

CHAPTER TWO

Place

Context Analysis

Chapter Two provides an analysis of the physical and social context of the project located in Central Pretoria.

The history of the site is discussed in order to provide an understanding of the various character changes that have occurred as a consequence of political and social influences.

A future vision is then proposed, along with an analysis of the site itself.



Figure 2.1 Project Location: Tshwane. (Source: Author, 2015)

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AREA OF INVESTIGATION: PRETORIA/TSHWANE

Pretoria, or Tshwane, is the administrative capital of South Africa and has been chosen as the city for investigation due to its position as a post-colonial African city in the throws of establishing a new identity.

The area of investigation is oriented around Lillian Ngoyi Square, previously Strijdom Square, which is a space with a politically charged history. As political power structures have shifted over time, these changes have manifested in the spatial character of the context, resulting in an environment comprised of dominating and isolated buildings that separate public spaces from one another and create a fractured experience of one of the few pedestrianised spaces in the city. This chapter seeks to understand the context as a consequence of these social and political influences as a means to inform appropriate tactics for future proposals for the context.

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HISTORY OF LILLIAN NGOYI SQUARE

Pretoria was established 1855 when the Voortrekkers left the rule of the British in the Cape to establish their own country of self-governance. Beginning as a rural village, it quickly developed into busy, eclectic town as the seat of government for the Zuid-Afrikaanse Republiek. Church Square was established as the central public space of the city, providing space for a variety of civic and public functions to play out (Bolsmann, 2001:13). Here, the Raadsaal was built where the parliamentary body of the Volksraad met to discuss issues relating to the newly established

republic (Bolsmann, 2001:9). Monthly markets were also held here, where farmers from neighbouring areas came together, traded goods, stocked up on supplies, met with friends and attended church services in the church in the centre of the square. Over time, the civic activities outgrew the space of Church square and in 1879, Jacob Daniel Cilliers was given a lease to build a set of market sheds on Market square (the current Lillian Ngoyi Square) located two blocks east of Church Square. This space, without the governmental functions of Church Square,

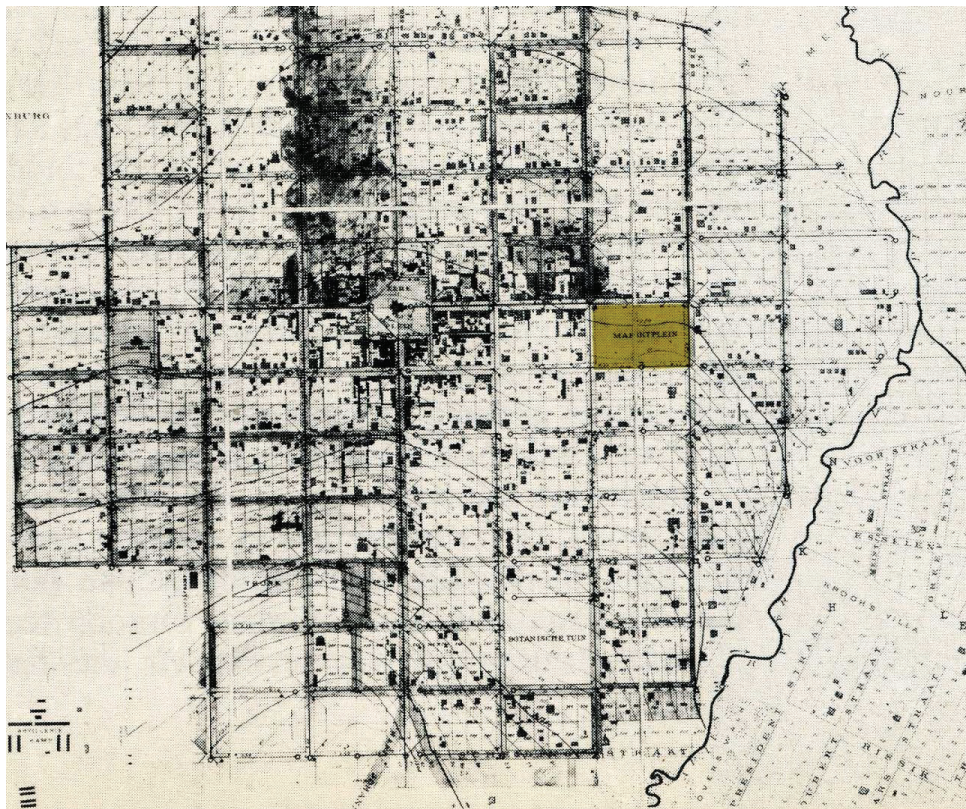


Figure 2.2 Lillian Ngoyi Square (Previously Market Square) is situated 2 blocks east of Church Square. (Source: Bolsmann, 2001:32)

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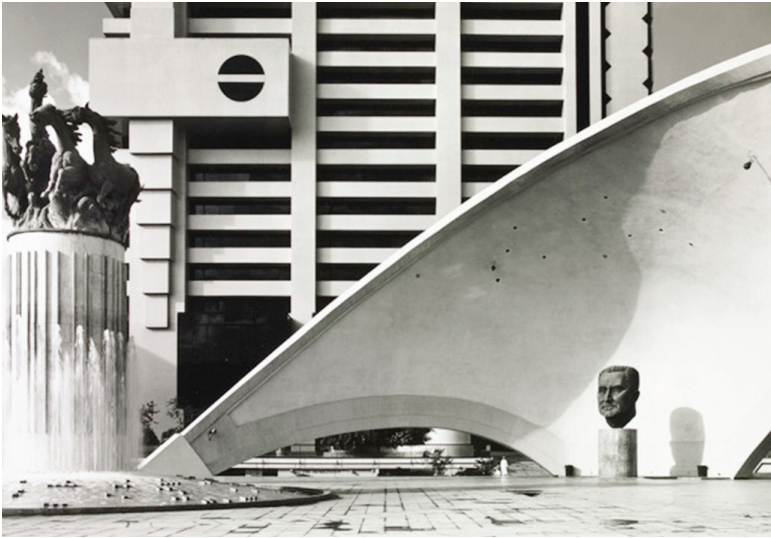
Figure 2.3 Church Square, 1880. Watercolour by Anderw A. Anderson (Source: Bolsmann, 2001:34)

provided a secondary open public space in the centre of the city, creating a vibrant cultural and civic space. Along with the open market, the first South African museum along with an Indian market were also built here. However, since its establishment, the site has been a place of tension between civic and governmental forces. When the time came for the new City Hall to be built in 1925, many Pretorians proposed for it to be built on Market Square, due to the central location and civic nature (Bolsmann, 2001:236). Yet despite 730 ratepayers presenting a petition to the council for the building to be located here, it was eventually built on Pretorius Square, on Paul

Kruger Street. Market Square continued to provide a place for daily urban activities into the 1950's: In 1956, the square served as the location for the meeting of 20 000 women who marched to the Union Buildings hand the Prime Minister J.G. Strijdom a petition signed by over 100 000 people protesting the pass laws imposed on black people in South Africa.

The first half of the 1900's had seen the Afrikaaners searching for a national identity (Bolsmann, 2011:8) and towards the end of the 1950's the ruling National Party, having been in power for almost twenty years, began plans to make its mark on the capital. Demolition of the Market hall

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Clockwise, starting from top left:

Figure 2.4 Market Square, 1860.

Figure 2.5 New Market sheds are built on the square.

Figure 2.6 The National Government begins construction of the cupola.

Figure 2.7 The State Theatre is completed.

Figure 2.8 A Masterplan for the Strijdom Square precinct

Figure 2.9 The ABSA tower is completed and the bust and horse statue built in the square.

began in July 1966 to make way for the construction of the State Theatre and a large public underground parking garage that would accommodate 1500 cars. The remaining buildings on Market square were then demolished to make way for a new public square dedicated to the Prime Minister of the time, J.G. Strijdom. In 1972, a bronze bust of J.G. Strijdom was unveiled under a large cupola, along with a towering brass statue of horses running through water (Bolsmann, 2001:109). What had previously been a thriving market square was transformed into a large open space that functioned merely as a large plinth for a statue of the Prime Minister. Aside from the occasional wedding photos and work lunches eaten in the awkward landscaping to the side of the square, it never regained its lively civic nature.

