

Chapter 2

Macro scale



2.01

Introduction

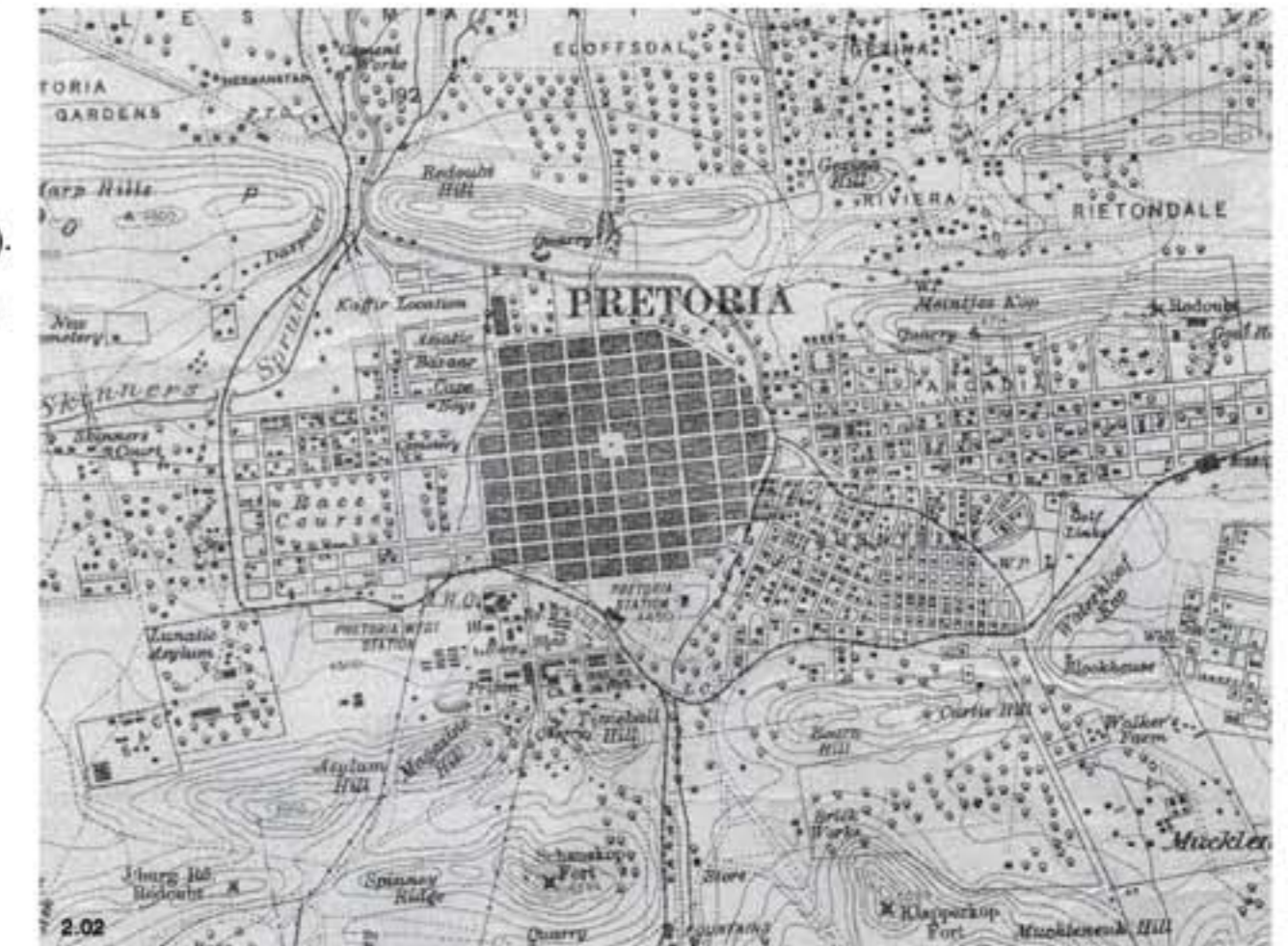
Pretoria is located in the Province of Gauteng. It is one of the three South African capital cities, along with Cape Town and Bloemfontein. Located around 50km north of Johannesburg, the city lies between natural ridges formed by the Magaliesberg range in the north and Salvokop in the south.

