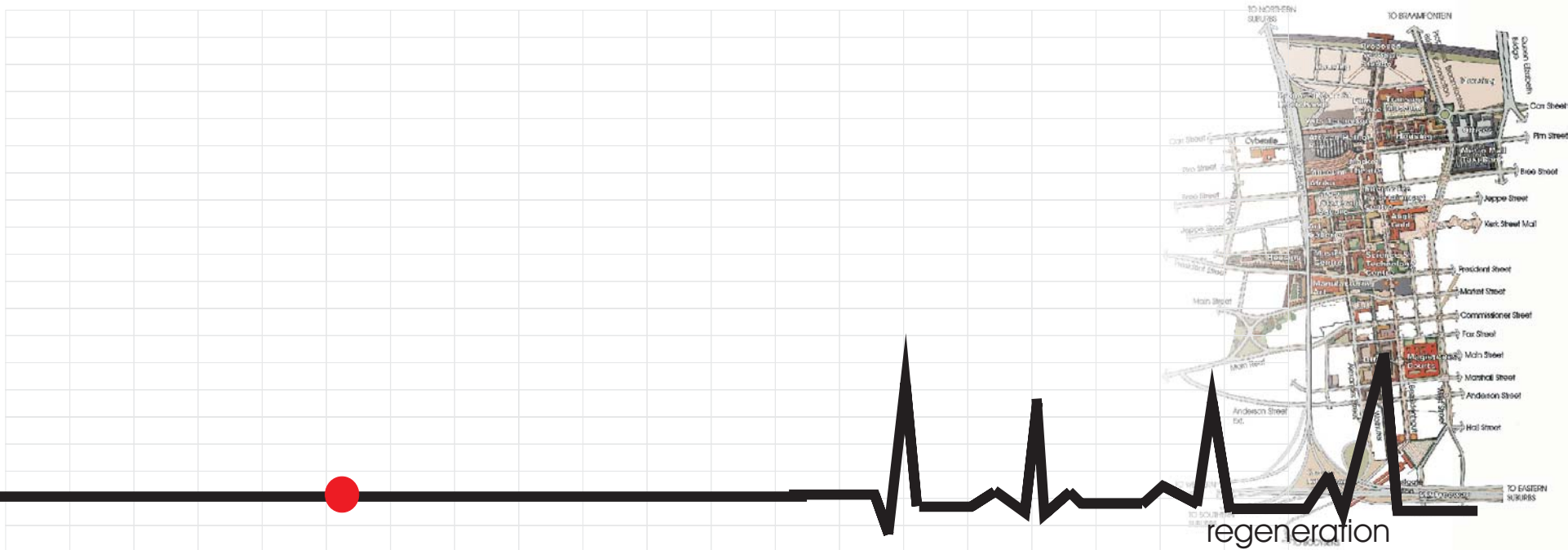


# existing frameworks



**Newtown Urban Design Framework:**

The Newtown Urban Design Framework (approved August 1999) a general framework of the Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council's intentions regarding the development and regeneration of the Western Sector of the Inner City, as well as the Newtown Cultural Precinct within it.

The Newtown Urban Design Framework outlines the overall physical development of three primary precincts: **Northern precinct**, **Central precinct** (including the Newtown Cultural Precinct) and **Southern precinct**.

The goals for the Newtown Cultural Precincts are:

- Creating a safe and secure environment;
- Improving accessibility;
- Developing Turbine Hall;
- Creating a critical mass and a 24 hour city;
- Establishing a coherent development framework for the area;
- Establishing a focussed special purpose vehicle to drive the development and land release process.



Fig 49. The Newtown Urban Design Framework: site location.

