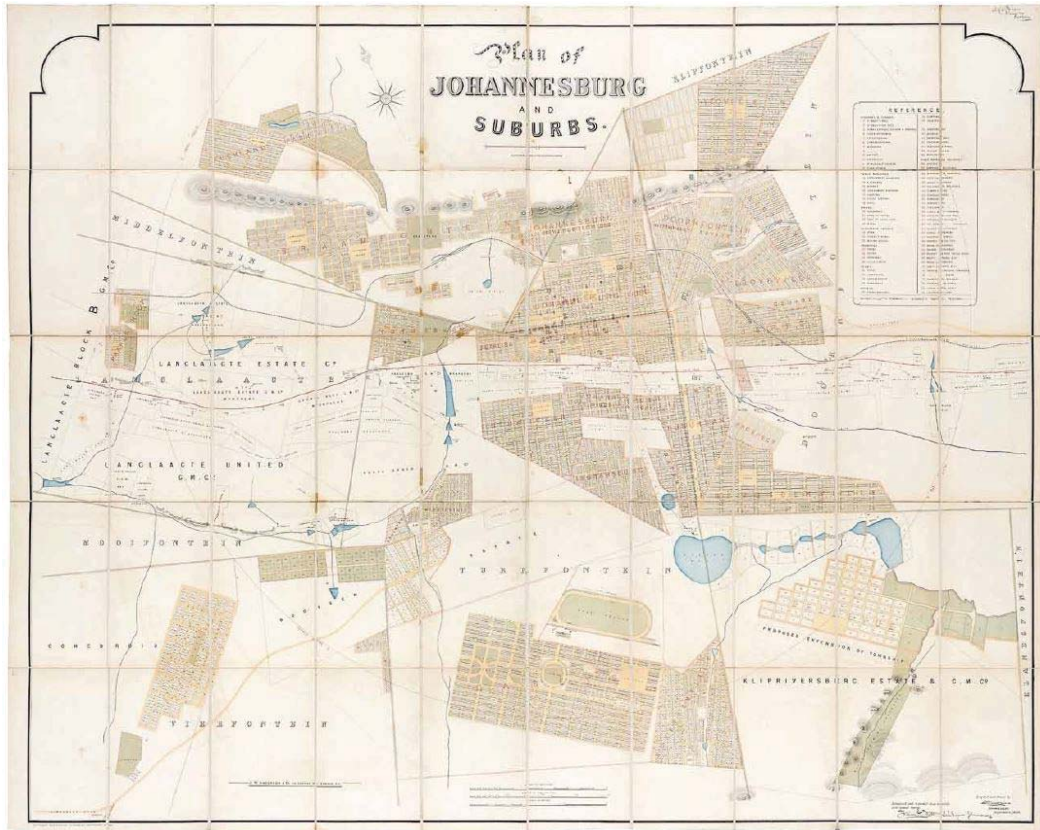




The following chapter is a synopsis of the investigation titled:

JOHANNESBURG NOSTALGIA
FANTASY & FRAGMENTS: THE REAPPROPRIATION OF THE 'MODERN UITVALGROND'
IN JOHANNESBURG

Undertaken by:
Pieterse, Elzanne
Roux, Marzanne
Struwig, Erwin
Swart, Pieter



2. JOHANNESBURG

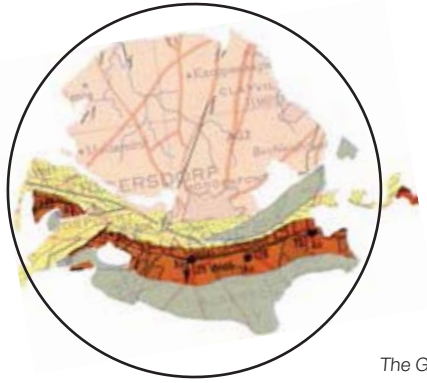
2.1. THE DEVELOPMENT OF URBAN FORM

When gold was discovered on the Witwatersrand in 1886, the acquisition of material wealth was the sole driver for the existence and development of the city (Fisher 1989:67). The first prospectors were an immigrant population of individuals (Uitlanders) whose pursuit of land for its instant investment potential and mineral reserves was their only common ground (Fisher et al, 1998:125). The mining venture was speculative by nature and characterised by trade and commerce with stock markets, high finance syndicates and the fluctuating time value of money (Fisher 1989:67). The value system that governed early settlement and subsequent urban development was unprecedented in comparison to the frugal settlement of its predecessor Pretoria (Pienaar, 2014:41) which has been the learning school in urban settlement for the authors prior to this study. The sentiments of intimate custodianship and a long term commitment to the landscape that shaped the settlement of Pretoria was lost on the immigrant population of Johannesburg. Typical natural characters such as the river, port and citadel (Fisher 1989:67) that define urban settlement were replaced by the underground of the new urban settlement. It was a repository of possibilities for invention and utopian dreams and the landscape a barrier between the miners and the potential sudden riches (Nuttall & Mbembe 2008:22).

