



INTRODUCTION

Worldwide cities are undergoing both growth and decline in urban density (Rasmuss 2000). The contents of cities change because of social and economical conditions, forcing the face of the city to also change with it (Rasmuss 2000). This constant change in social environments urges designers to react on such changes through alteration and adaptation of the existing structures (Scott 2008:6), rather than attempt to control it. A controlling design only proposes a solution to the current social position and does not provide for the next generation of change, contributing to yet another cycle of vacant buildings.

Pretoria is a growing city (illustrated in figure 1b), yet has a number of vacant and/or dilapidated buildings as illustrated in figure 2a. A number of buildings are also becoming ‘mothballed’ with only street level activity keeping them alive. To address the current situation and to prevent another cycle of vacancies, the city needs designers to react to its existing structures without attempting to ‘control’ it.

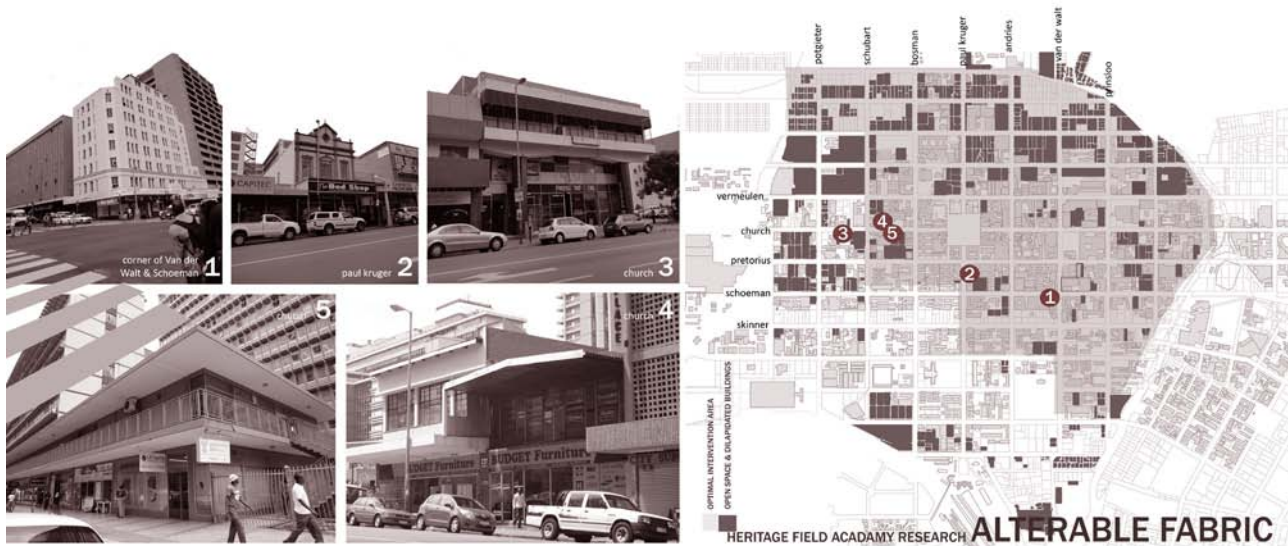


Figure 2a: A few examples of buildings in Pretoria with only the ground floor functioning

DISPOSITION OF LIVING CITIES

Changed conditions in urban societies are expressed by the change in street life patterns (Gehl 2006:50).

It is an all too common approach to view urban space as one big entity consisting of a collection of city blocks with surface areas covered in buildings. It is too seldom thought of as spaces used by individuals. The connections, shapes and scale of these spaces are often not taken into consideration (Trancik 1986:1). These spaces are seen by Trancik (ibid) as “anti-space”. Anti-space is crucial in the role of improving social influx to the city since cities are experienced on a human scale.

According to Ian Bentley (1985:9), the design of a space affects the choices people make dramatically. It affects: where people go and where they cannot; the range of uses available; how easily people can understand what opportunities it offers; the degree to which people can use a given place for different purposes; whether the detailed appearance of the place makes people aware of the available choices; people’s choice of sensory experiences; and the extent to which people can put their own stamp on a place. To summarize: it is of immense significance to make cities penetrable and functional for the ordinary citizens and provide them with a **living city**.

“It is important that all meaningful social activities, intense experiences, conversations, and caresses take place when people are standing, sitting, laying down, or walking. One can catch a brief glimpse of others from a car or from a train window, but life takes place on foot. Only ‘on foot’ does a situation function as a meaningful opportunity for contact and information in which the individual is at ease and able to take time to experience pause, or become involved.”
(Gehl 2006:72)



A successful example of a recently transformed living city is Curitiba, Brazil. The successful innovations of the city's fabric renewal process was initiated and implemented by the city leadership which lead to actually making a difference (Campbell 2006:5). One of the secrets to success in the planning was the continuous interplay of public participation (ibid:5). Curitiba, further illustrates how focussing on a human scale down town (figure 2b) can make an immense improvement not just on a social level, but also economics and safety (Lipman 2006). Central Curitiba was remade for its citizens rather than solely for automobiles. Cheap public transport – South Africa is in the process of implementing affordable and reliable public transport, BRT and Gautrain – is responsible for a decrease in fuel used per capita and citizens are attracted to the city (Campbell 2006:5-6), achieving a further decrease in sprawl. **Buildings previously marked for demolition were rescheduled and adapted for social use.** Simple treatment of streets, for instance the sidewalks fronting a building is cobbled, closed off to cars and streets are strung with lights which make the buildings inviting. And the slums are kept neat by slum dwellers, for each sack of garbage they collect; they get a sack of food in return. Overall, there is a general promotion of small scale businesses and social interaction (Lipman 2006).

