



2 SETTING

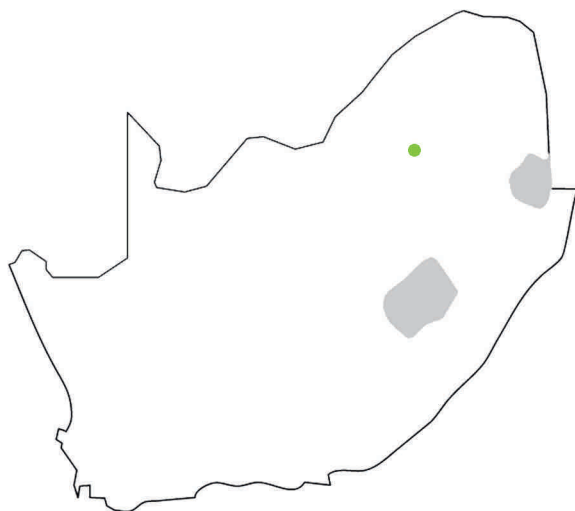
City

The area studied for this dissertation is in the Northern Precinct of Pretoria, the CBD in the city of Tshwane in Gauteng, South Africa.

A city is a point where an event in history occurred that attracted a group of people to it. The city of Pretoria developed from a meeting place for communion and a central market, to a town that has developed and grown into an important city in South Africa. The many variables within the city continue to attract more layers of variables and connections which encourage growth and attract greater numbers of people because they find what they need or desire, or think they'll find what they need or desire. The perception of the city becomes such that it fuels its own growth. It is important to note that it is not the built form that forms the city, it is the needs, aspirations, ideas and connections of the citizens that form the city and the buildings are a result of providing for those connections and needs.



Fig.1 Study area location in global context



UNINHABITED NATURAL LANDSCAPE

The area where the city of Pretoria stands was once a peaceful valley between two mountainous strips bisected by a river. The valley had a favourable climate. It may have been visited at different times by migrant pastoralists.

RURAL SETTLEMENT

There is evidence of indigenous settlers in the area. Urban settlements of between 12–20 000 existed up until 1800 in the central high–veld region and were mostly established along easily minable ore bodies. Iron, copper and gold was mined and traded through central and east African trade routes thousands of kilometres away [Lloyd,2003]. During the Difiqane, the rebel Zulu general Mzilikazi moved into the area with his tribe and stayed until a regiment of zulu leaders caused them to flee north.

Mzilikazi's murderous spree in the area left it depopulated when he moved north. [Frescura,1998]

FARMING & CENTRAL RITUAL GATHERING

In the mid 1800's a group of displaced foreigners discovered the beauty of the valley and fell in love with its Europeanly classical landscape of "mountains, valleys, fountains, rivers and 'poorte'." [Jordaan,1989:pg27]. They selected this place as their central meeting place to observe 'nagmaal' or Holy Communion. The settlement of the people as farmers in this area marked the end of their "Great Trek"

A central church on Church Square (then Market square) was built in 1854.

TOWNSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Pretoria was proclaimed a town on 16 November 1855. The two main roads structuring the town were Church Street and Markt Street (today Paul Kruger Street) which still structure the city of Pretoria. Together they form the east–west and north–south axes of the city. [Andrews & Ploeger,1989:pg5] The Town of Pretoria emerged along typically European urban patterns of two main streets perpendicular to each other and intersecting at a central point, copying the urban grid established in Graaf–Reinette [Jordaan,1989]

Markt Street (Market Street) was renamed during the Voortrekker celebrations in 1938 to commemorate Stephanus Johannes Paulus Kruger.