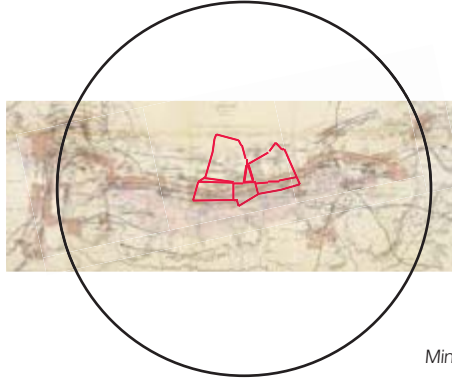
A small patch of triangular land falling between the demarcated farms of the Boers was made available for the establishment of Johannesburg. The unused land was known under the Boer republic as *Uitvalgrond* (Afrikaans for surplus ground). From there the layout of the town developed along rational and functional lines, following the acute angles of pre-existing farms. The land was subdivided into mining and living areas that were again subdivided into land for the living, land for the dead and beyond that the elusive land of the coloured work force that unearthed its riches (Fisher 1989:67).

A meticulous record of the imagination and confidence that drove the early settlement was Johannesburg's first commercial street guide (Gevisser 2013:26). It is significant to note that it was published in 1890, a mere four years after the discovery of gold. Gevisser (2013:28) recounts William Kentridge's fascination with the map that was a blueprint for the city to come. On the map Johannesburg is depicted as a grand colonial town with a handsome inner city grid arranged around civic squares between the gold mines to the south and the railway yards to the north and the fantastical residential suburbs (fantastical in that they did not exist) to the east. In the map's legend six churches, a synagogue, four banks, four theatres, four clubs, three hotels, six government buildings and around forty other 'Notable Buildings' are pinned. The map was an act of will, a determination of what would be, rather than an objective reflection of what was on the ground which was instead a chaotic and unrefined mining settlement (Gevisser 2013:28).

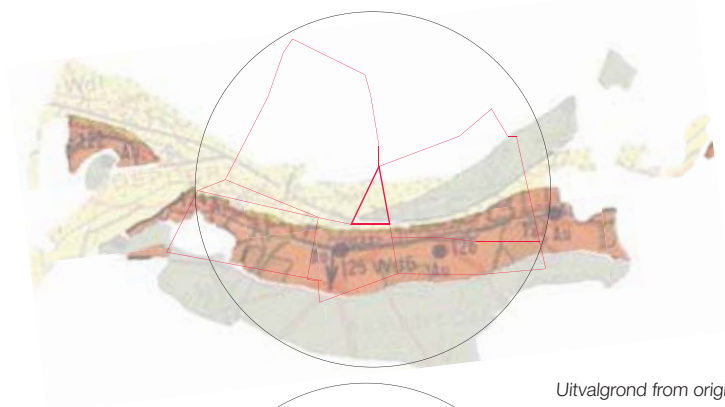
Because of the dizzying tempo of development of the urban settlement, time was essentially experienced as transitory and space eminently fleeting. The city's fabric and cultural styles borrowed from the major trends at the time and the shifts from one style to another are a testimony to its history of opulence (Nuttall & Mbembe 2008:19). Most importantly Johannesburg was a city with various boundaries. The acute lines on which the original city settlement was laid out were the drawing board for the city's spatial planners. It was however, their fantasies of racial enclaves and social distance that merely appropriated the existing boundary lines to form space rather than seeing spatial facts unfold with sociological consequence. The city was regulated according to the principle of social proximity – a concept that continues the amusing play between fantasies and fragments. The fragmented urban fabric facilitated the notion that every space possessed a sense of uniqueness and exclusiveness and that interactions between different races should be closely identified with specific demarcated areas that together composed a political body (Nuttall & Mbembe 2008:21).



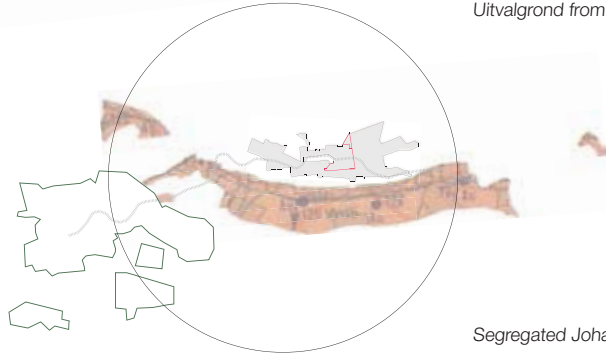
The Gold reef



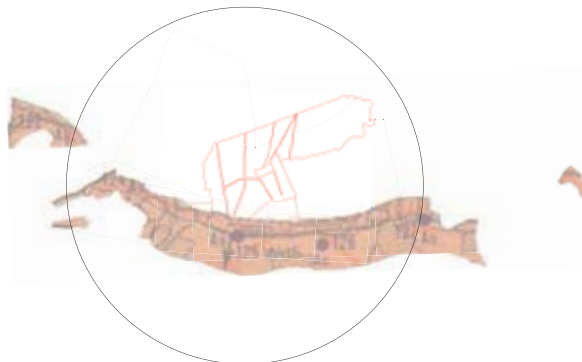
Mining activity along the reef



Uitvalgrond from original farms



Segregated Johannesburg



The development of urban form

Legislation in Johannesburg

1911 - The Mines and Works Act: prevents Africans from obtaining jobs beyond the level of manual labourer.

