



Yeoville Then **And** Now

History & Networking

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URBAN (HIS)STORIES

INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

YEOVILLE THEN AND NOW

YEOVILLE THEN AND NOW

INTRODUCTION

BASED IN YEOVILLE, THE GROUP SET OUT IN DOCUMENTING THE PERSONAL HISTORIES OF THE PEOPLE AND THE PLACES THEY'VE LIVED. THEIR JOURNEYS WERE MAPPED INTO AND WITHIN YEOVILLE. AFTER THOUROUGH RESEARCH A BRIEF HISTORY OF YEOVILLE IN THE CONTEXT OF JOHANNESBURG IS PROVIDED. DATA SUCH AS PHOTOGRAPHS, AERIAL MAPS, TIMELINES, PORTRAITS AND WRITTEN TRANSCRIP OF INTERVIEWS OF THE JOURNEY ARE DEMONSTRED.

METHODOLOGY

A CLEAR AND PRECISE METHOD OF NETWORKING FLOWS THROUGH THE PROJECT SHOWING A DEFINED MOVEMENT OF THE JOURNEY AND THE RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN YEOVILLE. BY MEANS OF GROUP INTERVIEWS WE WERE ABLE TO SET A COMFORT LEVEL GAINING MORE CONFIDENCE IN THE INTERVIEWEES AND THEREFORE WERE ABLE TO COLLECT MORE VAST AND DEEP INFORMATION. WE FOUND THIS METHOD EXTREMELY SUCCESSFUL AS ONE PERSON BEGAN TO LEAD US TO THE NEXT CREATING A JOURNEY PATH AS WELL AS AN INTERESTING LINE OF INTERACTIONS. THERE WAS ALSO AN EMPHASIS PLACED ON BUILDINGS AND THEIR SOCIAL AND HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE.

YEOVILLE NETWORKING

In order to understand and analyse a space and the people that move through it one needs to recognize the history and culture of the place in cohesion with the physical and personal now. We must understand the links and connections that form part of the human matrix; how do we communicate, how do we survive amongst each other? These answers coincide within the network that each individual shares with another, whether it is a geographical or personal link.

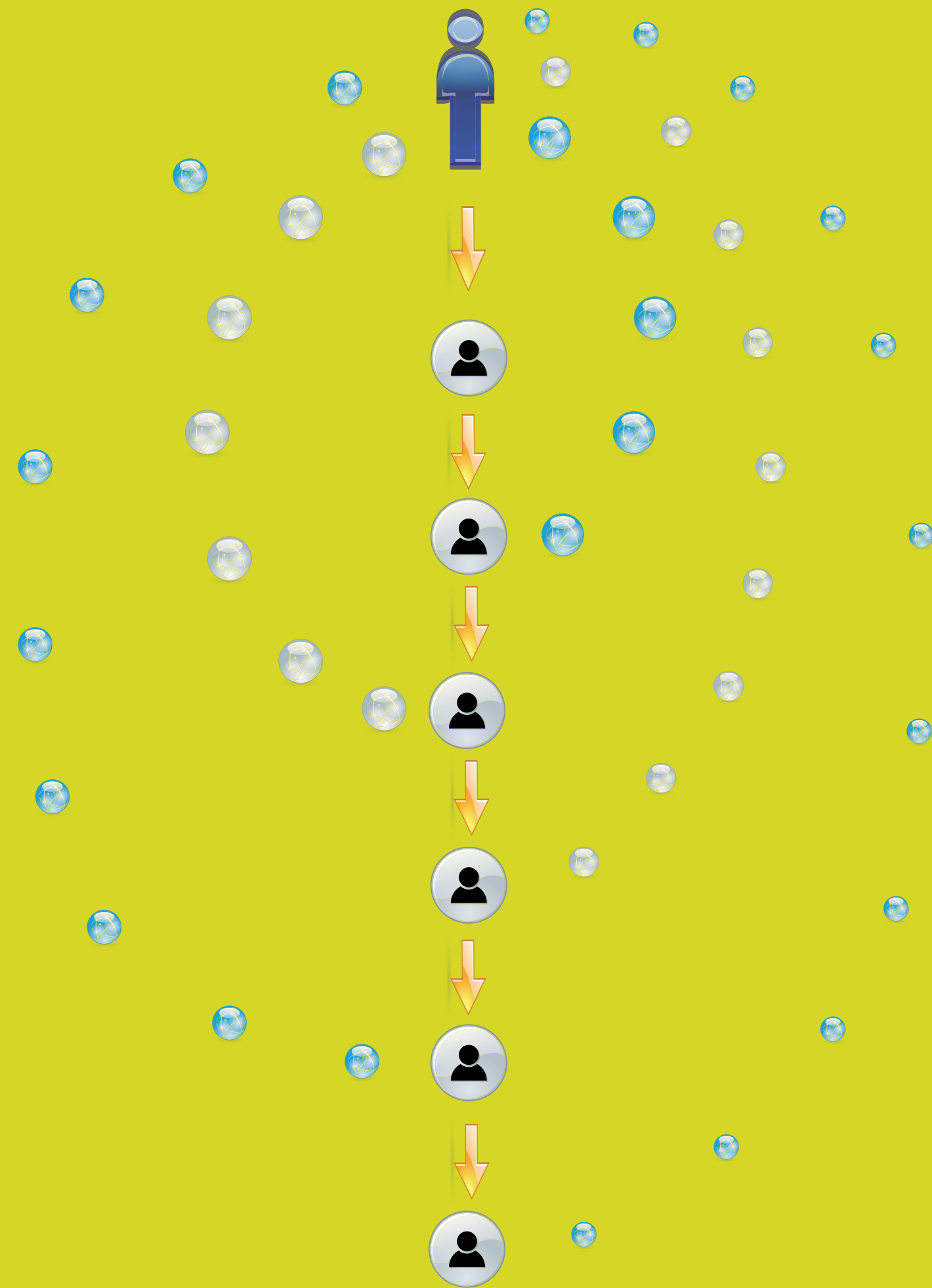
The network is created by social hierarchy, economic status, privilege, convenience and necessity. It is a link of the “they” factor. Who are the people that we refer to as “they” and similarly who are “we” in accordance. Yeoville is a framework of considered locals and outsiders. We, as a group developed a system of creating a network by connecting person, space and map through a continuous single motion. A single thread running through one person’s journey is one strand of the many that creates a functioning network of Yeoville. By communicating with individuals unique in interest and demographic we were able to access the web of livelihoods in Yeoville.

Entering the minds of the people we met we found a consistent fear in most of them. The fear of loss of power to authority and the loss of control of their rightful spaces; it is the authorities that they believe are the root of the crime and corruption in Yeoville and the reason for doubt and fear. As an objective outsider, we see Yeoville, the space as crime and corruption, yet it is not the space or the buildings. There is an unclear definition of people, place and time as the aspects merge and become a coherent entity that we refer to. It is therefore important in mapping the journeys of these people to merge these three factors.

Amongst the collectiveness of the virtual web there is still an obvious detachment. Yeoville is merely a base point for many. It is not always a starting point and for many wishful people it is not where they foresee a future. It is a convenience, how time and place attached them to the network. To the locals they are detached, separated from their families back home, forced to be ‘part of’ by shared spaces (living, facilities, and streets). In this way spaces force connections, the connections that people fear. This forced association detaches Yeoville as a separate entity within South Africa.

Other forms of virtual networking are seen in the library and the internet as communication mediums form a historical and social network. It connects people by ‘apartness’. Similar systems are seen in the ‘wall scheme’ located outside Shoprite and in HotelYeoville. These two examples of visual networking serve different functions in accessibility and purpose.

It is the interaction that people make in this ‘Network’ that is important to develop in a design concept. It is through these people, the spaces they occupy or inhabit and their experiences that we must understand the demands of living a Yeoville lifestyle. Understanding Yeoville, the past and present must be of purpose to a progressive future. Therefore, as architects and planners we need to consider how virtual and visual understandings and realities can be transformed into physical structures and efficient solutions to social housing.



