



004 context study



Cities as social condensers

Cities are stages for the great triumphs and tragedies of humanity - sites for the events and interactions which define the ages.

"The building of cities is one of man's greatest achievements. The form of his city always has been and always will be a pitiless indicator of the state of his civilization" (Bacon 1967:13).

"A city is an idea first, an expression of the idea which the society believes itself to be. It is made up of built fabric and people. 'City forms, their actual function and the ideas and values that people attach to them make up a single phenomena'" (Lynch 1960:30).

Cities that are social condensers provide opportunities for social events to condensate against the blank canvas of the city, leaving a visible vapour suggesting the activities present.

“...we must **collect** all the VISUAL SYMBOLS of this urban being – all the evidence of its pathologies and normalities, gathering and storing all the memory tokens from bygone times, so that in our present time we can arrive at an equilibrium between the urban being and its material environment” (Boyer 1994:17).

00411 City of collective memory

In the city of collective memory, we find that different layers of historical time, superimposed on each other or different architectural strata, no longer generate a structural form for the city but merely culminate in an experience of diversity. Especially in the last few decades, these architectural residues from earlier times have become important sites of pleasure. Perhaps it is the elusive quality of these outmoded places or their precarious state of existence that offers the spectator pleasure. Pleasure might be found because these fragments reawaken forgotten memories, or because their original function and purpose have been erased. Whatever it is, these fragments and remnants cause an unexpected shift of attention, allowing a reappraisal of their presence in the city (Boyer 1994:19).

According to Fisher, in *Defining the urban condition: accelerating change in the geography of power* (Bakker 1995:74) “architecture, like all artifacts, may be seen as carriers of cultural information or an expression of cultural identity and cultural rootedness. Architecture is produced and exists within specific paradigmatic timeframes, within which the artifact displays its content and interrelationship of its constituent elements a correspondence with the spirit of the paradigmatically bound cultural system”.

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fig 4.1 Northern elevation of site

City spaces have come to be conceptualized as 'texts' that are inscribed with the multifaceted, sometimes overlapping, **traces of time**, experience and use. These urban texts can be defined as any aspect of the urban landscape that can be 'read' or deconstructed to reveal cultural values.

The coding and decoding of these urban texts and meanings is an interactive process with the users of the city being actively engaged in a dialogue with its spaces.

As a result, the city of collective memory allows a single urban landscape to exist within a multiplicity of places that have been defined through use, imagination and cultural practise.



fig 4.2 Derelict power station "A"

The **urban conquerors**, MAJESTIC in their presence and overpowering in their victory, are found standing proudly against the backdrop of a once booming industrial edge. The site, layered with history and rich in meaning informs the city of collective memory and suggests the further layering of the city.

The intervention seeks to gather and store all the memory tokens present on the site, with the intention of transforming the site into an environment which finds its meaning in the present whilst respecting its past. This enables the city of collective memory to be read at a human scale.

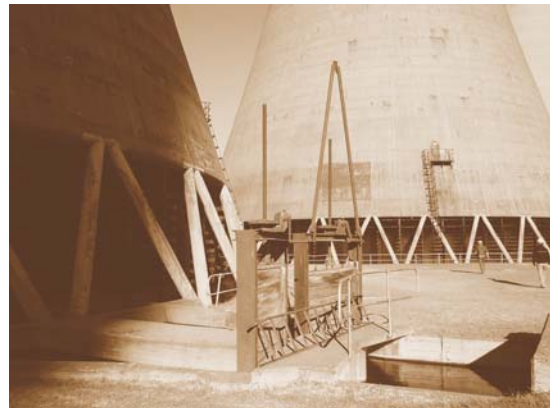


fig 4.3 At the feet of the cooling towers



fig 4.4 Pretoria's urban fabric

00412 Recycling the city fabric

Each period in history has added its own signature to the urban make-up as the continuous process of growth, decay and regeneration contributes to the chronological layering over time.

The stratification of successive layers in the historical development of the city fabric is evident in the city's architectural history. This evolution of the urban structure is shaped by a succession of encounters, compressions, expansions and interpenetrations. Each successive layer has left its mark – traces of the past – on the urban context.

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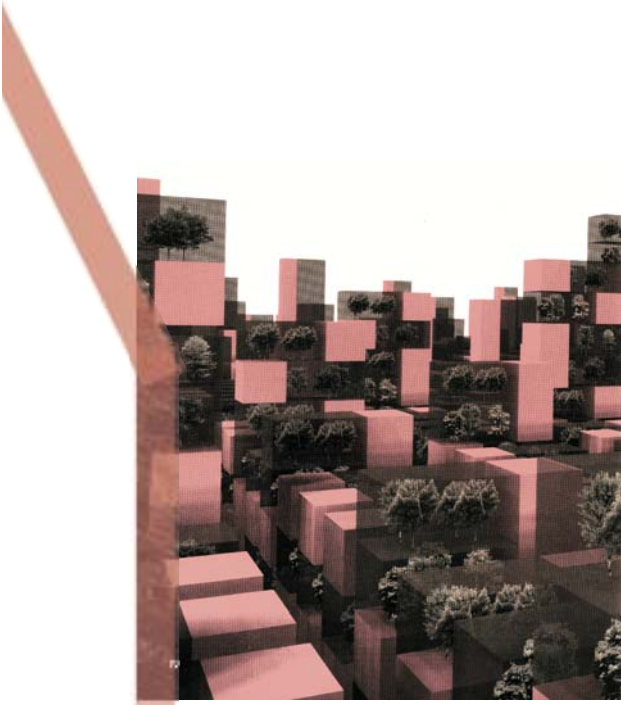
Voids as opportunities rather than voids as emptiness.

Sites threatened with redundancy and abandonment prevents the site's potential to become something greater than it currently is - derelict and vacant.

In 're-inhabiting the void' a once thriving power generating site of Pretoria is transformed and recycled into a spirited environment brought back to life willing again to engage with its users.

Today, our urban interventions take place in an amorphous and imponderable space, comparable to chess figures moved across a horizontal screen with white noise. The grid of the chessboard has disappeared and along with it the clear rules determining how the figures on it are to be moved. Yet the figures have remained. And its moves are still significant, even though the coordinates of its moves can no longer be determined as easily as they used to be.

However, the more the background recedes, the more distinct the figures have to be. For, in view of the implosion of the old order, it is these figures which make a city. Their interrelations create force fields of great tension, and in doing so create space. This process is infinitely more complex than the ordained decision to lay down a plan and then fill it up, step by step, with architecture. Space is no longer pre-ordained. It comes into being as a result of the force fields which figures create together, forming the basis of a vigorous urbanity.



0042 Urban exploration

00421 Anchoring

Building transcends physical and functional requirements by fusing with place, by gathering the meaning of a situation. Architecture does not so much intrude on a landscape as it serves to explain it. Architecture and site should have an experiential connection, a metaphysical link, a poetic link. When a work of architecture successfully fuses a building and situation, a third condition emerges.

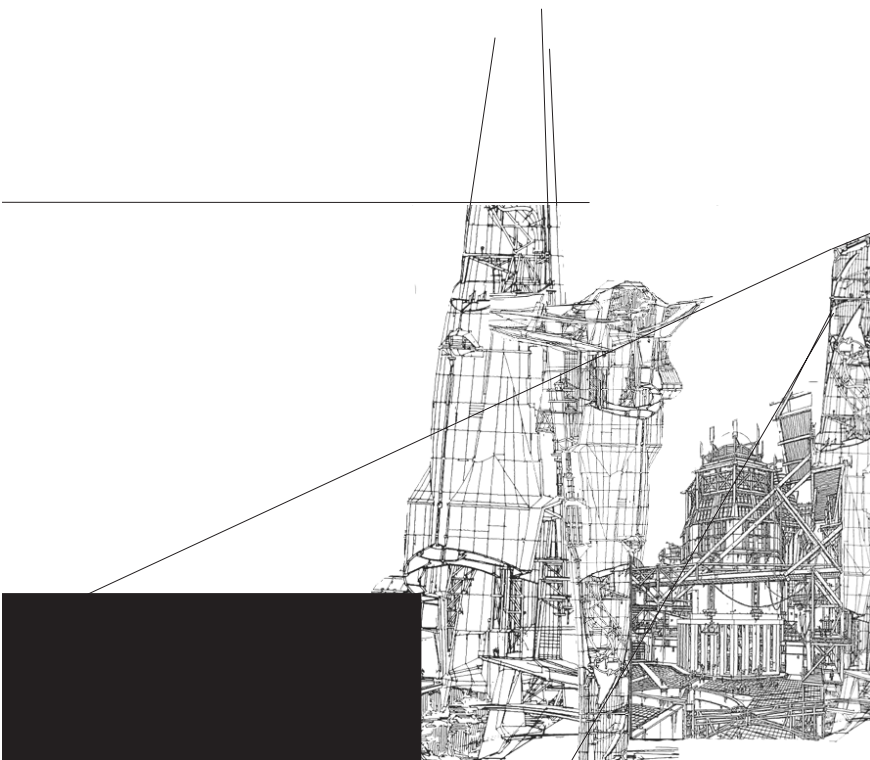
In this third entity, denotation and connotation merge; expression is linked to an idea which is joined to site (Holl 1989:9).

