

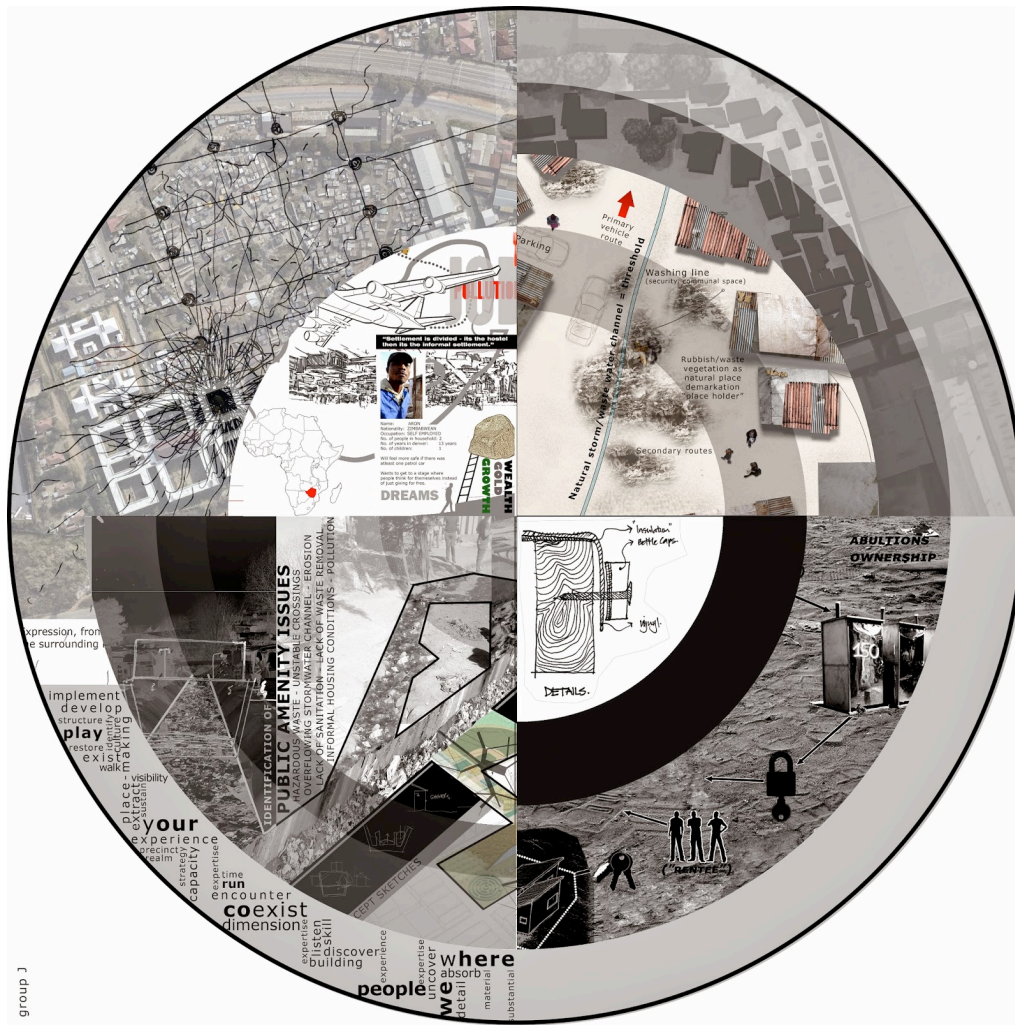
UJ UNIT 2 – Quarter 2 : Assignment 4

UJ UNIT 2 INTRODUCTION TO STUDIO AT DENVER

DESKTOP ANALYSIS, DOCUMENTATION & COMPILATION OF EXISTING DATA

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Group 3 Socio-Spatial graphic (www.studioATDenver.blogspot.com)

REFLECTIONS ON UNIT 2 QUARTER 1 2015

The projects carried out in Quarter 1 have introduced you to various sections of Johannesburg with the aim of developing a deeper understanding for context and the socio-spatial dynamics of a neighbourhood beyond the easily evident – to uncover the energy that makes up a place – with people and community at the core.

The assignments aimed to encourage you to consider the relationship between systems, infrastructure and people. Through the Habraken reading, you have also been expected to consider individual and collective needs and how these are mediated through built form.

