

site analysis

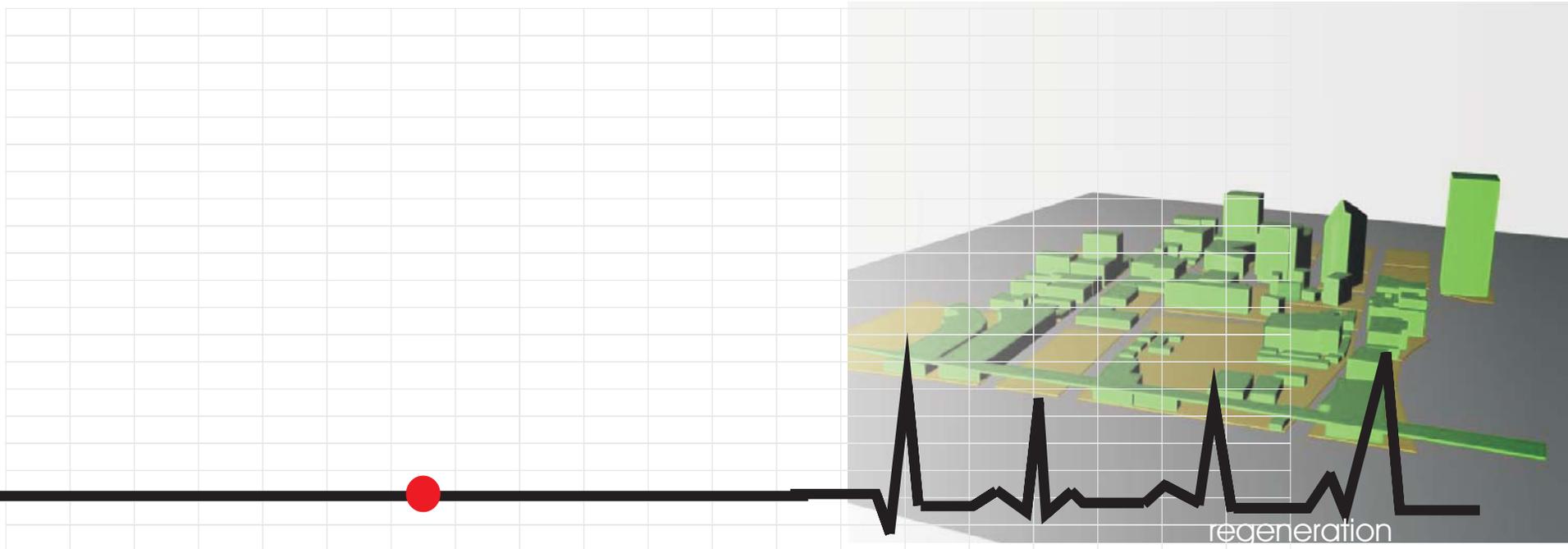




Fig 61. View to CBD towards the east.

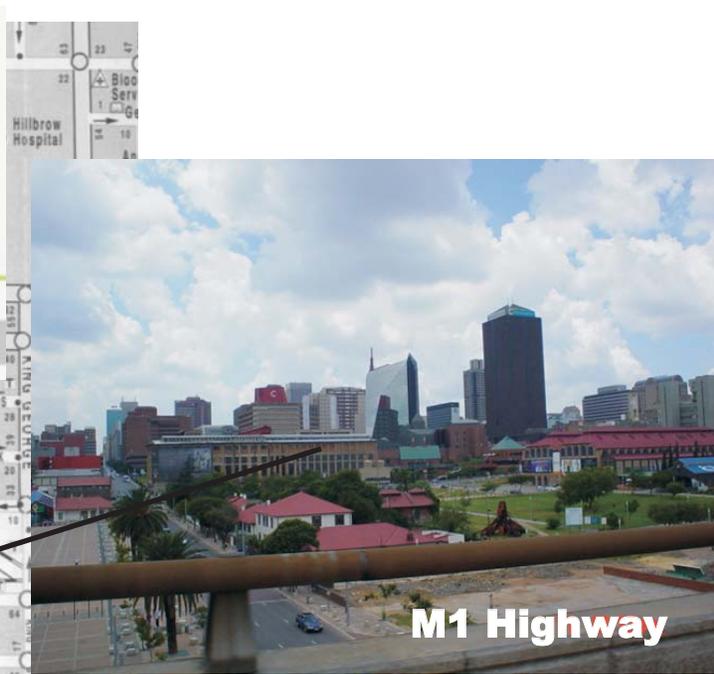


Fig 62. View to CBD towards the east.

