

MAKING PLACE THROUGH URBAN RESTRUCTURING

The Case of Mthatha



GWINYAI DZINOTYIWEYI

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School of Architecture, Planning and Geomatics
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ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores the notion of using design in a manner that (re)embraces and (re)amplifies the unique qualities that define the South African city, in this case – Mthatha. I emphasize “(re)” as over the last 80 years, South Africa’s cities have been structured and restructured according to the dictates of the Modern Movement whose ideas are rooted in the separation of the functions of “live, work and play” (Athens Charter 1933). Its most ardent propagators also argued that humanity’s habitual needs could be accommodated for through the triumphs of industry and technology. It was also held that the sensitive consideration of the unique characteristics of a particular place be consigned to the dust-bin of history. This was in favour of a universal design language that would homogenize space. These ideas arrived in South Africa almost as soon as they were formulated in Europe through the links that academic architects such as Rex Martienssen had CIAM (Parnell and Marbin 2000). The institutionalisation of apartheid in 1948 also found in Modernism the appropriate tools of separation with which to carry out its ideology spatially. My analysis and evaluation of Mthatha, presented here after 3 visits to the city, confirms that the city is currently structured and continues to grow in a manner that ignores its unique qualities giving rise to a feeling of placelessness. Moreover, the influence of global capital has facilitated its commodification in the form of shopping malls and supermarkets which negatively manipulate its local economy and exacerbate this feeling. It is within this context that I propose the restructuring of Mthatha, informed by ideas drawn from Place Theory, Contextualism and Collage City as well as Dynamic City/ Minimalism. Through these propositions, I show that it is possible to regain the qualities of a place through minimalist design interventions that clarify city structure in a manner that informs the growth of the city along a trajectory that respects and embraces that which defines its uniqueness.

INTRODUCTION

Structure of the Argument

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the last 80 years, the development of South African cities has occurred largely according to the dictates of the Modernist Movement whose ideas are based on the separation of the functions of “live, work and play” (Athens Charter 1933). The Movement also held the belief that humanity’s habitual needs could be provided for through the means made possible by industry and technology. The notion that contextual variations and local and particular needs should inform the design process was discarded into the dust-bin of history in favour of a universal architectural and urban design language that homogenized space. Hence, it is no wonder that the Movement also came to be referred to as the “International Style”, suggesting that “buildings in the Nubian Desert in Sudan and Northern Canada had much in common” (Trancik 1986: 21).

In South Africa, these ideas were solidified beginning the mid 1930s as a result of the connections that academic architects such as Rex Martienssen, Leslie Thornton-White and Roy Kantortowich had with the ideas of Le Corbusier and CIAM¹ (Parnell and Marbin 1995). Le Corbusier even went to the extent of dedicating one of his volumes, *Towards a New Architecture* published to the South African Modernists (Todeschini p.c July 2009). With the institutionalisation of apartheid² in 1948, the State found in Modernism, which was also based on the idea of separation (though of function and not race), the perfect theoretical vehicle that allowed it to implement its ideas spatially. Ironically, even with the end of apartheid in 1994, the State still seems to embrace the ideals of Modernism which have been reconceptualised as new images of ‘progress’ (Murray et. al 2007). The monotonous seas of low-income RDP match-box houses that continue to characterise the landscape of this nation are testament to this and also create landscapes of placelessness.

In the current period, the influence of global capital has also led to the preponderance of ‘non-places’ through its altering of the landscape via commodification and the devaluation of authenticity in preference for invented traditions such as theme parks and shopping malls. As alluded to earlier, this pattern is apparent in the vast majority of South African cities and Mthatha, which is the subject of this dissertation, is no exception.

1.1 About the Site

This dissertation’s central focus is Mthatha’s Central District, which is also the historical core of the town, founded in c1880 on the banks of the Mthatha River and at the intersection of the N2 and the R61. The central thrust of the design proposals later presented in detail, is to transform

¹ CIAM is an acronym that stands for the Congress International d’Architecture Moderne (International Congress of Modern Architecture) which was a grouping largely comprised of modern architects who met regularly between 1928 and 1956 to debate various issues that concerned their profession.

² The word “apartheid” is Afrikanse for separatism

Mthatha from its present preoccupation of being a place solely of commerce that operates during the week from 9am-5pm, to a place that is inhabited 24 hours a day, 7 days a week where the spirit of its people are one with their town.

1.2 Structure of the Report

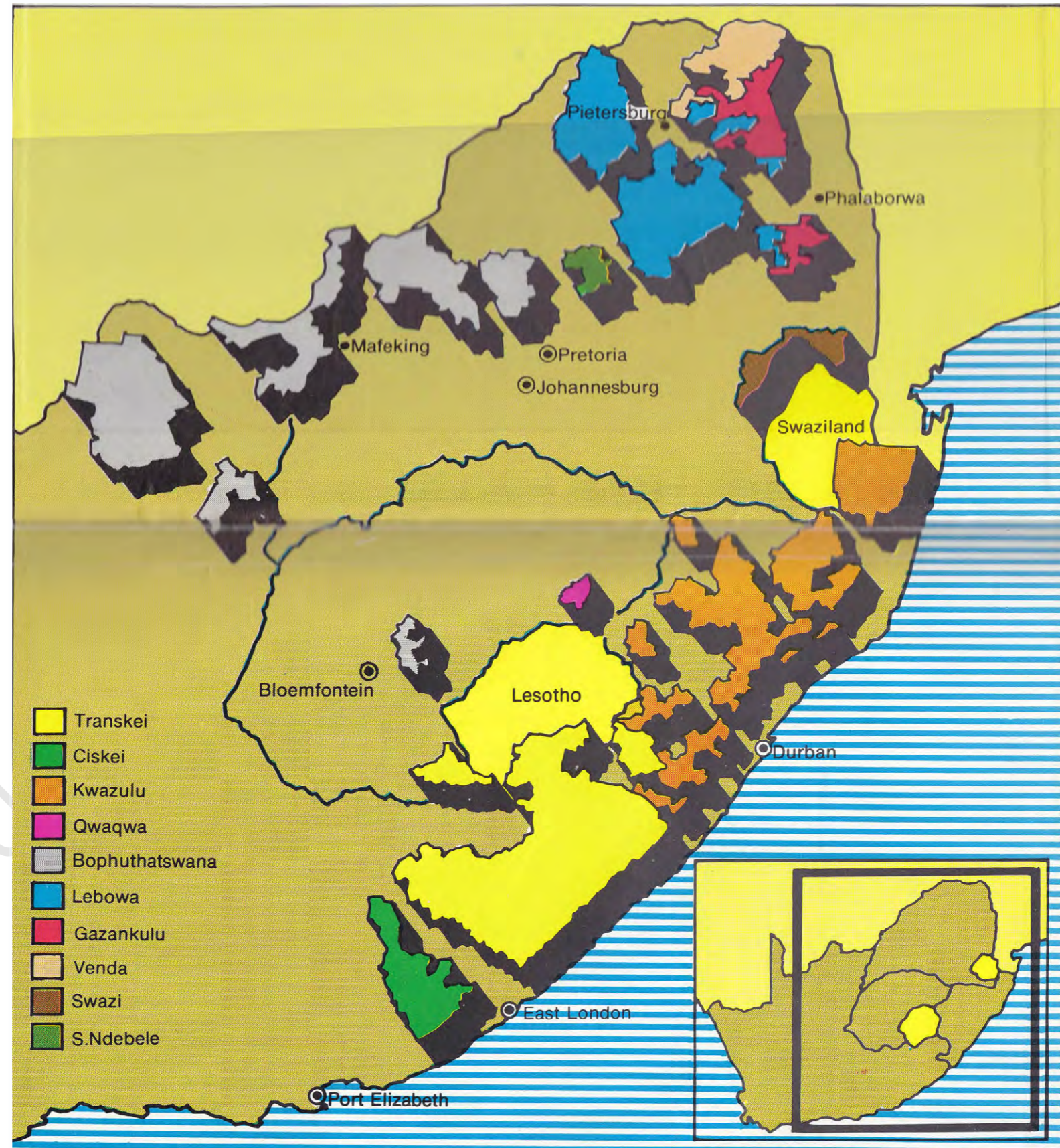
In Chapter 2 entitled ‘Understanding Mthatha’ in detailing the city’s regional and socio-economic contexts I analyse and evaluate the town and its region to provide an understanding of Mthatha’s dynamics. This chapter will also provide a critique of the town’s current spatial policy trajectory, which foregrounds the dissertation and is also expanded upon. Chapter 2 hence argues that any urban design intervention in the city must (re)amplify its unique qualities. This is in contrast to a continued blurring of these peculiarities rooted in the Modern Movement. Before undertaking this intervention in Chapter 3, I elucidate an understanding of the concept of **place** to establish the core principles that inform my design intervention through reviewing Place Theory, Contextualism, Collage City and Dynamic City/Minimalism. This intervention begins in Chapter 4 where I explain my methodology, drawn from the body of theory analysed, for place making in the most dominant centre of the town, the Central District. I must emphasize that this chapter provides an understanding of the design at a very initial and schematic level which will be further developed and refined between the present period and my presentation to the examiners on 13 November 2009. Hence, the purpose of this document is essentially to provide a background for the design proposals that will be presented on this date.

UNDERSTANDING MTHATHA

2. Understanding Mthatha

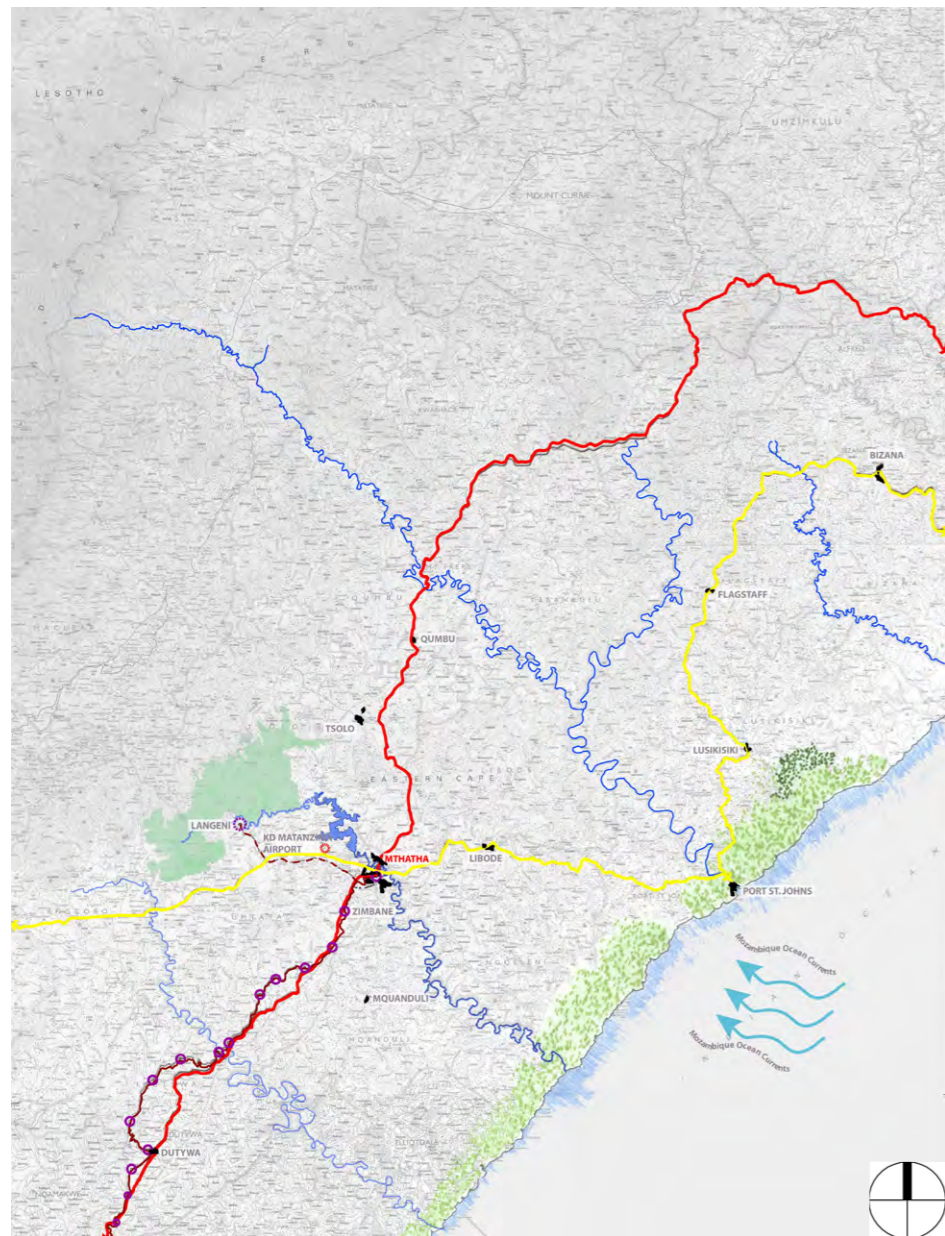
Mthatha was founded in 1879 on the banks of the Mthatha River and is located in the midst of immense rolling hills and valleys that provide a base to clusters of rural villages and cultivated land surrounded by vast tracts of grasslands. The town is largely recognized as the historic capital of the old Transkei homeland, which were one of ten territories within South Africa granted full autonomy during the period of institutionalised apartheid between 1948 and 1994. This was part of the apartheid government's agenda to deny all black people South African citizenship disguised as the intention to award them sovereignty. Similar examples are the sovereign states of Swaziland and Lesotho embedded within South Africa's borders. (Potgieter, 1960).³ This system fell apart with the introduction of a democratic dispensation in 1994. Since then, Mthatha has become part of the Eastern Cape; a province that houses about 16% of South Africa's population making it the third largest province in the country after KwaZulu Natal and the Gauteng (SCHREVE, 2000).

In this chapter, I begin by outlining the characteristics of Mthatha's regional space to provide an understanding of its unique qualities, the influences on her climate and how the city is strongly linked with her region. I will proceed to show how the strength of these linkages has played a dominant role in determining the nature of Mthatha local economy which in turn, has also had an impact on the town's demographic trends. I will then look at the state of the town's public management before presenting an analysis of its present urban form. This analysis will explore Mthatha's current policy context and some of the key issues that it seeks to address. I will also highlight some of the policy's shortcomings in arguing that emanate from its failure to suggest the direction that a regional spatial policy should take. These shortcomings exist despite contemporary Mthatha having been primarily shaped due to the nature of its relationship with its regional context.



³ The fact that Swaziland and Lesotho were sovereign states because they were former British Protectorates was obviously always ignored in passing such arguments

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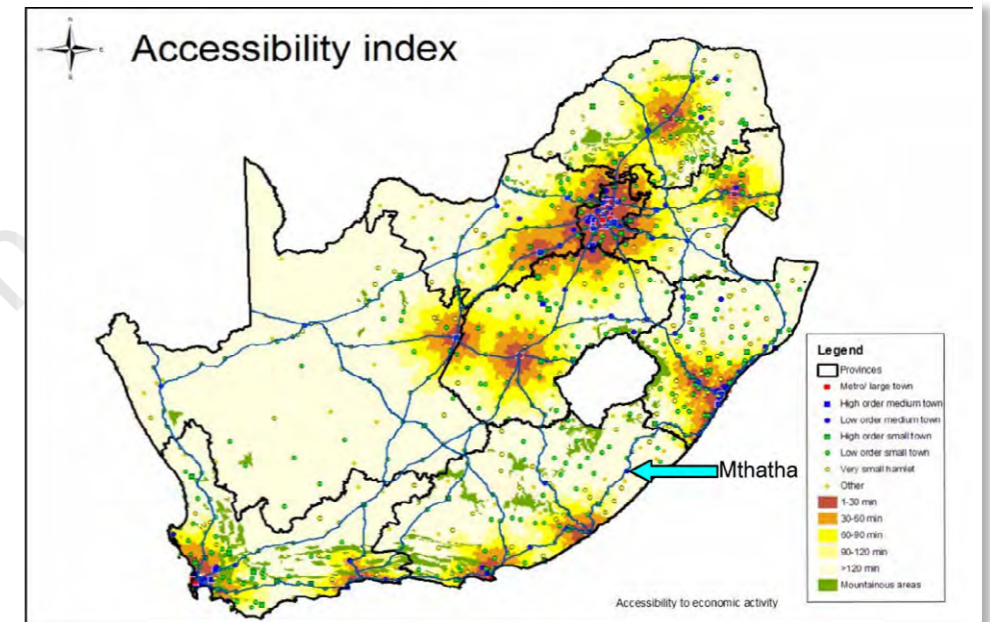
- Train Station
 - Proposed Train Station at Langeni
 - KD Matanzima Airport
 - Existing Rail Line
 - Proposed Rail Extension to Langeni
 - R61
 - N2
 - Pondoland
 - Magwa Tea Plantations
- Mthatha's Regional Context**

2.1 Regional Context

Within its broader regional space, Mthatha's surrounding landscape is defined by coastal forests, bushveld and grasslands of the Pondoland north of Mbatyi. This region is recognised as a "centre of plant endemism" and is home to over 130 plant species that occur nowhere else in the world, such as the Pondoland Coconut Palm. The coast, about 85km from Mthatha and widely referred to as the "Wild Coast", is also rich in biodiversity with its ocean containing large numbers of endemic fish species. This region is hence recognized as one of the World Wildlife Fund's 'International Global 200 Eco-regions of Global Significance'. Due to its elevation of 732m above sea level and the influence of the warm Mozambique ocean currents, Mthatha's region experiences a wide range of climatic conditions. The minimum temperatures range from a mean of 14.3 - 19.8°C in January and 1.8 - 13.4°C in July. The mean maximum temperatures range from 14.3 to 25.3°C in January and 19.5 to 21.4°C in July. In relation to rainfall, about 800mm is received annually with 81% of this occurring between October and March each year. The most significant factor linking Mthatha to its region is its location at the intersection of a national route, the N2 linking it to Cape Town and Durban, with a regional route, the R61, which links it to Engcobo and Port St John's at the coast. Mthatha is also linked by rail to East London. Since April 2009, the passenger rail service along this line has been increased from weekend to daily service as part of the Kei Development Corridor Initiative that seeks to better connect Mthatha, Dutywa, Butterworth and East London. This initiative conceptualises the towns as part of a regional corridor. It costs R30/person to travel the line's full extent which is significantly less than the R80 taxi-fare. Though one has to endure an 8 hour trip by train as opposed to 3 hours by taxi.

2.2 Socio-economic Context

The first impression that Mthatha undeniably makes on its visitors is of a vibrant place 'pumping' with activity. As already suggested, the pivotal factor contributing to this vitality is the fact that Mthatha is the only lower medium town within a 230km radius. This makes it a regional powerhouse serving as an economic and social hub to the functionally lower order towns of Tsolo, Libode, Ngqaleni, Mquanduli, Qumbu, Mbizana, Flagstaff and Lusikisiki in addition to their surrounding rural settlements (ORTDM IDP 2005). Although about 150 000 people live in Mthatha itself, it caters for the needs of over 1.5 million people who live within a 50km radius of the town. As a result, there is intense commuter activity between Mthatha and its surrounding settlements. The livelihoods of the majority of Mthatha's residents however remain in dire straits. About two thirds of its citizens live in poverty with 52% being formally unemployed (Harrison, 2008). Manufacturing activity is negligible with the State being the largest employer and contributor to the Gross Geographic Product (GGP), followed



South Africa Settlement Hierarchies
Source: Schreve 2008



Settlements 50km from Mthatha

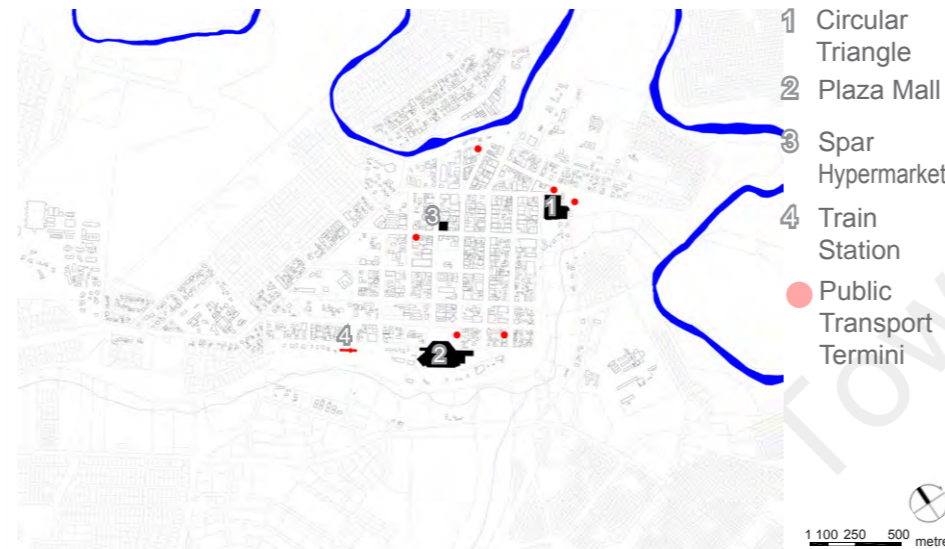
UNDERSTANDING MTHATHA

by the trade and financial sector of the economy (ORTDMA 2005:13). As a result, significant numbers of households rely on government grants and remittances sent by mine workers and family members working in other major South African towns (Harrison, 2008).

