

# An Assessment of Cultural Places of Interest in Tshwane to Inform a Tourism Shift From Colonial to Indigenous Towards Decolonisation

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**Abstract:** This paper continues from the premise that the built form of the South African post-apartheid city continues to perpetuate the paradigm that only the colonial culture is available for tourist consumption. South Africa is a culturally diverse country that provides tourism to an international tourist market that seeks diverse cultural experiences. However, with most African cultural artefacts found encased in colonial architecture museums, questions arise regarding the authenticity of the cultural experience and the appropriate cultural representation in built form. This paper provides recommendations towards the transformation of the post-apartheid city following an assessment of the current tourist attractions that host cultural artefacts and serve as tourist attractions. Most of this data exists, and this paper investigates, collates and assesses the data based on these criteria: colonial and indigenous, restricted, and accessible, and static or transformative. The collated data is presented in urban mapping and architectural illustrations. The study is focused on the City of Tshwane in South Africa. Selected case studies are presented. The findings indicate a substantial under-representation in the City of Tshwane of what this paper argues to be culturally appropriate tourist attractions. This paper argues that there is a market for the consumption of culture as an experience away from colonial towards indigenous.

**Keywords:** Artefacts, Cultural, Decolonisation, Indigenous, Tourism shift

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## 1. Introduction

This paper continues from the premise that the built form of the South African post-apartheid city perpetuates the paradigm that only one culture is available for tourism consumption. The problem statement of this paper is: When tourists visit the City of Tshwane, their experience is limited to one that is primarily colonial and they do not experience in built form or programme the indigenous cultures beyond that which is encased, entombed, and on display in museums. This paper presents the context followed by a literature review. The research methodology consists of identifying some of the most visited tourist attractions and presenting details and data on these destinations. Similarities are identified and listed to validate the premise of this paper and to present the argument that there is a need for the transformation of existing tourist attractions to reflect the diversity of the city better as it relates to its indigenous culture. A discussion of the findings is followed by the research methodology and the paper concludes with a list of possible further research to develop the argument.

## 2. The Context

The City of Tshwane, previously known as Pretoria, is the administrative capital of South Africa. Tshwane is a model post-apartheid city (van Tonder & Thomas, 2022). This means that its built fabric was primarily built during apartheid. Apartheid was a political system of oppression under which people were separated by law based on their race, with white people seen as legitimate (Maylam, 1995) and thereby enjoying more liberties and rights than the excluded and oppressed Black people. The morphology of post-apartheid cities results from accommodating legislation such as the Native (Urban Areas) Act of 1923, thought to be the cornerstone of urban apartheid (Parnell, 1991). On 27 April 1994 apartheid fell and apartheid cities became post-apartheid cities. The architecture of Tshwane is predominantly of a colonial style and international style with little to no relation to the indigenous people, including in buildings that are still symbols of governance, such as the Union Buildings.

For this paper, post-apartheid cities are premised to be the built-form legacy of a divided past. The city fabric is alien to most of its inhabitants as it is a mirage of identity and culture, which the culturally diverse indigenous city dweller struggles to relate to (Sesana, Thomas & van Tonder, 2022). The status quo extends to all activities, including the tourist market, a sector that contributed ZAR 130,1 billion directly to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2018 and accounted for 4,5% of employment in South Africa (StatsSA, 2021a).

Through an analysis of the popular tourist locations included along popular tourist paths, several case studies were selected. These case studies contain either: 1) colonial history and culture, or 2) indigenous artefacts or prototype indigenous culture entombed within museums, and 3) history as a celebratory museum and tourist

attraction. These comparisons and analyses indicate that there is potential to redefine what are deemed to be cultural and historical artefacts that form part of the decolonisation process. These comparisons and analyses also elicit the argument that diversifying what is experienced by the international tourist market and the indigenous urban dweller will be richer and more authentic.

Diversification will facilitate the international tourist's exposure to a truer representation of the diversity of worldviews and cultures when they experience the indigenous. In addition, the indigenous urban dweller's experience will be richer and more authentic in spaces and places inclusive of and defined by their indigenous culture.

