chapter 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

A Community Creativity Facility is proposed for Pretoria's city centre. The facility will aim at establishing a relationship between art and the inner city Pretoria community. This relationship will foster an appreciation of art through exposure, education, skills development, discussions, lectures and exhibitions.

The client, Tshwane Leadership Foundation (TLF) and its affiliate, the School of Creative Arts (SCA), require a facility that caters for the visual arts within Pretoria's city centre. At present there is no such visual arts facility. Considering that an arts educational programme that exhibits, produces and sells artworks of local Pretoria residents within the Cultural Precinct of Pretoria CBD is lacking, such a building would be socio-economically viable. The facility will focus on photography, drawing, painting, sculpture, pottery and beading classes. It will house various artistic programmes, such as an exhibition space, art workshops and classrooms, an art information lab, a lecture hall and artist studios to address the current gaps which exists in the Pretoria CBD fabric.

A site that is located close to the TLF/SCA and that is within the Cultural Precinct–defined by Minnaar, Visagie, Schubart and Andries Streets (Ref. to Fig. 1.1) – in the lower Central Business District (CBD) of Pretoria is desired. Furthermore, a site that is not used to its full potential and that will allow for inner-city activation and effective urban utilization is favoured (du Toit, 2009: 3–4).

1.2. PROJECT INTENTION AND AIM

- The design intent is to create a visual arts programme that allows its users to connect and establish a relationship with art. This relationship could have various benefits: cultural appreciation, skills development and personal healing.
- The design intent is to create a creativity facility that establishes a relationship between the city and its users.
- The project intention is to encourage a dialogue of understanding between art and a wider audience. The project aims to challenge the perception that art and art-related programmes are inaccessible to a large majority of people. A community-orientated arts facility that actively involves the community is desired to fulfill this intention.

Fig. 1.1. Aerial photograph of Cultural precinct south of Pretoria. (Geography Department, University of Pretoria. 2011. Edited by Author).
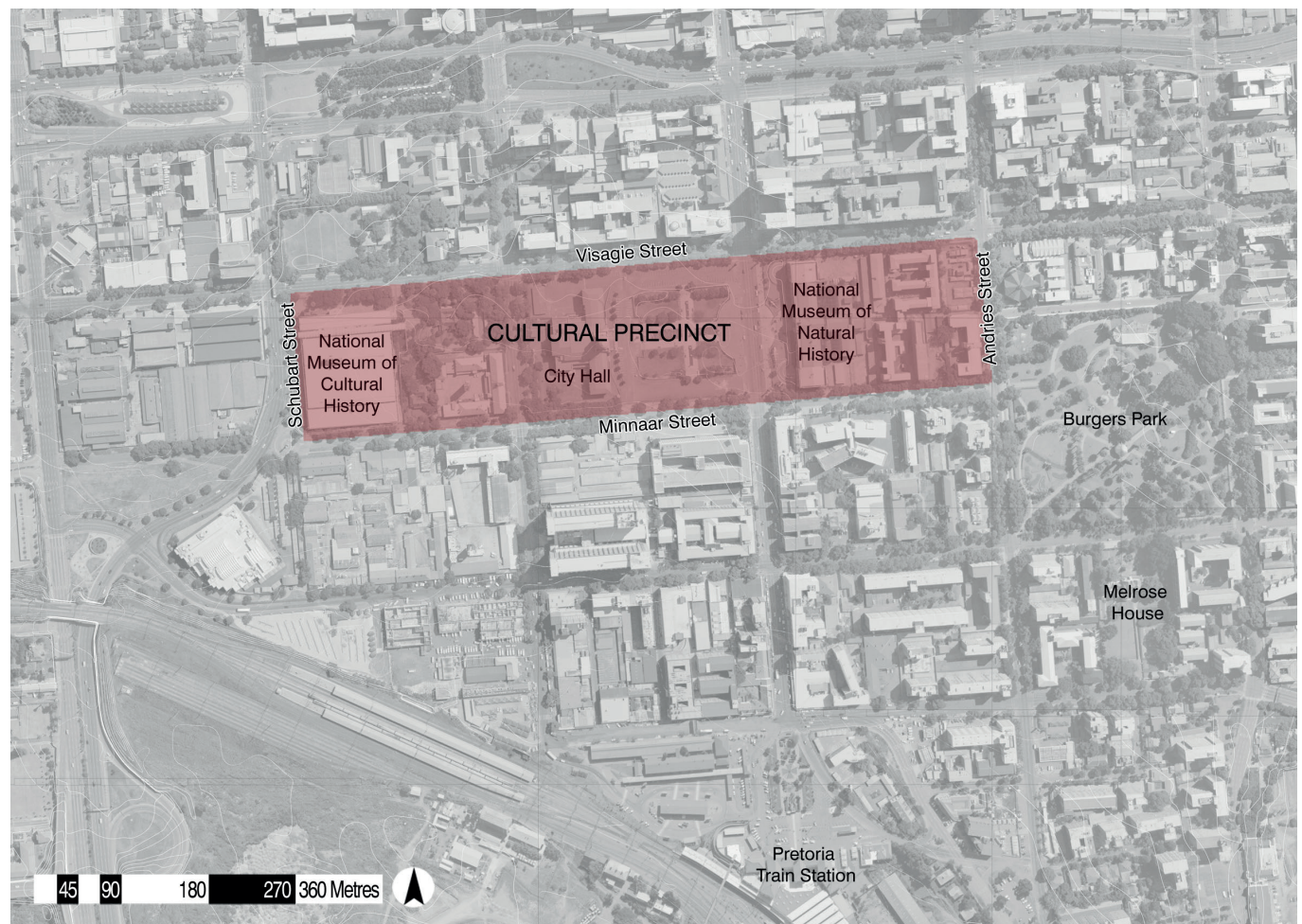
- The project intention is to make art more accessible through architecture. The building should ultimately break down the historical and ideological barriers attached to art by making the user an active participant, allowing them to discover, explore and actively engage with the building and the programme. The general perception that art requires a 'high level' of understanding (Stupples, 2009: 127) can be overcome by allowing the user to become the controlling participant within their context. It is desired that the facility engages with its urban environment and its users. This will be approached through the programme, the spatial planning, the treatment of thresholds and the wall-planes of the building.

