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The Rhenish Complex and Surroundings

Stellenbosch: Unlocking its Potential

November 2021

SQUARE ONE

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its INNOVATIVE TRANSPORT SOLUTIONS

Acknowledgements:

A special word of appreciation is due to Bernabé de la Bat of the Department of Economic Development Services, Municipality of Stellenbosch, for guidance in terms of spatial issues and the explanations of previous work and studies undertaken in the precinct.

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1. INTRODUCTION

It has generally been recognized that the Rhenish Complex as a whole is of significant cultural and heritage importance and is an invaluable asset for the town which demands proper maintenance and appropriate utilization. The Rhenish complex already contains the pre-conditions for a significant cultural precinct and associated regeneration. These include highly valued historic buildings and spaces in an accessible location to all citizens and visitors, and a range of space options, open and enclosed, large, and small, and varying in its degree of public exposure.

The site, however, is embedded and not easily accessible. The spatial layout is also confusing and requires clarification. In short, it needs to be unlocked.

1.1. Location of the Study Area

The location of the site is shown in figure 1 and the broad study area under consideration is indicated in figure 2, the landscape context, in the heart of the historic core of Stellenbosch. Figure 3 shows the heritage resources identified within the study area in a previous study, dated 1995. Of note is the uncoloured white zone running north-south through the middle of the block, not identified as a heritage resource.

1.2. The Brief

The brief is extracted from the tender and calls for the following:

a. The evaluation and analysis of all existing planning and planning related documentation, current lease agreements and any documentation as it relates to the future utilization of the Rhenish Complex, its buildings and open space, the Braak and public spaces around the Braak including the potential linkage of Church Street with the Braak and Rhenish Complex;

b. The identification of and exploratory discussions with Interested and Affected Parties as it relates to their understanding and ideas for the future use of the Rhenish Complex and gardens including the keeping of notes and minutes of such discussions.

c. The preparation and drafting of professional urban design proposals based on the existing studies and proposals linked to the preferred future use of the buildings, gardens and/or portions of buildings/gardens as well as other public space which might have an impact on the Rhenish Complex.

d. Drafting a framework for the Rhenish complex and surrounding properties linking the site to the historical centre and public space such as Die Braak, Dorp Street, Church Street etc.

e. The preparation of an urban design report and power point presentation with illustrations summarizing and motivating the future use of the Rhenish Complex.

1.3. Previous Studies

Several municipally initiated and supported studies and development frameworks have focused on the complex and its surrounds over preceding years. These include:

- Stellenbosch Conservation Strategy; Kruger Roos; 1997.
- Die Braak, Voorlopige Ontwikkelingsraamwerk & Rekonstruksie; Kruger Roos, 1997.
- Stellenbosch Historical Centre, Mill Square and Surrounds; Kruger Roos, 1998.
- Heritage Study, Binnetuin Park, Stellenbosch; Pistorius and Harris, 2005.
- Het Erfgoedbeleid van Stellenbosch. Het opstellen van ondersteunende komen – Die Braak en het Rijnse Complex als katalysator; Carton & Ryckeboer, 2012.
- Kerkstraat Sluiting, Piet Louw & Dave Dewar, 2020 Proposals call for the utilization of the Braak, Mayor 2019

While there are many relevant and good ideas included in the above-mentioned studies, there is now an opportunity to consider the study area as a totality, as well as the site's integrated relationship with the general surroundings. A key question therefore is:

'What should structure the whole or the totality, in urban design terms, and how can the site, most of which is embedded, be unlocked to become part of the daily-use fabric of the town, from a public perspective?'

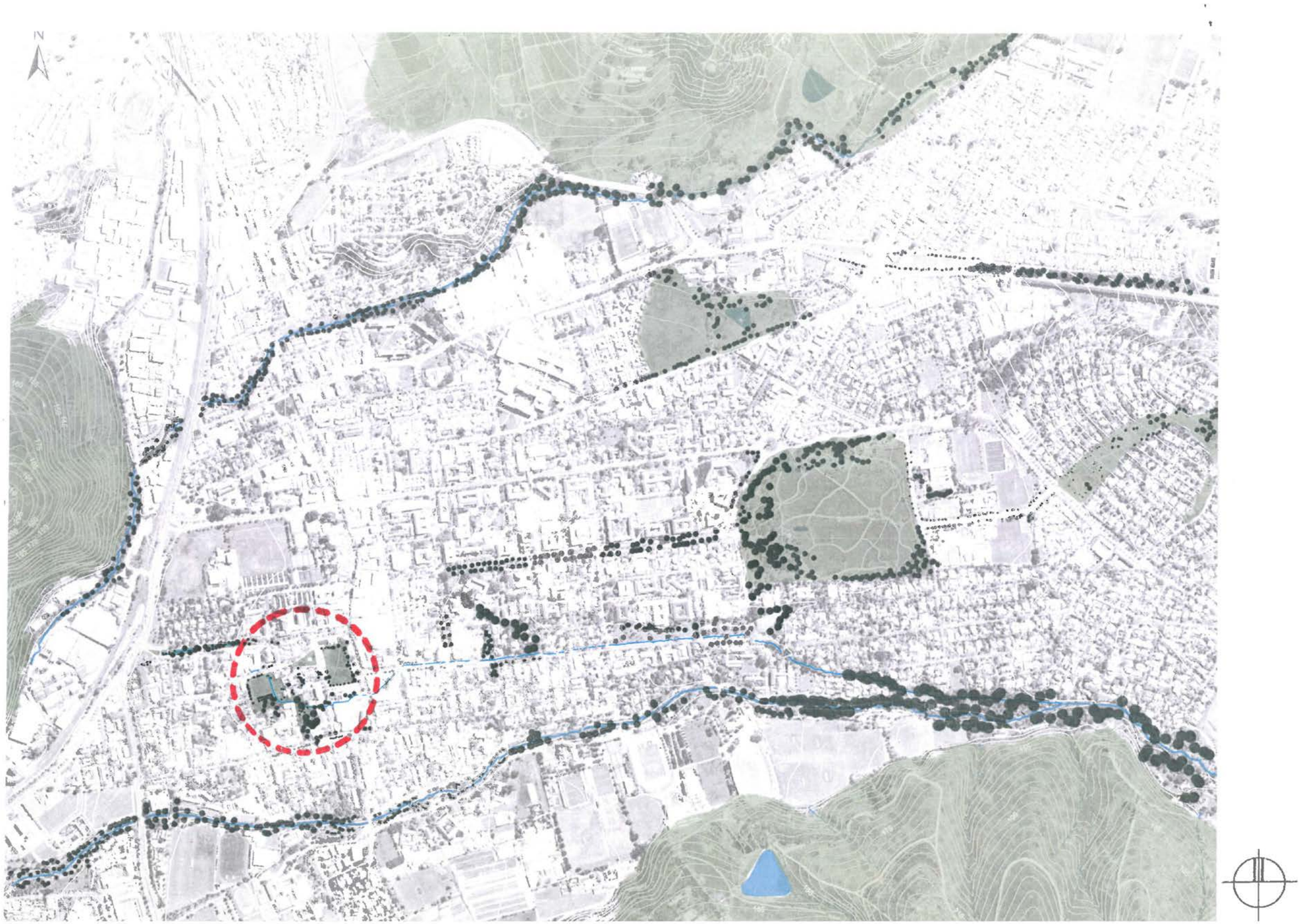


Figure 1: Location of the Precinct

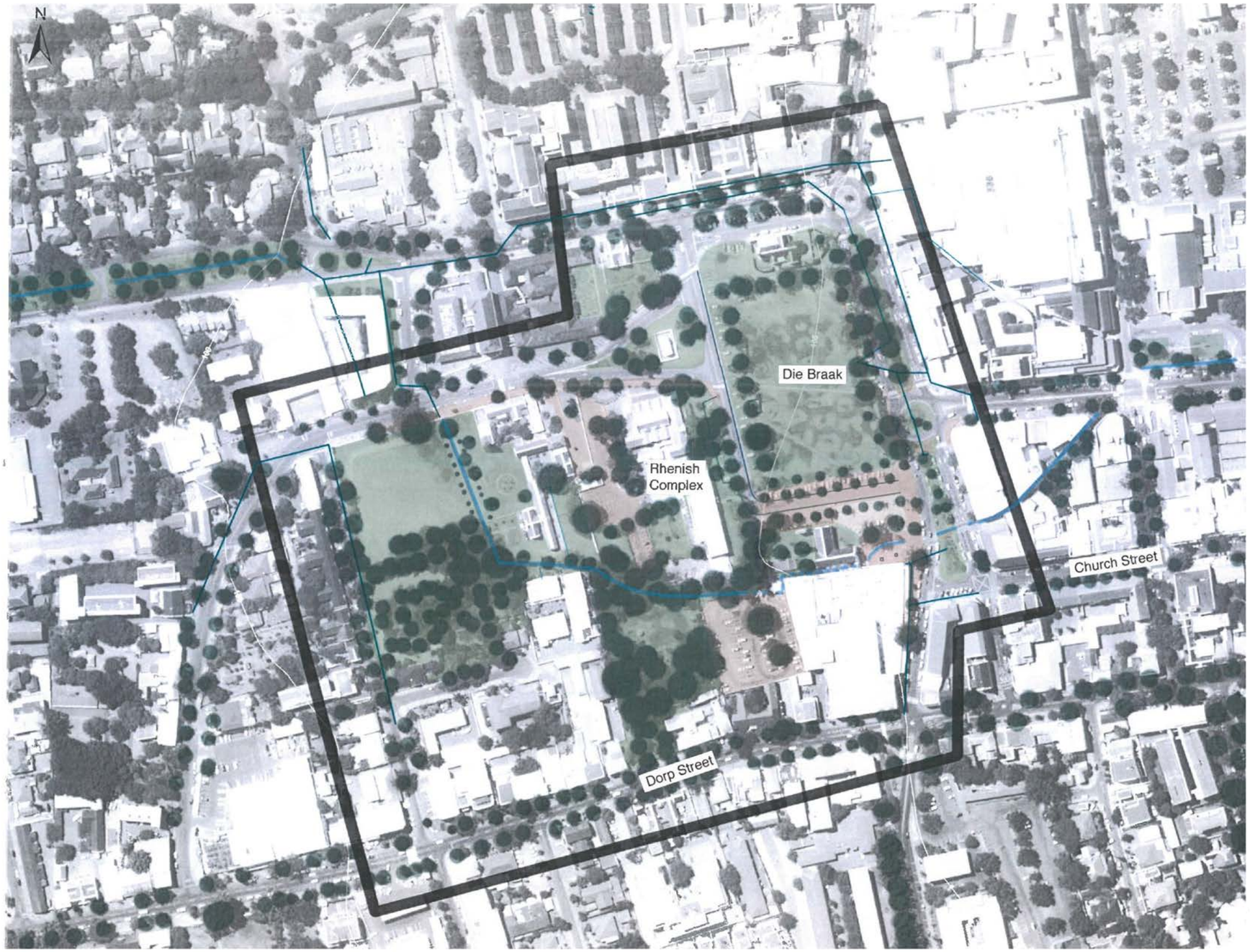


Figure 2: Study Area in relation to the Landscape Context

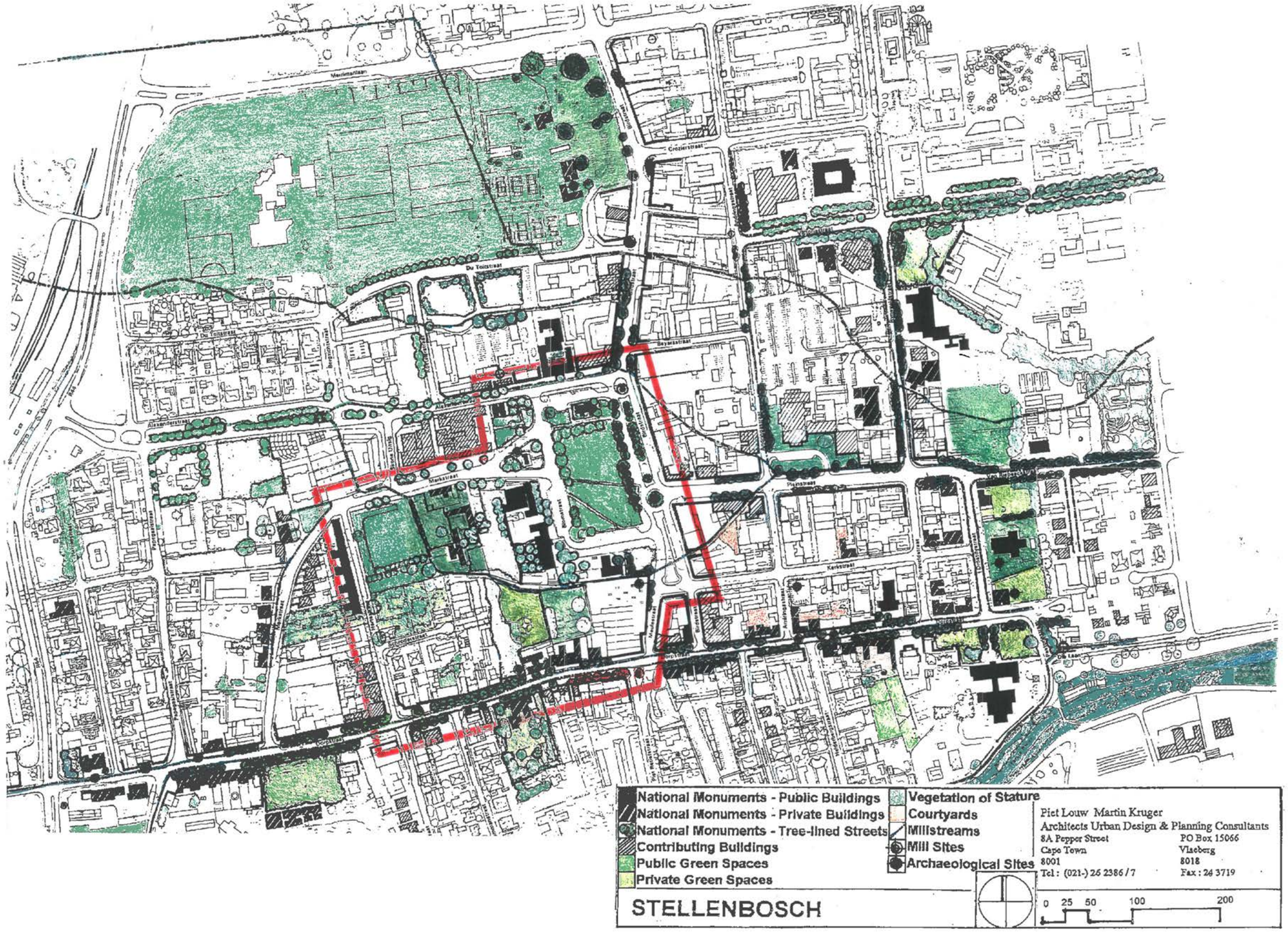


Figure 3: Study Area in relation to previously identified Heritage Resources

2. APPROACH

Firstly, the approach and working method adopted is multi-scaled as each scale of consideration impacts on the next scale up and down.

Secondly, the approach proposed is process orientated, and which will bring about change and improvement as a series of steps. This approach is consistent with generally accepted international trends where change is brought about through tactical thinking using interim measures and generating meanwhile uses while building towards a desired end condition.

The over-riding thrust is to set in place shared space which can accommodate many users. A high degree of flexibility and ensuring that public and common space is multi-functional, dominates the thinking and approach in the exploration of the possibilities.

At the same time, all safety, functional and emergency service requirements have to be satisfied. These include access for emergency (fire brigade, ambulance), service (refuse truck) and delivery vehicles.

Therefore, In order to unlock the site, the strategy needs to take cognizance of devices which embrace thinking about the following trends:

- Tactical Urbanism
- Recognizing Food and Water Security Issues
- Interim Measures and Meanwhile Uses
- Place-making through Design
- The Concept of Cultural and Creative Hub

2.1. The Concept of Cultural and Creative Hub

At an international level, considerable thinking has occurred around the subject of creative and cultural hubs as a means of regenerating under-utilized and strategically located parts of towns, cities and urban areas. These trends have recognized that:

- Art and Culture are one of the most promising avenues to revitalize cities and neighbourhoods.
- A city without a vibrant, diverse cultural life holds little appeal.
- A cultural and creative field is often anchored by specific places.
- These places are mixed-use meeting places for creative minds.
- Places where cross-fertilization between different user lead to new programming and the exchange of visitor and customer groups.
- These places are known as culture houses, art buildings or multifunctional centres, and they often brand new structures such as library, theatre, welfare facilities and resource learning facilities.
- If the culture houses are at one end of the spectrum, at the other end are temporary creative and cultural initiatives.
- Abandoned or underutilized properties can be leased for a modest rent, on a short or longer term basis, as live-work spaces for artists and creatives.
- Their creative endeavors generate a buzz and attract new people, thus enhancing the areas's quality of life, and thus its monetary value.
- This type of place-making has proved to be an extraordinarily successful strategy for many real-estate owners, developers and city and town councils.
- Several companies have now built their business model around starting and running this particular kind of temporary sites.

2.2. Some Principles and Ingredients for Running Successful Cultural Hubs:

Some internationally accepted practices have suggested that the following ingredients are required to enable a successful outcome.

- Find a smart mix of functions and users
- Create a sharp brand and positioning
- Share ownership and a common goal
- Earn local support
- Build a sustainable business model with a triple bottom line, which is the idea of 'multiple value creation'
- In 'multiple value creation' economic, ecological and social values are in balance
- Cultivate an active community
- Serve a real need
- Work with what is already there
- Carry out an area assessment – identify current initiatives and spaces, and how they can be strengthened
- Invest in making a space permanent

3. THE STARTING POINT

The starting point of the study, therefore, is not a re-hash of heritage-related issues or a narrow building-based definition of heritage resources. Rather, it begins with the identification of indicators which are of relevance from a context, townscape and streetscape perspective. The basic position is that the central issue is not simply the protection of historical heritage resources but ensuring that each new development is respectful of the resources and through change contributes to a steady improving future.

The study identified a number of scales of consideration in order to determine which informants impact on the site. The scales are the local area scale, the site and environs scale, the site and immediate environs scale and the site scale.

4. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The analysis focuses on spatial and settlement structure, and covers two broad categories. These are from a historic perspective followed by urban design and structural considerations.

4.1. Historic Context - Some Observations

Figures 4, 5, 6 and 7 show the historical development and the spatial evolution of the town. A number of observations require mentioning:

- The study area is located in the heart of the historic core of the town.
- The edges of the settlement superblocks are gradually firmed up over time.
- The superblocks are predominantly of orthogonal geometric shapes.
- The resultant grid offers urban permeability and choices of route.
- The main spaces are cadastrally of orthogonal shape and edged by buildings (Mark Plein, Die Braak and Meul Plein, except for their western sides, which are ‘looser’ in definition.
- Noteworthy is the diagonal line through the middle of Die Braak in the evolution of the settlement, in the form of a linear space as a desire line.
- The ‘Braak’ space is strongly edged with a double row of trees, at least in intent to ‘box the space’ in a well-defined rectangular shape, 1817.
- The growth of the town through infilling did not divert from the patterns described above.
- There is a clear spatial structure to the settlement.

