



## OLD PARK STATION

Draft Statement of Significance

June 2015

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*Cover image: Photograph of Old Park Station c.1897, from NZASM 100*

*This page: Underside of Old Park Station roof in 2007, from Pinterest*

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Old Park Station dates from 1896 and was in continual active service as Johannesburg's principal passenger station until its closure in 1951. It was the central station on the Rand Steam Tram suburban railway serving the region and is now one of only two stations surviving from this railway line, the other being Krugersdorp Station. This gives it a high degree of rarity and importance as a relic of railway heritage. Its period of service also meant it was active throughout four Wars, where it was used to transport soldiers, refugees, horses, munitions and other goods for the war effort. This gives it High social and cultural significance.

After its closure, it was dismantled and reassembled at Esselen Park, where it formed a training facility for the Railway College. Its connection to its original railway station function was maintained as it was the place where railway foreman were trained. In 1993, it was dismantled again and brought to a concrete podium south of the railway lines in the Newtown North precinct, just over a kilometre from its original location in Johannesburg city centre. Since then, it has only been in occasional use and stands forlorn, particularly as only 60% of the structure is standing there. It is unknown whether the remaining 40% is in fit condition to be reassembled in future to complete the structure.

The site is now flanked on the south by a development site, which has brought into sharp focus the need to prepare a conservation management strategy for the Old Park Station. In particular, finding an appropriate use for it and ensuring it can be conserved for the benefit and enjoyment of future generations. A Stop Order was issued to the proposed development, that of Brickfields North Social Residential Housing, to allow time for the production of a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA). This Statement of Significance has been prepared for Johannesburg Heritage Foundation in order to support informed decision making about the future of the heritage resource and better understand how it may be affected by the proposed neighbouring development.

Old Park Station has been assessed as having Exceptional historical, technological and landmark significance and High aesthetic, representational, group and relationship, social and cultural significance. Taking into account its condition, incomplete state and rarity, it is considered that overall Old Park Station is a heritage resource of **Exceptional** significance.



*Photographs of the interior of Old Park Station, c.1917, from Transnet Heritage collection*

## INTRODUCTION

The Old Park Station in Johannesburg is one of the oldest surviving structures in the city. Originally designed and fabricated in Holland, the structure was erected in Johannesburg in 1896 just ten years after the city was founded. Since then, the pre-fabricated structure was in continual use until 1952 when it was temporarily relocated out of the city centre to Esselen Park to make way for the building of a large extension of the station. In 1993, it was brought to its current location on an elevated concrete podium in the Newtown North precinct of the city, on a site immediately south of the main railway lines and approximately 1km west of its original location accessed from Noord Street.

This Statement of Significance has been prepared in light of recent proposals for Brickfields North, situated on the site immediately to the south of the Old Park Station. A stop order has been put in place to halt the ground preparation works and forming of foundations whilst a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) is prepared.

Following review of the draft HIA by Herbert Prins, it is the view of the Johannesburg Heritage Foundation that further detail should be added in order to ensure the significance of the Old Park Station is fully understood. Informed conservation-led decisions cannot be made about development proposals on the neighbouring site without a thorough understanding of the significance of the heritage resource, its context in the history of the city and its current setting.

The document has been arranged into two parts, the first addressing understanding the history of the Old Park Station and the second assessing the significance of the Old Park Station. It should be made clear that this Statement of Significance has been prepared in a short timescale and does not purport to be exhaustive. Rather, it is hoped this document will provide a useful reference point and encourage further investigation and appreciation of the Old Park Station in the future.

Site address: Old Park Station, Carr Street (north side), Newtown North, Johannesburg, 2001

Site Coordinates: Lat: -26.198884 Long: 28.033838

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This statement has been prepared for Johannesburg Heritage Foundation by conservation architect Frances Woodgate MA (Hons) MArch RIBA AABC in consultation with Transnet Freight Rail and Transnet Heritage.

The author wishes to thank the following individuals for their assistance in collating and interpreting archival material used in this report:

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## **PART 1: UNDERSTANDING THE OLD PARK STATION**

### **1.1 HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

‘Until shortly before the end of the nineteenth century, South Africa was mainly an undeveloped agricultural country. The population was sparsely distributed over wide areas and depended for its existence on agriculture and stock farming.

With the discovery of diamonds in 1868 and gold in 1886 South Africa made great and almost unmanageable strides forward in its economic development. The rapidly increasing demands of the mining industry and the fast expanding towns and cities accompanied by the ever-increasing demands for housing and consumer products, converted the country within a remarkably short period from an undeveloped agricultural country into one of urban economy.

The demand for transport and the ability to finance it were the telling factors that decided the extent of the railway and road communication schemes and the tempo of their completion, particularly in the early days of our rail history’.<sup>1</sup>

‘Historically speaking, the railway line and its railway stations have played a pivotal role in the day-to-day lives of South African communities, especially in rural areas.

Apart from the telegraph line, the railway was often the vital link to the outside world. Before the Second World War few people, if any, had motor cars or access to any such transport other than the iron horse and carriages.

The railway station was often the hub of public and business life: a social rendezvous for arriving and departing passengers, and a point of collection and delivery for townsfolk and businessmen. At this point the mail and newspapers arrived regularly, as well as milk and fresh produce, and from here the farmers would dispatch their harvests to the markets.’<sup>2</sup>

The railway was thus a transformational device in the development of the country, and as Johannesburg was a significant hub in the national network, the Old Park Station was an important node for rail passengers.

A Chronological Timeline listing key dates in the history of Old Park Station and its context in both the history of Johannesburg and South Africa is provided in the Appendix.

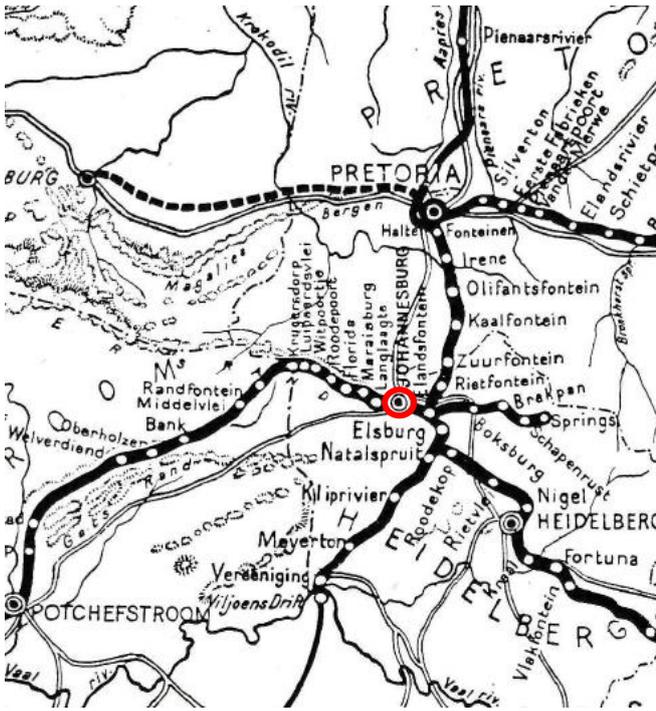
### **1.2 The Railway in Johannesburg**

In 1886, following the discovery of gold in the Rand, Johannesburg sprang up as a mining township. The gold rush encouraged the Cape Government Railways (CGR) to start work to extend its railway lines towards Johannesburg that same year.

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<sup>1</sup> Railway Country, 150 Years of Rail in South Africa. Transnet. 1-2 of 22

<sup>2</sup> Railway Country, 150 Years of Rail in South Africa. Transnet. 17 of 22



Nederlandsche Zuid-Afrikaansche Spoorweg-Maatschappij (NZASM) was the 'company responsible for laying the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek (ZAR, Transvaal Republic) railway network before the Second Anglo-Boer War'<sup>3</sup>. This private railway company was established in 1887. 'The Government entered into a contract with the NZASM for this so-called "Rand Tram" on 20 July 1888. The NZASM was keen to prove that the Dutch were able to build and operate a railway in South Africa as well as the British. Work started in January 1889, and in March 1890 the Boksburg-Johannesburg connection was opened for traffic'.<sup>4</sup>

*Plan of the Rand Tram network, with Johannesburg station (Old Park Station) shown in red, from NZASM Structures of the Rand Tram and Southern Line, 28*

In 1890, the Rand Tram was the first suburban railway line to open in Johannesburg, which was the section of line running from Boksburg to Braamfontein. The line covers a total of 81km. By 1892, Cape Government Railways (CGR) had completed the railway connection to Cape Town and freight tracks started to be laid. Initially, the station structures were basic corrugated iron sheds, but it was soon clear both more permanent and capacious structures were required in order to cope with the numbers of passengers using the railway. The initial corrugated iron shed was known as 'Park Halt' (Park Stop).

'The NZASM soon saw the need for a large and prestigious Park Station building, which would reflect in its size, style and furnishings Johannesburg's status as South Africa's economic centre. As the design of such a grand building was beyond the capabilities of the NZASM drawing-office, it was decided in 1894 to commission the Amsterdam architect and engineer Jacob F Klinkhamer, who was experienced in Dutch railway architecture.'<sup>5</sup>

'There were in fact three stations close to the centre of Johannesburg: Kazerne for goods and Johannesburg (Braamfontein) and Park for passengers. Park Station rapidly became the more important passenger station, largely because of its proximity on Noord Street to the city centre.'<sup>6</sup>

Klinkhamer's design was for the main Johannesburg station that became known as Park Station, owing to its proximity to the Kruger Park on Noord Street.