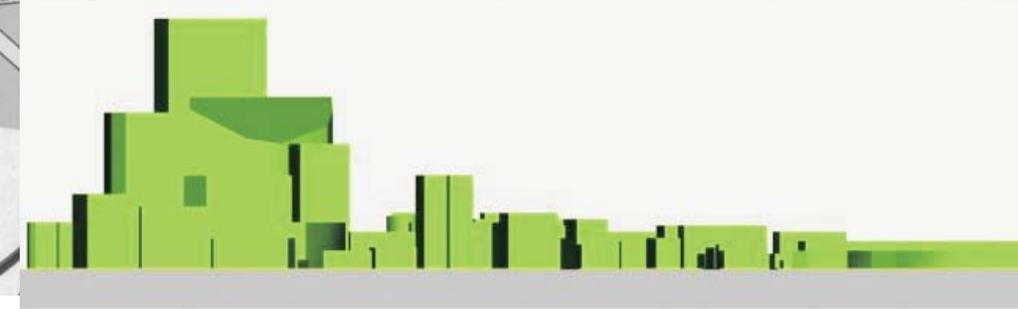
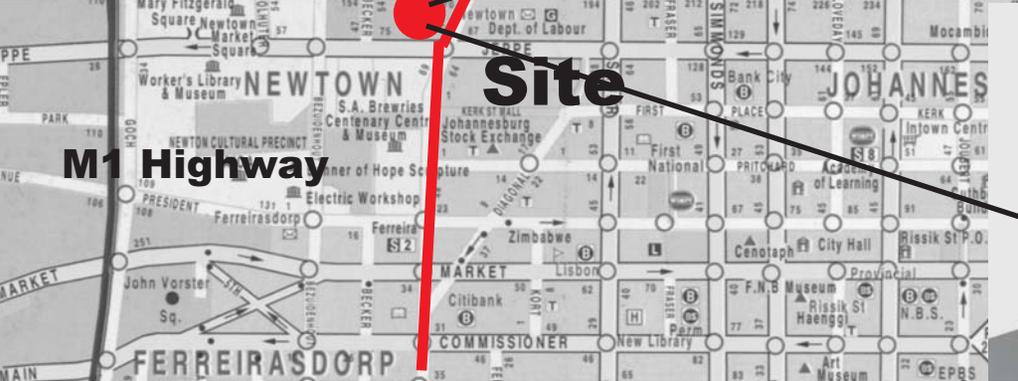
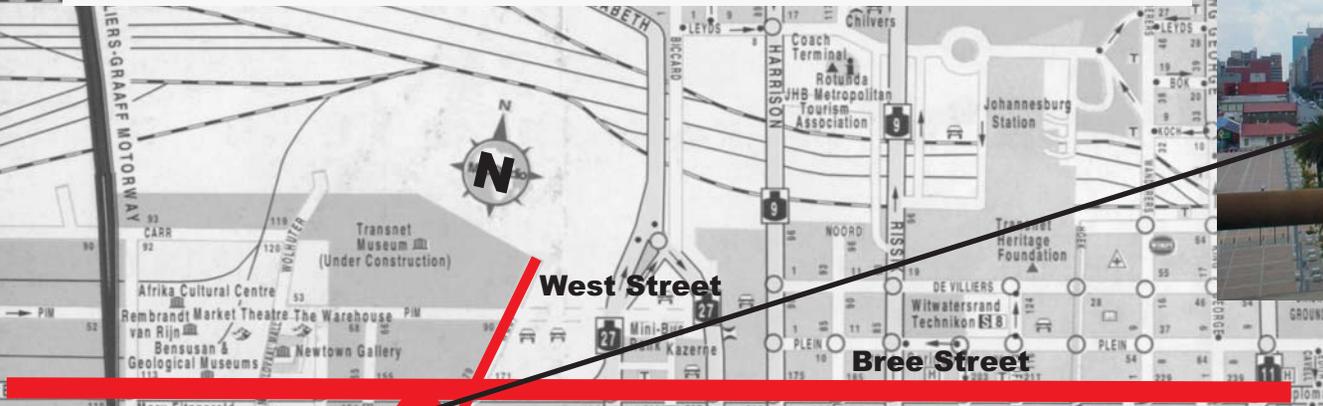