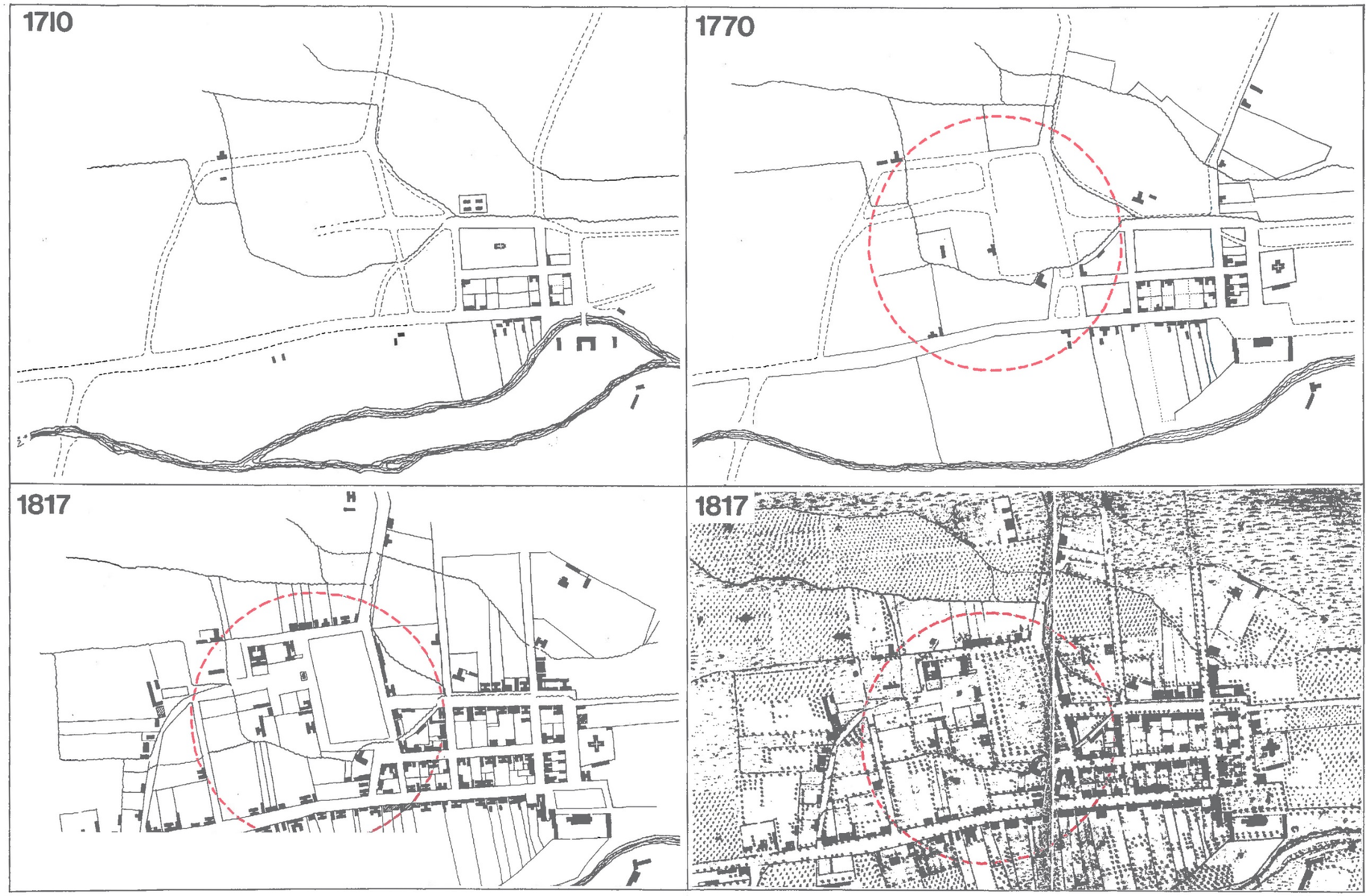


Figure 4: Historical Development and Spatial Evolution (1710-1817)

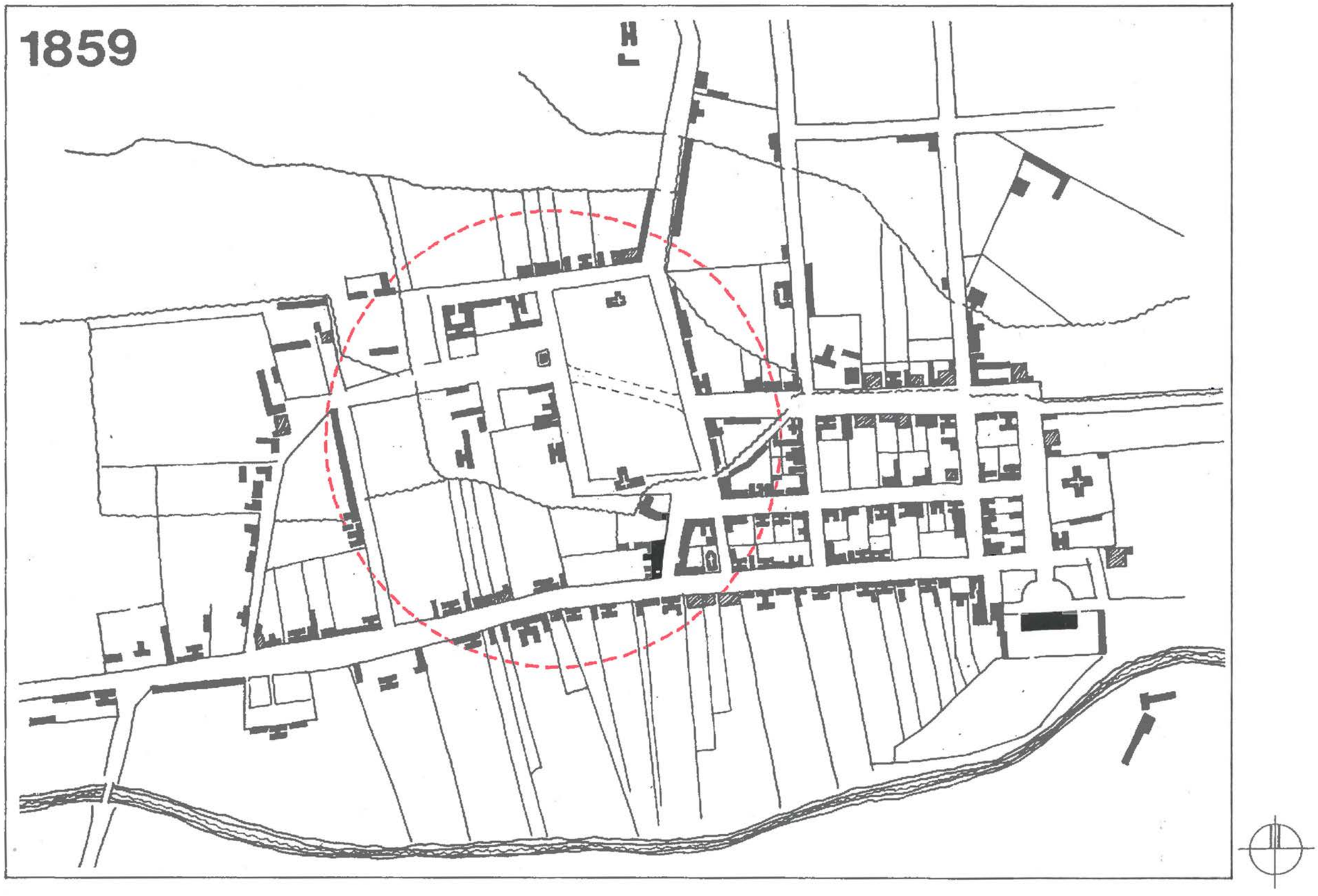


Figure 5: Historical Development and Spatial Evolution (1859)

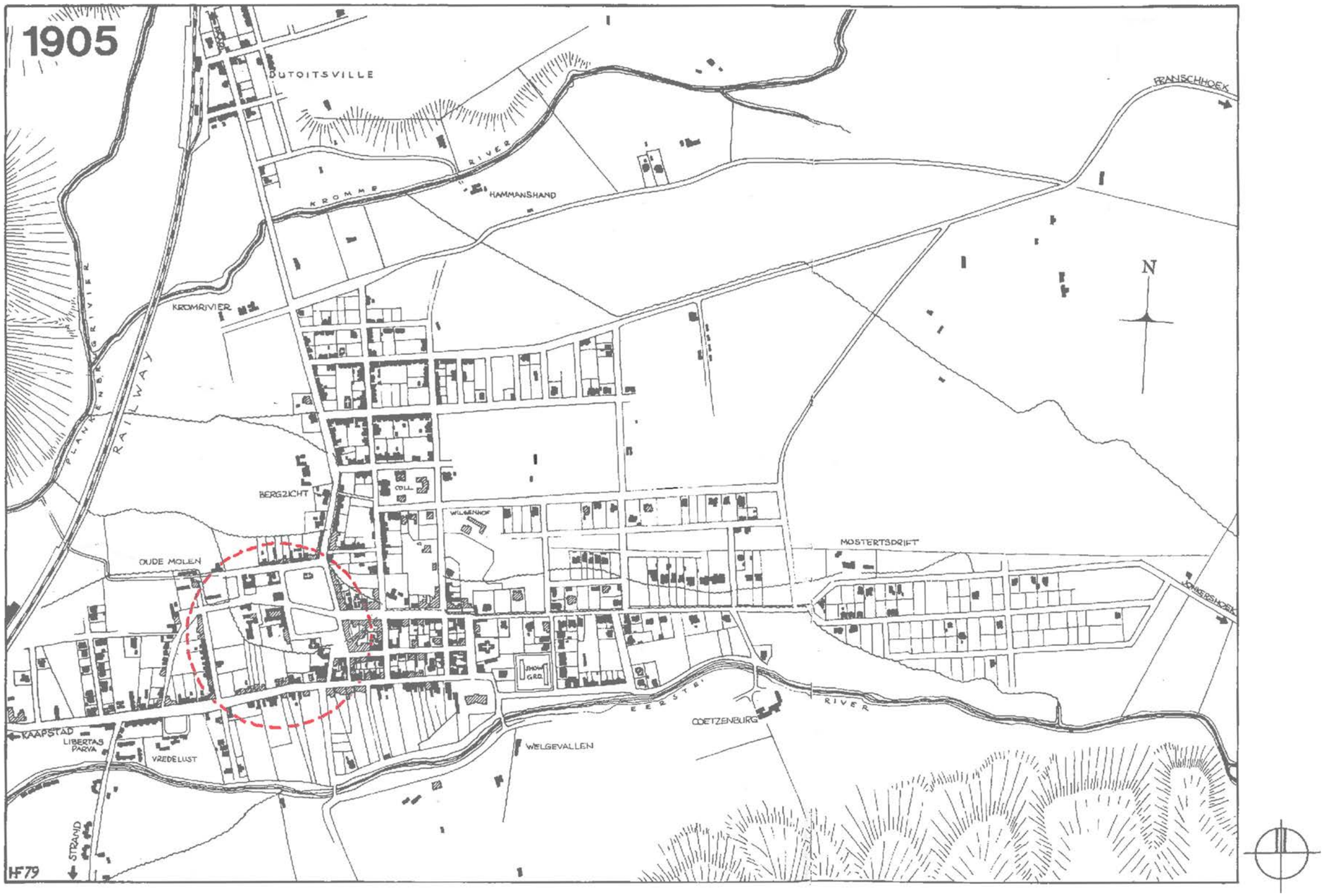


Figure 6: Historical Development and Spatial Evolution (1905)

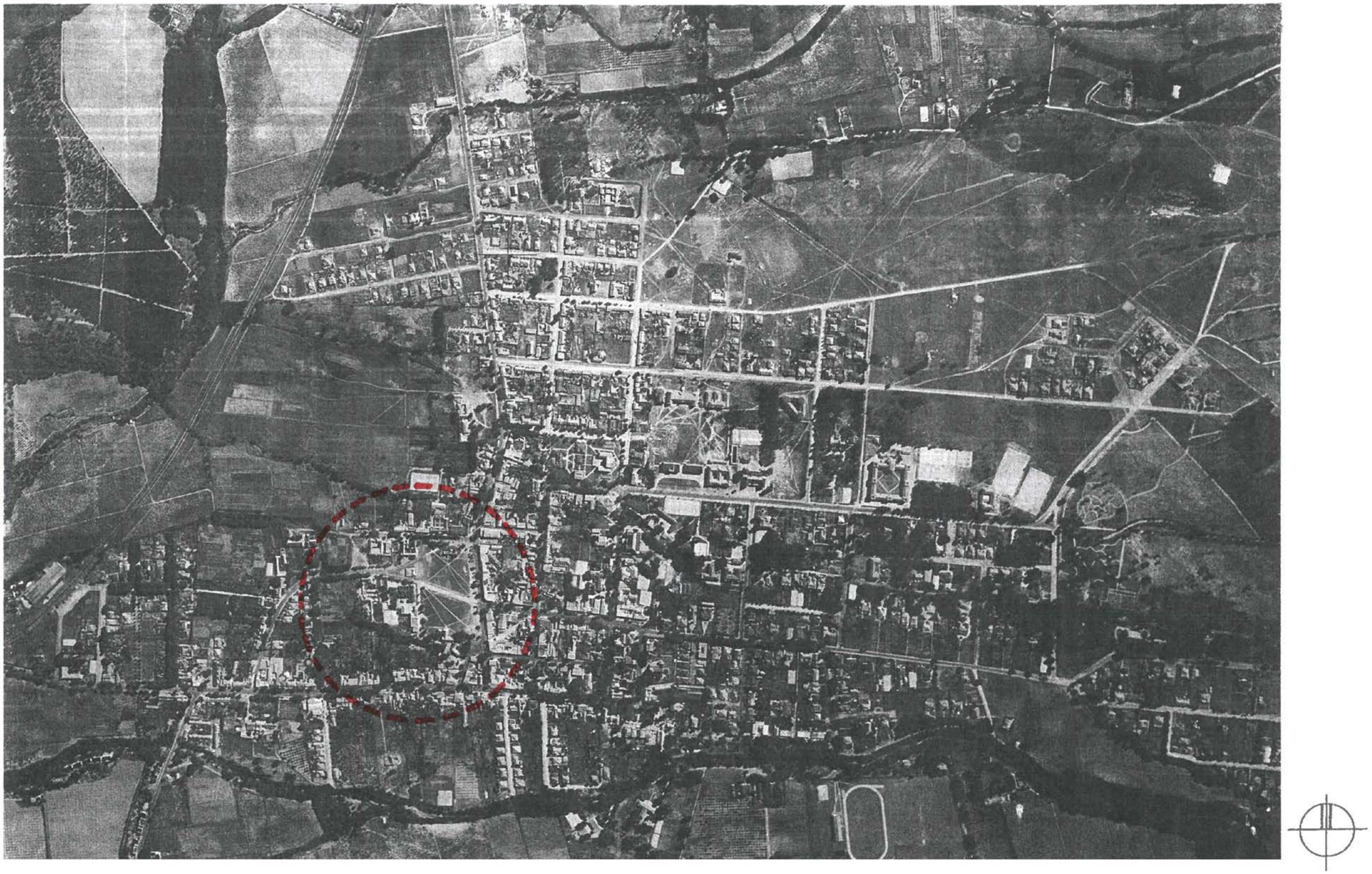


Figure 7: Historical Development and Spatial Evolution (1937)

4.2. Urban Design and Structural Considerations

At the precinct and environs scale, a number of analytic observations and interpretations point to constraints and informants which impact on the study area. The precinct and its environs are interrogated from an urban structural and design perspective and contain the following layers of consideration:

- The superblock system and their sizes, and the notion of urban permeability;
- The dominant activity energy zones in the precinct;
- The definition and nature of the edges of 'Die Braak' space;
- Edge conditions of the superblocks in the precinct;
- Building placements and the resulting public/private gradients.

Each layer is described and illustrated separately.

4.2.1 The Superblock System and their Sizes, and Urban Permeability (Figure 8) -

- The system and pattern of superblocks indicate their respective sizes, varying in shape and area. The superblock of the study area is distinctly larger than the surrounding ones, and constitutes a blockage, in urban permeability terms.
- The 'fish-bone' effect of Dorp Street, which offers fine-grain accessibility, is severely compromised by the length of the block, some three hundred meters.
- A finer pattern of access through the block should increase permeability, at least in pedestrian and bicycle terms.

Figure 8: The Precinct and Environs Scale: Urban Design and Structural Considerations - The Superblock System, their Sizes and Urban Permeability

4.2.2 Dominant Activity Energy Zones (Figure 9) -

- Two dominant energy zones impact on the site,
  - the activity along Dorp Street towards the ‘midde-dorp’ south of the superblock.
  - the pedestrian flows to and from the railway station precinct to the ‘midde-dorp’ north of the superblock.
- There is limited pedestrian flows and urban activity energy along Herte Street on the west.

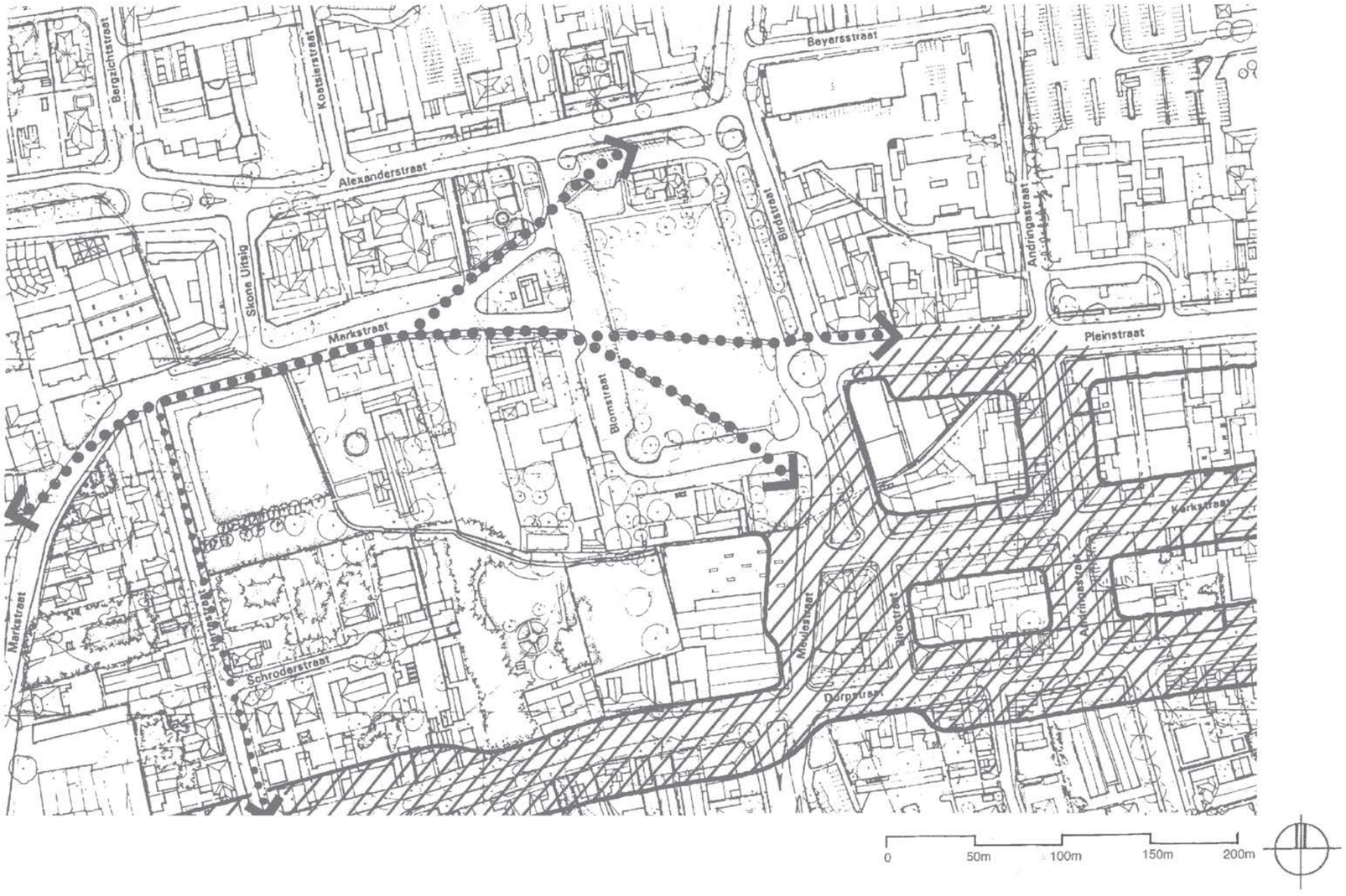


Figure 9: The Precinct and Environs Scale: Urban Design and Structural Considerations - Dominant Activity Energy Zones

4.2.3 The Definition and Nature of the Edges of 'Die Braak' space (Figure 10) -

- The edges of 'Die Braak' space is strongly and firmly defined on the north, east and part-south.
- In cross-section terms, the edge is layered with many interacting urban and townscape elements contributing to the edge definition. It is not just a single vertical line.
- The western and southern edges are 'looser' and semi-fragmented in definition with buildings appearing as free-standing objects with cadastral boundary treatments holding these edges together, in some fragile form.

Figure 10: The Precinct and Environs Scale: Urban Design and Structural Considerations - Definition and Nature of the Edges of 'Die Braak' Spac

4.2.4 Edge Conditions of the Superblocks (Figure 11) -

- Different edge conditions contribute to the street and public space interfaces:
  - Dead edge
  - Planted dead edge
  - Transparent edge
  - Planted transparent edge
  - Vehicle access
  - Pedestrian access
  - Overlooking feature
- The different edges of the superblock site basically create a dead edge around its periphery.

Figure 11: The Precinct and Environs Scale: Urban Design and Structural Considerations - Edge Conditions of the Superblocks

4.2.5 Building Placements and Public/Private Gradients (Figure 12) -

- There is confusion about the clarity of the privacy gradient as it is difficult to comprehend and orientate which parts of the buildings are fronts and which are rears. The ad-hoc installations of security fencing between the buildings is proof of this.