There is a vibrant social and economical motion within the CBD of Pretoria, but it is limited to certain sections of the city leaving barren pockets in other areas lacking in activity (figure 2c). Such 'dead' spaces do not contribute in creating a living city. Spatial design can promote the development of social activities by using built form to encourage or discourage social interaction. The physical framework undoubtedly plays a crucial role and can be used to reverse the current lack of activity. If a high concentration of people is not present in a city, it can cripple the regeneration of the area (Jacobs 1962:255).

Figure 2b: Street in the city of Curitiba, Brazil. Top: (Fox 2009), middle and above: (Lipman 2006)



1. SOCIAL AND ECONOMICAL MOTION IN THE CBD:

Pedestrian behaviour in the urban environment. The eastern link of church street is flooded with social and economical activity (nr.1-3), in comparison to the quiet western link (nr.4 & 6) and nr. 5 which is just a street block north of 1 and 2.

Pretoria's CBD is in need of a framework that addresses the current lack of activity in certain sections and attempts to reverse this negative trend.

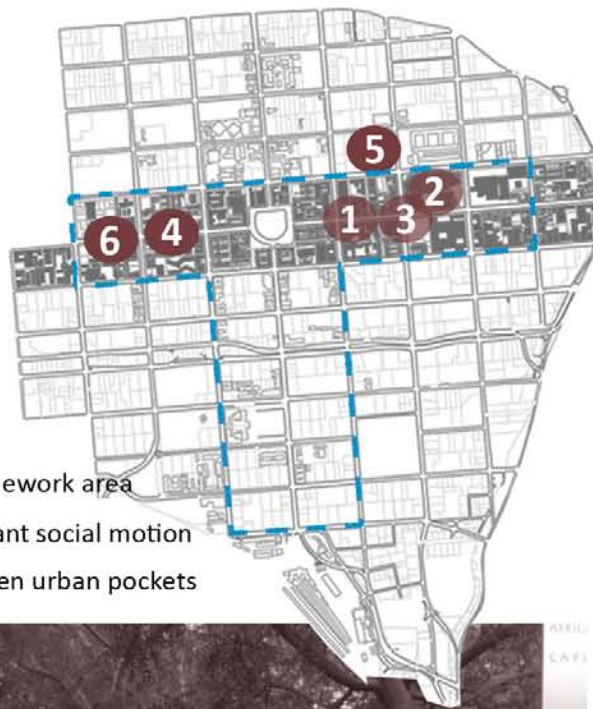




Figure 2c: Sectional vibrant social and economical motion in the CBD
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PLUG IN CITY URBAN FRAMEWORK

(by author, Olga-Marie de Villiers, Radhia Khan, Janri Myburgh, Grant Prestedge, Suné-Marie Steyn)

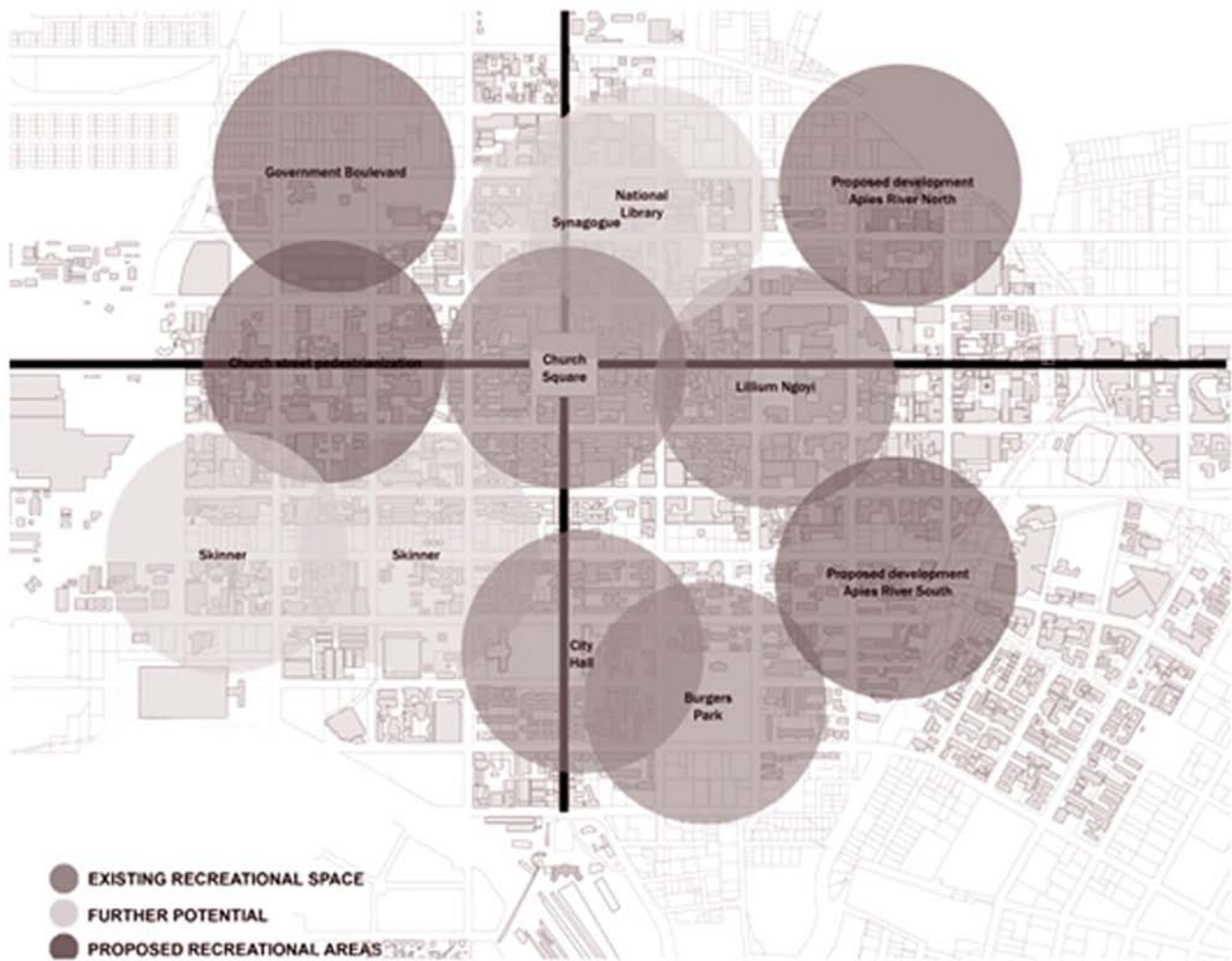


Figure 2d: Existing and proposed activity nodes in the CBD as proposed by PLUG-IN CITY Framework

