



4 Site Introduction

4.1 Pretoria East





Pretoria East, home to Plastic View

Over the past fifteen years commercial and residential development and investment in the City of Tshwane has shifted eastward (Peres 2013:5). Due to this shift in development, there was a need for affordable medium density housing for middle income markets and a market for high-income earners arose as well. The gated estate typology has been a dominant response in this area and can be characterized by large, physically cut-off and privately managed and serviced landholdings. These gated communities are serviced by car-dominated roads which are poorly serviced by public transport. Privately owned malls, schools and hospitals dominate the landscape leading to no or very little council led investment in amenities, infrastructure or public spaces (Peres 2013:5).

Pockets of left over land which consist of neglected municipal grounds, servitudes and natural areas becomes evident in a landscape surrounded by these gated communities. Peres (2013:5) suggests that there has been development of at least 10 informal settlements which are developing in these left over spaces. Woodlane Village, an informal settlement more commonly known as Plastic View, emerged on one of these islands of left over space (Turok, Hunter, Robinson, Swilling, & van Ryneveld 2011).

Fig 4.2 Aerial view of Plastic View, (UP Arch Hons 2016)



Fig 4.4 Plastic view 2008, Whitaker (2016)

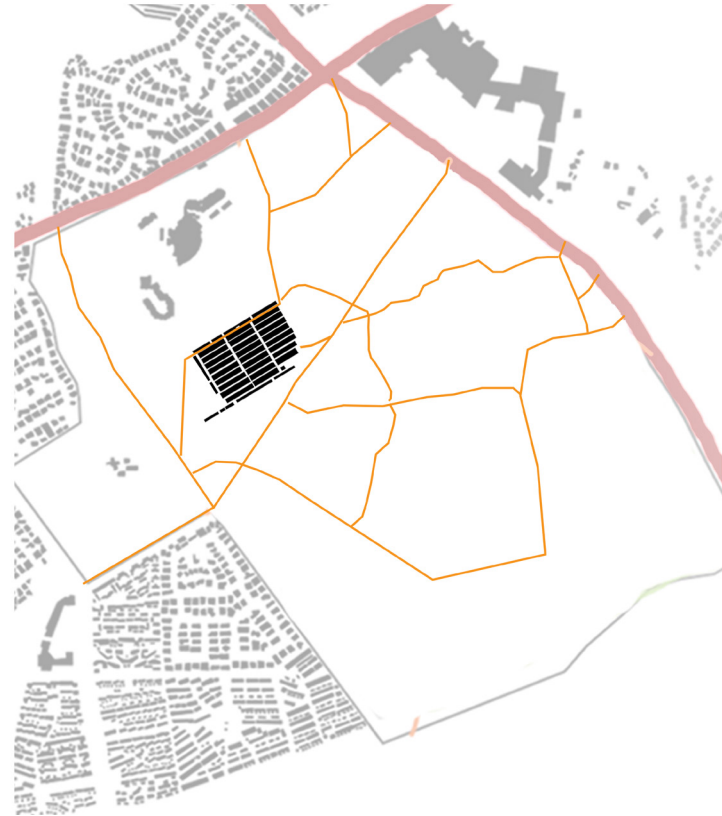


Fig 4.4 Plastic view 2009, Whitaker (2016)

An island of left over space, The history of Plastic View

As far back as 2002 there is evidence that a community had begun living on a vacant piece of land alongside a small stream which runs through Pretoria East, known as the Moreleta Spruit. This community was constantly at risk of being evicted by the local police forces and the municipality, a pressure which was heightened by the surrounding land property value market and gated estates (Dredge 2014:14-17).

Colin and Denise Dredge, the Founding Members of Tswelopele Step by Step, a local NPO, wrote an article titled *A journey between two worlds* (2013), in which they describe the journey that they undertook with this community in order to offer support and resources to the community.

They had no shelters and slept simply rolled up in whatever rags, plastic or pieces of old carpeting they could find. Their only source of water for bathing, laundry and drinking came from the Spruit. There were no toilets and the trees and bushes in the area served as a screen for them to bathe, dress and use as a toilet. They did their cooking on open wood fires using any old empty tins, such as coffee tins, for their pots. Pieces of wood or sticks served as spoons to stir their food. Plates were nonexistent and everyone simply had to dip in with their hands when they ate (Dredge 2013:2).

Tswelopele was registered with the vision to:

- Care for and empower disadvantaged and destitute individuals and communities with the purpose of enabling them to be involved in their own development.
- *Develop projects and programmes which promote responsibility, dignity and skills whereby Individuals and Communities will be developed and uplifted (Dredge 2014).*

They set out to achieve this by:

- Deeply investing themselves in the community in order to develop programmes suitable to their needs.

These programmes were continuously adapted and changed as the community developed and grew with the hopes of one day achieving independence and integration into mainstream society (Dredge 2014).

This community was however at risk of being evicted by local authorities and suffered continuous harassment by the local home owners who *linked criminal activity to the informal settlement, and suggests that the overcrowding and unsightly unhealthy living conditions are reasons for their property investments declining* (Peres 2013 ; Roux 2012).

In 2009 the residents association from the surrounding area took the local municipality to court in order to obtain a court order to remove the homeless community from the land which is owned by the municipality. Tswelopele were asked to assist in re-organizing all groups living on the land into a fenced off area below the Moreleta park Congregation's boundary fence (Dredge 2013:17). This informal settlement was then acknowledged as Woodlane Village but more commonly known as Plastic View.

In March 2015 the Municipality threatened to sell the vacant land for development at a public auction. Lawyers for Human Rights were contacted by Tswelopele who initiated a court case against the government in order to stop the sale of the land that Plastic View was founded on (De Lange 2015). Together the Lawyers for Human Rights and residents of Plastic View won the court case and halted the sale of land that they were currently occupying (Mudzuli 2015). The Tshwane Municipality however still does not recognize this community in terms of service provision and access to amenities, which is in direct contradiction to the principles laid out in the Bill of Rights (SA 1996: Chapter 2).

While many residents in Moreleta Park are opposed to the settlement (People opposed to Plastic View and Cemetery view facebook group, n.d) , the community of Plastic View continue to receive support and resources form a number of Non- Profit Organizations based in Moreleta Park and the surrounds. Tswelopele found that an increasing number of churches in Pretoria East were interested in supporting and assisting the community of Plastic View. The Tshwane East Advancing Communities Holistically (TEACH) Forum was established which is a Forum of churches and organizations who support and include Plastic View as a part of the Pretoria East community (Dredge 2013:24).

The Moreleta Park Congregation located above Plastic View play a vital role in the support and development of the community. The Pure Hope foundation, a programme which was started in 2011, provides an education and feeding scheme in support of the underprivileged children of Plastic View. The educational facilities include a pre-primary school and primary school up until Grade 4, with the intention of adding on a grade every year (UP Arch(MProf) 2016).

A programme has also been introduced that provides skills and development training to the community of Plastic View. Discussions are held with the community leaders of Plastic View in helping identify what skills training programmes are needed to help develop the community. These programmes include sewing classes, a training programme for domestic workers and training programme for teachers (UP Arch(MProf) 2016). The Foundation supports a similar vision to that of Tswelopele and encourage and support the integration of the community of Plastic View into mainstream society.

As a result of the above, one can see that Plastic View exists on an island of left over space in amongst the larger urban fabric in which it is found, thus becoming a site of contestation which is indicated by the rising tensions between the Moreleta park residents, the municipality and the community of Plastic View.

Tswelopele

Non profit Organisation



TEACH Forum



Organisations

- Labour Centre Lynnwoodrif
- Tswelopele Step by step
- Family impact



Community Members

- Woodlane Village executive committee



Churches

- Emmanuel and Grace Presbyterian Churches
- Glen Methodist Church
- Pharos Community Centre (Lux Mundi NG Church)



Moreleta Park Congregation

Skills training and Development Programmes:
Sewing Classes
House workers training programme



Pure Hope Foundation

Educational Facilities:
Pre-Primary School
Primary School

Training Programme for teacher assistants

Fig 4.5 TEACH Forum, diagram, Author (2016)

