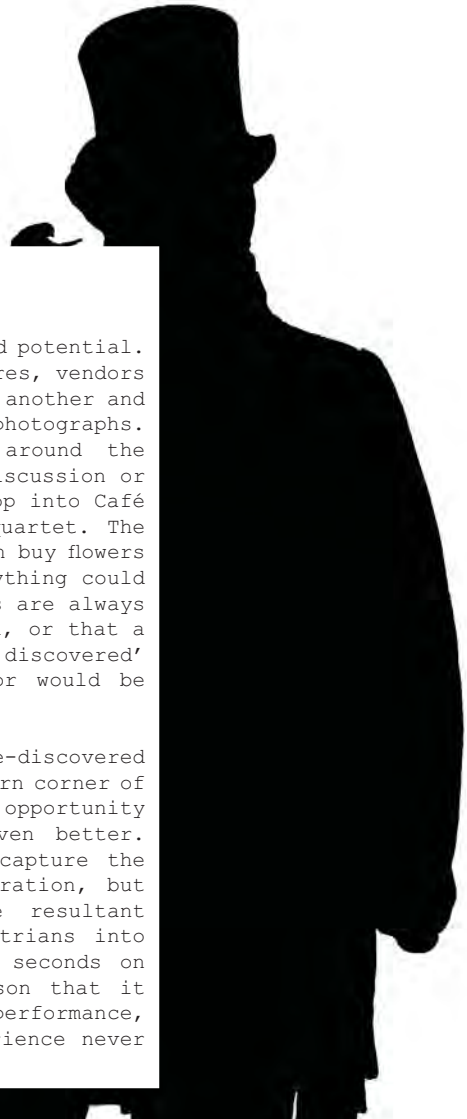




Chapter 2 - The Greater Context



Figure 2.1 Digital collage illustrating positioning of Pretoria
extending the skin



2.1 Introduction

Pretoria is a bustling CBD with unlimited potential. From nine to five, music blares from stores, vendors line the streets, pedestrians dodge one another and many people hand out flyers or take ID photographs. Within Church Square people gather around the plinth of Paul Kruger to listen to a discussion or even take part in a debate, some may pop into Café Riche to listen to the music of the quartet. The opportunities are endless - one can even buy flowers on the way home from Church Square. Anything could be around the next corner, and 'chances are always that something surprising might be seen, or that a beautiful or interesting place might be discovered' (Pienaar, 2004: 1). Any paying visitor would be disappointed if it were any other way.

One such exciting place waiting to be re-discovered is the Capitol Theatre on the south western corner of Church Square; a building which poses an opportunity to rework what was into something even better. This thesis therefore attempts to re-capture the grandeur of the theatre without restoration, but rather through adaptive re-use. The resultant design attempts to draw passing pedestrians into its intrigue if only for a couple of seconds on their way past. It is for this reason that it has been designed as a platform for performance, thereby setting the stage for an experience never to be forgotten.



Figure 2.2 Digital collage illustrating street activity around the watchful eyes of the statue of Paul Kruger in Church Square



Pret

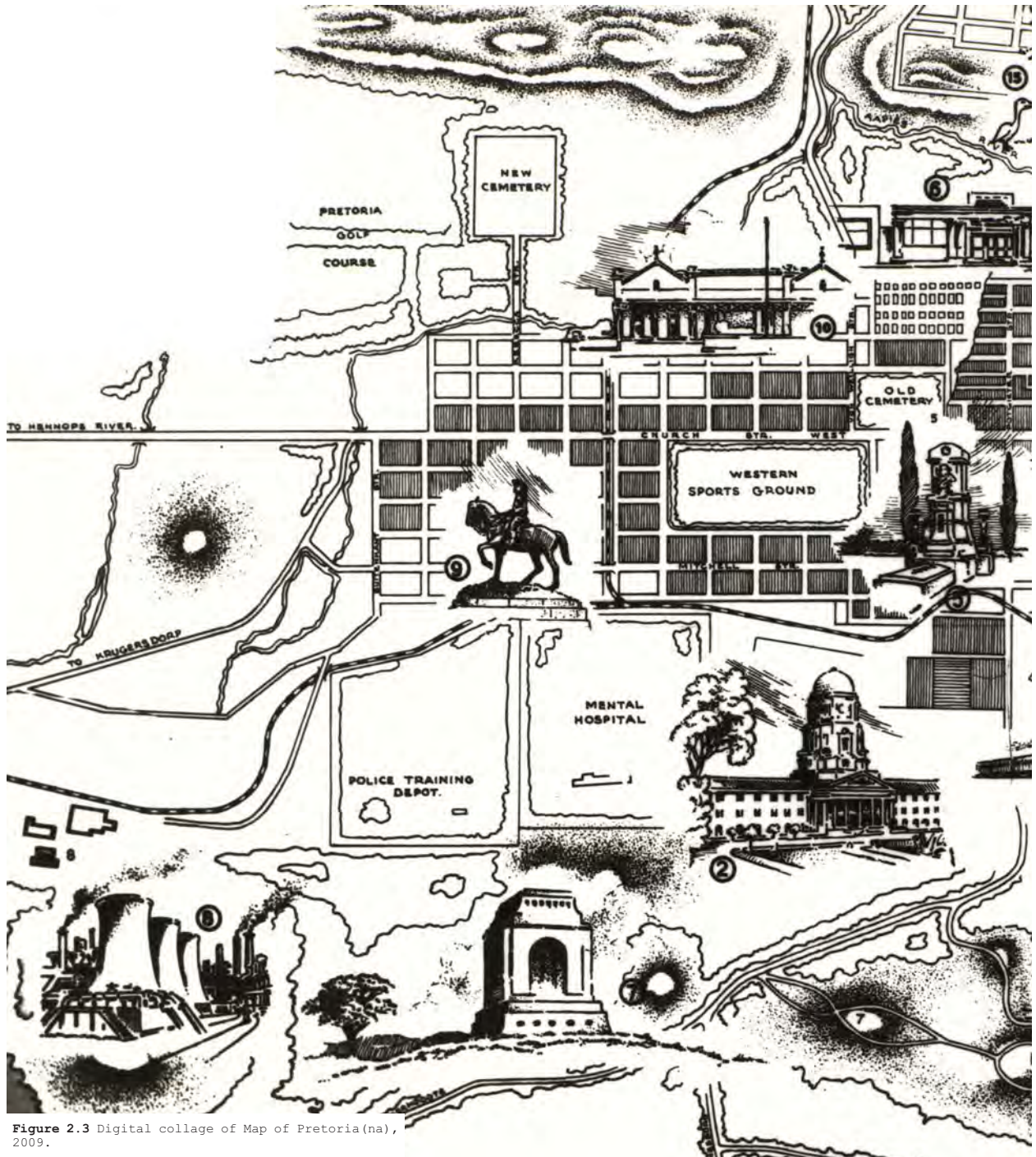
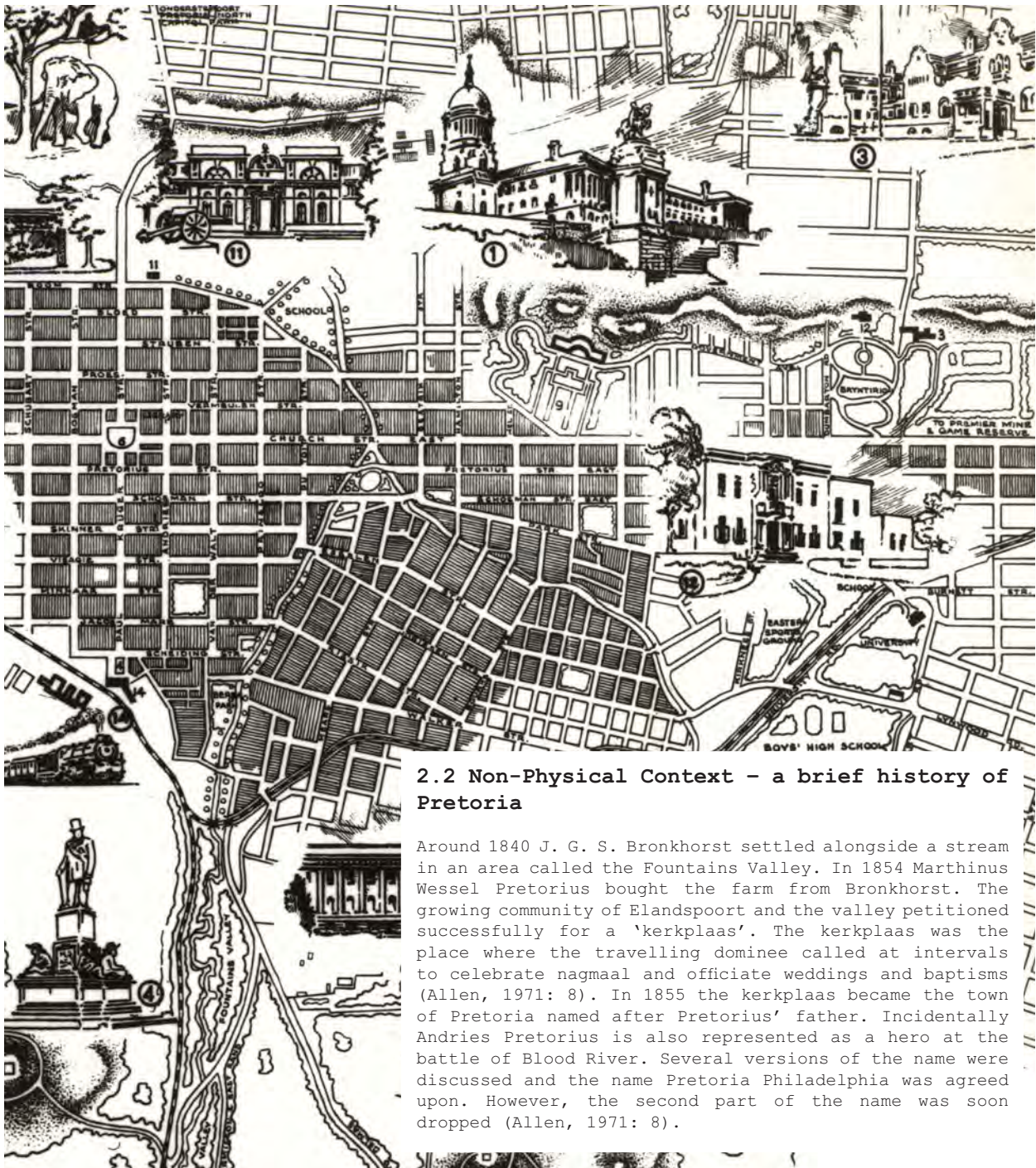


Figure 2.3 Digital collage of Map of Pretoria (na), 2009.

extending the skin



toriana



2.2 Non-Physical Context - a brief history of Pretoria

Around 1840 J. G. S. Bronkhorst settled alongside a stream in an area called the Fountains Valley. In 1854 Marthinus Wessel Pretorius bought the farm from Bronkhorst. The growing community of Elandspoor and the valley petitioned successfully for a 'kerkplaas'. The kerkplaas was the place where the travelling dominee called at intervals to celebrate nagmaal and officiate weddings and baptisms (Allen, 1971: 8). In 1855 the kerkplaas became the town of Pretoria named after Pretorius' father. Incidentally Andries Pretorius is also represented as a hero at the battle of Blood River. Several versions of the name were discussed and the name Pretoria Philadelphia was agreed upon. However, the second part of the name was soon dropped (Allen, 1971: 8).

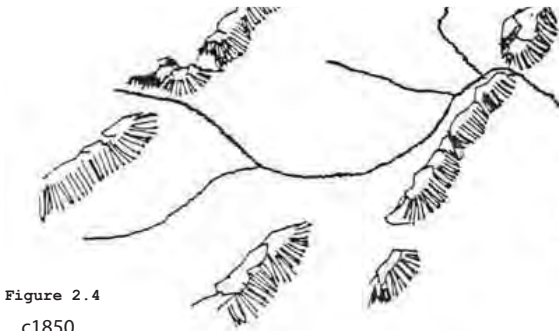


Figure 2.4
c1850

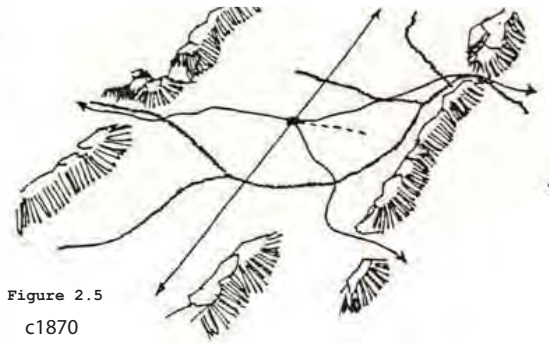


Figure 2.5
c1870

2.3 Development of the city

1. In the article *Urbs Quadrata* (1989), Gerrit Jordaan identifies principles that played a key role in the layout of Pretoria's inner city as well as universal aspects that further define the structure of a city.

