

02 CONTEXT

Accessing the peripherals

Having identified the site as a peripheral lot in terms of its elevation, this chapter aims to explain the conditions of the site in it's context.



DIVULGE

Scribing the story of place

Fig.12. The tight knit fabric of Atteridgeville. Showing a combination of an affluent neighbourhood, a cluster of NE-51/6 homes and the Atteridgeville cemetery.

2.1 LOCALITY

External influences and internal conditions

Located in the western most portion of the city, Atteridgeville is Pretoria's first black-labour township. Approximately 14km west of Church Square, the overpopulated suburb is directly connected to the city centre via W.F. Nkomo Street (previously Church Street). Alternatively, three train stations provide a link to the city for residents in Atteridgeville who do not have access to private vehicles or taxis (illustrated in the quantitative analysis in Volume I.)

In the broader context and in terms of location, Atteridgeville is a part of the North-South urban Development Corridor, (MCDC) aimed at connecting Pretoria's northern most settlement, Mabopane, to the southern most settlement, Centurion. Approaching from the east, Atteridgeville is the termination point of a string of formal settlements latching on to

the N4 road within the confines of Tshwane. On an urban scale, these conditions provide for interesting opportunities that can aid in connecting Atteridgeville back to the city in a east west direction. Additionally, cultural destinations can reinforce the *Mabopane to Centurion Development Corridor* in the north south direction.

The Garden City radial plan of Atteridgeville converges at the administrative heart of the township where the Police Station, Magistrates Court, Stadium, Town Hall and Municipal offices are located. These high streets provide energy and activity throughout Atteridgeville, taking advantage of high density, foot traffic and passive surveillance. These high streets are especially animated on weekends or after working hours due to work migrations.

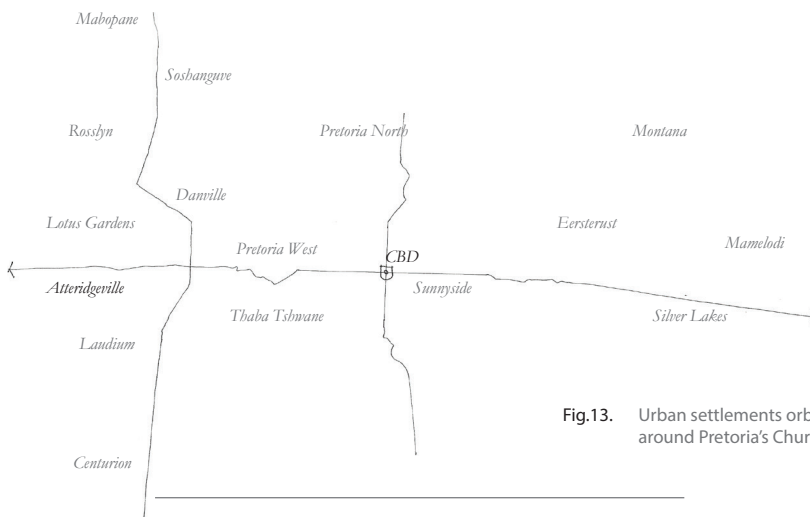


Fig.13. Urban settlements orbiting around Pretoria's Church Square.

2.2 NATURAL FEATURES

Overcoming physical barriers

The incorporation of natural features into the urban zoning strategies under the apartheid regime meant that rivers, mountain ranges and other prominent topographical features could be used as buffer zones (Stals, 1998:15). Turok's (1993:4) illustration below shows how these natural features were used to separate white and non-white urban settlements.

Ouzman (2009) proposes that the essence of public space in a South African context relies heavily on the spirit of place. Ouzman expands on the value of natural features as assets of the community, highlighting that ordinary life and extraordinary rituals were exercised in the dramatic South African landscapes between the sky and earth.

Atteridgeville's conception relied on these natural features to create a separation between Pretoria's

white central business district and the black labour town (refer to Volume I for Atteridgeville's history).

The dawn of democracy creates an opportunity to reclaim our natural assets and integrate them into South Africa's Post-colonial culture-scape.

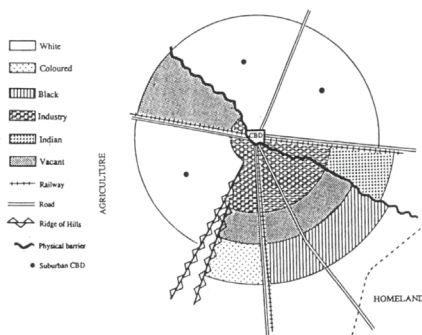


Fig.14. Crude Urban Zoning, the Apartheid City way (Turok,1993:4)

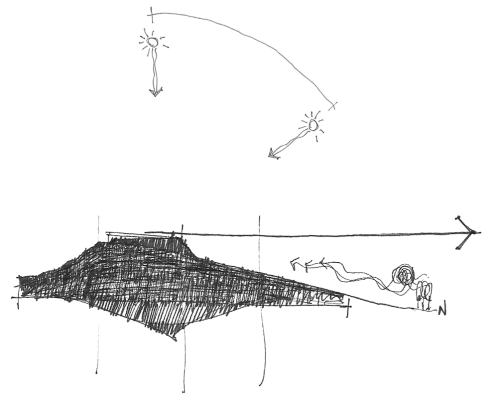


Fig.15. Approach to Natural Features. Urban Balcony. May,2016.

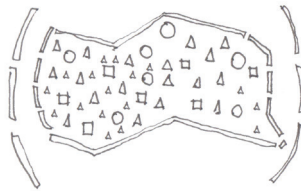
2.3 URBAN CONDITION

Dependency and Sprawl



Fig.16. Current condition:
Monotonous residential
environments spread across the
landscape (Nel & Sadiq, 20016).

