

The current situation of homeless shelters in Pretoria Central

The Potter's House

288 Burgers Park Lane, Pretoria Central, Tshwane

The Potter's House is a shelter for women in crisis and for their children. The centre provides a drop in shelter where they can stay for a few days and also provides transitional housing where the women stay for a longer period of time. The shelter has room for 24 women. The transitional housing facility offers counselling and training and aims to reintegrate the women into society. According to the programme manager, very few shelters provide services other than basic shelter and do nothing to improve the situations of the people in crisis and for this reason there is a great need for these types of facilities.

The current facility across from Burger's park is squeezed in behind the offices of the larger organisation. In the design of the shelter it is evident that there has been little thought about the experience of the user and the spaces are purely functional with minimal size and cost. The focus of the facility's design, does not appear intended to create an environment that promoted healing, but merely a functional design, which Davis states "entails fitting the requisite number of beds in a given space" (Davis: 2004, ix).

One enters the shelter through reception, which has the same nervous coldness of a doctor's waiting room, with glaring eyes judging and being judged. There is no place for children to play and they are made to sit still and quiet, adding to the tension in the room. A long passage leads off the waiting room to a row of tiny assessment offices which creates a monotonous and sterile environment.

Once accepted into the facility, there is little space for ones own belongings. Cold, sterile characterless, cramped rooms with no views, or northern light and warmth, are meant to become a person's home. Godkin states that there is an important link between a person's attachment to meaningful spaces and the development of a positive self-image (Buttimer & Seamon [Godkin], 1980: 74). This illustrates the impact of these surroundings and how vital it is that they are appropriately designed for the purpose of healing and empowerment.

For recreation there is a small communal lounge but because of its placement and the fact that it can not be passively surveyed, it is locked. There is a tiny playground that is dusty and squeezed into the circulation space between the chapel and the laundry. There is another cramped space called the peace garden. It is such a necessary space where the woman can sit alone in quiet and meditate. Unfortunately the space is in fact placed in the alley between the organisation's offices and the neighbouring building with too little sunlight for the few plants to grow. The space also overlooks the washing lines further down the alley.

The physical environment of the centre has such an intense feeling of unimportance, as it is forced into left-over space and left behind in the shadow of the seemingly more important neighbouring buildings. It is purely utilitarian with no thought for the fact that this is a desperately needed safe haven for the people in crisis who go there for a new beginning.

The only elements that make the environment feel inviting is the mosaic work, that was done by the women, on the walls and floors around the centre. The air is also filled with the scent of delicious smelling lunch and most importantly the whole place has a special energy created by the caring, smiling faces of the volunteers and the grateful women buzzing around the shelter.

Figure 3.2 & 3:

TLF Offices Burgers Park, Potter's House located behind.

Potter's House Reception (Author, 2010)



Urban Framework

This chapter investigates the context of the project, focusing on historical, social and physical conditions of the site within the context of Tshwane. First, an Urban Framework for the area is proposed, which focuses on the open space system within Pretoria. Secondly, welfare organisations within Pretoria are identified and the current situation of homeless shelters is discussed. The current milieu as well as the history of the suburb Arcadia is then investigated, followed by an investigation of the site itself.

According to the ReKgabisia Framework that is currently being implemented in the city, there are three major nodal points on which they are focusing: the Union Buildings, Freedom Park and Church Square. The area that these points encompass is where the future interventions are proposed. The study area is defined as Pretoria Central Business District, Sunnyside, Arcadia and Hatfield. This area is defined through the identification of existing boundaries defining the larger city centre. These boundaries were identified as the following:

- **Northern** Ridge: Meintjieskop
- **Southern** Ridge: Salvokop
Southern trail track extending to the east
- **Eastern** main north-south movement route: Duncan Street, which forms a barrier between the more commercial portion of Hatfield and the more suburban area to the east
- **Western** main entrance: from the south to the city, Potgieter Street, where a clear change occurs from CBD to a more industrial area.

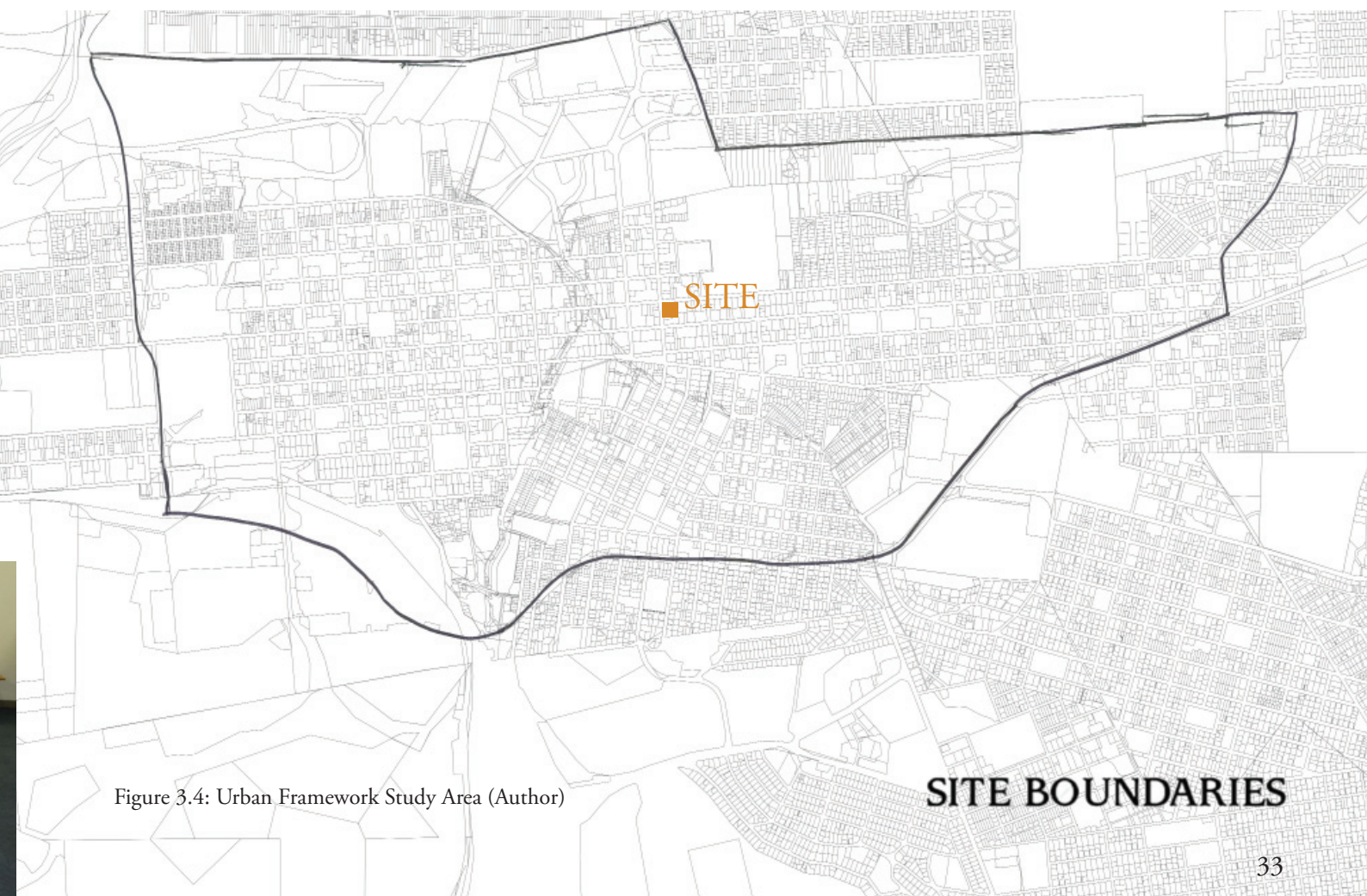
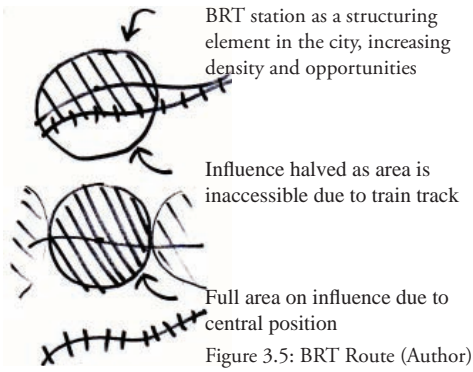


