



urban problem statement

Insufficient orientation and legibility for the unfamiliar city user within the Pretoria CBD discourages the efficient use thereof. Although many of the urban elements required for urban orientation are present, the disjointed organisation decreases their legibility to users. Furthermore, the *ad-hoc* allocation of government resources frustrates the uninformed city user, leading to a negative perception of city and government.



fig. 3.1 Aerial photograph of the central area of Pretoria, looking towards the south east. 1949.





[paths]

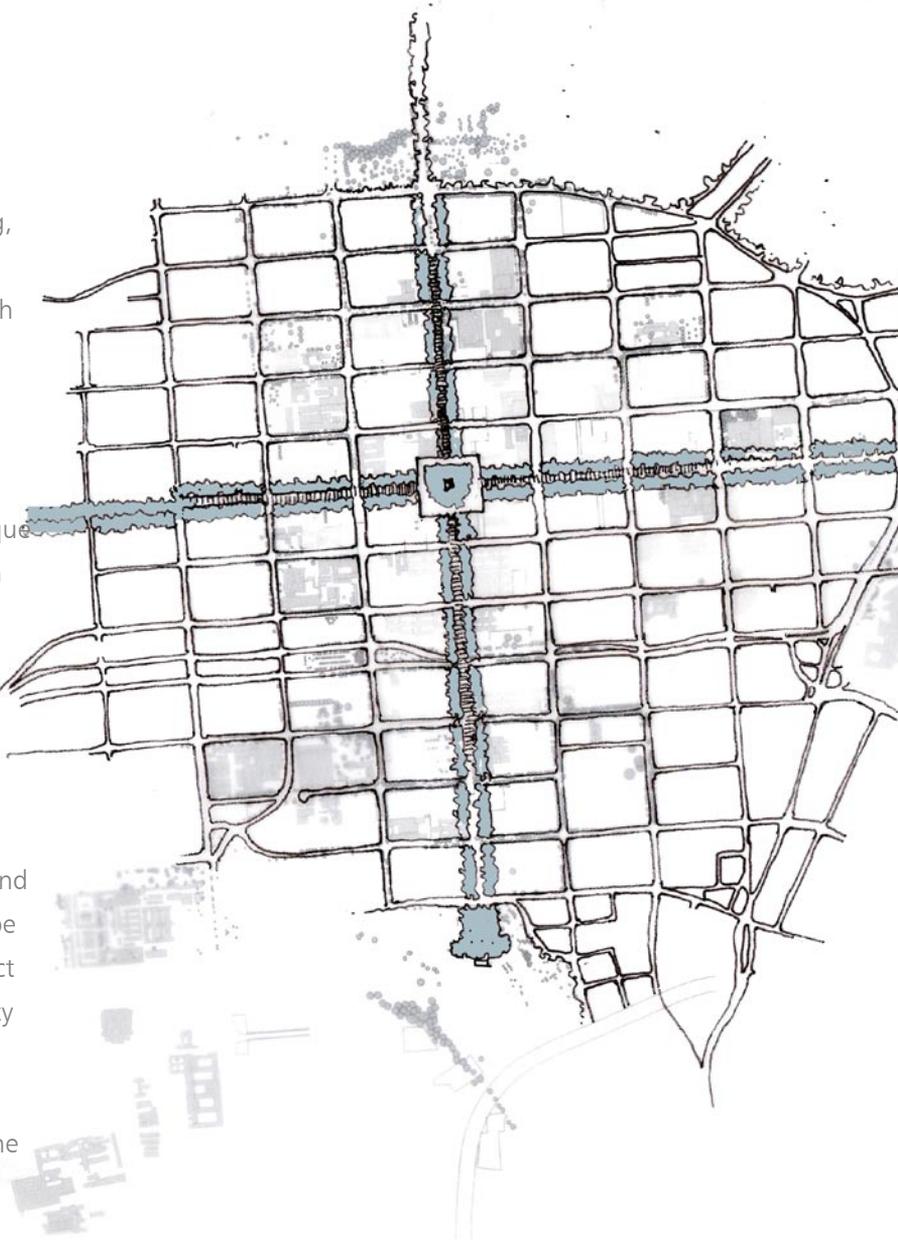
The orthogonal street grid, through its regularity, provides a rational, legible component by which the city can be mentally 'mapped'.