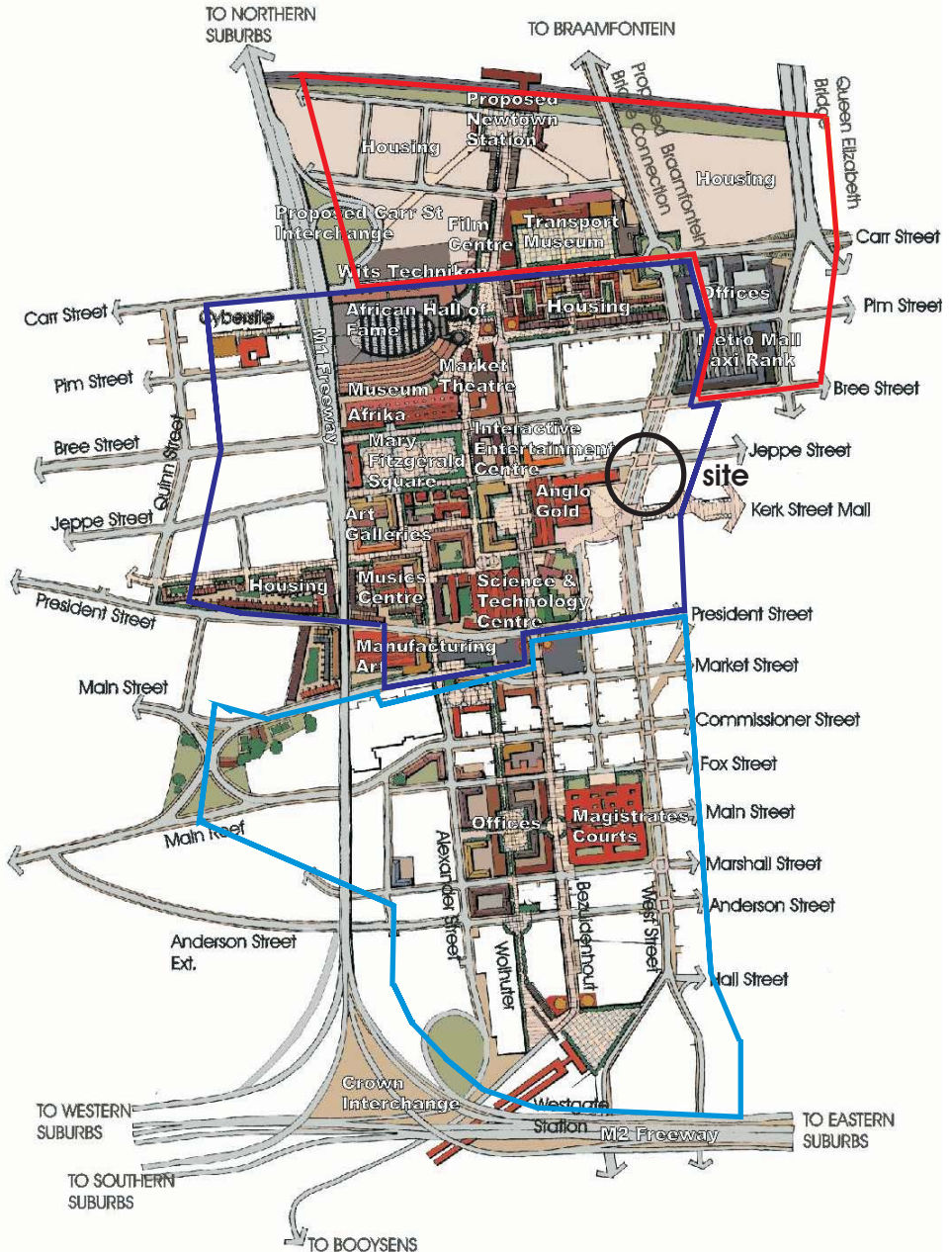


Fig 48. The Newtown Urban Design Framework.



**The Precinct Plan Concept:**

The spatial structure of the concept is based on an interlinked public environment system, which integrates the existing key activities and creates further linkages to adjoining areas and activity clusters.

Three primary public spaces are interconnected by pedestrian dominant routes and lanes: Mary Fitzgerald Square, Newtown Piazza and Turbine Square. Additional pedestrian routes radiate from the core area, creating linkages to the Johannesburg CBD and Church Street (east), to the Oriental Plaza (west), to the proposed Craft Centre and the West City initiative (south), to the Transnet Railway Land and Braamfontein (north), and to the Metro Mall development (north-east).

This spatial structure establishes a dominant east-west redevelopment corridor (past Turbine Hall). A secondary north-south development axis is created, established by the Market Theatre, Afrika Cultural Centre and Museum Africa to the north, with further development opportunities including the Transnet Land Redevelopment and the proposed housing development. The southern part of the development axis is promoted by the Dance Factory and the proposed Craft Centre development.

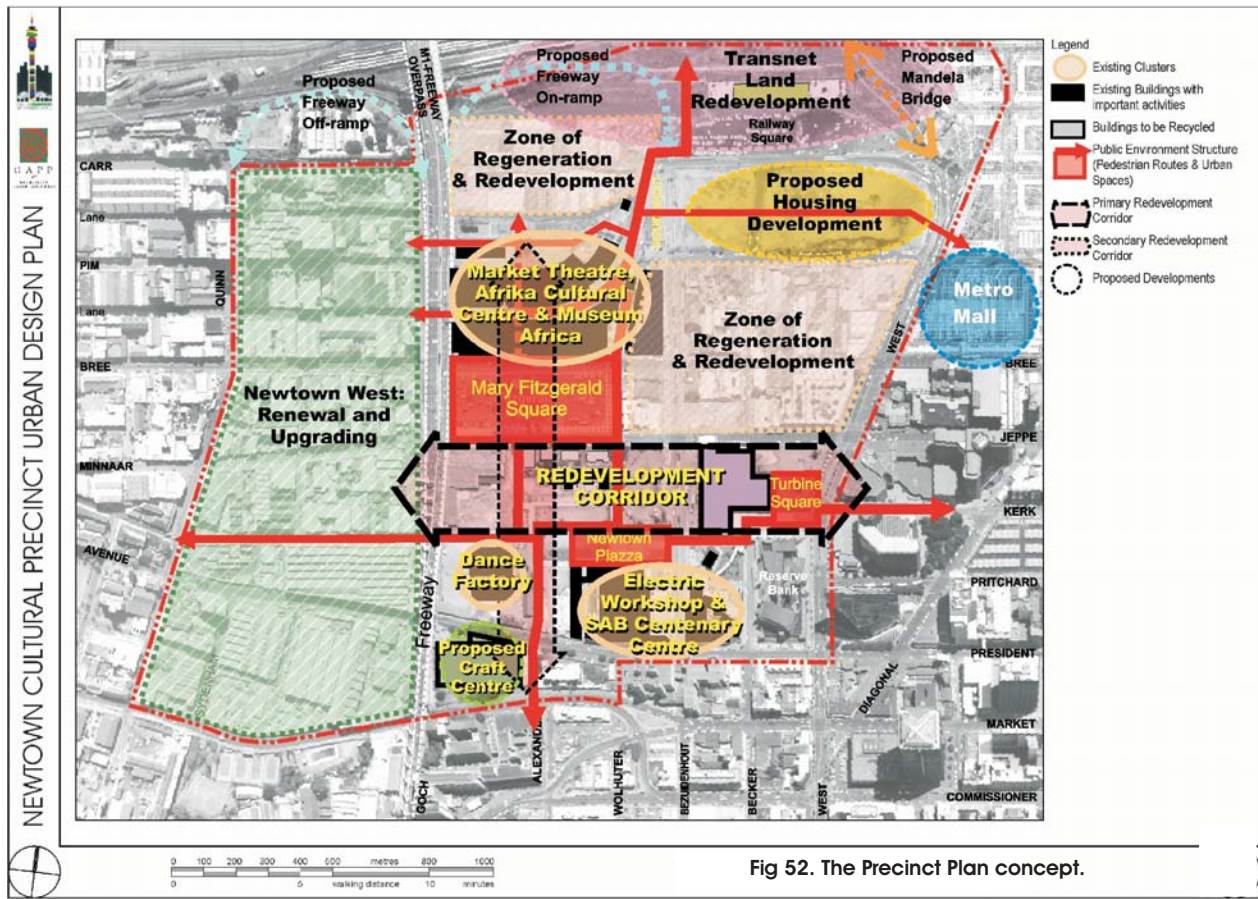


Fig 52. The Precinct Plan concept.



