



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

NEW ROYAL THEATRE

The Marabi Theatre as locus for Cultural Reproduction

*Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Magister of Architecture, MArch(Prof), the Faculty of Engineering,
Built Environment and Information Technology.
University of Pretoria.
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BUILDING ADDRESS

c/o Jerusalem and Grand Street, Marabastad, Pretoria.

FUNCTION

Multi-use theatre

RESEARCH FIELD

Heritage and Cultural Landscapes

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Arthur Barker- Study Leader
Jacques Laubscher - Year Coordinator

To my Parents



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ABSTRACT

This dissertation investigates the role of architecture in the conservation of intangible heritage with specific reference to the 'Marabi' culture, a vibrant township culture unique to Marabastad in the North West of Pretoria which played a formative role in the development of South African popular culture from as early as the 1930's.

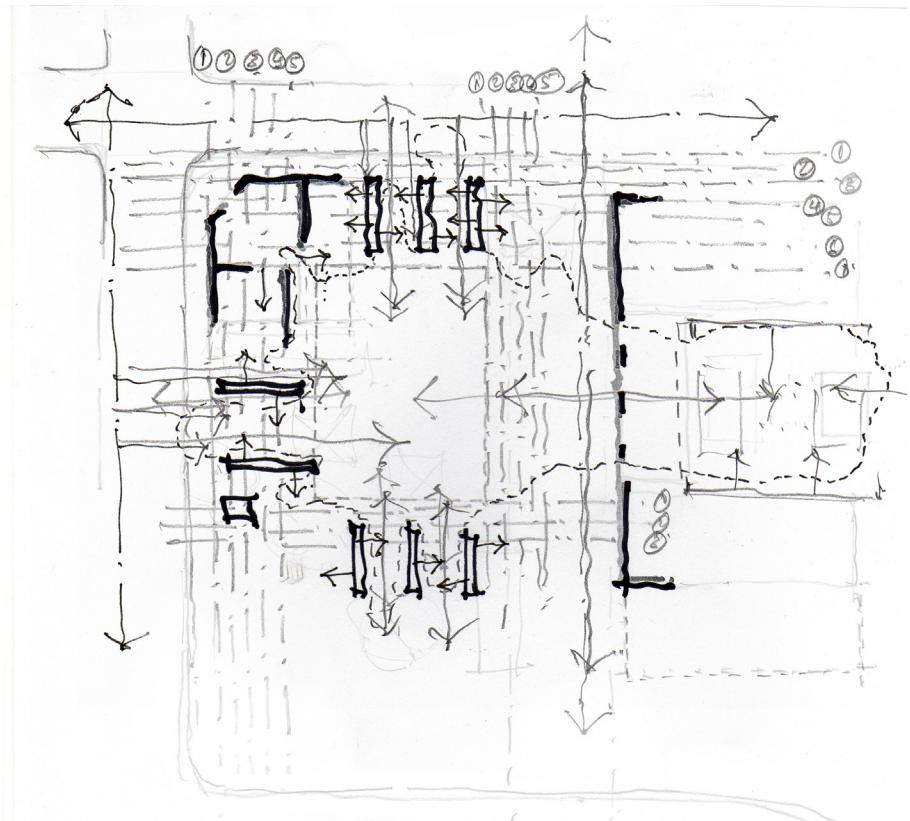
Due to the relocation of its citizens, the demolition of the Royal Theatre (together with the decommissioning of the Empire and Orient theatres) and the increasing effects of global cultural homogenization Marabastad has become dislocated from its cultural heritage. The principle aim of the dissertation is to re-introduce aspects of Marabastad's cultural heritage within it's current context.

The proposal intends to revive historical cultural practices by re-establishing the physical loci that once hosted them, which in the context of Marabastad, are the The Royal, Empire and Orient theatres.

The proposed intervention focuses specifically on the site of the Royal Theatre which was demolished in 1967. The project aims to (re)introduce a multi-form theatre on the site which will once again facilitate the cultural practices unique to the Marabi culture.

The architectural response is informed primarily by the following:

1. The historical function of the 'Marabi' theatre as a multi-use, adaptable space that had to accommodate a variety of functions such as town hall, cinema, school, church hall, events venue, dancehall and theatre.
2. An analysis of the existing historical built fabric of Marabastad (which reveals a complex layering of thresholds).
3. Programmatic requirements: Multi-form theatre with shebeen, informal restaurant, recording studio and artist accommodation.
4. Amalgamation of performance space with public space within a historical meaning framework.
5. Response to contextual conditions, both current and proposed in the 2002 Aziz Tayob Meyer Pienaar Integrated Spacial Design Framework.



Parti diagram
Author



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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction



INTRODUCTION

“The task of the responsible architect is to provide resistance to current cultural erosion and to replant buildings and cities in an authentic existential and experiential soil. At the beginning of the new millennium, architectural culture would do well to nurture productive tensions between cultural realism and artistic idealism, determination and discretion, ambition and humility.”

(Pallasmaa, 2000: 82)

This dissertation explores the role of architecture in the conservation of intangible heritage with specific reference to the ‘Marabi’ culture, a vibrant township culture unique to Marabastad in the North West of Pretoria which played a formative role in the development of South African popular culture from as early as the 1930’s.

The current predominant approach to South African commemorative architecture is critically investigated in order to ascertain the level of engagement with intangible heritage and the success thereof. Professor Karel Anthonie Bakker’s (Head of Department of Architecture, University of Pretoria) studies on Heritage Transmission and Liana Muller’s (University of Cape Town) investigation on Intangible Landscapes will serve as the principle supportive background for this investigation. The architectural proposal then responds to the findings of the study within the context of Marabastad and its intangible heritage.

The complex history of Marabastad is unpacked with the following intentions:

1. To illustrate the cultural, political and historical significance of the study area.
2. To identify living historical cultural systems unique to the area, their origins, their physical loci, their social implications and possible threats to their health/survival.
3. To establish Marabastad’s far-reaching cultural influence.
4. To understand the built fabric of the area in terms of its development and its role in supporting the culture of the area.

The knowledge gained from the historical analysis of the area will determine programme, location, scale and architectural response.

Renowned anthropologist and professor at the Performance Studies Department of the Tish School of the Arts in New York, Barbara Kirshenblatt Gimblett, is one of the world’s foremost authorities on the commemoration of intangible heritage. Gimblett, in alignment with Austrian Philosopher Friedrich August Hayek’s (1899-1992) theory of Cultural Evolution, propagates the notion that “culture is not static; it is continuously produced and re-created by people” (Kirshenblatt Gimblett, 2004: 65).

The endeavour of “preserving” cultural heritage is therefore inherently dualistic: for a cultural system to sustain its societal currency it must be able to endure within its current social context. This means that culture has to adapt in order to maintain practical feasibility. Should it fail to adapt, the cultural system may become sacrosanct, lose its functional value to society and ‘die’. Consequently, it could be argued that the act of “preservation” in a socio-cultural context entails not the safeguarding of “originality”, but rather the facilitation of a process of evolution. See Fig.1.1

Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (*ibid*) posits that the process of continuous re-interpretation, decoding, adaptation and the adding of additional layers of meaning allows “the outmoded” a life in the present as “an exhibition of itself,” a process she calls Metacultural Production. Metacultural Production and Bakker’s studies on socially constructed heritage meaning form the theoretical backbone upon which the dissertation will explore an architecture that may better engage with the complex, processual nature of intangible heritage.



Fig 1.1
The evolution of identity
Author



BACKGROUND

INTRODUCTION TO THE CONSERVATION OF INTANGIBLE HERITAGE

Since its establishment in 1942, UNESCO has guided the development of multiple heritage initiatives across the world. Initially, cultural heritage was only deemed to include tangible elements, which were defined as “monuments, groups of buildings or sites of historical, aesthetic, archaeological, scientific, ethnological or anthropological value” (UNESCO, 1972 : 1).

In 1972 the definition was expanded to include natural heritage, which was defined as “outstanding physical, biological and geological features; habitats of threatened plants or animal species and areas of value on scientific or aesthetic grounds or from the point of view of conservation” (UNESCO, 1972 : 1).

The understanding of Natural Heritage in terms of “ecology, environment, and a systemic approach to a living entity” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 2004: 53) contributed greatly to the perception of heritage not only as elements that could be indexed upon an inventory, but as living systems that are constantly evolving.

Consequently, it is through the systemic approach to Natural Heritage that Intangible Heritage found its current definition.

The efforts to devise a model for the protection of intangible heritage dates back to 1952. In an attempt to ‘safeguard’ intangible heritage (then called ‘Folklore’) legal concepts were enforced (such as intellectual property, trademark, patent). This failed however, for “folklore is not the unique creation of an individual; it exists in versions and variants rather than in a single, original and authoritative form; it is generally created in performance and transmitted orally, by custom or example, rather than in tangible form (writing, notating, drawing, photographs, recordings)” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 2004: 53).

During the 1980’s, UNESCO defined preservation as different from legal matters and in 1989 they adopted the “Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and

Folklore.” Although legal matters were now left aside, the focus was still on the “materials gathered” (UNESCO, 1989: 4).

2001 saw the introduction of the “Report on the Preliminary Study on the Advisability of Regulating Internationally, through a New Standard-setting Instrument, the Protection of Traditional Culture and Folklore” (UNESCO, 2001).

The 2001 report defines Intangible Heritage as: “all forms of traditional and popular folk culture, i.e. collective works originating in a given community and based on tradition. These creations are transmitted orally or by gesture, and are modified over a period of time through a process of collective recreation. They include oral traditions, customs, languages, music, dance, rituals, festivities, traditional medicine and pharmacopoeia, the culinary arts and all kinds of special skills connected with the material aspects of culture, such as tools and the habitat” (UNESCO, 2001: 6).



Fig 1.2
The Folklorist
Author



Then, at the March 2001 meeting in Turin, the definition was further specified as : "Peoples' learned processes along with knowledge, skills and creativity that inform and are developed by them, the products they create and the resources, spaces and other aspects of social and natural context necessary to their sustainability; these processes provide living communities with a sense of continuity with previous generations and are important to cultural identity, as well as to the safeguarding of cultural diversity and creativity of humanity" (UNESCO, 2001: [s.p]).

The Turin document shifted the focus from the documentation and preservation of endangered traditions and their artefacts (tales, songs, customs etc.) to sustaining the traditions themselves by supporting the practitioners. Barbara Kirshenblatt Gimblett (2004: 53) states that the 2001 document illustrated a "shift in the concept of intangible heritage to include not only the 'masterpieces' but also the masters." The latest model acknowledges the fact that the mere 'safeguarding' of a dying tradition (through the preservation of its 'originality') will not help in preventing its demise. It establishes that in order to "sustain a living, if endangered, tradition" one needs to support "the conditions necessary for cultural reproduction" (ibid, 2004: 56).

This approach adopted its thinking from natural heritage as living systems and from the Japanese concept of "living national treasure" (ibid, 2004: 54). Therefore UNESCO (2001: [s.p]) implores that measures be taken (by state actors) to create spaces that may "support local cultural reproduction, rather than creating cultural artefacts such as lists".

From the abovementioned introduction to UNESCO's framework for the protection of intangible heritage it is apparent that architecture has a role to play in the creation of places where metacultural production may occur and therefore contribute to the sustainability of living cultural systems.

This dissertation aims to illustrate how architecture may contribute to the conservation of the intangible heritage of Marabastad by providing it with a habitat for cultural reproduction, thereby "giving the endangered or outmoded [the Marabi culture] a second life as an exhibition of itself" (ibid, 2004: 56).

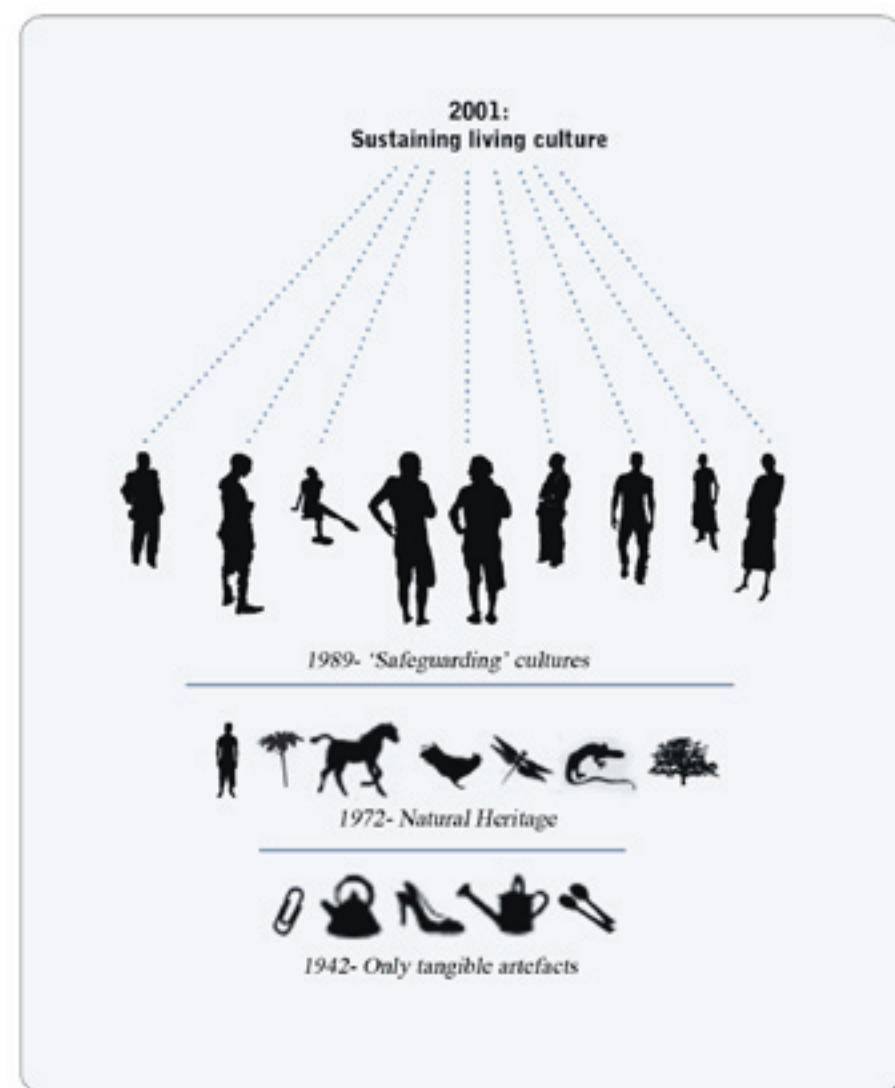


Fig 1.3
The development of UNESCO's model
for the conservation of intangible heritage.
Author



1.2.2

INTANGIBLE HERITAGE IN SOUTH AFRICA

The following section aims to briefly introduce the issues surrounding the conservation of intangible heritage in the context of Post-Apartheid South Africa. Chapter 4 further explores precedents in support of issues discussed in this introduction.

In “Making Money with Memories: The Fusion of Heritage, tourism and Identity Formation in South Africa” (2005: 103) Marschall identifies a “post- apartheid fascination, bordering on obsession, with the identification, celebration, evaluation, reassessment and, not least, commodification of heritage”. Fig 1.4 to Fig 1.9 illustrates six examples completed during the last decade.

This “obsession” has been actively taking shape in the form of a multitude of commemorative places (museums, statues, squares, memorials) across the country, all sharing the commonalities of either “correct[ing] previously misrepresented history, or to present[ing] previously non-represented or suppressed history” (Bakker & Muller, 2010 : [2]).

Although these post-1994 sites contribute (at varying levels of success) to the rectification and clarification of South African history, memory and heritage, they deal almost exclusively with the sites and heroes of the ‘struggle.’ Bakker and Muller (2010: 3) contend that they do so in the form of a “hegemonic, dominant voice that crowded out, ignored or silenced many dissonant and smaller voices of that epoch [intangible heritage], and made it more difficult to commemorate other cultural themes from the country’s multivalent past”.

Bakker (2008) alleges that this may be as a result of “a lack of clear guidance in the South African heritage legislation on the nature of intangible heritage” which leads to an “emphasis on the use of static monuments, blunt and simplistic use of symbolism, avoidance of complex narratives, ignorance of the cultural dimensions of landscape, a lack of interpretation of place, event and locally-based oral history, and subsequent deficiencies in presentation and meaning”.

Bakker and Muller (2010: [5]) support the argument for an increased “emphasis on intangible heritage as an agent in the production of places of commemoration” as well as an integral part of “community identity formation” and that heritage practitioners should “transform their practice” (Bakker & Muller, 2010 : [5]) in order to better engage with the complex, evolutionary nature of intangible heritage.



Fig 1.4
Red Location Museum, Port Elizabeth
Noero Wolff Architects, 2006
(sammlung, 2011)



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Cradock Four Memorial, Cradock
GP Greeff and Associates, 2010
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Walter Sisulu Square, Soweto
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Apartheid Museum, Johannesburg
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Freedom Park, Pretoria
Mashabane Rose, GAPP and MMA, 2010
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Fig 1.9
Hector Peterson Museum, Soweto
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(flickr, 2011)

1.3

PROBLEM

1.3.1

BACKGROUND TO PROBLEM STATEMENT

Chapter 2 discusses the historical background of Marabastad in detail, but to clarify the objectives of the study the following key points are of particular significance:

(Summarised from: Illife, 1987 ; Friedman, 1994 ; Van der Waal, 1998 ; Ballantine 1993 ; Le Roux, 1991 ; Dikobe, 1984 ; Naidoo, 2008)

1. The ‘Marabi’ culture refers to a rowdy, festive township culture synonymous with the drinking of illegally brewed beer and wild dancing to ‘Marabi’ music – a unique and greatly influential musical style argued to have originated in Marabastad. (Illife, 1987)
2. The ‘Marabi’ culture created important independent economical opportunities within the townships. (Friedman, 1994)
3. The culture once thrived in beerhalls and dancehalls where weekend-long parties (*timiti*) would be held. In Marabastad, three theatres : The Orient, Empire and Royal theatres were the primary locations where ‘timiti’ would take place (along with various other social activities). (Dikobe, 1984)
4. These locations were subject to numerous police raids and restrictive laws. In 1963 the Royal Theatre was demolished under the pretext of a highway scheme to be constructed through its site – it was, however, the only building in the area to be demolished. Electricity to the other two theatres were also permanently cut, thereby dislocating the culture from its primary physical loci. (Naidoo, 2008)
5. Marabastad saw the forced relocation of different racial segments of its population at different times during its history until finally in 1967 it was completely rid of its residential component, dislocating the area from its cultural practitioners (the people). (Van der Waal, 1998)
6. Currently, Marabastad hosts Pretoria’s largest inter-modal public transport interchange, accommodating vast daily ‘tides’ of commuters that pass through the area. (Aziz Tayob Framework, 2002)
7. In 1991, Professor Schalk le Roux (University of Pretoria) identified an opportunity to establish a heritage conservation area within the last remaining historical fabric of Marabastad, with specific reference to the possibility of reviving aspects of its

complex cultural history (intangible heritage).

