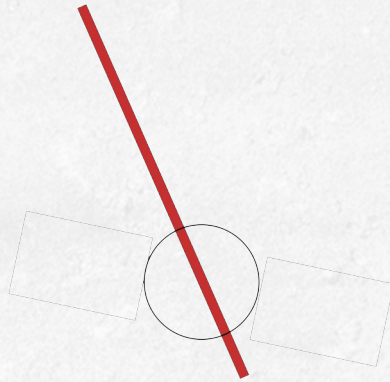


# PART TWO

## CONFRONTATION



## THEORETICAL DISCOURSE

The politician (character introduction)  
The culture of narcissism  
The 'modern' narcissus  
Acropolis of Pretoria  
City as collective memory  
Self and other [observer and observed]  
Third space  
Concept: disruption of power  
Charters  
Terminology

The process of exploring the third space, third face of power.

This chapter examines guiding theory into defining the third space and its dimensions. The chapter first analyses the theory in terms of postcolonial, post-apartheid South African spaces, cultural identities and concepts of relationship between Self and Other and ends with a spatial theory in understanding how third space is adapted and used as a form giving device. The architecture looks at the possibility of how people can strengthen themselves through otherness.

## The politician

‘ZM: You became South Africa’s Executive Deputy President after the 1994 elections. What was your first impression of the Union Buildings when you stepped foot in your office?

TM: My personal office, excluding the staff offices, was merely two or so rooms, with some furniture, a functioning telephone, and nothing else.

This told the message, practically, that we had to build something new, starting from what you might call a new slate.

From inside, the building was not as imposing and therefore as intimidating as a centre of power as it had looked from the outside when we used to sing, during the liberation struggle – siyay’ ePitoli! Nothing suggested that it should not be easily accessible to the people who had elected the new President and Deputy Presidents who occupied the East Wing of the Union Buildings.

I would like to believe that from the very beginning of our democracy we did nothing to sustain the belief that the Union Buildings were holy territory in terms of access by all our people (Msimango, 2013).

[Excerpt from the chapter below]



Figure 3.1: .: Narcissus (Caravaggio, 1600)

### The culture of narcissism

In Greek mythology, Narcissus was a proud hunter who fell in love with his own reflection. His beauty overwhelmed him. He was the son of the river god, Cephissus and the nymph Liriope. Nemesis, the spirit of those who show arrogance to gods (god of revenge), noticed his behavioral act and lure Narcissus to a pool of water, in which he lay fixated to the image of his beauty, which led to his tragic downfall of suicides. The problem we face today sees the up rise of the culture of narcissus and self-indulgence, in which government institutions choose such traits over empathy and social conscience; an internalised view of the image of the ideology they believe in, and the commodification of such an image into the lives of the citizens rather than focusing on the image of the city, in which this ideology has to be portrayed.



## CONFRONTATION

Pretoria, like many capital cities in Africa are controlled by government and the design of the city. The compositions of such states or cities are overridden by other eras of governance over time. While nation building relies on what has been branded in South Africa as the ‘rainbow nation’, it still relies much on how governance writes the language. In *Nation and Narration*, Bhabha (1990:2) speaks of the cultural representation in modern society, ‘If the ambivalent figure of the nation is a problem of its transitional history, its conceptual indeterminacy, its wavering between vocabularies, then what effect does this have on narratives and discourses that signify a sense of ‘nationness’’. Bhabha further goes on to explain the outlook of narcissism as opposite to nationalism, and that nationalism needs to be something that is understood, by acting against self-consciously held political ideologies but more centred with the large cultural system. In essence Bhabha focuses his attention on a detraction from political systems embracing own image but to emphasise the importance on the image of the people.

What makes South Africa a nation, According to Renan (1990:12) is much concerned with dynasty, i.e. an ideology representing an earlier conquest, one which was accepted but is now forgotten by the masses of people. In South Africa, it can be argued that some monuments are constructed purely for instilling a sense of authority amongst the ‘nation’, employing what may seem as commemorative, but often lead to the self-gratification or even accomplished to win support for a particular set of policies. Logan (2009: 2) mentions that in most instances, state authorities retell their own histories for their interest and maintaining an authoritative lead. He refers to this as the ‘wilful distortion of collective memory by governments’. Nation is thus a rich legacy of memories and a heroic past based on social capital. It is concerned with sharing the past, a glorious heritage and acquiring a shared programme or vision for the future. Over the past 20 years of democracy, South Africa has battled with the commemoration of shared heritage. The structures erected have commemorated struggles of apartheid, and leaders of apartheid and those that have come before that. Some ideologies have been contested, as seen with current debates of statues of representation, which have questioned the relevance of such histories for the future generations. The removal of statues may seem justified to the democratic world, but Benton (2010: 126) argues that a repression of the past can lead to the destruction of memory and sense of identity. These contestations have led to spiraling debates, and have set South Africa in regress by creating harsher divisions among racial groups. What was once branded as

a new South Africa is diminishing into a state of separateness and divisions among such groups.

The focus of my analysis lies in the Union Buildings. The dissertation is a challenge to the heritage building which is representative of the nations, as a key site for the production of collective memory. The dissertation considers the use of heritage to create forms of memory that shape people's identity and their environment and creating social cohesion between diverse societies, as well as softening thresholds between the powers that rule the nation and the ordinary people that live in it. Herbert Baker's design remains an incomplete architecture as stated by Bakker (2001) .

Bakker further argues to say that the intended overarching design of Herbert Baker's ideas and intentions need be captured for future extensions and alteration within a changing cultural context, as means to play a role in the conservation of the heritage. He quotes,

*'...that Baker's design, which was intended to be a collection of spaces and structures with the Union Buildings as its focus, is still an incomplete architectural work – this means that the intended overarching design 'idea', knowledge of which has faded from society's consciousness over the hundred odd years, had to be recaptured from his dispersed writings to guide in any future extensions and additions, within a continuously evolving cultural context, and that the idea has to be conserved to be able to play a role in managing the conservation of a special heritage place'.*

*'...that the surrounding urban fabric and its relationships are not expressions of a static 'blueprint' but are, like the complex, 'incomplete' and continuously changing around the complex over time – this demands that the intended relationship of the complex and its urban setting has to be conserved within a continuously reconstituted or co-constructed 'idea' of that relationship'.*

How can a successful balanced colonial architectural masterpiece be altered to a new cultural context, and what extent can the intervention go, before the heritage is misplaced and destroyed? Should one act sensitively in intervening or be brutal in design to overstate the importance of nationness and post-democracy? The underlying reason of conflict as a nation emanates from conflict of ethnic nationalism and separatism (Benton, 2010:167). According to Rodney Harrison, culture is closely linked to globalisation; culture is ever changing, and is best referred to as 'identities consciously in the making'. The concept of multiculturalism then can be imagined as the relationship with its citizens.

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How do we create something national or reinstate what was once was branded as national? How can we adapt both tangible and intangible heritage to new conditions?

### The Modern Narcissus

At the beginning of this chapter, it was explained the role of Narcissus on governmental institutions. The section below explains the modern interpretation of the analogy. Whereas the initiation of Narcissus explained an image, the modern Narcissus sees a reinterpretation of this idea manifested physically in protecting the image.

