

# Chapter

The aim of this dissertation is to build an argument around the subject matter of architecture as a sensory phenomenon, raising the question of how we experience architectural space through our senses in a predominantly ocular-centric society. The primary research topic for this dissertation is termed a sensory phenomenon in space, which investigates the nature of being through the performance of life. The principal methodology adopted investigates various theoretical subquestions that respond to the primary research statement. These subquestions are generated on a broad spectrum of scales, so that informative responses throughout the design process can strengthen the given argument, corresponding to a coherent and rich thread of theory as underlying basis.

On an urban scale, the discourse explored the notion of space as sensory performa, how we create a CREATIVE urban realm that embraces our cultural diversity, allowing individuals to contribute to the performance of life? On an architectural formative and tectonic level the discourse explores the notion of architecture as sensory conductor: how architectural articulation conducts, orientates and guides a user through various spatial experiences. These research questions have been chosen so that they act as ordering system for the discourse document. The primary outcome of the discourse would be that all design aspects should relate to, meaningfully strengthen, and test the given argument. The design becomes the realisation and ultimate test of the theoretical approach.

A second theoretical statement, questioning the development of Western performance spaces, provides the basis for the chosen programmatic and spatial design brief and responses. In conjunction with the architectural concept of architecture as sensory conductor, these two notions summarise the design concept. The parallels between the lack of sensory experience in architectural and theatrical performance space will be used to position the programmatic argument in line with the primary theoretical and formative research questions stated above.

# 1

# Glossary

Sensory  
Phenomenon  
In  
Space  
Investigate  
Nature  
Being  
Performance  
Life

Smell, taste, see, hear and feel  
occurrence, observant fact, ex  
Here, inwards, appearing in, ta  
room, breathing space, interv  
inquiring into, questioning, sea  
scenery, life, environment, cha  
living being, human being, pers  
presentation, recital, act, routi  
existence, being, time, living, so

experience, happening, incident, event, trend  
taking part in, participating in, featuring in  
al, opening, place, pause, threshold space  
rching, examine, look into, explore, inspect, study, consider  
racter, personality, quality, characteristic, features  
on, individual  
ne, concert, show, piece, occurrence, functioning, executing  
oul, vitality,

