

## CHAPTER TWO

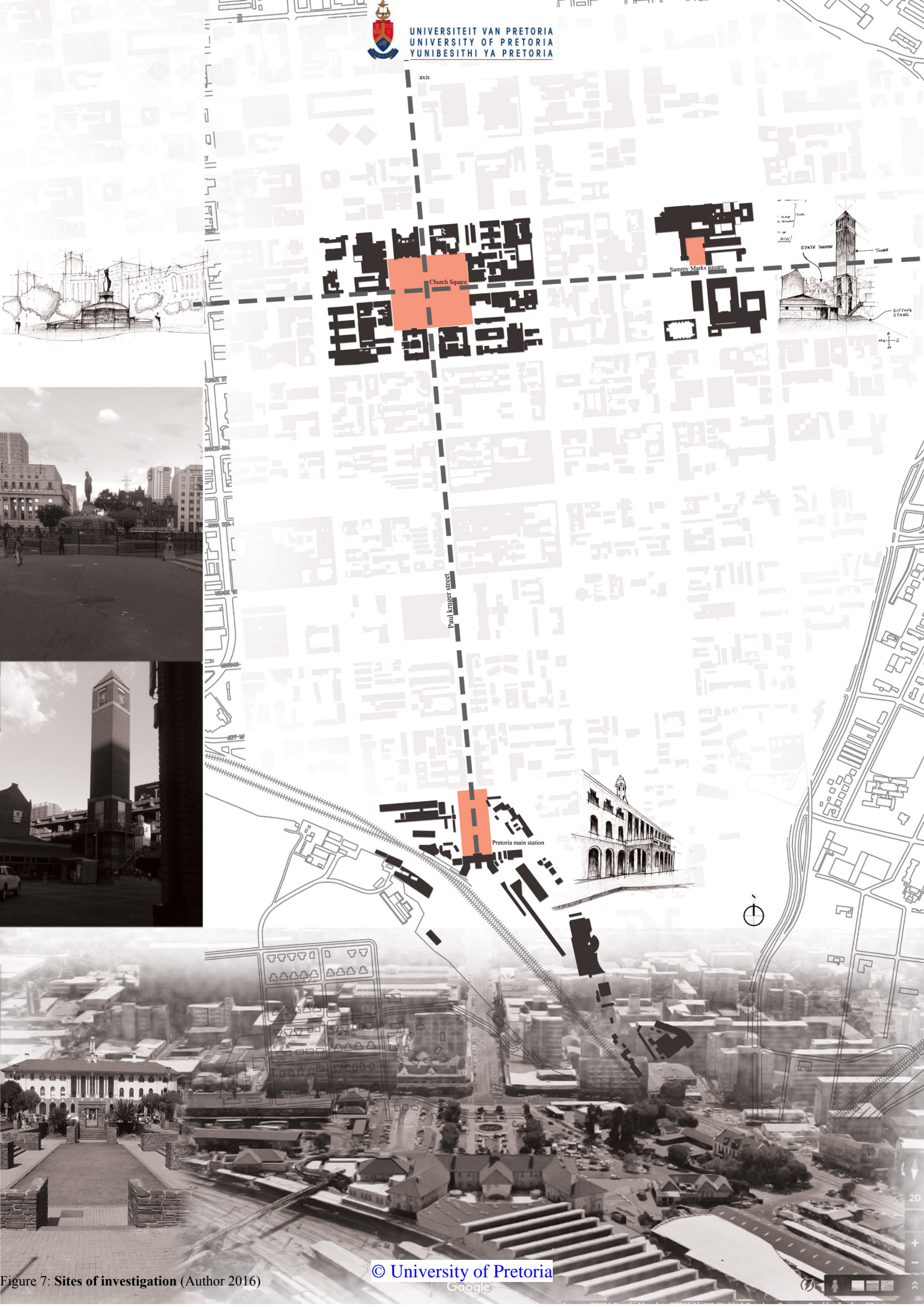


Figure 7: Sites of investigation (Author 2016)

## Real world problem: analysis of public spaces in Pretoria

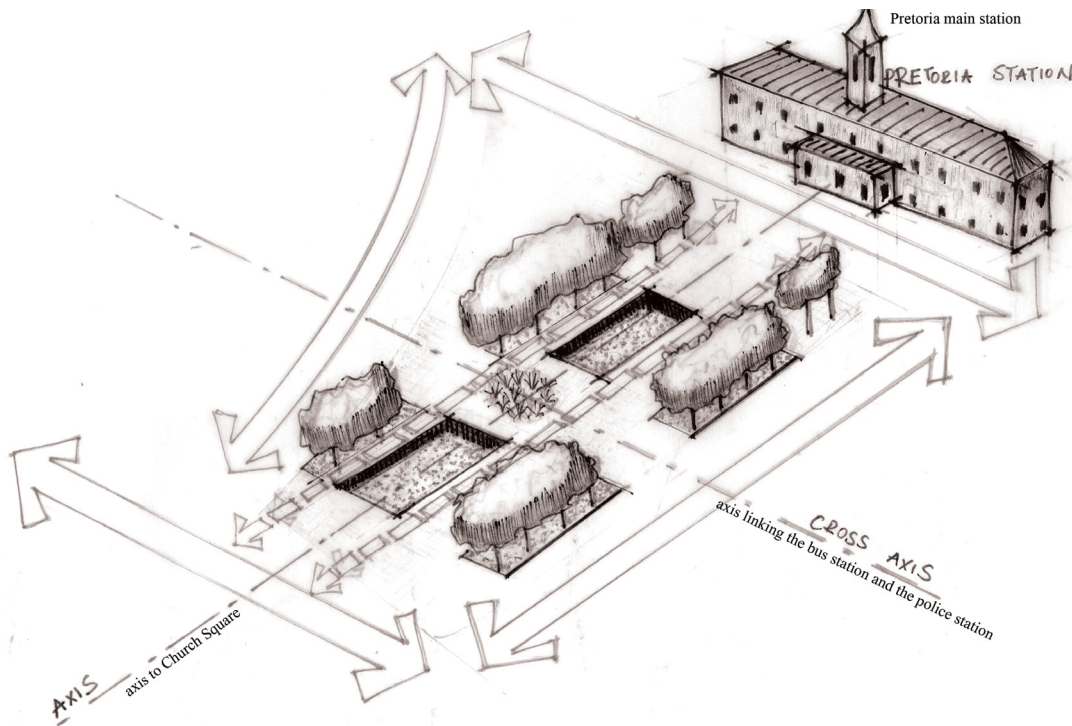
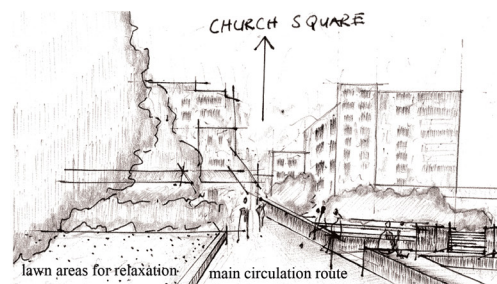
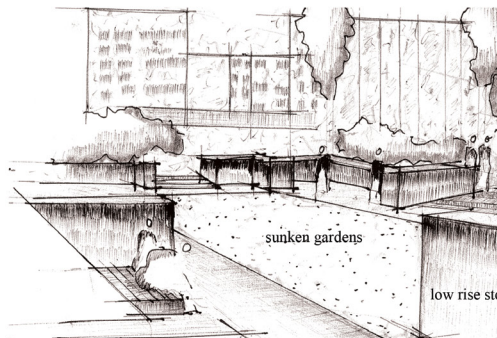