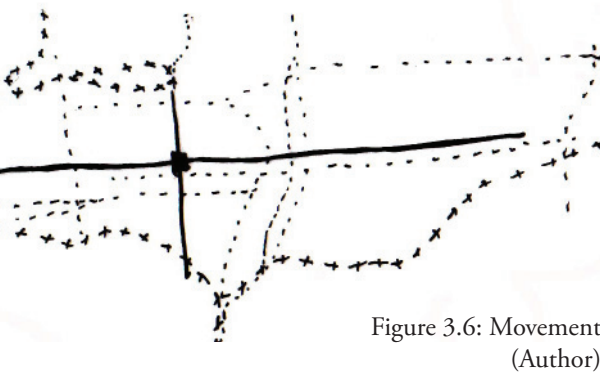
Figure 3.4: Urban Framework Study Area (Author)



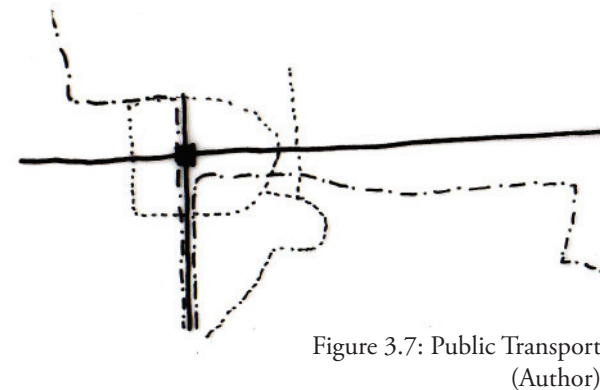
The intention of the framework is to explore development flexibility, thus ensuring structures that can respond to changing markets and development requirements. The main vision is to create a ‘World Class African City’; a city that is easily identifiable as an administrative capital. It is not just a place for living and working; it should embrace its cultural identities.

The city was analysed through the identification of 4 major urban structuring elements. These elements are:

Movement. Here the Metrorail, Gautrain, Ceremonial routes and important destination points were mapped. Major routes, namely through routes, entrance routes, and routes used within the city were also identified. See figure 3.10.

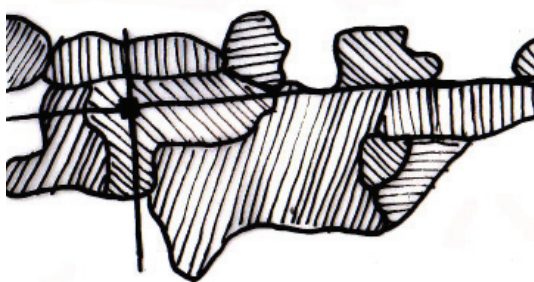


Public Transport. Here the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) routes and feeder routes were mapped (see figure 3.11). Through this exercise it was determined that the proposed BRT route is not in the optimal position. There are different levels of transport for example, pedestrian, taxis, busses, BRT, Gautrain, Metrorail, etc. These elements should feed each other, creating a complex hierarchical web. The original BRT route did not add to this web as it simply followed the existing Metrorail tracks. Not only is this a doubling of systems but because it ran against the track its circle of influence on the city as a structuring tool would be halved, and therefore it was moved to a more central route (see figure 3.5).



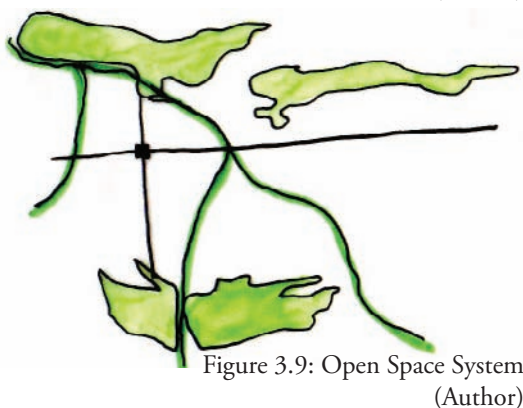
Districts. This is the main character or feel of an area. There were five different districts identified within the study area (see figure 3.12) namely:

- Residential, low & high density
- Offices, low & high density
- Industrial, low & high density
- Institutional
- Marabastad, with its unique character



Open Space System/ Green Structure. This is defined as naturally occurring elements within the city, including rivers and areas of abundant vegetation such as the naturally occurring ridges on the north and south boundaries of the city centre.