# Introduction

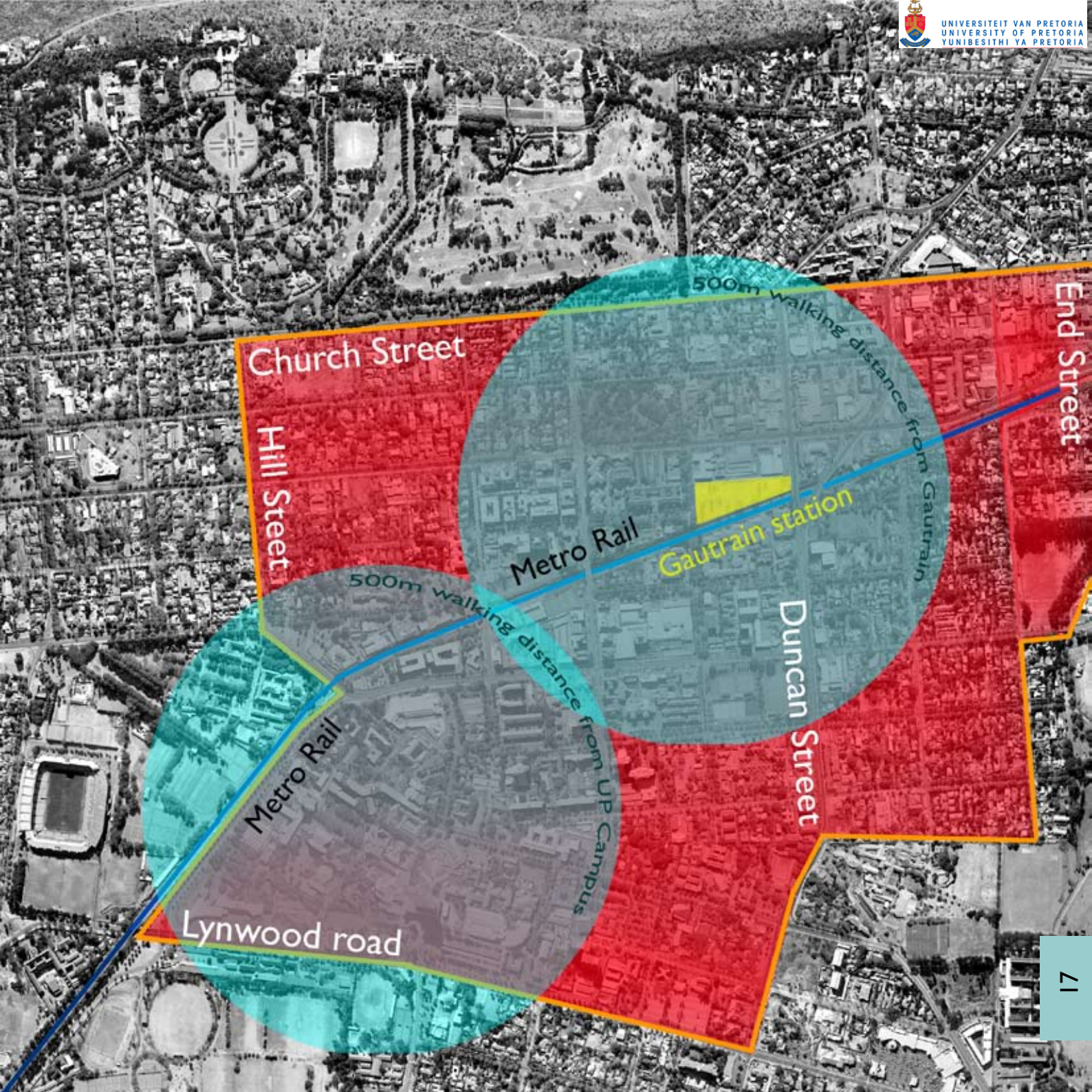
to study area

The chosen study area is situated in the larger Tshwane Metropolitan Area. The specific study area is divided into the current proposed Hatfield Development core, as outlined by the City of Tshwane's development framework, and the Gautrain development framework done in 2007. With the prospect of the Gautrain and 2010 Soccer World Cup, various new developments that aim to densify Hatfield are currently in progress. However, vast underutilised space and dilapidated built fabric, combined with the inconsistency of the urban grain, governs the current context and forms the bulk of the urban realm.

Although these new interventions rejuvenate the area to some extent, the lack of a proper spatial design framework will yet again result in an environment governed by privatised commercial prosperity with little consideration to the urban longevity. Numerous of these dilapidated sites border the train track, resulting in a spatial divide created by the track. There is a serious lack of quality public space within the area due to development failing to be regulated by an approved urban spatial master plan. As an initial response, our proposed development framework has been designed with the aim of creating a vibrant spine of public space within Hatfield.

The primary development objectives of the Tshwane Metropolitan Council have been focused on two central development zones. The first is a central development core that has been allocated in a 500 m radius walking distance of the Gautrain station. The University of Pretoria creates the second development core within a 500 m radius walking distance from its boundaries. The overall area extends to Church Street in the north, End Street on the eastern edge, Lynwood Street on the southern edge and Hill Street edging the area on the western boundary. According to the Tshwane Metropolitan Council, the key driving forces behind the development plan are as follows:

- Tshwane Metropolitan Area spatial design framework
- Gautrain development framework
- Proposed bus rapid transit system
- The University of Pretoria
- National sports facilities
- Movement linkages



Church Street

Hill Street

End Street

Metro Rail

Gautrain station

Duncan Street

500m walking distance from UP Campus

Metro Rail

Lynwood road



FIG 1.2\_View from Rissik Station towards chosen site

From these key driving forces, various deliverables have also been stated. These deliverables provide the foundation from which appropriate design responses can be generated:

- Integrated land use and transportation
- Mixed land-use developments
- Integration of land use with social needs
- Integration of public and private businesses
- Promotion of cultural and urban activities
- Foci of civic identity
- Quality of urban space
- Transport-orientated development (Tshwane, 2007).

