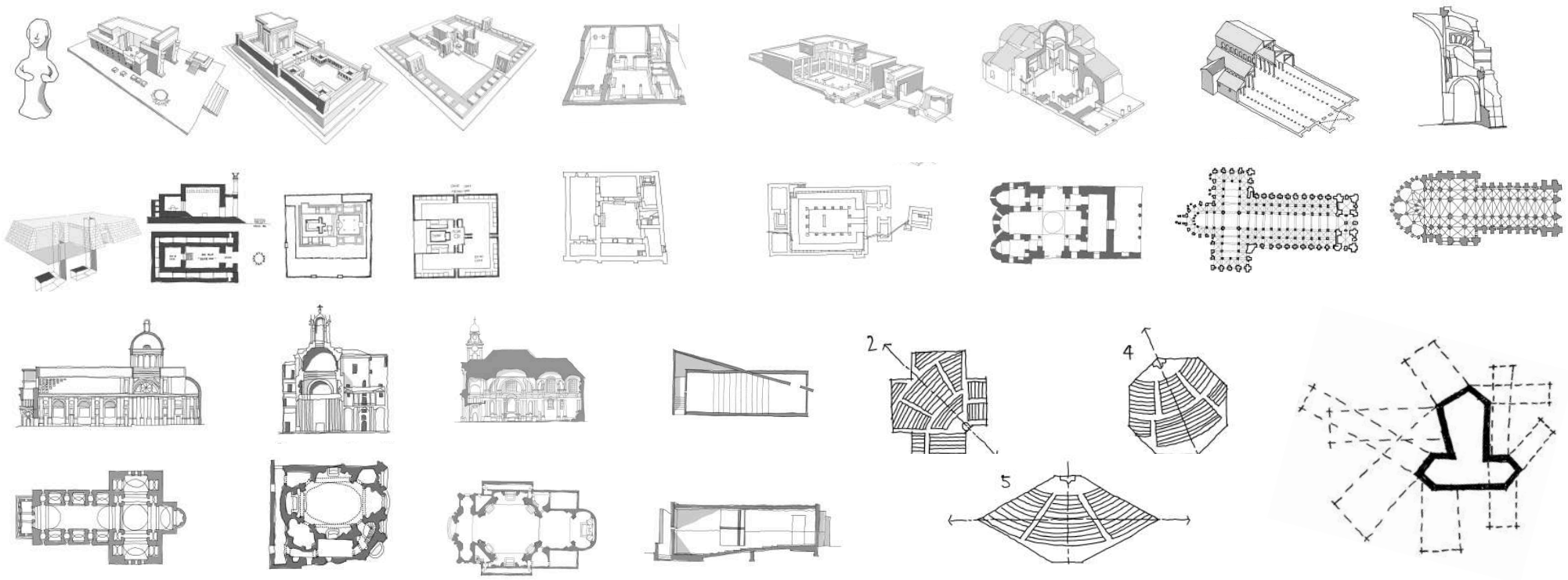


# THE BATTERED WOMAN CALLED EERSTERUST: Exploring Thresholds Through Urban Regeneration and The Re-adaptation of Religious Buildings.

by Nikola Marianne Redelinghuys

2021

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Client: The City of Tshwane, Department of social development, Vodacom foundation, Victim empowerment programme.

Research field: Heritage and Cultural landscapes

# DECLARATION:

In accordance with Regulation 4(e) of the General Regulations (G.57) for dissertations and theses, I declare that this dissertation which I hereby submit for the degree Master of Architecture (Professional) at the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not been previously by me for a degree at this or any other institution. I further state that no part of my dissertation has already been, or is currently being, submitted for any such degree, diploma or other qualification.

I further declare that this dissertation is substantially my own work. Where reference is made to the works of others, the extent to which the work has been used is indicated and fully acknowledged in the text and list of references.

Nikola Marianne Redelinghuys
2021

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Marianne and Johan Redelinghuys
for their unwavering support, love and opportunities they have provided me with.

Jannus and Jean-Mari Redelinghuys
for being my best friends throughout life and always putting everything into perspective.

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for the food, laughs, love, being my biggest motivator and always believing in me. You make my life colourful, this year would not have been possible without you.

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for patience above all and leading me towards becoming a better designer with the help of humour and guidance to allow your fledglings to fly.

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for hard work, the late nights together, camaraderie and thought provoking chats, without these people I would not have come this far. You have enriched my studies and I will forever cherish the friendships made within the studio walls.

My heavenly father:
without whom this all would not be possible.

# ABSTRACT:

In post apartheid South Africa, an attempt to develop the influential church typology has been made on a micro scale, but within the community of Eersterust, the building has stayed frozen in time, not allowing the role of the church to extend to help this poverty stricken community in need.

Safe spaces have become scarce within this community and the issue of gender based violence has escalated. The church complex has the capability to become a catalyst and a refuge for the abandoned nature and gender based violence victims.

The vast cluster of churches developed within this community has the infrastructure and community in the form of congregations to uplift the community and create opportunities for the overlooked inhabitants.

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# PART 1

## CHAPTER 1

1.1_ Introduction and background
1.2_ Situating the problem
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1.8_ Normative position

# INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

In Eersterust, approximately 500 churches can be found, with a ratio of 1 church for every 50 people. The churches vary in size and permanence. This phenomenon is prevalent within surrounding communities such as Diepsloot and Mamelodi and even manifested in other provinces, such as the Western Cape (Mitchells Plain and Khayelitsha). The communities comprising of this phenomenon have something in common, their origin took place within the period of the apartheid city planning, which allowed for spatial injustice and inequality (Stals 1998:4).

Religious buildings were only built by the reigning apartheid government within the predominant white areas (De Wit & Theron 2010:7), mainly excluding communities such as Eersterust, Diepsloot and Mamelodi, leaving the responsibility of constructing religious buildings to the communities themselves (De Wit & Theron 2010:7). Resulting in a more modest building style, if any, and a larger variety of denominations to feed the abundant religious identities evident within the community.

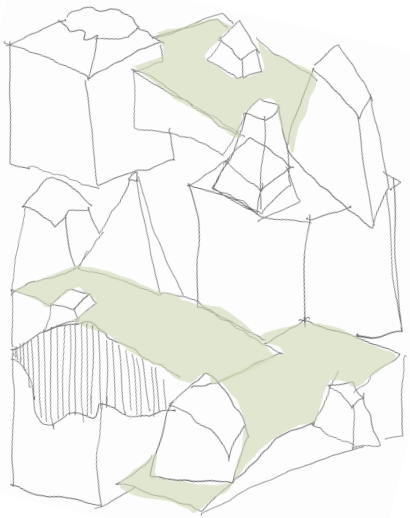


Figure 1: Construction of churches in Eersterust by Author 2021

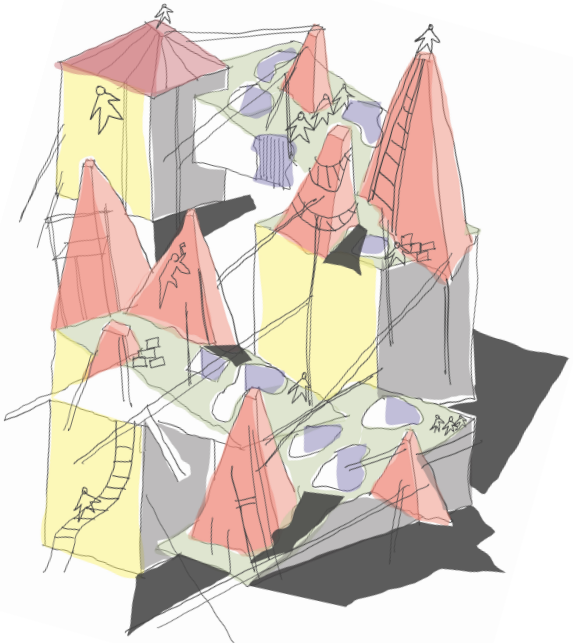


Figure 2: Constructed churches in Eersterust by Author 2021

Figure 3: Churches in Eersterust by Author 2021

Figure 4: Churches in Mamelodi by Author 2021

Figure 5: Churches in Diepsloot by Author 2021

Figure 6: Churches in Atteridgeville by Author 2021

Figure 7: Churches in Khayelitsha by Author 2021

Figure 8: Churches in Mitchells Plain by Author 2021

# SITUATING THE PROBLEM:

Eersterust was rezoned in 1958 due to the Group Areas Act of 1950, to become a "Coloured area", this entailed forcibly removing residents from the area who do not fit the criteria as well as forcing people living within different suburbs of Pretoria, who fit this criteria to relocate. To this day the community is predominantly "Coloured" (Potgieter 2004:46 & Van der Walt 1966:33). Eersterust was set out on the farm Vlakfontein, in the early 1900's by B & IHJ Wolmarans (Potgieter, 2002:32 & Van der Walt, 1966:32).

Eersterust formed part of the City Council of Pretoria in 1994 and by the year 2000 it formed part of the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality (Potgieter 2004:46).

The origin of the suburbs name is uncertain, translated from Afrikaans it means "first rest". Theories about the origin of the name is that after the siege of Pretoria, the Boer troops rested here (Van der Walt 1966), or that mail coaches rested here on their way to Lydenburg (Potgieter 2004: 46). The last theory entails that the Farm owners of Vlakfontein wanted the "Coloured community" to have a permanent place of main residency (Potgieter 2004: 46).

Gender based violence (gbv) is an underlying problem in Eersterust, the neighbouring suburb of Mamelodi East is a hotspot which spills over into the suburb of Eersterust (Stats online 2020). Unsafe spaces are found in open lots and parks, they are undesigned and abandoned, resulting in a fractured ecology. This becomes a nesting ground for illegal trade, theft and various crimes. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic the amount of homeless people has increased, resulting in an informal settlement, located at the western side of Eersterust. In addition to this, the amount of backyard dwellers grew, a phenomenon found within the community, where backyard rooms are rented out on a monthly basis at astronomically high prices.

## Barriers within Eersterust:

Stark barriers can be seen within the community, this is done for an attempt of safety, but rather the street edge becomes unsafe and the amount of safe gathering spaces becomes even less.

