Modern and traditional building techniques can be well integrated as people are willing to incorporate new methods into their old ones, thereby improving them.

### 7.1 Walls and external construction of mud

Mud is an important building material in Tswana housing. It is made from a mixture of soil (sand, clay) and water. The wall is built from a mixture of soil and cow dung. The soil is carried in baskets on women's heads to the building site. In Mochudi, the grains for beer are pounded on a flat stone.

#### 5.2 Beer brewing

Beer is made from sorghum and maize. The flour is mixed with water, then cooked twice. After each cooking, the flour is allowed to germinate and is then stamped to a flour. The beer is ready for serving.

#### 5.4 Personal hygiene and toilets

Toilet facilities are usually not available in dwellings. The shed, as long as possible, is set aside specifically for cooking it. The beer is stored in large clay pots inside a house or on the verandah.

#### 5.5 Storage facilities

Baskets and clay pots are used for storing food. The flour is mixed with water, then cooked twice. After each cooking, the flour is allowed to germinate and is then stamped to a flour.

#### 5.6 Laundry arrangements

Washing and drying clothes is usually done in the outdoor area. In the case of women from Shoshong, the laundry is hung from the roof. A number of families consider it a luxury to have a bathroom. However, some dwellings in Shoshong have a bathroom. There is a need for more research in the area of personal hygiene and cooking methods.

#### 5.7 Cleaning houses and yards, collection of rubbish

Cleaning houses and yards is usually done by the women of the household. Cleaning is done weekly. In Shoshong, it is done twice a week. In the other villages, it is done weekly.

#### 5.8 Heating and lighting

Heating is done by cooking and burning cow dung. In Shoshong, it is done with a stove and a chimney. Lighting is usually done with a paraffin lamp and a three-legged iron pot, jar or clay bowl.

#### 5.9 Gardening and domestic animals

Gardening is done by the women of the household. In Shoshong, it is done by the men. Domestic animals are kept in the yards of the dwellings.

### 8.1 The development of building methods

In Mochudi, the grains for beer are pounded on a flat stone. Beer may be stored in large clay pots. In Shoshong, it is stored in a large clay pot. In Mochudi, the grains for beer are pounded on a flat stone. Beer may be stored in large clay pots. In Shoshong, it is stored in a large clay pot.

### 8.2 Attitudes towards traditional and modern houses

In Mochudi, the grains for beer are pounded on a flat stone. Beer may be stored in large clay pots. In Shoshong, it is stored in a large clay pot. In Mochudi, the grains for beer are pounded on a flat stone. Beer may be stored in large clay pots. In Shoshong, it is stored in a large clay pot.
TRADITIONAL TSWANA HOUSING
A study in four villages in eastern Botswana
by Anita Larsson and Viera Larsson

TRADITIONAL TSWANA HOUSING, first published in 1984, is a compilation of material on research work conducted in Botswana by Swedish architects Anita Larsson and me, Viera Larsson. The report was published by the Swedish Council for Building Research under their research grant projects. The research project »Traditional Tswana Housing« was financed by a grant administered by the Department of Building Function Analysis, School of Architecture, Lund University, Sweden.

The original publication was produced by using solely black colour for printing text, photos and sketches – the technology available and affordable at the time. However, thirty-six years following the printing, I believe it is relevant that the publication be re-issued applying today’s digital technology in colour – to fully reflect the beauty of Tswana traditional houses and homes. Further, with modernization rapidly consuming what is traditionally Tswana houses and homes, the historical value can easily be lost.

The content and text remain the same as in the original publication. The only changes introduced to this version is the inclusion of the »Foreword« and »Conclusions 2020«. The photos are produced from scanned colour slides taken during the field study of the research project in 1984. However, the more than thirty-six years of storage have, in some cases, created difficulties in the production of a technically perfect result. Where considered ideal, the original black-and-white photos are retained.

The work with this second edition was inspired and encouraged by Sithabile Mathe, a Botswana architect, and Heather Dodd, a South African architect and a friend. They wrote the Foreword and Conclusions. The author, Viera Larsson, is grateful and thanks for their mostly valuable input. Anita Larsson has passed away in 2015.