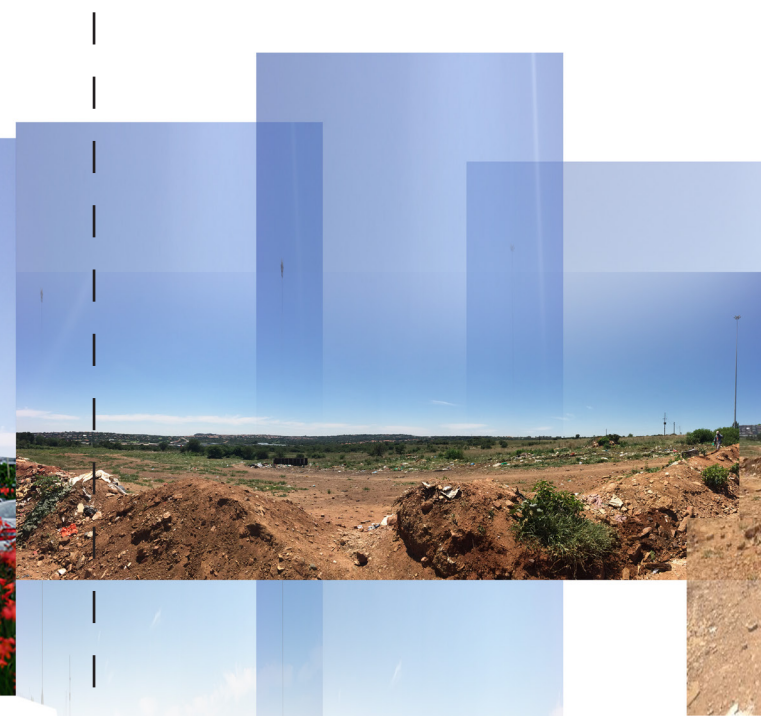
Privately owned housing estates



Woodlands Boulevard mall



Neglected Munciple ground



Plastic View

Moreleta Park

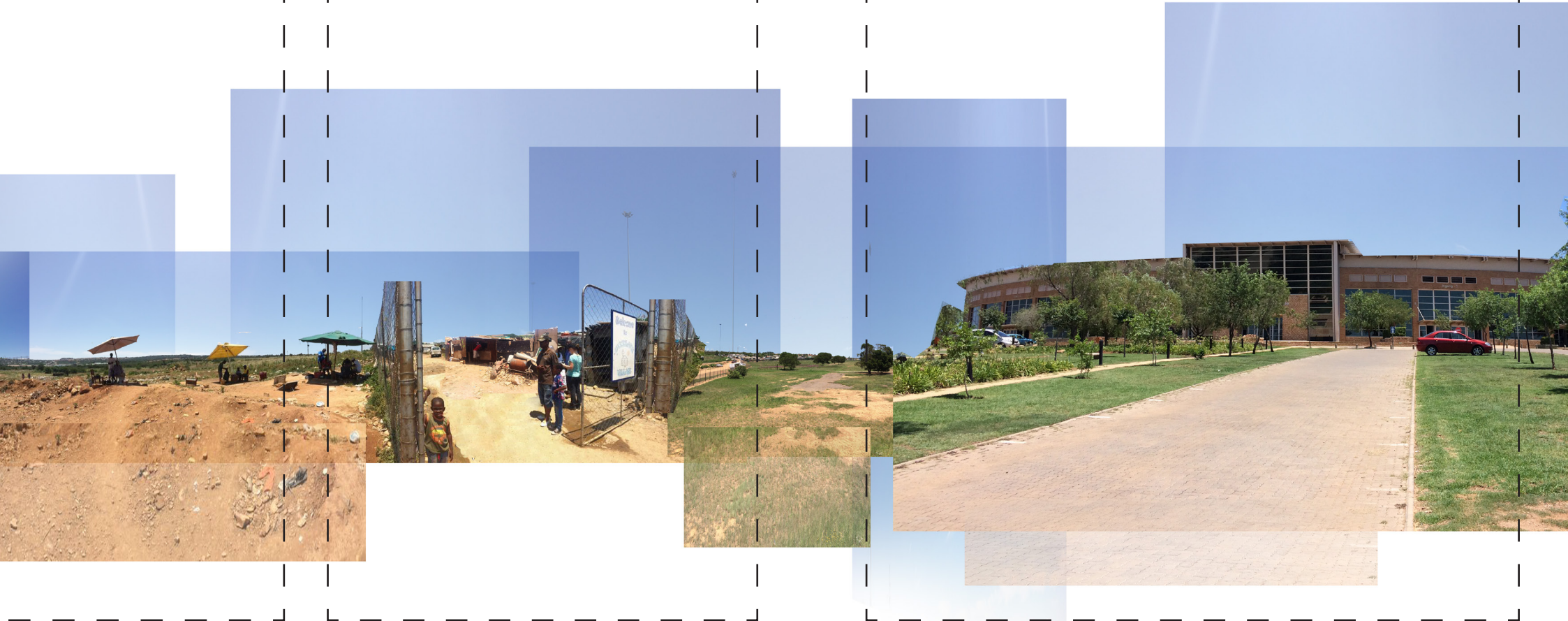


Fig 4.6 Collage of site and surrounds, Whitaker (2016)





Fig 4.7 Images of Plastic View, Photographs, Author (2016)

4.2 Research and theory

Quantitative and qualitative research was conducted by the University of Pretoria's Department of Architecture UP Arch(Hons) and UP Arch (MProf) research groups. Desktop research consisted of mapping the surrounds, analysing proposed frameworks for the site as well as considering the Tshwane Vision 2055 for the area (Tshwane). Field research consisted of a number of site visits including transect walks, informal interviews and site observation. This was done in order to:

- Understand the immediate and future influences of the current urban conditions on site.
- To establish an understanding of the local culture and existing networks in Moreleta Park, specifically Plastic View and the immediate surrounds.
- Analyse and understand the spatial arrangements of Plastic View from which conclusions can be drawn, respected and supported architecturally.

Research and theory into the history of urban patterns was undertaken by the UP Arch (MProf) in order to understand how this has informed the current urban settlement patterns which are present in our urban context.

The Democratic Constitutional Law of South Africa, specifically the Bill of Rights in Chapter two of the constitution (SA1996: Chapter 2), and the Breaking New Ground Policy (BNG) (Trusler 2009) which was put into place by the South African government in response to apartheid urban planning is discussed further. Both the constitution and policy recognize that South Africa is made up of fragmented and complex urban environments, and therefore the policies were set out to achieve more cohesive, multi cultural, sustainable communities which support the eradication of spatial inequality and the right of equal access to basic amenities such as food, health and education.

Despite the promising principles put forward by the South African government in these policies, the spatial implementation of these principles into South African society is not yet evident (Tissington 2010). Further the lack of implementation of these policies is intensified by the increasing number of informal settlements which are forming around areas of opportunity. For example, more specific to site location, development of the Menlyn and its surrounds have had effects on the surrounding area as at least 10 informal settlements are developing on open pieces of land in the area (Peres 2013:5).

Future proposals such as further growth of the Menlyn economic centre, the new K54 main road, which is proposed to border the land on which Plastic View is founded and becomes the extension to the Gautrain which is proposed to run through Pretoria East to Mamelodi, highlights that the island of left over space that Plastic View occupies is a significant area of urbanization and significant area of research for future development of Pretoria.

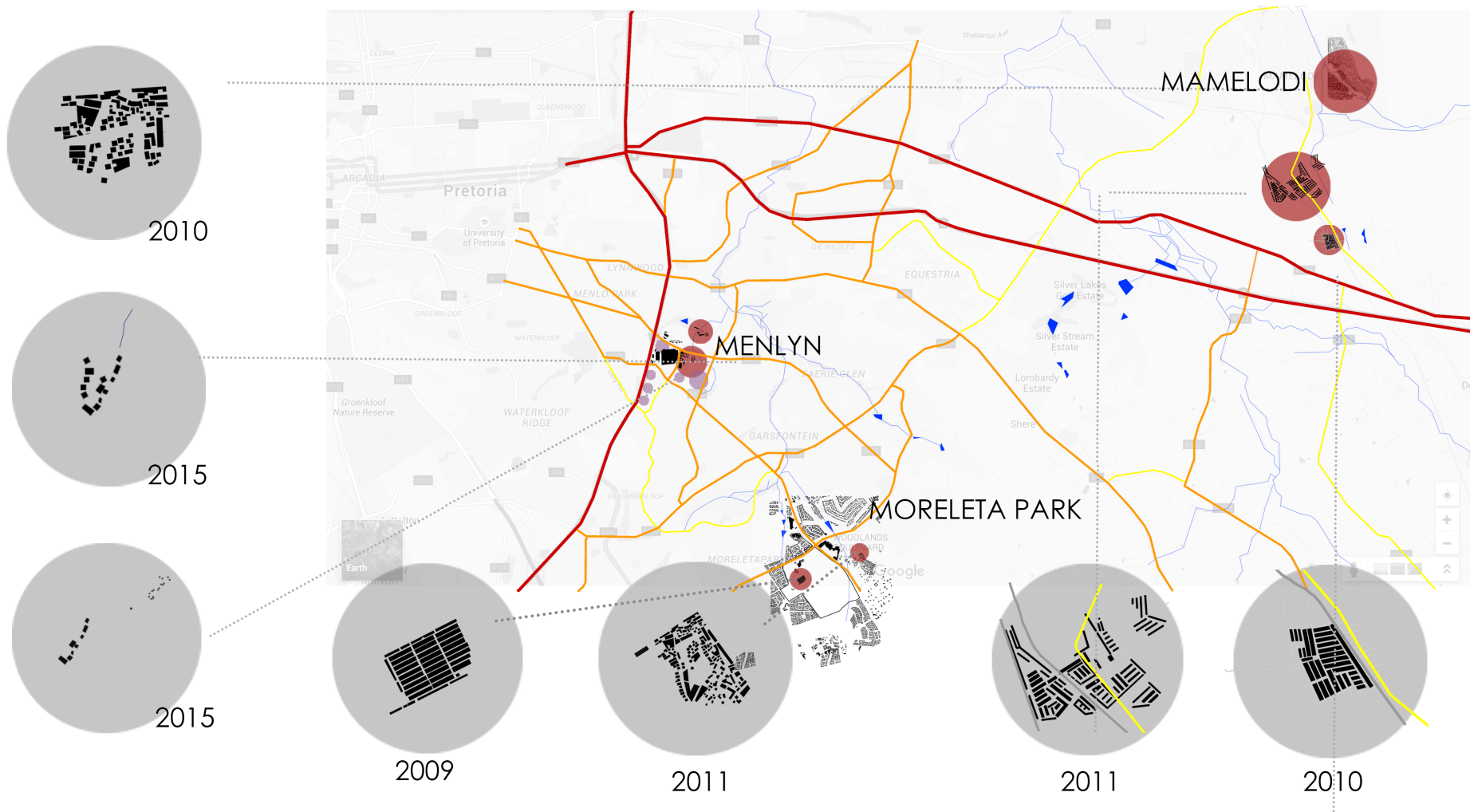


Fig 4.8 Current urban settlement patterns, Mclagan (2016)

