

3

Site	55
Locality	57
Urban Mapping	58
Urban group framework	64
Local Context	67
Munitoria	68

Con
text



fig. 3.1 Urban locality, Pretoria, South Africa.



“Among the many networks of flows that go into the making of the city; the network of encounters, of meetings, is a network that is underestimated and underrated.” – [Holden, 2008: 289]

Site

The site area under investigation sits along Van der Walt Street, Pretoria (fig. 3.1). Van der Walt Street, which runs north-south within the city, is one of the most active pedestrian corridors due to the two modal interchanges found at either ends (fig. 3.3). Along this corridor lies a series of important public urban components (fig. 3.1 -3.9). Le Roux (1991: 40) identifies Van der Walt Street as a critical pedestrian axis within the city, highlighting the active street’s interface which is provided by buildings that open up onto the street.

Liminal Public Space / Context // Locality

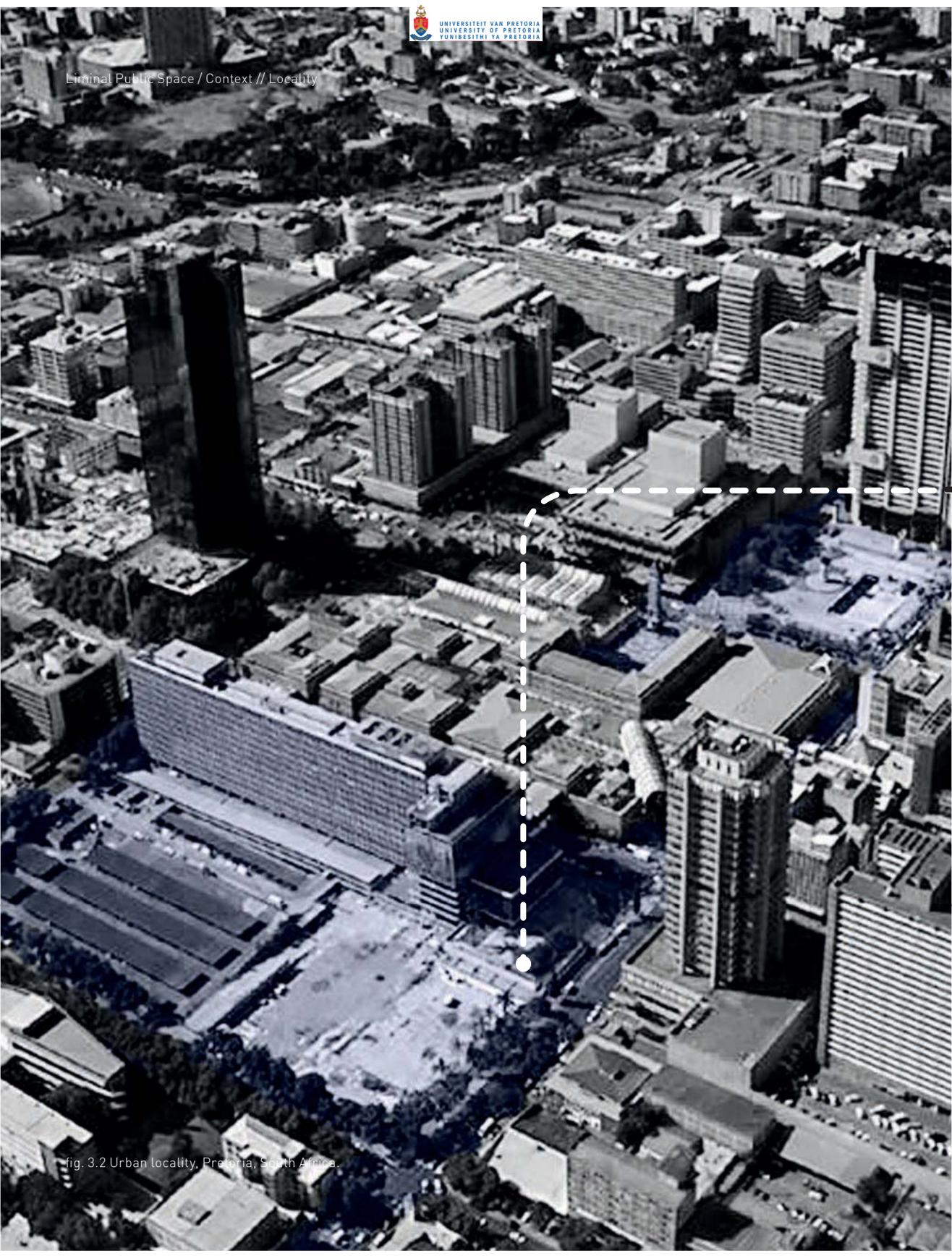


fig. 3.2 Urban locality, Pretoria, South Africa.

Locality

The site is located in the civic and economic heart of the city. Pretoria labels itself as the governmental capital, housing the majority of government departments. Within the 'city's centre' there is a balance between government, economic and private ownership. The site under investigation is erf 3200 on which the Munitoria building sits. In front of the augmented building exists an urban cavity. This urban cavity is what remains of the Western wing of Munitoria, which burnt down in 1997.

