

Revitalised Intersections, VOL. 1

By YP Mudaly

*Context and
Site Situation*

04.

Understanding how Point
Waterfront functions

4.1. Connection to the Harbour through the city

4.1.1. Durban Point Waterfront

The site itself presented a challenge to integrate both the city as well as the TNPA to develop a successful urban framework which mediated their intersections. From the reading of landscape as a cultural entity, it is meant to play a role as an active character in the ever evolving urban condition it may find itself with relations and associations to users who situate themselves in the space.

4.1.2. Spaces for investigation

- I. Water Edge condition
- II. Built/unbuilt space
- III. Harbour elements v city elements

The urban strategy was therefore not to start new but to draw synergies by extending the urban block morphology through appropriate programme mixes based on adjacencies and individual conditions.

Through this intervention one is able to link:

- I. The city to the landscape
- II. Citizenship to socio-cultural significance
- III. Leisure to working port conditions

4.1.3. Spatial Limitations

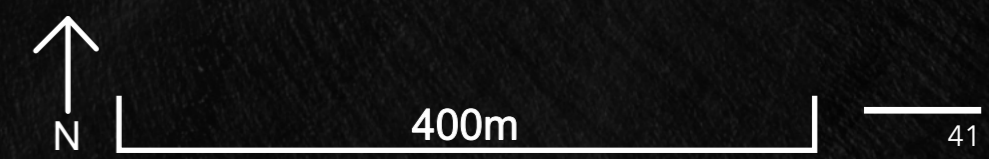
Limitations such as public-zoned space within brownfield spaces may be left off as tertiary space conflicting a possible success for urban regeneration. Ryan Centner enterprises that the priority becomes *“a more narrow environmental sustainability alongside sociopolitical participation and economic competitiveness, which lead to the fragmented projection of conflicting landscapes”* (2009: 2).

Derived from theory relating to Neoliberal spaces (Venkatesh 2014: 1), the author mentions French philosopher Michel Foucault on the nature of space which has outlived its physical usefulness, but still has the capacity for programmatic richness. Foucault is described as saying the treatment of space if left stagnant is dead space and as a consequence, it is fixed in context and represents the *“undialectic, the immobile”* (Flynn 1991: 1). ‘Space’ is therefore locked as a weighted element and

an environment which does not serve the context which it occupies. On the other hand, Foucault converses and debates ‘time’ as rich, generative in terms of production, full of life and able to create a narrative (Flynn 1991). This same narrative can be applied to built architectural structures.

The site does offer developmental potential which can boost the ‘absent’ space that aid in identity restructuring. This restructuring of port identity offers up the potential of examining abandoned brownfield port district nodes, revitalising them back to public use through comprehensive strategies of regeneration (Dündar et al. 2014).

Fig. xxi. Existing Map of Point Waterfront (GoogleMaps 2021)



4.2. Anchor infrastructure

Through these conceptual generators, there is the implication that spatiality is formed by the interference of anchors or proximities in relation to context which form a resilience in design much explored in Henri Lefebvre's production of social space. Here we see the distinction that physical space is defined "by purely practical activities or the perception of 'nature'" (Lefebvre 1991: 192).

Therefore layers of the site were anchored for investigation:

- I. Water as edge condition: the Canal
- II. uShaka Marine world
- III. The heritage quarter on Mahatma Gandhi Road
- IV. The ruins of the site as magnet for synergies