Figure 9: Collage of Eersterust by Author 2021

Figure 10: Collage of Eersterust by Author 2021

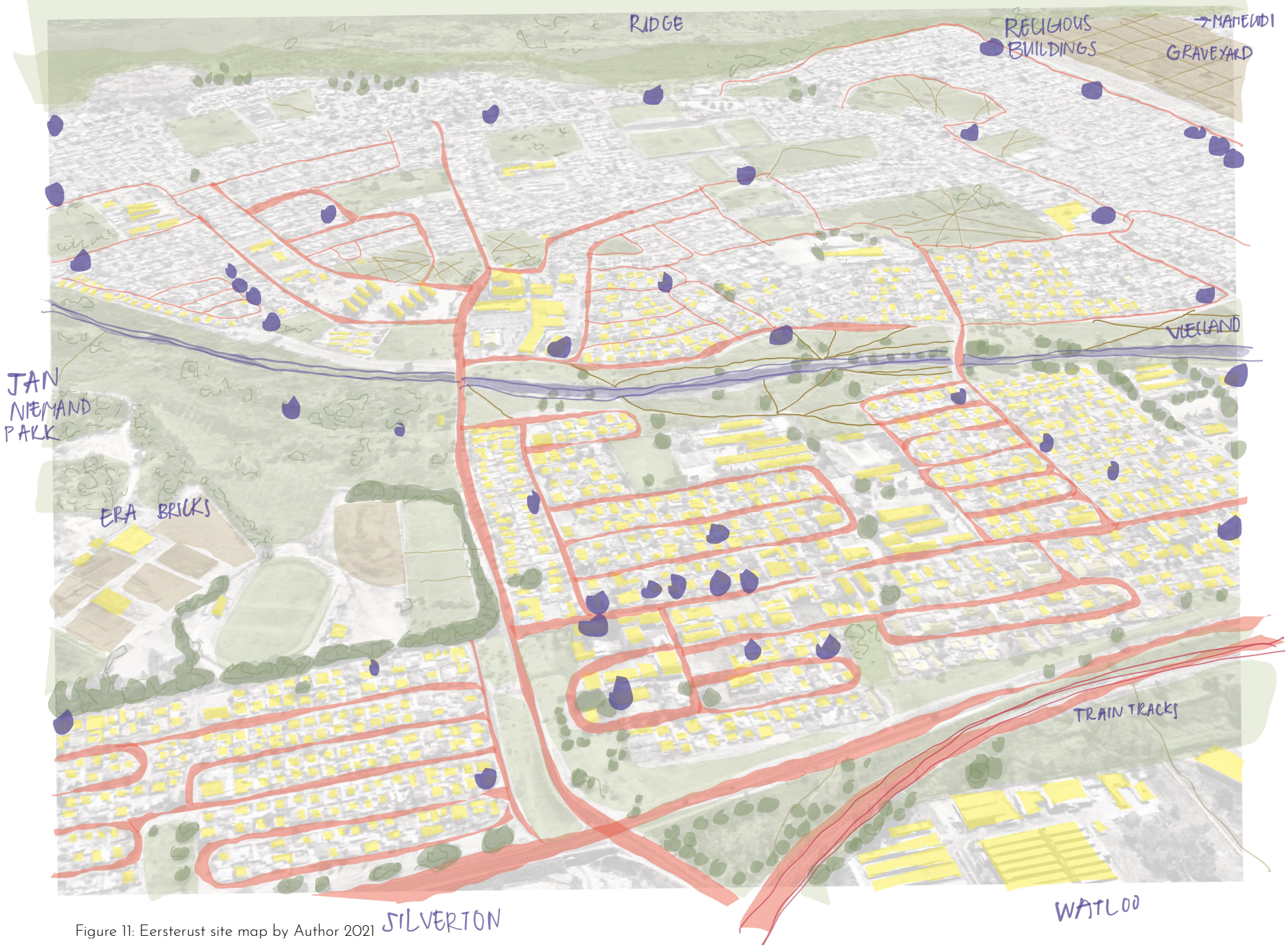



Figure 11: Eersterust site map by Author 2021

Within the socio-political climate of South Africa, violence has escalated. It is now "a country at war with itself" (Altbeker 2007) and the phenomenon of gender based violence has become an epidemic, evident through domestic violence, rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment or the murder of intimate partners. The perpetrators are mainly men.

The post-apartheid democracy developed the Domestic Violence Act (No. 32 of 2007) to protect groups such as woman and children or other vulnerable groups who were historically discriminated against due to a background of inequality (Nadvi & Naidoo 2013: 143). The act however focusses on justice for victims and punishment for the perpetrators, emitting to the actual cause which is the unjust behaviour. Within the demographic of South Africa and the astronomically high crime rates, poor prosecution rates arise. Due to these low rates domestic violence becomes one of the 'safest crimes' to commit within the country (Nadvi & Naidoo 2013: 145). Mamelodi is a hotspot for gender based violence within South Africa (the neighbouring commuunity of Eersterust), this has spilt through to Eersterust . The route of the behaviour must be addressed in order to lower the statistics.

Traditional power relations place the man at the head of the household and at the head of the church. The community of Eersterust and the church are indistinguishable. By placing woman on a lower ranking order than men, the chance for abuse is bigger as one party is seen to have more value than the other.

Khnesani de Klerk depicts the role of woman within the profession of architecture on her website Matri-archi (2017) (see figure 12), with the help of a scene on a beach. The white men are placed on the sand overlooking the vista, followed by black men with wet feet, who to the white men look perfectly fine, but are stuck halfway in the ocean on their way out. The white woman are gasping for air as the ocean becomes deeper, while the black woman are drowning and swimming for dear life. At the bottom of the ocean, decomposing, lies the imbalances causing the scenario that is played out.

Discrimination against woman in the church and at home can be represented similarly by placing the toxic patriarchal system next to the dead fish, polluting the ocean/ community, the woman in the sea, the men on the beach and the home as an umbrella which creates a veil shielding the view of the drowning woman and hiding her battered body. Finally the church is represented by a lifeguard, who can be on or off duty.

The children are placed in the wake of it all.

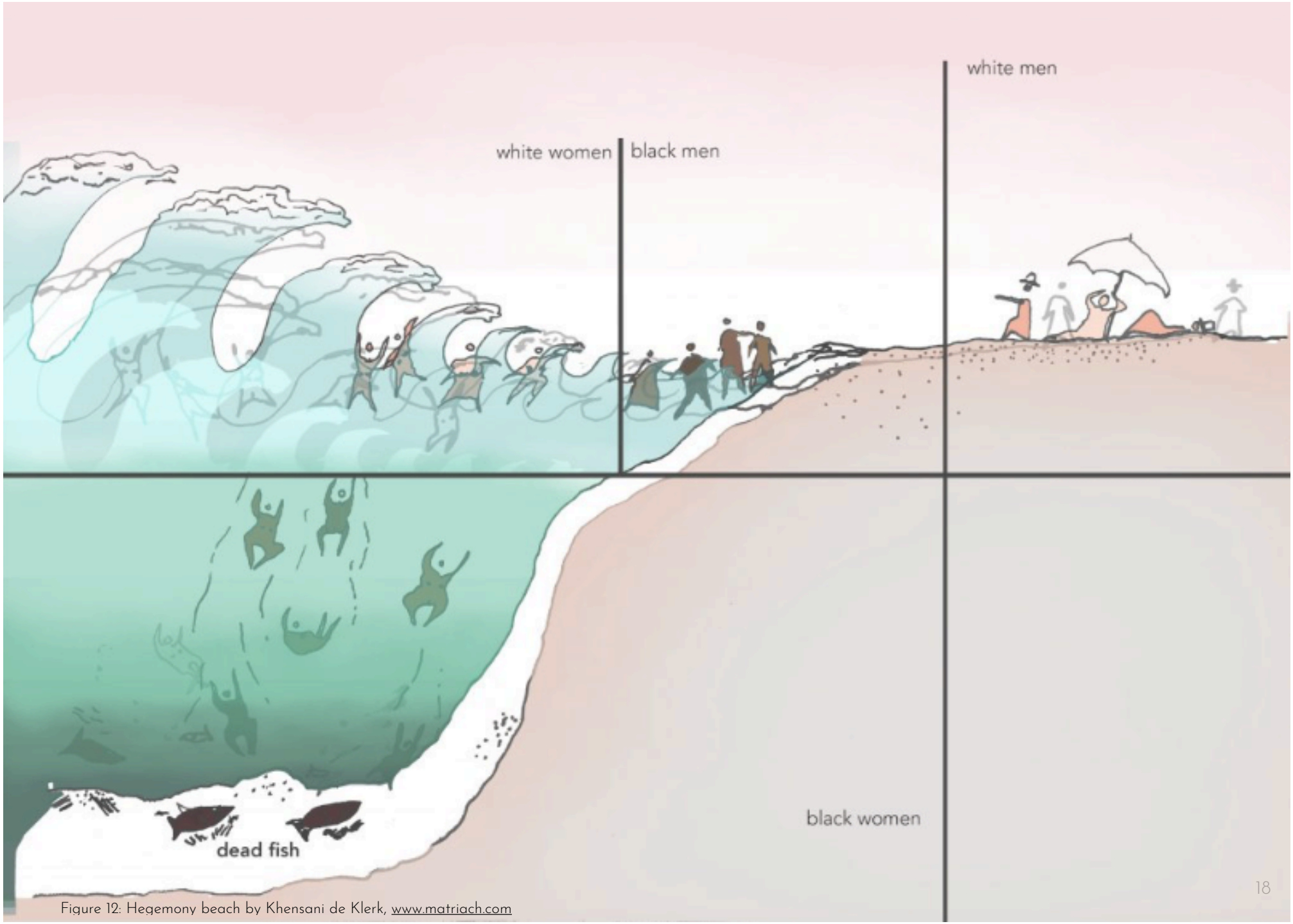



Figure 12: Hegemony beach by Khensani de Klerk, www.matriach.com

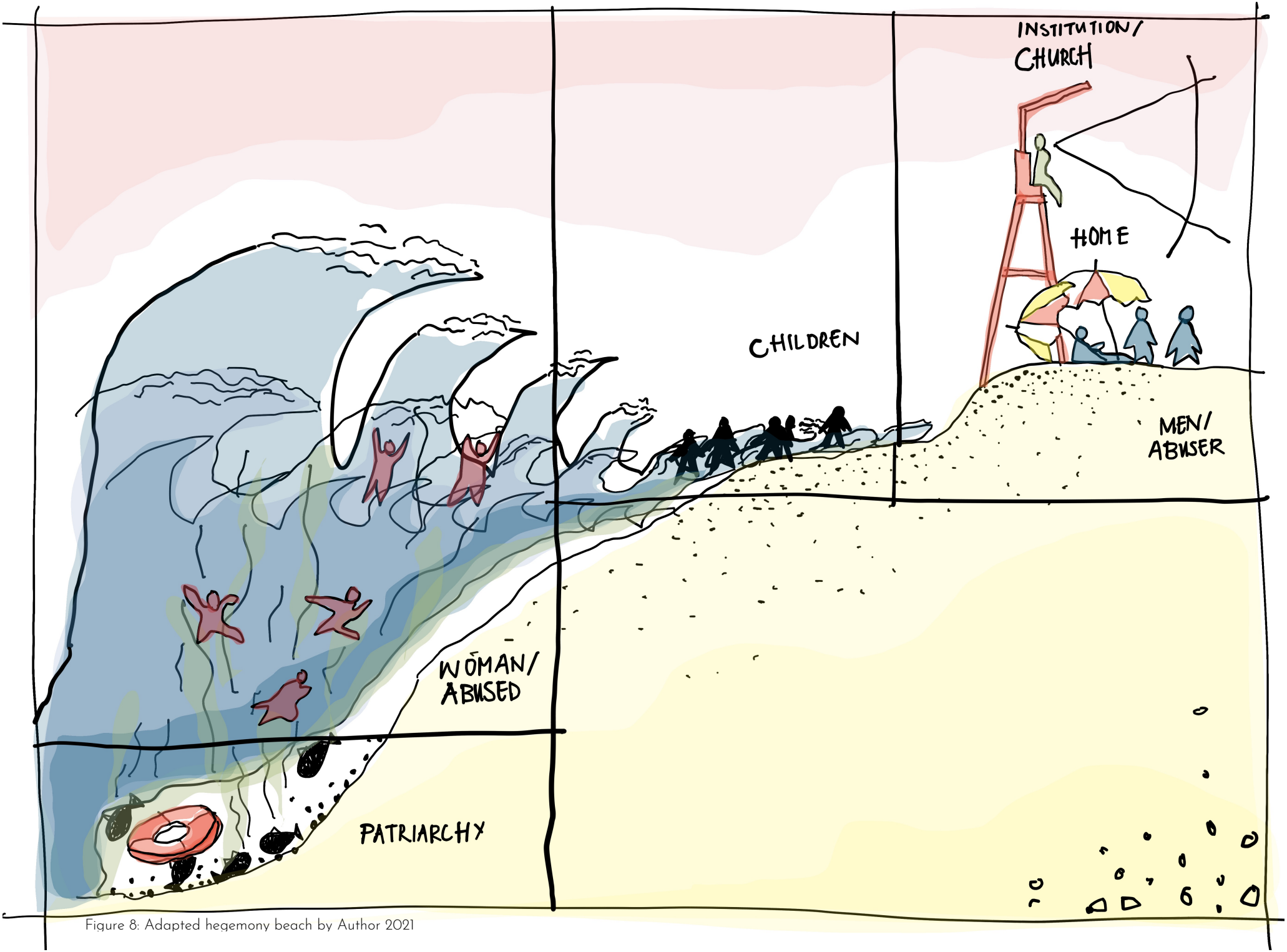



Figure 8: Adapted hegemony beach by Author 2021

Remnants of the apartheid city planning can be seen through the vast amount of churches within the community. Afrikaner nationalism was used largely to develop Pretoria with the church built in the heart of the city as the centre of trade and education, with roads aligning to this nucleus (Fisher 1998). Within Eersterust, the churches are not aligned with the infrastructure such as streets as the church was built on a palimpsest and not a tabula rasa. Spatial inequality is prevalent due to buffer zones.