Various problems hampering the achievement of these development outcomes were outlined:

- Student population resulting in seasonal fluctuation
- Lack of quality urban open space
- Defined precinct identity
- Lack of meeting, dwelling, working, visiting, walking and entertainment spaces.
- Lack of through routes and destination spaces (Tshwane, 2007).

These problems that were identified, provide an important basis for the initial brief development of the proposed development framework done for Hatfield. The importance of getting the provincial and private sectors to collectively work towards the same goal of providing a vibrant urban realm stands central to the realisation of such a proposal.

These problem areas have been seen as initial design criteria so that suitable opportunities for responding to each problem can be translated into informed design responses satisfying the municipality as well as private investor criteria. These opportunities can be summarised as follows:

- The opportunity to connect the existing Rissik Station to the proposed Gautrain station via an activity spine, providing much-needed public interaction space within Hatfield.
- The opportunity to develop an activity spine connecting Festival and Hilda Street to the proposed new Gautrain station.
- The possibility of linking across the existing train track, connecting to the new residential hub development done by City Property, reclaiming the vacant site.
- The opportunity to increase the urban identity and legibility of the Hatfield precinct, thus providing foci of civic identity.
- Encouraging informal meeting and social interaction spaces along the activity spine with vibrant day/night activity, which will provide much-needed public surveillance to the Hatfield precinct.

# Chosen site

## and urban approach

A dilapidated vacant site bordering the train track has been chosen. The proposed area falls in a larger spatial framework which links activities from the proposed Gautrain station with the western Rissik Station and then along an activity spine that connects Hatfield with the Pretoria University. The chosen site is shared by two other projects and together we define our site as the creative resource node, including fashion, visual art and the performing arts.

Collectively the proposed framework is shared by seven projects, which make up the activity spine. The proposed Gautrain station forms part of the activity spine. The framework is called START- social transition through activation of regenerative techniques, which ultimately aims to create a network of social space extending across the train track to reclaim this divided piece of land. The analogy of a spine has been explored.