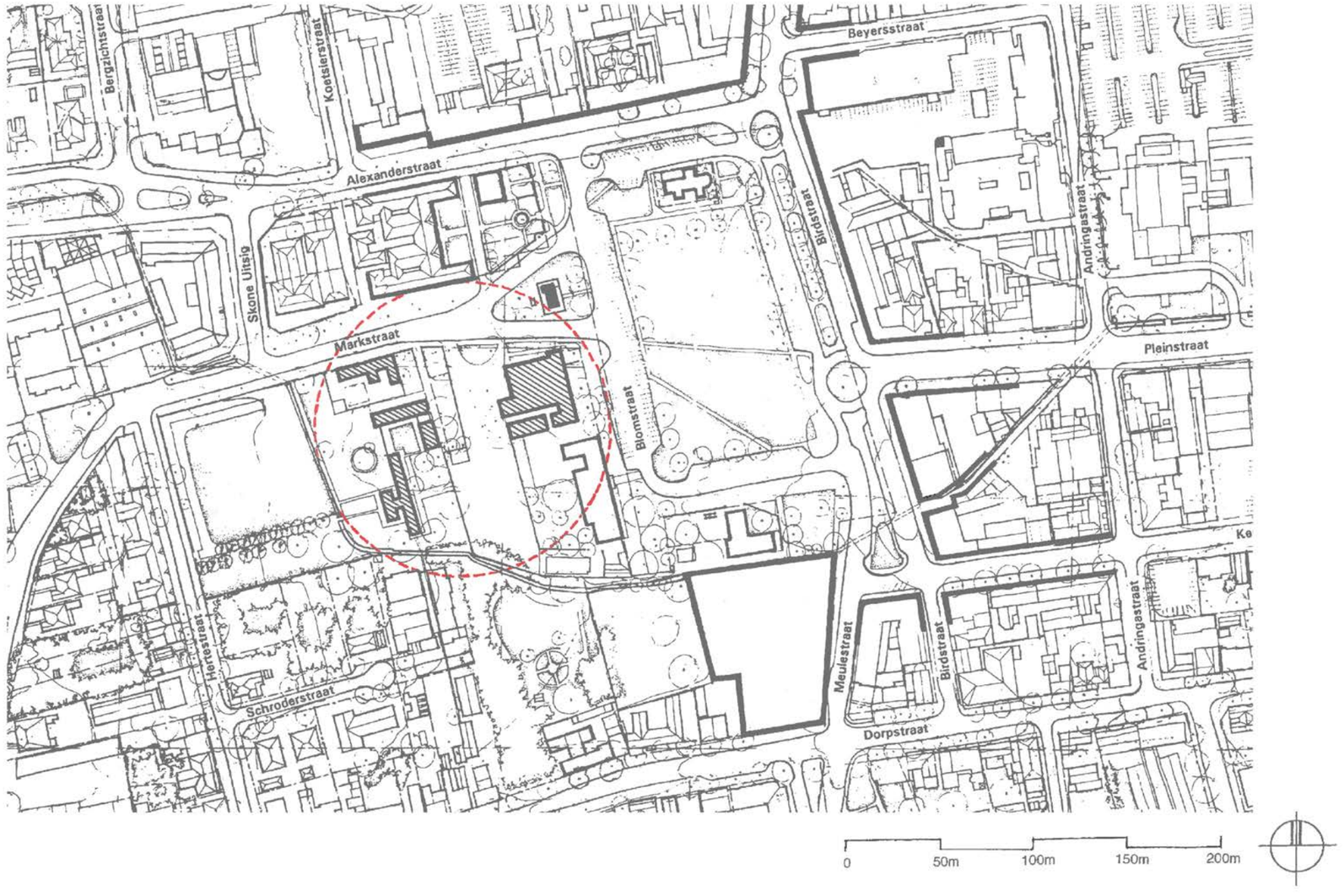


Figure 12: The Precinct and Environs Scale: Urban Design and Structural Considerations - Site-related Building Footprints and Public/Private Gradients

4.3. Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Activation Opportunities (Figure 13)

The Rhenish Precinct is a future-focussed initiative that looks to demonstrate a resilient vision for our urban centres. It is a place of health and abundance where communities can come together to share in their collective heritage and enjoy the range of amenities provided within this fascinating cultural landscape.

Income generated by the precinct is invested into the further development of the site and in the training of interns in horticulture, sales and marketing, event coordination, hospitality, urban landscaping, and maintenance. The design has transformed a semi-derelict site into a verdant working landscape, creating spaces that are both beautiful and functional and connects visitors to the production of their food, while creating a memorable immersive experience for communities in nature.

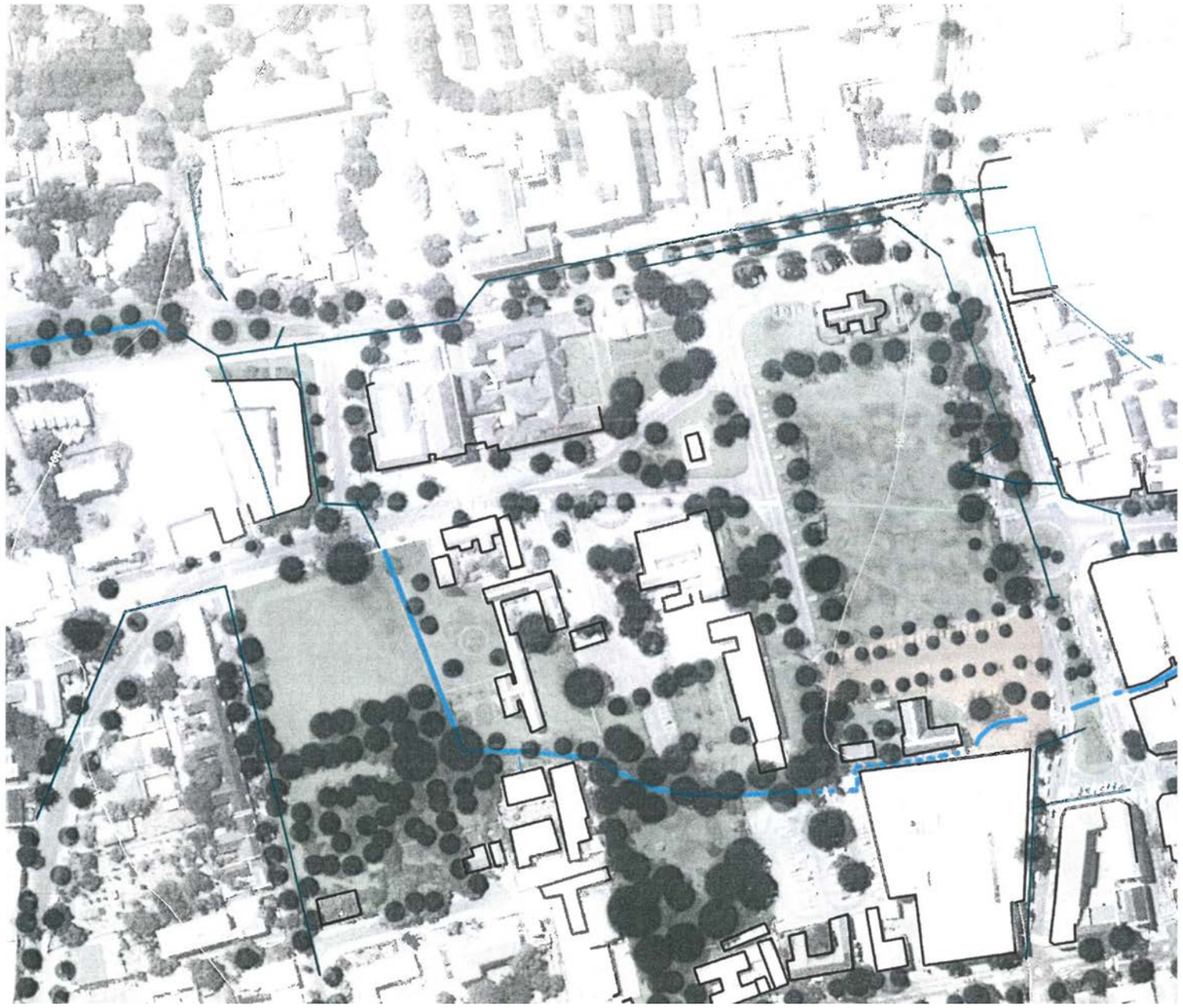


Figure 13: The Precinct and Environs Scale: Broad Landscape Considerations - Character Zones, Assets and Problems

The Rhenish precinct provides an opportunity to bring agricultural and urban life together as the confluence of farming and cultural landscapes. Central Stellenbosch is bounded by two rivers and forms the urban heart of the Cape Winelands. A strong landscape masterplan, consolidated visual identity of street furniture and landscape elements and integrated site management will all be essential to enable the success of the precinct.

4.3.1 Stellenbosch Urban Farm

The Stellenbosch Urban Farm laid out “in front” of the historic Voorgelegen homestead is the productive heart of the town. It provides an abundance of fresh produce that is supplemented by local farms for the daily Groentemark in the open air Voorgelegen courtyard.

The farm supplies a mix of everyday fruit and vegetable crops along with heirloom varieties, specialist herbs, cut flowers, fynbos honey from the apiary and medicinal, aromatic, and ornamental plants from the Binnetuin. The food crops are irrigated with water furrows supplied by the historic Mill Stream which connects people along a meandering path back to the Braak.

The building adjacent to Voorgelegen houses a new restaurant and bar that showcases the garden’s daily harvest of diverse fresh produce. In the mornings, it serves the sunny courtyard terrace at the back of Voorgelegen, offering breakfasts, coffees and baked goods for people working in the area and marketgoers. In the afternoon and evenings, the restaurant opens out onto the back terrace, overlooking the working farm for lunch, sundowners, and dinners.

The layout of the farm ensures maximum production but is also designed as a beautiful food garden that attracts visitors. Marquee spaces allow the restaurant to cater for larger events such as weddings, birthdays, harvest festivals or graduation parties while the farm and Binnetuin offer sought-after settings for event photography.

Babylonstoren
Paarl, Western Cape

Coogee Common
Perth, Western Australia

The Grounds of Alexandria
Sydney, New South Wales

Oranjezicht City Farm
Oranjezicht, Cape Town

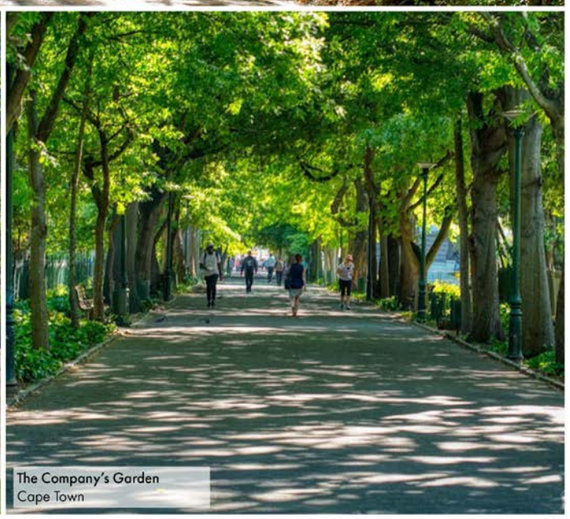
4.3.2 Die Binnetuin

The historic Binnetuin has been substantially transformed since it was designed as a Victorian Garden by Otto Hager in 1859. While some of the trees and plantings are part of the original design, the garden has fallen into disrepair and has lost much of its charm. With a renewed vision for the rejuvenation of the Rhenish Precinct, an opportunity exists to develop this garden into a valuable amenity space for future generations. Part of this strategy has to involve a sustainable approach to garden planning and maintenance.

The mature trees, ornamental plantings and the historic Mill Stream contribute a sense of tranquillity to this walled garden. They provide clues for the future direction of the landscape. The Binnetuin is envisaged as a contemplative peace garden where locals and visitors can escape their busy urban environment and enter a tranquil retreat in nature. A new reflection pond serves as a biofiltration basin that filters stormwater from the surrounding precinct and feeds that into the Mill Stream for irrigation of the Urban Farm and gardens. Tables and chairs and lawns are provided for people wanting to relax, meet up for lunch or picnic after shopping at the market.

Arderne Gardens
Claremont, Cape Town

Trafalgar Park (historically)
Woodstock, Cape Town



The Company's Garden
Cape Town

Various ornamental, aromatic and medicinal plants are selected and grown to be harvested for sales or as stock plants to be grown at the Urban Farm nursery. Together with the farm, the Binnetuin is an ideal training ground for interns wanting to develop horticultural and landscape skills that are so desperately in demand in our cities. The garden is the perfect spot for birthdays and as a venue for garden ceremonies and wedding photos. While the garden is not predominantly a play park, nature play structures encourage kids to have fun while exploring the garden.

Notable plants:

- *Cinnamomum camphora*
- *Angophora costata* = Australian Apple Myrtle
- *Syzigium jambos* = Rose scented fruit in confectionery / crystallized fruit.
- *Camellia japonica*
- *Cupressus sempervirens*
- *Magnolia grandiflora*
- *Quercus robor and hydrangeas*
- Sections for vegetables, roses, bulbs, shrubs, fruit trees.
- Rambling roses formed hedges that lined the paths.

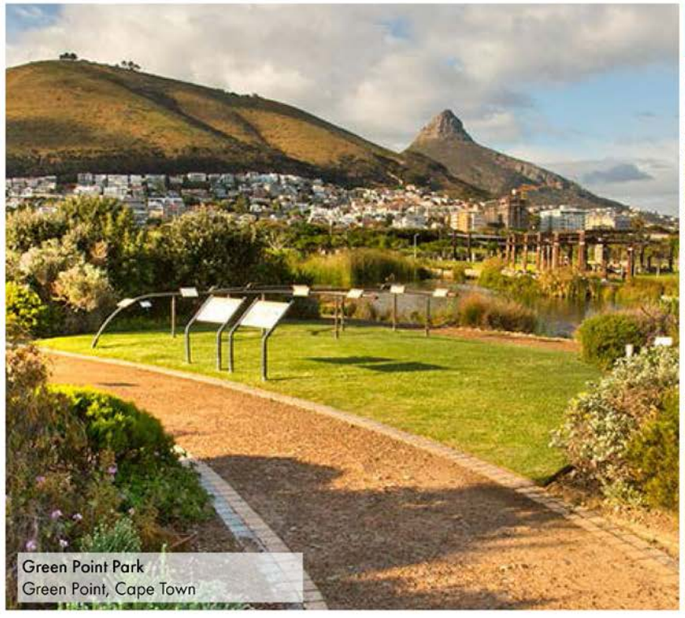
4.3.3 Die Braak

Die Braak is an open program ‘village green’ that can host a large variety of events from festivals to the start and finish of sporting events, larger markets, informal sports, and community exercise grounds. Every effort should be made to retain the multifunctional nature of the grounds.

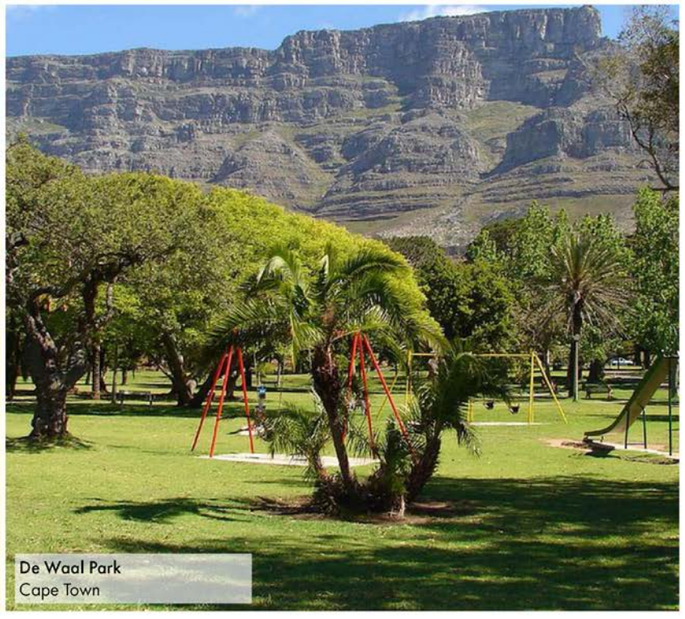
The edges, however, can accommodate a range of complementary amenity functions. A well designed and appropriated scaled and contextually relevant, all ages and abilities playground could be included to the south. A destination playground when coupled with retail and park amenities can generate substantial activity in the area.

Over time the roads surrounding Die Braak should be pedestrian prioritised and form part of the park. Edges should be consolidated and shaded. The incorporation of and interactive swale edge on the western edge provides a range of seating opportunities in the shade while the swale directs water to the tree’s roots. Outdoor exercise equipment can also be included along the shaded edges of the park along with picnic table and potentially some food kiosks. Large events such as outdoor cinema and concerts should also be considered and include multifunctional infrastructure such as a stage, lighting, and sound connections.

Kirstenbosch Botanical Garden
Newlands, Cape Town



Green Point Park
Green Point, Cape Town



De Waal Park
Cape Town

4.4. Identifying Main Constraints and Informants (Figure 14)

4.4.1 Urban design-related Informants:

In the analysis and interpretation, the following main constraints and informants impacting on the study area have been identified. These are graphically illustrated in Figure 14 and need to be addressed and considered in the outcome of a layout.

a. The clearly defined northern and eastern edges of 'Die Braak' versus the fragmented edge condition along the western and southern edges thereof.
b. The relationship of the site to firstly, the activity energy zone along Dorp Street and secondly, to the pedestrian flows along the northern edge of the site.
c. The boxed-in nature of the site.
d. The blockage effect of the overall superblock due to its size and length of boundaries along the streets.
e. The open space through the superblock generally not recognized as a graded heritage resource.
f. The poor water quality of the lei-water sloot system.
g. The dead-edge nature of most of the Shoprite/Checkers-complex.
h. The significance of the Meul Plein sub-precinct to provide continuity between the Rhenish/Braak precinct and the Church Street precinct.

4.4.2 Technical Informants

Some additional factors with technical requirements which influence the design of the layout must be incorporated. These are:

- Emergency vehicle requirements
- Service vehicle requirements
- Local access requirements
- Delivery vehicle requirements
- Universal access requirements
- Generally acceptable and comfortable pedestrian space requirements

4.4.3 Townscape and Landscape Informants

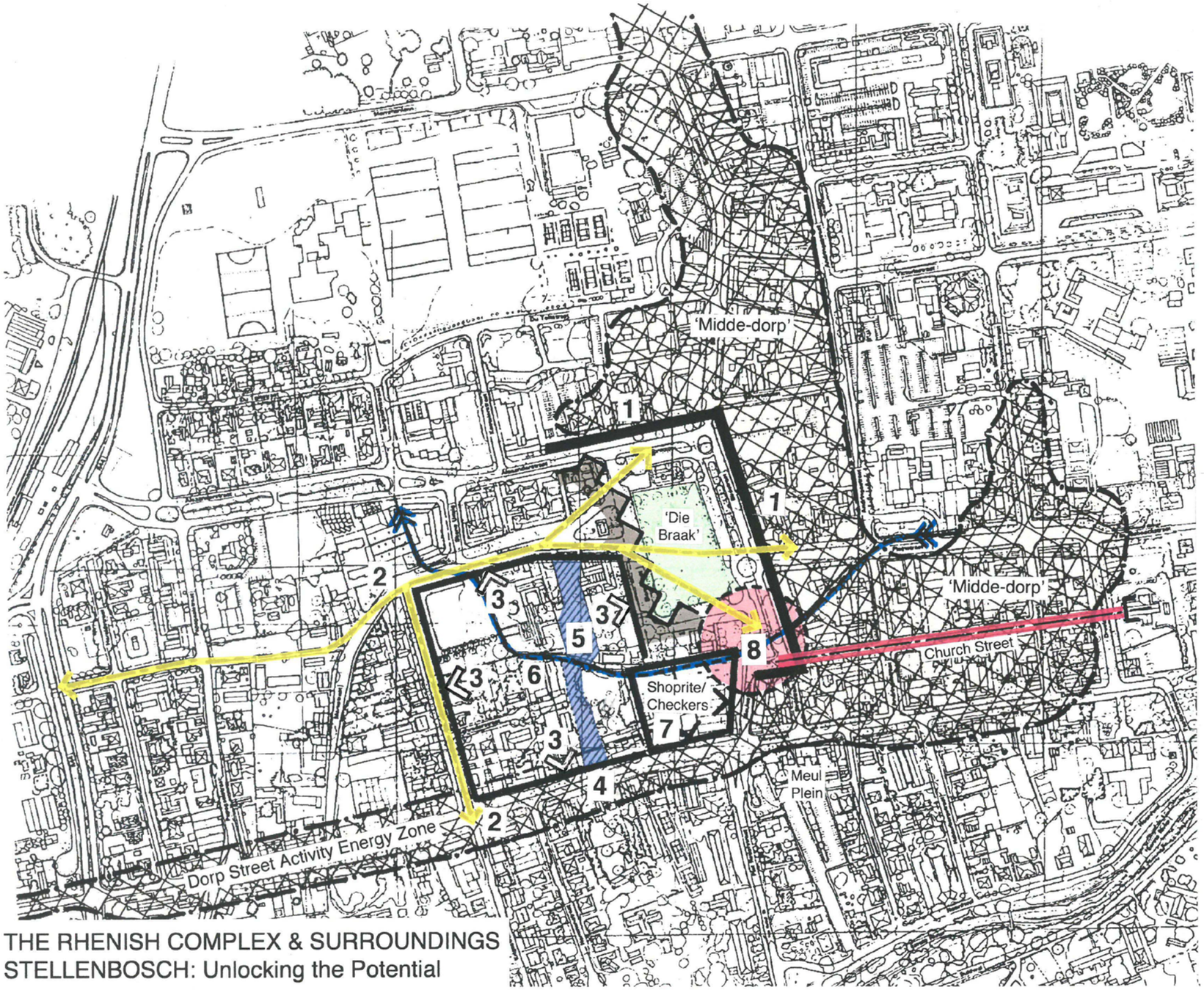
Further townscape and landscape elements which need to be incorporated into the composition of the layout:

- Surface treatment
- Storm water layout and management
- Trees and soft landscaping
- Artwork
- Street furniture
- Signage (directional, information, event specific)
- Lighting and power supply

4.4.4 Spatial Informants

Spatially, the following design principles should guide and enrich the spatial outcome and therefore take the layout beyond a purely functional resolution only:

- The idea of Pedestrian Priority and Amenity Space.
- The idea of Minimizing Vertical Surface Separation to enable convenient universal access.



