

*“At the far end of town” (Seuss 1971)*

## 7. PHYSICAL CONTEXT : LOCATION ANALYSIS

*In a forgotten part of town*



*"...[F]eature films...[provide] a fresh glimpse of a familiar terrain..." (Sanders 2002:10).*

*"[W]e must remember that drama and theatre are not special and separate and private things in our lives. They are the stuffs of living, the heart and soul of any true city. It follows that we must begin to provide architectural stages upon which our vast populations can act out their lives (Bradbury in Sanders 2002:10).*

## 1.1 FILMING ON LOCATION

Location filming became increasingly popular as technology allowed more portable equipment (Barnwell 2004:14). Real locations, as opposed to sound stage sets or backlot sets, are often “... favoured for the sake of authenticity over convenience and manipulation.” Real locations are less clinical than sound stage sets (Barnwell 2004:14, 29).

Filming on location gives a film *zeitgeist* - the German term for “spirit of the time” (Ingham 1998:86-87). “In the same way that buildings and cities create and preserve images of culture and a particular way of life, cinema illuminates the cultural archaeology of both the time of its making and the era that it depicts...both create experiential scenes of life situations.” (Pallasmaa 2001:13) This is much the same as interior architecture. “[Interiors] are, for Abercrombie (1990), “a celebration of a very particular time, place and situation”” (McCarthy 2005:10-11).

Real locations give *zeitgeist* to films because filmmakers shooting on location draws from the display, “...allowing their films to be shaped, or at least influenced, by the sights and sound around them” (Sanders 2002:423).

“You have to deal with the city every second that you are shooting, the place doesn’t stop. The chaos, of people and traffic, is simply the chaos of life itself. And the movie if you allow it, feeds of that life” (Berman in Sanders 2002:424).

Production designer Ted Haworth is quoted in *Pretty Pictures* (Tashiro 1998) on saying about filming on location that “what you see in real life starts to tell a story better than the script you’re shooting. You go half-mad trying to get some of those things into the picture” (Tashiro 1998:6-7).

The city becomes a character in its own right. In contrast with theatre where the actor is extremely important, narrative on the film screen can exist without actors. “A banging door, a leaf in the wind, waves beating on the shore can heighten dramatic effect. Some film masterpieces use man only as an accessory, like an extra, or in counterpoint to [architecture or] nature which is the true leading character” (Bazin in Bordwell and Thompson 1997:172).

Locations are also subject to change at the last minute, due to unforeseen circumstances (Weavind 2009). Therefore the design started out with a prototypical location, but the perfect prototypical location was found in Lilian Ngoyi Square. The designed sets could, however, be adapted to another location, without too much effort, if need be.

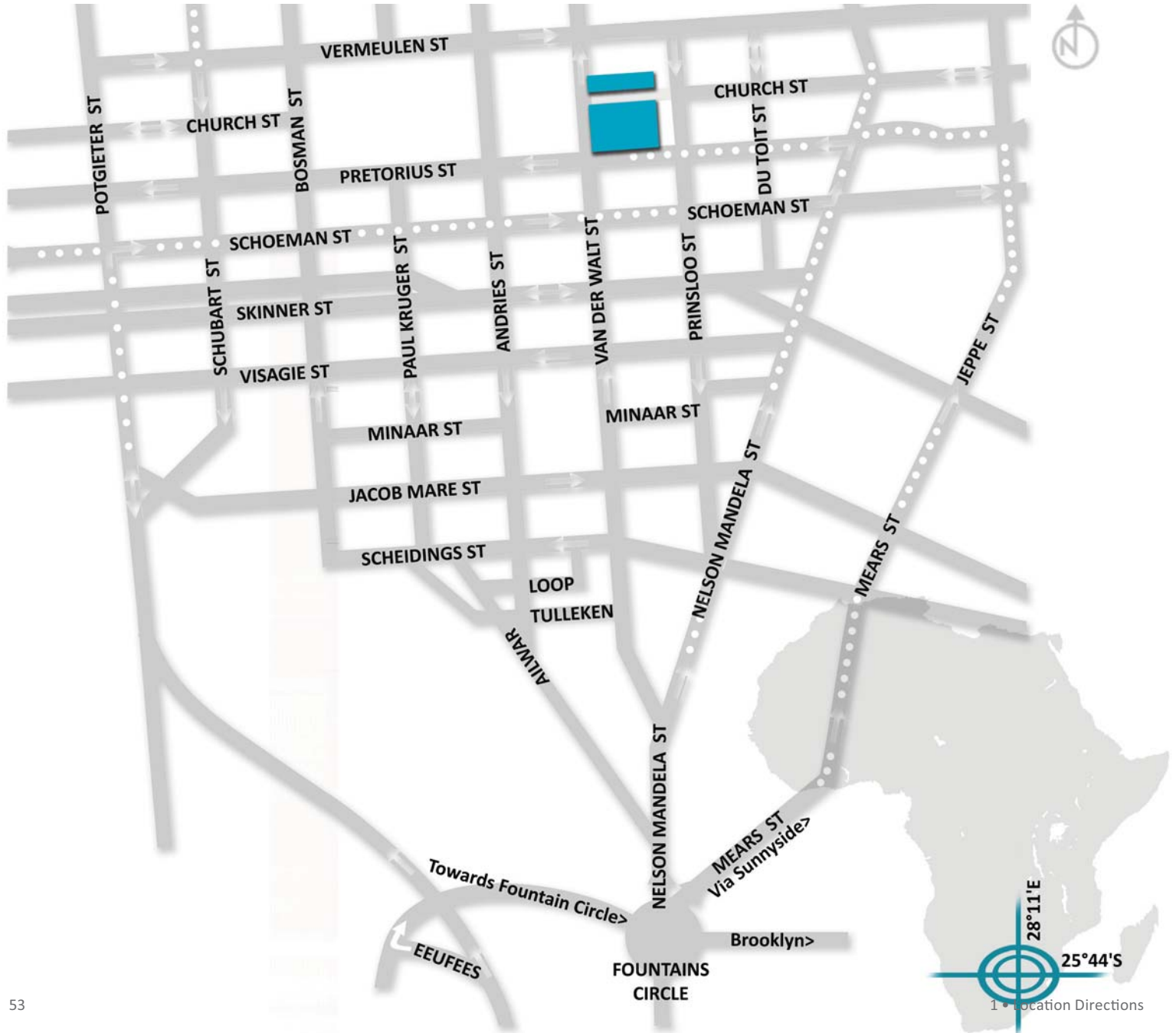
Lilian Ngoyi is a location where film and place could influence each other during all the stages of production. The Square is full of history and memories, meaning it could be the subtle background character strengthening the narrative (Barnwell 2004:26). The history of the square is closely linked with the avaristic nature of man. When a location is used for filming, it has to be the perfect match with the theme of the story. The location has to have a meaning that needs to correlate with that which the narrative is trying to send (Barnwell 2004:14). This Lilian Ngoyi Square, indeed does have this with *The Lorax* on some levels, such as a heap of rocks at the end of both the narrative and the story of the location up to now. Both can also be described as a ‘utopia’ (albeit in the case of the location a distorted utopia) gone dystopic.

