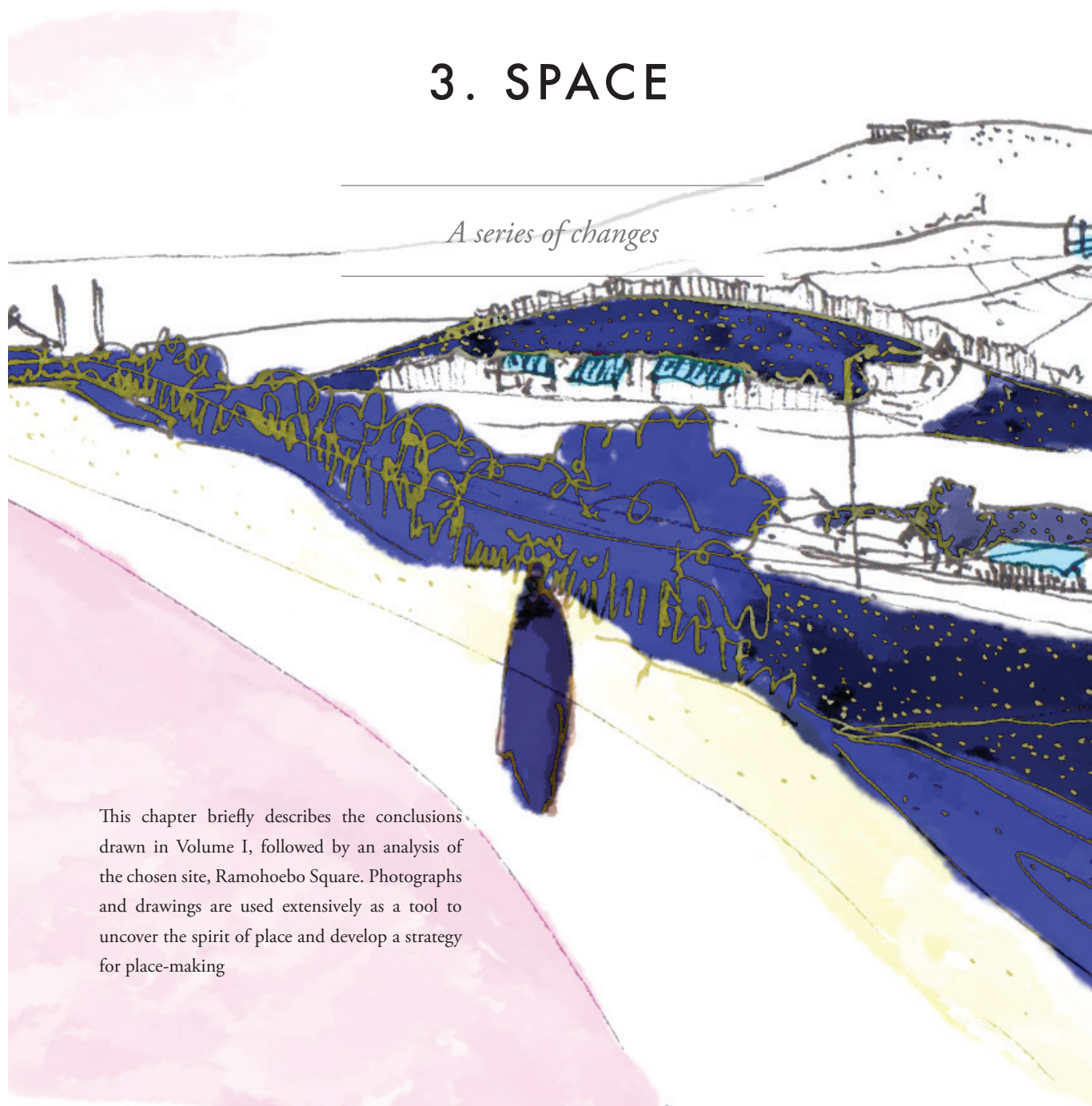


### 3. SPACE

*A series of changes*



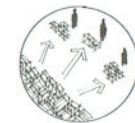
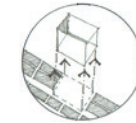
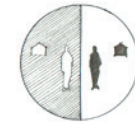
This chapter briefly describes the conclusions drawn in Volume I, followed by an analysis of the chosen site, Ramohoebo Square. Photographs and drawings are used extensively as a tool to uncover the spirit of place and develop a strategy for place-making

Fig. 43. View over Atteridgeville. Looking South-east.. (Nel & Sadiq 2106).

Fig. 44. A series of changes. (Nel & Sadiq 2016).



### BORDERLAND



*An area of overlap between two things*



# VISION

*In-between spaces detached from a collective vision*

## LEGEND

- 1 Saulsville Hostels
- 2 Saulsville Cemetery
- 3 Atteridgeville Cemetery
- 4 Maunde Street Gateway
- 5 SS Mendi Memorial
- 6 Atlyn Mall
- 7 Tshwane South College
- 8 Empty Plot (Khoza st)
- 9 Moroe St Park
- 10 WF Nkomo - Green Strip
- 11 Mbolekwa Sports Complex
- 12 Municipal Offices
- 13 Service Delivery Dept.
- 14 Taxi Rank
- 15 Shopping Mall
- 16 Engen Service Centre
- 17 Ramohoebo Square
- 18 Empty Plot (Matshiga st)
- 19 Swimming Pool
- 20 Empty Plot (Maunde st)
- 21 Reservoirs
- A School Grounds
- B Natural Buffer
- C Dolomitic Land



**Fig. 45.** A new collective vision. These sites form part of the vision developed for Atteridgeville. Proposals are described in depth in Volume I (Nel & Sadiq 2016).



## VISION

### *A summary*

Volume I of this series comprises the historical, theoretical, quantitative and qualitative study of Atteridgeville, and is concluded by a proposal for an incremental development scheme after identifying 21 potential sites of development

The analysis revealed the suburban-township state of Atteridgeville, and the symptoms thereof, most notably, the aspects of dependency on Pretoria, and sprawl.

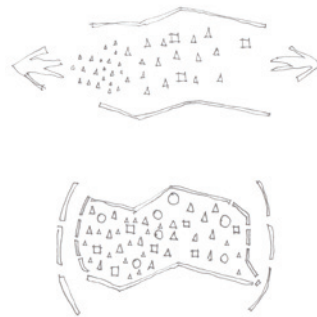


Fig. 46. Dependency + Sprawl vs. Contain (Nel & Sadiq).

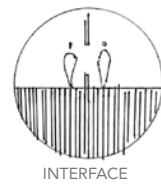
The focus of the study, and subsequent choice of intervention, is that of public space and public buildings. The vision (Figure 45, previous page) proposes an incremental approach, taking the existing network of urban green-spaces into account, in an attempt to strengthen and build on their essence.

Three main issues were identified, and used to test the potential sites for development: 1. definition, 2. barrier, and 3. neglect.

Three additional categories were considered as themes to adhere to, in order to form an integrated, holistic vision, and be incorporated in the design process for the individual intervention. These themes were developed in response to many successful spaces found throughout Atteridgeville. They are: 1. Interface, 2. Activity, and 3. Connect.



DEFINITION



INTERFACE



BARRIER



ACTIVITY



NEGLECT



CONNECT

Fig. 47. Definition

Fig. 50. Interface

Fig. 48. Barrier

Fig. 51. Activity

Fig. 49. Neglect

Fig. 52. Connect

\*All figures from Nel & Sadiq 2016)



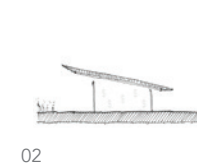
Fig. 53. Point 1 | cafe. Section illustrating micro-economic connection to street. (Nel & Sadiq 2016).

The image above is an example of a typical street in Atteridgeville which has been manipulated to adhere to the three themes: activity, interface and connect. The goal is to understand the dynamic that exists between the private and public realm and build on the existing network, rather than take a *tabula rasa* approach. This strategy will be used to inform the response to the chosen site.

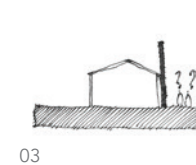
The responses developed were guided by the study of public spaces and the everyday user in Atteridgeville. The main issues identified are summarised in the diagrams below.



01



02



03



04

Fig. 54. 01. Public realm: neglects activity of the everyday user (Nel & Sadiq 2016).

Fig. 55. 02. Renewal Schemes: economically and aesthetically driven (Nel & Sadiq 2016).

Fig. 56. 03. The user: not supported by public buildings (Nel & Sadiq 2016).

Fig. 57. 04. Location well-connected sites are occupied by monofunctional buildings (Nel & Sadiq 2016).

## SURVEY

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### *Mapping* *Photographic essay*

---

A series of mapping exercises are presented to reveal the intricacies of the site at a functional level - exploring access, programmes on site, movement patterns, etc. This study is taken further, as a qualitative analysis through a graphical study making use of photographs and sketches.

A photographic essay is a collection of images ordered in such a way that a story is told, a series of events is illustrated or emotions and concepts are conveyed. The same techniques used in conventional writing is employed, but translated into a visual language.

The following pages invite the reader into Ramohoebo Square - the empty heart of Atteridgeville - providing a window into the site. The intention is for the reader to take a similar journey through Atteridgeville as the author, in order to better understand the intervention which follows.



## OUDSTAD NO. 17

### *Ramohoebo Square*

As discussed previously, Atteridgeville was designed as a 'model' township. This means care was taken in the planning and provision of schools, churches, recreational facilities, parks and businesses was essential.

The radial spine can be seen in Figure 58 (opposite). The intention was to connect the two commercial nodes (Mareka street), both located around traffic circles. The main approach into Atteridgeville, was and still is from the north-eastern corner from WF Nkomo street and is characterised by a row of cedar trees. Secondary radial routes emerged from these circles, while the main north-south axis (Komane street) was intended to house administrative and health facilities.

The Pretoria City Council (PCC) made a decision to centralise a commercial hub, distinct from the commonly appearing *spaza* shops which had sprung up in residential areas. The intention was to create a controlled commercial area to 'allow a reasonable amount of competition'. The goal was to protect black businesses and allow for profitable trade within Atteridgeville, while the trade in Pretoria was protected for the white community. (PCC 1943:160).

Due to the Council's optimistic plans for a model township, their financial resources fell short and no buildings for trade had been erected by 1955. Instead, in 1943, permission had been granted to convert 12 houses for commercial use and by 1945, 15 houses had been approved for conversion to business premises. The library, which had been moved from Marabastad, was relocated to a three-roomed house due to lack of financial resources (Coertze 1969:22).

Ramohoebo square is nestled between the undulating landscape of Atteridgeville. Stals (1998:76) states that in 1998 both nodes were 'still underdeveloped regarding both sense of place and underutilisation of space. Visually both nodes have little appeal. The few constructed buildings are positioned regardless of any spatial importance or potential.'

Very little has changed in the last 18 years.



LEGEND

- Main commercial node: shops, sports stadium and community centre were later added.
- Ramohoebo Square: trading and administrative centre. Includes post office, shops, offices, etc.
- Commercial node connected by Mareka Street.
- Ramohoebo square connected to Church street (now WF Nkomo) by Seeiso street.

Fig. 58. Portion of Native Residential Areas plan of Atteridgeville from March 1954. Two major commercial nodes are highlighted. (Original image PCC1948:24).



