CONSTRUCTION OF THE ALEXANDRA MUSEUM
a Necessity or a Spendthrift
When public and private funding for arts, culture and heritage in the era of low economic growth remains crucial and much needed now than before, can the construction of a museum change the psychological make-up of a people and contribute to the development of their mental state and dismantle the prescribed belief in the global class system and identify themselves as key and responsible actors in the creative economy?
Background

- Started as part of the Alexandra Renewal Project.
- A joint initiative of the three spheres of government, the private sector and community-based organisations.
- National government allocated R1,3-billion towards the project.
- Its targets included increased local employment, a healthier environment, cutting crime by 50 percent.
- A total of 10 development precincts were demarcated.
- A vital aspect of the project is increased awareness regarding the heritage and redevelopment of the famous township.
- Arts, cultural and recreational activities are supported through community-driven institutions.
Background

### Alexandra Heritage Centre

- Established in 2003.
- Department of Tourism contracted Johannesburg Development Agency.
- The JDA got behind the Alexandra Heritage Centre, and will complete the building and hand it over to the **Arts Culture and Heritage Directorate**.
- JDA says: "Once finished, most of the activity will be on the ground floor, where there will be space for **small businesses** and traders in artworks and other items. Upstairs, there will be a **museum** focusing on the **history of Alexandra** and a small **conference centre**."
Background

small businesses

small businesses
Background

conference centre

museum
Background
Background

- Suspected misappropriation of funds
- The plan was to build a Mandela museum in Alexandra.
- It began in 2001, after then-president Thabo Mbeki announced a wide-ranging urban renewal project to initiate infrastructure development in townships.
- In Alexandra, the project would entail shacks being demolished and replaced by RDP houses.
- The Gauteng Tourism Authority, the Alexandra Renewal Project, the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism and the Department of Arts and Culture led the Mandela museum project.
Residents had been evicted from the site where the heritage centre was to be built and moved to Bramfisherville.

Interdict was obtained. More than 40 families were relocated.

Neighboring tavern owner, Moss Maleka, says the place was a hive of activity after the news of Mandela’s death broke.

“Most people look surprised after they have been to the place,”

“There is nothing fascinating about the place. I don’t know what they actually expect to see when they come here – some would stay for two minutes and leave.”
Background
ALEXANDRA TOWNSHIP
Alexandra

- Alexandra Township
- Established in 1912 by Mr. H.B. Papenfus.
- At first for white residents, but they found it to be disease invested.
- Papenfus unable to sell his property to white prospective buyers he subdivided sites and offered them to Africans and Coloured buyers.
- It remain a mystery who was Alexandra the Township and company that sold the stands was named after.
- Alexandra has an exciting history.
Alexandra

- Prominent figures who lived in Alexandra:
  - 1 First-Lady & 3 Presidents:
    1. Zanele Mbeki
    2. Nelson Mandela
    3. Samora Machel
    4. Kgalema Motlanthe
Alexandra
Alexandra
Tourism
Alexandra
Living
Alexandra
Hostels
Alexandra
Juskei River
Alexandra
Volatility

WARNING:
Alexandra
THE FOUNDING TEAM
The Team
The Team

- **Deputy Director: Arts Culture & Heritage**
- Admin
  - Curator: Exhibitions
    - Administrator 1
  - Building Operational Manager
    - Museum Guide 1
THE BUILDING
The Building

- Designed by Peter Rich Architects.

"From here one can look down into two new public spaces created on both sides of the street, contained by wings housing entrepreneurial activity and training facilities. These multi-functional spaces are designed to be the sites of political and social events. Just as the 'spaces between' the yards are active, so there is no residual space in the centre. Uses overlap and interact: a fifth dimension is created under the building; space becomes street and street is reconfigured as space."
The Building
The Building
The Building
The Building
A MUSEUM

WHAT IS A MUSEUM
A museum is a work of art expressed in the structure and content to reflect life and to be perceived intellectually to uplift the mind and soul of human beings.

A museum collects and interprets behavior patterns and all other products of human work and thought characteristic of population. These characteristics which are not inherited through the genes, are transmitted by a museum.

A museum is a cultural conscience of the nation.
ALEXANDRA MUSEUM
Alexandra Museum

- Why residents of Alexandra Township are agents of disorder?
- Why residents of Alexandra Township are agents of change?

- It depends on which side of the coin did you see first.
- For one to tell the colour of a thing, must have been taught the name of the colour when seeing that colour for the first time.
A psychoanalysis agent.

To investigate the interaction of conscious and unconscious elements in the mind,

To bring repressed fears and conflicts into the conscious mind.

Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) believed that people could be cured by making conscious their unconscious thoughts and motivations, thus gaining insight.

Psychoanalytic psychologists see psychological problems as rooted in the unconscious mind.
The Alexandra Museum (the structure & content) should therefore replace the psychoanalysis psychologist.

Looking at and walking into the Museum must encourage the viewer to develop insights into their behaviour.

Unconscious thoughts and feelings can transfer to the conscious mind.
Alexandra Museum

- The construction of the Alexandra Museum is much more needed now than at any time in history.
- It has taken a very long period to realise and Alexandra residents must have lost hope by now.
- From 2003 to 2018.
- We need to establish collaborations, partnership, and cooperation with every relevant institution.
- The museum shall definitely change Alexandra Township.
THANK YOU
&
Ponder what I am pondering