2. CONCEPT
CHAPTER 2

2.1 PLACE AND NON-PLACE..............................................p31
2.2 BOUNDARIES AND ACCESS INTO PLACES & EXPERIENCES.................................................................p33
2.3 APPROACH SIMULATION MODEL..............................................p35
2.4 INTERPRETATION CENTRE FOR BRAAMFONTEIN CEMETERY..............................................................p37
   2.4.1 PRECEDENT STUDY: PINNACLES INTERPRETATION CENTRE, AUSTRALIA..................................................p37
2.5 SITE BOUNDARIES........................................................................p39
   2.5.1 THE CEMETERY..........................................................p39
   2.5.2 NON-PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES.......................................p41
   2.5.3 PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES.............................................p42
   2.5.4 DESIGNING AROUND BOUNDARIES ..................p43
2.6 INTENDED PATRONS......................................................p45
2.7 ARCHITECTURE IN THE CEMETERY.........................p47

CONCEPT
2.1 PLACE AND NON-PLACE

According to Augé (1997, p81), place is the “established and symbolised sense of an anthropological place (places of identity, relation and history; p52).” By this continues to elaborate that it is something that needs to come alive with journeys. A non-place on the other hand is defined by Auge as “to designate two complementary but distinct realities; spaces formed in relation to certain ends (transit, commerce, leisure, transit) and the relationships individuals have with these spaces (Augé, 1997, p94).

By this, it is suggested that non-places are responsible for the creation of relationships between disconnected spaces.

The cemetery is one such place. It is currently devoid of any widely acknowledged identity. It’s for this reason that it has been easily over-looked by it’s passers-bys. What makes this particular cemetery different is it actually has a rich sense of identity that is under-explored and poorly announced. To someone who does not make use of it’s traditional functions, it currently acts as a latent landmark that is between one destination and another; a suggested connector.

One could further stretch this metaphor by exploring it’s potential as not only a geographical connector but one that links the past to the present through individuals being able to access not only the cemetery grounds but the knowledge behind the events and individuals’ memorials in it.

This is not an attempt to duplicate the spatial characteristics of the cemetery’s immediate neighbours, because after all due to it’s nature, it is fixed in it’s state of otherness. However, the architectural programme attempts to celebrate the non-place by encouraging controlled periods of it being permeated and experienced as a place.

“SPACES OF TEMPORARY AND TRANSIENT ACTIVITY; PLACES THAT COULD BE ANYWHERE, ARE EVERYWHERE BUT ARE NOWHERE”.

http://fc08.deviantart.net/fs70/f/2012/236/5/e/hallway_to_hell___motel_666___by_midnight_variburen-d5cbld7.jpg


http://cfri.ca/images/room-bookings/cfri2108.jpg
One could further stretch this metaphor by exploring its potential as not only a geographical connector but one that attempts to celebrate the non-place by encouraging controlled periods of it being permeated and experienced as a place.

### 2.1 PLACE AND NON-PLACE

According to Augé (1997, p81), place is the “established and symbolised sense of an anthropological place (places and the relationships individuals have with these spaces) (Augé, 1997, p94).” By this, it is suggested that non-places are responsible for the creation of relationships between disconnected spaces. The cemetery is one such place. It is currently devoid of any widely acknowledged place identity and is contained by ownership, use and regular upkeep. It currently acts as a latent landmark that is between one destination and another; a suggested connector.

#### AN AIRPORT LOUNGE OR TERMINAL:

**Between:** destinations  
**Defined by:** its single purpose  
**As opposed to:** a museum because it is a place conceptualised around an experience that is intended to have emotive purpose.

#### AN ABANDONED BUILDING:

**Between:** ruin and restoration/disrepair  
**Defined by:** damage and neglect  
**Place it’s opposed to:** a functioning building; because it is a destination with an identity and is contained by ownership, use and regular upkeep.