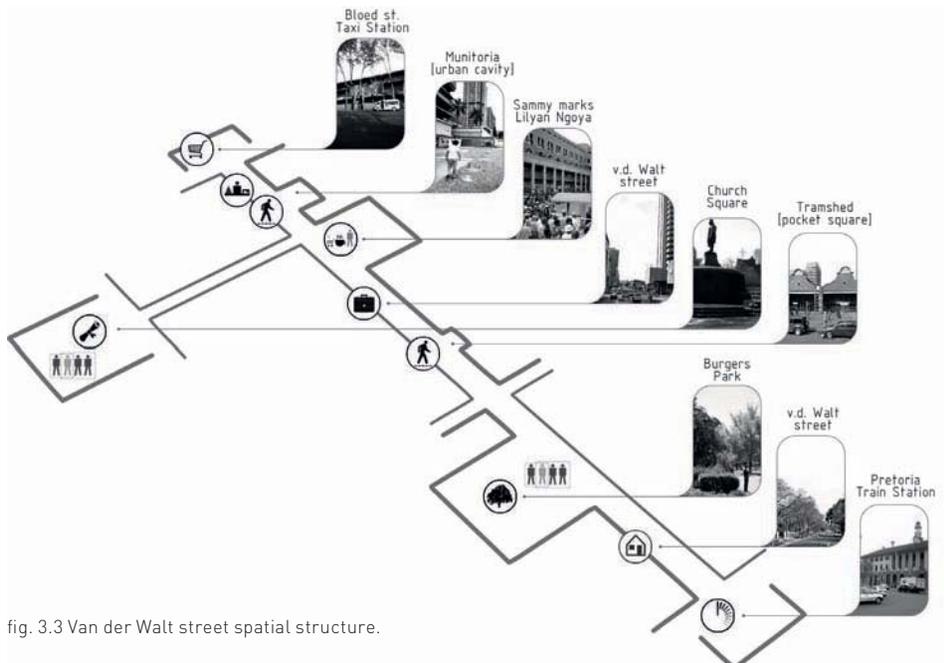


fig. 3.3 Van der Walt street spatial structure.

