

Pretoria Historical Context

1854 saw Marthinus Wessel Pretorius purchase two farms in the central Transvaal from J.G.S Bronkhorst. Located in the area now called the Fountains Valley, the property was declared a *kerkplaat* for the central Transvaal. A *kerkplaat* is a place where a travelling *dominee* called to celebrate *nagmaal* and officiate weddings and baptisms. (Allen, 1979) A year later a town was proclaimed on the site. On 4 April 1860 this town, until then referred to by its residents as *Pretoria Philadelphia*, was declared the official capital of the Transvaal Republic. (Engelbrecht S.P 1955)

Pretoria, named after General Andries Pretorius, the father of M.W. Pretorius, was surveyed in its formal grid pattern by its first *landdrost*, Andries du Toit in 1857. Church Square, originally called Market Square, was the heart of Pretoria, the “focal point from which it all grew”. (Allen, 1979) The first church was built in the centre of the clearing. The square was also the commercial and social core. Here the residents mingled, did business and worshipped. (Allen, 1979) Church Street and Market Street formed the *cardo* and *decumanus* of the new town.

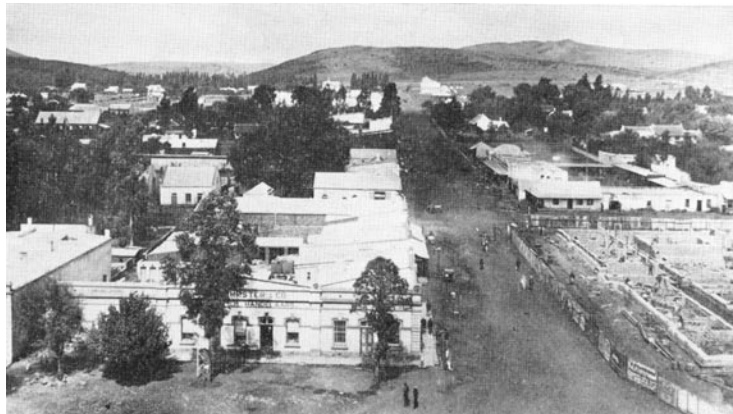


Figure 2-1 Markstraat in 1899 looking to the South – The Raadsaal under construction on the right (Engelbrecht, 1955:260)

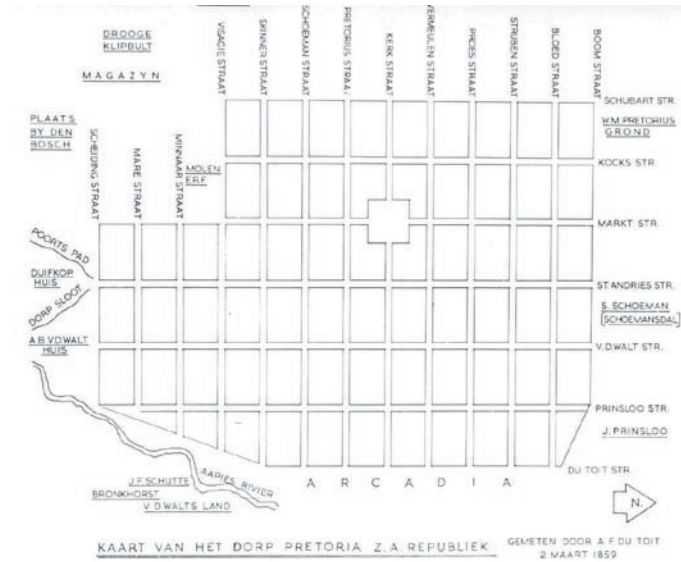


Figure 2-2 The original town as drawn out by A du Toit (Allen, 1979)

Paul Kruger was elected president of the Transvaal Republic in 1883. He was the charismatic leader of the Boer Republic and an important character of Pretoria's social life, until 1901 saw the British occupation of Pretoria during the Anglo South African War. Kruger's influence can still clearly be seen in the historic centre of the city. He laid the cornerstone of the Old Raadsaal in 1899. His statue, sculpted by Anton Van Wouw, peers over Church Square. His house and church are tourist attractions and the City Council changed Market Street's name to Paul Kruger Street during Pretoria's Voortrekker celebrations in 1938 (Allen, 1979).