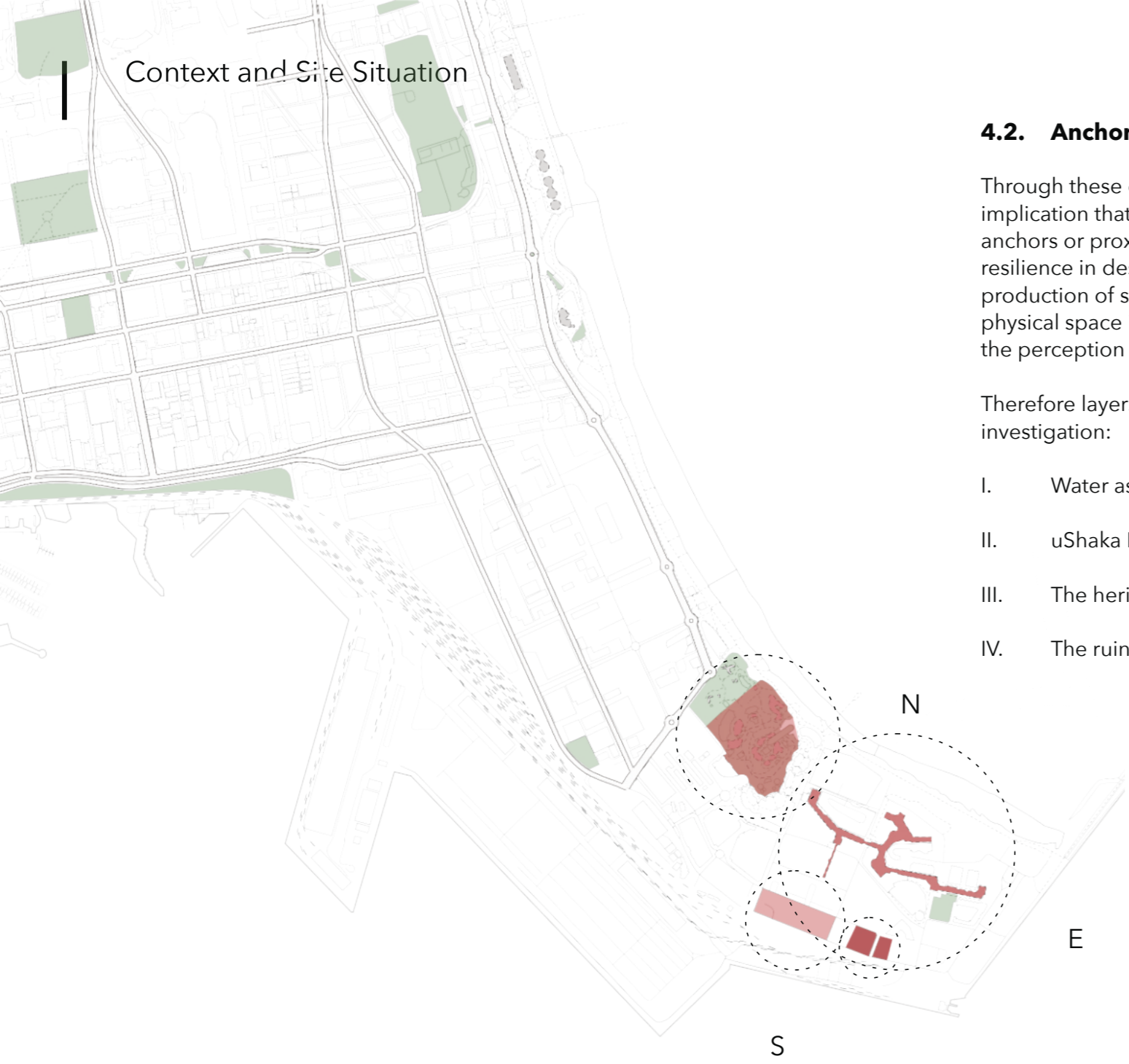
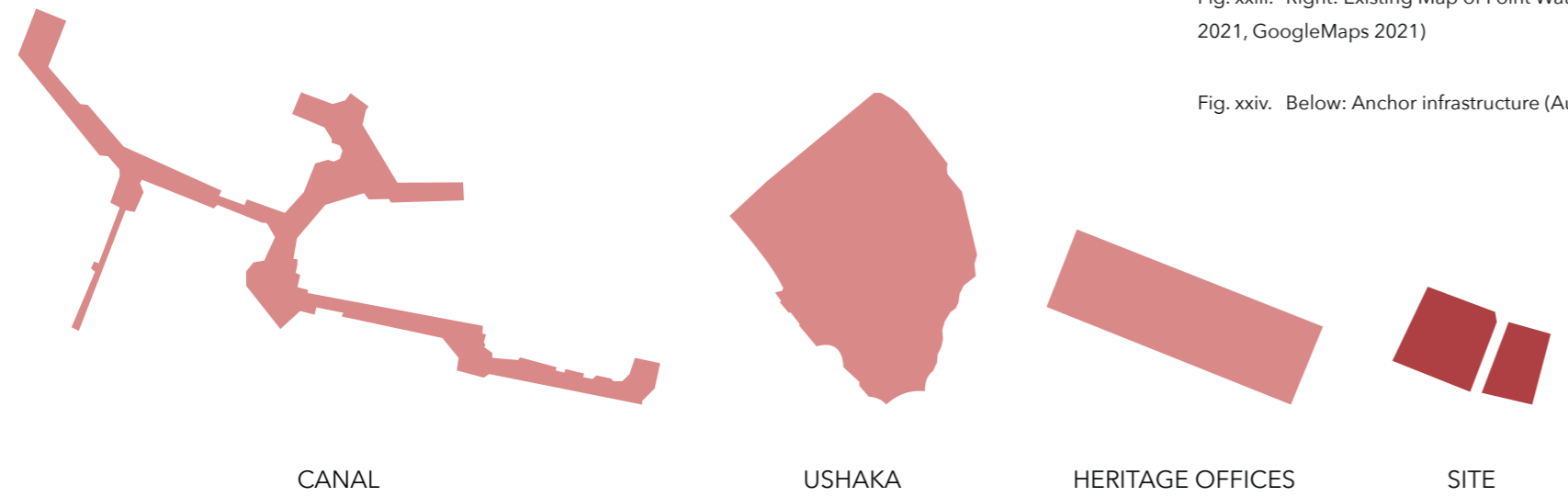


Fig. xxii. Left: Durban Port anchor infrastructure (Author 2021, Openstreetmap 2021)

Fig. xxiii. Right: Existing Map of Point Waterfront (Author 2021, GoogleMaps 2021)

Fig. xxiv. Below: Anchor infrastructure (Author 2021)



CANAL

USHAKA

HERITAGE OFFICES

SITE

existing framework diagram plan
automobile + transit infra improvements

- point promenade (ped / bike / local)
- water network (ped / gondola / local)
- existing bridge (ped / bike / car)
- cruise terminal
- existing rail network (train)
- proposed rail network (ped / tram)
- potential new development
- existing developments
- public green infrastructure
- BIKE + PEDESTRIAN WAY
- site choice



400m

4.3. The nature of Durban Point Waterfront

4.3.1. Defining the precinct vision and catalyst

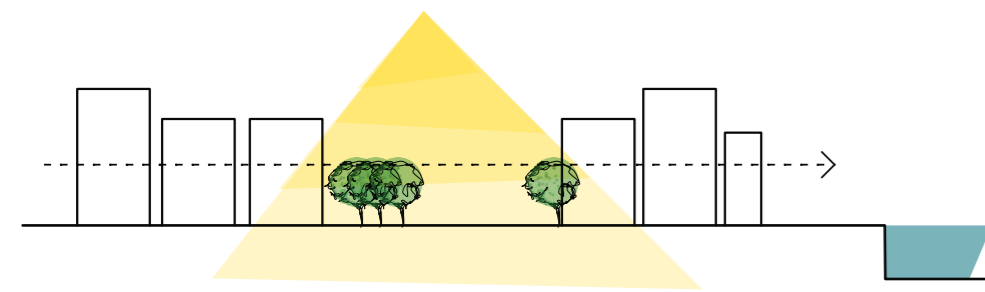
Going beyond the nature of how architecture is manifested through programme conceptual creation, a ubiquity of urban intent was required to fill the site using anchor sites. As described in the production of space by Henri Lefebvre, these conceptual generators imply that spatiality is formed by the interference of anchors or proximities in relation to context which form a resilience in design. The distinction that physical space is defined "by

purely practical activities or the perception of 'nature'" (Lefebvre 1991: 192).

