



“By endeavouring to impart an order to the world of our own making as a kind of human counterpart to the order found in nature, there emerged something we might call ‘the idea of a man-made world.’ That ‘idea’ continues to guide how we shape our world today and how we change nature to accommodate the presence of our world within it”.

(Crowe, 1995, Nature and the idea of a man-made world)

figure 2. panoramic view of Pretoria city, facing south



chapter 1 introduction





1. INTRODUCTION:

1.1 PRETORIA AND THE NATIONAL ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS:

Pretoria is a culturally rich city with exceptional physical qualities and economic opportunities. It is not only the capitol of our diverse and beautiful country, but it also hosts many exciting activities and tourist attractions. The National Zoological Gardens (henceforth referred to as the Zoo) is

the biggest natural attraction in the inner city.

The Zoo has come a long way. It was established in 1899 on an uninhabited farm and ,through its own Strategic Plan, has transformed into an internationally recognized Zoo.

It plays a major social and ecological role in Pretoria, not only for the obvious conservation and research components they house, but also in educating the community and thousands of visitors in environmental issues that threaten our delicate eco-systems.



figure 3. sketch of paul kruger statue



1.2 HISTORY

The establishment, known today as the National Zoological Gardens of South Africa, was founded in 1899 by the then-director of the State Museum (now Strijdom Square), Dr. Jan Boudewyn Gunning.

A collection of animals, that were to be stuffed and put on display, were kept in the backyard of the museum. Dr. Gunning, however, had other plans for the animals.

With the intention of establishing a zoological garden, the government bought the farm, Rus in Urbe, in 1895. In 1899 the men, who occupied the farm, moved out to join the Anglo-Boer War and Dr. Gunning jumped at the chance to relocate his animals there.

“Dr. Gunning encouraged residents living in the area adjacent to the Museum to complain about the noise and odour caused by the animals living in its backyard. Very soon he obtained permission to transfer a group of animals to “Rus in Urbe” on 21 October 1899” (<http://www.nzg.ac.za/>).

This was the humble beginning of the Zoo. In 1916 the Zoo received national status, and became known as the National Zoological Gardens of South Africa. At this point the Zoo could not afford many animals, and merely served as a stop-over point for animals travelling from Africa to Europe and America.

The main entrance was originally built in 1903

when the Zoo consisted of only a few farm houses and enclosures for a small collection of animals. Since then the Zoo has expanded greatly, with the most Northern enclosures and boundary fence now forming the ridge between the CBD and Pretoria-North.

The grounds on which the Zoo is situated is now owned by the Department of Public works. All renovations and additions have to be submitted to, and approved by, the department.



