



## Understanding ritual

Anthropologists have argued that space is culturally produced as an integral part of material culture. It is intimately bound up in daily life, social activities, and personal rituals. The relationship between the social and the spatial is an interactive one, in which people make places and places make people [Borden, 2001; 5]. The relationship between individual and place acquires ritualistic characteristics.



When designing to initiate or accommodate ritual it becomes important to identify different types of ritual. Rituals can be divided into two major categories: public and personal. These two categories can then be further divided into sacred and secular ritual. This classification is necessary in order to establish a common ground that will inform a basis from which to start the intervention.

Of these categories, sacred public ritual is the most written about and the most easily identifiable. A definition of sacred public ritual could be: Ritual is formulaic spatiality carried out by groups of people who are conscious of its imperative or compulsory nature and who may or may not further inform this spatiality with spoken words [De Coppet, 1992: 18].

From this definition the following is established: ritual can't exist without movement; there must be an expression of spatial orientation and movement through social space. This action can only be understood as bodily movement toward or positioning with respect to other bodily movements and positions [De Coppet, 1992: 22]. This doesn't

imply only physical movement. The spatial idea of ritual must be extended to the human body, which can be regarded as subject to journeys and passages even when it remains in one position.

If ritual is fundamentally made up of movement, words are optional or arbitrarily replaceable. The widespread anthropological view is that words and actions are inseparably inscribed in each other; language penetrates the social [De Coppet, 1992: 12]. Movement was used to facilitate communication long before words formed part of human communicational skills. Ritual can exist without words but not without communication.

Ritual don't need to be structured precisely. No value is added or lost if a specific ritual isn't performed exactly as it was previously. Rituals are also always partly being made up as they are carried out [De Coppet, 1992:

19]. Error and confusion are part of ritual and every participant has his or her own reasons, viewpoints and motives for taking part in a ritual.

The relationship of rituals to each other and to participants and outsiders is important. The question arises if there exists an interdependence of the elements of a ritual and whether a line or lines can be drawn from one rite to another in a society's rituals. Different rituals or rites can be interlinked; often fragments of one ritual is found in another. This is explained through music; different human or instrumental voices answer each other in certain fugues and it is said that these voices enter in imitation [De Coppet, 1992: 32].

This thesis is especially concerned with personal secular ritual. The liturgy of the Roman Catholic Church is used as the structured form of ritual, which individuals can choose to partake in or only observe. Individuals make up their own rituals suggested by existing religious rituals or by intimate experiences suggested by the architecture. Ideas concerning movement, choice,

unexpected incidences, and legibility will inform the design process. The interaction of non-users with the architecture and their degree of ritual involvement will be investigated.



### Images of Pretoria - in time

Distinct natural features, rivers and ridges influenced the development of the urban layout of Pretoria. Pretoria is very much a city in nature, but it has been neglected.

When one looks at the history of Pretoria and its surroundings, it can be gathered that its history includes a multitude of layers, cultures and influences. By deconstructing South African history as it is reflected in Pretoria, a layering of styles and materiality is discernable. These layers reflect the contexts in which they were created. The Pretoria central business district (CBD) may be considered as the hybrid metropolis, where new realities were added to the existing, creating a richer, more complex reality [König, 2002; 4].

The brick tradition inherited from the Dutch played a fundamental role in the construction of ZAR-buildings on Church Square (e.g. the Nederlandsche Bank and the Palace of Justice). The aesthetics of the square were altered as British buildings from the Baker School were erected to illustrate British identity and power (e.g. the Standard Bank and the Old Reserve Bank). The British buildings are characterized by monumental styles and the use of heavy materials, e.g. stone blocks.

When the Afrikaner gained power in 1948, a new materiality evolved as the Nationalists were ready to embrace the International Style. An Afrikaner Modernist aesthetic was created, incorporating the Dutch brick tradition into modernist facades (e.g. the Nedbank building in Church Street) [König, 2002; 4]. The Modernist tradition of Martienssen and the Transvaal group cannot be ignored either. This style was followed by the regionalist architecture of Norman Eaton. These buildings were progressive in style, if not in their use of materials [Bothma, 2000; 16].

Administrative buildings in Pretoria have a similar aesthetic, although less traditional materials were used as the Nationalists grew more self-assured, and where newer materials had proven their use over time [e.g. Wall cladding and curtain walls]. Unfortunately, most of these buildings were designed as 'object buildings', with little

consideration for the need of urban spaces in the city.

The city centre contains recently-built Post-Modern buildings, in which old and new materials are used in combination (e.g. the Sammy Marks Square with its red brick, concrete blocks, copper sheeting and IBR-roofing).

Architecture has a direct influence on space and the experience of everyday life. It is influenced by and is the visual manifestation of current tendencies and events characteristic of South Africa. In a time of insecurities and a search for correct, the excitement of living lies in processes and experiences - especially in a complex and multifaceted context such as South Africa. The temperate climate of Pretoria indicates an architecture that is environmentally responsive. This idea extends to the use of appropriate materials and technology.



3\_ Images indicating different architectural styles contributing to the urban fabric of Pretoria. View from Church Square towards the Raadsaal and the Transvaal Provincial Administration. View from Church Street looking west.

## Character

The city exhibits typical characteristics of an Apartheid City, with residential areas for the lower income black population located far from job opportunities and economic activities. The tendencies of urban sprawl and decentralisation are apparent in the current development of Pretoria. The central business district is acknowledged as a primary metropolitan activity node, with decentralisation of offices and retail from the CBD to Brooklyn, Hatfield and Menlyn [Capital Consortium, 1999; 5]. Decentralisation leads to the formation of edge cities.

South Africa is a country in the process of change. There is an ongoing process of integration of the third and first worlds, creating tension and energy. Pretoria proclaims to be part of South Africa, a country that conjures up images of vibrancy, textures, multiple layers of experience, instincts, living life to the full, the fight for survival, and subjection to the laws of Mother Nature. Opportunities should be created for the experience of and interaction among different cultures, which creates a vibrant energy.

In the past, residents of black residential areas utilised local retail facilities, but in recent years a greater utilisation of the CBD by these residents has occurred. An important influencing factor is the fact that the greater percentage of the regular users of the Inner City are dependent on public transport. This implies that there is continuous movement of pedestrians in the precinct, making it one of the areas in Pretoria which is more consistently lively and energetic by day.

The CBD contains retail, offices, service land uses and mixed activity areas. Informal trading is a new occurrence in the area. It is specifically successful along the pedestrianised area of Church Street and should be encouraged. Government and business institutions should exploit their role in the regeneration of the inner-city with new buildings that respond to existing problems (an opportunity was lost with the recent extension of the Reserve Bank).

The energy that used to be contained in the CBD region ought to be revived, instead of allowing the area to deteriorate and remain in a derelict state.



