The Meso Scale

Currently, the selected site on erf no 103 is owned by the Department of Public Works (DPW). The Old Synagogue, built in 1897, and its later additions are situated on the southern edge of the erf. A second-hand car dealership, Struben Street Motors, located on the north-western corner of the intersection, is renting a small portion of the land from the Department. According to the staff at the dealership,[1] Struben Street Motors is in the process of negotiating the purchase of the land from the Department of Public Works. The status of the negotiations is unknown. The site south of the synagogue is vacant and is used for parking, while directly behind the synagogue, the Sita buildings are to be found.

1. Staff at Struben Street Motors March 2007: personal interview

Figure 6.01. Panoramic view of site and surrounding context

Pretoria's Climatic Data:

Global Position:
25.77° S & 28.11°E
Average Annual Rainfall:
700-750mm
Sun Angles (12:00 solar time):
Summer solstice: 64.23°
Winter Solstice: 40.73°
Winds:
Summer: predominantely north-easterly, south-easterly
Winter:
South-westerly
Temperatures:
Summer max av: 28.6°
Summer min av: 17.4°
Winter max av: 19.1°
Winter min av: 4.5

(Holm 1996:69-73)

paul kruger street

south

proes street

proposed child/family court

parking area

1940s

castle carey clinic

struben street motors

war college

department of transport

panagos building

food exhibition box

maano craft shop

princess park school

government printers

liquor store

apollo restaurant and take away

department of correctional services

Figure 6.02. Panagos Building dating from 1940s

department of home affairs

jansen house

proposed art gallery

proposed department of education

propsed tram station

selected site

new national library

the Old Synagogue

proposed public square

sita buildings

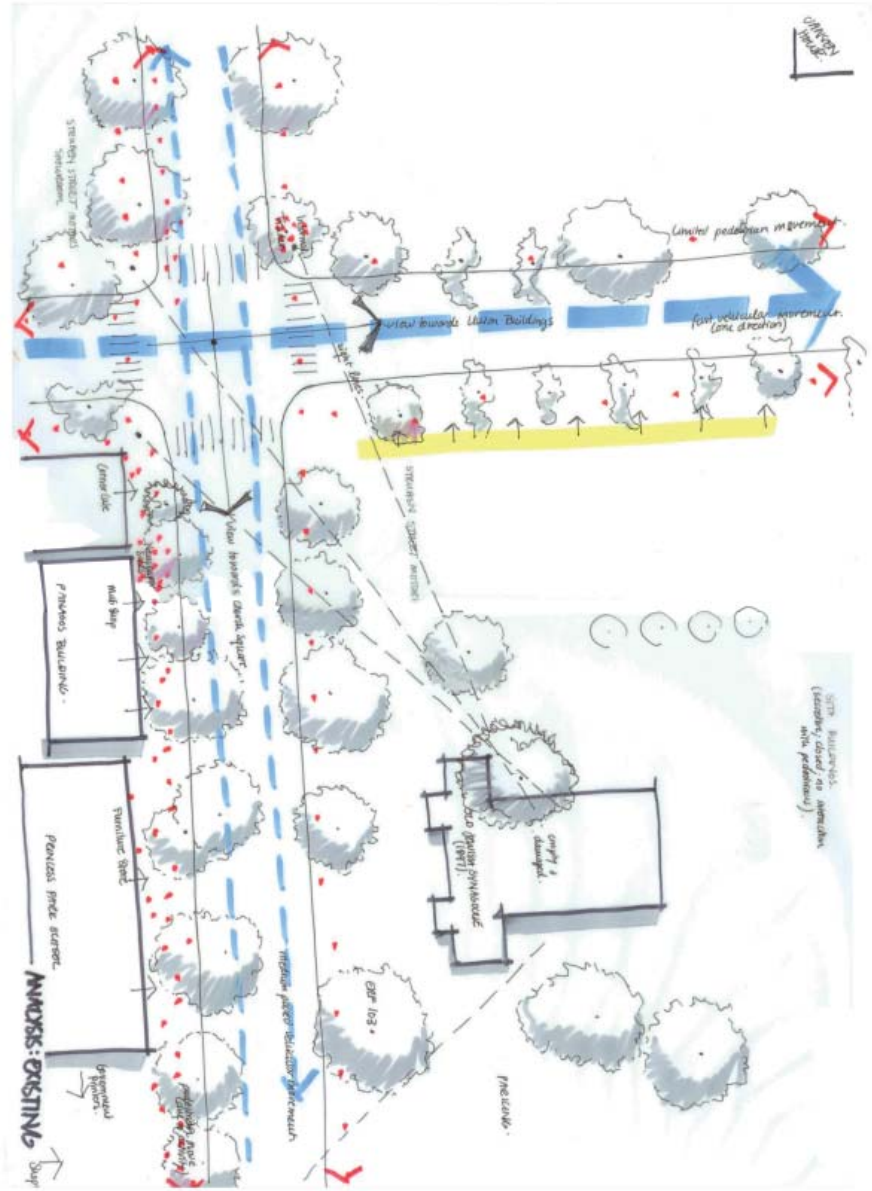
proposed child/ family court

parking

koopkrag gebou

deutscher verein

Figure 6.03. Aerial photograph of site and historical context


Limited pedestrian movement
First vehicular movement (one direction)
Visual towards Urban Buildings
Urban Interface Church Square
Pedestrian Buildings
Mall Strip
Pedestrian Strip
Furniture Store
Pedestrian Fence Access
ANALYSIS: EXISTING
Shop
Shop
Shop

