03

context analysis

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
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YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

urban context

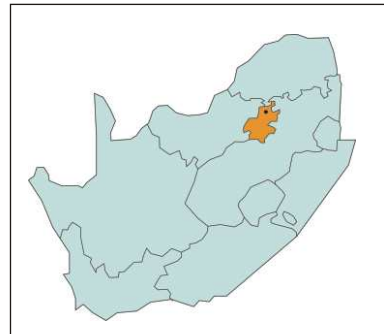FIGURE 3.1 World map indicating position of Africa, South Africa

FIGURE 3.2 Map of South Africa indicating Gauteng, Pretoria

FIGURE 3.3 Figure ground study of Pretoria CBD

Pretoria's inner city still reflects the char ... blacks were located in areas like Mamelodi and Atteridgeville that are situated along the edges of the city. This meant that people had to travel long distances to reach job opportunities and other economic activities.

This pattern still continues today. A great number of people who enter the inner city are dependent on public transport and so there is an ever-growing, continuous movement of pedestrians through the city.

FIGURE 3.4 Main pedestrian movement throughout Pretoria CBD

City blocks in Pretoria are twice as long as in Johannesburg, meaning that pedestrians need to traverse longer distances, along north and south connecting routes. This movement is facilitated by a system of arcades, which form mid-block pathways, thereby increasing the permeability of the inner city (Bothma 2003:14). The arcades also serve to increase the ratio of storefront to sidewalk. Originally most properties in the CBD were longitudinally orientated, but this arrangement resulted in insufficient frontage for shops.

The Integrated Spatial Development [...] ed by the Capitol Consortium in Pretoria and aims to understand the current condition of the inner city by providing a set of guidelines.

> *One of the key factors that contributes to the successful use of a city is the extent to which the public realm is activated by lively activities, functions and facilities at street level, and the quality, safety and cleanliness of the street. This facilitates the patterns of movement, encounter and avoidance that constitute and generate social relations in the city, and promotes quality of life.*
> *(Capitol Consortium 1999:3)*

The following principles suggested by the ISDF for implementation in Pretoria's inner city are relevant to the framework and intervention proposed in this document:

- Reinforce and develop clarity of the city structure by strengthening the linkage between the open public space system and the arcades that connect with it, guiding the dweller through the city and providing opportunity to stay.
- Enhance and acknowledge the cultural plurality of South Africa by facilitating diverse cultural activities, taking into account such aspects as informal trade.
- Create an awareness of the environment by designing spaces with layouts that dwellers find easy to understand, with adequate lighting and clear sightlines that enable them to know what is around and ahead of them.
- Create an environment in which people are not isolated and where they have the ability to see through the surrounding spaces.
- Enhance the visual clarity of the pedestrian networks, orientating the dweller within the city fabric.
- Create diverse and visually stimulating pedestrian zones.
  (Capitol Consortium 1999, p.5-11)

FIGURE 3.5 Existing open public space
The Integrated Spatial Development Framework (ISDF)

group framework

Existing open public spaces are scattered throughout the city. The framework proposes new open spaces that interlink with the existing spaces and arcades to form a public space network that is pedestrian orientated.

The group framework proposal focuses on the orientation of the urban city dweller within Pretoria CBD. The framework proposes three main street spines that will be identifiable by selected colours and materials (see Appendix C).

"People look for order, security and a sense of completeness in their immediate spatial experiences; on the other hand, they look for mystery, challenge, and stimulation" (Goldsteen & Elliott 2004:136).

Group framework principles:
- react to existing arcades
- relate to specific character of the street
- maintain a primary orientation towards the street, unveiling elements of surprise
- facilitate high activity around open spaces
- create interactive facades at street level
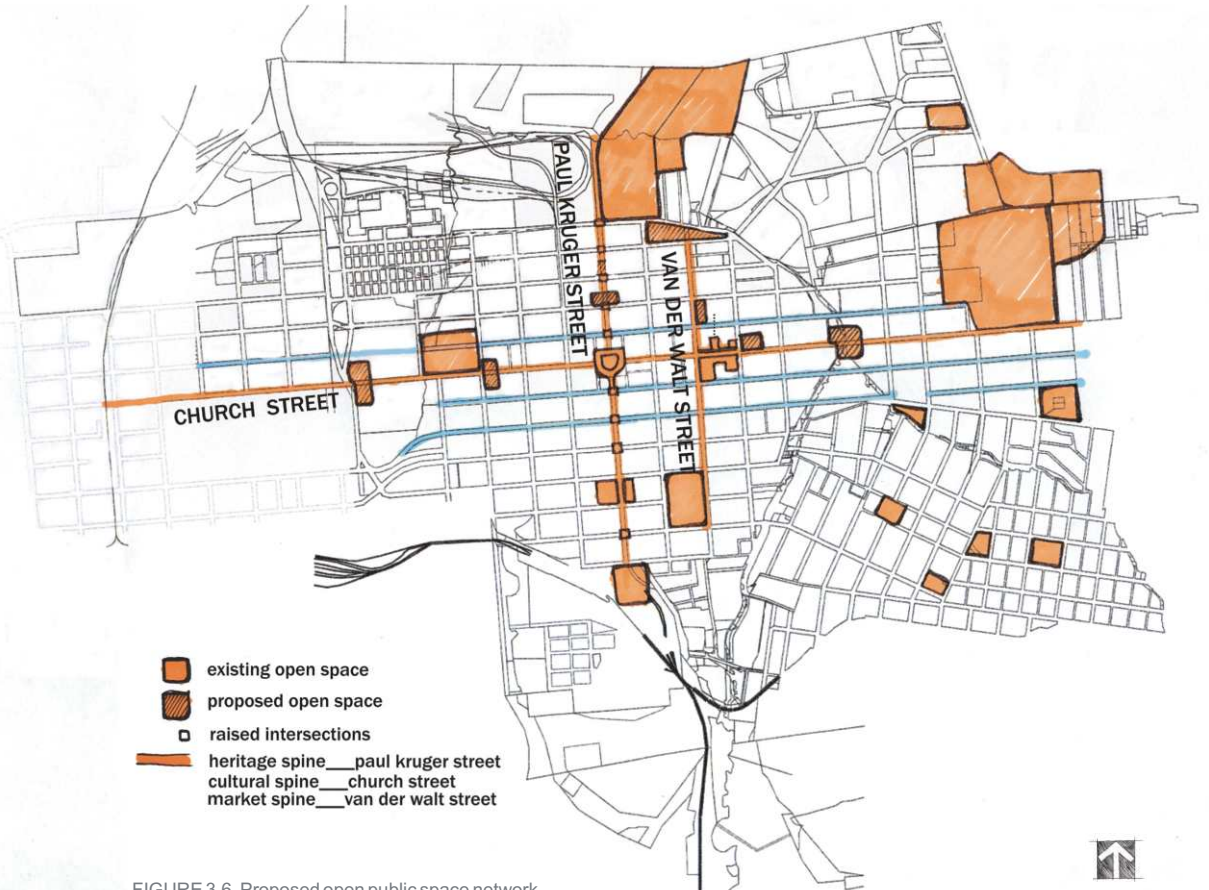- intersect movement spines with pause areas

PAUL KRUGER STREET

VAN DER WALT STREET

CHURCH STREET

■ existing open space

▨ proposed open space

▫ raised intersections

━ heritage spine___paul kruger street
cultural spine___church street
market spine___van der walt street

FIGURE 3.6 Proposed open public space network

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City dwellers occupy the inner city for most of the day. As they move through the city, the arcades and thoroughfares become public points where people socialise, interact, eat or simply linger, whether they are waiting for someone or watching life unfold in front of them.

0m 100m 200m   500m   1000m

__CENTRAL STREET linking with Pretorius street

__NOORDVAAL ARCADE linking Vermeulen street
with Church street

__THOROUGHFARE linking Church Square with
Andries street

__BURLINGTON ARCADE

__PRESIDENT ARCADE linking Schoeman street
with Pretorius street

__THOROUGHFARE between State theatre and
Sammy Marks

__POLLEYS ARCADE linking Schoeman street
with Pretorius street

FIGURE 3.7 ARCADE_PUBLIC SPACE Network

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA, for analysis:

- Has the need for social public space been addressed?
- Do the edge and public space create staying zones?
- Do the edge and public space provide opportunity for people to linger, watch and be watched?
- Is there an overload of information and are people able to orientate themselves in the space?
- Does the space have a visual connection to the sky and how do people respond to this?
- Do the building's edges contain elements of seduction? Do they entice people to look beyond the edge?
- What types of events take place in the store interiors and in the arcade?
- Have basic physical needs been addressed?
- The interviewing of people as to what they expect from public spaces.

