

# Microcosm Mountain

Exploring architecture's potential to make the pre-existing apparent in the manifold of the imaginary and physical.

Design Research Project APG5058S

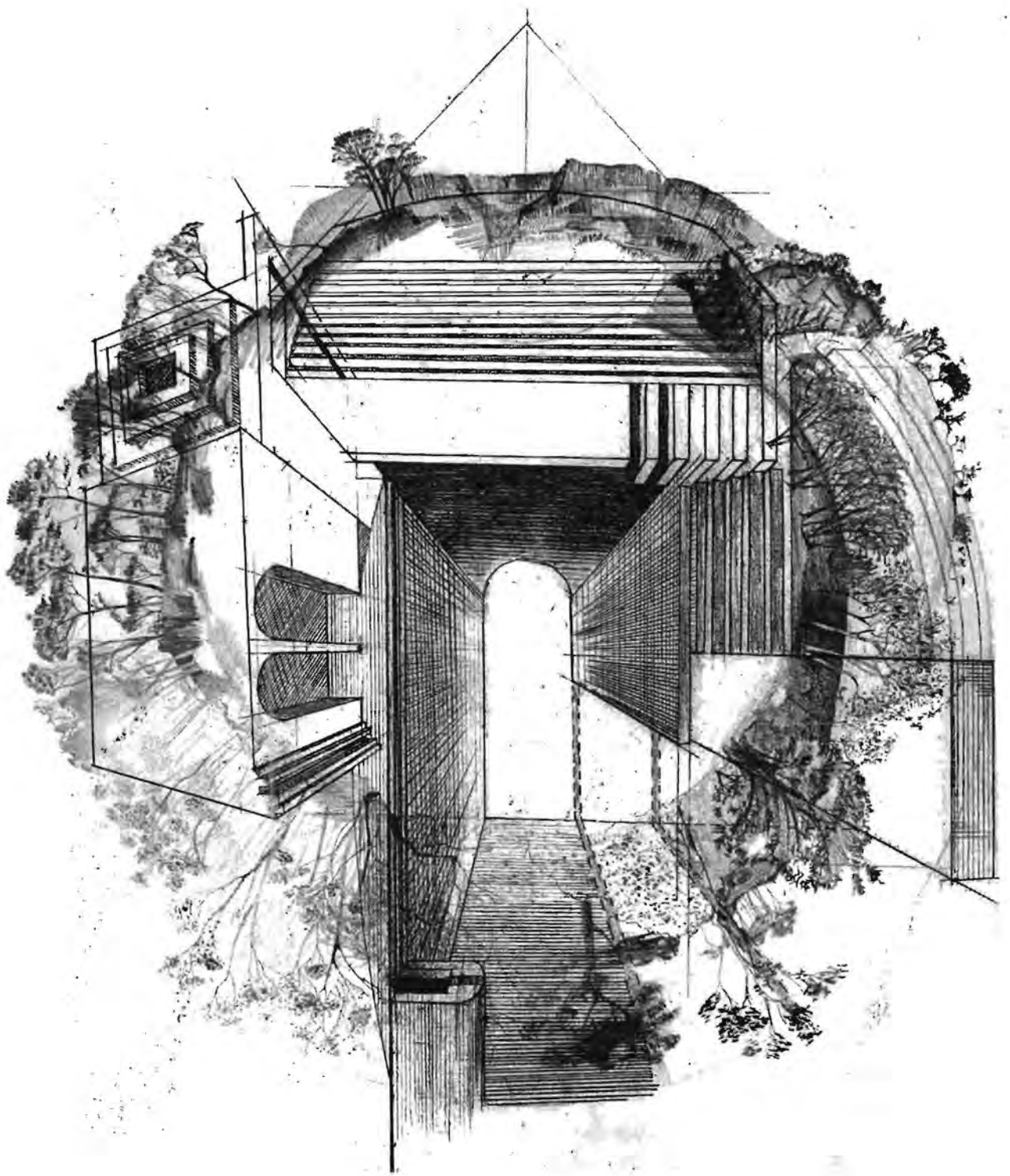
Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Master of Architecture (Professional)

Sarah Goosen, October 2011

University of Cape Town

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## Glossary

Enigmatic	- description of something which can be interpreted in many different ways; vague/mysterious/intriguing
Existentialism	- understanding of man's experience of the interconnectedness of 'things'
Historic/al	- should be read with regards to this thesis as a reference of <b>significance</b> rather than a reference of time. This includes social, cultural and natural significance.
Manifold	- should be read with regards to this thesis as a noun; a whole containing diverse elements between which there is an indeterminacy of synthesis.
Microcosm	- a complete world which integrates the imagined reality and the physical reality to give a coherent and significant experience
Multi-valent	- Having or susceptible to many applications, interpretations, meanings, or values.
Understand/stood	- to be standing amongst things; under things, phenomenological knowing.

## Preface

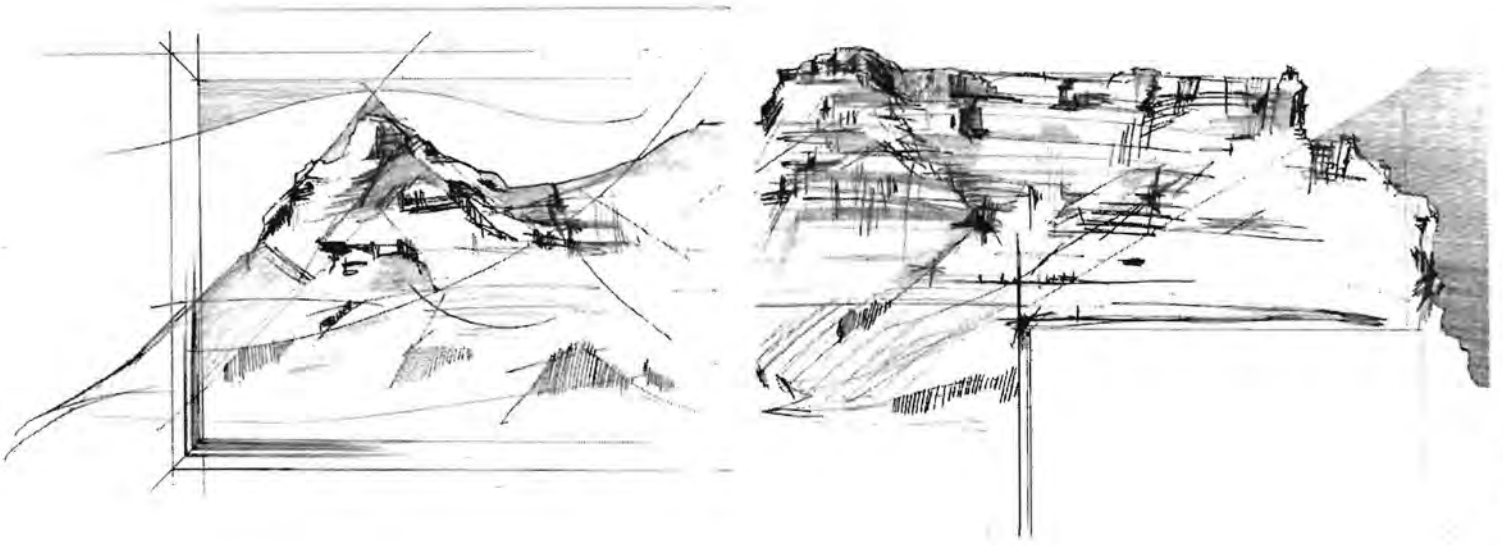
This report documents the thesis 'Microcosm Mountain'. The report aims to provide a complete representation of the thesis' process from the idea to the final proposed design.

This thesis experienced an important moment of change in intention and momentum, which gave the thesis process three distinct parts. This report shall echo this in its development; Part A, Part B and Part C.

Part A initially explains the objective and site of this thesis and then summarises the theoretical themes which underpinned the exploration of the initial design intention; allowing the germination of the thesis idea in a considered, practical and conceptual context.

Part B bears evidence of the aforementioned change in momentum and negotiates the route forward to a point of stability in the authors intention and methodology with which to move forward to the design phase.

Part C is a sequential description of the design proposal.



## Pretext

### Glory Be

A thesis grants the opportunity to the student to be his or her own client. Given free-reign regarding the direction of the thesis, the student is asked just one thing: to complete an honest, personal and meaningful architectural thesis. Juhani Pallasmaa advocates that *meaningful architecture* is conceived for a gloried client who aspires to an idealised world; a world that is more understanding, better cultured and more 'human' than the actual world. A thesis fits into an idealised world.

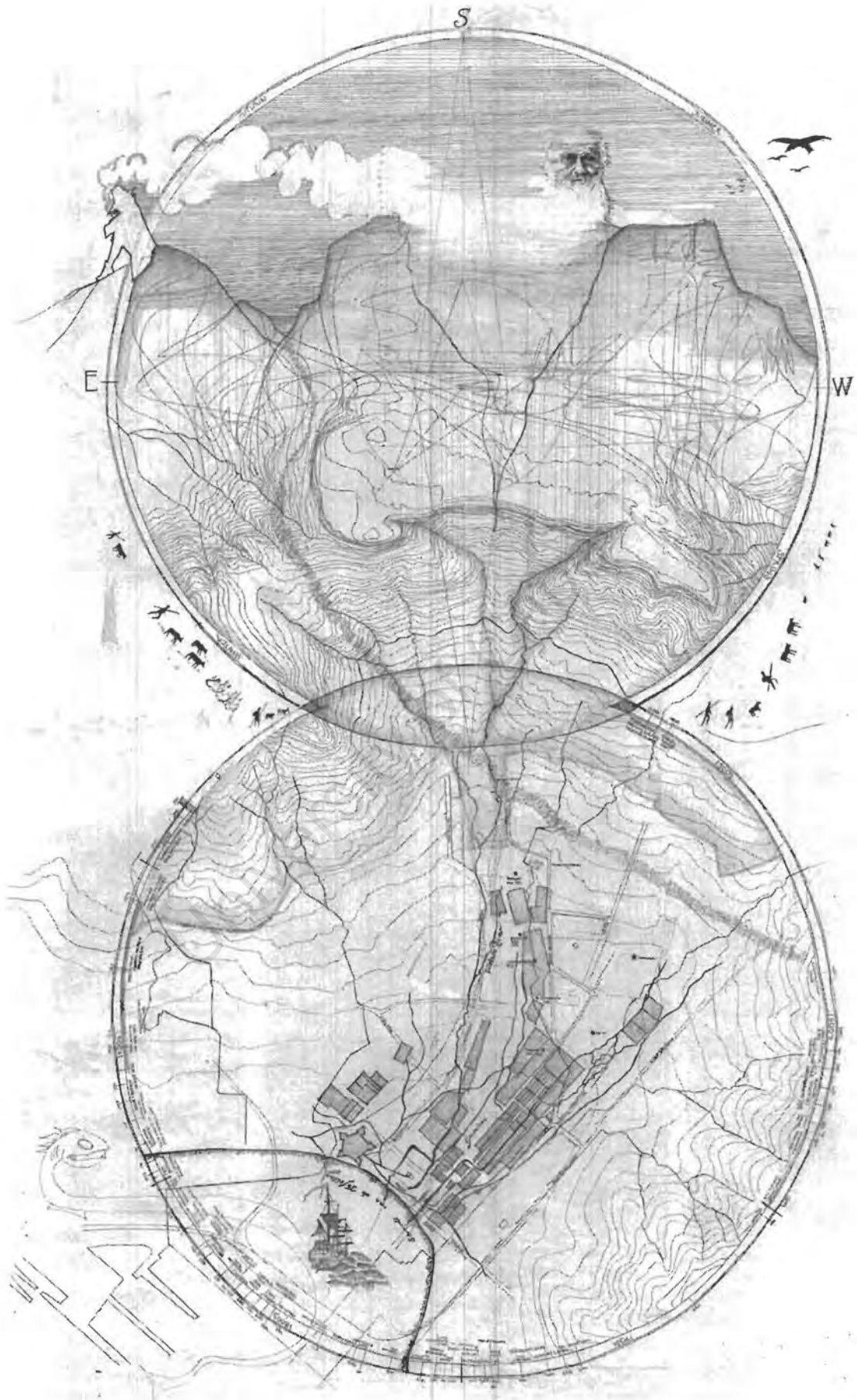
The honest idea underpinning this thesis is my love for Table Mountain. This idea germinated in an idealised vision of creating a place on Table Mountain that fellow Capetonians<sup>1</sup> could visit, experience and grow the same love for the mountain. Concealed by theoretical post-rationalisation, vague objectives and whimsical images, the project stagnated at the point of physical design because my intentions for the thesis had grown crooked. Fortunately, I came to the realisation that I had become my own glorified client. This glorified client had overpowered the architect and the project had suddenly become too personal. In retrospect, I realise that I was attempting to project *my* idealised imagined reality onto my thesis, rather than attempting to create *meaningful architecture*.

This realisation prompted a mid-year shift in my intention for the thesis and the altering of the subsequent methodological approach of the analysis and *drawing* of the site and the thesis intention through the use of a series of psychograms. The thesis developed further with a theoretical basis of the microcosm and the manifold of the imagined reality and the physical reality, notions influenced largely by the writing of Juhani Pallasmaa. From here the design started and grew rapidly to final design.

This thesis started with an objective and a site and has arrived at intention and form.

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<sup>1</sup> *Capetonians* is a collective term for the local population of Cape Town, encompassing the Cape Metropolitan Area



## PART A: Themes and Theory

### Introduction

Part A encompasses the objective, site, focus, limits to scope, literature and primary sources pertaining to the first part of the thesis. Beginning with an outline of the broad thesis objective and an in-depth analysis of the site recorded in written and graphic form, the author attempts to strengthen the intention of the thesis by analysing contextual theoretical discourse. Underpinned by the parameters of objective and site rather than that of program the research undertaken was theme-based. The analysis of themes helped formulate an argument for the purposeful application of ideas pertaining to the objective and site.

PART A is a report of the research completed at the beginning of the year which is still relevant to the thesis. As such PART A is written in the past tense. It includes a retrospective conclusion written in the present tense.

Figure 1 \_ Hand drawn culmination of the initial site research. The image layers the different histories: hydrological layers, farmstead layouts, roadways, geological significance, cultural myths and legends on a projection of the accurate contours of the city bowl and an accurate elevation of Table Mountain. The image explores the over-lap between the natural and urban landscapes with a time line encircling each landscape.

The site which sits on this image in the over-lap of the two circles, in reality lies within Deer Park in an area on Table Mountain which has the longest history of social and cultural interaction.

