



URBAN
CONSERVATION

CONTEXT STUDY

Opportunities in the CBD

Now in 2005, Nineteen years after the removal of the group areas act the tide finally seems to have turned. Today the unique cosmopolitan vibe of the CBD is viewed as a major draw card, rather than a hindrance for future development.

The inner city has been identified as an area in need of Government support, to counter decentralisation trends which have emptied the city of its commerce, industry, and revenue, over the past 30 years.

Since around 2003 enormous re-investment has occurred in the Johannesburg CBD. This has been boosted by South Africa's winning bid for the soccer world cup in 2010, and by various re-investment initiatives driven by the Johannesburg Development Agency (JDA) and Blue IQ. The JDA'S vision is to develop Johannesburg into a world class African city by 2030. Various incentives have been provided, which make development in the inner city very attractive. One of the most notable Incentives being the Urban Development Zone (UDZ) which makes all new building and improvement to existing building stock in the CBD tax deductible to private and business investors.

According to Graeme Reid, chief executive officer of the JDA, building vacancies in the inner city are now the lowest in the whole of the Johannesburg region. Land values are beginning to pick up and executives working at the financial institutions (According to Clive Chipkin, *author of Johannesburg Style*, the banks were the only commercial businesses to remain in the CBD during its decline) and other institutions which have moved back to the CBD are again looking for residential properties close to their place of work. Up until very recently most of the residential stock in the CBD was concentrated around Bree and Jeppe Streets and had become severely degraded. Most units in this area range in price between R50 000 and R90 000.



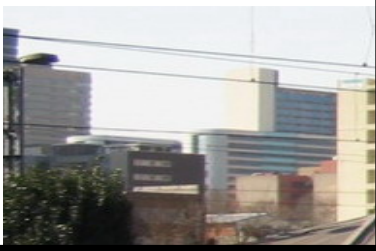
Carlton Centre City View



Matibele Tower and Hillbrow



The Rail Approach to JHB



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While it is important to build on the capital web of the city to sustain growth and realise opportunities for its large spectrum of inhabitants, it is also necessary to provide building stock for the full spectrum of urban society - from social housing to housing for the affluent. There is currently a demand for a mixed-use upper income residential component in the financial district of the city, close to the executive hub.

According to Katy Essa of the Urban Ocean development group (in a personal interview, April 2005), most upper income property clientele are young single professionals in the 25 – 40 age group. Most have other properties out of town and are looking for a compact luxurious pad in the city close to their places of work. Urban Ocean’s development at the historic Corner House in Commissioner Street is a good example of this type of development, with a 24 hour concierge, doorman, personal shoppers and a gymnasium.



Corner House

3.4



3.5



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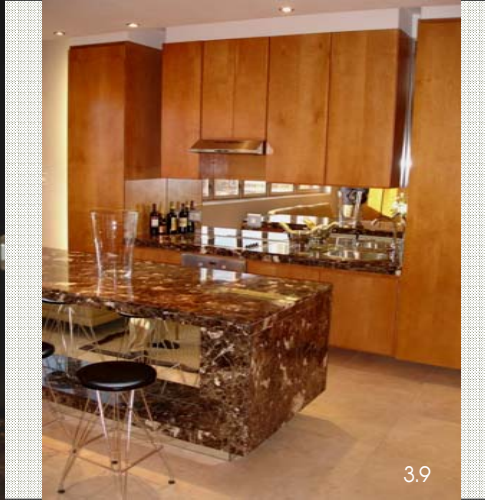


3.7



Corner House Interior Views

3.8



3.9



3.10



3.11



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It is important to create a residential component in the financial district of the city - mixed use development contributes to a more sustainable city, injecting life into a region that would otherwise die after working hours. Mixed use encourages a more sustainable, exciting, varied and secure environment.

In the Johannesburg CBD, the first areas to re generate have been on the South Western side of the city, from Newtown to the financial district, and the new government precinct .(Kopananong Precinct)

Although to a great extent the city (or at least the western part) has re-generated from a financial and commercial perspective. It still does not offer a relaxation, lifestyle, and interaction place for the new upper income urbanites. Most entertainment, interaction and social opportunities are still located in the northern suburbs.



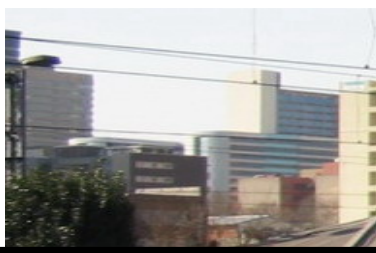
3.12



The Corner House Doorman

3.13

Pictures. this page and opposite; Urban Ocean's benchmark apartment development is located in the Corner House on Rissik Street, in the heart of the inner city financial district .This historic building, designed by Leck and Emley in 1902 housed the corporate empire of mining magnate Barney Barnato, *with billions of pounds worth of pure gold bars stored in its considerable number of bank-like vaults.*The building is steeped in tradition, exemplary of heritage and saturated with echoes of old worldly grandeur. (www.cornerhouselofts.com) . The refurbishment is by Stefan Antoni Associates.



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A place in the City

Historically, Johannesburg offered places of residence and entertainment for the affluent. The first generation of colonists in Johannesburg established the Rand Club - *South Africa's mining magnates and millionaires have been meeting in the imposing Rand Club in downtown Johannesburg for more than a century. The neo-Baroque building is filled with paintings of such celebrated past members as British colonizer Cecil Rhodes and the ubiquitous portrait of Queen Elizabeth II. Built on the wealth of the largest goldfield in the world and the sweat of black labour.* (Time Europe Online www.time.com)

The Rand Club (in the heart of the city), frequented by old money bankers, investors and mining magnets, still embodies the elitist elegance of old Johannesburg. Alternatively there are the street vendors and generic chain restaurants, which serve the less affluent city residents. In her book, *One City Colliding Worlds* (2004, 58) Lindsay Bremner describes a visit to downtown Johannesburg:- *I came across one rowdy Brazilian Coffee Shop, one Internet Café and a single branch of the CNA, but for the rest, what remains is a succession of loan sharks, wholesale hawker outlets, public phone shops and fast food stores, announced by clumsy drawings of steaming chickens. They serve the cities poor.*

There is a need for a pioneering project to create a space representative of the new multi-dimensional Johannesburg. This need is further highlighted by the question asked by the Financial Mail (July 22, 2005) *Will there be enough coffee shops, restaurants, cinemas, supermarkets and leisure facilities in the CBD to satisfy the new residents, who could be paying R10 000/ month (and upwards) in rent? If not, investors (in high income residential developments) may have to align their rentals more closely to current inner city levels of R3 000 –R5 000/ month, which will greatly impede new investment in the city and almost certainly minimize chances of creating Johannesburg 2030, A World Class African City.*



3.14

The Rand Club



3.15



View Of The Rand Club From Main St

3.16



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Urban Development Framework (greater CBD region)

The Johannesburg inner city has been identified as the regional employment and shopping node for Gauteng, South Africa and the countries of the Southern African subcontinent. The area is characterised by dense residential development, and medium to high rise buildings. *Public space, historically something to avoid in Johannesburg - synonymous with loitering or insurrection, was frequently declared undesirable in the apartheid days, and erased.* (Bremner, 2004. 20) This has resulted in a perceptible lack of parks and open public space - unfortunate in view of the high density residential nature of the area.



3.20

Rissik St Spine from the JHB Municipality

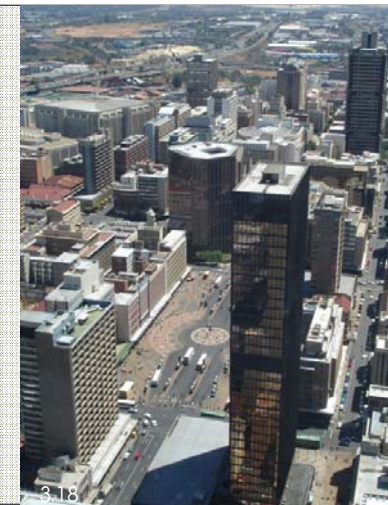
Demographics

The population fluctuates at around 220 thousand, but the exact amount is unknown. In many areas there has been a gradual shift, as higher income residents' move out of the traditional residential areas which are shifting to a lower income residential population, creating a need for new upper income residential building stock in other areas of the city.