NEED FOR SOCIAL PUBLIC SPACE

Has the need for social public space been addressed?

> Women sit in front of hair salons on plastic chairs with posters of different hairstyles displayed behind them, trying to lure passers-by into the salon. These points become social points, as many women passing by stop and chat.

> However, because there is no seating and many cars enter this pedestrian space people tend to move quickly through it.

LINGER   WATCH   BE WATCHED

Do the edge and public space provide opportunity for people to linger and watch and be watched?

> The only point where people seem to linger is at the start of Central Street, in front of a jewellery store. The storefront is filled with merchandise that doesn't allow one to see into the shop. When lingering at this point one's back is covered and one can safely look out onto the surrounding streets.

EDGE EFFECT_ STAYING ZONES

Do the edge and public space create staying zones?

> There are no opportunities for staying.

> There are many flagpoles that are obstructions to pedestrians because of where they are positioned.

INFORMATION   ORIENTATION

Is there an overload of information or are pedestrians able to orientate themselves within the space?

> The space is extremely busy and the mix of pedestrian and vehicular traffic obstructs the dweller's clear visual connection with the other end of the arcade.

PHYSICAL NEEDS

Are the physical needs of man addressed (through facilities such as public toilets and public phones)?

> There are no public toilets or public phones.

CONNECTION TO THE SKY

Does the space have a visual connection to the sky and how does the user respond to this?

> The space is completely open and the women sitting on the plastic chairs in front of the hair salons appear to enjoy the warmth of the sun on their skins.

ELEMENTS OF SEDUCTION

Do the edges/storefronts contain elements of seduction? Do they entice the dweller to look beyond the edge?

> There are no elements of seduction evident within this street or in the storefronts. The storefronts are too full with merchandise and the passer-by is bombarded by their wares.

SPACE AND EVENTS

What type of events takes place within the space?

> There is heavy pedestrian movement and it is evident that the space functions more as a thoroughfare than a destination. It is also very dirty and, although it should be a pedestrian-orientated space, many cars are parked within it.

CENTRAL STREET linking with pretorius street

Legend:

- Vehicles
- informal market stand
- Tree
- Flagpole
- people on the move
- people lingering
- dead storefront edge

CENTRAL STREET

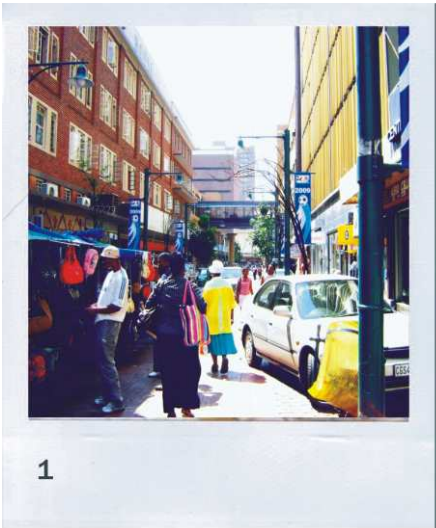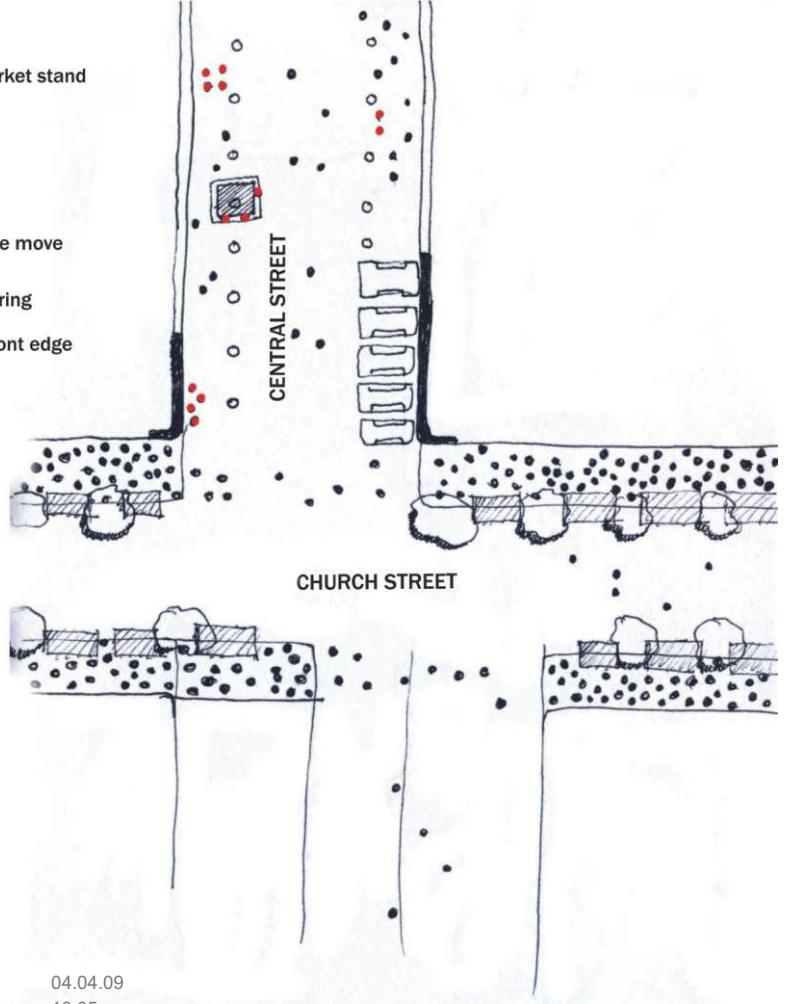CHURCH STREET

04.04.09
13:05 pm

1

FIGURE 3.8, 3.9
3.8   Diagrammatic illustration of the layout and movement within Central street
3.9   View of Central street

NEED FOR SOCIAL PUBLIC SPACE

Has the need for social public space been addressed?

There are no social points or places to sit down and interact.

The restaurants do not open up onto the arcade.

LINGER   WATCH   BE WATCHED

Do the edge and public space provide opportunity for people to linger and watch and be watched?

The only point where people can stop, recline against the wall and linger looks out onto empty shops. So there is nothing to watch and no one to be watched by. Nobody lingers in this space.

EDGE EFFECT_ STAYING ZONES

Do the edge and public space create staying zones?

Staying zones could have been set up at the point where a number of storefronts that face each other are closed up. However, the space looks out onto no activity and is covered with a roof that makes it dark and desolate.

There are niches projecting out into the arcade that people could sit against, but they look out onto closed store doors that are filled with stock and block the view into the surrounding stores.

INFORMATION   ORIENTATION

Is there an overload of information or are pedestrians able to orientate themselves within the space?

The dweller feels disconnected and lost while moving through the space, because the arcade bends at one point, breaking the visual connection with the other side.

PHYSICAL NEEDS

Are the physical needs of man addressed (through facilities such as public toilets and public phones)?

There are no public phones or public toilets.

CONNECTION TO THE SKY

Does the space have a visual connection to the sky and how does the user respond to this?

There is a visual connection with the sky at one point in the arcade, but because this is where the arcade bends and flows into dead ends, the dweller feels lost and trapped by walls.

Most of the arcade is covered with a roof that has no skylights, resulting in a space that is dark, desolate and empty, and has no public life.