Figure 8: Pretoria main station analysis (Author 2016)

### Design composition

- Axis connecting to Church Square
- Symmetry
- Focal point (planting that sits on the cross axis)
- Geometric forms
- Emphasis of the Station building by making use of trees to frame it



## 2.1. Introduction

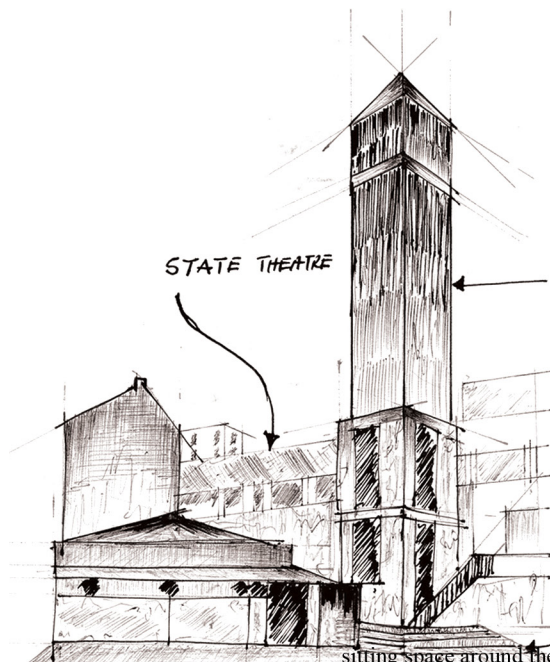
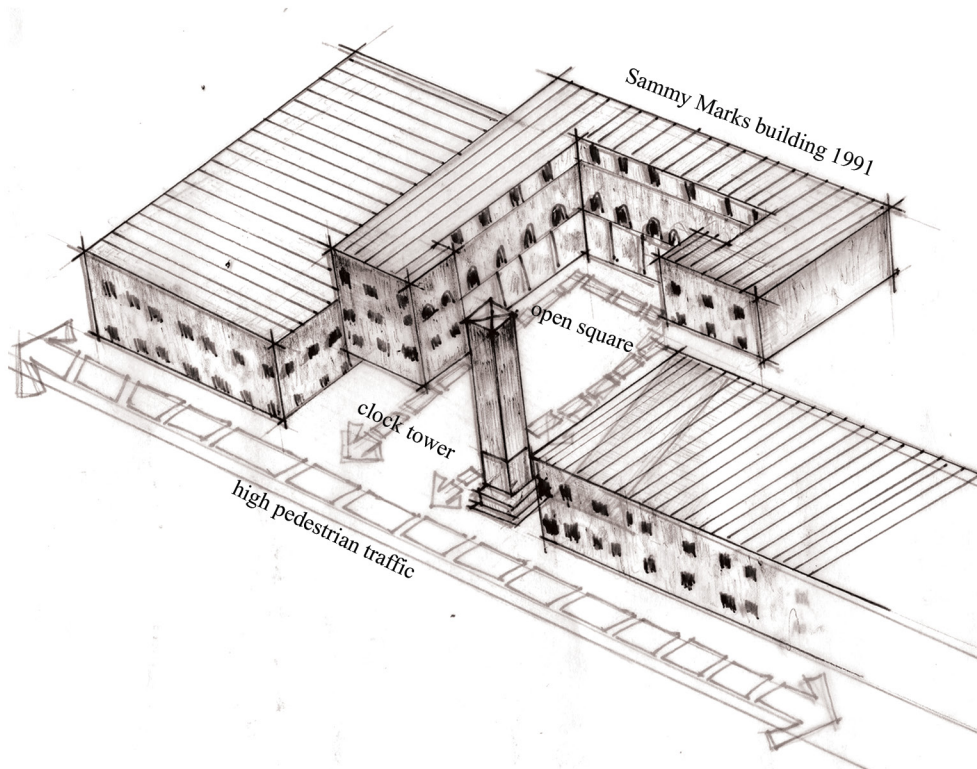
In an attempt to understand the degree to which public spaces in Pretoria represent Western classical ideas (colonial references), three prominent public open spaces in the city were analysed. These three spaces were selected based on their typological differences so as to broaden the nature of the investigation. The first site is the landscape in front of the Pretoria Station building, which is situated on a busy transport interchange. The second site is the Sammy Marks Square, which consists of a hard surface urban square. Lastly, the third site is Church Square, which has a park-like feel and look.

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Figure 9: **Sammy Marks Square analysis** (Author 2016)

