

# 03

## CONTEXT

BACKGROUND.  
MAPPING : EXISTING IDENTITY.  
MARABASTAD ; A LEGACY OF UTOPIAS.  
MAPPING : OCCUPATIONAL IDENTITY OF SPACE.  
CONCLUSION.

## Background.

The study area for this dissertation is Marabastad, which is located in the north-west quadrant of Pretoria's central business district (Fig. 23).

Marabastad remains as one of the last multicultural districts which were not completely demolished during the Apartheid regime under the Group Areas Act. It is a symbol of a past where different cultural communities lived side by side before they were forcibly removed to separate regions in Pretoria.

The boundaries of the study area are the Steenhovenspruit which lies on the eastern side and forms a natural barrier between the central business district (CBD) and Marabastad. Esk'ia Mphahlele Drive creates a distinct boundary on the western side of the study area. Belle Ombre station and rail tracks on the northern side separate Marabastad and the Daspoort sewage works. Heroes Acre cemetery and WF Nkomo on the southern side forms the last barrier between Marabastad and the rest of Pretoria's CBD (Fig. 24).



Fig.23. Locality map of Pretoria and Marabastad.

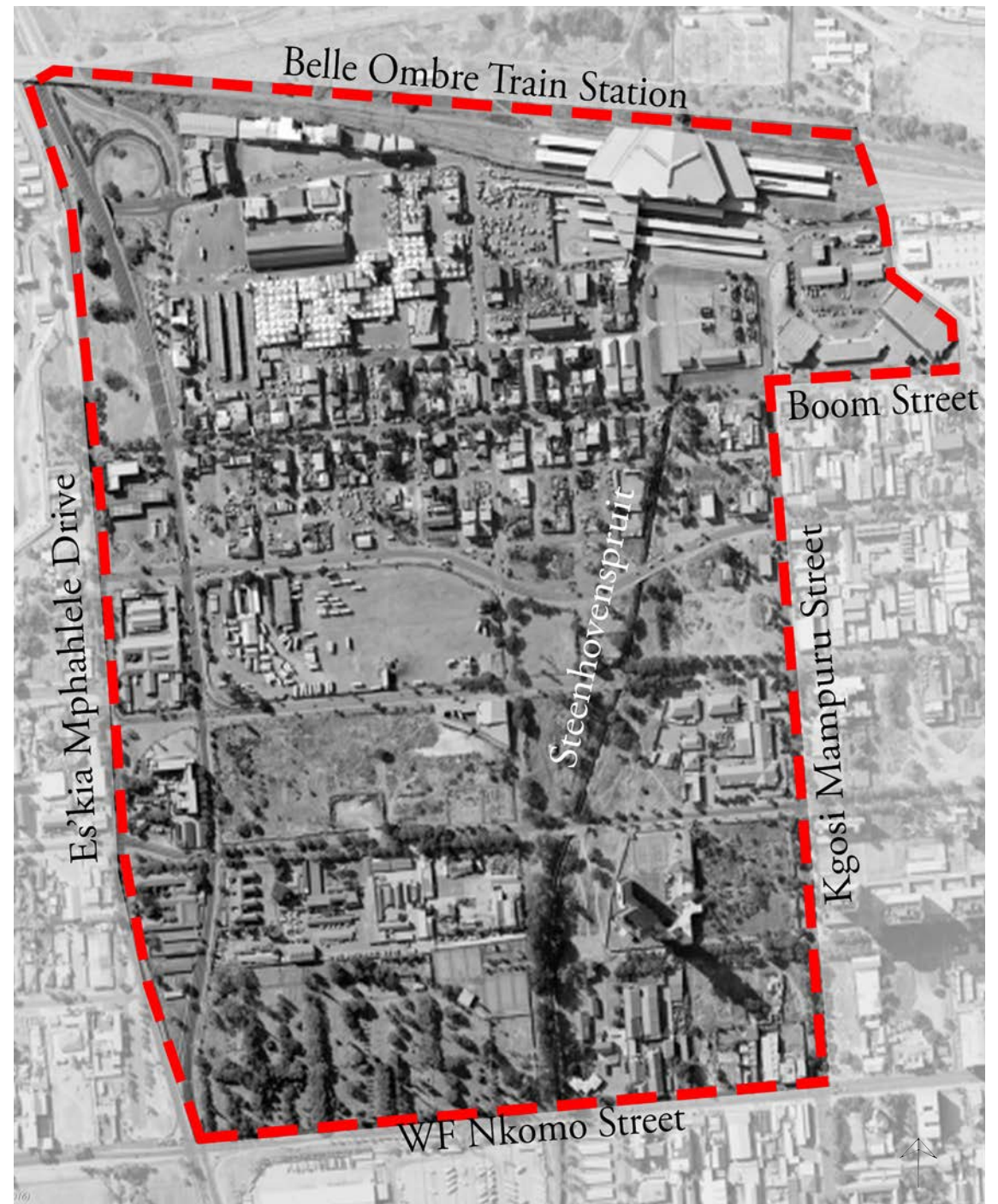


Fig.24. Boundaries of the study area



Marabastad's story began when the first settlers who found refuge and resources along the edges of the spruit, and formed a community under which they were named Maraba's Kraal. The name being later adopted in history as Marabastad once the Boer Republic founded Pretoria as its Capital, and developed informal settlements for workers to settle along the western edges of the Steenhovenspruit. Today, Marabastad serves as a gateway into the heart of Pretoria's CBD and connects various townships on the outskirts to employment further in the CBD. The daily influx of people through the various transport nodes have become one of the defining characteristics of Marabastad.