## INCOMPLETE

### *Unrealised dreams*

*"Despite all this potential for activity the area was deserted ... one could not help but feel depressed by the face of 'unfinishedness.'" Ramohoebo Square in 1998*

*(Stals 1998:76)*

Today, in 2016, Atteridgeville still displays the same traits. Much public space has been neglected or lost to housing developments. The vast, undefined 'public' space of Ramohoebo Square remains. The original intentions have not been realised, which is seen when comparing Figures 58 and 59. The form of the public square or traffic circle was not fully implemented. Rumour has it that there used to be a traffic circle with the SS Mendi Memorial and a rock garden at the centre, but today the empty square remains underutilised and undefined.

Ramohoebo Square is currently 'framed' by a variety of buildings. The largest, the Atteridgeville Clinic - a primary health care facility providing HIV, AIDS and TB-related treatment - is situated on the southern side of Mareka street. The burnt remains of the Sekgamorogo Shopping Centre lies on the west. To the north of the square sits a small commercial complex which includes DM Classics fashion

designer, a small supermarket, pharmacy, Dr MS Mnthatha's offices, a car parts store and a bar. A large government-run crèche is behind this centre and a primary school to the west. South-east is the post office, the United Reformed Church and a secondary school. Multiple smaller programmes about these structures including a dry cleaner. Finally, to the east is Vintage Corner, a *shisa nyama* (a commercial open-fire barbecue), car wash and bar with a crèche and hardware-type store behind it.

On an average day the square is quiet. The traffic passing through moves by slowly and the open area often gets used as a bus stop. During April site visits, the site was undergoing maintenance, and the burnt remains of Sekgamorogo Shopping Centre were finally demolished in July.

Figure 59, a recent aerial photograph, clearly indicates that the site is still derelict and undefined.



Fig. 59. Aerial photograph of Ramohoebo Square. (adapted from Tshwane GIS 2009). See Fig. 63 for key.



## REVIVE

### *Public Buildings*

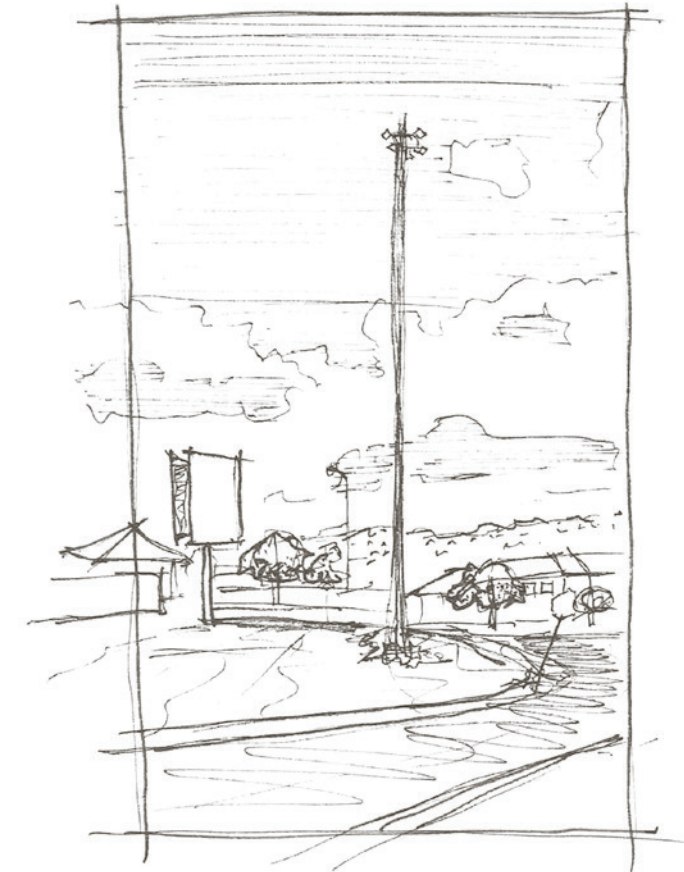


The chosen site is an example of a space intended to include commercial activities in the original planning, which was never executed. As a result, the site lies dormant, lost, and incomplete.

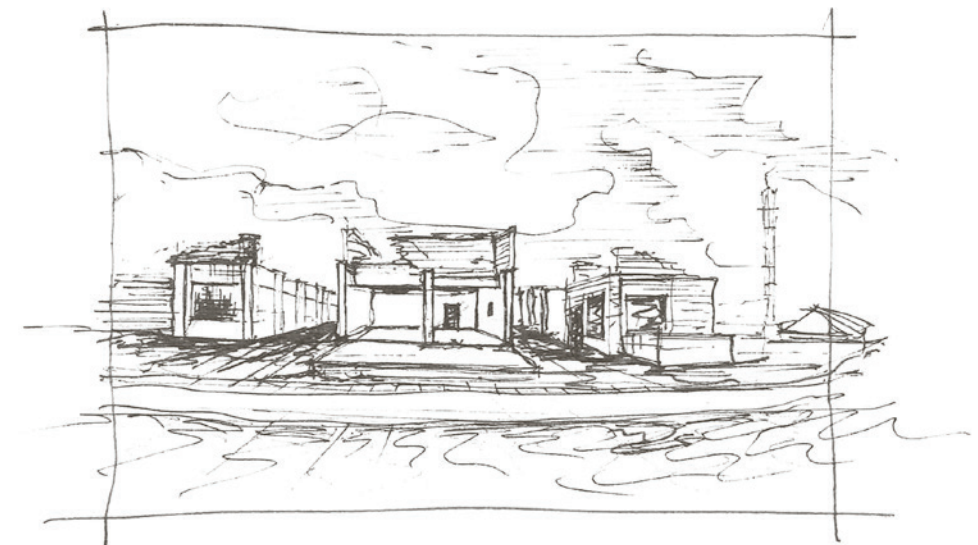
As it stands, Ramohoebo square is not a truly civic space and cannot sustain or maintain the vitality of the community. The public spaces that connect public buildings physically and programmatically are disconnected from the public life.

**The following pages follow the investigation of the site through photography and drawing as a method to understand the dynamic and opportunities on site, as well as the theory considered relevant as part of the development of an approach to revive the site.**

*Fig. 60.* Anchors and magnets.  
Areas of overlap on Ram Square.



*Fig. 61.* Neglect. View towards Atteridgeville Clinic over the empty square.



*Fig. 62.* Loss. Burned down mall on site (April) demolished in July.



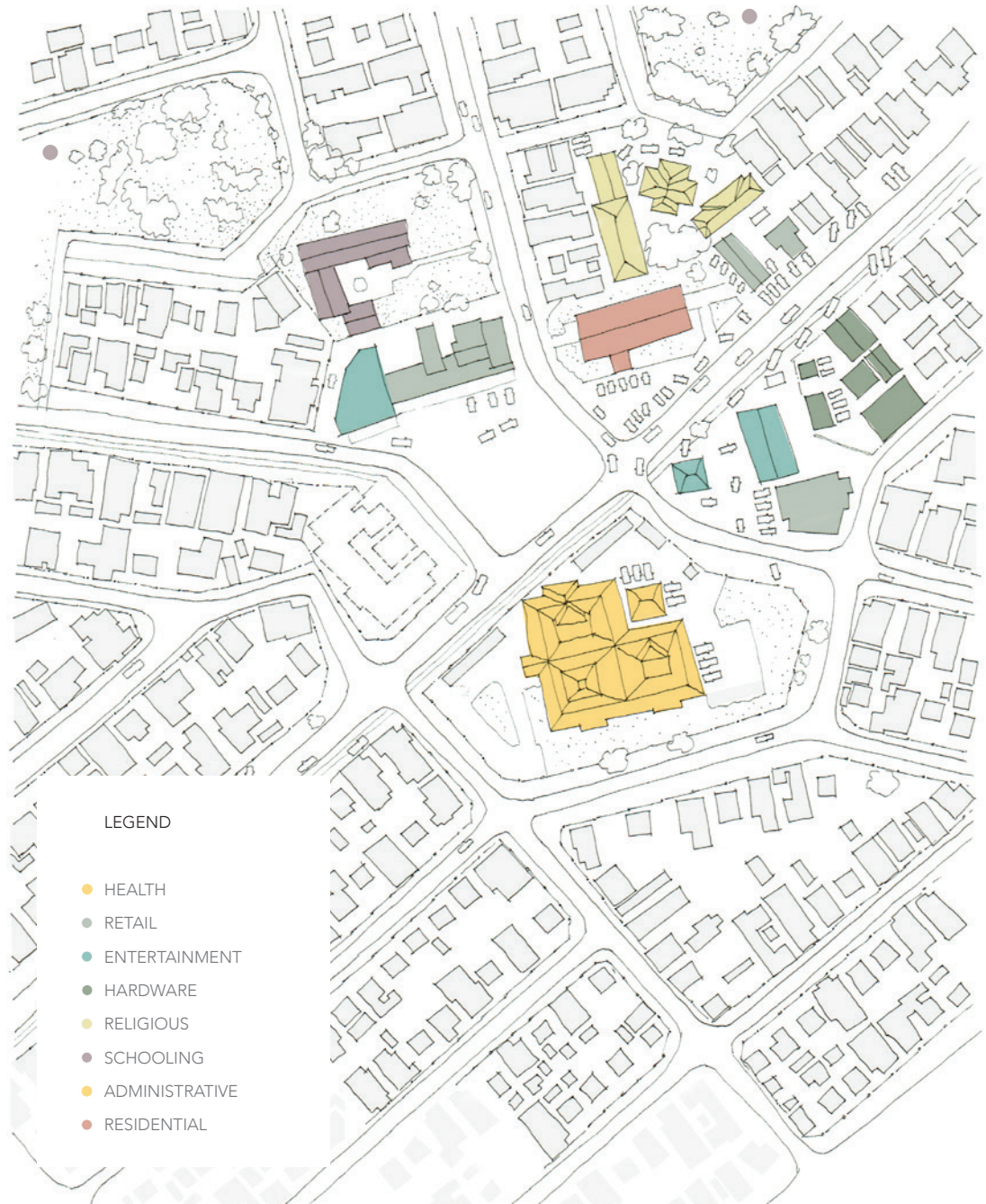


Fig. 63. Ramohoebo Square and surrounds - Noli Map.

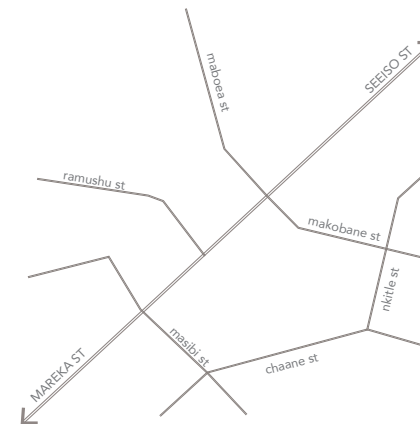


Fig. 64. Street Plan.

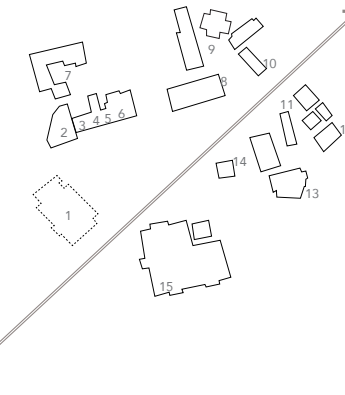


Fig. 65. Existing buildings.