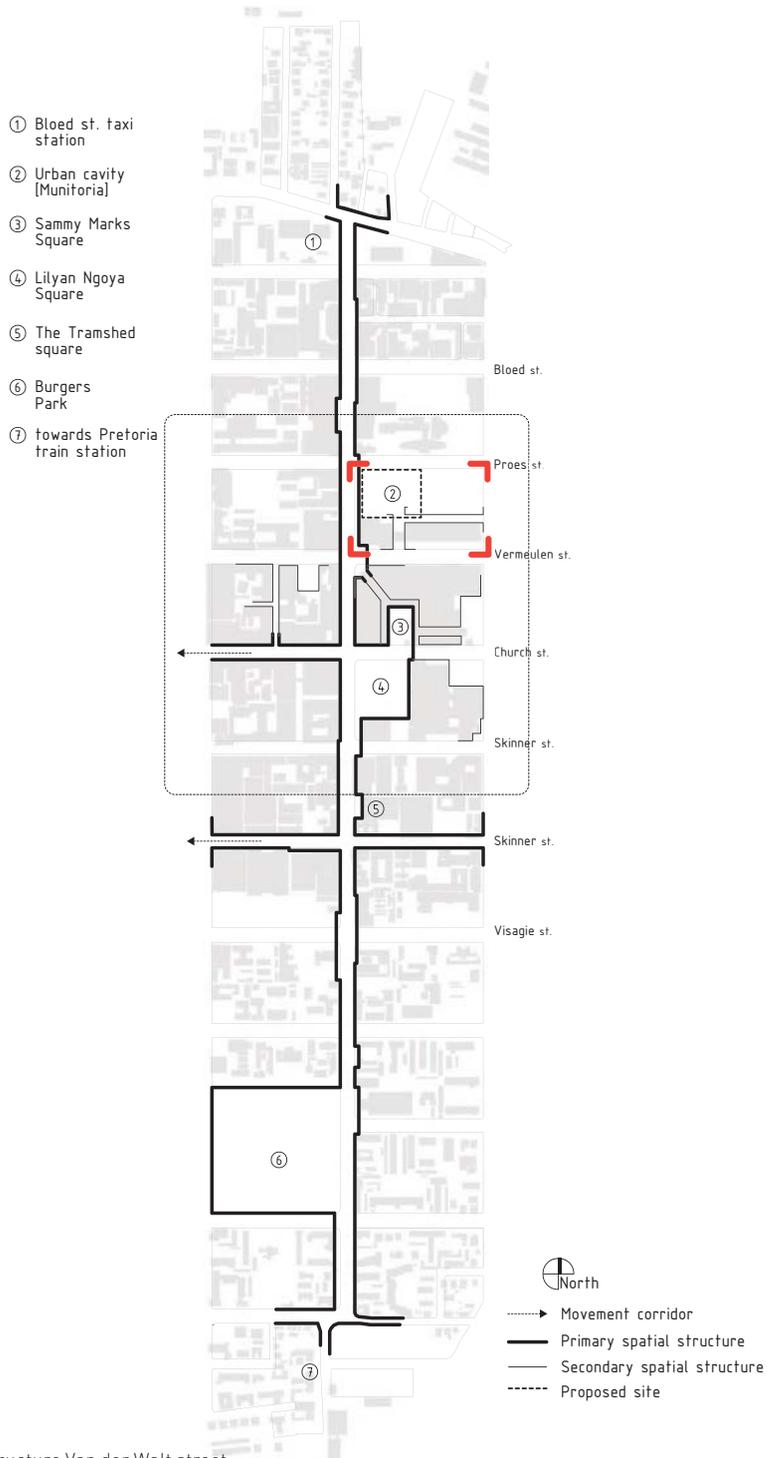


fig. 3.4 Spatial structure Van der Walt street.

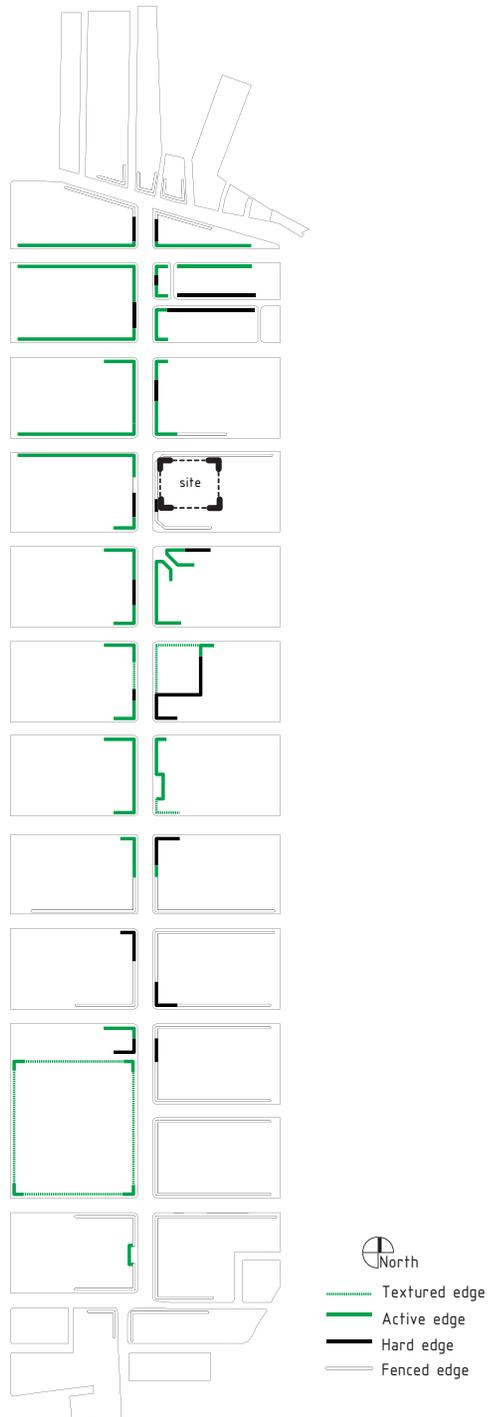


fig. 3.5 Edge condition Van der Walt street.