These conditions have fuelled a vibrant informal economy which is visible one entering the town. However, the informal economy dominated by thousands of hawkers selling fruit and vegetables, clothing and operating make shift hair salons is essentially a poverty trap. Local Economic Development expert Karen Harrison (2008) has found that while over 53% of Mthatha's hawkers have been operating for over 5 years, 61% of them earn less than R500 per month. These severely low earnings are undoubtedly due to the emergence of large shopping malls and supermarkets in close proximity to the major transport interchanges that compete with 70% of Mthatha hawkers based at these dominant energy points. The competition is almost always one-sided as retail giants are all part of major South African chains and thus able to "truck in" their produce from East London and Durban in bulk. This gives them the opportunity to undercut the prices offered by the hawkers who mostly source their produce from a few wholesalers in the town (Harrison, 2008). The large retailers are also often headquartered in Gauteng to which profits made in Mthatha move to. As a result, the number of times money circulates in Mthatha itself is greatly reduced. It is hence clear that Mthatha's potential prosperity fails to take fruition since it is a city largely of consumers as opposed to being a city of producers.

Commercial agriculture is the most obvious anchor to initiate a productive economy given the predominance of fertile, arable land. However it is poorly developed; it remains mainly subsistence in nature with most of Mthatha and its hinterland, remaining as grasslands. Nonetheless, encouraging attempts are being made with forestry being carried out in the Langeni and Mondi Forests soon to reach maturity. Tea plantation activities are also being carried out in the Magwa area (ORTDM 2005). The next step that is required to stimulate these activities further is the initiation of a secondary industry in Mthatha that is able to process these primary goods. I found it utterly absurd that it is impossible to find locally processed foods in Mthatha's store. Also, my search for a major furniture making concern located in the town, which would add value to its nearby forestry resources, proved unsuccessful.

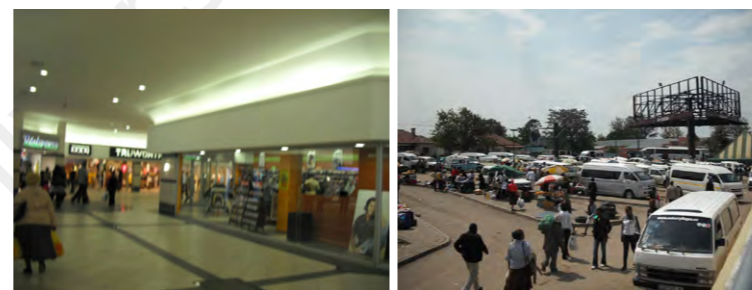
Racial income inequality is also apparent amongst the town's residents; the average annual income for black people is R15 762 compared to R41 875 for coloureds and R131 583 for whites (Harrison, 2008). The impact of HIV/AIDS has also affected population growth currently pegged at 0.7% per annum compared to the 10% population growth rate that existed in 1993 (Dewar, 1994). This depressed growth is largely fuelled by rural-urban drift which often occurs first to the regional centre and then on to other towns further away when opportunities are not found (ORDTM, 2005). Addressing this, particularly within rural Eastern Cape is not an



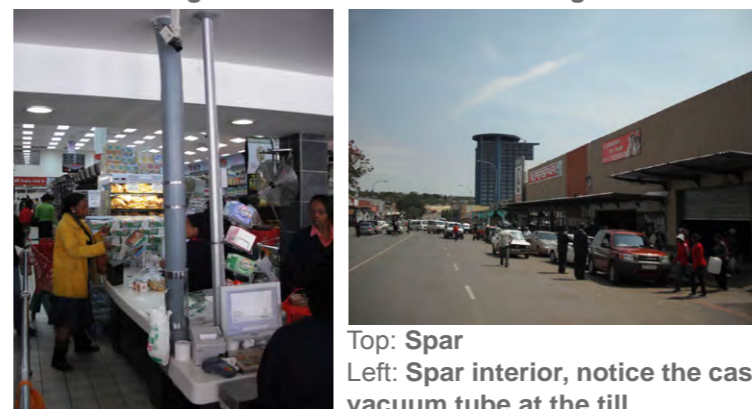
Location of Large Shopping Establishments in Relation to Public Transport Termini in Central Mthatha



Informal Market at Plaza Mall Plaza Mall Taxi Rank

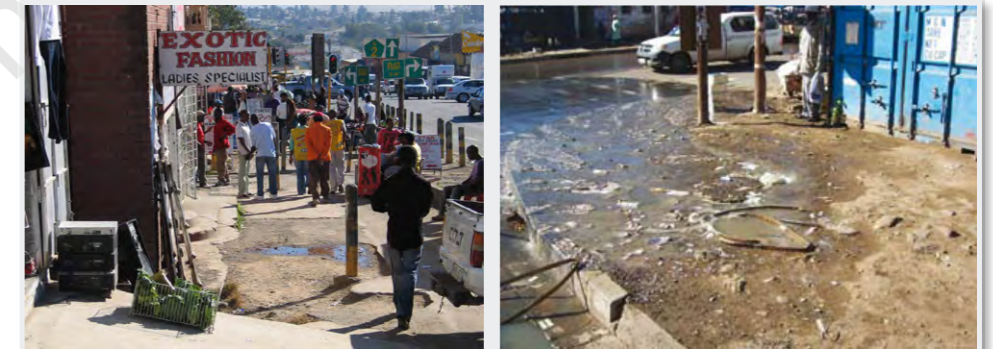


Circular Triangle Mall Interior Circular Triangle Taxi Rank



Top: Spar
Left: Spar interior, notice the cash vacuum tube at the till

easy task due to the Xhosa cultural practice of the eldest son inheriting the land and potentially leaving the younger siblings with no access to an economic resource who are then forced to seek their livelihoods in neighbouring towns (Dewar, 1994). This possibly accounts for over 50% of Mthatha's resident population who are younger than 19 years (Harrison, 2008).



Top: Poorly Maintained Sidewalk
Top Right: Burst Water Pipe
Right: Garbage Dumping

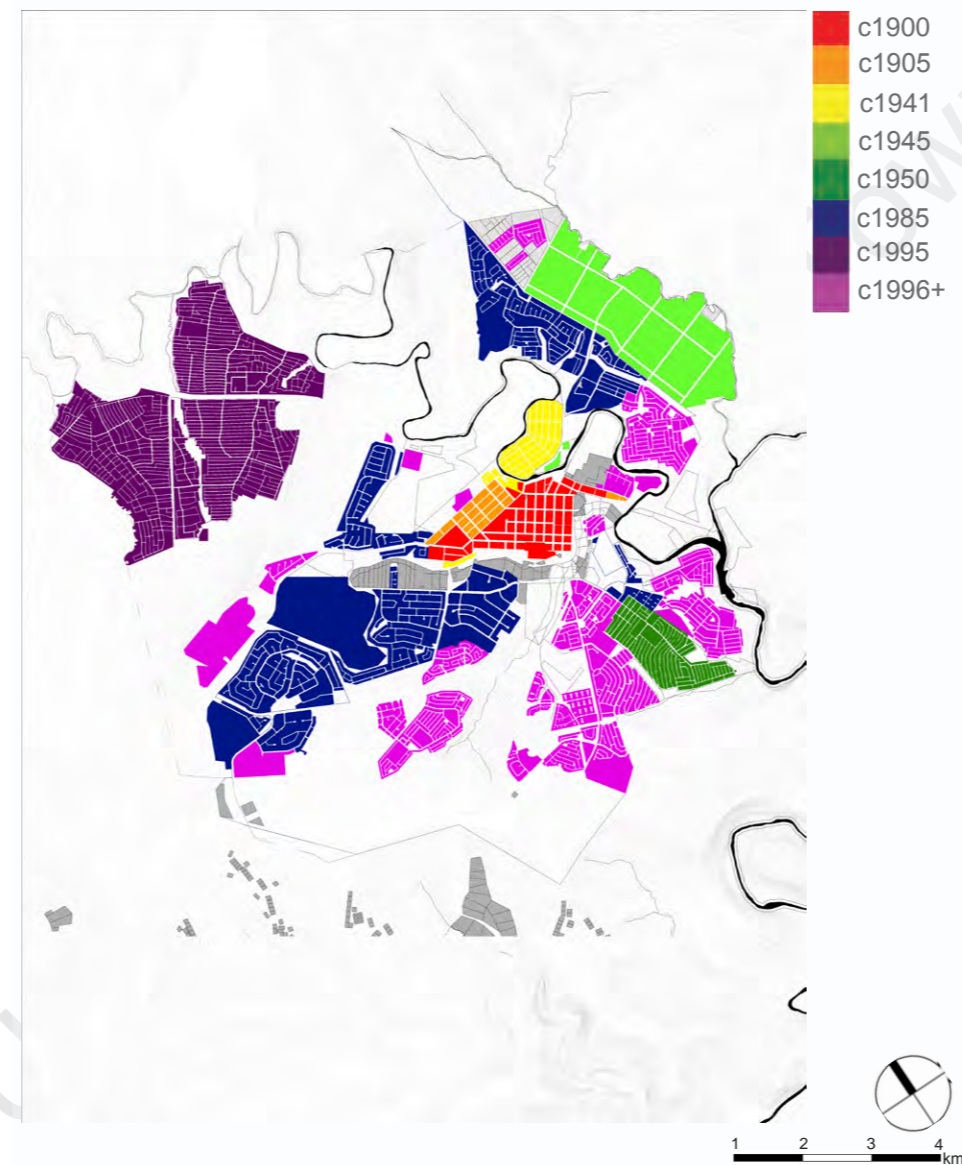


Concerning service delivery, Mthatha is plagued by institutional and management failure as illustrated by the inefficient water supply and constant electricity outages. The town's officials claim that this is due to the failure of its bulk network to cope under the burden of a rising population (Mary, 2008 p.c). Though this may be a contributing factor, the issue has been exacerbated by the absence of a satisfactory maintenance regime. At the end of 2008, 19 out of 20 pump stations were inoperable leading to unreliable water supplies and the inadequacy of the major sewage treatment plant resulted in raw effluent being discharged into the Mthatha River. The state of many of the public schools is also a cause for concern. Though many of these are fortunate to have robust buildings, some which have been made possible through corporate sponsorship, access to educational and recreational resources is still constrained. Many students fail to gain access to expensive laboratory equipment and chemicals necessary to adequately study science-based subjects such as physics, chemistry and computer science. Of those schools possessing such resources, they are poorly maintained. Within the town itself, almost all sidewalks are in a state of severe disrepair and there exists an obvious failure in handling solid waste management, evidenced through numerous piles of uncollected garbage throughout the town. This undermines the health and safety of its citizens and also compromises the spatial quality of the place. It is hard

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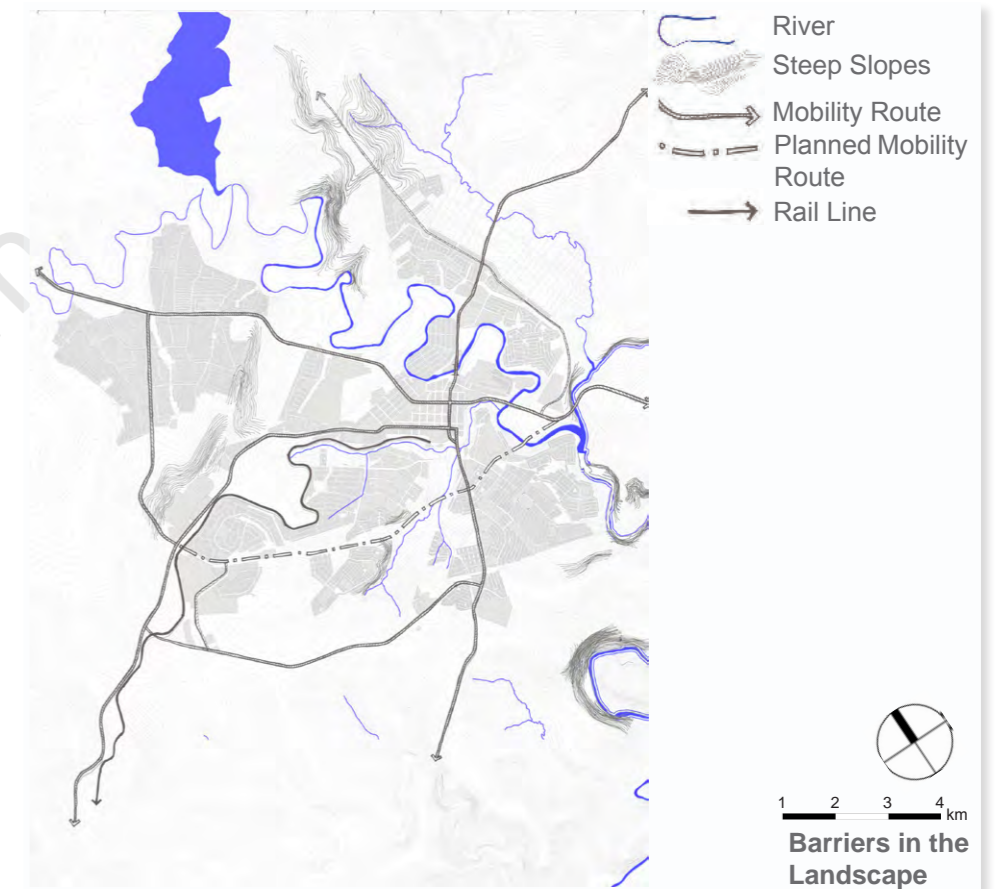
to understand how a town that is strongly associated with South Africa's liberators such as Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Oliver Tambo and King Sabata Dalinyebo, has fallen to such a state of disrepair. The town's disrepair has been linked to political parties' agendas. The African National Congress (ANC) governed Mthatha from 1994-1999 until they lost local government elections to the United Democratic Movement (UDM). This loss saw ANC officials come under direct pressure from former President Nelson Mandela who is believed to have been unhappy that his own party was unable to control what he considered to be his backyard. It is hence alleged that the ANC, in control of the national and provincial spheres of government, purposely delayed releasing funds for service delivery and the development of the town to frustrate and undermine the UDM. Their strategy worked since the ANC regained control of Mthatha in the 2004 elections. The town however, is five years behind in its developmental and maintenance program (Siyongwana, 2005).

Mthatha River. Soon after the establishment of Norwood, Ncabedlana was established further in the north as agricultural allotments. Subsequent growth of Mthatha, however, has produced an extremely fragmented and isolated urban form.

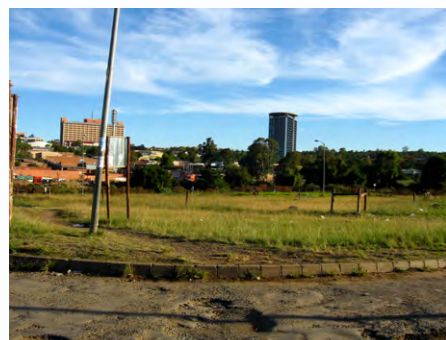


The Development of Mthatha's Urban Form
Based on Redding 1988; Siyongwana 1999; Siyongwana 1999 & Historical Aerial Photography

As designers of the built environment, we instinctively look at the barrier effect of movement infrastructure and landform features such as steep slopes and the river as producing this effect. However, deeper inspection reveals that political circumstances have actually played a more dominant role in this respect. In 1950, the South African apartheid government passed the Group Areas Act, that legislated the spatial segregation of



race groups. As a result, Ngangalizwe was established in the 1950s as a township for black people. With the introduction of the homeland system, Matanzima's Transkei government which was first constituted in 1963, instituted reforms early on that repealed much the Group Areas Act's clauses. This facilitated racial mixing and access to properties by black people in former white-only areas. To facilitate this access, the Transkei government offered compensation to whites who decided to leave the Transkei and housing subsidies were also made available for civil servants and parastatal employers. These measures were not instituted in the interest of the marginalized since Matanzima's government revealed their agenda to benefit the new black elite through slashing the prices of houses in former whites-only areas by as much as 50%. In contrast, housing for poorer people predominantly in the townships, only had their prices slashed by 10%, which still made them inaccessible to many. Non-Transkeians were also banned from purchasing property in the town to minimize competition in the purchasing of artificially reduced property values. In the 1970s, a minimum erf size of 300m² was declared for all new developments. In the following decade, the Transkei government facilitated the birth of the new residential areas Fort Gale, Southernwood and Southernridge which attracted large amounts of rental housing stock aimed at white industrialists and private sector workers living in Mthatha and maintaining their South African citizenship. The effect of the new erf size legislation that embraced typical American suburban style planning is



Mthatha 2009

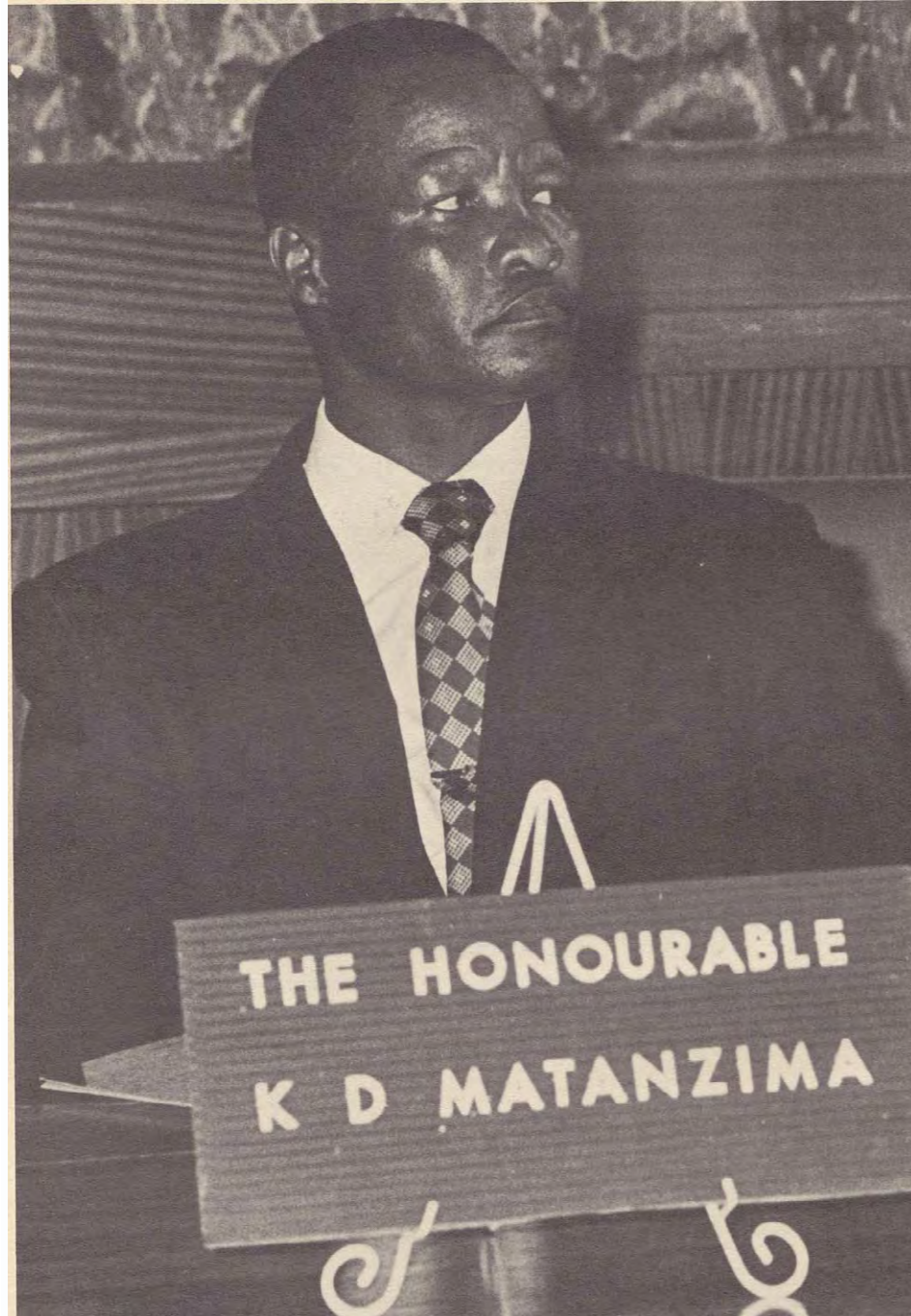


Mthatha 1972 down York St
www.flickr.com

2.3 The Development of Mthatha's Urban Form

Mthatha's original settlement which today serves as its town centre, was established on a colonial grid made up of three different block types and was sited on a gentle slope towards the river affording views to the surrounding hinterland. For its first 80 years, the settlement was characterised by a predominance of low-rise, single story buildings punctuated by the dome of the Bunga building, Town Hall and Anglican Cathedral. The colonial grid structure still persists within the central district today although its skyline is now more aggressively punctuated by 3 government buildings, two of which are about 7 stories high and a more recently constructed building that towers over the town at 19 stories high and houses the South African Revenue Authority. Other prominent buildings in terms of height include a hotel and mixed use building located towards the edge of the city which are 6 and 7 stories high respectively. Mthatha's growth after its initial establishment occurred in a fairly continuous northerly focused urban form, with Norwood linked by a bridge along York St going over the

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K.D Matanzima, First Prime Minister of the Transkei
Source: Prinsloo 1976

visible in the extremely long and impermeable block patterns within these areas resulting in the production of terrible pedestrian environments.