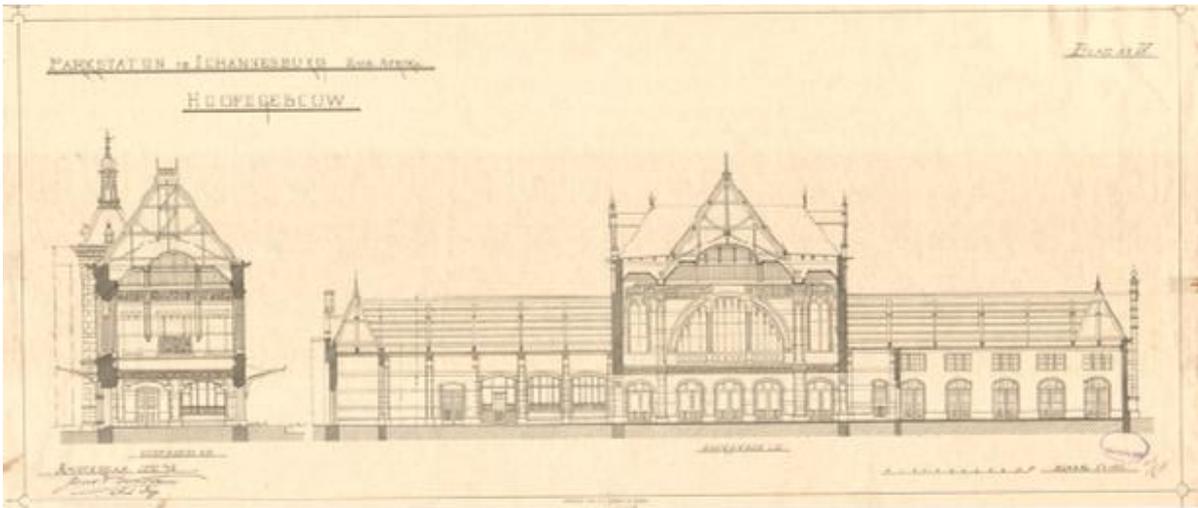
<sup>3</sup> <http://www.artefacts.co.za/main/Buildings/archframes.php?archid=1184>

<sup>4</sup> Article by Robert C de Jong featured on <http://www.heritageportal.co.za/article/nzasm-structures-rand-tram>

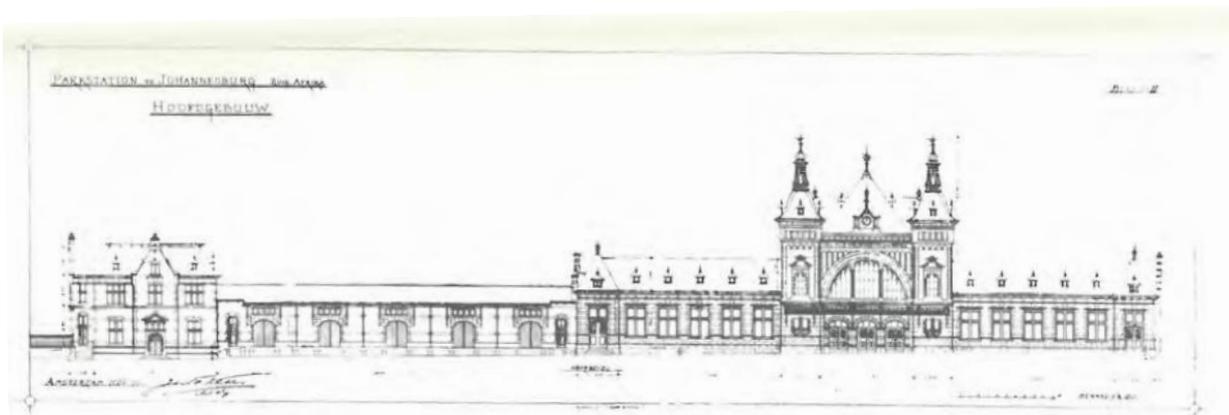
<sup>5</sup> NZASM Structures of the Rand Tram and the Southern Line. Rober C de Jong, in Restorica, magazine to the Transvaal Provincial Museum Service, April 1987. 91, 93

<sup>6</sup> NZASM Structures of the Rand Tram and the Southern Line. Robert C de Jong, in Restorica, magazine to the Transvaal Provincial Museum Service, April 1987 p91





Original section drawing of Park Station by Klinkhamer, courtesy of Transnet Heritage Library.



Original elevation drawing by Klinkhamer, from NZASM 100 book.

'The style of Klinkhamer's design is Neo Dutch Renaissance, which is reminiscent of the Amsterdam Central Station'.<sup>10</sup> For comparison, Amsterdam Central station, a contemporaneous Dutch station, designed by Pierre Cuyper in 1882 (the building was completed in 1889), is shown below – it is worth mentioning that Klinkhamer was from Amsterdam and would have been aware of Cuyper's proposals.

Note the turrets either side of the main hall shown in the section to the left in the drawing above, which are similar to those at Amsterdam Central station



<sup>10</sup> NZASM Structures of the Rand Tram and the Southern Line. Robert C de Jong, in Restorica, magazine to the Transvaal Provincial Museum Service, April 1987. 29

‘Contrary to what has often been supposed, the roofed section has never served as an exhibition hall in Europe, but was specially designed for its purpose by Klinkhamer and manufactured by the Pletterij Den Haag in the Netherlands’.<sup>11</sup> This statement is supported by the title of the original drawing ‘Park Station de Johannesburg’.

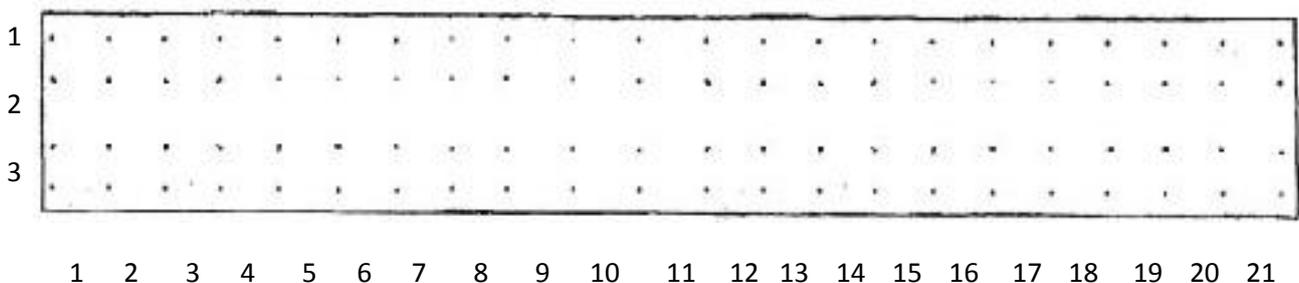
The structure was fabricated at the ‘Pletterij Den Haag’ foundry in Holland in 1896 and was transported in pieces to Johannesburg for assembly. ‘Due to cuts in expenditure and the political unrest prior to the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War in 1899, only the island platform with its roof and five buildings were erected.’<sup>12</sup> The station canopy sheltered a range of station functions: offices, toilets, waiting rooms, a restaurant and bar, kitchen, telegraph office and store room.

As can be seen in the drawing on the previous page, the original design intent was for a grand building with a lofty main hall, complete with ornate trusses. ‘Had not the abortive Jameson Raid influenced events during the years 1896-1899, the central station, Park Station at Johannesburg, would have boasted one of the finest railway buildings in all of South Africa.’<sup>13</sup>

Whilst the full design was never implemented, the insular platform structure of Old Park Station is nevertheless an elegant and attractive cast iron and glass structure that hints of the scale and ambition of the original design.

#### 1.4 Building Description

The Old Park Station is a pre-fabricated cast iron structure, with slender columns supporting a pitched corrugated iron roof with an elevated central barrel vault. The building plan measured 155m long by 22m wide, its length divided into 21 even structural bays of ~8.3m wide, and its width divided into 3 bays, the central one of which was wider to accommodate the kiosk buildings.



*Station floor plan based on drawings from Transnet, showing 22 rows of columns and the 21 structural bays*

<sup>11</sup> NZASM 100, 1887-1899 The Buildings, Steam Engines and Structures of the Netherlands South African Railway Company. R C de Jong, G M van der Waal and D H Heydenrych. Human Sciences Research Council. Pretoria, 1988. 93, 95

<sup>12</sup> NZASM 100, 1887-1899 The Buildings, Steam Engines and Structures of the Netherlands South African Railway Company. R C de Jong, G M van der Waal and D H Heydenrych. Human Sciences Research Council. Pretoria, 1988. 93

<sup>13</sup> NZASM Structure of the Rand Tram and the Southern Line, Robert C de Jong, in Restorica, magazine of the Transvaal Provincial Museum Service, April 1987. 93

Station buildings dating from the era of steam needed to be lofty to allow the necessary clearance from the steam. Old Park Station is thus a building with a generous ridge height of ~13m from platform level.

