ABSTRACT:

This thesis addresses the basic issue of stigmatisation. The vehicle used to question such an issue is that of public perception of dementia sufferers. The fundamental premise of stigmatisation stems from the misunderstanding of the medical condition, leading to a negative connotation imposed on the sufferers - 'mad people'. The project aims to investigate the implications of allowing the public to enter the facility, thereby encouraging interaction between the residents and the public.

The injection of a public component into such facilities is a direct reaction towards existing models. Most homes are deemed to be 'closed' environments as the public are kept at a distance, hence the title of an 'open' asylum. Having incorporated a 'foreign' component into the programme, this thesis also questions the response of the building to the needs of both the residents as well as that of the public.

The proposed building utilises the basics of movement through and within the building. Movement through the facility is arranged through the extensive use of ramps aimed at 'borrowing' the views of both the park, the conservation area as well as that of the business district. The circulation is divided into two loops; one beginning at the residential level and the other starts at the ground level. These loops are then choreographed to intersect at specific zones and at different levels of the building.

This project therefore offers the residents both the sense of dignity and self-confidence to deal with the outside world, and to the public a different perspective of dementia sufferers.