



NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

FACULTY OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE

**THE ROLE OF ZIMBABWEAN ART IN THE FABRIC AND FORM
OF ZIMBABWE'S ARCHITECTURE:**

PROPOSED G.SILUNDIKA AND XIMEX MALL REGENERATION

by

Ndebele Qhubekani

N0127041R

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The formative processes involved in architectural design are unique to an architect, but often influenced by their experiences and education. This research suggests an approach to design that uses the creative visual arts of painting, sculpture and artifacts of Zimbabwe as a means to draw inspiration for designs that will essentially embody what can be considered a uniquely Zimbabwean architectural aesthetic.

Contemporary trends of architecture in Zimbabwe have shown a growing trend towards an affinity for globalised architectural style, where architects tend to follow examples of architecture being practiced in other countries, with the consequence that it bears no ethnographic significance to the local population. The alternative trend seen is where architects tend to pursue a somewhat shallow representation of heritage in Zimbabwe's architecture, making it identifiable as Zimbabwean, but subjective in aesthetic quality. This stems from the cultural disparities inherent in any societies which hinder a general populace from objectively ascribing to an aesthetic that is based on any one ethnic group.

The solution therefore proposed in this research lies in adopting art as the influencing or inspiring starting and working point of a design approach. This interdisciplinary approach has worked in many places around the world from 15th century Europe to China and India, as well as being relatively put into practice in South Africa and other areas nearer to Zimbabwe. Art has the advantage of embodying the culture of a people as well as being dynamic and free of functional boundaries that allow the artist to express himself to the extent that an architect may not. Here aesthetic possibilities are explored to the fullest before they can be integrated into pragmatic architectural designs.

The design proposal for a regeneration of George Silundika Street and Ximex Mall in Harare's C.B.D outlined here looks to apply many of the concepts explored in the research exercise to illustrate the application of Art inspired architecture in Zimbabwe. It draws on the symbolic messages of sculptural works by local artists and illustrates the message of family and unity in the composition of space and form as well as the use of structure in design. Concepts such as the integration of Art into the urban landscape are also considered.

This research therefore does not seek to look for the art in architecture, but rather to explore the role that Zimbabwean art can play in architectural design. There is no argument that Zimbabwean art, as with the art of any other community, is unique to its location and arguably beautiful, something from which our architecture can learn.