With a rich and diverse history, Marabastad remains a multicultural and multilayered urban precinct of Pretoria. The various restrictive laws and policies imposed by the Apartheid regime still affects the community at large who cannot progress in an environment that cannot be maintained, serviced and has laid the foundations for unlawful activity. This being said, Marabastad can be seen as an opportunity, rather than a wasteland, and the history of such a place can become the foundation of a Post-Apartheid South African community.

"Summarised from *Marabastad, A legacy of Utopias*  
*Group Vision Book*(Hough,Nicha,Patrick, 2016)"



Fig.25. View down Boom Street.



## Mapping : Existing

The following images illustrate the existing physical characteristics of Marabastad. These attributes that make up Marabastad are a direct result of its history and the various periods of change. The history of Marabastad and how it came to be is documented in the urban vision document, *Marabastad, a legacy of Utopias*.

The identity of Marabastad tells a story of a layered and diverse past, and its identity manifests in those that reside in the area as well as in the buildings, the streets and the sidewalks. In McLeod's (1997: 25) critique on Henri Lefebvre's manifesto, *Le Droit a la ville (The Right to the City)*, she mentions his reaction to the recent urbanisation in 1968 France with new towns and peripheral developments. McLeod writes, *he called for greater urbanity, centrality, street life, residential participation, and opportunities for spontaneity. It was necessary, he believed to see the city as a collective oeuvre, an ongoing act of human creation, diverse but unified. Lefebvre appreciated the need for symbolic monuments and public space, but condemned false picturesqueness and nostalgia.*

Marabastad contains many of these qualities that Lefebvre mentions; the street life, the urbanity, the spontaneity, the interaction of the users of the space. Marabastad is a portion of the greater CBD where urban space and public space is one, but it is hidden beneath the facade of deterioration, neglect and bureaucracy. The following maps illustrate the tangible components that give Marabastad its identity.



Fig.26. Weathering of a wall along Boom Street.

## Site Boundaries.



Fig.27.Site boundaries.

Five main roads that intersect and separate the urban grid with high volumes of traffic following through the site are Bloed Street, Struben Street, Johannes Ramokhoase, Esk'ia Mphahlele Drive and 7th Street.

The Steenhovenspruit becomes a natural barrier to the east. Belle Ombre station railway line cuts the site off from the north. These barriers have fragmented the once tight knit fine grain urban fabric.

## Vacant land and green space.



Fig.28.Vacant & green space.

The dashed lines highlight the vast open blocks that were demolished during the Group Areas Act of 1960. The buildings along the edge of Grand and Bloed Street that were demolished was due to the high upgrade scheme of the 1970's are highlighted in orange.

The canalised spruit shown in blue, separates the CBD and Marabastad has potential to become a green lung within the urban fabric. Existing Jazz Park is poorly located on a busy street edge. Due to its location and proximity to the spruit, Jazz Park has potential in being an urban park.



## Treescapes and public spaces.



Fig.29. Treescapes and parks.

The main avenues with trees lines are indicated above. The main tree avenue is currently Boom Street and Johannes Ramokhoase Street. The only main public park is Jazz Park, which is under utilised at the moment.

Steenhovenspruit has potential in becoming a green lung, although it is currently in an unsafe state due to lack of maintenance

## Use of the vacant space.



Fig.30. Use of vacant lots

Various informal activities that occur in the vacant areas, and the types of activities that occur indicated by the various blocks.

- Legend**
- bathing in the steenhovenspruit
  - informal trading/services under trees
  - informal social spaces under trees
  - cooking along the steenhovenspruit
  - taxi holding areas
  - outdoor religious spaces

