



Figure 019:
Sketch of
Drie Lelies
south building

s i t e a n a l y s i s

Micro Scale: Introduction

The site manifests the concept of the edge physically and this symbolism is metaphysically the strongest on the micro-scale of analysis. The dominant juxtaposition within the contrasting forms, textures, colours and scales which are constantly thrown at the observer has at its root the opposition of the natural and artificial. By means of the juxtaposition and convergence of these physical dualisms the space which separates these dualisms appears. Completeness is forever deferred in this implied "différance", like the chemical reaction which forces a bar of soap covered in water to slip from our grip of reality: the veil, the between, the transition, the force repelling every possibility of unity.

If the function of funerary architecture has since the very beginning been to help mark the boundary separating the realm of the living and the dead (Harries 1998, p.293), does the presence of the qualities which the site embodies not qualify the site as sufficiently ethereal in terms of the intervention suggested?

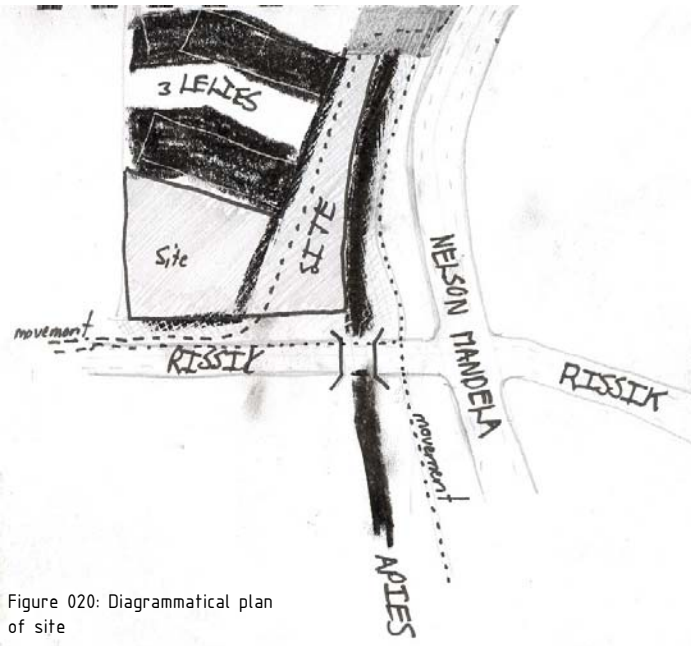


Figure 020: Diagrammatical plan of site

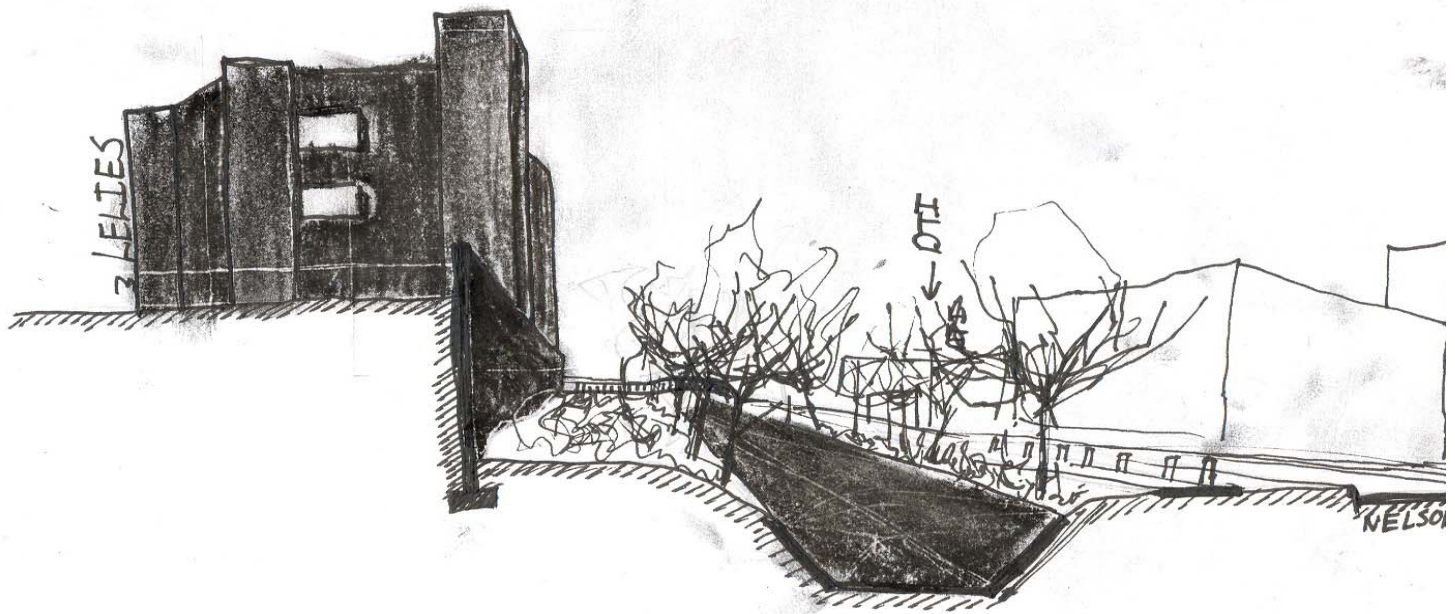