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7. The dead-edge nature of most of the Shoprite/ Checkers-complex.
8. The significance of the Meul Plein sub-precinct to provide continuity between the Rhenish/Braak precinct and the Church Street precinct.

Figure 14: The Precinct and Environs Scale: Urban Design and Structural Considerations - Main Constraints and Informants

4.5. Photographic Survey

Selected views of different portions of the precinct are illustrated in the photographic survey. An orientation sheet provides reference and orientation to the naming of the parts of the descriptions. The sheet and its intention is borrowed from 'Heritage Study, Binnetuin Park, Stellenbosch; Pistorius and Harris, 2005', and has been edited to read as follows:

> Generally well-known names are associated with the pedestrian network through and around the inner gardens of the area south west of the Braak: Voorgelegen, the Rhenish Parsonage and so on.
>
> The map shows the significant parts in the study area, which have been called "Binnetuin Park". A few other places have been named, such as the carpark behind Checkers "The Old Mill garden" and the lateral building at the north end of the Rhenish Parsonage is called "Long House".

These names appear on the orientation sheet and on Figure 28, Refined Layout and Estimated Street-related Parking Capacity in the Precinct.

Photographic Survey Reference Plan

Photographic Survey Imagery

Figure 15: View along Market Street looking west from pavement between Powder Magazine Kruithuis and Rhenish School.

Figure 16: View from Market Street looking south-west into area behind the Rhenish School.

Figure 17: View looking south into area behind the Rhenish School.

Figure 18: View of Leipoldt Court looking south.

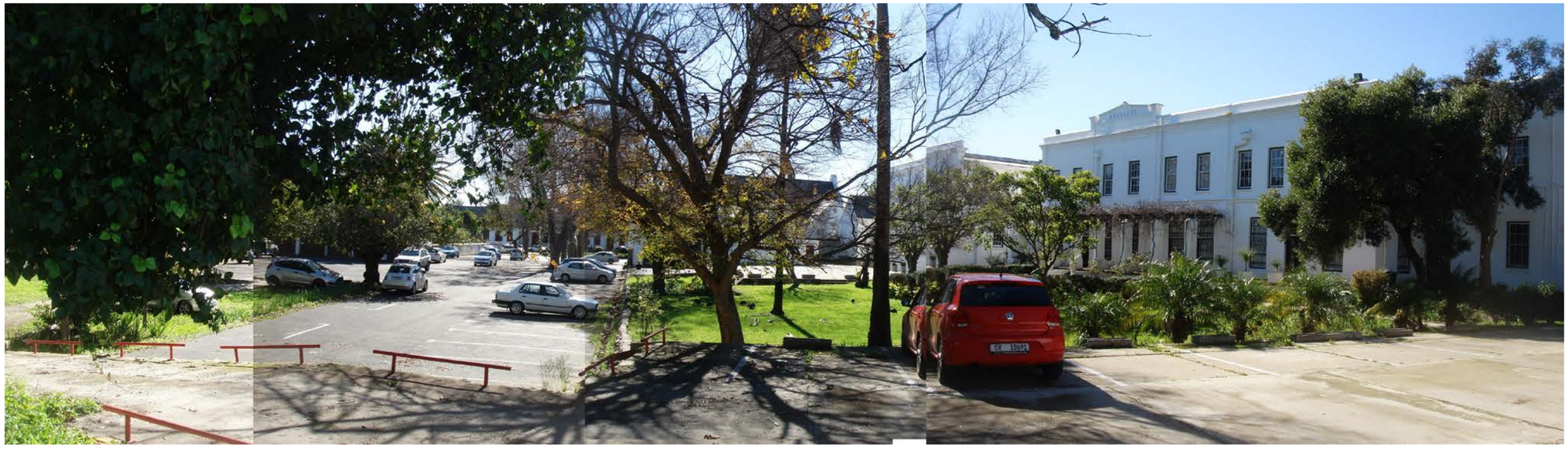


Figure 19: View of Rhenish Institute upper terrace garden and lower terrace carpark looking north.

Figure 20: View of lower terrace carpark of Rhenish Institute looking south-west.

Figure 21: View of parking garages separating current parking area spaces behind Rhenish School and Institute buildings.

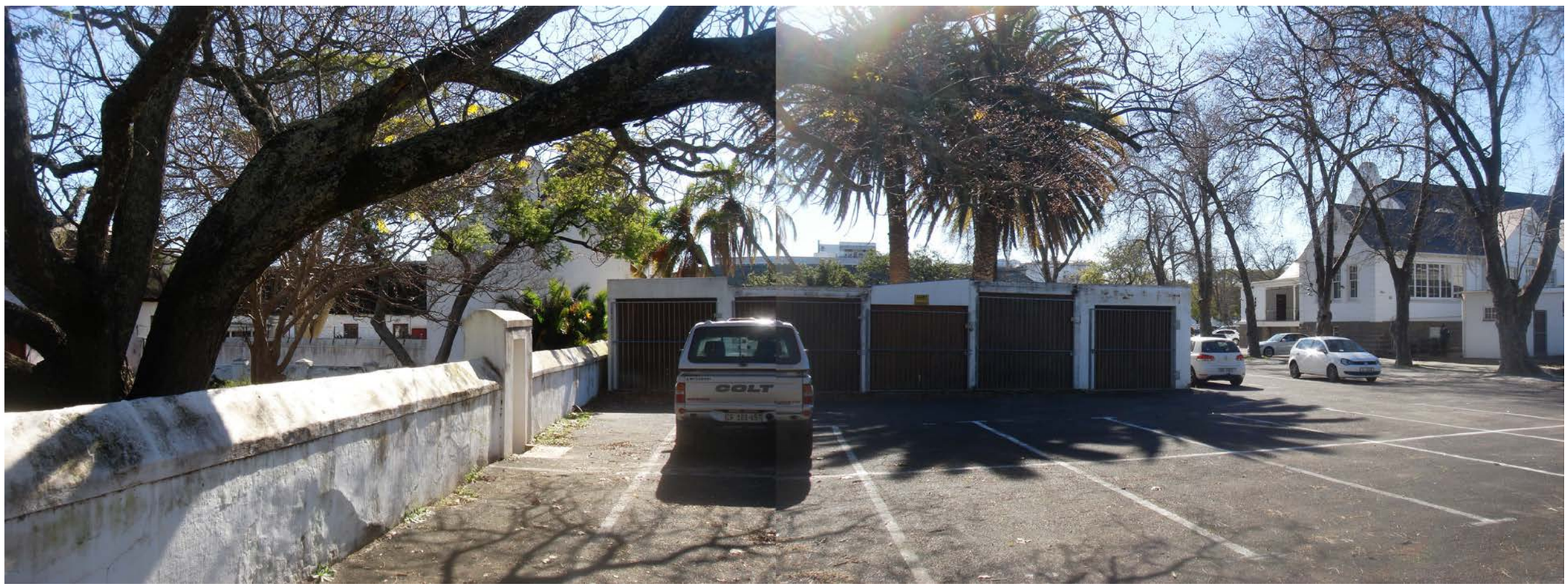


Figure 22: View of garages causing spatial blockage.

Figure 23: View of Rhenish Institute upper terrace garden and lower terrace carpark looking north-west from the previous Institute swimming bath area.

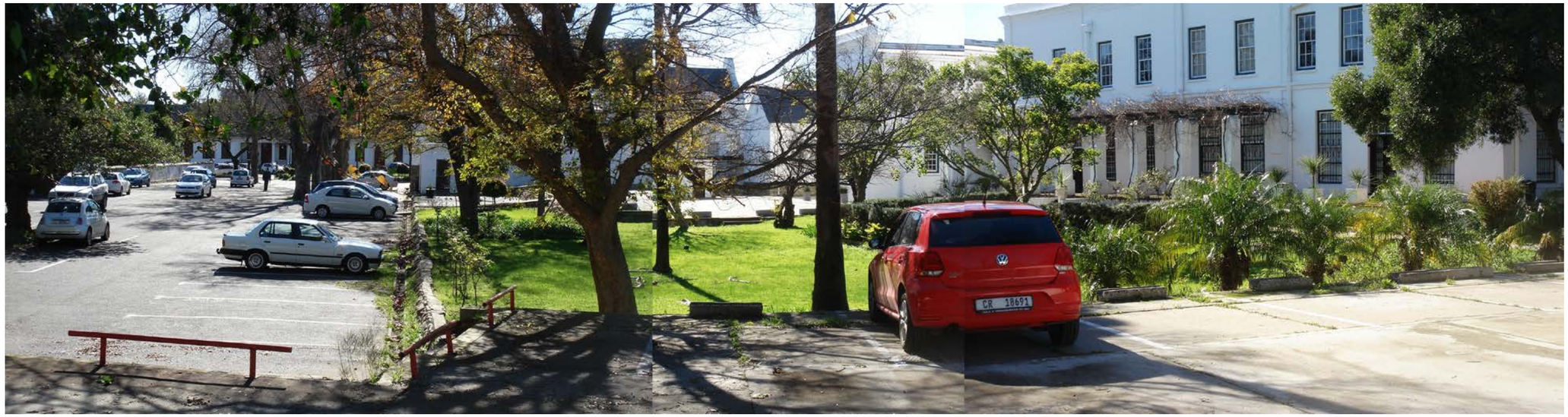


Figure 24: View of Rhenish Institute upper terrace garden and lower terrace carpark looking north from the previous Institute swimming bath area.

Figure 25: View of wall separating Rhenish lower terrace carpark and area behind the Rhenish Parsonage looking south.

Figure 26: View of Rhenish Institute upper terrace garden and lower terrace carpark looking south.

Figure 27: View from western edge of 'Die Braak' through the space between the Rhenish School and Rhenish Institute buildings looking west.

Figure 28: View from Dorp Street looking north towards the Voorgelegen side garden.

Figure 29: View from Meule Street looking across Meul Plein towards 'Die Braak' in a north-west direction.

Figure 30: View from Bird Street looking across 'Die Braak' in a westerly direction.

5. MAIN IDEAS

A number of ideas drive the spatial outcome of the proposals. These are captured in figures 31 and 32 followed by three perspectives and a photograph to convey the desired characters of the design ideas. The layers making up the overall concept are unpacked and illustrated separately with descriptions (figure 33 to 43).

5.1. Improving Urban Permeability (Figure 31)

To achieve improved integration and pedestrian convenience, the following ideas are proposed:

- Create mid-block connections between activity generators along desire lines to accommodate pedestrian, bicycle and emergency vehicles.
- The linkages should be direct with a high degree of visual transparency and pedestrian scaled lighting. A straight paved avenue (binne-tuin laan) is proposed.
- The entrances to these linkages to be managed for closure during specific times for security and surveillance reasons.
- Resolve the spatially confused condition of the Meul Plein precinct with pedestrian priority and sympathetic townscape qualities.

5.2. An Integrating Urban Design and Spatial Concept (Figure 32)

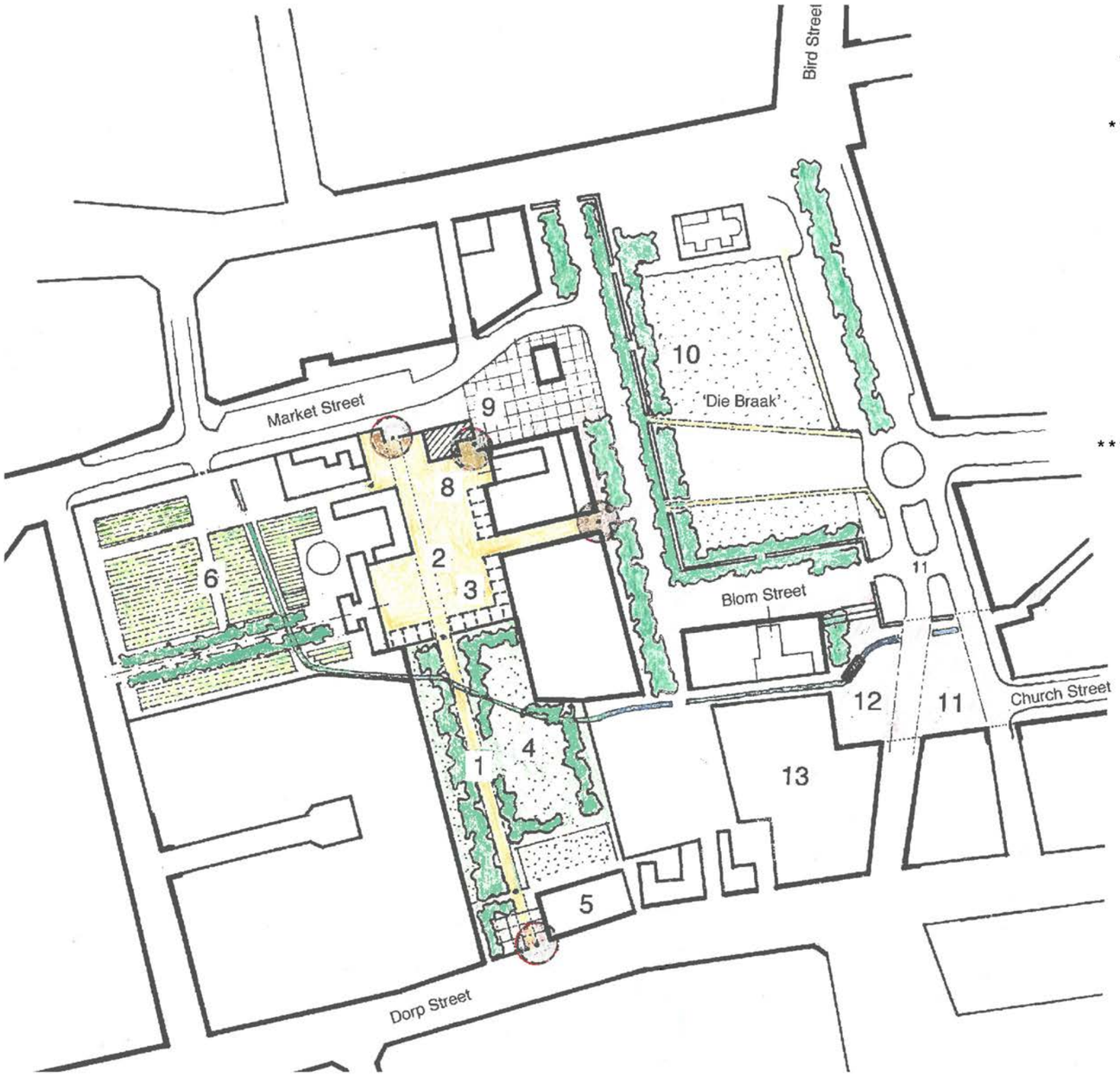
The design concept includes the following elements.

1. The creation of a mid-block connection in the form of a straight paved avenue between Dorp Street and Market Street with lockable control gates at the ends.
2. The creation of an urban resource hub space at the northern end of the avenue integrating the surrounding buildings into a central heart for the precinct. The access points to the buildings should all face onto the space.
3. The southern and eastern edges of the space should be edged with a roofed and rear-walled pergola structure suitably laid out for flexible market-related activities.
4. The ‘binne-tuin’ should be the subject of landscape treatment, including water management. The eastern edge of the garden should not be accessed from the Shoprite parking area.
5. The junction of the binne-tuin to Dorp Street should take the form of a commercial venture (restaurant, beerhouse) in the existing building with spilling out space onto a beer garden and tea garden, all accessed from the existing building. The building to the immediate east along Dorp Street should perform a supporting public-orientated function, although quieter.
6. The parsonage garden should be transformed into an agriculturally based vegetable and herb space with the produce sold from the market structure in the hub space on periodic days.
7. The uses within the existing buildings around the hub space should be community focused, with an emphasis on learning, access to resource management, arts, crafts and cultural activities.
8. To the north-eastern edge of the hub space, the entrance to the hall of the school should be transformed into a dignified forecourt space.
9. On this north-eastern corner, a new tourist information facility should be created on the edge of the market square precinct. The market square space should be re-instated to an orthogonal space and the through-traffic should be simplified to generate a more people friendly space around the ‘Kruithuis’.
10. The western and southern edge of ‘Die Braak’ space should be edged with a werf-type wall with openings which respond to the pedestrian desire-lines and paths. New tree-planting and associated stormwater swales compliment the making of this edge (see cross-sections).
11. The Meul Plein is reconfigured with the closure of the Church Street connection. A new westerly one-way connection for traffic circulation is created at the junction of Blom Street and Meul Street to give access to the parking on the western and southern edges of ‘Die Braak’.
12. Meul Plein is paved in one material and the water wheel is re-located in its original position.
13. The Shoprite-corner should be the subject of an action project in order to explore its improved potential.

The layout yields the following approximate areas in square meters:

- Agricultural precinct excluding building structures 9,600 sq m
- Main courtyard space (including market structure) 3,000 sq m
- Parsonage courtyard space (including market structure) 900 sq m
- Information centre and public toilets 248 sq m
- The Covered market structures 558 sq m

Figure 31: The Precinct and Environs Scale: Main Ideas - Improving Urban Permeability



The Main Ideas -

* 1. The creation of a mid-block connection in the form of a straight paved avenue between Dorp Street and Market Street with lockable control gates at the ends.

** 2. The creation of an urban resource hub space at the northern end of the avenue integrating the surrounding buildings into a central heart for the precinct. The access points to the buildings should all face onto the space.

3. The southern and eastern edges of the space should be edged with a roofed and rear-walled pergola structure suitably laid out for flexible market-related activities.

4. The 'binne-tuin' should be the subject of landscape treatment, including water management. The eastern edge of the garden should not be accessed from the Shoprite parking area.

5. The junction of the binne-tuin to Dorp Street should take the form of a commercial venture (restaurant, beerhouse) in the existing building with spilling out space onto a beer garden and tea garden, all accessed from the existing building. The building to the immediate east along Dorp Street should perform a supporting commercial and public-orientated function, although quieter.

*** 6. The parsonage garden should be transformed into an agriculturally based vegetable and herb space with the produce sold from the market structure in the hub space on periodic days.

7. The uses within the existing buildings around the hub space should be community focused, with an emphasis on learning, access to resource management, arts, crafts and cultural activities.

8. To the north-eastern edge of the hub space, the entrance to the hall of the school should be transformed into a dignified forecourt space.

9. On this north-eastern corner, a new tourist information facility should be created on the edge of the market square precinct. The market square space should be re-instated to an orthogonal space and the through-traffic should be simplified to generate a more people friendly space around the 'Kruithuis'.

10. The western and southern edge of 'Die Braak' space should be edged with a werf-type wall with openings which respond to the pedestrian desire-lines and paths. New tree-planting and associated stormwater swales compliment the making of this edge (see cross-sections).

11. The Meul Plein is reconfigured with the closure of the Church Street connection. A new westerly one-way connection for traffic circulation is created at the junction of Biom Street and Meul Street to give access to the parking on the western and southern edges of 'Die Braak'.

12. Meul Plein is paved in one material and the water wheel is re-located in its original position.

13. The Shoprite-corner should be the subject of an action project in order to explore its improved potential.

* Perspective 1
** Perspective 2
*** Perspective 3

0 50m 100m 150m 200m

Figure 32: The Precinct and Environs Scale: Main Ideas - Integrating Urban Design and Spatial Concept

Perspective 1: Binnetuin Avenue between Dorp Street and Market Street

Perspective 2: Parsonage Garden transformed into vegetable and herb garden

Perspective 3: Urban resource hub space looking towards pergola structure

Photograph: Alphen Centre Walkway

5.3. Unpacking the Layers of the Concept

A number of urban-design-related layers contribute to the overall spatial concept. These layers are unpacked in Figures 33 to 43 and include:

- Locations of after hour control points
- Locations of early evening control points
- Dominant pedestrian flows
- Use and character zones, and their entry points
- Proposed Position of Toilet Block integrated with Proposed Information Centre
- Potential market activity zones subject to management
- Potential parking zones subject to management
- Dominant pedestrian and vehicular movement network
- Landscape treatment to western and southern edges of ‘Die Braak’ space
- Proposed storm water-related landscape design concepts

5.3.1 Locations of After Hour Control Points (Figure 33) –

- The control points/gates to the hub-precinct for after hour closure makes the precinct secure.