Architecture is bound to situation. The site of a building is more than a mere ingredient in its conception. It is its physical and metaphysical foundation. The architecture of the intervention will respond to the context within which it finds itself. Within a landscape of monstrous industrial buildings and landmark elements, where people appear to crawl at the feet of these LARGE SKYSCRAPING STRUCTURES, a sense of human scale is lost. The architecture of the intervention aims to reintroduce the human scale into the built environment of the power station, but in no way tries to compete or threaten the scale of the power station or the adjoining towers. The elegance enhanced through the architecture aims to compliment the scale of these mammoth structures.

Envisioning a landscape left for dead, an **abandoned** site, waiting to be **transformed** yet full of unleashed potential...

As a designer of the built environment it is from this perspective that I explore the process of anchoring the intervention, which aims at reinhabiting that which is now lost, with an abandoned site accomodating a once well-known power station.





00422 An urban edge

Pretoria West, home to the vast industrial land that borders the inner city of Pretoria, can be recognized as an urban edge because of its position and role in demarcating and distinguishing that which is suburban from that which is urban. The site accommodating the existing Power Station occupies a strip of land, bordering the confines of the city.

Pretoria West, known for its industrial character, accommodates both lightweight and heavy industries. Currently a car-dominated industry governs the Pretoria West industrial sector, but there is a strong working class residential character too.

Good accessibility to the edge is advantageous to the site because of its location in relation to the city center with the main access artery being Church Street. Whilst safety precautions prohibit the power station from being permeable, and with only one entry point into the site, it is proposed that the site be made more permeable, increasing the number of access points onto the site.

The power station exists as an island amongst a sea of manufacturing industries. The power station tends to dominate the skyline of Pretoria and boldly states and very specifically defines its important position as the edge of its city.

0043 Theoretical exploration

00431 Design philosophy: Parasitism in architecture

Parasites **intrude** and **inhabit**. In so doing their presences demands a rethinking of sites of inhabitation. In the natural world some parasites can be tolerated and housed without any ill effect on their host. Such parasites may live externally to their host or they may live internally within the host's actual body.

An architecture of the parasite may be literally parasitical. In this instance the formal presence of the work would be such that its incorporation would allow it to remain formally distinct and yet programmatically interconnected with its host. The architecture of the parasite ties in with pre-existing infrastructures and programmes to open up new possibilities rather than being a space to which programme and infrastructure have to be brought.

In general terms the parasite has to take up a position within the body of what is given and consequently begins to insert itself into the spaces that the given provides. As such the grid or even the block, the contours of boundaries and edges will not be recognized by the parasite. The parasite has to survive within the given and the condition of that survival would be its refusal to recognize lines that mark out pre-existing edges and boundaries, and any compromise undertaken by the parasite becomes a structural transformation of the site.

If the host is to survive, the parasite has to negotiate the space of its internal incorporation. It can only live off the host if the host is maintained. It can only be present as a guest if the host is able to maintain the guest as a guest. What defines parasitism is the co presence of **maintaining** and **transforming**, because the conditions of edge and boundary that establish the site have to be transgressed and thus reformed by the presence of the parasite. What this means is that an architectural parasite has to be deliberate. It has to work with infrastructures, using and adapting them to its own ends. Here, of course, parasitism has to be distinguished from reuse. The transformation of the power station by Herzog and de Meuron's at Bankside in London into the Tate Modern is not an instance of parasitism. The parasite inserts itself into and between spaces absorbing infrastructure and allowing for openings and developments to occur because of its presence.

In parasitical architecture, a 'new' building works with, adds to and incorporates elements of the old. That incorporation opens up interstitial spaces within the new building by refusing the limitation imposed by what were the exterior walls of the old building. The challenge on the level of design is to construct a building that involves this complex relation to its site.

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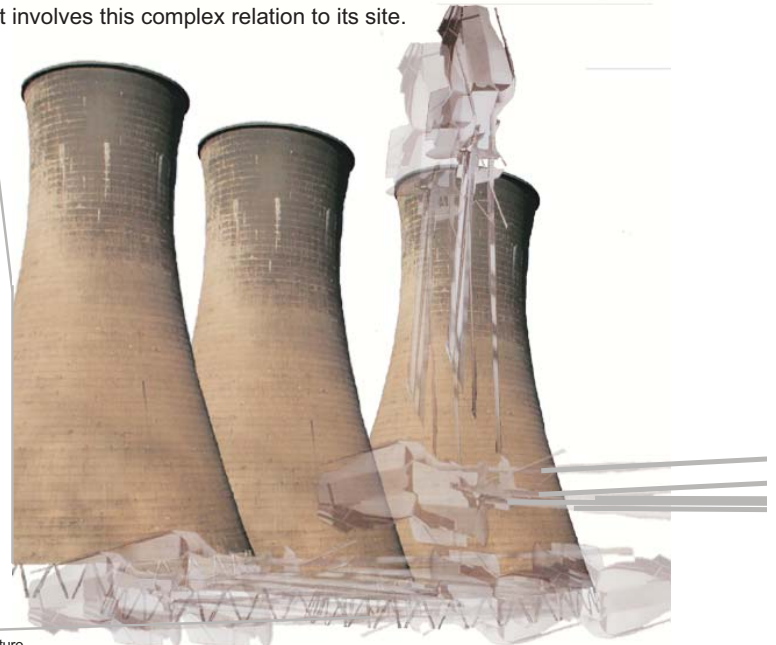


fig 4.5 Concept of parasitic architecture

In the world of architectural theory, a world in which buildings breathe and parasites are more than pests, the idea is to strip down a building into a kind of essence that explores a theoretical “suturing”, or uniting of new and old structures.

With the suture complete, at least on paper, the building can theoretically “breathe in”. When the abandoned building no longer has any need to exist, it is allowed to go back to nature; to be free, to breathe out. But before it is abandoned, it breathes in and has its life. The suture is a way of going between these - it provides for the next life of the building.

Architectural parasites are not pests: they do not draw off energy from their hosts. The existing structure is seen as a body whose lungs and organs of digestion produce enough surplus energy for weaker, dependent organisms.

Parasites may in certain cases perform a social function where the role of the host is not played by any single building but by this run-down, faceless slumbering part of the city where numerous buildings are to be torn down in the next few years. The parasite performs a social function which the condemned area previously lacked and which, perhaps, might even have an animating effect. It is therefore a case of parasitic infection as therapy, a kind of architectural bleeding with leeches.

004311 Precedent: Parasitic architecture

Little effort - Great effect

In Cirugeda Parejo's "Scaffolding" project (1998), the concept of contemporary docking onto larger, permanent structures reappears, he used the scaffolding to create extra living space.

After all, the great attention that parasite projects have been enjoying for several years is also due to the fascination that the unpleasant little creatures exert on us. In spite of their smallness, they have developed outstandingly successful survival strategies and can maintain themselves against apparently much more powerful organisms and thus excite our attention. In the best cases, parasitic architecture can achieve a great effect with little effort by opening our eyes to previously unrecognized spatial possibilities (www.anarchitektur.com).



fig 4.6 Parasitic architecture

**004312 Rooftop Remodeling
Falkestrasse : Vienna, Austria
(1 9 8 3 / 1 9 8 7 - 1 9 8 8)**

A law firm wanted to extend their office, which was situated on the first and second floor of the building and reached the attic. All that existed was a visualized line of energy which, coming from the street, spans the project, thus breaking the existing roof and thereby opening it.

This project identifies with parasitical architectural characteristics because of the way the project has latched onto an existing building, thus breaking through the boundaries and limitations that the roof imposed.

The clarity in being able to distinguish between what was and what has been added emphasizes the projects existence as a parasite and definately affects the way in which one may respond to the design.

