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4.1 (a)



4.2 (a)



4.1 (b)



4.2 (b)

Fig 4.1 (a) aerial of Strijdom Square and immediate context

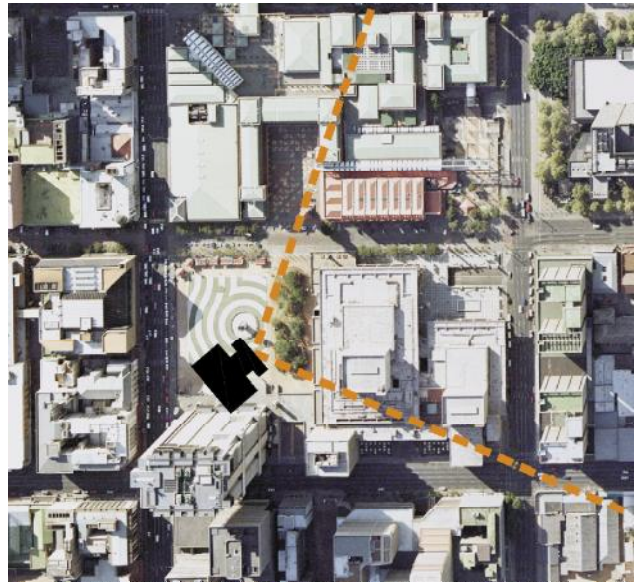
Fig 4.2 (a) aerial of Strijdom Square and immediate context

Fig 4.1 (b) panoramic looking north as per Fig 4.1 (a)

Fig 4.2 (b) looking north-east from glass elevator as per Fig 4.2 (a)



4.3 (a)



4.4 (a)

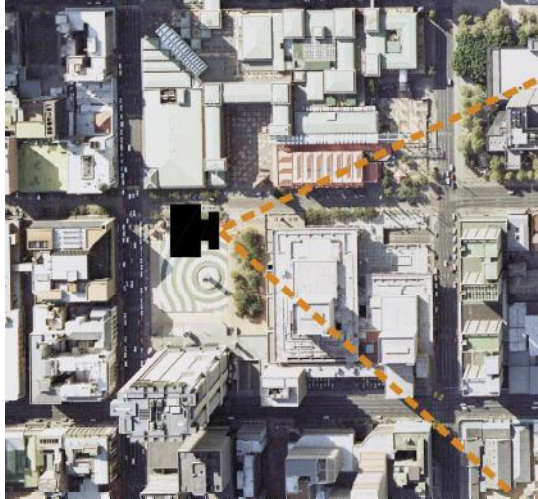


4.3 (b)



4.4 (b)

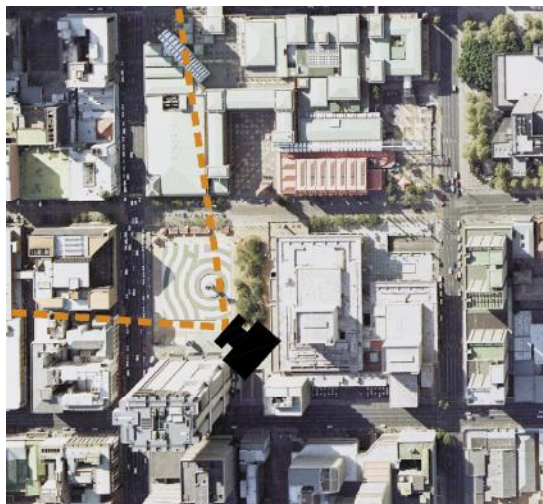
- Fig 4.3 (a) aerial of Strijdom Square and immediate context
 Fig 4.4 (a) aerial of Strijdom Square and immediate context
 Fig 4.3 (b) panoramic looking east as per Fig 4.3 (a)
 Fig 4.4 (b) green area on Strijdom Square as per Fig 4.4 (b)



4.5 (a)



4.5 (b)



4.6 (a)



4.6 (b)



4.7 (a)



4.7 (b)

Fig 4.5 (a) aerial of Strijdom Square and immediate context

Fig 4.5 (b) State Theatre's north-western corner as per Fig 4.4 (a)