You have been encouraged to pay particular attention to levels of the built environment as well as to detect the methods of negotiation that happen in the built environment. It is hoped that you now think in terms of levels, agents and decision-making processes in every situation where you have to understand a context from the urban level to the building level.

INTRODUCTION TO UNIT 2 QUARTER 2 2015

It is now time in the process of this year, and in line with the intentions of UJ UNIT 2, to increase your knowledge of the concepts that we have touched upon in Quarter 1.

In Quarter 2, and through the set assignments, you will be asked to pay particular attention to levels of the built environment as well as to detect the methods of negotiation that happen in a selected area of study – as well as how that negotiation is facilitated (or maybe in some places, hindered) by the spatial and structural qualities of the area.

You are asked to reflect on the lower levels of the environment which are under the direct control of groups or individuals and reflect on the concepts of levels and agency.

You will be asked to develop a broad interpretation of Open Building – Open Thinking/Open Design/Open City, Permanent/Temporary, Long Life/Short Life, Higher Level/Lower Level, Shared/Individual, Entangled/Disentangled, Interconnected/Independent, Control/Chance, Planned/Unplanned. Again, this relates strongly to facilitating increased agency in the built environment.

Quarter 2 will see UJ UNIT2 engaging in collaborations with the FADA architecture STUDIO AT DENVER initiative, with an international visiting professor, but also strongly linking up with other design departments within FADA in a community engagement project.

At the end of Quarter 2, you will not only have deepened your understanding of concepts and applications of Open Building through tools used in achieving Open Building (working with Tissue Models and designing Supports), but you will also have become more competent in neighbourhood analysis (with an Open Building perspective), documentation, representation and urban design.

REPRESENTATION: ASSIGNMENT 4

This initial assignment will help set the scene, and introduce the site for Assignment 5 which will be a “How to design Open Buildings”; a 2 week intensive, with Prof Stephen Kendall from the USA.

With these reflections in mind, Assignment 4 will see you undertaking a critical desktop study of Denver, the 2014 Studio AT Denver and relevant supporting information. From here you will synthesize the relevant information sets that make up the socio-spatial nature of this neighborhood and re-represent this into a more accessible and synthesized format.

BACKGROUND TO AFORMAL TERRAIN (AT) IN DENVER

Sections are extracts from the 2014 brief by conducted by AT (www.studioATdenver.blogspot.com)

Aformal terrain (AT) is a collaborative and collective architecture/urbanism/landscape laboratory which closely engages with complex urban conditions. AT focuses on integrating resources and skills towards promoting awareness and generating appropriate responses to the context of rapidly changing and often Unstable contemporary urban phenomena. This approach is underpinned by people-driven methodologies for engagement, research, design responses and planning strategies. AT directs this purpose to three areas of action:

Intends to cultivate long-term sustainable relationships with the networks generated through the teaching-and-learning studios. Real Projects refers to this intention - to identify potential roles for professionals and spatial practitioners through on-the-ground collaborative processes – assisting community action plans and governmental upgrade plans through providing relevant spatial and design services fitted to contexts of informal

The use of the term ‘Aformal’ frames a critical investigation (immersion) into complex spatial, social, cultural, economic and physical urban scenarios as an ‘in-between’ condition, or terrain. This direction is rooted in working with, and, within urban informal settlements with a focus on incremental in-situ upgrading and organic urban growth – interrogating current polarised definitions of the ‘formal’ and ‘informal’, and the often confused interpretations between legality and illegality.

Each Studio (project, exhibition, publication etc) is aimed at identifying and interconnecting multiple role-players (actors). This occurs through an immersive, collaborative and co-produced process of engagement, establishing a platform to enable trans-disciplinary exchange and capacitation, consequently activating public, private and community joint efforts.

This trajectory of critical engagement builds on methods and intentions developed through earlier formative collaborative platforms; informalStudio: Ruimsig (2011)ⁱ and informalStudio: Marlboro South (2012)ⁱⁱ. The core underpinnings, purpose and relevance of AT stems from and builds on the development of, and involvement in, these preceding studios.