According to the Tshwane Inner City Development and Regeneration Strategy (2006), the inner city is identified as a strategic focus area because it acts as the functional and symbolical heart of the greater Tshwane. Therefore the *Plug-In-City* Framework's location is of strategic significance, placed within the heart of the CBD of Pretoria.

The scope of the framework involves the whole extent of the CBD in order to connect the existing and proposed activity nodes. With specific focus area on the core which includes Church Street as the eastern and western gateway and Paul Kruger as the southern gateway to the city. The individual projects are driven by a holistic approach to integrate the city's identity and in providing the public with better access and awareness of the respective activity nodes.

As a response to this, the framework proposes Church Street as a vibrant spine of public space with Vermeulen, Pretorius and Paul Kruger Streets supplementing the public activity.

Existing focal points (activity nodes) include Lillian Ngoyi Square, Church Square, the State Theatre, Sammy Marks Square, City Hall, Kruger House and various arcade systems. Pedestrian activity is ample to the east of Church Street, conflicting with the other routes predominantly due to the fact that vehicular movement is generally restricted which allows for more informal interaction space along this spine.

as per group work.

1. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND:

The theory of Collage City (Rowe 1978) emerged as a response to problems brought about by modern urbanism. The study involved looking at figure ground drawings which emphasize the role of public and private space in determining the character of the city.

Collage is both a fragmentary technique and a state of mind that aims to address the difficulties of both Utopia and tradition in an urban context. The idea of collage is used to identify the problem of composite presence in the city. Collage City promotes an anti-totalitarian approach: one should rather think of a sum total of small and opposing set pieces than to continue the search for total and perfect solutions.

2. THEORY APPLIED:

The implementation is focused on site specific interventions (fragments) that are initiated with a common vision. Each intervention functions as a catalyst on its own, thus creating points of rejuvenation throughout the city. When viewed on a larger scale, a collage is created, revealing the diverse and pluralistic character of Pretoria's inner city.

The proposed concept is intend to be implemented in four phases (figure 2e) and aims to increase the legibility and accessibility of the city to all users, harnessing the grassroots' daily impact of pedestrian experience whilst emphasizing and exploring the individual components of the city. The phases connect these elements through collage and event and consider the experience from a variety of scales.

Phases:

- The first phase is the identification of potential within the city and their development as a node.
- Phase two links these nodes by corridor developments, aiming to strengthen the existing commercial and residential sectors.
- Phase three of the framework uses thresholds as points to indicate the currently concealed aspects in the city, harnessing identity, street essence and branding.
- The aim of phase four of the framework is to celebrate the city by implementing a festival: *PlugIn Festival*.

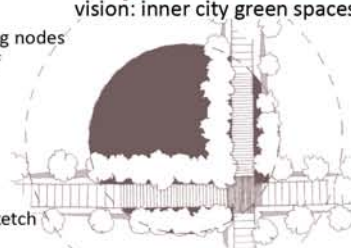
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public nodes

by means of:

- identification of existing nodes
- new proposed areas of recreation (figure 2d)
- must be accessible to residents and workers

vision: inner city green spaces



node sketch

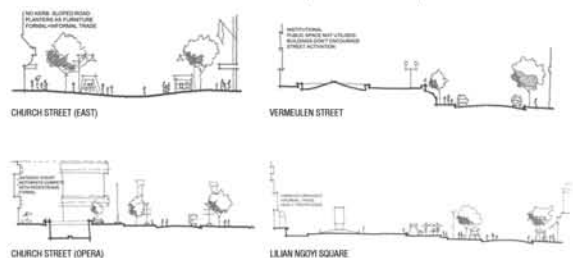
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corridors

vision: interactive public routes with focus on street edge

by means of

- strip development between public nodes
- connect and encompass existing commercial and recreational activities
- use existing transport routes and events to enhance pedestrian experience and public interaction



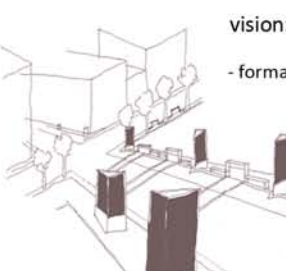
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thresholds

vision: orientation and information

by means of


- formalizing thresholds into and within the city
- increase legibility of existing significant spaces by branding certain zones
- promote underutilised resources



Pretoria **PLUGIN festival**

vision:

- to create a local/regional identity
- create recreational attraction, drawing people to the city
- generate income
- sets up framework for collaboration and skills transfer sparking future incentives
- an opportunity for community involvement