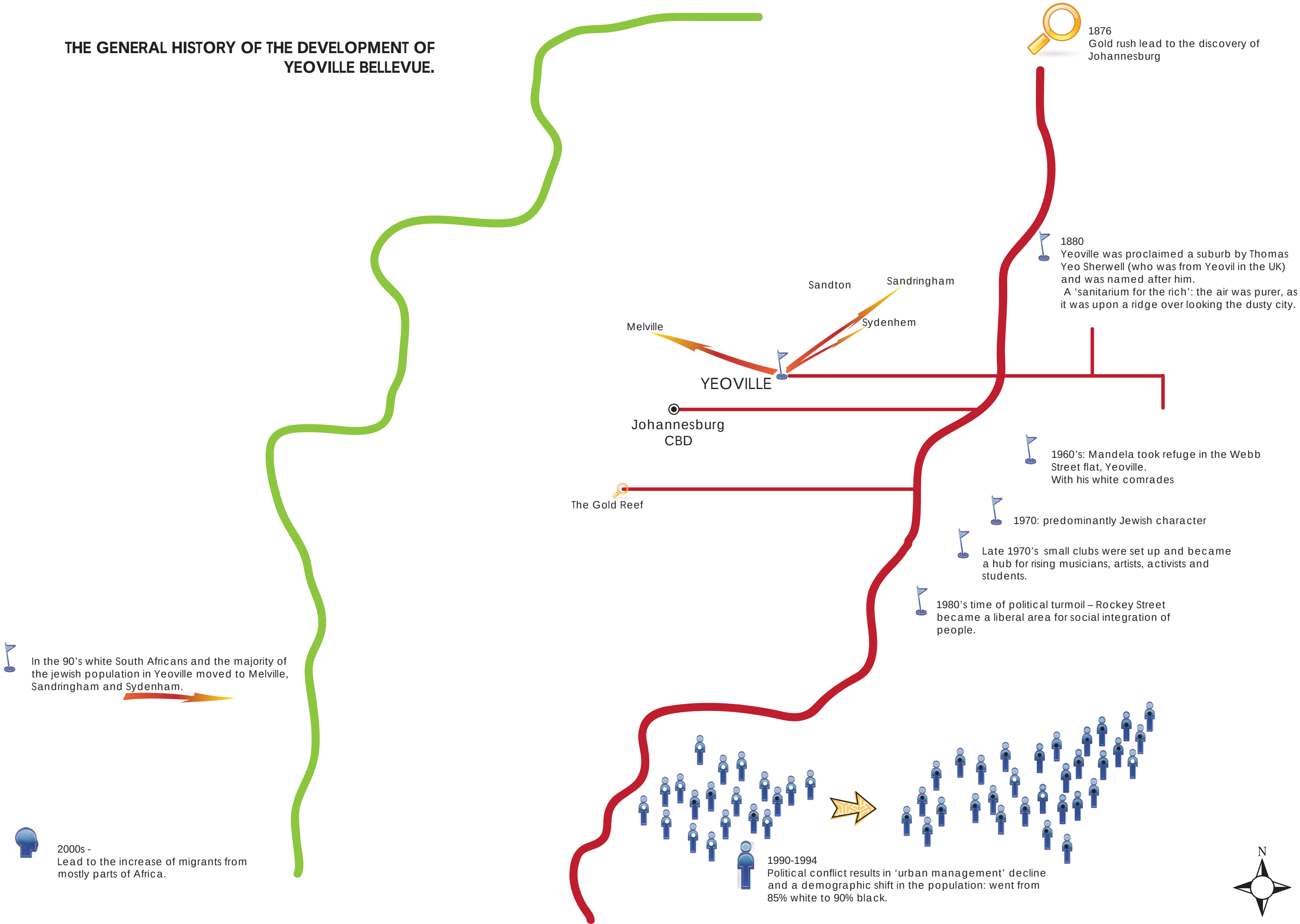
WE ARE ALL LINKED TOGETHER

‘Every single person on this planet is bound to someone by a trail of six people’

There is this bond, this chain reaction that we continuously create, unconsciously or not. It forms every time we interact with someone that we begin to build on this chain. It gets longer and larger and eventually through this person or through someone else that we get to know someone who he / she already knows. In which, we begin to unravel these many ‘invisible chains’ that have been created and discover that we are all linked to someone somehow somewhere some place. We are all connected to each other, directly or indirectly. Every single one of us is linked by numerous networks to everyone else on this planet.

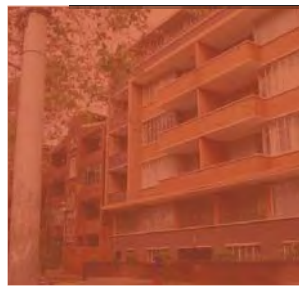
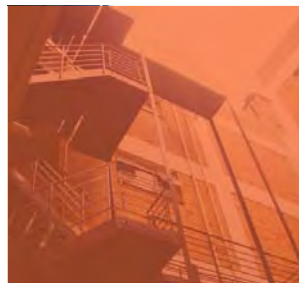
We could already know each other by someone you or we know. Therefore, we are all linked together.

THE GENERAL HISTORY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF YEOVILLE BELLEVUE.





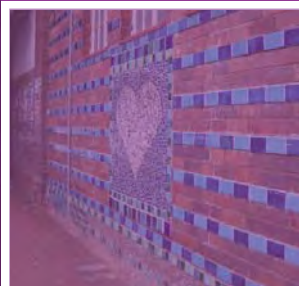
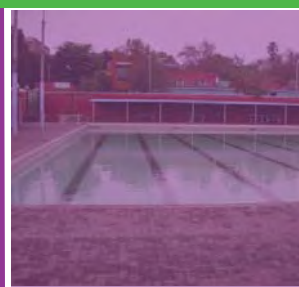
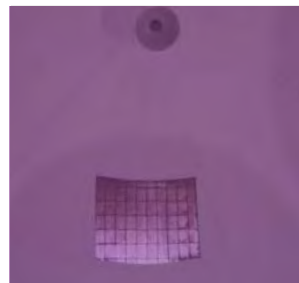
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Like Sharon who used to frequent the Yeoville Swimming Pools, we met Jericho and Joseph in the Yeoville Library who use the pool regularly.



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Hotel Yeoville connects all the residence in a formal way. We also met Zamani in the Yeoville Library, he admits to staying opposite Shoprite, this is where you will find an informal rental advertising wall.

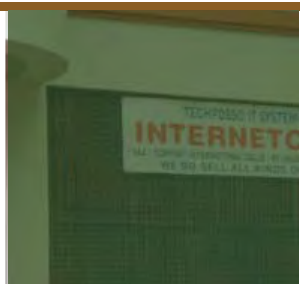
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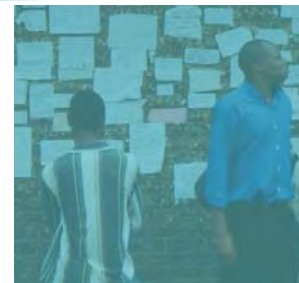


Fellow is an illegal street hawker, and an illegal immigrant. His stall is a stones throw away from Ellie's which is in the Yeoville Market.

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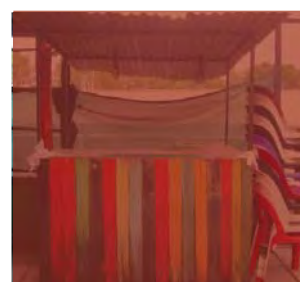
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Other informal which connect the community of Yeoville is the scribbled graffiti on the market walls. These take the form of personal adverts, renting information and just social/political commentary

We met Rasta in the internet cafe, he told us he often goes to a local hang out spot called The House Of Tandoo.

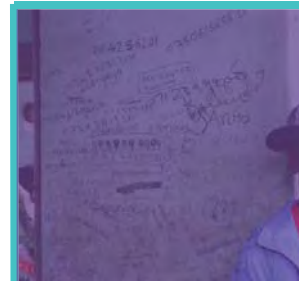
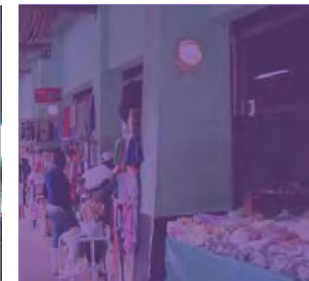
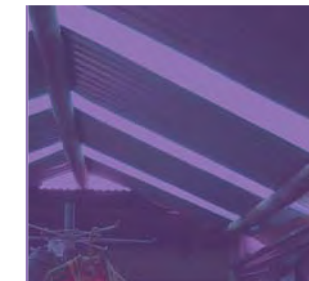
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Fellow's illegal street stall, is opposite to an internet cafe, this internet cafe connects Yeoville to the entire planet, this is where we held a group interview, with Tau, Rasta...



St Aiden's Church

Then

St Aidens church has always been a dear piece of architecture to its community. The name of the church was adapted from St Augenstine's church in Doorfontein. the very first Vicar, Rev. A.H Gallagher brought about many steps forward within the church such as the rectory was built in 1911 and the first Parish magazine was published in 1909. Later in 1912 he suffered a short illness and died on the 24 November 1912. in 1911 the church was given a stand as a gift, allowing them to extend. in memory of Rev Gallagher an altar was presented and was to be placed in the Lady Chapel.

Now

Today the church is not only a home of a nursery school but houses the community as it is a place of comfort and mental safety as said by the community.

Whilst conducting many interviews in and around Yeoville it was clear that the church was a very vital part of the community. Many of the people rely on God to bring them though their hardships and therefore see the church as a place of hope and belonging.

The church conducts Sunday services and also has a hall as well as a nursery school, housing the young youth and allowing for the elders to generate income whiost knowing their children are placed in a safe environment.

The church provides hope, belonging and a safe haven.





TESFOULE DEMISSIE

Now

An Ethiopian man living with pregnant wife in Eltruda Court, on the corner of Yeo and Kenmere in Yeoville. He came to South Africa in 2003 as the political climate was unsuitable. He works as a minsiter and travels to other provinces, like the Eastern Cape and Mpumalanga to preach to children in school. He believes South Africa is a "nice" country with "natural resources" and "advanced technology". He criticizes the corruption in the policing and home affairs departments.

He does not travel alot within Yeoville, except to the local supermarket (Shoprite on the corner of Raleigh and Bedford Street). He often goes travelling to Kempton park to preach with his friend Steve. He enjoys socialising with the diverse people in Yeoville and within South Africa.



Eltruda Court

Eltruda Court, a four storey apartment building (walk-up and elevator accessible), is located opposite the Yeoville police station on the corner of Yeo Street and Kenmere Road.

The Building includes an underground parking garage for it's tenants (accessible via main stairs and elevator). Apartments in Eltruda Court vary between two and three bedrooms and open and closed kitchens. The apartments have a separated toilet and bathroom.

Then

The Building's locality is one block away from Yeoville's main attraction, Rockey Street. This included walking distance to many places including the Yeoville Swimming Pool, Library, OK Bazaars, the various clubs and restaurant along the main street: Mama's and Black Steer.

