

Hillbrow Health Precinct

APPENDIX 1 : PRECINCT PLAN AND URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

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GAPP-IODSA Consortium

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PREFACE

This report is an Appendix to the Hillbrow Health Precinct Business Plan and should be read in conjunction with that document.
The full list of Appendices is given below :

- Appendix 1** : Hillbrow Health Precinct, Precinct Plan and Urban Design Framework
- Appendix 2** : Hillbrow Health Precinct, Traffic and Transportation
- Appendix 3** : Hillbrow Health Precinct, Technical Services Structural Assessment
- Appendix 4** : Hillbrow Health Precinct, Civil and Electrical Infrastructure
- Appendix 5** : Hillbrow Health Precinct, Land Use Study
- Appendix 6** : Hillbrow Health Precinct, Financial

TEAM

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1. INTRODUCTION

This report is an Appendix to the Hillbrow Health Precinct: Business Plan and deals with the spatial aspects, the Precinct Plan and Urban Design Framework of the Health Precinct. A number of studies were undertaken before the Business Plan was commissioned including an Urban Design Scoping Report, a preliminary heritage study and a traffic and services report. These reports have become the basis of this work.

2. CONTEXT AND STATUS QUO

The Hillbrow Health Precinct (HHP) comprises an agglomeration of institutional land uses (predominantly health services / facilities and associated laboratories). The boundaries of the Precinct are indicated on Figure 1. The land uses have clustered such that they are inward facing and are isolated from their surroundings. The latter has also prevented the development through-linkages, effectively forming a movement barrier between Hillbrow and Braamfontein (east-west), and to a lesser degree in a north-south direction.

Overall the precinct is unintelligible due to building on an ad hoc basis over the past 100 years. The older built fabric is decaying due to a lack of services maintenance and the ingress of water. Furthermore underutilised and empty buildings have not been maintained, subsiding into a state of disrepair and becoming unusable.

A number of key development initiatives surround the precinct. These include:

- Constitution Hill;
- Braamfontein regeneration;
- Hillbrow regeneration;
- Park Station; and
- Joubert Park

It is vital that the HHP forges links with these, and connects them to each other.

A significant proportion of buildings are heritage buildings. These cannot be demolished and require to be refurbished before they can be reused to accommodate health related activities and functions. This is relatively costly and impinges on budgets.

It is stressed that the Urban Design Scoping Report has been approved and essentially sets out the broad development principles for the precinct:

- Making connections
- A grid of streets
- A public open space network
- A mixture of land uses
- Landmark elements
- Catalytic projects, and
- “Putting it all together”

It is the objective of this study to apply and adapt these principles in a pragmatic and realistic manner in order to achieve the objectives as set out in the study.

It is important that the Hillbrow Health Precinct is well connected to the surrounding areas. The Contextural Framework that has been developed is indicated in Figure 2 and provides strategic linkages from the Hillbrow Health Precinct to Braamfontein, Constitutional Hill, Park Station, Joubert Park and Hillbrow. A “supergrid” of pedestrian routes and public spaces are proposed..

In this regard Kotze Street is key to these connections as it is the most viable continuous east west link, from which connections are made north / south. Existing roads within the precinct are utilised as local access routes as well as for pedestrian movement. The existing supergrid of main arterial routes is retained including the one way system. The “grid” established begins to divide the area into precincts and sub-precincts and forges linkages with the surrounding area. This sets up the structure around which the precincts will be developed.

3. KEY DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

A number of key development issues arise from the urban design scoping exercise and related traffic and services assessments:

A significant number of historic buildings occupy the site, which will in part restrict the physical restructuring of the site as the demolition of such buildings permitted. There is also a cost-premium in this regard as it is always somewhat more expensive to undertake the refurbishment of a building, as opposed to a new development.

The precinct comprises a dense agglomeration of buildings that is typical of incremental, ad-hoc and as and when required building development to accommodate expansion and new uses. Accordingly there is minimal open surface space within the precinct to accommodate parking and introduce the establishment of a public environment as envisaged in the urban design scoping report.

The older built fabric of the precinct has started to decay faster than usual because of the ingress of stormwater and the lack of services maintenance. There are underutilised and empty buildings that have not been maintained and vandalism is a problem. This all points to a decline in the quality of the building stock.