Originally, the city was laid out on an orthogonal grid imposed onto its natural surroundings (fig 2.02). Any symbolic reference to its natural surroundings is suggestive of an interpretation of the *genius loci* (Holm 1998:61). This grid form was the work of a Dutch engineer and architect named Sytze Wopkes Wierda.

2.01 Pretoria metro area today
 2.02 A 1906 map of Pretoria (Van der Waal Collection, University of Pretoria)

Founding of Pretoria

The city was founded in 1855 by Marthinus Wessels Pretorius, who was a leader among the Voortrekkers (Andrews & Ploeger 1989:2). He gave the name Pretoria in honour of his father Andries Pretorius, who became a hero after the victory at the Battle of Blood River against the Zulus. Pretoria became the capital city of the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek (ZAR) on 1 May 1860 (Andrews & Ploeger 1989:6). The ZAR ceased to exist following the Second Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902, but Pretoria once more played a dominant role in South Africa when it became the country's administrative capital following the formation of the Union of South Africa in 1910. It is an honour the city retained after the country became a republic in 1961 and which it continues to have to date. Today, the city forms part of the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality that was formed in the year 2000 (fig. 2.01).



2.02

Pretoria's development

Since its founding in 1855, Pretoria grew steadily. This growth is illustrated by fig. 2.03.

Demographics

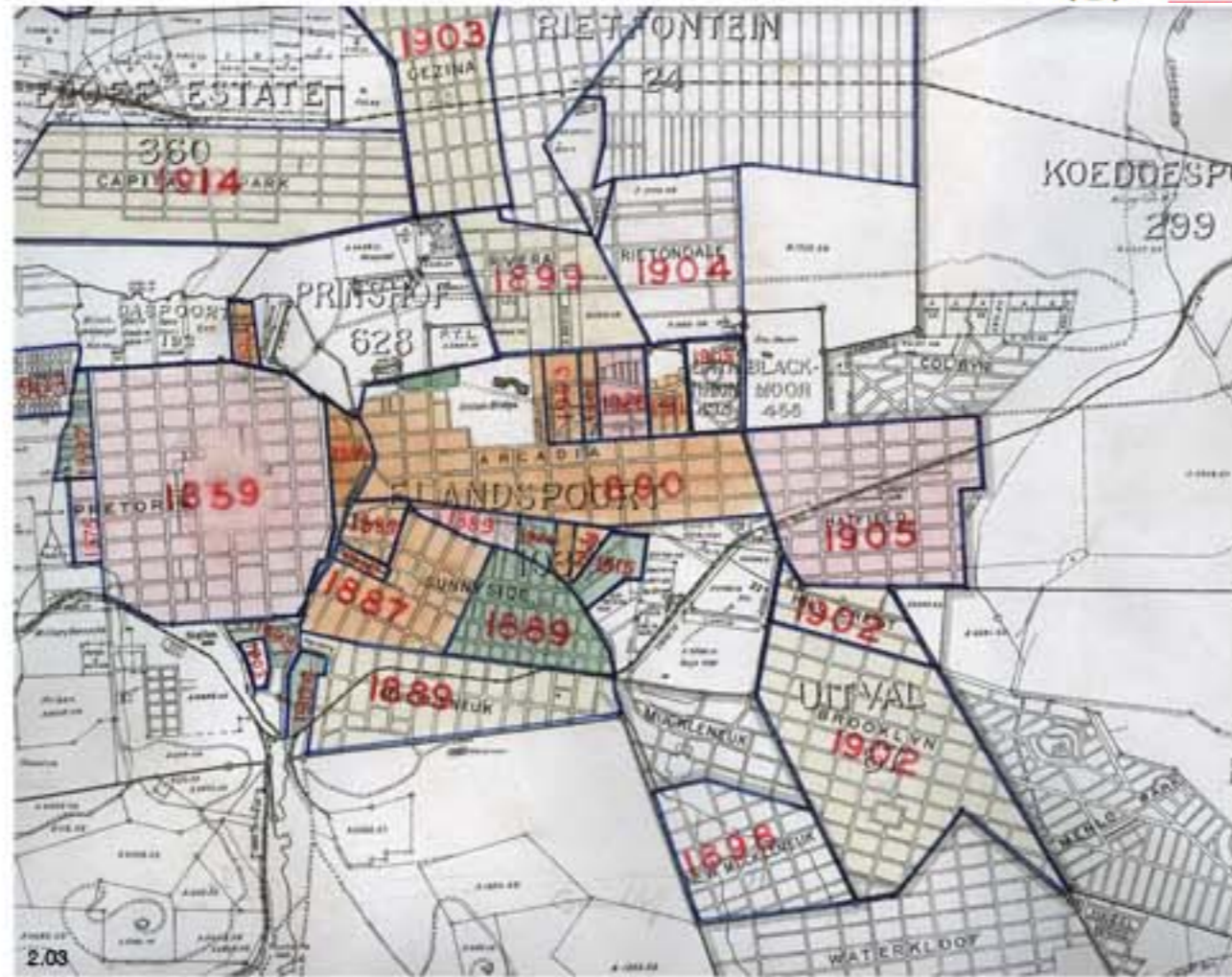
Over one million people live in the city and its surrounding areas. The languages most dominantly spoken include Afrikaans, English, Tswana, Ndebele and Sepedi.