Pretoria's street layout stands in relation to the surrounding topography. The east-to-west orientated city blocks line up with the surrounding *koppies*, and the longitudinal shapes determines Pretoria's street character. (Van der Waal, 1990)

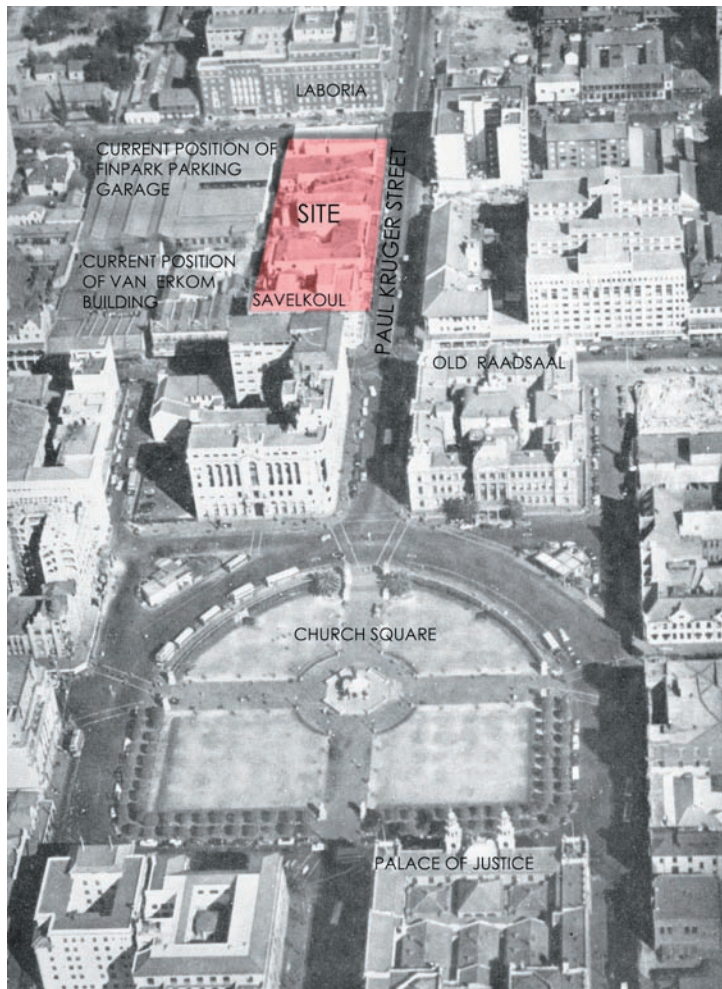


Figure 2-3 Bird's eye view of Church Square and surrounds in 1955 looking South (Engelbrecht, 1955:260)

The street edge played an important role in the buildings of the Pretoria historic core. The first buildings on Church Square stood on the building line, with verandas negotiating the street edge. Until the 1940's the street was a place of interaction and activity. International Modernism arrived in Pretoria in the 1930's, and although the streets edges were clearly defined through the geometry of Modernism, the result was lessened street activity. (Jordaan, 1990)

At an early stage in Pretoria's development the long city blocks resulted in small alleys to create a finer grain and allow easier pedestrian movement. (Jordaan, 1990) With time these were formalised and resulted in an arcade system. These internalised streets provided shelter from the elements and the rushing traffic of the CBD. Although the arcade system is a unique and important aspect of Pretoria's character, it resulted in less personal and lively streets. This was clear by the 1930's (Van der Waal, 1990) when the streets became transport infrastructure designed for effective vehicular movement instead of exciting places for human interaction.

The methods of street interface changed as different architectural styles dominated the CBD. Initially colonnades created a well-defined pedestrian space. In the 1930's floating canopies were the vogue. The result was vaguely defined walkways, or even worse, architects entirely rejecting their responsibility of creating shelter for the city dweller. (Jordaan, 1990)

Different periods' building form can be distinguished through the architectural expression. Modernism's rational grid makes it impossible to distinguish a government building from a block of flats. A number of Modern institutional buildings withdrew entirely from life on the street (Van der Waal, 1990).

