



Figure 13: Section sketch (Author, 2016)

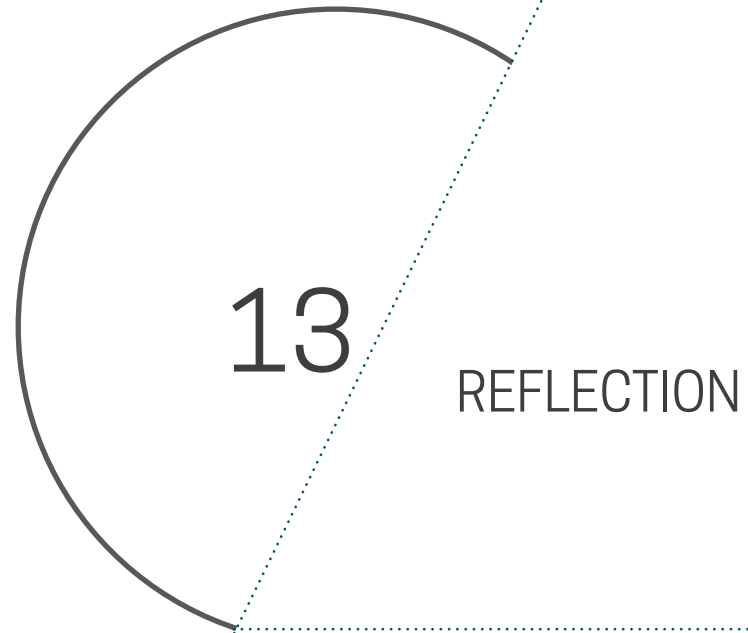
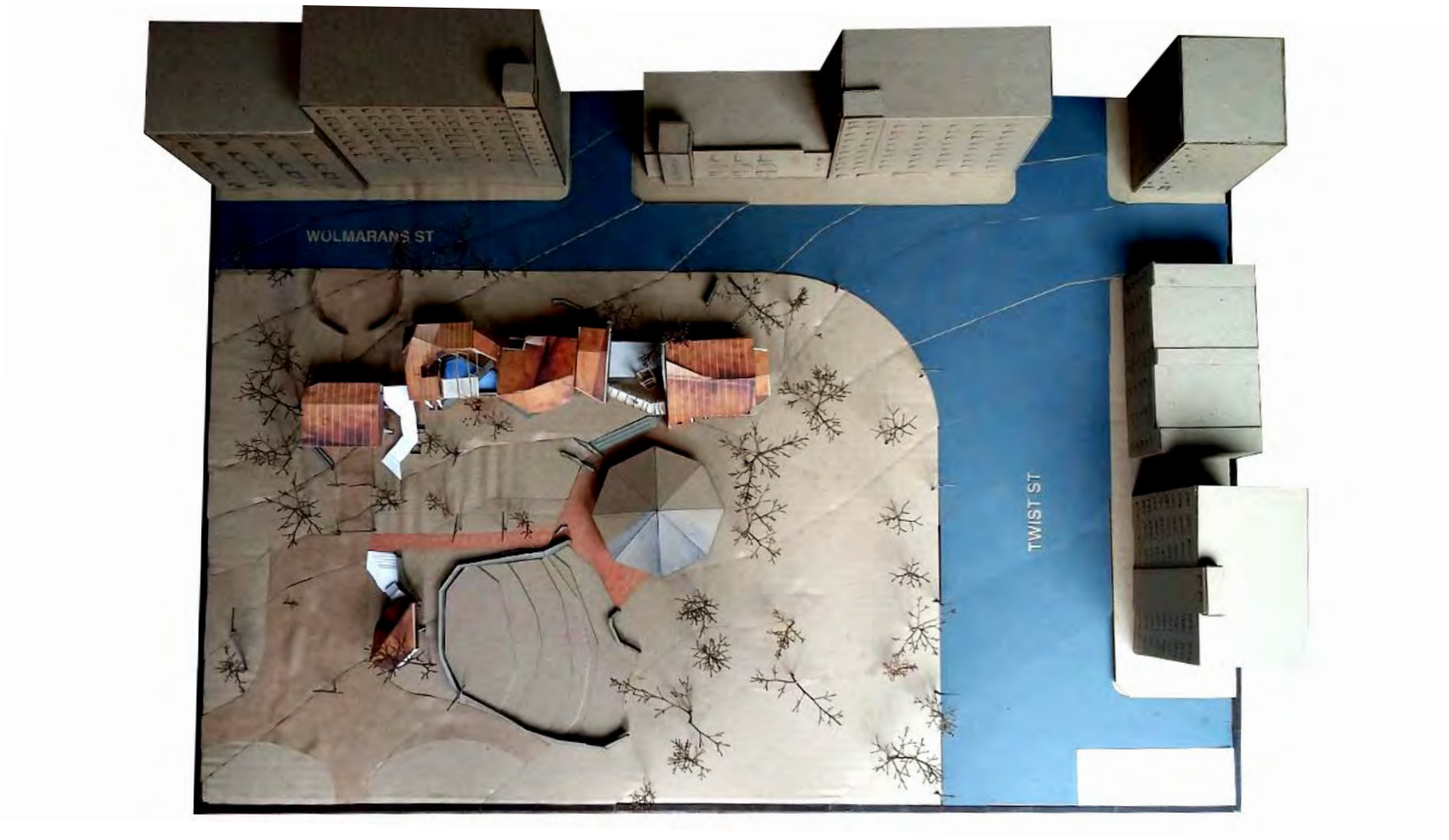