1912 - ANC - African National Congress is formed

1913 - The Native Land Act (No: 27) is passed, forcing Non-whites to live in specific areas

1922 - The Stallard Commission is established owing to African labour protests in the Witwatersrand, permanent African migration into towns and the emergence of squatter settlements close to towns. The Commission encouraged racial segregation.

1934 - The Slum Clearance Act: Enabled municipalities to forcibly remove people who were settled in areas that were considered to be slums.

1946 - The Asiatic Land Tenure & Indian Representation Act restricted Indian people from buying or occupying land outside certain exempted areas.

1948 - The National Party (NP): led by D.F. Malan in alliance with Nicolaas Christiaan Havenga's Afrikaner Party (AP) wins by a majority of five seats and 40% of the overall electoral vote.

1950 - The Group Areas Act: Gives the government power to create racially segregated areas where members of a specific racial group could live and work. The Act enables the authorities to forcibly remove people of a different racial group/s from an area that has been designated as belonging to another racial group.

1955 - Sophiatown is declared a White area under the Group Areas Act, and over 60 000 people are forcibly removed from the area and a suburb named 'Triomf' for whites is established in its place in

1957 - Lenasia: Indian people are forcibly removed from around Johannesburg and relocated to Lenasia

1990 - Mandela is released

1994 - Democracy - First democratic elections

It is this relationship between the underground, the surface and the edge that characterises Johannesburg (Nuttall & Mbembe 2008:17). If its metropolitan nature is its ceaseless metamorphosis, the city develops by re-articulating, layering and reusing its fragmented parts. The act of reconstruction does not necessarily imply that earlier conditions are neglected. On the contrary, its relationship with its underground and its repository of possibilities, deferred potential makes Johannesburg a city defined by nostalgia, less for the past than for the future (Malcomess & Kreutzfeldt 2013:20).

Johannesburg's fragments and their curious relationship with time

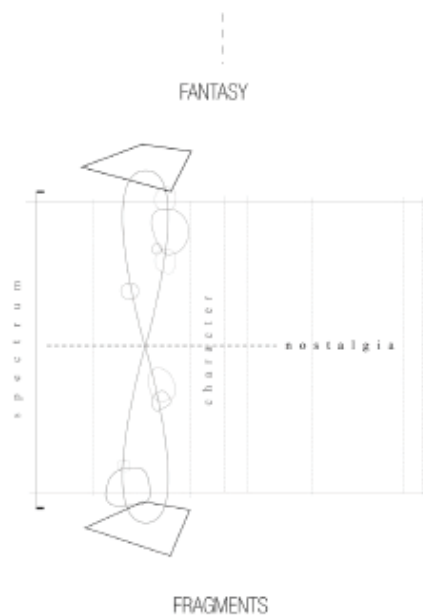
When sequential chronology is distorted, one can argue that historical progress is interrupted (Malcomess & Kreutzfeldt 2013:20). In Johannesburg the notion drew the authors to certain spatial typologies with chronological inconsistency that were discovered throughout the exploration and mapping of the city. The spatial types are arguably the contemporary Uitvalgrond of Johannesburg and include examples of places in Johannesburg that have been resilient to time and change and places that defied time with fantastical programmes that recreated spaces that denied their context in the city. The sites were investigated and became catalysts in comprehending the relationship between the concepts of fragment and fantasy and their varying characteristic relationships with time. It provided the group with a method through which to explore Johannesburg on different spatial scales and gauge the impact of spatial intervention in the present condition of Johannesburg.

2.2. A METHOD

As a methodology, the results in these explorations were used to inform, propel or contest design by the individual authors on their respective terrains within the city. In some cases the methodology was re-applied on a different scale to broaden a spatial understanding of context.

The spatial typologies are prototypes of the city within the city and are understood as islands with a concentrated bounded character. The analysis and exploration of these spatial types do not show the city of Johannesburg in a state of crisis requiring correction. They are recognised as imminent conditions in a projective model of the city.

Where the authors intervened in the city the relationships between their designs although not physically defined, share a collective spatial understanding.