Fig 4.6 (a) aerial of Strijdom Square and immediate context

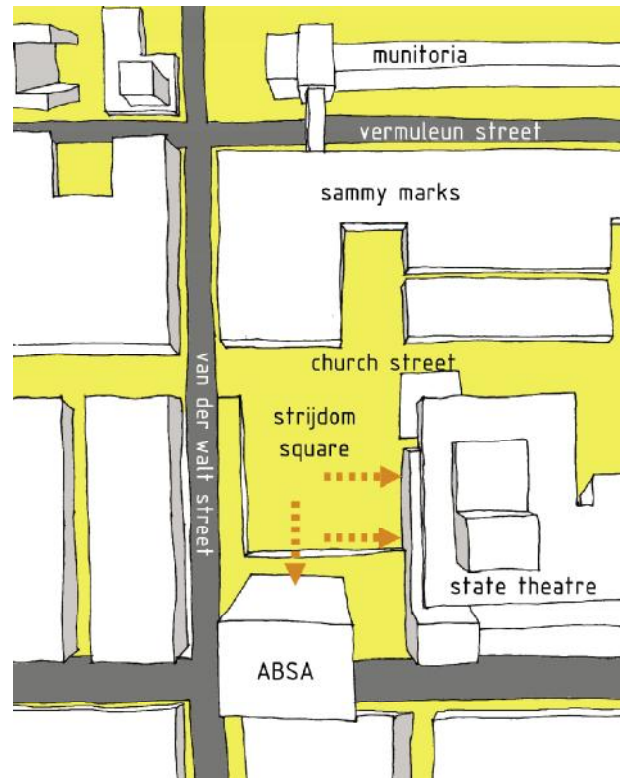
Fig 4.6 (b) looking north-west at the Standard Bank Centre as per Fig 4.6 (a)

Fig 4.7 (a) south-east corner of Premium Towers (old Volkas building before the ABSA building was built) as per Fig 4.7 (b)

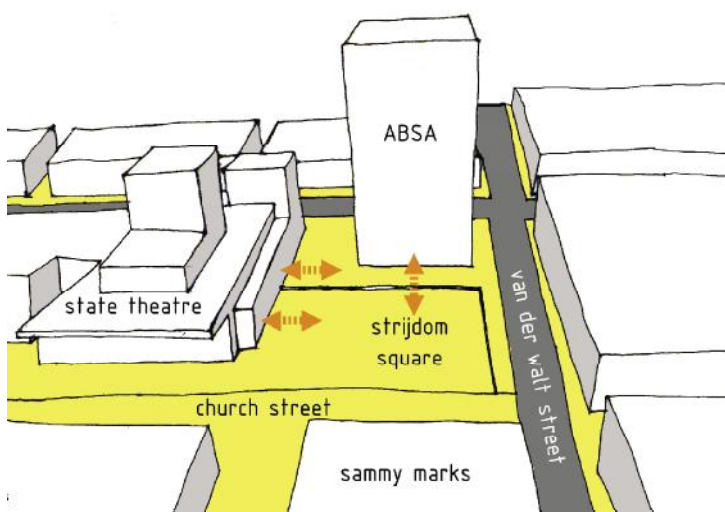
Fig 4.7 (b) aerial of Strijdom Square and immediate context

Constraints of the Site

Strijdom Square has various possibilities and constraints. In analyzing the site and the surrounding context, various physical constraints become apparent. The most obvious constraint of the site is the western façade of the State Theatre and the northern façade of the ABSA building. The western façade of the State Theatre and the northern façade of the ABSA building are the best example of the lack of interaction between the built fabric and the spaces between the buildings, occurring throughout Pretoria. The western façade of the State Theatre has been widely criticized as the reason for the death of Strijdom Square. The city council Architect during the 1970's said, "Pretoria is basically a garrison town and the laager mentality which produced the Voortrekker Monument is obvious in the blockhouse style of the opera house (State Theatre Pretoria). Not only did the State Theatre contribute to the death of Strijdom Square, but it was built with an overhang on the Church Street side of Strijdom Square, which aesthetically demands the demolition of the historic Sammy Marks building across the road." (MEYER 1979: 5).