3.17

View Of Hillbrow From The Carlton



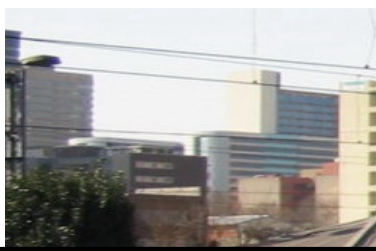
3.18

Ghandi Square From The Carlton



3.19

Government Precinct From The Carlton



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Housing

There is a diverse mix of housing in the CBD, from severely degraded areas, to more desirable areas. Some buildings are totally neglected and are being squatted in. these buildings are the focus of the JDA's *better buildings program*, for the upliftment of the inner city.

The Ansteys Building in Jeppe Street (formerly the Ansteys department store), is one of the better examples of the existing housing stock in Johannesburg, Ansteys was probably the most exclusive inner-city residential address in the 1930's and 1940's and home to prominent Mkhonto Wesiswe activist and playwright, Cecil Williams. Designed in 1935 by Emley and Williamson, Ansteys was undisputedly one of the tallest buildings in Johannesburg until the Skyscraper boom of the 1970s. The building is massed in a very elegant art deco inspired ziggurat form. The horizontal ribbon windows are typical of the modern movement. Buildings like the Barbican (on the site developed in this dissertation) desperately tried to mimic American skyscrapers. At 20 stories Ansteys had brought the true skyscraper to Johannesburg. While Ansteys is still in relatively good condition, Jeppe Street in general has become a lower income residential area. As urban regeneration spreads east across the city, landmark buildings like Ansteys are likely to reclaim their position as prime property.

3.21



Ansteys Spire Detail

3.22



The Ansteys Building, Corner
Jeppe St And Joubert St



3.23



3.24

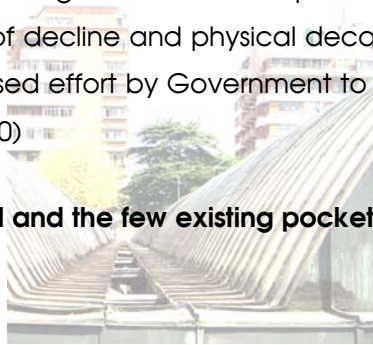


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General trends in the area

Deterioration and decline in central Johannesburg seems to be stabilising as the inner city's new function in the greater metropolitan areas is becoming clear. Renewed private and public sector funding has resulted in drastically reduced crime levels, and a stabilisation of decline and physical decay. Slum lording and illegal squatting is also being addressed by the city. There has been an increased effort by Government to improve the social and recreational facilities of the region. (Johannesburg SDF 2004:50)

Vacant land is very limited and the few existing pockets are strategic in developing a focused approach to regeneration.



Implications

A stabilised CBD will increase employment opportunities and stimulate the local economy. (Johannesburg Spatial Development Framework, 2004.70) Increasing the capacity of the residential component of the city is important, giving people a place to live in close proximity to their work and contributing to a sustainable, vibrant 24hour city. The residential market is expanding rapidly in the lower and higher income segments. Growth in the lower income segment is a reflection of overcrowding in the existing residential areas. Higher income growth is focused around developments in the more up-market Financial and Newtown districts, North West of the City.



Examples Of Existing Middle To Lower Income Residential Stock In The City

Astor Mansions Apartment

Lower Income Residential

3.30

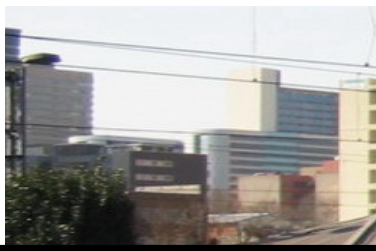
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3.25

3.26



URBAN REGENERATION

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Vision 2030

The current vision for **Johannesburg is to** develop the city to **become a world class African city** with service and delivery efficiency meeting world class best practice **by 2030**. The city's economy will, it is hoped, operate on a global scale. Strong economic growth should result from the city's policies which encourage competitive economic practices- driving up the cities tax revenues, private sector profit and individual disposable income. This will stimulate an increase in the standard of living and quality of life of the city's inhabitants, which should increase in a sustainable manner.

(Johannesburg Spatial Development Framework, 2004. 58)

3.31



SA Eagle Square, Main St

3.32



Main Street

3.33



The Oppenheimer Fountain

3.34



The Magistrates Court

West 40 St , New York, A World Class City



3.35

Chaos On 5th Ave, New York



3.36

The Empire State Building, New York



3.37



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A new spatial and economic framework for the Johannesburg inner city was approved by the Mayoral committee in 1999, with the primary goal of promoting investment and ongoing maintenance in the region. (Johannesburg Spatial Development Framework, 2004. 60)

The main aims of the framework include:-

Reducing crime and grime

Marketing districts by their specific characteristics

Managing informal trade

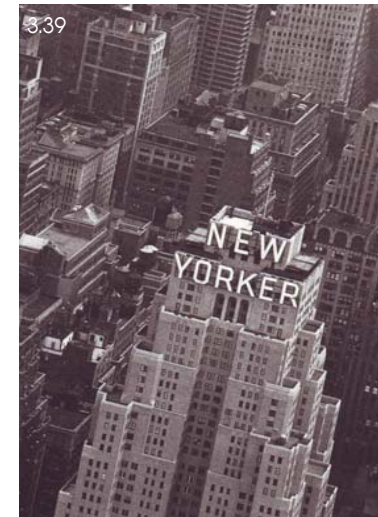
Creating and maintaining open space

Promoting strategic linkages between the different regions by encouraging mixed use.

Further it is hoped that the new SDF will attract financial investment, by providing incentives for investment and reducing the perception of the city as an area of crime and grime through enforcing council by laws. (Johannesburg Spatial Development Framework 2004. 60)



The Empire State Building, 1929, New York



The Art Deco Ziggurat New Yorker Building



Johannesburg 2030, World Glass Afical



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Site Choice

Rather than a building which is simply historical but which no longer relates to present society - like a museum piece - this dissertation investigates a context where the past and present exist simultaneously; - a living contradiction - rather than a place where time stands still. However, the historical context has to be preserved or the sense of memory is erased and thus the opportunity for juxtaposition of past and present is destroyed.

The area I have chosen as my site is in region 8, in the centre of the Johannesburg CBD. The site is opposite the Gauteng Provincial Legislature (City Hall) and diagonally opposite is the Old Rissik Street Post Office, which is currently used as a film set for *Hardcopy* a weekly television programme. The J.D.A has identified the Post Office Building as a prime redevelopment project and is currently in negotiations with private investors regarding its future. (The building is protected in terms of the SAHRA, act 29 of 1999) The site is overlapped by the new Government or Legislative Precinct, the Financial Retail Districts of the city. The site is bounded by Pritchard Street to the North, President Street to the South, Loveday Street to the West and Rissik Street to the East.



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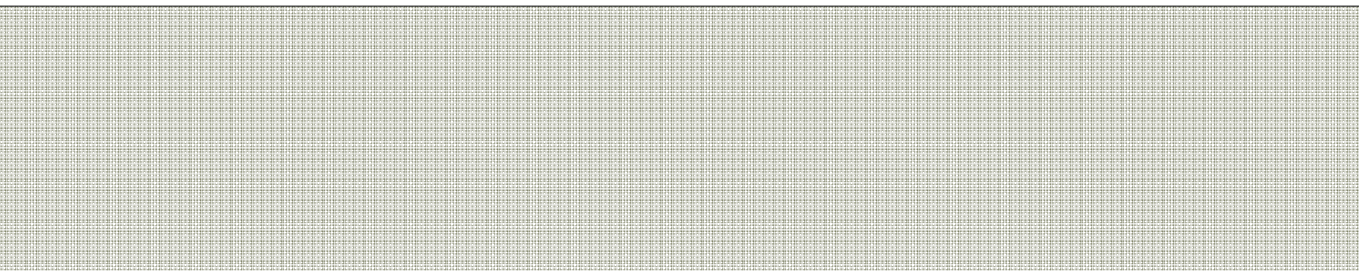
The site currently a void in the centre of Johannesburg - is situated within a historical precinct, but its historical integrity has been diminished through mass demolition of the historical buildings on the site for parking space in the 1990s. The site has been separated from the city by a green iron fence. The Barbican Building, the only building left standing on the whole block, looks impossibly tall, and is completely disconnected from its urban context. Its street level porticoes have been demolished, and its ground floors have been bricked up. It stands in isolation, void of any surrounding historical urban context and scale, and almost impossible to understand as a document of its time.