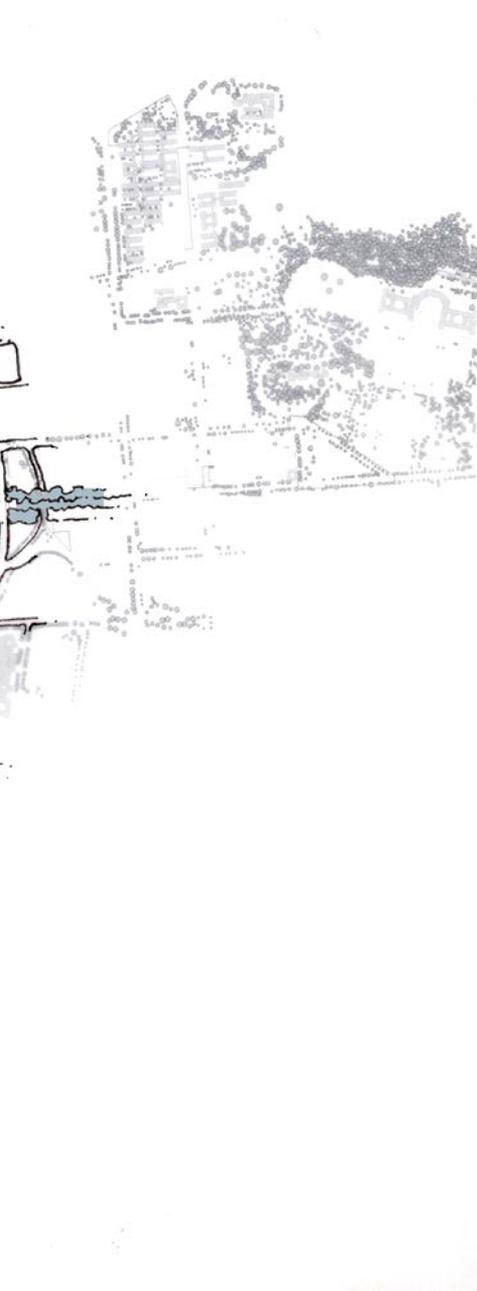
However, this regularity at times tends towards monotonous uniformity. The lack of unique identity displayed by many of the streets hinders a clear sense of orientation.

It is thus important that we strengthen users' environmental image through visually identifying, especially, the two main axes of the city of Pretoria, namely Church Street and Paul Kruger Street. Currently, the pedestrianisation of portions of Church Street has generated informal trade activity along its length. This lends a unique character to the street, which can immediately be identified.

As previously mentioned, the group proposal for the northern city precinct includes the semi-pedestrianisation of Paul Kruger Street from Church Square to Bloed Street. The street design, and that of adjoining buildings, will be considered to contribute a distinct character along this street. Priority will also be given to pedestrian paths, which are proposed mid-block in the northern precinct. The nature of activity and movement generated along various paths will be determined by the spaces through which they pass. Approach and further movement through the city will also be considered.

urban opportunities





[a]



[b]



[c]



fig. 3.2 orthogonal street grid
fig. 3.3 [a] -[c] street activity_pretoria





[edge]

Currently the city edge can be identified, due to the contrast between the natural and the urban. However, the opportunities created by this juxtaposition have not been realised, and interaction is poor. The urban fabric is seen to disintegrate towards the periphery. The natural landscape is poorly maintained, displaying an apparent disregard for the natural environment. The state of disrepair of many buildings on the outskirts of the CBD lends a negative perception to those commuting into the city.

The natural-urban city edge must thus be clearly defined, through the reinforcement of a physical or psychological threshold. This threshold should assist and highlight the transition from natural to urban, enhancing and acknowledging the qualities of both.





[districts]

Several districts within the CBD have received visible attention through financial and planning investment. However, the Northern and Western areas do not display such attentions, despite their intense use. The historical political attitude and demographic exclusivity towards certain regions of the city has led to a deficit of development. It should thus be of primary concern to create the optimal conditions for improvement, to uplift these areas to a more acceptable urban standard. Defining the threshold should serve to strengthen the character of the district. Through a strong environmental approach to design, the unique character of the area can be harnessed to create a distinct, vibrant environment for all users.



fig. 3.4 various photographs of northern district





[nodes]

Existing nodes within the Pretoria CBD are mostly associated with public spaces. However, these public spaces are often poorly designed, becoming lifeless and unused.

The lack of enclosure and activity-generating functions are just some factors which contribute negatively to examples such as Strijdom Square.

Nodes of activity can be identified in the Northern district, however limited and inadequate public open space has been provided. In order to introduce development and encourage urban regeneration in identified districts, nodes must be established as catalysts. These nodes should display the unique character of the region, promoting urban culture and public life.

The provision of well-designed public open space, providing opportunities for recreation and social interaction, will afford richer urban environments. These nodes should act as models, encouraging regeneration of public space throughout the city.





