

6.5 The Johannesburg C.B.D. Consortium Report

Gallagher, Aspoas, Poplak, Senior (GAPS), with other consultants, (the Consortium) were appointed by the Johannesburg City Council to complete a C.B.D. study with the purpose of identifying development directions for the city.

A meeting was held on 12 August 1987 at GAPS's office with representatives of the Business Development and Chief Director (Building Services)'s sections of S.A.T.S. in attendance. These representatives indicated their willingness to participate in the determining of a structure plan for the city, in as much as it concerned S.A.T.S. As the Consortium Plan will only be made public early next year, no information regarding it is available for inclusion in this report.

6.6 Transport Planning Studies

The Johannesburg City Council has appointed various consultants during 1987 to undertake transport studies, including light rail systems and the planning of various types of bus facilities within the C.B.D.. The recommendations on luxury and commuter bus services are scheduled for by mid-1988, and these are expected to have a substantial influence on the planning of a multi-modal transport centre at the station.

6.7 The Development of Newtown

The City Council of Johannesburg owns 25 ha of Newtown and invited the public during 1986 to submit ideas for this area's redevelopment on a competitive basis.

The abovementioned competition, the Market Theatre Precinct, the popular Saturday morning flea market and the R7,5 million Potato Sheds (market stalls, cafes, restaurants and cinemas) are examples of the Council's commitment to establish a bustling "people place" with mixed functions at Newtown.

The shift in development focus to the western fringe of the C.B.D. affects the development of a transport centre at the station. Improved access to Newtown should be allowed for; the transport service up-graded to

lessen the burden of private vehicles/taxis; the provision of facilities e.g. business, retail and residential, which will be in sympathy with this new urban magnet could become more feasible at the station complex.

6.8 Airspace Schemes

Several schemes for the decking of the railway lines to the east and west of the station complex have been put forward. Four are included here as an indication of the magnitude of envisaged development and the potential of the sites :

- 6.8.1 During 1985 the Regional Architect, Southern Transvaal, S.A.T.S produced concepts for relocating Putco buses, taxis and S.A.T.S. buses in a combined terminus in the airspace on site 7. One of these concepts is illustrated in Figure P. This concept is out of date in that the idea of termini in the C.B.D. is not favoured because of the underutilisation of prime land.
- 6.8.2 Louis Karol Architects presented the 'Big Bear' proposal in 1984. This scheme includes three low rise office blocks on a parking podium in the airspace on site 11. Refer to Figure Q.
- 6.8.3 Halford, Clemens, Halford designed a 'Centenary Centre' in the airspace on site 7. The flow of commuters from the 3rd class concourse is somewhat impeded by this proposal. See Figure R.
- 6.8.4 The Johannesburg City Council Director of Planning's proposal for Air Rights, is that a bulk of 3,6 be allowed on such sites, with a bonus incentive for the provision of certain public-oriented amenities. This proposal is still subject to approval by the City Council. See item 4.5.3.

6.9 Proposed Soweto C.B.D.

The establishment of a Soweto C.B.D. is becoming a reality, with the planning, construction and completion of large shopping/business complexes being finalised at present.

A development programme for a Soweto C.B.D. has been called for on a competition basis on 28 September 1987 by the Soweto Town Council. The Council believes that:

- i) 'the spending power is present for widespread commercial activity which can be the basis for the process of capital accumulation and re-investment for growth and development'.
- ii) 'the opportunity to gain the necessary entrepreneurial skills must be offered to Soweto citizens ...'

Consequently the Council has invited designers to establish 'preconditions that will stimulate activity covering a broad spectrum of urban functions', and present a development programme which should 'indicate how this project (sic) may be implemented, how investment may be attracted and how the commercial viability of enterprises may be enhanced.'