Fig 63. View to CBD towards the west.

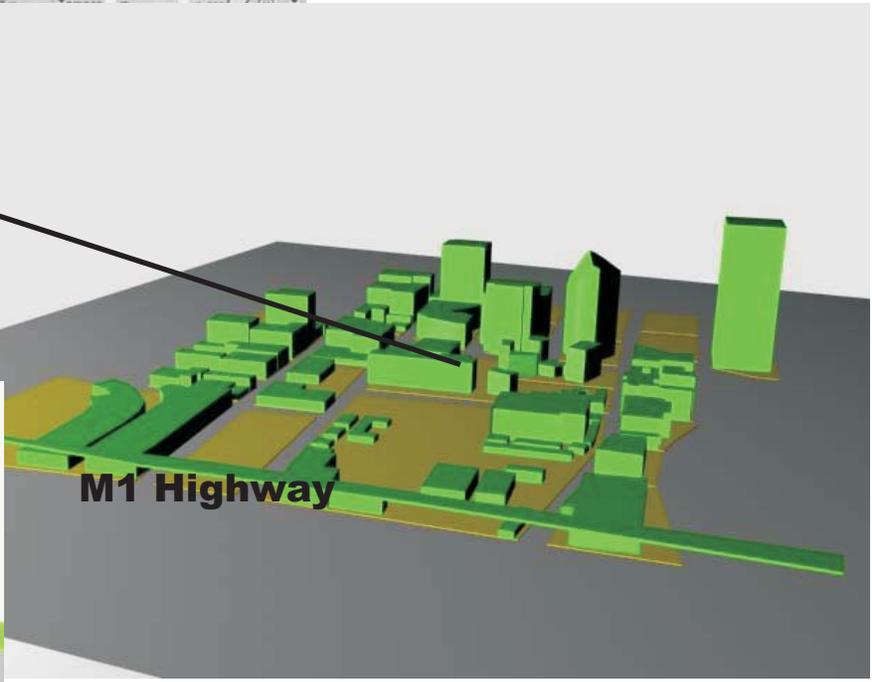


Fig 64. Site location.