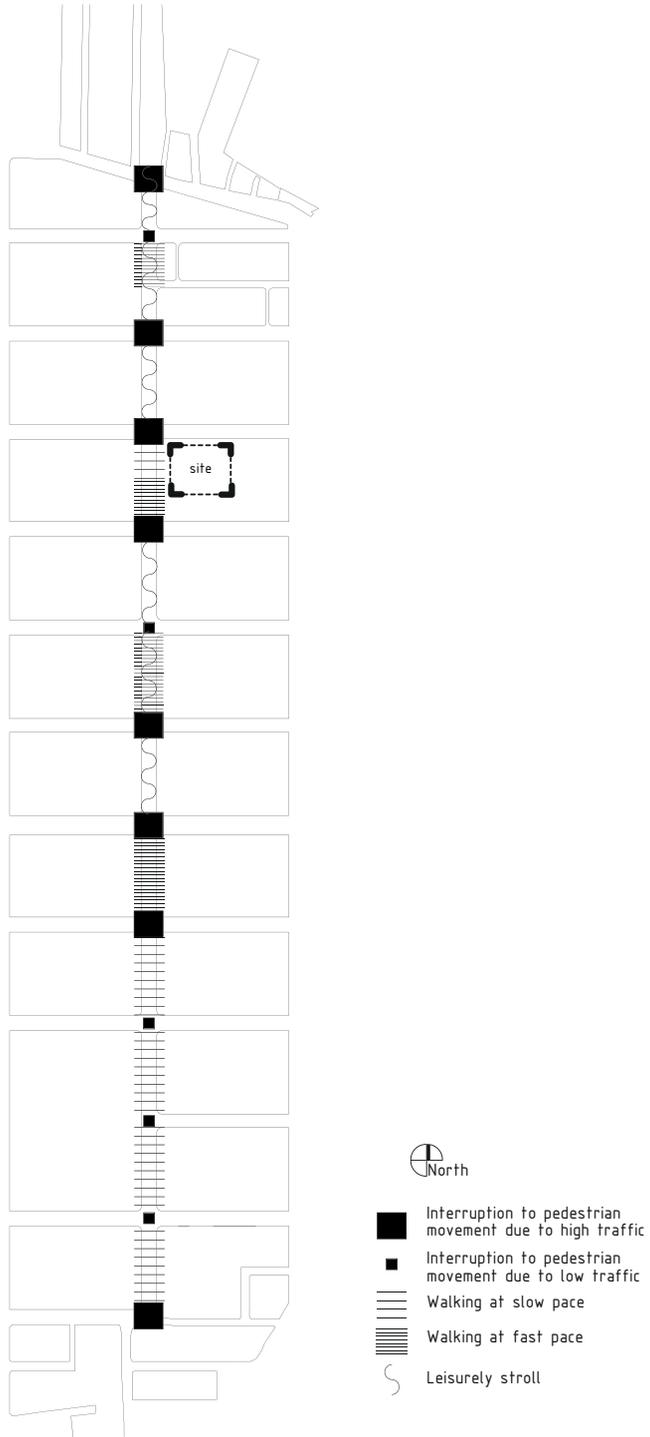


fig. 3.6 Pace of Pedestrian Van der Walt street.

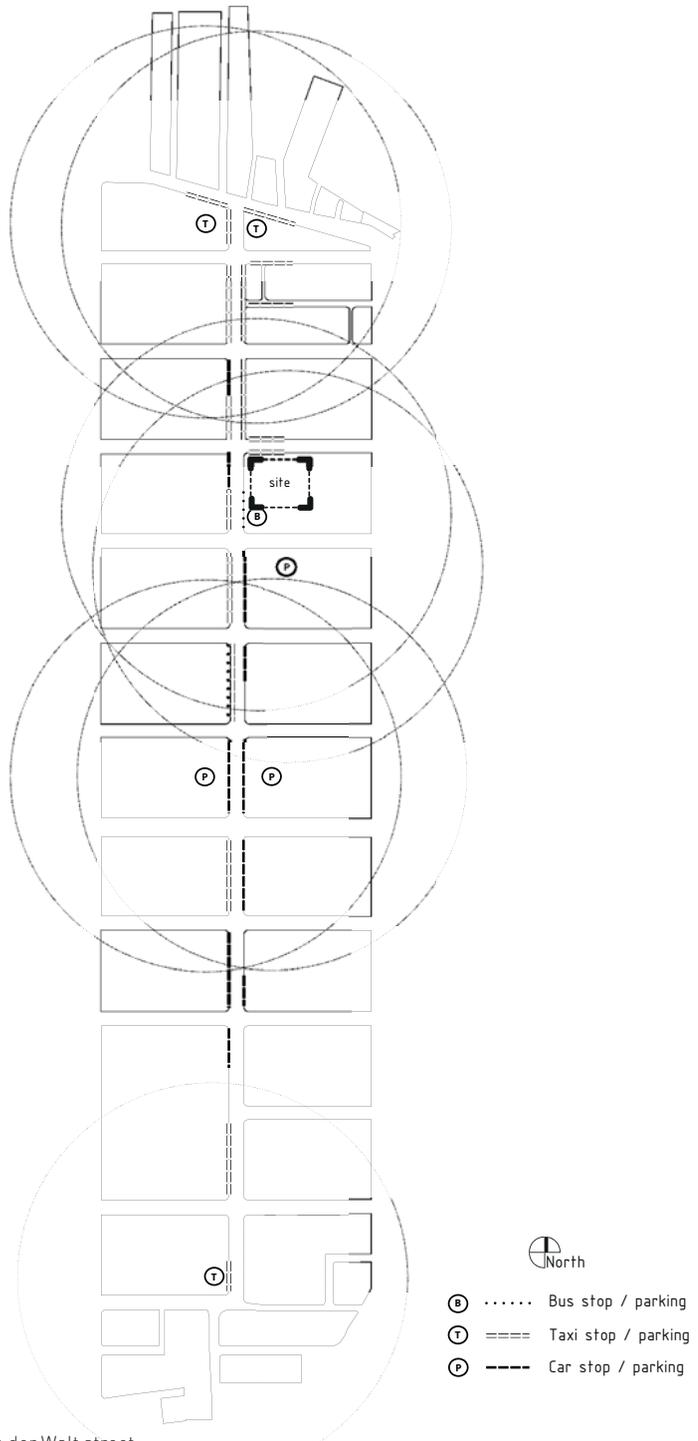


fig. 3.7 Public Transport along Van der Walt street.