In the 1970's and 1980's architects attempted to create a more human scale through the breaking up of the building blocks into irregular shapes. Interior malls and atriums created new pedestrian movement networks (Van der Waal, 1990)

Despite the good intentions the result was a loss of coherence in the city fabric and a lack of unity. The interior mall system created dead street edges. "The integration of the interior pedestrian movement networks created in the 1970's and 1980's into the larger whole of the city will be a major challenge." (Translated by the author from Van der Waal, 1990) After the 1980's very little new development happened in the CBD. Big business fled to the eastern suburbs, and when the workday ended, the city shut down. Activity in the city struck an all time low in the early 1990's. The general perception is that this is still the case.

But a lot has changed since 1994's wind of political change blew through the city. New needs and opportunities have emerged, and ever more new ones are emerging. A process of city regeneration has been set in motion. Historic buildings have been renovated and the city is marketed as a tourist destination. Tertiary education takes place above micro loans stores and bakeries. Traditional healers can be found next to financial institutions and hawkers trade on the sidewalks. Office blocks are converted into flats.

The city is taking on a new life and is becoming as diverse and culturally rich as cities are meant to be. This thesis project works within the context of these exciting events in an attempt to make a positive contribution towards the inner city rejuvenation of Pretoria.



Figure 2-4 informal trade on the CBD's busy sidewalks (Author, 2004)

The Pretoria Inner City Integrated Spatial Development Framework (ISDF)

Cities compete for business, consumers and tourists. Capitol Consortium developed the ISDF for the City Council of Pretoria, setting up guidelines through which Tshwane could develop as a competitive international business and tourist destination. The ISDF puts forth a future vision of a truly world-class capital city. Development guidelines at a regional, city, and local precinct level were put forth.

Citywide development goals put forth in the ISDF include

- The enhancement of the city as a people friendly place with a unique image and identity.
- Encouragement of new development that enhances Pretoria's image as a world-class and capital city
- Development of an appropriate, attractive and well-defined urban structure
- Creating specific identities for individual precincts
- The encouragement of a diversity of land uses

ISDF Guidelines for CBD Central

The proposed site falls under the CBD Central Precinct as defined by the ISDF. The precinct specific guidelines will be discussed, as well as its relevance and potential for implementation into the project.

"Enhance Paul Kruger and Church Street Ceremonial Ways by clarifying the spatial relationship along the axis. This includes the reinforcement of spatial definition and containment as well as the creation of focal points."

RELEVANCE: Development of the site fits perfectly into the guideline of clarifying street edge definition. Effective street edge definition will be a baseline requirement for the building. The potential of the site creating a focal point or becoming a point of interest along Paul Kruger Street is important. The latter can also be considered a baseline requirement.

"Establishing Struben and Skinner Streets as the respective Northern and Southern edges of the city."

RELEVANCE: The guideline does not have a direct impact on the site but its intention of clear definition of the precinct as a place with a unique image and identity in the city is relevant. Development of the site to have a relevant scale, function and architectural character to the CBD is a goal of the thesis project and a baseline requirement.

"Establishing and strengthening mid-block links between significant civic spaces, squares, arcades and building

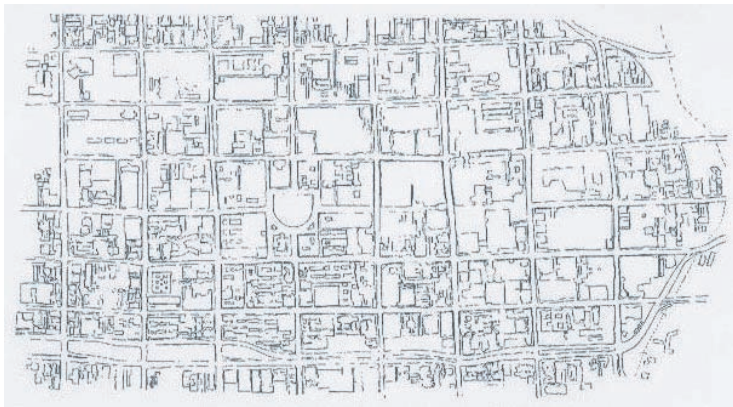


Figure 2-5 Footprint of the Precinct (CAPITAL CONSORTIUM, 1999:20)

atriums between Struben and Skinner streets.”

