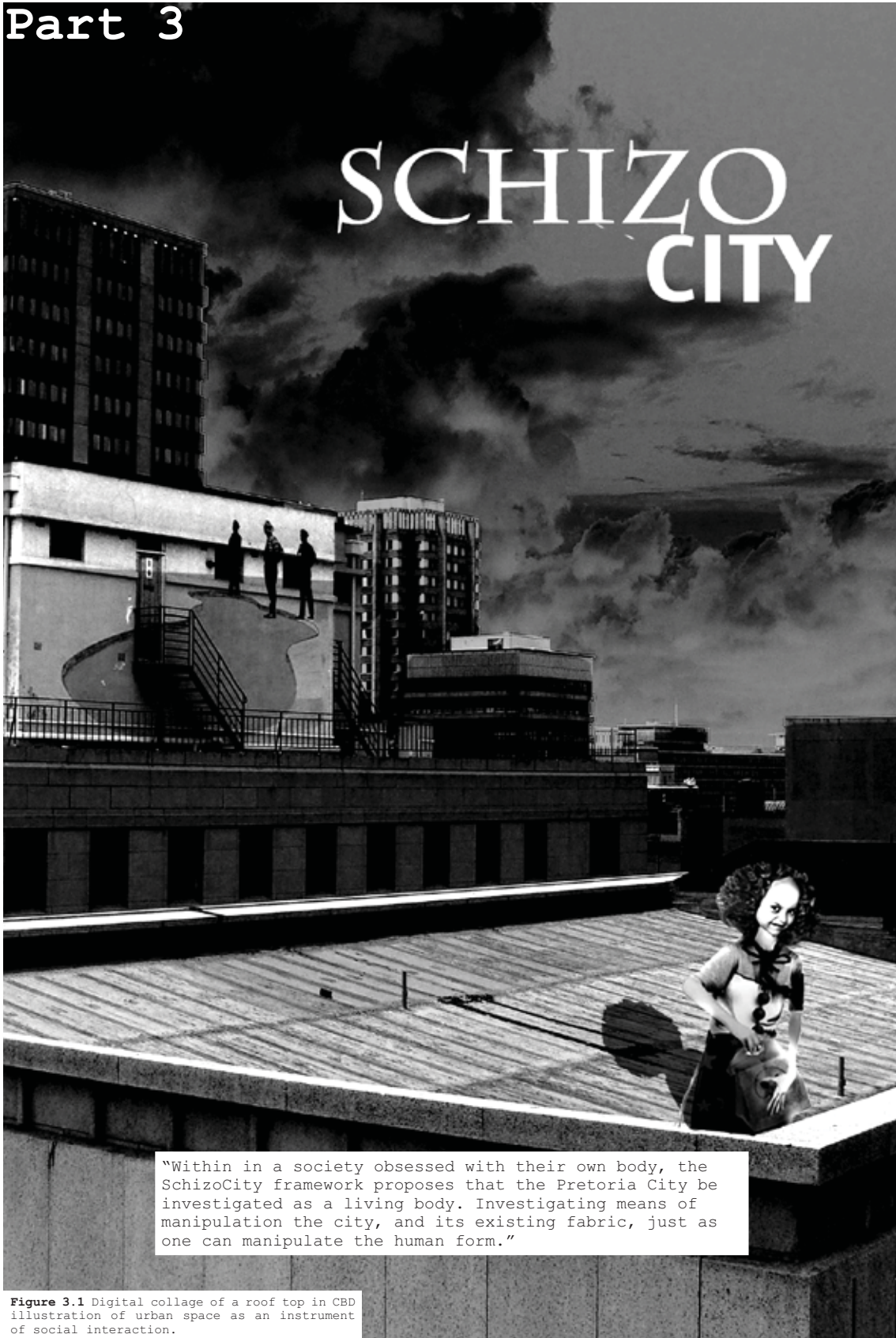




Part 3

SCHIZO CITY



"Within in a society obsessed with their own body, the SchizoCity framework proposes that the Pretoria City be investigated as a living body. Investigating means of manipulation the city, and its existing fabric, just as one can manipulate the human form."