The effect that such a city centre would have on the Johannesburg C.B.D. and its main station will be felt in the long term. However, a strengthening of the Johannesburg C.B.D., as developers consolidate their assets and the full potential of the city core is realised, may be expected in the short term. The Johannesburg C.B.D. with its diversity, density, existing infrastructure and opportunities is practically impossible to transpose or recreate elsewhere.

6.10 The Mass Transport Committee's Report

The Mass Transport Committee (Masstran) has released their report on mass transit in Johannesburg in November 1987, for Government and Local Authority approval as well as public reaction.

Mr James Clarke (The Star, 27 November 1987) stated:

"Some lines could be operating within the next seven years if planners get the go-ahead from central Government."

The "preferred scheme" comprises a 51 km radial network with 48 stations (20 of which are underground) and the major junction within the network at the Johannesburg station complex. Routes to R.A.U., Parkhurst, Rosebank, Alexandra in the north; and Mayfair, Jeppe, Rossettenville and Booyens Reserve in the south converge at a central station under the 1st and 2nd class concourse. Routes are to be underground in the central city and its surrounding built-up areas.

The Star's editorial on 28 November 1987 stated:

"it is difficult to believe that the plan published in The Star yesterday is as malleable as the designers say. After all, it has taken 17 years to get this far."

"Thousands will welcome a swift service that could save them from maintaining a second car and obviate more suburb-crunching highways. Thousands more will have greater access to job opportunities."

The implications of the Masstran proposals for the Johannesburg station complex are significant:-

- i) The rapid rail transit system will transport thousands of commuters and shoppers between the suburbs and the station and the spatial/physical needs of this mass of pedestrians will have to be catered for.

- ii) A transport and traffic plan for the station complex will have to take cogniscance of and integrate the requirements of the rapid rail central station within the multi-modal transport centre.

6.11 Multi-disciplinary Work Group

A multi-disciplinary work group comprising representatives from the City Engineer's Department and S.A.T.S. was formed on 15 October 1987 to co-ordinate planning efforts and promote common interests in the development of the Johannesburg station and its environs.

6.12 Comment

The above outline is by no means comprehensive, but serves to illustrate the degree of interest being shown in the development of the Johannesburg Station complex. It is clear that many real opportunities for urban renewal on a comprehensive scale present themselves. The prime location of a diverse range of developable space at the epicentre of the economic and industrial heartland of Southern Africa is unique, and the fact that these areas are available in the C.B.D. of a major city is without precedent.

7. ADDENDUM, APRIL 1988

This report was circulated to relevant SATS departments after it was completed in November, 1987. Their comments are included in this addendum for the sake of comprehensivity.

7.1 Assistant General Manager (Operating),
Headquarters:

No comment.

7.2 Assistant General Manager (Passenger
Services), Headquarters:-

i) Parking

In order to encourage the utilisation of rail transport rather than private vehicles, it is recommended that only limited parking space be provided at stations near places of employment. At stations in residential areas, provision of ample parking facilities could greatly enhance the attractiveness of rail commuter transport.

Regarding stopping facilities for buses, the bus should be considered a competing mode of transport, except where it would provide feeder and distribution services to rail passengers.

ii) Facilities

This section must be consulted in all instances where proposed activities or developments will affect passenger flow and/or basic station facilities.

iii) Train Services

Construction and building operations, and permanent structures resulting therefrom, must not adversely affect train services.

7.3 Assistant General Manager (Marketing),
Headquarters:-

This section concurs with proposed development plans.

7.4 Assistant General Manager (Finance),
Headquarters:-

- i) From a financial point of view, there is in principle no objection to the proposed development of the Johannesburg Station Complex.
- ii) It is noted however, that the refurbishment of the South Station Building forms an integral part of the proposed development of the area. Since this section occupies various offices in that building and is naturally interested in the improvement and upgrading thereof, you are kindly requested to also refer future development reports to this section in order to ensure that the specific needs of the occupants are taken into account.
- iii) The Assistant General Manager (Financial Services) must henceforth be contacted should assistance be required when the feasibility of the proposed ventures is determined. Tenders in respect of Business Development will also be evaluated in his section and Mr C. Strydom, Senior Superintendent (Evaluation) (Tel. 36382) must be contacted in this regard.

