Cities, Communities and Homes: Is the Urban Future Livable?

• **Paper / Proposal Title:**

FUTURE Boom Street, Pretoria South Africa: The space between the temporal and permanent home.

• **Format:**

Written paper (3,000 words) and Verbal presentation (conference presentation 20 minutes)

• **Authors Names:**

Prof Jacques Laubscher & Ms Sushma Patel

• **University or Company Affiliation:**

Tshwane University of Technology (TUT), Pretoria, South Africa

• **Abstract:**

The paper is based on a case study of Boom Street in the capital city of Pretoria, South Africa. It is presented from the perspective of an African city in the Global South.

Boom Street runs on an East -West axis in the inner city of Pretoria. It connects the historical Marabastad in the west with the bottom slopes of Meintjieskop in the east on which the Union Buildings are carefully placed. However, the ends of this axis almost disappear in the urban fabric and predominant motor ways.

The street activities along Boom Street represent the unique coming together of different cultural identities. Existing and migrant communities are inhabiting the street on both a permanent and temporary basis. The resultant product is a complex conglomeration of communities at the juxtaposition of different grains of urban fabric.

The cultural history of Marabastad further expands on the notions of contracts and connections. It was originally established as a non-white labour camp servicing the previously white inner city government centre and white households around the city. Although some presence remain in the form of built artefacts, the founding community has largely moved out. Today, a new wave of black formal and informal entrepreneurs, together with some old Indian businesses, trade actively on Boom Street. The nearby Belle Ombre railway station in Marabastad serves as a major gateway to the city for many working class people.

The urban fabric of Boom Street varies from the west to east. In the western part of Boom Street, the historical Marabastad is characterised by the finer grains of late 19th and early 20th Century, although the mostly single storey buildings are in a state of decay. Towards the inner city, the character of Boom Street changes from a typical single storey covered walkway to medium scale modernist housing blocks closer to the city. In close proximity, there are abandoned modernist housing skyscrapers due for demolition and new formal housing projects under construction. It is the tension and space between the temporal and permanent home that is the backdrop of this study.

The paper will present an exploratory student study of the area, focusing on the types of homes that people have made for themselves. The focus is on how shelter is made by the people for the people, taking place in the most adverse conditions. The study aims to document aspects such as incrementalism, materiality, construction techniques, density, the impact of technology, and general living environments.

The essay aims to present a future scenario of living in cities. In its current state, Boom Street is simultaneously a temporal and permanent space, providing shelter for a diversity of people and their unique needs.

• **Authors Biography:**

Jacques Laubscher is an architect and planner in academia and practice. He has been an academic for 18 years and is currently a full professor of architecture in the Department of Architecture at Tshwane University of Technology in Pretoria. He currently serves on the SABS Technical Committee of Construction Standards (TC 59). Jacques is also a committee member of Task group 79 of the INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL FOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION IN BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION (CIB).

Under his tutelage students have received various national and international prizes. Amongst others, these include a category winner in the 2010 and 2012 The Networked Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations (NDLTD), Innovative ETD award, category winner in the 2012 Open Architecture Challenge: [UN]RESTRICTED ACCESS hosted by Architecture for Humanity, winner of the COROBRIK: National Architectural Student of the Year Awards 2011, joint winner in the 2011 Archiprix International / Hunter Douglas

Awards, and award for best university at the St Gobain DesignHub Respond/ Renew/ Revitalise 2010 Competition.

Jacques has acted as reviewer for various journals and conferences, he also served as an invited member of various architecture competition judging panels in South Africa. Laubscher has presented various accredited workshops for continuing practice development for regional Institutes of Architecture in South Africa.

Jacques Laubscher has delivered invited lectures at the Technical University of Delft in the Netherlands and at the University College of London in England. In 2016, Jacques Laubscher headed an application with the University of Bath, England, for an application to the Newton Fund that was awarded in 2017. For the next two years, this research project will focus on vulnerability in the face of climate change and built environment regulatory requirements.

Sushma Patel has a Bachelor of Architecture and a Master of Urban Design degree, both from the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. Sushma is a registered architect and urban designer, currently practicing and teaching at the Tshwane University of Technology in Pretoria. She has 16 years of practice experience in both Cape Town and Pretoria. Her particular interest is in the spatial fragmentation of South African cities and the need for increased density and integration close to the inner city. She has worked with prominent architects Jo Noero, Heinrich Wolff, Aaron Wegmann and Luyanda Mpahlwa on socially significant buildings mainly in Cape Town. She has contributed to the winning and built design of an architectural competition '10x10', a low cost housing scheme in Mitchell's Plain. Sushma has gained insight into the policies and workings of state institutions while working at the National Department of Public Works. Sushma is currently on the board of the South African Council for the Architectural Profession (SACAP) which is the regulation authority of the profession. She has taught architecture part-time at the University of Cape Town in 2010 and 2011 and has since been involved with teaching and examining at many Universities around South Africa. Sushma was also an invited adjudicator of the Fuchs Award for best overall undergraduate student in the country in 2016.