



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA  
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YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

# c o n t e x t   s t u d y





## 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The Spatial Development Strategy 2010 and Beyond of Tshwane<sup>1</sup> state the following:

"The Inner City is strategically placed as the most important 'place' in Tshwane for the 2010 World Cup. This is in all probability the area where most of the tourists will be staying, going out, eating out and attending fan parks during the broadcast of the games."

The inner city is the area that can derive the most economic and social benefit from any investment that the municipality makes.<sup>1</sup> From an environmental, economic and social point of view, it is generally acknowledged that the inner city is currently not functioning as it should if it is to fulfill its role as the functional and symbolic heart of the capital city of the Republic of South Africa.

In identifying the first round of Priority Areas<sup>1</sup>, certain criteria were used to determine the most suitable locations in the city for these areas. The criteria include the Gautrain Station precincts.<sup>1</sup>



FIG 4.1:  
Pretoria region with the City Centre  
as main development area<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>B City of Tshwane  
Metropolitan  
Municipality (2007:22)

The new Gautrain Station<sup>1</sup> in Pretoria will be located south-east of the existing Pretoria Station with its historic Herbert Baker building. It is an important landmark in the City and is located near the proposed Information Node site. The new station will be situated underneath the existing railway lines and platforms.<sup>2</sup>

#### VISION OF THE PRETORIA STATION:

"Being one of the anchor stations of the project, the Gautrain Pretoria Station provides access to and from the Pretoria CBD. It will further also have an important tourism role and stimulate urban renewal in Pretoria's CBD. The Gautrain Station would be a tourism starting point for the CBD from where tourist attraction within and beyond the city can be visited and from where connections to regional tourist destinations can be made. Accordingly, the station should accommodate all relevant tourism information."<sup>2</sup>

In addition to the above, the station would be a catalyst for the upgrading and renewal of the Pretoria CBD area, which will in turn provide improved living and working environments for local users. The latter objective is integrated with the need to create proper linkages, provide pedestrian pathways, clean the environment and counter-act urban decay.

#### ACCESS TO THE PRETORIA STATION:

It is anticipated that more than 55 000 people<sup>1</sup> will use the Gautrain Station on a daily basis. A significant number of passengers arriving at this station will walk to their end destinations. Relevant pedestrian links will thus have to be established to ensure easy access to and from the station. Over and above the Gautrain feeder and distribution services, Metrorail services, bus services provided by Pretoria City Transport and taxi services operating between the Tshwane suburbs and the CBD are expected to feed and distribute passengers to and from the Pretoria Station.<sup>2</sup>

## GAUTRAIN RAPID RAIL LINK DEVELOPMENT

4.2



FIG 4.2:  
Gautrain Logo



FIG 4.3:  
Route of the  
Gautrain with Stations.

The Gautrain is a state-of-the-art rapid rail network<sup>1</sup> planned for Gauteng. The rail connection comprises two links, namely a link between Tshwane (Pretoria) and Johannesburg and a link between O.R. Tambo International Airport and Sandton.<sup>1</sup> Apart from the three anchor stations on these two links, seven other stations will be linked by approximately 80 kilometers of rail along the proposed route.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Gauteng, Provincial Government (2007)



FIG 4.4:  
Images from the Gautrain gallery

## LAND USE IN THE PRETORIA STATION AREA

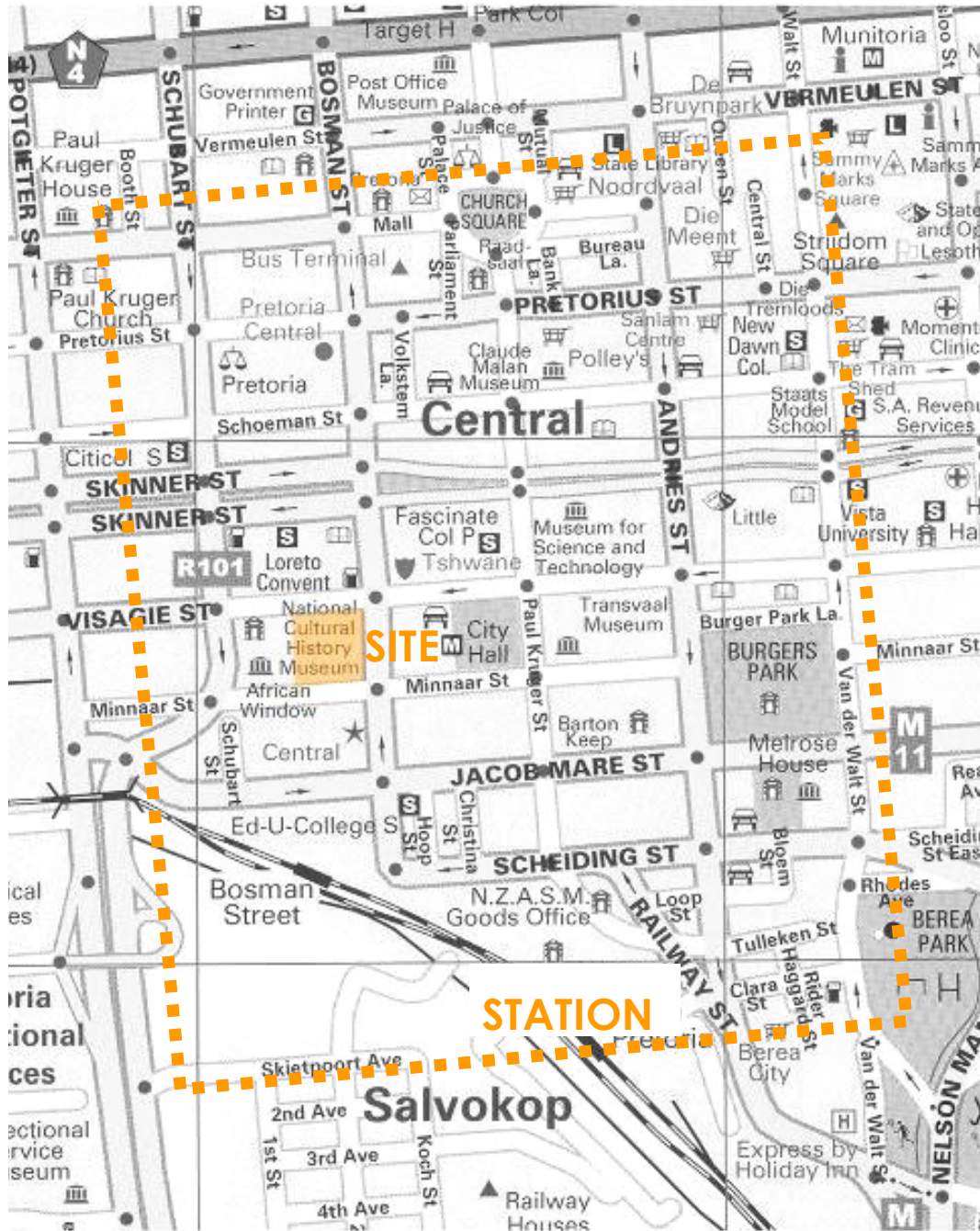
Like the Johannesburg Park Station, the Pretoria Station is situated in a city which is already formally established and forms the economic core of the metropolitan area. As with the former, the Gautrain Pretoria Station<sup>1</sup> is deemed to generate urban upliftment and revitalization, encouraging growth in the areas of business, housing and tourism. Progress regarding the renewal of the Pretoria CBD has already been made with the construction of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) building and the planning of the Nelson Mandela Development corridor along the Apies River and Nelson Mandela Drive.<sup>1</sup>

## ATTRACTIONS IN THE PRETORIA STATION AREA

The following attractions and destinations<sup>1</sup> are important places in and around Pretoria Station:

- “\_the proposed Salvokop Village and Freedom Park
- \_Voortrekker Monument
- \_UNISA
- \_museum precinct, which includes City Hall, Transvaal Museum and other museums in Visagie and Minnaar Street
- \_Church Square
- \_National Zoological Gardens and the National Cultural History Museum
- \_Union Buildings
- \_Nelson Mandela Development Corridor and the Department of Trade and Industry development.”

<sup>1</sup> Gauteng,  
Provincial  
Government  
(2007)



### THE LOCATION OF THE SITE

4.3

The site lies to the south-west of the city centre of Pretoria, in Museum Park near the Pretoria Station. It is conveniently located on major movement routes. It forms part of the rich historical heritage of Pretoria. Minnaar Street runs parallel to Church Street and forms the main axis of Museum Park.

FIG 4.5:  
Map of Pretoria Central:  
Context and site allocation.








## 4.4

### CONTEXT NETWORKING

Museum Park is situated in close proximity to nodes which form part of important transport networks into and out of the city. A reasonable amount of pedestrian traffic flows from the Pretoria and Bosman Street Stations through Minnaar Street into the centre of town and vice versa. The location of the Pretoria City Hall and Transvaal Museum as part of Museum Park makes this an important location for tourists and tourist transit networks. More travellers will be using the station with the implementation of the Gautrain, which will require an underlying support system for transportation. With the concept of marketing the city, a network of specific routes will be created. This network will provide the option of going on a tour through the city and back to the Node or Station. There will be regular pick-up intervals at certain main points of attraction that are mainly situated in Museum Park. These points can become waiting-areas defined by a structure that serves as a marketing tool.

