centre.

The meeting centre is to comprise of a number of small offices for each of the various cultural and sports bodies and a large number of varying sized multi-purpose rooms. These rooms will be used for madressas, debates, discussion groups, meetings of societies and selection committees, lectures, various religious activities, art classes, adult education classes, choir practices. A larger office will need to be provided for the administration of the complex, and a number of large lockers for files, etc., for societies and clubs which do not warrant an office.

A small prayer room, a kitchenette and toilets are also necessary. Appendix C on page lists the various societies, clubs and associations to be accommodated, their space requirements, and the times of occupation or use.

2.6.3 Early Learning Facility.

At present the creche and nursery school run by Boohaanol in the existing community hall is the only early learning facility in the area. It accommodates 65 children and has a waiting list of 100, and is probably experienced by the community as the single most desired facility apart from housing.

2.6.4 A Library.

The library will be sectionalized for children's reading, general reading and lending, and Islamic research and exhibitions.

For an Accommodation Schedule of all areas provided see Appendix B on page .

It was decided to include an early learning facility in the complex for various rather undefined though strong reasons.⁵ The idea of introducing or immersing the child in the community's life being the main one.

5 F.L. Osmon. Patterns for Designing Children's Centres. EFC Publications. New York. 1971.

6 Revel Fox. The Education of the Dis-advantaged Pre-school Coloured Child at the Cape. Van Leer Foundation. Cape Town. 1969.

The library should act as an intellectual and cultural catalyst in the community's educational and leisure activities.



2

2

7

8

3. The Place/Site.3.1 Relation to the City.

The historical development of Cape Town up until the construction of most of Bokaap by about 1860 has been covered in Appendix 1.

Bokaap, being on the outskirts of the city, and also densely built up over a relatively short period, remained much as it had for almost a century until in the 1930's and again after the war, development in the city began to encroach into this historically residential quarter.

Thus in the 1940's the conservation of the area became an issue and it has remained so and probably will for some time yet.

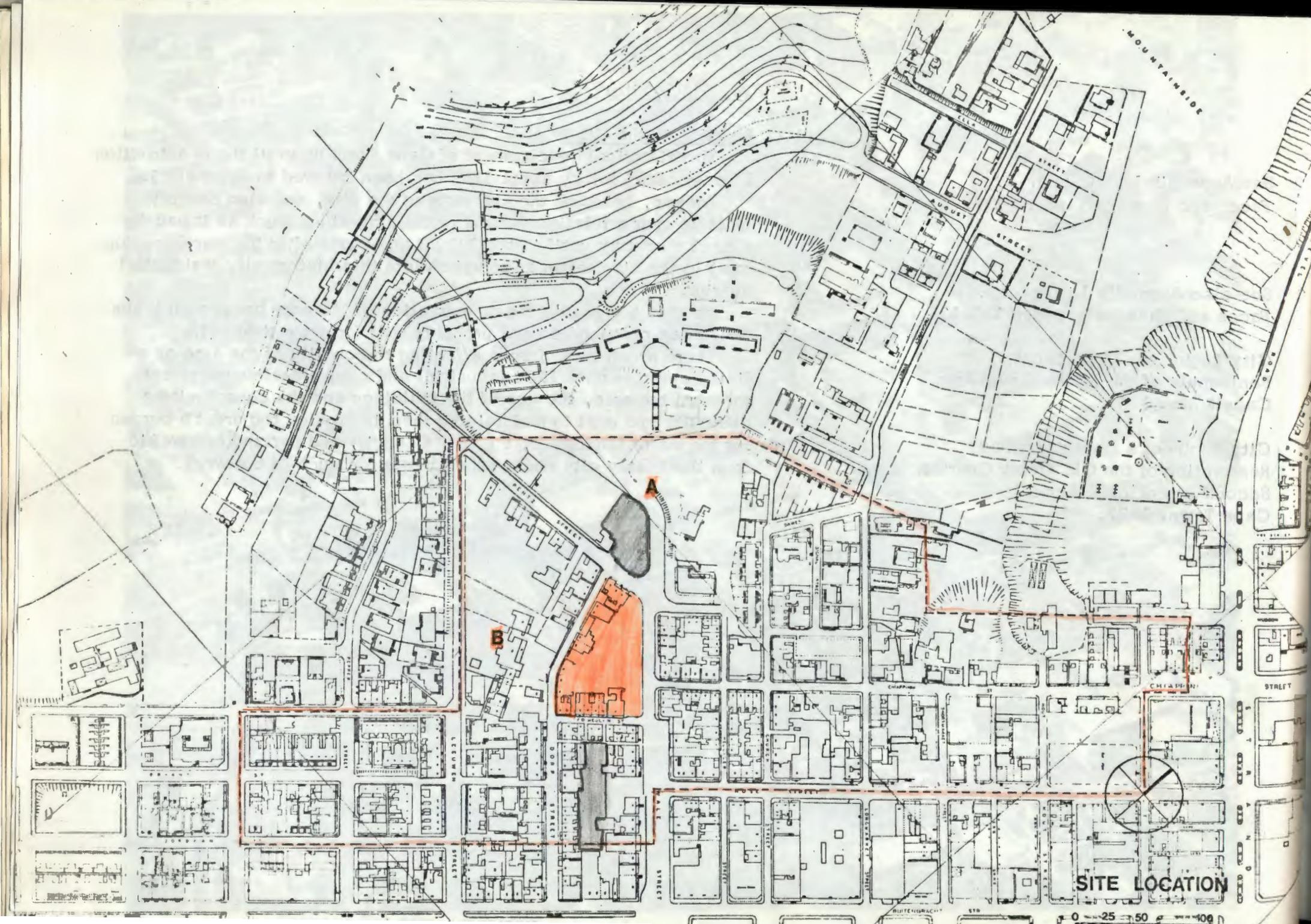
There are several forces affecting the quality of the area as a living environment: light industrial and commercial development threaten the area, the age of the buildings and the concomitant difficulty and cost in maintaining them is proving too great a burden for the major landowner, the City Council, and parking and traffic from the nearby city chokes the streets for much of the week.

2 See Appendix 1. "Bokaap...
Faces and Facades". pages 1-7.

2 See also Appendix 1. "Bokaap...
Faces and Facades". pages 133-136.

7 City Engineer's Department.
Replanning of the Malay Group Area.
Cape Town. 1974.

8 City Engineer's Department.
Restoration of the Old Malay Quarter.
Second Extension Scheme.
Cape Town. 1977.



The other possible sites were considered, but rejected on the following grounds: the one marked A is outside of the existing urban fabric and might be associated with the neighbouring Council-owned flats, and the one marked B would be a little out of the way in that Dorp Street, from where it would be most visible is very narrow, and because Leeuwen Street does not have the same associations as Wale Street.

It was decided that the existing street grid should be retained, emphasized and reinforced by any new building.

3.2 The Community Facilities Building Site.

The site chosen for these facilities is indicated on the drawing opposite. Photographs of the site will be found in Appendix A, page .

It was chosen for three main reasons. Firstly, because it faces onto Wale Street, which in a certain sense is the main street of Bokaap and because the other main street of the area, Chiappini Street, runs up to it. Wale Street is also the principal connector of the area with the city and a certain specialness thereby attaches to the street and its buildings. Secondly, the site is largely empty... the whole row of dwellings facing onto Wale Street were demolished in the 1950's to accommodate the proposed (now rescinded) Carreg Crescent. Thirdly, it is at the approximate geographic centre of the quarter.

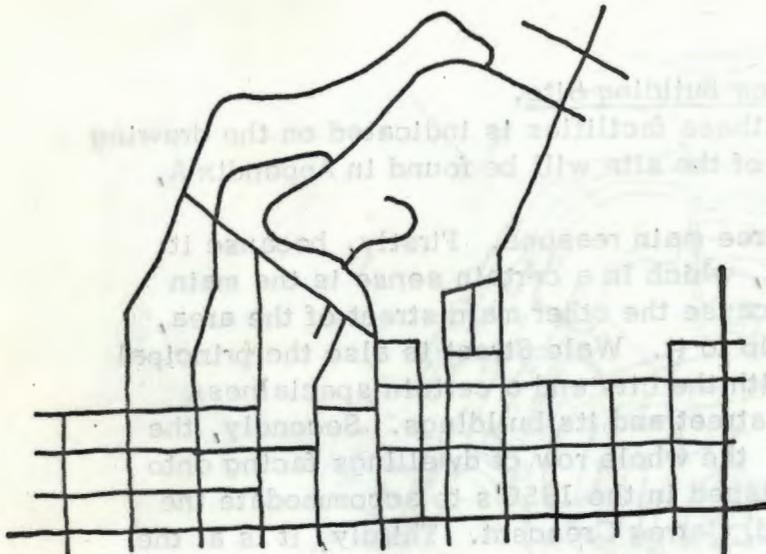
The site is also the one chosen by the City Council for a proposed community centre.