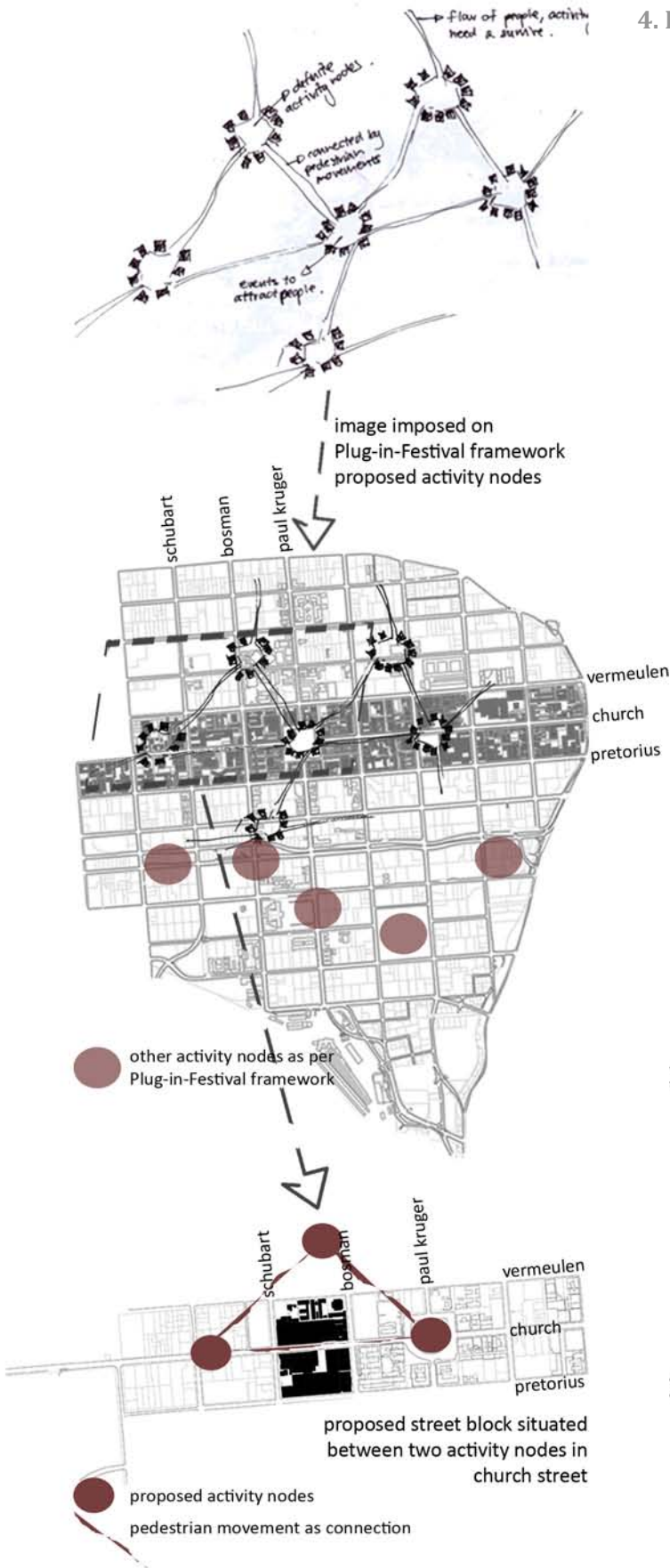
Church Square
26 April - 2 May 2011

Urban Art Performances Live Music CRAFT WORKSHOPS
Films Art installations Historical walks Theatre
Museum walks Street events Cultural walks Festivals
Photography Dance performances Evening activities
guided city tours Digital an acoustic sets MARKET
Superhero Art Upcoming Artists Exhibitions

Figure 2e: Phasing of Plug-In-City Framework

3. RESPONDING TO THE URBAN FRAMEWORK

The framework proposes to link the existing and new activity nodes. INTERFACE is located in one of the connecting pedestrian movement paths (formulating part of the cultural and historical walk within the Plug-in Festival) linking two public activity nodes as proposed by Plug in City Framework.