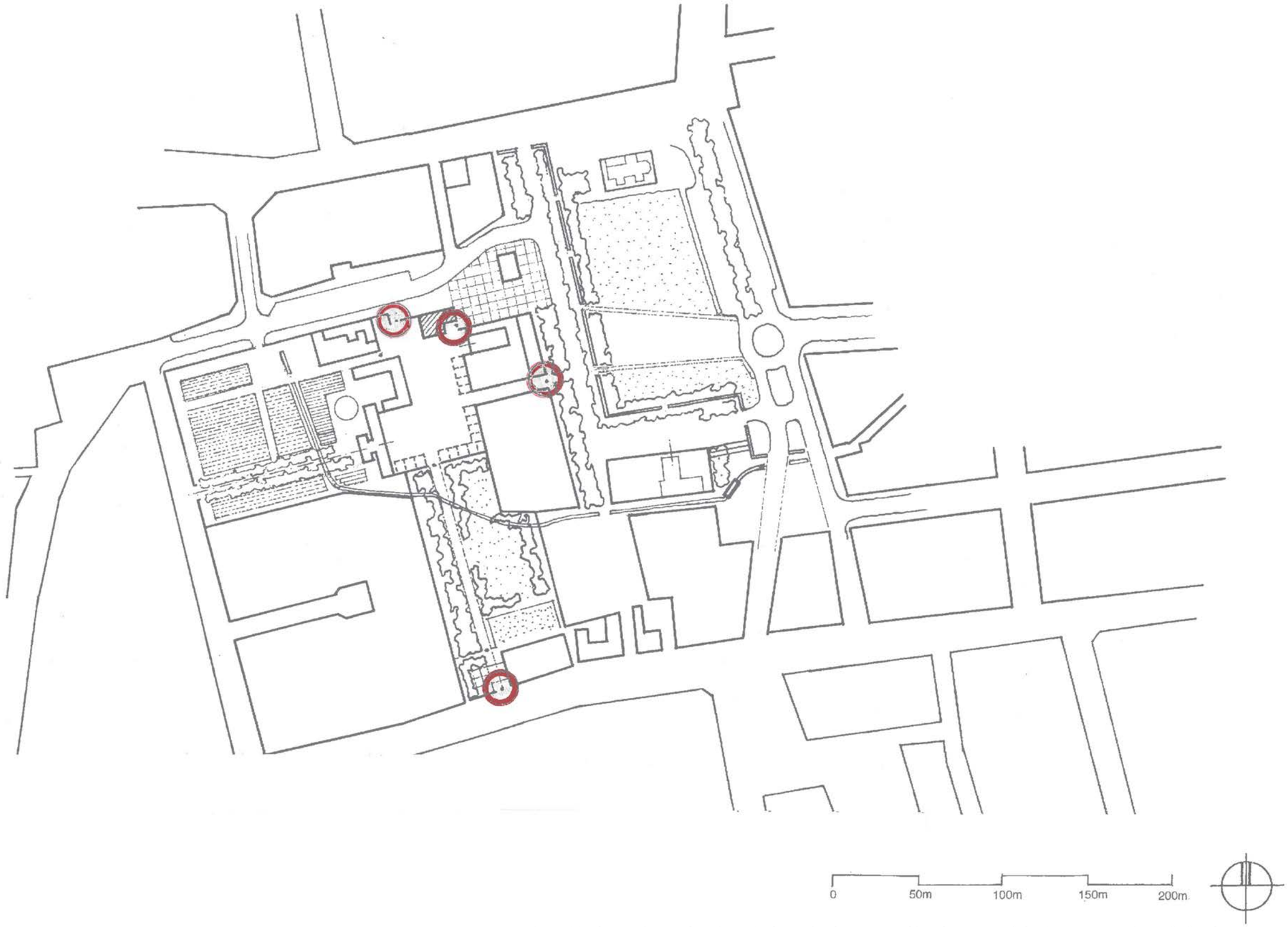


Figure 33: The Precinct and Environs Scale: Main Ideas - Unpacking the Layers of the Concept, Locations of After-hour Control Points

5.3.2 Locations of Early Evening Control Points (Figure 34) -

- Secondary and internal control points/gates to the hub-precinct for early evening closure allow for the security and management of parts of the precinct.

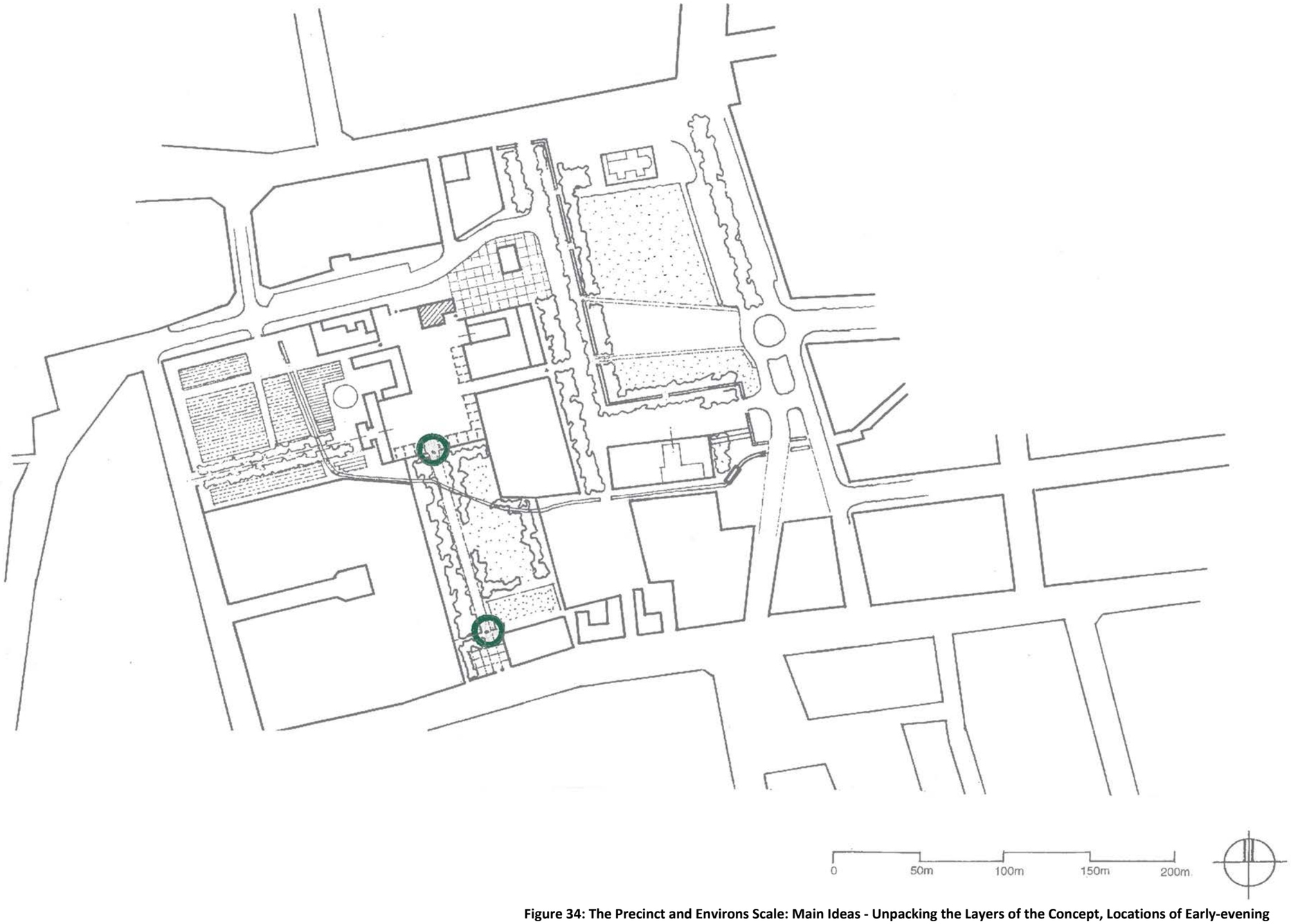


Figure 34: The Precinct and Environs Scale: Main Ideas - Unpacking the Layers of the Concept, Locations of Early-evening Control Points

5.3.3 Dominant Pedestrian Flows (Figure 35) -

- The dominant pedestrian flows are integrated with those of the larger precinct. In the hub space the entrances to the buildings respond to the pedestrian paths.

Figure 35: The Precinct and Environs Scale: Main Ideas - Unpacking the Layers of the Concept, Dominant Pedestrian Flows and Linkages

5.3.4 Use and Character Zones, and their Entry Points (Figure 36) -

- Complimentary uses are organized around the central hub space, with front doors aligned to activity energy zones.
- Publicly accessible commercial character.
- Religious character.
- Agricultural resource and learning centre.
- Publicly accessible landscaped park character (binne-tuin) with access control points.
- Multi-functional publicly accessible 'Braak' open space.
- Publicly accessible hard landscaped and treed multi-functional space with pedestrian priority.
- Publicly accessible hard landscaped and treed multi-functional hub space and court, framed with roofed colonnade south and east with pedestrian priority and access control points.
- Urban hub resource and learning centre.
- Craft learning centre.
- Arts and cultural learning and resource centre
- Publicly accessible information and display centre (new building structure).
- L-shaped treed and low-walled multi-functional parking space, landscaped with pedestrian priority.

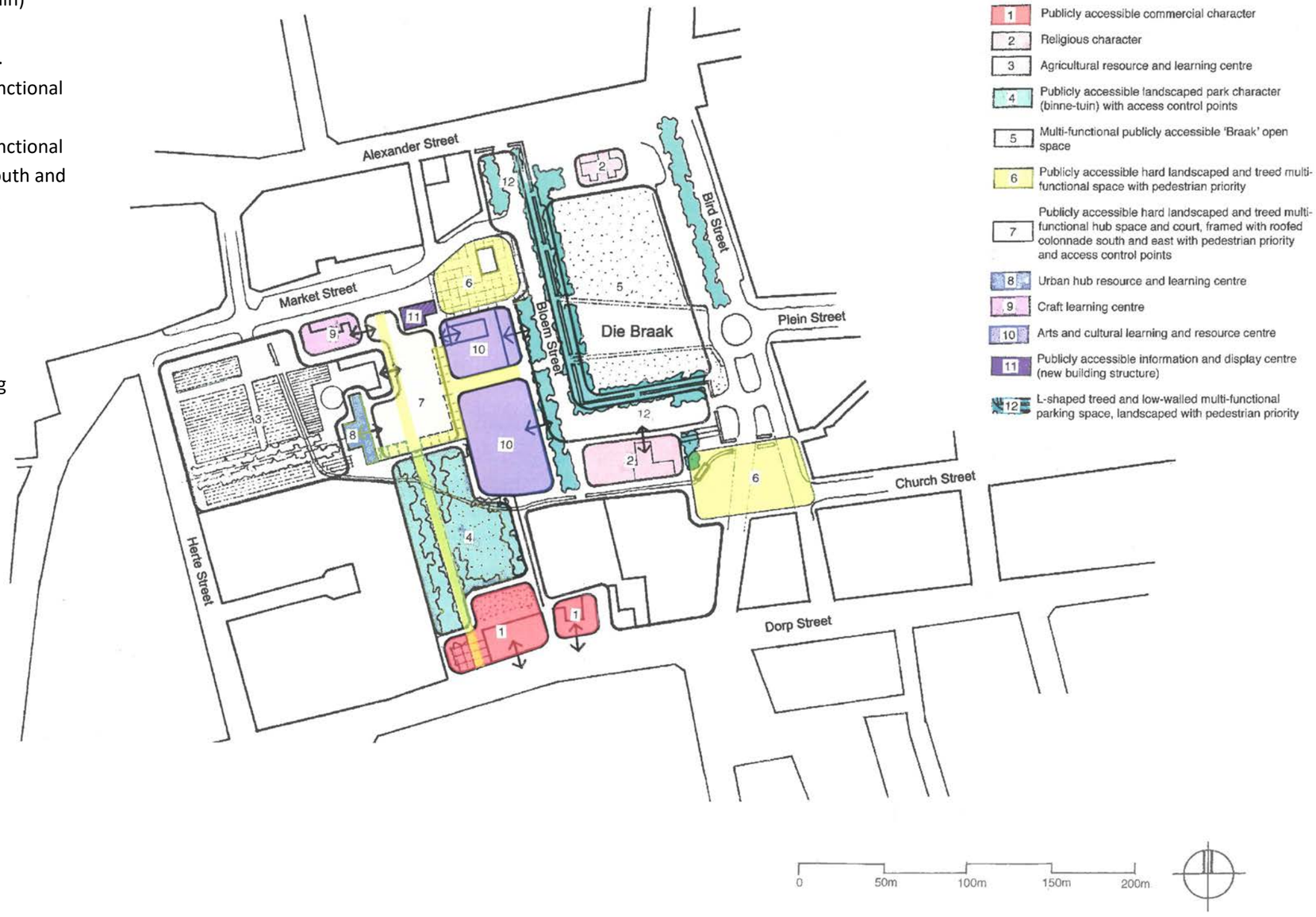


Figure 36: The Precinct and Environs Scale: Main Ideas - Unpacking the Layers of the Concept, Use and Character Zones, and their Entry Points

5.3.5 Proposed Position of Toilet Block integrated with Proposed Information Centre (Figure 20b) -

- The preferred position for this facility is at the northern end of the precinct, integrated with the proposed information centre. It can also serve activities on 'Die Braak'. In the layout of the building, flexibility for access control should be accommodated.
  For the southern end of the precinct different options should be tested whereby the incorporation of toilet facilities should be explored as part of the complex lining Dorp Street. This should be in close proximity to the proposed avenue walk through the park.

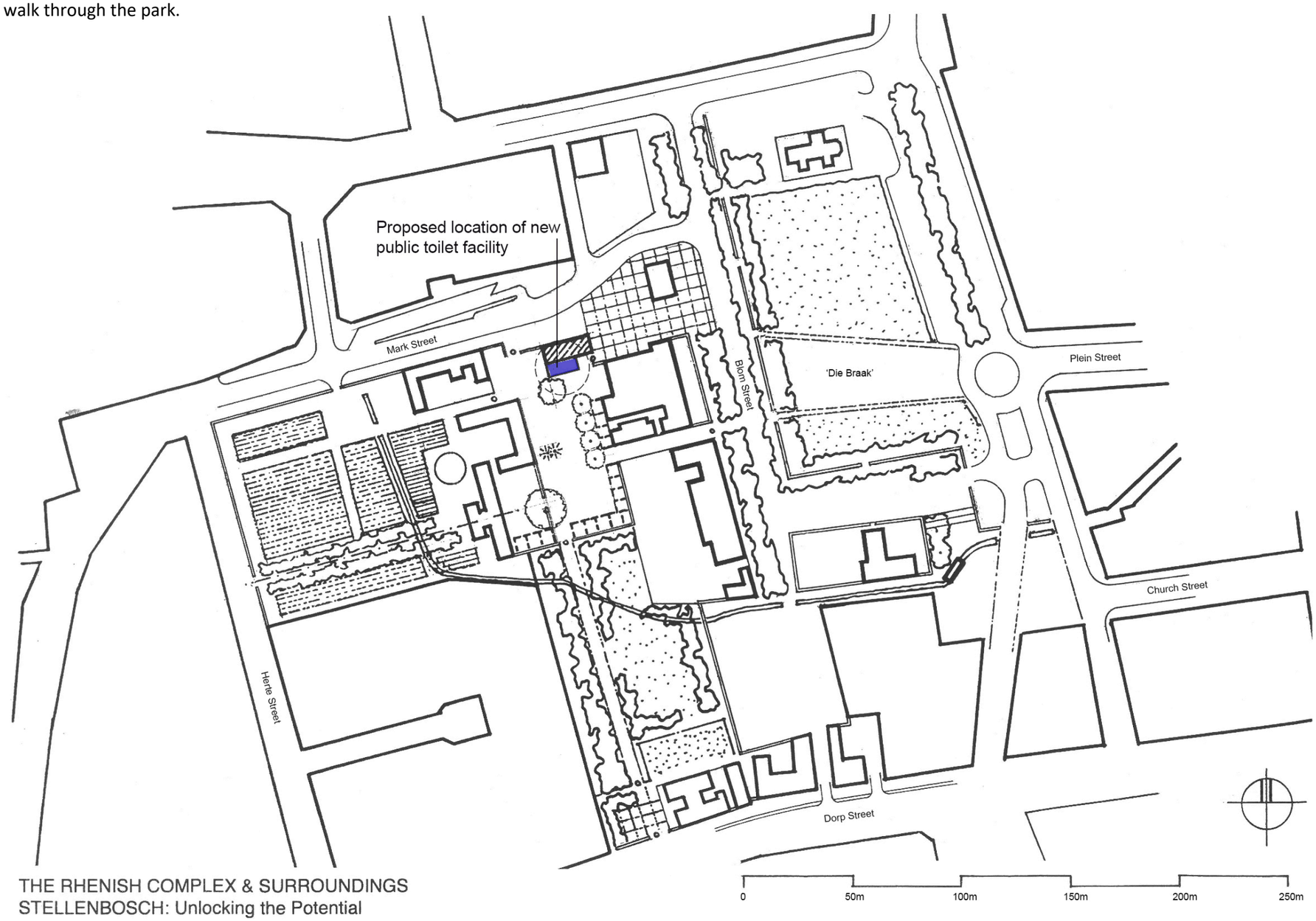


Figure 37: Precinct and Environs Scale: Proposed Position of Toilet Block integrated with Proposed Information Centre

5.3.6 Potential Market Activity Zones Subject to Management (Figure 38) -

- In terms of flexibility, many different market activities in their various forms and times can occur throughout the precinct, subject to management.

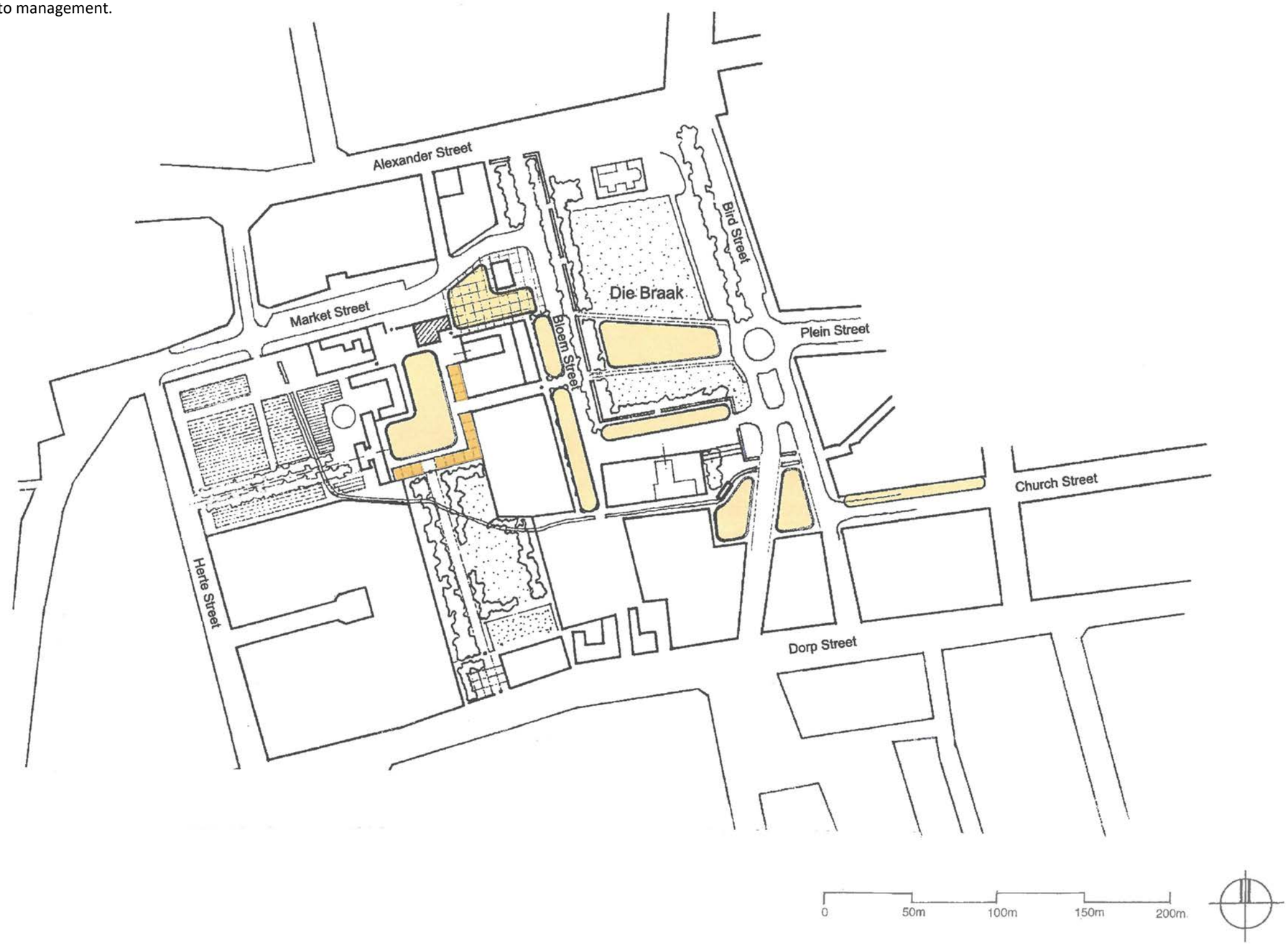


Figure 38: The Precinct and Environs Scale: Main Ideas - Unpacking the Layers of the Concept, Potential Market Activity Zones Subject to Management

5.3.7 Potential Parking Zones Subject to Management (Figure 39) -

- In terms of flexibility, many different parking options in their various forms and times can occur throughout the precinct, subject to management, permanent as well as temporary.