Fig.2 Uninhabited natural landscape

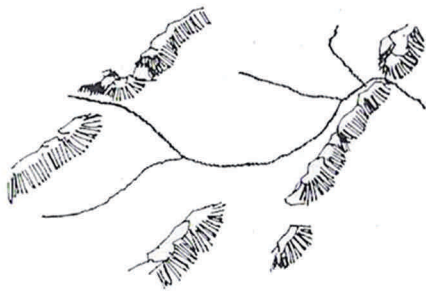


Fig. 3 Cattle kraal & domed huts

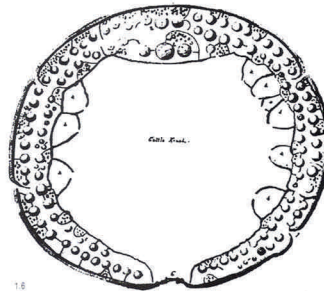


Fig. 4 Bilobial hut

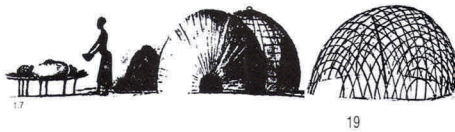
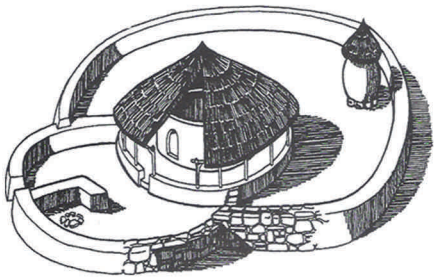


Fig. 5 Development of Boer Vernacular dwelling

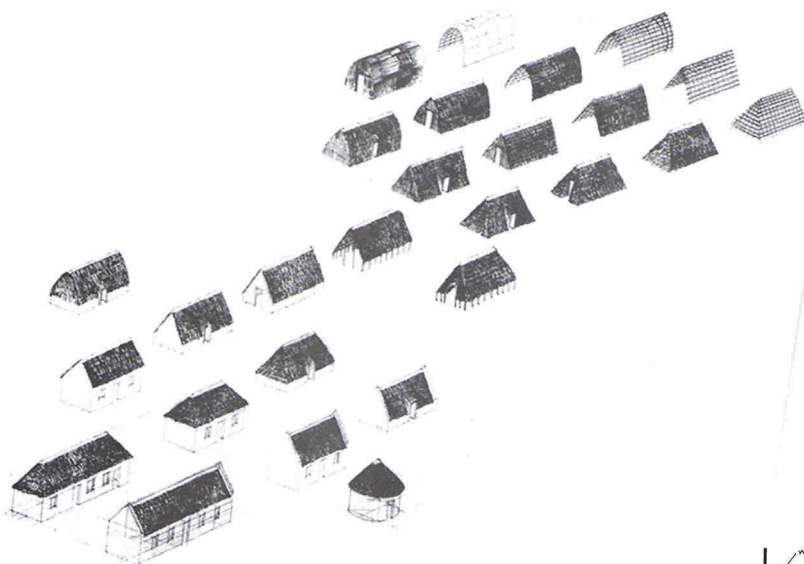
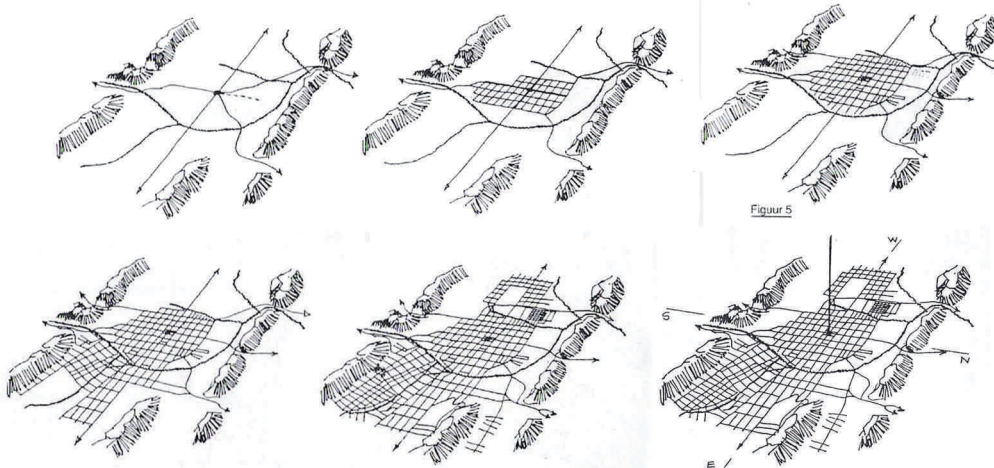
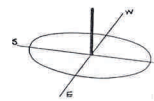