FROM THE BOOK, 1984:

THE AIM OF THE RESEARCH STUDY is to present the first documentation of traditional Tswana housing in Botswana today. The layout of the dwelling, the use of space and the building methods are the main interests. The study proceeds from the household and focuses upon its housing needs and ways of solving them in accordance with the possibilities available. Traditional Tswana housing is an integral part of the self subsistence economy in Botswana, based on farming and herding. The traditions are still very much alive as the majority of the population live in rural areas and are more or less dependant on incomes in kind generated in the self subsistence economy.

The project is justified for two reasons:
• Documentation in itself is urgent in the context of African traditional housing as Tswana housing is now undergoing rapid changes and
• Documentation will provide knowledge of traditional housing. This is essential for the development of low cost housing in urban and rural areas.

The new addition is a soft bound book of 232 pages, in full colour and of size 170 x 240 mm.

The book will be available in Sweden, in Botswana and in South Africa.

The cost of a copy will be SEK 250, BWP 320 and ZAR 470

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND YOUR ORDER CONTACT:

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FOREWORD

by Sithabile Mathe

I COMPLETED MY ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION in 1999 and to this day, many people in Botswana still do not consider the practice of Architecture as a profession that is suitable for a woman. As a student and now as a practitioner, upon telling someone that I am an Architect, I am often met with a look of disbelief or at best, a polite dismissive smile. When I was growing up in my mother’s village in Mochudi under the care of my grandmother, I watched and later helped her repair and decorate her home at the cattle post. The walls and floors were made of sun-baked clay, the roof made of thatch and the patterns on the walls crafted in exquisite, delicate shapes and forms. In my mind and in my culture, Architecture has always been a natural domain for women.

In 1997 the choice of subject matter for my Architectural honour’s degree thesis »Agang Basadi – A Gendered Perspective of Tswana Housing« was a natural one. It was through my research that I came across the extensive works of Anita Larsson and Viera Larsson which became the core reference material for my research thesis. Their work is still an authoritative, lasting record of an irretrievable part of our architectural heritage in Botswana and a body of work that needs to resurface and infuse the current dying dialogue on our Architectural identity as a nation.

When I established my practice »Moralo Designs«, my intention was to develop traditional Tswana design thinking to inspire beautiful, usable, modern spaces that fit perfectly into the culture and climate of Botswana. The embodied indigenous knowledge process of developing purposeful and innovative buildings solutions that fulfil functional and aesthetic demands based on the needs of our community in Botswana was my ethos. Go rala is the act of making these patterns, the originator for our practice name Moraló.

Our vernacular form of architecture has been eroded from our landscape. It has been discarded for more ‘modern’ forms of architecture without its real value being assessed; its relation to our climate, landscape being recognised, and its reflection of the needs and beliefs of our society considered. Historically our lifestyle has been perpetuated by general knowledge transfer, through oral mediums in a subtly transformative manner. This book has cemented this knowledge, making it accessible for all future generations in its historical accuracy.

Anita & Viera’s book has documented the layout and use of space in traditional Setswana homes and it also goes on to document the transformation of these homes with the advent of modern building materials, construction methods, social values.

As a society, this new edition of the book is crucial to ensuring that we do not forget our Architectural heritage. This book has shown the importance of themes, intentions, and forms of Tswana architecture and how these have evolved over time. It is simultaneously a reflection of the artistic abilities of all women expressed through the decoration of the walls and this record by Anita and Viera has documented that Architecture is an outward manifestation of our community’s identity and it must be preserved.

Our traditional buildings were cost-effective, used locally available construction materials, reflected our local traditions and always left a light footprint on the earth. They were built by women working creatively and collaboratively and truly embodied many of the values of sustainable architecture. Today, women still only constitute approximately 15% of the profession in Botswana. There is still a glaring need to ensure better representation within a profession that is responsible for creating spaces that house all of society.

Anita Larsson is no longer with us as she passed away in 2015 and Viera’s hard work in reviving their work and getting the book re-published can never be rewarded enough. The images have been brought to life in colour photographs and will awaken, for some, our memories of a precious time in our past. For the younger generation they are a window into who we really are. As a nation, Batswana will have a key part of their history accessible to many in a time where we are on a long journey to find ourselves again. Viera, thank you for this.

