

# CHAPTER 2 : CONTEXT

## 2.1 PROJECT LOCATION

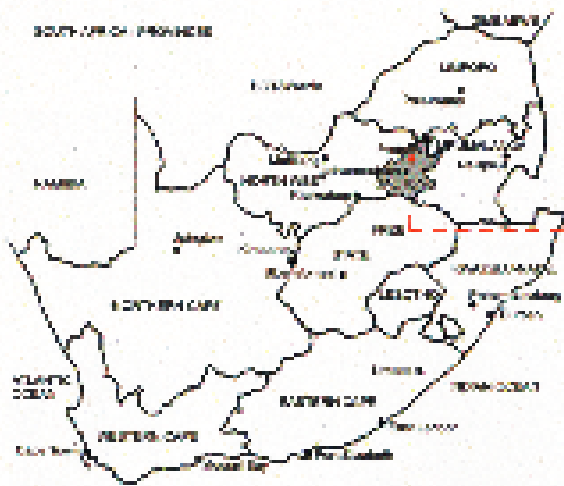


Figure 2.1  
Southern Africa with Pretoria, Tshwane, in the North of Gauteng (Samaps, 2009).

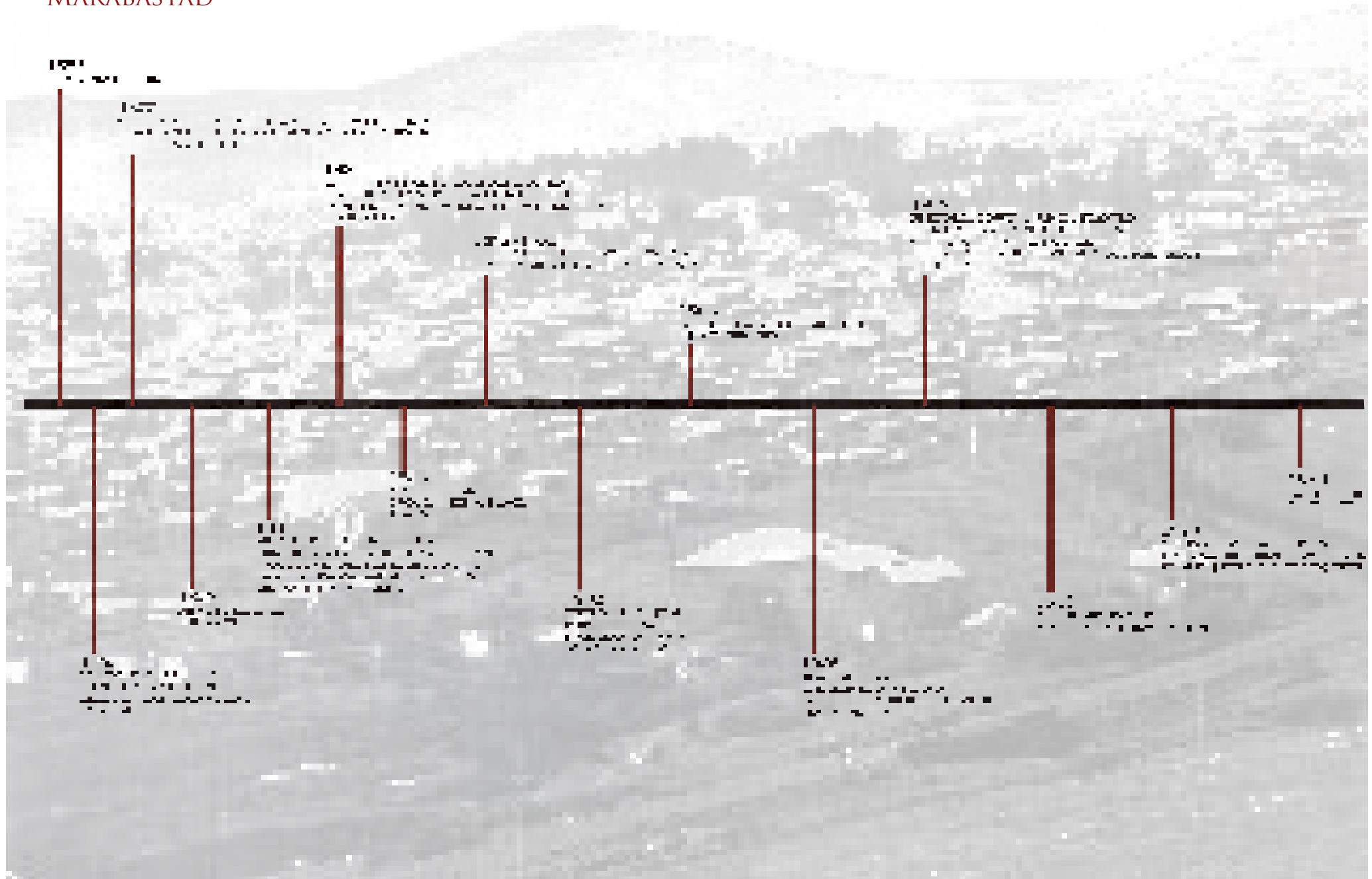


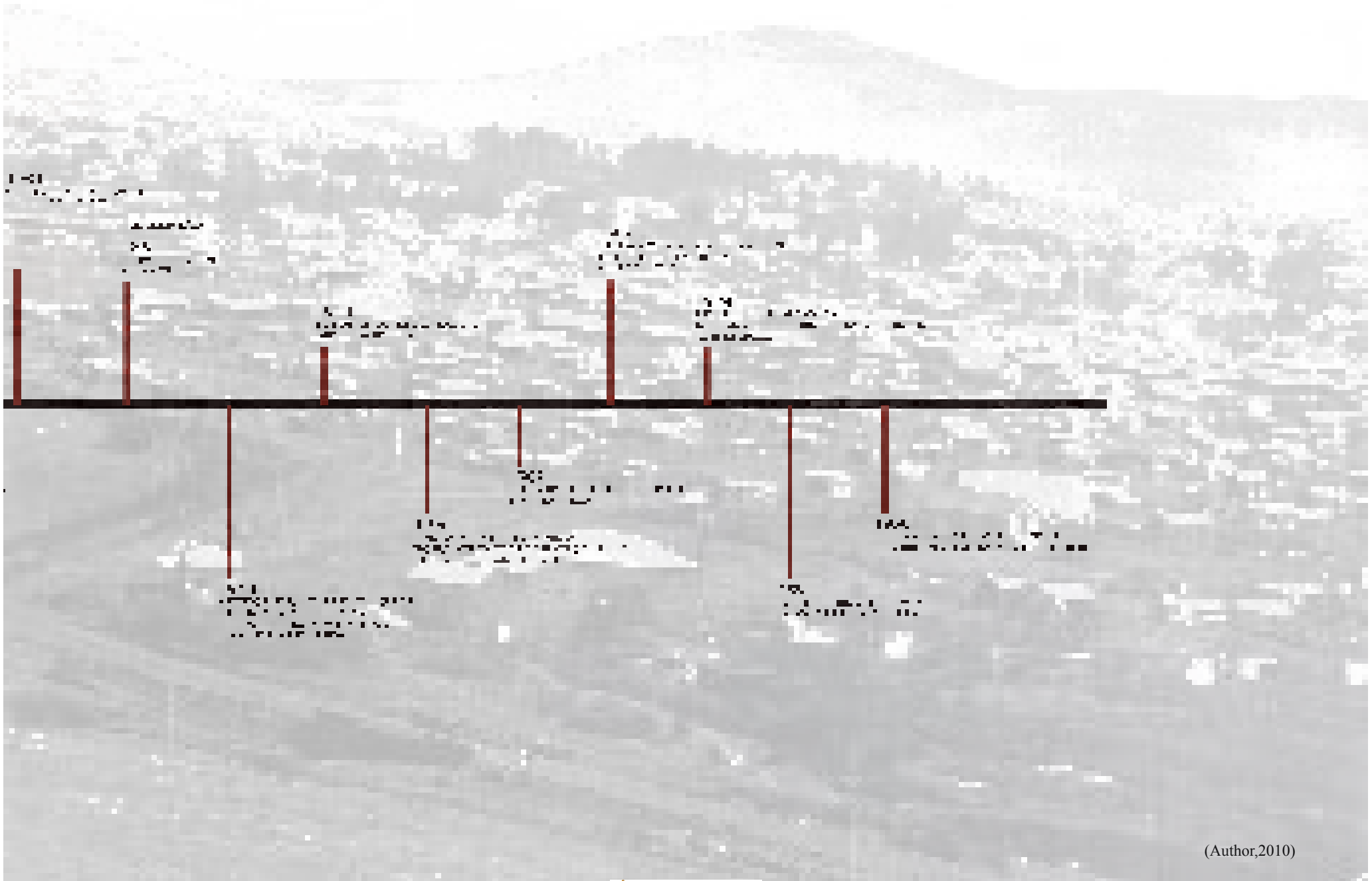
Figure 2.2  
The CBD of Tshwane with Marabastad highlighted in red and the specific site framed with the red box (Council Munitoria, 2007).



Figure 2.3  
Selected site with surrounding context (Council Munitoria, 2007).

## 2.2 HISTORICAL TIME LINE OF MARABASTAD





(Author,2010)

## 2.3 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

### 2.3.1 1850-1900

#### Segregation and Overpopulation

The history of Marabastad tells the story of **political oppression** where non-Europeans were not allowed to develop economically, socially and educationally without being subjected to complex interference and attempts at control on the part of the state.

Marabastad is located in Pretoria, Tshwane. In **1853** M.W Pretorius bought Elandspoort and Daspoort which attracted many traders, prospectors and hunters. These two farms were proclaimed as a town in **1855** by the Volksraad and was called **Pretoria** (Elliot,1975 : 3). North-West of Church square the Berlin mission society established a mission station in **1867** called '**Frischgewaagd**'. This land came to be known as '**Schoolplaats**' which was bordered by Boom Street(south), Steenhovenspruit(west) and farm land in the east (Friedman,1994 : 19) (see figure 2.4 and 2.5).

The mission stations, under control of state required that every African male living at Schoolplaats had to be employed by a white employer in the town and should he leave that employment he had eight days to find alternative employment or be forced to move out of the area (Bergh,1980 : 57).

The British influence in South Africa (**1881**) and thus Pretoria, gave more rights to people from Indian descent in the Transvaal (now Gauteng) and they began settling in Pretoria. After complaints from the European population, government began to resettle Indians in certain wards or 'bazaars'. Bazaars had elevated status above so called locations and people were able to trade, own immovable property and build religious buildings (Van der Waal, 1998 : 6). The boundaries of the **Coolie Location** was Bazaar Street (North), Steenhovenspruit (West), Struben Street(south) and Von Wielligh (East), (see figure 2.4). The bazaar was divided into 380 erfes that had were smaller than those North in Marabastad, and Van der Waal (1998 : 6) argues that the cause for that could have been to prevent sub-letting to informal settlers.