The rise of modernity led to the plight of inward looking; towards privatisation and towards fortification of walls. The same fortification is present, however discreet and not so obtrusive, in suburbia. The fear of self (building) facing the Other (street) leaves the streets under no surveillance. The Union Buildings also possesses fortification. I suppose its reasoning is justified due to its location of acting as a fort and due to its stately features and bold statement. Bakker (2003) outlines the high placed buildings as plinth, giving strong visual connections from vantage points. The access to Union Buildings has not always been limited to the main road in line with the gardens, but over the years and through change of governance and issues of security, did they see befitting to limit public access. Sightseeing and access was allowed on the grounds of the amphitheatre, as well as access to courtyards and corridors in the building. In 1966 under the Afrikaner nationalists, access was stopped (Department of Public Works, 2007: 14). There also existed a restaurant/ café in which people would pre-book and have lunch overlooking the city of Pretoria, and gaining a spatial understanding of how Union Buildings' axial point radiates into the roads pointing southwards (Mkhize, 2015). It is however unfortunate that there is no imagery to supplement this. Thus over the years the fear of state owned material to be known or any intruder grew until these were closed off. One can almost understand this barricade through the fenced off staircases that lead to the second tier road [see figures 3.2].

If the building itself cannot be accessed, as well as the theatre space at the centre, and the upper road at the very least, what will be the next cut off point for access to public. To what extent will governance continually retreat the access to public?

*Figure 3.2: Western side view of Union Buildings. The fortified wall further strengthened by a much later addition of the steel fences prohibiting people from entering the second tier road (Author, 2015)*



In an interview by Sunday Times with Thabo Mbeki, it is interesting to note his impression of the Union Buildings as experienced from the inside (Msimango, 2013)

*‘ZM: You became South Africa’s Executive Deputy President after the 1994 elections. What was your first impression of the Union Buildings when you stepped foot in your office?’*

*TM: My personal office, excluding the staff offices, was merely two or so rooms, with some furniture, a functioning telephone, and nothing else.*

*This told the message, practically, that we had to build something new, starting from what you might call a new slate.*

*From inside, the building was not as imposing and therefore as intimidating as a centre of power as it had looked from the outside when we used to sing, during the liberation struggle – siyay’ ePitoli! Nothing suggested that it should not be easily accessible to the people who had elected the new President and Deputy Presidents who occupied the East Wing of the Union Buildings.*

*I would like to believe that from the very beginning of our democracy we did nothing to sustain the belief that the Union Buildings were holy territory in terms of access by all our people.*



The design of the Union Buildings, and perhaps Sir Herbert Baker's intentions, gives two polarities of the observer and the observed. The observer as he stands from the bottom grounds looking up gets a sense of power and authority cast over him, while the observed sits in admiration of the power handed over to him. When looked at it in reverse, the interior poses a less imposing and less intimidating force over its people, while the observed still remains at a lower level in the same state of inferiority. The topic of observer and observed is elaborated further in [Self and Other]. What this suggests is a need to alter the meaning imbued in place; that of disseminating power to bring the observer and observed to the same level.

## Political history of Union Buildings

The Union Buildings as we understand it was the unification of the British imperialists and the Afrikaner Republics after the end of the Second Anglo Boer war (1899-1902) (Freschi, 2014). The building was a metaphorical answer of calling truce to both groups by the concept of unity. The war was mainly caused by differing political ideologies of imperialism and republicanism, the tension between the leaders, Paul Kruger of the Transvaal and Cecil Rhodes, premier of the Cape Colony (South African War 1899-1902, n.d.).

Sir Herbert Baker was commissioned to design the Union Buildings, whilst heavily influenced by British imperialist ideals in the Cape, and under the mentorship of Cecil Rhodes (Freschi, 2014). He was offered an opportunity to travel enabling him to study the classical architecture, which would be later be an influence in the design of the Union Buildings. (Fisher. The final outcome was a neo-Classical design that introduced British colonial 'Empire' style (Bakker, 2013) or the Union Classical Style (Freschi, 2014). This classical monumentality drew from classical architecture and the use of material was quarried locally, as means to contextualise or make it 'African', instead the result is a strong imperialist style only masked in local material or regionalist material. Nonetheless the colonial architecture was a time-stamp that would live its sense of place in the landscape for 100 years to follow from its inception.

If the Union Buildings was representative of the union of two cultures, it did however exclude the black people or the natives of South Africa, within a changing cultural landscape and formation or uprising of Other cultural identi-

ties, the Union Buildings depict somewhat flawed in its representation and current imagery. No provision was made for black South Africans other than the open spaces as well as the courtyard. General Louis Botha said, at a colonial conference in London, ‘I have the fullest faith that I shall be able... to make those two great races of South Africa one solid, united and strong race’ (The Heritage Portal, 2013). The architect, Herbert Baker also writes, ‘natives of the Union [will] experience the majesty of government’ (Freschi, 2014).

## Acropolis of Pretoria

Sir Herbert Baker shunned the idea of placing the Union Buildings in line with Church Square and the grid of the street, but preferred the site to be on the hill to accentuate its nobility, like the ancient Acropolis of Athens (van der

Klashorst, 2013). Through the travels he did which were funded by Cecil Rhodes, he gained knowledge from classical architecture, and one place he visited was Greece.

The aim is for the re-interpretation of the Acropolis on Herbert Baker’s plan.

### City as collective memory

The historical events of the city reveal the collective identity being undermined due to the South African historical context. The juxtaposition of the different

eras and their representations of architecture form a tense relationship between what is considered old and what is considered new or contemporary architecture. The city of collective memory refers to the relationship of historical constructs and contemporary forms of architecture, which attempts to find suitable ways of weaving the two spatially. This idea of weaving lies in public spaces, the spaces that lie between the earlier forms of architecture and the

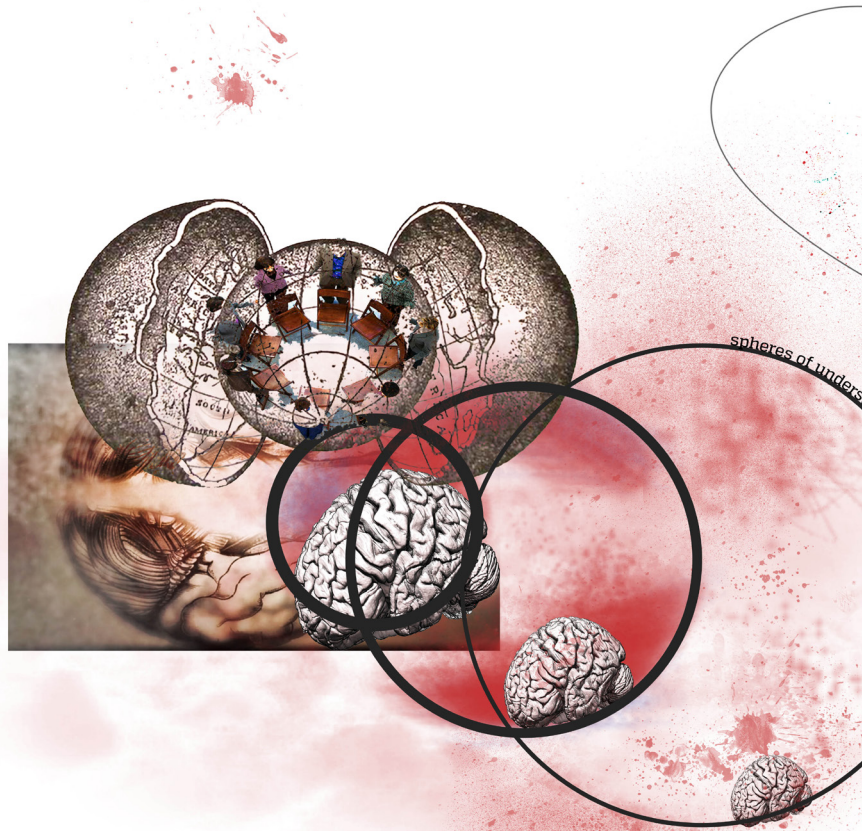


Figure 3.3: *Acropolis Athens* (UNESCO, 2015)