The cast iron structure was detailed as a kit of parts that could be assembled easily and quickly using basic tools on site, such as rivet drivers. The structure was not just a load-bearing, functional form; it was also an aesthetic element in its own right. The architect was also an engineer, so he knew how to detail the structural components both for strength and appearance. The cast iron elements were combined with wrought iron scroll work and the details emphasized through selective use of different coloured paints.

Even the roof was given an aesthetic treatment through the articulation of raised vents, which were also barrel vaulted to match the main roof. The combination of linear and curved elements gave the building elegance and demonstrates the designers care and attention to detail in ensuring the massing of the vast structure was not heavy or squat. The regular bays provide a strong rhythm when viewed along the platform, which would have been a view experienced by almost all passengers using the station as they watched for their train to arrive. It is a very fine example of a station from the latter years of the nineteenth century.



*Photograph from 2013 showing the detailing of the cast iron structure and wrought iron ornament to Park Station, [heritageportal.co.za](http://heritageportal.co.za)*

### **1.5 Builders of Old Park Station**

Within NZASM 100, some of the members of the construction team were listed as follows:

A van der Ruit was the contractor for the Old Park Station

HB Murgatroyd constructed the platform walls

Asphalt Paving Company laid the tarmac to the platform<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> NZASM 100, Structures of the Rand Tram and the Southern Line. Robert C de Jong, in Restorica, magazine to the Transvaal Provincial Museum Service, April 1987. 93

## 1.6 Pletterij den Haag Foundry

The cast iron components for the Old Park Station were fabricated in the Netherlands' Pletterij den Haag foundry, situated in The Hague. 'In 1848 the iron foundry, L.J. Enthoven & Co was founded in Den Haag, and remained the only industrial plant in Den Haag for many years.<sup>15</sup>

Old Park Station still bears the mark of the foundry:



*Photograph from 2010, found at <https://injoburg.wordpress.com/2010/07/26/>*

The company had its origins in 1823 through a partnership between Lion Israel Enthoven (Dutch) and Edouard Bartholome Louis Maritz (Swiss). 'In 1848 Enthoven bought his partner out and then he continued the business as Metaalpletterij LI Enthoven & Cie. (Israel Lion), which later became L J Enthoven (Leo John) was, and still later Pletterij NV (until 1969).

The company made many bridges in The Hague, gaslights and sewer manhole covers. Also, the metal structures of the State Railway (1870) and the Hollands Spoor were made by them.

In 1867 Enthoven took part in the World Exhibition in Paris. Their entry was a Gothic pulpit in steel. The pulpit is now owned by the Rijksmuseum.

In 1871, the company received a major contract from the State Railway.<sup>16</sup> This contract would have placed the company at the forefront of manufacture for Dutch railways and likely led to their appointment by the Dutch organization Nederlandsche Zuid-Afrikaansche Spoorweg-Maatschappij (NZASM) for the Old Park Station project.

Certainly, the quality of the castings is reflected in the relatively good condition of the cast iron almost 120 years after their fabrication. The foundry also fabricated cast iron post boxes for Old Park Station, although sadly the whereabouts of these is currently unknown.

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<sup>15</sup> Legal History Library 4 –Studies in the history of Private Law 2011: *'Specific Performance in German, French and Dutch Law in the Nineteenth Century'*. Janwillem Oosterhuis. 499

<sup>16</sup> Translated from the Dutch, [https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lion\\_Israel\\_Enthoven](https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lion_Israel_Enthoven)

## 1.7 Ownership of the Old Park Station

The Rand Tram suburban railway line and its buildings were owned and operated by NZASM on behalf of the Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek. The early 'Park Halt' structure of 1890 was simply a corrugated iron shed and was replaced with Klinkhamer's cast iron station in 1896. From then on, the station was known as 'Park Station' – owing to the modern station buildings still carrying the name, Klinkhamer's station is referred to as Old Park Station in this report.

The Old Park Station was built at a time of rapid change in Johannesburg: 'On 13 Sept. 1899 the Executive Council of the Transvaal Republic put the railway lines, the staff and the rolling stock of the NZASM at the disposal of the Commandant-General. After the British occupation of Pretoria the NZASM archives were taken over by the British military authorities on 3 August 1900. All NZASM properties were confiscated on 12 September 1900'.<sup>17</sup> From 1902, after the end of British occupation, the railways were operated by various state-run organisations. In 1990, the South African Transport Services 'was transformed into a limited company, Transnet, of which the rail business division was renamed Spoornet'<sup>18</sup>.

South Africa went through many changes of governance and thus the name of the organizations operating the railways was frequently changed to suit the political structure in governance at the time. The following list attempts to summarise this complex history and the changes in name:

- 1890 NZASM's 'Rand Tram' line reaches Johannesburg, 'Park Halt' station is a corrugated iron shed
- 1896 NZASM replaces corrugated iron shed 'Park Halt' with cast iron Old Park Station building
- 1900 Imperial Military Railways – IMR, takes control
- 1902 Central South African Railways – CSAR, formed after the end of British occupation
- 1910 South African Railways & Harbours – SAR&H, formed on creation of the new Union of South Africa
- 1981 South African Transport Services – SATS, change in name and structure
- 1990 Transnet Limited created, with Heritage and Real Estate divisions, and freight division Spoornet
- 1990s Transnet Heritage initially owned the structure; it was then transferred to Transnet Real Estate
- 2007 Spoornet was renamed Transnet Freight Rail (TFR)
- 2013 Transnet Real Estate transferred ownership to Transnet Freight Rail in order to create a museum
- 2015 Transnet Freight Rail is the current owner<sup>19</sup>

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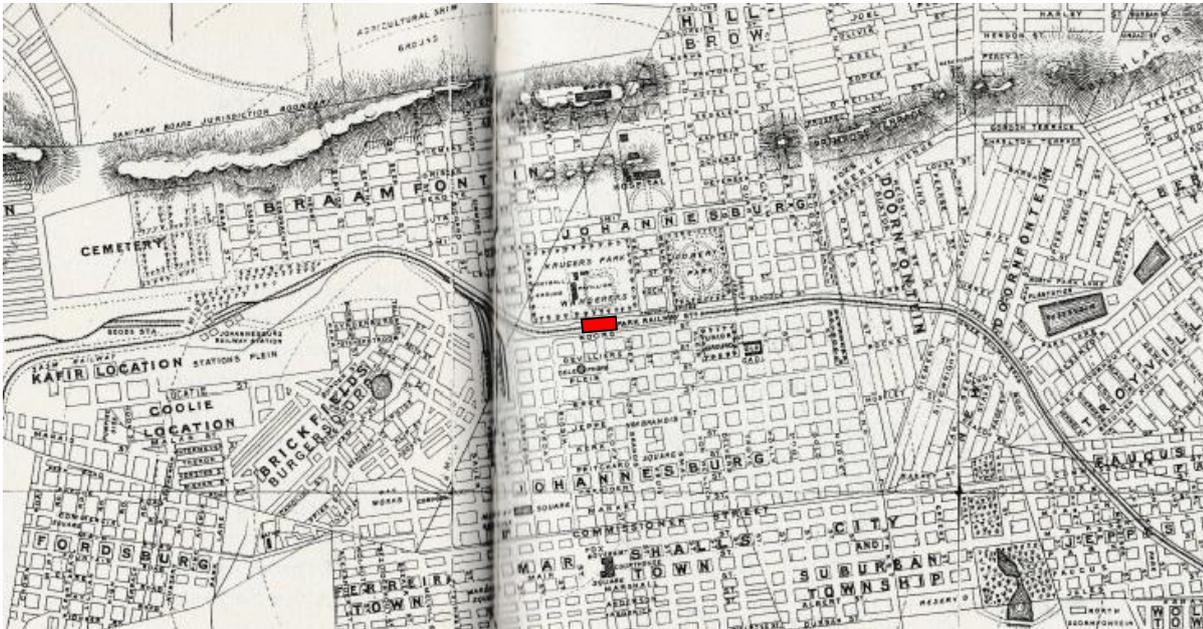
<sup>17</sup> <http://www.artefacts.co.za/main/Buildings/archframes.php?archid=1184>

<sup>18</sup> Railway Country, 150 Years of Rail in South Africa. Transnet. 17

<sup>19</sup> Railway Country, 150 Years of Rail in South Africa. Transnet. 1-22

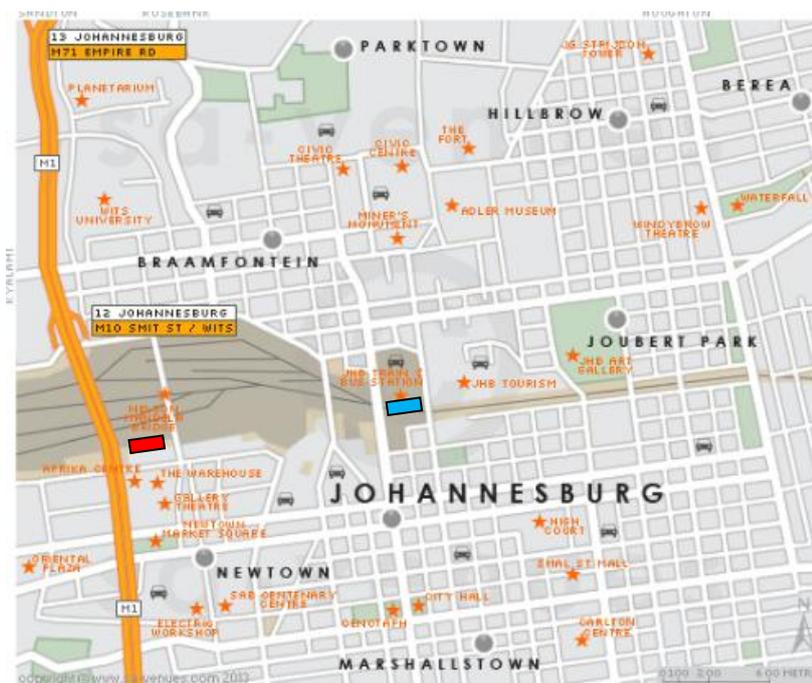
## 1.8 Old Park Station Site

The following series of illustrations show the Old Park Station site in context with the urban centre of Johannesburg.