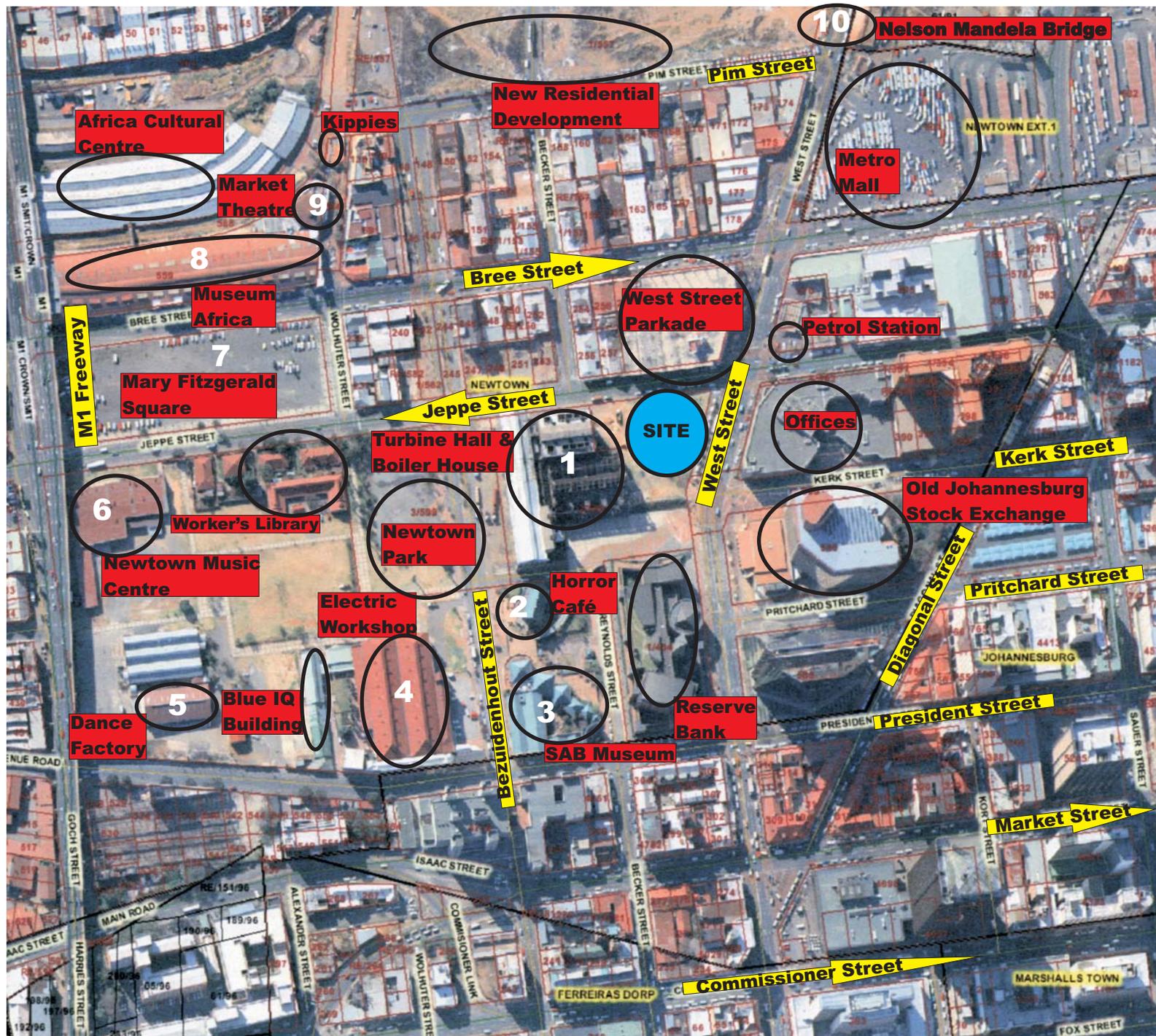


Fig 65. Neighbouring features.



Fig 66. Model of the Newtown precinct.

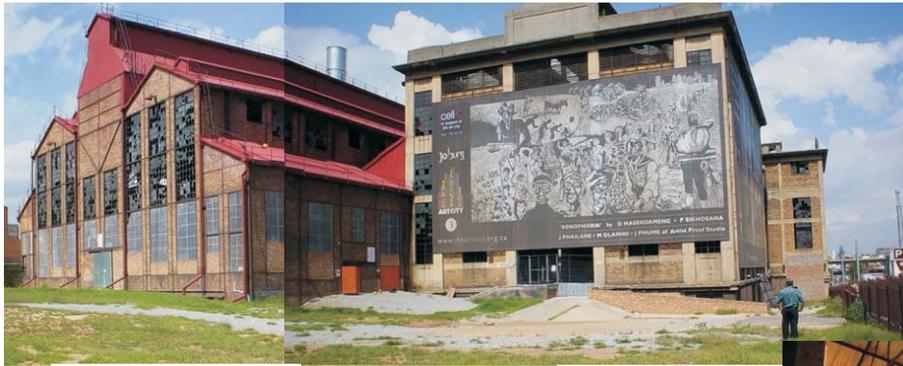


Fig 67. The Turbine Hall.