Patterns of fragmentation and displacement are apparent within the urban edges of post apartheid environments (Stals 1998:4). Informal settlements/ apartheid developments in the form of 'large dormitory townships" (Todes 2003:109 in Nel 2010:3) kept the power relations of hierarchal governing bodies dominant.

A natural buffer zone in the form of a ridge can be found to the northern side of the suburb. A buffer zone compiled out of a graveyard to the east, separating Mamelodi and Eersterust and an industrial buffer zone separating Silverton and Eersterust with the help of large access roads and a train station.. Towards the Western side the abandoned industrial ERA brick works factory, creates a harsh edge condition. Within Eersterust itself a layer of disconnect can be seen between the north and south. The Rietspruit river forms the barrier between parts of high and low income, the latter being more prevalent in the south.

Silver was found on the farm Koedoespoort, 11km east of Pretoria, but did not last long as the silver reserves were quickly exhausted. This sparked the promise for industry and trade and became the birth place of Silverton (Pansegrouw 2013:30).

The owner of the farm Derdepoort, started manufacturing bricks with top-quality clay, located on his farm (Van Dijkhorst 2013 in Pansegrouw 2013:32), creating a client base and a demand for bricks. In 1980 Rosema & Klaver bought the thriving company and Era Bricks was founded (Pansegrouw 2013:32). The production was changed to a coal-driven process and became too expensive to sustain. Eventually an application was made to decommission the unsustainable production site (Pansegrouw 2013:32).

The ERA brick works factory shows the disconnect and estrangement between man and the industrial. The decommissioned industrial site leaves scars of erosion on the ecology and an abolition of work opportunities.

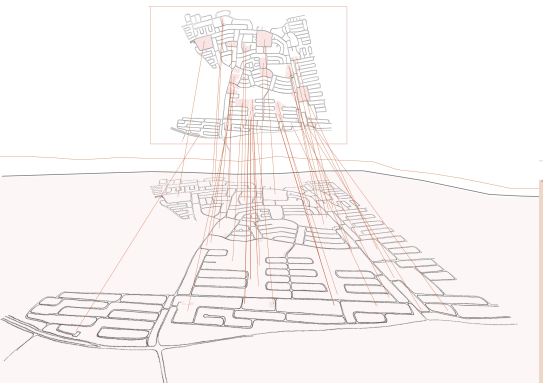


Figure 15: Safe spaces by Author 2021

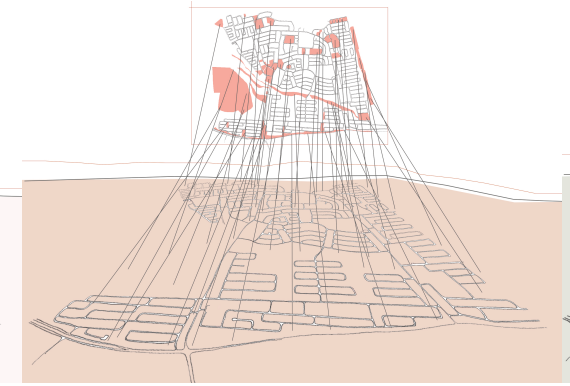


Figure 16: Unsafe spaces by Author 2021

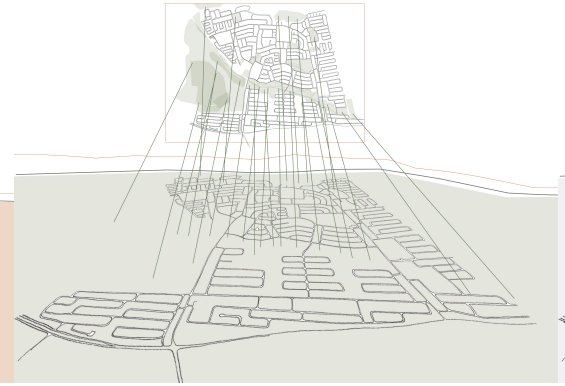


Figure 17: Fractured nature by Author 2021

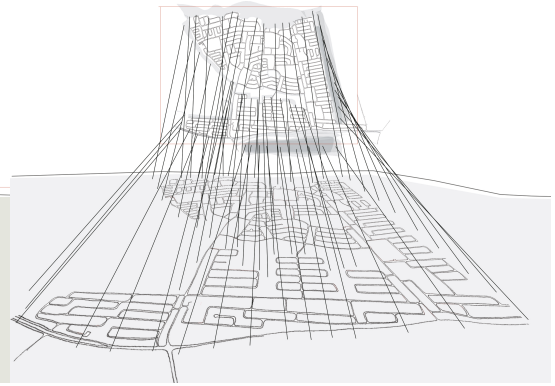


Figure 18: Boundaries/ buffer zones by Author 2021

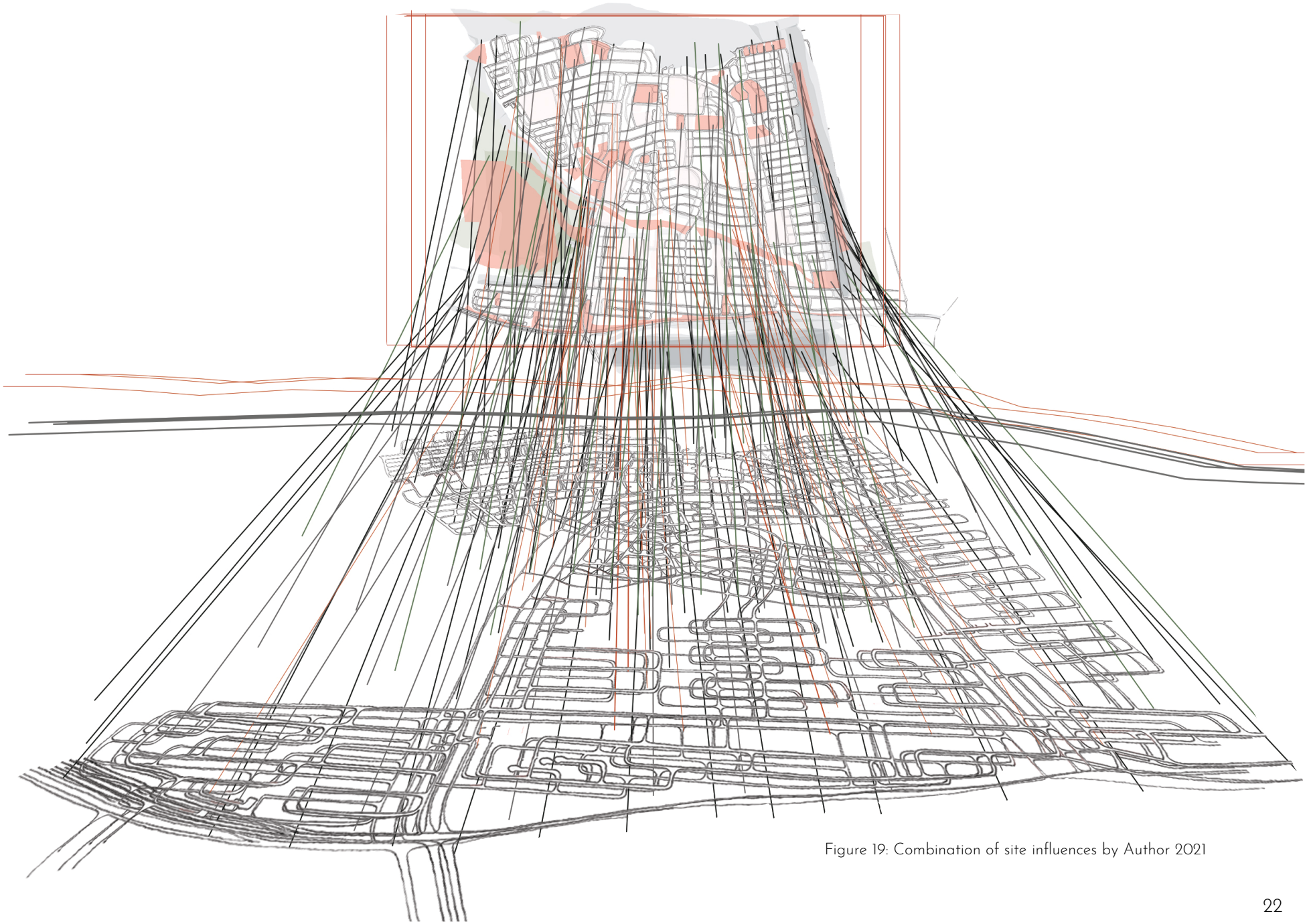


Figure 19: Combination of site influences by Author 2021

# ARCHITECTUAL ISSUE:

The abundance of churches within Eersterust becomes ironic when the layers of problems within the community start to present themselves. The lack of identity due to being pushed aside during the apartheid era and being forgotten post apartheid has taken a toll on Eersterust as well as the inhabitants. This can be seen through a lack of social housing leading towards a new and developing informal settlement aiding in poverty, pollution, theft and gender based violence (gbv). Existing infrastructure is available within the churches that are predominantly used on Sundays.

The church can be used to intervene in the problems raised above and become more than just a religious building, it can aid in creating a safe space useable during the week, rather than just being used during weekends. Within Eersterust, identity is searched for and related to the church, but as the building becomes isolated, identity too becomes isolated and left within this space. How can this identity be found or evolved when the building typology has made limited room for change. Institutionalised buildings such as schools and churches use the same typologies frozen in time. Schools built within the Apartheids era did not consist of school halls, the same principles developed during apartheid are still prevalent within the church complex, therefore a need for intervention occurs. The community of Eersterust calls for a decolonisation of the church complex to create a building addressing the current needs.

Figure 20: New informal settlement by Author 2021

# URBAN DEVELOPMENT SCHEME:

The National Development Plan; Vision for 2030:2014 for Region 6 (Eersterust is located within this region), states the principles that are focussed on (City of Tshwane 2018:5):

Spatial justice: Public resources unfairly distributed can be changed through densification. "Transparent networks are seen as the key to spatial transformation".

Spatial sustainability: By creating '"walkable neighbourhoods" to aid sustainability within the urban fabric.

Spatial resilience: Environmental sustainability should be the goal, by protecting the existing ecology and restoring the fractured.

Spatial quality: "To create more liveable vibrant and valued places" by improving the functional and aesthetic properties of the built fabric.

Spatial efficiency: "Job creation must be supported" by obtaining or adding potential through development.