### Informal trade.

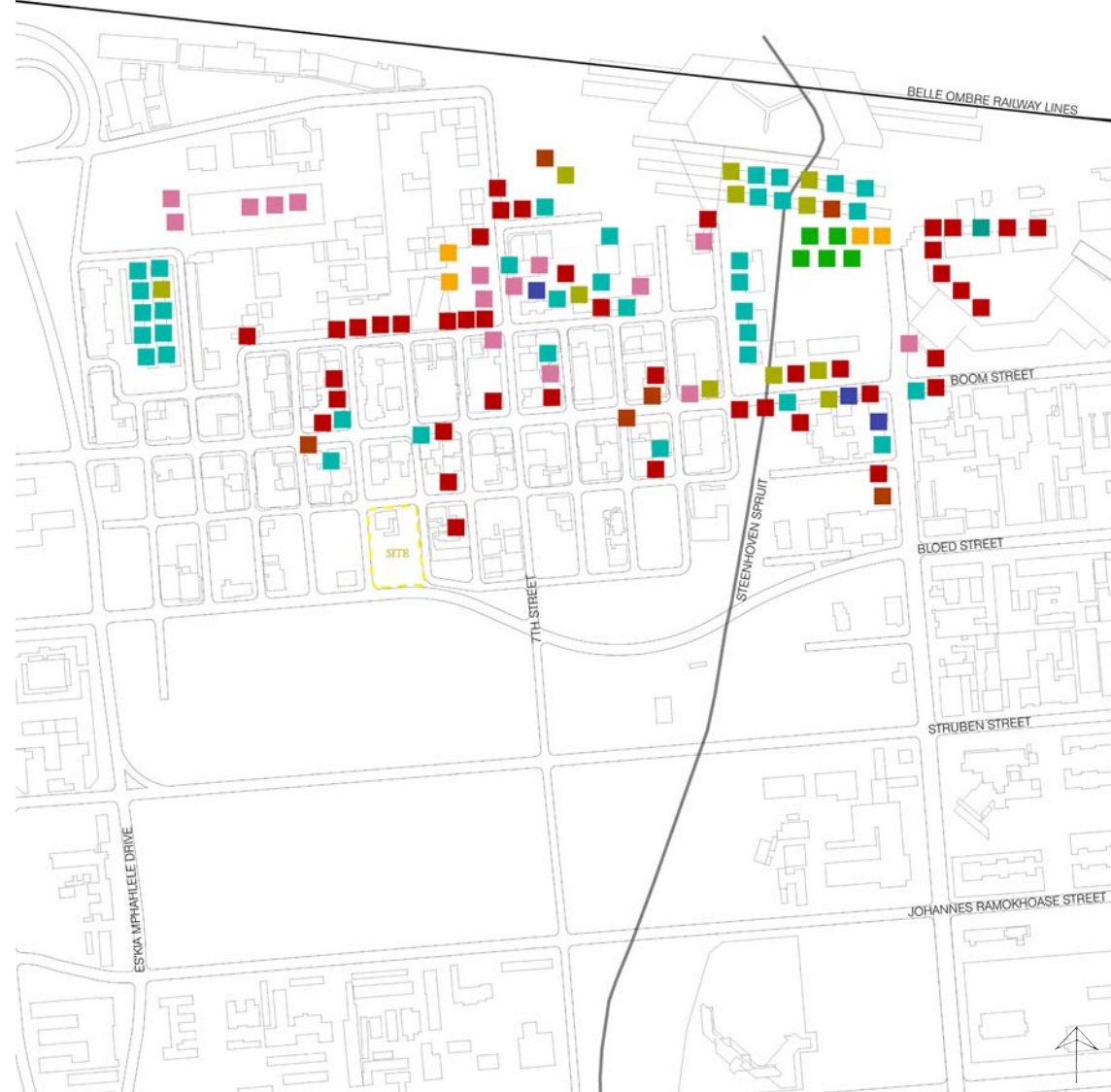


Fig.31. Informal trade zones.

- Legend**
- meals (pap & vleis)
  - airtime vendors
  - fruit & veg
  - clothing
  - open air butchery
  - electronics & music
  - snacks, mapaniworms & cigarettes
  - services
  - cold drink vendors

The various types of informal trade mapping across Marabastad. Informal traders and vendors form an integral part of the fabric of Marabastad.

### Movement networks.

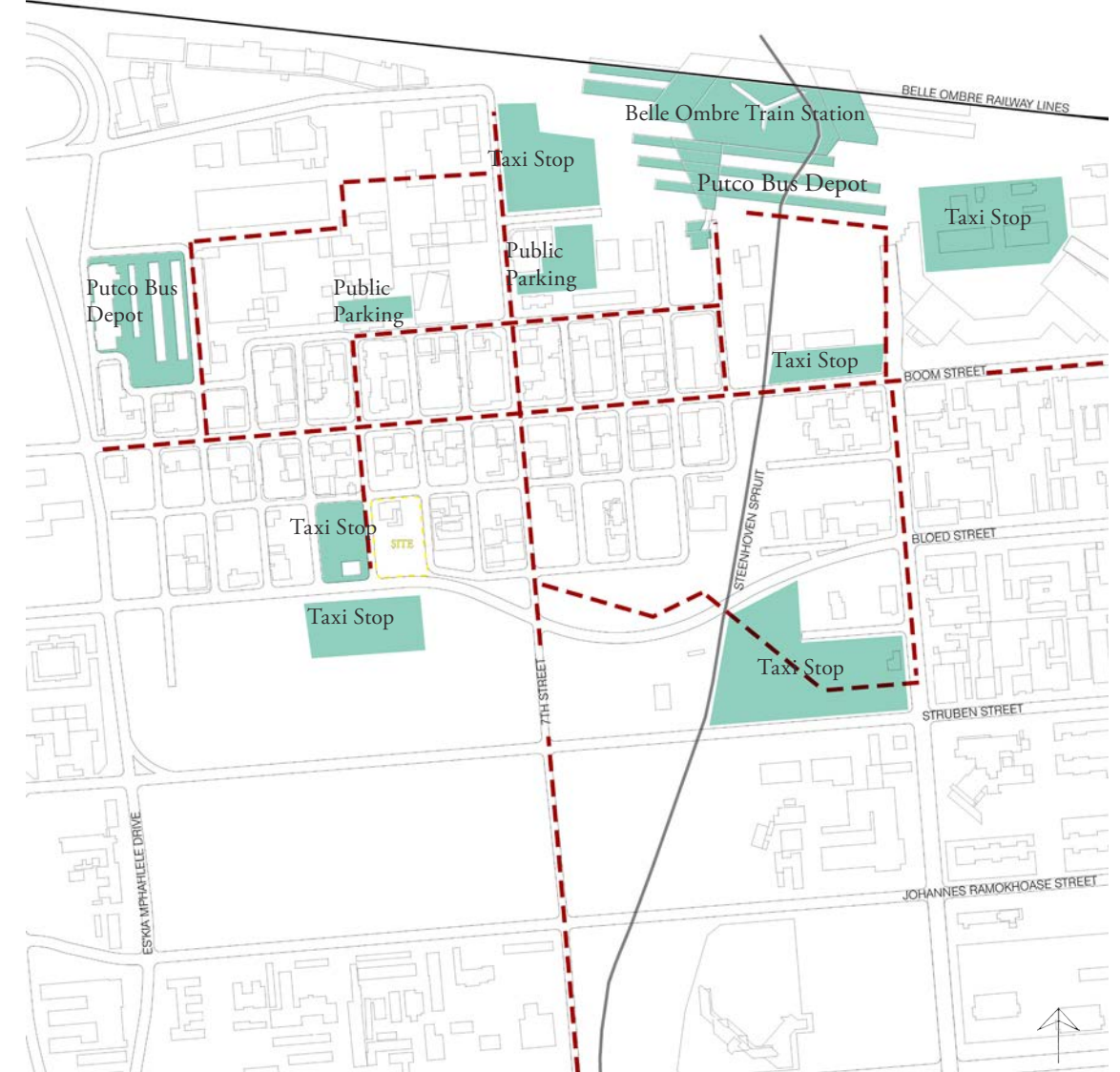


Fig.32. Movement Networks

The various types of public transport and as well the main pedestrian routes. The dashed line indicates main pedestrian movement routes around Marabastad.