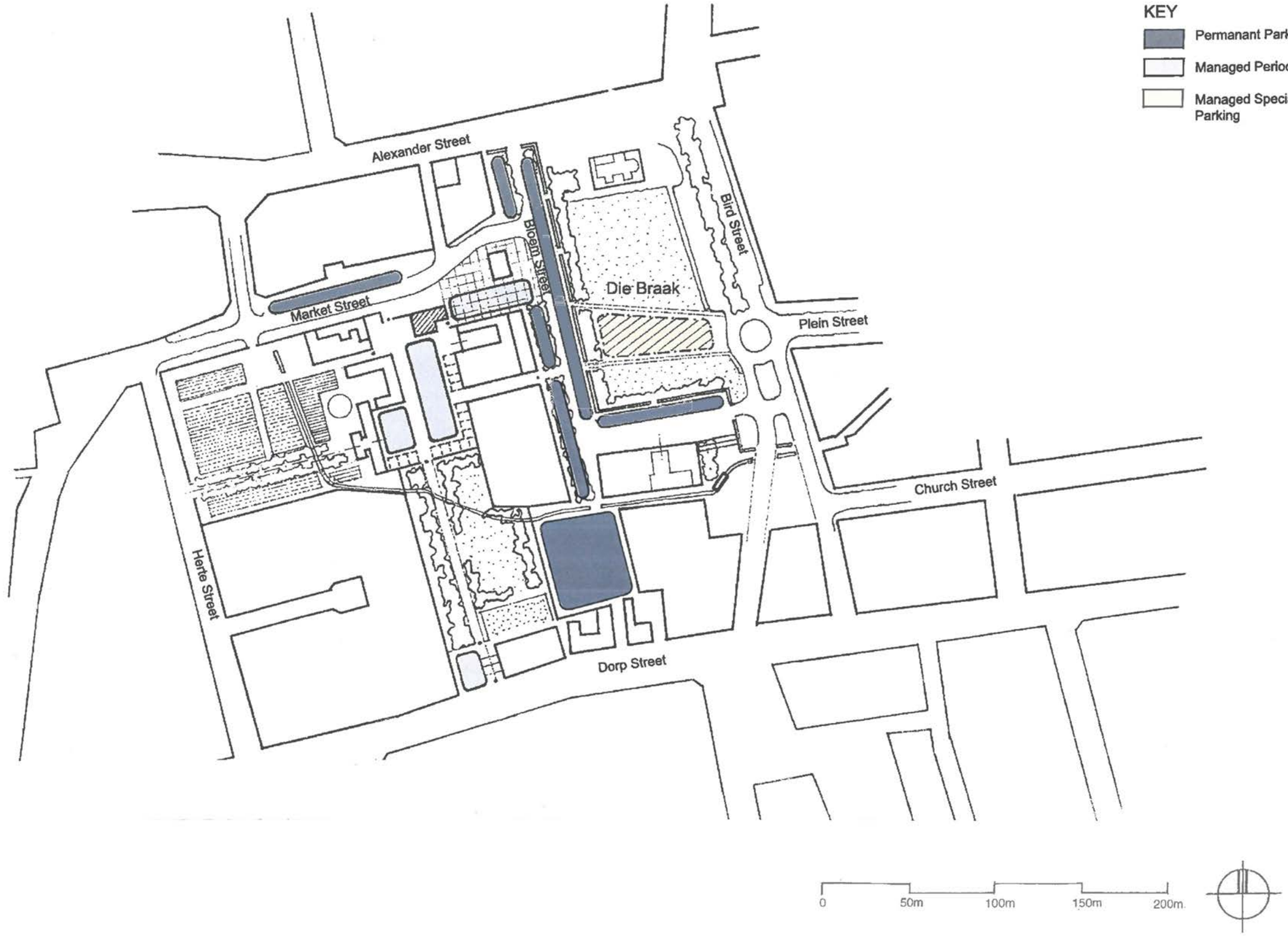


Figure 39: The Precinct and Environs Scale: Main Ideas - Unpacking the Layers of the Concept, Potential Parking Zones Subject to Management

5.3.8 Dominant Pedestrian and Vehicular Movement Network (Figure 40) -

- Careful and sensitive network planning ensures safe pedestrian paths, places and spaces.
- Zones and areas subject to traffic investigations are highlighted in red circles.

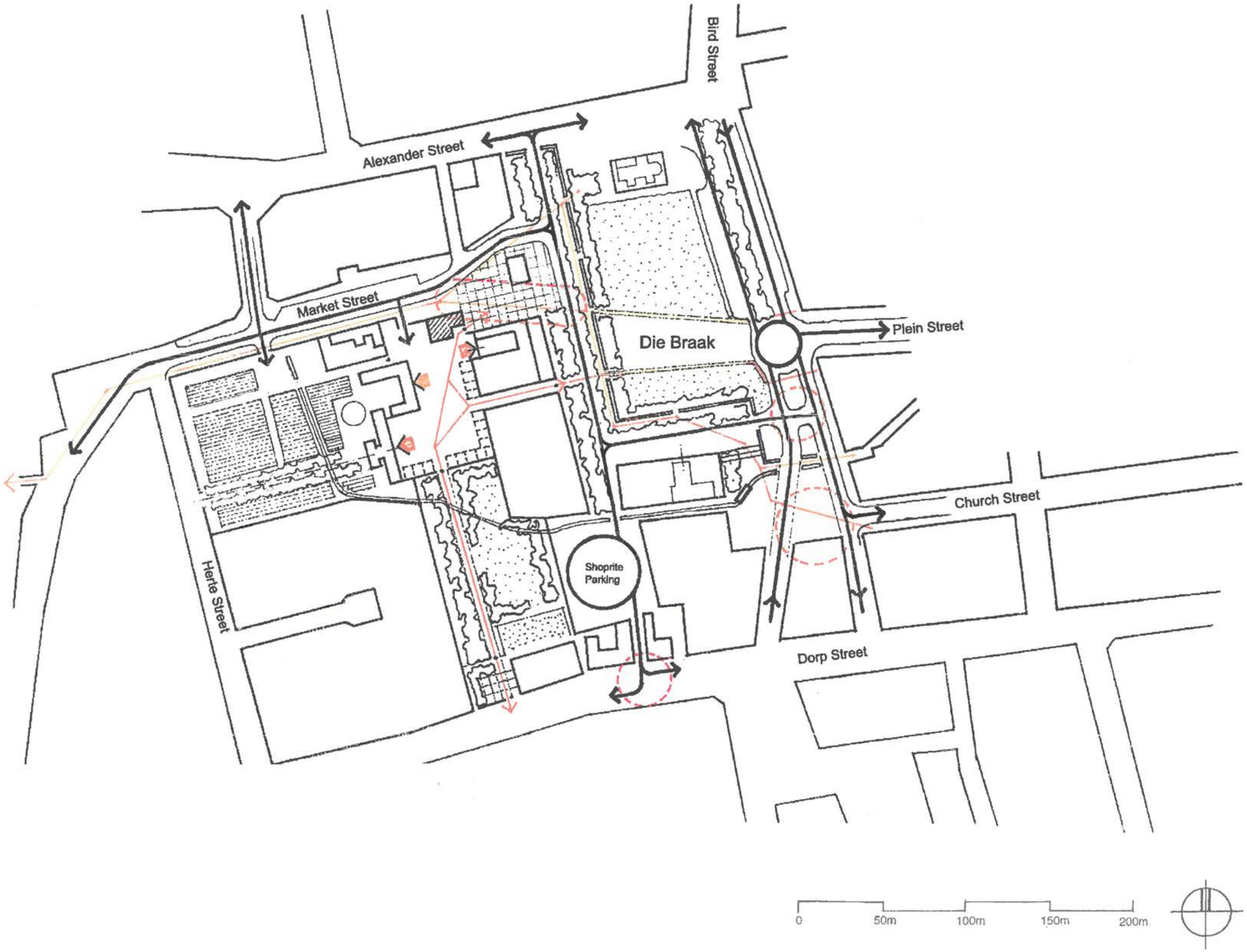


Figure 40: The Precinct and Environs Scale: Main Ideas - Unpacking the Layers of the Concept, Dominant Pedestrian and Vehicular Movement Network

5.3.9 Landscape Treatment to Western and Southern Edges of 'Die Braak' Space (Figures 41, 42 and 43) -

- Proposed alignment of the werf wall with associated landscape elements along the western and southern edges (see cross-sections). The elements include:
  - Low werf wall
  - Tree alignments
  - Storm water swale
  - Pedestrian-scaled lighting
  - Signage

The cross sections illustrate the different zones as well as an option to accommodate periodic market activities in terms of flexibility of use.

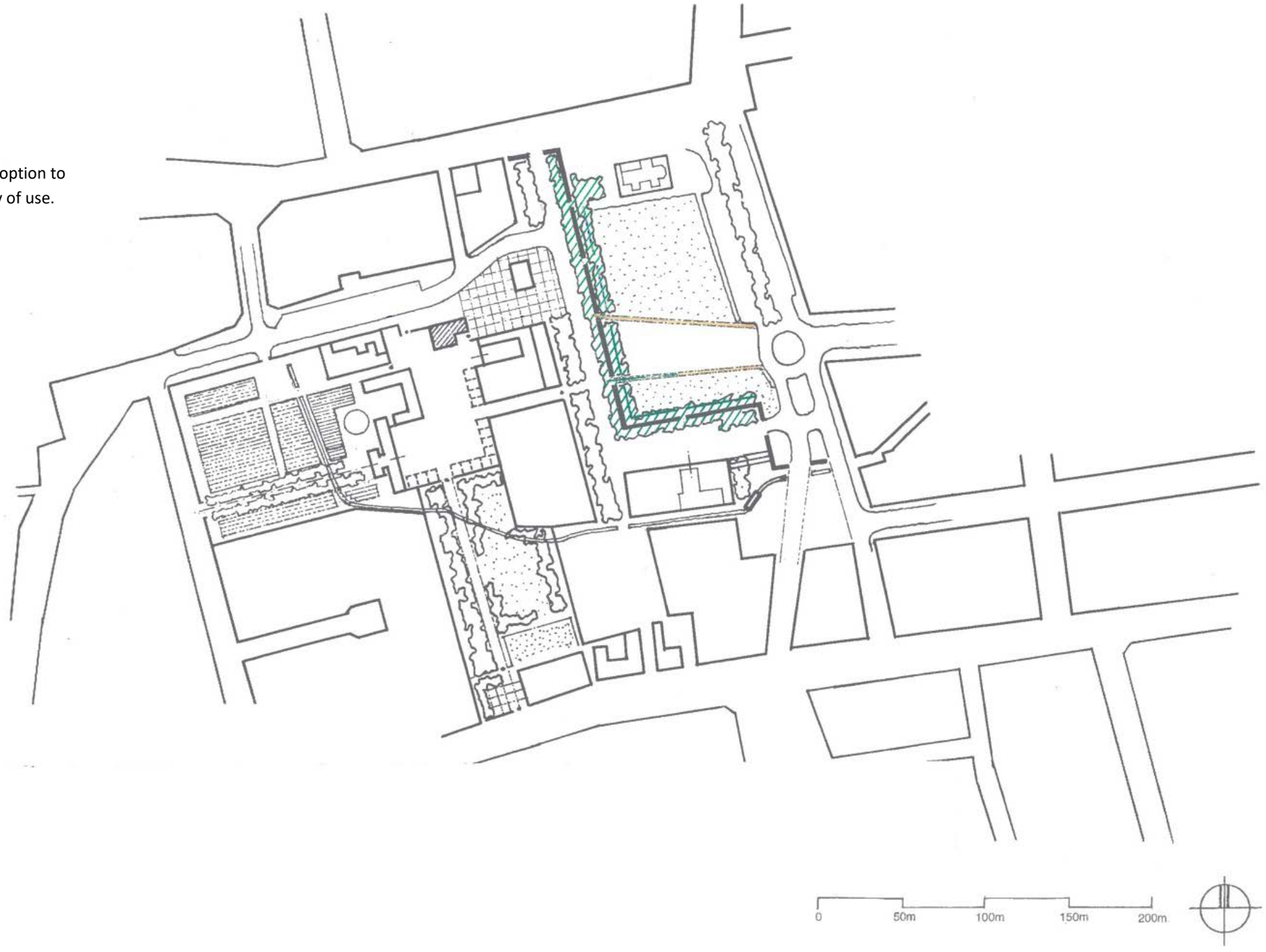


Figure 41: The Precinct and Environs Scale: Main Ideas - Unpacking the Layers of the Concept, Landscape Treatment to Western and Southern Edges of 'Die Braak' - Low werf wall, Tree alignments, Storm water swale, Pedestrian-scaled lighting, Signage.

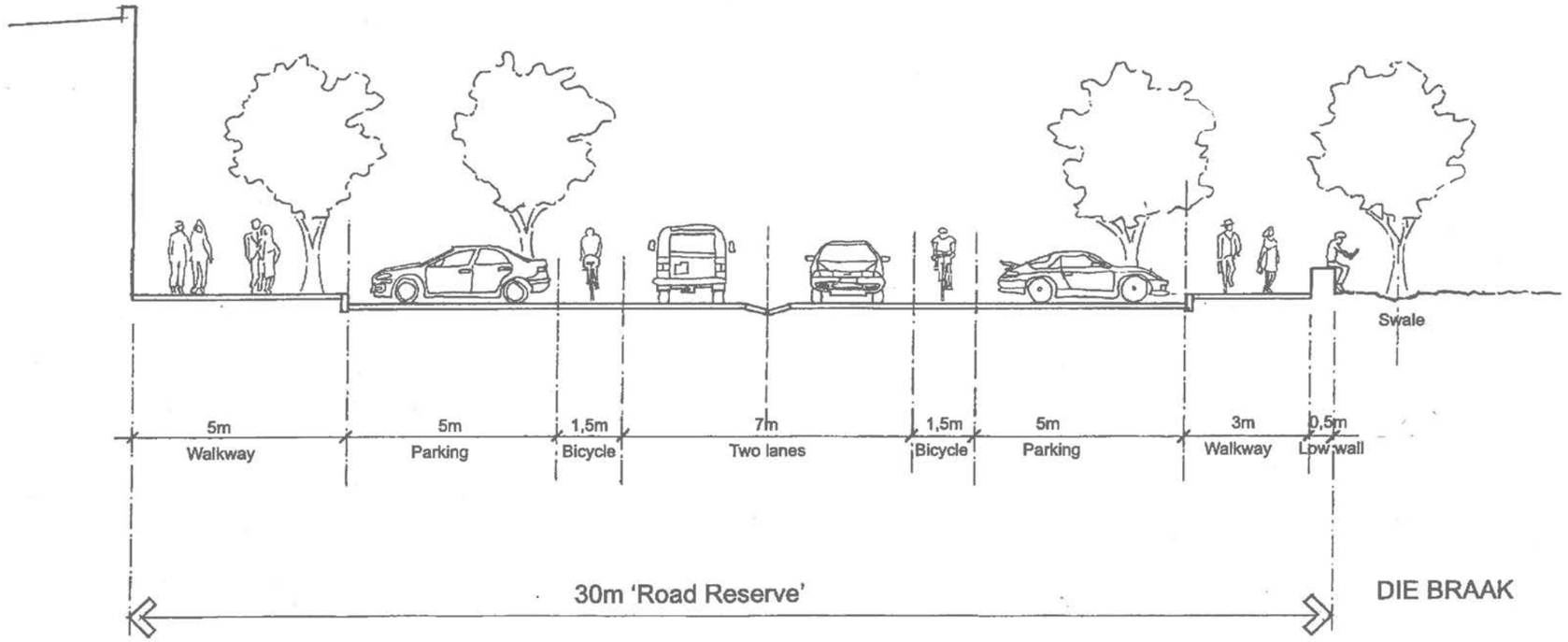


Figure 42: Proposed Cross-section through the Western Edge of 'Die Braak'

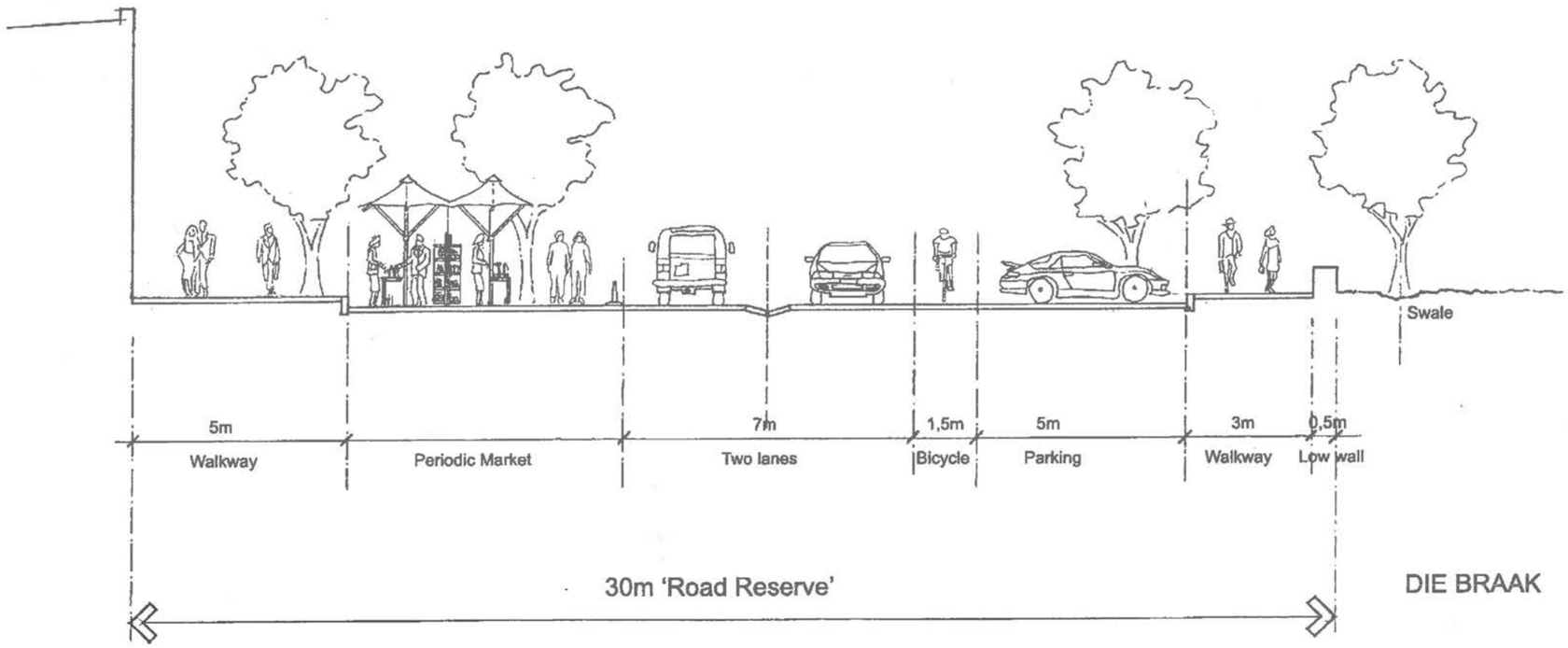
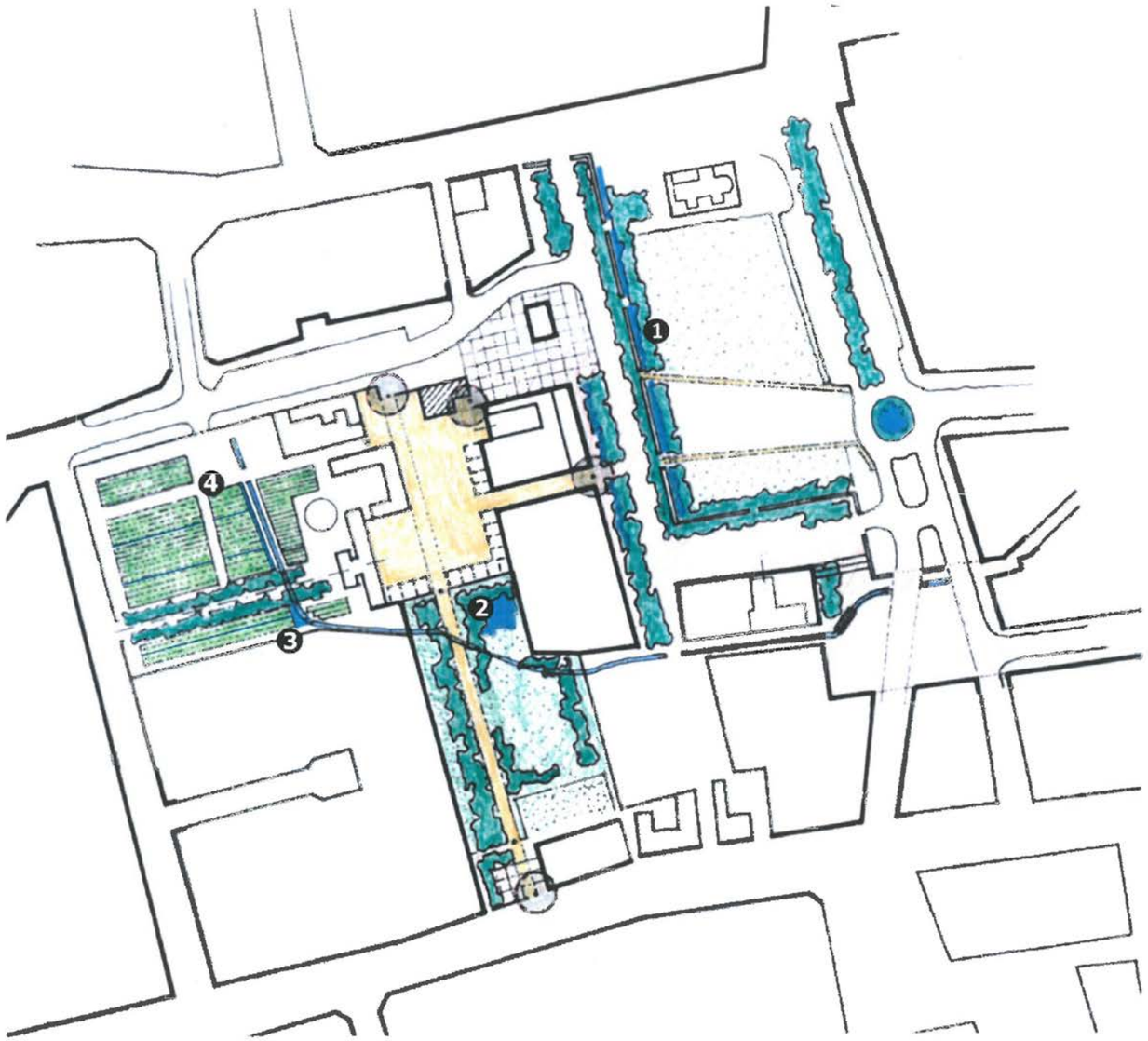


Figure 43: Proposed Cross-section through the Western Edge of 'Die Braak', Periodic Market Activity Zone

5.3.10 Proposed Storm water-related Landscape Design Concepts (Figure 44)

Stormwater systems are integrated into the proposed landscape to create ecological and spatial opportunities that complement the 'multiple value creation' objectives.