Fig. 6 Early Urban development



In the 1930s, the town planner Sir William Holford was employed to structure and plan the growing capital city. He produced several proposals over an extended period of time for the intersection of Struben and Paul Kruger Street. It is from this intersection that one has the impressive view towards Church Square as well as towards the Union Buildings, built in 1909 by Sir Herbert Baker. The intention of his proposal was for government departments to be located along this east–west axis, physically emphasising the existing visual link. The north–south axis focused on the original church built on Church Square. The intersection was intended as a large public space or park [Barbir, 2007]. The proposals were never realised and the intersection remains undefined.

FRAGMENTATION OF CITY

According to David Panagos, who grew up living in one of the apartments on the second floor of the Panagos Building, the area used to be a vibrant one with a fine urban grain. Several boarding houses and hotels existed in the area where temporary workers from the outlying area lived for the duration of employment in the city. The area had a high residential percentage. Struben Street was lined with small residential houses. Today only the Jansen House remains. Mr Panagos remembers the bakery diagonally across the street from his home as well as spending most of his afternoons playing in the Zoo with his younger brother. [Wilson, 2007]

A tram system used to operate in Pretoria, south of Church Square. On the northern section of Paul Kruger streets only buses operated. During World War II the zoning of this residential area was changed to accommodate light industrial activities. Several cottages north of the Panagos Building were converted to manufacture helmets. Mr Panagos identified this change to be the start of the degeneration of the area. [Wilson, 2007]

The 1967 scheme for a highway development led to the demolition of the northern area of the CBD. It was stopped before the highways were built but no plan was put into place to recover and redevelop this area. As a result it developed into a harsh light industrial, commercial area. It has been left to grow undefined and without direction, furthering the degeneration of the area.

NEW USERS AND PARADIGMS

In 1997 the post–apartheid cabinet decided that the headquarters of national government departments should stay in the inner city and not follow the trend of development to the eastern suburbs. This would prevent deterioration and promote inner city urban renewal. The Re Kgabisa Tshwane framework was developed with the main purpose of establishing a long term solution to improve the physical working environment for national government department head offices and agencies in Pretoria’s CBD.

NEW VISION

The new framework proposes open spaces and infrastructure around the new buildings to improve the publicly accessible spaces in line with the Batho Pele principles of people first. Facilities such as auditoriums, archives and communication solutions will be shared by the different departments. The framework divided the CBD into a number of precincts and defined overall strategic concepts as shown in Fig.10