Figure 022: Juxtaposition and fragmentation, where the natural landscape and urban forms collide

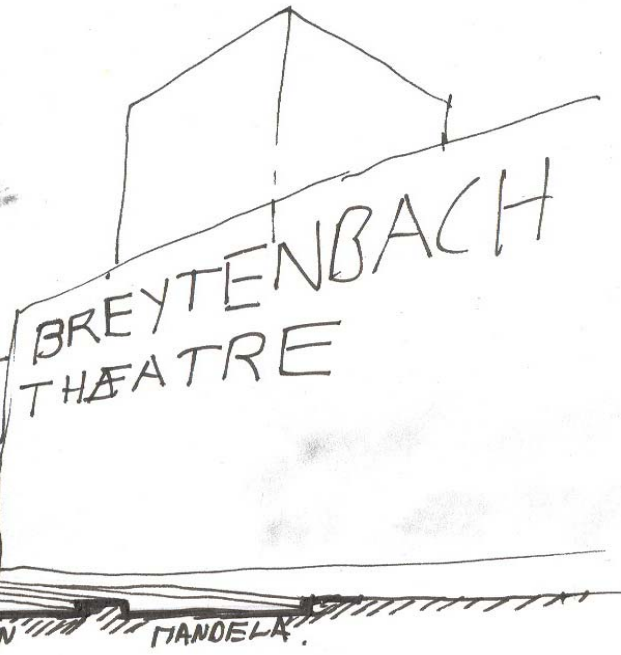
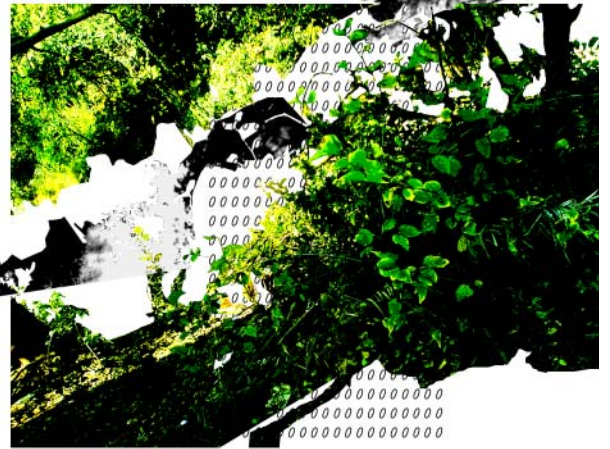


Figure 021: Diagrammatical East-West section of site



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Site Elements

River:

The mighty Apies River, as defined by Winston Churchill [2], has been forced into a concrete culvert: manipulated, controlled, tamed. Why, one may ask? Is the purpose the prevention of erosion, is it to allow for human settlement, is it only because of functional constraints? Should what has been negated through the decision-making process not be returned to its original state? Is its artificiality not perhaps an opportunity more relevant to the researcher's theoretical argument, in that another fragmented juxtaposition occurs between the water and concrete? Should the negation not be affirmed?

The juxtaposition is amplified by the silence created where the flow of the water is rhythmically interrupted by the regular spacing of the expansion joints. The rhythmic interruption is suggestive of the collapse of traditional time where the heterotopia functions at its full capacity. The river acts therefore as the interval or veil which simultaneously separates and connects the realms of the living and the dead.

