



Figure 01. Apple perspective

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VISION Station Precinct- City of Tshwane, 2010

"Streets and their layout reflect the societies that have created them." Moudon 1987:13

BACKGROUND

More than ten years ago, when South Africa held its first democratic elections in 1994 and the adopted of a new constitution, it seemed as if new urban era was to be ushered in.

A legal framework was formulated in the Developmental Facilitation Act (Act 67 of 1995), which outlined decision-making related to land. In essence it was a collection of principles that sought to reverse the spatial characteristics of Apartheid cities (Dewar 2004:39). More than ten years later, little has changed and the dominant spatial features of South African cities continue to be characterised by fragmentation and distorted spatial and social structures (Froise 2006:4). Spaces between buildings continue to act as space-bridges as opposed to space integrators, giving preference to the automobile in typical modernist fashion. Streets were and still are seen as high speed routes serving only to get people from one neighbourhood to another as quickly as possible (Dewar 2004:40). As such, streetscapes have become spaces to merely move through and fail to act as public spaces nor do they contribute to social interaction or community formation.

Modernist planning techniques were compounded by Apartheid principles, which designated urban spaces as exclusively white areas aimed at dictating and restricting the pattern of black settlement in urban environments (Mabin & Smit 1997:198). When black users were present they were seen as temporary inhabitants of urban areas. Today, this has resulted in an inner city that is dysfunctional as a peoples' place (Froise 2006:4).

In the early nineties national laws restricting black economic activities in the inner city were relaxed and South African inner cities saw an influx of black users, formerly banned from these areas, in search of economic opportunities. Some of these new

users, failing to find work, began to trade informally where business was favourable and pavement space available (Dobson, Skinner & Nicholson 2009:45). Street trading and associated practices outside the formal realm are still not recognised as urban in a conventional sense and are seen as counter progressive and contrary to the Modernist ideal of what the city should be i.e. a series of narrowly defined optimal solutions to problems of distributing people, resources and traffic. This has manifested as a series of sterile streets and extensive parks, and a deterioration of urban landscapes largely due to poor urban management, as well as high levels of crime both real and perceived (Wood 2008:60).

Today, South African inner cities are largely characterised by dual environments - formal and informal realms that struggle for equal legitimacy. The informal realm includes thousands who are struggling to establish themselves economically. This realm however is not only about livelihoods; it plays an important role in city making adding to the dynamic character of the city (Dobson & Skinner 2009:85). By celebrating, accommodating and legitimising emergent urban practices outside the formal realm, it is envisaged that one could achieve a democratic street which is described by Francis as:

...one that reflects the history as well as the social and economic diversity of the populace in the city – reflecting justice and economic health. It emphasises the access and needs of many people, provides opportunities for discovery and challenge, and actively encourages user manipulation, appropriation and transformation (Francis 1987:28).

Figure 02. Traders, pedestrians and taxis



Nowadays, we do not expect streets to offer us much more than a place to sit as we wait, a rubbish bin and a means of getting to our destination (Gaventa 2006:49). The concept of democratic streets recognises streets as playing larger social and economic roles in towns and cities, used by different people for a variety of activities. This is contrary to current urban practice that sees streets designed primarily for one group or for a particular function such as walking or driving (Francis 1987:29).

Streets are the most frequently used public spaces in our urban environment. It is necessary to review streets as a site that connects a variety of activities in time as well as in space.

These passages, routes and simple (sidewalks) are where most urban dwellers interact with others: meeting and greeting, flirting, waiting for buses, queuing and chatting on the phone (Gaventa 2006:49).

The quality of an environment can affect our behaviour and responses; moreover, a good quality environment gives a feeling that the local authority cares.

REAL WORLD PROBLEM

Many architects grapple with the optimal design of formal retail space, yet informal retail – street and market trade – has received far less attention (Dobson & Skinner 2009:82).

