

# Chapter 1: Introduction

## 1.1 Background to Study:

Cities exemplify the diversity and energy of human pursuits. They offer services and amenities that are appealing to rural dwellers and continue to expand as an increasing amount of people choose to live in the urban environment. However, along with the benefits of urbanisation there are a number of environmental and social challenges.

Social inequality, racism, and spatial segregation are not only challenges of South African cities but also of cities world-wide. Social marginalisation impacts negatively on a community and is believed to result in behavioural changes. These include: smoking, alcohol abuse and substance abuse amongst others. Research suggests that relative poverty or even relative inequality can significantly inhibit a healthy and productive lifestyle (World Resources 1996-97:48,49).

The segregated spatial formation of South African cities is still markedly apparent. Many areas that were previously demarcated according to race can still be identified as such. Furthermore, previously marginalised and oppressed communities suffer most in terms of socio-economic problems. In addition, the areas are often physically in poor condition and spatial layout does not encourage a sense of community or identity for the immediate residents.

## 1.2 Research Question:

The primary question that this dissertation seeks to answer is:

*How can a landscape architectural intervention invigorate community identity for a neighbourhood that was marginalised and dislocated?*

An example of an urban area where a community experienced severe marginalisation and spatial dislocation is an area known as Marabastad, located in the capital city of South Africa, Pretoria. For this reason Marabastad was chosen as the research area for this dissertation.

Figure 2. Map of South Africa with province of Gauteng highlighted (Author, 2009)

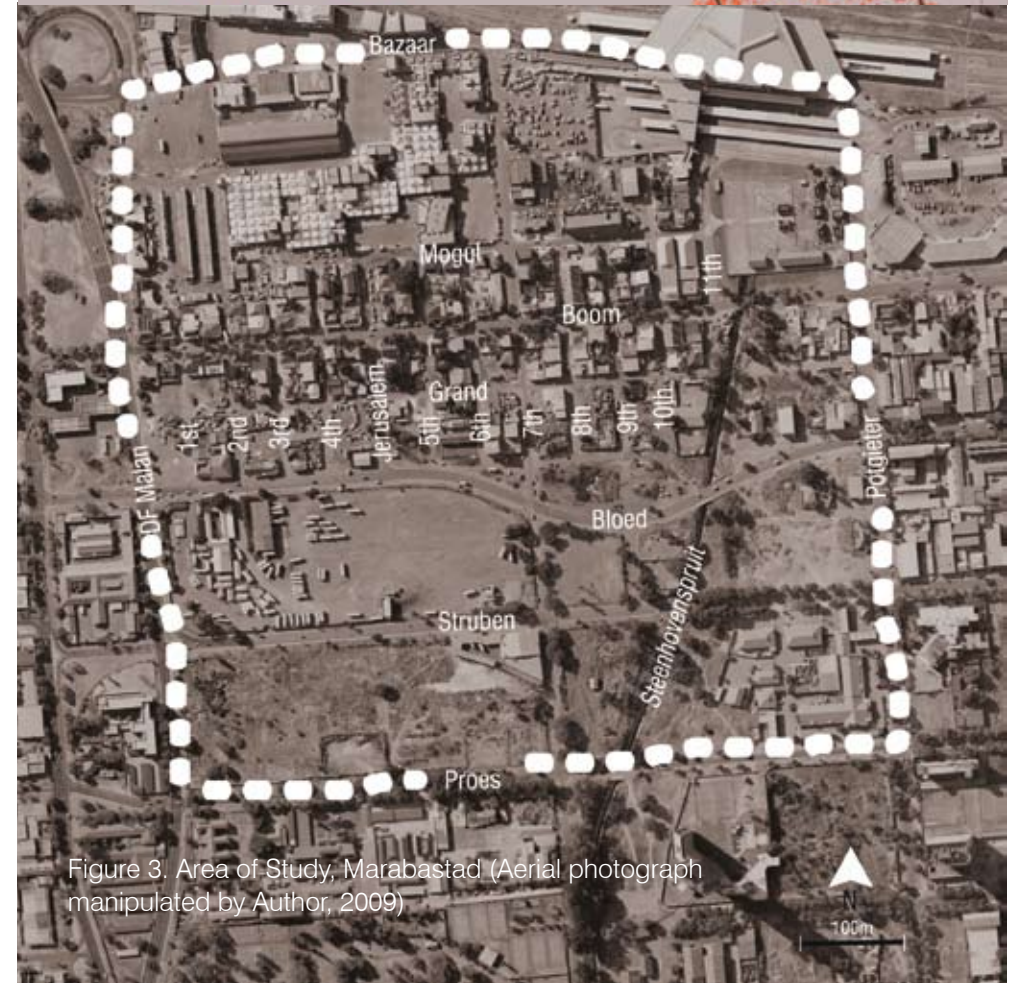


Figure 3. Area of Study, Marabastad (Aerial photograph manipulated by Author, 2009)