- |   |               |    |                  |
|---|---------------|----|------------------|
|  | SITE          | 1. | Station          |
|  | SITE CONTEXT  | 2. | Information Node |
|  | 24 hour route | 3. | Pretorius Square |
|   |               | 4. | Church square    |
|   |               | 5. | Science Museum   |
|   |               | 6. | Burgers Park     |
|   |               | 7. | Melrose House    |

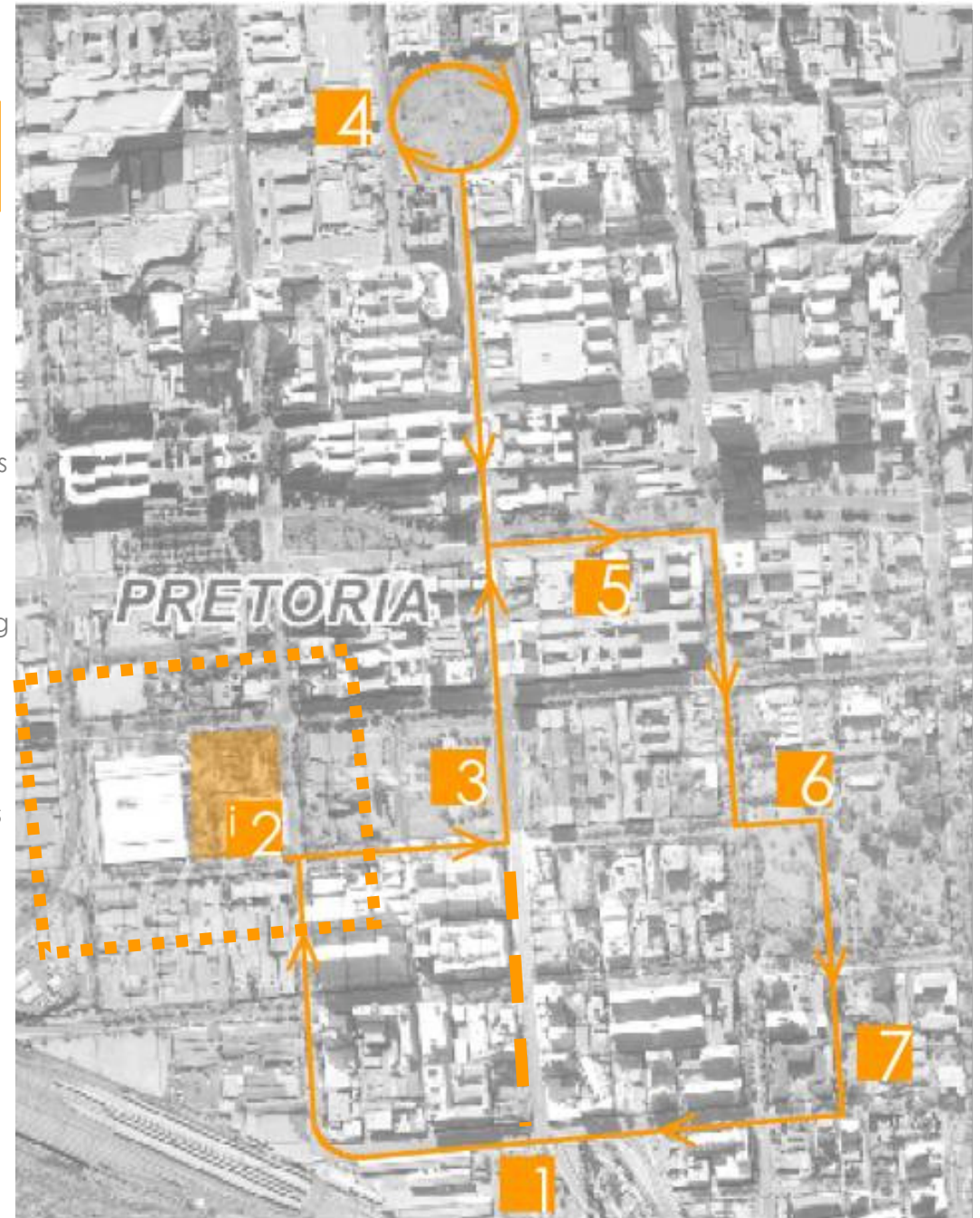


FIG 4.6: Aerial photograph of Pretoria Central with route of network.

## CHOICE OF SITE AND BUILDING

4.5

The proposed site for the Information Node is Erven 913 & 914, on the corner of Bosman and Minnaar Streets. It is located between the African Window Museum and the City Hall.

A number of factors were taken into consideration when the site for the proposed building was chosen. Together, the existing buildings should share the resources provided by people and the dynamics of human activity. If this could be achieved it would strengthen the credibility of the project and create an environment for different buildings to interact with one another.

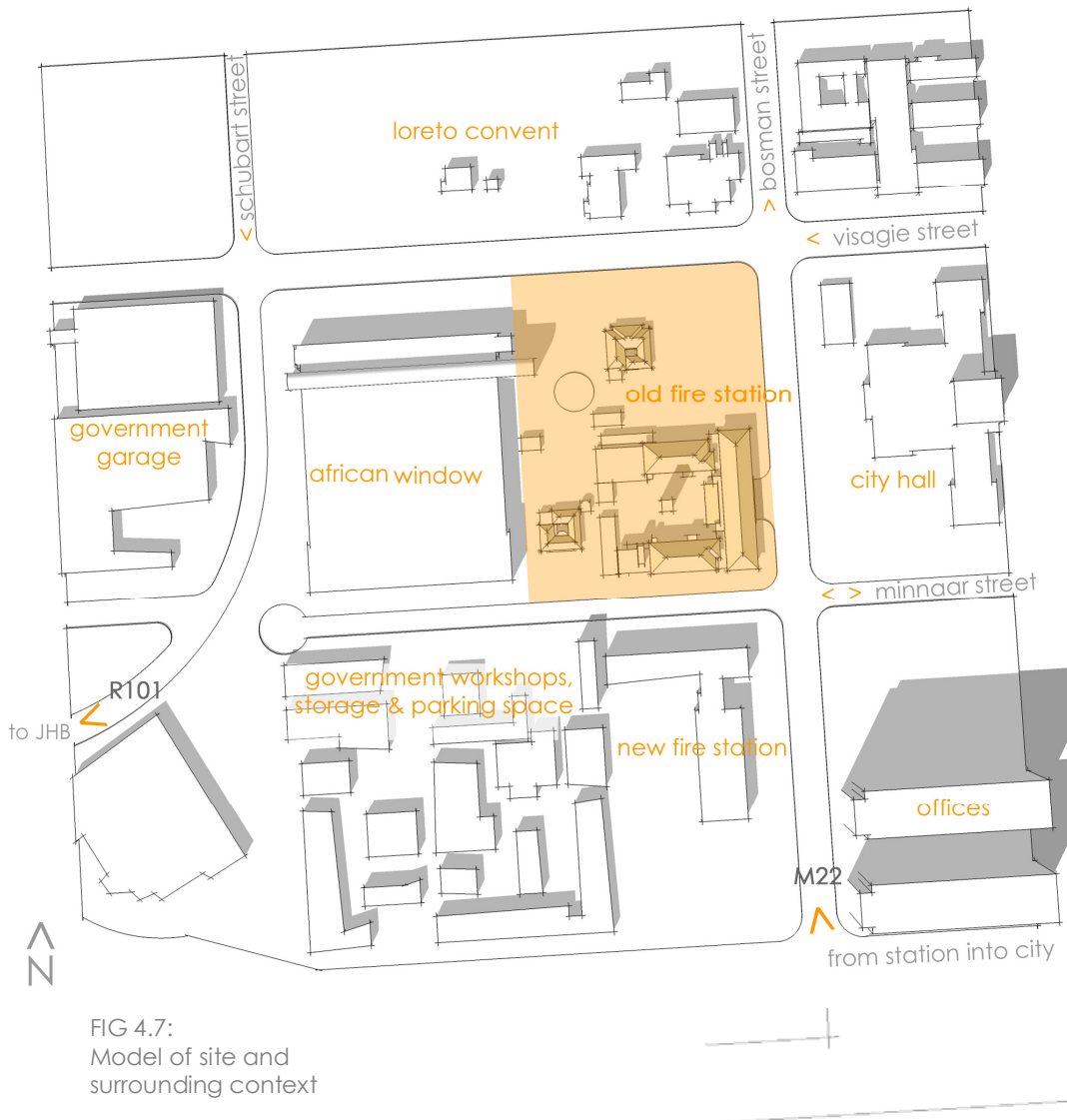
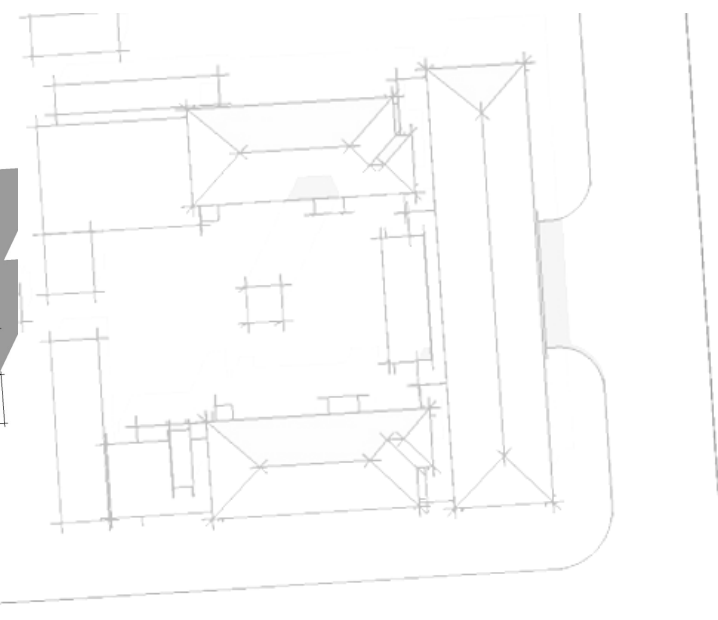


FIG 4.7:  
Model of site and  
surrounding context





- pergola
- parking
- Visagie Street House
- African Window's entrance
- toilets
- Old Fire Station
- Minnaar Street House

This particular location is suited to the project for the reason that the area has the potential of becoming an important node of cultural activity – a place frequented by tourists and the local community. It is, however, important to ensure that the development of such a node is financially and functionally viable. Placing an information node and other related facilities in this area would not only concentrate these functions around an 'appropriate node', but would also ensure that the area is used seven days a week by people having a personal interest in the area. Currently, the existing buildings on the site include the African Window Museum, Mint House, Minnaar Street House and the Old Fire Station. The site is not used to its full potential and there is no interaction between the neighbouring structures. The African Window forms the main function and point of activity of the site. The Mint House is used as office space, while Minnaar Street House is vacant. The original Old Fire Station building is isolated from the rest of the site by insensitive subsequent additions.