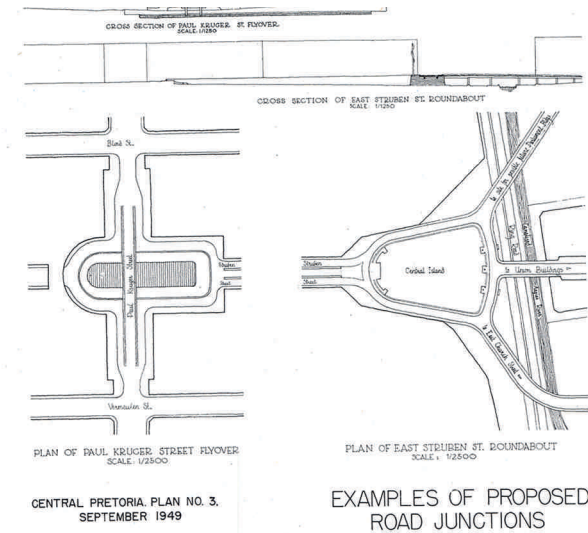


Fig. 7 Intersection of Struben & Paul Kruger street. 1949

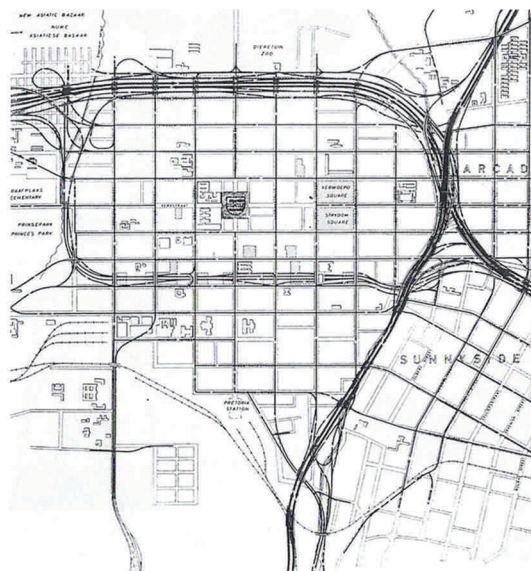


Fig. 8 Highway development scheme.1967



Fig. 9 Re Kgabisa Tshwane logo

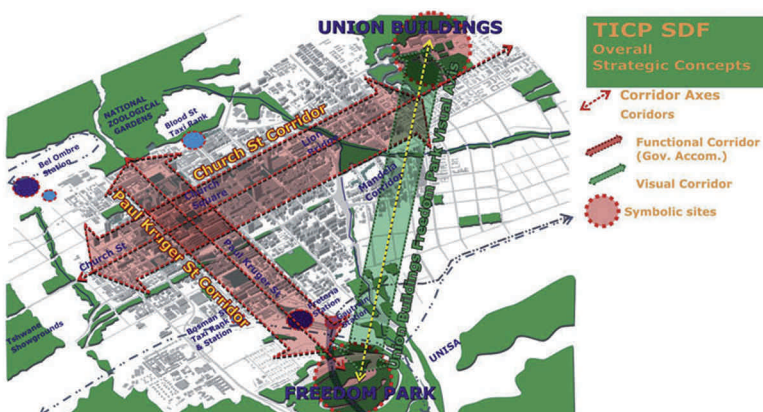


Fig. 10 Re Kgabisa overall strategic concepts

The area focused on for this dissertation is around the intersection of Paul Kruger St and Struben St. This intersection is the only place where visual axes from both the Union Buildings and Church Square meet and highlights the opportunity for a potential new public building. It falls into the Paul Kruger North Precinct as defined by Re Kgabisa Tshwane.

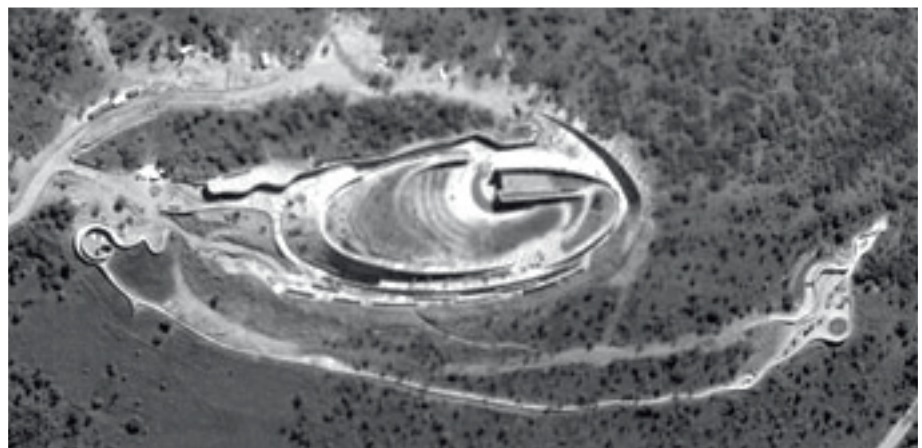
The projects proposed by Re Kgabisa Tshwane in the Precinct relevant to this dissertation include the New National Library, the Department of Education, Synagogue Square and the upgrade of Struben St. In the proposal the area around the synagogue is to be made a large open public space. Paul Kruger street is to be semi-pedestrianized by placing an island in the middle of the street lined with banners.