### 1.3 Hypothesis:

The hypothesis that guided the research is:

*By means of recalling the past in a physical form the landscape is able to encourage a community identity for a neighbourhood through memory.*

### 1.4 Sub Questions:

The sub questions that guided the research are:

1. How does a community develop a sense of identity?
2. How does community identity relate to landscape?
3. How can a landscape design reveal/recover past meaning?
4. How can a landscape design overlay past memories with new ones?

### 1.5 Research and Design Methodology:

The theoretical research methodology includes Henri Lefebvre's (1991) three dimensions of space (See page 30) as well as the three types of landscapes that hold memory (See page 50) which include: something that is lost, something that remains and something that has changed.

The design methodology used is put forward by Christophe Girot (1999). Girot states that there are four trace concepts that serve as tools for landscape investigation and design. A designer can use these if asked to intervene in a site that he or she is unfamiliar with. The four trace concepts are: **Landing, Grounding, Finding, and Founding**. These four concepts should be carried out sequentially and in the correct order.

**Landing** is the first act of site acknowledgment and describes the specific moment when the designer still does not know anything about the site, but is prepared to begin research and discovery.

**Grounding** is the second step and has to do with orientation and research to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the site. This understanding also comes through repeated visits and an analysis of the area. (pg19-26)

**Finding** entails the act of searching as well as the thing discovered. It is not limited to the discovery of objects, but encompasses the experience of relating ideas, places and themes. Finding usually discloses the evidence to support the initial intuitions about a place. (Pg 46-75)

**Founding**, the final step, is when the three previous steps are synthesized into a new construction. Something new is brought into place that aims to change or redirect the existing site (Girot 1999:59-64). (Pg 76-108)

Marabastad has been investigated according to these four trace concepts. The process was applied in order to create a suitable design proposal (**Founding**) that is sustained by the stated hypothesis.

### 1.6 Research Methods:

A combination of a qualitative and quantitative approach has been used for this research project. Data has been researched by means of the descriptive survey method and the historical method in order to understand the study area (Leedy 1985: 90-92).

The *Descriptive Survey Method* includes taking photographs on site, interviewing people that live or previously lived in the neighbourhood as well as observing the area under investigation. This provided information on conditions found on site.

The *Historical Method* includes accumulating data in the form of written records of past events as well as published literature that is then analysed. This provided an understanding of the past as well as indicated changes that have taken place in the area over time.

Through these two methods data was gathered and assimilated to obtain an understanding of the history of the area and therefore the layers of meaning and memory embedded in the landscape.

### 1.7 Delimitations:

Every individual holds a unique memory and attachment to a certain place. It is impossible to take every individual's memory of Marabastad into account, however, through the research undertaken certain pivotal locations in the area can be identified as points of reference where important events occurred. Time and resources did not allow for 'memory workshops' to be held with previous inhabitants of Marabastad and therefore limited interviews were held. Furthermore, time spent on site was inhibited by concerns of safety after the author was mugged on a site visit.

The author does not reside in the area of study nor has been part of its



history. However, through the research methods mentioned above, the memories of previous inhabitants of Marabastad can be uncovered.

### 1.8 Assumptions:

This dissertation assumes:

1. The framework compiled by the author in conjunction with the architecture students Kuziva Muyaka and Carl Adams for Marabastad will be implemented (See Chapter 4)
2. The City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality will be responsible for the implementation of this landscape design
3. There is currently no residential use in Marabastad. Therefore, it is assumed that it will gain a new community as a result of the residential component of the area proposed by the framework. This will consist of previous landowners who obtained successful land claims as well as people moving into a neighbourhood who may, or may not be, aware of the area's historical significance.
4. The owner of stand 304 with a successful land claim will sell his property to the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality for open space development (see Figure 38 on page 38)

### 1.9 Site Location:

The area of study, namely Marabastad, is located in South Africa, in the city of Pretoria. To the north-west of the old CBD (Figure 4). The boundaries of the study conducted by the author are defined by: Bazaar Street in the North; Potgieter Street to the East; Proes Street to the South and DF Malan Street to the West (Figure 3).

### 1.10 Aims of the study:

Marabastad is an area that has undergone much social injustice. It has a history of restriction and rejection. The aim of the study is to propose a landscape architectural intervention that recovers memories of the past and assists in the creation of new memories that are constructive and inspiring. At the same time the landscape encourages the conception and strengthening of relationships within the community.

