



Durban. Warwick Junction. (Photo: Anna Irene Del Monaco)

Reconnection and Revitalisation: from Warwick Junction to the Waterfront

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Abstract: Durban is a cogent city in its planning, however, it has a colonial history which is expressed in its urban quality. It is also a modern city defined by segregation of functions. The post-apartheid period resulted in the change in socio-economic dynamics of the city which raises many challenges while it affords various opportunities for development and enhancement through architectural and urban design intervention. The project developed during the workshop held at Durban University of Technology, prior to the UIA 2014 conference focused on the development of design concepts for responsive urban revitalisation.

Key words: Activate, connect, transform, pedestrianise, revitalise.

The article presents an outline of the study area and the outcomes of the project design workshop, during the period 28 July – 01 August 2014 which preceded the UIA 2014 Conference in Durban. The project is the culmination of a five day International collaborative workshop by students of University of Sapienza Rome, Durban University of Technology and Tsinghua University China. The workshop was facilitated by Tutors (academics / practitioners of architecture and urbanism) from the partner universities of the UNESCO Chair for Sustainable Urban Quality and Urban Culture.

The choice of project sites was based on the need to revitalise and activate some of the most important nodes of the city of Durban. The project focused on urban intervention through urban and architectural design of four precincts (Fig. 01) consisting of the following:

1. Warwick Junction (Berea Station / Early Morning Market),
2. the Link from Brook Street to Albert Park,
3. the Albert Park and Wilson's Wharf precinct and
4. the Waterfront between Wilson's Wharf and the Point.

Brief Analysis of the Project Sites

The project area (Fig. 1) is situated along the western and southern fringes of the historic city centre / CBD of Durban. While the urban form of the city is largely



Fig. 1. The Project Sites of the Workshop.

defined by a regular grid pattern, typical of modern British towns, the project sites are disconnected by edges such as motorways and railway lines which result in residual urban spatial waste. This is evident in the “lost spaces” between the Berea Station and Albert Park as well as the Esplanade and the Waterfront extending from Wilson’s Wharf to the Point. On the other hand, political and legislative changes led to the “decay” of the Albert Park precinct, while on the contrary, such change led to heightened activity and the proliferation of informal trade in the Warwick Junction precinct.

1. Warwick Junction (Berea Station / Early Morning Market)

The Warwick Junction Precinct comprises the area between and around the Berea Station, Early Morning Market, Victoria Street Market and the Grey Street (now known as Yusuf Dadoo Street) district. The railway line connecting the Durban Station to the Berea Station and further South, dissected the Warwick Junction Precinct into two districts comprising the Berea Station / Warwick Avenue (Julius Nyerere Street) district and the Grey Street district. Architectural interventions during the mid-1990s realized the installation of shaded steel bridges and the reactivation of abandoned concrete bridges with informal trade, thereby connecting the two previously dislocated districts. The connection of the two districts afforded various synergies and overlaps of activity, whereby people appropriated spaces for economic gain through informal trade thereby revitalising lost and wasted spaces under bridges and between functional spaces. The once sterile environment, by design, which served specific functions relating to public transport would transform into vital spaces for trade and social engagement.

2. Link from Brook Street to Albert Park

Brook Street, extended southward, forms a vital link between the Warwick Precinct and the Albert Park Precinct. Brook Street is highly congested by minibus taxis which seem to have colonized the street as an informal taxi depot / rank. This virtual link is flanked by the railway line on the western edge and largely derelict buildings on the eastern edge while Park Street is lined with buildings of good architectural character and sound structure, however, with little activity at street level and in need of repair and maintenance. The buildings consist of a mix of commercial and residential uses, however the street edges lack activation or engagement with human activity.

3. Albert Park and the Wilson's Wharf precinct

The character of Albert Park and the surrounding buildings changed drastically since the early to mid 1990s. The park is underutilized and is not supported by any critical mass of activity. The buildings around the park and within the broader Albert Park precinct are generally of good quality however the socio-economic challenges of the precinct poses the greatest challenge to urban development. The area is rife with illegal activity and is generally perceived by the public as being unsafe. This has resulted in a general and gradual urban decay of the area.

The current activities surrounding the park do, however, suggest that revitalisation is viable. The park is vast and well vegetated with direct links into the vibrant parts of the city to the north and breathtaking visual links to the harbour on the south-east. Wilson's Wharf is situated along the waterfront to the south of Albert Park however the two districts are dissected by a wide motorway and railway track along the Esplanade. Wilson's Wharf is a sought after place for leisure and recreation however pedestrian access is difficult and it is cut off from the city by the same Esplanade motorway and railway track. This lack of connection to the city poses the major urban development challenge along the bay.