Design composition

- The clock tower as a main design element in the open space



Real world problem: analysis of public spaces in Pretoria

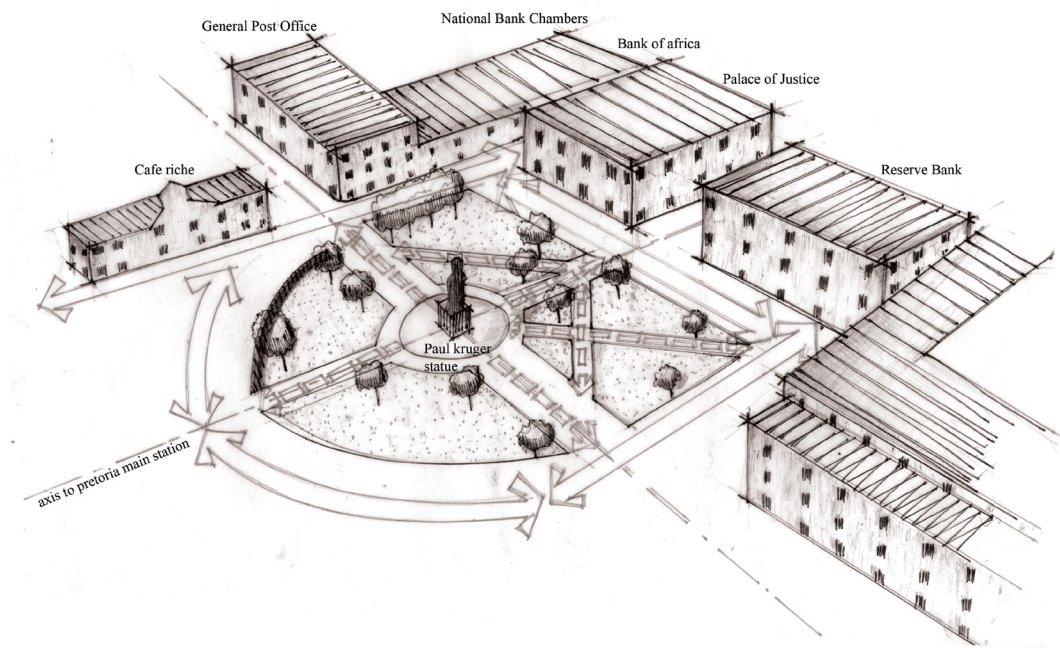
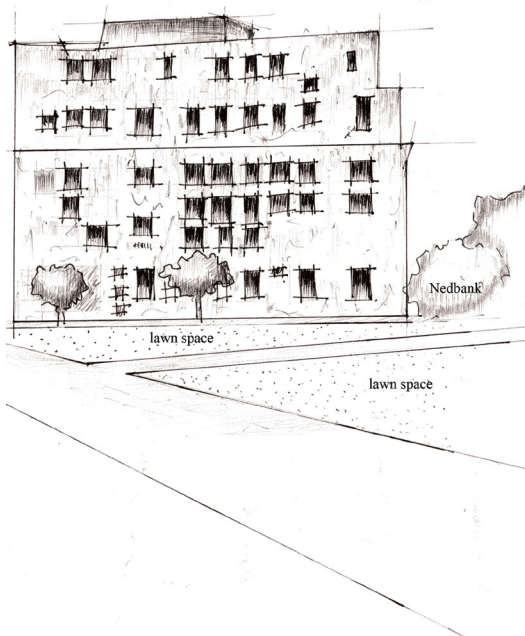


Figure 10: Church Square analysis (Author 2016)

Design composition

- Axis connecting to Pretoria Station
- Focal point (statue)
- Symmetry
- Order
- Geometric forms



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Figure 11:  
**Interpretation of  
Serlio's tragic stage set**  
(Author 2016)

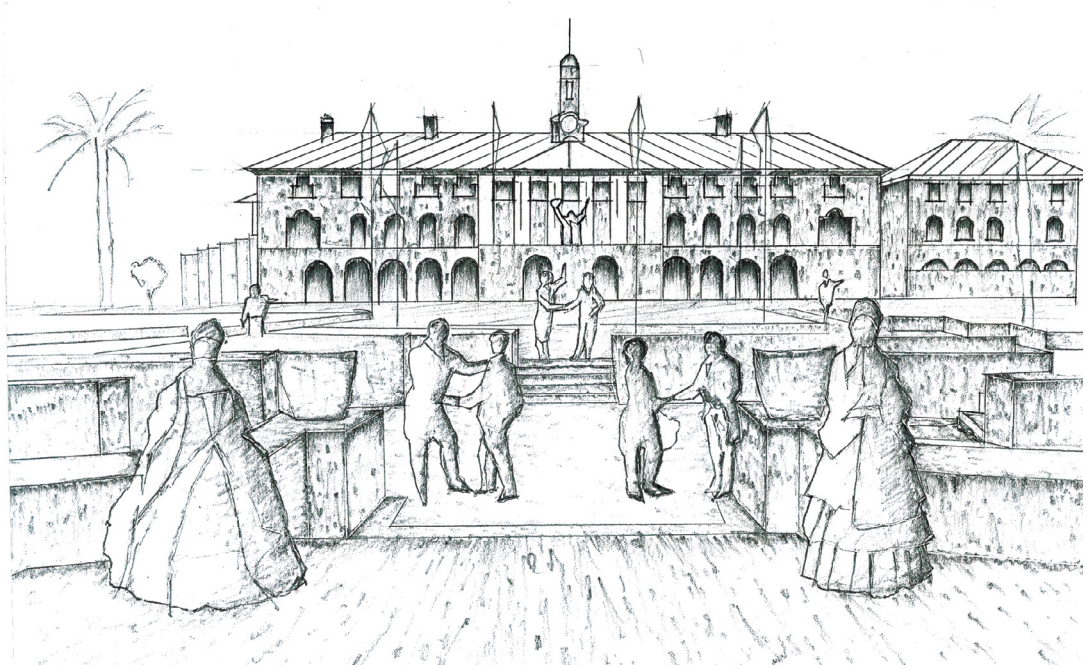


Figure 12:  
**Interpretation of  
Serlio's comic stage set**  
(Author 2016)

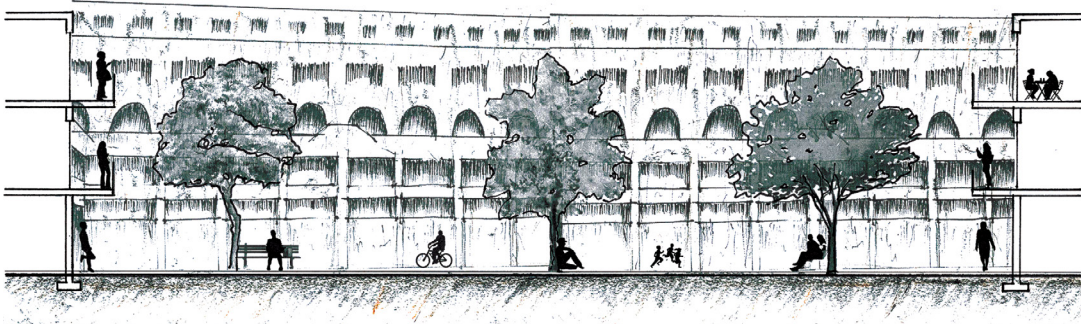
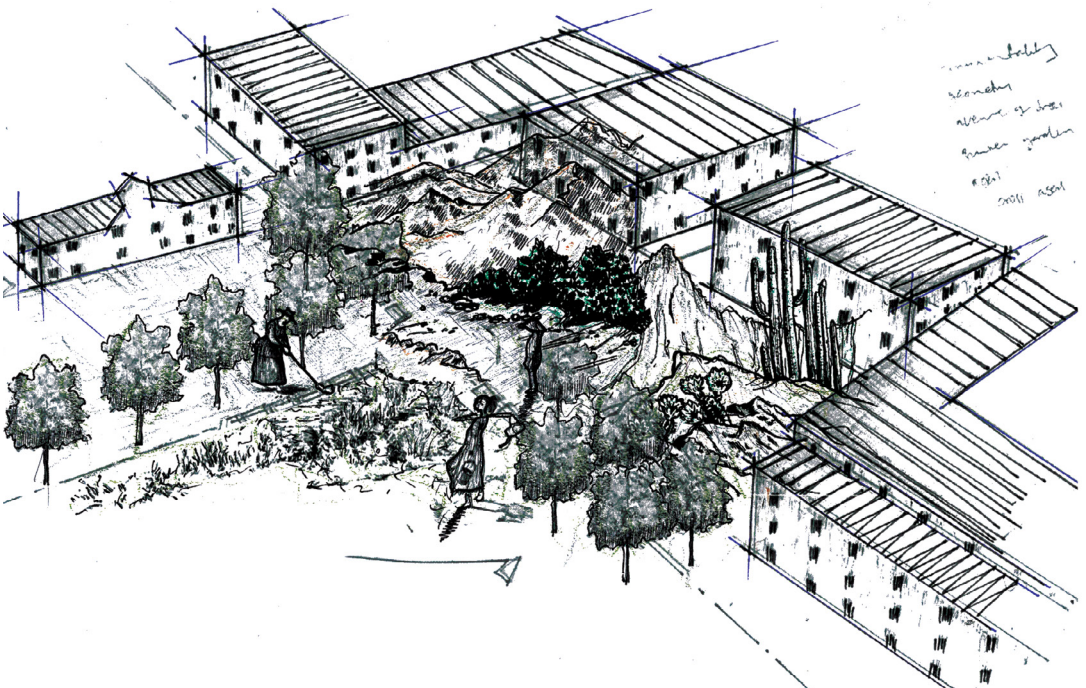