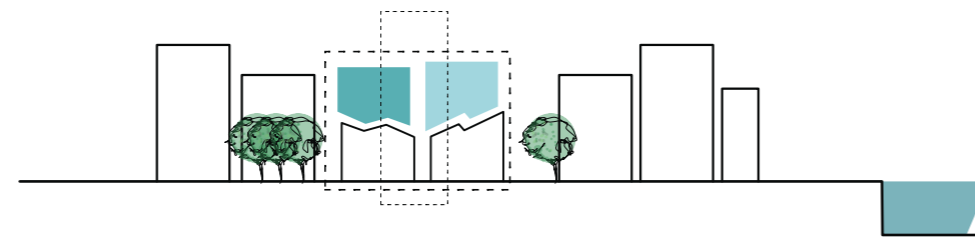
The dissertation focused on the dynamism of an economically bound context to a present city context and how the urban design process is able to enrich the architectural solution through a grander conceptual lens. Through identifying the proximities the architecture is curated through its chosen urban strategies and is

Fig. xxv. Urban ambitions of site (Author 2021)

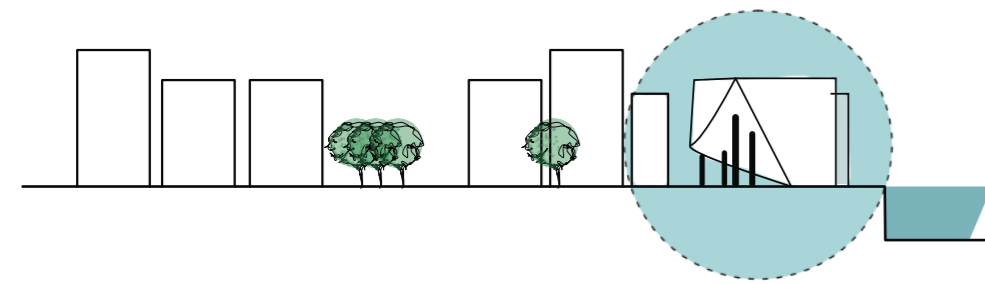
modelled along a process of insertion and juxtaposition from the macro to the micro sensitivity of design. This supports the architecture's final position as a catalyst and lantern building in the Durban Point Waterfront and gives resilience towards its primary condition as iconic in a new urban vernacular.



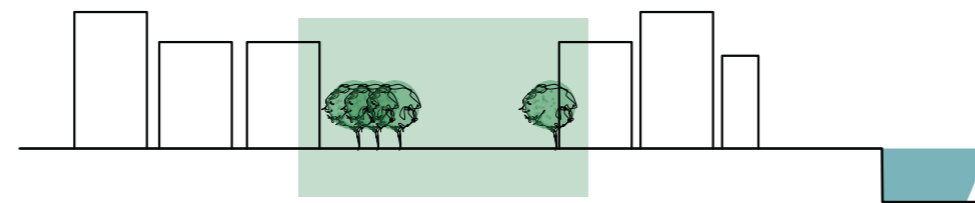
ATTEMPTING TO STRENGTHEN THE POSITION OF THE CITY AS A COMPETITIVE ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE



