

Events as the turning point

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## Concept 2: Events: the Turning Point

The hierarchical cause and effect relationship between form and function is one of the certainties of architectural thinking (Tschumi 1997:18). This relationship leads to the reassuring idea of community life that tells us that we live in houses designed to answer our needs, or in cities planned as machines to live in.

Tschumi notes the 'impossibility of returning to the 18<sup>th</sup> century village' set up by the architectural revivalists and conservationists as the answer to the confusions and conflicts experienced by society in the modern world which they have created but cannot come to terms with (Papadakis 1997:9). In South Africa we have numerous examples of themed golf estates, security villages, casino's and shopping centres that are designed to look like 18<sup>th</sup> Century villages that foster ideal communities where social values and respect for one another will replace differences, conflict and urban interchange. How can these resemblance villages of our (unknown) ancestors be a model for generations to come?

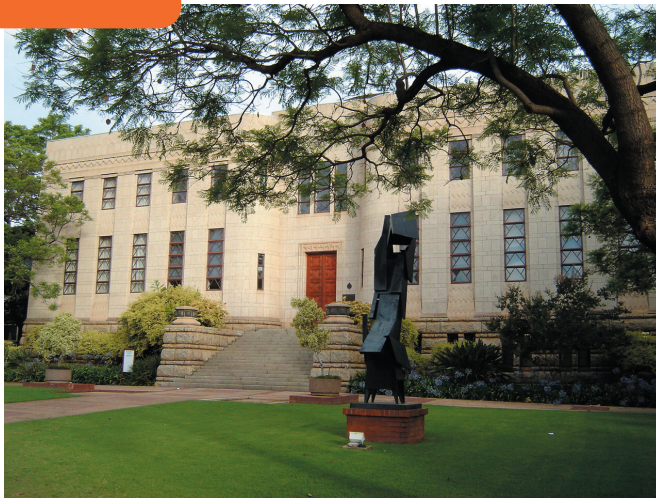
In contradiction to this *geborgenheit*, Tschumi (1997:18) argues that the real pleasures of architecture lie in its unexpected combinations of terms, and the reality of contemporary urban life in its most stimulating, unsettling directions.

According to Tschumi, architecture is the combination of spaces, events and movements without any hierarchy or precedents among these concepts. The very heterogeneity of architecture – space, action, movement – makes it into

an event, the place of shock, or the place of the invention of ourselves. The terms 'event' and 'movement' as used by Tschumi originates from Situationist discourse and suggest 'event' and 'movement' in action but also in thought. According to Michael Foucault the event is the moment of questioning the setting within which a drama may take place – occasioning the change or possibility of another different setting (Tschumi 1997: 18). For example: viewing art (function), in the old Merensky Library now the Eduardo Villa Museum (form), is not quite equivalent to reading or dining in it. This unlikely combination of events and space challenges both the function and the space. Here all hierarchical relationships between form and function cease to exist. Peter Eisenman also challenges the notion of "form follows function": 'the role of art is to alienate and dislocate man from his environment so that he is jolted into seeing what it is again' (Papadakis 1997: 9). Such confrontation parallels the surrealist meeting of unpredicted objects.

The spatialisation that goes with the event is just as important, to quote Foucault: 'Here are events in the space we construct ourselves to inhabit: heterotopia' (Tschumi 1997:19). The use of the term heterotopia derives from Demitri Porphyrios's study of Aalto wherein he defined heterotopia as a condition in which cohesion is achieved 'through adjacency, where edges touch, where the fringes intermingle, where the extremities of the one denote the beginning of the other, there is a hinge between two things and an unstable unity appears' (Frampton 1998:52-53).

2.1 The Eduardo Villa Museum, Pretoria. Previously the Old Merensky Library of the University of Pretoria



**Events as the turning point** Events are seen as the turning point: neither the beginning nor the end. Tschumi suggests that the future of architecture lies in such events. He further predicts that, due to the pressure of ever-rising land prices, the non-causal relationships between form and function as well as space and action, programmes of the future will host various events such as an airport, amusement park, athletic facilities and cinemas simultaneously. At Melrose Arch in Johannesburg we find multiple programmes scattered throughout buildings: where offices blocks contain health clubs, night clubs, shops and museums. Common or predictable programmes can generate uncommon or unpredictable events. The hidden potential or contradictions in a program, relating to a particular spatial configuration, can be exposed to create conditions for unexpected events to occur. Events aim to reinstate the conflict of urban interchange. Through events, the conflict of urban interchange is reinstated.

Contemporary urban life in its most stimulating, unsettling directions is achieved through this vibrant unexpected combination of terms that cannot be achieved by imitating the past and 18<sup>th</sup> century villages or by simply commenting on the various dislocations and uncertainties of our contemporary society.

*'You cannot design a new definition of cities and architecture, but might be able to design the conditions that will make it possible for this non-hierarchical, non-traditional society to happen. By an understanding of the nature of our contemporary circumstances and the media processes involved, architects have the possibility of establishing conditions that will create a new city and new relationship between spaces and events.'*

(Tschumi 1997:19)

**Events:** By definition it is the place of the combination of differences, where events occur as an indeterminate set of unexpected outcomes. The event is the place where the rethinking and reformulation of the different elements of architecture may lead to their solution.