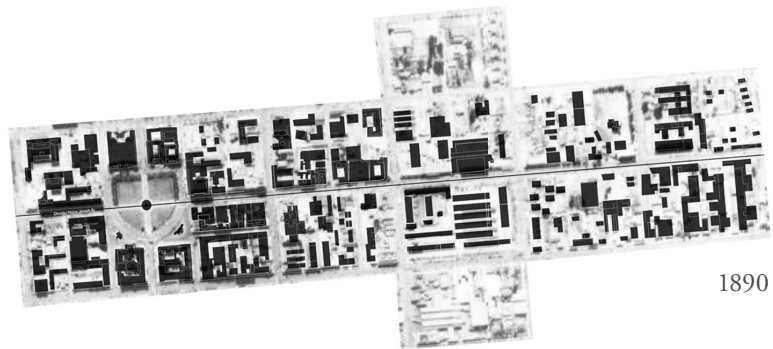
‘Many of the modern developments, like Strijdom Square, seem hell bent on destroying the city centre for people,’ said Alan Konya, a prominent architect in Pretoria during the 1960’s & 70’s as well as a lecturer at the university of Pretoria (Rand Daily Mail, 23 November 1979).

Construction projects continued around the square, erecting buildings that reinforced the

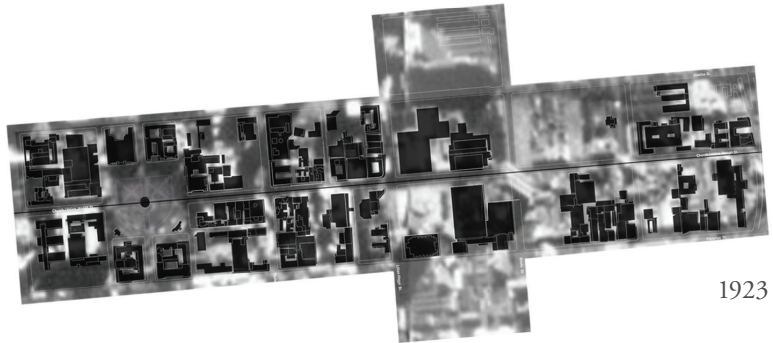
nationalistic intentions of the current government. In 1978, the ABSA Tower (then known as the Volkskas Building) was completed on the south-west corner of the block. Designed by Samuel Pauw, it was the tallest building in the city until the Reserve Bank was built. Designed with an open retail podium and an underground retail corridor linking to the Standard Bank building, the tower *‘served as a statement of nationalism, triumph and economic dominance’* - Melinda Silverman, Johannesburg Urban Designer & Heritage Expert (Schmahmann, 2013). The new State Theatre Building was completed and unveiled on 23 May 1981.

These buildings, while appearing to have city-dwellers at the heart of their purpose, in reality had the opposite effect on the context. While a building like the State Theatre’s programming might suggest civic inclusion, the architectural resolution and style instead create an overpowering, monolithic and insular building that disregards its immediate environment. The ABSA Tower has a similar effect.

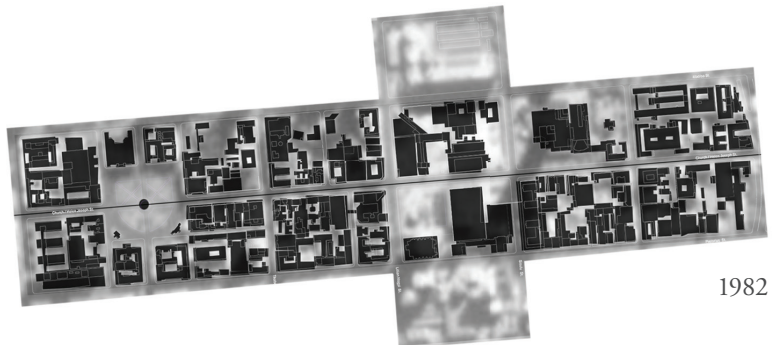
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1890



1923



1982



2015

Figure 2.10 Evolution of the urban grain along Church Street
(Source: Author, 2015)

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EVOLUTION OF
LILLIAN NGOYI SQUARE

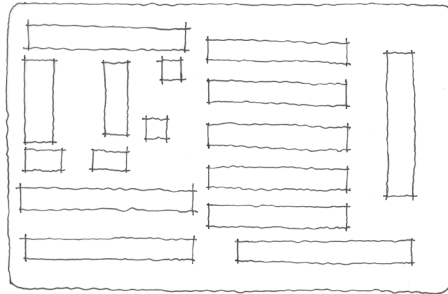


Figure 2.11 **A Civic Space**
Markets, exhibitions, political gatherings and court hearings were held on the square. It was the location of Pretoria's first museum, and it hosted many festivals, the opening of the Mozambique railway. (Source: Author, 2015)

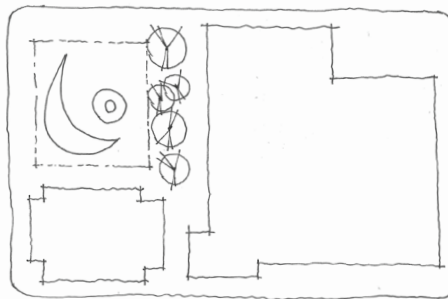


Figure 2.12 **A Time of National Grandeur**
From the 1970's, the square functioned as a nationalist monument to past Prime Minister, J.G. Strijdom. (Source: Author, 2015)

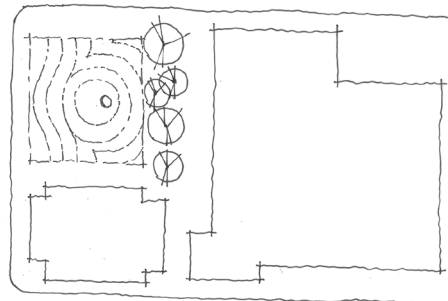


Figure 2.13 **A Forgotten Space**
After the fall of the cupola and the bust of J.G. Strijdom, the horse statue was moved. The square stood open, barren and awkward in the urban context. (Source: Author, 2015)

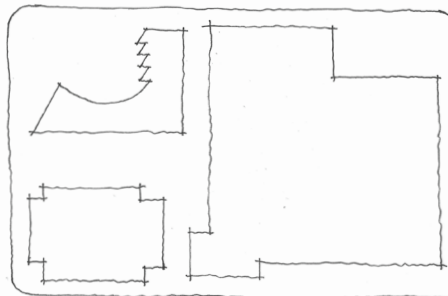


Figure 2.14 **Pendulum Swing**
A new national narrative is represented with the construction of a Women's Museum on the square that represents the struggle of the black women during Apartheid. (Source: Author, 2015)

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CURRENT CONDITION

In 2001, the cupola on the square collapsed due to structural failure. The statue and the cupola were removed and the square was rebuilt. The bronze horse statue was unaffected but relocated to the University of Pretoria campus in 2007 (Schmahmann, 2013). Nothing was built in the place of these structures, leaving the square as an open, forgotten space. The Square has since been

renamed Lillian Ngoyi Square and the Women's Memorial has been built in its open space. The museum presents an opposing narrative to the buildings of its direct context but with a political agenda that is just as strong. As previously discussed, one is forced to question whether the political pendulum has simply not been swung in the opposite direction with the new construction.



