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School of Architecture, Planning and Geomatics

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Masters of Landscape Architecture

In the School of Architecture, Planning and Geomatics
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Site Specificity as the Decolonial Model
An Interpretive Study of the Groote Schuur Menagerie

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ABSTRACT

The Groote Schuur Menagerie, commonly known as the ‘Rhodes’ Zoo’, is located next to the University of Cape Town on the foothills of Table Mountain. A deserted display of historical relics, this site can be seen as a tangible and perceived symbol of colonisation. Despite not being a focus of the #RhodesMustFall movement to date, the Groote Schuur menagerie was also established by Cecil John Rhodes’ and was part of his imperial agenda.

Abandonment, physical change over time and immersion of the zoo structures in spontaneous vegetation growth, has blurred the distinction between the architectural objects and the original topography, creating a new hybrid landscape with a particular microclimate and ambiance.

This study presents the argument that theories on Site Specificity, as a model of site interrogation and design, is the most appropriate to the discourse of decolonization as it is inherently a de-colonized method of reading the site.

Through conducting a site specific analysis on the Groote Schuur Menagerie site, in addition to consulting archived material. I will argue that the current site conditions are a manifestation of the colonial and decolonial, suggestion that the landscape is essential ‘new’ in its current condition, and therefore appropriate for new identity.
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“We must find new lands from which we can easily obtain raw materials and at the same time exploit the cheap slave labour that is available from the natives of the colonies.” ¹

Cecil John Rhodes

“To the colonized people the most essential value, because the most concrete, is first and foremost the land; the land which will bring them bread and above all dignity.” ²

Frantz Fanon

1. INTRODUCTION

In the current politically charged climate of South Africa, the search for decolonized identity and a transformed society is apparent across the country. The most recent and notable evidence of this can be seen by the #RhodesMustFall (#RMF) and #FeeDecolonizedEducation movements founded by the student body at the University of Cape Town (UCT) in 2015 and 2016. While not directly the focus of #RMF to date, the Groote Schuur Menagerie was also established by Cecil John Rhodes, and stands as a symbol to his imperial agenda. Positioned adjacent to the university of Cape Town on the foothills of Table Mountain, this now abandoned menagerie is perceived as a historic display of structures and relics scattered along the slopes of the Groote Schuur estate.

The historic narrative of the this site, is a reflection of Rhodes’ desire to embed the colonial order into the African landscape. With the aid of his architect, Herbert Baker, the public zoological garden was designed to exhibit a wide range of privately owned animals housed in aviaries, cages, paddocks and even a lion den. While detailed records of the menagerie are limited, archived photography, illustrations and published descriptions of visits to the Groote Schuur estate, provide informants that describe the colonized landscape. Through abandonment, physical change over time and the immersion of the zoo structures in unmanaged vegetation growth, the visible distinction between colonial object and the ‘natural’ landscape has become blurred. This study present the argument that the merging of these two conditions, the site as is ‘was’ and ‘is’, has created a new hybrid landscape reflecting its own unique micro climatic conditions and ambience. Using contemporary landscape architecture to provide the theory of Site Specific, investigations will show that the current state of the site is no longer a holistic reflection of the colonial order, but rather is a ‘new’ landscape appropriate for new identity.

Contemporary landscape theories of site-reading are aimed at emphasising the uniqueness’ and significance of ‘site. Rediscovering the landscape both through systematic site analysis and intuitive experiential responses, reveals the site’s specific character, giving voice to the landscape and it’s users. This process of highly site specific interpretations is central to the discourse of decolonization as will be proved, and offering an alternate mode of transform the perceived colonial occupation of this site.

The study will beginning by briefly outlining colonization and Rhodes’ role in South Africa, which includes an introductory history of the Groote Schuur menagerie. This historic retelling situates the site’s significance in relation to decolonizing UCT. Understanding ‘Decolonization' will then be discussed on the basis of Frantz Fanon’s teachings, and linked to the discourse of landscape architecture. Following this the claim will be presented that site specificity, as a model of site interpretation and design, is the most appropriate method for decolonization. Three site specific theories will be presented and used to interpret the Groote Schuur Menagerie site, with the findings servings as evidentiary support to the claim.
[Fig 01] Cecil John Rhodes at his home in Rondebosch

2. THE COLONIAL HISTORY

This chapter will discuss the colonial history of South Africa, focused on Cecil John Rhodes and his manifestation of the imperial agenda in Cape Town. An example of this manifestation can be identified in the establishment of the Groote Schuur Menagerie. Using archived source material, the menagerie will be described from its intended historical perspective.

Born 1853 in England, Cecil John Rhodes grew up as one of eleven children in rural Essex into the well off family of Francis and Lousia Rhodes. Shortly after completing his schooling, Rhodes fell ill showing early signs of consumption (Tuberculosis) and was diagnosed with a heart problem. Hoping to delay the perceived inevitable, Rhodes was sent to Africa to be cured by the sun, a common treatment for lung disease at the time. Arriving in Natal in September 1870, Rhodes was sent to meet his elder brother Herbert who worked on a cotton farm near the port of Durban. The crash of the cotton market drove Rhodes to Kimberley two years later, after which he decided to go back to England to enrol at Oxford University. Rhodes returned to Kimberley, standing at the edge of the great hole looking at the chaos of men below, Rhodes quickly recognized its potential to provide the wealth he needed to finance his dreams of furthering the British Empire.

“The object of which I intend to devote my life is the defence and extension of the British Empire... I contend that we are the first race in the world, and that the more of the world we inhabit the better it is for the human race.” Believing that being born an Englishman meant you had “won the lottery of life”, Rhodes could be described as the ultimate imperialist. He went on to become the “King of Diamonds” by establishing De Beers Consolidated Mines and soon acquired most of the world's diamond mines. Sharp business instincts and the accumulation of wealth came naturally to Rhodes, but this was not what he sought, it was power.

Cecil John Rhodes became the Prime Minister of the Cape Colony in 1890. The most significant undertakings during his time in office was the passing of the Glen Grey Act, commonly referred today as the blueprint of the Apartheid regime. Initially implemented as the administrative “Native Bill” to assert more order over the overcrowding in the Glen Grey area (Eastern Cape), soon evolved into a way of forcing black Africans into the wage-labour market and displacing them from their own lands. This Act had 3 primary outcomes [1] it created the migrant labour system, [2] it formalized “native reserves” areas, for example declaring the Transvaal as purely “native territory” and [3] removed vote-power for all non-white Africans.

The Glen Grey Act, essentially restricted landownership and allowed Rhodes to spatially reorganising man according to race, which would become his most lasting and influential act of colonisation, and became the foundation for the Apartheid’s racially divisive governance. From 1948 years of non-white displacement, segregation and unequal social ordering would physically embed racial programming into the land. By 1994, following the liberation of Nelson Mandela from imprisonment, government power was handed over to the ANC (African National Congress) and the Apartheid regime was abolished, leaving behind the deeply scared landscapes of its doctrine.

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3 Crowe, “Cecil John Rhodes “.
5 Crowe, “Cecil John Rhodes “.
6 Ibid.
7 Ibid.
History of the Groote Schuur Estate

The Groote Schuur estate, located on the eastern slopes of Table Mountain and below Devils Peak, was originally inhabited by the nomadic Koi San who would seasonally roam these low lying regions and harvest from the indigenous landscape and hunt the freely roaming buck. During the 17th Century the Dutch East Indian Trade Company laid claim over this land which quickly forced the San to retreat to the hinterlands. The freely roaming animals were also replaced with livestock and the indigenous vegetation with agricultural practises in the lower wetlands around what is now known today as lower Observatory and Rondebosch.