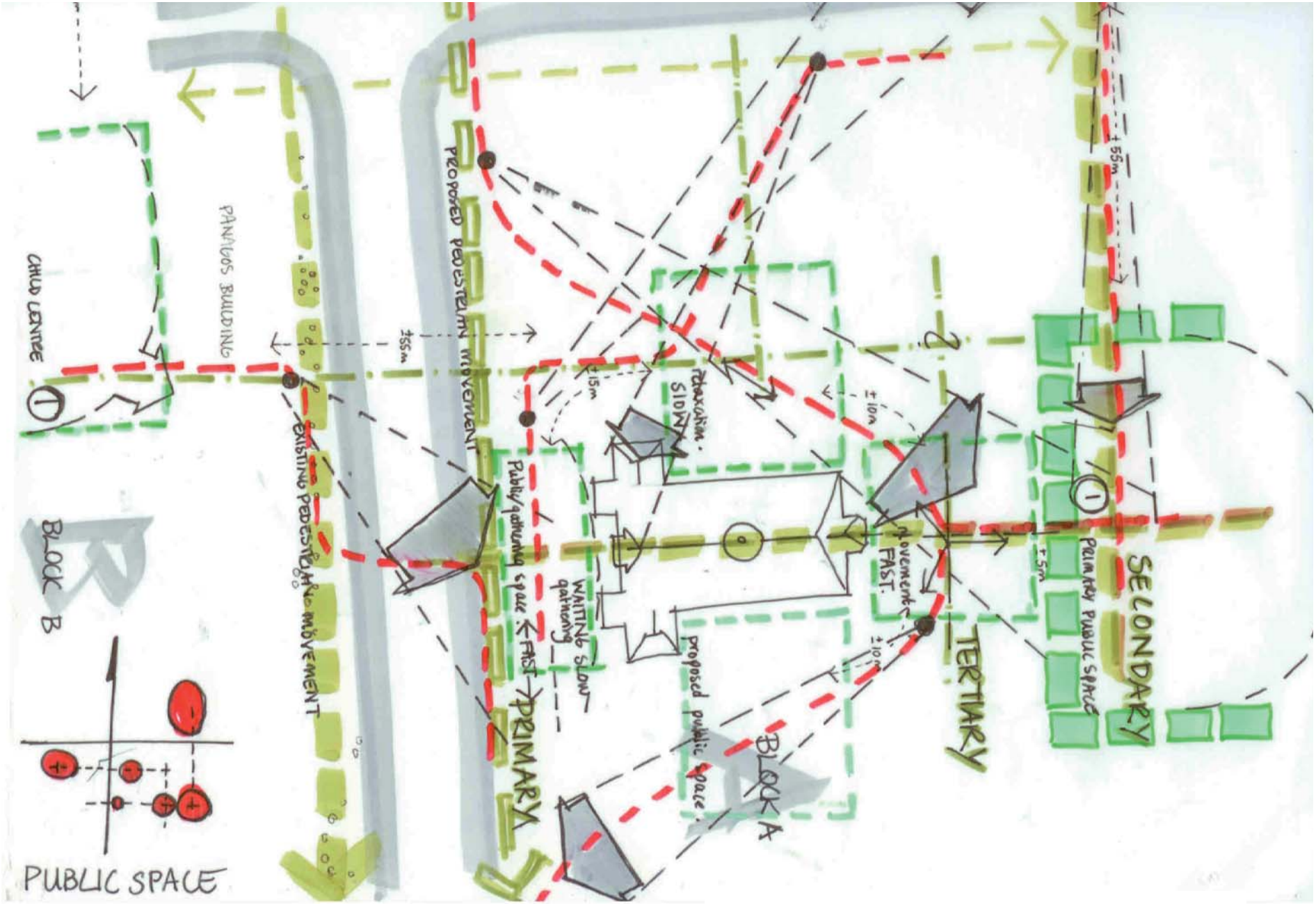


Figure 6.05. Analysis of public spaces and desired relative patterns

Surrounding Buildings

Several buildings of significant heritage value surround the site. The Old Synagogue is the most valuable due to its political history. The Panagos Building, dating from 1880s,[2] is the oldest remaining commercial building in the city and is situated opposite the site on the south-western corner of the intersection. Other buildings include the Jansen House at 21 Struben Street, dating from 1888, and the War College, previously the Boulevard Hotel.

The eight-storey Princess Park College is directly opposite the Old Synagogue, from where a second-hand furniture store operates on the ground floor. South of the college, the government printers, a liquor store, the Apollo 11 take-away restaurant and coffee shop, as well as the Department of Correctional Services, are located.

Pedestrian movement on the northern portion of the Paul Kruger Street spine is minimal due to the lack of street-side activities. Most pedestrian movement takes place on the western edge of Paul Kruger Street and peters out as it reaches the threshold of Struben Street. Only those that are en-route to the Belle Ombre Station (located on the north-western fringe of the inner city) continue beyond this point. Most pedestrian traffic (moving north-south) is concentrated along Van der Walt Street due to the taxi rank located at its most northern point.

Government Departments on Struben Street

Several government departments are located in the area. The Department of Transport and the Department of Home Affairs' offices are located on Struben Street, west of Paul Kruger Street, while the new National Library,[3] situated at the intersection with Andries Street, was nearing com-

2. Conflicting sources: according to Meiring (1980:33), the Panagos Building was built in 1880, while Panagos (2007: personal interview) maintains it was built in 1897

3. National Library of South Africa, Pretoria Campus by the Department of Arts and Culture. Project managers: The DPW; Architects: Jeremy Malan Architects CC, Impendulo Design Architects and Ghandi Maseko Architects CC (Architects Board on site)

pletion at the time of writing. It has been proposed that the Department of Education is to move to the currently empty north-eastern corner of the Paul Kruger Street intersection,[4] and be built in a south-facing U-shape that encloses the public space on which the Jansen House is located. Clearing of the site has commenced.

