

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 OVERVIEW AND CLASSIFICATION OF THE CHAPTERS

Chapter 1 introduces the reader to the fundamental meaning of waiting. This information serves to explain the problem statement and the design vision. Chapter 2 deals with the design task at hand and the method that was used to formulate the required data that is needed; the data were used to guide for the design process. Chapter 3 is divided into two parts that are subjected to a theoretical discourse on waiting and its associated qualities. The design concept is an extension of the theory, which extracts principles as guidelines. The aim is to formulate a deeper understanding of the concept of waiting and to establish the relation with architecture in order to inform the design solution. Chapter 4 explores the contextual aspects and environmental conditions, as basis for the mapping of the site described in Chapter 5. For continuity, the theoretical discourse is presented prior to the site investigation that therefore, it should be noted that certain ideas were inspired by site-specific elements that also contributed to the concept of the project. Chapter 6 is an extension of the design development, dealing with key phases of the project and explaining design decisions. Chapter 7 progresses to a final design stage and investigates the technical approach. Chapter 8 presents technical resolutions of the design.

1.2 DISSERTATION TOPIC

The dissertation is an investigation into the possible reunification of the ordinary space and architecture. Architecture is most influential in determining how everyday activities such as waiting are experienced in very ordinary places.

1.3 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Pretoria is again at a stage of transformation, with the country's hosting major events, such as the 2010 FIFA World Cup, accelerating changes. A visible layer of transport systems and other facilities is being added to the city fabric, which indicates possible reactivated interest within the city context and possible opportunities for interventions. The city is at a turning point with regards to its future direction and this project aims to contribute to the renovation of its fabric. The identified precinct is located close to the Pretoria Gautrain station.

The history of mankind has been marked by other turning points, by other singular conjunctions of circumstances leading to irresistible changes (Prigogine, 1984:5).

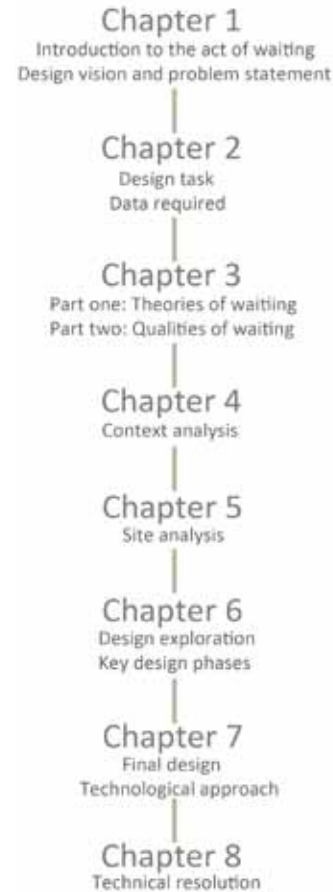


Figure 1.1: Chapter classification



Figure 1.2: Gautrain Stations

<http://www.gautrain.co.za>





1.4 INFORMATION

Project:

The Architecture of Waiting: A public transition and waiting space

Hypothesis:

The project argues the importance of the waiting place as an architectural endeavour. The essence of the dissertation is the exploration of the synergies between the waiting place and architecture, with the aim of creating a place of orientation for the urban user.

Client:

The project is a collaboration between several bodies forming a public--private partnership (PPP) programme. Liberty Properties represents the private investor, in co-operation with the South African Department of Transport (DoT) as the governmental institution. These stakeholders, together with the Taxi Association and the Road Traffic Corporation, will form a coherent client body.

Users:

Everyday city dwellers who make use of public transport to travel between the city, their homes, work and other destinations.

Agenda:

To create a rich environment that is sympathetic to everyday users going about their daily activities.

Site location:

The inner city of Pretoria: 149 Jacob Marè Street (corner of Bosman Street)

Current site use:

An informal taxi rank

Current building use:

The building's inner core remains vacant while its outer edges serve as waiting areas for the Bosman Street Taxi station.

Previous building function:

The Dairy Mall: An old dairy factory that had been converted into a commercial sales precinct for entrepreneurs.



Figure 1.3: Sketch of an urban transport environment



1.5 PROBLEM STATEMENT

As a result of users' lack of interest and confidence in the district, buildings in central Pretoria stand under-utilised. These vacant buildings lead to the deterioration of the inner city fabric. Existing buildings within the urban context present a misleading idea of the true potential of the area. The disuse of these buildings stifles business potential and deters new investors. Unfortunately, these places become associated with negative elements, which deprive them of meaning, and so create a perception of unsafe environments. This leads to pockets of dislocated areas, creating the idea of disorder. However, Pretoria has embedded layers, which function autonomously on an informal level introduced by the general city user. Taxi transport systems, for instance, have a dynamic system that regulates their operations.

Disorder is not the absence of all order but the clash of uncoordinated orders (Arnheim, 1971:13).

This dissertation is concerned with the following problem: Can the insertion of social design elements rejuvenate an abandoned building?

1.6 GOAL AND OBJECTIVE

The change in the city should include the upgrade and reintegration of buildings in the urban context. There is a need for ideas to guide the rehabilitation and revitalization of these sites in order to avoid eventual demolition. Under-utilised sites should be identified and then upgraded to become reference points within the city, linking the greater whole of the urban context to an anchor point. These sites can become nodes that may help to establish orientation points. The reinvented character of the building should uplift and support people in their daily activities. Derelict buildings are untapped reservoirs of opportunity and can become spaces of influential change. The main objective of this study is to revive an abandoned building and transform it into a connection space between the city and the user.

Alteration is the mediation between preservation or demolition. In this less than perfect world the cause of obsolescence is more generally derived from social and economic changes in the wider society (Scott, 2008:17).

Buildings change as the city changes (Scott, 2008:17).

Figure 1.4: Aerial image of Pretoria Station precinct

1.7 CHOSEN BUILDING

The Dairy Mall building is typically a vacant structure within the city that is industrialized. Its location forms an essential part of the Pretoria Station district, therefore it has major potential for becoming a transition place where people can linger and socialise.



1.8 THE DEFINITION OF WAITING

To wait is to stay in one place in expectation of an event or a progression to a next phase. In *On Waiting* (1998:72), the author Harold Schweizer refers to Gadamer's use of the word 'verweilen', which is translated as 'to dwell upon' or 'to tarry'. Schweizer explains that 'to tarry' refers to a special manner of waiting which is non-directional and without purpose (Schweizer 2008:71).

Tarrying has much to do with leaving slowly, meaning that departure is delayed and one temporarily stays or remains in a place because of reluctance to leave. "She didn't leave until midnight", for example, implies that the person delayed leaving until midnight and when leaving was imperative. Tarrying also refers to tardiness in acting or doing something – it implies a type of procrastination.

The kind of waiting on which this project focuses is a result of being a commuter in the city. It is the kind of waiting that places users in a space without their consent; it brings on certain behaviours of non-directional movement and non-purposeful dealings that make life effortful. However, architecture should cater for those in a state of waiting, so as to turn daily routines such as waiting into time well spent. Therefore, transforming the state of waiting into an act of tarrying suggests that the person does not mind lingering.

1.9 TERMINOLOGY

Waiting implies that a person waits for someone or for something to happen. However the term 'waiter' can be ambiguous and can also refer to a person who serves at a table in a restaurant. The usage of the word should therefore be clearly defined. In this study the use of the word 'waiter' refers to a person who waits for a while, or an event or opportunity (Fowler, 1995:1379). To avoid ambiguity the term 'waitee' may be used in specific instances.

Figure 1.5: Sketch of people waiting for the bus at the Pretoria bus station