Fig.17. Proposed condition:
Diversify the urban fabric and
create social anchors to contain
lost energy (Nel & Sadiq, 2016).



Dependency on employment in urban cores means that the working class often leave their homes early in the morning and return in the late afternoons. Due to this work exodus, the residents who remain in the suburbs on the periphery of Pretoria, are those with no disposable income.

With an urban fabric unable to support this influx, and fuelled by the lack of diversity of activities, the conditions of these marginal suburbs are perpetuated as working class residences are obliged to return to urban cores for entertainment or evening activities.

Youth unemployment is prevalent in these residential suburbs due to the lack of opportunity, and neglected zoning for industrial or commercial centres. Home businesses and entrepreneurship are the predominant means of self-support and often require large capital expenditure, coupled with high risk investments.

The studies conducted in Volume I attempt to understand the influence of the apartheid spatial planning on democratic South African suburbs in order to propose a method for appropriate intervention.

2.4 URBAN VISION

*Developing a response for the Apartheid
Spatial Legacy*

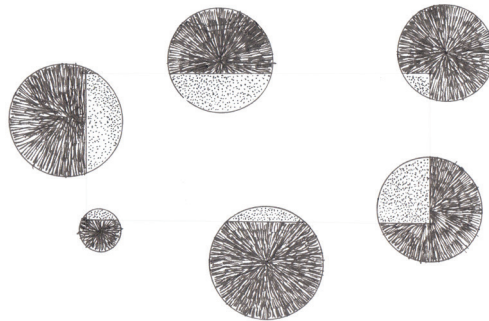


Fig.18. Conceptual Methodology: Activity to define boundary. Psychological city walls (Nel & Sadiq, 2016).

Volume I identifies the character of monotonous suburbia within the confines of Atteridgeville. In order to remedy this situation, twenty one sites are identified and discussed as possible sites of intervention to diversify the fabric of Atteridgeville.

1. Connect :
To other civic nodes
2. Interface:
To the street and immediate surrounding
3. Activate:
Draw energy back into the public realm

These interventions vary in scale and function and can be explored further in Volume I of the research. The overarching principles that guides the diversification process of the urban fabric can be dissected into the following:

2.5 OUDSTAD No. 21

Infrastructure predominates

Site twenty one was selected from the list of sites discussed in Volume I due to the dramatic natural setting and internal forces that give this site its unique character.

Its elevation makes it the highest point in its surroundings. At 1480m above mean sea level, the site is completely visible from all corners and valleys of Atteridgeville and beyond. Vistas are provided back towards Pretoria CBD [East], the Quagga Mountain range [South], Lucas Moripe Stadium and larger Atteridgeville suburbia [West], finally Lotus Gardens across the N4 road [North].

Due to its elevation and lack of access, the site has become a peripheral lot in the third dimension. In conjunction with this island effect, the boundary fence further separates the site from the urban fabric, which prevents opportunities for thoroughfares.

Situated at the physical summit of Atteridgeville, the site is home to a discontinued and submerged four mega-litre reservoir, two eight mega-litre tanks located above ground and a twenty mega-litre semi-submerged fresh water reservoir which supply water to Atteridgeville and Saulsville residences.

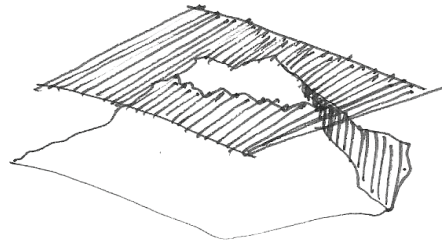


Fig.19. Abstraction of the island effect

These reservoirs dominate the site and the south-east skyline of Atteridgeville. The platonic cylinders protrude from the natural ridge creating a contrast, not only between the natural and man-made, but between the privately owned residential typologies and the overpowering municipal infrastructure.

The surrounding homes form part of an affluent neighbourhood, nestled between them, west of the site a Mosque and a Zion Christian Church meet one another on Thindisa Street.

The commercial hub, Atlyn Mall - is situated four-hundred meters to the east, and towards the south Atteridgeville Cemetery fronts the neighbourhood at the base of the hill (Figure 21).

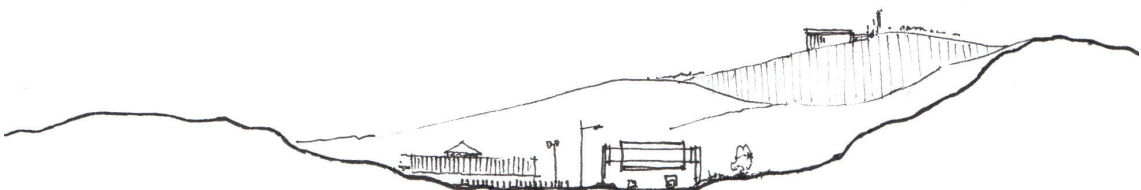


Fig.20. Section through Maunde Street. Illustrating the peaks of the Quagga Mountains. Laudium Water Reservoir can be seen in elevation.