With the production design of *The Lorax*, the

Square will become a place where “the real and the mythic cities will intertwine, become entangled, just as they so often do in our memory” (Sanders 2002:4).

“...[S]paces enter a narrative with pre-existing associations of value; they leave the story changed by their use.” (Tashiro 1998:7) There is also an inverse relationship by which the film narrative changes the place. The place where a film is shot will forever be where the scene of the film was shot – and it becomes part of the place’s narrative. “[The] relationship between stories and the outside world [is] one of constant, mutual exchange and interaction...Once placed in a narrative, objects and spaces acquire meaning specific to the film” (Tashiro 1998:7).

## 1.2 LOCATION DIRECTIONS



## 1.3 PHYSICAL AND SCRIPT LOCATIONS

### 1.3.1 SCRIPT LOCATIONS

- > Dystopia
- > Utopia
- > Heterotopia

### 1.3.2 PHYSICAL LOCATION

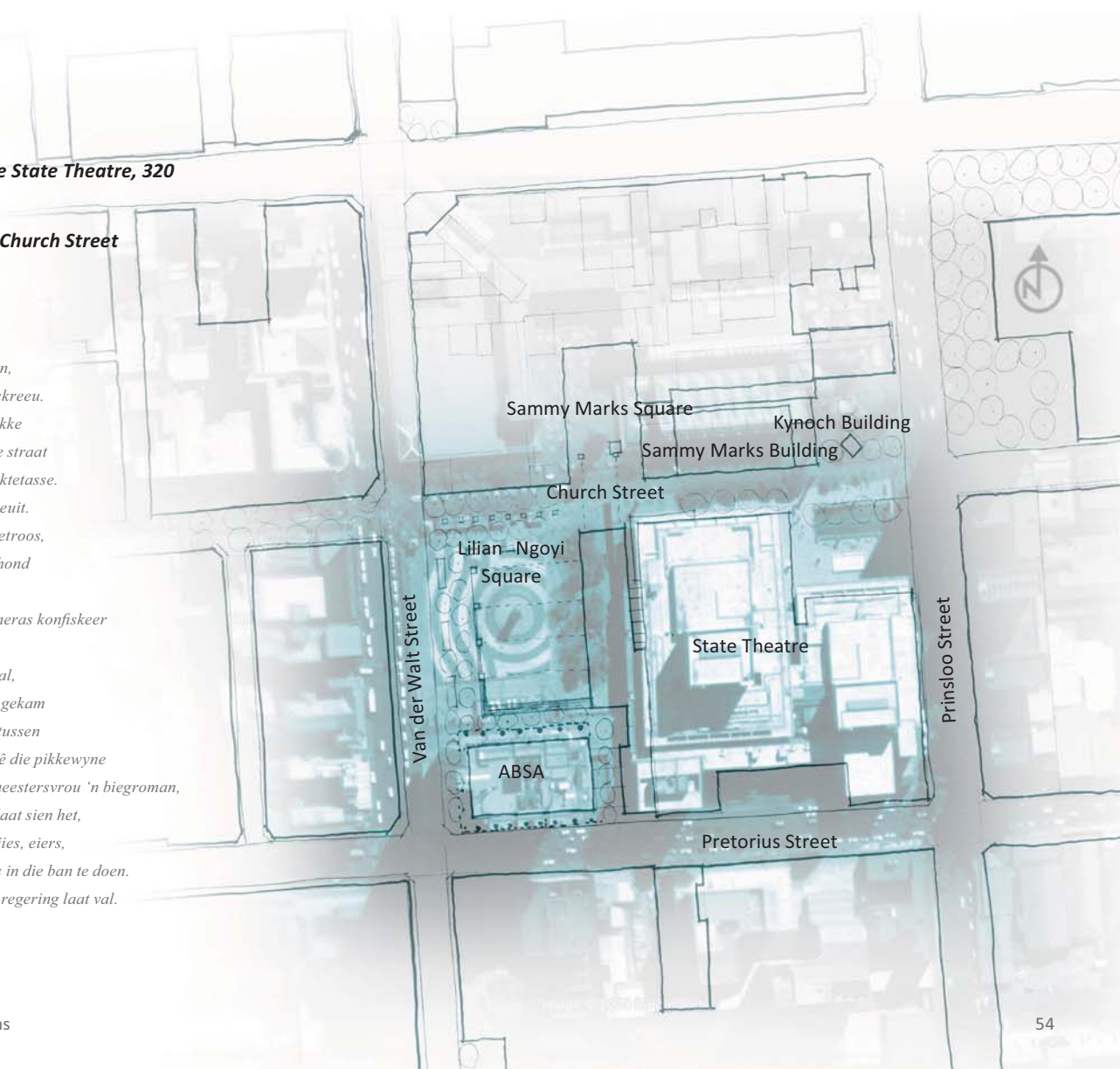
**Lilian Ngoyi Square and The State Theatre, 320 Pretorius Street**