### Events The Event City

The focus of this chapter is the 2010 event city, the City of Tshwane. Tschumi claims that 'there is no architecture without the city, no city without architecture' (Tschumi 1994: 12). The subject of this chapter is the urban effect and aims to determine strategies for the Rainbow Junction precinct and the project concerned. The purpose is to create the conditions that will make a better city, with new relationships between spaces and events surrounding the 2010 Soccer World Cup developments. The underlying urban principles and dilemmas of the city was explored prior to the design of the building. Since 'all architecture is linked to our urban condition' (Tschumi 1994: 11), the exploration aims to inform the design.

Within the City of Tshwane, we can identify dilemmas that lead to urban decline and inform our decisions regarding the design of the precincts as well as the buildings. Problems facing the city include the layout of the city, the vehicle and signage, the advancement of the private persona and mediation through advertising.

THE PHYSICAL LAYOUT OF THE CITY As mentioned in the context study. [Chapter 1, p 1.7]

### THE VEHICLE AND SIGNAGE The vehicle

The design of roads in the City of Tshwane disregards the needs of pedestrians and does not contribute to the urban built form. Most people live far from where they work and have to spend significant proportions of their income on transport. Trancik (1998:5) mentions that lost space occur as a result of

dependency on motor vehicles and a lack of use of transport systems. We find that the dominant open spaces consist of highways, thoroughfares and parking lots in stead of public space.

The most recent retail centres in the city are designed with the motorist in mind rather than the pedestrian; they sacrifice public space for parking space. The majority of the centres have the same unsurprising linear configuration with the shops facing a sea of parking and the road. The signage of the centres dominates and clutters the buildings, as it is designed to be read by passing motorists.

Louis Kahn had an enormous concern for the demands made on the city by the dynamics of the vehicle. This is clear from the way he conceives of the automobile in relation to the city. He writes in 1961:

'The circumstantial demands of the car, of parking and so forth, will eat away all the spaces that exist now and pretty soon you have no identifying traces of what I call loyalties – the landmarks. Remember, when you think of the city, you think immediately of certain places, which identify the city as

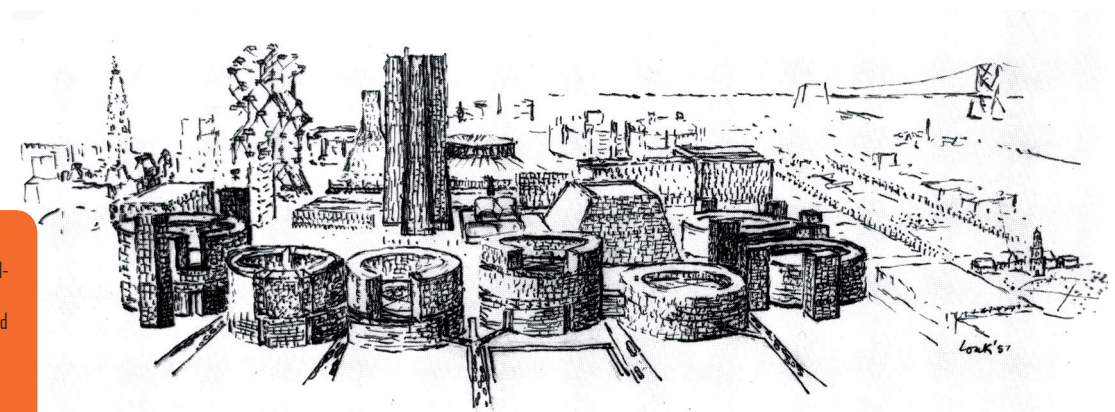
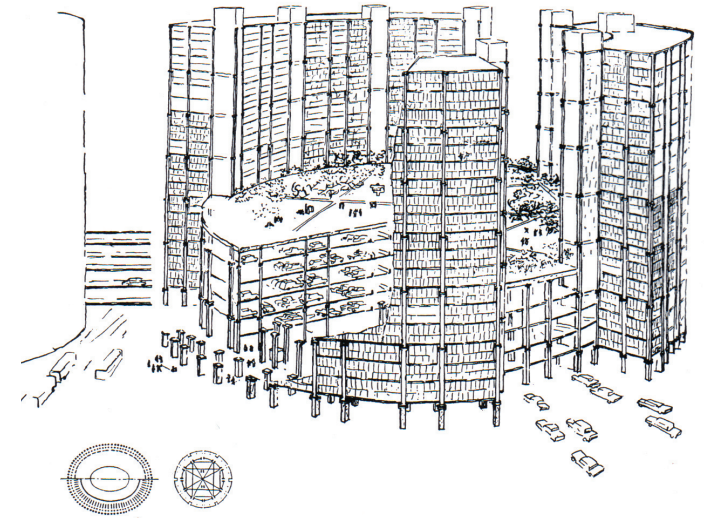
Shopping centres  
and signage

you enter it. If they're gone, your feeling for the city is lost and gone...if because of the demands of the motorcar, we stiffen and harden the city (omitting water, omitting the green world) the city will be destroyed. Therefore the car, because of its destructive value, must start us rethinking the city in terms of the green world, in terms of the world of water, and of air, and of locomotion.' (Frampton 1996:223)

Kahn went further to completely eliminate the car from the city. This can be seen in the designs of cylindrical parking towers, Philadelphia, by which the city centre was to have been surrounded (Frampton 1996:223).