Historic context according to David Panangos

According to David Panagos,[5] who grew up in one of the apartments on the second floor of the Panagos Building (refer to figure 3.02), the area used to be vibrant, consisting of a fine residential urban grain. Several boarding houses and hotels, which housed temporary workers from the surrounding rural areas, existed in the area. These included the Boulevard and Annexe Rusoord Hotels on Struben Street and the Castle Carey Clinic on the corner of Proes and Paul Kruger Street. The area was predominantly residential, with small houses lining the streets. Today, only the Jansen House remains. It is here that David Panagos met his wife Anne, who grew up living in the Jansen House. David Panagos remembers the bakery diagonally opposite the Panagos Building and the minister's house where the Old Synagogue's cantor, Mr. Zwick, lived. (refer to figure 7.01)

According to Panagos,[6] the Annexe Rusoord Hotel was located on the northern edge of Struben Street, approximately four houses down from the Jansen House. There also is a record of the Castle Carey Clinic at no 100 Paul Kruger Street, located on the corner of Proes and Struben streets, south of the synagogue. It also operated as a boarding house for those temporarily employed in the inner city. Today, only the Boulevard Hotel, out of all the buildings dating from that period, remains, albeit with another function

4. Barbir 2007: personal interview

5. Panagos 2007: personal interview

6. Panagos 2007: personal interview

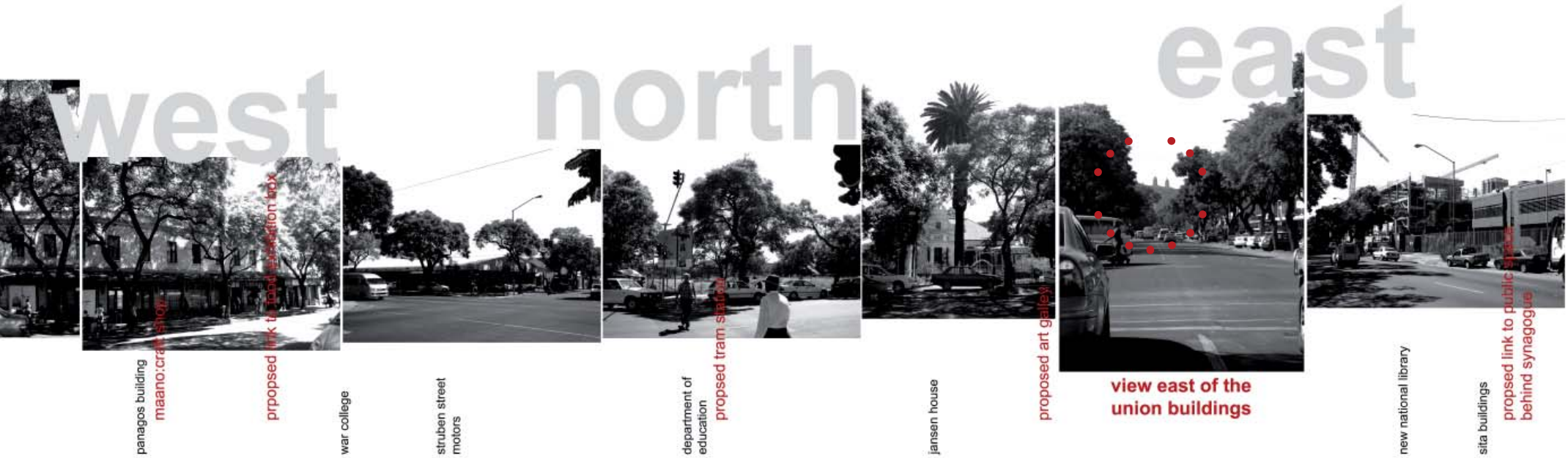


Figure 6.06 Panoramic collage of buildings surrounding site

The Threshold

When approaching the site from the north, building heights are mostly single and double storey. The buildings on site do not generally contribute to the activities in the street. The activities that do take place in this area are more informal in character. This northern portion of the city is scattered with large, empty sites and dilapidated buildings. South of the intersection with Struben Street, the context changes dramatically. While the heights of the buildings increase, the streets become clearly defined by urban edges. The street image takes preference over orientation and allows activities to contribute to the energy on the street. Struben Street, therefore, acts as the threshold between the perceived north and the inner city. It separates the formal from the informal.

The dilapidated Old Synagogue, located within the 'boundary', gives the perception that the more neglected north is encroaching on the inner city.

The synagogue as a symbol of decay

The selected site is located on the boundary between the urban part of the city and the partially neglected northern portion. The Old Synagogue, that embodies religious, cultural and political history and heritage, is symbolic of the decay evident in the north. The building itself is in a dilapidated state and is surrounded by a 3m barbed wire fence after homeless people in search of warmth and shelter set the interior balustrade alight. According to Pyke,[7] chief architect of heritage assets management at the DPW, Pretorians are aware of the significant value of the building and its ever-increasing decay. Without an appropriate proposal for the building and the required funding to restore and maintain it, the Old Synagogue will remain vacant and will continue to allow the decay of the inner city to persist.

