



CONTEXT ANALYSIS

CHAPTER 03

everyday literacies
framework_plugin festival
urban context and pretorius street
arcades and the pedestrian experience
detailed analysis of 239
reflection

CONTEXT ANALYSIS

everyday literacies

Literacy and the perception of literacy in South Africa is greatly influenced by the country's history. The standpoint of the colonizer in inducing a western doctrine of teaching has affected the growth and continues to influence identities in relation to language and culturalism. In Mbembe's *On The Postcolony* he suggests that newly independent states are predisposed to improvisation in all spheres of everyday life (2001: 102). This in turn impacts the identities and places of expression within the context of opportunity. Accordingly the western form of literacy practice has been promoted which doesn't respond to the demands of the people. The 'everyday' experience is characterised in contemporary South Africa by a focus on 'today' and what the emerging context is. Thus the development and exposure to literacy and its various forms needs to respond in a manner which recognises the evolving nature of society. Literacy practice can't be referred to as a constant, for the contexts vary dramatically in addition to conditions of individualism and urbanisation (Rogers, 2005: 8). The change of direction of literacy workshops since 2000 addresses the framework of development within the country. Previously, attention was specifically given to rural women, however with the ease of movement and community member displacement illiteracy levels have increased in urban areas (Rogers, 2005: 6). The variation required in how literacy responds is now crucial, for being able to read and write can be overcome in order to make a living.

The variation in opportunities provided responds to the urban environment and within the framework of the 'city as possibility'. As the multiplicity of spatial experience is addressed through form, the programmatic equivalent is to develop a multiplicity in methodology in the approach to literacy. This includes basic literacy, numeracy, community support and specific literacies such as computer, music or economic which increase the legibility of the urban realm. Arend argues that exposure to literacy in conjunction with people's values and social relations allow for greater combat in learning, access and distribution of required texts (2005: 106), whereas Kell suggests contextual and linguistic variations result in better approaches to literacy workshops (2005: 159). The classroom environment is not contextually appropriate. Thus, varied teaching styles, workshops and leadership should be considered in literacy teaching.



The context of the city as overload already acts as a mechanism of learning. The plethora of information available, ranging from magazines, newspapers, signage, flyers and advertisements add to the everyday interactions with literacy on the domestic scale. Books, electricity bills, shopping lists and church readings are duly exposed and people adapt under these scenarios already. To foster this 'everyday' overload through varied teaching methods and catering for a range of home languages allows for somewhat of the stigma attached to literacy to fall away. The 'everyday' can be compared to a 'succession of moments' which inform and transform experience and identity (Mbembe, 2001: 242). The expression of literacy through variation should be accordingly defined and combined with a societal reciprocity such that literate members expose and educate the illiterate to their opportunities.

The ultimate goal is to foster social and economic conditions and transactions generating a massive demand for literacy and thus to bring about environments indispensable for using literacy-based skills and competencies (Ouane in Rogers, 2005: vii).

The provision of opportunity and meaning transcends disciplines, the value of literacy leads to greater understanding and participation which encourages the economic growth and reiterates the nature of Pretorius Street. The value of literacy is ever-present, in whatever form the individual defines their literacy, but the acquisition should be made clear. Within the aim of transcribing an architecture of opportunity and an urban framework which addresses the temporary nature of the city and the pedestrian experience, an everyday literacy becomes critical to continuing the city narrative. Part of UNESCO's aims is to integrate literacy as a means of gateway to improve community expression, the transfer of knowledge and relevance in the 'everyday' social and economic context (Maruatona, 2005: 237). The identification of a particular zone of opportunity could be invaluable at addressing the scales of literacy and the street identity of a city street. The historical relevance of a literacy intervention within contemporary Pretoria could become an experience out of the wait for an accomplishment (Ricoeuer in Mbembe, 2001: 205).

3.04 LITERACY AS A SOCIAL ACT



3.05 INTEGRATION OF HISTORY AS LITERACY



3.06 EVERYDAY FORMS



Opportunity within the city worker's experience would benefit from exposure to literacy. The issue of migration and gaining information becomes a cyclical process that responds to work and study and the transfer of knowledge in the community. Production, negotiation and compliancy are directly impacted and the source of this learning becomes a reference, an opportunity (Kell, 2005: 168). Accordingly the current context could be deemed inadequate in the variation of skills which are accessible. The overload of the city experience complicates access to knowledge and word of mouth dominates an individual development. The opportunity lies in blatant exposure to information, skills transfer and the hierarchy which develops as a result of skills learnt. Kell suggests that bolder vision be implemented to scaffold the system (2005: 177). The 'everyday literacies' context has developed from a perceived African destructive society, but the gradual interweaving of life, exposure to the global trends of the city is demonstrating the possibility to all user groups. Although literacy is not an end in itself it enhances the everyday experience and creates platforms for development. The potential legibility of this discipline has parallels in architecture, within the socio-economic context and allows for the development of opportunity within the illusive city establishment.

3.07 SHOPPING LIST



3.08 COLLECTION OF MONTHLY BILLS



3.09 ROAD SIGNAGE

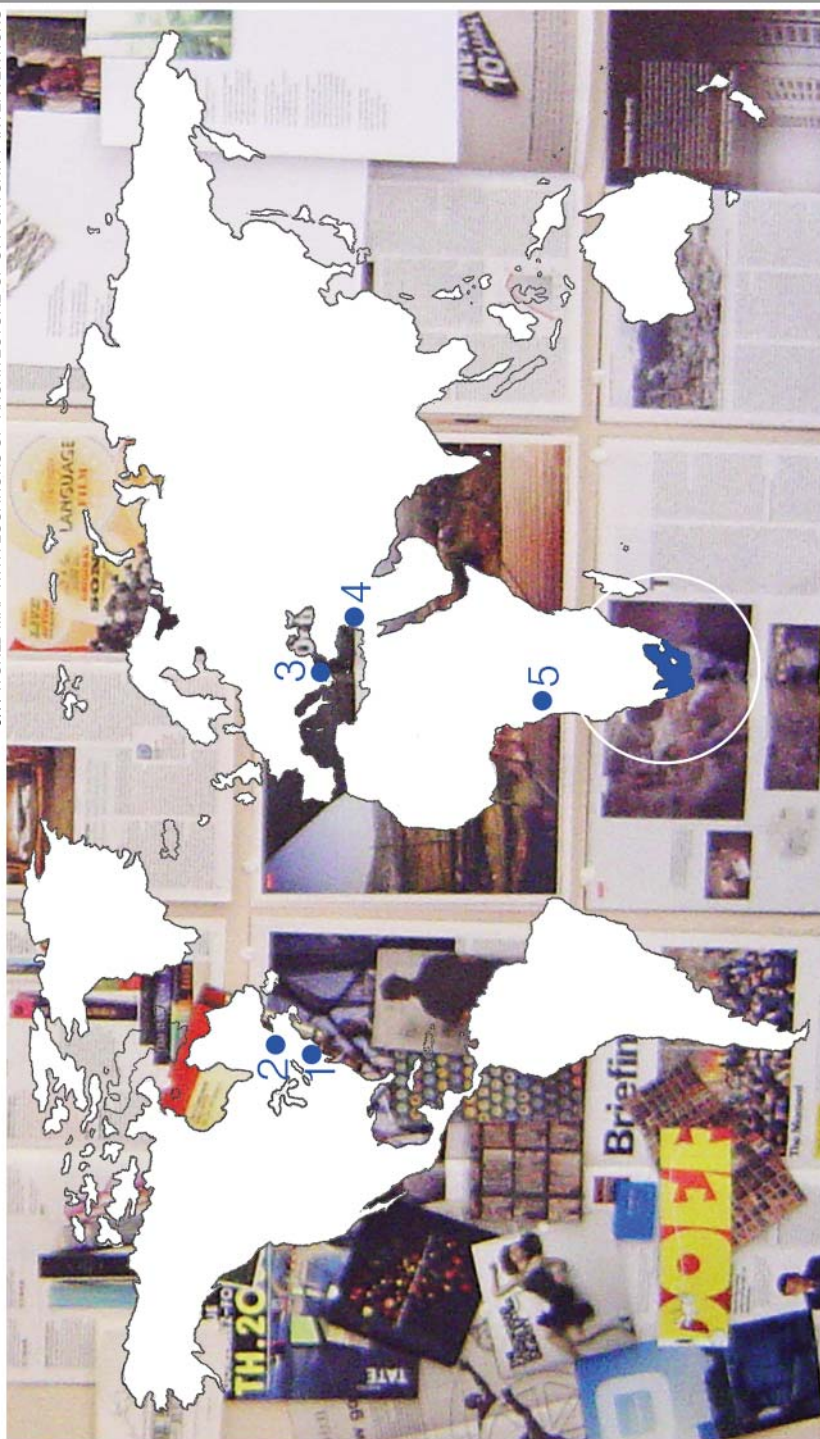




3.10 A COLLECTION OF FLYERS FROM PRETORIUS STREET. THE DEMANDS OF EVERYDAY LITERACY

EVERYDAY LITERACIES

3.11 WORLD MAP WITH LOCATIONS OF 'ARCHITECTURE OF OPPORTUNITY' INTERVENTIONS



global architecture of opportunity

Archis Interventions organise international events and projects which initiate debate on spatial / cultural issues. Shrink, Perversion and the Beyroutes Guide Project are such interventions where multi-disciplinary professionals work together to highlight and solve issues for its context.

01 SHRINK: may 2004_new york city, usa

Shrink challenges the idea that design is driven by growth. The notion of new buildings, new programmes, newer, taller, denser is no longer relevant. The new is replaced by the shrinking. Growth is the hidden agenda of our entire society, its the vector of our thinking. Using landmarks the intervention challenges the new and the relationship of human experience and new technologies. This is opportunity within the city as possibility.



02 CANADIAN HOUSING / RENEWAL: 2005_quebec, canada

This government project aims at building 68,000 housing units in Quebec, responding to the often neglected demographics (drug users, rehabilitated prisoners, the old, the homeless), whilst utilising neglected spaces within the city, through social and inclusionary principles. By means of adaptation, an intervention of meaning is discovered by new spheres and generations of city users.



03 PERVERSION: july 2004_athens, greece

It is not difficult to find evidence for the existence of a perverse age; the erosion of the public domain, a lack of historic awareness, pointless regulation. Perversion builds upon the Athens Charter (1933), questioning adaptation and the processes of organisation and normality. The aim was to record the possibility of embracing and curiosity - social practices as opposed to current exclusiveness.



04 BEYROUTES GUIDE PROJECT: feb. 2009_beirut, lebanon

Only a few cities in the world offer so many layers of hidden meaning as Beirut does. In the public realm of this town there seems to be merely suggestions, projection and difference of opinion that somehow interact with peoples daily movements and actions.