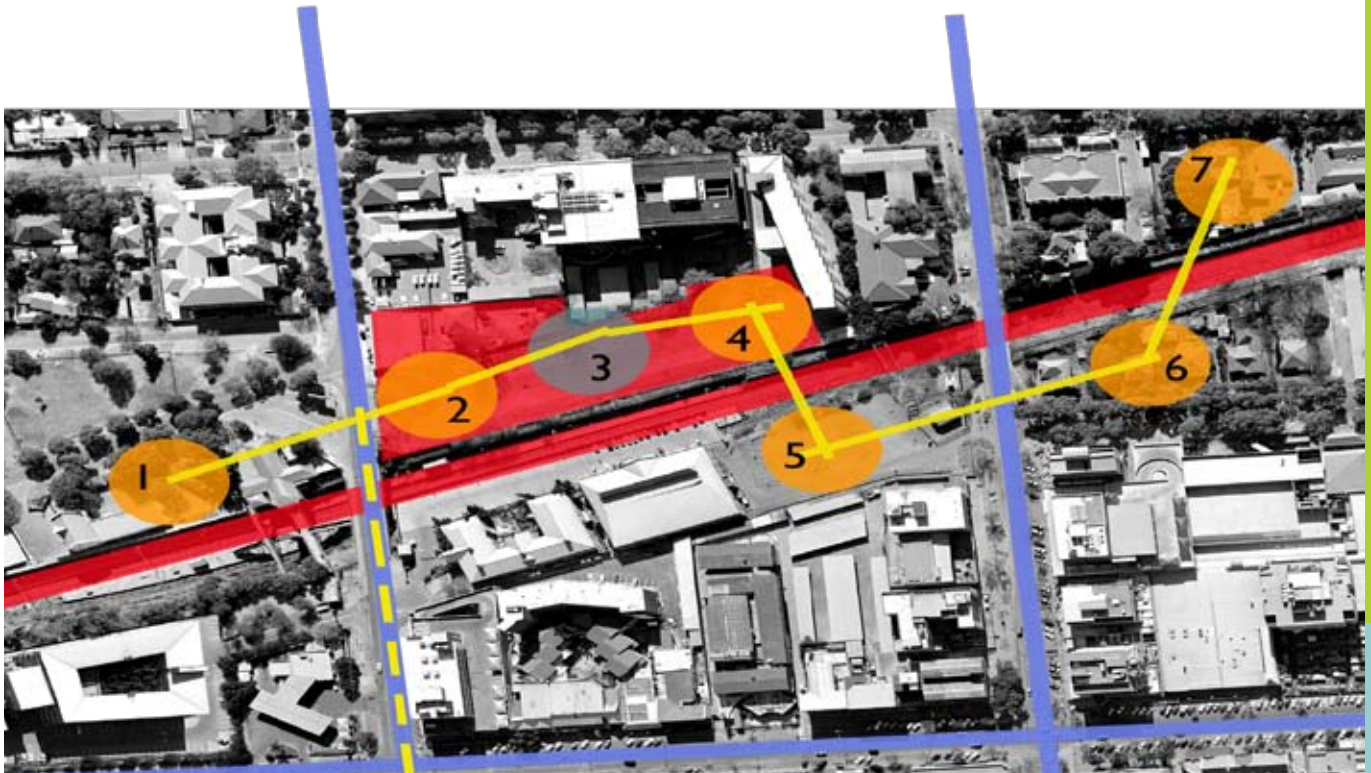


FIG 1.3\_Location map indication the seven proposed interventions



# C

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The client and owner of the site is Intersite, which forms part of the property portfolio of SA RAILS. City Property has a lease on the site opposite the track. For a successful link across the track a synergy between the two parties should be established. For this synergy to transcend into a viable investment, a shift in development methodology is necessary. This shift requires that, instead of maximising the bulk development on each site, a maximum public space creation approach is adopted. It has been decided that Intersite will initially fund the project in association with City Property as part of its community engagement responsibilities enforced by government regulations.

The strength of the joint venture lies in the fact that the private sector works with the Tshwane municipality to not only gain returns on investment in built interventions, but also provide an enriched urban realm that can be enjoyed by all. This approach will yield a far greater return on investment and longevity for these new interventions. By creating the activity spine, Intersite establishes its existing movement routes as primary activity sectors. A constant influx of users will provide not only vital arrival and departure points, but also destination places for users to linger and enjoy. The proposed scheme ultimately sets an important precedent for the effective rejuvenation of lost space adjacent to train tracks. City Properties gains a much needed spill out space for its occupants, with the added advantage of being centrally located for major movement and activity zones, the urban green corridor and the University of Pretoria, ultimately increasing the popularity of the overall development.



FIG 1.4 \_Property ownership involved framework implementation

# Design

## outcome

The primary objective of this intervention is to collectively create a vibrant, creative, interactive destination place that will not only provide a much needed creative resource node for Pretoria, but also a place for people to enjoy and be despite the rush of urban living. The architecture should encourage public interaction and an active contribution to the urban realm by providing the platform for creativity to emerge. The user should be made aware of the various facets of the performing arts industry, with the opportunity created for emerging artists to succeed in the music business. This place should embrace the performance of life, celebrating and enriching our unique cultural diversity. It should be a place where scholar, student, street artist and professionals can share artistic ideas; a place where I am part of the performance of the everyday life; a place that I can use, a place where I can just be.....



