

Introduction Chapter 1

"This is the age of the shrug... Our civilization could well die of indifference within it before succumbing to external attack"

F. Herbert, 1967: 53

Background + Context

The apartheid based model for city development formed during the early nineteenth hundreds was based on control and separated cultures by locating 'white' suburbs around the central business district surrounded by buffer zones while placing townships on the outskirts of the city perimeter (Osman & Hinde, 2005: [59]). The buffer zones generally consisted of industrial areas and eventually resulted in degeneration and discontinuity within

the city grid. This mode of city planning promoted a fragmented environment, unpractical for required urban densities and integration. The result is a South African context where cities are highly disconnected, developments are low in density and segregation is promoted (Osman & Hinde, 2005: [59]).

Although pass laws and the Groups Areas Act which designated residential areas

for different ethnicities was scrapped respectively in 1986 and 1991, South African cities, after the transition to democracy in 1994, are still characterised by racial segregation (Morris, 1998: 763). According to Mueller-Friedman (2007: 37) closer inspection of societal groupings and spatial layouts in Post-Apartheid cities such as Pretoria, Johannesburg and Windhoek reveal that Apartheid ideologies have not sufficiently been overcome and that the city continues to

be segregated along racial and societal lines years after the end of Apartheid.

Post-Apartheid urban strategies should aim at overcoming social division and spatial segregation produced during the Apartheid era (Mueller-Friedman, 2007: 33). Integrated public space that promotes gathering, community formation and a homogenous urban environment needs to be provided within Pretoria CBD.



Fig. 1.1: Women resisting apartheid on 9 August 1956



Fig. 1.2: Continuing segregation two weeks after blacks were allowed to travel on 'whites-only' buses on February, 1990

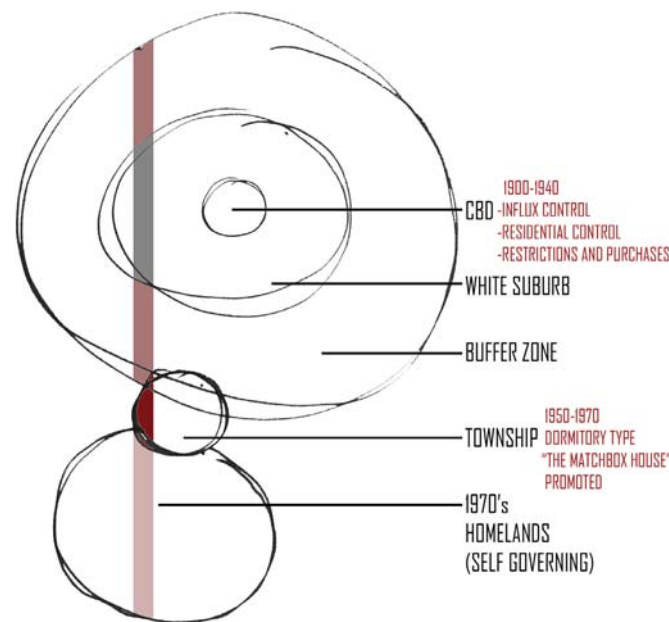


Fig. 1.3: Apartheid Space Planning

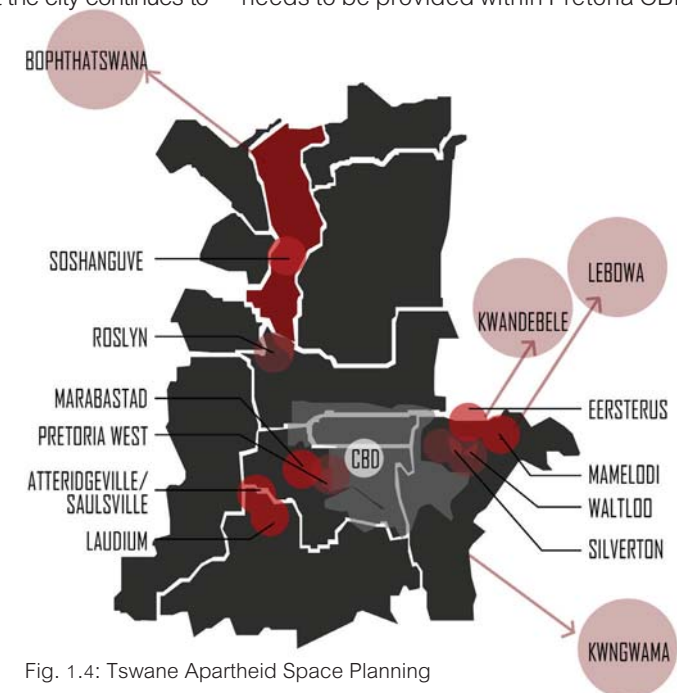


Fig. 1.4: Tswane Apartheid Space Planning

Choice of Site

The site selected for the proposed scheme is on the Eastern corner of Scheiding and Paul Kruger Street within Pretoria CBD directly opposite Pretoria Station. The site is located close to a major traffic node that contains the Metro Train station, Gautrain Station, proposed BRT route, bus stops (both long distance and local) as well as taxi ranks. Due to the nature of the traffic node the area is characterized by high levels of pedestrian movement.

