



6

# Urban Framework

*Illus. 6.2: The Apies River and Walker Spruit running through the city. (Botha, April 2011)*



## 6.1 Introduction

The site analysis was done before the urban framework. This is due to the large size (and consequent large influence) of the site in relation to the rest of the open space along the Walker Spruit.

The Walker Spruit has its origin in Nieuw Muckleneuk, flowing through Bailey's Muckleneuk and Sunnyside before joining the Apies River at the Caledonian Sports Fields (Illus. 6.2 & 6.3).

## 6.2 Current condition of the Walker Spruit and Apies River

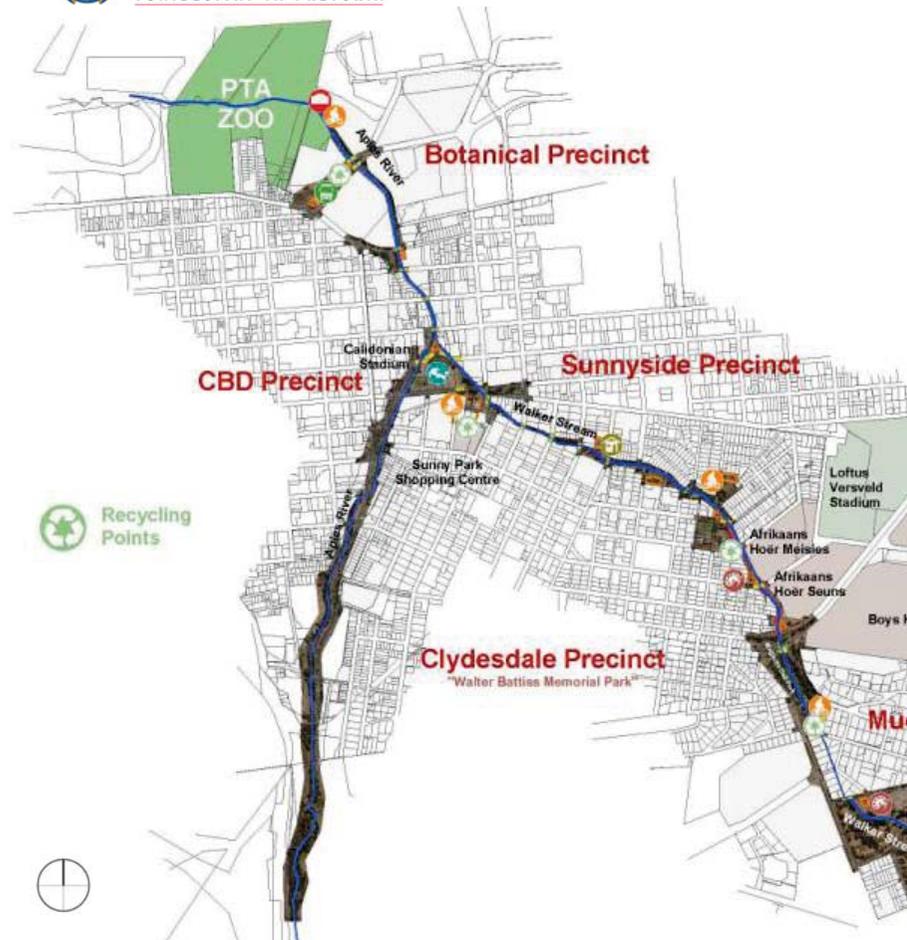
The channelization of the Apies River already started in 1910, and that of the Walker Spruit in 1925 (South Africa, town clerk, 1925). Today these two urban rivers are merely storm-water channels as opposed to the natural meandering rivers they once were. As they are not visually pleasing, buildings along the rivers turn their backs on it (Illus. 6.5 & 6.7).