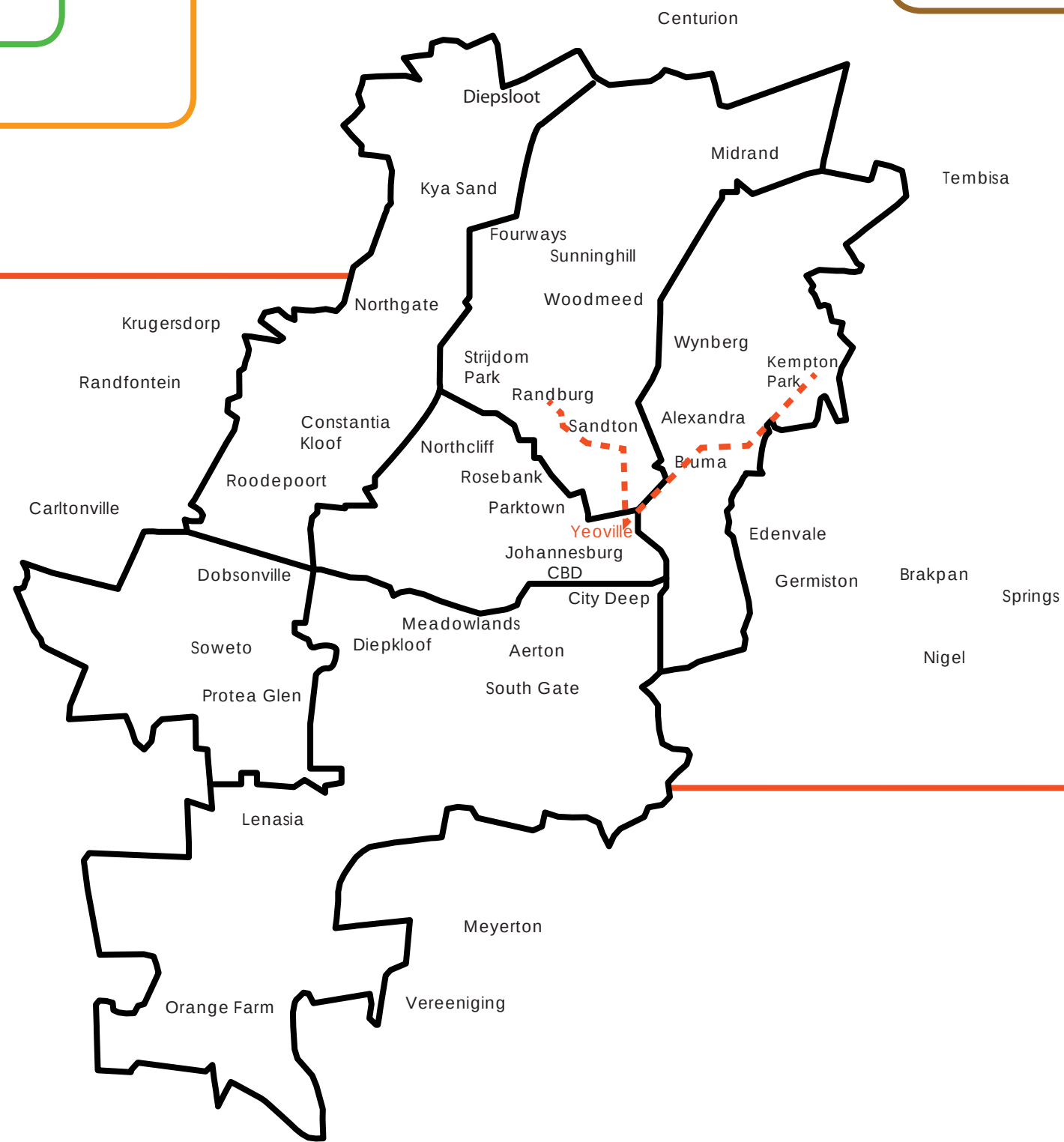
Eltruda Court had a well-kept front garden flowered by an array of Sweet Peas and green hedges.

Now

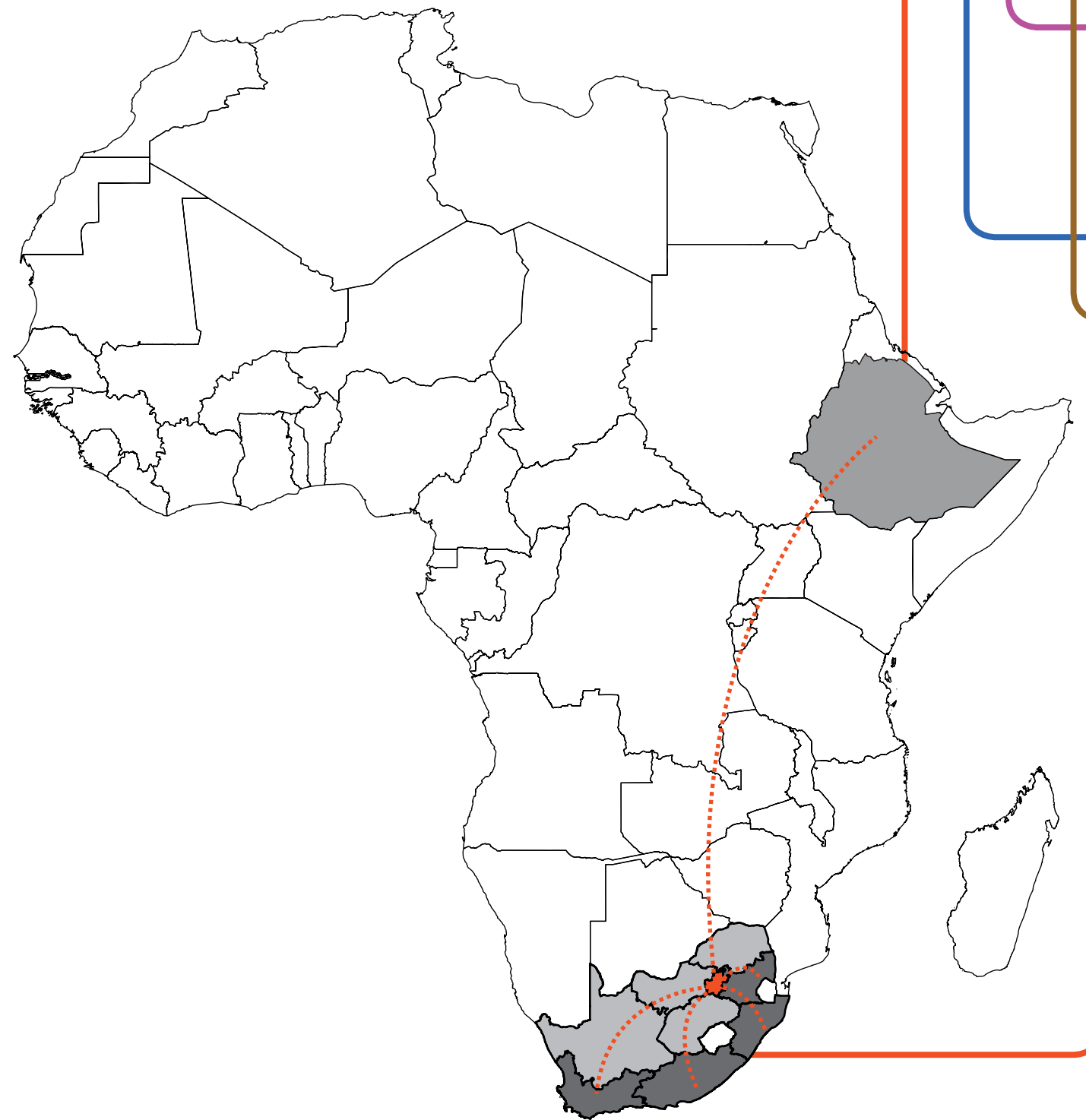
The building is still maintained and looks much like it had fifteen years ago. The building is managed by a private agency and has still kept under employment George, who stays on site and manages the day-to-day functions of the building. George worked as a gardener and cleaner for the building fifteen years earlier. Employed in the building is a cleaner and twenty four hour security gaurd who keep the building a safe a clean environment.

Much of the building's success in preventing itself from declining into slum-like dwellings seen around Yeoville and Bellevue is its close locality to the Yeoville Police Station across the road.





Map showing Tesfoule's journey within Gauteng



Map showing Tesfoule's journey within Africa and his country of origin



SHARON

Then

A Jewish woman who lived with her mother from 1979-1985. Originally from Brakpan, she then moved to Yeovile. She worked in Johannesburg CBD near the magistrates court. She travelled by bus within Yeoville, this was convenient as most bus routes came through Yeoville. She enjoyed the convenience of living in Yeoville. The shops and cinemas formed part of the trendy and vibrant night life along Rocket Street. She often ate at *Black Steer* on Rockey Street. Yeoville was a close - knit, friendly town where local shop-owners knew you by name. Everybody knew everybody. She remembers Johanneburg as being a safe area, unlike today. The houses being close together and semi-detached.

The 'hip' places to be were Hilbrow and a club called Colleseum on Eloff Street.

From Yeoville she moved to Windsor, then Glenhazel and is now currently staying in Sandton with her husband and son.



Yeoville Swimming Pool

Then

The Yeoville Swimming Pool is located on the busy street corner of Kenmere and Raleigh Streets. It receives a constant stream of traffic and people all day. It is an important community building as it provides swimming classes for children during the afternoon and is an important landmark in the daytime social network.

Now

The building has a distinctive domed entrance and multi-toned blue mosaic facade, the mosaic artwork was done by a local artist, who employed and skilled workers in mosaic.