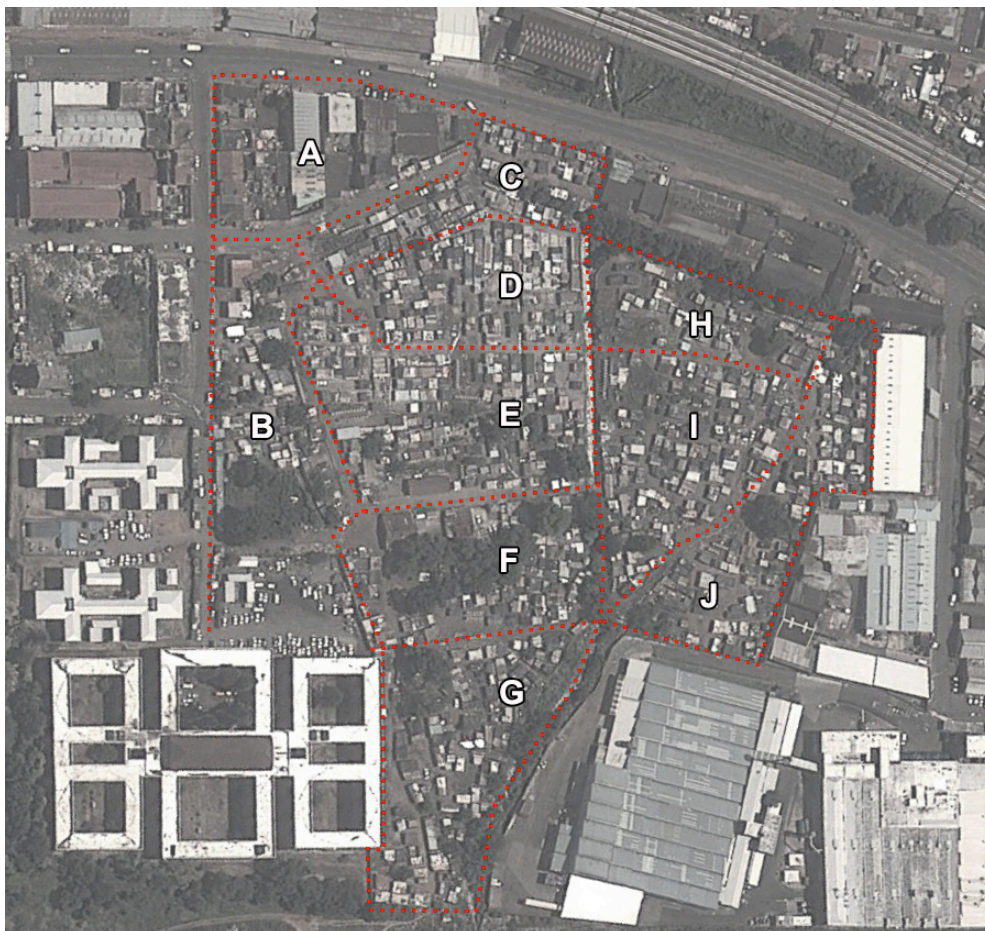
DENVER

Sections are extracts from the 2014 brief by conducted by AT (www.studioATdenver.blogspot.com)

Denver is a light industrial zone located along the eastern edge of a broader industrial belt spanning the southern extent of Johannesburg's CBD. It sits adjacent to the historic east/west gold mining axis (known as the 'main reef'). This industrial belt (buffer) is embedded into the surrounding urban fabric, simultaneously woven and disconnected by multiple forces: mine dumps, railways, arterials, freeways and storm water channels. Over the past 15 years residual industrial lots and open spaces have become appropriated as living environments affording well located shelter within the inner city.

Denver Hostels and other surrounding settlements emerged, accompanying the city's development, to accommodate migrant workers arriving in the city, controlled by previous apartheid planning approaches. The numerous hostels in the broader township vary dynamically in terms of spatial and social conditions. Such differences are largely informed by management and leadership. Denver (township/informal settlement) contains minimal established residential areas within its confines – The closest larger established ('formal') residential suburb is Malvern East, to the North. Other nearby townships include; Benrose and Jeppestown to the east, City Deep and Heritodale to the south and Gables to the east.

The larger Denver area sits well connected to various mobility lines; the M2 motorway, Main Reef road, The railway line and taxi routes. From this is can be considered an area with high levels of accessibility, mobility and visibility. Through these well-developed transport networks and as an industrial node offering employment, many people transit the CBD and surrounds en route to jobs in Denver and surrounding industrial areas. Denver can be considered as both a regional destination and transit point taking the provision of employment and other services (manufacturing, motor repairs etc.) into account.