By **1887** Schoolplaats was so overpopulated that there were concerns about degrading health conditions (Bergh.1980:68). In **1888** sixty seven erfes, west

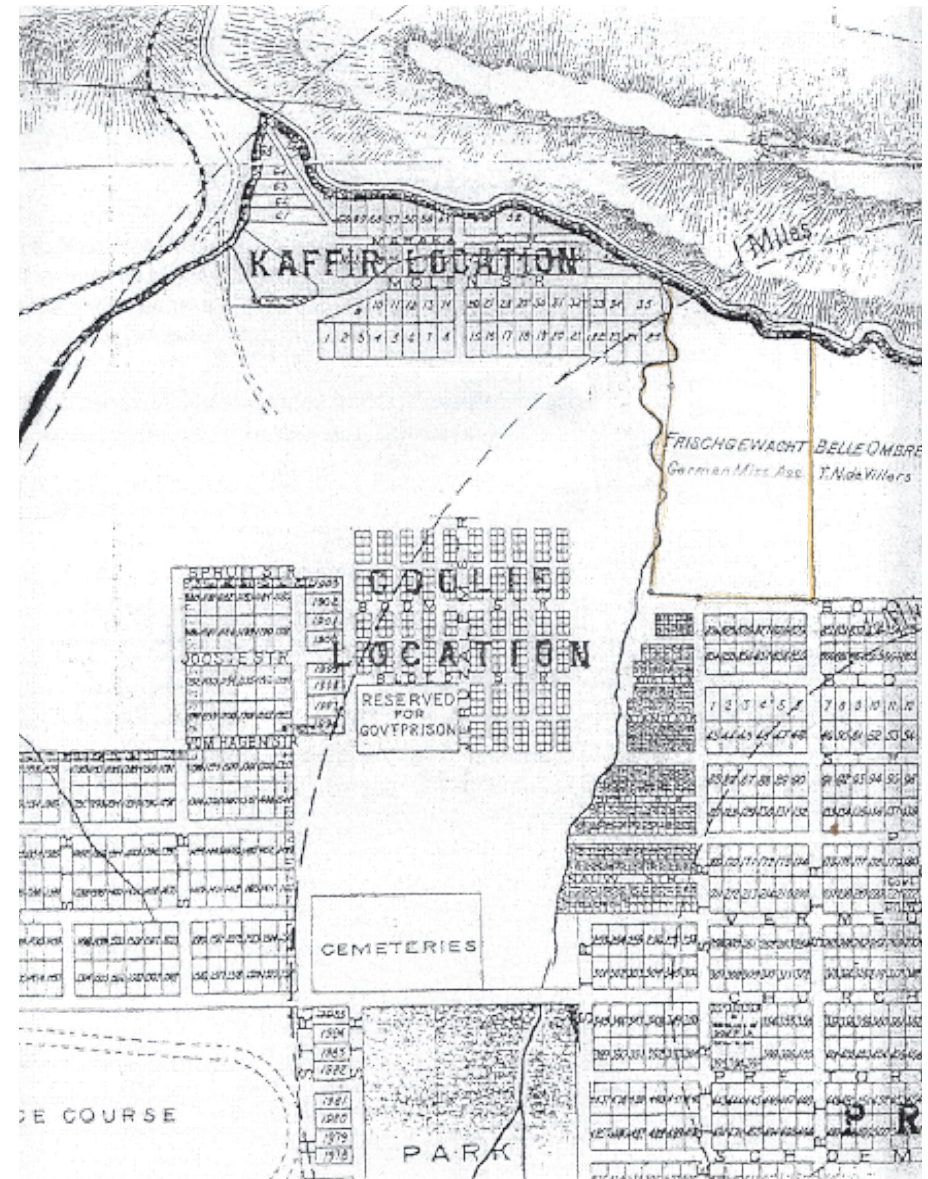


Figure 2.4  
1902 Map showing separation of races in Marabastad. Frischgewacht later known as Schoolplaats top right (National Cultural History Museum, 1995).

of Schoolplaats, and the first African location in Pretoria came into existence (Peacock, 1987:244). The area became known as Marabastad, named after Chief Maraba who not only had a kraal in this area but was translator to the Landdrost of Pretoria (Sack, 1964:31).

**1890s** attracted many Cape coloureds to Pretoria due to the discovery of gold. The government set aside an area south of the Coolie Location, known as the **Cape Location**. Tensions arose between the Coloureds and the Africans due to the encroachment in the same employment fields. The Cape Location was between Bloed and Struben Street and all coloureds not living on their European employers' property were forced to move to this location (Friedman, 1994: 36).

By **1900** Marabastad was now becoming overpopulated and could not sustain its residents and emigrants moving to the city. The empty land between Marabastad and the Asiatic bazaar was filled with emigrants informally settling there. This became known as the **New Marabastad** (see Figure 2.5).

### 2.3.2 1901-1988

#### **Domination, Relocation and Destruction**

In **1903** the Coolie Location was renamed the Asiatic Bazaar and resurveyed into 464 stands (Figure 2.5). The management of new and old Marabastad, the **Asiatic Bazaar** and the Cape Location were transferred to the City Council of Pretoria. Resurveying was done by the council with intentions to implement **rates and regulations**. New and old Marabastad was proclaimed one township, namely Marabastad, in **1906** (Van der Waal, 1998: 8).

A sewerage farm was built in **1907** by council in the old Marabastad area. Residents were **resettled** to the New Location later known as Bantule and this only aggravated the population situation (Van der Waal, 1998:8). In **1934** Marabastad became even more overpopulated as numerous people were also **relocated** there from Schoolplaats. This area could not expand as the Steenhovenspruit to its East and Von Wielligh to the West prevented it. **1934** also saw many demolitions of homes in the Marabastad area due to the **Slums Area Act** (Van der Waal, 1998:9).