4.8



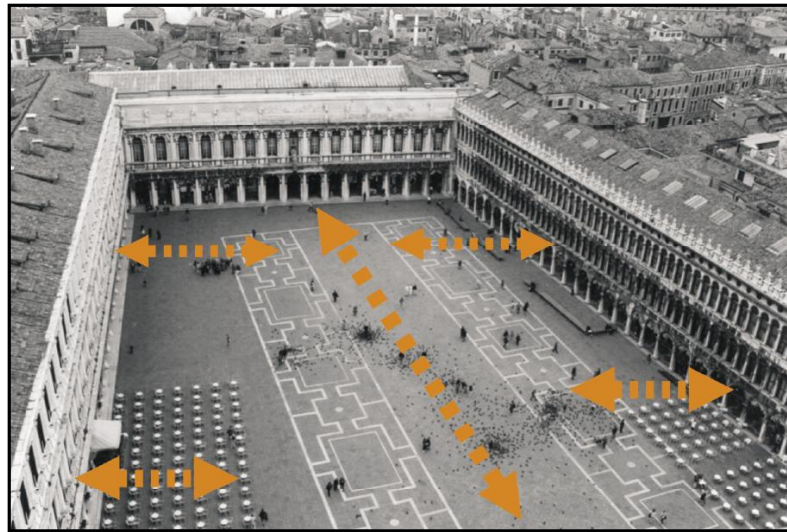
4.9



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4.12

- Fig 4.8 diagram indicating the un-responsive facades of State Theatre & ABSA building
 Fig 4.9 diagram indicating the un-responsive facades of State Theatre & ABSA building
 Fig 4.10 photo of western facade of State Theatre looking south
 Fig 4.11 San Marco Square in Venice is a good example of how the built environment interacts and participates with the public space
 Fig 4.12 San Marco Square in Venice is a good example of how the built environment interacts and participates with the public space

The way the building envelopes disregard their surroundings leads to harsh, unwelcoming and dead spaces in the city. In city streets and public spaces there tends to be a more superficial interaction between people, the majority being passive contacts, seeing and hearing a great number of unknown people. This form of socialization can be very appealing even in its limited superficial form (GEHL 1987: 15). If activity between buildings disappear the boundaries between isolation and contact of people become sharper (GEHL 1987: 19). The way the built fabric disregards its surroundings is one of the reasons why activity between buildings is disappearing. The space on the western façade of the State Theatre is a clear example of how a buildings disregard for its surrounding can create spaces that are barren. The building's envelope not only affects the space directly in front of it but the rest of the square has become barren as a result of the uncomfortable space. People are attracted to other people's activity. When there is activity occurring within a given context and space people will generally be attracted to the activity. And where there is already activity, new activities tend to begin in the vicinity of that activity as well (GEHL 1987: 25–27). What this means in the context of Strijdom Square is that the barren space will not attract any activity and hence one of the reasons why the Square is not functioning as an urban public square.

Fig 4.13 diagram indicating height ratios of existing buildings to the square

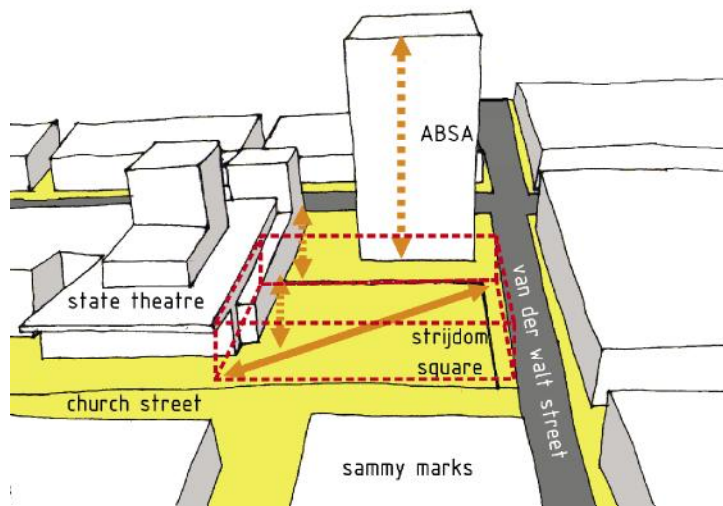
Fig 4.14 photo of the northern facade of the ABSA building from Sammy Marks Square

Fig 4.15 San Marco's Square indicating good height ratios of building to the square

Strijdom Square is surrounded by built fabric on all four sides. The ABSA Building on the southern end of the site is approximately 145 meters high. The State Theatre on the eastern side of Strijdom Square is approximately 30 meters high (45 meters high including the fly tower). The ratio between the height of the ABSA building and the area of the square is uncomfortable. The ABSA building is too high and a very dominating presence in the square. The sheer size and obtrusiveness of the ABSA building creates an overwhelming feeling of intimidation. The height of the State Theatre is suitable for the size of the square.



