

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background Intention of thesis

In 2006, I worked on an urban design project with three other students, Mathebe Aphane, Bennie Kunz and Marilu Vermeulen. During this project, I began to understand the importance of the taxi rank in the travels of so many people from the outskirts of Pretoria (see fig 3.49-3.52, 3.53). I also started imagining the change accessible education that is beyond the traditional schooling system could bring to our society. I feel very strongly about breaking barriers of the segregated society the Apartheid regime has left in its wake. And I think that education can be a tool in this situation.

fig 1.1 Map of city centre of Bologna

fig 1.2-1.3 Interior of city library of Bologna

fig 1.1



fig 1.2



fig 1.3



fig 1.4



"... The aim is to kill education for Africans, reduce them to mindless manual labourers, to cut off their only link with the outside world." (1974:22)  
I agree with Mphahlele that education is anybody's link to the outside world at any point in time.

The urban design project became a small part of the South African exhibition at the Venice Biennale (see fig 1.7-1.11). There after we had the privilege of visiting the exhibition. Through this journey to Italy, my eyes were opened yet again to new ideas.

fig 1.3-1.4 Interior of city library of Bologna  
fig 1.7-1.9 Fourth year urban design project of Aphane, Kunz, Vermeulen and van der Merwe

fig 1.5



fig 1.6



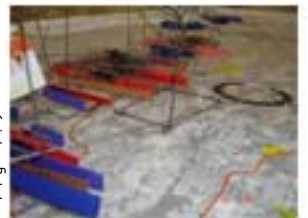
fig 1.7



fig 1.8



fig 1.9



We also used this opportunity to visit other Italian towns. In Bologna one of the oldest university towns in Europe (see fig 1.1), I saw what a vibrant place a community library could be. This library in Bologna was busier than the student bars, with old and young alike using the library (see fig 1.2-1.6).

Thus the idea of creating an opportunity for an educational facility was born.

fig 1.10-1.11 Fourth year urban design project of Aphane, Kunz, Vermeulen and van der Merwe  
fig 1.12 Cover of Time magazine, Dec 2006

fig 1.10

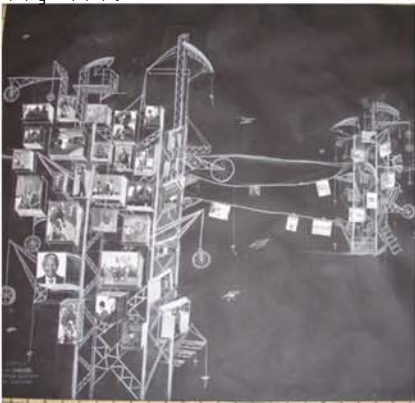


fig 1.11



fig 1.12



### 3.2.2 Climate of the study area

Pretoria is located in the climatic zone of the northern steppe. This region has distinct rainy and dry seasons with a large daily temperature variation and strong solar radiation (Holm 1996). Summer winds are predominantly east-north-easterly to east-south-easterly, and winter winds are prevailingly south westerly and north-easterly (Holm 1996).

The study area has an almost negligible slope to the north.

### 3.2.3 Zoning of the study area

All the sites the study area have been zoned for general business as well as institutional use. Permission would be obtained to increase the height restriction imposed by the zoning, as allowing the building to be higher would increase the density of the area, and also add to its value (see appendix b).