Fig 53. The model showing the urban design guidelines of The Precinct Plan concept.



## The Precinct Plan Vision:

The development vision is based on creating a human-scaled, active and vibrant public environment, within a milieu of art and cultural activities, with supporting retail, commercial, business, office and residential uses.

Principles include:

- to accommodate pedestrians as the major form of movement and to emphasize a human scale to create a public environment in the Newtown Cultural Precinct;
- an easy, safe, convenient and pleasant pedestrian environment and movement, co-ordinated with ease of vehicular movement and access to well located and safe parking areas;
- extensive tree-scaping and landscaping for the promotion of a comfortable public environment;
- focusing on the need of pedestrians first, and ensuring that vehicular movement supports the diverse human activities that are envisaged;
- building on the distinct hierarchical road structure;

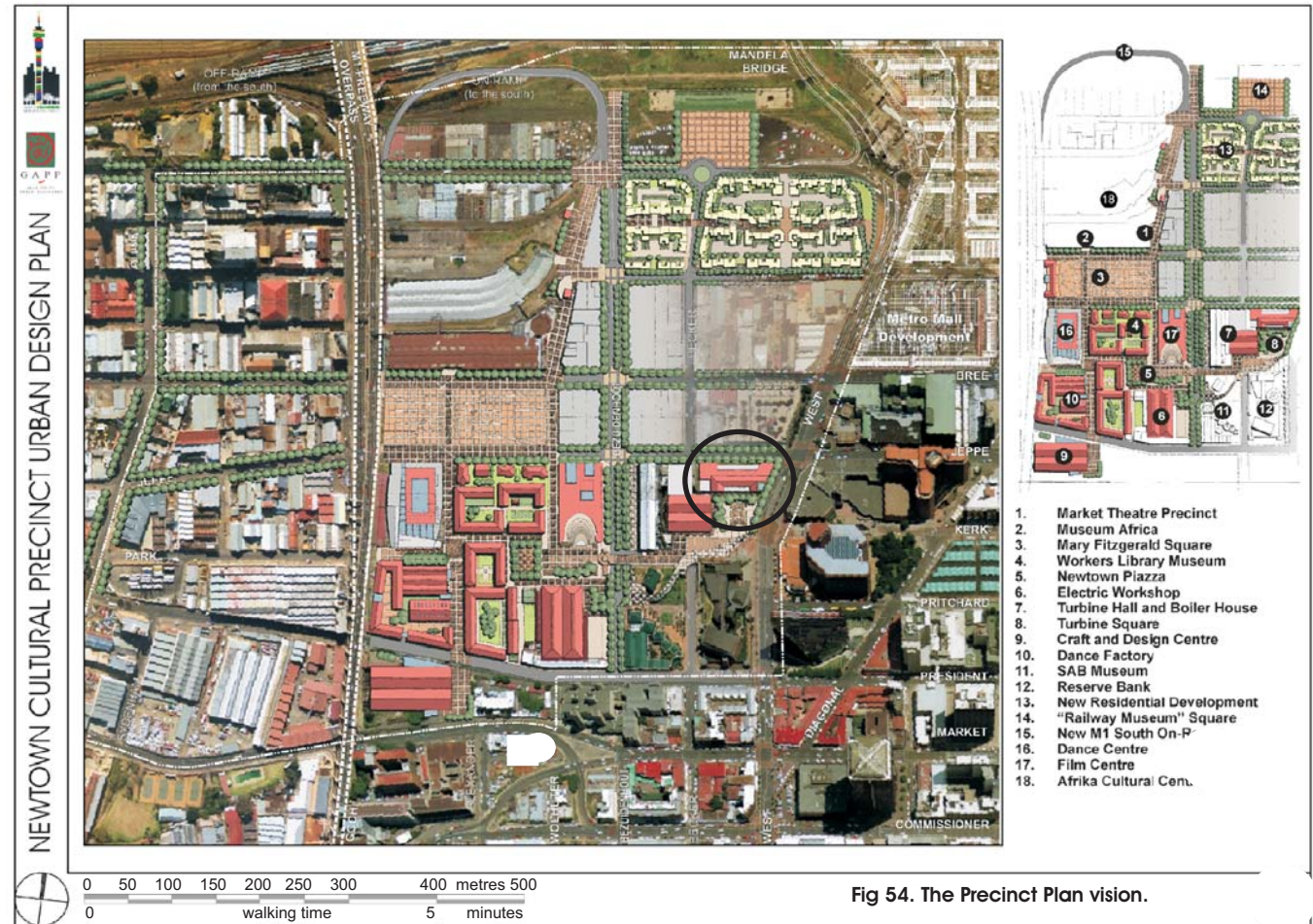


Fig 54. The Precinct Plan vision.

**Land Use Activity:**

The proposal is focussed on a mixed-use development within a cultural and art milieu, encouraging the complex integration of cultural, art, entertainment, retail, commercial, office and residential activities.

To maintain a sense of continuity and a vibrant urban life, there must be given attention to the activities and uses within buildings at ground floor level. Ground floors are recommended to be used for retailing, entertainment, restaurants: uses that can flow out onto the sidewalk space adjacent to the building.

The uses and activities on the upper floors are to encourage looking out onto the public environment. Offices and residential uses must face outwards to the street. The use of balconies are encouraged.

Mixed-use developments are encouraged: active uses at ground level, two or three storeys of cultural uses above, and residential use at the Top.