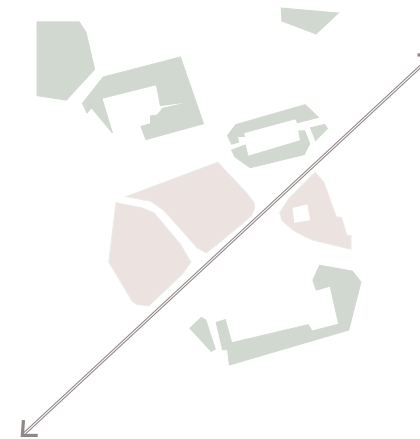


Fig. 66. Hard + soft surfaces.

The mapping exercise reveals the dense suburban grain which surrounds the empty square. The original plans for a commercial node were never fully realised, however a few establishments do exist.

The burnt down shopping mall has caused a loss of energy on the site, as the majority of commercial activities are hosted on the eastern periphery of Atteridgeville, at Atlyn Mall on Khoza street. The post office is regularly used, but the majority of the activity occurs in the evenings at the entertainment venues, Devine Lounge and Vintage Corner. The clinic to the south is well used but offers very little to the public realm as the entire premises is fenced off.

Atteridgeville has very little to offer it's residents in terms of recreation. Since many of the neighbourhood parks were lost to housing developments, empty plots such as this offer potential for diversifying the amenities available to residents.

1. Sekgamorogo Shopping centre  
Burnt down remains of the centre were finally demolished by July 2016.
2. Devine Lounge  
A popular entertainment venue
3. Lunch Bar Supermarket
4. Spares Shop
5. Dennie Manthata Classic  
Fashion designer
6. Dihlareng Pharmacy
7. Government crèche
8. Atteridgeville Post Office
9. United Reformed Church Complex.
10. Dry Cleaners
11. Christian Bookstore
12. Hardware and construction store
13. Small informal crèche
14. Vintage Corner - carwash, diner, bar.
15. Atteridgeville clinic



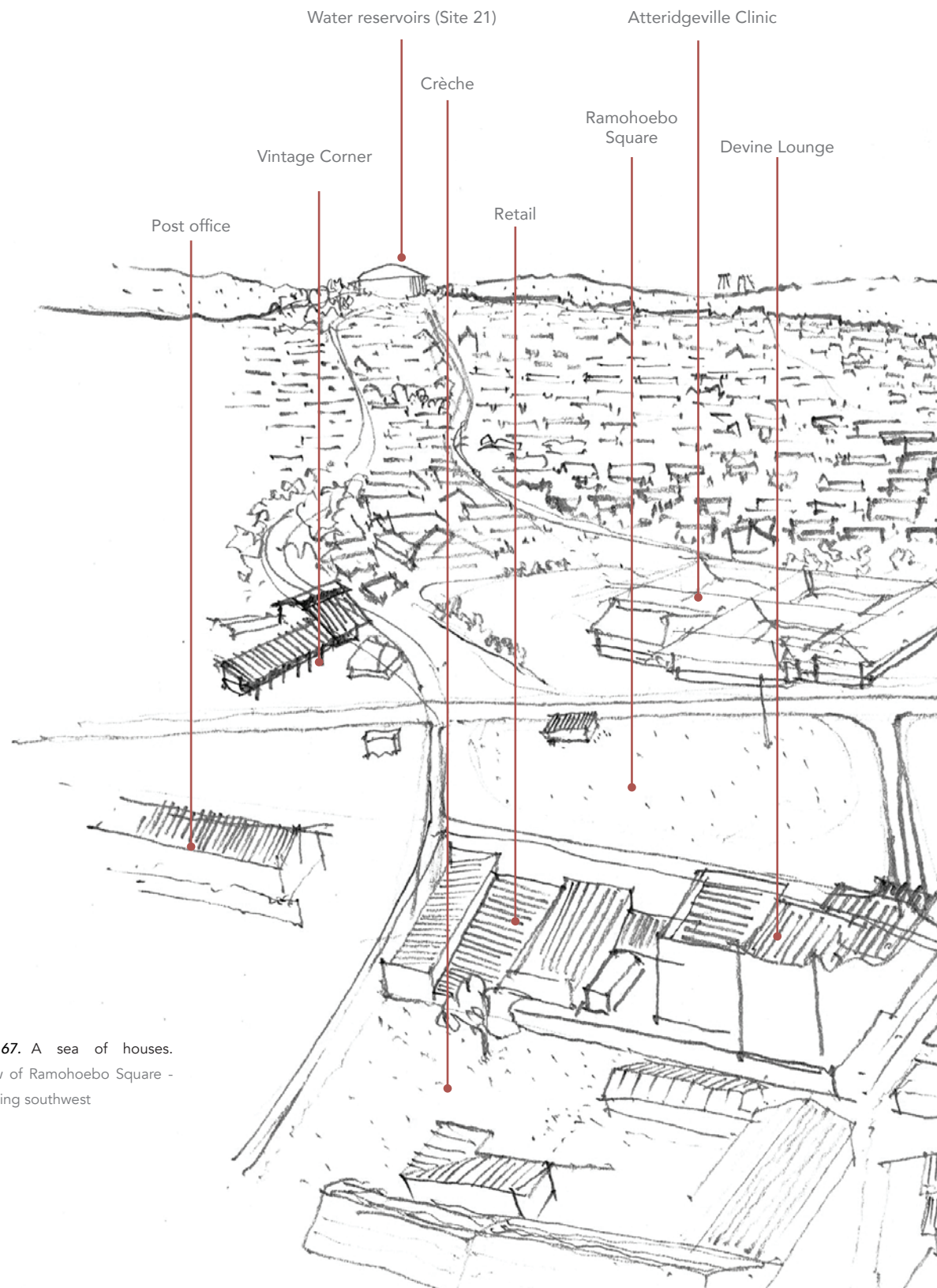
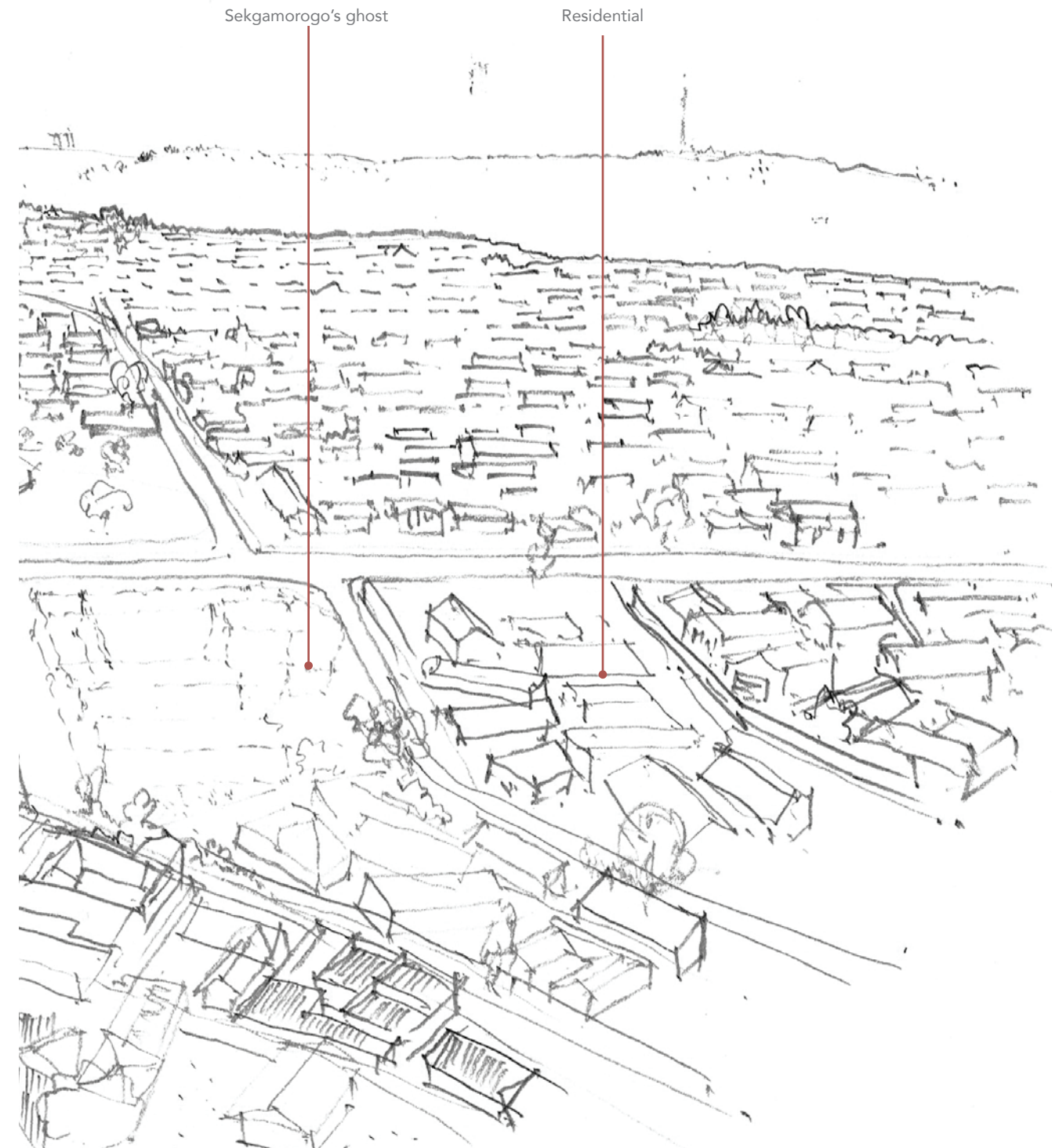


Fig. 67. A sea of houses.  
View of Ramohoebo Square -  
looking southwest





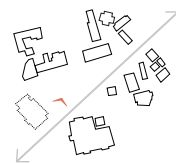


Fig. 68. The Square. Looking north (February 2016).



Fig. 69. Section from the church up the hill.



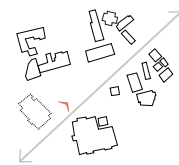


Fig. 70. Post office (left) and Vintage Corner (right) (February 2016).





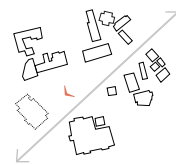


Fig. 71. Remnants of Sekgamoro Shopping Centre (February 2016).



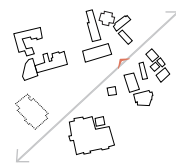


Fig. 72. Church, day care and dry cleaners (February 2016).



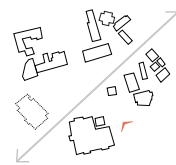


Fig. 73. Clinic (left) Vintage Corner (right) on Mokobane street (February 2016).

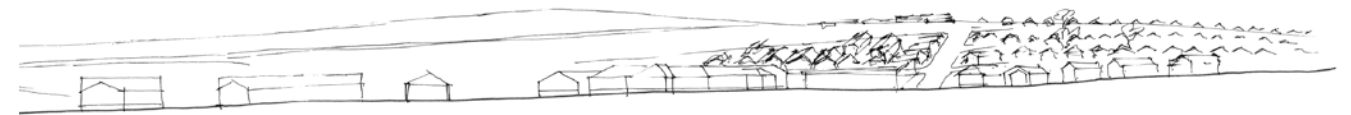


Fig. 74. Hills and houses. View towards Masibi st.



Fig. 75. Focused Panorama highlighting points of interest (March).