4. Waterfront between Wilson's Wharf and the Point

While the Esplanade disconnects the Waterfront from the city, the activities along the edge of the bay from Wilson's Wharf to the Point are sparse and dislocated characterized by yacht marinas and a few social / cultural sites. The waterfront has been the result of residual space created as a consequence of the development of the harbour therefore the potential for socio-economic activity along the edge of the bay, connecting Wilson's Wharf to the Point, remains an opportunity for urban intervention and revitalisation.

The analysis of the project sites was based on abstract analysis through secondary data such as maps as well as direct observation on site, which provided invaluable information on the existent socio-spatial dynamics or the lack thereof. The analyses revealed many unexpected conditions which were vital in defining the design intent which generated the design principles of the master plan concept proposal.

Key design principles of the General master plan

The master plan illustrates (Fig. 02) the conceptual design layouts of each project site shown on a single map. This is necessary in order to indicate how the “in-between” spaces, largely comprising residual or lost space are integrated and activated while the major focal nodes are developed. The intention of the master plan is to synthesise the design solutions developed by groups of students that focused on the four project sites in order to present a well-knitted and holistic urban development plan along the western and southern fringes of the city. The nature of intervention on each of the project sites is outlined hereunder.

1. Warwick Junction (Berea Station / Early Morning Market)

Development of stalls and temporary accommodation for traders on the roof of the Berea Station and multilevel parkades in order to free up ground space for more pedestrian-centred streets. This approach is based on the principle of extending the vitality of the street up and onto the wasted spaces on the vast extent of the roof of the station.

Activation of the existing unutilised bridge to the south of the station with small informal traders’ stalls and green landscaping is based on the observation of the appropriation and socio-spatial activation of lost space by the informal traders. The greening of the bridge provides much needed relief from the harsh concrete environment of the Warwick Junction precinct.

2. Link from Brook Street to Albert Park

Enhancement through pedestrianisation of Park Street, to link the activity of the Warwick markets to Albert Park and the Wilson’s Wharf, as well as the semi-pedestrianisation of the streets perpendicular to Park Street.

This is achieved through the activation of spaces flanking Park Street by opening up the hard edges at street level for socio-economic engagement. Small scale formal shops that engage with the street, as in the Grey Street precedent, are effective for activation of lifeless streets. The intention is to extend the vitality of the Warwick precinct by way of the revitalisation of edges, residual and lost spaces along the same street.

3. Albert Park and Wilson’s Wharf precinct

Revitalisation of the precinct possible through dual/synergistic activation of Albert Park and the waterfront by introducing functions and amenities along a new landscaped link bridge, activated with leisure and trade.

The revitalisation of the residual space on the southern end of Wilson’s Wharf by activating new restaurants and the refurbishing the existing shops and the accessibility to Albert Park, increases the viability of development of the park. The differing conditions on the southern waterfront edge and the northern, city edge, affords a graded approach to the spatial ordering of Albert Park.



Fig. 2. General master plan.

4. Waterfront between Wilson's Wharf and the Point

The potential along the water edge between Wilson's Wharf and the Point precinct produces various design possibilities despite the spatial challenges caused by the existing disconnected infrastructure. A landscaped activity corridor and Commuter Train facility, along the existing railway track between the two project areas has been proposed. The contemplative relief from an intense inner city precinct is achieved by way of a subtle connection through nature along the waterfront.

The key design principles that informed the respective project proposals for the four

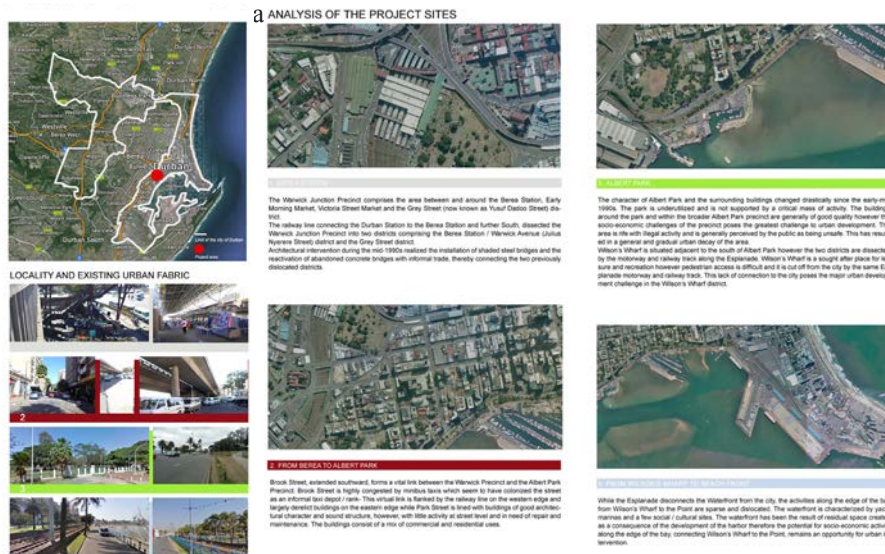


Fig. 3. Google aerial view and photos of the project sites.