FIG 4.8:  
Aerial Photograph of Site





THE HISTORY OF THE SITE AND  
ITS SURROUNDING CONTEXT

4.6

The development of the Information Node would incorporate Minnaar and Visagie Street Houses. The development of the entire site would complete the block as one unifying design, with facilities that are integrated with each other. The African Window is purely functional in museum terms and makes little allowance for public use of the site. The design proposal will incorporate public spaces.

**THE AFRICAN WINDOW MUSEUM.** The African Window Museum was previously the Old Royal Mint, which was built in 1921. The Mint was originally built on a site which was already of historical importance. A bronze plaque of the Council for National Monuments (now SAHRA) fixed to the fence along Visagie Street explains that the site was previously known as the "Convent Redoubt". The training tower has historical value and acts as a landmark on the site.

**MINT HOUSE AND MINNAAR STREET HOUSE.** The Mint House was occupied by the Mint Director, and Minnaar Street House by the Director of Works. The Mint House is a traditional style building and was renovated when the African Window was being developed. It was renovated with the aim of turning it into a restaurant. At present the house is occupied by an Environmental Centre Office. Minnaar Street House is currently standing empty and is in need of renovation before it can be occupied. The house could be utilized by the Information Node and its related activities. The Fifty Year Act focuses on the protection of buildings older than fifty years that have not yet been declared monuments. These buildings provide historical character and richness to the site and should be incorporated into its proposed development.

OTHER SURROUNDING BUILDINGS FORMING PART OF  
THE CONTEXT:

**LORETO CONVENT.** A convent school for girls is located in Visagie Street to the north of the site. Its sports grounds can supply overflow parking for large events at the African Window.

**THE CITY HALL, PRETORIUS SQUARE AND THE TRANSVAAL MUSEUM.** These are places of great historical importance and main tourist attractions in the area. Pretorius Square is not utilised to its full potential.

The Transvaal Museum is built on a civic scale and creates a landmark. The west façade is of sandstone and is beautifully detailed, while the extended side wings are of face brick. It forms a grand edge to Pretorius Square.

The City Hall is only on a civic scale where the clock tower stands. The wings and the east façade are of lesser proportions, being only three storeys high. The west façade of the City Hall does not define the edge of Bosman Street, nor does it respond in any way to the street section on which the Old Fire Station is located. By defining this particular street edge, the entire space will be defined.



## 4.7

## MUSEUM PARK



FIG 4.9:  
Logo of Museum Park

The site forms part of the Museum Park redevelopment program (RDP) in Pretoria. Museum Park currently stretches from Schubart Street in the west to Van der Walt Street in the east, and from Skinner Street in the north to Scheiding Street in the south. The development is concentrated around Minnaar Street and is modelled on the Smithsonian in Washington DC.

The idea is to develop a park that offers the largest focus of cultural resources in Africa with the following attempts:<sup>1</sup>

“To visually and structurally group a number of diverse museums, buildings, spaces and activities all related to conservation and education into a unified whole. There would also be facilities for functions and conferences, as well as restaurants and museum shops. The Museum Park is well supplied with safe parking and focuses and promoting pedestrian links.”

1. African Window:  
National Cultural History Museum
2. SITE: Old Fire Station:  
Information Node
3. Old Mint House (Visagie Street)
4. City Hall
5. Pretorius Square
6. Transvaal Museum
7. Science Museum
8. Burgers Park
9. Melrose House



FIG 4.10:  
Location of Museum Park  
with main attractions

1 Museum Park (2006)



## historical background of museum park

The vision for the Museum Park Development was initiated with the relocation of the National Cultural History and Open-Air Museum.<sup>1</sup> In 1989 and 1991, when the temporary buildings in Boom Street were flooded, the museum had to be evacuated. After investigating various options, the premises of the old South African Mint in Minnaar Street were chosen as the most appropriate and most economic option.

A contextual study<sup>1</sup> of the area to which the new museum was allocated revealed an unusual concentration of cultural attractions. There are the Melrose House Museum, Burgers Park, the Transvaal Museum, the City Hall, the Old Fire Brigade building and the new African Window Museum in the converted Old Mint Building. Apart from Melrose House, these attractions form an aligned 'cultural belt'<sup>1</sup> between Visagie and Minnaar Streets.

In 1985 the Museum Park Company commenced the upgrading of Minnaar Street into a pedestrian-friendly spine that links the cultural attractions. Holm Jordaan Holm Architects were appointed in 1991 to upgrade Minnaar Street. The design of markers to define and identify the Museum Park precinct was included in the development. Minnaar Street is currently a well utilized pedestrian spine and has been transformed into a street with a recognizable identity.

## participating institutions

The following institutions are core members<sup>1</sup> of Museum Park and have direct representation on the Board of Directors of Museum Park:

### **National museums and institutions**

- \_National Cultural History Museum
- \_Transvaal Museum
- \_Geoscience Museum.

### **Other local museums and institutions**

- \_Melrose House
- \_Enviro Centre
- \_Museum Park Discovery Centre
- \_Kruger Museum
- \_Pretoria Art Museum
- \_Fort Klapperkop Museum
- \_Tswaing Meteorite Crater
- \_Pioneer Museum
- \_Willem Prinsloo Agricultural Museum
- \_Sammy Marks Museum.

### **Historical sites and buildings**

- \_Burgers Park
- \_City Hall of Pretoria
- \_Pretorius Square.

<sup>1</sup> Museum Park (2006)



## mission and vision of museum park

The vision of Museum Park is to create a cultural experience for the visitor and to share our country's heritage with the rest of the world in the capital city, Pretoria.<sup>1</sup>

Museum Park<sup>1</sup> is an organization that develops and markets the heritage activities of several museums and historical sites in a prominent precinct in Pretoria as a tourism destination. This precinct is regarded as possibly the largest focus point of cultural resources in Africa.

The overall objective<sup>1</sup> of Museum Park is to:

"Promote public awareness, understanding and appreciation of cultural, scientific, artistic and natural heritage, science, engineering and technology and to enhance the knowledge and expertise of the people of South Africa in these fields. In order to achieve this, the objectives are to generate own income by way of trading, sponsorships and other means to offset expenditure. Furthermore, the task of Museum Park is to attract people to the Museum Park precinct by marketing, facilitating and co-coordinating heritage, tourism, recreational and educational related activities linked to the mandates of participating institutions."

<sup>1</sup> Museum Park (2006)

## the character of the built environment

A variety of building styles are found in Museum Park. Styles vary from modern office blocks to Neo-Classical sandstone buildings. Building uses vary between recreational facilities and maintenance workshops for the Public Works Department. There are, however, certain buildings which play key roles in the Museum Park development. The two most important ones, both in scale and symbolic meaning, are the Pretoria City Hall and the Transvaal Museum. Both these buildings are on a civic scale in terms of spatial arrangement and architectural style, with the open area between them being an important space within the area as a whole. The Transvaal Museum is fully operational, but the City Hall building is very much under-utilized. Another important venue is the African Window Museum. This museum, bordered by Visagie, Schubart, Bosman and Minnaar Streets, offers the largest collection of artefacts<sup>1</sup> of all the cultural history museums in South Africa.



FIG 4.11:  
Bosman Street, View of  
Old Fire Station building





MINNAAR STREET

4.8

Minnaar Street forms the backbone of the Museum Park Development. The closing off of the western end of Minnaar Street and the lack of public facilities provide little incentive for pedestrians to move down the street to and from Burgers Park. This fact has the advantage that Minnaar Street will not become a high speed traffic thoroughfare. At present, the African Window opens onto Visagie Street, and is situated on the corner of Visagie and Schubart Streets. There are pedestrian entrances to the African Window on both Minnaar and Bosman Streets. The site is easily accessible. The train and bus stations are in close proximity to the site, which is situated between the station and the CBD. High levels of pedestrian activity take place around the site, and these will increase with the development of Museum Park. A diversity of cultures move through this area on a daily basis. As Minnaar Street is intended to be a cultural spine, the site is well suited as a location for the Information Node.