The site is ideal for development. There is existing infrastructure and it is one of very few undeveloped areas within the Johannesburg CBD – identified in the Johannesburg SDF as areas of strategic importance in developing a focused approach to regeneration in the area. The site also falls within the area earmarked as the legislative and government precinct, but is not on government owned land, making it an ideal position for an upmarket flagship development. A private sector project on such a strategic site, literally at the heart of Johannesburg should serve to strengthen investor confidence in the CBD, and act as a primer for further investment in the region. The up-scale nature of the site - being at the junction of the legislative and financial districts of the city - makes it a prime location for a luxury development which should add to the up -market nature envisaged in the Johannesburg Spatial Development Framework, for the area - heightening the sense of place and history and re-asserting the CBD as the heart of the region.



The Barbican - Separated From The City By A Green Iron Fence

3.46



View North East of Site

3.44

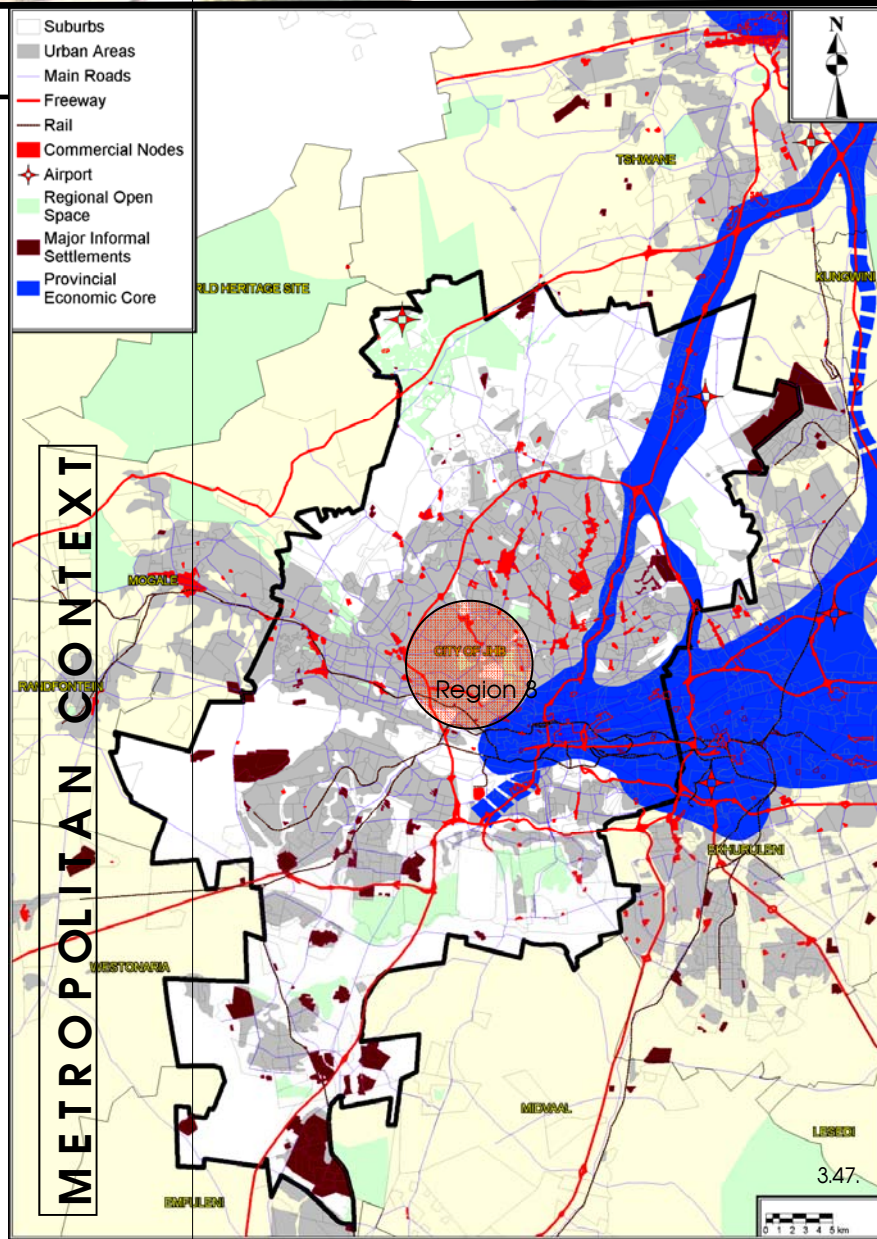


Rissik St Post Office

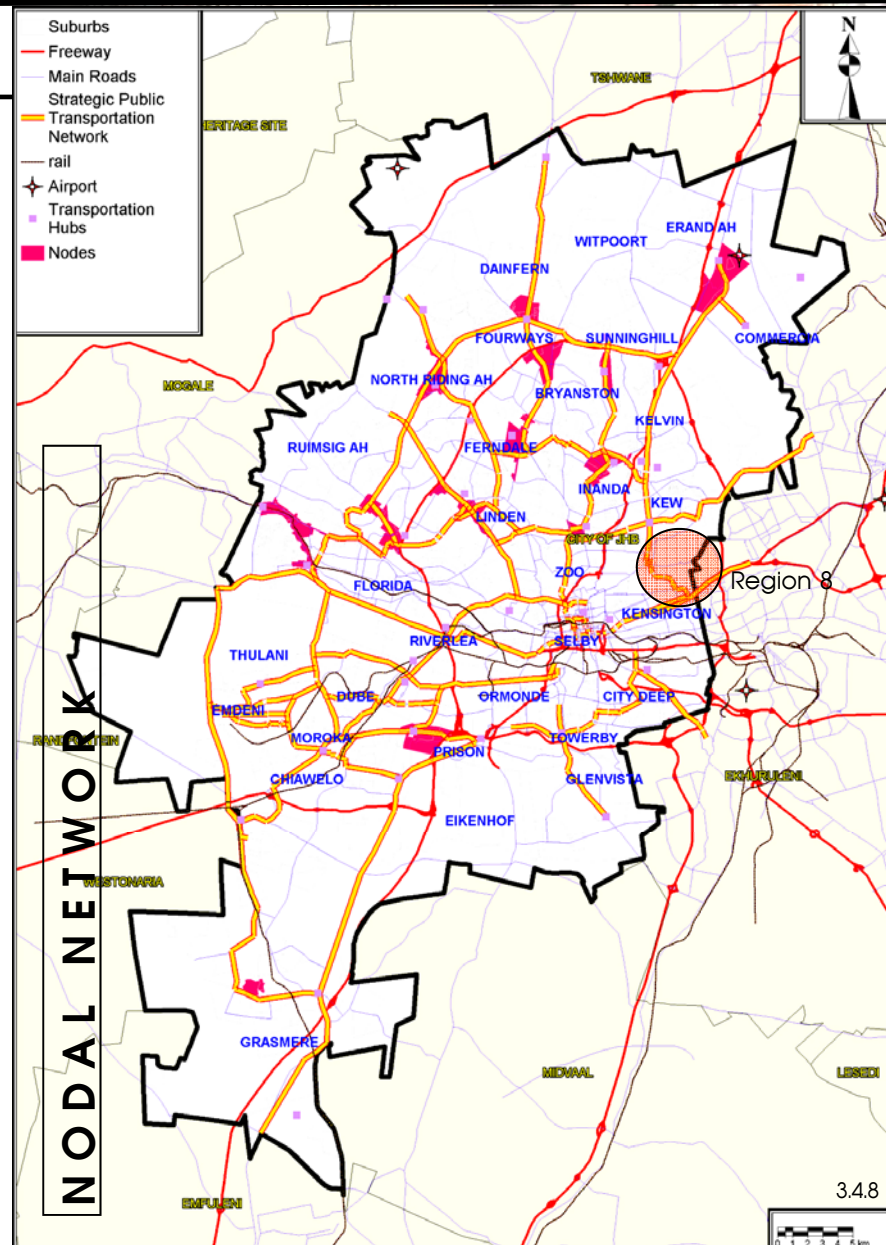
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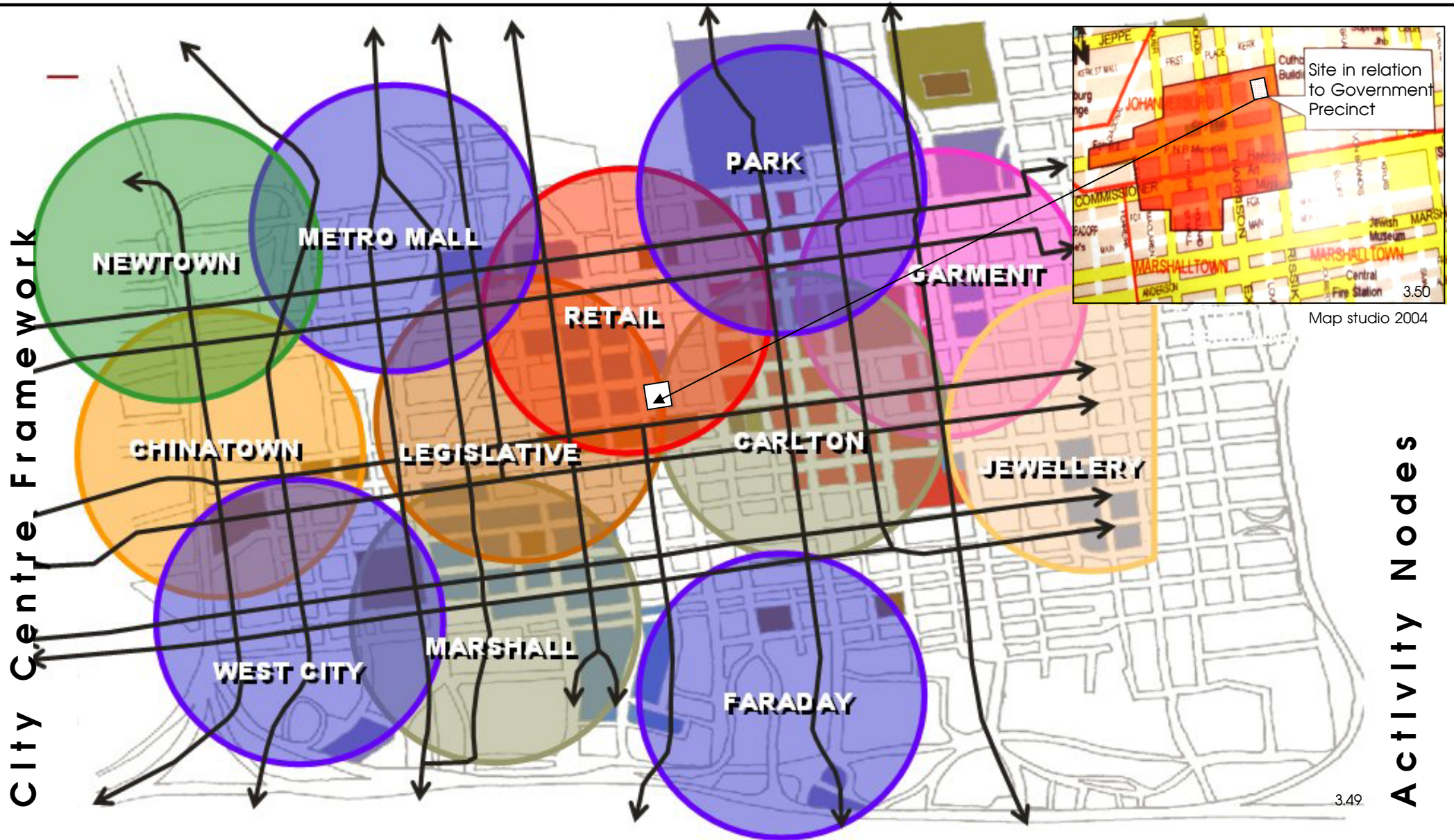
The site is in region 8 - a pivotal location in the metropolitan area.