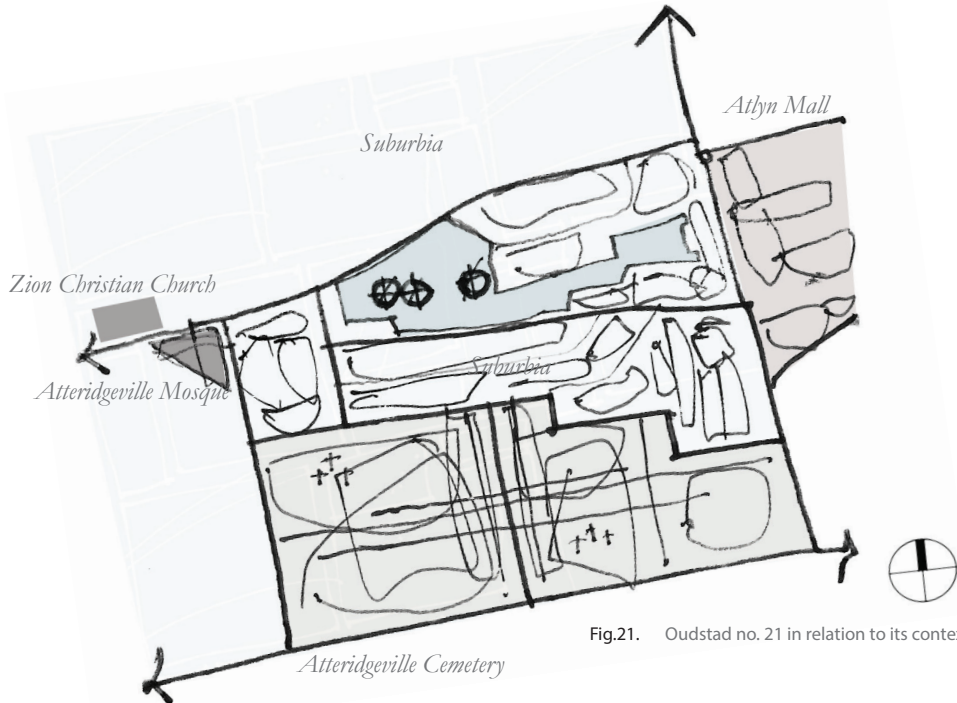


Fig.21. Oudstad no. 21 in relation to its context NTS.

Integral to the planning of Atteridgeville, provision for private vehicular access to individual homes has created leftover space. Due to inaccessibility this abandoned space creates a tail-piece that meanders behind the homes on the peak of the ridge (Figure 21). This linear green strip provides an opportunity to reinvigorate the area, making it possible for homes that once faced a neglected planning error to face a reclaimed green space.

From Atteridgeville's southern entrance, via Maundestreet, the largest of the three reservoirs can be seen floating above a sea of tile-roofed homes. These scattered infrastructural elements can be found along the skyline (Figure 22), drawing attention to high-voltage electrical carriers, telecommunications towers, water reservoirs and double-lane vehicular roads - all seen westbound on Maunde street.

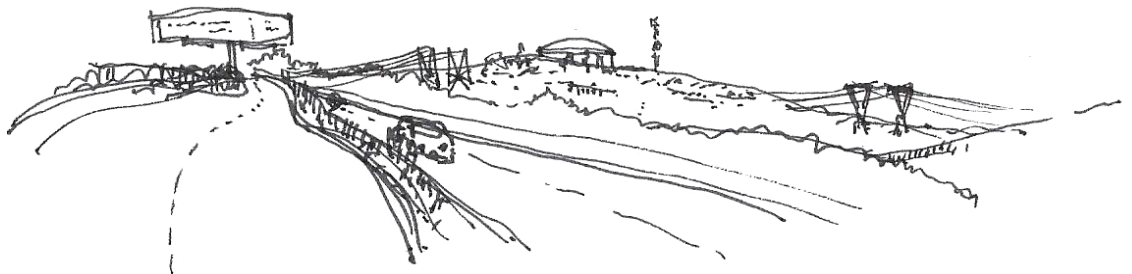


Fig.22. Sketch of approach to site, highlighting the domination of municipal infrastructure on the surrounding landscape.

2.6 OUDSTAD No. 21

Infrastructure predominates

The demand for housing nearby Pretoria's CBD has forced residential lots to emerge in hostile environments within Atteridgeville's fabric. There is an opportunity to reclaim the spirit of place on the summit of this ridge while sensitising the overpowering municipal water reservoir site. Changing the way people view and access their environments.