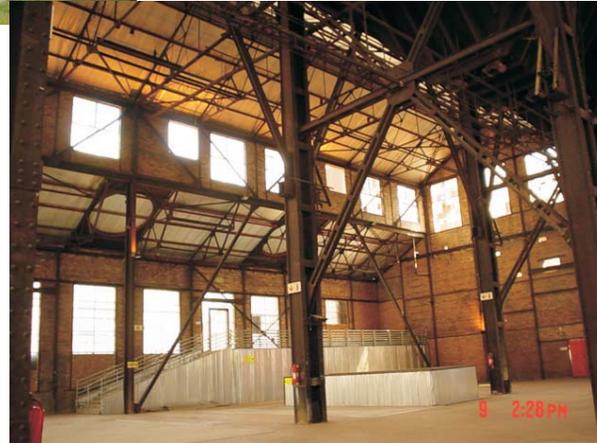
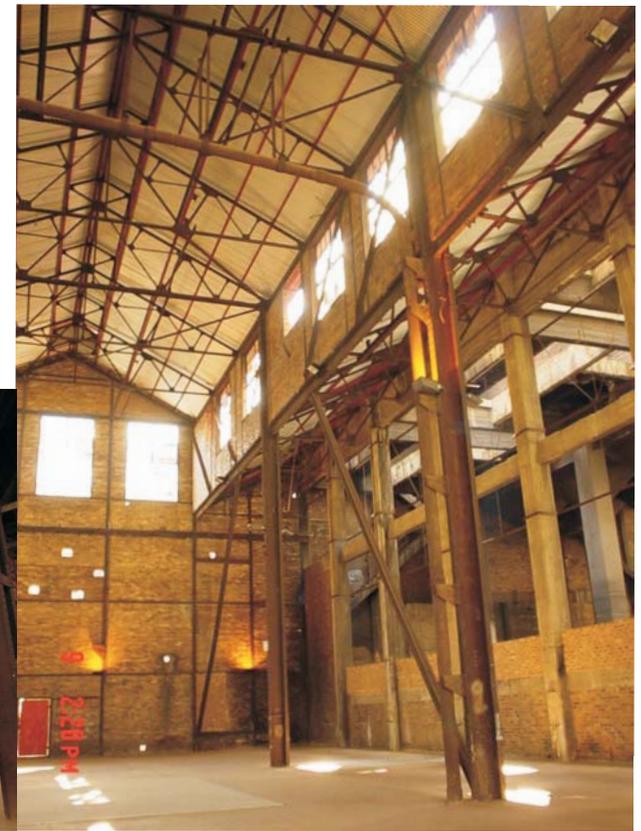


Fig 68. Renovated Interior of the Turbine Hall.



Turbine Hall:

The Turbine Hall situated on the corner of Jeppe and Bezuidenhout Streets is probably one of Johannesburg's most striking ironies and mysteries. The Turbine Hall was home to Johannesburg's first coal-fired power stations. In its heyday just the room, which houses the turbines, was the largest building under a concrete roof in South Africa. The history of the hall is uncertain. It is said to be built around the 1920s [Turbine Hall Set for a Jol, 2003] when the Newtown markets were established.

In 1904 a plague broke out among the poverty stricken Indians who lived in the area now known as Newtown. The people were moved to Klipspruit, the district was named Newtown and the town council started building a business district there, complete with abattoir, livestock market and a fruit and vegetable market. Then followed the construction of the Electric Workshop, the power station and the Turbine Hall. These buildings powered the city's electric trams and all of Johannesburg.

When black people heard the halls howling siren during apartheid they had to vacate the city at seven pm or face the wrath of the police. The siren marked the curfew to the black workers to be bussed out to their homes in Soweto and banned from the city.

The four electricity cooling towers in Jeppe Street, used to cool water for the power station, were constructed between 1935 and 1937 [Turbine Hall Set for a Jol, 2003]. Decades later these large structures served as a landmark to anyone traveling on the M1 freeway to and from Johannesburg.

Eventually the Turbine Hall became inoperative. Life sizzled out of the generators and the city's electric department moved office. Age too took its toll on the cooling towers and by 1985 their concrete was flaking and they were in a state of disrepair. Despite of hopeful talk of transforming the towers into new-age hotels or an art gallery they were demolished in June 1985 [Turbine Hall Set for a Jol, 2003].



Fig 69. View to Turbine Hall from the pedestrian bridge.



