

**DECLARING URBAN CONSERVATION AREAS:**

**THE ART DECO TOWNSCAPE OF VREDEHOEK, CAPE TOWN**



Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree Master of Philosophy in Conservation of the Built Environment

Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment,  
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## **ABSTRACT:**

The research question posed in this study asks what qualities, characteristics and cultural significance need to be embodied within an urban environment that make the area worthy of conservation-oriented protection through laws and policies.

The research question was explored through an assessment of the townscape of Vredehoek, an informally<sup>1</sup> proposed conservation area in Cape Town where there is a relatively high concentration of Art Deco buildings. The selection of Vredehoek as a laboratory within which to ask this question is due to the presence of contested opinions amongst various stakeholders and heritage-claimants about the cultural significance embodied within the built fabric of this place. This study aimed to identify what elements of the built environment of Vredehoek are of special interest, what qualities and characteristics these elements of special interest embody, to understand and articulate the values that inform these qualities, and to identify to whom these elements are valuable and why. Criteria were established with which to determine whether the identified qualities and values are special enough that when synthesised, the resultant significance of the place warrants protection through heritage area designation.

The criteria developed with which to assess and evaluate proposed urban conservation areas, including Vredehoek, require that such environments need to embody cultural significance and characteristics informed by an urban history reflected in its authentic manifestations developed over time through continuity of use with a high townscape quality established primarily through the aesthetic unity of its component parts.

Through historical research, the studying, mapping and analysis of the area's urban morphology, built environment and natural landscape, and the identification and evaluation of values held by heritage-claimants and views held by those critical of Vredehoek's proposed designation, evidence regarding the conservation-worthiness of Vredehoek has been assembled and assessed within the framework of criteria developed to evaluate heritage area designation. It has been found that the environment of Vredehoek does not embody high townscape quality nor does a strong aesthetic unity of its components exist. Furthermore, the area is not a richly layered environment reflecting continuity of use, the existence of cultural significance within the place is limited to a relatively small part of the townscape - a collection of Art Deco buildings demonstrating a moderate degree of architectural merit. Thus the environment of Vredehoek does not meet the criteria required for heritage area conservation.

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<sup>1</sup> By "informally", I mean that this proposal is made by City of Cape Town heritage management officials only without any public or expert consultation or confirmation from the City of Cape Town itself.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:**

I dedicate this Master's Degree and dissertation to my parents, Adrian and Sharon Jongens, for their unwavering support, encouragement and enthusiasm for all my endeavours.

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To the community of Vredehoek, thank you for your insights into a neighbourhood that is clearly very special to you all.

Cover image: Aerial view of Vredehoek with Table Mountain and the Disa Towers in the background. (Image courtesy of Think3DLab and Mason Properties, 2016)

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## **TABLE OF CONTENTS:**

	ACRONYMS USED WITHIN THE STUDY.....	Page 7
CHAPTER 1:	INTRODUCTION.....	Page 8 - 17
CHAPTER 2:	CULTURAL VALUES AND THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT.....	Page 18 - 45
	- Heritage and Cultural Values.....	Page 18 - 27
	- Urban Conservation, Conservation Areas and Townscapes of Cultural Significance .....	Page 27 - 38
	- Urban Morphology.....	Page 38 - 45
CHAPTER 3:	URBAN CONSERVATION IN CAPE TOWN: STATUTORY AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK .....	Page 46 - 61
	- Development of Conservation Areas within Cape Town.....	Page 46 - 51
	- Statutory and Legal Framework.....	Page 51 - 61
CHAPTER 4:	VREDEHOEK CASE STUDY.....	Page 62 - 181
	- Vredehoek – from Upper Table Valley farm to residential suburb: A Brief History .....	Page 68 - 82
	- The architectural styles prevalent in Vredehoek.....	Page 82 - 89
	- Assessment of Vredehoek’s built fabric and townscape quality.....	Page 89 - 128
	- Articulation of values.....	Page 129 - 144
	- Annexures.....	Page 145 – 181
	Annexures 1-6: Surveyor General Diagrams of Vredehoek.	
	Annexure 7: Extract from original building plan of 12 Ludlow Road.	
	Annexure 8: Extract from original building plan of 21 Virginia Avenue.	
	Annexure 9: Extract from original building plan of 25-29 Bellair Road.	
	Annexure 10: List of interviewees.	
	Annexure 11: List of interview questions.	
	Annexure 12: Art Deco buildings in Vredehoek compromised by alterations.	
	Annexure 13: Supplement to the assessment of Vredehoek’s built fabric and townscape quality including further illustrations and description.	
	Annexure 14: Extract from original building plan of Fleetwood - 37 Exner Avenue.	
	Annexure 15: Extract from original building plan of 14 Yeoville Road.	
	Annexure 16-19: Extracts from mapping exercise of Vredehoek.	

CHAPTER 5: EVALUATION OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE AND TOWNSCAPE QUALITY WITHIN VREDEHOEK..... Page 182 - 186

CHAPTER 6: STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE AND CONCLUSION..... Page 187 - 189

BIBLIOGRAPHY..... Page 190 - 195

**ACRONYMS:**

BELCom: Built Environment and Landscapes Committee

CIBRA: The City Bowl Ratepayers and Residents Association

CoCT: City of Cape Town

E&HM: Environmental and Heritage Management Department (City of Cape Town)

HPOZ: Heritage Protection Overlay Zone

HWC: Heritage Western Cape

NHRA: National Heritage Resources Act No.25 of 1999

PHRA: Provincial Heritage Resources Authority

SAHRA: South African Heritage Resources Agency



Figure 1: Aerial view of Cape Town's City Bowl, locating Vredehoek within the greater context of the Upper Table Valley. (Hilton, T. 2008. Flickr.com/photos/Hilton-t/9591007771)

## **CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION:**

This study sets out to research the qualities, characteristics and cultural significance embodied within the townscapes and built fabric of urban conservation areas which make these zones significant enough to be afforded conservation-oriented protection through laws and policies. This significance is determined by several sets of societal values. The study seeks to identify what these values and qualities are, who holds them and how they inform decision-makers in the determination of whether the cultural significance embodied within the fabric of an urban townscape is significant enough to deem it a heritage conservation area. The suburb of Vredehoek, Cape Town, is used as a case study to research, analyse and interrogate the determination processes that occur during the potential designation of a heritage overlay zone. Vredehoek has for some years been proposed as a heritage protection area and is a particularly contested case where the conservation-worthiness of the townscape and built fabric is in question.

The selection of Vredehoek as a laboratory within which to ask this question is due to the presence of contested opinions amongst various stakeholders and heritage-claimants about the cultural significance embodied within the built fabric of this place. This study aims to identify what elements of the built environment of Vredehoek are of special interest, what qualities and characteristics these elements of special interest embody, to understand and articulate the values that inform these qualities, and to identify to whom these elements are valuable and why. Through these findings, the study aims to define what the criteria are with which to determine whether these values are special enough that when synthesised, the resultant significance of the place warrants protection through heritage area designation.

Within this case study, criteria have been established to assess the value of the area as a townscape, including an assessment of the individual buildings, the assessment of its urban morphology including the plot pattern, street pattern and building footprint, how these elements contribute towards streetscapes and how these streetscapes contribute towards the townscape. The criteria include those which identify landscape elements within the environment, as well as those informed by the identification of values held by heritage claimants.

Initially I considered the existing suburb of Vredehoek to embody a unique townscape character, an intimately scaled, low-density environment embodying a relatively consistent period-character made up of well-preserved blocks of flats in an Art Deco style and interspersed with petite dwellings. My professional role within an architectural practice carrying out residential development projects within Vredehoek triggered a personal conflict between my dual role as an agent of change, altering the character of an urban area within a townscape which I unselfconsciously deemed to be

conservation-worthy, and as a scholar of built environment conservation trained to analyse and protect such conservation-worthy environments. Over the past several years our practice has completed a number of residential developments within the suburb of Vredehoek, with several more in various stages of planning or production. All of the completed projects and those in the pipeline required the demolition of the existing single dwellings on each property. Several of the completed projects are alike in scale, massing and height to the existing neighbouring context of older flat complexes. Some of the schemes currently under construction, however, will relate less to the surrounding context, with building envelopes proposed to exploit full potential of the properties' zoning restrictions (recently, in 2013, relaxed to enable greater development envelopes) which, amongst other things, allow building onto the common boundary to 15 metres in height. This will result in a new massing presence different to that which currently exists within the surrounding Vredehoek townscape where buildings are set back from the common boundaries.

The proposal that Vredehoek become a protected heritage area, an initiative triggered by the threat of development and change within the environment, provides an interesting opportunity to understand what factors inform the determination of heritage significance within an urban environment which I believed at the outset of this study to embody architectural merit and townscape quality. The degree of this quality and whether the environment in fact warrants conservation-oriented protection is currently a controversial debate yet to be confirmed by the City of Cape Town. This debate is interrogated through this study. The case is analysed within the intellectual realm of conservation values and cultural significance, and urban conservation and townscapes of cultural significance in Cape Town.

The suburb of Vredehoek is part of an area called the Upper Table Valley (see figure 1), an inner suburb of the City of Cape Town just above and adjoining the Central City, within the valley below Table Mountain. Vredehoek is one of eight outer districts of the Upper Table Valley discussed by the town planner, Verschoyle, in the 1970s according to general characteristics of physiography, geology, main period of development, and predominant dwelling types. Vredehoek was characterised as embodying gentle to steep slopes, with houses and flats making up the main building types (Verschoyle, 1979: 13).

Amongst the earliest settlements in Vredehoek were the two market gardens, Vredehoek and Elba, established at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century respectively. The survey prepared by Thom indicates that in 1900 this area was still mostly open land.

Building activity in Cape Town paused at the outbreak of World War I and only resumed after 1920. By this time there was a great shortage of housing. To help deal with this shortage, the City Council

advanced building loans to prospective owner-occupiers resulting in the shift towards property ownership and small detached dwellings with gardens. Single dwelling development gained momentum between 1920 and 1938. At the same time speculative flat development became popular as an investment source (Verschoyle, 1979: 41). Many of these speculative flats were built in an Art Deco style and variations of the style, and many of the single dwellings were built exhibiting an eclectic mix of Cape Dutch Revival and Arts and Crafts architectural characteristics. The township of Vredehoek was laid out and developed within this period, that is, between the 1920s and the 1950s. By the end of World War II, the suburb was almost fully developed. Due to the rapid rate at which it developed, the townscape of Vredehoek acquired a relatively consistent period-character. Many of the Art Deco apartment blocks and single storey dwellings with tiled-roofs remain in existence today. The apartment blocks are typically three and four storeys in height. Some of these blocks were designed by architects, others were designed by the developers themselves using 'off the shelf' building elements.

The Vredehoek townscape is defined by the modest scale and massing of these built forms and how they are sited on their erven. This arrangement of buildings in relation to their site placement has created a particular urban fabric, the pattern of which is added to by broad street systems made up of roads between forty and fifty Cape feet (12, 6 and 15, 74 metres respectively) in width plus wide embankments and pavements. These wide street systems do not create streetscapes of an intimate scale, and are an element that detracts from Vredehoek's townscape.

The existing built fabric of Vredehoek still reflects the urban form generated during its first form-producing period when the suburb was established between 1920 and 1950. Over time, to accommodate the needs of its residents, many buildings have been altered and added to. More recently, some of the first generation dwellings have been demolished and replaced by second generation infill buildings in the form of four to five storey apartment blocks. Further apartment blocks are currently being constructed that will extend to the common boundaries of their site, reflecting a new morphology of buildings embodying the development conditions of revised zoning restrictions. This introduction of a new building morphology within the area has prompted concern for the loss of character in Vredehoek.

Within this study, I follow Mason and de la Torre who define value as "a set of positive characteristics perceived in cultural objects or sites by certain individuals or groups." They define "cultural significance" as "the importance of a site as determined by the aggregate of values attributed to it" (de la Torre & Mason, 2002: 3). The process of determining the significance of a place is dependent on the identification and evaluation of values specific to the site in question, "...it

is necessary to examine *why* and *how* heritage is valued, and by *whom*" (Avrami, de la Torre & Mason 2000: 7 – emphasis in original).

"Only through understanding the significance of a place is it possible to assess how the qualities that people value are vulnerable to harm or loss" (English Heritage, 2008: 14).

Based on interaction with different groups of heritage-claimants, elements that are special within the urban environment of Vredehoek have been identified, as well as the qualities and characteristics that make these elements special or significant. These significant qualities and characteristics are determined by cultural values held by society, those values identified within Vredehoek are discussed within Chapter 4. Discussions also took place with those who are critical of the conservation-worthiness of the environment of Vredehoek, concerned about the lack of conservation-worthy elements within the suburb, and how designation as a heritage area could freeze or limit its development and evolution. The articulation of what cultural values and townscape qualities exist within Vredehoek, as well as the negative qualities, are evaluated and an assessment about the cultural significance of the place is defined in Chapters 4 and 5.

A clash of values exists within the area of study between private property developers who value Vredehoek for its financial and development possibilities, supported by the City of Cape Town political establishment who recognise that the low density residential nature of the environment can play a role in satisfying the drive for densification on one hand, and residents who cherish their familiar townscape, as well as groups including certain heritage officials at the City of Cape Town who appreciate the non-quantitative architectural, aesthetic and townscape values within Vredehoek on the other hand.

Chapter 2 discusses how the significance of a place can be articulated through the identification and assessment of the cultural values attached to the place; and various theories, concepts and principles are defined to assist in articulating the cultural significance of this proposed conservation area. Larkham points out that there is much attention and focus on the retention of townscape character but queries what criteria this character is based on (Larkham, 1996: 91). He argues that there is also a lack of criteria laid down for conservation area designation, that comprehensive character appraisal must be a prerequisite of area designation, and that these criteria should pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the area's character or appearance (Jones & Larkham, 1993, cited in Larkham 1996: page 95).

In order to further define what makes an area special, the work of Conzen and the concept of urban morphology has been considered, an approach that assists in the articulation of an environment's physiognomy, the character of its outer appearance - how the physical manifestations of an

environment's development history can contribute towards an area's significance. The character that urban morphology can impart is assessed in this study.

It is suggested here that the development history of a place and the tangible remains of this historic development imparts characteristics that gives the townscape a unique disposition, one that society assigns values to and finds a sense of place within, whether these characteristics exist within Vredehoek are assessed in the following chapters. How factors of change in a familiar landscape can drive members of society to seek conservation of an environment are discussed, as well as how this impulse to conserve needs to be properly articulated and, where conservation-worthiness is identified and articulated, how to assess this proposed conservation-worthiness within forces of change. The work of Baumann (1997) and how the qualities of townscape can create a sense of place and aesthetic unity that can contribute towards a special and conservation-worthy environment, are discussed, as well as the work of Lynch (1969) who illustrates how engagement with the users and occupants of environments can assist in the identification and articulation of strong and special qualities of place.