8. The ‘Marabi’ culture is still very much alive, ‘Marabi’ music forms the platform upon which a great deal of contemporary South African musical styles has been developed. Kwela, Mbqanqa and even Kwaito are known to have their origins in Marabi music. These styles now enjoy worldwide acclaim. (Ballantine, 1993)
9. The street and the ‘Shebeen’ (informal bar) may be ascribed as the contemporary loci where the culture is still most active.

1.3 .2

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Due to the relocation of its citizens, the demolition of the Royal Theatre (together with the decommissioning of the Empire and Orient theatres) and the increasing effects of global cultural homogenization, Marabastad has become dislocated from its cultural heritage.

The principle aim of the dissertation is to re-establish aspects of Marabastad’s cultural heritage within its current context. It will do so by reviving historical cultural practices and allowing it a life in the present through the process of metacultural production. The implementation of the proposal entails returning the cultural practices to the physical loci that once hosted them, which in the context of Marabastad, are the three theatres: The Royal, The Empire and The Orient.

1.3.2 .1

Sub-Problem

The shortcomings of commemorative architecture in South Africa in terms of its engagement with intangible heritage (discussed in Chapter 4).

The proposal aims to offer an architectural response to issues raised regarding commemorative architecture in South Africa with specific reference to Bakker’s 2011 critique on the 2007 ICOMOS Charter for the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites (discussed in Chapter 3)

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1. Quantitative and qualitative field research

Analysis of current conditions in Marabastad in relation to the Integrated Spatial Design Framework for Marabastad as compiled by Aziz Tayob Architects Inc. & Meyer Pienaar Tayob Architects & Urban Designers in 1998.

Author of "Plekke en Geboue van Pretoria" (1992) Professor Schalk le Roux's 1991 report "Marabastad of die Asiatische Bazaar: Geboue en Plekke van Belang" will guide the analysis of the existing historical fabric of the area.

2. Literature study

Literature studies will be done on the following subjects in substantiation of the argument:

- Metacultural production
- Social Construction
- Intangible Landscapes

The following Heritage Charters and Heritage Legislation will be considered:

- The 2007 ICOMOS Charter for the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage sites.
- The 1999 South African National Heritage Resources Act.

3. Historical overview/context

A thorough analysis of Marabastad's physical, political and cultural history will be undertaken.

Intentions:

1. To identify opportunities for architectural response.

2. To create an in depth understanding of the local culture.
3. To substantiate the arguments expressed in this dissertation.
4. To illustrate the significance of the study.
5. To establish a baseline knowledge of the study area with the reader.

4. Precedent/case studies

Examples of South African commemorative architecture will be critically analysed in order to establish current typological characteristics (both positive and negative).

International examples will be discussed, illustrating global trends, theories and design approaches.

Programmatic precedents will be investigated to gain knowledge on the subject of contemporary theatre design.



Fig 1.10
The Merry Blackbirds - 1930's Jazz troupe.
(Ballantine, 1993: 53)

PROGRAMME

The proposal is to be implemented as an integral part of a heritage conservation scheme within the Marabastad heritage conservation area identified by Professor Schalk Le Roux (1991). He identifies three theatres as important social, cultural and physical landmarks which should be restored or reprogrammed in an effort to re-establish their influence on the area. Le Roux stresses the importance of developing individual landmarks within relation to one another because of their role of providing continuity to the historical fabric of Marabastad.

1. The programme will function together with the simultaneous restoration and/or adaptation of the Orient and Empire theatres (See Fig 1.12-Fig 1.13).

In accordance with the wishes of the owner, Mr Sandha Chetty, The Orient will be restored as a cinema, specialising in local and historical films. The Empire Theatre will be re-programmed as a micro-brewery that brews local historical beers (Skokiaan) with names like 'Ma-trek-my broek uit', 'Klim-in -die-boom' and 'Lillian's Brew' ¹, to be served at a bar there as well as at the other two theatres (the historical and cultural relevance of beer brewing is discussed in Section 2.2.2.4).

2. The main site of investigation, the site of the Royal Theatre will be programmed as a multi-use, multi-form theatre.

The programme will respond to historical, current and future conditions:

Historical:

A reinterpretation of its historical function as multi-functional space: cinema, theatre, dancehall, town-hall and community centre.

Current

Appropriable space for informal restaurants

Public ablution area

Public open space

¹ Skokiaan [mass noun]

South African illicit home-brewed alcoholic drinks made from malt, yeast, sugar, and water. (*Oxford Dictionary*)

Future:

In response to the programming of the Conservation area and the implementation of the Aziz Tayob framework.

In addition it will now also host:

Music recording facilities and music teaching facilities.

Artists accommodation- flexible, to accommodate different group sizes .

The old Columbia dancehall – which later became Steeve the Jazz King's Records – also has a role to play in the re-programming of the historical area. It will be programmed as a public sound archive where music and sounds recorded at the new Royal Theatre will be stored and made available to the public. The songs and sound samples are available to visiting artists to use in contemporary projects (See Fig 1.11).

3. How does this programme facilitate metacultural production?

- Provides an arena for the Marabi culture to exhibit itself within the current social context and in relation to contemporary cultures.
- Allows critical public engagement with the Marabi culture as a living historical cultural system.
- Allows cultural evolution within a historical framework.
- Returns the physical locus which traditionally hosted the Marabi culture.



*Fig 1.11
Steeve the Jazz King's Records: Historical Remnant of the Marabi era. To be re-programmed as a public sound archive where sounds from the New Royal Theatre are made available to the public.
Author*



CLIENT PROFILE

The Gallo Music Group- Record company and music publishing.

The Gallo Music Group has been associated with Marabi music since 1930 when they first introduced the world to Marabi music by sending several Marabi musicians to London to record albums for Singer Records. Since then, the label has become synonymous with the culture, having recorded acclaimed musicians such as Miriam Makeba, Solomon Linda and Ladysmith Black Mambazo (Ballantine, 1993: 8).

Fig 1.14 (overleaf) Shows the album cover of Marabi group Tsaba Tsabane's first recording, recorded in London in 1930 (Ballantine, 1993: 54).

1.6.1

ECONOMIC JUSTIFICATION

The client (and the artists involved) would stand to benefit from the following:

Primary income sources:

**Royalties*: Sounds from the sound archive are copyrighted. Artists or private agencies that use the material pay royalties.

**Recording*: The studios offer recording facilities where musicians can produce albums.

**Record Sales*: Music recorded by the artists signed under the Gallo brand.

**Large events*: Events where entry is controlled can generate income through ticket sales.

Secondary income sources:

**Music classes*: Musicians can share knowledge.

**Rentable space*: Restaurant and living units generate income through rent.

**Overnight facility*: The overnight facility charges a nightly fee.

**Busking*: Performers accumulate donations during daytime performances

**Exposure*: As artists gain popularity other opportunities are created for them.



Fig 1.12
Field Sketch: The Empire Theatre today, currently shops but to be reprogrammed as a micro-brewery that brews local historical beers.
Author



Fig 1.13
Field Sketch: The Orient Theatre today, currently a shebeen and shops, to be restored to a cinema.
Author



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA



Fig 1.14
Early Gallo Records Album Cover
Tsaba Tsabane No 1.
(Ballantine, 1998: 54)

CHAPTER TWO

Context



STUDY AREA

Marabastad, a city-sector directly to the North West of the Central Business District of Pretoria is rich in political, religious and cultural history. Remnants (both physical and intangible) of its multivalent past still survive among the bus stations and taxi stops that now characterise the area. At present, Marabastad is one of Pretoria's principle modal interchange for public transport, which, together with the customs, rituals and traditions inherited from it's previous vocations, dictate life in this uniquely multifarious environment.

The extent of the study area is defined as Steenhoven Spruit to the East, Proes Street to the South, D.F Malan drive to the West and the railway lines to the North (that run through the Belle Ombre Station). These boundaries are determined by elements that essentially cordon Marabastad off from the rest of the city, contributing to the area's distinct sense of autonomy within the larger city context.



Fig 2.1
Marabastad in the context of Pretoria
Author



Fig 2.2
Extent of study area
Author

2.2

THE STORY OF MARABASTAD

2.2.1

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Summarised from Illife, 1987 ; Friedman, 1994 ; Malan, 1999 ; Van der Waal, 1998

Since the establishment of Pretoria in 1855, rural people have come to the city in search of employment. A great deal of these migrant workers found refuge in the village of Maraba, named after chief Maraba, situated on the North West periphery of the city between the Steenhoven spruit and the Apies River. At that time the village stretched up into the foothills of Daspoortrand. 1967 saw the establishment of Schoolplaats, the first formal Black 'location' to accommodate for the increasing influx of migrant workers to the area. Schoolplaats, however, soon became overpopulated and Marabastad was proclaimed as another black 'location' in 1888. Black residents were not allowed to own the land, but could rent it from the government at an annual fee of around four Pounds (Van der Waal, 1998: 5).

According to Van der Waal (1998:6) Pretoria allowed more rights to Indian and Coloured communities during the late 1800's than elsewhere in the Transvaal; therefore a considerable amount of Indian and Coloured families began to settle in the city. The white population was aggrieved by the sudden influx of Indian and Coloured families to the city, which led to the creation of "Bazaars". These were designated areas where Indians could reside, own property, trade and build religious structures. Between 1892 and 1893 an area to the South of Marabastad was proclaimed as a Bazaar. It was called the "Coolie Location," consisting of three hundred and eighty small stands.

Around the same time an area was demarcated where the Coloured community would be accommodated. The area between Struben and Bloed Streets was proclaimed as the Cape Location/Cape Boys Location and all Coloured citizens were ordered to reside in there.

During the following decade the Marabastad location became increasingly overpopulated and in 1900 was no longer capable of accommodating any new migrants. The area between Marabastad and the Coolie Location was used as overflow space for informal settlement. This area eventually became known as New Marabastad (Friedman, 1994: 42).

Between the years of 1903 and 1906 the management of all the abovementioned locations was allocated to the Pretoria City Council. The council resurveyed the entire area in order to implement rates and regulations. It was during this time that the area attained its distinctive grid pattern: Small stands of approximately 15mx15m, grouped into blocks of six stands each, resulting in the fine grained urban fabric unique to the area (Van der Waal, 1998: 8).

The construction of the Daspoort Sewage Works over Old Marabastad in 1907 saw the resettlement of the residents of six hundred erven to the New Location to the North West of the city. The New Location later became known as Bantule (Malan, 1999: 4).

Between 1940 and 1950, the black population of Marabastad was relocated to Atteridgeville to the South West of Pretoria, after which the area was deproclaimed as a township and all remaining built fabric was demolished. From 1959 to 1976 the Indian population was relocated to Claudius and Laudium. Although it was abolished as a residential area in 1976, most of the built fabric of the Asiatic Bazaar was left intact. The Coloured residents of the Cape Boys Location were moved to Eersterust between 1962 and 1965 and all physical remnants of the location were demolished (Van der Waal, 1998: 13).

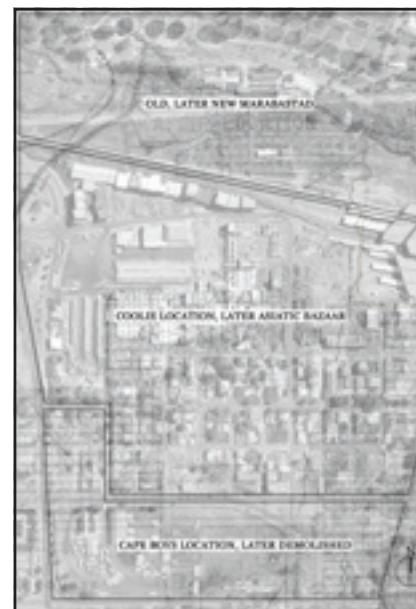


Fig 2.3
Positions of the different locations
Author



Fig 2.4
Outlying townships in relation to Marabastad
Author

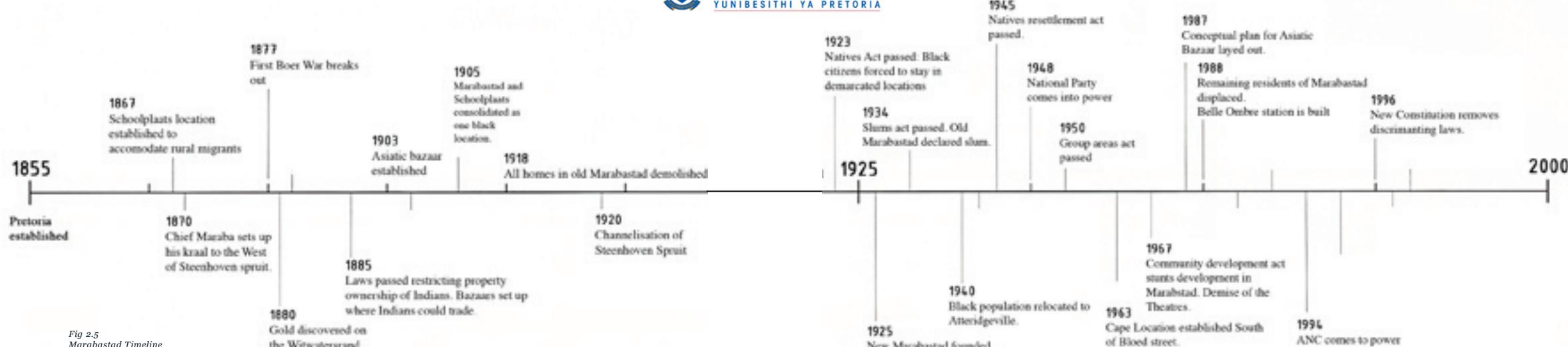


Fig 2.5
Marabastad Timeline
Author

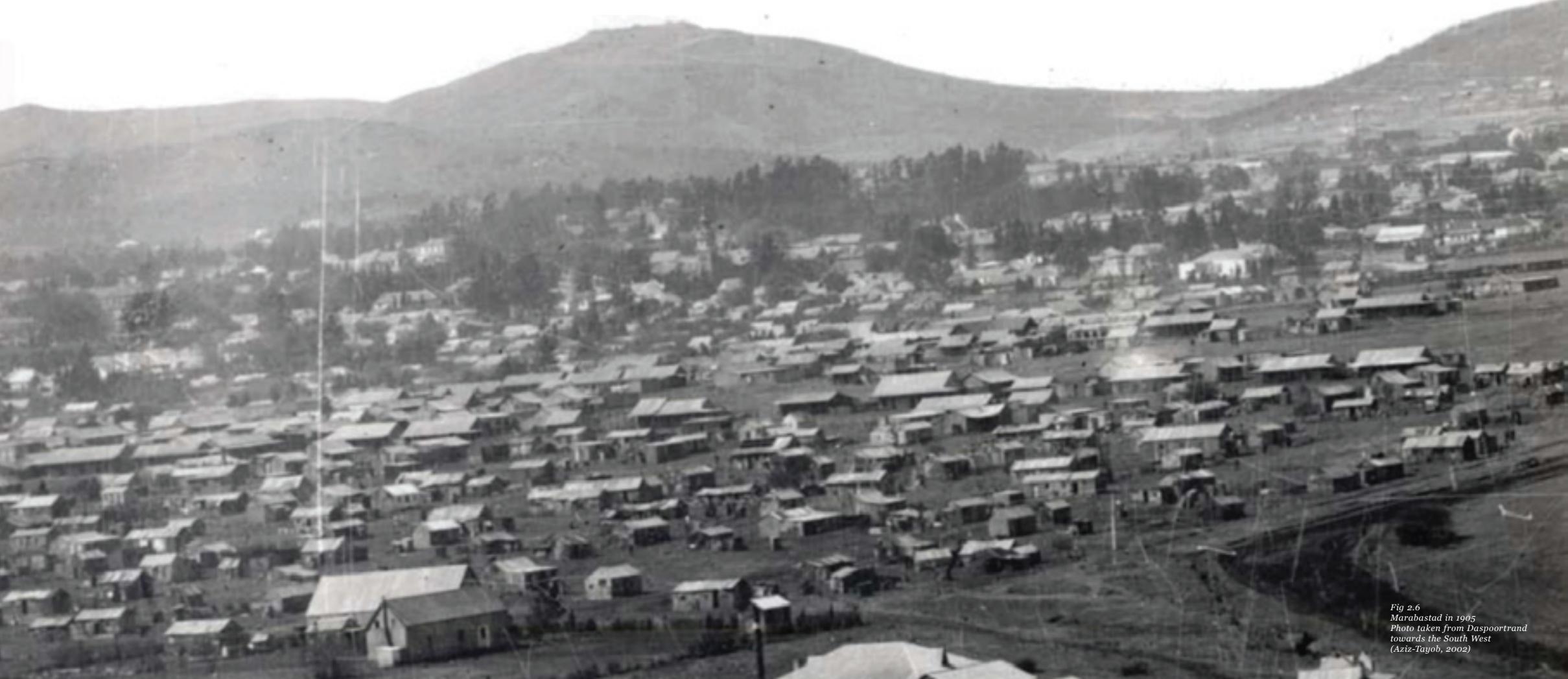


Fig 2.6
Marabastad in 1905
Photo taken from Daspoorstrand towards the South West
(Aziz-Tayob, 2002)

2.2.2

CULTURAL HISTORY

2.2.2.1

The 'Marabi' Culture

The Marabi culture originated and flourished in the slumyards and locations around the main urban centres of the Transvaal during the 1930's. According to John Illiffe (1987) the name was derived from Marabastad. It is a culture born out of hardship, one that stands in defiance of the context that gave it birth and yet cannot be understood without it, a culture that thrived in a wildly illicit, yet good-natured social arena. Illiffe (1987:128) explains that "Marabi love" was illicit, a 'Marabi girl' wanted a good time. But Marabi meant more. It meant youth and modernity. It meant freedom of the town. It meant freedom of towns not yet in the grip of the state. It meant hope and ambition not yet crushed."

The word 'Marabi' is synonymous with the rowdy parties (*timiti*) and street culture that formed the centre of township life. At the core of this vibrant culture is music, its own unique musical style, together with all of its fantastical limbs: wild dancing, casual sex, drinking illegally brewed beer and the sharing of its illegally gotten gains at 'stokvels' (informal credit unions). The elements of the Marabi culture all came together to create a strong community identity, grounded in the non-violent resistance of oppression.



Fig 2.7
Sam Nhlengetwa - Township Jazz, Collage, 2001
(arthrob,2011)

2.2.2.2

Marabi music

In Modikwe Dikobe's 'The Marabi Dance' (1984) and Christopher Ballantine's 'Marabi Nights' (1993) detailed accounts are given of Marabi music. People flocked to the shebeens and dancehalls where the Marabi bands would play, therefore music played an invaluable role in the development of the culture. Marabi (music) is a unique style of music which incorporates American ragtime blues, jazz and swing into traditional African music. This distinctive blend came about as much per chance as by intention. The musicians in the townships were generally unschooled in formal music and merely interpreted foreign styles through their own musical framework, which, at the time, was traditional African music. The reasoning behind their adopting these American styles is important in comprehending the spirit in which the music was performed. Jazz is synonymous with rebelliousness, defiance and 'sinful' behaviour. Blues is associated with perseverance in the face of hardship and Swing with rowdy, unadulterated fun, despite the adversities of life.

