

# CHAPTER 4

URBAN PRECEDENT STUDIES

## 4.1 CASE STUDY -NIGHT LIFE AND THE STREET

*An exploration of the relationship between street life and night life in greenside Johannesburg*

**“Most of the activities close down at night; those which stay open won’t do much for the night life of the city unless they are together”**(Alexander, 1978: 180)



## A STREET IN GREENSIDE

A node of development and mixed-use functionality exists within the residential suburb of Greenside Johannesburg. This development is concentrated along Gleneagles Road and dissipates along Greenway Street. The street has always been a most retail node than the surrounding area but in recent years the place has evolved into a vibrant night life and recreational hub.

The street has grown incrementally over time and is currently a diverse nightlife promenade with a multitude of functions providing for the needs of a “typical night-out”.

If a rough estimate of a typical night-out<sup>1</sup> is detailed on a time line an evening begins with the ritual of a communal meal that engages with a social space, involving people watching and promenade. This continues into a later group that includes social drinking and more relaxed recreational activities, this transcends into louder party behaviour and most dancing occurs later into evening. The evening then declines back into a more relaxed social drinking environment and culminates with the re-introduction of food.



Fig 4.1 Google earth Aerial Photograph showing how Gleneagles road relates to its context.

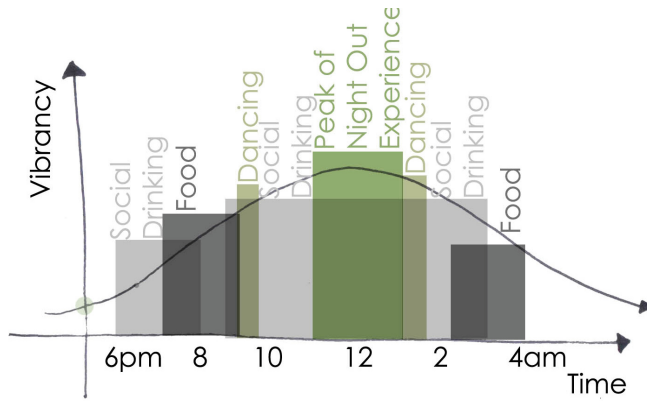


Fig 4.3 Typical night out as indicated by user that are mostly single between the ages of 18-30 but within this the timeline the users will change and different groups occupy spaces at different times.

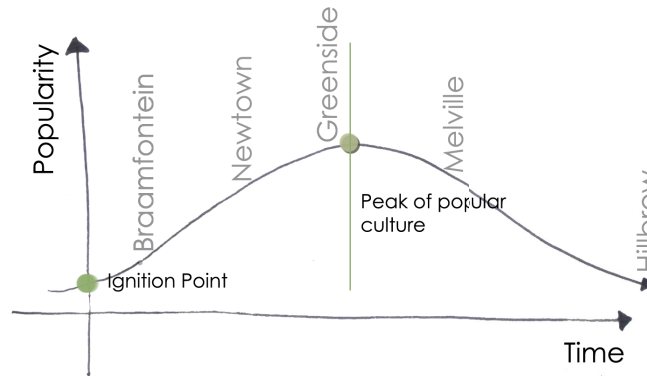


Fig 4.3 Timeline showing organic lifecycle of nightlife within the city

If a timeline of the night life within a street extrapolated onto a larger scale to determine the life-cycle of the nightlife of a street it falls into a similar pattern. If Johannesburg's active night life streets are placed onto this graph it becomes apparent that greenside is currently at its height. The challenge in understand how this organic process of popularity and destination develops is understanding the ignition point of the growth curve.

Gin restaurant owner states that it takes three establishments to create a destination street or night area. If the streets' development is mapped it is apparent that the introduction GIN a restaurant and music hall is the closest to an ignition point that can be found on the street.