UNESCO Field Studio 2014 in Durban “Reconnection and Revitalisation: from Warwick Junction to the Waterfront”

Tutoring and Jury:

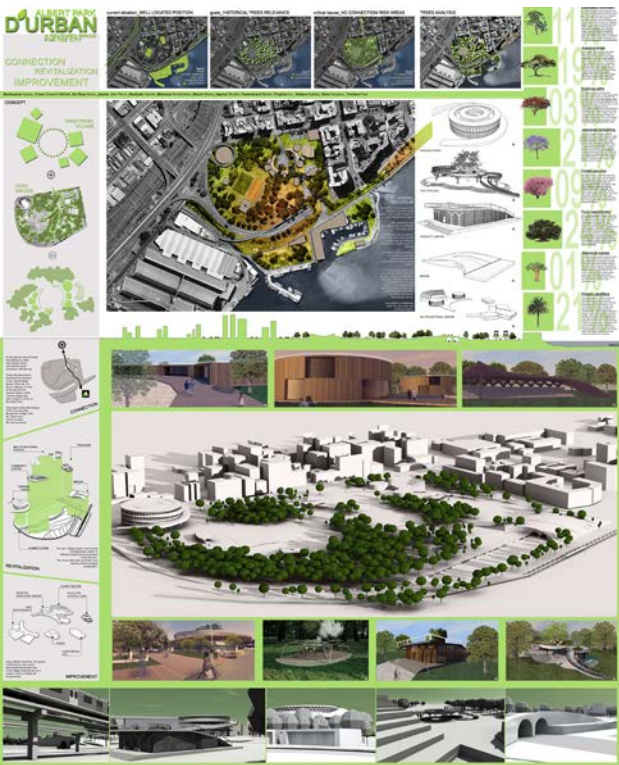
Prof. Lucio Barbera, Sapienza University, Rome – Italy (UNESCO Chair-holder)
 Prof. Anna Irene Del Monaco, Sapienza University, Rome – Italy
 Prof. Liu Jian, Tsinghua University, Beijing – China
 Prof. Zhu Wenyi, Tsinghua University, Beijing – China
 Prof. Martha Kohen, University of Florida, Gainesville – USA
 Prof. Nancy M. Clark, University of Florida, Gainesville – USA
 Prof. Yashaen Luckan, Durban University of Technology, Durban – South Africa
 Prof. Nishant H. Manupure, Manipal University, Manipal – India
 Prof. Christian Dautel, ENSA Nantes, Nantes – France
 Arch. Yasuhiro Hayashi, Hosei University, Tokyo – Japan
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 Dr. Zhou Zhengxu, Tsinghua University, Beijing – China

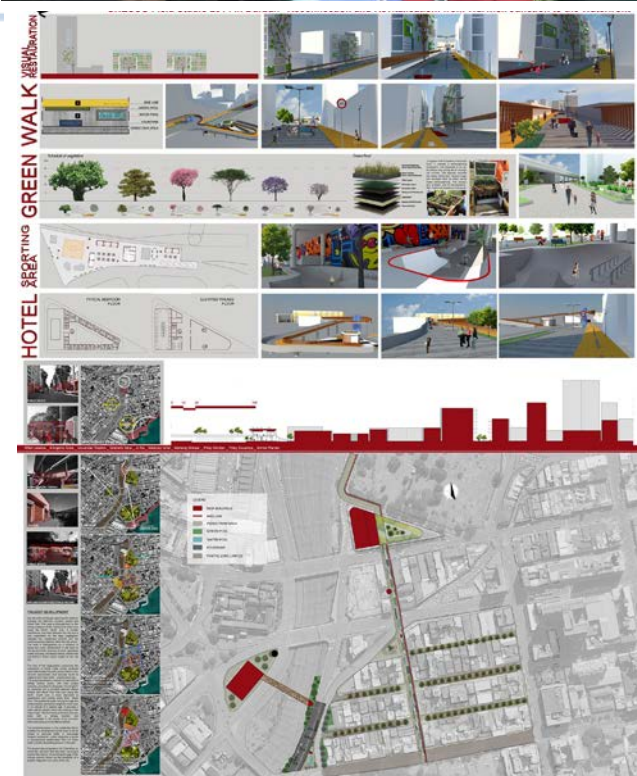
Workshop Participants:

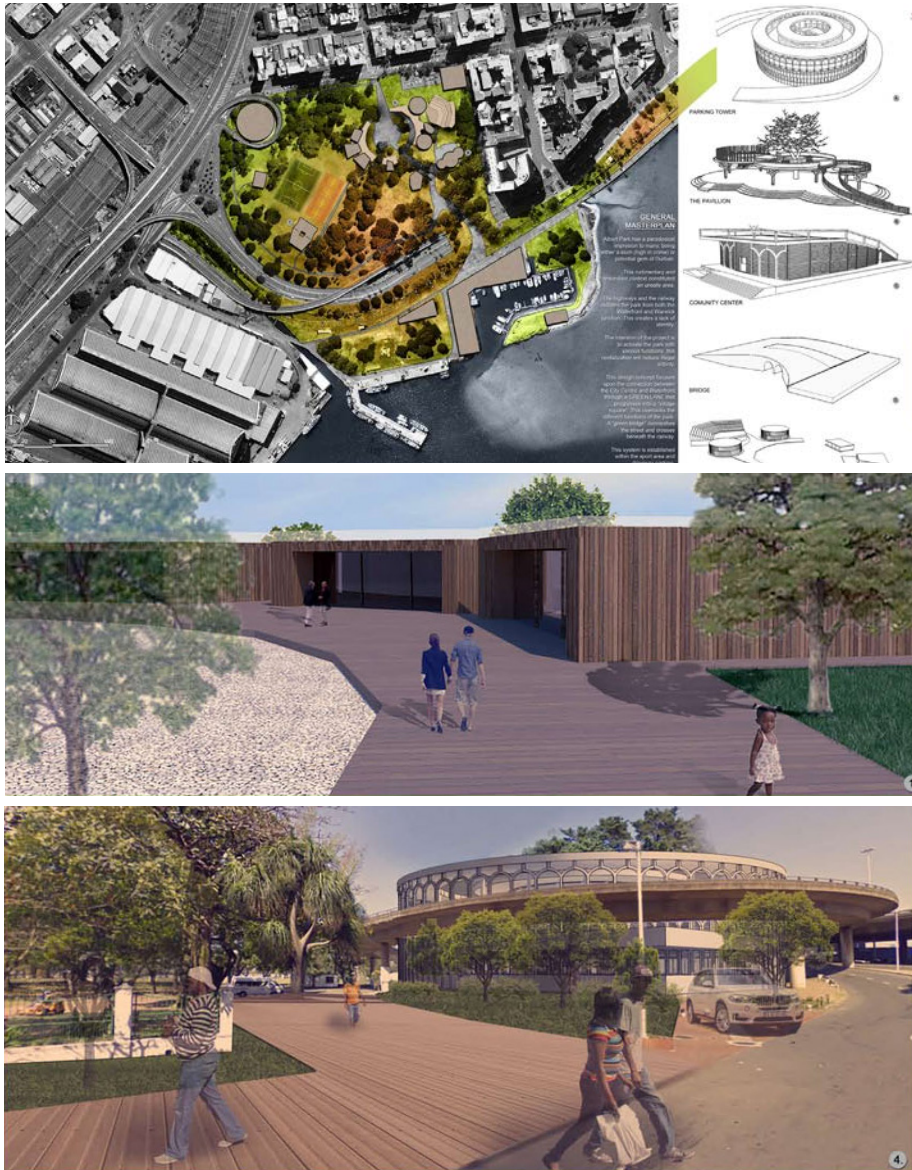
Berea Station (1): Nkosinophile A. Zungu Lulama N. Mhlongo, Dumisani Shoji, Luca Saccoccio, Valerio Vincioni, Malusi Zwane, Khulekani B. Ntuli, Philani T. Mtshali, Raffaella Amatilli, Liu Zhiqiang, Phila Khumalo, Venere Rosa Russo.
Albert Park (2): Nickiel Paramanand, Jean Pierre Jacobs, Paul Timbane, Iacopo Benincampi, Liu Pinghao, Bheka Msomi, Nduduzo Sibisi, Katleho Seliane, Giovanni B. Croce, Alexis De Rose, Zamah Mazibuko, Silindile Ngema, Nontethelo Mkhonza.
From Wilsons' Wharf to Beach Front: Nhlakanipho Mkhize, Nhlanhla Khumalo, Riaaz Sumed, Noemi Schiano, Valentina Frieri, Yusuf Rajab, Vimal Ramchand, Jesse Joseph, Giulia Quaglieri, Liang Yingya, Masibonge Hlongwane, Sinothando Sibiyi, Zama Shoji.
From Berea Station to Albert Park: Uriel Maduray, Dinolan Pillay, Treston Govender, Jessica Alfieri, Xia Ji, Warren A. Simon, Suvanya Pillay, Shikaar Maharaj, Gioia D'Argenio, Ilaria Granello.