7.5 Assistant General Manager (Manpower),
Headquarters:-

The recommendations contained in the report as well as the proposals of Messrs. Britz and Abramowitz's Urban Design Project have considerable value for the future development of the station complex.

Although numerous studies and surveys still have to be undertaken or completed the concept of the establishment of a multi-modal transport node is supported.

7.6 Assistant General Manager (Airways),
Headquarters:-

No comment.

7.7 Chief Director (Road Transport Services),
Headquarters:-

Clause 2.4.1 (vii) fourth paragraph

Concrete barriers should be provided to prevent "illegal" parking on islands, sidewalks etc.

Clause 2.5.2 (ii)

Langlaagte depot has since been closed as a depot and a new depot has been built in Harmonie Street, Crosby. This depot is +- 10 kilometres from the centre of town and a lot of unproductive kilometres will have to be travelled daily if the vehicles are stabled at that depot.

Clause 2.5.2 (iii) and (iv)

It is agreed that the facilities for 3rd class passengers are extremely poor and should be upgraded and the number of bays increased to cope with the number of increasing passengers.

Plan: Figure P

The parking area should be re-investigated with a view to providing angular parking, thus avoiding that haulers with semi-trailers and baggage trailers have to reverse.

A stopping area should also be provided for private cars and taxis where they can offload passengers destined for bus transport.

7.8 Chief Director (Planning), Headquarters:-

No comment.

7.9 Chief Director (Public Relations),
Headquarters:-

SATS' property is extensive and occupies the most important central part of our city. It's the hub around which the city turns.

Tremendous numbers of people of all races pass through this area on a daily basis. Virtually 30 % of the entire population of Johannesburg see and experience this area every day.

The image of SATS is closely linked with what the man in the street perceives here. Since this complex is far from fully developed, great opportunities still exist here to implement a totally new progressive Corporate Identity for SATS.

Pentagraph is taking care of certain aspects of this, e.g. the signage and design of fascias and public reception areas like foyers etc. to name but a few. Planning on a vaster scale is required which this report covers in reasonable detail.

The historical value of the Regional Manager's Office Building and the South Station Building is stressed in the report. We are in complete agreement with this. The interesting plans envisaged in developing these fine old buildings are exciting and worthy of support.

Facilities located in these buildings such as the printing works and the chapel on the western side of Paul Kruger Building can be better utilised elsewhere.

You are aware that the museum is in the process of being redeveloped at the Krugersdorp loco depot. Although this would end the museum atmosphere there, continued museum presence, albeit on a small scale, is desirable, firstly because of the extremely good sales of museum items as a result of public convergence and thoroughfare and secondly, because of the historic significance of this building.

Regarding the latter, it should be pointed out that any tampering with the building, especially structural changes, will cause serious public involvement and criticism on a scale similar to the old NGR headquarters building on Durban's old station. As you know, the frescoes on the front of the South Station Building are the work of Anton van Wouw who is revered amongst most South Africans.

Any development of the old concourse area should therefore include a museum shop and, say, one or two museum exhibits which would blend with the historic nature of the area.

It is, furthermore, the opinion that opening up the concave (courtyard) area for a

speciality centre should not be interpreted as a carte blanche for any type of business. The esthetic appearance of the area should at all times be uppermost when contracts for business outlets are negotiated, because the station area is rigidly associated with SATS in the public mind. The image of a "third world trading bazaar in the street" should be avoided at all costs.

A problem in this connection, already existing, is that advertising stalls on the station are allocated without any control over their esthetic content and some very drab and dubious stalls are obviously associated with our Organisation.