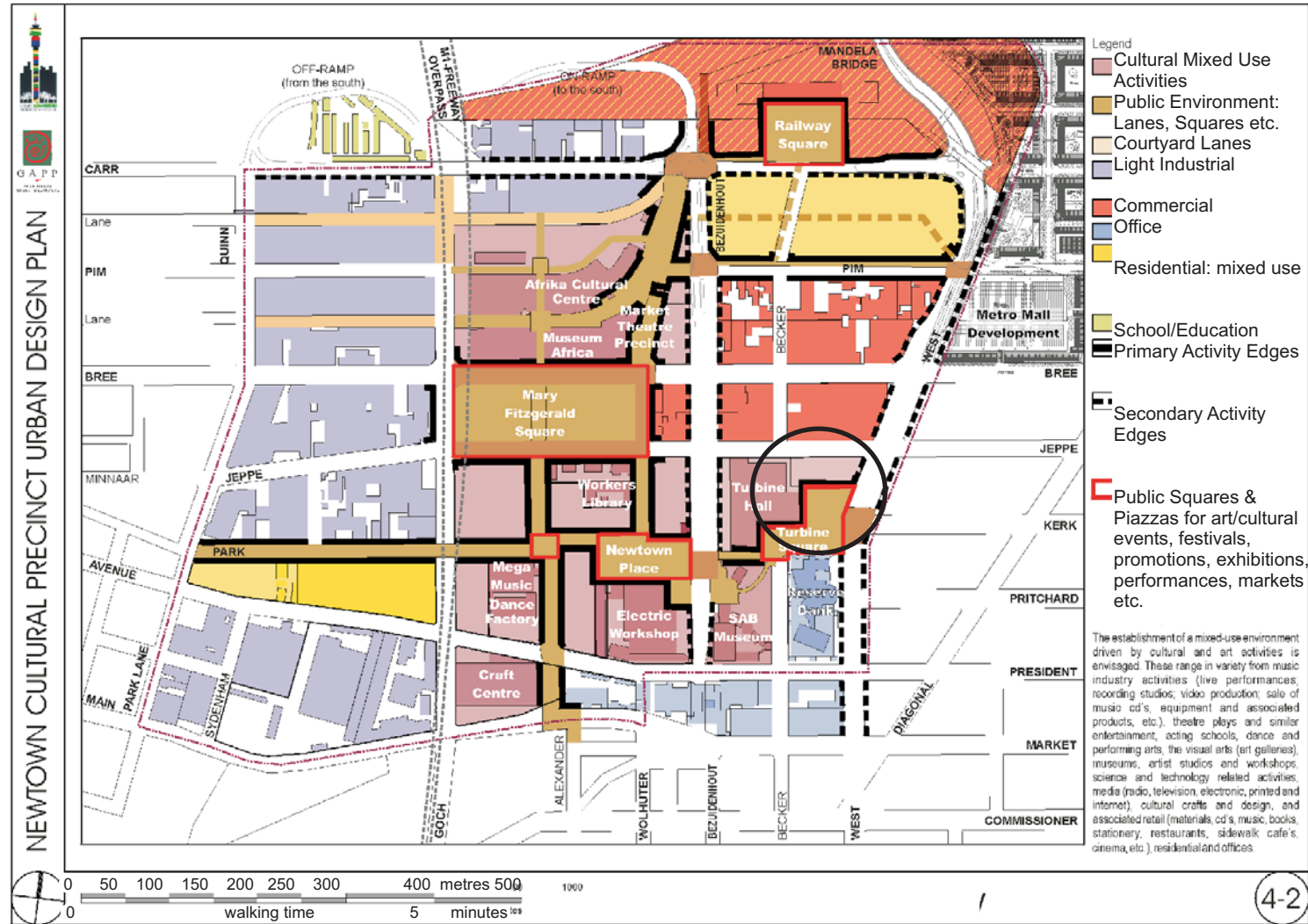


Fig 55. Land Use Activity (GAPP Architects & Urban Designers, 2001)

### Built Form Directives:

- Designers are required to use their buildings to define space: buildings are used in group form to define the edges of the public environment.
- The buildings are encouraged to be designed to stand on their boundary lines and collectively form a human scale to achieve a feeling of containment and natural surveillance, ensuring safety and security.
- The mechanisms used to promote the built form: mandatory and desirable build to lines, building zones, and definition through colonnaded or covered walkways.
- Buildings and building facades of historical value are set aside for conservation. Historic buildings are to be retained and recycled. Historic facades must be retained and integrated with the redevelopment of the site.
- Height of the buildings are to be two to four storeys, in keeping with the existing urban environmental scale, and achieving a human scale of enclosure.
- The promotion of the development of landmark buildings with a distinct character. Architectural accentuation of buildings at important locations are encouraged. This promotes imageability and legibility.