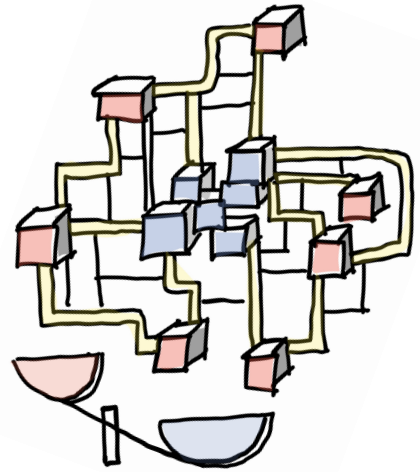


Figure 20: Spatial justice by Author 2021

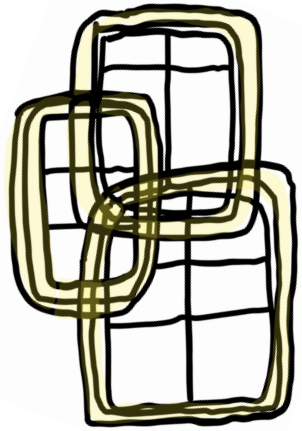


Figure 21: Spatial sustainability by Author 2021

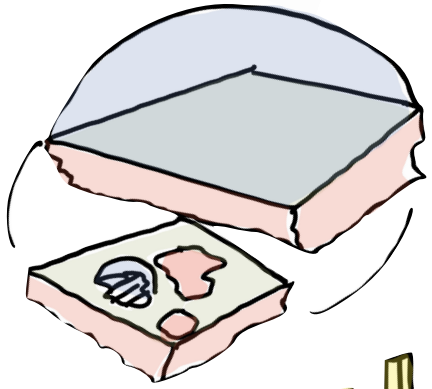


Figure 22: Spatial resilience by Author 2021

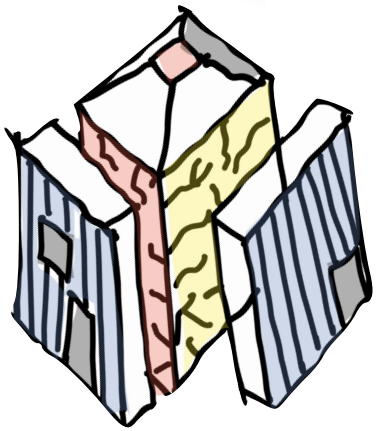


Figure 23: Spatial quality by Author 2021

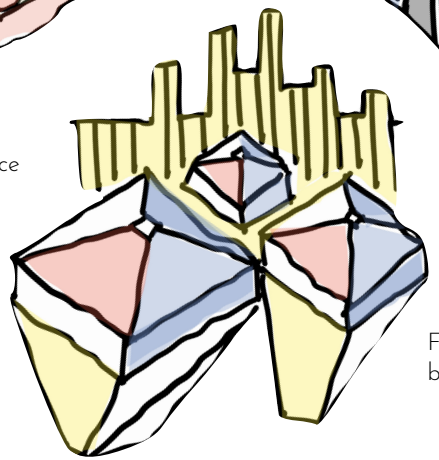


Figure 24: Spatial efficiency by Author 2021

# INTENTIONS/ OUTLINING THE BRIEF:

*"Since today's religious buildings get used more than one day a week, the architect is prompted to design his program with the day-to-day needs of the community in mind... an emphasis on secular and religious functions of the community ensures that the building will be used, that the neighbourhood is aware of its usefulness, and in a way, guarantees the longevity of the building itself... we know these buildings are serving their communities to the maximum capacity."* (Thompson 1979:ix in Nel 2010:5).

To create a space of refuge and ritual within the urban edge, creating a building that is a catalyst, providing social services for community upliftment and empowerment using the exisitng Christian churches located within the suburb by adapting them to be more relevant within this community of need.

By creating a multi-nodal, polycentric community of adapted churches to enrich the lives of the inhabitants through a ancupunctural system, many needs can be fulfilled, densifying the community.

Client: The City of Tshwane, Department of social development, Vodacom foundation, Victim empowerment programme.

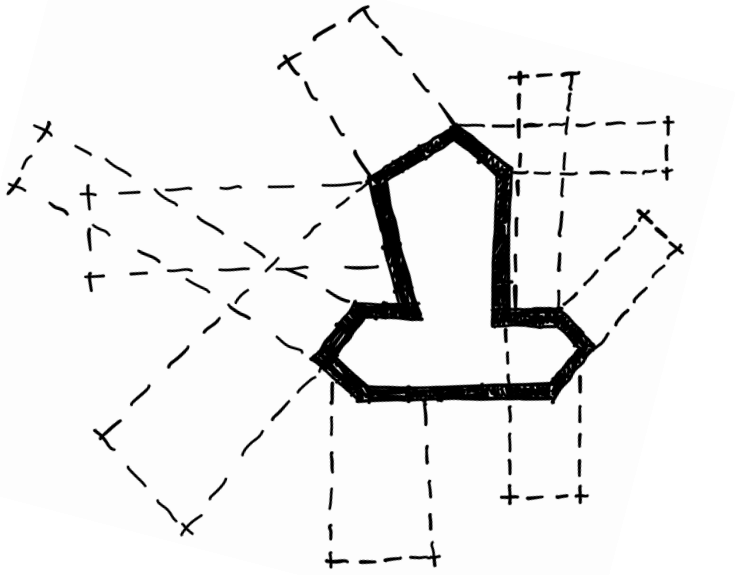


Figure 25: Readaptation of church by Author 2021

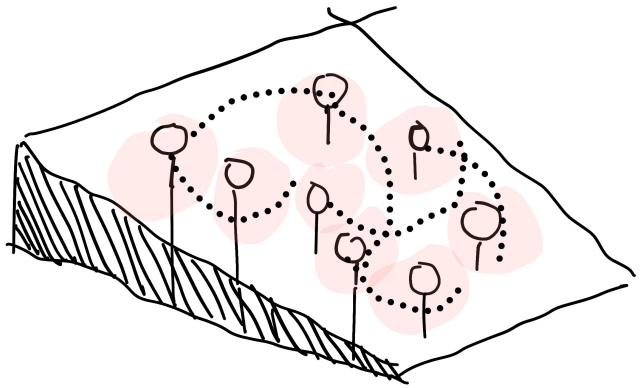


Figure 26: Polycentric development of community by Author 2021

# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The site choice is to be made through a comparative analysis of churches within the community of Eersterust by pinpointing the identified urban and architectural problems situated in the suburb, related to an existing church in close proximity to the plotted issues.

Theory development will be used to develop an initial theoretical framework on addressing further design informants.

Historical studies will be conducted on how the church typology has came to be as well as the thresholds used within this secular space.

Precedent studies globally and locally will be done qualitatively to scrutinise the development of the religious typology. Profane buildings that depend on being spaces of refuge will be investigated.

Case studies are to be conducted with the help of site visits and attending services on Sundays, this is to understand the manner in which the churches are currently used within Eersterust.

Interdisciplinary research will be guided by the need to understand treatment methods of gbv as well as theological data to understand the different religious nominations situated within Christianity.

Design development is to be done with an iterative process, addressing the theory and issues raised.

The design will be supported by a technical resolution using empirical quantitative data regarding environmental studies and a holistic sustainable approach.

A research-by-design methodology is developed throughout the mini dissertation with the aim to add to the architectural discourse.

# SITE CHOICE:

The site is to be developed and attached to an existing church. Therefore the churches within the community are to be assessed.

The problems identified are gbv, a fractured ecology, homelessness, a lack of safe outdoor spaces, impermanent market space, a lack of school halls/ auditoriums and malnutrition due to poverty (lack of soup kitchens).