“Develop and protect the existing retail and arcade structure. Link, strengthen and extend existing pedestrian networks and nodes.”

RELEVANCE: The site is located next to the Van Erkom, Thibault and Polley’s Arcade system. (See Arcade analysis later) Linking to these arcades and creating an entrance from Paul Kruger Street into the system is an ideal opportunity to stimulate the arcade growth while simultaneously creating a finer grain and improving pedestrian movement.

ISDF Guidelines for Paul Kruger Street

The development of Paul Kruger Street as a ceremonial way is discussed in the ISDF and includes suggestions on

how the street is to be developed with this goal in mind. The suggestions are sparse and general:

- “Improve linkage between Station Square and Pretorius Square through environmental upgrading.”
- “Restructure pedestrian crossing at Skinner Street to improve north-south pedestrian movement in the city.”
- “Terminate Paul Kruger ceremonial spine at Northern edge of city.”
- “Develop central road space as new landmark space.”

The ISDF does not say much in regard to Paul Kruger Street’s future development. The need for a more detailed framework is answered through the Paul Kruger Street Spine document developed by the University of Pretoria., which is discussed next.

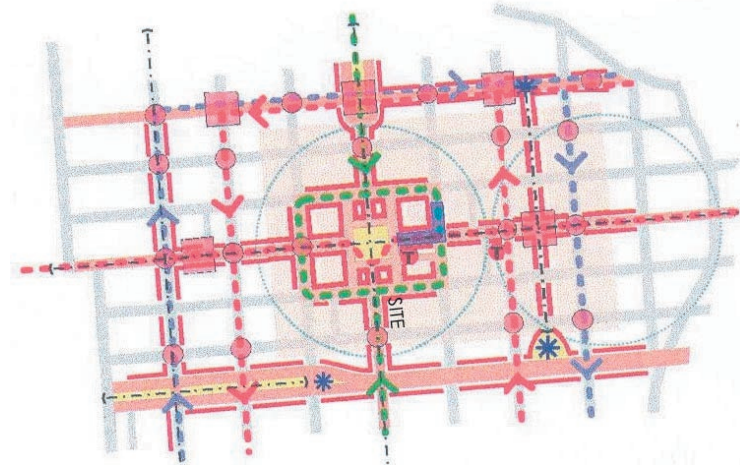


Figure 2-6 ISDF diagram showing public Spaces, Buildings, Pedestrian Networks and Public Transport (CAPITAL CONSORTIUM, 1999:20)

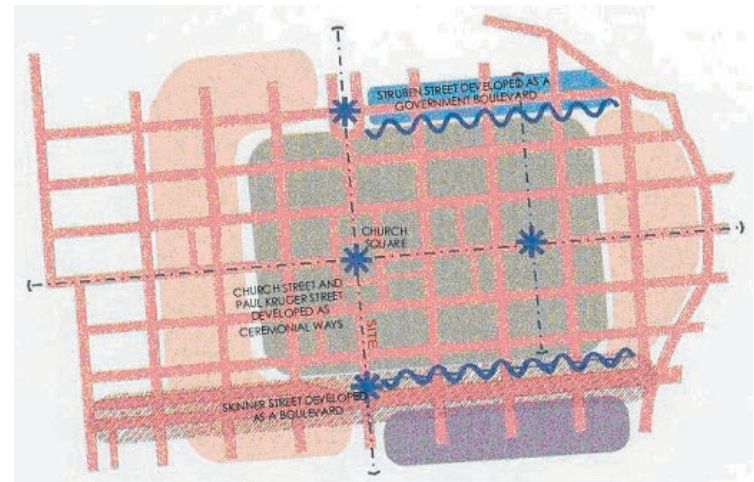


Figure 2-7 ISDF Development Concept - Text added by author (CAPITAL CONSORTIUM, 1999:20)

The Paul Kruger Street Spine Development Framework

This urban design framework was developed after Paul Kruger Street was identified as an area, the enhancement of which would “produce the greatest positive impact on the image of the inner city.” Street-wide guidelines were developed. The street was divided into a series of zones for which more detailed guidelines were then given. The main focus fell on two areas namely to the North of Proes Street and South of Skinner Street. The guidelines for the zone between Visagie and Skinner Streets where the site is located do not go into a great level of detail.

