

The Refinery

An Incubator for the Refinement of Talent in Tshwane's Inner City

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**FROM DEAD CITY SPACE TO VIBRANT HUB OF TALENT:
THE CHALLENGE OF URBAN RENEWAL IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT**

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FOR MY PARENTS ...

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1 Introduction

The Tshwane Inner City Development and Regeneration Strategy (City of Tshwane 2005:13) of 2005 identifies aspects of identity, entertainment, public space and safety as some of the urgent needs of the city of Tshwane.

The aspect of identity is perhaps a misnomer as the capital city has a strong bureaucratic and educational identity. It can be presumed that it is not the lack of identity per se, but rather that the city lacks the sense of play that most cosmopolitan cities have.

What does the city need? What does it want? What is lacking in our city? What brings people towards a city, a node, a point, a building? What has happened to the city's sense of play?

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In order to address these problems, one would have to understand the principles of how to create vibrant, safe spaces in the city where people would want to spend their time. Which environments generate opportunities for people to interact?

The study will concentrate on theories addressing diversity and safety within urban environments, with a focus on the role played by the consumer. These theoretical principles will be tested on a real-world problem in the inner city of Tshwane.

The project will thus be approached from a practical point of view to present a realistic scheme to a potential client, while contributing to the regeneration of the inner city of Tshwane.

PROBLEM

What does the city need?
What does it want?

CAPITAL CITY

IDENTITY
CULTURE
VIBE

What are these things? → HOW? →

SITE

What makes a city?
What is lacking?
What is unique in to the city?

What brings people to a city?

What am I good at?

ENTERTAINMENT
HISTORY
ADMINISTRATION

RESTAURANTS
BARS/JAZZ CLUBS
LOFT APARTMENTS
PERFORMANCE AREAS

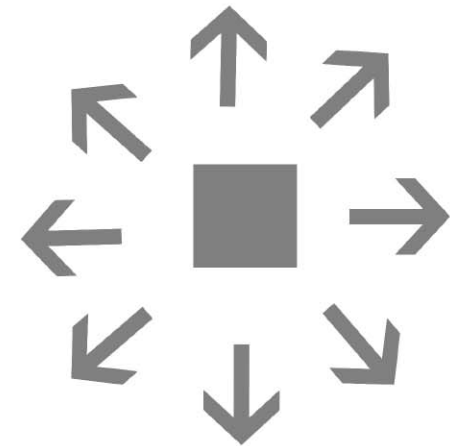
URBAN
CONTEXT

Where does the city want these?
Tshwane Inner City strategy

PRECINCT

GENERATOR
MAGNET

24HR



Combine with:
EDUCATION?
ACCOMMODATION?

SAFETY?

Just as the Technikon generated educational facilities?
Why not use what has worked before?

PRECEDENT

- 44 Stanley
- Newtown
- Catalyst Arts
- Cafe Society
- Manchester
- Gentrification
- Covent Garden
- Greenwich Village
- Soho
- Montmartre

ONE SITE VS. INFILL



VS.



fig.2.1 - thought map



low rent = artistic demographic =
regenerated precinct = rent increase =
artists move out

Let the theory come out of the site...

2 Background

The City

Let us look at the city and the problems that exist within it. What does it need? What does it want? What is unique to our city? What is lacking? An analysis would have to be done of the universal as well as unique problems faced by a capital city such as Tshwane in order to address them.

The Tshwane Inner City Development and Regeneration Strategy (City of Tshwane 2005:13) of 2005 identifies ten characteristics that are lacking in the Inner City:

- Identity.
- Development.
- Housing.
- Residential facilities.
- Tourism, entertainment, recreation.
- Transport.
- Provision for pedestrian movement.
- Public spaces.
- Safety.
- Good management.

A series of e-mail surveys has revealed that the problem faced by our capital city is not the lack of identity per se but rather that the city lacks the vibrancy, excitement and energy that most cosmopolitan cities have. The city has always had a bureaucratic and educational identity and one would suppose that it takes a very unique individual to get excited about either. It is shocking to realise that even though we live and breathe within the cities we shape that we could be devoid of an opinion of our very own capital city. So how does one create the above mentioned characteristics within a city?

Currently people live, work, educate and administer within our city. In our consumer driven society people travel great distances to be entertained, to eat, to drink, to experience, to play. It is also apparent that within the South African context only commercial spaces are truly used as public space; the rest of the city is privately owned and fortified against the general public; with even government buildings limiting access to them.

Site Selection

The selection of a site was pertinent to the success of the project. The site had to be easily accessible and have existing users on, as existing energies on the site needed to be harvested and used site to generate a catalytic reaction in the urban fabric. Once again the Inner City Strategy was consulted in an attempt to question the validity of the strategy from within. (Three possible sites were identified as places where the city proposed the envisioned consumer functions to be located within the urban fabric. Each site was then carefully considered and a list of opportunities and constraints drawn up and compared by the author). The selected site is framed by Church Street on the south side, Vermeulen to the north, Du Toit to the west and Nelson Mandela to the east. The site currently houses some of the faculties of the Tshwane University of Technology and the Tshwane North College Campus. The choice of site was obvious as it contains an existing energy and a history of generating activity, and is located near the heart of the inner city. The site also lies at the intersection of two regional routes, is therefore conducive to the successful positioning of commercial activity and is easily located by people travelling from areas outside the inner city.