05 WAR CHILD: 2008_kinshasa, drc

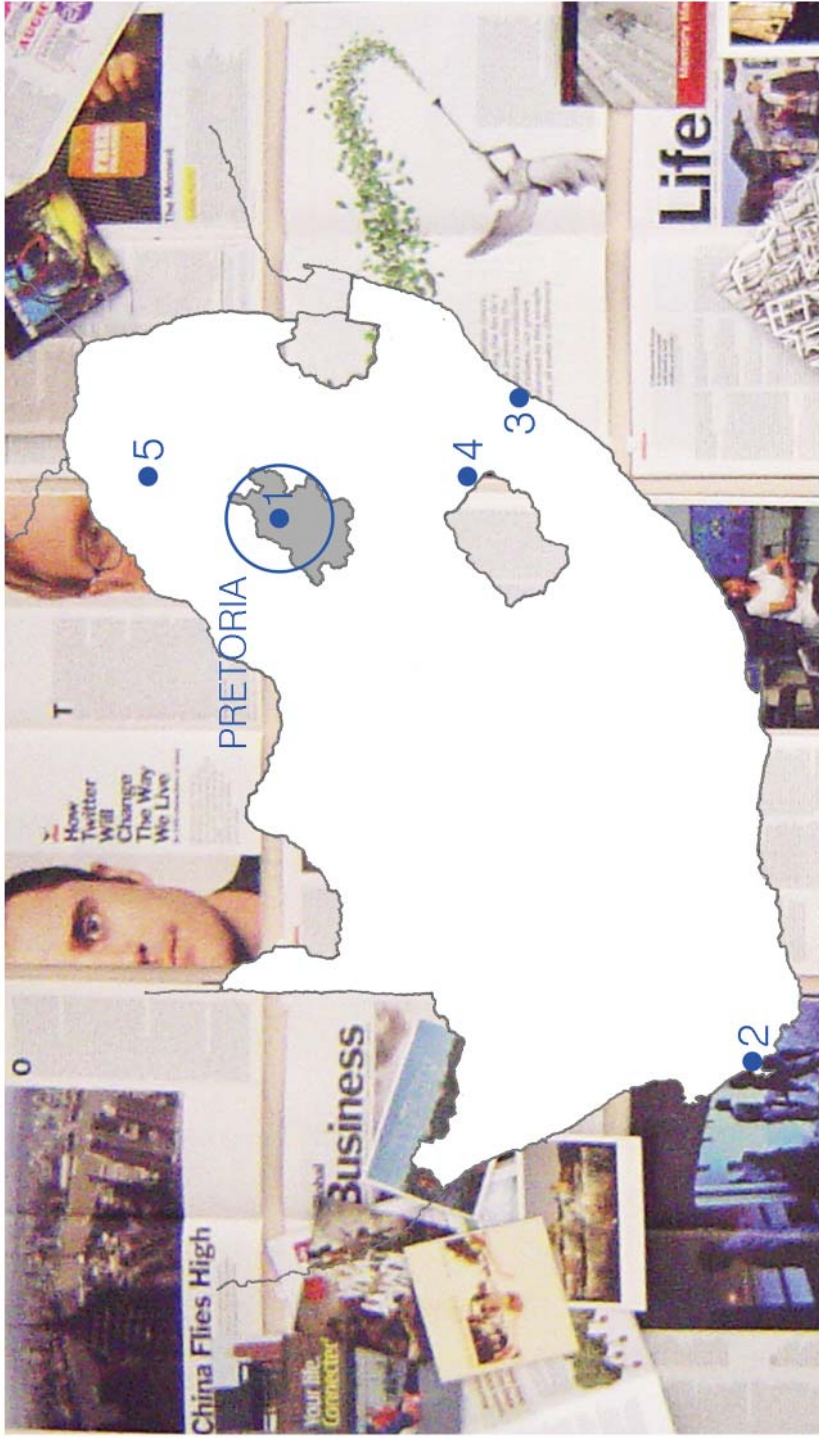
The organisation describes life in the capital city of the DRC and the responses to a current lack of an architecture of opportunity. The under utilised potential in a place so 'possibility' resource rich, the team considers where established principles could harness the resources. The aim is the re-establishment of the city as the *Beau Belle*, using its nobility and sharing nature to develop.





EVERYDAY LITERACIES

3.17 MAP OF SOUTH AFRICA WITH LOCATIONS OF 'PROJECT LITERACY' INTERVENTIONS



project literacy and south africa

Project Literacy is a national organisation which aims to give people their dignity and help grow the South African economy through cyclical systems of literacy and empowerment. The collaborative nature of the organisation allows for far reaching successes.

01 RUN HOME TO READ: 2007

This programme positions itself as a link between education, training and poverty. Engaging the community in social forms of literacy, Run Home to Read has successfully impacted the lives of 3500 families throughout the country and by means of its cyclical and mentorship nature, more families are exposed to the programme on a tri-monthly basis. The engagement of communities / volunteers / individuals allows the scheme to develop.



The programme impacts children in terms of directly addressing the causes of poverty and joblessness. It is a preparation for formal education and at a basic level improves a child's page turning, questioning and memory skills whilst developing their confidence when confronted by various forms of literacy. The primary care giver is taught by the fieldworker and develops as the child develops. In partnership with local libraries, the families have the opportunity to continue with literacy support and the fieldworkers ensure the sustainability of the programme as skills are directly transferred into the community.



02 ABET TRAINING: 2007

In partnership with government and private business, Project Literacy has developed functional and self-motivating courses of wide ranging skills training to be taught to both the employed and unemployed. In partnership with CBO's, companies can approach Project Literacy to train their staff or aid in outreach. The programme first assesses the skill level of the trainees, allocates booklets as per skill level, then over a requested period of time develop this occupational literacy and integrate the new found knowledge into their everyday business requirements.



03 SMME TRAINING: 2008

Approaches people on a basic literacy level. Dealing with the initial 'idea', or everyday challenges (such as subsistence farming) the training partners with small SMME's and capacity builders over a long term period. This programme is in great demand and is of new focus for Project Literacy come 2011.



01 SHOSHANGUVE: run home to read_ABET training

02 CAPE FLATS: run home to read_launching 2011

03 UMHLANGA ROCKS: ABET training_corporate_computer

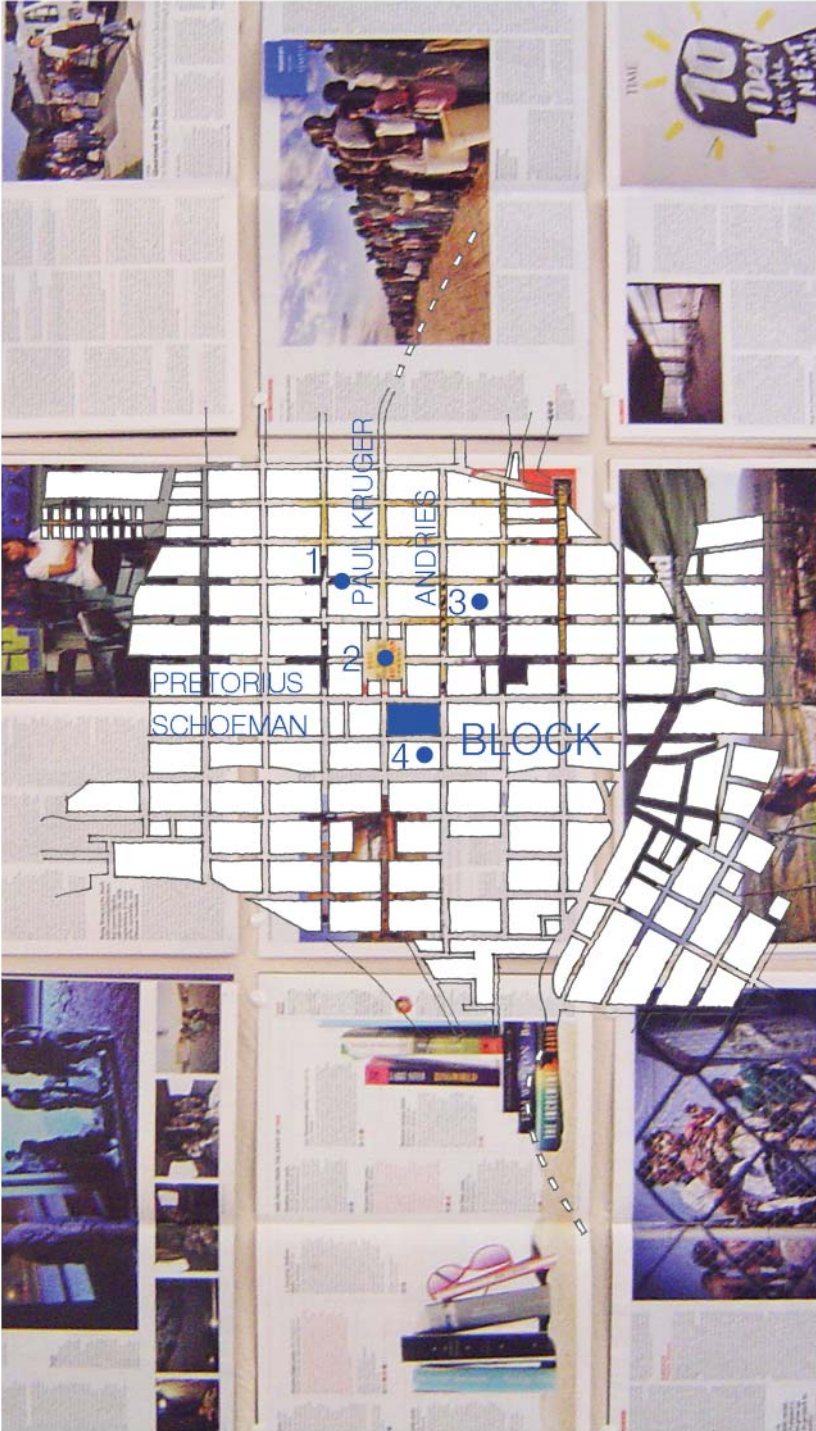
04 QWAQWA: SMME_ABET_environmental

05 MAHLOMELONG: run home to read_this is one of 25 towns in Limpopo Province that the programme is anchored in.



EVERYDAY LITERACIES

3.23 MAP OF PRETORIA, WITH LOCATION OF SITE FOR AN ARCHITECTURE OF OPPORTUNITY



pretoria's architecture of opportunity

To define the legibility of the city and to shape the story as it goes forward, the overload of information and interventions of meaning must be considered in conjunction with the pedestrian routes. Interaction with historic resources, spaces of opportunity and market gatherings can all strengthen the public ownership of the city. The opportunity lies in this interaction, bringing down fences to re-connect with last chapters of Pretoria.

The context of these identifications is based upon the growth of the city centre. The residential and commercial consolidation of space, increasing the population and thus the pedestrian traffic on the sidewalks. These four examples identify an architecture of opportunity, off the existing pedestrian networks. The concealed potential of the blocks is revealed, to expose the process and meaning within Pretoria's city blocks.

01 CORPORATE PRETORIA: the courts and telkom towers

The integration of the magisterial precinct and the cluster of skyscrapers allows for an experience and understanding of Pretoria's reputation in conjunction with the corporate, international identity. Whilst the idea punts for public ownership in the presence of the 'untouchable' big business and justice systems, the route provides potential and channels energy in a precinct which fluctuates between active, neglected and sterile.



02 CHURCH SQUARE AMBULATORY: an elevated perception

The visitor circles its periphery and the motorist is briefly introduced, yet the elevated perception is seldom achieved. As the German Reichstag revealed the hidden potential and process of the parliamentary system, a high level ambulatory could connect the city user with the capital city status of Pretoria. The investigation into city management would be an opportunity for the upcoming generation or cement the Square's permanence.



03 GOVERNMENT ROUTE: noordvaal arcade to struben street

New government buildings are 'concealed' from the pedestrian activities on Church Street and Paul Kruger Street. The connection of these departments and the new National Library with the office and commercial environment of Noordvaal Arcade and Vermeulen Street could potentially invigorate the precinct. The intervention would support the proposed Government Boulevard of Struben Street.



04 ST. ALBANS CHURCH AND 239's UNFINISHED ARCADE

The arcade of 239 Pretorius Street has the potential to trigger a movement route through the city incorporating the existing arcade networks of the block (Polley's, Thibault, Van Erkom), with an open site, St. Alban's Church and further on to Burger's Park. The 'intimate' route would reveal the historic resource of St. Alban's Church to the 'everyday' whilst exposing block processes and the narrative of a portion of the city.