Figure 2.15 A new national narrative is represented with the Construction

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Figure 2.16 Intimate personal spaces are appropriated (Source: Author, 2015)

PERSONAL SPACE OF THE BODY IMPERSONAL SPACE OF THE CITY

As has been discussed, the surrounding context of Lillian Ngoyi Square has a harsh and dominating character. Extreme conditions of expansive and exposed spaces are contrasted with those of the small, intimate spaces that appropriated by city users as a means of creating human-scale spaces. It is the intention of this project to create an intervention that is able to mediate between these extreme conditions. Sketches were used as a medium by which to observe and understand the context. Attention was focussed on the way that people appropriate and react to their environment, giving clues as to the needs of daily city dwellers and to the built environment's accommodation and response to those needs. The surrounding context of the site is characterised by impersonal and exposed spaces and a lack of human scale. Due to the fractured evolution of this urban environment, buildings of the context operate independently of one another, providing few examples of cohesion within the urban fabric. Public and private

are starkly juxtaposed against one another, and thresholds between inside and outside, public and private are thin. A five-lane road separates the city blocks from one another, bringing high levels of noise, pollution and fast-moving traffic to the city centre. Pavements do little to separate this traffic from the pedestrian zones, aside from assigning car parking along the edge of the street. Ground level facades consist mostly of retail but the relationship between the shop fronts and the pedestrian zone is poor. Small elements can be found that allow for temporary rest, interaction, conversation and trade but these are the exception and not the norm. Much of the personalised space created along the pavement is created by the appropriation of urban elements intended for other purposes. Without spaces for rest along the pavement and with little connection to the facing retail from buildings, pavements behave simply as treadmills, bustling people along without opportunity for rest or social encounter.

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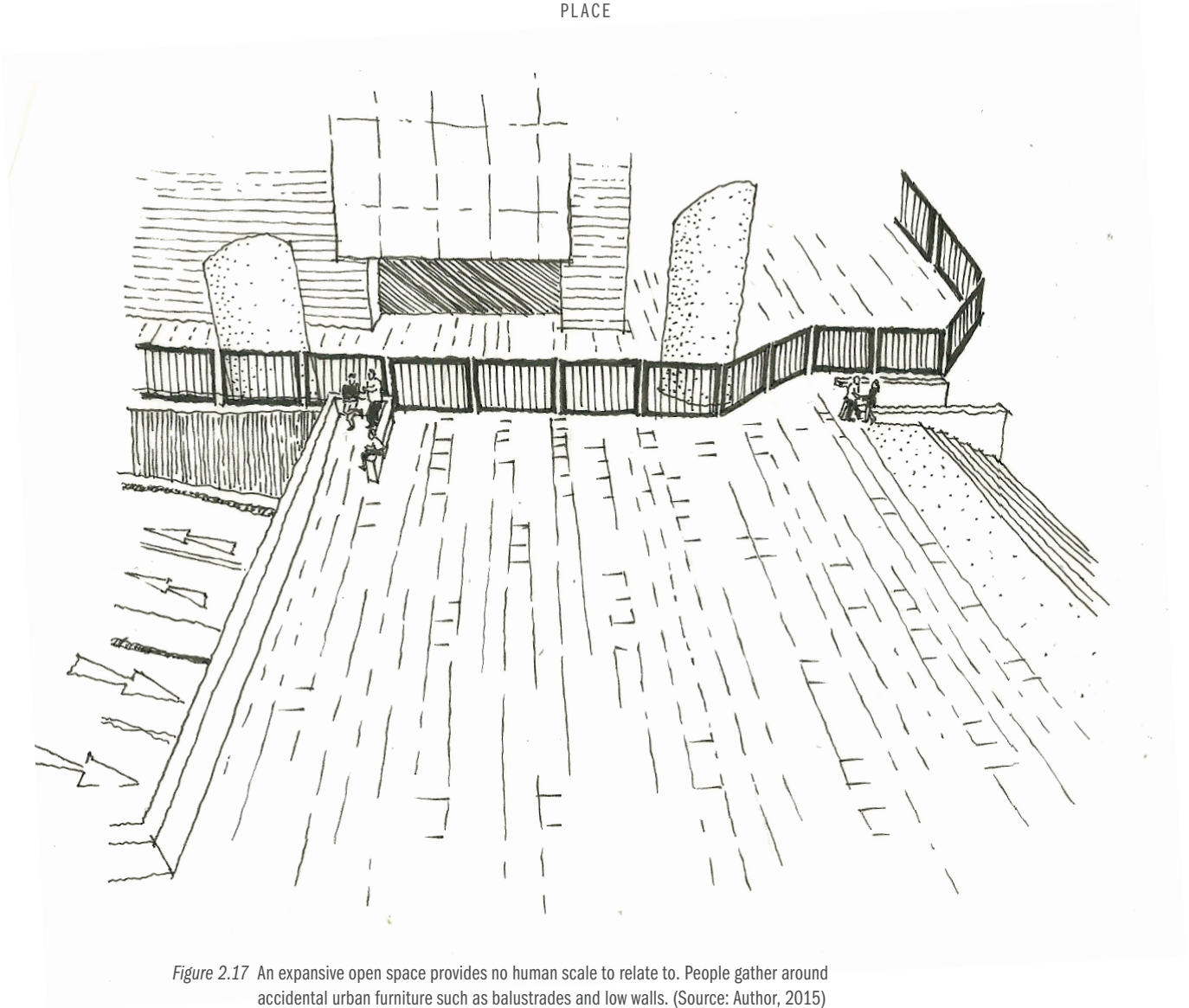
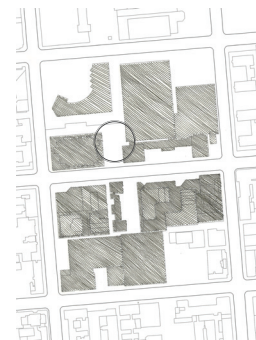


Figure 2.17 An expansive open space provides no human scale to relate to. People gather around accidental urban furniture such as balustrades and low walls. (Source: Author, 2015)



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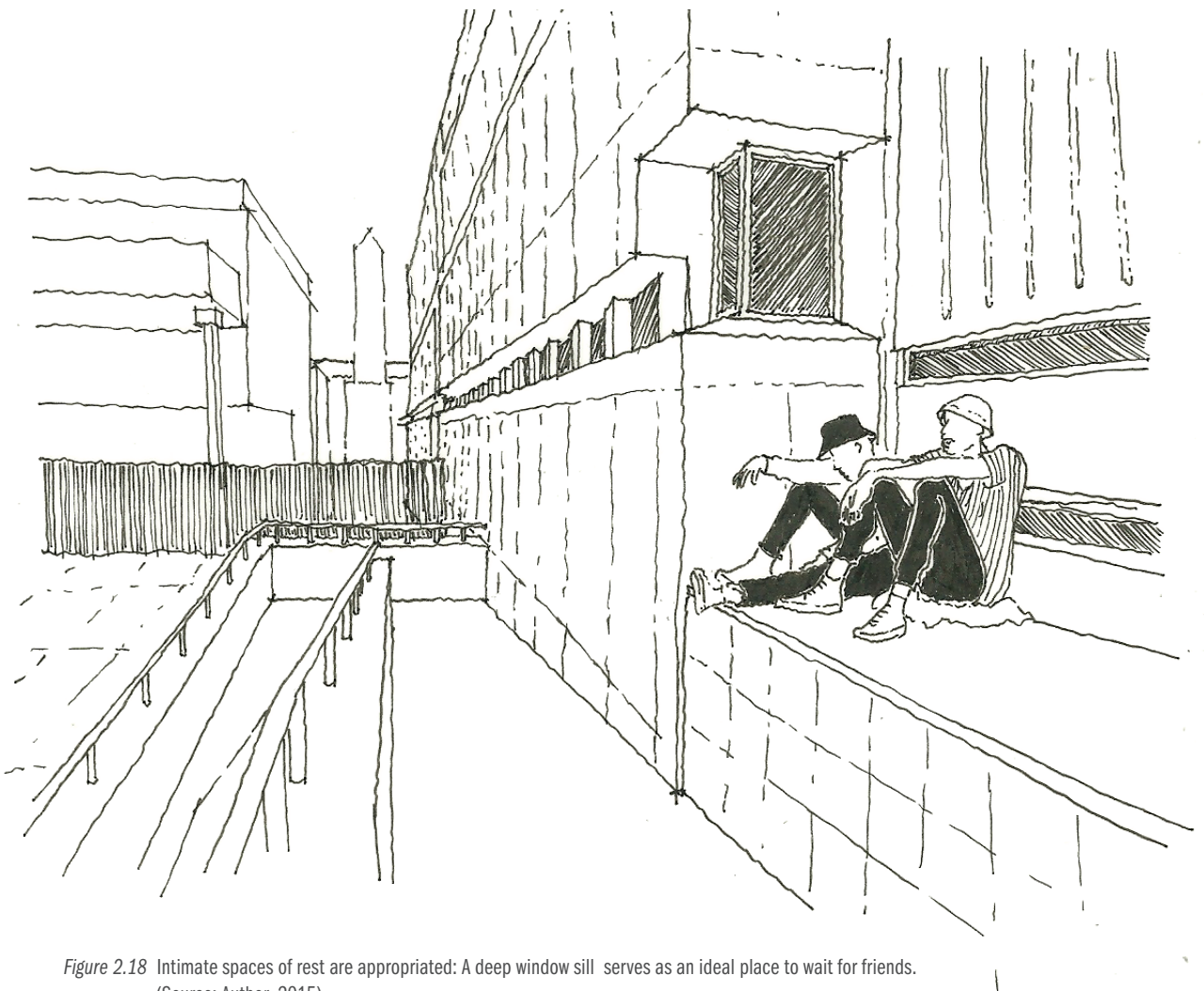
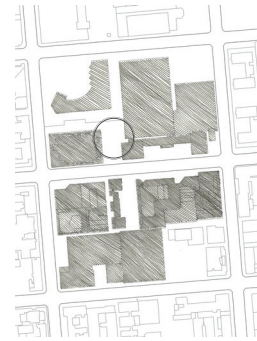