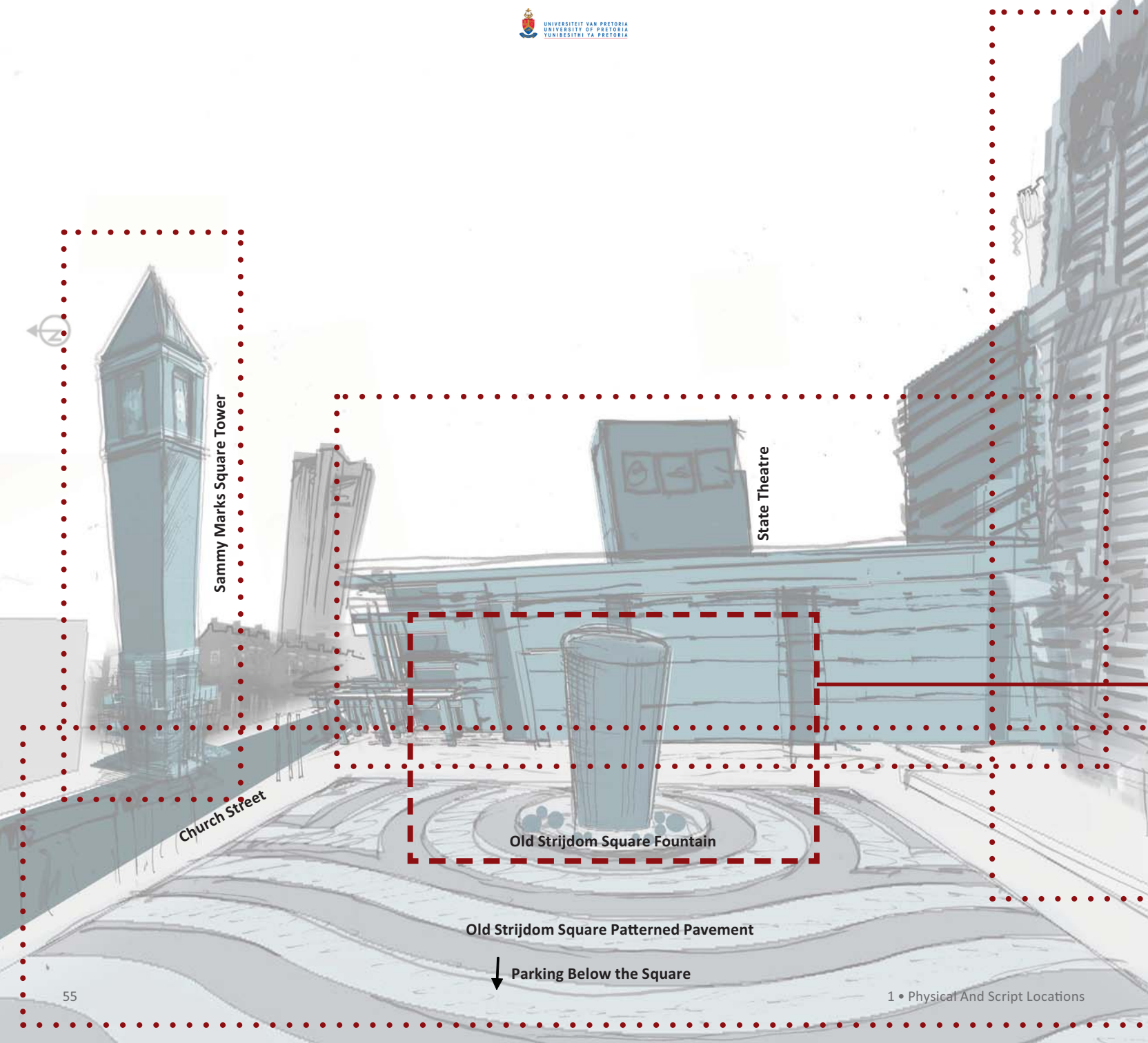
**Sammy Marks Square, 333 Church Street**

Pretoria CBD, South Africa

*Op die sementplein daar waar  
ou grootkop op sy adamsappel staan,  
het 'n Jesusskreeuer donderend geskreeu.  
Duiwe het soos water van winkeldakke  
gerol en teen die verkeerslig oor die straat  
gestap, die vlerke vasgeknyp soos aktetasse.  
'n Bejaarde vroujie het rooi gille geuit.  
'n Grypdief het 'n beroofde dame getroos,  
pleks van haar handsak haar skoothond  
gevat. Wol is duur. Vleis is skaars.  
'n Kortbroekkonstabel, aan die kameras konfiskeer  
by vurige vaderlanders, het 'n kam  
uit sy kous gehaal, en sy pet afgehaal,  
en sy skouerlengte krulle gekam en gekam  
en gekam en gekam en gekam en intussen  
is olie in die Suidpool ontdek, nou lê die pikkewyne  
paaseiers, en aangesien die burgemeestersvrou 'n biegraman,  
opgedra aan haar bolletjie, die lig laat sien het,  
is op hoogste vlak besluit om bolletjies, eiers,  
kamme, wol, duiwe en adamsappels in die ban te doen.  
Ook gate word verbied. Dit kan die regering laat val.*

(Stockenström 1973: 44)





Sammy Marks Square Tower

State Theatre

Church Street

Old Strijdom Square Fountain

Old Strijdom Square Patterned Pavement

↓ Parking Below the Square

## 1.4 LOCATION ELEMENTS

Lilian Ngoyi Square is an underutilized location holding the remains of what used to be a monument to the achievements of the Afrikaners (Hook 2005). The location comprises of a number of architectural objects and elements that dominate the space.