Drie Lelies Peripheral wall:

The seamless concrete retaining wall of the Drie Lelies buildings defines the western boundary of the site. Its monotonous texture is smooth, almost shimmering between the moving shadows in the morning sunlight, a motionless stage on which the shadows of leaves and branches gaily dance during the early day. Yet as the day matures time seems to transform its innocence.

The increase in height, owing to the soil which the wall retains, creates a sense of expectation as one moves towards it; yet the sense of expectation and excitement is replaced by a feeling of fear

Movement through site



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[2] <http://www.wanttotravel.co.za/southafrica/gauteng/illyria/illyria.htm>



16

Figure 023: Progressional photographs through the site, in a clock-wise direction around the river.

and of being trapped in a catch pin as the space between the river and the wall narrows. The dense foliage and dark shadows isolate one: one has passed the point of no return; left to one's fate the psychological distance increases although physically its distance from Nelson Mandela Drive decreases. One can only move forward, move faster, move away.

A strange dynamic exists here, the result of the relationship between the changing spatial quality as the day progresses and the criminal activity which occurs as a result of this dynamic spatial transformation. The edge where the wall meets the soil is blurred by weeds which have been left to grow as they please, raising the question of where the artificial ends and the natural begins. This blurred boundary opens the gap between the imagination and reality, and the cracks and fissures appear through this sense of uncertainty.

Drie Lelies High density Residential Buildings

The brutal monumentality of the Drie Lelies buildings is a significant quality which contributes to the definition of the *genius loci*. From a distance the stark, motionless objects vertically connect the earth and sky, while horizontally they bond west and east together through their response (on the plan) to the convergence of the city grids, which are orientated at different angles. Their presence enhances a sense of transition similar to that of a stranded shipwreck which is half - exposed during low tide, with a section in the water and the remainder on land. This bridging quality enhances the notion of the edge which defines the site on the different scales of analysis.

When one walks on the Western bank of the Apies through the site in a Northerly direction the change in perspective creates a change in experience. The realization of its scale, owing to the close distance from which it is perceived, is uncomfortably humbling, almost surreal. The clouds drifting by in the background sky create an illusion of the building falling; an unsettling feeling of vertigo dominates the senses.

In conclusion, each of the elements discussed above, although considered separately, contributes significantly to the *genius loci* which exists as a result of the phenomenological relationship between the elements. This spirit of place could, if at all possible, in terms of the metaphysical site analysis best be described as "edge". It is the meeting place in which the "between" appears by disappearing through the tears, cracks and fissures of that which seems to unite, but remains eternally fragmented.



Figure 024: Vertical landscape photograph of the Drie Lelies buildings and peripheral wall, South Western segment of site.



Figure 025: Movement analysis diagram, indicating vehicular and pedestrian traffic. Route A indicates pedestrians moving towards and from the pretoria station to the Nelson Mandela Corridor. Route B has a low pedestrian intensity to the South of the site along Nelson Mandela Drive.

A.