The first phase of the Museum Park development provided street furniture along its spine, visually connecting the related functions and broadening the sidewalk on one side in order to emphasize the flow of pedestrian traffic. A row of parallel parking spaces was also provided along the northern edge of the street. The approach involved the incorporation of important buildings and elements along the street into the development. The project was initially envisioned by Louis Cloete, who was involved with the City Council. Up to this point the design had been done by Holm Jordaan Architects and Urban Designers.

Minnaar Street has been upgraded to a pedestrian-friendly street, using landscaping as well as changes in paving. Although it functions well as a pedestrian walk, there are certain areas of the Museum Park development that need to be addressed:<sup>1</sup>

- \_ Although it is based on the Smithsonian model, only the northern side of Minnaar Street has been activated.
- \_ The entrance to the African Window is on Visagie Street, resulting in the reduction of pedestrian activity on Minnaar Street.
- \_ Activities do not extend beyond the dead-end of Minnaar Street, resulting in a lack of pedestrian activity beyond Bosman Street.
- \_ The tourist infrastructure needs to be addressed. A lack of information undermines plans to increase tourism in the area.
- \_ The transportation of tourists between attraction points and the station also needs to be addressed

<sup>1</sup> Museum Park (2006)

## the built environment and spatial relationships in minnaar street

The height of buildings in Museum Park vary, with most of the buildings towards the west being three to four storeys high, and the housing blocks to the east having an average height of seven storeys. This is due to the residential zoning requirements of the area around Burgers Park. Few offices in Minnaar Street are exceptionally tall in relation to other buildings, the highest of these being fourteen storeys.



FIG 4.12:  
Views of Minnaar  
Street from the Old  
Fire Station Buildings

The building mass density in the area is much lower than that of the CBD, but increases rapidly north of Visagie Street towards Skinner Street, forming a strong barrier between the museum district and the CBD. Museum Park has provides very good opportunities for the development of small-scale open spaces with the potential to become urban 'pockets' used for parking as well as informal public activities.

Unfortunately, these spaces are poorly utilized, and there are only two public open spaces, both on a very large scale. All the other 'open spaces' are either vacant lots or on-site parking areas. The process of enhancing Minnaar Street through the use of identifiable landmarks and street furniture has made some progress. Simultaneously, development of the sidewalk has shifted the emphasis to pedestrian traffic. However, the street still does not relate properly to the scale of pedestrian activities and movement patterns. It lacks edge continuity and multi-functional smaller open spaces.



Buildings are set back from the street at various distances, with vast open areas in some cases, such as the space in front of the City Hall. However, much potential exists for the creation of better street edges and pedestrian street spaces. Rows of trees line both sides of the street, and parking is also provided. This fact relieves the amount of parking required on the site of the new design scheme that will be incorporated into this development. The area is generally under-utilized because of a lack of residential and commercial activities.

The Old Fire Station was replaced by the new Fire Station built on the south side of Minnaar Street, directly across from the old one. The Old Fire Station building was subsequently utilised to house ambulance services. At the time of the conversion of the Old Mint Building into the African Window, the ambulance services still occupied the premises and they refused any proposal by the City Council to develop the building. The Old Fire Station was therefore not included in the development of the block. For this reason, there are a number of links to the Old Fire Station, incorporated in the landscape design of the African Window, that terminate in dead ends. These already supply perfect opportunities to link the landscape design with the Old Fire Station.

The original building is highlighted in FIG 4.13. It included the Tower and Minnaar Street House.



THE OLD FIRE  
STATION BUILDING

4.9



FIG 4.14:  
Training Tower of the Old Fire Station





# historical background of the old fire station building



As mentioned before, the old ambulance building was originally designed as a fire station complex. After the new fire station was erected on the opposite (south-western) corner, the ambulance services moved into the complex. The complex was designed by Cowin & Powers Architects<sup>1</sup> and completed in 1912. It is situated on the corner and is one of the few buildings in the precinct that defines the street edge. The complex is two storeys high and interacts well with the topography of the surrounding buildings.

## ARCHITECTS:

The Archives of the Department of Architecture, University of Pretoria<sup>1</sup> state the following about the Old Fire Station Building architects:

"Cowin & Powers Architects started in 1912. This partnership between N.T. COWIN and E.M. POWERS in Pretoria from 1912 was first listed in 1913. The partnership was formed on winning the competition for the Central Fire Station in Bosman Street, Pretoria in 1912, probably in collaboration with JS CLELAND. The partners came second in the competition for the Boksburg Town Hall (1912), and won the competition limited to Transvaal Architects for the Dutch Reformed Church at Greylingstad in the same year, a competition adjudicated by Herbert BAKER. In 1919 they won the competition for the South African Party Club with a simple, solid classical design, characteristic of the period. In 1920 they were placed second in the competition for the 'Johannesburg University Building' (the Main Building, University of the Witwatersrand). The Roll of Honour for the Association of Transvaal Architects was designed by Cowin & Powers in 1920. In 1921, TG ELLIS joined the firm, the style of the firm becoming COWIN, POWERS & ELLIS."

<sup>1</sup> Archives of the Department of Architecture, University of Pretoria (2006)

FIG 4.15:  
Old Fire Station 1912, Bosman Street view





## choice of building type

The conservation and re-use of existing buildings in the inner city must be investigated to keep the character of the city alive. The existing Old Fire Station is standing partly empty, while a small part – only one room - is used as an information facility. Other facilities like accommodation, education laboratories and conference facilities are available on the premises, but the building is not utilized to its full potential.

A proposal has been made by the Museum Park Society in co-operation with the African Window to convert the building into a discovery museum for children. The Transvaal Museum, which is located 800 m from the site, is underutilized, and proposals are underway to develop parts of it to play a more interactive role. Therefore, it would seem a more viable option not to remove possibilities from the Transvaal Museum, but rather to increase the density of functions in the surrounding buildings. Turning the Old Fire Station into a children's museum would exacerbate the current underutilization of the Transvaal Museum.

The development of the Information Node would make visitors more aware of the surrounding activities that are available. The proposal would encourage the re-use of the existing buildings. The Fire Station has a robust internal layout, and can easily be converted. The spaces already lend themselves to accommodation, offices, retail and entertainment.

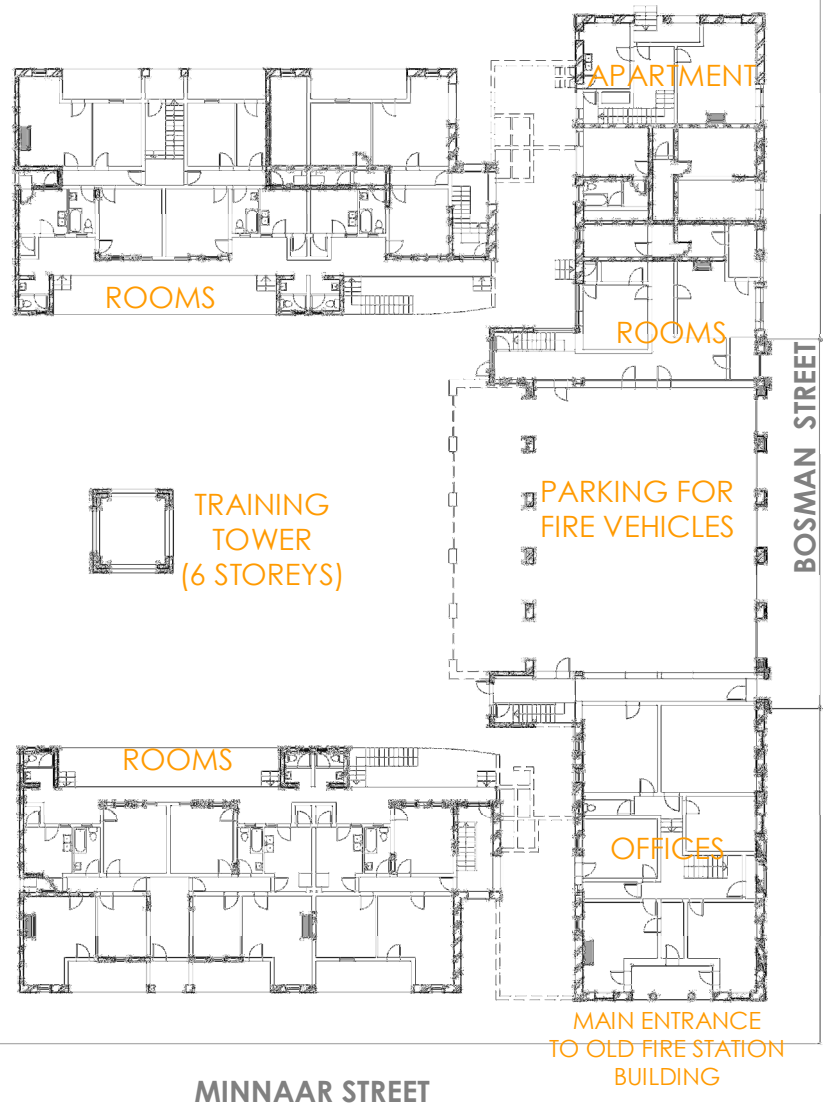
## architectural style, structure and material use of the building

This building has a historical, cultural and architectural value. It is in need of restoration, conservation and re-use.