CONFRONTATION

newer spaces that form twentieth century architecture,; modern architecture. There lies a disconnection between the two entities in which such public spaces are transitory spaces of departure point and destination point, in which Waade et al (2010:38) term as communication geographies, or the ‘phenomenological gap among city dwellers’ (Waade, 2010:40). The notion of weaving allows for historical objects to collide with others, to achieve awareness of what once has been done. The collective memory can be seen as this very idea of different era collisions. In the same manner in which the Union Buildings can be redesigned for different imagery to occur to represent different political ideologies, as will be discussed in later sections.

Boyer (1994:7) describes the collective memory as the creation of meaningful public spaces, the spatial structure that covers for both rich and poor, private memory walks and personal retreats. The interpretation of public space has however changed over time, from public space embodying notions of the power of the king, queen or the nobility and their responsibility in the construction of the city, thus representing the city’s self-image. A later response to the definition of public space gives form to a democratic public space, giving allowance for open debate and gatherings. Nonetheless the meaning of public space within the Pretoria context is seen as a



THE CULTURAL  
BANDIT

*Figure 3.4: The cultural bandit. Explanation of relationship between Self and Other (Author, 2015)*

negative concept in which Boyer attaches connotations of unruly bureaucracy, corrupt officials, inefficient management, while the private spaces are territories of bliss and freedom behind high structured walls

## Self and Other [observer and observed]

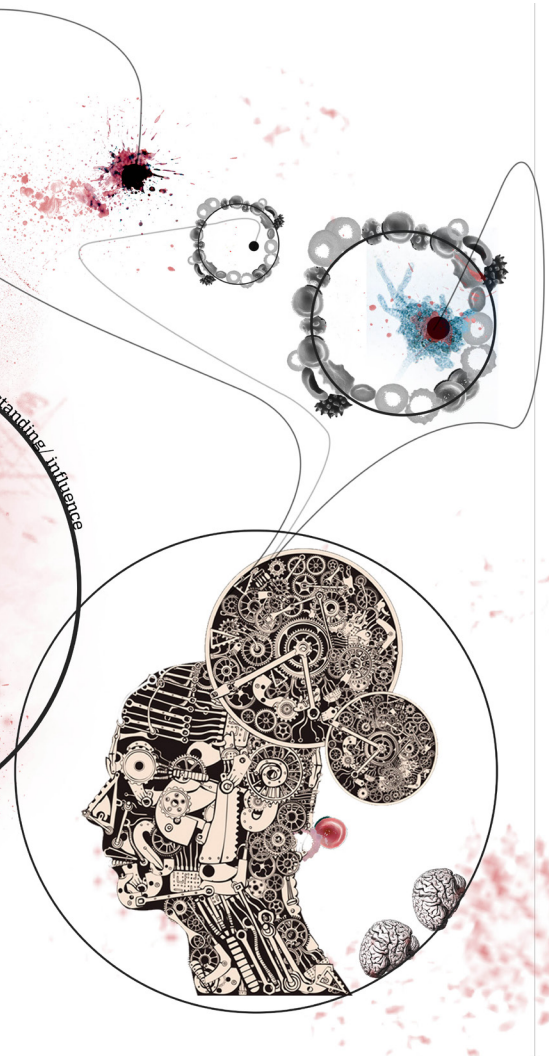
*‘When an individual enters the presence of others, they commonly seek to acquire information about him or to bring into play information about him already possessed. They will be interested in his general socio-economic status, his conception of self, his attitude toward them, his competence, his trustworthiness, etc. Although some of this information seems to be sought almost as an end in itself, there are usually quite practical reasons for acquiring it. Information about the individual helps to define the situation, enabling others to know in advance what he will expect of them and what they may expect of him. Informed in these ways, the others will know how best to act in order to call forth a desired response from him’. (Goffman, 1959:1).*

The image above gives an account of the concept of self and other. The conceptual image displays the journey of self to meet other, as well as the relationship between self and other. The explanation can be read below.

## Third space

The following shall attempt to describe the first, second and third space in detail. The concepts explained have a direct link to the conception of the proposed concept.

There lies a potency in cultural beliefs and traditions among small cultural groups; that of sameness in such beliefs. These beliefs can range from the apparel worn due to traditions and specific ceremonies, to songs of praise. These conditions set upon by the groups over time form an inward, closed entity that focuses its attention on what exists in this group. The traditions are practiced to become a set of tools that are used on a daily basis. Such systems become difficult to penetrate and exterior influence becomes fused into one seamless cultural practice. Any influence is closely link in terms of its geography. This can





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be seen in Zulu, Xhosa, and other Nguni tribes, to name a few. The initiations of these behavioural practices form a set of codes which eventually lead to mental constructs. To explain this metaphorically, every cultural group has a brain system which encapsulates a set of codes, and although the brain can be influenced in whatever way, it adapts changes and can even lose its identity, but nonetheless a brain will always exist. This is the first space. This is home; this is an original set of codes that stem from the culture that one emanates from.

The city holds similar principles although the rate of influences is far greater. The city is a receptor in which different brains plug into, allowing multiple narratives with different backgrounds that play out to form the cityscape. Whereas the first space constructs the mental image, the city continuously constructs itself and its mental image. No single person is possible for such a conception. There exists hosts, some of which originate from the first spaces and are hosts to the mental construct of the city. This is a second space, these include institutional colonial powers. These spaces are foreign bodies which require transition. Such spaces are transitory and offer a shorter influence and can be seen as spaces that are of inclusion and exclusion performed by high physical and mental boundary walls as well as fortifications. There are hierarchy of spaces; there is fragmentation and sense of disparity among people. There are theories which are placed, which later are succeeded by oppositional theories that contest previous ones. Life becomes quantified and the being of life shifts from a planetary understanding to a Cartesian understanding. These are the conditions that the second space sets out.

The transition from one space to another forms a brain drain, a term coined to describe the emigration of people with a particular set of skills that flee a country to another due to pull/ push factors. This leaves the country of origin brain drained. In such an instance of the transition from the first to the second space, the loss of the brain structure, leads to a loss of values that have been crafted from its origins. This analogy is used to describe the condition of such spaces to understand why the third space is initiated.