The rationalisation of activities and the concomitant demolition of buildings will have to be undertaken in order to enable the restructuring of the precinct, introduce parking and establish the envisaged public environment.

The proposed physical restructuring and reorganisation of the precinct will assist with the urban management of the precinct and enable the incremental phasing of the development, which is dependent of financial and institutional arrangements.

The introduction of parking is considered to be an important component in the redevelopment of the precinct. This is important for accessibility to the precinct.

The precinct is well served by public transport and is accessible by foot from all four sides, such as Hillbrow, Braamfontein, Constitutional Hill and Joubert Park.

Existing high order traffic mobility routes on the periphery of the precinct hinder safe pedestrian movement. Appropriate pedestrian crossings require to be established within the context that pedestrian movement is a high priority given that residents within the surrounding areas rely predominantly on public transport and walking as their modes of transportation.

4. APPROACH

The recommended approach is based on the philosophy of the approved Urban Design Scoping Report. The Principles indicated in that report are described on Figure 3. Although the principles in that document have been complied with the proposals have been slightly adjusted to accommodate both the physical implications discussed above and the institutional realities with regard to funding and urban management.

4.1 Making Connections

The urban design scoping study proposes the reorganisation of the traffic system into a two-way vehicular traffic system. For reasons of pragmatism regarding time frames and the fact that such a proposal implicates the entire inner city, the existing study will work within the ambit of existing traffic flows. It will, however, make proposals regarding the physical reorganisation of the street space in order to accommodate pedestrian and public transportation needs.

The establishment of dedicated pedestrian links to and from the health precinct, as well as within, in order to improve public accessibility to the facilities within the precinct and improve connectivity to the public facilities and activities in Braamfontein (Metro Centre etc.), Hillbrow, Constitutional Hill, Park Station and Joubert Park.

4.2 A Grid of Public Environment

The underlying rationale behind the reinstatement of a proposed grid of streets within the precinct is to enable accessibility to all users, allowing for choice and variety of movement within the precinct and through it to adjoining areas.

Given the intensity and density of built form, as well as the configuration and positioning of the historic buildings within the site, the physical creation of actual street space will be very difficult. In this regard it is proposed that a public environment grid be established, comprising a series of pedestrian paths and routes, public places such as piazzas and squares, and where possible, parking courtyards and vehicular access (even cross links).

The insertion of a public environment grid into and across the existing impenetrable precinct blocks makes connections between the surrounding fabric and the fabric and associated activities within the precinct.

The public environment is to be supported with active ground floor uses and designed to an appropriate standard for human comfort. This is to include

appropriate landscaping (with an appropriate tree-scape), lighting, wide pavements, level crossings, street furniture, way finding and sign system.

4.3 A Public Open Space Network

The urban design scoping report proposes the establishment of a primary public open space running across the east west axis of the precinct. This will form the primary focus of the precinct with its landmark building being the original Hillbrow Hospital Building. This idea is based on a long-term vision and development approach of the precinct, and given current institutional arrangement and economic realities, makes the establishment of such a public open space in the first phase of development unviable. The existing study proposes an incremental development approach of a linked network of public spaces, both soft (existing and proposed local parks) and hard (piazzas and squares), throughout the precinct at key locations. These are connected via pedestrian walkways and paths.

A pedestrian network is also proposed throughout the precinct. This network is to form an additional offset grid to the existing road network and comprises pathways and walkways to key access points and follows key desire lines and linkages across the precinct.

The existing street spaces are to be redesigned and upgraded in order to accommodate both pedestrian and vehicular movement, such that a synergy is achieved for vehicular accessibility into and within the precinct, and human comfort and safety.

4.4 Mixture of Land Uses

A mixture of land use activities is an important principle that allows for the diversification of economic activity and enables greater viability in the long term.

The predominant land use of the precinct is to remain as being health-related, including health care and research.

It is proposed that activities that build on and establish synergies (synergy in this context also means no conflict) with the predominant use, such as social housing, formalised informal trading / retail, offices for NGO's (general institutional) and AIDS research etc.

4.5 Landmark Elements (Imageability and Legibility)

An important aspect to the redevelopment of the precinct is to introduce imageability and legibility into the urban fabric.

