

# INTRODUCTION





### **Problem statement:**

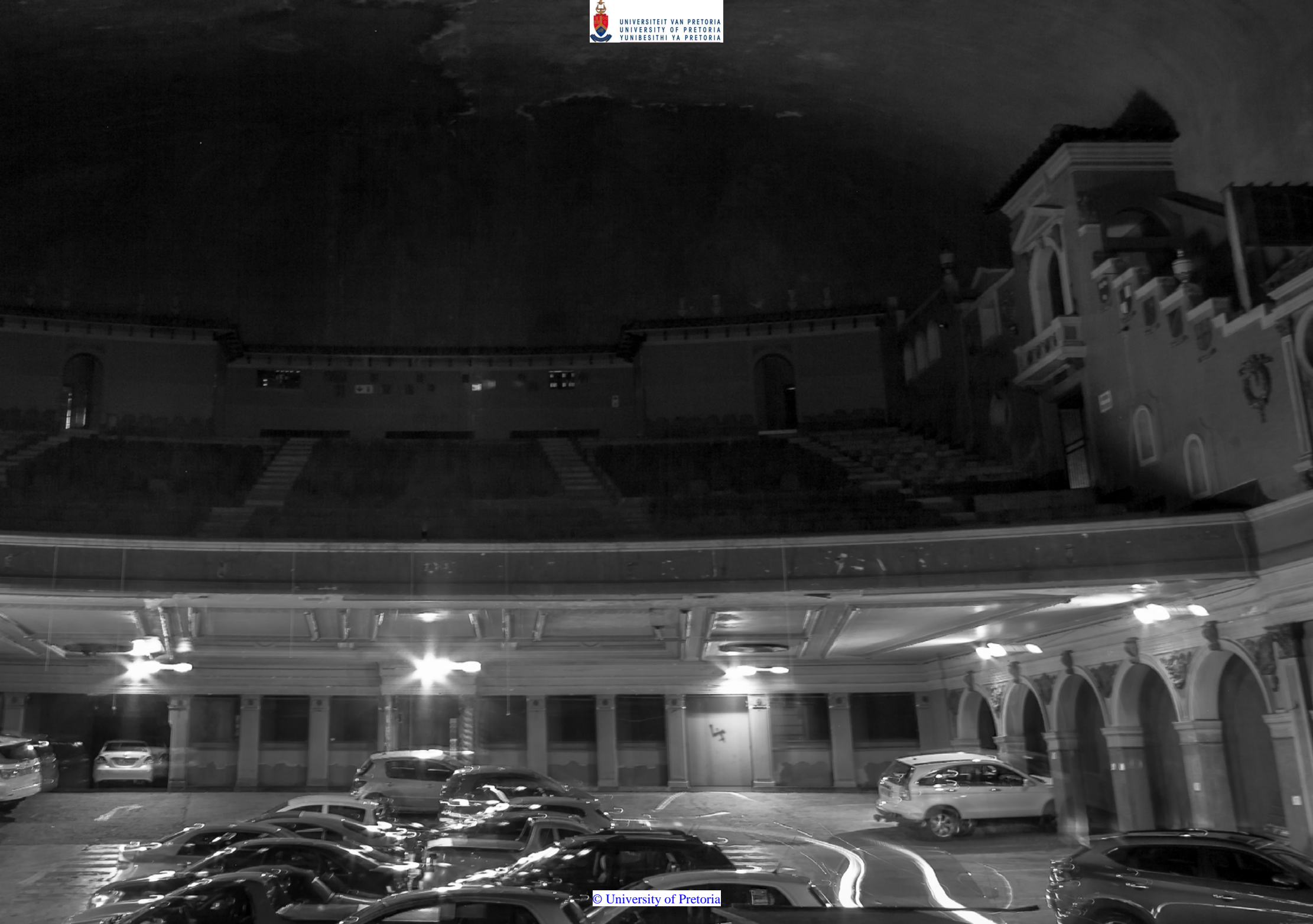
How do we deal with the changing identity of a post-Apartheid city? South Africa is still a country in transition where the current democracy can be jeopardised by factors such as "race", "class, and access to resources" (CASAC, 2015). At the time of writing, student protests regarding the cost of tertiary education, essentially resource accessibility matter, have been marred by the issues of a race and class.

