

Published on *THE SOUTH AFRICAN INFORMAL CITY* (<http://informalcity.co.za>)

[Home](#) > [Exhibition](#) > [Un-Built Projects](#) > Informal Studio: Ruimsig

Informal Studio: Ruimsig



- click images to see larger version -

SHEBEEN		CHURCH	
EXISTING	PROPOSED	EXISTING	PROPOSED
Existing number of plots	20	Existing number of plots	60
Existing number of households	40	Existing number of households	120
Number of households to be relocated	10	Number of households to be relocated	30
Relocated plots	240 m ²	Relocated plots	240 m ²
Relocated plots	120 m ²	Relocated plots	120 m ²
Average plot size	120 m ²	Average plot size	120 m ²
Plot gain in number of plots	10	Plot gain in number of plots	30
Plot loss in number of plots	0	Plot loss in number of plots	0

Plotting strategy: A plot will happen to the residents how many will continue to live in backyards, how many will be relocated in clusters. 2 initial clusters (0-4 households per cluster), backyard retains to remain on existing plots.

SPAZA		WETLANDS	
EXISTING	PROPOSED	EXISTING	PROPOSED
Existing number of plots	10	Existing number of plots	40
Existing number of households	20	Existing number of households	160
Number of households to be relocated	5	Number of households to be relocated	40
Relocated plots	120 m ²	Relocated plots	120 m ²
Relocated plots	120 m ²	Relocated plots	120 m ²
Average plot size	120 m ²	Average plot size	120 m ²
Plot gain in number of plots	5	Plot gain in number of plots	40
Plot loss in number of plots	0	Plot loss in number of plots	0

Plotting strategy: A plot will happen to the residents how many will continue to live in backyards, how many will be relocated in clusters. 2 initial clusters (0-4 households per cluster), backyard retains to remain on existing plots.

TOTAL	
EXISTING	PROPOSED
Existing number of plots	30
Existing number of households	120
Number of households to be relocated	45
Relocated plots	120 m ²
Relocated plots	120 m ²
Average plot size	120 m ²
Plot gain in number of plots	45
Plot loss in number of plots	0

Plotting strategy: A plot will happen to the residents how many will continue to live in backyards, how many will be relocated in clusters. 2 initial clusters (0-4 households per cluster), backyard retains to remain on existing plots.



INFORMAL STUDIO: RUIMSG

Ruimsig Johannesburg, 2011

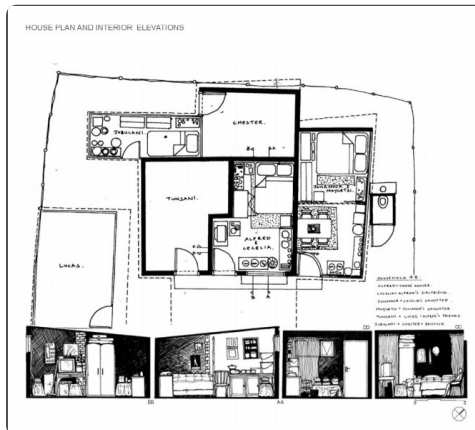
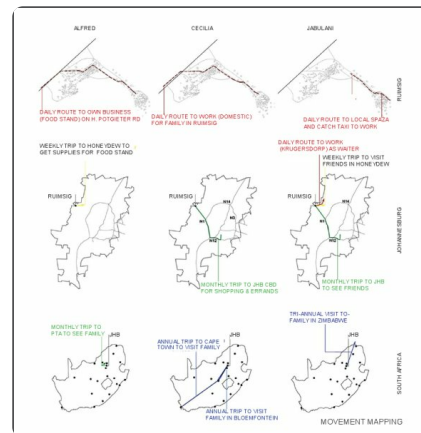
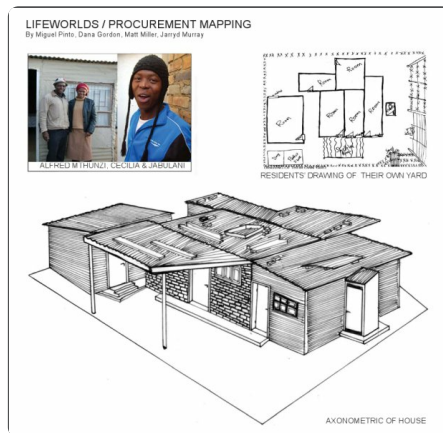
Project Partners: 26'10 South Architects, Goethe-Institut Johannesburg and the University of Johannesburg

Lecturers: Thorsten Deckler, Prof. Lone Poulsen, Alexander Oppen (UJ), Melinda Silverman (UJ)



The INFORMAL STUDIO: R U I M S I G has been carried out in partnership with the Goethe-Institut and the University of Johannesburg as an in-situ course on informal settlement upgrading. Sixteen masters students, together with residents of Ruimsig (an informal settlement on the western periphery of Johannesburg), have produced a detailed mapping and re-blocking study. The course was run partially from a studio within the settlement where students and teachers worked with local community architects in a process guided by NGOs and grass-roots organisations. This in-situ interaction formed a vital component linking theory and practice, 'clients' (residents), and service providers (students and teachers). The collaborative output of the studio is the first version of a reblocking map showing how minimal shifts and adjustments in what is ostensibly a 'temporary' urban condition and fabric can lead to a more equitable distribution of space, the undoing of exploitative rental conditions, the creation of legal road reserve widths (for more effective circulation including emergency services) and future provision of sanitation, water and electricity supply. In addition, the re-

blocking facilitates the process of awarding tenure and can 'bracket' space for future social amenities. Working with the ISN (Informal Settlement Network) has made possible a meaningful engagement in a people's process for change and points to new ways of practice for architects and more fundamentally a shift away from the obsession with the single formal house constructed (at great expense) for and not by people.