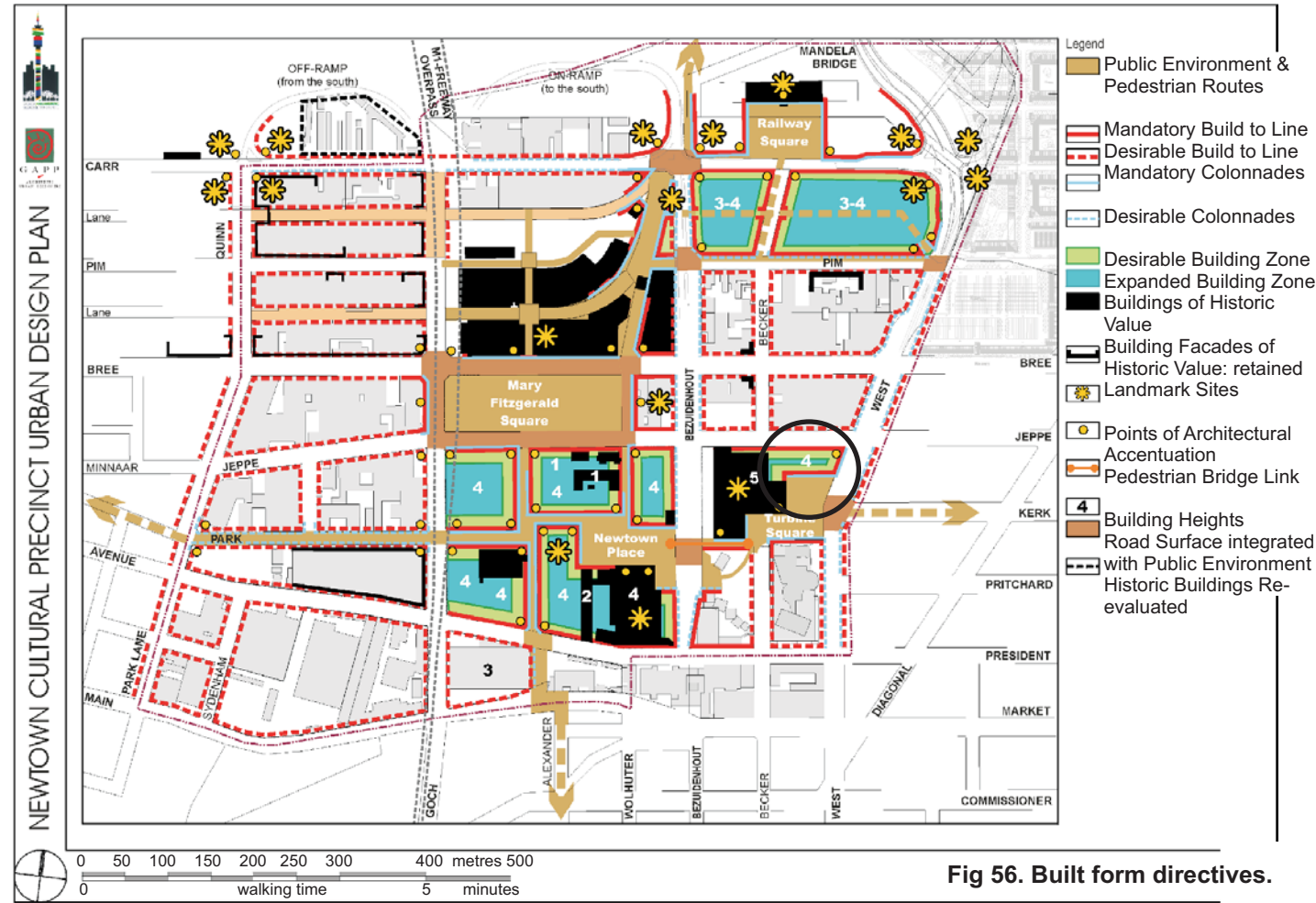


Fig 56. Built form directives.



**Movement:**

The proposed movement system is structured on a hierarchy of movement modes. These modes are separated but integrated: no rigid reservation of space for a particular type of movement is evident.

The movement is pedestrian dominated in a public environment. Controlled access of vehicles are accommodated. Public transport routes (taxi and bus) are proposed with stops at strategic intervals for maximum accessibility. These are integrated with the overall metropolitan- wide public transport system.

**Vehicular Movement:**

Two activity streets, or 'high streets' have been proposed: Carr and Bezuidenhout Streets. These streets are proposed to have more intensive retail, with significant on-street parking, wider pedestrian pavements, catering for entertainment, restaurants, daily needs and convenience shopping.

The rest of the roads form local secondary access roads, which provide circulation throughout the precinct, with on-street parking.

**Public Transport:**

Public transport routes and stops have been proposed. The routes consist of bus and taxi routes and have been routed that they fit with the existing public transport routes. The stops are located to provide easy access on foot throughout the precinct.