In 1893 Rhodes purchased the land along with several adjoining hectares including the land on which UCT and Rhodes Memorial sit today. Herbert Baker, a British imperialist architect, would be the one to help Rhodes shape and carve his colonial vision into the landscape of South Africa.

After being gifted a lion, lioness and leopard by his fellow colonialist, Rhode conceptualised a public zoological garden that would showcase these spectacular creatures and demonstrate Rhodes power and domination over even the most savage of beasts. Originally the menagerie,( a collections of wild animals privately owned and housed for exhibition), was intended to display a wide variety of animals that would ‘freely’ roam the estate in large paddocks and be admired in their ‘natural’ habitat. As many animals died shortly after captivity, it was decided that proper enclosures should be built.

Designing the enclosures and site layout was handed over to Baker with strict guidelines to be followed. A lover of classical Greek and Roman architecture , Rhodes sent Baker to visit the great Roman and Greek ruins to be inspired by the classical order. In 1894 Baker proposed the first design of the lion den [Fig 04], an elaborate colonnaded enclosure that would sit proud in landscape and be observed with dramatic backdrop of the rising mountains behind. Due to cost this design was never built, 2 more designs followed before the existing structure was built in 1904.

The spatial design of the site followed the classical principals of order and symmetry, with paths consciously directional towards the mountain vista. This making reference to the British picturesque gardens. Large bird aviaries were constructed in the typical ‘green house’ style with thick hedges of roses and camellias planted to further establish the English countryside in the African context.

No formal record of the animals housed were kept, however through the sourcing of archived photographs and visitors personal accounts one derives that all the animals were from colonized countries from across the globe, though mainly African species were evident. Extracts from The Cape stitch the mental picture of the zoo:
[Fig 02] Historical plan of the Groote Schuur menagerie
Source: UCT Archive

[Fig 03] Lionness and her cubs
Source: Cape Town Historical Archive

[Fig 04] First proposal of the Lion Den by Herbert Baker - 1894
Source: UCT Archive
“On the right hand side of the road are a number of cages and these are surrounded by a wire fence in order to keep visitors at their proper distance. The space between the cages and the fence is used by the peacocks and cranes as a promenade. Here they stroll up and down to the music of canaries, the cries of parrots and the shrill jabber of the monkeys.”  

“A leopard paces rapidly to and fro behind the cruel bars. He never halts nor pauses. At each end he turns right about with the precision and regularity of a sentry. So he goes backwards and forwards, raging, fretting hoping vainly for release”

“Another cage containing a number of small animals which appear to be species of dingoes...do not divert people flinging missiles at the poor imprisoned beasts.”

“...and in a field just behind the historic residence the kangaroo jumps about as freely as on his native soils”

After Rhodes passing in 1902, the land was donated to the City of Cape Town with instructions to maintain this land as public in his last Will and Testament. Animals were kept in the zoo until the late 80's, then was official left vacant. UCT has made many proposals for this land with the most recently proposed as the potential ‘linking’ site to the new Nelson Mandela Learning centre, positioned against Rhodes Memorial rd above the lion cages.

In the next chapter Frantz Fanon’s theories on decolonization will be explored in relation of the urgency for a decolonized identity in the South African landscape and specifically UCT. Fanon, a revolutionary theorist giving voice to colonized African countries, makes suggestions for achieving “true freedom” by changing the physical and perceived colonial occupation of the land.

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8 Unknown, “Saturday Afternoon - the Zoo at Groote Schuur,” *The Cape* 1908.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid.

[Fig 05] Historical images of captive animals

Source: Cape Town Historical Archive
3. DEFINING DECOLONIZATION

“Decolonization is the ending of colonialism and the liberation of the colonized. This requires the dismantling of the colonial government and its entire social system upon which control & exploitation are based.”

This chapter will discuss the meaning of decolonization, as referenced by the teachings of Frantz Fanon and Walter Mignolo, with particular focus on the role of consciousness and perception in reaching an identity of decoloniality.

Fanon (1925 - 1961) a psychologist, political theorist and freedom fighter during the Algerian revolution, has published theories on decolonization in African countries. His theories, derived from Marxist thought, demonstrate the importance of land to the discourse. Which in the context of South Africa, we recognise that decolonization is largely a result of the dispossession of land that was initially strategized by Rhodes.

Fanon states, “True liberation is not simply decolonization but involves the total deconstruction of the colonial system.” He goes on to say that decolonization occurs at two levels. First - the physical act of freeing the land and the colonized, and second - the psychological freeing of consciousness. Further recognition of this is belief is shared by Walter Mignolo, a semiotics and literary theorist focused on exploring global concepts of coloniality. He references this notion of as “coloniality of being” implying that the ‘colonial’ does not only manifest is the physical but is also a way of thought and existence.

In the context of recent protests at UCT, namely the #RhodesMustFall and #FreeDecolonizedEducation, we identify that beyond the physical manifestations, the legacy of the colonial is imbedded in the mind and in our access to knowledge. “Knowledge is also colonized and therefore needs to be de-colonized” a thought emphasised by Anibal Quijano. In his theory on coloniality, he makes irrefutable links between the “coloniality of power in the political and economic spheres with coloniality of knowledge and of being.” Here again the reference to decolonizing the ‘being’/ the ‘mind’ is critically emphasised.

From these understandings we learn that to liberate the colonized one needs to change the dialogue to include more than physical change, more that the physical manifestations. Mignolo refers to this as “De-linking [meaning] to change the terms of the conversation and NOT just the content of the conversation” Taking the microcosm of UCT campus as a miniature version of a national identity and political crisis, we see the manifestation of both the physical and psychological presence of the colonial. While not actually constructed during Rhodes lifetime, the university project was envisioned by him and constructed according British spatial guidelines. While statues can be physically removed, decolonizing an environment requires the perception of place to be read as de-colonial.

In the next chapter, I will argue that contemporary landscape theories of Site Specificity, offer alternate interpretation of reading the landscape. I propose that the process of finding and revealing the specifics of a landscape are by their very nature, decolonized. This approach will then be tested against the ‘colonial

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14 More, "Fanon and the Land Question in (Post) Apartheid South Africa." p172
15 Ibid.
17 Ibid.
18 Ibid.
19 Ibid.
4. SITE SPECIFICITY AS THE DECOLONIZED APPROACH

"In order to uncover the logic underlying the philosophical conundrum of coloniality - we must consider how to decolonize the ‘mind’ and the ‘imaginary’".

From the previous chapter we learn that to achieve a de-colonized identity of place, an emphasis on liberating the consciousness, the intangible, the being, from its imperial constructs of the past, needs to be achieved. This chapter will argue the claim that site specificity theories, as a model of site interpretation and design, is the most appropriate to the discourse of decolonization, as it offers a unique revealing of a landscapes current condition. It is through this process of revealing uniqueness, that articulates and emphasises a decolonized identity of place.

When considering coloniality in terms of a ‘site planning mode of practice’, one needs to acknowledge that it is fundamentally and entirely a ‘top-down’ approach. The top down approach applies the same method of site planning and organization to every single place, as it assumes each site is ‘generic’. It overlooks any existing conditions of uniqueness and forcibly pushes the desired program into the site.

This is evident in the site planning of the Groote Schuur Menagerie, as discussed in chapter 2, where the natural conditions of the site were almost completely manipulated to respond to the brief of pre-determined spatial organization.

Site specificity, as an invert to the top-down, is a ‘bottom-up’ approach that identifies the specific uniqueness of site, and uses those informants to determine the site organisation and programming. Site specificity argues that there is no landscape or place that could ever be common and embraces each site as its own place through reading and interpreting that landscape’s exact character.