Marabi music formed the foundation upon which a great deal of contemporary South African popular music was developed. Mbanqanqa, Kwele, Bubblegum and Kwaito are known derivatives of Marabi music, establishing the Marabi culture as one of South Africa's most influential contributors to the country's musical heritage.

Famous artists that have contributed to the international acknowledgement of Marabi music through their interpretations thereof are:

Hugh Masekela - Various albums from 1964 to present

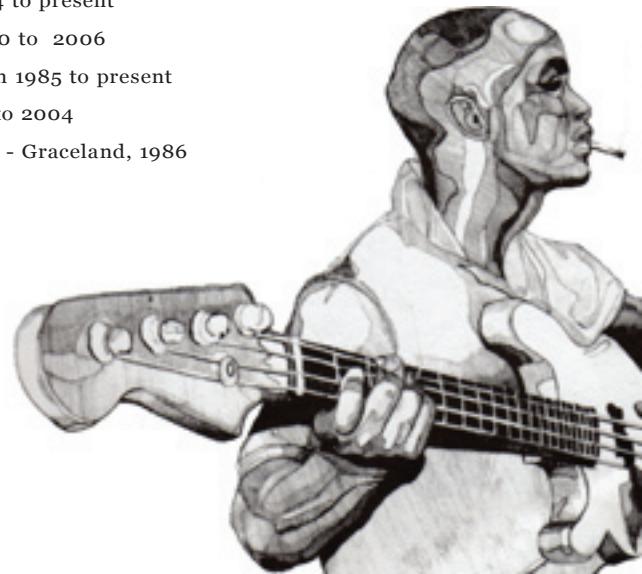
Miriam Makeba - Various albums from 1960 to 2006

Yvonne Chaka Chaka - Various albums from 1985 to present

Brenda Fassie - Various albums from 1981 to 2004

Paul Simon and Ladysmith Black Mambazo - Graceland, 1986

Fig 2.8
Tza-Sol plays Bass
(Thomas,2003: 14)



2.2.2.3

Timiti dance parties

Along with the music came the parties or ‘Timiti’ where people would drink illegal beer, dance wildly and interact socially. These parties were generally held in dancehalls or beerhalls and were often the target of police raids. By hosting ‘Timiti’ the dancehall/shebeen became the primary locus for community interaction, offering a place where social concerns could be discussed since there was no formal town hall or community centre.

2.2.2.4

Illegal beer brewing

In ‘A history of Africans in Pretoria’ (1994), Michelle Friedman discusses the important political role of illegal beer brewing in the context of Marabastad. Not only did the illegal brew fuel the Timiti, it created independent economic opportunity for an otherwise severely limited community. For these reasons the brewing of beer became an important symbol of defiance and independence. Police raids on the beerhalls were common, as well as frequent searches of homes suspected of housing breweries. Friedman argues that the frequency of the raids suggest that the government was aware of the economic capacity of illegal brewing enterprises and the empowering effect they had on the community.

In ‘Bioscopes and Achaar’ (2008) Dr. Muthal Naidoo illustrates how the brewing of beer did not only create economic opportunity for black community of Marabastad, but also greatly benefited the Indian traders of the area. The Indian owned shops (blacks were not allowed to own property) sold the corn and malt that they needed to brew the beer, but were not allowed to buy in bulk. These operations took place ‘behind closed doors’ so to speak, but the income generated from it contributed greatly to the development of the infrastructure of Marabastad.

As established in Chapter 1, UNESCO’s definition of intangible heritage includes the culinary arts and all of its material aspects, therefore it could be argued that the brewing of beer in Marabastad should be considered as an essential part of its intangible heritage and should therefore be conserved/heralded accordingly.

Therefore this dissertation argues that the beers themselves, their recipes, their names, their social and cultural connotations and their role in the political history of Marabastad are to be celebrated in any undertaking concerning the intangible heritage of the area.

To conclude, the names of some of the beers
(Friedman, 1994: 157)

- Ma-trek-my-broek-uit
- Skokiaan
- Klim-in-die-boom
- Lilian’s brew

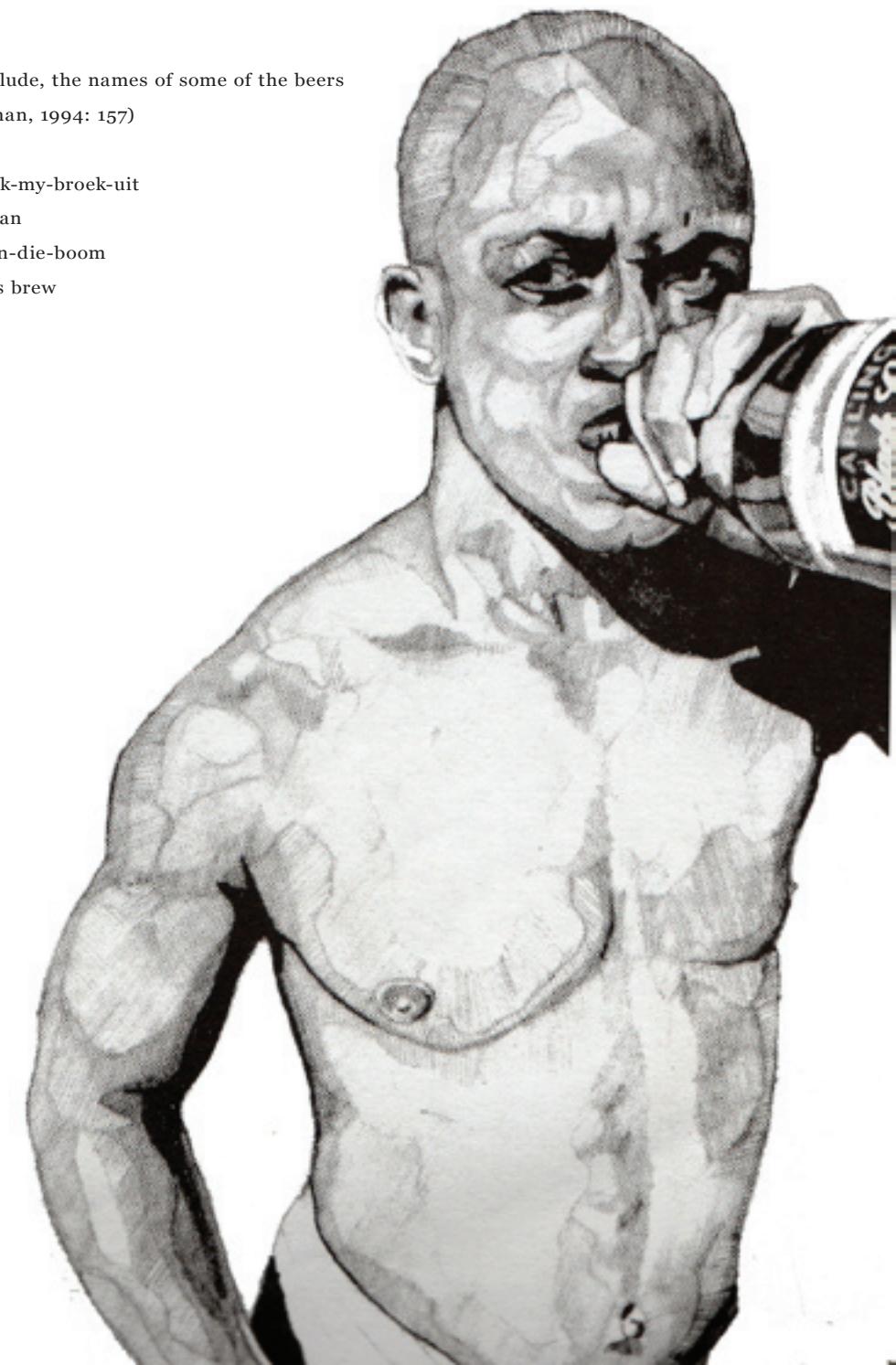


Fig 2.9
Drinking beer
(Thomas, 2003: 13)



2.2.2.5

Cultural Diversity

The grouping of diverse racial and cultural groups into such close proximity to one another due to the pre-described living areas created a place with an almost unprecedented richness of cultural diversity. The remaining fabric bares testimony to the remarkable way in which different cultures and religions harmoniously co-existed in the small area assigned to them. The religious structures across Marabastad act as landmarks that embody the multivalent character of the place. The Aga Khan (no longer active) and Mogul Street Mosques serve the Islamic community and the iconic Miriammen Temple is still used by the Hindu community today. Steenhoven spruit and its surrounding landscape hosts the Zionist church each Sunday while the abundant Muti stalls and Traditional healing shops serve traditional African beliefs and customs.

In addition to the religious structures, there are still elements that testify to the area's once vibrant and festive cultural history. Much of the area's way of life has survived. The streets are still alive with the smells, sounds, colours and activities that embody the spirit of the place. Poverty and neglect (lack of formal development) has allowed layers of meaning to remain visible through time while new layers are constantly being added. The flotsam of bygone era's still riddle the area in the form of old signboards and building facades, suggesting that beneath the exterior there may still live a forgotten culture. Fig 2.10 is structured in such a way as to prompt the viewer to 'discover' diverse landmarks, historical remnants and cultural activities as one would upon a visit to Marabastad.



Fig 2.10
Marabastad experiential diagram illustrating
the abstract interconnectivity between diverse
landmarks and activity within Marabastad.
Author



2.3

THE STORY OF THE THEATRES

The most apparent examples of the historical remnants mentioned in the previous section are the two theatres in Boom street - The Orient Picture Palace and the Empire Theatre (which now hosts shops). These theatres were once part of a trio of theatres that formed the backbone of the Marabastad social scene. (See Fig 2.11 and 2.13) The third theatre, and main focus of this dissertation, was called the Royal Theatre and stood on the corner of 5th and Grand Street, around the corner from the other two. Following is a short account of how these theatres came about, how they contributed to the cultural history Marabastad and finally, how they came to their demise (summarised from Naidoo, 2008).

Built in 1905, the Orient had hosted social events from its very beginning. It started out as a double storey building with shops on the street-front and a small dancehall upstairs. A much larger double volume dancehall was added at the back in 1915. During the late 1930's the property was put up for sale and the building was bought by Mrs Athieammal Chetty, a widow and mother of six sons. She and her sons were all hawkers, but by pooling all their money together they could make the monthly instalments of fifty pounds a month.

The dancehalls were kept intact and a grocery store was opened in the front. The family took advantage of the trade restrictions against black citizens who were subject to severe curfews and limitations as to where and what they could buy as well as during which times. The store was kept open twenty four hours a day and they sold to any citizen (albeit behind closed doors). The Chettys also took advantage of the fact that blacks were not allowed to buy bulk amounts of corn and malt which they needed to brew beer. Soon they were making enough money to obtain screening rights for films upon which the large dancehall was converted into a movie theatre.

As their business grew they bought all the rights to show films in the location and obtained the Empire and Royal Theatres from the Keshavjee family. The Chettys then had a monopoly on the theatres in the location. These theatres were more than cinema's "they also provided venues for social, cultural, educational and political events" (Naidoo, 2008 : [s.p]). While the Orient had fixed seating, the Empire and Royal Theatres were loose-fit halls which would be cleared out on demand to host a Marabi party, a wedding, a community meeting or any other large social event that was required. The police often raided the Chetty's theatres, looking for illegal alcohol, prostitution and curfew violations.



Fig 2.11
From top to bottom: 1. Site of the old Royal Theatre, 2. The Empire Theatre 3. The Orient Theatre. 2011
Author



As these “theatres” thrived the Chettys’ business prospered from the selling of beer brewing products and snacks, especially Achaar. The Achaar¹ sales, in fact, went so well that they had to change the yard behind the Orient theatre into an Achaar factory where they would produce up to 30 000 25l containers per month – to be exported to various countries.

The films shown in the Chetty’s theatres supplied the Marabi musicians with inspiration, as discussed by Ballantine in ‘Marabi Nights’ (1984) : “for jazz and vaudeville artists, films were an apparently infinite source of things to be emulated or developed: ideas, melodies, songs, routines, dance steps, styles of presentation, ways of dressing, ways of playing; and of course they also provided ways of estimating local achievement.” He continues to explain how cinema was an important part of life in the townships since they provided the repressed society with tales of hope and aspiration: “black South Africans were watching films long before the invention of the sound movie in the late 1920’s ... By the 1930’s, there were a number of commercial cinemas for blacks ... and in most of the townships free films were shown out of doors, even on cold winter nights. Despite the controls of strict censorship, the movies had an impact difficult to overestimate” (Ballantine, 1984: 13).

It was with the enforcement of the Group Areas Act (affecting Indians during the early 60’s) that the Chetty’s theatre empire was brought to its knees. The Royal Theatre was demolished under the pretext that a highway was to be constructed through the property, but it was the only building to be razed in the area. The highway was never constructed and the electricity to the other two theatres was cut. The Chetty’s, along with the rest of the Indian population of the Asiatic Bazaar were relocated to Laudium and Claudius.

In 1964 the government claimed ownership of all Indian property in the area and it was only some 30 years later, in 1995, that the Chettys (descendants of the original Chetty brothers) could reclaim their lost property.

The author met the owner Mr. Sandha Chetty on a visit to the Orient theatre on 9 June 2011 and Mr. Chetty intends to re-instate the Orient as a cinema.

¹ Achaar - The Hindi term for pickle. Predominantly made from mango, salt, spices and oils.
(About.com)



Fig 2.12
1967 Highway Scheme that was to be built through Marabastad.
(Aziz Tayob, 2002)
Site indicated



Fig 2.13
Positions of the Theatres within the Heritage Conservation area as stipulated by Le Roux, 1991
Author



2.4

MARABASTAD TODAY

2.4.1

URBAN FABRIC

The last remaining original historic fabric remains in the area between Bloed and Mogul Streets. (See Fig 2.14 & 2.15) The built fabric dissipates to the South to expose large dusty tracts of land used mainly as parking for taxi's. To the North the fine grain of the original grid ends abruptly in Mogul Street, to the North of which most of the large scale transport interchanges are located. The remaining original fabric is in varying states of disrepair but generally still very much active and lively. The fine historical grid pattern and small erven has resulted in an area with a dense built fabric that is very pedestrian friendly, with a number of North South avenues having been closed to vehicular traffic and turned into ad-hoc open air markets. The unique urban fabric, enclosure within distinct boundaries and the palpable sense of history present in the area lends Marabastad a distinct autonomy that distinguishes it from the rest of Pretoria.



Fig 2.14
Comparative densities of Marabastad in 1934, 1965 and 1998
(Janse van Rensburg, 1994)

Fig 2.15 Adjacent page
Current state of Marabastad urban fabric
Author



2.4.2

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Today pedestrian activity in Marabastad is primarily dictated by the presence of large scale modal interchanges of public transport. Each morning the area floods with commuters travelling from outlying townships by bus or train to come to work in/around Pretoria (See Fig 2.16). From Marabastad the commuters take taxi's to their places of work. The area again floods during the late afternoon when everybody returns home. Besides the heightened activity during the mornings and afternoons, Marabastad remains highly active throughout the day with informal trade and socialising the dominant commercial activities. Fresh produce stalls and informal restaurants are most abundant – serving the throngs of commuters passing through each day. Shebeens are plentiful in the area and are ceaselessly active.

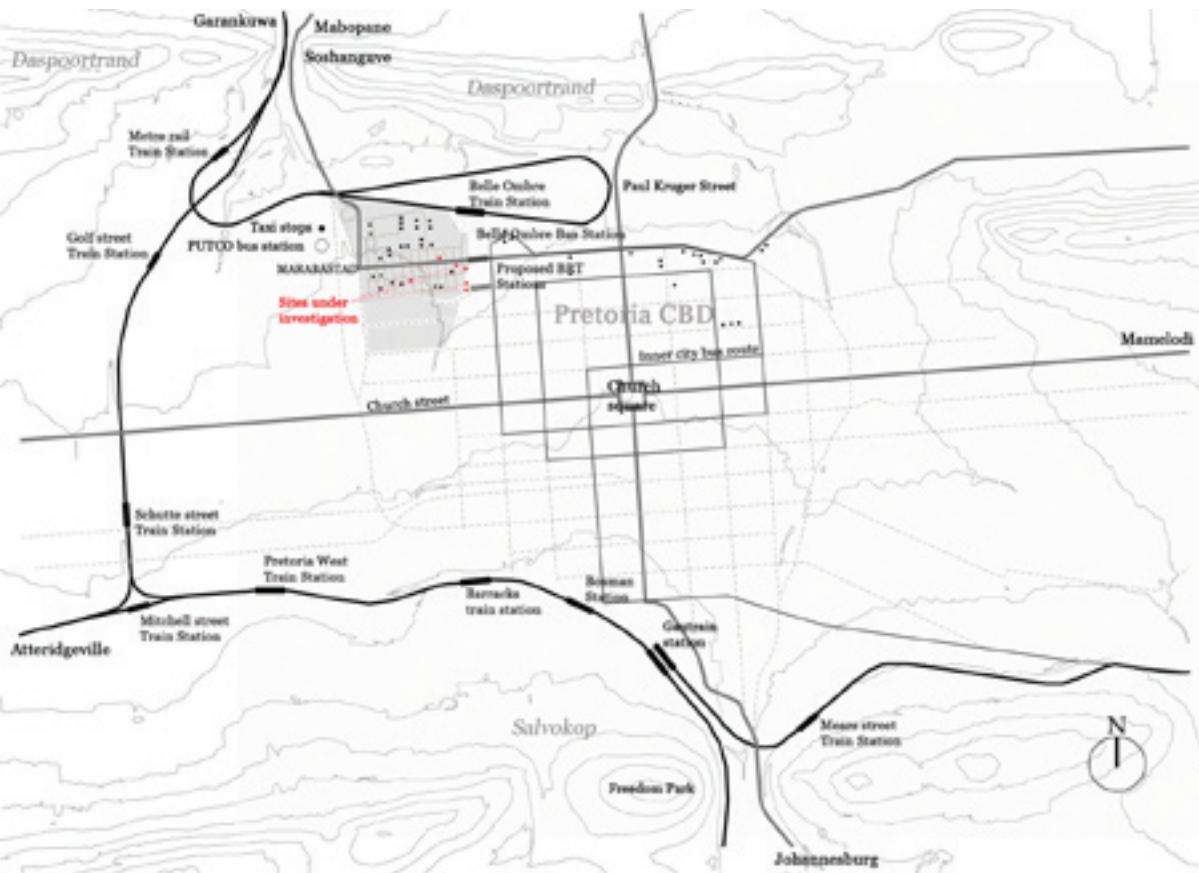


Fig 2.16
Pretoria's Transport Network with Marabastad as principle
intermodal transport interchange
Author

The following list indicates the influx of people through the area each day by way of public transport (Aziz Tayob Partnership, 2002:138).