4\_ Images of the 1988 Church Street (left and middle) and 1988 Sterland bomb explosions.

5\_ Informal trading along Church Street, 2003.

### Design Problem

In the city at this point in history differences are so numerous, each one competing for the consumer's attention, that they cancel each other out: all things are worthy of the same attention and nothing lasts [Scalbert, 2002: 59]. Abstract space tries to erase the individual characteristics of class, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, family relations, and age; everything becomes equal [Borden, 2001; 11]. Contemporary architecture is swayed by economic rationalism. There is no room for human emotion. Things are treated as consumer goods; they are manufactured, then disappear [Ando, 1991; 126]. Space of representation (lived experience) includes bodies imbued with culture and symbolism [Borden, 2001; 11].

The proposed intervention is seen as part of a process of architectural proliferation. It takes the existing fabric and current conditions and rather than replace them, creates a synthesis of elements so as to evolve a new urban condition; i.e. how to grow a piece of city, rather than to build it [Bullivant, 2002; 13]. An extension of this, is the idea of puncturing the city, where a number of small scale interventions occur to facilitate wider urban regeneration. Problems and opportunities are identified on a small scale, with a response that focus on them.

Part of this philosophy is to spend money where it counts; focusing on the surfaces people touch and see at close range [Bullivant, 2002; 13]. The city should bring together the micro-architectural and macro-planning scales, the everyday realm and the urban, inside and outside, work and non-work, the durable and ephemeral; it must be situated between the perceived and the lived [Borden, 2001; 11]. This strategy is extended to enhance the visual quality of pedestrian networks with attention to fine-grain built forms; users become more aware of the urban landscape.



### Motivation

The custom of refraining from labour on certain occasions exists in many of the world's religions. Rest days are also commonly observed outside the Semitic area. Under these conditions, the cessation of labour merges into a cessation of all the usual activities. The day of rest becomes a day of abstinence and quiescence [Webster, 1916: I].

It might be thought that such observances, especially those which impose a period of rest, have a rationalistic basis and arise from man's need for relaxation and idleness as a relief from daily toil and the harsh conditions of existence. However, rest days have arisen chiefly as products of superstition or religious beliefs [Webster, 1916: II]. In the last few years this state of affairs has changed and today more people follow a holistic mind-body approach. The Retreat concedes this change and provides for this need with contemplative spaces in a religious context.

In his budget speech for 2003 the Minister of Finance, Trevor Manuel, stated that urban renewal requires greater business investment in the regeneration of inner city areas. He proposed that investment in refurbishment or construction of buildings in certain areas receives special treatment; taxpayers refurbishing a building within these designated zones will receive a 20% straight-line depreciation allowance over a 5 year period, and construction of new buildings will receive a 20% write-off in the first year and 5% a year for a further 16 years. This benefit will be available to owners as users of the building or to lessors/financiers of these investments [Manuel, 2003].

The Inner City contains a number of parks and open spaces, but they tend to be scattered, isolated, neglected and inaccessible. There is a need to create usable public open space. At the moment, open spaces tend to be mono-functional and in some instances blatantly synthetic and harsh (e.g. Sammy Marks Square). The proposed intervention is not seen as an exercise to create usable open space, but rather as an extension of that space.



6\_ Historic photographs of Polley's Arcade, Koedoe Arcade and the Noordvaal Thoroughfare.

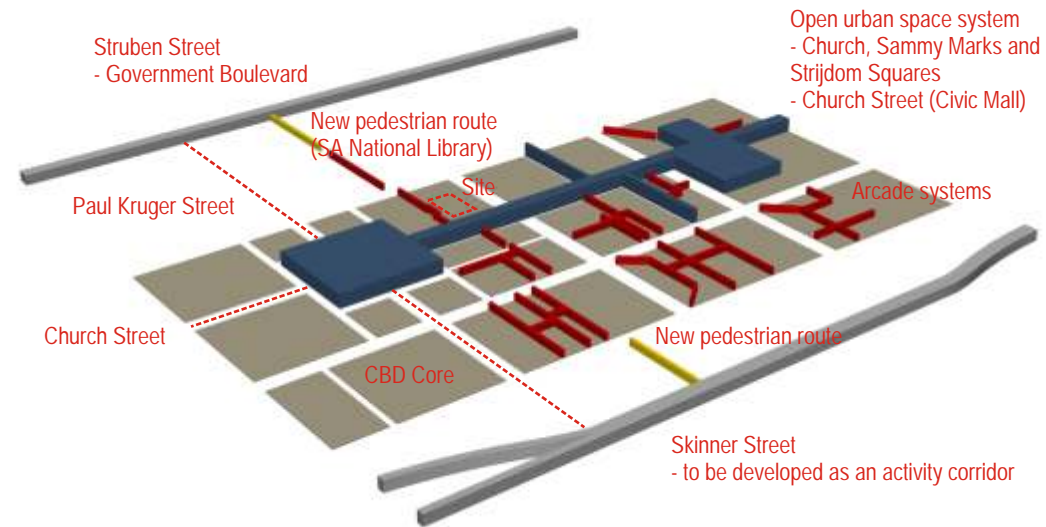
### Direct urban influences

A number of the problems regarding the spatial experience of the city can be attributed to the high intensity of vehicle usage and the requirements of large numbers of private motorists. The needs of the large number of pedestrians are neglected to a great extent.

Street blocks in the CBD of Pretoria tend to be twice as long as those in Johannesburg. Unnecessarily long distances have to be crossed between north-south connecting routes. The urban fibre surrounding Church Street indicates a tendency towards north-south mid-block arcades increasing permeability in the Inner City. The resulting permeability is successful in certain areas, but a lack of cohesive planning has resulted in disorientation, confusion and dead ends in many areas.

Burlington Arcade and the Noordvaal Thoroughfare are successful as pedestrian routes and commercial areas. Both these arcades connect directly to the pedestrianised area of Church Street, which is a main east-west movement route. The mid sections of these arcades that are open to the sky, the large skylight in the Noordvaal Thoroughfare, and the generous height of the walkways, create arcades that are inviting. The success of these two arcades is further due to the variety of commercial practices that can be found in them. Arcades in the city have different levels of legibility; Koedoe and Polley's Arcades are examples where level changes and various entrances confuse pedestrians, while Burlington Arcade with a short and direct route is more pedestrian friendly (The exit can be seen from the entrance).

Arcades were also formed due to the fact that most erven in the CBD run longitudinally north to south, and the resultant frontage formed is insufficient for commercial use. The development of arcades improved the efficiency ratio of frontage to sidewalk.



7\_ Diagram indicating the existing arcade and open space systems in the CBD Core. The diagram further indicates possible extensions of the arcade system, creating a pedestrian route from Skinner Street to Struben Street, that runs adjacent to the site.

