

# A story of Re-integration

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of the People and Place  
of Marabastad

Nicola Patrick





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Ally, Roxy and friends for tea.

The studio team: “Bollard Management”.

**A story of **Re-integration**: of the People and Place of Marabastad**

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Study Field: Regenerative Architecture

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## **Preamble**

This dissertation is intended to be read in conjunction with:

Marabastad: A Legacy of Utopias  
by Sandeep Nicha, David Hough and Nicola Patrick

## **Project Summary**

Programme: A drug rehabilitation centre within a larger network of ancillary programmes.

Site: 25°44'24.63"S 28°10'43.86"E

The setting is bounded by Boom Street to the north and Grand Street to the south (on either side of Steenhovenspruit). To the east there is a cluster of buildings that terminate on Kgosi Mapuru Street. To the west an historic fine-grain block contains the old Empire Theatre and other buildings, and is bounded by 10th Street.

Research Fields: Regenerative Architecture, Human Settlements and Urbanism, and Heritage and Cultural Landscapes.

# Samevatting

Die verhandeling bestaan uit 'n ondersoekende narratief, wat die regte wêreldse probleem van dwelmverslawing benader, 'n probleem wat net 'n klein deel van die komplekse kwessie van haweloosheid verteenwoordig. Die verhaal kyk na dietransformerende herlewings van Marabastad, wat, volgens die skrywer, 'n noodsaaklike rol speel in die herintegrasië van mens en plek. Storievertelling was in die vooruitsig gestel as 'n tegniek om die potensiele regeneratiewe aard van argitektuur, binne die konteks van die groter stedelike raamwerk, te openbaar. Met dié benadering word die komplekse situasie van 'n ontwikkelende gemeenskap met beperkte infrastruktuur en die sosiale kwessies wat daarmee gepaard gaan, beter deur die leser begryp, omdat daar verby die meer abstrakte kwessies gekyk word, na die persoonlike kwessies.

In die skema neem die 'ontwerper' nie die rol van die kenner aan nie, maar plaas haarself in 'n wedersydse rol, wat die behoeftes van die plaaslike bevolking in ag neem. Die naratiewe benadering word 'n middel om beide die ontwerper en die leser in die situasie te plaas, op so manier dat die projek meer toeganklik raak op 'n humanitêre vlak. Die benadering gaan teen die "bo-na-onder" benadering waarvolgens argitektuur en stedelike beplanning so dikwels in 'n gemeenskap toegepas word deur eksterne partye.

Herlewing, as 'n manier om na die potensiaal van 'n omgewing te kyk, gaan verder as gentrifikasie, deur dat die gesondheid en die welstand van die onmiddellike gemeenskap, asook die veerkragtigheid van die landskap, deur die argument as die hoof dialek geopenbaar word.



# Abstract

This dissertation comprises an investigative narrative that approaches the real world issue of drug addiction, which represents only a small part of the complex issue of homelessness. The story looks at the transformative regeneration of Marabastad, which the author feels is essential to the re-integration of people and place. The technique of narration was envisaged to best reveal the potentially regenerative nature of the architecture within the greater urban framework of the area. With this approach, the complex situation of a developing community with limited infrastructure and its associated social problems, is better assimilated by the reader as it looks beyond the more abstract issues, at the personal.

In this scheme, the 'designer' is not assuming the role of expert but is adopting a more reciprocal role, receptive to the needs of the local population. The narrative approach becomes a means of putting both designer and reader into the situation, in such a way that the project can be better accessed on a humanitarian level. This counters the 'top-down' approach to architecture and urban planning that is so often superimposed on a community from the outside. Regeneration as a way of looking at the potential of an environment, goes beyond gentrification in that the health and well being of the immediate community, as well as the resilience of the landscape, becomes the major dialectic revealed by the argument.



