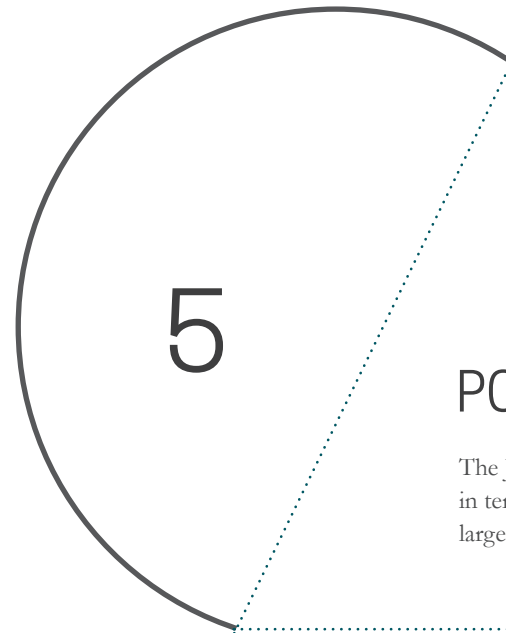


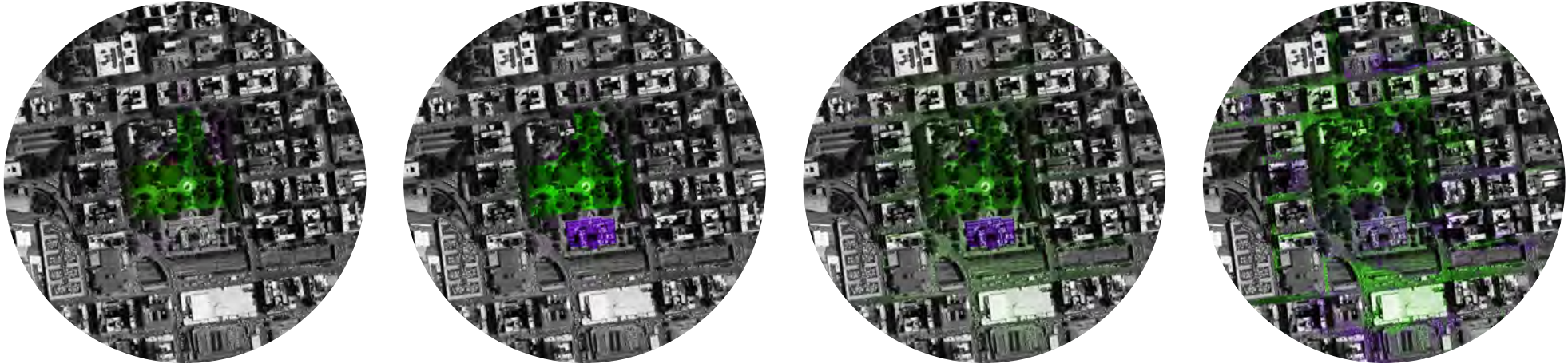


Figure 5: Extending the park into the city fabric.



## POTENTIAL OF SITE

The Joubert Park Group explores the site in terms of its potential value to the city at large.



Joubert Park is faltering due to the encroaching city and the privatisation of portions of the park, detracting from the public space.

Through the affirmation of identity and the strengthening of identities that are currently under-valued in the precinct, the park can develop a stronger presence in the city. This will result in the park being viewed as an asset to the city of Johannesburg.

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**Figure 5.1:** Conceptual diagrams of the park and JAG as a cultural center bleeding into the city.

## 5.1. PRECINCT VISION

### Re-establishing place

# PRECINCT VISION

The Joubert Park Group (hereafter JPG) created a conceptual framework that extends the timeline of Joubert Park. This framework strives to establish the park precinct as a place that by enhancing its identity within the city of Johannesburg, which will hopefully eradicate thoughts of destroying it in the name of progress. By using existing structures and rituals and by introducing new ones, the daily functioning of the park will be enhanced and opportunities will be created for the everyday and the extraordinary to occur.

Place, as defined by Donlyn Lyndon (2009), “is space that can be remembered”. She goes on to say that place is created in two ways: through structures that imply order in space or through events. These events are either continually recurring rituals rooted in the space or take place as a singular occurrence. It is then that the place has the capacity to aid in the creation of collective cultural identity (Lyndon 2009).