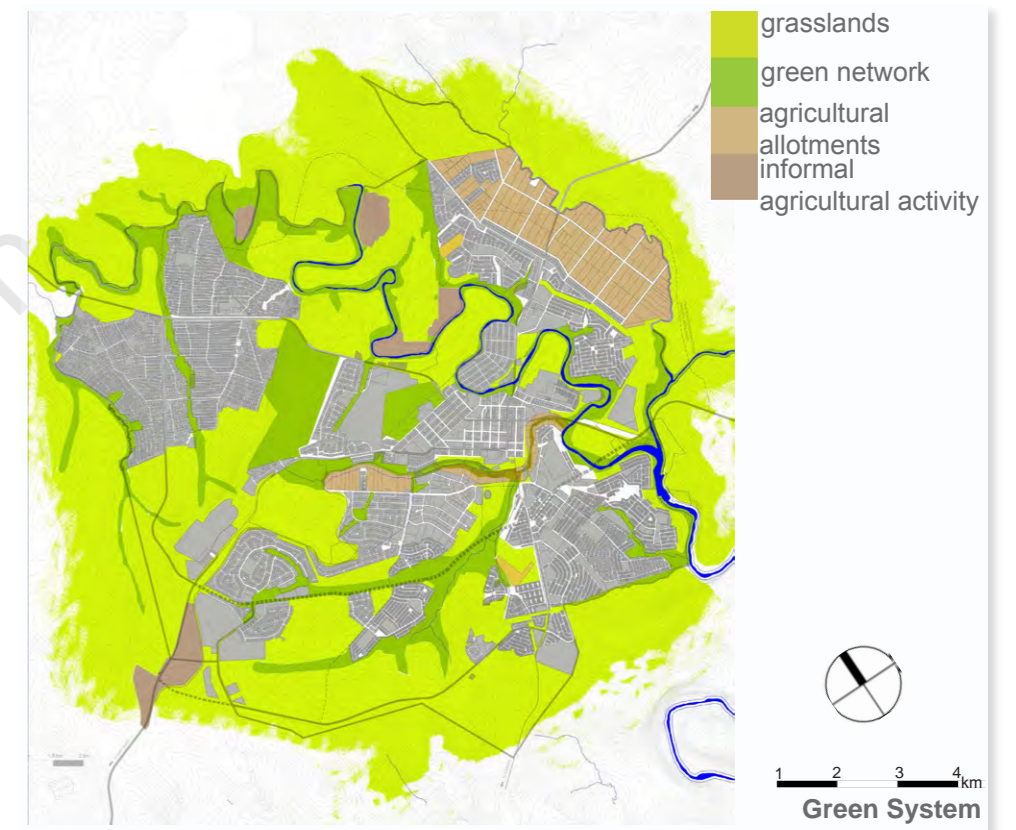
The elitist agenda is again revealed through the Matanzima government instituting the Illegal Squatter Act which outlawed the establishment of informal settlements in the town in trying to maintain a 'positive' image of the town. The vigorous policing of this Act saw the establishment of dense

informal settlements in Mthatha's peri-urban areas where the problem of limited housing for poor was deflected while also kicking off the sprawl time bomb that the town currently faces. With the end of apartheid in 1994, the fuming discontent among the marginalized and the ANC's relaxation of the Illegal Squatter Act saw land invasions occurring within Mthatha's boundaries, most conspicuously along the R61. This led to the establishment of the informal settlements of Chris Hani Park, Joe Slovo Park and Zamukulungisa. It may be surprising that the cadastral maps of these areas show a 'planned' settlement form as opposed to the usual seemingly haphazard layout typical of most informal settlements. This is due to the fact that before 1994, these areas had been serviced and earmarked for the development of income housing, which made them attractive candidates for post 1994 land invasions. In attempting to satisfy the obvious need for housing within the town, new RDP settlements of Zimbane; Waterfall Park; Ilita; Maydene Farm; New Brighton and Kuyasa have also been established in the post-apartheid era (Siyongwena, 1999; Siyongwena, 2005).

During the UDM's governance of the city (1999-2004), little expansion development of the urban form occurred until the ANC regained power in 2004. Since then, the RDP settlements mentioned earlier have seen further expansion. Sadly, this has all occurred in the same fragmented and isolated language. It is confusing why the vast amounts of municipal land were not released in a more coherent fashion. An opportunity presently exists to investigate such options by releasing municipal land for housing to be developed by the private sector as a part of a strategy towards addressing the enormous need for housing that still exists in this town. This need is apparent in all income groups and in both ownership and rental categories. For example, Fezile Bebelele (2008 p.c), an engineer from Port Elizabeth moved to Mthatha in mid-2008 and spent 5 months living in a bed and breakfast due to his inability to find suitable accommodation. He finally managed to move into a standard 2-bedroomed apartment which costs him R5500/month; rent that is comparable, if not more excessive than those in Cape Town. There is also anecdotal evidence of people paying R1000 per month to rent a garage to live in (Southworth 2008 p.c). The strategy suggested towards remedying this situation, however, is likely to be severely constrained by the long drawn out land restitution case between the King Sabata Dalinyebo Municipality (henceforth referred to as KSD Municipality) within whose jurisdiction Mthatha lies and King Zwelibanzi Buyelekaya Dalinyebo⁴, the traditional custodian of the land. Until the conclusion of this case, no municipal land can be legally released for development by private enterprise.

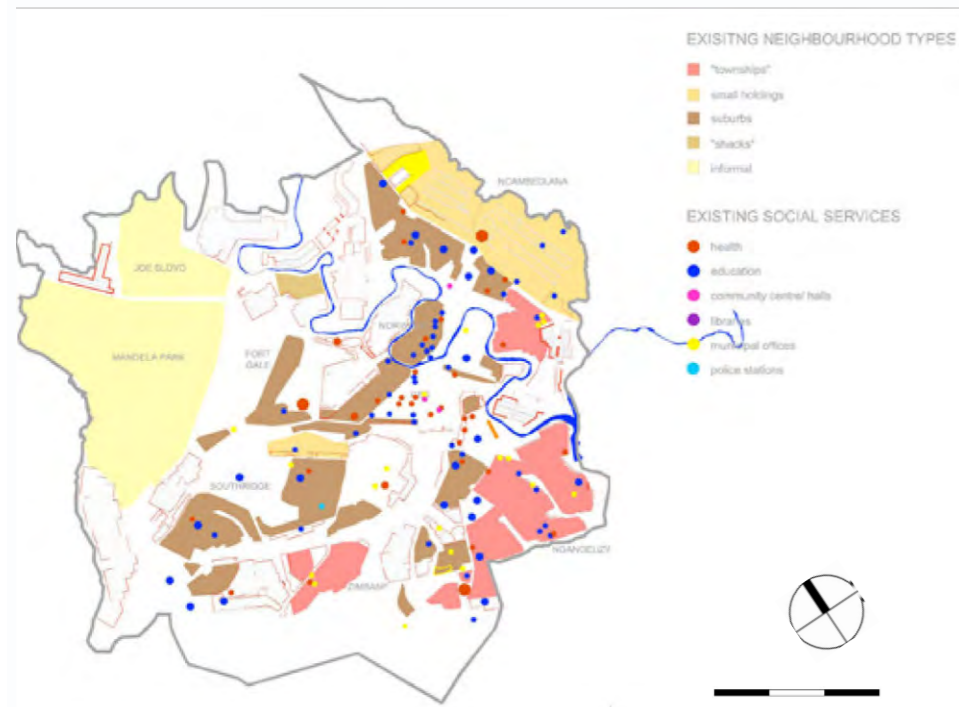
Although the fractured nature of Mthatha's urban form is undesirable, it has ensured the existence of a continuous green open space network that predominantly coincides with existing rivers and streams and areas

⁴ King Zwelibanzi Buyelekaya Dalinyebo took over as King of the Aba Thembu in 1986 after the death of his father, King Sabata Dalinyebo after whom the Municipality is named.



Images showing the sorry state of recreational spaces in Mthatha
Source: Sustainable Mthatha Consortium 2008

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Existing Neighbourhood types and Social Facility Distribution

Source: Sustainable Mthatha Consortium 2008

currently being utilised for agricultural purposes. The remaining open space in-between the isolated settlements is largely dominated by grasslands that invade the town from its rural hinterland. Some parts of the green open space network, are presently experiencing the threat of encroachment from the growth of informal settlements and development. In addition, the network contains an obvious lack of suitable recreational facilities, with the town having only one communal major sporting facility located near Ngangalizwe. Although Mthatha is relatively well served in terms of neighbourhood play parks, most of these have been conceptualised as isolated elements thrown randomly into each neighbourhood's form. Others are quite clearly "left-over" spaces that have been designated as play parks. Many of these are ill-maintained, often behind a blank wall thereby failing to contribute towards the quality of public realm. Hence, there is an urgent need for well maintained recreational facilities particularly since many of Mthatha's schools are experiencing a severe strain in maintaining their own sports fields and other recreational facilities, some which could be easily mistaken to be part of the town's system of grasslands.

The logic likely to have been used in the provision of play parks in Mthatha is also apparent in the manner in which other public and social facilities have been provided. Although Mthatha is relatively well served in terms of the number of schools, police stations and medical facilities, these also seem to have been thrown randomly into each suburb. There is no indication that these have determined the structure of the most of

the settlements and the newer areas lying in the western and southern parts of the town are not adequately served. Overall, clinics, libraries and community centres are severely lacking in the town. For example, only one small reference library exists in the city centre for a population Mthatha population of about 180 000 residents when in fact, the town should have about five of such facilities.⁵

2.4 Current Policy Context

At the beginning of 2008, the KSD Municipality commissioned a team of eight planning, development and design consultants jointly calling themselves the Sustainable Mthatha Consortium, to prepare a long term vision document to guide the future development of Mthatha and Mqanduli. These are the two urban areas under the KSD Municipality's jurisdiction. The consultants completed their task in December 2008, producing the *King Sabata Dalinyebo Sustainable Development Plan* (henceforth referred to as the KSD Sustainable Development Plan) and I was fortunate to have been given the opportunity to take part in compiling the final document. This has recently been adopted and will now form the basis of the town's Integrated Development Plans which will prioritise projects from the plan to be implemented in cycles of five years. An understanding of this plan's contents is therefore crucial to ensuring that the interventions I propose for Central Mthatha are carried out in a manner that reinforces the plan's broader intentions.

Many of the issues alluded as requiring the attention of the town's officials have been highlighted within this plan, alongside measures that are suggested to address these issues. Regarding the provision of public facilities, the plan proposes a logic for these to be delivered as clusters located at points along the town's existing and proposed major access routes. The opportunities that these offer for the local economy as a result of the large numbers of people that are likely to be attracted to them, has also been acknowledged by the plan's designation of these points as 'market nodes' in addition to their role as public facility clusters. However, guidelines to give an idea of the potential spatial quality of these nodes as well as policy statements that discourage large, inward oriented shopping malls from locating in close proximity to them usurping their benefit to small business, are missing from the document. In addition, substantial nodes have been proposed along the N2, the R61 and Tutor Ndamase Avenue, routes that the transport engineer on the Sustainable Mthatha Consortium team has noted as being the subject of substantial congestion. The plan implies that the proposed N2 bypass will reduce this pressure however it does not grapple with the real prospect that the scheduling of KSD Municipality's implementation program for the establishment of these nodes is unlikely to align with

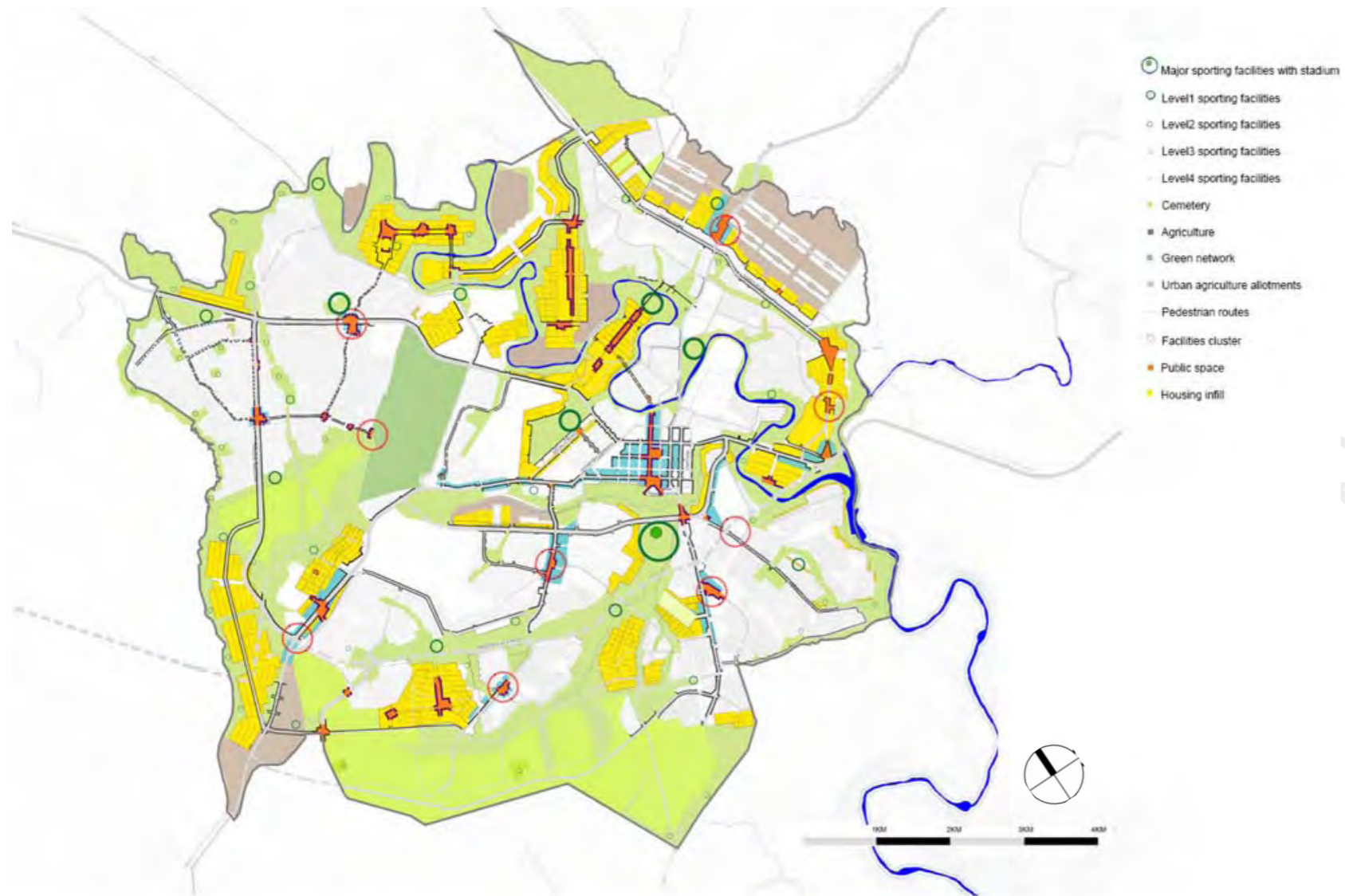
⁵This number is based on the CSIR schedule of Standards and Guidelines for the Spatial Provision and Development of Social Facilities, Public Institutions and Public Open Spaces (Sept 2007) which suggests the provision of one library for every 35 000 people.

national government's program for the construction of the N2 Bypass. With this scenario, the KSD Municipality will be left with only two options – to either delay the establishment of these nodes until the N2 bypass has been constructed, or to go ahead with their establishment regardless and subject Mthatha's residents to more congestion along these routes. To make the task easier for the town's officials, the plan could have also advised possible alternative locations for these nodes where they will still be able to respond to the town's major access routes when the N2 bypass is constructed. Another major shortcoming in this area is the plan's failure to accord a hierarchical system to the logic for the delivery of these nodes. This would have accorded an understanding of the role each node is to play in the context of the whole town.

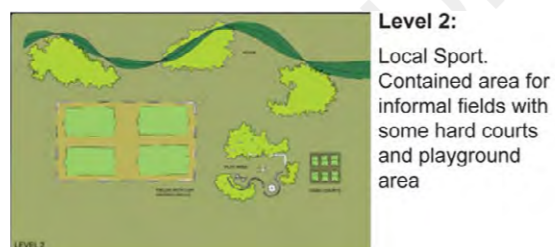
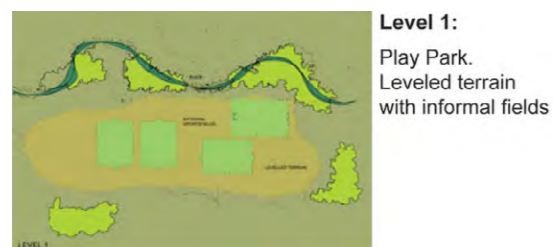
A cue for this hierarchical system could have been taken from the landscape architects in the consortium who devised a hierarchical system for the provision of new recreational facilities that the town desperately requires. The system is made up of four 'levels' of these facilities, all located within an enlarged continuous green open space network. Most of the recreational facilities are proposed to be located in close proximity to either existing or proposed residential areas. More effort however, could have been put into using these buildings to properly define the recreational spaces making them intricately integrated into the urban texture that will arise from the plan's suggested initiatives. Nonetheless, the housing initiatives that the plan suggests for Mthatha, which include the densification of existing settlements in addition to the construction of new high density housing, will see the town's average gross density rising from about 11 du/ha to over 25 du/ha. They will also bring about well defined streetscapes and new public spaces in addition to reclaiming the Mthatha River by ensuring that all new development along its banks faces onto it as opposed to the current scenario where the town effectively turns its back onto the river. More importantly for this dissertation, the plan also argues for the introduction of housing possibilities within Mthatha's centre by encouraging shop owners to provide residential accommodation above their properties. At present, virtually no living possibilities exist within Central Mthatha which sees it becoming a dangerous and 'dead' place after hours when all the workers, traders and students who inhabit the area during the day retreat to their homes at night.

In addition to the recommendation of introducing urban living spaces within Central Mthatha, the plan also proposes the pedestrianisation of Owen Street. This would create a pedestrian oriented civic spine that links the proposed soccer stadium that is currently under construction in the southern part of the town, the railway station, Plaza Mall, the Nelson Mandela Museum and the town's civic core with the Mthatha River as part of a strategy towards reclaiming Central Mthatha's genius loci. Although the intentions are indeed novel, the question of whether the interventions suggested here will suffice to achieve these intentions will form the basis of proposals that I will suggest for making place in this part of Mthatha.

UNDERSTANDING MTHATHA



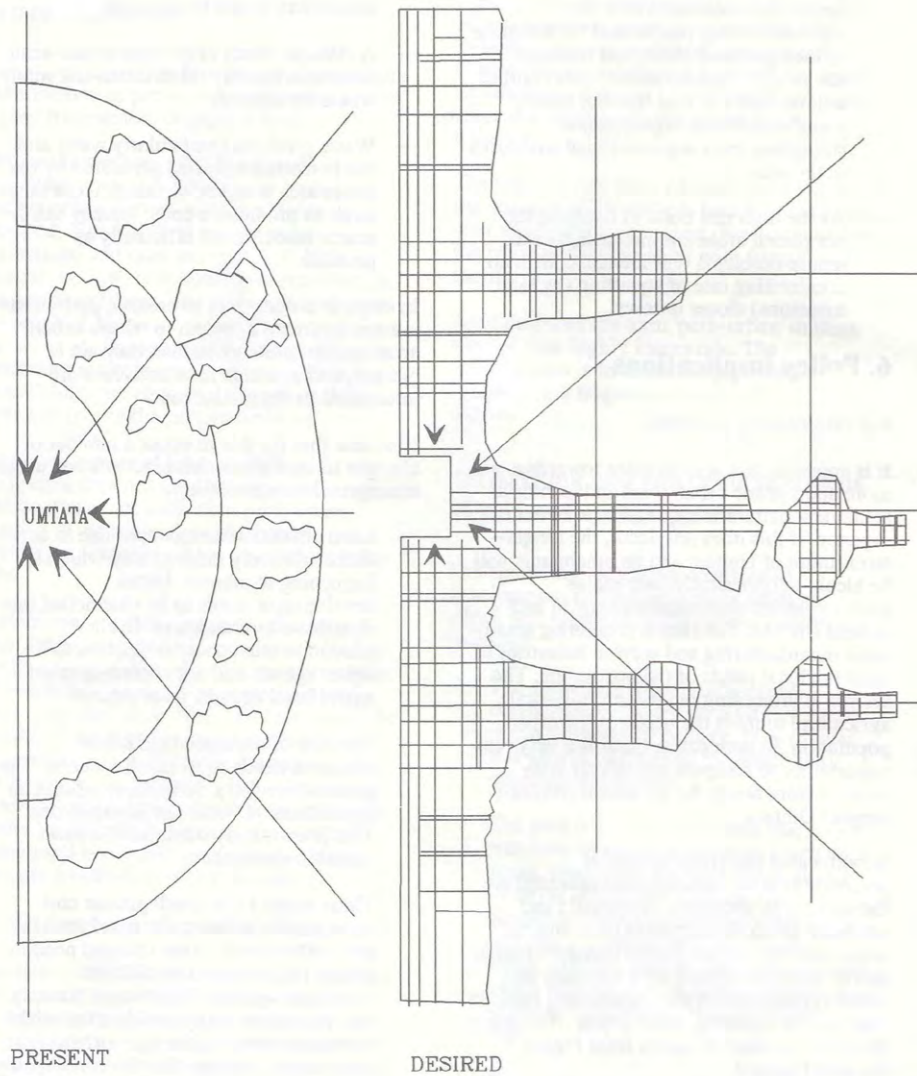
- Description of elements of the plan
- A. High density zone on Nelson Mandela Drive
 - B. Densification in Central
 - C. Owen Street spine, one carriageway pedestrianised & transformed into new produce & craft market
 - D. Public space and transport interchange
 - E. New stadium sports precinct
 - F. Link Owen Street spine to station and stadium on to the southern residential areas
 - G. Link through Norwood to northern and western areas
 - H. Link through Central to new development in golf course
 - I. Nelson Mandela museum
 - J. Civic core
 - K. Pedestrian bridges
 - L. Links through Norwood to the north and west areas, and in the south past the stadium to the south and east areas, tie the whole city into one.