The area chosen for the study is situated along an important axis since Paul Kruger Street forms the original link between Pretoria Station - where the main public transport routes in and out of the city are located - and Church Square. From Church Square, the Paul Kruger axis continues and forms a direct link to the Pretoria Zoological Gardens.

The site forms part of an important gateway to the city which is currently completely neglected.

An initial analysis as to current uses around the site has indicated that in addition to expected uses such as relaxing around Station Square and movement to shopping and travel destinations the area serves as a waiting space. There is however no adequate shelter provided for this with the weather posing a continuous problem for pedestrian use.

Additionally, the site demands sensitivity with regards to historical consideration as direct views to heritage sites such as Pretoria Station, Station Square and the Victoria Hotel are possible.

The site requirements can be summarized as follows:

- Potential gateway formation,
- Provision of functional resting and waiting space,
- Sensitivity with regards to context and heritage sites.

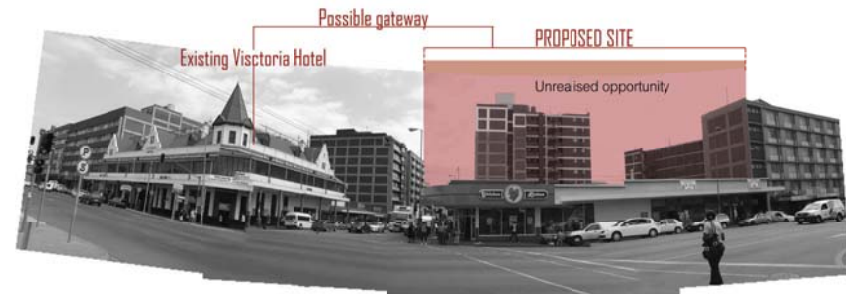
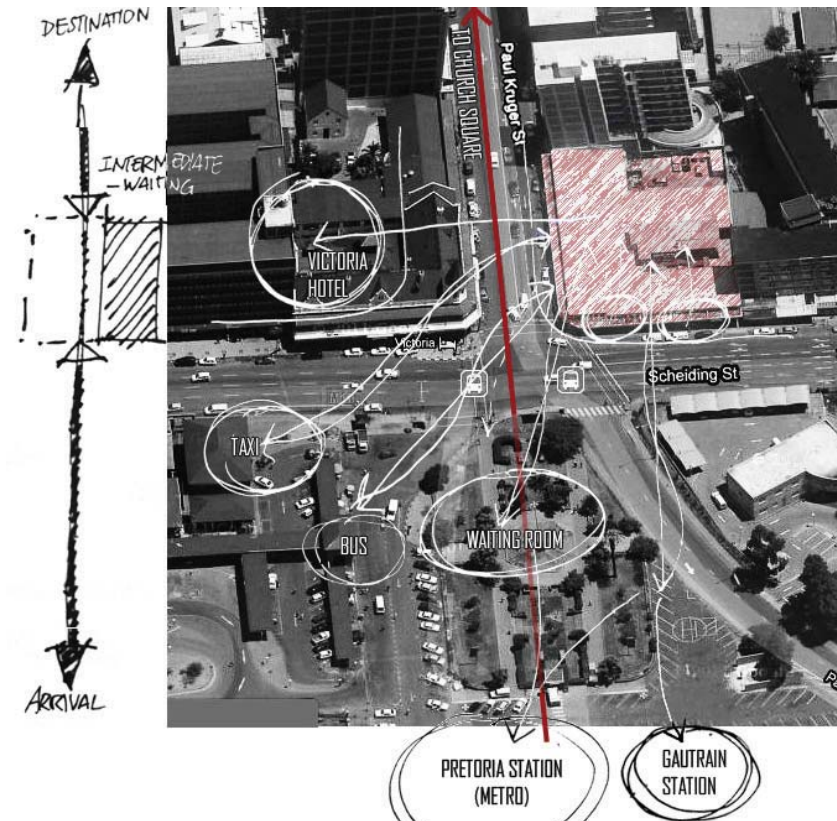


Figure 1.5: Panorama of threshold



Figm 1.6: Locality Map illustrating main transportation nodes, site relation to Victoria Hotel and the only current available urban waiting room.



Importance of the Project

The built environment has a central role in the production and facilitation of social life and can directly influence the success of social cohesion. In Pretoria however, a lack of cultural integration and limited social cohesion is evident (Mueller-Friedman, 2007: 37).

