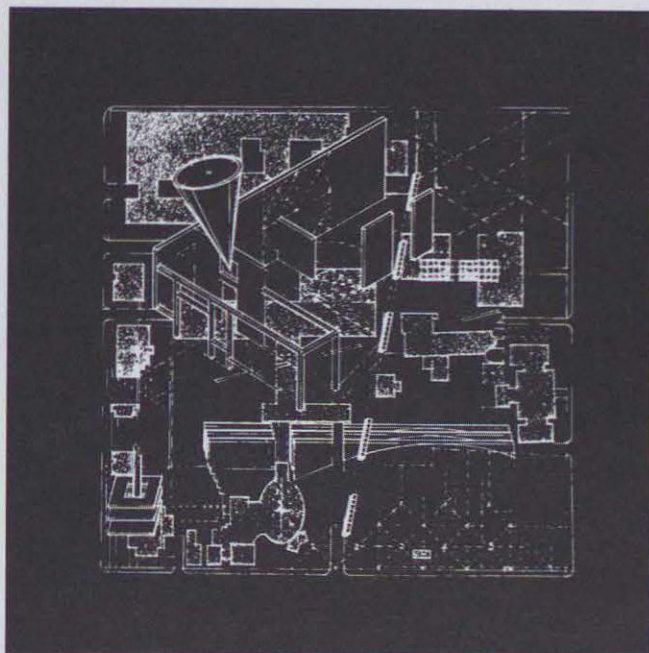


BRENDA WEBSTER

THE READING OF PLACE

"...confusion exists ... because we observe an infinite variety of cultural products, but rarely apprehend the universal human processes by which they are created."¹



Re-engagement of process and product is the focus of this work. The underlying assumption of this re-engagement is that "the function of being a means is not disjointed from the function of being an end."² Choice (conscious or unconscious) of a design process is inexorably linked to the architectural resolution. By shifting the focus from product to process, greater architectural understanding emerges. Process orientation aids in re-examination of architectural design conventions. The product grows out of the process and thus one is actively engaged in the present instead of focusing exclusively on some future product. This process approach aids in the suspension of preconceptions and external influences, allowing for the widest perception of reality and the greatest opportunity for innovation.³

"...Our appreciation of an object has to do with our appreciation of the processes that the latter has evidently undergone."⁴

For the purposes of this investigation, process is defined as a systematic series of actions, motions, or events.⁵ Process is revealed by the gap between what has been and what might be. This gap is bridged by substitutions, oppositions, reversals, inversions, and fragmentations. This Bridging is further facilitated by fading in and out between imagination to reality. Play between the subjective and objective worlds creates a lateral rather than linear approach to design.

1 John Blacking, *Process and Product in the Human Society*, (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1969), p. 5.

2 A. N. Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1929), p. 495.

3 The particular methodology used in this thesis is elaborated on in the section referred to as Creative Evolution.

4 Michael Benedikt, *For an Architecture of Reality*, (New York: Lumen Books, 198), p. 44.

5 Dissection of this systematic series of actions through drawing, exposes the nature of one process.



who will themselves be offering a short mandatory elective course at TUNA this summer entitled "how to put away your toys." May I present, Ladies and Gentlemen, Tony Moldy. Tony Moldy.

CHORUS: (whistles Carpenter's song, "We've only just begun" as TONY MOLDY enters).

(TONY MOLDY waggles his huge moustache in recognition of audience applause. He sits).

STAGE MANAGER: Our next critic needs no introduction—

GARY (in shrill voice from offstage): God Damn right you'll introduce me! I'll cut off your arm! You are right handed, aren't you?

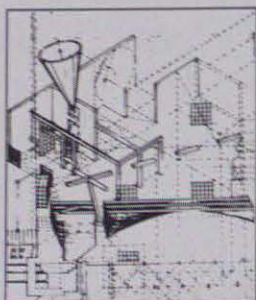
STAGE MANAGER: —But I give you TUNA's Chairman Garish Ballsaside, known lovingly by student and fellow administrator alike as simply "Gary," Gary hails originally from Abyssinia... descended from a long line of Kings and masterbuilders... The blood of untold thousands on his hands... among his most memorable achievements... but perhaps you've heard of the Ziggurat of Ur?... Please put your hands together for the Chairman... the one, the only, Chairman Gary Ballsaside! GARY!

(CHORUS plays kazoo snake charmer music).

GARY (enters, dressed in princely garb, borne aloft by two CHORUS members dressed in black): Jesus Christ! Be careful! Drop me and I'll be feeding you to my geese tomorrow!

STAGE MANAGER (as CHORUS member sets out chair): Our next and final critic, of solid South African stock, currently hails from M.U.T.T. where she is professor of architecture. Here

OPPORTUNITY IN LIMITATIONS



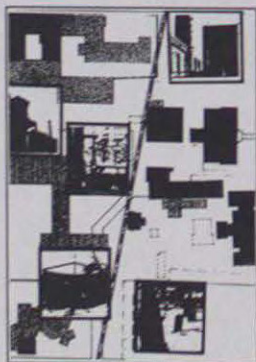
The TUNS campus, a self-contained block of buildings with no clear organization, is the chosen testing ground. The design process strategy is to develop a series of drawings that come from and inform the site.

Two simultaneous explorations are carried out on the site: a determination of the critical path of movement through the campus, and a spatial interpretation of the historical, physical, and programmatic layers of the site. The purpose of this approach is to foster continual play between analytical and intuitive investigations.