Figure 2.18 Intimate spaces of rest are appropriated: A deep window sill serves as an ideal place to wait for friends.
(Source: Author, 2015)

PLACE

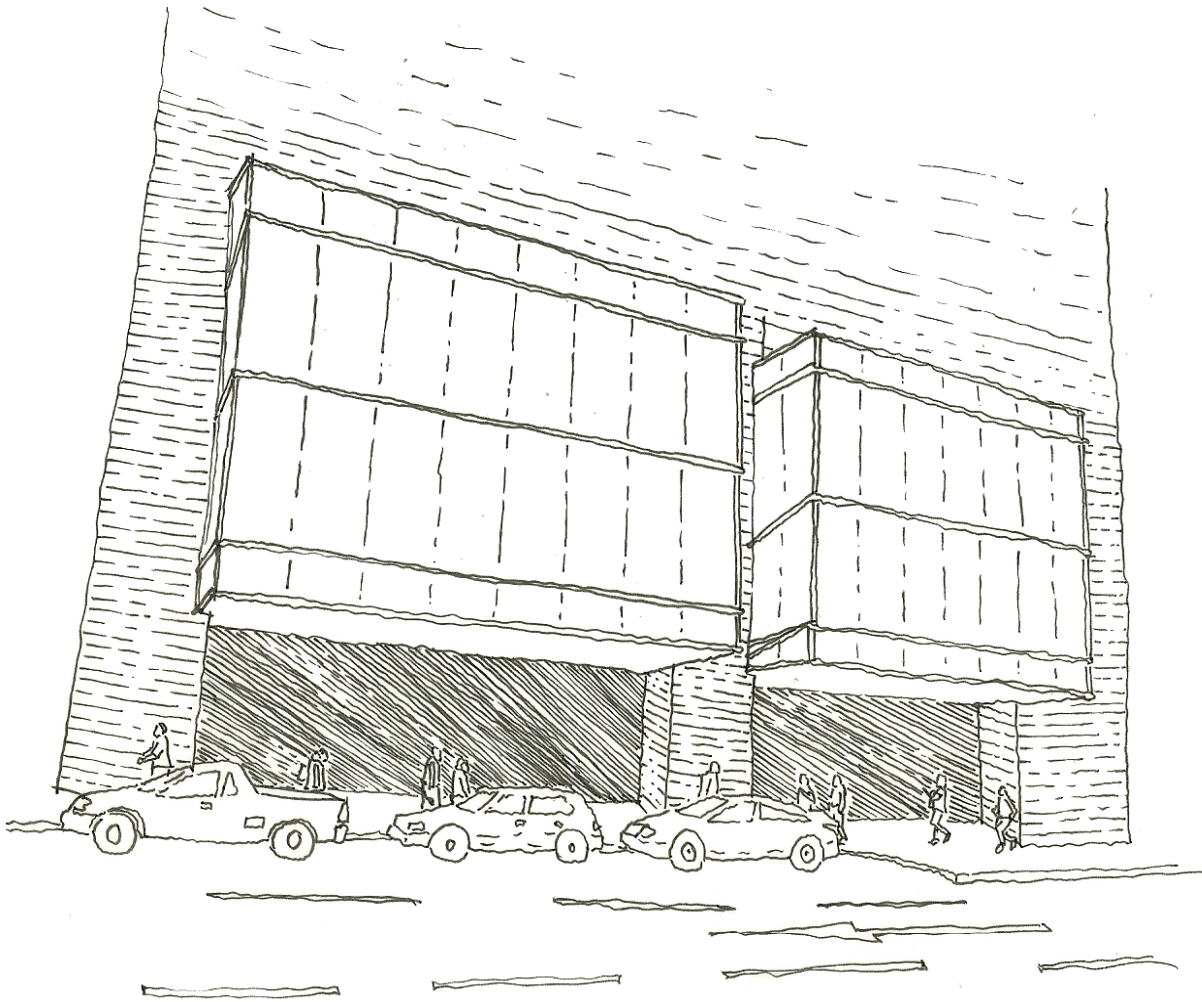
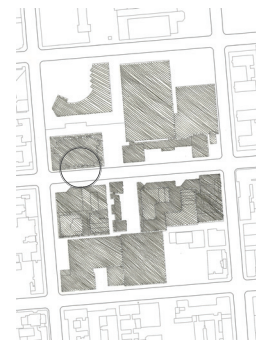


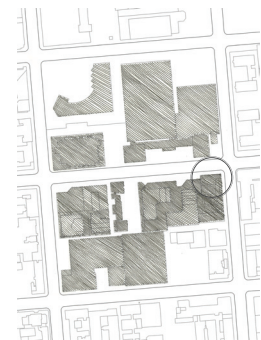
Figure 2.19 The ABSA Tower was originally designed with a retail podium that related to the pedestrian realm on the ground floor. But changes over time have closed up the podium, providing little connection between the tower and its context. (Source: Author, 2015)