By recognising the colonial approach to site planning as ‘generic’ and produces a tabula-rasa design reaction to site. Site specificity embraces and emphasises the uniqueness of place, and through its refute of the generic, is therefore inherently a decolonized method of reading the site and designing for a decolonial place.

To demonstrate this claim, I will be using site specificity theories from Christophe Girot (Four Trace Concept), Elizabeth Meyer (Site Citations) and Dr. Julian Raxworthy (Interpretation Machine) as site reading techniques to interpret the colonial landscape of the Groote Schuur menagerie. By ‘testing’ these theories against a colonial landscape, I am suggesting that site specificity offers a way to register the uniqueness’s in the landscape and to ‘see’ the site on the basis of what it is and not purely on the basis of what is was. Therefore showcasing that the landscape as already being effectively de-colonized.

The next chapter will introduce the different models of site specificity as explained by the above mentioned landscape architects. While much of their teachings are largely founded under the same logic, there are differences that will be selectively applied when interpreting the different landscape characters of menagerie site.

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20 Ibid.
5. SITE SPECIFICITY | THE RECOGNITION OF SITE

“The word ‘paysage’ means Landscape and conveys qualities that are both visible and invisible. It refers not only to issues of environment and ecology but also to the mood of an entire nation, to its changing sense of identity and cultural belonging.” 21

Since the 1970’s, site reading has been driven by environmental conservation and restorative practices. A potential reason for this can be linked to the, now common, site analysis technique developed by Ian McHarg, which places huge emphasis on the measurable ecological components of reading the landscape. It entailed analysing the landscape’s make up through separate mapped layers (Geology, vegetation, hydrology etc.), that are then interpreted through relationships noted between them. This has resulted in the over reliance on the ‘measurables’ as the preferred drivers of site planning and design.

While this form of data analysis is valuable, contemporary adoptions of site reading includes an emphasis on the lands cultural and historic reference, in aid of creating “landscape forms that evoke the memory of culturally meaningful sites”22. Site specificity models broaden the scope of reading the landscape beyond the measurable, by valuing the invisible attributes that heighten the specific significance of place both physically and experientially.

The question of what constitutes the ‘specific’ is a likely query. Dr. Julian Raxworthy considers it to mean “the appreciation of the ‘specific’ [is] the same understanding as that which is ‘significant’ in a site” 23. The first investigative method places particular emphasis on ways of recognizing how to identify these significant site moments, that then should directly informs the design response to those site specifics.

Christophe Girot has termed his strategies for site specific investigation and design “Four Trace Concepts”24. Out of all the approaches, this is the most intuitive and experiential. Each ‘concept’ acts as a directives that “designates a specific attitude and action that in turn nurtures a process of landscape transformation.”25 It is insisted by Girot that Trace Concepts can only be verified in the field of real site engagement, and has to be practised as sequentially presented: Landing, Grounding, Finding, Founding.

Landing:
This, the first of the Four Trace Concepts, can only occur once at the very first site visit. Landing is based on ones sense of intuition and is aimed at provoking personal impressions and insight when exploring the landscape for the first time. The procedure is very simple and essential involves moving through and around the site, it is a process of “stalking [the landscape] before seeking full disclosure and understanding.”26 Girot explains that during Landing, nothing is allowed to “neutral”27 from the designers experience, regardless of how seemingly trivial, all aspect physically noticed or subconsciously sensed are to be apprehended with a curious mind.

24 Girot, "Four Trace Concepts in Landscape Architecture."
25 Ibid.
26 Ibid.
27 Ibid.
This stage does not have a precise methodology, it is not a descriptive ‘site analysis’, but rather teaches ways of noticing one’s intuition. Girot suggests that one can register these intuitive, sensed “landscape elements” by describing them as “the moment when a designer reacts to the difference between the perceived idea of place, and the reality that appears during the first visit.” This can only truly occur when the designer embraces the sense of complete “displacement” or “outsider-ness” when exploring the site. One needs to relinquish the investigative search for answers in the landscape, and holistically be focused on acknowledging these chance encounters, moments, as being the first generators of the initial design stage.

Grounding:
This stage is understanding and reading the site through repeated visits and analytical research. The studies could adopt the layering techniques of a typical site analysis, however it is critically important to remember that both the visible and invisible “landscape elements” are considered. Analytical studies are ecologically driven and include geology, soil, climate, hydrology, species both flora and fauna; as well as the historical narratives of the site.

Finding:
The method of ‘Finding’ is difficult to articulate as it involves discovering “the distinct quality to a place...the hidden ‘nature’ of place” that belongs specifically to an exact area within the site. The difficulty in describing a method, as Girot points out, is because “different activities yield different discoveries.” For example, walking through a site when it is raining versus when it is sunny could render a different quality to place.

However it is my interpretation that ‘Finding’ is more a search for the unique characters within that site area. That which extends beyond fluctuating conditions, and that generates an associative mental image based on the experiential quality. The act of finding these characters or qualities may be linked to tangible relics or objects, but also includes associations to place experienced, thought or felt.

“Finding usually discloses the evidence to support one’s initial intuition about a place.”

Founding:
This is achieved when the prior 3 concepts are synthesized into “a new and transformed construction of the site”. This is not to say that the site has been physically changed at this stage, but rather the “mental imagery of place has made the site experience, new”. Founding happens inevitably as the designer begins to introduce something new to the site. Again, this does not only occur once the project is on site or completed, but happens when the associative imagery of place is altered by envisioning it as something new.

“A well founded project remains clear in its approach and resolution, extending the legacy of place.”

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28 Ibid.
29 Ibid.
30 Ibid.
31 Ibid.
32 Ibid.
33 Ibid.
34 Ibid.
35 Ibid.
Girot concludes his site specificity approach by emphasising that the Four Trace Concepts are tools, to enable designers to recognize their intuitions and experiences of place, and allow these unique qualities to direct the project’s response to the site. My review of Girot’s strategies emphatically targets the specificities of the site through the experiential rather than the documented. My only critique is that this method assumes the site readings can holistically determine the project outcome and negates the more likely existence of the project brief. It is in fact a calibration of specific programmatic demands with a site specific findings that transform the top-down to bottom-up approach.

The second site specificity model has been envisioned by Elizabeth Meyer and in my opinion primarily strategies for site reading, as opposed to Girot whose concepts can be used as design generative tools. Elizabeth Meyer has developed techniques for reading the landscape that calibrates the scientific and spontaneous experiences of site interpretation. The techniques fall within the topic of Site Citations and comprise of four investigatory strategies: Site As Armature, Figuring the Site, Site Fragments, Site as Phenomenal or temporal experiences. Here too, it is insisted that these strategies be used to interrogate the site from first hand engagement to identify the “landscape characters”.

**Site As Armature:**
This strategy is an expression of the sites natural features (landforms, plant groupings, micro-climates) and their arrangements on the site. This strategy relies on the ability to visually document the landscape features. Site as Armature articulates the site according to the variety of it spatial qualities and suggests how programming of movement and activity could be implemented on site.

**Figuring The Site:**
This is a reading of the landscape through its geological structure. Accessible scientific knowledge changed the way people read and understood the landscape to be result of its geological and hydrological processes. Geological understanding placed a site within its larger topographic context of interlocking geometries and orders.

Meyer suggests that by identifying these underlying orders, one could amplify the sites existing character and reveal a new structuring hierarchy in the landscape. This strategy also articulates a site through its topographic surface, identifying spatial relationships that are derivatives from or determined by the physical land shaping, or figuring of the ground.

