Pour Winery: A Study in Black and White

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> "The task at hand will not be easy, but you have mandated us to change South Africa from a land in which the majority lived with little hope, to one in which they can live and work with dignity, with a sense of self-esteem and confidence in the future."
>
> —Nelson Mandela, *10 May 1994. Speech at his inauguration as president*

INTRODUCTION

The buildings that form Pour Winery in Kayamandi near the town of Stellenbosch in the winegrowing region of South Africa deal with the history of race relations in the country rather than avoid it. They claim with equal pride their origins in Cape Dutch Architecture which predominates in the wealthy regions of the Stellenbosch valley, as well as the South African Ndebele people's bold geometric patterns that cover their homes in the northeastern part of the country. The careful interplay of black and white architectural elements of the winery signify and acknowledge the complex race relationship of the country while the expanded programmatic function of the winery as economic center and social hub empowers the local community.

BACKGROUND HISTORY

To build in South Africa, one cannot deny the relationship between race and place. The relationship between the color of ones skin and the place where one can live was codified by the South African government in the Group Areas Act of 1950. One could argue that Townships are the spatial manifestation of apartheid[1]. Kayamandi, the site of the winery is one such township located near the town of Stellenbosch home to Stellenbosch University which was the academic seat of the apartheid movement. Kayamandi carries the aspirations of a community to move beyond their present economic condition[2]. The predominant image of the wealthy farms and great wine estates in the Stellenbosch valley in South Africa is one of Cape Dutch Architecture – whitewashed mud brick walls with thatched gable-ended roofs. The style is considered by white South Africans to be the vernacular

architecture[3] of the region dating back 350 years to early Dutch colonial settlements of the 1670's.

There is though another tradition in the region of indigenous architecture that persists to this day. The Ndzundza Ndebele, a warrior and large landowning people of South Africa developed their own tradition and style of wall painting in the 1700's as they shifted from grass huts to mud-wall homes. In 1883 they went to war with the neighboring Boers. The conflict lasted many years but ended with the Boers winning and receiving land as reparations as well as the forced dispersal of tribal chieftains and their clans. The Ndebele painted the homes they were forced to live in by white settlers with strong geometric designs. The loss to the Boers brought on hardship and grief that the Ndebele expressed through the symbolic language used to paint their homes. The symbols they painted with black lines framing colorful shapes on plain white walls were done unbeknownst to the white settlers as a form of cultural resistance[4].

EXPANDING PROGRAM

The land and landownership is fundamental to the problems of South Africa but may be the source of its healing. Questions of land rights and ownership are intertwined with South Africa's brutal history of creating laws that systematically disenfranchise black landowners[5]. The current government of Ramaphosa is considering the return of land as reparations to black South Africans[6]. Return of land owned by white farmers to black South Africans while extremely controversial may go a long way to healing the racial divide. If the promise of economic opportunity through land ownership is to succeed there is work to be done to educate a new generation of farmers. Given the small size of plots that are being considered for reparations, learning how to manage farms that grow higher valued crops to be sold as part of the grow local/eat local food movement is crucial.

The Pour Winery in Kayamandi would be both a working farm and winery that would train people how to cultivate and yield high priced crops on small plots of land. The land and its cultivation is both a unique and omnipresent feature of this programmatically expanded winery complex that is part farm, part school, part housing, part community center. It is both the setting and the actual fabric that weaves together the experience of the