A look at South Africa's urban environments confirms that:

...despite advances in modern retailing, millions of people still make their living selling goods on the streets. These men and women are an integral part of the urban distribution system. They sell goods in appropriate quantities and at convenient times of day for commuters... There are however very few cases in

South Africa or internationally where street traders have been sensitively integrated into urban design (Dobson & Skinner 2009:82).

To date, South African cities have seen a range of architectural responses that have aimed to acknowledge and legitimise emergent urban activities; these responses range from eradication to inclusion (Dobson & Lees 2008:21). In projects that favour an inclusive approach, there remains an uncertainty of how to intervene effectively as well as how to address the traders that continue to trade on the street pavement.

RESEARCH GOAL

In light of recent local urban renewal projects that aim to accommodate and integrate informal traders into the urban environment by housing them within structures, this study aims to address the gap in the informal trading sector, looking beyond the creation of iconic buildings but at giving form and legitimising the individual who strategically places himself on a high foot traffic route in order to earn a living. This is driven by the perception that built structures and the institutions they represent were probably the source of alienating the traders in the first place. This study addresses stalls from the portable to the fixed on pedestrian paths along the street edge viewing informal trade as a system, composed of multiple subsystems that overlap and connect within a matrix. As such the study will examine how the individual can operate and grow within this system through humanistically conceived interventions that aim to understand the various scales of this activity from the inside out, rather than the outside in. The aim is to exploit existing conditions into a system that evolves and learns from existing site conditions.

“Collective behavior begins to shape the physical environment: people, money, goods, information and other things flow, interact; they create reactions in the skin of the earth and inform the dynamics of the second skin: the City.” Bunschoten, Hoshino & Binet 2001:28

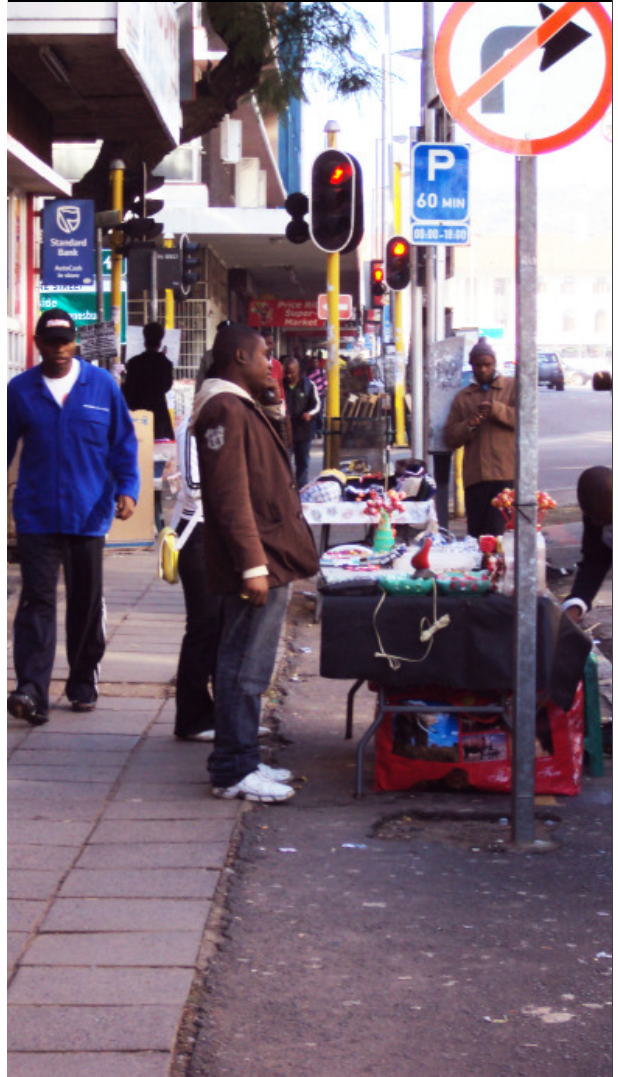


Figure 03. Trader selling wares on Paul Kruger Street

SITE ABSTRACT

Given that planning action must be shaped by the context in which it occurs, the programme of intervention into informal typologies looks specifically at the Pretoria Station Precinct. Driven by the need to address the changing use of the city environment by society given that new needs require environments to adapt in order to cater for its users and enable the city to function at its highest potential.