Joubert Park is currently in jeopardy of becoming a “non-place” due to the decreasing impact and presence of its formal structures, which is amplified by the park’s tendency to act as a mere thoroughfare for daily commuters, leaving little of the park fulfilled by those who wish to dwell here. The park’s consideration as a potential taxi holding by the city of Johannesburg is testament to its depleting sense of place.

In fast-paced, high-density urban settings such as Johannesburg, it is important to maintain our open spaces for public interaction, especially those spaces with historic and cultural significance. The park’s identity as a public green space is in a state of decay with the privatisation of various areas of the park leading to the throttling of public place.

If the park’s “sense of place” is rehabilitated and reinforced it will foster its existing identities and allow for the development of new ones. This implies, from an architectural point of view, that the facilitation

of rituals and events in and around Joubert Park will contribute to the salvation and creation of identity in Johannesburg.

As discussed in Betsky’s article, entitled *The Architecture of Liminal Spaces*, most public space today is filled with commercial ventures, leading us into a false belief that public space and commercial space are intertwined. He calls for different types of spaces that do not exclude, filter or discriminate between users or functions (Betsky 2015). In this sense, spaces like Joubert Park can become truly public. Not merely the fact that it has the potential to become one of the largest green spaces in the city once more; and not only because it will form a continuum of green spaces throughout the city at the heart of The Seam project (NLA N.d) (see figure 2), but also because it does not define what should and should not occur here. The idea of undefined space is made evident through the narrative of site visits and the vastly different activities and user groups that occupy the space on various days.

By enhancing everyday occurrences and allowing for more activities to evolve, the JPG will attempt to bring together that which is necessary in creating place. Bringing together different aspects of everyday functions within the area with extraordinary places and groups of people we hope to uplift the everyday and make the extraordinary accessible to all.

Our projects have been divided into various stages along the scale of the extraordinary and the everyday in order to ensure that together a variety of aspects regarding the site can be dealt with.