'The tower entrances and interchanges, wound up parking terminals, suggest a new stimulus to unity in urban architecture, one which would find expression from the order of movement. The location and design of these entrances are an integral part of the design of the expressway... At night we know these towers by their illumination in colour. These yellow, red, green, blue and white towers tell us the sector we are

entering, and along the approach, light is used to see by and give us direction in ideas of lighting in rhythm with our speed. From these entrances a system of canals or interior streets feed the various activities of center, of city life.' Louis Kahn



2.2 Right: Proposal for Parking Towers Surrounding the City Centre of Philadelphia. Designed and Sketched by Louis Kahn

2.3 Top Right: A Single Parking Tower. Sketched by Louis Kahn

**PRIVATE / PUBLIC SPACE** The breakdown of a conventional notion of community life leads to the individual's loss of a clear concept of his public role (Mayne 1997:21). Present-day city life revolves around organised social lives, in private spaces, in comforting environments that are fenced in. Technology has advanced so much that by the use of internet shopping we do not even have to leave the house. To paraphrase Trancik (1986:10-11), the city goer is forced to create a social life on a personal, controllable territory instead of engaging in communal existence centred on the street.

The result of this privatisation is that the individual's public role and personal attitudes towards the utilisation of urban space have dramatically been altered. The loss of a collective meaning of public space has led to the disregarding of any rules for linking spaces through the design of outdoor space. The irony is that enclosures no longer protects communities, it destroys them. At the same time that the density of the suburbs begin to exceed that of the inner cities- the enclosures now protect the periphery and not the centres.

**ADVERTISING AND TELEVISION** Peter Eisenman (Papadakis 1997:9) describes our current culture as a mediated culture:

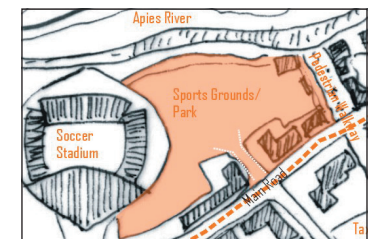
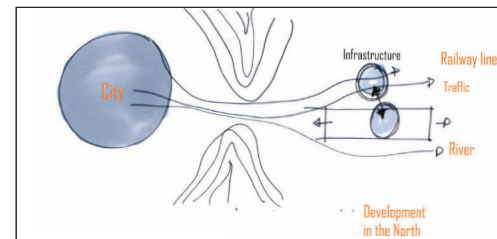
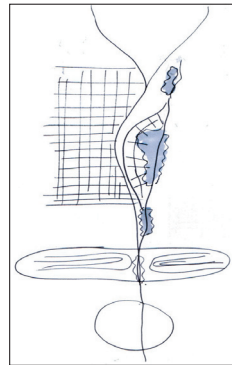
'a condition in which everything we know is mediated through images, and the number of images we are bombarded with increases every day. The systems by which we have

understood the world in the past break down because our preconceptions are under constant bombardment.'

In South Africa the educational system does not lend itself to visual literacy through basic art education, therefore the ordinary individual does not have a cultural frame of reference to evaluate and have an informed, if any, opinion about styles in architecture. In addition to this, we do not have a strong architectural heritage originating in South Africa. Advertising and lifestyle programmes on television create a popular taste among citizens that change with the seasons or along with the trends. The assumption that is made is that this epitomising of particular lifestyles lead to the outburst of theme park type living. The novelty wears off after a few years and the majority of new developments have to find other selling points other than the 'Tuscan' lifestyle.

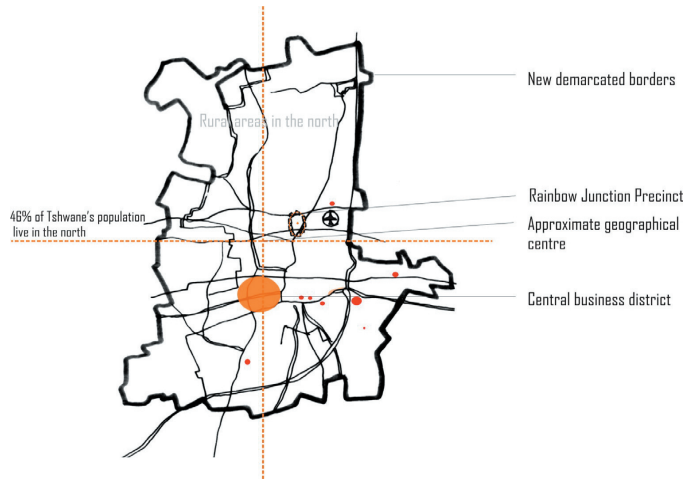
Through managing the physical and social aspects of the development concerning the city as a whole, it is hoped to affect the lives, and everyday life experience of the urban dweller. 'Architecture's importance resides in its ability to accelerate society's transformation through a careful agencing of spaces and events' (Tschumi 1994:11).