From this analysis it was found that the major structuring element within Pretoria city centre is the large number of Open/ Green Structures. It was identified that Pretoria is structured within the natural boundaries of the green ridges to the north and south and that the CBD is defined by the locations of rivers to the west and east. For these reasons and the abundance of vegetation within the CBD, Pretoria has a unique green character. Through this understanding of the importance of natural elements within the city, it was decided that these Green Structures should be protected, enforced and celebrated. This was done by the introduction of BROWNnodes, linked with BROWNways, to important Green Structures. These BROWNways will have a unique character, where landscaping and flora will be of utmost importance to identify these streets as significant linking and structuring elements, within the city (see figure 3.13).



THE MAJOR STRUCTURING ELEMENT WITHIN PRETORIA IS THE LARGE NUMBER OF OPEN/ GREEN STRUCTURES.

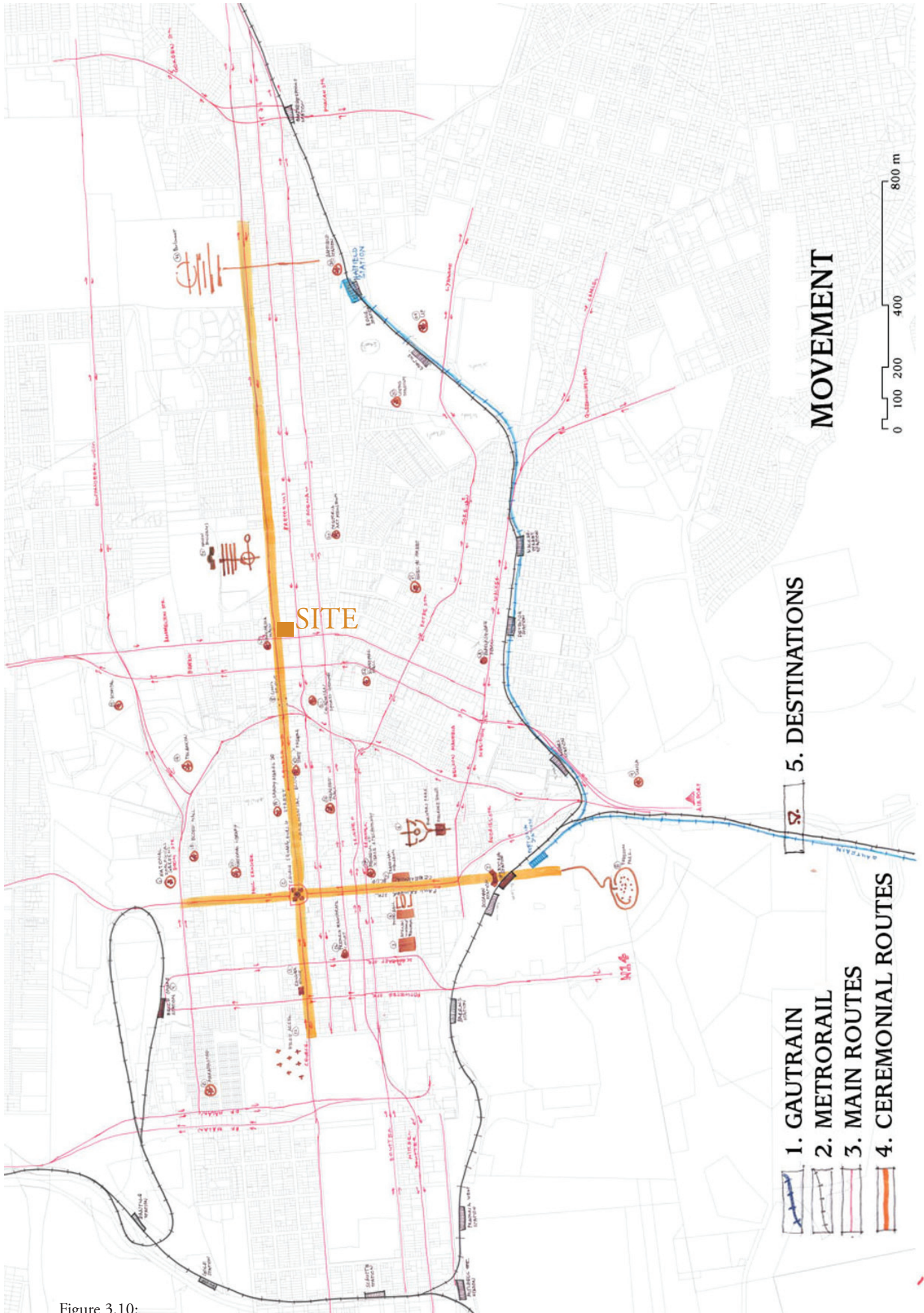
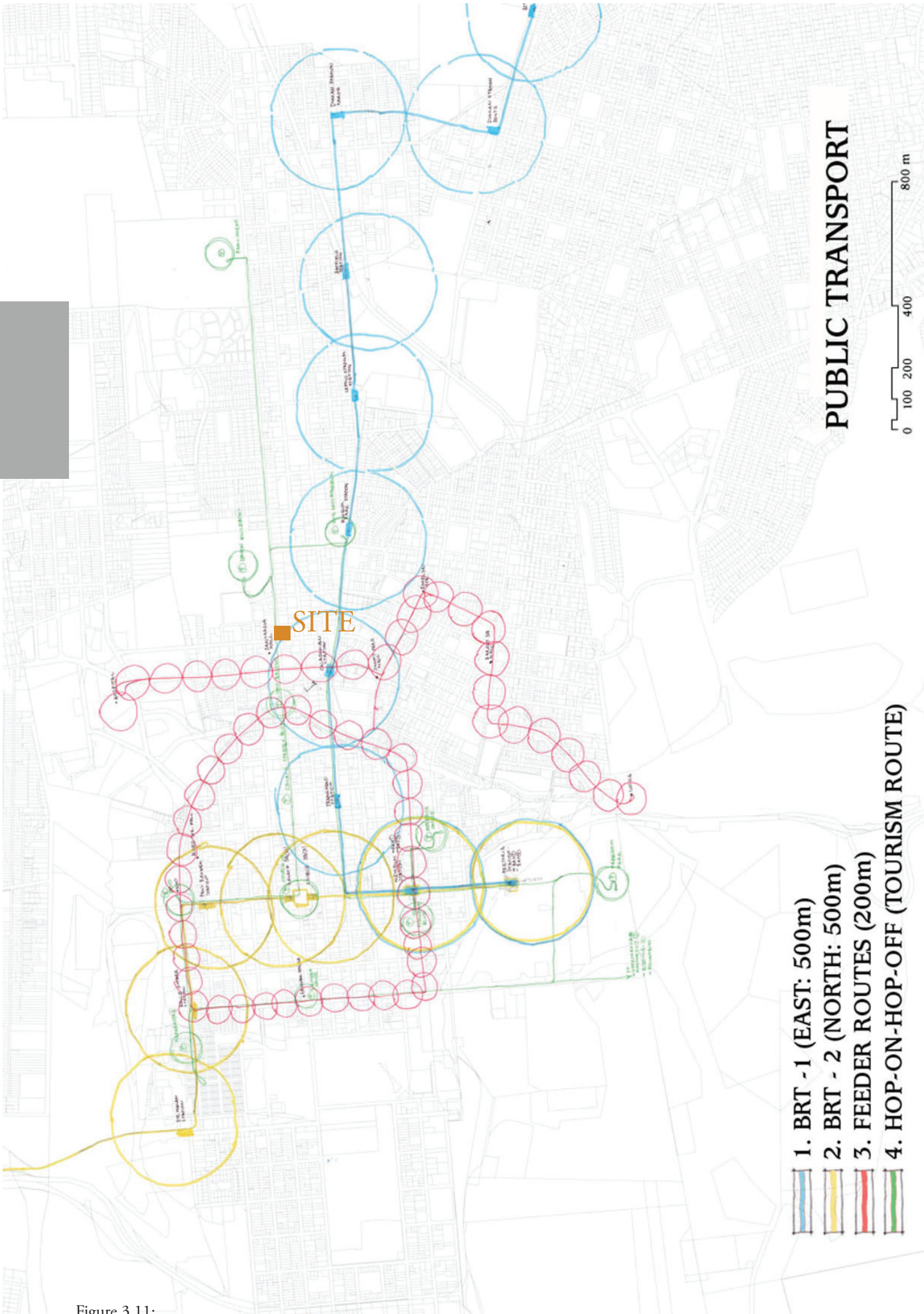