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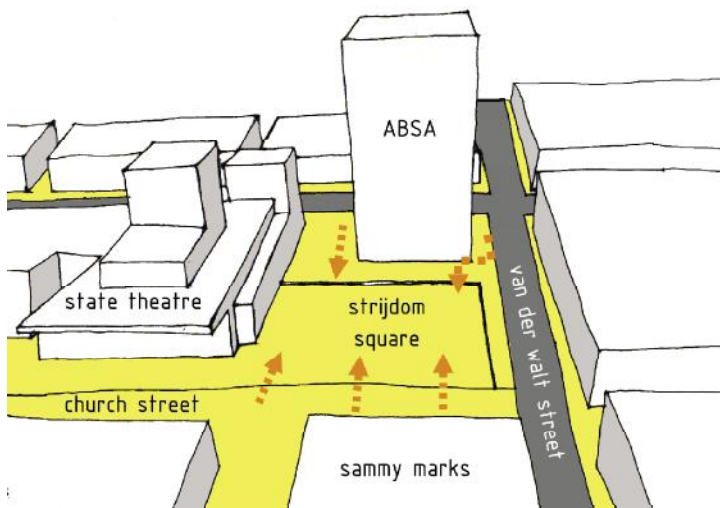


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Accessibility into Strijdom Square is a hindering factor to the use of the square. The most notable level difference is the height difference between van der Walt Street side-walk and the square itself (see fig. 4.23). Not only is there a level difference but there is also a balustrade along the length of the western side of the square on van der Walt Street. This has made the accessibility of the square limited to only staircases from the ABSA building side of the square and from Church Street the square is on the same height. There is a lot of pedestrian activity along van der Walt Street as well as informal trade but it is restricted to the side-walk and can not spill over onto the square.

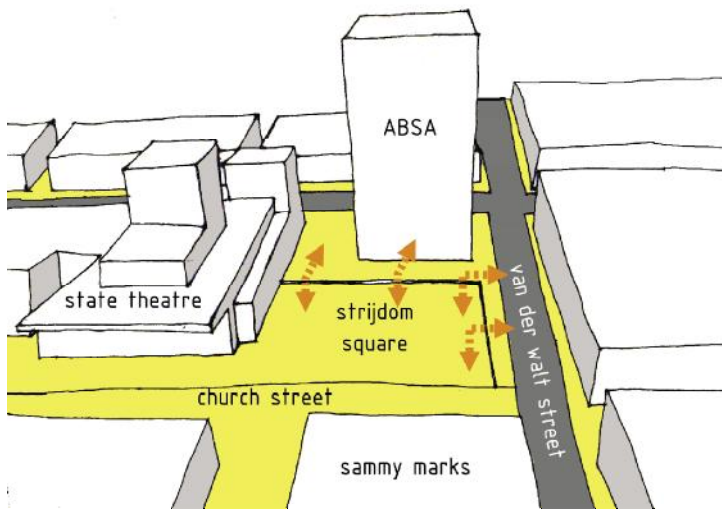


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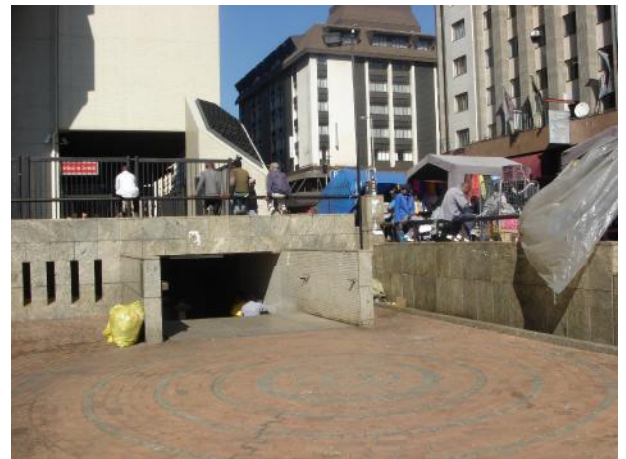