3.3 Vehicular Traffic and Parking.

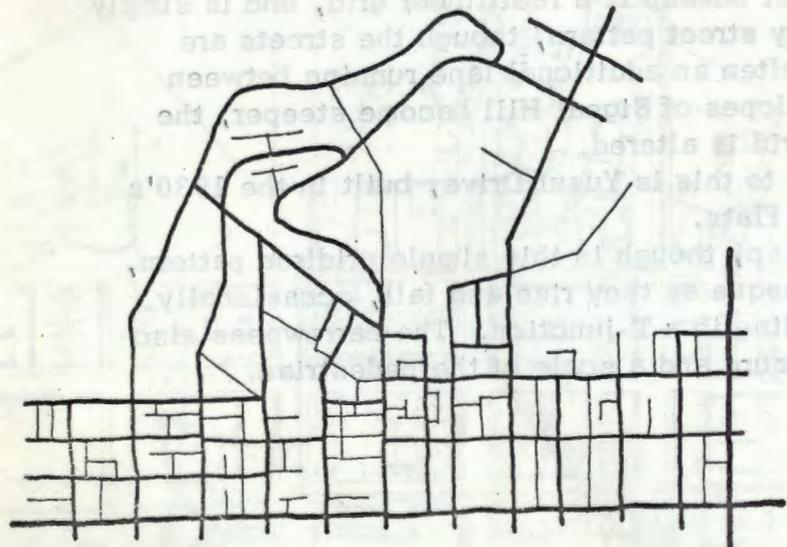
The street pattern of Bokaap is a rectilinear grid, and is simply an extension of the city street pattern, though the streets are narrower and there is often an additional lane running between streets. Also as the slopes of Signal Hill become steeper, the streets bend and the grid is altered.

The only exception to this is Yusuf Drive, built in the 1930's to service the Council Flats.

The streets of Bokaap, though in this simple gridiron pattern, are particularly picturesque as they rise and fall, occasionally bending slightly or ending in a T-junction. The narrowness also gives a sense of enclosure and a scale of the pedestrian.



VEHICULAR MOVEMENT



PEDESTRIAN MOVEMENT

The other possible sites were considered, but rejected on the following grounds: the one marked A is outside of the existing urban fabric and might be associated with the neighbouring Council owned flats, and the one marked B would be a little out of the way in that Dora Street, even when it would be most visible in very narrow, and because Ladbroke Street does not have the same associations as Wala Street.

NOTES:

It was felt that this should be replaced thereby restoring the sense of "place", and ending, as it were, the city: to the visitor arriving, this becomes Bokaap. And the building mass doing this assumes considerable importance... thus an opportunity is created.

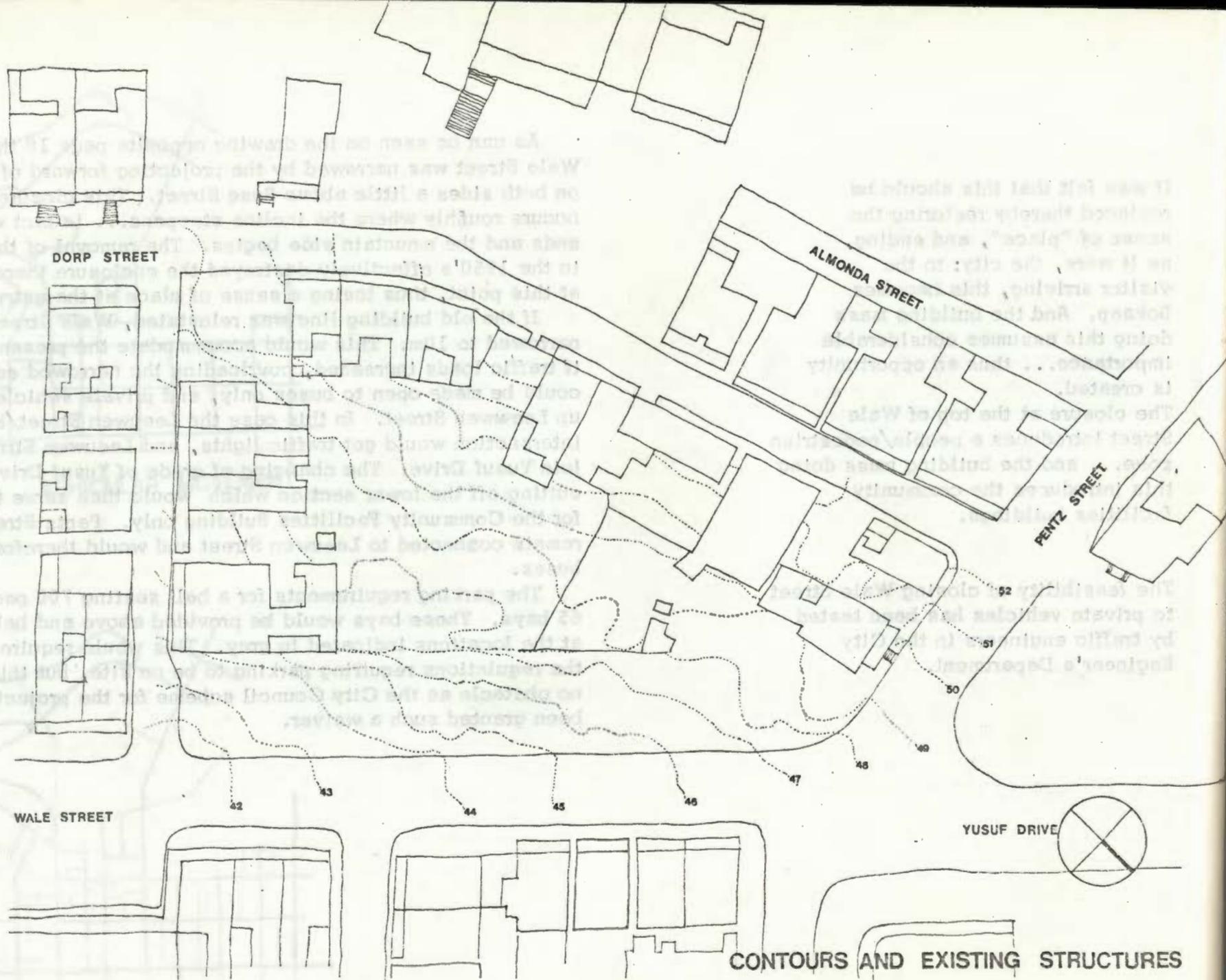
The closure at the top of Wale Street introduces a people/pedestrian zone... and the building mass doing this introduces the community facilities buildings.

The feasibility of closing Wale Street to private vehicles has been tested by traffic engineers in the City Engineer's Department.

As can be seen on the drawing opposite page 18 the top of Wale Street was narrowed by the projecting forward of the dwellings on both sides a little above Rose Street. This closure or ending occurs roughly where the incline steepens... in fact where the city ends and the mountain side begins. The removal of the one side in the 1950's effectively destroyed the enclosure thereby created at this point, thus losing a sense of place at the entry to the quarter.

If the old building line was reinstated, Wale Street would be narrowed to 10m. This would accommodate the present traffic, and if traffic loads increased, overloading the narrowed section, it could be made open to buses only, and private vehicles would go up Leeuwen Street. In this case the Leeuwen Street/Buitengracht intersection would get traffic lights, and Leeuwen Street would join Yusuf Drive. The changing of grade of Yusuf Drive would mean cutting off the lower section which would then serve the parking for the Community Facilities Building only. Pentz Street would remain connected to Leeuwen Street and would therefore carry the buses.

The parking requirements for a hall seating 700 people number 65 bays. These bays would be provided above and below the complex at the locations indicated in grey. This would require a waiver of the regulations requiring parking to be on site, but this should be no obstacle as the City Council scheme for the project has in fact been granted such a waiver.



0 5 10 20m

3.4 The Pedestrian System.

The primary existing pedestrian movement pattern corresponds to that of vehicular traffic, that is, as is usual it is in the streets, but also in Bokaap there are few pavements so motor vehicle and pedestrian share the same road surfaces. Thus the human or people scale of the narrow streets is further emphasized by the motor vehicles' need to beware of pedestrians.

There is another finer grain of pedestrian movement. Most of the blocks are penetrated by lanes and alleys which lead to internal open spaces, or often tightly packed smaller dwellings, work spaces, stables, and the like.

3.5 Aspect and Prospect.

The site is a steeply sloping one as is indicated on the drawing on the opposite page, and consequently reveals itself if viewed from afar. The importance of the building mass facing onto Wale Street has already been emphasized.

The site is, in fact, a marvellous one with beautiful views of the quarter, the city, Table Mountain, Lion's Head, Signal Hill and the docks.

The Community Facilities Building and site is to keep to this existing pattern of street pedestrian movement and also encourage through and cross movement from the parking areas and from Chiappini Street through to the playground and proposed sportsfields above Dorp Street.

This subject will be discussed at greater length in the section on Style.

The user's experience of the environment, the earth, the sky, the city, should be as complete as possible, and it was felt that this particular characteristic should be a major form-giver to the buildings on it.