The highlight areas indicate the various public transport nodes; bus terminals, train stations, or taxi drop off and pick up areas.





Fig.33. Urban vision collage

## Marabastad A legacy of Utopias

A brief summary of *Marabastad; A legacy of Utopias* (Hough, Nicha, Patrick, 2016), is the group's urban vision document. The separate document does an in depth study of Marabastad in order to present a vision for this dissertation to respond to.

In order to understand how Marabastad came to its current state, we started from the beginning and saw that it was a place of opportunity, using "Utopia" as a lens to understand why and how certain time periods affected the urban fabric of Marabastad.

The definition of Utopia that was used in order to set up the mapping was "an impractical scheme for social improvement."

The mapping revealed that Marabastad remains to be a place of opportunity. The vision used Michele Foucault's (1984) theory of Heterotopias. Utopias are the impractical scheme, while Heterotopia describes places and spaces that function in non-hegemonic conditions. Each of the six principles of Foucault Heterotopia were used to analyse the site, and produced the vision as seen. Fig 39 - 44 illustrate the various capacitors that form part of the final vision for Marabastad illustrated in fig 45.

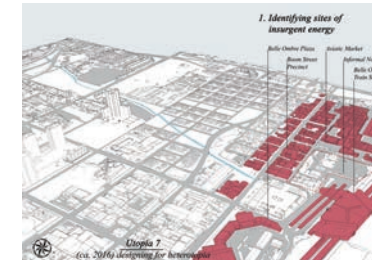


Fig.34. Insurgent Energy.

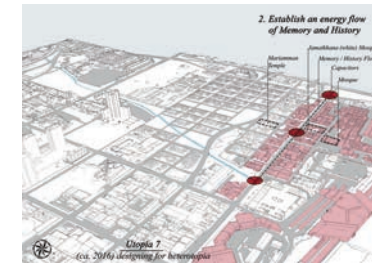


Fig.35. Memory & History Flow.

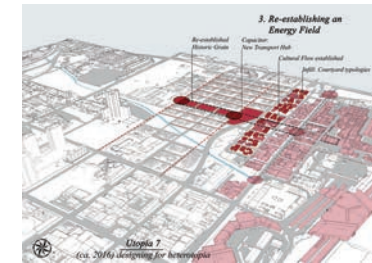


Fig.36. Cultural Flow.

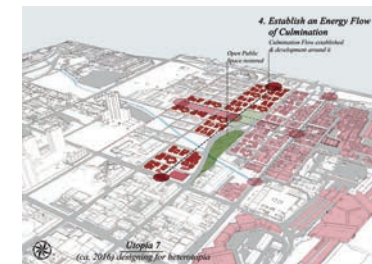


Fig.37. Culmination Flow.

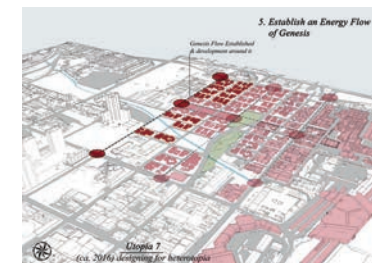
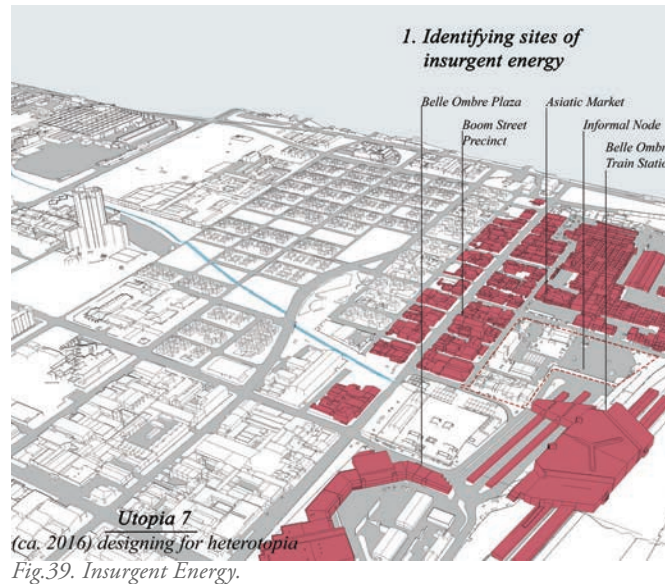


Fig.38. Genesis Flow.