[landmarks]

Landmarks, though present in the CBD, are often uncelebrated. Buildings, such as the reserve bank, contributed to the development of public space in the initial design. However, with time and change of use, the need for security measures increased. Designed public space has been enclosed and is now exclusively for the use of employees.

Within the Northern district, visual landmarks are limited. Buildings, due to their functions, may act as landmarks to those familiar with the area, but contribute little to the orientation of the unacquainted public. A landmark should be provided, visually accessible from various points within the district and along primary paths. This should assist users in creating visual image sequences for self-orientation, and a means of communicating position to others.



fig. 3.5 nodal development proposal indicating 5-minute walking circles

fig. 3.6 | conditio





client profile

Pretoria, as national administrative capital, is largely given form and identity by the governmental and institutional buildings which comprise it. The *ad-hoc* allocation of poorly-developed public resources becomes illegible for users, impeding the use thereof and, as a result, the city.

The project proposed is intended to co-ordinate, streamline and facilitate public service delivery on a local, regional and central level of government. The department of public works is responsible for the provision and management of land and accommodation to the various national departments and institutions [strategic plan 2006/2010, compiled by strategic management unit, Department of Public Works]. Certain government objectives must be reached in terms of public service delivery.

An efficient and effective use of government resources is essential, and instrumental in achieving these objectives.

The Tshwane Inner City Development and Regeneration Strategy [TICDP], 2005 [Gapp architects & Urban Designers] proposes the establishment of a public open space network, enforced by the location of Government offices [appendix A]. Through necessary use, a government building promotes activity in a location. Intended sustainable urban renewal can thus be stimulated through public investment.



3.7



3.8

fig. 3.7-3.9 interior views of gpg building, c/o bosman and pretorius street

fig. 3.10 location of public sector buildings in CBD

fig. 3.11 south african coat of arms

3.9



SOUTH AFRICAN

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

Agriculture
Arts & Culture
Communications
Correctional Services
Defence
Education
Environmental Affairs & Tourism
Foreign Affairs
Government Communications (GCIS)
Health
Home Affairs
Housing
Independent Complaints Directorate
Justice & Constitutional Development
Labour
Land Affairs
Minerals & Energy
National Intelligence Agency
National Treasury
Provincial & Local Government
Public Enterprises
Public Service & Administration
Public Service Commission
Public Works
Science & Technology
Secretariat for Safety & Security
SA Management Development Institute
SA Police Service
SA Revenue Service
SA Secret Service
Social Development
Sport & Recreation South Africa
Statistics South Africa
The Presidency
Trade & Industry
Transport





Many existing governmental buildings were built during the previous political era. The approach towards employee structures was strongly hierarchical, the compartmentalised office system clearly reflecting this. With the introduction of the new constitution and frameworks for development within the departments, their needs in terms of infrastructure have changed. Internal office walls have been demolished for new open plan office layouts; however the building was never intended for use in such a manner. Thus the quality of work environments is of a low standard. Lack of maintenance to several buildings has led them to become health and safety hazards [strategic plan 2006/2010, compiled by strategic management unit, Department of Public Works]. It becomes impossible to provide a satisfactory public service within this working environment. The frustration often experienced by members of the public, lends a negative perception of public service delivery, directly related to government and ultimately projecting a negative city image.

3.11



■ = national government





Complementing the project proposal is the establishment of a Public Sector partnership within the Department of Public Works, as a joint venture between various levels of government. It will be “focused on meeting the needs of all sections of the public as customers of public services... supporting and encouraging the adoption of new technology throughout the public sector; with sharing experience and good practice in service innovations; and with delivering key inter-agency strategic projects, joining up and integrating public services...”

[LondonConnects, *Future strategy: 2006 and beyond*, accessed from www.londonconnects.gov.uk]. This “city vision” department, similar to the Inner City Operational task team proposed by the TICDP, will aim at enhancing, improving and integrating the urban character of Pretoria, in order to establish it as a nationally and globally significant city [see appendix A]. With the approach of the 2010 FIFA World Cup it will be imperative for Pretoria to be accessible to all visitors, local and international.

user profile

Jan Gehl identifies three types of outdoor activities that may take place within a city environment. Firstly, necessary activities are those that are compulsory and generally occur independently of the physical framework provided. This includes shopping and working [Gehl, 1987: p.11]. Optional activities occur under favourable exterior conditions. This category

fig. 3.12 sketch of recreational activities

fig. 3.13 necessary activities





is of particular interest in physical planning as it includes most outdoor recreational activities. An optimal environment should be created to encourage such activities [Gehl, 1987: p.13]. Lastly, social activities are the active or passive social interaction which mostly results in conjunction with the other two activities. They occur spontaneously as a direct consequence of using the same space. Social activities are indirectly supported when other types of activities are catered for in public spaces.