New buildings on Paul Kruger Street

The Framework gives valuable guidelines for new buildings in Paul Kruger Street. Its recommendations will be critiqued and its relevance to the project discussed. This in turn will form baseline requirements for the buildings' street interaction. The following urban design principles are given for new buildings on Paul Kruger Street:

“Buildings must define the street and have an articulated and permeable street edge that contributes to the activity in the street. Opportunities for edge activities must be provided wherever possible, in the form of cafes, trees and seating areas”

RELEVANCE: The design of the buildings' street interface will definitely be more permeable than currently through its link(s) to the arcade system. A redesign of the pavement will be undertaken.

“Existing building configurations in terms of alignment to the street must be respected. If a setback is created, the setback must create a public place that forms part of the street.”

RELEVANCE: The importance of lettable space on ground

level and the high building density in the CBD would make setbacks unlikely on the site.

“Buildings must fit in with the massing of existing buildings and must form a street wall that defines the public space. A minimum and maximum height must be specified based on existing buildings, orientation and the creation of human scale”

RELEVANCE: There is relatively uniform height of 5 to 8 storeys in the Paul Kruger city blocks between Church Square and Skinner Street where the site is found. This will provide the guideline to be adhered to.

“The use of colonnades should be encouraged in areas where there are existing colonnades”

RELEVANCE: The identified site's existing colonnade is a very special feature of the existing buildings. This aspect will be reintroduced in a new building or alternatively the existing colonnade could be conserved.

“Compatible mixed land use should be encouraged in all instances... stimulation of a residential component and small businesses.”

RELEVANCE: The proposed scheme attempts to work towards mixed land use, as well as the encouragement of small business.

“Parking must be provided in the centre of the block and not on the street edge.”

RELEVANCE: The attempt to focus on pedestrian movement and the importance of lettable space on ground level would make parking at ground level unpractical. Parking could be provided at basement

level. The site has the potential of linking with the neighbouring 7 storeys Finpark parking lot at basement level.

Widening of sidewalks

The framework proposes the widening of sidewalks at intersections, so to decrease pedestrian risk through shortening distances at pedestrian crossings. This would only mean the loss of 2 to 4 parking bays per city block. Other proposals include:

- “Extension of pavement material across the street to create a pedestrian environment.”
- “Use of railing and bollards to direct pedestrians”
- “Ramping the sidewalk down to the road for easier movement of disabled persons.”

RELEVANCE: All of these suggestions would make for a better street environment and will be considered in the design of the street edge. However the needs of vehicular movement and the lack of sufficient parking space in the CBD is a reality in Paul Kruger Street.

Precinct specific guidelines

The area is called the commercial precinct and described as “a typical urban street.” Problems include the lack of street trees and the Skinner Street intersection, which is a dangerous crossing for pedestrians. It forms a major physical barrier between the Southern and Northern sections of Paul Kruger Street. Coherence of the built fabric is entirely lost due to this vehicular spine.

The drawing on the right was used in the Paul Kruger Street Spine Frame-work to indicate buildings of importance in the commercial precinct. The site is indicated in red. Save for the Savelkoul Building and the Afrik House no historically important structures are indicated on the block. The site will be investigated to assess that no other important structures were overlooked.

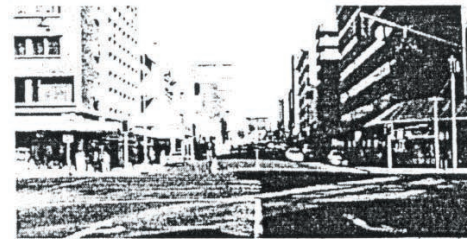


Figure 2-8
Commercial Precinct
– Ex. Structure
(Schoonraad, 2000)
Note: Red frame
around site added by
author.