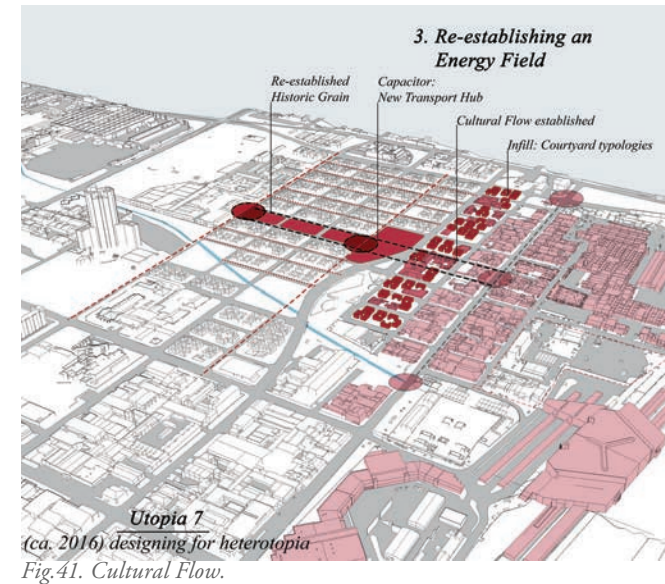
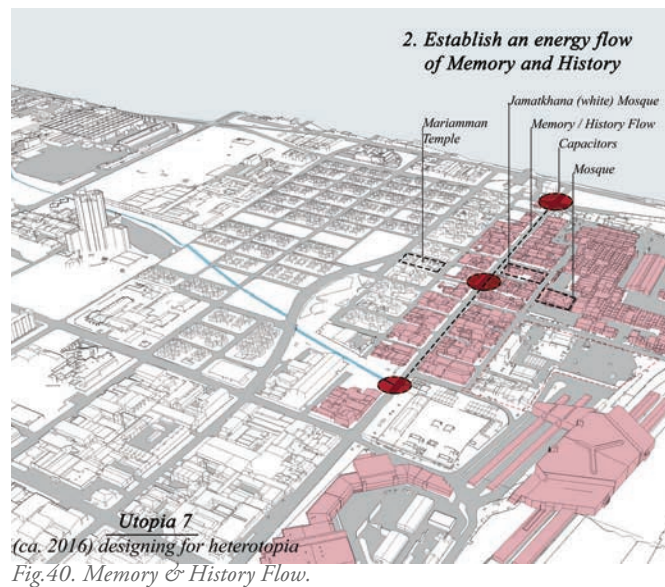
Identifying sites for insurgent energy.

The first principle of designing for heterotopia forms part of an incrementally phased approach of testing. Ruins of utopia are identified and selected based on their latent potential to facilitate insurgent growth (Hough,Nicha,Patrick, 2016).



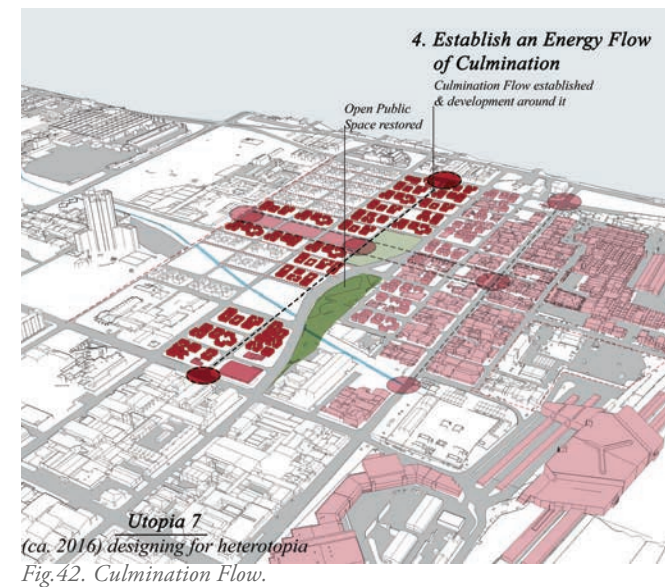
Establishing the Memory and History route.

Through the insertion of capacitors, insurgent energies are conducted and condensed to strengthen the flow of energy along prominent routes within Marabastad. Memory, history, and culture are enhanced and exposed through the resulting architectural intervention (Hough,Nicha,Patrick, 2016).



Establishing the Cultural flow route.

By restoring the historical grain of Marabastad, the urban vision intends to disperse the energy associated with the memory and history flow further south through a series of pedestrian streets. The formation of a cultural flow between the Boom Street precinct and the Heroes Acre cemetery intends to reinforce this energy dispersal by forming connections between Marabastad and WF Nkomo Street (Hough,Nicha,Patrick, 2016).



Establishing the Culmination flow route.

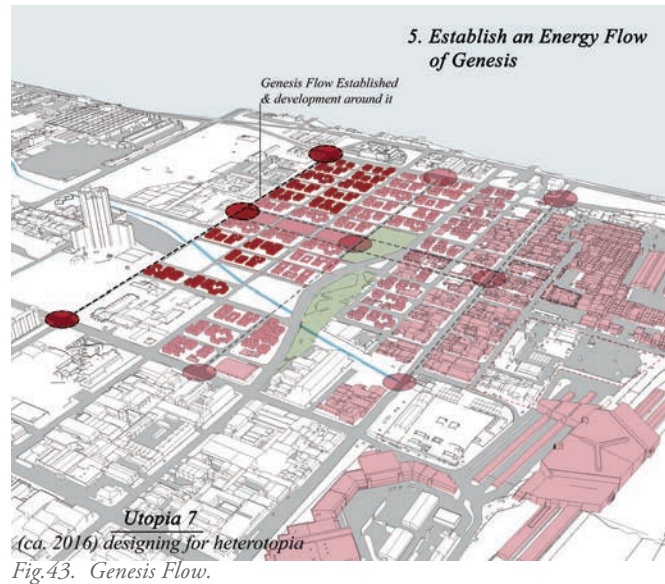
The intention of the urban vision is to focus development along the street edge where insurgent energy flow is seen to be at its highest. In developing a typology for future development, incremental growth begins on opposite sides of an energy flow closest to insurgent capacitors, and later extending in both north-south and east-west directions. The resultant energy flows begin to culminate into new sites of latent potential for release back into the network, thus strengthening and enhancing existing energy flows.