7. Pyke 2007: personal interview

Figure 6.07 Figure ground study

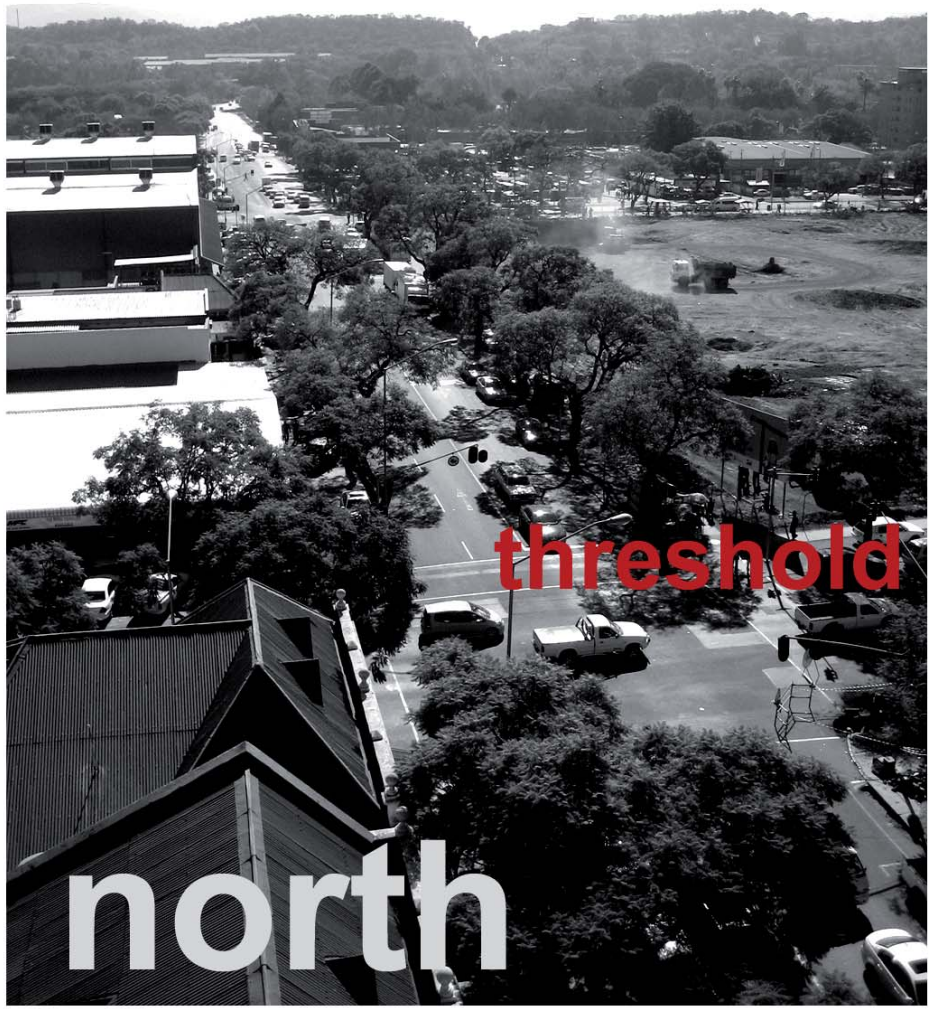


Figure 6.08 View north of threshold

south

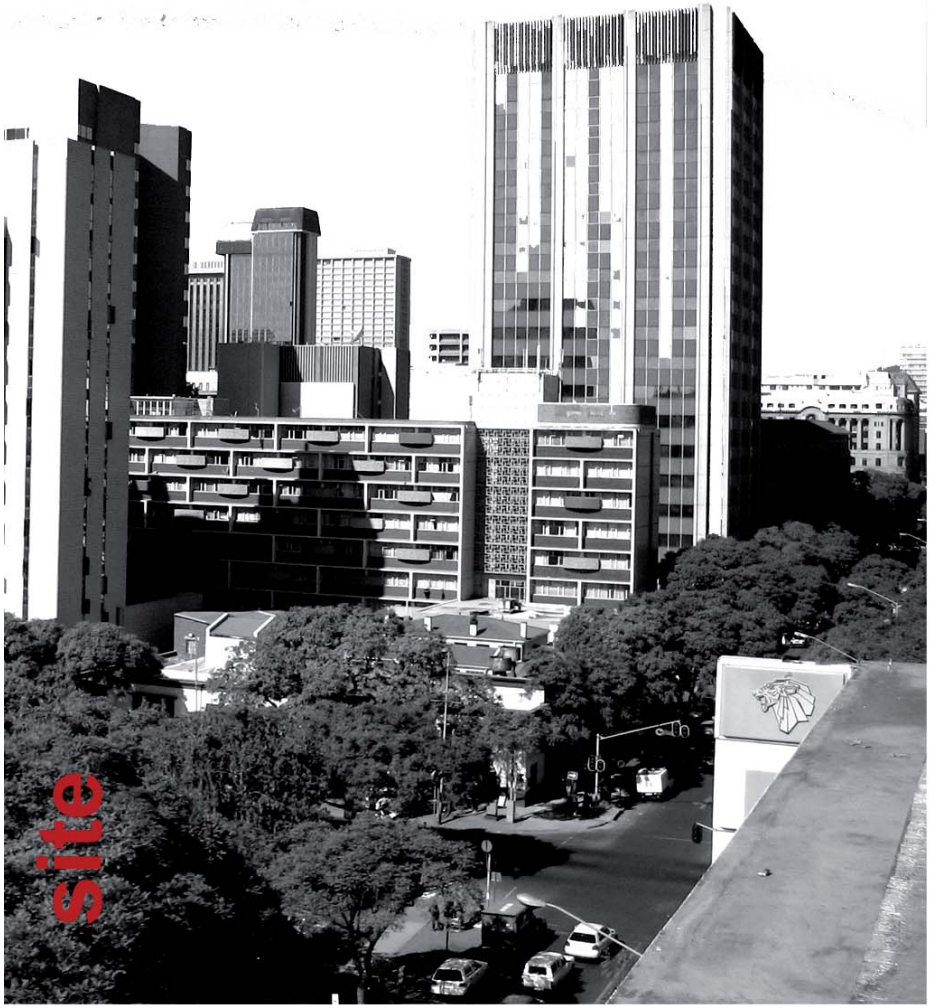


Figure 6.09 View south of threshold

Urban decay in the north of the inner city

The decline of the city

Whereas in the 1940s, Paul Kruger Street used to be a vibrant fine-grained residential urban area, the urban character of its northern section is increasingly weakened. According to Panagos,[8] it was during World War II that the zoning of this residential area was changed to accommodate light industrial activities such as the manufacturing of helmets. Panagos identifies this change as the start of the degeneration of the area. Since then, proposals for a large motorway interchange, taking up several city blocks, and the clearing of Marabastad, a cosmopolitan 'mixed-race' settlement to the northwest, during the Apartheid era inevitably had an impact on the city. Today, much of the cleared land remains vacant or is informally occupied.

The primary causes of urban decay

In Roberts'[9] *Urban Regeneration: A Handbook,* urban decay is identified as the result of an "urban change event",[10] whereby decisions are taken and the spatial consequences of a local area are either ignored or intentionally not taken into consideration. Roberts refers to this type of decision-making as "dislocated" as the decision-makers are removed from the immediate context. "The survival of an economic activity or a close knit community is often threatened by political whim or professional misjudgement." The author identifies other factors that disrupt the social structure of a community or contribute to the decay of city areas: crime, physical blight, social polarisation, physical decay, changing transportation and accessibility requirements and the difficulty of adapting buildings to accommodate new uses. The range of factors can originate from within the city or can be related to regional influences.

The lack of an integrated vision

The city council's inability to formulate a strong vision for the capital city has allowed the economic relocation to the east to persist. At this stage, while several proposals are on the city council's agenda, priorities seem to change along with changing staff members and their individual interests.[11] points out that "the absence of an adequate institutional capacity

8. Panagos 2007: personal interview
9. Roberts (2005:24)
10. Roberts (2005:23)
11. Erasmus 2007: lecture to architectural students at the University of Pretoria
12. Saarinen (1965:79)
13. Saarinen (1965:78)
14. Saarinen (1965:80)

The origin of urban decay

Saarinen,[12] in his book *The City: Its Growth, Its Decline, Its Future*, traces the decline of the city back to the Renaissance period when the renewed interest in classical antiquity led to imitation, based on doctrines and formulas rather than creative expression. In contrast, Saarinen[13] points out that up until and including the medieval period, buildings were conceived three-dimensionally in a specific context and, therefore, the art of building was an indigenous expression of a specific time and place. The consequences were only realised much later: "The real effect appeared during the latter part of the nineteenth century, when free play with imitative forms became proverbial, as irrelevancy between building design and site character became complete".