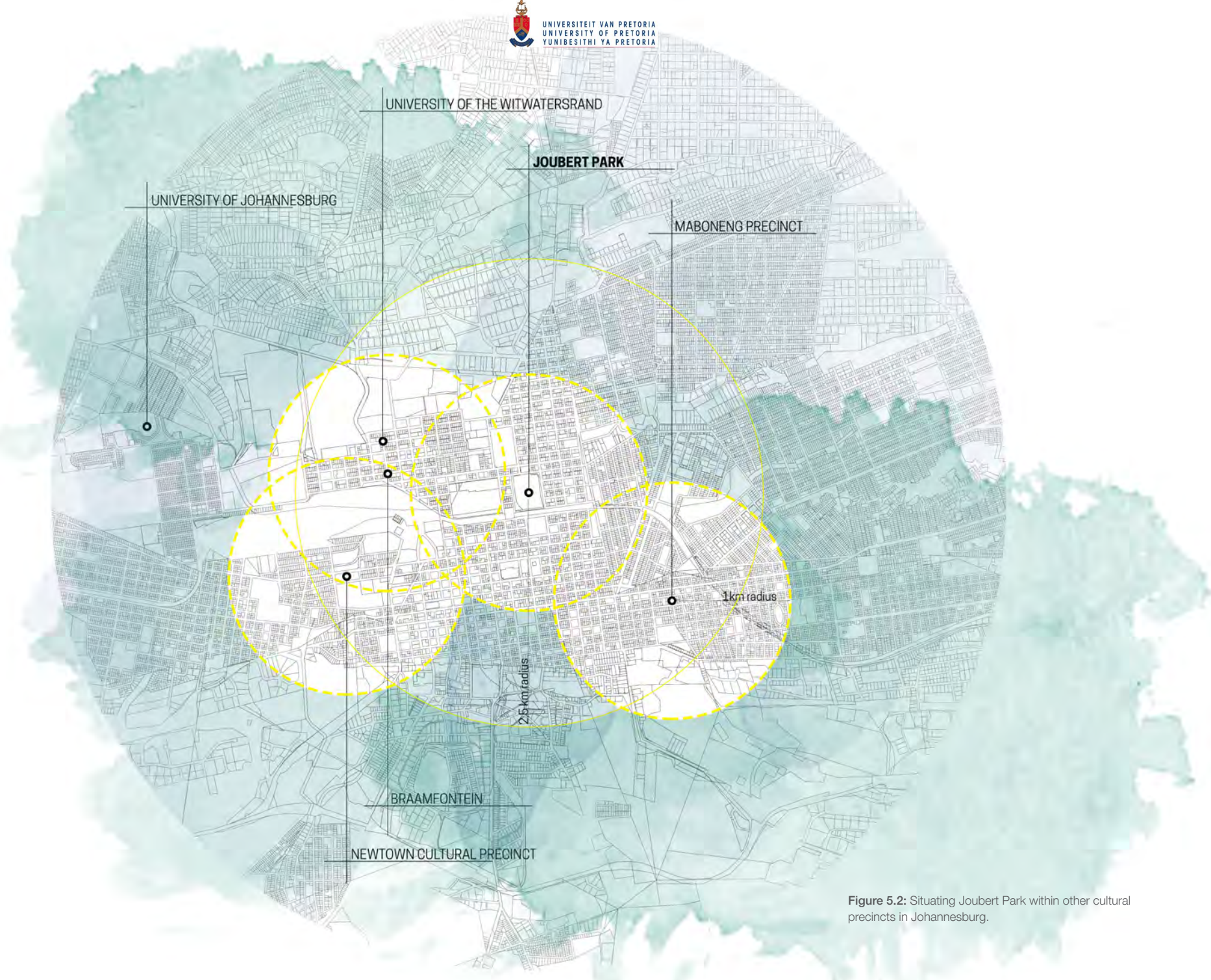


Figure 5.2: Situating Joubert Park within other cultural precincts in Johannesburg.

## 5.2. POTENTIAL

### Enhancing *placeness*

# PRECINCT VISION

By placing Joubert Park within the family of parks found in Johannesburg it was attempted to establish what defines it as unique. One of the most prominent features of the park is the fact that it is surrounded by high-density residential buildings, allowing this public green space to be used as a garden space for the people of the area. This is in contrast with other parks in Johannesburg that are mainly surrounded by businesses. This implies that Joubert Park has the potential to become a family park and not just remain a throughway-type park it is today.

Another defining feature of the park is the fact that it is so well connected. Park station, the Johannesburg Art Gallery BRT stop as well as major taxi stops surrounding it have the potential to enhance the park as a pivotal point for people travelling to and around Johannesburg. The park has already become a major transport hub for pedestrians, but in order to prevent the upgrading of transport to completely take over the area, and therewith destroying the integrity of Joubert Park as a heritage resource and a public green space, the park will need to become more of a destination. More people could be encouraged to stop and linger in the space by introducing more intimate spaces for recreation and relaxation.

Using the presence of JAG (a major feature that is very under-used and underappreciated) as a tool for creating identity, the projects introduced will be aimed at establishing this place as an art park in the city. The location of the park allows for easy access from existing precincts such as Maboneng, Braamfontein, Constitution Hill and Newtown. The ease-of-access between these places will promote the identity of Johannesburg as a creative hub as a whole.

The park also forms part of the winning entry for the The Seam Project by Newtown Landscape Architects (NLA N.d) which is currently being discussed regarding its implementation in Johannesburg. The scheme,

if it is constructed, will require that Joubert Park become a truly green space once more, as it will form a central point along an urban park that stretches through Johannesburg creating a connected public park. In this sense, Joubert Park can be treated differently to the rest of the green spaces, ensuring it maintains its prominence as the first park in Johannesburg.

The potentials of Joubert Park were identified as follows.

- The space is surrounded by residential buildings, ensuring the potential for constant activity
- It is well connected and serves as a pedestrian hub for people from and not from the area
- It is well located between existing cultural precincts that could be used to enhance the identity of Johannesburg central as a whole
- The park already forms part of frameworks that are in place for upgrades for Johannesburg
- Although there are hot spots (or vacant and dangerous buildings) surrounding the park, with some effort the existing functions found in the park can be relocated to the periphery, enhancing the street edge and increasing the amount of public space in the park

Using these noted aspects, the JPG came up with a few strategies, some architectural and some more focussed on events, to establish it once again as a place of interest in Johannesburg.