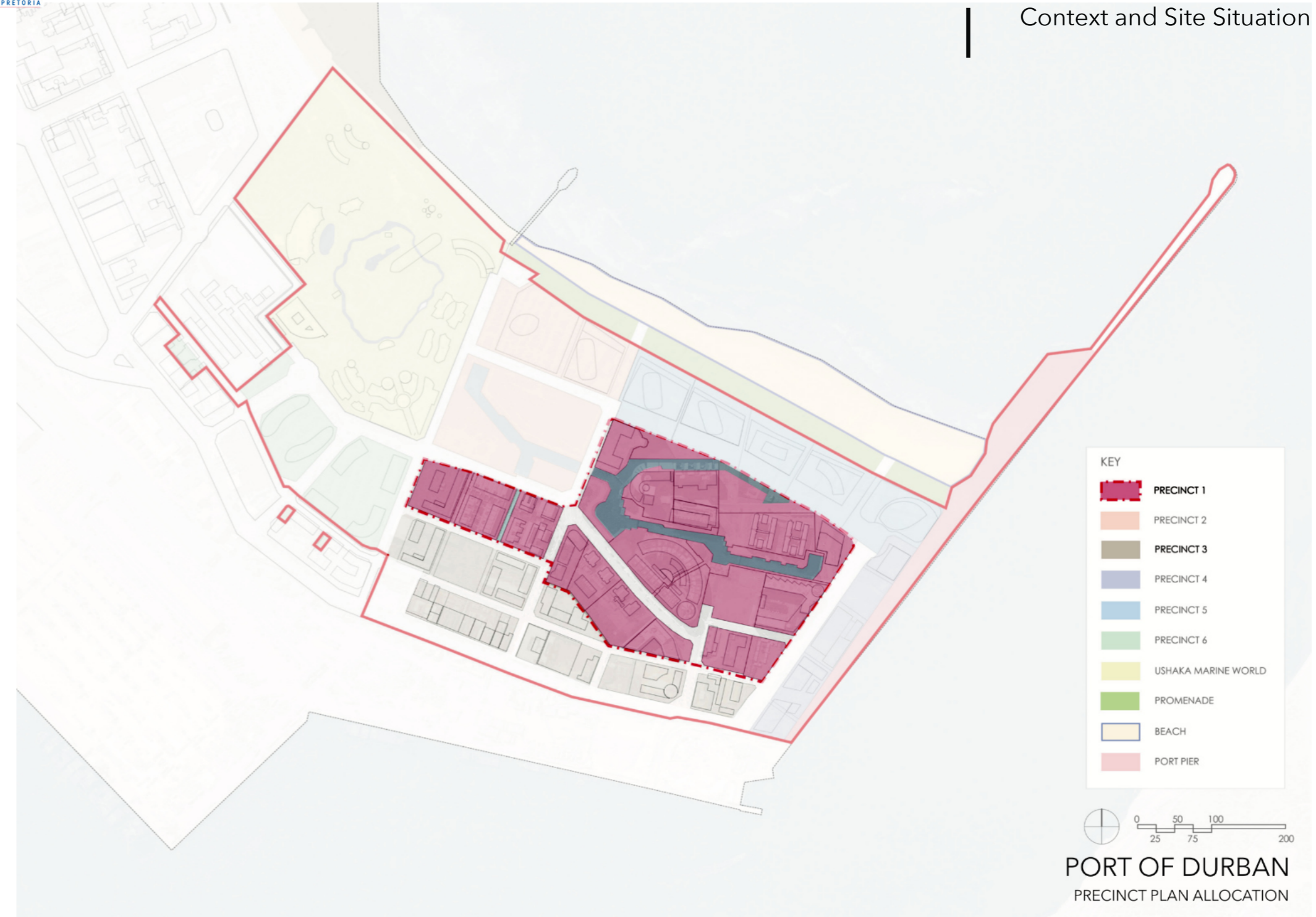
ATTEMPT TO CREATE NEW COMMERCIAL ZONES TO REVITALISE FRAGMENTS OF CITY



CREATE WATERSIDE AREA TO GIVE NEW IMAGE TO THE CITY



CREATE NEW URBAN SPACES TO CHANGE FATAL IMAGE OF CITY



4.3.2. Precinct Allocation Plan

Existing as an allocation map is the precinct allocation plan taken from eThekweni urban planning (Allopi 2021) and UEM Sunrise developers. The main zones were precinct 1 in pink and precinct 3 on the southern edge which situates the chosen site for development. The crucial detailing in this

map considers how segregated and isolated developmental concepts are within the Point Waterfront. As an opinion by the Author Mudaly (2021), the concern raised is far beyond architecture but urban cohesion and good urban spaces along a water edge.

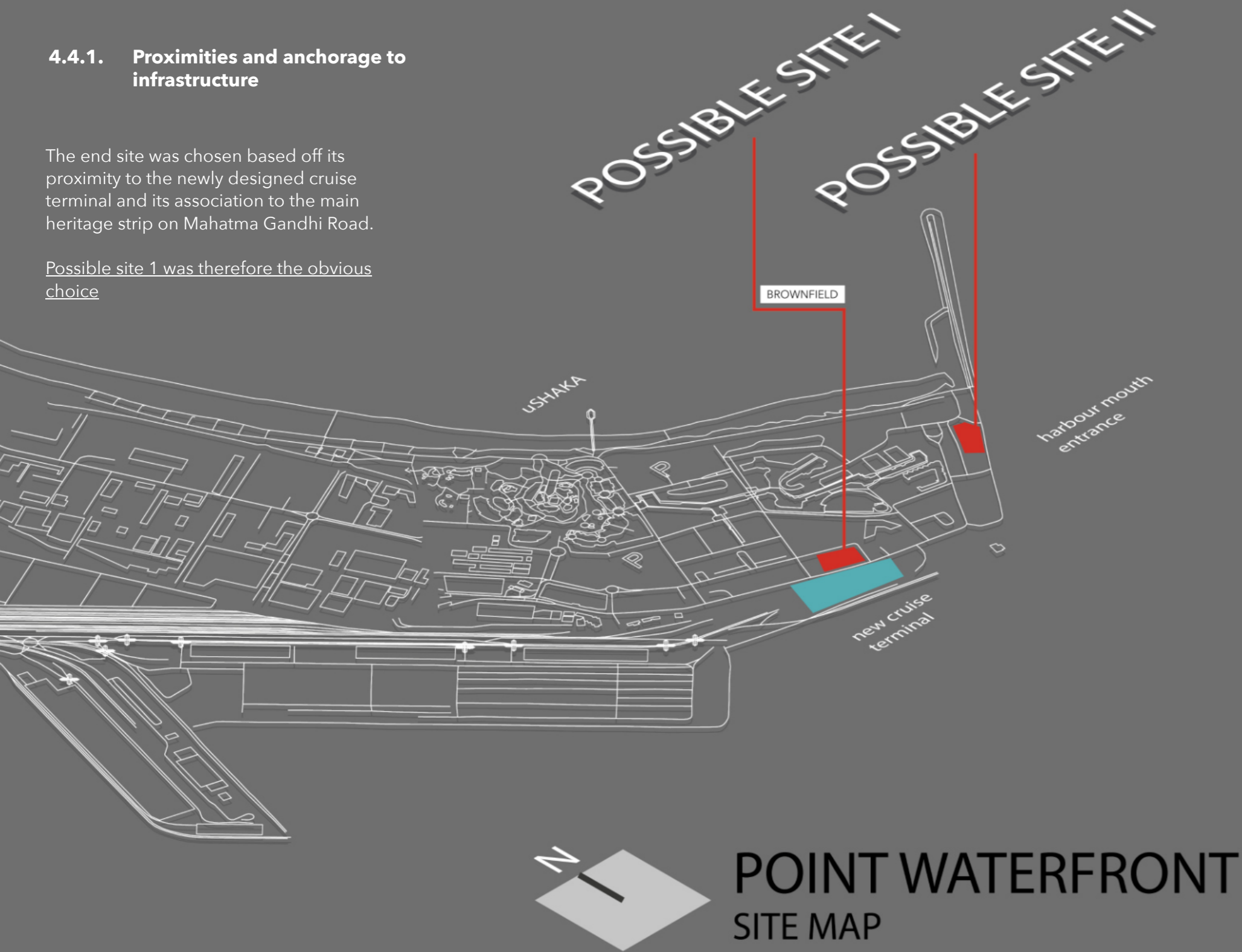
Fig. xxvi. Precinct allocation plan for Point Waterfront (Allopi 2021)

4.4. Site Selection Process

4.4.1. Proximities and anchorage to infrastructure

The end site was chosen based off its proximity to the newly designed cruise terminal and its association to the main heritage strip on Mahatma Gandhi Road.