4. PROPOSED SITE WITHIN A CONNECTION PATH

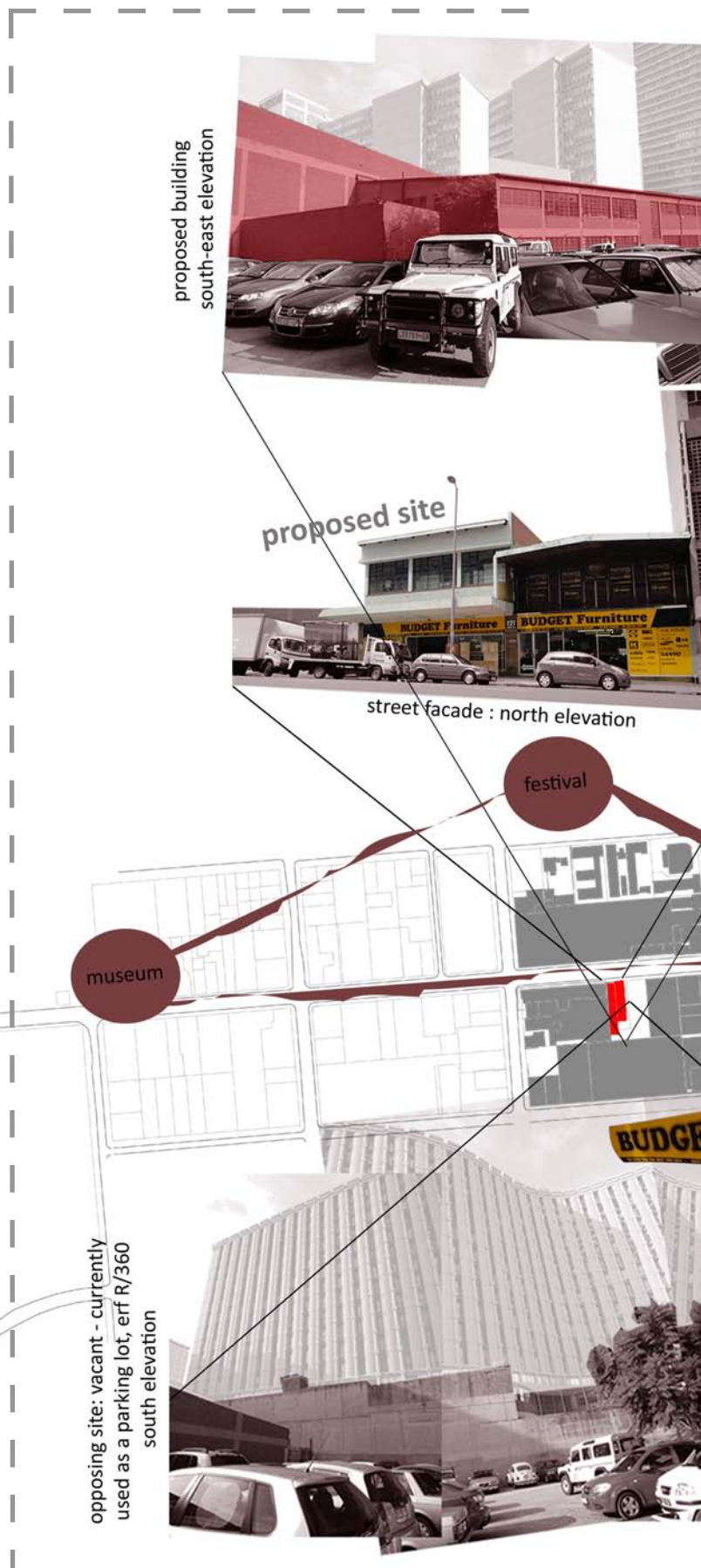


Figure 2f: Activities are stretched out in time and space and connected with pedestrian movement

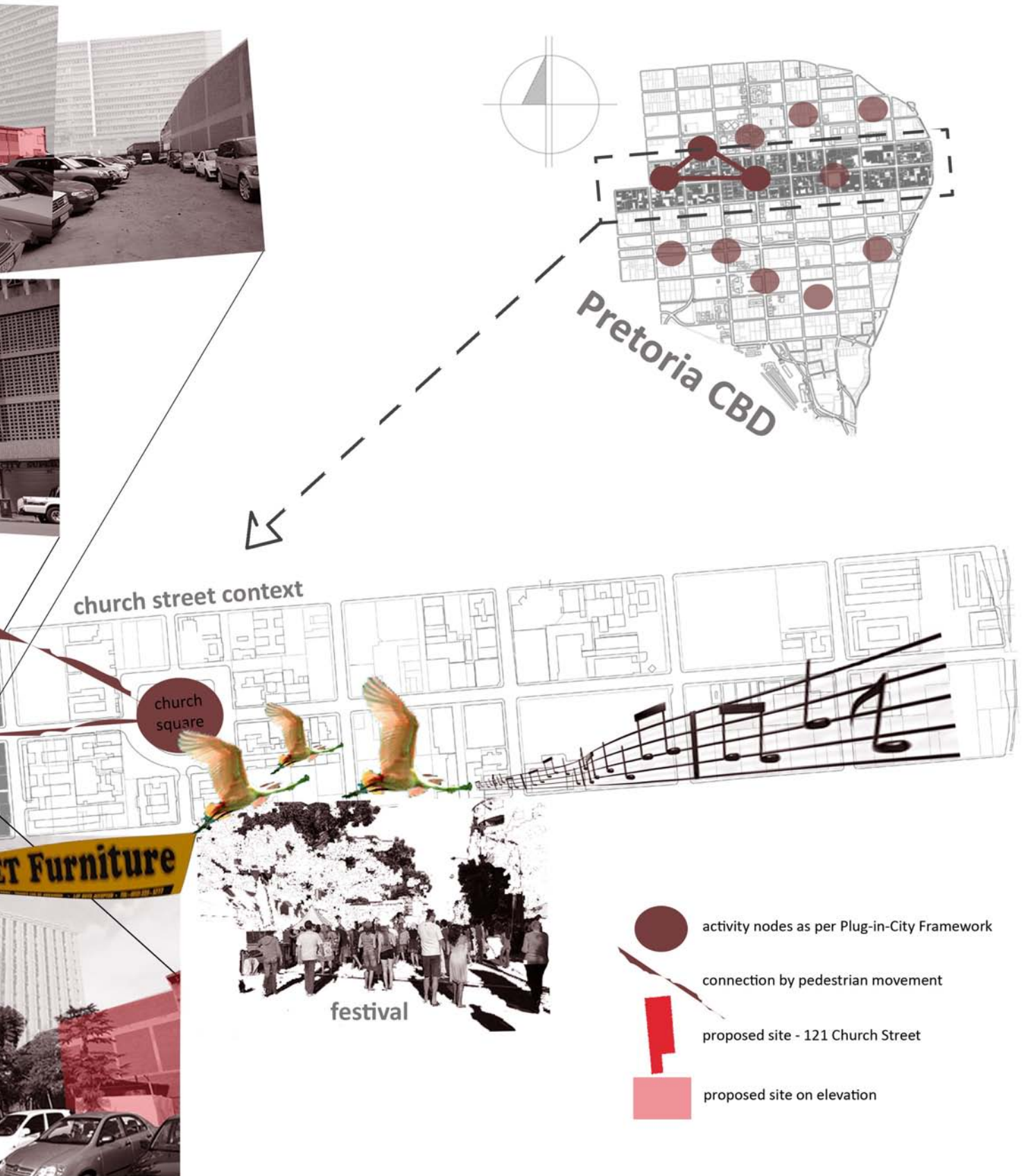


Figure 2g: Location and views of the proposed site surrounded by activity nodes

CONNECTION OF ACTIVITIES

“Where there are people – in buildings, in neighbourhoods, in city centres, in recreational areas, and so on – it is generally true that people and human activities attract other people. People are attracted to other people. They gather with and move about with others and seek to place themselves near others. New activities begin in the vicinity of events that are already in progress” (Gehl 2006:23)

To experience a space, the user must be able to easily and comfortably move about (access) (Gehl 2006:51); to be able to linger and explore the street life that connects the interior spaces of buildings. The approach to improve this experience must be done on a moderate scale (Sassen 2006; Lipman 2006). Moderate changes, interior interventions as defined in chapter 4, allow for objectives to be accomplished faster.

