

CS STUDIO ARCHITECTS

ZOLANI CENTRE MULTI - PURPOSE CENTRE

LOCATION: NYANGA, WESTERN CAPE

DATE: 1997 - 2002

BACKGROUND

Located 15 kilometres from the centre of Cape Town, Nyanga is one of the city's oldest townships. It is also one of the most violent communities in the Western Cape, with poor housing conditions, high unemployment and a legacy of gangsterism. The Zolani Centre building is located in Nyanga opposite the bus and taxi rank. The environment is characterised by informal trading of household goods, clothing, fruit and vegetables, with areas designated for animal slaughtering and where traders braai meat on open fires. Thousands of commuters use these crossroads daily, as the location is central to most townships and places of work.

Zolani Centre was originally built in the 1950's by the then black local authority as a community centre. Unlike facilities of its kind through South Africa, it survived and functioned well in providing a community service. Throughout the apartheid years local groups organised sports, recreation, culture and social activities at the centre. Our original brief was to upgrade the old facility with a budget of R1.2 million, which was inadequate.

Through efforts driven by the Nyanga RDP Forum and CS Studio architects, more funds were raised through the Provincial Department of Social Services. The Bavarian Government in Germany also raised the final budget for the reconstruction.

DESIGN

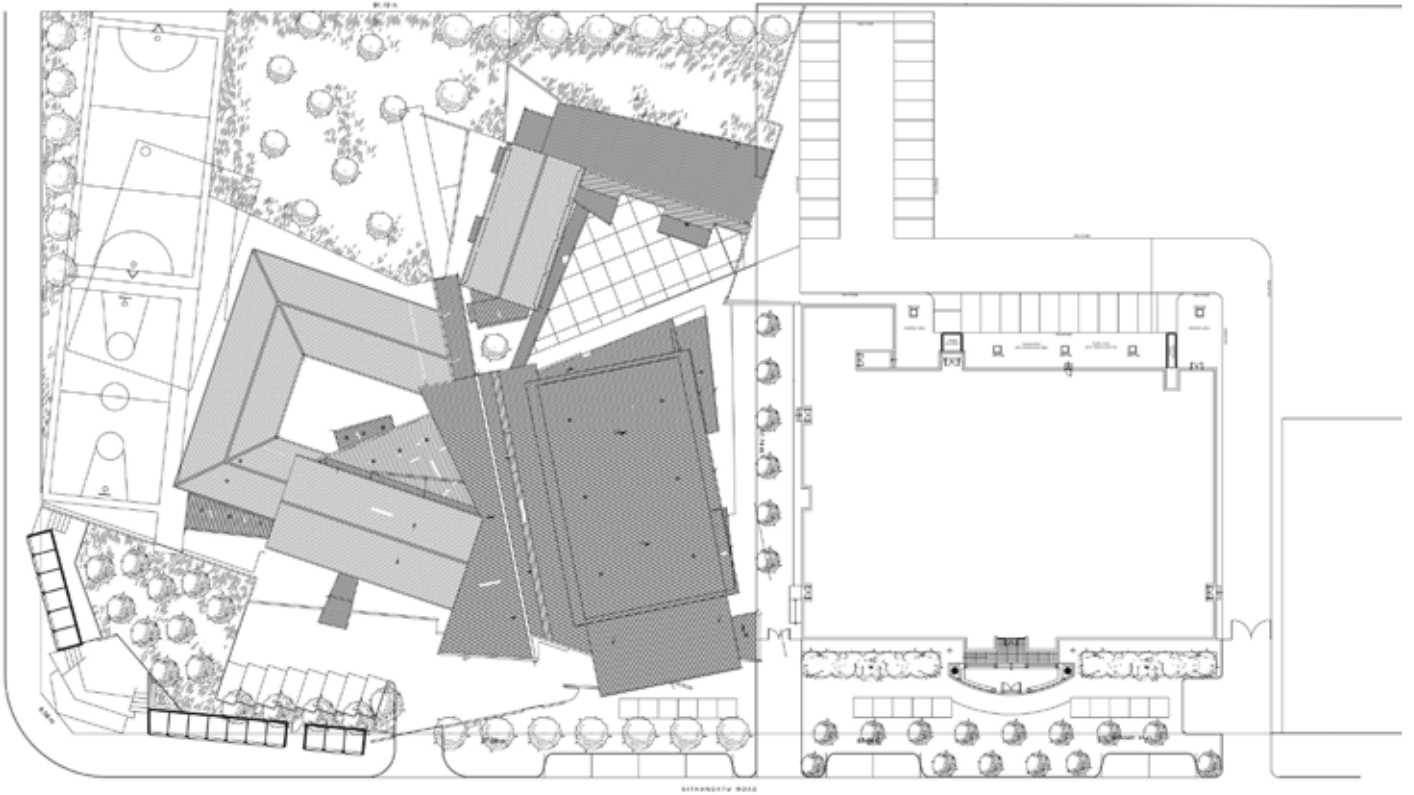
The design was developed over a number of years during a consultative process. It was co-coordinated by the

Nyanga Reconstruction and Development Programme Forum (RDP). All users and community role players were invited to participate in the public design meetings. The design went through many changes until all role players were content with the outcome.

In plan, the building sets up a tension between the angled layout of its new section which is juxtaposed to the rectilinear urban grid of the old building and the township. The pathways that exist within the townships and which creates "in between" spaces which allows for social interaction, served as the main source of inspiration for the design. Thus, by setting up 'pathway systems' and ordering the spaces around these systems, we managed to integrate the old building with the new. The main foyer 'street' therefore creates a pathway from the south entrance to the north exit, at times becoming internal and then external. It therefore serves as the space that brings together and mediates the old and the new on the inside as well as the outside. In some places it cuts through the old and in other areas, it allows the old façade to have a presence, therefore reminding one of the past. There is thus a constant play between what was and what is. Concrete fin walls with angled openings knit these aspects together, creating thresholds between spaces.

Since the completion in 2001, thousands of people receive pensions and grants at Zolani. Arts and culture programmes bring international stars and functions to Nyanga. Indoor sports and recreation produce world class athletes and soccer stars.

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SITE PLAN



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SOUTH ELEVATION



EAST ELEVATION



WEST ELEVATION



NORTH ELEVATION