

Interfacing Marabastad

A public facility generated from the rituals associated with transport interchanges.

INTERFACE: *The place where independent and often unrelated systems meet*

(Tschumi, 1994:270)

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A public facility generated from the rituals associated with transport interchanges

inter- (in'-ter) *prefix.* between, among, with, amid

Most South African cities bear the mark of Apartheid planning; with large sectors of society being geographically isolated from job opportunities. Tshwane is one such city; developing over time from a system of segregation and social exclusion, to a policy of integration under the formation of the Government of National Unity in 1994. Countless commuters travel to the city over distances reaching as far as Soshanguve and Khadubeng. Unsurprisingly “many new projects built with post-apartheid public funding work around points of mobility such as transport interchanges” (le Roux, 2003:17). Improving public transport facilities is the most apparent symbol of integration.

This dissertation aims to exploit the concept of social integration and advancement of previously disadvantaged people through designing an adequate public transport facility. Situated north-west of Pretoria (the Tswane CBD area), Marabastad is an area that presents the opportunity for a development of this kind. Aligning with important nodes and major routes passing through the city, not only poses potential for development in the public transport sector but also the promotion of Marabastad as a significant symbol of the rich cultural heritage of South Africa. The current precinct is extremely run down and viewed as a slum by its inhabitants and visitors alike. Public open space is deficient, no facilities are provided for hawkers and homeless people and basic services such as water and sanitation are non-existent. The Pretoria ISDF (1999:2) identifies Marabastad as an area in need of “urgent urban intervention”.

The building will be designed to accommodate evolving functions, generated from the rituals associated with transport interchanges. Acting as a gateway to the city, the building is functionally diverse. It offers access to public toilets, opportunities for informal trade, an informal overnight sleeping area, formal taxi ranking facilities, and a social gathering place. The development will also include a community hall, storage facilities, rentable office space, an eatery, mechanics workshop, and other public amenities associated with taxi ranking.

A program is generated for a building through the superimposition of existing rituals and processes occurring on and around the site. A sense of place is naturally spawned from existing fabric over time. This process of creating place can be directed by designing facilities that offer opportunities for evolution and appropriation. The project will focus simultaneously on the formal and informal aspects of places for social gathering, such as transport interchanges. The challenge lies in the incorporation of the formal and informal to create a social facility with a sense of place for the community, as well as a sense of permanence and integration. The building acts as an envelope creating spaces which allow activities to develop unofficially and spontaneously while bearing a great sense of formality and certainty.

The site acts as a catalyst for future development of this in-between that is Marabastad

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introduction

The non-Western view of self can be described as interdependent, located within a social context. Boundaries between individuals are less sharply drawn as individuals are “*more dependent on group characteristics*” (Madanipour, 2003:20). The notion of public gathering is apparent in African cultures and can no longer be overlooked. South African cities lack sufficient public facilities; they are either non-existent, inadequate, or merely in a state of deterioration. Activities that seem to develop unofficially and spontaneously, bear a great sense of formality and certainty and are generally more successful than most enforced interventions.

The natural gatherings of people at city markets, transport interchanges and on street sidewalks are inevitable and have to be emphasized in the South African context. Most South African cities bear the mark of Apartheid planning; with large sectors of society being geographically isolated from job opportunities.

Tshwane is one such city; developing over time from a system of segregation and social exclusion, to a policy of integration under the formation of the Government of National Unity in 1994. Unsurprisingly “*many new projects built with post-apartheid public funding work around points of mobility such as transport interchanges*” (le Roux, 2003:17).

Improving public transport facilities is the most apparent symbol of integration.