Pretoria is located in a 'classical' landscape between two mountain ranges. The ridges naturally delineate the northern and southern boundaries of the city whereas the Apies and Steenhoven rivers define the eastern and western boundaries.

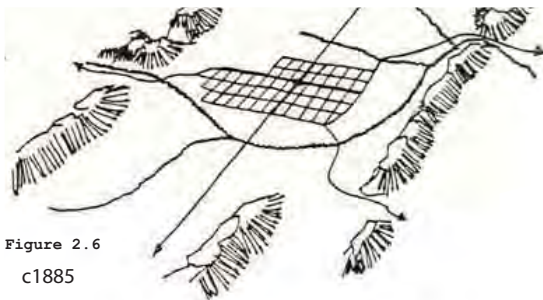


Figure 2.6
c1885

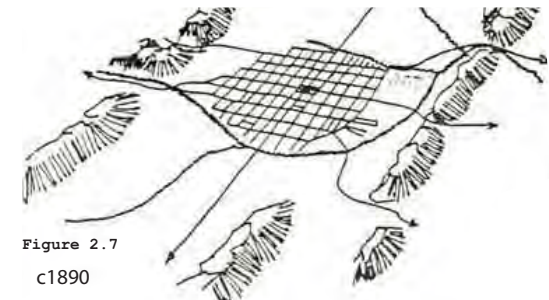


Figure 2.7
c1890

2. The decision to establish the city in this area was based mainly on the availability of water as well as protection against natural forces. The centre of the city coincides with the junctions of two primary movement routes from neighbouring farms. Accessibility to the church was of major importance. As a result, Church Street and Paul Kruger Street (previously Market Street) were created and Church Square was established at their crossing point.

3. The mandala, a primary cosmic ordering principle, was used as a generator for defining the city centre as well as subsequent layouts. The spatial layout of the city is

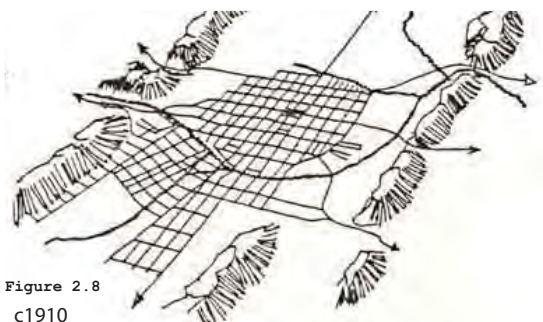


Figure 2.8
c1910



Figure 2.9
c1950

a result of the *Urbs Quadrata*, based on the Roman grid system. Within this system, urban settlements are quartered by two intersecting axes.

4. From the main structuring axes, each quarter of the city was further divided into a hierarchical grid system of roads and streets defining the city blocks. The natural layout of the landscape obviously influenced the extent and direction to which the city developed. The spatial relationship of Church Square set a precedent for the further placement of public and institutional buildings. Religious, commercial, banking and governmental institutions were amongst the civic structures that gave rise to the architectural development pattern of the inner city that we see today.

extending the skin



Figure 2.10 Artistic impression, water colour of Church in Church Square 1949.



Figure 2.11 View toward east of Church Square in 1905 including Sammy Marks fountain and Tudor Chambers,



Figure 2.12 Image of Church Square circa 1920, Tudor Chambers in background.



Figure 2.13 View of Paul Kruger Street from Church Square circa 1895.



Figure 2.14View of Church Steeple from Church Square

Church Square became the heart of Pretoria, the 'focal point from which it all grew' (Allen, 1971: 22). The first church was built in the centre of the clearing of Lewis Devereux and William Skinner. The square became the commercial centre of the town where markets and auctions were often held. In addition, it also became the social core where people worshipped and met. The Hole-in-the-Wall, the first bar in Pretoria, was situated on the north eastern block of Church Square (Allen, 1971: 23).



Figure 2.15 Church Square 2009.
Bruwer, J. 2009

The urban fabric of the CBD, in terms of the city grid is very rigid, whilst the social fabric of the city is fragmented. As a city, Pretoria has a mixed identity. The fact that it serves as the administrative capital of the country imbues it with an authoritative role, which surpasses its social role/identity. Within this social fragmentation, most businesses and places of interest have repositioned themselves to the east of the city centre (do Vale, 20078: 33). This has had a major impact on the city. By day it still takes on its authoritative role, the bigger half of its ego, whilst at night it recedes to its more introverted self. This city, with all its potential and historic importance has reduced itself to a mono-city; a fact that has impacted on both its social and urban fabric.

Church Square plays a significant role in the social identity of the city, but has to an extent lost most of its previous cultural importance. This thesis will therefore attempt to employ the re-use and restoration of the Capitol Theatre as a catalyst for the revival of Church Square as a cultural hub within the city. This space should become a place for both travellers and residents to pause, be entertained and become entertainers. It becomes a space that, through the exploration of the proposed framework, SchizoCity, will link to other public spaces, thereby creating an open spatial network that will extend to include cultural and artistic institutions throughout the CBD.

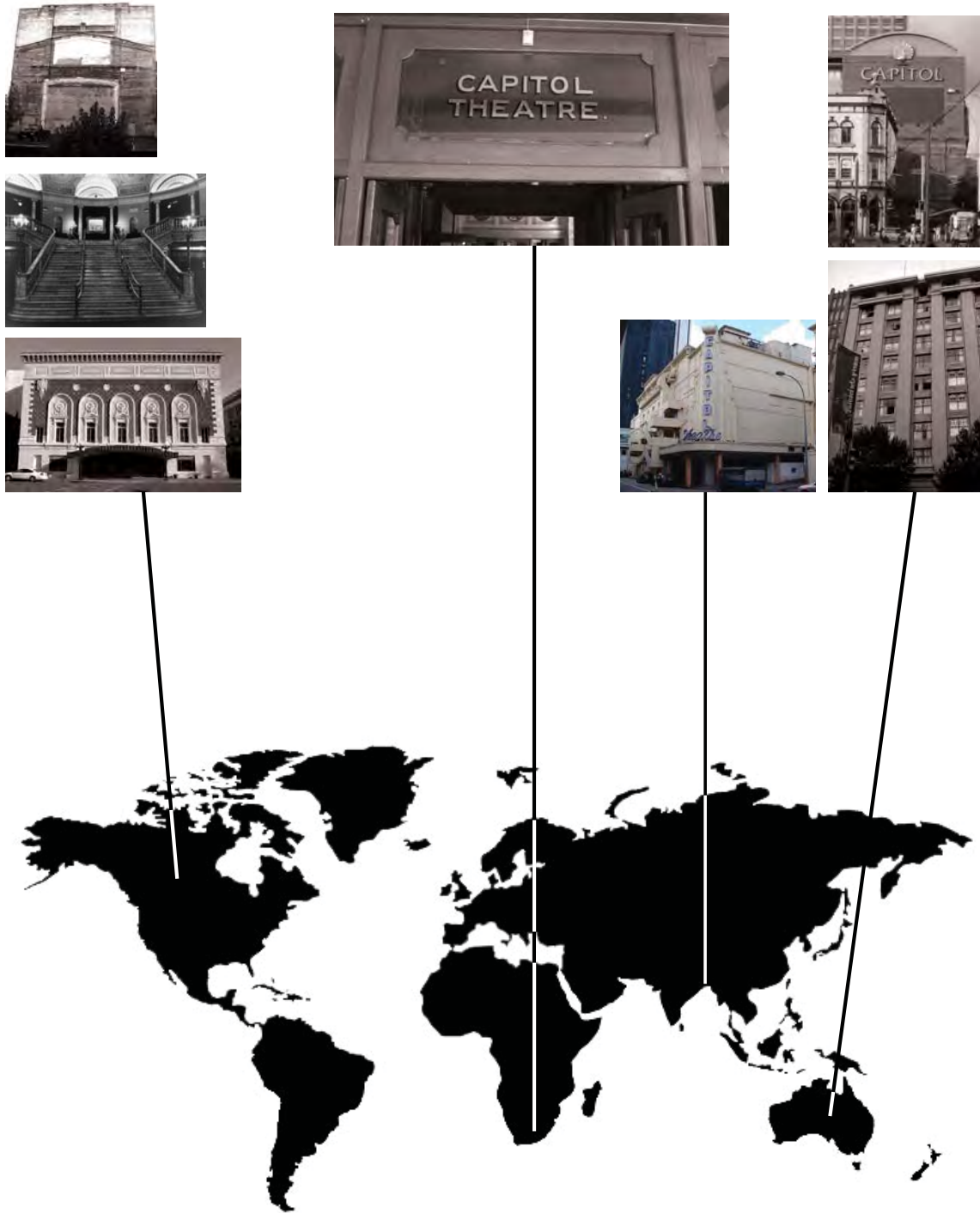


Figure 2.16 A World of Capitol Theatres, digital collage.
America: Oregon, Ottawa and Washington respectively. South
Africa: Pretoria. Asia: Singapore. Australia: Sydney and
Melbourne.



Figure 2.17 Randolph Street,
Jack Siegel circa 1950.

2.4 The Atmospheric Theatre

The atmospheric theatre was developed by John Eberson in the 1920's. During his architectural career, five hundred atmospheric theatres were designed around the world. The atmospheric theatre gave the impression that the audience was seated in a great open air amphitheatre in which architectural scenography converged with natural topography in a liminal exchange between interior and exterior' (Bruno, 2007: 49).

The majority of these theatres were built between World War I and the Great Depression. This was a decadent era of flappers and Fitzgerald's Gatsby. At this time the cinema became well established, and atmospheric theatres showcased both live performances as well as screened shows (Naylor, 1981: 14). These theatres not only provided entertainment but became the heart of the nightlife in cities, providing relief during a difficult time. An atmospheric theatre is a haptic phenomenon in which a constant play on surface exists. Whilst in the theatre, each spectator must lose their individuality in order to fuse themselves into complete unity with the setting as well as the performers (Bruno, 2007: 47).



Figure 2.18 - 2. 21 Digital collage of atmospheric theatres including **Granada Theatre**, original artwork by Bruce Sharp and **Coronado Theatre**, original artwork by Russell Phillips.

The atmospheric theatre becomes an extension of the urban fabric. It is however a mysterious realm as opposed to the reality of the street. Street users are temporarily removed from the sidewalk, becoming spectators within a theatre, architecturally shaped by extravagant decoration. It is 'a place of excess and excessive space to be enjoyed whilst strolling' (Bruno, 2007: 48).