Fig 4.4 Stched Photograph of street facing facade of Gleanagles road. Photograph by Author 2011



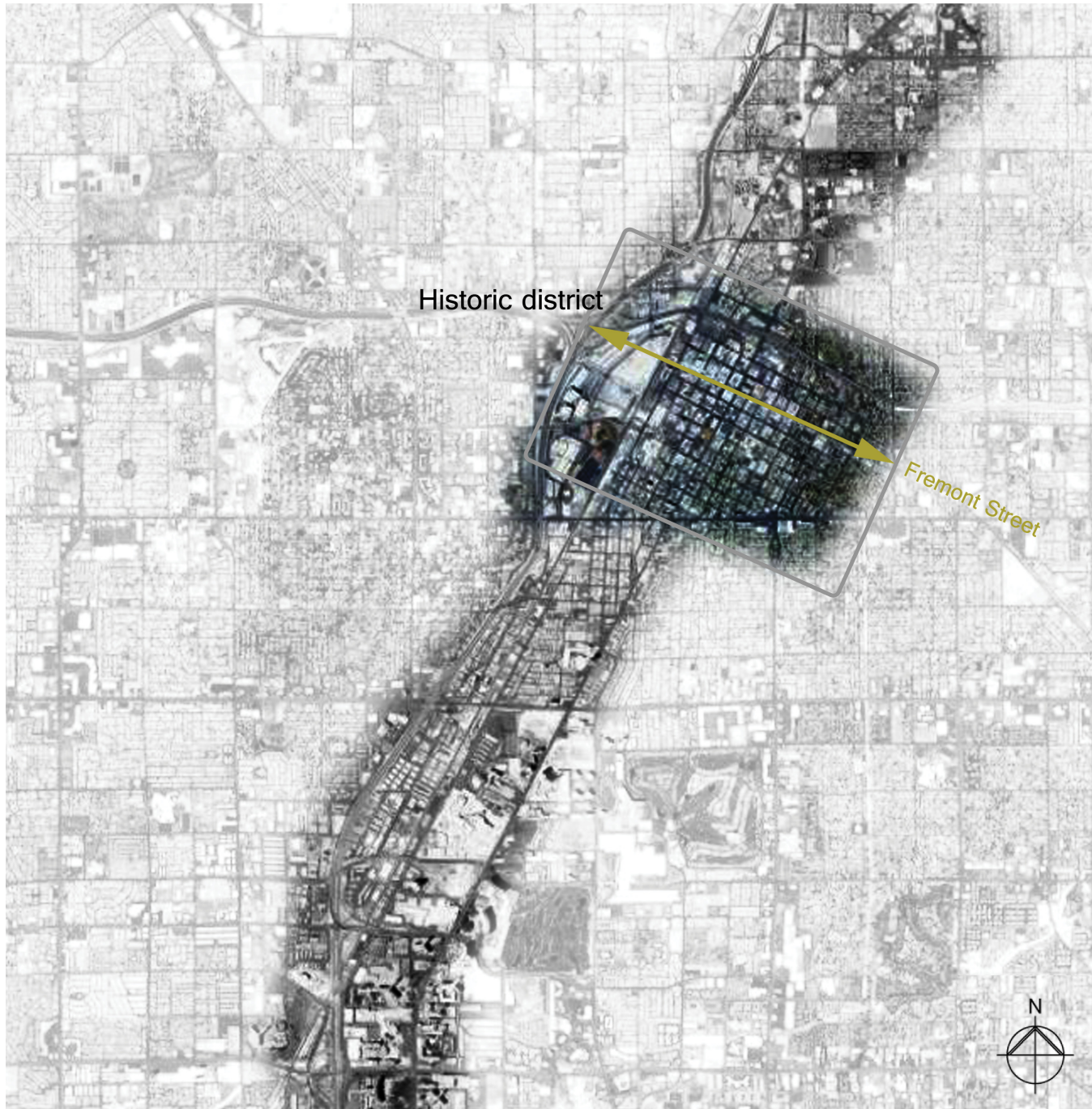


Figure 4.5 Strip Development of Las Vegas (Image Google Earth 2010)

## 4.2 CASE STUDY-LAS VEGAS

Gaming and the success of gaming as an urban catalyst for development can be investigated through a study of Las Vegas, Nevada in the United States of America,

Las Vegas, can be described as a commercial "Strip City" developed from one major axis that now contains a large concentration of casinos.