FRAMEWORK

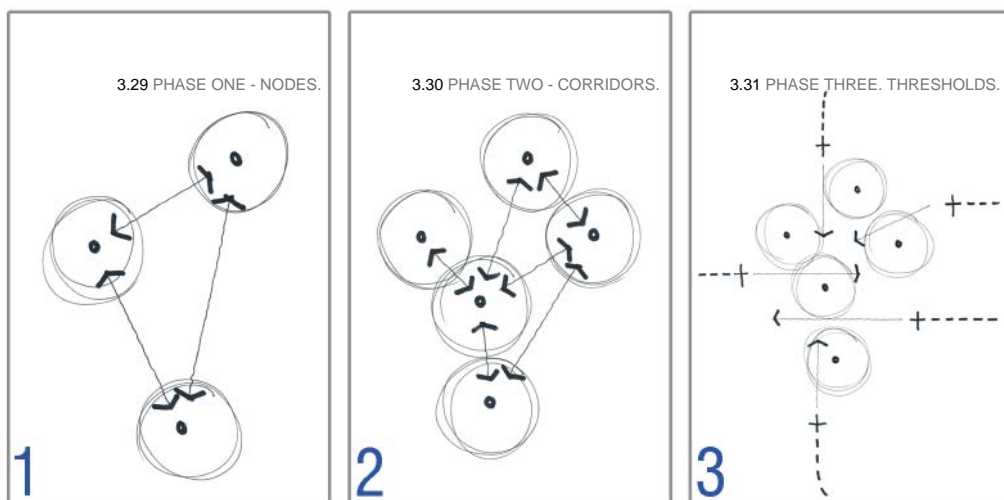
plug-in festival

The aim of the framework is to develop an identity for Pretoria through collective intervention in a vision of understanding and branding. By expressing the unique layers that comprise Pretoria's inner city, the aim is to enhance the existing fabric and stimulate an energetic environment.

In order to translate these aims into achievable interventions, each project must consider and aim to increase the legibility and accessibility of the city and emphasize and explore the individual components thereof. In conjunction with the proposed phases, the components should be connected through collage and event and harness the grassroots impact and pedestrian experience which will be shaped.

The Plug-In Festival Framework takes reference from Collage City (Rowe and Koetter), Plug-In City (Archigram) and the Carnivalisation of the World (Parker) in order to identify the potential within the central business district and develop precincts through the growing nature of the city and the established infrastructure. The 'everyday' approach of Collage City allows for a development of optimism about precincts and public projects which are rooted in the modular environment. The natural variation of city precincts is addressed as a positive element which strengthens the pedestrian experience and subsequent perception of ownership of the city. This composite system supports itself and the contradictions which it proposes.

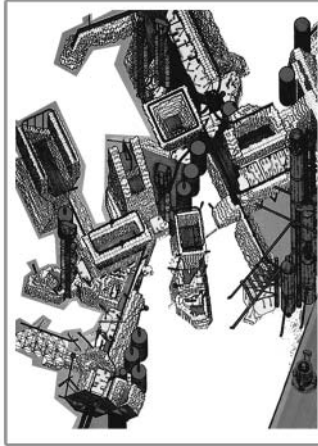
The Carnivalisation of the World discusses the reversal of hierarchy of established city structures and the proclamation of a human and city equality (Parker, 2003: 141). The development of the framework in phases and the enveloping festival responds to this equality and heightens the vision of potential and identity within the city. Identity must be organised within a system, and thus the influence of Archigram's Plug-In City as a modular, infrastructural and network of the established becomes valuable. The framework understands that the city is an ever changing entity and the pedestrian finds a niche within this megastructure of everyday life. Thus the temporary environment is addressed through the connections of commercial, social and recreational happenings.





collage city

- colin rove and fred koetter 1978
- **fragmentary method** allowing **contradictions** to exist
- composite **presence** in the city
- **pluralist** approach to architecture

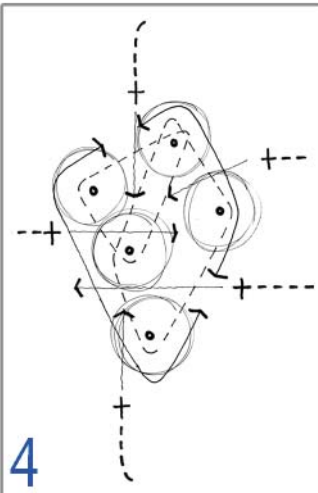
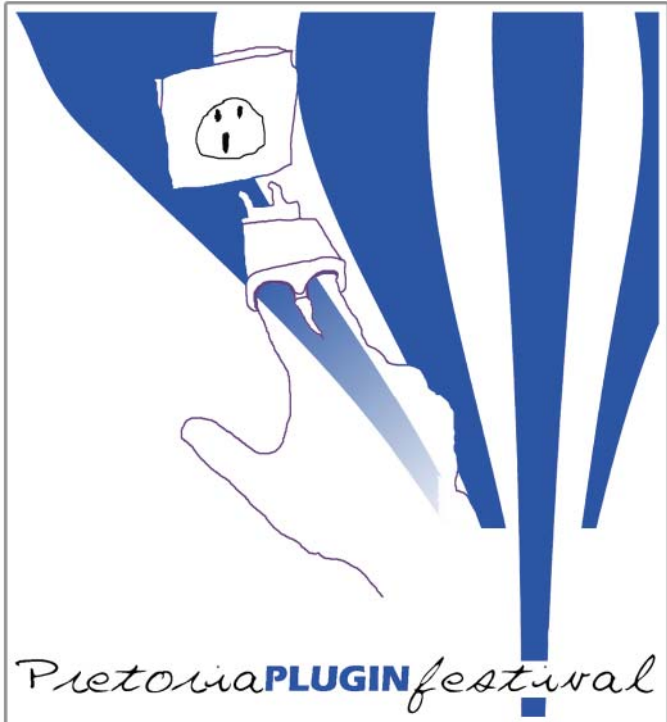


plug-in city

- Archigram 1964
- City as megastructure with **pedestrian experience**
- Using the **established network of the city** to identify interventions
- **Connecting** various parts of the city : social, recreational & commercial
- Responding to the **temporary nature of city life**



- 3.32 COLLAGE CITY
- 3.33 PLUG-IN CITY AXONOMETRIC DIAGRAM. ARCHIGRAM
- 3.34 CARNIVALISATION OF THE WORLD.
- 3.35 PHASE FOUR - FESTIVAL.
- 3.36 PLUG-IN FESTIVAL FRAMEWORK LOGO.

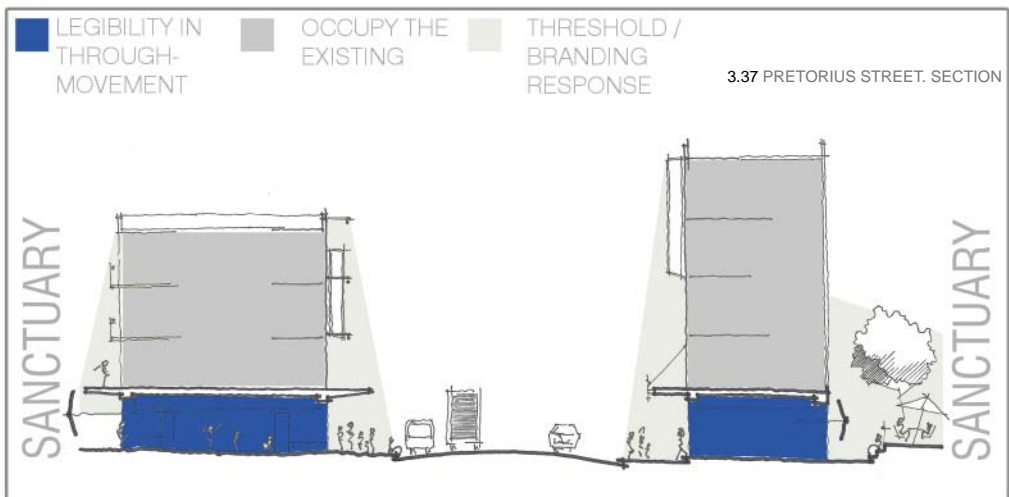


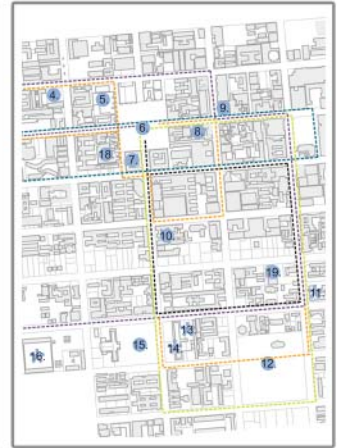
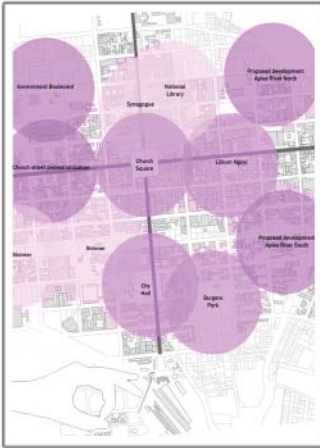
The Plug-In Festival Framework proposes the development and implimentation of ideas through four phases. Phase one is the identification of potential within the city and its development as a node. Phase two links these nodes by corridor developments. Phase three proposes thresholds at key points throughout the city to develop potential through identity and accessibility. Phase four is the Plug-In Festival which would showcase the city and utilise framework developed elements.

The development of nodes are identified through existing, potential and new areas of recreation. Spread across the city the nodes are positioned so that residents and office workers can access them within a 100m walk. This system of quick access responds to the position that the city's population will grow, the existing buildings occupied and the demand of public infrastructure will heighten. Traffic is proposed to be slowed via raised intersections and an awareness of these calm spaces implimented by changing surface materials and heightening the planting within a 50m radius. The corridor developments join these green spaces together, aiming to strengthen the existing commercial and residential sectors. These corridors are in line with the 2007 Pretoria Inner City *Integrated Spatial Development Framework* proposals. Phase three uses thresholds as points to indicate the currently concealed aspects in the city, harnessing identity, street essence and branding. These would be integrated into street furniture, surfacing, lighting and signage.

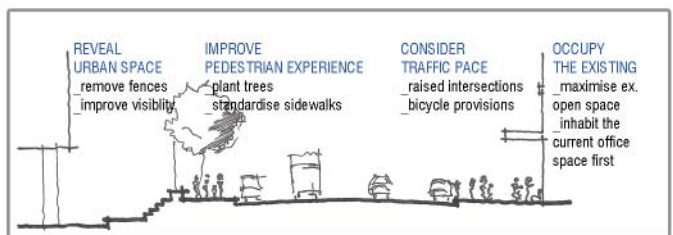
The festival aims to enhance the framework of development by means of interaction and exposure, giving population to the architecture. The festival ties the framework together as a result of the occurances happening in the nodal, corridor and threshold phases.

The festival proposes five routes through the city to interact with developed and proposed zones of activity to highlight the various values of the inner city. The routes (Cultural, Conser- vation, Knowledge, Market and Open Space) allow for an intimate pedestrian experience, responding to Plug-In City as a means of inter-connected services and varied interaction. Routes support the four phase development as a means of grassroot initiative. The starting point is Church Square, historic haert and large established green node and its from this point that the framework begins and the eight interventions aim to embody the framework vision to evoke the essence of the city.





- 3.38 PHASE ONE - NODES.
- 3.39 PHASE TWO - CORRIDORS.
- 3.40 PHASE FOUR - TWO FESTIVAL ROUTES.
- 3.41 PHASE THREE - THRESHOLDS.
- 3.42 PHASE FOUR - FESTIVAL / CITY HIGHLIGHTS.
- 3.43 PRETORIUS STREET AND FRAMEWORK POSSIBILITIES. SECTION



URBAN CONTEXT AND PRETORIUS STREET

Pretorius Street is evocative of an architecture of opportunity. The high rise streetscape and the intense pedestrian activity encourage the ambiance of possibility. The potential for meaningful narrative within the overload and established environment is the investigation.