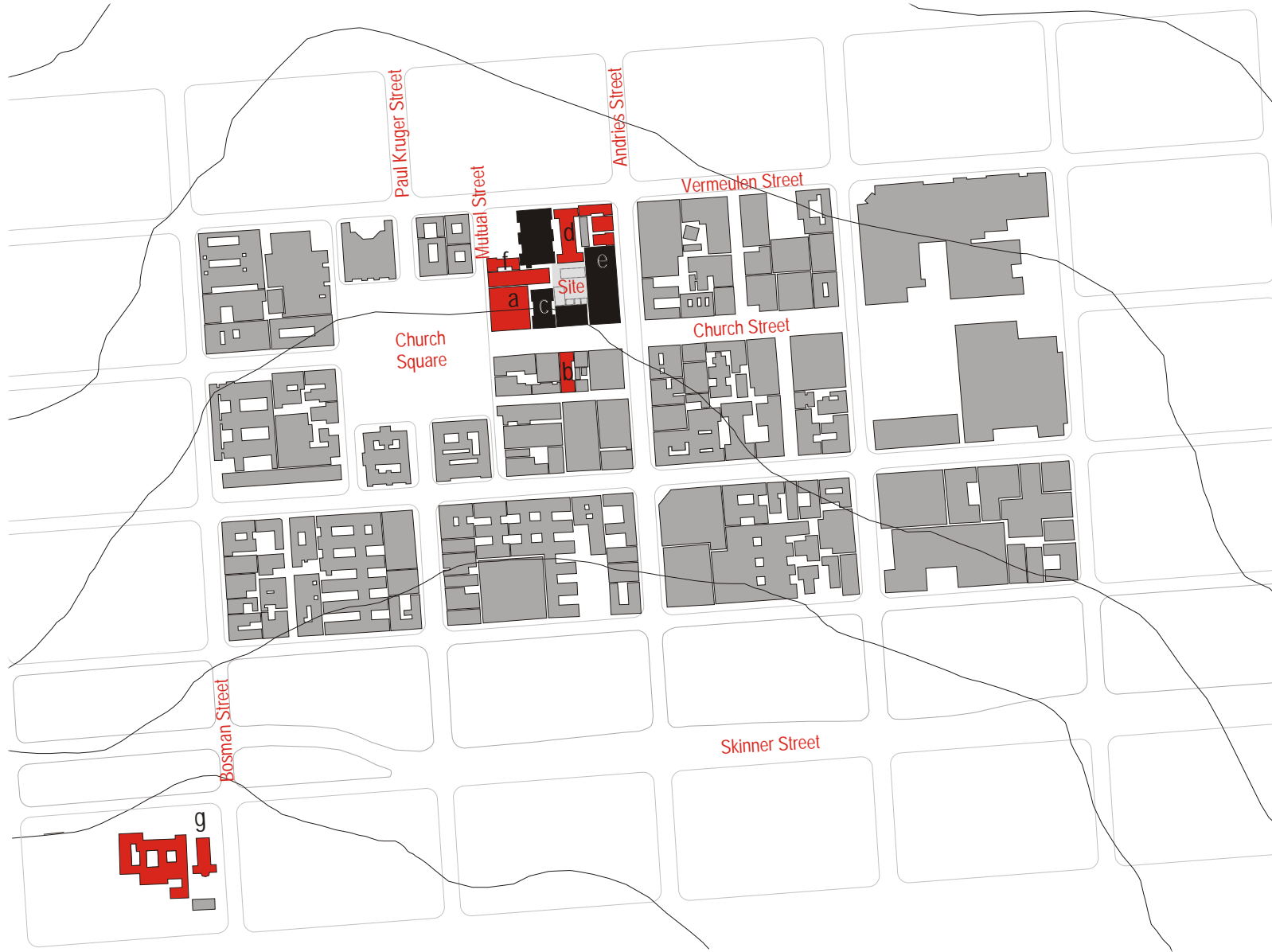
The Integrated Spatial Development Framework (ISDF) is a document compiled by the Capitol Consortium. The ISDF is aimed at providing a set of guidelines for the management and comprehension of the nature of the changing inner-city of Pretoria. Its aim is to focus the growth and development of the Inner City in a positive manner, which will deal with both realities and perceptions prevalent in the area. The ISDF allows for flexibility; it therefore cannot be seen as a blueprint, but rather as an innovative and dynamic tool.

From an urban design point of view, the principles to be followed are primarily those of a multi-functional approach toward streets and urban spaces, robust building forms, vitality through diversity, sustainable neighbourhood structures, continuity in open space, and environmental management.

The following principles are of specific importance regarding the precinct and the proposed redevelopment of the site:

- All interventions must be of an integrated nature. Redevelopment must place special emphasis on spatial and pedestrian qualities
- Promote a vibrant and lively city by providing facilities for a wide variety of possible users and uses
- Create an awareness of the environment by designing places with an understandable layout. This entails having the ability to see and understand what is around and what is ahead
- Ensure development that enhances the city-wide open space system by defining a continuous edge
- Establish a clear civic presence in the city by developing a civic spine, i.e. a series of links at mid-block between significant civic spaces, arcades, squares and building atriums

One of the major problems in the Inner-City is its short active life. The majority of its users reside in peripheral areas, far from the Inner City. Promoting the development and densification of residential support areas will help to ensure the extension of the active life of the city. The Urban Retreat is not seen in the traditional sense of housing but addresses the problem to an certain extent.



8\_Figure ground study of CBD Core.

### Church Square and Church Street - Civic Mall

Church Square is the most prominent and symbolically important public space in Pretoria. The edges of the square offer no street level interaction, due to the presence of a high number of state owned buildings whose only response to the square is their symbolic facades. The layout is symbolically successful but not functional; streets isolate large areas of the buildings [Botes, Le Roux, 1992; 54].

Church Street predates the history of Pretoria when, it served as a trade route between Delagoa Bay and Potchefstroom. Together with Paul Kruger Street, previously known as Market Street, it became the pivot and reference point for the grid layout of the inner city during Pretoria's formative years [Van Rensburg, 2001; 5]. Since then, Church Street, with its exceptional historic connotations, has become the commercial artery of the city, at the very heart of the city centre and running the length of the city.

A section of Church Street, between Prinsloo Street and Church Square, was pedestrianised in an attempt to revive the inner city. This area is known as Civic Mall and is traversed by extensive pedestrian traffic during the daytime. Church Street has a short active life; recent recycling of office space into residential units, in the John Orrs and Kerkade buildings, started to address this problem. Informal traders are concentrated around this part of Church Street. There is a definite need and potential for increased commercial activity in the area.

Moving west on the walkway created in Church Street, a rich historic and vibrant fabric unfolds.