"During the 1960s, a phenomenon led by Howard Hughes, occurs in Las Vegas. Corporations are building and/or buying hotel/casino properties. They have the capital necessary and the profitability makes entrance into the casino industry extremely attractive. Gambling becomes "gaming" and starts the transition into legitimate business." (City of Las Vegas, 2011)

Robert Venturi et al in *Learning from Las Vegas: The Forgotten Symbolism of Architectural Form* (1972), provides a thorough analysis of the Strip in the 1970s. He uses Nolli's Map of Rome as precedent for mapping private and public space (Venturi suggests that the "atmospheric qualities of Las Vegas" (VENTURI et al 1972) are not easily quantified in functional maps since the "atmosphere" is inclusive of illumination, animation and iconology.

This mapping of "atmosphere" by figure ground studies of different "components" in the system provides an architectural vocabulary describing the spaces that constitute that atmosphere that is particular to place.

Fremont Street, being one of the first streets developed in Las Vegas serves as a suitable precedent for describing how an architectural intervention was used to revitalise an historic precinct, which was falling into a state of decline. It's relevance also lies in the programme it offers.



Venturi's mapping of the strip uses various aspects as criteria to assess the strip development, which includes illumination, ceremonial spaces and the presence of the car as contributing to its atmosphere." (VENTURI et al 1972) "Change and Permanence of the architecture is effected by the competitive branding and signage, giving a fast paced flux, of facade treatments, interest and diversity . (VENTURI et al, 1972)

Within the context of Maputo, the elements providing degrees of fluidity and permanence can be light, the informal economy and its effects on the transitional nature of threshold space.

The "decorated shed" of signage in globalized Las Vegas can be interpreted in the context of Maputo as a series of transforming veils on the threatened permanence of historic Baixa.

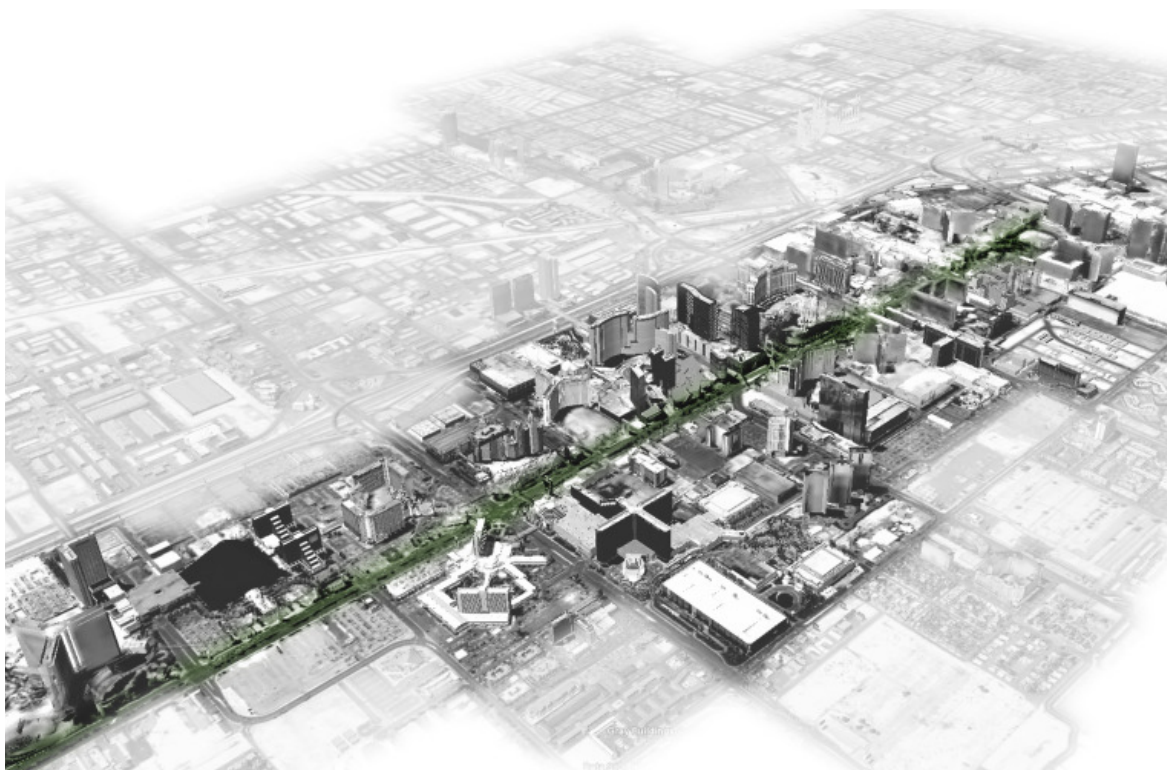


Figure 4.6 3-dimensional building as a per Google Earth (2010) showing the scale of buildings along the strip