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Putco bus rank- | 12 000 persons/day |
| 2. 7th St. Informal taxi rank- | 500 persons/day |
| 3. Bazaar St. Informal taxi rank- | 3 500 persons/day |
| 4. Belle Ombre train station- | 24 000 persons/day |
| 5. Belle Ombre bus stop- | 9 000 persons/day |
| 7. Belle Ombre Informal taxi rank- | 700 persons/day |
| 8. Proposed BRT terminal- | 11 150 persons/day |
| 9. Proposed BRT stop- | 11 150 persons/day |
| 10. Jerusalem St. Informal taxi rank- | 3 500 persons/day |

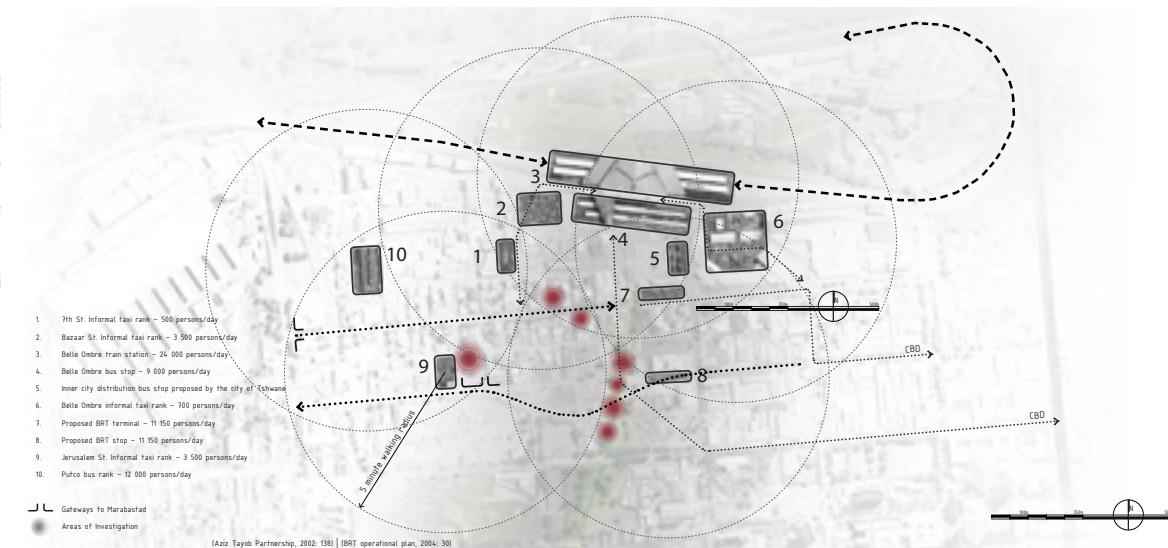


Fig 2.17
Main transport nodes of Marabastad
Author with Darryn Botha



Fig 2.18
High daytime pedestrian activity due to influx of commuters
Author with fellow student Darryn Botha.



Fig 2.19
Lower nighttime pedestrian activity due to exodus of commuters
and the small residential component.
Author with fellow student Darryn Botha.



Fig 2.20
Travelling to and from outlying homelands/townships has
become part of Marabastad's heritage. These are part of a
photostudy done on the subject by David Goldblatt in 1989.
(Seejarim, 2006: 48,49)



2.4.3

HERITAGE CONSERVATION AREA

In his 1991 report "Marabastad of die Asiatiese Bazaar: Geboue en Plekke van Belang" Professor Schalk le Roux classified the buildings of Marabastad in terms of their conservation/preservation value. After determining the area with the most valuable heritage content the heritage conservation area was stipulated. Figure 2. 21 illustrates the proposed conservation area along with a legend indicating the classifications of the buildings in terms of heritage value.

Of specific importance to this study is the classification of the Orient and Empire theatres as irreplaceable landmarks which should be appropriately reprogrammed.

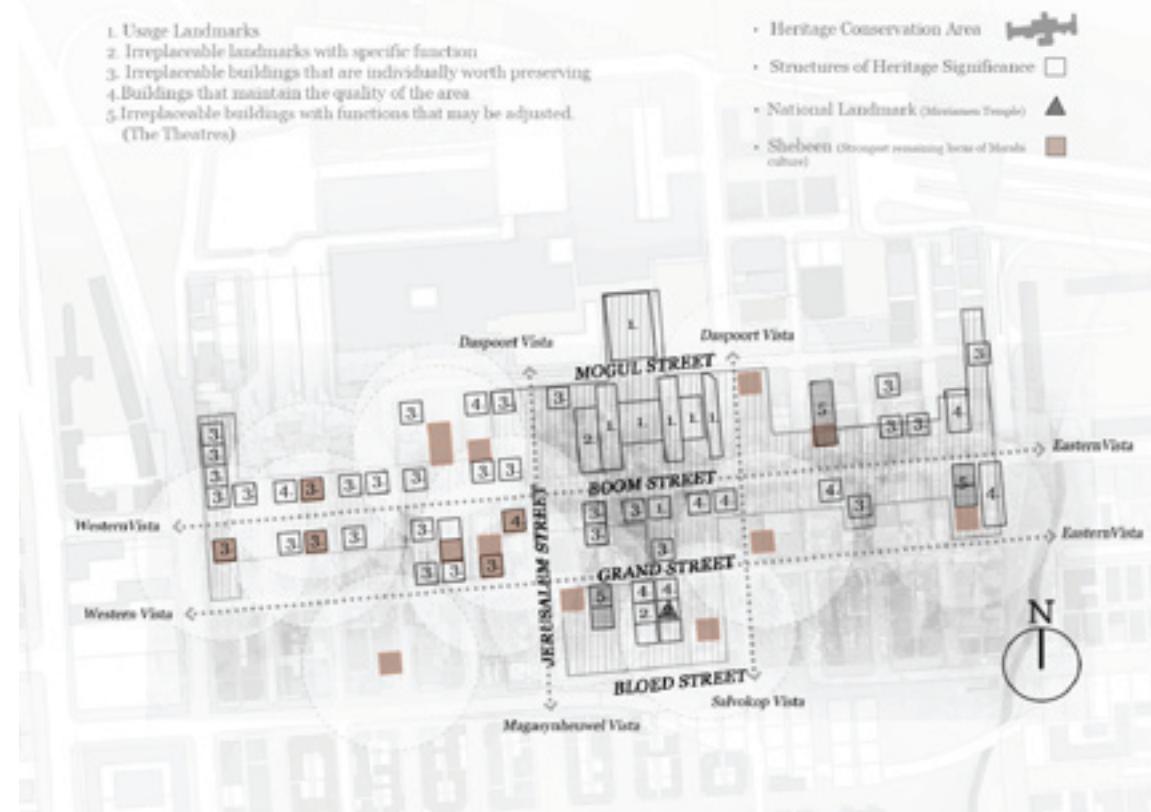


Fig 2.21
Marabastad Heritage Conservation area as stipulated by
Prof. Le Roux, 1991.
Author



HAWKERS WELCOME



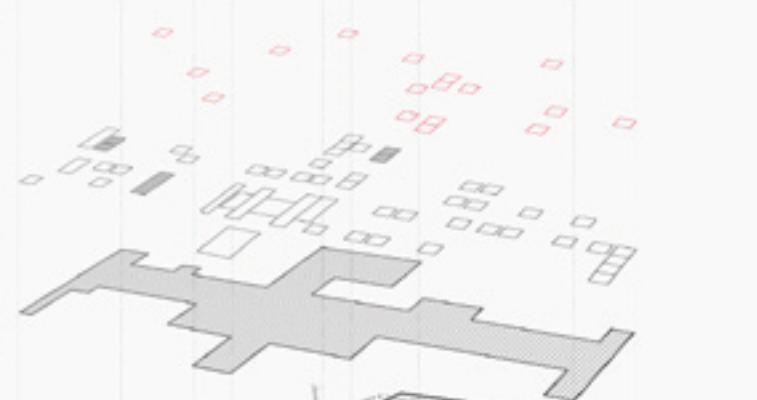
Intensity of activity

A mesh grid is overlaid over the area of investigation. Activity levels are identified. The mesh is extrapolated according to activity levels, indicating the footprint of energy throughout the area.



Social layer

Heritage and Social spaces are identified and their plots are matched to establish the current social framework present. The correlation between social space, heritage space and transport nodes becomes apparent.

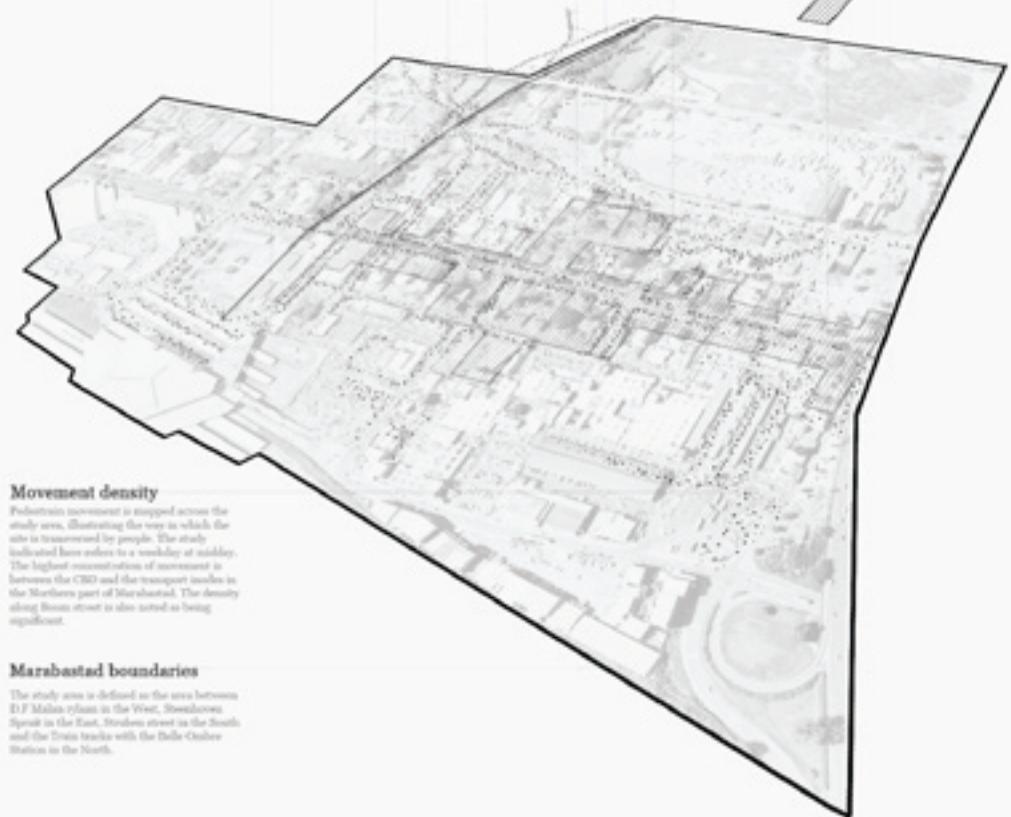


Conservation layer

The buildings worthy of conservation are identified as per the study conducted by S. Le Roux in 1992. Each building is numbered for one of the following: Adaptation, Renovation, Re-use or protection.

Heritage area

The central area of the Asiatic Bazaar still contains the only remaining original fabric of the area. Le Roux suggests that it be protected as a conservation area.



Movement density

Pedestrian movement is mapped across the study area, illustrating the areas in which the area is transversed by people. The study indicated high rates as a weekday at midday. The highest concentration of movement is between the CBD and the transport nodes in the Marabastad part of Bloemfontein. The density along Bosman street is also noted as being significant.

Marabastad boundaries

The study area is defined as the area between D.F.Motsepa street in the West, Steenberg Street in the East, Steenberg Street in the South and the train tracks with the Bell's Corner Station in the North.

Fig 2.22
Life in Marabastad today, Photostudy
Author

Fig 2.23
Layering of analysis data
Author with fellow student Darryn Botha

2.4.4

SECTIONAL ANALYSIS OF MARABASTAD ARCHITECTURE

A detailed section through Boom Street illustrates the fundamental workings of the built fabric of Marabastad. When viewed from the front façade, most of the buildings of Boom Street convey simplicity and apparent legibility, however, the section reveals a complex series of thresholds that determine different levels of interface, public engagement, privacy, safety, function, concealment/unveiling of experience, permanence/adaptability and historical layering.

When considered individually, each layer divulges information about the mechanisms that drive the architecture of Marabastad. The following analysis documents the vertical layering from street-front through the building towards unseen courtyards and workshops at the back, with particular consideration for the spaces created between thresholds and how they are programmed (See Fig 2.22 -Overleaf).

- Boom Street

Three lane vehicular one way from West to East. Traffic lights control traffic effectively, assisting pedestrian movement across the road.

- On street parking

Taxis occupy the majority of the parking, therefore commuters are constantly getting on and off along the entire length of the road, thereby keeping energy levels uniform along it. The curb is therefore occupied by informal traders selling goods to people waiting or arriving.

- Tree line

The line of Jacaranda trees offers both a visual filter and a definite sense of threshold. They offer cover to the traders, waiting commuters and pedestrians walking along the sidewalk.

- Colonnade/Arcade

The colonnade creates another definite threshold to pass through before reaching the

covered arcade that runs along almost all of the facades along Boom street in Marabastad. The space between the colonnade and the shopfront is a popular area occupied by informal traders. The shop owners don't mind this at all, in fact they promote it, often placing signs that read: Hawkers Welcome. There still exists a unique reciprocity between the shop owners and the hawkers in Marabastad. The shop owners buy goods wholesale and sell them to the hawkers. Where it is not taken up entirely by hawkers the arcade offers shaded walking space along the shopfronts.

- Formal shopfront/ building facade

The shopfront/façades of the buildings convey a sense of stable permanence in an otherwise highly dynamic environment. Access is controlled at this point but the domain directly beyond it (shop) may still be considered as public. The name shop-'front' or 'façade' is decidedly suitable in the historical context of Marabastad. Shop owners would often showcase benign goods in the front while making most of their money through illegal dealings 'behind closed doors.' Solicitation, gambling, ingredients for illegal alcohol brewing and trade after curfew were common undertakings. The fronting facades are mostly constructed of masonry and most of them date back to the first half of the 20th century, thereby creating the impression of permanence and stateliness. Behind their facades most of the buildings are little more than sheds, constantly evolving to suit the ever changing needs of its users.

- Evolving backrooms/workshops

Concealed from the public eye, the areas behind the shops are used for a multitude of uses. Liberated from the façade, these spaces are highly adaptable and can change to accommodate programmatic requirements, thereby enabling the longevity of the building. Uses for these spaces are infinite – from housing through workshops to shebeens.

- Additions/Informal housing

Many of the buildings have shed-like additions behind them – also concealed from view from the main road and these too accomodate a variety of uses. They are the least permanent and can be altered or removed without much trouble.

- Enclosed courtyard

The tightly knit built fabric creates hidden courtyards nestled within the small blocks.

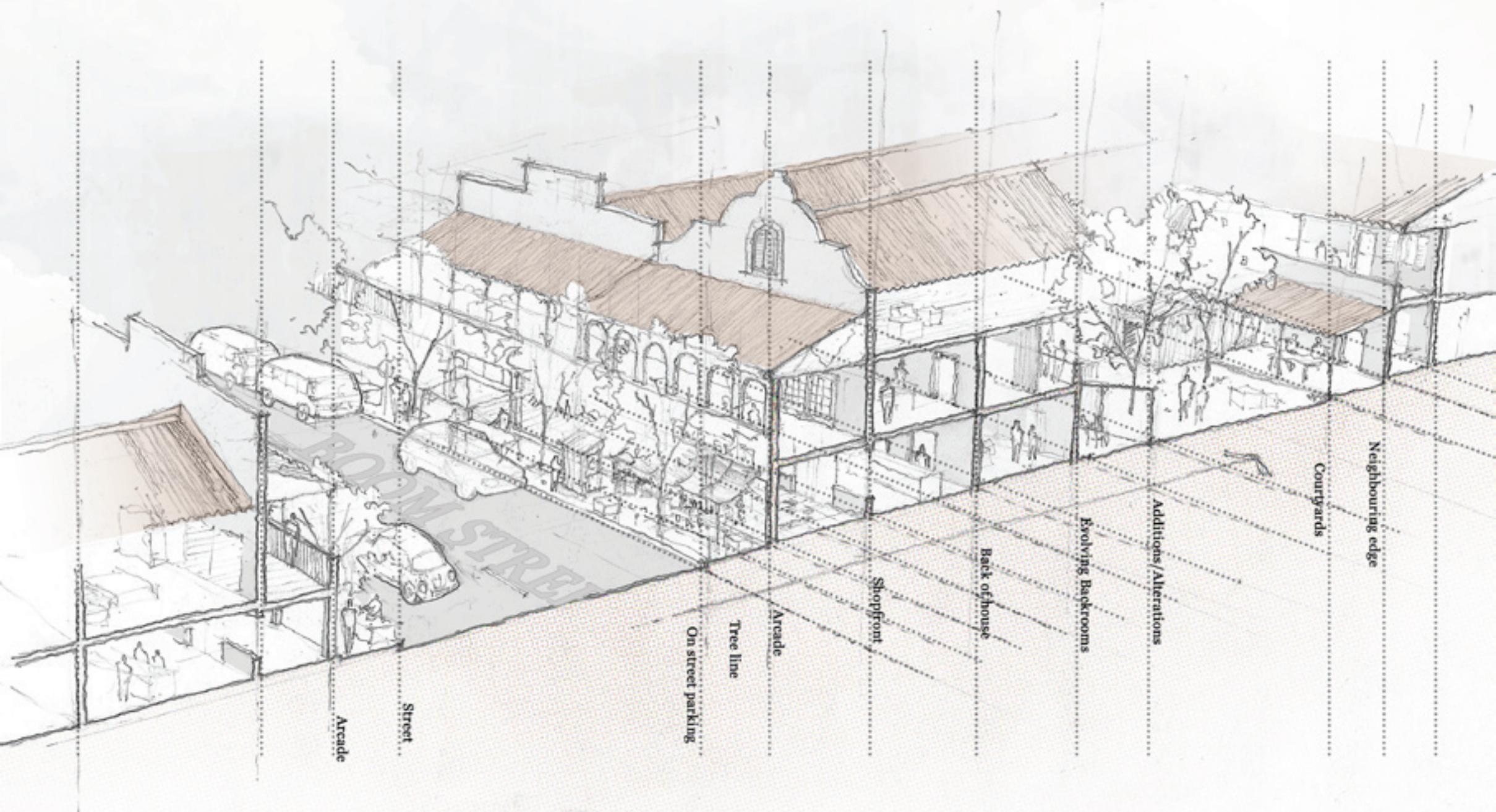


Fig 2.23
Sectional analysis of Marabastad built fabric
Author



2.5 PROPOSED FRAMEWORK

2.5.1

SUMMARY OF THE AZIZ TAYOB & URBAN DESIGNERS FRAMEWORK

A comprehensive Integrated Spatial Design Framework (ISDF) for Marabastad was compiled in 1998 by Aziz Tayob Architects Inc. & Meyer Pienaar Tayob Architects & Urban Designers and was again revised in 2002. The primary objectives of the framework may be summarised as:

- The development of vacant areas on the periphery of Marabastad.
- The development of the area as a unique tourist destination.
- Re-integration of Marabastad into the CBD.
- To facilitate optimum land restitution to correct past injustices.
- Revival of the area's historical character and to facilitate cultural continuity.
- Conservation of remaining historical fabric.
- Re-introduction of a residential component to Marabastad.
- Provision of social support facilities and recreational areas.
- Upgrading the service infrastructure of the area and addressing social concerns.