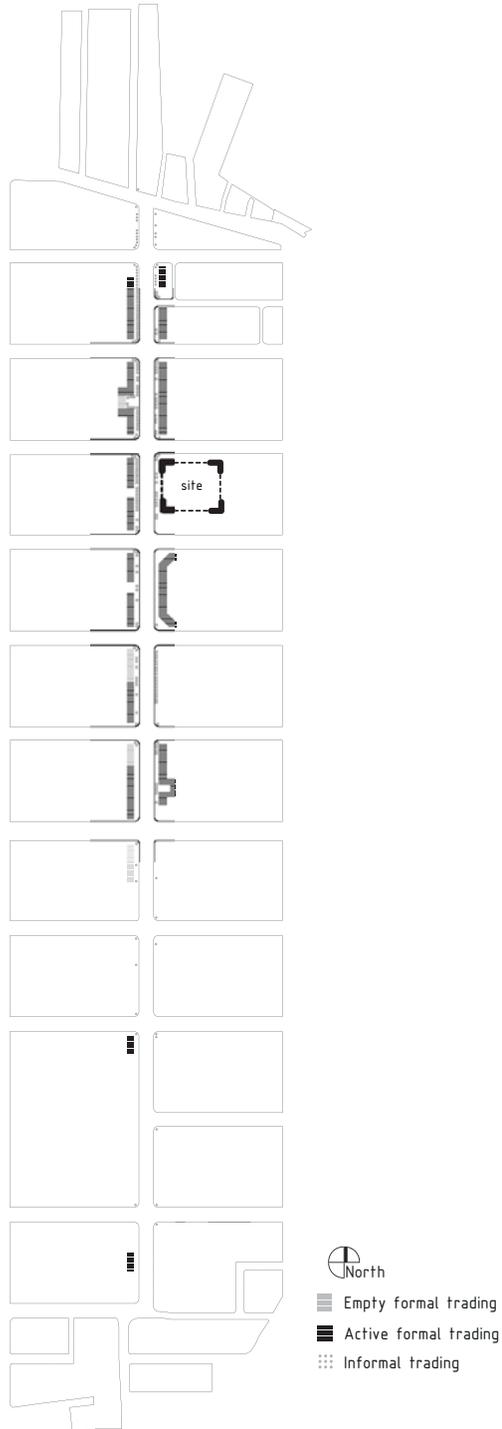


fig. 3.8 Trading opportunities Van der Walt street.

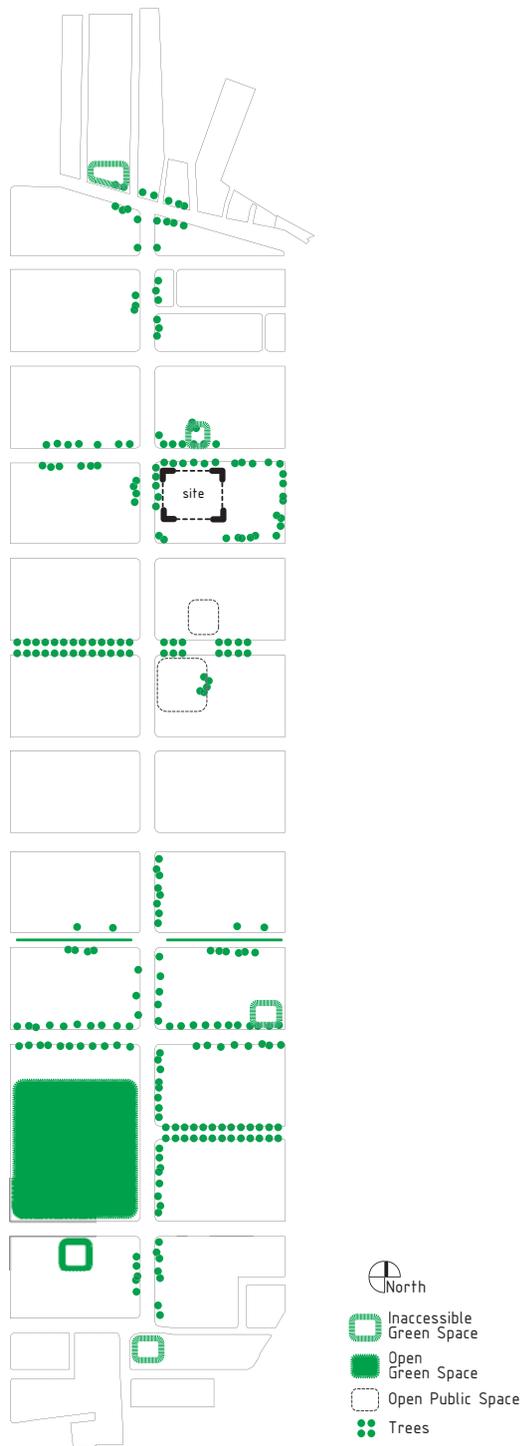


fig. 3.9 Open green spaces Van der Walt street.