[14] Saarinen, therefore, attributes the decline of the city to the degradation of architectural form expression, which, due to the spirit of "imitation" and "irrelation", resulted in superficial stylistic decoration. This is linked to the divorce of architecture from town planning, resulting in solutions no longer addressing the spatial character of the city as a whole.

The following table summarises the evolution of urban regeneration over the last 50 years. While this table focuses on Europe, primarily the United Kingdom, it clearly illustrates the shift in focus and approach. The UK remains the leader in regeneration policy development and project implementation and, while many of the below identified trends are not directly related to South Africa's scenario, we are inevitably heading in the same direction.

Period/ Policy Type	1950s Reconstruction	1960s Revitalisation	1970s Redevelopment	1980s Redevelopment	1990s Regeneration
Major strategy and orientation	reconstruction and extensions of older town and often based on a 'masterplan'; suburban growth	continuation of 1950s theme; some early attempts at rehabilitation	focus on *in-situ* renewal and neighbourhood schemes; still development at periphery	many major schemes of development and redevelopment; flagship projects; out of town projects	move towards a more comprehensive form of policy and practice; more emphasis on integrated treatments
Key actors and stakeholders	national and local government; private sector developers and contractors	move towards greater balance between public and private sectors	growing role of private sector and decentralisation in local government	emphasis on private sector agencies; growth of partnerships	partnership the dominant approach
Spatial level of activity	emphasis on local and site levels	regional level of activity emerged	regional and local levels initially; later more local emphasis	in early 1980s focus on site; later emphasis on local level	reintroduction of strategic perspective; growth of regional activity
Economic focus	public sector investment with some private involvement	continuing from 1950s with growing influence of private investment	resource constraints in public sector and growth of private investment	private sector dominant with selective public funds	greater balance between public, private and voluntary funding
Social content	improving housing and living standards	social and welfare improvement	community-based action and greater empowerment	community self-help with very selective state support	emphasis on the role of community
Physical emphasis	replacement of inner areas and peripheral development	some continuation from 1950s with parallel rehabilitation of existing areas	more extensive renewal of older urban areas	major schemes of replacement and new development 'flagship schemes'	more modest than 1980s; heritage and retention
Environmental approach	landscaping and some greening	selective improvements	environmental improvement with some innovations	growth of concern for wider approach to environment	introduction of a broader idea of environmental sustainability