The first recorded historical significance of this site is in the 1600's when European sailors used the 'Vaarsche Rivier' (as the Platteklip River was first named) the only year-round reliable fresh water stream in the Cape to supply passing ships with water. It has been speculated that this site was one of the first places that European and indigenous people interacted. For approximately 250 years the Vaarsche River and the fresh water springs on the lower slopes were the only sources of drinkable water to the city bowl inhabitants. The layout of the rivers affected the layout of the first farmsteads, formal streets, civic history and hydrology systems of the city which are still apparent today. The two Platteklip Reservoirs (1849 & 1846) and the Slow Sand Filter (1896) which are located on the site, were the first attempts at mountain water storage and filtration respectively in Cape Town. The site sits at a point which holds geological significance. Historically and culturally, this site has a level of responsibility to relay the importance of the aforementioned social, cultural, urban, geological and vegetation interactions, to allow for the notion of a shared common heritage.



Figure 2 \_ "Athlone". Photograph: Images of Table Mountain, David Lurie, 2006.



Figure 3 \_ "Clifton". Photograph: Images of Table Mountain, David Lurie, 2006.

## Objective

This thesis aims to address the current and future interaction of Capetonians with Table Mountain as a historic<sup>1</sup> landscape of common heritage. This aim at the commencement of PART A was approached by exploring architecture's potential in bringing out the poetic nature of a particular site on Table Mountain. It was and still is the authors intention that through the strengthening of the experience of the physical reality of the site, the individual can better formulate his personal image of Table Mountain.

The notion of historic landscape is an ideological concept; it is socially and historically specific. It holds a historic and cultural image that is constantly evolving in its social meaning and interpretations. Capetonians, as a diverse community signify themselves through their imagined relationship with their surrounding physical landscape. An individual will assume their own type of relationship with a landscape and hence categorise their own social role and that of others with respect to the historic landscape.

Hence the site identified is not a neutral body and I, as the author of this thesis, which exists in an idealised world, have the ability to assist Capetonians in formulating their own personal image and with the historic landscape of Table Mountain as a bond of Capetonian common heritage.

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1 *Historic / historical* - see glossary

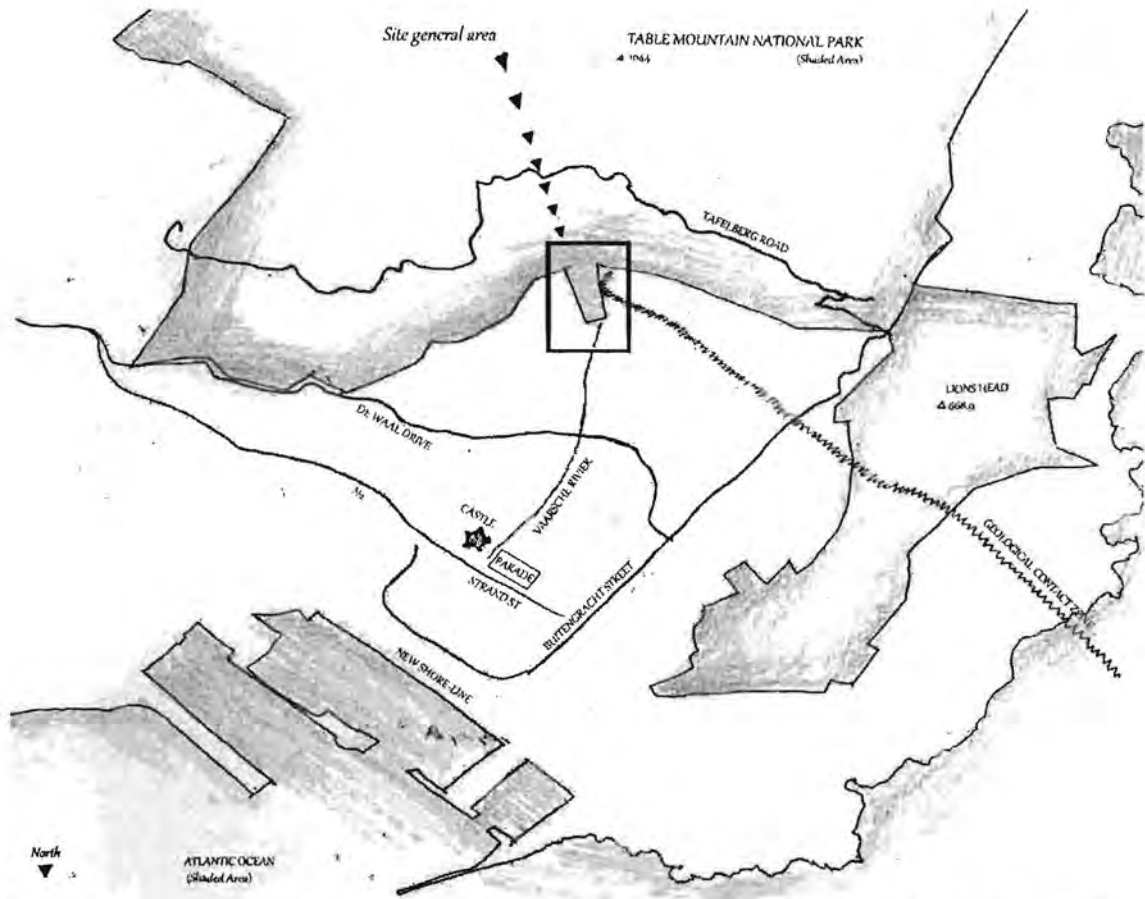


Figure 4: Authors own sketch-map indicating the general site area in relation to the city and the border of Table Mountain National Park (TMNP). The site sits in a chalice-like shape on the city-side of the boundary of TMNP. Only TMNP officers are permitted motor vehicle access to the site. The public can access the site by foot or bicycle. There is a public carpark 400m away from the Northern end of the site. Note the 'contact zone' and Buitengracht Street referred to in Figure 1.



Figure 5: Looking down to the site from the summit of Table Mountain on the East edge of Platteklip Gorge. Facing North. Photograph: 2011, Mark Horton. Platteklip Gorge is the mid-northern facing ravine on Table Mountain. 'Platteklip' translates loosely to 'flat rocks.' This describes the flat rocks lining the Platteklip River where the slave-washerwomen did their masters' washing in the late 1800's.

## **Parameters of Site**

The site sits on the Northern slope of Table Mountain where the natural slope of Platteklip Gorge meets Deer Park along Platteklip River. (please see Figure 4)

### **Moment of revelation**

Whilst approaching the site from either the North, South, East or West there are traces of the urban landscape: glimpses of houses, roofs or fences, city-sounds or views displaying traces of urbanity. At the centre of the site however, there are only features of the natural landscape. Within the site there is a distinct moment of revelation when the walker is suddenly confronted with the realisation that they are engulfed by the natural landscape; they are now on Table Mountain. The site holds an overwhelming sense of peace, and due to the sudden realisation that the walker has moved from being in the urban landscape to the natural landscape it has the power to make the walker pause, if only for a second, to take in their surroundings. The walker experiences it as a place.



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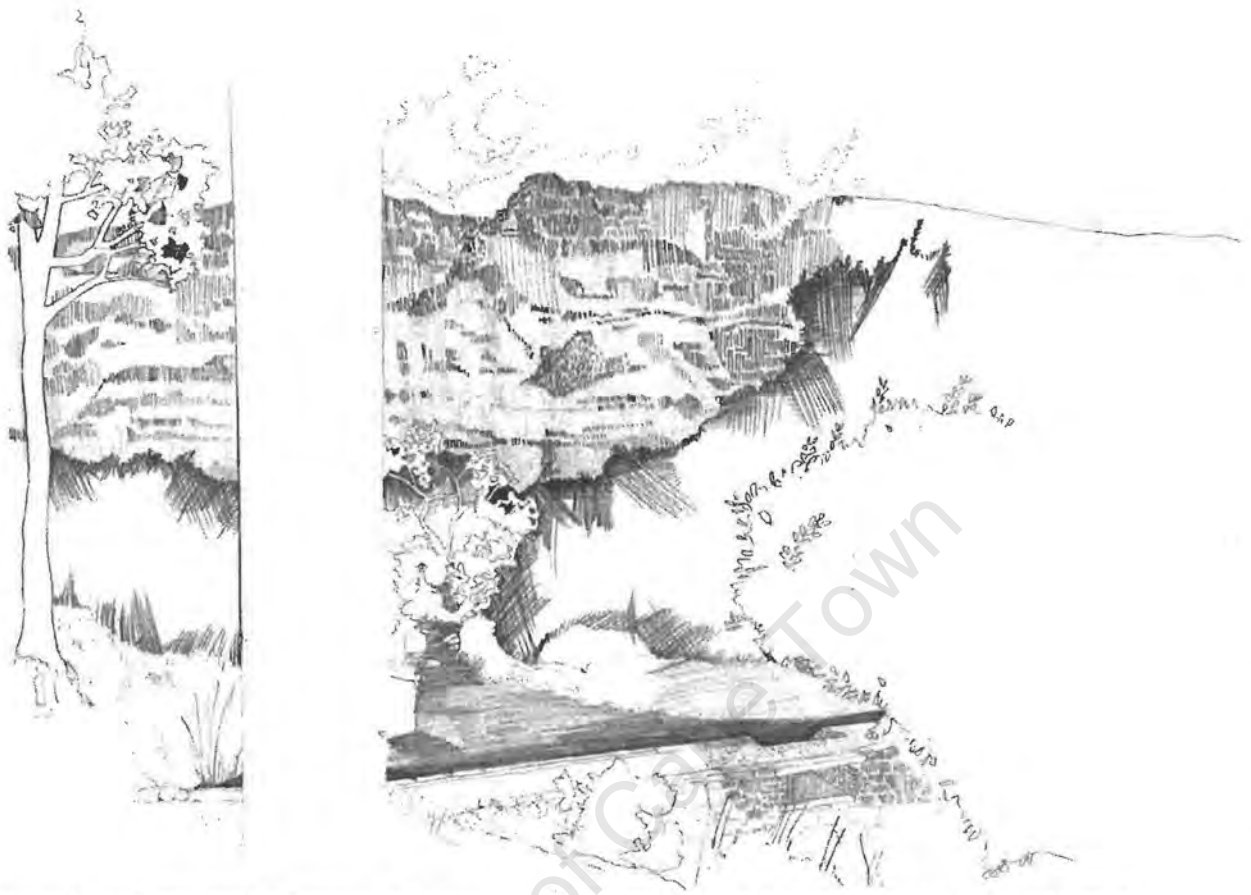


Figure 6: Authors own sketch on site, looking across the Lower Platteklip Reservoir towards Platteklip Gorge on Table Mountain.

### **Present**

Deer Park and its immediate surroundings are currently under utilised as a recreational ground by the residents of the central city and Deer Park's surrounding community. The area has vast potential to be a well-used natural and historic landscape, however the park has been neglected and the recognition of its historic contribution has been limited to the restoration of the two Platteklip Wash Houses and the Platteklip Mill which are kept under lock and key. As a consequence of the lack of a permanent presence in the park and of the over-grown nature of the vegetation, security is an increasing concern to users of the park and the surrounding community.

The potential beauty of this historic and natural landscape is that it is a place which is currently activated by human activity; it is relevant in the present. This thesis advocates that architecture can invoke a change in the interaction and hence the perception of the landscape to those who experience it.

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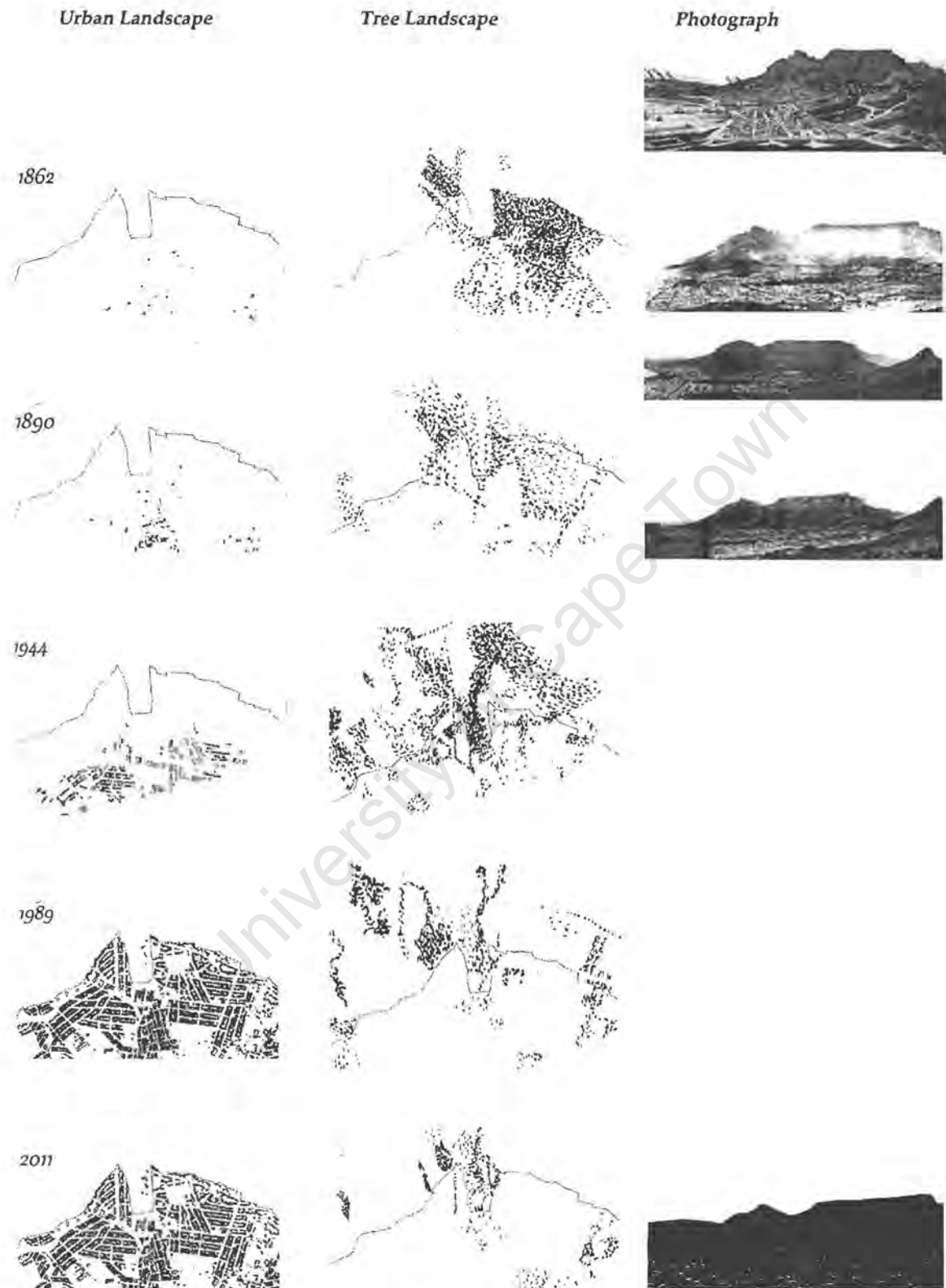


Figure 7: Authors own mappings of her understanding of the changing patterns of the urban and natural landscape over time in approx 3km radius of the site. The data for these mappings was collated from orthographic photographs, topological maps, GIS maps and photographs. It is arguable that due to this constant change, Capetonians have not been able to develop a relationship or attitude with regards to the area where the urban and natural landscapes meet.