2.5 Physical Context

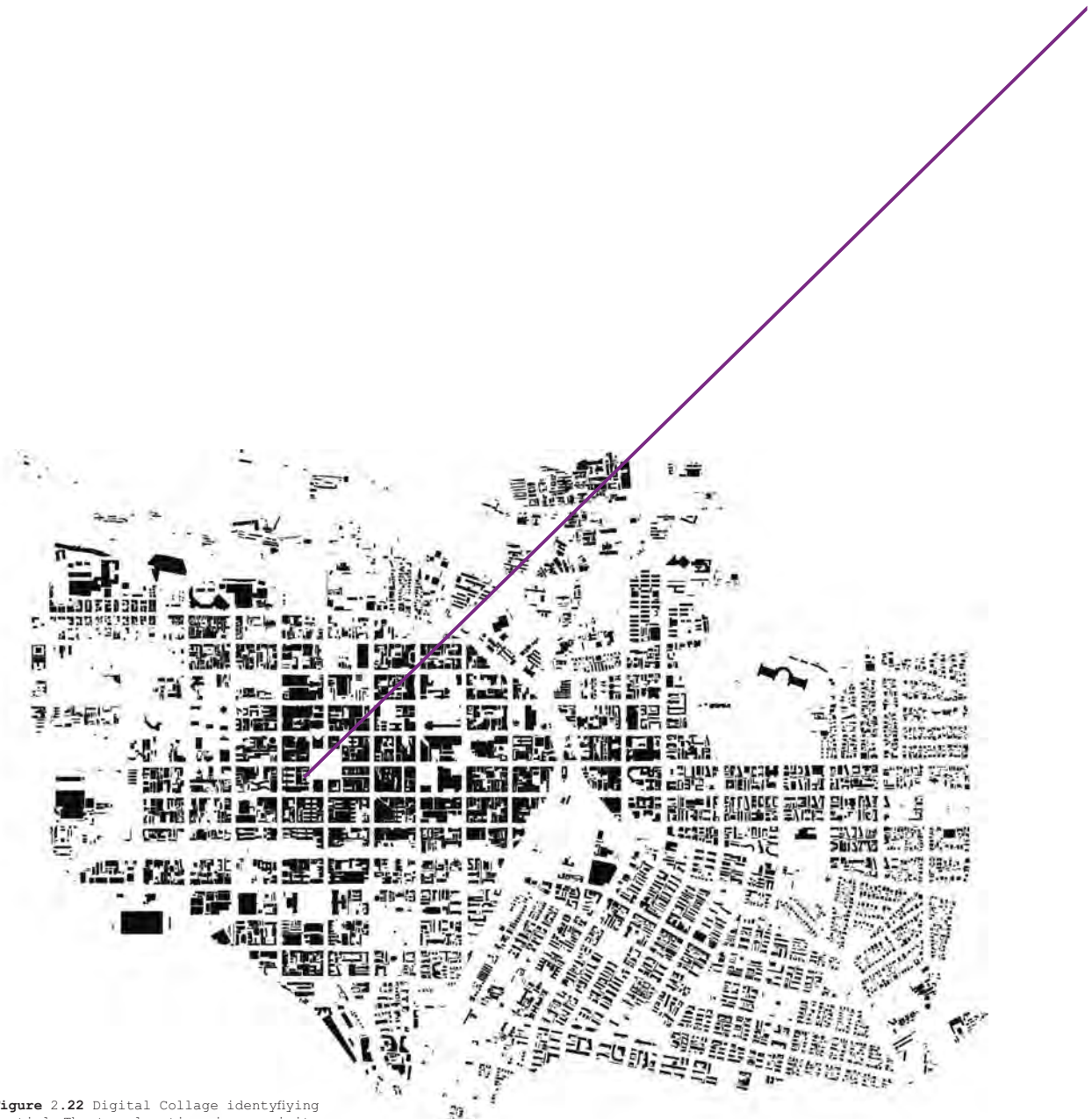


Figure 2.22 Digital Collage identifying
Capitol Theatre location in proximity
to Church Square
extending the skin

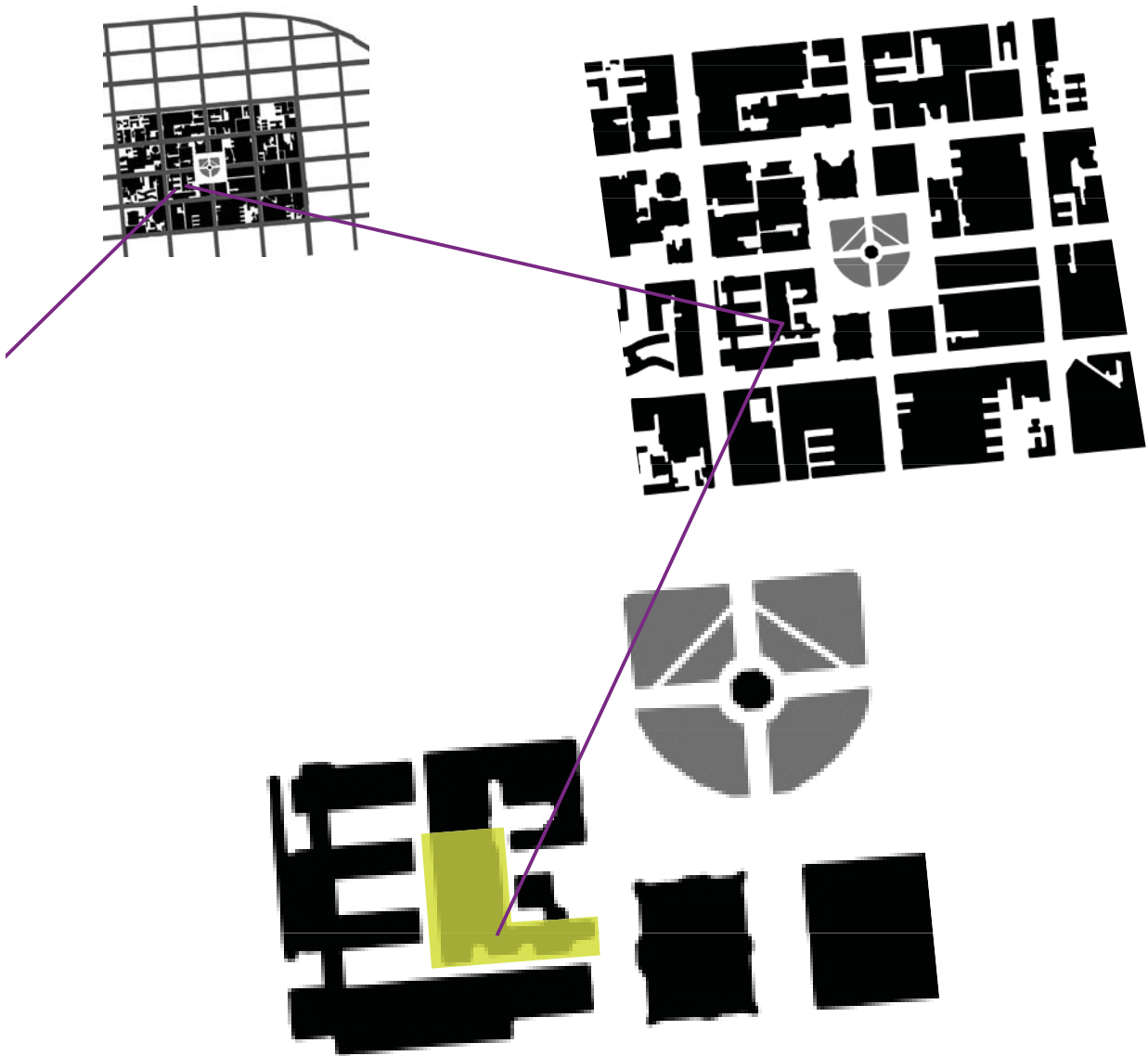


Figure 2.23 View of Church Square from the Transvaal Provincial Administration. The roof of the Capitol Theatre auditorium is visible in bottom centre, 2009

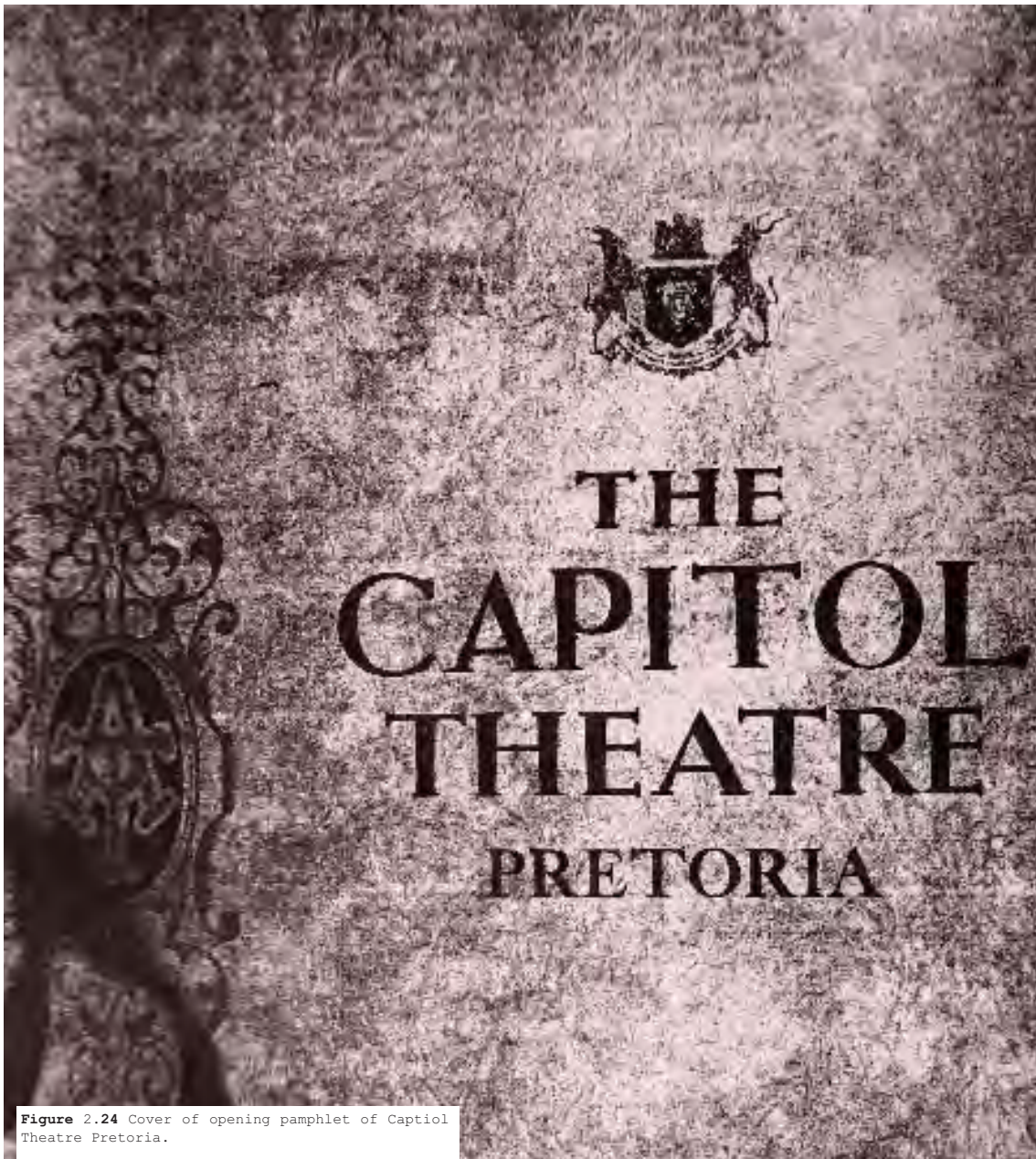


Figure 2.24 Cover of opening pamphlet of Capitol Theatre Pretoria.

"The Capitol Theatre is dedicated to the Citizens of Pretoria, to their Wives and their Children in the hope that within its walls they may find relief from the cares and worries of the everyday world by passing through the magic portals into the world of Make-believe." (Opening pamphlet, 1931).

The Capitol Theatre was designed by London architect P. Rogers Cooke in 1931 for African Consolidated Theatres. The theatre is built in an Italian Renaissance style and is described by Cooke as an 'atmospheric theatre'. When being designed three main purposes were borne in mind: the presentation of perfect 'talking' pictures, dramatic performances and instrumental music. The early days of the theatre were marked by public admiration and the palatial auditorium was a realm of wonder to get lost in. An army of ushers, wearing buckled shoes, silk stockings, satin knee-breeches and monkey jackets would lead patrons to their seats (Fourie, 1994).