One of the longest streets in the city, Pretorius Street runs from Hatfield in the east to the central business district in the west. Its most impactful zone, and the area of investigation is between the Apies River (Nelson Mandela Boulevard) and Prince's Park, its termination in the west. Within these nine blocks, the economic activity is strong and the potential for improving the pedestrian experience is still achievable, despite the established nature of the street. Located one block south of Church Square and parallel to the shopping environment of Church Street, Pretorius Street combines to form the heart of the city. People come to the area on a daily basis searching for opportunities, the capitalist environment is at its strongest here.

As one of the major traffic gateways into the central business district, Pretorius Street is host to public transport routes and stops. A one way street, travelling west, traffic from the east moves swiftly and filters about the city. Public parking is available, but at a premium and the vehicular environment is favoured over the quality of pedestrian experience. Sidewalks are irregular, often not sheltered and have few trees within the streetscape. The landmarks as a route, include the ABSA Building and the State Theatre and for the daily city user the arcade networks offer shortcuts to destinations and a varied shopping experience. The layers of concealed spaces abound, which lends itself to the potential in defining an architecture of opportunity.

Despite the urban canyon and established skyline, the occupation levels of the commercial spaces offer room for improvement. In accordance with the proposed framework, existing buildings should be part of first phase redevelopment instead of building on the open lots. This would solidify Pretorius Street as a major economic centre, synonymous with capital city status. The future development of the city and population growth makes the improvement of conditions along the street more important. Pedestrian experience and safety, an increased sense of legibility within the urban canyon and city blocks as well as the sub-servient nature of the street, promotes a platform of the 'everyday' in conjunction with the recreational features of the city.

3.44 APPROACHING THE CBD



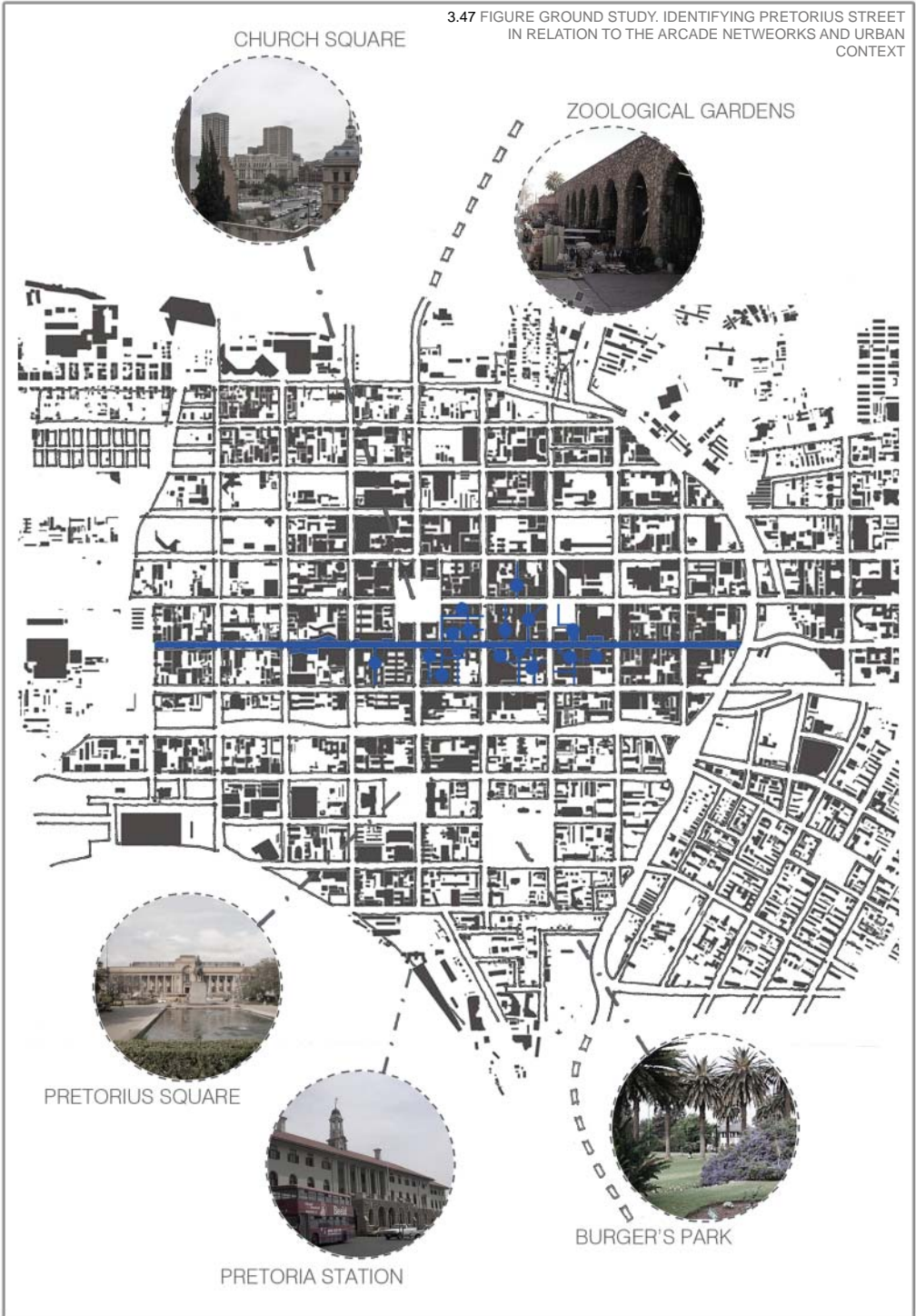
3.45 ABSA BUILDING / STATE THEATRE



3.46 LOOKING BACK. URBAN CANYON



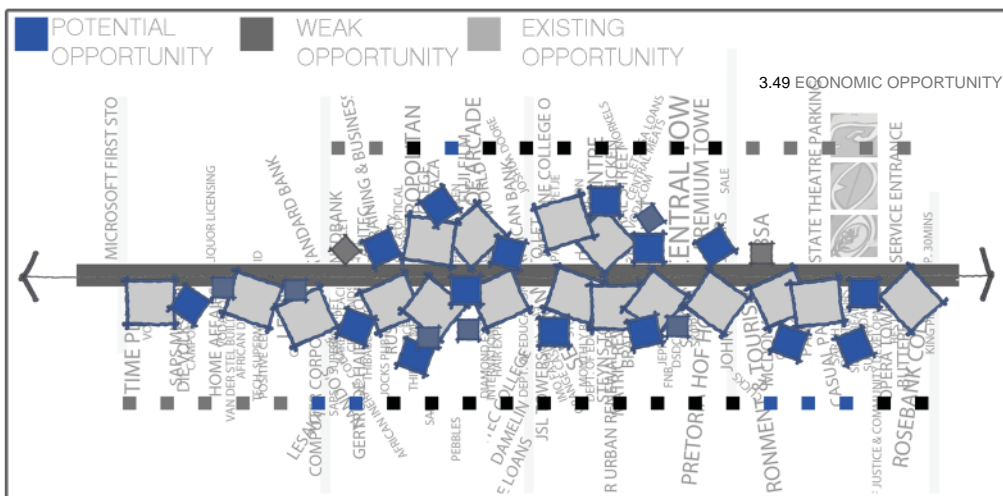
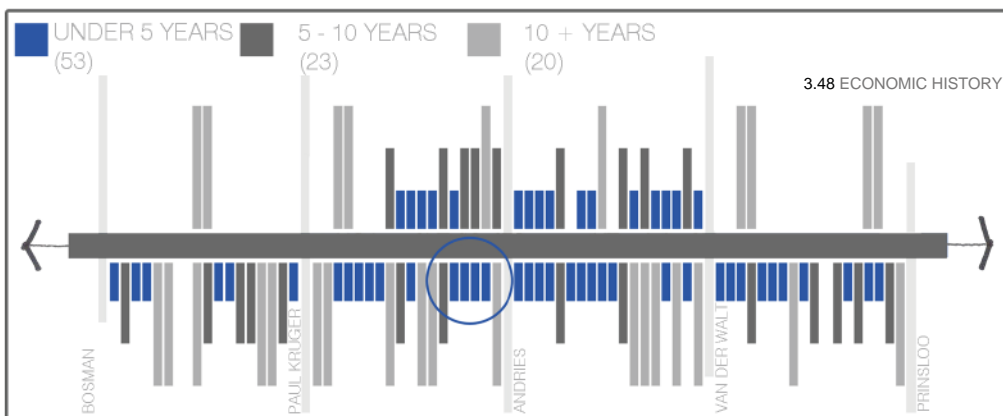
3.47 FIGURE GROUND STUDY. IDENTIFYING PRETORIUS STREET
IN RELATION TO THE ARCADE NETWORKS AND URBAN
CONTEXT



overload and opportunity

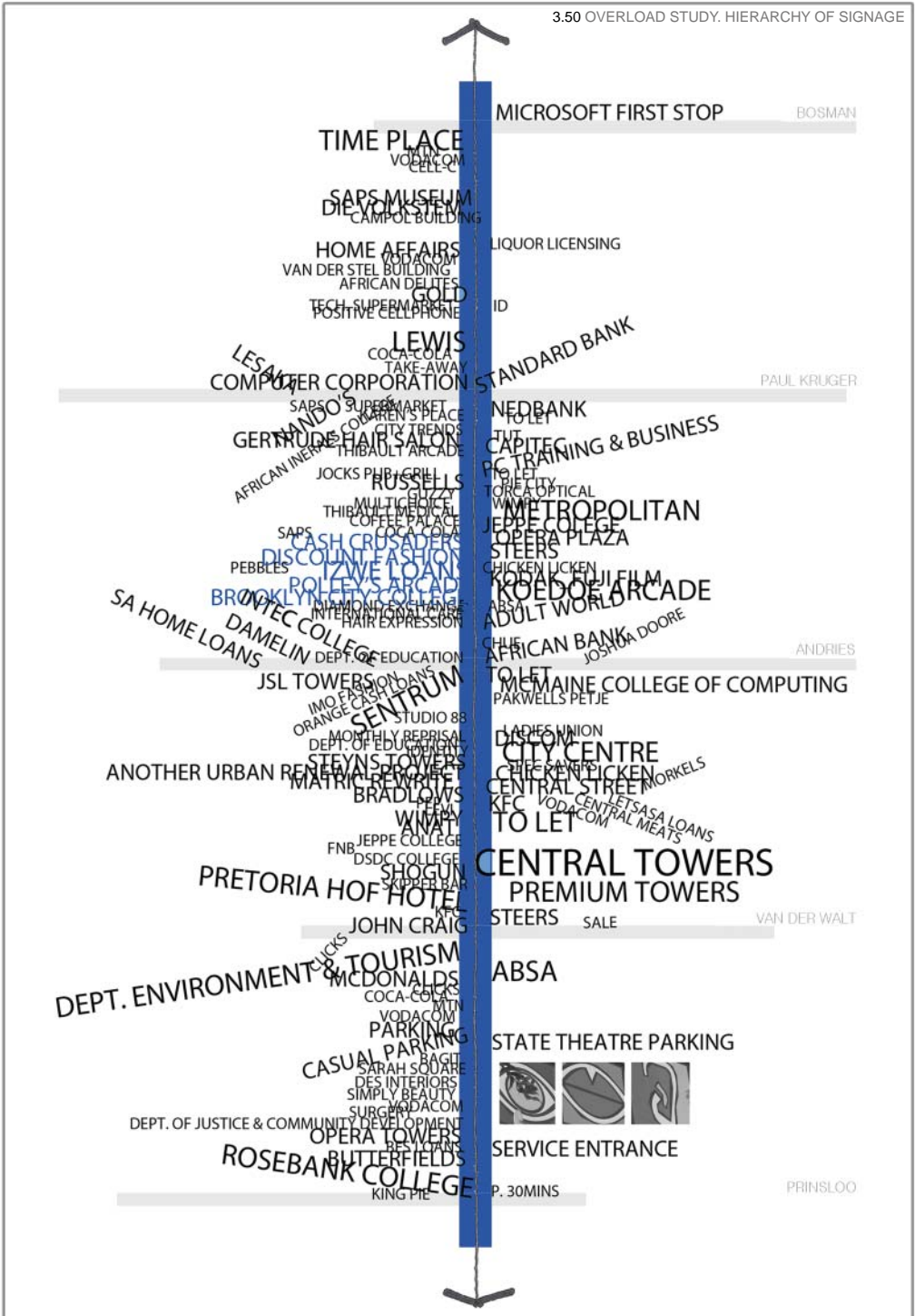
Pretorius Street as the economic heart and arguably the most 'international' of the city streets embodies the commercial turnover and temporary nature of everyday life. The four blocks along Pretorius Street, between Bosman and Prinsloo Streets, which represent the heightened density of the strip were analysed in commercial tenure and potential opportunity. 53 of the 96 side-walk exposed shops have been open for less than five years. This rapid turnover represents the ever changing conditions and the architectural environment too communicates this obsession with the new.