ELEMENTS OF SEDUCTION

Do the edges/storefronts contain elements of seduction? Do they entice the dweller to look beyond the edge?
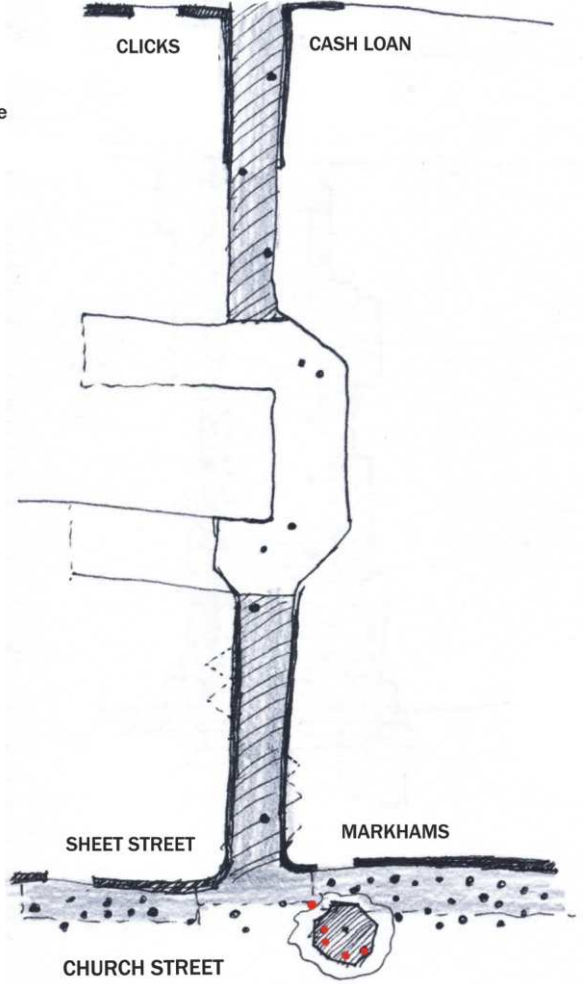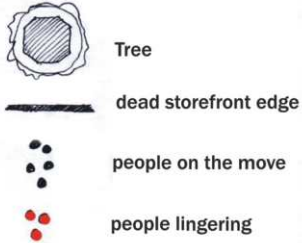
The storefronts, which are typical (flat, continuous, clear glass window) are either closed up or too cluttered with merchandise to be attractive.

The retail shops at the corners of the arcade have folding doors and entrances that open up into Church Square thoroughfare and not into the arcade. Although there are doors that can open up into the arcade, they too are closed up, missing an opportunity to draw pedestrians into the arcade.

SPACE AND EVENTS

What type of events takes place within the space?

No events take place here.

NOORDVAAL ARCADE linking vermeulen street with church street

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VERMEULEN STREET

⬡ Tree

▬ dead storefront edge

• people on the move

• people lingering

CLICKS

CASH LOAN

SHEET STREET

MARKHAMS

04.04.09
11:40 am

CHURCH STREET

2

FIGURE 3.10, 3.11
   3.10   Diagrammatic illustration of the layout and movement within Noordvaal arcade
   3.11   View of Noordvaal arcade

NEED FOR SOCIAL PUBLIC SPACE

Has the need for social public space been addressed?

There are four seating spots along the edge of the space. The main social spot is the seating point in front of Burlington Arcade, which allows dwellers a 360° view of the space. Because the storefronts at this point are empty, it is quieter and removed from high commercial activity. There are only retail shops in this area and no restaurants that open up into the space with tables and chairs outside. People move quickly through this space.

LINGER   WATCH   BE WATCHED

Do the edge and public space provide opportunity for people to linger and watch and be watched?

The seating spots are located within the pedestrian promenade. Sitting down at one of these spots, it seems as though the dweller is right in the middle of the street activity and not at a point where one can watch and be watched.

EDGE EFFECT_ STAYING ZONES

Do the edge and public space create staying zones?

There are no functional staying zones along the storefront edges. People linger at the beginning of the thoroughfare where there is a strip of blank wall, but only because this spot overlooks an area that is busy with activity.

People move along the edges, where they form smaller promenades. Very few people move in the centre, where it is much quieter and more removed from high levels of pedestrian traffic.

INFORMATION   ORIENTATION

Is there an overload of information or are pedestrians able to orientate themselves within the space?

There is a strong visual connection with Church Square, so pedestrians know where they are within the city fabric. This sense is enhanced by the fact that the only signage is found up against the storefronts and does not project into the surrounding space.

PHYSICAL NEEDS

Are the physical needs of man addressed (through facilities such as public toilets and public phones)?

There are no public toilets near by.

Although there are public phones, no one uses them because they are located in the midst of high pedestrian movement.

CONNECTION TO THE SKY

Does the space have a visual connection to the sky and how does the user respond to this?

The thoroughfare is completely open to the sky, with trees along its edges.

ELEMENTS OF SEDUCTION

Do the edges/storefronts contain elements of seduction? Do they entice the dweller to look beyond the edge?

The space contains art deco storefronts with clear open window displays which are, however, cluttered with merchandise. This overload of visual information, combined with the fact that one can see everything that is happening within the shops, means that passers-by do not notice anything in particular and simply move past without being lured inside.
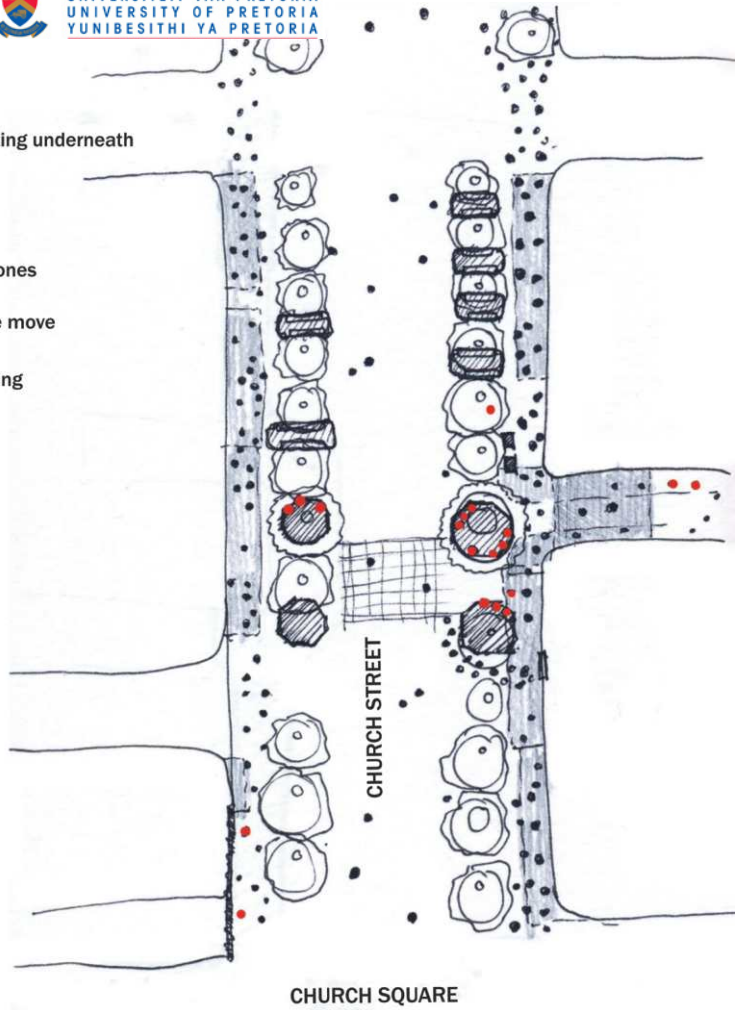
SPACE AND EVENTS

What type of events takes place within the space?

The space is an important thoroughfare that connects two main streets. It is not a destination in itself, because there are no opportunities for staying and to linger.

THOROUGHFARE linking church square with andries street

Tree

tree with seating underneath

Vehicle

public telephones

people on the move

people lingering

CHURCH STREET

CHURCH SQUARE

04.04.09
11:00 am

3

FIGURE 3.12, 3.13
3.12   Diagrammatic illustration of the layout and movement within the thoroughfare
3.13   View of the thoroughfare

NEED FOR SOCIAL PUBLIC SPACE

Has the need for social public space been addressed?

Although there are no established social points, people have created their own. For example, many people gather at seats that have been placed within the arcade in front of a jazz music shop.

LINGER   WATCH   BE WATCHED

Do the edge and public space provide opportunity for people to linger and watch and be watched?

Many of the stores are empty, so there is not much to watch. The only point where dwellers can linger and watch and be watched is at the start of the arcade at a barbershop, which although it faces an empty storefront, is positioned at the corner of the arcade, allowing the dweller to look out onto the busy Church Street thoroughfare.

EDGE EFFECT_ STAYING ZONES

Do the edge and public space create staying zones?

Many of the storefronts are built at a higher level than the ground and open up with sliding glass panels. When people sit at these points, it appears as though they are sitting inside the shop. The shop activity and arcade activity thus becomes blurred.

The storefront edges are visually stimulating as they are each built on alternating levels, giving the impression of change and creating niches that the dweller can lie against and watch their surroundings. However, because so many of the shops are empty, nobody makes use of this space.

INFORMATION   ORIENTATION

Is there an overload of information or are pedestrians able to orientate themselves within the space?