The third, is a term used to describe the Other, it is not here, nor there, it lies somewhere in between. It fills the gap between the subject/ object, knowledge/ non- knowledge, past/ present, centre/periphery. Soja (1996:56) describes the third space as a kind of meeting place of things; abstract and concrete, the real and imagined space, the everyday life and the unending history.

*Thirdspace: the space where all places are, capable of being seen from every angle each standing clear, but also a secret and conjectured object, filled with illusions and allusions, a space that is common to all of us yet never able to be completely seen and understood, an ‘unimaginable universe’. (Soja, 1996:56).*

The third space, can be analysed as something that literally ‘fills a gap’, and does not dwell in specialised fields or hold any exclusivity. Instead it embraces



*Figure 3.5: Third space (Noero, 2012)*

openness and a possibility of potential knowledge. It has the potential of opening up a new world where grounds can be tested. In so far the theory of thirdspace is a difficult task to turn from theoretical premises into architectural practice. Much of the theory of third space originates from Henri Lefebvre’s writing on *The Production of Space* (1991).

Third space attempts to overcome the complexities of dualities. An exemplar of this nature of space can be seen through St. Cyprian’s Girls School by South African architect Jo Noero. In his understanding of a third space, coupled by the brief he set for himself or by the client, had no specific purpose in mind.

This notion allows us to imagine the kind of spaces third space can lead to: an unprogrammed adaptable space that allows for the regeneration of the space over time. In such the case of the school, the round timber constructed spaces offers many different uses which include an impromptu theatre, large and small meetings, quiet reading rooms or teaching and homework (Noero, 2012). This idea of third space allows for spaces to be imagined or chosen by them, giving an open ended resultant of space.

FIRST SPACE

SECOND SPACE

**PLANETARY**

**HOST**

**SELF**  
A balanced unit, comprising of family units. They are guided by one God, or Being, and guided by the same spirit. The inward structure offers enclosure and reliance on one another. Self is in the image of the other self, he sees the same image.

**HOST**

**HOST**

**HOST**

**SELF/O**  
The collective memory. It removes the individual aspects of culture, allowing for commonality. Self meets the other and is confronted with a different understanding of the world.

*Institutional colonial power*

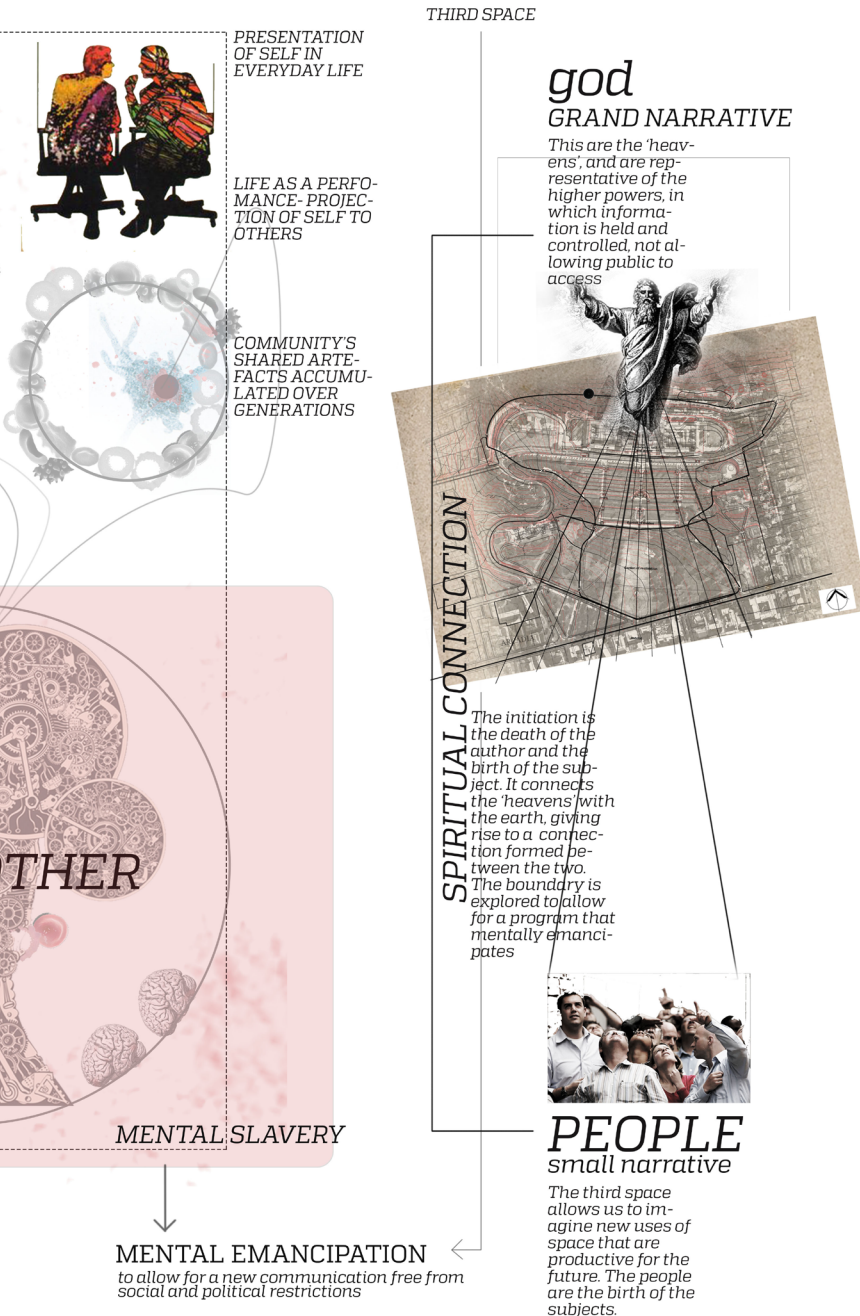
*inclusion/exclusion*

DE LA SPHERE. FIGURE XXXI.

Rene Descartes Discours de la methode (1637) [Discourse on method]

76 LA DIOPTRIQUE

Figure 3.6: Further explanation of Self and Other highlighting their location in space (Author, 2015)



## Concept: Disruption of power to generate new

The current city suffers from a fragmented spatial planning. The old form of planning was guided on the generation of absolute power, in which pockets and parcels in the city could be planned through this ideal. It was believed that such power would be able to structure the chaotic world and provide a quality of life (Boyer, 1994:11). Despite the noble intentions of creating rational spaces governed by absolute power, these methods also implied a utopian image in which people could be crafted in one whole image under a given set of rules. The concept is to corrupt the absolute power to generate a new order in power. The new power creates a new walk through the building and submerges the user into a new public realm of collectivism or third-ism void of in single identity but embracing difference. In the space, the proposed intervention aims to play with opposition of old and new, existence of otherness in formal plan-



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ning of spaces, disturbances, chance encounters between characters, theatrical stage sets and recreation of lost narratives. The proposed spaces will reveal silenced and misinterpreted characters.

The secrecy of the Union Buildings and its fortified walls create an ever desirable effect on what lies on the interior spaces. This yearning to know of its interior and the quality of its spaces, the image of the amphitheatre, as well as how power can encapsulate one when standing on the amphitheatre floor of the Union Buildings in the axis.