(http://www.rekgabisatshwane.gov.za/content/content_about.html)

The New National Library was completed and opened in September 2008. The Department of Education is currently under construction. The area around the synagogue is still undeveloped but if all goes according to Re Kgabisa's plans it will soon be a sterile "iconic" object in the middle of a vast themed urban park. This solution poorly utilizes the potential for public activity that can be promoted along the prominent axes as well as the informal, unprogrammed fine grain uses that can emerge from these edges. The synagogue's facade is the prominent feature of the building and this would be better emphasised by defining the facade line of the street through other buildings as proposed in Fig. 19, that would also provide an edge to encourage public activity and fine grain uses.

Another important development contributing to the regeneration of Pretoria is Freedom Park established by the Freedom Park Trust with Nelson Mandela as its patron-in-chief. The intended purpose of Freedom Park is tell South Africa's story from pre-colonial to colonial, apartheid and post-apartheid times, in the hope that an overall understanding of its true history will help dispell myths and prejudices and reveal its rich cultural heritage. By acknowledging the past it is hoped that "Freedom Park will celebrate the achievement of democracy and stand as a beacon of hope for the future." [Young, 2004:1]. Freedom Park forms the southern most point of the Paul Kruger Street axis (see Figures 10 and 21)

Fig. 11 Aerial photo of Freedom Park



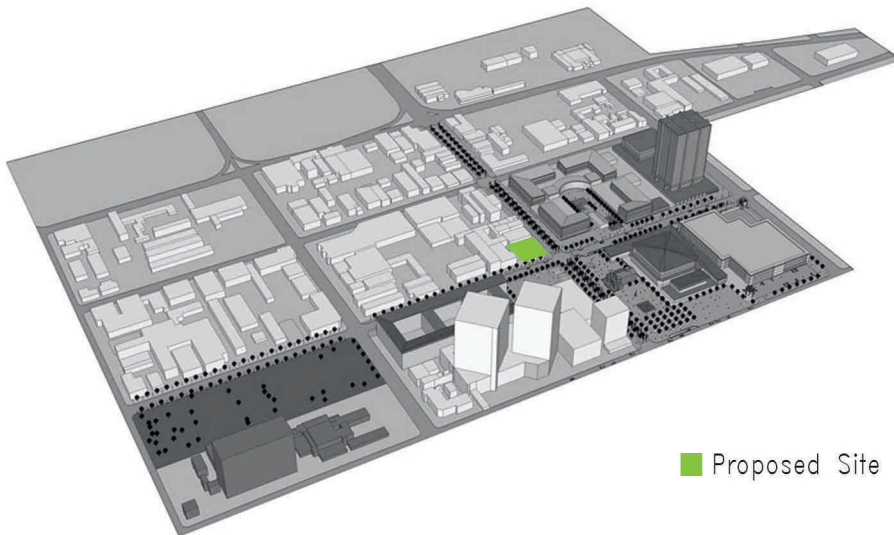


Fig. 12 Proposed site within context of Re Kgabisa proposal

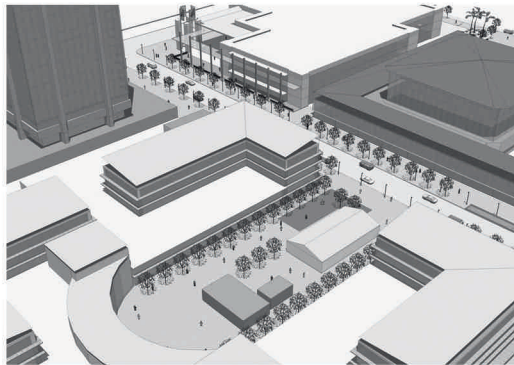


Fig. 13 Artistic impression of new Education Department

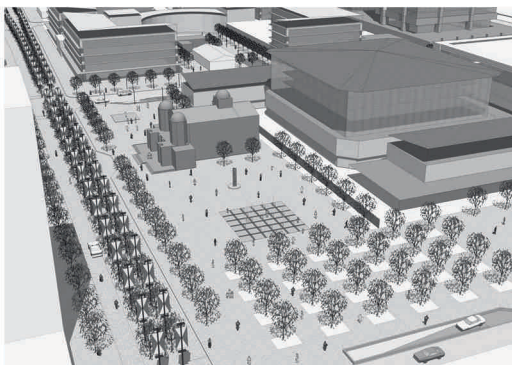


Fig. 14 Artistic impression of Synagogue Square proposal



Fig. 15 Artistic impression of proposal for Struben street upgrade

RE KGABISA FRAMEWORK PROPOSALS

Fig. 16 Pedestrianised area

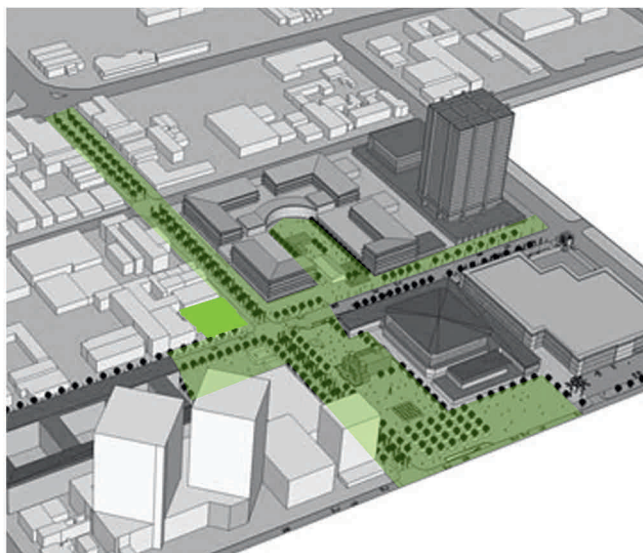


Fig. 17 Underground parking

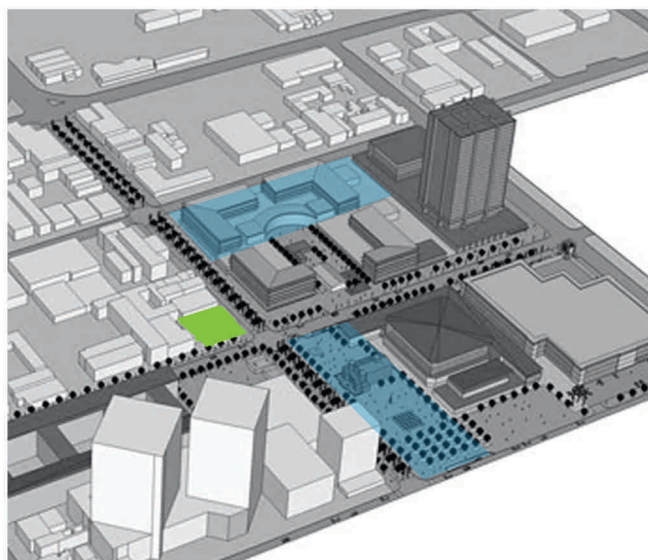
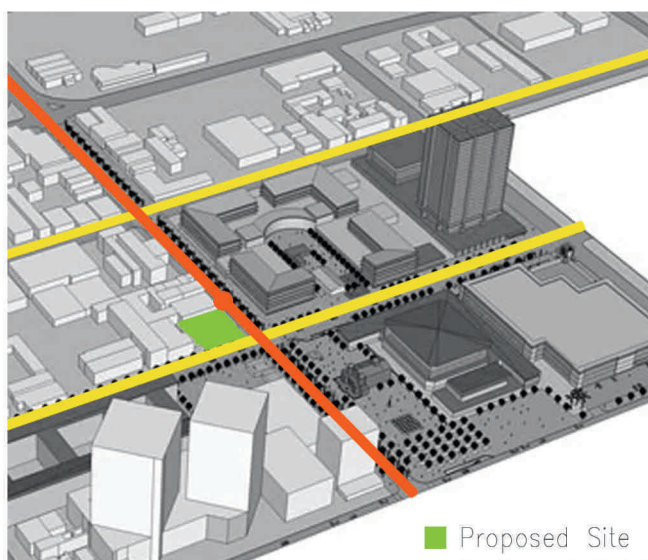