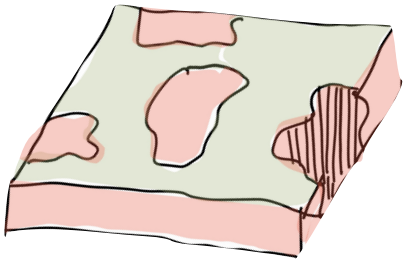


Figure 28: Fractured ecology by Author 2021

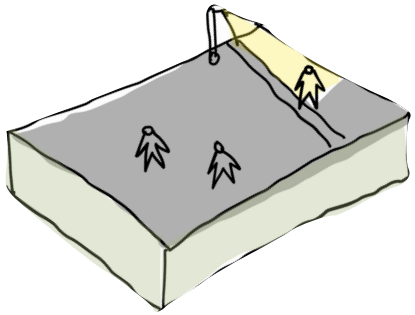


Figure 30: Lack of safe outdoor spaces by Author 2021

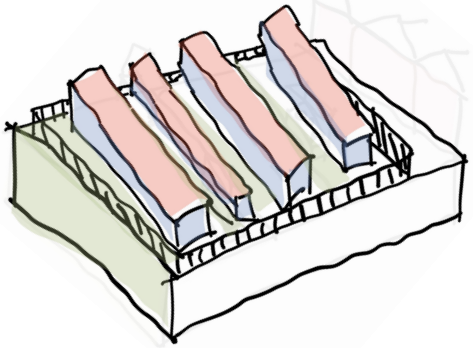


Figure 32: Lack of school halls by Author 2021

Figure 27: Gbv by Author 2021

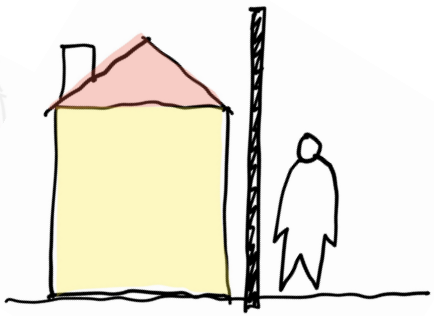


Figure 29: Homelessness by Author 2021

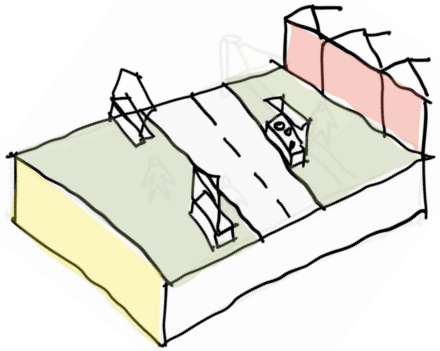


Figure 31: Impermanent markets by Author 2021

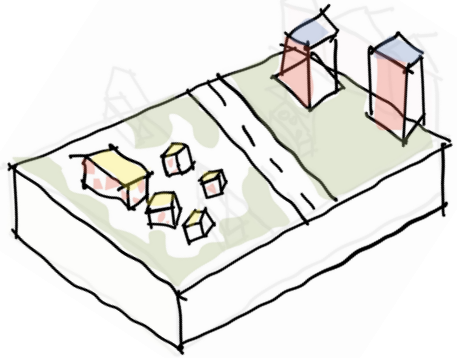


Figure 33: Poverty by Author 2021

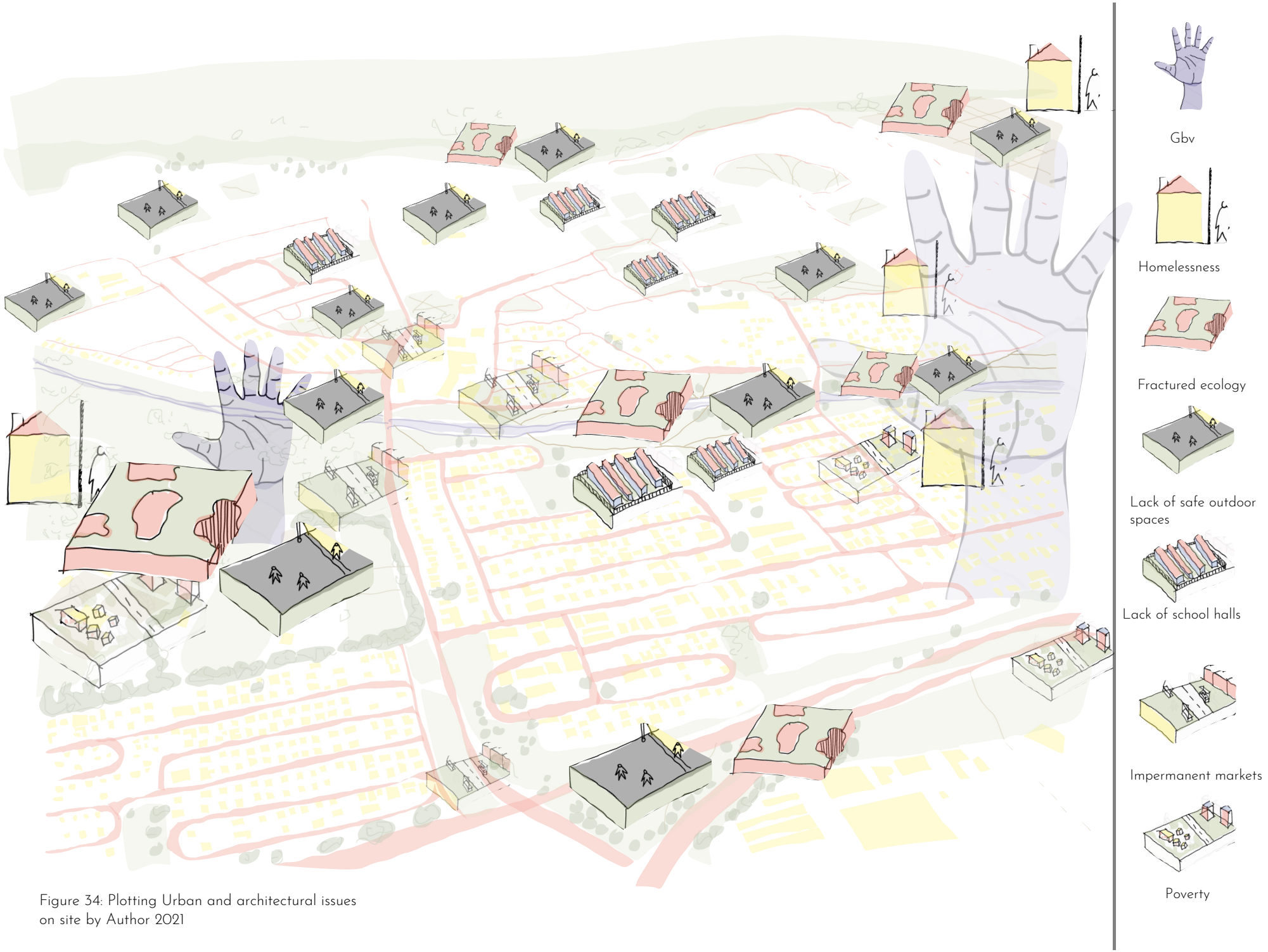



Figure 34: Plotting Urban and architectural issues on site by Author 2021

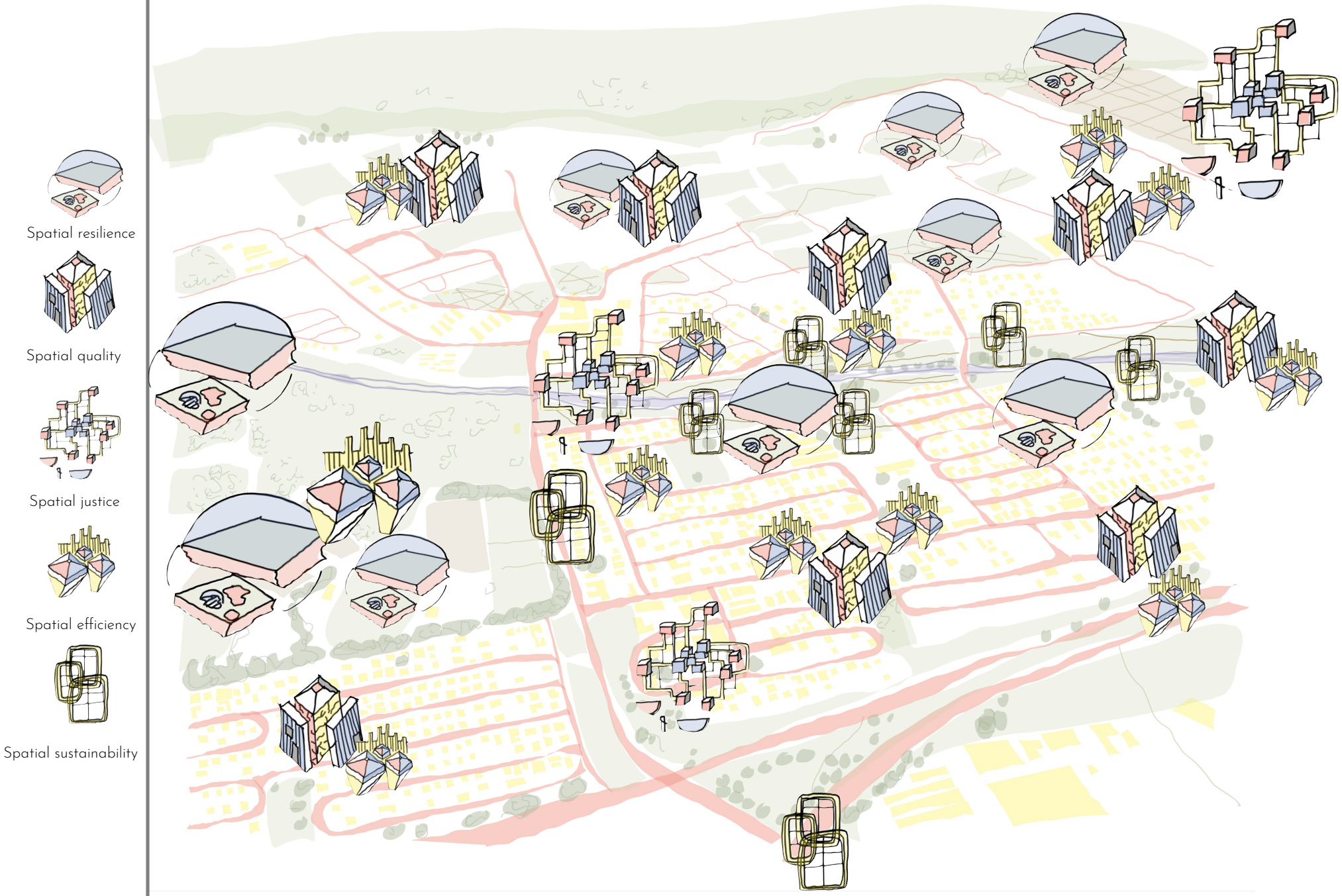



Figure 35: Places in need of urban framework Author 2021

Figure 36: Churches located in Eersterust by Author 2021

