



INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 01
architectural realm
overview and context
methodology
intention

INTRODUCTION

architectural realm

We have the power to affect the way that the story of the city goes forward...to steer that progress in directions which we hope will be not only equitable in terms of the way opportunities for livelihood and self-realisation are distributed and mediated...but also enabling, liberating and supportive of the human spirit (Read, 2005: 3).

Architecture contributes to the story of everyday life and enhances and manipulates the experience we engage in. It can be understood as a process as much as the discipline itself unravels as a process. Within the 'everyday', time and movement are the elements which give substance to the architectural realm, as they render it tangible, meaningful and ever changing. The manipulation and adaptation of this 'everyday' therefore becomes a dynamic and experimental zone in which the architect finds value.

However much of the story of architecture relies on collaboration and it is important to realise that other disciplines develop independently of architecture. The process of this thesis therefore explores the 'everyday', the context of this experience and the users of the environments, whilst recognising the boundaries of the discipline and its inconsistencies which spark interest.



overview and context

The city represents possibility and it's this association which encourages movement within, to and from the city. Social and economic dynamics constantly change as the user group changes such that possibility emerges from feeling out of place (Swyngedouw in Read et al, 2005: 133). The study aims to explore the idea of the 'city as possibility' in the specific context of Pretorius Street. Furthermore an exploration into what possibilities are concealed from the user will be considered. For in the context of an established economic activity zone, with high pedestrian and vehicle traffic, an overload of signage, deep city blocks and internal mall systems, possibility lies in the clarification of process and systems on the street. The study aims to invigorate legibility and consider the literacy of the outsider within the 'city as possibility'.

Literacy in this context builds upon the basics of reading, writing and numeracy to address everyday literacy, a means of learning through experience and community support to acquire skills to sustain a livelihood. The increased awareness of illiteracy is of specific relevance to the future empowerment of the city worker. City users may be illiterate in the Western sense of the word, but this does not render them helpless. This intervention aims to supply various methods (Arend, 2005: 107) of skills training through the use of increased legibility and the existing environment of information overload.

The programme of the study combines the notions of the everyday and adaptation in the proposed creation of an interactive environment. The aim is to enable people by providing everyday literacy through economic and creative skills training; repurposing an existing building to expose the possibilities beyond the practicalities and inserting new trade, learning, incubators and public service facilities, which are non-prescriptive and contribute to the depth of the block. The value of this programme is that it works in conjunction with established literacy practice, empowerment, UNESCO and government policies on small business start-ups and incubators. The study investigates information transfer and integration of small business with the evolving context of the city. Accordingly, the study questions what role architectural adaptation plays in providing opportunities, with specific reference to the re-use of a heritage resource.

1.04 SIDEWALK QUALITY



1.05 URBAN CANYON IN SHADOW



1.06 EDGE AS OPPORTUNITY



methodology

The study follows a theoretical and contextual progression in order to develop a discourse relevant to approaching an architecture of opportunity and everyday literacy. Theoretical research then continues into specific intervention issues such as: adaptation, the element of surprise, process, neutrality of space and the city as possibility by means of philosophy and precedent. The contextual research is aimed in two areas. The first method is extensive investigation, observation and interview of Pretorius Street and the movement and concealment of possibilities. The second method is to conduct thorough analysis and observation of how people use the inner depth of a city block. Questioning what stimulates the user to make the inner realm a destination as opposed to through movement and how this can further implement the theoretical research.

intention

The architectural intention therefore aims to transcribe an architecture of opportunity over the defined built fabric, in order to clarify process and address the illiteracy of the outsider. The development of an enabling architecture is important in contemporary South Africa. An interactive base where all interactions, be it facade, vertical circulation, through-movement or the adaptive system of the city should act as a notice board: accessible, informative and receptive of change. The intervention will manipulate the existing fabric, add layers to it and consider how these learning, trade and incubator spaces can affect the experience of the 'everyday'. The very nature of the established context provides the sphere of opportunity, yet the intervention must query its own impact. How does it relate to the future of a working city, the transfer of knowledge and the legibility of urban architecture?

1.07 ARCADE QUALITY (SOUTH EDGE)



1.08 ENTERING PRETORIUS STREET



1.09 VARYING NARRATIVES