The document aims to investigate social cohesion, formation of space and what enables people to successfully interact within their environment by researching theories with social design applications and relevant precedents. The research will be distilled into principles on how to encourage social cohesion and community formation with specific application to design in architecture.

These principles in turn can be applied to other projects thereby further encouraging social cohesion throughout the urban environment and is deemed important within an environment characterized by segregation.

Aim

The study aims to identify ways in which architecture can promote social cohesion and help overcome lingering apartheid ideologies. The study further aims to derive specific principles that can be applied to a design irrespective of building program.

Design Problem

Although Pretoria is a Post-Apartheid city, it would appear that the urban environment within Pretoria remains largely segregated (Mueller-Friedman, 2007: 37). This segregation includes groups of different cultures, ethnicities, ages and physical capabilities. Segregation within South African cities contributes to inhospitable environments and non interactive public space. As stated by Morris (1998: 773) the Post-Apartheid city remains an inhospitable environment.

Numerous articles, books and theories state the power of architecture to influence people's way of thinking as well as the ability of architecture to alter behavioural patterns (Mueller-Friedman, 2007: 37; White, 1987: 137;

Cave, 1998:1). It can then be said, that architecture and the built environment have the ability to encourage social interaction and reduce segregation within South African cities. It is however, never clearly stated how this can be achieved.

During this dissertation, research will be done in order to determine the role that architecture plays in the formation of social cohesion and how it can contribute to the advancement of an integrated society. Additional research will aim to determine how space is formed in the physical setting as well as the cultural mind and what determines how people respond to and perceive space.



Research Methodology

During the course of the study, specific attention has been given to site, context and history to ensure that the program is applicable to its context and environment on a physical and metaphysical level.

In an attempt to resolve the problem identified in the dissertation, a matrix has been created illustrating major theories that have been influential during previous years of study. Applicable theories have been identified and further

investigated in order to determine the role of social design in architecture and the role of socially conscious architecture with regards to a segregated society.

Research has been conducted through literature reviews and precedent studies. Projects selected for the precedent studies are limited to Pretoria CBD in order to ensure contextual applicability of the precedents.

To gain information a mixed method has been used, combining both qualitative and quantitative aspects. Subjective perceptions of the city have been collected through informal interviews on site.

Qualitative information produced through questioning regular users of the area identified for the study, has then been used to interpret the applicability of factual, quantifiable aspects generated through research and literature reviews.

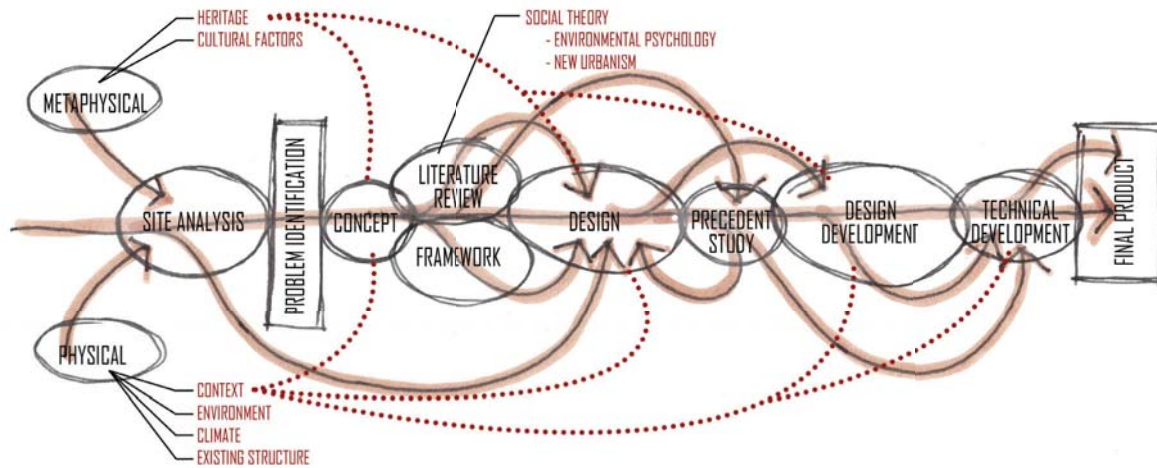


Fig. 1.7: Design process followed during the project

Assumptions + Delimitations

The selected site contains an existing building which does not fit or contribute to the context in which it is located. It is proposed that the current single storey building be demolished as it can be assumed that the existing structure cannot support the addition of five to six storeys as is needed within the environment.

It is accepted that the design cannot aim to reduce segregation within every sub-community housed within the city of Pretoria. The design is therefore

focused on cultural integration.

The Gautrain Pretoria Station has recently been completed and is situated adjacent to the existing Pretoria Station close to the chosen site.

It is assumed that all predicted demographics in the area due to the new station are correct and that proposed improvements to public transport and distribution routes are to be followed as indicated on Gautrain plans.



Fig. 1.8: Existing building on site