Signage projects into the arcade, but appears to have been designed as part of the edge. Because there is no visual connection with the other side from inside the arcade, dwellers might feel lost if they do not know where they are going.

PHYSICAL NEEDS

Are the physical needs of man addressed (through facilities such as public toilets and public phones)?

There are no public toilets. There are public phones close by in the Church Square thoroughfare, but because they are placed in the middle of high pedestrian traffic, few people use them.

CONNECTION TO THE SKY

Does the space have a visual connection to the sky and how does the user respond to this?

The arcade has a pattern of closed and open areas, which means that one can see the light even when one can't see the sky. This strong relationship with sunlight maintains a relationship with nature that ensures the dweller feels less isolated even though there is no direct visual connection between one point of the arcade and the other.

ELEMENTS OF SEDUCTION

Do the edges/storefronts contain elements of seduction? Do they entice the dweller to look beyond the edge?

The storefront edges create an interesting element of seduction. Because there is not one flat surface, the dweller is lured forward to discover what is beyond the next level change, even though the stores are all fronted by clear glass that enable one to see everything inside.

SPACE AND EVENTS

What type of events takes place within the space?

A popular social spot has been created in front of the jazz music shop, which opens into the arcade and blurs the boundaries between the two spaces. Music from the shop draws people into the arcade and creates a point where one can relax and linger, thereby determining the character of the whole arcade. Passers-by stop to sit on chairs set up outside the store and listen to CDs on earphones.

Another social spot which blurs the distinction between storefront and arcade is the barbershop. Because it opens up into the arcade, it feels as though the barber is cutting hair in the public space. Positioned at the entrance to the arcade, the barbershop appears to be a very active and lively corner shop which draws people in.

BURLINGTON ARCADE linking church street with opera plaza

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OPERA PLAZA

tree with seating underneath

BUREAU LANE
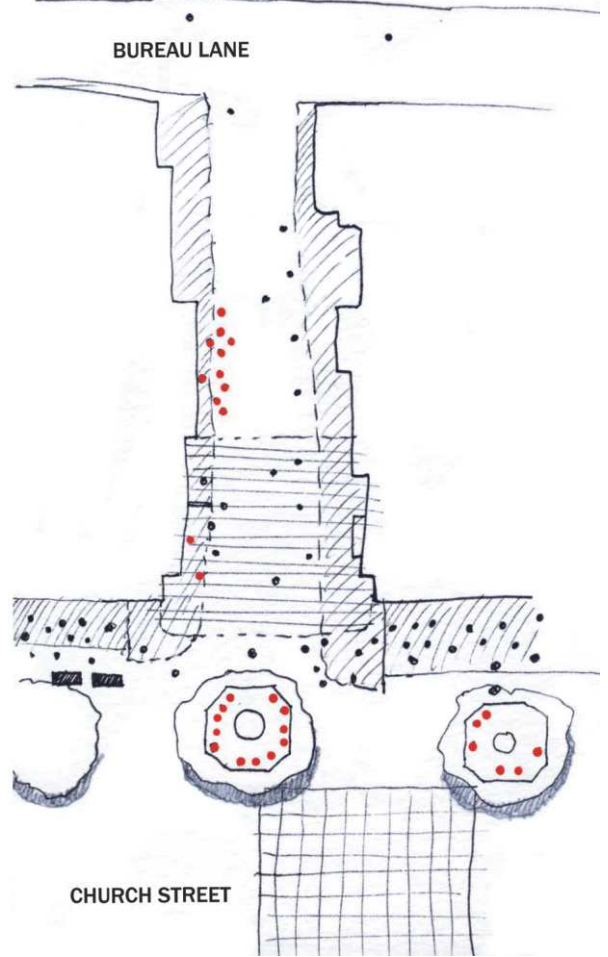
public telephones

people on the move

people lingering

CHURCH STREET

04.04.09
12:25 pm

4

FIGURE 3.14, 3.15, 3.16
3.14   Diagrammatic illustration of the
            layout and movement within
            Burlington arcade
3.15, 3.16   Views of Burlington arcade

THOROUGHFARE between state theatre and sammy marks

NEED FOR SOCIAL PUBLIC SPACE

Has the need for social public space been addressed?

There is no formal seating within the thoroughfare, but people create social spots where there are informal opportunities to sit down such as the bases of flagpoles. Many people also sit on the structural elements of the State Theatre, which are partly hidden away from the public eye indicating that these people prefer to be in public but at a private social point.

Seating is provided near some of the trees along the perimeter of the thoroughfare.

LINGER   WATCH   BE WATCHED

Do the edge and public space provide opportunity for people to linger and watch and be watched?

Where people sit on the structural elements of the State Theatre, they face the opposite storefronts and watch the people passing by, who are focused and move quickly without looking left or right. This space becomes a stage to be viewed by people lingering around the State Theatre.

The storefronts create a flat surface of clear glass that does not lure the passer-by to linger longer, while the edge of the State Theatre, which is free from commercial activity, offers the opportunity to be in public yet private.

EDGE EFFECT_ STAYING ZONES

Do the edge and public space create staying zones?

There is no opportunity for staying zones along the edge of the storefronts. People move along quickly and seem very focused.

INFORMATION   ORIENTATION

Is there an overload of information or are pedestrians able to orientate themselves within the space?

There is a strong visual connection from one point of the space to the next that allows dwellers a clear visual field in which to orientate themselves. The only signage is on the storefronts' facades and there are no elements sticking out into the sidewalk. The dweller walks past quickly without being lured to look or stop.

PHYSICAL NEEDS

Are the physical needs of man addressed (through facilities such as public toilets and public phones)?

There is no litter in sight, due to the presence of a street cleaner and a number of dustbins.

There are no public toilet facilities close by. There are phone facilities at the beginning of the thoroughfare, which form a social point.

CONNECTION TO THE SKY

Does the space have a visual connection to the sky and how does the user respond to this?

The thoroughfare is completely open to the sky, with trees along the edges. Most people sit under the trees where it is shaded but not completely covered. Very few people linger underneath the theatre overhang.

ELEMENTS OF SEDUCTION

Do the edges/storefronts contain elements of seduction? Do they entice the dweller to look beyond the edge?

The art deco storefronts have clear, open window displays which create one flat continuous front and allow the pedestrian to see everything that happens inside. There are no elements of seduction and very few people enter the shops.
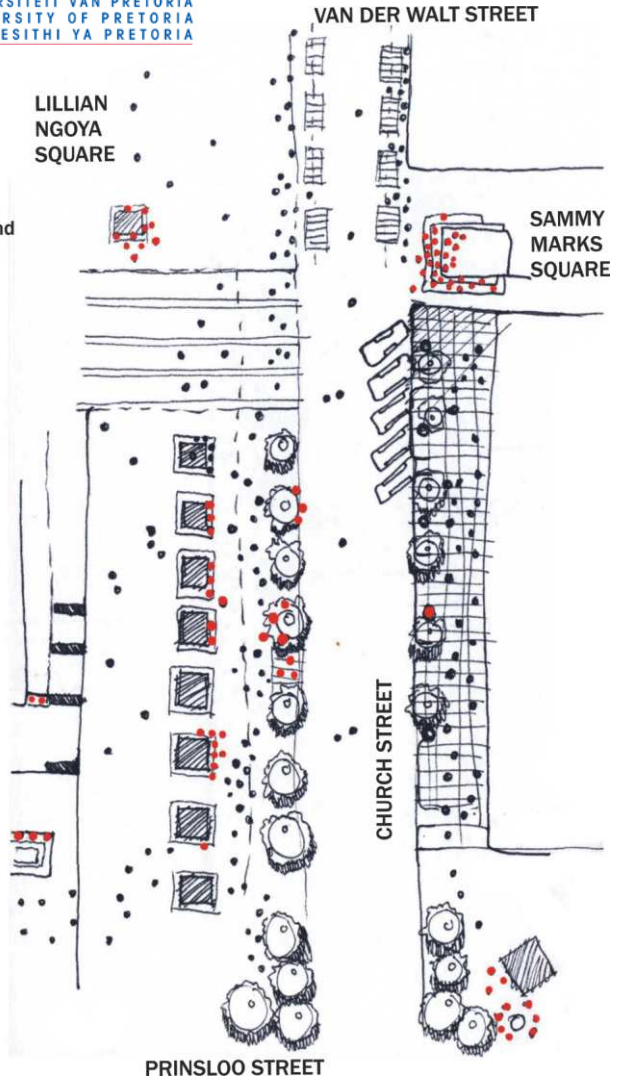
SPACE AND EVENTS

What type of events takes place within the space?