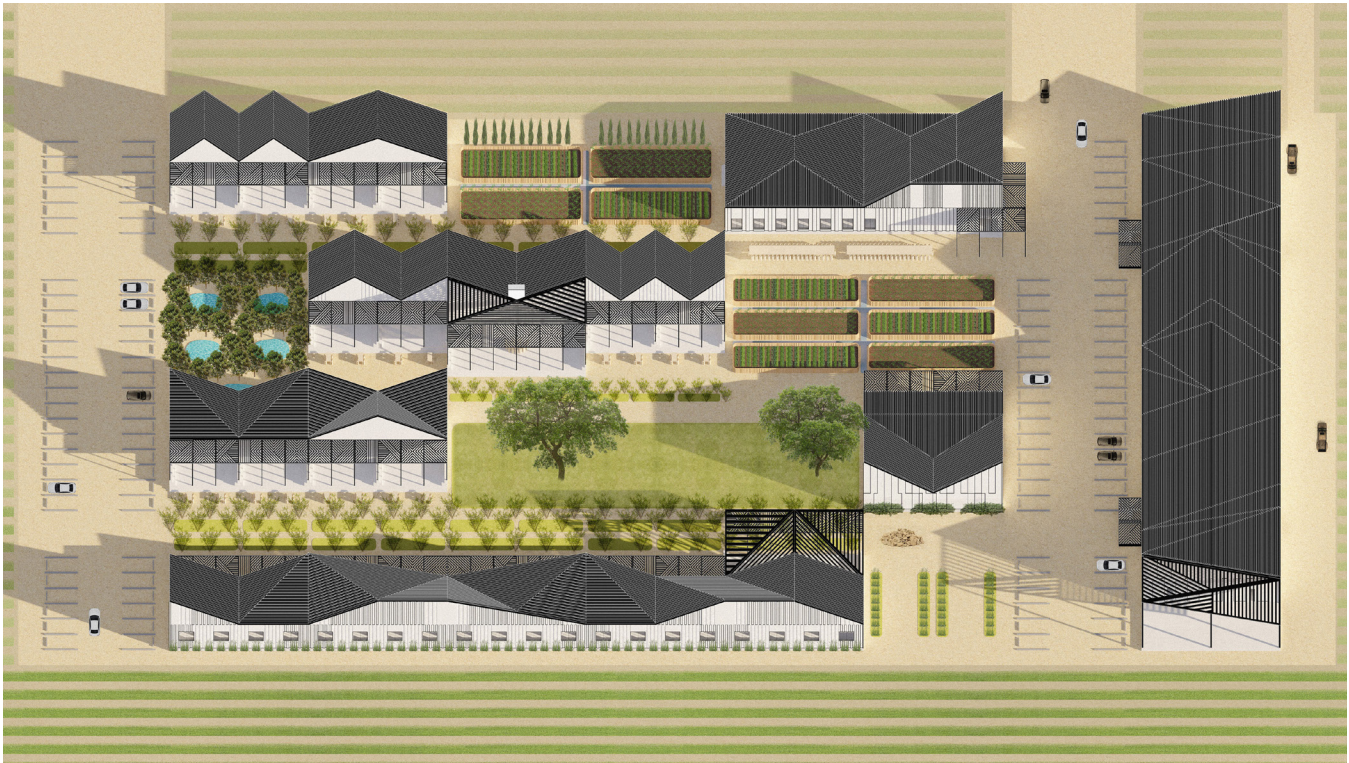Figure 1. View of outdoor communal dining. VRO.

Figure 2. View of winery form above. VRO.

complex. The combination of winery, working farm, and agrarian school would provide a place to live and learn for participants in the program. The winery would also employ people from the local community as seasonal workers. In addition to which, a community center would be established for the residents of Kayamandi, a facility which is currently missing but would be much appreciated. By expanding the typical winery program to include housing, a working farm, an education center and gathering spaces for the community, this project hopes to empower the community it serves while providing an economic model for the region.

CONNECTION TO SITE

Vineyards and agricultural landscapes in general are organized for efficiency using an overriding geometric pattern. The way plants are arranged in parallel lines to optimize sun exposure, manage water runoff, enhance growth, and ease crop harvesting create a grain to the land and give measure to the otherwise continuous terrain. The sensible alignment of all of the buildings to the surrounding agrarian landscape creates a primary connection between the winery and the vineyard. Alignment supports both visual and physical access to the vineyards insuring a complimentary relationship between the domestic and domesticated landscape.

The massing of the building roof forms also echoes the shape of the land. Rolling continuous roof forms were arranged laterally along the southwestern portion of the site to pick up on

the topographic characteristic of the adjacent vineyard. Angular roof forms create a set of definable peaks on the buildings that run laterally on the northeastern part of the site paralleling and reminiscent of the mountain range across the valley. At grade the lines of the vineyard find their way into the paths and walkways of the building compound. The linearity of the vineyard gives way to orthogonal planting beds, fruit orchards, and lawns within the winery grounds. Since the winery is both a working farm and a place to learn how to farm, participants in the education program are taught how to raise, care for, and market their produce to the local community. An assortment of fruits, vegetables, and herbs are grown on site to educate and for consumption at the café.