Fig 70. Music festival held at the Turbine Hall.



Fig 71. View to Turbine Hall from West Street.

The Turbine Hall stood still and empty, rooted to the city like an urban survivor. After being gutted by fire, its brooding skeleton became home to the city's homeless and a way for them to make money. About 300 homeless people used the hall's domains to recycle cardboard, paper, plastic and tin cans during the 1990's.

During this period the city's engineers embarked on an ambitious plan, rumored to cost about R300-million to transform the area into a thriving retail square, called Turbine Square, but the plans were rejected as the project doomed 'too ambitious'.

As businesses left to areas like Sandton, taking their money with them, and the city declined. The Turbine Hall fell into ruin and became a den of drugs and crime. In 1999 the hall was a scene of a series of muggings, rapes and murders, including that of a Homeless Talk writer. Criminals used the hall's numerous dark passages to evade authorities and build elaborate tunnels from which to steal copper cables from nearby businesses. The city council razed the shacks in July 2000 and evicted the squatters.

Anglogold, the gold mining company, offered a chance of salvation when it stated that it might move its offices to the hall, but nothing came to fruition. When the city's urbanites were interrogated about the future of the hall, some suggested it to be used as an Inner City housing project, an upmarket boutique, a market place, a concert hall, an ice-skating rink or a children's home. None of these proposals realized. It seemed as if there was nothing but a false hope for the Turbine Hall until recently.

After the turbulent and sorrowful past, this landmark has finally found its rightful identity Johannesburg's newest music venue. During the World Summit on Sustainable Development, 2002, the hall was hosting veteran artists such as vocalist and guitarist Vusi Mahlasela, Judith Sephuma, P J Powers, Jimmy

Dludlo and Selaelo Seloto.

A total of R5-million was spent from council funds to make the southern boiler house a suitable music venue, but a great deal of work still needs to be done to restore the other two connected venues, the Link Building and the northern Boiler House. Most of the work on these two venues is of a structural nature and will be completed at the end of 2003. The R25-million needed for upgrading is made available by the Gauteng Provincial Government.

The 'industrial' theme the Johannesburg Development Agency wanted to develop has worked well. Not only has the approach of raw brick and steel saved the council money, it has also enhanced the Turbine Hall's unique charm broken windows and all.

The finished Turbine Hall will hold up to 4 000 people. The other buildings will host photographic and fashion shows as well as musical events. The new toilets capture the stark, urban industrial feel. This enabled the installation of a generous amount of toilets to prevent queuing outside the toilets.

The southern Boiler House was given the green light from a safety point of view. The polythene and wood panels covering the lower windows are only temporary. The windows of the other buildings pose a safety problem of glass falling down. A solution is to cover up the broken windows with sheets of safety glass on the outside, thus retaining the charm while addressing the concerns around safety.

The Turbine Hall received quite spectacular lighting to make it a round-the-clock landmark in Newtown. The building is now lit up from the inside and the outside. With lights kept on all night, the Turbine Hall is clearly visible from the M1 highway.



Fig 72. The Horror Café.

Horror Café:

This club/restaurant is open for lunch and dinner. Every week patrons can experience anything from drum 'n base, reggae, house music or break-dancing to documentaries and visuals.

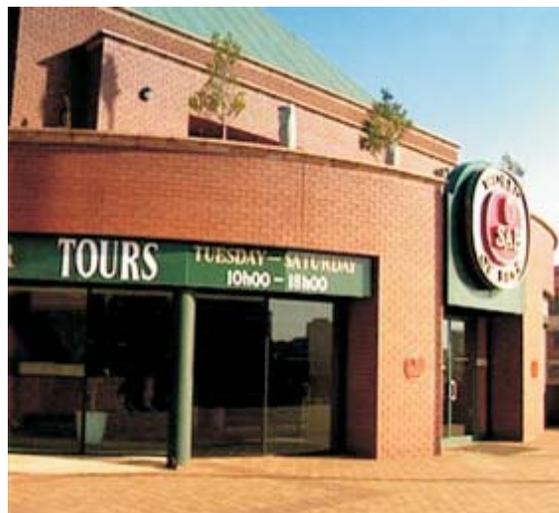


Fig 73. South African Breweries Museum.
South African Breweries Museum:

The SAB Museum celebrates 100 years of beer brewing in South Africa through exciting, interactive displays, memorabilia and beer tasting events.