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The other restrictive level difference is the transition between the square and the ABSA building on the southern end of the site. Staircases have been provided allowing for people to be able to traverse the square from north to south; north to south-west and visa versa. This level difference is not as detrimental to the site as the level difference between the side-walk and the square on van der Walt Street but is slightly restrictive in terms of the visual barrier it creates between the square and the southern part of the immediate surroundings.



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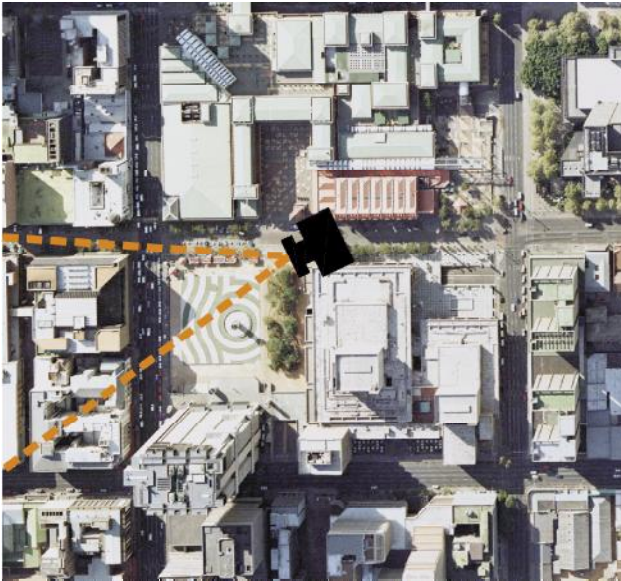
- Fig 4.16 diagram indicating current lack of accessibility onto site
- Fig 4.17 photo of level difference between van der Walt side-walk & the square
- Fig 4.18 diagram indicating the level differences between the square & its surroundings
- Fig 4.19 photo of the entrance to the underground toilets
- Fig 4.20 (a) aerial of Strijdom Square and immediate context
- Fig 4.20 (b) photo of staircase access on the south-western side of the square as per Fig 4.20 (a)



4.20 (a)



4.20 (b)



4.21 (a)



4.21 (b)



4.22 (a)

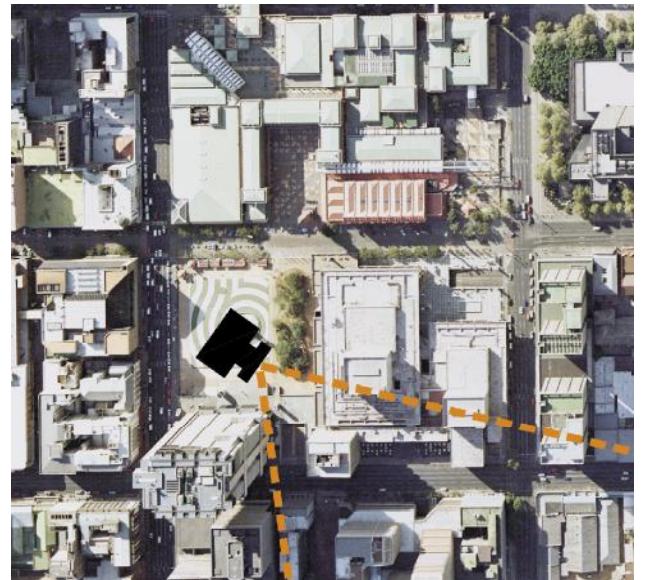
Fig 4.21(a) aerial of Strijdom Square and immediate context

Fig 4.21(b) photo of northern part of square looking west as per Fig 4.21 (a)

Fig 4.22(a) photo of staircase on the south-eastern side of the site as per Fig 4. (b)

Fig 4.22(b) aerial of Strijdom Square and immediate context

Fig 4.23 photo of how the surface of the square is hard & uncomfortable



4.22 (b)