 A major economic generator and employment and service centre, with access to
 major public transport and significant infrastructure. The heart of Johannesburg



Johannesburg Spatial Development framework 2004



Johannesburg Spatial Development framework 2004



CONTEXT STUDY

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



- M1 Link
- Mary Fitzgerald Sq
- Market Theatre
- Sci Bono
- Turbine Hall
- AngloGold
- Metro Mall
- Bank City
- Legislature
- Site
- Rissik P.O
- High Court
- Carlton Centre

Johannesburg e Services <http://eservices.joburg.org.za>

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- Stock Exchange
- Proposed Kopanong Demolition
- Corner House
- Legislature
- JDA Office
- The Site
- Rissik Post Office
- Ghandi Square
- High Court

Johannesburg e Services <http://eservices.joburg.org.za>

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- Train Depot
- Old Park Station Canopy
- Nelson Mandela Bridge Link
- Brickfields Social Housing
- Queen Elizabeth Bridge Link
- Harrison Street Bridge Link
- Rissik Street Bridge Link
- Old Park station Future Gautrain)
- Park Station
- Joubert Park
- Johannesburg Art Gallery
- Drill Hall

- Metro Mall
- Diagonal Street
- Lithuli House (ANC Head Offices)
- Johannesburg Library
- Bank City
- Bayers Naude Square
- Johannesburg Roads Agency
- Old Mutual
- Kerk Street Market
- WoolWorths
- Ansteys
- Edgars
- Game