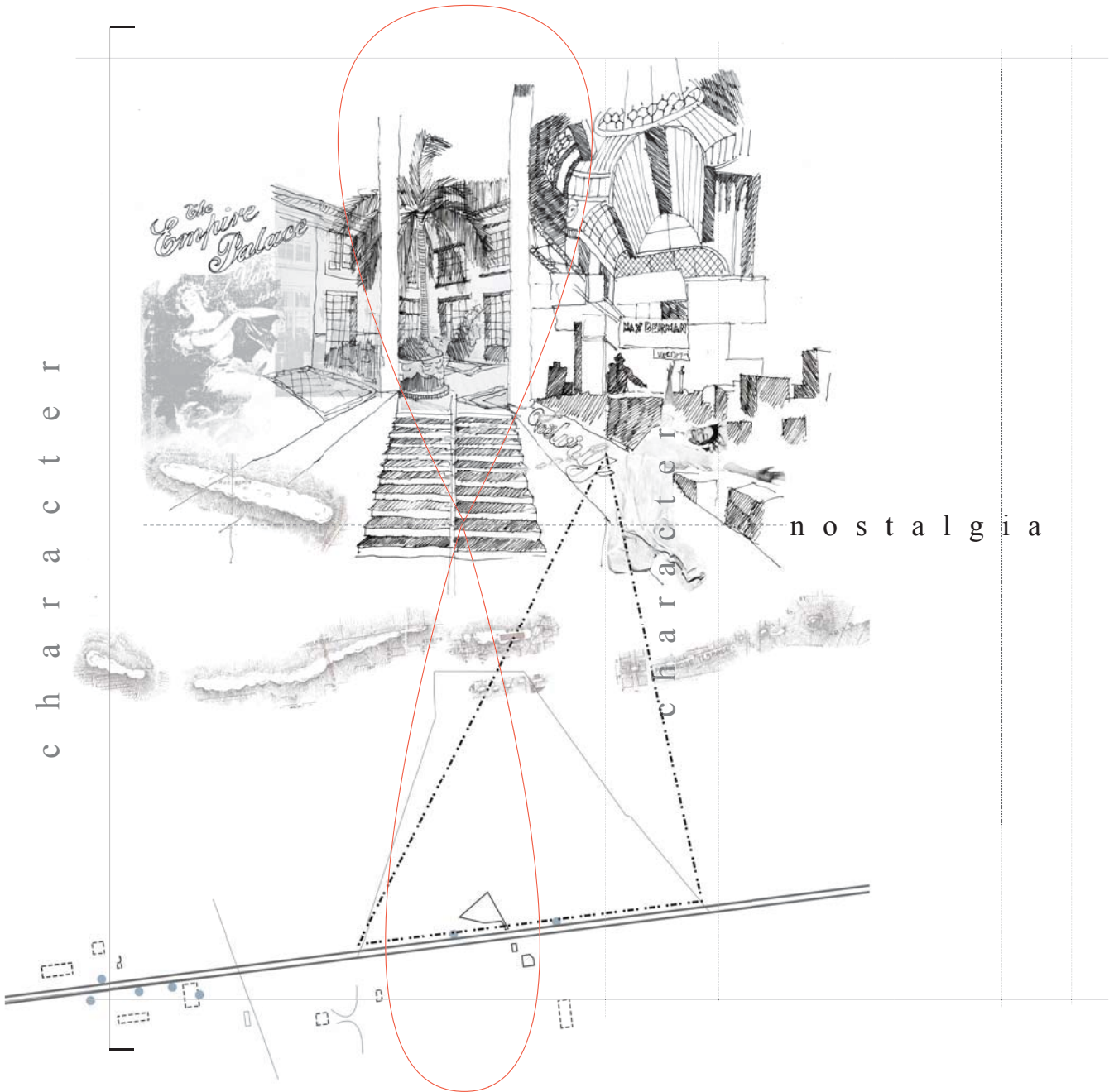


The diagram is used to position the polars of fragments and fantasy to be able to gauge its nostalgic character

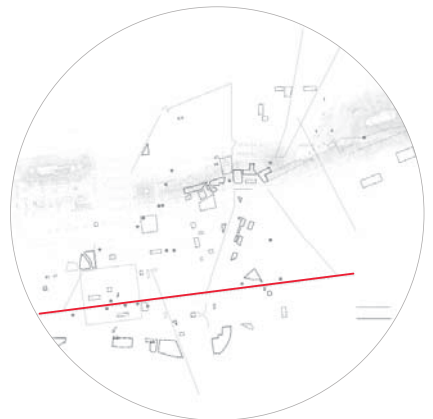


TYPOLOGY MAPPING

Mapping: Johannesburg's condition as a result of fragmentation, showing arbitrary lines, urban forms and spatial characters