The collective memory achieved by the design seeks to create a hybrid strategy, but the hybridity can assume the role of its parent identities, or assume a new role, a complete mutation. The grandeur of the Union Buildings was aimed at creating a large space that would store governmental records for many generations to come (Solomon, 1910).

The unification was that of British imperialists with Boer Republicans. Throughout ruling from 1910-1948 the government would design many buildings in Pretoria, Cape Town, Bloemfontein and other provinces to create timelessness of political regime as means to hegemonic ruling. From 1948-1994, the Afrikaner Nationalists would seek ruling and highlighted their significance in the country by designing the city with a modern architecture appeal (Freschi, 2006), also bearing in mind this was the period of industrialisation which had high capital for infrastructural development and the apartheid spatial planning of segregation of races.

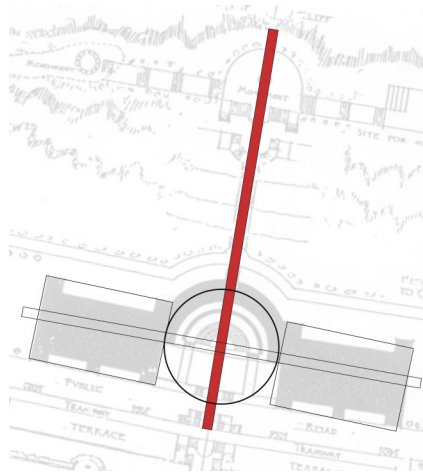


Figure 3.7: Original line of axis passing through Union Buildings (Author, 2015)

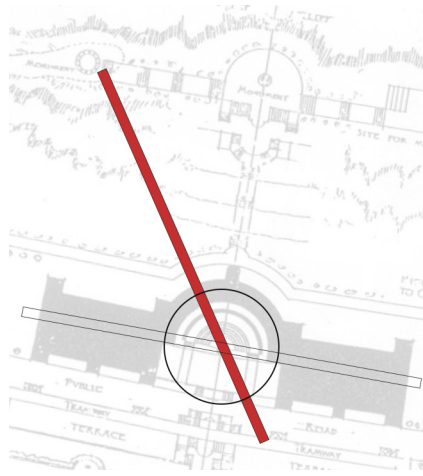


Figure 3.8: New line of power by new axial line (Author, 2015)

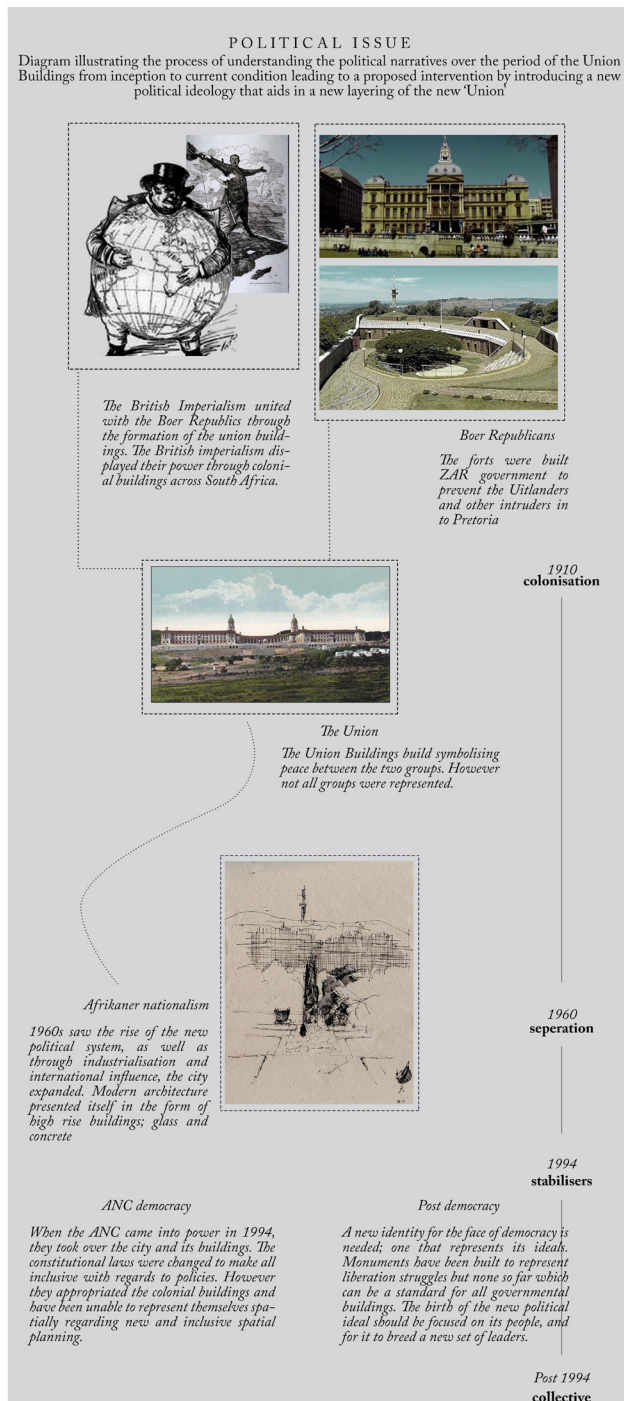


Figure 3.9: Political issue with timeline of political ideologies (- Author, 2015)

It is true to say the cultural, social and economic developments of the past are reflected in the city's form and structure (Corten et al., n.d.). 1994- Present day gave way to the liberation of the oppressed and the democratic ruling. With the ANC party being in power, we notice a complete twist in how they developed the city in their eyes. Instead of creating new architectural typologies to suit their political beliefs, they appropriated the old buildings and took office in such buildings. This data can be synthesised in the following manner; let use the analogy of a rock and silk cloth. The rock symbolises all political regime that have come into play from early 1900s to late 1900s, i.e. British imperialism, Boer republicanism and

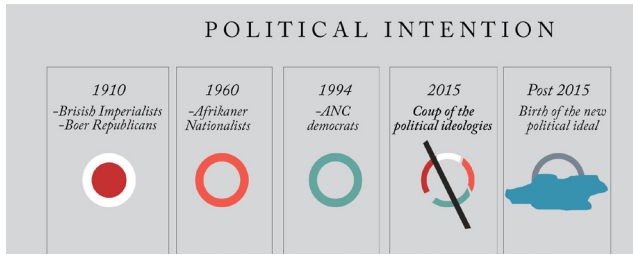


Figure 3.10: Political issue (Author, 2015)

Afrikaner nationalism. The silk is representative of post 1994. When you place the silk cloth above the rock, the cloth wraps itself to give the same shape as the rock. What this says is that no matter the circumstance, as long as the dem-