An important part of creating this imageability and legibility is to apply the following principles:

- *Gateways*, whether literal or implied, to certain parts of the precinct should be used to acknowledge arrival or departure at a place having a collective character (or specific function and / or activity);
- *Local nodes* of activity (e.g. local parks, piazzas) should be used to create focal points to areas and where more than one such node exists in within the precinct, these should be visually related to one another in order to reinforce

- this sense of identity;
- *Edges* are an important aspect in the definition of the health precinct and its “sub-areas”;
- *Landmarks* are crucial in achieving a sense of place. This is achieved through their scale, location and / or architectural significance. Apart from making landmarks strongly identified with the health precinct, they are also vital in forming an understandable system of references across the precinct and to and from it; and
- *Axial vistas*, whether formal or subtle, are necessary to achieve a visual relationship between the landmarks and the surrounding area.

Existing natural features such as established trees must also be taken into account.

The public spaces should each have a unique character that can be established through their design, the introduction of a public art programme, any cultural significance in terms of the historic types of health care that have taken place etc.

4.6 Catalytic Projects

The establishment of catalytic projects to kick-start the redevelopment of the precinct is an important principle.

Catalytic projects show commitment to investment and the realisation of development plans. It forms the platform to further development by showing the market, as well as development partners and institutions, that there is action. In this sense they become the springboard for further development as additional partners join in over time, and thus directly and indirectly gears development.

5. PRECINCT PLAN AND URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

5.1 Concept and Vision for the Precinct

The urban design framework is based on the above principles and comprises the following:

The Precinct Concept and Vision indicated in Figure 4 and 5 is based upon the local access road network forming a cross or pinwheel with links to the major movement routes around the precinct. The existing local access roads are augmented by a new east west road from Hospital to Klein Street. This structures the precinct into 4 Quadrants. The existing and new local access roads become the focus of the precinct and will require a public environmental upgrade to provide an attractive environment at the centre of the precinct. These roads can be linked by an overlaid pedestrian / public environment system further subdividing the quarters by pedestrian access. These routes could be either public or private routes. There is thus a “parallel development approach” whereby certain things can develop per quadrant but also at an overall scale.

The reinforcement of the “cross” roads principle structuring the Hillbrow Health Precinct into four quadrants. The north-south axis of the “cross” is Hospital Street and the east-west link De Korte Street with an extension through the Hillbrow Hospital site to link to Klein Street.

The four quadrants can be characterised as follows:

- Quadrant 1 (north-east)- Esselen Street focus: upgraded Esselen Street into public space, the Esselen Street Clinic, the Y-Centre, support NGO's. Also includes the northern portion of the former Hillbrow Hospital complex.
- Quadrant 2- The remaining southern portion of the former Hillbrow Hospital complex. It includes the new Hillbrow Community Health Clinic and a possible District Hospital.
- Quadrant 3 (south-west)- Mixed uses consisting of education, residential, private and public medical facilities and services.
- Quadrant 4 (north-west)- Comprising the forensic chemical laboratories, the National Centres for Occupational Health and Health Laboratory Services and the Johannesburg Mortuary.

The “cross” road is not viewed as divisive element, but literally forms the “crux” around which the identity, public image and functionality of the health precinct is formed. It is to act as a seam, providing vehicular and pedestrian access to each of the quadrants and enabling pedestrian permeability and connections between them. This “crux” also establishes design principles that aim at improving the overall legibility and imageability of the area. It provides for the collective and cohesive unity of the Hillbrow Health Precinct, whilst allowing each quadrant to have nuances of individual character depending on function, use and character of the particular quadrant. In this way, in subtle treatments, the viewer is presented with a legible environment that assists in orienting one in the greater whole.

The “crux” is reinforced by two public spaces. The first is the existing park within the grounds of the National Health Laboratory services. It is proposed that this is opened for the use by the public, predominantly as a recreational facility. It is at the “heart” of the precinct and represents the public interface of the institutional partnership that forms the precinct: national, provincial, local and university. The second public space is the proposed combination public park and public square, located at the intersections of Hospital and Smit Streets (on the north-east corner), part of the Community Health Centre quadrant. This proposed public space is to be multi-functional, providing for:

- structured parking: there is a dire need to accommodate vehicular parking and the ground slopes such that a single level structured parking garage with natural ventilation can be built;
- a public park on the “roof” surface of the structured parking, providing a residential recreation facility (play area, relaxation etc.). for the surrounding residential communities. This would include the idea of being an open “waiting” room for the clinic; and
- retail activities in the form of formalised informal trade (eating, personal services- hairdressers, fruit & veg etc.).