(<http://www.coop-himmelblau.com>)



fig 4.7 Rooftop remodeling



fig 4.8 Rooftop remodeling interior

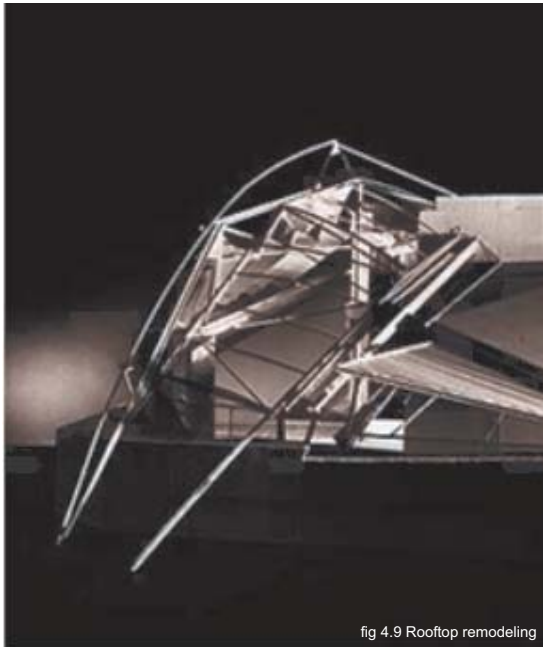


fig 4.9 Rooftop remodeling

00432 Adaptive reuse

Shouldn't we preserve those buildings whose space is a valuable asset, even if they do not lay claim to noble characteristics?

“Every building, however recent, is destined to be transformed” (Pelissier 1994:11).

Because their structure tends to outlive their function, buildings have continuously been adapted to new uses and this need to find new uses when old buildings are threatened with redundancy offers an opportunity of building new **urban tissue** where the old ones have been torn to pieces.

In their damaged state these structures suggest new forms of thought and comprehension, and new conceptions of space that confirm the potential of the human to integrate with the building.

Wanting to preserve a factory made out of disused brick shows a desire to perpetuate its architectural expression. Anyone can understand and sympathize with this wish to give new life to constructions doomed to neglect and ruin.

What can we gain by preserving these monuments of industrial architecture? – Everything! : an urban structure can be conserved.

The spaces for transformation are here, all around us. These include not only the sites of destruction but also the sites of abandonment. The emphasis in converting buildings to new uses has shifted from the historic building and the problem of extending its life, to the challenge of using existing space.

Now there is no choice but to invent something **new**, which nevertheless must begin with the **damaged old** (Woods 1997:27).

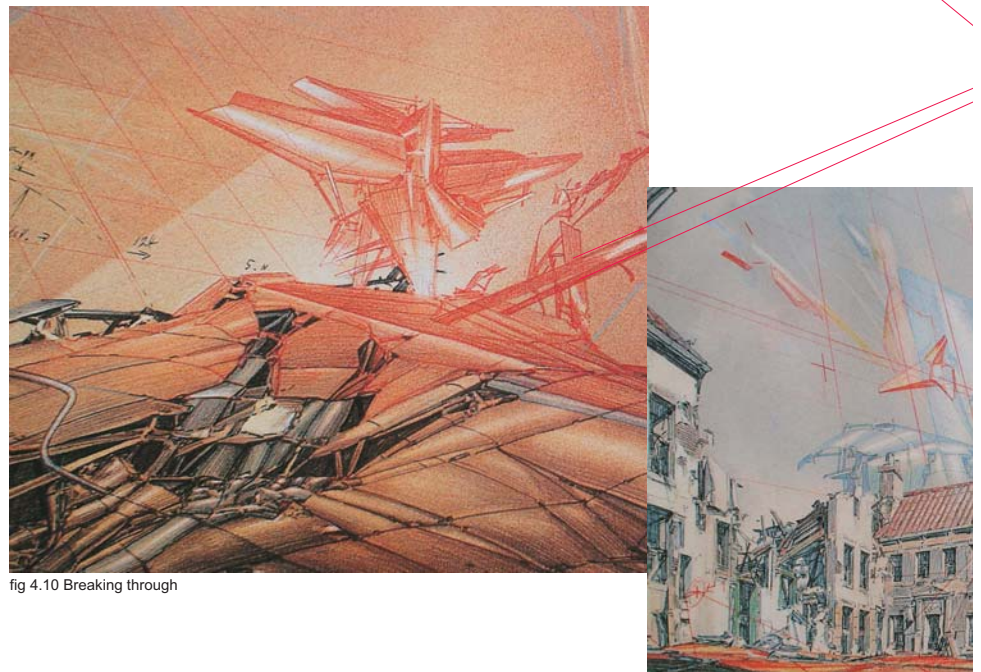


fig 4.10 Breaking through

“The **scab** is a first layer of reconstruction, shielding an exposed interior space or void, protecting it during transformation” (Woods 1997:16).

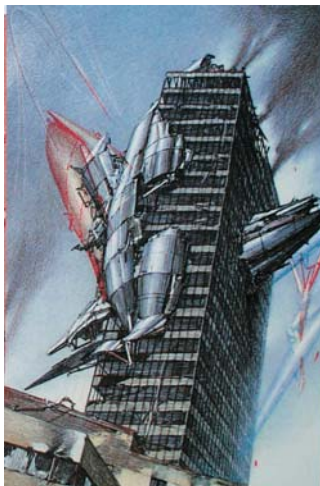


fig 4.11 Scab

“The **scar** is a deeper level of reconstruction that fuses the new and the old, reconciling, coalescing them, without compromising either one in the name of some contextual form of unity. The scar is a mark of pride and of honor, both for what has been lost and what has been gained. It cannot be erased beyond what it is, a **mutant tissue**, the precursor of unpredictable regenerations. To accept the scar is to **accept existence**” (Woods 1997:16).

“The scar shows a more authentic relation to time; it does not consecrate like the monument; it does not make timeless. The scar marks the WOUND without erasing it, allowing healing without forgetting. An impasse is crossed without erasure” (Woods 1997:165).

fig 4.12 Scar



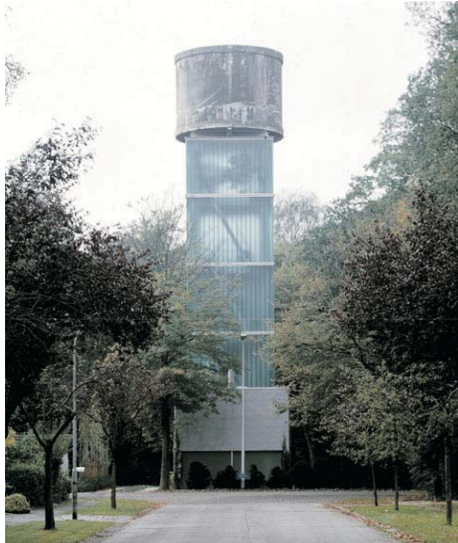


fig 4.13 Water tower house



fig 4.14 Water tower house interior

004321 Precedent: Jo Crepain's Water Tower House, Antwerp

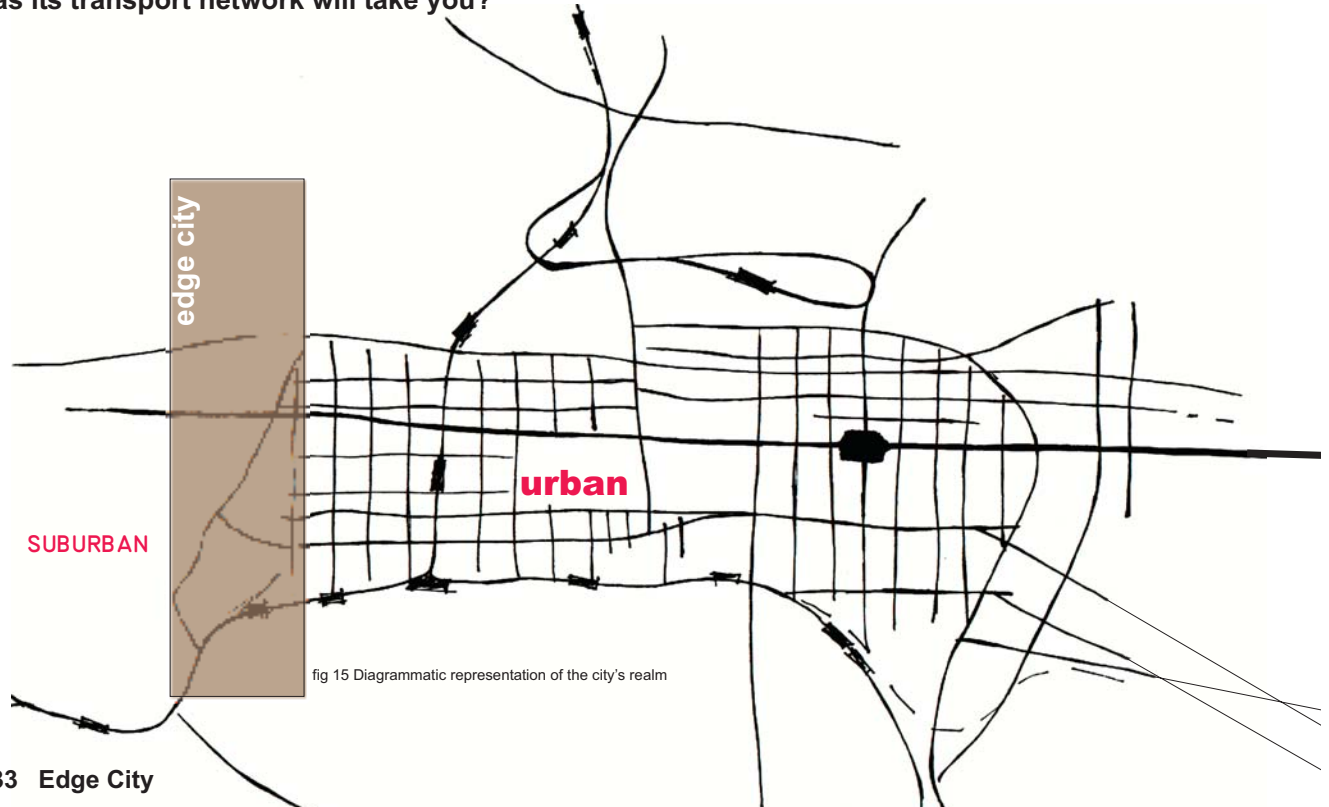
Jo Crepain's sensitive metamorphosis of an empty quayside warehouse into a residential flat respects the architectural character as he has employed cool rationality and a tough industrial vocabulary to open up the building and create extraordinarily austere light-filled spaces.