DORP STREET

VAN DER MEULEN STREET

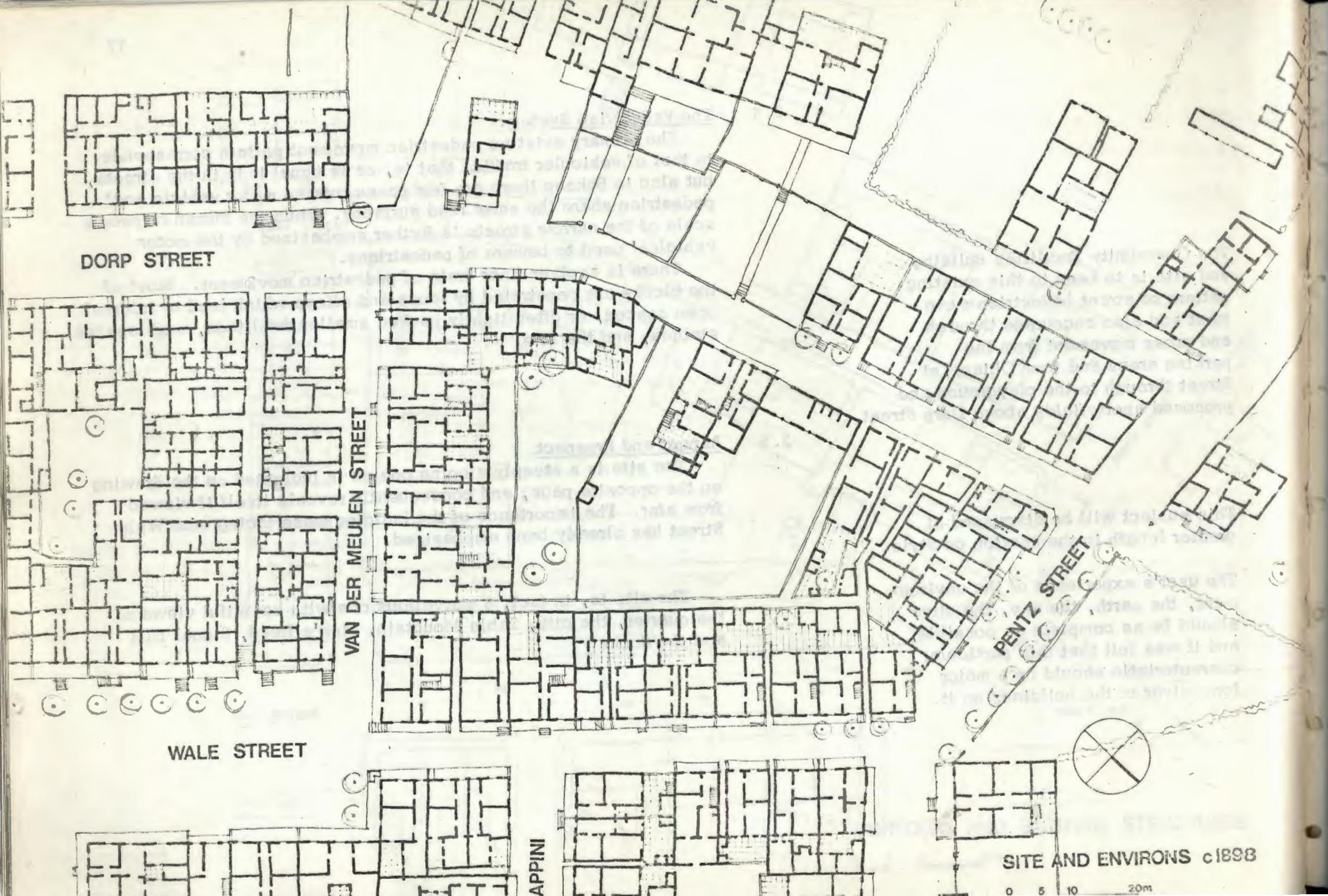
PENTZ STREET

WALE STREET

APPINI

SITE AND ENVIRONS c1898

0 5 10 20m



Photographs of the site appear in Appendix A on page .

- 2 The character and status of these buildings and the surrounding environs are fairly fully described (pages 14-26) and photographed (pages 27-130) in Appendix 1. "Bokaap... Faces and Facades".

The issues of conservation and the aesthetic effects on the design will be discussed in the following section on Style, but the densely packed low-rise nature of the built fabric does bear noting here.

3.6 Existing Buildings On and Surrounding the Site.

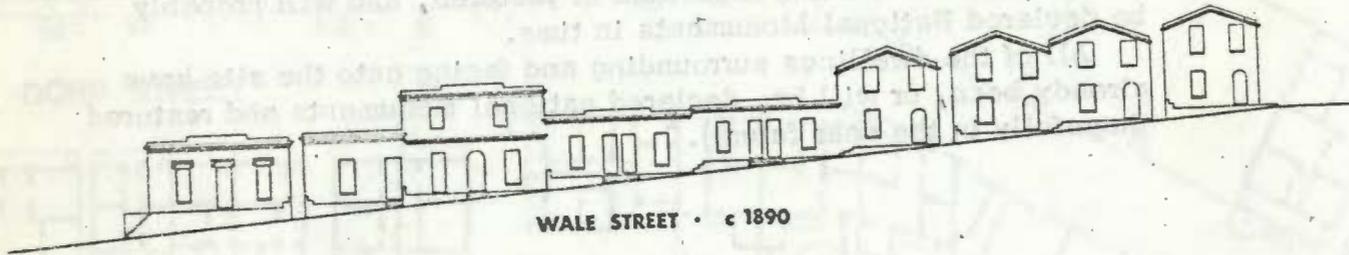
The drawing opposite the previous page shows the position and number of existing buildings on the site. All of these buildings are currently being lived in and, though some are in a poor state, all are capable of being renovated or restored, and will probably be declared National Monuments in time.

All of the dwellings surrounding and facing onto the site have already been, or will be, declared national monuments and restored (hopefully in the near future).²

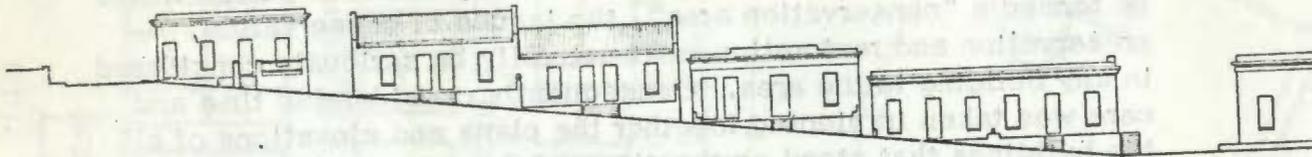
As the site is in the middle of this area, which in Europe would be termed a "conservation area", the issues of conservation, preservation and restoration must naturally be seriously considered in any building in the area. Consequently considerable time and care was taken in piecing together the plans and elevations of all the buildings that stood on the site and the surroundings prior to 1898 (the year of the Thom survey). The results of this research can be seen on the opposite page and overleaf. It bears noting that this particular site was an exception in that it was not built up within the block as were all of the others. This is possibly because the double storied house on Dorp Street was on a very large site that was probably a smallholding and used for market gardening or keeping livestock.



WALE STREET - PRE 1890



WALE STREET - c 1890



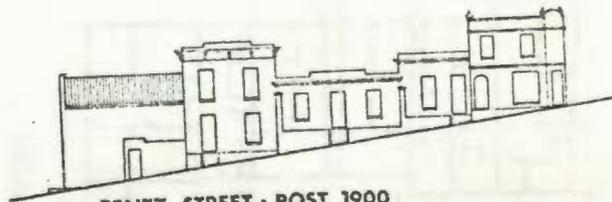
VAN DER MEULEN STREET - c 1890



DORP STREET - c 1890

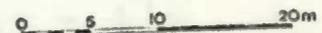


PENTZ STREET - PRE 1900



PENTZ STREET - POST 1900

RECONSTRUCTED STREET ELEVATIONS



The relative mildness of the Cape climate in general and of temperatures in particular, and the modifying influences of the particular position of the site suggest that the potential of the natural beauty of the site and the surroundings be fully exploited by opening the various parts of the complex to courts and outside spaces with views of the environs.

3.7 Climate and Vegetation.

The climate in the Western Cape is typically Mediterranean: that is, mild and pleasant with wet winters and windy summers. Bokaap's position relative to the city with its large building masses and its own densely packed buildings means that the summer south-easter is not as troublesome as it is elsewhere. Summer days in the city are very hot and relatively unrelieved by the wind which dominates other parts of the Peninsula. Also its position at the foot of Signal Hill means that sunset comes earlier than otherwise... however this is no disadvantage as dusk in the Quarter has a quiet, gentle and lovely feeling.

There is very little vegetation on the site... a few stunted and worn out fig trees, an equally stunted apricot and a couple of vines. These trees should all be replaced by healthy plants and their presence could therefore be ignored in the design of the building.



The site from Wale Street, looking towards Signal Hill

4. Style/Aesthetic.

4.1 Introduction.

In this section the distinction between objective subject matter and subjective commentary is rather tenuous, to say the least. In fact, in this case the thought process involved is concerned first with opinion, preference, commentary or hypothesis, and then with the rationalisation or concretisation of that first idea.

It is in this section that the most important notions informing decision making will be discussed.

4.2 Issues of Conservation.

In any design the surroundings demand some acknowledgement and in some situations the constraints of character are greater than others.

In Bokaap the character of the built fabric is such that considerable care is required in maintaining, let alone enhancing, the quality of the local environment generally.

That the site is in the middle of a "conservation area" and that there are statutory safeguards in the form of the National Monuments Council preventing the spoiling of the area, hardly bears mention. The task of the designer or maker of any part of the built environment is to improve or maintain it whatever the difficulties.

As the fabric of Bokaap is as delicately consistent and as historically valuable as it is, the concept of conservation becomes vital, and as it is a fairly complex concept bears some discussion.