DENVER, JOHANNESBURG

The fabric of Denver comprises of mainly older industrial stock, many of these large factories and warehouses are disused. The area developed rapidly from 1920-1940 and much of the disuse is due to the fact that most buildings are now either unsuitable or less competitive for contemporary industrial uses.

Denver has a growing demand for housing, the effects of this imbalance of people and housing provision/access can be seen in various conditions of the adaptation of spatial scenarios in the area; ever-growing informal settlement/s and appropriation/inhabitation (illegally) of nearby vacant shops and warehouses. Further to these conditions, the proximity and relationship to the nearby hostels and surrounding social housing developments suggest noteworthy, both historical and emergent, living conditions as informants to perceptions and aspirations towards the provision of services and housing.

RELEVANCE

Sections are extracts from the 2014 brief by conducted by AT (www.studioATdenver.blogspot.com)

The following themes were identified as key concepts for the 2014 Studio **AT** Denver; each theme has a potential scale and timeframe considerations i.e. *short-medium-long term strategies at dwelling scale, interface scale, system scale, settlement scale, regional scale etc.* Within each of these key themes the following (more quantitative and qualitative) considerations have been identified as sub-focuses offered here as guideline to begin collating your research:

CONTEXT

- Scenario Typologies (*open lot, walled stand, residual space, unused, abandoned, vacant*)
- Narratives (*culture, heritage, history*)
- Community/ies (leadership and people groups)

SPATIAL/PHYSICAL/SOCIAL

- Wellbeing/Healthscapes (*A rhizomatic healthscape is defined as non-fixed health provision which minimises obduracy (inflexibility) and follows open building theory (Habraken), and extending it to design scales around and above architecture.*)
- Lifestyle
- Shared Space (*public, common, open*)

SYSTEMS/NETWORKS

- Mobility
- Opportunity
- Ecological/ies
- Services
- Hierarchies (*tribal, leadership etc*)

INTERFACES/THRESHOLDS

- Access, permeability, codes
- Opportunity

UNDERCURRENTS/THREATS

- Community Knowledge
- Surrounding Conditions

ASPIRATIONS/PERCEPTIONS

- Community objectives
- Governmental objectives (*city, national*)
- Long-term engagement

THE PROCESS

Your task is to study Denver and its immediate (and relevant) surrounds through an intense desk-top study and re-represent the complex socio-spatial nature of this neighborhood through a series of drawings/maps/diagrams/graphics in an easily accessible format to future collaborators on this project (community, local/national government, private sector spatial designer, students e.t.c)

This is a studio-based group assignment where you will prepare base information, while identifying the elements (physical, spatial or systemic) that are deemed of value to be retained in any future proposals.

Groups will be required to submit digitised versions of the various outputs on easily navigable cd submissions including pdf, cad, movies, scans etc. Special instruction regarding digital archived and raw material/data submission will be issued during the course of the studio, please note:

- A Google Drive/Dropbox will be set up where you can access the raw data from the 2014 Studio **AT** Denver.
- The 2014 Community Hand Over Information Packs will be made available.
- The 2014 Studio **AT** Denver brief is attached to this brief
- The website www.studioATdenver.blogspot.com has much information from the process.
- Supplementary Information. (e.g *Census Data, GCRO, National Policy e.t.c*)

OUTCOMES

You are required to compile a concise, albeit comprehensive, compilation of information:

- **1 x Accurate Digital Base Map** (Revit, Sketchup or CAD) (digital)
- **1 x Infographic Poster of Denver** which introduces the area to someone who has never been there before, predominantly through images and minimal text (A1/A0)
- **1 x well-designed 'Hand Book/Field Guide'** of the area which showcases the various socio-spatial layers that make up Denver - That aims to introduce the area in an easily-accessible format and that focuses on the general structure of the area, its people e.t.c (A4/A3)
- **1 x Open Building Analysis** of the base maps showing, in your judgement, what needs to be retained as part of the support level of the neighbourhood and what can be demolished or altered (A1/A0)
- **1 x Personal Reflection** on this process with select images from the group work to be uploaded on your personal blogs before the week of the 13th April 2015 (300 words per person)

All of the above is to be presented in studio, to Prof Kendall on Monday 13th April at 11.00. Site visits will follow after this exercise.