Erected near Antwerp this water tower was one of the first to be built in concrete and it was taken out of service in 1937 and subsequently fell into a state of dilapidation. It consists of a 4-meter-high cylindrical water tank raised on four 23-meter-high columns. The visible concrete structure of the tower is complemented by elements in steel and glass in a way that has allowed the original character to be retained.

In this precedent, a regular water tower was noticed for its potential to accommodate architecture. Jo Crepain had long been struck by the melancholy romance of the place, by the tower rising from its watery crypt, as skeletal as the surrounding trees, thus architecture was born from its setting (www.jocrepain.com).



Where then is the **edge of a city**? As far as you can see? As far as you can think?
As far as its transport network will take you?



00433 Edge City

The term 'periphery' transcends locality and represents instead a philosophical zone – the architecture of opportunity.

Until the advent of the Industrial Revolution the 'peripheral condition' had long been understood as the demarcation of the city limit where built form confronted unbuilt territory. The periphery may best be exemplified not by its geographical location but by the increasing importance of re-developing industrial areas within city limits. In many ways, the peripheries function as areas of expansion and experimentation for the planning without which no city can survive.

Dieter Steiner explains the periphery as: "a state **in-between**, between old centres and new islands, a region of non-location that remains in motion, free, contradictory, wild and plain beautiful" (Lapunzina 1995:318). The edge does not simply separate other spaces, but defines spaces within themselves, spaces "between". They are not simply outlaw zones, feeding on themselves, but the critical edges of urban life and culture as a whole.

It is at the edge of a city that boundaries are questioned and space leaks and spills out and eventually overflows. It is also at this point, the edge that a threshold has been crossed, but the threshold is not some abstract line; it too is a space of transformation, a place for radical reconstruction. The site under investigation intended to anchor the intervention is at the edge of a city. On entering the Power Station, a threshold is most definitely crossed, an imaginary line, a psychological space begins to unfold in your mind, informing you that you are now at the edge of a city and it is then that you suddenly feel the need to understand what happens at the city edge. It is then all made clear that at the edge of this city, is the place where people come together for leisure, for work, for play and to view the rest of the city.

Whilst the sole purpose of the urban edge is to contain physical development and urban sprawl and re-direct growth towards a more integrated, compact and efficient urban sprawl, the exploration of strategies to counter sprawl at the periphery of cities – the formation of spaces rather than the formation of objects – are primary aims of the edge of a city projects.

The Apartheid City as an Edge City

The Apartheid City has been identified as an edge city because of the demarcation of informal settlements along the periphery of the city with the intention of dividing communities into racially segregated settlements. But, just as the spaces of the apartheid city divided, they also generated crossings and interactions: crossings as people moved and lived and worked in different places. These edges and thresholds within the apartheid city acted as boundaries and our cities are laced with such “uncrossable” spaces. A space becomes an impasse because of the way it relates to other spaces.

“The difference between intervention and insurrection is that the former involves an outside moving in and the latter involves an outside moving out, as in the case of a population that was never truly part of a system. Every city has such an “outside” – a displaced group in a neighbourhood that is cut off from major flows of the city-within it” (Woods 1997:163).

The site provides the opportunity for an intervention to materialize, a moving in of new ideas, a new programme that suggests and provides for new activities.

Pretoria West, identified as an edge city, located along the city’s periphery, comprises mostly of the industrial sector of Pretoria. Characterized by the largely noticeable car industry, Pretoria West is evidently different from what lies beyond its borders - the world of the suburban.

The **edge that divides**, the **edge that separates**, emphasizes and exaggerates the differences between that which is urban, and that which is suburban or even further beyond, rural.

Driven by the light industry in the area, Pretoria West is known for its mammoth scale buildings and intimidating structures that capture and hold captive vast amounts of valuable space. Whilst people beyond the cities limits are purposely excluded, buildings capturing captive cathedral like spaces should be transformed, reintroducing them into society. Redirecting their energy into a new lifecycle paying attention to the needs of its users.

Beyond the edge that divides, lies an **EDGE THAT JOINS**, and beyond the edge that segregates lies the edge that BRIDGES, where possibilities become OPPORTUNITIES, for it is at this edge where people come together simply just to ‘be’. The edge therefore needs to be redefined as a place of ‘being’. That which allows its engagers to come unobstructedly and observe that which happens around them in the city that surrounds them.

0044 Historical exploration

There is a realization that many ordinary industrial buildings had a functional character that gave them beauty and distinction, and the scarring of old buildings in our landscape can be brought back to life.