The townscape movement developed as an approach towards understanding the character of place, initially focused on purely visual qualities. This movement proposed several core values and principles which focused on the character of towns and a method was developed to identify and analyse the elements that contribute towards the physical character of places (see Cullen, 1960). These values, principles and methods can be applied to urban conservation practice contributing towards the identification and articulation of qualities which assist in the definition of significance, the underpinning values and principles of which are, in the main, founded on the significance of sight and visual experience and are discussed further within this study.

Baumann defined the key elements of a noteworthy townscape as first embodying "the *sense of place* ('I know where I am') and second the *sense of unity*, the town experienced not as a lot of disconnected pieces but as a whole, with one recognisable area leading into another" (Baumann, 1997: 253 – emphasis in original). This definition within the context of Vredehoek is discussed at length within this study.

Through the theories and arguments discussed in Chapter 2 a set of criteria have been articulated with which to analyse and assess proposed conservation areas. Townsend argues that areas of cultural significance rich in urban history and character are worthy of conservation, that criteria for designation need to be developed based on questions about cultural values and the articulation of the qualities and characteristics of these places that make them special. Larkham has identified a shift in the criteria for conservation area designation which previously emphasised historical quality

and more recently is informed by areas of high townscape quality and character. According to Baumann, townscape quality is informed by visual characteristics and visual harmony created through the composition and organisation of urban elements. Baumann argues that urban conservation areas are townscapes of high quality informed by the aesthetic unity of their elements, that a thorough understanding of the unique physical character of a place is required to inform conservation area designation, and that a coherent assessment of conservation areas is typically informed by topography, urban morphology, historical development, archaeological potential and significance, character of space and the quality and relationship between buildings. In keeping with Conzen's emphasis on the significance of the historicity of townscapes, Lira, Piccolo and Zancheti (2009) argue that the cultural significance of urban townscapes or parts of urban townscapes is determined by the authentic manifestations of its "physical structures, natural and built, and human relations" (Lira, Piccolo & Zancheti, 2009: 165) through continued use over time, and that effective protection of the city is primarily dependant on the authenticity of the city.

Chapter 3 discusses how conservation areas are identified and assessed for heritage area designation in Cape Town and what it means once these areas have been designated, including the implications on development. It introduces the legal and statutory framework within which development and demolition applications are assessed, how heritage resources are identified and protected and what the implications of this protection of existing heritage resources are when they exist within areas of proposed demolition and development. The dynamic between enabling property rights and densification policies and restrictive conservation law are introduced.

Chapter 4 describes the case of Vredehoek. The research methodology set out to find evidence of conservation-worthiness within Vredehoek is structured in such a manner that identifies the values, heritage resources, and special qualities that exist within the area; and, informed by these identified qualities and values, criteria have been established in order to evaluate the significance and conservation-worthiness of the place. The process also exposes qualities that do not support conservation of the environment.

The search for evidence of conservation-worthiness begins with a historical investigation of Vredehoek's transition from an Upper Table Valley farm in the 1800s to an area of urban residential development between the 1920s and 1950s. The significance of important historical links, or lack thereof, are identified and assessed as to whether they contribute significance to the place that should be protected.

The urban morphology of the area has been analysed in order to understand the pattern of development that originated within the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the degree to which these

morphological features still exist today and, given that they do, how they contribute towards the character of the townscape.

Applications made to relevant heritage authorities by developers for the demolition of buildings within Vredehoek and the decision-making processes that ensued are assessed. The values and special qualities of the area, and lack thereof, identified by heritage practitioners, local heritage authority officials, amenity bodies, and Vredehoek residents through the decision-making process have also been evaluated. Conservation surveys that have been carried out within the area in the past thirty years are assessed in order to understand what values and special qualities were identified by heritage experts at the time.

Interviews were carried out with a number of stakeholder groups, each concerned with Vredehoek for different reasons. Heritage-claimants who are concerned with how development occurring within the area is changing the character of the area and threatening heritage resources were engaged with; these included Vredehoek residents, certain City of Cape Town heritage-management officials, and representatives from CIBRA (the City Bowl Ratepayers and Residents Association). Architects and Art Deco enthusiasts with expert knowledge about Art Deco architecture were engaged with, as well as property developers who have identified Vredehoek as an area with development potential, and those who are critical of Vredehoek's proposed designation as a heritage area including certain heritage practitioners and town planners. Those interviewed during the course of the study are listed in Annexure 10.

I approached interviewees first by telephone or email, and the purpose of the study was introduced as well as the reason they were being asked to participate in a discussion about Vredehoek.

Interviews took place with one person at a time and in person. Some residents were engaged with at coffee shops within the area of study. Interviews lasted between forty-five minutes and one hour, and within this time, each interviewee was asked the same prepared questions. Questions were structured to find out how each person experiences Vredehoek, what each person values about the area under study and why, what qualities and characteristics about the area interviewees find special, or not special, and whether they have noticed elements of change occurring within the area and whether this is a concern or not. The interview questions are included as Annexure 11.

Whilst there were several common elements identified as special across the groups, the results of the interviews clearly reflected different value sets for most stakeholder groups with differing characteristics identified as special. All parties recognised that Vredehoek's natural landscape, setting and location is special, but the values identified as most special by the residents of Vredehoek are, first, the sense of community created by the people living in the area and, second,

the village-like scale of the built environment. For certain heritage-management officials at the City of Cape Town, as well as one of the CIBRA representatives, the architectural and townscape value of the dense clusters of Art Deco buildings that exist within Vredehoek, as well as the homogenous period-character created by the Art Deco buildings and the 1920s/1930s houses were identified as most significant. The property developers engaged with identified the current land value and erf sizes that exist within Vredehoek as conducive to viable residential development schemes, Vredehoek's location in relation to the Central Business District, its setting and orientation were also identified as valuable, enhancing the attractiveness of proposed developments. Some heritage professionals and town planners were critical of Vredehoek's designation as a heritage area but acknowledged the presence of a certain degree of architectural value within the area, but none identified heritage resources embodying architectural excellence.

The results of these interviews provided a fundamental basis of evidence required in assessing the conservation-worthiness of the area of study, they also demonstrate the existence of multiple sets of values attributed to urban environments by different groups of experts and laypeople and how these value sets need to be thoroughly articulated and assessed when considering the designation of heritage areas.

I also assessed the suburb of Vredehoek on foot and mapped the findings by isolating conservation-worthy heritage resources and special elements of area, streetscape and townscape character within the environment using a set of criteria developed to identify noteworthy characteristics within the townscape. These resources and noteworthy elements are mapped illustrating the degree of unity of townscape elements. This mapping exercise provided further evidence with which to assess and evaluate the conservation-worthiness of Vredehoek.

A brief history of Art Deco and relevant architectural styles in Cape Town is outlined, as well as a description of the typical housing type that arose within Cape Town between the 1920s and 1930s in order to assist in the identification of architectural and aesthetic value embodied within the clusters of flats and dwellings in Vredehoek.



Figure 2: Aerial view of the Vredehoek study area is delineated in yellow.

The extent of the study area is located within the part of Vredehoek developed between the 1920s and 1950s. This section being studied encompasses a large portion of the area that has been delineated by the local planning authority as an informally proposed heritage protection overlay zone. Excluded from this study, however, are public open spaces, the Disa Towers complex and the Table Mountain edge. The Disa Tower's complex is touched on within this study in terms of the impact of its scale on the surroundings, however the towers and the development to the east of them were developed much later. Land zoned as public open space and community space has been infringed upon for development within the Vredehoek area, whilst this is a valid reason for concern, those issues will be excluded from this study which will focus on determining the heritage significance and conservation-worthiness of the townscape that manifested during Vredehoek's main period of development.

Through historical research, the studying, mapping and analysis of the area's urban morphology, built environment and natural landscape, and the identification and evaluation of values held by heritage-claimants and views held by those critical of Vredehoek's proposed designation, evidence regarding the conservation-worthiness of Vredehoek has been assembled and assessed within the framework of criteria developed to evaluate heritage area designation. It has been found that the environment of Vredehoek does not embody high townscape quality nor does a strong aesthetic

unity of its components exist. Furthermore, the area is not a richly layered environment reflecting continuity of use, the existence of cultural significance within the place is limited to a relatively small part of the townscape - a collection of Art Deco buildings demonstrating a moderate degree of architectural merit. Thus the environment of Vredehoek does not meet the criteria required for heritage area designation.

## **CHAPTER 2 – CULTURAL VALUES AND THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT**

### **HERITAGE AND CULTURAL VALUES**

“Values are critical to deciding what to conserve – what material goods will represent us and our past to future generations – as well as to determining how to conserve” (Avrami, de la Torre & Mason, 2000: 1). The process of determining whether a place is significant enough to be designated as a heritage conservation area relies on the identification of cultural significance that this place embodies: “Cultural significance is the term that the conservation community has used to encapsulate the multiple values ascribed to objects, buildings, or landscapes” (Avrami, de la Torre & Mason, 2000: 7). These concepts of heritage and cultural values have been given considerable attention by various organisations, researchers and academics in recent decades and several charters and principles aimed at guiding the conservation of environments of cultural significance have been formulated over time.

English Heritage, now called Heritage England, is one of these organisations which defines conservation as: “the process of managing change to a significant place in its setting in ways that will best sustain its heritage values, while recognising opportunities to reveal or reinforce those values for present and future generations” (English Heritage, 2008: 7). English Heritage use the word “place” as a proxy for any element of the historic environment that people, not only heritage practitioners, recognise as having a distinct identity. “The term ‘place’ goes beyond physical form, to involve all the characteristics that can contribute to a ‘sense of place’” (English Heritage, 2008: 13).

The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) is dedicated to the conservation of the world’s cultural heritage and primarily concerned with the philosophy, terminology, methodology and techniques of cultural heritage conservation. Australia ICOMOS, a national chapter of ICOMOS, adopted the Australia ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance in Burra in 1979 known as the Burra Charter, which “sets a standard of practice for those who provide advice, make decisions about, or undertake works to places of cultural significance...” (Burra Charter, 2013: 1) through a set of principles and processes adopted as the accepted standard for heritage conservation practice in Australia. This charter has been widely adopted in the English speaking conservation community as a guiding tool. Values, and the co-existence of cultural values, are two of the Burra Charter’s main conservation principles:

“Conservation of a place should identify and take into consideration all aspects of cultural and natural significance without unwarranted emphasis on any one value at the expense of others. Relative degrees of cultural significance may lead to different conservation actions at

a place” (Article 5.1 & 5.2). “Co-existence of cultural values should be recognised, respected and encouraged, especially in cases where they conflict” (Article 13).

While English Heritage refers to heritage significance and the Burra Charter to cultural significance, the values that inform both sets of conservation principles are similar. According to the Burra Charter “cultural significance is a concept which helps in estimating the value of places. The places that are likely to be of significance are those which help an understanding of the past or enrich the present, and which will be of value to future generations” (Guideline 2.1). Establishing cultural significance means assessing all the information relevant to an understanding of the place and its fabric.

Places that are protected by heritage area designations are places embodying rich layers or strong elements of cultural value. In the case of Vredehoek, the identification and assessment of what is considered valuable by those with a stake in the area has not yet been coherently or succinctly articulated in a manner that persuasively argues for the conservation of the area. Opinion about whether the area is conservation-worthy at all is contested. Specific heritage resources and values have been identified, however, the significance of these values has not been agreed upon. Clusters of blocks of flats built in an Art Deco style have been identified as architecturally and aesthetically valuable in their own right and as a collection of unique buildings, the suburb has been identified by certain heritage-claimants as embodying a period-character defined by the homogenous scale and type of dwellings and flats within the area which evolved within a short time frame. Social significances in terms of the link that Vredehoek holds as a place where immigrants initially settled after fleeing Europe before World War II has also been argued as significant. The greatest value identified by residents within Vredehoek is an intangible one - a strong sense of community.

To answer the research question posed within this study which asks: what qualities, characteristics and cultural significance need to be embodied within an urban environment that make the area worthy of conservation-oriented protection through laws and policies, the study assesses why and how the area is valued and who these values belong to. Criteria need to be developed with which to assess and evaluate proposed conservation areas informed by, amongst other things, the values attached to it. The theories, concepts and principles relating to conservation of the architectural and urban environment have been considered here in order to locate this study and its arguments. Vredehoek has been used as a case study in an attempt to articulate the cultural significance of the place informed by cultural values attached to the place.

English Heritage’s definition of place has already been mentioned above, the Burra Charter defines place as “site, area, land, landscape, building or other work, group of buildings or other works, and

may include components, contents, spaces and views” (Article 1.1). Cultural significance according to the Burra Charter means:

“aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations. Cultural significance is embodied in the *place* itself, its *fabric, setting, use, associations* (the special connections that exist between people and place), *meanings* (what a place signifies, indicates, evokes or expresses), records, *related places* and *related objects*. Places may have a range of values for different individuals or groups” (Article 1.2, 1.15 & 1.16, emphasis in original).

In this study, I shall follow Mason and de la Torre who define value as “a set of positive characteristics perceived in cultural objects or sites by certain individuals or groups.” They define cultural significance as “the importance of a site as determined by the aggregate of values attributed to it” (de la Torre & Mason, 2002: 3). The process of determining the significance of a place is dependent on the identification and evaluation of values specific to the site in question. “...it is necessary to examine *why* and *how* heritage is valued, and by *whom*” (Avrami, de la Torre & Mason, 2000: 7 – emphasis in original).

“Only through understanding the significance of a place is it possible to assess how the qualities that people value are vulnerable to harm or loss” (English Heritage, 2008: 14).

Heritage value typologies are characterised by scholars, academics and organisations based on vocation. Value categories will differ according to distinct perspectives. The primary values within the Burra Charter, for example, are cultural and historical in nature, but economic values – seen as being derived from these primary values - are given secondary considerations. Alois Riegl’s values are characterised through an art history lens, and the high level values defined by English Heritage are evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal - aesthetic value defined as being “derived from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place” (English Heritage, 2008: 30).

Jokilehto and Zancheti define value in a simple manner as “the quality of a thing that makes it useful or desirable,” and they qualify this definition further adding that the natural quality of the thing does not make it valuable but rather:

“it is the relative social attribution of qualities to things that make them have values....values are social categories, the results of human thought defined in a cultural context, and not natural attributes. The matter (physical world) is neutral, relative to the attributes that human thought attaches there to” (Jokilehto & Zancheti, 1997: 40).

Zancheti and Jokilehto believe that objective methods are required in assessing and defining urban structure, but that:

“there is equally a need for a new consciousness of heritage values. After all, conservation of cultural heritage is fundamentally a cultural problem; there is a need to establish a basis for balanced judgements where cultural, economic and financial values are taken into account in the context of the decision-making process concerning the planning and management of the built environment” (Jokilehto & Zancheti, 1997: 38).