The space is an important thoroughfare that connects two main streets. The arcade is not a destination in itself, because there are no opportunities for staying and to linger.

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Tree

Vehicle

informal market stand

seating point

people on the move

people lingering

VAN DER WALT STREET

LILLIAN
NGOYA
SQUARE

SAMMY
MARKS
SQUARE

CHURCH STREET

02.04.09
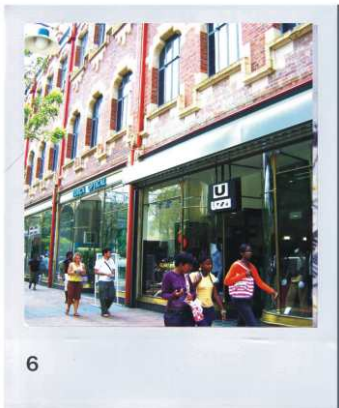11:45 am

PRINSLOO STREET

6

FIGURE 3.17, 3.18, 3.19
3.17   Diagrammatic illustration of the
            layout and movement within
            the thoroughfare
3.18, 3.19   Views of the thoroughfare

39

NEED FOR SOCIAL PUBLIC SPACE

Has the need for social public space been addressed?

> There is no formal seating within the arcade. Instead people gather at the entrances of the arcade where there are established social points next to shops. At one end of the arcade people gather to eat around a woman informally selling cooked food. The arcade houses the offices of the SAPS and a restaurant that has few clientele. It is desolate and empty, and is seen only as a thoroughfare from the one street to the next.

LINGER   WATCH   BE WATCHED

Do the edge and public space provide opportunity for people to linger and watch and be watched?

> The arcade is wide and dark with no activity within it that would encourage people to linger. All the edges are closed up (cardboard, furniture or blinds), disconnecting the interior spaces from the surrounding arcade space, so people move through the arcade without stopping and lingering around.

EDGE EFFECT_STAYING ZONES

Do the edge and public space create staying zones?

> There are no opportunities for staying.

> The only opportunity to sit down is at the restaurant, which is located in the middle of the arcade but is hidden from pedestrian movement so customers can't sit and watch the activity in the arcade. All the edges are non-active and the arcade is lined on both sides with one continuous flat surface.

INFORMATION   ORIENTATION

Is there an overload of information or are pedestrians able to orientate themselves within the space?

> On entering the arcade the pedestrian is able to see right through to the other end, providing a strong visual connection with the surrounding city. The only signage is that of the SAPS as there are no other shops or businesses in the arcade. Pedestrians need to know where they are going when passing through the arcade.

PHYSICAL NEEDS

Are the physical needs of man addressed (through facilities such as public toilets and public phones)?

> There are no public toilets or public phones.

CONNECTION TO THE SKY

Does the space have a visual connection to the sky and how does the user respond to this?

> The arcade has a roof and so there is no visual connection to the sky. The only connection to the outside is the direct visual link with the other end of the arcade and so, when moving through the space, one feels disconnected from the environment. The arcade has a gloomy atmosphere, because it is so wide with non-active edges and no light entering from above.

ELEMENTS OF SEDUCTION

Do the edges/storefronts contain elements of seduction? Do they entice the dweller to look beyond the edge?

> The edges are non-active and the SAPS occupies the surrounding spaces, which the dweller is not permitted to view. A staircase in the middle of the arcade leads up to a higher level and seduces the dweller to see what is to be found above when entering the arcade from Pretorius Street.

SPACE AND EVENTS

What type of events takes place within the space?

> The space is empty, except for the SAPS and the occasional passer-by who needs to cross through the arcade to reach a destination on the other side, and so no events take place here.

POLLEYS ARCADE linking schoeman street with pretorius street

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SCHOEMAN STREET

Vehicle

informal food stand

Columns

people on the move

people lingering

dead building edge

04.04.09
10:15 am

PRETORIUS STREET

7
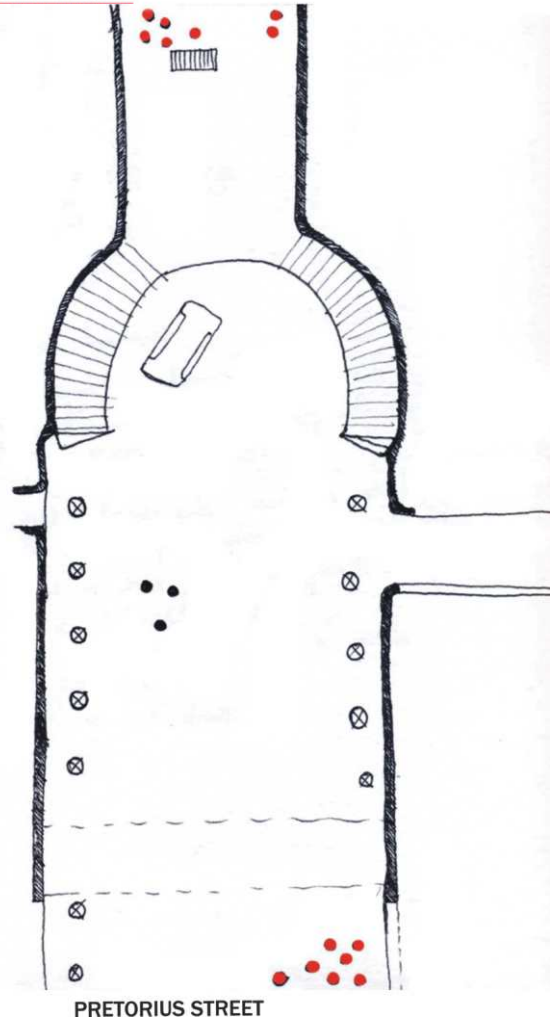
FIGURE 3.20, 3.21
3.20   Diagrammatic illustration of the layout and movement within Polleys arcade
3.21   View of Polleys arcade

FIGURE 3.22 Streetscape of Pretorius street that links in with President arcade

FIGURE 3.23, 3.24
    3.23   Interior east elevation of President arcade
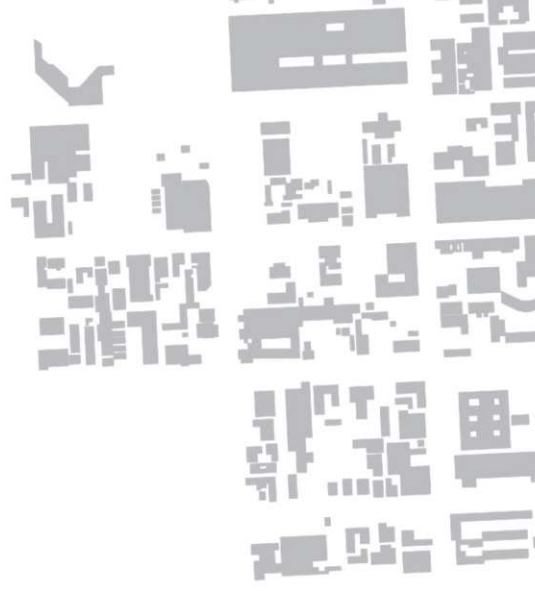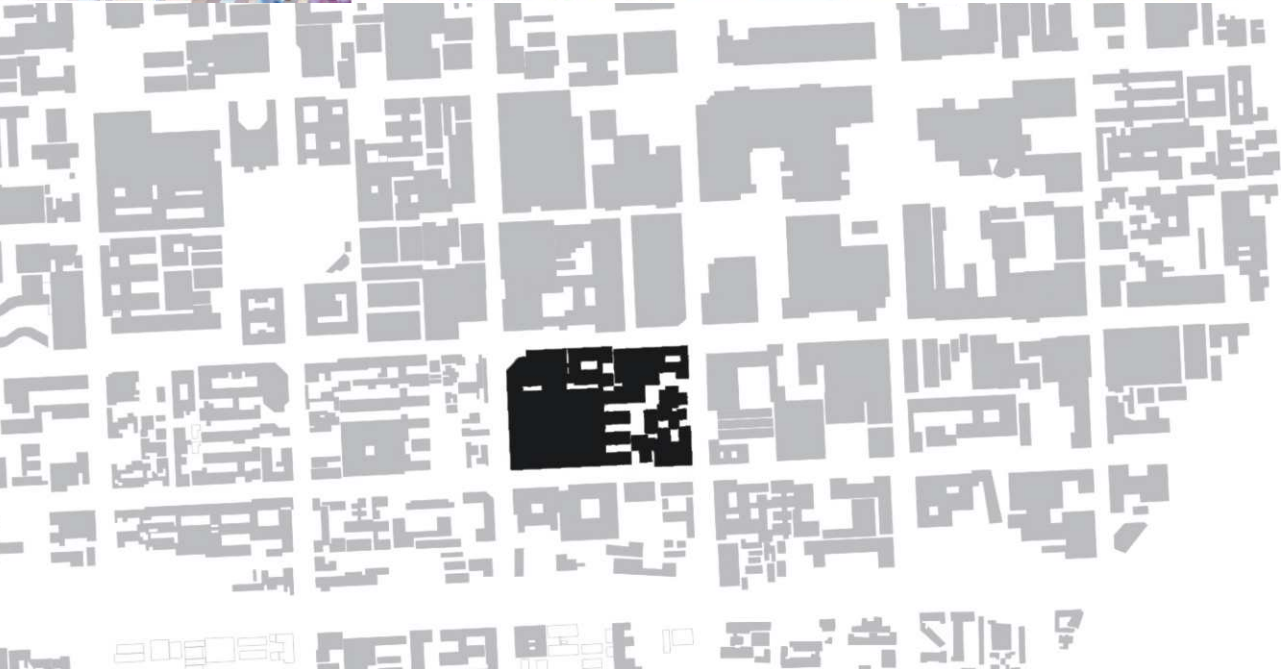   3.24   Interior west elevation of President arcade