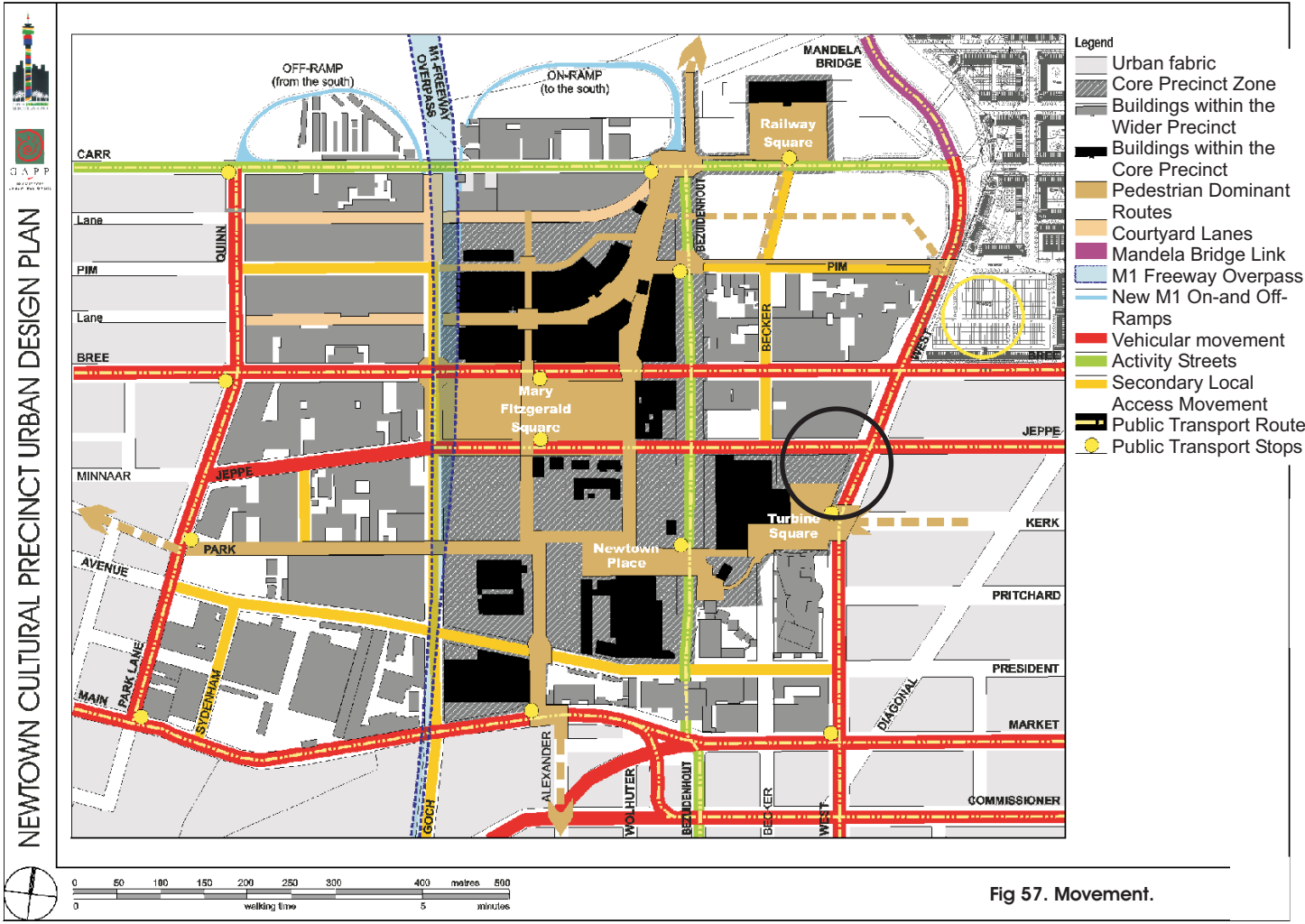


Fig 57. Movement.

**Public Environment:**

A pedestrian dominant public environment is proposed. The parts of Jeppe and Bree Streets along Mary Fitzgerald Square are to be designed as an extension of the square, with the aim of closing these streets during off-peak periods, at night, or over weekends, if required for an event.

## Urban Space and Landscape:

The urban space environment is characterized by a network consisting of pedestrian walkways and routes, piazzas and public squares. Semi-public courtyard lanes have also been located, for the use by adjacent businesses for courtyard parking, landscaping and places of recreation.

The landscaping is structured to add to the aesthetics, legibility, sense of place, linkage and physical comfort of the environment. Elements used are:

- Formal planting of street trees along the primary routes to form boulevards.
- A secondary order of street tree planting to define areas of public environment, pedestrian routes and secondary streets.
- The utilization of formal -planters and landscaping features throughout the public environment.
- The use of 'soft' green spaces like local parks.

Colonnades and covered walkways have been proposed to enhance overall physical comfort and protection from the elements.

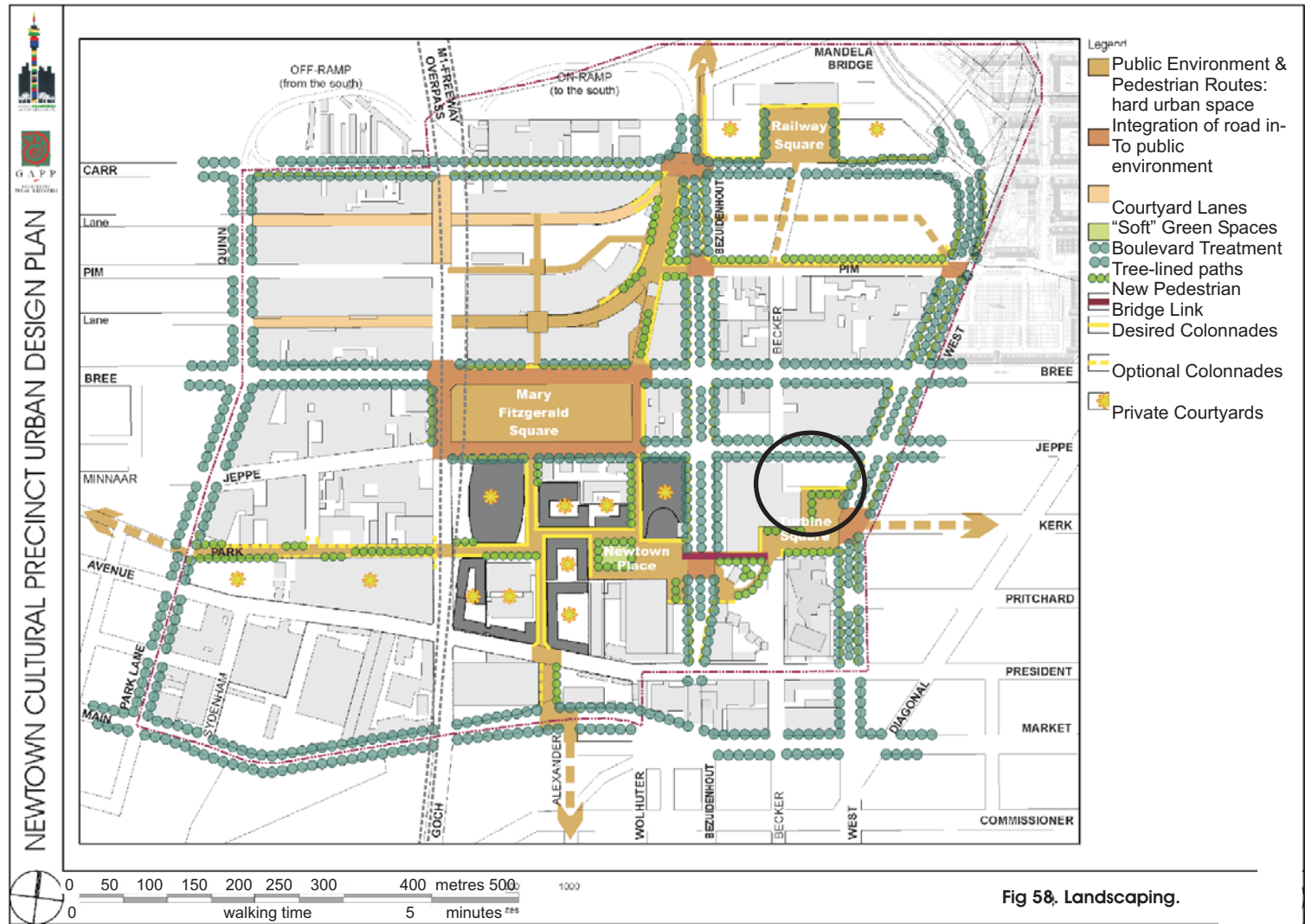


Fig 58. Landscaping.