Through the creation of a culmination flow between insurgent capacitors, the significance of the open public space of Jazz Park is restored and the resultant flow of insurgent energy leads to the development of modal interchange (Hough,Nicha,Patrick, 2016).



Establishing the Genesis flow route.

A genesis flow, established by the vision, intends to allow new members of the insurgent citizenry to establish and promote their position in the city through access to skills training, education and housing (Hough, Nicha, Patrick, 2016).



Establishing the Civic flow route.

The final stage of the incremental approach adopted by the urban vision results in a civic energy flow where Marabastad becomes woven back into the fabric of Pretoria through the common need of the citizenry to express their civic right to the city. Open public spaces provide a platform to escape, demonstrate, celebrate, or seek relief. Additionally, the implementation of a wetland scheme in Princes Park restores the Steenhovenspruit as a natural public element (Hough, Nicha, Patrick, 2016).

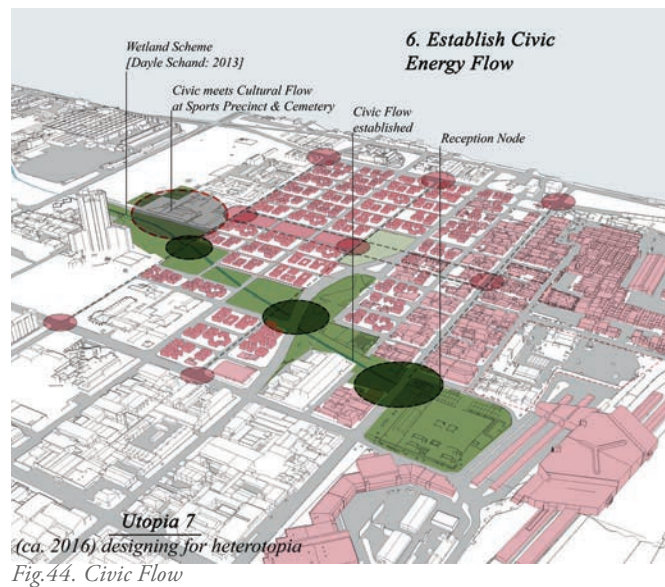


Fig.45. Final site map with the various layers illustrating the urban vision for Marabastad.



## Mapping : Occupational Identity

The following picture essay will illustrate the way space is being occupied in Marabastad, as the way that the users of Marabastad occupy space forms a major part in its identity and its *everydayness*.

The following forms of occupation will be analysed:

- Lost Identity
- Cultural Identity
- Occupation of the Storefront.
- Occupation of the Pavement: Retail.
- Occupation of the Pavement: Social.
- Occupation of the Open Space.
- Building Identity on Boom Street.

McLeod's (1997: 14-15) writes that according to Henri Lefebvre, *everyday life embodies at once the most dire experiences of oppression and the strongest potentialities for transformation. The oppressions of daily life cannot be contained by bureaucratic regimentation, that it harbours the desire that generates transformation. Nature, love, simple domestic pleasures, celebrations, and holidays all erode any prospect of total, static systematization.*

The following mapping exercise indicates that these various occupations of space aren't always in line with the norm, but they present a unique and almost revolutionary stance when it comes to the occupation of space in Marabastad. These differences add to the character and the identity of place.



Fig.46. Occupying the pavement.



## Lost Identity of Marabastad built fabric.

The vacant blocks are reminders of the result of the Group Area act of 1960 and as well the highway upgrade scheme.

The result of these two acts and schemes are the vast open unoccupied lots between Johannes Ramokhoase Street and Bloed Street as seen in figures 47 to 50.

These vacant pieces of land have become taxi stops where the drivers would take a break, as well as wash and repair their vehicles.

Various religious groups have also been seen using the open land over the weekends (refer to figure 30.)

The area between Johannes Ramokhoase Street and Struben Street is used as a dump site as shown in figure 50, but the main function of the vacant land is to serve as a reminder of the identity lost during Apartheid and the laws and acts passed during the era.



Fig.47. Vacant land between Bloed and Struben Street.



Fig.48. Vacant space along Bloed street.



Fig.49. View standing on Struben street.



Fig.50. Dump site between Struben and Johannes Ramokhoase street.

## Cultural Identity

Religion, Theatre, and Jazz. These are not just buildings in Marabastad's urban fabric, but rather they represent fragments of a past that was a multicultural environment .

The Jamat Khana mosque (fig. 51) and Miriammen temple (fig. 52) are reminders of this rich cultural and spiritual history.

The theatres (fig. 53 and 54) were once symbols of community centres. These were one of the few public social spaces for nonwhites. Steve's record bar (fig. 55) is one of the last surviving remnants of a space that is true to its heritage by providing a service that they did since opening.

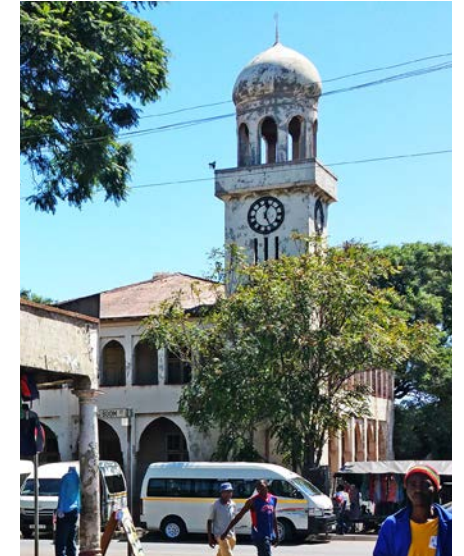


Fig.51. Jamat Khana Mosque.