Bayers Naude Sq

First Place

Old Mutual Plaza

Kerk Street Market

Government Sq

Oppenheimer Park

Johannesburg e Services <http://eservices.joburg.org.za>



Public Amenities / Library

Subterranean Parkade

Corner House Up Market Residential

Local Govt

Govt Agency / JDA

The Site

Up Market Residential

Future Office of the Premier

LAND USE

Simmonds Street

Harrison Street

Kerk Street Market

Pritchard Street

Loveday President Street

Market Street

Rissik Street

3.54

Johannesburg e Services <http://eservices.joburg.org.za>

Financial / First National Bank

Future Local Government

Government Roads Agency

Old Mutual Head Office

Small Scale Retail / Commercial

Large scale Retail / Edgars

Large scale Retail / Game



CONTEXT STUDY



M2 East

Ghandi Square

AngloGold Head Office

Standard Bank Building

Southern Life Building

Corner House

Lthuli House

Johannesburg Library

Beyers Naude Square

Gauteng Legislature

Rissik St Post Office

Old Mutual Building

Barbican Building

The Site

M1 North

Brickfields Social Housing

Nelson Mandela Bridge

The Ansteys Building

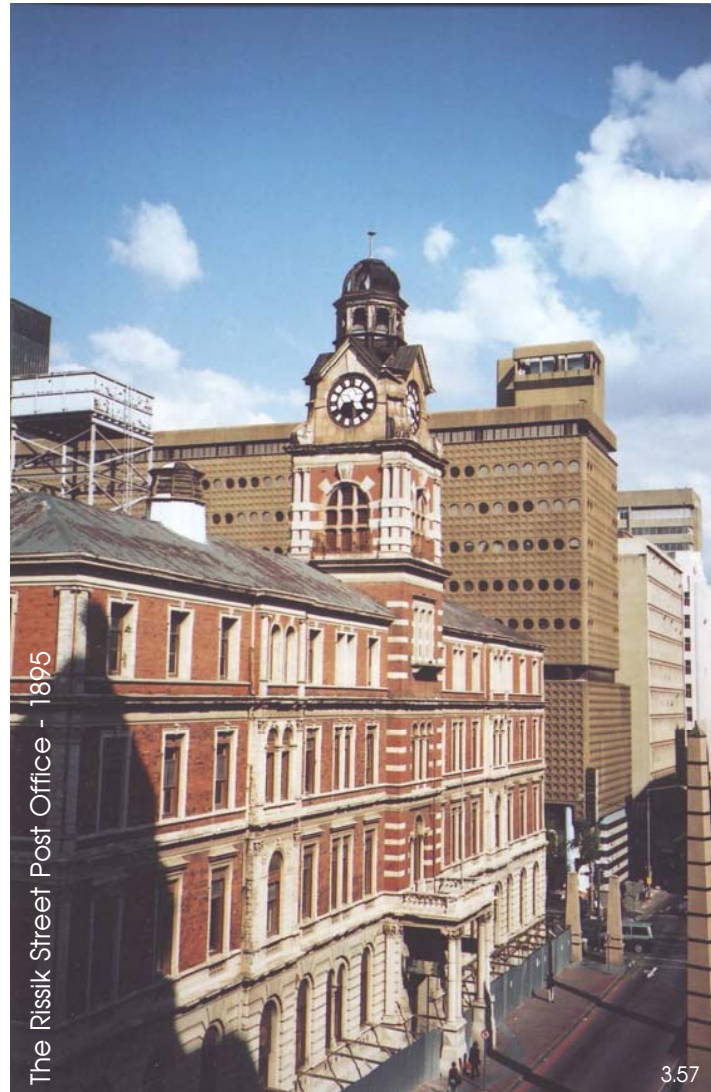


HISTORICAL BUILDINGS IN THE SITE CONTEXT



The Barbican Building - 1929

3.56



The Rissik Street Post Office - 1895

3.57

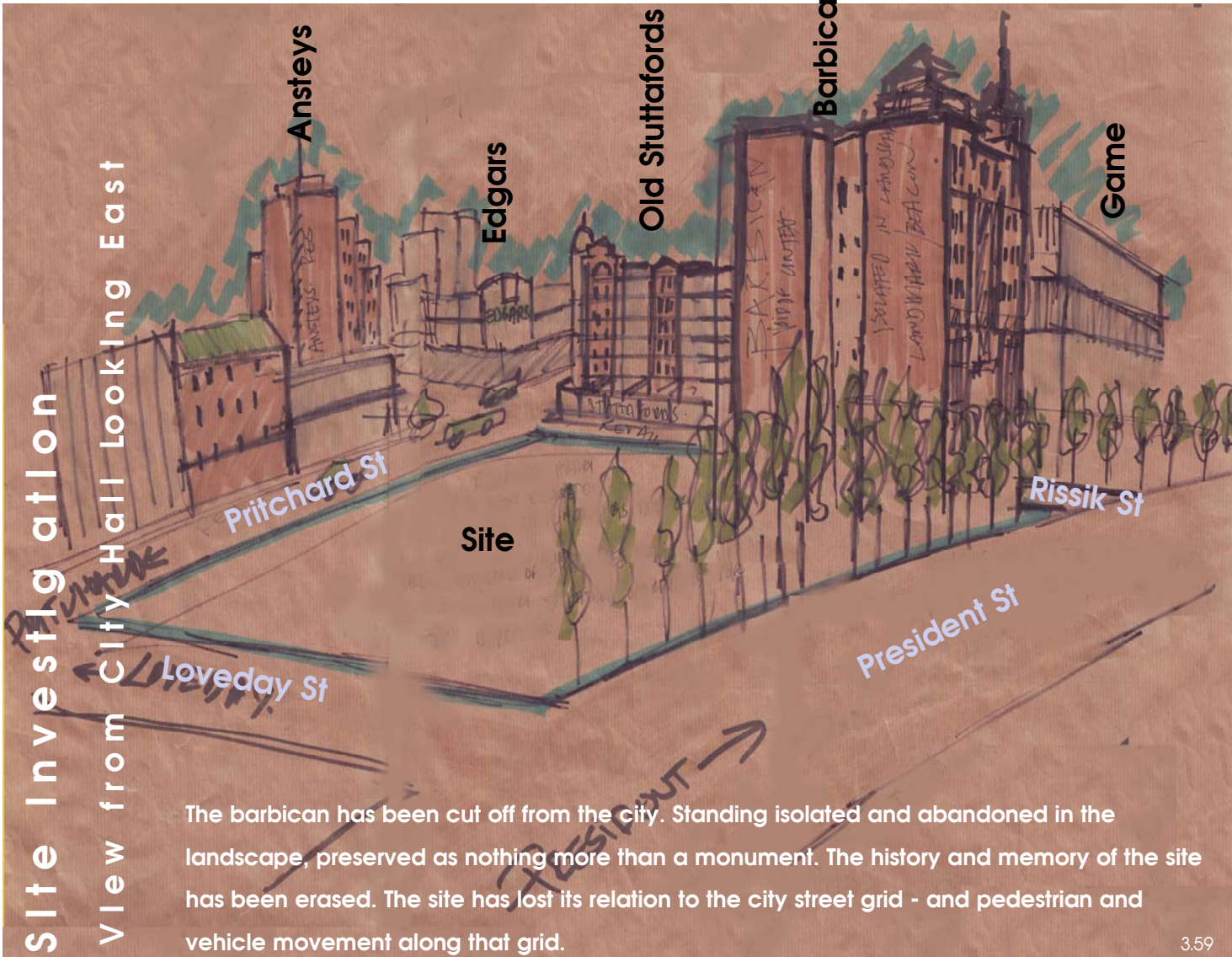


City Hall - 1909

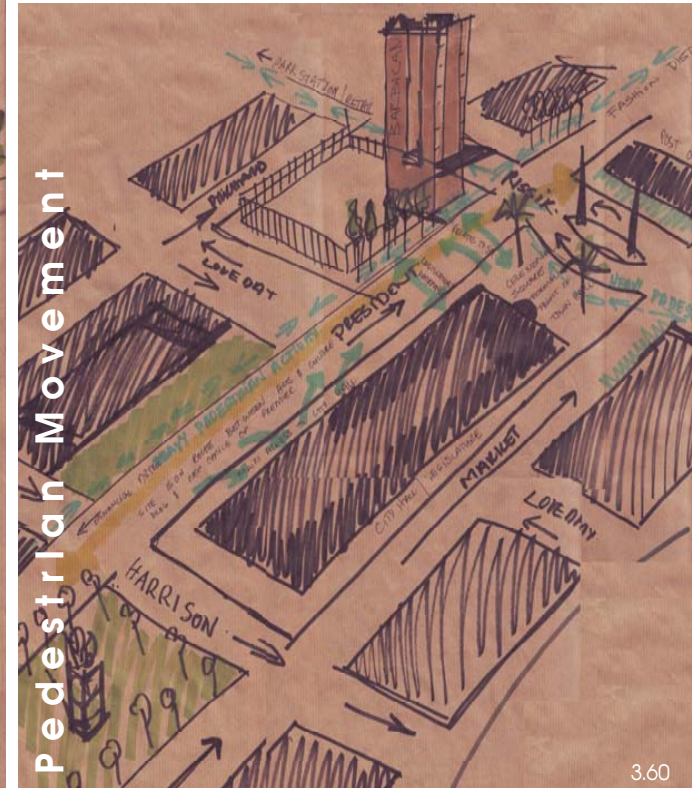
3.58



CONTEXT STUDY



The barbican has been cut off from the city. Standing isolated and abandoned in the landscape, preserved as nothing more than a monument. The history and memory of the site has been erased. The site has lost its relation to the city street grid - and pedestrian and vehicle movement along that grid.

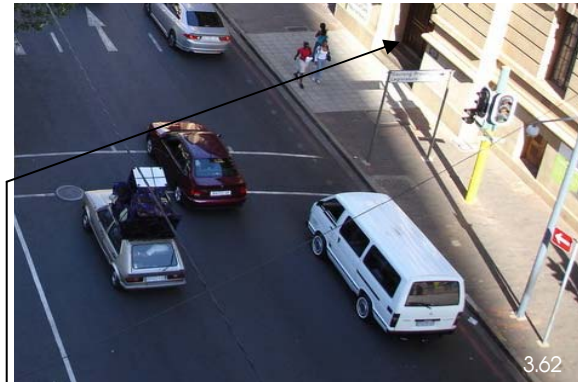


Pedestrian Movement



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Below - The North East retail edge of the site. The Edgars building, corner Pritchard and Rissik Streets.