The First National Bank Building (a) (SEE FIG. 8) forms part of the north-eastern edge of Church Square. This eight-storey building was completed in 1939, and was then known as Barclays Bank. The architect was Gordon Leith. Materials used for the walls are sandstone and granite. The building forms a strong corner to the square, recalling the architectural language already used on other parts of the square, by the use of giant columns on the first floor, the corner pavilion, the materials employed, and the fact that the main building rests on a podium (SEE FIG. 9) [Botes, Le Roux, 1992; 72].

Burlington House (b) (SEE FIG. 8) is situated on Church Street, and contains an arcade connecting Bureau Lane with Church Street. The building was completed by Gordon Ellis in 1934 as one of the first commercial buildings in Pretoria. Burlington House shows a combination of styles, i.e. Art Deco, Art Nouveau and Modernism. The use of granite and a tidy facade gives the building a sense of stateliness, that starts to compete, also in scale, with the abundance of state architecture that surrounds it (SEE FIG. 9).

The biggest contribution made by the building to the architecture and urbanism of the inner city is its arcade. It marks the beginning of an arcade system which continues with Koedoe Arcade to the south and the Noordvaal Thoroughfare to the north. Entrance to the arcade is marked by a high street roof. The arcade was designed to inform users of the building's main entrance which is situated within the arcade. Noteworthy are the large shop fronts, produced by Frederick Sage & Co, which are made of brass [Botes, Le Roux, 1992; 85]. The middle section of the arcade is open to the sky, a fact which contributes to the success of the arcade.

The Noordvaal Thoroughfare (c) (SEE FIG. 8) is situated on the northern side of Church Street, directly opposite Burlington House. Office buildings form the northern and southern sections of the arcade. An older office building, of which the main facade is on Church Square, forms the western edge. On ground level this edge consists of similar copper shop fronts to those of Burlington House (SEE FIG. 10). When seen from the entrances to the arcade, only glimpses of this softer interior is possible.



9\_ First National Bank, Burlington House, SA National Library, Old Mutual Building.

### Vermeulen and Andries Streets

The SA National Library (d) (SEE FIG. 8) is situated on the corner of Andries and Vermeulen Streets. The complex is made up of five neighbouring buildings which form the northern edge of the proposed site.

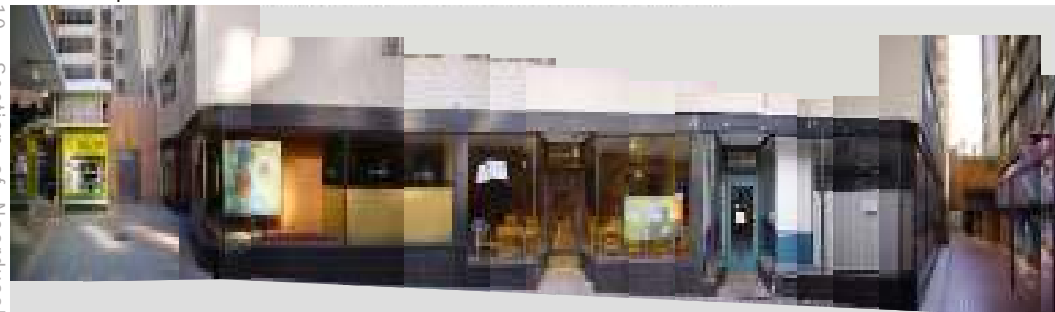
The building directly north of the site used to be the Extra-Curricular Building of the University of Pretoria and which became the State Library. It was constructed in 1918 - 1919 by the Public Works Department (PWD), with several extensions done to attain its current state. The building is classically symmetrical and adorned with eclectic detail [Botes, Le Roux, 1992; 72]. This three-storey building is stepped back from the street edge and makes no attempt to engage with pedestrian or vehicular movement along Vermeulen Street; it is unnoticeable within the city block.

The southern most building in Andries Street is a double storey with a central rounded gable. The building has historical value and adds a religious continuity to the context of the site. It was built in 1899 as a Baptist Church, but in 1933 it was sold to the State. The building responds to pedestrian movement along Andries Street with columns and a street roof [Botes, Le Roux, 1992; 72].

None of these buildings were designed to accommodate a library or its associated functions, which is the main reason why the SA National Library is in the process of relocating. An opportunity exists for the future use of these buildings to be more pedestrian orientated and to act as an extension of Church Street Mall.

A new site was identified on the corner of Struben and Andries Streets, which forms part of the ISDF's proposal for establishing government institutions along Struben street (Government Avenue) [Capitol Consortium, 1999; 48]. The design for the new building, by Jeremie Malan, proposes a pedestrian walkway mid-block between Struben and Proes Streets; this, together with the arcade system already in place, will effectively establish a pedestrian route between Struben and Skinner Streets (SEE FIG. 9).

10\_ Section of Noordvaal  
Thoroughfare, with copper shop  
fronts, formed by the back of  
Prudential Assurance.





The Old Mutual Building (e) (SEE FIG. 8) on the corner of Andries and Church Streets is a modern office block. An 18-storey tower rest on top of a podium. The podium consists of small commercial enterprises on the ground floor, with three levels of parking above. It forms a 12m high off-shutter wall with the neighbouring site, runs the length of the site and has no openings. The importance of the tower in relation to the site is the privacy consideration it poses and the shadow it throws on the site (SEE FIG. 9).

### Mutual Lane

Mutual Lane forms the eastern street edge of Church Square. The eastern facade is formed by the First National Bank Building (SEE ABOVE), Prudential Assurance and the Reserve Bank offices.

The Reserve Bank Offices (f) (SEE FIG. 8) were built in 1930, designed by either Collett or Gordon Ellis. The building is a rectangular double storey, constructed mainly of red Kirkness bricks, and has a steep clay tile roof. Window frames are made from Oregon Pine. Of note is that the entrance to the main hall and the stairway is not placed centrally, but is situated on the right-hand corner of the building (as seen at the Old Netherlands Bank) [Botes, Le Roux, 1992; 17]. The Building is currently used as offices for a law firm (SEE FIG. 11).

The building is of historical value; it forms part of the initiative taken in the 20's to strengthen the Afrikaner economy and culture. It was built as a banking institution, Ons Eerste Volksbank, which was one of many similar institutions on Church Square, forming the centre of Transvaal banking [Botes, Le Roux, 1992; 17].

The site of the Reserve Bank offices stretches all the way up to Vermeulen Street, but the building only comprises a small part of the southern edge of the site. The remaining part of the site is fenced-off, with parking spaces for offices. It causes a break in the continuous urban fabric as experienced in the surroundings. This is one of the most important unused pockets that exists in the CBD, with great potential for future development and regeneration of the inner city.

### Skinner Street

Skinner Street facilitates mainly east-west vehicular movement through the CBD. Part of the ISDF's proposal is to upgrade this movement route, defining it as an activity corridor. This includes establishing built-to-lines and allowing densification and development of the street edges to define the street space [Capitol Consortium, 1999; 52].