### *The ABSA Building (1976)*

**Architects: Pauw and Botha**

Lilian Ngoyi Square is bordered by the ABSA Bank building to the south. This building is Pretoria's second tallest building at 132m (Janneke 2009). The building had to serve as a backdrop for the Strijdom monument that was previously on the Square. It had to be a landmark for orientating the city dweller, as well as be a monument for what Volkskas (Nation's Chest) Bank and Afrikaners achieved on economic terrain (Pauw and Botha 1969:13). The building initially housed a retail and cinema complex (Janneke 2009). Today the Absa building and the Reserve Bank give the Pretoria skyline its identity.

### *The State Theatre (1981)*

**Architects: Botha and Smit**

To the east of the Square is the State Theatre's western facade that is closed off and has no connection with the Square, except for balconies on levels one and four overlooking the Square.

### *The Sammy Marks Square Tower (1993)*

**Architects: Stauch Vorster**

On the north side of the Square is the adjacent Sammy Marks Square, with a tower.

### *Remaining Strijdom Square Fountain Column (1972)*

All that is left of the fountain and monument that used to grace Strijdom Square, is the column surrounded by rocks. Previously four horses representing the then four provinces of South Africa topped the fountain column (Hook 2005 and Saunderson-Meyer 1979).

### *Pavement Pattern*

The existing pavement pattern dates from after the collapse of the Strijdom Square monument.

### *Church Street*

Church Street is Pretoria's main street, the longest urban street in South Africa and one of the longest straight streets in the world (Allexperts s.a.).