**Site Fragments:**
This site reading strategy is based on “the notion that one landscape element signifying the whole, or broader site.” This is best explained through the use of example, one which Meyer uses Columbus Park by Jens Jenson. Fascinated by the regional landscape of Mid-western America, he identified particular spatial typologies and plant communities which he used as fragmented design elements. Jenson would then graft these fragments into a site by assembling this pieces to reflect that same relationships as the larger whole. In the design of Columbus Park, we read the prairie landscape of meadows, woodland edges and trickling streams as a distilled fragment of the larger regional landscape.

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37 Ibid.
38 Ibid.
This site strategy is aimed at identifying these potential fragments that could then be used to establish a stronger sense of local identity.

This strategy, in my opinion, could also be argued as a mode of the colonial, where fragments were imported and simulated to create a ‘faked’ environments.

**Site as Phenomenal or Temporal Experiences:**
This is the spontaneous or unplanned characteristics of the site. It identifies the importance of these intangible events on site as a result of the physical conditions. This strategy is highly site specific and requires active on site observation and engagement over a long period of time.

Meyer’s strategies “allows site meaning to be created as much through social ritual or experience of temporary moments” as through physical occupation and character of the land.

I feel that there is still an over reliance on the recordable qualities of site in Meyers strategies. This is not to say the quantifiable is not valuable, but is perhaps more a comment about scale when recoding the findings. The scale ultimately determines what information is relevant or not by selectively choosing what is visible at a particular scale. Significant uniqueness’s can sometimes occur at a minute level when talking about the texture of a ground plain for example, versus and enormous scale of a mountain ranges. This highlighting the shortfall documentation.

The final site specific model by Dr Julian Raxworthy, is less of a site interpretive strategy and more about direct techniques of how to implement a site specific design approach. He has termed this Interpretation Machine.

To introduce Raxworthy’s techniques he first identifies that ultimately, the success of a site specific projects are a direct measure of the designs “appropriateness” to the site. In other words how the site is seen so respond to the specificities of the landscape. A way of gauging the appropriateness is to “balance [the] qualities of site specific data against cultural national identity”.

He suggests that contemporary landscape architecture manifests principles of appropriateness via three implementation approaches: Memorialisation, Palette approach or Relationship approach, to establishing a sense of place and identity.

**Memorial Approach:**
Memorialisation is a contentious one as it typically selects one side of the story to memorialise through monumental gesture, whether it be a statue or a programmed stopping point in a landscape. In the South African context, “..monuments find it almost impossible to be the bearers of collective meaning; instead they are inhabited by contradiction, because of their reluctance to imagine the idea of citizenship outside the boundaries of race.”

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39 Ibid.
41 Ibid.
42 Ibid.
While projects that take this approach may still respond appropriately to the physical constraints of landscape I believe it falls short in terms of translating holistic social identity.

**Palette Approach:**
This technique references the site through the use of local or indigenous materials. These materials could be both indigenous or endemic plant species or locally sourced construction materials. Raxworthy does highlight that this approach often leads to general associations to place, taking complex relationships of site and simplifying them through purely the material use.

**Relationship Approach:**
This technique utilizes site specific spatial relationships to make design decisions about organisation and programming on the site. This has particular relevance in re-occupying the colonized landscape, as it sees the landscape as a relationship between a person and a place. Through design, interaction with the landscape can be curated to put “people in different relationships with historic relics” 44 therefore establishing a new relationship to place and a new psychological perception of land ownership.

From these theories is it apparent that highly site specific readings of the land offers a new lens of interpretation and identifies unique characteristics of the current landscape. In consideration of the colonial reading of the landscape, as though it were a blank canvas, these modes of site practices reject the notion of generality and emphasises the significant specifics of each site, and resultantly offer an inherently decolonized design solution.

The following chapter will use these models to interpret the Groote Schuur menagerie site. Through detailed descriptions from personal encounters, supported by site photography and analytical data, the qualities of the site will be linked to the site specificity strategies. Through reading the colonized landscape on the basis of site specificity, the interpretations will show that the site is in fact a hybrid of the 2 states, the colonized and decolonized, and as such is appropriate for new identity.

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44 Raxworthy, "Sandstone and Rust: Designing the Qualities of Sydney Harbour."
[Fig 06] KEY PLAN - Route of first site visit
Source: CapeTown.gov
6. SITE READING | THE GROOTE SCHUUR MENAGERIE

This chapter will utilize the Site Specificity theories depicted in the previous section as a basis for interpreting the Groote Schuur Menagerie site. Taking direct guidance from the theories, the site study is primarily based on first hand site readings that occurred between May to November 2016, with the supporting evidence founded in historical research and recorded analytical data.

As an informal structure the site will be revealed as though walking through the landscape. The walking route has been mapped and can be used as a key when locating one’s self whilst reading. To optimize the value of my intuitive readings, as suggested in Girot’s ‘Landing’ concept, I have chosen to illustrate the very first walked route experienced in May 2016. While the content does deviates to included all significant site interpretations from all visits, there are continuous referrals to personal impressions that occurred during the first site visit.

From the theories, particularly Girot and Meyer, the uniqueness's of the site are referred to as “Landscape elements” and “landscape characters” respectively. In my own search for the specific, I have termed these spaces Site Natures, each with a corresponding name that suggests quality of the nature.

Not having any prior knowledge of the site at the time, this first site visit had limited preconceptions going in. The route begins from the Architecture building - Centlivres, on UCT upper campus. Armed with a coffee and a charged iPhone, I set off along University Avenue, bisecting the new lecture hall plaza on the corner and crossed the street into the tree lined parking lot that terminates the axis of the avenue. The well established trees and planted beds directed me along the drivable routes through where a break in the metal mesh fencing [Fig 06] and a visible desire line caught my eye.

Stepping beyond the line of the fence I immediately sensed that I had transitioned into ‘another place’.

Directly a head towered a cluster of Stone Pine trees. Their apparent lean indicated the presence of prevailing winds despite the calm of that particular day. The narrow earth trodden pathway closely sliced past the tree trunks which further exaggerated their verticality. The path ahead, littered with debris of severed trees and branches encourage a pivot left towards what appeared to be a levelling of the surface and the first of the Site Natures - The Meadows.
The Meadows:
This space is articulated by two terraced plateaus, roughly rectangular in shape, that are topographically contained along the upper-slope edge by stone retaining walls, and three London Plane trees (Platanus x acerifolia) along the opposite edge. The top platform had a small structure tucked into the slope that appeared to be an old ablution block. [Fig 07]

On my first ‘landing’, the wintered braches of the London Planes cast stretched shadows across the grassed ground and bathed the spaces in soft sunlight [Fig 08]. Although within close proximity to the campus, there was a noticeable impression of isolation. Unobstructed view lines encouraged a sense of security. The immediate experiential sense of this space was passive, it had a feeling of clarity as uncomplicated platforms that one could move through or rest on. The platforms, although large and open, still had a distinct feeling of ‘enclosure’ as a result of the topographic terracing that defined its boundaries.

Through grounding, I consulted the archived site plan of the zoo that revealed these plateaus were levelled to support monkey and small animal enclosures. An extract from The Cape newspaper dated June 26, 1908 - brings to life the historical experience and imagery of this exact space:

“In each of the first 2 cages is a baboon - demons who scowl horribly and spring from the back to the front bars as if they we going to fall upon you and crush you with their ugly bodies. Each of them has been provided with a trunk of a tree, kept in its place in the centre by chains fastened to the bars; and he amuses himself by swinging on this tree or jumping from it to the barred roof, where he hangs by his paws... their gestures and movements are frighteningly human-like. If this were fairyland instead of Groote Schuur, I would have the monkeys charged with disturbing the peace.” 45

While no remaining trace of the cages are currently visible, the topographic shaping is the only remaining indication of a previous site occupation or program, as this levelling is clearly not family of a naturally homogenous mountain slope.