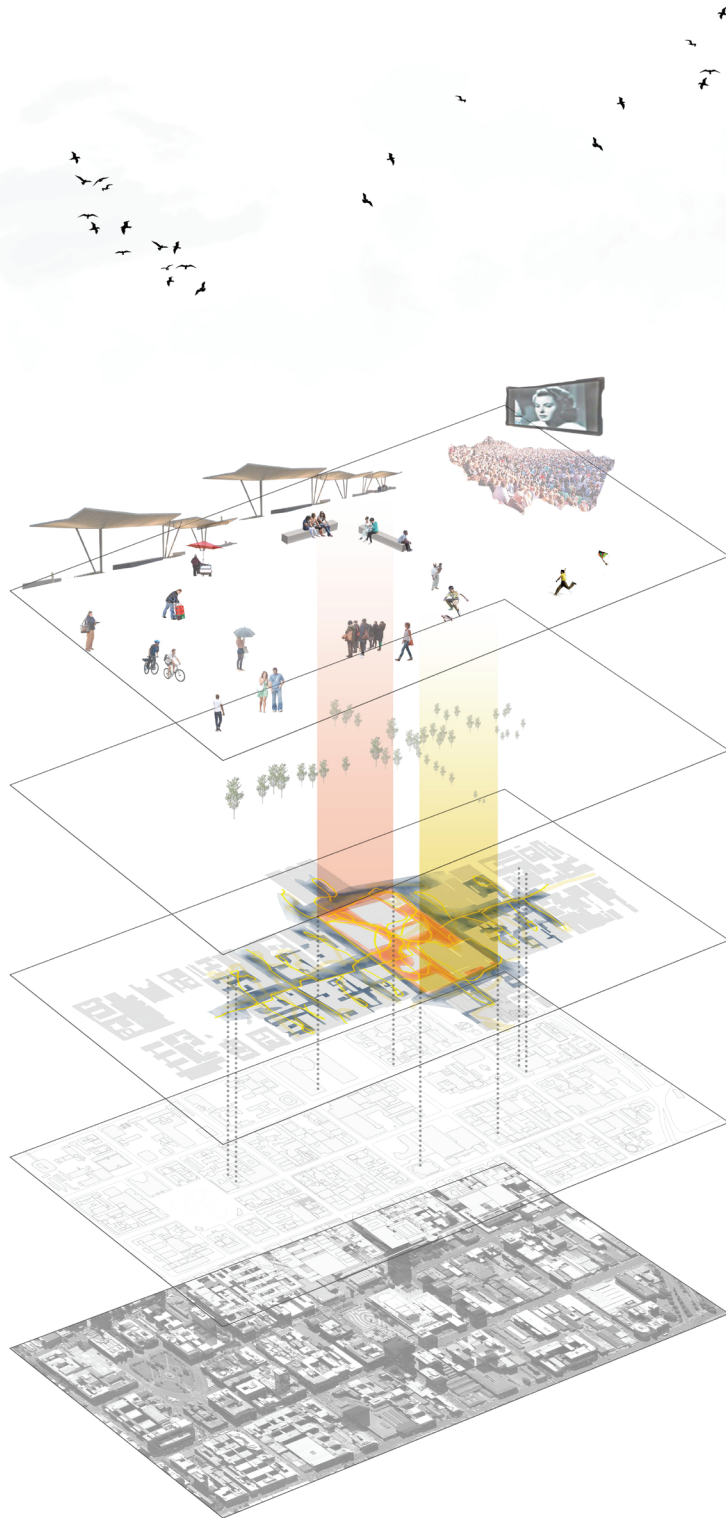
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Figure 2.20 Small design considerations such as canopies bring down the scale of the buildings along Pretorius Street, creating an appropriate relationship between the human scale of the pedestrian realm and the height of its context. (Source: Author, 2015)



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CIVIC LIFE RETURNED: THE URBAN VISION

As part of the investigation of the greater context of the site for the dissertation, an Urban Vision was proposed (Bester, Burger, De Veredici & Oosthuizen, 2015). The Urban Vision aims to return the civic nature to the centre of the city. A Cultural Precinct is proposed for the city block including Lillian Ngoyi Square with Church street runs through the precinct. Currently, the portion between Church square and Sisulu Street is pedestrianised. The linearity of this portion of the street is a primary obstacle to the integration of the various spaces into a unified public space. Church street is therefore dissolved into the block and the surface treatment and furniture of the street removed to allow for a cohesive open square to be created. Interventions are proposed which intend to break open the insular, dominating nature of the buildings of the context, opening them up physically and programmatically to the public. Pretoria's tradition of cutting through the large city blocks with arcades is continued, allowing the alleyway behind the new museum to become a linking arcade between the greater proposed area. This arcade continues into the site for this dissertation, creating continuous pedestrian movement from the cultural precinct into the smaller parts of the proposed area. Propose to create a network of these public spaces, allowing the links between the spaces to be designed to accommodate

as much public life as the open spaces that they connect. As with the theory relating to the notion of the street as public space especially within the African context, the pedestrianised Church Street becomes an important platform for the playing out of everyday public life. To the west, the already pedestrianised part of church street beginning at Church square and terminating in the cultural precinct is intended to become a vibrant and active market street, filtering through into smaller courtyards that are already present between the buildings lining the street. The courtyards will contain semi-public functions for restaurants, bars and other social programmes. On the eastern portion of the precinct, a didactic zone is proposed which exaggerates the current programming of the buildings in the area. Here, small courtyards are also created but serve a more private purpose by accommodating for the schools in the surrounding buildings. The many rooftops are integrated into the precinct through a third tier of semi-public space. This allows for a range of functions such as outside movie theatres and event spaces to be made use of. A grading from public to semi-public, semi private and private is created in the precinct. Particular sites were chosen for intervention, as a means of supporting and contributing towards the new civic precinct.

Legends

- Educational
 - Community
 - Commercial
 - Residential
 - Cultural
 - Transport
 - Nightlife
 - Commercial Offices
 - Health
 - Government
 - Craft Business
 - Religious
 - Weekend Activity
 - Week Activity
 - Night Activity
 - Day Activity
-
- Fenced Off
 - Accessible But Unused
 - Active
 - Inaccessible Green Space
 - Open Green Space
 - Trees
 - Existing Arcades
 - Proposed Arcade
 - Active edge
 - Exothermic: Release energy in the city
 - Inactive Edge
 - Endothermic: Removes energy from the city
 - Taxi Rank
 - BRT Stops
 - Taxi Stops
 - Taxi Routes
 - BRT Routes
 - Heavy Pedestrian Traffic

The mapping analysis recognises the existing spatial conditions, building edge conditions, use, land use, type of private or public activities, and the public flows and energy surrounding spaces within Church str.

This study maps the various activities that provide energy at night, day, week and weekend, giving insight into the spatial use of Church str. Overlapping the energy flows of people in and around buildings, and shows whether the buildings edge conditions and there programmes are exothermic (giving energy), or endothermic (taking energy) from Church str. The diurnal / nocturnal, and week weekend study shows how high energy spaces may fluctuate during night and day activities or visa versa.

Examination looks at transport networks and interchanges, the accessibility or inaccessibility of public and green spaces, as well studying the traditional pedestrian arcades that cut through Pretoria's Long City Blocks, also framing the rituals of people, and lastly it provides insight in possible cross-pollination of activities to revitalise Church Str.



Figure 2.21 Mapping of existing conditions of the precinct. (Source: Bester et al. 2015)