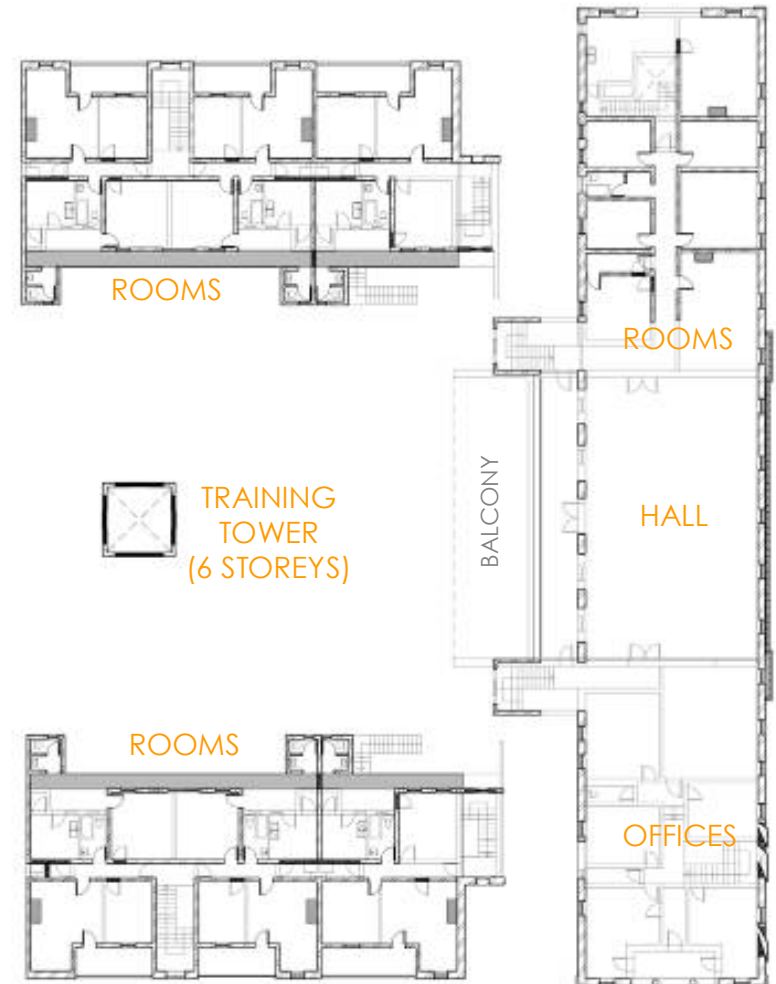
- \_The building is built in a U-shape and is placed close to Bosman and Minnaar Streets. The courtyard is open to the west.
- \_The double-storey façade facing Bosman Street is symmetrically designed around a central axis. This entrance or exit is well defined by a tower on the roof.
- \_Two identical wings on the northern and southern sides of the courtyard are aligned on a north-west axis.
- \_The Fire Station is structurally sound and relies on internal and external load-bearing walls.
- \_Wood-framed windows and doors, timber and granite floors and timber ceilings can in some places be recognized as original finishes.
- \_The original wooden doors of the vehicle entrances have been replaced by rolling steel doors.
- \_The original clay tiled roof has been replaced with corrugated iron sheeting which needs repainting. In some places the sheets as well as the waterproofing and gutters will have to be replaced.
- \_The clay brick walls are currently painted, except for those of the six-storey training tower.
- \_The section of the fire station presently in use is in good condition. It has been painted and the wooden floors renovated.
- \_The interior is in a dismal condition. In most places the paint is peeling and damp spots are noticeable.
- \_Steel moulded fireplaces with timber frames, square tiles and copper plates can still be seen in most of the rooms and offices. The fireplaces are in need of cleaning.
- \_Some of the electrical switchboard connections have been cut and will have to be rewired.
- \_Most of the toilets, except for those in use by the existing information centre, are unusable.



ground floor plan



first floor plan


 FIG 4.16:  
 Floor plans of the Old Fire Station building

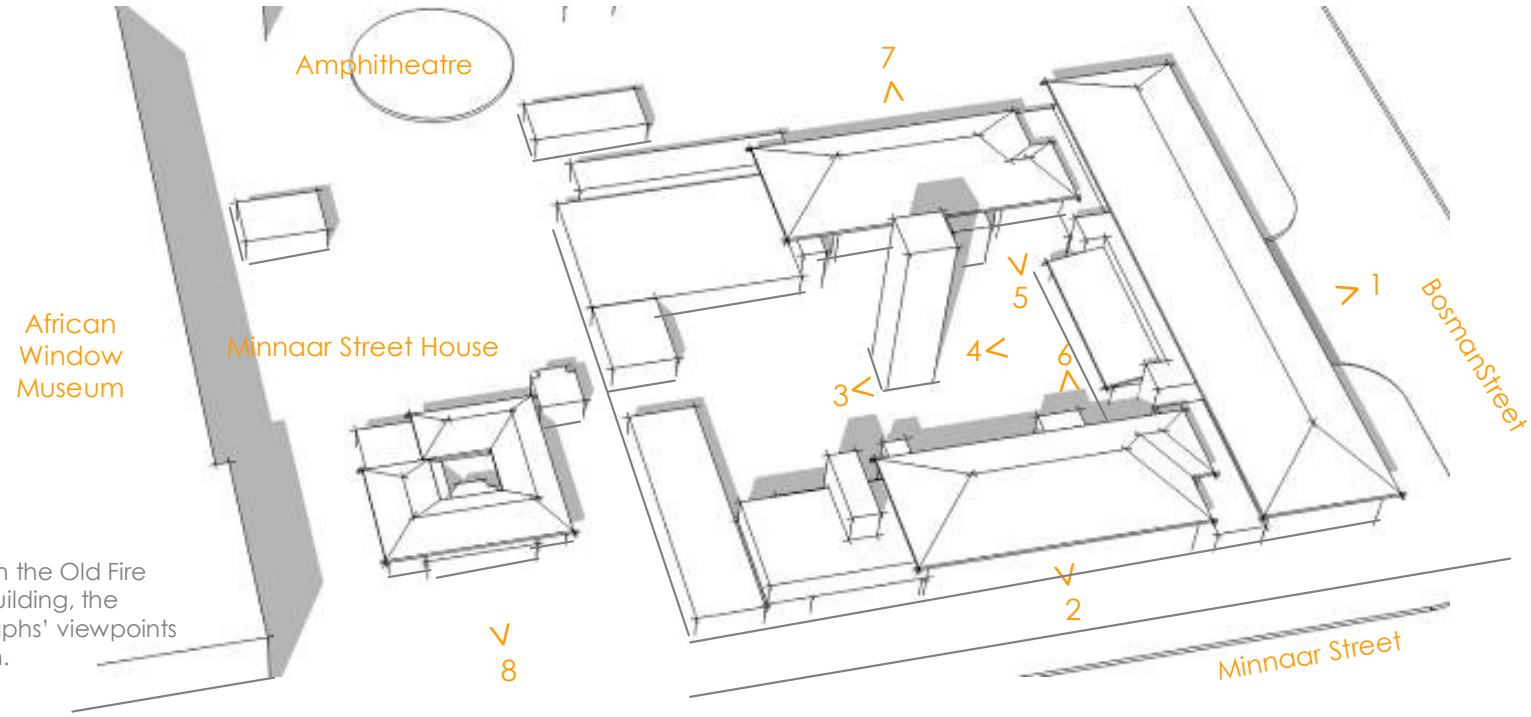



FIG 4.17:  
To explain the Old Fire  
Station Building, the  
photographs' viewpoints  
are given.



FIG 4.18:  
Eastern façade (Bosman Street)



FIG 4.19:  
Detail of entrances at eastern façade (Bosman Street)



FIG 4.20:  
Original ambulance sign (1912)





2



FIG 4.21:  
Balconies at south  
wing, facing towards  
Minnaar Street

FIG 4.22:  
Corner of Minnaar  
and Bosman Street



FIG 4.23:  
Minnaar Street:  
View to Bosman Street



FIG 4.24:  
View from information  
centre's entrance towards  
Minnaar Street House



FIG 4.25:  
Staircase and entrance  
into square from Minnaar  
Street (unused)

FIG 4.26:  
Signage and entrance  
of Tourist Centre



3



FIG 4.27:  
Training Tower  
(6 storeys high)

4



FIG 4.28:  
Balcony of Conference  
hall facing into square

FIG 4.29:  
View of garages and  
conference hall from square



FIG 4.30:  
View of garages and  
conference hall with balcony



5



FIG 4.31:  
Northern wing and garages  
viewed from inside the square



FIG 4.32:  
Northern wing viewed  
from inside the square

6



FIG 4.33:  
Information centre  
entrance from square

FIG 4.34:  
Additional staircase  
to upper floor



FIG 4.35:  
Southern wing viewed  
from inside the square





8





FIG:4.41:  
Two old fire trucks still on site



FIG 4.42:  
View to original entrance of  
the Old Fire Station Building



FIG 4.43:  
Original staircase with face brick walls  
(some painted white) and window detail