The importance of Skinner Street concerning the proposed intervention is the fact that a Roman Catholic Cathedral is located on its southern edge, and the possibility exists of a pedestrian route connecting it to Struben Street (Government Avenue), that runs adjacent to the proposed site (SEE FIG. 7).

The Cathedral of the Sacred Heart and Loreto Convent (g) (SEE FIG. 8) are situated on the corner of Bosman and Skinner Streets. The cathedral is set back from the corner to form a small open space in front of it and a small walled garden along Bosman Street. The first part of the Cathedral (designed by B J Clinch) was completed in 1932. The current northern facade was completed in 1965 by Hussey and Van Rensburg. The exterior walls are clad in terrazzo tiles, while the interior walls are red sandstone. The building is of great historical value and acts as an urban landmark in Skinner Street (SEE FIG. 11) [Botes, Le Roux, 1992; 17].

The importance of the Cathedral lies both in the fact that it functions as the only Cathedral in Pretoria, and also in its proximity to the proposed site. The programme for the project includes a small chapel which will be used mainly by the subjects of the retreat. The Cathedral will be used to accommodate larger gatherings.

The first part of the convent was completed in 1878. The newest part of the building, finished in terrazzo, was completed in 1962 by Van Rensburg. The original building now forms part of an extensive complex, consisting of numerous courtyards and buildings.

Currently the largest part of the convent is operated as a school. The number of Sisters in the Convent has reduced to only five. The Sisters do not play a prophetic or critical social role in the inner city, although they are ideally situated for this. The need for a structure that could fulfill this role exists in the CBD.

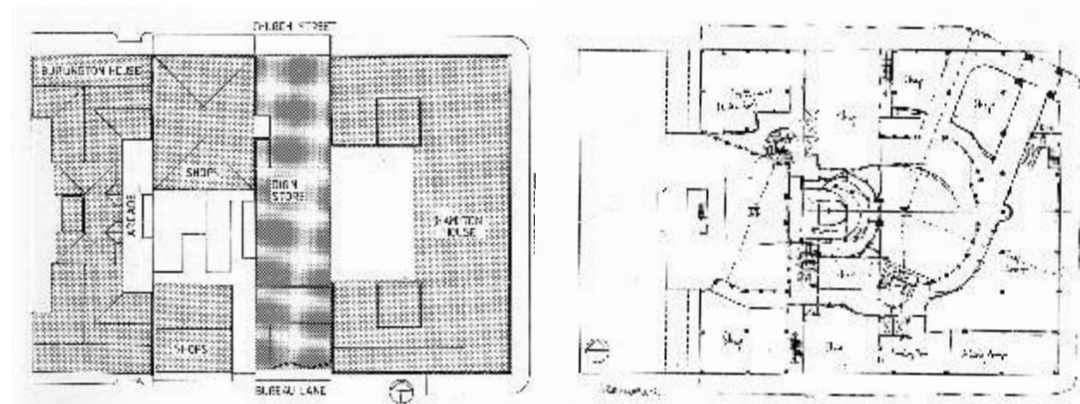
11\_ Old Reserve Bank Offices, Prudential Assurance, and Cathedral of the Sacred Heart.



Open space in mid-block interventions:

A spatial analysis, based on figure-ground studies, indicates that the interiors of many of the blocks in the CBD precinct tend to be soft. Individual developments should determine if they are to provide movement routes or semi-public spaces. Mid-block interventions have the potential to either create public space, or enclose pockets of urban space. Existing pockets are enclosed to heighten the definition of existing public spaces and to create semi-public or private spaces in their interiors.

A thesis by Christoph Malan, *Tension and Reconciliation*, creates two public spaces on a site where two semi-public pockets existed. The site is situated on the corner of Church and Andries Streets in Central Pretoria. A under-utilised commercial building, the Old Dion building, runs solidly across the full length of the site; creating a barrier that divides the site into two distinctive parts. To the east lies Hamilton house, forming a courtyard with the Dion building, and to the west lies Burlington House and Arcade. What is significant on the site, is the eastern orientation of the main facade of Burlington House. The impact of this facade is so strong, it practically demands that an urban space be created between Burlington House and the Dion building [Malan, 1986: 7].

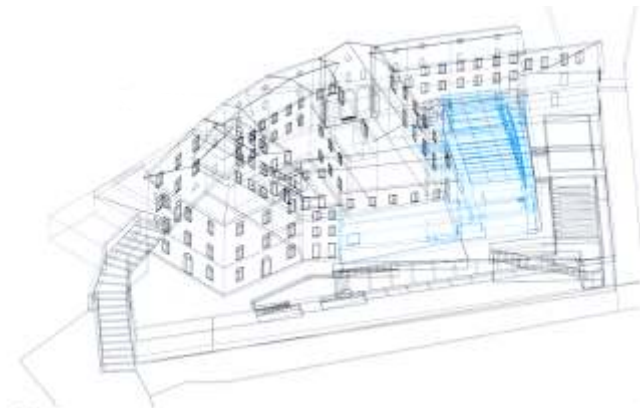


12\_ Plan of study area situated to the south of Church Street. Ground floor plan of proposed design, forming two plazas.

In the final design, smaller commercial buildings were altered to expose the facade of Burlington House and to create a large open space which connects to the arcade. A new building was designed on the site of Hamilton House, forming a plaza with arcades connecting to Church Street and the public space to the west. A hierarchical network of public spaces exists in the CBD between Church Square and Sammy Marks Square, and between Church Street and the arcade networks. The thesis is successful in realising the need for public space, however, the size of the public space required lies somewhere between the size of Church Street and an arcade.

The extension of a Graduate School of the University of Sienna (2002) by Andrea Millani is an example where an existing pocket was enclosed. The Graduate School was inserted within the monastery of Santa Chiara and grafted onto the remains of the Palazzo Contucci and its related 20th-century extensions. The graduate school is enveloped in enclosing walls which have stood since the middle ages.

The volume of this extension goes right up to its surrounding envelope, but does however also provide intimate public spaces. There is a strong relationship between interior and exterior; circulation routes throughout the school extend outdoors in a pedestrian circuit. This is taken further where an entrance was widened by removing an original stair block, creating an atrium that provides simple, unified access. Milani's design avoids tipping solid into void, mistaking presence for absence or vice versa [Savi, 2003; 82].



13\_ Axonometric view of intervention. Passageways, winding between old and new, surround the auditorium..

The Queen Street Mosque is a noteworthy pocket that exists in the CBD; not only because of its historical value, but also because of its scale and the open spaces it provides. The juxtaposition of the Mosque onto a Cartesian city grid, creates small intimate spaces on the edges. The wash area is open on ground level, but at the same time also very private. Views from neighbouring offices are controlled through a raised roof and a series of arches.