ASSESSMENT

Your submissions will be assessed based on the following criteria:

- How well you have used the available data in compiling a comprehensive set of material for the project – the level of depth achieved in the investigation
- How well the material is accessed and how you have used graphics, text, images in the poster and booklet
- The level of detail and accuracy in the base plans
- To what extent have you been able to identify the elements (physical or spatial) that are deemed of value to be retained in any future proposals and how well this is presented in graphic format – visual style and clarity
- To what extent have you used lessons learnt in the assignment of the first quarter and carried these through to your approach in this project – how you have engaged with concepts introduced, reading material prescribed
- The quality of the online submissions and the studio submissions and presentations, based on innovation and originality of your response to the brief

ⁱ informalStudio: Ruimsig (<http://2610south.co.za/gallery24.php>)

Teaching staff: Thorsten Deckler (principal at 26'10 south Architects), Alexander Opper (director of architecture master's programme, UJ), Lone Poulsen (architect and urban planner at ACG Architects), Melinda Silverman (urban design theory, UJ). \

Ruimsig Community: The community of the Ruimsig informal settlement, including Dan Moletsane, Dingaana Matia, the community leadership and the eight 'community architects': Irene Mohale, Rosalina Mphuti, Julia Mashaba, Mildred Thapeni, Albert Masibigiri, Jemina Mokoena, Watson Sibara, and Alfred Mthunzi.

UJ Students: Dewald Badenhorst, Dean Boniface, Dirk Coetser, Dana Gordon, Zakeeya Kalla, Daniel Lyonga, Julian Manshon, Matthew Millar, Karabo Mokaba, Jarryd Murray, Trisha Parbhoo, Sean Pillan, Taswald Pillay, Miguel Pinto, John Saaiman, Salome Snyman.

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ii informalStudio: Marlboro South (<http://www.informalstudio.co.za/>)

Teaching staff: Thorsten Deckler (principal at 26'10 south Architects), Anne Graupner (principal at 26'10 south Architects), Alexander Opper (director of architecture master's programme, UJ), Eric Wright (3rd year lecturer, UJ), Suzette Grace (3rd year lecturer, UJ), Claudia Morgado (3rd year lecturer, UJ). Support staff (UJ): Melinda Silverman, Suzette Grace, Leon Krige, Amira Osman, Annemarie Wagener, Absalom Makhubu, Dr. Finzi Saidi

Marlboro South Community: The community of the Marlboro South informal settlement, including the Marlboro Warehouse Crisis Committee (MWCC): Charles Gininda, Thapelo Mogane, August Tswai, Maluleke David, Loveson Motlapa, and the community architects: Winnie Ngubane, Queenie Nkosi, Happiness Nkosi, Khanyisile Songca, Fezeke, Baliswa Mahono, Khanyi Ncube, Nonhando Madondo, Thabo Masenyetse, Phili Thafeni, Karabo Mokaba, Promise Nxumalo, Agnes Lekgotla, Mapule Lekgotla, Anna Mathibedi, Melissa, Jabulani Dwiazawa, Thulie Shabalala, Wonderboy Butheklezi, Andries Tzumbo, Asanda Magqabi, Ayanda Libala,

UJ Students: Francois Mercer, Elaine Engelbrecht, Francisco Hamilton Alves, David Cloete, Rick van Heerden, Shani Fakir, Nakedi Nkoana, Lance HO Hip, Brent Proudfoot, Renee van Rooyen, Dylan Watkins with Steffen Fischer, Jolien Dreyer, Eugene Ncube, Naeem Kooreyshi, Katrin Tenim, Martin Bam, Philip van As, Debbie Pienaar, Laura Strydom, Katty Harris, Dewald Coetzer, Jurgen Rubirske, Lemohang Sekhoto, Shyam Patel, Joseph Matebane, Ashlea Weaver, Calvin Copeling, Basil Moutsatsos, Nhlamulo Ngobeni, Samantha Trask, Jaco Jonker, Lungelo Zulu, Alex Verissimo, Grant Woodward, Jaques Wienekus, Motebang Matselela, Sachin Mistry, Caitlin Bell, Robin Theobald, Keron Muller, Michelle Jordaan, Thabiso Siwana, Gareth Jones, Marc Sherrat, Glen Jordan, Lucille Jacobs, Tlale Masiu, Hanle van Huyssteen

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