1890s Map of Johannesburg, from *The Rand at War*, by Diana Cammack

The early street map of Johannesburg above clearly shows the original central location of Park Station relative to the urban centre of the city. For ease of reference, the 'Park Railway Stn' has been highlighted in red. Note to the left hand side of the map, the Brickfields area and Stations Plein (to the right of the Kafir Location) which is now the modern North Newtown precinct where the Old Park Station structure has been relocated to.



The modern day map on the left, from SA Venues website, has been highlighted to show the current location of Old Park Station in red and its original location in blue.

## 1.9 Old Park Station in Photographs

The following photographs and postcards are intended to show the Old Park Station at various points in its history.



*Postcard of Old Park Station, probably from the early years of the station's history, JHF collection*



*Old Park Station Interior in c.1902, note the highly ornate detailing to the timber kiosks. Museum Africa*



*View of the principal building on the main platform of Old Park Station c.1902. The timber panelling is richly detailed with deep profiles and cornices. Above the panelling are ornate cast iron grilles. The column in the foreground shows the detailing to the cast columns and structural bracing, the rhythm of the rivets also forms part of the aesthetic. Photograph from Transnet Heritage collection.*



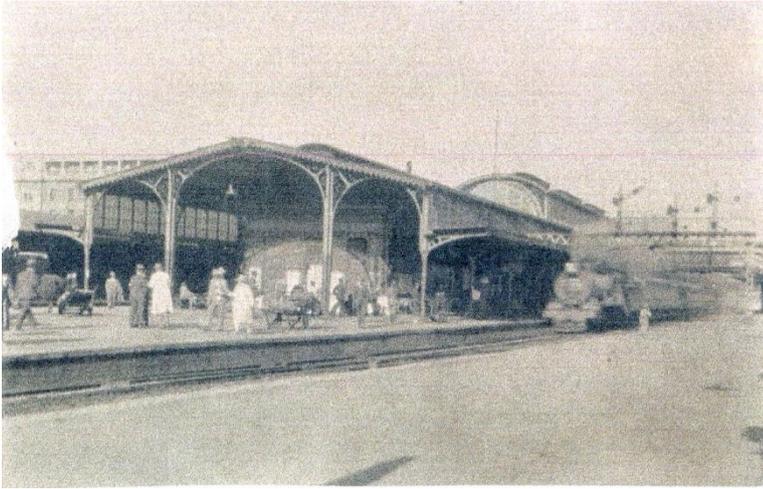
*Postcard of Old Park Station from c1910, from Report on the Historic Layered Development of the Johannesburg Park Station Complex and Joubert Park Precinct*



*Postcard of Old Park Station in 1912, showing the kiosks on the main platform. Museum Africa collection.*



*Old Park Station with a Class 16B locomotive – No.805, departing with the 'Union Limited' luxury passenger express for Cape Town, 1926. Museum Africa collection.*



*Photograph of Old Park Station in 1929, with steam locomotive. Museum Africa collection.*



*Aerial photograph from 1930 by Wally Green, the Old Park Station & tracks visible in the foreground*



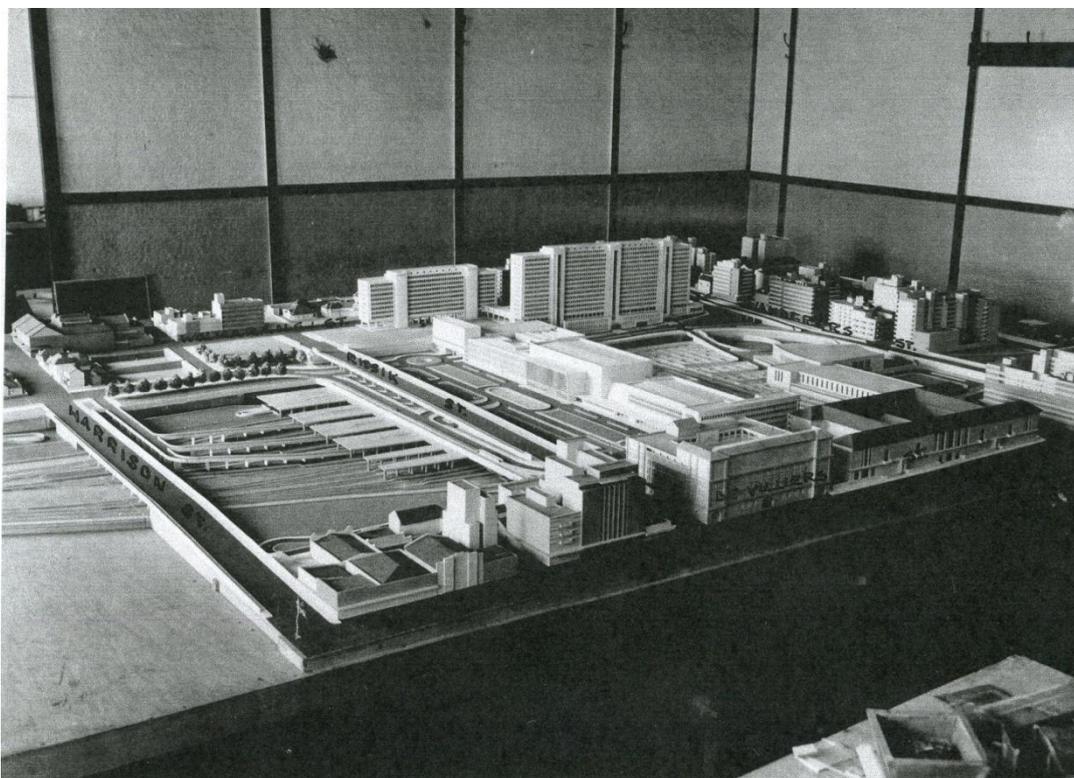
*Photograph showing demolition in 1932 of a nearby building to make way for the new station. Old Park Station was retained as a functional platform. Museum Africa collection.*



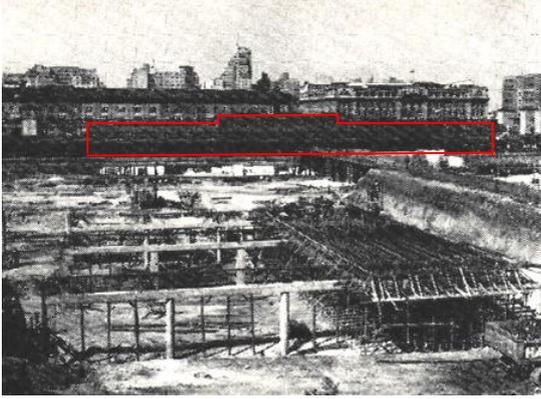
*Photograph of the main platform in Old Park Station. This gives the appearance of a taxi rank – perhaps the timber panelled building and kiosks were removed to make way for vehicular access? Transnet Heritage collection*



*Photograph of railway tracks at Old Park Station in 1937, indicating how busy the rail network was. Museum Africa collection.*



*Photograph of scale model of the proposed New Park Station development, c1950. Museum Africa collection. Note the vast scale of the new building, spanning all the tracks.*



*Photograph from July 1950, from the article Johannesburg Station Complex, which shows Old Park Station still in position with construction works progressing around it.*



*The Old Park Station in use within the Railway College campus in Esselen Park, 1990. Flo Bird*



*Model by Basil Brink and Stewart Douglas c1990, for the proposed new location for Old Park Station in Newtown North. Transnet Heritage collection.*



*Photograph of Old Park Station c.2002 in its current location in Newtown North, during the building of Mandela Bridge, heritageportal.co.za*



*Photograph from May 2015 by Vincent at A Brand New Sky, see <http://abrandnewsky.com/2015/05/10/jozis-landmarks-the-old-train-station/>*