Figure 3.1 Digital collage of a roof top in CBD illustration of urban space as an instrument of social interaction.
extending the skin

SchizoCity: The rehabilitation/redressing of a body.

"There is a certain vitality present in South African cities that should not be ignored by practices of transformation. Spatial practices should not aim to change or simplify the dynamics of society and their patterns of use, but should rather aim to mediate, support, combine and exploit these positive features to create a new city order" (van der Wath, 2008: 9).

Throughout the world, cities are a constant topic of discussion. Pretoria is no exception, especially currently with the migration of city workings beyond its borders to the East. An inherent problem within many cities is the fact that they are built over time, and as such, comprise mostly of disconnected interventions, buildings, and open spaces. The challenge that arises as a result of this is the juxtaposition of these city workings and how to go about it.

The urban fabric needs to be taken as it is, and manipulated so as to compliment a contemporary society; its already established core must be uplifted. "...a new pattern has emerged: the trek from nowhere to nowhere as an exhilarating urban experience" (Koolhaas & Mau, 1998:207).

Pretoria is a city with a rich history, both culturally and architecturally, but it is also currently a city that is neither here nor there, spreading from its original centre, faltering and needing to be built back up again.

It is within the vacant lots and existing buildings of the city that the potential lies. The route to this potential is one of analysis and context. The urban fabric of the city needs to be idealized, analysed and zoned. The city needs to be zoned into areas that bring it together into a coherent whole; districts of sorts. The architectural elements, the voids and the parks are already in place, it is how they are dealt with that becomes important. It is about the contextualisation and the juxtaposition of these places and spaces.

Contextualism within the city is vital. It is not a case of how it can be expanded, but rather of how it can be rationalised, so that buildings regain their use, "the central moment of the contextualist epiphany is the collision of a projected ideal with empirical necessity" (Koolhaas & Mau, 1998:283). Through the contextualisation of the city, its history is regained and understood, suitable interventions decided upon and thus a future plan of the city is projected. This form of pumplanning suggests new programmes, defined routes and the manipulation of the grid both horizontally and vertically.

"Within pumplanning, the historical buildings are highly valued, though an updating of their use is encouraged. It presupposes the city to an evolving condition, not the result of historical atrophy. Architectural space is expected to engage with cultural and social space, so that the road

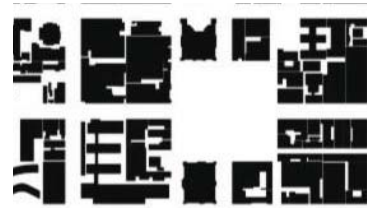


Figure 3.2 Nolli map of Pretoria



Figure 3.3 Digital collage illustrating the privatisation of the city reducing sense of place



Figure 3.4 Digital collage illustrating Pretoria as a monocity with a 9-5 function.

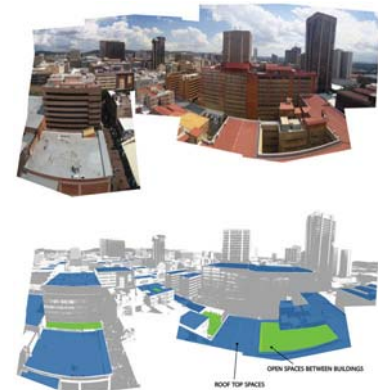


Figure 3.5 Digital collage illustrating roof spaces that within the proposal become accessible terraces.



Figure 3.6 Block exploration. A programmatic exploration suggesting the insertion of new programmes along with the existing.

traffic, the advertising and infrastructure are all considered to take part on the ground. With pump planning you work up what's there with more complexity, more overt messaging and more covert seduction. You create a mild psychotic effect with more layering, more movement, more intensity and more delirious scale shifts" (Coates, 2003:143).

Within in a society obsessed with their own body, the SchizoCity framework proposes that the Pretoria City be investigated as a living body. Investigating means of manipulation of the city, and its existing fabric, just as one can manipulate the human form.