The National Party came into power in **1948** and also gave rise to the **Apartheid-regime**.



Figure 2.5  
Aerial view of Schoolplaats 1902  
(Tayob, 2002)



Figure 2.6  
Present map showing where  
previous townships were located.  
(Aerial photograph  
manipulated by Author, 2010)

New policies were implemented that could gain more control over the population. These were influx control over non-Europeans, slum declaration and removals and racial segregation. From the 1950s many new Acts were implemented. The **Population Registration Act** of 1950 classified people according to the colour of their skin, language and descent. The **Group Areas Act** proclaimed separate group areas classified according to a person's population registration. From 1940 to 1950 Africans from Marabastad were **relocated to Atteridgeville** South-West of the city centre (Figure 2.7). 1950 saw more **demolitions** in Marabastad as it was de-proclaimed. (Today Belle Ombre station is situated on the place where New Marabastad was occupied) (Van der Waal, 1998:9). In 1959 **Claudius** had been proclaimed a group area for Indians and in 1960 **Laudium** followed. Residents from the Asiatic Bazaar had to move to these two townships and the Bazaar was eradicated as a residential area. **Relocation** for the **coloured population** occurred from 1962 to 1965 to Eersterust and most of the buildings in the Cape Location were **demolished** (Van der Waal, 1998:14).

A **Freeway proposal** for Pretoria in 1967, Marabastad was to become part of a major circulation system giving access to the city via an interchange over the Asiatic Bazaar (Figure 2.8). Most of the structures in this area were **demolished** when suddenly the idea was dismissed. But it was too late as most of Marabastad's urban fabric had already been destroyed (Bruinette, 1967). Today this urban cavity is still evident in the Marabastad fabric (Figure 2.9). In 1988 the **remaining residents** of Marabastad were **relocated** and **Belle Ombre station** was built to accommodate a large number of **commuters** that now needed to travel far distances to the city (Van der Waal, 1998:24). From 1934 to 1988 Marabastad went from a highly dense populated urban

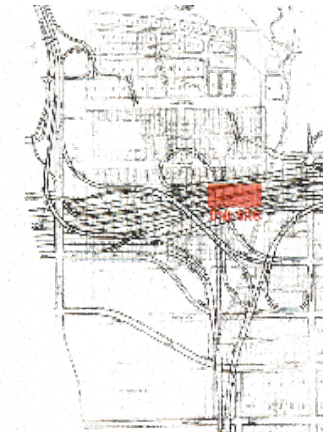
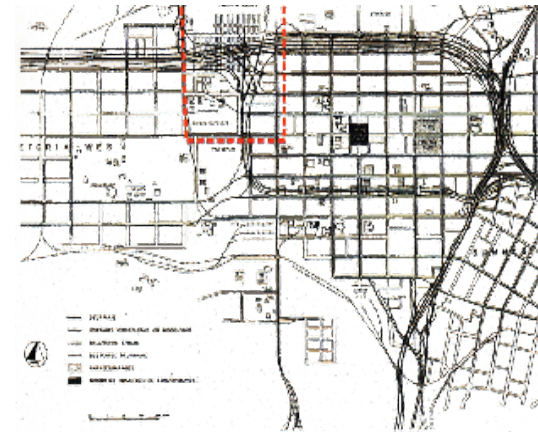


Figure 2.8  
Freeway Proposal of 1967.  
Red block indicates where the chosen site would have been in 1967  
(Tayob, 2002 : 95).



Figure 2.9  
Demolition of 377 Cowie Street during 1972 evictions  
(Holm Jordaan & Partners, 1998).



Figure 2.7  
Horse-drawn wagons such as these were used to cart household possessions during 1940 relocations from Marabastad to Atteridgeville  
(Holm Jordaan & Partners,



1934



1965



2010

Figure 2.10  
Comparative figure ground study of Marabastad from 1934 to present day. Red block indicates selected site (Tayob, 2002 : 52).

city to a place with less than half its urban fabric and almost none of its former residents left (see figure 2.10). Political oppression has left many physical and social scars in Marabastad that need to be addressed.

## 2.4 MARABASTAD TODAY

Marabastad is one of the most undeveloped parts of the Tshwane CBD. The area between Bloed and Boom Street has some urban fabric that has been preserved but has many cavities that with the remaining structures hold memories of the relocation and destruction that occurred in Marabastad. (Figure 2.10) Stands are small and orientated with its longer measurements East-West. These small stands also allow for short walking distances which contribute to a pedestrian friendly Marabastad (Figure 2.11). Boom Street and the Orient bazaar in the North of Marabastad are buzzing with commercial activity. Belle Ombre station also located in the North of Marabastad, creates a major transport node and is also the most dominating and large structure in the area (Figure 2.14). The BRT route runs through Boom Street which connects to the station. There are many options for commuters



Figure 2.11  
Aerial photo manipulated by Author(2010) showing orientation of sites, short distances between them and the cavities within the urban fabric (Munitoria,2010).



when changing modes of transport with a bus depot to the South and many informal taxi stops in the area Dewar (2002:68) says that large amounts of pedestrians generated by transportation interchanges create high activity, engagement between people and social activities.

## 2.5 ARCHITECTURE IN MARABASTAD : MEMORIES AND THE PRESENT

The mission station in Schoolplaats brought many people to settle there. As seen in figure 2.5 architecture from early Schoolplaats was modest but of a better quality than those of Marabastad. According to Friedman (1994 : 129) buildings in Schoolplaats were mostly made of brick and some are iron shanty structures. The stands were larger and had gardens with trees. Houses in Marabastad were built from wood and iron on order from Town Council and any alterations and improvements were prohibited. The city council had plans to demolish Marabastad and did not want to encourage any form of permanence (Friedman, 1994 : 129).