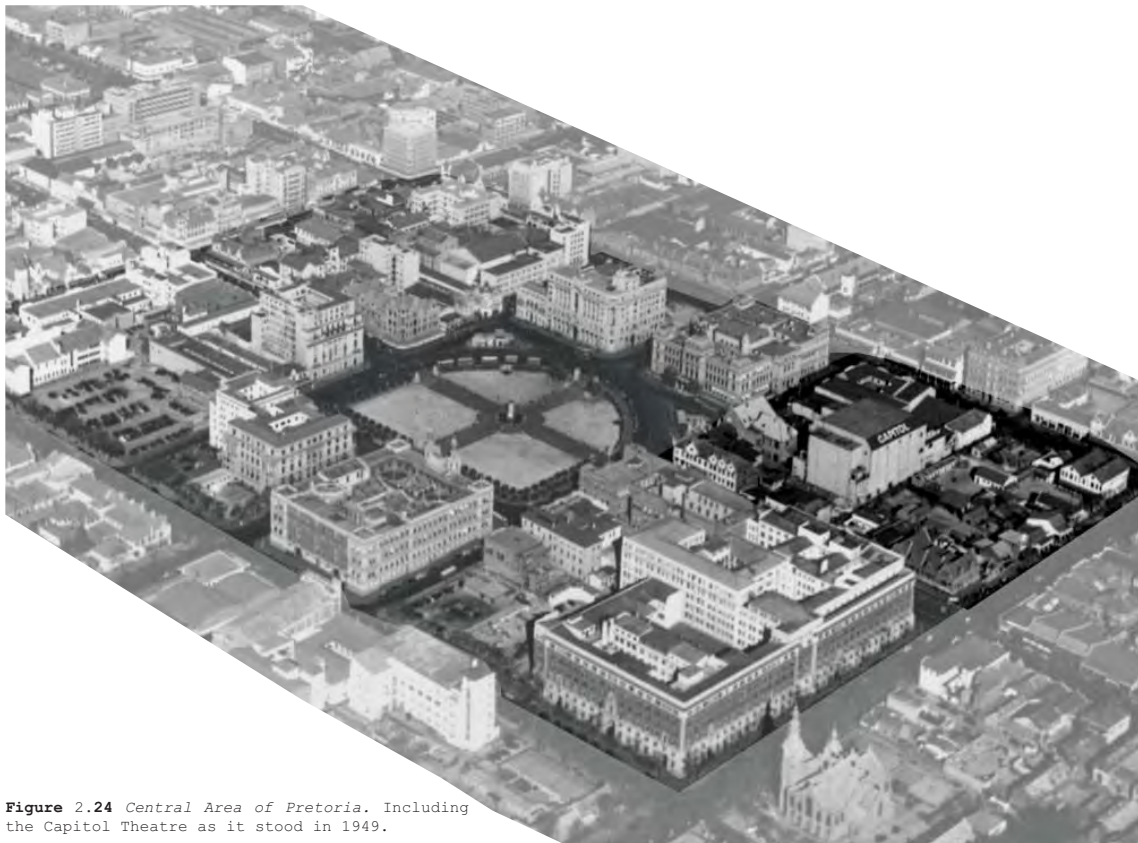


Figure 2.24 Central Area of Pretoria. Including the Capitol Theatre as it stood in 1949.



Figure 2.25 The Capitol Theatre Exterior with Transvaal Administration foyer addition circa 1970.

The foyer and auditorium contained frescos, busts and striking chandeliers enhancing the grandeur of the Capitol. The theatre was intended to be supported by the Capitol Hotel, which was never realised. During the depression the grandeur of the hotel started to decline and in 1955 it was bought by the Transvaal Provincial Administration. The intention was to demolish the theatre and erect high-rise buildings (Fourie, 1994). This however was never realised as in 1971 it was found that the TPA building stood on 23 different unconsolidated blocks and in 1989 the scheme was cancelled (Fourie, 1994).



Figure 2.26 The Capitol Theatre Interior circa 1970. Cinemasouvenirs.

In November 1981, the Capitol was renovated into a parking lot. Initially, this was intended to be a temporary measure until the Capitol and the Poynton building were demolished. This demolition never occurred however, and the parking lot still persists today. In 1985 it was reported that the theatre was to become a museum for provincial affairs, and in the same year the Wurlitzer organ was returned to the theatre (Fourie, 1994). Most recently the Foyers of the theatre were converted into a nightclub, for which the auditorium provided the parking. It is rumoured that the nightclub was closed and re-located due to damage caused to the interior of the foyers which had been restored five years prior.

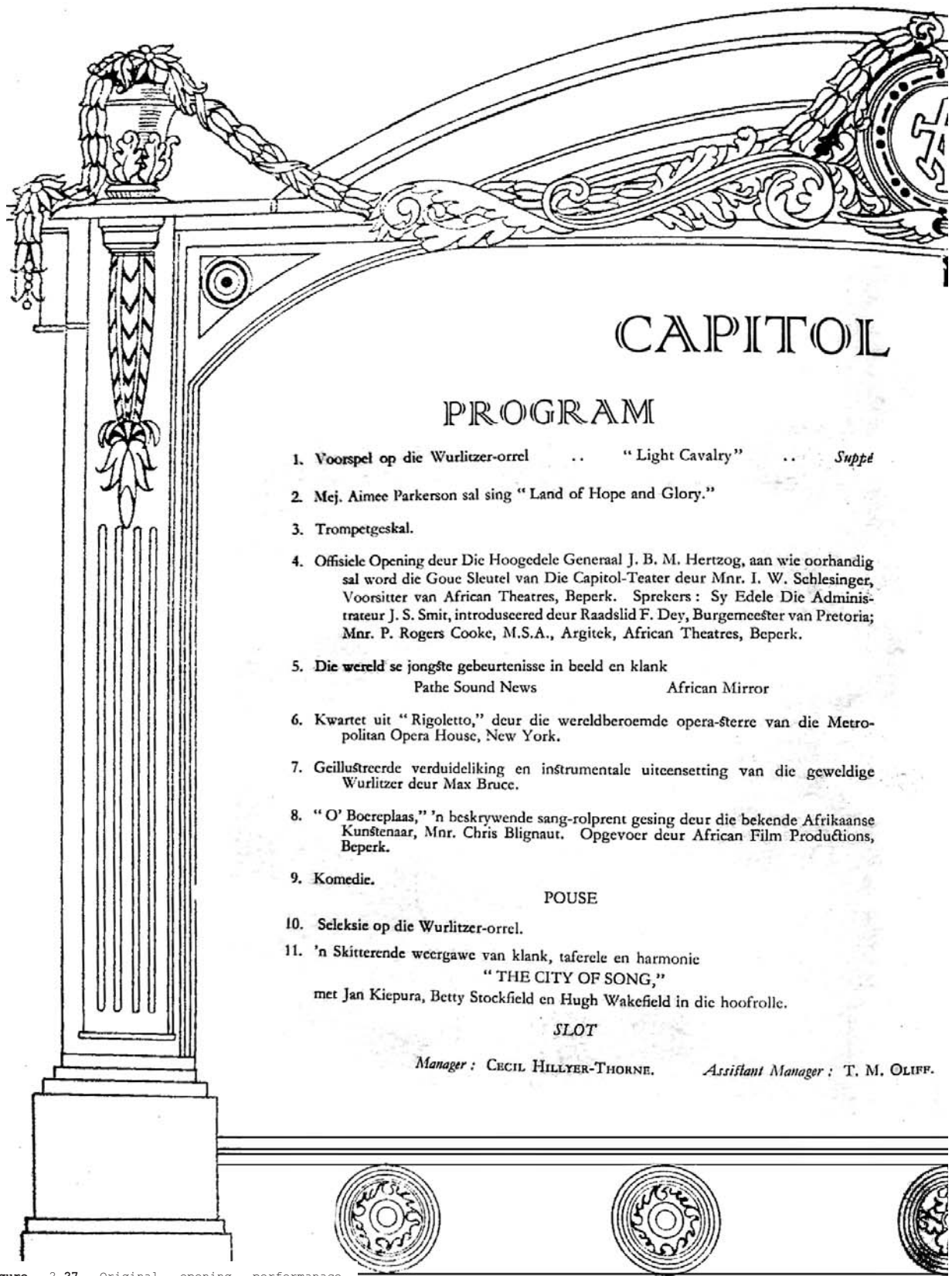
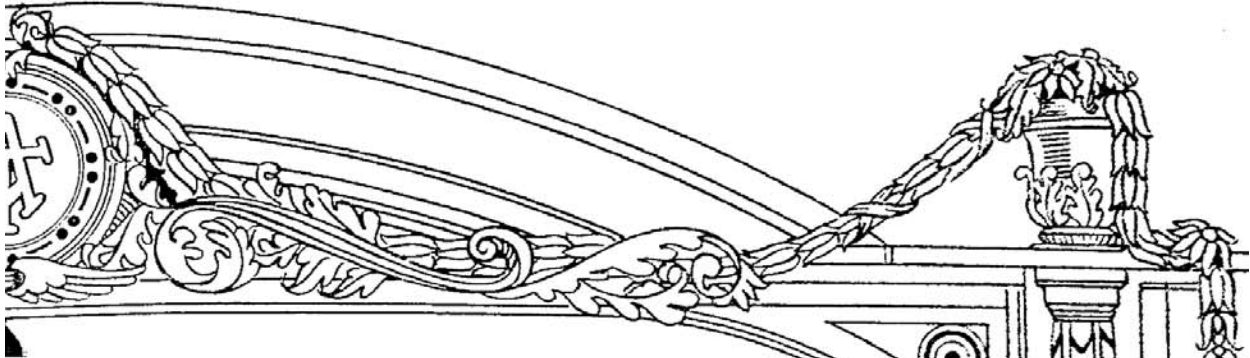


Figure 2.27 Original opening performance program, Capitol Theatre 1931.

extending the skin



PRETORIA

PROGRAMME

1. Overture on The Wurlitzer Organ .. "Light Cavalry" .. *Suppé*
2. Miss Aimee Parkerson will sing "Land of Hope and Glory."
3. Fanfare of Trumpets.
4. Official Opening by General The Right Honourable J. B. M. Hertzog, who will be presented with The Golden Key of The Capitol Theatre by Mr. I. W. Schlesinger, Chairman of African Theatres, Limited. Speakers: His Honour The Administrator, The Honourable J. S. Smit, introduced by Councillor F. Dey, Mayor of Pretoria; Mr. P. Rogers Cooke, Architect, African Theatres, Limited.
5. The World's Latest Events in Sight and Sound :
 Pathe Sound News. African Mirror.
6. Quartet from "Rigoletto," by World-famous Opera Stars from The Metropolitan Opera House, New York.
7. Pictorial and Instrumental Exposition of The Mighty Wurlitzer by Max Bruce.
8. "O' Boereplaas," a descriptive song film produced by African Film Productions, Limited, featuring Chris Blignaut.
9. Comedy.

INTERMISSION

10. Selection on the Wurlitzer Organ.
11. A brilliant presentation of sound, scene and harmony,
 "THE CITY OF SONG,"
 featuring Jan Kiepura, Betty Stockfield, Hugh Wakefield.

FINIS

Projectionist : A. E. PFAUL.

House Engineer : R. H. SHUTT.

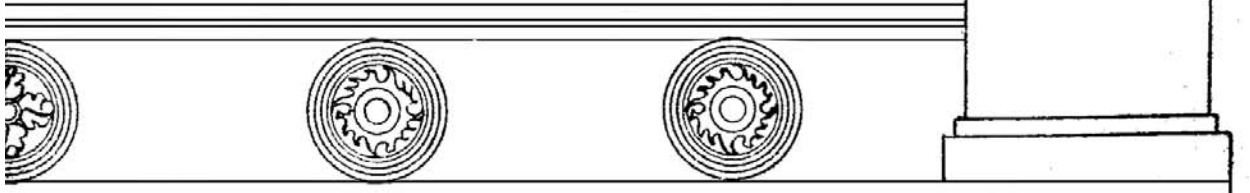
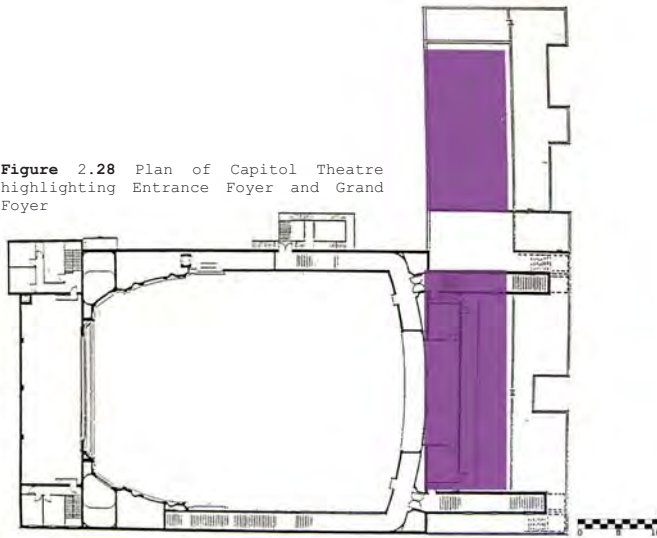


Figure 2.28 Plan of Capitol Theatre highlighting Entrance Foyer and Grand Foyer



2.6 Capitol Theatre as building

The Capitol Theatre consists of:

1. The façade
2. The Entrance Foyer
3. The Grand Foyer
4. The Balcony
5. The Auditorium and Stage

2.6.1 The Façade

The theatre auditorium was not intended to have a façade as it was concealed by the building in front of it. The addition of the façade took place in the later phases of construction (Fourie, 1994).

2.6.2 The Entrance Foyer

This foyer projects from the main building mass in an easterly direction, and was originally supposed to puncture through the Grand Foyer and connect the Capitol Hotel to the street. The foyer is a colonnaded space with two secondary niches. Accessed through glass doors, it is lined with Corinthian columns. These columns, raised on plinths, have no fluting and support a frieze, thereby creating the illusion of an Italian boulevard (Fourie, 1994).