# Table of Contents

	<b>Prologue</b>	The Narrative: Introduction	pg 13
	<b>One</b>	The People: Characters of the Narrative	pg 15
	<b>Two</b>	Marabastad: A Legacy of Utopias: Historical Context	pg 17
	<b>Three</b>	From Dystopia's Perspective: Current Context	pg 27
	<b>Four</b>	Networks of Support: Current Social Networks in Context	pg 29
	<b>Five</b>	Regenerative Development: Theoretical Approach to Architecture	pg 35
	<b>Six</b>	Heterotopia: Project Proposal	pg 45
	<b>Seven</b>	Designing for Heterotopia: Urban Context	pg 47
	<b>Eight</b>	The Re-integration of Place: Site Context & Analysis	pg 57
	<b>Nine</b>	The Re-integration of the People: Definition of Client & Approach to Treatment	pg 67
	<b>Ten</b>	The Re-integration of the People: Programme(s) Definition: Spatial & Quality	pg 75
	<b>Eleven</b>	Conceptualising Re-integration: Initial Conceptual Development	pg 91
	<b>Twelve</b>	Designing for Re-integration: Design Development	pg 105
	<b>Thirteen</b>	Realising Re-integration: Final Design & Technical Development	pg 145
	<b>Fourteen</b>	Re-integrated: Conclusion	pg 175
	<b>Epilogue</b>	The Narrative: Reflection	pg 201
	<b>Bibliography</b>	Figures and References	pg 203
	<b>Appendices</b>		pg 215