Opportunity lies not within the open sites on the fringes of the established zone and the urban canyon, but rather in the concealed spaces: the unoccupied high level office space, the inner realms of the city blocks and the thresholds between the successful businesses and the start-ups. The economic opportunity is extensive and this change supports job creation, yet the legibility of the city narrative, the 'everyday' and the meaningful experience becomes more difficult to distinguish in this context. An intervention must accordingly change the pace to raise attention. The legibility can be discovered in response to the route taken and what is revealed on an everyday basis to the individual. The intervention must question the spatial dimensions.





3.50 OVERLOAD STUDY. HIERARCHY OF SIGNAGE



urban canyon and thresholds

Opportunity in the urban canyon and threshold environment is in the potential to develop a contemporary feature within the mundane 'city wall'. One that respects its context and continues the narrative of everyday life.

In the comparison of Schoeman Street, Pretorius Street and Church Street the variation in the urban canyon is obvious. Schoeman Street is characterised by buildings averaging six storeys high and distinctive church buildings. Medium sized trees line the street yet the strength of the retail activity is significantly less than Pretorius Street and Church Street and thus there seems to be more space to manoeuvre. The thresholds to the arcade networks are fairly well emphasized. All the arcades have signage indicating their entrances yet the architectural expression of these entrances is non-existent which doesn't promote the network or the shops within them.

Church Street is the pedestrianised shopping mall of the city. Accordingly the vehicular movement is infrequent and the walkways are well maintained for a comfortable shopping experience. Jacaranda trees line the street and the canyon is dominated by an historic appeal rather than a commercial and temporary 'wall'. The threshold conditions are considered and reiterate the established environment. Burlington Arcade is received as a manipulation of the sidewalk canopy with a clear branding scheme that is communicated through to the street. The malls and department stores of the Standard Bank Building and Truworths Emporium also manipulate the canopy conditions whilst maintaining the scale of the streetscape.

Pretorius Street is the clearest example of an urban canyon in the typical sense and this is heightened by the lack of public space along the street. The strong retail and pedestrian activity develops the crowded nature of the sidewalks which seem to be exacerbated by the perceived narrowness of the urban volume. High levels setbacks at street intersections, create a larger open air environment yet with no street termination, the canyon perception is supported. The threshold conditions are to some extent confined by the urban canyon. The Department of Justice entrance is the most legible, as the building recedes, allowing for a larger sidewalk with trees and a space frame canopy to announce the mall. Koedoe arcade is subtly expressed by a triangular facade element, yet the entrances to Opera Plaza, *Die Meent* and the arcades within the *Wachthuis* are unannounced, merely passages within the street facades.

3.51 SCHOEMAN STREET

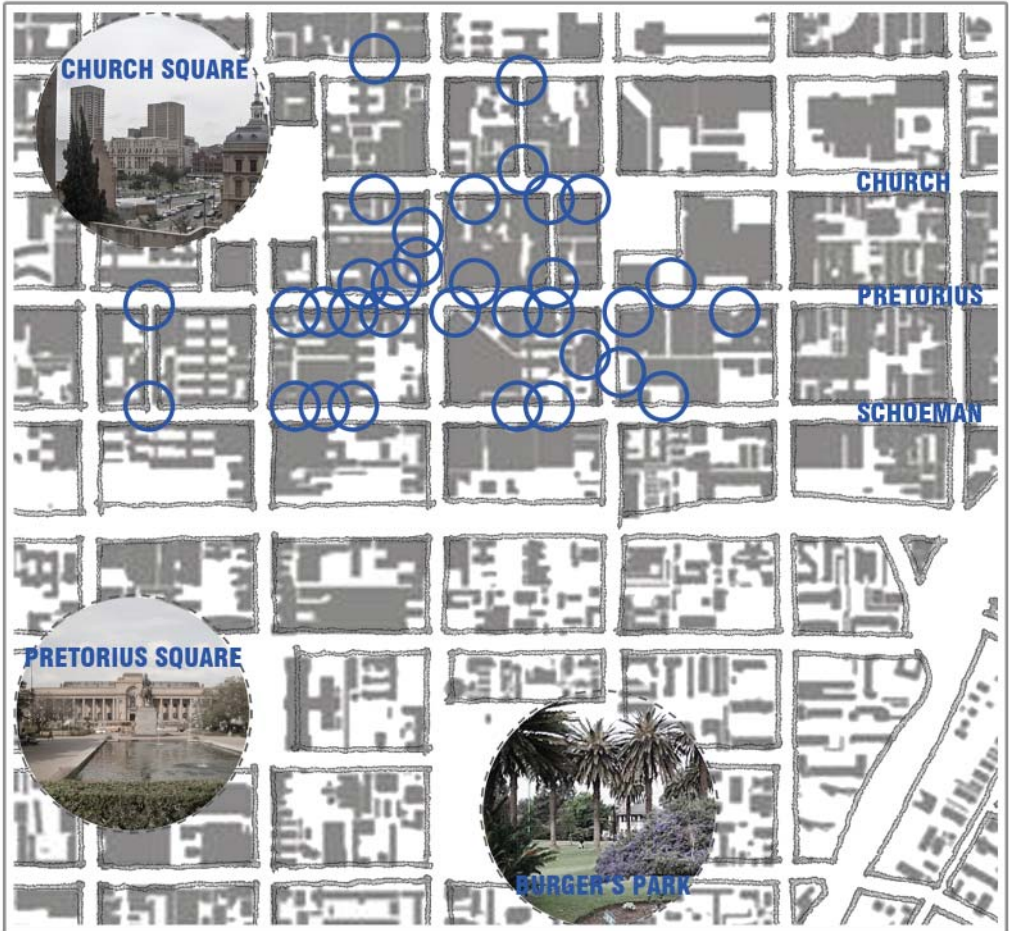


3.52 PRETORIUS STREET



3.53 CHURCH STREET





3.55 BURLINGTON ARCADE THRESHOLD



3.56 VAN ERKOM ARCADE THRESHOLD



3.54 CITYWIDE ARCADE THRESHOLDS
3.57 DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE BUILDING THRESHOLD



sidewalk conditions

The pedestrian and everyday experience is consistently influenced by retail and display quality as well as the sidewalk conditions. As people travel on the most direct route to their destination the quality of the surface becomes secondary. This directly influences the legibility of the city blocks, for if the paving is irregular or waste packets line the street, the pedestrian will concentrate on avoiding the packets and maintaining their step rather than observing the opportunities within the block.

Pretorius Street is heavily used as a service environment. Waste packets are placed on the sidewalk, cardboard and timber is recycled onto trolley's which occupy the sidewalk and when combined with construction, poor street drainage and public transport 'platforms', the sidewalk narrows considerably. The underfoot quality varies greatly along Pretorius Street. The northern sidewalk varies between square smooth concrete pavers with recessed grouting, square textured concrete pavers with flush grouting and unevenly laid slate tiles in front of the Nedbank Building. The southern sidewalk maintains the square smooth concrete paver for the majority of the high traffic area, yet recent construction has replaced the sidewalk in front of Steyns and President Towers. The quality of surface is greatly improved and hopefully this marks a new-found concerted effort in considering the pedestrian's comfort.

Comparitively the surface conditions in the arcades and on Church Street only demand attention as a result of the rendered aesthetics. The surfaces are regular in material and even underfoot, draining successfully and developing a hierarchy of orientation. The designed quality of the surfacing in Polley's and Thibault Arcade contributes to the element of surprise and in an arcade which has little sustained commercial activity, the spatial and surfacing treatments become the focus in through-movement.

In considering the future development of sidewalks along Pretorius Street and the central business district, an increase in pedestrian traffic would demand better quality surfaces and access to better quality environments. The relationship of vehicle to pedestrian must also be reconsidered. The street section of raised intersections, the slowing of traffic, dedicated public transport and cycle lanes may all develop a relevance. A greater legibility in the access to new public routes, the processes within the block and opportunities of the city will be required.

3.58 POLLEYS ARCADE



3.59 SIDEWALK IN FRONT OF RENOVATED STEYN'S BUILDING



3.60 PRETORIUS STREET





3.62 PRETORIUS STREET IN FRONT OF THE NEDBANK BUILDING



3.63 KOEDOE ARCADE



3.61 CONCEALED ROUTES DIAGRAM
3.64 CHURCH STREET



ARCADES AND THE PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE

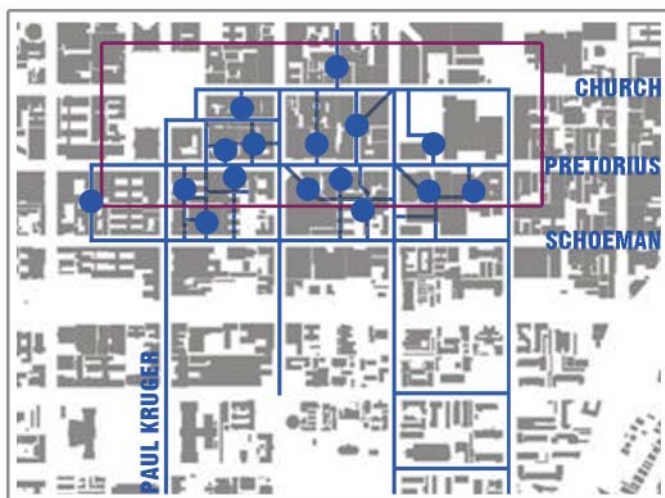
Pretoria has a long established connection with the arcade typology. Not only do they serve as shopping destinations, they define the depths of the city blocks and clarify the narrative of the city through current and past trends. The arcades have been adapted and re-invented in order to compete as destinations, yet their success is in part due to the nature of through movement.

The successive arcades which are considered are defined as either principally a destination or thorough-fare in character and whether it responds to the ideas of implementation. These include, the 'City as Possibility', Overload, Adaptation and Sub-servient nature of typology.

pedestrian movement routes

The impacting pedestrian routes which filter through the arcades of Pretorius Street are predominantly from the south. The sources of which are the southern residential sector of the city and the people arriving in the city by rail and disembarking at the Pretoria Station. The direct pedestrian route from the station is north along Paul Kruger Street, on an irregularly paved and shaded sidewalk. The prominent filtering process begins at Schoeman Street and people either walk along the sidewalk or cut through the arcade network at their convenience. Accordingly the arcades which inhabit the shortest route possible are the most frequented, although the retail and spatial quality does influence some users, hoping to buy the newspaper or lunch on the way to work.