The site is the Pretoria Station Precinct, which is the culmination of the Re Kgabisa Tshwane framework (City of Tshwane: Not Dated). The choice of site is a response to City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality's (CTMM) vision to make Tshwane a world class African city by creating pleasant working and surrounding environments for government officials working in the inner city. The Re Kgabisa proposal, however, envisages a number of picturesque squares without taking into account that the activities and people 'on the ground' determine the real quality of the urban environment.

In addition, the (CTMM) local council has earmarked the station precinct as an area that will be restricted for informal traders in terms of Section 6A of the Business Act 1991 (Act 71 of 1991) (Mathime, A 2006:1), which suggests that the area will become an exclusive environment that does not represent the populace. This is contrary to what happens naturally at the confluence of different transport modes (in the South African context) – they are a natural market for informal traders and the social dynamics that come with it. Informal trading and transport support one another and simultaneously contribute to infrastructure (Malan 2005:18).

RE KGABISA

TSHWANE OBJECTIVES THAT ARE RELEVANT TO THIS STUDY (CI: NOT DATED).

- ensure that the urban environment is improved, including urban security, public spaces, and accessibility
- Contribute to Inner City renewal and rejuvenation
- Develop the image of Tshwane as an important capital city in Africa
- Contribute to BEE
- Attract private sector investment

- Creating precincts with distinct character

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- Humanistic approach to intervention in the urban realm
- Challenge the traditional role of the interior architect - inquiring whether informal retail that usually occurs outdoors falls within the domain of interior architecture?
- What could be gained from understanding the various scales of this activity from the inside out instead of the outside in?
- Critically investigate current urban practices of informal trade, in order to exploit existing conditions into a system that evolves and learns from existing site conditions
- Intervention is driven by a need to effectively manage the activity at the chosen site, orchestrate action and suggest a new typology that stimulates self-organisation
- Address cleanliness, safety and hygiene

RESEARCH PROBLEMS

How can informal retail along with its associated emergent activities be legitimised in the urban realm in order to create a democratic street that reflects the nature of South African society?

- a. How can current site dynamics become primary and influential as design generators?
- b. How can the informal traders be given a higher profile in the urban environment whilst still reflecting adaptability, diversity and creativity?
- c. How can designers provide infrastructure that is adaptable for different traders whilst still giving them a sense of ownership?



Figure 04. Figure ground map of Pretoria Tshwane CBD locating study area

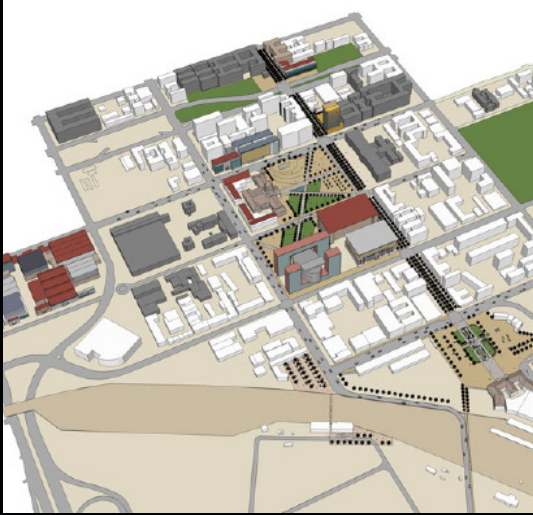


Figure 05. Re Kgabisa vision for the southern portion of the CBD



Figure 06. Re Kgabisa vision for the Museum Park Precinct

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Context – societal needs, environment (author's interpretation derived from the Oxford Concise English dictionary (Fowler & Fowler 1995:288)).