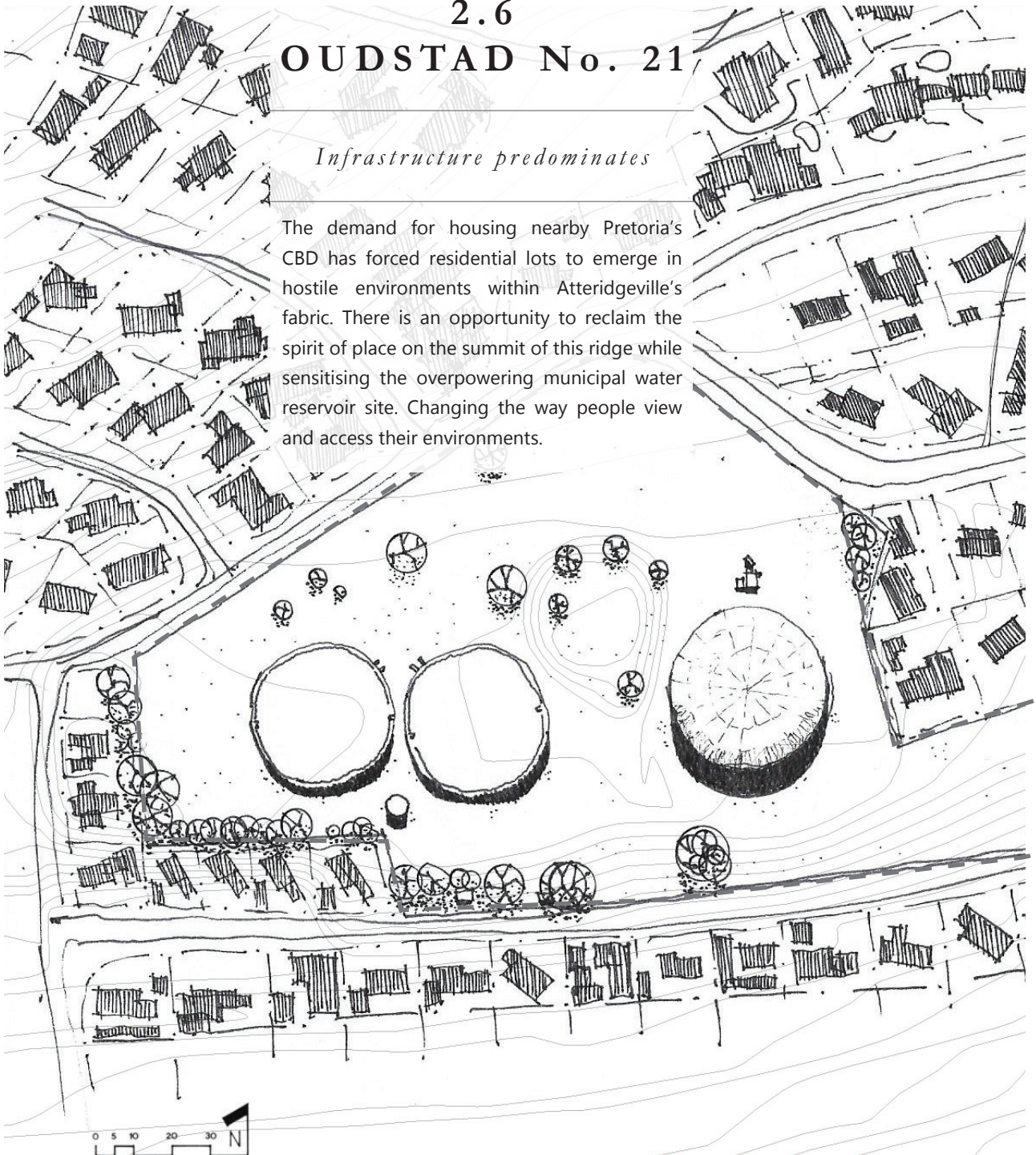




Fig.23. Site Plan of the Atteridgeville water reservoirs including the space left over after planning, creating a tail-piece stretching east.

2.6.1 DEALING WITH BOUNDARIES

Incoherent Environments



Fig.24. Isolated. October, 2016.

Isolated on the hilltop, the site is disconnected from its surroundings due to the suburban condition. With the exception of the service crew, access to the site is prohibited. The necessity for water provision has undermined the significance of the hill, disconnecting the resident from appreciating a prominent feature in their local environment.



Fig.25. Inverted. October, 2016.

Seeing this as an opportunity, the site welcomes the daily user, attracting the residents of the suburb to visit the park. Inverting the current model of privatisation, the site aims to draw attention to Atteridgeville from the larger Tshwane region. Connecting this space with a larger green network challenges current township developments which exasperates the condition of suburbia.

2.6.2 CREATING PATTERNS

Palimpsest

The points of energy on site include directed views, activity nodes around the water tanks and a central space of collection. On the south, after the bottleneck, the site reveals a view over Atteridgeville. These energy nodes can be used to determine the sequencing of spaces, allowing the natural movement on site to determine the unfolding of programme.

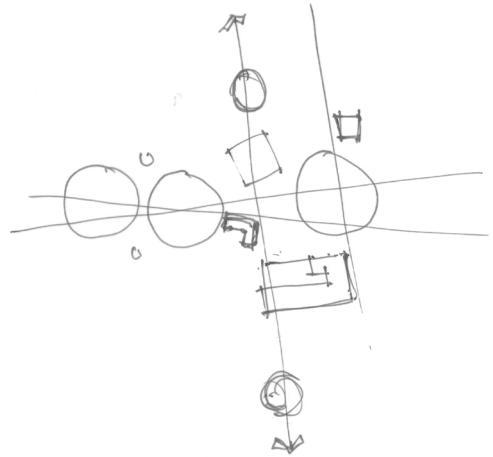


Fig.27. Energy axis. July, 2016.

For the daily user and the passer-by, the main movement route is identified as a diagonal line that intercepts the main gathering space. This provides an opportunity to engage with friends or bump into a relative, and spark a conversation. For the visitor, this glimpse into the sense of community present in Atteridgeville aids in changing perceptions about the stigma associated with townships.

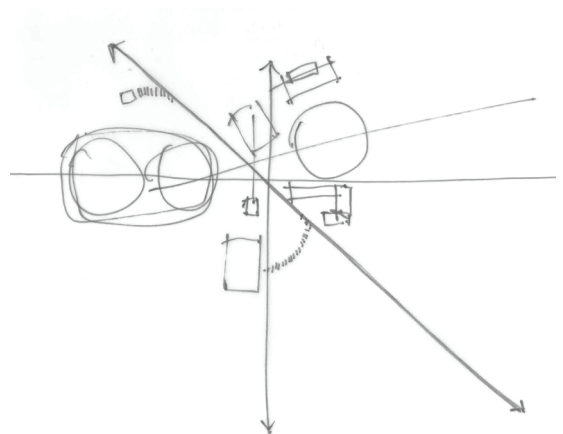


Fig.26. Movement axis. July, 2016.

2.6.3 3RD NATURE

Ecological significance of the ridge

The site, measuring 1.8 hectares, is situated on a plateau of the Quagga Ridge. With the addition of the water reservoirs, much of the site was altered and flattened for ease of maintenance. The ecological integrity and value of the site has been disturbed as trees were planted to conceal the gigantic reservoirs.

To prevent further deterioration of the natural ecology, it is proposed that a master plan be devised for the landscape to successfully treat and preserve the ecological integrity of the ridge. The artistry of landscape architecture according to Dixon Hunt (1992:13) has the ability to remedy such a disturbed site.

A strategy for runoff water will be devised, including the design of terraces. The terraces will capture, retain and up-cycle runoff rainwater. Conceptually, these terraces also will act as the table-cloth for the activities happening on site.