### 3. Literature Review

#### 3.1 Tshwane as a Post-Colonial/Post-Apartheid City

In order to ensure the authenticity of the cultural experience as provided to the tourist market by the City of Tshwane, the tourist attractions should reflect the city's inhabitants. There should be icons of the predominantly African indigenous people to accompany the icons of Afrikaans or Anglo heritage. Despite the contentions during the recent struggle for freedom by the indigenous people, a history exists before and during those events. Their history should be represented in the monuments in the same capacity as that which already exists.

#### 3.2 Artefacts and Architecture

Across centuries and around the globe, artefacts have and still preserve meaning and identity. Bruchac (2014) expands:

*"Indigenous communities have devised distinctive methods of encoding useful data within philosophies of thought and modes of activity that are linked to landscapes."*

It is usually in museums and cultural institutions that the relevance of these indigenous epistemologies as it relates to the past is revealed to the Western audience. There are worlds in these places (in this paper, museums), specifically on specially crafted artefacts; as in the residue of transplanted communities.

Museums and cultural institutions tend to embrace the idea, enshrined in the Hague Convention of 1954, that cultural products contribute to humankind's culture (Matthes, 2017).

Regarding their relevance to present cultural values, historical objects are blithely described as indigenous artefacts or relics and are usually curated as if they hold no philosophical or spiritual significance. Exhibits thus trap their audience into an 'always already' present narrative of authoritative interpretation (Hamilakis, 2011). This Western gaze overlooks and chooses to "ignore the multiplicity of meanings [that the artefact] may be found to contain" (Hamilakis, 2011) and it is through this lens of perception that artefacts lose the spiritual and philosophical meaning that were invested in them.

It seems most people respond to the same impulse that led Hamilakis (2011) to exclaim:

*"The obsession with an artefact's identity as an archaeological object (inventory numbers, taxonomy, and so on) and its poetic genealogy ('made by so and so', 'attributed to so and so by so and so') places a grossly undue emphasis on the artefact's career within the ancient workshop (and the modern library, certainly) but fails to elucidate its interaction within its own cultural context(s)."*

Unlike modern-day objects, artefacts are unique relics that illustrate a tangible link to a tradition that once existed. In some cases, artefacts are the only remaining trace of a community or belief that no longer exists. For endangered indigenous groups, artefacts serve as fragile links to a history that endured wars, colonialism's attempt at ethnic cleansing, and the burgeoning commercial tourism industry. Frescura (n.d) writes that Western-European society historically has always laid particular emphasis upon material artefact as a measure of cultural achievement. However, there is a need to examine the philosophical, spiritual, and practical implications of what we refer to in museums as 'indigenous artefacts'. As it describes the poignancy of seeing and experiencing what indigenous communities held dear and endured for; it emphasizes the importance of identity preservation.

Bruchac, (2014) defines indigenous knowledge contained in architecture and artefacts as:

*"[A] network of knowledge, beliefs, and traditions intended to preserve, communicate, and contextualise indigenous relationships with culture and landscape over time"*

In light of this definition, it is not surprising that indigenous architecture places the artefact as much more than an object of visual indulgence rather, the artefact is a part of the procession or ritual of its own cultural context, or at least the hybrid model it represents, one informed by the agrarian and pastoral nature of the local rural economy, as Frescura (n.d) argues:

*“[An] economy (that) has encouraged a pragmatic and highly functional approach towards folk art and building which is integrated into the value systems and lifestyles of the people themselves”.*

In this context the nature of the architecture (physical space) preserves more than just the artefacts within, it also preserves the architectural context in a way that clearly marks the passage of time. The materials used and the construction techniques employed give sensory insight into the communities or individuals who may have ‘owned’ it. They all communicate a sensory story of the community that made it, as well as reveal the identity of communities or individuals that might claim ownership.

#### **4. Delimitations**

Due to a need for brevity and limited space, the study does not include:

- Data that deals with the number or demographic of users, even though the authors agree such data would have some impact on the comparison of the tourist attractions.
- An analysis of the quantity of each type of case study will clarify where exactly Tshwane stands in the ratio between colonial and indigenous tourist attractions and the in-between variations. The study is limited to the top search outputs as the point of access for tourists.
- Colonial and indigenous views, knowledge, and artefacts are not fully defined or explored in the paper. The selected criteria are limited to what the authors deemed important within the study: colonial and indigenous, restricted and accessible, and static or transformative.