Proposed Hierarchies of Recreational Facilities
Source: Sustainable Mthatha Consortium 2008

Central City Proposal
Source: Sustainable Mthatha Consortium 2008

UNDERSTANDING MTHATHA



Managed Growth Over Time

Source: Dewar 1994

The KSD Sustainable Development Plan implies an acceptance of the present model

Possibly the most serious indictment on the Mthatha Sustainable Development Plan, is in its almost exclusive focus within the boundaries of the KSD Municipal boundary. As a result, the plan fails to offer a strong argument on how Mthatha should relate to its broader region in future.⁶ What is implied from this omission is that the plan supports the current regional status-quo, where Mthatha is the centripetal focus of the rural and smaller urban settlements within its hinterland. The existing situation where some people are forced to travel up to 50km to access basic public services and livelihood opportunities is both unsustainable and unacceptable even though the retail sector is benefiting greatly from this scenario. When HIV/AIDS awareness programs and the increased roll-out of mechanisms to increase access to anti-retroviral treatment to HIV/AIDS patients within the Eastern Cape begin to take effect, it is



Proposed N2 Toll Road

Source: Schreve 2008

conceivable that the 1993 population growth rates of 10% in Mthatha will be reached once again. One can only imagine the increased strain that the already stretched town will experience from an increased rate of rural-urban drift. Therefore in moving forward, what is required is a net outflow of people to other regional settlements by maximizing the absorptive capacity of these places by imbuing them with greater comparative advantages within the broader space economy and encouraging migration to these (Dewar, 1994) areas. In this respect, one would have expected for the KSD Sustainable Development Plan to include a study of which settlements along the Kei River Corridor, and specifically those between Mthatha and Dutywa, have the potential to play a role in this process. Such a study should have also included recommendations on the measures that the state needs to undertake to catalyse the attractiveness of these settlements.

A similar study should have also been undertaken in relation to the proposed construction of the N2 Toll Road between the Gonubie Interchange near East London and the Ispingo Interchange south of Durban. This project, which has recently been approved by the State, will open up the Pondoland to take advantage of the tourism opportunities that this unique biodiversity region offers. Admittedly, in order to preserve the unique biodiversity of this region, encouraging massive migration to the settlements along the proposed route's trajectory within the Pondoland may be undesirable. The fact is, however, that increased tourist movement within this region will undoubtedly attract migration to these settlements.

⁶ The leader of the Sustainable Mthatha Consortium, Barbara Southworth, acknowledged this omission at a public engagement meeting in Mthatha in November 2008, arguing that this was due to the terms of reference in their commission which didn't include a requirement to study and pass recommendations in relation to Mthatha's broader hinterland. With this in mind, it would have been more beneficial for the consortium to have sought a revision of these terms before accepting the commission.

Therefore the plan should have included recommendations on how to ensure that this migration does not reach unsustainable proportions. For example, an argument could have been made for massive investment to be concentrated further inland away from the coastline.

Part of these recommendations could have included recommendations to the State on how best to take advantage, in a regional spatial sense, of the proposed extension of the rail line from Mthatha to Langeni which will facilitate the export of timber from this region. Already, a siding facility for wood processing is under construction in Zimbane which is located within Mthatha. This will undoubtedly create an impetus for the sprouting of secondary and tertiary activities in its vicinity which will begin the process of turning around Mthatha from a town of consumers to a town of producers. However, it remains unclear whether efforts will be undertaken to ensure that the investment in the line's extension will benefit some of the other settlements along its trajectory, increasing their comparative advantages.

Mthatha is undoubtedly imbued with potential comparative advantages in its beautiful surrounding landscape; direct access to a market of 1.5 million people, excellent soils and climate, and its linkages with regional centres and tourist attractions. The current structure of its local economy, however, constrains the upliftment of the majority of its people who have also been failed by poor public management that originated from political tensions which have plagued the town since the days of apartheid. As noted here, encouraging initiatives are underway within the town's regional sphere that could help turn it from a town of consumers to a town of producers. For this to be able to occur, these initiatives need to be executed in the context of a policy framework that is more cognisant of Mthatha's regional space, an issue that KSD Sustainable Development Plan fails to adequately address. This framework should not only propose mechanisms on how the town can best take advantage of the activities in the region, but also suggest actions that can be taken to establish a broader space economy and move away from the current unsustainable centripetal focus on Mthatha.

THEORETICAL CONCEPTS FOR CONCEIVING THE CITY

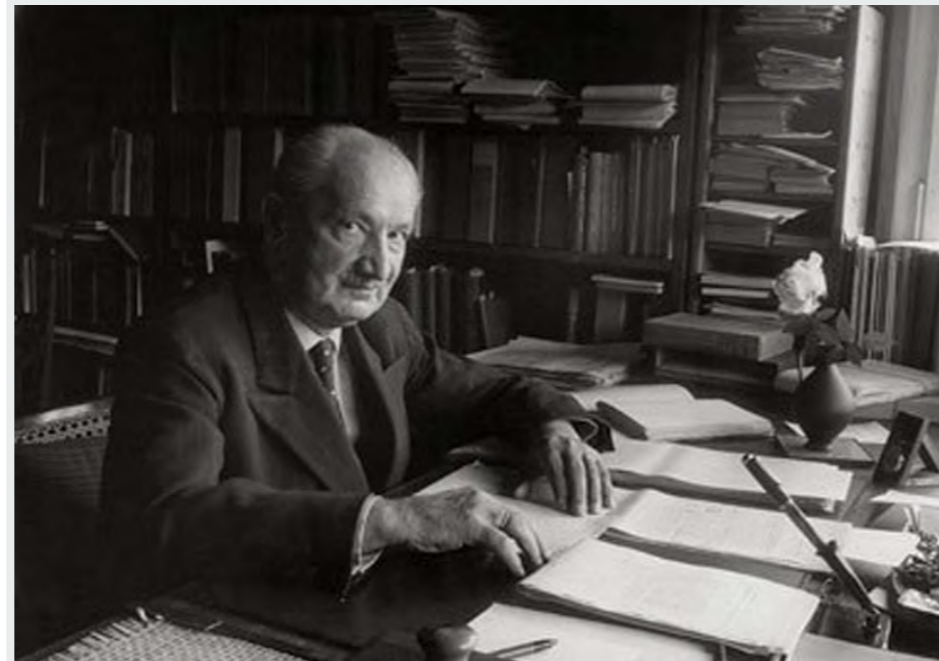
3. Theoretical Framework

Since this dissertation is concerned with eschewing an appropriate approach towards place making in Mthatha's central district, it is conceivable that an important component of this process lies in elucidating an understanding of the concept of "place" drawn from various bodies of theory. This is necessary to establish a number of core principles that will be valuable in guiding the design process in addition to determining its success. With this in mind, I will begin this chapter by looking at Heidegger's philosophy of "Being in the World", a philosophy underscoring that structure and meaning are inherently ingrained within the landscape. He further argues that the essence of place-making lies in discovering this structure and making it apparent. This structure, as Benton MacKaye has argued, is composed, in its broadest sense, of the domains of urban, rural and wilderness. Norberg-Schulz has expanded on this idea of structural domains by observing their archetypal characters. In addition, he alludes to the view also shared by MacKaye, that the key to successful place making lies in the sensitive articulation between these different character imbued domains in a manner that both respects and unleashes their essence. Again drawing from Heidegger, I will show that place theory is not only geared towards maintaining the 'character status quo'. It also argues that a successful place is one that is generative, alluding to the idea of place as facilitator in achieving **access** to livelihood opportunities. This **access**, I will argue, is best achieved through the articulation of urban structure in a manner that delivers the optimal densities of people necessary for the creation and sustenance of such opportunities.

Upon establishing **what** makes an authentic place, the next task lies in determining **how** these characteristics can be achieved in making place. As already established in the previous chapter, Modernism, whose ideas are apparent in Mthatha and continue to influence its unsustainable development trajectory, should be discarded forthwith. Instead, I will argue for lessons to be drawn from the Collage City school of thought which points towards a minimalist and acupuncture approach to resolving urban structure as being pivotal to creating place.⁷ I will also show this position was reached after having implicitly acknowledged, through their own attempts, that any 'tabula rasa' approach to addressing an urban design problem is still akin to following the dictates of Modernism. Collage City falls short in its ambiguity in relation to the exact nature of these acupuncture interventions it proposes and the methodology involved in achieving the city it envisions. This problem, I will show, is addressed by the Dynamic City theory which argues for such interventions to be made up of public

⁷ Between the mid 1960s and late 1970, experimental design projects undertaken by students in Collin Rowe's urban design studio at Cornell brought forth the ideas of 'Contextualism', 'Collision City' and 'Collage City'. The term 'Collage City' is used here encapsulating all three although the particular characteristics of each idea and how they evolved will be also be addressed here.

elements. These, the theory argues, should be provided in a manner that produces a robust and minimalist urban structure. Robustness refers to the conceptualisation of urban structure in a manner where its



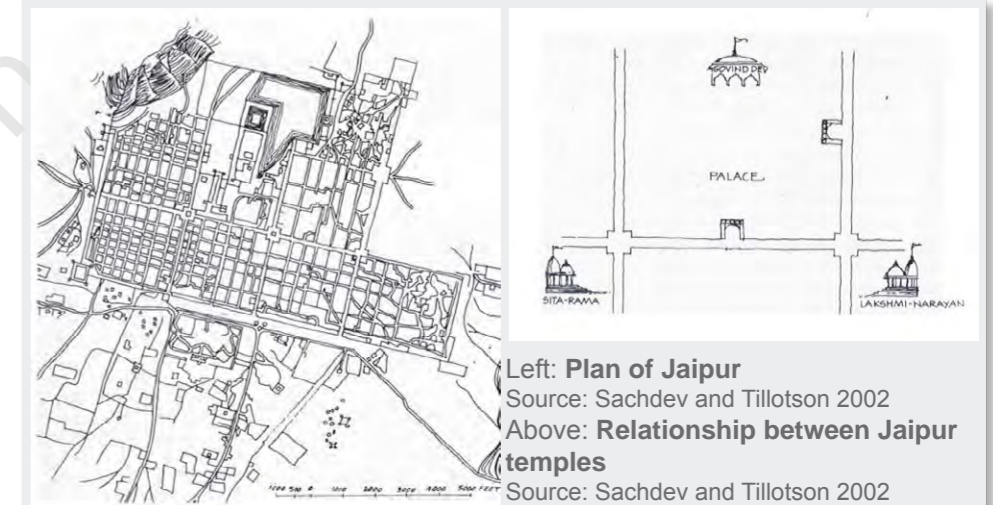
Martin Heidegger
Source: www.excerptmill.com

essence remains timeless and is continually reinforced by incremental growth carried out through the actions and reactions of many actors. Hence, Dynamic City introduces the idea of legible framework as being pivotal to the making place.

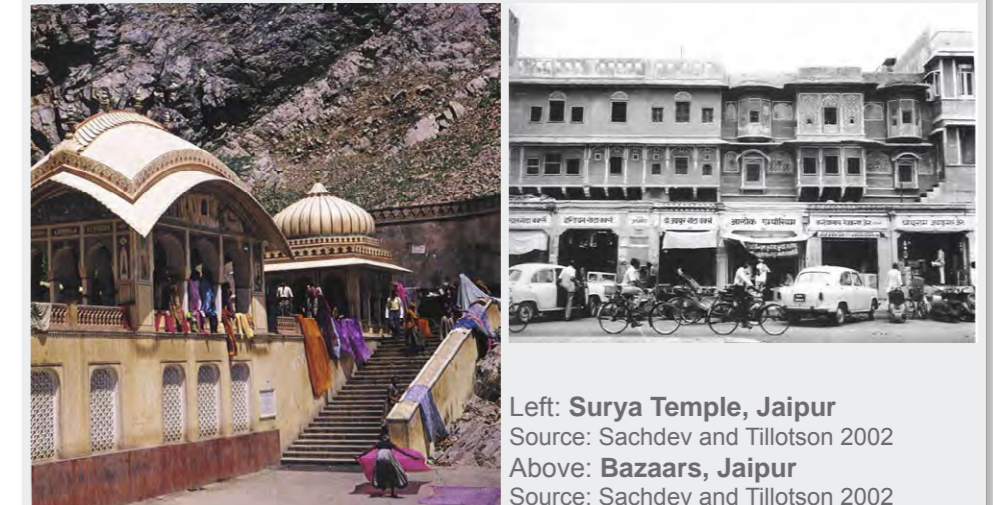
3.1 Place: Heidegger As The Point of Departure

As noted earlier, central to Heidegger's notion of place is that structure and meaning have been inherently ingrained in the landscape since time immemorial and that it is the role of art to unlock this structure and meaning into the world through a combination with landscape. Art, to Heidegger is not merely a representation but a 'thing' that brings **truth** into presence and this **truth** may be regarded as meaning or authenticity. To elucidate this concept, Heidegger (1971 cited in Norberg-Schulz 1983), in an essay entitled "The Origin of the Work of Art" describes a Greek temple as being in the middle of the rock-cleft valley. He emphasizes the temple's location in a prominent position within the landscape where it "makes all the things of earth visible: the rocks, the sea, the air, the plants, the animals and even the light of day and the darkness of night" (Norberg-Schulz 1983:63). His use of the temple in this example signifies Heidegger's attempt to restore architecture and urbanism back to the realm of art. We may however, accuse Heidegger of excessive hyperbole as "all the things of the earth" that he refers to were undoubtedly already in existence,

they didn't suddenly appear out of thin air when the temple was erected. His point in this hyperbole is that we stop and take notice of the things of the earth due to the presence of the temple in its position. The erection of a less significant building in place of the temple could have easily



Left: Plan of Jaipur
Source: Sachdev and Tillotson 2002
Above: Relationship between Jaipur temples
Source: Sachdev and Tillotson 2002



Left: Surya Temple, Jaipur
Source: Sachdev and Tillotson 2002
Above: Bazaars, Jaipur
Source: Sachdev and Tillotson 2002

seen the characteristics of the landscape go unnoticed. Hence, the gist of Heidegger's argument is that the landscape is already structured with particular positions to accept significant human interventions that unlock the meaning of the place. In Heidegger's example, it is the metamorphosis that occurs between the work of art and its location in the landscape that creates and sanctifies the place.

As alluded to, the temple acquires its meaning as a result of its location in the **world** which Heidegger (1971 cited in Norberg-Schulz 1983: 62) understands as being composed of the fourfold of "earth, sky, mortals and divinities". The temple relates to all of these: "the God, the human beings, the earth and implicitly, the sky" (Norberg-Schulz 1983: 63). This relationship implies that the work of art is a manifestation of the fourfold and thus it may be considered as something that "gathers" the world into

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a “simple onefold”. It is this idea of “gathering” that brings the place into presence. Heidegger defines locations in the landscape that are able to achieve this “simple onefold” as positions that both “admit the fourfold and install the fourfold” (cited in Norberg-Schulz 1983: 64). The city of Jaipur, for example, is a work of art in this sense as it relates earth and the sky by the Vishnu temple located at its centre and anchored by the two Vaishnavite temples at the southern corners of the central ward. The relationship with the divinities is further strengthened through the strong dialogue between the city and the Surya temple in the eastern hills of the city. The mortals are included in the bazaars that define the boundaries of the central ward making the streets people places (Sachdev and Tillotson 2002). In this way, a relationship with the fourfold is achieved and a meaningful place is revealed. A local example is that of Grahamstown where it is quite evident that it is in the manner in which the Cathedral of St Michael and St George is axially aligned with the town’s main street is what makes Grahamstown most memorable. Although evidently not currently amplified to the same degree, in Mthatha, the Bunga building,



View of the Cathedral of St Michael and St George, Grahamstown
Source: GoogleEarth

Town Hall and Anglican Cathedral have a similar effect for the town. If Mthatha loses these, then she has also loses what defines her. Therefore, these aspects can begin to help us establish protocols for making place in Central Mthatha by highlighting those elements, defining them as ‘hard’ buildings in a field of ‘soft’ buildings. ‘Hard’ here denotes those buildings that must be retained as they form an integral part an authentic and meaningful place making agenda here.

Heidegger also grapples with what exactly this whole idea of authenticity or meaning is by turning to the origins of art, which he argues to lie in language, the essence of which is in poetry. To Heidegger, people **dwell**



Above: Bunga Building, Mthatha
Middle: Anglican Cathedral, Mthatha
Right: Town Hall, Mthatha



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in language when they listen and respond. The world of which they are a part of is opened up and an authentic existence or 'poetic dwelling' becomes possible. This assertion is made apparent when he asks: "But where do we humans get our information about the nature of dwelling and poetry? [We receive] it from the telling of language. Of course, only when and only as long as [we respect] language's own nature (Heidegger 1971 cited in Norberg-Schulz 1983: 64). His emphasis on the need to respect language's own nature" alludes to the notion of 'genius loci' or 'spirit of place'. This term is derived from the Roman tradition and refers to the guardian spirit or essence of a thing. Language's own genius loci lies in poetry and thus only when we use language authentically, that is poetically, is truth revealed. The origin of poetry, Heidegger argues and as I have implied earlier, lies in memory, a fact that was well understood by the Greeks. To them, the goddess Mnemosyne, memory, was the mother of Muses while Zeus was her father. To bring forth Muses, Zeus needed memory: Mnemosyne who herself had been conceived of by earth and sky. Being a goddess, Mnemosyne is also simultaneously human and divine and thus her daughters are understood as the children of the complete world: earth, sky, mortals and divinities (Heidegger *ibid*, cited in Norberg-Schulz 1983: 65). The fact that Heidegger conceives of memory as being both divine and mortal, alludes to the notion of memory being ingrained within a belief system. It is therefore no surprise that Lukermann (cited in Norberg-Schulz 1980: 8) attributes places of meaning as being those that are "characterised by the beliefs" of a people. Hence, an authentic place can only be one that facilitates the playing out the beliefs of society within space.

These beliefs need not be religious as may be inferred from the emphasis earlier, on the Greek Temple, Jaipur, Cathedral of St Michael and St George in Grahamstown and the Anglican Cathedral in Mthatha. In the making of older historic settlements such as Jaipur for instance, which invariably accommodated a monotheistic society with virtually all its citizens identifying with a particular belief, it logically occurred that the symbols of that particular religious institution defined the place. However, in this day and age, where cities are now essentially containers for a plural society, the use of a particular religious institution such as the Catholic Cathedral, the Sunni Muslim Mosque or the Buddhist Temple as the primary 'placemaker' is likely to lead to a feeling of alienation among those who do not identify with that particular group. Hence, in the making of the contemporary city, emphasis needs to be placed on installing a sense of sacredness on those institutions that are universally accepted as important, those that 'characterise the beliefs' of all people. Some that immediately come to mind are the institutions of health, of education and one that is particularly important in the developing world is the market which, in many cases, gives the only access to livelihood opportunities for those who are less fortunate. In Mthatha for example, we have

⁸In Medellin, each 'Library Park' is composed of a green space supporting both active and passive recreation in addition to an urban public space defined by a major public library.



Left: Biblioteca de Leon de Grieff, Medellin

Source: www.archdaily.com

Middle: Public Square in front of Biblioteca EPM, Medellin

Source: www.archdaily.com

Above: Biblioteca San Javier, Medellin

Source: www.archdaily.com

already noted how the informal economy, even in its current straggled state, offers the only means of survival for many. In the Columbian city of Medellin, particular emphasis has been placed, in the last 10 years, on exalting the institution of education. This city's former mayor, Sergio Fajardo, implemented a program where 5 iconic 'Library Parks' were built in specific locations of the city, most of which were in its poorest areas.⁸No stones were left unturned to ensure that these were designed and built in such a manner as to attain iconic significance. Today, they define Medellin and their sites are engrained within the psyche of Medellin's residents as sacred nodes enabling orientation within an emerging knowledge charged landscape (Fujado 2009).