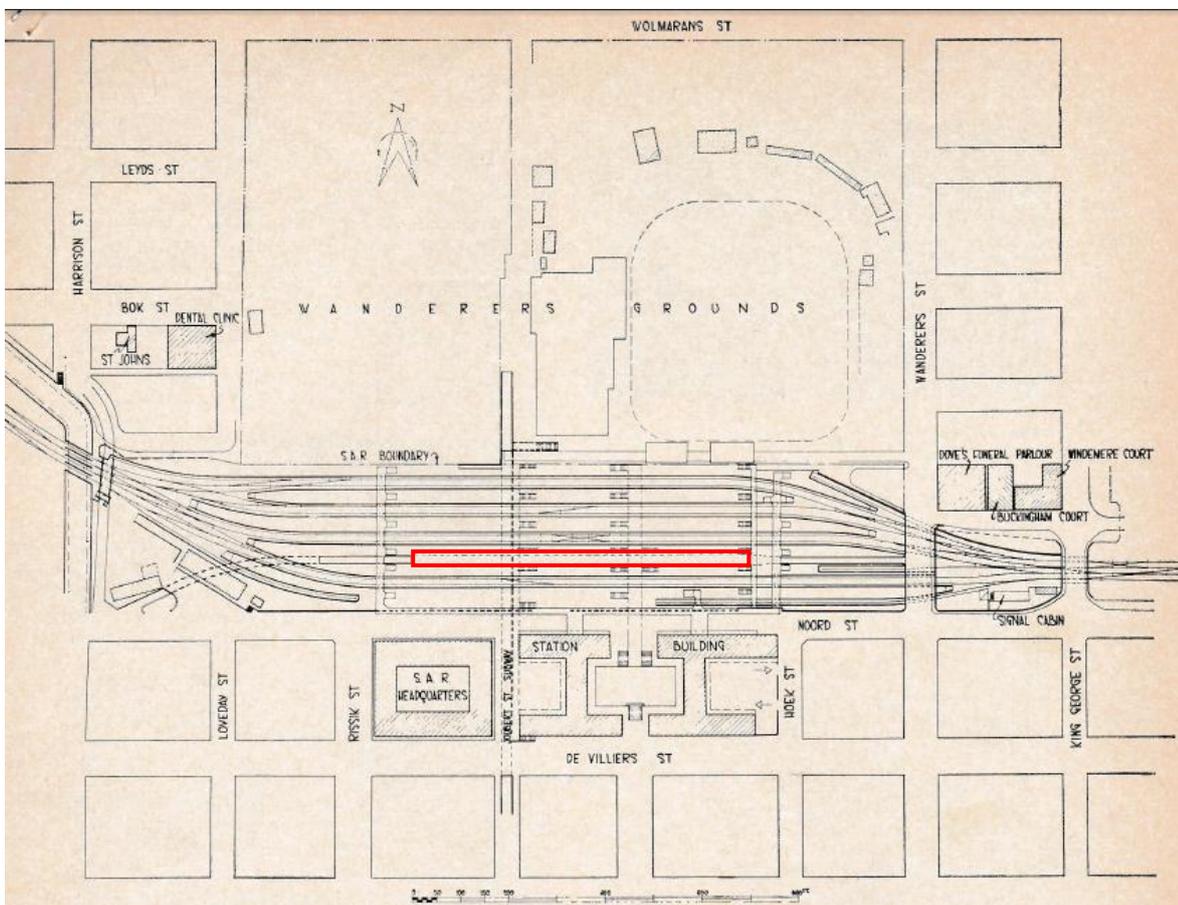
*Note the raised keystones to the podium arches, which are detailed to allow for the addition of facing brickwork. It was the intention of Transnet to apply brickwork to the podium but the bricks were stolen from site and the work was never implemented.*

### 1.10 The closure of Old Park Station

The expansion of Park Station planned in the late 1940s determined that the Old Park Station would have to be removed. In order to save the historic structure from destruction, it was relocated to the Railway College in Esselen Park, where it was retained in use not as a station but as a training facility for station foremen.

In conservation terms, maintaining historic buildings in use is a priority and if relocation is the only way to save a historic structure, it is a justifiable change to separate it from its original site context. Where a change of use is necessary, it is ideal for that use to relate to its original use so as to minimise the impact on the fabric and significance of the heritage resource.

Below is a plan showing the location of the Old Park Station relative to the new development plans and expansion, which also required the relocation of the Wanderers Grounds:



*Plan of the development of Park Station in 1960; the former position of the Old Park Station is indicated in red. This plan shows that the Old Park Station was more than two street blocks long and therefore a substantial structure within the urban fabric. From article 'Johannesburg Station Complex' in the South Africa Architectural Record, June 1966.*

### 1.11 Social History of Old Park Station

The Old Park Station was in continual use from 1897 to 1951. It was thus active during pivotal moments in the history both of Johannesburg and of South Africa as a whole.

#### 1.11.1 Mining and Economic Expansion

‘Mining gold put enormous pressures upon the simple economic structure of the Boers’ South African Republic. Infrastructural development and economic reforms were necessary to maximise profits and minimize expenditure while extending outcrop operations and developing deep levels. The discovery of coal on the far east Rand at Springs and Boksburg, as well as the construction of the Rand Steam Tram from the colliery to the gold fields and into Johannesburg facilitated the growth of the industry in its early years. Soon, too, the railway arrived from the coast: in September 1892 the Cape Railway reached the Rand.’<sup>20</sup>

#### 1.11.2 Wartime

Old Park Station was a departure and arrival point for soldiers – on both sides – who fought in the following wars:

1880-1881	First Anglo-Boer War
1899-1902	Second Anglo-Boer War
1914 to 1918	World War I
1939 to 1945	World War II

Many soldiers departed Johannesburg from Park Station, waved off by loved ones. For some who did not return, the Old Park Station would have been their last experience of Johannesburg.



*Photograph by Horace W Nicholls in 1899, captioned: “Au Revoir” or “Goodbye”? Boers’ sweethearts and wives saying farewell at Johannesburg*

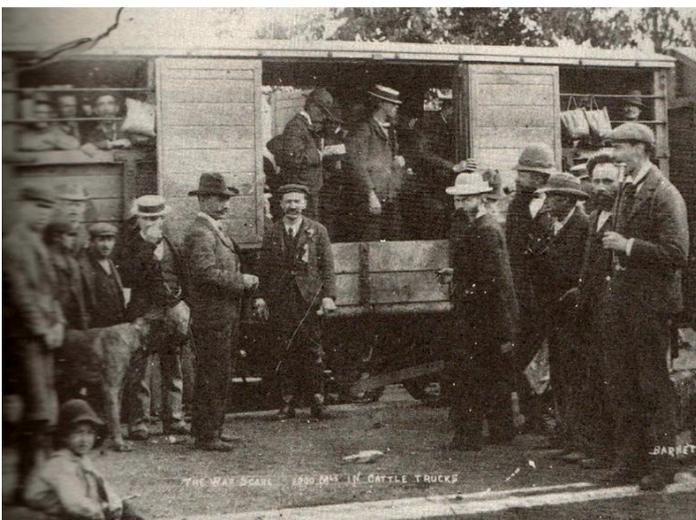
<sup>20</sup> *The Rand at War, 1899-1902, The Witwatersrand & the Anglo-Boer War* by Diana Cammack, James Currey Ltd, London, 1990. 2



Photograph by Horace W Nicholls in 1899, captioned: At Johannesburg – Burgers entraining for the Front. Carriages, it will be seen, were provided for the burghers. The uitlanders had to be content with coal trucks.



Photograph from the Transvaal Crisis, taken in 1899, from book *The Rand at War*



*The War Scare – 100 miles in Cattle Trucks*, photograph in 1899 by Barnett, from book *The Rand at War*

In addition to the movements of troops, munitions, horses and other materials necessary to support the war effort would also have been transported by train. The photograph below shows horses being led onto the train carriages for transportation to the Front:



Photograph by Horace W Nicholls in 1899, captioned: *Boers entraining horses in Johannesburg*

### 1.11.3 Refugees

The railway was also the primary means of relocating refugees. One example of this was in 1899, during the Second Anglo-Boer War, when the Boer Republic sought to extricate British citizens from Johannesburg:

‘The Republican executive committee’s policy regarding British residents remaining on the Rand vacillated. The first utterances from Pretoria were conciliatory, urging British people to remain at work. Soon though, it was clear that only approved people would be allowed to stay. A permit system was thus introduced and, by 4 October, the earlier policy had been reversed: all British subjects were expected to leave except those with ‘exceptional circumstances’.’<sup>21</sup>

‘The disappointed permit-seekers filled the overflowing trains to the Cape and to Delagoa Bay in the days before the 18 October deadline. Between 14 and 17 October inclusive, about 10,000 people left the area by train. On the 18 October several trains pulled out of Park Station, though none was as full as those leaving earlier that week. Even so, the last trainload of reluctant but voluntary refugees consisted of nine packed carriages and 13 coal trucks, carrying over 1,000 people. During this second exodus, the government provided free travel as far as the border to any refugee without the funds to purchase a ticket’.<sup>22</sup>

The situation was reversed a year later, ‘with the fall of Johannesburg, pro-Boers were sent to the coast by train’ by the British.<sup>23</sup> It was a tremendous period of turmoil, hostility and unrest for Johannesburgers. For some on both sides, escaping the chaos of the city may have welcomed, though for many it brought great uncertainty and hardship in starting a new life elsewhere.

Being the primary passenger station in Johannesburg, Old Park Station would have been the point of disembarkation for a large proportion of the refugees from both the Anglo and Boer communities. This situation is aptly illustrated in the following graphic portrayal of the departing refugees:

<sup>21</sup> *The Rand at War, 1899-1902, The Witwatersrand & the Anglo-Boer War* by Diana Cammack, James Currey Ltd, London, 1990. 69

<sup>22</sup> *The Rand at War, 1899-1902, The Witwatersrand & the Anglo-Boer War* by Diana Cammack, James Currey Ltd, London, 1990. 70

<sup>23</sup> *The Rand at War, 1899-1902, The Witwatersrand & the Anglo-Boer War* by Diana Cammack, James Currey Ltd, London, 1990. 149



*Illustration by Frank Dadd, submitted by Gary O'Bryan and found on Pinterest*

The image above shows predominantly women and children, who would have been the first to disembark. The structure of the Old Park Station is recognisable in the illustration and the annotation reads:

*'The Crisis in the Transvaal: A Daily Scene at The Park Railway Station, Johannesburg'*

There is no date visible on the illustration but it is likely to have been produced for a publication contemporaneous with the turmoil at the turn of the twentieth century.