The study proposes a system of public spaces for Marabastad that will improve the physical and psychological environment for immediate future residents, as well as for visitors. The proposed intervention aims to create a place that is valued and respected; where people can congregate, socialise,

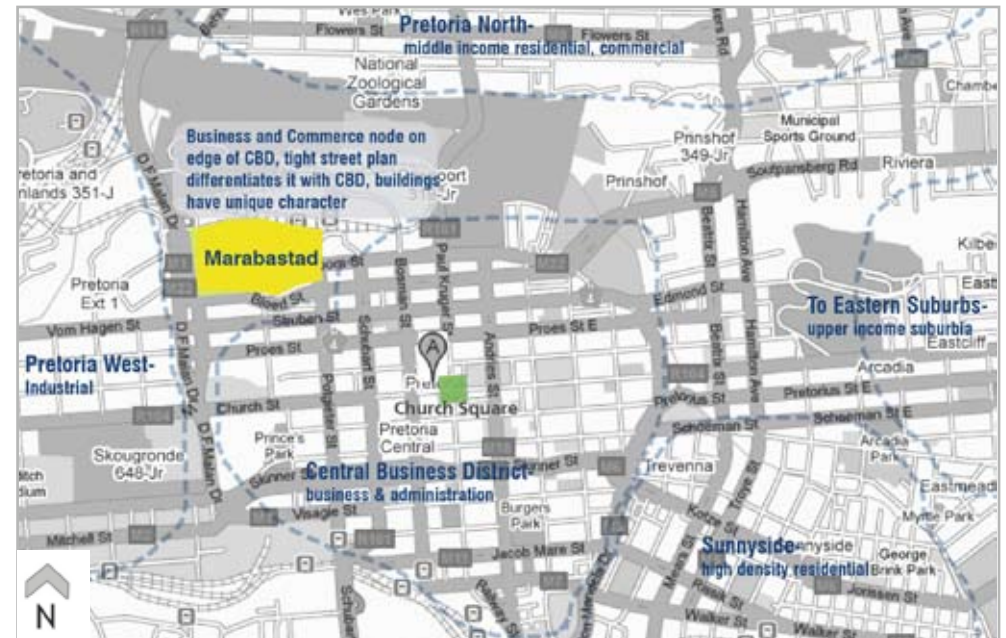


Figure 4. Locality of Area of Study (South African map of Pretoria from GoogleMaps manipulated by Author, 2009)

relax, be entertained and where memories can be made through events and everyday life.

Furthermore, the aim is to connect Marabastad to the inner city of Pretoria as well as to improve connections within Marabastad, which are not ideal because of historic reasons. This will allow the entire area to become unified and improve not only physical relationships but also social ones, to ultimately strengthen the community identity of the area.



# grounding

15 april 2009



Figure 5. Grounding (Author, 2009)



# National & International

# Marabastad

Timeline

1855  
Pretoria established

1912  
Native Land Act

1923  
Native (Urban Areas Act)

1927  
Native Administration Act

1934  
Slum Clearance Act; inhabitants of Schoolplaats removed to New Marabastad

1936  
Natives Trust & Land Act

1939  
Steenhoven Spruit channeled

1947  
Pakistan and India gain independence

1950  
Population Registration Act; Group Areas Act

National Party comes to power  
1948  
Ghandi assassinated

1967  
Freeway proposal planning the total destruction of Marabastad

1997  
Holm Jordaan Architects writes guidelines for implementation of Local Agenda 21 Programme in Marabastad

1867  
Schoolplaats established, Pretoria's first Black Township

1888  
Marabastad proclaimed a Black Township

1892-1893  
Indian Township 'Coolie Location' proclaimed to south of Marabastad

1900  
New Marabastad formed between Marabstad and Coolie Location

1894  
Township proclaimed for Coloured Community 'Cape Location' or 'Cape Boys Location', southern part of Asiatic Bazaar

1906  
Old and New Marabastad basically become one township

1907  
Sewage Farm established on land occupied by 1888 portion of Marabastad

1930  
on 16 December hundreds of Blacks burned their passes in Marabastad, were arrested, charged and sentenced under the harsh pass laws

1940-1950  
Removal of Black population of New Marabastad, the Asiatic Bazaar and Cape Boys Location

1960-1976  
Removal of Indian population of Asiatic Bazaar to Laudium and Claudius

1962-1965  
Removal of Coloured population of the area to Eersterus

Figure 6. Time line (Author, 2009)

historical events that occurred in Marabastad (below line) as well as events that occurred elsewhere (above line) which influenced