Organization / Institutions:

UNESCO Chair in “Sustainable Urban Quality and Urban Culture, notably in Africa”, Sapienza University of Rome
 Dipartimento di Architettura e Progetto, Sapienza University of Rome
 Department of Architecture, Durban University of Technology
 Anna Irene Del Monaco, Attilia De Rose, Sapienza University, Rome – Italy,
 Yashaen Luckan, Durban University of Technology, Durban – South Africa.







Albert Park: Nickiel Paramanand, Jean Pierre Jacobs, Paul Timbane, Iacopo Benincampi, Liu Pinghao, Bheka Msomi, Nduduzo Sibisi, Katleho Seliane, Giovanni B. Croce, Alexis De Rose, Zamah Mazibuko, Silindile Ngema, Nontethelelo Mkhonza.



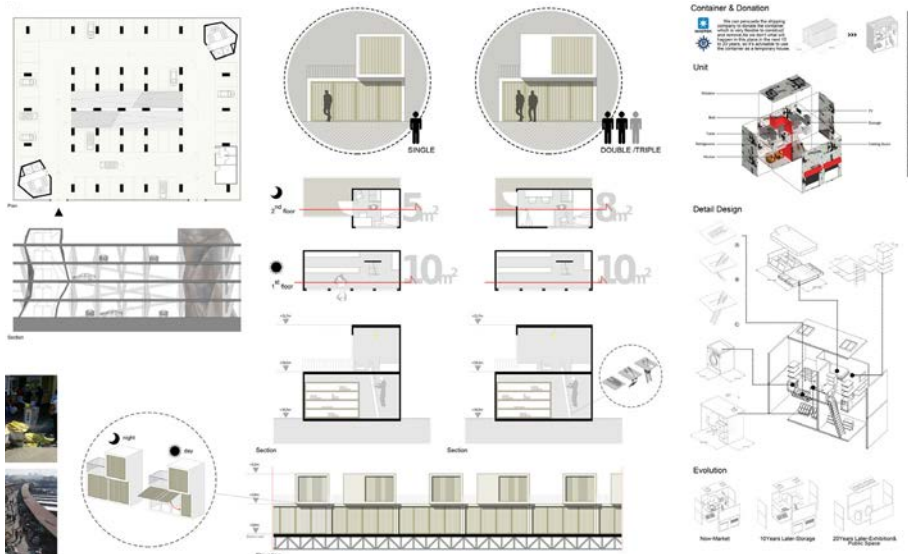
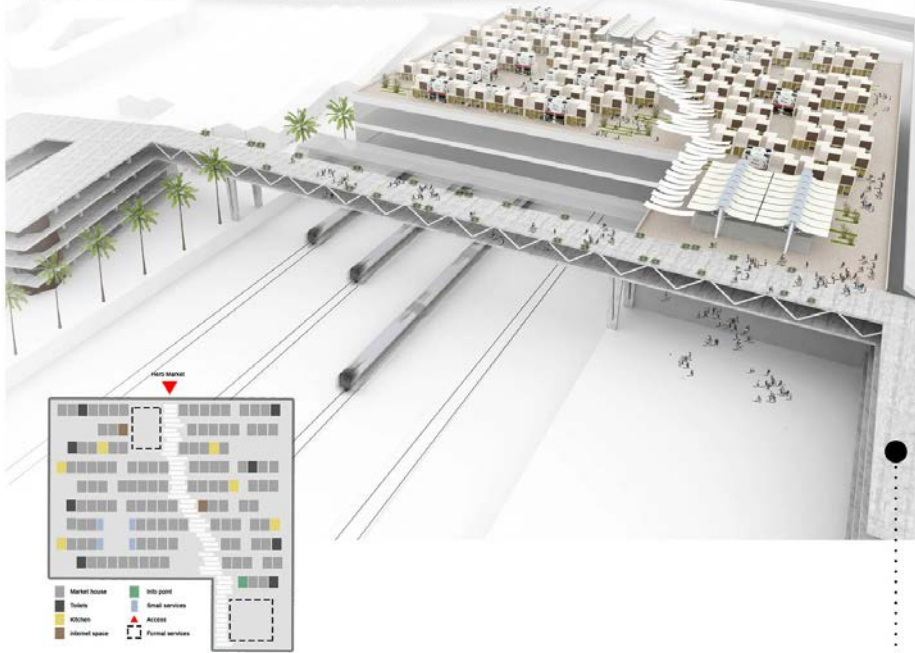
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TRANSFORMING MARKET: A CITY ON THE ROOF

TEMPORARY HOUSE, MARKET AND PUBLIC SPACES ON THE BEREA STATION'S ROOF, IN DURBAN



Berea Station Theme: Nkosingiphile A. Zungul Lulama N. Mhlongo, Dumisani Shoji, Luca Saccoccio, Valerio Vincioni, Malusi Zwane, Khulekani B. Ntuli, Philani T. Mtshali, Raffaella Amatilli, Liu Zhiqiang, Phila Khumalo, Venere Rosa Russo.