Table 3.01 'The evolution of urban regeneration' (Roberts 2005:14)

to intervene in the cycle of physical decline has proved to be a major impediment to the regeneration of many urban areas."[15] While some departments have deliberately moved their head offices to the northern part of the city, such as the proposed Department of Education and the New National Library, both of which are currently under construction, other departments completely contradict the effort by joining the economic relocation to the east of Pretoria. This disunity contributes to the erosion of Pretoria. "Inevitably, the responses to this challenge […], mirror the socio-political and economic values and structures of urban society".[16]

Key factors of degeneration

The following five key factors[17] help identify the origin of past and current problems. These factors are all evident in the area of the selected site:

- Physical conditions and social response
- Housing and health
- Social welfare and economic progress
- Containing urban growth
- Changing urban policy

15. Roberts (2005:28)
16. Roberts (2005:11)
17. Roberts (2005:10)

The Re-Kgabisa Tshwane Project

One of the current proposals for the inner city of Pretoria is the Re Kgabisa Tshwane Project,[18] which is led by the DPW, the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) and the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality (CTMM). The objective of the project[19] is to "prevent inner city deterioration and promote inner city urban renewal". The proposal, which addresses the Paul Kruger Street spine is in line with the Tshwane Inner City Strategy which addresses Tshwane as a whole:

"The revitalisation of Tshwane in the form of improved infrastructure and urban management is core to the programme which will enhance the city's image and reputation as a leading African capital city."

The proposal addresses issues such as the allocation of public space (which is lacking in the northern portion of the city), increased provision of infrastructure and services, and the accommodation of national government departments.

Proposals for Paul Kruger Street Spine

The proposal includes the following: The Museum Park Precinct, which consists of the provision of a green public space to be named Station Square directly in front of the Pretoria Main Station Building at the southern anchor of the Paul Kruger Street spine, as well as the Museum Square which incorporates the re-design and extension of what is currently Pretorius Square. In the north, the Paul Kruger North Precinct includes the proposal for a large, L-shaped public space to be named Synagogue Square which wraps around the existing Sita buildings. Additionally, the Struben Street improvement suggests a renewed focus on the urban quality surrounding the intersection of Paul Kruger and Struben streets.

This project is in reaction to the proposal of Synagogue Square for the selected site.

18. The project commenced under the banner of the Tshwane Inner City Project (TICP) and had its official launch on 9 & 10 November 2005 (The Re-Kgabisa Tshwane Project 2007: http://www.rekgabisatshwane.gov.za/about.html)

19. The Re-Kgabisa Tshwane Project 2007: http://www.rekgabisatshwane.gov.za/about.html

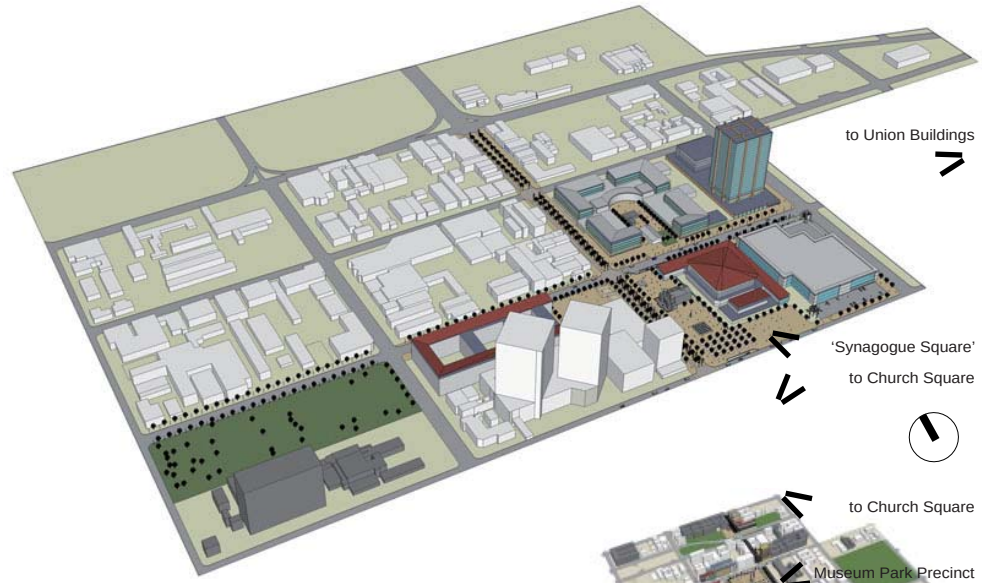


Figure 6.10 Propsals for the Paul Kruger Street North Precinct

Figure 6.11 Propsals for the Paul Kruger Street South Precinct

Figure 6.12 Synagogue Square

Figure 6.13 Struben Street

Figure 6.14 Department of Education

Inadequate provision of Public Space

In an urgent attempt to provide public space, the city council's proposal simply addresses the statistical provision of public space. The criteria and activities that truly determine the 'publicness' of an open space within an urban context are neglected. The proposed Synagogue Square does not accommodate or generate activity on the site, merely creating another large void within the city. Similarly, the large, monotonous Department of Education building decreases the activity that could potentially take place on the street. This has a direct impact on pedestrian movement as it decreases surveillance and, therefore, lowers the sense of safety and security on the street.

"[...] So many places in our modern cities are grossly oversized. It is as if planners and architects have a strong tendency, whenever in doubt, to throw in some extra space, just in case, reflecting the general uncertainty concerning the proper handling of small dimensions and small spaces.