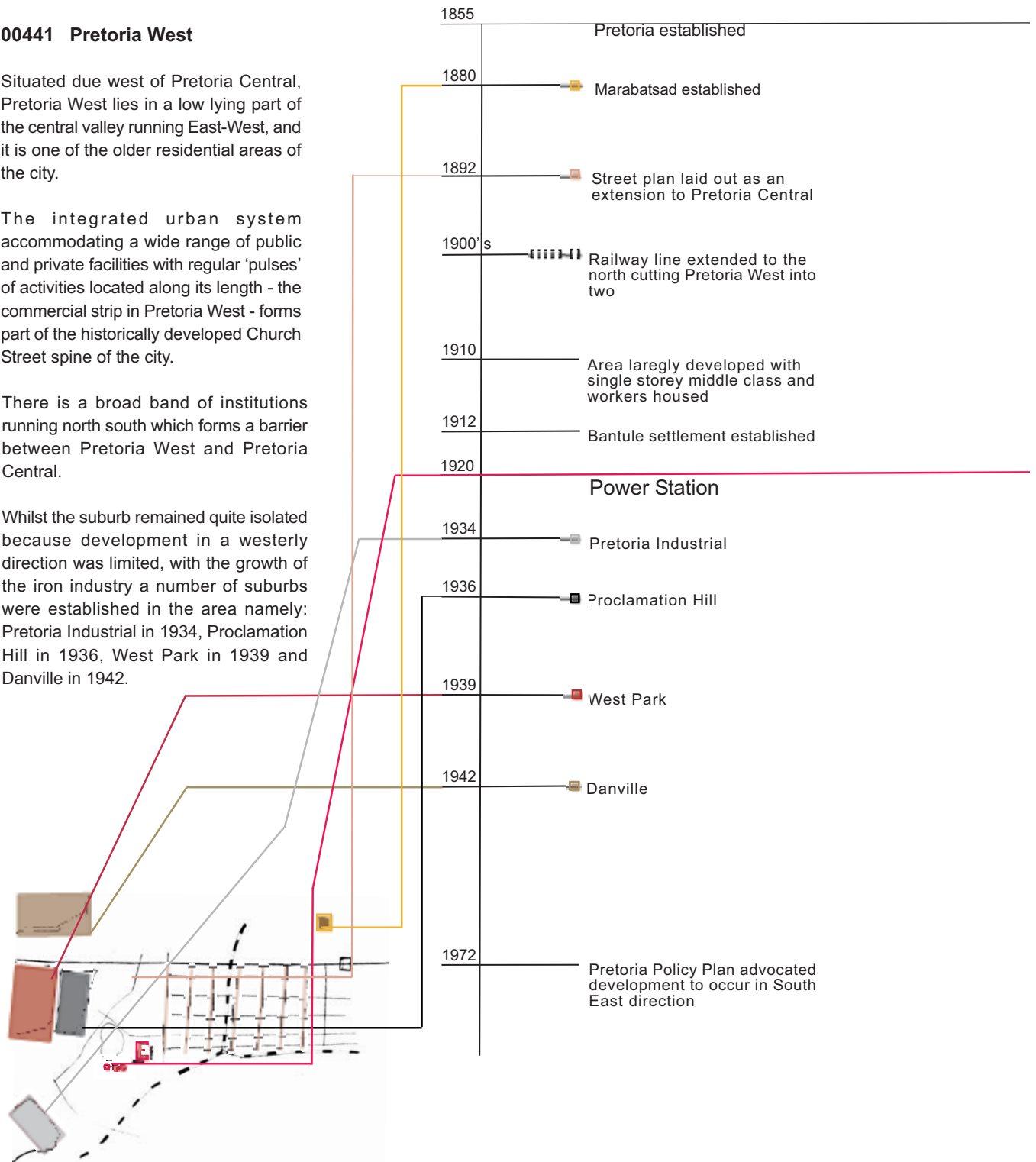
00441 Pretoria West

Situated due west of Pretoria Central, Pretoria West lies in a low lying part of the central valley running East-West, and it is one of the older residential areas of the city.

The integrated urban system accommodating a wide range of public and private facilities with regular 'pulses' of activities located along its length - the commercial strip in Pretoria West - forms part of the historically developed Church Street spine of the city.

There is a broad band of institutions running north south which forms a barrier between Pretoria West and Pretoria Central.

Whilst the suburb remained quite isolated because development in a westerly direction was limited, with the growth of the iron industry a number of suburbs were established in the area namely: Pretoria Industrial in 1934, Proclamation Hill in 1936, West Park in 1939 and Danville in 1942.



More recently there has been a marked increase in the proliferation of non-residential activities, predominately car related and the nature of this change and the scale at which it is taking place is threatening to destroy the residential fabric of Pretoria West (Erasmus 1997:7). "Not only has the number of dwelling-units declined, but the residential character of large parts has almost completely been destroyed" (Erasmus 1997:2).

This gives rise to the concern that the built fabric of Pretoria West is no longer conducive in allowing its visitors to intimately engage with such environments. Development in the area has resulted in the loss or even neglect of the human scale. Spaces giving no priority to the human scale, makes it difficult for people to engage with.



fig 4.16 Abandoned power station

00442 Pretoria West Power Station

The Pretoria West Power Station operated for the first time in 1920 with the erection and installation of the Pretoria "A" Power Station. With a growing demand for more electricity, a proposal for an additional Power Station was submitted, with the decision that the "A" Power Station should be expanded, and another cooling tower erected to assist in the production of the increased energy demands. In 1940 the second cooling tower was erected, but because of the Second World War (1939- 1945), it was not utilized until 1949. The Pretoria "B" Power Station was erected on the same site, south of Pretoria "A" Power Station and put into service in 1961. Prior to the construction of the "B" Power Station, its two accompanying cooling towers were erected in the 1950's alongside the existing cooling towers of "A" Power Station.

The 1970's saw the closing of Pretoria "A" Power Station and the total exclusion of the station in 1996 because it was no longer economically viable to operate. However, the original cooling tower from "A" Power Station remained in use for "B" Power Station until 2000. The "B" Power station cooling requirements were functional through the use of only three cooling towers. The last three cooling towers to be erected were chosen to meet these requirements. Because of this, Pretoria West witnessed the demolition of Cooling Tower 1, leaving the remaining three towers to dominate the skyline of Pretoria.

The derelict original Power Station "A" building is a **remnant shell** waiting to be **re-conceptualized**.

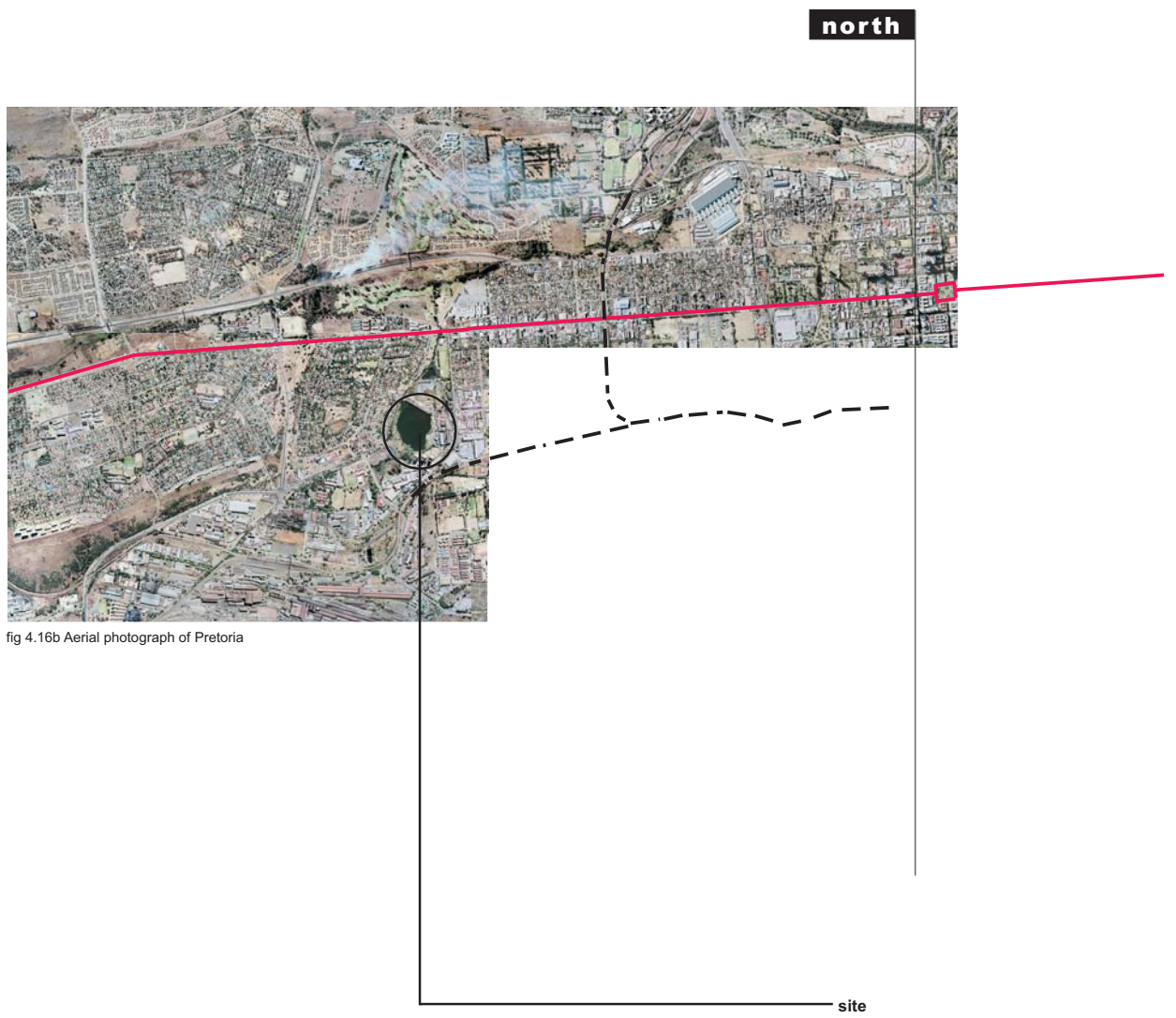


fig 4.16b Aerial photograph of Pretoria

0045 Urban Analysis

This urban analysis seeks to understand the urban setting of the site under investigation. A theoretical exploration of the urban context of the intervention aims to inform and guide the design, with the expectation that the intervention will successfully respond to the landscape and its immediate context.

“ There are existing potentials in our spaces. They must be recognized and drawn upon in order to make possible the transformation of material-social spaces. “radical reconstruction” produces new structures that frame the relations in which buildings and spaces operate: in order to transform social relations we must transform space and time” (Woods 1997:156).

There are no official frameworks set-up for the Pretoria-West precinct. This analysis is guided by the Pretoria City planning and development physical development services.