FIG 4.44:  
Conference hall with original  
timber roof and floor



FIG 4.45:  
Original timber floors and  
fireplaces in some offices and rooms



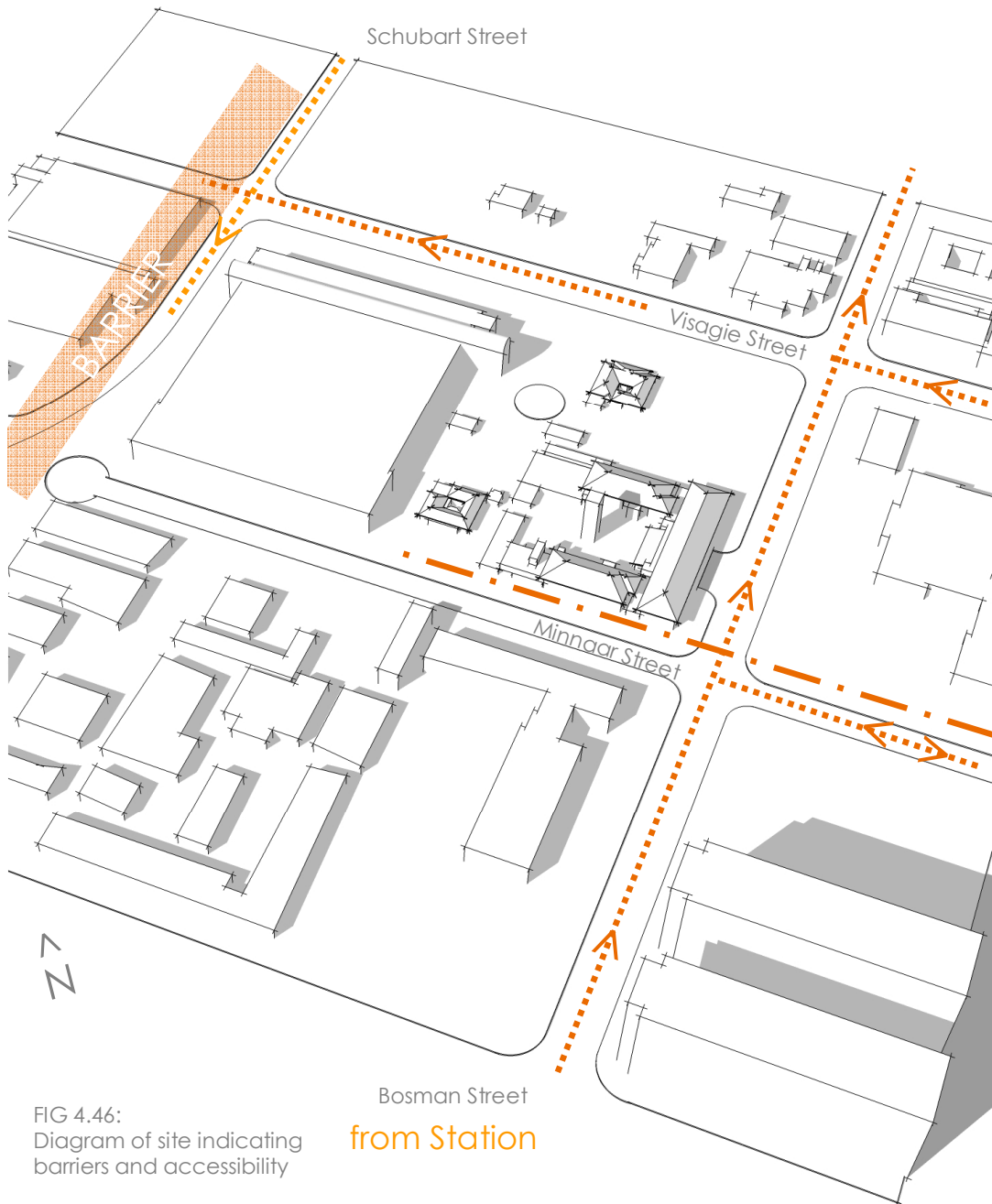


FIG 4.46:  
Diagram of site indicating  
barriers and accessibility

Bosman Street  
from Station

## SITE ANALYSIS

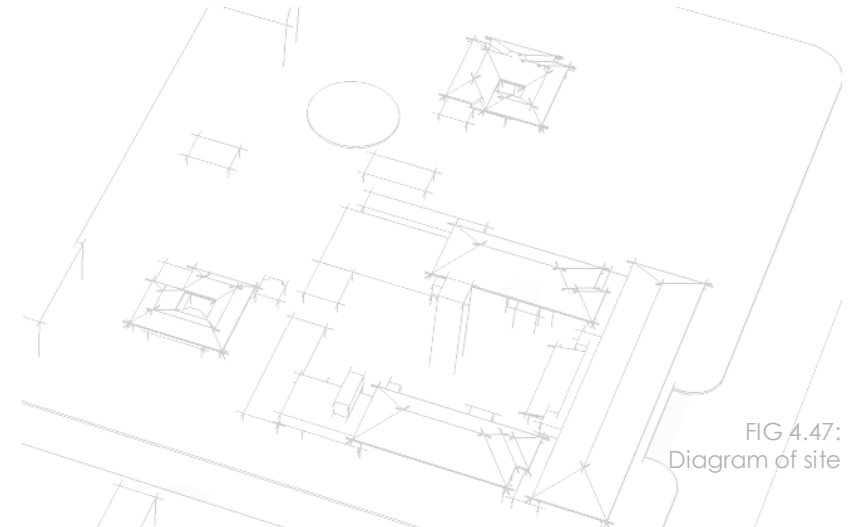
4.10

**LINKAGE:** Linkage represents the glue of the city. It is the act by which all the layers of activity and resulting physical form of the city are united. Urban design is concerned with creating comprehensible links between the following:

- \_visual linkage between the City Hall and Transvaal Museum;
- \_linkage between the Pretoria Station and tourist attractions;
- \_linkage between Church Square and the Pretoria Station;
- \_linkage between Church Square and tourist attractions.

**BARRIERS:** Schubart Street acts as a physical barrier that prevents the extension of the Museum Park in a westerly direction.

**ACCESSIBILITY:** The site is centrally located and easily accessible from the station. Pedestrian accessibility from Paul Kruger Street is encouraged by the pedestrian-friendly Minnaar Street. The traffic in Bosman Street moves in a northerly direction due to it being a one way street. This creates rapid movement past the site and needs to be considered in the design process. Museum Park enhances pedestrian activity along the streets. High levels of pedestrian movement take place around the site.


 FIG 4.47:  
 Diagram of site

#### NOISE POLLUTION:

The site is protected from major traffic noise disturbances. The eastern side borders Bosman Street, which becomes very busy during rush hour traffic. The thick walls of the old building, however, blocks out most of the noise pollution.

#### VISUAL CHARACTER AT NIGHT:

The visual character of Museum Park at night is important for determining the actual value of night-time activity. At present, activity in the evening is located more towards the eastern residential area, but does permeate the area towards the City Hall where people move down Paul Kruger Street. Minnaar Street is very quiet at night, especially towards the western end. The visual quality of the site in the evening must be designed carefully and with deliberate consideration as Museum Park may become increasingly utilized after hours.

In *The Image of the City*<sup>1</sup> Lynch describes how people 'image' the city, that is, how they create and remember mental images of the large-scale environments in which they live. He focuses on how people think about the structure of their cities. From verbal and pictorial accounts, he derives five basic elements<sup>1</sup> of the city image: PATH, NODE, LANDMARK, DISTRICT and EDGE..

The contents of city images needed for successful human interaction can be classified into these five types of elements. They can be applied to any urban environment, as they are derived from a study of human needs and activity patterns. These five would be useful in any context of spatial division.<sup>1</sup>

Museum Park forms a district that is already improving the legibility of the surrounding area. Through further applications of design, the area can potentially become easily legible in the urban context.

<sup>1</sup> Lynch (1960:46)

## PATHS: *The channels along which people move.*<sup>1</sup>

The site is easily accessible. A diversity of tourists and cultures move through the area on a daily basis. The site can easily be accessed by vehicle, train or on foot. This fact reduces the required number of parking bays needed in the area. The train and bus stations are in close proximity to the site. The main point of entry for tourists into Tshwane is the Pretoria Station.<sup>2</sup> The Blue Train, Rovos Rail, Touring Couches, Spoornet trains (and soon the Gautrain) transport tourists to and from Tshwane.

All the routes surrounding the site are major vehicular routes. Visagie, Paul Kruger and Schubart Streets are prominent vehicular routes and form the main eastern exits from the city centre. Currently, the main entrance to the African Window is on Visagie Street. This poses a problem in terms of the circulation in the streets surrounding the site. All the streets, except for Minnaar Street, are one-ways and if the entrance is missed one has to make a long round trip to return. It makes more sense to allow for pedestrian entrances from all the surrounding streets. This will also increase the use of street parking.

High levels of pedestrian activity take place around the site, which will increase with the development of Museum Park. Paul Kruger and Bosman Streets are also heavily used pedestrian paths from the Pretoria Station to the centre of town. On entering the site via the pedestrian entrance in Bosman Street, one moves through the pergola along Visagie Street House. One encounters the entrance to the African Window after passing the amphitheatre. If the site could be entered from Minnaar, Bosman and Visagie Streets, pedestrian movement through the site will be encouraged. The permeability of the site will be improved if the add-on buildings of the Old Fire Station were to be demolished. This would enhance interaction between the existing buildings on the site. Spaces could then cater for movement through the site.