Jokilehto and Zancheti recognise that monetary value in modern society is the common denominator for how society compares values. However not everything can be reduced to a monetary state, urban objects cannot be considered commodities. Rather, the values typically at stake in the context of urban conservation are cultural values such as artistic, technical, rarity or identity values, identified through using symbolic systems of reference such as aesthetics (art), history or age, and socioeconomic values including economic, functional and educational values. Identifying these socioeconomic values requires the use of symbolic systems that are “used in the practical relationships between people and institutions in the daily use of urban spaces” (Jokilehto & Zancheti, 1997: 41). Examples to illustrate such practical relationships are the exchange value of buildings and how this enables them to be sold in the property market, or their use value related to specific functions such as offices.

“Cultural and socioeconomic values are not mutually exclusive. It is part of the nature of a city to be both a symbolic (cultural) and a useful (functional) object. It is not the dominance of one type of value over the other that decides the form and degree of conservation. Rather, it is the relative assessment of several values, a kind of social calculus that will determine the extent and degree of conservation” (Jokilehto & Zancheti, 1997: 42).

Similarly, although recognising that it is impossible to divide economic behaviour entirely from culture, Mason argues that a distinction between sociocultural values and economic values is a constructive starting point for research on values-related issues (Mason, 2002: 10). Mason proposes a provisional typology of heritage values that, although not distinct or exclusive and prone to overlaps when fully defined, encompass most of the relevant values necessary for decision making in conservation planning and management:

- sociocultural values: historical, cultural/symbolic, social, spiritual/religious and aesthetic.
- economic values: use (market) value and non-use (non-market) values: existence, option and bequest (Mason, 2002: 8-10).

These values, and their relevance to this study will be discussed shortly.

Kalman discusses Alois Riegl's "rigorous" classification of conservation values into two categories: intrinsic values - those "that are inseparable from the place" listed as age, historical and commemorative (intended memorial value); and temporal (contemporary) values - those relating "to present-day potential for conservation" listed as use value, which can be likened to economic value, and which relates to functionality and everyday use, art value, newness and relative art value. (Kalman, 2014: 200-201). Newness value is the quality being looked for by a certain demographic, those who associate completeness or perfection of form and colour/polychrome in an art object. Historic fabric will embody newness value once the traces of age have been removed to once again reveal its new and 'original' state. Newness value is in direct opposition with age value, the value that a different demographic will derive from an object that embodies the visible signs of the passage of time (Stanley Price et al, 1996: 80).

Kalman discusses values in a useful way, one which will assist the process of defining the values that exist in Vredehoek. He defines the Burra Charter's declaration that the need to assess cultural significance for past, present or future generations essentially means that "values change over time", and that "society is constantly in the process of revising what it values" (Kalman, 2014: 202). He states that:

"changes in value implicitly acknowledge the coexistence of what Alois Riegl called 'present-day' values, which are more societal and change considerably over time, and which are distinguished from 'memorial' values (age and historical value), which are mostly technical and remain relatively constant. The latter are best identified by professional specialists, such as historians, architectural historians, and archaeologists; and the former are better expressed by interested, non-professional members of the community" (Kalman, 2014: 202).

These considerations enlarge the scope of where and how to look for values embodied in a place.

Kalman stresses that as important as historical research and physical investigation is in revealing values and characteristics associated with a historic place, so too are the additional sets of values felt and expressed by the community. Historical research and physical investigation methods expose "technical interpretations of documentary records, physical fabric and environmental context" about a place, additionally, the opinions of non-experts in the heritage field assist in gaining a full understanding of the historic place. Article 3 of the Burra Charter states that "conservation is based on a respect for the existing fabric, use, associations and meanings", thus, it is necessary to find a way to "identify the associations and meanings that society gives to the places from the past" (Kalman, 2014: 195). Kalman refers to Denis Byrne's views about the values and meanings of historic places that are not found in the places themselves but in the communities and individuals to whom

the place is significant (Byrne: 2003 cited in Kalman, 2014: 196). These values are acquired through a means of community engagement. Although Kalman refers above to the 'historic place' when identifying values, I argue that this approach is equally important in revealing the values of modern places of potential significance.

It is relevant to discuss further some of the values mentioned above as the understanding of these principles/ideals and of those who hold them underpins the discussions and arguments made later within this study.

“Sociocultural values are at the traditional core of conservation – values attached to an object, building, or place because it holds meaning for people or social groups due to its age, beauty, artistry, or association with a significant person or event or (otherwise) contributes to processes of cultural affiliation” (Mason, 2002: 11).

Those values that have been raised as relevant within this study of Vredehoek and its proposed designation as a conservation-worthy area include architectural, aesthetic, historical, social and townscape values.

The concept of heritage has its origins in historical values. It is worth citing Lowenthal's succinct comparison of history and heritage: “History explores and explains pasts grown ever more opaque over time; heritage clarifies pasts so as to infuse them with present purposes” (Lowenthal, 1998: xv). According to English Heritage, “historical value derives from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present” (English Heritage, 2008: 28).

Objects, sites and places can acquire historical value in many ways – through associations with events or people, through the age of heritage fabric, from the objects' or sites' technical qualities, its uniqueness or rarity, or through its archival/ documentary potential. Historical value can be divided into two important subtypes – educational/academic value: the value of the historic object, site or place as a potential source of knowledge from the past to the present and future; and artistic value: the value of the object, site, place as being a unique, good or best example of historical art, or work by a particular individual (Mason, 2002: 11). Within the context of this study, the history of Vredehoek as once being a dairy farm within the Upper Table Valley may be found to be historically significant, or, the fact that it was a place where many Jewish immigrants developed buildings and settled after fleeing Europe.

The broad category of aesthetic value stems from the manner in which people extract sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place. These values can be the product of the conscious design of a

place, including artist endeavour, they can also be the product of how a place has fortuitously developed over time and use with a visually appealing result (English Heritage, 2003: 30).

Related to aesthetic value is design or art value - the aesthetic qualities created by the considered design of a structure, building or landscape as a whole. Design value encompasses composition, the arrangement of proportions, form, massing, circulation, silhouette, views and vistas, as well as choice of materials, inclusion of decoration, detailing and craftsmanship, and planting. These design values may be enhanced by associational values if the place or works embodying design value were created by a renowned architect, designer or craftsman (English Heritage, 2003: 30). Aesthetic value, and design or architectural value will be a central topic throughout the course of this study due to the fact that the cluster of buildings most valued within the area exhibit Art Deco characteristics. The dwellings within Vredehoek exhibiting typical 1920s/1930s architectural characteristics will also be examined in terms of architectural and aesthetic value.

Social value as defined by English Heritage is a value “associated with places that people perceive as a source of identity, distinctiveness, social interaction and coherence.” A point that English Heritage recognises which is relevant to the current case study, is that

“the social value of places are not always clearly recognised by those who share them, and may only be articulated when the future of a place is threatened....The social value of a place may indeed have no direct relationship to any formal historical or aesthetic values that may have been ascribed to it” (English Heritage, 2003: 32).

Mason speaks about the social values of heritage and how they can enable and facilitate social connections and networks. In the context of the current case study however, it is more relevant to discuss the possible existence of “place attachment” as a social value/quality. “Place attachment refers to the social cohesion, community identity, or other feelings of affiliation that social groups derive from the specific heritage and environmental characteristics of their ‘home’ territory” (Mason, 2002: 12). In the case of Vredehoek, the overriding special quality that the residents associate with the place is a sense of community. This value within the context of heritage values will be discussed further in Chapter 4. A place can have social value should it be valued by a community or cultural group for religious reasons. In terms of Vredehoek and its links to the early Jewish community that lived within the area this may be identified as significant.

Urban conservation pertains to urban environments and townscapes. This suggests that another value typology will be present when dealing with these composite environments, values not just associated with individual elements within the urban structure but also clusters or aggregates of elements. When interpreting values linked to clusters or whole urban environments, one cannot

simply add up the values attributed to the individual elements to reach a sum total of individual values. In terms of the role that aesthetic value plays in the context of townscape value

“is the consideration of the part a building plays in a group, street or area; its pictorial or townscape value. In this instance the particular context plays a critical role in establishing the character of the place and any new development should respond to this. Grain, massing, plot widths, building lines, skylines, colours, textures, visual density and, in particular, scale all contribute to this character. Conversely, an existing building might possess value irrespective of artistic or historical merit, simply because its location performs an important role in townscape terms, for example, in forming an enclosure or framing a vista” (Baumann, 1997: 18).

Avrami, Mason and de la Torre of the Getty Conservation Institute begin their report entitled *Values and Heritage Conservation* pointing out the intense focus on values and meaning in contemporary society, stating how values are critical to deciding what to conserve and how to conserve it in the realm of cultural heritage conservation. They affirm the common problem in conservation of the presence of multiple sets of values and how these can conflict (Avrami, de la Torre & Mason 2000: 1).

Pertinent to the study at hand with regards to change occurring in a suburb due to new residential development, further conflicts arise within the arena of development and conservation oriented-control between major role-players who have different responsibilities and interests.

“The tension between public and private interest is, by itself, sufficient cause for considerable conflict, but differences in opinion regarding the identification of significance, differences in opinion regarding the impact of the (development) proposal on either the significance of the building or the site or on the character of the environs, differences in opinion regarding the appropriateness or otherwise of the demands of the authorities or of specialist interest groups can each lead to considerable conflict” (Townsend, 2003: 8).

It is critical to understand the sets of values that inform decisions made with regards to cultural heritage. Randall Mason seeks to understand how diverse ranges of heritage values can be identified and characterised in a manner that “(1) informs policies and planning decisions, and (2) is relevant to all the disciplines and stakeholders involved” (Mason, 2002: 8). Mason suggests the compilation of value typologies - sets of values grouped together with the aim of facilitating the articulation of heritage value characteristics as viewed by the range of stakeholders through the breaking down of significance into constituent types of heritage value, thus creating a common language through which the views of residents/citizens, communities, experts, authorities and other stakeholders can

be discussed. Due to the subjectivity of heritage values, it is important to stress the difficult nature of breaking these values down into groups. The social nature of heritage also means that values are susceptible to change. A values-based approach to conservation thus requires the critical assessment and clear articulation of each case in its own right.

Those concerned with how development occurring within Vredehoek is changing the character of the area and threatening heritage resources will be referred to as heritage-claimants within this study. The heritage-claimants that have been engaged with in this study are those who value the environment, buildings and townscape of Vredehoek including residents, certain representatives from the City Bowl Ratepayers and Residents Association (CIBRA), and Art Deco experts/enthusiasts; those who are involved in managing environments of heritage significance and providing expert heritage advice such as the local heritage authority and heritage practitioners; and other stakeholders such as the developers and architects seeking development opportunity and exploiting property development rights within Vredehoek. Within these groups mentioned above, views about the cultural significance and quality of Vredehoek's townscape are not unanimous, with many disagreeing on the fundamental quality of the fabric being claimed as conservation-worthy. These arguments will be discussed further in Chapter 4.

Based on interaction with heritage-claimants and stakeholders, elements that are special within the urban environment of Vredehoek have been identified, as well as the qualities and characteristics that make these elements special or significant. These significant qualities and characteristics are determined by cultural values held by society, these values have also been identified. The articulation of what cultural values exist within Vredehoek, as well as the opposing arguments about the conservation-worthiness of these elements, have been evaluated in Chapter 4 and an assessment about the cultural significance of the place has been defined.

Kalman states that "the heritage significance of a historic place is determined by synthesising the many values that are attached to it" (Kalman, 2012: 211). He refers to English Heritage's Conservation Principles, eight steps with which to assess heritage significance. These eight steps, listed below, will be used within this assessment of Vredehoek's environment and assist in evaluating and determining its significance. The steps are:

- 1: Understand the fabric and evolution of the place
- 2: Identify who values the place, and why they do so
- 3: Relate identified heritage values to the fabric of the place
- 4: Consider the relative importance of those identified values
- 5: Consider the contribution of associated objects and collections

- 6: Consider the contribution made by setting and context
- 7: Compare the place with other places sharing similar features
- 8: Articulate the significance of place

(English Heritage, 2008: 35-40)

## **URBAN CONSERVATION, CONSERVATION AREAS AND TOWNSCAPES OF CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE**

In order to locate this study and its arguments it is necessary to briefly summarise the development of various concepts and theories regarding architectural and urban conservation since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as the evolution of these concepts and theories have informed current approaches and practice in the management of architectural and urban conservation.

Attitudes towards conservation have changed through the centuries from conservation as the concern for functional utility, to conservation as the concern for the art object or monument, then to conservation as the concern for the artefact, context and fabric as evidence (Baumann, 1997), then to conservation as a self-consciously political and social act, and most recently to conservation of cultural significance (Townsend, 2003). The history of architectural conservation can be understood in four phases. Humans have, since the beginning of their existence, performed functional restoration upon objects of daily life. Everyday objects such as tools, habitable structures and other utility items were repaired or added to for as long as they had use value (Townsend, 2003: 22). Significant buildings embodying memorial/symbolic value as well as use value were treated in the same manner. This earliest approach to conservation is widely considered as the traditional approach – the straightforward, unselfconscious repair and return to functionality with a lack of concern for history or aesthetics. Where buildings were added to over time, continuity of style was of little importance.

During the Renaissance, relics embodying past greatness of the church and empire were being maltreated and plundered creating a concern for their conservation, likewise the iconoclasm which occurred post French Revolution resulted in similar concerns. As a result, the second and third phases or approaches to conservation arose out of aspirations to protect and restore national monuments as concrete evidence of a nation's history. The second was the stylistic/historical approach to restoration focused on form and appearance. Stylistic interventions were concerned with making the building complete again in a stylistically correct manner, conserving the existing ancient fabric as much as possible. Important missing parts of the building were reconstructed by copying elements directly from buildings of the same style through substantial research into buildings of the same style, from the same area, using the same materials and building techniques, no innovation was acceptable. Where layers of different styles existed in one building, it was

acceptable to remove those building elements not in keeping with the style being restored. It was also deemed appropriate to add architectural elements that the restorer/architect deemed essential for the stylistic completeness of the project, as long as these additions were consistent with the style.

Historical restorations focused on the primary notion that a building or monument will be best understood and appreciated once it has been returned to its “original” or “best” previous form. This “original” or “best” form was usually chosen by the restorers after very thorough research into the building itself. Thorough documentary research ascertains crucial formal and stylistic elements which encapsulate this chosen time. Using this approach, all subsequent additions are removed, missing parts are reconstructed and the building is redecorated back to its ‘former glory’.

