

OBJECT



Pic. 1: object photo

FACTS

Altitude:	462m above sea level
Building Age:	approx. 1/2 - 10years
Dimensions:	ca. 2-4x2x2m
Built surface:	ca. 4m ²
No. of stories:	1
Typology:	improvised shelter
Climate:	mild, subtropical
Topography:	flat plains, high rocky mountains
Used Materials:	wood, corrugated iron, foils...

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will introduce the different kinds of shacks, the way how to build one and the many varieties of use.

A shack serves the occupant with shelter in a hardly satisfying way. Except of giving a room called home it is often leaking during rain, it is cold in winter and hot in summer. When strong wind blows one have to be frightened the shack will fall apart.

It do not even offer enough space to feel comfortable as only one person and there are mostly living entire families in it, so if you have the wish of having privacy - forget it. Also one's need for security can not get granted at all. Nevertheless people developed real creativity to face their needs with all the means they got - and sometimes they offer

surprisingly simple but effective ways to fullfill their needs.

SITE / LOCATION

Somewhere in the squatter camps of Khayelitsha...

INFRASTRUCTURE

Like already described above (see data-sheet 'Khayelitsha') there is hardly existing any infrastructure. Shacks are built everywhere, where people have enough space to build one. Depending on the quality of the location this can lead to high densities (up to >1000 inhabitants per km²) in one place and moderate density at others. For instance in the areas of the train stations Nonqubela and Nolungile the density of population is very high, because the people have short ways to the trains and can save time and money they would have spend



Pic. 2: informal trade

otherwise to get there. Buying facilities are mostly given in informal dwellings. Besides public roads the layout of the streets is rather a path system, created through regularly use of the shortest ways around the shacks. Sanitary services are given in portable latrine facilities for shared use and 9 combined toilet and shower units for aproximately 25.000 people. But they are only distributed in the older areas of the squatter camps. The demands for water supply is regulated with some 550 collective standpipes for around 25.000 squatter households. 99% of the households do not have connections to the electricity network, so either

they use wood or paraffin in order to make fire for lighting and cooking purposes or they extend illegally the circuits of the existing network.

The public transport system is also inadequate related to the many people that need to get into town every day. Trains are mostly overcrowded and serve only three stations in Khayelitsha. So the residents have to walk long ways to get to the stations or they use the quite expensive private managed minibuses. The private, state subsidised Golden Arrow bus company serves only the outlines of Khayelitsha. So there is no special internal bus system in Khayelitsha except the mini busses.

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

It has to be emphasized that community ties and social cohesion are strong in Khayelitsha. The community often functions as a resource and solidarity network to support each other. The predominantly black population is also formed by the old Xhosa traditions. Almost every black person speaks Xhosa and is related to the old rituals like the initiation of the boys, which are taken very serious amongst the community.

People in Khayelitsha are very young according to the age pyramid of 1996: 43% are younger than 20 years and 66% younger than 30 years. So only 34% are older than 30 years, whereas only 6,5% are older than 50 years. So almost half of the population depends financially on the economically active group. That would not be a problem (in comparison to the upside down age pyramid in some european countries), would not be there the high unemployment rate of nearly 60%. Illiteracy is also a great problem, because many of the immigrants, most of them from the Transkai and Ciskai, had to suffer educational disadvantages. But most of the childs are going to one of the ca.50 public schools in Khayelitsha. Unfortunately the level of education is still very low. Teachers are expected too much as there are in some schools only 10 teachers for a few thousand pupils. Besides crime and violence, like burglary, theft, vandalism, physical violence, possession of drugs and weapons and incidents of rape, are endemic are endemic at both primary and secondary schools. Therefore many residents, who are able to afford it, are sending their children to attend school outside Khayelitsha, primarily in formerly coloured and white areas.

USE

A shack is used for a lot of things but mainly for living. And in fact the inhabitants hope to move into town or a proper house sooner or later so in general it is seen as an interim solution of housing. That causes the sometimes only minimal maintenance of the dwelling. But the residents who realized they will stay in Khayelitsha and need long term housing created different kinds of possibilities and qualities of using a shack. Also the need of some kind of economic network independent from far away trade facilities caused the development of informal dwellings for trade and services. For instance I saw shacks used as a barber shop, spaza shops offering goods for daily needs like fruits, vegetables, sweets cigarettes ...etc, shacks used as phone shops and even as a cash store. Shebeens, Taverns and Gambling spots make up next to the informal trade facilities the biggest part of non-retail businesses accommodated in shacks.



Pic.3: barber shop Pic.4: daily needs

Pic.5: public phones

CONSTRUCTION

A shack is normally built within a day. In general there are four supporting planks in every corner. Sticked at them are the walls of wooden planks or metal, where openings are left to put some windows and a door in it. The roof construction consists of a few supporting wooden beams nailed on top of the walls and then mostly corrugated iron or foils are fixed onto them.