## ASPHALT

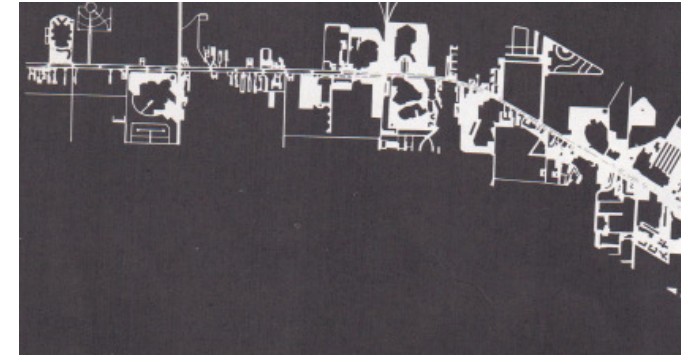


Figure 4.Learning from Ls Vegas 2.jpg

## ILLUMINATION

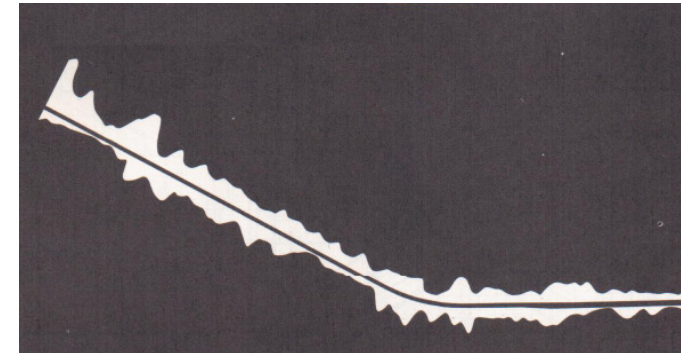


Figure 4.Learning from LAs Vegas 4.jpg

## CEREMONIAL SPACE

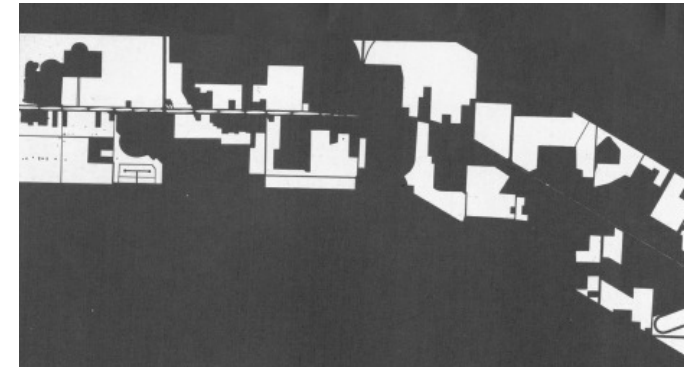


Figure 4.Learning from Las Vegas.jpg



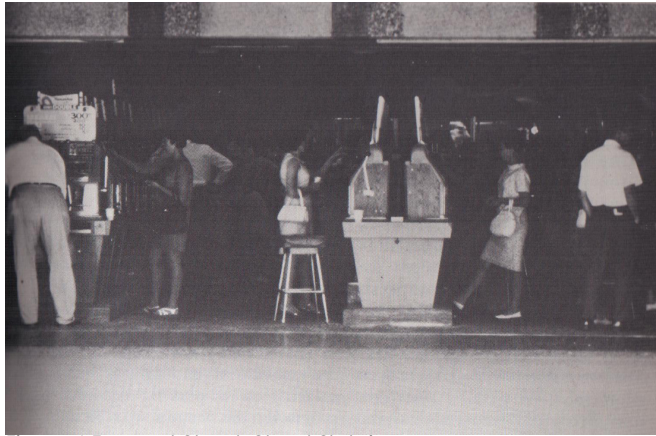