FIGURE 3.25 Figure ground study of city block that President arcade runs through

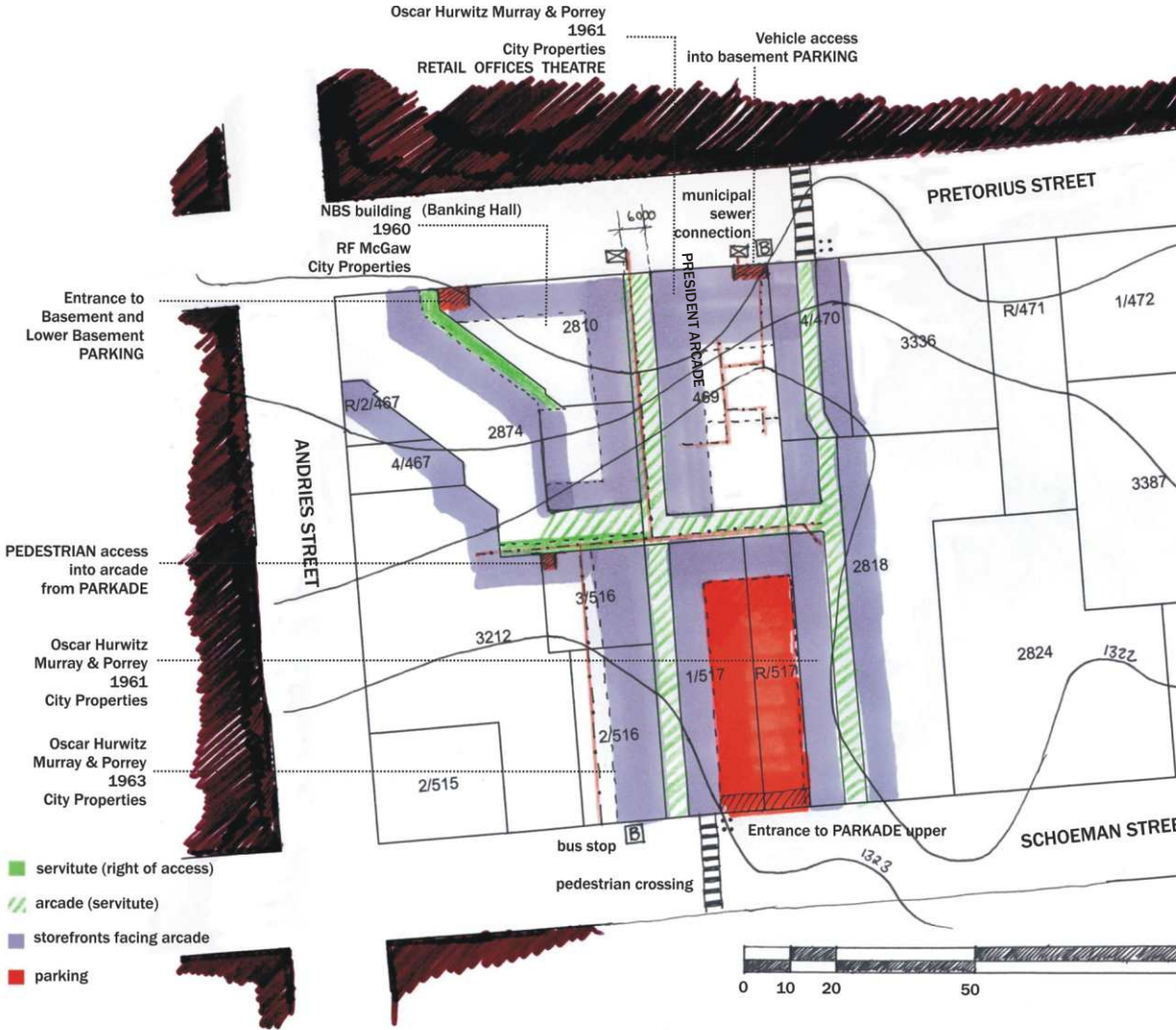FIGURE 3.26 Existing materials used throughout President arcade

PRESIDENT ARCADE lining schoeman street with pretorius street

om Pretorius street

FIGURE 3.28   Diagrammatic analysis of sites forming President arcade

Pretoria has a temperate climat̲e̲ 29°C during summer and 20°C during winter, and a minimum temperature of 9°C that seldom falls below 0°C, making it an ideal setting for public spaces that open to the sky. It is also a sunny city, as the duration of bright sunshine exceeds 80 per cent of the possible in winter and 60 per cent of the possible during summer. On average Pretoria experiences 50 to 89 rainy days during the rainy season between November and March, which peaks in January, and its thunderstorms often features heavy rainfall. The city is fairly wind still (Bothma 2003:32-33).

President Arcade is surrounded by tall buildings and is for most part open to the sky. The edges should not only provide staying zones, but also spaces to hide away in and socially interact when the weather changes. The arcade incorporates a play between covered and open areas along the building edges that cater for the seasonal changes. People can feel the sun on their skin during winter and still have shelter when there is a rain shower.

There are a number of colleges and schools in and around President Arcade and many of the students and children wait around in President Arcade during their lunch breaks and free time. Although they recline against the non-active storefronts, there are no real opportunities to create staying zones where they can linger along the edges.