In Pretoria, the search for a new identity that is representative of the new South Africa has led to new government buildings built on open sites often outside of the city centre. One such building is the OR Tambo building of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation, situated in Rietondale, a suburb over the ridge that defines the northern boundary of Pretoria's city centre (Dirco.gov.za, 2016). The red block (Fig. 11) highlights the location of the building in relation to the historic centre of the city. New areas of the city do not necessarily imply a new South African identity. The

**Fig. 4:** (Previous page) *The Grand Foyer, as referred to by the proposal drawings, in its current condition (Author, 2016). This area as well as the adjacent spaces are relatively well maintained when compared to the auditorium space. (Pictured right) Events, private and restaurant hosted extent from the Entrance Foyer into the Grand Foyer and the adjacent spaces.*

**Fig. 5:** (Right) *The auditorium space is currently being used as parking garage since 1981 (Author, 2016). Refer to Context chapter.*







city continues to sprawl eastwards in search of this new identity or a new ideal, leaving in its wake the empty shells of old buildings (see Fig. 11). In most cases, the new occupants adapt these buildings as best they can to serve a new purpose with minimal physical alteration. The buildings with the strongest identities often cannot be adapted without costly infrastructural changes and have simply been abandoned. How do we deal with the changing identity of a post-Apartheid city in a more effective manner than simply ignoring the scars of the past and trying to suggest a new identity without contextual response?

### **General issue:**

Present day Pretoria, like most of the country, is in a state of protest. The demands of the protest seem to be constantly evolving and some protests have progressively become more violent as the state of protest continues. The subsequent responses to demands have become equally divided and brings into question as to whether the protests are directed at the appropriate institutions

for the most effective response. Furthermore, would the realisation of these demands lead to a more equitable nation for all or are there more appropriate demands that would lead to better outcomes.

During an event commemorating 20 years of the South African Constitution at Freedom Park in Pretoria, former President Mbeki (2016) stated:

*A lot of our people are not familiar with what this Constitution says. The consequence is that we sit in government and do something that is wrong and even unconstitutional. Mmusi [Maimane, party leader of the Democratic Alliance political party] will say it is incorrect and so will the judges [of the Constitutional Court]. But where is the rest of society?*

**Fig. 6:** (Left) A view from the Promenade into the Grand Foyer looking (east) towards the Entrance Foyer (Author, 2016).

The Grand Stair can be seen to on the right (south) of the image. The doors on the left (north) of the lower level of the Grand Foyer, now barricaded, lead into the Auditorium on the Orchestra Floor. The Balcony is accessed from the north of the Promenade level. An understanding of the intricacies of the details and ornamentation that once adorned the Theatre can begin to be appreciated in this image.

The unfamiliarity with the Constitution would suggest that it is no longer protected and advanced by the public. Unconstitutional acts that are not subject to the public's objection imply that the value assigned to the Constitution has diminished. The exposure of public objections in the form of protests can be more effective. Improving the exposure to physical protests in the city could improve their effectiveness as well as increase the public awareness of the matters subject to protests. Can an increased following of, and improved effectiveness of physical protest bring value back to the Constitution? This value is that of a South African identity, its formation is representative of South Africa's heritage and it serves to protect the South African people.

**Urban issue:**

There is a loss of heritage that occurs as Pretoria's urban centre migrates eastwards (Fig. 11), "breaks" in the fabric become more apparent. The "breaks" in question are relics, the left over identities of past regimes and requirements of a previous urban

condition. In order to advance the transformation of the city to that of a truly post-Apartheid city, the identities of its relics need to be addressed and possibly altered to be in line with present and future requirements of the urban condition. Contemporary identities are not founded in tabula rasa, instead, they are each the product of its past. The experience of space is governed by a personal perspective formed by previous experience (Connerton 1989: 61). Like the experience of space, the adaptation of space and its identity is influenced by its heritage.

**Architectural issue:**

The identity of relics found in the city need to be addressed so that they may once again contribute to the urban fabric and condition in a positive manner. There needs to be a negotiation between the old and new identities of the city that validates the memory and function of place. Adaptations have to be made to accommodate new required functions to ensure their contribution to the urban condition. The occupant must have a certain awareness of how the

new identity is a product of the past. Beyond the negotiation of identity, the relationships between the various scales of the city fabric and the links between the public and political realms have to be addressed in order to create a platform for more effective democracy.