The routes from the residential sector and Burger's Park are defined by the streetscape quality and the pedestrians walk at a slower pace, due to their surroundings. The routes are chosen for their convenience and safety and consider the openness and visibility of the street. Some networks, which encounter buildings of historic value have been fenced off, which diminishes the accessibility of the city narrative and public ownership perception. Access to these routes would greatly enhance the optimism of the city, allowing for possibility and the element of surprise. These routes are well shaded, yet integration with the arcade networks are defined by the arcades as destinations, rather than thorough-fares. The arcades become successful as they evoke the speculative element (Geist, 1983: 110) but however rely on convenience of passage for viability.



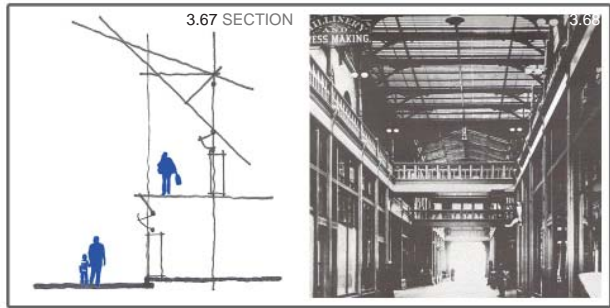
3.65 EXISTING ARCADE NETWORK
3.66 ARCADE ENTRANCE SIGNAGE

PULLMAN ARCADE

Chicago_USA

The arcade acts as a town centre, within a dense housing environment. It is a representation of the streetscape through the section of the block and allows the processes within to be expressively revealed. Large volumes, opportunity for shop display and clear lines of sight provide a successful retail atmosphere.

THOROUGH-FARESUB-SERVIENT CITY AS POSSIBILITY

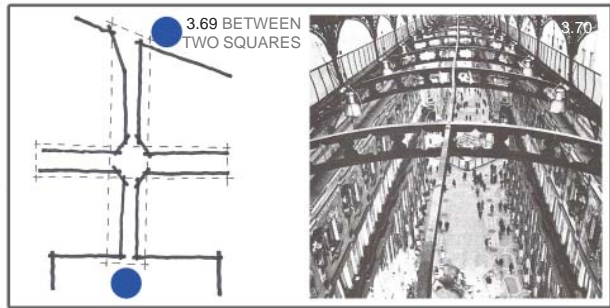


GALLERIA VITTORIO EMANUELE II

Milan_Italy

This arcade is the most recognised and elaborate example in the nature of the arcade typology. Part of a monumental redesign of the city centre, it connects two prominent city squares. The immense scale responds to the adjoining road and cathedral environments.

THOROUGH-FARESUB-SERVIENT CITY AS POSSIBILITY



PASSAGE CHOISEUL

Paris_France

This french example embodies the street character of the building type, thus evoking the illusion of an arcade. Two rows of buildings project opposite each other whilst including a promenade to a local theatre. Its character is self-sufficient and animated.

DESTINATION OVERLOAD CITY AS POSSIBILITY

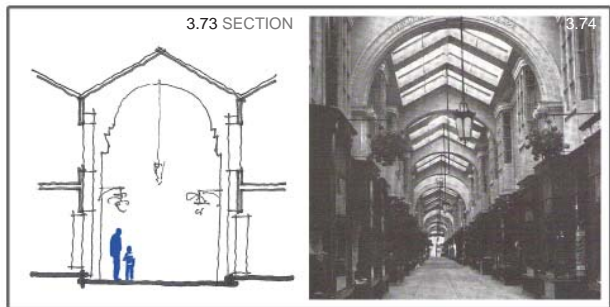


BURLINGTON ARCADE

London_UK

A popular shopping destination, it has been maintained due to its prime location in the city. Scaled as a comfortable English street scene, the rhythmical shopfronts have deemed that no change is required from its original state.

DESTINATION ADAPTATION SUB-SERVIENT



ARCADES AND THE PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE

church street arcades

The success of the arcade networks between Church and Pretorius Streets is due to the established nature of the city as well as primary movement patterns. Pretorius Street is one of the busiest inbound streets, with traffic from the eastern suburbs. Bus stops and the associated high pedestrian movement filters the pedestrian through to the numerous attractions of Church Street (Church Square, Sammy Marks and the shopping malls, the State Theatre and the office environment). This develops a cyclical process in which the arcades are both used as through-fares and as elements to harness the shopping experience throughout the entire day.

That Burlington Arcade, Central Street and Koedoe Arcade connect two evenly frequented streets (Geist, 1983: 111) supports their longevity and constant adaptation to attract trade.

BURLINGTON ARCADE

The arcade's well defined edge conditions allow for passing and lingering trade, a connection to the office environment of the upper levels and for through-movement. Connecting the busy shopping mall of Church Street with Burlington House and the internal realms of the block, the arcade eventually connects with Bureau Lane and Koedoe Arcade. The clear lines of sight, routes of escape and openness to the surrounding building facades and the sky have ensured the popularity of this arcade as people feel safe, in a 'watched' atmosphere.

It is quick passage, bisecting the block, from Church Street through to Pretorius Street and although it has developed a reputation by means of its established nature, the arcade remains more of a thorough-fare than destination in itself. As provision of a varied urban experience, Burlington Arcade reveals part of the narrative of the city, an 'intervention of meaning' and is contextually grounded by the optimism this can evoke. The informing environment in the relationships of shop attendant to pedestrian, browser to the pedestrian and office worker to pedestrian incorporates Burlington Arcade within the city as possibility.

THOROUGH-FARE CITY AS POSSIBILITY_INTERVENTION OF MEANING_SUB-SERVIENT



KOEDOE_SAAMBOU_OPERA PLAZA ARCADE NETWORK

Connecting Pretorius Street, Andries Street, Bureau Lane (onto Burlington Arcade) and Bank Lane, this network of arcades maintains constant pedestrian traffic as a means of thorough-fare. Clear signage, constant movement and the element of surprise support retail enterprise and promotes the arcades as a viable route as opposed to the busy streets. The variation of space associated with these arcades make for a memorable pedestrian experience, revealing the hidden aspects of the city block and controlling the overload environment. The polygonal timber structure within the Saambou Arcade, the seven storey office volume of Koedoe Arcade and the surprising open space of Opera Plaza demand the pedestrian's attention.

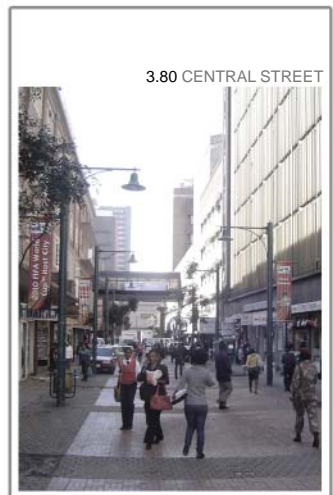
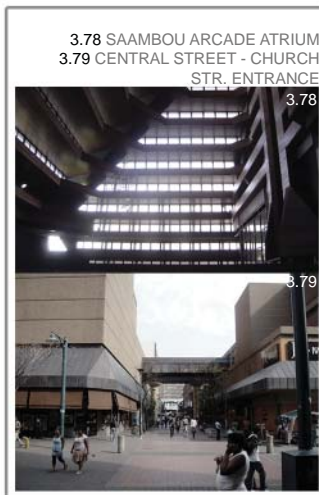
THOROUGH-FARE CITY AS POSSIBILITY_OVERLOAD_SUB-SERVIENT

CENTRAL STREET

Central Street is possibly the most successful and visible thorough-fare in the central business district. Connecting Church Street and Pretorius Street it is announced by giant order columns at both entrances and the buildings reduce their scale about the street. With clear lines of sight from street to street and between shops and the pedestrian, the street encourages formal and informal trade with the possibility for busking and spontaneous event. The street is well lit and designed for a pedestrian hierarchy and accordingly handles significant pedestrian traffic.

The movement patterns of Pretoria burgeon this open pedestrianised environment and the architectural response has allowed for varied scales of adaptation. The ground floor is exclusively retail trade with substantial display and allows the processes within to be communicated with the person on the street. In terms of the city as possibility, Central Street reveals a sense of optimism concurrent with the busy vehicular streets, yet allows for an engaging experience rather than a temporary one. However, the overload is present due to exposed sight lines, yet the street allows for an intervention of an architecture of opportunity.

THOROUGH-FARE CITY AS POSSIBILITY_ADAPTATION



ARCADES AND THE PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE

pretorius street arcades

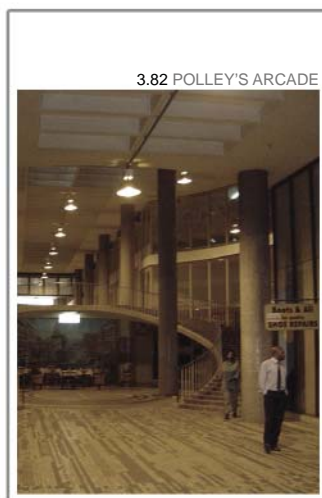
Comparitively the arcades that run between Pretorius Street and Schoeman Street are less successful from a retail standpoint. The pedestrian activity and commercial environment vary greatly between the two streets, yet its the nature of arcade in these blocks which are different from Burlington and Koedoe Arcades. The southern arcades are used primarily as thorough-fares through to the residential sector of the city which surrounds Burger’s Park. They are uniform in their routes over a longer distance and thus the enticing nature of the retail outlets diminish deeper into the block. The lines of sight and connection with the open air are less frequent, yet they are established pedestrian routes through the city and are thus prominent in the city’s story. Many of the stores within these arcades have built a reputation and thus have an established clientele which frequents the store, despite the fluctuating trends of spatial conditions. The arcades are perhaps most frequented before work, at lunch hour and after work, as use of thorough-fare or as store specific destinations.

POLLEY’S ARCADE

The spatial conditions and established reputation of Polley’s Arcade make for one of the most memorable traverses of a city block. Yet these conditions are most enjoyed by the flâneur or the derivé as the retail environment has almost completely dissipated. This is as a direct result of the SAPS occupation of the building. Retail space has been converted into office and storage space, with only reflective glass panels to impact the pedestrian’s experience of the arcade. An exception to this is Pebbles Restaurant, with an established reputation and clientele, the owners are content with today’s business and are fully booked for most weekday lunch sittings.

The wide, well-lit and volumous arcade is however used predominantly as a thorough-fare, yet even at peak pedestrian traffic times is not the preferred route, due to a lack of retail activity. The historic nature and potential of the arcade, with its connections to other minor arcades and sky reveals the city as possibility: a sub-servient route within the narrative of the city.

THOROUGH-FARE AND DESTINATION CITY AS POSSIBILITY SUB-SERVIENT



MIDDESTAD

This mall and office environment is a series of comfortable, safe spaces, well connected to the arcade system of the block, yet it remains concealed from the everyday experience of the sidewalk. Only the everyday city worker would have knowledge of this space, whereas the sporadic city shopper would be most likely to pass it by, due to the concealed entrances and depth of the block which it occupies. The mall however, in conjunction with President and Steyn's Arcade, seem to accept their immobility (Geist, 1983: 110) and function as a result of consistent office use and varying retail outlets.

The space however reveals the element of surprise through its well lit and edge-defined atrium. Stores that have sidewalk frontage, also relate to the mall which increases display area and awareness. The success perhaps is that the branding is controlled, such that the external overload is reduced, making the mall a calmer shopping experience.

DESTINATION CITY AS POSSIBILITY_OVERLOAD_SUB-SERVIENT

PRESIDENT AND STEYN'S ARCADE

These well frequented and recently renovated arcades are successful thorough-fares and destination points, with numerous coffee shops occupying premises deep within the network. Their success is the volumetric variation, clear display systems and proximity to the pedestrian movement routes. The openings are fairly successfully defined and promote a continuation of the sidewalk shopping experience in addition to an easement of the pedestrian route, whereas Polley's Arcade and its associated network chiefly promote a shortcut.