Form – n. the shape or arrangement of parts (Fowler & Fowler 1995:531).

Humanistic – n. an outlook or system of thought concerned with human matters promoting human welfare and relating to human action, it is a humane approach (Fowler & Fowler 1995:661).

Informal Sector – economic enterprises at the bottom end of the continuum ranging from very small to large businesses. Currently it is less stable, more oppressed and fragile and sometime less permanent economic activities which are central to this work (Dewar 1995).

Legitimise – a lawful and proper valid force in the urban environment with a role to play in its healthy functioning (author's interpretation derived from the Oxford Concise English dictionary (Fowler & Fowler 1995:777)).

Urban Market – physical agglomeration of small traders and producers (Dewar 1990:xi).

RESEARCH METHODS

- Passive observation in order to determine:
 - how products are stored, and displayed
 - patterns of use
 - appropriation of space
- Interviews with professionals and organisations that have worked on projects that involve street traders
- React to informal trading policy and streetscape guidelines
- Review projects that have attempted to integrate informal traders into the urban environment
- Study of international precedents that have similar urban conditions
- Literature review

ASSUMPTIONS

Link framework will be implemented:

- The park and ride scheme on the south-west corner of Bosman and Jacob Mare streets will come to fruition, resulting in higher volume pedestrian traffic.
- The inception of the Gautrain (Gautrain Rapid Rail Link 2007) and BRT (Bus Rapid Transport) station (Appel 2008) will generate greater pedestrian traffic in the precinct throughout the day.

The Gautrain is a high-technology rapid rail network that will run between Johannesburg and Tshwane. It is envisaged that by 2015 there will be 24 trains that will travel in both directions. At this time, with a population of 14,6million, Gauteng will be the 14th largest urban region in the world. The Gautrain will be critical in supporting and enabling the economy of the province to grow (Gautrain Rapid Rail Link 2007).

The BRT, Bus Rapid Transport System is seen as a major upgrade of the transport system that will also aid in reducing congestion on the roads whilst creating a “fast, efficient, safe, affordable and accessible” mode of transport within Gauteng, according to Johannesburg Mayor Amos Masondo (Appel 2008), speaking at the launch of the prototype station in Johannesburg in 2008. It is also envisaged that at its peak, the buses will run for 18 hours a day from 5am to midnight daily. Thus making the BRT system crucial for South Africa’s transport system as a whole.

To date, since the beginning of construction of the Gautrain stations and rail system in 2006, many job opportunities have been created. New businesses, shopping malls and residential blocks have been established along Gautrain routes and in proximity to Gautrain stations (Gautrain Rapid Rail Link 2007). It goes without saying that the areas around Gautrain stations will be favourable for large and small businesses alike.

The precincts and areas surrounding transport interchanges should enable business opportunities for both established formalised businesses and small traders alike - representing all

Link is a group framework that addressed the linking of Salvokop, South of the city and the Station Precinct

members of the population, including those who are usually marginalised and neglected.

DELIMITATIONS

- As much as the study hopes to learn from the existing conditions and find a viable solution it has been noted from case studies conducted - that a project of this nature relies heavily on extensive negotiations and workshops involving various stakeholders, actors and agents. A study of that nature will require resources, funds and time that a one-year study for fulfilment of a MInt(Prof) study will not be able to realise. As such, this study aims to suggest a solution that responds to more than the pragmatics of street traders, but to the qualitative aspects which have not yet been explored in order to give form to informal trade.
- In order to maintain and understand the intrinsic nature of street trade, the study will rely heavily on passive observation in order to determine the needs of traders.