From photographic studies of present and past architecture of Marabastad some elements and patterns were identified. There is not a lot of new development in Marabastad and the present architecture is a glimpse into the past. There are some important landmark buildings in Marabastad that are important to mention like **The Orient Hall**, **the Mariammen Temple**, **The Ismaili or white mosque** in Boom Street and the old **Empire Theatre** (Figure 2.12). These buildings carry the memories of a Marabastad that had energy and vibrancy. These were places of entertainment, culture and music that Marabastad was famous for. They tell the story of the 'Marabi' culture that involved a working class culture that flourished in Johannesburg and Pretoria during the 1930s which is considered to have originated from Marabastad. It is also the name given to a style of music that combines Afrikaans and Coloured traditions, local African rhythms and American Jazz (Ilife, 1987:128).

Further investigations show that on a site surrounded by streets there are several small buildings that occupy it. These created smaller hierarchies and linking pathways within a site (Figure 2.11). From figure ground studies



Figure 2.12  
Collage by Author(2010) showing Major Landmarks in Marabastad. clock wise. A. Orient Hall, B. Empire theatre,C. Ismaili or white mosque and the D. Mariammen Temple (Author,2010).

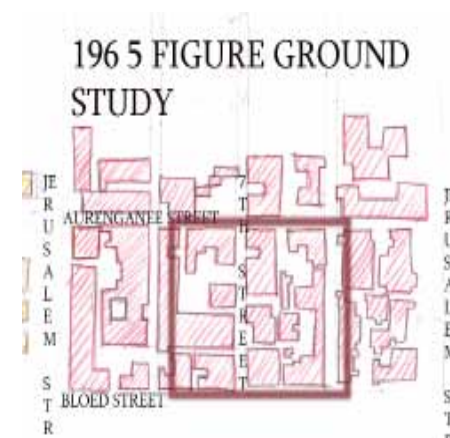


Figure 2.13  
Figure ground studies by author(2010) from 1934 to 2010, determining occupation, scale and spatial importance. Red box indicates selected site (Author,2010).

buildings on the corner of the site are mostly occupied and is important on the street edge (Figure 2.13). The building's scales are more or less the same, and heights don't surpass 3 storeys with the exception of Belle Ombre built 1988 (Figure 2.14). Most buildings are built from brick and is plastered and have corrugated iron roofs. (Figure 2.16) Buildings that edge on the street have beautiful verandas that allow pedestrians to move close to them (Figure 2.17).

Marabastad has a fine grained urban fabric and a more intimate human scale (Figure 2.15). It gives orientation and identity to its surroundings which are according to Norberg-Schulz(1986) the function to the 'spirit of place' which will be discussed in Chapter 3.



Figure 2.14  
Belle Ombre Station, important transport node in Marabastad. This building has the largest scale in the area (Tayob, 2005 : 190).



Figure 2.15  
View of Boom Street. Notice Old Empire Theatre on left and small intimate street scale (Author, 2010).



Figure 2.16  
Photograph by author (2010) showing material use in present Marabastad.



Figure 2.17  
Photograph by Author(2010) showing how Verandas define street edge with balconies on top (Author,2010).

## 2.6 GROUP URBAN FRAMEWORK :

### Connectivity through activity : an urban framework for the Northern ridge of the CBD

The northern and north-western parts of the Inner City are highly neglected areas that are in desperate need of urban regeneration. Marabastad, the National Zoological Gardens, and the area in between form the study area of the urban framework. With the city strategy development plan (2005) that aims to develop the Northern parts of Pretoria, the development of the Northern part of the CBD becomes important to create connections to the inner city.

#### Vision

- Pretoria is a culturally rich city with exceptional physical qualities and economic opportunities. Urban decline in the north of the CBD is evident
- Through a clear vision and implementation strategy this can be stopped
- The aim is to create a memorable and people friendly city – a people's place
- Nodes must be integrated through activity spines and the integration of activities to demote sprawl
- Reconnect Marabastad to inner city
- Enhance tourism around Zoological Gardens.
- Zone between Paul Kruger and Potgieter Street to act as catalyst for
- Regeneration of inner city activity

#### Strategy

- A city with an unique identity
- Inner city Precincts
- Diversity of land use
- A thriving tourism industry
- Inner city natural environments
- Mobility and access

#### Sustainability

The framework proposes an activity spine running from the Bloed Street Mall to link up Grand Street in Marabastad. This spine will connect the Northern nodes with each other with this pedestrian spine (see Figure 2.18). Figure 2.19 shows the main proposed entrance spine linking the greater North of Pretoria to the inner city.

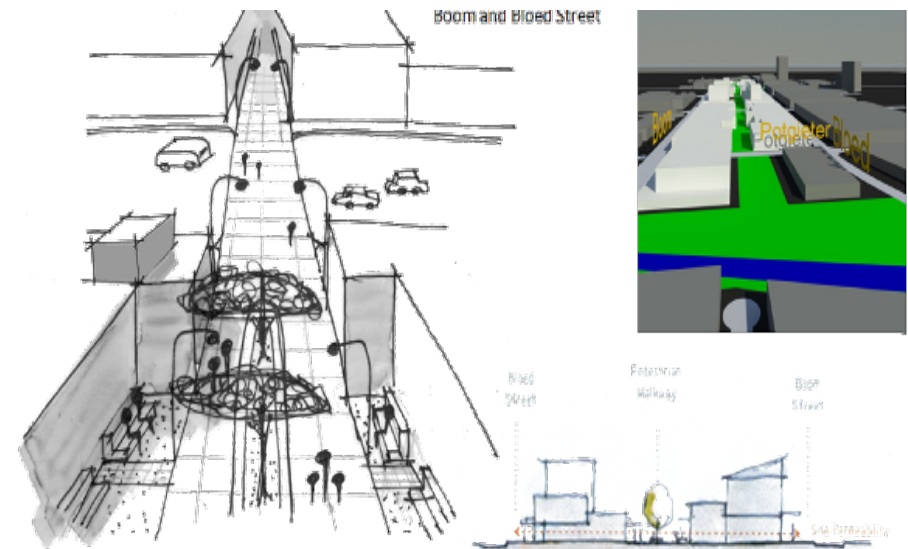


Figure 2.18  
Collage showing Activity Spine linking up with existing Grand Street in Marabastad (Author, 2010).