Figure 4.Fremont Street Street Slots.jpg

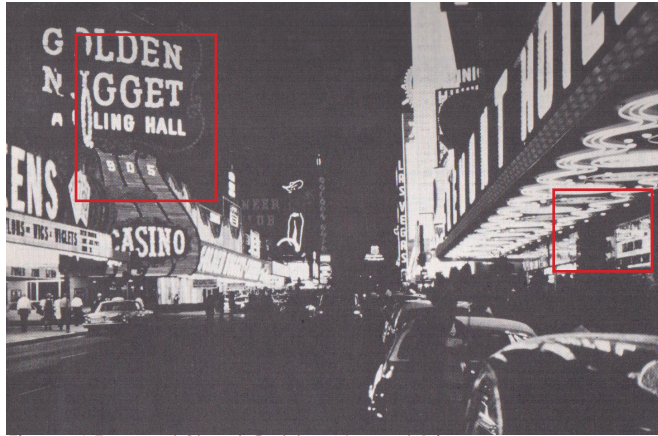


Figure 4.Fremont Street Golden Nugget 1.jpg



Figure 4.goldennugget\_t466.jpg

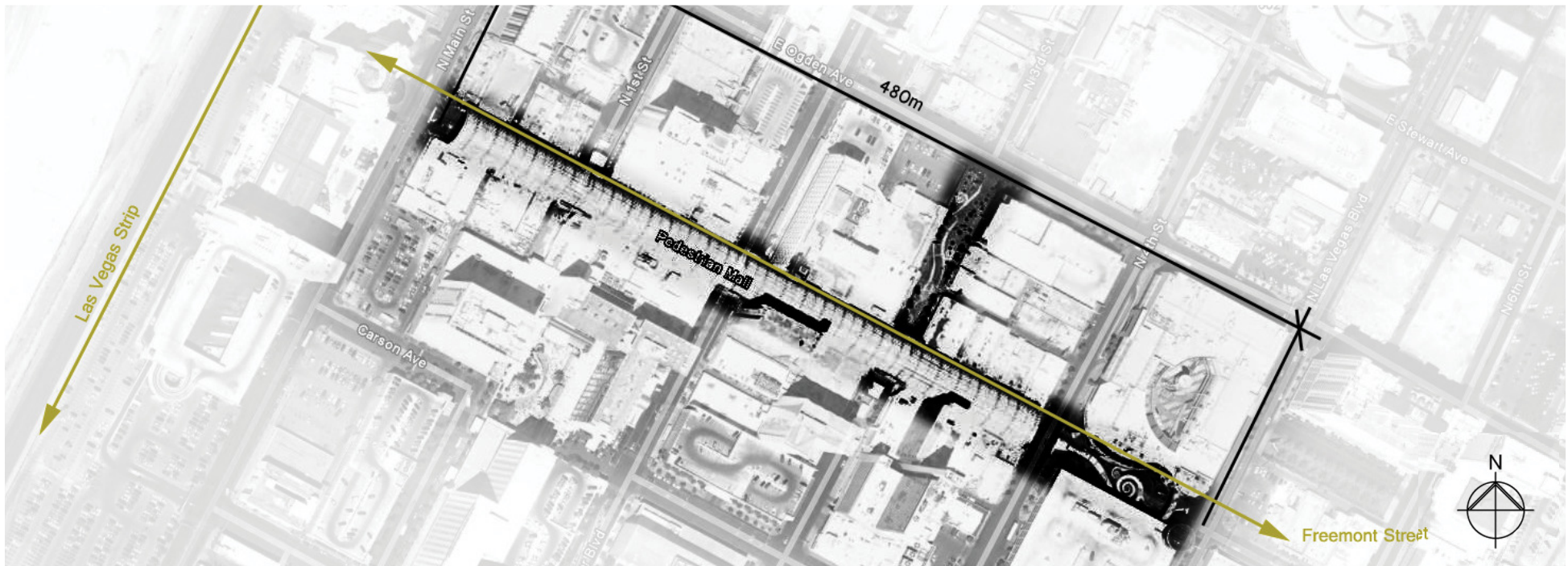


Figure 4.8 Photo- Montage of images showing the interior space of the Fremont Street Experience see Fig list for References



