

URBAN  
REGENERATION



1930s Postcard Of JHB



Main St Looking North



The Rissik St Post Office



The CBD From Berea



Corner House Interior



Constitution Hill Detail



Corner House Detail



Deco Detail, Rissik St





## 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.



The CBD From Berea

1.11



The East CBD Skyline

1.12



Art In The City

1.13



Mural On Rissik St

1.14

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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.





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**PROBLEM STATEMENT**

The economist Mancur Olson noted that *the decline of nations and regions is the result of an organizational and cultural hardening of the arteries, which he called 'Institutional Sclerosis'. Places that grow up and prosper in one era, Olson argued, find it difficult and often impossible to adapt to new organizational and cultural patterns. Consequently, innovation and growth shift to new places.* (Olson 1982: 36)

This observation easily describes the plight of the Johannesburg CBD at the time when the apartheid era began to unravel.

**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.

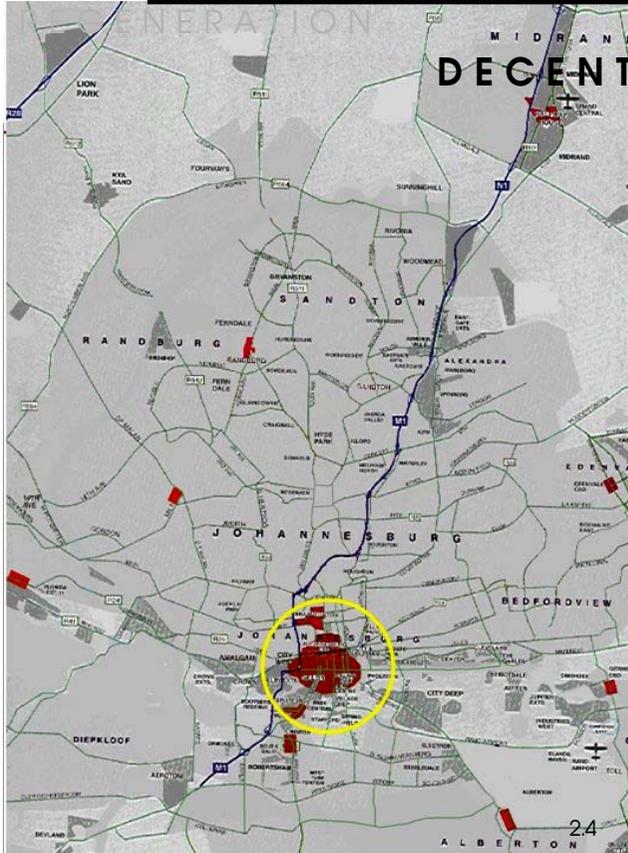


Works from South African Artist William Kentridge's Series 'Johannesburg Second Best City In The World, After Paris, 2004', exhibited at the Johannesburg Gallery - July 2005.





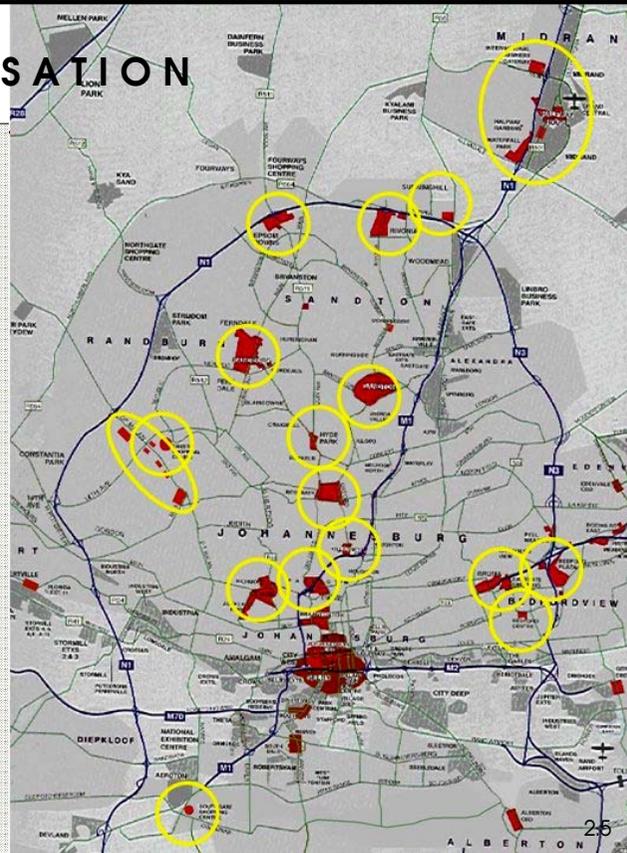
URBAN



**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.

Graeme Reid 2005

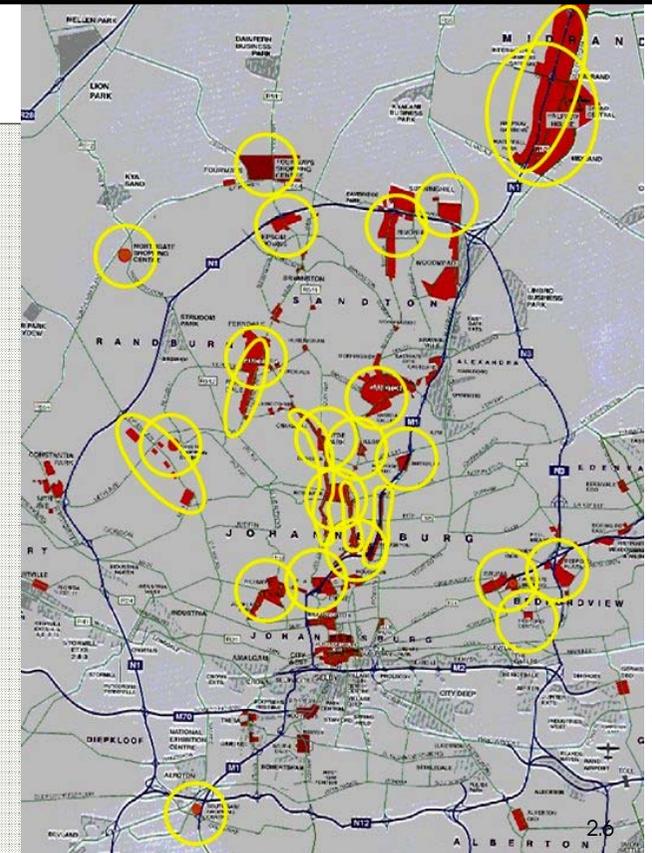
DECENTRALISATION



- 1970s – 1990s**  
**PRECONDITIONS:**
- Car centered 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

Graeme Reid 2005



- 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