Urban group framework»

The proposed urban framework is a contextual framework aiming to strengthen the existing urban fabric by reacting to and consolidating existing infrastructure- rather than imposing on the existing urban context (fig. 3.10). A particular emphasis is placed on the connectivity of the study area and the linking of the different proposed interventions. Four different scales are addressed: urban (macro planning strategies), block (micro planning strategies), architectural (edge conditions) and detail level (design guidelines) (fig. 3.11).

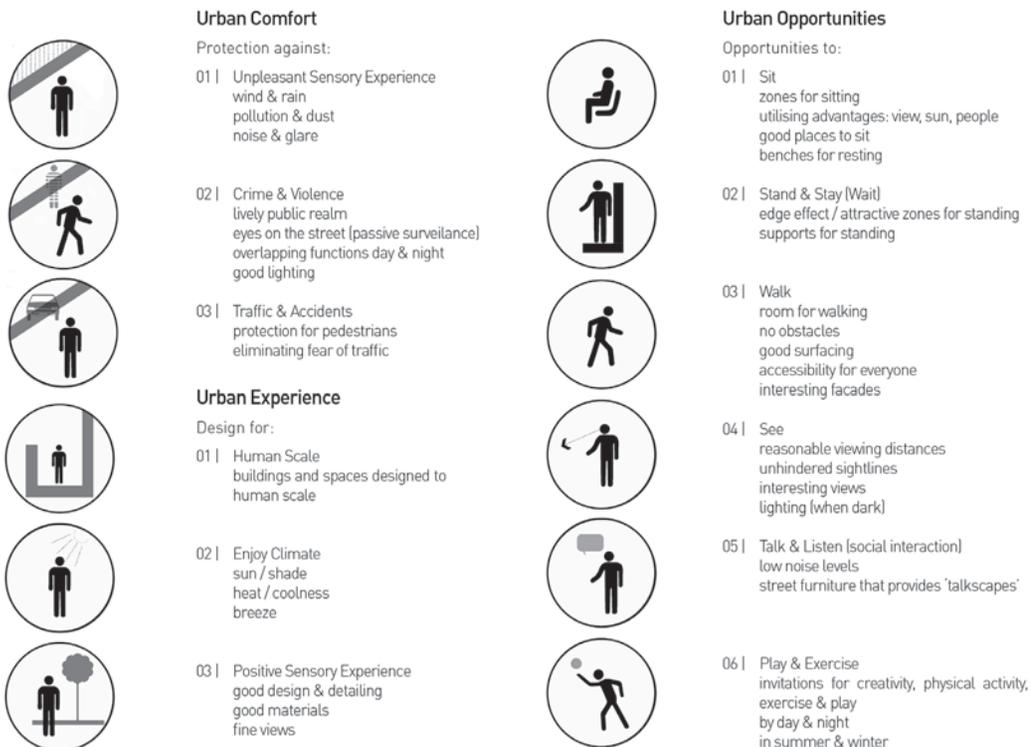


fig. 3.10 Design Guidelines.