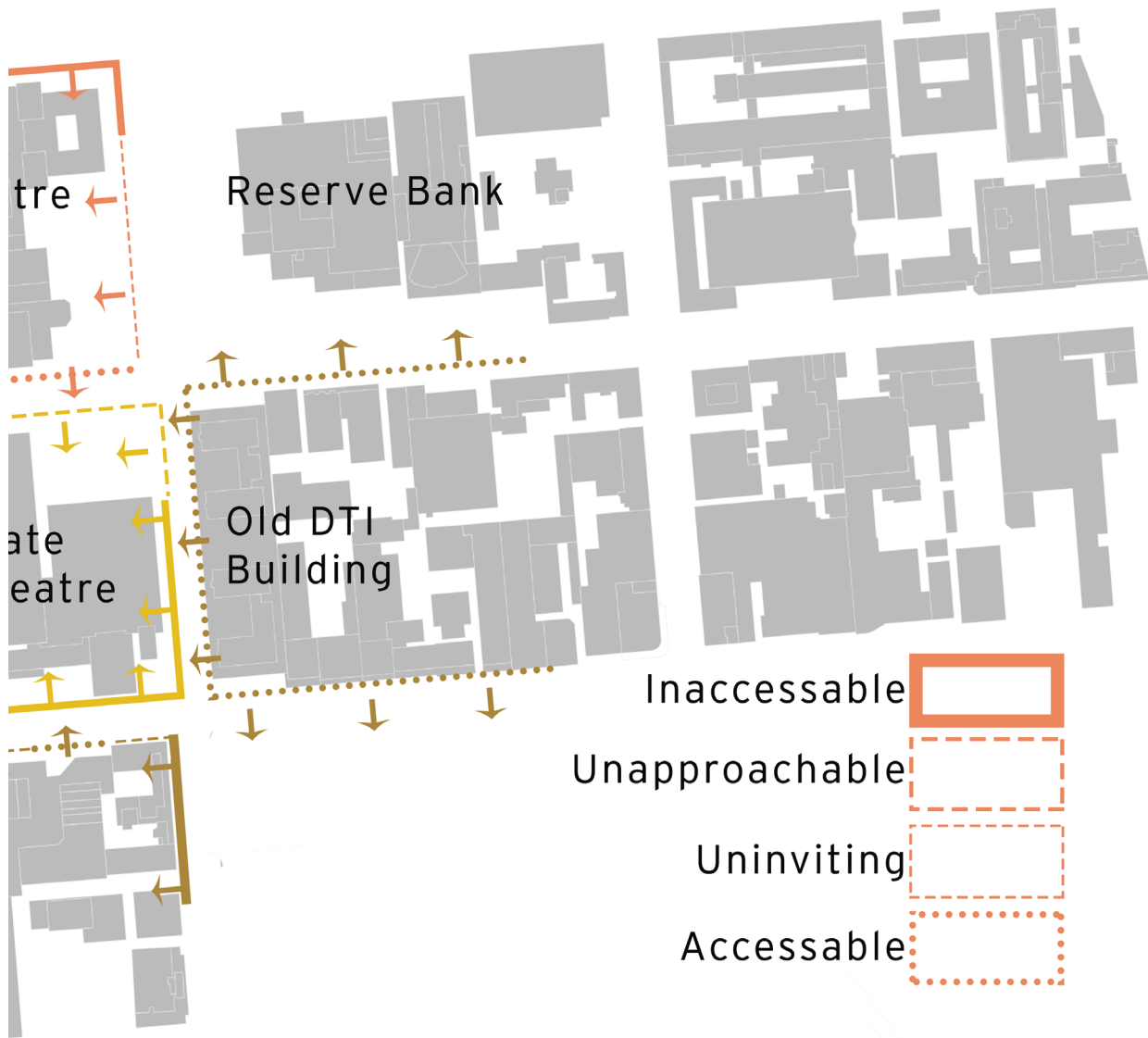


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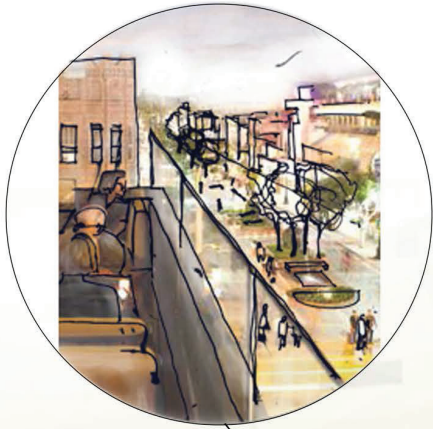


Figure 2.22 dominant, insular buildings of the context. (Source: Bester et al. 2015)

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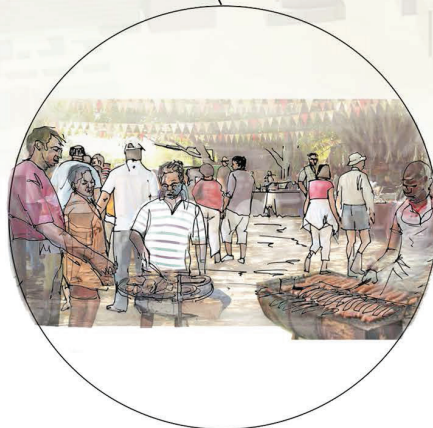
Roof Top Social Space



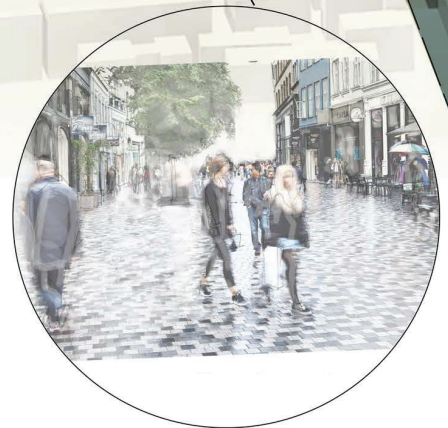
Intimate Social Space in The City's In-between Space



Designated Eating Space within Sammy Marks



Braai Space for Vendors
(Pedestrianised Street)



Commercial Street
(Pedestrianised Street)

Figure 2.23 Urban Proposal: A cultural precinct in proposed. (Source: Bester et al. 2015)