#### 1.11.4 Royal Visit



*Commemorative photograph of the Connaught visit to Johannesburg in 1911, at Old Park Station. Transnet Heritage collection*

In 1911, Johannesburg welcomed the Duke and Duchess of Connaught, who were touring South Africa by train. Prince Arthur, Duke of Connaught and Strathearn, was the seventh child of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert.

Old Park Station was festooned with regalia and a floral arch was constructed as a welcome. In the photograph above, the corrugated iron roof of Old Park Station is visible behind the 'South African Railways' banner. The Royal couple arrived at Old Park Station on 28 November 1911 for their visit to Johannesburg.

There was a further Royal Visit to South Africa by the British Royal Family in 1947, with a specially commissioned locomotive. They were invited to the City Hall in Johannesburg for a banquet as part of their tour. However there is no evidence available to suggest that they arrived in Johannesburg by train. If they had, their arrival point would undoubtedly have been Old Park Station.

#### 1.11.5 The Apartheid Era 1948 to 1991

The rigorous segregation policy of Apartheid was clearly manifest in the New Park Station building designed in 1948. Separate concourses and amenities for Whites and Non-Whites were formalized into the design of the building. The Old Park Station was relocated to facilitate the building of this polarized New Station. This racial segregation remained in place until the New Park Station was radically redeveloped at great expense in the mid-1990s.

Whilst this is a short chapter in the history of Old Park Station, it is nevertheless a significant aspect of South African history and a significant moment in societal reforms that were expressed in the physical and spatial arrangement of municipal urban architecture.

### 1.11.6 A Place to Meet

At the heart of the Old Park Station was the ‘famous ‘Station Buffet and Bar’, pleasant rendezvous of Johannesburg’s citizens for many years’<sup>24</sup>. It was a place for rail travellers to have refreshments before or after their train journeys, but also a place to hold a business meeting. The attractive timber panelling within the ornate glass and cast iron structure was an appropriate and dignified place to converse. Even if one had no intention of catching a train, it was necessary to purchase a ticket to access the Station Buffet. This added a layer of effort and prestige to a meeting held within the Old Park Station.

This additional social function of the Old Park Station adds to its value as a community building.



*The original departure board of Old Park Station, showing the various destinations relating to the different platforms. Note the reclining lounge chairs in the foreground! Transnet Heritage collection.*

<sup>24</sup> Cutting from an unknown publication in the Johannesburg Heritage Foundation collection.

## **PART 2: ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

### **2.1 Significance Criteria**

The significance of heritage resources is categorized under the following headings:

- Social and Cultural Significance
- Historical Significance
- Archaeological Significance
- Architectural Significance
- Aesthetic Significance
- Scientific and technological Significance
- Group and Relationship Significance
- Landmark Significance

In combination with the above categories, the following aspects also contribute to the overall significance rating of heritage resources:

- Rarity
- Representational Value
- Sphere of Significance (local, regional, national, international)

### **2.2 Significance Rating**

The following six significance ratings have been used in this assessment:

#### **Exceptional:**

This relates to areas of the original buildings which are evident on the site. These elements are of national importance and form protected national heritage resources.

#### **High:**

The element is relatively intact, has a special interest, and makes an important contribution to the wider significance of the site. These elements are of regional importance and form protected provincial heritage resources.

#### **Medium:**

The element has been altered, has less special interest, and its contribution to the wider significance of the site is less important.

#### **Low:**

The element has been significantly altered, has a low level of integrity, the special interest has been lost and it makes little contribution to the wider significance of the site.

#### **Neutral:**

The element is historically unimportant, but does not have a negative visual impact on the surrounding buildings.

#### **Intrusive:**

The element is historically unimportant and has a negative visual impact on the surrounding buildings.

To provide a clear visual summary of these ratings, the six significance ratings have been colour coded as follows:

## SIGNIFICANCE

 Exceptional	 Low
 High	 Neutral
 Medium	 Intrusive

### *Significance colour key*

This colour key will be used to annotate drawings of the building in Section 2.5.

## 2.3 Assessment of Significance

The assessment of significance is arranged under sub-headings taken from the bullet points above. Heritage values are intrinsic to the building, but can be diminished through loss of historic fabric, setting or context. Thus a further paragraph relating to context and condition has also been added.

### 2.3.1 Social and Cultural Significance

As outlined in the Social History section in Part 1, the Old Park Station was the scene of a whole variety of important historical activities, including the transportation of people and goods in and out of Johannesburg during wartime as well as forming a key part of the day-to-day routine of the city for commuters and commercial companies alike.

Its long period of service from 1897 to 1951 spanned four periods of war time; the two Anglo-Boer Wars and the two World Wars. The association with these important events in the history of the country and internal affairs give the Old Park Station a **High** social and cultural significance.

### 2.3.2 Historical Significance

The Old Park Station is one of the oldest surviving structures in Johannesburg, which gives it **Exceptional** historical significance. It is a protected heritage resource with regards to the National Heritage Resources Act in light of its age and importance within the history and development of Johannesburg.

### 2.3.3 Archaeological Significance

Buried archaeology that may have been associated with the original site of the Old Park Station has been lost. Similarly, buried archaeology relating to its current site in Newtown North would have been disturbed during the construction of the concrete podium.

From the point of view of building archaeology however, the Old Park Station has the potential to yield information about the technological processes and construction activities employed in its fabrication and erection. This gives it some Archaeological Significance, albeit with a **Low** rating.

### 2.3.4 Architectural Significance

The design of Old Park Station was undertaken by an experienced railway architect, Jacob Frederik Klinkhamer. The Neo Dutch Renaissance architectural style of the building is a clear link with the origins of the design in the Netherlands.

The design and form of the structure visually reflects its function, which makes it a legible architectural edifice to the wider public; the architectural language is honest and transparent, whilst being archetypal of the period in which it was conceived. The ability of historic architecture to convey meaning to the public adds value to its significance.

The structure therefore has **High** architectural significance.

### 2.3.5 Aesthetic Significance

The ornate detailing of the cast iron structure is carefully proportioned and distributed throughout the building, from major structural elements down to the treatment of minor elements and fixing details. It is an attractively proportioned structure which has lost none of its charm through weathering.

It has **High** aesthetic significance.

### 2.3.6 Scientific and Technological Significance

The pre-fabricated cast iron structure of Old Park Station is technologically advanced, detailed in such a way as to allow it to be dismantled, transported and reassembled with relative ease. The engineering of the structure is impressive, enabling a lofty structure with comparatively few structural supports. The wide bay size enabled unobstructed views along the platform, which was important for passenger safety and also enabled flexibility in the planning of the kiosks originally housed in the centre of the platform beneath the canopy.

‘The erection of the NZASM buildings was the largest single exercise in prefabricated architecture, bar the structures of the goldmines on the Witwatersrand, at that time.’<sup>25</sup> The architectural technology of Old Park Station mirrors the technology of the railways, with the use of replicated components in iron and rhythmic arrangement of bays. It is a product of the great Industrial Age, where new building technologies were created from pioneering engineering and manufacturing processes.

As a very fine example of a late nineteenth century pre-fabricated station structure, the Old Park Station has **Exceptional** technological significance.

### 2.3.7 Group and Relationship Significance

The Old Park Station has a strong visual relationship with the Mandela Bridge, which is also a significant landmark structure. It also has group value in the way that it is now situated in a Cultural Quarter of the city, with a number of Museums located nearby. The Museums provide a critical mass of heritage in the area, which the Old Park Station contributes to.

The Old Park Station is considered to have **High** group and relationship significance.

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<sup>25</sup> <http://www.artefacts.co.za/main/Buildings/archframes.php?archid=1184>

### 2.3.8 Landmark Significance

It is a highly visible structure, which is an intrinsic aspect of any landmark building. There is a significant amount of traffic passing Old Park Station daily, both local commuters and international tourists on city tours, so it has a high exposure to the public. It is a memorable building to look at and photographs well, as all landmark buildings should.

The Old Park Station has **Exceptional** landmark significance owing to its longevity as a Johannesburg icon and also to its prominent elevated position on the podium in Newtown North. Its landmark status is reflected in its being ranked No.2 out of 35 top Johannesburg landmarks in the list prepared by Melinda Silverman within the new Architectural Guide by Roger Fisher and Nicholas Clarke.

### 2.3.9 Rarity

The Old Park Station is one of only two Rand Tram Station buildings that survive, the other being the Krugersdorp Station which was commenced in the same year. This means the Old Park Station is a rare example of original Rand Tram architecture. In combination with its age being only ten years younger than the city of Johannesburg itself, it is one of only a small number of early structures that were in existence before the start of the twentieth century. It thus has additional significance owing to its rarity.

### 2.3.10 Representational Value

There is a high degree of representational value to the Old Park Station owing to the nature of the design, construction and the strong aesthetic which clearly place it as a late nineteenth century structure. It is also unmistakable as a railway structure, and its rapid method of construction reflects and represents the rate of expansion of the railway it served.