The extent of this "conservation area" is indicated by the dotted line on the map of Bokaap opposite page 15.

- 2 Some thoughts on the related concepts of preservation and restoration have been discussed in Appendix 1. "Bokaap... Faces and Facades" pages 133-134.

- 9 Lance Wright, editor. Old Lamps for New. The Architectural Review. November. 1975.

Conservation can be seen to imply a conservative social and political standpoint, but, in fact, usually the opposite is the case. Conservationists are attackers rather than preservers of the status quo, and the attack is levelled at the inadequacies of the modern city and the failure of modern architecture to address itself to the real needs of the man in the street.

However, conservation is not concerned with preserving a building or townscape as is. The concern is with an environment that grows and changes reflecting history. Alterations and additions to buildings show the passage of time, the change of need and culture, and alterations (or equally the lack of them) may say more about the present than the past. The decision to not act is just as positive a decision as to act. History is not concerned with the past, but with the present pointing to the future, and is constantly by our actions being rewritten for the future. Our heritage is whatever we want it to be.

In unravelling this thread we must next consider our motives for conservation. Once this is done it will be clearer what the goals and methods are to be.

There are generally three motives for conservation: archaeological, artistic and social. Generally all three occur in each case, thus the problem is to decide how to weight each one in the particular situation.

The archaeological motive is scientifically based and rigorous, and leads to a "museumisation", a look at but do not touch feeling. The original substance is retained and kept in perpetuity. This attitude will not allow changes to the original structure to look like or be mistaken for the original.

The artistic motive allows much more freedom in adding to or upgrading decaying parts, and it does not mind deceiving the viewer as to what is old or new, as it is primarily concerned with design and its impact on the viewer. The emphasis is often on "townscape", craftsmanship, materials and texture. The danger with this motive is that the artist might impose a new image on the original fabric through subtle changes not perceptible to himself.

The social motive allows an even greater freedom, and a consequent greater danger of deception, though often to the retention of an outward appearance at the cost of absurdity. Though often this may seem inevitable as the sequence of events may have led to a situation in which any solution would seem absurd. Thus, though to resort to pastiche may appear absurd and wrong, not because it deceives (to be properly deceived is always a pleasure), but because it does not deceive enough, it is sometimes the correct thing to do (for example, when used to replace a house on a Georgian Square). This might also be the case with this row of buildings on Wale Street. The fabric that is of value here and that we wish to preserve is the townscape; that is the street scene, the views across the environs, the views through passages and lanes to inner courts and work yards, and most particularly the public life that has flourished in the streets.

This may well be the situation with the edge of the site facing onto Wale Street. In the 50's the buildings on it were demolished to make way for a freeway that has since been rescinded.

The difficulty here is compounded by the fact that it is not dwellings that are being built, but a new, unprecedented building form in the townscape... a building to be used exclusively for education, meeting and recreation.....

Thus the dilemma is very much more complex than simply "to restore or not to restore". The question and solution lies in why? how? to what degree?

10 Graeme Binckes. Integrated Conservation. The Vernacular Society of South Africa. Cape Town. 1976.

11 Giancarlo de Carlo. Urbino. Marsilio Editore. Padova. 1966.

12 Kevin Lynch. The Image of the City. MIT Press. Cambridge, Mass. 1960.

13 Christian Norberg-Schulz. Meaning in Western Architecture. Studio Vista. London. 1974.



The street facade



Out buildings and yard walls

- 14 Christopher Alexander, et al. *A Pattern Language*. Oxford University Press. New York. 1977.a.
- 15 Christopher Alexander, et al. *The Oregon Experiment*. Oxford University Press. New York. 1975.b.
- 2 The architectural elements and materials of Plan, facade, etc. are also described in Appendix 1 "Bokaap....." pages 18-26.
- 16 Lawrence Halpin. *Cities*. MIT Press. Cambridge, Mass. and London. 1963.
- 2 The history of the stylistic influences leading to this architecture has been described in Appendix 1 "Bokaap....." pages 14-17.

4.3 Patterns of the Architecture.

The architecture of Bokaap can be seen to be made up of various patterns, and clearly, in order to be conserved and repeated (or even duplicated) they must be understood in principle and form or imagery. These are the patterns pertaining to the particular Place and Users, and are followed by some patterns pertaining to the Function or Use of the building. ^{14 15 2}

4.3.1 Building Technology.

The architecture is essentially one of heavy load bearing walls with small openings and flat timbered roofs. The dwellings are narrow, two-rooms deep being lit and ventilated from street and court.

Materials are consistent throughout... limewashed stucco, timber, locally quarried shale paving.

4.3.2 Courtyards.

In a certain sense the court or courtyard is the most vital element in the architecture of Bokaap, and perhaps of any urban fabric. ¹⁶ It fulfills many functions, the most important of which is daily contact with the out-of-doors, which in densely built environments like Bokaap is vital. It also allows light and air to penetrate into the interiors, and provides for private out-door living in contrast to the semi-private life of the stoep and the publicness of the street.

4.3.3 The System of Proportioning.

The facades of Bokaap, though varying slightly, have a standard system of proportioning: ² narrow, single and double storey fronts, with vertical rectangular openings, relatively simple cornices and parapets. One of the strongest characteristics of the street facade is its two-dimensional character and the care in relating the differently textured areas of window, door and stuccoed wall, decorated or articulated with moulded cornices, architraves, consoles, trimmings and coursings. The strictness of applying this treatment applies only to the street facade of each building, consequently side and court elevations are considerably less ordered and follow the demands of use and building construction. Out-buildings and second floor additions are simple and unselfconscious structures of plastered parapet walls, tin or tarred roofs and unadorned openings.



Configuration of stoeps, steps and walls in Wale Street



The hint of a courtyard



View of the mountain across a stable yard



Flight of steps

4.3.4 Stoeps

Each House has a stoep the full width of its frontage. The stoep is a device used to solve a variety of demands with one element. It provides a zone of semi-public privately owned space between street and dwelling, it accommodates a fall across the frontage of the site, and it includes steps, seats and low dividing walls which appear as demanded by the situation.

4.3.5 Views through to courtyards.

As much a part of the experience of Bokaap as the street scene, is the view through passages to courtyards. These views are so exciting because they are experienced only in passing, a flash of green, a glimpse of a private world. They fascinate as counter to the openness of the street scene.

4.3.6 Glimpses and views.

Glimpses and views of the mountains and environs. A constant reminder and awareness of place.

4.3.7 Steps.

As Bokaap is on the slopes of Signal Hill, the changes of levels is an important constant element in the landscape. These changes in level create vantage spots, ideal for watching and waiting from. Steps are a potentially dynamic element for articulating and giving character to a space or place.

4.3.8 Walls.

Walls serving various purposes, treated and made in various ways. plinths, retaining walls, yard walls, garden walls of stone, brick, plastered, white washed. . . Each wall's task and



A garden wall becomes a house... tied together by the regular rhythm of pilasters, all on a stone plinth



Buttressed masonry



A mosque in Chiappini Street, set well back for emphasis. This mosque is on the edge of the quarry



A balcony addition

relation to both sides must be appreciated, and acknowledged. Walls not only enclose, but also connect and create new links between spaces.

4.3.9 Thick Walls.

Walls that are thick give much greater opportunity for articulation and richness. A wall can perhaps be a zone that contains cupboards, shelves, seats, niches, nooks, within which the space "has room to breathe". This zone can also contain structure (buttresses, columns, etc.,) and it becomes an inbetween realm like a stoep or verandah.

Christopher Alexander, et al. op. cit.

4.3.10 Outdoor Covered Areas.

Outdoor covered areas like verandahs are not really typically Bokaap elements as most of the quarter was built before verandahs became fashionable. Consequently they are usually simple Victorian lean-to additions of corrugated iron with a row of castiron columns.

4.3.11 Trees.

Until recent years there were numerous trees in the streets and backyards: now only a few remain. Trees must be brought back to Bokaap, and planted to serve, and to shape and articulate their surroundings.

4.3.12 Specialness of Certain Sites.

Certain sites have assumed a specialness for a variety of reasons eg. a particular topographical character, for religious reasons and historical associations, and have correspondingly been given a special architectural treatment.

These sites must be protected and/or developed in a way that their specialness is concretized and articulated.



This photograph by Arthur Elliott, taken in the 1920's shows trees in Leeuwen Street and the ever present backdrop of the mountains

4.3.13 Activity Nodes.

Certain community activities which are mutually supportive want to be concentrated in specific activity nodes. However, not all community activities are appropriately assembled together and also the place of their assembly should be appropriate or "right". Thus the solving of the questions of which activities and where is essential in this pattern of Activity Nodes.

4.3.14 A Local Town Hall.

To assist the community in its struggle to establish itself as a body with some political control of its own local affairs, a small Town Hall must be established. It should have four main parts: an indoor space for public meetings, an outdoor space for public meetings, a variety of public services and a variety of multi-purpose spaces for use by the community.

4.3.15 Thresholds.

Every boundary in the city whether it be of a building complex neighbourhood or larger area, which has important meaning is made clearer by a gateway or threshold where the main entering paths cross that boundary.

4.3.16 Decentralized Parking.

Large parking areas are inhuman and are a blight on any environment. This is especially so, where the scale is of the pedestrian and no spaces, closed or otherwise, are large, and even street side parking has a detrimental effect on the character of the area.