In the urban framework group, it was envisioned that the Apies River and the Walker Spruit become linear urban parks running through the city, spines along which pedestrians can move. Elements from existing frameworks were used as the basis for design decisions:



*Illus. 6.3: The Walker Spruit from Walker Street to the Caledonian Sports Grounds. (Author, April 2011)*

Illus. 6.4 : Consortium Fook proposal for a Walter Battiss Memorial Park. Not to scale. (Courtesy of Joubert, 2009)



### 6.2.1 Apies River Framework

- Pedestrian and cyclist access should be established.
- Buildings should open up towards the river, with appropriate land use. Along the Apies River, mixed use is proposed. Retail and restaurants on the ground floor, with offices and housing above would ensure continuous usage of the spaces next to the river.
- Visual integration of the river with its surroundings should be established.

### 6.2.2 Tshwane Open Space Framework (TOSF)

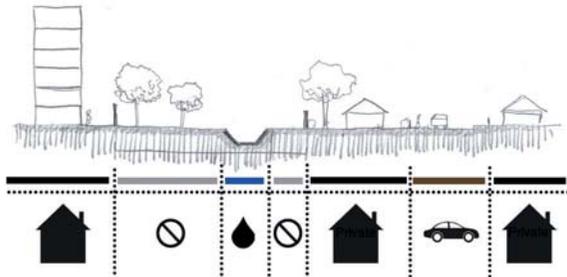
- The TOSF has a classifying system of “ways” and “nodes.” Interconnectivity of these structuring elements would ensure continuous spaces serving as ecological corridors.
- Alternative service delivery (CID’s, partnerships with private/parastatal/NGO organizations) should be implemented.

### 6.2.3 Nelson Mandela Corridor Framework

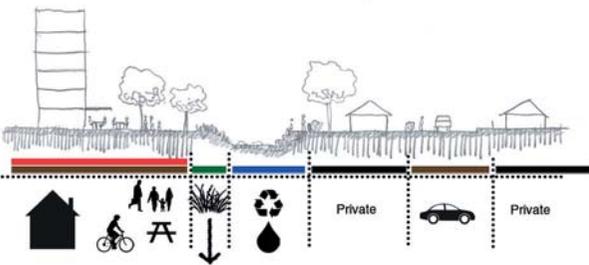
- Both rivers should become activity spines with activity nodes along them to generate energy.

### 6.2.4 Consortium Fook Proposal

- A Walter Battiss Community Park should be established together with an eco-recycling network along the Walker Spruit (Illus. 6.4). This will promote “job creation, social sustainability and community participation” (Joubert & De Villiers, 2009). This proposal had the largest influence on the proposed framework, and its general principles were followed, such as using Battiss’s artworks as mosaics or installations along the Spruit and in underpasses, and using Norman-Eaton paving patterns.



Illus. 6.5: Currently buildings turn their backs to the Walker Spruit. There are no passive surveillance and few escape routes. The river is contained in a concrete channel. (Author, April 2011)



Illus. 6.6: Design guidelines: It is proposed that buildings be converted to mixed use, opening up towards the river. The channel should be rehabilitated as far as possible and pedestrian and cyclist access enhanced. (Author, April 2011)

## 6.3 Proposed framework

Together with T. van Deventer, D. Botha and T. Meyer, design guidelines were established to guide the detail design of sections of the Apies River and Walker Spruit. The author then chose to focus specifically on a framework for the Walker Spruit area.

On Illus. 6.6 the general guidelines for the Walker Spruit portion of the larger urban framework can be seen. Ground floor mixed use such as retail, restaurants and markets should be used to activate the space. Activity nodes as shown on Illus. 6.7 would supply energy to the spine. They would contain community amenities such as fast-food restaurants, a laundromat, post office or internet café.

An amount of water is taken out of the Spruit with a waterwheel and cleaned by means of a wetland and various filters (see Illus. 6.7, 7.6 & 7.8). It is then used in a water feature on the proposed site before being released back into the Spruit. The wetland re-establishes lost habitat and could encourage awareness of environmental issues.