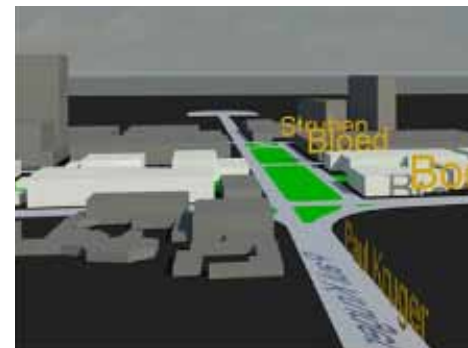


Figure 2.19  
Entrance node to city from North (Author, 2010).



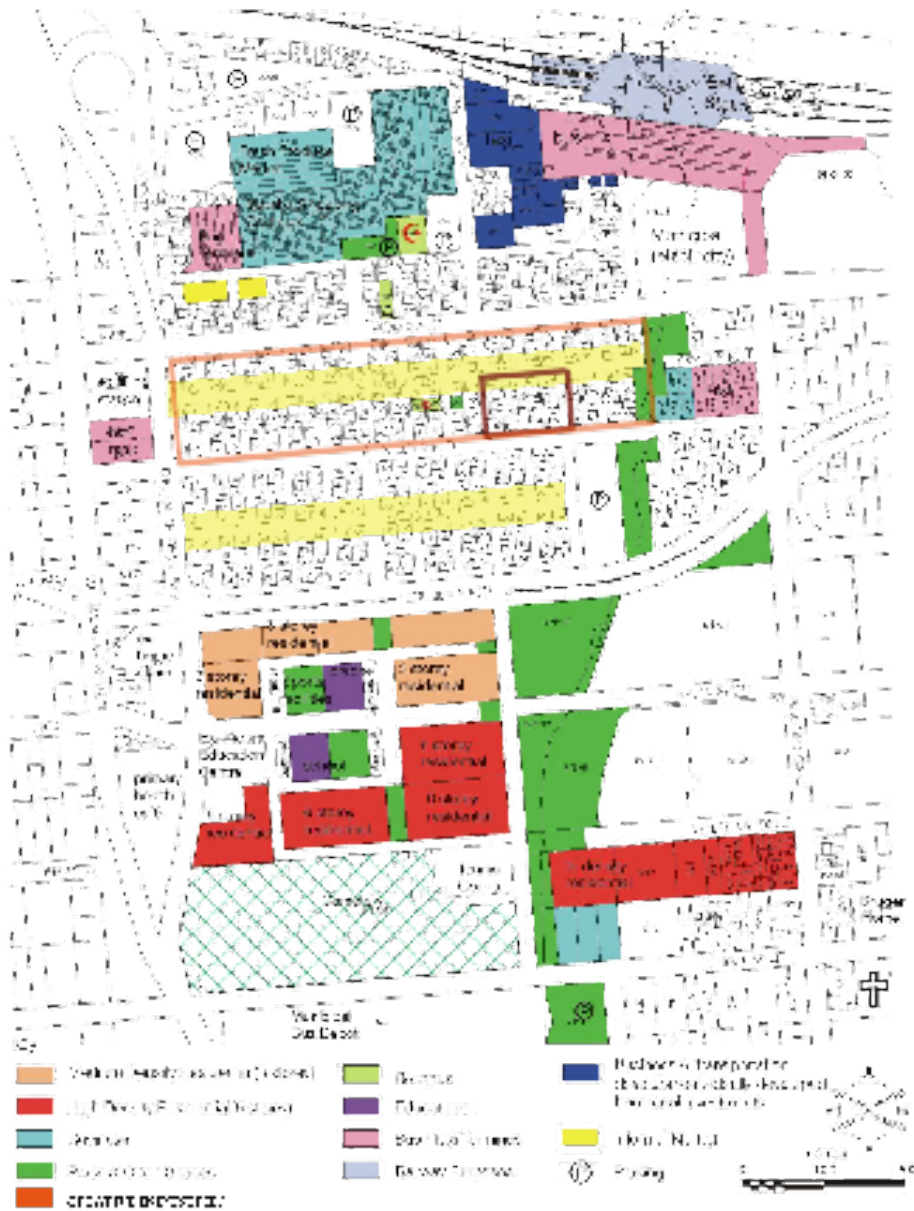


Figure 2.21  
Proposed land use for Marabastad manipulated by Author. Site indicated with red box (Aziz-Tayob Architects, 2002 : 169).