Academic culture

Pretoria is home to a number of prominent academic and research institutions such as the Universities of Pretoria and South Africa (UNISA), the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT), as well as the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR). This makes Pretoria one of South Africa's leading academic cities.

The name issue

After 1994, the issue of Pretoria's name has been a controversial subject with some voices calling for a change of name while others strongly resist it. The South African Geographical Names Council approved such a change of name proposal on 26 May 2005. However, the matter is still under investigation and awaiting approval from the Minister of Arts and Culture, Pallo Jordan. The name Pretoria will be used for the purpose of this thesis.



Architectural context

Pretoria's early architectural character was largely the result of people imported from the Netherlands during the administration of President Paul Kruger. People such as Sytze Wierda, De Zwaan and Soff had a huge influence which can still be seen today around Church Square in Pretoria's CBD (Meiring 1980:9).

The more recent architectural style that developed in Pretoria is referred to by Fisher (1998:123) as "The Third Vernacular". It is a style characterised by a regional adaptation of the International Style. The work of Le Corbusier had a major influence, with special reference to his climatic response in the form of the *brise soleil*. Pretoria Regionalism, or the Third Vernacular, is a response to the local climate, materials, economy and cultural expression found in Pretoria. This has resulted in the buildings in Pretoria's inner city falling predominantly in the idiom of Modern Movement architecture. Architects such as Herbert Baker, Gerhard Moerdyk, Gordon Leith, Norman Eaton and Gordon McIntosh have had a strong influence on the city (Meiring 1980:10).



- 2.03 Map showing Pretoria's growth (Van der Waal Collection, University of Pretoria)
 2.04 The original "Trappewel Kerk" on Church Square, circa 1860s (Van der Waal Collection, University of Pretoria)
 2.05 Mass rally at Church Square (Van der Waal Collection, University of Pretoria)
 2.06 The Netherlands Bank on Church Square (Van der Waal Collection, University of Pretoria)
 2.07 Paul Kruger Street looking south towards Pretoria Station (Van der Waal Collection, University of Pretoria)