### Response to the Context urban solutions



2.4 From the Left: City Scale, Precinct Scale and Site Scale of the Project

## URBAN DESIGN IN SOUTH AFRICA



2.5 A Map of the City of Tswane Indicating the New Geological Centre

In the Past urban design practice in South Africa was based either on simple ideological considerations of race separation or on conventional planning wisdoms which have been developed primarily in relation to the contextual circumstances of Western Europe and the United States. These ideals have proved to be inappropriate to the circumstances of a developing country. The human issues raised by urban growth will remain constant and are independent on the political situation (Dewar 1991:10). Dewar and Uytendogaardt (1991:11) point out that very little thought about city development at large city scale has occurred in South Africa, and most of the actions are reactive to existing trends and relate almost exclusively to elements of the city, such as transportation rather than to the urban whole.

'Architectural solutions however brilliant cannot overcome the limitations of the urban fabric in which they are placed' (Trancik 1986:19).

Research done by Dewar and Uytendogaardt revealed that the performance of local areas is profoundly influenced by broader city decisions, and thus cannot be viewed in isolation. Most developments in suburban Tswane offer their inhabitants an isolated private existence free from city conflict, removed from public life and social interaction.

CITY SCALE  
Missing Link to The North

In most cases in South Africa demands for housing were addressed through the creation of peripheral settlements, like

Akasia and Soshanguwe that are located north of the City of Tswane. These municipal areas have recently been included into the metropolitan area of the City of Tswane along with: Hammanskraal, Klipdruisfontein and Themba. According to the 2001 Census, the areas north of the Magaliesberg are home to 46.7% of the inhabitants of Tswane (City of Tswane 2004:19). The Rainbow Junction precinct falls close to the new geological centre of the city.

Suburbs to the north of the Witwatersberg relate more to Akasia than to the central business district, owing to the physical barrier created by the ridge to the south. The physical barrier of the Magaliesberg isolates the northern areas to a degree from activities to the south and the CBD. 'The Magaliesberg stretches from east to west forming a series of protective valleys from south to north' (Fisher 1998:138).

As mentioned earlier, the areas further north of the CBD are currently excluded from the city atmosphere and there are currently few social facilities linking Pretoria North to the CBD. The atmosphere of Pretoria North is that of leftovers of run-down industrial settlements, open, undefined and under-developed spaces around the highway

The Greater Tswane Metropolitan Council's development objectives for the area in question is "urban" with a secondary metropolitan node indicated in the vicinity of the site (City of **Corridor Development**)



Tshwane 2004:19). Secondary nodes lead to the decline of the CBD, and will not be a responsible solution for the area.

Corridor development will promote growth of the CBD by enhancing the infrastructure from the north, to link the areas to the opportunities that the CBD offer. This can be done by latching the new Rainbow Junction development framework onto the existing transport infrastructure, promoting corridor development towards the CBD.

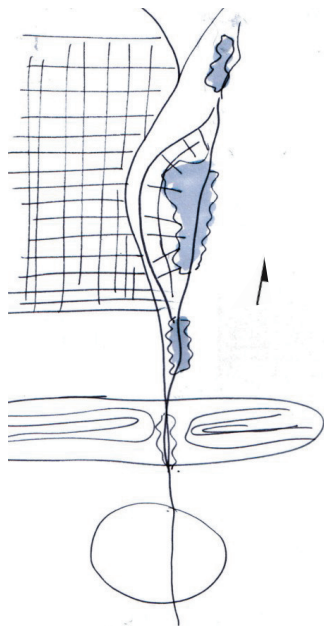
Contemporary definitions of a corridor:

'Corridors are locations in both urban and rural areas along which new development can be located to benefit from existing or potential future access to effective public transport by road or rail. Corridors have been promoted as means of integrating transport and land use planning so as to accommodate new

development in ways which minimise private car use and enhance transport choice and accessibility' (Friends of the earth 2000).