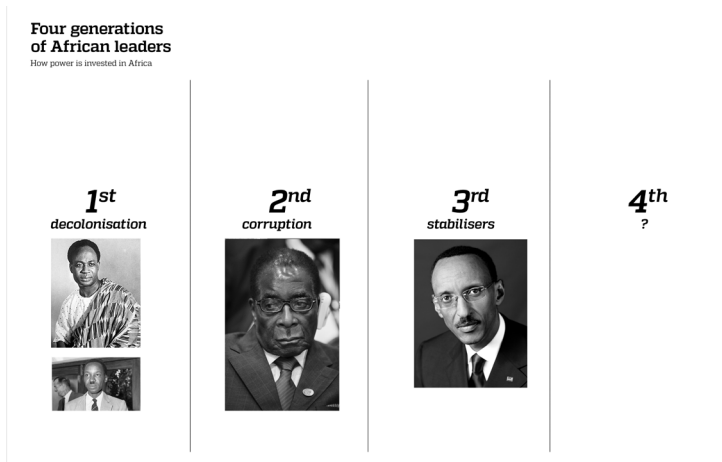
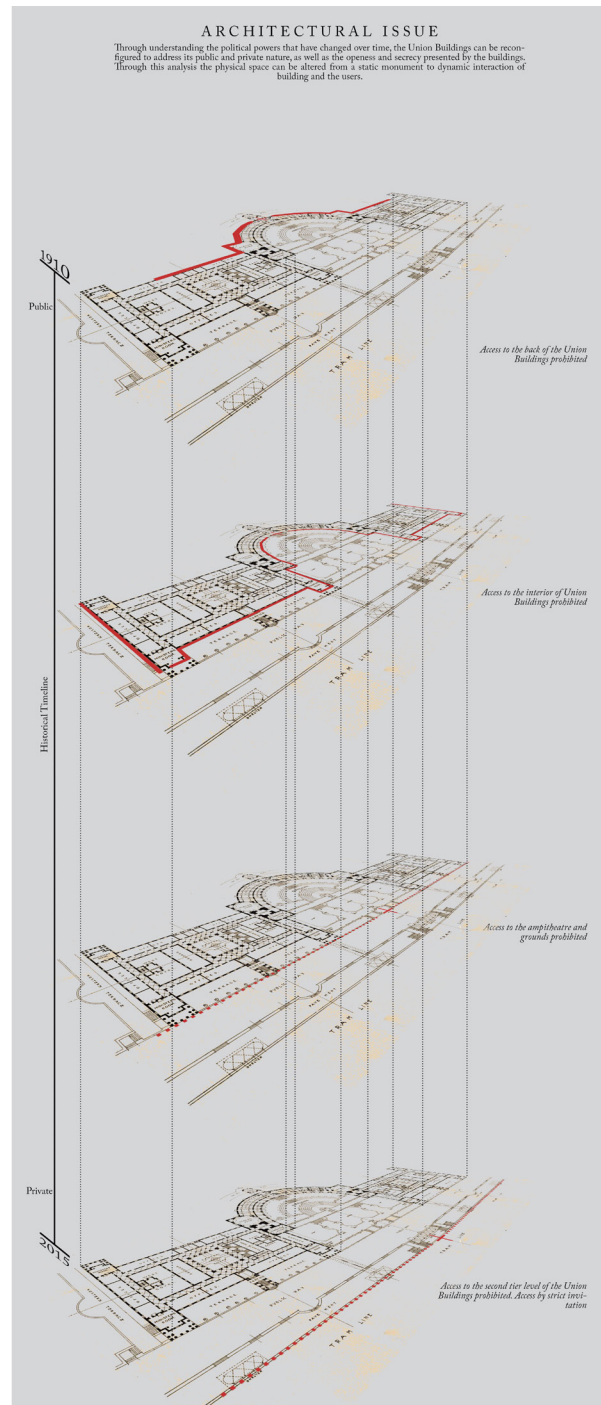


Figure 3.11: adopted from TEDx talk with Fred Swaniker (Author, 2015)

ocratic political ideal appropriates itself within these old buildings, in some sense, the city is still under a subliminal, however apparent, colonial ruling.

I propose an alternative. If the current political ideal is masked over the colonial political ideals, for there to exist a third space, or liminal space, or collective identity, there needs to exist a new post democratic manifesto. This manifesto would be focused not on the ideals of attaining superiority of land and resources, or liberation struggles that led to democracy but focused on the collective; monologue of two voices. The different voices need to be represented as one,



*Figure 3.12: Architectural issue (Author, 2015)*

such that all voices in the room, however different are coherent with one another, and form a common idea. The question that remains is, how is this alternative envisaged? What kind of architecture represents the alternative?

The proposal to this third space is to turn to a militaristic form of engagement; military coup d'état, whereby the rock and the silk cloth is blown up to give leeway to a new architectural typology that represents the collective for future generations, conceptually speaking. By creating a rapture of all political ideals, a new political ideal is envisaged that would create a new nationness. This 'detonation' process and the way it is done is explained in the next chapter.

The  
 image  
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 the  
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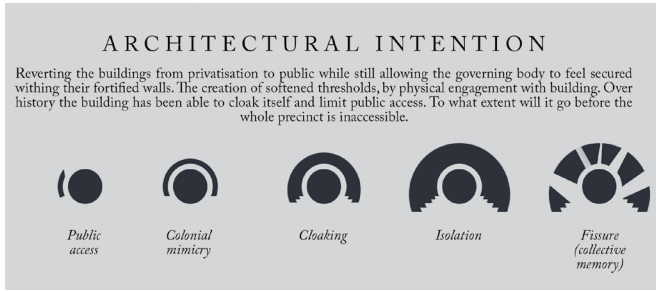


Figure 3.13:  
 Architectural  
 intention (Author, 2015)

trates four generations of African leaders. 1. The decolonisation period; the political figures who gave Africa back to its people, by ending colonialism by European countries. 2. The leaders which led African countries to destruction and tyranny. This destruction could be in one country or create ripple effects among different nations. 3. The stabilisers are the remedial leaders who ailed Africa once again from apartheid and other unjust systems that came into play before. 4. The fourth leaders are yet to be determined, but the current generation lies in this section. They are the social terrorists; they voice their opinions to oppose colonial ruling and its forms of representations in current day society. These are dissatisfied groups of people that bring down statues, such in the case of the Rhodes statue. These leaders want a new system based on economic uplifting, educational gain, political transparency and equality (Figure 3.11).

The statue is a form of representation that aids in remembrance, and is commemorated by a sculptural piece that sits in the landscape, or in some environment, and of course overtime, these gain heritage value and significance with layered history. The same could be said with buildings, which are also forms of representation of a time and place. The terrorist act is thus seen as the growing dissatisfaction with buildings that have little to do with street edges and fortified walls creating intimidating structures. The detonation of the Union Buildings is thus an opportunity for a radical reconstruction of the system.

