

Chapter 3 - Research methodology

Research Methodology

The challenge raised in the introduction (Chapter 1: p. 1-2) focuses around principles of recovering lost space and finding an inclusive solution to this specific site that links with the proposed urban development strategy of the river and city.

The Apies River and adjacent sites were identified as areas with the most potential and largest influence for uplifting the image of the city. Lost spaces, under used and deteriorating spaces, provide opportunities to reshape an urban centre so that it attracts people back to the city core (Trancik, 1986: 2).

In 1909, due to heavy rains, the river burst its banks and as a result many lives and live stock were lost, since then, the river has been a controversial area of study, which saw the canalization of the river between 1909 and 1930 (see Context study, chapter 7.2: 43). As a result of the Apies and Walkerspruit being canalized a piece of the city's memory and experience has been lost, cultural and social networks stripped away leaving a scar in the landscape that leaves the city and spaces around the rivers (Apies and Walkerspruit) fragmented. The rivers have the potential to become part of the cities every day experience - a place people can visit with mixed recreational and economic potential.

"Lively and thriving cities are cities which are rich in experiences and have public spaces that allow people to interact with one another" (Gehl, 1987 :23), and since people are attracted toward cities for these opportunities, they should be accessible to all who use the city.

The theories used to substantiate the importance of open space are:

1. Recovering lost space - the literature on lost space focuses on principles and theories by authors like Trancik who attempt to achieve goals of integrated design. This is achieved by making use of the built form to recreate, reconnect and revive lost space. These principles include bridging, framing, fusion and interacting between the public outdoor and public indoor space. Other theories will delve into zoning, urban renewal, landscape and landscape urbanism.

2. Phenomenology - theories on memory, heritage and genius loci. In particular, Heidegger's theories (Nesbitt, 2005: 411-426), on the relationship between the built form and the landscape to achieve meaning were examined. One becomes meaningless without the other.

The urban investigation will assist in understanding the needs of the people and the needs of their surrounding. In doing so, the appropriate functions for the sites can be found.

The history of the site will be researched in order to understand the different layers that make up the urban fabric of the city. De-constructing these layers will allow for meaningful interpretation of the information into new design opportunities for the envisioned future of the city of Pretoria.