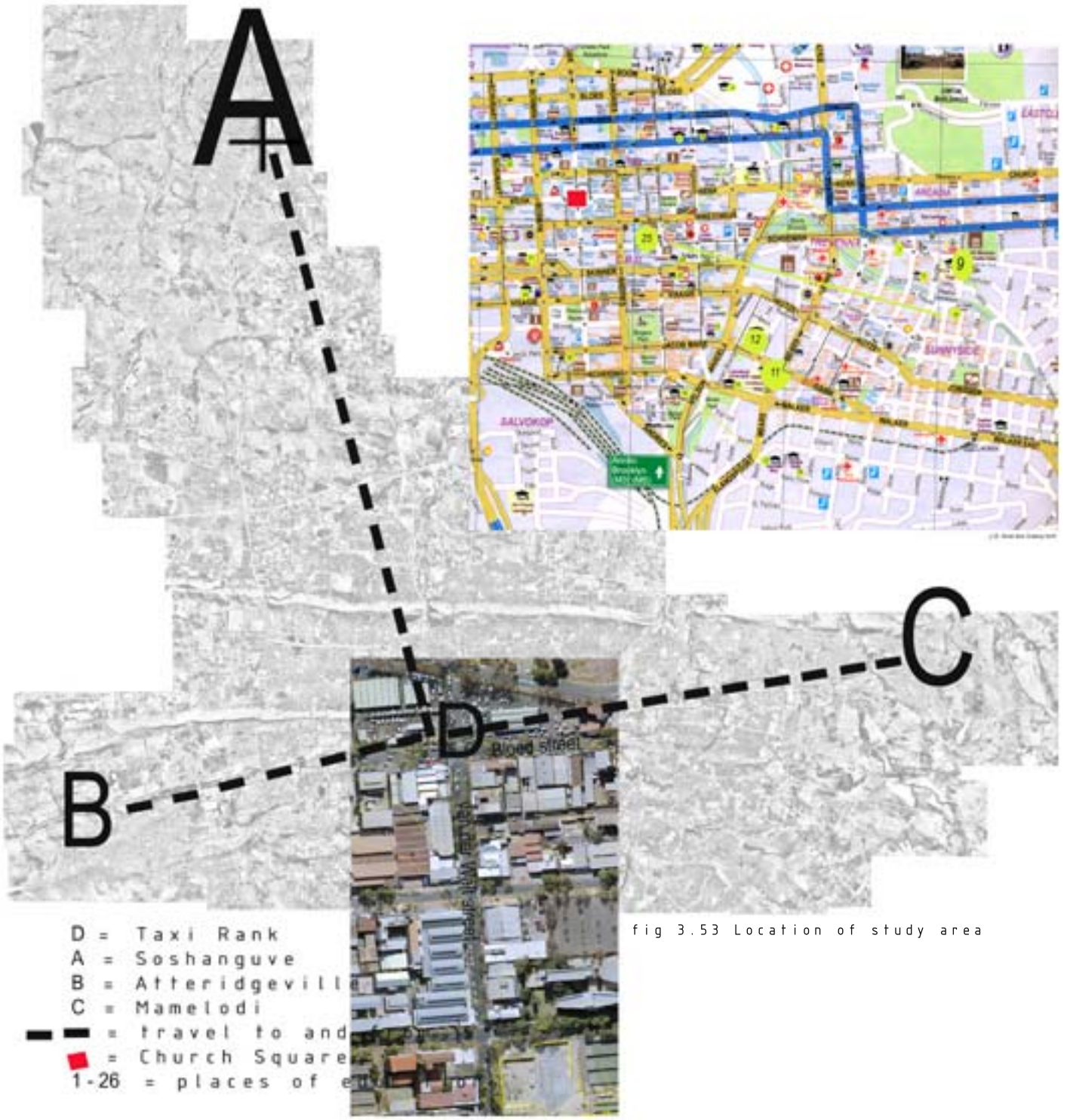


fig 3.53 Location of study area



Van der Walt Street is very busy and vibrant with both vehicles and pedestrians using it. It seems to be at its busiest early in the morning before eight and after four in the afternoon.

To the east of the study area, there are 26 schools and colleges (see fig 3.53).

- fig 3.53 Location of study area
- fig 3.54 Figure ground study
- fig 3.55 Main routes around Pretoria
- fig 3.54 Pamphlet handed out in Van der Walt Street
- fig 3.55 Pamphlet handed out in Van der Walt Street

fig 3.55



fig 3.54

**ARE YOU DISAPPOINTED?**  
 Have you found your problems with other Herbalist's history?  
 Do you have any chronic diseases in your body?  
**UDOKOTELA WEZIFO ZONKE**  
 THE ONE YOU SHOULD GO TO FOR YOUR PROBLEMS!  
**DR. WANI & MAMA ALI**  
 TELL US ABOUT YOUR PROBLEMS BEFORE YOU MENTION THEM!  
 HEALS DISEASES OF DIFFERENT NATURES / PROBLEMS:

1. Do you have Bad Luck sent by your Enemies? Witches to be removed and see them with your eyes!
2. Do you have misunderstandings at home, work or school?
3. Do you want to pass your exam, job interview, get promotion?
4. Men with penis problems be strong, big or make more rounds?
5. Do you want her or him back with more feelings of love for you?
6. Women with long periods, pregnancy problems?
7. Do you want to win court cases? Business Attraction - **Check Income just & more!**
8. Do you want Luck for money? To win Horser, Lotto, Casino & others?
9. Are you always losing money & properties? And many others!

**100% SAFE (HERBS) GUARANTEED!**  
 Just try on one and you will be surprised too!

**VISIT US AT:**  
 349 OPERA TOWERS  
 ON TOP OF ROOSEBANK COLLEGE  
 8TH FLOOR ROOM 805  
 CNR BRINSFORD & PRETORIUS STR.  
 DIPS STATE THEATRE ON PRETORIA CENTRAL.

**WORKING HOURS:**  
 Mon - Fri: 7:00am - 11:00pm  
 Saturday: 7:00am - 2:00pm  
 Sunday: 11:00am - 1:00pm

**MAIL ORDERS ARE ACCEPTED!**  
**072 392 7087**

fig 3.55

**SEXUAL PROBLEMS/SPECIALIST**  
**MEN & WOMEN**

- ♣ WE MAKE MEN'S PENIS BIG & STRONG PERMANENTLY
- ♣ PENIS ENLARGEMENT
- ♣ CONTROL EARLY EJACULATION
- ♣ MAKE MORE ROUNDS (DURING SEX)
- ♣ CAN'T SEE PERIODS (WOMAN)
- ♣ CAN'T PRODUCE (BOTH)
- ♣ WE MAKE MEN'S LONG/SHORT
- ♣ WE BRING BACK LOST LOVER
- ♣ LOTTO & CASINO SPECIALIST
- ♣ REDUCE WOMEN'S VAGINAL

**CHECK UP MAHALALI!**

**FIND US AT:**  
 242 KARL KLING BUILDING  
 (MARY'S FASHION) 2ND FLOOR  
 ROOM 347, 242 VERMEULEN STREET  
 BETWEEN ANDRIES & VAN DER WALT STR.  
 NEAR LIBERTY LIFE, OPP. BRADLOW'S  
 FURNITURE SHOP, PRETORIA TOWN.