balconies that can be used for camera placement or audience for production

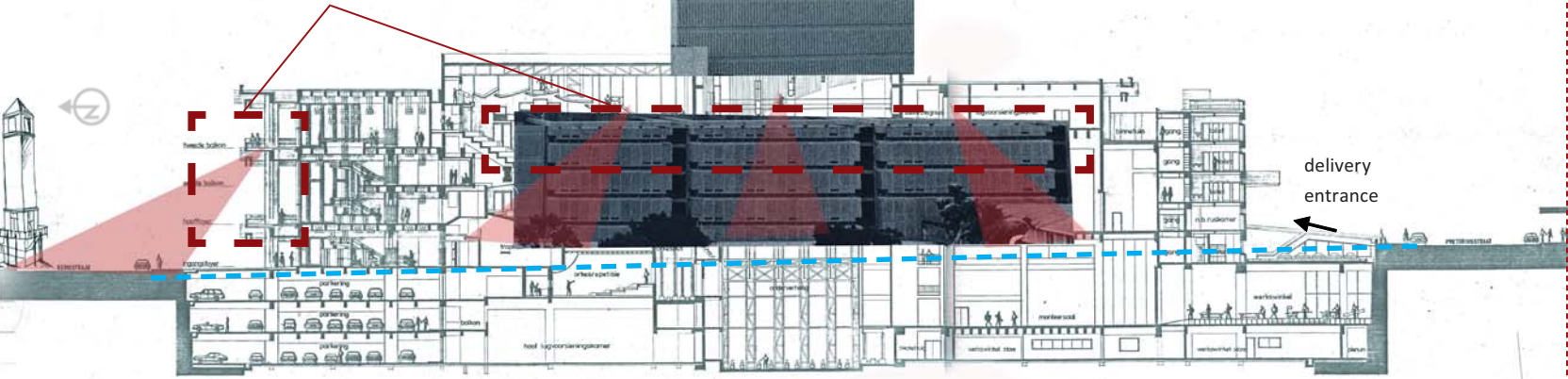


Figure 1.15 Vantage points from the State Theatre

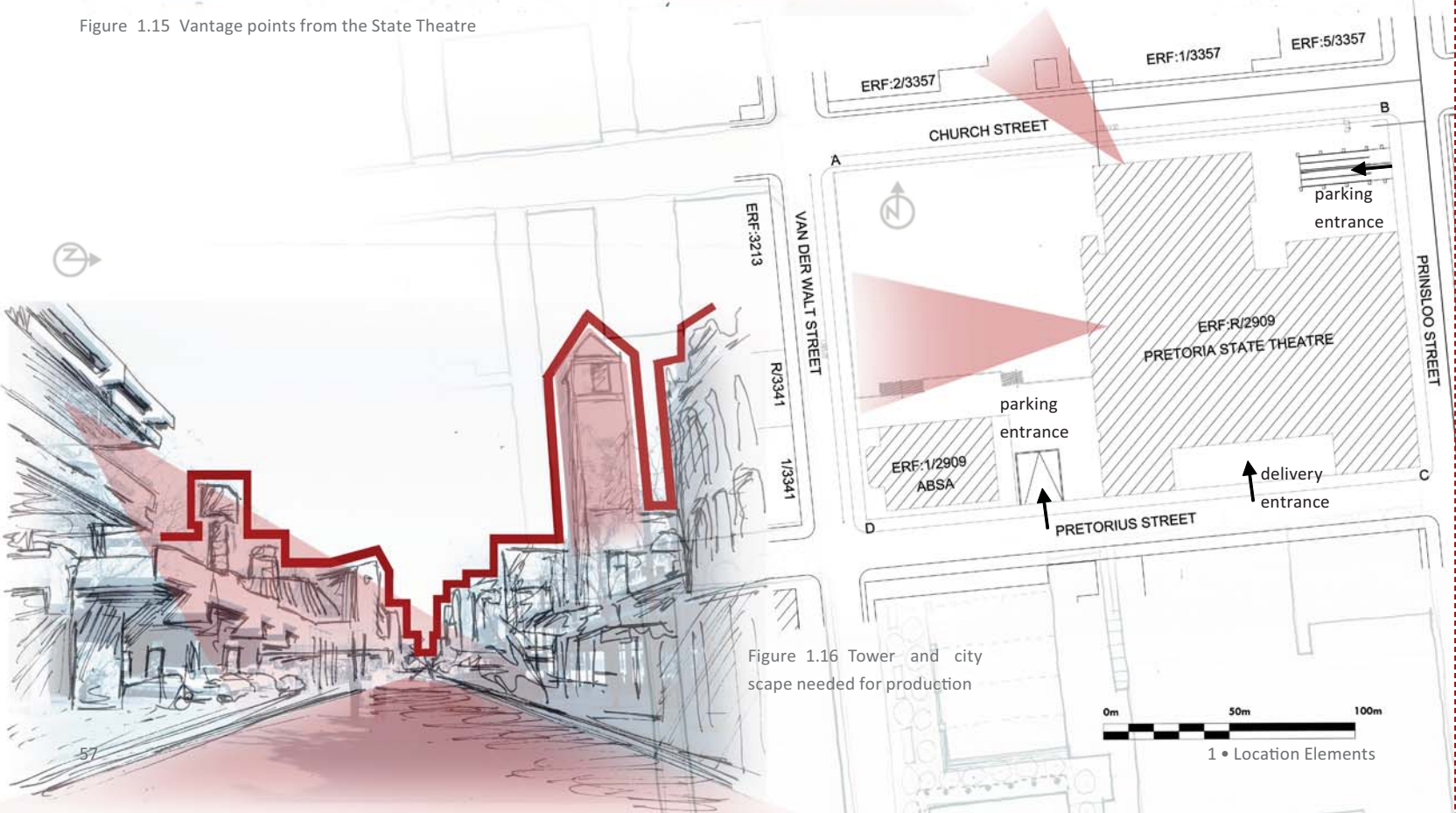


Figure 1.16 Tower and city  
scape needed for production

## 1.5 LOCATION BENEFITS FOR PRODUCTION

- > All sequences can be accommodated on this single location, maximizing time as a resource and also minimizing transport (Gravy 2007:89-90).
- > The Square itself is **underutilised**, especially during the night, when most of the filming will take place.
- > The State Theatre has large areas that can be used for staging, dressing, holding and rehearsing (Stark 1979; Viljoen 2009 and Maier 1994: 77).
- > The State Theatre has balconies on the 1st and 4th floors with views of Lillian Ngoyi and Sammy Marks Squares. This is beneficial for the following reasons:

1. Additional high angle shots can be achieved quickly and cost effectively.
2. Public audience can watch the production phase of the filming at scheduled times without interfering with the production process.

> The State Theatre has fully equipped workshops for metal, timber, plastic, painting and assembly, as well as electrical requirements. Currently the production workshops are underutilised and only used for maintenance or hiring by a production company. This is due to the fact that the State Theatre is only used to showcase productions from outside production companies. Due to the lack of studio space in Gauteng, especially Pretoria, the stages and production assembly areas are hired for filming advertisements (Stark 1979 and Viljoen 2009).

The workshops can be used for set construction. Materials needed for construction can also be

stored in the storage areas. Sets can be moved to location via the delivery entrance in Pretorius street (Gravy 2007:163).

> The large parking areas beneath Lillian Ngoyi Square of the State Theatre are beneficial for crew equipment trucks and parking needs (Maier 1994:73).

> Ample space for standard trucks on a production, namely the art department, lighting, grip, camera, wardrobe, prop and catering trucks as well as a production trailer (Campbell 2002:1) is available on this location.

> Church street is a **pedestrian street**, which means any possible road closures will have a minimal disruptive effect.

## 1.6 LOCATION BENEFITS FOR PRODUCTION DESIGN

> The location is a metaphor for the history of greed in various forms in South Africa. This links with the central theme. It is also a warped 'utopia' gone dystopic, linking with the concept for the adaptation of the narrative.

> The scene storyboard indicates a faint **cityscape** in the background. The location has a few different vantages to choose from.

> The scene storyboard requires a **long street** for which Church Street can be used.

> The **Sammy Marks Tower** is an added benefit and is reminiscent of the tall and narrow Once-ler house in the the original text.

> The **parking basement** has an industrial appearance that can be used for filming the 'sectional' factory scenes. Although over capitalized during weekdays – the parking basement is virtually empty after 5pm and on weekends and

public holidays (Van der Merwe 2009).

> The location contains mostly of **monotonous colours** – colours are mainly greys, browns and blacks. The location thus lends itself to easy integration with the production design colour palette.