Daspoort Waste Treatment Plant

Site

Marabastad

Church Square



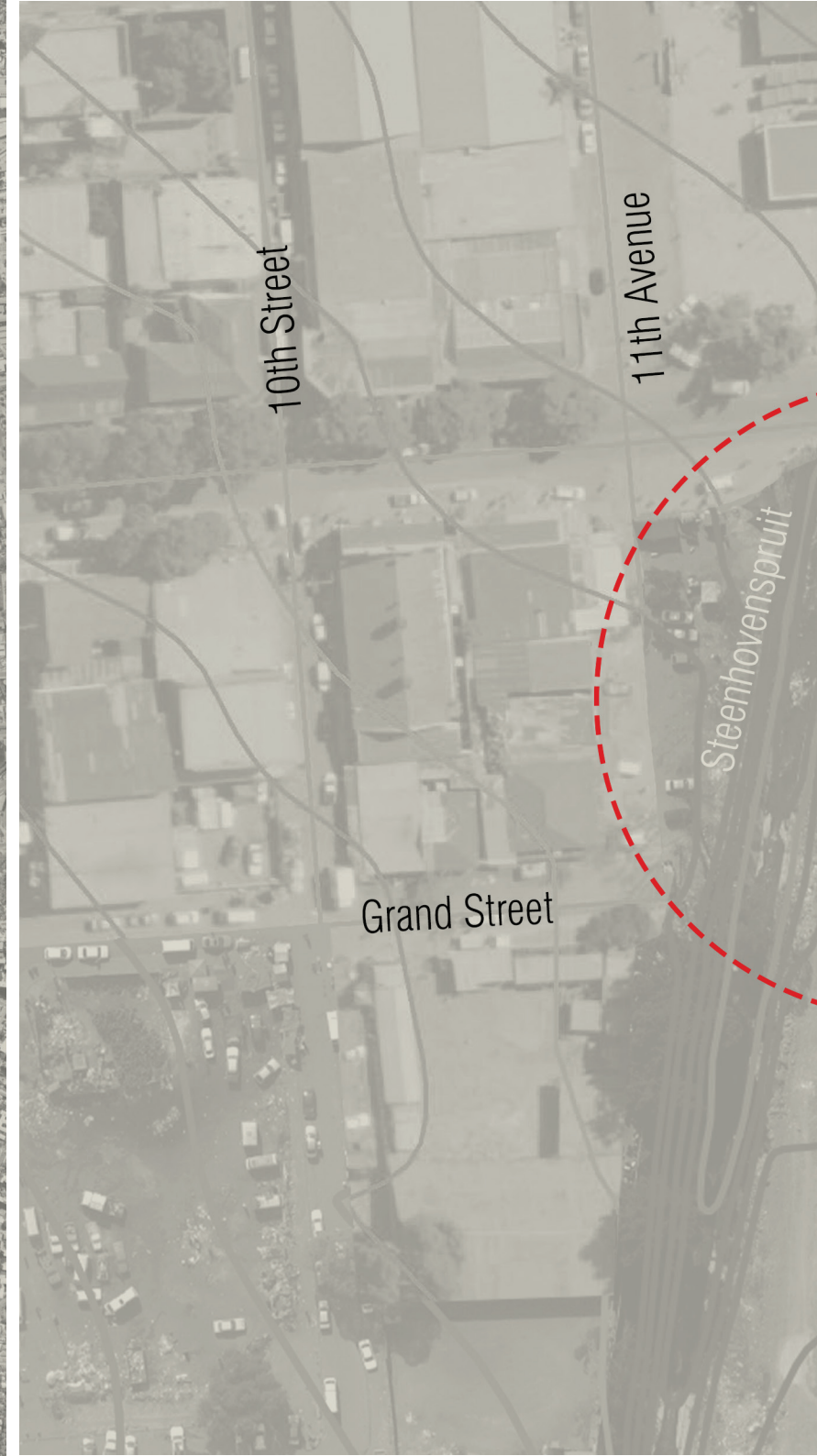
South Africa



Gauteng



Tshwane





# Prologue

## The Narrative

### Introduction

#### Inspiration:

The motivation for this dissertation came about because of the prevalence of drug addiction in our South African cities. This is a real world issue that affects the urban environment and the people living within it.

#### Approach:

This story takes place in one of the many deteriorating and abandoned spaces and buildings in Marabastad, in the City of Tshwane. Marabastad lies to the north-west of Pretoria's CBD<sup>1</sup>, in the province of Gauteng in South Africa<sup>2</sup>. It is the story of a neglected people living in a place, Marabastad, where transformation is needed to encourage a thriving system, which would provide a prospect and refuge for its people.

The setting is bounded by Boom Street to the north and Grand Street to the south (on either side of Steenhovenspruit)<sup>3</sup>. To the east there is a cluster of buildings that terminate on Kgosi Mapuru Street. To the west an historic fine-grain block contains the old Empire Theatre and other buildings, and is bounded by 10th Street.

The real world issue of drug addiction is of paramount importance and requires the adoption of a holistic approach. The role of Architecture in this dissertation is investigative in the light of a narrative of collaboration between health professionals, architects, shop owners, informal traders and the homeless community of Marabastad. The problem of drug rehabilitation, and a proposed facility, needs to be considered as part of a much larger community support network. This dissertation aims to provide a framework in which to speculate on a potentially regenerative architecture, through the introduction of a narrative with fictional characters living in Marabastad. This would allow for the unlocking of the social and environmental systems in terms of which the community of Marabastad must function.

Figure 1: (far left) Locality of Marabastad within the greater context of Tshwane, Gauteng, South Africa (Patrick: 2016)

Figure 2: (left) Locality of the site for the dissertation within the context of Marabastad (Patrick: 2016)