Above - The South West Legislative edge of the site, with the main entrance to the Gauteng Provincial Legislature directly opposite the South Western corner of the site at President and Loveday Streets.



BIRDS EYE VIEW OF THE SITE AND GOVERNMENT SQUARE



The Barbican, Post Office and City Hall buildings form three tower elements around the historic Government Square.



ARCHITECTURAL LANGUAGE OF THE SITE

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3.71

Gauteng Legislature Main Entrance - Directly Opposite The South West Corner Of The Site



3.70

The Classical Language Of The Rissik St Post Office



3.67

Bank City Viewed From The North West Of The Site



3.68

The Rissik St Post Office

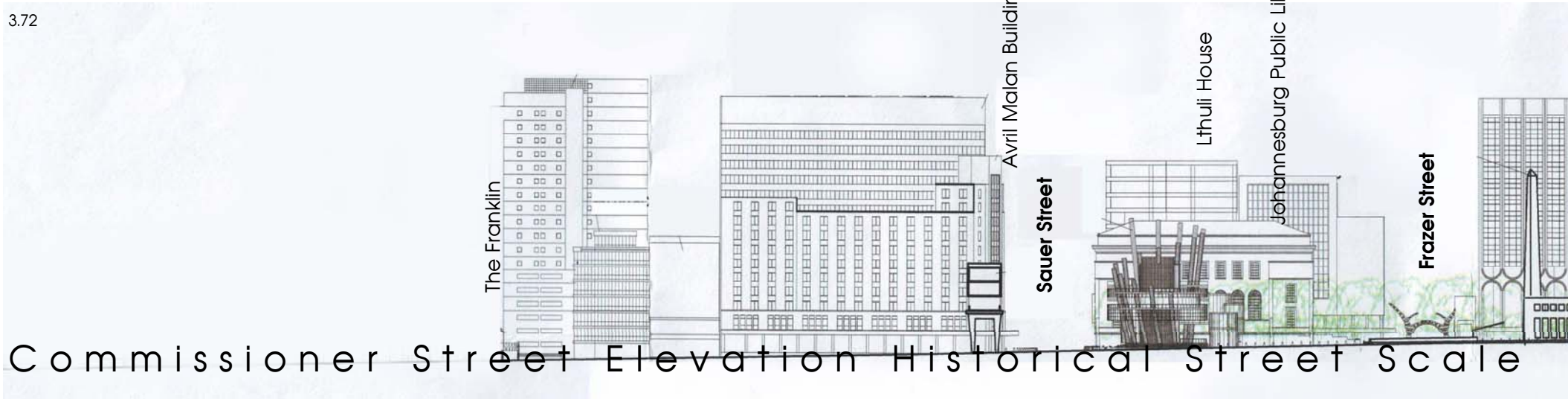


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Gauteng Legislature Main Entrance - Directly Opposite The South West Corner Of The Site

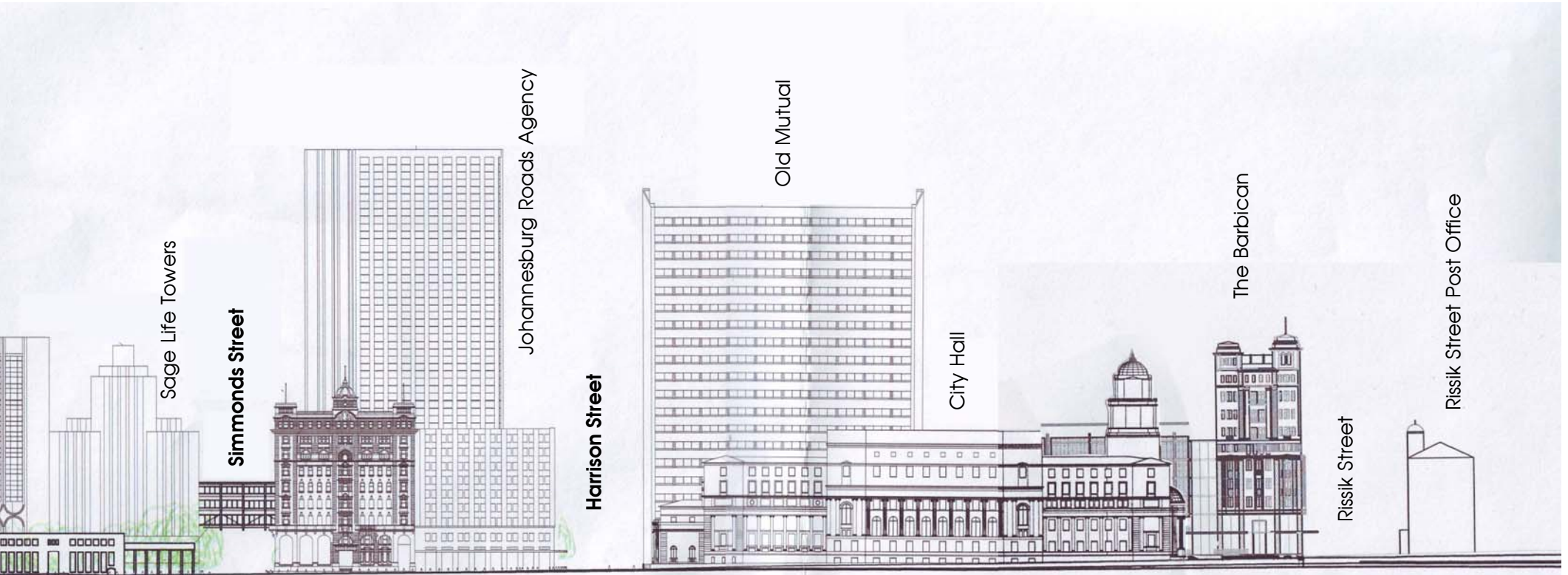
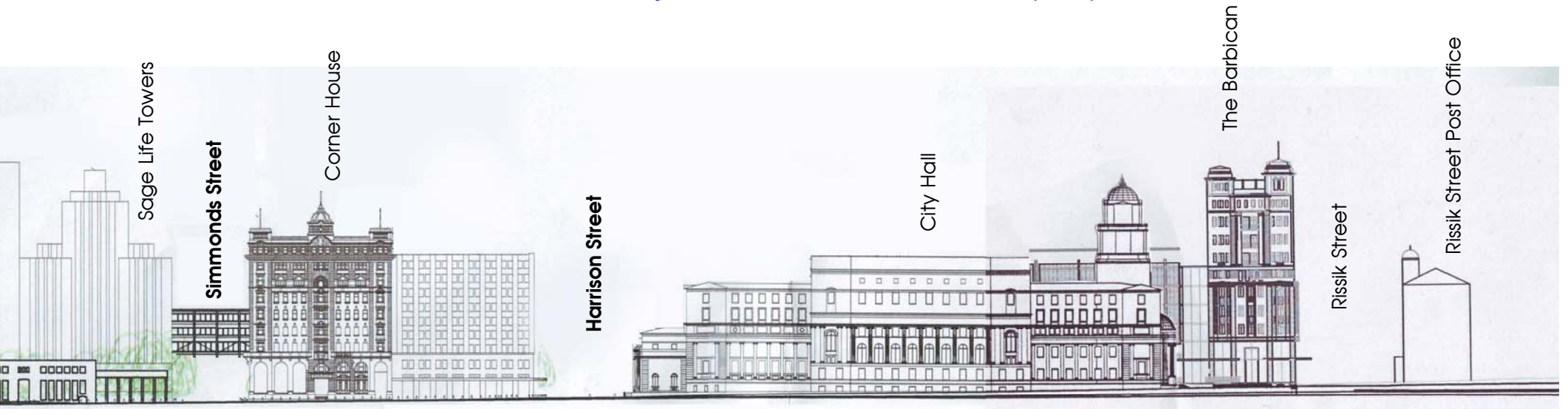
CONTEXT STUDY

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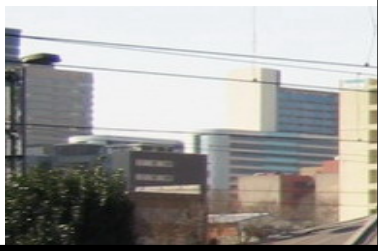


3.73





Street Buldings



URBAN REGENERATION

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Districts of strategic importance to the site

The need for the provision of extensive residential development for all income levels has been identified as a priority in the inner city region. The Government and financial precinct fall into region 8 of the city, which includes the whole of the inner city. As the business centre of the city, the vision for this area is that it should offer many top class services and facilities, in line with making Johannesburg a world class African city.