The following statement summarises the governing principle of the ISDF:

"The urban environment is here seen not as a designed stage set, but as the physical manifestation of social interaction, and the urban design exercise as an enabling mechanism which will help steer the reciprocal relationship between a community and its built environment into a spiral of growth on all fronts" (Aziz Tayob, 1998).

Since the abovementioned framework is currently the intended one for implementation this dissertation intends to respond to the context thereof. Of greater importance to this dissertation is the sensitive treatment of the existing historical fabric of the area.





Fig 2.24
Aziz Tayob ISDF Model
Black: Existing Fabric
White: Proposed
Author with fellow student Darryn Botha.



2.5.2

SITE LOCATION AND ANALYSIS

The site under investigation is the (now vacant) site of the old Royal Theatre on the corner of 5th Avenue and Grand Street. The intention is to investigate the possibility of returning to Marabastad the network of theatres that once provided a pivotal platform for the Marabi culture (See Fig 2.26).

2.5.2.1

Site description

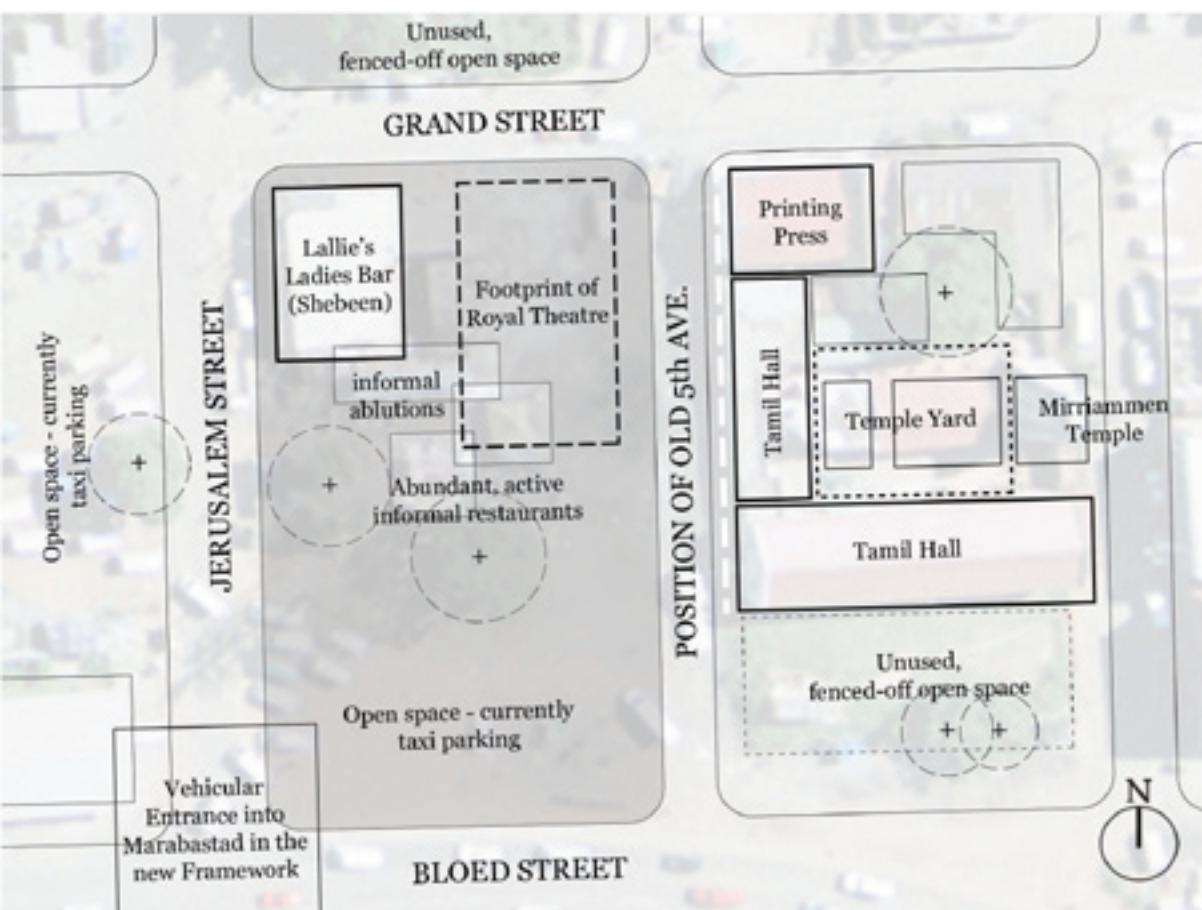
The site has been vacant since the demolition of the Royal Theatre in 1967. The only built fabric on the site is Lallie's Ladies Bar – a popular shebeen (See Fig 2.27). The site is currently occupied by informal restaurants where meat and chicken are cooked over open fires and served with pap to passers by. All of the areas associated with a formal restaurant are present: 'kitchen', washing area, seating areas, service counters and even toilets in the form of temporary ablution stalls which are converted from shipping containers. Ash and soot from the cooking fires cover the entire site. The block has been consolidated with its Eastern neighbour which hosts the Miriammen temple complex, 5th avenue having been covered up between them. The walls of the Tamil Hall and the printing press adjacent to the site creates an impermeable negative edge. The site consists of six 15mx15m stands but now also includes the area once occupied by 5th avenue.

The South Western corner of the site is on the corner of Bloed and Jerusalem Streets, which in the new framework, will be the first primary vehicular access point into the historical conservation area of Marabastad, therefore attaining an important role in announcing destination.



Fig 2.25 Adjacent, Top
Position of site in the context of Marabastad
Arial photo adapted by author

Fig 2.26 Adjacent, Bottom
Existing site condition
Author





2.5.2.2

Statement of significance for the site

1. Historical: It is the site of the old Royal Theatre which played an important role in the development of the Marabi culture together with the Empire and Orient Theatres.
2. Cultural: The theatre culture was an important part of township life. The films showed at the theatres were important sources of inspiration to the community but also provided Marabi musicians with the foreign material which they incorporated into their music. The loose-fit nature of the theatres meant that it could be appropriated as places for social gatherings and meetings. Theatre halls were used to host the wild dance parties that personified the culture thereby acting as the primary physical loci of the Marabi culture. The theatres were also known suppliers of the products required to brew the beer that fuelled the parties and did much to sustain the independent economy of the area.
3. Architectural: The site today houses a current locus of the remaining intangible qualities of the Marabi culture in the form of the shebeen. The informal restaurants on the site are also indicative of a way of life that is unique to the area and should be taken into consideration (See Fig 2.28 & Fig 2.29).
4. Political: The theatres were often raided by police targeting illegal activity like pass offences, curfew violations, prostitution and the possession of illegal alcohol. The theatre was demolished under the pretext of a highway scheme to be constructed through the site. The theatre was the only structure that was demolished and the highway was never built. The electricity to the other two theatres was also cut off, thereby displacing the Marabi culture from its physical locus.
5. Religious: The site is directly adjacent to the Mirriammen temple complex, an iconic landmark of Marabastad. The customs and rituals of the Hindu religious practice therefore have to be regarded in the approach to the proposal.
6. Physical: It falls within the heritage area as proposed by Professor Schalk le Roux in his 1991 survey of heritage structures in Marabastad wherein he suggests that the sites of the theatres are important historical landmarks which should be appropriately re-programmed. The site is situated on the corner of Bloed and Jerusalem Streets, which is the primary vehicular access point into the historical area when approaching from the CBD.

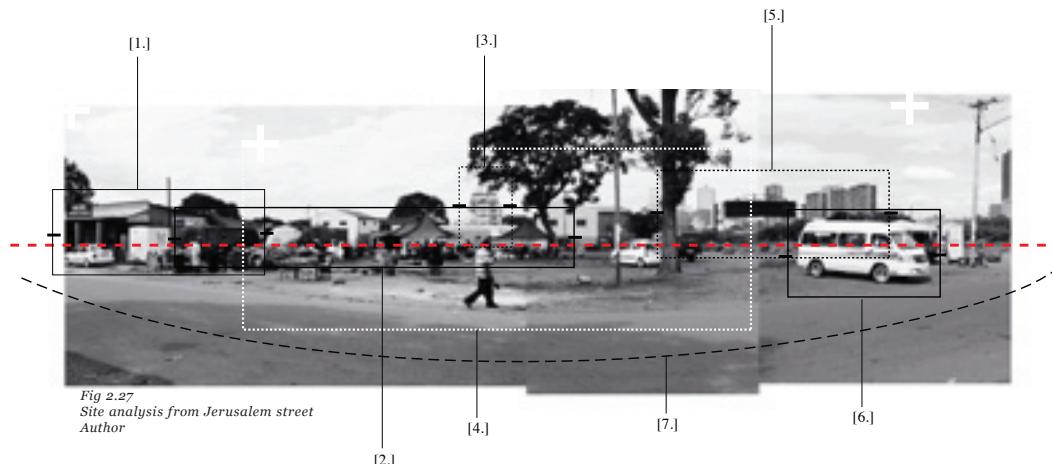


Fig 2.27
Site analysis from Jerusalem street
Author

1. Lallie's Shebeen and Ladies Bar - important remaining locus of the Marabi culture.
2. Informal Restaurants - Highly active and a typification of the township lifestyle.
3. Mirriammen Temple - A sacred site directly adjacent to a site associated with the profane.

4. Site for proposal
5. Pretoria CBD vantage
6. Taxi parking abundant on site
7. Jerusalem street will be an important vehicular access point in the new framework, therefore the New Royal Theatre will have an important role in announcing destination.

B - SITE ANALYSIS – FROM GRAND STREET

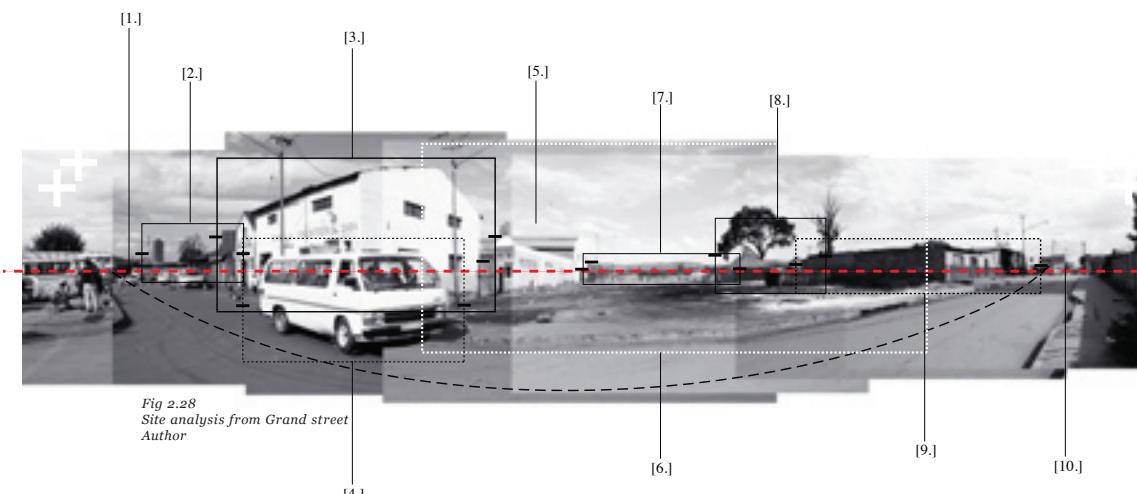


Fig 2.28
Site analysis from Grand street
Author

1. Grand street running East towards Steenhoven Spruit.
2. City vista always visible.
3. Printing press. Large building, no significant heritage value.
4. Taxi's stop on all of the open erven around the site, commuters move through Marabastad to switch from Taxi's to Trains or Busses that head out towards the townships.
5. Tamil Hall behind the Mirriammen temple.

6. Site of Royal Theatre
7. Vista of Salvokop and Magazine Hill.
8. Informal restaurants that serve the commuters that move through the area each day. Also on site: an informal ablution stall.
9. Lallie's shebeen and ladies bar.
10. Grand street running towards the West, exiting in DF Malan Highway.

CHAPTER THREE

Theory

3.1

INTRODUCTION

The following chapter introduces the theoretical platform to substantiate design decisions throughout the dissertation.

The first section aims to clarify the theoretical concept that supports the central argument of the dissertation. The concept is expressed metaphorically through the use of a folktale. The tale acts as the supportive ‘backbone’ to which the theoretical premises are attached.

The second section explores the design opportunities that arise from the theoretical studies and proposes possible architectural solutions.

The chapter concludes with definitive aims that will drive architectural resolution.

For the purpose of this dissertation Marabastad acts as an example of an “intangible heritage landscape” as put forth by Liana Muller in her 2008 study on Intangible and Tangible Landscapes wherein she stresses the importance of interpreting the intangible aspects of place and its relation to its tangible fabric with specific reference to the role of memory (Further discussed in Section 3.3).

Informed by Muller’s premise of intangible landscapes, the primary theoretical concept of the dissertation is the following:

The intangible qualities of place (eg. memory, meaning, cultural history, lived experience) are ‘buried alive’ beneath a number of temporal layers (time, socio-cultural and physical recontextualisation and/or dislocation from its practitioners)

This dissertation argues that architecture can assist living heritage to ‘exhume itself’ from these layered phenomena by providing the physical habitat for cultural reproduction in the form of ‘open-ended’ heritage places (Further discussed in Section 3.3.2).

The abovementioned concept is illustrated by way of a folktale. The ‘tale’ is intended to act as the unifying thread between individual theories in support of the primary theoretical concept.

The title of the tale:

Ringing the dead man’s bell

The title refers to the 14th century device used to aid victims of premature burial to signal their being alive from the grave. The architecture of the proposal aims to provide the same service in aid of living heritage that has been ‘buried alive’ beneath the temporal layers as discussed above.

The configuration of the story is based on that of a traditional African folktale. Traditionally these tales include anthropomorphised animals, plants, objects or gods as the actants in the tale (often as metaphorical representations of other phenomena). The interaction between the actants is used to express embedded motifs (both simple and complex).

3.2 THEORETICAL CONCEPT

As discussed in the introductory chapters the principle aim of the dissertation is to reunite Marabastad with its intangible heritage. The reasons for the dislocation may be summarized as:

- The forced relocation of the citizens of Marabastad to outlying locations such as Atteridgeville, Laudium, Claudius and Eersterust.
- The demolition and decommissioning of the physical loci (theatres, beerhalls and dancehalls) that once hosted the cultural practices.
- The physical recontextualisation of Marabastad as a transport interchange.
- Cultural recontextualisation due to changes in the socio-political environment. Changes such as the end of Apartheid and increased exposure to external cultural influence through mass media (leading to cultural homogenization).
- The effects of time on memory.

In the case of “Ringing the dead man’s bell” the actants are anthropomorphised versions of the primary participating elements of the dissertation. Their interaction is metaphorically expressed in the narrative of the story as well as in accompanying graphics (abstractly illustrating the interaction). The theoretical implications of the interactions are indicated below each page of narrative.

The cast:

- Folklore (the main protagonist) : Represents intangible heritage (In the context of Marabastad: the ‘Marabi’ culture).
- Community (the wife of folklore) : Represents the people of a specific community (Inhabitants of Marabastad).
- Anthropology (the loyal dog) : Represents current endeavors to engage with intangible heritage.
- The Public Sphere: Represents Muller’s intangible landscape (Remaining historical fabric of Marabastad).
- Cultural Homogenisation (the witch): Represents the effects of external cultural influence (Explained by Fig. 3.1 and Fig 3.2).
- The Realm of Memory: Represents the perception that ‘heritage’ is a function of the past rather than an active contributor to the present.
- The Dead Man’s Bell: Represents ‘open ended’ heritage architecture that facilitates cultural reproduction (The proposal for this dissertation).

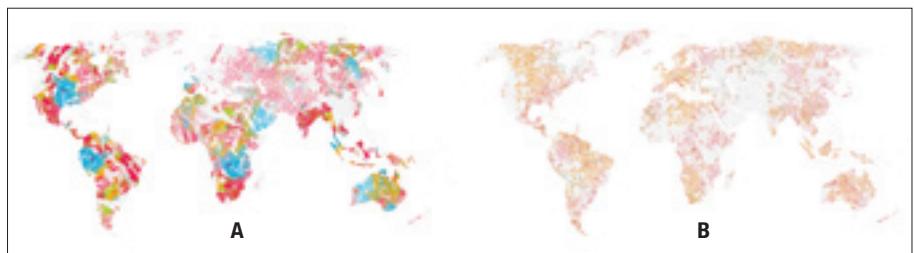


Fig 3.1
A- Diverse cultures with a strong sense of regional autonomy
B- Homogenised cultures, loss of autonomy due to external cultural influence
Author

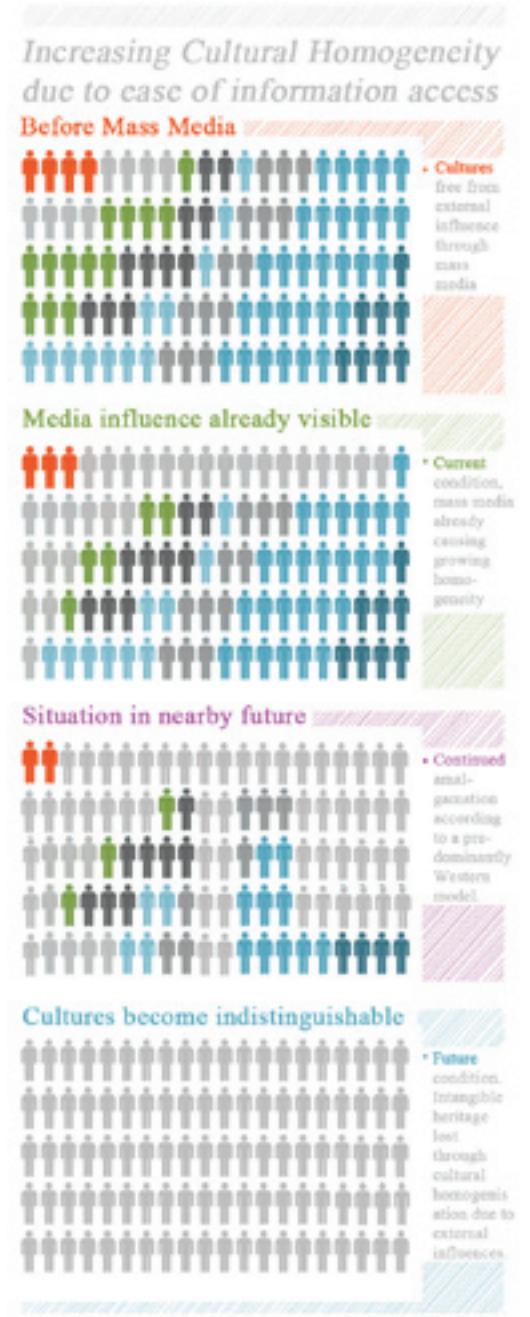


Fig 3.2
Increase in cultural homogeneity
due to ease of information access
Author



RINGING THE DEAD MAN'S BELL

A folktale by Leon Grobbelaar.