“The character of the life between buildings changes with changes in the society situation” (Gehl 2006:7). In a public space the individual is contributing in a modest way towards the atmosphere of the space (ibid:17). The participation of people is needed to activate the streets and great attention should be given to the design thereof.

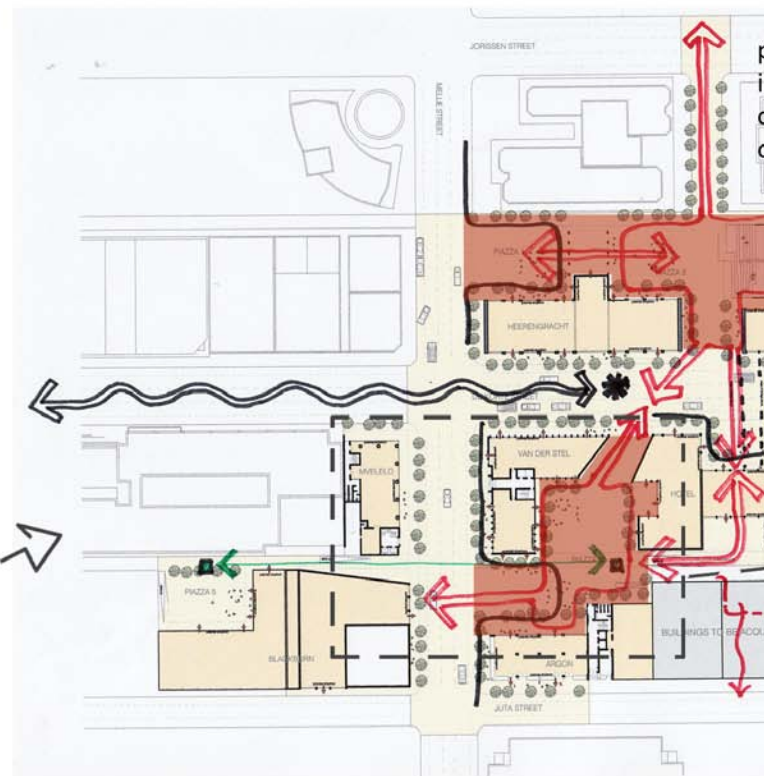
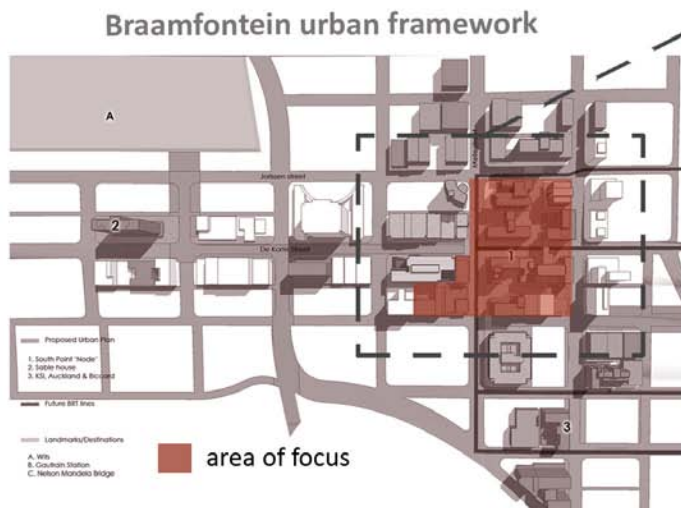
The focus of this thesis is not to create a meeting space nor redesign the streets of the CBD, but rather to provide direction of how to invite activities through designing responsive street interfaces affected by spatial qualities of the interior environment. As exhibited by the temporary architecture of Dough Garofalo: Mellow Yellow (Demby 2003), social events can evolve spontaneously. In an attempt to activate the public space in front of Chicago’s Museum of Modern Art, Garofalo constructed a pavilion that promotes social interaction by the incorporation of seating and shading devices. The pavilion is a connection between the museum and the city; it becomes the connection point of activity where situations are allowed to develop. This is evidence of how the addition of simple architectural elements to existing built fabric can become the connection with daily social activities and therefore increase the opportunity for development and activation of space.

1. PRECEDENT - CONNECTION OF ACTIVITIES:

Situated just outside the Johannesburg CBD, Braamfontein is currently undergoing a process of regeneration (Braamfontein Precinct Regeneration Programme). In collaboration with South Point Property Holdings, Silvio Rech and Lesely Carstens proposed an urban framework that entails the connection of activity nodes by pedestrian movement.

urban settings can be filtered down to human activity nodes and their interconnections

Figure 2j: Local precedent study of pedestrian movement used as connection between individual buildings



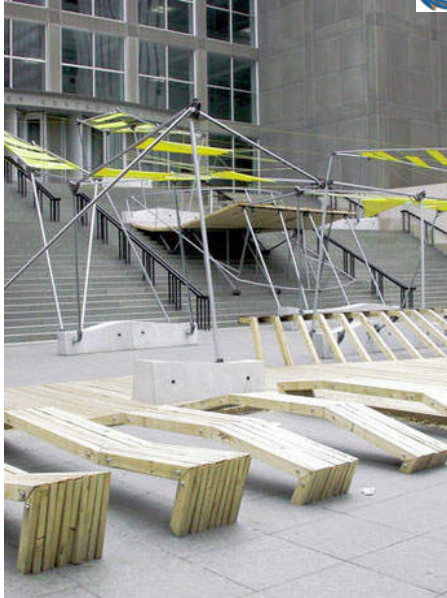


Figure 2h: Mellow Yellow,
Temporary architecture
designed by Dough
Garofalo (Demby 2003)

