



Fig 6-11 and fig 6-12: Restaurants (Grobler 2005)

The Edward Hotel and Grey Institute are found on Belmont Terrace, west of the Donkin Reserve. The Edward Hotel, originally built 1821, serves as a backdrop to the Donkin Reserve in 'old English' style (O'Brien et al 1998:23). The Edwardian building sits on the street and faces the ocean in the distance. The Grey Institute, designed in a secular gothic style, was completed in 1859 and the clock tower added in 1875 (O'Brien et al 1998:22). Today it has been renovated and restored.



Fig 6-13: Edward Hotel  
(Grobler 2005)



Fig 6-14: Grey Institute  
(Grobler 2005)

### 6.3 Data gathering

The qualitative research methodology, which is field focused with the observer as the instrument in obtaining information is implemented in this investigation. The observations aim to produce an account of what has been observed and from that the interpretation of significant aspects will be derived. The interpretation of the character and the understanding of the behaviour of the users of the space provide further comprehension of the current situation; an expressive language that pays attention to the description of particulars and detail. A rational approach in the investigation for both

the descriptive survey methodology and historical study is achieved with the use of an articulate writing style that expresses thoughts and ideas clearly (Leedy 1993: 141-142).

The descriptive survey method is applied in this analysis and focuses on the description on events (people, space and place) observed at a specific location and time of day. The information obtained from the descriptive survey method is ever-changing and the recording of observations is important in this process. Narrative observations form part of this method and are structured systematically by the use of questionnaires and interviews (Leedy 1993: 186,188). Although this research is structured, interviews are kept informal with the daily users of the Donkin Reserve. The completed questionnaires are included in Addendum B.

Canter (1977:122) argues the link between descriptions and actions. The descriptive survey method is performed communicating the attitudes of the users, and the actions that illustrate the behaviour. The experiences of place are complex: "...it is because there is a network of descriptions available to a person that he can use one part of this network to draw upon or represent the rest..." (Canter 1977:123). Place is evaluated by the system of interrelated aspects that affect the value judgements of the users; the degree of differentiation, the physical characteristics, the spatial organisation, the links between place and activity and the expectations and reaction of the users. These aspects influence space as "...it becomes place..." (Canter 1977:123,125).

#### **6.4 Space and place description**

The cognitive system, observance and perception, allows for understanding of information on what constitutes place, in terms of the recognisable characteristics and the feelings that are elicited when the space is used. The following are listed for this purpose: what a space is for, what is there, the type of activities that take place and who are represented in the place. The aim of spaces is to create meaning in the quality of experience: "...there is a large wardrobe in the corner and when the sun comes in through the bay windows it is a very relaxing and pleasant place to be..." (Canter

1977:105, 106). This illustrates the importance of the elements and variables that are examined in Chapters 3 and 4 for both architectural and urban interiors.

When these qualities are outlined, place descriptions bring forth various responses in the variety of adjectives that can be used in the analyses. “The unit describes, with some precision, how a statement by a person of his degree of satisfaction with a place relates to his purpose for being in that place...” (Canter 1977:106). Individual satisfaction created by a space is determined by the performance of a space in response to the day-to-day goals and use of an individual. The generalisation of responses within the analysis of a group of people can indicate collective attitudes and feelings. As a result responses are compiled in a comprehensive understanding including various components, as well as the daily experiences of the place (Canter 1977:106). This approach is followed in a data gathering process by means of interviews and the use of questionnaires.

#### **6.4.1 Place description of the Donkin Reserve: interviews of random population**

Canter (1977:107) emphasises the importance of including a variety of people in the population for questioning. It is suggested that age, sex, gender, occupation, education and residential background should vary when selecting the population in order to achieve a broad understanding. The experience expressed by each individual will most likely vary and to be representative of the types of people and backgrounds. Leedy (1993: 199) supports this viewpoint by noting the opportunities for information that exist in including a random population.

For this investigation people have been randomly selected: users of the Donkin Reserve in the natural state of activity. The profile of the population is inclusive and represents the community at large. The variety can briefly be described as follows: a group of pre-primary school children with a guardian, teenagers in transit after school, adults on a lunch break, an elderly man with his dog, lovers in the park, business people in a rush to the next destination and children playing soccer. People were informally questioned and were encouraged to be descriptive when responding. Twelve interviews were conducted, scattered over a four-week period, between 9:00 and 17:00. Additionally,

documentations were continuously made within these times to add data to an observational level.

The result of interviews with structured questions reveals two categories of users. The first category concerns users that frequent the place due to the close proximity of the working and living spaces, and usually make visits in the lunch hour or some time during the day. The second category consists of users in transit through the Donkin Reserve as a transition space, between Central Hill above and the city with transport nodes below. The frequency of space use ranges between daily, weekly and monthly, with a higher use within the daily and weekly option.

The interviews revealed that users find the Donkin Reserve appealing due to the natural aspect of the reserve within the urban environment. The panoramic view over the city and the ocean proved to be an important aspect for users: an open space on a sunshine day surrounded by nature in the form of a 'park'. However, people expressed no need or want to stay and spend time, as there is no informal activity, entertainment or reason to linger otherwise. Users that spend time seated were taking a break from work, or conveniently resting on the way home, but had not specifically chosen the spot for the quality of the place. The location in the heart of the city makes it accessible. It was further noted that the site is barren and featureless and does not provide variety for the users.



Fig 6-15: Panoramic view – Donkin Reserve (Grobler 2005)

The Pyramid and Light House, the major landmarks of this site, serve as a tourist attraction due to the historical background, but the majority of daily users have no or little knowledge about the historical heritage. There exists no awareness of the Donkin