There once was a man named Folklore. He lived happily with his wife, Community and their dog Anthropology in the magnificent land of the Public Sphere. Folklore had a tremendous memory and he was an exceptional storyteller. He knew every story ever told by the people of Public Sphere and he would spend hours entertaining Community and Anthropology with his fables and tales. He told his tales in the most uncommon and splendid fashion. With each telling a different twist would emerge! Community too would chime in, adding anecdotes, alterations and permutations to his ever evolving narratives. Life was grand and all was well until, one day, Community and Anthropology disappeared...

* Theoretical implications:

In “The City of Collective Memory” Christine Boyer (1996:67) states that collective memory is a “current of continuous thought still moving in the present, still part of a group’s active life, and these memories are multiple and dispersed, spectacular and ephemeral.” According to Professor Dan Ben Amos of the University of Pennsylvania intangible heritage is the “repository for collective memory,” (Ben-Amos, 1971: 3) thereby illustrating the value of intangible heritage as a crucial (active) part of community identity. As discussed in earlier sections, Marabastad has suffered a dislocation from its intangible heritage and it is the intention of this dissertation to restore that connection.

{Once upon a time}



Fig 3.3 Adjacent page
Introducing folklore (intangible heritage)
Author



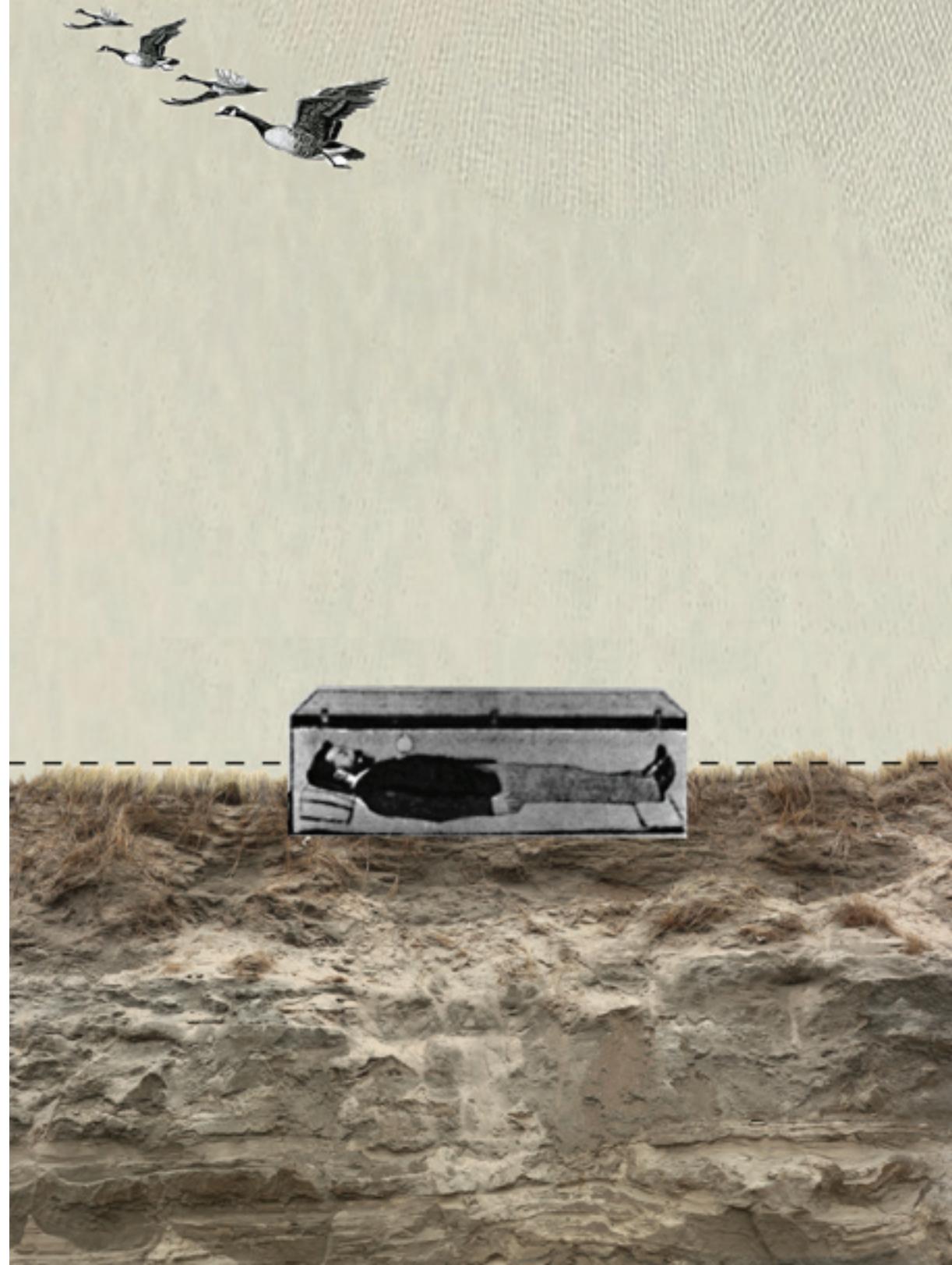
Folklore looked everywhere for his beloved Community; but she was nowhere to be found. After years and years of looking, Folklore gave up his search. He was so devastated that he isolated himself within a box made of misperception and had a witch curse it so that it may only be visible in her phantasmagorical world, the Realm of Memory. The seasons came and went, years began to go by, and yet folklore remained alive inside his box of misperception...

* Theoretical implications:

This frame illustrates the [mis]perception of heritage as a function of the past and not an active contributor to the everyday environment. Muller (2008, 18) argues that there exists an “interrelationship between the intangible and the tangible landscape and that they are inseparable. The tangible landscape guides, informs and shapes the intangible landscape, and vice versa.” Therefore it is crucial for any development dealing with historical matter address the intangible qualities of place with the same amount of rigour as the physical.

“Within the development industry in South Africa, the concept and realities of preserving intangible heritage are still misunderstood or ignored. Most development projects in South Africa show little or no recognition of the role of memory and meaning of place in present or for future conservation policies ” (Muller, 2008: 2).

Fig 3.4 Adjacent page
Isolation through misperception
Author





With it's passing, time shed its layers upon Folklore's box. Ever deeper he became buried beneath time's abhorrent strata. Oh the wretchedness! The unspeakable woe! To be buried alive is beyond any doubt the most horrendous lot that can befall mortality! Since his banishment to the Realm of Memory the entire populace of the Public Sphere has forgotten about Folklore as he lay buried.

* Theoretical implications:

As time passes and shifts in social and political context occur a historical cultural practice has to adapt to these changes in order to maintain societal currency. Bakker (2011, 2) explains it in terms of an ecosystemic view: "systems [culture] are continuously evolving in interaction with other systems [social, physical, political] in a process of co-evolution" so if one system fails to adapt, it loses its meaning in terms of the whole. He draws parallels with Gergen's Social Constructionism which holds the view that "knowledge and [heritage]meaning are social constructs" (Gergen, 2001: 47) and that a "continuously evolving process of re-discovery, decoding and adding of layers to existing constructed meaning" is necessary for the continued survival of a cultural practice.

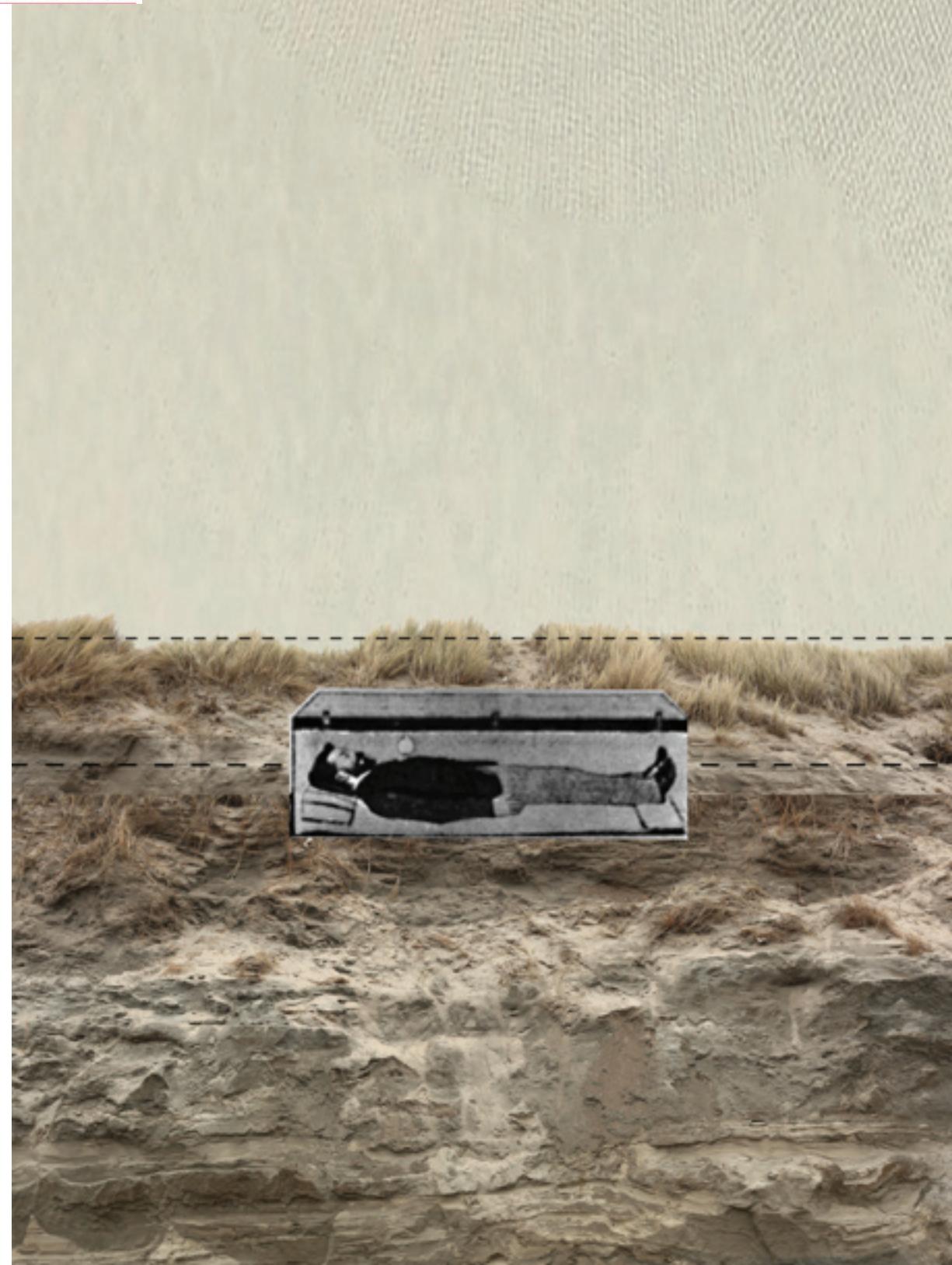


Fig 3.5 Adjacent page
The effects of time
Author



The years continued to go by and time mercilessly buried Folklore beneath its sediment. How he missed his beloved Community, how he wished he could be free once again to tell her his delightful tales! Hopelessly he lay buried, but still Folklore remained alive within his box.

* Theoretical implications:

South African heritage initiatives “where commemoration of intangible heritage is exclusive, static and/or monovocal” (Bakker & Muller, 2009: 51) do little to allow historical cultural practices a life in the present , thereby isolating it in the past where it has no significant value to its community. This dissertation argues for the implementation of heritage initiatives which allow for critical engagement with intangible heritage so that new layers of meaning may be added.

Fig 3.6 Adjacent page
Losing touch with the everyday
Author





One fateful day along came an Archaeologist called Architecture. He had met Community along his travels and she told him her woeful account of how she had lost her beloved husband, Folklore. A wicked witch of the West by the name of Cultural Homogenisation had lured her away from Folklore using her spells of Mass Media. Community explained to Architecture that the witch then returned to the grief stricken Folklore and deceived him into isolating himself in a box of misperception.

Architecture felt great pity towards Community, and being an archaeologist, took it upon himself to uncover the mystery of where Folklore lay buried.

Resolutely the archaeologist sought. Single mindedly he fought. He battled his way through the entangled and dissonant Realm of Memory until, just as he was about to terminate his futile quest, he found what he was looking for.

With the help of anthropology and his astutely fine tuned archaeological comprehension he located the exact position of Folklore within the witch's uncharted realm. But he alone could not rescue Folklore from the Realm of Memory. The witch's curse meant that only by his own hand could Folklore be rescued...

* Theoretical implications:

The current Zeitgeist of the so called “information age” has many social ramifications. Communities across the globe are increasingly exposed to external cultural influence (predominantly Western) through information channels such as the media, the arts and the internet. Although hugely beneficial in terms of the sharing of knowledge, it has the side effect of a growing cultural homogeneity.

Architectural theorist Juhani Pallasmaa (2000: 82) states that “the task of the responsible architect is to provide resistance to cultural erosion and to replant buildings and cities in an authentic existential and experiential soil.” In support of Pallasmaa’s notion, this dissertation attempts to resist the effects of cultural homogenisation on the cultural heritage of Marabastad by supporting the conditions necessary to unearth the cultural practices unique to the area and allow it a life in the present.

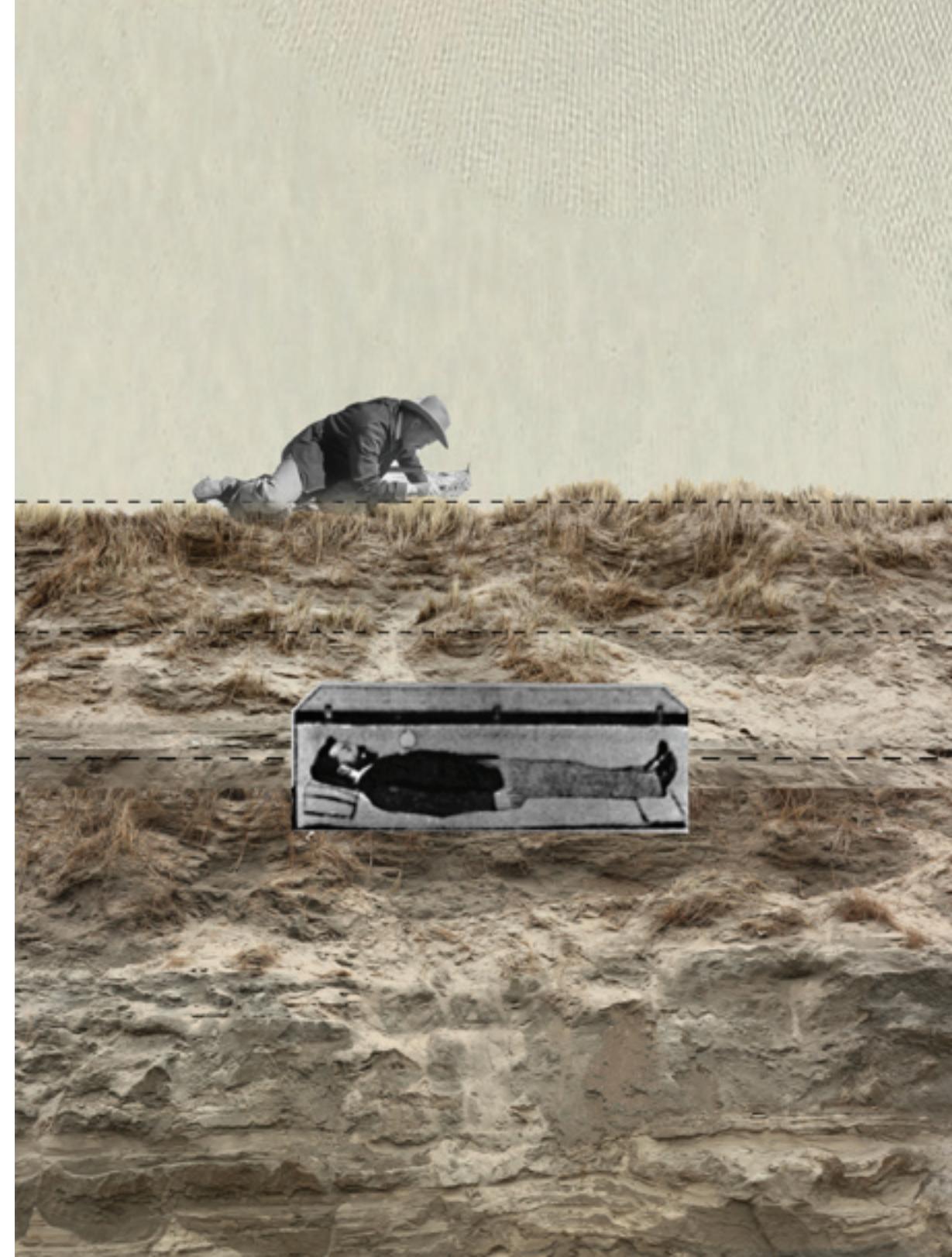


Fig 3.7 Adjacent page
Architecture as archaeology of memory
Author



But the cunning and artful Architecture had a plan of how to outsmart the witch. He devised a device through which he could allow Folklore to communicate to Community and all the inhabitants of the Public Sphere from the Realm of Memory; thereby contributing to his own emancipation.

Architecture got to work in constructing his device. He gathered numberless knickknacks and countless trinkets, all sorts of bric-a-brac and scores of gimcracks, he took hundreds of gewgaws and rusted old thumbtacks and, working through the night, he assembled the most incredible contraption the world has ever laid its eyes upon... He called his device: The dead man's bell.