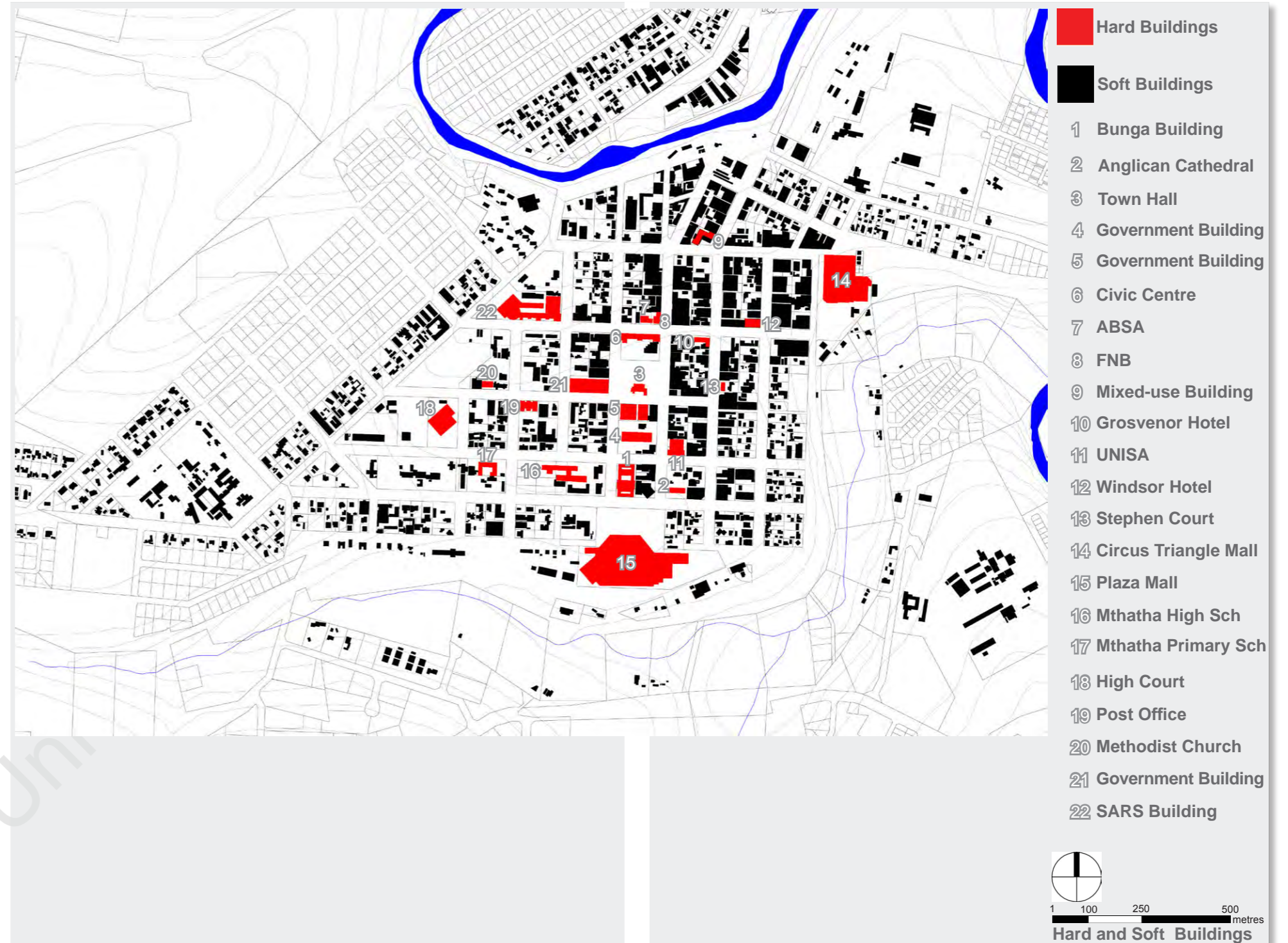
This idea of meaningful places as nodes within the landscape ties the concept directly back to the idea of spatial structure, the basics of which Lynch has defined as being 'node', 'path' and 'domains' (Lynch 1960:4). As already mentioned, the domains of urban, rural and wilderness make up the structure at its broadest scale. As early as 1928 when he wrote his seminal work entitled *The New Exploration: A Philosophy of Regional Planning*, MacKaye expressed grave concern regarding the future of the wilderness domain. He had already noted the threat to its existence that it faced due to humanity's unsustainable exploitation of it in establishing what he referred to as "the habitats of fundamental human relations" – the urban and rural domains. MacKaye found it ironic that humanity was ready to initiate the rapid disappearance of the wilderness, ignoramus of the fact that as this occurred, our need for such environments also

increased in parallel. He pin-pointed that with such a scenario, the problem becomes one of establishing and then controlling an equilibrium between the urban, rural and wilderness domains. It was MacKaye who also first argued that before establishing the urban system, we must first consider the needs of the wilderness, based on the needs of its population – the beasts, birds, insects and plant life – protecting them against ruthless invasion. For example, it is now widely recognized that an uninterrupted wilderness landscape, in other words one that maintains a form of continuity, is crucial for the propinquity of a vast variety of vegetation and fauna. MacKaye had already recognized this and it is within this context that he called for natural barriers such as mountains, lakes, rivers and streams to be maintained as shafts of wilderness interrupting urban space (Newell 1983). For the recreation potential of this domain to be appreciated, he also suggested the development of specific nodes for concentrated human activity along these shafts as well as along the wilderness edges, serving as integrators between the urban, wilderness and rural domain. These ideas are clearly visible in the enlarged proposed green system that is proposed in the Mthatha's Sustainable Development Plan whose team of consultants, among others, included qualified environmental scientists who scientifically established the quantity of the green system necessary to support the town's eco-service needs. Where this plan has a major shortcoming, as already mentioned, is in failing to suggest a regional green system. MacKaye argued that the nature of such a system should be devoted to vast tracts of unexplored or partially explored wilderness areas of unmodified vegetation and fauna accommodating regional transport

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infrastructure (Eco et al 1940).

These domains, as Norberg-Schulz has pointed out, are also imbued with a particular character that ought to be recognised and respected in making place. In relation to landscapes, he suggests the existence of three character archetypes: the romantic, cosmic and the classical. Mthatha, with its vast hills and changeable weather which gives rise to dramatic changes in appearance can be classified as bearing a classical landscape. Cosmic landscapes are dominated by the sky and the ordered movement of the sun. They are also characterised by a constancy of climate and appearance. Classical landscapes are made up of a composition of “intelligible elements, all dimensions are human and constitute a total harmonious equilibrium. They may also be characterised as being made up of an order of distinct, individual places. In relation to the urban domain, Norberg-Schulz also points to the existence of three character archetypes bearing similar names to the landscape archetypes. Romantic ‘architecture’ is characterised by dynamic as seemingly organic qualities. It is ‘topological’ rather than ‘geometrical’ and its urban configurations are free and indeterminate thereby setting up complex relationships between its elements. The medieval city typifies this archetype. Classical architecture is distinguished by its image ability and articulate order “formed through a conscious composition and individual element”, giving a combination of order and freedom (Norberg-Schulz 1980: 23 -77). Cosmic architecture is distinguished by a ‘uniformity and absolute order’ within an integrated system. It is strictly geometrical and is usually concretized as a regular grid. Essentially, it is an inversion which we often refer to as labyrinth space and Islamic architecture is typical of this archetype. Mthatha’s historic centre tends towards this archetype. However, the political forces that influenced the emergence of the town’s isolated and fragmented urban form, were also obsessed with using a modernist language to replace historic forms of the city with new images of ‘progress’. As a result, the historical centre has suffered a substantial blurring of its character towards a universal ‘non-placism’. This state of mind is yet to disappear as evidenced by the recently built office tower housing the South African Revenue Authority and the town’s shopping malls and major supermarket. Though these symbols lack any real depth, there is no denying that they represent particular phases of Mthatha’s existence and are still nodes of energy within the town’s spatial structure capturing the imagination of its society. For example, some of Mthatha’s ‘Coca-Colarised’ youth can be found on the social networking site, Facebook (2009), raving about how Mthatha’s progress is evidenced in its new shopping malls. For this reason, these symbols need to also be embraced as ‘hard’ buildings in the town’s place making agenda, as part of a new spatial structure that does not rely on aesthetics for its robustness. In this same vein that we must also accord ‘hard’ building status to those historic buildings in Central Mthatha, many of which are more humble than the ‘images of progress’, such as the Standard Bank building, that have been engrained over time in the minds of Mthatha’s people as nodes of orientation within their urban landscape.



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Spatial Structure in Making Place thn Achieveing Place

3.2 Spatial Structure in Making Place

In a tone reminiscent of Heidegger, Norberg-Schulz also deciphers a deeper understanding of the idea of spatial structure by reinforcing that life does not just take place horizontally but that it also occurs vertically. People are more than things among things, we are also in the world as 'mood' which applies identification with a given environmental character; as 'understanding' which implies our orientation in space; as discourse which implies that we express the spatiality of a given situation and as with 'being-with' others, which implies that we share the world with others. In our context, the notion of 'discourse' is especially significant. Places are part of different life situations and the fact that they 'gather' concrete things within a boundary also makes them 'forms of togetherness' such as the 'home', 'school', 'shop', 'church square' or 'street'. The place becomes the 'house of an institution' (Norberg-Schulz 1988: 194). These are composed of an element of spatial structure called **type**. The notion of **type** is concerned with the abstract spatiality of a basic situation and thus describes the ordering of structures of 'being with' as comprehensive totalities. In a single work, it is characterised as a single room or building. Further understanding of the structure of place can only be achieved by grasping the notions of **topology** and **morphology**. **Topology** is concerned with the spatial order for the provision of space in a single work through the ordering of the basic structural elements of nodes, paths and domains. The character of the built form is not considered in this process though distinction between 'inside' and 'outside' is of particular importance here. **Morphology** is concerned with the 'how' of the ordering and is concretized as sculptural articulation. It is therefore concerned with boundary. Hence, sculptural articulation, which occurs at the levels of the landscape; city; building and thing, is arrived at through the process of typology, topology and morphology which make up the language of architecture (Norberg-Schulz 1988).

The aim of sculptural articulation is to translate the spatiality of the four-fold into built form which occurs through the gathering of the world. What is gathered is the earth and the sky as well as man in relation to things and in relation to other beings. Hence, it is the inhabited landscape that is gathered. The gathering is achieved through visualization, complementation and symbolization. Visualization implies an emphasis on the order and character of the environment by the work of architecture. Complementation relates when the building adds something that is lacking in the environment such as an oasis in a desert. Symbolization relates to the borrowing of elements from an understood world from one location to another, conjuring Robert Venturi's 'radical eclecticism'. For this borrowing to be authentic, it has to **belong** to the building; that is it has to relate to the way the new work is rooted between earth and sky. The new work visualizes or compliments in the new gathering. In this way, meaning is unearthed through the unearthing of a situation that is both new and old. It is this revelation that defines the genius loci. In this way, the architecture respects and therefore cares for its environment. An

architecture of care is an authentic architecture. It is also an architecture of 'participation' (Norberg-Schulz 1988: 195). Thus, as Lynch (1976: 37) and Steel (1981) have stated, meaning is achieved when people act directly with their setting. In this way, Main Road in Cape Town for example, has acquired meaning as a result of its role as a public transport and commercial corridor catering for the movement and livelihood needs of a large cross-section of the City's multi-cultural society (Mammon and Patterson 2005). Main Road is therefore a shared place that gives identity to multitudes of people thereby mirroring the notion of place as 'gathering'. To have a place in common is to belong to a fellowship. When man belongs to a place he dwells. Where man dwells he builds so as to bring the inhabited landscape close to him so that he may experience his existence as meaningful. Dwelling depends on how the building stands, rises, extends, opens and closes so as to reveal the spatiality of the four-



Colin Rowe
Source: www.cornell.edu

fold. When this occurs, it becomes a work of art (Norberg-Schulz 1988).

3.3 Achieving Place

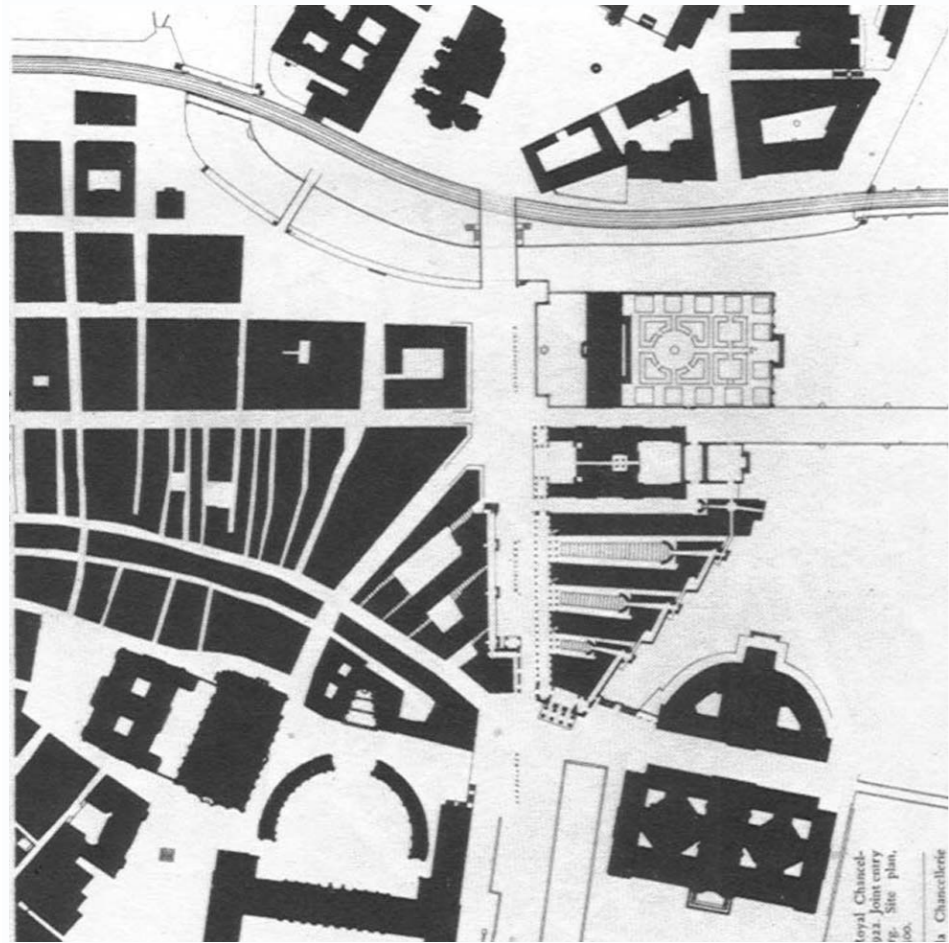
Now that we have established **what** constitutes an authentic place, it is necessary to decipher **how** such qualities can be best achieved. As already suggested, the dictates of the Modern movement, whose scars are still open in many South African cities, should be discarded due to its tendency towards a preponderance of non-places. Among the most significant bodies of urban design theory to have recognised the regressiveness of the modernist paradigm and attempted to rediscover

the positive qualities of the place is known as *Contextualism*, *Collision City* and *Collage City*. The ideas surrounding these theories were developed in parallel over a period of thirty years beginning in 1963. This was carried out through an interactive and non-programmatic process of design and criticism of student design projects, supervised principally by Colin Rowe at Cornell in New York (Middleton 1983: 3; Hurtt 1983: 55). The student projects that were the outcomes of these processes are therefore the best vehicle to understanding the notions of this body of theory.

Flipping through the pages of Rowe and Koetter's book entitled *Collage City*, one gets the impression that a firm understanding in the history of architecture and urbanism was highly regarded in Rowe's studio. This is confirmed by Wayne Copper, one of Rowe's former students who stated that an openness to the lessons of history was encouraged to decipher the essentials of the past that could be used to give direction to future decisions. It is in this respect that Copper argues that a strong historical grounding allowed for design moves to be made on an analogical basis with past exemplars. Moreover, this practice counteracted the modernist thinking that design excellence could only be achieved through a clean break with the past, devaluing the value of precedent.

Looking through Cooper's thesis project of 1966, one is confronted by numerous figure-ground studies of the morphologies of various traditional cities. Although the figure is normally seen as resting above the ground, Cooper's exercises show that it is possible for the figure to become the ground for urban space which in this case becomes figures cut out of the ground of the surrounding texture. The aim of such exercises was to discover how this duality in the figure-ground, absent in the modern city, was achieved in the traditional city where both object and context accord each other meaning. This is exemplified, for example in Gunnar Asplund and Ture Tyberg's competition proposal for the Royal Chancellery in Stockholm which is among the works that Copper studied. The site for this proposal was located at an important corner near the Royal Palace and other government buildings over two small islands in the wide inlet that divides Stockholm. The brief for the building, with the exception of several reception rooms, specified a building consisting mainly of cellular office spaces. Thus, as Schumacher (1971) has alluded to, the brief implied the need of for an office building type that is often idealized as a point block. The CBS Building, designed by Eero Saarinen at the end of a New York city block, though of greater scale, is an example of this type in its purest form. As a result of Saarinen's insistence on portraying the idealized type, the building fails to respond to its context and orientation. All its sides are exactly the same and its entrance is virtually impossible to find. It is in response to buildings such as this that Rowe argued for the deformation of the idealized type to, at the very least; address entry and orientation (Schumacher 1971: 86). As Copper (1983) points out, in Asplund and Tyberg's scheme, this idea of deformation and response is achieved by their definition of the avenue connecting the Royal Palace with the smaller island and the sculptural Russian Church. This, they achieved by borrowing

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Gunner Asplund & Ture Tyberg
Royal Chancellery Building, Stockholm, 1922
Figure Ground Plan
Source: Rowe & Koetter 1979

from the fan shaped solids to the west, recreating four of them on the opposite side of the avenue. The colonnades at the ends of the H-shaped building to the north of the site were also continued in front of the three side entrances to the Chancellery. Apart from defining the street, these moves also clarify the relationships between the existing buildings with its symbolic importance being accomplished through the placement of the entrance portico on the major axis. As a result, the new work becomes both assertive and responsive. It exhibits a continually shifting dialectic between idealized type and context where one does not over power the other and is thus analogous with Cubist works such as Gris's Portrait of Picasso of 1912. Here, the idealized figure is partially submerged in the field though still emergent from it (Hurtt op. cit: 68).

All these studies had been carried out in the context of Rowe's envisioning of the contemporary city as some kind of hybridization between the new and the old. This was particularly in relation to their attempt to resolve the fractured and variously aligned American grid which was the outcome of decades of massive clearances and renewal. The early proposals from



Juan Gris
Portrait of Picasso, 1912
Source: Hurtt 1983

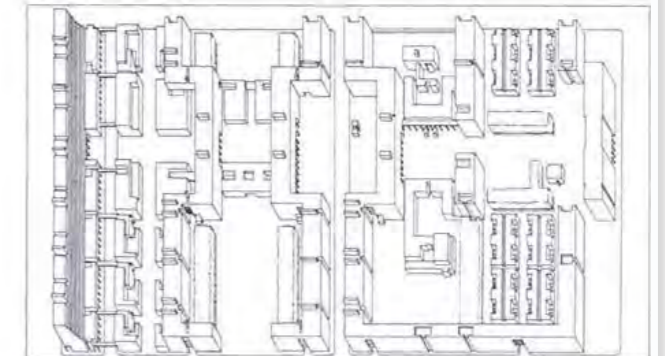
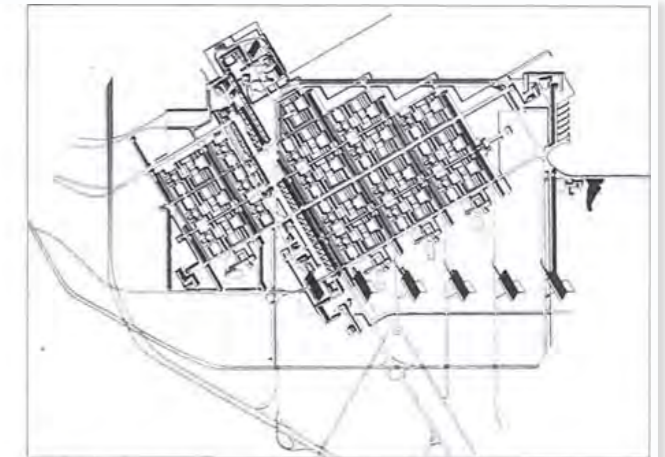


Pablo Picasso
Portrait of Daniel-Henri Kahnweiler, 1910
Source: Hurtt 1983

Rowe's studio that attempted to address this problem, however, lacked the shifting dialectic between idealized type and context stressed in Cooper's studies. What we find is responsiveness without assertiveness. Indeed there was a fascination with the subordination of the idealized type to the dictates of the old, thus drawing parallels with some of Cubism's earlier work such as Picasso's Portrait of Daniel-Henri Kahnweiler. Here, the figure is completely deformed by the existing field, each overlapping one another to the point where it is virtually impossible to distinguish the new from the old. It is in light of such lessons that Rowe, in the early days of the studio, suggested the introduction of components from one field to another in order to clarify the relationships between the fractured and differentially aligned fields. Thomas Schumacher's proposal for South Amboy, which he undertook as a thesis project in Rowe's class of 1966, is regarded as among the most quintessential pieces of work demonstrating this approach. Here, Schumacher, as can be deduced from a comparison of his scheme with Le Corbusier's for Antwerp, used modernist forms in an attempt to recreate the traditional city (Hurtt 1983: 65). He achieved this, to some extent, by using the linear building to define the edges of the street and the regular public spaces which he backed up with a very tight texture. Interestingly, however, Le Corbusier's pilotis which surely ought to have been recognized as compromising ground floor activity also found their way into Schumacher's scheme. Nonetheless, he still successfully clarifies the relationship between two differentially aligned grids by slightly deforming each of them as they approach his new urban environment where they overlap one another. However, as Hurtt (1983) has pointed out, a major flaw in the work from this period, is in its attempts to resolve an urban condition of huge proportions. This resulted in many such schemes smacking of the same utopianism that characterised the modernist work they so heavily criticized. In addition to this, although Schumacher and



Thomas Schumacher, Thesis, 1967
South Amboy, New Jersey
Source: Middleton 1980



his compatriots during this time aimed to create a texture analogous to that of the traditional city, their attempts were somewhat futile as they were unable to achieve the richness that is inherent in morphologies that have developed incrementally over long periods of time. Nevertheless, Schumacher's scheme initiated the birth of the term *Contextualism* and it also prompted further investigations of how to accomplish the shifting dialectic apparent in Gris's painting and also seen in Cooper's studies of the traditional city.