BUILDING SOLUTION

The careful interplay between Cape Dutch Architecture and Ndebele inspired elements can also be understood as a play between the generic and the specific, typology and improvisation. Cape Dutch Architecture has a set of rules that help create its shape. For example, the width of buildings is based on timber roof spans. Locations of programs are arranged linearly. Adding to an existing building is very much like a game of dominos[7] with the floor plan taking the shape of letters (ex. T, H, L, et al.) Similarly, Ndebele wall paintings have their own rules to generate patterns to adorn homes. Thick black lines set against white walls with bold color insets are the basic vocabulary. Endless variations are achieved through the various combinations of a set of motifs (step, diamond, arrow, angle, et al.). Improvisation
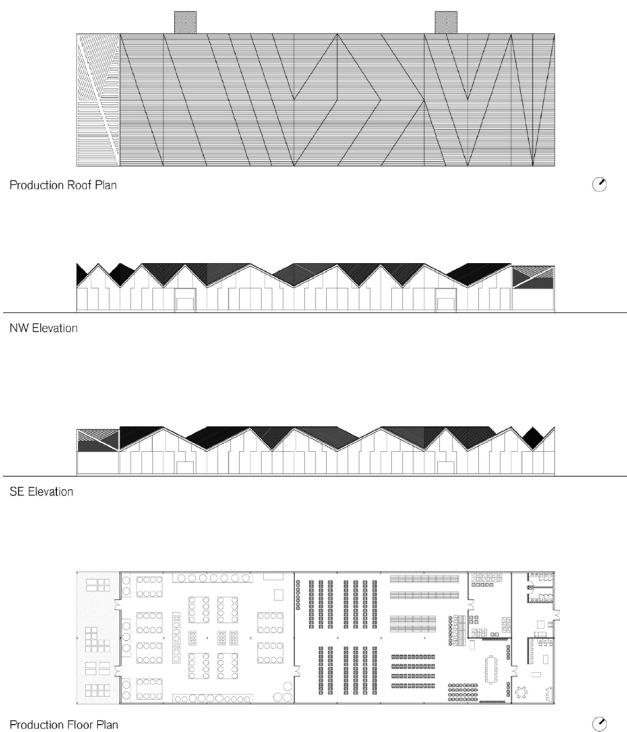
PROJECT

Figure 2. Drawings of wine production hall. VRO.

Figure 3. Axonometric of wine production hall. VRO.

occurs each time a wall is painted with the artist unique signature style evident in the final work[8].

The idea of a rule-based system of construction typical of Cape Dutch Architecture was adopted and modified and infused with the sense of endless variation inspired by the Ndebele wall painting for the design of the winery. The layout of the buildings starts with an 8x12 grid aligned with the vineyard. Building modules hosting the various functions populate the grid. While the 25'x75' footprint of each building module is identical, the roof slopes vary and produce an array of gable ends. The roof slope of each module is uniquely shaped and is made up of one, two, or three folds. Taken together the 32 unique roofs form a collection of all of the possible permutations of sloped roofs using one, two, or three folds. Combinations of various roof forms were chosen due to their affinity with the program functions they house. The game of combining modules to yield various buildings to house the required program had the added constraint that each roof must lead to the next such that a continuous roof is formed and no module could be repeated.