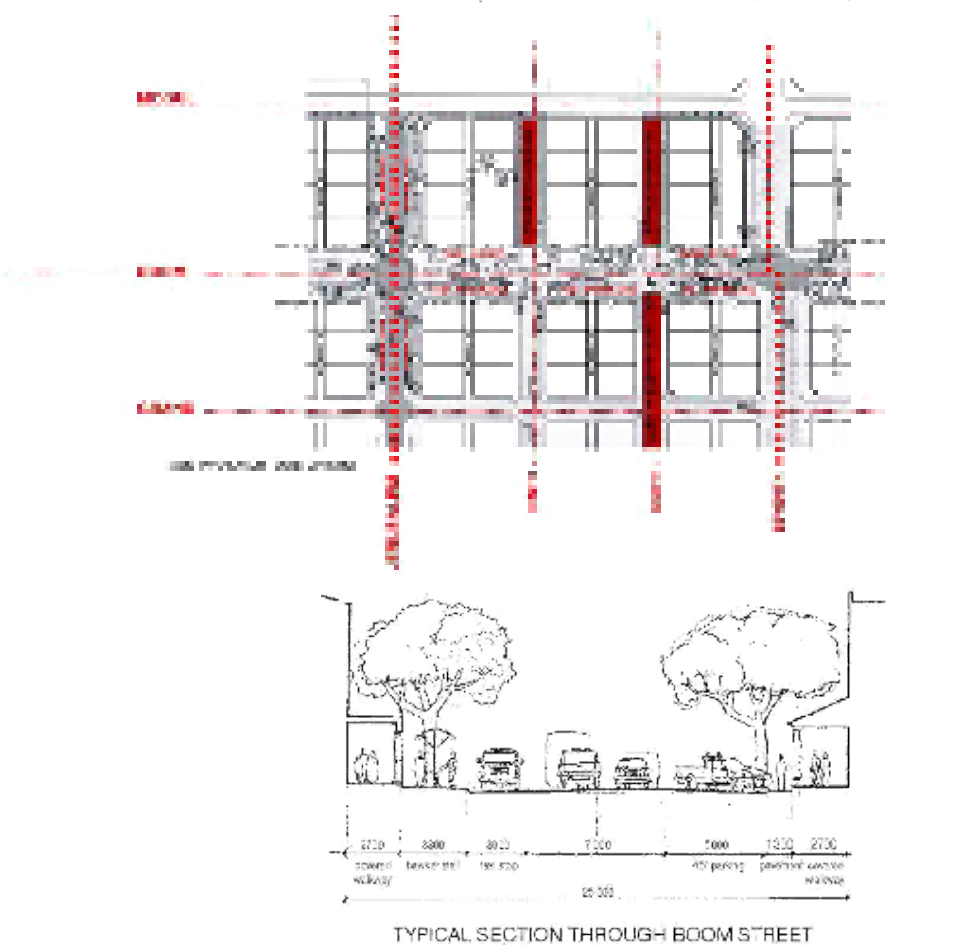
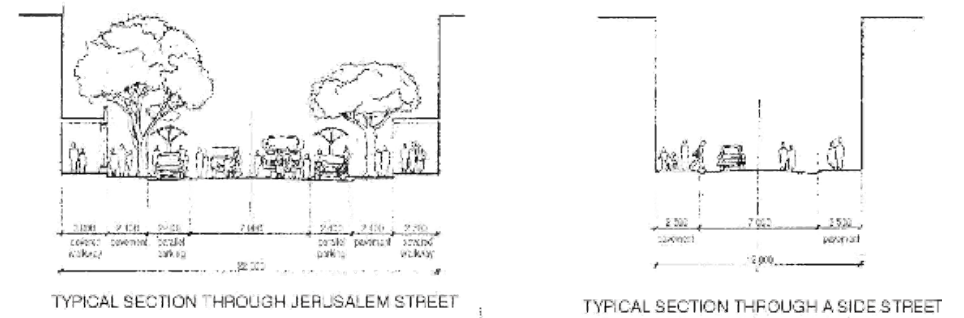


Figure 2.22  
Proposed streets scapes for Marabastad adopted from framework (Aziz-Tayob Architects, 2002:170).

## 2.8 INFRASTRUCTURAL ANALYSIS

Access to Marabastad is adequate due to the main traffic arteries, indicated in figure 2.23. D.F Malan allows for access from the North-West. Church Street gives access to Atteridgeville township from the West and Mamelodi township from the East. Bloed and Boom Street feed in and out of Marabastad from East to West and vice versa. The inner city bus route and the BRT runs through Marabastad, connecting it to the rest of Pretoria.