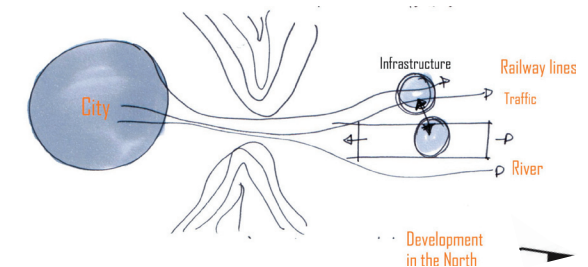
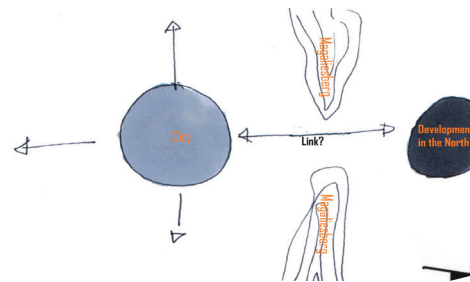
In the context of the Integrated Development Plan for the Greater Tshwane Metropolitan Council, the term 'corridor' refers to:

'a transportation spine of some nature (usually road or rail) which link certain important activity nodes in the urban structure, and along which it is proposed to stimulate a range of development activities aimed at better utilisation of the transportation and other infrastructure with the specific aim of enhancing land use and transport' (GPMC, IDP,1999:ii).

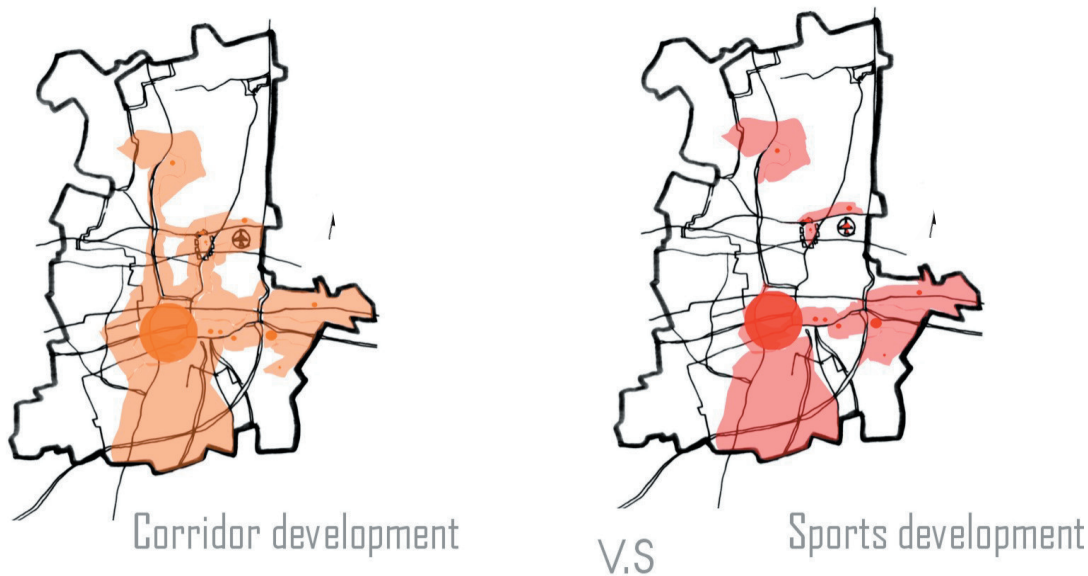


2.6 Left: Diagram Illustrating the City Grid vs. the Grid of the Precinct

2.7 & 2.8 Right and Far Right: Diagrams Illustrating the Relation of the City Centre to Developments in the North



2.9 Below: Maps Indicating the Result of the Hypothetical Analysis. The Coloured Areas Indicate the Location Development and Population Spread in the City of Tshwane: (Left) if the Rainbow Junction Development is Approached as a Sporting Development or (right) a Catalyst for Corridor Development.



FUTURE SCENARIO

A hypothetical analysis was done on the possible outcome that corridor development may have on the city, the precinct and the isolated areas in the north.

#### The Hypothetical Study fig. [2.10]:

Firstly, the framework was phased from 2005 – 2016 to allow the development to be integrated into the urban fabric of the surroundings. This will give other developments and the community time to advance, through the new infrastructure. Secondly, the developments within the City of Tshwane were plotted roughly. During each phase of the Rainbow Junction precinct, the anticipated (probable) development as a result of the corridor development was jotted down. The end result was further reaching than the immediate environment: a greater City of Tshwane that had a sense of unity and could possibly help in the rejuvenation of the CBD.

The same exercise was executed with the approach that the development is to be an elite sports development and secondary metropolitan node. The result was a fragmented city, where infrastructure and opportunities are out of reach for the rural areas in the north. The development also runs the risk of being unfeasible in the long term after the Soccer World Cup takes place in 2010.