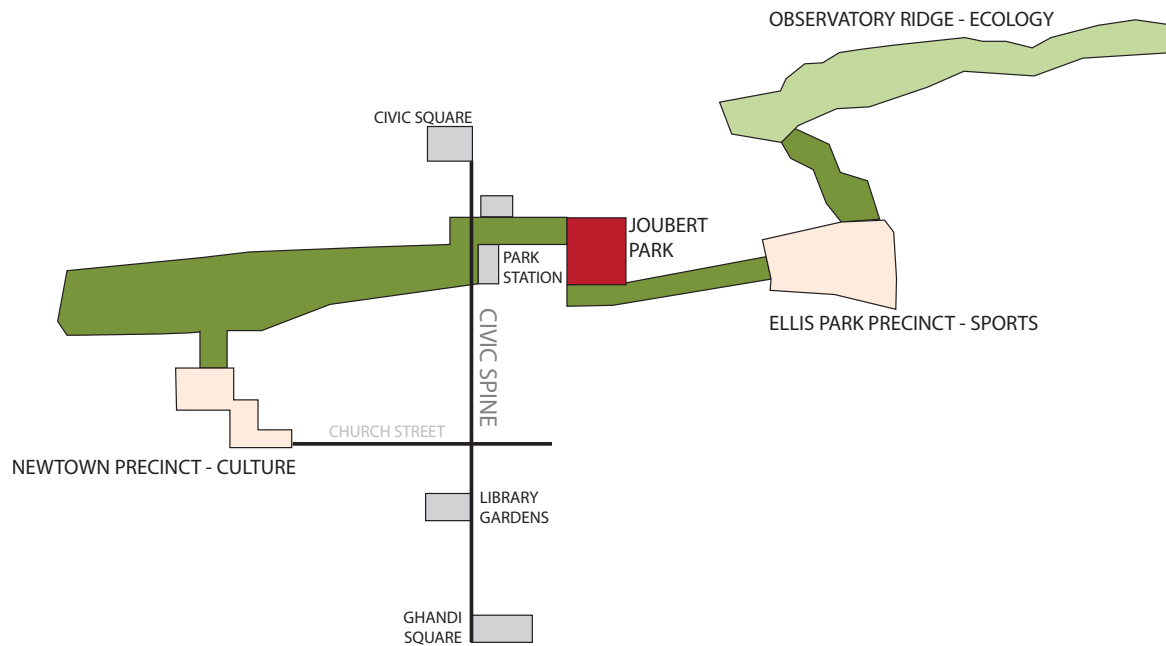
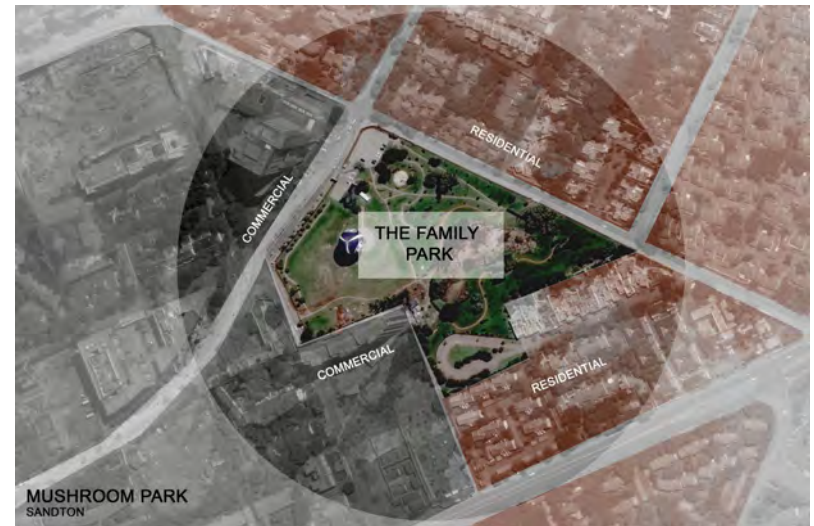


Figure 5.3: *The Seam* Project by NLA Architects was the winning entry in an urban regeneration initiative by the City of Johannesburg (a collaboration of the JDA, Joburg City Parks and the Department of Planning and Urban Management). The project focuses on *stitching together* the open spaces in the city, reclaiming them to create a green public space that runs, uninterrupted, through the city centre (Barnard & Young N.d). Original diagram by NLA N.d.