Figure 13.1: Photographs of final design model



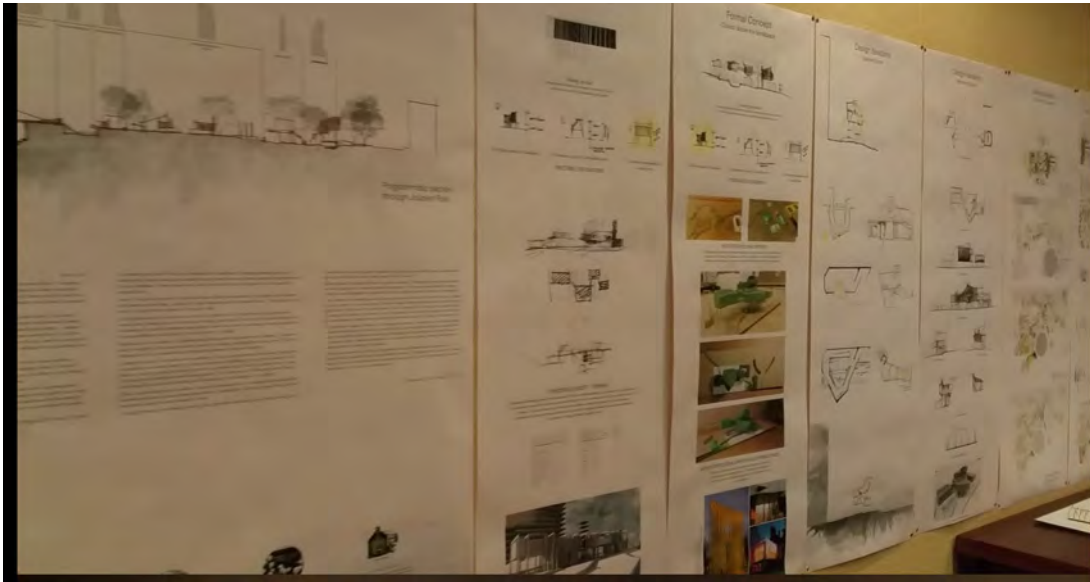
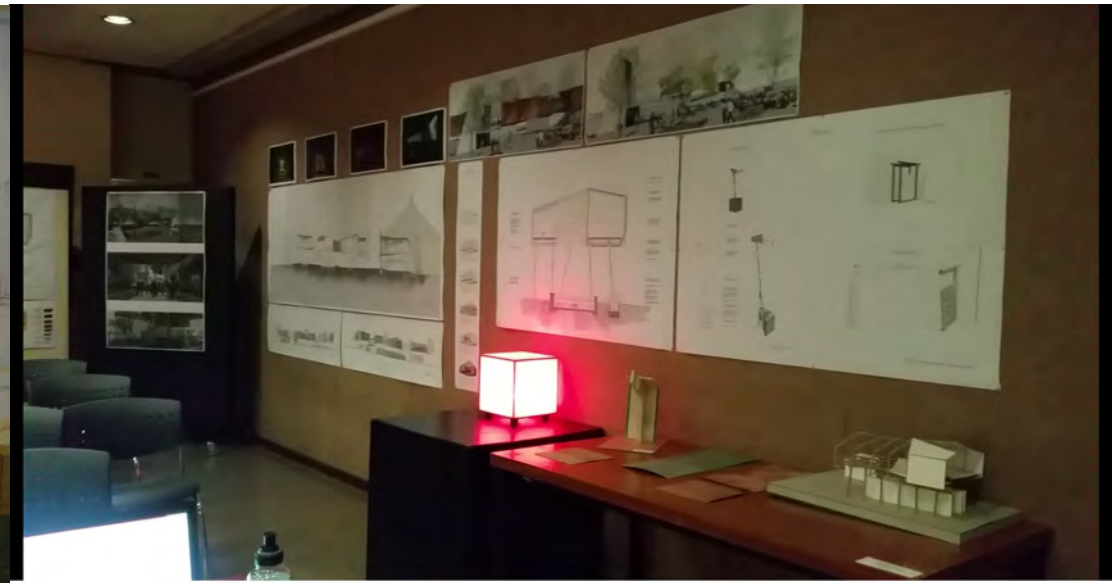
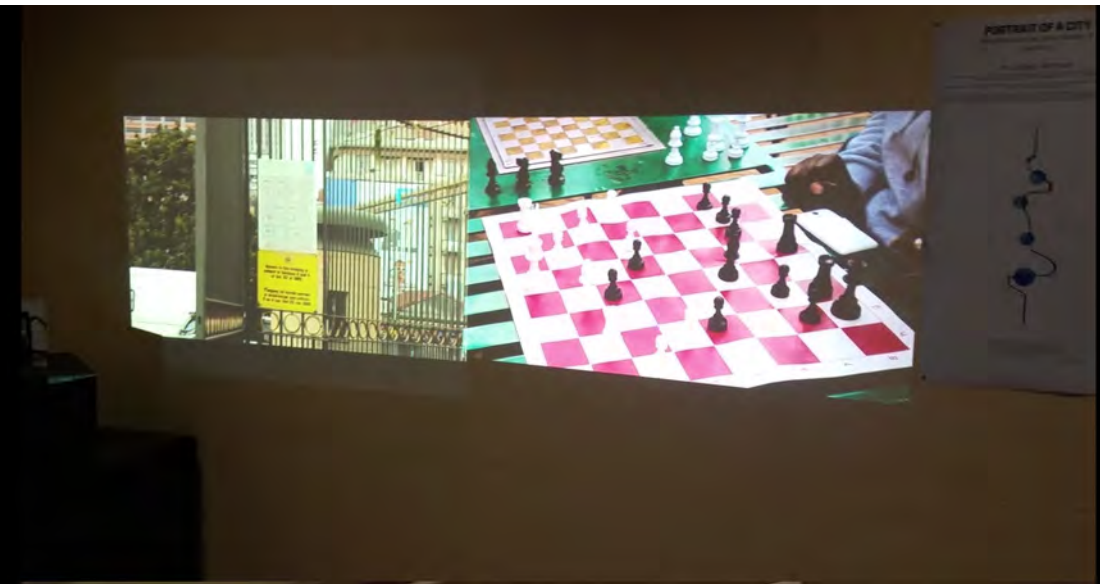