This gave rise to further historical studies which generated the ideas of Collision City and Collage City. In search of the assertiveness and responsiveness exemplified in Gris's painting, they studied schemes such as Sant' Agnese in Piazza Navona and Palazzo Borghese in Rome, the Uffizzi in Florence and L'Hotel Beauvais in Paris as quintessential exemplars. They arrived at this conclusion after comparing these with examples that are closest to their idealized type. Sant' Agnese, for example, is noted as being representative of Santa Maria della Consolazione at Todi which is portrayed as the idealized type. When this ideal type is placed into a tight urban context, the irreducible protagonists are the dome, which speaks of cosmic fantasy and the piazza, which speaks of Rome. In Sant' Agnese, the needs of both are, in this very tight site, satisfied by thrusting the dome forward and ensuring that a hard façade to the front of

THEORETICAL CONCEPTS FOR CONCEIVING THE CITY



Sant' Agnese in Piazza Navona, Rome
Source: Rowe & Koetter 1979



Santa Maria della Consolazione, Todi
Source: Rowe & Koetter 1979

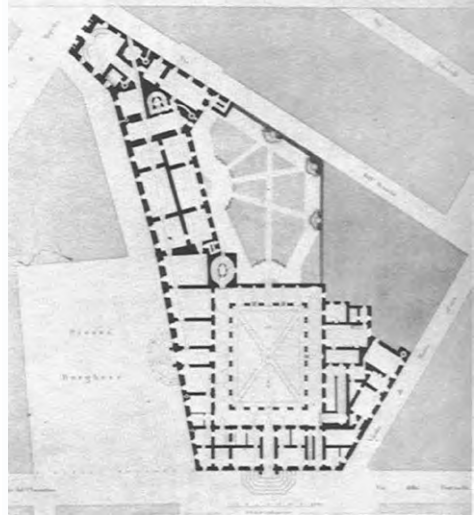
Heidegger also grapples with what exactly this whole idea of authenticity or meaning is by turning to the origins of art, which he argues to lie in language, the essence of which is in poetry. To Heidegger, people **dwell** in language when they listen and respond. The world of which they are a part of is opened up and an authentic existence or 'poetic dwelling' becomes possible. This assertion is made apparent when he asks: "But where do we humans get our information about the nature of dwelling and poetry? [We receive] it from the telling of language. Of course, only when and only as long as [we respect] language's own nature (Heidegger 1971 cited in Norberg-Schulz 1983: 64). His emphasis on the need to respect language's own nature" alludes to the notion of 'genius loci' or 'spirit of place'. This term is derived from the Roman tradition and refers to the guardian spirit or essence of a thing. Language's own genius loci

differentiation to an otherwise fairly homogeneous field. Rowe called such buildings composite buildings and it is no wonder why that he found them to make the most exhilarating urban environments (Hurt op.cit: 67). In Mthatha's context, the elements that I have described as 'hard' symbols that define the existence of the town have the potential of taking on the role of Rowe's 'composite buildings'. What becomes the major challenge in the place making agenda, is designing the preconditions that will ensure that over time, central Mthatha will incrementally adopt a tight texture that will see its composite buildings creating tensions in its urban field, tensions that glorify place.

When Rowe and his students arrived to this notion of composite buildings, the focus was still on the fragmented and differentially aligned grid of the American city. Here, the idea of the composite buildings was seen to bear the potential to resolve the collisions in the grid by making them hierarchical focuses in the field. Hence the term *Collision City* which came to the fore in the 1970s. These sites of the collision, where attention would be zoomed into, would then be defined by composite buildings that are characterised by an eclectic borrowing of symbolic and associational inferences from past and present contexts, hence *Collage City*. This idea of eclectic borrowing had already been argued for by Robert Venturi in his book *Complexity and Contradiction* and exemplified, for example, in his Yale Mathematics Building and the Vana Venturi House. The idea of *Collage City* was to promote a similar practice at the urban level. The thinking that was coming out of Rowe's studio at this time was markedly different to that of the 1960s and even more so to that of the Modernists (Oechslin 1985). Klienman's Project for Brooklyn of 1975, for example, rejects the tabula rasa approach completely and instead concentrates on establishing hierarchies of focus places that are defined by composite buildings which relate to their context. These are then connected by a set of major boulevards and parks along the fracture junction and it is here where the sacredness of Brooklyn is installed and concentrated. Kleinman's minimalist intervention pre-empts the thought that gradually came to be accepted at Cornell that the role of urban design is to promote order in the public realm while allowing the private realm to develop laissez-faire. In effect, the Cornell Urban Design School had come to a consensus in the mid 1970s that an exercise in comprehensive design, in whatever manner it is undertaken, is unable to bring about authentic place. The agreed position was that, especially in existing urban contexts where this body theory was developed, authentic place-making can only be achieved through an acupuncture design process that concentrates on the public realm.



Above: Palazzo Farnese, Rome
Left: Palazzo Borghese, Rome
Source: Rowe & Koetter 1979



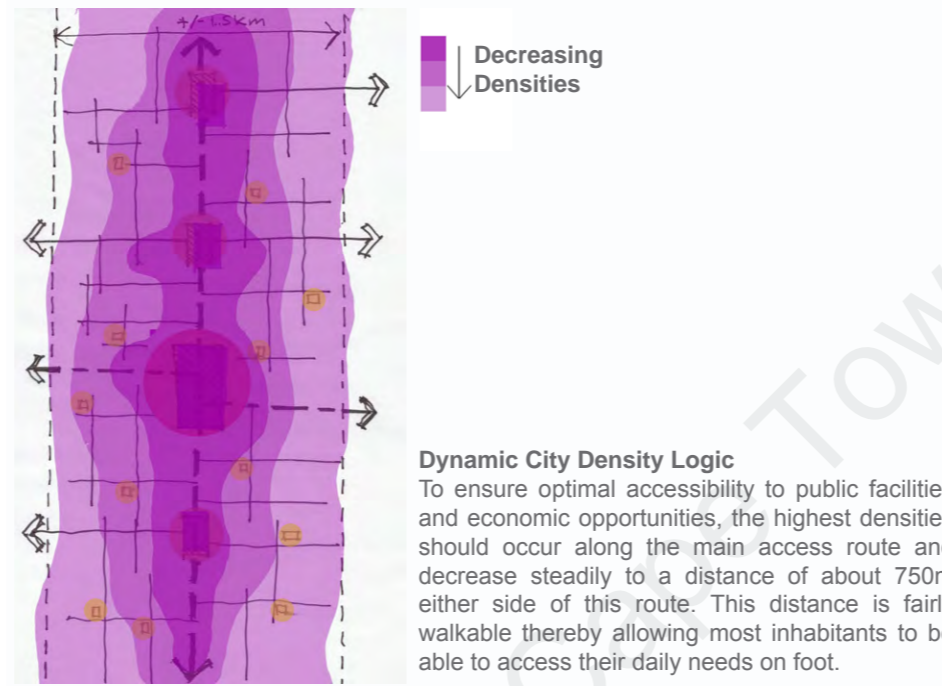
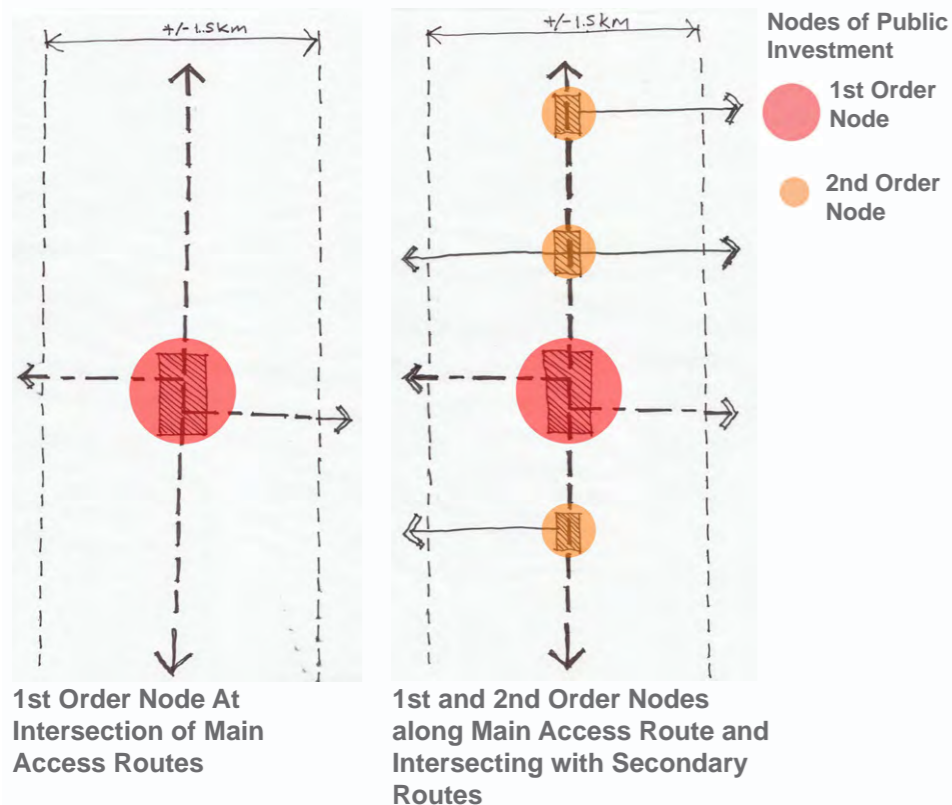
Top: Existing Plan
Bottom: Proposed Plan
Martin Klienman, Thesis, 1975
Project for Brooklyn, New York
Source: Middleton 1983

typological identity by ensuring geometrical regularity at its core. Its edges, in the meantime, respond to the local contextual conditions (Ellis op.cit: 7; Schmacher 1971: 79). The figure-ground, ground-figure duality of such projects, achieved through their definition of urban space, also saw them being read at the level of the whole as focus points that provided

The nature of this acupuncture and minimalist idea is more thoroughly unpacked by the Dynamic City body of urban design theory first developed through David Crane's urban design studios at the University of Pennsylvania in the late 1950s, with the seminal one entitled *Chandigarh Reconsidered*. This theory concentrates on the notion of focusing urban design on the ordering of a minimalist urban structure defined by key public elements. The intention is that this established structure then acts

the building defines the piazza. As a result, both the dome and the piazza assertively make their point giving rise to a continually fluctuating reading of Sant' Agnese as type and its reinterpretation as texture (Rowe and Koetter 1978). Similarly, the Palazzo Borghese in Rome is representative of the Palazzo Farnese type which contributes factors of central stability both of façade and plan. Its edge, however, is deformed and elasticized to respond to its highly 'imperfect' urban context thereby sustaining its

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of access in a spatial sense. Perhaps most important in formulating this logic, the Dynamic City theory stipulates that the nodes of public investment contributing to the definition of place, be of a hierarchical nature and not of the same order. These, in turn, should also define a hierarchical continuum of public spaces that vary from a high degree of publicness to a low degree of privateness. These spaces 'gather' people within their boundary contributing to place and becoming particularly important for disadvantaged communities where they take on the role of fulfilling the needs that cannot be met in the private realm. Hence, they become extensions of the individual dwelling and they help in relieving pressure off it (Dewar 2000; Dewar & Todeschini 2004). The highest order of public elements, the catalyst for the exploitation of opportunities attracting the largest numbers of people should occur along the city's main access routes. Typically, these are represented by the central city and possibly the city's decentralised centres, occurring at the intersection of at least two major access routes. Hence they become sites that facilitate 'access to access'. These nodes typically accommodate major transport interchanges where large numbers of people change mode and/or direction, thereby producing the thresholds necessary to support a large variety of activities. Along the same routes should occur second order nodes that are also typically the sites of an interchange though not of a terminus nature which should be located in the highest order node. These will also produce thresholds to support additional activities, though not of the quantity that will logically be supported within the first order node. These routes will, naturally, be the most populous routes within the city, attracting private business to locate along them. Since among the most important aims of the Dynamic City model it to ensure that the majority of the city's inhabitants are able to access their daily activities on foot, it follows that these routes be packed with the highest densities of housing



Top: Tall Buildings Aligning one of Curitiba's Corridors

Source: Todeschini 2009

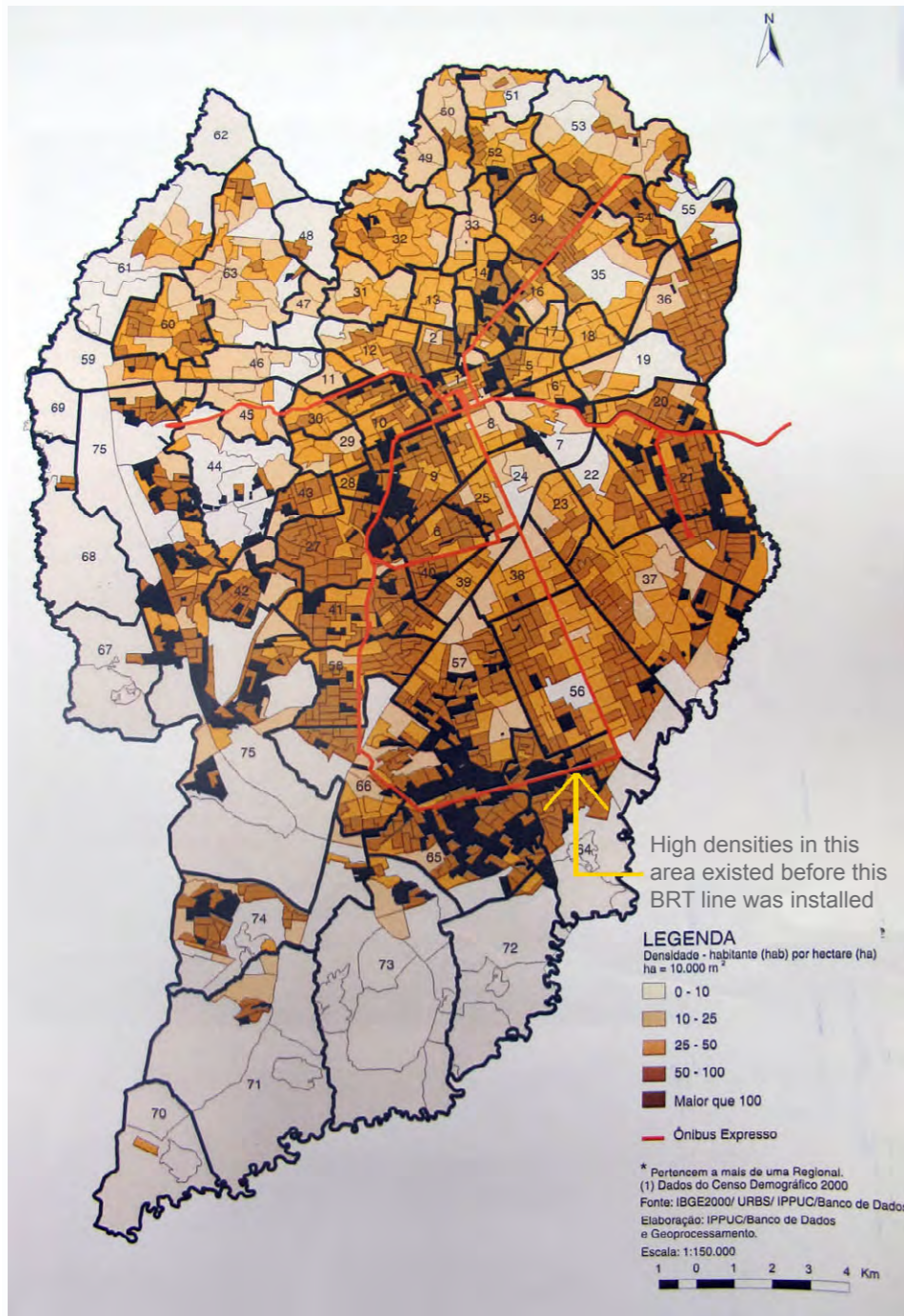
Bottom: Image of Spare Capacity about 200m off the centre of the Corridor shown above

Source: Todeschini 2009

as a framework that is continuously reinforced by incremental growth carried out by the city's inhabitants (Crane 1960 a, b, c). As a result, rich morphologies germinate based on an underlying robust physical structure with nodes designed in the spirit of the Greek temple that Heidegger describes as defining the place. It is this structure that will allow Mthatha's people to experience their existence as meaningful by stimulating individual creativity according to typological and topological preconditions that facilitate richness as a function of change over time, constantly reinforcing the robustness of the framework.

The implementation of the theory is based on the idea of the Capital Web where public investment in infrastructure and public facilities gives guidance to private actions. The idea of time thereby becomes an important notion in the city making process. For the citizens to be able to make a contribution to this process, they need to be enabled to do so for them to be part of the architecture of 'participation' that makes authentic place (Norberg-Schulz 1988:195). Hence a key responsibility that the structure must fulfil is in enabling access to a variety of social, economic and cultural opportunities. Optimal conditions for this access only exist when the majority of places and activities are accessible on foot. Hence, there is an emphasis on intensification which itself is a generator as the physical agglomeration of people is the precondition for all kinds of opportunities to occur especially for small business (Dewar et al 1999). This intensification along with the rolling out of the capital web must not occur haphazardly, they must occur according to a logic

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Top: Map showing Curitiba's Corridors (in red) and the city's Density Patterns

Source: Institute for Planning and Research in Curitiba (IPPUC 2009)

within the city, again increasing the thresholds of support, stimulating the germination of additional activities.

The city of Curitiba in Brazil which has been ardently promoted by its charismatic former mayor, Jaime Learner, has been profiled internationally as having successfully implemented such a model as part of their Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system. Photographs of this city's tallest buildings, many of which are apartments defining its five corridors, have been widely shown especially by Learner himself, as a testimony to this success. On closer inspection, however, we find that immediately behind this veil of tall buildings, lies vast amounts of spare capacity typified by detached single story buildings. Many of the apartment buildings are of a point block type, typically with only four apartments per floor, due to their lots having been predominantly modelled to accommodate detached buildings. This is clearly a result of Curitiba failing to initiate the typological change in her plot and block patterns necessary to bring about a tighter and denser morphology patterns. As a result, Curitiba is not as friendly to pedestrians as she could be and the densities are severely compromised as the 'corridors with the highest densities' (Tahira 2009) in Curitiba are literally, to use a word mentioned earlier, a veil. 'A veil' because the highest densities are not along these corridors, they are in the southern and south western parts of the city where a tight grain of largely two to three stories has emerged incrementally over a period of time. The key problem with the Curitiba model its linear corridors have been conceptualised as a transport corridor of only 40m thick. What it misses is a third hierarchical cluster of public facilities, which should be the most numerous, provided within the same overall framework and set within a comfortable walking distance from the main access arteries. These would become additional nodes of energy, stimulating more activities and attracting higher densities of housing though not necessarily as high as those defining the main arteries. Moreover, as the third hierarchy nodes serve as attractors of pedestrian traffic from the main artery, they also determine the routes that should be designed predominantly for walking and cycling.⁹ Such preconditions will undoubtedly create a truly **urban** corridor underpinned by a robust minimalist and hierarchical structure envisioned by the Dynamic City theory.