Public Staircase to Newly Proposed Munitoria Building



First Order - Cultural



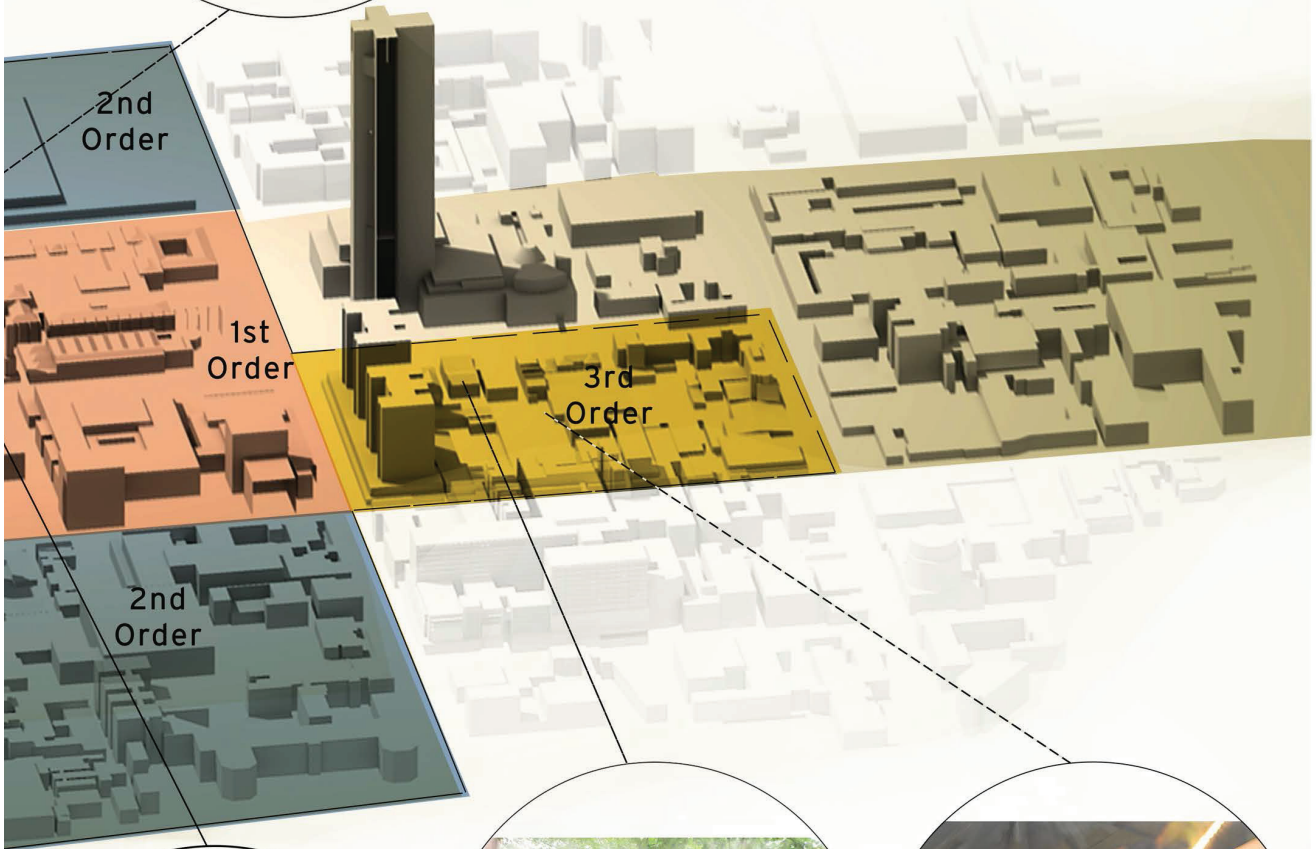
Second Order - Civic



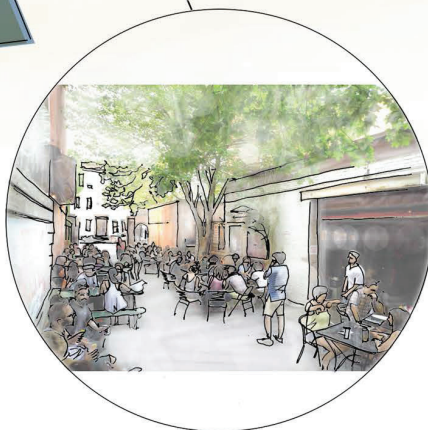
Third Order - Cultural / Didactic



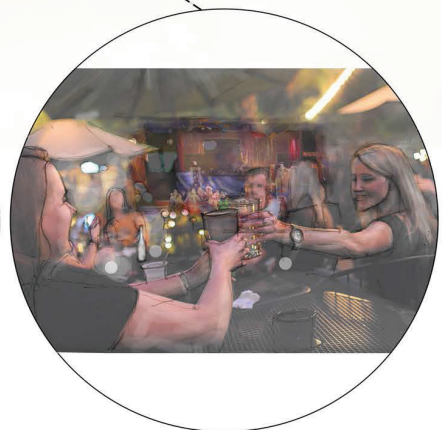
Supporting Colour - Commercial



Space of Repose on Ngoyi Square



Intimate Social Space in The City's In-between Space



Intimate Social Theatre Space The City's Inverted Space





Figure 2.24 Site allocations for group members. (Source: Bester et al. 2015)



Marlette

- | Continuation of pedestrian arcades
- | Situated on the threshold of the Cultural, Civic and Didactic Precincts
- | Mediates surrounding programmes
- | Negotiates contesting architecture

Tian

- | Programmatically the "Backstage" of State Theatre
- | Connects the Cultural and Didactic Precinct
- | Continuation of pedestrian arcade
- | Mediates two extremely different urban scales

Lillian Ngoyi
Square

Women's Living Memorial

State Theatre

ABSA Tower

PRETORIUS STREET

Retail and
office block

SITE

Department
of Justice

The Tramshed

Parking



Figure 2.25 Site locality NTS.
(Source: Author 2015)

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THE SITE

Located on Pretorius Street, directly opposite the new museum building, an urban void exists between the Momentum and Pretmed buildings. Used as a parking lot for the surrounding buildings, the site has an indeterminate nature. It can only be assumed that the original intentions for the site were never realised, leaving the site to exist in this awkward in-between state. The Women's Forum is located in this interstitial urban space. The

Department of Justice is based in the two buildings that border the site, allowing the Women's Forum to operate alongside the governmental department that addresses many women's issues in South Africa. A network of existing pedestrian arcades are found around the site, providing a good opportunity for continuation of the public, pedestrian realm by creating a connected movement path through the site.

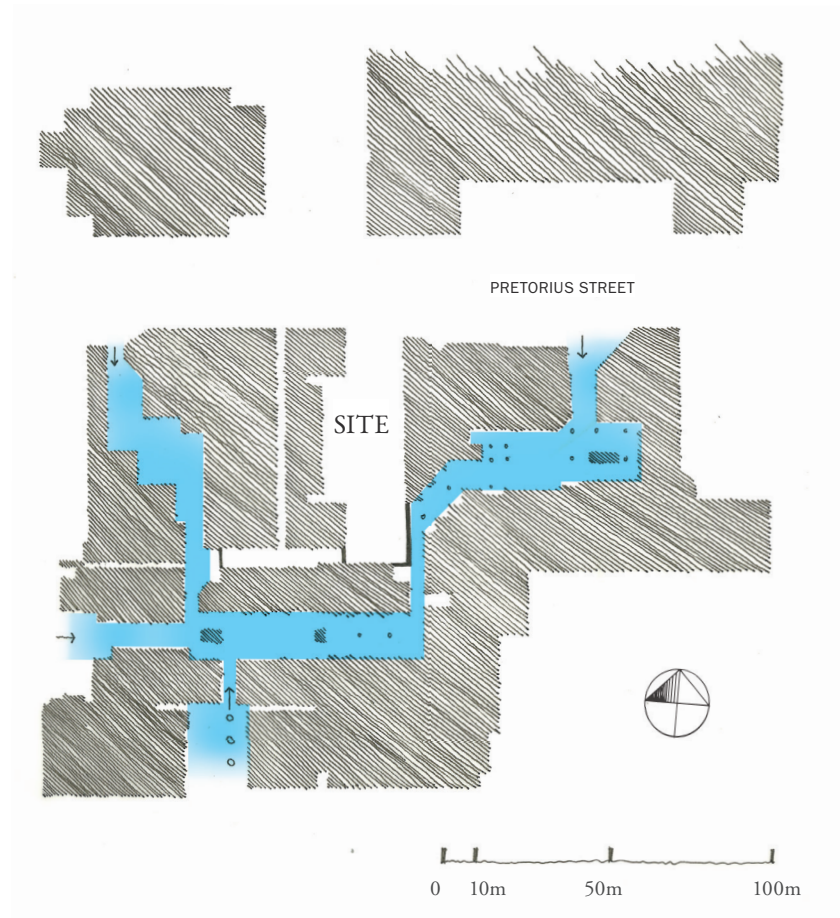


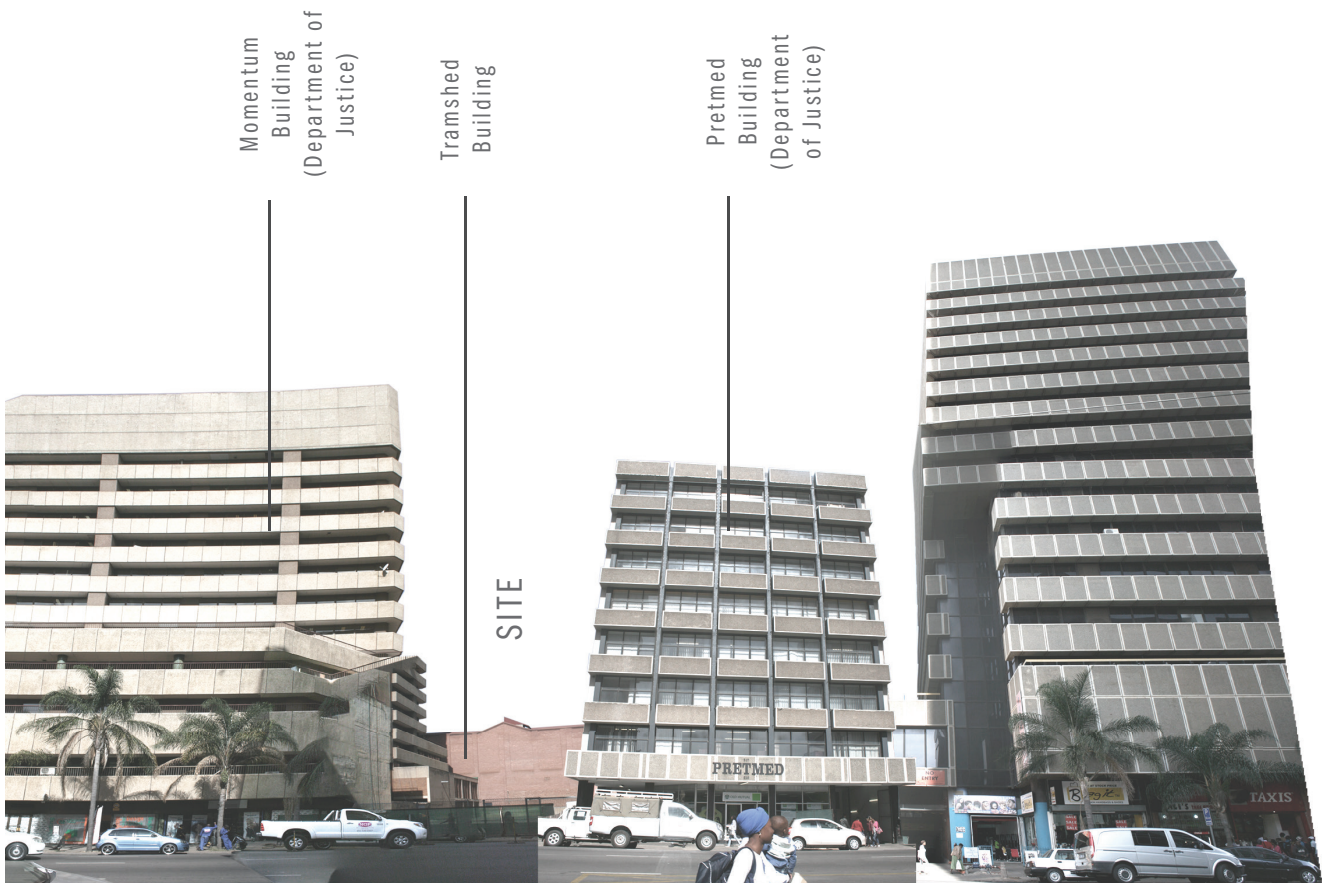
Figure 2.26 Arcade network on Pretorius Street. (Source: Author 2015)