Fig. 76. Panorama sketch of Ram Square starting at the clinic. (March).



**RAMUSHU ST**

Clear suburban character with tree-lined streets. Streets are always full of energy with many pedestrians, small street-side stalls or businesses fronting onto the street.



**SEKGAMOROGO SHOPPING CENTRE**

The remains of the old centre edge the square, signifying the neglect of communal spaces in Atteridgeville. The site is however not inhabited by any vagrants. The remnants of the mall were demolished in July 2016.



**DM CLASSICS**

A view of the dilapidated stores on the southern edge of Ramohoebo square, including a hardware store, grocer and pharmacy.



**DEVINE LOUNGE**

South-western corner of Ramohoebo Square - a popular entertainment venue.



**POST OFFICE**

The Atteridgeville post office, which receives considerable traffic, is in front of the United Reformed Church, a beautiful church which offers an intimate environment in contrast to the vast open space of the square.



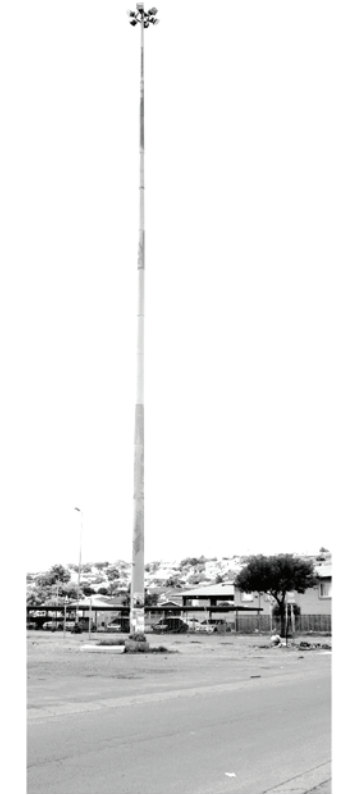
**VINTAGE CORNER**

Formerly, Rams Square Cafe owned by the notorious 'King of Bling' William 'Mashobane' Mbatha - a popular entertainment venue in Atteridgeville.



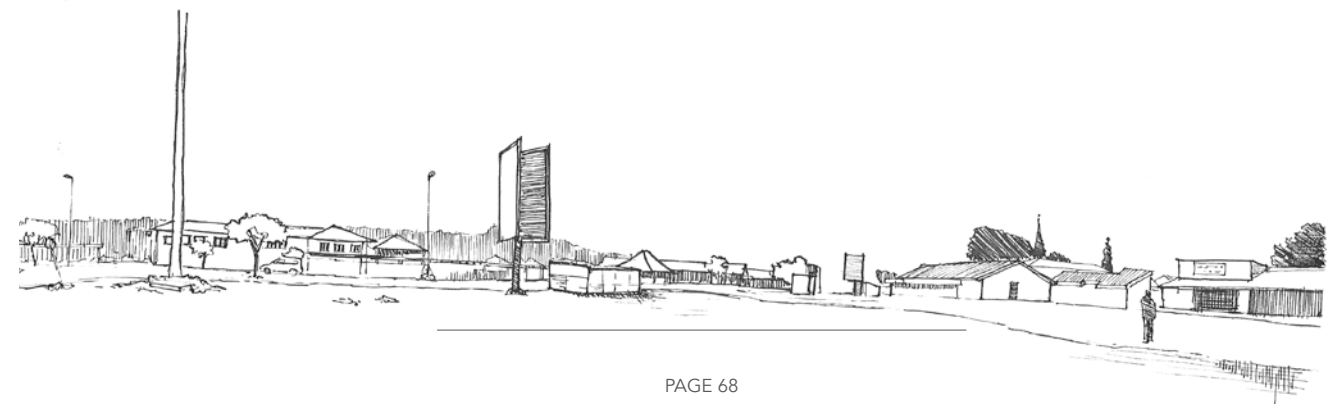
**SQUARE**

Neglect with a view of the suburb



**CLINIC**

The Atteridgeville clinic with the rising rows of houses behind.





## SUBURBIA

*Streets of Atteridgeville*



Fig. 77. Suburbia (April 2016).

## INDETERMINACY

*Patterns and ghosts*

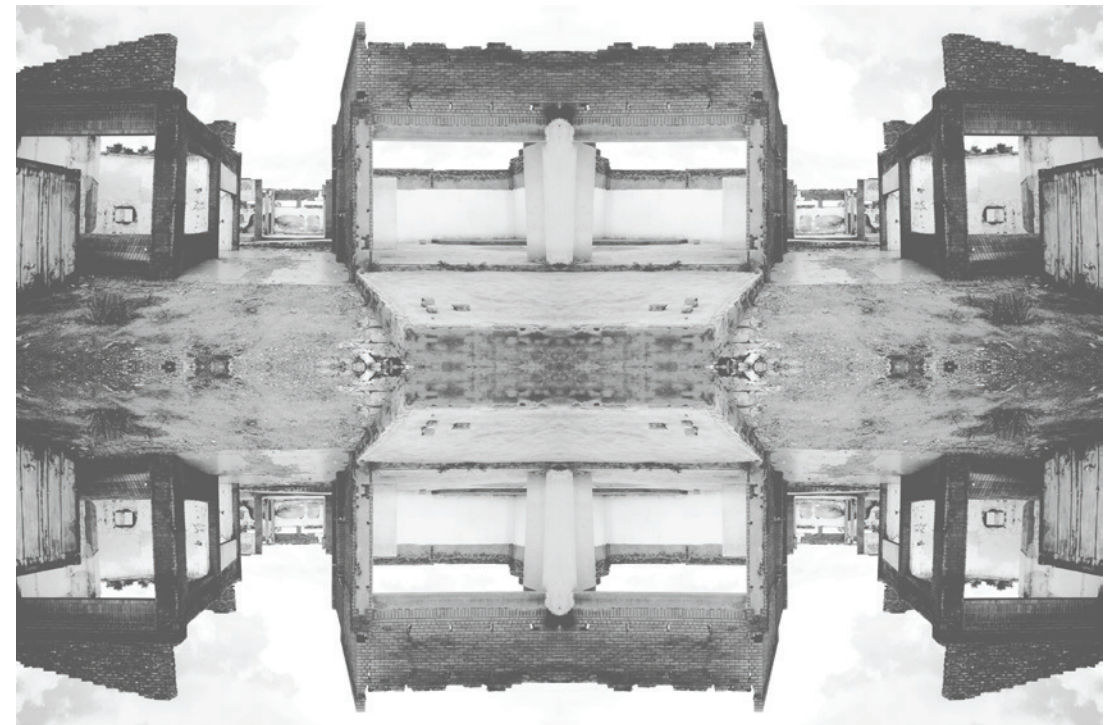


Fig. 78. Patterns and Ghosts (April 2016).





## PATTERNS

*Uncovering ghosts on site*

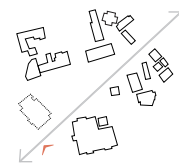
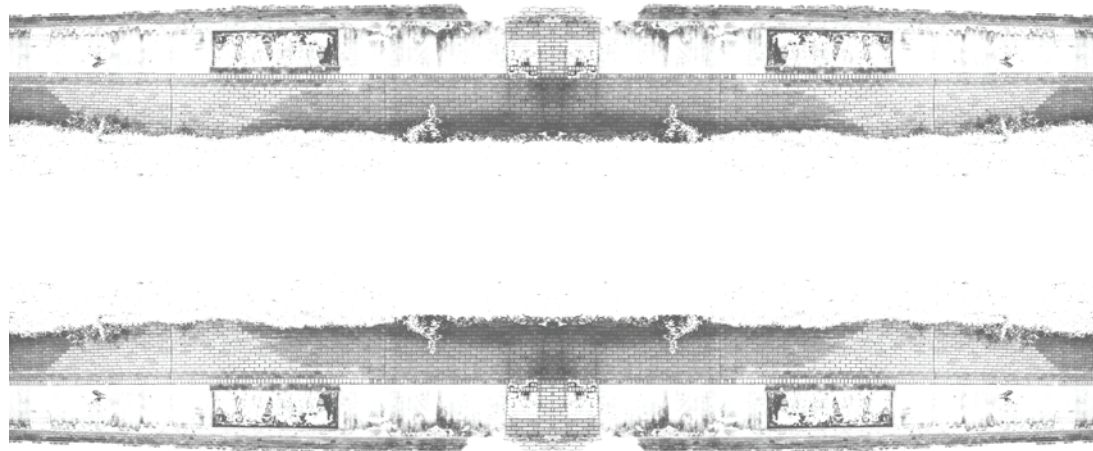


Fig. 79. Patterns (April 2016).

## NO DUMPING

*Neglect*

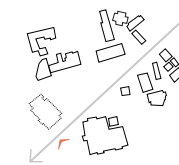


Fig. 80. No dumping (April 2016).



## UNEASY

*Abandonment*

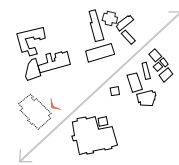


Fig. 81. Uneasy (April 2016).

## INTIMACY

*The tree and the steeple*

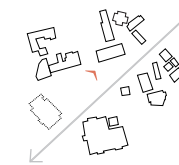


Fig. 82. Intimacy (April 2016).