By combining the urban vision and places where intervention is needed, the urban and architectural issues as well as the location of the existing churches- it is prevalent that the vleiland area is the space with the largest need for mediation, see figure 32.

The vleiland is polluted, the open space around it abandoned and unsafe. The space becomes a corridor with vibrant desire lines used to cut through the landscape towards the schools, public swimming pool or to and from Silverton/ Watloo. Informal market places are set up around the boundaries of the vleiland and the new informal settlement is located along the vlei, towards the west.

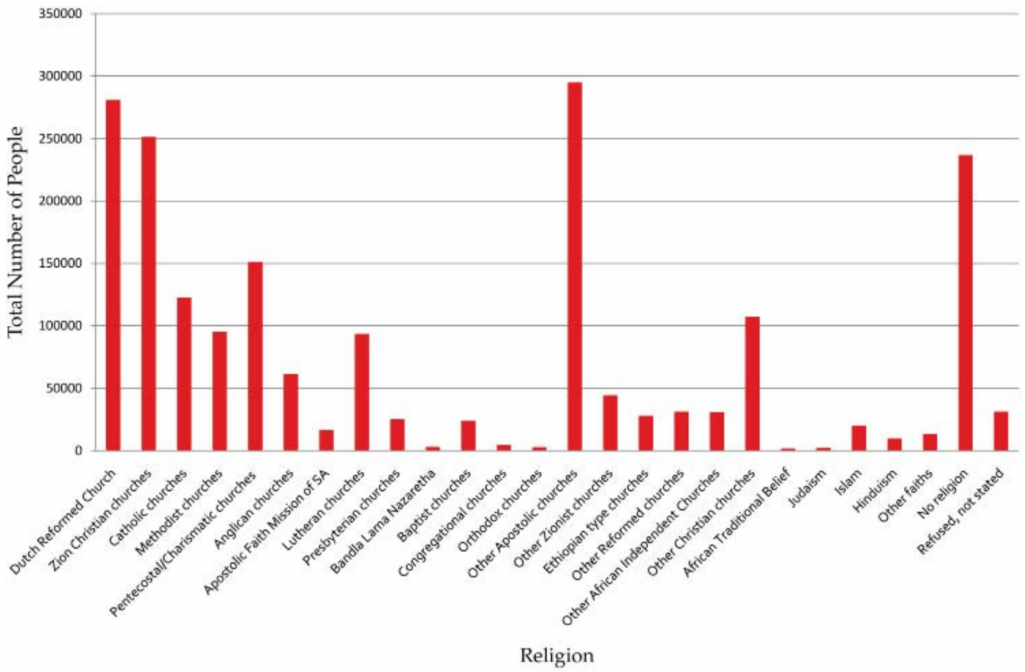



Figure 37: Statistics South Africa 2001, number of people following certain religious nominations, from Census 2001 for Tshwane Metropolitan Region

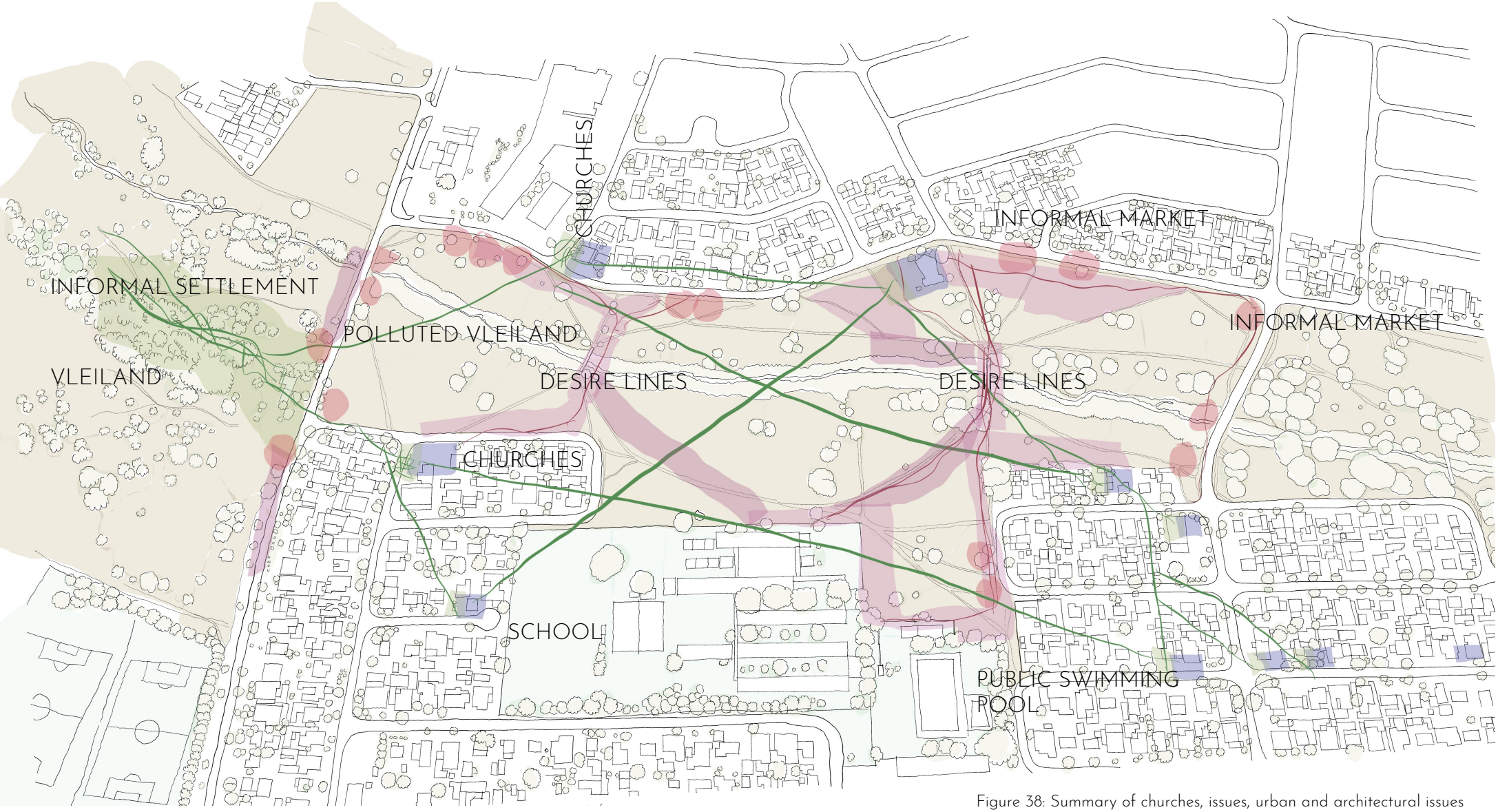
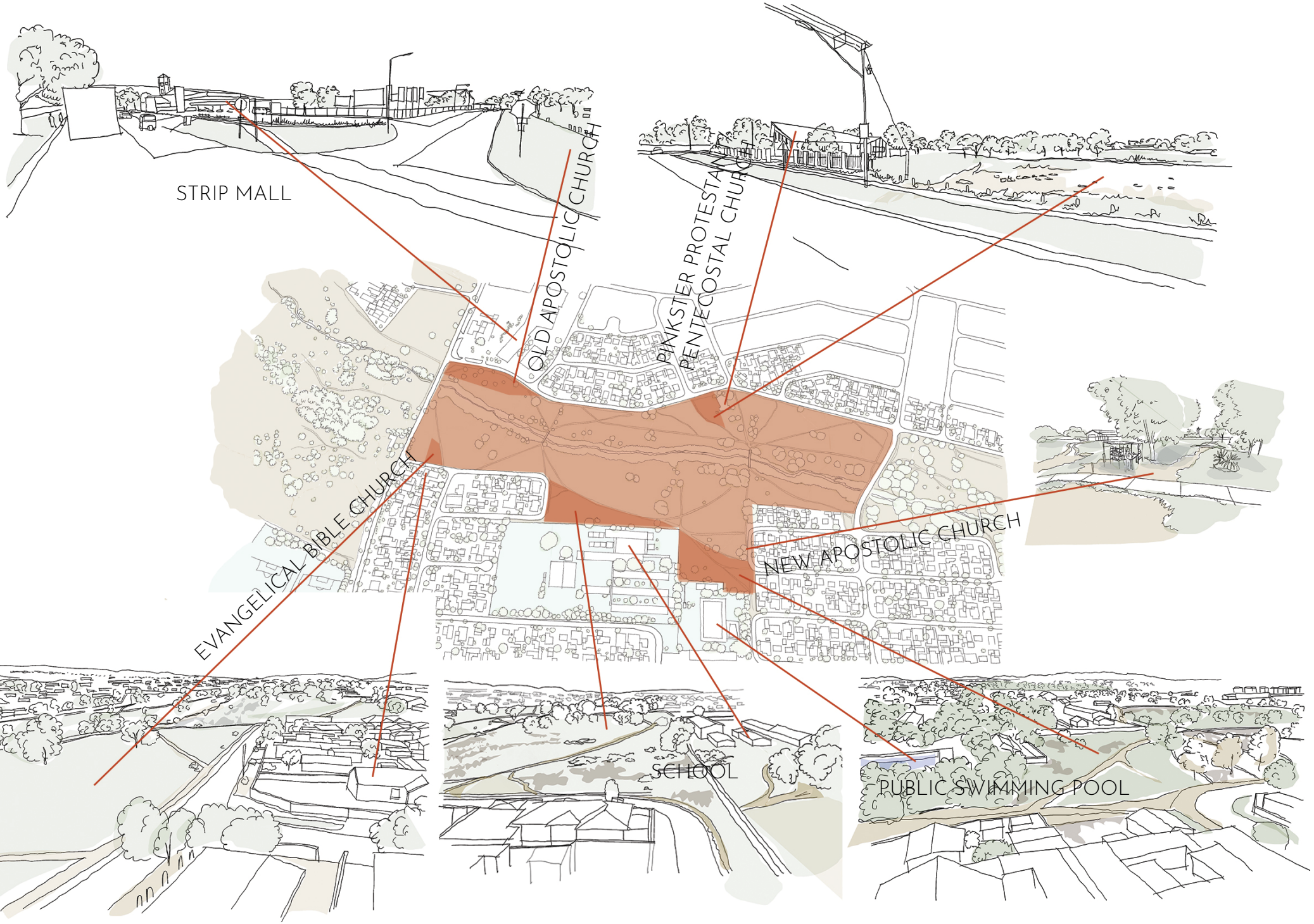



