INTRODUCTION

chapter 1

In an increasingly globalised world, the formation of cities is drastically influenced by economic (Sassen 2006), social and political conditions (Hildebrandt 2006). Within this dynamic, cities' perimeters are subject to continuous change (figure 1a), either expanding or withdrawing resulting in vacant or degraded structures (figure 1b). Fewer people are commuting to the city and urban sprawl further contaminates it, the urban body is 'being eaten from inside', resulting in dead empty pockets (Mitchell 2001) (figure 1b).
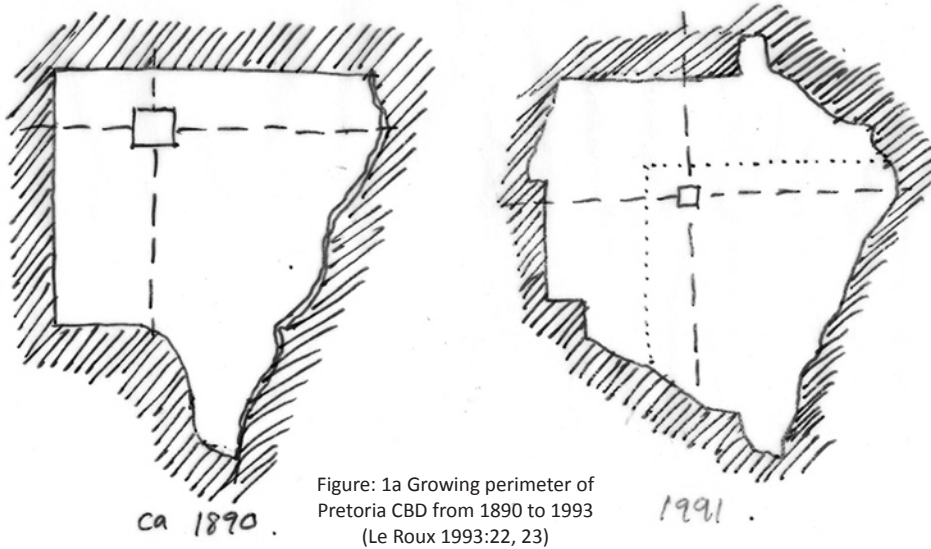

Figure: 1a Growing perimeter of Pretoria CBD from 1890 to 1993 (Le Roux 1993:22, 23)
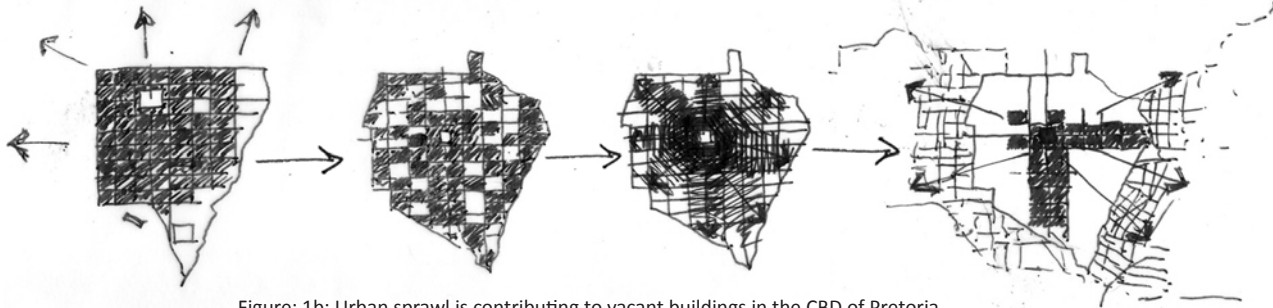

Figure: 1b: Urban sprawl is contributing to vacant buildings in the CBD of Pretoria

These complex globalised cities have a rich diversity in life styles (social interaction), cultures and economic challenges which can be experienced through habits of everyday life - with the latter being the most acute form (Schoonraad 2000).