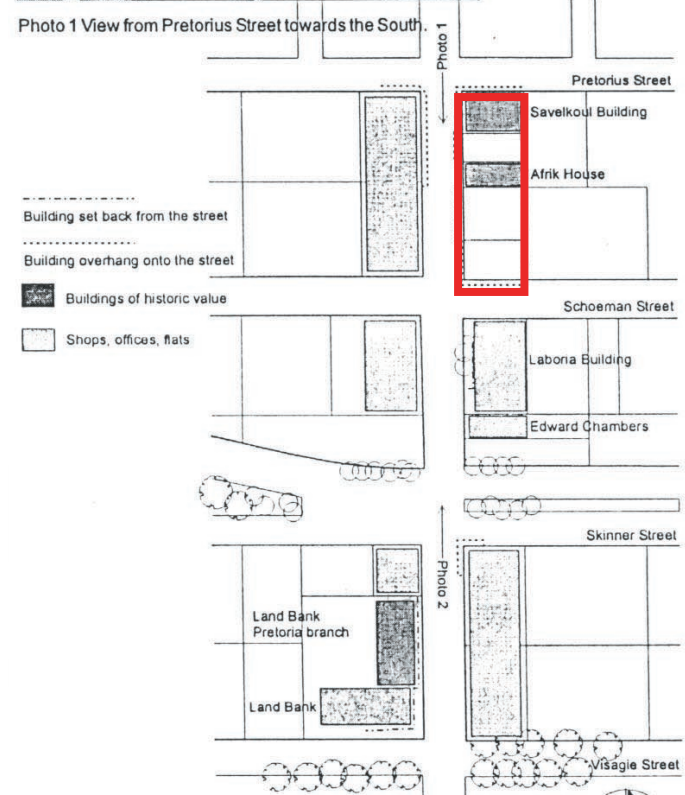


Photo 2 View of Skinner Street crossing Paul Kruger Street.



The City of Tshwane

The City of Tshwane states its vision of itself as “An internationally acclaimed African Capital City that empowers the community to prosper in a safe and healthy environment.” Tshwane means “we are the same” or “we are one because we live together”. Pretoria falls under the Tshwane Municipality. Any public building has all the residents of a city as its clients and should share in the vision of an Ubuntu life approach.

Tshwane markets itself as an international city. “Tshwane, the administrative capital and the birthplace of the new South African democracy, is home to a large diplomatic community. Well over a hundred embassies and foreign missions are located here, making Tshwane the ideal base for international trade and for liaison with political decision-makers from all over the world.” (www.tshwane.gov.za) The importance of tourism is discussed under the physical context section.



Figure 2-9

Tourism in Tshwane

According to Statistics South Africa a total of 185861 overseas travellers arrived in South Africa in the month of February 2004. 92,6% of these visitors stated that they were in South Africa for their holidays. A total of 339 343 visitors arrived from mainland Africa, of which 89,9% stated tourism as the purpose for their visit. Both mark an increase from February 2003. (Statistics SA, 2004) Figure 2-10 shows the arrival of international travellers in South Africa in thousands from 2000 onwards. A marked increase can be seen.

Tourism is an important aspect of the South African economy, and the country has an expanding tourism sector. 2003 saw a global slowdown of tourism as foreign visitors avoided regions hit by security concerns and the SARS virus. South Africa showed a rise of 4,2 percent during the same period. (wwwnews24.co.za)

The Number of tourists that visit Pretoria specifically is unknown, but the stimulation of the tourist industry is a priority to the Tshwane municipality. In the State of the City Address on 17 February 2004 the Executive Mayor of Tshwane, Father Smangalis Mkhathshwa stated that “the promotion of tourism is a key focus area of our Marketing Department for the forthcoming financial year.” New projects geared towards increasing Tshwane’s appeal to tourists include:

Freedom Park is the Flagship National Heritage project and will become an important tourist attraction and public place. Located on Salvokop at the Southern end of Paul Kruger Street, the completion of Freedom Park (expected to be in 2005) will be the initiation of Paul Kruger Street as a Ceremonial and Tourist Route.

The Gautrain is part of the Blue IQ initiatives and will run through Freedom Park with a stop near Pretoria Station.

This public transport system will make the CBD much more accessible.