03 | SPACE

# VACANT

*Potential*

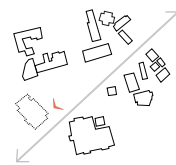
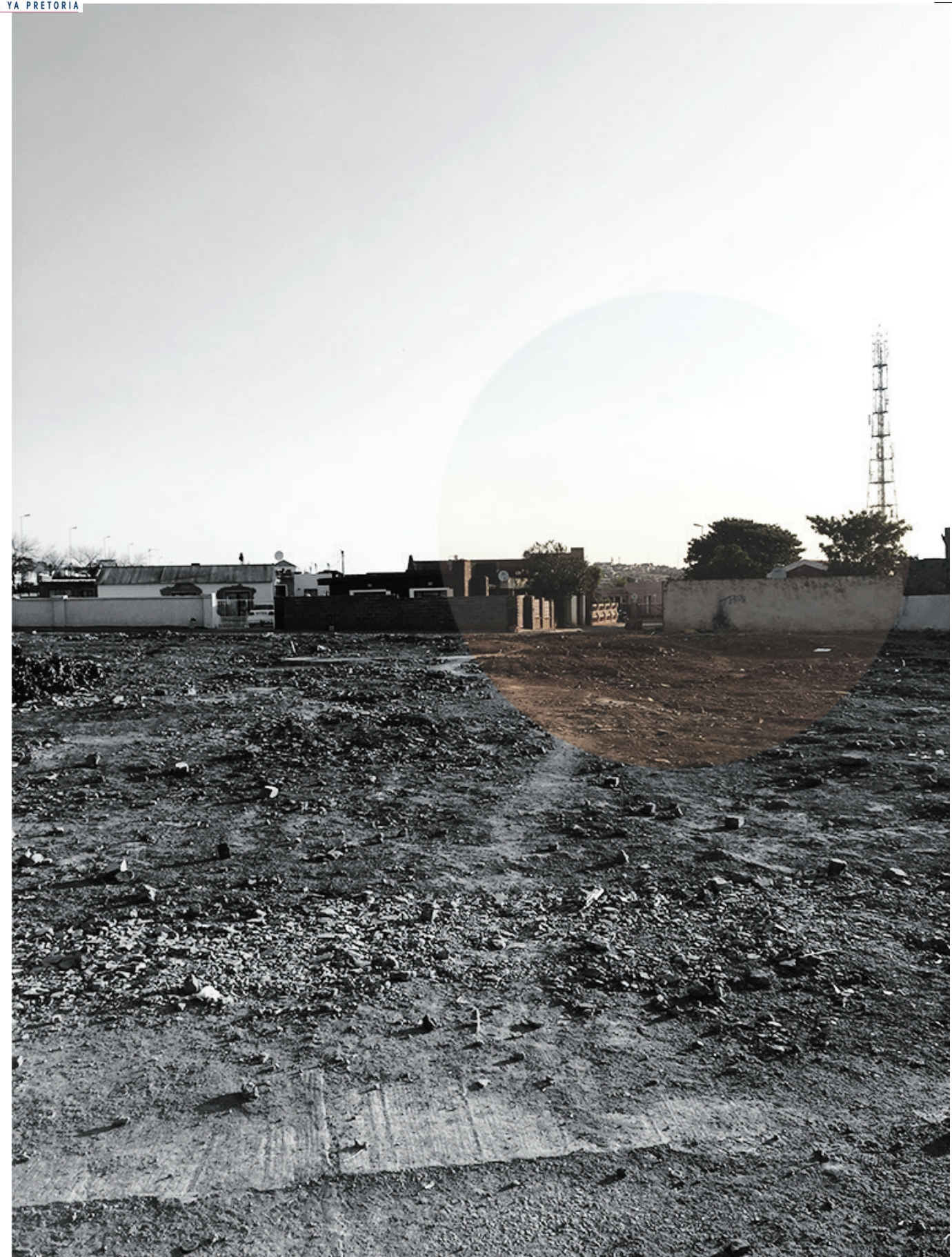
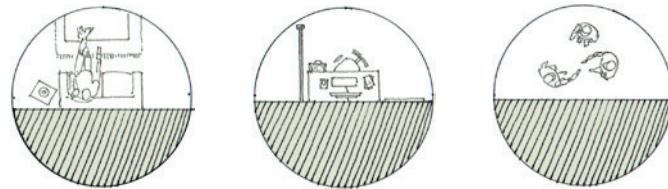


Fig. 83. Vacancy 01 (July 2016). Fig. 84. Vacancy 02 (July 2016).



## THE STREET

*As third place,  
and maybe first and second*



### Third place:

public places on neutral ground where people can interact. These are identified by Ray Oldenburg (1991) as essential spaces for community and public life in his book *The Great Good Place*. First place is the home and second place is related to work.

The streets have been identified as the predominant third space in Atteridgeville. This third place not only functions as a vital neutral ground for social interaction but also the space where businesses spill out or the street becomes an extension of the private, social realm. This is a prominent characteristic in townships throughout South Africa. The large road reserves in Atteridgeville create many such opportunities, as an allowance for this space already exists.

The boundary of the house serves a purely aesthetic purpose. Gates are left unlocked, and display identity rather than security. The division between public and private spaces is blurred, complimenting the concept of the third place.

The vital dynamic that exists on the streets of Atteridgeville presents many opportunities. The reason for its existence may be the loss of dedicated public space, but it also speaks of the sense of community amongst residents.

This dissertation aims to investigate what the street lacks as a true civic space. The proposed public space and public buildings should provide for an 'active citizen' of a vibrant neighbourhood by reclaiming the lost space of Ramohoebo Square to establish the heart of Atteridgeville

The photographic study, site visits and sketches have revealed an unfortunate abandonment of public space. However, a vibrant social dynamic exists in Atteridgeville. This investigation will be taken further to develop a site-specific response.

Fig. 85. First, Second and Third Place. (Nel & Sadiq 2016).



An investigation into the occupation of the street in Atteridgeville: (Live - Work - Play)

Fig. 86. Third Place 01 Live.  
Fig. 87. Third Place 02 Work.  
Fig. 88. Third Place 03 Play.



## THE VERY NARROW WALL

### *Broader theoretical approach*

Atteridgeville has been identified as a 'borderland' due to the segregationist nature of its development. It holds many positive attributes, possibly due to the formal development of the model township, as discussed by Stals (1998) in her extensive study of a possible connection between physical space and social cohesion.

If a borderland is to be considered as an area of overlap between two things, we begin to see the importance of this interstitial space - the third space. The in-between space, which is between public and private, is where important activity occurs.

Caroline Dionne (1994:2) discusses the border as a place to dwell using the analogy of Humpty Dumpty sitting on a very narrow wall.



*... a limit - a point, a plane, a body; a certain Humpty Dumpty sitting on a very narrow wall - that separates both. It is in between and therefore cannot be fixed; it moves, it transforms itself, or at least it appears to be fixed, but only for a certain time, because the mind always oscillates between the two sides... The limit is always becoming; it is the site of events.*

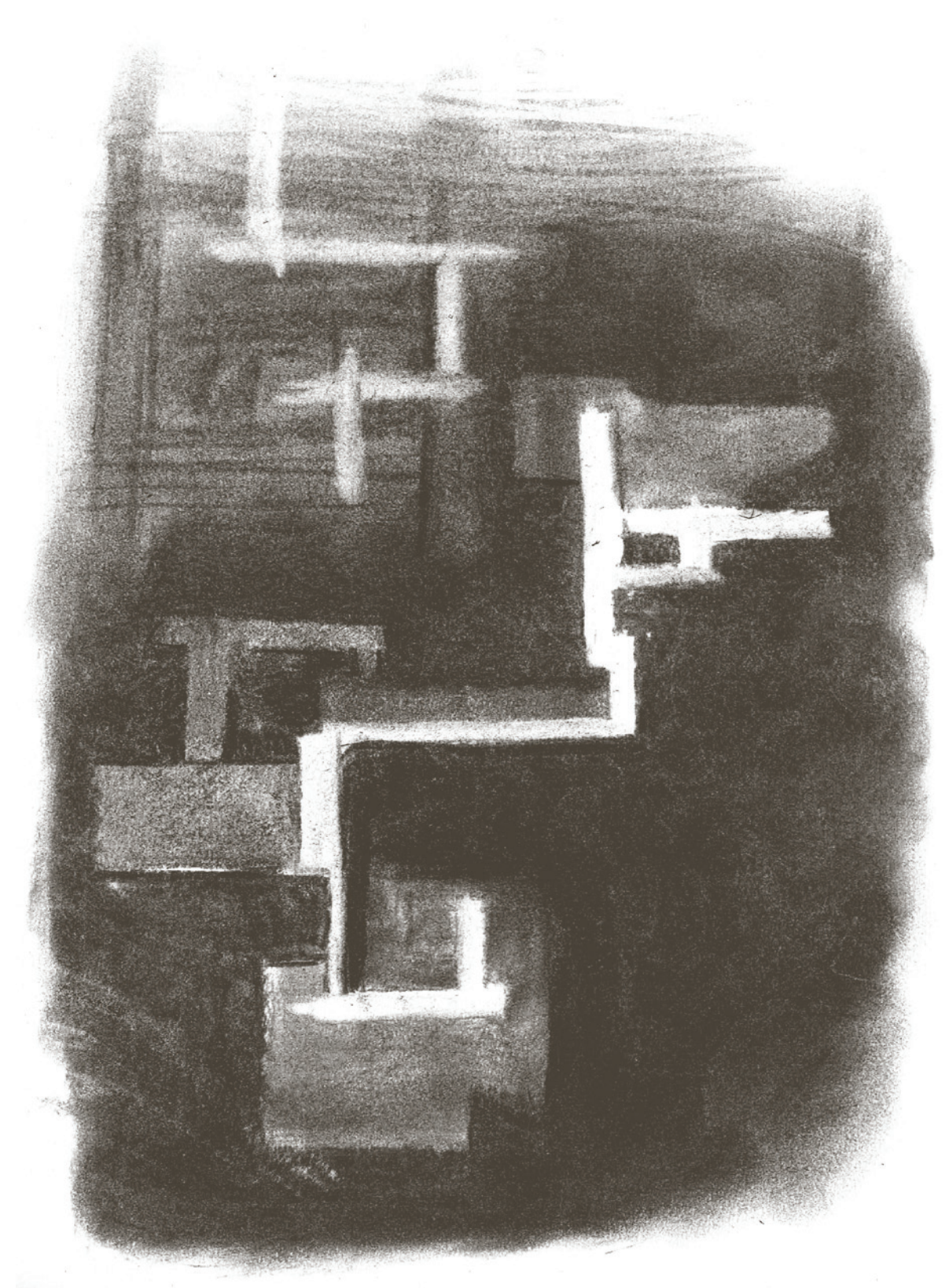
Activity is what is hidden inside things, and at the surface of things. The border becomes the place in which to dwell. This relates to preceding topics of discussion related to the body's physical occupation of space and will continue to be used to investigate existing conditions and devices for creating new interstitial spaces.

Dionne (1994:2) continues to discuss systems, stating that the beauty of any system, no matter the complexity, is that it circumscribes a closed, self-sufficient world rejecting the unnecessary. The 'modern' tendency is to create a new system by stepping outside of the existing to create an antagonistic system beside the former, creating yet another system through their union. Dionne suggests that this can be avoided if one chooses to 'enter a system, work within its limits (precisely at the limit) and create a new component (a critique) that induces a slight movement.'

**There is a need to investigate the border, the nuances of the in-between, and find a place to dwell there.**

Fig. 89. Inversion.

Fig. 90. The very narrow wall (opposite).





## THE INVISIBLE OBJECT

'hands holding the void'

*Discovering the terrains of the extraordinary in the midst of the ordinary*



There has been a steady "decline of being into having and having into merely appearing." (Debord 1967). The way in which we interact with one another, and even with ourselves, has deteriorated and our capacity for imagination and dreaming has been lost to our fast-paced lives inundated with an overwhelming amount of information.

What makes Giacometti's sculpture (opposite page) so incredibly beautiful is that it is the prerogative of the viewer to imagine the invisible object in the hands of the woman - she grasps the void. It is the ability to seek beauty for its own sake which allows us to find the time to wonder and wander.

Surrealist art exhibited a fascination with the discovery of magical things within the mundane. The development of society has created a more mundane environment in which to dwell, and the suburban nature of Atteridgeville has exacerbated this condition. Architecture and the arts could be seen as a means to create the void for us to discover this invisible object.

Fig. 91. The invisible object (Hands), Giacometti (1935).  
Fig. 92. The invisible object, (opposite) Giacometti (1935).



*"I search gropingly in the void to grasp the invisible white thread of magic ... from which the facts and the dreams escape..."*  
Giacometti 1933 (cited by Marcus 2001:215).