Map showing Sharon's journey within Yeoville and where she resided





JERICHO AND JOSEPH

Now

7 year old friends both living in Yeoville with their parents and siblings. Joseph has a younger brother, called Chris (3) and Jericho a younger sister called Jennifer. They walk to the library on Raleigh Street as well as the Yeoville Swimming Pool, on the corner of Kenmere and Raleigh. Their mothers work at the market and their fathers work selling cars and clothing. Jericho wants to be a policeman when he is older and Joseph a doctor. Jericho is fascinated by the police cars that regularly move through the streets. They enjoy McDonalds' burgers on special occasions, such as birthdays.

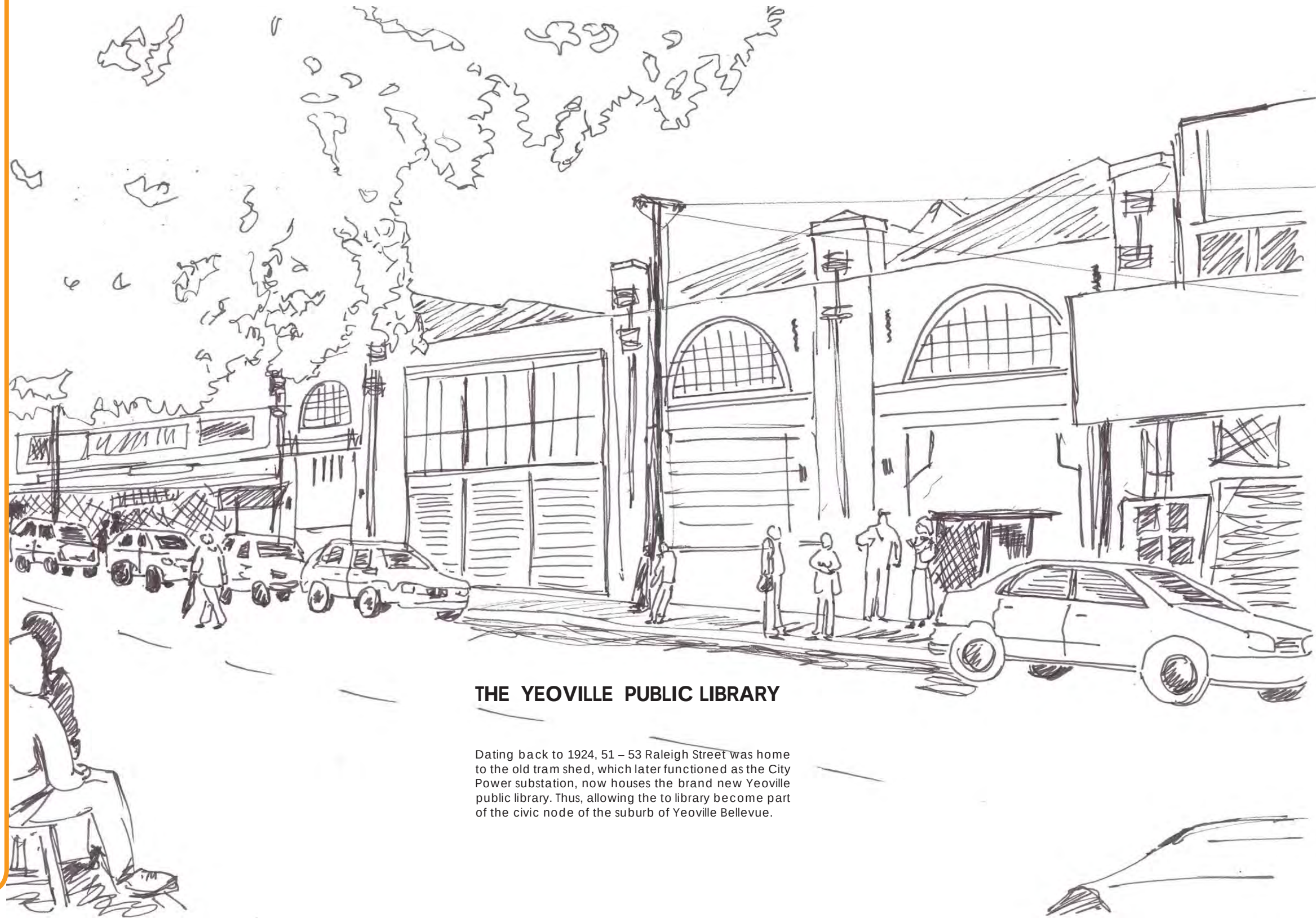


ZAMANI NDLOVU

Now

Zamani came to Yeoville in 2009 from Kwazulu Natal. He lives in a flat opposite Shoprite with his sister and nephew. He shares a communal kitchen and bathroom. He believes that Joburg has better employment and economic opportunities. He studied business and commerce through UNISA but never finished his degree and now works in retail. His opinion on Yeoville is that it is over-populated by the number of foreigners who densely occupy Berea and the Yeoville - Bellevue area. He finds Yeoville to be a "safe haven" where there is minimal discrimination in the form of xenophobia. He loves living in Yeoville because of its unique and rich diversity. He would like to one day own a house in Houghton - "It is a nice suburb, understated unlike Sandton, modest and close enough to Yeoville" that he doesn't have to go far to visit family and friends.

He loves using the Yeoville Library and prefers to read over watching television. He finds the resources in Yeoville limited and the library is the only connection to the world.



THE YEOVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY

Dating back to 1924, 51 – 53 Raleigh Street was home to the old tram shed, which later functioned as the City Power substation, now houses the brand new Yeoville public library. Thus, allowing the to library become part of the civic node of the suburb of Yeoville Bellevue.

Key:

1. New Library
2. Time Square
3. Swimming Pool
4. Park Rides
5. Yeoville Recreation Centre
6. Park Movement
7. Community Garden
8. Tennis Courts
9. Derelict Water Feature
10. Police Station

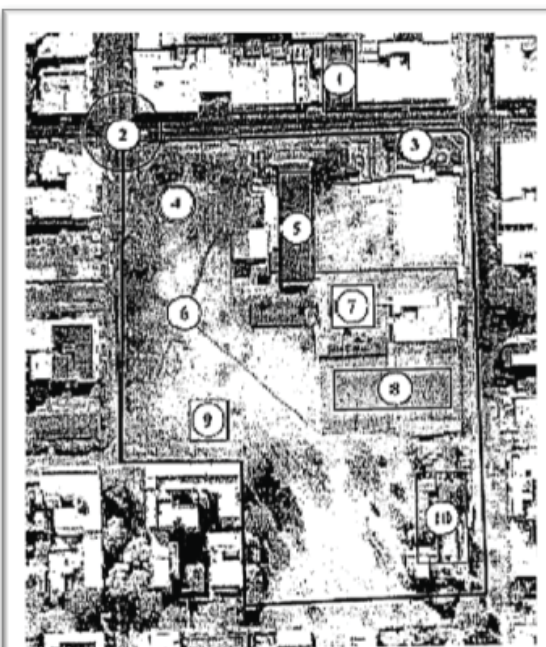


Figure 10: Land use map of Yeoville Park



The position of the new library now allows the community to be in short walking distances from all other community facilities, that make up the civic node.

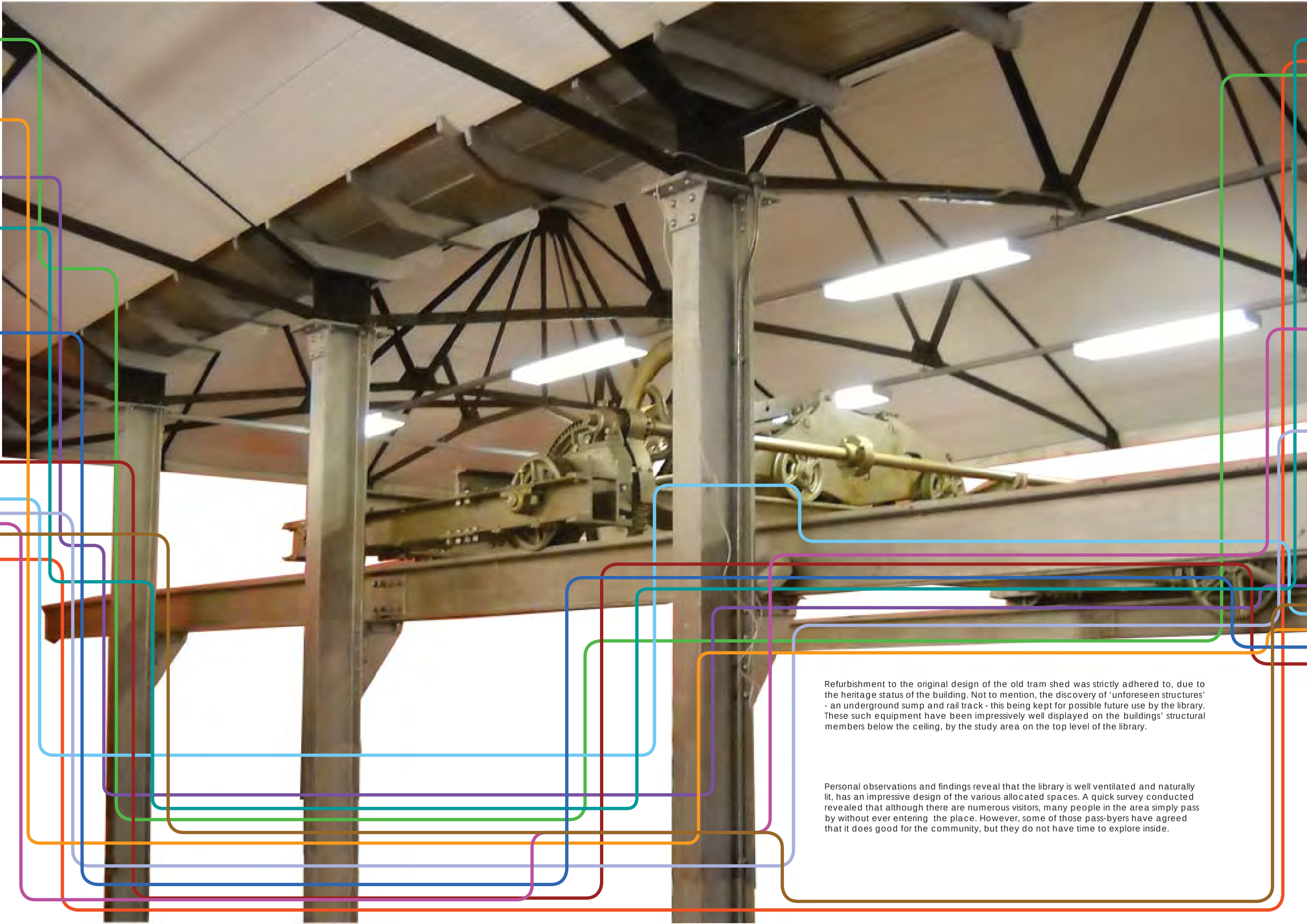
However, much concern is made of the adjoining taverns at 'Time Square' that poses some threat to the safety of the library's visitors, especially its children.