The next morning before dawn, he took his device to the site where he knew Folklore lay buried and stuck it through the layers of time until he heard the distinctive 'clunk' of anti-burial device against misperception. He initiated the drill to bore through the roof of Folklore's coffin after which he lowered a string into the coffin for Folklore to grab hold of. At the other end of the string he attached a magical bell that could be heard across all of space and time. The rest, he said, is up to Folklore...

* Theoretical implications:

This frame illustrates the implementation of an open-ended heritage initiative which embraces "complex and minor narratives, thus accepting the evolving nature of identity construction and inviting the unlocking of more levels of interpretation." (Bakker & Muller, 2009: 52) The dead man's bell is a metaphor for the architectural proposal of this dissertation.



Fig 3.8 Adjacent page
The dead man's bell is introduced
Author



Folklore was astounded! He pulled the string with all of his worth. He pulled and pulled and rejoiced at every magnificent clang of the bell! The sound of the bell echoed across all of space and time, and Folklore knew his means of escape would soon be at hand.

* Theoretical implications:

The ringing of the bell implies the process of metacultural production whereby the culture “acts as an exhibition of itself” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 2004: 56).

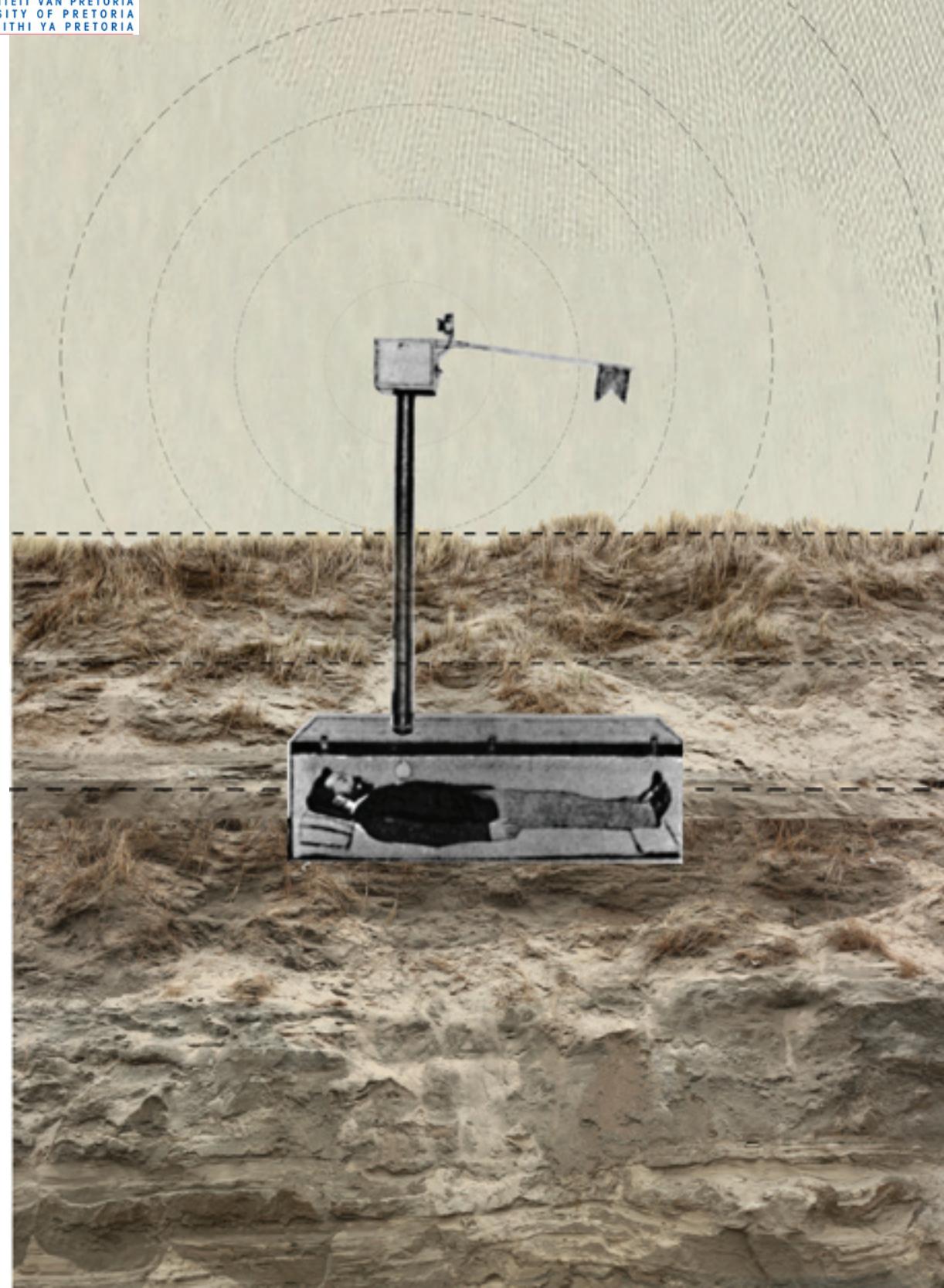


Fig 3.9 Adjacent page
Ringing the dead man's bell.
Author



In no time at all, scores of people swarmed towards the bell. Architecture had long since left, for he knew that he had completed his task, it was now Folklore alone facilitating his rescue through the device the archaeologist had left him.

* Theoretical implications:

By providing the habitat necessary for metacultural production architecture allows the cultural system to sustain itself. This approach to commemoration contrasts with the “thin, exclusive or hegemonic forms of memorialisation” (Bakker, 2011: 5) where the experience is pre-packaged in the form of a controlled narrative. The proposal for this dissertation employs an open-ended heritage approach where the visitor learns through engagement with the subject from their own social framework.



*Fig 3.10 Adjacent page
Re-introducing the public to their intangible
heritage.
Author*



The citizens of the Public Sphere began to dig fervently through the layers of time in order to unearth their entombed hero. They dug for what felt (to Folklore) like an eternity until, finally, after enduring decades of solitude and excruciating pensivity...

* Theoretical implications:

This frame illustrates the importance of critical community engagement in the conservation of intangible heritage. Only by creating an “abstract space to which a community could attach their own heritage narratives and management initiatives, including multivocal interpretation and presentation” (Bakker & Muller, 2010: [4]) can architecture provide the necessary habitat for cultural reproduction.

In reaction to the 2005 Faro Convention Professor Gabrielle Dolff-Bonekamper discusses the importance of participation in the process of cultural reproduction:

“heritage is a societal relationship, an attribution of meaning and value to an object; we shall refer to a process of heritage building. Exercise of the right to a heritage thus involves access to a site, the right to interpret and the right to take action, alone or with others, in a joint process of building heritage” (Dolff- Bonekamper, 2009: 70).

Fig 3.11 Adjacent page
Critical public engagement
Author



Folklore is reunited with his beloved Community:

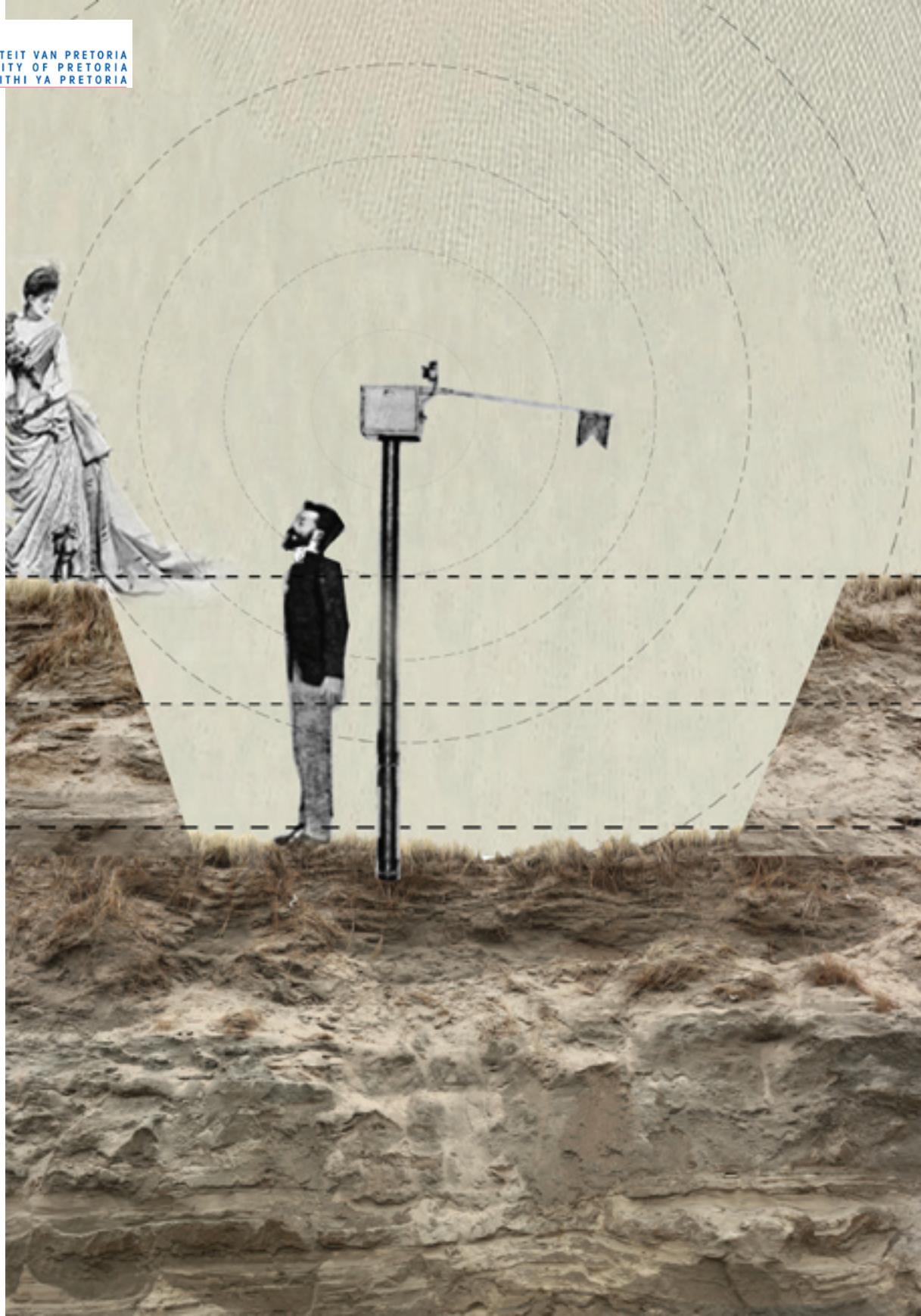
* Theoretical implications:

The 2007 ICOMOS Charter for the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites states the importance of 'interpretation' in the conservation of intangible heritage.

The proposal aims to address each of the following objectives (ICOMOS, 2007: 4-5)

1. Facilitate understanding and appreciation of cultural heritage sites and foster public awareness and engagement in the need for their protection and conservation.
2. Communicate the meaning of cultural heritage sites to a range of audiences through careful, documented recognition of significance, through accepted scientific and scholarly methods as well as from living cultural traditions.
3. Safeguard the tangible and intangible values of cultural heritage sites in their natural and cultural settings and social contexts.
4. Respect the authenticity of cultural heritage sites, by communicating the significance of their historic fabric and cultural values and protecting them from the adverse impact of intrusive interpretive infrastructure, visitor pressure, in- accurate or inappropriate interpretation.
5. Contribute to the sustainable conservation of cultural heritage sites, by promoting public understanding of, and participation in, ongoing conservation efforts, ensuring long-term maintenance of the interpretive infrastructure and regular review of its interpretive contents.
6. Encourage inclusiveness in the interpretation of cultural heritage sites, by facilitating the involvement of stakeholders and associated communities in the development and implementation of interpretive programmes.
7. Develop technical and professional guidelines for heritage interpretation and presentation, including technologies, research, and training. Such guidelines must be appropriate and sustainable in their social contexts.

Fig 3.12 Adjacent page
The 'anti-monument'
Author





After a disbelieving gaze she jumped into his arms and vowed never to leave him again. Folklore merely replied: "let me tell you the story about the time I was buried alive..."

Theory in support of the arguments expressed above are available in Addendum B: Supportive theory.



Fig 3.13 Adjacent page
The end (is the beginning)
Author

3.3

TRANSLATION INTO ARCHITECTURE

The theory discussed in this section is translated into architecture as follows:

The architecture of this proposal establishes a platform for both spontaneous and rehearsed event through the provision of freely appropriatable space in correspondence with a formalised arena for performance and activity in the form of an adaptable multi-form theatre.

The proposal employs a “past-orientated meaning framework” (Olick & Robbins, 1998: 108) in the form of a reinterpretation of the old Royal Theatre and what it meant in terms of the cultural production of Marabastad (Further developed in Chapter 5).

3.4

CONCLUSION

“People cannot maintain their connections with the past if the physical world they live in does not also sustain these connections.”

(Alexander, 1969: 132)

If “buildings are the ornament of cultures” (Brand, 1994 : [s.p]) then it stands to reason that architecture has the moral imperative to respond to cultural development, thereby “index[ing] the process by which life becomes heritage” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 2004: 56).

This dissertation aims to support the notion that architecture has the moral imperative to act as a custodian of living cultural heritage. Through the amalgamation of living memorials and community initiatives, architecture can allow history to remain an active contributor to the quotidian social environment.

Rambhoros (2009:10) reasons that commemorative architecture that is realigned with the commonplace responds more meaningfully to societal plights than “grand monumental accounts”. He continues to state that these “catalytic interventions are fusions of practical functionality and symbolic representations of memory, which steer the South African socio-spatial landscape progressively into the future” (Rambhoros, 2009:11).

CHAPTER FOUR

Precedents

4.1

CRITIQUE ON SOUTH AFRICAN HERITAGE ARCHITECTURE

The following section provides an introductory critique on general aspects common to South African heritage architecture. The critique is substantiated by Fig 4.1 on the pages directly following. The table was compiled by the author after a selection of post apartheid heritage developments were visited. The research done by Liana Muller and Professor Karel A. Bakker on South African heritage places and intangible landscapes is employed to further substantiate the findings.

1. *In most cases the unfolding of the experience is pre-determined through the employment of a single narrative.*

Through the imposition of a pre-determined narrative the memorial or site does not allow for “the community to attach their own [complex and evolving] heritage narratives” (Bakker & Muller, 2010 : [4]) thereby virtually privatising the experience. Eisenman’s Museum of the Murdered Jew in Berlin (Fig 2.15) offers an alternative, he proposes that the visit itself completes the narrative, this way the building can learn from it’s visitors and the visitors can learn from it in turn.

2. *A great deal of the structures are not within active public realms.*

Although an argument exists that it places the structure within the realm of the informal settlement (where a great portion of South African history was created), it should be carefully considered in terms of public accessibility and contextual relevance. One such example is “the isolated position of the Apartheid Museum, immediately adjacent to the Gold Reef City theme park and casino complex, which riddles it with irony and perhaps fallacy, making it a decontextualised monument positioned in an artificial surrounding” (Low 2005: 136).

Other examples of monuments that may fall into the same category are Freedom Park outside of Pretoria and The Cradock Four Memorial outside of Cradock in the Eastern Cape.

4. *The spaces are predominantly privatised and access is controlled.*

A case should also be made for the monuments that are positioned immediately within communities but do little to interact directly with its context through its private nature. Examples are Red Location Museum situated in the Red Location outside Port Elizabeth, Constitution Hill in Braamfontein and The Hector Pieterson Memorial Museum in Soweto and Walter Sisulu Square in Kliptown, Soweto. Although these developments are appropriately placed to allow critical public engagement, their private nature ‘dislocates’ them from their context and they are “perceived by residents as foreign entities in their midst” (Bakker & Muller, 2010 : [3]).

5. *In most cases the subject matter is displayed statically and does not contribute actively to the socio-cultural arena.*

The “emphasis on the use of static monuments, blunt and simplistic use of symbolism, , ignorance of the cultural dimensions of landscape, a lack of interpretation of place, event and locally-based oral history, and subsequent deficiencies in presentation and meaning.” Bakker (2008: [s.p]) creates monovocal and exclusive monuments that essentially fail in their principle duty of expressing South Africa’s complex, multifarious cultural history.

6. *Most of the spaces are mono-functional and only operate only during the daytime.*

The ‘static monument’ has the function of memorialising an historical event or influential person beyond which it has very little (or no) further utility. The memorials that only operate during business hours do little to contribute to their environments after closing time. This dissertation proposes that South African heritage architecture assume more responsibility than the mere memorialisation of history and contribute actively to their direct social environment.

	Freedom Park	Red Location Museum	Apartheid Museum	Constitution Hill	Walter Sisulu Square	Hector Peterson Museum	Sharpeville Memorial	Cradock Four Memorial
Access is controlled and entry fee is required	●	●	●	●		●	●	●
Positioned on the outskirts of main urban developed centre	●		●					●
More functional and only operates during the daytime	●	●	●			●	●	●
Single pre-determined narrative		●	●			●	●	●
Does not allow for everyday critical public engagement	●		●	●		●	●	●
Subject matter displayed statically as 'artefacts' not 'systems'	●	●	●			●	●	●
Formal strength more apparent than contextuality	●	●	●	●		●	●	●
Connection with time based on "Zeitgeist" approach	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Pathological permanence. (minimal contribution to societal evolution)	●	●	●	●		●	●	●

Fig 4.1
 Comparative table illustrating tendencies in South African Heritage Architecture
 Author

4.2

THEORETICAL PRECEDENTS

4.2.1

PROPELLING vs. PATHOLOGICAL PERMANENCE

In "The Architecture of the City" Aldo Rossi (1982) explains that time affects different built artefacts in different ways and through it contributes to the transformation of the built environment. "Structures that delay the process of development are deemed to be pathological, whilst buildings that accelerate development are defined as propelling" (Rossi 1982: 6).

Rossi's theory supports this dissertation's argument that commemorative architecture has the ability to do more than merely commemorate past events and contribute actively to the continuous development of culture.

The following synopsis clarifies Rossi's theory and illustrates the relevance of its application to commemorative architecture.

PATHOLOGICAL

In response to Rossi's theory, Christine Boyer (1996: 186) defines pathological permanences as "unmodifiable artefacts whose dynamic linkage with the rest of the city is severed."

Most monuments in South Africa tend to fall into this category, as supported by Mizan Rambhoros in his critique on "South African Commemorative Architecture" wherein he states that "they are signs of a specific epoch and bound to a certain period or event in the historic course of the country" (Rambhoros, 2009:34).

Although valuable artefacts in the recognition of history these "preserved presences and unusual characters are isolated within a certain context, which defines their form and static usage" (Rambhoros, 2009:34).

Older examples of South African pathological permanences are structures such as The Taal Monument (Paarl) and The Voortrekker Monument (Pretoria), whilst contemporary examples would be The Cradock Four Memorial, The Apartheid Museum and Freedom Park.