In developing the discourse surrounding the SchizoCity framework proposal, it was necessary to research the following:

- existing concepts and theories regarding the development of urban space
- the relationship between programme and existing block typologies

The urban grid has been the defacto generator of urban form since antiquity, a method whereby human civilization is able to logically define its presence on the earth. This framework accepts the condition of the grid as a given, but questions the nature of urban design, denying the nominally efficient process of planning and zoning, and instead proposing a large-scale architectural mindset that is spatially and programmatically driven. Such a mindset should allow for specific interpretations of context and program without necessarily being restricted by an inhibiting framework.

One of the more well known urban projects of recent history is that of Haussmann in Paris, an endeavour that was initiated and executed between (1852 - 1874) Haussmann's development of Paris was guided by capitalism, and viewed the city as a business - a business that had become cumbersome in the modernised global economy.

Through a process of modernisation and sanitation, Haussmann intended a far-reaching improvement of existing living conditions, transport facilities and infrastructure that would provide the city with many opportunities for economic prosperity. He subscribed to the view that the wealth of a city lay within the wealth of its citizens.

Haussmann's new network infrastructure redefined the notion of the route. He believed that the hierarchy of the city was established through the road network and the facilities distributed by it, which in turn "allow[ed] the diversification and multiplication of distributive functions in a complex context with an efficient distribution of people, food, water and gas, and the removal of waste. Facilities, in the contemporary meaning, suddenly appeared everywhere ... [t]he challenge was to distribute these facilities in the

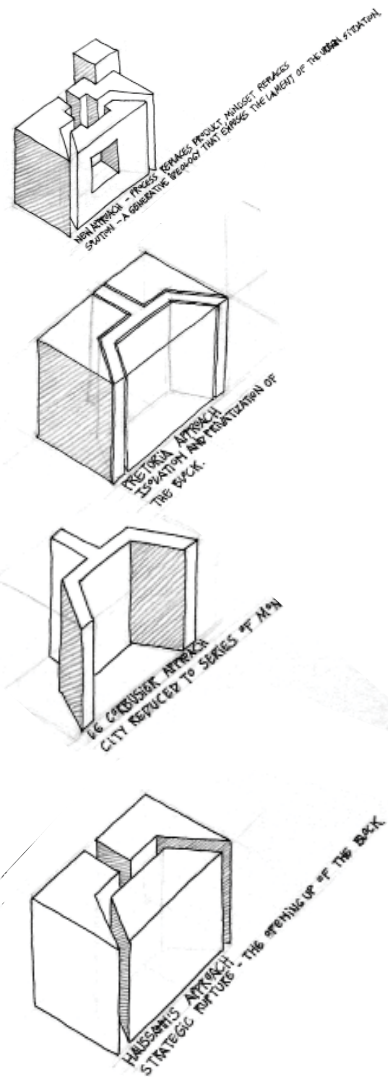


Figure 3.7 Illustrations of various approaches to working with a block typology including Le Corbusier, Haussmann, the Pretoria approach and the SchizoCity approach.



Figure 3.8 Digital Collage illustrating the insertion of new public spaces and walkways into the existing buildings.

urban structure and to allow them to develop and expand" (Panerai et al. 2004:6). It is important to note however that Haussmann was reacting to an already structured urban environment and through a process of limited intervention imposed a specific spatial model on the city that created a "new type of space... not totally dissociated from the old space but capable of reinterpreting it, to reproduce or to deviate its forming mechanisms, to develop them into a more ample and coherent project" (Panerai et al. 2004:7).

Haussmann's ambitious project remains the dominant experiential ordering factor of contemporary Paris, a tribute to the quality and depth of his thinking at his time. His program of networked, connected spaces, wide sidewalks and a series of aesthetic and experiential guidelines established the grain of Paris. Haussmann's reaction to the existing structures of the city lies in stark contrast with le Corbusier's rejection of the city.

Haussmann suggests the negation of the city, an erasure of the existing in preference of a completely new beginning, including a new way of life for its inhabitants. Le Corbusier on the other hand, envisages a series of vertical freestanding multifunctional urban blocks raised above an open field of movement and activity, a procession into the building - the city reduced to a series of monuments. His program of change abolishes continuity, spatial proximity and the differentiated functional status of spaces.