## Change

This thesis intends to invoke a change in the existing landscape so it is vital that the notion of change is understood.

*Change is the sense of being alive; it tells us of things past, things to come and gives us a present awareness.*

*(2001, Martin-Brown)*

This area has seen constant change between the urban and the natural landscapes. Change is inherent in historical and cultural landscapes; the site has been under constant natural change, urban growth, wavering political policies, developing city services and strengthening heritage laws. Historically the local population has had an uncertain relationship in this area of change, and as the ultimate guardian of the local landscape, it is important that through the next change, an all-encompassing symbiotic relationship be forged between the landscape and the local population.

The biggest challenge faced by the author of this thesis is to accept the intangible values (the imagined values) of collective cultural identity that the site provides to the local population and to address what inherent values (the physical values) the landscape has. The imagined and the physical values together affect the individuals' image of the place.

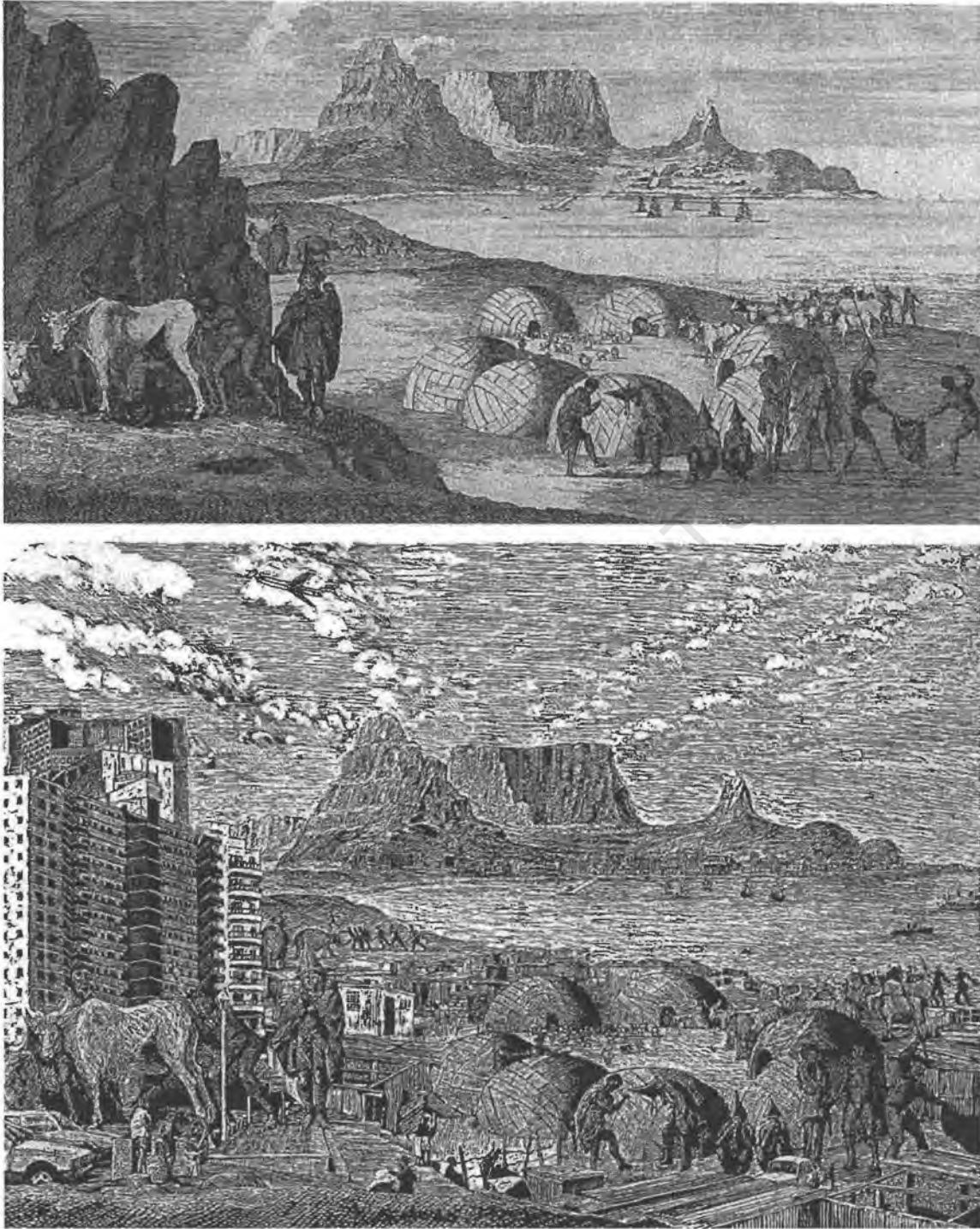


Figure 8: Engravings (top) 'Cabo de Goede Hoop' by Abraham Bogaert (1711) and 'Milnerton' by Katherine Bull both comment on the obvious racial disparities suffered between the inhabitants. Bulls engraving draws reference from Bogaert and she is commenting on the comparison and similarities of the "spatial and temporal difference between these two worlds." (2000, Vergunst)

As this thesis is catering to the diverse Capetonian local population, the architecture is required to be multivalent in order to achieve a diverse and subjective set of readings from the individual. According to Cape Town architect Professor Jo Noero, in order to design for a multivalent set of readings, the design needs to encompass a variant of scale, light, texture, axiality, randomness, typology and routes (Hoerikwaggo, )

## Urban context

### State of mind

Each city has its own character and so do each of its historic sites. It is for this reason that there is no existing formula that is used for the restoration or conservation of historic cities and sites – foreign cities' solutions and identities cannot be imported to deal with local problems. The local ways of life, values, norms and representations they bear in giving each city its state of mind, must be respected.

The level of attachment which a local individual feels towards a city is comprised of a complex mosaic which made up of many smaller images of the layers and sites of the city. Every urban form generates a figurative mosaic piece; a unique image in the mind of the local individual. The large mosaic of images is the reason that he or she can become attached to all the city's elements and their functions and consequences which affect his or her daily life; the more pieces, the stronger the attachment.

### Roots in Time

According to Historic Places and Sacred Sites, the presence of historic sites gives the local population a sense of permanence and continuity; these sites are social stabilisers as witnesses of where we come from and who we are. The most tangible psychological reason for this sense of stability comes from Kevin Lynch's book What time is this Place? which explains that humans assume if a historic part of a city is being conserved then it promises that the future will in turn conserve the present. Lynch argues that humans conserve or recreate the past because it gives them a familiarity and a secure sense of the future.

### Cultural Sustainability

The cultural dimension of cities can no longer be seen as a luxury and instead should be seen as a vital element in the creation of cities. Cultural continuity is essential for social cohesion, especially in Cape Town which is a culturally, geographically and demographically fragmented city. Historic sites bring psychological stability to the local individuals and it is the authors opinion that these sites should be integrated into the everyday life of the Capetonian. According to Historic Places and Sacred Sites, the focus need not be on the mere preservation of historic sites, but rather on the conservation of local urban heritage for current human purposes of understanding the past to contemplate the present and the future. If historic sites have no significance to the present or future then they are of little use to the individuals' present image of their environment.



Figure 9: 'Table Mountain: The Great Mother' by Rina Badenhorst (1995) An example of the many different beliefs regarding the origin and power of Table Mountain. (2000, Vergunst)



Figure 10: 'Bitter Fruit' by Julia Teale (1994). "Seen from Bloubergstrand, the tripartite profile of Table Mountain is easily recognised in the framed mirror (though not reversed). The mountain appears not only as a backdrop to the city beyond Table Bay but simultaneously, as a landmark for the townships on the Cape Flats. This juxtaposition point to the political polarisation withing the metropolitan area and the separate socio-economic worlds in which Capetonians live." (2000, Vergunst)

*The heart of our sense of time is the sense of now.*

*(Lynch, 1972)*

According to Historic Places and Sacred Sites, culture influences what is valued in society and shapes the development outcomes that people will value. The urban society of Cape Town will develop in a manner better conducive to growth if we draw from our historic heritage a framework of common references within the city to build up a strong base of common heritage. Common heritage has the power to anchor a diverse nation by promoting solidarity through a shared sense of culture. We need a shared sense of culture to forge and repair the social bonds which allow people of different backgrounds and generations to live peacefully together.

#### **Table Mountain as Common Heritage**

Table Mountain is a latent piece of common heritage. Like its city, Table Mountain has a layered history. It has been utilised, abused and worshipped by our predecessors yet each Capetonian has inherited the mountain which still has the power to give them a sense of place. If it does not already, Table Mountain has the potential to signify a common Capetonian heritage. It is a national monument of natural and historic heritage; Table Mountain needs to be utilised in this regard.

*Table Mountain is among our most sacred possessions part not only of the soil, but of the soul of South Africa.*

*(General Smuts, 1923)*

Unfortunately, as illustrated before (see Figure 7) there is not a tradition of interaction with the mountain because the threshold relationship between the urban landscape and the natural landscape has always been a tentative and changing one. The local population does not have a tradition of knowing how to interact with the mountain at the point where the urban landscape meets the natural landscape. Many more Capetonians could use, or could make better use of Table Mountain. It is the author's opinion that Table Mountain does not hold a place in as many Capetonians framework of references as it should. If Table Mountain has no relevance to the local population in the present then it can be deemed useless; it needs to have a valency in the present.



Figure 11: Norberg-Schulz was an architect and architectural theoretician who added substantially to the theoretical basis of architecture from the 1960's. The development of the majority of his ideas on architecture held an all-encompassing notion of place.

In his book *Architecture: Meaning and Place*, Norberg-Schulz discusses the notion of placelessness of sociology of the world. In summary, it was in Norberg-Schulz's opinion that before the era of modern architecture of the 1920's human life was intimately linked with things and places. He qualifies this with the explanation that before industrialisation, commercialisation and mass production. Quantity of things was not accessible so the quality of things mattered. According to Norberg-Schulz the era of quality brought about an identity and belonging and therefore the physical world had a set of common qualities and 'rootedness'. However after the World Wars in the modern age of mobility and science man started to relate things to quantities, on "how much" we had. The world is still seen as a supplier of resources to fulfil our needs. For example a man in the past would build a life-long home but today a home is seen as fulfilling an immediate living need and is adaptable; value is given to that which is 'international'.



Figure 12: Martin Heidegger was not an architectural theorist but the notions underpinning his philosophy can be equated to architecture.

*"Man does not become a citizen of the world if he does not belong to any place. The citizen of the world has to settle within a totality and he understands that his place forms part of the larger whole..... [which] represents a continuum of his existential space. The contribution of each individual to the totality consists in the articulation of the place to which he belongs."*

(Norberg-Schulz 1988:38)

## How is this Place a Place?

The site is experienced by the walker as *place*. To uncover how sites hold a *placeness* and in order to locate the notion of place in a wider discourse the author analyses basic ideas from the theories of Christian Norberg-Schulz and Martin Heidegger.

### Christian Norberg-Schulz

Norberg-Schulz carried three lines of thought in architectural theory: psychological, existential and traditional. This thesis looks to his existential line of thought with regards to architecture, which Norberg-Schulz asserted belongs to place. His existential line of thought can be linked to the notion of the personal image and *understood* places within a framework of reference; mosaic pieces.

The existential (and existential space) can be explained as the individuals understanding of mans experience of the inter-connectedness of concrete 'things' [and space] beneath the level of human awareness or consciousness. According to Norberg-Schulz, experience of space is the tension between ones immediate situation and the existential space.

Whichever way it is read, the point of reference, the personal image and/or the existential place are all egocentric. Norberg-Schulz advocates that this egocentrism should be encouraged by the architect, because existential experience recognises the human variable over which the architect has no control, so an enigmatic design is required. However this egocentrism makes it challenging to find precedent or a set of guidelines by which an architect can design. The author advocates that it is not primarily the egocentrism which calls for a multi-valent design, but rather that overlap/tension between Norberg-Schulz's 'immediate situation' and 'existential space' which recognises the unknown denominator of the individuals immediate situation that calls for enigmatic design.

In the 1960's in Architecture: Meaning and Place, Norberg-Schulz noted a crisis in architecture of a "worldlessness and homelessness". He assigns "the loss of things" as the reason for the sense of worldlessness of the modern world (see Figure 11 caption). Norberg-Schulz means 'worldless' in the sense that man has lost his sense of identity and community and hence he has lost the poetic understanding of the world. As a result Norberg-Schulz advocates that the aim of today should be to give the poetic dimension back to the people; a simple phenomenon of the everyday sense of the environment.



Figure 13: Author's own exploratory drawings of the 'thingness' of the site and how architecture can emphasise the 'thingness.'