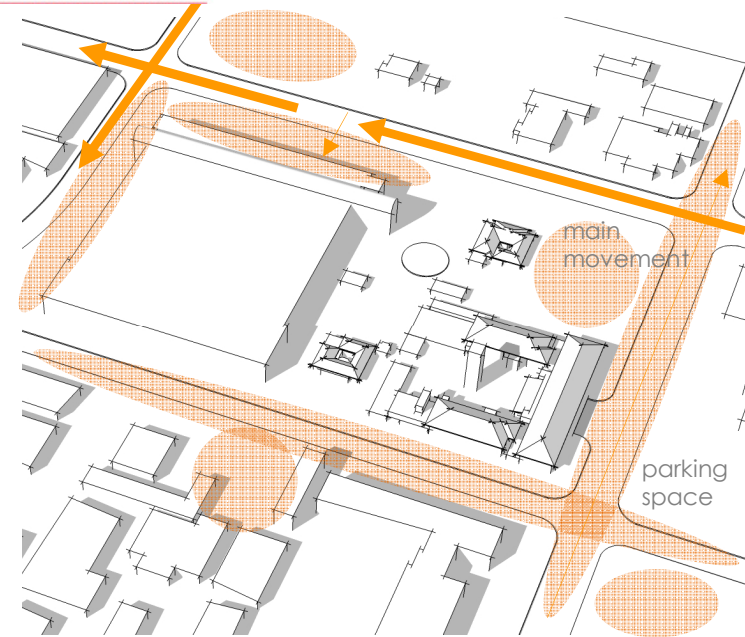


FIG 4.48: Vehicle movement and parking

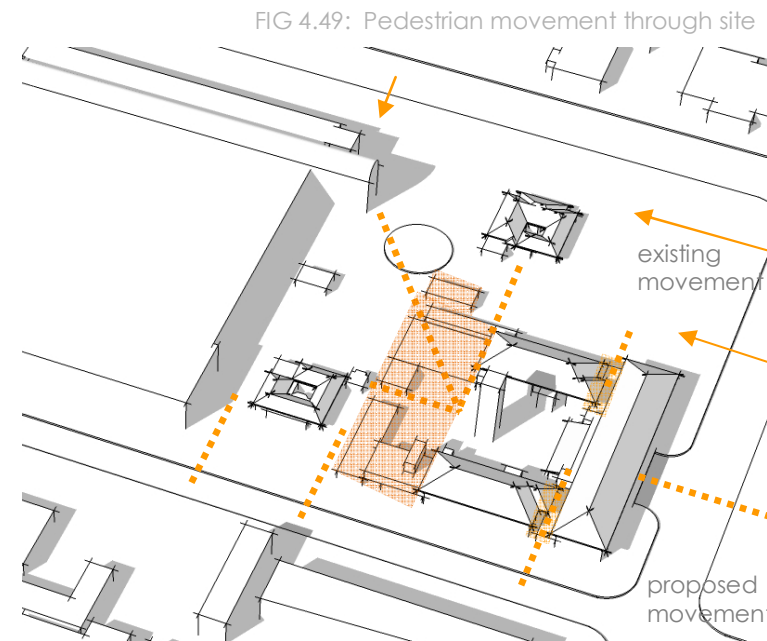


FIG 4.49: Pedestrian movement through site

1 Lynch (1960:46)

2 Fitzpatrick (2006:440)

**NODES:** *Points in the city where paths meet or cross, experienced as points which the observer can enter. The node is a place that creates a space of activity.*<sup>1</sup>

The precinct in which the site is located accommodates important transportation nodes. The only prominent nodes in the whole of Museum Park area are the Pretoria and Bosman Street Stations. The Pretoria Station is within walking distance from the site. Taxi ranks are located in the area, but taxis are not predominantly considered as a mode of transport for tourists.

Pretorius Square, if defined more clearly and designed to accommodate a diversity of activities, could act as a node space. There clearly exists a strong need and great potential for activity nodes within the Museum Park development. Therefore, nodes should be carefully considered and incorporated. Designing functions surrounding the edges of these nodes will improve legibility in terms of spaces of public gathering and the usage of these spaces.

The current nodes on the site are the African Window Museum. At least one conference a day is held at the facility. The Museum, amphitheatre and two houses do not interact with each other. By demolishing the add-on buildings between the Old Fire Station and the rest of the site, the node could be used to its full potential by giving access to the whole site from four streets. The design will further define and incorporate the functions of the existing buildings on the site.

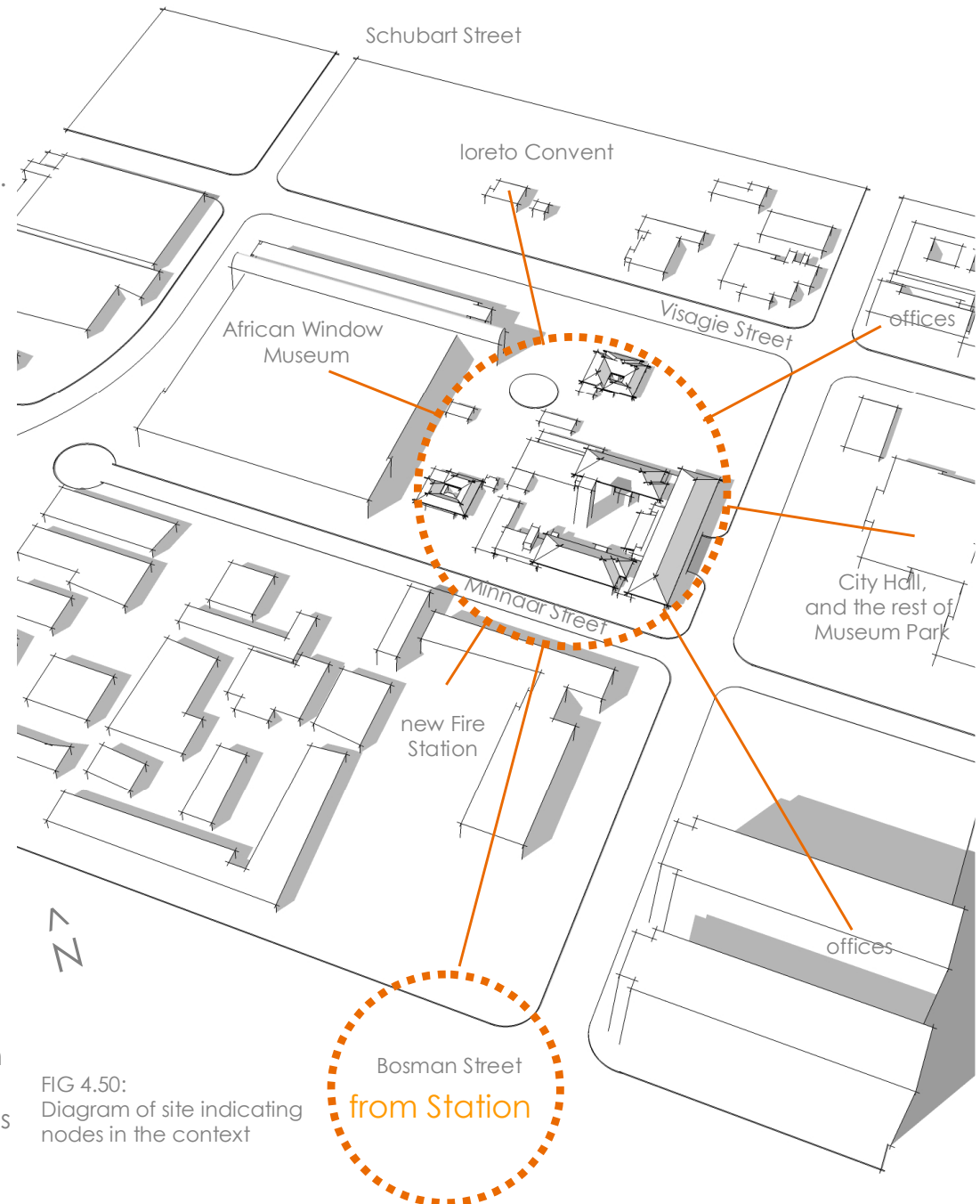


FIG 4.50:  
Diagram of site indicating  
nodes in the context

<sup>1</sup> Lynch (1960:46)



**LANDMARK:** *Physical reference points used for orientation within the city. They are experienced externally and the observer does not enter them as in the case of nodes.*<sup>1</sup>

The site allows easy legibility as the African Window stands as a landmark on the main movement routes that surround the site. The Old Fire Station forms a strong corner building and edge, and can be seen as a landmark building. The training tower also acts as a landmark but can easily be missed. The visibility of the tower will be improved by the new development. The City Hall and the Transvaal Museum can also be regarded as landmarks. The visual connection of both landmarks adds to the legibility of the site. At night the lights at the entrance of the African Window Museum draw attention to the building as a landmark. The same technique should be used for the Old Fire Station tower. Visuals are important for nocturnal movement and legibility.

**DISTRICT:** *Areas with a similar spatial and visual character. They are perceived as having some common identifiable character.*<sup>1</sup>

The greater part of Museum Park is a district on its own because of the mixture of cultural and institutional functions it contains. It is surrounded by districts which all differ in character. To the east are located the residential areas around Burgers Park; to the north are large-scale office developments and the south consists mostly of transport and informal trading areas.

The potential of the site is limitless and the Information Node proposal is well suited to the site. The Information Node will complement the focus on information, conservation and education in the area. The conservation aspect would be realized not only by the re-use of the existing buildings on the site but also by increasing the awareness of South African heritage within Tshwane and the tourism field.