## Syntactic analysis of Buildings

Power is the ability to define and control circumstances and events so that one can influence things to go in the direction of one's interests'. (Dovey, 1999:

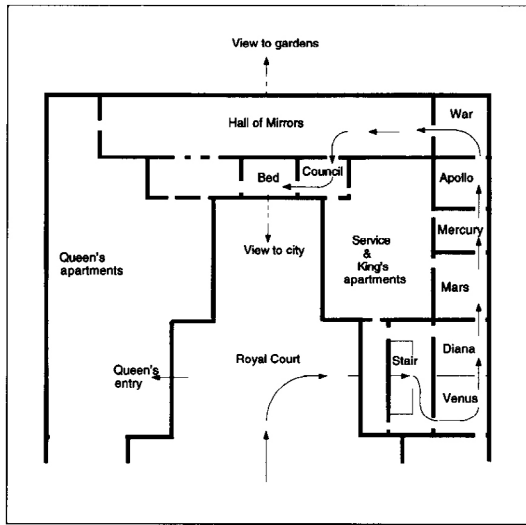


Figure 2.2  
Versailles Palace c. 1701

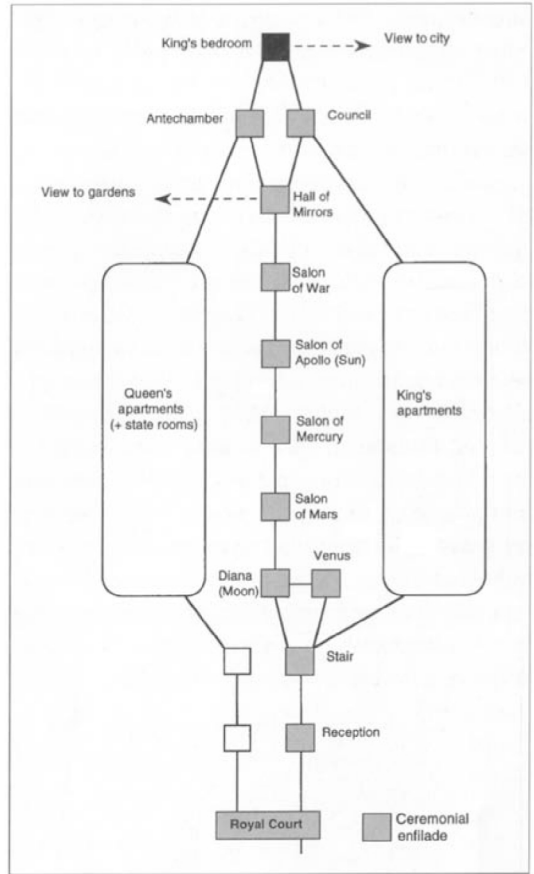


Figure 2.3  
Versailles Palace c. 1701: spatial analysis

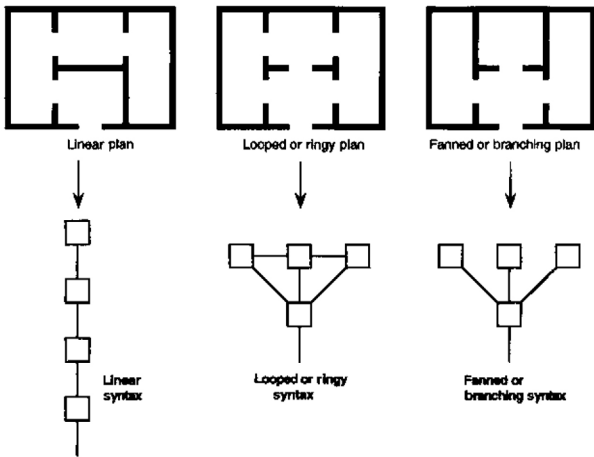


Figure 3.14:  
Primary syntactic relations  
based on Hiller and Hanson  
(Dovey, 1999)



## CONFRONTATION

9). Over history, through various political regimes around the world, political leaders have represented themselves through buildings to exercise power and hegemonic ruling. Historically, the architecture that existed celebrated and glorified the power. There exists different forms of power as described by Dovey (1999, 10). One form of power that is signified in built form is the power of coercion, which is power that prevents a subject from forming any intention of resistance. Furthermore, it is the spatial domination with an exaggerated scale than is capable of intentionally aimed at belittling the human subject to signify the power necessary to its production. Such power exists all over the world, such as in the Chinese imperial history of the Forbidden City in Beijing, the Palace of Versailles and of course Union Buildings, to name a few. These centres of political power boasted power and authority through spatial design, urban design and exclusion of people from entering the structures. This can also be seen as a form of power, as the instruments of power must not be revealed by anyone, despite their grandeur.

Figure 3.14 highlights the difference in hierarchies of space. The three similar plans with different doorways yield three quite different syntactic structures. The linear system, looped system and fanned system are compared against one another. A deep structure like the linear system requires the traversing of many segments. This has implications on the number of boundaries and points of control. The spatial syntax structures social relations, and the depth to which visitors are allowed to penetrate into the structure. The depth into which one traverses is an indicator of status (Dovey, 1999, 22). The Union Buildings can thus be seen as a linear system in which one moves through several thresholds before reaching the amphitheatre.

## Charters

The proposed alteration or reconstruction of the intervention contests current conservation principles. In their document on the heritage impact assessment tool, Graham Young and Liana Muller unravel the significance of the place in terms of its landscape features.

The ICOMOS Charter (Venice Charter 1964) states that historic monuments need to remain to present day as living witness of the old age tradition. The ICOMOS Charter requires that we safeguard such monuments and their heritage for future generation as historic evidence (The Venice Charter, 1964). It

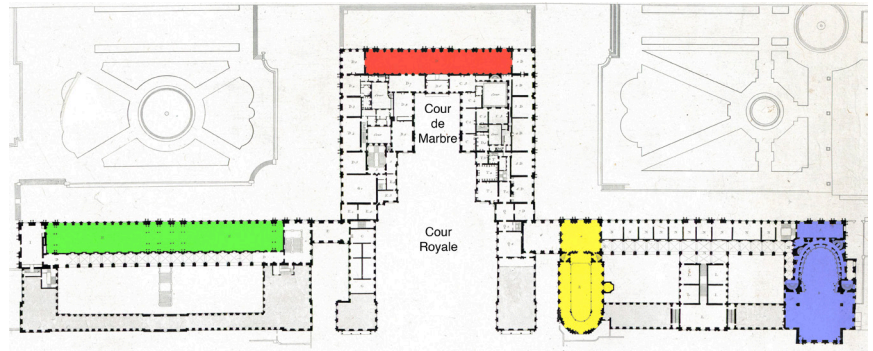


Figure 3.15:  
Plan of Palace de Versailles (Wikipedia, 2015)

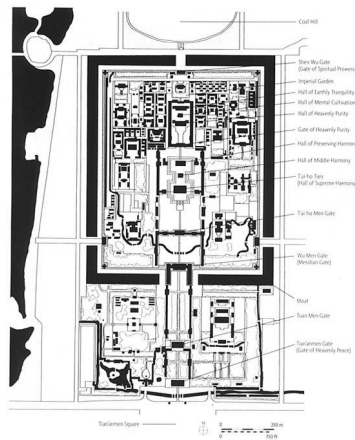


Figure 3.16:  
Forbidden City imperial palace plan in Beijing (StudyBlue, 2015)

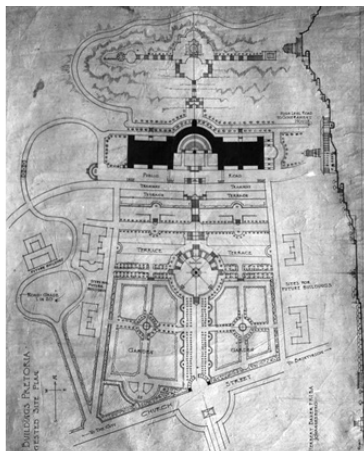


Figure 3.17:  
Union Buildings plan (Liana and Young, 2005)

