

From the Architect:

In truth, Architects are more creators of space than of built-form. It is this enigmatic, intangible quality that *the Nest* attempted to perfect and embody in its design and composition.

Drawing inspiration from rural Africa and informed by existing patterns and features on site, the building seeks to utilise the present, while at the same time suggesting something novel. Being located in a city park close to pre-existing structures (The National Museum of Natural History) of both historical and cultural import; a careful articulation of form and a good sensitivity of sustainable building strategies were paramount in my design approach.

With a diverse programmatic schedule the design grew into a conglomerate space in which spatial conventions were challenged. The restaurant space arched over a prominent highway; thereby obtaining good light in the mornings whilst commanding a majestic view of the surrounding suburbia. Many breakaway spaces, lecture rooms on the ground floor, and a workshop area in the schemes South Wing were included to address the problem of unemployment in Zimbabwe; being designed to optimize peer/mentor interactions and multi-valence. The materiality tries to make use of as much recycled material as possible; using repurposed steel and wood scaffolding for the cladding systems, and replacing conventional masonry with rammed earth and hempcrete. From this assemblage of materials the 'nest' aesthetic was born; with the exterior closely resembling a buffalo-weaver nest during the dry-season.

The Nest is in essence a structure that attempts to have a low profile; benign in its general impact on the Bulawayo skyline whilst existing in a state of symbiosis with its context. Its location was chosen to commemorate the city's architectural heritage in the form of the pre-existing *Lions pool*, whilst aiming to foster a relationship with the museum that would see the youth taking a greater interest in our Nations natural history.