I am eternally grateful for this work and humbled to be able to give this foreword. It is a means to examining and recording qualities about our spaces that stood the test of time and that could potentially resolve our future housing needs as an inspiration to a relevant and contextual building culture in Botswana.

Sithabile Mathe, Gaborone Botswana, June 2020

Sithabile has 20 years of post-graduate experience in the built environment working with both design and implementation of projects. She qualified in Architecture in Glasgow, Scotland. In 2006, she established Moraló Designs, an Architectural Practice which now offers Urban Design, Architectural Design, Landscape Design, Interior Design and Project Management services. She is a registered Architect and serves as Chairperson of the Architect’s Registration Council of Botswana, as Chairperson of the BHC Board and as Treasurer on the Architects Association of Botswana Executive Committee. She is a former Council Member for the Commonwealth Association of Architects (CAA) as Vice President Africa Region and currently the Chair of CAA Validation.
POSTSCRIPT

by Heather Dodd

Legae eKhaya

Words that say »home«.

AS A STUDENT OF ARCHITECTURE in the mid-eighties the teaching of the history of architecture hinged around a taxonomic approach based on the Western tradition. Fortunately, we were exposed to a few teachers who looked to our local context for inspiration and to document the unique spatial lessons afforded by the architecture of our African cultures. Yet nearly thirty years later the paucity of the architectural record of our immediate African architectures is problematic – how do students of architecture immerse themselves in their own culture and indeed move forward towards creating unique interpretations and new architectures rooted in our context in an ahistoric vacuum? Recent events such as the Decolonialist movements in the educational sphere in South Africa have shown that there is a great hunger by the youth to position themselves in a reality that is unapologetically African.

The Larssons’ work belongs to a moment in history, bound with the Swedish solidarity movement that brought development assistance through Sida to countries such as Botswana, Zambia and Lesotho. As they made Botswana their home away from home, they committed themselves to understand the culture within which they were working. Within this context, they respectfully studied and documented the villages that make up the study in this book, and as such it is an important record of Tswana architecture.

At the essence of this book is the idea of placemaking and of ‘home’. In the conclusions to this book, the Larssons pose the question »will traditional Tswana architecture survive«. Whether the study will just be of value as a historical record of the material culture of that time and place, or whether an examination of traditional architecture could play a bigger role as the basis for a sustainable appropriate approach to affordable housing provision.

To limit the narrative to these questions is to limit the value of the study to the past – to a place and time that no longer exists and to a single context, rather than thinking about the fundamental values this architecture holds for today and the future. Much has changed since this book was published in the mid-eighties, as Botswana forged an identity as a modern democratic state. The traditional landscape has urbanised and the villages described in this book do not exist in this form anymore. Culture by definition, continually changes and adapts – it can never be static, yet the villages and homesteads described in this book remain as the ancestral homes of the Batswana. Our rootedness in ‘home’ does not change.

In the same way that Alberti (1404–1472) described the city as a house and the house as a little city, we might consider multiple readings of ‘home’ within Tswana architecture as homestead – village – town, a repeated spatial ordering system that scales thresholds from the domestic to the city. In this, our readings of this work need not be limited to our perceptions of ‘traditional architecture’ but might rather focus on the liminal space that would allow us to take the lessons from our ancestral homes into the ordering of our urban and social spaces within the city.

Focussing on these values would allow us to reflect at a much deeper level on the lessons of this architecture. The challenge to the current generation of students and practitioners is to forge a unique trajectory from this understanding of heritage and home, that transcends this study and exploits the mental space rooted in culture, that will truly create a modern African architecture.

Heather Dodd, Johannesburg South Africa, June 2020

Heather Dodd is a partner in Savage + Dodd Architects based in Johannesburg South Africa. Savage + Dodd Architects believe in the power of design in restorative spatial justice and urban resilience within the context of architectural practice in a society with a deeply unjust past. This is reflected in the scope of projects undertaken in the Practice, which encompass buildings within the public realm such as universities and social housing, which are reflective of new building types for a new society. Working in the inner city of Johannesburg for the past 20 years has given her a unique insight in housing processes, urban living and the urban condition.