Figure 13:  
**Interpretation of  
Serlio's satiric stage set**  
(Author 2016)



## 2.2. Summary of analysis

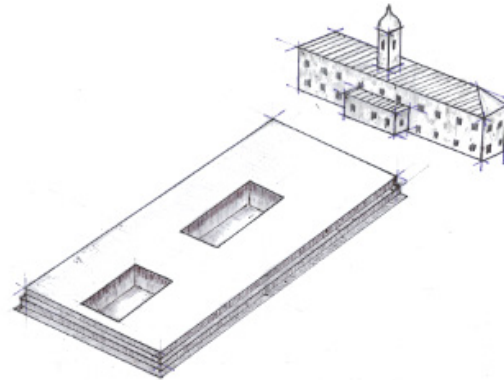
Out of the three sites, Church Square had the most direct linkage to what might be termed *colonial* because of the Paul Kruger statue that sits in the middle of the site. However, what is apparent is that all sites express a neo-renaissance design language which consists of a geometric layout, geometric shapes, the inclusion of a statuary (Church Square), order and symmetry. Church Square and Pretoria Station consist of similar design elements whereas Sammy Marks Square is different from the other two sites because of its resemblance to an Italian piazza with its characteristics of an open hard surface and a clock tower.

The order and formality that defines the design language of the three investigated sites relates to what Sebastiano Serlio (Renaissance architect and scenographer) termed a *tragic stage set* (Beyer et al. 2008). Serlio identified a *tragic stage set* in the city as a place that is monumental, formal and ordered, instead of being *comic* (celebrating every day activities) and *satiric* (celebrating the importance of wild nature in the city) (Beyer et al. 2008). This is the same problem that is identified in the analysis of the three public spaces in the city. The main issue is not that the spaces are not being used, but that the spaces no longer celebrate the everyday life of an ordinary contemporary city inhabitant. For this reason, the three spaces need to be conceptualised as *comic* and *satiric stage sets*.

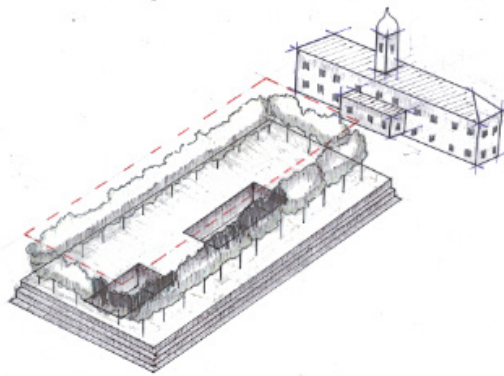
## 2.3. Conceptual scenarios of the three sites as theatrical stage sets

In an attempt to integrate the *tragic*, *comic* and *satiric* characteristics of city spaces, the three sites were conceptualised as theatrical stage sets. Each stage set was according to what the site resembles. For example, Sammy Marks Square resembles a comic stage set because it is a place where people go for shopping, sit under the clock tower and watch other people (everyday activities). Church Square is both tragic (surrounded by monumental buildings) and satiric (it has more vegetation than the other two sites). Pretoria Station consists of a bit of all three stage sets, tragic (station building) and satiric (few vegetation on the site) and comic (sitting spaces, movement of people).

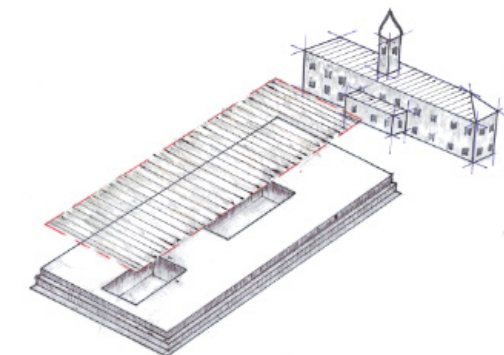
Figure 14: Pretoria station as a tragic stage set (Author 2016)



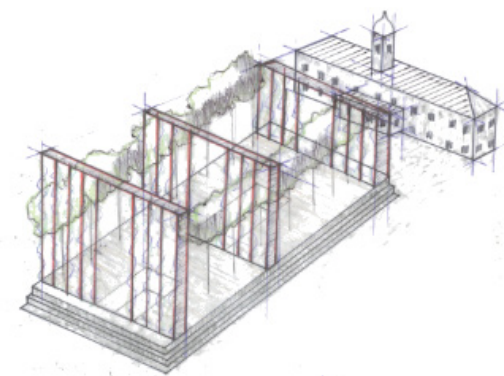
Raise the site so to create the idea of a stage and to make the site become a feature in its context. By raising the site, the two sunken gardens become more deep and give an opportunity to create walled gardens (Author 2016).



Create a boundary between the performance space and the other spaces. Make use of vertical elements such as trees and walls (Author 2016).



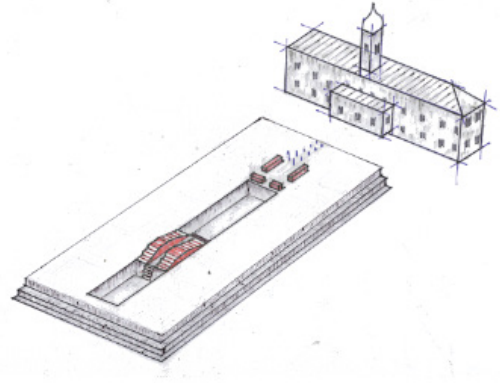
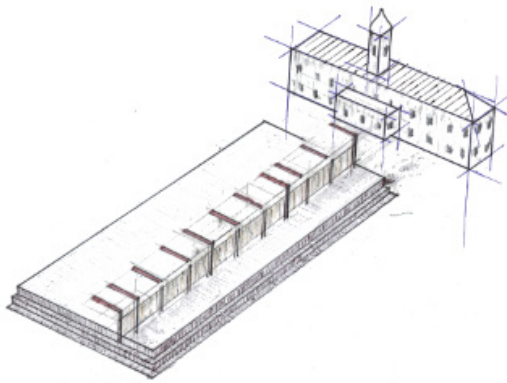
Create overhead structures to create a total sense of enclosure and as a result give definition of the site as a performance space or fictional space that is separated from the real world (Author 2016).