‘The significance of the railroad and its rich history in South Africa cannot be underestimated. Its heritage is unquestionably woven into the very fabric of our society.

The railway still occupies a critical role in the transport system of our country. Every day millions upon millions of tons of minerals are conveyed to ports from where they are shipped away to earn us valuable foreign currency and more and more commuters are rediscovering the sheer convenience of safe travel without the hassle of traffic and parking problems’.<sup>26</sup>

### 2.3.11 Sphere of Significance

The Old Park Station has a broad sphere of significance. It is a local landmark building that once formed a nodal point on both regional and national rail networks. It has international significance relating to its origin in the Netherlands and its association with Anglo-Boer Wars and the two World Wars.

Any building that has significance across all spheres is an exceptionally significant building. Old Park Station is a historic treasure of Johannesburg and also of South Africa.

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<sup>26</sup> Railway Country, 150 Years of Rail in South Africa. Transnet. 22 of 22

### 2.3.12 Current Context and Condition



*Aerial view of Old Park Station site showing the 2006 Brickfields South development in the foreground. Photograph from Google maps*

Above is a contextual aerial photograph showing the Old Park Station site bounded by Carr Street and Brickfields South Housing development to the south, Mandela Bridge to the east, on-ramp slipway to the M1 motorway to the west and the railway tracks to the north.

Old Park Station is now flanked by an open construction site to its south side where the proposed Brickfields North residential social housing development has commenced. The ground preparation and foundation works were halted following the issue of a Stop Order by PHRAG:



*Photograph by Elodie Hazard for Johannesburg Heritage Foundation, April 2015, showing the cast iron and glass structure on the concrete podium, with site preparation work underway in the foreground*

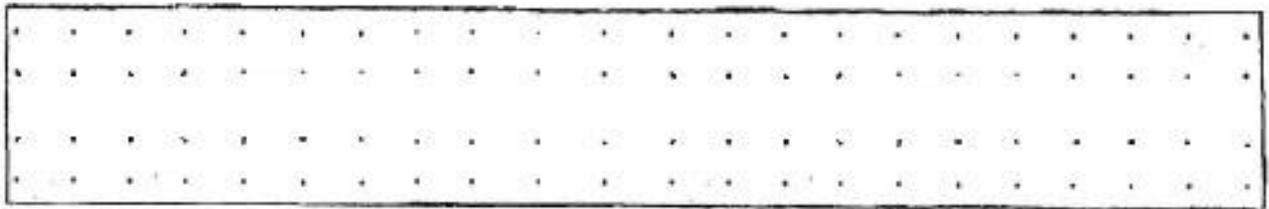
### Intactness of the Structure

Reviewing the aerial photographs available on Google Maps, it is clear that the Old Park Station as it stands is incomplete. Counting the structural bays, only 12 of the original 22 bays are present on the concrete podium. This equates to approximately 100m of the 155m length being intact and 9 bays missing. This situation is shown on the plans below. The structure thus lacks integrity in the sense it is incomplete, and this does diminish its significance somewhat.

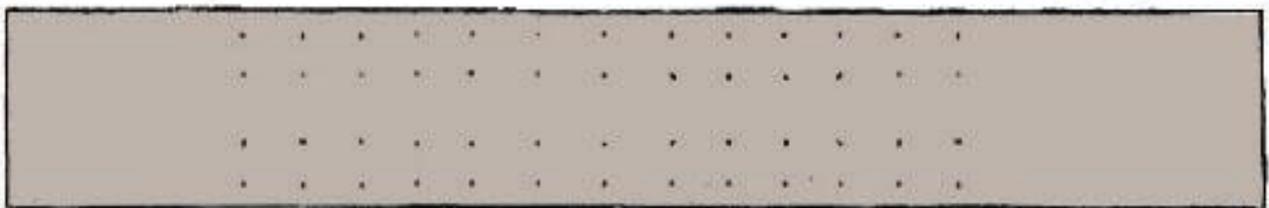
A letter written from the office of Transnet dating from 1994, held in the Johannesburg Heritage Foundation, describes how 60% of the structure would be taken to the podium in Newtown North and the remaining 40% would remain at Esselen Park. This was at the time when Transnet Heritage was planning to create a museum with the Old Park Station at its heart. The structure was then transferred into the ownership of Transnet Real Estate and owing to the decision by THL to create museums in George and Kimberley, the work was not completed.

The remaining 40%, or 9 bays, of the structure are still at Esselen Park. It is not clear what condition the remaining parts of the structure are in at Esselen Park. It is hoped that Transnet will be able to negotiate with Esselen Park over the relocation of the remaining parts of the structure so that it can be completed.

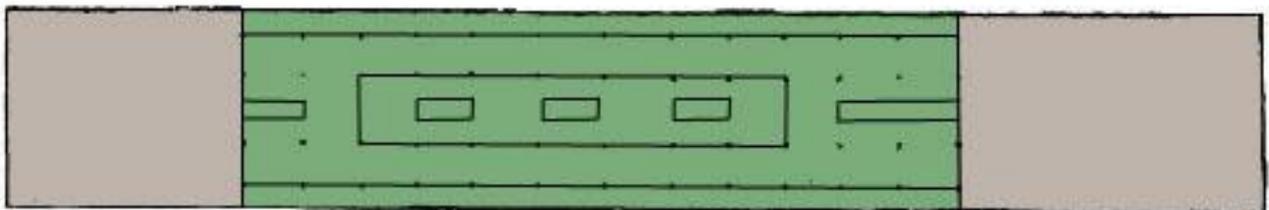
It is regrettable that the Old Park Station structure is not fully intact. However, the degree of intactness is sufficient to convey the scale and status of the original structure.



*Original plan of Old Park Station*



*Plan of Old Park Station as it currently exists on the concrete podium*



*Roof plan showing the roof of the Old Park Station as it exists on the concrete podium – the original roof would have spanned the full length of the concrete podium*



*Photograph looking south, with Brickfields South visible through the structure, Panoramio website. This photograph shows the abrupt termination of the roof vent, which would have had a grille to its face*



*Photograph from the heritageportal.co.za in 2015 showing how the regular bays of the structure provide a strong visual perspective, reminiscent of movement and befitting a station*

### **Condition**

Taking into consideration the structure has not been in regular use since its relocation in 1993, the standing structure appears to be in reasonable condition and relatively intact. Some of the roof vent grilles are missing, presumably as a result of only part of the structure being assembled here. The extent of original fabric surviving is surprising given its lack of use and degree of exposure to wind and rain. Throughout its existence, it has been exposed to the elements, except for the short periods in which it was dismantled and being transported and stored between sites. A greater degree of weathering than is apparent would be expected as a result.

A site inspection has not been made, so it is not possible to provide a detailed summary of building condition. Cast iron structures are very durable providing they are protected from water ingress and corrosion. Regular maintenance of the paint finish to the cast iron and iron elements is thus essential. The corrugated iron roof has afforded the structure beneath good protection from the worst of weather. Cast iron has good thermal properties and as a construction material is less susceptible to dimensional variation from changes in climatic temperature than naturally occurring materials such as wood. The elevated podium has served to reduce the risk of vandalism by distancing the structure from ground level. This has also protected it from ground water damage, as the water table is high in this area.

The limited amount of maintenance that has been carried out in recent years appears to have prevented significant deterioration of the structure. However, it is imperative that a full condition survey and measured survey is implemented in the near future to accurately determine the condition of the structure and inform future conservation management. This information will also be necessary in order to assess the appropriateness of any proposed future use of the structure.

Its current condition is not considered to diminish its significance, however steps should be taken to ensure the condition does not deteriorate.

## 2.4 Statement of Significance

The Old Park Station in Johannesburg is one of the oldest surviving structures in the city. Originally designed and fabricated in Holland, the structure was erected in Johannesburg in 1896 just ten years after the city was founded. Since then, the pre-fabricated structure was in continual use until 1952 when it was temporarily relocated out of the city centre to Esselen Park to make way for the building of a large extension of the station. In 1993, it was brought to its current location on an elevated concrete podium in the Newtown North precinct of the city, on a site immediately south of the main railway lines and approximately 1km west of its original location accessed from Noord Street.

Old Park Station is one of only two station buildings that survive from the Rand Steam Tram suburban railway network constructed by NZASM in the 1890s. This rarity gives it a great importance as a heritage resource from the steam train era and adds an exceptional rating to its overall significance.

As a local, regional and national station, Old Park Station has a broad sphere of significance. Due to its origin being in the Netherlands, and its association with Dutch architect and engineer, Jacob Frederik Klinkhamer, Old Park Station also has international significance. Any building or structure that has the full spectrum of spheres of significance is an exceptionally significant building.