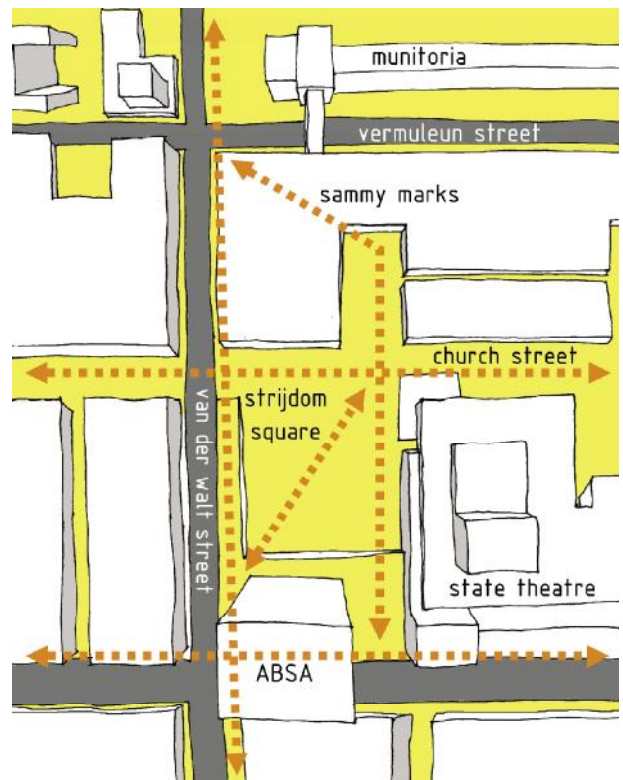
The square itself is restrictive in that the surface of the square is hard paving concrete. During the day, the hard surfaces absorb the sun's short-wave radiation and that heat is radiated back into the space. The square becomes hot and uncomfortable. The raised section of the surface is painted with light colours which reflect the sunlight creating a glare which is visually unpleasant. Basic needs are not met- there is no seating for people, no shading from the sun. The square is a barren surface and there is no possibility of involvement and interaction for the people who use it.



4.23

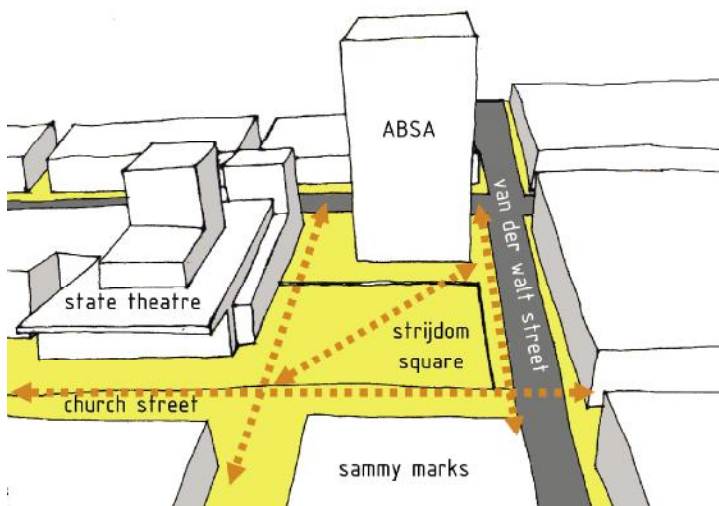
Opportunities of the Site

Strijdom Square, apart from its negative failings has positive attributes that have enormous opportunities. The most significant of these is the location of the square in the greater context of the inner city. Strijdom Square is fortunate in its location because of the significant pedestrian activity that flows through and around the site. The only problem is that none of the pedestrians that either move by or through the square have any intention of using the square as a public space, in other words to stop, sit or relax and take a break from the continual movement and repetitiveness of the surrounding city. The major pedestrian activity past the site is the east-west movement on the northern part of the square in Church Street. Church Street is pedestrianized from Church Square up until the Prinsloo Street on the eastern side of the State Theatre. The entire pedestrianized portion of Church Street generates massive pedestrian flow throughout the day. Because of this pedestrian exposure along Church Street, the retailers and informal traders are enjoying an increase in consumers, and thus exposure for trading. This activity continues past Strijdom Square



4.24

but does not move into the square. Secondary to this is the pedestrian movement diagonally across the square from the southern part of the inner city to Sammy Marks and visa versa. Again, people are not taking ownership of the square but are rather using it as a corridor to move through to get to an intended destination. The third major pedestrian activity is the north-south movement along van der Walt Street. This movement generates more pedestrians than the pedestrians moving across the square but it has less impact on the square currently. Due to this pedestrian activity, informal traders have set up stores and are trading on this side-walk. Lastly there is pedestrian movement along the western side of the State Theatre through the square moving towards Sammy Marks and vice versa.