The biggest draw card to the library will be new information technology section and the impressive new 'community website and interactive art project' space: the 'Hotel Yeoville Project.'

The new building is well able to accommodate more than double the amount of people than the old library (situated a few block outside the civic node), also providing ample natural light and ventilation within the spaces.

The noise level by hordes of school coming children daily still never seems to exceed the still quietness of the library, as one visitor expresses. Not only that, it is fitted with several toilet facilities that eliminate the troubles of the old library, which only had one toilet for both male and female occupants.

Even though the library is still quite limited in its supply of books, it has quite a range of other media also available. Not to mention, dedicated reading spaces within the library.

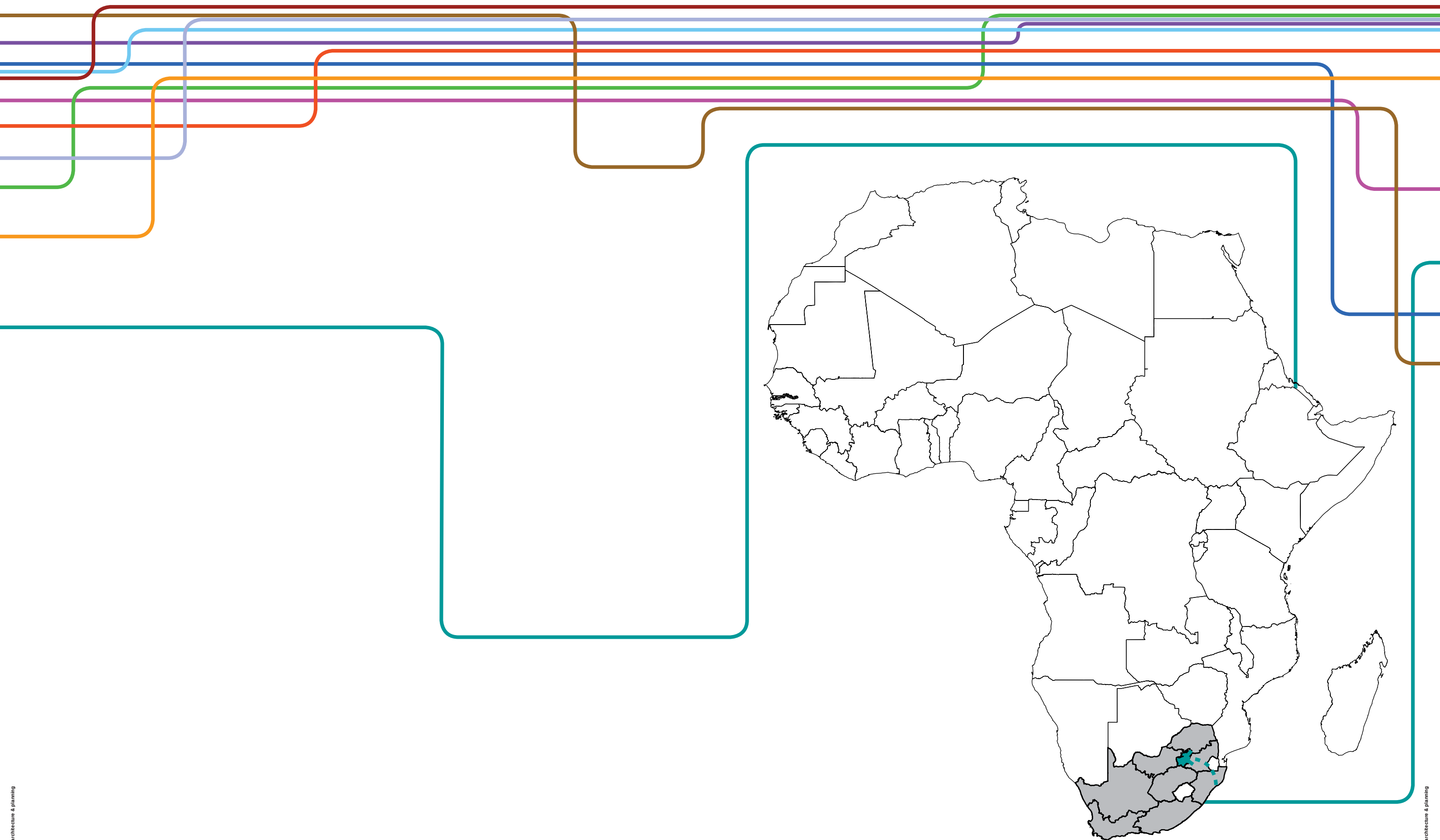


Refurbishment to the original design of the old tram shed was strictly adhered to, due to the heritage status of the building. Not to mention, the discovery of 'unforeseen structures' - an underground sump and rail track - this being kept for possible future use by the library. These such equipment have been impressively well displayed on the buildings' structural members below the ceiling, by the study area on the top level of the library.

Personal observations and findings reveal that the library is well ventilated and naturally lit, has an impressive design of the various allocated spaces. A quick survey conducted revealed that although there are numerous visitors, many people in the area simply pass by without ever entering the place. However, some of those pass-byers have agreed that it does good for the community, but they do not have time to explore inside.



Map showing Zamani's journey within Yeoville and where he resides



Map showing Zamani's journey within Yeoville and his country of origin



ELLIE

Now

Ellie sells general supplies from her stall in the middle of the market.

Ellie Came to Joburg from Congo 5 years ago to look for life. She stays in a flat with her 3 children and her husband and 3 other families. She makes her living by selling at the market, had her stall for 1 year. Enjoys Yeoville, the people are nice