Possible site 1 was therefore the obvious choice



POINT WATERFRONT
SITE MAP

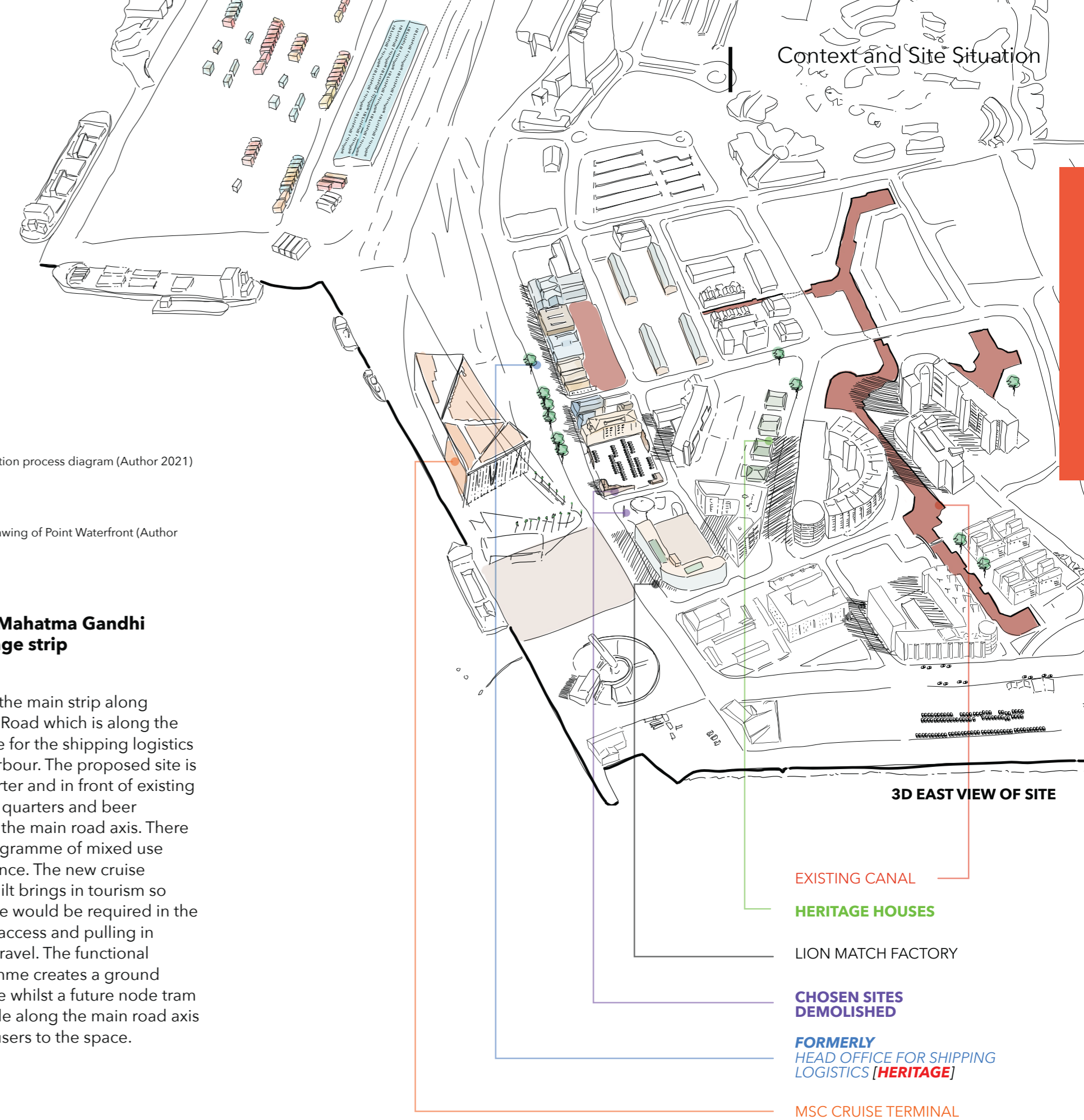


Fig. xxvii. Left: Site selection process diagram (Author 2021)

Fig. xxviii. Right: Aerial drawing of Point Waterfront (Author 2021)

4.4.2. Main Mahatma Gandhi Heritage strip

The site is part of the main strip along Mahatma Gandhi Road which is along the former head office for the shipping logistics of the Durban Harbour. The proposed site is along a retail quarter and in front of existing shipping logistics quarters and beer production along the main road axis. There is a proposed programme of mixed use retail and conference. The new cruise terminal that is built brings in tourism so market retail space would be required in the site for threshold access and pulling in congestion from travel. The functional aspect of programme creates a ground typology of leisure whilst a future node tram terminal is possible along the main road axis to bring in more users to the space.

4.5. Site Imagery

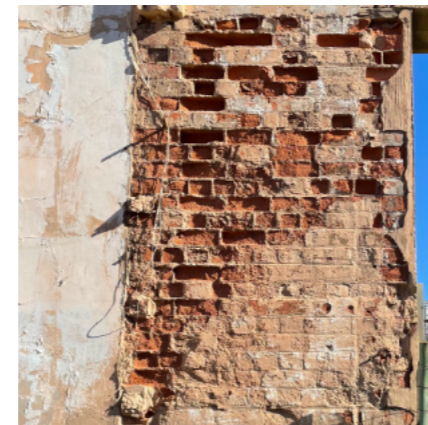


Fig. xxix. Images taken on site (Author 2021)

Fig. xxx. Images taken on site (Author 2021)

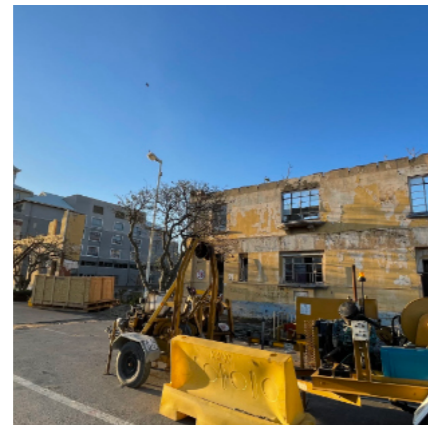


Fig. xxxi. Images taken on site (Author 2021)

Fig. xxxii. Images taken on site (Author 2021)

4.6. Site Analysis

The site had to be unpacked by the palimpsest of physical elements to perceive a final potential of what the site could have become. The elements critiqued represented:

- I. The historical
- II. The transient
- III. The analytical
- IV. The anchor space

This allowed for an initial investigation of space to begin the creative process which was Meso in scale and collectively considered the broader site in the final iteration of the urban vision. The strategies investigated then highlighted the integration of space through the juxtaposition of elements which represents itself as conscious infill. Elements were not seen in isolation and they understand the energy of the city through urban and critical theory. The final site vision then encapsulated these narratives by extending the canal and adding fractured urban space along the water edge to create the internal harbour.