2.6.3 The Grand Foyer

P. Rogers Cooke describes the Grand Foyer as 'a design to create surprise. The unusual proportions, the beauty of the lofty colonnade, the architectural detail, decoration and lighting have been combined with beauty and dignity, so awakening a sense of pleased anticipation before entering the theatre itself' (Cooke, 1931)

The foyer consists of a double volume articulated at its boundaries with Corinthian columns. Each column has a pier and pilaster, dividing the space into equal parts. The columns within the Grand Foyer are fluted, contrasting with the entrance foyer. The columns are not load-bearing and support vase-like luminaries. A grand staircase leads up to the mezzanine promenade from which lounges and the theatre balcony could be accessed (Fourie, 1994)

extending the skin



Figure 2.29 View of mezzanine promenade stairs in Grand Foyer.



Figure 2.30 View of interior of Grand Foyer.

Figure 2.31 Balcony Plan of Capitol Theatre highlighting balcony.

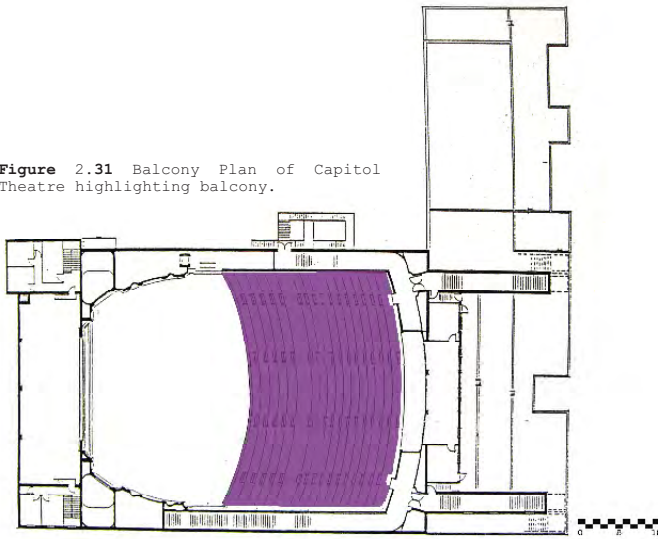
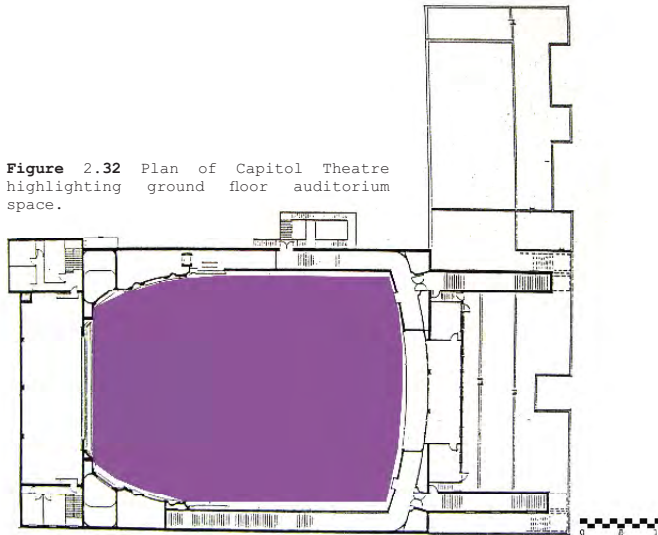


Figure 2.32 Plan of Capitol Theatre highlighting ground floor auditorium space.



2.6.4 The Balcony

This area of the theatre was accessed from the mezzanine promenade via two corridors and could seat 750 patrons. One of the greatest tasks in the building of the theatre was this balcony which was not permitted to have any supporting columns. The weight is supported by a steel girder. This girder was erected using over 5000 rivets and carries 550 tons (Fourie, 1994).

2.6.5 The Auditorium and Stage.

It is the interior of the Auditorium where the theatre earns its title as an atmospheric theatre. The space creates the illusion of an Italian Renaissance street during the evening. The skyline close to the stage is formed by a parapet which is lined with a trellis creating the illusion of a roofscape, softened by artificial cypress trees and vines (Fourie, 1994). The domed ceiling of the auditorium



Figure 2.33 Illustration of stage from balcony. Unknown, 1931.



Figure 2.34 Illustration of balcony from stage.



Figure 2.35 Illustration of seating from below balcony.



Figure 2.36 Illustration of proscenium.

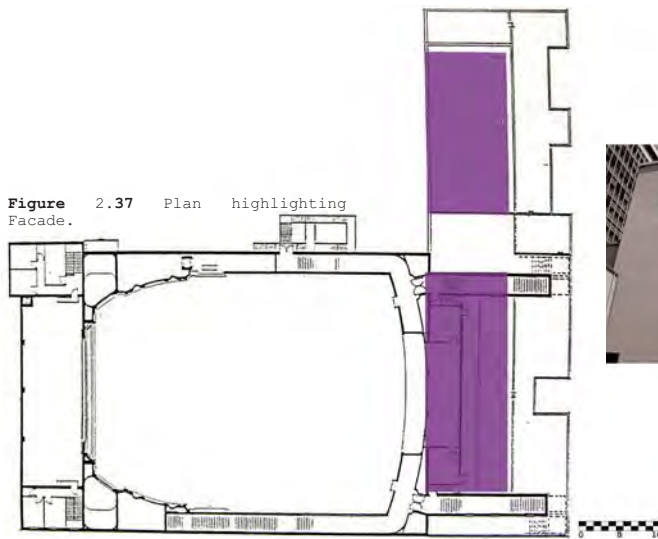


Figure 2.37 Plan highlighting Facade.



Figure 2.39 Facade of Capitol Theatre with balcony doors visible

provides the illusion of a clear night sky. The dome is taken right across to the back of the stalls, completing the illusion (Fourie, 1994). The Proscenium arch was implemented to provide a frame for the stage, it being the most important component of the theatre.

The structure of the auditorium consists of a reinforced concrete frame which is filled-in with Kirkness bricks. The dome of the auditorium consists of a lattice of steel girders which support a concrete roof slab. This slab is covered with several layers of bitumen and felt. The ceiling is suspended from the girders by a framework of steel ribs (Fourie, 1994).



Figure 2.34 Plan highlighting placement of sculptures and water fountains in both auditorium and Grand Foyer.



Figure 2.40 Illustration of stairway to mezzanine promenade in Grand Foyer.



Figure 2.41 Illustration of water fountains and sculpture niches in auditorium.

2.6.6 Sculptures and reliefs

2.6.6.1 Fortune on horseback

The, depicts the mythological character of Fortune atop a rearing horse statue stood at the end of the grand foyer. Fortune and the horse are carved from white marble and stand on a green marble base, the statue slowly rotated on its base to be observed from all angles (Fourie, 1994).



2.6.6.2 Roman man

A mass produced plaster statue, assumed to have stood in a niche on the eastern wall of the auditorium.

2.6.6.3 Woman with raised elbow

Brought along as a pairing to the Fortune on horseback, similarly carved from white marble with a green marble base. The statue depicts a Hellenistic woman in loosely draped clothing which she clutches to her breast.

2.6.6.4 The four nymphs

The main sculptures within the auditorium.

a. Nymph with oenchoe and goblet

Placed within the southern niche of the western wall. She holds a oenochoe in one arm and a goblet in the other.

b. Naked nymph holding drapery

Placed within a niche in the eastern wall in front of the water fountain. She stands, half nude, covering the front of her body with a drapery.

c. Nymph with raised with arm

Placed within a niche of the western wall, the statue depicts a woman covered in a drapery from her lower abdomen to her feet, with one arm raised.

d. Nymph with broken arm

Placed within the second niche on the eastern wall the statue was damaged, but remained in place until the closure of the theatre.

2.6.6.5 Three busts

Situated in the Grand Foyer within the mezzanine promenade.

a. Man looking down

b. Woman looking to her right

c. Man looking sideways

2.6.6.6 Patera

A relief found above all the doorways leading from the Grand Foyer into the auditorium. Oak leaves and acorns are used to decorate the Patera, just as the classical Acanthus has been used.

2.6.6.7 Proscenium Masks

The masks of the proscenium consist of classical Medallion masks as well as Harlequin masks. Both are coated in gold paint and are framed by a circular wreath.

2.6.6.8 African Theatre Crest

The crest is situated atop the proscenium directly in the centre of the arch. It bears the letters 'A' and 'T', below the crest a festoon of fruit hangs over the proscenium. The crest is topped with a royal crown, containing a Greek cross, and flanked by French Fleur-de-lis.

The Roman Capitol was built in B.C. 507

STRANGE days they must have been in ancient Rome. No motor cars, no aeroplanes, no wireless, no binoculars but above all no Rowntree's Chocolates or Wilson's Sweets.

Modern days may have their trials and tribulations but always you will find quiet solace and enjoyment if you will remember to ask for Rowntree's Chocolates or any of Wilson's wide range of Pure Sugar Sweets.

Stocked regularly at this Theatre and at all Confectioners and Grocers.

**WILSON'S Pure Sugar SWEETS
and ROWNTREE'S CHOCOLATES**

**MADE IN THE WILSON-ROWNTREE MODEL FACTORY
EAST LONDON**

Figure 2.42 Advertisement from opening pamphlet of Captiol theatre.

REID & KNUCKEY

*Engineers,
Builders and
Contractors*

for

The Capitol,
Pretoria

The Alhambra,
Capetown

The Opera House,
Capetown

JOHANNESBURG AND CAPETOWN

Figure 2.43 Advertisement from opening pamphlet of Captiol theatre.

For this beautiful theatre

WHEN the "Capitol" was designed, they said "It must be a beautiful theatre in every way—only the best will serve." And so—for Fittings and Builders' Hardware, they went to Henwoods.

Henwoods, the House for Builders' Hardware—they put all the Fittings and Builders' Hardware into the Prince's Theatre, Durban, and the Alhambra Theatre, Cape Town. They fitted the Grand Theatre, Maritzburg, with Sanitary and Builders' Hardware, and—when the Bijou Theatre, Johannesburg, was altered, they went to Henwoods for the Fittings.

A thoroughly inter-provincial record, and one which pays a splendid tribute to Henwoods' position as the leading specialists in the Union.

Every charming building—large or small—deserves Henwoods' charming Fittings.

Always say "And Henwoods' Fittings!"

HENWOODS
Opp. City Hall Johannesburg

And at DURBAN, PRETORIA, MARITZBURG

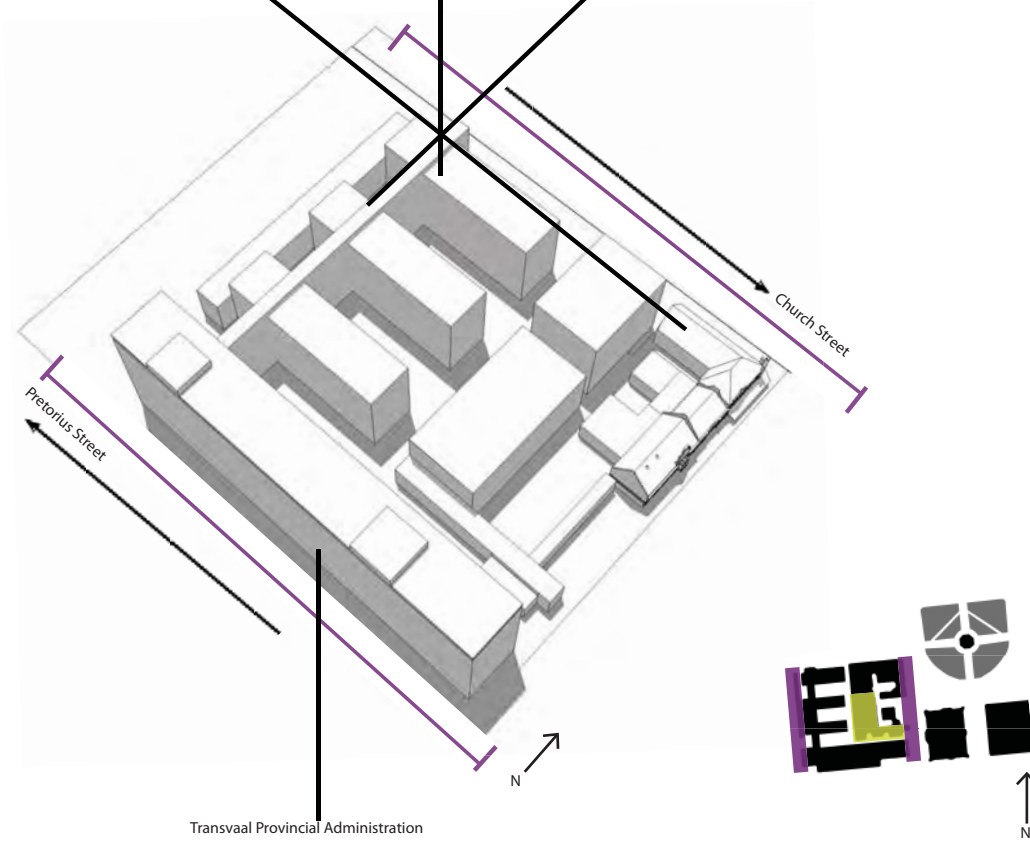
Figure 2.44 Advertisement from opening pamphlet of Captiol theatre.