In the Opera Plaza an outside seating area for a fast food establishment is tucked in between office buildings. This space receives little direct sunlight, but is successful because of a climber growing on the side of an adjacent building. The climber is seen from Pretorius Street, suggesting the possibility of a space behind it. The use of vegetation to enliven small open spaces must be considered.



14\_ View of Queen Street Mosque, washing area. Opera Plaza with climber on adjacent building.

### Site - Place

The site is seen as a room in the city, carved out of the city fabric and defined by its four sides. It currently functions as a service courtyard to commercial buildings on Church Street. The choice of site was greatly influenced by the idea of accommodating architecture in what might be termed lost space. The site is not recognised as suitable for building purposes and appears totally secluded, situated in the heart of a CBD city block. The secrecy of this site is appealing; steeped in contrasts like noise and silence, a furious pace and the choice of pace.

The Noord Vaal Thoroughfare situated on the western edge of the site is an arcade connecting Vermeulen and Church Streets. The site is physically cut off from the middle section of this arcade by only a boundary wall. Visual and pedestrian access to the site will be established from the arcade, strengthening the notion of seclusion, and acknowledging pedestrians as its primary users. The adjacency of transport nodes ensures that it is easily accessible to users of public transport.

The site is in an area well known for its rich historic fabric, which includes Paul Kruger's statue, the Palace of Justice, the Old Netherlands Bank Building, Capitol Theatre, Old Raadsaal, Tudor Chambers and Church Square. The surrounding area contains the traditional CBD uses of retail, offices and services. It is in a high-density built-up area with strong government and municipal functions.

15\_ Off-shutter concrete boundary wall of the Old Mutual Building. Southern Facade of the SA National Library Building. Future connection to the Noord Vaal Thoroughfare.

16\_ Vehicular access from Vermeulen Street. View of informal traders down Church Street. Interior view of the Noordvaal Thoroughfare.

17\_ Entrance to the Noord vaal Thoroughfare on Church Street. View of Church Street from Burlington Arcade. Interior view of Burlington Arcade.





18\_ Aerial photograph of site, from Vermeulen Street

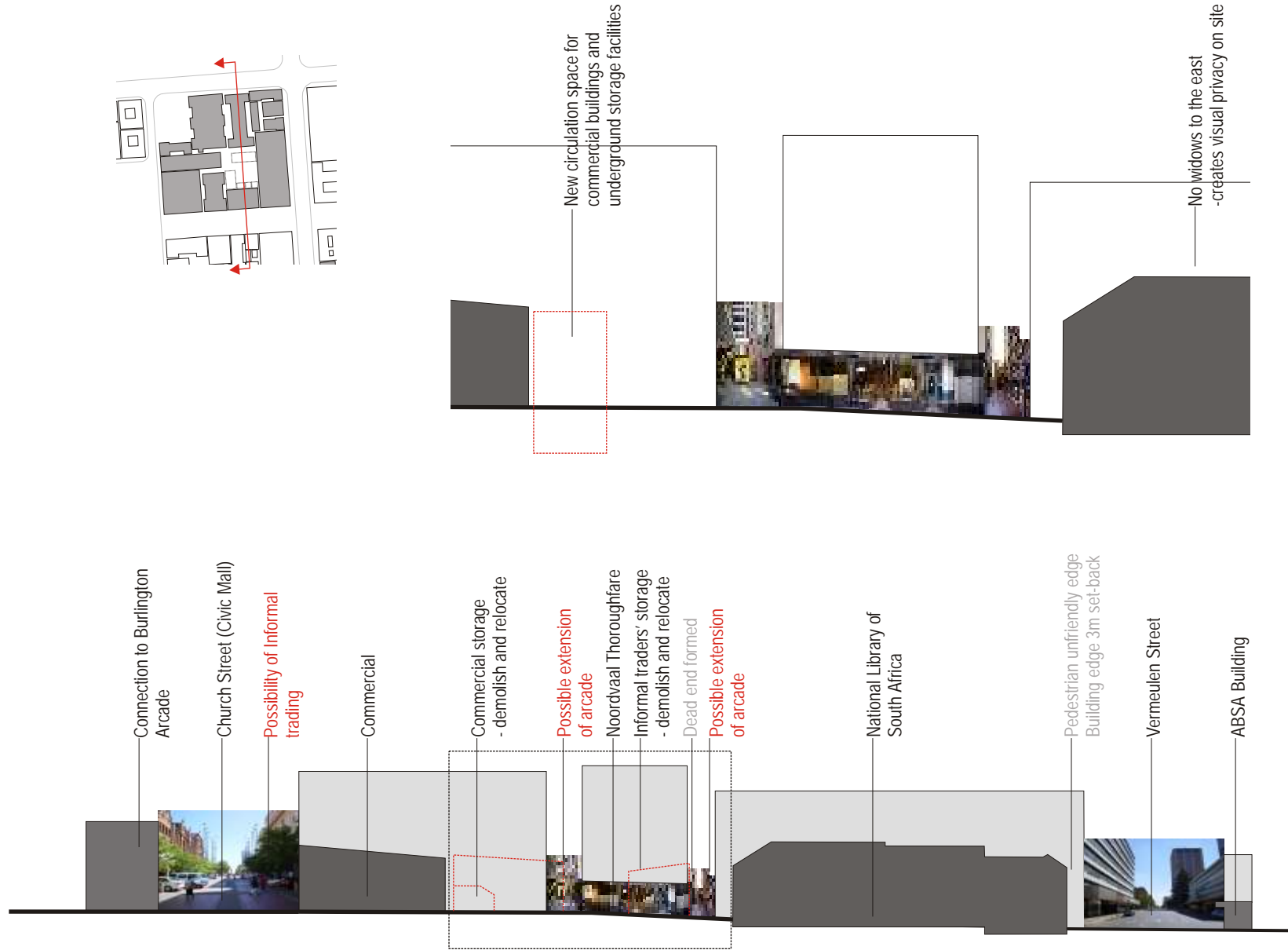
to Church Street

19\_ Position of site in the city-block.