Inequalities in cities caused by these economic challenges are visible in social and spatial differences (Sassen 2006). Developing countries such as South Africa are not spending finances to develop and rectify these social environments. All new urban schemes such as Re Kgabisa Tshwane 2006 (City of Tshwane 2006) and The City of Tshwane Spatial Development Strategy 2010 and beyond (City of Tshwane 2007) propose radical interventions to stop urban degradation. This involves enormous financial impute and densification of the city fabric towards a new **Utopia**[1]. However, what is not taken into consideration is the alterations to existing built fabric (Scott 2008:1) in order to improve degraded social environments and hence social influx. Aspects such as the implementation of responsive interior spaces that include the adaptation of space to assist change in programme and the improvement of the interface between private and public space can enhance social and as result economic development (Lipman 2006; Jacobs 1962:44;65-84).

1 New Utopia: The world map does not provide for a space that includes Utopia, nor does it take notice of it. Humanity is always seeking for something greater. When the previous decade's Utopia is reached, yet again they set sail in search for a better country (Coleman 2005:iix). It would be a less intrusive search to find or create an adaptable country, changing its colours with the change of each social regime.

Shifting social conditions put a time limit on the social exploitation of such urban environments. Time has very particular temporal qualities which long for space to be able to fluctuate (Hauptmann 2006:214). This encourages diversity and movement which is the determining factor of the boundaries between life and death of a space. Living space is fluctuating space, keeping up with social variables and not a monolingual building designed for a specific programme, not able to adapt to the 'language' of the next occupant (Lambert 1993:53).

It is of great concern to create **living cities**, cities where interior spaces of buildings become an extension of the surrounding social outdoor areas (Gehl 2006:31). In such cities public spaces have a much better chance of working well. Here spaces are penetrable and functional for the ordinary citizens and buildings grow naturally, logically and harmoniously out of its surrounding conditions (Lambert 1993:7).

The implementation of a **temporal intervention**[2], which is interior architecture - further discussed in chapter 4, implies

that the identity of a building can change with society. Giving the building the ability to change its function as needed – form doesn't always follow function, but form rather follows future. This leaves us with the underlying question: **How can interventions at an interior scale improve the influx of society to urban environments and address vacant buildings caused by changes in economic and social environments?**

- **What basic interior architectural principles can be applied to alter the interface of interior and exterior spaces of existing buildings to create living cities?**
- **How can one create interior space that respond to changing conditions and in doing remain valid and improve the social notion of the city?**

2 Temporal intervention: An intervention with minimum impact to the existing environment in which it is placed, and can be removed or altered accordingly.

OUTLINE BRIEF

The aim is to design or transform an existing, mono-functional space into a responsive space that is able to adjust to changing social conditions and the user's specific needs. In other words the thesis will attempt to alter an existing building in the CBD - vacant or partially used - without prescribing a specific programme that implies definite conditions. Specifying a definite programme to the building may lead to the exclusion of other varied programmes in the future. Scott (2008:3) believes that specifying in this way, may lead to future vacancies. In contrast, the idea is rather to keep the "existing occupied and significant" (ibid 2008:xv) by allowing change to occur naturally in a given space.

"...everything physical changes" (Scott 2008:8). Change is inevitable, thus spaces should be designed with transformation in mind. The spatial intervention must be able to change with the progressive social environment. "..function is uncoupled from social progress" and "buildings over time will alter their status with regard to society" (ibid: 14-17). There is a necessity to create a relationship between the 'living' and the built form.

The objective is to address the following areas of concern:
- o interface between built form and human interaction
- o influence of interior architecture on urban conditions which include the interface between private and public spaces
- o interplay between building and everyday use (social environment)

To test the adaptable nature of the building and its spaces, a selection of programmes - ranging from public, semi-public and private - will be placed in the proposed design to illustrate the utilisation and adaptability of the building.

