





chapter 03 introduction to framework and site





framework



SchizoCity is an experiment that questions accepted practices of urbanism. These practices often fail to address complexities of existing context and fabric. Within this framework, process replaces product, mindset replaces solution. It focuses on a generative ideology that exposes the latent multiplicity of the current urban situation.

The SchizoCity framework was done as a group project and set out to mainly investigate the pedestrian friendly nature of the Pretoria CBD and immediate areas.

In developing the discourse surrounding the urban framework proposal it was necessary to research existing concepts and theories regarding the development of urban space. The relationship between programme and existing block typologies that occur in many contemporary cities was the main theme of discussion.

The grid has been the de facto generator of urban form since antiquity. A method employed by civilization to logically define its presence on the earth. This framework accepts the condition, but questions the nature of urban design itself. It opposes the nominally efficient process of planning and zoning. The framework proposes a large-scale architectural mindset that is spatially and programmatically driven. This allows for specific interpretations of context and program, without being restricted by an inhibitive framework.

Hausmann's process of strategic rupture, whereby the block both physically and experientially, creates opportunities for previously interiorised spaces of the block is opened to become the theatre of collective annexation. It unlocks the possibility of individual modes of expression. Previously inaccessible space supports an urban tissue of greater depth and experience. This tissue forms a framework for human



Figure 31 - original figure ground.



Figure 32 - figure ground interpreted according to schizo city principles.



Figure 33 - example of Schizo City framework.

experience that could successfully support its inhabitants and their complex needs. Jan Gehl, a Danish architect, subscribes to the aphorism that life takes place on foot. Mechanisation with the advent of automobiles, computers and the internet has a direct influence on, the possibilities and opportunities for chance encounters. Interaction, that were for so long an everyday occurrence, have diminished (Barnett, 2003:17) – people have stopped engaging with their environment on a variety of levels.

This situation Gehl believes can be remedied through the design of a physical environment that promotes 'optional activities' such as lingering in the shade of a tree, watching a water fountain, pausing for a cup of coffee etc (Barnett, 2003:17). These aspects in turn promote an environment of sociability and community that is crucial to the convivial nature of a successful urban space.



Figure 34 - images indicating concept 'cutting' through city blocks.



Figure 35 - images indicating concept of 'alien' programme.

Parallel to the spatial investigation of the city, a programmatic exploration is necessary to achieve the goals of the proposed framework. It is suggested that programmes that exist on the fringes of the city, or that might be considered alien to the urban environment be introduced into space provided by the alternative block typologies. These programmes are deliberately chosen as not to compete with the existing programmes of the city but to be complimentary and catalytic processes. With reference to SchizoCity the proposed project intends to add another layer of 'exploration' within the city.



Figure 36 - figure indicating proposed area of investigation and the location of existing 'classical' theatres'.

introduction to site

The proposed site is located in the area surrounding the Unisa Little Theatre. Situated on the corner of Skinner, van der Walt and Visagie Streets. The site extends South towards Burgers Park. In Tshwane there are a three major theatres, the State Theatre, the Breytenbach Theatre and the Unisa Little Theatre. These theatres are 'classical-theatres'. Main pedestrian

movement occurs in a north-south direction, between the train stations and the CBD. The Unisa Little Theatre is located along this route and is placed on one of the three main crossings over Skinner Street. The proposed site, in accordance with SchizoCity, will emphasize the existing routes and provide additional routes.