Gehl 1987:93

Criticism of the Proposal

The proposal for the northern portion of the Paul Kruger Street spine seeks to encourage investment interest in the inner city through the relocation of various national departments to the inner city. The focus of the proposed frameworks is on the urban renewal of the area. The historical value of the city has been identified:[20]

" The City of Tshwane, and the Inner City area in particular, constitutes a rich South African concentration of historic and cultural places (reflecting different periods of our history and cultures), and government and other institutions."

But the response to the existing views and heritage, considering the richness thereof at the junction of Paul Kruger and Struben streets, is neglected. The existing architectural heritage buildings are 'monumentalised', leaving them isolated on a public square and completely stripping them of their original context.

A strategy for crime prevention

According to the research project[21] conducted by the CSIR and the Institute for Security Studies (ISS), the planning and design of public spaces has a major impact on safety and security. Five principles that are crucial to establishing how the physical environment "either reduces or increases the opportunities for crime" have been identified:

- Surveillance and visibility
- Territoriality
- Access and escape routes
- Image and aesthetics
- Target hardening

These principles have been considered in the design of the proposed building adjoining the Old Synagogue. The approach to the selected site requires careful consideration of the allocation of public space and its activation.

20. Tshwane Inner City Development and Regeneration Strategy (2006:4)

21. Kruger et al (2001:33)

Urban Precedent: Long Street, Cape Town

In search of an appropriate approach to tackling the issue of providing public space and integrating the existing Old Synagogue into the current context of the city of Pretoria, Long Street in the centre of Cape Town proved to be a valuable case study. According to various accommodation managers,[22] approximately six to 10 years ago, the street was in a dilapidated state. The turn-around came when, over a period of time, several low-cost temporary accommodation 'backpackers' targeting international tourists, located themselves on Long Street. Due to its central location and ease of access to public transport, this move allowed Long Street to come alive with people and activity, which, in turn, further attracted growth and activity. Today, Long Street is a buzzing accommodation, shopping and entertainment spine that is frequented by both local residents and international tourists.[23]

The success of Long Street can not only be attributed to the facilities available on the street, but also to the fine urban grain that generates an interest on a pedestrian level. Furthermore, the integration of the historic character of the street, typical of the city of Cape Town, into the contemporary scenario contributes to the current character and the interest generated when one visits the city.

Gehl discusses the weaknesses of 'modernised' cities with regard to four main principles. These points have each been successfully dealt with on Long Street in Cape Town and should form the basis of the approach for Paul Kruger Street in Pretoria, which has a similar potential.

Dispersion rather than assembly

Firstly, Gehl[24] criticises activities that disperse human activity rather than assemble it. "Big buildings with long façades and few visitors mean an effective dispersal of events". Such buildings, including parking garages, petrol stations and large financial institutions, contribute to decreasing the activity on the street, which, in turn, leads to the deterioration of the urban environment as they effectively become voids in the urban fabric. The result[25] is "the disintegration of living public spaces and the gradual transformation of the street area that is of no real interest to anyone" and this is "an important factor contributing to vandalism and crime in the streets".

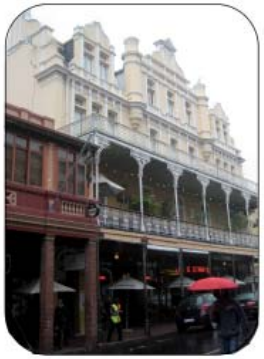


Figure 6.15

Figure 6.16

Figure 6.17

22. Various backpacker managers on Long Street, Cape Town May 2007: personal interviews

23. refer to Appendix A for survey of local backpackers

24. Gehl (1987:97)

25. Gehl (1987:78)

Figure 6.15 Carnival Court Backpackers

Figure 6.16 Cat & Moose Backpackers

Figure 6.17 Long Street Backpackers

Figure 6.18 Daddy Longlegs Boutique Hotel

Figure 6.19 View of Long Street

Figure 6.20 Old & new complementing the urban character

Figure 6.20

Figure 6.18

Figure 6.19

This criticism is particularly relevant to the proposed Department of Education (refer to figure 3.13), which covers the entire western edge of the city block north of the selected site and turns its back on the street. The criticism of the department's building is primarily directed at the monotony and the sheer size of the proposal. In contrast, Gehl[26] suggests that street fronts should only consist of "narrow units and many doors" containing the most interesting activities.

Monotony

Secondly, Gehl[27] points out that the segregation of different activities leads to monotonous social groups. He discusses the importance of integration:[28] "The rejection of monofunctional areas is a prerequisite for the integration of various types of people and activities". This argument supports the introduction of a mixed-use building into the current context as a catalyst for urban regeneration.

Speed

Gehl[29] suggests that successful social integration requires the integration of movement into the social life of cities. In South Africa, the transition from fast to slow motion takes place at the individual's doorsteps, however, a more gradual transition and a varied form of transportation would allow integration, while simultaneously promoting stimulating environments and safety. This could be achieved by public transport or by encouraging bicycle transportation along with promoting pedestrian movement.

Similarly, the sudden transition from fast to slow movement sharply demarcated borders emphasise the sudden transition from the public to private domain. The opposite is desirable:[30] "Flexible boundaries in the form of transitional zones that are neither completely private nor completely public, on the other hand, will often be able to function as connecting links, making it easier, both physically and psychologically, for residents and activities to move back and forth between private and public spaces, between in and out".