**Parking:**

The parking requirements for the development are estimated to be in the range from 3600 parking bays at an average ratio of 3 bays per 100m<sup>2</sup> of floor area across all uses; to 5500 parking bays at an average ratio of 4.5 bays per 100m<sup>2</sup> of floor area across all uses.

**Problems with provision of parking:**

A significant amount of physical space is required to provide for parking. It is expensive to build a structured parking (basement). However, safe and secure parking, that is easily accessible, is required to attract people, which is critical to economic viability.

- Proposed Incremental Parking Ratio:

A sliding-scale parking ratio is proposed based on an analysis study of the Rosebank area in Johannesburg, undertaken by GAPP. Although the Rosebank parking study is not scientific in approach, it highlights the following principle: Mixed use developments encourage more complex activities within the urban environment resulting in a more dynamic and more efficient use of the provided parking facilities. The result is an overall lower parking ratio.

The sliding-scale parking ratio proposed:

Floor Area Ratio	bays/m <sup>2</sup>
0.5 FAR	1 bay/20m <sup>2</sup>
5.0/100m <sup>2</sup> cumulative	
Thereafter to:	
1.0	1 bay/22m <sup>2</sup>
4.5/100m <sup>2</sup> cumulative	
To 1.5	1 bay/25m <sup>2</sup>
4.0/100m <sup>2</sup> cumulative	
To 2.0	1 bay/29m <sup>2</sup>
3.5/100m <sup>2</sup> cumulative	

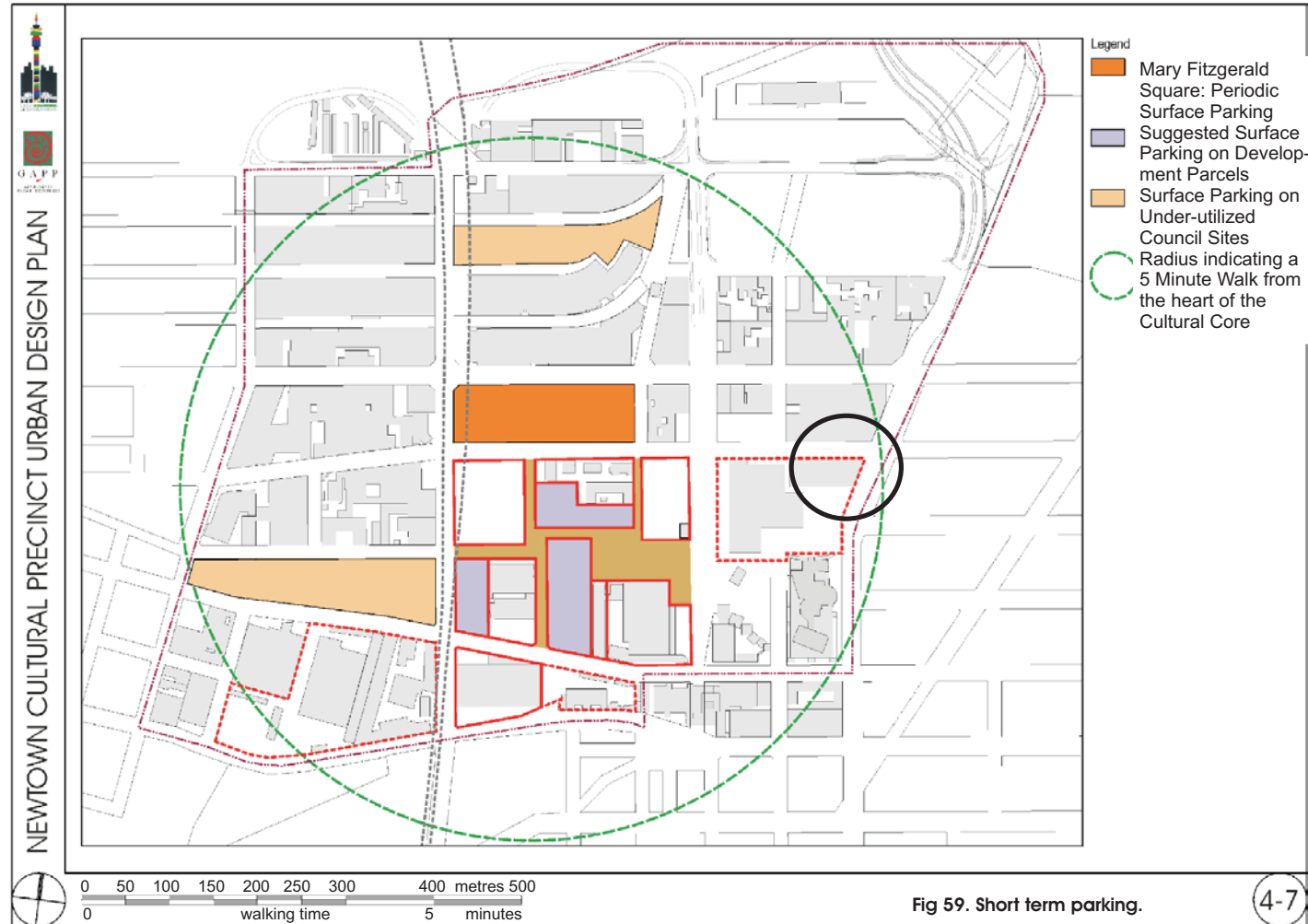


Fig 59. Short term parking.

**Short-term parking:**

Short-term parking is to be accommodated on-surface on the undeveloped sites and under-utilized Council land. Space for this is to be made available in an incremental manner.

Once all available land has been used for parking, and physical redevelopment begins to reduce the parking, the long term parking strategy should be initiated.