Financial District

Key institutions in this area include: - banking institutions - Bank City, Standard Bank of South Africa, national head offices, SA Eagle, mining house head offices – AngloGold Ashanti and provincial government head offices. The region consists of mixed land uses, chiefly comprising retail and commercial.

Key factors which the Johannesburg SDF identifies for the rejuvenation of this area are **the rejuvenation and revitalisation of the areas historic buildings with appropriate new uses. Focus areas include the area around the Rissik Street Post Office and City Hall. (Now the Gauteng Provincial Legislature)**

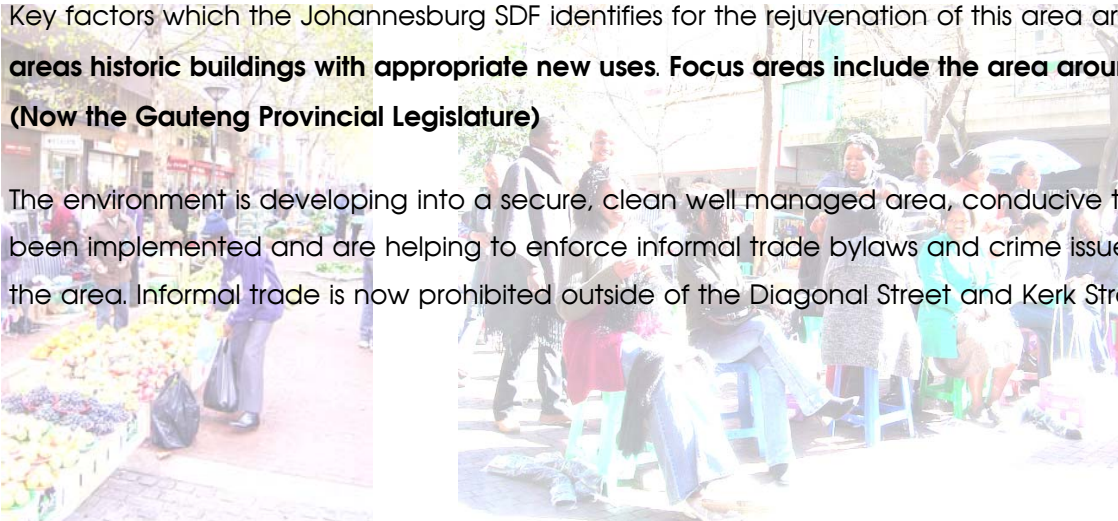
The environment is developing into a secure, clean well managed area, conducive to investment. City Improvement Districts have been implemented and are helping to enforce informal trade bylaws and crime issues which were previously a major problem in the area. Informal trade is now prohibited outside of the Diagonal Street and Kerk Street markets.



Kerk Street Market



Kerk Street Market





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The Government Precinct (Kopanong)

This is the area around Beyers Naude Square and City Hall, identified as the new region to be developed as the Gauteng Provincial Legislature and Cultural Heritage Precinct. This precinct includes the Existing Johannesburg City Hall, and the areas around Beyers Naude Square (the old Library Gardens). It is bounded on the North by Pritchard St, on the South by Fox St, on the West by Sauer St and on the East by Rissik St. The precinct is identified as a cultural and heritage area. The Kopanong project is currently under way, and the Gauteng legislature plans to have fully transformed the precinct by 2009. R280 million has already been spent in the area - a good sign of Governments commitment to the project. Kopanong will house ten new government buildings, three new commercial developments and 150 thousand square meters of new construction. New open spaces are planned in the area between Commissioner St, Market St, President St and Sauer St through the demolition of existing buildings of low historical and cultural value. Other areas within the precinct are also planned for pedestrianisation. (Johannesburg Spatial Development Framework, 2004)



Beyers Naude Square

3.79



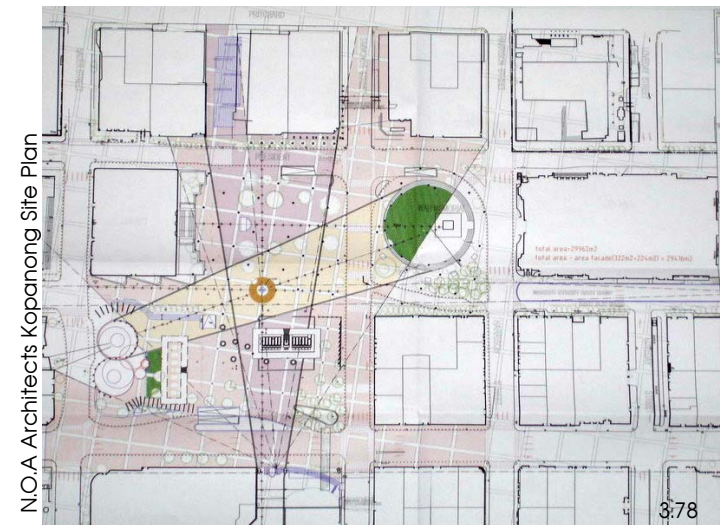
Kopanong Precinct looking North West

3.76



Artists Impression Of Kopanong Precinct

3.77



N.O.A Architects Kopanong Site Plan

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Climate

Johannesburg

Position: 26° 08' S 28° 14' E

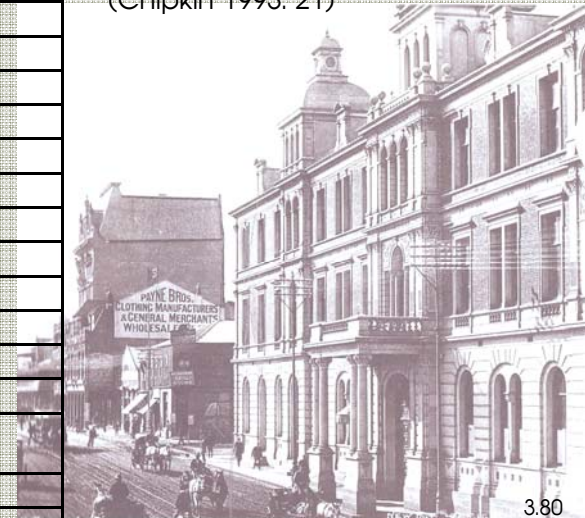
Height: 1694m

This climatological information is the normal values and, according to World Meteorological Organization (WMO) prescripts, based on monthly averages for the 30-year period 1961 – 1990

Precipitation overages range between 600 and 800mm per annum.

month	Highest max temp	Highest min temp	Highest 24 hour rainfall(mm)	Highest monthly rainfall (mm)
January	35.4	7.2	188	338
February	33.5	6	56	191
March	31.9	2.1	92	219
April	29.3	0.5	50	130
May	26.4	-2.5	70	80
June	23.1	-8.2	31	59
July	24.4	-5.1	17	22
August	26.2	-5	21	47
September	31.1	-3.3	62	175
October	32.2	0.2	110	198
November	32.9	1.5	65	230
December	32.4	3.5	102	181
Year	35.4	-8.2	188	1019
South African Weather Services www.weathersa.co.za				

View of the Rissik Street Post office looking North in the 1880s (Chipkin 1993. 21)