- 1 CBD: Central Business District
- 2 See Figure 1
- 3 See Figure 2





Current Dystopia

Katlego

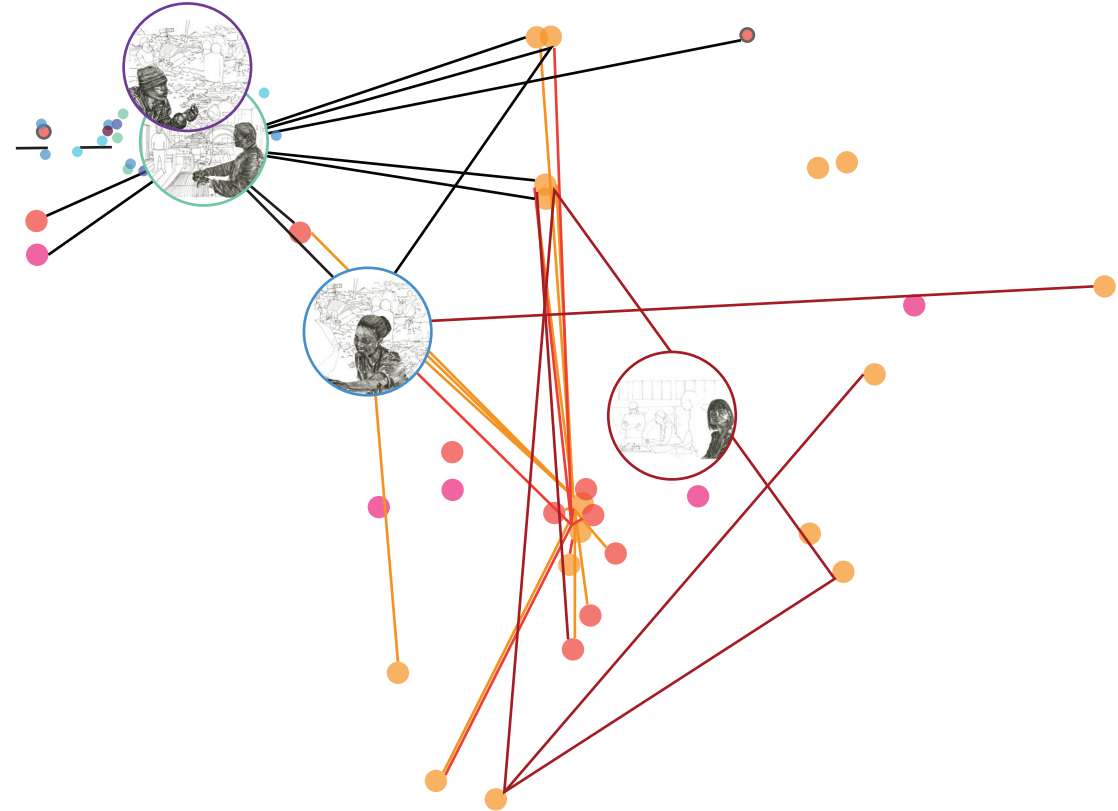
- Born 1987
- Unemployed
- Dwells in the deteriorated spaces of Marabastad
- Came to Gauteng in search of better work opportunities from a small town in the North-West



Knowledge of Past Utopias

Mr Pillay

- Born 1949
- Shop owner of Pillay Upholsterers
- Resides in Laudium
- Lived with his family in the Asiatic Bazaar until the mid 1960s



# One The People

## Characters of the Narrative



Social Support Networks

Dr Radebe

- Born 1983
- Doctor at Sediba Hope Clinic
- Resides in Sunnyside
- Lived in Mamelodi before she moved closer to work



Regenerative Architect

Janeke

- Born 1971
- Regenerative Architect at a firm in Pretoria
- Lives in Sunnyside
- Lived close to her family in Garsfontein, a suburb of Pretoria East, before moving closer to work

Welcome to Marabastad. The year is 2016 and we are about to meet Katlego, Mr. Pillay, Dr. Radebe and Janeke. These characters are important figures in the social fabric of Marabastad and their lives are intricately connected<sup>1</sup>.

**Katlego** represents the current dystopia of Marabastad. Katlego is numb - he is despondent about the prospect of stepping out of homelessness.

**Mr Pillay** familiarises us with the historically and politically significant suburb of Marabastad as he relays his knowledge of the past utopias (as he calls them) to his son and other characters. Mr. Pillay is deeply concerned for the future of the homeless people of Marabastad, as well as the future of his business.

Having grown up in Marabastad until the mid 1960s, Mr. Pillay is full of stories about Marabastad. Although he no longer lives in Marabastad, he has always worked in the shop that he now owns - Pillay Upholsterers.

**Dr Radebe** is part of a social support network in the City of Tshwane that caters to the needs of the homeless and vulnerable. Dr. Radebe is overwhelmed - she does not feel that their efforts will be enough to help the homeless people towards success.

**Janeke** facilitates the process of the re-integration of the people and the place of Marabastad through her regenerative approach to architecture.

Figure 3: (spread left to right) Characters of the narrative and their place in the greater network of support (Patrick: 2016)