#### **5. Research Methodology**

##### **5.1 Tourism in Tshwane**

The identity of a city is closely tied to the elements of the city one experiences. Tourism is an experience where one takes oneself out of their culture and places themselves into a new one through immersion, while being given information about the process of formation (history) of that experience (Sesana, Thomas & van Tonder, 2022). Transformation of the post-apartheid city occurs on multiple fronts and the consumption of culture as a tourist attraction is one such front. Thus, an assessment of a selection of cultural sites that host cultural artefacts and has cultural prominence, which serves as tourist attractions must be done.

##### **5.2 Research Path**

Most of the necessary data already exists, not only as data on the tourist attractions as case studies, but also as data containing the tourists’ routes and popular attractions that are commonly used and visited. For this paper, data was collected through the online search engine Google using the phrase ‘Pretoria tourist attractions’ as a keyword search input.

The results feature websites that allow the user to create a path based on a list of tourist attractions that fall under the Tshwane district. *Table 1* gives the highest listings in the search engine outputs for various tourist sites. *Figure 1* presents an urban map of a part of the City of Tshwane with the tourist attractions listed and the four tourist attractions identified as case studies.

From *Table 1* the following four case studies are selected:

1. Voortrekker Monument
2. Union Buildings
3. Ditsong National Museum of Natural History
4. Freedom Park

These four landmarks have a unique history and significance and are relevant to this paper as they represent various aspects of South Africa’s history and heritage. The relevance of the case studies to the argument presented in the paper is that they represent the current state of the tourism market in Tshwane, which is limited to colonial history and lacks representation of indigenous cultures. The similarities identified between these landmarks validate the need for transformation and the inclusion of indigenous cultures in tourist attractions to better reflect the city’s diversity.

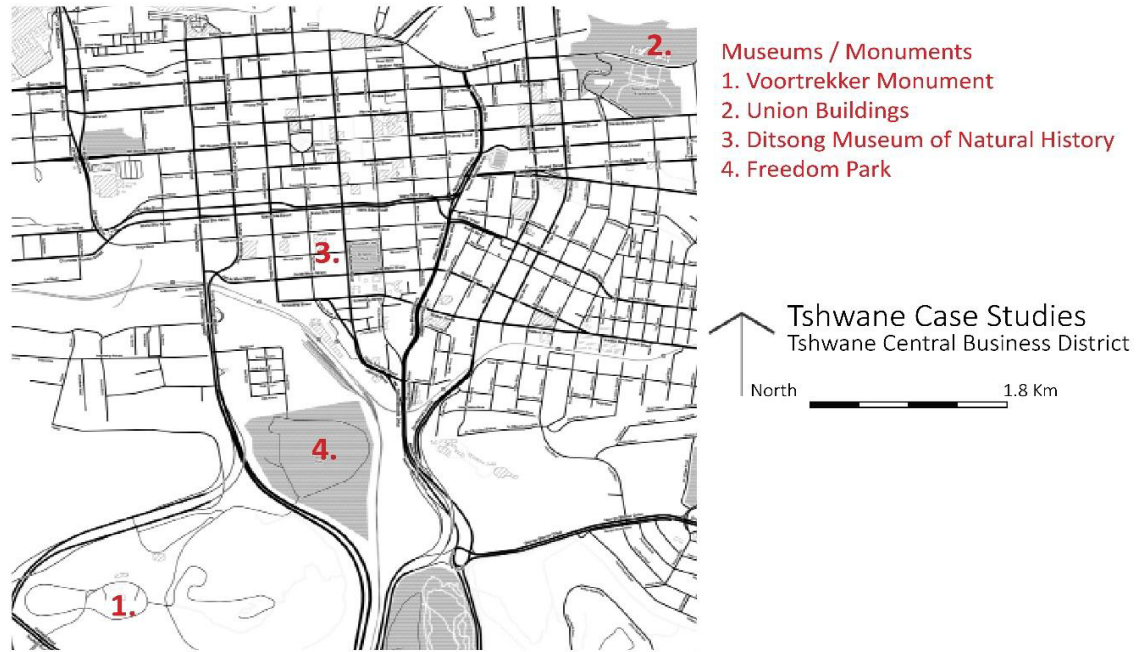


Figure 1: Part of the City of Tshwane Urban Area With the Listed Tourist Attractions and Four Case Studies