Thus parking should be decentralized into small areas off the streets: ideally at the centre of the city blocks, or at least behind some kind of natural barrier.

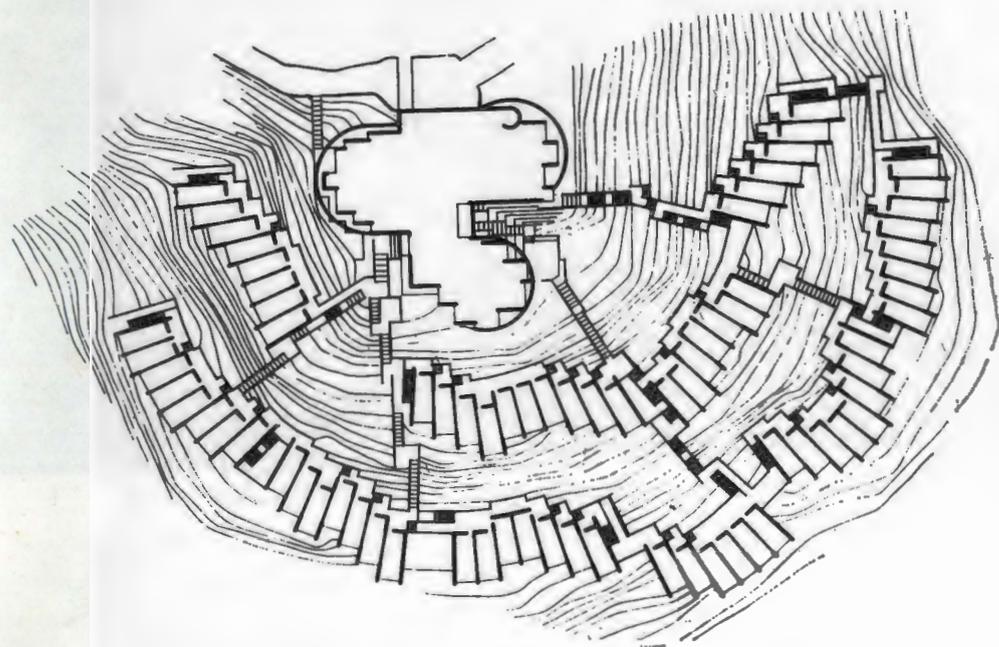
In these times of increasing politicisation of underprivileged or oppressed masses, one of the architect's primary tasks is to provide an architecture that both accommodates changing needs and facilitates or even points to such change.



The old city of Urbino



Uncovered walkway



Plan of University College, Urbino



Covered walkway

5. Precedent.

There appears to be no precedent for this Community facilities building which can be directly referred to in terms of programme and form. Therefore the precedent that is referred to is fairly diverse: The organisational principle determining the form, that is, the system of walkways and courts, invokes de Carlo's University College outside Urbino; the facilities provided and the consequent nature of the centre refers to Aalto's Cultural Centre in Wolfsburg; and the precedent for the re-use and/or restoration of existing building fabrics in old historic cities for new and different facilities refers to de Carlo's Law Faculty and Faculty of Education in Urbino.

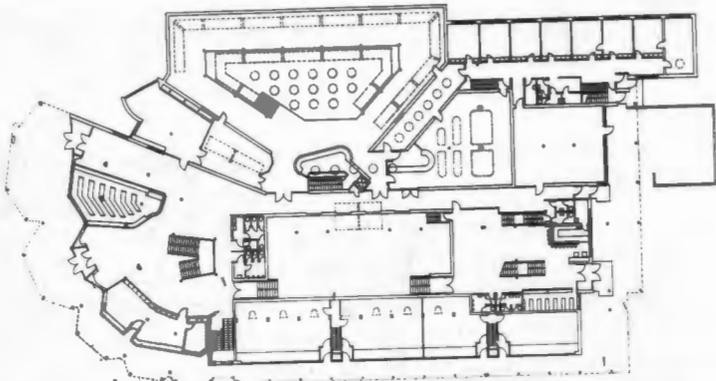
Also, another order of precedent has already been covered, that is, the local precedent of finer grained elements and textures covered in the Patterns of the Architecture.

5.1 University College, Urbino, by Giancarlo de Carlo.

The plan suggests a strong polarity between the individual and communal realms. However, the interconnecting system or web of internal and external, covered and uncovered walkways, steps, walls, seats, balconies and terraces, connects, embraces, binds, follows and penetrates the whole complex, becoming a great and extended doorstep... an inbetween realm coinciding with the building. This extended doorstep means that wherever the user looks he will find sun or shade, light or darkness as he wishes; his contact with earth and sky, and the surrounding hills and villages is immediate and ever-present.

The building element, the larger communal spaces, is a compound form of cylindrical drums resting on an orthogonal sub-structure. The superstructure is articulated by the cantilevered external staircases and passageways winding around it, while the substructure extends the smaller fabric of the alleys and student rooms into the larger structure. The interaction of the curved walls of the superstructure and the orthogonal substructure creates quite naturally opportunities for richness in tables, seats, people

17 Aldo van Eyck. University College in Urbino. Zodiac 16. 1966.



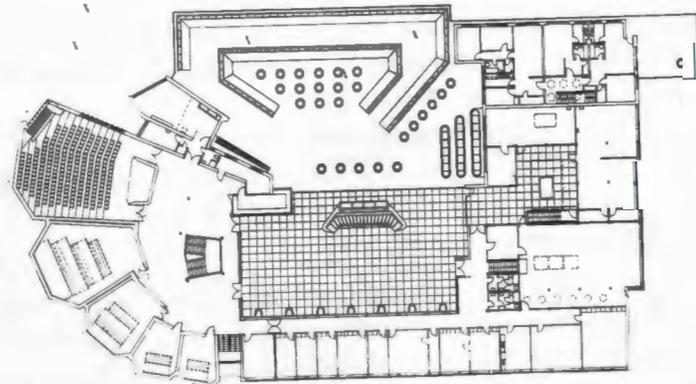
Erdgeschoss 1: 001, links Eingang zur Bibliothek und des Hörsaals, rechts Eingang zum Jugendzentrum, Musikstudio und den Wohnungen. Gegen die Straße unter der Arkade sind Ladengeschäfte

Le plan de l'étage. A gauche, les accès à la bibliothèque et au lecture hall; à droite, les accès au centre de la jeunesse, le studio de musique et les appartements. Sous les arcades sur la façade

Plan at entrance level, to the left the entrances to the library and lecture hall; to the right the entrances to the "youth center", studio music and the apartment apartments. Shops are located on the street side under the arcade



Grundrissansicht / Fassade von oben / Fassade im Schnitt



Obergeschoss 1: 001, links die Hörsäle der Volkshochschule, rechts die Werkstätten und Clubräume, in der Mitte der Zentralhof für verschiedene Veranstaltungen

L'étage supérieur. A gauche, les salles de l'Université populaire; à droite, les ateliers et les salles de club; au centre, le cour couronné à une multifonctionnelle espace

Upper floor, to the left the lecture rooms of the adult educational center; to the right the workshops and studios; in the middle is the central court for various types of presentations



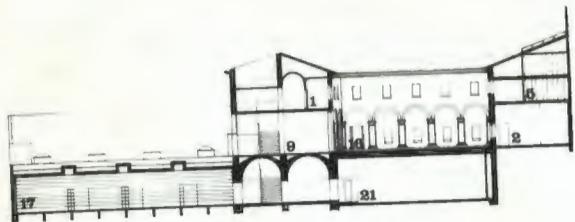
Längsschnitt 1: 001, links die Volkshochschule, Mitte offener Festival- und Clubhof, rechts das Jugendzentrum. Gegen Hauptfassade, à gauche l'Université populaire, au centre une salle pour fêtes, à droite maison des jeunes. Longitudinal section, left the college adult education, center the general auditorium and roof garden, right the building for young people

5.2 Cultural Centre, Wolfsburg by Alvar Aalto.

This cultural centre was built to provide a place of "intellectual counterpoise and relaxation in the otherwise monotonous routine of working in an industrial city". Enclosed for climatic reasons, it is supposed to assume the social role of the Greek agora.

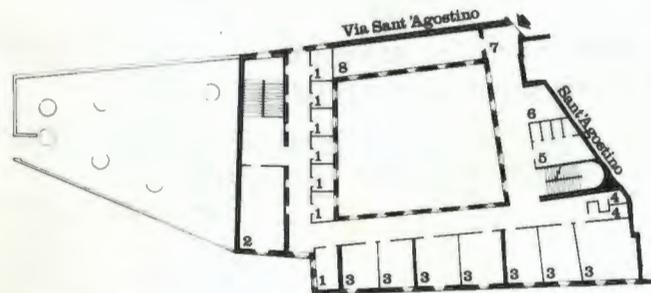
The various parts of the building are functionally related to one another, though each group of activities retains its individuality.