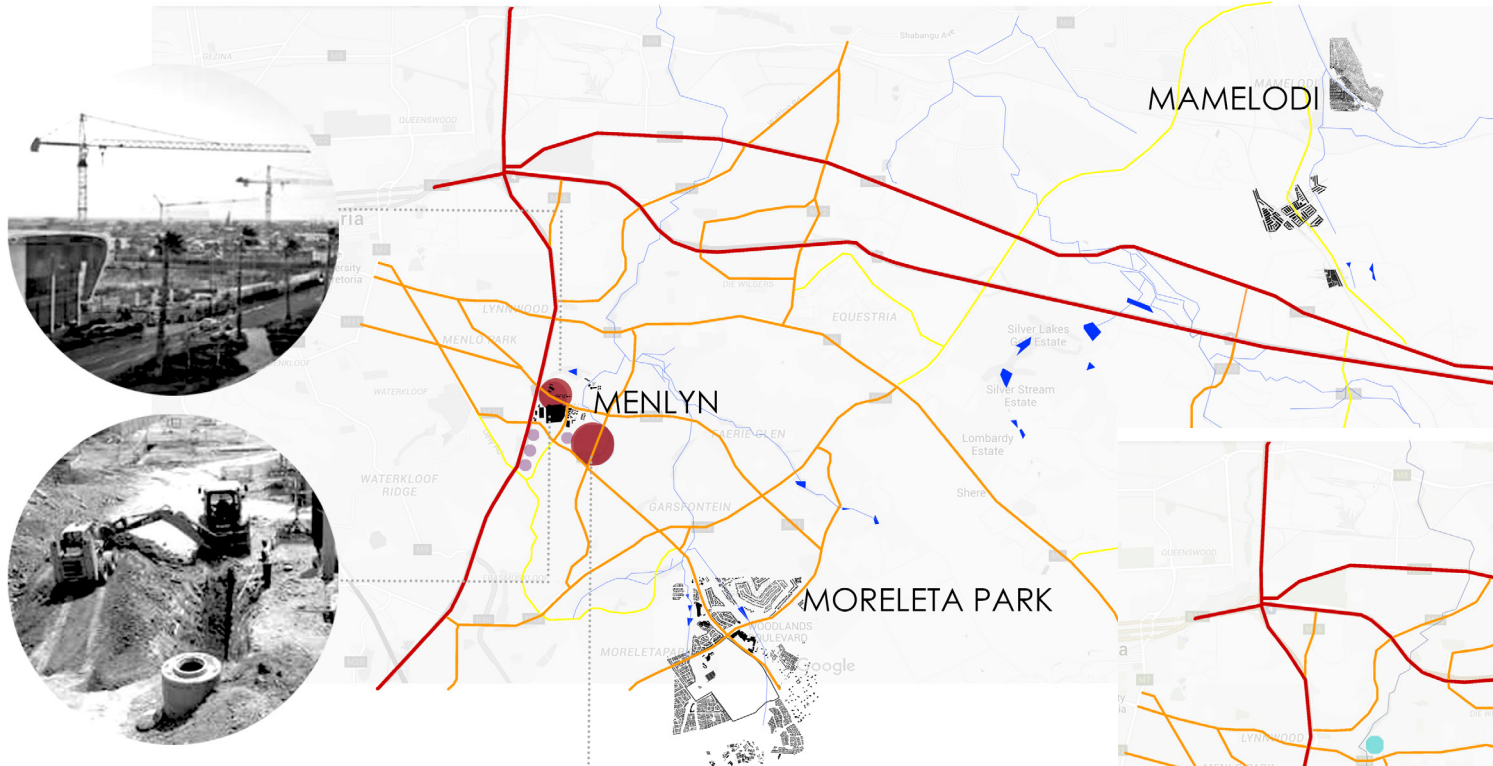


Fig 4.9 Employment opportunities, Mclagan (2016)

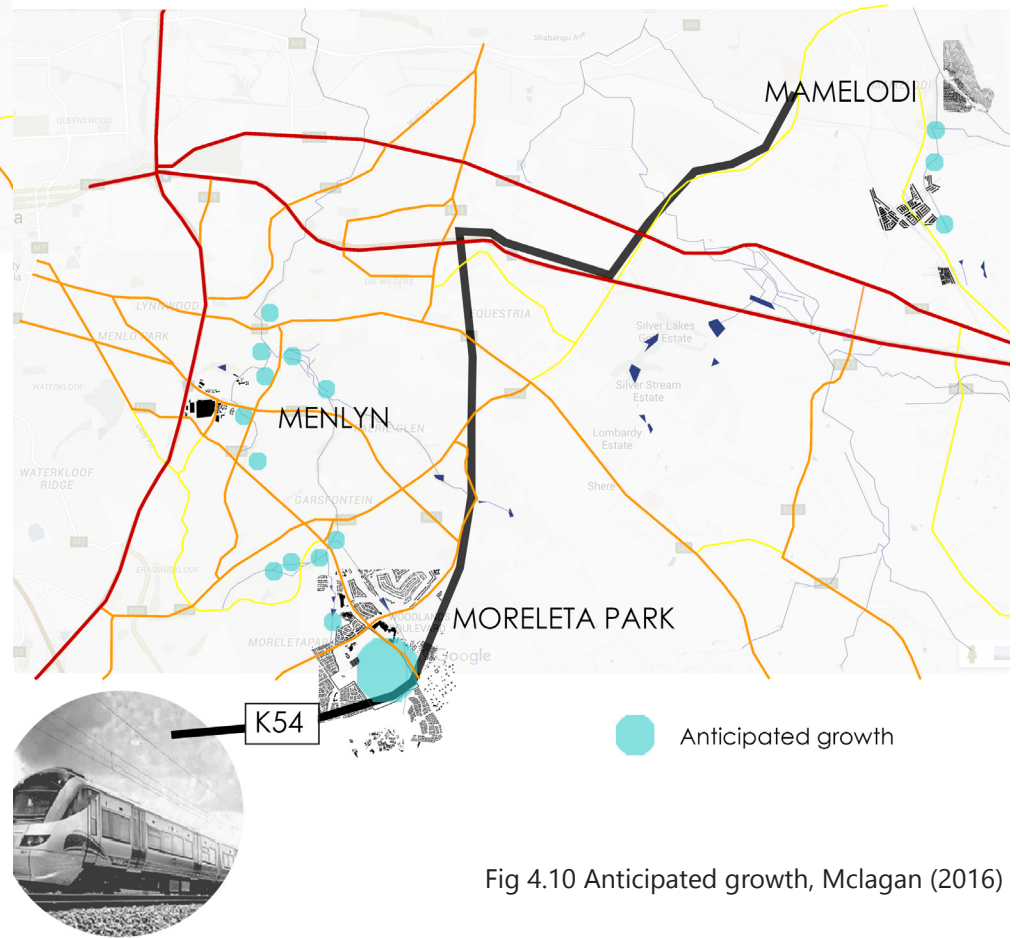


Fig 4.10 Anticipated growth, Mclagan (2016)

Access to Basic amenities in Moreleta Park

In support of the principles promoted in the Bill of Rights (SA 1996: Chapter 2) and the Breaking New Ground Policy (Trusler 2009), one of the mapping exercises conducted in alliance with the UP BArch (Hons) research group also working on the site, included the mapping of basic amenities situated around the site.

In order to achieve this mapping, the research was divided into a number of sub focus research topics, namely; infrastructure, economic nodes, environmental mapping, cultural asset base, social capital, density, the financial profile of the surrounding areas and food sovereignty. This mapping involved both a macro scale of the context around Plastic View and a micro scale which looked at Plastic View itself.

The research considered both the public and private sectors of service provision to the area and concludes that education, health and food is easily accessed within the private sector. However, accessibility to amenities in the public sector is limited. Informal interviews conducted by the UP Arch (MProf) students with that community members of Plastic View identified that the access to basic amenities in Moreleta Park is of concern as some of the nearest public amenities are more than 20 km away, contributing to the divide and inequalities present in the area. The unequal access to basic amenities have limited the interaction between people of different race, cultures and classes thus restricting the creation of networks to form as a basis for social and economic activities (Landman & Schonteich 2002:81).

The spatial disadvantages which affect those who live in Plastic View become a tangible experience of inequality in their day to day lives, *undermining the sense of social inclusion and equity prevents any chances of building a commonly-held consensus that society is fair* (Philip, Tsedu, Zwane 2014:35).