South Africa will host the **2010 Soccer World Cup**. The tournament will be sure to boost the South African economy. An estimated three million fans will visit South Africa during the tournament, far more than the number of supporters who came for the Cricket World Cup in 2003 or the Rugby World Cup in 1995. (www.iol.co.za) The improvement of South Africa's international image and the exposure associated with this event will be the beneficial to all levels of South African society, especially

tourism. An estimated 159 000 jobs will be created. Tshwane will also receive a piece of the pie in the form of the brand new Rainbow Junction Sports Stadium in the North of Pretoria. (www.news24.co.za)

All of the above clearly portray the importance of tourism to the South African community. The upgrade of Paul Kruger Street and the creation of more stops and attractions along the future Tourist Route is a realistic and important consideration. The CBD should be made more attractive to tourists.

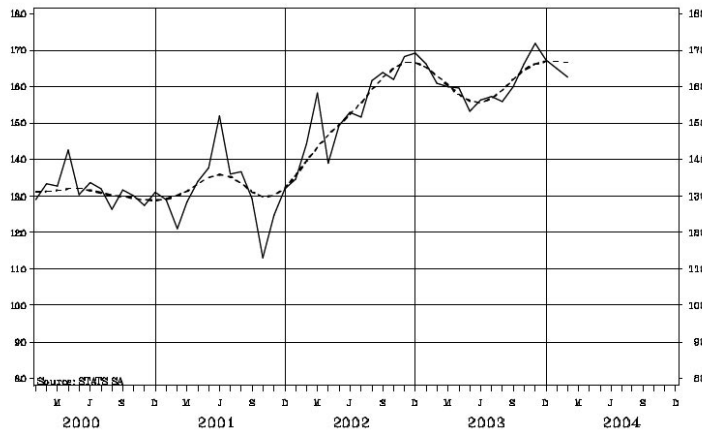


Figure 2-10 International Travellers Arriving In Thousands From 2000



Figure 2-11 Church Square looking down Church Street (Hone,2000)

CBD Character, Function & Needs

To understand the city it must be experienced and seen at ground level. Businesses and institutions, public places and streets within the CBD were studied. Needs and opportunities within the Inner City were identified. The findings are discussed below:

Diversity of use

City living is exciting because it is unpredictable. Around the next corner you might find anything and everything. This diversity is important for the functioning of a city: It is what attracts the people. Pretoria has an immensely diverse inner city. People from various walks of life negotiate the streets.

The proposed development will have to accommodate and stimulate diversity. It can be assumed that the project must have a multi-functional nature.

Education as an inner city function

Pretoria has a proud history of tertiary education. Institutions such as the University of South Africa (UNISA), University of Pretoria (UP) and the Tshwane University of Technology (Formerly The Pretoria Technikon), as well as institutions such as the CSIR contribute to Tshwane's character as a place for the attainment of knowledge.

The CBD has also developed into a place that offers tertiary education. Computer and Business schools can be found everywhere. A dance studio and art school can be seen, and Internet Cafes offer basic computer skills training. This may be attributed to the ease of access to the CBD.

The need for skills training and tertiary education facilities in the inner city is clear. This will be incorporated into the proposed project.

Space for small businesses needed

In most arcades it is usually the smaller shops that have

been rented while those with larger floor area remain empty. City Properties confirmed the need for smaller shops areas: The highest numbers of enquiries concern shops of 100 square meters or less.

The proposed project's commercial levels will tender for smaller business in an attempt to encourage entrepreneurial development and small businesses.

Residential need in the inner city

There is a need for housing in the inner city. City Properties has converted a number of unused office blocks into apartment blocks and there are more in the pipeline. As the city develops it will continue to attract people who require adequate residences.

The project will offer flats to let. A seven-storey apartment block across the street from the site is 100% let out with eleven people on their waiting list. (Coetzer, 2004) This is a very viable building function in the CBD.

Informal trade on the sidewalk

The sidewalk is where the city lives. In the zone between vehicles and buildings the movement and interaction takes place. Pretoria's sidewalks are brimming with hawkers that offer everything from fruit to toys, sunglasses to cigarettes. Pedestrians often spill into the street and in front of hooting vehicles where the sidewalk has been turned into an informal market.

The project will take the reality of informal trade as a given and attempt to structure rather than prevent it.

Tourism as a means of income

Tourism in South Africa is a growing business, and the CBD already offers many of Pretoria's important tourist attractions, incl. Church Square, the Church Street Mall and soon Freedom Park. Paul Kruger Street should be envisioned as a tourist orientated street.

Tourism will be a major informer of design decisions.