THE GREAT WHITE WAY



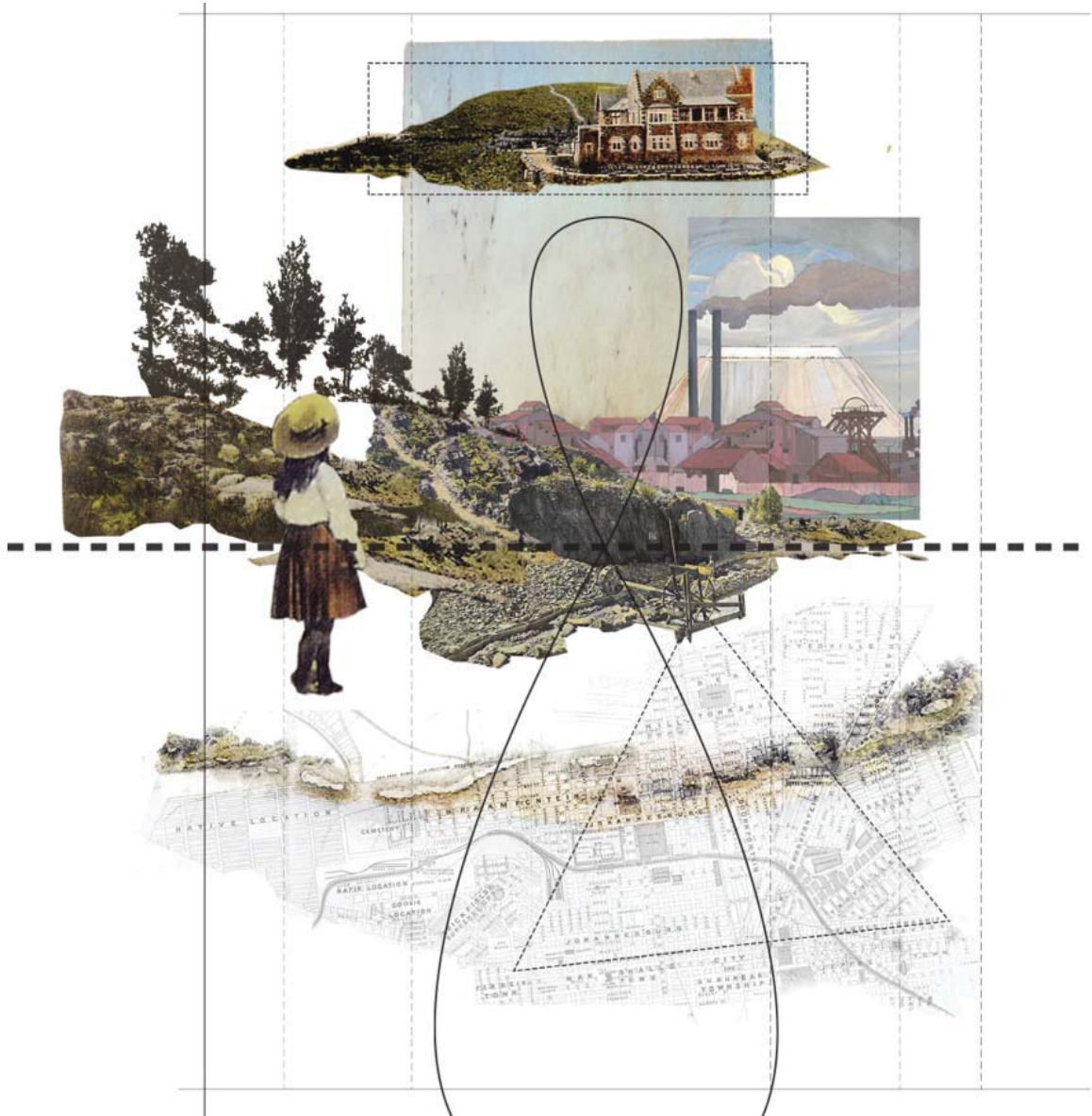


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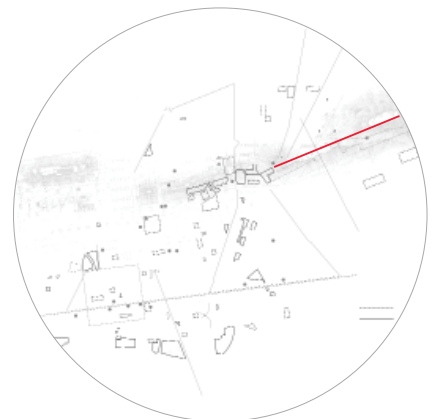


