Identity.Orientation.Interface

The adaptive reuse of the NZASM Building in Pretoria, South Africa. Working towards an architecture which aids the orientation of the user and serves to further define the identity of the city.
This thesis seeks to explore the potential of existing built fabric to change in order to meet the needs of its users. Central to this is the realisation that cities are highly dynamic environments. Momentarily appropriate, static solutions are not acceptable. This means not only adapting an existing building to fit a particular need at a particular time, but to ensure that it lends itself to future change.

The building chosen for this study is the NZASM building, currently owned by Transnet, on the corner of Paul Kruger and Minnaar Streets. It was completed in 1963 on the property of the old NZASM headquarters and now serves mainly to house offices for Transnet. The building was between sixty and seventy percent occupied at the time of writing this thesis.

The client is a fictional coalition of NGOs. The desired program is what will be referred to as an NGO Hub. The NGO Hub is a shared office and public interface facility. The intent is that these NGOs share resources and act within their specialties to support one another on collaborative projects. They must also be free to pursue their own projects and retain individual identity.

The thesis also assumes that a scheme by Mary-Anne Da Costa, "Surfaces and Services - A Public Space for Communication, Information + Discussion" (2007), for Pretorius Square is feasible and that the two projects will occur simultaneously.

The programmatic aim is to create a true civic square in Pretoria that will also serve as an example to other cities.

This thesis will also work towards generating and reinforcing identity within the city. The reason for doing so is that we orientate ourselves by our environment. The clearer our idea of what a building/district/city is, the clearer our perception of what our relationship to it is and the better oriented we feel.

At the same time, members of the public have a central location to visit where they can find information and the NGO best capable of serving their needs. This will lead to a far more efficient operational model for these organisations.

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With a big thanks to the gentlemen above for their guidance and patience.

Identity, Orientation, Interface
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