Various options of dealing with the concrete channel

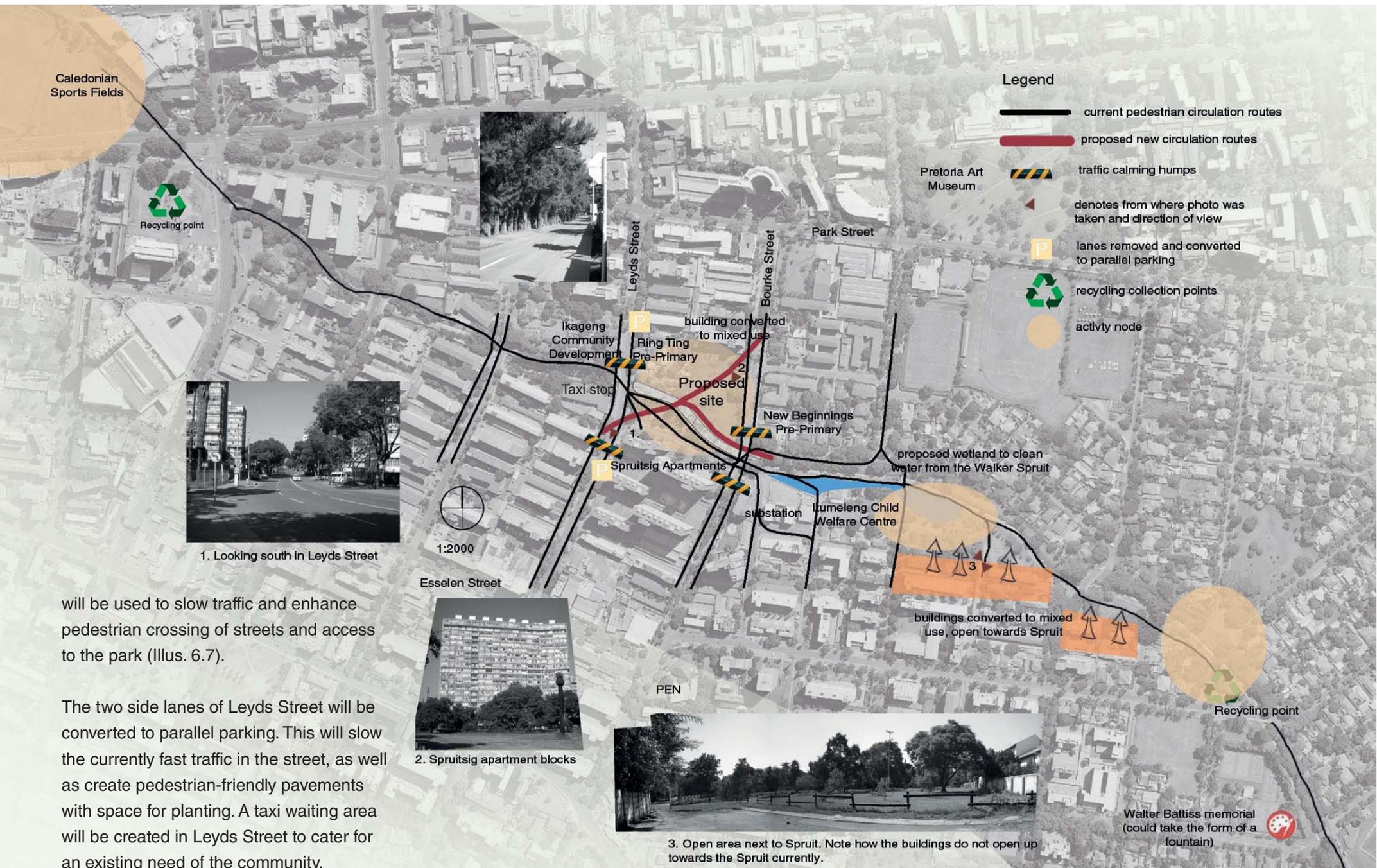
were investigated. Due to very high floodlines, it is impossible to rehabilitate the channel. It is therefore proposed that the *Mantis* artwork by Battiss (Illus. 6.9 & 6.10) be executed in mosaics in the channel. This work was chosen by the author as it has a natural theme with no bright colours, in keeping to the natural theme of the proposed park (see chapter 7).