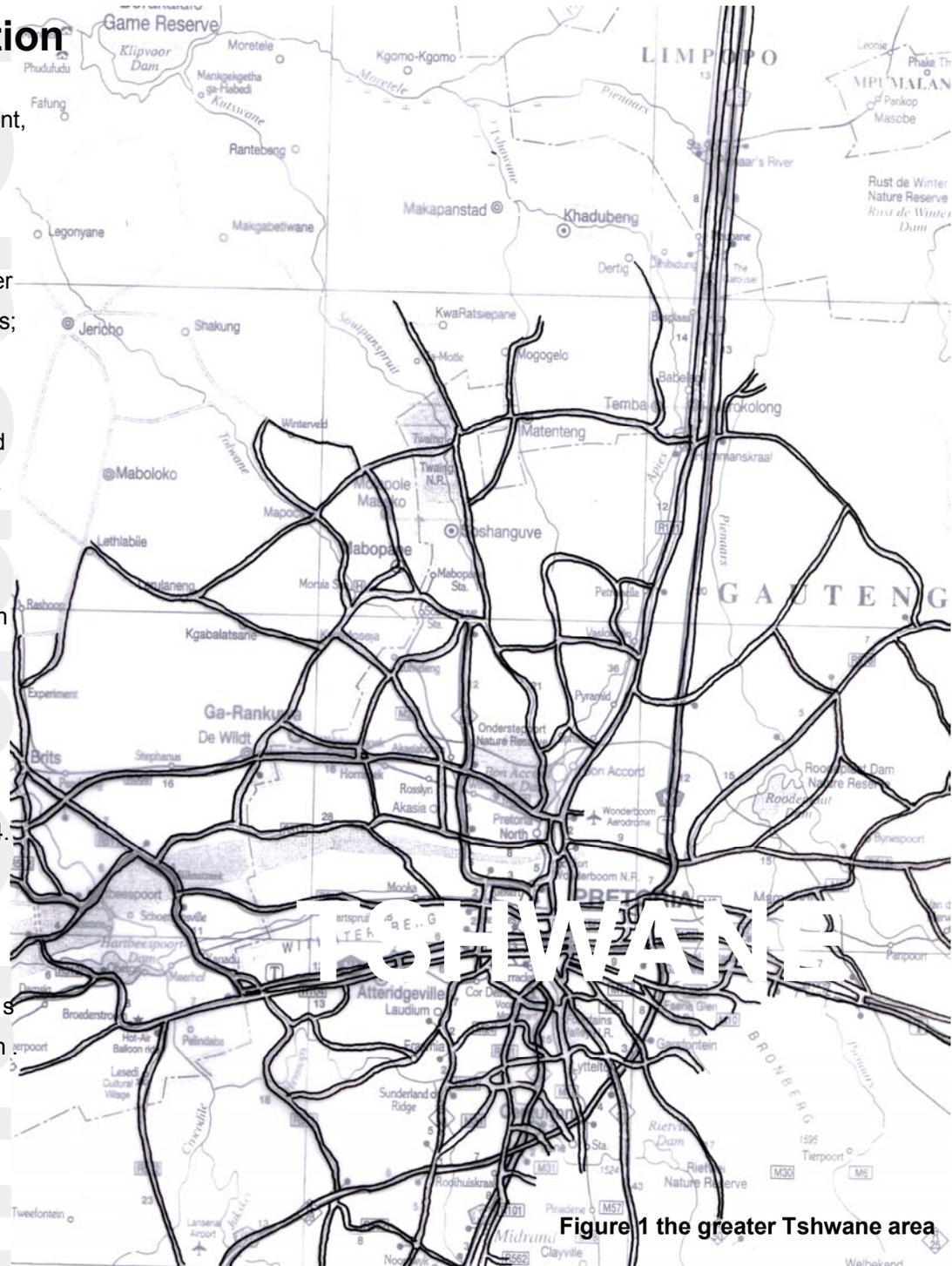


Figure 1 the greater Tshwane area

This dissertation aims to exploit the concept of **social integration** and advancement of previously disadvantaged people through designing **an adequate public transport facility**. Situated north-west of Pretoria (the Tswane CBD area), Marabastad is an area that presents the opportunity for a development of this kind.

The building will be designed to accommodate evolving functions, generated from the rituals associated with transport interchanges. A sense of place is naturally spawned from existing fabric over time. This process of creating place can be directed by designing facilities that offer opportunities for evolution and appropriation. The project will focus simultaneously on the formal and informal aspects of places for social gathering, such as transport interchanges. The challenge lies in the incorporation of the formal and informal to create a social facility with a **sense of place** for the community, as well as a sense of **permanence and integration**.

Marabastad, sited on the border of the CBD, can in itself be seen as an interface; a crossing point, an edge and a boundary. Acting as a gateway to the city, the building ought to be **functionally diverse**. It should offer access to public toilets, opportunities for informal trade, an informal overnight sleeping area, formal taxi ranking facilities, and a social gathering place. The development will also include a community hall, storage facilities, rentable office space, an eatery, mechanics workshop, and other public amenities associated with taxi ranking.

The intervention should aim to satisfy the basic requirements of a public facility