#### A HIGHWAY:

**Between:** destinations  
**Defined by:** a singular function: transit  
**Place it’s opposed to:** a street; because they are a social spaces designed for people to gather and interact in addition to transit.

---

“SPACES OF TEMPORARY AND TRANSIENT ACTIVITY; PLACES THAT COULD BE ANYWHERE, ARE EVERYWHERE BUT ARE NOWHERE”
2.2 BOUNDARIES AND ACCESS INTO PLACES & EXPERIENCES

The allure and dissuasion a cemetery presents is its inaccessibility. Being of significant size (21 hectares), this creates a tension in its contextual urban fabric. Accessing it requires behavioural protocol to be observed. The challenge posed is how to acclimatise pedestrians who enter the cemetery to neither mourn nor pay any homage to the deceased there to the behaviour of people that would.

Crossing over into the cemetery space involves knowing what the boundaries are. The defining perimeters separate in this case, the sacred and the secular. In the context of sacred realms; boundaries range from physical, cultural and spiritual. To cross over to a sacred space, actions akin to ritual are practised. There are different stages of immersion into the sacred. Much like how the lighting and sound are gradually controlled when entering a cinema so not to thrust patrons into the screening rooms directly from the noisy, brightly lit foyers.

Sacred Space: Ancestral spiritual realm
Medium: Trance
Process: Dance and singing

In order to access the ancestors to communicate with them, a sangoma will dance and chant/sing himself into a state of trance. At the peak, the ancestor will “descend” and possess the sangoma in order to clearly communicate with him.

Sacred Space: Isibaya
Medium: Offering
Process: Announcement, praise

At a Zulu cattle kraal is where it is believed the family’s ancestors dwell. Not everyone is allowed inside and entering requires reciting praise names and announcing the visit. The selected people will proceed to the holy place in the kraal to make a request and/or sacrifice.
**Sacred Space:** Church  
**Medium:** Water, body  
**Process:** Genuflection and holy water blessing

When entering most orthodox churches, the ritual of dipping your fingers into holy water near the doorway then making a cross with them on your forehead. You would then go on to bow or genuflect before sitting at a pew.

**Sacred Space:** Temple  
**Medium:** Steps, height, nature  
**Process:** Long ascent

Temples and holy places from Japan, Greece and Machu Picchu are at the top of a mountain. Whether at the centre of the city or at the outskirts of one, the temple is distinguished from the secular through the medium of height. Approaching them requires a long, pilgrim-like ascent to the top which spiritually prepares one.

**Sacred Space:** The Forbidden City  
**Medium:** Water  
**Process:** Crossing over

The 13th century Ming dynasty city is a historical gem of Beijing. It remains untouched by the modernity of the city that surrounds it. A moat surrounds it and acts as a physical barrier between the co-existing cities. Crossing over this moat is an in fact an act of crossing over to another time and cultural space.
2.3 THRESHOLD SIMULATION MODEL

APPROACH SIMULATION

SANGOMA

CATTLE KRAAL
2.4 INTERPRETATION CENTRE FOR BRAAMFONTEIN CEMETERY

As a primary architectural intervention for the integration of the “place and non-place” as represented by the cemetery and its immediate surroundings (the city), is an interpretation centre.

What makes an interpretation centre suitable is the following characteristics it has:

- quiet architectural program
- has an educational function
- usually an intermediary to external people and actual site where it’s located
- appropriate tool to communicate heritage

All of the above interventions will ensure a fulfilling experience to the visitor while monitoring and protecting the cemetery site by responsibly administering access into it.