A comparative overlay of the historical plan and the current contour plan, (which was personally contracted to be conducted, on 22nd August 2016 by a final year Land Survey student Jacques Enslin) illustrated the current topographic shaping was almost a perfect match. The only notable difference is a result of degradation over time. Collapsed retaining walls resulted in a mis-shapen mound of earth and unmaintained vegetation growth impacted the clear reading of the levels. [Fig 09]

As advised by processes of ‘Finding’ - The meadows can clearly be characterised by wide flat terraces. This space is of topographic uniqueness and can be linked to Meyers “Figuring the Site”. As the specific character is being determined by the artificial shaping of the ground surface. She refers to these kinds of site characters as being “figures [in the landscape] that could be named or delineated” 46 as is the case with the levelled terraces and shaped retaining walls.

From the meadows deep views into the site ahead exposed what looked like oversized benches [Fig 08] with the ‘backrest’ shaped in a clearly classical motif. That was my decided next stop. Walking along a barely visible path against the London Planes [Fig 10], I reached the opposite end of the meadow and caught my first glimpse of the Lion cage.

45 Unknown, "Saturday Afternoon - the Zoo at Groote Schuur."
[Fig 07] The Meadow - Upper Terrace
by Author

[Fig 08] The Meadow - View of topographic change and towards Forecourt
by Author

[Fig 09] The Meadow - Topographic comparison
by Author

[Fig 10] The Meadow - Path
by Author
The image was perfectly picturesque [Fig 11]. The stone structure was framed in the foreground by the skeletons of a tree, seemingly cushioned by topographic mounds that terminate at the pathway afoot and complete with the dramatic backdrop of Devils Peak. With not a person in sight, I felt like I had been instantly transported back in time. Wanting to experience the axial intentions of mountain backdrop, I decided to turn left and continue to the obscure objects. Walking down a tarmac path I continued to the end of the tree lined passage to enter the next site nature, the Forecourt.
The Forecourt:

This space, though initially obscured by tall grass [fig 12], had 3 prominent structures that capped each end and centred what appeared to be a sucked water feature. The shape of which was unclear at the time but later revealed as 2 circles connected by a central rectangular bay [Fig 13]. The objects are around 2m in height and oddly look like large benches and shaped with apparently colonial detailing. Shortly after the first visit the grass was mown which exposed a distinct topographic levelling and shaping of the ‘front edge’ of the platform. It also exposed a stone retaining wall that shaped the boundary of the space along the upper sloped edges.

The first impression of the forecourt was the apparent colonial presence. The objects in the space (both the water feature and structures) were clearly classically styled, and although previously knowing that this site was for Rhodes, the structures emphasised it pre-occupation.

The remnant structures [fig 14] were also highly graffitied giving insight into the need to deface, re-own the space. The desire to climb onto the bench structure was experienced on all site visits. Perhaps driven by seeking a unique vantage point over the city below - *Needless to say the height prevented such views.*

Historical research shows this space was the water fowl enclosure with the remnant structures serving as additional fencing supports. The original archived drawings show the structures as being open in the lower sections and used as a coop and large perch for the birds. Later blocked, the original shape is still definable. Examining the historical context, one can assume this area was likely to be the arrival point to the menagerie. Here again, and extract from The Cape article revives the memory of place:
Lower down, are birds of all sizes and plumage...there is a circular pond where a score of canaries are bathing under a ray of winter’s sun. They plunge their golden wings into the water, and shake their feathers, uttering short songs of delight. I wonder what they are able to enjoy in their pretty prison when, through the metal bars and wire netting they can see free birds flying away over the tops of the trees through the glad sky. Perhaps they have lost their sense of liberty. “

As the perceived colonial presence of the space is still apparent, the site nature has been termed the forecourt and references the historical ‘entrance’ to the zoo. In this site nature, it is the tangible relics that emphasis the specific significance of the forecourt. Girot refers to this as allowing physical objects define the character or qualities of place.

Through the process of mowing, the spatial qualities changed the character of the space between the first and recurring visits. This could also be linked to Meyers, Site as a Temporal Experience. Site Fragments and Figuring the Site are also applicable. In this instance the fragments are physical relics and traces of the colonial that are imported from England and grafted into the South African landscape. They are distinctly foreign and apparently rejected by the presence of graffiti. In relation to Figuring the Site, the site has been clearly artificial shaped.

In this particular area, the practise of mowing or over-growth, revealed or concealed topographic shaping [Fig 16]. It was here that I made the direct connection between ‘surface treatment’ and ‘figured ground’. That it was only when mown that ground shaping was registered, therefore materiality of figured ground is important. Upon reflection, this is overlooked in Meyers interpretation of figuring the site.

[Fig 15] Historical drawings of the Water Fowl Enclosure
Source: Cape Town Historical Archive

[Fig 16] Forecourt - topographic shaping of the platform by author

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47 Unknown, “Saturday Afternoon - the Zoo at Groote Schuur.”
Behind the central structural relic, the stone retaining wall tucks into the site to form a circular stone plinth, edged by stone seat and leading the eye up a central stone corridor [fig 17]. On the base of the plinth 2 stone lions are paved into the ground [fig 18] clearly indicating the route leads to the lion den. The corridor, lined with low tree canopies meet to form an almost roofed passage, only broken at the intersection of the path and stone stair. The pathway is made up of small pebbles seemingly scattered and pressed into the ground [Fig 19]. Once at the top of the stairs, the cap of the den wall peaks over the stone packed ground cover, holding its big reveal until perfectly level and centred.
The Ruin

The lion cage, a roughly circular stone structure, has a central trapezoidal mound of earth and boulders, specifically shaped to separated the captive from the viewer. The den wall is punctured by 3 small windows, 2 'doorways' and 2 arched openings with the original steel bars still intact. The haul of the den has an approximate 5m drop from the viewing level to its base, with its outer circular shape interrupted by a chamfered bulge. This bulge, separated by a steel bars from the main pit, is presumably to gain access to the base of the pit as the steel ladder and gate would suggest. Structurally appearing untouched, it is only through the consuming vegetation growth on the stone walls that suggests the ruinous nature of this space.

The most dominant relic remaining on site, the initial impression of this space was that of wonder and amazement. It seemed so obscure yet somehow, in the picturesque setting, it felt family of the landscape. The depth of the pit caught me by surprise, as did the scale of the structure being far larger and grander than anticipated. The strongest image to mind of the ruin, is its striking alignment with Table Mountain. The circular shape prompted the desire to move around the den, though this was quickly hindered by an broken timber walkway and unmaintained hedge blocking the route [Fig 20].
Following an informal mown path leading to the back of the den [Fig 22], the steel cages were found. Judging by the materiality, the cages seemed to be a later addition and displayed a far less opulent impression than the classical stone frontage. The gate to the cages were open and lead inside the stone den. Once inside the punctuated openings noticed on the front facade became rationalised as the openings to each of the lion enclosures [fig 23]. Separated by stone walls and steel bars, traces of the pulley mechanisms [fig 24] that opened the sliding doors [fig 25] to the pit were still intact though rusted into place. Smoke blackened walls and floors suggested informal habitation though no current trace of human occupation was visible. The internal rooms were dark and uncomfortable and imparted a distinct sense of insecurity.