CONSTRUCTION PROCESS

First the necessary wooden planks have to be erected and fixed to the ground. This is simple done through driving the planks into the earth. Then the wooden or metal sheets are going to be attached at the planks. Openings for windows and doors are cutted into the sheets before attaching them. In step 2 the windows are nailed into the left out openings. Sometimes even small window boards are build in. The door



Pic. 6: construction process, step 1



Pic. 7: construction process, step 2



Pic. 8: construction process, step 3



Pic. 9: construction process, step 4

is also fixed to the intended opening. Afterwards the roof follows. The supporting wooden beams are fixed to the walls and the rafters lay down onto them. At least the covering material like thick plastic foils or corrugated iron is going to be fixed on top. To give protection against rain water flowing into the dwelling, the foils or metal sheets are bend around the junctions of the roof to the walls.

Inside the floor is constructed with wooden industrial pallets or just left as stamped down earth.

FOUNDATION/BASEMENT

Unfortunately there are no foundations what makes the dwelling susceptible and insecure to the elements like rain and wind. And as commonly known in the cape are often strong winds blowing as well as it is constantly raining during winter.

WALLS

Like mentioned above walls are in general consisting of wooden or metal panels and planks. And like a tree whose age one can read out of its rings one can determine the age of a shack out of its layers of wall panels.

OPENINGS

Windows and doors are mostly second hand products, got from building sites or where ever one can find used windows and doors.

ROOF

The roof is a construction of supporting beams and rafters where over thick plastic foils or corrugated metal sheets are spanned. No gutters or cornices are catching the rain to lead it in a controlled way to the ground.

ENCLOSURE

Mostly there are no enclosures but if there are they are designed quite creative. Of course they are also second hand and found fences or other constructions but it is interesting to

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see how the inhabitants try to achieve some kind of privacy and to set themselves off their surrounding.. In the pictures shown below one can see two completely different kinds of enclosures. The left one is a self-made fence in line with the improvised shack construction and the right one's owner was lucky to find a real sweet little front garden fence. Many of the actually quite rare enclosures are something in between those two examples.



Pic. 10: enclosure 1



Pic. 11: enclosure 2

INNER BUILT ELEMENTS / FURNITURE



Pic. 12: inside 1



Pic. 13: inside 2

The interior design is simple and purpose conform. Wallpapers are mostly pages of newspapers or sometimes even the package of tetrapaks for isolation purposes. According to the little space a shack offers there is only necessary furniture putted in like a bed, a chair and table and a cooking place. Simply mattresses function as beds giving space for up to 3-4 persons. Personal belongings are kept away in boxes or shelves fixed to the walls, because there is not enough space on the ground to

Images:

Pic.1: Undine David, own Source; Pic.2: Undine David, own Source; Pic.3: Michelle Shaw, own Source; Pic.4: Bradley Vans, own Source; Pic.5: Michelle Shaw, own Source; Pic.6/7/8/9: unknown Author in Mike Telschow 'Townships and the spirit of Ubuntu'; Pic.10: Bradley Vans, own Source; Pic.11: Katrin Bade, own Source; Pic.12: unknown, allafrika.com; Pic.13: unknown Author in Hilton Judin, 'Architecture, Apartheid and after'

put everything down.

PROBLEMS / CHANCES

Because of the high density in some areas and the use of paraffin and wood for lighting and cooking purposes a common incident are quick spreading fires amongst the closely build shacks with considerable loss of life, material belongings and environmental pollution, as well as undermining the development of economic activities. Another problem are the inadequate health conditions of the inhabitants. It is almost impossible to live in a hygienically manner. Waste is all over thrown on the streets because the informal areas are only partly serviced by the municipal refuse collection. Steady overflows of the sanitary toilet units causes an unhygienic environment by supporting the increase of bacteriums and other germs. Also the increase of HIV/Aids especially among the young people presents a alarming problem for economic development and social cohesion in Khayelitsha. Already a few thousand Aids orphans are living on the street in and around the CMA and local health workers consider one in three people to be a realistic figure for HIV infected persons in Khayelitsha. Additionally the unacceptable state of education and the lack of educational opportunities especially for adults block the development and emancipation of black people in order to access the formal labour market. Up to now black people are mostly employed for unskilled, elementary or service-related occupations. The poor living conditions of the vast majority of residents also contribute to exceeding crime rates, which in turn aggravate the poor circumstances of living in Khayelitsha. Also leads the ongoing rapid growth of the population to a backlog in housing and infrastructure provision, resulting in a huge extent of partly unserved informal settlements in the area as well as a degradation of the environment.

But as the government of Cape Town is aware of the problems being obvious in the townships and the great chance to upgrade the state of economic position of Cape Town within South Africa the government released already an urban development plan for Khayelitsha.

Literature:

Mike Telschow, Townships and the spirit of Ubuntu, 2003, Technical University of Berlin, Library of the Institut of Prof. Herrle; Jens Hauser; 'Urban and Economic Development of Disadvantaged Areas in the Cape Metropolitan Area, South Africa: New Prospects for the Township of Khayelitsha'; Magisterarbeit 2003; Technical University of Berlin, Library of the Institute of Prof. Herrle

The population of Khayelitsha spends already about R1,2 billion per annum for retail purchases, of which approximately 70% is currently spent outside town. This leakage factor of about 70% indicates that Khayelitsha has to be considered as a large untapped market for retail and service providers.

Websites:

<http://allafrica.com/photoessay/southafrica/photo3.html>