2.4.1 PRECEDENT STUDY: PINNACLES INTERPRETATION CENTRE, AUSTRALIA

Pinnacles Interpretation Centre, located in Nambung National Park, West Australia, is a celebration of the landscape it is located. Unique limestone protrusions surround the centre and are the focus of this unique phenomenon. Materials selected were used to compliment those in the landscape to suitably integrate the building to the land.

http://www.archdaily.com/14074/pinnacles-interpretive-centre-woodhead/
2.4 INTERPRETATION CENTRE FOR BRAAMFONTEIN CEMETERY

As a primary architectural intervention for the integration of the “place and non-place” as represented by the cemetery, the interpretation centre plays a crucial role. What makes an interpretation centre suitable is the following characteristics it has:

- Quiet architectural program
- Has an educational function
- Usually an intermediary to external people and the actual site where it is located
- Appropriate tool to communicate heritage

All of the above interventions will ensure a fulfilling experience to the visitor while monitoring and protecting the cemetery site by responsibly administering access into it.

2.4.1 PRECEDENT STUDY: PINNACLES INTERPRETATION CENTRE, AUSTRALIA

Integrates well in the landscape

Draws tectonic inspiration from the site in order to blend with it easily.

Pinnacles Interpretation Centre, located in Nambung National Park, West Australia, is a celebration of the landscape it is situated in. The soil cementation walls, with their different finishes, are inspired by the layered limestone cliffs and structural sand dunes, which gives the building a rich sense of the region’s geology and climate. The building is also designed to respect the area’s geology and landscape, with its long, winding vehicular approach providing a long approach platform from parking to building. The long approach is deliberately delayed through the landscape, allowing visitors to interact directly with the landscape. The building also integrates well in the landscape, with its long approach platform from parking to building, and approach to centre deliberately delayed through long approach.

For more information, visit:
http://www.archdaily.com/14074/pinnacles-interpretive-centre-woodhead/
2.5 SITE BOUNDARIES

The previous illustrations are of the different manners of arriving at a sacred space as mentioned in the previous page. As illustrated there are sacred and secular layers, each differing in intensity and framed by a threshold. Not only does the threshold need to be acknowledged in order to enter the next space each one serves as a medium of acclimatisation and preparation for the next stage.

The cemetery, the proposed site and the sites’ edges each have their own set of boundaries that are physical, psychological and in between. My aim is to identify ones that are relevant to the needs associated to the site program and needs.

2.5.1 THE CEMETERY

The cemetery is a physical boundary in the sense that it is a massive land mass that cannot be permeated and so must be circumnavigated to reach one’s destination.
In addition, within the cemetery, there are further boundaries that disallow physical access into those parts for people intended for the purpose of the programme.

Therefore, entering the cemetery whether as a visitor (of it and the interpretation centre) or as a passer-by, requires a mindful and layered approach to it.
2.5.2 NON-PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

Perception
Usually, nobody will willingly walk into a cemetery if it were for no intent or reason. Overcoming the psychological barrier would require acclimatisation and opening the closed sealed space for exploration.

Knowledge
As mentioned during my investigation, knowledge activates memorials and places. While the cemetery’s historical and cultural significance remains unknown, this remains a barrier to people’s interest to interact with it. Activating the cemetery will require the organised managing and distribution of this knowledge.

Culture
According to most Southern African cultures, walking amongst the dead is an activity carried out in one’s own homestead or during an organised trip to the burial grounds/cemetery. In both instances, its common for only elders or selected people to do so as the deceased are consulted for ceremonial purposes more than they are visited for sentimental reasons.

2.5.3 PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

Braamfontein Spruit
The river, originally called the Klein Jukskei divides the proposed site and the cemetery (Clarke, 2009). It’s a relatively smaller stream in that area and swells during the months of August and December. Although a physical barrier, the stream is a significant threshold that signifies cleansing. This is particularly apt as cleansing is a common feature in ritual which is a threshold activity.
Bank

In addition to the stream creating physical barrier between the sites, it lies at the bottom of a bank. At its deepest, the bank is 5-6m high and at widest is 9-10m gap between each site. The bank suggests a deliberate and designed means to cross over. This also is a metaphorical reference to ritual of leaving one state and place to enter another.
2.5.4 DESIGNING AROUND BOUNDARIES

Position 1: On top of bank
Allows direct views to cemetery to people arriving without acclimatisation the building is completely separate from the cemetery.