Figure 3.10:



PUBLIC TRANSPORT

- 1. BRT - 1 (EAST: 500m)
- 2. BRT - 2 (NORTH: 500m)
- 3. FEEDER ROUTES (200m)
- 4. HOP-ON-HOP-OFF (TOURISM ROUTE)

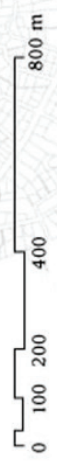


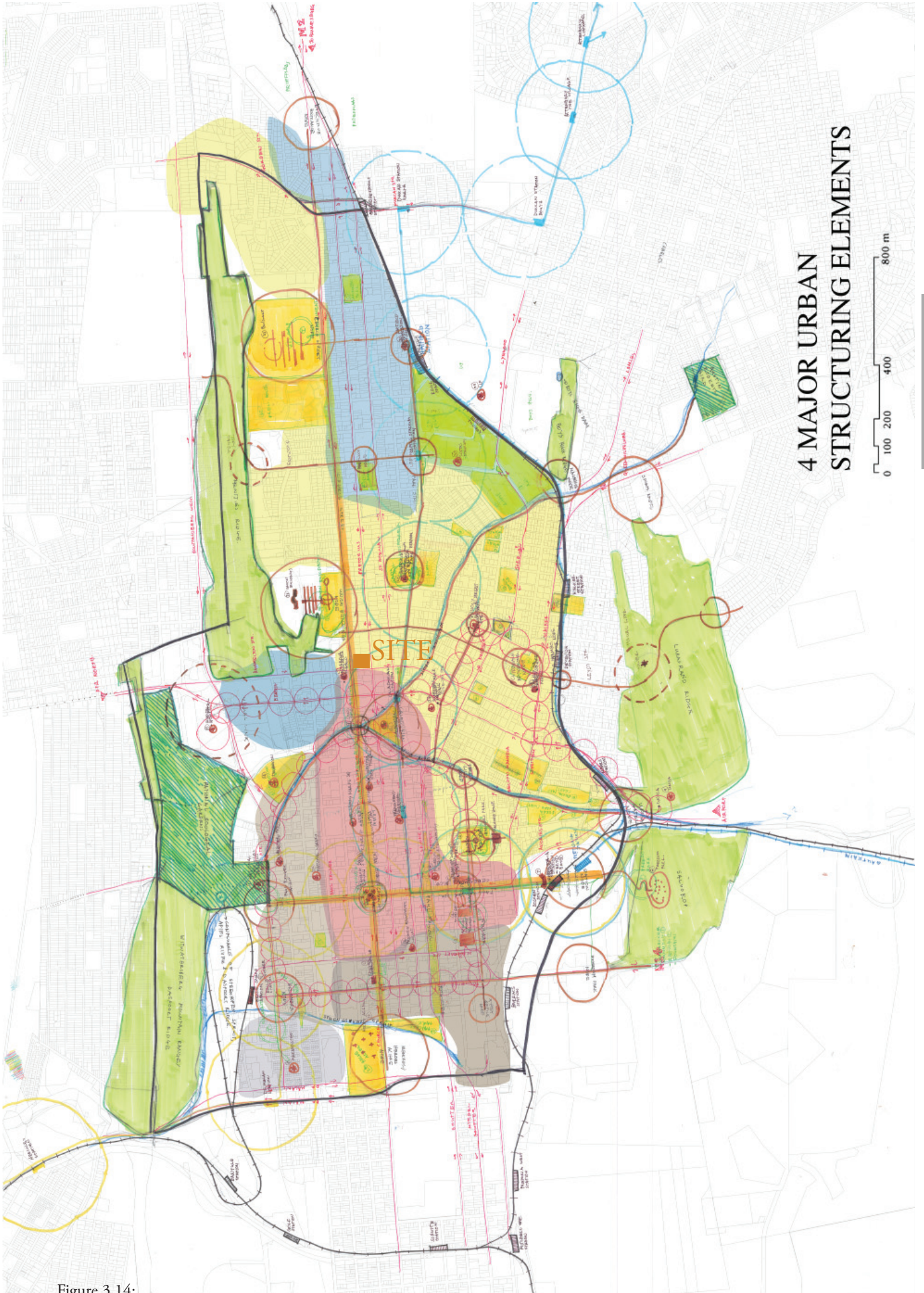
Figure 3.11:



Figure 3.12:



Figure 3.13:



4 MAJOR URBAN STRUCTURING ELEMENTS

0 100 200 400 800 m

Figure 3.14:

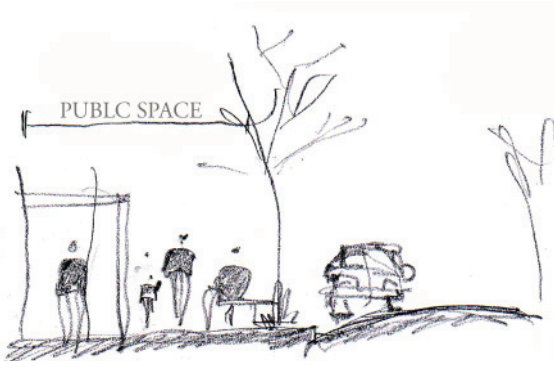


Figure 3.15: Ceremonial Route and BROWNway:

- street furniture
- shaded sidewalks
- existing trees kept
- planters (Author)

The Urban framework design guidelines are informed by the following:

- ‘Former TAFE Site Urban Design Guidelines’, August 2006.
- Housing, City Planning and Environmental Management Department. City Planning Division- Streetscape management section, Second Edition, August 2007.
- Gauteng Spatial Development Framework, Phase 1 and 2, Gauteng Department of Economic Development. Prepared by: GAPP Architects and Urban Designers, Rode, Business Enterprises and Mandala GIS, June 2009.
- City of Tshwane Spatial Development Strategy 2010 and beyond, April 2007.
- City of Tshwane integrated development plan draft, 3rd revision (March 2009) for 2009/2010.
- ReKgabisia Tshwane Inner City Programme, February 2006.

Implications for the shelter

In conclusion the Urban Framework defines the site of the shelter on the corner of Hamilton and Church streets as being:

- On a **Ceremonial Route** and a tourist bus route: Church Street. A Ceremonial Boulevard forms the visual and physical link between other higher-order city structuring elements, such as important functional nodes and public urban spaces (i.e. squares, parks, landmarks, boulevards, historical buildings). (Movement)

- **Adjacent to a heritage building**, namely Arcadia Mansions, which was built in 1927. According to the urban framework, new development in the vicinity of heritage building should respond sensitively to its scale, prominence and architectural era and materials. (Movement)

- **BRT** stations are structuring elements within the city as it is desirable to be near such stations. A 500m radius around these stations should have a very high density because of the favourable walking distance to the station. The selected site falls just outside the 500m radius and therefore is not required to have a very high density. (Public Transport)

- A **High Density Residential District**, which forms a transitional zone between an established residential area to the east and the commercial area of the CBD. (Districts)

- On a **BROWNway**, which are defined as linkages, aimed at connecting the GREENways (open Space) in the city. BROWNways are linear elements that aim to enhance the spatial character of the city. BROWNways are characterised by human intervention in terms of formal and informal landscaping elements. Tree planting is the main spatial definition element and must be facilitated at all times. Pedestrian movement is critical and must be encouraged through the provision of well developed walkways and street furniture (benches, litterbins, etc). (Open Space)

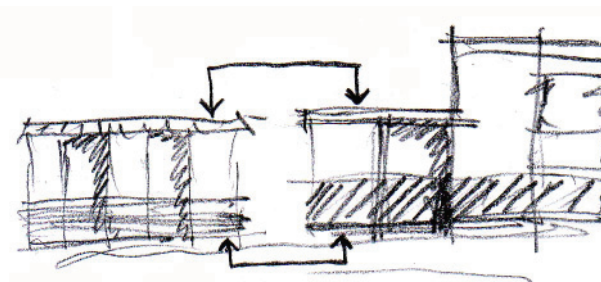


Figure 3.16: Heritage:

- stepped back
- stepped down
- “plinth”
- repetition of street edge (Author)



- 5min. walk
500m
- high density

Figure 3.17: Outside 500m radius of BRT stop (Author)

CHURCH STREET, A CEREMONIAL BOULEVARD FORMS THE VISUAL AND PHYSICAL LINK BETWEEN OTHER HIGHER-ORDER CITY STRUCTURING ELEMENTS.

Arcadia

Arcadia is a well established residential area in the city of Tshwane. Pretoria City Central borders Arcadia to the west, Sunnyside is found to the south and Hatfield to the east. The suburb terminates against Meintjies Ridge to the north.

Although Arcadia is an established residential area, it is well known for the hotels in the area because of its proximity to the Union Buildings, the presidency and the numerous embassies in neighbouring suburbs, for example, Lisdogan Park, Eastclyffe and Eastwood.

The word 'Arcadia' comes from the name for a region of Greece, which was named after the mythological character Arcas, the son of Zeus and Callisto (<http://arcadia.ceid.upatras.gr/arkadia/home.htm>).



Figure 3.18: The suburb Arcadia in relation to Church Square (Author)

In 1856, Andries du Toit, a presidential advisor, bought the area, known as Arcadia today. Mr. du Toit then surveyed his land for the following two years. The area was bought in 1868 and developed by Stephanus Meintjies, who lived there and put up a mill (Swanepoel, 2007: 6). See figure 3.19. The mill was powered by water from the Apies River. This development meant that Pretoria stretched from Boom Street in the North to Scheiding Street in the south and from Potgieter in the west to Prinsloo in the east, see figure 3.21. Mr Meintjies was honoured for his work by the naming of Arcadia's bordering northern ridge, Meinjieskop. T.W. Beckett bought a portion of Arcadia in 1889, and built a new imposante woonhuis "Merton Keep" which later became part of the French embassy after renovations (Swanepoel, 2007: 2).



Figure 3.19: In this photograph the mill can be seen on the left side of the road and Mr. Meintjies' residence on the right (Swanepoel: 2007, 7).



Figure 3.20: A later photo taken at the same place (Swanepoel, 2007: 7).

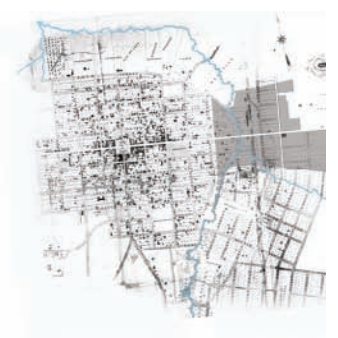


Figure 3.21: Map of Pretoria in 1841, 1855 (Corten & van Dun, 2009: 12) & 1889 (Andrews, 1989: i).