The site analysis focuses on the programming of site knowledge to produce a multitude of site information layers – to be viewed in various combinations. As a result: an urbanism that manifests from an analytic categorization. Site construction is always a subjective understanding of the infinite number and type of causes constituting an urban site. The site presented by the designer, and explained as such is thus already a designed product of analysis and construction.





fig 4.17 Space as objects

00451 Macro Scale

Spatial issues at a macro scale relate to the legibility of the city, inter-precinct linkages and the edge interface, and these spatial issues are also concerned with linkage to the wider metropolitan area.



fig 4.18 Building as objects

004511 Figure Ground Study

The figure ground study clarifies the structure of urban spaces in a city by establishing a hierarchy of spaces of different sizes, and the figure ground study of the Pretoria West precinct indicates a lack of definition of city blocks and streets. The buildings are often set back from the street thus not defining the streets as urban edges.

The intrusion of large scale development has resulted in a loss of the human scale, and increased building set-backs have resulted in lack of continuity of street space and poor definition of urban space. Poor interface between public and private realms has resulted in a fragmented pattern of development.

A scattering of **isolated objects** has literally disrupted our territory, strewn along roads and the borders of the compact city.

The fine-grain fabric of the traditional development, particularly the residential component, is evident and contrasts markedly with more recent large scale commercial development. The implication is that the variety and complexity inherent in the area is being reduced, resulting in the demise of unique urban qualities.

004512 Legibility study

District:

Pretoria West must enable as many people as possible to live conveniently close to a large concentration of urban facilities.

Edge:

The edge must be treated as an amenity zone which should be accessible for the enjoyment of all people.

Path:

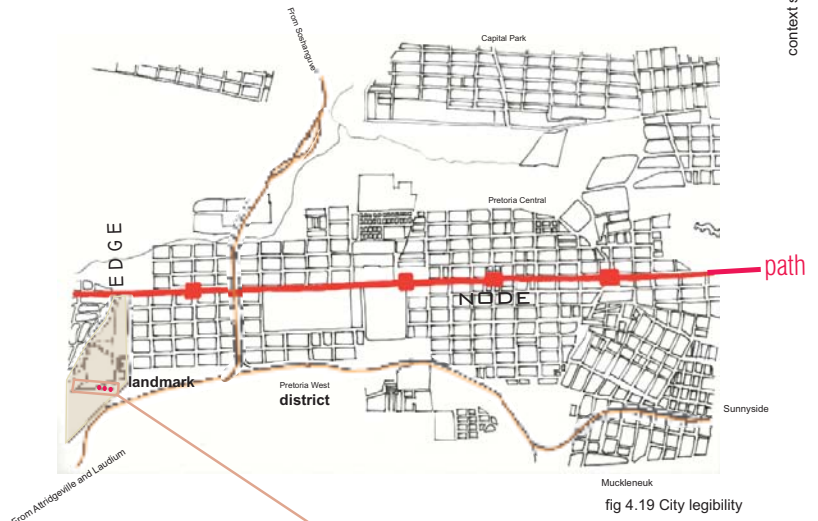
Church Street with its continuous linear space forms part of the east west artery of Pretoria. The linear space becomes an entity in itself, like a linear park which connects various significant activity nodes.

Node:

Church square is the original energy source of the city.

Landmark:

The physically defined visual loci that mark place in Pretoria West comprise of a number of buildings,



context study

site



Urban fringe planning is often associated with the idea of recreation and escaping the city. This gives rise for the opportunity of allowing people to gather at the city edge with the intention of recreation.

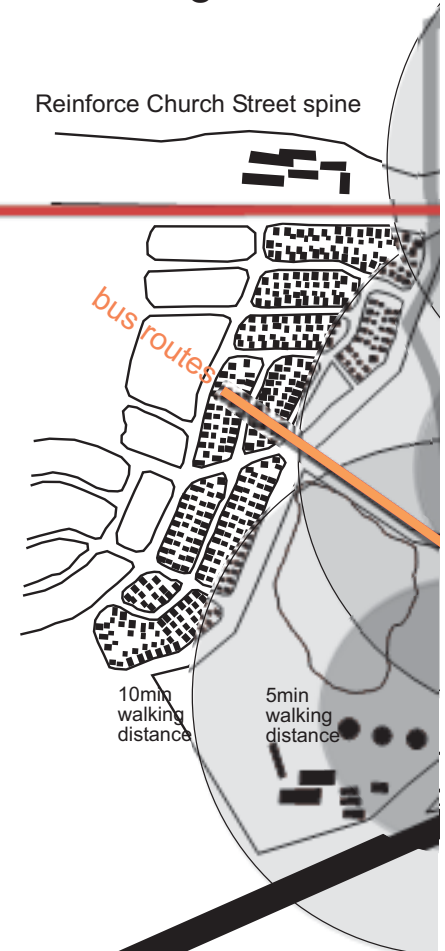
fig 4.20 The urban system that feeds into the urban edge

The identified strip of **urban voids** reaffirms the city edge, and the densification of these sites in turn result in the recycling of the urban fabric.



edges

Reinforce Church Street spine



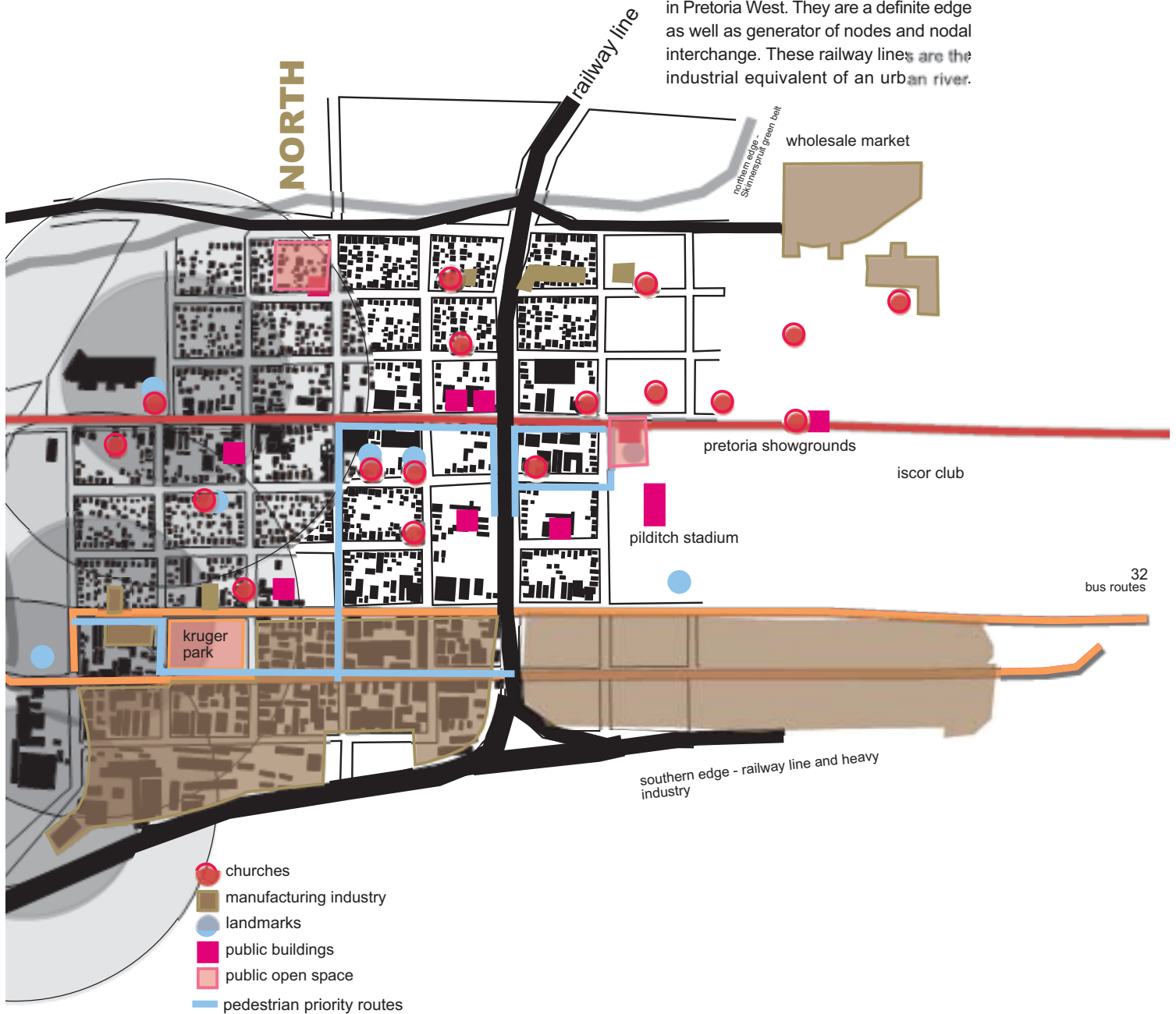
comprises of the gridded street network, together with services infrastructure, the railway infrastructure, including all stations, Pretoria Wholesale Market, Pretoria Show Grounds, Pilditch Stadium and the Power Station. It is of interest that part of this utility, the power station, has been phased out, and that the buildings together with the three cooling towers and dam, are landmark elements.