Stepping into the pit space inverted the perspective from the viewer to the lion [Fig 26]. The pit somehow didn’t seem as deep and that the spatial relationship between ‘lion’ and ‘spectator’ did not appear as far removed. The sense that a small leap would transport me from the ‘captive’ to ‘freed’ side, this was purely speculative. Another significant impression was the view of the city in the distance that was only visible through breaks in the tree canopies below. There was an urge to climb on top of the cage to see more of the site and view of the city in the distance. Unbeknown at the time, this would be the only opportunity to experience the ruin from the lions perspective as the space was chained before the next site visit. Taking cue from Girot, the interpretation of this space “played emphasis on the intuition” 48.

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48 Girot, "Four Trace Concepts in Landscape Architecture."
Baker recalls extensive site interrogation undertaken by Rhodes in locating the menagerie, referring to his site visits as Rhodes’ search for the “dream topography” 49. Baker continually expressed the importance of this project to Rhodes and would, in letter correspondence, refer to the “special nature of the work.”50 One of the consideration for the placement of the lion cage, took direct cognisance of the wind direction, as Rhodes wanted to hear the roar of the lions from his Rondebosch home. Louise Fraenkl, who lived on the Groote Schuur estate as her father was the zoo-keeper [Fig 27], recalls the memory of the lion roars as a child:

“...The lions used to roar at night. When we first moved there we were so frightened. My father said, ‘No! They’re all locked up, they won’t come out.” 51

With limited specific records of the menagerie available, an extract from The Cape adds insight to this space during its ‘heyday’:

“In one of the cages are a lion and lioness squatting together with their huge paws pressed up against the iron bars...The sit turning gazes of the visitors who stand outside the rails. Sometimes one of them appears to be bored by the meaningless looks and gesticulations of the visitors, and with a stretching movement turns away his head and looks out through the prison bars and the unknown world of suburbs on the plains below. People lolling in their hired carriages, lash the perspiring horses up the hill to the cages and then dismount in order to poke their walking sticks and umbrellas into the lions... A lioness, alone and sound asleep is undisturbed by the sounds of carriages and voices; she is immovable as if her days of captivity were over and she were dead.” 52

The essential character of the lion cage rests within its ‘ruin-ness’. It is the tangible abandonment and sense of ‘decay’ that characterises this relic. While the clearly man-made nature of the pit also characterises the spaces uniqueness, I feel the emersion of the relic is spontaneous vegetation growth really emphasises the character. Here again, much like the forecourt, it is the physical object within the landscape that implies an emotive, experiential response to place.

Additional linked interpretation can be made through Meyer’s Figuring the Site as the pit space is a constructed, artificial topography. Site fragments could also be argued in terms of the aesthetic nature of the building design. A fragment could also refer to the typical ‘HA-HA’ [fig 28] spatial relationship between the lion and the spectator. This was a typical design technique used during the Picturesque landscapes of England. The design was to create the impression that the viewer was placed in seemingly close proximity to the ‘wilderness’ when in reality the excavated buffer prevent contact.

A further link can be made to Raxworthy’s Palette Approach to recognise the particular choice of “Baker’s monumental use of stone.”53 In agreement with Raxworthy’s review, the materiality does not intrinsically reference place, however as it is interpreted throughout the site, the stonework is recognized as traces of the colonial.

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50 Ibid.
51 Sarah Oommanney, "Lacuna Groote Schuur Zoo" (University of Cape Town, 2012).
52 Unknown, "Saturday Afternoon - the Zoo at Groote Schuur."
53 Bunn, "Whited Sepulchres: On the Reluctance of Monuments ".
[Fig 27] Historical photos of the Zoo-Keeper and the lions View from inside the pit

[Fig 28] Illustration of a HA-HA
Source: https://www.google.co.za/search?q=HA-HA+Picturesque

[Fig 29] Historical section and back elevation of lion den
Source: Cape Town Historical Archive
[Fig 30] View towards Vertical pine garden by author

[Fig 31] View towards Vertical pine garden by author

[Fig 32] View of rondavel by author

[Fig 33] Upward view of Stone Pine Trees by author
Now at the top reaches of the site, a heightened sense of isolation was palpable increasing the sense of insecurity and encouraged a faster pace towards the towering group of stone pines.

**The vertical garden**

This area, small in comparison is a distinct and unique feature of the landscape. The area was a tightly packed cluster of 8-12m high stone pines that stood proud of all the tree canopies below. Demarcated by surrounding existing paths [fig 31] this contained ‘garden like’ space, had a stone relic nestled into the site. The relic was the lasting pieces of a rondavel type structure that had the visible remnants of seating still intact.

The rondavel structure [fig 32], in close proximity to the towering pines exaggerated the experience of tall canopy and characterised this space with an initial impression of volume. This space, regardless of seasonal change was always shady and cool and felt in some way separate from the organisation of the site. This could be as a reaction to the dense forest of trees a head that entirely blocked the view to the rest of the site.

In characterising this site nature, it is the stone pines sheer height that encapsulated the experience of this space. Though the surface was littered with boulders and stones, no doubt discards from the lion cage construction, the immediate reaction to this area was to look up [fig 33], hence the reference to the vertical. Although there was a physical relic, it was more the “invisible sense”⁵⁴ that the trees imparted that articulates this site nature’s as unique.

Meyer’s, Site as Armature would also apply as this site nature is being characterised by its natural plant groupings that encouraged its uniqueness.

Moving down the site, I followed the tarmac path [fig 34] into the final of the site natures, The forest.

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⁵⁴ Girot, “Four Trace Concepts in Landscape Architecture.”
The Forest

This space is described as a dense yet delicate forest of a variety of tree species of varying ages, with 2 existing pathways, one that runs along the outer edge, and another deviating through [fig 35]. The ground cover, littered with a dense layer of dropped leaves was suggestively damp in winter yet dry and crunchy in summer. With no distinct order or organisation the forest seems to be a result of spontaneous growth.

The initial impression of this nature was the strong sense of insecurity. With no visible sign of anyone else, nor a clear view in any direction, I became very aware of the sudden potential risk. This encourage a quick detour along the bisecting path to a clearing in the other side. Another impression was the distinct temperature change. The canopy of the trees, varying in height and density created a thick layering that let in little direct sunlight to the ground surface. As my first landing was early winter, this space was cold though in summer offered a welcomed refuge.

Along the detoured path I stumbled upon what appeared to be two circular water features recessed into the ground and partially enclosed by stone retaining walls. The first of the ponds [fig 36], beautifully edged by a pebble detail, was filled with water lush with ferns growing amongst the retaining wall. On later visits this pond was dry indicating that its state of flooding was a result of surface runoff that filled the vessel after each burst of rain. The second pond [fig 37], slightly larger, was different in that its base was a deposition of soil and rocks that encouraged informal vegetation growth.

In consultation with the historical site plan, this entire area was intended as an open paddock, with no formal planting suggestion. This further affirmed that the tree growth was spontaneous and of the sites own doing. Meyer’s, Site as Armature, is the only applicable as is makes reference to reading the site as an expression of its “natural features”55 such as plant groupings.

The route, as shown in the diagram follows existing pathways down the site and passes 2 terraces that share the same qualities as the meadows on the opposite side. These, however, previously sat large bird aviaries [fig 38] now only display a large central tree on the lower terrace, and a huge pine tree on the upper. Walking back towards my starting point the steepening gradient is noticed until reaching the parking lot again.

A brief investigation into the overall site planning could also be interpreted through the site specificity strategies.

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The Site as a Whole

Site fragments’ can be linked to the whole idea of the zoo itself. Zoo’s, by their very definition are artificial simulations of a real environments. In establishing the Groote Schuur Menagerie, Rhodes and Baker aimed at “recreate the African Savannah on the slopes of Table Mountains”\(^{56}\). They were taking fragments, or themes of an ‘African’ landscape and constructed them into the foothills of Table Mountain.