- 1 PRIVATE PROPERTY
- 2 INTERSITE PROPERTY
- 3 SA RAILWAYS
- 4 CITY PROPERTY LEASED

# A

# ssumptions

and delimiters

Within the chosen research topic, various different ideologies surrounding the terminology, relevance and method of studying of spatial experience through the senses have been identified. I have chosen various important writers and philosophers whom I believe contribute appropriately to the argument. I take their arguments as foundation on which I build my argument and do not attempt to criticise the validity of their thoughts, but rather draw from different relevant scopes with the aim of indicating a homogeneous train of thought. On an urban framework scale responses have been based upon approved spatial design frameworks and the statistics given are seen as legitimate.

The contexts created are a proposed projection of future development done according to these approved framework projections, and the proposed interventions respond to this projected context.

# Theoretical

abstract

In our current ocular-centric society few spatial experiences stimulate the full penchant of our senses. Most experiences of space can be reduced to a single experience of sensory bliss. How do we create a functioning civic environment which addresses the full spectrum of sensory phenomena, stimulating the performance of life, allowing individuals the opportunity to express their unique individuality? What role does architecture play in the phenomenon of lived space? How do we create such a place? In my view such a place should not only be accessible to the selected few, but should be a commonality in an urban realm shared by all, appreciated by all, experienced by all. In an increasingly consumerist society there is an immense need for non-commercial space without the prerequisite of money.

For this environment to be successful, it should be easily accessible and used on a frequent basis with enough diversity in activities sustaining the ever-changing user requirements. The architectural interventions should be an active participant within the larger stage set of activities. How do we develop an architectural language that enhances our sensory experience of the built environment? Can this be that we are striving once again to create real places and spaces for people and communities to engage in?



# A nalogy

As I move through the space, en route to my end destination, I am suddenly confronted with a spatial contradiction. Through the rumbling voices, the rush of the city and my own brain racing to make sense of the experience, I can softly hear the beautiful sound of musicians rehearsing. Stopping to buy food, I sense the wonderful atmosphere of people procrastinating, enjoying coffee, laughing, engaging and unknowingly participating. I catch a glimpse from the corner of my eye of bodies rhythmically caressing the studio space, unaware of my presence. How can it be that this previously dilapidated site now represents a sensory nucleus of creative energy, that I unexpectedly experience an intense creative moment in a public space catering for an amalgamated South African society, participating in everyday activities? What do I bring to this place? My unique sense of being, my presence, my creativity, or merely the fact that I happen to be in the right place at the right time? How can it be that I suddenly feel creative, that the opportunity that I have waited for for so long has finally revealed itself?

Filtering through the intervention I suddenly find that the previous role of spectator has suddenly changed, and I feel, sense, believe for that brief instance that I am the musician rehearsing that song, that I am part of the visual dialogue between the other performers. As one of the artists briefly makes eye contact with me, I can sense the satisfaction that he must have felt when he saw the way that I was subconsciously keeping the beat of his song, feeling every note as if I were playing it.

As I continue through the intervention, numerous multi-disciplinary creative nodes are experienced, and I soon realise that art, performance and creativity have finally been reinstated as public commentary device; that I, as an aspiring artist, can contribute to this environment in a way that opens up endless possibilities to one day be able to be that artist in the recording studio. Working on my own album, dreaming of my new destiny and looking across the crowd to spot the next young performer, dancer, student and individual waiting for that once-off opportunity to be part of something life changing. I walk on and suddenly stop and turn around to catch my last glimpse of the amazing experience I have witnessed, no – rather participated in, and realise that I am proud to be me, that this was a place that includes rather than excludes and that the creative energy freely experienced was amazing.

This was a place that I will return to, captivated to experience more of art as sensory performa .....

AND SO THE JOURNEY BEGINS



FIG 1.5\_Photo of Author