figure 4. historical photos of study area



marabastad

boom

ZOO

paul kruger

church

union building

figure 5. aerial showing location of zoo in cbd



figure 6. corner of boom and paul kruger street. zoo blocked off



figure 7. view down boom street from

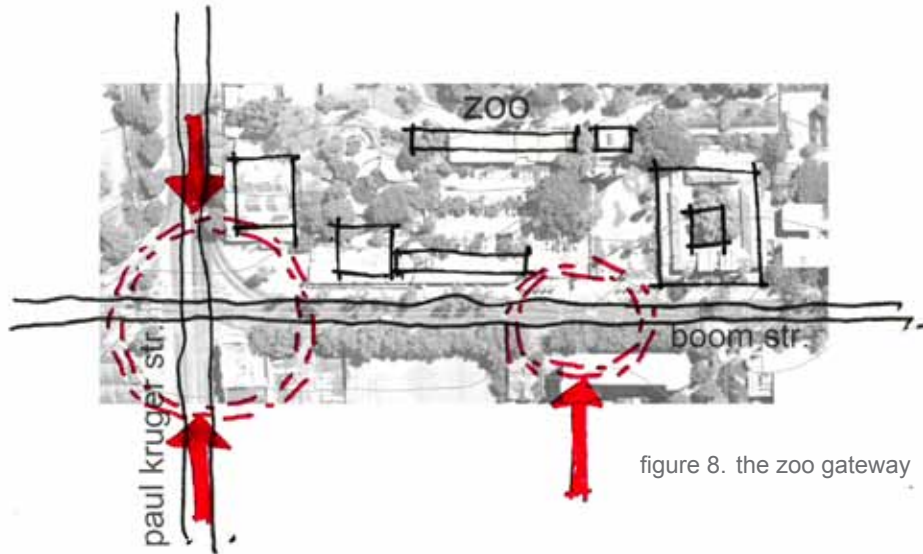


figure 8. the zoo gateway

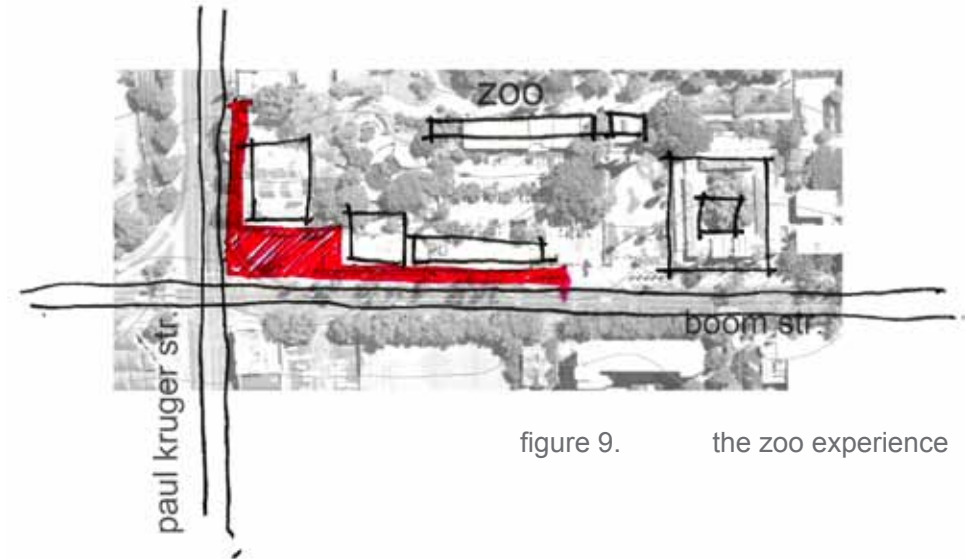


figure 9. the zoo experience

1.3 THE PROBLEM AROUND THE ZOO

The Zoo forms a visual and tactile green edge along the Northern ridge of the CBD and the Paul Kruger Street entrance into the city creates a beautiful natural backdrop to the city's skyline. The area is, however, not without its problems.

THE ZOO GATEWAY

The corner of Boom and Paul Kruger Street forms a main entrance point into the CBD. This makes it the ideal location for the Zoo, as it is easily accessible to everyone entering the area. The corner also hosts various heritage buildings and trade opportunities, adding history and a richness to the surroundings.

The main entrance to the Zoo facilities is undefined and hidden behind existing infrastructure. This lack of announcement and importance to the gateway does a great injustice to a major attraction node in Pretoria.

THE ZOO EXPERIENCE

The "face" of the Zoo on Boom Street lacks a pedestrian interface and an attraction factor that will encourage more visitors into the area. because of the entrance being hidden away behind fences and existing infrastructure. The hidden entrance seems to deter people from lingering in the area, and promotes fast pedestrian movement along the sidewalk. An opportunity should be created for passersby to stop and admire the view. Funding for the Zoo's projects is an ongoing problem, as their main income is dependent on the revenue made from paying visitors coming to the Zoo.

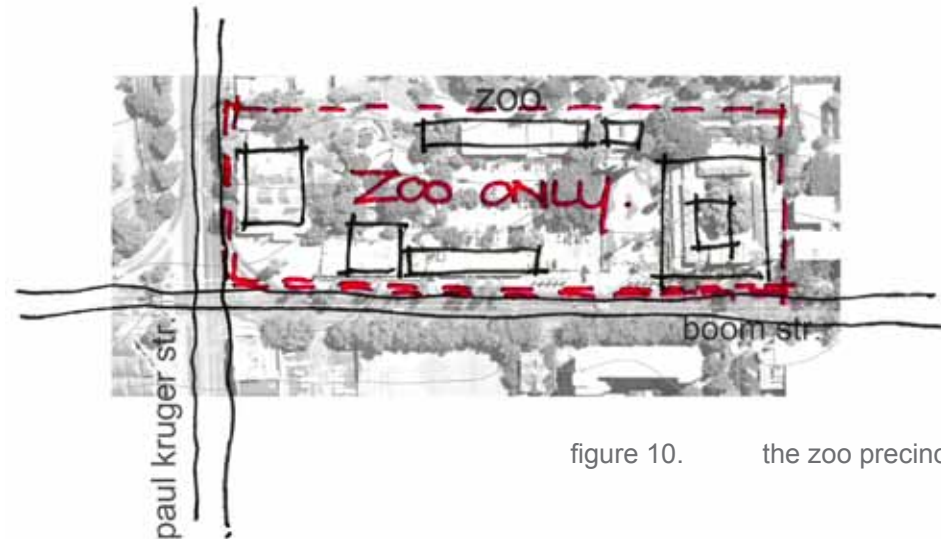


figure 10. the zoo precinct

THE ZOO PRECINCT

The National Zoological Garden's Strategic plan states that the Zoo currently receives around 600 000 visitors per annum. Increasing this number to 1 000 000 will only be possible if the Zoo and its associated facilities can accommodate, and encourage more activity in the region.

The Northern precinct lacks the complexity of a successful urban environment as most of the urban space North of Boom Street has become large mono-functional areas. These areas provide vital facilities and opportunities needed in the precinct, but fall short in integrating a successful mixed-use methodology.

The Zoo precinct, while being a major tourist attraction in a well located area of the city, currently faces a state of degeneration and despair. It does not portray the stature of importance and vitality that one would expect from a world renowned tourist attraction.

A sustainable city should increase the quality of the lives of the people living and working in it, and architecture can be utilized in this regard .

A possible solution could be to integrate the economic opportunities that Marabastad provides into the city. The precinct around the Zoo needs to address issues around attracting more tourists and local residents into the area.