Stylistic and historic restorations were abandoned when conservation of the ancient, authentic material of a building’s fabric itself became important as it contained evidence. This is the stance of the ‘building as a document’ approach to conservation, an approach that is based on the archaeological principle of interpreting the physical remains of history. Where objects and buildings were restored, additions were purposefully distinguishable to ensure authenticity of the original fabric. The fundamental conservation principle of authenticity arose out of reactions to stylistic and historical restorations. Authenticity in its purest form, however, can be understood by John Ruskin’s belief, that any and all restoration was unacceptable, that buildings from the past which have had a good life should be left to fall apart in peace and that any restoration was artificial and deceitful. To Ruskin, the genuine signs of a building aging was authentic beauty. Two important charters guiding the practice of modern building conservation which focused on the ‘building as a document’ are the Athens Charter of 1932 and the Venice Charter of 1964.

The ‘building as a document’ approach to restoration was criticised for focusing too much on the historic and age value of ancient material. No means were considered for critically assessing the relative importance of historical facts and evidence, and the artistic or aesthetic value – thus limiting the accessibility of cultural significance. Art historian Alois Riegl emphasised that authentic ancient remains create an atmosphere that is unique and impossible to recreate. Where re-use and restoration is required, these ancient remains “are amenable to compromise, negotiable on a case-by-case basis, depending upon the condition of a given monument and the social and cultural context in which it is placed” (Choay; citing Riegl, 2001: 113-114). Riegl’s stance reflects tones of critical or values-based conservation, the approach common place today. Choay states that Riegl’s study of values and value judgements “lays the foundation of a non-dogmatic and relativist conception of the historic monument...” (Choay; citing Riegl, 2001: 113-114). The importance of lesser buildings and vernacular buildings became recognised. Architectural conservation became

concerned with the cultural values that buildings and sites could contain such as historical, artistic, age, commemorative, use and newness values.

Although the theory of conservation of material culture had advanced by the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Scaltas pertinently argues that “there is no sharply, sufficiently or adequately defined *hierarchy* of criteria for decision-making” (Townsend paraphrasing Scaltas, 2003: 31). The work of Italian architects and art historians such as Boito, Argan, Brandi, Giovannoni and Riegl who recognised this problem contributed towards the creation of the critical approach to conservation/restoration, an approach “which allows the primary criteria of both *historicist restoration* and of the *conservation as a document* approaches and suggests a methodology for the weighing of the relative importance of the criteria *in each case*” (Townsend paraphrasing Scaltas, 2003: 31 - emphasis in original).

It is worth looking at the development of key concepts of critical conservation as this is the conservation approach best suited to urban conservation. It was emphasised that the focus of conservation of material culture needed to shift from the art-historical to the critical sphere, Brandi and Argan investigated the philosophical, artistic and practical elements of conservation endeavours. In addition, the process of artistic creation and the differentiation between works of art and common products were integrated into conservation practice (Townsend, 2003: 32). Significant contributions towards critical conservation from Roberto Pane and Renato Bonelli included the concept of the ‘critical act’ necessary when finding a solution to each conservation effort. “Critical conservation/restoration is defined as a “critical process and then creative act, the one as an intrinsic premise of the other” by Bonelli, where each historical object is unique and where each conservation action is based on its own critical assessment which leads to its own unique creative solution.” “The critical approach, beginning with a critical analysis of the building’s and site’s significance and of the context, then creatively integrates old and new” (Townsend, including citation by Bonelli, 2003: 32).

The principles of critical conservation are in harmony with the outcomes of the 1994 international conference on authenticity that took place in Nara, Japan. It was concluded, amongst other things, that “all judgements about values attributed to cultural properties as well as the credibility of related information sources may differ from culture to culture.... It is thus not possible to base judgements of values and authenticity on fixed criteria...(and) requires that heritage properties must be considered and judged within the cultural contexts to which they belong” (Nara Document on Authenticity, 1994: 94).

This critical approach to conservation, more recently described as values-based heritage management, is particularly relevant to the study at hand, where the identification and evaluation of

value typologies of the buildings and context and the relationship between building and context is required in order to articulate the significance of the place where conservation action and controls are being proposed. This place, Vredehoek, needs to be understood in its own right by understanding the aesthetic, artistic, historical, townscape, contextual and social values that potentially exist within the fabric of the suburb.

Running parallel to the evolution of architectural conservation concepts were those of urban conservation. Particularly in Europe the industrial revolution of the 19<sup>th</sup> century ignited rapid change throughout the urban landscape. These dramatic and swift changes started impacting on the qualities of visual completeness and picturesque individuality of towns, an urgent need arose to negotiate the conflict between preservation and change to ensure the conservation of architectural heritage and town character. Continued recognition of the historical significance of lesser or vernacular buildings contributed to concerns for urban conservation. The complete destruction caused to many towns and cities during World War II saw urban and architectural conservation concepts put into practice. Historical and stylistic restorations took place in many instances due to the sensitivity towards the symbolic significance of many towns, however conflicts arose with this manner of restorations seen as unauthentic forgeries. In other scenarios, towns were reconstructed using architectural and urban design techniques of the time which embodied the modernist approach devoid of any historical and cultural associations alienating society. The resultant unsatisfactory restorations of post-war cities added further scope to conversations on appropriate urban conservation approaches. It is pertinent to note that in Italy due to the amount of damage incurred during the war and the rate of urbanisation after the war, architectural and urban conservation integrated with town planning to address the urban issues.

Conservation of the urban environment is a reaction to forces of change within this environment. The dynamics of change are complex. Change is necessary for progress, and to accommodate and facilitate the needs of a growing population. However, environments are inhabited by people, and people have the capacity to become anxious by changes to familiar places. Larkham states:

“There is a widespread agreement that urban areas must change, or they will stagnate. Yet, at the same time, there are growing pressures for preservation from both the general public – or, at least, an educated and vociferous minority – and from increasing elements of the design and planning professions. For the most part, Western cities are the creations of the capitalist order, where investment fuels an economy and becomes part of the cycle of wealth creation. This capitalist imperative runs counter to the set of values based on aesthetic; environmental and non-quantitative criteria. So there is a clash of values: land and property exploitation for capital gain versus consideration of art; aesthetic and historical

appreciation. There is also, in aesthetic terms, an essential tension between the old and the new, the familiar and the unfamiliar” (Larkham, 1996: 1).

In addition to concerns for environments and fabric of aesthetic and historical value is the value of, or concern for continuity of place, the fear of losing one’s roots. This concern is linked to emotional or symbolic values – values relating to familiarity, affirmation and identity, as discussed above.

“People respond intuitively as well as rationally to their surroundings and it is frequently this intuitive reaction which is responsible for the extent of public support for conservation.

People become highly upset at the destruction of places they know, whether or not they have any particular historical or aesthetic values” (Baumann, 1997: 18).

This clash of values within the area of study between private property developers who value Vredehoek for its financial possibilities, supported by the City of Cape Town political establishment who value the low density residential nature of the environment due to the role that it can play in satisfying densification requirements, and residents who cherish their familiar townscape as well as groups including the City of Cape Town’s heritage-management officials who appreciate the non-quantitative architectural, aesthetic and townscape values within Vredehoek has been articulated within this study.

Baumann raises the question of the extent to which a place can change and absorb development before the character of an area is lost irreparably. Here the nature, degree and rate of change needs to be investigated, as well as means of assessing the capacity for change and integrating this into the development control process (Baumann, 1997: 19).

Due to the diverse nature of towns and cities, conservation of these urban environments means that one is dealing with the multiplicity and complexity of many value typologies. Pertinent to the study at hand and the concept of change and continuity is Jokilehto and Zancheti’s argument that a major characteristic of a city is its inherent diversity, a place which has the potential for continuous innovation between the creation and integration of the new into the existing fabric of the ‘old new things’ (Jokilehto & Zancheti, 1997: 42).

It is worth citing David Lowenthal generously below. Lowenthal’s stance on the preservation of fabric from the past aptly articulates the essential concepts of critical conservation – an approach suited to conservation of the built environment today which has been described above.

As Lowenthal puts it:

“The past is essential – and inescapable. Without it we would lack any identity, nothing would be familiar, and the present would make no sense. Yet the past is also a weighty burden that cripples innovation and forecloses the future” (Lowenthal, 1985: prologue).

“We should not deceive ourselves that we can keep the past stable and segregated. Ruskin and Morris condemned restoration as a fraudulent modern contrivance, but modern contrivance is inescapable. Whether we restore or refrain from restoring we cannot avoid reshaping the past; no recognised vestige is devoid of present intentions. When we realise that past and present are not exclusive but inseparable realms, we cast off preservation’s self-defeating insistence on a fixed and stable past. Only by altering and adding to what we save does our heritage remain real, alive and comprehensible.

Preservation narrowly construed cannot improvise or adapt to the implacable pressures of change. Seen as part of the process of change, however, preservation takes its place among other fruitful ways of treasuring a heritage. Without a past that is malleable as well as generously preserved, the present will lack models to inspire it and the future be deprived of a lifeline to its past” (Lowenthal, 1985: 411).

Heritage-claimants within Vredehoek who value the homogenous scale and period-character of the urban environment would very much like to see it remain in its current state without substantial additions to its built fabric. However, freezing a town in one state to preserve its heritage significance is only appropriate in environments where the heritage resources in question are so rare, so intact and so culturally significant for historical, archaeological, educational and symbolic reasons. On the other hand, urban environments like Vredehoek need to remain more flexible, more open to negotiation between conservation and progress to accommodate the diverse and fast moving nature of contemporary life and present day values.

The consequences of a non-critical attitude to the past include, amongst other things, the decreasing capacity for creative change and the stifling of the culture of the present (Baumann, 1997: 4). In addition, fear of change and the designation of ‘hands-off’ environments such as heritage protection overlay zones without critical evaluation and clear articulation of heritage values found within a place can lead to economic stagnation of such a place. Over time, without economic injections, a place such as Vredehoek could become a run-down neighbourhood.

Jokilehto and Zancheti define urban conservation as:

“a process that seeks to co-ordinate and regulate the process of continuity and change of an urban structure and its values. From this definition it follows that work on the present condition of urban elements (their existing state) must be parallel – and co-ordinated – with action aimed at the control of changes (processes)” (Jokilehto & Zancheti, 1997: 45).

They clarify that conservation of urban structures is a complex subject, consisting of built artefacts such as structures of an architectural and urban nature; the townscape; the landscape and/or the urban environment, but that the “concept can also be expanded to include the urban culture and lifestyles of the people; the uses of spaces; the technical procedures and the building construction techniques...” (Jokilehto & Zancheti, 1997: 39).

From an urban morphological perspective, change in an urban environment reflects the changing needs of society through the development of its built form,

“...a town, like any other object of geographical investigation, is subject to change. Towns have a life history. Their development, together with the cultural history of the region in which they lie, is written deeply into the outline and fabric of their built-up areas. When one period has achieved the manifestation of its own requirements in the urban pattern of land-use; streets; plots and buildings, another supersedes it in turn, and the built-up area, in its functional organisation as well as in its townscape, becomes the accumulated record of the town’s development” (Conzen, 1960: 6).

The study of townscapes through an urban morphological lens assists in the understanding of how and why urban landscapes change. In terms of urban conservation, this understanding assists in the assessment of significance when determining what fabric of the urban landscape needs to be preserved.

Bandarin and Van Oers define urban conservation as a policy and planning practice, while at the same time calling it a utopia

“steeped in legend, rooted in the public’s fascination for past built environments: the representation of history; personal and collective memory values; and spirit of place. These legends reflect the values of the historic city, and are at the same time at the centre of the concerns of urban conservators, confronted by the gradual erosion of the physical and social structures that support these values” (Bandarin, Van Oers, 2012: vii).

“The urban landscape is a defining feature of every city, a value to be understood, preserved and enhanced through attentive policies and public participation. Historic fabric and new development can interact and mutually reinforce their role and meaning” (Bandarin, Van Oers, 2012: xi).

These words refer to conservation of historic urban environments but are appropriate to this discussion about modern urban landscapes which contain built fabric of the 20<sup>th</sup> century embodying architectural styles and morphological manifestations with which people identify values.

Lira, Piccolo and Zancheti (2009) argue that effective protection of the city is primarily dependant on the authenticity of the city. Within the context of urban conservation, they consider authenticity as defined by the Nara Document on Authenticity of 1994 in relation to the World Heritage Convention of 2005 where

“authenticity is the measure of the degree with which the attributes of cultural heritage, form and design, materials and substance, use and function, traditions and techniques, location and setting, spirit and feeling, and other factors, credibly bear witness to its significance” (Lira, Piccolo & Zancheti, 2009: 163 citing guidelines within UNESCO 2005).

The ideas central to the Nara Document include the notion “that authenticity is the essential factor for attributing value and that it arises from cultural diversity, with due judgement being made, taking into consideration the cultural context of each asset” (Lira, Piccolo & Zancheti, 2009: 165 citing guidelines within UNESCO 2005).

Lira, Piccolo and Zancheti argue that the city is made up of characteristics that may or may not be recognised as true and therefore when considering the city in its authentic state one must admit “that it is an artefact: i) of human genius; ii) singular, specific and non-ordinary; and iii) of local and potentially universal representativeness” (Lira, Piccolo & Zancheti, 2009: 165). They stress that, because the built environment of most cities has developed over long periods of time through successive interventions, “most cities consist of a store of artifacts of the built material or of vestiges of it accumulated in history” (Lira, Piccolo & Zancheti, 2009: 166). They argue that “the city, or parts of it, should reveal a singularity and specificity which makes it differ from countless other examples”, and that it should be recognised as an essential reference point for the discernment of “local particularities and its potential universality” (Lira, Piccolo & Zancheti, 2009: 166).

Lira, Piccolo and Zancheti explore the dimensions within which the authenticity of a city, either in its physical totality or certain pockets, manifests: the material dimension of authenticity “refers to its creation as material recognised as a document, in which its state of existence is recorded” expressing “the truth of the city as living memory” (Lira, Piccolo & Zancheti, 2009: 166); the constructive dimension of authenticity refers to the process of how the city “realises itself, relates to

others and is reproduced”, the “know-how to build” (Lira, Piccolo & Zancheti, 2009: 166); and thirdly, the expressive dimension of authenticity – how to recognise the former two dimensions, their “physical attributes and/ or the processes of creation and re-creation of the urban space over time” (Lira, Piccolo & Zancheti, 2009: 166). This expressive dimension of a city’s authenticity needs to be viewed through a lens of awareness – an awareness that an understanding of a city’s authenticity is required, knowledge of material characteristics and constructive composition and the deliberation of context and historical process, space and time (Lira, Piccolo & Zancheti, 2009: 167).

Central to the argument made by Lira, Piccolo and Zancheti is that the cultural significance of urban townscapes or parts of urban townscapes is determined by the authentic manifestations of its “physical structures, natural and built, and human relations” (Lira, Piccolo & Zancheti, 2009: 165) through continued use over time.

