INTRODUCTION

The aim of this dissertation is to explore the history and diversity that contribute to place value and memory. The area I have chosen is rich in history. This history needs to be conserved and adapted sensitively, so as to fulfil the needs of a 21st century city, and fit into a contemporary urban fabric. What are the key elements to successful adaptive re-use of historical buildings and areas? What factors should be considered when working in a historical environment? How does one overlay different programs, for people from different backgrounds in a successful vibrant crucible?

The city of Johannesburg is an African city - a city of contradictions and juxtapositions. There are seemingly incompatible elements which give the city its unique character and authenticity; these are the elements which should be preserved in future developments and for future generations. A successful development in urban Johannesburg should combine different ideas, functions and contexts, without losing the authentic spirit of place; and address current realities, without erasing those of the past.

The challenge of this dissertation is to create a place of inclusion in the city - an unobtrusive yet memorable building. The program explores a residential and commercial building, which will enhance the urban environment and fit into its historical precinct, contributing to the sensitive regeneration of the surrounding area. The aim is to reinstate the scale and character of the historical street fabric, asserting rather than undermining the integrity of the existing heritage buildings.
URBAN REGENERATION

INTRODUCTION

The inner city of Johannesburg - an area which in the recent past was inhabited only by those with no other choice of location - is in the process of rapid regeneration, as young upwardly mobile, educated, urbanites are re-claiming the city - it is important to provide a place in the city for this group of people. This will contribute to revitalising the inner city and will increase the municipal tax base - affording local government better means to provide for the less affluent city dweller who depends on the public domain for their existence.
Decentralisation

By the late 1970’s the Johannesburg CBD began to decline with new development favouring suburban commercial and shopping centres (for example Rosebank, Cresta, Sandton, Randburg, etc) which developed as a result of the process of decentralization. White flight to the suburbs left many buildings in the city centre deserted. When the group areas act was officially repealed in 1986, areas which represented good value for money (like the CBD) were an obvious choice for people previously confined to the townships, who wanted to move closer to the city and their places of employment. The group areas act had resulted in an inequitable distribution of land. Conveniently situated land became unduly expensive and freedom of choice was greatly impeded. (de Vos 1986: 4)

The initial reaction to the changing face of the CBD was negative. More affluent people perceived the area as becoming more dangerous and feared the city centre would soon be overrun by the poor and homeless and begin to degrade. The remaining affluent businesses (With the exception of the financial institutions and AngloGold) began moving to the suburbs. Customers stopped coming to the boutique shops and restaurants and one by one they closed down.
Pre 1970s
Radial transport routes merged on the city centre. The Johannesburg CBD functioned as the financial and commercial centre of the greater metropolitan area.

1970s – 1990s
PRECONDITIONS:
• Car centred freeway system established.
• Establishment of Sandton in 1969.

PRIMARY EFFECTS:
This period saw the development of suburban shopping centres, office parks and an exodus of people from the CBD

1990s – 2000s
SECONDARY IMPACT:
• Crime and grime
• Unregulated mini-bus taxis and street trading
• Lack of public amenities
• High vacancy rates and slum lording
• Rapid capital flight

Graeme Reid 2005

University of Pretoria etd – McKechnie, B K (2005)