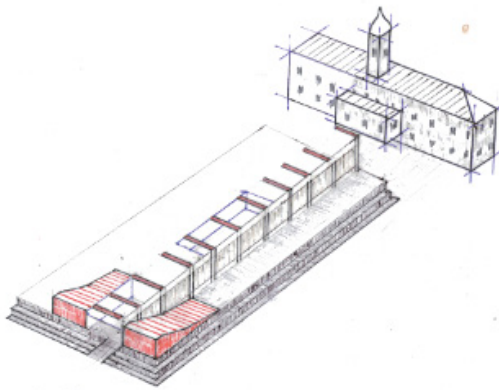
Envisioning a scene with the Pretoria station building as a background in the scene. The building reveals itself as one approaches it. The 3 structures gives the impression of a background, middleground and foreground (Author 2016).

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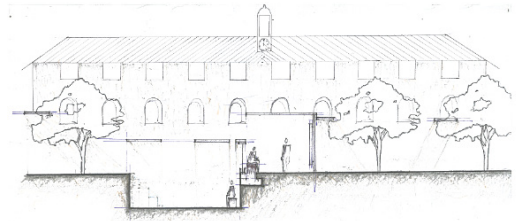
Creating an alternative path to the building for people who do not want to walk through the sunken gardens. The linear path is an example of how the author wanted to emphasise and exaggerate the formality of the existing landscape (Author 2016).



Idea of having two big stairs that overlook the whole site. Between the two stairs is a long linear path that takes you to the building entrance (Author 2016).

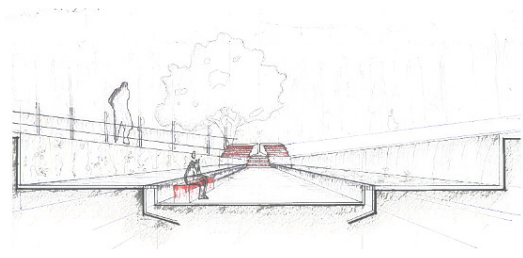
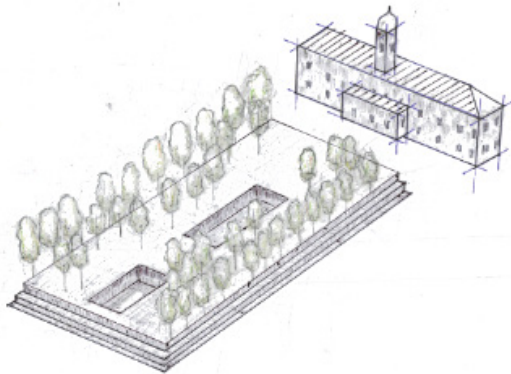


Create an anticlimax between the two sunken gardens. The anticlimax is in the form of a set of stairs that act as a threshold (Author 2016).



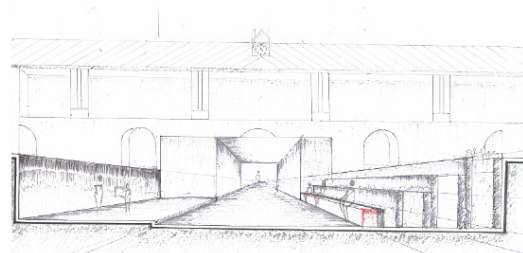
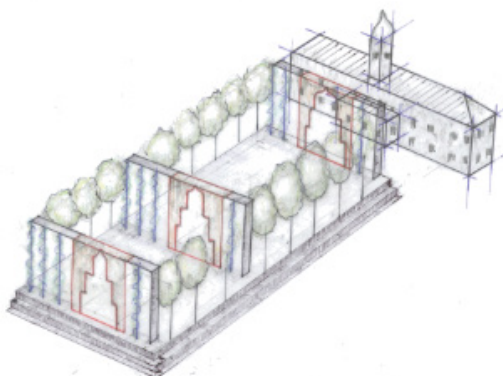
Conceptual scenario of the sunken spaces (Author 2016)

Tree placement on site. The layout is influenced by overlaying one of the concept diagrams on the site (Author 2016).



Conceptual scenario of the sunken spaces (Author 2016)

Creation of structures that resemble the station building's clock tower. The structures run throughout the whole site and they give a framed view from the park entry to the building entry (Author 2016).



Conceptual scenario of the sunken spaces (Author 2016)

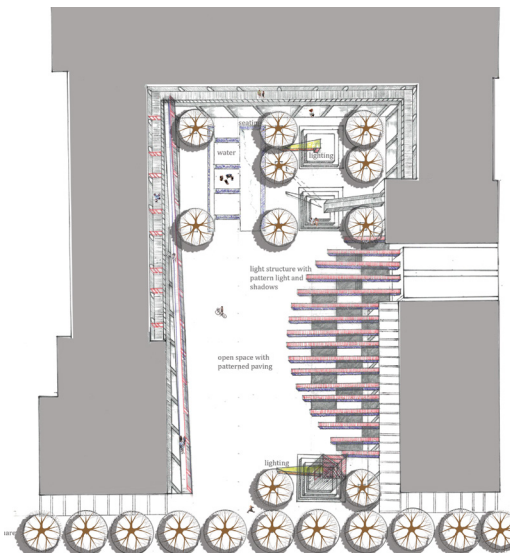
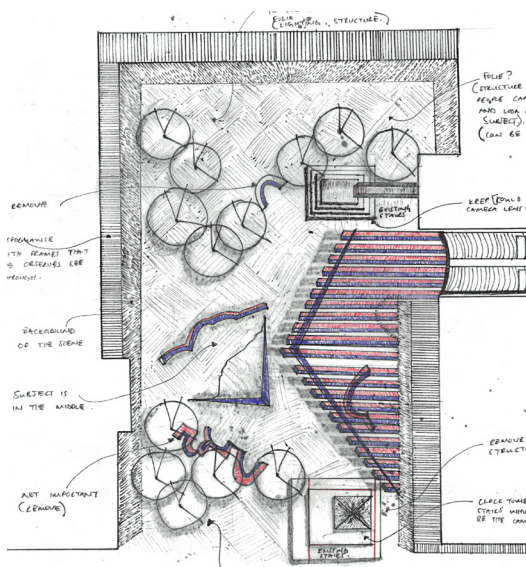


Real world problem: analysis of public spaces in Pretoria



Figure 15: **Sammy marks square as a comic stage set** (Author 2016)