Table 1: Search Engine Outputs for Various City of Tshwane Tourist Sites

	GetYourGuide.com	TripAdvisor.com	MoAfrikaTours.com	EkalaTours.com	ShowMe.co.za
<b>Common tourist attractions</b>					
1	Voortrekker Monument	Voortrekker Monument	Voortrekker Monument	Voortrekker Monument	Paul Kruger House
2	Paul Kruger House	Paul Kruger House	Paul Kruger House	Paul Kruger House	Ditsong National Museum of Natural History
3	Union Buildings	Union Buildings	Union Buildings	Union Buildings	Ditsong National Museum of Cultural History
4	Cullinan Diamond Mine	Church Square	Cullinan Diamond Mine	Church Square	Pioneer Museum
5	Lion Park	Pretoria City Hall	Lion Park	Pretoria Synagogue	Sammy Marks Museum
6				Pretoria City Hall	Tswaing Meteorite Crater
7					Willem Prinsloo Agricultural Museum
8					Freedom Park

## 6. Research Findings

The research findings present the case studies identified above to investigate, collate, and assess the data based on these criteria: colonial and indigenous, restricted and accessible, and static or transformative. The data is significant as the paper argues that there is a market for the consumption of culture as an experience

that leans away from the colonial and towards the indigenous. However, the findings indicate there is a substantial under-representation of what this paper argues are culturally appropriate tourist attractions in the City of Tshwane. The incorporation of these site-specific elements that reveal indigenous ecological knowledge is recommended: artefacts/ architecture/ rituals. Cajete (2000) aptly elaborates:

*“Native science is the collective heritage of human experience with the natural world; in its most essential form, it is a map of natural reality drawn from the experience of thousands of human generations.”*

As native science maps, and in the context of South Africa’s rich indigenous identity, museums need to incorporate indigenous cultural history as part of the curated exhibits of the museum. Bruchac (2014) describes this form of natural history as:

*“[M]ore than a mere collection of primitive survival tactics; it is a system of awareness that offers both moral guidelines and practical advice.”*

The incorporation of indigenous cultural history provides a more authentic visit to tourists.

## 7. Case Studies

### 7.1 Case Study 1: Voortrekker Monument

The Voortrekker Monument (Figure 2) is a museum celebrating the Great Trek in which there was an exodus of Afrikaner people during the period of 1835 to 1854. It was completed in 1949 and was designed by Gerard Moerdijk. As is characteristic of apartheid-era structures, the museum is a monolith. Large, square, and symmetrical, the building is made of granite stone inspired by architecture from the ancient city of Great Zimbabwe, and Egypt (Rankin, 2017).



**Figure 2: Voortrekker Monument (Source: Viljoen, 2018)**

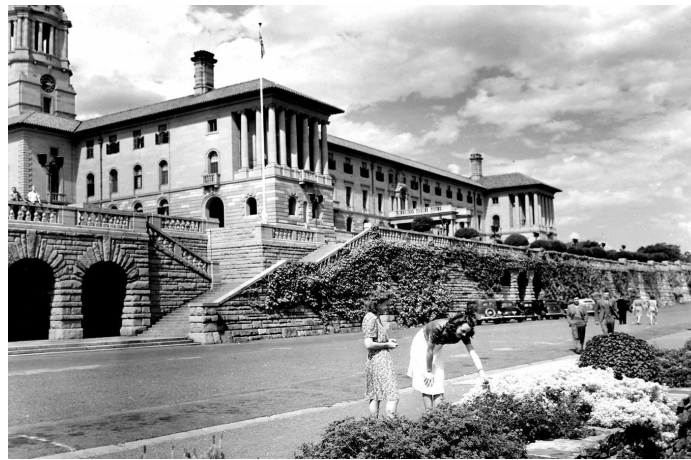
The monument commemorates war, conquest, dominance, (and nationalism), is a form of militarism legitimisation, and is a symbol of mourning (Abousnoug & Machin, 2010). Much of the 20th-century architecture of which this forms a part, was built to celebrate the triumphs of colonisation and to encase into physical form the builders’ (political) powers (Eróss, 2018). The Voortrekker Monument is an example of this principle as it functions as a museum in which Afrikaner history is stored and displayed. (Rankin, 2017). The only artefact that represents indigenous cultures is a replica of a Zulu hut from the royal capital uMgungundlovu as a homage to the Zulu King Dingane. This also reflects the entrenchment of war, for it is war that defines the relationship between Dingane and Piet Retief, the figures who initiated the conflicts, one representing the Zulus and the other the Voortrekkers (Crampton, 2001).