The Norman-Eaton paving patterns suggested by Consortium Fook are also carried through the site in the main pedestrian pathway running along the Spruit. The mosaics and paving patterns add complexity to an otherwise dull urban environment.

### 6.3.1 Site-specific interventions

It is envisioned that the proposed project site become a natural children's playground, as it is situated close to various educational institutions. Such a playground will fulfil the needs of the community children, as discussed in Chapters 1 to 3.

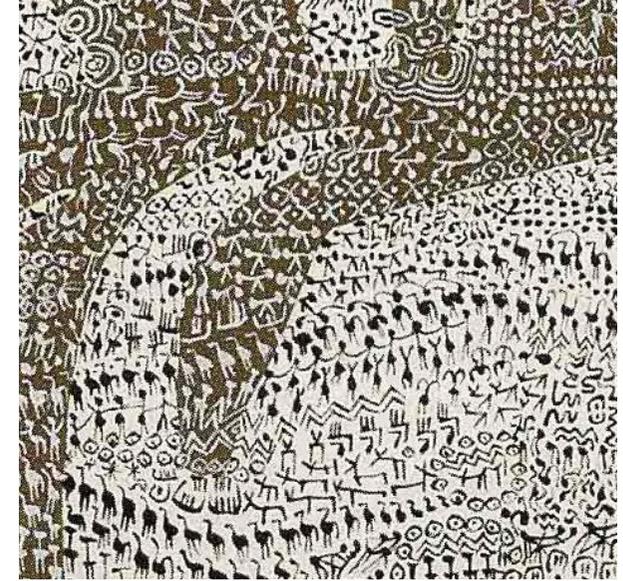
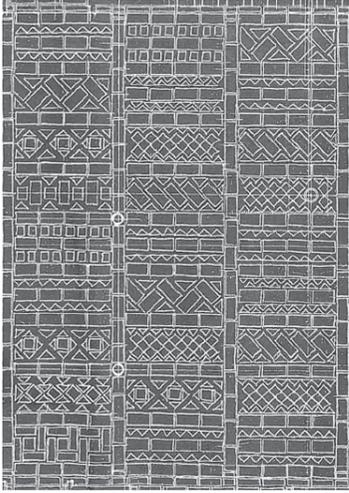
De Rapper street on the south side of the site will be removed. This will open up more usable space on the south side of the Spruit, and enhancing the children's safety from vehicular traffic. Traffic calming devices



will be used to slow traffic and enhance pedestrian crossing of streets and access to the park (Illus. 6.7).

The two side lanes of Leyds Street will be converted to parallel parking. This will slow the currently fast traffic in the street, as well as create pedestrian-friendly pavements with space for planting. A taxi waiting area will be created in Leyds Street to cater for an existing need of the community.

Illus. 6.7: Proposed framework for portion of Walker Spruit (Author, May 2011).



*Illus. 6.8: Norman-Eaton paving patterns (Courtesy of Joubert, 2009)*     *Illus. 6.9: Mantis. Oil on canvas, by Walter Battiss. (Skawran & Macnamara, 1985:31)*

*Illus. 6.10: Close-up of Mantis artwork showing complexity and detail. (Skawran & Macnamara, 1985:31)*

A new pedestrian route will be opened up across the site, as the northern part of the site is currently an isolated, unused space (except by homeless people).

The Costando Building on the north side of the site will be converted into mixed use on the ground floor, with a toy library, an internet café, Chicken Licken and greengrocer. The Spruitsig apartment blocks could not be converted to mixed use on the ground floor, as it is situated well within the floodline (the buildings currently stand on pilotis).

## 6.4 Conclusion

By creating activity nodes with amenities such as ATM's, cell-phone repair shops, internet cafés, and landscaped open spaces, energy will be generated along the Spruit, creating a safer and more pleasant environment.



*Illus. 6.11: Collage of vision for Spruit (Author, May 2011)*