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This poetic dimension can be explained by quoting a piece from a poem of Heidegger: The Thinker as Poet:

*Forests spread/ Brooks plunge/ Rocks persist/ Mist diffuses. Meadows wait/ Springs well/ Winds dwell/ Blessing muses.*

*(Norberg-Schulz 1988:14)*

### **Martin Heidegger**

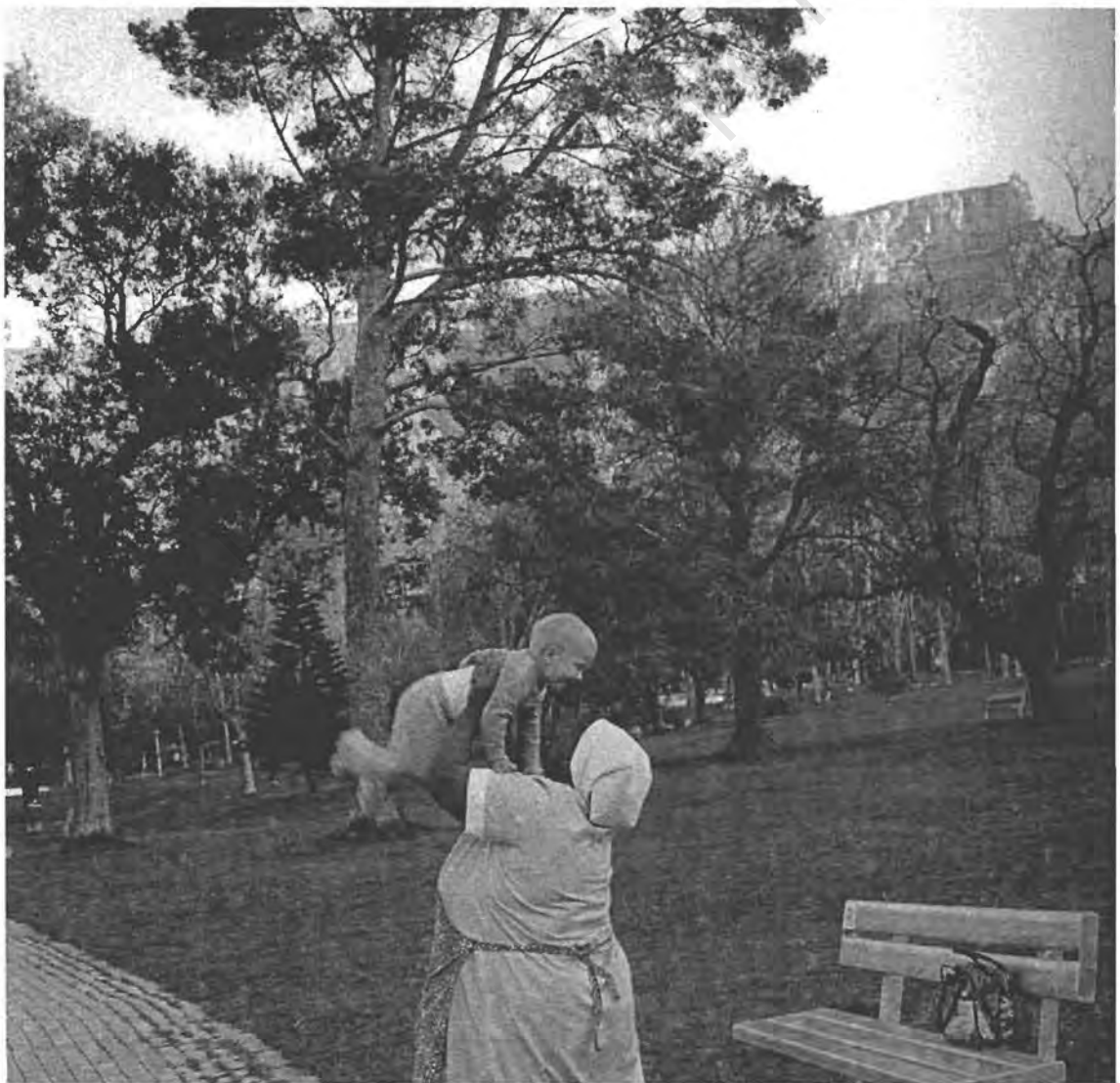
Heidegger had an understanding and discourse around the sense of being-in-the-world; of how things *are*. Heidegger saw *place* as a concrete place made up of concrete things. He theorised that our everyday life-world consists of concrete things rather than the world being conceived as a distant world of ideas. The value to be taken from Heidegger for this thesis is his *poetic approach to seeing things* can be used as an objective for architecture and in the methodology of the making of architecture. To Heidegger, architecture can gather the *thingness of things* because it is a "setting-into-work of the truth." (Norberg-Schulz 1988:41) In other words he believes that all places, being concrete places made of concrete things, have meanings that can and should be revealed by architecture.

It is Heidegger's description of architecture that needs to be implemented on this thesis' site in order to bring out its thingness of things. *Architecture needs to gather the mountain's presence, the tree's embrace, the river's journey, the rock's repose and the wind's surge which are the pre-existing elements of the site.*

Norberg-Schulz and Heidegger contribute value and ideas that can be used to explain why the place at the centre of the site holds its placeness. Their ideas can be used to help shape an attitude towards the treatment of this place or perhaps a desired sense of place for the design of the architecture on this site.

*Architecture is the meaningful creation of places in the concrete phenomenological sense of the word. (Norberg-Schulz 1988:16)*

The authenticity of the poetic dimension of this site depends on the authors ability to design an architecture which allows a sense of the direct and genuine experience of the entire complex of the *thingness* of this place.



Figures 14 & 15: Photographs: Images of Table Mountain, David Lurie, 2006.

## Conclusion

### The state of the Research

The personal and collective image of Table Mountain of Capetonians, as a point of common heritage in the framework of the cultural heritage of Cape Town is vital to the state-of-mind of the city. The author is hence challenged to design an architecture to allow the landscape to assist the local population to form their own image of Table Mountain as one of the historic sites in a framework of references of common heritage.

The site which sits at the point of the longest interaction of the urban and natural mountain landscape has the potential to facilitate the present and future interactions between the individual and the mountain. The historic importance of the site has to have consequence in the present in order to contribute any meaning to the local population in the present and in the future.

The research suggests that in order to create an environment which allows for the creation of the individual's personal image of the mountain, the proposed design methodology should apply the personal image idea of Lynch, the existential place-making traits of Norberg-Schulz and use the poetic underpinnings of Heidegger's *thingness of things* to achieve the objective of framing the poetic dimension of the site.

## Post-Rationale: Personal Reflection

On reflection on the conclusion of Part A, I realised that the notion of the poetic dimension had a disproportionate affect on the swaying of the design intention at this stage of the thesis where the sketch design began. I began seeking a design solution to frame MY interpretation and imagined landscape of the poetic dimension of the site.

I recognised that I enjoy a certain reading of this place; my experience is one of delight. My hope was to positively influence the individuals personal image of the site, and hence Table Mountain, by creating a similarly delightful experience on site. However, I acknowledge that there is a crisis within a project of experiential intention. I am permitted only a certain level of control over one of the two variables of experience; the place and the person. I can only control a certain level of *what* the place is like in physical reality but not of the imagined reality of *who* experiences it.

I, as the author of this thesis, have to *act* on my reading of the landscape but the intention is not to project my personal image onto the landscape so that it becomes MY imagined landscape. But rather the intention is allow for the better formulation of other individuals' personal images.

From this point on, in attempting this, this thesis investigates the potential that architecture holds in making the pre-existing elements of the landscape apparent. In doing so the experience of the thingness of the place is heightened to assist the individual Capetonian in formulating their own subjective personal image of the place.

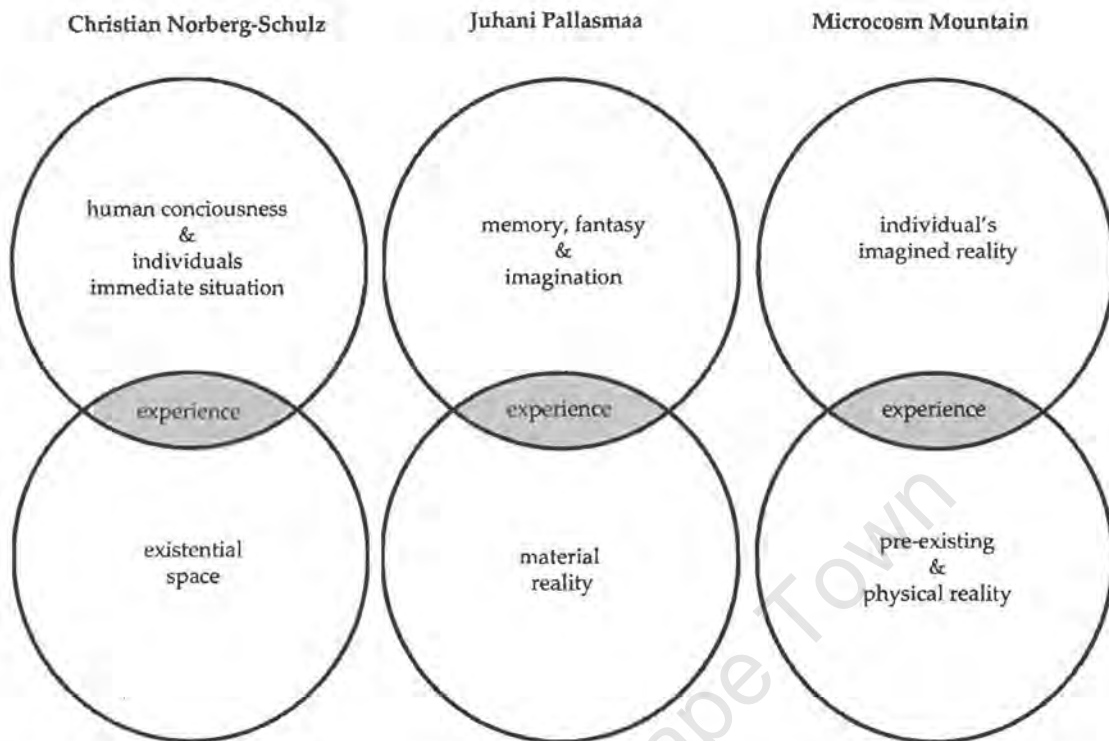


Figure 16: Author's own representation of the perception of the composition of 'experience' according to Norberg-Schulz, Pallasmaa and this thesis - Microcosm Mountain

## PART B: Change in Author's Intention

### Introduction

*The taste of the apple [...] lies in the contact of the fruit with the palate, not in the fruit itself.*

*Jorge Luis Borges (2009, Pallasmaa)*

PART B shows evidence of the author's change in intention for the thesis. This change was inspired by the above quote, the gravity of which was strengthened by comments given by lecturers and professionals from the author's presented work to this point in the thesis.

The author's focus changed **from the poetic dimension to the microcosm**. The author used the notion of the *manifold* and the methodology of exploring the power of the *psychogram* to do so.

### Gravity of the Apple

According to Juhani Pallasmaa in The Thinking Hand, the human mode of experience is the fusion of the material world and the mental world (or imagined world). The most human thing is to use one's faculty of imagination. Mental images are registered in the same zone of the brain as visual perceptions which means that mental or imagined images possess the same experiential authenticity as the material images perceived by the human eye.

Existential space, according to Pallasmaa, is made from the meanings and values projected onto the space by the individual, consciously or not, interpreted through their imagination and their own previous experiences.

The architect, aware that he has no control over the individuals' imagination or consciousness, has to negotiate his use of architecture to honestly project the physical reality, and not his own imagined reality. It is the author's opinion that meaningful architecture speaks of the world rather than of itself.

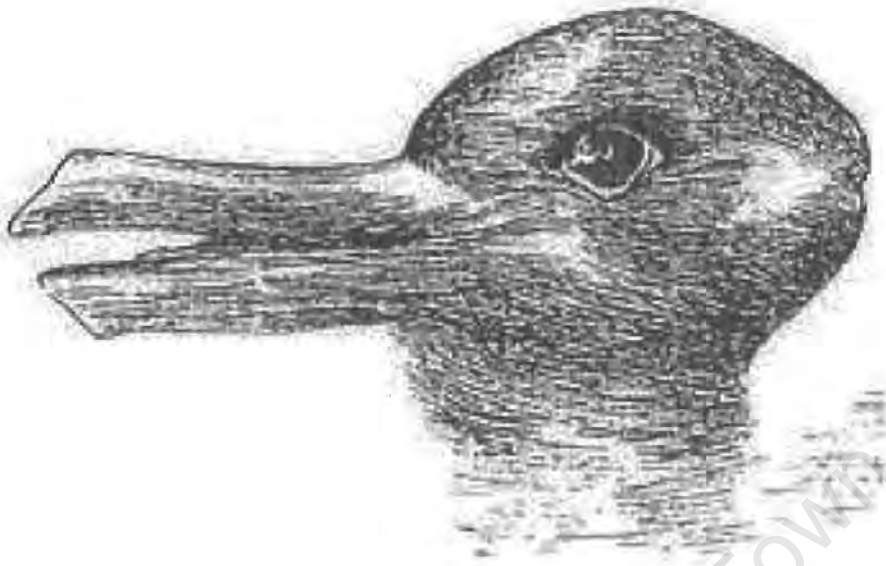


Figure 17: "What do you see? The duck or the rabbit?" This well-known image is the centre of the philosophical debate of the origins of the faculty of imagination. The image essentially represents the search for something in common between veridical (physical) and non-veridical (imagined) experience.

#### Author's Manifold

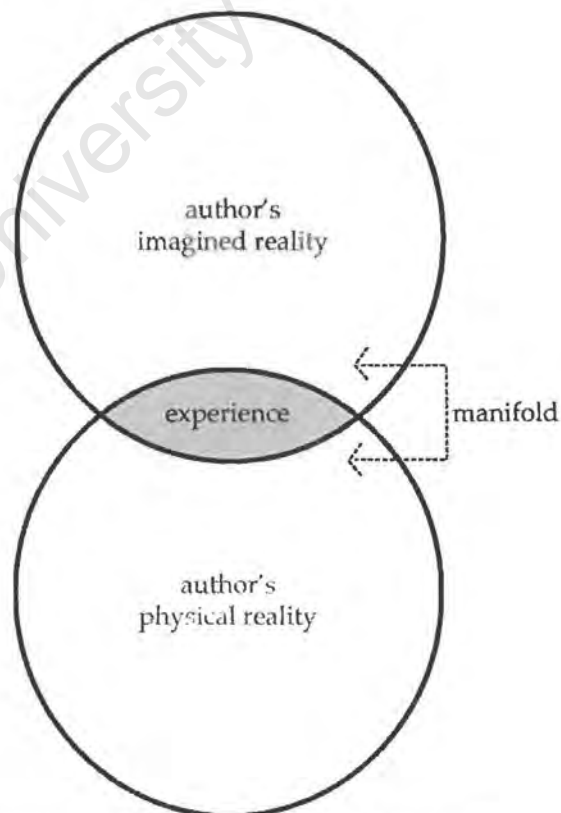


Figure 18: Author's own representation of her own manifold of experience.

## Microcosm Mountain

Meaningful architecture, according to Pallasmaa, is a world in itself; a microcosm which integrates the imagined reality and the physical reality to give an existential coherence and significance to the experience of the site.

A microcosm enhances and articulates our understanding of gravity, materiality, horizontality and verticality, the dimensions of above and below as well as the external enigmas of existence, light and silence.

This has become the new intention of this thesis; a change from the author seeking to frame the *poetic dimension* of the site to seeking to use architecture as a *microcosm* to make the pre-existing elements of the site apparent.