Urban conservation concerns itself with the integration of knowledge from different disciplines and culture areas in informing management of the built environment (Larkham & Whitehand, 1992: 1). In order to conserve the urban landscape, one needs to understand what informs the development of such an environment. The study of the urban landscape requires an understanding of urban morphology. Urban morphologists examine the individuals, organisations and processes that are informing and shaping urban form (Larkham & Whitehand, 1992: 2). The discipline

“analyses the growth and changes in the form of towns and involves the joint interests of the disciplines of history and geography... It concerns itself with explaining the processes which have shaped urban settlement over time in an attempt to arrive at an understanding of the built form as it exists today” (Baumann, 1997: 227).

This investigation into the urban morphology of Vredehoek will be discussed in Chapter 4.

Throughout Europe, as well as the United States, in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century concern for urban areas of special character grew, legislation enabling the protection of areas was passed and conservation authorities identified and designated significant environments. Architectural and urban conservation became integrated into town planning. In the United Kingdom legislation concerned with the preservation of buildings and groups of buildings had been included in Acts from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, towards 1960 the effect of a dramatic rise in the development of property combined with the widespread introduction of new road networks threatened the historical character of towns. By 1964 the Council for British Archaeology listed over 300 significant town centres worthy of conservation recommending areas of special control, and in 1967 the promulgation of the Civic Amenities Act made specific provision for areas of special architectural or historical interest, the character or appearance of which was worthy of preservation or

enhancement, to be designated by the local authorities. Provision was also made for public participation through residential or amenity groups in the development of control processes (Townsend 2003: 45).

Subsequent to the passing of the Civic Amenities Act, more attention was given to the conservation of the character and identity of towns, “giving wider scope for the protection of the settings of groups of buildings or even individual buildings” (Larkham, 1996: 88); (Baumann, 1997: 87). Studies of major historical towns - York, Chester, Bath and Chichester were conducted with the aim of defining solutions for problems affecting towns of this nature. These studies were successful in providing solutions for historic towns of the finest quality, however, for lesser towns, guidance was imprecise in terms of integration of new development, scale, form and architectural character. The resultant effect on the approach to conservation in Britain was the adoption of restrictive and conservative controls as informed by those set for high quality towns (Larkham, 1996: 88).

Emphasis on area conservation continued in Europe into the later 20<sup>th</sup> century. 1975 was declared as European Architectural Heritage Year with much focus given to conservation and management of the urban environment. The designation of conservation areas was emphasised, as well as the integration of conservation and town planning. The Amsterdam Charter of 1975 reflected this focus emphasising that:

- Architectural heritage includes not only individual buildings of exceptional quality and their surroundings, but also all areas of towns or villages of historic or cultural interest.
- Since these treasures are the joint possession of all the peoples of Europe, they have a joint responsibility to protect them against the growing dangers with which they are threatened - neglect and decay; deliberate demolition; incongruous new construction and excessive traffic.
- Architectural conservation must be considered, not as a marginal issue, but as a major objective of town and country planning.
- Since the new buildings of today will be the heritage of tomorrow, every effort must be made to ensure that contemporary architecture is of a high quality (The Amsterdam Charter: 1975).

The Charter also emphasised that “historical continuity must be preserved in the environment if we are to maintain or create surroundings which enable individuals to find their identity and feel secure despite abrupt social changes” (Baumann, 1997: 101).

In a South African context, Townsend discusses managing urban conservation areas in Cape Town:

“In 1979 and 1980 the Cape Town City Council had agreed to change the town planning regulations to include a new regulation enabling the designation of conservation areas and special control of development within these areas. The Municipality would be able to

prevent demolitions of significant buildings and it would be able to prevent the erection of new buildings which could have a detrimental visual impact on the environs....The second phase of identifying and delimiting conservation areas between 1986 and 1994 differed from the first phase in that the studies conducted to identify conservation worthy buildings; sites and areas were specifically designed to give emphasis to urban history and character rather than the worth of individual buildings" (Townsend, 1998).

Chapter 3 will describe the development of area conservation within South Africa during this time further and how it was primarily informed by English practice.

Within the context of conservation-oriented controls, and whether these controls in fact protect culturally significant elements in the environment and the conservation-worthy urban environment, Townsend argues that the everyday application of conservation requires an explicit framework of evaluative criteria for the assessment of conservation issues. Summarising Cesare Brandi's definition of conservation as:

"the entire complex of the intellectual and other activities involved in the process of the recognition or identification and evaluation of culturally significant buildings; places and environments, and all of the activities aimed at the transmission of such identified buildings; places and environments into the future in the interest of all of humankind" (Townsend, 2003: 16; summarising Cesare Brandi's definition in Chapter 1 of his 1963 *Teoria del Restauro*; in Stanley Price et al, 1996: 230-231).

Townsend suggests that in order for these necessary evaluative criteria to be developed or articulated there are three fundamental questions, or complexes of questions, that need to be answered:

"what are the qualities of the objects of our attention? The qualities or characteristics that make a building or environment significant are determined by the societal or cultural values of the society in question. Which are the objects? And how are they to be transmitted into the future?" (Townsend, 2003: 16).

Larkham points out that there is much attention and focus on the retention of townscape character but queries what criteria this character is based on (Larkham, 1996: 91). He continues that there is also a lack of criteria laid down for conservation area designation, that comprehensive character appraisal must be a prerequisite of area designation and that these criteria should pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the area's character or appearance (Jones & Larkham, 1993, cited from Larkham, 1996: page 95).

Larkham talks about the designation of residential areas as conservation areas in the United Kingdom and how the types of residential areas differ substantially, shifting from the typical well-established pre-Victorian residential areas to modern areas including Victorian bye-law terraced housing; 1930s speculative suburbia and post-war cases (Larkham, 1996: 123). He observes that local authority focus is expanding to include designations of modern areas embodying high townscape quality – most likely, he thinks, in order to prevent architectural and aesthetic deterioration over time, where previously guidance for conservation area and listed building designation has typically emphasised ‘historic’ townscapes (Larkham, 1996: 126-127).

This shift in attitude towards the heritage significance of speculative suburbia is central to the issues and arguments made within this study. Vredehoek is a suburb that developed between the 1920s and 1950s and is illustrative of the shift in architectural and housing character within Cape Town. It is the only suburb within the Upper Table Valley that has not been designated as a conservation area unlike its neighbours whose urban environments of Victorian and Edwardian architectural character are protected. Vredehoek, a low-density suburb within this picturesque Table Valley setting looking down onto Table Bay is experiencing development pressure by those seeking to exploit opportunities for denser development, particularly in such an attractive setting. Due to no formal heritage area protection, the suburb is beginning to change – second generation infill development occurring within the framework of first generation development.

Running parallel to conservation area studies in the 1960s were studies looking at townscapes in relation to town character and urban design, as well as studies in urban morphology and how this discipline assisted in the understanding of urban environments. The theory and concepts of the townscape movement and urban morphology and how they assist in the understanding of the urban environment and thus urban conservation will be discussed below.

## **URBAN MORPHOLOGY**

The work, concepts and principles of urban morphologist M.R.G Conzen, a geographer and founder of the Anglo-German school of urban morphology, play an important role in contributing towards the understanding of the conservation worthiness of urban environments, assisting in the articulation of their significance and thus their conservation. His work also assists in understanding the concept and significance of townscape. Conzen was concerned with features in the urban landscape that have been created by previous generations. Academic research regarding urban form stemming from Conzen’s ideas, include the concern with the nature and amounts of urban-landscape change, the agents involved in the process of change, and the management of that

change. As well as “a concern for the conservation of period buildings and an interest in townscapes as composite historical artefacts” (Larkham, 1990: 352); (Larkham & Whitehand, 1992: 7).

According to Conzen, man has converted its material habitat into a ‘cultural landscape’ in response to the challenges of nature; human requirements and historical situations of different regions in different periods. Within the human or social environment the cultural landscape is created through the objectivation of the social mind – the conversion of a concept into an object, or mind into matter. As Conzen puts it, humans have converted mind into matter

“in the form of a great, composite artefact on the earth’s surface, wrought with the materials of nature. (Along with) spiritual possessions of society, the cultural landscape forms a distinctive heritage of material possession, handed down as a traditional asset to successive generations” (Conzen, 2004: 40).

Historically, towns with non-agrarian centres grew out of the preceding rural/agrarian landscapes. These centres over time became dense urban landscapes, defined by Conzen as townscapes, with close-grained, compact town plans - in morphological terms the most intensive type of cultural landscape (Conzen, 2004: 41).

Conzen’s work is firmly anchored in geography – understanding urban form in relation to the physical properties of the Earth’s surface, human societies that inhabit this surface and the relationships between people and their environments. His work focuses on spatial dynamics and relationships. According to Conzen, urban history is a phenomenon that takes place in a geographical space and historical time forming an integral part of a larger system of interacting forces. It is therefore pertinent to consider first the nature of the environment in relation to human society in general (Conzen, 2004: 34).

Conzen proposed that the character of a town finds its morphological expression in its physiognomy - the character of outer appearance - or townscape. He proposed that this townscape is made up of three systematic categories: town plan, building fabric or pattern of building forms, and pattern of urban land use. The town plan takes priority within this synergy as it

“forms the inescapable framework for the other man-made features and provides the physical link between these on the one hand and the physical site as well as the town’s past existence on the other..... A *town plan* can be defined as the topographical arrangement of an urban built-up area in all its man-made features. It contains three distinct complexes of *plan elements*: (i) streets and their arrangement in a *street-system*; (ii) plots and their aggregation in the *street-blocks*; and (iii) buildings or, more precisely, their *block-plans*” (Conzen, 1960: 4-5 – emphasis in original).

Further defined, streets refer to open space utilised by surface traffic bordered by street-lines, these elements within urban areas are arranged in a contiguous, symbiotic manner to make up a street-system. Street-blocks are those spaces within the town plan not taken up by streets that are encapsulated wholly or in part by street-lines. These blocks denote a single land parcel or groups of contiguous land parcels and “each parcel is essentially a unit of land use”. These land use units, or plots, are physically defined by boundaries, these demarcated plots arranged contiguously make up plot patterns. The plot patterns of street-blocks can differ substantially informed by geographical features. Plots, each with their own frontage, placed contiguously in rows along a street-line structures a plot-series. A pivotal element of the town plan is the block-plan, the area of the plot that is physically covered by a building, the outline of which is defined by where the external walls hit the ground.

“Examination of the town plan shows that the three element complexes of streets; plots and buildings enter into individualised combinations in different areas of the town. Each combination derives uniqueness from its site circumstances and establishes a measure of morphological homogeneity or unity in some or all respects over its area. It represents a plan-unit, distinct from its neighbours” (Conzen, 1960: 4-5).

Conzen sees the townscape as a mirror of urban society’s functioning life,

“it provides the physical equipment within urban space to answer the varied needs of that society and its individuals: dwelling...transport...other social and cultural services, and recreation. As these needs change in time, so does the townscape, that is, the townscape is subject to historical development” (Conzen, 2004: 49).

The material manifestation of historic development in a current townscape is referred to by Conzen as the townscape’s historicity, and is a fundamental characteristic of this townscape. The accumulation of form-producing periods, each with their own form style, becomes a distinctive and recognisable morphological period on the urban landscape. The building fabric and town plan of these form-producing periods can be made up by architectural building styles, building coverage, plot patterns and street systems with distinct characteristics (Conzen, 2004: 51).

The morphological patterns of ancient towns tend to embody a richer layering of history which can enhance the quality and character of an area, in the case of a young urban environment such as Vredehoek which still embodies the relatively intact pattern of its first generation development, morphological studies will nonetheless identify street, plot and building patterns, some of which may contribute positively to the suburb’s streetscape and townscape character.

The work of Conzen and urban morphological concepts, along with historical research into the suburb's origin, will assist in understanding the townscape of Vredehoek as it exists today and how, and why, it has developed in such a manner since its birth in the early twentieth century. The identification and articulation of Vredehoek's urban morphology will assist in assessing its townscape character and whether these character elements are significant enough to contribute towards the conservation-worthiness of the suburb.

Areas of special interest are made up of a combination of elements that contribute towards its character. Conservation areas can be vastly different from each other, but certain aspects will typically form the basis for a coherent assessment, the topography, urban morphology such as the street systems, street blocks and building patterns of the town plan, historical development, the archaeological significance and potential, the dominant building materials, the character and hierarchy of space, the quality and relationship of the buildings in the areas and also of the contribution of natural elements such as trees and planting (Baumann, 1997: 122).

Elements of character that should be analysed when assessing an environment "include the setting, important views and vistas, topography, landscape features including open spaces and vegetation, historical evolution and urban morphology, physical building patterns, densities, building typologies and styles, building materials and techniques, patterns of movement and disfiguring features" (Baumann, 1997: 141). Baumann's study *Townscape in Urban Conservation* examines the degree to which urban conservation can make use of the tools of townscape to accessibly communicate the language and qualities of place.

The origins of the twentieth century townscape movement or discipline as it became known are firmly based in empiricism – the theory that all knowledge is based on the experience derived from the senses, verifiable by observation or experience rather than theory or pure logic. Camillo Sitte's *City Planning According to Artistic Principles* (1889) influenced the emerging profession of town planning, as well as the townscape movement. A believer in the picturesque - where character is derived from the irregular, and concerned with the sterile effects of planning based predominantly on engineering principles, Sitte explored town planning proposals that focused on achieving visual harmony through the composition and organisation of urban elements. Sitte was also concerned with how the resident in an urban setting was experiencing his immediate surroundings. He was "concerned with designing buildings and spaces to fit in with their immediate contexts, with the appearance of the built environment and with the need for it to accommodate the requirements of its users" (Baumann, 1997: 161).

In 1944, the townscape movement originated with an article in the *Architectural Review*, *Exterior furnishing or Sharawaggi: the art of making urban landscape* by De Cronin Hastings writing under the pseudonym Ivor Wolfe. Echoing picturesque theory, Wolfe used the Chinese term *Sharawaggi*, meaning irregular gardening, to define a new approach to the art of making urban landscape, one emphasising context and individual character. De Cronin Hastings “developed the notion of the radical aesthetic...an impulse to be more unique, an individualising differentiating impulse...” He questioned whether this notion could be “turned into a working principle for the practising planner,... a decision regarding whether the various juxtapositions of elements make up a pleasant visual scene” (Baumann, 1997: 171).

Baumann cites Ward who defined the term townscape “...as the total landscape of the town. As a ‘science’, townscape thus consists of the studying and recording of all the elements (from buildings; groups; spaces and variations in level...) which give a town its individual character” (Ward, 1958: 169 - contents in brackets supplied).