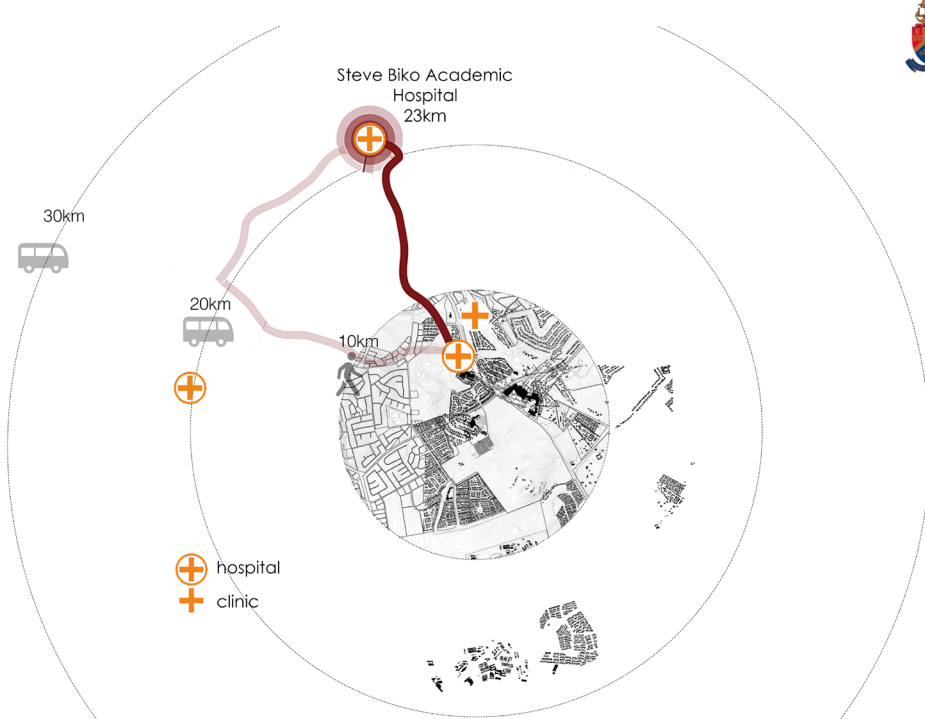


Fig 4.11 Public Health networks, (Mclagan 2016)

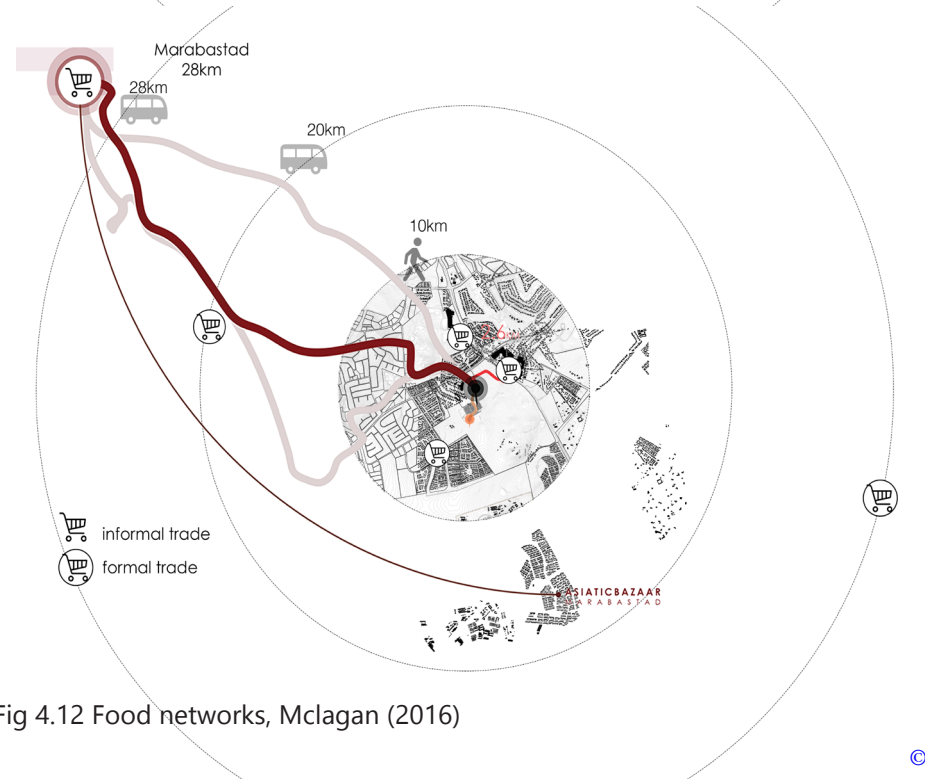


Fig 4.12 Food networks, Mclagan (2016)

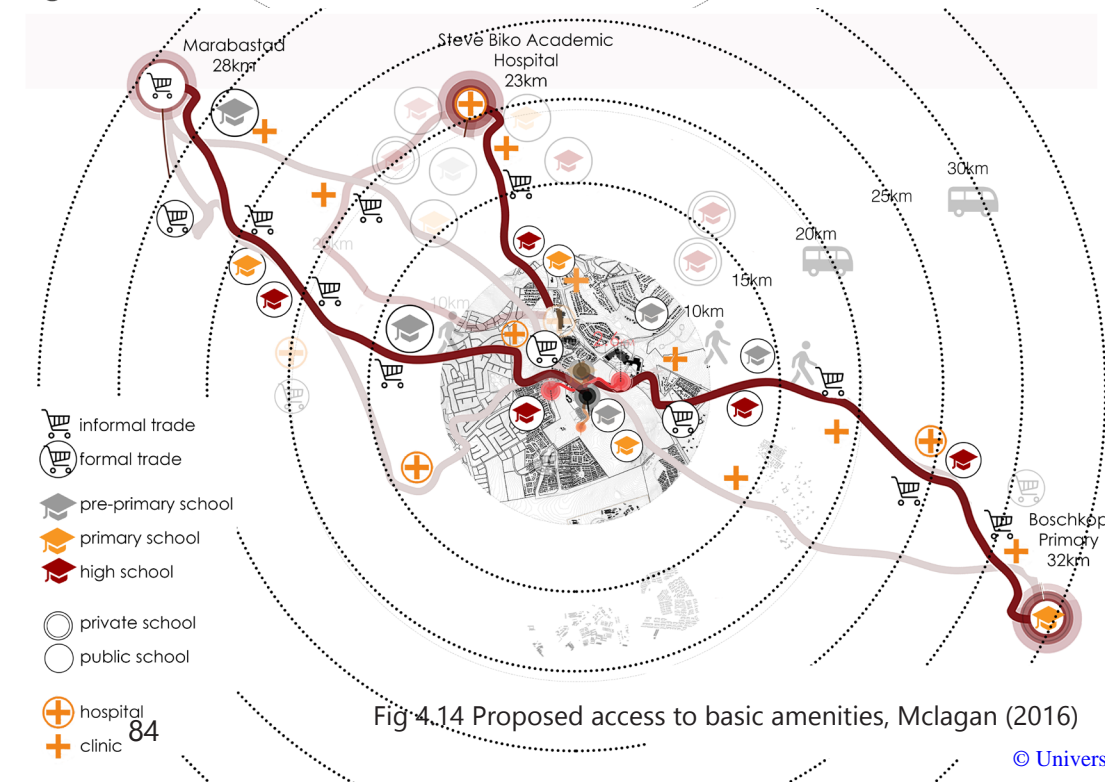
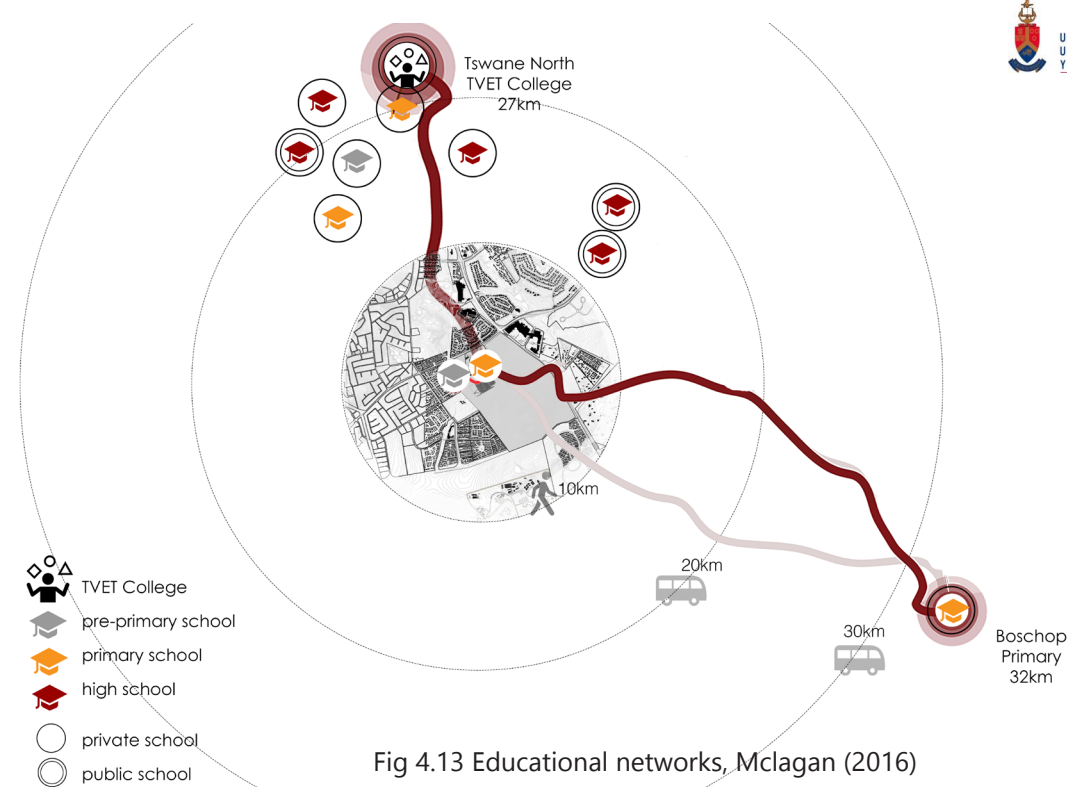
4.3 Urban issues and intent

The research conducted by the UP Department of Architecture (UP Arch (MProf) 2016) research group working on the site of Plastic View concludes that the principles put forward by the bill of rights and Breaking New Ground Policy have not been implemented in Plastic View.