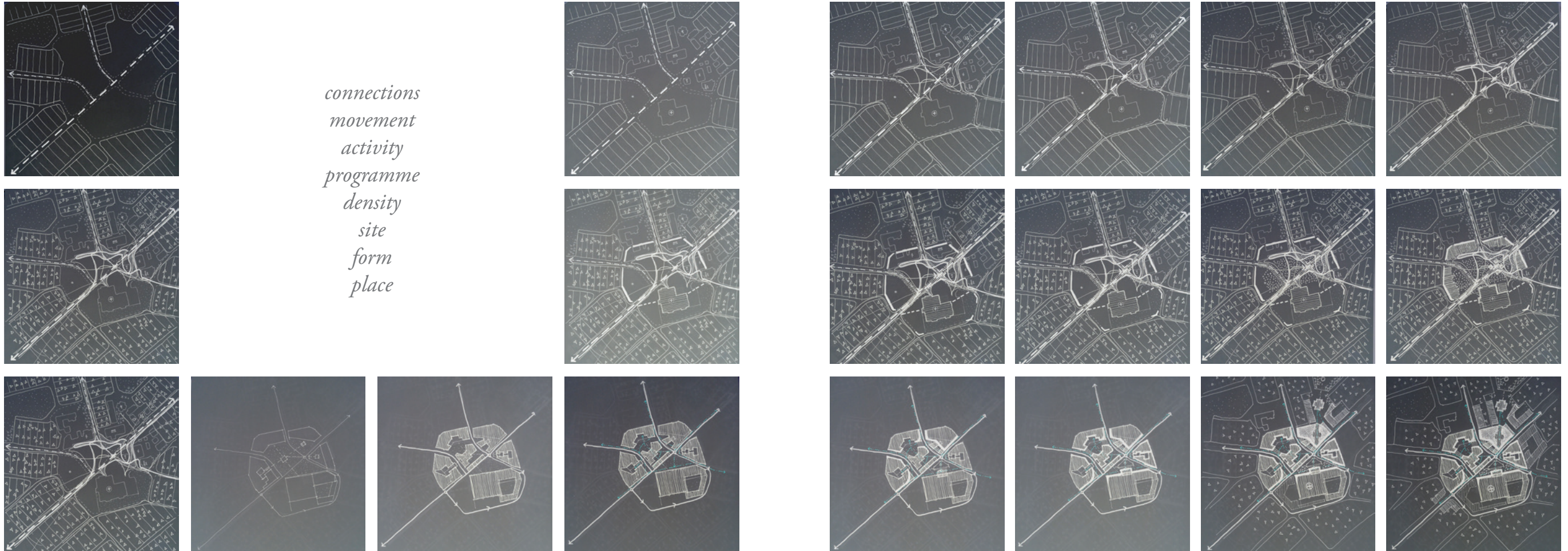
Giacometti, Alberto  
Swiss, 1901 - 1966  
The Invisible Object (Hands Holding the Void) 1935.



## DISLOCATED CONNECTIVITY

*In search of patterns*

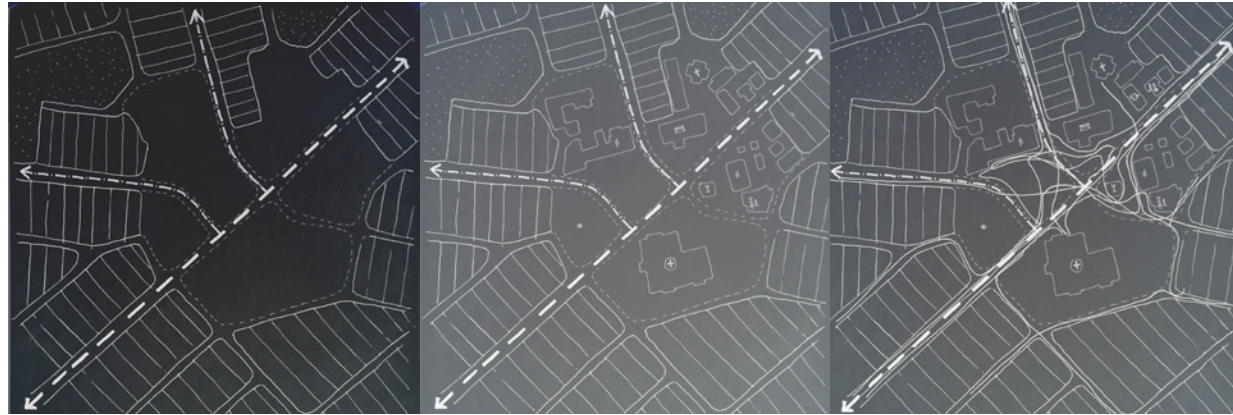
*connections  
movement  
activity  
programme  
density  
site  
form  
place*



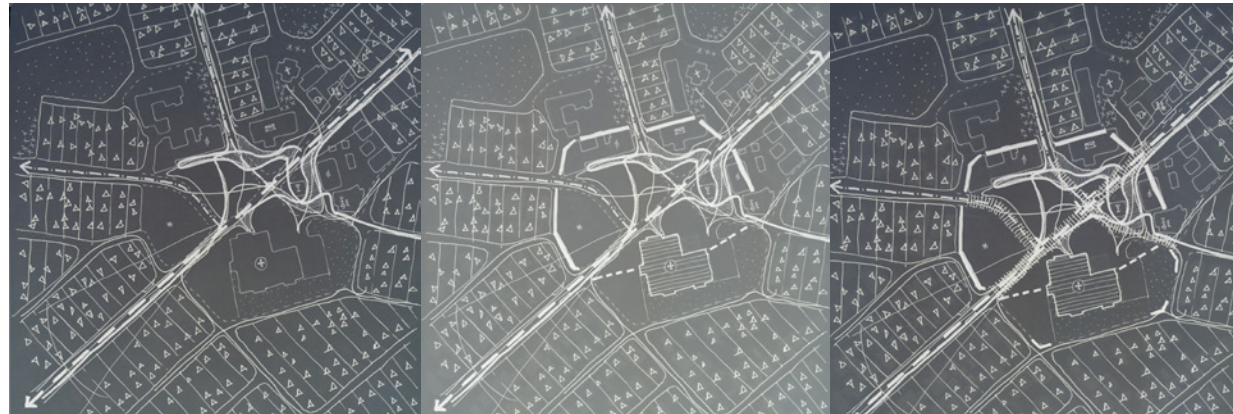
**Fig. 93.** A series of connections. The diagrams explore layers of movement, points of connection, activity, etc. in an attempt to reveal patterns on site (March).

*"The more living patterns there are in a thing - a room, a building, or in a town - the more it comes to life as an entirety, the more it glows, the more it has this self-maintaining fire, which is the quality without a name."  
- Christopher Alexander (1979:123).*

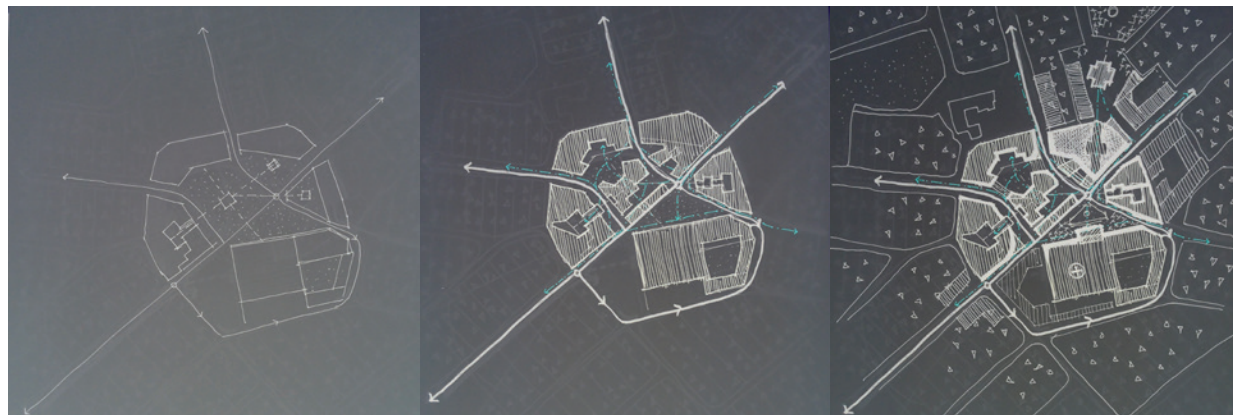




Vehicular Movement Patterns | Programmes on site | Pedestrian Movement



Residential density | Proposing defined edges and zones of opportunity | Surface treatment considered for pedestrian areas.



Defining a public square | Imposing a courtyard typology | Outward growth and densification



Busiest junctions | Greenery - trees and grass | Highlighting important movement patterns



Proposing precincts | Open public space | Fixed programmes to anchor open space

## AUTHOR'S NOTES

These early explorative diagrams investigate the existing layers on site, and the potential uncovered by superimposing new layers. The objective was to understand how the site currently functions by building upon each layer to create a palimpsest, revealing the connections between old and new. With each layer, relationships were established, creating new patterns for the site. This exercise was intentionally done without a programme in mind to interpret what the site 'calls for'.

The main concerns identified fall under the three aspects identified in Volume I: lack of definition, neglect, and barriers. The new layers imposed were derived from the three lenses: interface, activity and connection. The exercise revealed the enormous potential lying dormant in Ramohoebo Square and the potential to have a larger impact on the greater Atteridgeville. There is an opportunity to create a rich precinct hosting a diverse set of programmes. This study will take various forms outlined in the following pages.



LAYERS

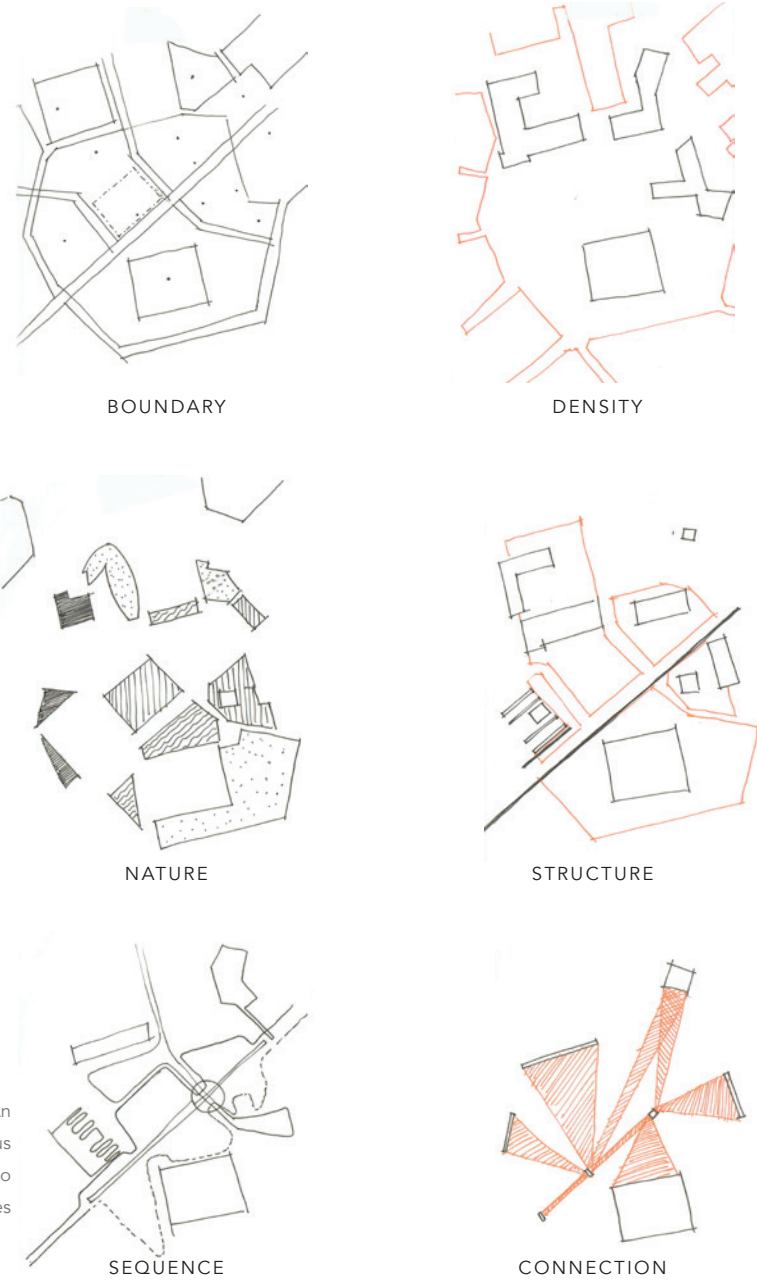


Fig. 94. Layers. An exploration of various layers on site to understand territories and connections.