Three categories of users can thus be identified:

_familiar users

This category addresses the current users of the city. These users work, live in, or frequently make use of the city's facilities and have developed a sufficient sense of orientation through the regular use of functional routes. These users develop individual landmarks and an environmental image through personal experience. Familiar users should be catered for, through the provision of necessary facilities, and thus be attracted to the site. The activities provided by the proposed project should encourage lingering of the city's current users, displaying city life as an attraction to potential users.

_unfamiliar users

These include potential users of the city, which currently do not use the city for security, locality or discomfort reasons. These users are the primary focus of the project. They enter the CBD for unavoidable activities, inaccessible elsewhere. As occasional visitors of necessity, they





experience the greatest frustration, their ignorance of the city structure causing disorientation.

The formulation of a point of reference, providing necessary information on orientation and usage would facilitate city use. A positive experience could thus decrease the animosity felt by such users, encouraging further exploration of possibilities. Regular use would lead to ease of use. Once 'at home' within the urban environment, a fondness and affinity for the city can be developed.

_sporadic users

These are temporary visitors, for example, tourists. As short term users of the city, their perception of the city is formulated predominantly through visual experience of *character*. Here, navigability and transcending legibility is essential, due to the unfamiliarity of the surroundings. Urban culture displayed, will create points of unique interest and ensure lasting visual images.

With the approach of the 2010 FIFA world cup, this category of users will be of particular interest. Although not the major concern of the project, the manner in which visitors, whether local or international, perceive the city and its inhabitants should be positive and memorable.





The proposed project should allow for the integration of users from varying demographical contexts- the accessibility for each of the space, and ultimately the city context, being the primary goal. A strong interactive component between government and the public will be enforced. Active and passive continual participation from users is to contribute to *identity of place*. Activities provided and generated should encourage the fostering of a vernacular urban culture.

fig. 3. 14





The architectural component to be investigated is that of an urban orientation foyer building. It is to receive users, providing information which will improve their ability to further move through, and make use of the city and its facilities. This will be orchestrated by the government City Vision Department proposed as project client. Accommodation will be provided, not only for the city vision department, but also other select government departments intending to assist users in orientation and integration within the public service.

Despite accommodating various selected civic functions, the building is to be approached as a public mixed-use building as opposed to a specialised civic building. As forerunner in the government and public integration process, the project is to layer programme, facilities and movement spaces, maximising interaction opportunities between its governmental client and public users. The proposed public square is to lend an associated civic importance to the building, while promoting public life. The accommodation of various commercial functions is intended to dispel the exclusivity of programme currently displayed by governmental and institutional facilities.