## 1.7 OBTAINING A PERMIT

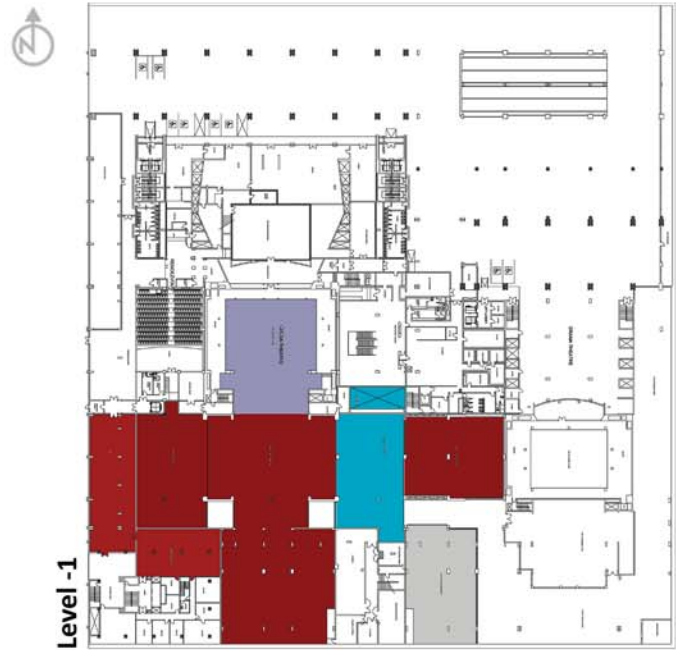
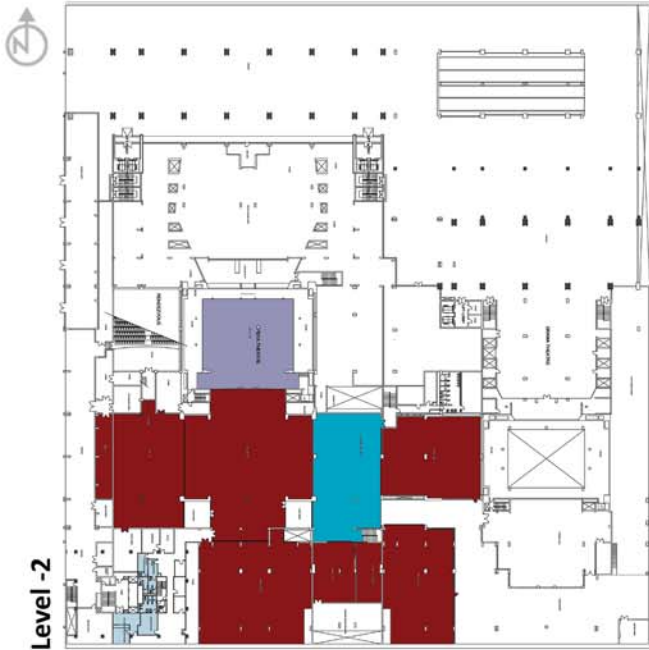
1. A request for filming needs to be sent to the local film commission where the shoot will take place. For the production of *The Lorax* the request should include that following information:

- > Name and type of project
- > Location address
- > Number of crew and cast
- > Number of vehicles






2. The request is then sent to the necessary Metro Police Department

3. Once the request is approved, the filming permit payment is made and the permit is obtained.

(Mogoshane 2009)



### 1.8 ACCESSIBILITY: SUPPORT AREAS

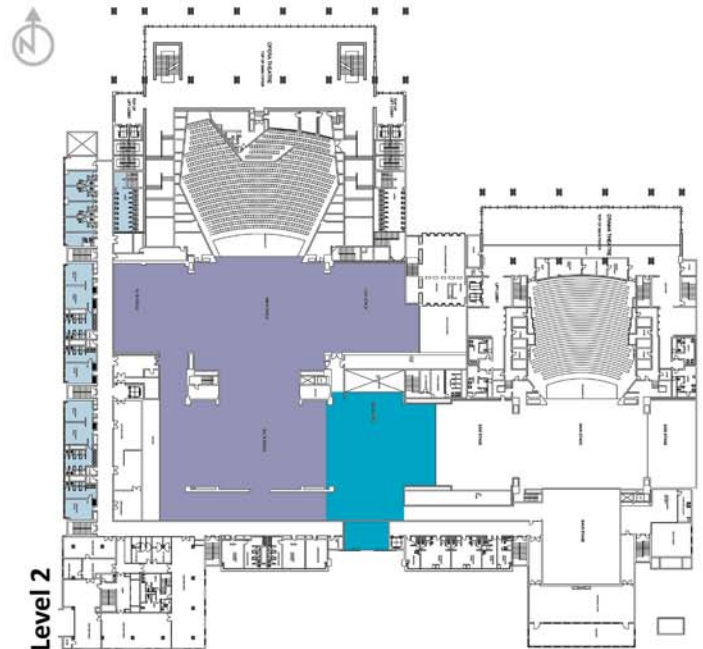
-  Existing under utilized workshop areas. Possible staging area
-  Delivery area with lifts. Beneficial for equipment transport
-  Dressing rooms. Areas for dressing and holding
-  Roof patios. Areas for positioning camera for high angle shots
-  Stage areas for Opera Theatre