UNION EHGWAWU
BUILDING SUPERVISOR
MICROZONE **DRIVING SCHOOL**
STYLE ALTERATIONS

STEP UP LOAN LADDER
CASINO **TRAINING ACADEMY**
SECURITY **TRAINING COLLEGE**
PERFUME SHOPPE

BROKERS & PROPERTY FINANCE
REVENUE AFFAIRS
NURSING COLLEGE

WORKERS UNION
DSDC COLLEGE
ATTORNEYS
NEW DAWN COLLEGE
FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATORS
COLLEGE OF BUSINESS
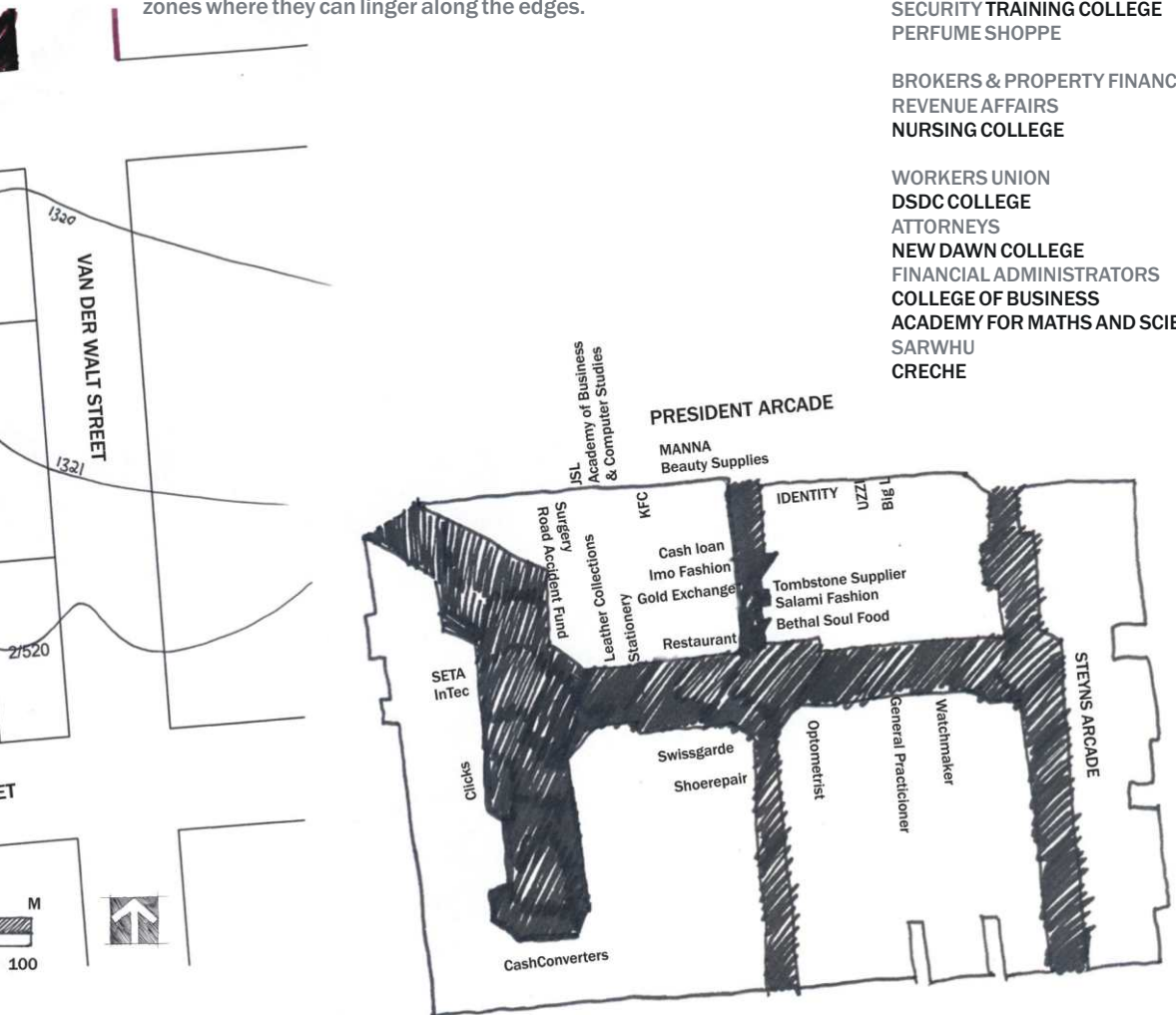**ACADEMY FOR MATHS AND SCIENCE**
SARWHU
CRECHE

FIGURE 3.29 Businesses and colleges in and around President arcade

The following observations were made b̶ ian movement, interviewing people and conducting an experiment w̶i̶t̶h̶i̶n̶ President Arcade.

THE NEED FOR SOCIAL PUBLIC SPACE

Has the need for social public space been addressed?

> There is no formal seating within the arcade and limited opportunity for the creation of staying zones.
> People tend to linger at points where there is already established activity.

- PEOPLE GO WHERE PEOPLE ARE
  There is a street vendor around whom the schoolchildren gather during lunch time to socialise.
- Bethal Soulfood
  Schoolchildren sit in front of the restaurant on the ground or gather around the point where people use the street vendor's telephones.

FIGURE 3.30, 3.31, 3.32
  3.30   Diagram indicating the social public points within and around President arcade, 24 March 2009, 11:45am
  3.31   Children gathering around street vendor
  3.32   Children in front of restaurant

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Do the edge and public space provide opportunity for people to linger and watch and be watched?

"The sight of action is an incentive for action. When people can see into spaces from the street their world is enlarged and made richer, there is more understanding; and there is possibility for communication, learning" (Alexander et al. 1977:774).

In President Arcade people linger at the disused storefront of a clothing outlet called Identity. This staying point faces an active storefront, allowing dwellers to look into the activity of the shop while watching the movement along Pretorius Street. This pattern repeats itself throughout the arcade, as people linger at points where their backs are covered and they face an active storefront. This notion that the sight of action is an incentive for action is further confirmed on observing that people do not linger at points where two empty storefronts face each other, arguably because they feel too exposed here and because there is nothing to watch.

At the point where President Arcade links up with Steyn Arcade to the east, both edges are closed up/non-active and there is no visual connection with the interiors. Although this is an important connection point, people stay away or quicken their pace as they move through it. The space has become desolate, with a homeless man making it his living area.
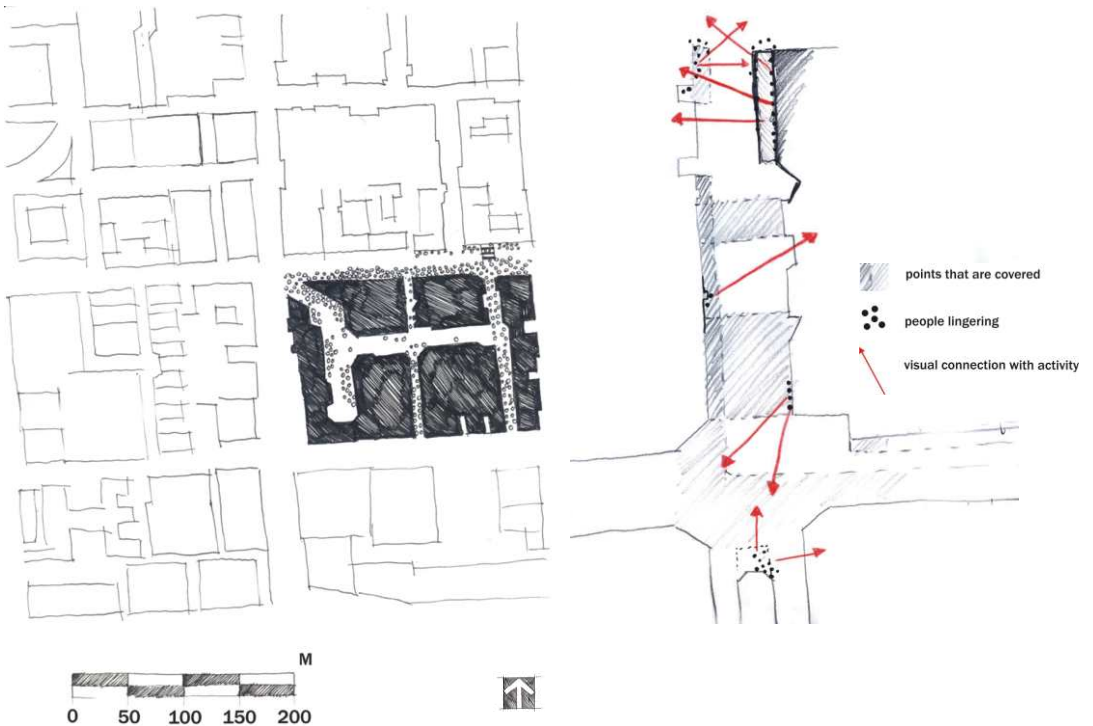

points that are covered

people lingering

visual connection with activity

M

0   50   100 150 200

FIGURE 3.33, 3.34
3.33   Diagram illustrating the concentration of pedestrian movement in and around President Arcade
3.34   Diagram indicating the places in arcade where people linger, 24 March 2009 at 11:50am.

EDGE EFFECT___STAYING ZONES

Do the edge and public space create opportunity for staying zones?

Opportunities for staying zones in President Arcade are limited. There is a niche along one of the edges, but as it looks onto an interior space where there is currently no activity, it is not used as a staying zone. Only one eatery, at the south end of the arcade, has used the opportunity to open into the arcade, creating the atmosphere of a street café. It provides seating outside the edge, in the midst of activity, and draws the most customers. The shops directly opposite benefit from the continuous movement of people.

FIGURE 3.35, 3.36

3.35   Restaurant seating flowing into the arcade, attracting people to the stores opposite it

3.36   Niche along the edge of President arcade

Is there an overload of information or are pedestrians able to orientate themselves within the space?