The proposed public parks do not achieve the public open space axis as envisaged in the urban design scoping report. The existing institutional arrangements and proposals by the Braamfontein regeneration project currently prevent the establishment of such a focal public open space. However the above proposals reinforce the principle to structure the redevelopment of the precinct around a redeveloped, safe, secure, comfortable and functional public realm.

The four quadrants are connected by a system of public environment linkages. These linkages are in the form of pedestrian pathways, parking courts and public areas (not unlike local access lanes) that allow for both vehicular and pedestrian movement. This public environment network disaggregates each of the quadrants into smaller parcels, establishing the refined grid as envisaged in the urban design scoping report.

The public environment linkages are inserted across the site in a series of north / south and east / west connections. The primary pedestrian link is east / west from Hillbrow along Esselen Street and Kotze Street, through the Metropolitan Council concourse and into Braamfontein via Stiemens (the main pedestrian link in Braamfontein). The secondary east / west connection is from the Community Health Clinic, westward along De Korte and into Braamfontein. Two north / south pedestrian links are established through quadrants 1 & 2, and 3 & 4 respectively, forging links with Constitutional Hill, Park Station and Joubert Park. This makes the Community Health Clinic accessible from all areas, and creates increased access possibilities to Constitutional Hill. Albeit that these connections are predominantly pedestrian links, some will have dual functions and be access lanes and act as parking courts. These will all require detailed design work before they can be finalised. Some existing building stock will have to be demolished to make way for these connections and create the public spaces envisaged.

5.2 Traffic and Movement

Figure 6 indicate the Traffic and Movement within the precinct. This includes the surrounding arterial routes of Kotze, Joubert, Rissik and Smit Streets; Klein Street on the east which is a major public transport route; the existing local access roads of De Korte, Hospital and Esselen Streets and a proposed new local access road from Hospital to Klein Streets. Additional street parking is proposed within the precinct on all local access routes and existing and proposed surface parking is recommended.

5.3 Activities and Land Uses

Figure 7 indicates the Existing Activities and Land Uses and Figure 8 indicates the proposed Activities and Land Uses in the precinct. The northern portion of Quadrant 1 is generally as existing uses with the proposal to create a NGO centre on the corner of Klein and Esselen Streets. The southern portion of the precinct has been identified for consolidation, re-use or redevelopment for health related facilities.

The northern portion of Quadrant 2 has been indicated as a potential District Hospital and the southern portion for a community health clinic.

Quadrant 3 is generally in private ownership and is indicated as the existing uses. However this quadrant has the potential for private sector infill and/or redevelopment.

Quadrant 4 is as existing with medical research and the Johannesburg Mortuary.

5.4 Open Space and Landscape

Figure 9 indicates the Open Space and Landscape proposals in the precinct. Two new public parks are proposed. These are located on the corner of De Korte and Hospital Streets and the other on the corner of Smit and Hospital Streets. These parks are not just seen as important “green lungs” in the precinct for the residents of the area but as waiting spaces and “Entrances” to the medical facilities within the precinct.

It is also proposed that the demolition of the building in Esselen Street provides the opportunity for the establishment of a multi purpose hard play space for basketball and other activities. Alternative uses could be considered for this space such as permaculture medicinal gardens but these need to be evaluated on a need and desire basis.

The public environment associated with the streets is in need of refurbishment in order to provide attractive spaces for the residents and visitors. This will include additional parking, reworked bus and taxi facilities in Klein Street, improved street lighting, way finding, sign systems and street furniture.

5.5 Urban Design Directives

Figures 10, 11, 12 and 13 indicate the guidelines and directives for the built form within the precinct.

Figure 10 indicates the buildings that have historic or heritage significance. These buildings will require a detailed heritage study before alterations or additions are undertaken. A detailed study is to be undertaken of the Hugh Solomons Building which will provide an example of a basis for future studies within the precinct.