*We live in the flesh of the world and architecture humanises this existential flesh to give it specific meanings. Architecture frames human existence in specific ways and defines a basic horizon of understanding.* (Merleu Ponty in Pallasmaa, 2009)

## Exploring the Manifold of physical versus imagined realities

The challenge to the author in creating a microcosm, is to evaluate the thesis' intention and determine where in the manifold of her *own* physical reality and imagined reality the intention of the architecture should lie (see adjacent image). This indeterminacy of the negotiation between these two realities is perhaps the most exciting moment in an architectural design, and holds the most valency in the production of meaningful architecture; a microcosm.

*Work on philosophy, like work in architecture, is really more work on oneself. On ones own conception. Oh how one sees things.* (Pallasmaa, 2009)

The author used the technique of the psychogram, explained in the following chapter, to explore her own manifold.

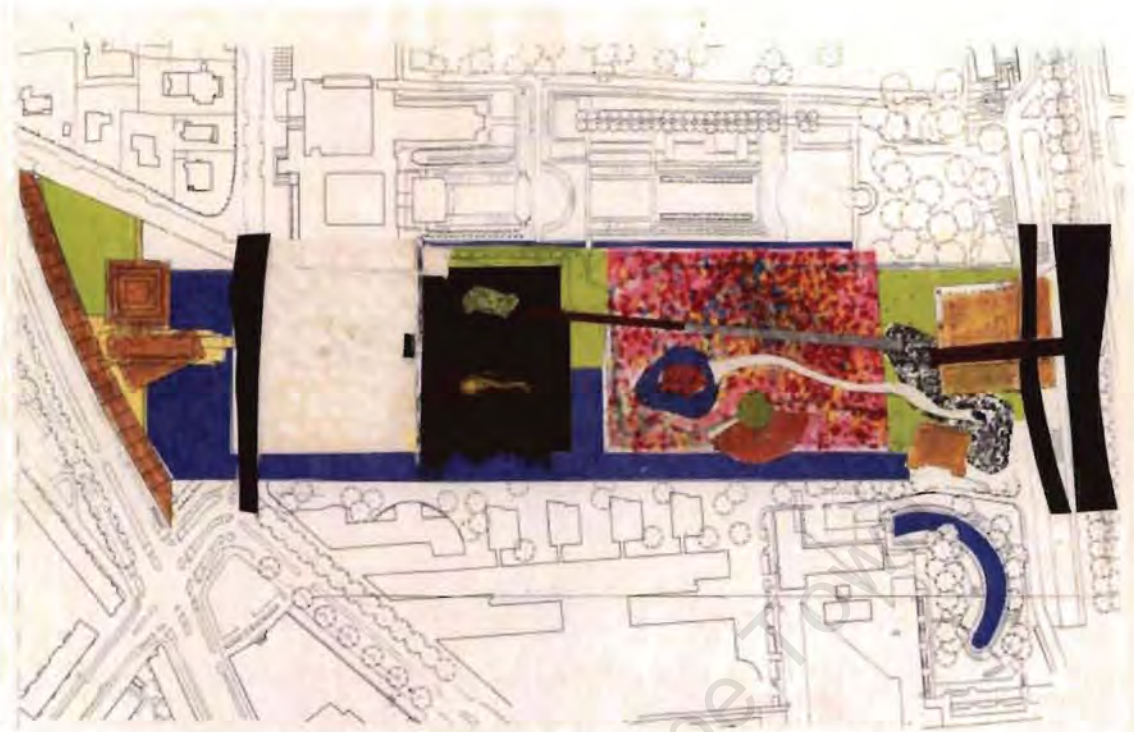


Figure 19: Image plan for the Museum Park in Rotterdam by the late Yves Brunier. Brunier used a large range of mediums with which to explore and represent his intentions for his designs. Yves Brunier advocated that the image is a metaphor which reveals a hidden dimension. The "metaphor is reassembled which put the perhaps chaotic fragments stripped of meaning, of commonplace reality in an image which, in one fell swoop, makes sense and momentarily becomes a yardstick for the construction of the real." (Jacques, 1996)

## Psychogram; a technique of revealing the hidden dimension

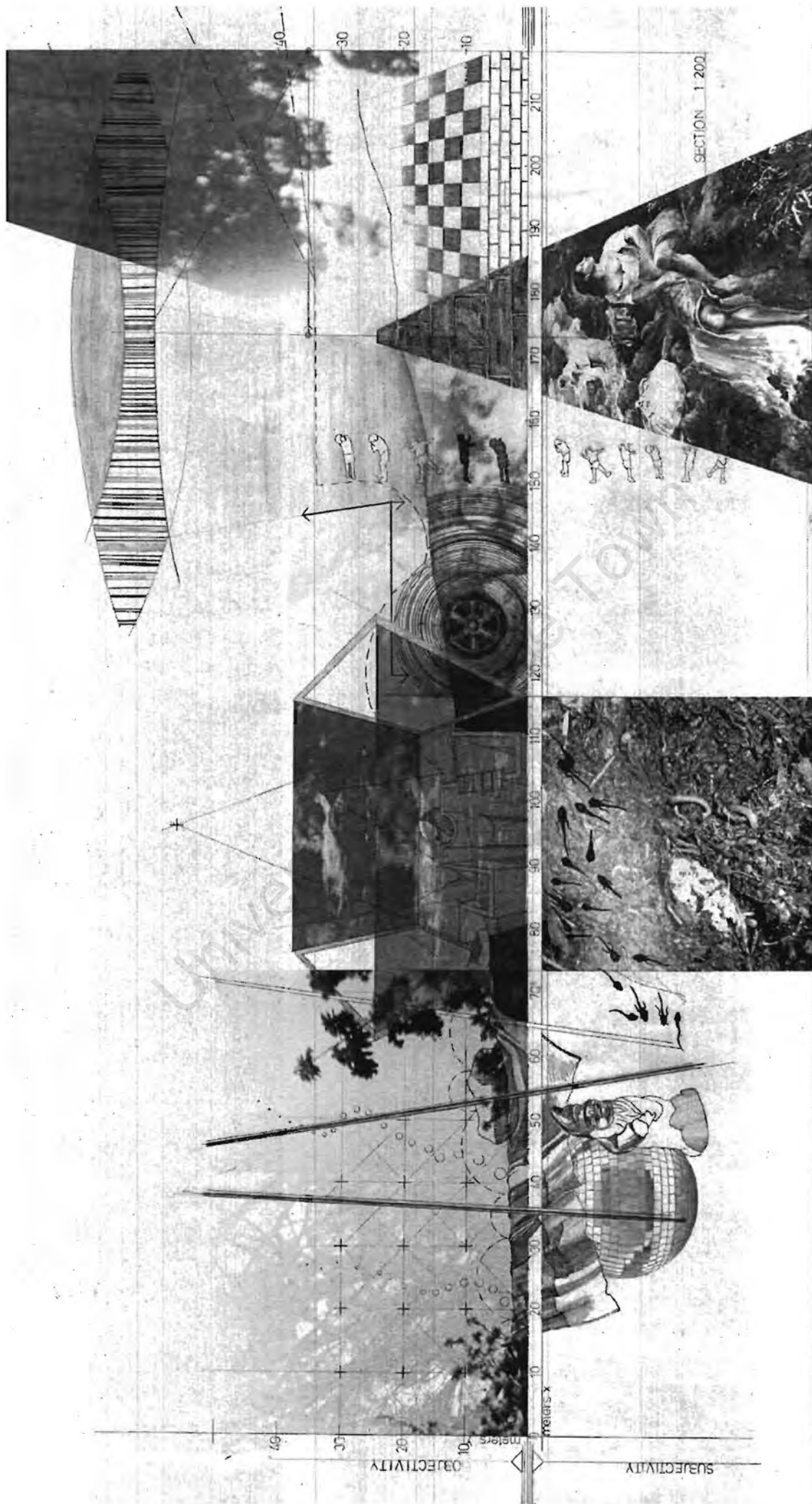
To uncover the manifold pertaining to this thesis, the author borrowed and adapted the technique of Architects Coop Himmelb(l)au and landscape architect Yves Brunier of the *psychogram*. The psychogram is a drawing used as a form of psychoanalysis to reveal the instinctive reactions of the author which are not always obvious in a normal architectural drawing or representation.

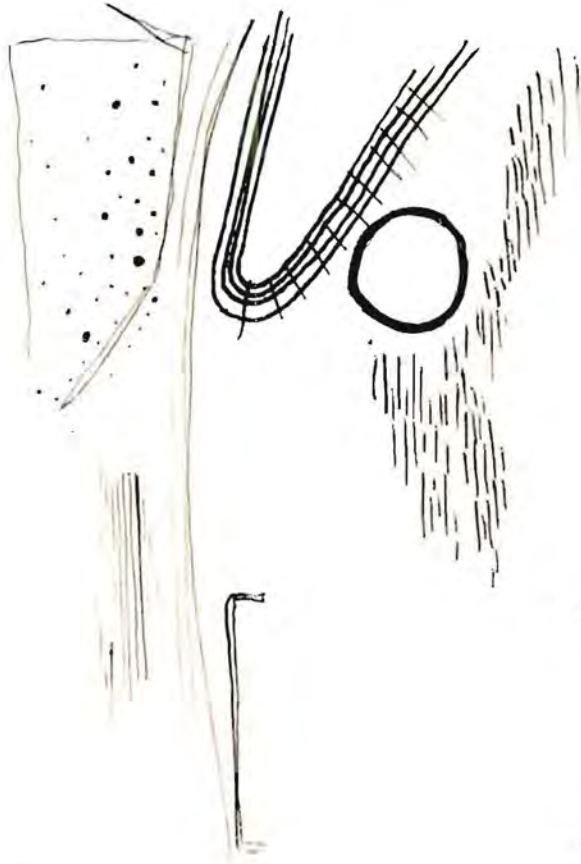
*[...] the unformed drawing is 'alive' and changeable, it forms questions as much as answers.* (Manolopoulou, 2005)

Because the author was struggling not to revert back to the first design ideas when her intention was to bring out the poetic dimension, the evocative nature of the psychogram and the revealing of its ordering, offered a different perspective to the author of her own [sub]conscious intention for the site and architecture. In other words the psychogram shifts words (known intention) into matter (a drawing) which allows the reading of a factual visual truth so that the architect can reveal hidden dimensions in a project.

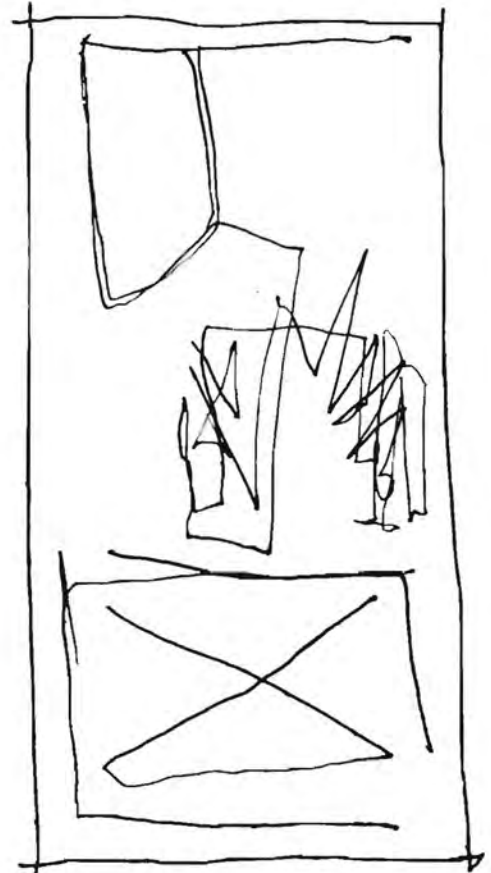
The author of this thesis used the psychogram to re-think and adjust the approach to physical design in Part B after the aforementioned 'change in intention' was realised. In a sense the psychogram gave the design phase of the thesis a refreshed view. A range of mediums for the psychograms were tested including collage, fine pen and wax colours. The **most effective** and accurate medium proved to be the **fastest** medium - the bold colours using wax pastels.

The exercise of drawing the psychograms and the images themselves were used as a starting block and a reference for the physical design as opposed to merely jumping straight back to sketch design.

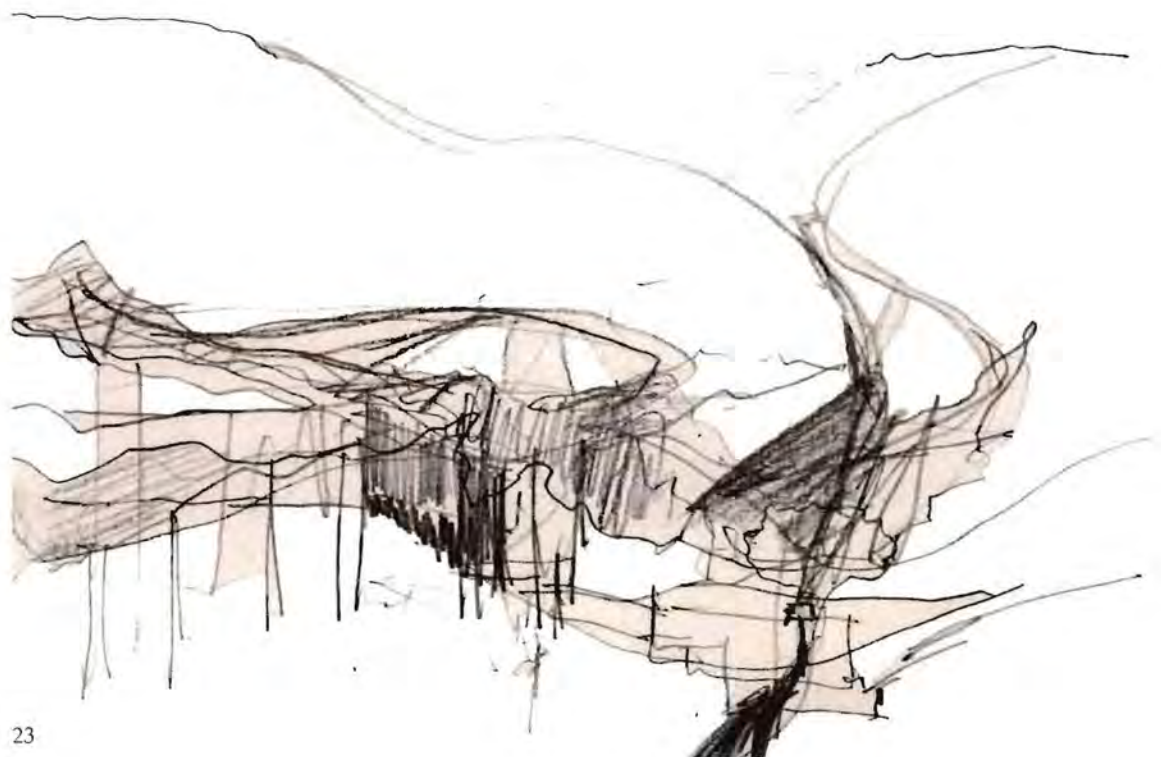




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Figures 20 - 26: Examples of the authors own psychograms.