Reserve Investment Building (Café Riche)

Poynton Building

Transvaal Provincial Administration



Transvaal Provincial Administration

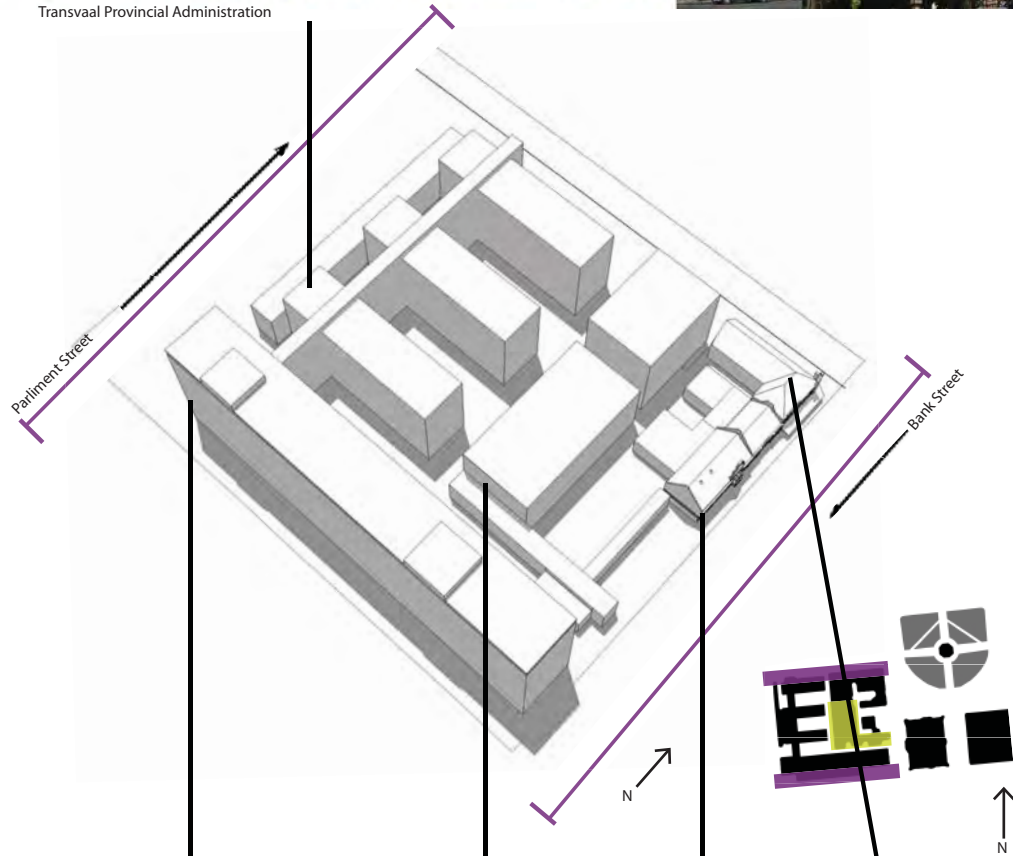


Figure 2.45 Digital model and collage depicting the north and south edges of Captiol Theatre city block

extending the skin



Transvaal Provincial Administration



Transvaal Provincial Administration



Captiol Theatre



Nederlandse Bank

Reserve Investment Building (Café Riche)

Figure 2.46 Digital model and collage depicting the east and west edges of Captiol Theatre city block

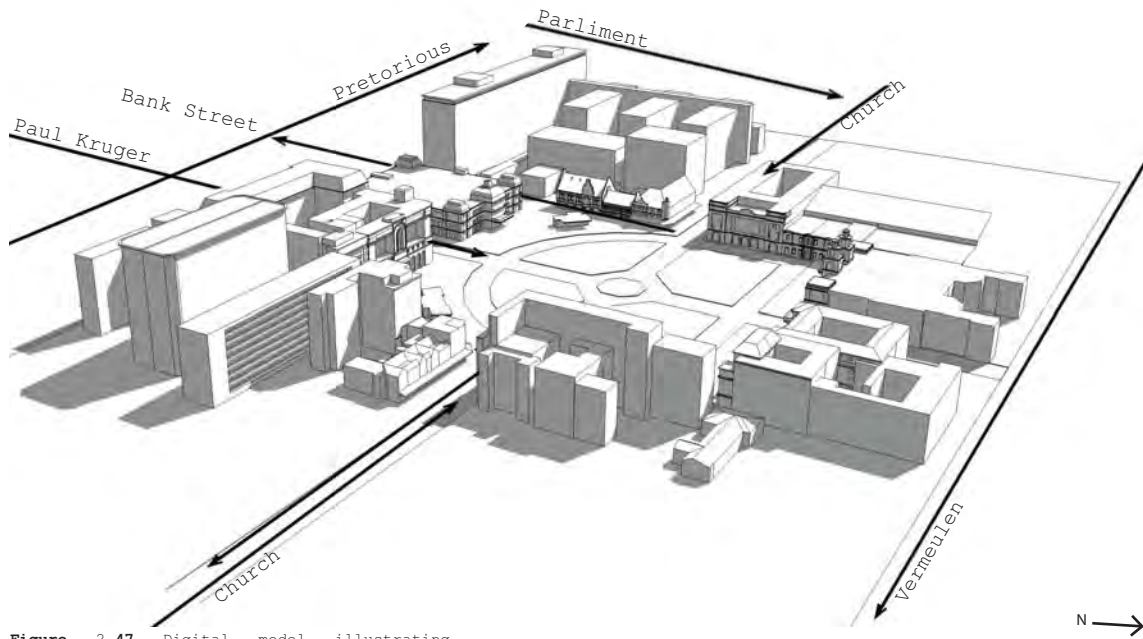


Figure 2.47 Digital model illustrating vehicular activity of Church Square

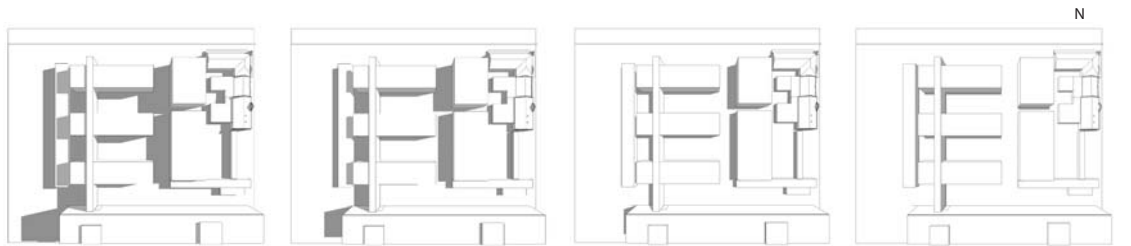


Figure 2.48 Shadow analysis Summer solstice

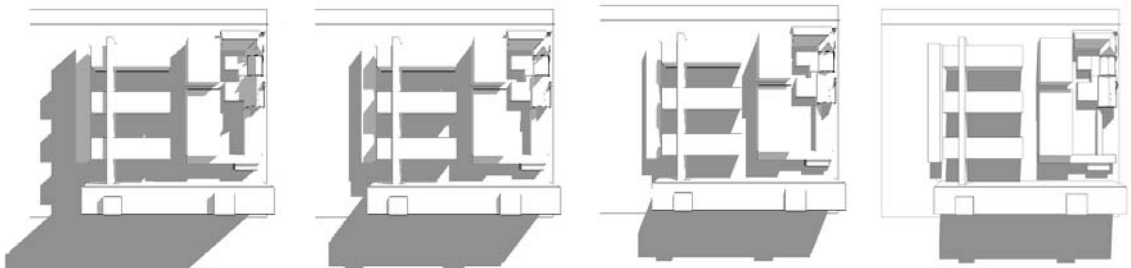


Figure 2.49 Shadow analysis Summer solstice

extending the skin

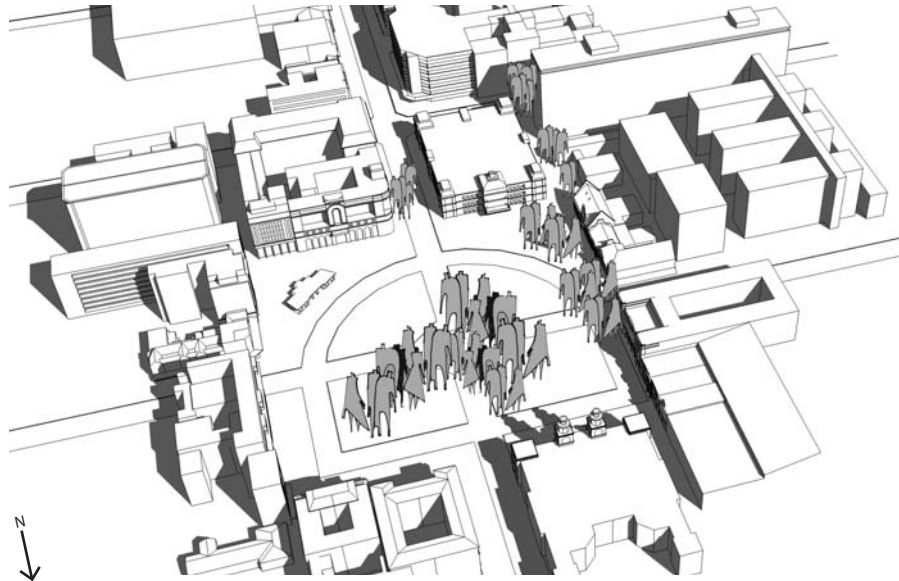
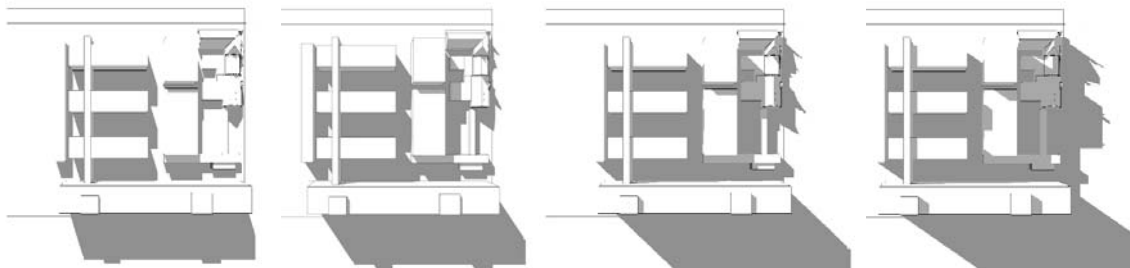
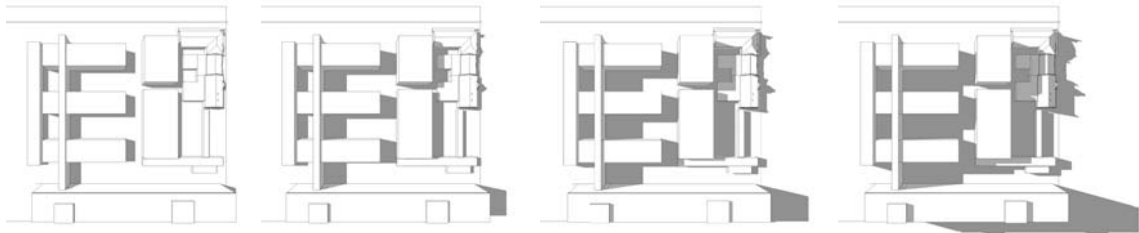