Figure 11 indicates the structural condition of buildings within quadrants 2 part of 3 and 4. This indicate the asbestos buildings, poor structural condition, average structural condition and good structural condition. This information has been summarised from Appendix 3 Structural Assessment.

Figure 12 indicates those buildings that are to be demolished due to being constructed of asbestos or in poor structural condition and those buildings that require moderate and considerable structural upgrade.

Figure 13 indicates the design directives for the precinct including gateway features, nodes, landmarks and edges. These should be taken into account in the detailed design of the

6. PHASING OF THE DEVELOPMENT

Figure 14 indicates the overall phasing in the Precinct. This shows three phases of public infrastructure programmes (catalytic projects) as follows:

Phase 1 : Esselen Street Upgrade

Phase 2 : Establish the cross including the new access road from Hospital to Klein Street and the public environmental upgrade

Phase 3 : Redevelopment of the southern portion of Klein Street as a dedicated public transport route

Also indicated on Figure 14 is the potential development and redevelopment within each quadrant including

- The recycling and refurbishment of buildings within Quadrant 1
- New Public Park, pedestrian routes and parking facilities in Quadrant 2
- Social Housing and pedestrian links in Quadrant 3
- Refurbishment of the existing park and pedestrian links in Quadrant 4

Figure 15 indicates the scope of work and design for Phase 1 : Esselen Street upgrade in detail.

Figure 16 indicates the scope of work and design for Phase 2 : Upgrade of Hospital, De Korte, portion of Smit Street and the new east west route and squares.

Figure 17 indicates the scope of work and design for Phase 3 : Redevelopment of the southern portion of Klein Street.

At this stage of the precinct development, it is only possible to frame up its earliest phasing programme in detail. More detailed planning and preparatory activities identified in this business plan will be carried out, producing more specific financial, technical and operational information. In turn, this will allow more certainty on land and property acquisition, and upgrading of the physical environment. However as a preliminary guide and for information for the Business Plan the following has been assumed with regard to Phase One of the urban upgrade and building programme.

Phase One: Urban Upgrade / Buildings	July – December 04
Implement Esselen St streetscape upgrade	By end September
Confirm space requirements for expended RHRU activities	By end August
Confirm space requirements of potential tenants in NGO Centre	By end September
Secure development agreement for Nurses Homes, Solomon Building and former Streetwise property	By end September
Confirm Y-Centre establishment arrangements and secure site	By end September
Initiate discussions with POMA / showcase potential properties	By end October
Support residential / social housing developments by fast-tracking planning approvals, decision turn-round times and incentive packaging	By end December
Collate property information as portfolio database	By end December

7. DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL, BUILDINGS TO BE DEMOLISHED AND RE-USE OF BUILDINGS

Figure 18 indicates the developments (public and private) in Quadrants 1 and 2. f

Figure 19 indicates the developments (public and private) in Quadrants 3 and 4.

Figure 20 indicates the buildings that have the potential for re-use or recycling for other uses. Figure 21 indicates the buildings that are to be demolished as they are constructed of asbestos or that the land is required for the new road between Hospital and Klein Streets.

8. URBAN UPGRADE OF THE PUBLIC ENVIRONMENT

Figure 22 indicates the urban upgrade and the new roads which forms the basis of the focal point in the precinct. Figure 23 indicates the pedestrianisation of Esselen Street. The costs of this upgrade of the public environment are indicated in Appendix 6 : Financial

9. CONCLUSIONS

A summary of this document is included in the Hillbrow Health Precinct : Business Plan. This summary and additional financial and programme requirements are set out in the Operating Plan section of the Business Plan under the following headings:

- Approach to the physical development
- Implementing the Urban Design Framework
- Phases of the Development

The aim of producing this Precinct Plan is so that it can be used to guide the physical development of the precinct. The Precinct Plan should therefore be approved and be incorporated into RSDF in the next update which will be in March 2005.

In order to be approved this Precinct Plan will have to go to the following Committees;

- Section 79 Committee (Nov)
- Section 80 Planning Committee (Nov)
- Section 80 Adoption (Nov)
- Mayoral Committee (Jan/Feb)
- Full Council Approval (Jan/Feb)