Analytical studies find the greatest density of movement forming a diagonal line running east-west through the site. This sets up an indication as to where growth might occur. The strategy works with the existing patterns of movement. A pathway runs through the campus, linking all the entrances to existing buildings and inviting future expansion to occur alongside. The process of remembering and drawing all the existing ways of proceeding through the campus becomes instrumental in producing the chosen course of action; process has become product.

The intuitive exploration focuses on a perception from memory of the relative importance of the architectural landscape. The drawing highlights the integration of layers of architecture and landscape over time. The layering of a perceptual interpretation of the site with a 'real' site plan, plays on the line between perception and reality. The opposition and interplay of these two layers allows for many readings of the same site.

PERCEPTION + INVESTIGATION



As a plan for the site is developed, a simultaneous understanding of the elements of the site is nurtured. The next layer of growth is developed along the new pathway, which acts as a spine for all existing buildings and future additions. Snapshots describe the

distinct areas of the site. The campus site is perceived as having five significant markers:

- The cemetery
- The oval gymnasium
- The engineering tools as outdoor sculpture
- The loading areas
- The visually rich rooftops.

At each site chosen for development there is a play between the nature of the markers and the nature of the required programmatic growth. For example, the cemetery location (residence for the dead) is developed with student quarters (residence for the living.) As one travels along the east-west route, the architectural additions both unify the site and describe its changing nature.

CREATIVE EVOLUTION



Creative evolution is at the heart of the 'process as product' exploration. Through a series of shifts and fragmentations of what is perceived in the existing context a new 'text' is developed.

The chameleon nature of the new buildings is meant to connect back to and simultaneously stand apart from the previous layers of history and the additive nature of the buildings already on the site. The drawings that follow are transformed to describe the experience of movement through the site. As the focus of this design grew out of a realization that the TUNS campus required both more space and a unifying element, the new path/spine provides for both these needs. The diagonal pathway both separates and unifies. Drawing on the analogy of the site markers (snapshots) as 'site plan', the newly recognized path is overlaid onto the markers as the first stage of transformation. Compression of images as they might register in the mind after having travelled through the path. This idea parallels the next stage in the design process, that is, exploration of the path to discover how the next layer might be added. This second transformation abstracts the original markers sufficiently to allow for an interpretation of the existing architectural language. Process dissection has created a series of architectural fragments which have their own life, both distant and distinct from their origins. Traces of both the subjective and objective worlds exist in this series. The original markers have evolved to a degree where they now provide cues for a new set of architectural pieces. Horizontal expansion brings the works back onto the site and stretches them to strengthen as much of the new path as possible.



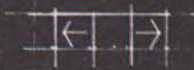
Diagonal +
Horizontal
split



Vertical
Condensation

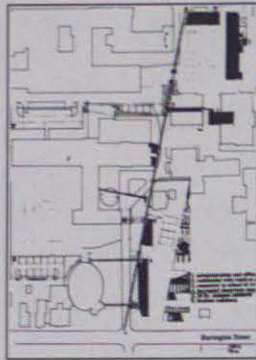


Horizontal
Expansion





A CLOSE-UP VIEW



Creative evolutionary change is a by-product of a process approach that sees perception as a tool for conception. In this project the architectural elements along the pathway that were seen as significant to the experience of the campus became the datum for the new layer.

at TUNA she serves as a junked professor: Julia Mindfart. Professor Mindfart, as external critic, helps to establish our school's credibility in the wider academic community, credibility we desperately need if our degrees are to mean anything at all. Ladies and Gents, a warm round of applause to a truly cutting critic, Professor Julia Mindfart (exit STAGE MANAGER).

(Enter JULIA, with bushy eyebrows intact, carrying chainsaw and clenching a pipe in her jaw. She acknowledges applause with wry expression, sits, FARTS, acknowledges audience again, and falls asleep).

(Stage is in semi-darkness. CRITICS consult quietly among themselves as F.L.L.M. clumsily sets up his presentation. Suddenly each critic reaches down and turns on spotlight, pinning the obviously unprepared and now dazed and blinded F.L.L.M. to the board).

TONY: Gary... Julia-I mean Professor Mindfart-I mean Julia-I'd like to introduce you to Fielding Lloyd Mellish-

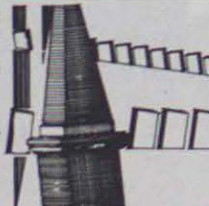
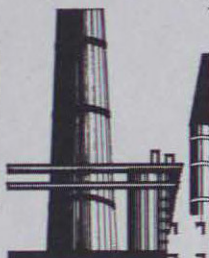
F.L.L.M.: That's with two LLs!

TONY: --with two LLs. I'm Fielding's advisor this year, but for the previous 72 months, he worked with professor Fritz Hemandhaw, presently on sabbatical. I think it's fair to say, isn't it Fielding, than you learned your basic stance from Fritz?

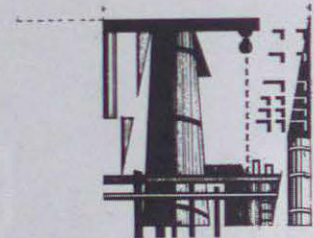
F.L.L.M. (chest caved in, chin stuck out, hands on hips, trousers hiked up



Objects on site



diagonal split of the path



Compress - as objects might register in the mind after a walk through the path