The commuter rail system, with a number of stations at close intervals, serves the industrial area adequately. The finest grain commercial activities are those along Church Street, which is also part of the historically developed urban spine of Pretoria, whilst activities along Mitchell Street tend to be predominately car related. A fair number of institutions are located in Pretoria West and the immediate area; several of these are of metropolitan significance. This concentration of facilities entails that a large number of people are drawn to Pretoria West on a regular basis, which has potential for supporting and reinforcing the commercial structure.

The identification of city's edge and an understanding thereof allows the architect or urban planner to capitalize on the potential within a site such as that which the power station is located on...

"Urban voids", if dealt with correctly may operate as social condensers. Bringing people together and providing the space and environment in which to do this, with the help of the intervention, the city's users now have the opportunity to engage with a site that was intended to only serve the function for which it was created. The railway lines form a pivotal feature

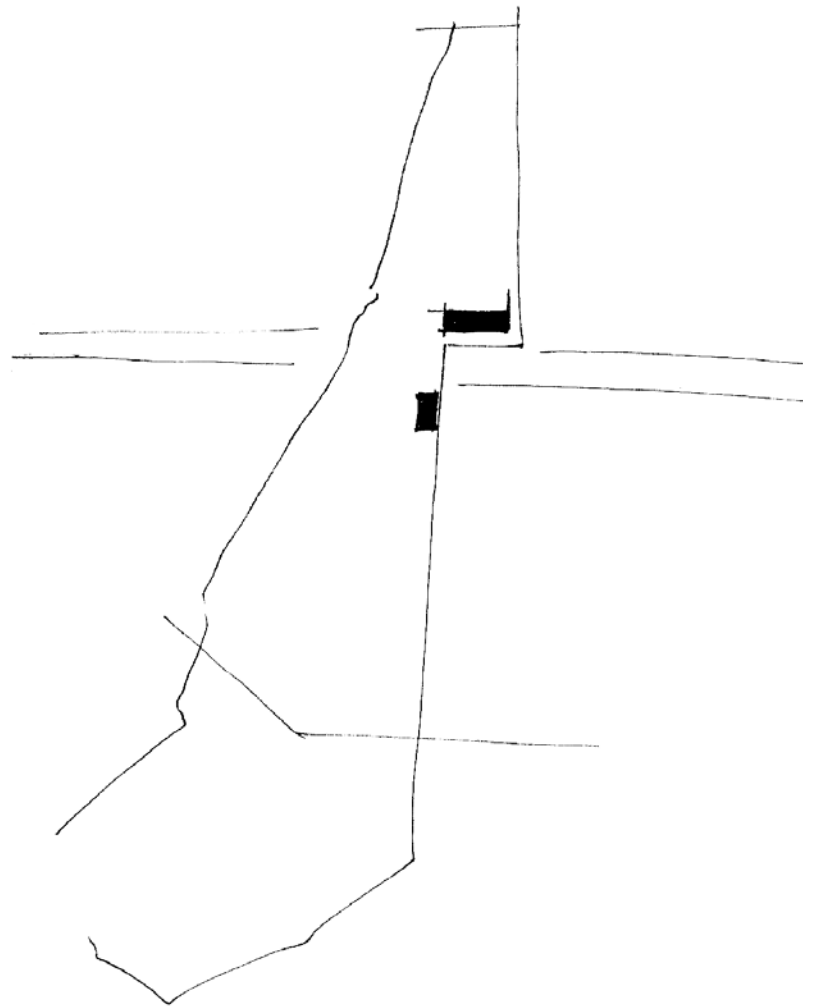
in Pretoria West. They are a definite edge as well as generator of nodes and nodal interchange. These railway lines are the industrial equivalent of an urban river.



- churches
- manufacturing industry
- landmarks
- public buildings
- public open space
- pedestrian priority routes

Analysis of infrastructure

00452 Meso Scale



Buildings are constructed as distinct structures that derive their usability by plugging into various networks.

At a meso scale, it is still evident that this site is in fact an urban void - an industrial wasteland. Existing railway tracks and ash dumping sites, one begins to realize the importance of reading and understanding the site as a complete whole. At this scale, the intervention is identified as a catalyst for the rehabilitation and re-inhabitation of this entire site.

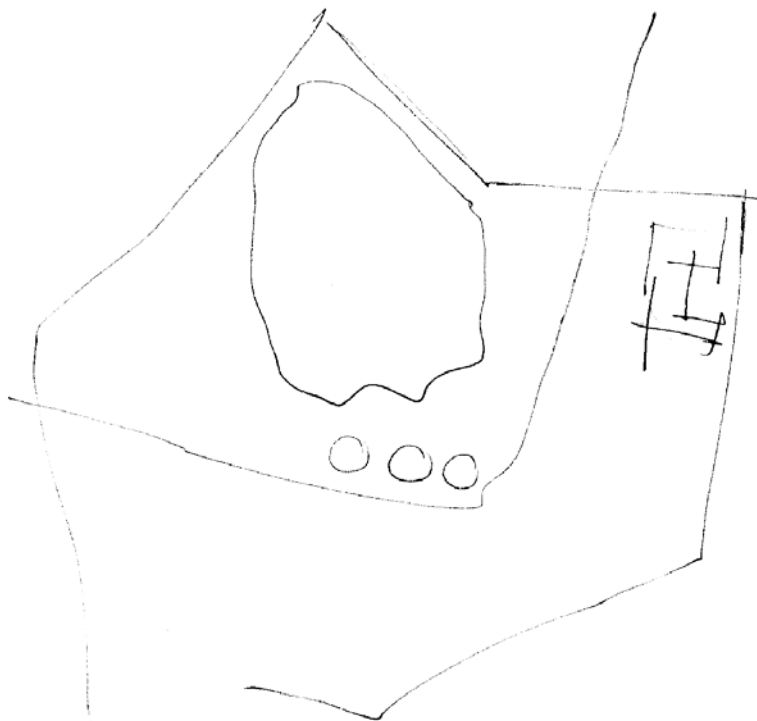
Currently the site has two entry points but only one is operational. An additional entry point is suggested closer to the towers to accommodate for the need of an increase in population.



00453 Micro Scale

Site itself is the construction of indefinite knowledge of and from the urban fabric and location; while the urban site cannot be seen as a stable and constant place – neither spatially, nor socially. This knowledge of *site* is most often an experientially based knowledge, expansive to include the larger surrounding urban fabric (Kahn 1995:200).

An important issue in the planning of the site is the degree to which both public and private spaces are revealed, understood and encountered.