There is a high level of pedestrian movement within Pretorius Street and people prefer to wait for the buses inside the arcade space rather than in the street. The signage along the arcade is controlled until the midpoint, where the dweller is confronted with an overload of signage. But, because there is a very strong visual connection from the one side of the arcade to the other, dwellers are able to orientate themselves within the city fabric and do not feel disconnected.
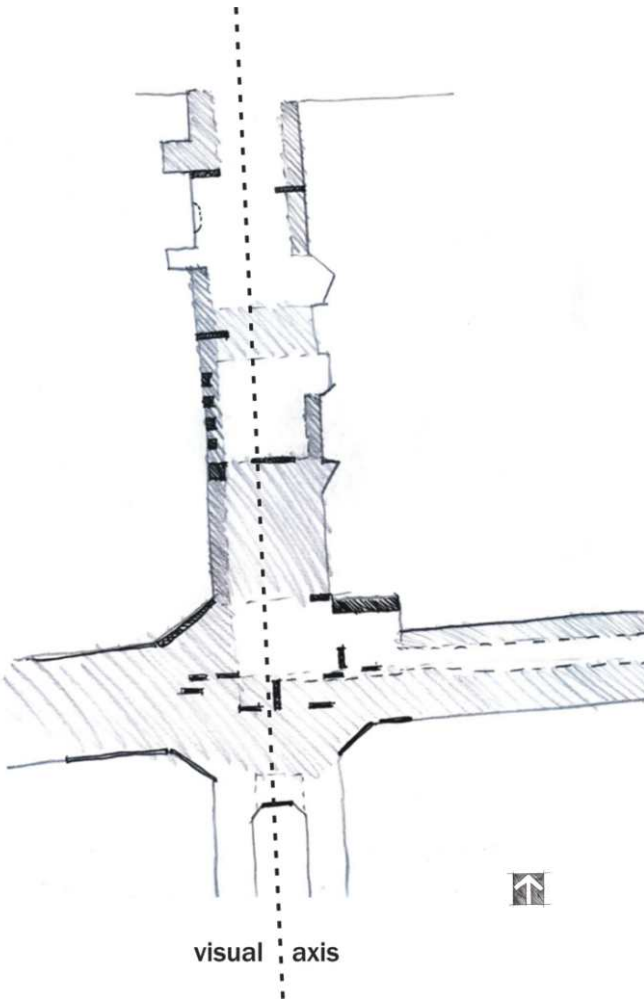

visual : axis

FIGURE 3.37, 3.38, 3.39
3.37   Diagram indicating the signage/orientation within and around President arcade
3.38   Signage along the edges of the arcade
3.39   Signage at midpoint

PHYSICAL NEEDS

Are the physical needs of man addressed (through facilities such as public toilets and public phones)?

There are no public toilets in the arcade, which can limit the time spent lingering, as the city dweller will have to move when they require these facilities.

While public phones (see figure 3.24) are available, people prefer to make use of the informal telephone stands located along the arcade. When asked why, their response is that the public phones are usually out of order or their coins get stuck inside and they lose their money. They prefer the informal stands because they are more reliable and they are removed from heavy pedestrian movement and form an active social point.

FIGURE 3.40 Informal telephone stand, removed from pedestrian movement

CONNECTION TO THE SKY

Does the space have a visual connection to the sky and how does the user respond to this?

There is a pattern of covered and open areas throughout the space and people linger at the points along the edge of the arcade where it is open to the sky but where cover is provided by means of a narrow cantilevered slab along the edge perimeter. At the points where the arcade is completely covered dwellers can still see light coming through, thus maintaining their relationship to nature.

The interior of the closed-up Identity store at the beginning of the arcade is completely cut off from the outside, allowing only a limited amount of natural light to fall into it.

FIGURE 3.41 View showing pattern of open and covered areas

ELEMENTS OF SEDUCTION

Do the edges/storefronts contain elements of seduction? Do they entice the dweller to look beyond the edge?

The storefronts are articulated as a continuous surface of glass (see figure 3.23 & 3.24). Some window fronts have been closed up while in others the displays are chaotic, making it difficult to notice any one thing in particular. The window displays fail to lure the passer-by into the shop, who continues past without even slowing down.

Where the arcade terminates in Pretorius Street, the shop entrances are located on the street. However, if the entrances were relocated inside the arcade, people would have to enter the arcade to access the shops and may subsequently be drawn deeper into the space.

SPACE AND EVENTS

What types of events take place within the space?

The activities taking place inside the shop interiors are disconnected from those taking place in the exterior space of the arcade. Passers-by cannot see into the shops and eateries. None of the shops have storefronts that open up to display merchandise in the arcade space. Neither do the eateries open up into the arcade, so patrons seated inside are unable to watch activity outside while passers-by are not enticed by sights and smells of food.

Dwellers made the fo[...]ents about President Arcade as a social public space:

- President Arcade is a prominent thoroughfare for the city dweller, because it provides pedestrian access through a city block in order to reach Bosman Street station.
- There is a lack of opportunity for staying zones.
- Safety is an issue because of the strips of closed-up storefronts that break the visual link with the surrounding spaces. Not only does the pedestrian feel disconnected from the surrounding spaces, but schoolchildren are often mugged where nobody can see them.
- City dwellers consider arcade spaces as social points within the city fabric. However, President Arcade loses its value as a social space because there are no points in which to linger and stay.
- Although people want to look out onto activity while they are lingering and having lunch, restaurant windows do not open up into the surrounding arcade.
- The entrances of the corner stores should be moved into the arcade from their locations along the busy pedestrian street.
- Schoolchildren recline against the long strips of blank storefronts, making the area dirty. This behaviour cannot be monitored, as the storefronts are blocked off from the surrounding spaces.
- People only visit the stores in this arcade if they can't find what they are looking for somewhere else, because there is no opportunity to linger. This indicates that both commercial activity and public social space need to be present in order to activate the full potential of a place.
- Because many schoolchildren and students visit President Arcade, a bookshop (rather than a shop selling tombstones) would be more practical. The activities and functions of adjacent spaces need to compliment each other and to activate the dialogue between the inside spaces and their surrounds.

PUBLIC OPINION how do you experience this space? why are you here? What do you expect from a public space?

ANDREW SITHOLE

NTOMBI MPHIWE

PLEASURE MASEKO

EMILY BEBUZA

RIKKIE COETZEE

ELIOT TSWAI

THEMBI NOBELA

FIGURE 3.42

FIGURE 3.43, 3.44

    3.43   Diagram indicating the points where people linger within President arcade

    3.44   Diagram indicating the points where people linger when MUSICIAN was performing within President arcade

FIGURE 3.45, 3.46

    3.45   View of clarinet player lying against inactive Identity storefront while performing

    3.46   View of activity within President arcade while musician is performing

design aim

Kwaito music booming from oversized speakers in front of shops is a common feature in the arcades and thoroughfares. People move past quickly, ignoring the music, which thereby hinders opportunities for staying zones. The experiment required a musician to perform in President Arcade, in front of an inactive clothing storefront. The clarinet player performed classical and jazz compositions on a weekday, during the busiest period from 11:30am and 1:30pm. He moved slowly up and down the arcade space and, for a period of time, rested against the inactive storefront while performing. The aim was to observe if the city dweller responds to the element of surprise created by live classical and jazz music in this context and whether this seduces the passer-by to stop and linger or even to pause. A secondary purpose of the experiment was to observe, map and compare the lingering points of people while the musician was performing with that when there was no musician present.

response

Documenting the event was a difficult task. The moment people noticed that they were being photographed they moved on quickly.

Usually people loiter around the closed-up Identity storefront. But when the musician positioned himself here, all except two people moved over to the edge opposite to watch him. They did not recline against the clear open shop-fronts as is typical, but chose to stand within a niche formed by the entrance to the top building. Most people moving through the arcade paused to watch the musician, fascinated by an event that is out of place in the CBD.

conclusion

The experiment highlights that man's desire to watch and to be watched is limited and that dwellers want to survey their environments without being monitored. Provision should be made for public and semi-private points along the edges that give dwellers a choice regarding the level of exposure and social activity they want to engage in. The creation of these lingering points and staying zones are affected by what happens along a building's edge. People prefer to be directly opposite an active edge with their backs 'protected' by a less active edge.

The design of storefront edges should also incorporate elements of surprise and seduction to make the passer-by take notice and explore beyond the edge.

outcome

The design aim - through the above process of analysing the different arcades and thoroughfares, engaging in the detail analysis of President Arcade, interviewing the public and conducting the experiment - is to establish a document that will provide guidelines for the interior architect and developer as to which elements need to be implemented in order to establish an active dialogue between the building edge and the immediate public space.

The outcome of the above-mentioned process is discussed in the following chapter in the form of a guideline document that provides long-term and short-term guidelines.