Fig 74. The Electric Workshop.

Electric Workshop:

The Workshop is one of the earliest buildings in Johannesburg, which once powered the city's earliest trams. This spectacular space was built in 1929 to house a generating station and municipal workshop for Johannesburg's department of electricity. Its distinctive facade and interior were renovated a few years ago to serve as a multi-purpose venue for cultural events in Newtown. Dramatic reminders of its former use are clearly visible.



Fig 75. The Dance Factory.

Dance Factory:

At the Dance Factory you can see work of young South African choreographers, or take part in an African dance class, a creative movement class, a ballet class, or watch anything from Spanish dancing through to ballet, to gumboot, tap modern or a combination of all of them.



Fig76. Mary Fitzgerald Square.



Fig 77. The Square lighting scheme.

Mary Fitzgerald Square:

Mary Fitzgerald Square lies at the heart of Newtown. Named in honour of the first woman trade unionist who played a key role in the miners' strikes of the 1910's, the Square has been refurbished and upgraded. Work on the Square began in July 2001 and was opened with a special jazz concert on 17 December, 2001. Its completion was a major milestone in the progress of the Blue IQ's inner city projects.

Located opposite the MuseumAfrica and the Market Theatre, the Square is approximately 29 000 square metres and will accommodate roughly 22 000 people. Built at a cost of approximately R14 million the Square provides a place for people to interact, and a range of related functions such as flea markets, exhibitions, concerts and similar open space activities to take place.

The brick-paved square is meant to be a pedestrian area although the western section of the Square is used for parking. The French Government has funded the Square lighting design, schemes being put forward by European lighting designer - Patrick Rimoux. Proposed landmark towers would make use of variable lighting to provide different effects and make the structures visible throughout the day. These towers will also be employed as viewing platforms for productions. Proposals for ground lighting and specially-designed lampposts have also been created. The lighting will be manufactured in South Africa and an electrical engineer contract is under evaluation.

Newtown Music Centre:

The refurbishment of the Centre was one of the infrastructure developments undertaken by Blue IQ. The Centre was renamed the Newtown Music Centre and allows for a 'one-stop shop' for musicians, emerging artists and other industry practitioners who need information, training in live performance skills, studio facilities, rehearsal rooms and resource networking for the South African Music Industry.

The Centre will be run by the Music Industry Development Initiative (MIDI) Trust which was awarded the tender to operate this venue. The MIDI Trust was established in October 1996 to assist in developing the South African music industry.

Talks have been held with Kaya-fm to move into Newtown. MIDI Trust has also moved into the Centre, where it will host events.



Fig 78. Museum Africa.

Museum Africa:

The museum charts the history of our land using expert geology, archeology, anthropology and history to weave together the story of South Africa in an existing creative way. Photographs, paintings, prints, needlework and music help to paint a complete experience for visitors.



Fig 79. The Market Theatre Precinct.



Market Theatre:

The internationally acclaimed African Bank Market Theatre, which played a critical role in the struggle against Apartheid in the 1980's by encouraging debate and challenging ideas, is a vibrant theatre complex, housing three theatres, a theatre bar and art gallery. This is a favourite destination for residents of and visitors to Johannesburg.

An old fish and vegetable market, it still retains the ambience of the market place, and is suffused with theatrical history, from the posters of Athol Fugard plays that had their first performance here, to Grammy and Toni Award musicals like 'Sarafina' and 'Kat and the Kings' that started here.

The Market Theatre Precinct is also home to the Gramadoelas Restaurant, specializing in South African cuisine, and Kippies, a renowned jazz bar which specializes in local jazz and afro fusion, with some top local and international artists dropping in for sessions.



Fig 80. Unveiling of the model of the Nelson Mandela Bridge.