“In terms of practical application, townscape provides a specific means by which this character can be safeguarded and enhanced. The standards of townscape are further specified as being first the *sense of place* (“I know where I am”) and second the *sense of unity*, the town experienced not as a lot of disconnected pieces but as a whole, with one recognisable area leading into another” (Baumann, 1997: 253 – emphasis in original).

The townscape movement developed as an approach towards understanding the character of place, initially focused on purely visual qualities. The movement was made up of several core values and principles which focused on the character of towns, methods were derived to identify and analyse the elements that contribute towards the physical character of places. These values, principles and methods can be applied to urban conservation practice contributing towards the identification and articulation of qualities which assist in the definition of significance. These underpinning values and principles are, in the main, founded on the significance of sight and visual experience.

The townscape movement had an earlier phase and a later phase, the former focused on aesthetics of place, an esoteric approach which catered for those with a specialised interest and knowledge of visual elements, as defined by the works of Cullen and Sharp. The later phase, defined by works by Lynch and Worskett, focused on the interactive contributions by the everyday users of space towards the making of townscape. The environments studied in these cases were typically rich multi-functioning neighbourhoods being traversed by foot. The traditional visual approach expressed by Cullen emphasised the picturesque,

“this pictorial approach tended towards as esoteric and specialised view of environmental quality. The alternative approach based on user experience and involvement provides the opportunity for a richer, multi-dimensional and more relevant environment related to use and daily needs” (Baumann, 1997: 251).

Cullen defined townscape as “one building is architecture, two are townscape.”

“...bring buildings together and collectively they can give visual pleasure which none can give separately. One building standing alone in the countryside is experienced as a work of architecture, but bring half a dozen buildings together and an art other than architecture is made possible” (Cullen, 1961: 9).

Both phases are relevant in this study of Vredehoek. The values associated with Vredehoek vary between those people with a specialised knowledge about the architectural/ aesthetic significance of groups of buildings in the area and how they contribute towards the making of a special townscape, and those who find value in the area due to their experience of a sense of place created by how buildings relate to their context; and how this context possibly relates to the user’s lifestyle and behavioural patterns.

Kevin Lynch included the consideration of human behaviour into his research on urban design, adopting a social approach whereby inhabitants of cities were interviewed to understand how they perceived their city.

“The novelty of the approach was his consideration of the visual character of the American city through the study of the mental images of that city held in the minds of its citizens. Asserting that legibility was a crucially important characteristic of a city environment, enabling inhabitants to place themselves in the general structure and to establish a framework for individual action, he argues that such legibility depended on the ability of the environment to communicate a clear image of itself” (Baumann, 1997: 238).

Lynch sees the city as an image, a vast construction in space – comprised, not only of many parts of static architecture and built fabric, but also of moving elements including the city’s people and their activities.

Lynch explains how the city is not a fixed object, perceived and appreciated in a frozen moment, but a continuously modified creation. “While it may be stable in general outlines for some time, it is ever changing in detail. Only partial control can be exercised over its growth and form. There is no final result, only a continuous succession of phases” (Baumann, 1997: 238). Lynch saw giving visual form

to a city as a special kind of design problem, he aimed for his concepts and principles about the image of cities as experienced by the users of the city to inform city design.

Through the study of three American cities, Lynch could identify similar groups of elements in the mental images of most interviewees. These elements could then be categorised as belonging to one of five types of urban elements: landmarks, nodes, districts, edges and paths. This identification of key urban design categories as informed by the users of cities, as well as the concept of the city image and how this image was comprised, was a very useful contribution towards the urban design profession. Similarly, this language or vocabulary of urban components can assist in the identification and articulation of significant urban elements as identified by the everyday inhabitant, which in addition can assist in the articulation of values that people attach to these elements, thus being a valuable tool for urban conservation processes.

The contribution that Lynch made towards urban conservation was finding a method with which inhabitants of urban environments could articulate how they saw and engaged with elements of familiar townscapes, how these elements could be categorised into certain urban elements, and how these elements could project a strong or weak image in the minds of those experiencing them. The strength/weakness or memorable/non-memorable nature of the elements within the image could then be analysed in terms of value.

As identified by Baumann, the townscape discipline has the ability to describe locally perceived meaning and significance of places in culturally diverse contexts, and that the value of the townscape movement is in the identification of the tolerances within which new development can occur.

“Visual appreciation of townscape qualities, underpinned with a thorough understanding of the forces which led to its layering over time, has a major contribution to make to the understanding of the character of a place and consequent urban conservation policy”  
(Baumann, 1997: 19); (Baumann, 1997: 7 & 300).

This chapter has introduced the concept of heritage protection areas and why such areas have developed driven by societal values. These values have been introduced as well as what these values are associated with. Methods have been introduced with which the special qualities of such an area can be identified and articulated, as well as means with which to identify the cultural values that inform this recognition of special qualities and characteristics. It has been posed how the development history of a place and the tangible remains of this historic development can impart characteristics onto a townscape that gives it a unique disposition, one that society assigns values to and finds a sense of place within, whether these characteristics exist within Vredehoek will be

assessed within the following chapters. How factors of change within a familiar landscape can drive members of society towards seeking conservation for this environment has been introduced, as well as how this impulse to conserve needs to be properly articulated using some of the methods introduced above. Where conservation-worthiness is identified and articulated, how to assess this proposed conservation-worthiness within forces of change has been introduced.

The next chapter will study the development of conservation areas within Cape Town, as well as the statutory and legal framework within which conservation area designation and development control is sited.

## **CHAPTER 3 – URBAN CONSERVATION IN CAPE TOWN: STATUTORY AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK**

### **DEVELOPMENT OF CONSERVATION AREAS WITHIN CAPE TOWN**

The purpose of this study is to understand what makes an urban area significant enough to be designated a heritage conservation area. The case study, located in Cape Town, South Africa, aims to interrogate the research question through the assessment and evaluation of Vredehoek, an informally proposed heritage conservation area. The aim of designating conservation areas within environments where heritage resources have been identified is to control the redevelopment or alteration of individual buildings and to protect the character of the relevant area (Townsend, 1999: 3). To underpin arguments made within this study, a brief introduction to the statutory and legal framework within which urban conservation and development are sited will be undertaken. To locate the study and its arguments within the context of urban conservation in Cape Town, it is also necessary to briefly summarise the events leading up to the designation of heritage conservation areas in Cape Town.

From the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, significant growth in Cape Town's city centre and a number of important actions occurred which ultimately threatened the character of the historic city centre, including the reclamation of land from Table Bay and the Foreshore development plan including the introduction of new freeways. However the greatest factor to influence change within the city was the introduction of formal town planning. The provincial Townships Ordinance No. 33 of 1934 obliged local authorities to prepare town planning schemes and by 1941 a proposed town planning scheme draft was adopted by the City Council, formally promulgated much later in 1986 (Townsend, 2003: 121). The scheme afforded development rights including floor area ratios and site coverage, as well as the imposition of limitations to development including type of use, building line setbacks and maximum heights. In the city centre and periphery, land was zoned for General Business use and General Commercial use respectively, the zoning afforded generous development rights including 100% site coverage, high floor area ratios and a maximum height of 60m.

The generous development rights afforded by the Zoning Scheme resulted in the development of a number of tall and bulky buildings in the City Centre built between the late 1960s and 1980, most of which were completely insensitive to their surroundings, not compatible with the existing scale and character of Cape Town's historic city. The Disa Towers complex at the mountain edge of Vredehoek was built during this time in the 1960s.

Concern about the detrimental impact on the city by the insensitive new buildings, the effects of the land reclamation of Table Bay, the Foreshore development and the introduction of new freeways had been mounting, and as result, conservation oriented actions arose. Recognising public and

professional concern about the nature of change occurring within the city, the local authority published a report in 1975, *Cape Town: City for the People*, in which it acknowledged the need for urban preservation:

“The city is a living organism and the CBD, as the centre of business and professional activity, must develop as the population of the city grows. Consequently, the CBD must be allowed to expand and buildings to redevelop. Demolition of many old buildings is unavoidable, if the city is not to stagnate and decay; but reckless demolition can destroy the city’s character. A balance must be found, and towards this end it is suggested that only buildings which meet (certain) criteria should be considered for preservation” (CCC, 1975, 55 as cited in Townsend, 2003: 133).

The report articulated a conservation strategy influenced by English conservation practice, including the identification, listing and grading of conservation-worthy buildings and the introduction of legislation controlling demolition. As a result, the zoning scheme made provision for types of special areas to be afforded development controls, Cape Town created conservation areas as a category of special area (Townsend, 2003: 60-61). Any development proposal including demolition of an existing building and new building work within a declared conservation area required the approval of a formal planning application,

“and such approval shall be granted only if the demolition and/or design of the proposal is not detrimental to the protection and/or maintenance of the architectural, aesthetic and/or historical significance of the area” (Townsend, 2003: 61 citing Section 108 of the City of Cape Town Zoning Regulations).

The concept of preparing an inventory of conservation-worthy buildings and areas had already been recognised by the late 1950s by “architecturally-, historically- and environmentally-minded Capetonians” (Townsend, 2003: 133). By 1976 the City had approved and funded the development of an inventory, and a steering committee representing relevant conservation bodies of the time was established. In order to compile an inventory of conservation-worthy buildings and environments the process of identification and assessment needed to be informed by the establishment of criteria. “Classification is a means of isolating and identifying buildings of particular significance in architectural, historical or cultural terms or insofar as they contribute to townscape” (Cape Provincial Institute of Architects, 1978: 43).

The criteria that were established for the classification of conservation-worthy buildings in Cape Town for the 1978 Catalogue *The Buildings of Central Cape Town*, the first inventory of buildings of its kind in South Africa informed the designation of the conservation areas in Cape Town between

1990 and 1997, they are also the criteria that were used in the surveys of Vredehoek. These criteria were defined with the purpose of identifying individual significant buildings of architectural excellence and association with white colonial history (Townsend, 1999: 2):

- 1 Buildings or sites which are of national or local historic importance or association (including association with events or with persons), or buildings which play an important part in the life of the communities in which they are set.
- 2 Buildings which are rare or outstanding architectural examples of their period (including buildings which exemplify adaptations or innovations in materials or techniques).
- 3 Buildings which form a fine grouping of architectural merit.
- 4 Buildings which by their presence contribute to a fine urban setting or lend character to a locality.
- 5 Buildings which contribute to or enhance the quality of a square or other space of significance on which they abut.
- 6 Buildings which represent the work of a pioneer or recognised master.
- 7 All buildings over 100 years of age which are substantially unaltered.
- 8 All buildings or sites over 100 years of age which should form the subject of archaeological or architectural study (i.e. buildings which have been substantially altered but which may contain valuable articles or features) (Cape Provincial Institute of Architects, 1978: 43).

The process of designating conservation areas took two decades to formalise. The identification of conservation-worthy buildings and sites, and the definition of conservation area boundaries in Cape Town occurred in three phases between 1979 and 1997 (Townsend, 2003: 148-153). Enabled by the Catalogue of 1978's identification of individual buildings, between 1979 and 1988 the first phase of conservation area definition focused on protecting significant public places, and political and religious buildings.

The second phase of conservation area identification and delimitation occurred between 1986 and 1995 where "the entire historic city and its suburbs (that is, the urban core of the colonial settlement, the related villages or satellite cores and their suburbs established by 1920)" (Townsend, 2003: 149) were surveyed. This phase was significantly different from the first phase in that the emphasis on architectural and historical significance of individual buildings shifted to focus on the significance of whole urban environments. Methods to identify conservation-worthy buildings, sites and areas "were specifically designed to identify the *urban* character and understand the *development history* of the environs" (Townsend, 2003: 149 - emphasis in original) through

examination of the area's urban morphology and the spatial and architectural development history of the City (Townsend, 1999: 2).

Urban conservation in South Africa was attracting public and professional interest and support during this phase. During the 1980s and 90s many conferences and symposia were held throughout the country by relevant heritage, architectural and town planning bodies. A number of significant attitudes towards urban conservation were articulated during this phase: that "whole environments better reflect history" (Townsend, 2003: 150), and that wider public input and ownership was necessary in defining conservation values (Townsend, 2003: 150). The latter point reflected the growing emphasis within the global conservation discourse about understanding the values that residents and communities associate with environments, and as such, the Cape Town City Council urged communities to engage with them during the period when conservation area studies and surveys were taking place,

"One of the pillars of the municipality's conservation programme has been to encourage local residents' and ratepayers' associations to form conservation committees to give a neighbourhood input into these management processes" (Townsend, 1996: 145).

As a result, today there are many conservation bodies who have registered areas of heritage significance with Heritage Western Cape. The bodies are typically special interest groups such as DOCOMOMO, The International Committee for Documentation and Conservation of Buildings, Sites and Neighbourhoods of the Modern Movement, who seek to identify and protect buildings, objects and sites exceptionally representative of the Modern Movement legacy, as well as property ratepayers associations. These bodies must be consulted if a development or building activity covered by stipulations within the National Heritage Resources Act No. 25 of 1999 falls into the interest or delineated area of such a body. The Vredehoek community is represented by the City Bowl Ratepayers and Residents Association (CIBRA from here on). The problem with ratepayers associations is the potential for this platform to be exploited by property owners expressing 'nimby: not-in-my-backyard' reactions to development proposals. Conservation concerns are often masking self-centred or political issues such as fear of change rather than expressing genuine interest in conserving the character of environments or culturally significant fabric (Townsend, 1998: 8). As the case study will illustrate, within Vredehoek a large portion of residents are livid at development happening within the area and are concerned that their ratepayers association is not doing enough to curb development.

Other surveys of other parts of the city and surrounding suburbs performed between 1986 and 1995 included those by Fabio Todeschini, Vivienne and Derek Japha. These were the first to take into

account elements that contributed towards streetscapes, including significant trees, avenues of trees, historic garden walls and elements that contribute towards a special area/group. These surveys were carried out in areas likely to be under the greatest threat of development including Greenpoint and Seapoint (Graham Jacobs, interview, 2016).

By the end of this second phase, further conservation area designations included two areas in the Upper Table Valley, and three areas in the suburbs of Sea Point and Greenpoint (Townsend, 1996: 143). Significant to this study is the fact that the suburb of Vredehoek was surveyed twice during this phase by John Rennie and Pat Riley during their assessment of all the buildings within the Upper Table Valley between 1986 and 1987, and again by Graham Jacobs and Nicolette Duckham in 1990 for the next Catalogue of *The Buildings of Cape Town* focused on the Upper Table Valley. This next Catalogue, however, was never published (Jacobs, 2016, interview). Although Vredehoek is part of the Upper Table Valley, besides the Nazareth House complex and the small area surrounding Upper Mill Street, the greatest portion of Vredehoek was excluded from the two Upper Table Valley areas delimited as conservation-worthy during this phase. This is a revealing omission illustrating that a general lack of conservation-worthy buildings, urban character and historic development significance was identified within Vredehoek at the time. Whilst it has been recognised that “Art Deco buildings were largely ignored” (Townsend, 2003, 136) from the Catalogues of *The Buildings of Cape Town*, the Rennie and Riley survey conducted within Vredehoek did note the presence of Art Deco buildings and the Jacobs and Duckham survey identified several as meeting Criteria 4 of the Catalogue’s criteria: buildings which by their presence contribute to a fine urban setting or lend character to a locality, whilst none were identified as meeting Criteria 3: buildings which are rare or outstanding architectural examples of their period. Almost thirty years later it is apparent that the opinion about the conservation-worthiness of these Art Deco buildings within Vredehoek is still divided.