1. *Die Braak*: Surface water run-off to create infiltration swale opportunity along proposed new werf wall (where viable, divert existing stormwater pipes into planted swale)
2. *Binnetuin:* Direct stormwater run-off from hard, impermeables surfaces to new biofiltration area
3. *Urban agriculture:* Include filtration-reservoir to enable water to be directed into urban agriculture channels
4. *Urban agriculture*: Include shallow water channels to allow water from mill stream to be channelled into urban agriculture plots

Figure 44: Proposed Storm water-related Landscape Design Concepts

5.3.11 Refined Layout and Estimated Street-related Parking Capacity in the Precinct

- The coarse-grained parking capacity in relation to the streets in the precinct is illustrated in figure 28. It excludes the on-site 'managed parking zones' for special occasions and events, as shown on Figure 22.
- The layout also indicates the two elements in the main courtyard space to be demolished.
- Also shown is the borehole element at the northern end of 'Die Braak', which will require a design concept once the technical requirements have been clarified.
- Apart from enclosing the elements serving the technical requirements, the borehole element can be of a townscape-nature and potentially include considerations of a small stage, flagpole feature for periodic lights and walled seating. The circular shape represents the idea of a 'farm-like reservoir'.
- The layout yields the following number of parking spaces in the streets:

Mark Street converted	31
Blom Street (Western edge of 'Die Braak')	117
Rhenish Church forecourt	42
Alexander Street (Northern edge of 'Die Braak')	20
	210 parking spaces

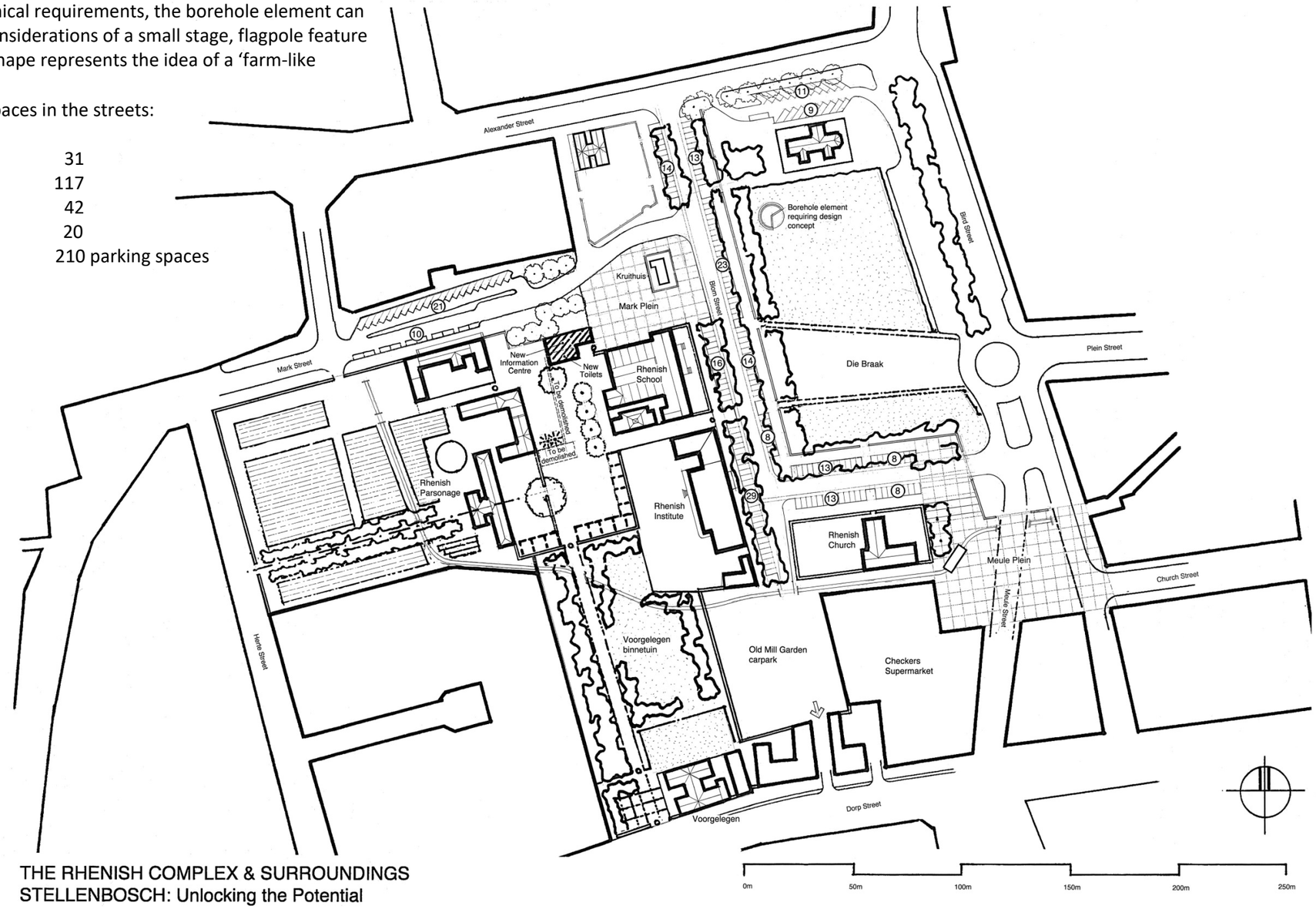


Figure 45: Refined Layout and Estimated Street Related Parking Capacity in the Precinct

5.4. Identification of Action Areas and Action Projects (Figure 46) -

A series of preliminary action areas and projects are identified for possible further investigations and strategies. These are spatially shown on the figure and include:

SLD1	Soft landscape design study
A1	Agricultural-based feasibility study
DSC	Dorp Street commercial interface study
TS 1	Traffic-related feasibility study
TS 2	Traffic-related feasibility study
TS 3	Traffic-related feasibility study
TS 4	Traffic-related feasibility study
UD 1	Integrated urban design/landscape/engineering study
UD 2	Integrated urban design/landscape/engineering study
UD 3	Integrated urban design/landscape/engineering study
UDAL	Integrated urban design/architecture/landscape study
NS 1	Negotiation study
NS 2	Negotiation study
FS 1	Feasibility study
FS 2	Feasibility study
WQ 1	Water quality study
SH/CH	Special redevelopment strategy study

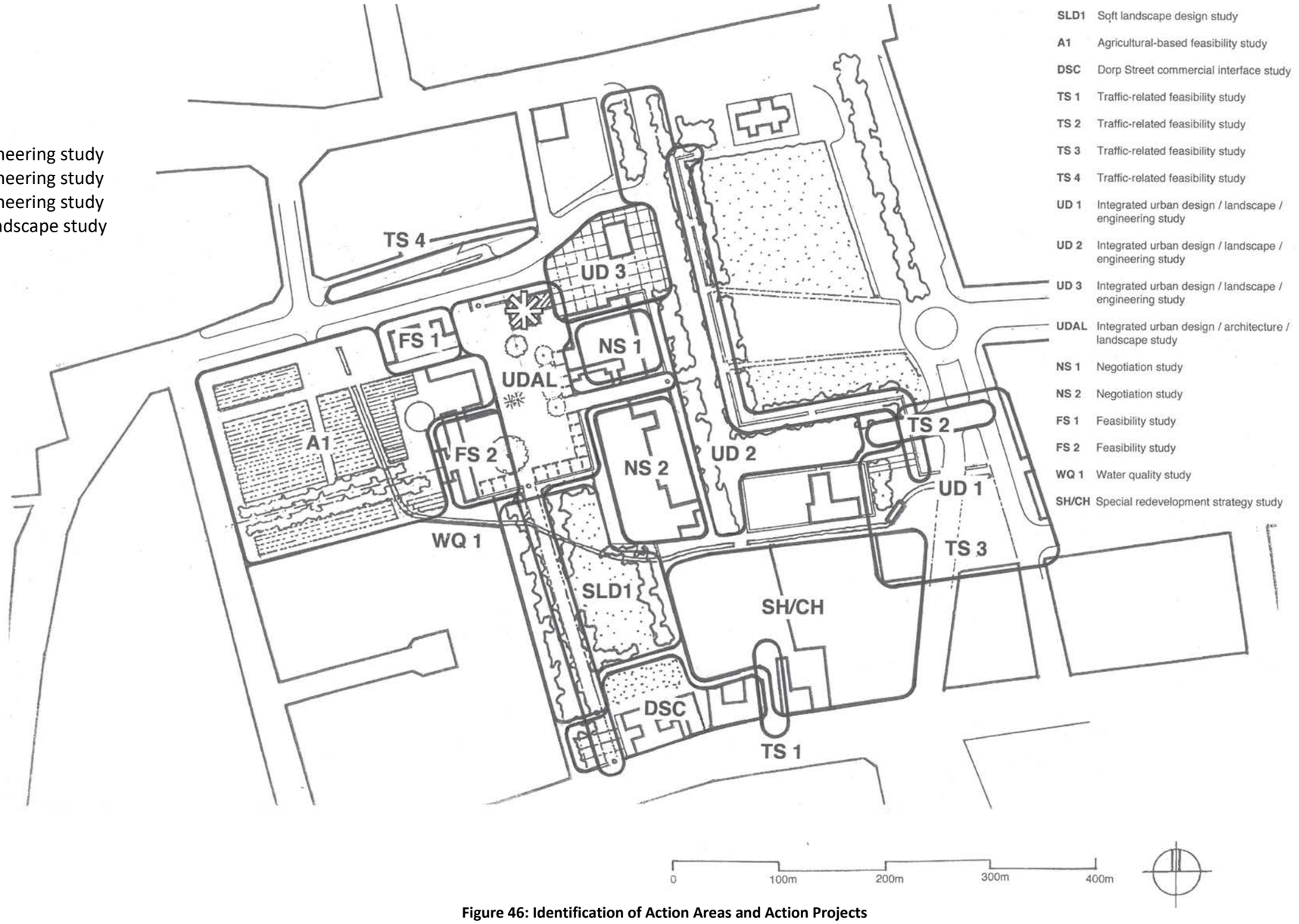


Figure 46: Identification of Action Areas and Action Projects

5.4.1 Demolition Plan

In terms of implementation and in order to achieve the spatial intentions of the Action Area marked 'UDAL' at the northern end of the precinct, a demolition plan for the garages and a boundary wall identifies the extent and scope of these elements. The boundary wall can be reduced to a height of 450 – 750mm and transformed into a low seat wall.

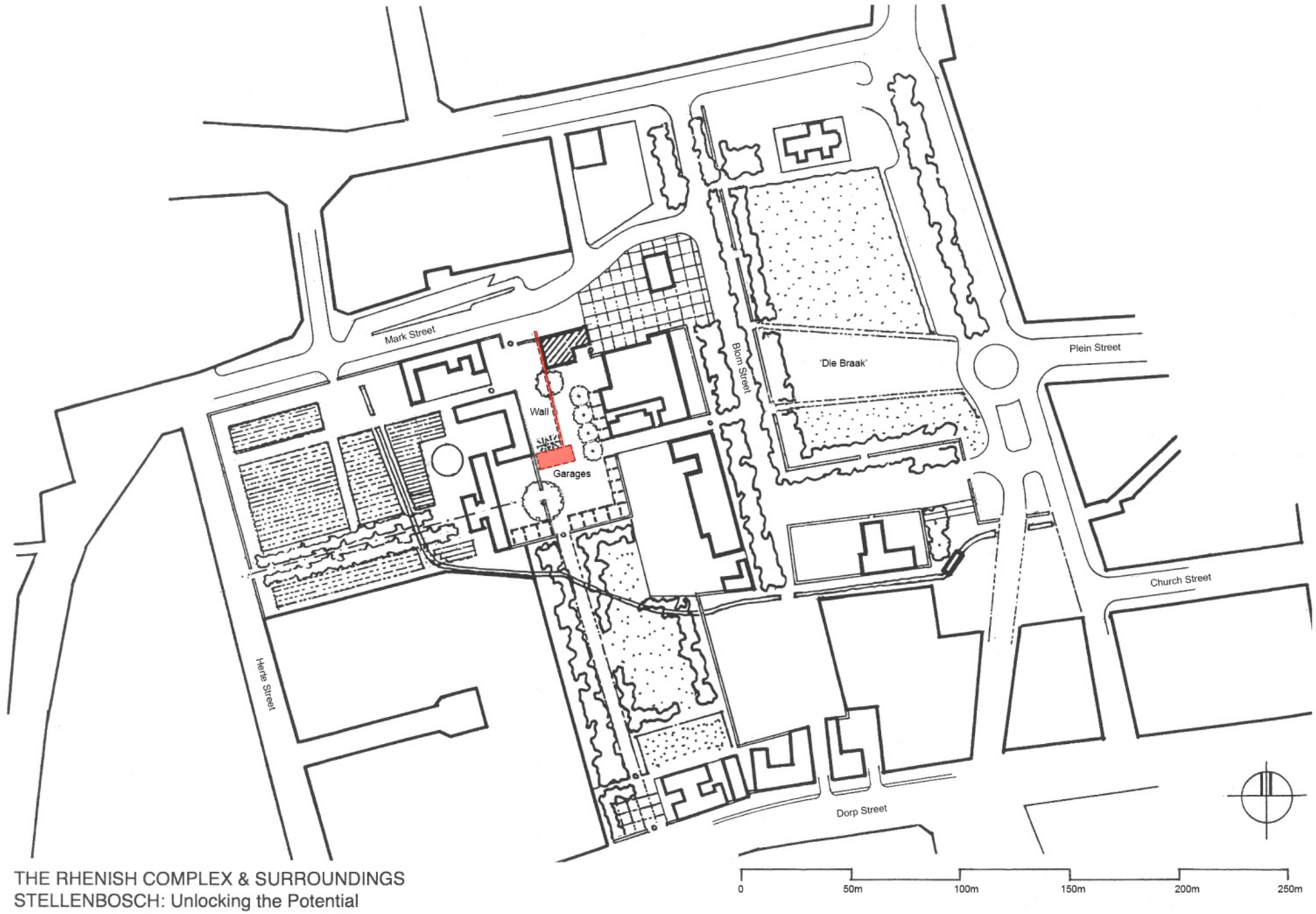
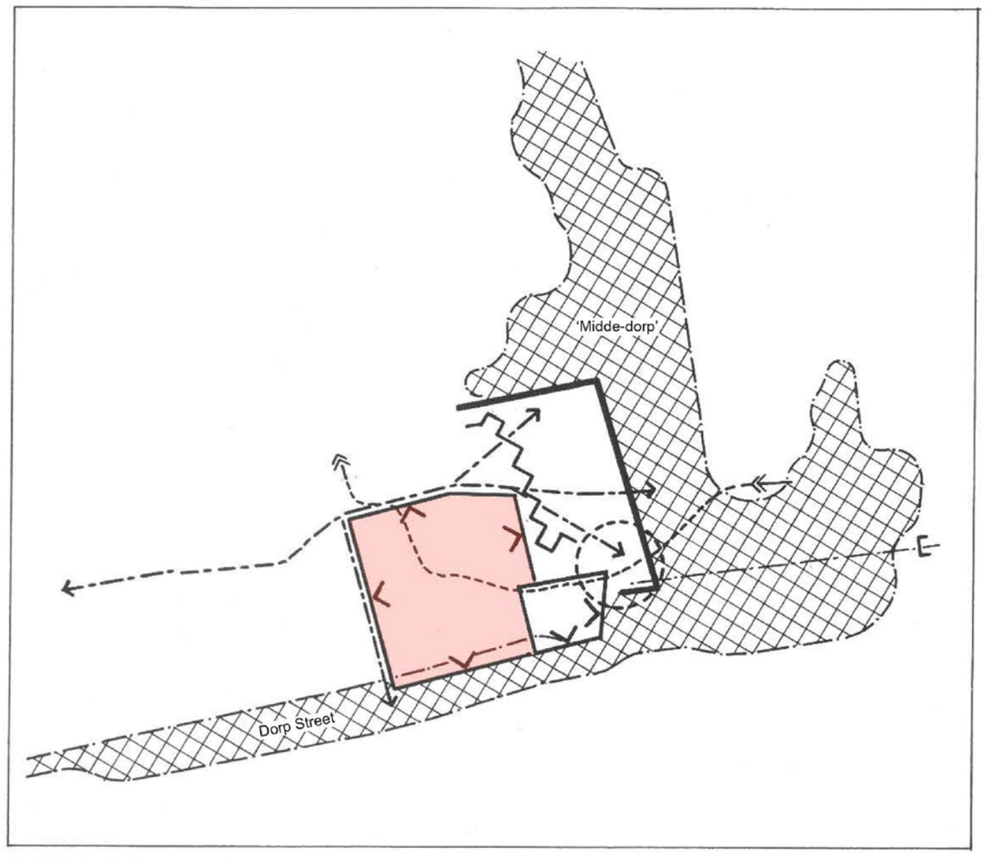


Figure 47: Demolition Plan

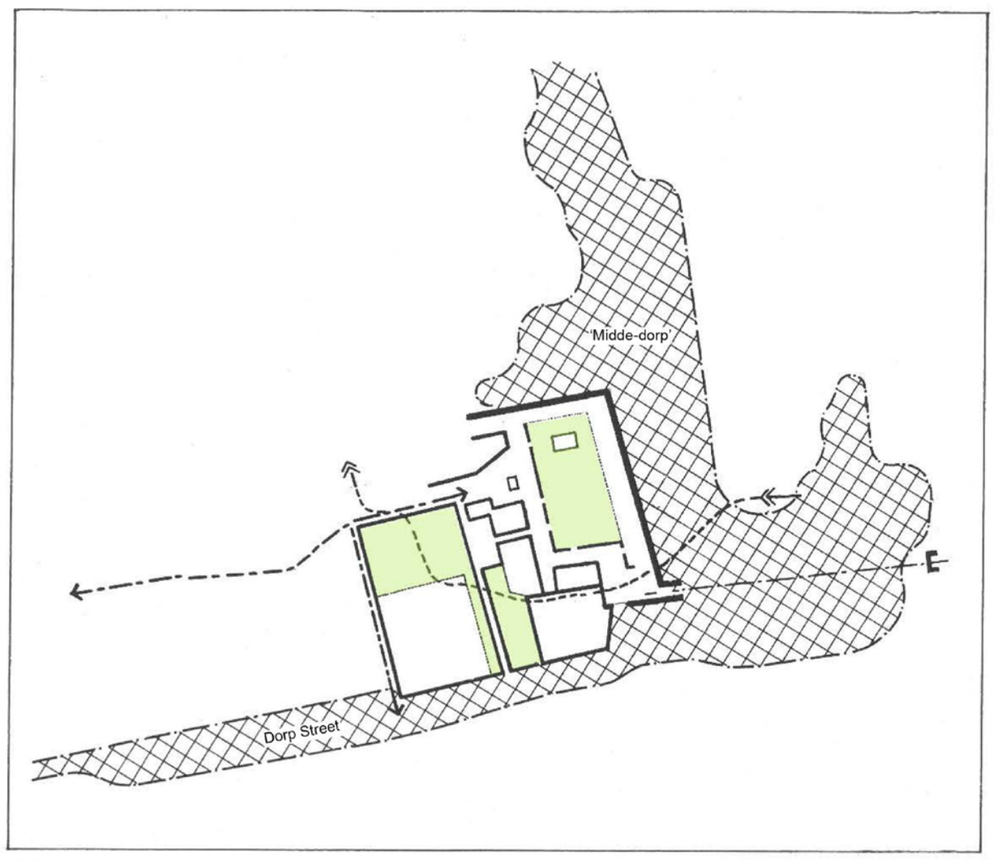
6. Returning to the Essence of the Idea and the Bigger Context

Figure 48 captures the essence of the proposed municipal-led intervention in terms of unlocking the site and integrating the precinct with the surroundings and mutually-reinforcing activities through a before and after comparison. The outcome is much more spatial and consistent with the qualities of the original historic core.