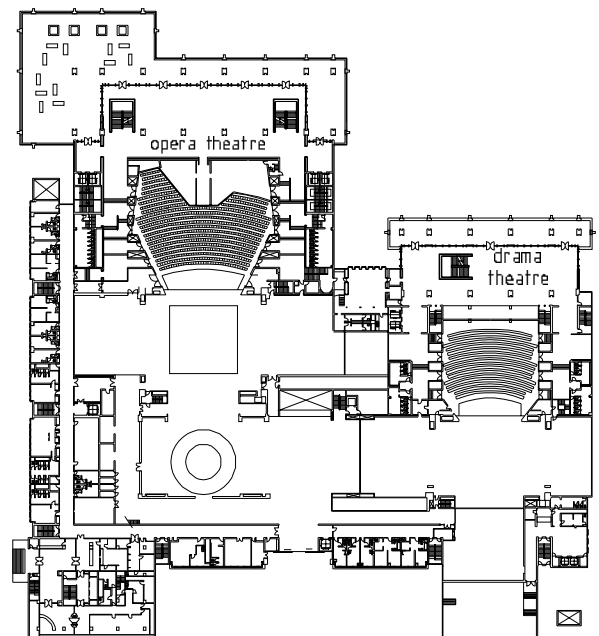


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The State Theatre, as well as contributing to one of the negative aspects of the site (the western façade) also provides opportunities. That opportunity being the influx of people who work, train, study and teach at the State Theatre. The State Theatre at any given time, has at least 1500 people inside the building, rehearsing, working, building props etc... (VILJOEN 2006). And then there are the people who come to the theatre to view productions. The influx of viewers is restricted to mostly night-time activity, but this can be an important attribute. Currently, the way the theatre works in terms of the patrons who use the theatre is as follows: Most people come to the theatre by private transport. They park their vehicles underground in the two-level basement parking. From their vehicles, people move to the nearest elevator. All elevators take people into the lobby of the respective theatres. The State Theatre is equipped with four theatres. From largest to smallest they are the: Opera Theatre (seats 1300 people), the Drama Theatre (seats 660 people), the Rendezvous Theatre (seats 260 people), and the Momentum Theatre (small scale for development theatre). Once people have arrived in the respective lobbies, they enjoy drinks and snacks at the bar, and are then ushered to their seats. Apart from the balconies provided on the northern part of the State Theatre for the opera and drama theatres, there is no connection (visually or physically) by the guests to the city environment. People do not venture into the State Theatre's surroundings. When they are finished in the theatre they simply move back to their vehicles and go home. Reasons for not using the surrounding spaces vary from safety issues especially that the people only come at night. People who come to the theatre generally are not from the city so are unfamiliar with the environment. The important attribute is the fact that the theatre is being used at night. This allows for a twenty-four use of the surrounding areas.



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4.27

- Fig 4.24 diagram indicating pedestrian movement in & around Strijdom Square
 Fig 4.25 diagram indicating pedestrian movement in & around Strijdom Square
 Fig 4.26 photo of one of the levels of the underground parking lot
 Fig 4.27 plan of the State Theatre showing the two biggest theatres



4.28

There are hidden opportunities within the square. One of the significant advantages that Strijdom Square has, is a two level underground parking lot. The underground parking is intended for the patrons of the State Theatre who come for the productions in the evenings. During the day the parking lot is occupied by vehicles of the people who work in the State Theatre and by the general public who are willing to pay a parking fee. The ABSA building also has underground parking facilities in the building for its employees, not accessible to the general public, and can be only accessed from the State Theatre's parking lot in the second basement level.