WARWICK JUNCTION

Storicamente la zona di "Warwick Junction" è stata progettata principalmente per uso residenziale e commerciale. Nel corso del tempo la città ha risposto ad esigenze in base alle necessità di trasporto. Questo evento ha richiesto la produzione di una trasformazione di Warwick in una zona di mercato informale che è diventato un posto importante per lo sviluppo economico locale.



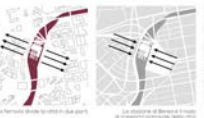
Interview



Context, Overview



Overview



WARWICK IN NUMERI
450.000 persone al giorno
300 bus a.k. 150 taxi
150.000 passeggeri
del trasporto pubblico
35.000 veicoli
Tre 5000 and 8000 venditori



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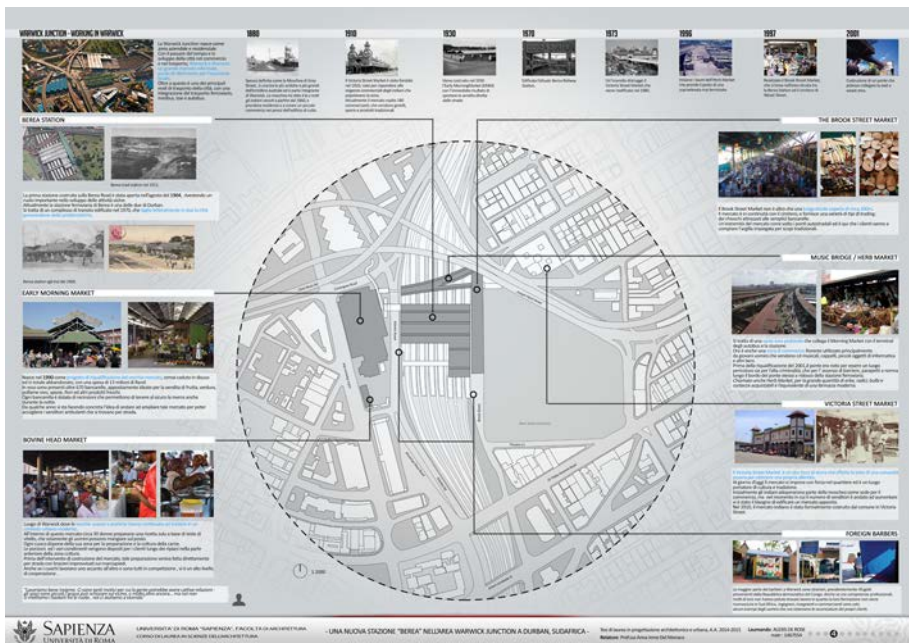
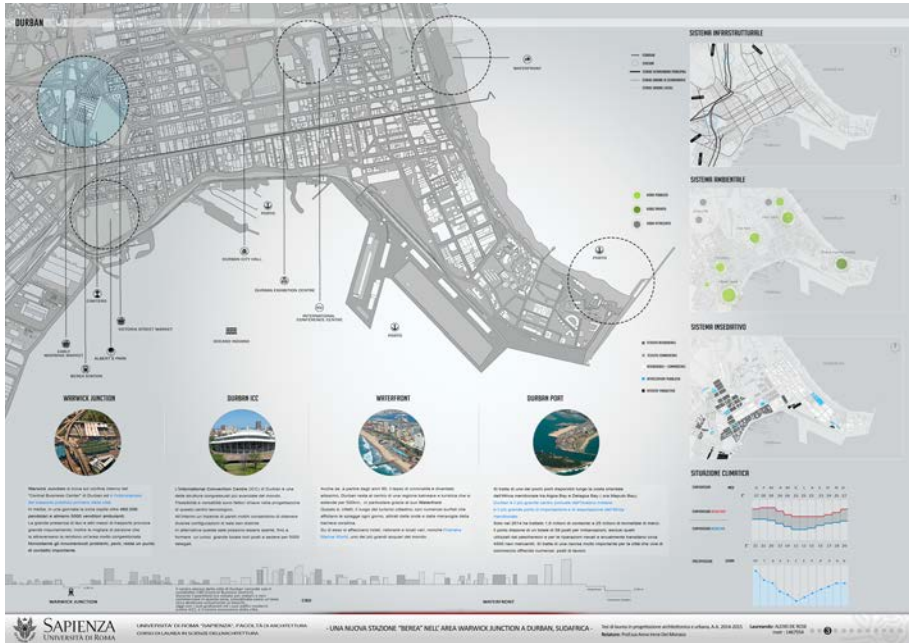
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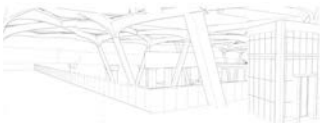
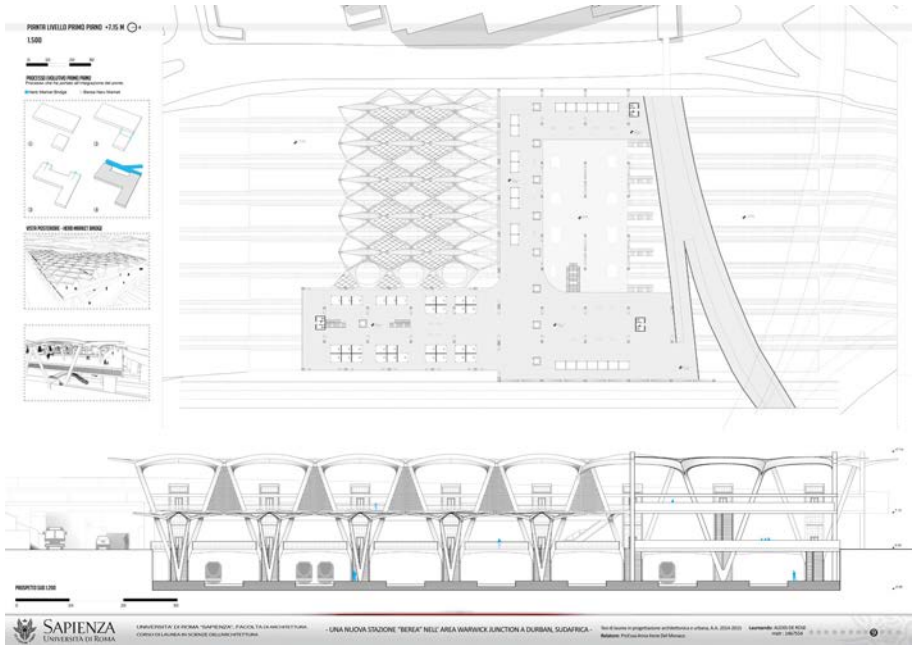
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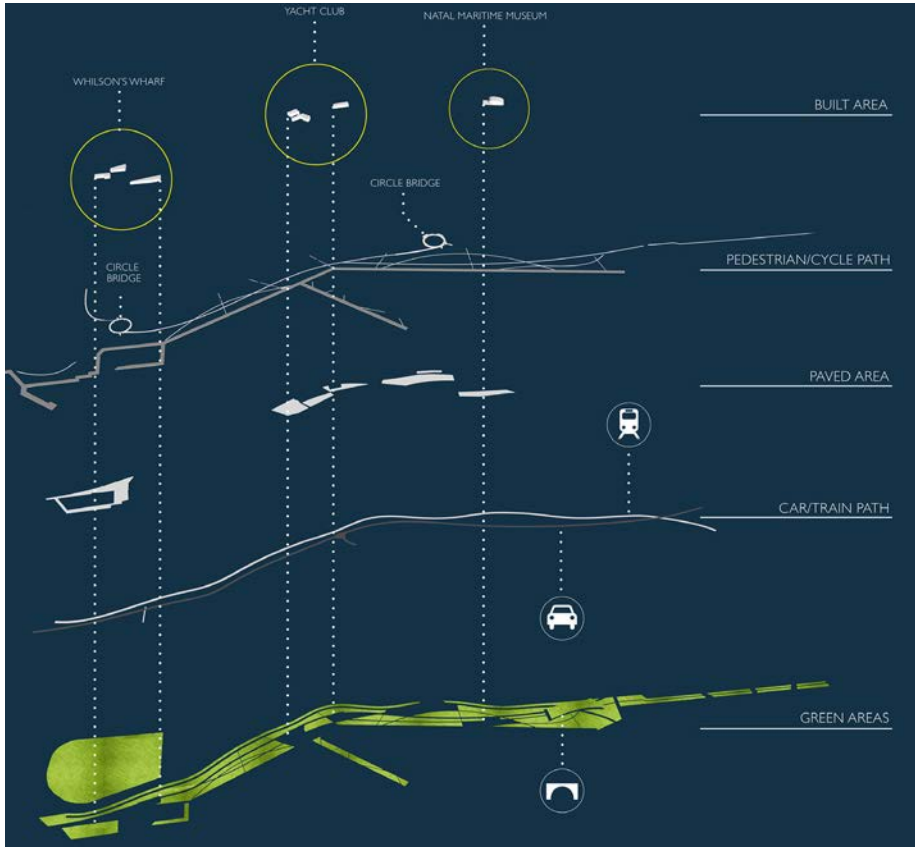