The formal vocabulary of the winery is an interplay of gable-ended roofs based on the typology of Cape Dutch Architecture integrated with trellis spaces inspired by Ndebele geometric patterns. The vocabulary of Cape Dutch Architecture was re-interpreted as a series of gable-ended roofs that continuously transform in section. Black painted steel is used throughout the winery to denote areas of shelter and gathering. The corrugated steel typically found in Townships is used as the cladding for the
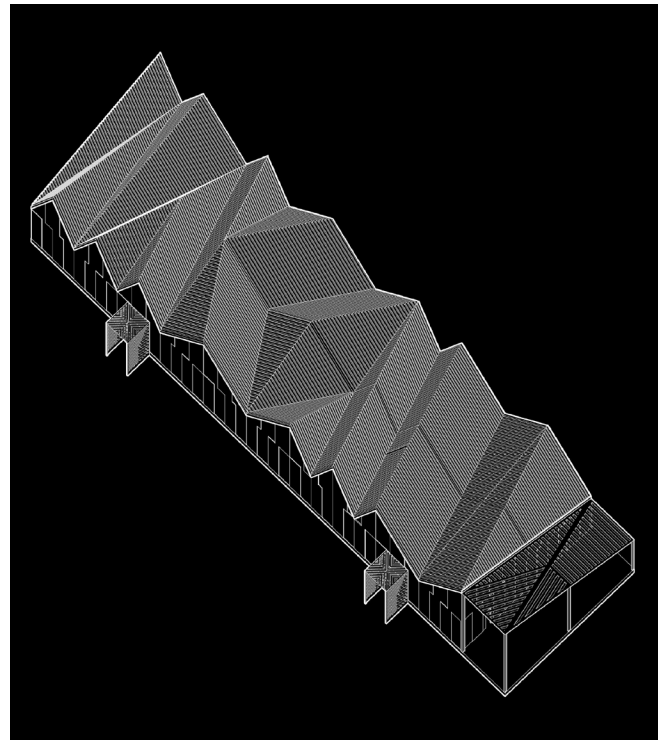

Figure 5. View of wine tasting in the barrel room. VRO.

roofs. Trellis covered stoops in front of each residence act as intermediary spaces between the public walk way and the private realm of the home. Outdoor living rooms placed throughout the compound act in a similar way to the stoops but for larger groups and community events.