This integration of function with the landscape design will predominantly focus on restoring the ecological significance of the ridge. Creating a podium that acts as an urban balcony - a place where local residents can meet in late afternoons to enjoy a current of cool air and reconnect with the environment as envisioned in Figure 15.



Fig.28. Glimpses of the neighbouring rooftops can be spotted from the peak of the site. Photograph looking NE from the roof of the submerged reservoir. March, 2016.

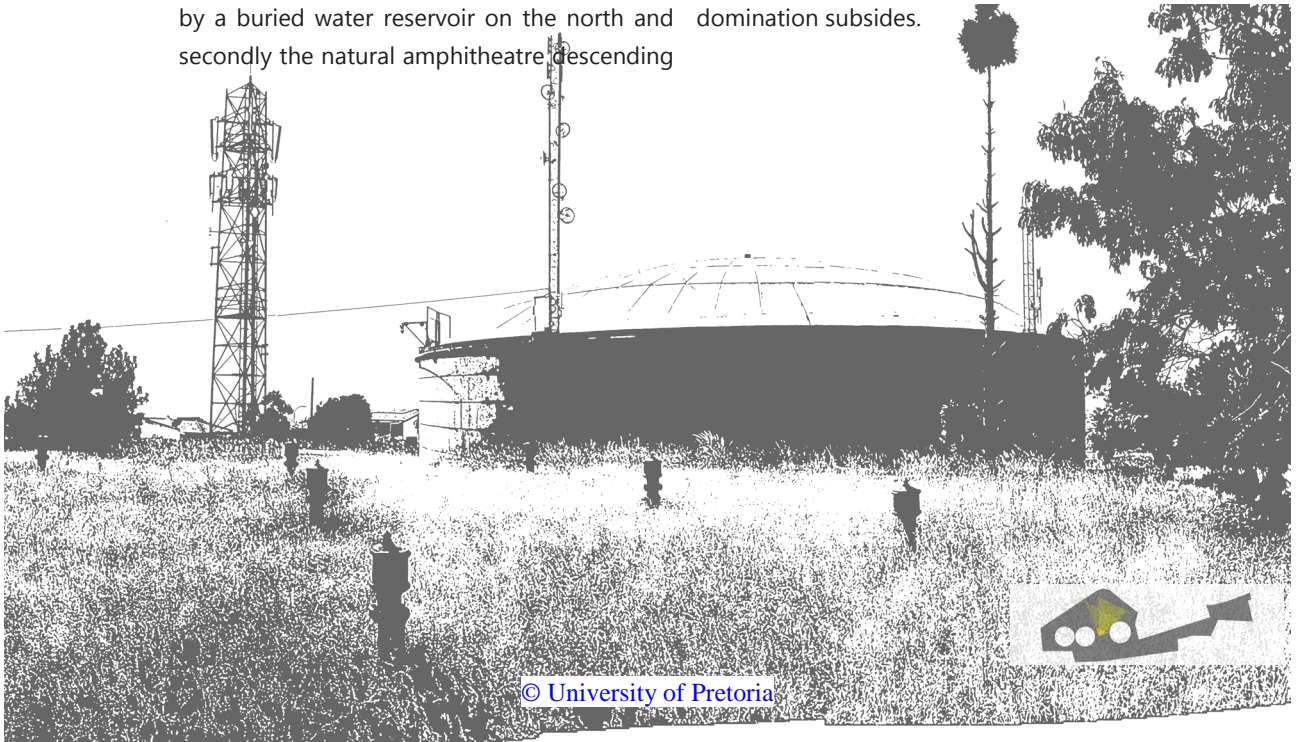
2.6.4 FORTUITY

An instance of chance or occurrence

The chosen site offers the curious visitor many opportunities and experiences. The undulating topography and swells of the distant mountains invite contemplation. This passage of time creates a fluid landscape, accentuated by dynamic shadows and orange skies at dusk and dawn. At 1480 meters above mean sea level and almost one hundred meters higher in elevation than its immediate surroundings, lies a spectacular mediation between the sky and ground. As clouds slowly move over the landscape, shadows they cast can be tracked as they glide over the topography.

The site can be distinguished by two immediately evident conditions: First: the podium created by a buried water reservoir on the north and secondly the natural amphitheatre descending

toward the south. Both conditions deliver views over Atteridgeville and beyond. While the sheltered southern-end calls for a more intimate resolution of programme, the north is less demanding and accommodates for larger gatherings. These qualities, in combination with the placement of the cylindrical giants, create a natural transition through space directed by the curves of the reservoirs. Approaching from the northern edge, the site bottlenecks between the *big friendly giants* accentuating their gravitas. However, the experience of approach from the south is completely different. Although this appears tiresome on plan, the steepness of the topography shifts the focus towards the physical action of ascending the hill, and the domination subsides.



2.6.5 DIVULGE

Revealing the story of place

By studying the noli-map (Figure 23) the three platonic circles animate the context with their gigantic scale and deep shadows on the sloped topography. Their difference is only noticeable in elevation i.e. the way they are capped. The two reservoirs on the west have a flat concrete roof whilst the larger of the three situated on the east is domed.

With the exception of the largest of the three reservoirs, the site is hidden behind the foliage and the severe plateau created on the hill-top. This podium provides a tranquil, protected depression on the southern portion of the topography. This natural amphitheatre provides views across the undisturbed ridges of the Quagga mountain (Figure 20).

The reserved site stretches towards the east through the linear tail-piece. Obstructed by two residential lots, this tail-piece would otherwise make direct connection with Khoza Street, the high street linking W. F. Nkomo on the north and Maunde Street on the south. Establishing this connection will assist drawing energy from the adjacent shopping complex and active street. These movement routes and possibilities for newly formed connections are highlighted below in Figure 29, but discussed in detail in 2.7. These thoroughfares will act as receptions for the site, welcoming visitors as well as guiding the daily user and resident to take an alternative route home, refer to Part I for major transport nodes.