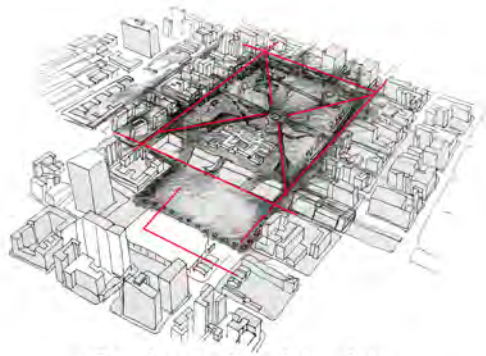
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Figure 5.4: Diagrams of various parks in Johannesburg with the JPG's understanding of their identity and relation to the city as well as surrounding functions. (JPG 2016)

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Figure 5.5: Diagrams showing existing threats, weaknesses opportunities and strengths at Joubert Park. (JPG 2016)





Pedestrianising the surrounding streets

Extending the park to the south

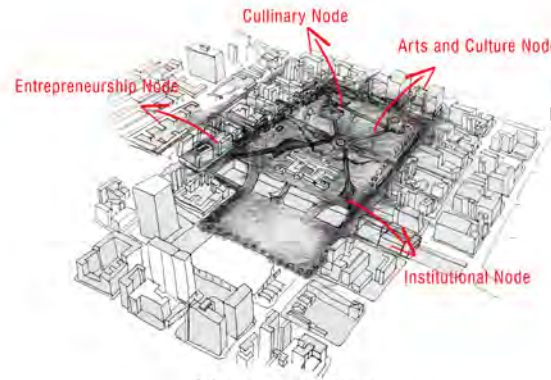


Creating themed gardens within the park.

- Gerard Sekoto (waiting garden)
- Dian victor (garden of reflection)
- Miriam Makeba (song garden)
- William Kentridge (creative garden)
- Walter Battiss (play garden)
- Willie Bester (weathering garden)



By pedestrianising the periphery the streets can be utilised as truly public space, extending the park's boarder tot he edge of the buildings.



Establishing nodes on the periphery of the park

Figure 5.6: Changes proposed in Joubert Park Precinct. (JPG 2016)

### 5.3. STRATEGIES FOR JOUBERT PARK

Proposed interventions for the precinct on various scales

Strategies proposed by the JPG are proposed on various scales, starting in the park then extending to the outskirts of the immediate precinct.

- By introducing art into the park through sculptural initiatives by JAG; organising creative markets and production space by informal initiatives such as Artists in the Sun; promoting the photographers as an art form and engaging with the current community through creative competitions and workshops, a more pronounced identity of creativity can form in the precinct.
- Opening up the northern entrance of JAG and continuing initiatives to help people of the area to understand the building, a better relationship between park and gallery can occur. (More specific strategies for the inclusion of JAG will be investigated in a park-specific vision which will form part of the programmatic proposal.)
- The park will be subdivided into sections that will adopt various themes for the design of each space. The portions will be fashioned according to various prominent South African artists through the use of sculpture and landscaping. These gardens can be revisited over periods of time to introduce new nuances into the park.
- Removing existing privatised functions from the park grounds and placing these functions in surrounding hot spot buildings will increase the amount of public space and create a welcoming and safer street edge for pedestrians.
- With the removal of private functions, the bandstand and conservatory will be available to once again form part of the park. The conservatory will still house an educational facility that will form part of a community media and arts centre (designed by Lisa Verseput, who is part of the JPG).
- The bandstand will once again play host to various performances

and the necessary supporting infrastructure will be introduced to support it.

- By introducing these two heritage structures into the park once more, the northern portion of the site will once again become more public (as it is currently the section that has had the most area fenced off from the park).
- The pedestrianisation of surrounding streets will alleviate the congestion of taxis that flood the area. This will create safer environments for the children of Joubert Park and those on their way home as well as provide opportunities for more informal trade and performances by music groups and comedians who currently work there.
- A bridge will be introduced over the submerged railway in order to connect the gallery directly to the opposite side of the tracks – reintroducing Lutyens’ intention.
- A new connection between Park Station and the park will be opened up and developed to form a skills upfitment centre for entrepreneurs from the area. This will create a new avenue that will lead people towards JAG. This new route has the benefit of establishing direct links for easier access by commuters and creates a more established way-finding avenue for visitors who are new to the area. This connection will also encourage surveillance by the people working, living and creating in the area, which will promote a safer environment, especially for visitors of the gallery who normally arrive by car.

