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Thresholds: activating the Braamfontein cemetery through an interpretation centre

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.1.3 ABSTRACT

A green palisade fence is not all that separates the urban, kinetic Braamfontein from it's dormant cemetery. It's a long-standing perception that the two spaces are not related despite their proximity. And for this reason, you too have likely driven past it's sixty metre long edge without having given it too much acknowledgement.

Granted, it's easier to overlook a space supposedly devoid of rational markers from their neighbours because of rhythmic disturbance in function and social experience or even their inability to mirror their adjacent counterparts: a derelict building, a desolate parking lot in the evening, a twenty one hectare cemetery in a city.
However, what makes the green, park-like Braamfontein Cemetery different from any other in Johannesburg is that it was the first cemetery in the city. As a result, is the final resting place of significant contributors of the country's history. It is then, currently a commemorative landscape in which events, social and burial practices of Johannesburg and South Africa are recorded.
For this reason, one could say that this cemetery is very much a part of urban Braamfontein in 2014. How then to negotiate the de-alienation of this remarkable space while preserving its beauty.

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