The City of Tshwane with Possible Corridor Development indicated

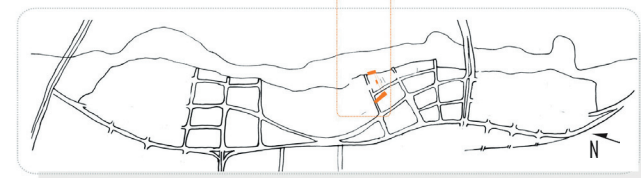
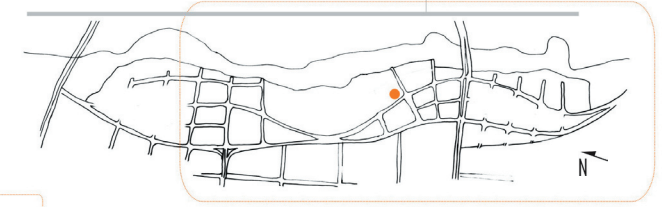
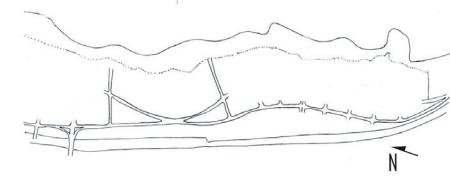


2005

2008

2010

The Various Phases of the Rainbow Junction Development

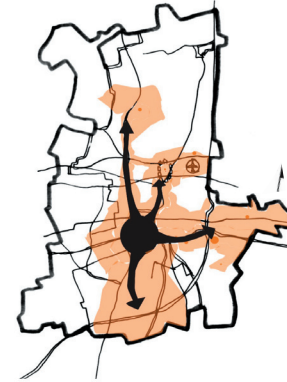
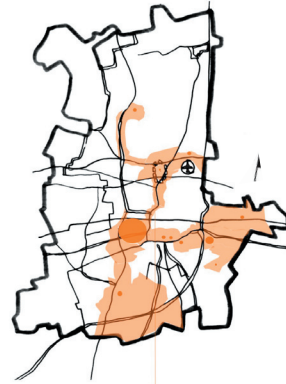
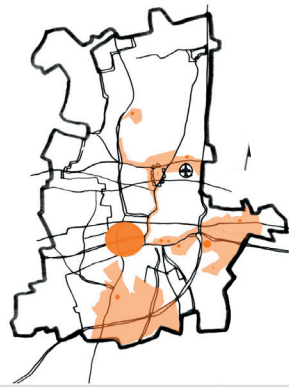


Phase 1

Phase 2

Phase 3

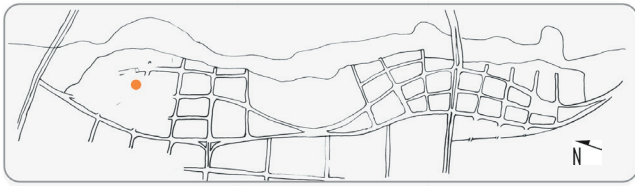
2.10 A Hypothetical Analysis of Corridor Development Between the CBD and the North of the City of Tshwane, in Relation to the Various Phases of the Rainbow Junction Development.



