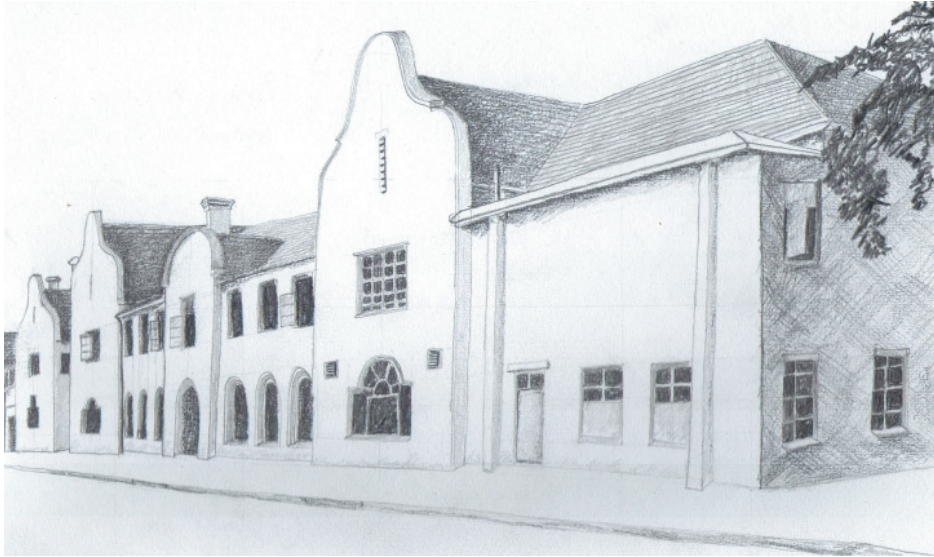


MICRO CONTEXT



### HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The Berea Club was developed in 1897 and sold to the South African Transport Services in 1903. The Southern clubhouse (pictured above) was built in 1907, designed by S.A.R & H. In 1913 the club had 1 200 members. The northern club hall was built in 1926 as a loose standing building, the same year in which the Berea Rugby Club was started. Berea Park was the only sports facility in the young Pretoria and provided a library, music room and bar to its members (Jansen 2001: 5). The first South African automobile was exhibited at Berea Park in 1897 (ARUDF 1999: 16). This landmark site and buildings

are of great cultural and historic value.

The construction of the Van der Walt Slipway leading off Nelson Mandela Blvd (R21) resulted in the Berea Sport Ground being cut in two: the tennis courts (south) severed from the main sport grounds.

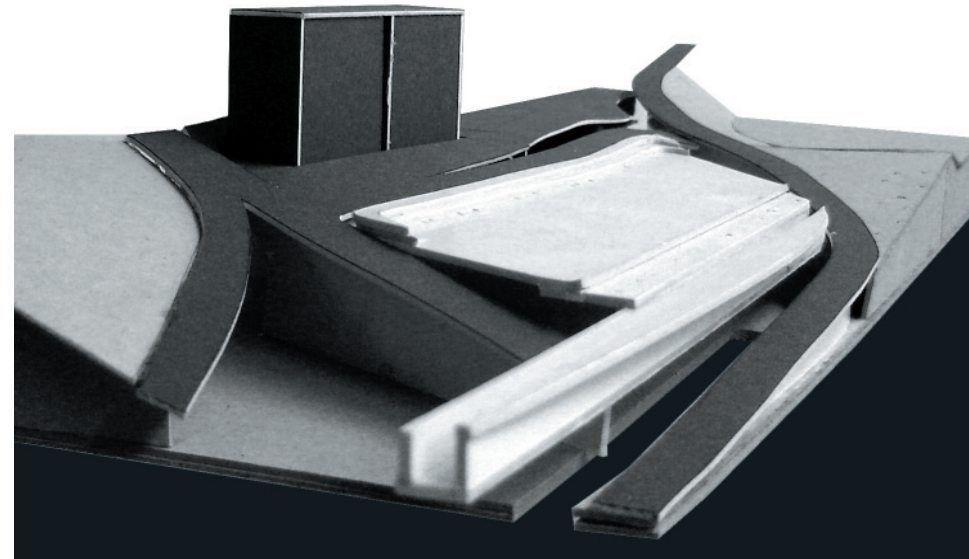
The tennis courts have fallen into disrepair and are currently overgrown, tree roots cracking and lifting the surface. Only ruins remain where the tennis clubhouse stood, and the site has become a rubbish dump.



FIG. 4.2 Drawing of Berea Clubhouse (2006).

FIG. 4.3 Aerial photograph of Berea Sport Grounds and the site (1934).