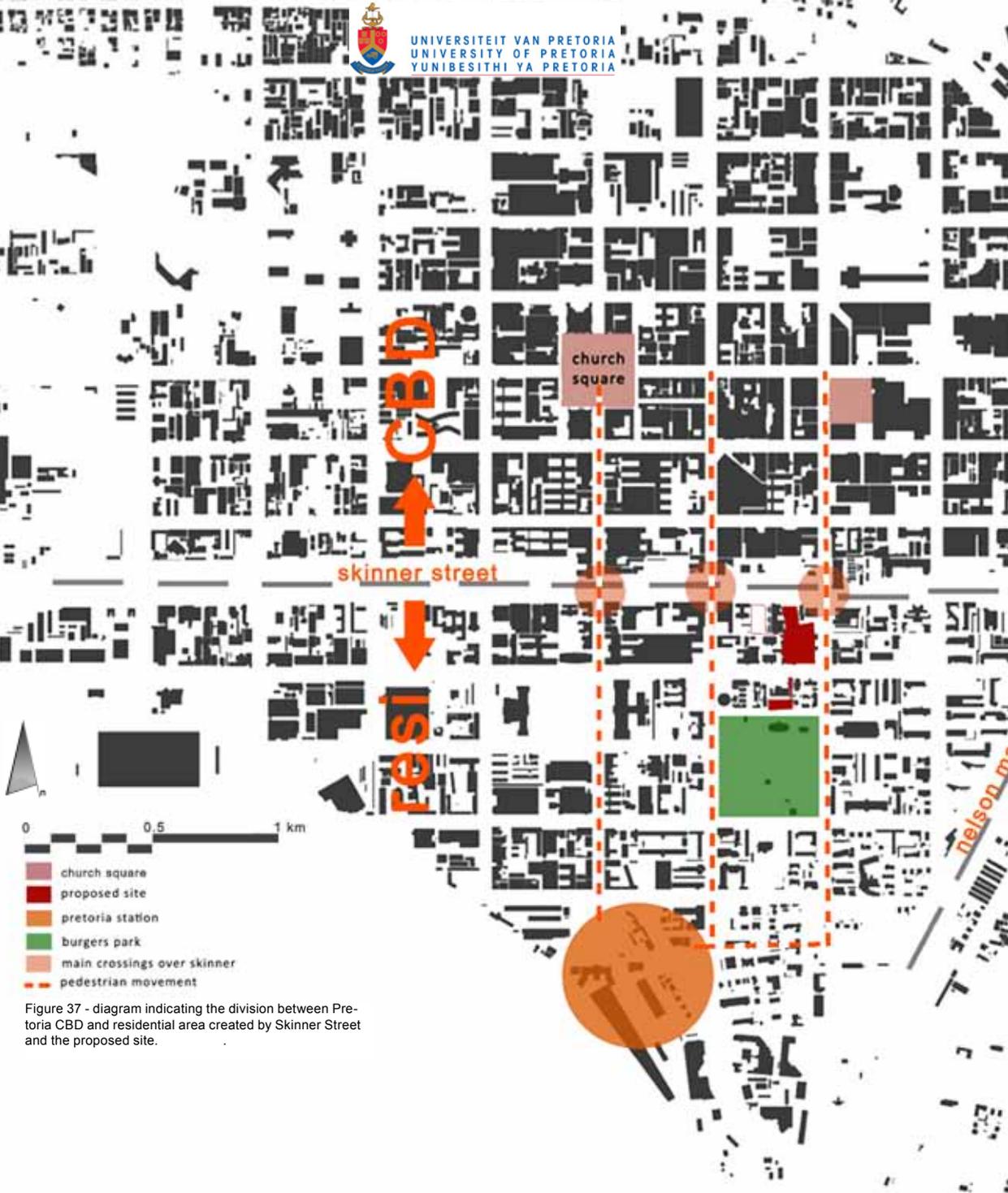


Figure 37 - diagram indicating the division between Pretoria CBD and residential area created by Skinner Street and the proposed site.

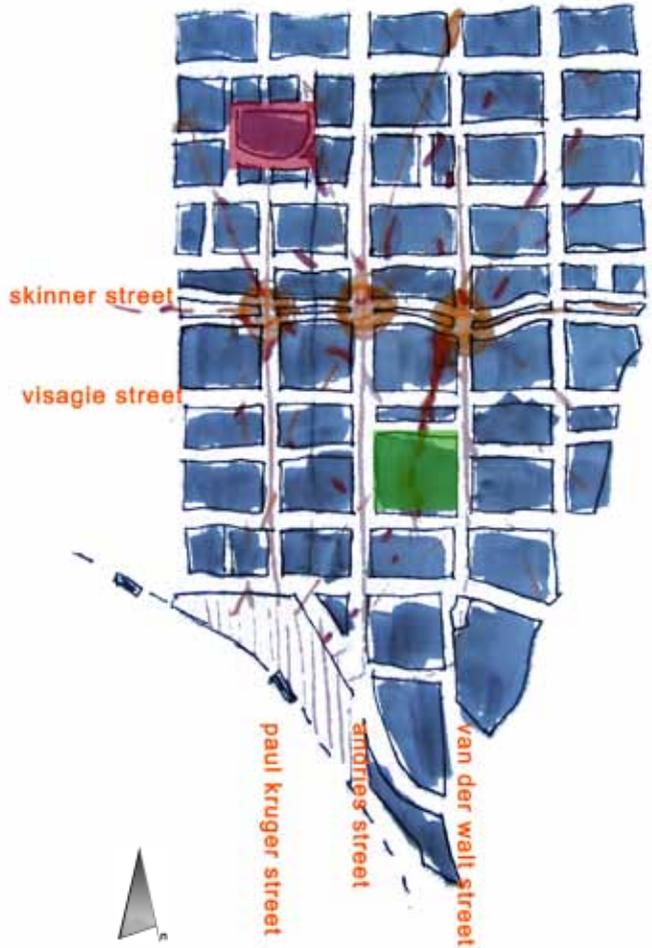


Figure 38 - diagram of north south pedestrian movement and three main pedestrian crossings over Skinner street.