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Historical Context

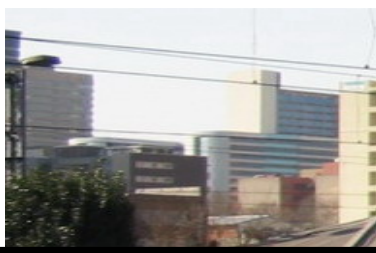
The area around Market Square is probably the oldest part of Johannesburg. The tract between present-day Bree and Pritchard Streets was the first public gold field, proclaimed on the 4th October 1886, on the farm Randjeslaagte. *The ZAR government had little faith in the permanence of the goldfields and thus the future of the new mining village. They appointed (their surveyor Johann Rissik) to cram as many stands as possible into the area, with as many street corners as possible —as the corners would fetch higher license income, which was further boosted by the multiplicity of plots. This naturally contributed to the latter-day high-rise development of the city.* (Van de Waal, 1986.15)

Pritchard Street at the turn of the 20th century
(Joyce 1981.43)



Rissik Street looking South towards the Post office 1910
(Joyce 1981.43)





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REGENERATION

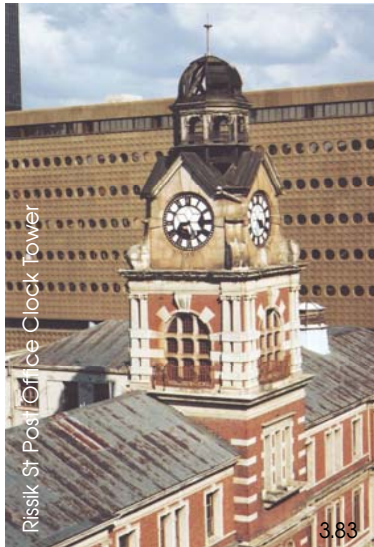
CONTEXT STUDY

In the mine diggings, early trenches were soon abandoned in favour of shallow inclined shafts which followed the reef; however the reef soon gave way to rotten pyretic ores which refused to yield any gold. In 1889 the gold recovery rate dropped so sharply that the city of Johannesburg panicked. Many mines became unpayable, and mining shares dropped almost overnight. "Grass will grow on the streets of Johannesburg" declared the young mining executive, Percy Fitzpatrick. (Van de Waal, 1986:23)

History proved him wrong. By 1893, The Goldfields Company of South Africa sent hopes soaring with the announcement that shafts could be sunk to a vertical depth of 5 000 feet. Johannesburg was saved - its future secured. Pulling out of the slump, its buildings began to reflect solid prosperity. (Van de Waal, 1986:24)

The two predominant architectural styles of the time were: the Victorian Style, favoured by the *uitlander* miners - for private buildings; and the Dutch style favoured by the ZAR public works department - for government buildings. The old Rissik Street Post Office is probably the only remaining example of ZAR architecture in Johannesburg.

Pictures on this page: The Old Rissik Street post office, as it is today. This structure on the periphery of the site is the only remaining example of ZAR architecture in the Johannesburg C.B.D. The building, (constructed in period Dutch red brick with sandstone detailing on the cornices and window surrounds) was designed in 1895 by Styze Weirde, Head of the Public Works Department of the ZAR. When it was completed in 1897 the Post Office was the tallest building in Johannesburg, a very coveted title. A fourth floor was added to the building in 1904. The building has been "mothballed" for the last ten years; the clock tower has been wrapped in protective sheeting to delay further degradation of its wooden structure.



Rissik St Post Office Clock Tower

3.83



Rissik St Post Office Window Corbelling

3.84



Rissik St Post Office Entrance Portico

3.85

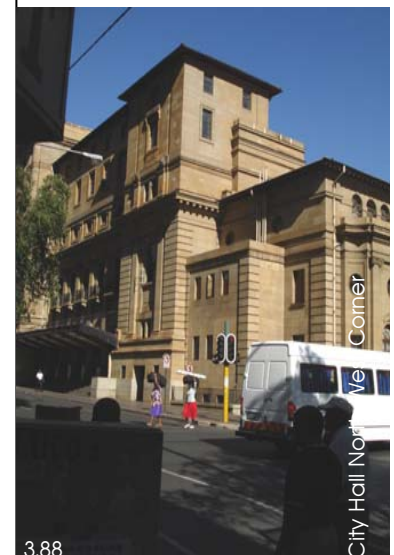
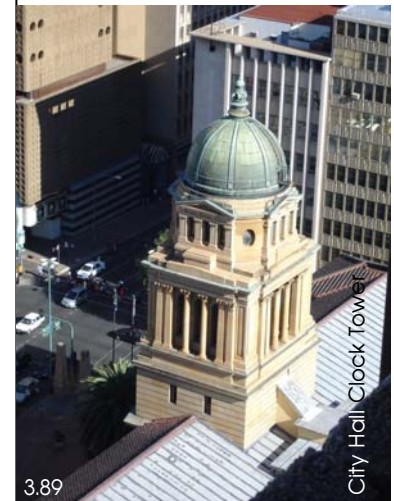


URBAN CONSERVATION

Relations between the ZAR government and the *uitlander* British miners were fragile at best. The miners resented paying taxes from the lucrative goldfields to a government, which would not allow them the franchise and did not, they felt, represent their best interests. In a letter from Lord Alfred Milner, British High Commissioner in South Africa, to the Colonial Secretary, Joseph Chamberlain, Milner writes, "There is no way out of the political troubles of South Africa except for reform in the Transvaal, or war, and the chances of reform seem slight..." (Muller, 1969. 286) By October 1899 matters had further degenerated and war was declared.

By May 1900 the war was over and Johannesburg was under British control. Once again the town began to flourish. The British colonial architectural style was then adopted for private and public buildings - a *status quo* that would last until the end of the 1920s. *Johannesburg architecture at the time was an attempt to replicate the Edwardian style of the city of London, the financial heart of the Empire.* (Chipkin, 1993. 320)

Pictures on this page: The Johannesburg City Hall. This building, with its imposing colonnades and sandstone exterior, is typical of British Colonial architecture. It was designed in 1909 by the Cape Town firm, Hawke and McKinlay. This style was so homogenous that the book, *Johannesburg 100 years*, (VanRensburg, 1986. 286) incorrectly attributes its design to the British architect Sir Edwin Lutyens. A further two storeys were added to the building in 1903. The central tower of the original building was dismantled and reconstructed above the additions.





URBAN
REGENERATION

CONTEXT STUDY

By the mid 1920s the architectural style of Johannesburg began moving away from the style of the English post-Edwardian period. The city needed a new style to adopt as its own. By 1920 the dollar's financial strength was underpinning the fragile post-war economies of Europe, and the world was in awe of the scale of US production - modernisation became synonymous with Americanisation. Johannesburg looked to images of New York and Chicago's towering modern skyscrapers - *masterpieces of materialism* (Koolhaas, 1990, 81). 'Manhattan' was the talisman for up-to-datedness: *there was Manhattans of Eloff St, Manhattan Court, Manhattan confectionary...* (Chipkin, 1993, 84) Johannesburg glided into the 'Golden Age' like a lithe, elegant ocean liner. Architects designed buildings with graceful spires searching the skies in an effort to proclaim their superiority, and grasp for a fleeting moment the coveted title, 'tallest building in Johannesburg'. The scale of the late 1930s was unrivalled in Johannesburg - until the building boom of the 1970's, with the arrival of contemporary skyscrapers like the 50 storey Carlton Towers.

Pictures opposite page: A building which very clearly points to Johannesburg's aspirations as 'Little New York' is The Barbican Building, on the South Eastern Corner of the site. Designed in 1929 by the firm Obel and Obel, *The Barbican was ten stories high, and trying desperately hard to appear higher: an extraordinary pile-up of building elements culminated on the corner tower with a surrealist imposition of disembodied classical details used to stake the buildings claim in the growing competition for height and dominance* (Chipkin, 1993, 85) The top storey had a glass roof and was occupied by a photographic studio which commanded a spectacular view of Johannesburg. The Barbican building is currently empty. It is owned by the Old Mutual Property Group who have been reluctant to part with it despite interest from various private developers.



URBAN
CONSERVATION

Balcony And Pediment Detail



View From President St East



3.96

View From Rissik St Post Office



3.95



3.94

View From President St West



3.91



3.92

View From Government Square



3.93



3.90