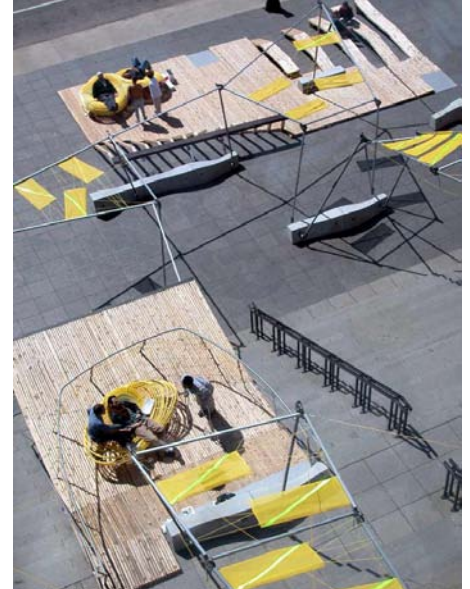


Figure 2i: Mellow Yellow,
Chicago's Museum of
Modern Art (Garofalo
2003)

des and

It is important to dedicate time to pedestrian movement along observed ways; this includes the arrangement of activities on ground floors of buildings as it divines the streets

pedestrian movement is influenced by the building configuration and location of attractions



plan rendering (by SRLC)

intervention (current)
photos taken by author



pedestrian axes

LAYERS OF DEFENCE INTERFACE BETWEEN INTERIOR AND EXTERIOR SPACES

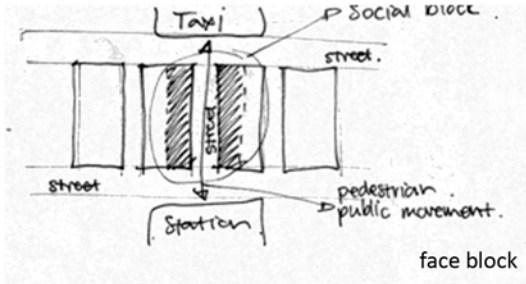
The term for a public street surveillance by dense social housing is a *face block*, which means exactly that - a row of houses with the street facades as the border between public and private space (European model). In South Africa, we arrange a sequence of lesser spaces (transitional space) before you reach the private space, giving the private space a more significant feeling. This transition space acts as the interface between public and private space. This is the principle of layered spaces where "the outer rings of subsidiary zones protect the core ones" (Frederick 2007:10).

"Change of use causes a massive change in the rituals of occupation. Buildings change as the city changes"
(Scott 2008:17)

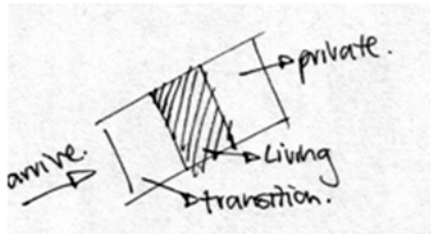
There are social activities which connect city environments; "these activities include day-to-day interaction between city inhabitants, but also interaction between inhabitant and environment. On a human scale this feedback from user to building and vice versa can be seen in the adaptation in order to fulfil a certain need" (Brits 2007:12) and create favourable conditions for harmonious living.

Favourable conditions does not entail the design of "interesting" buildings by using dramatic architectural effects, it rather requires simple principles to create an interface between the exterior and interior spaces. The exterior can invite, or in some cases prohibit, the user to enter and experience the internal space (figure 2b). The facade of a building must 'interact' with city dwellers to encourage them to experience buildings. This experience creates an ease of mind and creates opportunity for simulation of various activities.

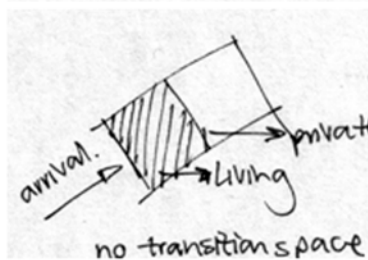
The interface between interior and exterior space (in the physical realm) is the subject of this dissertation. Because of the integral part the exterior social activities play in the interplay of such physical realms, a further discussion on outdoor space will follow.



residential building layout from public to private space:



South African model



European model

layers has the sole intention of protecting the core, thus limiting access whether it is from human contact or preventing the natural elements to penetrate

Figure 2k: Residential building layout - layers of defence

SCALES WITHIN THE CITY: MOVING FROM PUBLIC TO PRIVATE SPACE

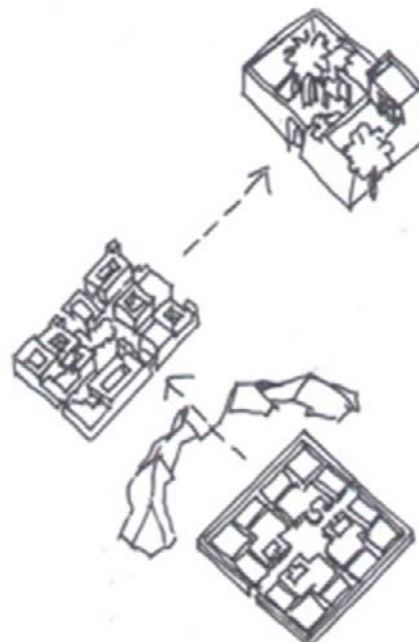


Figure 2l: Hierarchy of scale from city to individual dwelling (Kriken 1987)

A city is built up of a series of spaces positioned in hierarchical order from large public spaces, with a gradual decrease in scale to a single private room (Figure 2l, Kriken 1987).