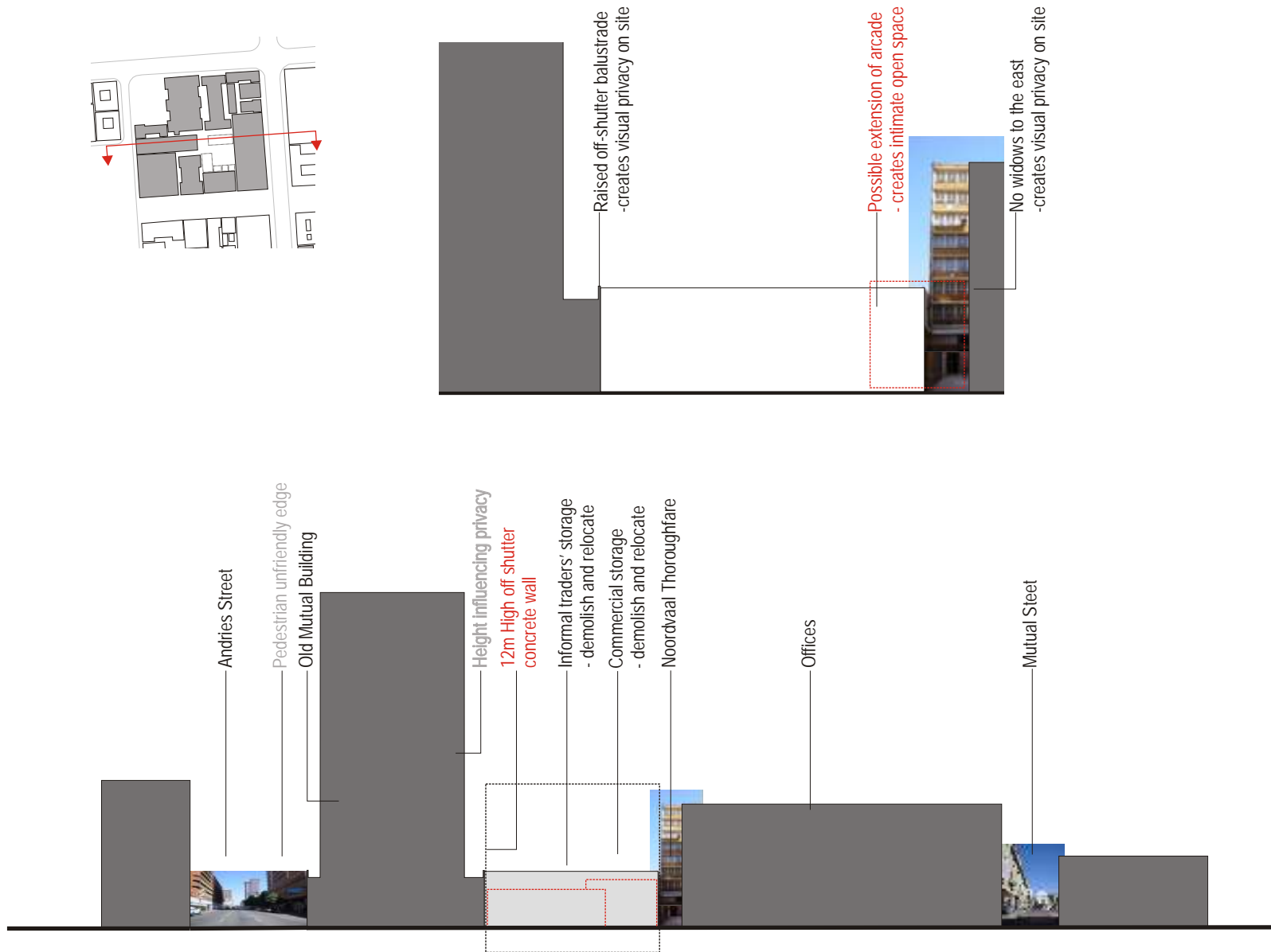


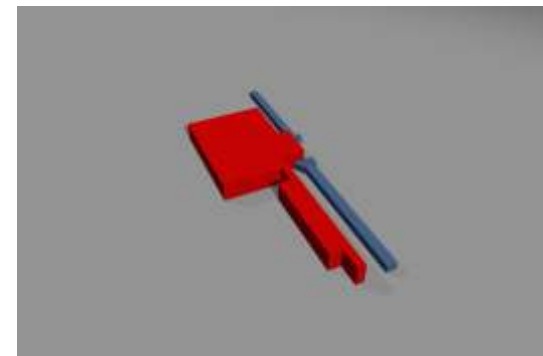
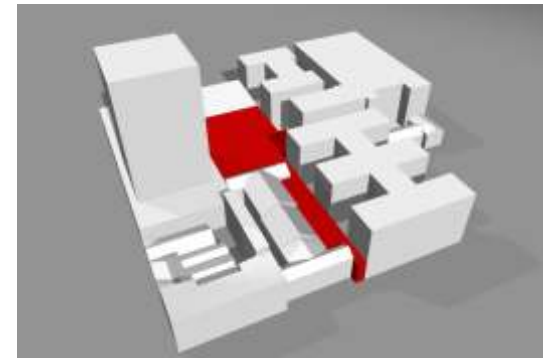


20\_ Site-related opportunities and problems - section AA



21\_ Site related opportunities and problems - section BB





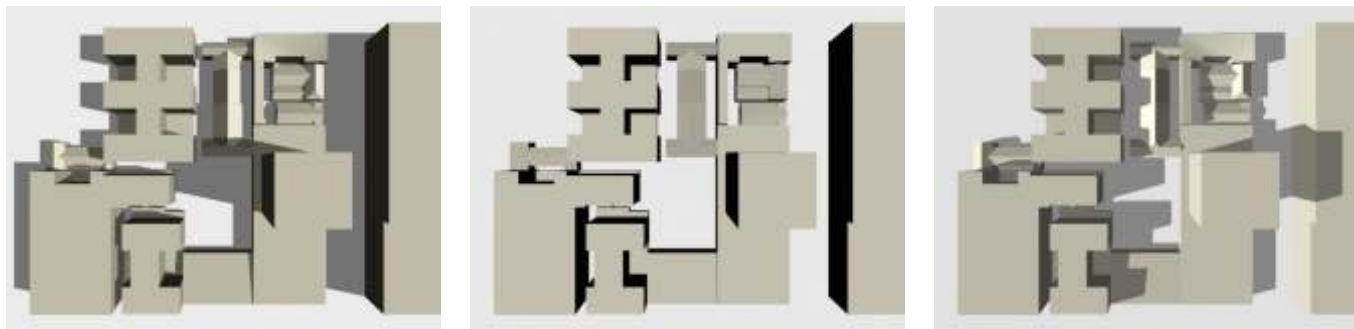
22\_ Structures on site to be demolished. Position of site in the city-block. Relationship of site to the Noord Vaal Thoroughfare.

## Physical Factors

### Macro Climate

Pretoria has a temperate climate. Throughout most parts of the year, it is one of the most pleasant climatic areas in the country. However, days are often oppressive in summer, whereas winter nights can be particularly cold. Temperatures during summer months average 29°C, and in winter average 20°C, with minimums of 9°C and less, but seldom fall below 0°C. The proposed design should provide opportunities to make optimal use of outdoor living and should integrate inside and outside. Basic concepts of sun control, such as roof overhangs, should be kept in mind, and used to manipulate sun penetration in order to enhance heat gain in winter, and prevent sun penetration on surfaces in summer.