Nelson Mandela Bridge:

The construction of this multi-million rand bridge, named after former President Nelson Mandela, began in September 2001. This 295 metre-long bridge is also part of the redevelopment plan for Newtown. The bridge will be the country's largest cable-stayed bridge. The bridge will provide a link between Braamfontein and Newtown, thereby providing easier access to Newtown and the Johannesburg CBD for people coming from the north and west of the city. The bridge and the associated road works jointly referred to as Braamfontein-Newtown Link will connect Bertha Street in Braamfontein with West Street in Newtown.

A model of the bridge was jointly unveiled by former President Nelson Mandela and Gauteng Premier Mbhazima Shilowa in Newtown on 16 July, 2001. The bridge is said to be completed by March 2003 and to be launched on Nelson Mandela's birthday on 17 July 2003. Once built, the Bridge will become a city landmark with its dramatic design.

Further infrastructure development includes the construction of the M1 Carr Street interchange, a project that will see the creation of an on-ramp and off-ramp linking the M1 South and M1 North to Carr Street. The interchange is scheduled for completion on September 2002. The tender to build the interchange was won by Siawela Joint Venture - a venture between Wilson Bailey Ovcon and Rainbow Construction Company. The South African National Road Agency, which oversees the entire project, appointed Keeve Steyn and Goba Moahloli Joint Venture to professionally manage the entire project.



Fig 81. A news article in Rapport on the Nelson Mandela Bridge, 23 March, 2003.

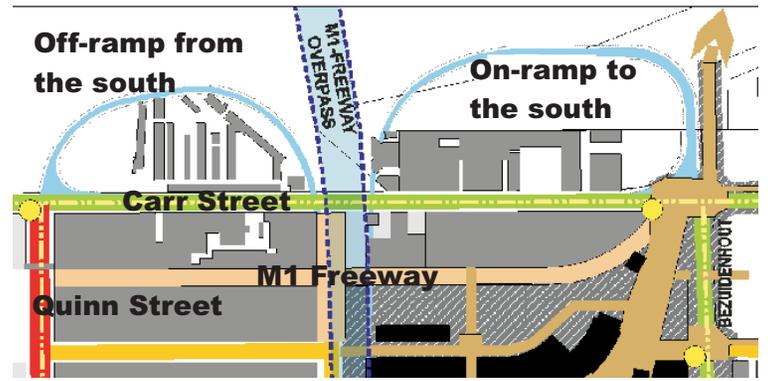


Fig 82. The M1-Carr Street interchange.



Fig83. The Metro Mall during construction.



Fig 84. Colourful murals at the Metro Mall.

Metro Mall:

The metro Mall facility on the corner of West and Bree Street is a transport interchange and trading facility established to serve as a market place for Johannesburg's informal and formal traders as well as a rank for taxis and busses carrying commuters into and out of Johannesburg. The massive structure has three blocks: the first one is for subsidised housing. The second block consists of taxi ranks, hawkers' stalls, shops and fruit and vegetable market. The final block has a taxi rank, a bus terminus, hawkers' stalls and space for retailers and wholesalers.

The development serves the needs of the 150 000 taxi and bus commuters passing through Johannesburg. It is built to accommodate 2250 taxis and 100 busses at any given time. The Mall is a trading hub for about 450 informal traders, who are trading side by side with formal retailers in a healthy and competitive environment. To diversify the products sold at the market, preference is given to people who sell unusual goods. Fast food outlets are a big feature in the Mall. The project is worth R140 million and is one of the Blue IQ infrastructure projects. The formal retail space comprises a total space of 2832 square metre of which 2000 has already been allocated.

The Mall is designed and maintained in such a way that the safety and security of users is paramount. The Mall has facilities like closed circuit cameras and security personnel on guard throughout the day. It also has fire protection equipment, storage facilities for informal traders, electricity, water, ablution facilities, preparation areas, manufacturing space for craftsmen and lock-up units for goods.



Fig 85. The new housing development.

New Housing Development:

In the next three years 2200 housing units will be built in Newtown. The developments will be targeted to mixed income markets, thereby encouraging diversity and sustainability. Some 1050 of the total number of housing units are to be subsidised, while the remainder will be developed to target earners within the middle-income bracket.