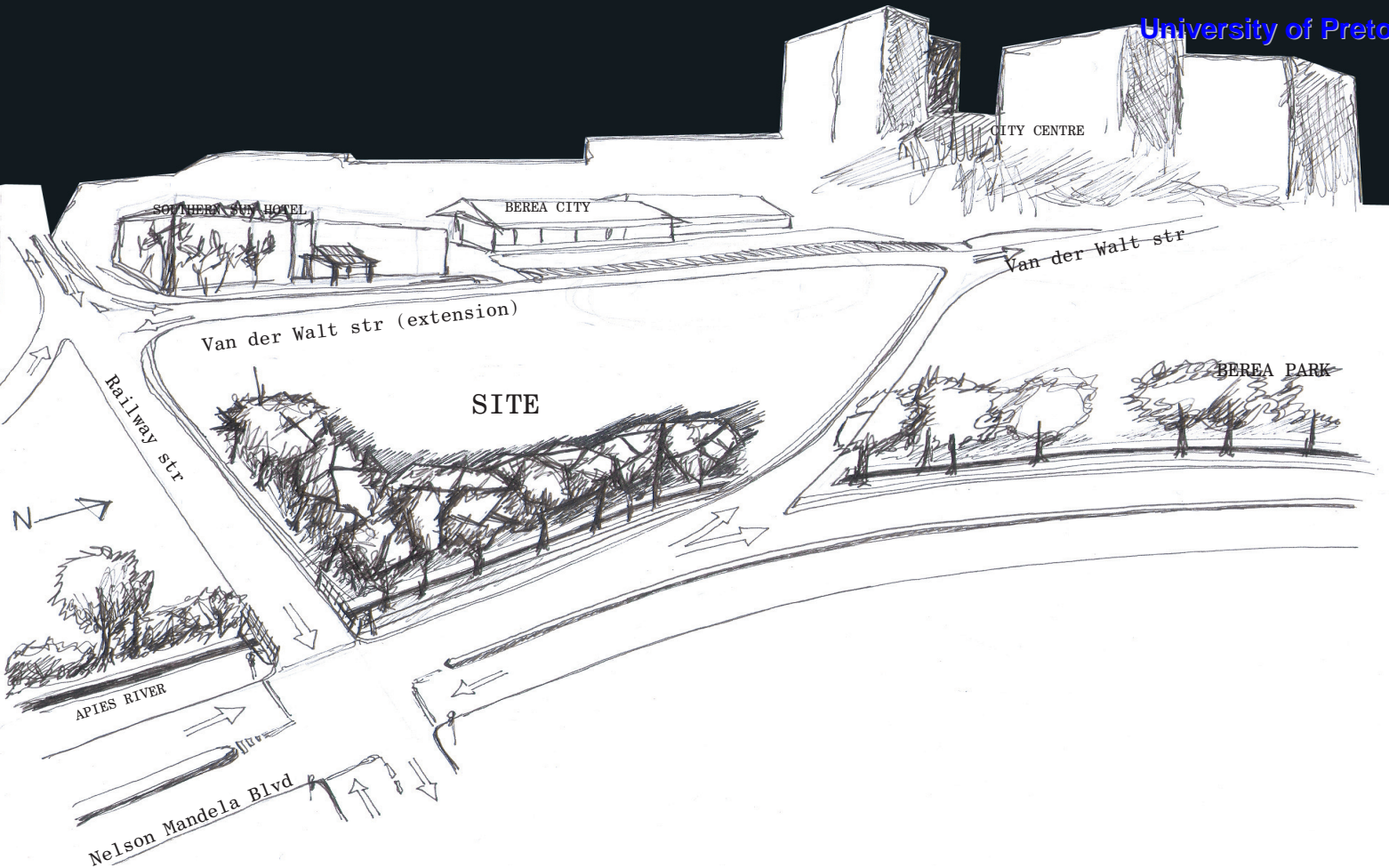
FIG. 4.4 (opposite) Photograph of the site exploration model (2006).



In architecture, context is much more than the building's immediate physical surroundings. Context is a representation of the self-image of the city, the aspirations of its politicians and the visions of architects. Context is the dirt and grime that soils polished metal and glass of a newly constructed building. It is the sound of a door slamming, a gunshot late at night and a dog barking 10, 20 years in the future.