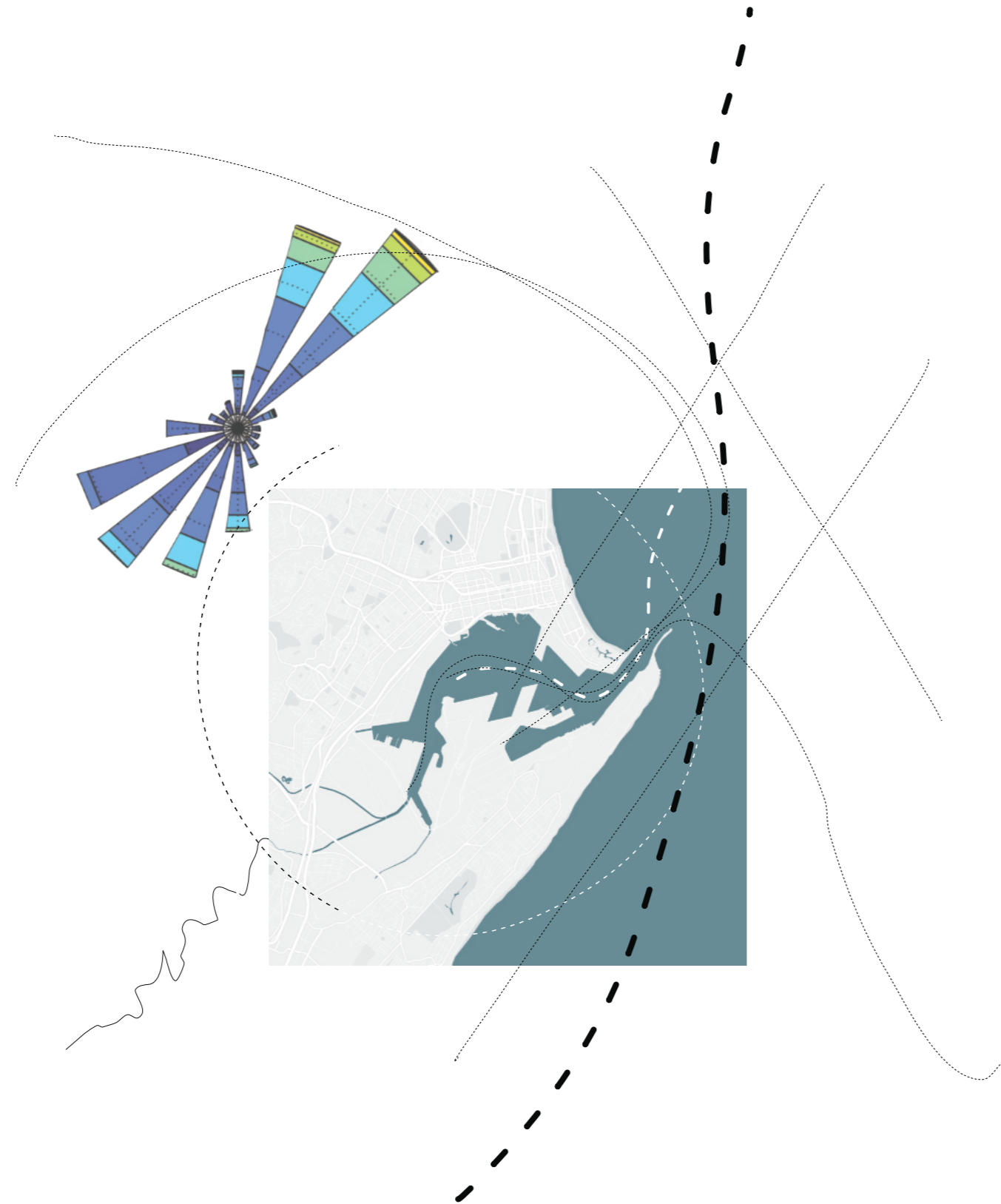


Fig. xxxiii. Climate analysis of Durban and entrance threshold to port (Author 2021, Mapbox 2021)



4.6.1. Noise and Road structure Study

Two main roads exist as Mahatma Gandhi Road on the Southern boundary and the Northern promenade road with major noise traffic existing on the Southern basin from ships and existing shipping logistics and the Northern quadrant noise traffic comes from active users and wind.

Fig. xxxiv. Site analysis map (Author 2021, Openstreetmap 2021)



4.6.2. Heritage study and nodal view analysis

The site contains any major heritage spaces and many have been left to ruin such as the chosen site for this dissertation. The views of the harbour are preserved through flat developments but diminished through active fencing off of the site.

Fig. xxxv. Site analysis map (Author 2021, Openstreetmap 2021)