CONCLUSION
While architecture alone cannot solve the economic problems and systematic disenfranchisement of the black population in South Africa, projects such as the Pour Winery with its expanded definition of program to include economic advancement can play a role in changing the lives of the community it serves
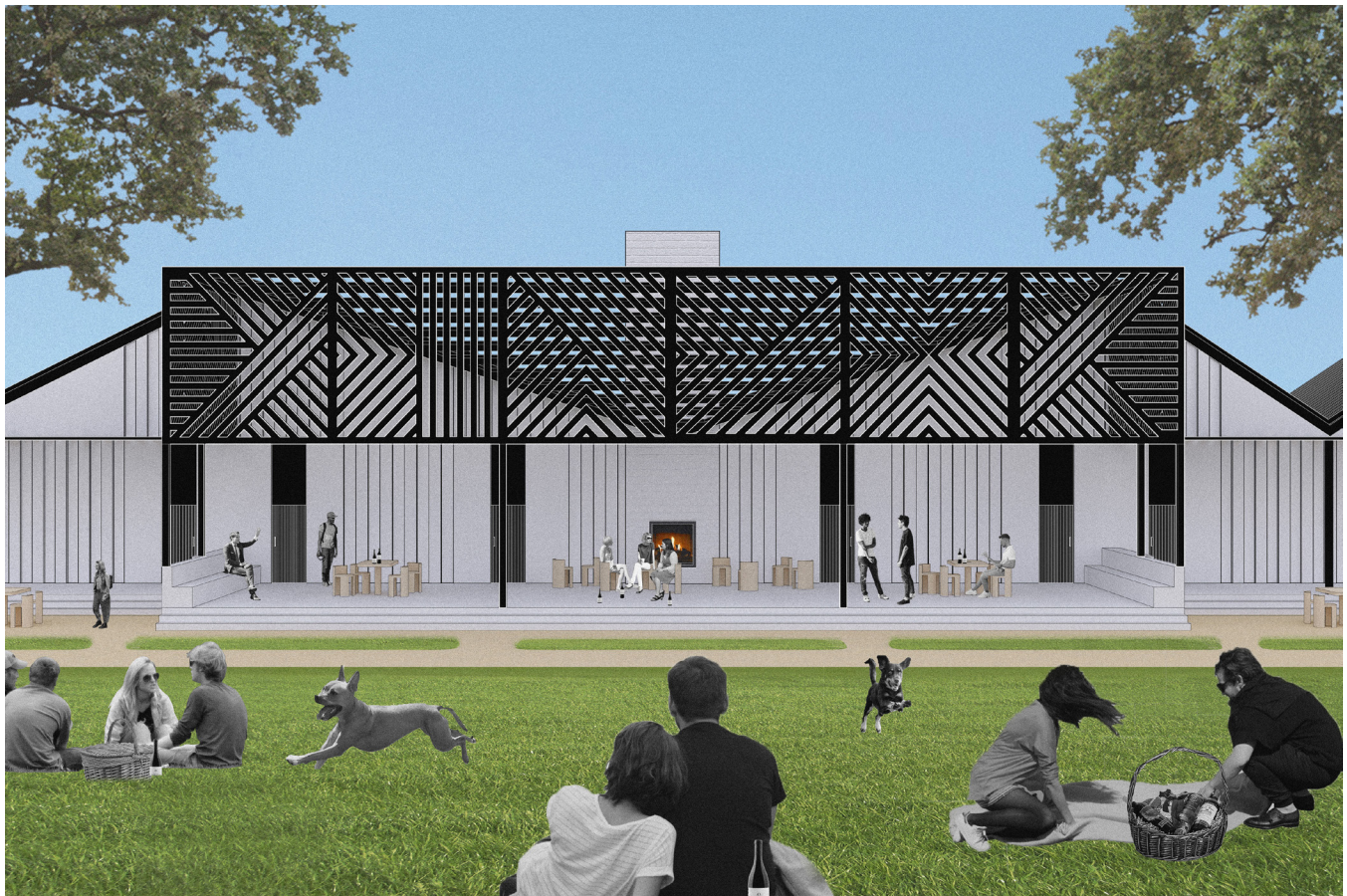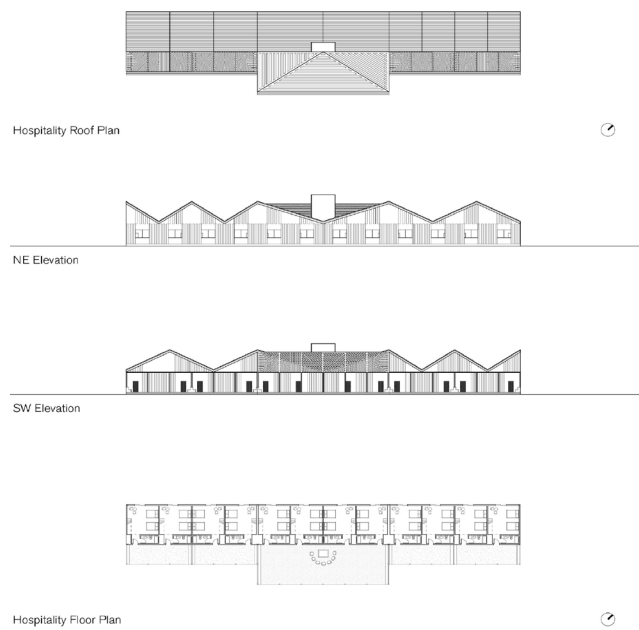
Figure 6. View of main outdoor gathering space. VRO.