The average number of rainy days per annum is 50-89 days. Thunderstorms are often accompanied by heavy rainfall. The highveld is prone to times of rain scarcity. This should be taken into consideration for the catchment and re-use of rainwater, even if only for landscaping and not as principal source for a building. Water elements in public areas can contribute to the sensory experience of a space. Physically, it has a climatic impact by enabling evaporative cooling in summer and heat storage during winter.



23\_Shadows on summer solstice, at 9:00, 12:00 and 16:00.

Winds are light to moderate and primarily from the northeast, except during thunderstorms, early spring or weather changes, when the wind has a southerly component. Pretoria in general is fairly wind still.

The duration of bright sunshine exceeds 80% of the possible in winter and 60% of the possible in summer. This has a major influence on how buildings perform regarding the comfort of its users.

### Geography

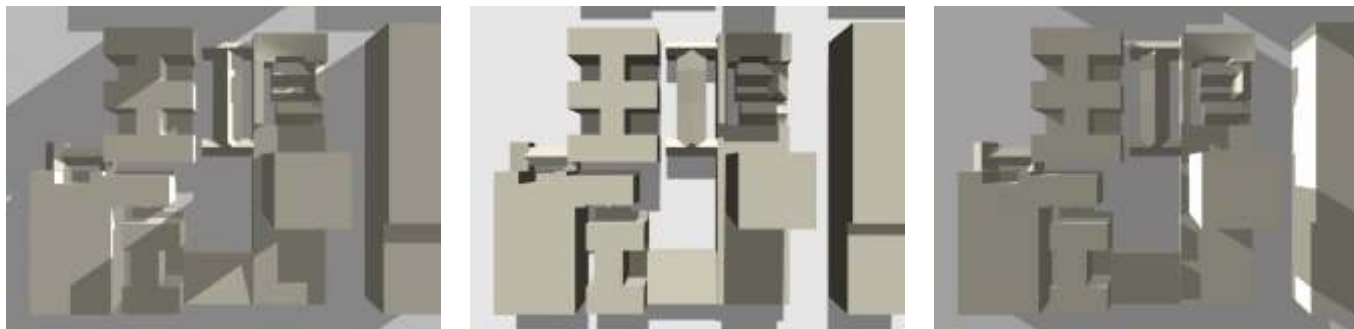
Groundwater: the general movement of groundwater is from southwest to northeast.

Water-table: depths are generally shallow in the low-lying valleys (in which the study area falls), between quartzite ridges, and range in the order of 3-18m. Basements need to be drained mechanically.

Geology: rapidly changing conditions in the Pretoria area resulted in alternating bands of shale and quartzite, because of a high rate of sedimentation and deposition of quartzite upon shale.

### Micro Climate

The average temperature on site is a few degrees lower than the average for Pretoria. This might cause uncomfortable conditions during the winter months. The design should respond to this with basic concepts like heat storage and trombe walls.



24\_ Shadows on winter solstice, at 9:00, 12:00 and 16:00.

Neighbouring buildings on the perimeter of the site form a solid edge, protecting it from winds. This is unfavourable where natural ventilation is concerned, and climatic design responses based on ventilation must take this fact into consideration.

The total cloud cover is at a minimum during winter. The maximum is reached during summer, peaking in January. Solar radiation along with solar intensity will influence design decisions. Heat radiation from neighbouring buildings must be taken into consideration.

The site receives limited direct sunlight. The position of shadows created by neighbouring buildings on the site should be looked at in order to establish the positions of open spaces, and to determine the mass of the building (SEE FIG. 23 AND 24). Limited direct sunlight received must be used optimally, either as natural light or to heat the structure.

## Clients - Users

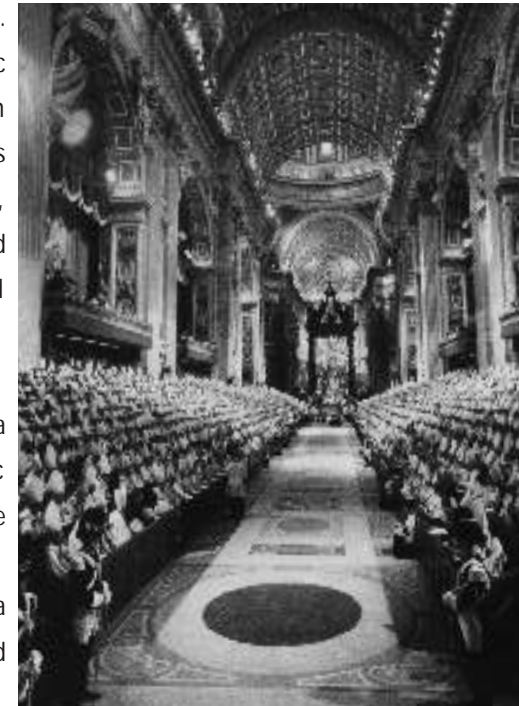
The Roman Catholic Church has successfully come to terms with the rise of the modern state and has carved out a new role for itself as a global defender of human rights, in what Pope John Paul calls a culture of life [Wood Head, 2002; 164]. The new mission for the Church is to play a more critical and social role, which forms part of the new approach of a holistic ministry.

There are several Retreat Houses and Conference Centres in the Pretoria area. These are run by either the Catholic Church or by laymen with a strong Catholic input. The St Vincent de Paul Sizanani Village near Bronkhorstspruit is an example where the original facility was started in 1989 by a Catholic Priest, but is now under layman management. The facility plays an essential social role, providing an aids care centre and orphanage, housing for disabled children, and a craft centre. Running cost for these projects is partly made up of rent raised from conference facilities that are available for public functions.

The proposed retreat will be funded by the Roman Catholic Church, to provide a basis in the inner city from which social work can be done. Different Catholic institutions in the Archdiocese of Pretoria will alternatively and for variable time periods occupy the building as permanent members.

The retreat will also function as a base for other organisations playing a social role, for example Love Life, from where they can work in the CBD and surrounding areas. These members are referred to as working visitors.

The Retreat will further provide a service where members of the public can stay in the retreat for a limited period, opting either to follow the sacred rituals of the priests and nuns, or to allow their own personal rituals to occur. These members are referred to as retreat visitors (SEE FIGURE 26).



The Retreat building provides a religious environment from which to organise community work. It is further seen as the first part of a bigger Retreat House (Community Centre), that will eventually include some of the buildings currently used by the SA National Library. The Retreat House will include facilities such as a clinic, craft centres, a shelter, and other related functions.

The entrance to the Retreat will be situated adjacent to the Noordvaal Thoroughfare, and will in future also function as the main entrance to the Retreat House. In order to establish the Retreat as future community centre, related functions such as an information area or conference facilities and consulting rooms will form part of the current programme.

	Cells	Chapel
Permanent Members	10	10
Visitors: Working	12	12
Retreat: Overnight	8	8
Retreat: Day		10
	30	40

26\_ Table with breakdown of maximum number of users of the retreat.