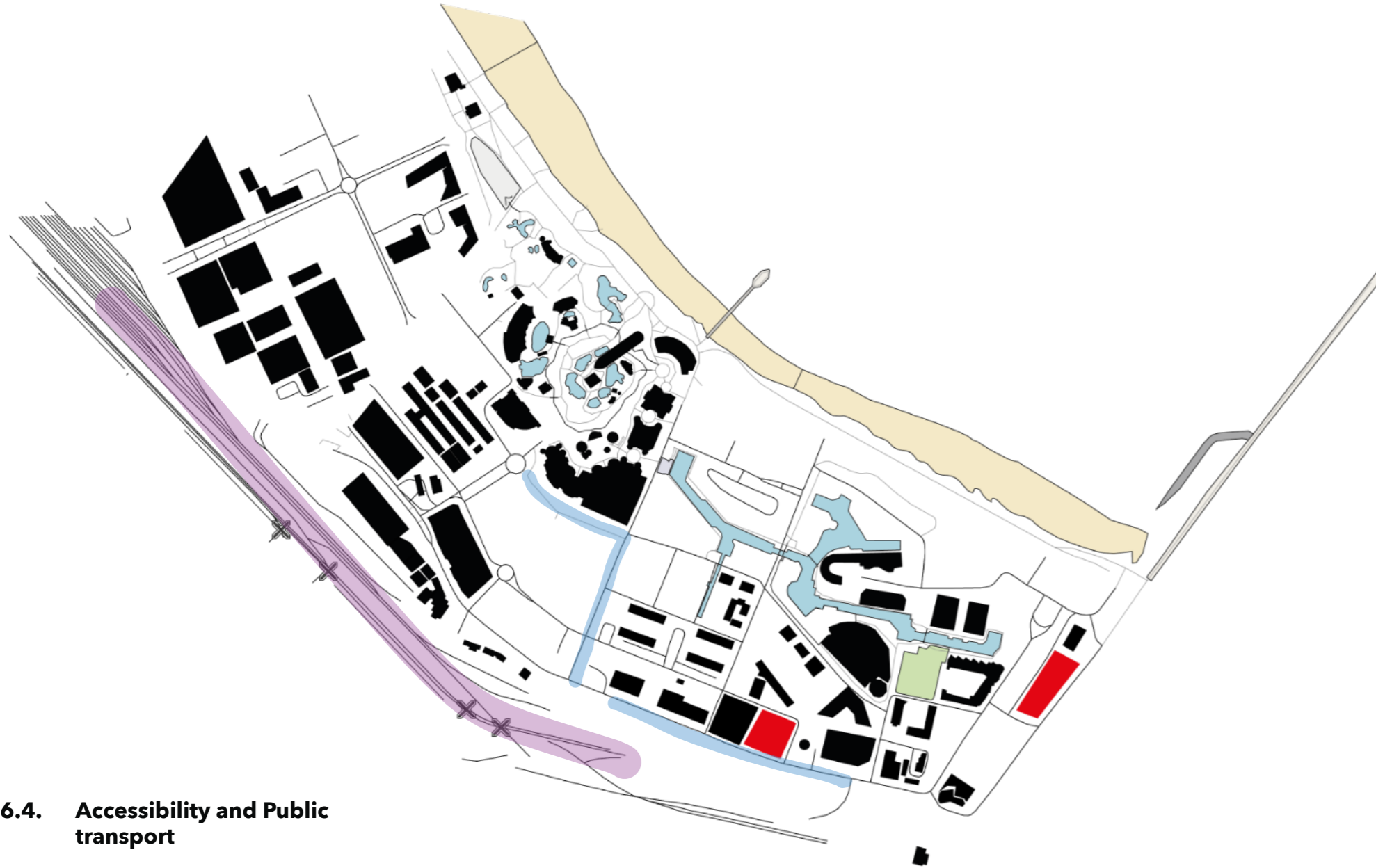


4.6.3. Land Use Study

Due to the Precinct Allocation plan as seen on page 55, there is a distinct character difference between developments in the Southern quarters and central district where there is mainly residential to office buildings.

There are many heritage opportunities as well as collaboration operations with the TNPA and PRASA to consolidate a tram/ railway network

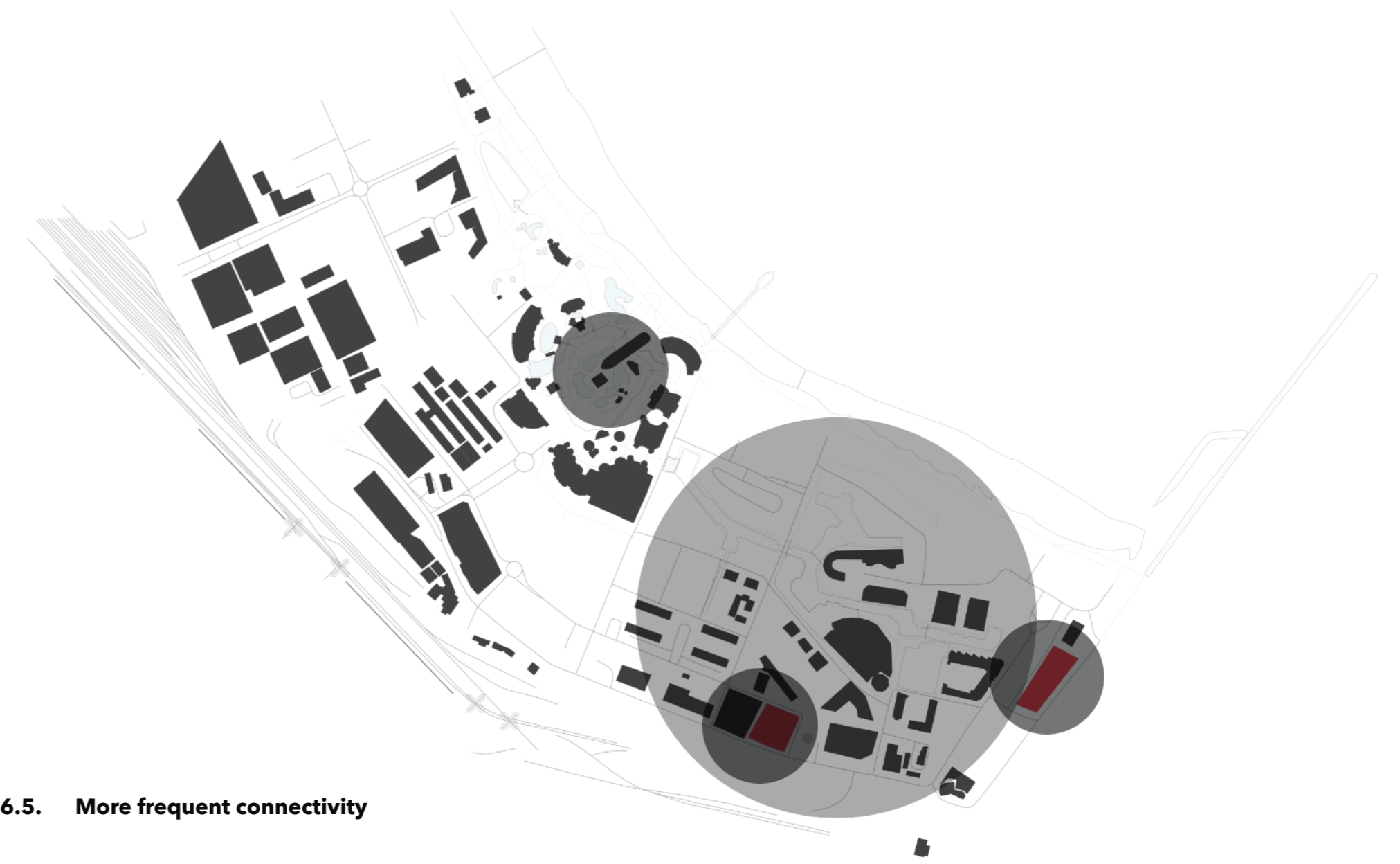
Fig. xxxvi. Site analysis map (Author 2021, Openstreetmap 2021)