Enclosure

Lastly, the enclosure of public spaces and activities narrows the parameters for human sensory experiences and results in depopulated, duller and dangerous public spaces. In contrast, in South Africa, enclosure has become the only manner of dealing with the issues of security. Gehl[31] expresses his surprise about how many urban renewal projects neglect to activate space within and around buildings and, thereby, reduce their impact through decreased visual accessibility.

26. Gehl (1987:97)
27. Gehl (1987:104)
28. Gehl (1987:109)
29. Gehl (1987:111)
30. Gehl (1987:115)
31. Gehl (1987:123)

Discussion

The role of public space

While it is commonly accepted that most South African cities experience a lack of public space, the provision thereof must function successfully, rather than simply fulfilling a statistical requirement. The following discussion focuses on the role of public space in the city and the resultant impact, relating to the quality of space. The discussion focuses on Jan Gehl's *Life Between Buildings: Using Public Space*. While the discussion focuses on Western European and American cities, the issues raised are common in most South African cities and, therefore, address the problems[32] of inner cities in general.

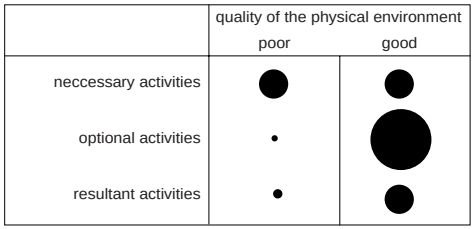


Figure 6.21 Graphic representation of the relationship between the quality of outdoor spaces and the rate of occurance of outdoor activites (Gehl 1987:13)

Definition of "outdoor activities"

Gehl[33] differentiates between three different types of outdoor activities: necessary activities, optional activities and resultant activities. Although necessary activities take place regardless of weather conditions and the quality of the physical environment, Gehl points out that optional activities are "especially dependant on exterior physical conditions".[34] Resultant activities are, therefore, the spontaneously occurring social interactions and activities that take place as a result of optional activities.

Considering the ideal climatic conditions in South Africa, one would imagine that outdoor public spaces would be in abundance and that social interaction in our cities would be vibrant. Sadly, this is not so. Not only do most South African cities lack the adequate provision of public space, but due to the dominance of private motorised transport, social interaction between the multitudes of different inhabitants is limited.

" Life between buildings compromises the entire spectrum of activities which combine to make communal spaces in cities and residential areas meaningful and attractive." Gehl 1987:16

The importance of low-intensity contacts

The lowest intensity contact (refer to figure 3.21) is only possible in a public place, and the lack of this form of passive contact makes the "boundaries between isolation and contact become stronger". These fundamental contacts form the basis of social interaction and an abundance thereof, Gehl[35] terms a "living" city. Therefore, by accommodating life between buildings, one allows for the natural development of higher intensity contacts, while simultaneously providing information on the social environment and acting as a stimulating experience and a source of inspiration.[36] Furthermore, as the number of outdoor activities increases, the frequency of interactions increases as well.[37] According to Gehl, this is in contrast to most North American cities and 'modernised' European cities.[38]

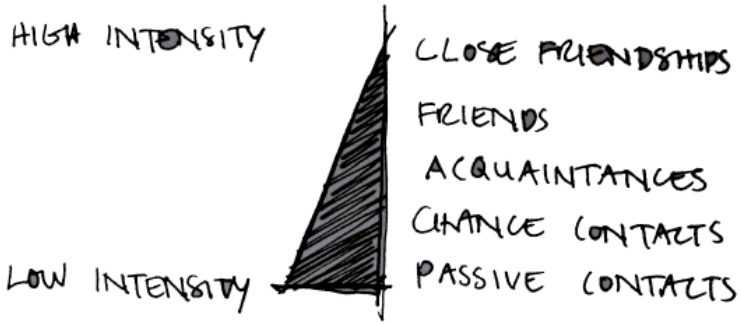


Figure 6.22 Hierarchy of social interaction (Gehl 1987:17)

32. For further information on the urban problem refer to Roberts (2005:24)
33. Gehl (1987:11-13)
34. Gehl (1987:13)
35. Gehl (1987:23)
36. Gehl (1987:19)
37. Gehl (1987:13)
38. Gehl (1987:31)

According to Gehl,[39] "[…] all experience to date with regard to human activities in cities and in proximity to residences seems to indicate that where a better physical framework is created, outdoor activities tend to grow in number, duration and scope". In addition, people and human activities attract one another. Therefore, life between buildings is a "self-reinforcing" process.[40] (refer to figure 6.23)

The origin of poor public spaces

Housing typologies

The development of the single-family housing typology;[41] which emerged in Scandinavia, the United States of America, Canada, Australia and South Africa; created desirable outdoor conditions but reduced communal outdoor areas, resulting in the phasing out of the "life between buildings". In South Africa, as in other countries, shopping malls have become virtually the only point of contact with the outside world for many urban and suburban dwellers.

Motorised transport

In addition, the increase in private motorised transport is directly linked to the decrease in outdoor activity,[42] as well as the decay of the urban environment. Gehl [43] attributes this to the increased speed of movement that results in a lesser attention to detail. Thus, the urban environment responds to high-speed transport rather than individual pedestrian movement, which is characterised by walls, long distances, high speeds, multiple levels and orientation away from others.

The focus of the synagogue is on the beautifully detailed main façade that faces the street. At the time of construction, the primary form of transport was on foot, allowing passers-by to appreciate the fine detailing of the main façade of the building.

Figure 6.23 Activating space: Shop window Band

39. Gehl (1987:39)
40. Gehl (1987:75-6)
41. Gehl (1987:49)
42. Gehl (1987:37)
43. Gehl (1987:74)