Figure 20 Author's own exploration of the manifold of her imagined and material reality of the site. The image was hand-drawn instinctively and quickly. The image serves as a yardstick for the objective versus subjective analysis of the site and the architectural intention.

Figures 21 - 23 Examples of the authors quick-drawn responses to site.

Figure 24 Collage attempting to draw out the 'thingness' of the site.

Figure 26 & 26 Effective wax pastel psychograms of the author's response to site.

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## Conclusion

The analysis of the above selected psychograms reveal the apparent tensions in the manifold of the authors imagined world and physical world. Some of the images tend to be more subjective in places (in the authors imagined world) and others tend to be more objective in places (in the authors physical world). Figure 20 was a bouncing-board against which the author could gauge the design in order to stop the design from falling back into the trap of PART A; of seeking the authors own imagined *poetic dimension*.

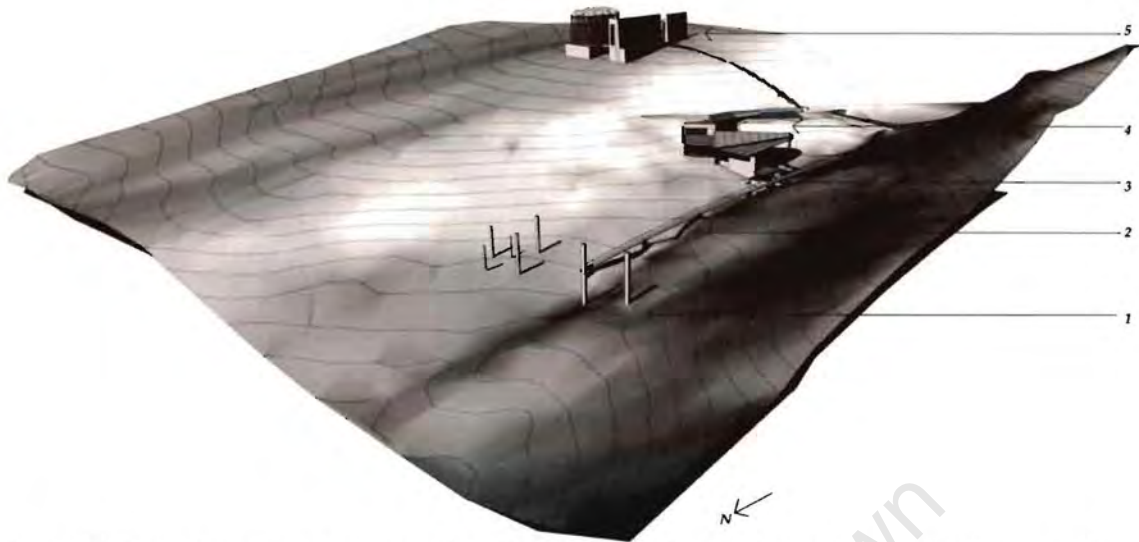


Figure 27: Computer rendered representation of the design on site for reference purposes to contours and landscape only.

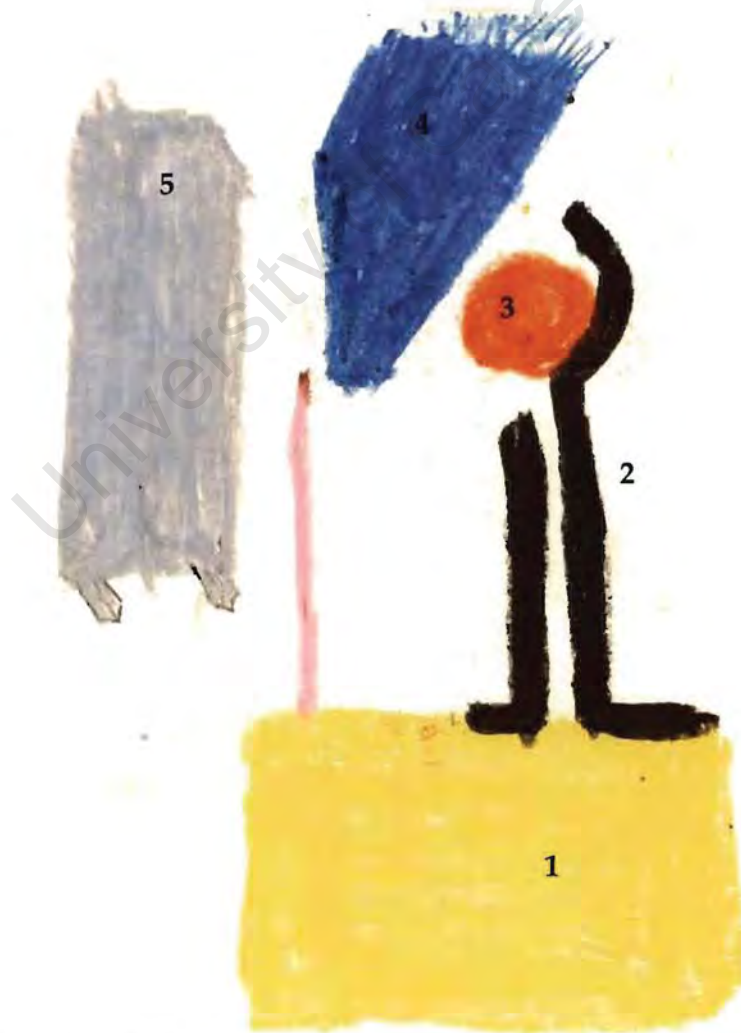


Figure 28: Psychogram on which the titles of the sections of PART C, and the interpretations of sire are based.

## PART C: Design

### Introduction

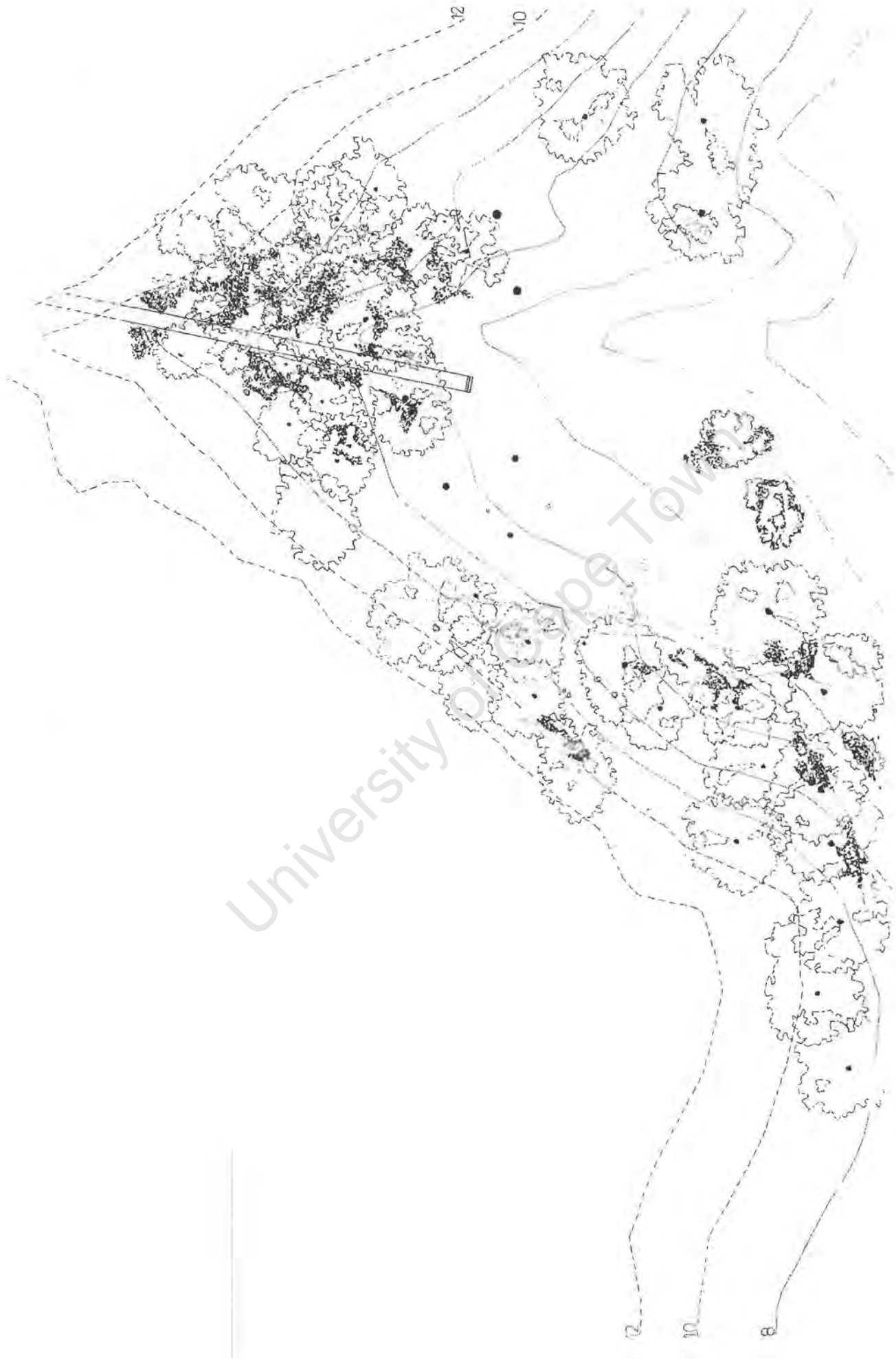
The author used the psychograms from PART B on which to base the design. The physical design has been divided into five distinct sections in reference to the adjacent psychogram:

- 1 \_ Yellow Square
- 2 \_ Black Lines
- 3 \_ Orange Circle
- 4 \_ Blue Table
- 5 \_ Grey Expanse

It was up to the author to interpret the psychograms to create a meaningful architecture to make the pre-existing values of the site apparent. The architecture has been considered in response to the 'hidden' dimension of the psychogram. PART C rudimentarily describes the walkers route through the five sections.

Please Note:

- *walker* is used as a generic term for those that use the site, ie hikers/runners etc. and is referred to in the masculine
- the site is described facing Table Mountain; south is ahead/up. The site can be approached from the North, South, East or West however is presented from North to South for clarity and uniformity of presentation.
- The plans and sections which are current at the time of the production of this design dissertation have been included for more information on the design. The architectural drawings included in this document are not the intended final design drawings.



## 1 \_ Yellow Square

The psychograms revealed that this place on the site required a subtle intervention. The architecture needed to emphasize the openness and 'lightness' of the space.

### Physical Design

The design for this place comprises of the installation of seven reflective vertical poles relative in formation and scale to the stars of the Southern Cross; a reference to Table Mountain's significance at the Southern point of Africa.

### Purpose

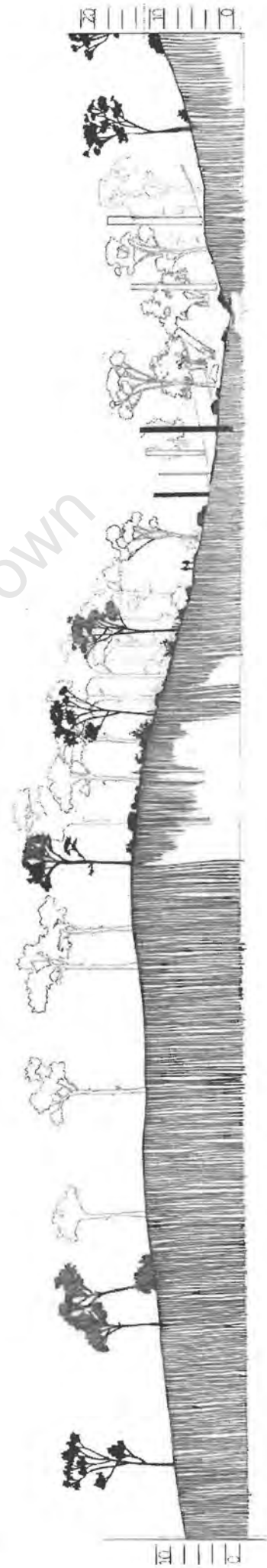
The design of the architecture is intended to invoke a sense of surprise and wonderment; architecture is saying gently to the walker, "something different is happening here."

Mimicking the dotted and wide placement of the gum trees and shards of sunlight and/or contrasting dusty shade, the highly reflective surface of the poles reflects and distorts the surroundings and invokes a sense of play and creativity. The reflective metal which is wrapped around cast concrete poles juxtaposes the soft and natural surroundings making the natural surrounding more apparent to the walker.

### Interaction

The design intends for the walker's interaction with the poles to be mental or non-tactile, however the curious walker will venture off the path to touch the poles or linger a while amongst them. The poles also serve as an introduction to the next 'section'; *Black Lines*.

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## 2 \_ Black Lines

The current paths of Deer Park ignore the densely vegetated entanglement of the most raw section of the site; an agile walker would struggle to negotiate his way up the banks of the river.

The psychograms indicate that the inherent nature of this section of the site is of dark, damp and vegetation-induced enclosure. The author's imagined reality of this space that it is a shy and moody side of the personified mountain; a side that she would prefer remain undisturbed. The authors physical design lies in a negotiation between the psychogram and the authors imagined reality.

### Physical Design

The design for this place features a slender pathway which gently rises up with the slope of the land over the serpentine river. The pathway is constructed of five sequential 1200mm wide slabs which are supported at their ends. The joints in between the slabs are screeded over making the pathway one continuous element. This construction makes the pathway seems to hover above the ground - allowing the walker an otherwise inaccessible experience.