#### 4.2.1 FREMONT STREET EXPERIENCE

Architect(s): The Jerde Partnership  
Address: Fremont St. from Main to 4th  
Year: 1995

"The Fremont Street Experience was an attempt to redevelop and rejuvenate downtown Las Vegas. The popularity of the family-oriented Strip and the aging of downtown casinos kept many visitors away. The addition of the four-block-long, 90-foot-high space frame has transformed Fremont Street into one large casino with a pedestrian mall. Concerts and other events are held at the Experience, in addition to the light show that plays hourly in the evenings. Overall, the project has been considered a success." (Fuentes, 2003)

The Fremont street experience covers approximately 480m of street with a convex roof structure used as a display screen. This acts as a gimmick to attract potential users.

Respect to heritage of the historic buildings is apparent in the way in which the new structure is supported solely on its own columns and visible spaces exist between existing and the new structure.

The structure is entirely above the existing and does not interfere with the view to the top of existing buildings and encloses all the street facades within the covered structure.



Figure 4.9 Photograph showing Fremont street experience from east. Photograph. Feurtes (2003)

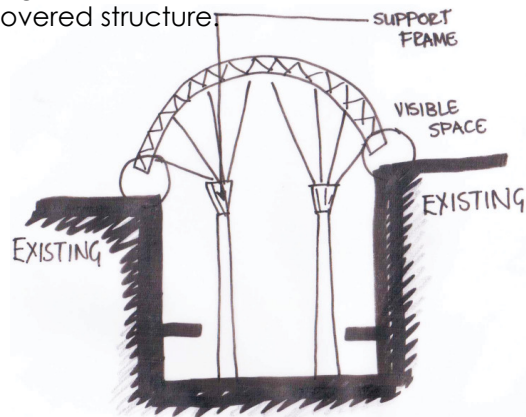
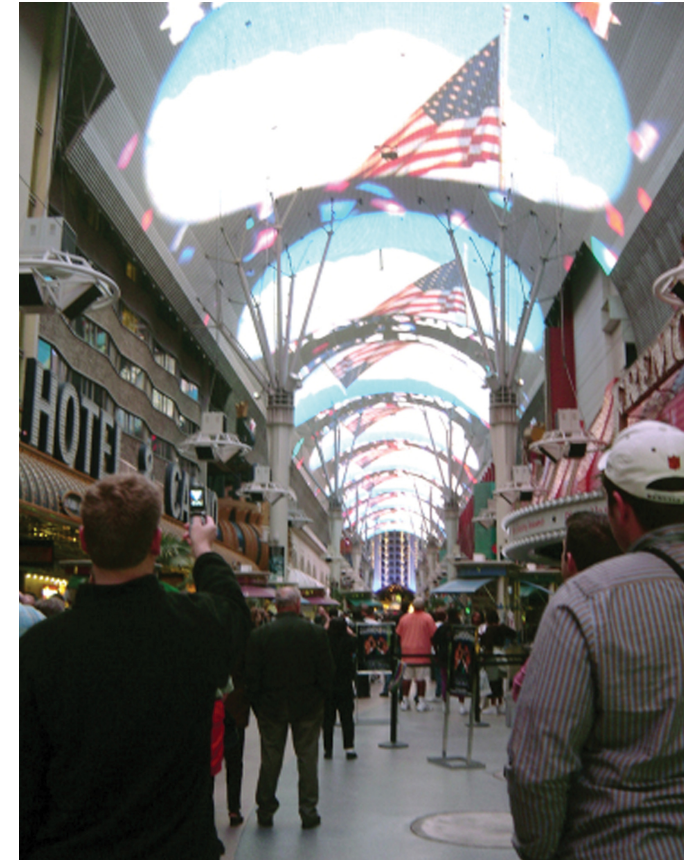


Figure 4.11 Diagram showing connections to existing.