Site as Armature also contributes in identifying the hybridity of the previous colonial landscape, with the current ‘de-colonial’ site natures. Through a comparative analysis of the historical plan against the current site conditions, what one see is that the rigidity and formal ordering of the colonial structure is no long holistically visible, as spontaneous vegetation growth, erosion and deposition have oppressed the colonial spatial ordering.

7. CONCLUSION

The desire for a decolonized identity has been discussed and is evident by the #RhodesMustFall and #FeeDecolonizedEducation campaigns. While the social or cultural impacts of decolonization are linked to the discourse of contemporary landscape architecture, I cannot reject the understanding that decolonization is essentially a political issue that is ultimately driven by the dispossession of land. As Fanon says, “The politics of genuine independence thus necessarily became the politics of land.” For me to claim the Site Specific model of landscape interpretation and design can holistically decolonizes the landscape, would be an untruth and impossibility. Though saying that, one needs to reject the logic that one solution ‘fits all’.

As discussed in section 3 - Defining Decolonization, the role of changing the consciousness is emphasised in achieving a true sense of liberation. That in order to relocate one’s self within this state of the de-colonial, the perception of land ownership and land access has to be decolonized. It is here that Site Specificity is situated.

The current state of the site, as shown above, is a complex hybrid of the previous colonial occupation and the current ‘natural’ order. By interpreting the site through its uniqueness’s the colonial history is de-emphasised by reading the landscape for what it is, and not pure by what is was. While buried relics and ruins are tangible reminders of the past, through interpreting their characters instead of their objectivity, one can now use those as tools to inform a contemporary design response.

Girot refers to this as a way of “recognizing the site through design” and therefore “distilling a sense of culturally identity” through interpreting the site’s natures. Site specific interpretations “expands the landscape project beyond simply making something better, but also that reactivates the cultural dimension of site.”

By accepting the claim that Site Specificity as a mode of practise is inherently decolonized, then using the specific site readings to determine the site’s current significance, presents the site findings as being part of a ‘new’ landscape appropriate for new identity.

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57 More, "Fenon and the Land Question in (Post) Apartheid South Africa." p179
58 Girot, "Four Trace Concepts in Landscape Architecture."


Unknown. “Saturday Afternoon - the Zoo at Groote Schuur." The Cape, 1908, 14-17.

The Groote Schuur Menagerie
Re-Envisioned as a Decolonized Recreational Landscape

author
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ABSTRACT

The University of Cape Town (UCT), located on the foothills of Table Mountain has a student body of around 26 000 , however despite being surrounded by Fynbos, the campus is a hard landscape of hard surfaces, with few green spaces for recreation, apart from the steps of Jameson Plaza.

Apart from a deficit of recreational green spaces, UCT has experienced significant unrest and calls to decolonize the perceived colonial occupation of the campus from the #RhodesMustFall (#RMF) campaign, a student movement established in 2015.

Despite not being a focus of the #RMF movement to date, the Groote Schuur menagerie was also established by Cecil John Rhodes’ and was part of his imperial agenda. Commonly known as the Rhode’s Zoo, the menagerie is adjacent to the UCT upper campus along the northern most boundary, and below the proposed Nelson Mandela Learning Centre. The currently abandoned site is a deserted display of historical relics and a tangible symbol of colonisation.

In consideration of ‘coloniality’ as a site planning approach, it is generic response and results in programming being ‘forced’ into the site. Site Specificity, as a model of site interrogation and design, interprets the landscape in its current state and embraces the uniqueness’ of place, and is therefore inherently a de-colonized method of site reading and response.

Detailed mapping and documentation of the current site condition has shown that as a result of desertion the landscape no longer truly reflects the colonial occupation, but is rather a reflection of a new hybrid landscape appropriate for new decolonised identity.

The design proposes a recreational park space that is consciously driven by the specificity of the landscape, reinterpreting and revealing historic remnants, and engages with the “natural” beauty of the found landscape. This park will explore the role of landscape architecture in the discourse of decolonization, provide a much needed transformed space for students and an opportunity to explore what a decolonised park might be.
Following the site specificity strategies of investigation - the Groote Schuur site was distilled into its 5 Site Natures: The Meadows, The Forecourt, The Ruin, Vertical Garden, The Forest.

The site interventions manifest in these site natures and respond directly to the findings in the site investigations.
THE GROOTE SCHUUR MENAGERIE
Re-Envisioned as a Decolonized Recreational Landscape

Isometric view of the proposed landscape interventions
THE GROOTE SCHUUR MENAGERIE
Re-Envisioned as a Decolonized Recreational Landscape

Isometric view of the proposed landscape interventions

THE FORECOURT

WILDFLOWER WALK

THE MEADOWS

THE FOREST

VERTICAL GARDEN

THE RUIN

PUBLIC PARKING

JAMIE INTERCHANGE

Potential Future Parking Area

Rhodes Memorial Drive
The proposed Jammie transport interchange will connect and activate the centre of the site. Increased activity in the site boundary improves

accessibility and establishes stronger housing links along the corridor into the transnational landscape of the central business district. Conversely, the Jammie “Winter-Hay” is very
crowded and does not cater to large waiting numbers. By relocating the parking, this interchange can increase bus shelter coverage as well as benefit from the

generous recreational space of the adjacent meadows.
THE FORECOURT: Sectional perspective of The Forecourt reflective pool

In response to the historical remnants of the Water Fowl Enclosure - this intervention aimed at 'submerging' the colonial occupation in a shallow body of water that concealing the remaining pond structures and transformed the water surface into a reflective plane.

The existing cage structures are now accessible through a steel steps so that viewers may catch views across the reflective surface and toward the city below. This to reposition the focal view down the mountain instead of upward toward the lion cage.

The formal hard landscaping suggests a sense of a 'formal' entry point into recreational landscape and encourages transition into the landscape.

"...Lower down, are birds of all sizes and plumage...there is a circular pond where a score of canaries are bathing under a ray of winter's sun. They plunge their golden wings into the water, and shake their feathers, uttering short songs of delight. I wonder what they are able to enjoy in their pretty prison when, through the metal bars and wire netting they can see free birds flying away over the tops of the trees through the glad sky. Perhaps they have lost their sense of liberty..."

Unknown. "Saturday Afternoon - the Zoo at Groote Schuur. The Cape, 1908, 14-17.

THE FORECOURT: View towards Wildflower walk and Forecourt

With the strong central axis still prominent in this area, the wildflower route breaks this axis with a mown grass path that disrupts the dominance of the central line. Historically the walkways around this central area were flora species that had a strong sense of colour and floral aroma along the procession to the lion cage (Rose hedges and Camellias). The wildflower route retains the floral identity of this space but uses indigenous mountain fynbos and bulbs to relocate the visitor into the local landscape.

The mown pathway registers the topographic shaping of this area and follows a 'ridge' and 'valley' line across this area.
In response to the historical remnants of the Water Fowl Enclosure - this intervention aimed at ‘submerging’ the colonial occupation in a shallow body of water that concealing the remaining pond structures and transformed the water surface into a reflective plane.

The existing cage structures are now accessible through steel steps so that viewers may catch views across the reflective surface and toward the city below. This is to reposition the focal view down the mountain instead of upward toward the lion cage.

The formal hard landscaping suggests a sense of a ‘formal’ entry point to the recreational landscape and encourages transition into the landscape.