Using stage lighting generate form (the exploration is intuitive)

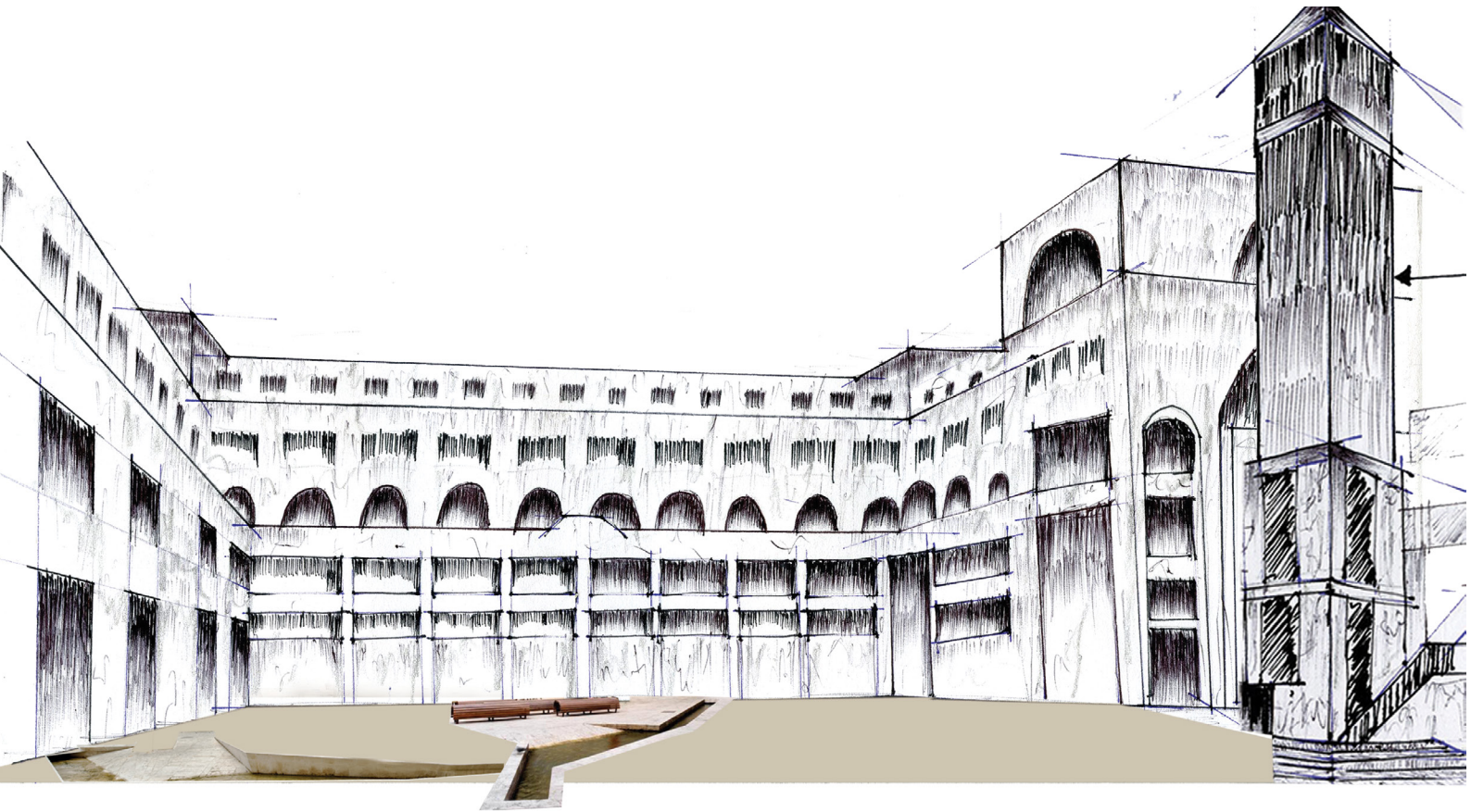


Concept plans based on intuitive explorations (Author 2016)