A new building is brutal; it is shocking. It pokes a hole in city life. It forces people to change their habits, take new routes, look elsewhere to see the sky. It forces their bodies in contact with new materials - they must walk on new stones, hear their voices thrown back from new surfaces and meet their own eyes in new mirrors. And it forces them into contact with each other - across new counters, walking new corridors, facing strangers at new tables. This new hole in reality, before it starts to heal over, covered by the scar tissue of new habits, dust and dirt, briefly lets in light and fresh air through the heavy blanket of normality. Before it is conquered by familiarity, it represents new dreams, new possibilities; it prises open and challenges preconceptions (Almaas 1997: 68).





## ACCESSIBILITY

### VEHICULAR ACCESSIBILITY

Vehicular access to the site is a major constraint, due to the fact that three one-directional fast feeding roads flank it. Nelson Mandela Boulevard and the Apies River, as well as the Van der Walt slipway, form an impenetrable barrier on the eastern and north eastern edges of the site respectively. These two roads feed the inner city with vehicular traffic from the eastern suburbs, Centurion and Johannesburg International Airport via the Fountains circle.

Railway Street, a one-directional fast feeder, runs along the southern edge of the site, crossing the Apies River. Railway Street directly connects the site with Pretoria Station, which is 0.8km or seven minutes' walking distant. The site is accessible from the bi-directional extension of Van der Walt Street, which forms the western edge of the site, which currently serves the Southern Sun Hotel and Berea city. Access to the proposed development can only be attained from this road and the western edge of the site. This extension of Van der Walt Street is currently a quiet road and has the potential to become a bustling pedestrian walkway in light of the proposed development.

### PEDESTRIAN ACCESSIBILITY

The Nelson Mandela development corridor (MDC) framework proposes a pedestrian-friendly walkway all along the Apies River in order to utilise this open space system of Pretoria CBD. Heavy pedestrian movement occurs along Van der Walt Street, especially during the afternoon when students of Founders High Primary School (Berea Clubhouse) depart towards Pretoria Station. Pedestrians moving south avoid the site, due to its poor response to the Apies River, and move along the Van der Walt slipway across Nelson Mandela Boulevard. A steady flow of pedestrian movement to and from Pretoria station and the residential area of Muckleneuk

moves along Railway Street. The Pedestrian walkway along Nelson Mandela Boulevard, south of Scheiding Street, is rarely used and has become unsafe due to muggings.

In order to realise the future vision for the Nelson Mandela corridor, it is of paramount importance that the site responds to the Apies River in a pedestrian-friendly way. Pedestrian access to the site will be realised from the east along the Apies River, in accordance with the MDC guidelines, as well as from Berea City northwest of the site. It is furthermore important that the site regains its historically green recreational open space character.

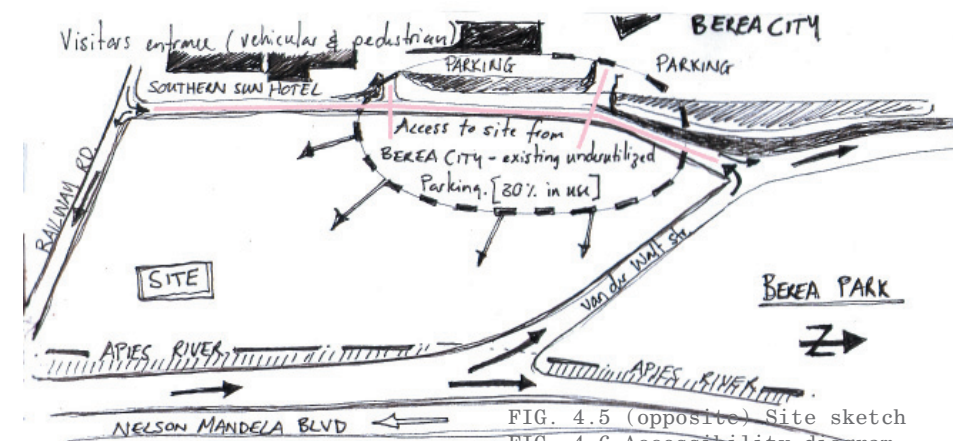


FIG. 4.5 (opposite) Site sketch  
FIG. 4.6 Accessibility diagram.

## BIO-PHYSICAL CONTEXT

### APIES RIVER

The Apies River finds its origin in the Fountains Valley, fed by two springs delivering up to 30 million litres of water per day (ARUDF 1999: 16). It is the most prominent natural feature in the city of Pretoria.

The river edge can be described as uninviting, mismanaged and neglected. It is canalised in a concrete lined culvert without a natural riverbed and has a 50-year flood line of 12m.

It flows along Nelson Mandela Blvd in a northern direction and is the binding element that runs through the entire length of the Mandela Development Corridor (MDC) urban development framework of 2005.

The Apies River culvert design principles as prepared by Urban Solutions architects and urban designers (MDC 2005: 16).