As the aforementioned argument has shown, Heidegger's philosophy of 'Being in the World' stresses that the qualities of place are realised by accentuating particular points in the landscape, imbuing them with a sense of sacredness identifiable in the psyches of all. It is this sacredness that initiates a city's inhabitants to identify such points as defining their existence within space. Norberg-Schulz, as I have also shown, suggests that these qualities can only be achieved through an understanding of urban structure in relation to the notions of typology, topology and morphology. It is the articulation of these notions that forms the basis

⁹ I detest the increasingly popular term for walking and cycling – non-motorised transport as it describes walking and cycling as negatives of what should be the 'preferred' form of movement. For this reason I refuse to use it.

of creating place. Since the discrediting of the Modern Movement in the Global North, beginning in the mid 1960s, we have seen the Collage City school of thought experiment with the notions urban structure in attempting to recreate place in the fractured American city. The earliest attempts in this school, as I have shown, were essentially unsuccessful due to their 'tabula rasa' approach which made them akin to the ways of modernism. Through further experimentation, they reached a consensus that manipulating these notions of urban structure could only successfully recreate place through a minimalist, concentrated acupuncture interventions within the urban field. This echoes Heidegger's call earlier for a concentration on particular points within the landscape. The Dynamic City body of theory noted here, however, best offers a methodology and logic based on the idea of the Capital Web, for implementing this acupuncture approach in bringing about place.

DESIGN RESPONSE

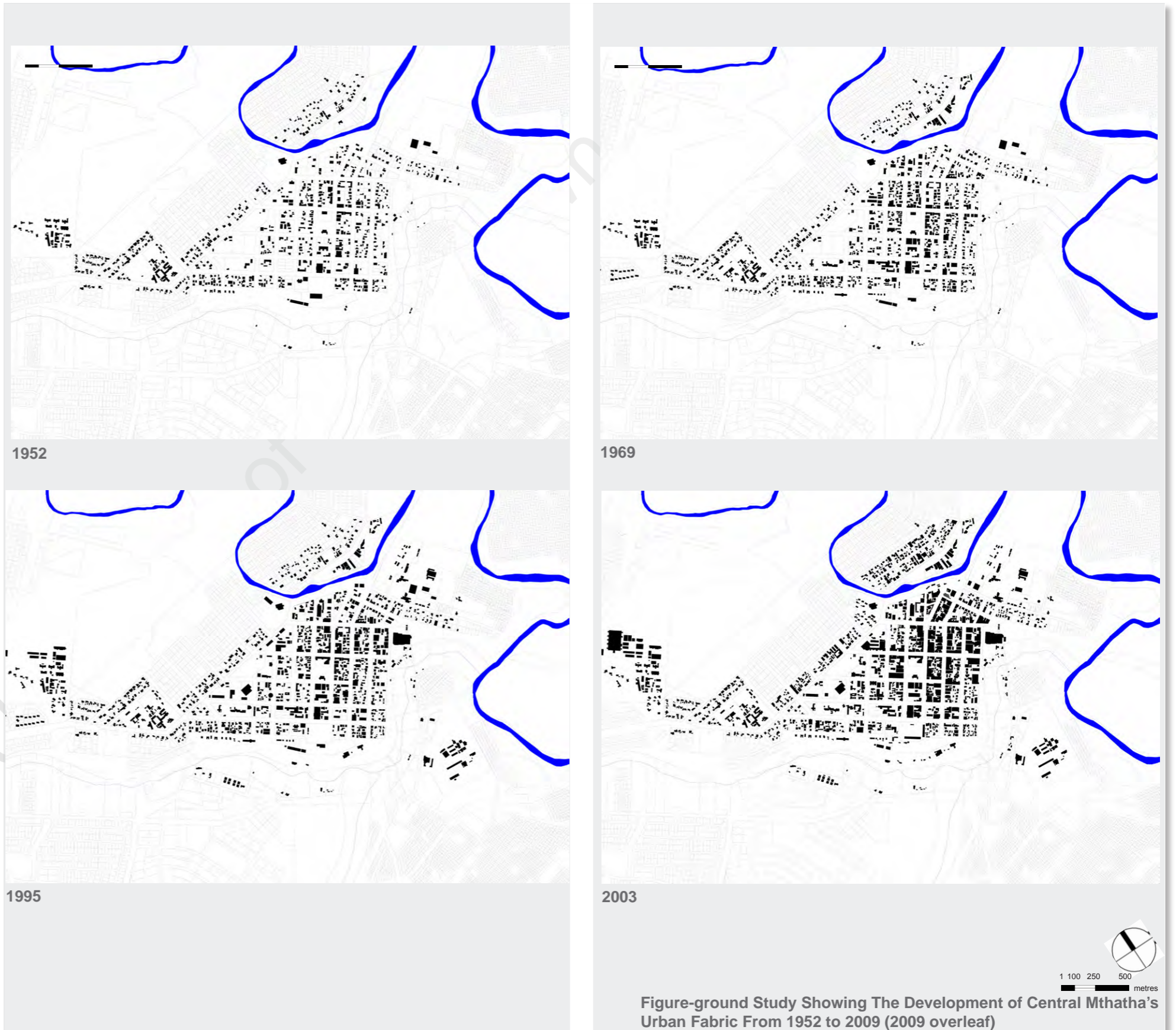
4.0 Design Response

Among the most important points from the theoretical argument presented in the last chapter is that the positive qualities that a place has when a people are one with the spirit of their place are brought about through an incremental process of change. Central Mthatha has undergone a significant degree of change as evidenced by the figure ground shown here that tracks the manner in which this change has altered the town's urban texture. The rate of change within Mthatha accelerated substantially in the 1960s, fuelled by massive injections of funding from South Africa's then apartheid government as part of their agenda to accord self-government of the Transkei to the Xhosa. Since the end of apartheid in 1994, change in the city has essentially been led by the private sector that has understood the economic opportunities available in the town and has acted hastily to capitalize on these for themselves. With all this change, however, Mthatha has not gained the positive qualities of place that are inherent, for example, in historic cities such as Djenne in Mali whose quality has been derived from the many centuries of change that the city has undergone producing environments that are scaled with the consideration of the pedestrian in mind. In fact, Central Mthatha has progressively become more hostile since the establishment of the town as evidenced by the extremely poorly maintained sidewalks and motorists who disregard pedestrian space by parking on these sidewalks and not giving way to pedestrians



The historic city of Djenne in Mali has a network of public spaces within very dense living environments which are the fruition of many centuries of change

Source: GoogleEarth



DESIGN RESPONSE

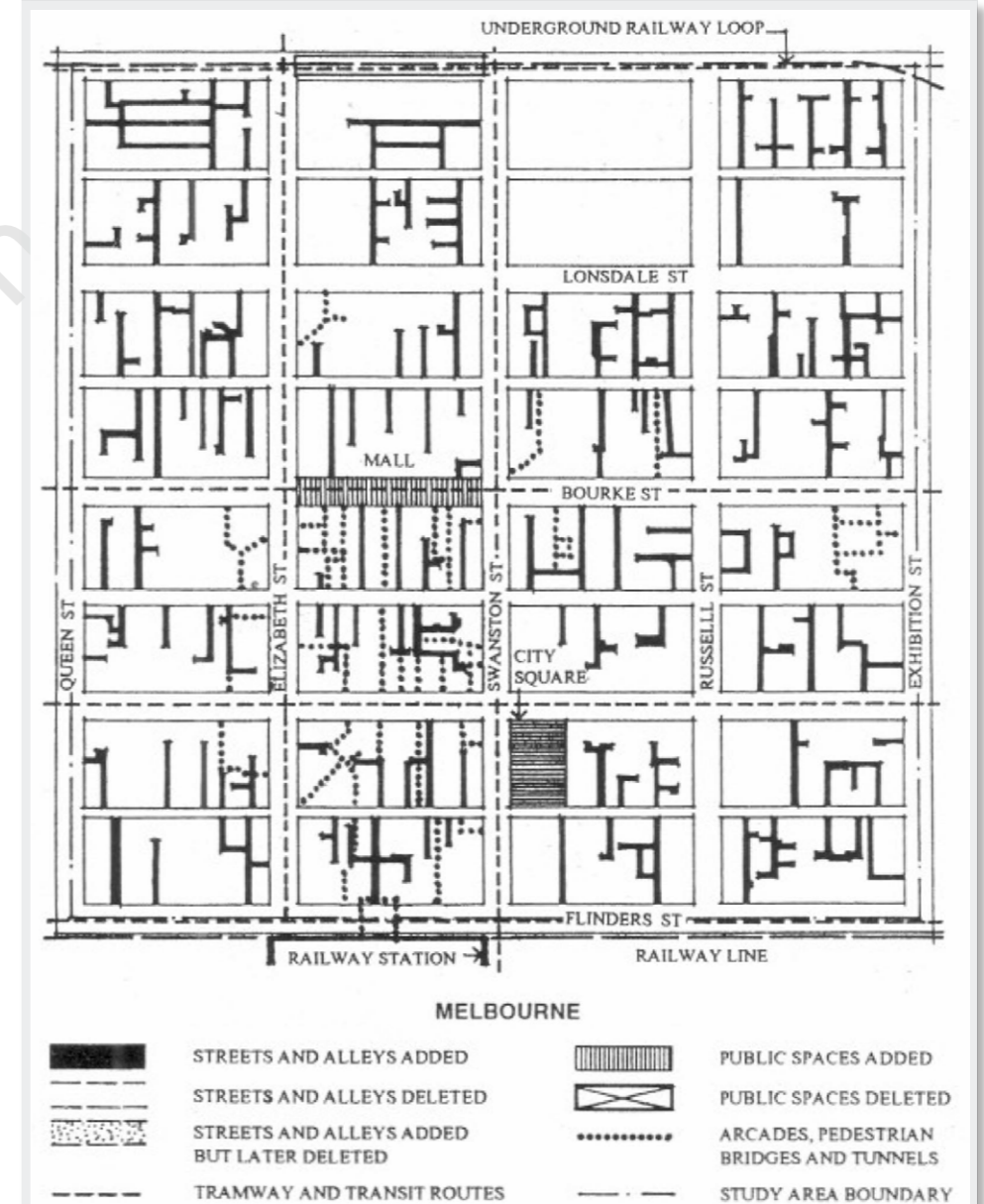


Figure-ground Study Showing Central Mthatha's Present (2009) Urban Fabric

Sheer and Sheer (n.d) have argued that in many cases, such suggestions fail to address the core issue that determines the quality of a place. This core issue is the language of architecture which, as we have already learnt from Norberg Schultz (1988), is made up of typology, topology and morphology. When urban design guidelines avoid grappling with these issues, they are likely to end at best, as cosmetic exercises. The city of Curitiba which was mentioned in the previous chapter is a typical case in this regard due to its apparent desire to maintain its inflexible plot configurations.

We have already seen how remarkably Central Mthatha's urban texture has changed since 1952 and have established that all this energy has not contributed its spirit of place. In contrast, it has contributed to a diminishing sense of place because, in essence, it is only change at face value. The underlying structural language of the town, rooted in its typomorphology, has been restrained from undergoing the changes necessary to embrace Mthatha's energy and changing needs within a framework that would enhance the town's sense of place. The needs and possibilities available to a town's inhabitants today, are vastly different to those in 1890 for example. Today, arguably the most pertinent issue that place-making in central districts has to confront in making place, is in addressing the conflict that exists between the needs of motorists and pedestrians. In Central Mthatha, the fact that most of its streets are still of the same width, reveals an absence of any sense of hierarchy in the articulation of the urban form, which reveals that this conflict is yet to be addressed.

Central districts that are also successful places today are those that have managed to optimally address this conflict. For example, Prof. Rob Adams (2008), the Director of Urban Design and Culture for the City of Melbourne, attributes the positive qualities of his city not to any particular architects or planners, but to the incremental subdivision patterns that were allowed to occur in the 19th century. These subdivisions, which were accompanied by the insertion of laneways and alleyways, broke down the city's regular grid of 200 x 100m rectangular blocks, into a pedestrian circulation mesh that is as fine as 46 to 80m in areas of high pedestrian activity. It is in this regard and on the basis of comparative studies she conducted comparing the typomorphologies of Australian and American cities, that Arnis Siksa (1997) suggests a circulation mesh of 50m to 70m as providing the optimal place-making conditions in areas of intense pedestrian activity. Where the network is shared by both people and vehicles, she suggests a mesh of 80m to 110. Where optimal conditions for vehicular circulation are the concern, Maitland



A Portion of Central Melbourne showing the changes that have occurred since the 19th century to its original 200x100m block formation
Source: Siksa 1997

(1984) has suggested a spacing of 200m which the central districts of cities such as Savannah, Seattle, Brisbane and Melbourne conform to. However, Siksa found during her research, that Perth, with a mesh spacing of 300m and Adelaide's spacing of 554m for vehicular circulation, still produced optimal conditions for this mode of movement. She arrived at this conclusion after noting that no subdivisions in the large blocks of these cities had occurred towards attaining Maitland's 200m spacing for vehicular circulation. Instead, subdivision patterns here had occurred to adopt optimal conditions

trying to cross the town's congested streets.

The KSD Sustainable Development Plan referred to in the second chapter of this dissertation, suggests that the key to reclaiming Central Mthatha and making it a place for its citizens again, lies in introducing the notion of city-living by encouraging shop owners to build residential accommodation above their properties. The plan also recommends the repair and maintenance of Central Mthatha's sidewalks, the cleaning of the river and ensuring that all new development along its banks faces onto it rather than turning its back onto this asset. The plan, however, does not suggest any planning or policy instruments that could be used by Mthatha's authorities in achieving this form of development. Returning to its suggestions, it also proposes the pedestrianisation of one carriageway along Owen Street to make a civic pedestrian oriented precinct that links the proposed stadium, the railway station, Plaza Mall, the Nelson Mandela Museum and the town's civic core with the river. As already mentioned, these are all novel suggestions that identify with conventional urban regeneration guidelines, popularised most recently by the publishing of the Urban Design Compendium which argues for the regulation of colour, signage, streetscape and the like as being key to rekindling the spirit of place.

DESIGN RESPONSE



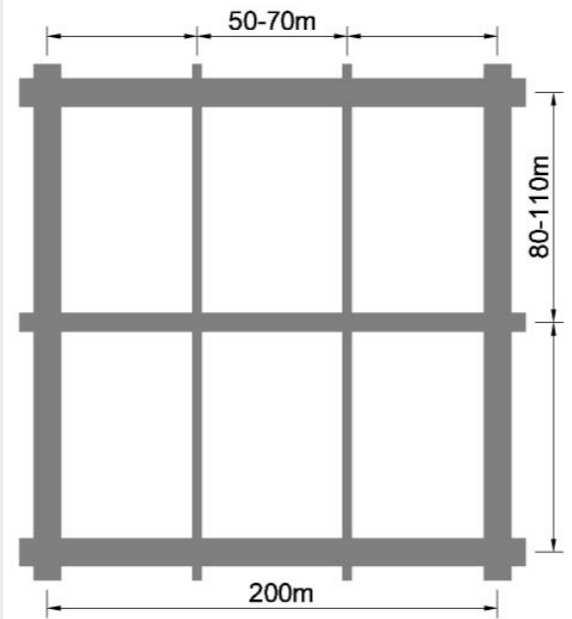
A Portion of Central Adelaide
 Source: Skisna 1997

for pedestrian circulation. Therefore, when attempting to rekindle the spirit of place, attention should be directed towards establishing circulation networks devoted to people first and then to those to be shared by people and vehicles. The mesh for the circulation of vehicles can be as coarse as Adelaide's without necessarily disrupting optimal conditions for vehicular circulation.

4.1 Establishing a New Underlying Structural Order for Mthatha

In Mthatha, as has already been alluded to, no insertion of alleyways, arcades or new streets has been allowed to initiate the change that has occurred in cities such as Melbourne. The Transkei government's refusal, in the 1960s, to allow plots less than 300m² undoubtedly contributed to this state of affairs. Therefore, the first action in attempting to rekindle place lies in establishing a

TERTIARY NETWORK OF ROUTES
 In very intensive pedestrian areas and in historic city centres



SECONDARY NETWORK OF ROUTES & NODES
 In intensive areas

PRIMARY NETWORK OF ROUTES & NODES
 Maximum desirable distance between major pedestrian nodes

Desirable Pedestrian Circulation Mesh
 Based on Siksna 1997

new underlying structural language for Central Mthatha based on Siksna's research.

4.2 The Relationship between Restructuring Mthatha and the Objectives of the KSD Sustainable Development Plan

In providing a design intervention for placemaking in Central Mthatha, my intention is not to discard the ideas contained in the KSD Sustainable Development Plan for this area, rather, it is to repackage these ideas within a framework that will bring about an enhanced sense of place. An analysis of the town's patterns of movement reveals that the use of Owen Street to link the Mthatha River in the north with the new stadium in the south is not particularly ideal as it is evident that York Street is more energetic, supporting larger volumes of pedestrian movement activated by the train station, Plaza Mall and the town's taxi ranks and the intercity bus terminal near Circular Triangle. In addition, before it 'touches' the banks of the Mthatha River, this street splits into two, creating an irregular triangular block suitable for accepting Colin Rowe's notion of a composite building whose role would be

to define the new pedestrian oriented axis along York Street with views of Mthatha's hinterland forming its backdrop. Here, similarities can be struck with the manner in which the Cathedral of St Michael and St George is axially aligned with Grahamstown's main access route.

4.3 Logic for Installing the New Structural Order

The key to the success of the new pedestrian oriented precinct which, together with the existing civic core, will become Mthatha's heart lies in linking the implementation of this idea with the installation of a new structural order for Mthatha. As shown in the following diagrams showing the incremental development of the idea, the new order responds to existing patterns of movement while also acting as a catalyst for new movement patterns.