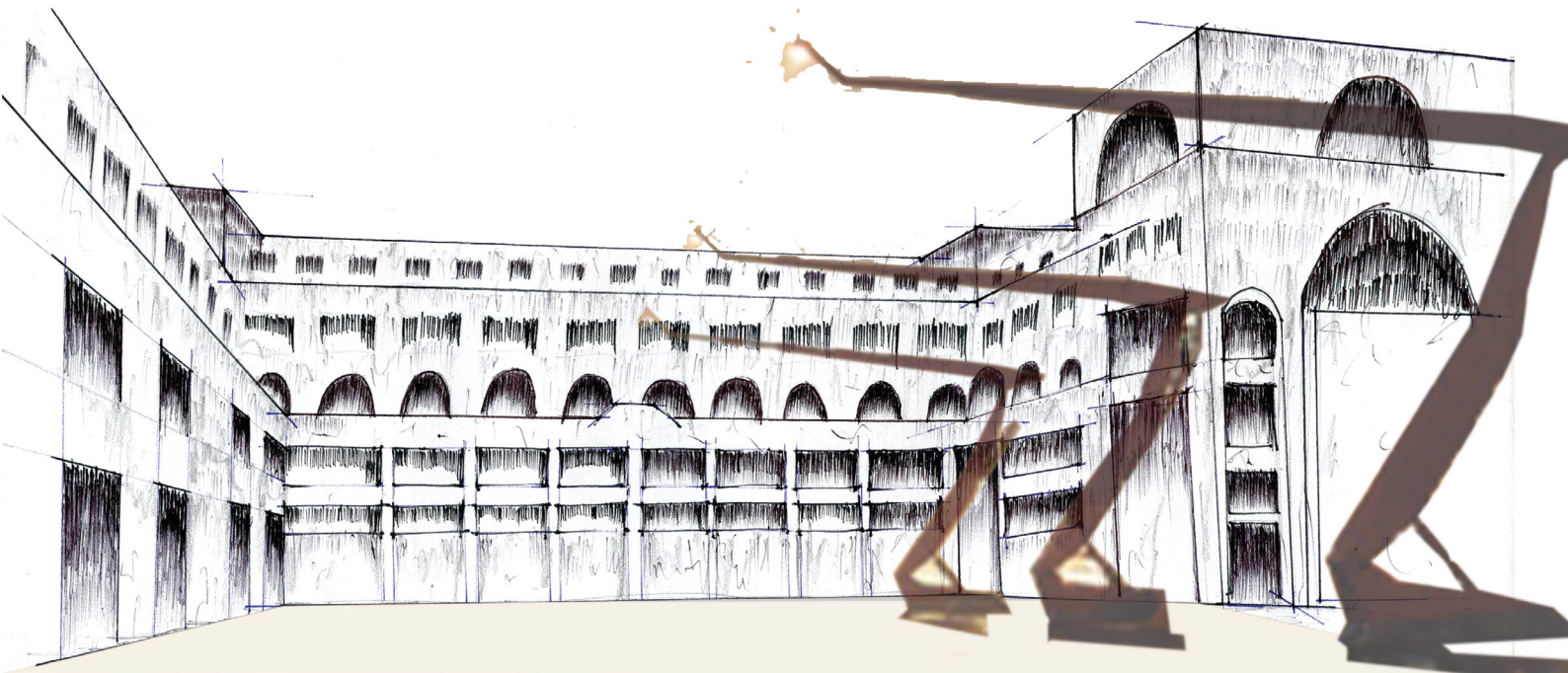


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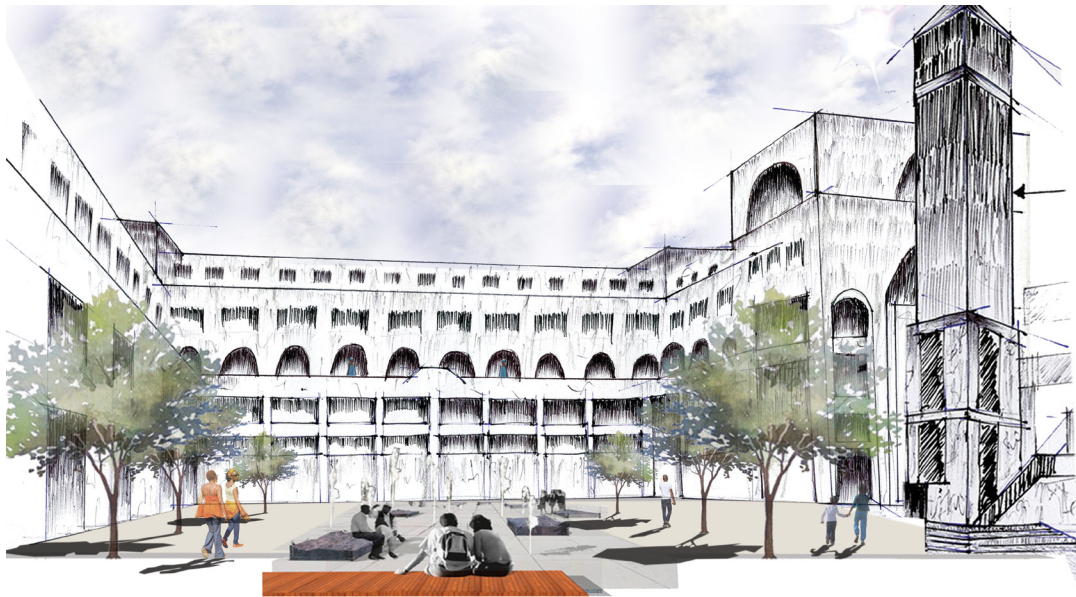


Conceptual scenario one (collage Inspired by Public Spaces in Banyoles, Spain by Mias Arquitectes) (Author 2016)



Conceptual scenario two (collage Inspired by Schouwburgplein, Rotterdam, The Netherlands by west8 (Author 2016)

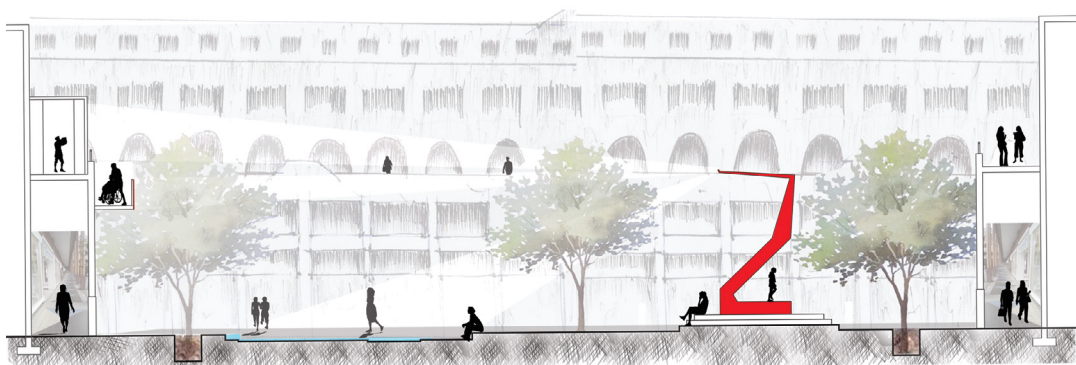
Real world problem: analysis of public spaces in Pretoria



Conceptual scenario three (collage Inspired by the Agora Theatre, Nathan Phillips Square by Plant Architect Inc) (Author 2016)



Conceptual scenario four (collage Inspired by Public Spaces in Banyoles, Spain by Mias Arquitectes) (Author 2016)

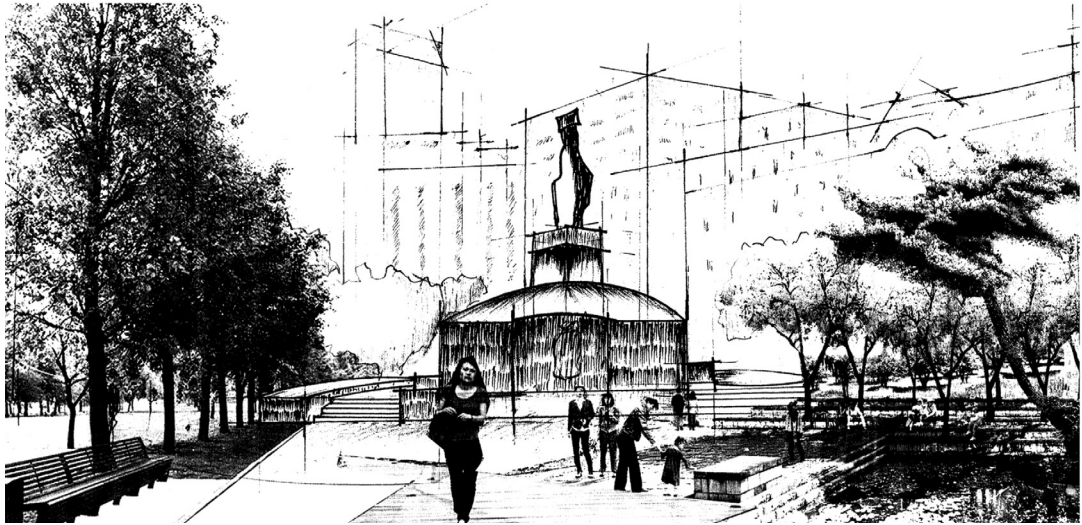


Conceptual section (Author 2016)