Position 2: Concealed in bank
Building is buried; when in it, one can see the cemetery at eye level and stream is visible. The building is not seen at street level and arrival to the exhibition is delayed.

Position 3: Partially buried in the ground
Allows slight visibility at street level but is at eye-level with the cemetery to those inside it. Again, arrival to the exhibition is delayed.
Position 1: Straight
The shortest route from the interpretation centre site to the cemetery. There are few opportunities to effectively acclimatise the visitor from one space to the other.

Position 2: Zig-zag
Long and winding option which allows for gradual descend into the cemetery space. Resembles a mountain pilgrimage path.

Position 3: circular
The circle is a sacred form in most cultures and used in many forms during ritual (dancing in a circle, demarcating a holy place etc.). Descending in a circular motion takes advantage of this.
Spaces and functions required for these two buildings are a direct response to the needs of people in this group to ensure a fulfilling experience.

Pedestrians are a wide group of people who currently walk around the cemetery in order to get to their destination. Since there is no activity in the large expanse of cemetery land, this makes this group vulnerable to safety issues.

Using the cemetery itself as a solution to the navigation and safety issue, it is required that the space and its routes are safe.

---

### 2.6 INTENDED PATRONS

The programme is designed in response to the dormancy issues in the area as explored in previous chapters, the needs of the pedestrians in the area and to preserve the heritage of the cemetery through managing it and providing a knowledge base about it for those who intend on entering it.

People who will have direct affiliation with the site (other than those that work there) are in one of two groups: the visitors and the pedestrians. Visitors arrive at the site with the intention to enter the cemetery on a guided tour, having learned the historical relevance of it prior to doing so. Pedestrians on the other hand are persons passing through the programme site or cemetery for the sole means to get somewhere else safely and quickly in the scenic backdrop of the Braamfontein cemetery.

---

Visitors are a group of people who deliberately go to the centre for the sake of learning more about the cemetery and commemorate (or remember) individuals or groups buried or recently cremated there. They are either visiting the exhibition building or the archive building.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Families of the departed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People associated with individuals buried at the cemetery or recently cremated there.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Researchers and scholars</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People carrying out research work based on the groups or individual buried at the cemetery</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tourists</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People who are interested in the historical significance of the cemetery and wish to explore it as an educational activity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Spaces and functions required for these two buildings are a direct response to the needs of people in this group to ensure a fulfilling experience.

Pedestrians are wide group of people who currently walk around the cemetery in order to get to their destination. Since there is no activity in the large expanse of cemetery land, this makes this group vulnerable to safety issues.

Using the cemetery itself as a solution to the navigation and safety issue, it is required that the space and its routes are safe.
2.7 ARCHITECTURE IN THE CEMETERY

There is only a small amount of infrastructure in the cemetery, namely the gatehouse, the crematorium and the keeper’s house. However, when walking through the cemetery, the trees (some aged over 100 years) form clusters and open spaces of varying densities. This forms a pattern of covered spaces and opened spaces; lit ‘rooms’ and shaded ‘rooms’. These spaces are reminiscent of (albeit crude) architectural forms in the cemetery.

FOREST ROOMS:
Clearings in a heavily-wooded forest create a light-filled space that appears to be like a room.
There is only a small amount of infrastructure in the cemetery, namely the gatehouse, the crematorium and the keeper's house. The cemetery is divided into private and public spaces; lit rooms and shaded rooms. These spaces are reminiscent of (albeit crude) architectural forms in the cemetery.

Forest rooms: Clearings in a heavily-wooded forest create a light-filled space that appears to be like a room. Clearings in a forest are formed by gaps in the canopy, which allow light to penetrate. The canopy, made up of leaves and branches, shades the ground beneath. The structural formation of a forest room includes a foundation, columns, and shading.

The structural formation of a forest room including a foundation, columns, shading...