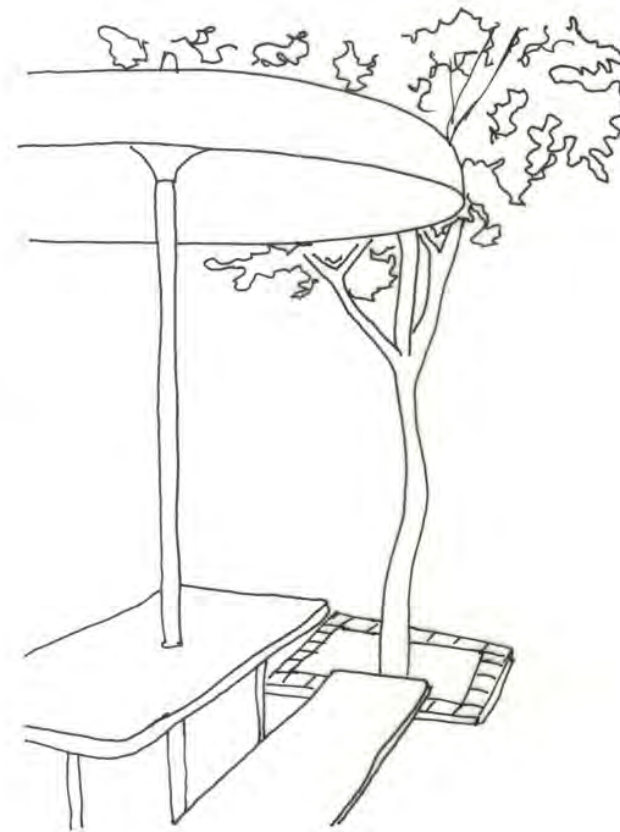


YEOVILLE MARKET & TAXI RANK

A Celebration of African Diversity



Linking people and places



Yeoville Market and Taxi Rank

Now

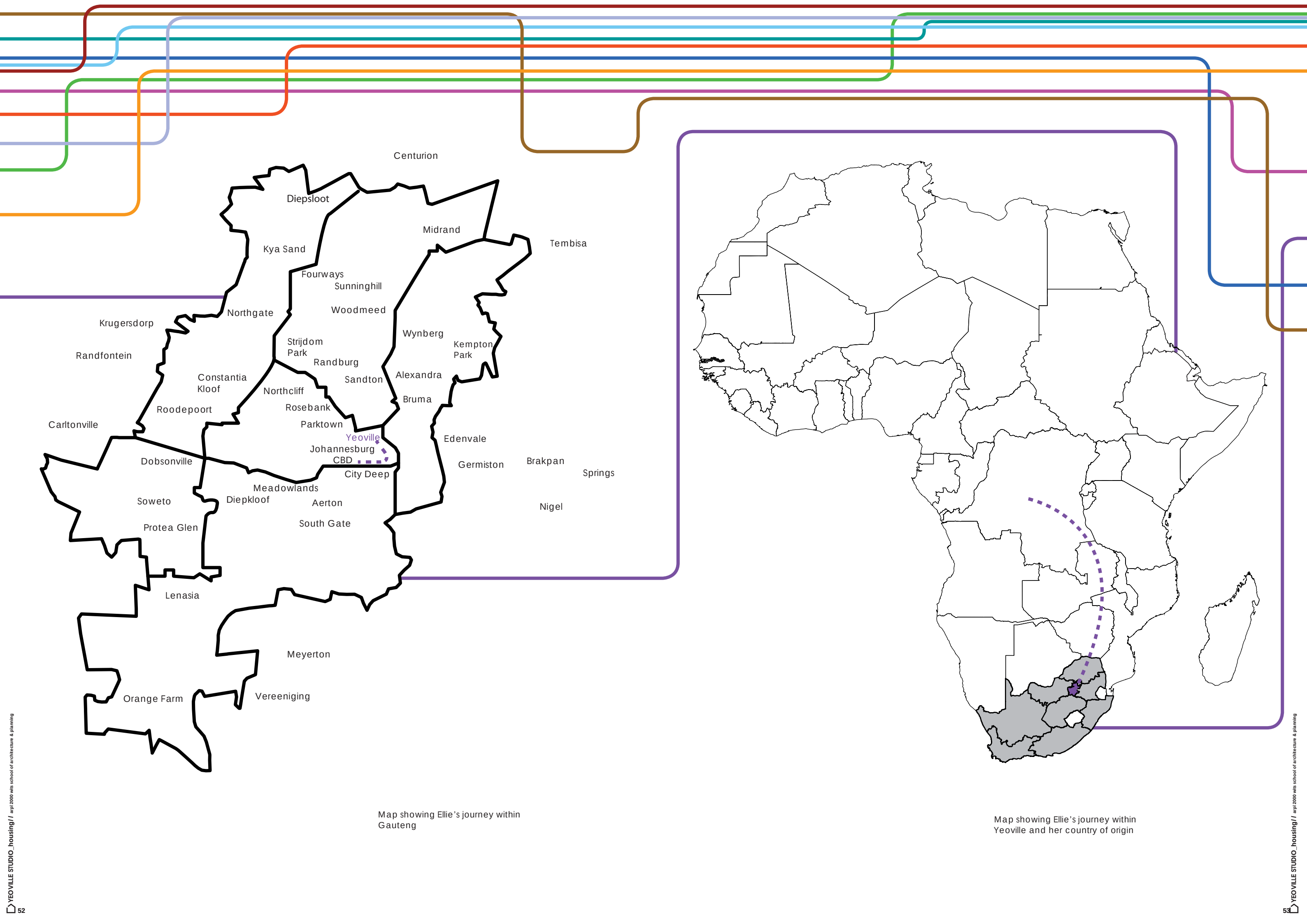
Opened in 1999, the Market took the place of the Yeoville taxi rank, an open piece of land that was used by taxis and hawkers. Today the market is thriving with traders, paying R2.75 rent a day for their stalls.

When the market was opened it was requested that all hawkers move off the pavements and into the market. Many disliked this idea as they were making good money where they were. Moving to the market meant having to pay for a space to sell their goods, and they lose out on their clientele.

After many years people became happy with using the market as more and more of the Yeoville/Bellevue community use the market. There are spaces for the traders who sell hot food, with enough space to cook the food at the stall. There are also benches with umbrellas where people who bought their cooked food can sit and eat.

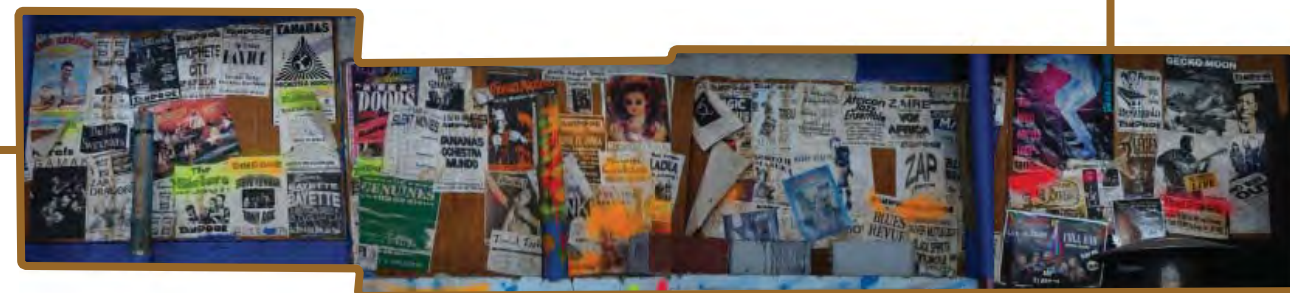


Map showing Ellie's journey within Yeoville and where she resides



NETWORKING WITH WALLS

A communication network links the population of Yeoville. This is done through advertising, artistic expression and virtual communications. A cultural communications timeline is visible on public walls such as the wall outside the Shoprite Centre and the walls in the refurbished library.

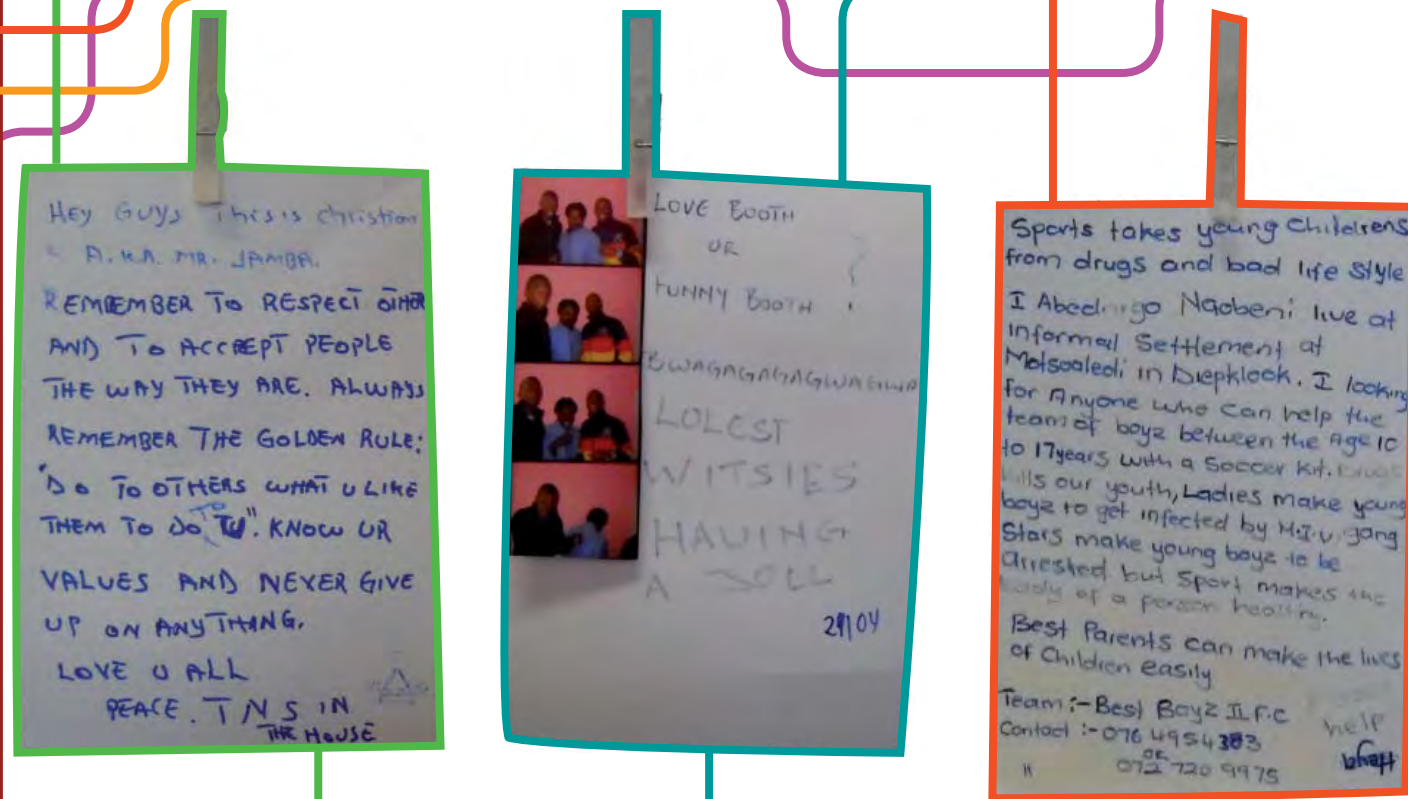


TANDOOR HISTORY COLLAGE

This wall consists of a visual timeline of the music and communication network of Yeoville. Posters from the past fifty years are plastered as a collage on the wall forming a sense of permanence. The collage is merged with the textures and colours of a space intoxicated with vibrancy and heritage.

HOTEL YEOVILLE AND LIBRARY

The wall represents the heritage and histories of people moving through Yeoville as well as its residents. The wall forms a personal network of experiences and memories of Yeoville.