The research concludes that the island of left over space that Plastic View is situated on is a site of contestation amongst a socially corrosive and spatially fragmented and segregated urban fabric. The fragmented urban fabric has restricted the creation of service provision networks to form and limits the interaction between people of different race, cultures and classes leading to inequality of access to opportunities for those less privileged.

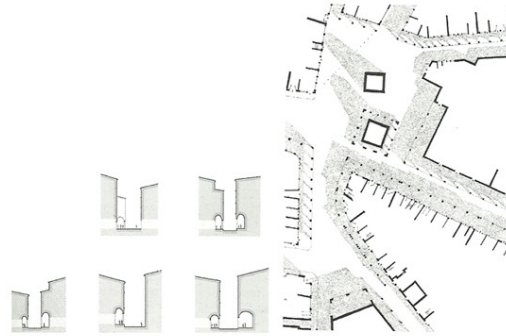
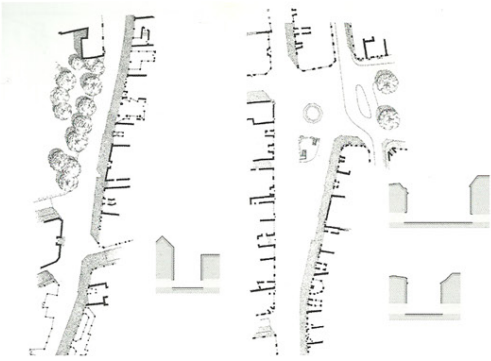
The urban intention of the UP Arch MProf (2016) research group working in Plastic View proposes an urban vision which spatially translates policies such as Breaking New Ground while supporting active networks such as the Pure Hope Foundation programme located at the Moreleta Park Congregation. It is suggested that by stitching the fragmented urban networks, the gap between the private and public sector service provision could be reduced within the Moreleta Park area. This would encourage a more socially cohesive and spatially integrated society to form, leading to improved access to opportunities.

In this way, Plastic View which is currently a site of contestation could become a site of conciliation.



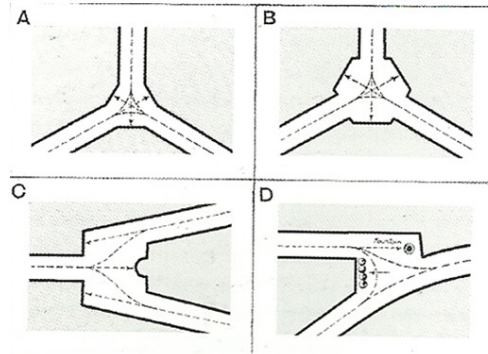
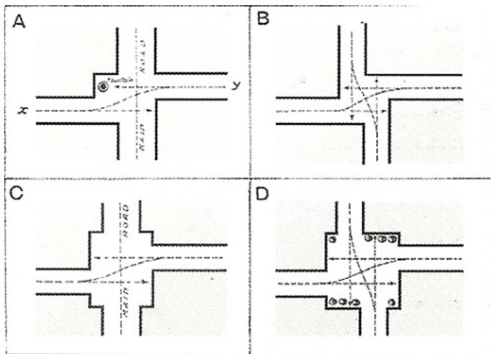
1. Street layouts a

2. Street layouts b



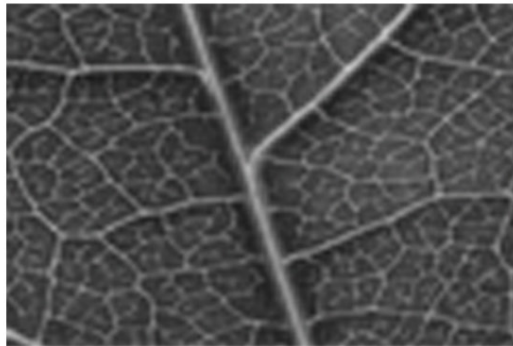
3. Proposed street intersections a

3. Proposed street intersections b



5. Resilient urban fabric taking the structure of a leaf

6. Urban layout aims to connect all networks



4.4 Urban vision and framework

In order to translate this urban intention into an urban vision (which improves the spatial implementation of principles put forward by the current governmental policies), the UP MProf (2016) research group unanimously adopted an approach which has recognised the need for a paradigm shift in terms of the planning procedures conducted in the South African urban context from a neo liberal view to a more ecological world view.

Ecological Approach

Theorists such as Serge Salat (2011) and Gerald Steyn (2005), who have adopted this ecological approach, become the leading theoretical drivers to the conceptual urban vision and approach to this dissertation.

Salat (2011:309) describes urban space as a *complex human experience*, explaining that the structure of the urban fabric should be like that of a leaf, providing resilience through the multi connected and inter connected network systems. The advantages of viewing the urban fabric as a living system which is never static, suggests an adaptable system that ensures its sustainability and resilience over time.

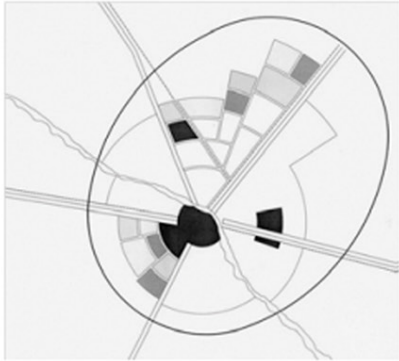
In order to achieve this Salat (2011) suggests the following characteristics;

- Streetscapes becoming a stage for activity which create fluctuating energy nodes within the urban context,
- High density communities,
- Mixed use communities,
- Pedestrian and bicycle oriented environments,
- The provision of public space,
- Self sufficient districts made up of heterogeneous communities
- Strong recognition of the existing conditions on site.

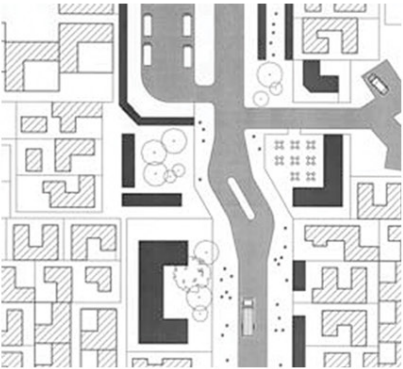
Fig 4.15 Urban principles, Whitaker (2016)

Images: Salat, S. 2011. Cities and Forms: on sustainable Urbanism. Urban Morphology Laboratory of CSTB.

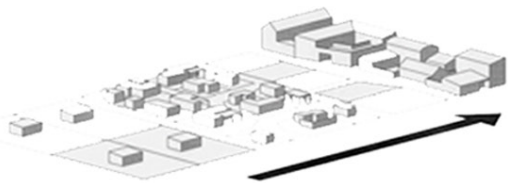
1. Medium-sized compact cities



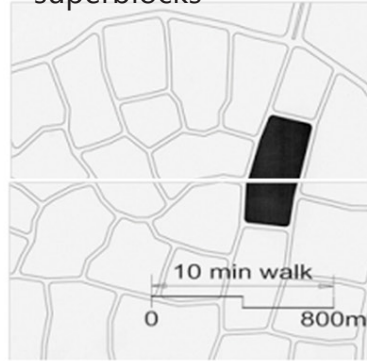
3. Appropriate boundaries & streets



5. Medium density, robust with courtyards, walkable.



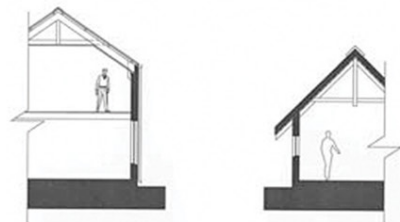
2. Urban villages in superblocs



4. Mixed-use main streets



6. Small-scale and local/self-help and semi-skilled



These principles were exercised in a local example, Thorntree View in Shoshanguve by Holm Jordaan Architects (GWA Studio U3 2007). The urban planning focused on strengthening the existing networks and therefore the project was not viewed as an isolated entity but rather an additional node within its surrounding context. This was achieved by proposing heterogeneous, mixed density communities which focused a high concentration of energy and density along activity corridors (GWA Studio U3 2007).

Gerald Steyn, the author of *Patterns for People Friendly Neighbourhoods* (2005), offers a local interpretation of a similar view. Having conducted research in Mamelodi, Steyn states that due to urban sprawl and spatial and social fragmentation, our urban fabric has become unsustainable. Steyn's (2005) response to this observation concludes that although a sustainable African neighbourhood would certainly differ from a European one in terms of character and appearance, such as the one Salat (2011) considers, the basic ordering principles and characteristics would essentially be the same, namely:

- Compact,
- Walkable,
- Mixed use environment,
- High level of economic self sufficiency.