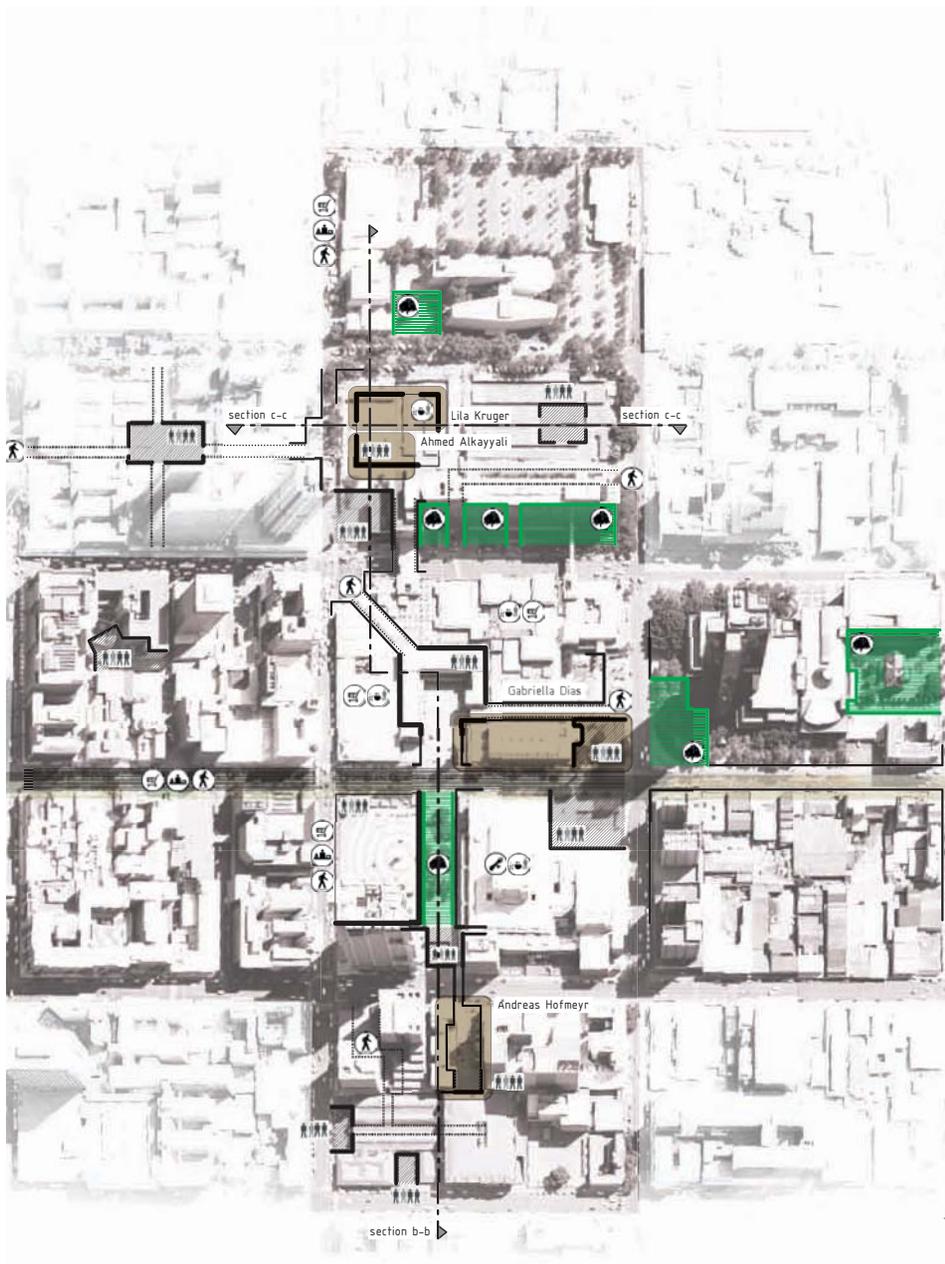
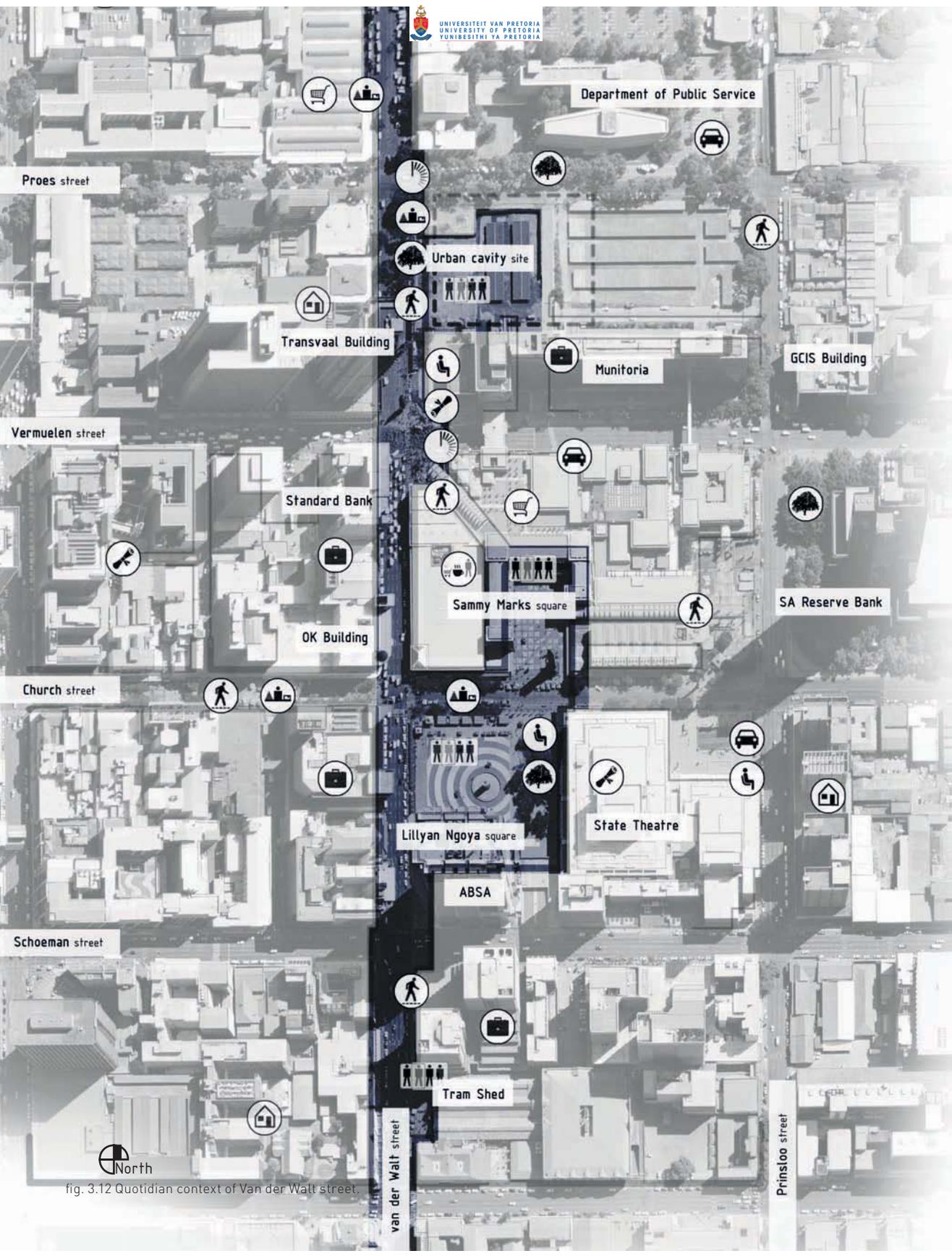