Figure 13.2: Photographs of final presentation



13.1. FINAL NARRATIVE

Reflection on the site



Figure 13.3: Hand print in weathered concrete. (Colourbox, N.d.)

Upon visiting Joubert Park recently, I was surprised by how much activity there was. It was once a place that was under threat of being destroyed by the city, but was now bustling with life, although maybe in a different way than before. The park is a lot bigger than it used to be, extending to the bases of the surrounding buildings, almost taking over the street.

The floating boxes that once stood along Wolmarans Street are not there anymore. Almost like gravestones to the giant camera, pieces of concrete that were once part of the building, stand scattered in the park, rusting from within. Overgrown by plants and stained by rain, they look like they had always been there.

They become an extension of the playground for the children after school, until they are called inside. That's when they become hiding places for young couples giggling, holding hands and staring at the stars. I heard that the church groups who still gather in the park on Sundays use these concrete walls and blocks too.

Art students from the Community Arts Centre and the Performance College have adopted the bandstand as their theatre, putting on weekly shows for the people of the area.

Of course, as trustworthy as ever, the photographers are still using Joubert Park as their office, offering visitors the chance to have their portraits taken. They have not yet returned to digital photography, insisting that the quality of doing things in a dark room far exceeds the convenience of a digital camera.

The Johannesburg Art Gallery has also survived, as grand and as stately as ever. There are many sculptures that mark the line where the fence once stood blurring the divide that once existed. JAG is under construction; the rumours say it is due to an extension in the form of a glass box that will protrude from the building to make space for new installations. Perhaps the next time I visit the addition will be complete.

I was elated to find the park thriving under the pressures it once faced from the city. Despite all odds, both Joubert Park and JAG have managed to become a symbol of change in Johannesburg and an emblem of pride for the residents of the area.

**JozziGirl97, 25 March, 2025. (Blog entry)*

13.2. PERSONAL REFLECTION

Forming part of the discourse

The discussion regarding museums and galleries in South Africa is an important one with which one should actively engage. Museums have the potential to serve the contexts that they are based in, to become an asset in the making of place (as discussed in Chapter 4). From an economic perspective, they should add value to an area, acting as a catalyst for positive investment and development. Utilising these institutions and adapting each one to suit its specific context might to a certain extent, ensure their longevity.

Perhaps, as some would say, museums and galleries have passed their prime and no longer add value to cities.