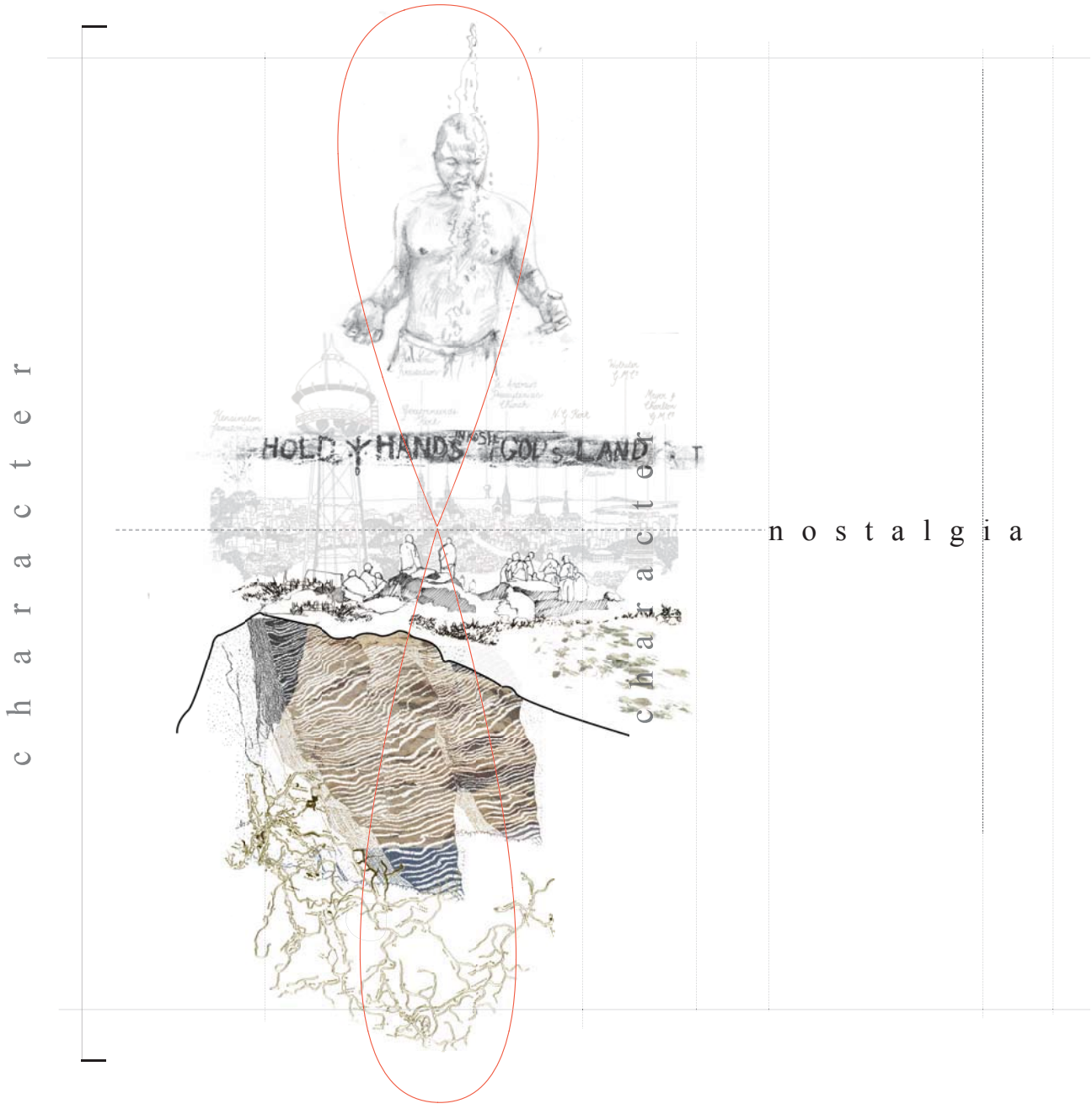
THE COSMOPOLITAN HOTEL



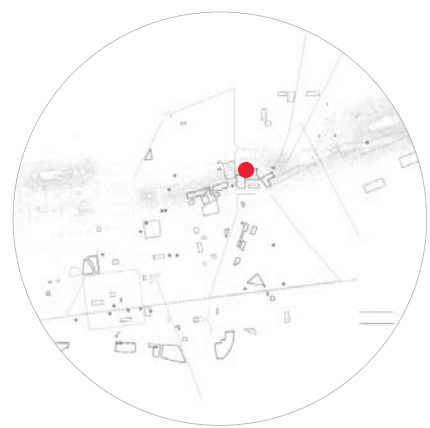


THE WITWATERSRAND RIDGE



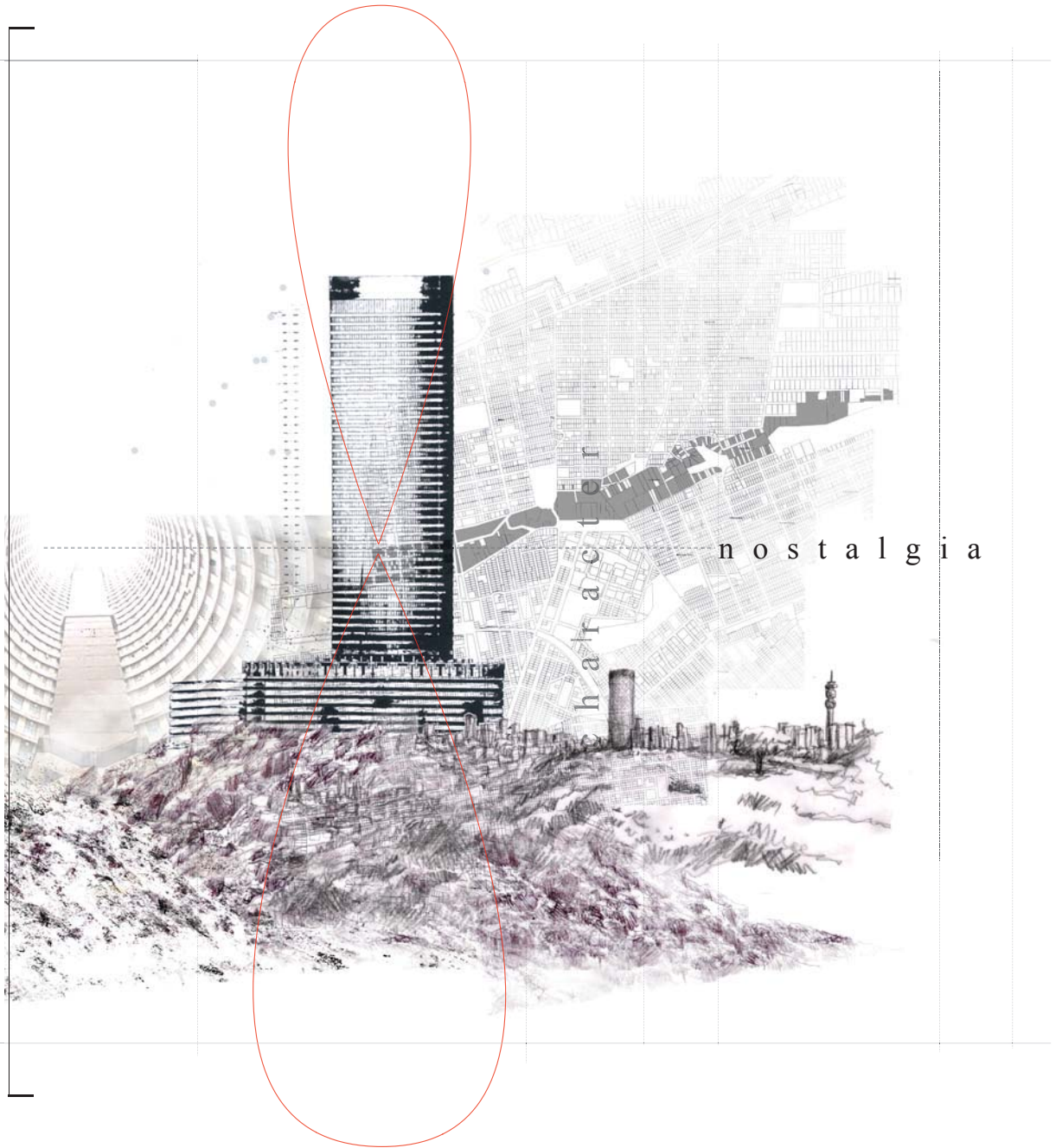