Figure 2.50 Digital model illustrating the pedestrian activity of Church Square



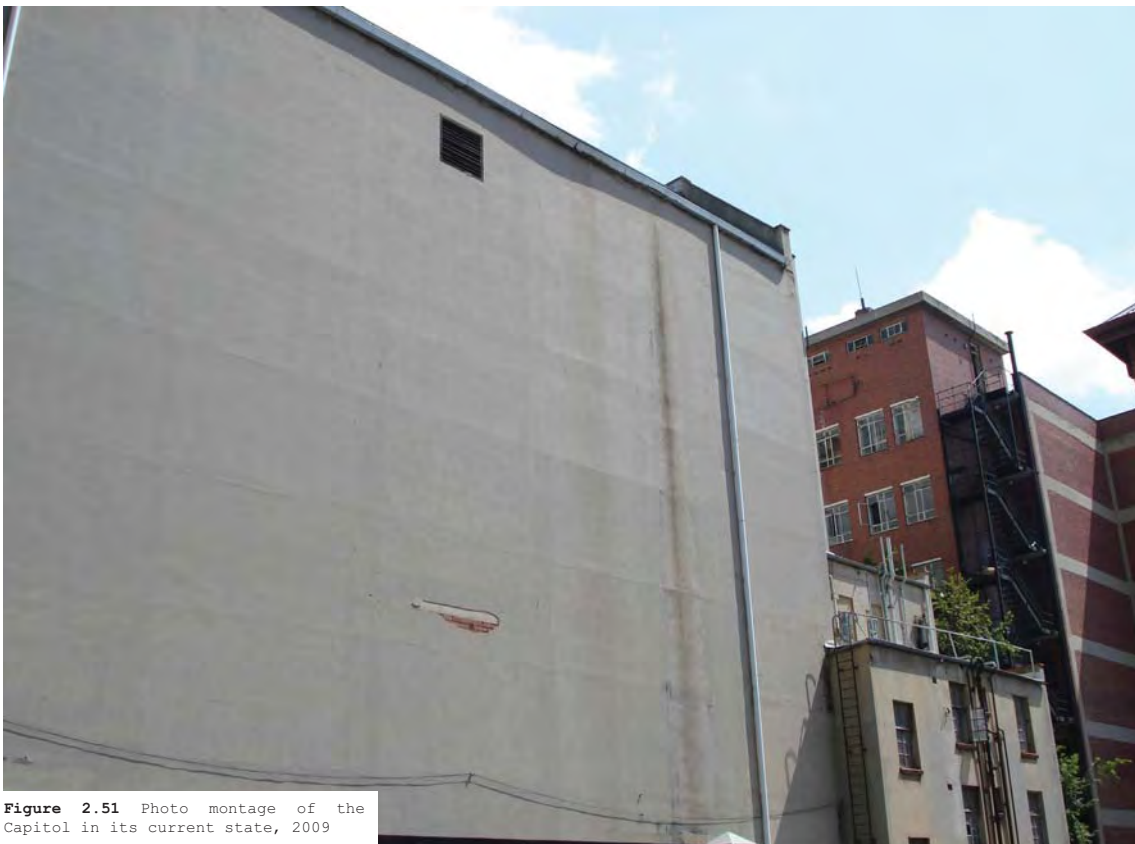


Figure 2.51 Photo montage of the Capitol in its current state, 2009 extending the skin

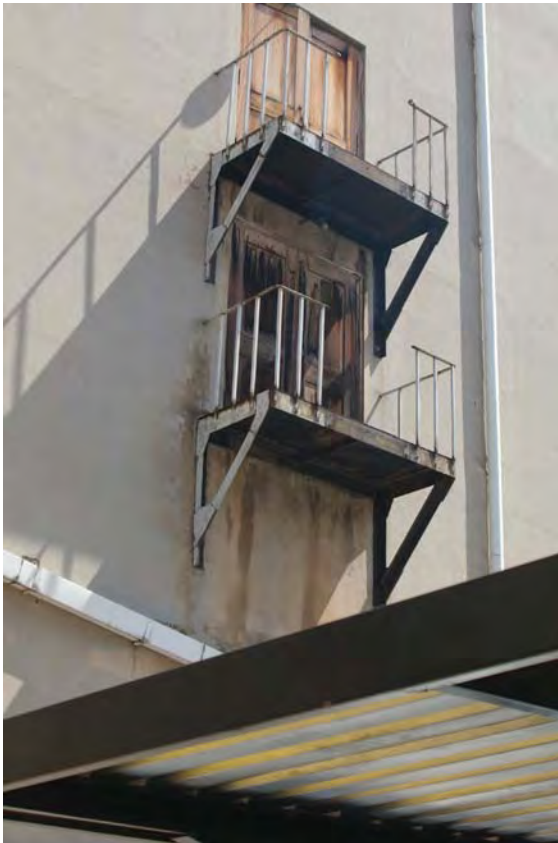
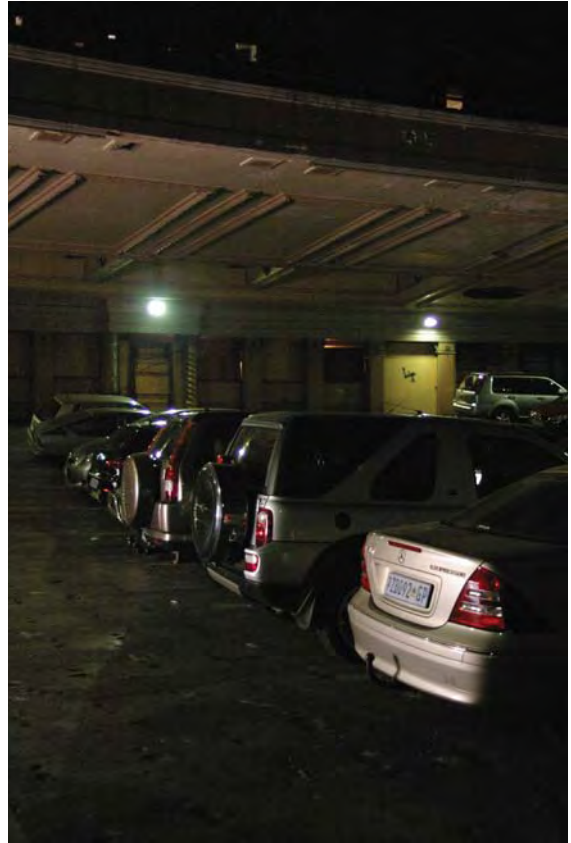




Figure 2.52 Photo montage of the Capitol in its current state, 2009 extending the skin



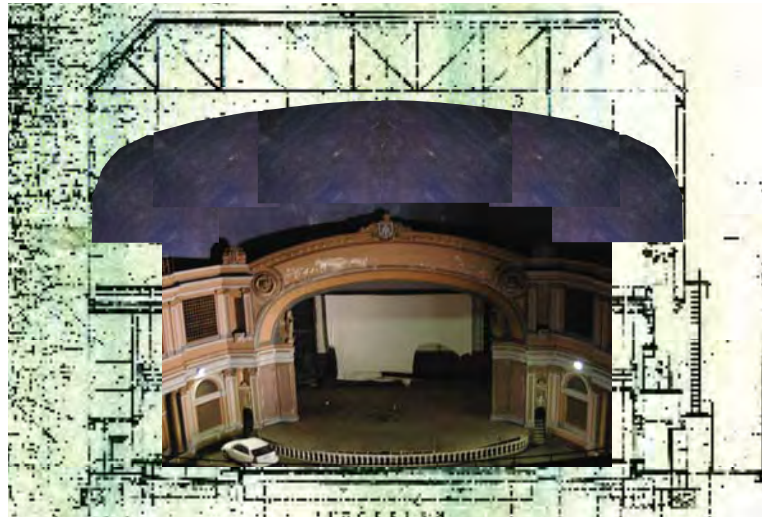
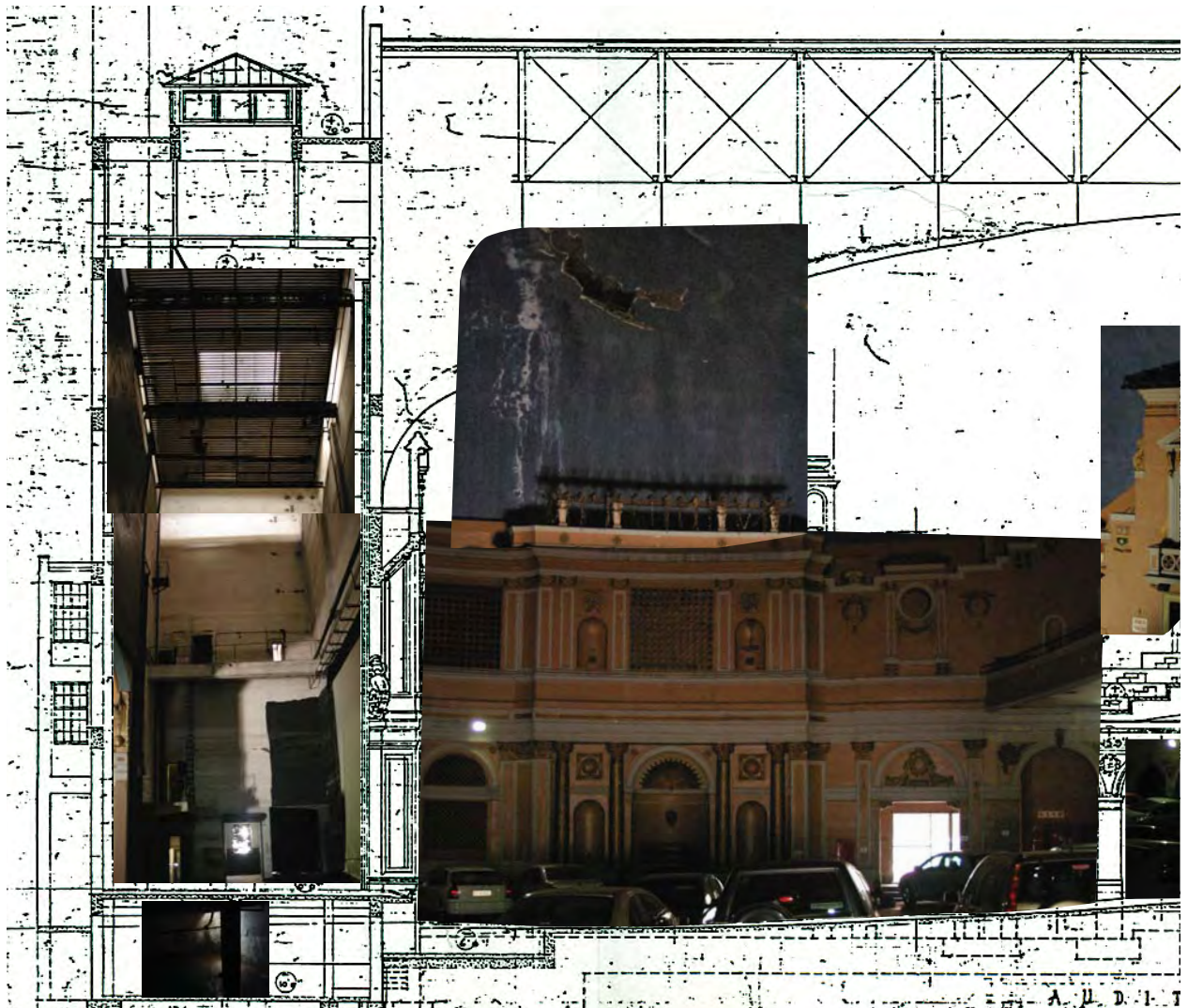


Figure 2.53 Original sectional drawing and photo collage through the auditorium with view toward stage illustrating spatial qualities and texture.



extending the skin

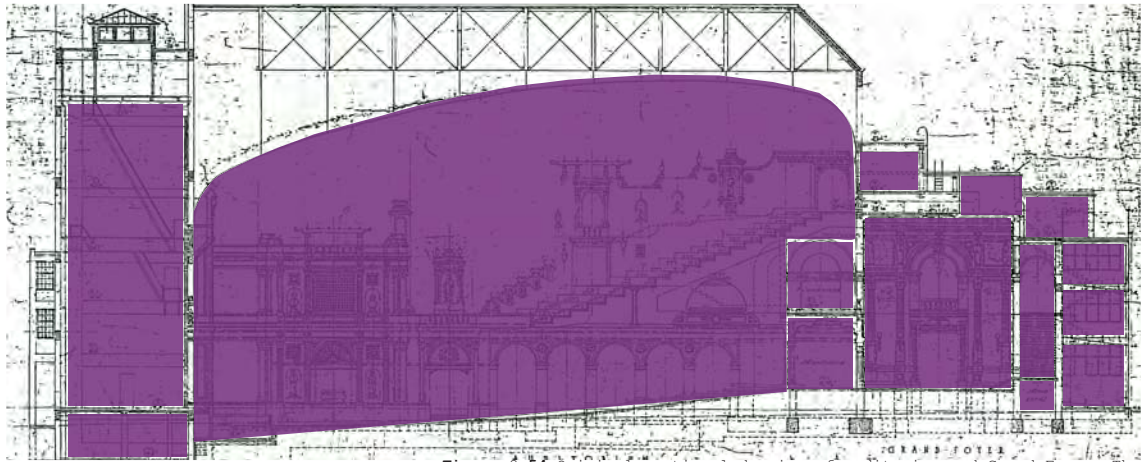


Figure 2.54 Original sectional drawing of auditorium and Grand Foyer. The diagram illustrates the volumetric space and hierarchy of the theatre from floor to dome.

