



FORGOTTEN SPACE

*Constructing a relationship between the confluence
of Architectural and Infrastructural space*

By

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PROJECT SUMMARY

Programme /

Neighbourhood Library, service centre, public markets

Site Description /

Northern boundary of railway line, west of Doornfontein station,
Located South of IH Harris primary school.

Site Location

Doornfontein Station, Johannesburg

GPS Coordinators

25 °11'49" S; 28 °03'10"

Research Field

Environmental Potential/Human Settlements and Urban Environments

Theoretical Premise

Regenerative and placemaking, focussing on non-place created by the
remnants of the railway infrastructure.

Architectural Approach

Finding a relationship between people, place and existing infrastructure

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DECLARATION

In accordance with Regulation 4(e) of the General Regulations (G.57) for dissertations and thesis, I declare that the thesis, which I hereby submit for the degree Master of Architecture [Professional] at the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other tertiary institution.

I further state that no part of my thesis has already, or is currently being submitted for any such degree, diploma or other qualification.

I further declare that the thesis is substantially my own works. Where reference is made to the work of other, the extent to which that work has been used is indicated and fully acknowledged in the text and list of references.

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Jean-David de Villiers

ABSTRACT

Our modern urban environments consists of a complex system of interrelated infrastructures that give structure and order to our daily lives. The implementation and organization of these multi-layered elements has the ability to influence the daily rituals of society in a positive or negative manner.

The industrial revolution marked the beginning of a new technological era at the start of the twentieth century that inspired great technological innovations across various disciplines within the built environment. The modern ideals that were developed during this era embraced technology as a means to solve the issues associated with the rapid growth within cities, especially to allow for the movement of people over vast territories as the city dispersed outwards. However good the implementation of these new infrastructural networks were to connect people, it often neglected the immediate spatial conditions of the urban environment as it cuts through the fabric of the city.

These spaces have become disconnected, uncertain empty voids that do not contribute to the formation of the city. Such is the case of Johannesburg, where the railway line has created a definitive scar in the landscape that resulted in a series of barriers and isolated spaces along its edges, disconnecting people and places.

The dissertation offers a contribution to the contemporary discourse of architecture which is greatly concerned with the existence of lost space within our urban environments. It grapples with the issues associated with non-place, the construction of place and the relationship between infrastructural space and architectural space.

The project investigates the various issues that gives expression to lost space and non-place. Theories regarding place and place making are investigated through the lens of regenerative design in order to understand place and formulate an approach to the project.

Other theories regarding place making, such as legibility – especially the idea of edges and paths are investigated to formulate an approach that can contribute towards the design of place. The program of a neighbourhood library is envisioned for the site to contribute to the idea of place making and is used as a pragmatic device to mediate between the conflicted programmes of the existing train station and school on site.

The architectural response aims to construct place in a non-place by creating a series of spatial condition to connect people, places and infrastructure with the intention to allow for a more integrated relationship between infrastructural space and architectural space within the context of Doornfontein, Johannesburg.

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