PROPELLING

Rossi's notion of the propelling permanence stands to support the central argument of this dissertation in its reasoning that a process of dynamic memorialisation allows its subject a life in the present instead of isolating it in the past. He states that "propelling permanences serve to bring the past into the present, providing a past that can still be experienced" (Rossi 1982: 6).

United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) is of the opinion that memorial architecture "can no longer stand aloof from the major issues of our time" (UNESCO: n.d.), therefore it stands to reason that the act of commemoration should be merged with everyday life in an attempt to contribute actively to the social environment. The propelling permanence allows for this integration to occur, for they have the ability to "endure time and transform from their original function to become characteristic fragments of the urban landscape" (Rambhoros, 2009:40).

The contemporary notion of memorialisation would benefit from the recognition that history only maintains its vitality through use. For "when form and function are severed, and only form remains vital, history shifts into the realm of memory. When history ends, memory begins" (Rossi 1982:7).

History may be kept functional in the present through the act of dynamic memorialisation. The architecture should provide the platform upon which its historic subjects may be "overlaid with contemporary processes, allowing for the continuity of the historic processes" (Rambhoros, 2009:45).

Upon such a platform the old can enter into dialogue with the new, allowing for a critical superimposition of history and present and the ultimate recognition of one another. "Thus, this framing of memory through palimpsest is essential in making connections with the context" (Rambhoros, 2009:45).

Contemporary examples of propelling permanences are: The Sans Souci cinema and the Vilakazi street art project, both situated in Soweto. They are discussed in more detail in Section 4.3 – Local Precedents.

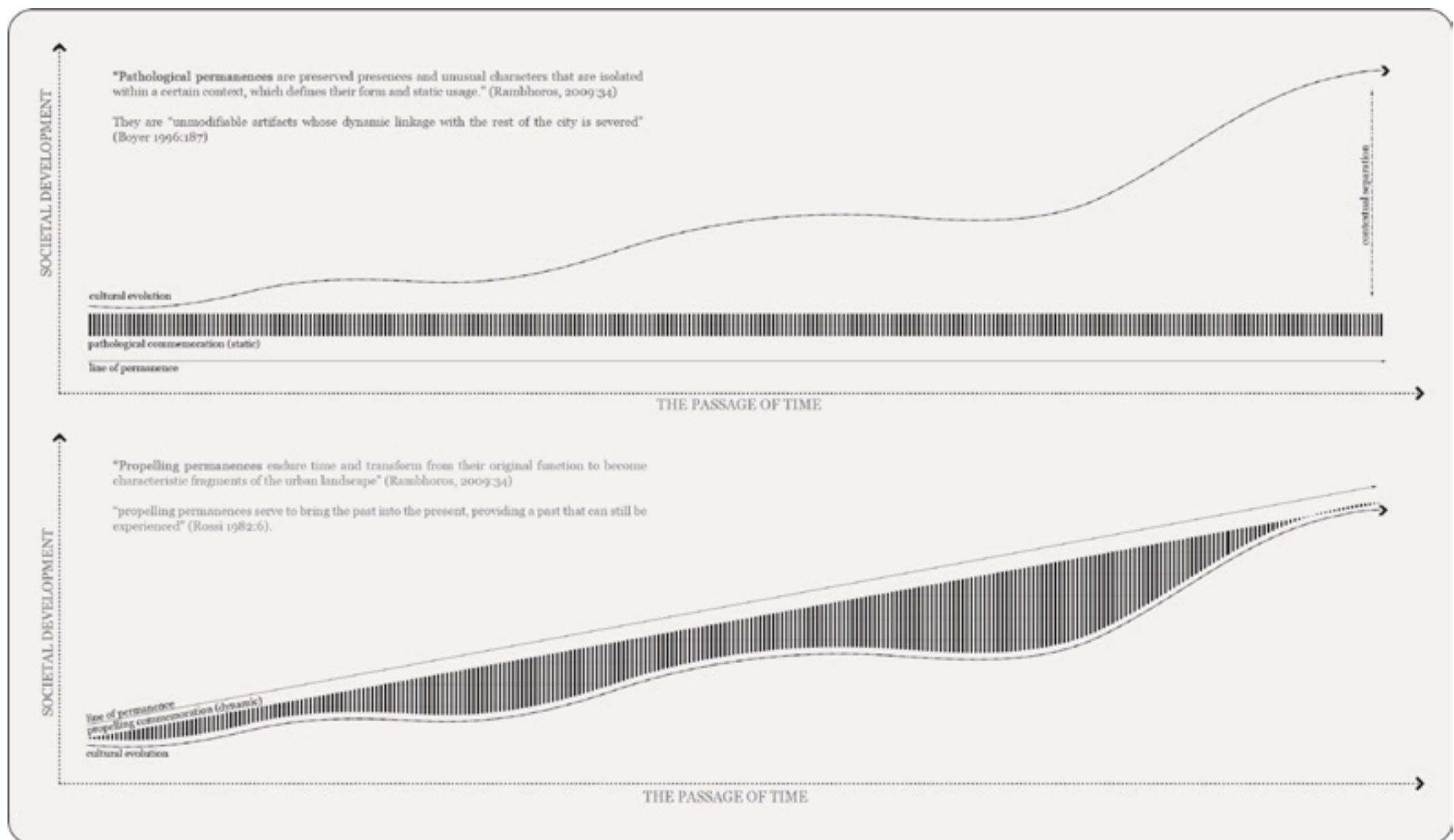


Fig 4.2
Pathological vs. Propelling Permanence
Author

4.2.2

THE ARCHITECTURE OF FRAGILITY

In “Hapticity and Time: Notes on Fragile Architecture” (2000) Juhani Pallasmaa explains that Western architecture generally tends to embody the qualities of the “strong” image. ‘Strong’ formal elements seek to impress through idealized conceptual manifestations and striking articulation of space. Although admirable in the physical sense, the architecture of the “strong image” tends to have shortcomings in terms of contextuality and responsiveness. He defines “strong” architecture as architecture that “attempts to conquer the foreground instead of creating a supportive background for human activities and perceptions” (*ibid*, 2000: 75).

When considering the current predominant typological approach to South African heritage architecture through the critique established in section 4.2 and the studies conducted by Muller and Bakker it is evident that the majority of the examples discussed could be classified as architecture of the “strong” image.

Contrary to the “strong image”, Pallasmaa continues to define a “weak” or “fragile” architecture as “an architecture of courtesy and attention, which invites one to be a humble, receptive and patient observer” (*ibid*, 2000: 76). Where “strong” architecture imposes itself upon its context in “hegemonic, dominant voice” (Bakker and Muller 2010: 3), fragile architecture engages with its context through an active, evolutionary process of “listening and dialogue, evoking a sense of humility and duration” (*ibid*, 2000: 76).

A noteworthy exponent of “fragile architecture” is Greek architect Dimitris Pikionis. His work is described as a “dense conversation with time and history to the degree that the design appears as a product of anonymous tradition without drawing attention to the individual creator” (*ibid*, 2000: 82). The work of Carlo Scarpa and Alvar Aalto also embodies “fragility” as defined in this context. Their work is said to “aim at a specific ambience, a receptive emotional state, rather than the authority of form” (*ibid*, 2000: 82).

Some architects succeed in the reconciliation of the “weak” and the “strong”. Herein lies the strength of Zumthor, he possesses the ability to reconcile “formal strength with sensual subtlety” (*ibid*, 2000: 80). Also Barragan, whose “apparently strong images glide into the world of dreams” (*ibid*, 2000: 80).

The architecture of this proposal endeavours to achieve a similar “fragility” in order to

respond to the evolution of its subject and cultural environment to such a degree that it too may appear to be a construct of its context instead of the ideology of a single designer.

Architecture of the strong image



Munitoria before the fire in 1997. (Panoramio, 2009)



Zaha Hadid. Guangzhou Opera House, China. 2007 (Flickr, 2010)



Fig 2.3 Luis Barragan. El Pedregal, Mexico (Ambasz, 1976: 24)



ABSA Building Pretoria. (Le Roux, 1992)

Fig 4.3
Strong vs. Fragile architecture
Assembled by Author

Architecture of the fragile image



Dimitris Pikionis, detailing of public surfaces around the Acropolis of Athens during the 1950's. (blogspot, 2011)



Peter Rich. Mapungubwe interpretation centre (peterrich, 2011)



Dimitris Pikionis, Pouris residence 1953 (blogspot, 2011)



Fig 2.3 Carlo Scarpa. Brion Cemetery (flickr, 2011)

4.3

LOCAL PRECEDENTS

4.3.1

THE VILAKAZI STREET PRECINCT ARTWORK PROGRAMME

Orlando West, Soweto.

Johannesburg Development Agency (JDA), 2008

Vilakazi Street in Soweto is the only street in the world to house two winners of the Nobel Peace Prize, namely Nelson Mandela and Archbishop Desmond Tutu. This street is also a key site of the fateful 1976 Student Uprising against Afrikaans as a language of instruction at schools which saw the death of 176 local students, among them the 12 year old Hector Pieterson.

Vilakazi street now connects a number of tourist destinations and heritage sites including the Hector Pieterson Museum which was built in 2002 to commemorate the 1976 Uprising and the events surrounding it.



*Fig 4.4
Artwork at the Vilakazi Street Precinct Artwork
Programme
(represent, 2011)*

-112-

The Vilakazi Street Precinct Artwork Programme is a framework for the introduction of public art along the street. According to Bakker and Muller (2010:4) “it is intended as a diverse tourist movement armature to which the community could attach their own heritage narratives and management initiatives, including multivocal interpretation and presentation of the historical events of the uprising, as well as the actors in it”.

The project intends to better integrate the Hector Pieterson museum with its “still unexplored context” (Bakker and Muller 2010: 4) by creating an “abstract space for conceiving local reinterpretations and multivocal expressions of the historical events, not sufficiently addressed by the Museum” (Bakker and Muller 2010: 4).

An example of an initiative generated by the programme is the The Vilakazi Street Oral History Exhibition which was opened there on the 2nd of April 2011. The Exhibition aims to record and display “the day to day lives of ordinary Sowetans living on Vilakazi Street, using photographs and video recordings” (Gaule, 2011: 1) thereby allowing the inhabitants of the area to tell their own story, from a multitude of perspectives.

“Through introducing the concept of the anti-monument, the exploration of the historic urban landscape, and celebrating the use of abstract representation, this public art project is creating the potential for a new form of inclusiveness and multivocality at one of the country’s important legacy sites. It provides the opportunity for more voices and authentic interpretations, which can be an alternative layer of understanding different from the monolithic, historical representations constructed in the first fifteen years of democracy” (Bakker and Muller 2010: 5).



*Fig 4.5
Offstreet public activity at the Vilakazi Street Precinct
Artwork Programme
(witsvuvuzela, 2010)*



*Fig 4.6
Artwork at the Vilakazi Street Precinct Artwork
Programme
(theicityfix, 2011)*

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4.3.2

THE SANS SOUCI CINEMA

Kliptown, Soweto.

Lindsay Bremner Architect & 26'10 South Architects

The Sans Souci (meaning “without a care” in French) was a cinema in Kliptown, Soweto built in 1948. Before the cinema was installed it had been a stable and later, a dancehall. As with the theatres of Marabastad this cinema was more than a place for watching films, it offered a rare public place for social gathering and was used to accommodate political meetings, jazz concerts and community events (www.thesanssouci.org, 2010).

Since it burned down “community surveys indicate that there are no public outlets for cultural expression or social or political meeting places in Kliptown” (www.thesanssouci.org, 2010). One hundred and twenty five interviews conducted by the Kliptown our Town initiative (led by architect Lindsay Bremner) revealed that the Sans Souci was an important cultural locus for the people of the area and that it is still very much alive in their memories. The proposal by Lindsay Bremner and 26'10 South Architects seeks to reinstate the cinema using the remaining ruins and thereby restore its cultural influence on Kliptown. The theatre will once again be a multi-use space which can be used to “project both popular and educational films, live theatre, and concerts... as well as school functions, conferences and meetings” (Deckler, Graupner & Rasmuss, 2006: 51).

The implementation of the proposal will not start with a completed structure, instead it will be incrementally constructed through community engagement with the project. The incremental reconstruction of the structure together with the “film screenings, film and dance festivals, audience development, dance training and film production will allow visitors and residents to actively participate in excavating and remembering/recreating/imagining the history of Kliptown and the Sans Souci” (Deckler, Graupner & Rasmuss, 2006: 53).

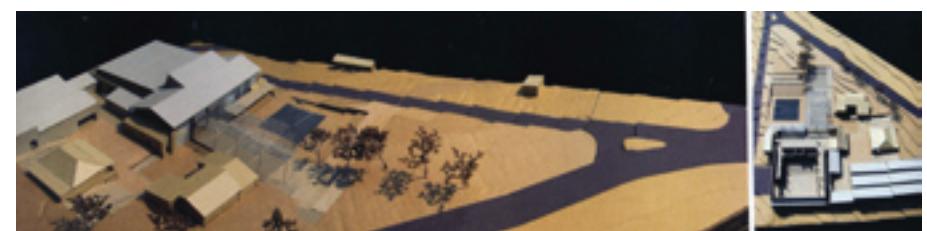


Fig 4.7
Model of proposed Sans Souci
(Deckler, Graupner and Rasmuss, 2006: 52)



Fig 4.8
Existing ruin
(Deckler, Graupner and Rasmuss, 2006: 50)



Fig 4.9
Existing ruin
(Deckler, Graupner and Rasmuss, 2006: 54)



Fig 4.10
The Old Sans Souci
(Deckler, Graupner and Rasmuss, 2006: 54)

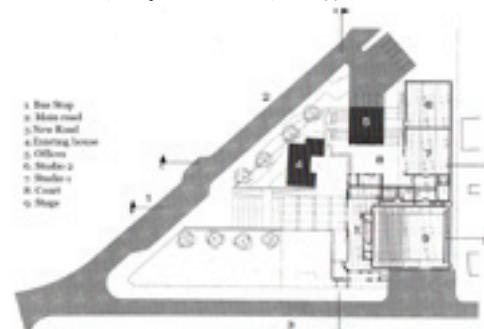


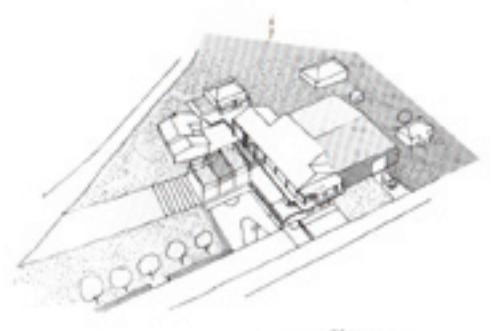
Fig 4.11
Groundfloor Plan
(Deckler, Graupner and Rasmuss, 2006: 51)



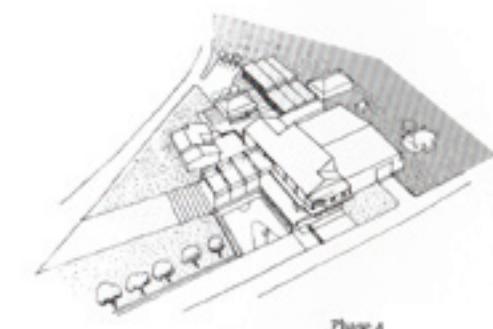
Phase 1



Phase 2



Phase 3



Phase 4

Fig 4.12
Development Phases
(Deckler, Graupner and Rasmuss, 2006: 53)

4.4

FUNCTIONAL PRECEDENTS

4.4.1

THE DEE AND CHARLES WYLY THEATRE

Dallas, Texas. USA.

OMA

Where the traditional theatre generally has its support spaces around the auditorium, buffering the space from the outside world, the Dee and Charles Wyly Theatre stacks its support spaces vertically above and below the auditorium, exposing all the edges of the auditorium to the city around it. (See Fig 4.13)

The re-imagined form also facilitates the unique mechanics of the theatre. The Wyly theatre is based on the multi-form principle where the performance arena can be modified into a variety of configurations. Stage elements, seating, scenery, lighting and audio equipment are all contained in the space above the performance hall and their positions can be mechanically manipulated in order to adapt to different configurations. The typical “backstage” is also accommodated above the auditorium instead of behind the stage and the foyer is positioned beneath in order to allow the groundlevel plain to be uninterrupted, thereby inviting the outside world into the performance space.

All surfaces of the auditorium space are constructed from non-precious materials in order to accommodate adaptations to the space. Floors and walls can be drilled, painted, nailed or even removed completely if necessary.

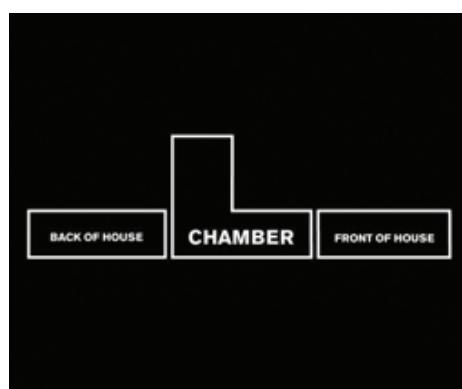


Fig 4.13
Stacking of support spaces frees periphery of performance space
(rex-ny, 2011)

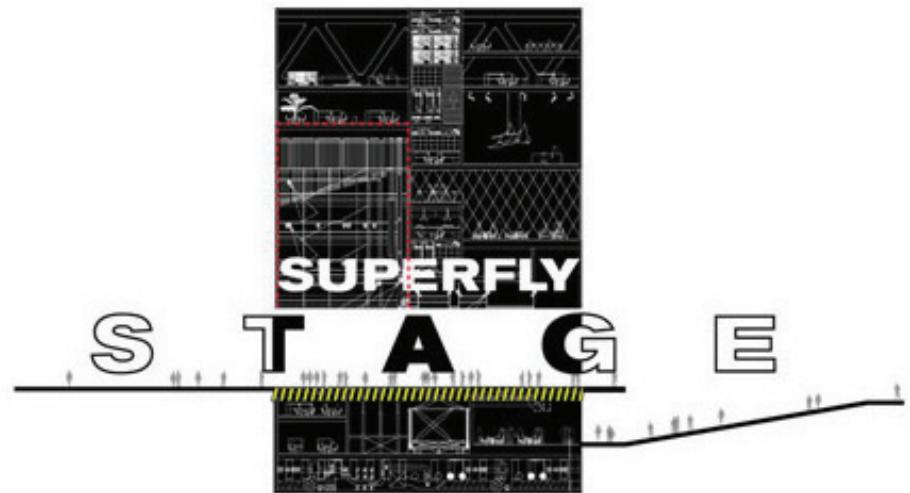


Fig 4.14
Sectional diagram illustrating spacial dynamic.
(rex-ny, 2011)



Fig 4.15
(rex-ny, 2011)



Fig 4.17
Approach to lower level foyer
(rex-ny, 2011)

Fig 4.18
Adaptable seating configurations
(rex-ny, 2011)

Fig 4.19
Public space around building
(rex-ny, 2011)