This dissertation focuses on the area between Burgers Park and Skinner Street. It however proposes that the study area expands to encompass a stretch from the Pretoria Station North towards to the edge of the CBD defined by Skinner Street.



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Figure 46 - image of image of St. Peter's – Evangelic Lutheran Church

Figure 39 - existing north entrance to Unisa Little Theatre.

the proposed area of investigation (images by author)

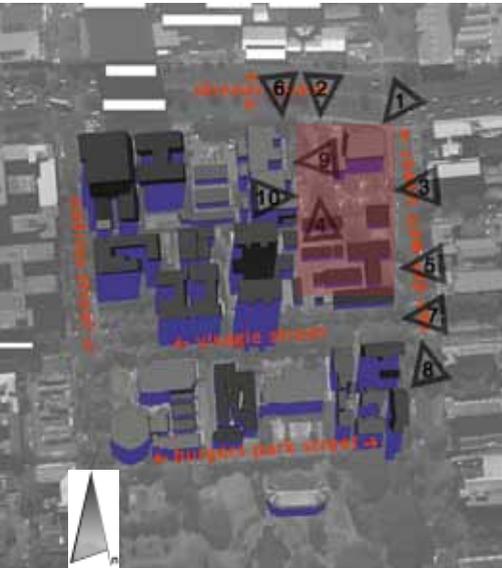


Figure 45 - aerial diagram indicating different views. numbers corresponds with images.



Figure 40 - Unisa Little Theatre.



Figure 41 - existing parking area.



Figure 42 - existing quart yard.



Figure 43 - existing spill out space.



Figure 44 - existing parking area.

4

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3

10



Figure 47 - existing dadel palm.



Figure 48 - existing temporary structures.



Figure 49 - existing temporary structures.



Figure 50 - existing entrance to Unisa Little theatre.



Figure 51 - west view along Visagie Street.



Figure 52 - north view along van der Walt Street.



Figure 53 - foyer space and entrance of Unisa Little theatre.



Figure 54 - Unisa Little theatre.

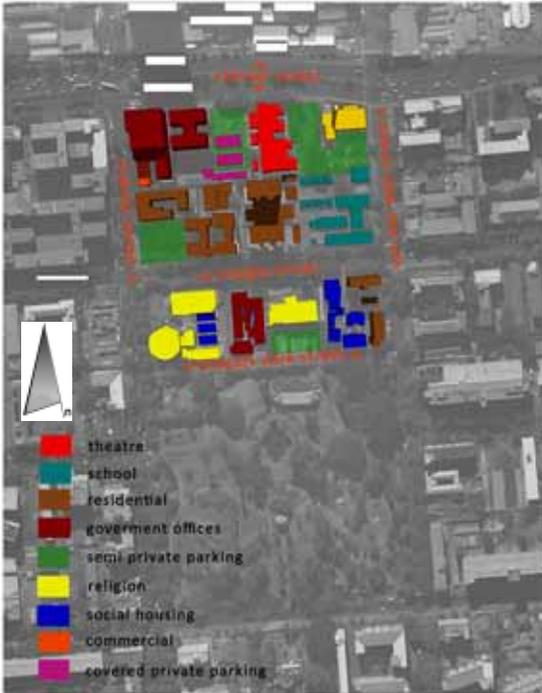


Figure 55 - zoning diagram.

The proposed site is surrounded by residential and commercial blocks, hotels, social housing, a theatre and a number of churches. There is a temporary school structure on the corner of van der Walt and Visagie Streets. It is proposed that these temporary structures be removed and the occupants of the school be relocated to more appropriate permanent facilities in the surrounding area.