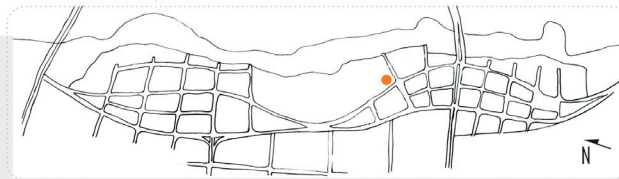
2014

2016

Future



Phase 4



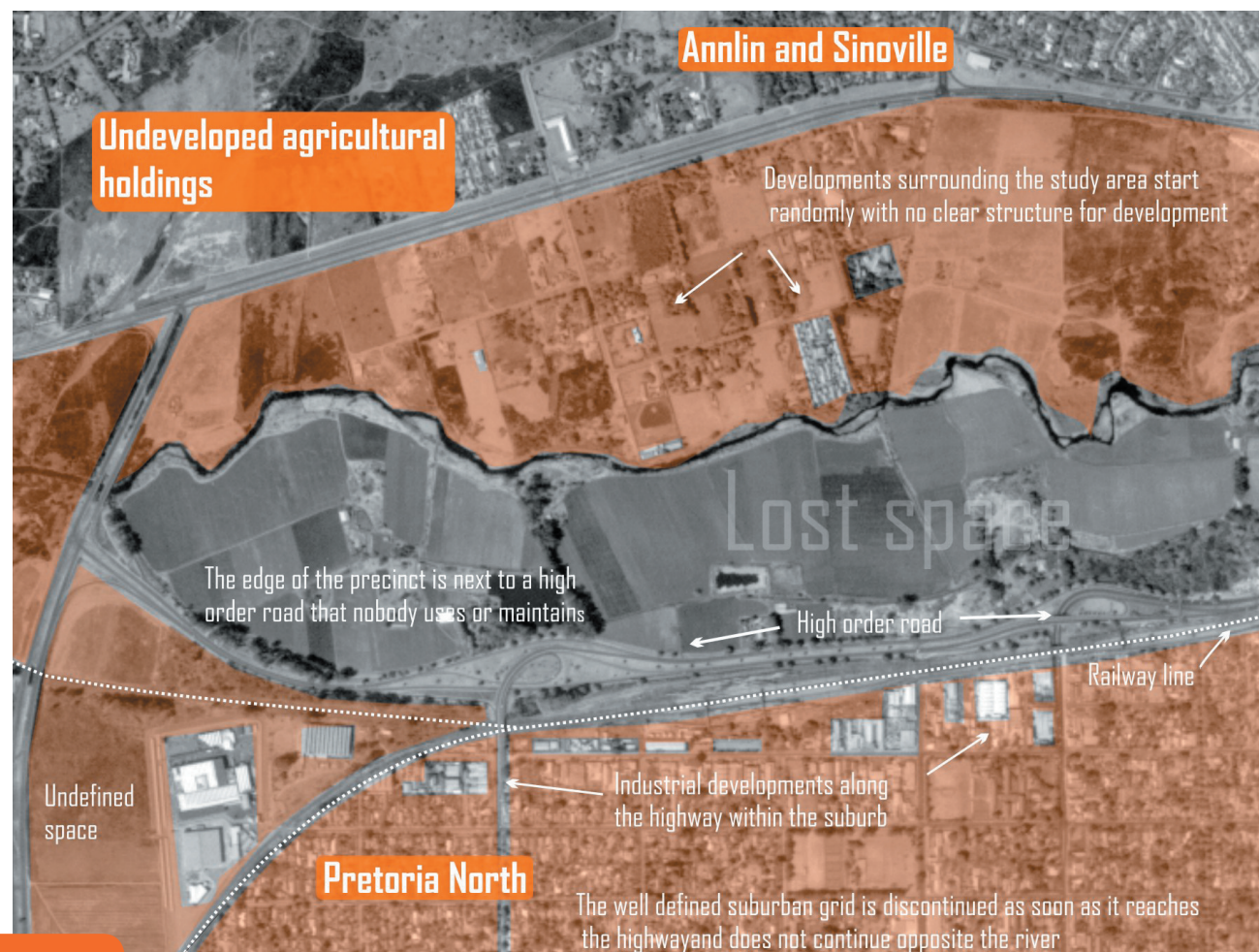
Phase 5

Phase 5

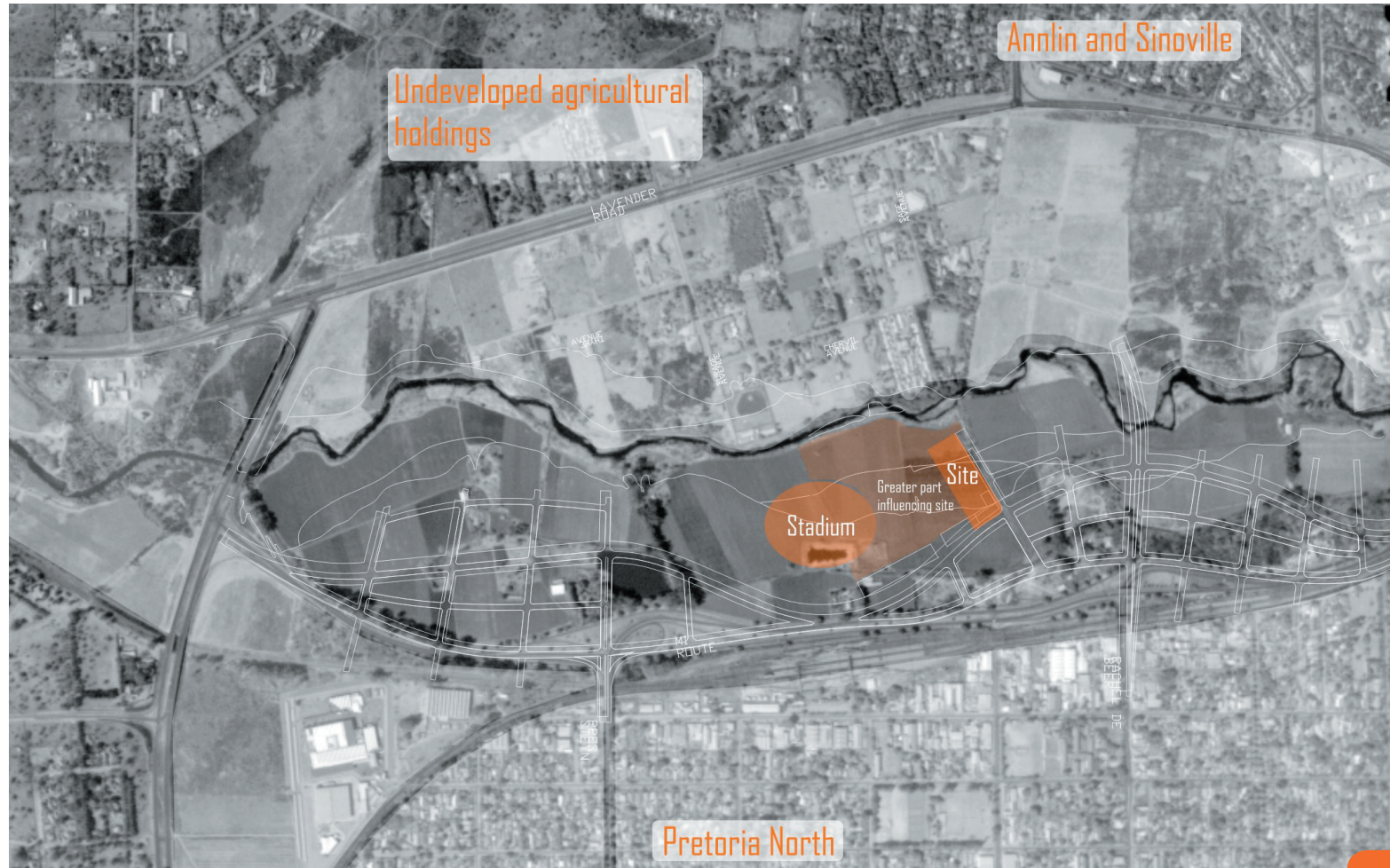
Lost space according to Trancik (1986:2-3) is the no-man's lands along the edges of freeways that nobody cares about maintaining, much less using. Lost space includes industrial complexes that have moved out to the suburbs for easier access and lower taxes. These are undesirable urban areas that are in need of redesign – anti-spaces, spaces that do not contribute to the surroundings or users. Lost space is ill-defined, without having measurable boundaries, and fails to connect elements in a coherent way. Professionals who work in the urban landscape have a responsibility to reclaim and redesign lost spaces, especially those on the outskirts of town.