The functional variation also increases consistent usage of the arcade throughout the day, which has developed an ownership of the space. Children kick a soccer ball to each other as they move through the arcade and friends linger for a conversation. Ambling is encouraged.

THOROUGH-FARE AND DESTINATION CITY AS POSSIBILITY_ADAPTATION



DETAILED ANALYSIS OF 239 PRETORIUS STREET

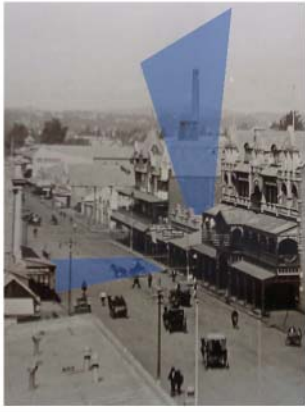
Built during the economic optimism after the Second World War, 239 Pretorius Street became part of a city block dominated by the insurance industry. Originally known as the Southern Building and now occasionally grouped in name as the Southern Life Association Building, its western neighbour, the building is now part of a city block dominated by the South African Police Service. The building is presumed to have been designed by architects Burg, Lodge, Burg.

The notion of tracing the city's past in order to develop a narrative and recognise the architectural legacy of the site is relevant to this streetscape. In 1910, before the existing building, the site was flanked by two prominent and long-standing hotels, The Hotel Imperial (became United Building, now Manaka House) and Polley's Hotel (both now demolished). The proximity to Church Square and early magisterial buildings, lent a hierarchy of position to the city block. In 1910 a single storey retail building with a verandah over the sidewalk and detailed entablature occupied the site, with the workshops behind. The building was leased by Torrance and Crawford Coal Merchants. Evidence of this early building is not apparent, however the platforms of former workshop buildings and the concrete roof of a unoccupied basement parking garage remain on the southern portion of the site connecting to Schoeman Street. The prime position of the building is still announced by the four flag poles which adorn the facade of the building.

The current condition of the building is adequate and successful aesthetic renovations maintain the everyday public realm in good condition. The total area of the 239 Pretorius Street site is 1260sq.m and the total area of the site for intervention is 4356sq.m. The seven storeys of office space within the existing building average 710sq.m per floor. At present there are 10 retail spaces available for rent, of which 9 are currently occupied. Zoned for general business the office space is rented by a wide range of businesses. The SAPS has offices for its language, musical, legal and sexual offences unit as well as occupying the fifth floor for the city's SAPS library and journal offices. The other major tenant is the Brooklyn City College which occupies the first floor and attracts an average of 600 students on a daily basis. Throughout the building, general office space is leased by various unions, attorneys, financiers and insurance companies.

The building remains heavily anonymous in today's environment, yet its connection to high pedestrian traffic and the arcade network issues the potential for developing forms of legibility.

3.86 TURN OF THE CENTURY



3.87 HOTEL IMPERIAL 1910



3.88 1982 STREETScape



3.89 239 PRETORIUS STREET AND NEIGHBOURING BUILDINGS



site and city block

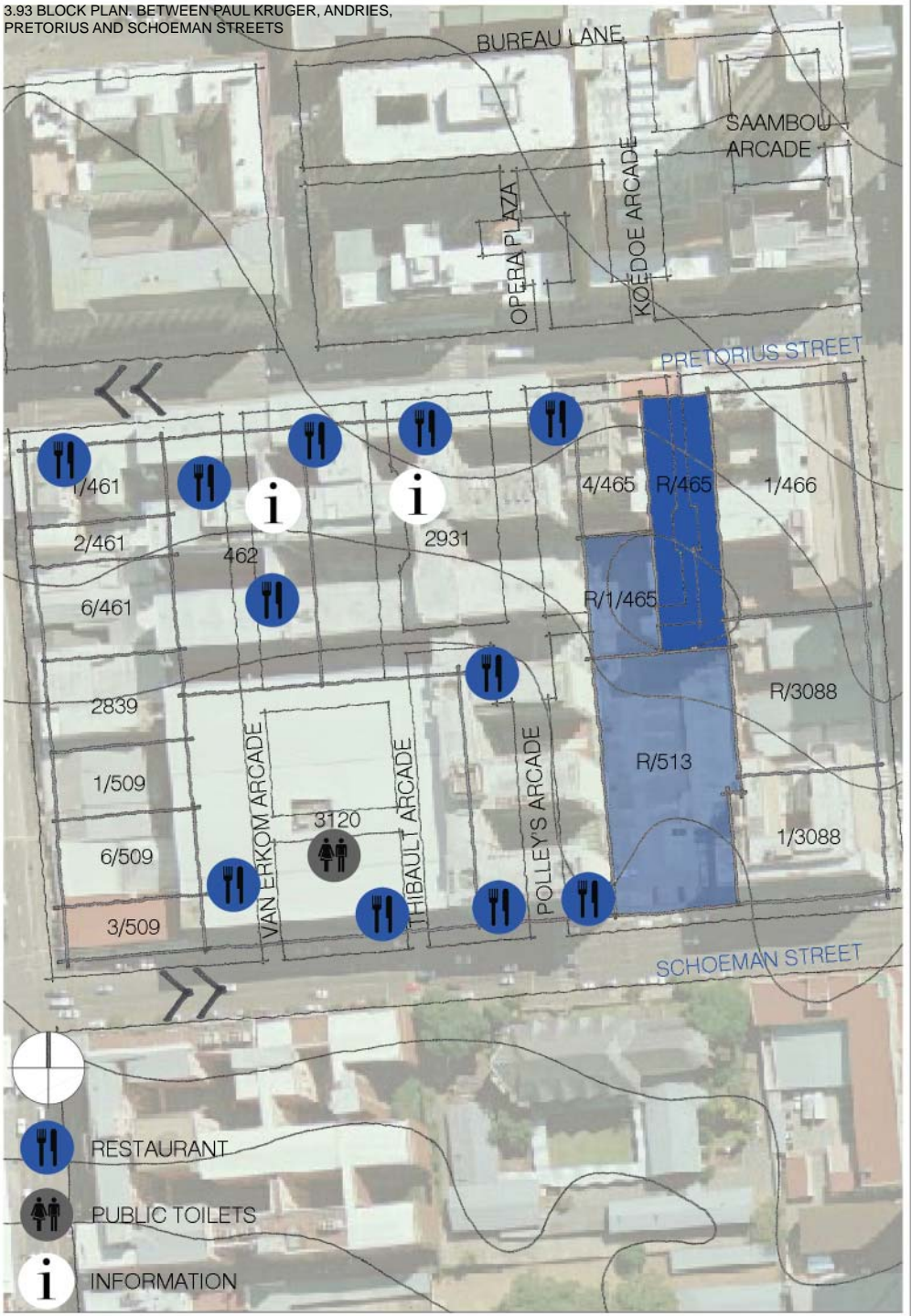
Despite the arcade networks which run through the city block, the processes and sub-servient happenings are confined by its boundaries. The legibility of the 'everyday' is accordingly reduced. Vertical circulation points are anonymous and a variation of activated spatial conditions is lacking within a site with previous historical value. The potential to utilise the derivé scenario within the block is great, provided the activation and development of the established routes occurs. Established stores such as *Savelkous Outfitters*, *Russells*, *Gloria's* and *Pebbles Restaurant* maintain the block as a destination point in itself. The archival nature that has developed along the edges of Polley's Arcade is an example of where the stagnation has unfortunately occurred.

The threshold environment which draws people through the block is where the site is anchored by completing the movement network and developing meaning in the approach. The edge conditions act as magnets pulling pedestrians through the block and allowing for potential activation of the interior. The variation of space and use, considering safety, open air qualities and visibility are important to recognise. The office and controlled environment that exists can be contrasted with a calm space, which despite the high land value, would be a valuable asset to the block as Pretorius and Schoeman Streets currently lack accessible points of public space. The temporary aspect of everyday life dominates the block, where the overload and boundary have hidden the potential, ownership and meaning of the block. Massive signage announces Damelin's presence within the block, however the external environment fails to benefit from a potential shared network of society and public facilities. An integrated, larger scaled intervention, where guidelines are suggested could serve to activate the inner realm.

The neighbouring buildings offer a varied perspective on the use and architectural quality of the block. The roofscapes are dominated by ad hoc additions of storage, service and managerial facilities which conveys the intense inaccessibility of use within the upper volumes. Manaka House (eastern neighbour) is occupied by ABSA and remains internalised in parallel with the *Wachthuis*, SAPS primary offices. The Southern Life Association (western neighbour) is currently unoccupied and scheduled for renovation. The buildings within the block disregard a shared relationship which conceals space for intervention: lightwells and courtyards which are inaccessible and illegible to the outsider.



3.93 BLOCK PLAN: BETWEEN PAUL KRUGER, ANDRIES, PRETORIUS AND SCHOEMAN STREETS



- NORTH
- RESTAURANT
- PUBLIC TOILETS
- INFORMATION

site as an architecture of opportunity

01 FACADE

The communication of the process within the block begins with a varied street relationship, as opposed to a continuation of the urban canyon. 239 has an exaggerated concrete frame and formal street relationship combined with five infill bays which demonstrate the thermal concerns (blinds and air-conditioning) of the office environment within.



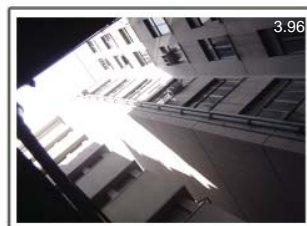
02 SIDE TRANSPARENCIES

The western facade of 239 responds to climatic concerns but conceals itself behind these louvres. The redundant facade treatment and lack of internal / external spatial relationship instead becomes compartmentalised, private offices. The element of being 'watched' is removed from the open external environment in favour of a service dominated, incomplete edge.



03 LIGHTWELLS

The lightwells are service elements which show the neighbouring building's mutual respect of each other. Yet despite views into these unattractive spaces, there is no legibility between processes and recognition of potentially enhanced views. The ground floor sections are inaccessible by the general public and an opportunity for a varied route is lost countlessly.



04 TRACING

The currently narrow volume of the arcade allows for further consideration in terms of recognising the presence of a previously existing structure. The contours of the site, the potential for volumetric legibility and elements of phenomenal transparency are ignored. The monotonous environment is only accented by the overload. Distinctive new work that recognises the old is starkly absent, no matter how abstractly represented.



05 CIRCULATION

The presence of the security guard in the lobby emphasizes the poor lines of sight and legibility of circulation within the building. The internalised environment may suit the SAPS tenants, yet it excludes the everyday user from the building. A single circulation core, within this narrow site renders a distance to any destination. A journey which is unconsidered in terms of its design.