Figure 38: Summary of churches, issues, urban and architectural issues by Author 2021


STRIP MALL
OLD APOSTOLIC CHURCH
PINKSTER PROTESTANT
PENTECOSTAL CHURCH
EVANGELICAL BIBLE CHURCH
NEW APOSTOLIC CHURCH
SCHOOL
PUBLIC SWIMMING POOL

EVANGELICAL BIBLE CHURCH

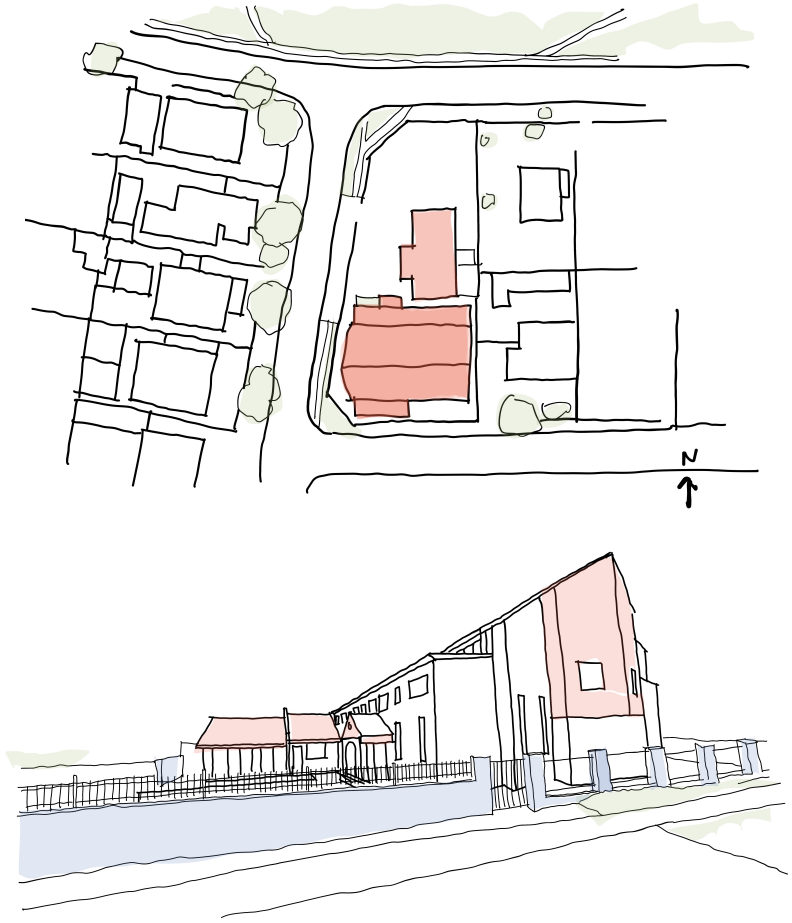



Figure 41: Evangelical Bible Church by Author 2021

OLD APOSTOLIC CHURCH

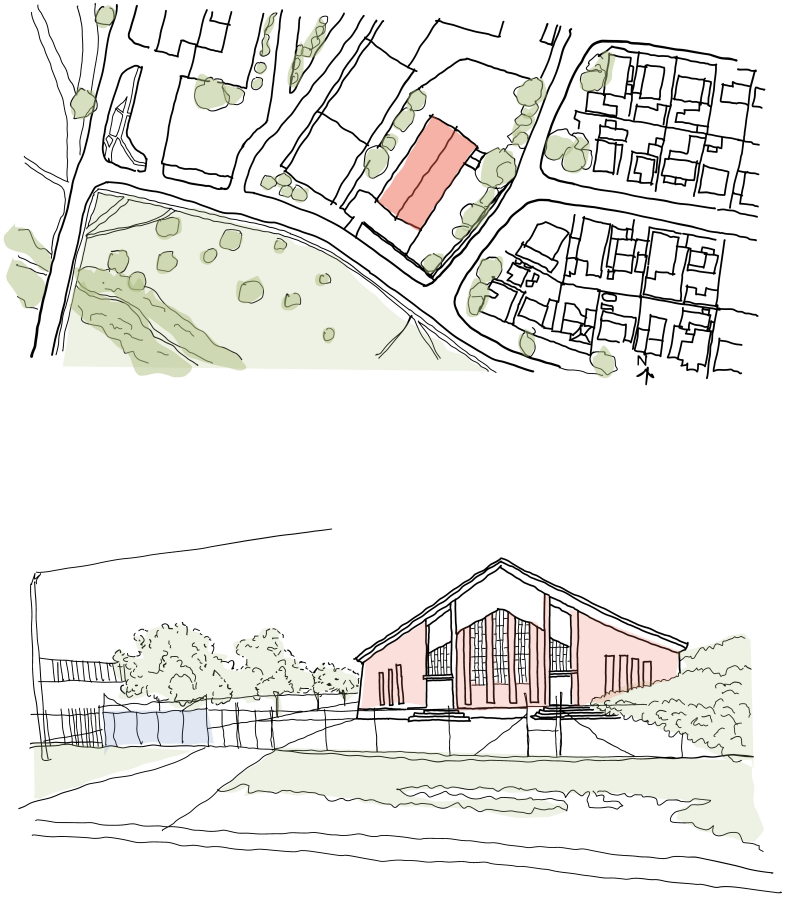


Figure 40: Old Apostolic Church by Author 2021

NEW OLD APOSTOLIC CHURCH

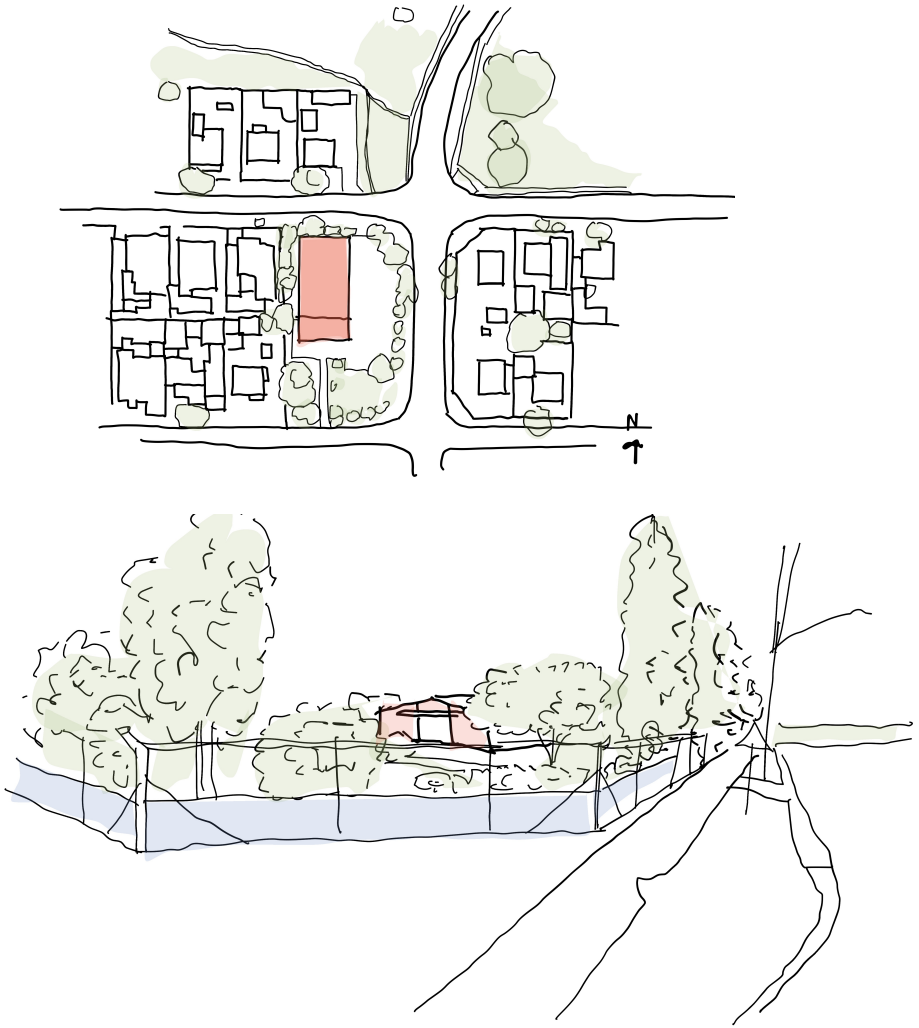


Figure 41 New Old Apostolic Church by Author 2021

PINKSTER PROTESTANT/ PENTECOSTAL CHURCH

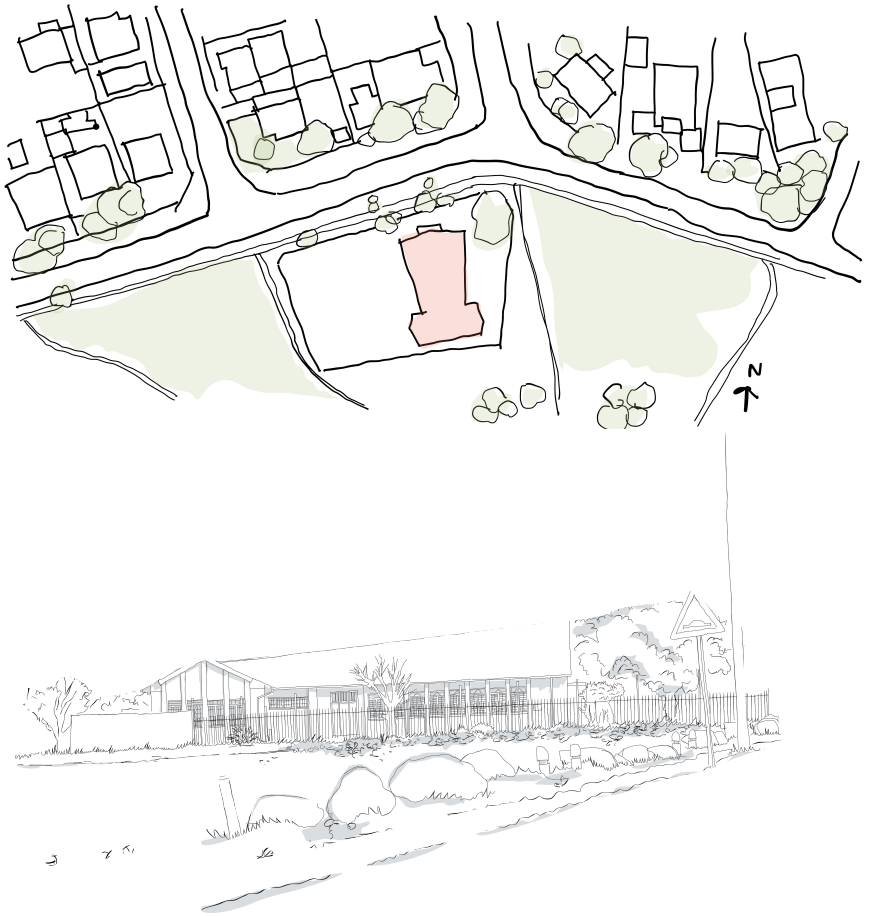


Figure 39: Pinkster Protestant church by Author 2021

The four potential sites are compared in terms of the prevalent edge conditions and potential for development. The Pinkster Protestant Church creates and interesting dialogue between nature and man made with the possibility of expansion towards the east, west or south. The vlei land which is polluted and fractured is in need of spatial resilience. The church situated within this corridor of Eersterust can help create spatial sustainability by constructing a permanent walkway with lighting and a promenade of semi permanent market space where vendors can easily lock up their goods rather than having to portage it daily.

The chosen site is thus the Pinkster Protestant Church.

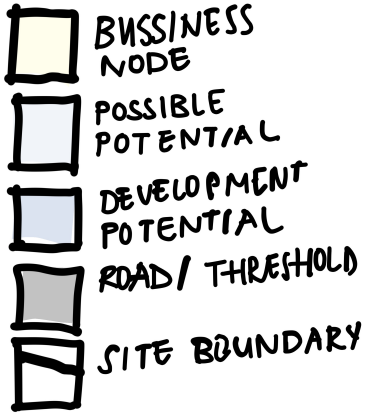
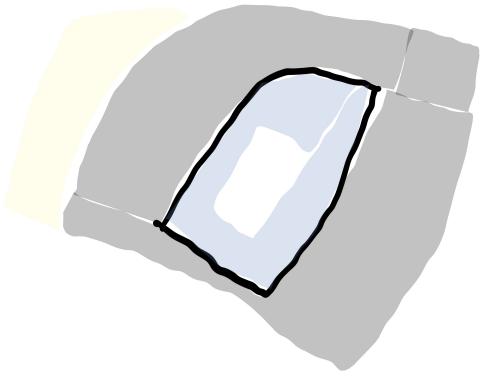



Figure 45: New Old Apostolic Church by Author 2021

Figure 43: Pinkster Protestant/ Pentecostal Church by Author 2021



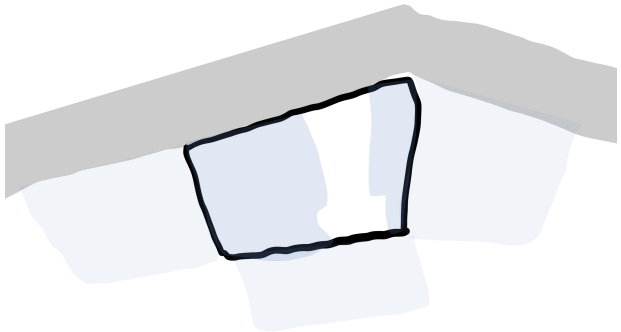
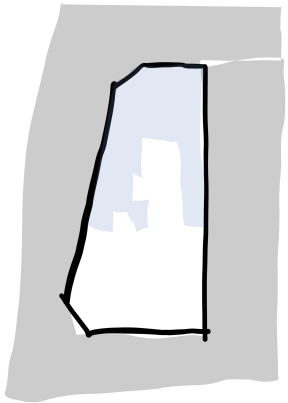


Figure 42 Old Apostolic Church by Author 2021



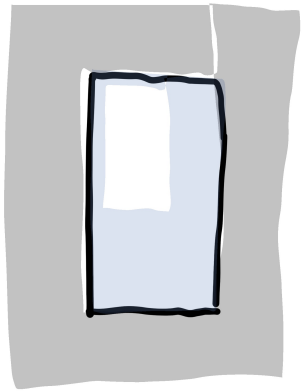


Figure 47: Evangelical Bible Church by Author 2021

Figure 48: Chosen site by Author 2021

Figure 49: Chosen site by Author 2021

Figure 50: Pinkster Protestant Church by Author 2021

# THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK:

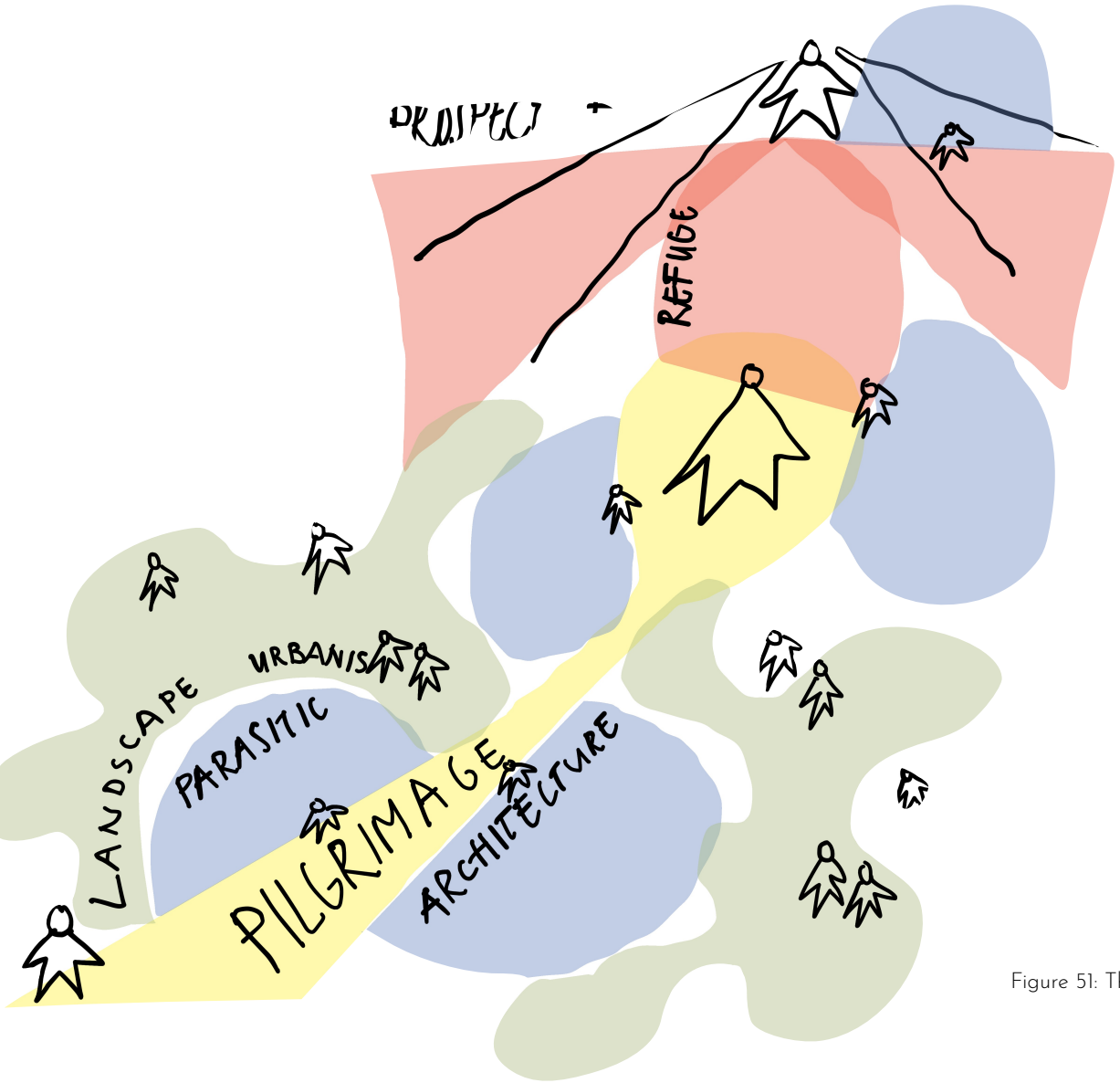



Figure 51: Theoretical framework by Author 2021

## Pilgrimage

Within the church complex an idea of pilgrimage is induced. The building itself is constructed to allow for a journey. The Spire or steeple, draws people in from the street as this is visible and becomes a form of hierarchy and the most public node. The forecourt then allows for people to gather before entering the sacred and more private narthex leading towards the nave. The nave creates a dramatic hallway housing the seating area and space up to the pulpit or altar. This is the most sacred space which is private and designated for the minister or pastor. Behind the Pulpit is the vestry which becomes the most private space used for baptism. Pilgrimage is penitence (renewal or birth) (Thompson 2015:32).

Types of Pilgrimage
-Mini pilgrimage, short journey to a local holy site.
-Long distance, lengthy journeys to a shrine or other sacred space.

The pilgrimage within the building can be enhanced through slowing down movement, ordinary activities (festivals) or vertical movement (Thompson 2015:36). A forced pilgrimage materialised with the Group areas act of 1950, forcibly removing people in and out of Eersterust. Churches settled within Mamelodi had to move after the law was implemented. Pilgrimage is undergone by the informal vendors by setting up their informal stands and goods each day with the promise of a sale and livelihood.

A pilgrimage from battered to healed is called for within the community, physically, mentally and ecologically.