# The Burra Charter Process

Sequence of investigations, decisions and actions

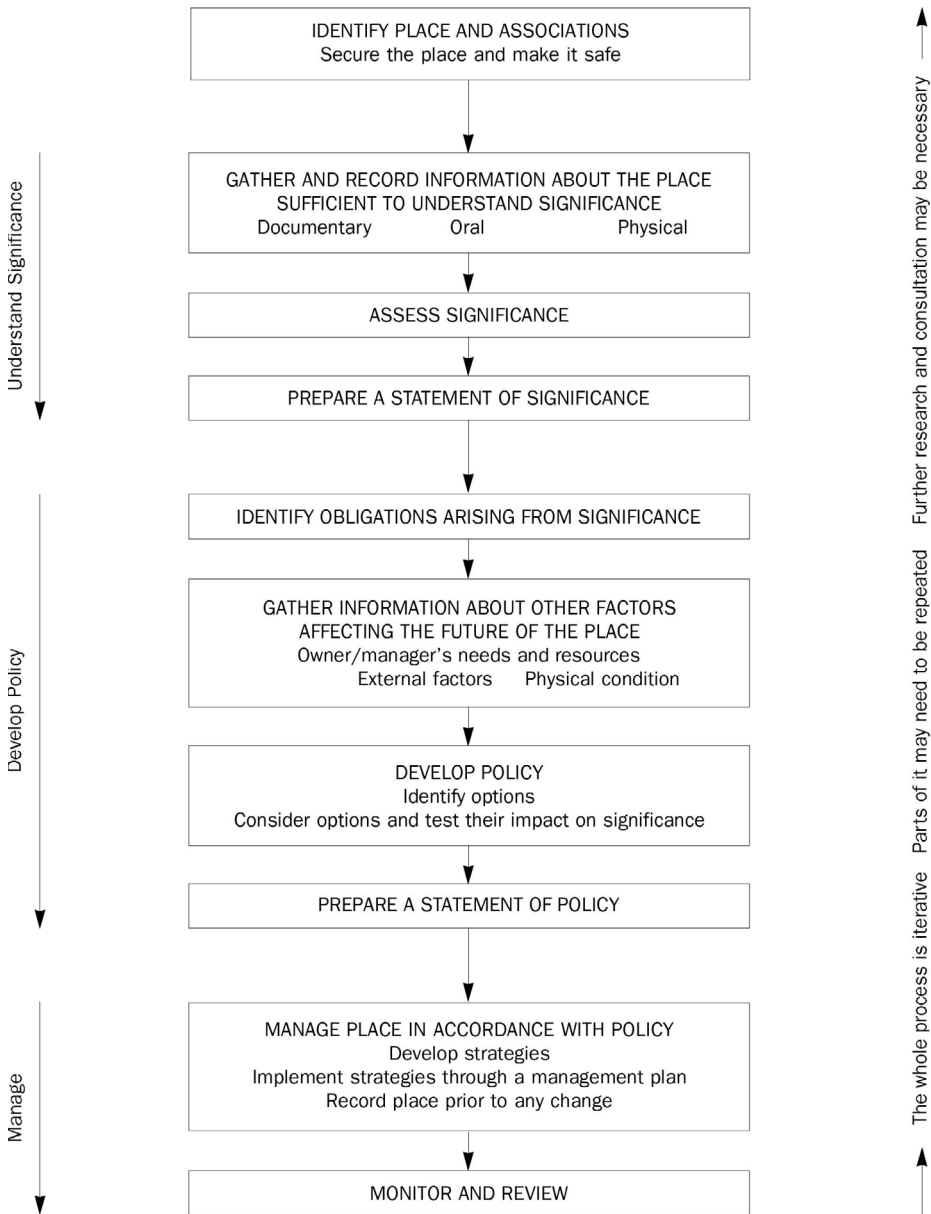


Figure 3.15: Burra Charter Process (Burra Charter, 1999)



Figure 3.16: Demarcation of the Union Buildings regarding different levels of significance (Muller and Young, 2005)

is also essential for the conservation of historic places to be used for a socially useful purpose, but the use must not change the layout or decoration of the building (The Venice Charter, 1964). The Burra Charter (1999) however states that change may be necessary to retain cultural significance, although it has to be guided by appropriate interpretation.

The theoretical argument stated guides the principle for the interpretation of the structure and the need for change in cultural significance. The Burra Charter process is used for the investigation in the historical, cultural and social significance for the Union Buildings precinct. A statement of current cultural significance was determined, and a new cultural significance was administered in conjunction with the theoretical argument. Nonetheless the proposed intervention aims to retain as much as fabric as possible, and where there has been reconstruction, the materials are reused and adapted to suit the new intervention. The historical narrative of place, the associations with place and its prior identity have been withheld while adding on change to the static monument that has become of the Union Buildings.



*Statement of (Cultural) Significance PAST*

*Historical:* represents a symbol of unification and nation pride of the Afrikaans and English speaking communities. The architect of the Union Buildings was a prominent architectural figure of his time. Over the course of history, the building has contributed significantly to the development of the history of Pretoria, as well as South Africa at large. The Union Buildings estate features different sections and portions, all of which have been contributed by prominent historical figures.

*Landscape:* The landscaping component bears much significance to the Union buildings. In fact the Union Buildings are incomplete without the landscaping grounds that lie beneath it. The landscape grounds offer a threshold or an additional buffer zone before reaching the top of the building. The landscape component also features many indigenous plants which have a high biodiversity.

*Social:* As a symbolic landmark and brand identity of Pretoria, the Union Buildings is a place of meeting, and orientation of one within city. A sense of ownership has been formed by the people over the years, and used as grounds for national festivals which occur over the year as commemorations of political struggles, human rights, and recently global events which not only draw in residents but international groups too. The spaces have also transformed over time to enhance the everyday life, notably for exercise and relaxation purposes. The site is a place of tourist attraction, allowing visitors to gaze on the city and the building

*Spiritual:* The concept of Herbert Baker was for the Union Buildings to be a sacred Classical temenos [a piece of ground adjacent to a temple], a collection of routes, vistas, spaces and buildings, that would unify the elements with the building, to express unity amongst people (Bakker, 2003).

*Aesthetic:* There exists a kind of reciprocity with the building; the gaze upon the Union Buildings and the gazed from Union Buildings to the city. The view-points at which one can view the Buildings reach out as far as the entry into the CBD from Eeufees Road and as far as the road from Waterkloof to Groenkloof. The aesthetic value is strengthened by the compositional quality and its backdrop, with the mountain creating a secure and protective façade for the

building. The view from Union Buildings onto the city offers evokes a different emotion; one of power and dominance caused by the strong axial lines which are used as radial measurements for the construction of streets.

*Political:* The Union Buildings has undergone different governances: The Union Buildings is symbolic of the Union between the Afrikaners and English speaking communities. It is symbolic of reconciliation, although its true and original intent was for the two groups.

*Cultural:* The cultural value of Union Buildings changes with each successive government and its influence on Pretoria. The break of apartheid and into a democratic world saw a new cultural birth arise which changed the way the spaces were used.

## CONFRONTATION