Hospitality Roof Plan

NE Elevation
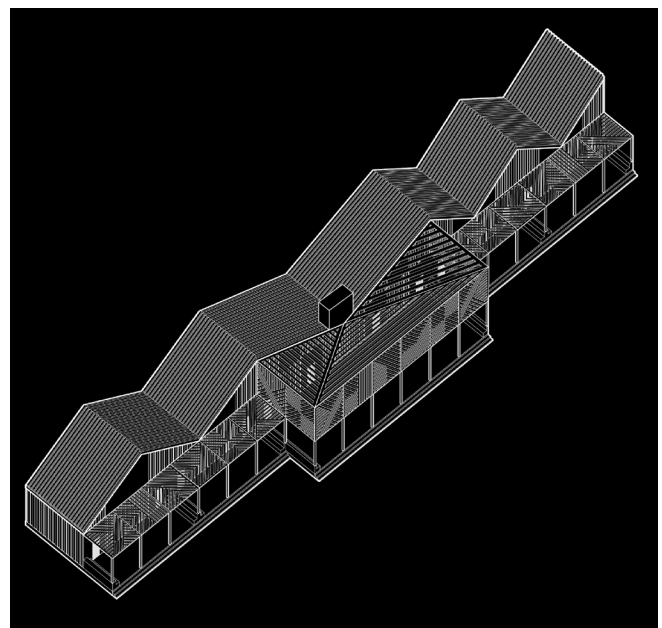
SW Elevation

Hospitality Floor Plan

Figure 7. Drawings of housing. VRO.

Figure 8. Axonometric of housing. VRO.

PROJECT

Service Roof Plan

Service Floor Plan
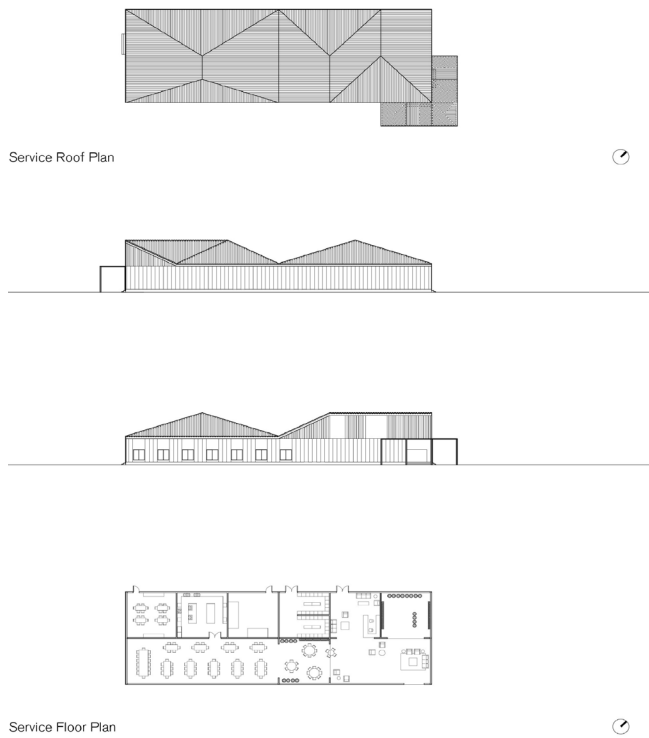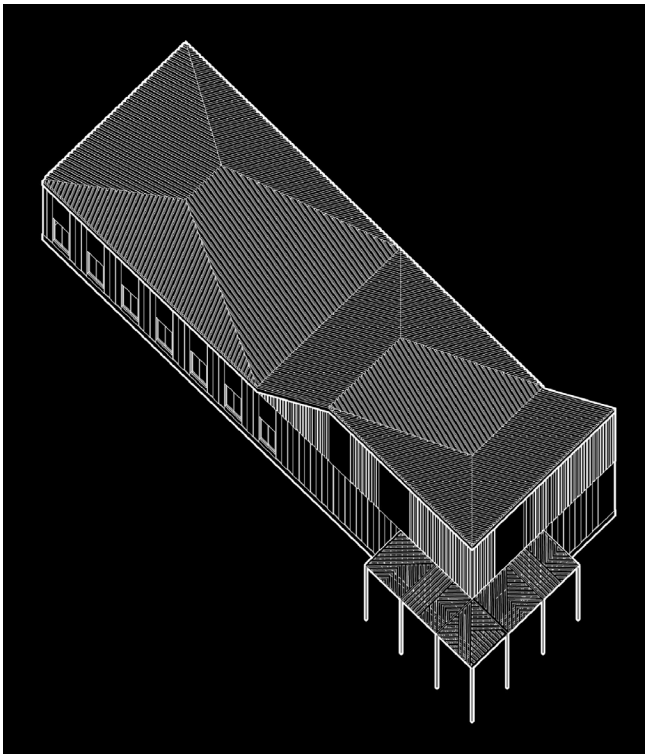
Figure 9. Drawings of community center. VRO.

ENDNOTES

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Figure 10. Axonometric of community center. VRO.