### 4.3 CASE STUDY\_ SMALL STREET MALL, JOHANNESBURG

Spurred by similar intentions of the Fremont Street Experience, small street was converted into a pedestrian mall in the early 1990's to compete with the new enclosed shopping malls.

The street connects the Johannesburg Sun Hotel to the Carlton Centre Mall, and Office block to the south.

Small Street mall is characterized by pockets of space that fit organically against the building facade. The roof plane allows for a change in quality of space through its irregular openings and termination into a larger civic space.

The types of programmes along the street vary from culturally significant buildings, to low end thrift stores, intimate small stores and larger multi volumes with parking concealed below street level.

Within the context of the Baixa, the roof plane as a veiling element for modifying light quality, atmosphere, repetition and drama in the street experience, can be a way of highlighting or enhancing existing building fabric, within public everyday space.

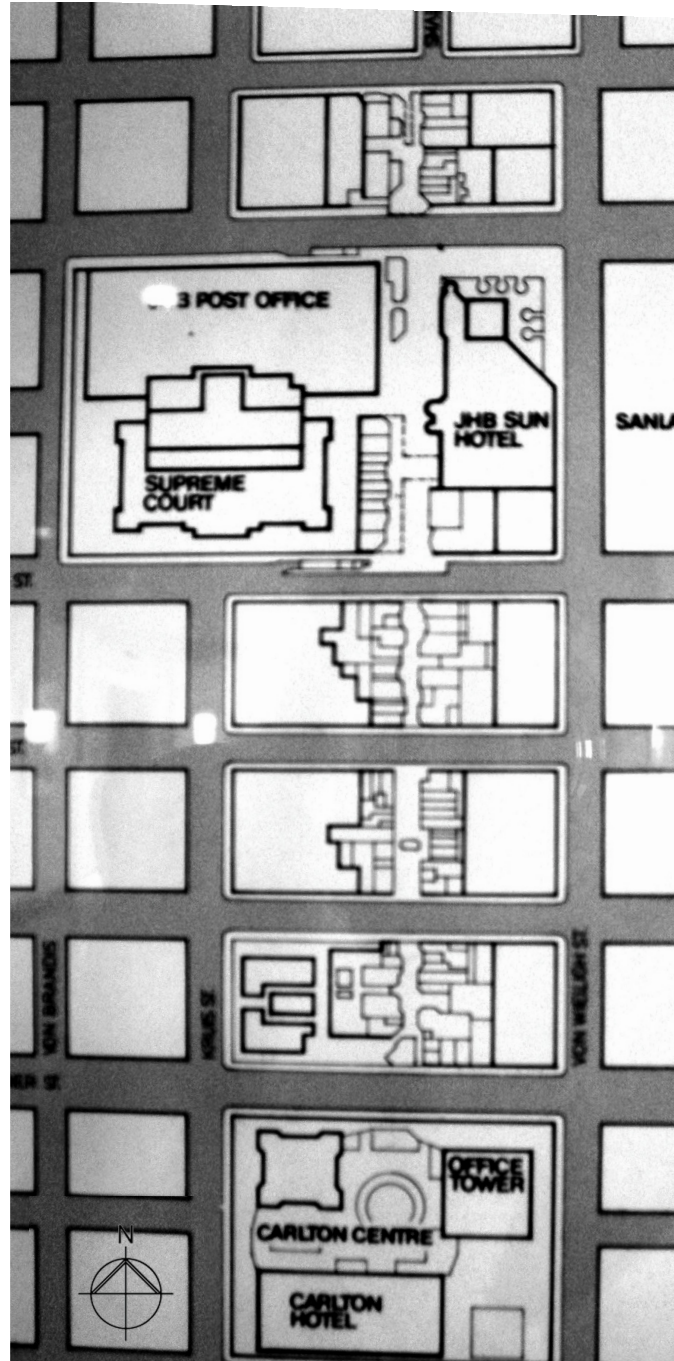


Figure 4.IMG\_4115.JPG







The changing roof planes create different moods and intensity in the urban space.

Within the context of Maputo the roof plane may play a crucial role as being a sensitive intervention to *Rua de Bagamoyo*, that alters the mood of a space with little damage to the historical fabric itself.