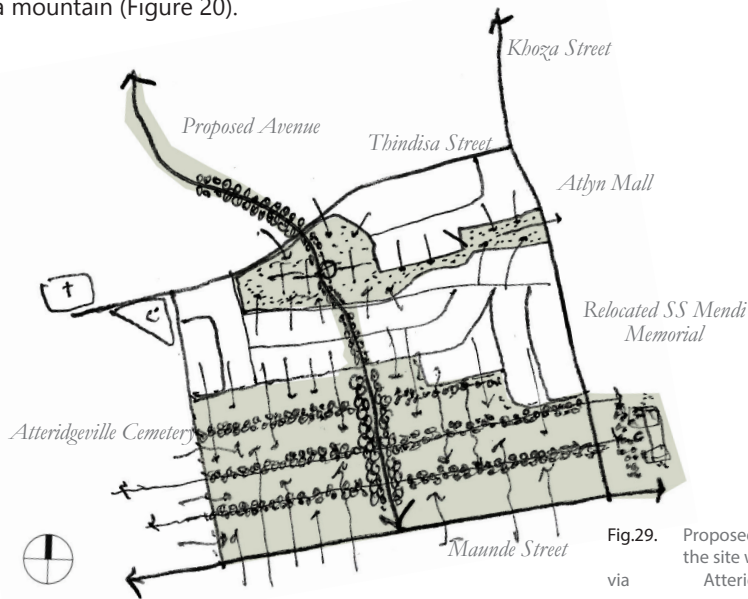


Fig.29. Proposed avenue to connect the site with Maunde Street via Atteridgeville Cemetery.

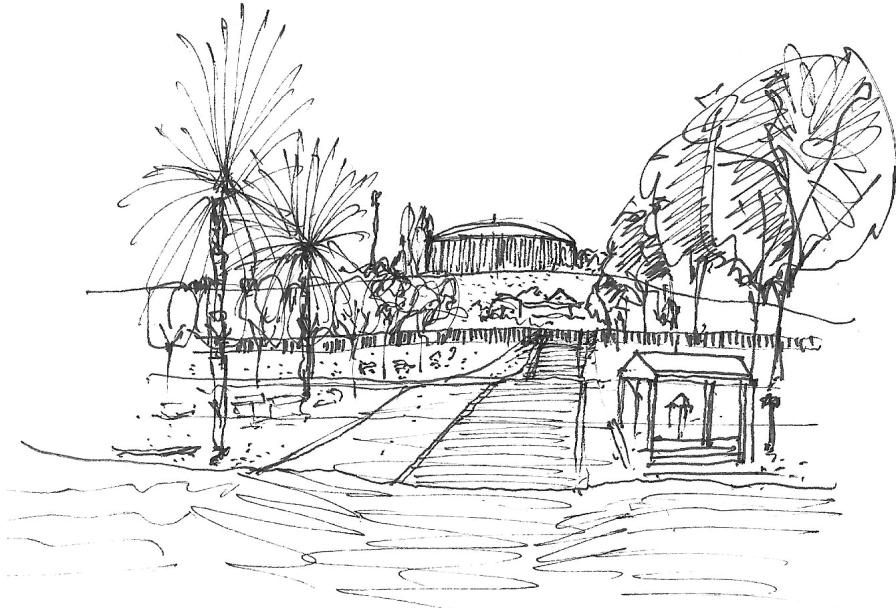


Fig.30. Approach from Atteridgeville Cemetery, south of the site. The 20MI tank dominates the surrounding scale.

The large vehicular artery, Maunde street provides the only point of entry to Atteridgeville from the south. With the cemetery lining Maunde street towards the northern edge, an opportunity exists to connect the cemetery with site 21, as a series of green public spaces that encourage outdoor civic activities (Volume I - urban vision).

As discussed in Volume I, Atteridgeville Cemetery provides an opportune moment to reclaim the lost green spaces that once populated the township. This is predominantly due to its location in the urban fabric and lack of space for new burials. Reintroducing the cemetery as a green space will require a change in perception of burial sites once they are full. The cemetery is currently underutilised with the exception of a few repeat visitors.

The first intervention will be in the form of establishing a southern entrance to site 21 (see Figure 29 and 30). This thoroughfare will allow residents who rely on public transport to descend the hill-top through a newly created 'short-cut'. This new activity will become a catalyst for residents to review how they make use of mono-functional municipal spaces.

This mono-functionality can be noticed in both the cemetery and water reservoir site. In the case of the water reservoirs, the removal of the boundary fence will aid in creating curiosity on the site as a point of surveillance. With time, the site will be infiltrated with activity, appropriated by the immediate residents, school children and passers-by. These proposals do however raise concerns with regard to health and safety as the public will have access to the suburb's fresh water supply.