The strategy of holding developable space in reserve is not to be recommended as the momentum of development is more important now. Shortsighted over-development on the other hand is a great danger. South African cities as a whole suffer from this tendency and it should be guarded against. The height and ground level space allocated to new buildings should be carefully monitored as an adequate amount of green space should be left unsullied by massive towering structures in concrete that are neither aesthetically pleasing or "user friendly".

To quote this report the area should be vibrant, pleasant, safe places to enjoy and be in.

The 40 storey office blocks mentioned on page 24 tends towards a concrete jungle effect and should be drastically scaled down. The open area in front of Paul Kruger Building should also be left undeveloped.

Decked Airspace

Decked airspace seem to be the most promising areas to develop. The main advantage from a visual point of view is the camouflaging effect it will have by blocking most of the unsightly and depressing railway lines to the east and west of the main railway station from view.

The Rotunda Building could be redeveloped to a higher more functional building of possibly not more than 10 storeys high.

Access points should be looked at and improved. The possibility of moving conveyor belts or steps to transport people quickly into and out of the building should be considered.

A well organised and controlled security system is essential to create trust and peace-of-mind in the users of this area. Too many undesirable elements hang around inside the station complex.

The urban design concepts proposed by various parties will definitely enhance the development of the station complex, e.g. the proposed closing of Eloff Street for traffic, creating a mall under the street level, etc.

To conclude, the report is brimming with excellent ideas tempered with a good balance of common sense and practicality, it should go far to satisfy most needs including our own. The financial benefits that SATS will derive from this is also substantial on the long term - a project worth tackling. In view of the responsibility towards image building that lies within this department, it will be appreciated if any development of this area could be done in close consultation with this office and our design consultants, Pentagraph.

7.10 Chief Engineer (Signals and Telecommunication) Johannesburg :

No comment.

7.11 Regional Manager, Southern Transvaal, Johannesburg :

When planning the expansion to Johannesburg station and environs, it must be borne in mind that adequate parking facilities for departmental and private cars must be incorporated, as well as an office block for the Regional Manager, large enough to accommodate his staff.

Page 6, Clause 1.2.3:

It should be noted that Wanderers Street is to the east and not to the west as stated.

Page 12, Clause 2.4.1

The name of C.B.D. Parking Company (Transvaal) (Pty) Limited has since changed to National Auto Parks (Pty) Limited.

Page 14, Clause 2.5.2 (ii)

It cannot be agreed that first class passenger buses of the S.A. Road Transport be parked at Harmonie depot every day due to the cost of unproductive kilometers caused by shuttling the buses to and from the depot.

Page 15, Clause 2.5.2 (iii)

It is agreed that future investigation is required to establish proper design criteria for the third class passenger bus terminus.

Page 16, Clause 2.5.2 (iv)

It is agreed that the facilities for the third class bus passengers are extremely poor and should be upgraded and boarding/alighting bays should be increased.

Plan : Figure P

It is recommended that the parking area be redesigned to suite angular parking i.e. "saw tooth" type bays for 20 m combination vehicles with adequate length to allow forward exit eliminating the necessity to reverse. Additional shelters for passengers should be provided. Convenient stopping facilities must be provided for private cars/taxis bringing passengers and luggage to connect with S.A. Road Transport Services long distance buses. It must, however, be noted that passengers arrive with extremely bulky and heavy luggage.

Page 25, Clause 4.1.6

The lease of the flea market will only be on a yearly basis and not 5 years as stated.

In general the concept of a business development project as outlined in the report, is supported as it could bring about great financial advantages for Transport Services.

7.12 Catering Manager, Johannesburg:

The report on the development potential is fully supported.

As soon as the investigation has however been finalised, this department would like to be represented at meetings where the planning of a building as such is discussed.

The planning of shops in such a building affects the future of this department and a future planning in regard to catering businesses will have to be done after a meeting has been attended.

7.13 Deputy Director (Estates), Headquarters:

No comment.

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