DELIMITATIONS

The following delimitations apply to this study in order to have a product based result:
- o The focus of the study lies within the CBD of Pretoria, with changing boundary lines and scattered vacant or dilapidated buildings.
- o After a field study conducted on 23 February 2010 (see Chapter 3), the assumption was made that the main reason for building vacancies can be traced back to two main factors:
  1. Poor street interface (facade as a boundary and therefore difficult to breach by the pedestrians) and;
  2. The inability to adapt to the needs of new and future occupants.
- o Although references will be made to the profession of architecture, the primary focus is on interior architecture and its contribution to the creation of living cities.
- o In-depth understanding of cultural diversity in South Africa is not of importance to this study, thus there will only be reference to the greater whole of cultural affiliation since it is a factor in determining the nature of the social condition of the city.
- o The design of external social environments will not be fully exploited in the proposal since it does not fall in the realm of Interior Architecture. In order to formulate the interface between interior (typically private) and exterior (typically public) space, the exploration of these public social environments are crucial to propose the necessary adaptation of building facades and sidewalks, and will therefore be included as framework and not detailed design.

RESEARCH STRATEGY

"Always design a thing by considering it in its next larger context – a chair in a room, a room in a house, a house in an environment, an environment in a city plan."

ELIEL SAARINEN (Frederic 2007)

Like any other living creature, a city is a large organism consisting of matter, varying in size. To every leap travelled in scale, there is a corresponding shrink to a dimension travelled within. From urban scale, right down to the interior (molecules and DNA coiling) spaces, it is implicitly linked to each other. For one to be successful, the former should be equally successful. For a thorough understanding of this idea, refer to figure 1c.

THREE SCALES [of research]

The first portion of the dissertation will outline the current problems and possible solutions to **urban** decay.

Street scale represents life between buildings which makes a positive collaboration between the two opposite scales, urban and interior, possible.

Interior scale will be the area of focus, indicating how **moderate scale**[2] interventions, even on individual level, can counter social situations on an urban scale. Take care of the small things and the big things will take care of themselves.

The diagram represents the relationship that has emerged among the different scales.

2. Moderate scale: based on interior dimensions. Interventions of the Interior Architecture profession as defined in chapter on Interior Architecture as mediator
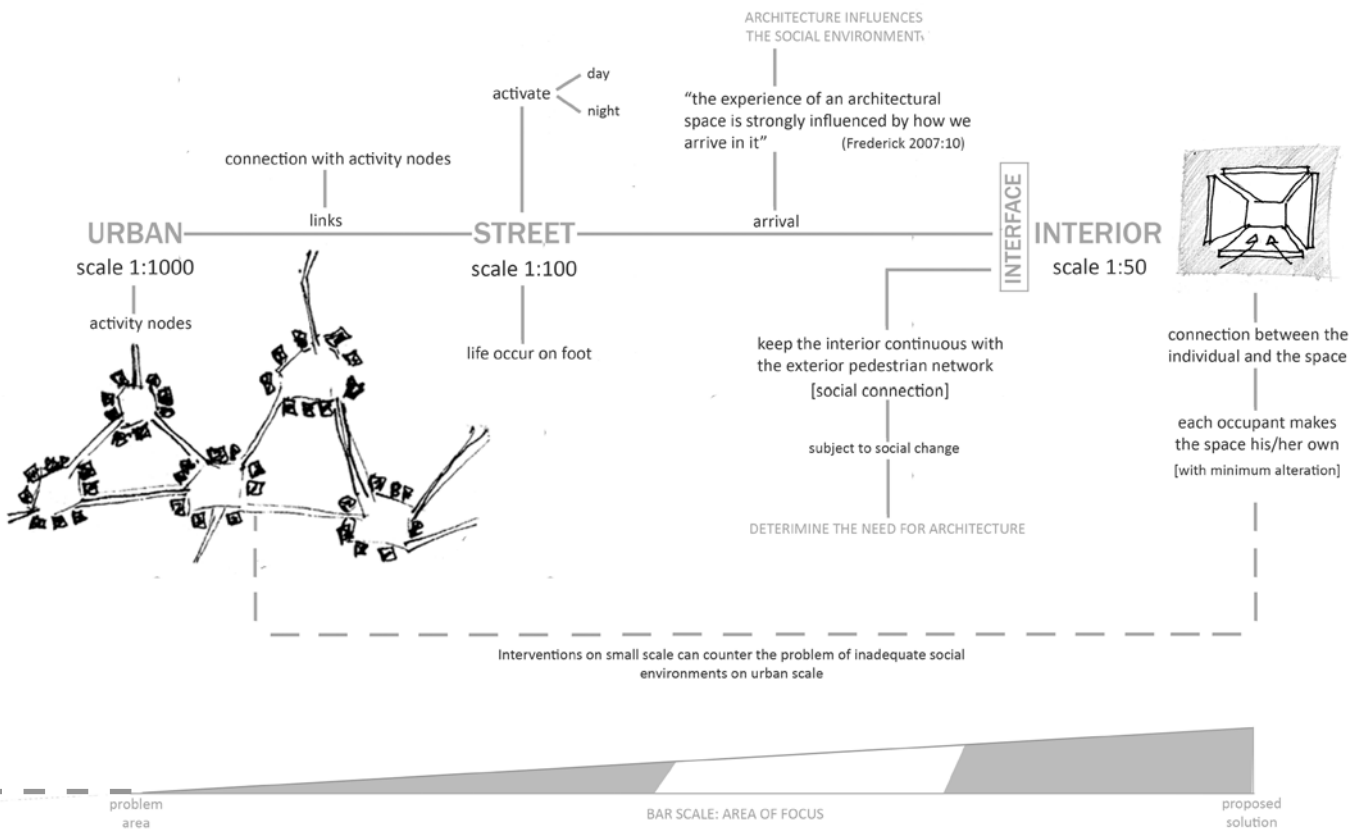
ARCHITECTURE INFLUENCES
THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

