


## 002 INTRODUCTION

fig 2.1 Sketch of cooling towers



“THE OBJECT MUST  
EXCITE CURIOSITY  
AND DESIRE. A  
CONSIDERABLE  
DEGREE OF  
STRANGENESS IS  
INDISPENSABLE. THE  
PROJECT, LIKE ANY  
TRUE OBJECT OF  
DESIRE, MUST AT  
FIRST APPEAR  
MYSTERIOUS, AN  
UNKNOWN TERRITORY  
WAITING TO BE  
DISCOVERED AND  
EXPLORED” (HADID  
2005:112).

The aim of the discourse is to establish an understanding of the role of **adaptive reuse** in the **recycling of the city fabric**. This dissertation seeks to explore how sites threatened with redundancy and abandonment can become sites of opportunities. The process of transformation is investigated and documented showing the development of a site from 'urban void' to the re-inhabitation of that void.

The goal is to create a lively and dynamic environment which allows its participants to engage and interact with **foreign objects** found in the urban setting - such as the cooling towers of a coal fired power station - whilst providing opportunities for people to gather at the city edge.



fig 2.2 Cooling towers viewed from Quagga road

For the sake of this discourse, the **assumption** has been made regarding the availability of the site for the proposed intervention. Though most parts of the site housing the power station are currently operational, it shall be assumed that all components of the site are **v a c a n t** and **n o n - o p e r a t i o n a l**.

---

*“A wave of verticals. Its agitation is momentarily arrested by vision. A gigantic mass is immobilized before our eyes” (de Certeau 1988:91).*

---

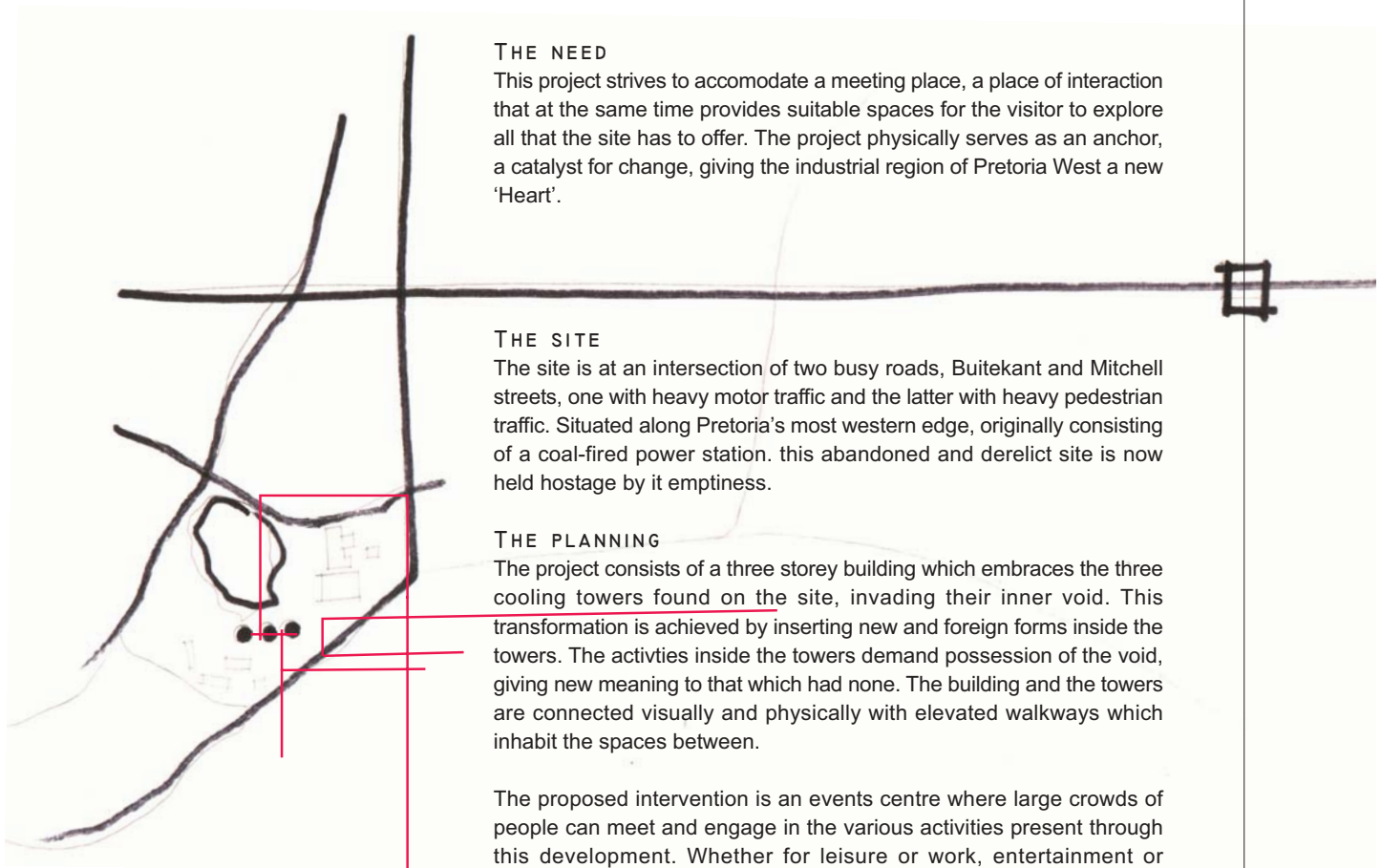


fig 2.3 skyline of Pretoria West



**003 purpose**

One of the prime purposes of architecture is to heighten the **drama of living**. The differentiated spaces must be articulated in order to ensure that the emotional content of the particular act of living which takes place in them is reinforced.



#### THE NEED

This project strives to accommodate a meeting place, a place of interaction that at the same time provides suitable spaces for the visitor to explore all that the site has to offer. The project physically serves as an anchor, a catalyst for change, giving the industrial region of Pretoria West a new 'Heart'.

#### THE SITE

The site is at an intersection of two busy roads, Buitekant and Mitchell streets, one with heavy motor traffic and the latter with heavy pedestrian traffic. Situated along Pretoria's most western edge, originally consisting of a coal-fired power station, this abandoned and derelict site is now held hostage by its emptiness.

#### THE PLANNING

The project consists of a three storey building which embraces the three cooling towers found on the site, invading their inner void. This transformation is achieved by inserting new and foreign forms inside the towers. The activities inside the towers demand possession of the void, giving new meaning to that which had none. The building and the towers are connected visually and physically with elevated walkways which inhabit the spaces between.

The proposed intervention is an events centre where large crowds of people can meet and engage in the various activities present through this development. Whether for leisure or work, entertainment or conferences, this events centre seeks to bring people together by merging various activities at the city's edge.

#### THE BUILDING

The building is made up of a series of movement paths. Whether walls or floor surfaces, this linear building understands the importance of circulation. Open and closed interior spaces are inter-connected by circulation paths and elevated walkways. The spaces are further connected by voids and translucent floor and roof materials. Much emphasis is placed on the ability of the building's facade to interact with its user.

The desire exists for people to gather and re- inhabit the city edge. It is at the edge where people meet and disperse, activities merge and overlap. It is this edge that offers limitless possibilities to the city dweller.

---

The centre is to accommodate:

- \* events and large gatherings
- \* conferences
- \* coffee shops and restaurants
- \* exhibitions
- \* a museum of coal-fired power stations
- \* shops
- \* offices
- \* guest houses
- \* viewing platform