2.7 FRAMEWORK *Layering the site*

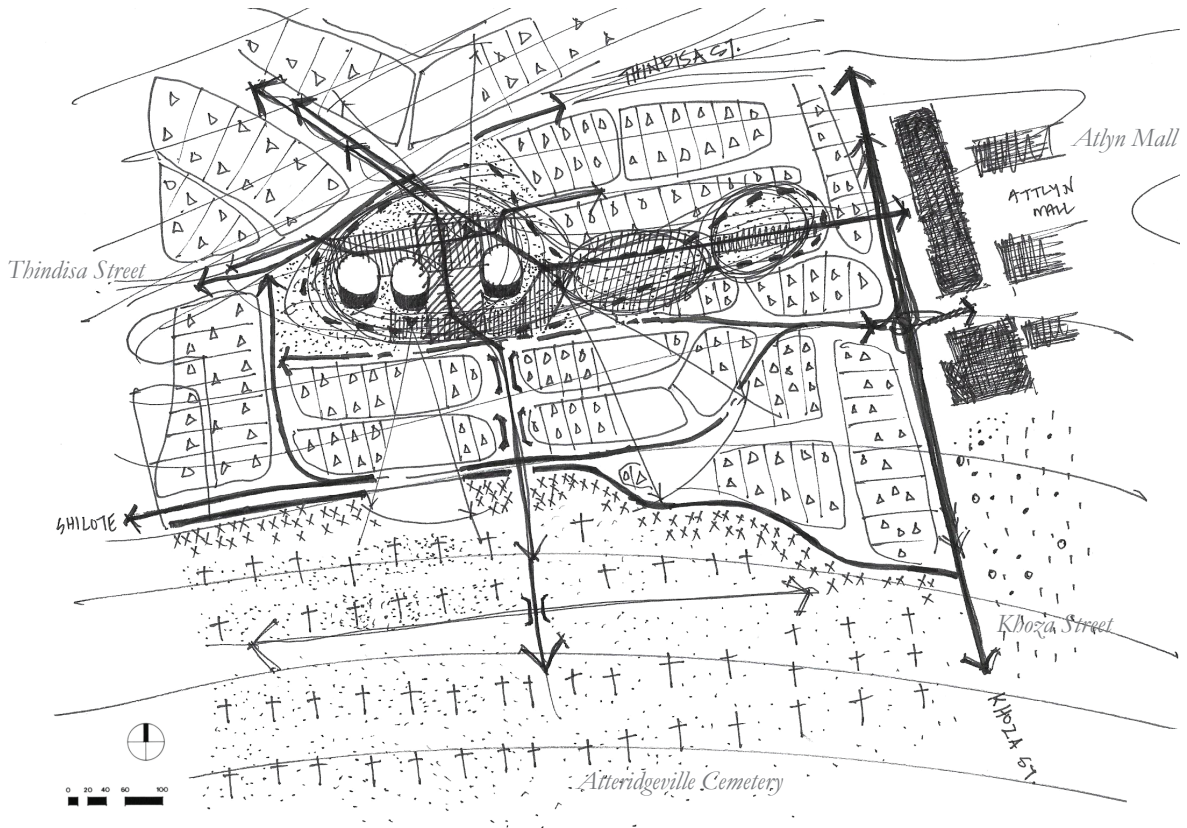
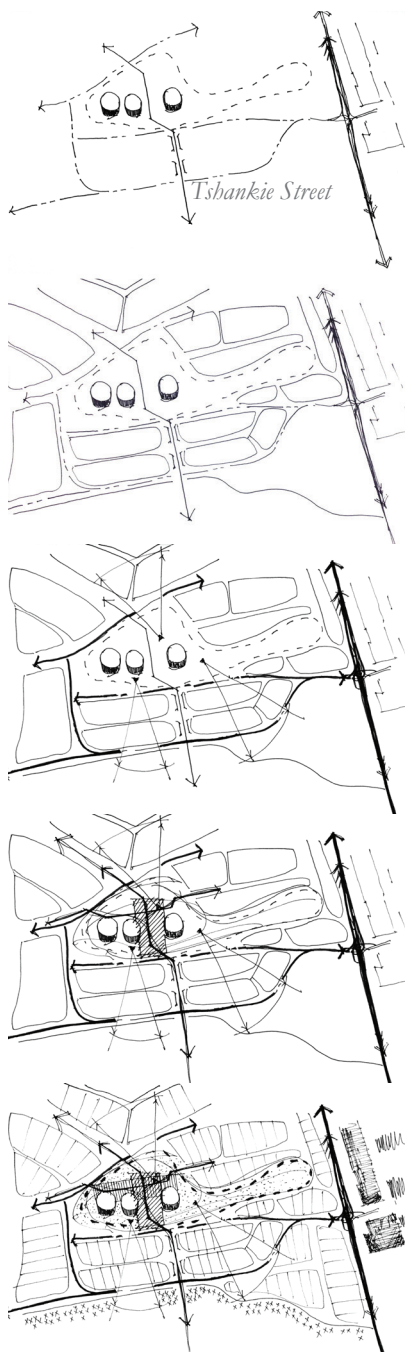


Fig.31. Establishing connections to the surrounding context. Inviting 'the everyday'. April, 2016.

The everyday

“There are two versions of the everyday that exist today, though the two seem contradictory. In one, the everyday is understood as an aesthetic experience tied to democratic values. In the other, the everyday becomes a signifier for the identity of a powerful class”.

(Halley, 1997:191)



A » *Establishing a connection to Atteridgeville Cemetery*

As discussed previously, the success of these thoroughfares is dependent on the energy provided by the daily user. Establishing north-south access to Maunde street will activate the cemetery and draw energy through the site. Challenges include negotiating the topography, and the extension of Tshankie Street which entails the relocation of four family homes.

B » *Inviting surrounding context to infiltrate the site*

This is not exclusive to the homes and retail activities in the immediate context, but rather focuses on providing safety and ease of mobility across the site without jeopardising the quality of water housed on site by ensuring that the new activities do not affect the maintenance of the reservoirs and location of servitudes.

C » *Defining platforms for viewing. Highlighting the genius loci*

The site has marvellous lookout points which include the topics inspired in Chapter 2. These lookout points will attract different users dependant on the time of day, weather and nature of the view point. This creates an additional layer that the site offers to the user, providing opportunities to respond programmatically.

D » *Defining a programme to anchor the site in its context*

Generating a programme fit for the site and context involves examining a broader study of the region. As determined by volume I, Atteridgeville displays a unique attitude to the nature of public facilities in townships. Cross-pollination of programmes and public interaction are major influences on the choice of programmes.