Those suburbs that were part of the Upper Table Valley demarcation included Tamboerskloof, Oranjezicht and Gardens, areas described as having:

“a rich mix of Georgian villas, Victorian and Edwardian villas and terraced row houses, some small apartment buildings and houses built in the twenties and thirties, and a well-treed urban landscape with fine parks, punctured by handsome schools and hotels” (Townsend, 1996: 144).

Significant to the 1986-1995 phase of identifying and delimiting urban conservation areas was the introduction of a consolidated grading system that would integrate the various surveys carried out.

The City Council's Urban Conservation Unit "developed a simple three-grade system of classification of conservation-worthiness:

- Grade 1: national or very considerable local architectural and/or historical significance; rare or outstanding;
- Grade 2: significant historical interest and or/ intrinsic architectural value; and
- Grade 3: contributes to architectural or historical character of an area; contextual rather than intrinsic value; and/ or minor intrinsic value" (Townsend, 2003: 151, citing CCC, 1994; and Townsend, 1996).

The third and final phase of conservation area identification and delimitation concluded in 1997 with the Provincial Government approval of twenty eight new conservation areas and the consolidation of the Central City conservation area (Townsend, 1998: 7). The designation of these conservation areas was included within Cape Town's Town Planning Regulations thus requiring any building applications proposing alterations, additions or demolitions to properties within these areas to be scrutinised and approved by the local heritage authority before building plan approval can be issued. The City of Cape Town Municipal Planning By-Law of 2015 is Cape Town's current town planning legislation. Areas previously protected as Conservation or Special Areas under the old Zoning Schemes are now protected as Heritage Protection Overlay Zones (HPOZ from here on) within the Planning By-Law of 2015.

#### **STATUTORY AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK:**

HPOZ legislation fits within a framework of laws and policies legislating and guiding the demolition and development of property with Cape Town. Law authorising building related works includes the National Building Regulations and Building Standards, Act No. 103 of 1977, specifically Section 4(1) which states that "No person shall without the prior approval in writing of the local authority in question, erect any building in respect of which plans and specifications are to be drawn and submitted.." (NBR and BS Act); Section 7 (1)(a) states that any such building work must "satisfy any other applicable law" (NBR and BS Act) and Part E1: "No owner of any site shall demolish or cause or permit to be demolished any building without the prior written permission of the local authority" (NBR and BS Act).

The City of Cape Town Development Management Scheme (DMS), as part of the City of Cape Town Municipal Planning By-Law 2015, stipulates the zoning uses, regulations and restrictions for land within the City of Cape Town. This is the base zoning of a property over and above which Heritage Protection Overlay Zoning sits when an area is designated.

The land within Vredehoek, the area of study, is zoned for residential use, Single Residential 1: Conventional Housing (SR1) and General Residential Housing 4 (GR4). “SR1 zoning provides for predominantly single-family dwelling houses in low- to medium-density residential neighbourhoods, whether these incorporate small or large erven.” “GR zonings promote higher-density residential development, including blocks of flats....GR3 and GR4 cater for flats of medium height and floor space...dominant use is intended to be residential..” (Municipal Planning By-Law, 2015: 102-111) A small number of erven on the Derry Street border of the area under study are zoned for Local Business 2.

“LB2 zoning provides for low-intensity commercial and mixed-use development which serves local needs for convenience goods and personal services. Limitations are placed on the scale of such development so that it is capable of integration into the adjacent residential neighbourhood without adversely affecting the amenity of the neighbourhood” (Municipal Planning By-Law, 2015: 117).

The erven within Vredehoek zoned SR1 are typically between 595 and 625 square metres in size, with a small number of larger erven on street corner sites, the largest sized 1155 square metres. Zoning regulations for erven of this size permit a floor factor of 1 in the smaller erven and maximum floor space (in relation to any building means the area of a floor which is covered by a slab, roof or projection) of 1500 square metres in the larger, 10 metres to top of roof height for the smaller erven and 11 metres for the larger, for the smaller erven no structure is permitted within 3,5 metres of the street boundary, structure is permitted onto the common boundary for the first 12 metres of the site measured perpendicular from the street boundary, 0 metres for 60% of the total remaining linear distance and 3 metres for the remainder. For the larger SR1 erven no structure may be built within 3,5 metres of the street boundary and 3 metres of the common boundary line. Outbuildings are permitted on the property boundary to a maximum height of 3,5 metres.

The properties zoned for GR4 use within Vredehoek are typically 595 square metres, zoning regulations permit a maximum floor space of 1,5 times the site area, maximum height of 24 metres, a maximum of 60% of site area may be covered by structure, no structure is permitted within 4,5 metres of the street boundary. Building onto the lateral or common boundary line is permitted for 18 metres running perpendicular to the street boundary to a maximum height of 15 metres. Further building work needs to be 4,5 metres or 0.6h from the common boundary. Outbuildings are permitted on the property boundary to a maximum height of 3,5 metres. Given the size of these properties, the floor factor of 892.5 square metres (595 x 1.5) runs out by the time five storeys has been reached. Thus, unless consolidations of properties are approved, most new structures within

Vredehoek will not exceed five storeys due to the majority of the sites being 595 square metres in size.

HPO zoning within Cape Town stipulates a number of general and specific provisions, the general provisions require that any proposed external alteration to a structure, addition of any new structure, partial demolition of a structure, alteration or removal of any historical landscape features or planting, and any proposed development within an HPOZ requires a planning application to be submitted to The City of Cape Town's Land Use Management department. General provisions regarding development include:

“Any development, including any physical intervention, excavation, or action other than those caused by natural forces, which may in any way result in a change to the appearance or physical nature of a heritage place, or influence its stability and future well-being, including –

- i. construction, alteration, demolition, removal or change of use of a heritage place or a structure at a heritage place;
- ii. carrying out any works on or over or under a heritage place;
- iii. subdivision or consolidation of land comprising a heritage place, including the structures or airspace of a heritage place;
- iv. any change to the natural or existing condition or topography of land; and
- v. any permanent removal or destruction of trees, or removal of vegetation or topsoil”

(Section 162, Municipal Planning By-Law: 2015).

Specific conditions can be imposed on individual HPOZ areas, although none have been formalised yet.

The intention of HPO zoning is not to prevent development but to provide development controls. Development proposals are evaluated using specific criteria which guide new interventions that are sensitive and respond to existing environments that have been identified as culturally significant.

“It must be emphasised that the prime intention (of conservation areas) is to enable development and change in the future while at the same time maintaining the character and historical value of the environs. It is not the intention to “freeze” the existing urban environment as it is” (Excerpt from the Upper Table Valley Proposed Urban Conservation Area leaflet prepared by the Town Planning Branch in 1989).

Whilst this intention to create a balance between development and conservation within conservation areas is the appropriate approach given the pressures on urban environments within Cape Town, many property developers are not willing to risk investing in property within HPOZ areas due to the inability to set up concrete viability proposals. Unknown restrictions on building form that might be enforced at some point within the planning application process could change predicted bulk calculations thus effectively compromising the amount of sellable square metres or units within a proposed development. Unknown time parameters within which planning and building plan approvals will be attained also compromise the viability of development proposals due to interest that could accrue on building loans before development product can be sold.

Although HPO zoning does not aim to impose on the development rights of property owners, the nature of the application process is often resented by owners wanting to embark on alterations and additions to their properties, and developers wanting to demolish existing buildings and propose new structures. This resentment and conflict often arises due to the fact that envisaged design proposals based on full exploitation of property rights needs to be negotiated and revised to attain approval. Whilst property rights can be negotiated, for example, less height in return for more bulk, certain parties are more amenable to compromise than others.

As with other planning applications, unless waived due to the insignificant nature of the proposal, applications for building and development works within an HPOZ need to be advertised to the public and any relevant conservation bodies registered with HWC. The length of time required for advertising and then possible negotiations that arise is often extensive thus delaying any initially planned timeframes. Whilst the concern and requirements of ratepayer associations and conservation bodies are typically reasonably articulated, objections lodged by neighbours are often arbitrary and self-centred as discussed above and can contribute to a long and drawn out negotiation process.

Thus certain environments, like Vredehoek, if designated as an HPOZ may be prone to 'freezing' if the risk to developers is too great. Incremental change to environments such as these through alterations and additions to single residential properties will most likely be the only change to occur within the built environment if this is the case.

Additional restrictions and detailed conditions that set out and regulate the way and extent to which a property may be used or developed by its owner are sometimes contained within the title deeds of a property. Often these conditions are similar to the zoning requirements relevant to the property, whilst some are more arbitrary inherited from much earlier times. Where the title deed is more

onerous than the zoning restrictions, the title deed restrictions are in addition to the development parameters and rules or restrictions prescribed in terms of a zoning scheme.

Many of the properties within Vredehoek have restrictions within their title deeds. Typical to Vredehoek, these restrictive conditions stipulate that the property may only contain one building or one dwelling not covering more than 50% of the site area, with lateral or common boundary building line setbacks of 1,57 metres and street boundary building line setbacks of 3,15 metres. These title deed restrictions may be removed or amended, however this requires an application to the CoCT in terms of the Municipal Planning By-Law of 2015. There are currently planning applications being assessed by the CoCT for title deed restriction removals from erven within Vredehoek where developers wish to erect new blocks of flats. These applications can take up to two years to process and are advertised to the public. Two such applications were submitted for dwellings on Bradwell and Davenport Roads, these applications received more than sixty objections each from Vredehoek residents opposing further development within the area (Schoeman, Town Planner, telephone conversation, 2017).

Also taken into account when development proposals are assessed by the CoCT, is Cape Town's Densification Policy, a policy aiming to address rapid and continuous low-density development occurring within the region threatening its long-term sustainability. Fragmented urban nodes requiring long travel distances has been caused by urban development sprawl, perpetuating pollution and congestion, and consuming good agricultural land on urban edges. Efficiency is lower and expense higher when providing necessary infrastructure to service low density environments as opposed to medium-higher density environments (Cape Town Densification Policy, 2012).

Subsequent to 1994, South Africa's conservation-oriented legislation changed to the National Heritage Resources Act, No. 25 of 1999 (NHRA from here on), the act codified the manner in which conservation-worthy objects and places within South Africa, defined as heritage resources within the Act, would be managed. Inter alia, the Act sets out to:

“introduce an integrated and interactive system for the management of the national heritage resources; ...empower civil society to nurture and conserve their heritage resources so that they may be bequeathed to future generations; ... to introduce an integrated system for the identification, assessment and management of the heritage resources of South Africa; ... to enable the provinces to establish heritage authorities which must adopt powers to protect and manage certain categories of heritage resources; to provide for the protection and management of conservation-worthy places and areas by local authorities...” (National Heritage Resources Act, No. 25, 1999: 3).

Relevant to the study at hand are certain definitions as defined by the Act, including:

“(iii) “conservation”, in relation to heritage resources, includes protection, maintenance, preservation and sustainable use of places or objects so as to safeguard their cultural significance;

(vi) “cultural significance” means aesthetic, architectural, historical, scientific, social, spiritual, linguistic or technological value or significance;

(viii) “development” means any physical intervention, excavation, or action, other than those caused by natural forces, which may in the opinion of a heritage authority in any way result in a change to the nature, appearance or physical nature of a place, or influence its stability and future well-being, including –

(a) Construction, alterations, demolition, removal or change of use of a place or a structure at a place;...

(c) subdivision or consolidation of land comprising, a place, including the structures or airspace of a place;...

(e) any change to the natural or existing condition or topography of land; and

(f) any removal or destruction of trees, or removal of vegetation or topsoil;

(xvi) “heritage resource” means any place or object of cultural significance” (National Heritage Resources Act, No. 25, 1999: 8).

Section 3 of the NHRA states the criteria that the local and provincial heritage authorities must use to determine the cultural significance of potential heritage resources – places and objects. Section 3(1) of the NHRA stipulates that:

“those heritage resources of South Africa which are of cultural significance or other special value for the present community and for future generations must be considered part of the national estate and fall within the sphere of operations of heritages resources authorities” (National Heritage Resources Act, No. 25, 1999: 12).

Section 3(3) states that “a place or object is to be considered part of the national estate if it has cultural significance or other special value...” (National Heritage Resources Act, No. 25, 1999: 14) because they embody one or more of the following criteria:

(a) its importance in the community, or pattern of South Africa’s history;

- (b) its possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of South Africa's natural or cultural heritage;
- (c) its potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of South Africa's natural or cultural heritage;
- (d) its importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class of South Africa's natural or cultural places or objects;
- (e) its importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by a community or cultural group;
- (f) its importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period;
- (g) its strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons;
- (h) its strong or special association with the life or work of a person, group or organisation of importance in the history of South Africa; and
- (i) sites of significance relating to the history of slavery in South Africa" (National Heritage Resources Act, No. 25, 1999: 14).

Following on from the three-grade system of classification of conservation-worthiness developed by the City Council's Urban Conservation Unit in the early 1990s (Townsend, 1996), the NHRA introduced a three-tier management system for heritage resources. Resources of highest significance on a National level, such as Robben Island, are classified as Grade I heritage resources and are managed at a national level by the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA). Heritage resources of exceptionally high significance in the context of a region or province, such as St. Georges Cathedral in Cape Town, are classified as Grade II heritage resources and are managed by the provincial heritage resources authority (PHRA from here on), in the case of Cape Town this authority is Heritage Western Cape (HWC from here on). Heritage resources that are of local significance through their contribution to environmental quality or the cultural significance of a larger area, and fulfil one of the criteria stipulated in section 3(3) of the NHRA, but do not fulfil the criteria for Grade II status are classified as a Grade III resource and are managed by the local heritage authority. In the context of this study the local heritage authority is the Environmental and Heritage Management Branch of the City of Cape Town (E&HM from here on) (HWC, 2016).