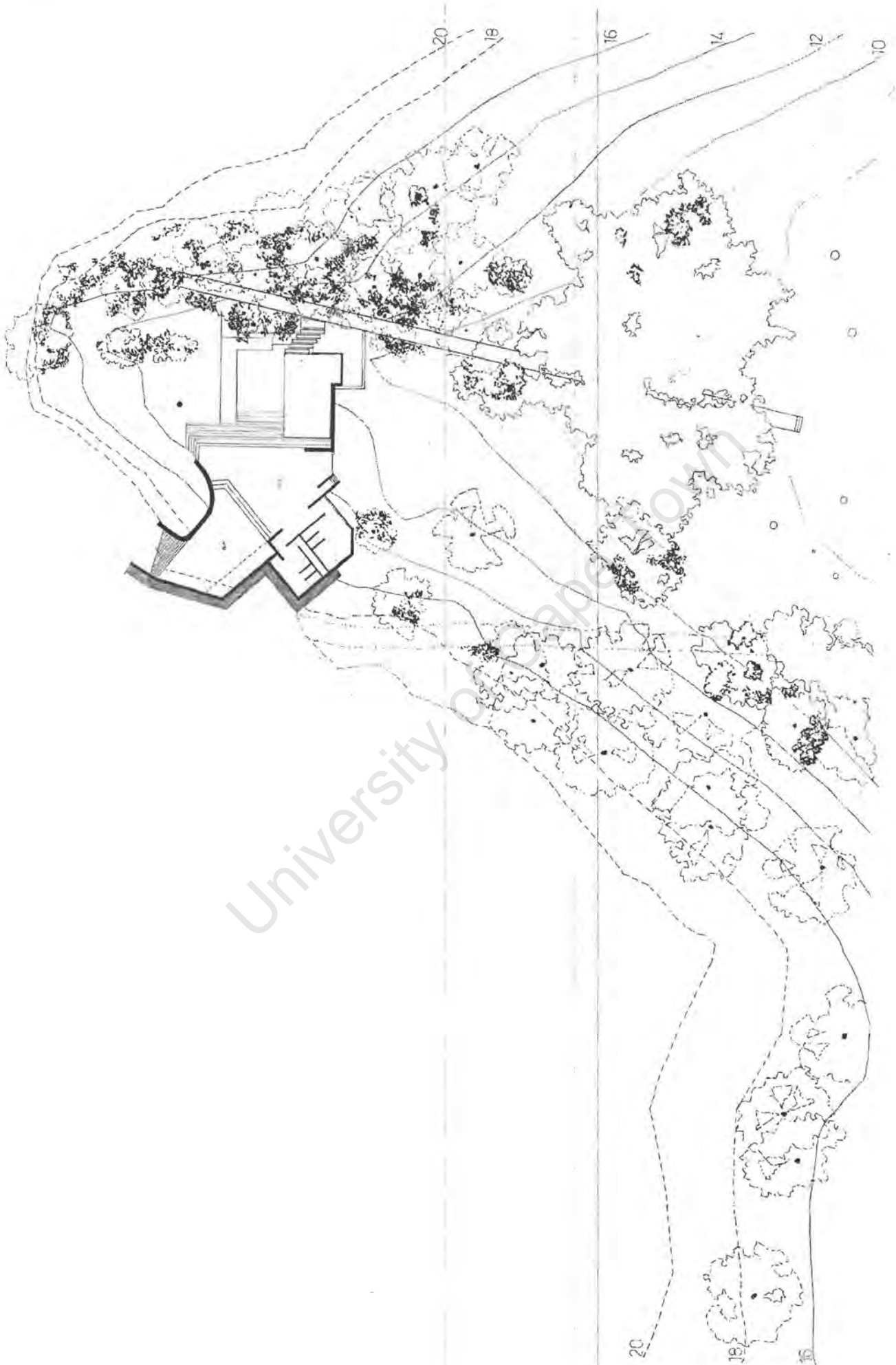
### Purpose

The walker can pass through this section of the site discreetly whilst given the opportunity to smell the dankness, be engulfed by the noise of the water, and experience the chill coming off the shaded undergrowth. The walker can encounter an otherwise private moment in the site without intruding in the space.

### Interaction

The walker is permitted the use of a simply designed, steel handrail on one side of the pathway. The handrail has been bolted to the slab prior to the screed so it has the sense of being part of the bridge and attracts no attention to it. Other than for stability, the handrail acts as a subtle human comfort by being a familiar object in an unfamiliar territory.

Figure 30: Lower Section - Contour 8. North faces into the spine of this document.



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### 3 \_ Orange Circle

This point on the site feels contained and has a gravity about it. The psychograms communicate a messy and child-like sense of self-involvement and self-importance. The author has interpreted that the messiness should be contained and juxtaposed yet the architecture should emphasise the feeling of self-involvement by encouraging the walker to do the same.

#### Physical Design

The design features a pavilion-type building, set into the earth on the East valley slope just below the Lower Platteklip Reservoir wall.

The architecture attempts to emphasise the feeling of containment and brings to attention only the immediate surroundings by formalising and juxtaposing the adjacent natural character of the space and restraining sight lines from reaching too far out of the space.

The tectonics of the architecture and the materials used are revealed in such a way as to create an immediate understanding of their role in the architecture: walls are of dry sandstone construction held in off-shutter concrete frames, the exposed aggregate concrete slab is a continuous element retaining and calming the pre-existing messiness of the space, the main landing is shaded throughout the day by two off-shutter concrete canopies which span simply from the load-bearing dry stone walls to a concrete column. The architecture hides nothing and begs no questions.

The materials are unfinished and rainwater runoff is visibly channelled through the building to re-join its natural course to the river, and only natural lighting is used as a reminder to the walker that even though they are inhabiting a familiar urban construction, they are still within a raw natural landscape.

#### Interaction with the building

The building is a central pivotal point in the site for walkers to gather and disperse.

Approaching from the 'Black Lines' pathway, the walker emerges from the dense vegetation into the wide clearing of the 'Orange Circle' - he accesses the building over designed stepping stones.

The building encourages the walker to engage in self-involved activities by providing the amenities to sit, wash, rest, swim and shelter. These activities, apart from the use of a western-style ablutions, are all activities which can be entered into without the existence of the

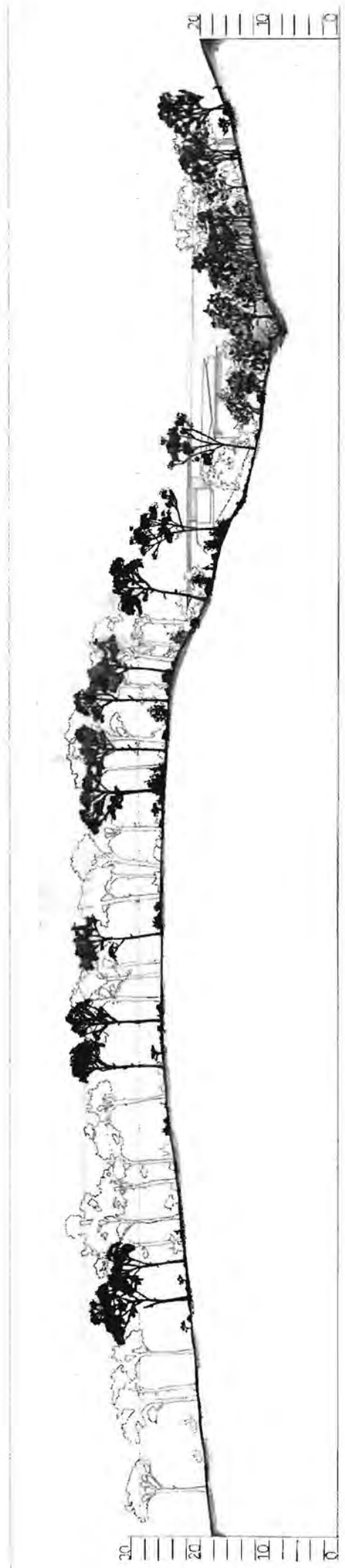
Figure 31: Middle Plan - Contour 19. North faces into the spine of this document.

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building however it is the authors opinion that due to the seeming chaos of the pre-existing space, the walker would not use the pre-existing landscape to engage in those activities. The building allows returning weary hikers to pause on even ground and put their feet in the water. Hot walkers can rest in the shade. Carefree walkers can splay themselves on the warm concrete slab or find a close-by picnic spot using the building as a meeting spot. Determined and easy walkers can use the bathrooms on their way up or down the mountain. Just as this section of the site has been interpreted as *self-involved*, so is the intended momentary mind-set of the walker inhabiting the architecture. The walker is permitted to focus on himself and this engagement with that he can physically touch, rather than mentally engage with the significance of his greater surroundings.

As an example, the building momentarily controls and contains the otherwise wilful river by manipulating the fall of the slab level to force the river to move in certain ways. The water is taken through the building and the water level is allowed to rise up and down the concrete steps; the water stains on the untreated concrete left by the river in previous seasons will become apparent. The walker is encouraged to dangle his legs above the water or put his feet in the controlled river or wade in the deeper pools made by the concrete walls; he is made aware of his choice to encounter the river within the architecture. Whether or not he chooses to venture from there into the natural river, he has nevertheless engaged with his immediate surroundings.



## 4 \_ Blue Table

This point on the site holds a sense of revelation. The walker is afforded the first unobstructed view to the mountain due to the clearing in the trees enforced by the reservoir and converging existing paths (the paths converge here because the paths use the reservoir wall to cross the river). The place holds a sense of historical permanence as the walker is surrounded by well established trees, the historic reservoir wall construction, remnants of a ruined stairway and the steadfast mountain.

Initially the author wanted to design the pavilion at this point, however the psychograms communicate an existing sense of peace and freedom and this place requires no interference.

### Physical Design

The design leaves this place relatively untouched. The ground merely needs retaining and securing post-construction of the *orange circle*.

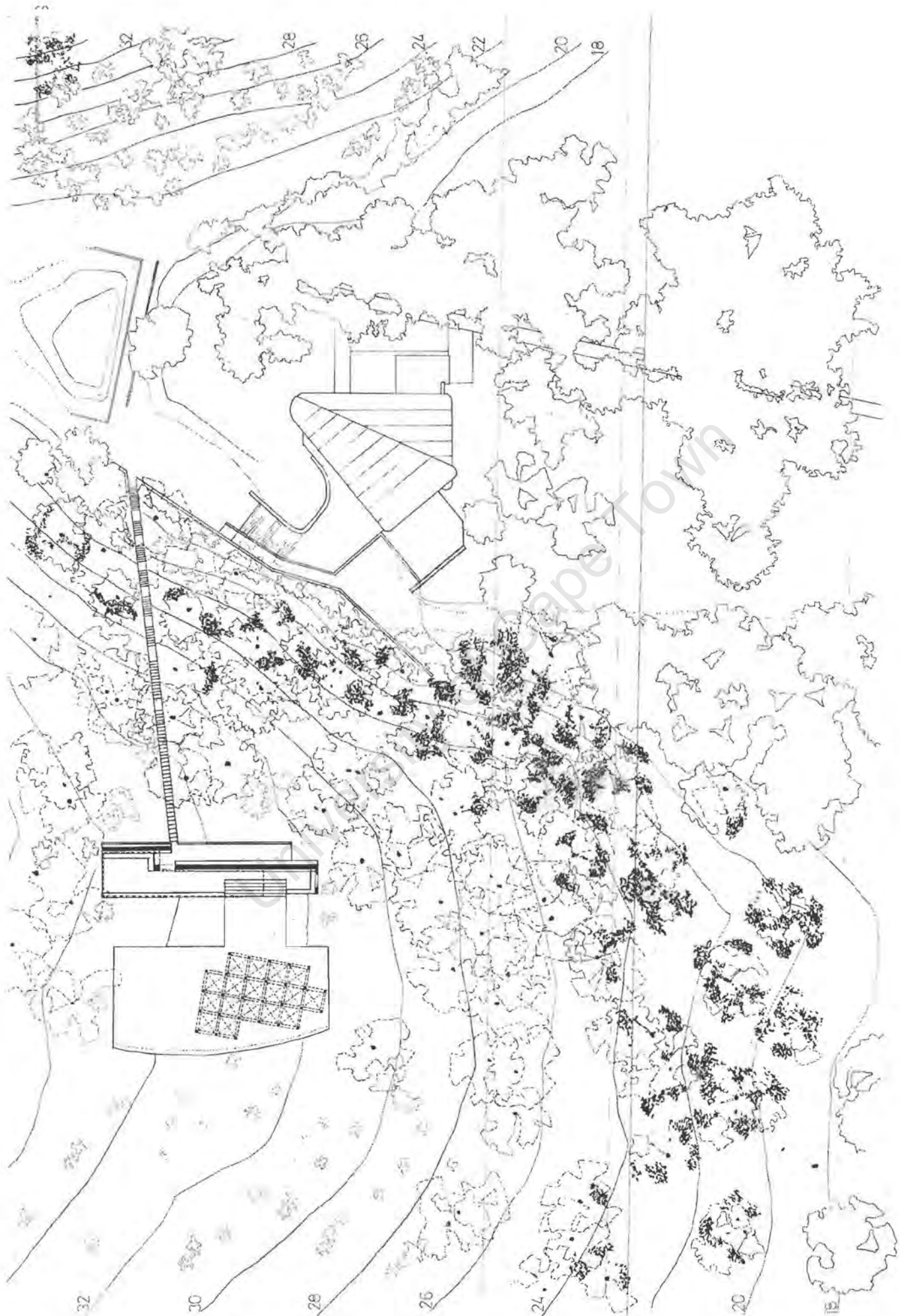
### Purpose

The design intention is for the walker to pause and absorb his 360 degree view of being engulfed by the resolute natural landscape.

### Interaction

The *blue table* is approached from the *orange circle* up a set of wide steps. The design tempts the walker to pause and catch his breath whilst taking in his first full view of the mountain.

If approached from the North, the walker who would be accustomed to the momentum of walking down the slope of the mountain, has to suddenly decide whether to take the steps down to the *orange circle* or the narrow pathway down the eastern valley slope. Approaching from this direction the design also tempts the walker to pause momentarily and absorb his surroundings.



## 5 \_ Grey Expanse

This point on the site proved to hold the biggest valency for the stimulation of the authors imagined reality and hence would possibly hold the same for the walker. This calls for the architecture to be severely enigmatic and to provoke the mental engagement of the walker. Open to the sky and holding permanent visual connection to the mountain this place holds a sense of weathered-wisdom, yet also of anonymity.

### Interaction

The design draws the walker into the *grey expanse* from any direction by pulling on his curiosity and hence his imagination. By virtue of the existing paths on the site, up to this point the walker has been allowed distant glimpses of the architecture of the *grey expanse* from any direction.