PROCUREMENT ANALYSIS TO DETERMINE COSTS OF CONSTRUCTING HOUSE

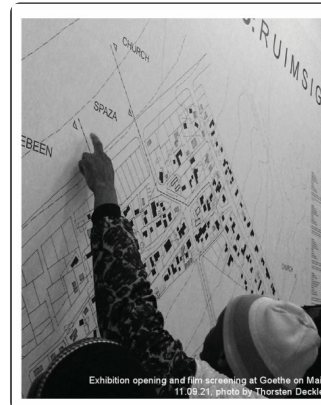
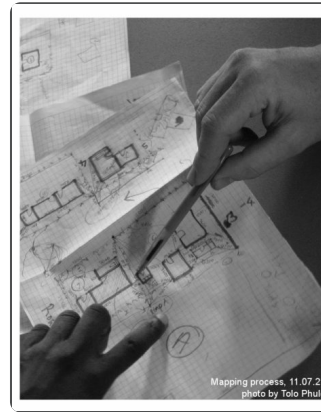
CONCRETE FLOOR Single slab used for the breakfast room with a capsl floor finish PURCHASE PRICE: R200 TRANSPORT: R100 INSTALLATION: R100 TOOLS: R5 TOTAL: R405	CORRUGATED ROOF SHEETING Taken from an old building site PURCHASE PRICE: R5 TRANSPORT: R250 INSTALLATION: R100 TOOLS: R100 TOTAL: R455
CORRUGATED SHEETING Corrugated roof sheeting used for add-on room walls only PURCHASE PRICE: R200 TRANSPORT: R100 INSTALLATION: R100 TOOLS: R5 TOTAL: R405	PLASTIC CEILING Purchased from Builder's Warehouse PURCHASE PRICE: R100 TRANSPORT: R5 INSTALLATION: R5 TOOLS: R5 TOTAL: R115
FACEBRICK WALL Used from original house structure taken from remainder of building site PURCHASE PRICE: R200 TRANSPORT: R100 INSTALLATION: R5 TOOLS: R5 TOTAL: R310	
WATERBOARD INTERIOR PARTITION Used as insulation from corrugated sheeting from Pick N Pay recycling yard PURCHASE PRICE: R5 TRANSPORT: R10 INSTALLATION: R10 TOOLS: R5 TOTAL: R30	
STANDARD ALUMINUM WINDOW Purchased from Builder's Warehouse PURCHASE PRICE: R350 TRANSPORT: R50 INSTALLATION: R150 TOOLS: R5 TOTAL: R555	
STANDARD THREE DOOR Purchased from Builder's Warehouse at cost price PURCHASE PRICE: R250 TRANSPORT: R100 INSTALLATION: R100 TOOLS: R5 TOTAL: R455	
TOTAL COSTS PURCHASE PRICES: R1600 TRANSPORT: R510 INSTALLATION: R550 TOOLS: R230 TOTAL: R3890	

NOTES
 Alfred used to work for a contractor and is therefore experienced in building construction. He also owns his own car, that although is often not working or broken down still enables him to transport his own building materials. Due to both these reasons Alfred's total cost price is decreased considerably as he does not need pay for all the labour and transport required to build his home.

- click images to see larger version -

Questions the studio raised revolved around the 'perceived' backlog of 2.5 million formal houses. To students it became clear that the informal city in this case does what the formal system cannot: it provides affordable shelter and a foothold closer to opportunities of employment and advancement. The informal city, constructed by inhabitants themselves with little input from the state or professionals, offers flexible and affordable access to shelter.

In some instances, it displays spatial and programmatic richness sorely lacking from the housing landscapes constructed by teams of professionals. Yet the lack of services, security of tenure, repeated threats of 'eradication' and the promise of eventual housing delivery have locked the informal city into an illegal limbo in which mounting tension and frustration are becoming increasingly evident.



- click images to see larger version -

Encouragingly, but not surprising, the state's previous ambition to eradicate informal settlements by 2014 has been redefined and refocused (courtesy of the National Delivery Agreement targets) to the upgrading of 400 000 units in well-located informal settlements by 2014. To this effect the National Upgrade Support Programme (NUSP) has been established to assist the state and communities in realising this target. For South Africa this demands a major shift in thinking about housing and how it has been delivered in the past. It acknowledges the efforts people have made in building their own homes and communities. No matter how deficient, tenuous or exploitative the informal city may be – it directly mirrors the ever increasing backlog in formal housing. Considering that just about 60% of all urban inhabitants in Africa live in informal conditions, it is time for a mode of professional practice which embraces housing as a process rather than a product. The INFORMAL STUDIO: R U I M S I G thus positions itself to educate professionals in becoming skilled in engaging with a process of housing that is not about houses as finished, professionally executed products but about a people-driven process towards improved living environments.



**26'10 SOUTH ARCHITECTS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE GOETHE-INSTITUT SA,
THE UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG AND PROF. LONE POULSEN**

Copyright (c) 2011-2012, Architects' Collective and respective authors. All rights reserved.