INDUCE A  
'SLIGHT MOVEMENT'

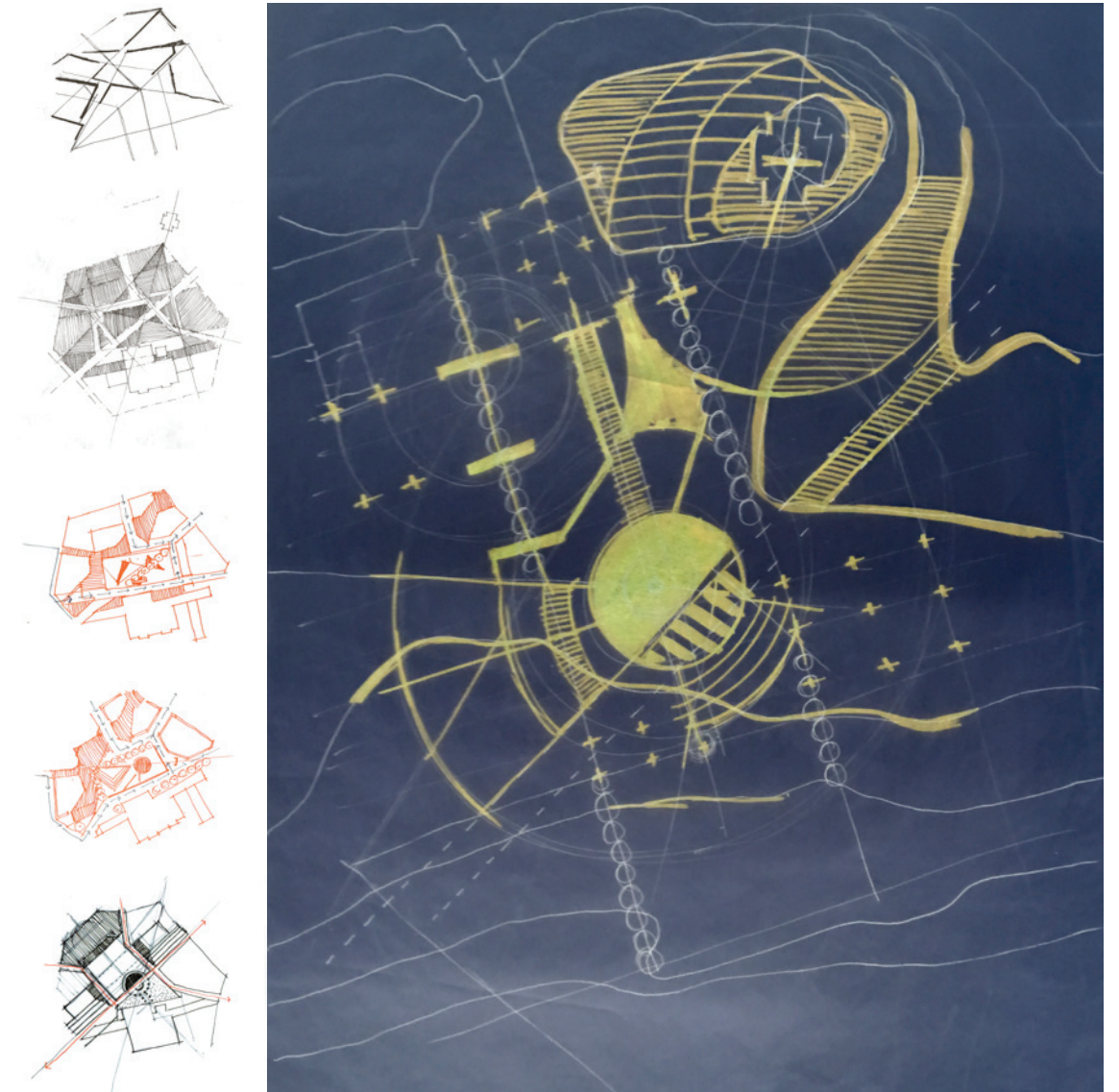


Fig. 95. Series of Order (left). Methods to create legibility on site.

Fig. 96. Grids and anchors on site (right).



HIERARCHY + ORDER

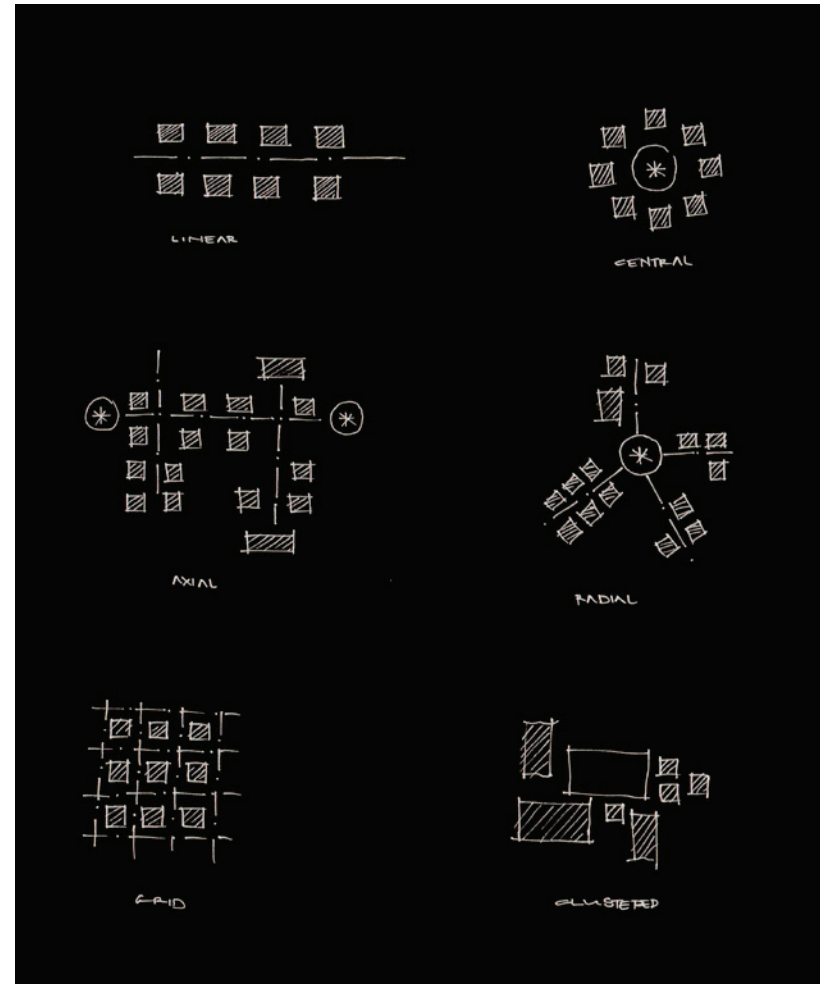


Fig. 97. Urban configurations

The search for a new structure for Ramohoebo square led to the investigation of alternative spatial configurations of urban development. The above diagrams indicate typical formations which are explored in the following pages using models and drawings.



Fig. 98. Carving out territories on site (March).

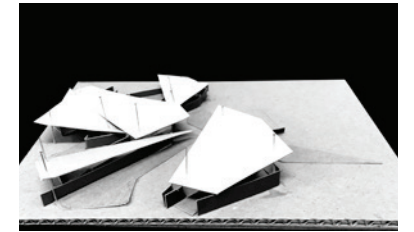
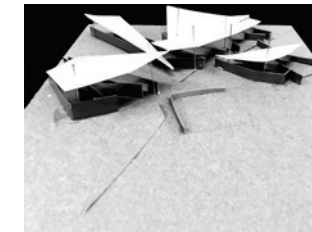
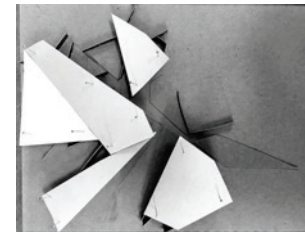


Fig. 99. Pockets of space (March).

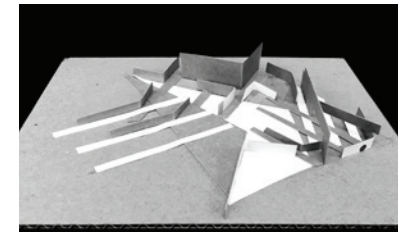
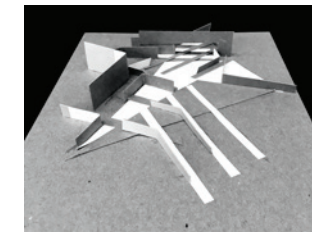
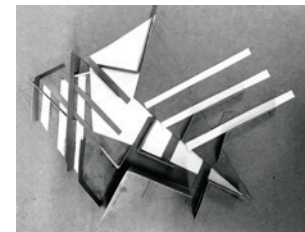


Fig. 100. Exploring vertical and horizontal planes (March).

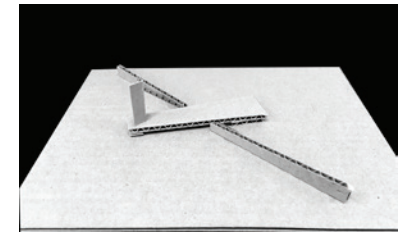
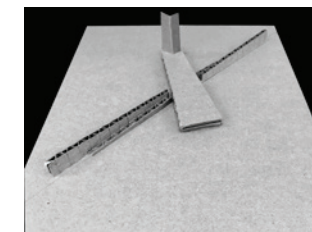
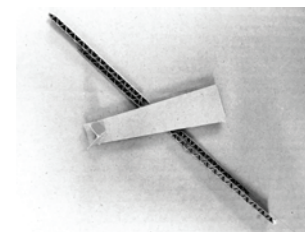


Fig. 101. Landmarks (March).

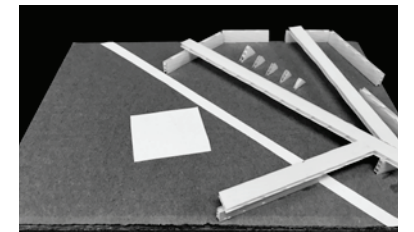
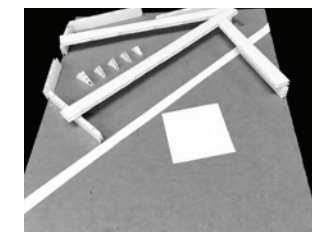
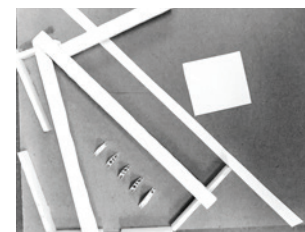
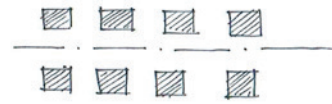
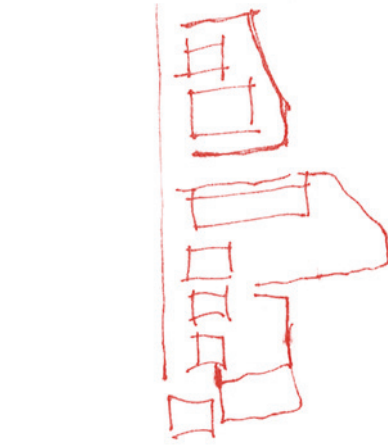


Fig. 102. Planes (March).