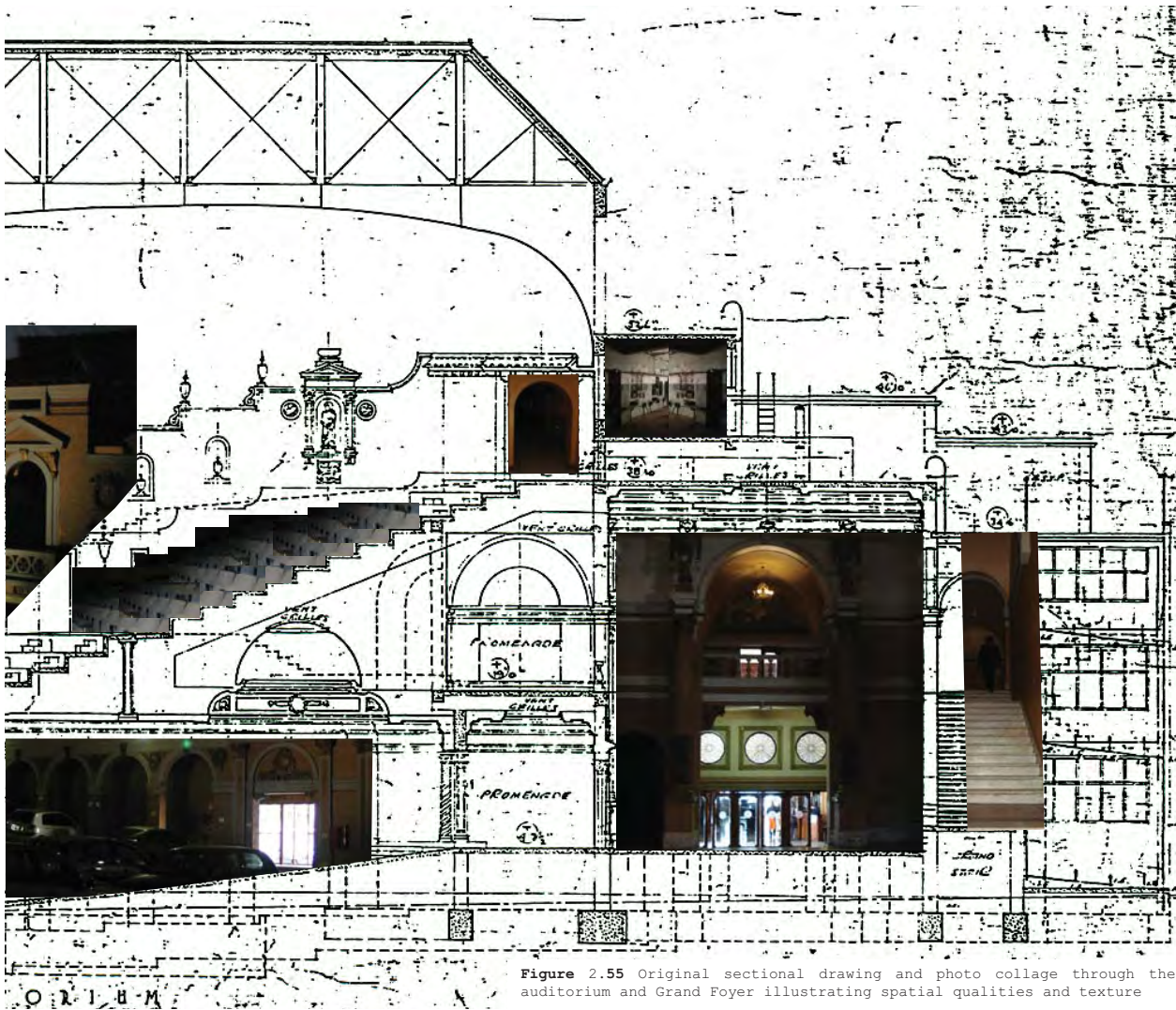


Figure 2.55 Original sectional drawing and photo collage through the auditorium and Grand Foyer illustrating spatial qualities and texture

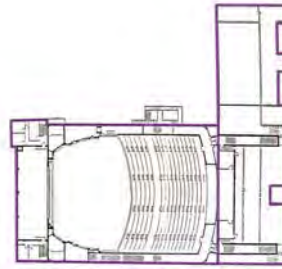
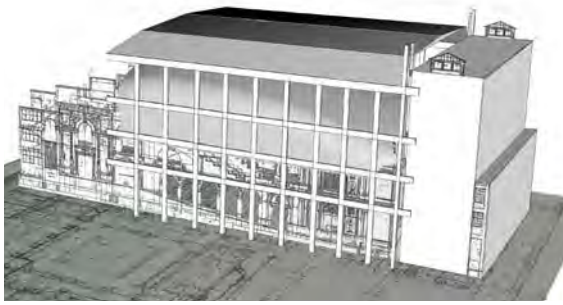


Figure 2.56 Digital montage of structural system of Capitol theatre, plan highlighting facade dominant

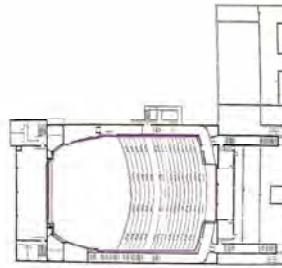
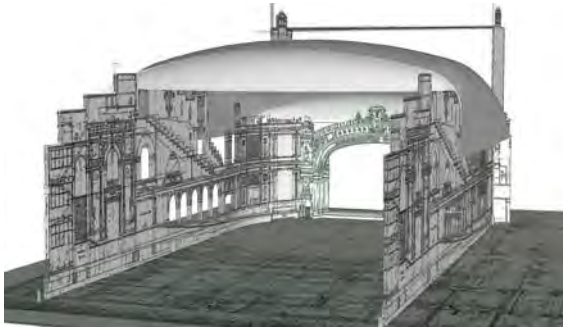


Figure 2.57 The two masks of the Capitol Theatre combined. The fragile nature of the interior is overpowered by the exterior. The building is essentially two architectural orders combined into one space

Through neglect the building is no longer what it was. It has been stripped of its sculptures, and the frescos have been concealed under a new layer of paint. Its former glory is left only in the remnants of the theatre's peeling paint and dust covered chairs. Glimpses of the auditorium are allowed only through the nuances of natural light piercing parts of the building. The exterior of the theatre auditorium is ominous in its appearance, differing from that of the TPA. The vacancy of expression on the façade acts as a mask for the elaborate interior of the theatre; its cladding does not seem to yield to a particular architectural order.

The Capitol appears to have an alter-ego. The exterior serves to protect and conceal the elaborate interior of the building. Upon passing through the exterior skin of the building, one is immediately transported into the mysterious, artificial world that is the interior space. No longer used to enhance theatrical performances and films, the now derelict interior has not lost its sense of mystery. The alter-ego of the more brutal exterior



Figure 2.58 Existing colour palette of the Capitol Theatre, 2009 extending the skin

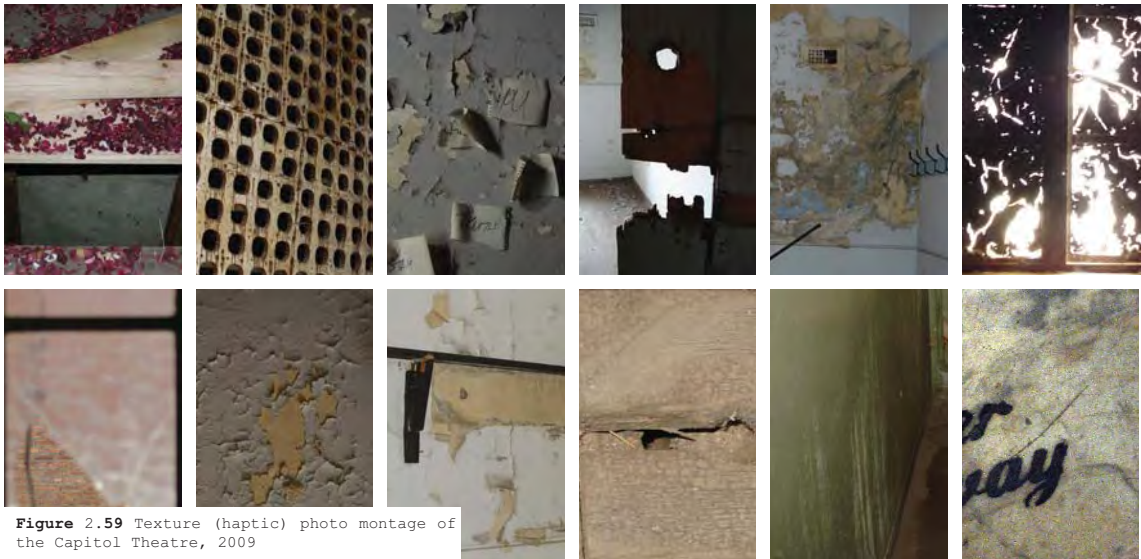


Figure 2.59 Texture (haptic) photo montage of the Capitol Theatre, 2009

protects the fragile interior. It is this combination of two varying orders that defines the buildings potential; two architectural entities within one architectural entity - the interior. When one is enhanced, the other may remain, feeding off the 'other'. The building does not impose a strong exterior because all the intrinsic values are captured inside the building (Viljoen, 1990: 31). The interior space, even through the additional layers of paint, is the authentic entity as it has a specific identity, a sense of place.

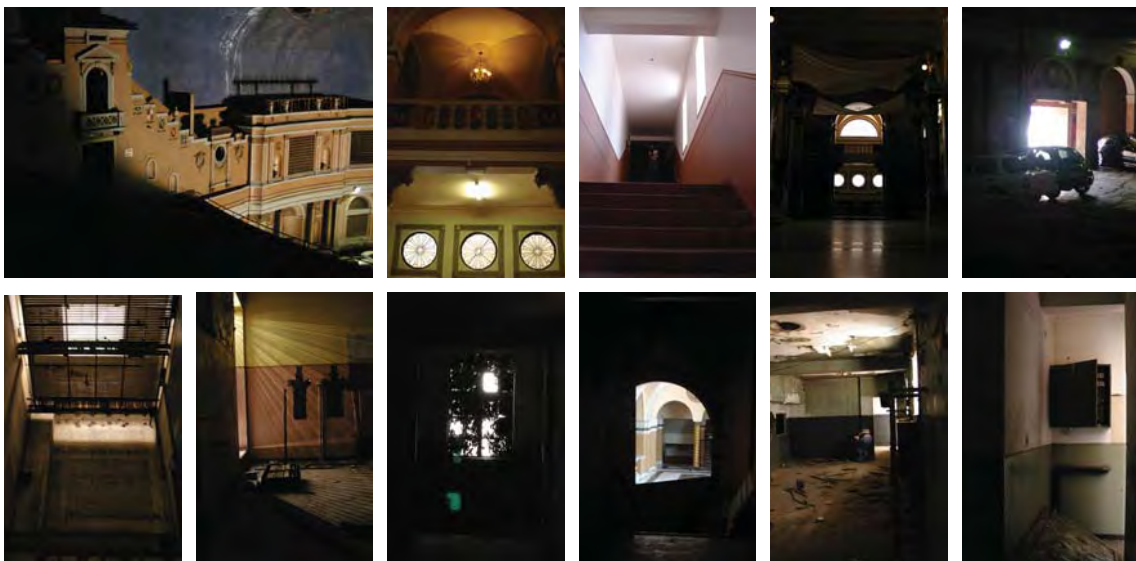


Figure 2.60 Light (haptic) photo montage of the Capitol Theatre, 2009