

FRAGMENTS FLOATING IN TREES
RECLAIMING THE URBAN SURFACE

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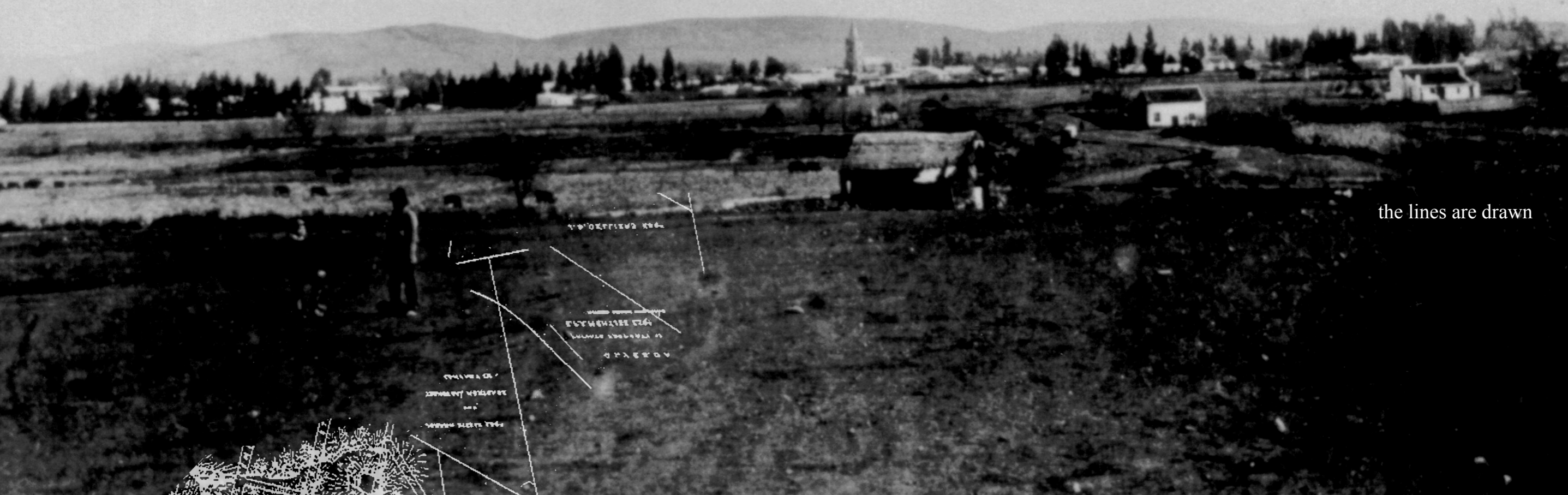
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Figure 1

Photograph of Sunnyside,
Pretoria c. late 19th century.

Architecture Department
Archive: University of
Pretoria, 2006



the lines are drawn

Figure 2.

Photograph of Sunnyside,
Pretoria c. 1938.

Architecture Department
Archive: University of
Pretoria, 2006



the chips are counted

Figure 3.

Photograph of Sunnyside,
Pretoria from roof of ABSA
Building.

Author, 2006



a city

Bold forms rise up from the ground, scorching the earth with their shadows. The ruptured earth grows darker by the day. Hellish creatures lurk in the silence, waiting. The forms have severed their ties with their maternal earth. They have become lost in the void: fragments floating in trees.

Figure 4.

Photograph of Maroela and Tambotie flat blocks of Spruitsig Park. Sunnyside, Pretoria.

Author, 2006



Abstract

This dissertation will investigate the functionalist influence on the development of Pretoria focusing specifically on the high-density residential area of Sunnyside. On an urban scale, it will examine how the combination of a topographically necessary east-west orientated road network, as well as a Functionalist building typology of north-facing flat blocks has resulted in north-south dead routes throughout the Sunnyside region.

While as a result of their orientation, these routes will always be doomed in the functional sense, they offer an opportunity to physically introduce an anti-functional theory in built form. This 'anti-functional', a theoretical reaction against modernist doctrine, will be implemented in these north-south routes, providing a synthesis of the existing functional and the imposed 'anti-functional' in Sunnyside's grid pattern.

This synthesis can be applied within a variety of scales, from that of the urban to that of the common pedestrian. In the same way that the unused north-south streets are utilized for the purpose of the 'anti-functional', the lost, unused spaces between the typologically north-facing flat blocks can be used. In so doing, the wastelands at the feet of these functional buildings can become spaces which reconnect them to their urban context and the people which inhabit it.

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