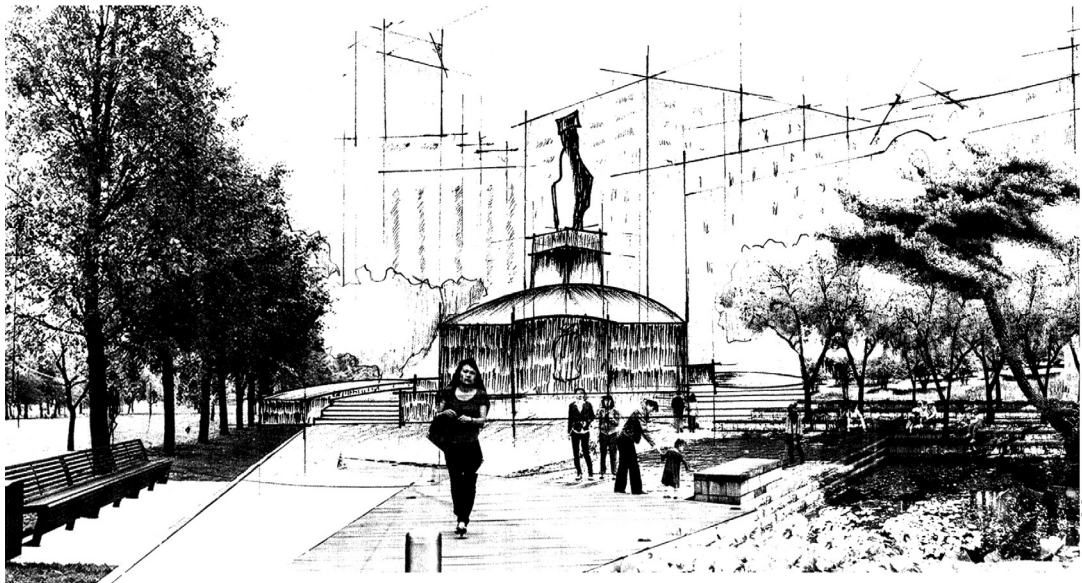
ramp/movie screen
water feature
sitting area next to water
light / art piece

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Figure 16: Church Square as a satiric stage set (Author 2016)



Conceptual scenario one: vegetation is used to define form and spaces in the park (Author 2016)



Conceptual scenario two: introduction of wild vegetation and water elements to create a natural setting (Author 2016)



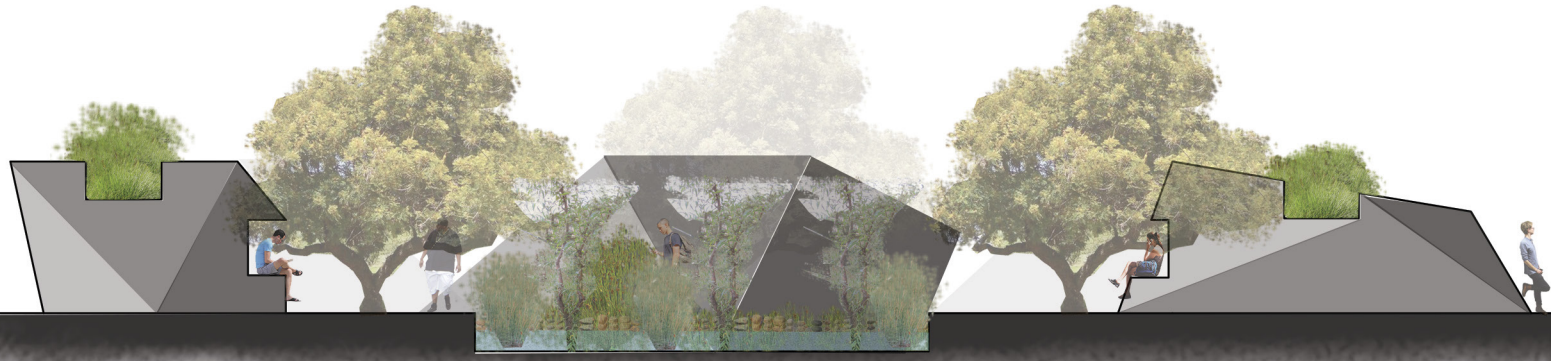
Conceptual scenario three: colonnades define walkways (Author 2016).

## 2.4. Conclusion

The analysis proved that the narrative of public spaces in the city need to be re-imagined so that it becomes relevant to the current users of the city spaces. Moreover, the analysis showed that the issue concerning public spaces is not about bad design or lack of use by city inhabitants, but the issue is relevance. What story are these spaces telling?

Eragostis curvula  
(weeping grass)

Peltophorum africanum Concrete masses  
(weeping wattle)



Designing a scene that promotes dialogue between park visitors

Searsia leptodictya

Ziziphus mucronata

Erythrina lysistemon

BUS ROUTE



Creating an emotional neutral scene through the design of an open well lit space with a water feature

parallel to visually cut off the lower  
park edge with walkway.  
raised surfaces  
individual path  
turbulent water fall  
water fall

Section A-A

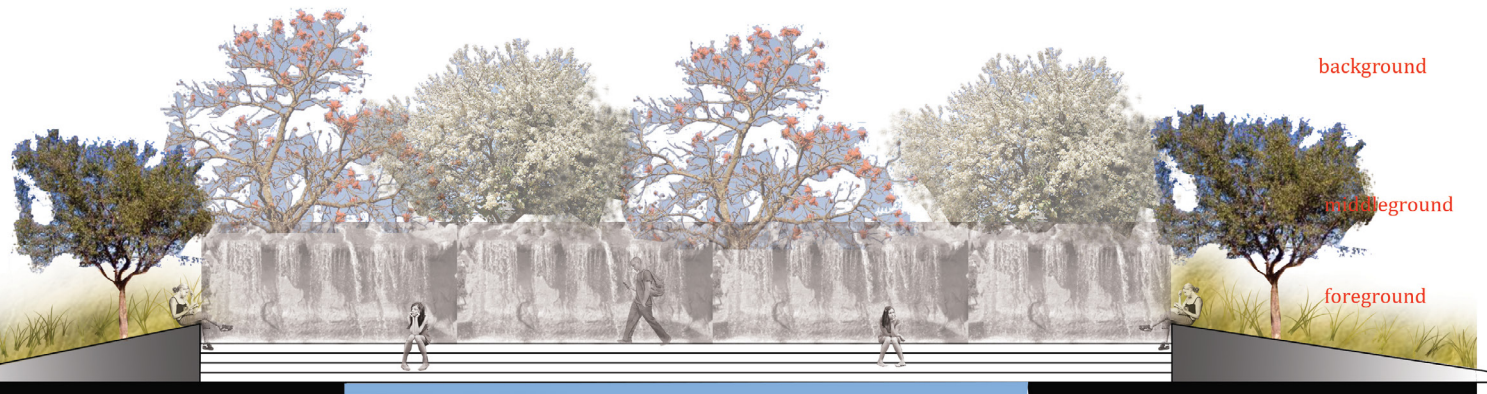
Section C-C

Ziziphus mucronata

Dombeya rotundifolia

Erythrina lysistemon

Eragrostis curvula



background

middle ground

foreground

Using the background, middle ground and foreground for scene composition