Using these principles as basic informants for the conceptual urban vision, the urban framework proposal in this dissertation is as follows:

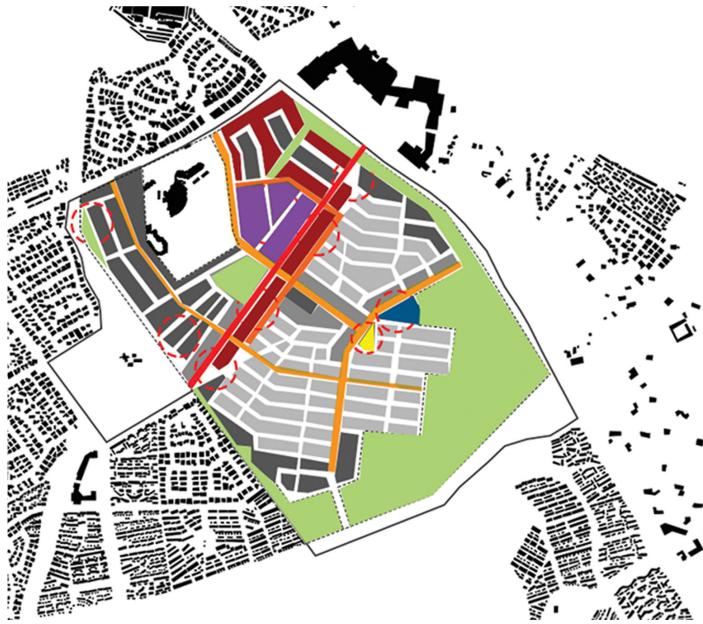
- The framework proposal considers and critiques an existing formal framework proposal for the development of the Plastic View site by StudioMAS Architects (StudioMas 2008).

By viewing this formal proposal through the lens of the theoretical approaches listed above, specifically focusing on

- Accessibility,
 - Heterogeneity and
 - Consideration for the existing conditions on site,
- the UP Arch MProf research group critically assessed this proposal altering areas within it accordingly in order to reach the urban vision used in this dissertation.

Fig 4.16 Urban principles, Whitaker (2016)

Images: Steyn, G. 2005. *Patterns for people friendly neighborhoods* in Mamelodi, South Africa. Department of Architecture at Pretoria University: Pretoria



SERGE SALAT PRINCIPLE EVALUATION



ACCESSIBILITY
streetscape, fluctuating energy
nodes & the walkable city.



HETEROGENEITY
high density community, mixed use
public space and social
interactions.



EXISTING CONSIDERATIONS
existing conditions and relationship
of people to space.



Access
Walkable community



Density
Heterogenous community



Response to gated communities



Fig 4.17 Evaluation of urban framework, Mclagan (2016)

It is proposed that the current community of Plastic View will be catered for within this urban framework through the provision of low income housing. The municipality is currently proposing that the community of Plastic View be decanted and moved to a site across from Garsfontein Road to the North East of the current site. It is envisioned however that more people will be in need of low income housing in Moreleta Park and therefore this land will provide the access to mainstream society (UP Arch (MProf) 2016).

Due to the vast scale of the site which is around 9ha in size, the UP Arch MProf research group's focal point was directed at developing the high activity access boulevard that stretches across the site, connecting high energy nodes of activity on either side of the site. Desktop research identified very strong desire lines on site as a result of walking paths through the site. The desire lines became an important aspect as it helped inform the location of the boulevard which therefore considers existing conditions. The existing and new servitudes on site coincide with the position of the high activity access boulevard.

The boulevard is envisioned as becoming a highly densified, mixed use activity corridor which aims to draw existing energy onto and across the proposed site. These boulevards connect high energy nodes of activity on either side of the site, namely the Woodlands boulevard and the Village shopping centre. The access boulevard consists of a main vehicular orientated road as well as a secondary pedestrian orientated road which supports compact, accessible and walkable living as Steyn (2005) and Salat (2011) suggest.

The North West part of the site, the area cornered by Garsfontein Road and De Villa Bois Mareuil road was zoned as a high density typology, that consists of a three to five storey build up and accommodates for formal retail and offices. To the south of the high density area is the main vehicular road which connects Garsfontein road to the residential area on the Western edge of the site. A pedestrian island that is located between the main vehicular and pedestrian boulevard caters for informal retail activities that are one-two storeys in height. The buildings surrounding the proposed site are zoned to be two- three storey medium density live work units which slowly become one-two storey low density residential living units toward the southern side of the precinct. Smaller access roads that run around the proposed site are encouraged to be pedestrian orientated. Sidewalks are necessary along the vehicular road for pedestrian use.

The provision of basic amenities was considered for the urban vision. Using Salat (2011) and Steyn's (2005) theories, the proposed provision of three basic amenities, namely Health, food and educational amenities are positioned along the main boulevard providing walking distance proximity around the site.

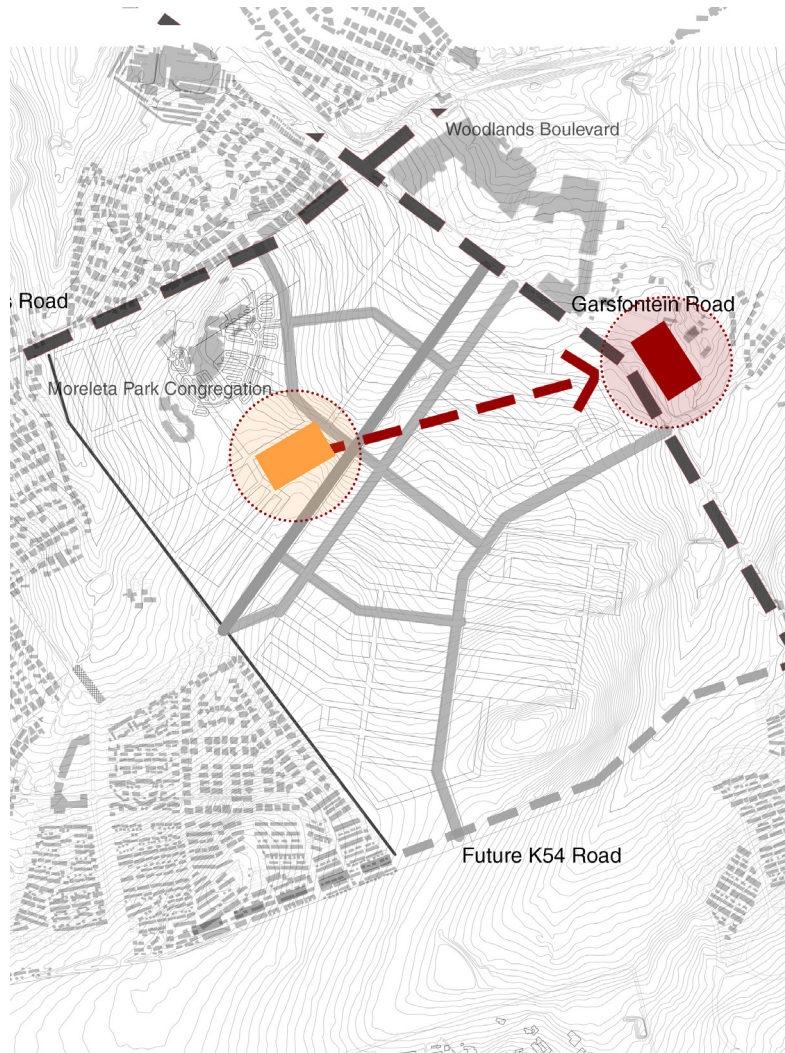


Fig 4.18 The relocation of Plastic View, Mclagan (2016)