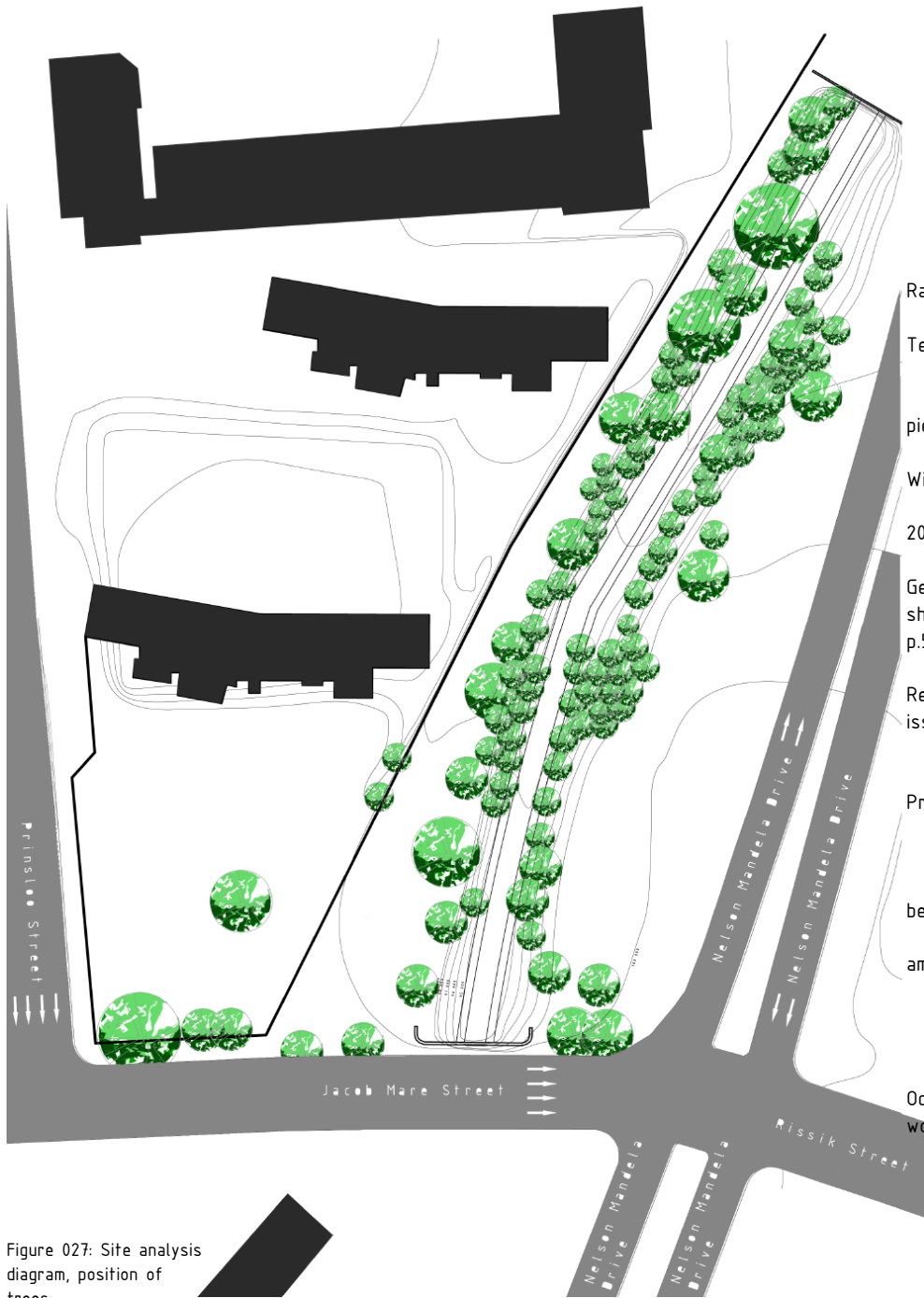
The shortest route, as indicated, channels the pedestrian between the river and the peripheral concrete wall of the Drie Lelies buildings. The density of the foliage to the east and the impermeable concrete peripheral wall to the west create a visual barrier which physically isolates the pedestrian from surrounding activity. According to an interview with a police officer at the site, the area is renowned for its criminal activity since criminals utilize the density of the foliage in combination with the cover the bridge provides to hide from both their victims and the police.

B.

The intensity of pedestrian use along this route is currently low, possibly because of the lack of activity nodes along it. However, the MDC intervention will dramatically change the current situation and the site will have to be considered within the framework of the MDC.



Figure 026: Site analysis diagram restrictions and opportunities



Site data:

Rainfall: 700 - 750ml annually

Temperature:

Minimum - 12.5 degrees celcius

Maximum - 22.5 degrees celcius (Napier, 2000 p. 8-9)

Wind: Summer: North-Easterly

Winter: North-Westerly (Napier 2000, p. 8-9)

Geology: Ferrugenous shale and quartzite, shale and quartzite (Holm Jordaan 2005, p.50)

Restrictions as per the zoning certificate issued by the city council of Tshwane:

Details: Portion 7 of erf 2378 Pretoria, Pretoria town planning scheme, 1974

1-Use Zone: General Residential

2-Purposes for which buildings may be erected with the consent of the city council: Places of Public Worship amongst others.

3-Density restriction: None

4-Height: 25m

5-Coverage: 40%

Occupancy Class: A4 (places of public worship) (SABS 0400)

Figure 027: Site analysis diagram, position of trees