18 Alvar Aalto. New York.
Wittenborn and Co. 1963.

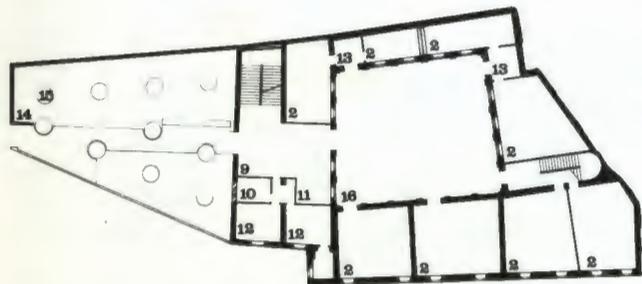


longitudinal section

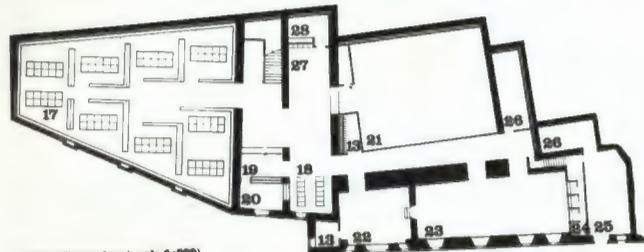
- | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1, dons | 7, entrance | 15, roof lights | 24, simultaneous translation |
| 2, lecture room | 8, students' common room | 16, courtyard | 25, central nesting installation |
| 3, departments | 9, entrance | 17, reading room | 26, store |
| 4, dons' lavatory | 10, secretary | 18, card index | 27, microfilms |
| 5, male lavatories (female lavatories on half floor above) | 11, porter | 19, book distribution | 28, dark room |
| 6, porter | 12, administration | 20, librarian | |
| | 13, cloakroom | 21, stack room | |
| | 14, garden | 22, dons' common room | |
| | | 23, ceremonial hall | |



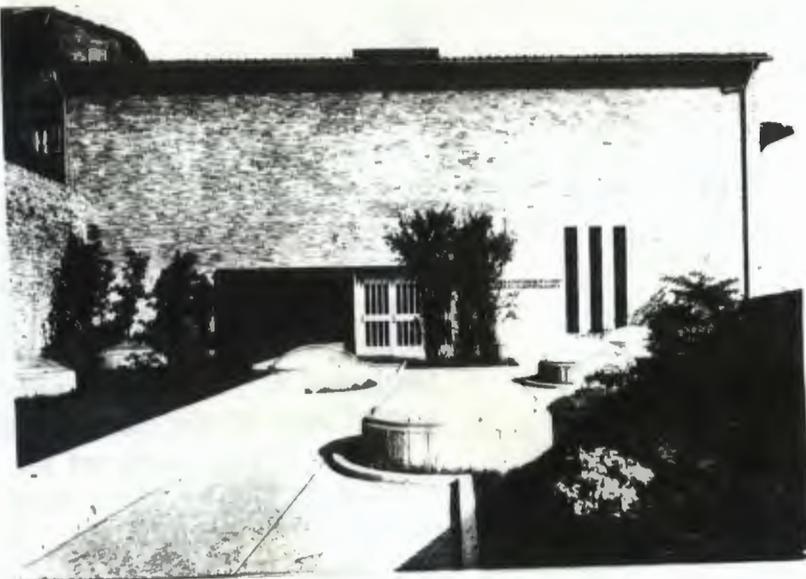
upper floor plan



middle floor plan



lower floor plan (scale 1:500)



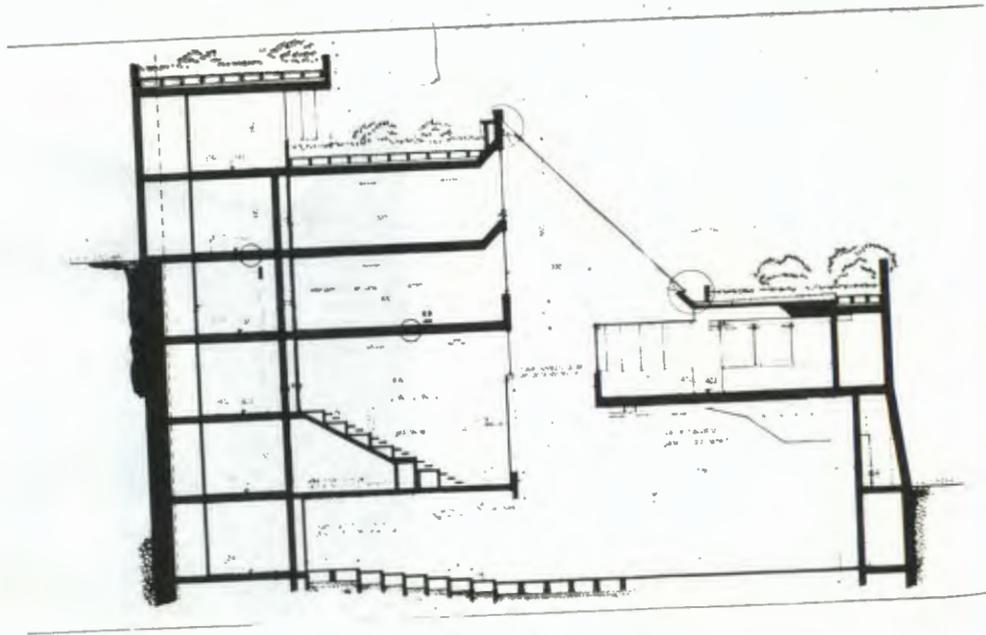
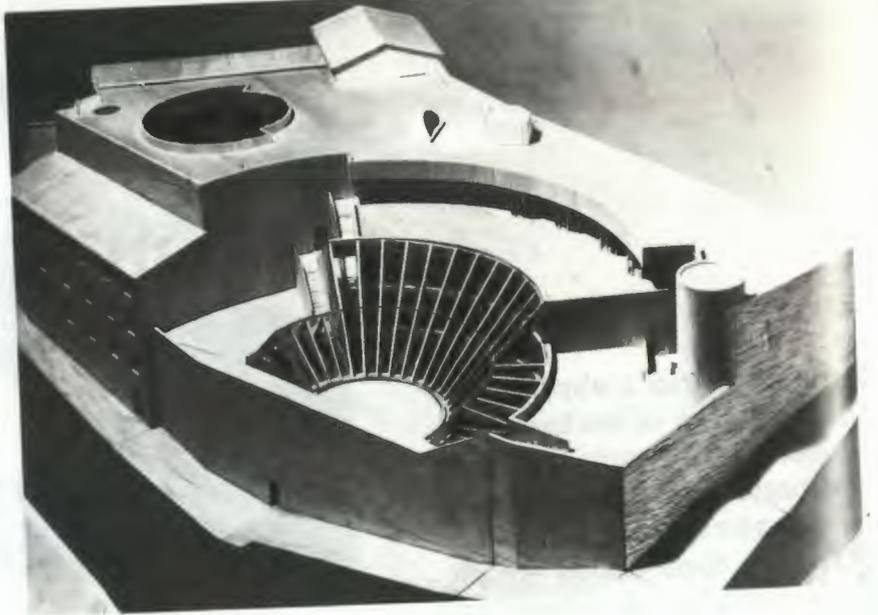
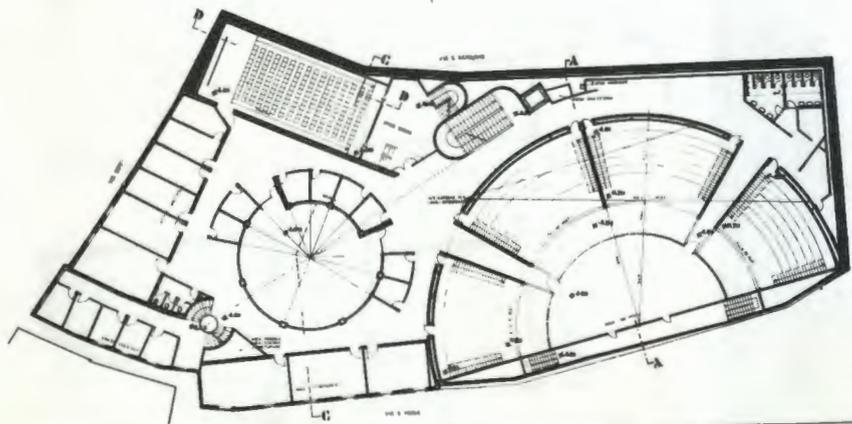
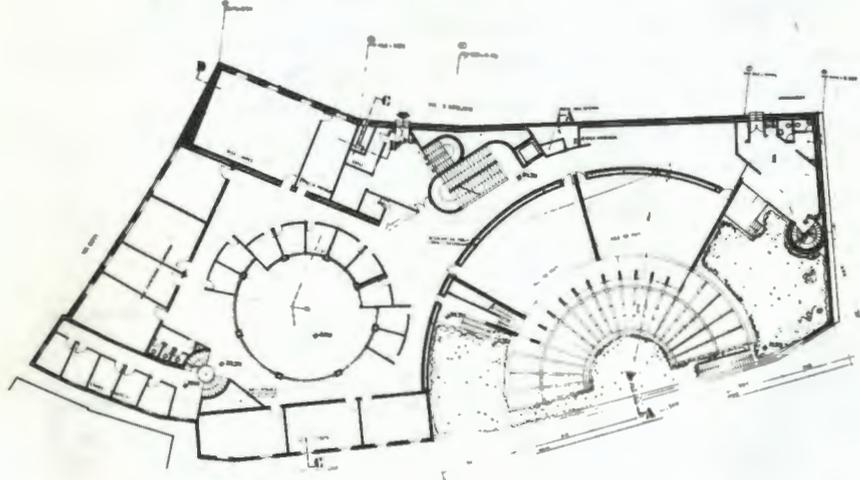
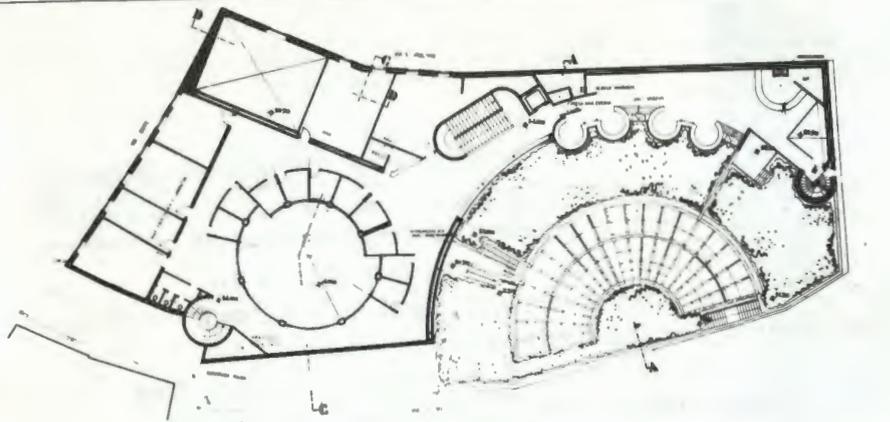
Thus de Carlo's approach to the question of restoration is determined very much by the particular case. Here, in the same building, are differing approaches which presumeably are determined by the exact position, use or alteration he may be considering.