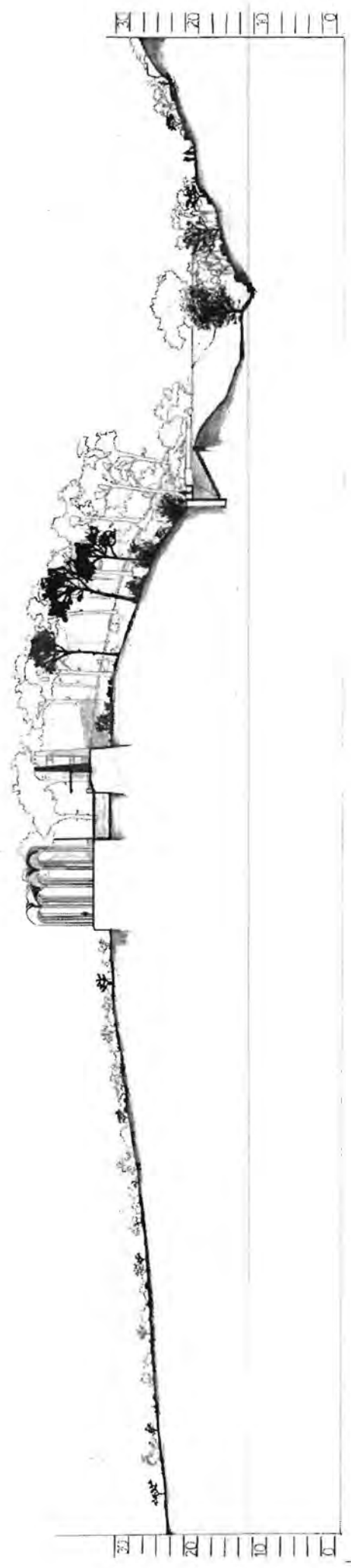
Approaching the *grey expanse* from the reservoir level the walker ascends narrow steps. Designed according to a comfortable stair ratio [ $T + 2R =$  approximately 640] the steps begin steeply and then ease off towards the top. The simply supported, pre-cast aggregate-screeded steps seem to hover by following just above the natural gradient of the land. The design of the steps encourages a solitary ascendance, by not allowing walkers to comfortably climb the 1100mm wide steps side-by-side and hence not allowing easy conversation to a tired climber.

The steps lead to a colossal, dry sandstone wall which can be seen from reservoir level. As opposed to the logical structural system of the dry sandstone wall construction of the *orange circle* below, the tectonics of the colossal wall are not at first apparent, causing the walker to wonder about its construction. The sandstone has been collected from site and it has a familiarity to its surroundings however its hidden tectonics and its sheer size give it a sense of being a foreign object in the natural landscape.

The wall is constructed to give it a ruinous feel. The stonework is mismatched in places to give hints to additions and alterations to the wall and non-structural elements are allowed to decay. The ruinous effect is designed to instill in the walker a sense of historical privilege; he is encouraged to approach and explore the 'ruin' because, according to What Time is This Place? humans have a tendency to claim ruins as part of their heritage and in doing so claim the a right to explore them. The walker feels like he is not trespassing.

Once up the steps the walker passes through the narrow full-height slit in the wall to a narrow, smooth screeded, concrete platform which holds onto the other side of the wall despite being structurally independent from the wall. The walker is exposed to a flood of

Figure 33: Upper Plan - Contour 30. North faces into the spine of this document.



light; finding himself on the edge of a huge clearing. The clearing is encircled by a choir of stone pines with large exposure to the mountain and the sky. This place is a dramatic change in environment from the enclosed environment in the valley below.

The walker is now granted an understanding of the tectonics of the wall; it become apparent that it is in fact a series of concrete buttresses and frames that are used to stabilise the wall. The walker is offered a rest on articulated concrete seats cantilevered into the thermal mass of the stone wall. The platform is protected from the wind or rain by a narrow cantilevered, articulated, reinforced concrete canopy.

The walker can then cross to the next platform, down four wide steps, to the arched-vaulted columns which stand eight meters high between himself and the full view of the clearing. The lime washed, square, concrete columns gesture to the surroundings by mimicking the height and canopy and autonomous ordering system of the stone pines, yet juxtapose their pre-existing uniformity and softness. The concrete floor platform is supported independently from the columns, with just a delicate band of brass separating the two structures indicating the delicate separation between horizontality and verticality.

The design carries a temple quality to it; provoking the walker to question, "What is being revered here?" The author recognises that temples or columns are naturally associated with politics, religion, worship, authority, respect, etc. The author however has removed all notions towards formal procession by the off-angle and off-centre positioning of the arched vaulted columns to prevent any design influence of the walker feeling subversive and controlled. The architecture encourages all imagined realities the walker may possibly engage with in his experience. The author hopes that the mental engagement of the walkers' questioning of the purpose of the architecture set in this place will encourage the walker to take in the physical reality of the place. The design encourages a contemplative manner; the walker engages with his surroundings rather than with himself.

The *grey expanse* is a cul-de-sac, not in the sense that the walker has to return the way he came because there is an alternative route, but in the sense that it is not a by-pass or a destination. Like someone would walk to the end of a hallway to look at a painting, the walker would visit the *grey expanse*.

Figure 34: Upper Section - Contour 30. North faces into the spine of this document.

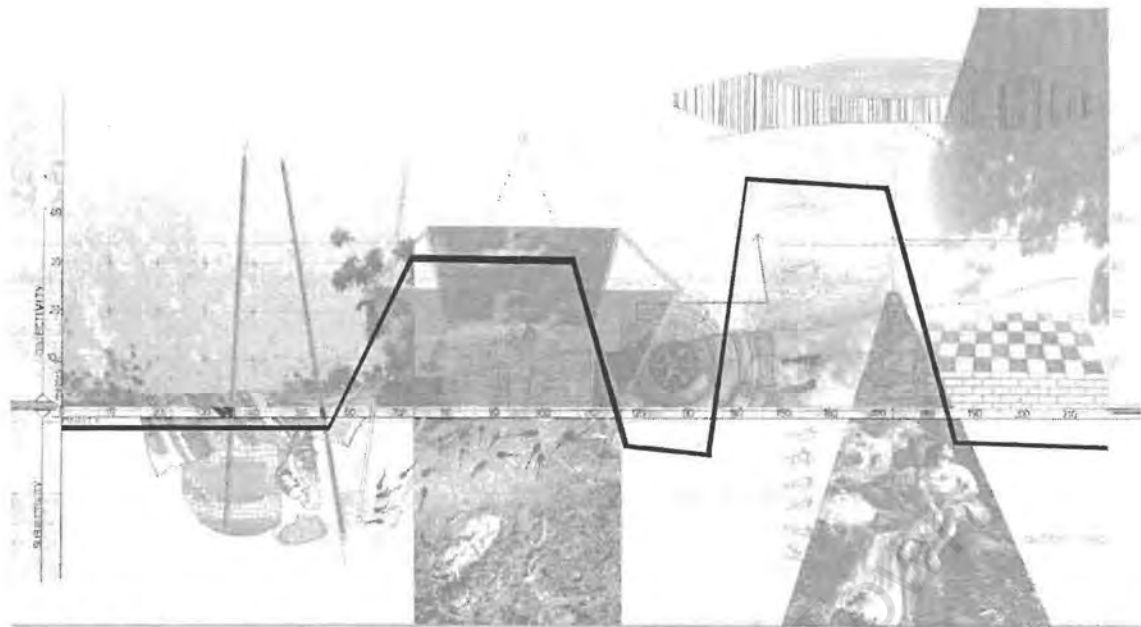


Figure 35: Authors self analysis of the design with respect to the imagined (subjective) versus physical (objective) responses.

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### **Reflection; the design and the psychogram**

The author recognises the tendency of the design to push and pull within the manifold of her imagined reality and the physical reality of the site. The adjacent image is a retrospective analysis of where within the manifold the physical design of this thesis sits.

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## Conclusion

Underpinned by a consistent site and objective, the author has slowly evolved her intention for this thesis and developed a new and evocative approach to the analysis of site and thus a new design methodology for this thesis.

Temporarily swayed off course by the author's own misguided interpretations of Christian Norberg-Schulz's poetic dimension, and the poetic descriptions of Martin Heidegger, the thesis had a slow, stunted and frustrated sketch design growth. However with the authors realisation that her intention for the thesis was on the wrong course, due to external critique and the writing of Juhani Pallasmaa, the intention of the thesis changed. From this point the thesis gained momentum with Yves Brunier inspiring the use of the technique of the (Coop Himmelblau termed) psychogram, a new approach to the drawing of site and the design was found.

Whether the analysis of the site and psychograms was accurate or not, the author acknowledges the positive influence the drawing of the psychograms had in the maturing of intention, the drawing out of the hidden dimensions of the site which made the thinking and making of the design component of the thesis clear, methodical and purposeful.

The physical design was well-considered and due to the relatively small scale of the architecture on the site, the author has been able to resolve the design from the concept down to the small physical design details.<sup>1</sup>

It is the authors opinion that the design has met its requirements of this thesis; by the local coming into contact with the architecture on site, the pre-existing elements of the site become apparent to the local and thus together with his imagined reality he can formulate a personal image of the site. This personal image of Table Mountain is put into his mental framework of references of Cape Town, and he can feel more attached to his city of Cape Town. The historical landscape of Table Mountain would thus become incrementally part of the day-to-day lives of Capetonians and become a piece of Cape Town's common heritage.

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that the complete set of design drawings, including concept, design, technology and detail drawings shall be presented during this thesis' formal examination

## Annotated Bibliography

- 1) Lynch, K. What Time is This Place? 1972. MIT Press.

Kevin Lynch's book deals with the human sense of time and place – a continuum of the mind intermingled with our internal biological rhythms and the external rhythms of real time. Lynch argues that this time-place theory affects the ways we view and change, conserve and destroy the physical environment of our cities. Lynch uses several case histories of cities transformed by time. Also discussed are the notions of place as an emblem and embodiment of past, present, and future time, the biology and psychology of time with its social aspects, the symbols of time, the aesthetics of environmental time, the proper management of change, and the relation between environmental and social change. A final chapter looks at all these themes from a general perspective. (<http://mitpress.mit.edu>)

- 2) Ed: Serageldin, I. Shugler, E. Martin-Brown, J. Historic Cities and Sacred Sites. 2001. International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

51 chapters organised into 8 parts on specific themes. Each part is accompanied by an editor's note highlighting the key points of each chapter. Part one looks at the philosophical and spiritual origins of historic cities and sacred sites. Part Two discusses governance, planning and management of cultural patrimony. Part Three discusses the risk in built heritage restoration. Part Four addresses urban and cultural heritage in pressing economic times, Part Five analyses authority's investment options. Part Six covers documentation, Part Seven looks at sacred places and cultural roots and Part Eight looks at experiences from NGO's and foundations.

- 3) Campfires in Cyberspace: Primordial Metaphors for Learning in the 21st Century by David D. Thornburg.

This internet based article is directed towards learning in the sphere of Cyberspace. The article discusses the primordial approach to learning which pre-dates civilisation which still applies today and suggests "guideposts in the primordial ooze of consciousness."

- 4) Norberg-Schulz, C. Architecture: Meaning and Place. 1988. Rizzoli. New York

This book comprises of twenty essays which chart the author's philosophy on architecture. Norberg-Schulz gives a well written synopsis on the philosophies of Heidegger which was instrumental to the understanding of Heidegger for this thesis. The themes are used were "The totality", "Meaning in Architecture" and "Heidegger's Thinking on Architecture"

- 5) Norberg-Schulz, C. Existence, Space and Architecture 1971. Studio Vista, London

"Norberg-Schulz provides new thinking on the question of existential space; proposing the idea that architectural space can be understood as the concretisation of the environmental

elements or images that form a necessary part of mans general orientation in the world. He hopes to establish a simple and useful key to the architectural totality. " Backleaf *ibid*

6) St John Wilson, C. Sigurd Lewerentz and the Dilemma of Classicism. 1989. The Architectural Association, London

Pictorially heavy publication of Lewerentz work from 1914 to 1969. Foreword by Peter and Alison Smithson

7) Todeschini, F. The Cultural Landscape: Signal Hill and the lower slopes of Table Mountain & Devils Peak in the Table Valley Amphitheatre. 2000, UCT

Report prepared for the Cape Peninsular National Park Management. The report gives a historical background by breaking down the descriptions into four periods. The report delves largely into the notable elements of the cultural landscape with special attention paid to the issue of the pine trees on Table Mountain.

8) Site development plan for the wash house precinct of deer park (February 2004) Draft3. Prepared for: SAN Parks. Compiled by a consortium consisting of MLH Architects & Planners, OVP Landscape Architects, and Ninham Shand

9) McEnery, C. An architecture with a soul: a search for meaning in architecture through an exploration of the works of Peter Zumthor. Presented to School of Architecture and Planning, EBE, UCT in partial fulfilment of the requirement of the History and Theory of Architecture Course

10) Vergunst, N. Hoerikwaggo : Images of Table Mountain : South African National Gallery Iziko Museums of Cape Town project, November 2000-April 2001. South Africa National Gallery 2000

11) Jacques, M, ed. Yves Brunier: Landscape Architect. 1996. Basel: Boston BirkHauser Verlag, France

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12) Pallasmaa, J. The Thinking Hand: existential and embodied thinking in architecture. 2009. Wiley, Chichester, UK

Theories and ideas belonging to Juhani Pallasmaa exploring the role of the senses, mind and body in experiences of the existential. A large contingent to the book is of the role of the hand in hand-drawing to discover hidden dimensions of the subconscious.

- 13) Fieldhouse, K. Harvey, S. Hopkins, J. The Cultured Landscape: Designing the environment in the 21st century. 2005, Routledge, London

An assessment of the philosophy of landscape which collectively forms a new approach to creative design. With regards to this thesis this book was useful to bridge gaps in landscape architectural discourse.

- 14) Lurie, D. Images of Table Mountain. 2006. Bell-Roberts, Cape Town, South Africa  
An unedited photographic commentary on the dichotomous symbolism of table mountain. Powerful Black and white images.

- 15) Goldblatt, D. David Goldblatt: South African intersections. 2005. Prestel, Munich, London

Published in conjunction with the exhibition David Goldblatt: Intersection. Book includes interviews, essays and many images of art, interest, photographs etc pertaining to Table Mountain.

- 16) Zumthor, P. Thinking Architecture. 1999. Basel, Boston, Birkhauser

The author expresses his motivation in designing buildings that speak to understanding which possess a presence and personality. The book was used to gain an understanding of Zumthor's philosophy on architecture and the Thermal Baths in Vals.

- 17) Edward Hopper Paintings.

Images sourced on the internet. "Hopper: Power in the everyday things."

- 18) Saito, Y. Carlo Scarpa. 1997. TOYO Shuppan, Japan

Personal description of the authors visit to the Brion Cemetery including interviews with some Brion family members. Heavily illustrated and well described – excellent inspiration.

- 19) Scarpa, C. The Other City: the architect's working method as shown by the Brion Cemetery in San Vito d' Altivol. 1989. Ernst & Sohn, Berlin

Scarpa's account of his design of the Brion Cemetery.

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