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Figure 2.27 The southern edge of Pretorius Street. (Source: Author, 2015)

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ABSA Tower

Women's
Living
Memorial



Figure 2.28 The northern edge of Pretorius Street. (Source: Author, 2015)

PLACE



State Theatre



PLACE

SITE: THE URBAN VOID

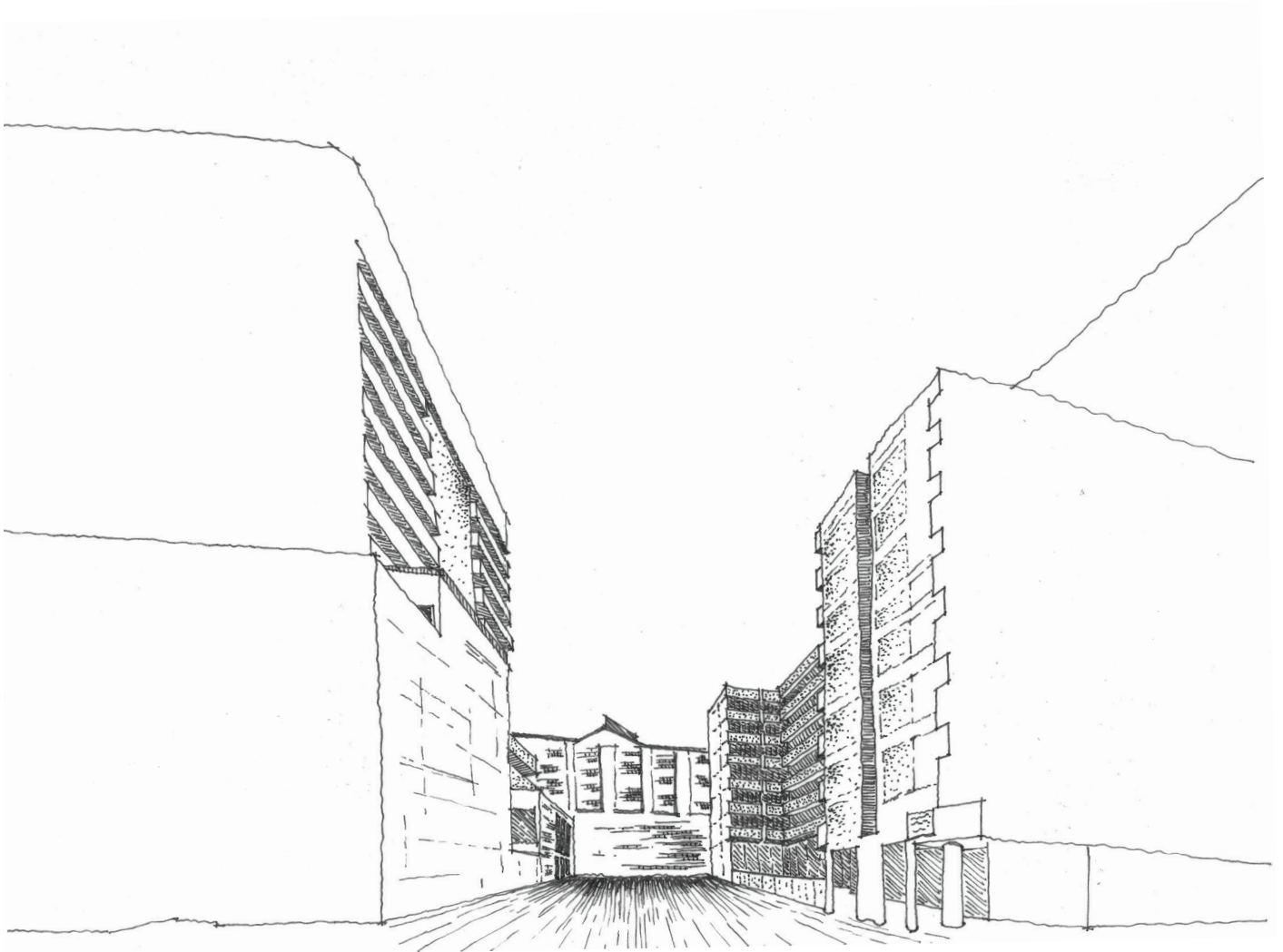


Figure 2.29 The Urban Void: An 'Other' Space. (Source: Author, 2015)

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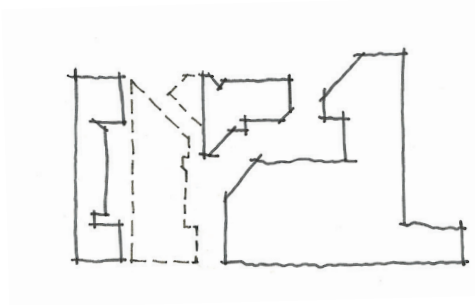


Figure 2.30 Dashed line indicating the footprint of the demolished building where the site is now. It contained a pedestrian arcade that met up with the arcade in the Momentum Building.

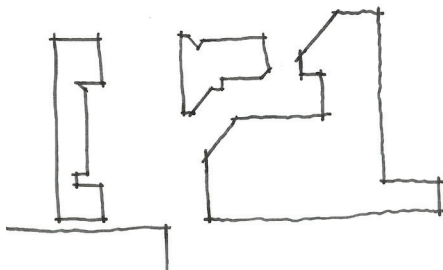


Figure 2.31 The site as it exists today. A thin masonry wall separates the pedestrian arcade from the site. (Source: Author)

The site identifies as a significant non-space within the city; an 'other' space; currently existing in limbo. Fragments exist on site, layered over time. The site was originally occupied by the western extension to the Momentum Building which has since been demolished (Department of Architecture Archives, Accessed 11 March 2015) but disconnected intentions for surrounding buildings have led to the creation of this indeterminate void within the urban fabric. Due to this lack of definition, the walls behave as membranes rather than walls between buildings. Unfinished intentions leak into the space. These membranes that line the borders contribute to its isolated nature. It is at these indeterminate borders to the site that the proposed building will puncture into the surrounding context. The qualities of the urban void are explored through documenting the fragments that compose its boundaries.

PLACE

Figure 2.32 The Urban Void



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The 'second' facade of the Pretmed building creates the western edge to the site. Here, the possibility for dialogue space between new and existing is possible.

Figure 2.33 Figure 5.4: Western edge of the site. The 'second' facade of the PretMed building faces into the site.



PLACE



The southern-most edge creates the opportunity for public movement through the site. Puncturing through this wall creates a connection to the existing network of arcades that run through the city block.



Figure 2.34 Southern edge of the site.
The masonry wall of the Tramshed building
(Source: Author, 2015)

PLACE



The eastern border of the site is comprised of a variety of different walls, as a consequence of the demolition of a portion of the building. The unfinished character of the walls with the lack of intention for future use give the walls a membrane-like quality between inside and outside.



Figure 2.35 Eastern edge of the site. Unfinished concrete walls behave as membranes between the interior and exterior (Source: Author, 2015)