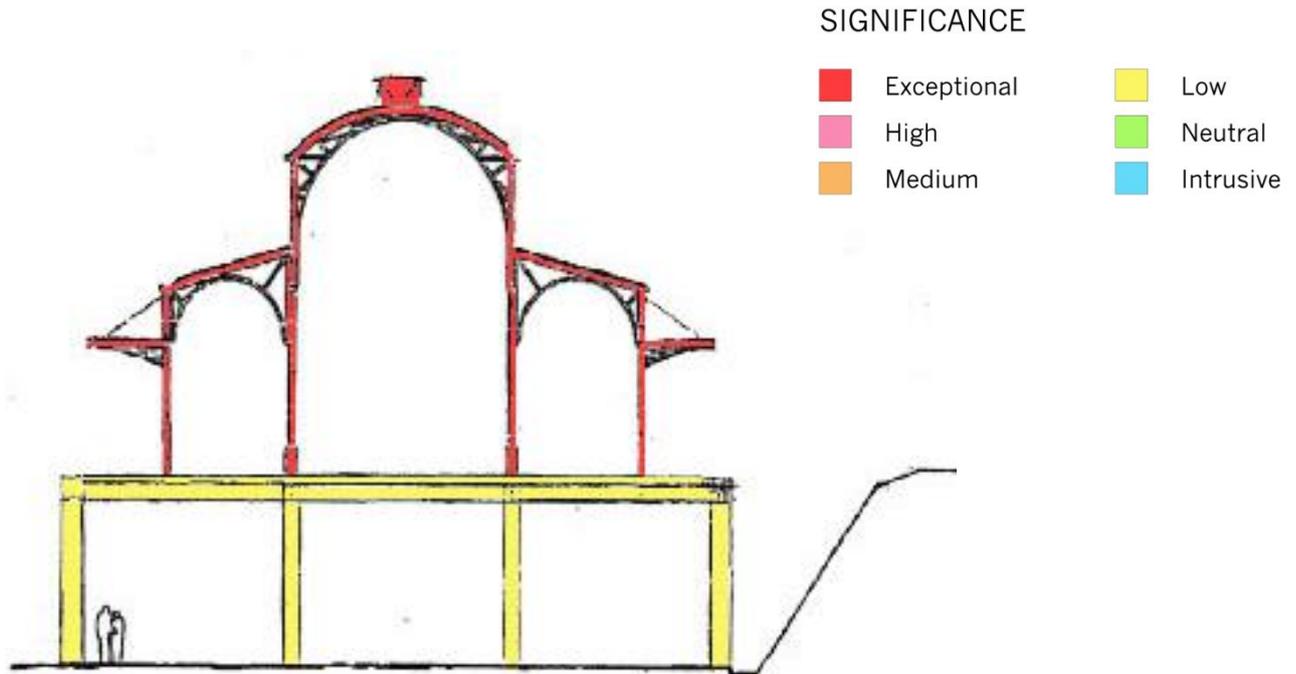
However, the building is not fully intact, as only 12 bays of its original 21 bays are present on site. It is unknown whether the remaining 9 bays are being held in storage and are in good enough condition to be reassembled to complete the structure. The incompleteness of the structure diminishes its significance, although due to the repetitive nature of the structure, the standing elements enable an accurate impression of the original to be made.

In the previous section, the Old Park Station was assessed as having Exceptional historical, technological and landmark significance and High aesthetic, representational, group and relationship, social and cultural significance. Due to the relocation of the structure and its being sited on disturbed ground, it has no significance for buried archaeology. However, it does have Low significance for buildings archaeology.

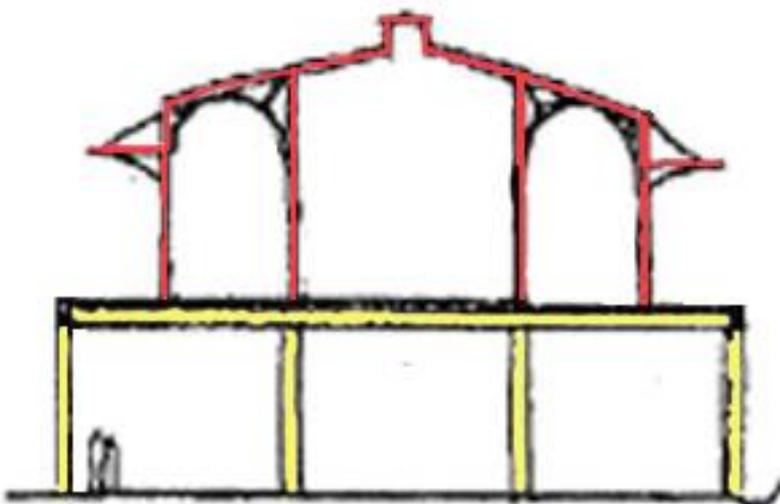
Taking into account all of the above, it is considered that Old Park Station is a heritage resource of **Exceptional** significance. It merits protection under the NHRA 1999 and should be conserved for the benefit and enjoyment of future generations of South Africans and international tourists. It is recommended that an appropriate use is found for the building so that it can be conserved through occupation. In this way, it would regain its relevance to the local community – it was originally a building of great activity, mass comings and goings, so it deserves to be brought back into full beneficial use, preferably as a public building.

## 2.5 Significance Drawings

The following drawings are based on drawings provided by Transnet and have been coloured to indicate the exceptional significance of the 1896 Old Park Station structure and the low significance of the 1900 concrete podium.



*Station Section through the centre line of the building showing the elevated central barrel vaulted roof*



*Station Section through outer bays showing the reduced roof height and ridge vent*

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## APPENDIX – CHRONOLOGY TIMELINE

- 1488 Discovery of the Cape by Dias
- 1652 Landing of Van Riebeck
- 1688 French Huguenots
- 1806 Occupation of the Cape by the British
- 1820 British Settlers
- 1835 Vortrekkers
- 1852 Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek recognised as an independent country within South Africa
- 1860 First official train journey between Durban and The Point
- 1867 Discovery of diamonds in Kimberley
- 1877 The South African Republic was annexed by Britain as the Transvaal
- 1880 First Anglo-Boer War began
- 1881 First Anglo-Boer War ended
- 1883 Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek regained independence and Paul Kruger was elected President
- 1886 Discovery of gold in the Rand and founding of Johannesburg.  
Cape Government Railways (CGR) starts work to extend railway lines towards Johannesburg
- 1887 Netherlands South African Railway Company NZASM is formed
- 1888 Construction contract for Park Station is awarded to NZASM
- 1890 'The Rand Tram' First suburban railway line in Johannesburg – Boksburg to Braamfontein
- 1892 Johannesburg is connected by railway lines to Cape Town and freight tracks introduced
- 1895 Jameson Raid against Paul Kruger's Transvaal Republic
- 1896 Work begins on Park Station to J F Klinkhamer's insular platform design
- 1897 Park Station opens to passengers
- 1899 Second Anglo-Boer War began
- 1900 British Occupation of the Transvaal, Johannesburg captured.  
Imperial Military Railways is formed
- 1902 Second Anglo-Boer War ended  
Central South African Railways is formed.  
Brickfields area is cleared.
- 1904 'Newtown' is named following clearance of Brickfields
- 1906 Electric trams are introduced in Johannesburg
- 1910 Four South African Colonies amalgamated into the new Union of South Africa  
South Africa Railways & Harbours formed to serve the whole country
- 1914 to 1918 World War I
- 1922 Rand Revolt
- 1923 Luxury passenger trains 'Union Limited' and 'Union Express' are introduced on Johannesburg to Cape Town line – to reach ships departing from Cape Town to England

- 1924 New government under J B M Herzog
- 1928 Johannesburg gains city status
- 1929 Economic depression
- 1930 Gordon Leith, architect, designs the new station
- 1932 Gordon Leith's new station is opened, Park Station remains in service.
- 1933 Park Stations two clocks are removed
- 1939 to 1945 World War II
- 1946 Preliminary work on the new Johannesburg Park Station
- 1947 Royal Visit by the British Royal Family, with purpose built train
- 1948 to 1991 Apartheid era
  - 1948 Phase 1 Construction Work to new Johannesburg Park Station underway, with separate concourses for White and Non-whites
  - 1951 Phase 1 Construction Work complete, old Park Station activities moved to the new station
  - 1952 Old Park Station is dismantled and relocated to the Railway College at Esselen Park
  - 1958 Old Park Station's two clocks are fitted to the corners of the old CSAR building
  - 1959 Last steam locomotive at new Park Station
  - 1960 Centenary of first passenger rail journey in South Africa
  - 1961 Republic of South Africa is formed. Trams are decommissioned in Johannesburg
  - 1965 The new Johannesburg Park Station (started in 1948) is completed
- Early 1970s Fresh Produce Market in Newtown is relocated to City Deep, 5km south of the CBD
- 1981 SAR&H becomes SATS – South Africa Transport Services
- 1990 Centenary of the Rand Tram (suburban railway).  
State-run SATS becomes a limited company, Transnet Limited, with freight division Spoornet
- 1991 Pouring of the concrete podium for bringing the Old Park Station to Newtown
- 1993 Old Park Station is assembled on the concrete podium in Newtown
- 1994 Nelson Mandela is elected President
- 1996 R160M redevelopment of (new) Park Station, removing Apartheid era segregation
- 1997 Opening of redeveloped main (new) Park Station concourse by President Mandela  
Inauguration of The Blue Train luxury passenger rail service
- 1999 National Heritage Resources Act
- 2003 Completion of the Mandela Bridge and M1 onramp adjacent to the Old Park Station site
- 2005 Sale of southern part of Old Park Station site by Transnet Property to JDA
- 2006 Brickfields South Social Housing development
- 2007 Transnet Freight Rail replaces Spoornet
- 2012 Opening of the Gautrain in Johannesburg, a modern rapid transit railway
- 2015 Brickfields North proposals