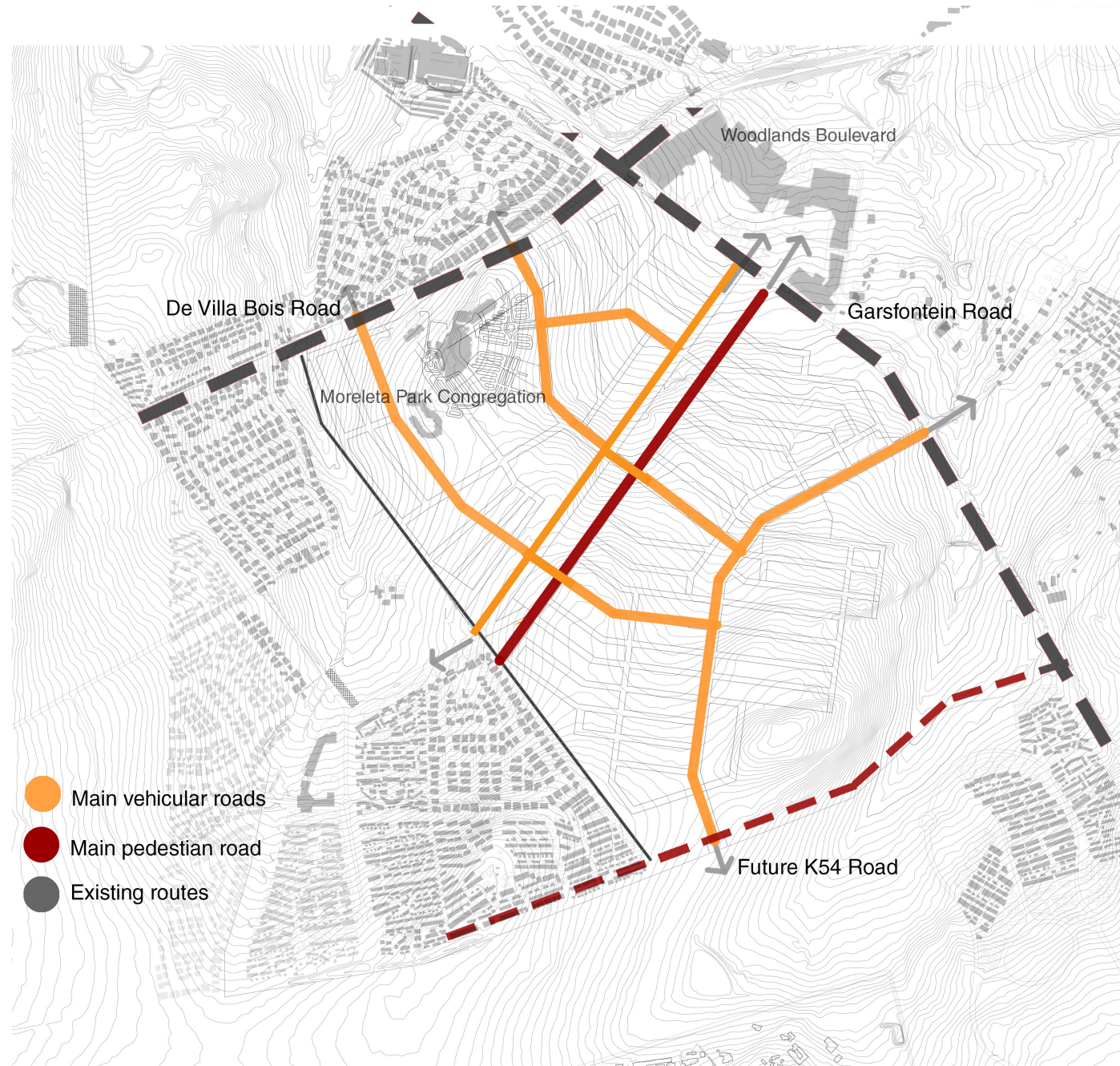


Fig 4.19 The main vehicular and pedestrian roads, Mclagan (2016)



Fig 4.20 Sewer reticulation, Whitaker (2016)

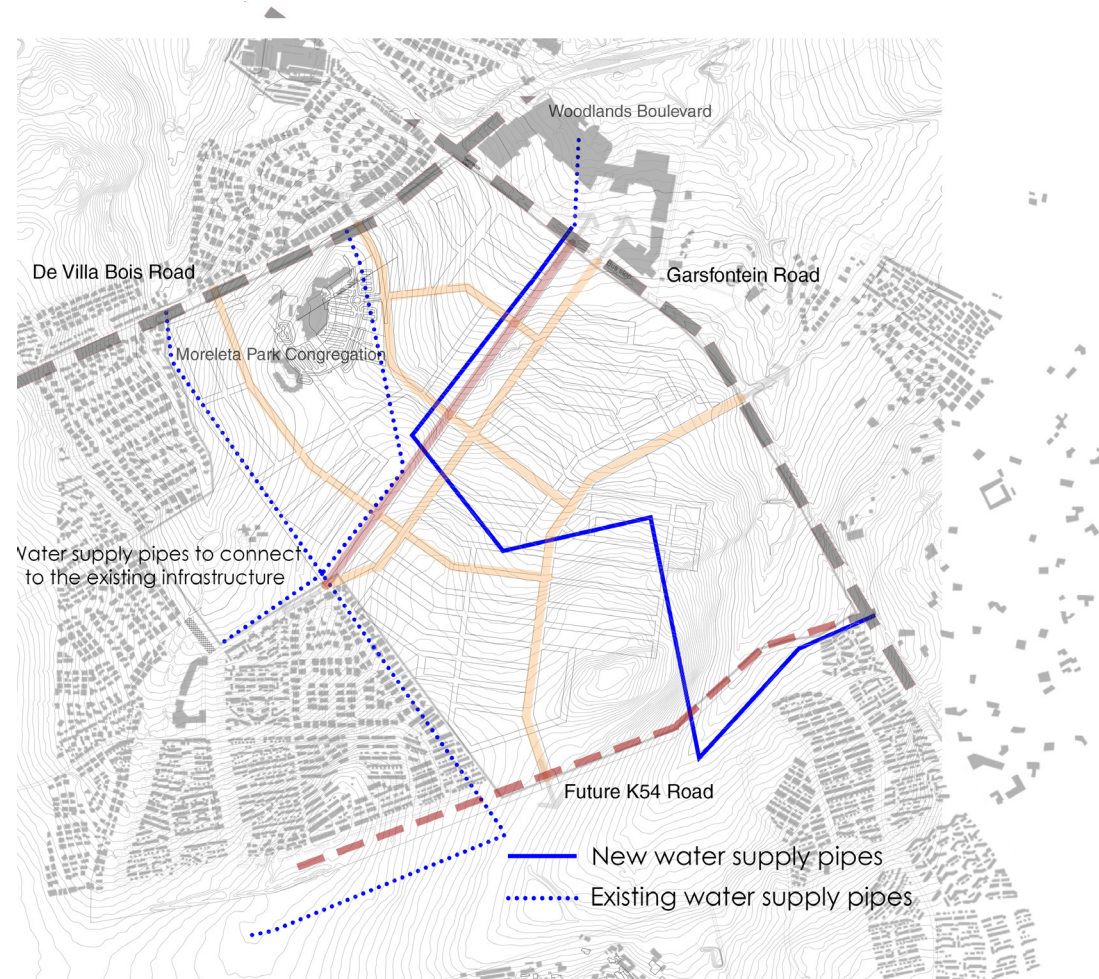


Fig 4.21 Water supply, Whitaker (2016)