- 19 G. de Carlo. Urbino Renewal.
The Architectural Review.
October. 1972.

5.3 Law Faculty, Urbino, by Giancarlo de Carlo.

In the urban renewal of Urbino a number of conversions of half-derelict buildings was called for. One of these was an old convent, more recently an army barracks, which has been remodelled as a Law Faculty for the University. Changes to the two long facades have been matched in with the existing, but the entrance facade has been completely remodelled. The courtyard also has changes, but these fall between the matching in and remodelling approaches used with facades. Additional space has been created by excavating under the triangular open space (across which one enters) and under the courtyard.

The vaulting and plaster mouldings of the interior have been carefully restored, but the new concrete floor across which one enters is in no way disguised.



Nouvelle école normale d'Urbino.
plan des premier, deuxième, troisième
niveaux.
New Faculty of Education, Urbino. Plans
of the first, second and third floors.

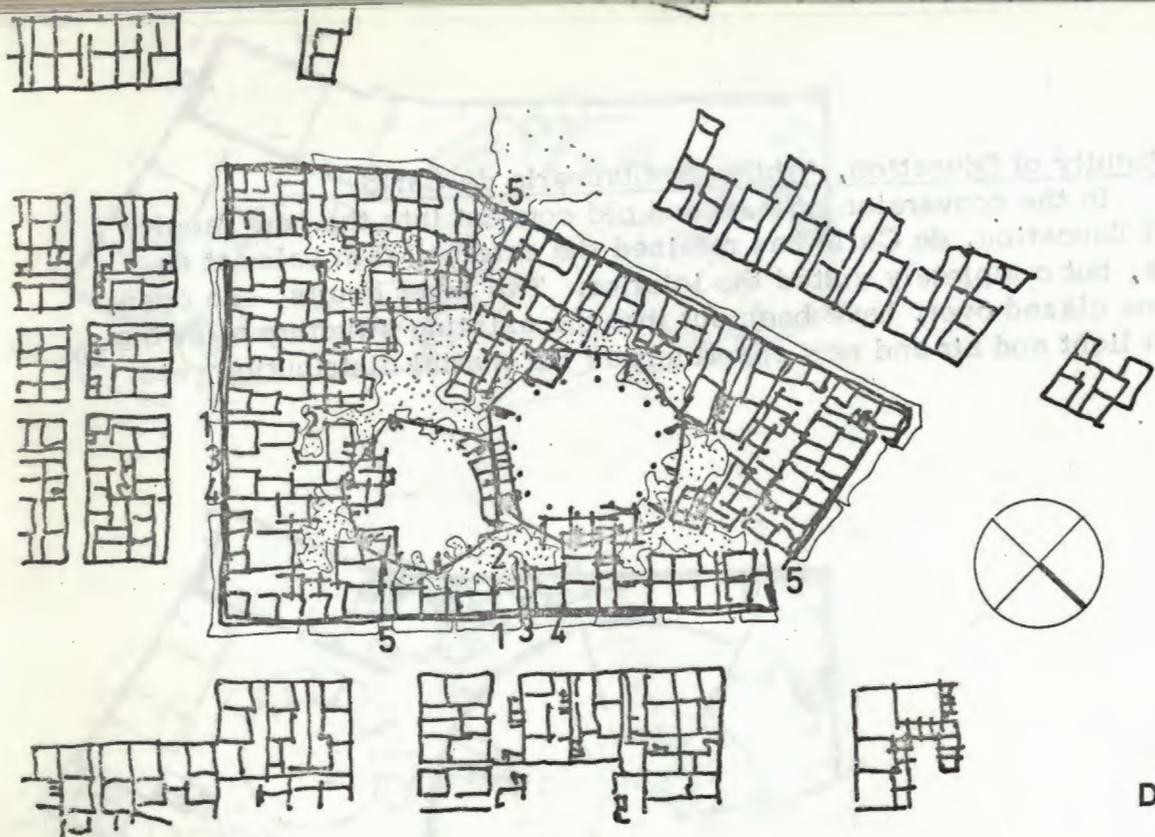
5.4 Faculty of Education, Urbino by Giancarlo de Carlo.

In the conversion of a second old convent into the new Faculty of Education, de Carlo has retained the external skin almost as is, but completely gutted the interior. Two inner courts, one open, one glazed over, have been cut into the existing structure allowing in light and air and new opportunities for spatial distribution, etc. 20

In this case de Carlo again differs in approach depending on the nature of the problem, here even more radically than in the Law Faculty... and with considerably more success.

20 G. de Carlo. Reconciliation of Architectural and Political Contexts. L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui. Jan/Feb. 1975.





- Pattern 1. building technology
 2. courtyards
 3. the facade
 4. stoeps
 5. views through to courtyards

DIAGRAM A



- Pattern 6. glimpses and views
 11. trees
 16. decentralized parking

16

DIAGRAM B

6. Conclusion/Solution.

This continuum of time and form is mentioned here to emphasize the concern in the solution for history and the existing built fabric of the environment, which is the expression of a socially based vision of the meanings of architecture.

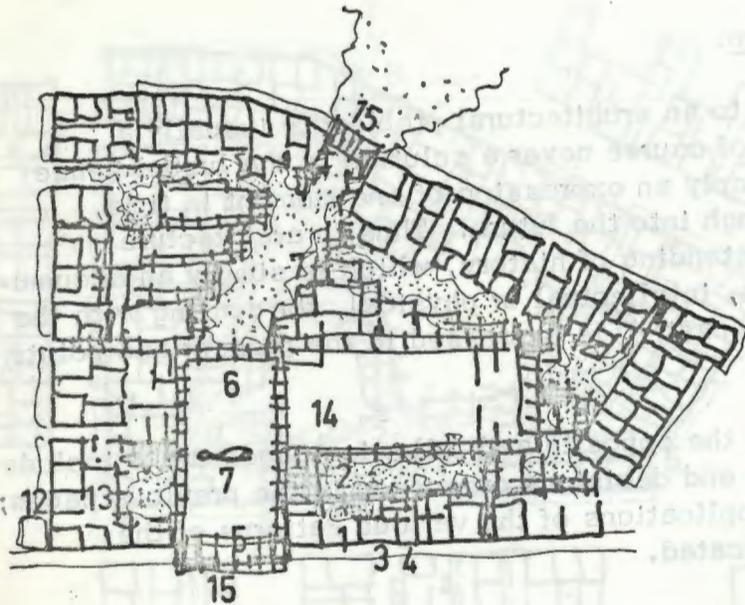
20 Giancarlo de Carlo. op. cit.

The conclusion to an architectural problem is usually a solution, which is of course never a solution in the usual sense of the word, but simply an expression of one moment in time, which endures through into the future. Thus in architecture knowledge or understanding of history, which is simply an accumulation of techniques, intellectual or physical, for dealing with the moment (or moments past) ²⁰ is expressed in the present and points to the future.

The diagrams on the opposite and following pages try to include all the determinants and decisions discussed in the previous pages; and in particular, applications of the various Patterns of the Architecture are indicated.