E » *Activating edges to contain activity on site*

The manageability of a 1.8 hectare site in such a tight-knit fabric such as Atteridgeville is dependant on the success of its linkages with its surroundings, and interaction with neighbouring residences. Ownership and infiltration of local activities must be harnessed and encouraged.

Fig.32. Activating the site. Exploration. April, 2016

2.8 INFERENCES

Understanding context to forecast development

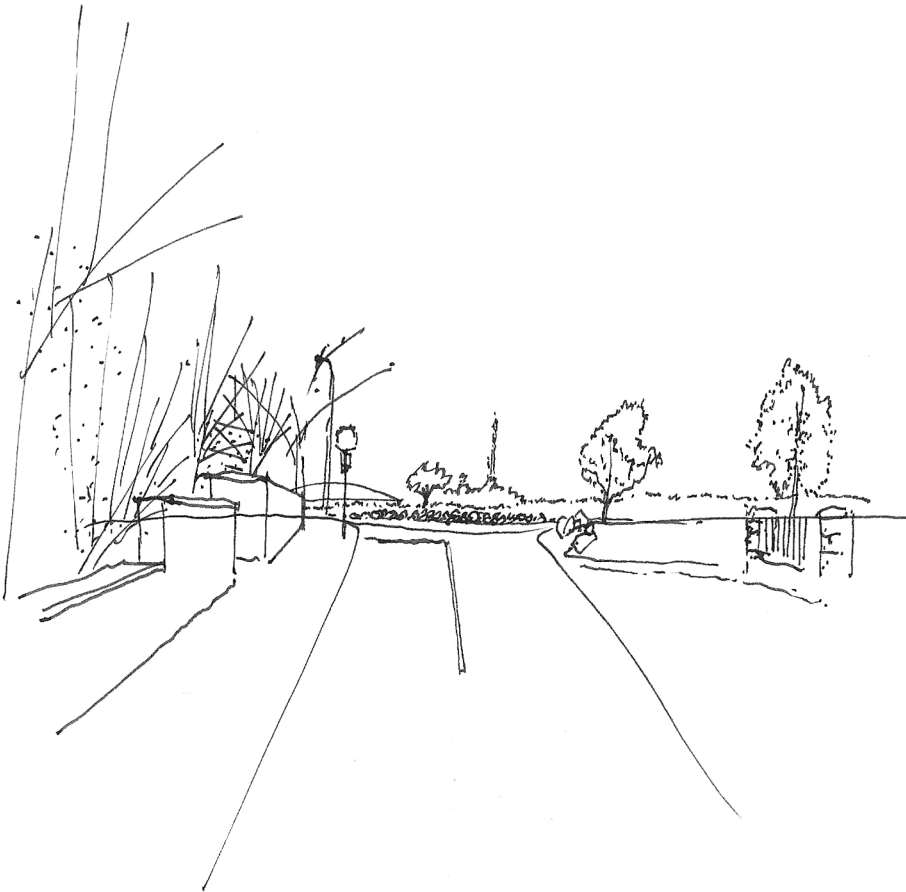


Fig.33. Approach from Tlale Street. With the exception of the domed concrete roof, the tanks are hidden behind the topography.

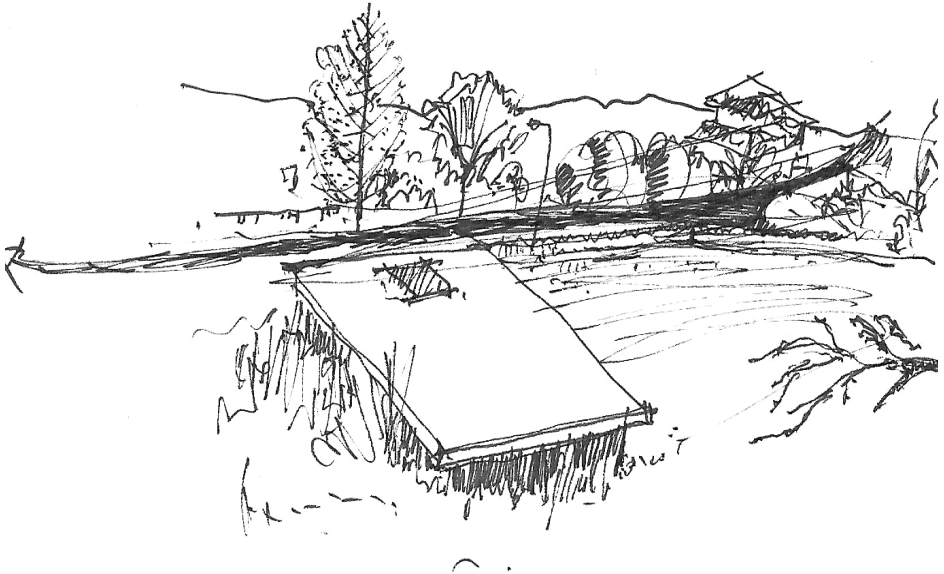


Fig.34. On site sketch, highlighting the tranquillity of the hill and the serenity of the surrounding neighbourhood.

Ten primary schools and seven high schools make up the original planning of Oudstad. Children are a large part of the success of the *3rd place* in Atteridgeville due to their prominence in the public realm.

After-school activities range from the organised sport training and competitive leagues to the less formal street games and socialising. The wide streets provide the children with a place for recreation as they wait for their parents or working relatives to return home (see Volume I).

The presence and safety of children become an integral part of the

framework. It is vital to provide a place for them to congregate safely, share and communicate ideas and skills. Finally, to experiment and be encouraged to remain curious.

The proposed framework attempts to create an inclusive site to act as a stimulant for the *urban receptors* (described in 4.4.1). The micro-scale intricacies should be respected and built upon to ensure the safety and well being of the predominant user. Furthermore, the site should express the value of water in all aspects of life, from the household scale to the planet at large.