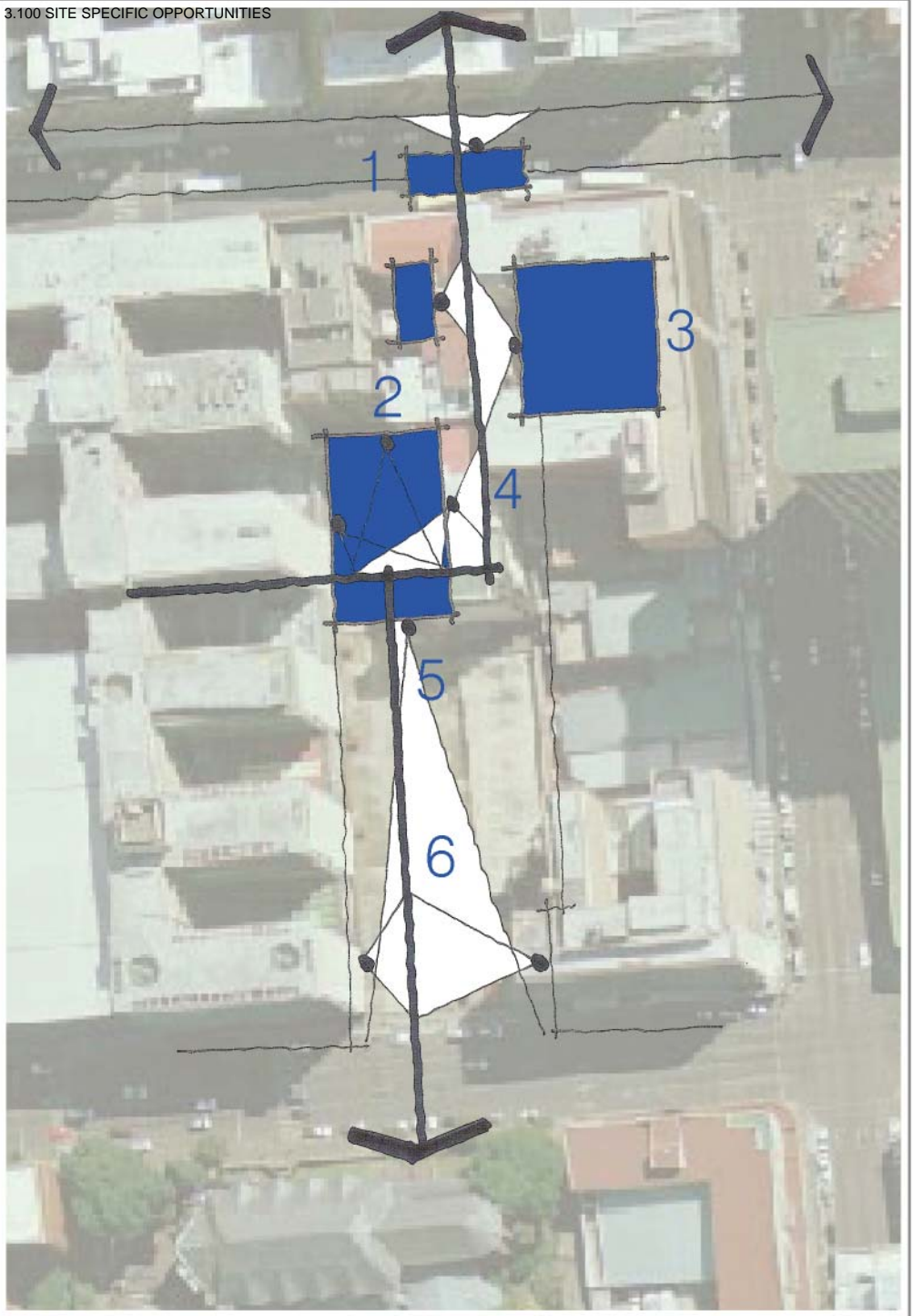


06 SUB-SERVIENCE

239 and the open lots to the south and west have the potential to 'awaken' the neighbouring buildings. An existing basement parking lot which parks 100 cars, a terraced outdoor environment and a non-utilised roofscape in terms of its rainwater harvesting capacity and energy independence could strengthen the block network and develop new layers of meaning from the existing systems.



3.100 SITE SPECIFIC OPPORTUNITIES



239 pretorius street arcade

An arcade must necessarily provide a connection, shortcut, opening or easement (Geist, 183: 111).

This incomplete arcade doesn't provide a connection to anywhere, it turns to reveal a temporary parking lot with a view towards an unfinished wing of Polley's Arcade. The spontaneous member of the public hoping to continue their journey would have to return to the sidewalk of Pretorius Street. However, the potential to connect the unfinished network exists and to develop it further into the open site to the south and beyond to St. Alban's Church.

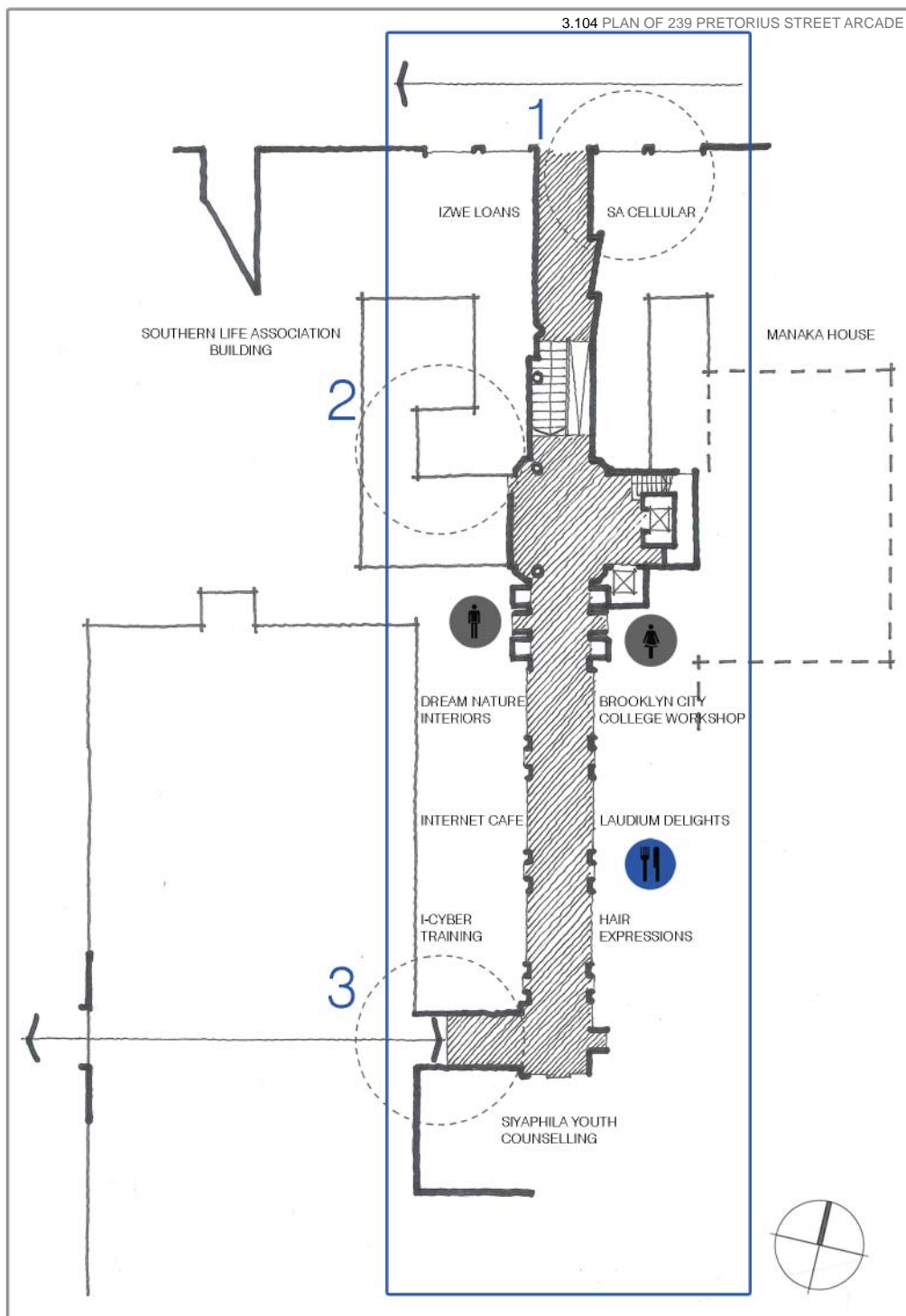
The spectacular element of the arcade also remains hidden within this arcade, such that the retail outlets only begin more than 50 metres into the arcade. This reduces the visibility and legibility of the retail environment. Shop owners have therefore had to develop a reputation, as the arcade could only be seen as a destination point. The daily movement towards the Brooklyn City College has maintained the client base for the outlets at least. In comparison with successful arcades such as Koedoe or President Arcades, the difference is that they provide a shortcut, a variation in the everyday pedestrian experience through volumetric manipulation, a perceptively safe and busy environment and are easily recognised as an established arcade. The quality of shopping experience for the outsider is unknown at the point of entry into an arcade, therefore the entrance threshold should entice the pedestrian.

The route and termination of the arcade is also problematic. The arcade is never wider than 3.8 metres and the volume never varies above single storey, making the distant end of the arcade indistinguishable. Once in the arcade it becomes evident that the path doesn't continue which predisposes the pedestrian to assume the building is of a private nature. The variation of the route doesn't allow for the element of surprise and the narrowness discourages lingering for a conversation.

An attempt to control the overload within the arcade by means of independent sign posts has failed due to the poor lighting within the retail section and ceiling mounted and freestanding boards have been installed apart from the original intentions. The current conditions of the arcade promote a mundane, needless pedestrian experience not in connection with the node.



3.104 PLAN OF 239 PRETORIUS STREET ARCADE



everyday literacy of the existing building

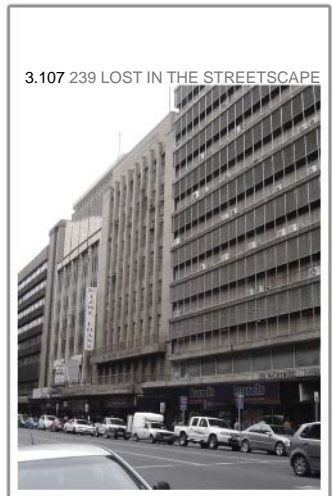
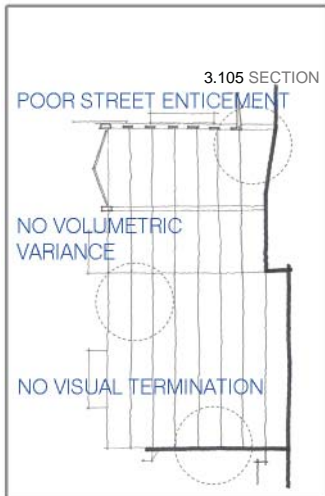
The existing planning of the building discourages extended amounts of time on any levels. Venues are cramped and the lack of variation between public, semi-public and private spaces heightens the perception of an appointment environment. The legibility through circulation is minimal and renders many of the spaces inaccessible due to the confusing spatial qualities. Students from the Brooklyn City College linger on the sidewalk or on the platforms of the fire escape within a lightwell, instead of provided facilities. In order to develop a meaningful pedestrian experience the building must allow for a variation of pace in daily life.

The mundane is communicated from the building's anonymity in the 'city wall', through to the redundancy of floor plans and the unfinished arcade. This contradicts the optimism of the building's environment and the possibilities that Pretorius Street provides.

reflection

The context lays out a framework of possibility in order to define an architecture of opportunity. In conjunction with the Plug-In Festival Framework's rationale on creating identity, the street becomes a manipulatable input. The facade of the building, set within the urban canyon allows the intervention to challenge the discrepancies in the building's heights and attempt to follow an intervention of meaning.

The pedestrian experience, which defines the node in terms of retail quality can be manipulated by means of the sidewalk and canopy, the accessibility that the pedestrian enjoys due to visibility off the street as well as how the threshold of the arcade can be made to entice the outsider. Safety and spatial qualities will define the ongoing use of the arcade. Above all the variation of space must regularly be considered in order to define an architecture of opportunity, within an enabling and non-prescriptive environment. The regulation of the overload and the temporary experience could perhaps be offset in the reveal of lost space within the block and an increased legibility into the processes of the block. The expression of service elements as a tangible form could be further exposed from many viewpoints to respond to the creation of meaningful routes through the city.



3.108 EXISTING GROUND FLOOR PLAN (LEFT)
TYPICAL OFFICE FLOOR PLAN (BELOW)
DEMOLISHED WALLS IN BLUE

PRETORIUS STREET

NOTE: NO ORIGINAL PLANNING DOCUMENTATION EXISTS