architectural proposal

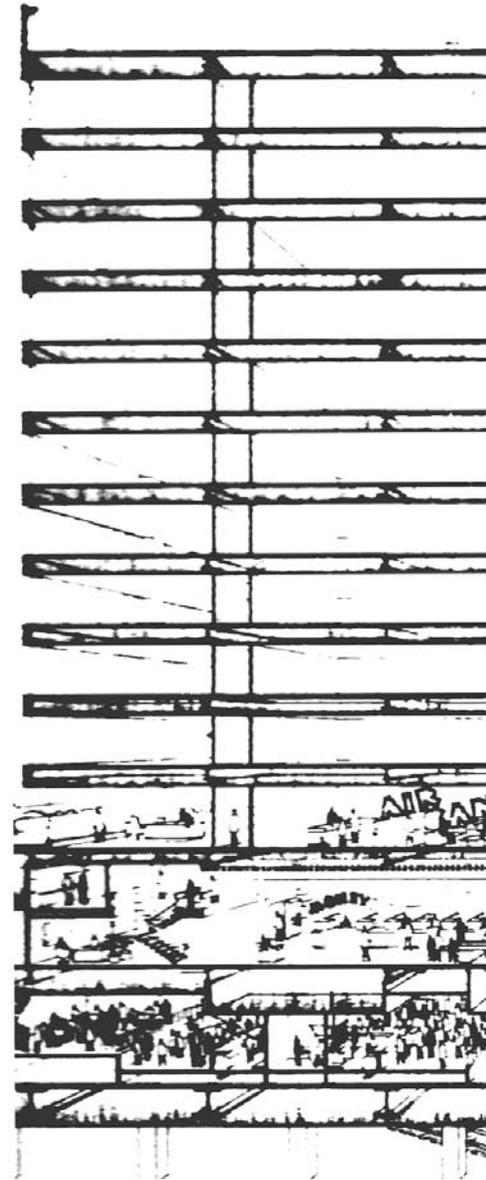
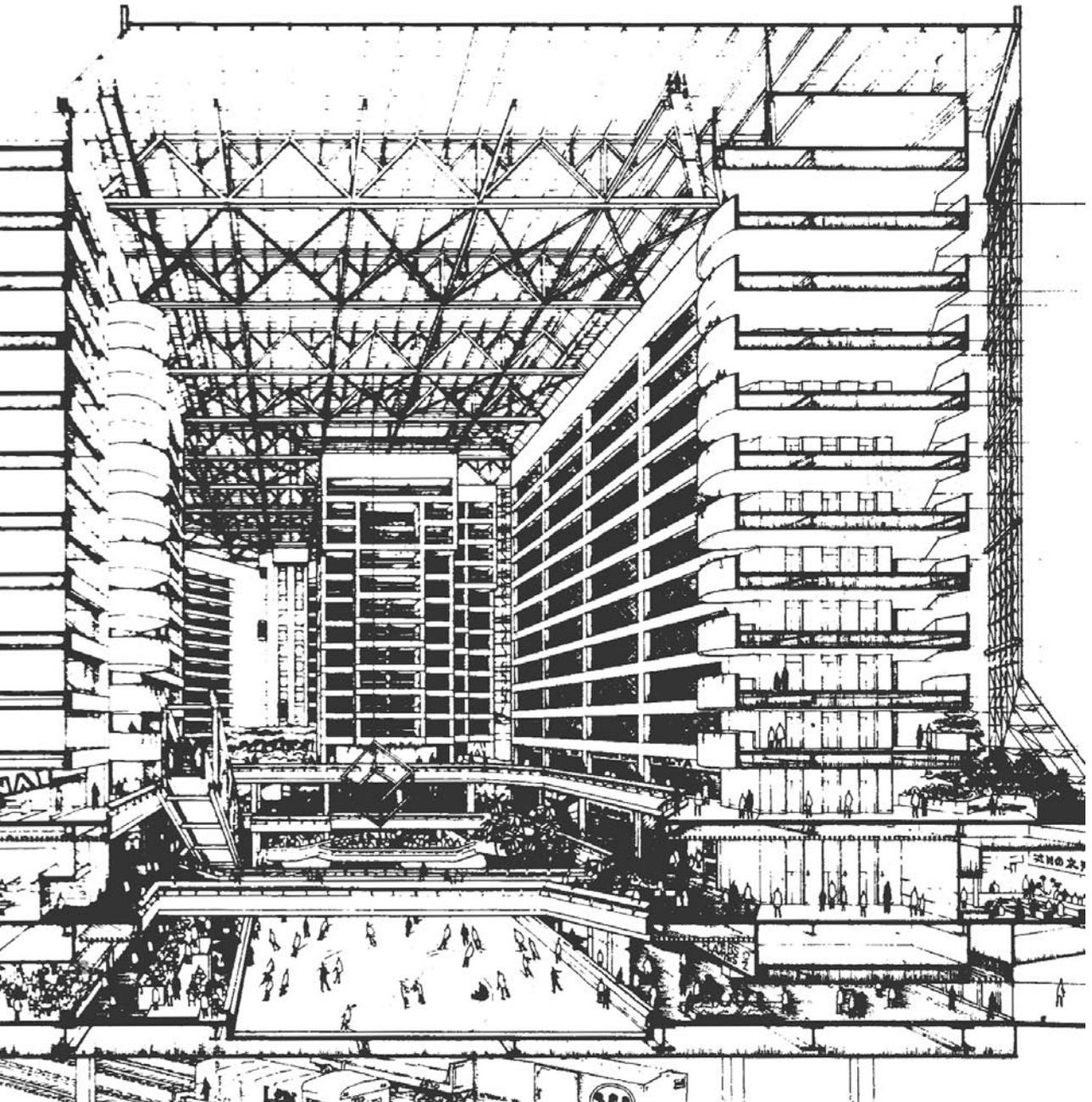


fig. 3.15 sketch of unknown multi-use building

fig. 3.16

“It is also possible to create sensibility by improving the human ability to perceive the environment...One may educate users to attend to their environment, to learn more about it, to order it, to grasp its significance”





The project is to act as a catalyst for urban regeneration. By incorporating necessary functions within the building, new users are introduced to an area of the city, along with financial and social opportunities. Once adequate development has occurred the nature of the programme may change to accommodate the new urban context and users. Thus the current programme will be considered transient and long term adaptability will be provided for.