Globally the city block experienced a metamorphosis, as the processes of classification, specialisation and zoning sought to modernise existing structures in order to better respond to the modern industrial landscape that had been generated. This process removed much of the finer grain of the city, resulting in blocks that no longer handled transitions between scalar places and varying functions.

The 'efficient' and pervasive grid that structures Pretoria's CBD has to be accepted as a given condition to react to. This leads to an interrogation of the block itself as a formal typology to be investigated and executed differently. The destructive nature of Pretoria's continuous sprawl necessitates a counter-action that posits the insertion of a new programme and form within the existing structures of the city. One needs to implement an alien program that begins to inform urban regeneration, as well as formal possibilities suggesting programmatic interventions.



Figure 3.10 Nolli map of Pretoria Figure



3.11 SchizoCity interpretation of nolli map.

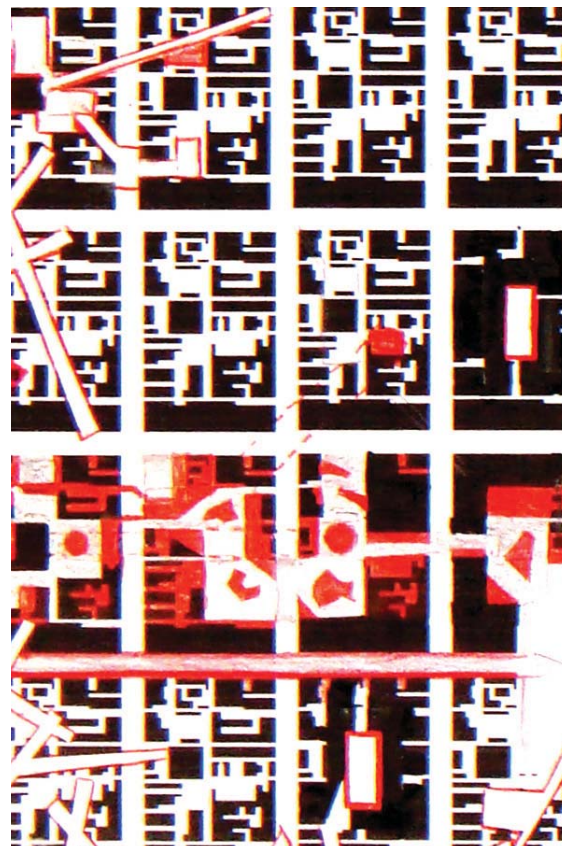


Figure 3.12 The interrogation to determine and alternative and new public/private interface. The new interface must relate to the exiting typology and create a new hierarchy as of space in the city.