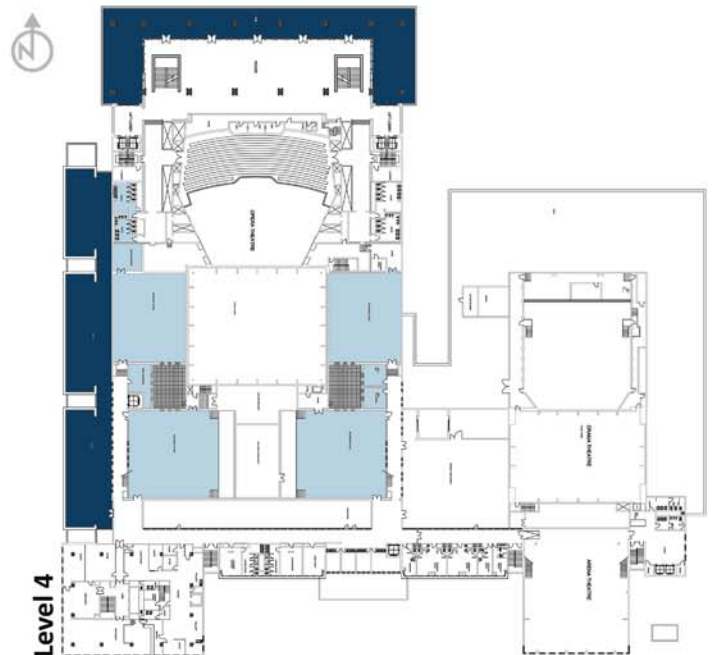
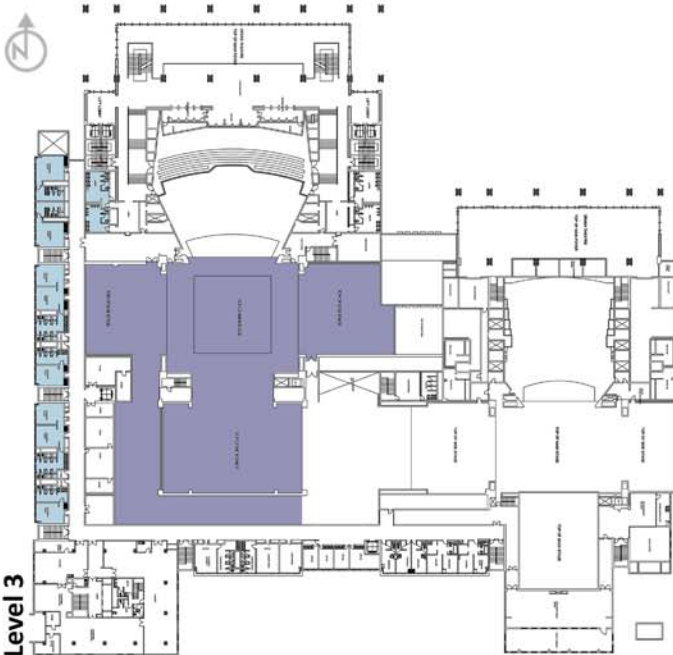
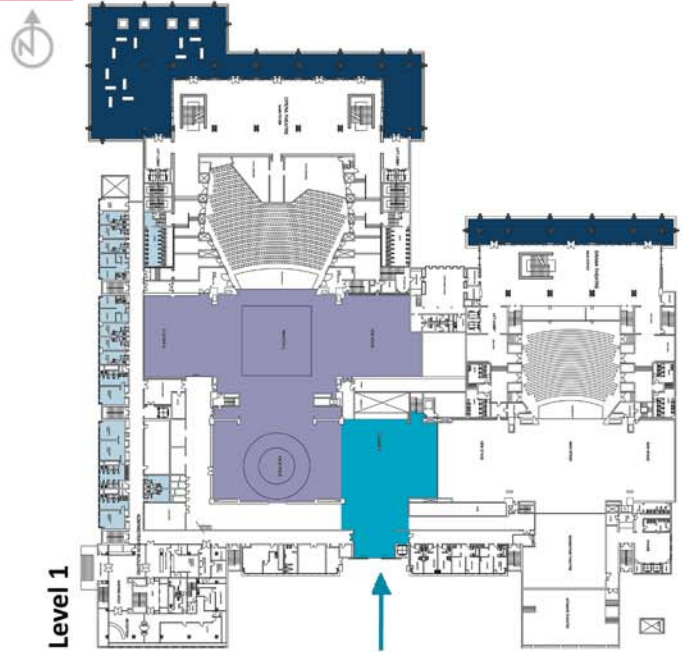
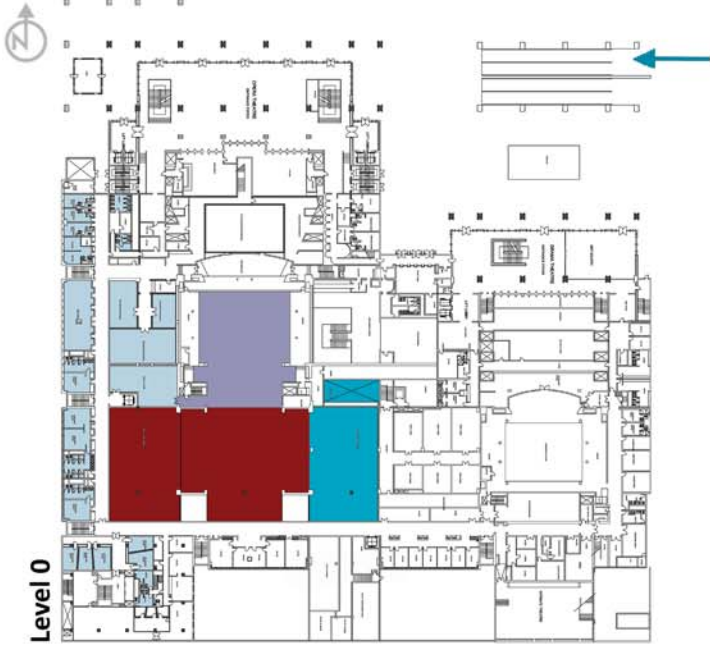
**Staging:** Room for preparing film equipment

**Dressing:** Space for make-up and hair

**Holding:** Space for extras to rest and change

(Maier 1994: 77)





1 • Accessibility: Support Areas

1.9 LOCATION WEATHER

- °C / mm
- January
- February
- March
- April
- May
- June
- July
- August
- September
- October
- November
- December