The platform should allow for both the individual and the group to voice an opinion removed from the influences of the public, political and constitutional powers that the matters brought to light concern. This provides an opportunity for an independent party to suggest an order and direction of public action in the form of protest that stands the greatest chance of being heard by the relevant parties. The spatial requirements of the platform are not dissimilar from those of the historical theatrical function of the auditorium space that would allow for the revival of the function of the space on occasion, reinstating the intended identity of the Capitol Theatre for the duration of the event.

### **Research Questions:**

Is a new layer of identity able to provide a new occupant with an understanding and appreciation the old and often times lost identity of relics within the city fabric? Furthermore, can these various layers of identities coexist in a manner that does not negate the core principals on which each identity is founded?

### **Hypothesis:**

The strategic insertion of a new programme can allow for a space that has lost its identity to once again contribute to the urban fabric. Provided the new program is required by the current society, the space can assume a new identity. However, a layer of inserted architecture is essential to altering the perception of how the existing is experienced and provide a new layer to which the new identity can be assigned.

### **Delimitations:**

The dissertation is focused on the new layer of architecture and the points of physical intersection with the existing. Areas of the existing that do not have a direct contact with the new layer will not



be focused on and can be assumed the finishes will be restored, and services upgraded. An effort has been made in the case of fire regulations and ablutions to bring the existing as close as possible to SANS 10400 code.

The public spaces beyond the new layer of architecture into which the programs will extend have been considered. In this case, design suggestions for Church Square have been made as part of the urban framework in which this dissertation is positioned. The design suggestion is based on the principles proposed in the urban framework and through exploration of the heritage and current conditions of the site. Further development of these suggestions will not be undertaken.

#### **Limitations:**

Documentation of the existing. The final proposed documentation for the Capitol Theatre (Rogers Cooke, 1928) is to be utilised for this dissertation as they are the most detailed and complete documentation available for the Theatre and is sourced from De Klerk (1995:

68-72). There are minor differences between the proposal drawings and built form, although the structural system of the building is consistent with the drawings. These are accurate and sufficient to be utilised for the purposes of this dissertation.

Links to the surrounding existing buildings.

Information regarding the subterranean links between buildings of Church Square such as the Ou Raadsaal, Palace of Justice and Café Riche is thin but enough to suggest their existence. Documentation of these links do not appear to be publicly available and assumptions are made as to the locations of the tunnels connecting the basements of the buildings.

#### **Research Methodologies:**

Before a negotiation between old and new identities can be made an understating of the heritage must be gained. The heritage and identity is held by an architecture of a specific time and place that has a current value that is to be taken into account and done through

the consultation of the South African heritage legislation and appropriate heritage charters. Regardless of the nature of the old identity and how closely the architecture is related to a zeitgeist, it cannot be view as an isolated object when attempting to assign it a new identity. Rather, it is to be viewed as part of a continuum so as to gain a better understanding of the influences impacting both the identity and heritage of the architecture over time.

The primary research will be conducted through the experiences had and observations made on site and the surrounding spaces. This extends to the access to the site through the public transport systems in place as well as walking the historical and current protest routes.

The secondary research is undertaken through an assimilation of prior research that has been done in Pretoria, Church Square and the Capitol Theatre. Comparisons to these findings and observations made in the primary research will be drawn to establish

changes in conditions.

There theoretical research is approached firstly through an understanding of South African heritage legislation: the National Heritage Resources Act, No.25 (1999). This understanding allow for a statement of heritage to be proposed that is prepared in conjunction with the ICOMOS Burra Charter (1999) and on sight observations made as part of fieldwork. Theories regarding adaptive reuse and palimpsest architecture are then applied using precedent studies relating types of adaptations to existing, conceptual approaches to inform adaptations of the existing, retention and change of programs.

The fieldwork conducted relates mainly how the existing heritage is experienced and documenting existing site. This documentation is made to capture the current condition of the existing and highlight the impact of previous adaptations on the heritage of the site. Insights into the possible points of adaptation are gained during the conduction of this fieldwork.