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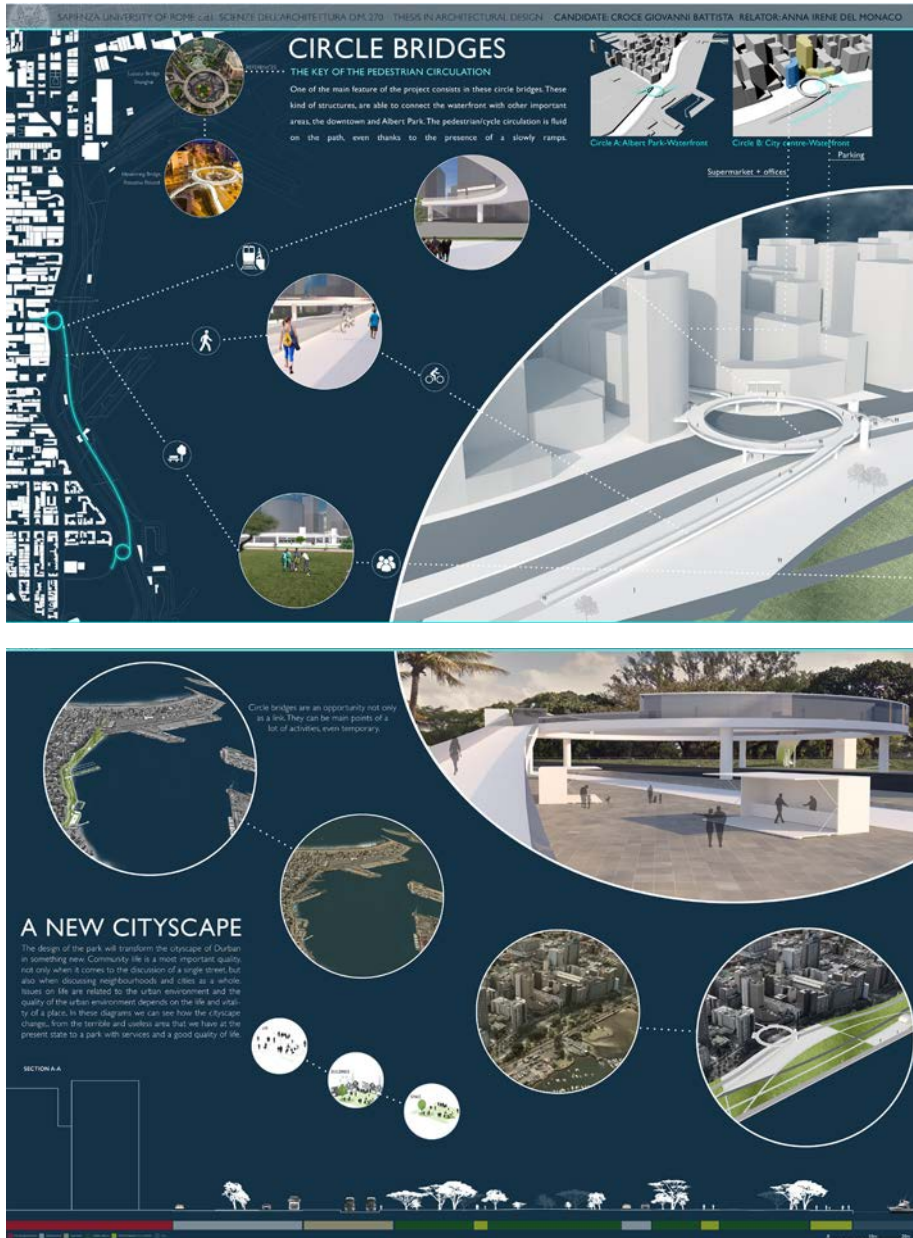
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Alexis De Rose, Undergraduate Graduation Thesis, Sapienza University of Rome, 2015.
Theme: New Station and facilities at Warwick Junction.







Giovanni Battista Croce, Undergraduate Graduation Thesis, Sapienza University of Rome, 2016.
Theme: Pedestrian connection between the city and the waterfront.