The building is a museum and its surroundings are a nature reserve. The site is accessible to the public at a cost throughout the week. The times range from 08h00 to 18h00 from Monday to Saturday, and on Sundays from 9h00 to 13h00.

### 7.2 Case Study 2: Union Buildings

The Union Buildings (Figure 3) were designed by Sir Herbert Baker and completed in 1913. The buildings were originally built to house the entire public service for the Union of South Africa at its inception (Christenson,

1996). The buildings borrow from the Greek Acropolis as Sir Herbert Baker was influenced by the classical era. The structures are built primarily of freestone and concrete, while brick is used on the interior (Mabin, 2019). It is of the neo-classical architectural style. The Union Buildings now serve as the official seat for the government of South Africa. The buildings currently house the Office of the President.



**Figure 3: Union Buildings, Pretoria 1953 (Source: Hilton, 2009)**

When a government occupies a building a former organization used, there is a connection through the association between the two. In the case of South Africa, where the history of the country is one of conflict and discrimination, that connection should be mitigated as that representation qualifies as a counter-memory (Marschall, 2017). The mitigations can be achieved by attaching symbolic representations of the new government and the people it serves in the form of gestures or structures that represent the new ideology and identity. This change to the material shape or aesthetic of what is iconic can alter the meaning of place and attach to it the identities of the indigenous people (Zubrzycki, 2013).

Notably, government departments have moved out of the Union Buildings. Many government departments have acquired new buildings or have built new buildings to house them (Mabin, 2019). This is part of the decolonisation process, as it reduces the experience of the colonial form and iconography for the public service.

The Union Buildings function as a government facility with no public access to the interior. The large garden area serves the public, and is accessible twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. It is free of charge, and occasionally events are held within the public area.

### **7.3 Case Study 3: Ditsong Museum of Natural History**

The Ditsong Museum of Natural History (formerly called the Transvaal Museum) (Figure 4) is located in the central business district of Tshwane, specifically on Paul Kruger Street across from City Hall, between Visagie and Minnaar Streets. The museum visually fuses a reverence for the past as it is related to palaeontology and the embrace of traditional colonial architecture.



**Figure 4: Ditsong Museum of Natural History (Source: Ditsong: Museums of South Africa, 2021)**

The mission of the museum was to collect and preserve objects of general and historical interest as well as to reflect the status of the Zuid-Afrikaanse Republiek (Grobler, 2006). Today, the museum's displays offer intellectual vitality spanning far-flung geographies and categories (the fields of fauna, palaeontology, anthropology, and archaeology). It may be argued that the museum can benefit from forming partnerships with indigenous communities to incorporate site-specific artefacts, architecture, and ritual processions that reveal its connection with indigenous ecological knowledge.

#### 7.4 Case Study 4: Freedom Park, Isivavane

'Isivavane,' is a rock monument located on the south-eastern slope of Freedom Park (Figure 5) and is the focus of this case study. Isivavane is a space where the timeless wisdom of the indigenous ancestors coalesces with the shaping of sacred places. This rock enclave holds great spiritual significance for many people and serves as a striking symbol of South Africa's cultural inheritance and identity. Spirituality and tradition loom large here - boulders stand as sentinels reflecting South Africa's ecological and political traumas and simultaneously symbolising the beauty and promise of a country reborn.