Figure 3.22: Photo of Meintjies' residence, with white-washed walls, a thatch roof and large stoep (Swanepoel, 2007: 8).



Figure 3.23: S. J. Meintjies sold a portion of the mill to his son, E. P. A. Meintjies in 1887. E. Meintjies later rebuild the mill calling it Arcadia Mills (Swanepoel, 2007: 9).



In 1887, Sytse Wierda was appointed Movement Engineer and Architect. His first project was to design a bridge over the Apies River at the area called Meintjies Drift in Church Street, today known as Lions Bridge.
Figure 3.24: Photo of the opening of the bridge by President Kruger (Swanepoel, 2007: 10).



Figure 3.25: A photo taken later of Lion's bridge. The four bronze lions were cast in Scotland by MacFarlane Sun Foundry (Swanepoel, 2007: 10).



Figure 3.26: Present day photo of Lion's Bridge (Author).

ARCADIA IS A WELL ESTABLISHED RESIDENTIAL AREA IN THE CITY OF TSHWANE.

The Site

Site: 555 Church Street, Arcadia
C/o Church Street and Hamilton Street
Erf 78

Size: 58.250m x 34.635m = 2017,49m²

Existing Zoning: Special
Maximum height: 19m
Coverage: 60%
FSR: 2,0
No deliveries from Church Street

The selected site is on the corner of Church and Hamilton Streets, in Arcadia, Tshwane. The site was selected because it is a transitional zone between the residential area to the east and the commercial area towards the city centre. The established residential area means that the shelter can integrate into the existing community and prevent isolation of the development. The busy streets also provide an excellent opportunity to promote awareness of the current social problem and of the support systems available.

THE SITE WAS SELECTED BECAUSE IT IS A TRANSITIONAL ZONE BETWEEN A RESIDENTIAL AND A COMMERCIAL AREA.

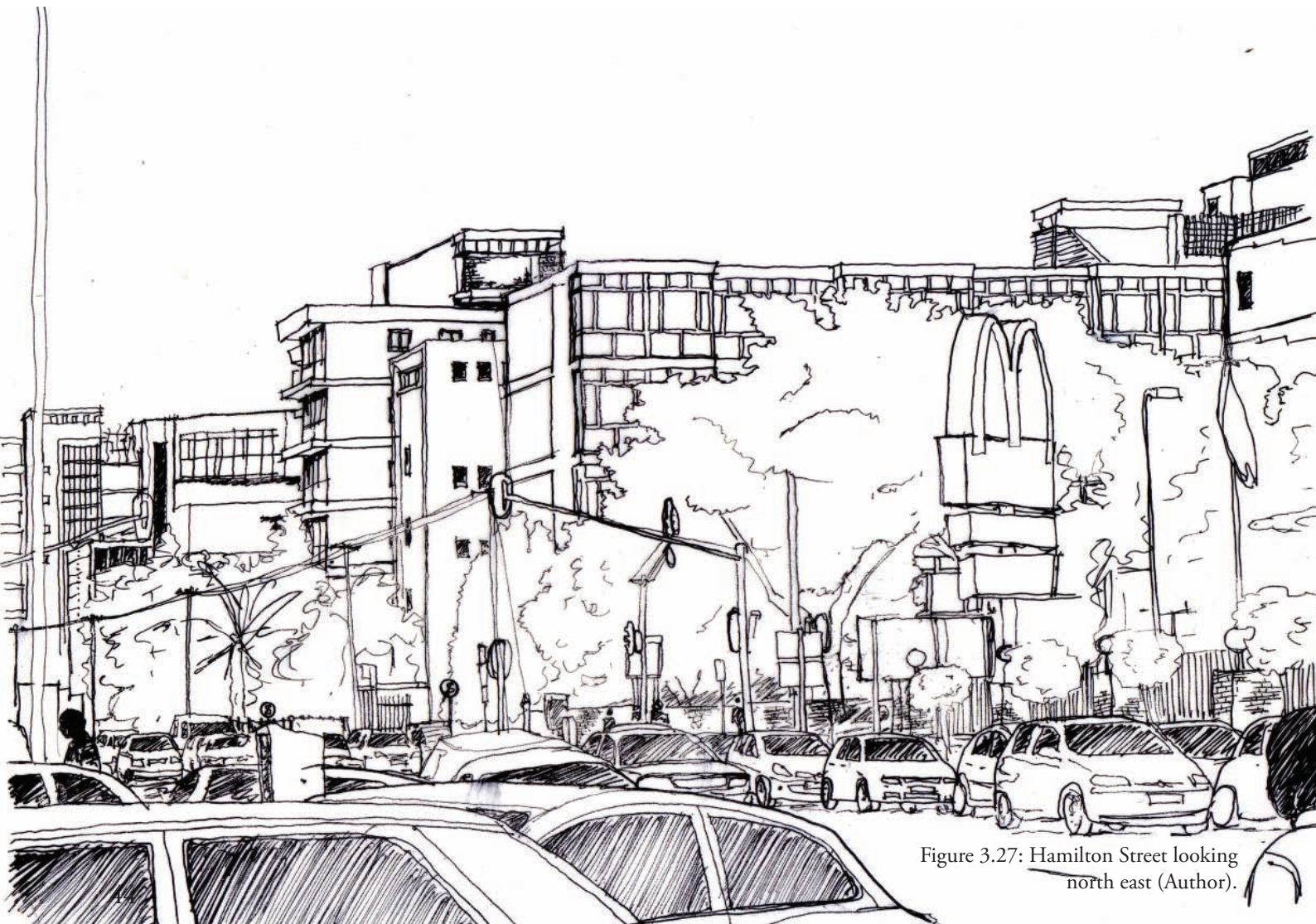


Figure 3.27: Hamilton Street looking north east (Author).

At an urban scale, the development provides an opportunity to densify the city, improving the quality of the city itself and counteracting urban sprawl. The site is currently completely underutilised with a small single story building in the middle of the site surrounded by an excessive amount of parking. The parking becomes even more unnecessary according to our urban framework which promotes fewer cars in the city. The site is also within 500m of a BRT station so public transport will be available. The intervention will focus on defining the street edge and activating it through commercial activities. The building itself will also focus on passive surveillance and 24 hour activity to promote safety in the city. The current programme on the site is a McDonald's which will be retained in the new development activating the street and creating a buffer zone between the public street and the private shelter. McDonald's could also be involved in supporting the shelter as they are involved with charities.