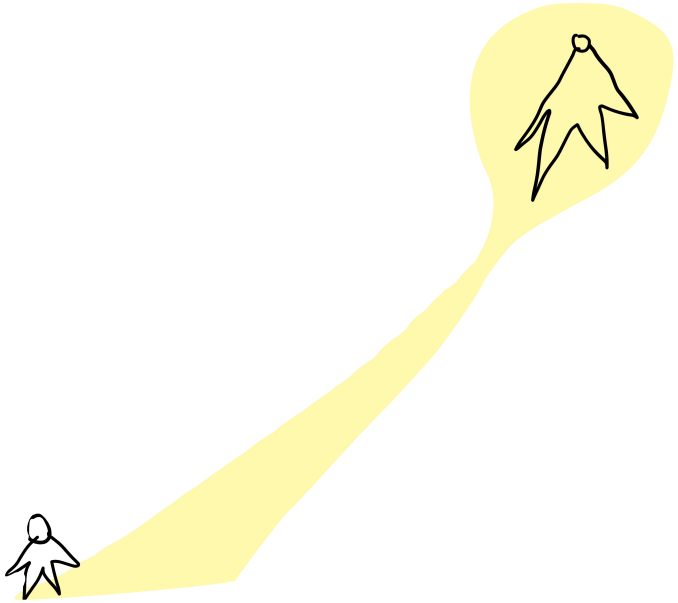


Figure 52: Theoretical framework, pilgrimage by Author 2021

## Parasitic architecture

The early modernists were tasked with rebuilding the war ridden buildings which have a connection with calamity by adding a new layer, to improve (Woods 1993:10) allowing the dweller to integrate freely, outside of the ingrained system. Woods (1993:14) suggested that the war wounded buildings must not commemorate the tragedy or celebrate the possible change in current dogma, but rather through acceptance.

To heal a scar with a scab architecturally, as this becomes the connection and progression between old and new. The existing church was built during an era of tragedy and the nature surrounding it is scarred due to pollution and abandonment.

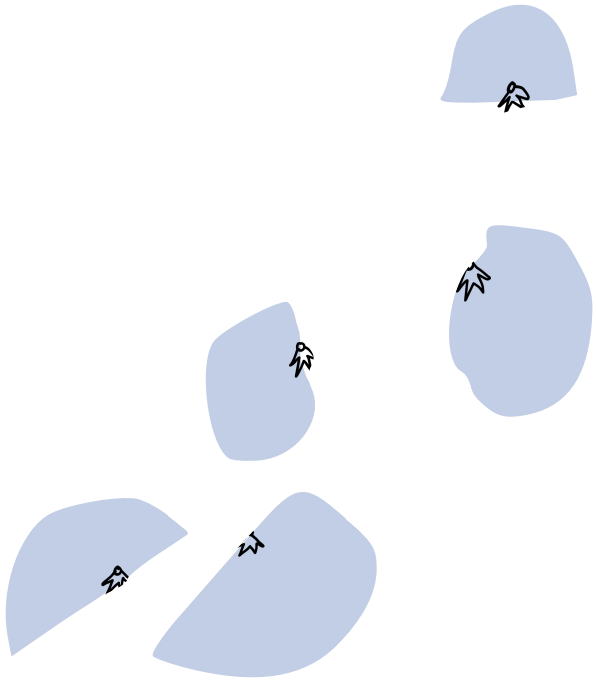


Figure 53: Theoretical framework, parasitic architecture by Author 2021

## Prospect and refuge theory

The "prospect and refuge" theory relates to the ethos of secure environments, which meet the needs of basic human psychological needs (Dosen & Ostwald 2013:4). To observe (prospect) without being seen (refuge) (Dosen & Ostwald 2013:4). According to Dosen & Ostwald (2013:5), the origin of prospect-refuge theory can be detected through the means of the survival instinct (Darwin 1958). Descartes separation of body and mind within Cartesian dualism or phenomenological philosophy, aimed at the exchange that happens between environment and the human body (Husserl 1913).

To better understand the theory explorations of Appleton and Kaplan within this field is explored (Dosen & Ostwald 2013).

Prospect-refuge-hazard (Appleton 1984).

The natural landscape can be perceived through hiding and seeing, as well as the layer of hazardous conditions- this being the reason to hide or see as the opportunity calls for, Appleton in (Dosen & Ostwald 2013:7). Appleton claims that if scale is further added then the effect and approach is easier to determine, the prospect which is observed by the individual can split into two categories. Primary vantage points are directly perceived, while secondary vantage points are predictions made indirectly as they are anticipated (Dosen & Ostwald 2013:7). Psychological

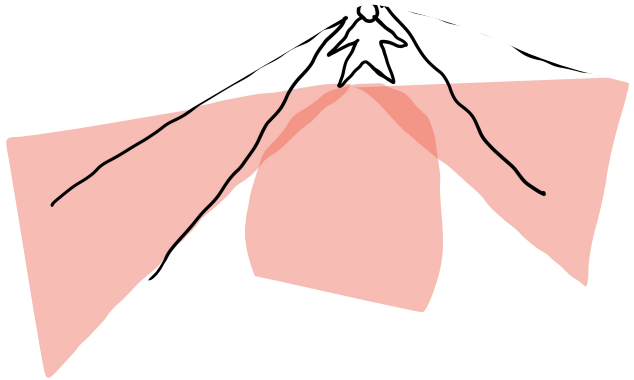


Figure 54: Theoretical framework, prospect and refuge theory by Author 2021

hreats are divided into groups of "incident hazards, impediment hazards and deficiency hazards" (Dosen & Ostwald 2013:7).

Prediction of preference (Kaplan 1983)

Human needs relating to environmental conditions, including a factor of "mystery". Here the preference by reaction "pleasure and pain" and interest "like or dislike" becomes important (Dosen & Ostwald 2013:9).

Kaplan and Appleton's explorations are then compared by Hildebrand (1999).

The main elements encompassed by the theory is (1) a view is needed, the view can be further categorised and varies, but an outlook is always constant for the theory to apply. (2) The space of refuge, a viewing point in the form of frame or dwelling. (3) Safety, or the perception of comfort is needed. (4) The relationship between the view and frame evokes mystery, complexity. The path taken to make a cross over (Dosen & Ostwald 2013:15).

The prospect-refuge theory can be summarised to be "a particular environmental pattern, made up of spatial and formal relations that induce feelings of safety and well- being" (Dosen & Ostwald 2013:15).

Places of refuge were traditionally religious, sacred or hallowed spaces (Sennett 1992:33) allowing for a break from the everyday into a space of enlightenment.

## Landscape urbanism

Nature is in need of refuge within Eersterust. James Corner analyses landscape urbanism with the help of surface strategies to enable a open-ended contemporary city. Demarcation, infrastructure and adaptation are the lenses he uses to scrutinise.

Demarcation and infrastructure are used in a traditional way to plot the building, whilst adaptation is the more abstract as it creates the framework and allows for transformation over time (Waldheim 2006:5).

Adaptation becomes important within designing for a building which will outlive its initial purpose.

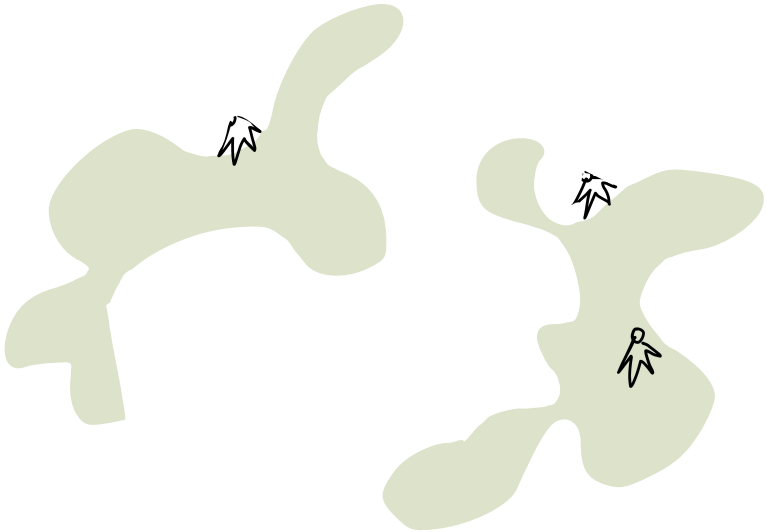


Figure 55: Theoretical framework, landscape urbanism by Author 2021

Reuse and adaptation:

According to Worthington and Bond (2008:148), if a build were to be re-adaptable then it would adhere to the following points.

Flexibility- the building allows for expansion of the plan (Douglas 2002:5).

Expandability- expansion in terms of volume, for example an addition of floors.

Compatibility- keeping the spirit of the building by adapting a church to become a community centre rather than a casino, the adaption is to be similar to the character of the building (Binney 1977:167).

Honesty- recyclability of built materials.

Convertibility- changes made to be legal.

Reversibility- if the building can easily be dismantled or demolished if needed, leaving the existing site as it was.

Minimum intervention- the original building is not to be fractured (Worthing & Bond 2008:101)

(Verster 2010:48-49).

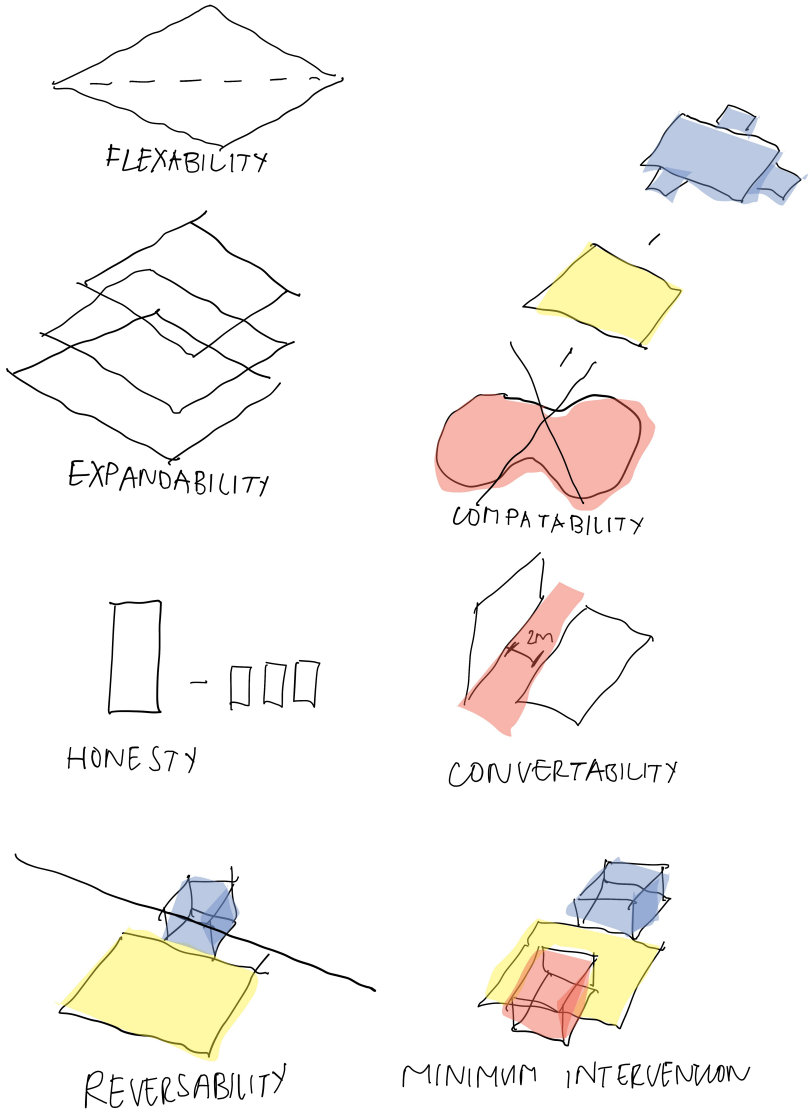



Figure 56: Adaptation explained by Author 2021

# NORMATIVE POSITION:

It is argued that architecture is not art because what separates the two is function.

The idea or construct of art is stereotypically displayed in a gallery/ museum space. This is a space removed and isolated from the everyday. Architecture too is removed from the everyday, For the majority of South Africans it is reserved for certain groups- excluding people near or within the poverty line, leaving poorly built RDP houses, low cost apartheid flats or informal shacks to their dismay.

Architecture has the capacity to become a catalyst. To create functional art with the capacity to uplift and enrich communities in need, is the goal.

Buildings do not forget and stay frozen in the typology it was constructed in. A building is a testimony of its time and its authors (people in control). The building cannot speak further than its own walls (Young 1994). Therefore buildings must be able to expand their lifespan by being able to adapt for the future.

Plural identities and plural programs are to be integrated into architecture, to allow inhomogeneous life to take place within a space.