1.3. DESIGN CHALLENGE AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In South Africa art is generally not understood or appreciated by the populace: it is unfamiliar (Manetsi & Meyer, 2007: 196). This absence of an art culture can be attributed to a variety of reasons such as a lack of an art education and art exposure. Conversely, it could be said that art doesn't understand a large majority of the people that "encounter" it. Art movements, such as Dadaism (1915–1924), rejected all previous artistic contributions (Belton, 2002: 110). Dadaism was intentionally an irrational art movement – an "...anarchic nihilism" (Belton, 2002: 110). This type of art did not cater for the public, stirring controversy and debate. Marcel DuChamp's (1887–1968) Fountain – a urinal with "R. Mutt 1917" signed on the side – is a prime example. Fountain is an object that was "found" rather than created through a technical process and declared "Art" (Belton, 2002: 110). The artwork evoked a massive public outcry because the majority of people that saw it did not understand it.

Fig. 1.2. Marcel DuChamp's Fountain (1917) Ready-made. (Phaidon, 2000: 142)

Another challenge in the art world is that artists often battle financially to support themselves and also battle to gain exposure. These challenges will be discussed in depth in Chapter 2.

Research questions that arise are:

- Can the belief that art is exclusive be challenged architecturally?
- How can architecture encourage the public to view art?
- How can architecture create a greater engagement between the city users and art?

The programme, context, concept and the theory for the project will influence the dissertation and will be the design informants. The design challenges that need to be addressed through the architectural approach are outlined below:

- The facility needs to be mixed-use so that each programme can play off the other. Therefore, the facility will provide art workshops, public talks or discussions that encourage public participation and education. Exhibitions and leisure activities would also be included to contribute to public dynamism. This participation and involvement aims to familiarise, educate and instill an appreciation of art in the public.
- The building should be constantly active, both day and night.
- Inner-city regeneration in the Pretoria CBD is important for a vibrant city. Thus, a Brownfield site, a waste landscape that can contribute to inner-city development and that can respond to the programme's needs and nature is required. (This will be explored further in Chapter 2.) A site location that embodies a strong community culture, pedestrian activity, good access to public transport and leisure activities is desired. (The Framework Study, context and the site will be further explored in Chapter 6). The location should allow for a relationship with its programme's users.
- Input from art curators and artists is important in understanding the current South African art culture.
- Spaces designed must allow the user to utilise the spaces effectively. The building needs to show an awareness of how artists produce art.
- Create a building that publicly engages with its context, users and the public through the spaces created. The building's architecture should allow for the effective viewing of the art and engage the supporting programmes by approaching the design through the theories of the Derivé and the Flâneur (discussed in Chapter 3). Applying the primary theory of the Derivé will assist in creating spaces that encourage and enable the user to become an active participant in the city (Porter, 2004: 63) and the building. The supporting theory of the Flâneur will be explored and interpreted against the Derivé. The aim is to create a space in which the user engages and interacts with the building.