YEOVILLE KOPPIE





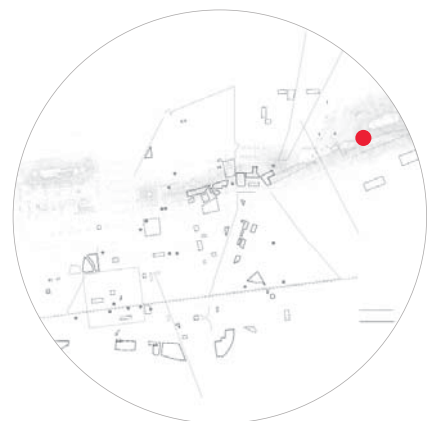
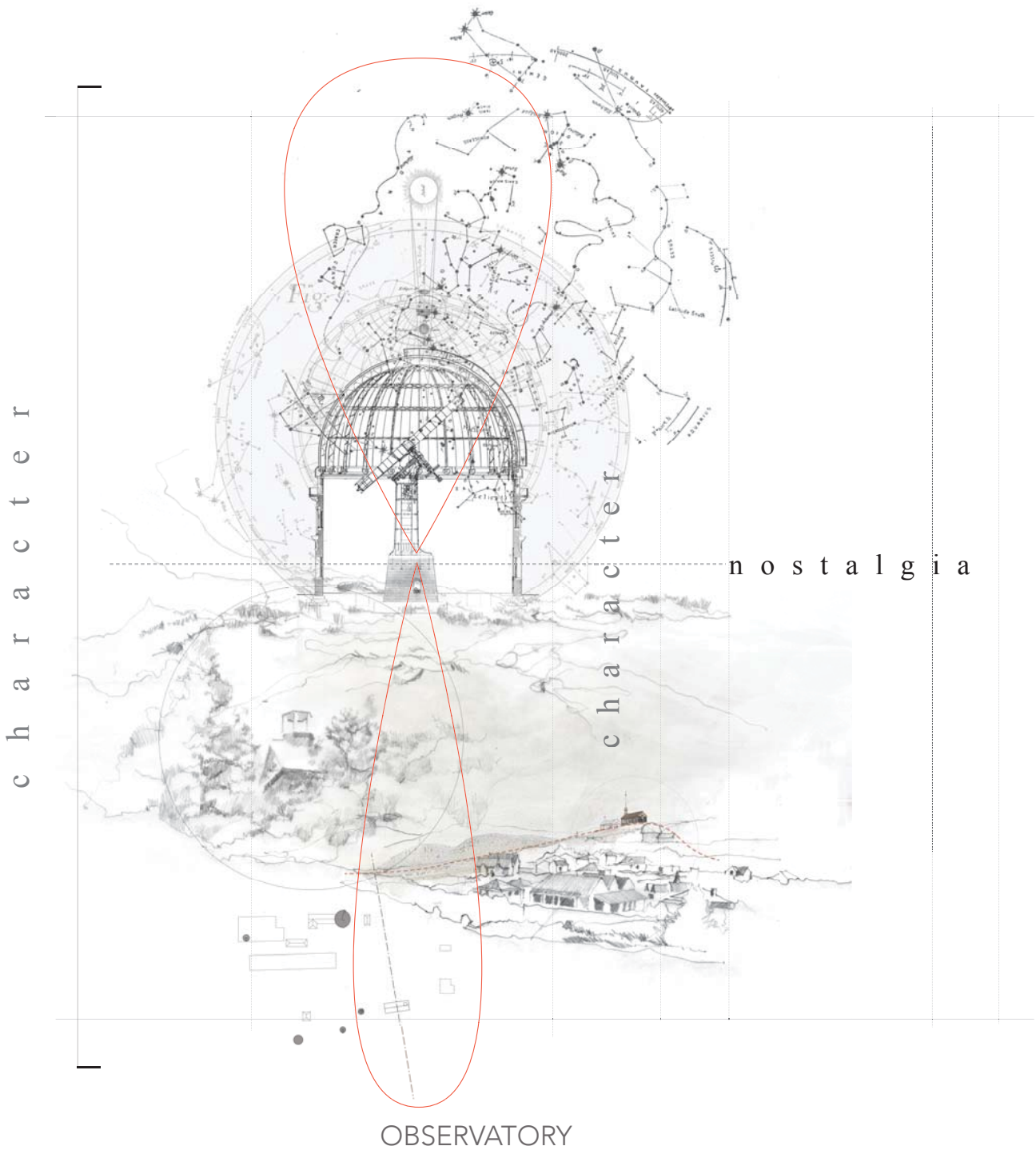
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PONTE CITY