fig. 3.11 Group urban framework



Proes street

Department of Public Service

Urban cavity site

Transvaal Building

Munitoria

GCIS Building

Vermuelen street

Standard Bank

Sammy Marks square

SA Reserve Bank

Church street

Lillian Ngoya square

State Theatre

Schoeman street

ABSA

Tram Shed



fig. 3.12 Quotidian context of Van der Walt street.

van der Walt street

Prinsloo street

-  housing and residential units
-  commercial and institutional units
-  retail and shopping opportunities
-  cultural and religious spaces
-  entertainment spaces
-  informal trading stalls
-  private vehicle parking
-  pedestrian activity and arcades
-  seating spaces
-  shaded green spaces
-  waiting spaces
-  public space and squares

Local context»

The site houses both Munitoria and its aftermath; lightweight parking structures, and a permanent parking structure. The site lies on an important threshold within the city. Van der Walt Street supports various open public spaces (fig. 3.12), with a strong pedestrian link towards the historical centre (Church Square).

While it is important to map out the existing buildings surrounding the site, due to the formal and social qualities they provide (fig. 3.12); it is as important to note non-architectural qualities that occur in-between the buildings (fig. 3.12). Trees that provide shade and shelter from the sun, vendors tapping into pedestrian activities, interim spaces where people can cross the road or even ledges that form seating in the urban environment. These factors inform the quotidian context of the city, these 'urban accidents' which inform the architectural identity of the urban environment (fig. 3.12). All of these conditions direct the performances within the city, which as stated earlier, are in constant flux.

Munitoria

Munitoria [from] Muni-*cipality* and Pre-*toria*, was named as part of a public competition in February 1969 to find a suitable name for the council building (Tindall, 2002: 2).

On Tuesday 4th March 1997 the blazing fire that destroyed the west wing of the Munitoria complex finally came to rest after about 12 hours of fire fighting. Records, documents and office equipment of various departments were turned to ash (Leitch, 1997: 22). The remaining structure was imploded in 1998 (fig. 3.14). The only remains, to this day is the concrete basin (fig. 3.16). The building was designed by Burg Lodge Doherty and completed in 1969, show a strong resemblance to Van der Rohe's Alexander Platz project (fig. 3.13) (Fisher, le Roux & Mare', 1998: 52).

The building houses the Tshwane Municipality. In attempts to raise the building from its ashes, Project Phoenix was launched. A competition established to rebuild the destroyed section of the building, but with intent to "reflect a distinctly African character, with an emphasis on the precolonial history of the City" as stated by Subesh Pillay- Member of the Mayoral Committee responsible for Public Works and Infrastructure (Hlahla, 2007). However, the project was terminated due to financial and feasibility issues.

The building is sometimes viewed as a symbol of Afrikaans nationalism, a regime linked to struggle and heartache (fig. 3.15). Recently a plan to implode the building, along with its connotations, and to replace it with the building of Pillay's "African character" (Hlahla, 2007). However one needs to question the value of the structure. Amongst its heritage, embodied energy and its environmental value, the building forms a distinct character and edge within the city (*see appendix A*).

Currently the building sits trapped in time, as a result of government inactivity, forming the backdrop for the everyday performances. Where on the outside people carry on with their everyday lives, while hidden on the inside, the inner workings of the municipality play out its script. Visible, however, is the result of these activities, the textures, colours and surfaces (fig. 3.17 -3.21). The urban cavity forms a negative space and requires redevelopment. The intervention should therefore provide a civic forum for the city, where changes in levels and texture thus becomes another layer by which the everyday is exposed.



fig. 3.13 Munitoria under construction.



fig. 3.15 Munitoria West-Wing.



fig. 3.14 Munitoria implosion.



fig. 3.16 Munitoria Urban Cavity.



fig. 3.17 Munitoria South-wing and Urban Cavity.





fig. 3.18 Muntoria burnt West-Wing and views



fig. 3.19 Urban cavity, Surface Textures, Munitoria.



fig. 3.20 Urban cavity, Surface Textures, Munitoria



fig. 3.21 Urban cavity Wall textures, Muntoria.