Fig. 18 Transport



- Proposed Site
- Dedicated Public Transport
- Taxi & Bus support
- Stop

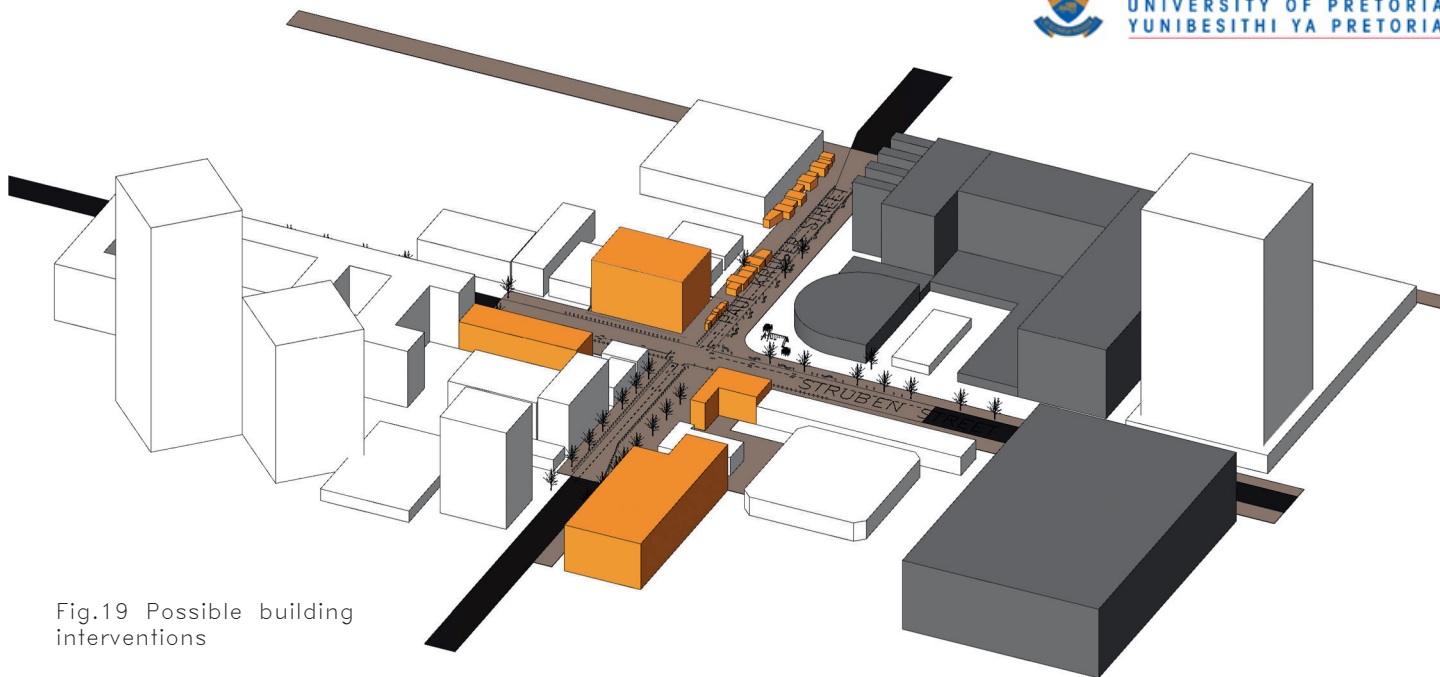


Fig.19 Possible building interventions



Fig. 20 Sketch of Site analysis with proposed interventions