Lost space can be regained by filling the gaps with a framework of buildings and interconnected open-space opportunities that will generate new investment. Lost spaces that are underused and deteriorated, provide exceptional opportunities to counteract urban sprawl and suburbanisation (Trancik 1986: 2-3).

The study area within the city context been identified as lost space. The developments in the surrounding areas start randomly with no clear structure, no cohesion and no plan. This lost space is being claimed for development so that the study area and the spaces around it can be incorporated into the historic fabric of the city.



**2.11 Right:**  
Aerial Photograph of the  
Rainbow Junction Precinct  
Illustrating 'Lost Space'



2.12 Left: Aerial Photograph of the Proposed Rainbow Junction Precinct Layout Superimposed on the Current Farm

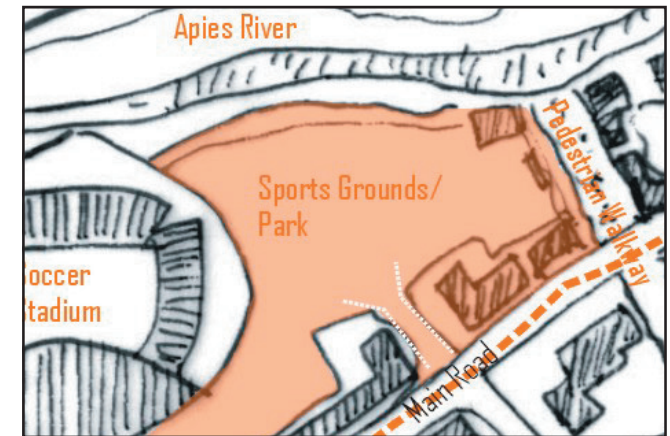
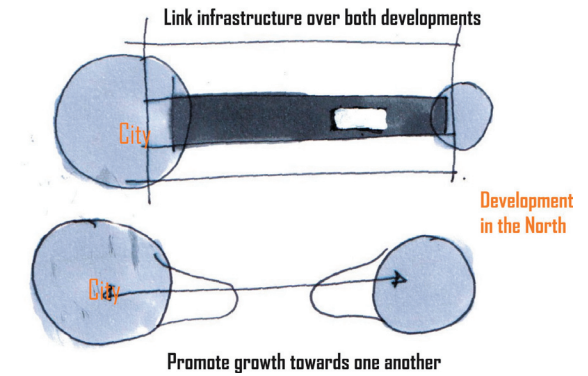
The study area is located on the outskirts of the CBD and any major commercial development could have urban sprawl as a result. Holistic city growth is suggested by creating infrastructure and facilities without deteriorating the city center. The development, as a catalyst for corridor development, can be seen as a vehicle for rural communities towards the prospects of the city. The problem of lost space can be resolved by placing an infrastructure over both the separated entities, the CBD and Pretoria North fig.[2.13]. The new Rainbow Junction development as suggested by The Holm Jordaan Group latches onto this infrastructure, and aim to continue the defined urban space of the surrounding suburbs.

building that is applicable to the reality of contemporary urban life in its most stimulating, unsettling directions.

The combination of events relating to the building is discussed under superimposition and crossprogramming.

**SITE SCALE** The broader city decisions, such as corridor development and rethinking the lost space, will have a beneficial effect on the surrounding areas and especially the precinct. These actions will create the conditions for the precinct to function as a successful contemporary development. All these aspects have an influence on the project and the facilities involved.

Events regarding the buildings are events of our daily lives, the differences, the conflict and the urban interchange involved in present-day life. At this point in the dissertation, the events within the building are formulated, not strictly by a accommodation list, but a combination of terms that will allow unexpected events to occur. The true delight of architecture will be revealed through the unexpected combinations of spaces, events and movements. The focus is language for a



2.13 Top Right: Diagram Illustrating Corridor Development Between the CBD and Development in the North  
2.14 Right: A Diagram of the Site