"Our perception of built space has to do with the common activities that it shelters; with that ritournelle whistled by our body, every day, in the successive depths of this rhythm-space. We inhabit and tame architecture in order to make it belong to us, who belong to it. We render it familiar and eventually construct a meaning dancing a ronde within the walls."  
(Dionne 1994:16)



The physical exploration of planes through models led to a deeper understanding of the palimpsest exposed by the mapping exercise. The images to the right show the investigation of a linear typology responding directly to the street edge in search of opportunities presented by a linear, rather than centric model. Learning from conditions on site allows for a sensitive and appropriate approach.

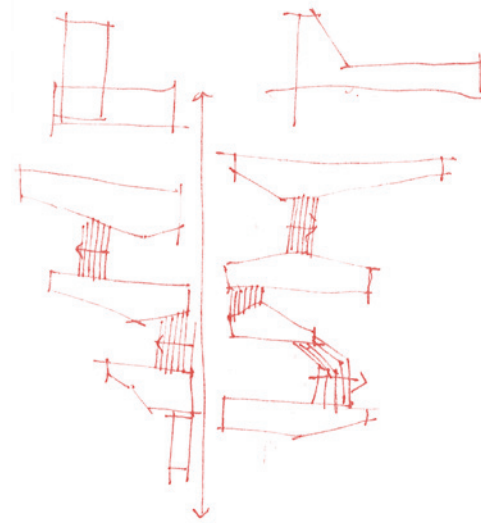


Fig. 103. Exploration of a linear model rather than centralised space.

Fig. 104. Mimicking the street perpendicular to the main axis.

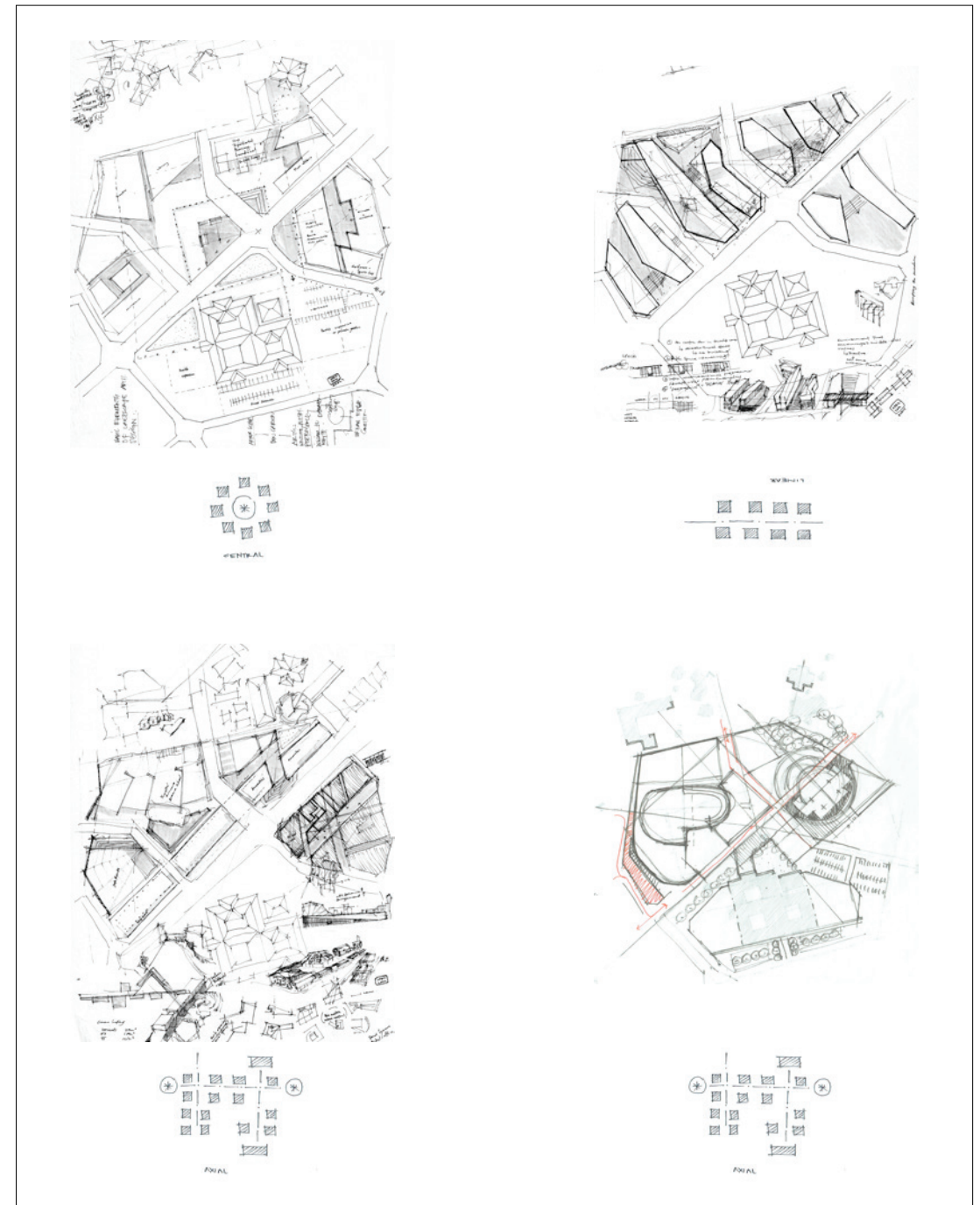


Fig. 105. Testing of configurations on site (Mar.-Apr.).



## CONNECTIONS

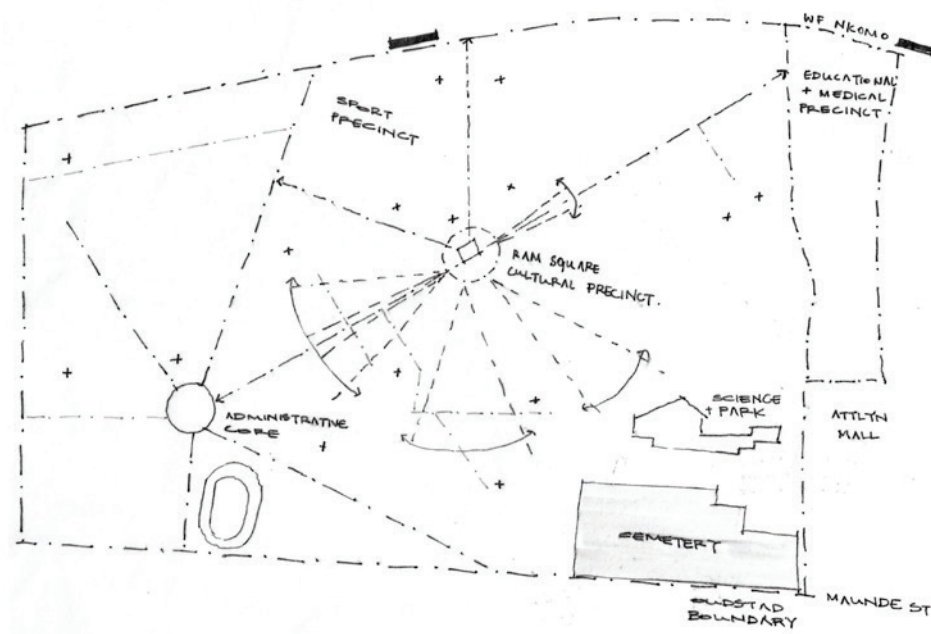


Fig. 106. Views and connections. From Ramohoebo Square to the 21 sites identified in Volume I.

Lying at the heart of Atteridgeville, Ramohoebo Square is well connected to the larger, administrative core and the main entrance to Atteridgeville at W.F. Nkomo street. This site will form a valuable recreational core as part of the larger vision proposed in Volume I.

## CONDITIONS



Fig. 107. Mapping quadrants and climatic conditions on site.

The above diagram illustrates the potential to tie the separate quadrants of the node together, responding to the main Mareka street running through the site. As it stands, the empty square is bare and dusty, without any alleviation from the elements. Exposed to noise and wind the site is seldom occupied except by those passing through.



## IN SEARCH OF THE QUALITY WITHOUT A NAME



*"Places which have this quality, invite this quality to come to life in us. And when we have this quality in us, we tend to make it come to life in towns and buildings which we help to build. It is a self-supporting, self-maintaining, generating quality. It is the quality of life. And we must seek it, for our own sakes, in our surroundings, simply in order that we can ourselves become alive."*

- Christopher Alexander  
(1979:53-4)

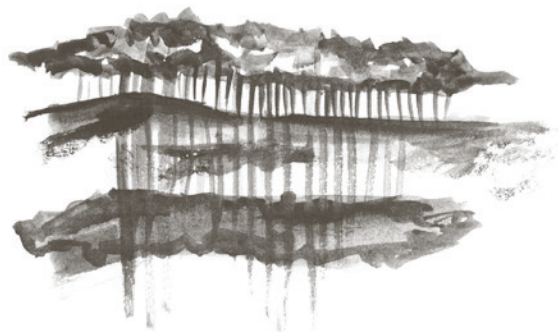
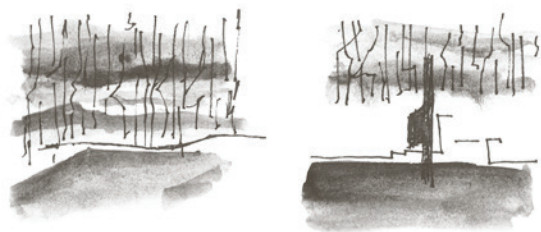


Fig. 108. A view of the church (March).

Fig. 109. Sketching 'the quality without a name.'

## REFUGE

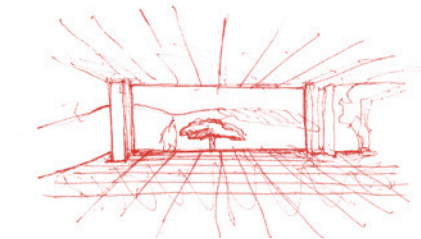
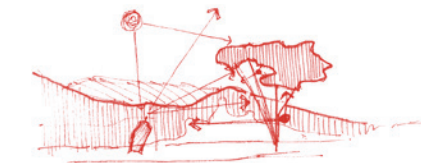
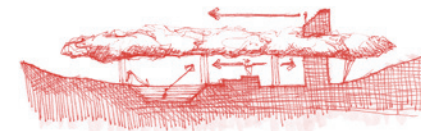


Fig. 110. Intimacy. Prospect and refuge at the United Reformed Church.

Refuge can be found under the tree at the United Reformed Church (Figure 108) to escape the vastness of the abandoned square. The quality and sense of place is highlighted as an important condition on site, and this energy should be harnessed as an informant for making space. The *quality without a name* is explored through abstract sketches on the facing page.

Fig. 111. The use of trees to define space or as foci.