Drawing Showing Central Mthatha Street Names



DESIGN RESPONSE

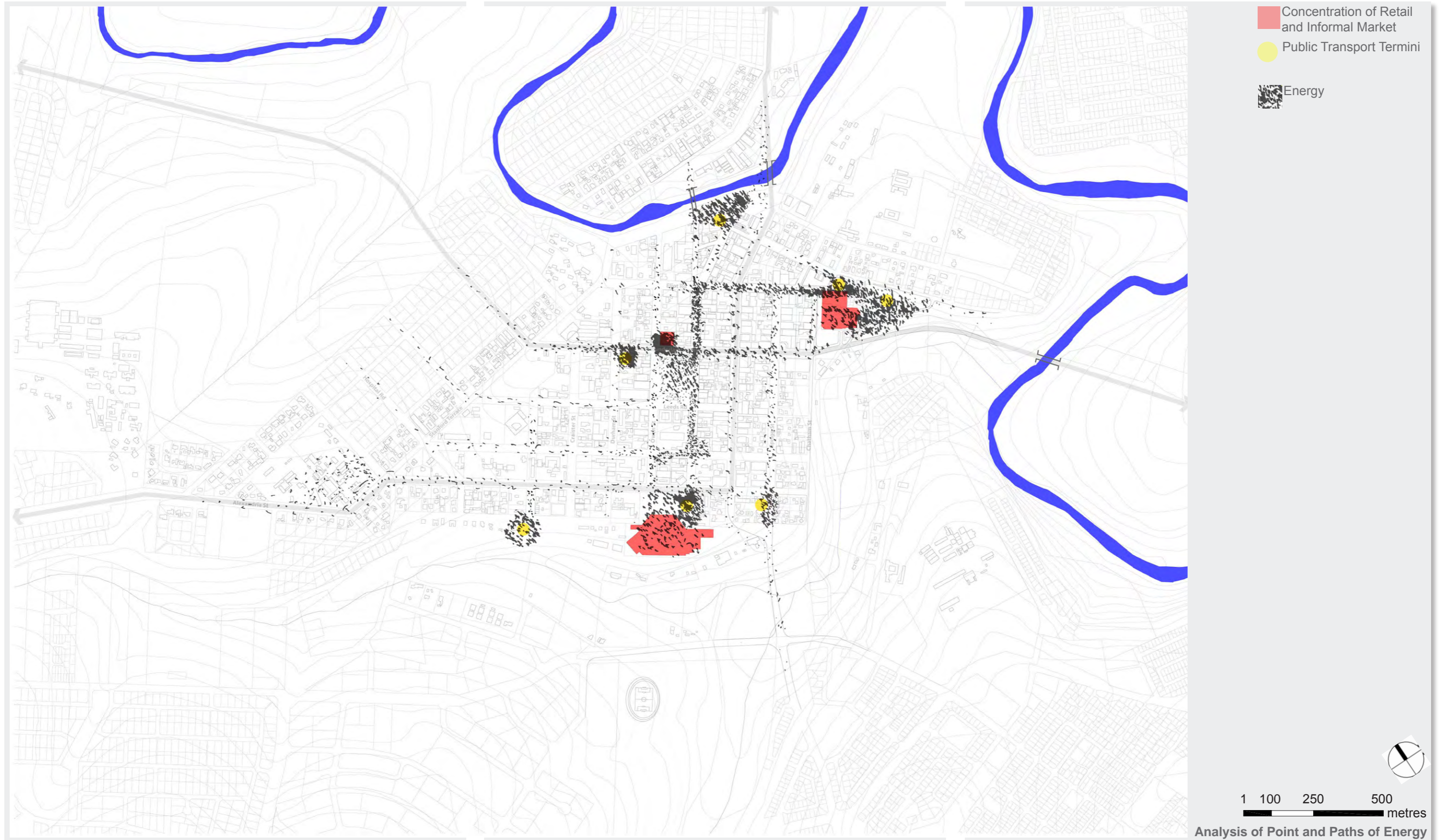


Street Dimensions

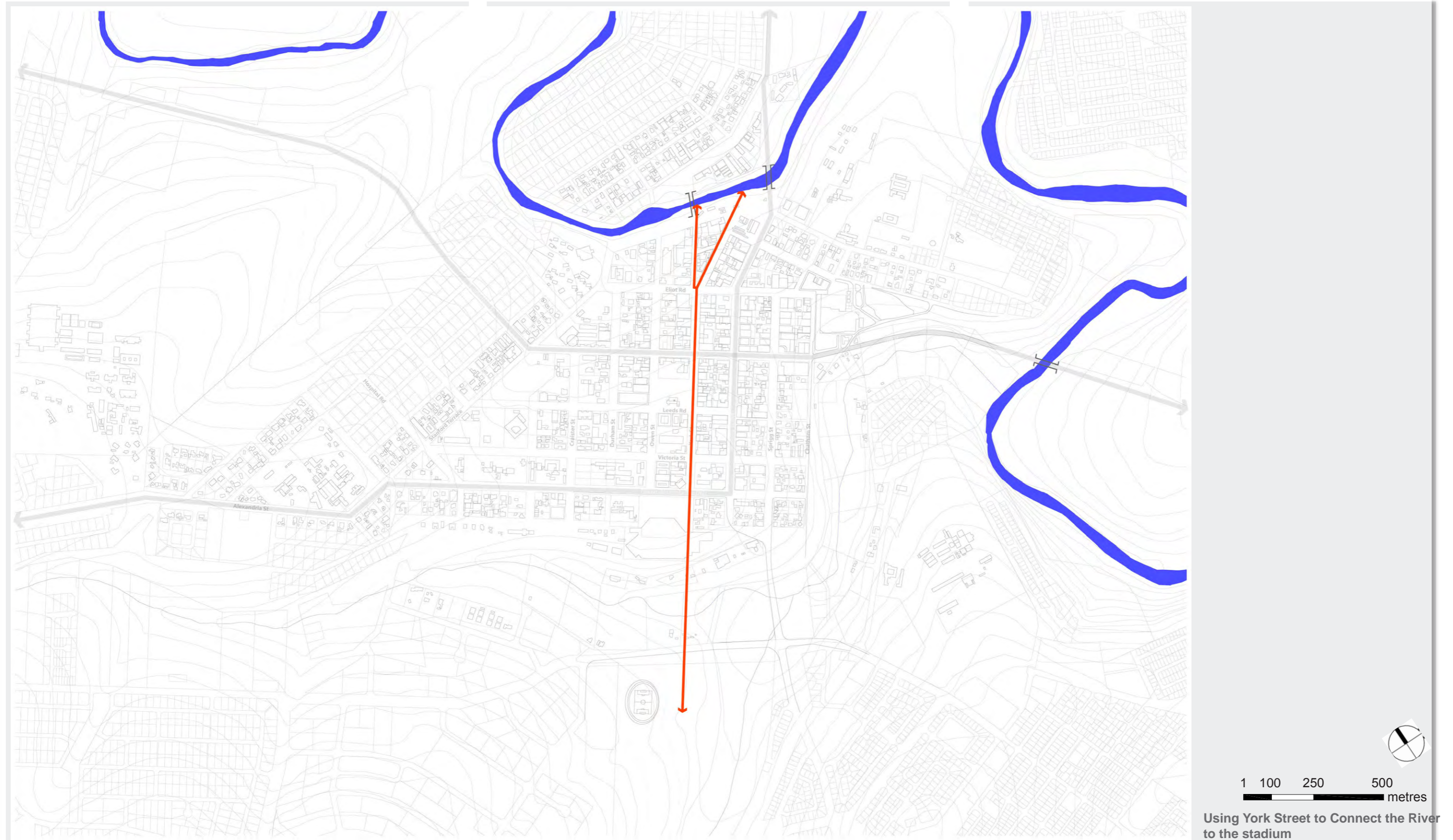


Block Dimensions

DESIGN RESPONSE



DESIGN RESPONSE

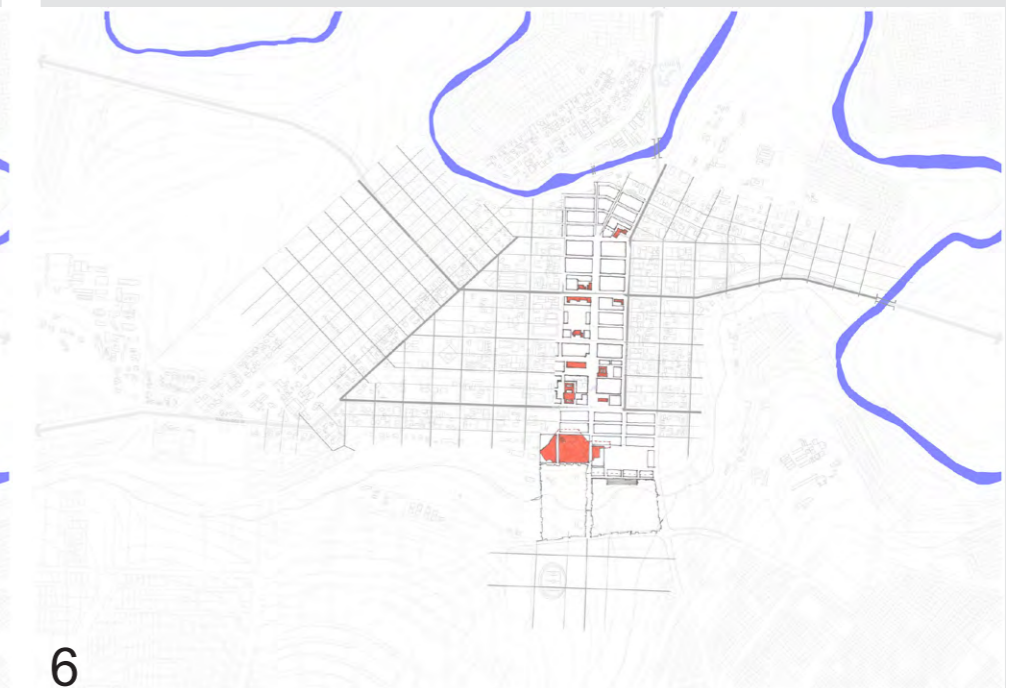
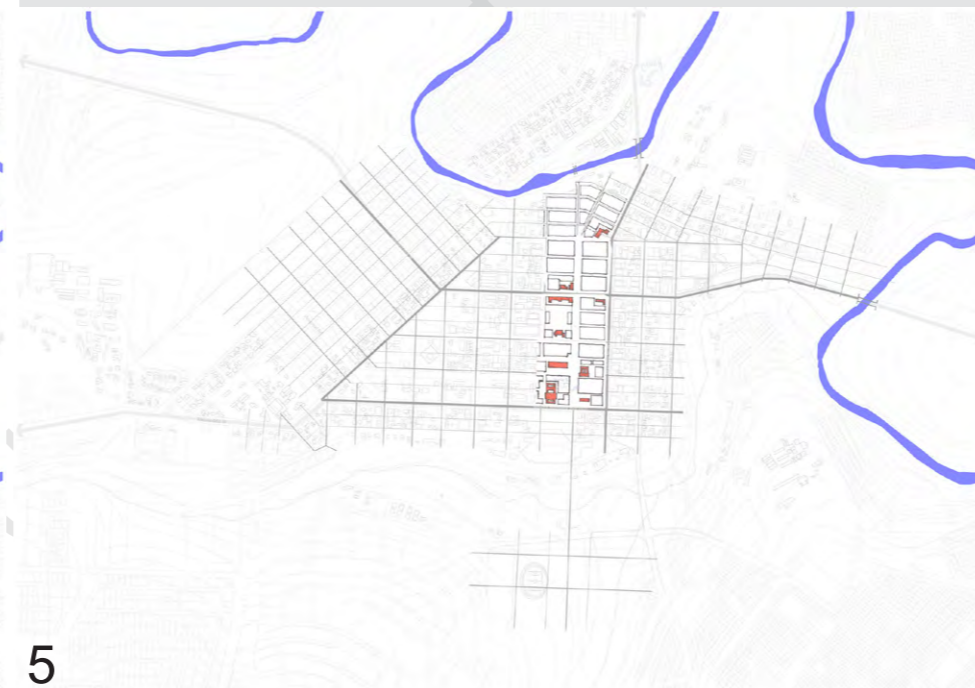
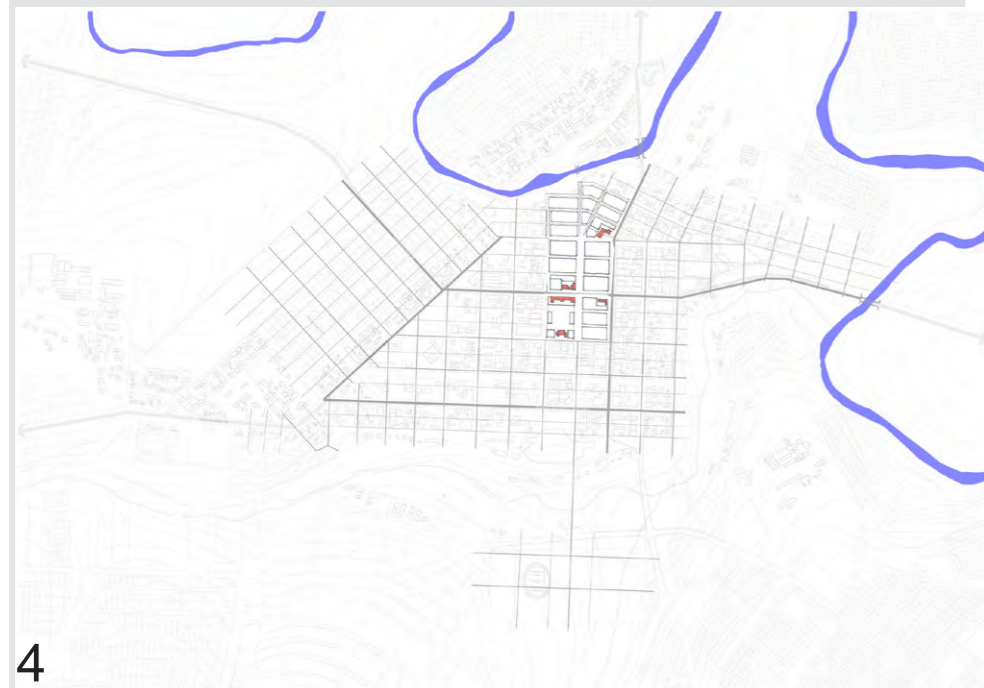
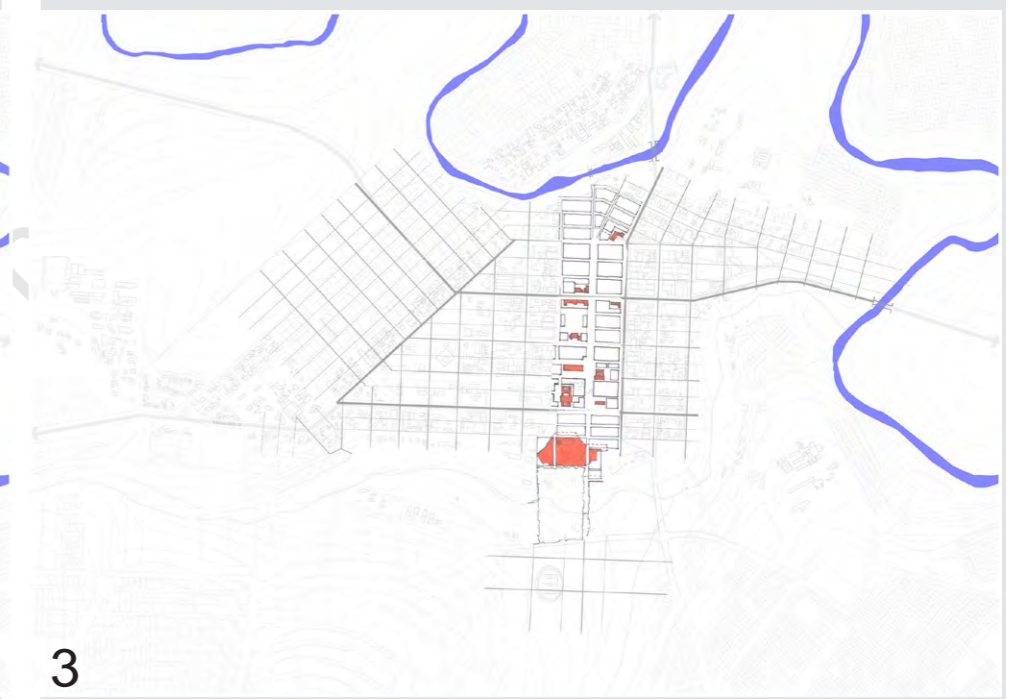
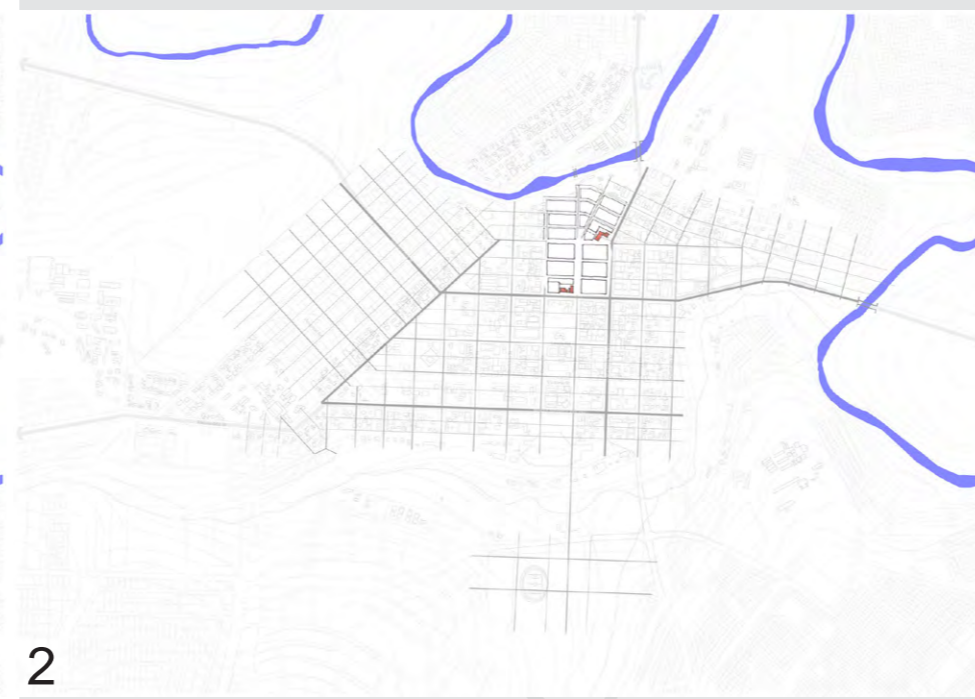
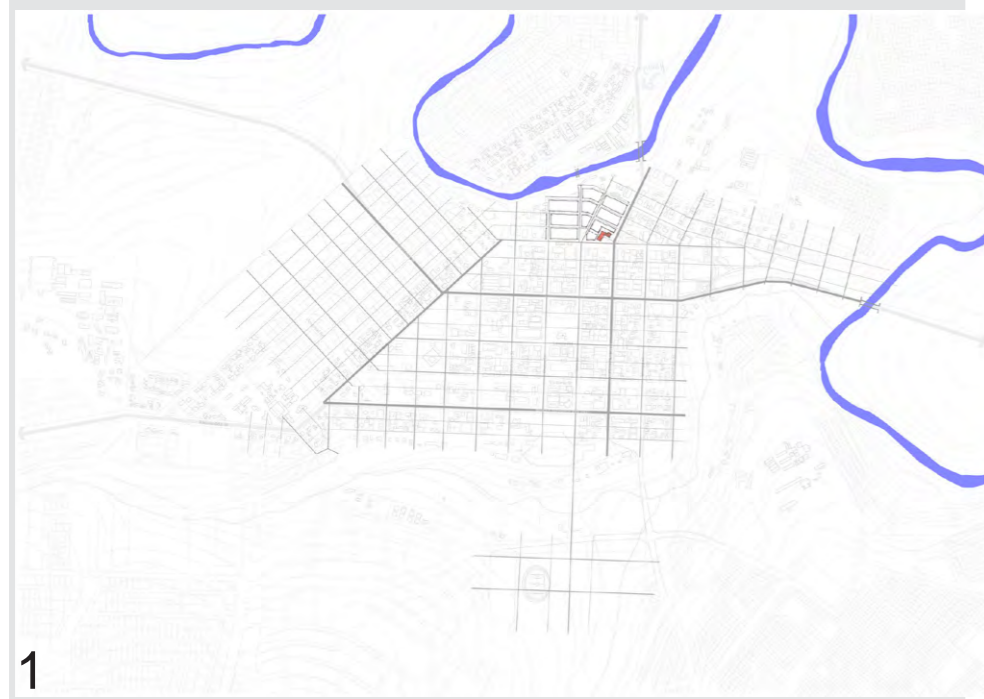


DESIGN RESPONSE

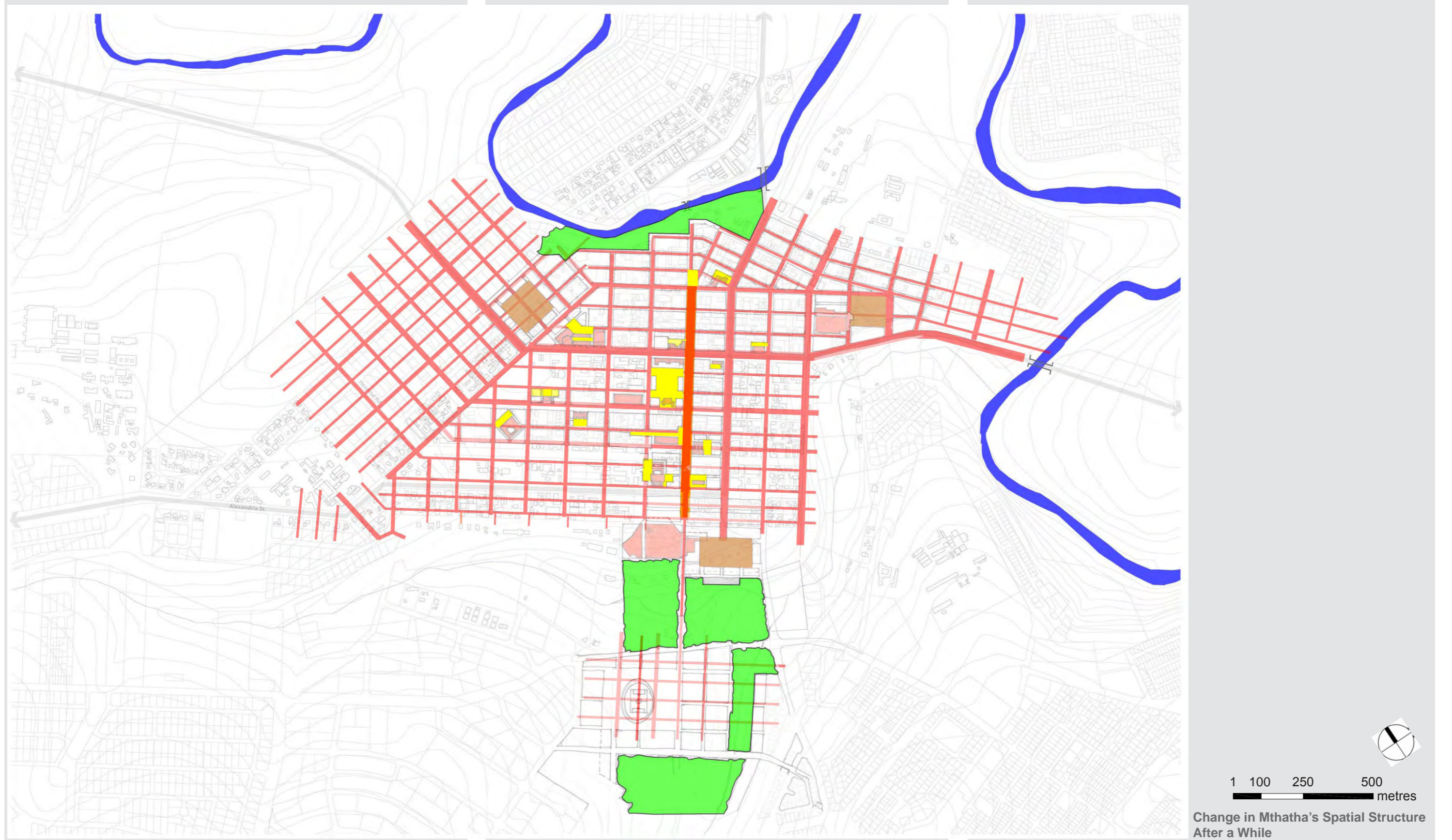


Applying Skisna's notion of optimal underlying structure to Mthatha

DESIGN RESPONSE



DESIGN RESPONSE



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