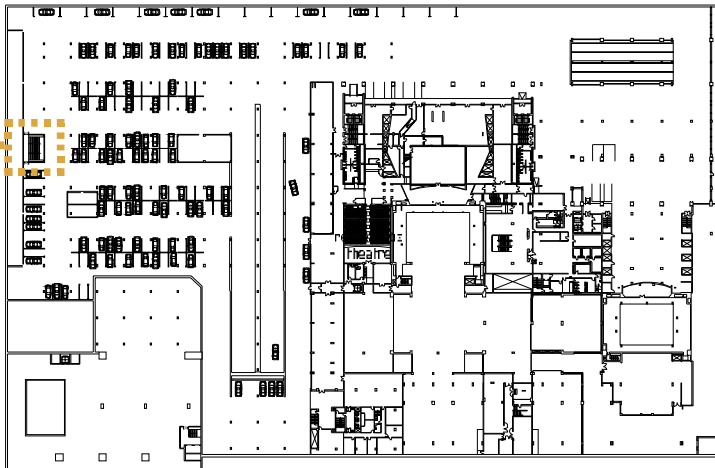


4.29



- Fig 4.28 entrance to the Rendezvous Theatre on the first level of the underground parking lot
- Fig 4.29 photo of the underground parking lot under Strijdom Square
- Fig 4.30 entrance to the staircase in the underground parking lot which moves down to the underground arcade that crosses van der Walt Street to the Standard Bank Centre
- Fig 4.31 plan of basement level 1 indicating the Rendezvous Theatre and highlighting the staircase to the underground arcade

4.30



4.31

To the western end of Strijdom Square there is a staircase which allows vertical access between the first and second levels of the underground parking. It does not, however, extend onto the square level. The opportunity of this staircase is that at its lowest level, the staircase leads you to an underground arcade which crosses west, under van der Walt Street, to the Standard Bank Centre. The underground arcade has small retail stores. When the arcade reaches the other side of van der Walt Street it opens up into an atrium banking hall of Standard Bank, which is on a basement level. Above the atrium there are many retail stores that are on ground floor level. On higher floors are offices mainly used by Standard Bank. The centre generates significant activity. People who use the centre who cannot find parking on the streets tend to park in the underground parking of the State Theatre. People on foot who also use the centre do not have the easy access to Strijdom Square as they have to cross the busy van der Walt Street in order to get there.



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Fig 4.32 staircase to the underground arcade

Fig 4.33 underground arcade passing under van der Walt Street

Fig 4.34 Standard Bank on the basement level of the Standard Bank Centre

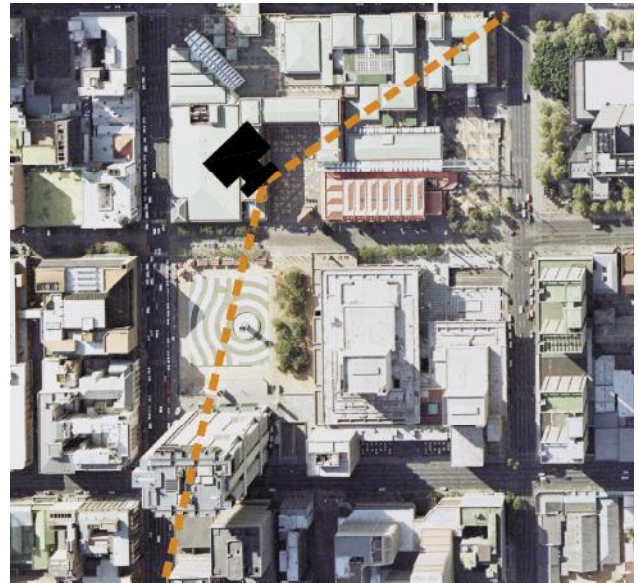
Fig 4.35 view of the upper floors from the basement level of the Standard Centre

Fig 4.36(a) aerial of Strijdom Square and its immediate context

Fig 4.36(b) panoramic of Sammy Marks Square as per Fig 4.36 (a)

Opportunities of Sammy Marks

Sammy Marks is currently a busy retail center, generating a lot of activity, though not used to its full potential either. An intervention on Strijdom Square will enhance the activity that Sammy Marks currently enjoys but more importantly, the two will be able to work in tandem and benefit from each other's activity. Together with the Standard Bank center the three spaces will provide a broad spectrum of activities and enhance the immediate surroundings.



4.36 (a)



4.36 (b)