Figure 07. Panoramic view of the Station Precinct

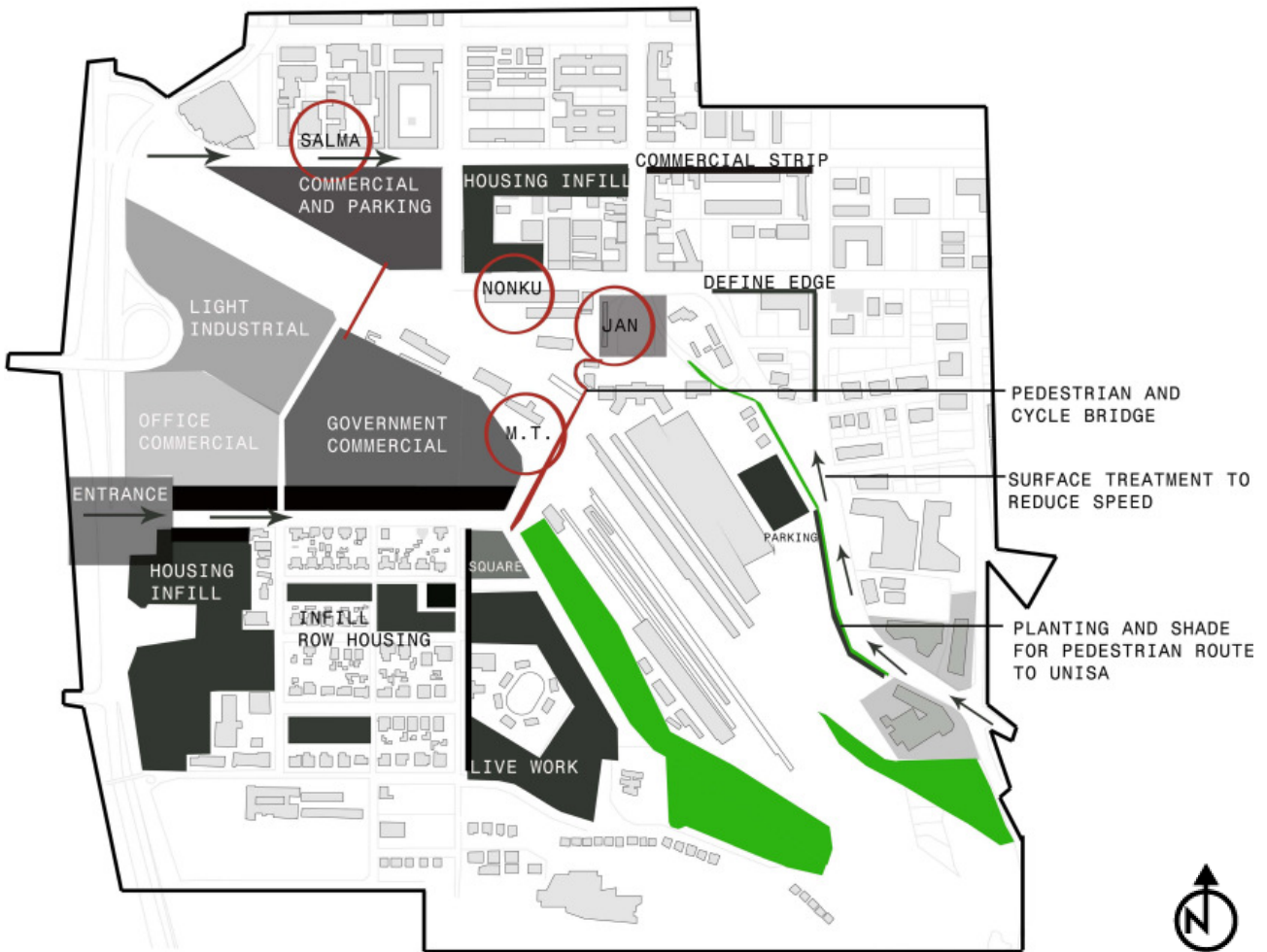


Figure 08. LINK framework proposal