"...Lower down, are birds of all sizes and plumage...there is a circular pond where a score of canaries plunge their golden wings into the water, and shake their feathers, uttering short songs of delight. I wonder what they are able to enjoy in their pretty prison when, through the metal bars and wire netting they can see free birds flying away over the tops of the trees. Perhaps they have lost their sense of liberty."

Unknown. Saturday Afternoon - the Zoo at Groote Schuur. The Cape, 1908, 14-17.
By utilizing the existing stonework as the supporting structure, the restaurant and cafe’ clip onto the ruin and gives the visitor an inverted perspective of the lion den. With the new structure clearly separate from the historical, a metal mesh walkway circulates through the ruin and links both structures. The cafe’, on the lower level, re-purposes remnant cages walls for seating with the large volume allowing for uninterrupted views across the protea banks and toward the mountain.

"...In one of the cages are a lion and lioness squatting together with their huge paws pressed up against the iron bars...The sit returning gazes of the visitors who stand outside the rails. Sometimes one of them appears to be bored by the meaningless looks and gesticulations of the visitors, and with a stretching movement turns away his head and looks out through the prison bars and the unknown world of suburbs on the plains below. People lolling in their hired carriages, lash the perspiring horses up the hill to the cages and then dismount in order to poke their walking sticks and umbrellas into the lions...A lioness, alone and sound asleep is undisturbed by the sounds of carriages and voices; she is immovable as if her days of captivity were over and she were dead...."

Unknown. "Saturday Afternoon - the Zoo at Groote Schuur. The Cape, 1908, 14-17.

"...The lions used to roar at night. When we first moved there we were so frightened. My father said, ‘No! They’re all locked up, they won’t come out.’"

"...A leopard paces rapidly to and fro behind the cruel bars. He never halts nor pauses. At each end he turns right about with the precision and regularity of a sentry. So he goes backwards and forwards, raging, fretting hoping vainly for release..."

Unknown. "Saturday Afternoon - the Zoo at Groote Schuur. The Cape, 1908, 14-17.

The remnant rondavel structure is re-purposed by clipping on a metal mesh seat and is suggestively enclosed by a wild garlic (Tulbaghia violacea) and Dietes bicolor planter bed.

The existing retaining wall has been cleared of spontaneous vegetation growth to reveal the stonework and used as supporting structure to the steel framed staircase.

Cleared vegetation and formalised pathways make navigating this landscape more accessible and encourages use. Additional programming of the restaurant and café re-invigorated activity on the site and suggests a broader appeal beyond the campus users.
THE RUIN: View towards the Cafe' & Restaurant

Utilizing the existing stonework as the supporting structure, the restaurant and cafe' clip onto the ruin and gives the visitor an inverted perspective of the lion den. With the new structure clearly separate from the historical, a metal mesh walkway circulates through the ruin and links both structures. The cafe', on the lower level, re-purposes remnant cages walls for seating with the large volume allowing for uninterrupted views across the protea banks and toward the mountain.

"...In one of the cages are a lion and lioness squatting together with their huge paws pressed up against the iron bars. Their patient faces, with tiny eyes that seem to focus on nothing in particular, and wispy whiskers that convulse as they breathe, stare fixedly back at the visitors who stand outside the rails. Sometimes one of them appears to be bored by the meaningless looks and gesticulations of the visitors, and with a stretching movement turns away his head and looks out through the prison bars and the unknown world of suburbs on the plains below. People lolling in their hired carriages, lash the perspiring horses up the hill to the cages and then dismount in order to poke their walking sticks and umbrellas into the lions... A lioness, alone and sound asleep is undisturbed by the sounds of carriages and voices; she is immovable as if her days of captivity were over and she were dead..."

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"...The lions used to roar at night. When we first moved there we were so frightened. My father said, 'No! They're all locked up, they won't come out.'"


THE RUIN: Front view of The Ruin

The light weight restaurant structure clips onto the stonework of the lion den and offers visitors the views both down into the pit and across the site towards the city, and back towards the mountain. Along the outer stone wall a metal mesh seat/walkway allows one to encircle the structure to appreciate its bowl-like shape. Planter beds soften the previously dominant hard surfaces and suggest seating areas around the ruin. The meandering ramps seemingly disappear into the ruin and encourages an explorative nature to the space and inverts the relationship between 'viewer' and 'captured' zones.

VERTICAL GARDEN: View Towards grass terraces & seating area below Stone Pines

The grass terraces registers the level change between the Vertical Garden and The Forest by stepping between the spaces. The lawned terraces serves as passive seating and lounging area as well as increase visibility into the forest and lower site. The historical Rondavel structure has been re-purposed as an informal outdoor work space with metal mesh seating and tables clipped onto the existing stonework, with the tall tree canopy 'enclosing' the space.

VERTICAL GARDEN: View Towards Stone Pines

The rockery and succulent garden below the Stone Pines utilizes the found site condition to create large outcrops for seating and further articulates this area as having its own unique character.

The meandering walkway, from the public parking area, cuts through the yellow Protea bed and responds to the existing pathways by breaking continuity at the intersection. The pathway, though continually surfaced by concrete cobbles, becomes nestled in graded gravel and stone as it enters the Vertical Garden consciously engaging the visitor in the as they transition through the Site Nature.
The grass terraces register the level change between the Vertical Garden and The Forest by stepping between the spaces. The lawned terraces serve as passive seating and lounging area as well as increase visibility into the forest and lower site.

The historical rondavel structure has been repurposed as an informal outdoor work space with metal mesh seating and tables clipped onto the existing stonework, with the tall tree canopy ‘enclosing’ the space.
The grass terraces serve as passive seating and lounging area and creates a visual link to the The Ruin cafe and restaurant therefore increasing security to the forest.

Visitors can experience the delicate forest nature through the raised metal mesh walkway that weaves through the tree trunks and elevates to respond to the changing tree canopy height. To increase light and visibility the trees have been pruned upwards to make the under storey of the forest canopy habitable.

The forest walkway is raised to account for the seasonally damp ground plane with the selected metal mesh materiality to retain the visible registrations of the leaf littered surface.

The remnant pond structure has been re-envisioned as an informal meeting space with a metal mesh platform and seat clipped onto the existing stonework shell. The close proximity to The Ruin would encourage the use of this seating area for more intimate discussions and increase visibility into the forest.

The metal mesh walkway follows the topographic ground plane and widening to accommodate its rootings in the tree canopy in smaller and larger trunk trunks. Shade, silt, and pluvial run-off from a sloping pointed at into the walkway substructure.
The forest walkway is raised to account for the seasonally damp ground plane with the selected metal mesh materiality to retain the visible registrations of the leaf-littered surface.
THE FOREST: View towards grass terraces & into The Forest

The grass terraces serve as passive seating and lounging area and creates a visual link to the The Ruin cafe and restaurant therefore increasing security to the forest.

Visitors can experience the delicate forest nature through the raised metal mesh walkway that weaves through the tree trunks and elevates to respond to the changing tree canopy height. To increase light and visibility the trees have been pruned upwards to make the under storey of the forest canopy habitable.

THE FOREST: View towards forest & remnant pond structure

The forest walkway is raised to account for the seasonally damp ground plane with the selected metal mesh materiality to retain the visible registrations of the leaf littered surface.

The remnant pond structure has been re-envisioned as an informal meeting space with a metal mesh platform and seat clipped onto the existing stonework shell. The close proximity to The Ruin would encourage the use of this seating area for more intimate discussions and increase visibility into the forest.

The metal mesh platform is raised above the base of the pond base to allow for seasonal flood permeation and further vegetation growth. While the mesh base is circular is consciously does not follow the form of the pond structure but rather cuts away to respond to existing fern growth.