1.4. CLIENT PROFILE

TSHWANE LEADERSHIP FOUNDATION (TLF).

Fig. 1.3. Tshwane Leadership Foundation Logo (TLF, 2011g).

Established in 2003 and located in the cultural precinct of Pretoria, opposite Burger's Park, the Tshwane Leadership Foundation (TLF) is an outreach organisation geared towards social and economic upliftment of the urban population within the Pretoria CBD (TLF, 2011a). The TLF supports initiatives and programmes within Tshwane's urban areas to "...build healthy urban communities" (TLF, 2011g). It works towards "...urban transformation... [through] ...churches, communities and [various] programmes" (TLF, 2011g).

The TLF believes that the arts have the ability to consolidate "healing, community development and urban regeneration" (2011d) as well as allowing for an appreciation of beauty. In 2005, the TLF introduced a dance and creative movement and the School of Creative Arts (SCA) was founded as a TLF affiliate (TLF, 2011d). Educational programmes such as workshops, learnerships and classes are offered by trained educators (TLF, 2011d). In 2006 the school introduced music theory and musical instruments classes to the programme and is currently looking to introduce a visual arts programme (TLF, 2011d) with drawing and painting classes.

The TLF is also linked to the Potter's House, an outreach programme offering empowerment programmes for women and their children in vulnerable or difficult situations. The Potter's House offers a variety of classes that are of interest to the women, accommodating their requests if necessary and if possible. The classes are informative and beneficial for the women and deal with various urban and social issues. Creative classes, such as fabric painting, beading classes and catering, are also offered (TLF, 2011).

A visual arts programme that facilitates the creative processes through education, exposure and skills development is lacking in this precinct. Considering the gap in the visual arts sector within the TLF and the SCA, an arts facility can contribute positively to the Pretoria urban context. The classes offered by the Potter's House and the SCA within the TLF programme can be accommodated within a single building. All amenities can be provided for in one building and can allow for the exploration and exposure of various types of visual arts programmes by its users.

1.5. FUNDING

BUSINESS AND ARTS SOUTH AFRICA (BASA)

Business and Arts South Africa (BASA) is a non-profit organisation that focuses on the "...promot[ion of] mutually beneficial and sustainable business–arts partnership that will benefit society as a whole" (BASA, 2009). BASA was established in 1997 and is a joint venture between the private sector and the Department of Arts and Culture. Funding is provided by both parties (BASA, 2009).

BASA recognises all arts entities, be it individuals or organisations. BASA memberships include benefits such as funding, business–arts education, business mentoring, research, networking opportunities, promotion of arts events, media support and other services (BASA, 2009). For the TFL to realise the Community Creativity Facility and enjoy the BASA's benefits and support, the TFL would have to become a member of the BASA.

1.6. TARGET MARKET

The TLF services cater for the "...most vulnerable people in Tshwane's inner city and beyond" (TLF, 2011c). Children and adults defined as "vulnerable" are orphans, the homeless and the displaced(TLF, 2011c). Individuals that are HIV positive or suffering from AIDS are also defined as "vulnerable" (TLF, 2011c). The TFL primarily deals with women and children (TLF, 2011a). It is clear that the intention of the TLF, the SCA and the Potters House is to socially and economically uplift such marginalised people and enable them to better themselves.

However, it should be noted that the Arts Facility will not only focus on the underprivileged as its doors will be open to wider audience - the residents and users of the Pretoria CBD. These people will also be able to participate in the educational workshops. They may also develop their artistic inclinations and/or contribute to their skills development.

The promotion of local artists within the creativity facility is also desired. The facility will offer artists a socially cohesive and economically viable environment, where they can simultaneously educate a wider audience on art.

1.7. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Methods employed for the dissertation:

- Framework study
  (This will be explored in Chapter 5, Part 1).
- Site Analysis Study
  (This will be explored in Chapter 5, Part 2).
- Interviews with artists and art curators. The contribution from art curators and artists is required to gain an understanding of the South African art scene (This will be available in the Addendum.)
- Local statistics from Statistics South Africa
- Research and Theory papers.
  (This will be explored in Chapters 2–3.)

Papers that deal with sociology, culture and art offer an understanding of the current South African art culture and contribute to the project's design outcome. The theoretical study of the *Derivé* and the *Flâneur* (Chapter 3) will be explored. This will inform the design approach for the project.

- Precedent studies
  (This will be explored in Chapter 4.)

Studying South African and international precedent studies of a similar nature are important so as to foster an understanding of the requirements of programmes of an artistic nature. it is laso important to understand their approach to the public realm.

- Requirements of the Client

The programmes offered to the users of the TFL, SCA and the Potter's House will inform the proposal.