However, the question remains: what happens when they are gone? What will be said when these cultural resources are no longer made available to the youth and what if international and national exhibitions are only held in areas that cater mainly for the more affluent market? Johannesburg galleries are concentrated in the North of the city and most are not very welcoming to everyone in the general public.

One method that could be employed to protect JAG's archive is to move its collection elsewhere, but to what end? If this were the case, the issue at hand will still not have been dealt with. There are examples of museums that have been erected that manage to integrate well into the community, especially those that involve the community in their creation. The District 6 Museum is a good example of this kind of integration, but with regards to existing museums, alternative methods need to be investigated.

Highlighting the issue

Another issue that was addressed in this dissertation highlights the need to protect the existing and recreate the lost public space. Some of the JDA's agendas for upgrading the city focus on sustainable inner city regeneration, the creation of green public space and using public art to "reinvigorate declining city spaces" (JDA 2015a; JDA 2012). These strategies could assist in establishing Johannesburg as the "Cultural Capital of South Africa" (JDA n.d.). Keeping this in mind, an upgrade of Joubert Park can be considered an asset, not only to the residents and stakeholders of the park, but to the city as a whole.

The dissertation could aid in developing strategies for upgrading the park to the public status it once had. As outlined in Chapters 3 and 4, a variety of strategies for re-establishing Joubert Park were investigated. Introducing events, removing programmes and infrastructure that detract from public space as well as adding new publically orientated infrastructure were discussed. These ideas could influence the potential upgrading tactics that the JDA could implement while attempting to deal with Joubert Park.

Creating

During the process of creating, a plethora of concepts were adopted and abandoned in search of something that could be deemed “more appropriate”. Every person that was approached on the subject, from former University of Johannesburg students and lecturers at various schools to architects in practice, had the same reaction – Joubert Park is a difficult site. It has even been unofficially labelled as part of the Bermuda triangle of thesis sites. The result of these opinions was constant: the disheartening of an architecture student attempting a dissertation scheme.

Throughout the process the project was viewed as an opportunity to create something that can contribute more than a sculpture or fence, but an idea that would once again shine relevance on people and place. The project attempted to draw out pieces of the gallery into the public realm where they could be appreciated, enjoyed and understood, making the park an extension of the gallery’s exhibition space, with the city as the subject. By including the people and the place in the development process and the expression of art, and by using an existing user group to implement the urban archive, there exists an active involvement between the context and the intervention. Ways in which marrying architecture, art, people and place were illustrated in order to establish a stronger identity in the city.

Personal significance

“Identity begins in that one sentence: I am the first, the middle, the fourth, the second, the last”
(Gappah 2015: 12).

As a designer, the project was significant to me, because:

The project’s significance to me as designer is due to it being

- It was my first adult attempt at a pavilion - an elevated structure;
- It was the first movable structure I ever designed;
- It was my first intervention in a park.

With regard to its significance as a dissertation at the University of Pretoria it is the first of three investigations into Joubert Park and the first project that deals with JAG.



Figure 13.4: *Two eyes are better than one.* (Photo Conbrio 2015)

Site reflection

At the end of a project, the feeling one gets when returning to site is difficult to explain. Once you felt like an unwelcome stranger, in a place you do not understand despite undertaking thorough desktop studies. This feeling remains throughout the process, but dwindles in its intensity as you get to know the people of the area and you begin to feel safer and more welcome there. You almost begin to feel as if you could belong. This can also be said with regards to my feelings toward both Joubert Park and the Johannesburg Art Gallery. Learning to understand more about the people, the functioning and the beauty of each place has been an enlightening process.

While visiting the site for the last time this year, I imagined the interventions in place throughout the park. I could picture the photographers moving screens and boxes around, creating the impression of a working park, while other visitors sit on benches or around the bandstand and children weave through the scattered sculptures. My vision of the pavilion is an entity that will spark intrigue along its journey through the city and the country, documenting scenes in various settings. Furthermore, architects from the area would design the pavilion in each location, contextualising the pavilion. Hopefully this moving camera will highlight photography as a profession instead of merely a hobby for the masses, rendering photographers like Janus Boshoff as respected artists once more.

Project reflection

The project offers a framework of ideas that could be explored further. Each idea has the potential to induce a change to create a more positive environment for both the city and JAG.

The aim of the project was to create a better social cohesion and identity of place in the Joubert Park precinct by using JAG as an asset and starting point for change. Using the group vision as laid out in chapter 3 (Potential of Site) and the park framework as discussed in chapter 6 (Symbiosis – Park and Gallery), I hope this scheme encapsulates some of the building blocks to further investigate the site and the urban issue.

Furthermore, I hope my intention to create a journey of discovery, creation and reflection from the processes of designing a photographic urban archive has been achieved, intriguing the reader as much as it intrigued me.