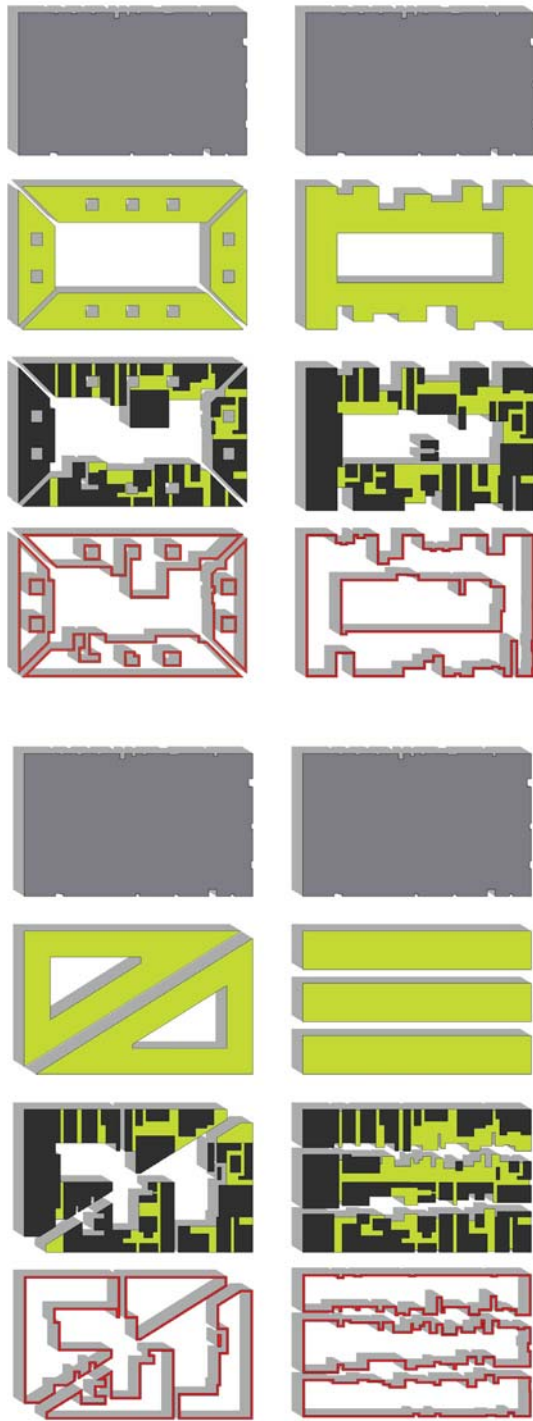


Figure 3.13 Tested block typology.

Pretoria itself has undergone a series of urban transformations in recent years including the Inner City Ring Road Project and the Church Street Pedestrian Mall. The success of these interventions will not be discussed here, but in principle they ignored the block as an un-discussed formal strategy.

The additional layer of control and separation that Pretoria has as a result of security concerns removes complexities of difference and continuity. The complex interior-exterior, private-public relationships of the city, and the influence they have on spatial practice and ideas of hierarchy and control, have been destroyed.

Hausmann's process of strategic rupture, such as the opening of the block both physically and experientially creates opportunities for previously interiorised spaces to become 'theatres of collective appropriation' into which individual modes of expression can be imprinted. The possibilities of this previously inaccessible space allow for an urban tissue of greater depth and experience; a tissue that forms a framework for human understanding, and which successfully supports its inhabitants and their complex needs. It is the success of this framework of interaction that determines the success or failure of the city, and of the life of its inhabitants.

Jan Gehl, a Danish architect, subscribes to the aphorism that 'life takes place on foot'. However, with the advent of automobiles, computers and the internet on a massive scale, the possibilities and opportunities for chance encounters and interaction that were for so long an everyday occurrence, have diminished (Barnett, 2003:17). People have stopped engaging with their environment on a variety of levels. Gehl believes that this situation can be remedied through the design of a physical environment that promotes 'optional activities' (Barnett, 2003:17) such as lingering in the shade of a tree, watching a water fountain, pausing for a cup of coffee, and so on. This in turn promotes an environment of sociability and community so crucial to the convivial nature of a successful urban space.

The investigation of architectural intervention as urban regeneration, rather than well-established planning practices, leads to a change in ideology and mindset, rather than the generation of stereotyped solutions that are caricatures of reality. This process develops from an overall concern for the context, and possible future transformations that must include the amendment of the modern movement's imposed structures. SchizoCity is a framework that questions accepted practices of urbanism; practices that neglect to address the complexities of the existing context and urban fabric.

Within the SchizoCity approach to accommodate and simultaneously initiate a change in urban form, an eclectic programme is introduced to the urban situation in an attempt to (re) generate the city. The proposed result of this action is increased density, pump-planned buildings, alternative connections and an increase in usable public space that is sensitive to hierarchy. To accommodate and simultaneously initiate a change in urban programme, the form of the city block and its buildings are interrogated in an attempt to regenerate the city. This allows for increased pedestrian activity, improved density, alternative connections and increased usable public space within the specific context.

The intention is not to analyse the city according to our own desires, but rather to find answers for questions posed by a contemporary city dweller. Pretoria stands as witness to a bygone urbanity, but if construed as a system it can easily testify to the continuity of its urban fabric. Such a framework, which favours collaborations between various processes of modification, will give the CBD meaning, thereby indicating the diversity of identities, both spatially and for those individuals that use it.



Figure 3.14 The result of the manipulation of the city combining the public and private realm adding more diversity to the city.