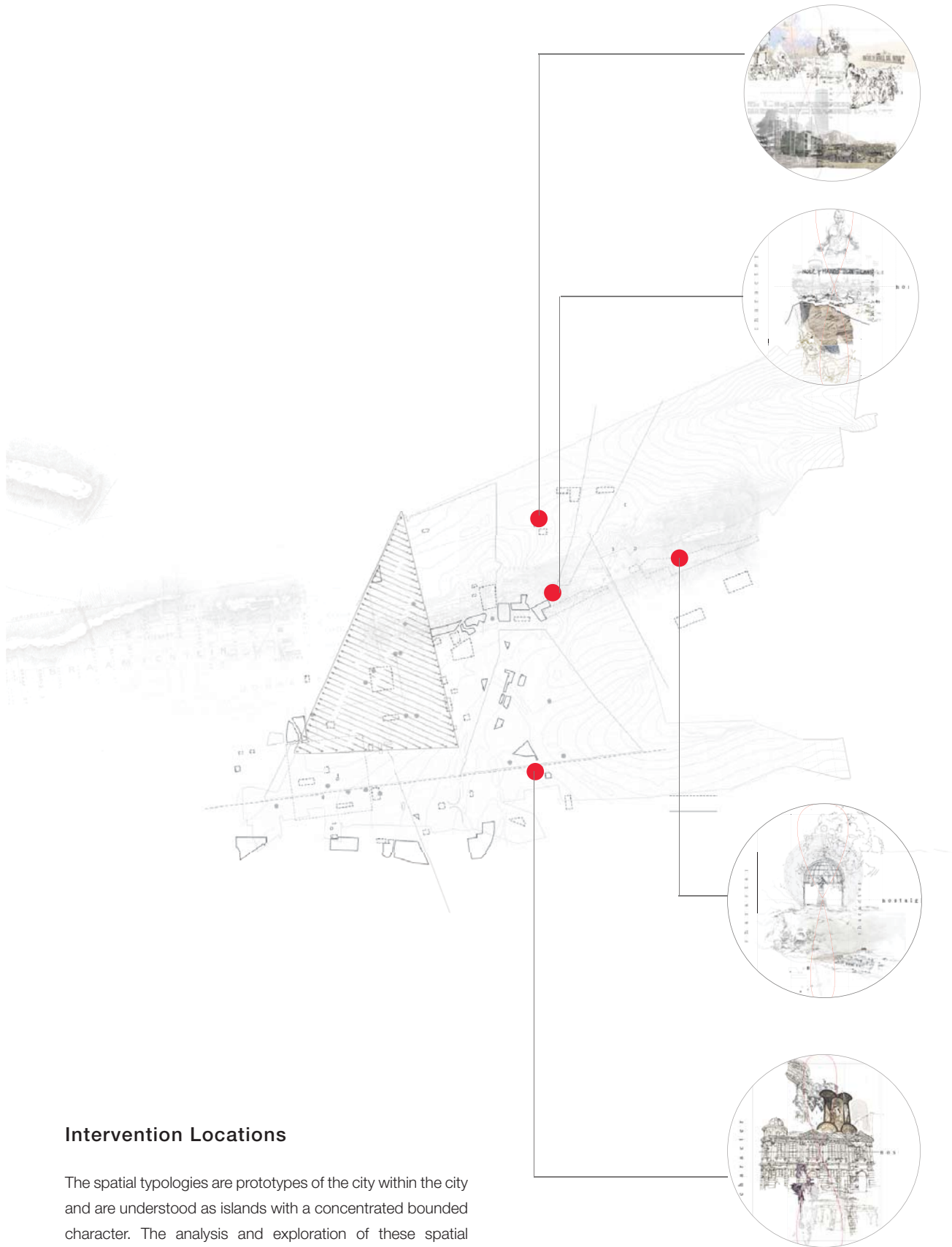






YEOVILLE





Intervention Locations

The spatial typologies are prototypes of the city within the city and are understood as islands with a concentrated bounded character. The analysis and exploration of these spatial types do not show the city of Johannesburg in a state of crisis requiring correction. They are recognised as imminent conditions in a projective model of the city. Where the authors intervened in the city the relationships between their designs are not physically defined but rather a collective spatial understanding.