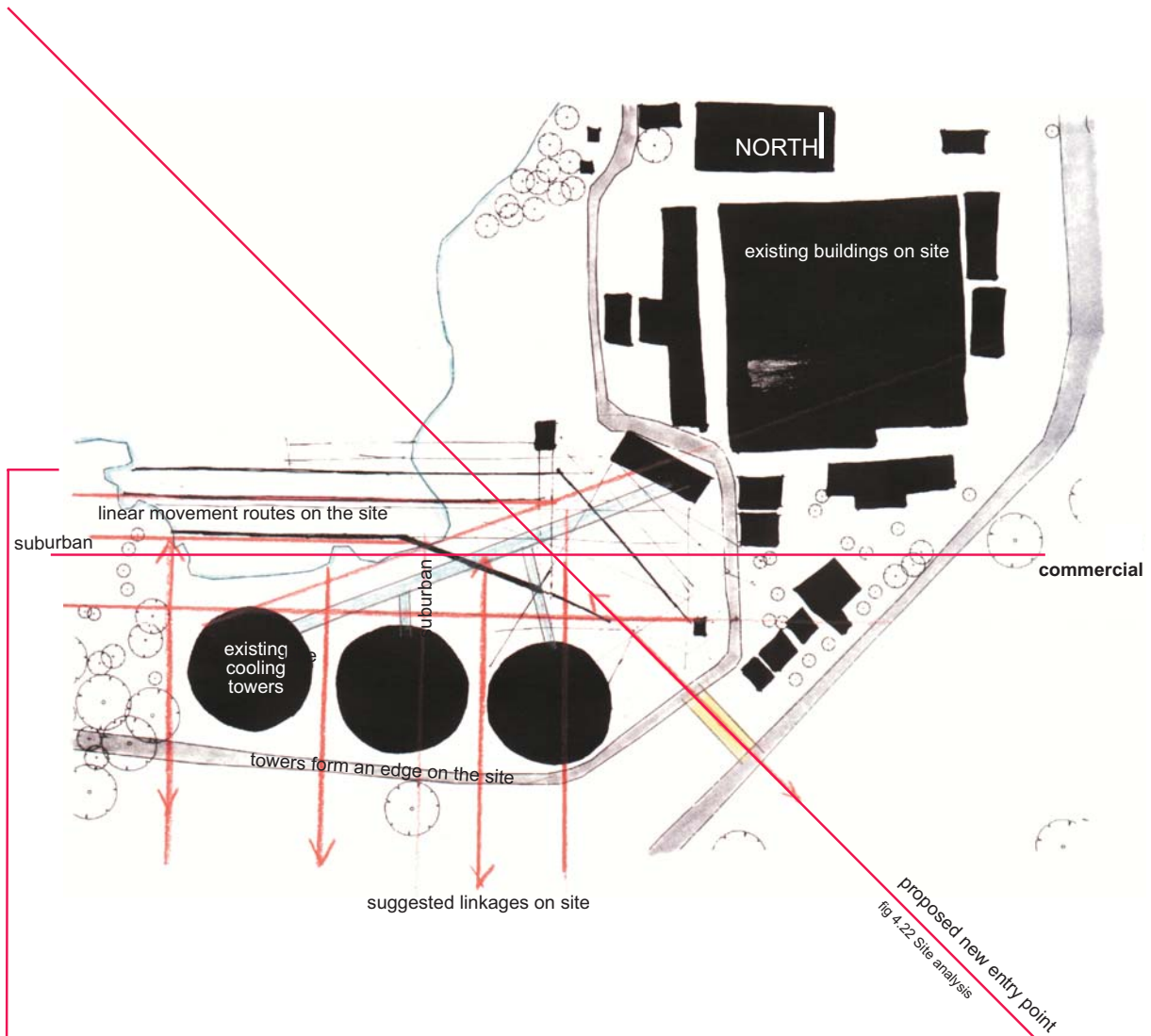


fig 4.23 Aerial photo of site

The existing buildings on the site frame the road to the towers. Standing alongside the lake, the three cooling towers form a very distinct edge on the site. Movement on the site is suggested to be directed by the linear space formed between the towers and the edge of the lake. This space between the two edges on the site gives birth to the specific site for the intervention.

The intervention seeks to link the suburban sector with the commercial sector of Pretoria West. Thus the specific site for the intervention gives rise to the possibility of a linear design which is aimed at facilitating and bridging these two areas on either side of the site.

0046 Development strategies

An important factor in the achievement of a dynamic urban quality is the multifunctionality of space; human activities are too complex to be compartmentalized into simple spatial cells.

The intervention aims to ensure the maintenance and reinforcement of an integrated and connected open space system, which is a functional part of the urban structure and which is accessible to all and that focuses on higher density urban development with a mix of residential densities and where possible concentrations of the highest density developments at points and lines of high accessibility.

00461 Urban Proposals

Clear and comprehensive linkages should be defined between urban elements and by strengthening and defining urban borders and boundaries, landmarks and activity nodes, this may be achieved. The Power Station site should be treated as a clearly defined edge and this should be maintained and strengthened.

The power station site as a whole seeks to achieve the following, with the intervention proposed acting as a catalyst for the desired changes. On a larger scale, the intervention aims to achieve:

- high residential densities within walking distance of the commercial strip
- proximity of public open spaces
- the presence of landmarks
- maintain the edges of Pretoria West

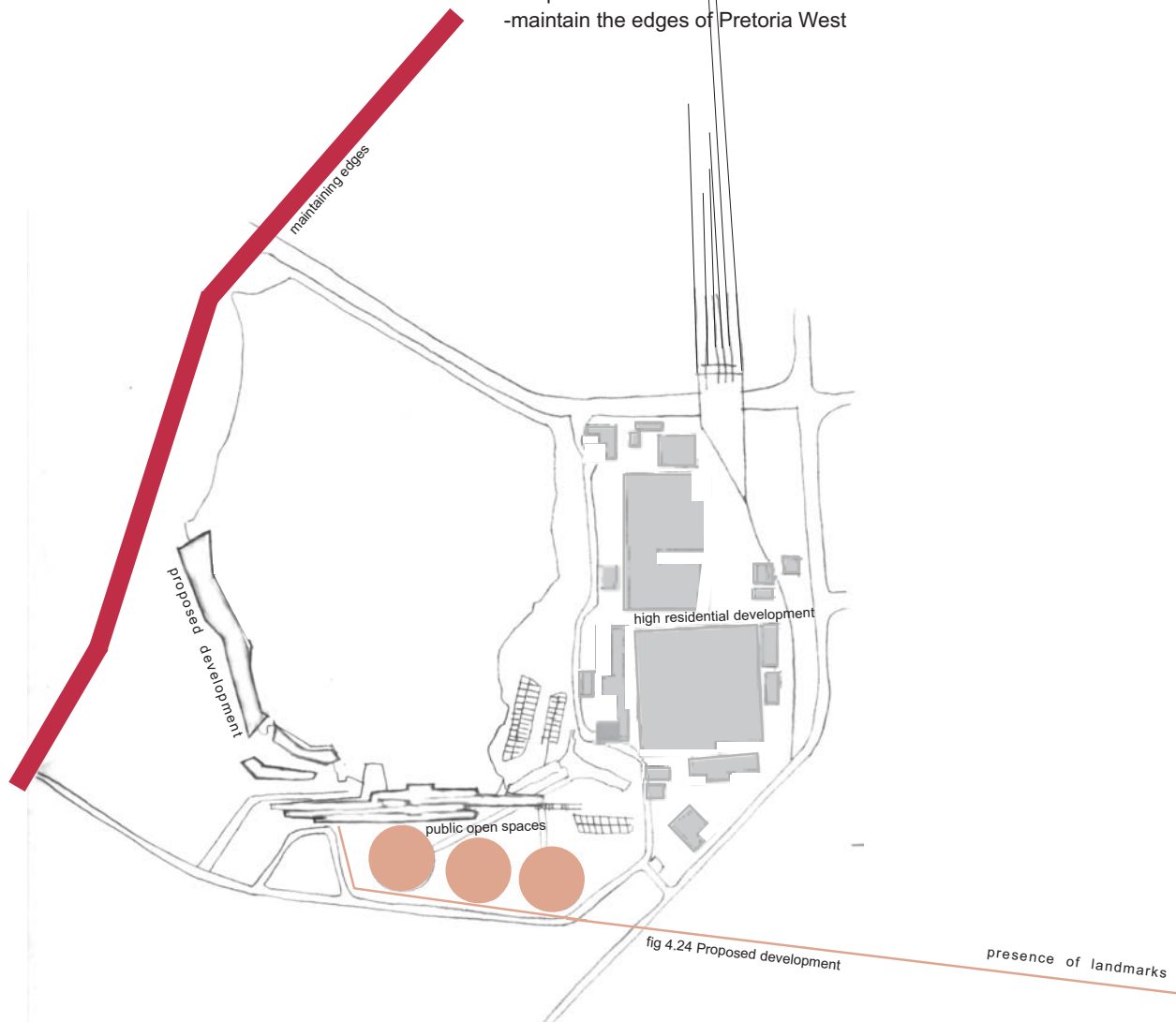




fig 4.25 Eastern elevation of site

0047 Narrative Journey

Driving down Buitekant Street, suddenly I catch a glimpse of the three standing **“urban survivors”**. Turning right into Mitchell Street I start comprehending the setting and context in which they find themselves, standing all alone. Entering the main gate of what was once the only entry point into the power generating station of Pretoria West, I'm filled with a rich nostalgia of the past life of this now derelict and abandoned **“urban void”** – “sickness that if not dealt with may spread and contaminate the surrounding area”.

As approaching the towers, the car can go no more. Hit by this vision of suspended walkways and restaurants floating above the water, the only question searching for an answer is, “How did they get up there”, On top of the tower?. All is about to be revealed as I excitedly approach the floating bridge. The anxiety is high, catching odd glimpses of the towers, then the lake, then the bridge ahead of me. All views controlled and structured, I almost feel like the architect intended on playing games with me. Showing me a piece of something, then immediately taking it away. It is at that perfect point in time that all is revealed.

.....so this is what all the anxiety was about.....