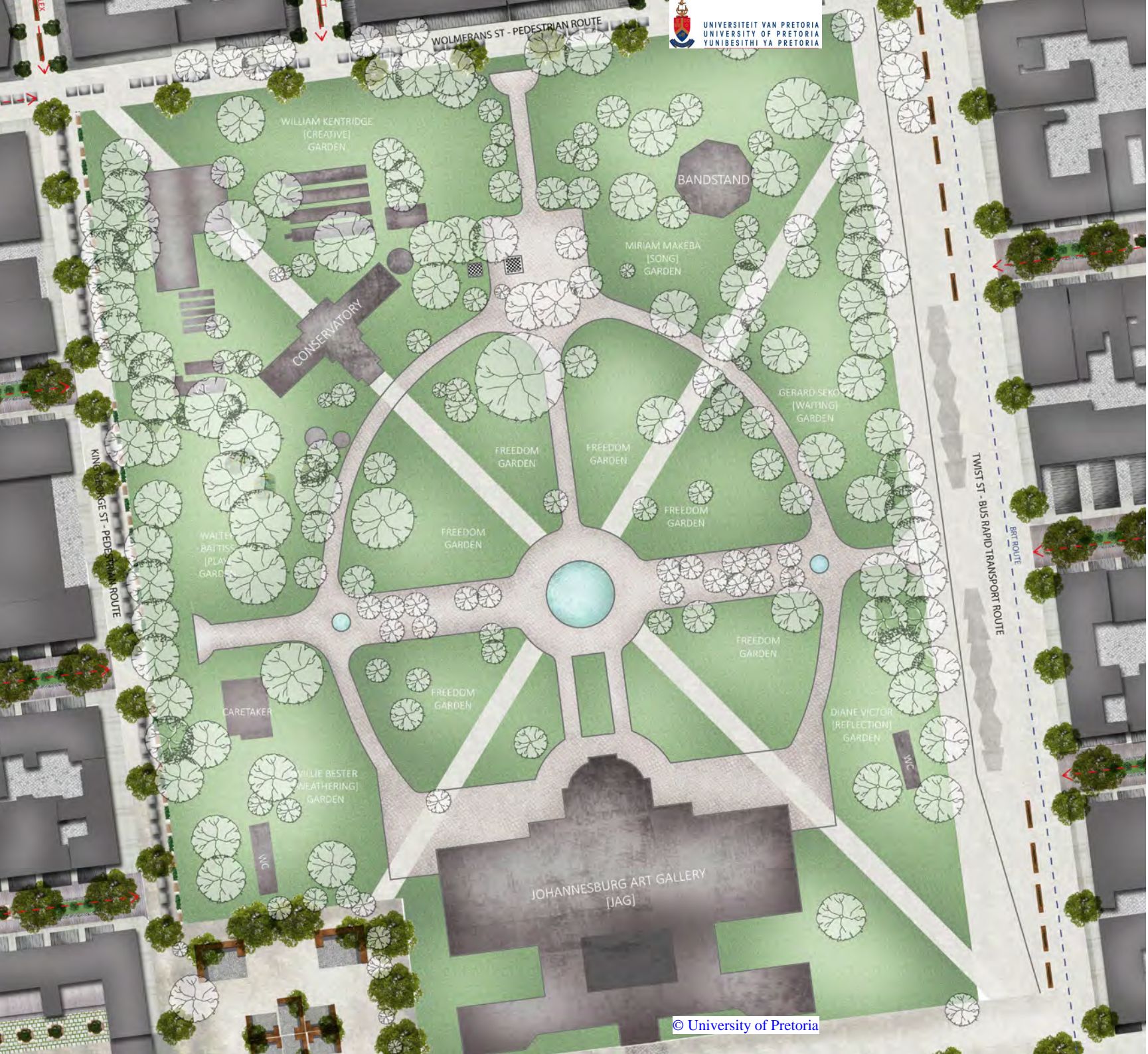




Figure 5.7: Precinct vision by the Joubert Park Group (2016)