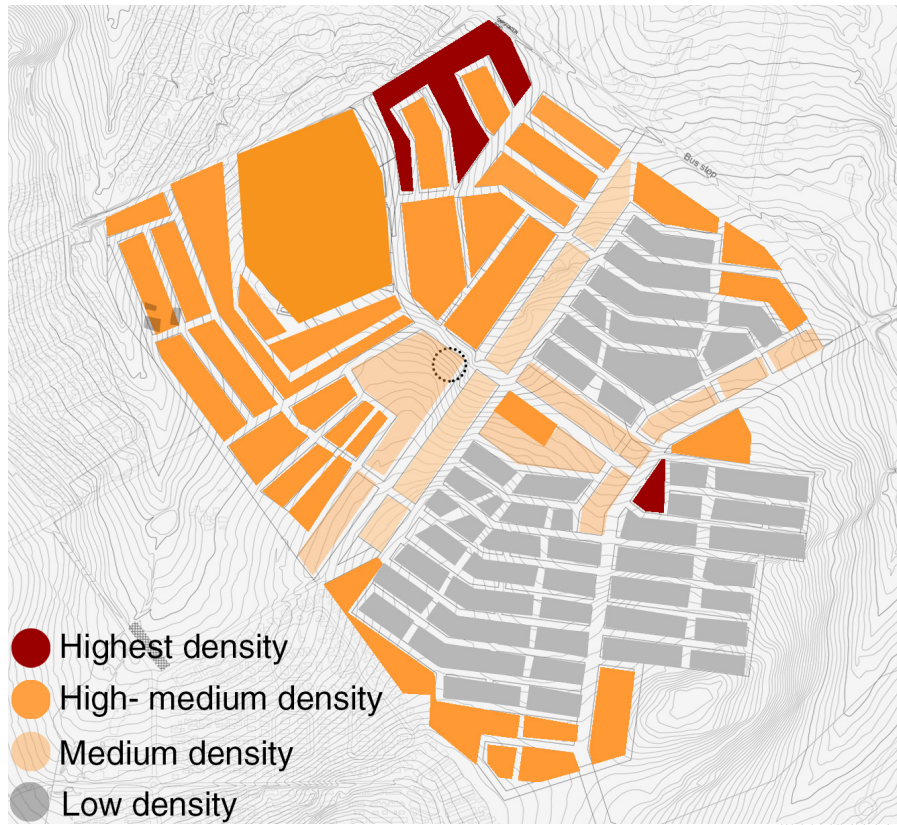


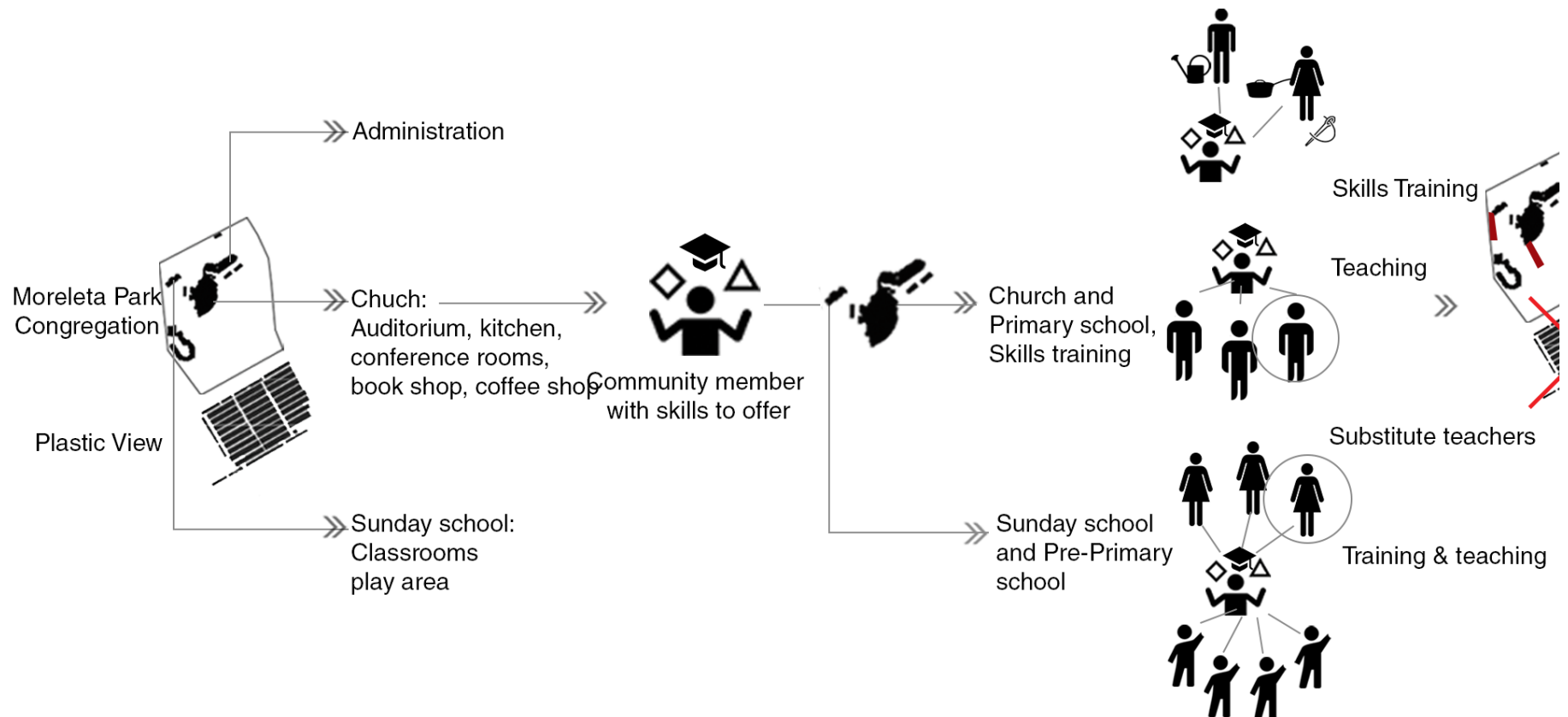
Fig 4.22 Urban density, Mclagan (2016)



Fig 4.23 Site locations, Mclagan (2016)

4.5 Site choice substantiated

The South African government recognizes the potential education has in transforming society as it can be used to minimize the gap in inequality by enabling citizens with tools to enter the working world thus in turn creating socially and physically equal societies. However South Africa has failed to use educational facilities to contribute to a common and equal society, indicating a short-sighted and underdeveloped approach to education in South Africa (SA DOE 2001:3).



Site of Conciliation

The Pure Hope Foundation provides access to education and skills development for those less privileged as the Foundation indentified that:

- Education and skills development are among the most effective actions in breaking the cycle of inequality.
- Education can be used in an attempt to help improve the evident gap in education networks in the Moreleta Park area, this will help break the cycle in which poor experience lower, late and uncertain returns in educational achievement (Netshitenzhe 2013:11).

The Pure Hope education and training programme is made up of volunteers from the surrounding community who are qualified in a specific field or have a skill that they can offer and teach to the community of Plastic View. This a citizenship approach to education and training that results in:

- Educational networks of Moreleta Park are strengthened as the programme supports the integration of the community of Plastic View into mainstream society.
- Supports the notion of citizenship education as the programme encourages social cohesion among people by encouraging interaction between people of different race, cultures and classes, promoting equality in society.

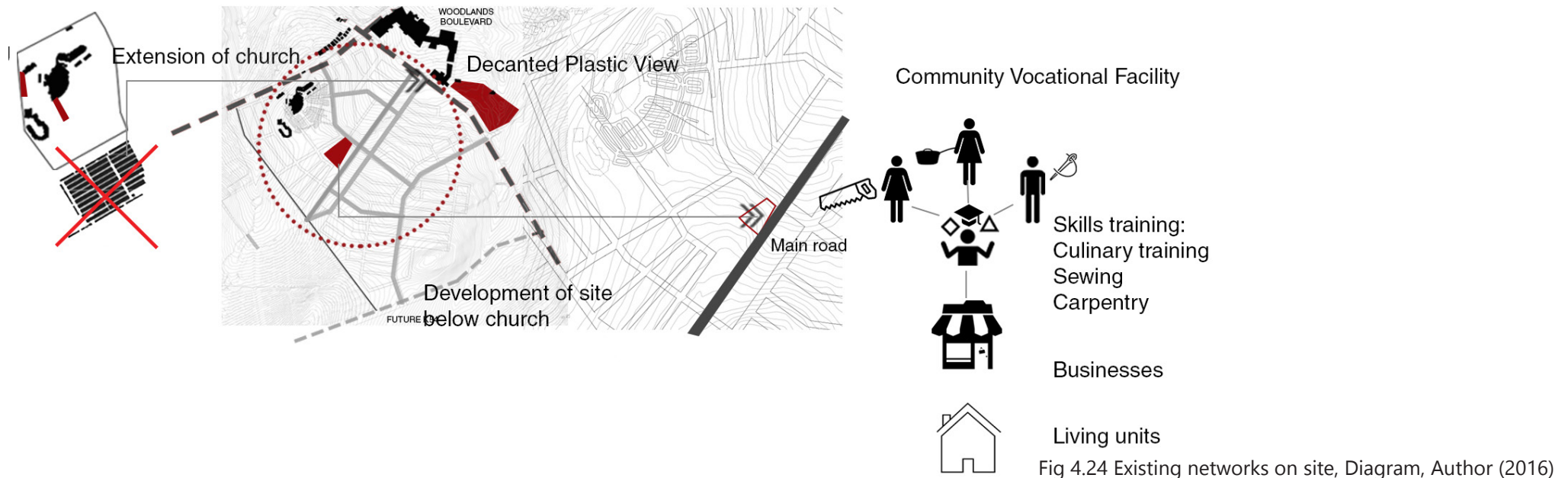


Fig 4.24 Existing networks on site, Diagram, Author (2016)



The interactions among neighbours, friends and members of groups and associations generate social capital and the ability to work together for a common good. This is especially important for the poor. Social capital can be used by the poor as a substitute for human and physical capital (Claridge 2013).

The interaction between people, specifically of different race, culture and classes is vital to achieve social cohesion. Frequent interaction between people creates a norm of exchange through which people become more willing to assist one another. This improves the way information is shared increasing mutual trust and respect for one another and encourages future collaborative efforts (Claridge 2013). The programmes encourage a co-operative process in which people work together to achieve a common goal essentially highlighting the commonality and understanding between one another.

The urban vision and framework of this dissertation supports a paradigm shift in terms of planning procedures in the South African context, supporting that the site is one of conciliation within a contested environment. Site proposals need to challenge existing typologies in order to encourage proposals that support socially cohesive conditions and spatially integrated environments.

Citizenship education, specifically a Community Vocational Facility (CVF), supports this paradigm shift as it suggests that education and educational facilities could encourage and represent what an equal society consists of. The CVF proposes the integration between an educational facility and the community in order to become the key factor in overcoming inequality in society.

If we want to create public value in society, it is schools that need this kind of thinking. Schools should be the measure of a society's belief in human qualities (Jacobs 2016: 46).



Fig 4.25 Cooking classes at the Moreleta Park Church, Photographs, Erasmus (2016)

4.6 Project intention

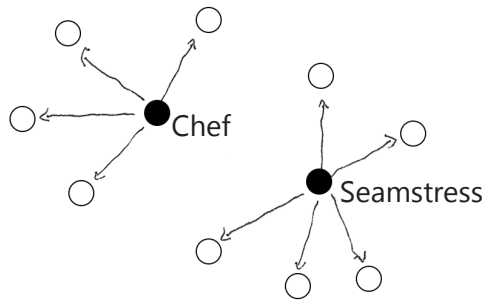


Fig 4.26 Current skills networks, Diagram, Author (2016)

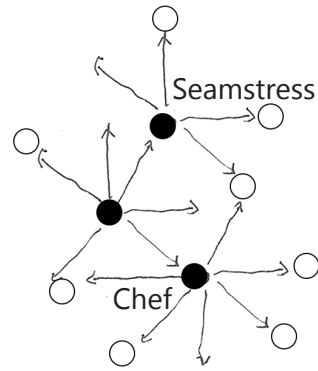


Fig 4.27 Strengthening skills networks, Diagram, Author (2016)

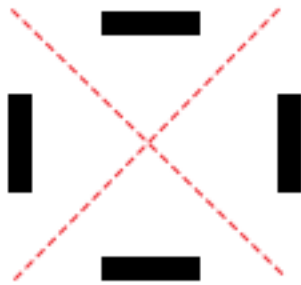


Fig 4.28 Extroverted approach to education, Diagram, Author (2016)



Fig 4.29 Integrated within its environment, Diagram, Author (2016)

Common ground- finding commonality in a place of learning

The dissertation seeks points where commonality between people of different race, culture and class is highlighted in Moreleta Park in order to encourage equality and social cohesion among citizens . This is done by:

- Focusing on strengthening and supporting the currently active learning networks at play, specifically the education and skills training programmes that are run at the Moreleta Park Church. The programmes identify that learning can be used as a means to realize commonality between one another.
- Integrating the learning environment into the community's everyday spaces by promoting permeability between learner, educational facility and the community.
- Introducing an extroverted spatial approach to education that establishes a sustainable interactive platform for interaction between the community of Moreleta Park.
- Encouraging the students and community as a whole to learn how to be active citizens in their environment as citizenship education encourages learning through different media and informants, social interaction being one of them.