Figure 3.28: East- West section of the current site condition (Author).

Figure 3.29: 3 Dimensional view of the current site condition, indicating the number of levels of neighbouring buildings. This figure illustrates that although Arcadia has areas where there are very high buildings, which are predominantly flat blocks, the site is located in a fairly low scale area which allows the development to have a human scale, permitting the residents to be connected to the street and ground level and not isolated high up in a skyscraper (Author).

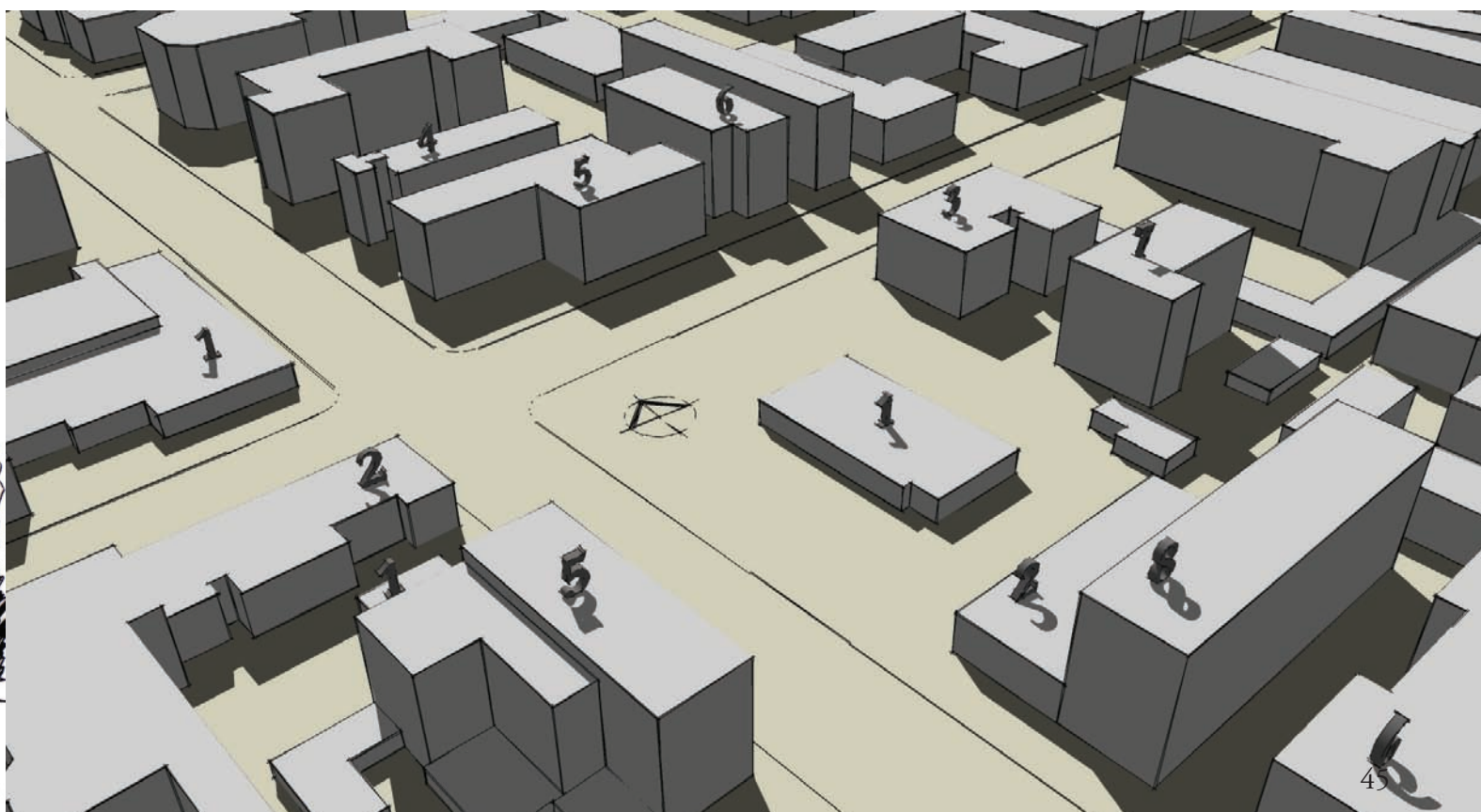




Figure 3.30: North view of current site condition, neighbouring building to the east, 3 storeys and to the west, across the road, 2 storeys (Author).

NORTH VIEW of SITE

INTERVENTION WILL AIM TO:

- Activate street edge
- Increase density: height & coverage
- Retain current programme as buffer between public & private
- Be environmentally responsible

THE SITE OFFERS:

- Good location to promote awareness: busy street
- Transitional Zone between residential area in the east & commercial area in the west
- Residential area: integration into community
- Commercial area: economic opportunities
- Access to recreational areas & to schools



360° VIEW FROM SITE

view to the south

to the west

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COMMERCIAL

N URBAN FABRIC

Commercial
& flats



3.32



Figure 3.32: Existing single storey building, currently used by McDonalds, to be demolished (Author)

Figure 3.33: Illustrating the amount of under-utilised space on the site (Author)



Figure 3.34: Illustrating the dead city sidewalk caused by the un-interactive palisade fence around the site (Author)

Sancardia

HAMILTON STREET



to the north

to the east

//

RESIDENTIAL

Site Climate:

Pretoria, which is at a latitude of 25.77° south, falls into a climate zone which has a distinct dry and rainy season during winter and summer respectively. The area has large variations in daily temperatures and strong solar radiation with moderate humidity levels (Holm, 1997: 69).