Figure 5: Freedom Park (Source: Visit Tshwane, n.d.)

Visitors to this sacred space can behold the transcendent power of ritual in relation to the structure, as it rises above the doctrine that seeks to divide us. 'Isivavane', evocative of the traditional *lesaka* or *kgotla*, is a beacon of hope and inspiration, its nature as a cultural and spiritual symbol, in programming and materiality, reflects its indigenous context and the history of South Africa.

### 8. Research Discussion

Table 2 lists the indigenous and colonial inclusion of the case studies. These findings are based on online assessments of the tourist attractions used as case studies as well as the authors' perceptions from visits to the case studies.

Table 2. Comparison of the Characteristics of the Indigenous and Colonial Inclusions of the Tourist Attractions

Characteristics	Colonial	Indigenous	Case Study 1: Voortrekker Monument	Case Study 2: Union Buildings	Case Study 3: Ditsong Museum of Natural History	Case Study 4: Freedom Park, Isivavane
Accessibility (location)	Low	High	Low	High	High	Low
Accessibility (cost)	Low	High	Medium	None	Medium	Low
Accessibility (time)	Low	High	Low	Medium	Low	Low
Cultural (artefacts)	None	High	Low	None	High	High

Characteristics	Colonial	Indigenous	Case Study 1: Voortrekker Monument	Case Study 2: Union Buildings	Case Study 3: Ditsong Museum of Natural History	Case Study 4: Freedom Park, Isivavane
Cultural (container)	None	High	None	Low	None	High
Cultural (use)	None	High	None	Low	None	High
Colonial (artefacts)	High	None	High	None	High	Low
Colonial (container)	High	None	High	High	High	Low
Colonial (use)	High	None	High	Medium	Medium	Medium

When the case studies are placed alongside each other to compare, certain patterns are observed. Firstly, the greatest need is not limited to what is seen and acted upon within the tourist attraction. It also includes access. Secondly, the existing popular tourist attractions exist with diversity in their colonial and/ or indigenous characteristics. Thirdly, the colonial and indigenous characteristics used as criteria can overlap without restriction.

After data collection and its comparison, the endeavour will be to bring the indigenous to the forefront of the post-colonial city and enhance the indigenous aspect of the tourist experience. Most monuments, spaces, and architecture either celebrate colonial achievements or speak the colonial 'language'.

The presence of colonial and indigenous cultural landmarks in Tshwane represents the tension between the two: the Voortrekker Monument and the Union Building represent colonial history, while most artefacts exhibited in the Ditsong National Museum of Natural History and Freedom Park can be said to focus on indigenous culture and identity. This paper's assessment could help tourists better understand South Africa's complex history and cultural diversity. It could also promote a shift in the focus of tourism from colonial to indigenous culture, inviting a reflection on the role cultural landmarks play in shaping an understanding of the world and how to create more inclusive and diverse spaces.

The City of Tshwane is primarily indigenous (StatsSA, 2021b), hosting a larger population of indigenous people, including those brought into the country through colonisation as slaves. To offer an experience that is more reflective of indigenous people and an experience that cannot be found anywhere but in the City of Tshwane as it would of the indigenous people, would create a more diverse, valuable, authentic and economically viable form of tourism.

## 9. Conclusion and Further Research

This paper argues that there is a need for change in the tourism market in the City of Tshwane. The built form of the City of Tshwane as a post-apartheid city continues to perpetuate the paradigm that only the colonial culture is available for tourist consumption.

In order to move past that argument, firstly, a collection of the indigenous cultures and history must be placed into monuments or in physical forms within the city. Secondly, it should be decided where those forms should be placed to meld well with the existing tourist market. Thirdly, who and how the introduction of the indigenous might be brought into being within the city by those entities, whether government departments, architects and/ or indigenous knowledge practitioners, that have the responsibility and ability to decolonise built form. Lastly, the nature of cultural and historic artefacts as well as the relationship between said artefacts and architecture needs to be investigated as part of the process of formulating a strategy for decolonising tourist attractions. These attractions would include those chosen for this study as well as others within the City of Tshwane.

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