In terms of achieving continuity of space and linkages, Figure 49 locates the precinct in relation to the Church Street precinct. This bigger idea is ideal for very large events, festivals and special days. Also shown are the municipal parking areas on the periphery of the east-west activity core/spine. With appropriate management, it should be possible to control the extent and spatial distribution of events of different sizes and characters in the larger precinct.



BEFORE: Boxed-in nature of the site



AFTER: The site unlocked and spatially integrated with the structure of the Town

Figure 48: Returning to the Overall Idea: Before and After

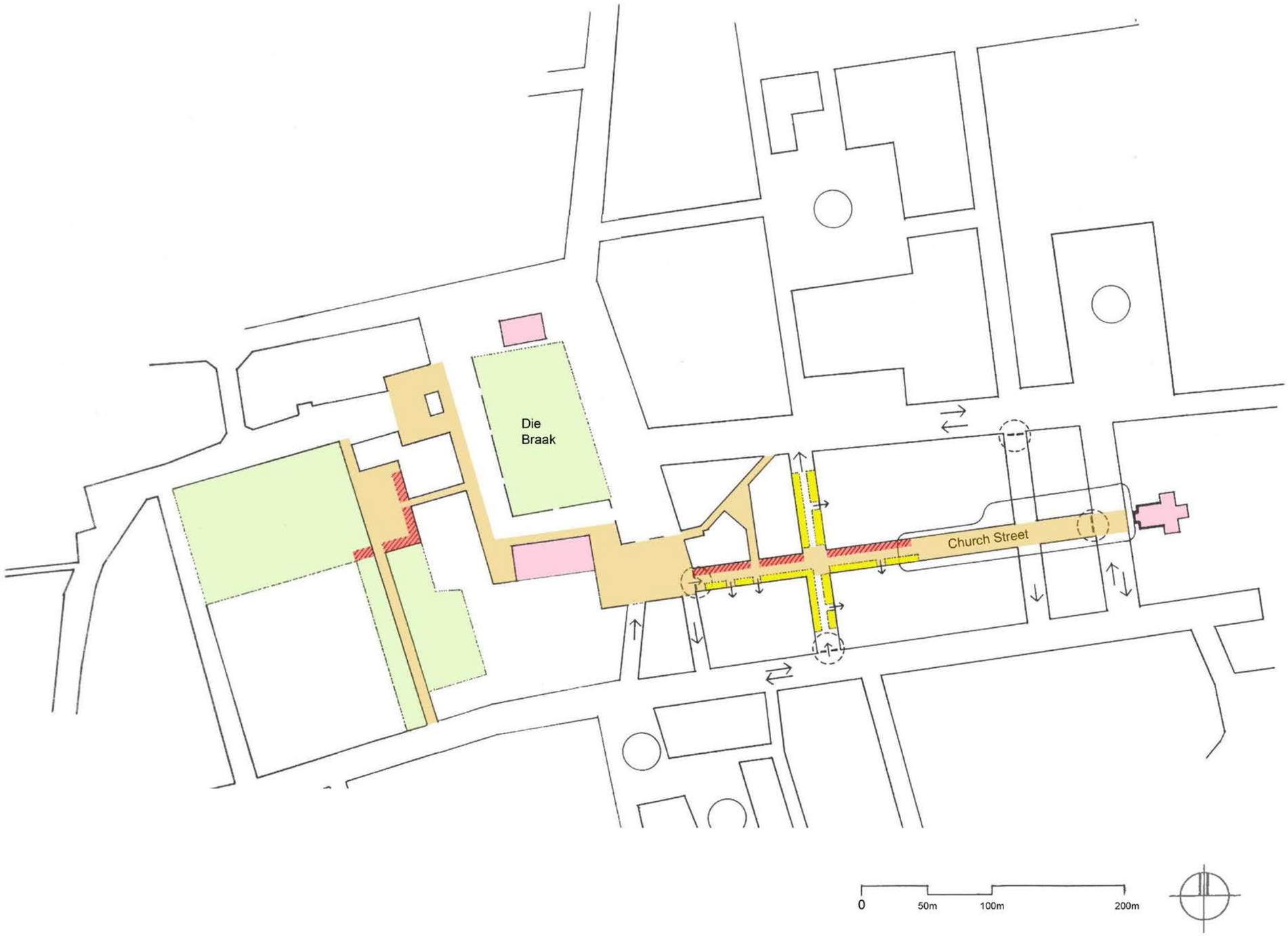


Figure 49: Returning to the Bigger Context: Integration with the Church Street Precinct

7. Effectuation and Way Forward

As a way forward, the following activities are recommended:

a. Endorsement of the intent and ideas of the proposals by the Municipality and the critical role-players.
b. Identify stakeholders and prepare questionnaire, engage with stakeholders.
   Explore discussions with Interested and Affected Parties as it relates to their understanding and ideas for the future use of the Rhenish Complex and gardens.
c. Establish the basis for public/private partnerships and their related negotiations.
d. Undertake accurate survey of the study area.
e. Undertake coarse-grained technical feasibility studies for Action Areas and Action Projects
f. Prepare implementation strategy and prioritize action projects.

8. References

1. Human Geographies of Stellenbosch Transforming Space, Preserving Place
Editor: Ronnie Donaldson, Sun Press, 2020

2. How to Nurture Flourishing Cultural and Creative Hubs: Lessons from the Netherlands
RINSKE BRAND MARCH 4, 2021
https://www.pps.org/article/how-to-nurture-flourishing-cultural-and-creative-hubs-lessons from-the-netherlands

9. Appendix A

ITS RHENISH COMPLEX: TRANSPORT ENGINEERING INPUT

INNOVATIVE TRANSPORT SOLUTIONS

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Piet Louw Architects, Urban Designers and Planners

Email: piet.plarchud@telkomsa.net

30 July 2021

Our Reference: 4387

Your Reference: Rhenish Complex

Attention: Piet Louw

Dear Sir

RHENISH COMPLEX: TRANSPORT ENGINEERING INPUT

The following refers:

- Our briefing meeting on 23 July 2021 at which the overall Framework Plan was discussed.
- The attached Integrating Urban Design and Spatial Concept (your Fig 16) and the Dominant Pedestrian and Vehicular Movement Network (your Figure 23)

At the briefing meeting the following key inputs are required from ITS:

- Potential exit from Checkers Parking area onto Dorp Street
- Reconfiguration of the Mark/ Blom intersection
- Closure of the section of Church Street between Bird and Mill Street
- New full intersection at Blom/ Mill and Bird

Our comments are as follows:

1. Potential exit from Checkers Parking area onto Dorp Street

The potential exit is currently a drive-way access located opposite another driveway access and adjacent to the Checkers service area (approximately 23m c/c). The potential exit is possible from an access management perspective.

2. Reconfiguration of the Mark/ Blom intersection

The entry and exit portion of the Mark/ Blom intersection is currently split to accommodate a historical feature on a central island. The current Blom/ Mark (1-way) is priority-controlled with Blom having priority.

It is proposed to close the southern link (the entry portion) to enable the creation of a dedicated pedestrian link between Plein Street and Mark Street and the current Mark Street (1-way portion westbound) will become an urban square with a pedestrian route. This will require that the existing approach to the intersection on Mark Street (currently a 1-way eastbound) in the Blom direction, will become a 2-way section. Refer to Figure 2 in the attached Annexure.

This is possible as it is expected that the Blom/ Mark street intersection (currently priority-controlled with Blom having priority) will have sufficient capacity to accommodate 2-way traffic on Mark Street. Access to the existing parking areas must just be considered and adapted in the reconfiguration of this section of Mark Street. A Transport Impact Assessment will also be required to determine the impact of the additional entering traffic volumes at the Blom/ Mark intersection.

3. Closure of the section of Church Street between Bird and Mill Street

It is also proposed to close the portion of Church Street between Mill and Bird Street. Mill Street and the portion of Bird Street between Dorp and Alexander (currently dualled) forms part of a 2-way couplet system. Three turn-around opportunities are available:

- At the Alexander/ Bird roundabout
- At the Bird/ Plein roundabout
- The Church link between Bird and Mill (proposed to be closed)
- At Dorp at the mini-circles at Dorp/ Bird and Dorp/ Mill.

Previously Church Street was also a one-way westbound which then extended across Bird and terminated at Mill. However, in recent years Church, between Bird and Drosdy, was changed to a one-way eastbound, but the portion of Church between Mill and Bird remained a one-way westbound. So currently, the only function this portion of Church Street serves is that it allows southbound vehicles along Bird Street to turn around into Mill Street, especially for those vehicles traveling southbound along Bird looking for parking.

The closure this portion of Church Street will have the following impacts:

- Vehicles looking for parking along Bird Street southbound will have to turn around at the mini-circles in Dorp.
- The parking (8 bays) along this section will have to be removed.

This proposal is possible, but subject to a parking investigation and a Transport Impact Assessment. Also refer to Figure 3 in the attached Annexure.

4. New full intersection at Blom/ Mill and Bird

Refer to Figure 3 in the attached Annexure.

A new full intersection is proposed at Blom/ Mill to enable the vehicles to cross the median of the Bird - Mill Street couplet discussed in Section 3, and create another turn opportunity that will be lost due to the closure of Church between Mill and Bird.

The spacing between Plein and Blom is 39m (c/c) and 27m measured from the external kerb of the roundabout and Blom. Bird Street is a Class 3 street in a CBD environment with full accesses limited to 90m and high volume driveways limited to 60m per the previous Road Access Guidelines (RAG). The new Access Management Guidelines (AMG) recommends 80-120m spacings. Current access spacing ranges between 80m and 140m.

The proposed Blom/ Bird full intersection is too close to the current Plein/ Bird roundabout and will result in sub-standard access spacing along this section and potentially increasing congestion. It could also attract more traffic along Blom due to the direct link between Bird and Blom. However, it will not serve anymore as the turn –around opportunity for vehicles searching for parking as it located before the parking for southbound vehicles.

Further to the above, the following options are available:

- Close the portion of Church between Mill and Bird with no other turn-around opportunity provided; ie no median break at Blom. Turn-around movements must then be re-directed to Bird/ Dorp and Mill/ Dorp.
- Provide the median break at Blom, but close Blom/ Mill; not the current left-in/ left-out intersection but only a median break. This option does not serve the drivers searching for parkers.
- Re-align the eastern end of Blom to intersect with Mill/ Plein at the roundabout. This option does not serve the drivers searching for parkers.
- Maintain the link between Mill and Bird, but change the surface texture to improve the pedestrian-friendly quality of the street.

From the above, the proposal will have traffic engineering implications and it is advised that a Transport Impact Assessment be undertaken to understand the impact on intersection operations, intersection spacing and parking.

I trust that the above provides you with adequate feedback. In conclusion, the proposals must be tested in a more detailed Transport Impact Assessment.

Please do not hesitate to contact us should you have any queries in this regard.

Yours sincerely,

LYNNE PRETORIUS, PR.ENG
DIRECTOR: INNOVATIVE TRANSPORT SOLUTIONS

Annexure A: Figures

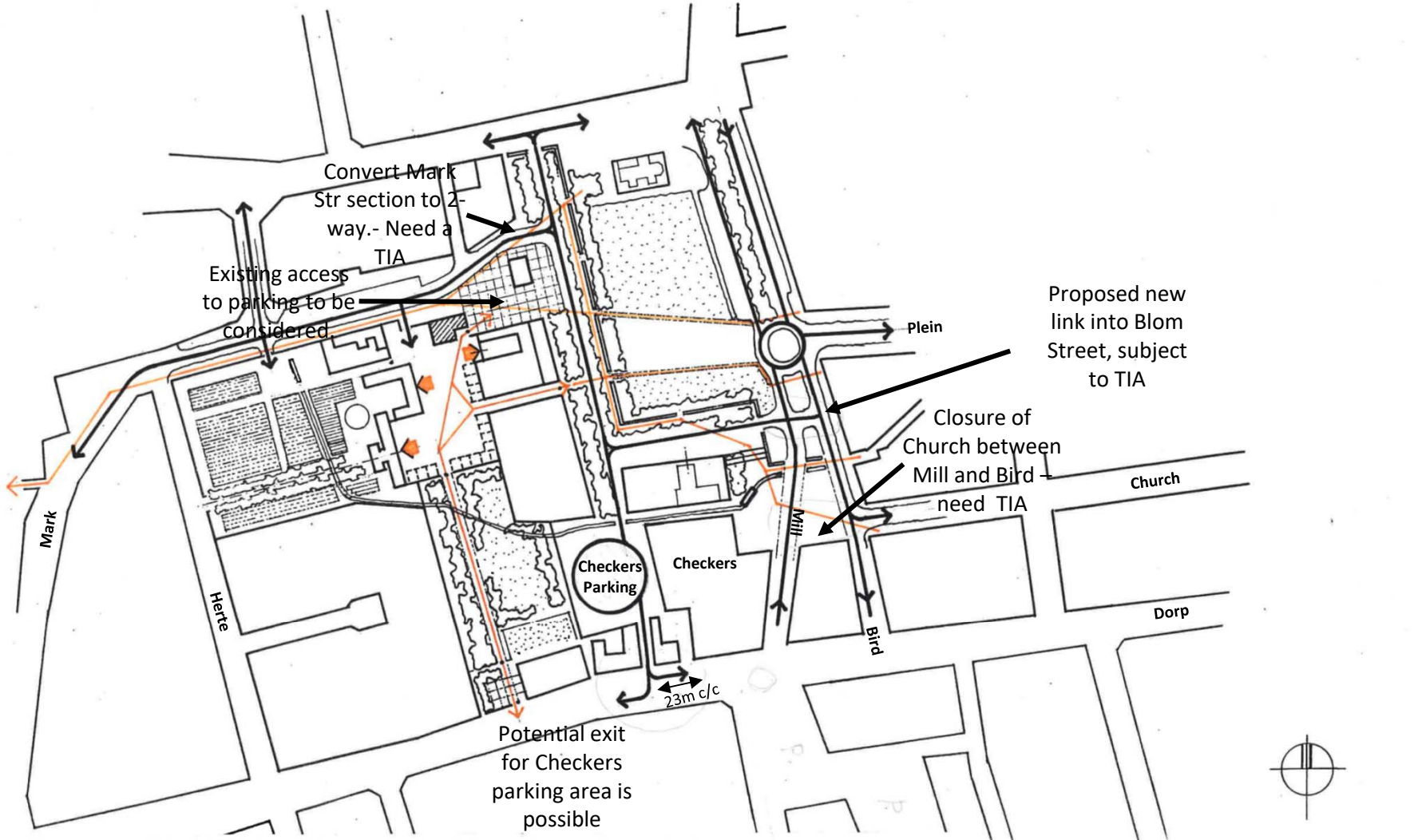


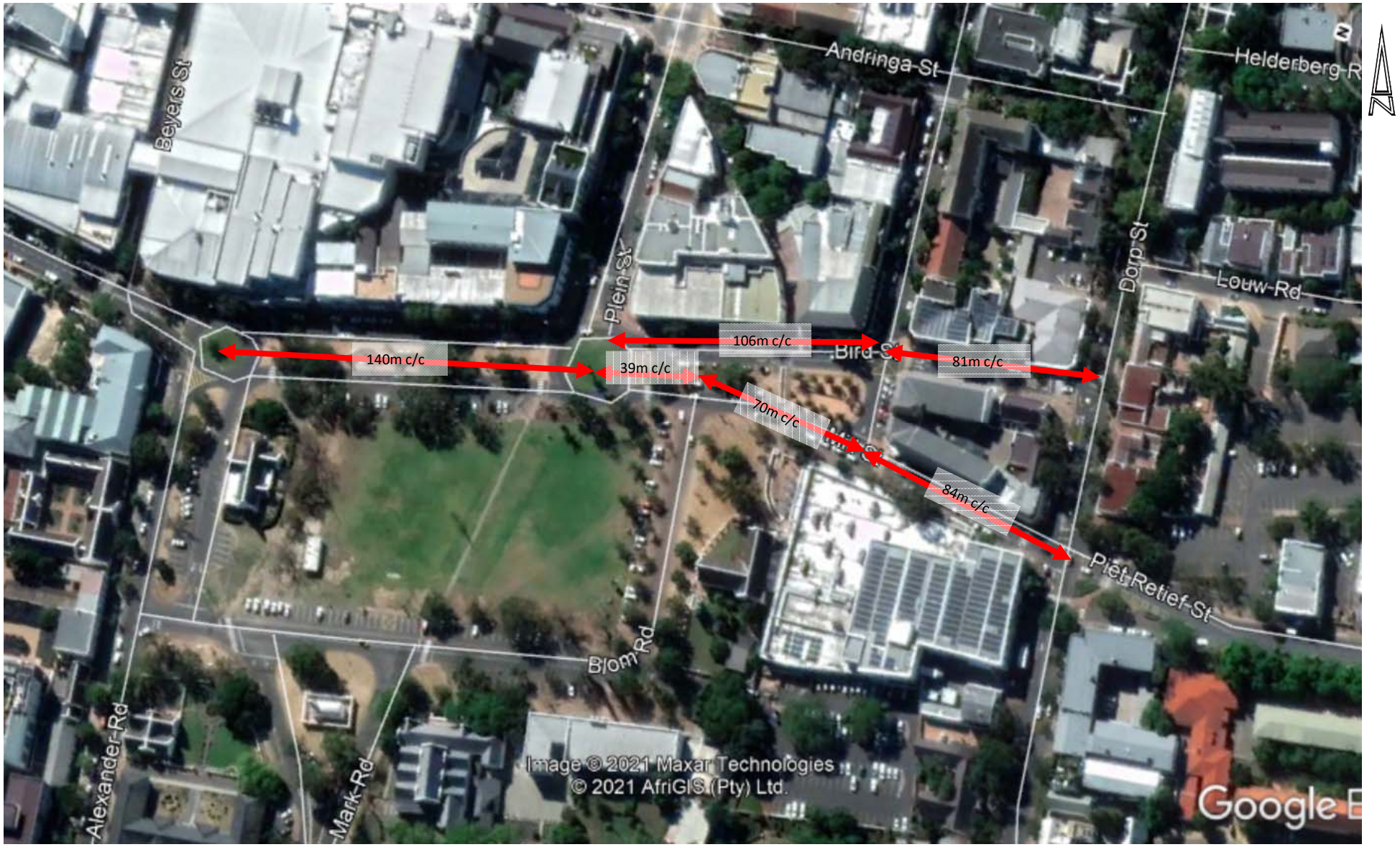
Figure 23: The Precinct and Environs Scale: Main Ideas - Unpacking the Layers of the Concept, Dominant Pedestrian and Vehicular Movement Network

SCHEMATIC

PROJECT:	FIGURE:	NUMBER:
4387: RHENISH COMPLEX -	TRANSPORTATION ENGINEERING COMMENTS	1

SCHEMATIC

PROJECT:		FIGURE:	NUMBER:
4387: RHENISH COMPLEX	-	RECONFIGURATION OF MARK/ BLOM INTERSECTION	2



SCHEMATIC

PROJECT:		FIGURE:	NUMBER:
4387: RHENISH COMPLEX	-	ACCESS SPACING ALONG-BIRD-MILL STREET	3