**WORKING HOURS:**  
**MONDAY - FRIDAY**  
 7:00AM - 5:30PM  
**SATURDAY**  
 8:00AM - 2:30PM  
**SUNDAY**  
 8:00AM - 1:00PM

**Call: 012 323 2199 / 082 220 1010**

## 3.2 Physical context

### 3.2.1 Location of study area

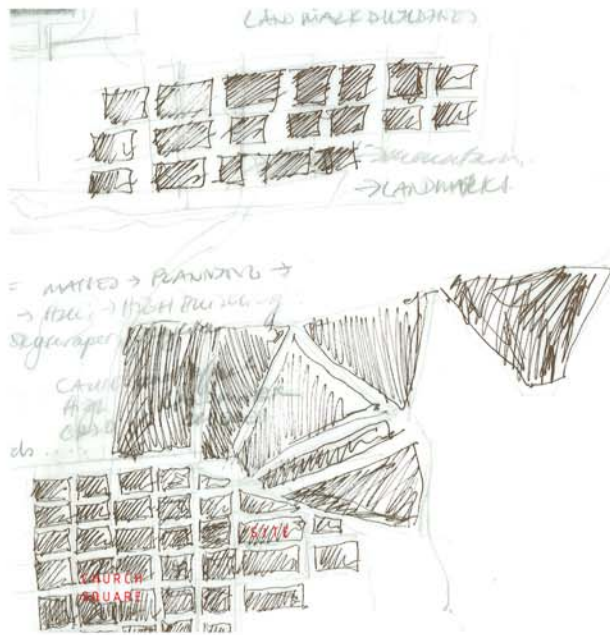


fig 3.53

The selected study area is the block that lies between Bloed and Struben Street, with Van der Walt Street on the north-western side (see fig 3.53). It appears the city changes at this point (see fig 3.54). Business is more informal and the buildings and the sidewalks are neglected in comparison to the city that exists two blocks away. The buildings in the centre of this block appear to be the most dilapidated. These buildings front mostly onto Brown Street – Brown Street is used during the day as a parking area for taxis. The taxis are parked all along the street on the sidewalk. This makes it difficult to walk along Brown Street. After having arrived in the morning the taxis seem to wait there until they are needed again to take people home. It does not feel safe to walk down the street, although there are people around. Only one building faces onto Brown Street, resulting in the street feeling secluded. It is a possible hide away for underground activity, as there is no passive surveillance. Yet, if you look down Brown Street you can see a beautiful view of the Union Buildings, framed by the buildings along Brown Street. I don't think anybody notices this. There seems to be no escape from the ground level along Brown or Van der Walt Streets. You never get to view your surroundings from the top.

The Bloed Street taxi rank 15 is also located in that area due to the link with the northern entrance (see fig 3.2).

The State Library (see fig 3.4) situated at Vermeulen Street 239, served as a Public Library until 1964. Thereafter the City Library (see fig 3.3) was established on the corner of Vermeulen and Andries Street. In 1964 the area of Greater Pretoria was established subsequently, the State Library became too small to function simultaneously as a City and State library. In 1992 Sammy Marx Square shopping centre was completed, and shortly thereafter the City Library was moved there.

- fig 3.1 Indication of arcades
- fig 3.2 Natural entrances to the city centre
- fig 3.3 Public Library
- fig 3.4 State library
- South of Church Str. looking north, 1903
- fig 3.5 Electric tram stables

fig 3.1



fig 3.2



fig 3.4



fig 3.3



fig 3.5





### 3. Context analysis<sup>14</sup>

#### 3.1 Historical context

Historically the city of Pretoria developed between two ridges, with natural entrances through the mountain ranges. The layout of the city has been generated by a grid system of a typical 19th century colonial city (Evans 2002). The blocks resulting from this grid, are twice as large as that of the CBD in Johannesburg, measuring 140m wide and 225m long (Van der Westhuizen, 2005). Thus there exists an arcade system around Church Square (see figure 3.1), allowing pedestrians to cut through the blocks in a north south direction. The successful arcades, such as the Burlington and Northvaal Arcades, are lined with shops and bustling with activity.

In the study area, Ford and Turner Streets existed as thoroughfares in a north south direction in the block between Bloed and Struben Streets. Brown Street allowed pedestrians to cross the block in a west east direction. Brown Street still exists, but Turner and Ford Streets are no longer visible.

The historic importance of Van der Walt Street has always been that of transportation, as it is the street where the tram station was once. As an important gateway, Van der Walt Street links with the natural entrance into the city from the north.