Public spaces in the CBD - especially economically driven areas - have little or no transition from exterior to interior or public to very private territory (figure 2m). Compared to residential buildings (figure 2k) where there is a gradual

transition from the public street (arrival) to the approach and transition over the front yard to the dwelling entrance, entering the living room (semi-private) through to the bedrooms (private).

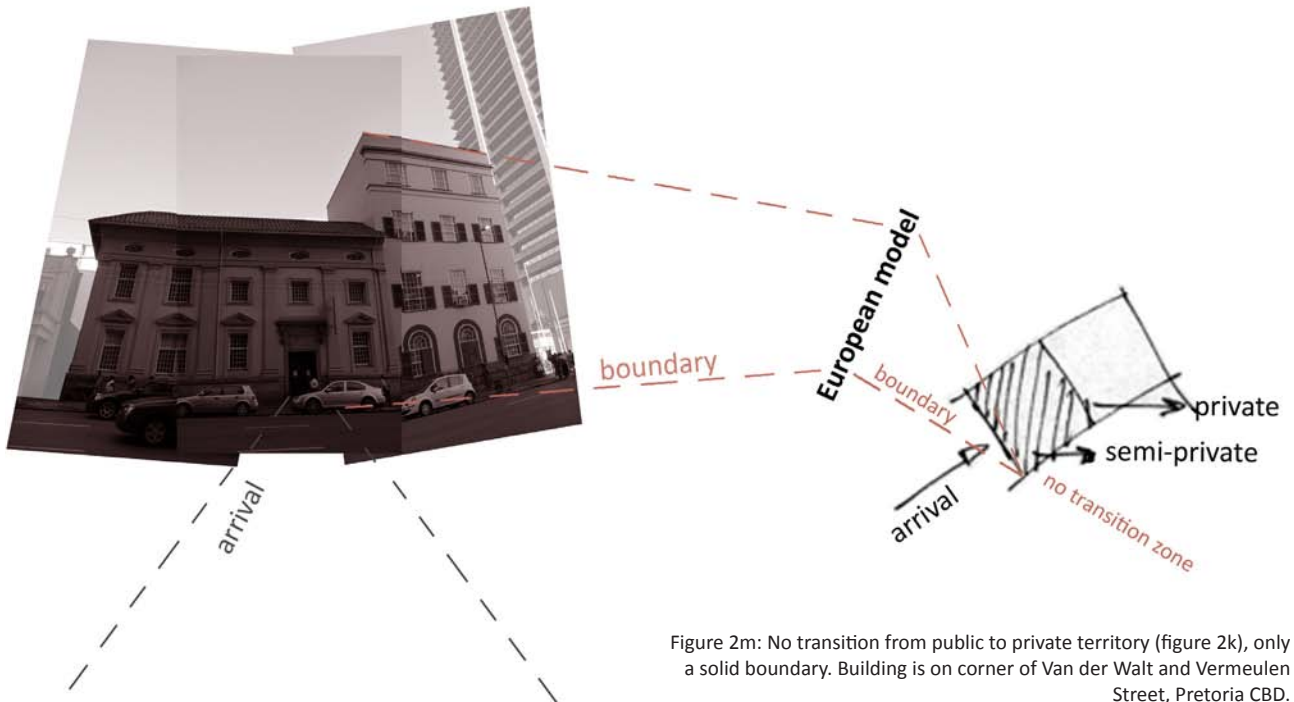


Figure 2m: No transition from public to private territory (figure 2k), only a solid boundary. Building is on corner of Van der Walt and Vermeulen Street, Pretoria CBD.

In the CBD of Pretoria, the hierarchical order of these spaces is not as gradual. It may leap directly from public to very-private, demarcated with a definite boundary – generally the building’s facade. Demarcation of the private space is necessary, but visual connection to the public space is important for security, access and social purposes. The boundary between public and private space may also be as a result of the programme of a specific building.

Boundaries limit access to buildings, whereas gradual transitions invite access. The successful transition between these spaces must have a well thought through social and physical structure with clearly defined yet accessible transitional zones.

CONCLUSION

The success of each city is ultimately identified in how it adapts to the changing rhythms of life, in how it connects or reconnects and inspires the man on the street. Through implementation of responsive designs, cities can transform to become a ‘location’ (destination).

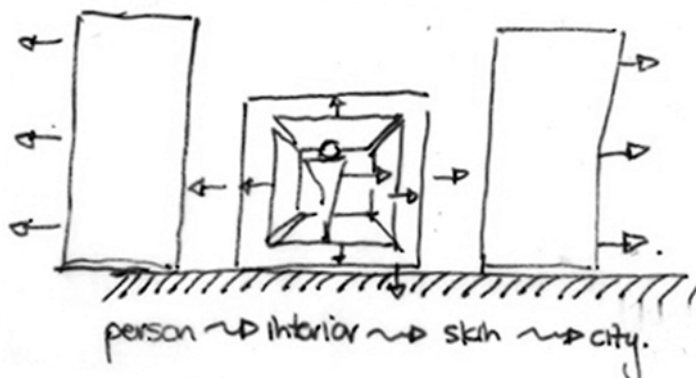


Figure 2n: The interior space influence the quality of the city.

The city of Pretoria is designed from the outside in (figure 2l), an approach that seems to give rise to the formation of boundaries instead of transition zones (interface) that encourage access and thus social interaction - INTERFACE proposes to move in the opposite direction (figure 2n), indicating that a city can and should be designed from the inside out. Such an approach will produce a more humanitarian city with comfortable internal spaces spilling out into the streets, connecting the social urban activities - to create a social unity within the city. This in turn will aid in transforming Pretoria into a living city.