The following areas are pointed out for short-term parking:

- On -surface Mary Fitzgerald Square.
- On-surface on the development parcels of the precinct, which have presently no development proposals.

The minimum amount of parking available within the precinct in the short-term is approximately 928 bays.

**Long-term Parking:**

Parking over the long term is to be accommodated as follows:

- Structured parking: most developments will require a minimum of one parking basement, and some will require two basements.
- Mary Fitzgerald Square will accommodate public surface parking.
- Parts of the Turbine Hall buildings' basement can be redeveloped into a public parking facility. This will depend on the proposed redevelopment of the building.
- A public structured parking facility (above surface) should be developed in the vicinity of the new on-ramp on to the M1 freeway.
- On-street parking will also be available.
- Parking becomes available in the evenings at the West Street Parkade.



## Development Design Guidelines:

The intention of urban design controls is to ensure the development of a cohesive urban environment that responds to its urban and topographical location, to the goals and experience of Newtown, and which can act as a framework within which architects and/or developers can contribute positively to the urban form as agreed by the Johannesburg Development Authority. [Gapp Architects & Urban Designers, 2001]

The following guidelines were given in the framework to set the architectural goals that would be recommended within the Newtown Cultural Precinct.. Structure and character of the architectural form need to be guided so that it can be read through its movement systems, urban spaces and building forms.

### Architectural Character:

- The urban design controls will, to an extent, control the form and size of buildings and their relationship to one another and to the hierarchy of open spaces proposed. This will ensure a consistent integrity of urban form.
- A design code is required to prevent design deviations in the wrong direction, but permits the occasional flight of fancy that does enrich towns. The juxtaposition of more formal spaces, places, routes, landmarks, vistas, topography and interesting buildings conceived that makes memorable precincts, such as Newtown.

### Design Ethic:

- Buildings must define space, rather than be objects within it. The built fabric should be defined by:
  - High Floor Area Ratios
  - Minimum heights that achieve an acceptable degree of enclosure of the public environment
  - Definition of build-to-lines ensuring strong edges.
  - Minimum design criteria that accentuate the building's relationship to the public environment, its point of entry, parking, vehicular circulation, security, massing of built form, elevational and roof treatment, façade modulation, vertical composition and relationship to adjacent developments, in particular active ground floor activities.
- Buildings must recognise their context, be respectful of neighbours, and enrich public, semi-public and private environments. Pure copying of historical styles is discouraged, but analysis and reinterpretation of historical clues must be encouraged. The thrust of the architectural ethic should be an enduring, timeless quality.

### Materials and Quality:

- High quality materials should be used, which can also be cost effectively maintained.
- The area is characterised by red brick and earthy colours. Materials of this colouring are encouraged.
- Materials and elevations should reflect a consciousness in respect of energy and water conservation.
- Roofs must be dealt with as a conscious element of façade treatment. Roofs should not dominate their buildings.

### Relationship to Surrounds:

- The overriding group form sought is that of a *street-related wall architecture*, as is characteristic of the Johannesburg CBD. In other words, urban spaces must be lined by a continuous façade of buildings. While heights, build-to lines, and architectural styles may vary slightly, the net result should be a complex façade facing onto the public environment.
- Continuity of building is encouraged, with gaps between them being discouraged.
- Buildings must relate to each other, to the interior and exterior. The interior of each block should be considered with importance, as a place within its own right. It should form an important ingredient of the semi-private domain of the Newtown Precinct. The development of each site / erf should recognise it as an equally important frontage and respond to it accordingly.

### Mixed Use Development:

- Quality of life, ambience and activity in the area is dependent on the extent to which mixed-use developments are achieved. There is therefore a high priority on encouraging developers to respond in this regard.
- Continuity of a vibrant ground level is encouraged, for example, retail, restaurant and entertainment activities. Cultural activities are equally important here, such as theatres, galleries, and workshops.
- Sidewalk space becomes an important element in the architecture of a building. Colonnaded, canopied or protected sidewalk space becomes an important determinant of the adopted architectural approach. Enclosure of the sidewalk should be of a human scale.

- Ground level facades must interact with street if they are not to be used for active spaces. This will allow for surveillance and thus security.
- The ideal mixed-use configuration is that of retail-related active uses at ground floor; with offices and studios two or three storeys above this, and one or two more levels of residential apartment above this.
- Densities must be maximised where possible.

#### Celebrate Entrances:

- Pedestrian entrances and circulation should be clear and emphasised, both from the street and the inner core of the block. Thus the building becomes a double frontage development.
- A hierarchy of spaces ranging from public to private must be encouraged.
- The area must be as user-friendly and as accessible as possible to all people, regardless of disabilities. Thus ramped access to buildings should be an integral part of the building's sense of arrival. Specialised facilities for mothers and their children, the elderly and the disabled would be welcomed.
- Vehicular access across sidewalks must be limited if possible.
- Corner buildings must be given particular attention, in terms of stature, by way of accentuating height and details.

#### Signage:

- Designated zones are needed for signage that is visible to public, semi-public or neighbouring property.
- Discreet and restrained signs are encouraged, in other words, no flashing or moving signage should be allowed.
- Approval must be obtained for the display of external signs.
- No signage may appear on the façade above ground, other than the name of the building.
- Signs should be manufactured of high quality, durable and colourfast materials.
- Fixed elements of the sign should be concealed.
- Signs and support structures are to be ground related and integral to the building.

#### Landscaping:

- Landscaping is used to enhance the architecture of the building and to create a greening of the city fabric and to emphasise the relationship

between built and natural elements.

- Landscaping must complement that of adjoining sites to create a unified landscape running across boundaries rather than defining them.
- The utilisation of indigenous planting is encouraged and is to be designed with a conscious attention to routine maintenance.
- 20% of the site's area (hard and soft landscaping) must be professionally planned and detailed.
- Planting must be properly maintained and irrigated. All hard surfaces must be designed to accommodate proper storm water drainage.

[GAPP Architects and Urban Designers, 2001]