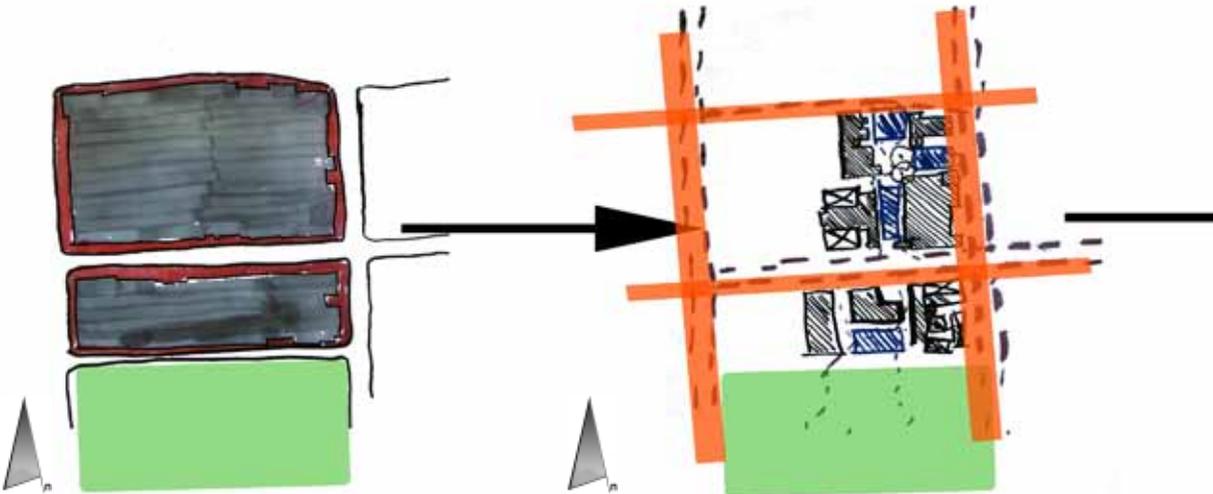


Figure 57 - diagram of existing Noli map.

Figure 56 - diagram of existing allowable pedestrian movement.

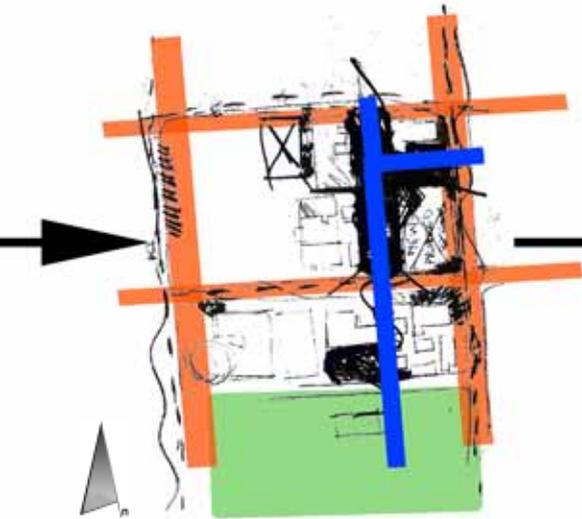


Figure 59 - diagram of proposed pedestrian movement.



Figure 58 - diagrams of proposed Noli map and 'opening' up of the city blocks.



Figure 60 - diagram of proposed site.

CBD

skinner street

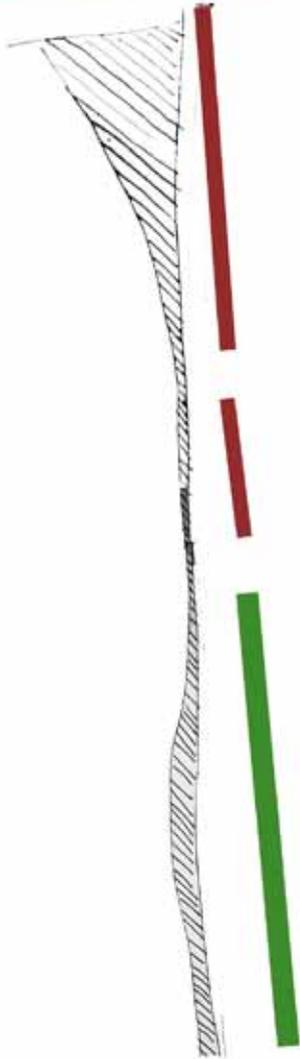


Figure 61 - sectional diagram of proposed build up before the 'break' of Skinner Street.

proposed site and interpretation of framework

The proposed site is located within the vicinity of Burgers Park. The site starts at the Pretoria station and creates a 'pause' space before entering the 'rush' of the CBD complimenting Burgers Park. The site becomes a transition between the CBD and Burgers Park. It offers a second possibility of movement for the city dweller. A more intimate and novel layer that does not compete with the daily movement patterns, which mostly happen on street edges.

The program includes the following:

- A number of performance areas, ranging from open air theatres to a closed 'Black Box' theatre.
- A Contemporary Dance Company establishment.
- An eatery, consisting of a lounge bar, a formal seating and outside foyer areas complimenting the major 'Black Box' theatre.
- Recreational landscaped areas with both hard and soft surfaces.

The surrounding residential structures are supplemented by the possibility of a night life. The presence of more dwellers will reintroduce 'eyes' on the street. Basement parking is provided for both users of the site and visitors to the city.