### URBAN FORM/ACTIVE EDGES

*Buildings along the river should provide a strong sense of enclosure for the river. Direct contact should exist between the built up area and the river edges. Active frontages onto the river edge to be promoted*

### LAND USES

*Intense and diverse development types on the embankment should be promoted. Groundfloor uses should be activity generators through a mix of land uses including entertainment, retail, offices and residential activities across a 24 hour period will be ensured.*

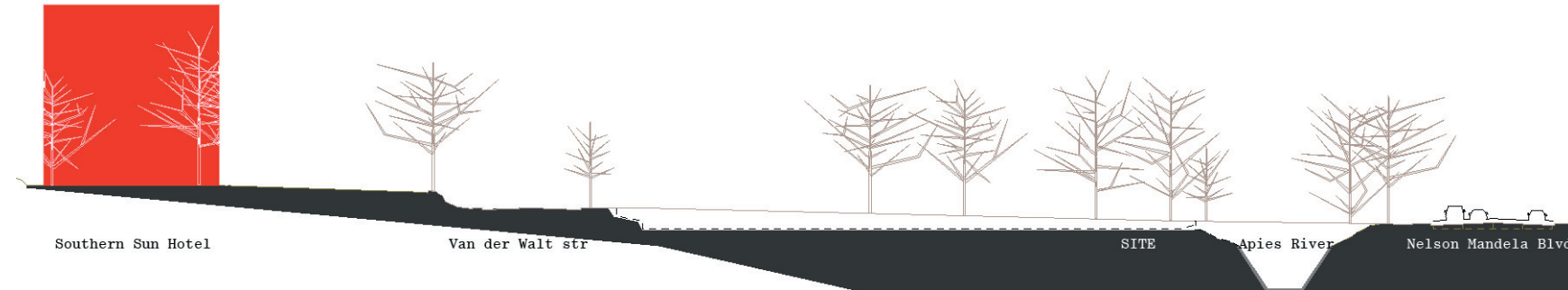
### MOVEMENT AND TRANSPORT

*Wide paved or decked areas (at least 7 meter wide usable area) should be provided all along the river to accommodate pedestrian and cycle movement.*

### SECURITY

*The river edge to be well lit and overseen by a security camera system to ensure maximum use as movement route over a 24 hour period.*

Through the integration and celebration of the Apies river, the quality of the urban fabric will be dramatically enhanced.



### SOIL

Hekpoort Andesite and Shaly Timeball hill formation underlie the site. In reaction to this, ordinary footings or slightly deeper strip foundations can be used. Subsurface pipes and drains have to be installed in order to prevent subsurface drainage, and drainage should divert rainwater away from foundations (Purnell 1984: 36).

### HYDROLOGY

The water table in andesites is six meters deep and strong inflows of water must be anticipated with deep excavation work (Purnell 1984:10). The topology has, as result, a natural flow of water to the north.

### METEOROLOGICAL ASPECTS

**MACROCLIMATE:** half dry and very warm intermediary savannah biome with 125 – 375mm summer rainfall and 62 – 250mm winter rainfall.  
**TEMPERATURE:** January: 20 to 38 degrees Celsius and July: 10 to 27 degrees Celsius. The average monthly diurnal variation is 13 degrees Celsius with a frost period of 120 days between May and September (Gouws et al 1989: 29)

The average relative humidity is 59%.

60 to 80% hour's sunshine p/year.  
**PREVAILING WINDS:** northeast, southeast in the summer and southwest, northeast in winter. (Gouws et al 1989: 69)

Summers are hot, with fairly dry air characterised by thunderstorms generated by thermal air movements. hail is not uncommon. Winter days are pleasantly sunny with clear cold to very cold nights. (Napier 2000: 9.8)

**MICROCLIMATE:** The site is tree rich and surrounded by roads, which results in extensive evaporation and transpiration. Due to the fact that the site is situated next to the Apies River there is less variation in daily temperatures and the site is cooler during daytime hours than the surrounding urban landscape.

**VEGETATION:** Riverbank - *Celtis Africana*, *Kiggelaria Africana*, *Halleria Lucida*, *Leocosidea sericea*, *Buddleja salvifolia*, *Cassinopsis ilicifolia*

FIG. 4.7 (top) East-west section through the site



FIG. 4.8 *Celtis Africana* (White Stinkwood)



Fig. 4.9 *Kiggelaria Africana* (Wild Peach)



Fig. 4.10 *Halleria Lucida* (Tree Fuchsia)



Fig. 4.11 *Acacia caffra* (Hook Thorn)