20

40

60

80

100

120

140

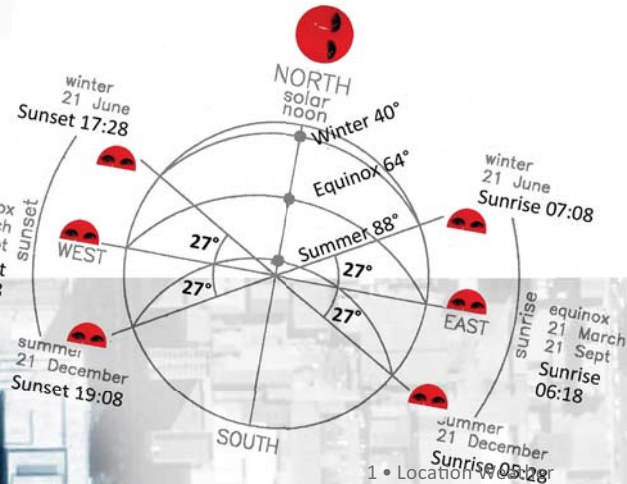
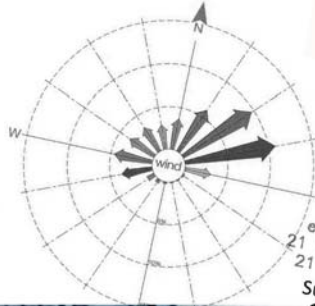
160

min temp

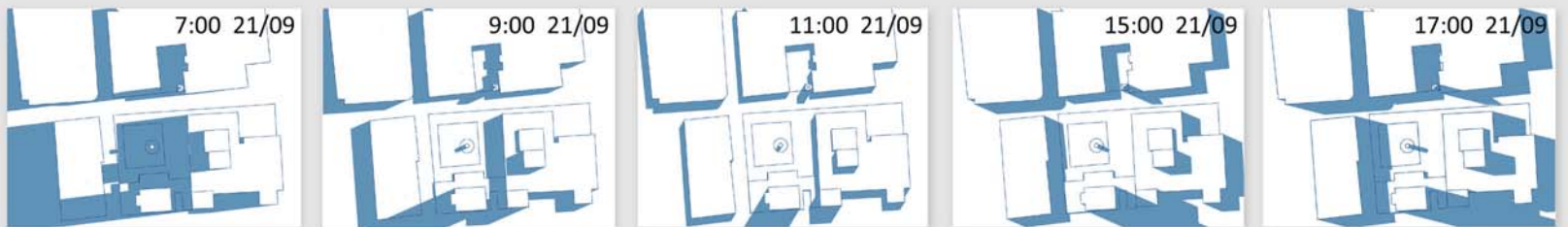
max temp

rainfall

Pretoria, 25°44' S, 28°11' E, Time Zone UTC +2 hours



1 • Location weather



1.10 LOCATION SOLAR STUDY



Figure 1.17 31 May 2001 - 40 years to the day, after the South Africa became a Republic, the Strijdom Monument collapsed into the State Theatre parking lot

The location is one where various uncanny incidences took place. This is beneficial to the production of a fantasy genre film. Key events in the history of the location frequently happened on the same date of 31 May. The poem *Laat Berig* (1973) eerily hints at future events on the location. The location is a future reflection image of what happens when greed takes over - be that economic greed or greed such as that of apartheid, linking with the anti-avaristic theme of the text. The most uncanny similarity of the Square to that of the text of *The Lorax*, is that at the end of greed filled era of the square, only the heap of rocks surrounding the column remains - the same as at the end of the text. .

## 1.11 THE UNCANNY HISTORY OF THE LOCATION

**1870** The location's history started as the Market Place and economic hub of early Pretoria. (State Theatre Pretoria 1981).

**1884** Soon afterwards the first shops in Pretoria were erected. Of these the Kynoch building still remains today as "the oldest existing shop building in Pretoria" (State Theatre Pretoria 1981; Van der Walt 1993: 49).

**1903** Next to the Kynoch Building is the Sammy Marks Building - the second oldest retail building in Pretoria (State Theatre Pretoria 1981).

**1891** On the Market Place the Market Building was eventually erected. (State Theatre Pretoria 1981).

**31 May 1961** The Republic of South Africa is born. The country turns its back on the world with its utopian policies of racial segregation (Hook 2005).

**31 May 1972** Unveiling of the Strijdom Monument, named after JG Strijdom, 5th Prime Minister of South Africa .

The cupola enclosed the gargantuan disembodied head of the former apartheid statesman JG Strijdom, 12 times larger than life. "... [T]he 12 foot high head [was] placed on a level close to the spectator so that every spectator [could] stand literally below his gaze and metaphorically come under his influence" (Hook 2005). In the centre of the Square was the fountain consisting of a column with four horses, representing the then four provinces of South Africa (Hook 2005 and Saunderson-Meyer 1979).

**1973** *Laat Berig* ('Late Newsflash'), the prophet-

ic poem about Strijdom Square, by Wilma Stockenström is published.

**1976** Volkskas building for Volkskas (Nation's Chest) Bank – now Absa Bank - is completed (Janneke 2009).

**1988** At this time "Strijdom Square constituted an entire city block devoted to Afrikaner heritage, accomplishment, and culture. It was to many...apartheid's sacred precinct, a monumental public space that aimed to build and mould an Afrikaner National identity" (Hook 2005).

**1992** Barend Strydom, JG Strijdom's unrelated namesake, who killed 8 people in 1988, on the Square is released from prison. On the same day red dye was poured into the fountain on the Square by artist Jacques Coetzer. He claimed that he wanted to "wrench South Africans from a placid and spineless acceptance of horror" (Hook 2005).

**31 May 2001** On the morning of the the 40th anniversary of what would have been Republic Day, the cupola with the Strijdom head, collapsed into the parking area of the State Theatre, taking a large part of the Square with it. The director of city-planning noted that it was just a coincidence that the dome collapsed on the anniversary of the old Republic Day (Hook 2005).

**2009** **All that remains is the old fountain column with the heap of rocks and the pattern on the Square.**

**At the end of The Lorax, only a heap of rocks with the words 'UNLESS' is left behind by the Lorax.**