Pretoria Climate:	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Ave
Maximum average monthly temp (°C)	28.6	28	27	24.1	21.9	19.1	19.6	22.2	25.5	26.6	27.1	28	24.8
Minimum average monthly temp (°C)	17.4	17.2	16	12.2	7.8	4.5	4.5	7.6	11.7	14.2	15.7	16.8	12.1
Average monthly relative humidity (%)	58	60	60	60	55	53	50	46	45	50	54	57	54
Average monthly rainfall (mm)	136	75	82	51	13	7	3	6	22	71	98	110	56

Table 3.1 Pretoria Climate (adapted from Holm, 1997: 69)

Vertical sun angle at 12:00 solar time	Solstices (21 March/23 September)	Winter (22 June)
Pretoria	64.23°	40.73°

Table 3.2: 12:00 sun angles for Pretoria (adapted from Holm, 1997: 72)

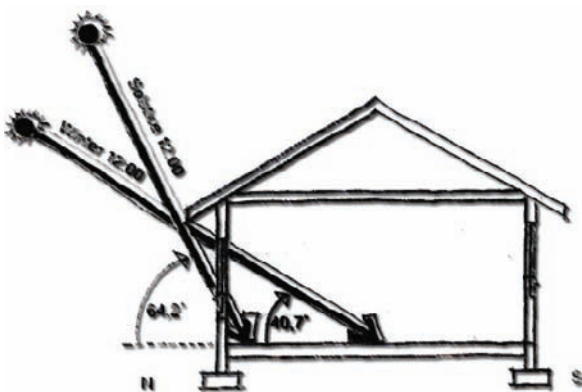


Figure 3.35: 12:00 sun angles for Pretoria (Holm, 1997: 72)

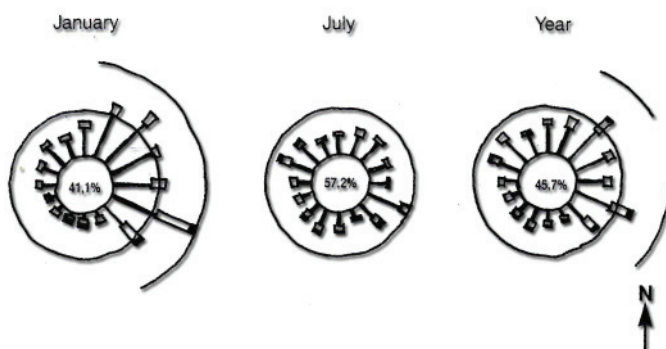


Figure 3.36 : Wind rose for Pretoria (Holm, 1997: 70)



3. 37



3. 38



3. 39

Figure 3.37-39: Weather over Tshwane (Online)

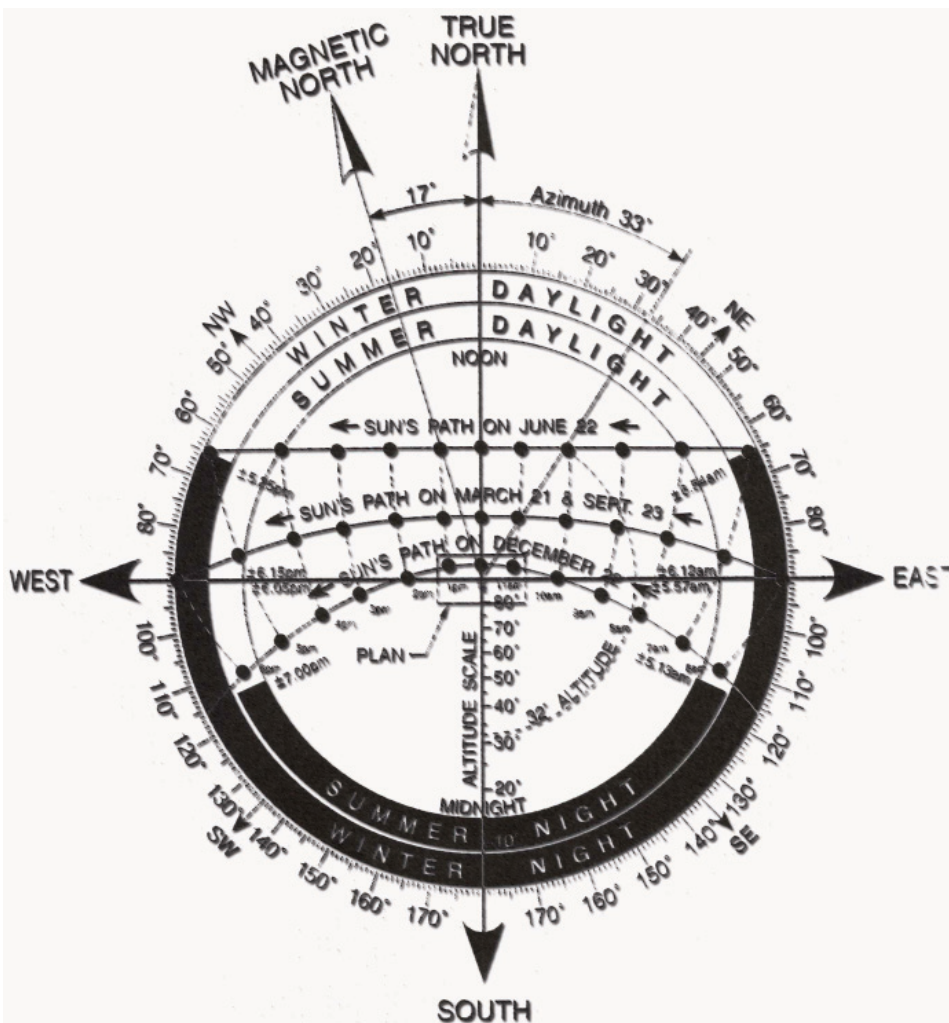


Figure 3.40: Solar chart for Pretoria (Grobbelaar, 2006: 40)

It is important to take climatic characteristics into consideration in the design process. For the design to be appropriate to Pretoria's climate, the following aspect will be incorporated:

- North orientation for heat gain in winter
- Limited openings on the eastern and particularly on the western facades to prevent excessive solar heat gain and glare.
- Shading by means of overhangs and shutters to prevent excess heat gain during the warmer seasons.
- Due to the distinct dry and wet seasons, rainwater collection to irrigate gardens during winter is important.

History of the site

As illustrated by the aerial photograph (Figure 4. 27), taken in 1947, the city fabric in the area has changed from single storey detached dwellings to multi-storey flat blocks, as seen in figure 4. 26, taken in 2010. Although the scale of the city fabric has changed, the environment has remained residential becoming more commercial to the west and the city centre.



Figure 3.41: 1947 Aerial photograph of the site and surrounding, with drawing showing the foot prints of buildings around the site (University of Pretoria Library Services Africana Collection & Author).



Figure 3.42: 2010 Aerial photograph of the site and surrounding, with drawing showing the foot prints of buildings around the site (University of Pretoria Department of Geography & Author).