4.6.4. Accessibility and Public transport

There is a proposed tram line proposed by the city planning committee according to Mrs Mridulekha Allopi (2021) but this ideology diminishes with poor planning from the city. Lying on the Souther quarter is an old existing railway which circulates towards 80% cargo rail. 20% road. More effective on Point quarters in order to reduce truck congestion.

Fig. xxxvii. Site analysis map (Author 2021, Openstreetmap 2021)



4.6.5. More frequent connectivity

Due to the Precinct Allocation plan as seen on page 55, there is a distinct character difference between developments in the Southern quarters and central district where there is mainly residential to office buildings.

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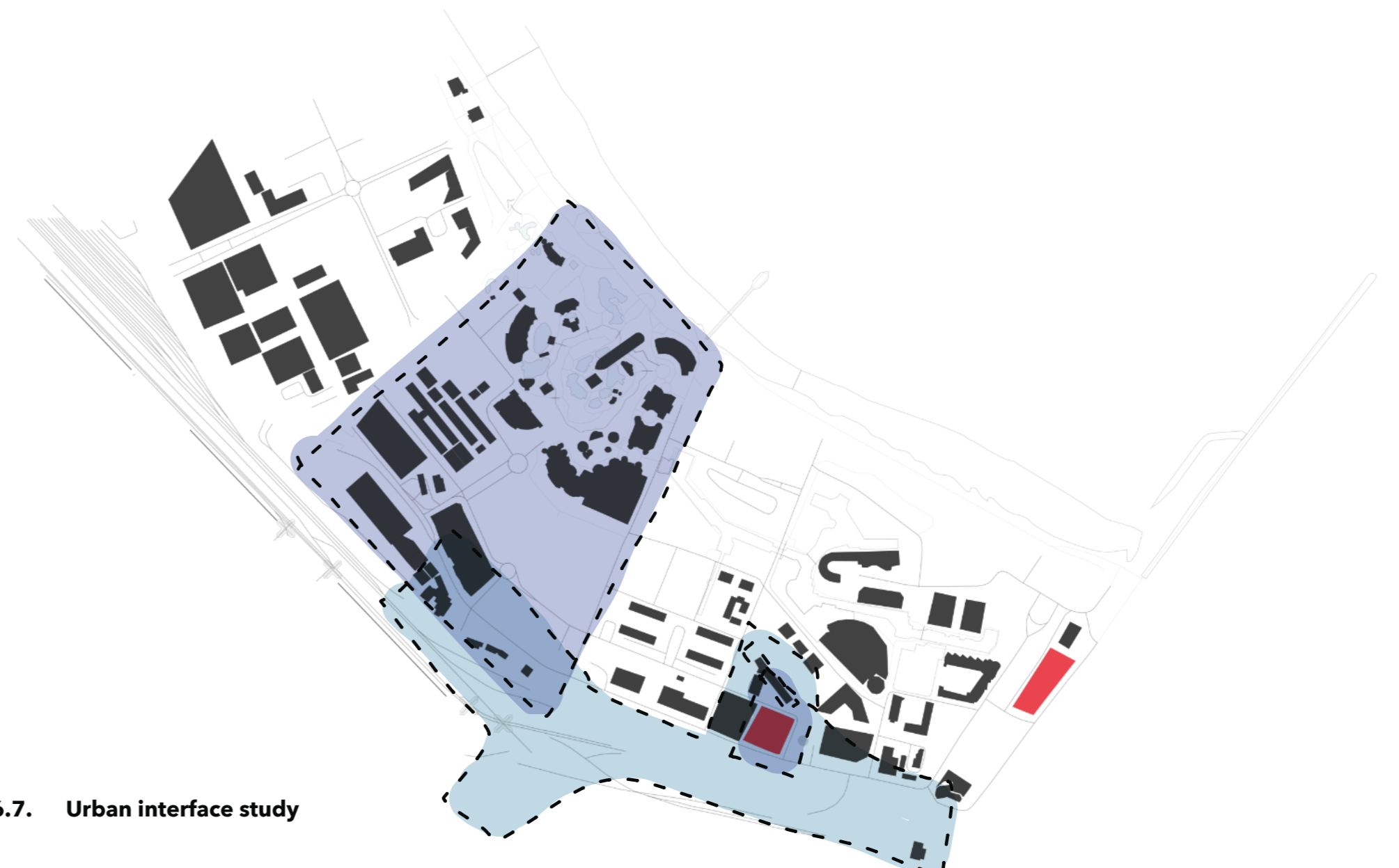
Fig. xxxviii. Site analysis map (Author 2021, Openstreetmap 2021)



4.6.6. Diagonal Connections

There is a prominent axis from the main road on Mahatma Gandhi towards the promenade road which create a web of intersections towards the central quadrant of the site and the edge of the existing canal periphery.

Fig. xxxix. Site analysis map (Author 2021, Openstreetmap 2021)



4.6.7. Urban interface study

Main infrastructure in the central CBD pull programme and important developments towards different precinct allocation areas which in turn should homogenise the sites overall character.

Fig. xl. Site analysis map (Author 2021, Openstreetmap 2021)