Fig.52. Miriammen Temple.



Fig.53. Empire Theatre.



Fig.54. Orient Theatre.



Fig.55. Steve's Record Bar.



## Occupation of the storefront.

The way that narrow and shallow window fronts have been converted into small rentable stores have become a main part of the way space is shaped and occupied along Boom Street. In fig. 56 it shows the possibilities of how one can use space to its maximum potential.

The converted window fronts serve as storage and display space. During trading hours, vendors set up their stalls which spill out onto the pedestrian walkway. Fig. 57 shows how display stands and boxes spill out onto the pavement.

The layering and blurring of space between consumer and trader makes shopping a more interactive experience. Fig. 57 to 61 indicates the conversion of the of the window front.

The variety of goods and services that are provided on the edges of the main built structures of Boom Street give an extra dimension to the multifaceted identity of the occupation of space. Fig. 62 shows the steel doors that are inserted into the existing window frame space, which are for security purposes, like the safekeeping of stock.

The storefront or building edge becomes a vital point of exchange between vendor, buyer, and the everyday user of space.

The storefront or display window that is converted into a trading stall might be fixed in terms of built fabric, but it is an ever changing occupation of retailer. As businesses expand, entrepreneurs seek larger spaces to occupy leaving the shop to let for other prospects.



Fig.56. Trading in an existing window front.



Fig.57. Retail and the pavement.



Fig.58. Retail and the pavement.



Fig.59. Retail and the pavement.



Fig.60. Retail and the pavement.



Fig.61. Retail and the pavement.



Fig.62. Steel doors.



## Occupation of the pavement : Retail

Retail and trade, whether it is informal or formal, forms a large part of Marabastad's identity. Main pedestrian routes become the main retail points. Boom Street and adjacent side avenues allow for commerce to flourish.

As shown in the figures 63 to 71, the veranda and building edge becomes the main point of interaction of the entrepreneur and the pedestrian. The exchange of a service or item isn't as important as the manner of HOW the exchange occurs.

All interactions from a business to a social level occur along the sidewalks, under the verandas, among the many shops that spill out on the pavement, or around a raised platform or a column keeping a roof up.

Fig. 63 and 64 illustrate how many of the traders spill out the store onto the sidewalks.

Fig. 65 shows an electrician who uses his retail space as storage space, and the pavement as the workshop.

Fig. 67 illustrates how a mat, a chair and a few essential tools can transform a veranda into a barber shop.

Fig. 68 and 71 illustrates the various ways the edge conditions can be changed and altered according to the various programmes. Fig. 71 shows that various programmes can manifest under the veranda and the colonnade space, from retail space to restaurant space.

There is no clear separation between the storefront occupation and the pavement occupation of space, as both occur between the blurred boundaries of the various thresholds of space. Each blurred boundary becomes a constant exchange between the vendors, between one another and the potential consumer, as well as with the everyday pedestrian walking by.



Fig.63. Pavement as an extension of the shop.



Fig.66. Window shop.



Fig.67. Barber.



Fig.64. Shop owner and the verandah.



Fig.68. Security and retail along the pavement.



Fig.65. Electrician using the pavement as workshop space.



Fig.69. Various edges.



Fig.70. Retail.



Fig.71. Various occupations of the verandah, retail and restaurant space.



## Occupation of the pavement : Social

The pedestrian walkways, pavement edges, overhangs, verandas and columns, create space for social exchanges to occur.

These elements in their simplicity and almost *mundaneness* allow the users of Marabastad to occupy and have social interactions with each other.

Open air restaurants, as an example, make use of the veranda space as a dining space. Shown to in fig. 72 to 74, the dining space provided allows for patrons to stop, buy food and enjoy the conversations along the building edge. The patrons now become observers of those who now walk the streets. The dining spaces, though small and seemingly cramped, offer all the amenities needed for those who are on the go. Options for takeaways or sit down meals, where space is designated for the user to wash their hands before and after the meal, dustbins for trash to be disposed of, and the tables to be cleared for the next round of patrons. These all become the daily rituals for the users of Marabastad.

The columns that are structural elements for the verandas become elements for social interaction. Users would use the column as space to catch up with friend, chat with a vendor, or simply remove themselves from the frantic pace of pedestrian life along the Boom Street pavements.

As seen in fig. 72 and fig. 76 the column becomes a place for shop owners to sit against, which allows for shop owners to interact with pedestrians. These interactions are not always for business, as changes in the ground level plan creates seating opportunities for any user to just stop and catch up. Marabastad is in a constant flux of people moving in and out and these pause spaces allow for users to step off the main pedestrian avenues and become observers of their surroundings. This can be seen in fig. 77 and fig. 78, and the bollard in fig. 79 functions in similar fashion.



Fig.72. Seating



Fig.73. Dining



Fig.74. Dining & social interactions.



Fig.75. Food & social exchange.



Fig.76. Columns & seating.



Fig.77. Raised pavement edge & seating.



Fig.78. Change in pavement level as seating.



Fig.79. Bollard as seating.



## Occupation of the open space.

The consequences of the various laws and acts that were passed during the Apartheid regime are still visible in Marabastad today. The open land that will be analysed here is not the two larger vacant plots between Johannes Ramokhoase Street and Bloed Street, but rather the vacant land between the buildings around Grand and Boom Street.

The available land is occupied by retailers, pop-up makeshift restaurants, service providers such as barbers, electronic repairs and various others. They become parking lots for taxis and private cars as seen in fig. 80 and 83.