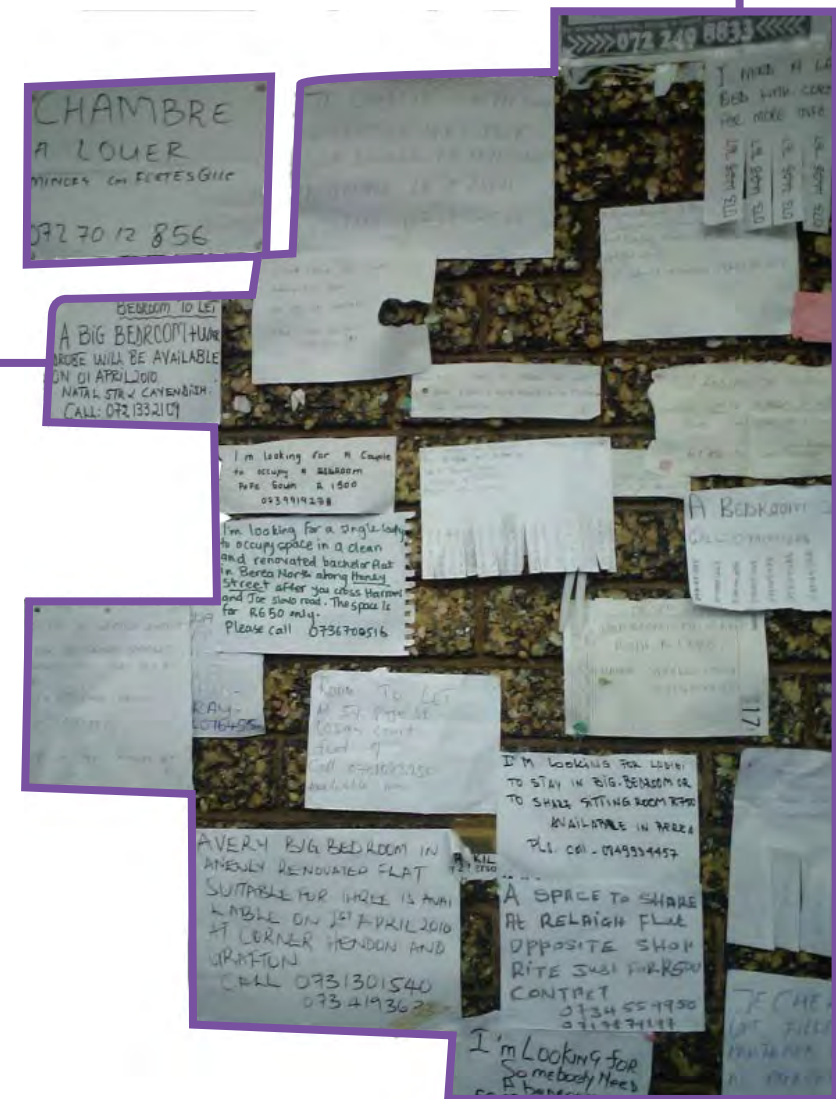
Internet Café and Library

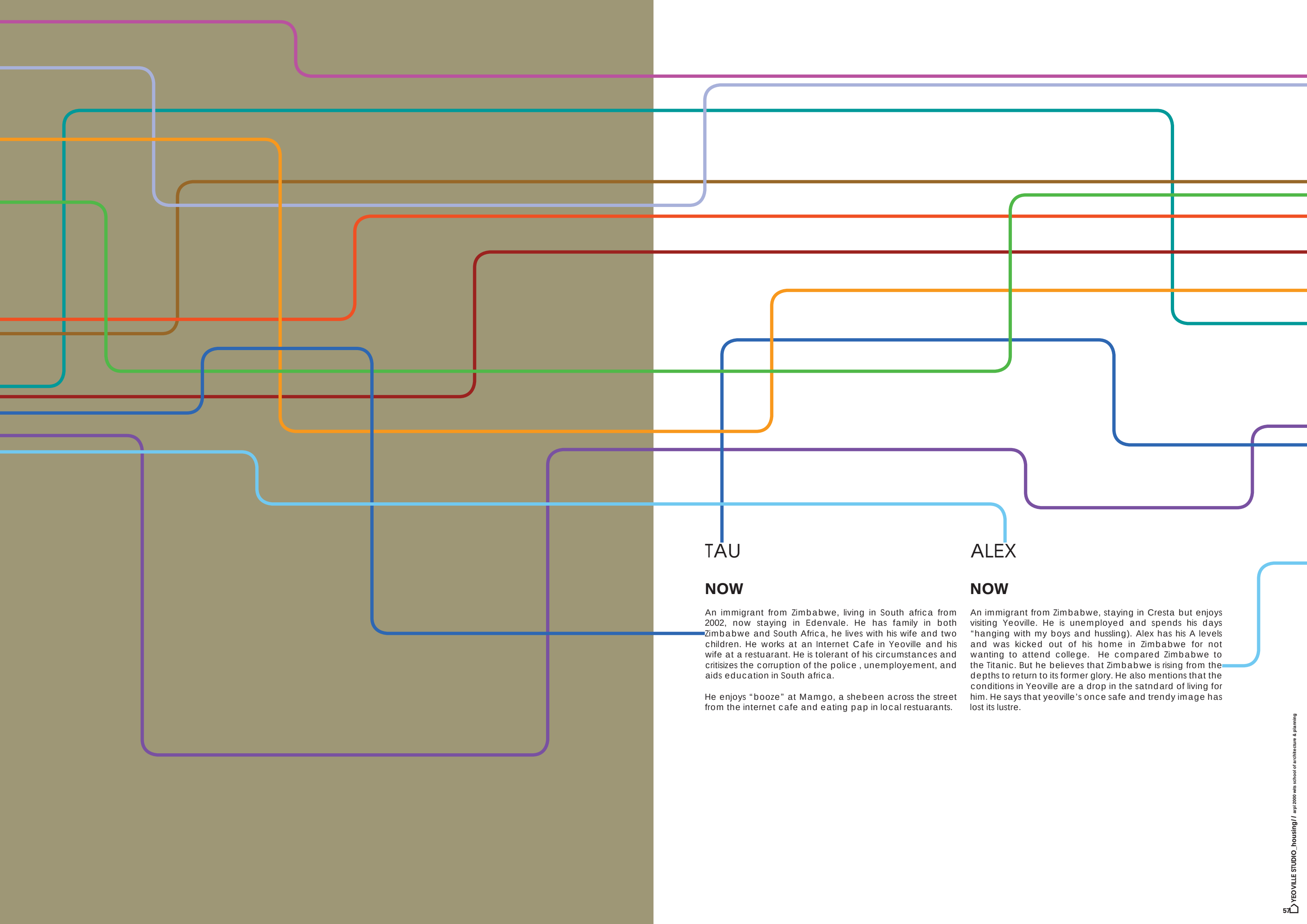
These spaces individually show the progressive nature of network communications. It is not a physical movement in and out of Yeoville, but a virtual flow of knowledge, cultures and people that shift about the boundaries of Yeoville.



SHOPRITE WALL

The wall is an indirect communication channel between the locals where they can advertise different happenings in the community as well as available rental space, and things for sale. The wall depicts the diversity in the community with the use of several languages and communication means.





TAU

NOW

An immigrant from Zimbabwe, living in South africa from 2002, now staying in Edenvale. He has family in both Zimbabwe and South Africa, he lives with his wife and two children. He works at an Internet Cafe in Yeoville and his wife at a restuarant. He is tolerant of his circumstances and criticizes the corruption of the police , unemployment, and aids education in South africa.

He enjoys “booze” at Mamgo, a shebeen across the street from the internet cafe and eating pap in local restuarants.

ALEX

NOW

An immigrant from Zimbabwe, staying in Cresta but enjoys visiting Yeoville. He is unemployed and spends his days “hanging with my boys and hussling). Alex has his A levels and was kicked out of his home in Zimbabwe for not wanting to attend college. He compared Zimbabwe to the Titanic. But he believes that Zimbabwe is rising from the depths to return to its former glory. He also mentions that the conditions in Yeoville are a drop in the satndard of living for him. He says that yeoville’s once safe and trendy image has lost its lustre.

TERRANCE

NOW

A Namibian immigrant living in Edenvale with his brother. He comes to the internet cafe in Yeoville to meet friends and use the internet to work on his entrepreneurial enterprises. His parents are from Mpumalanga and he often travels there.

FARAI

NOW

A Zimbabwean man originally living in Yeoville, who now stays in Lyndhurst. He comes to Yeoville daily to use the internet at the cafe as it is cheap. He says that Yeoville is a "nice" place; it is multicultural and shows little bias towards people from different countries and cultures. Yeoville has a lively entertainment scene. He comes to Yeoville with his friends from the Northern suburbs to meet and go out.

RASTA

NOW

Rasta is originally from Zimbabwe. He is an artist; he does painting, wire work, carving among other skills. But, says that he stopped as business was not good. He came to South Africa by bus, in order, to study business accounting at Birnam College in Braamfontein, so that he could go overseas. But, due to financial restraints he never completed his studies. This also deterred his vision of opening up a catering business in Yeoville. He lives in Yeoville (actually in Bellevue, but most people seem to regard Bellevue part of Yeoville), in St. Georges Street for 14 years. He tells me, "The rent is too much" and has no family staying with him in Bellevue; his sister lives in Eastgate, not far from here. He had lived here during the apartheid régime, so moved around a lot: staying in various homes within Yeoville Bellevue. He also experienced the major shift from white to black thereafter.

FELLOW

NOW

An illegal immigrant from Zimbabwe ("I border jumped), living in South Africa for 2 years and Yeoville for 6 months. He left Zimbabwe because of the political situation, but would like to return. His brother stays in Sowetho but originally came to Yeoville where Fellow initially stayed with him.