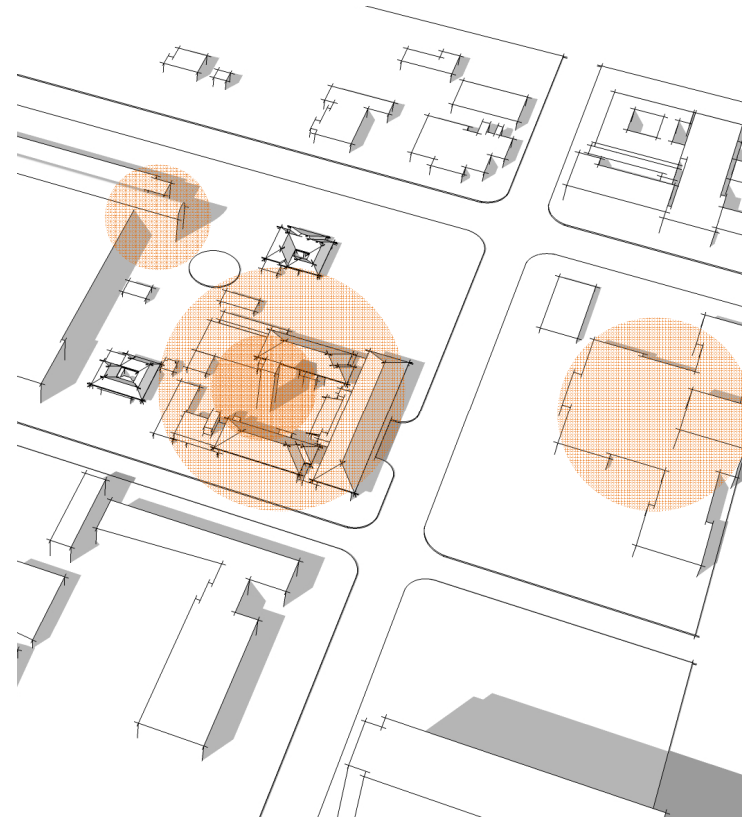


FIG 4.51: Diagram of site indicating landmarks in the context

<sup>1</sup> Lynch (1960:46)



**EDGE:** *Linear elements not considered as paths by the observer. They are boundaries between two phases or breaks in continuity.*<sup>1</sup>

Along the north side of Visagie Street, buildings form an edge that defines Museum Park clearly. The only other clearly defined spatial edge is formed by a group of taller buildings towards the south of the City Hall site. The City Hall defines the edge of Bosman Street rather ineffectively.

The edge of Minnaar Street is well defined by the Old Fire Station. The set-back of the defining edge at Minnaar Street House indicates the approach to an entrance. The pergola indicates movement from the pedestrian entrance to the African Window. The wall dividing the surrounding sites and activities from the Old Fire Station will be removed, allowing its façade to become the edge of the node. The other edges to the space will be designed so as to allow activities to spill out onto the space.

The fence along the Bosman Street edge will be removed so that the eastern façade of the Old Fire Station building can become a new edge. The removal of the garage doors will establish a visual link with pedestrians as well as vehicles in Bosman Street. Privacy will be achieved by the horizontal distance when the space is opened up, and will attract people to the square. The edges should encourage activity and promote pedestrian movement.

<sup>1</sup> Lynch (1960:46)

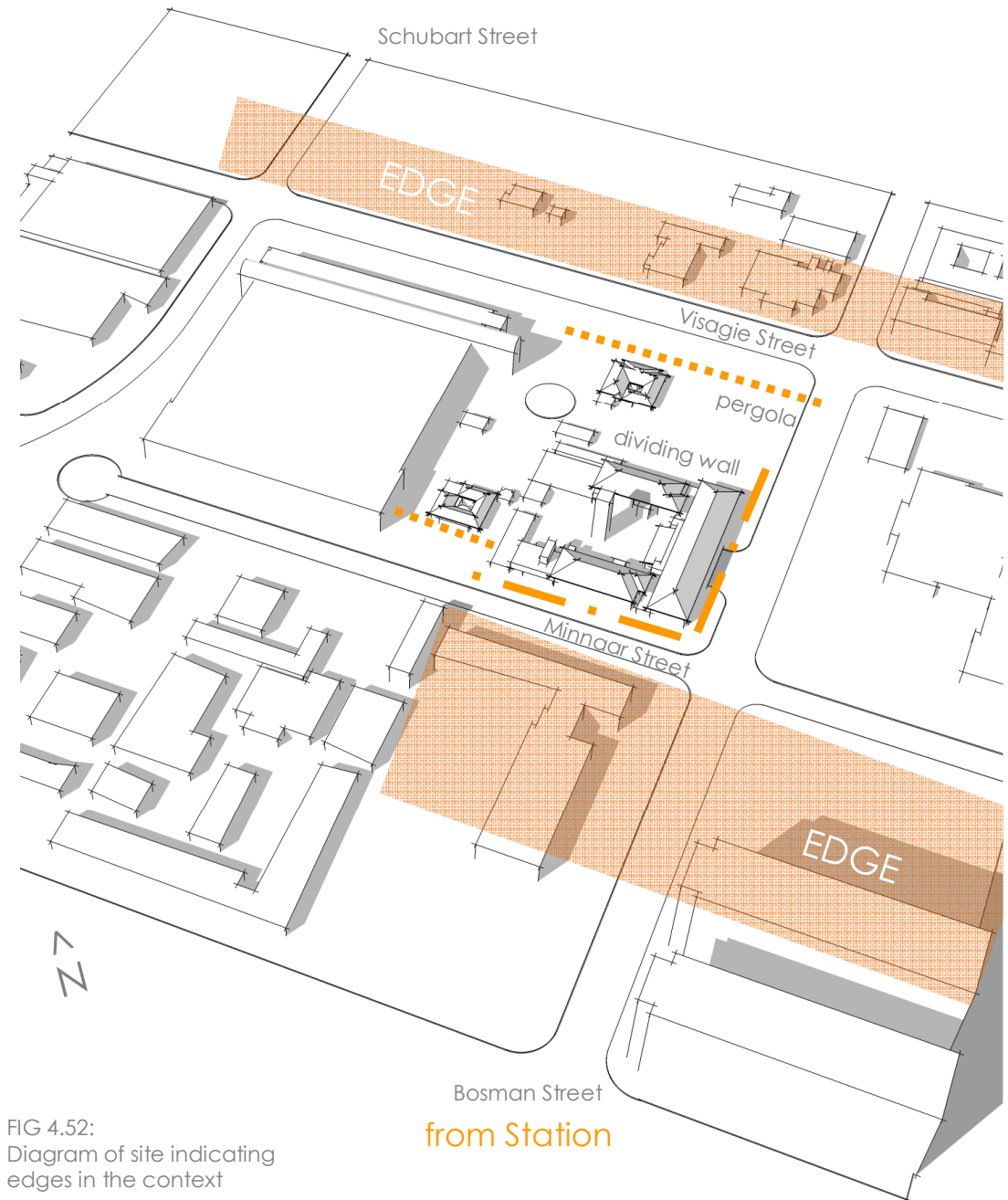


FIG 4.52:  
Diagram of site indicating  
edges in the context

Bosman Street  
from Station

## CONCLUSION

4.11

The Fire Station is already associated with an information centre and is clearly visible from all major routes and tourist activities. The spaces already lend themselves to both public and private areas that will complement the Metropolitan Activity Nodes<sup>2</sup> that form part of the development strategy of the Tshwane Spatial Development plan.

Metropolitan activity nodes<sup>2</sup> can be defined as the following:

“Centres of economic activity as far as business enterprises in the city are concerned. These are retail and office centres, which should provide opportunities for a wide range of business types and sizes. As far as possible, these nodes should be physically and functionally integrated with and around major railway stations. Metropolitan Activity Nodes should be the highest order activity nodes in the metropolitan area with the highest concentration of residential, commercial, social, cultural and other general urban activities.”

They should be characterised by:

- \_high intensity and high density mixed land uses;
- \_highest levels of accessibility;
- \_24 hour activity;
- \_well-defined public spaces;
- \_pedestrian-friendly environments;
- \_public transport facilities and activities.<sup>2</sup>

Metropolitan activity nodes should be extended into high density, mixed-use activity spines along certain vehicular public transport routes.<sup>1</sup> The site and the existing building can be classified according to all the above criteria, thus the conclusion can be drawn that the site is well suited to accommodate an Information Node.

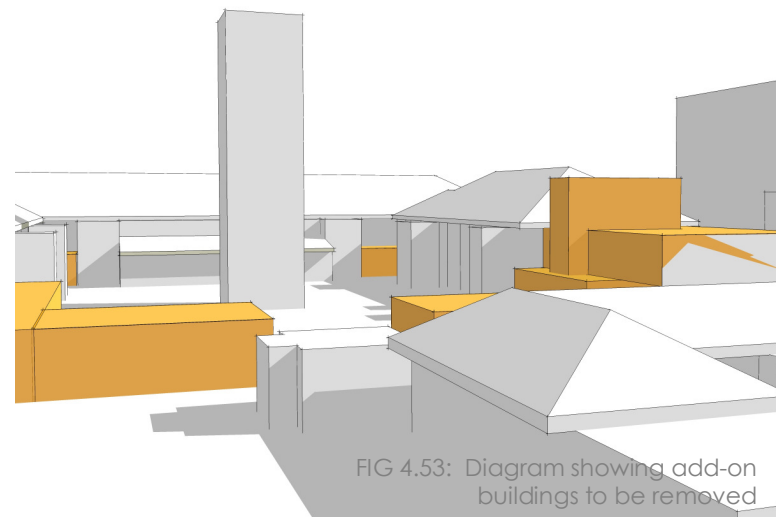


FIG 4.53: Diagram showing add-on buildings to be removed

2 City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality (2007:18)