The trading stalls, in most cases, are outdoor restaurants or take away spots are erected using the gazebo typology: a makeshift structure using available materials to construct a wall and roof system. We can see these structures in fig. 80 fig. 81, fig. 82 and fig. 86.

The main issue for these types of entrepreneurs is that at day-end, these structures must be able to be folded and packed away. This is illustrated in fig. 81 and fig. 84-86.

The images shown illustrate the various ways in which space is occupied under the tarp structures.



Fig.80. Open land, informal restaurants and car park.



Fig.81. Gazebo.



Fig.82. Informal restaurants.



Fig.83. Taxi stop.



Fig.84. Informal trading stalls.



Fig.85. Various informal trades against solid edges.



Fig.86. Food vendor and her various components.



## Building identity on Boom street.

The buildings on Boom Street are the only artefacts of a time before the group areas act of 1960, and these buildings have been lived in, abandoned, refurbished and used.

Due to a lack of maintenance most of the buildings' external qualities have degraded over time, yet the core essence of the typology is still there.

Maximum height consists of two to three storey buildings, and the buildings are generally face brick facade or plastered with corrugated metal roof sheeting. Low pitched roofs or flat roofs are concealed behind parapets (fig. 90 & 95).

The veranda that is then created beyond the building edge serves several functions from providing shade, serving as an overhang to bring down the scale, and to serve as signage (fig. 89 & 93).

The images show how the edges have been converted into trading units within the building frame. Thresholds are clearly articulated through the changes of surface of ground and ceiling planes.

The columns, whether made from brick, concrete, or steel, start to define the edge between the covered pavements, and the pavement between the road edge (fig. 94 & 96).

The tree line down Boom Street adds to the character of the space, and the trees provide shading during the harsh summer months, as well as allowing for the sun to warm up the street edges during the winter months. These trees also add an extra layer between the different thresholds from street to building edge (fig. 90 & 95).



Fig.87. Empire Theatre adaptive reuse.



Fig.88. Buildings converted into rentable stalls.



Fig.89. Roller shutters as advertising.



Fig.90. The treescape and building height.



Fig.91. Corner edge.



Fig.92. Security.



Fig.93. Flat roofs.



Fig.94. Lallies shabean edge.



Fig.95. Multilayered facade & treescape.



Fig.96. Verandah.



Fig.97. Various pitched roofs.



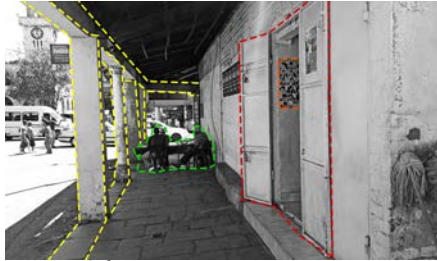


Fig.98. Columns.



Fig.100. Edges.



Fig.102. Veranda space.

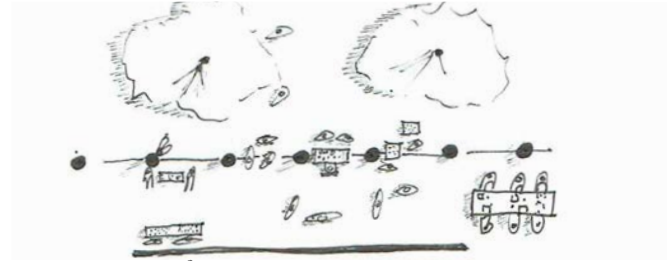


Fig.99. Diagram of activities.

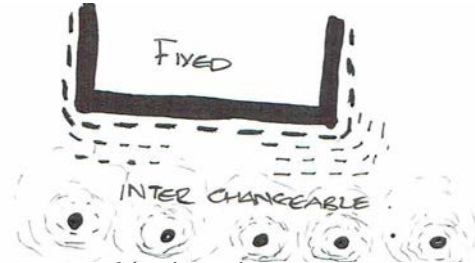


Fig.101. Diagram of the edge conditions

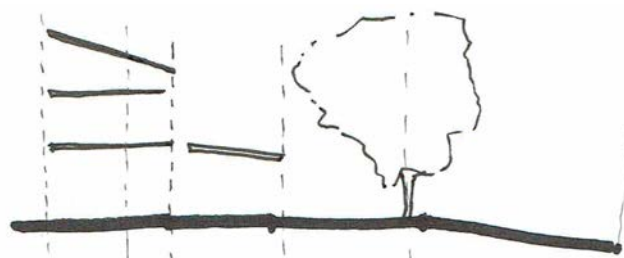


Fig.103. The various horizontal and vertical planes.



Fig.104. Overhang and pavement space.

## Conclusion

The analysis of Boom Street illustrates the various ways space can be occupied. The history of Marabastad has shaped the physical context that we know today. The various layers of Marabastad rich and diverse history has a direct impact on the way space is used and occupied by the *everyday* user.

The various occupations of space that have been analysed are a result of the three main physical characteristics such as the column, the veranda and the edge. These three physical elements come together to form a colonnade. This colonnade is where the occupational identity of Marabastad resides.

Figures 98 to 103 illustrate the elements that allow for an occupation of space. The colonnade allows for the mundane and ordinary tasks that make up the daily rituals of the users to manifest within its various thresholds. This is the *everydayness* of Marabastad.



# 04

## PROGRAMME

ULWALUKO,  
SHOPPING FOR THE AMAKRWALA,  
LADUMA NGXOKOLO,  
TEXTILE INDUSTRY IN SOUTH AFRICA,  
HAND-LOOM WEAVERS  
PROGRAMME,  
TEXTILE ROUTE VISION,  
SITE.