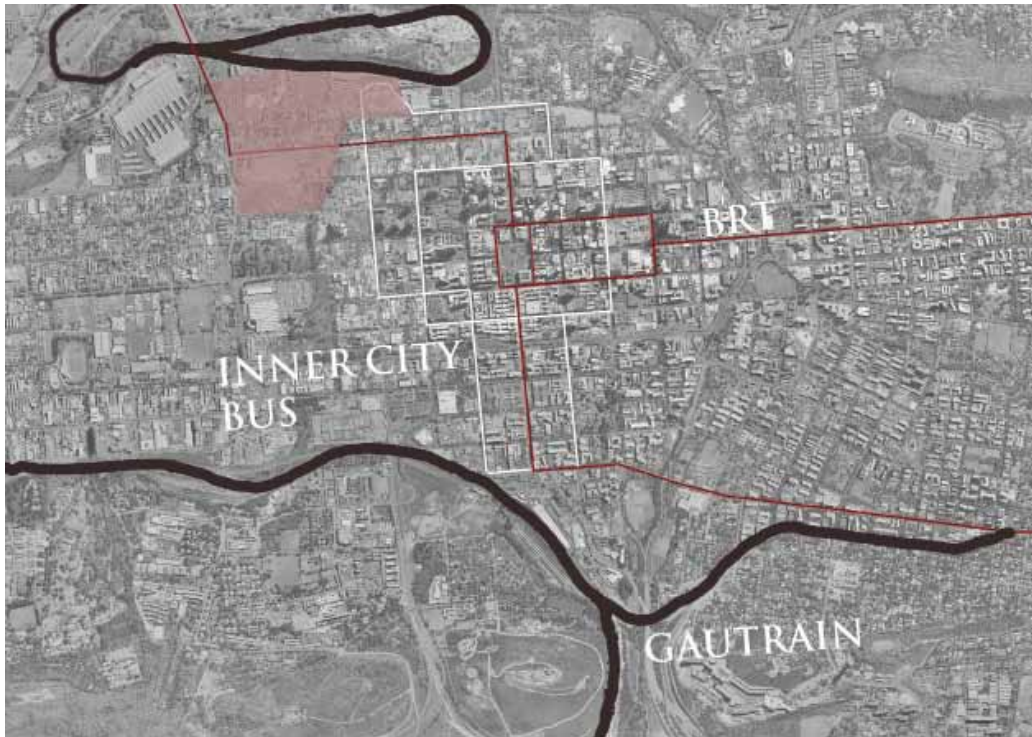
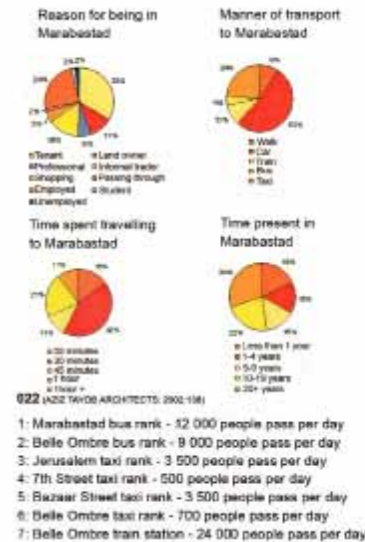


Figure 2.23  
Map manipulated by Author (2010) showing major routes connecting Marabastad city (Aziz-Tayob Architects, 2002 : 169)

## 2.9 SOCIAL AND ECONOMICAL ANALYSIS

Marabastad hosts 18% of Pretoria's informal trading and with all the commuters passing through via different means of transport it is clear why trading is a growing economy. Most of the commuters are from the north-west passing through Marabastad every day (Aziz Tayob Architects, 2002 : 103).

Most people that trade in Marabastad have been there for years selling to their loyal customer passing through. The formal traders of Marabastad consist mainly of the Indian community whereas the informal trade is a mixture of black cultures (Aziz Tayob Architects, 2002:126).



- 1: Marabastad bus rank - 12 000 people pass per day
- 2: Belle Ombre bus rank - 9 000 people pass per day
- 3: Jerusalem taxi rank - 3 500 people pass per day
- 4: 7th Street taxi rank - 500 people pass per day
- 5: Bazaar Street taxi rank - 3 500 people pass per day
- 6: Belle Ombre taxi rank - 700 people pass per day
- 7: Belle Ombre train station - 24 000 people pass per day

Figure 2.24  
Social analysis of Marabastad (Aziz-Tayob Architects, 2002:169).

## 2.10 BIO - PHYSICAL ANALYSIS

**Climate** : Marabastad is characterised by generally high temporal relatively low local humidity frequently combined with high afternoon temperatures in the summer. The summer rains reach an average of 741mm per year. Large roof areas could contribute in the sustainability vision from the group framework by **catching and storing of rainwater** (Holm, 1990).

**Wind** : Prevailing winds are calm and blow from the north-east in the morning backing to the north-west in the afternoon. During winter cold snaps bring winds from the south, while in the summer thunderstorms are accompanied by turbulent wind patterns. The proposed roof structures and facilities should be designed to **maximise cross ventilation** by utilising the prevailing wind directions.

**Topography** : Marabastad falls in gentle slope from the south-west to the north-east at about 1 : 36. This slope places no constraints on development. The underlying geology is composed of localised Andestic lava with inter bedded agglomerate, shale and tuff. Soil conditions are such that highly variable foundations conditions may be expected to occur, from solid rock at shallow depth to potentially expensive residual andesite soils.

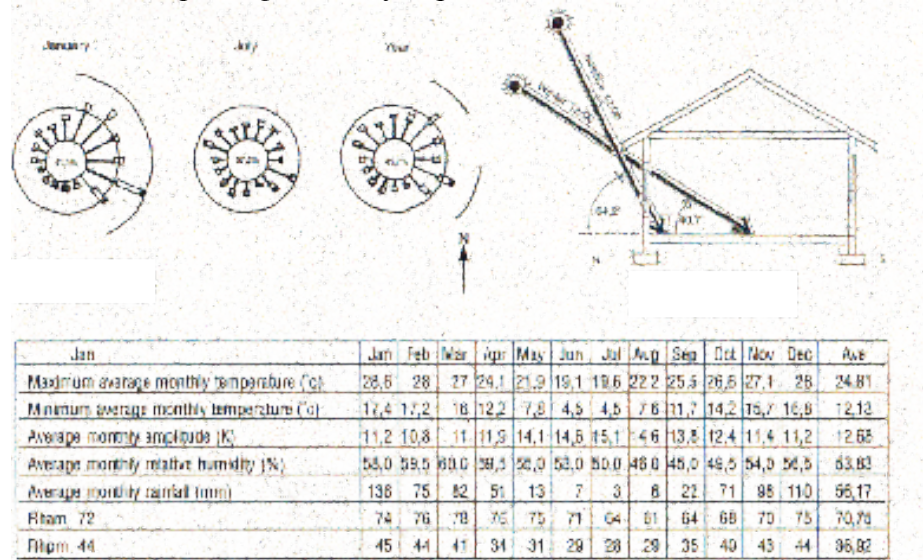


Figure 2.25  
Bio-physical information  
(Holm, 1990).