He is a street vendor selling cigarettes and sweets opposite an internet cafe and in front of Mamgo, a shabeen. He opens his shop from 06:00 - 10:00 depending on how late he was up the previous night. He frequents a vibrant night club called Tandoor, on Rocky Street.

THE HOUSE OF TANDOOR

Then

1970's Yeoville was a hot spot for local musicians, artists and political activists, changing the face off Yoeville with liberal and active thinking. Rocky Street was the 'bohemian cultural centre of South Africa". Meeting hubs were liberal zones where both black and whites, ate and listened to music in defiance of prevailing apartheid laws - for 50 years clubs liberated people from "mental slavery". Africans from Nigeria to Ethipia would come and enjoy the sounds of Bob Marley and Hugh Masikela.

Now

The House of Tandoor is a gaily painted, Rastafarian-style open-air rooftop club. Reggae vibes merged with smoke flow from the intoxicated, dimly lit building. The building is a spectacle for onlookers awkwardly anticipating something to happen.

Tandoor , an artistic installation of a culturally diverse society not bound by societal conformities, raging with colour and texture. The intricately rural feel of the painted walls, the wooden columns heavy with decorative beer lids and the masterful steel sculptures exhibits an escape space, a crafty, artistic, comfortable haven.

A historical memento is plastered along the walls of the club forming a visual, historical timeline of a history of music, culture and politics.

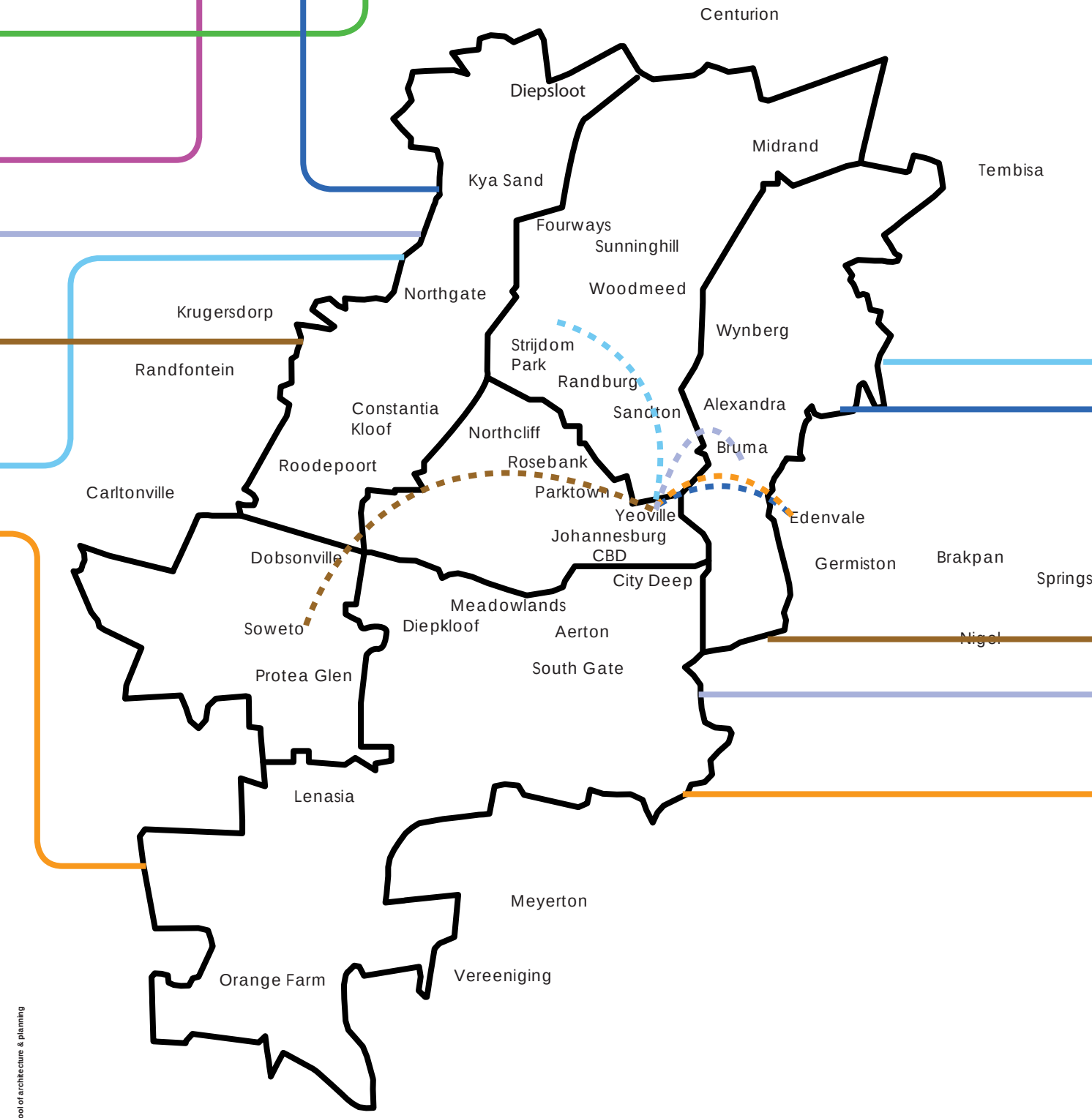
The public aswell as the historical significance is abused as the club becomes a hazard, a tool of distrupction with the loud music and drunken participants.



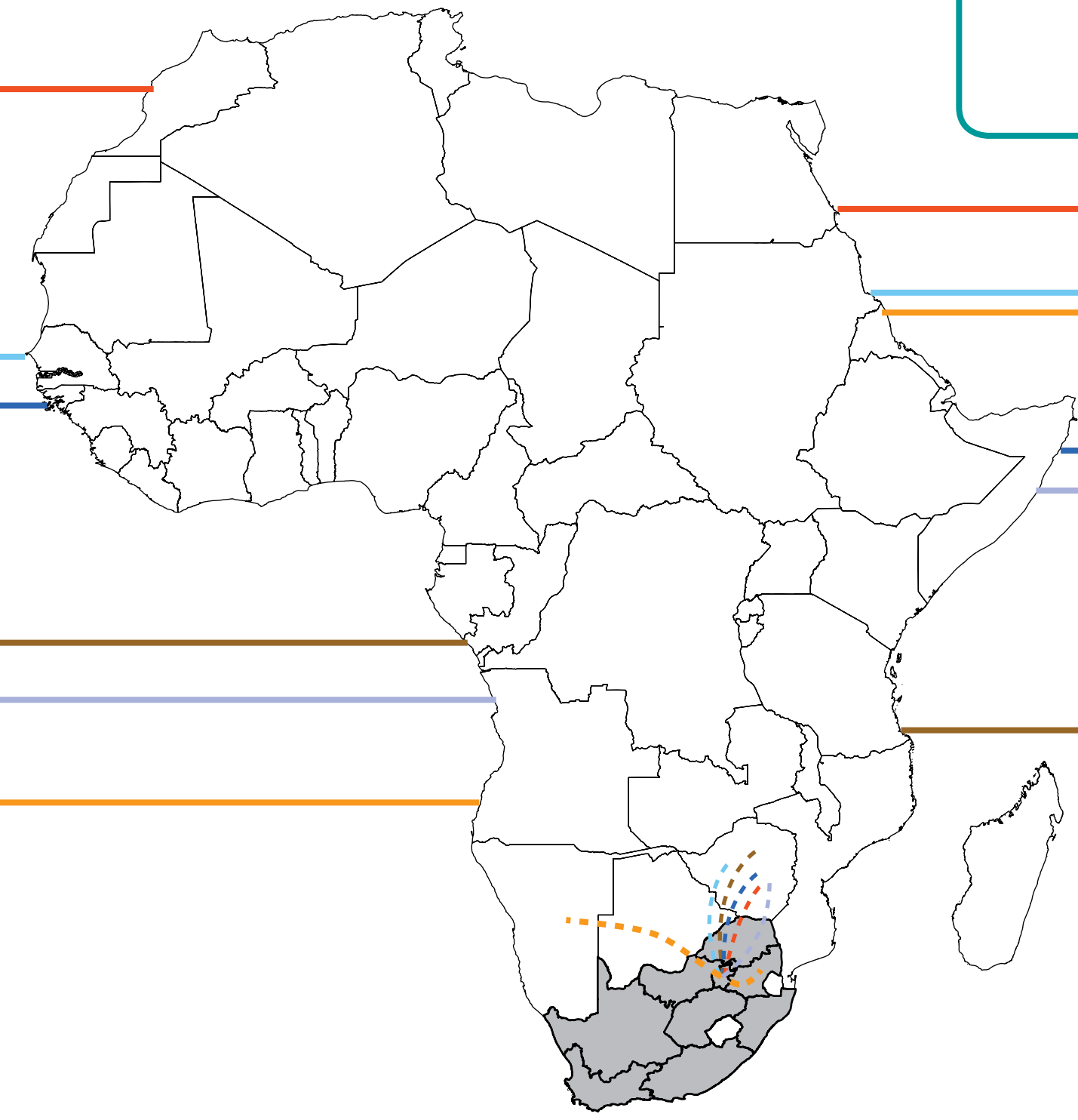




Map showing Internet group's journey within Yeoville and where they reside



Map showing Internet group's journeys within Gauteng



Map showing Internet group's journeys within Africa and their country of origin





Map showing the collective journeys within Africa and places of origin



Map showing the collective journeys within Gauteng

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Courtesy of Brett Hirson

PHOTOS:

Selection taken from research group
Selected photos redrawn by research group

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