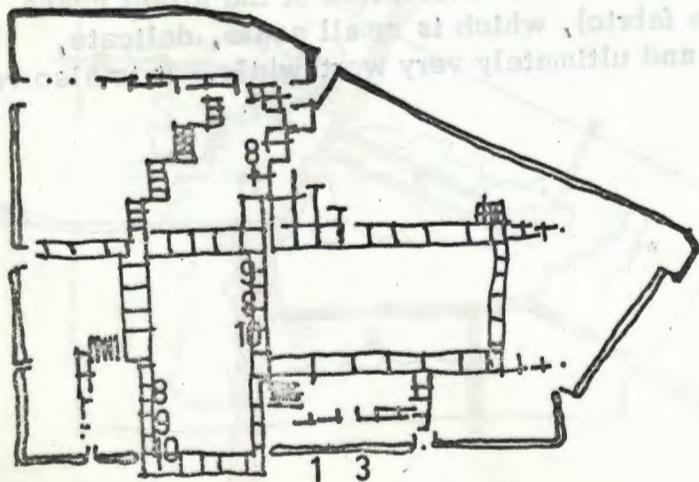
Diagram A shows the conservation and restoration of the continuous fine-grained cellular plan with a formal, two-dimensional facade facing onto the streets. Inside the block courts are created by the breaking of the fine scaled grid by the large open and enclosed public volumes. In this diagram the decision to place the large containers at mid-block is made clear: the problem here is to preserve the townscape, to avoid disruption of the street scene (both its life and the fabric), which is small scale, delicate, consistent, uniform and ultimately very worthwhile. It is also very easily eroded.





- Pattern 1. building technology
- 2. courtyards
- 3. the facade
- 4. stoeps
- 5. views through to courtyards
- 6. views of environs
- 7. steps
- 12. specialness of certain areas
- 13. activity nodes
- 14. local town hall
- 15. thresholds

DIAGRAM C



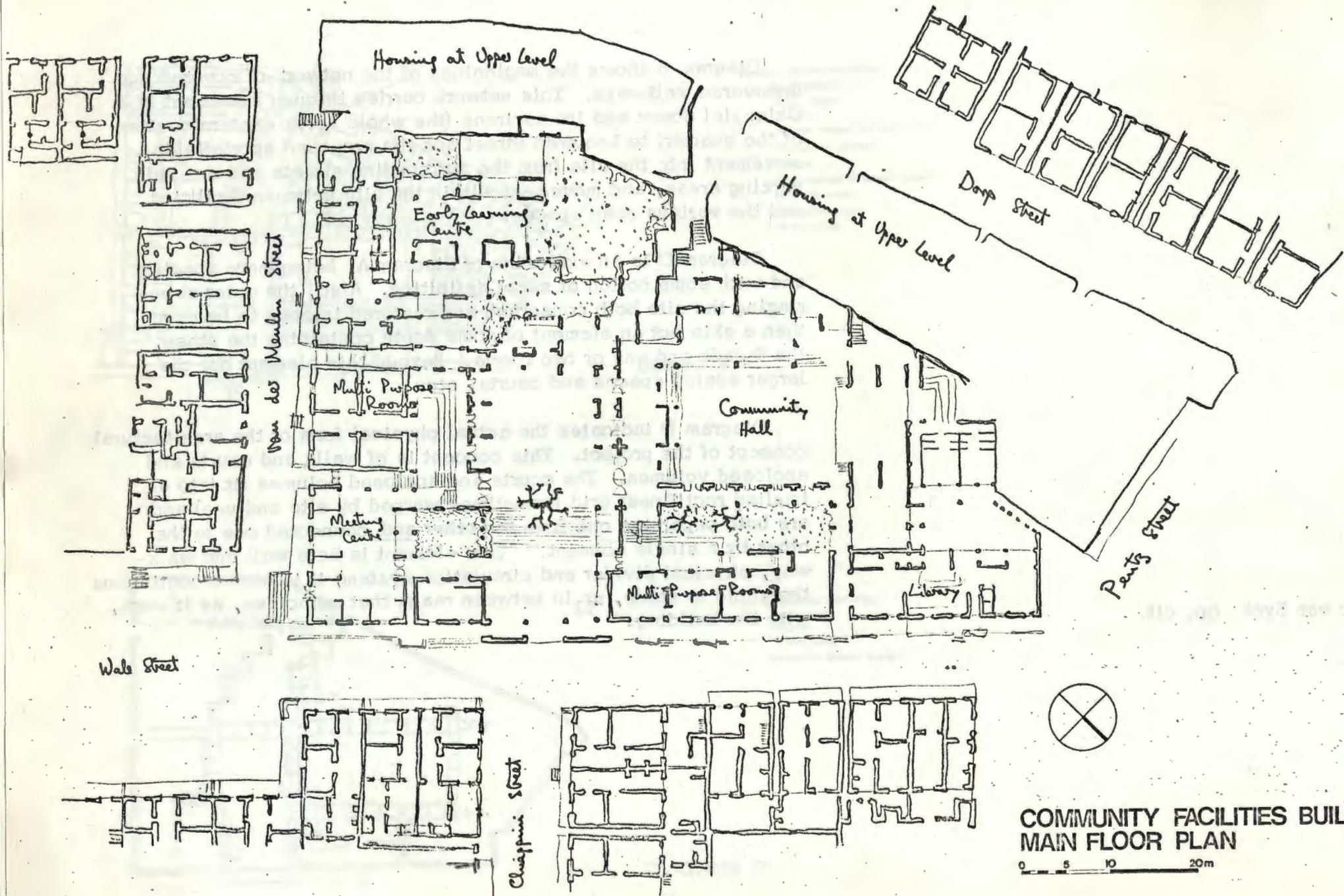
- Pattern 1. building technology
- 3. the facade
- 8. walls
- 9. thick walls
- 10. outdoor covered areas

DIAGRAM D

Diagram B shows the beginnings of the network of covered and uncovered walkways. This network carries through movement from Chiappini Street and its environs (the whole north-eastern section of the quarter) to Leeuwen Street and the proposed sportsfields, movement into the site from the surrounding streets and the main parking areas, and movement within the site between facilities and the various open spaces.

Diagram C is an extension of diagram A, being more specific and with some notion of zonal definition. Also, the outer skin ringing the site both conserved and restored is seen to be more than a skin but an element of some depth containing the stoep, the facade and one or two rooms. Beyond this element are the larger scaled spaces and courts, etc.

Diagram D indicates the actual physical form or the architectural concept of the project. This concept is of walls and courts and enclosed volumes. The courts and enclosed volumes fit into an implied rectilinear grid (sometimes warped by site and use) and are both separated one from the other and connected one to the other by a single element. "This element is both wall and walkway, physical divider and circulation system; it is also a continuous threshold or stoep, an in between realm that coincides, as it were, with the building."



Housing at Upper Level

Early Learning Centre

Van der Merwe Street

Multi Purpose Rooms

Meeting Centre

Community Hall

Multi Purpose Rooms

Library

Housing at Upper Level

Dorp Street

Pentz Street

Wals Street

Chappin Street



COMMUNITY FACILITIES BUILDING
MAIN FLOOR PLAN

0 5 10 20m



Looking down Chiappini Street to the site. It is clear how the site is open to views from within

7. Appendices.

7.1 Appendix A. Photographs of the Site.

The few photographs on the following pages give a clear picture of the state of repair of the buildings on the site and immediately surrounding it. To say the least, the buildings are all clearly in need of maintenance, and equally obvious is the need to do something to the gaping hole left in the townscape by the demolition of the dwellings on Wale Street.

Some of these photographs also appear in Appendix 1, but have been included here for the convenience of having all of them together.



A rooftop view, looking across the lower part
of the site and up van der Meulen Street.
Table Mountain in the background



From Wale Street, looking up to the Dorp Street dwellings. Note the path across the site despite the unevenness of the terrain



The corner shop at the intersection of
Dorp and Pentz Streets



Dorp Street dwelling and users



Pentz Street and the backs of the Dorp Street dwellings, and beyond Table Mountain

7.2 Appendix B. Accommodation Schedule.

| | Area Required in sq. m. |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <u>Community Hall</u> | |
| Hall for 400 people | 295 |
| Gallery for 100 people | 85 |
| Annex for 80 people | 75 |
| Kitchen and Coffee bar, etc. | 75 |
| Chair and equipment storage | 55 |
| Stage and wings | 145 |
| Change rooms | 70 |
| | <hr/> |
| | 800 sq. m. |
| | |
| <u>Meeting Centre</u> | |
| Small offices | 70 |
| Office for administration of centre | 30 |
| 7 Multi-purpose spaces | 350 |
| 4 Hobby rooms | 250 |
| Toilets for Hall and Meeting Centre | 40 |
| | <hr/> |
| | 740 sq. m. |
| | |
| <u>Early Learning Facility</u> | |
| Creche - play room | 60 |
| - toilets, etc | 7 |
| - lockers | 4 |
| - storage | 10 |
| - kitchen | 7 |
| - covered out-door play | 20 |
| - outdoor play | 12 |
| | <hr/> |
| | 90 |

| | |
|----------------------------|-----|
| Nursery School - Play room | 90 |
| - Toilets | 8 |
| - lockers | 5 |
| - storage | 15 |
| - Kitchen | 10 |
| - Quiet room | 12 |
| - covered play | 45 |
| - outdoor play | 290 |

Services and Administration

| | |
|--------------|----|
| - Kitchen | 25 |
| -pantry | 14 |
| - laundry | 18 |
| - Staff room | 10 |
| - toilets | 3 |
| - Offices | 25 |
| - Staff room | 13 |

| | |
|------------------------------|----|
| Reception | 15 |
| Isolation | 10 |
| Circulation -cum- play space | 40 |

457 sq. m.

Library.

| | |
|--|----|
| Entrance and control | 27 |
| Childrens reading | 60 |
| General reading | 60 |
| Islamic research and exhibition space. | 80 |
| Toilets | 10 |
| Librarian's workroom | 12 |

249 sq. m.

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