activate
— day
— night

"the experience of an architectural
space is strongly influenced by how we
arrive in it"   (Frederick 2007:10)

connection with activity nodes

links   arrival

INTERFACE

URBAN——————————STREET———————————————————INTERIOR

scale 1:1000   scale 1:100   scale 1:50

activity nodes

life occur on foot

keep the interior continuous with
the exterior pedestrian network
[social connection]

connection between the
individual and the space

subject to social change

each occupant makes
the space his/her own
[with minimum alteration]

DETERIMINE THE NEED FOR ARCHITECTURE

Interventions on small scale can counter the problem of inadequate social
environments on urban scale

problem
area

BAR SCALE: AREA OF FOCUS

proposed
solution

Figure 1c: Diagrammatic representation of the different scales of research and how it influence each other

This study follows a liberal approach to research methods, considering multiple approaches and applying the strengths of each respectively.

 "Designers often use mixed-method research approaches without explicitly calling these approaches 'mixed-method'" (Groat & Wang 2002:341). The use of a more integrative approach is a method whereby strengths of multiple methods are used to complement each other and formulate a single objective.

This study challenges the functional design approach of the Modern movement and the Post-modern tool of communication with society to achieve common ground through spatial interpretation and experiences to accommodate the fluctuating function. It calls for logical debate (pragmatic thinking) combined with intuitive creativity.

In exploring the question of how i*nterventions on an interior scale can improve the influx of society to urban environments and address vacant buildings caused by change in social environments*, the method for collecting data includes: using precedents of successful cities which introduced social public spaces; formal analysis of existing buildings and the study of current social behaviours in the environment of the proposed site; personal experience – using subjective feelings and experiences.

According to Moustaka (1990:10) the "Heuristic process [which] is a way of being informed, a way of knowing". Combing the Heuristic process wtih Qualitative research methods would be of great advantage to gather the appropriate information. The Heuristic Research method incorporates creative self-process and self-discoveries, essential in investigations of human experience – the "emphasis is on the investigator's internal frame of reference, self-searching, intuition, and dwelling lies in the heart of heuristic inquiry" (ibid:12). This study incorporates this method along with the Case study approach that implies the study of precedents on paper and in real life context.

This study thus follows multiple research approaches to gather the information necessary to address the problem statements.