Heritage surveys are performed by the local heritage authority and significant buildings and heritage resources at a local level are identified and graded accordingly. Grade III heritage resources are

divided into sub-grades, typically IIIA, IIIB and IIIC. E&HM have informally defined Grade III resources as follows, this informality means that the sub grades have not yet been formalised through publication within the Provincial Gazette but can be used as a guide to local grading:

- Grade IIIA (makes a significant heritage contribution to a *metro or region*): Heritage resources that have high intrinsic significance in terms of the significance criteria identified by the NHRA. Such heritage resources are outstanding examples or representations of a typology and may demonstrate a high degree of intactness.
- Grade IIIB (makes a significant heritage contribution to a *neighbourhood or suburb*): Heritage resources that have considerable intrinsic significance in terms of the significance criteria identified by the NHRA.
- Grade IIIC (makes a significant heritage contribution towards a *streetscape*): Heritage resources that have significance within their immediate context. They contribute to the streetscape and historical character of the surrounds. Alterations and additions may be evident, but the building remains a representative example of the typology. Heritage value can be improved or rehabilitated.
- Grade IIIC (of some local significance): Buildings that are older than 60 years, but have been altered to such an extent that their heritage value has been greatly diminished. Demolition could be considered, but where in an HPOZ, any replacement building would have to be appropriate to the heritage environment of the streetscape (CoCT, 2015: 2 – emphasis in original).

Based on the criteria stipulated within section 3(3) of the NHRA, as listed above, the local authority surveyed and graded Vredehoek into subgrades as per the above categories. Figure 3 reflects the outcome of E&HM's grading of Vredehoek. Plots overlaid in red indicate Grade IIIA resources that have been identified, yellow overlays indicate Grade IIIB resources, blue overlays indicate IIIC resources of contextual or streetscape value, green overlays indicate IIIC resources that are over 60 years old and of some local significance but have been significantly altered, and grey overlays indicate new buildings.

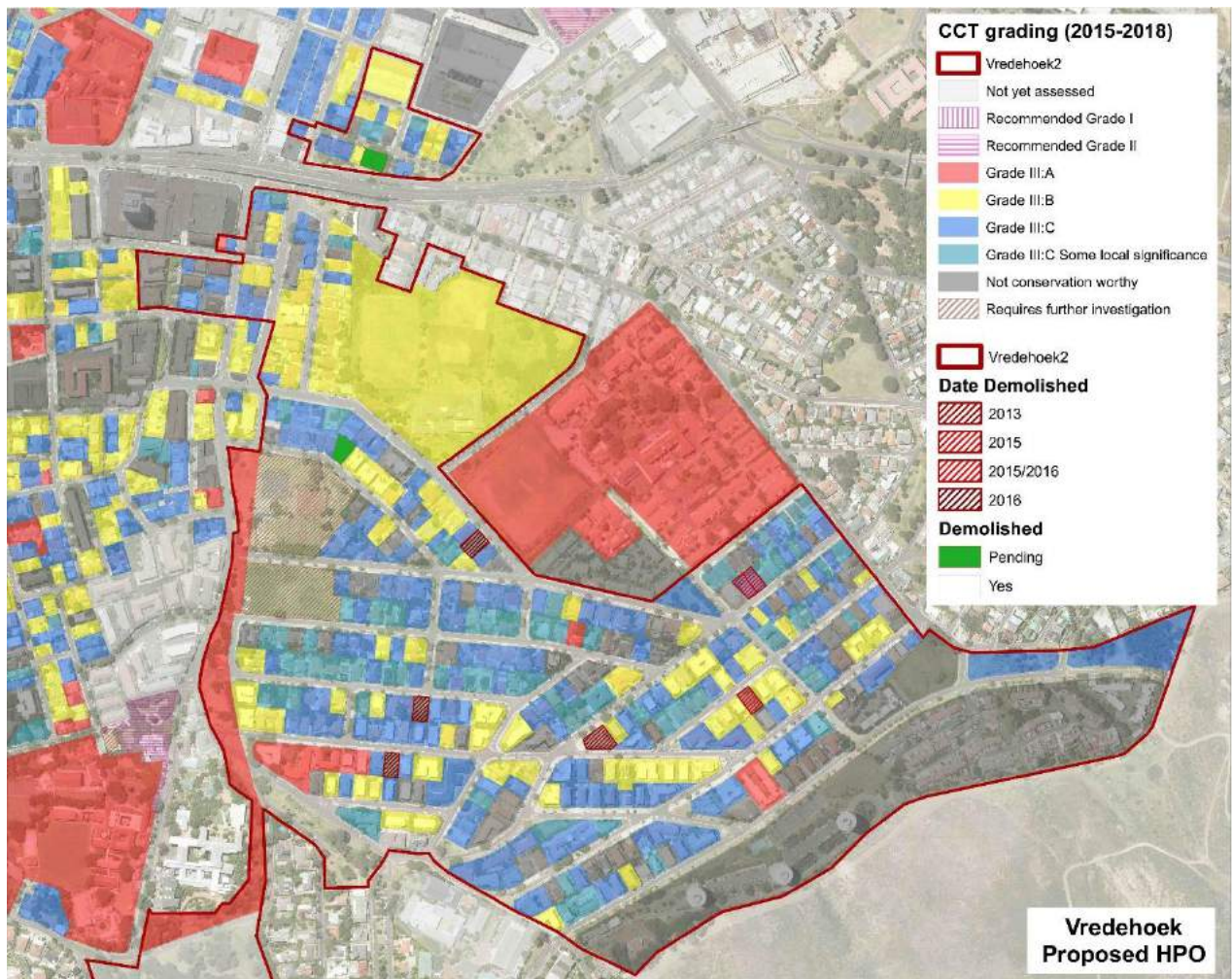


Figure 3: Aerial view of Vredehoek with property gradings as determined by the local heritage authority overlaid in colour. The Heritage Protection Overlay Zone as proposed by the local heritage authority is delineated in red (E&HM, 2016).

Significant buildings and heritage resources can be protected in two ways in terms of the NHRA, through formal or general protection. As per Section 30 of the NHRA, formal protection of Grade III resources occur when these resources, including but not limited to buildings, are identified during heritage surveys and are compiled into an inventory. The PHRA is responsible for selecting resources that they deem worthy of formal protection from this inventory and placing them on the Heritage Register, a Provincial Gazette. No buildings in Vredehoek are as of yet on the heritage register.

Further formal protection of heritage resources exist when places of environmental or cultural interest are protected by the designation of heritage areas, as per Section 31 of the NHRA. These heritage areas can be protected through provisions in the NHRA, but the Act also makes provisions for the local planning authority to identify and protect heritage areas through the designation of Heritage Protection Overlay Zones (HPOZ from here on). The NHRA requires that the local authority provides protection for heritage areas through provisions within its planning scheme or by-laws,

these provisions include that “the special consent of the local authority shall be required for any alterations or development affecting a heritage area” (National Heritage Resources Act, No. 25, 1999: 50). As discussed above, the designation of conservation areas was formally included within Cape Town’s Zoning Scheme in 1990 with several areas declared at this time. By 1997 approximately forty additional conservation areas within Cape Town and its surrounds were formally designated. Since then no further designations have been made although E&HM have made subsequent proposals for areas such as Bo-Kaap and, in the future, Vredehoek.

General protections within the NHRA are temporary/ interim holding controls which, when triggered require the assessment of the property/ structures on the property by the PHRA and relevant professionals to determine whether the property should be formally protected. General protections commonly triggered by development and demolition applications include Section 34 where a permit issued by a PHRA is required for any alterations to, or partial or total demolition of any structures on a property that is older than 60 years in age. Where these structures are graded and/or fall within an HPOZ HWC may require a heritage statement or impact assessment be compiled by a professional heritage practitioner to assess the cultural significance of the resource. Where Section 34 permit applications are refused, the building/site/object is deemed to have conservation-worthy heritage significance and therefore, according to Section 34(2) needs to be formally protected, in the case of a building, by being placed on the Heritage Register of the province. Section 38 deals with heritage resources management including provisions regarding the development of property that will change the character of a site, including subdivisions and consolidations of three or more erven.

Multiple Section 34 applications have been submitted to HWC within the past few years applying for total demolition of existing dwellings within Vredehoek. Due to the age of the existing structures within the area, most being over 60 years old, and the fact that Vredehoek has been informally proposed as a HPOZ, HWC have required the preparation of heritage statements to accompany these applications. Whilst heritage values have been identified and articulated, none of these Section 34 demolition permits have been refused by HWC due to an overriding lack of heritage significance within the property in question.

Fairly recently, however, a Section 34 demolition permit was issued by HWC for the building on 24 Davenport Road, a building of Art Deco character with no formal heritage status deemed too ordinary to protect. Due to the fact that the building is situated within an informally proposed HPOZ on a road identified by heritage-claimants as being the most significant in terms of architectural significance, HWC imposed restrictive conditions on the replacement building instructing that the new building must have the same ‘town-planning envelope’ and materiality of the façade of that which was demolished. The owner of 24 Davenport Road appealed this judgement and ultimately,

after appealing to the High Court unsuccessfully, appealed to the Supreme Court of Appeal of South Africa disputing that the conditions of development imposed by HWC through the demolition permit were beyond their legal authority. Ultimately however, the Supreme Court ruled in favour of HWC, deciding that the conditions were lawfully imposed through Section 48(2) of the NHRA which states that:

“...a heritage resources authority may in its discretion issue to such person a permit to perform such actions at such time and subject to such terms, conditions and restrictions or directions as may be specified in the permit, including a condition (a)...having regard to the nature and extent of the work referred to in the permit...” (National Heritage Resources Act, No. 25, Section 48(2), 1999: 74).

This is an unprecedented situation. HWC now have the power to dictate the extents of a new building once one has been demolished, a mechanism more powerful than what the local heritage authority can impose through HPOZ restrictions (Graham Jacobs, interview, 2016). The implications of this ultimately means that buildings deemed not worthy of formal protection through the issuing of a demolition permit could still be ‘protected’ through the restrictive conditions stipulated within the permit which, in many cases, will deter owners or developers from investing further into the property due to uncertainty, as discussed above. HWC’s new found powers could be detrimental should the balance between conservation and development not be reasonably negotiated.

This chapter has discussed how conservation areas are identified and assessed for HPOZ designation in Cape Town, and what it means once these areas have been designated, including the implications on development. It has also introduced the legal and statutory framework within which development and demolition applications are assessed, how heritage resources are identified and protected and what the implications of this protection of existing heritage resources are when they exist within areas of proposed demolition and development. The dynamic that exists when enabling property rights and densification policies are juxtaposed with potentially restrictive conservation laws can be fraught with conflict and frustration. However, the potential for synergies between development and conservation to exist has the capacity to result in rich and vibrant urban environments. This however requires concerted efforts, tireless negotiations and inspired attitudes engaging two arenas with polar opposite aspirations. The following chapter assesses the suburb of Vredehoek within the context of the conservation and development framework discussed above.

## **CHAPTER 4: VREDEHOEK**

The purpose of this study is to understand what qualities, characteristics and cultural significance need to be embodied within an urban environment that make the area worthy of conservation-oriented protection through laws and policies. This cultural significance is informed, in part, by the values attached to such an environment as expressed by heritage-claimants.

Through the theories and arguments about the conservation-worthiness of urban environments discussed in Chapter 2, a set of criteria has been developed with which to assess and evaluate proposed urban conservation areas based on the arguments made by Townsend, Baumann and Lira, Piccolo and Zancheti. These criteria are:

- does the urban environment embody cultural significance and characteristics informed by an urban history reflected in its authentic manifestations developed over time through continuity of use?
- does the urban environment embody high townscape quality established primarily through the aesthetic unity of its component parts?

This chapter is a case study of Vredehoek, an area that has been informally<sup>2</sup> proposed as a Heritage Protection Overlay Zone, through which the research question above is examined and which will be evaluated through the developed criteria.

The research methodology adopted within this chapter is structured in such a manner that interrogates the conservation-worthiness of Vredehoek through the above mentioned criteria. Evidence of conservation-worthiness, or the lack thereof, embodied within the townscape of Vredehoek has been sought through the identification of the cultural values that exist within this environment as identified by heritage-claimants, stakeholders and myself. Further criteria specific to isolating the special townscape qualities and characteristics of Vredehoek have been developed through which the urban townscape has been evaluated.

The search for evidence of conservation-worthiness commenced with a brief historical study summarising Vredehoek's transition from an Upper Table Valley farm in the 1800s to an area of urban residential development between the 1920s and 1950s. The findings reveal an interesting development history within the social and political context of Cape Town at the time.

Using Conzen's concepts, the urban morphology of the area has been analysed to articulate the character of Vredehoek's outer appearance. The pattern of morphological features informed by

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<sup>2</sup> By "informally", I mean that this proposal is made by City of Cape Town heritage management officials only without any public or expert consultation or confirmation from the City of Cape Town itself.

Vredehoek's original development within the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century still remains relatively intact today and contributes toward the character of the townscape. The quality of this character is assessed within this chapter.

A brief study of Art Deco and Arts and Crafts architectural styles including a description of their defining features has been summarised, as well as a description of the typical housing type that arose within Cape Town between the 1920s and 1930s, in order to assist in the assessment and articulation of architectural and aesthetic value embodied within the buildings of Vredehoek.

Informed by Baumann's principles for identifying townscape character, which partially informed the development of Vredehoek-specific criteria, I mapped the area of Vredehoek being studied by experiencing it on foot and isolating conservation-worthy heritage resources such as buildings and groups of buildings of good architectural merit, and special elements of area, streetscape and townscape character within the environment.

These Vredehoek-specific criteria are as follows:

- Noteworthy building of fine architectural quality.
- Good, intact example of Art Deco building.
- Good, intact example of 1920s/1930s housing type.
- Less intact buildings with sufficient architectural and aesthetic qualities which by their presence impart character to the streetscape and urban setting.
- Intact original morphological pattern of plot and building that lends character to the streetscape and urban setting.
- Property boundary elements that contribute character towards the streetscape.
- Buildings which form a noteworthy group.
- Poor street interface (negative criterion).
- Streets that contribute towards a fine townscape.
- Important trees.
- Areas of fine greenery/ or trees that contribute towards the townscape.
- Recreational nodes.

Elements of the townscape that met the above criteria have been visualised through the generation of a map, illustrated in figure 106 and attached as Annexures 16-19 at the end of Chapter 4 indicating conservation-worthy buildings and elements of townscape character. This map clearly illustrates the disconnected pockets of conservation-worthy buildings and elements of townscape quality and thus provides illustrative evidence of the lack of unified townscape character, thus assisting in the evaluation of the conservation-worthiness of the area.

The work of Lynch illustrates how engagement with the users of environments can assist in the identification and articulation of strong and special qualities of place. These concepts contributed toward the formation of interview questions that were posed to residents of Vredehoek in order to identify how they experience their suburb, and whether these experiences illuminated areas of value.

Another portion of evidence came from interviews and discussions with individuals and representatives from various groups with an opinion about the conservation-worthiness of Vredehoek. As introduced earlier, heritage-claimants are those individuals and groups concerned with how development occurring within the area is changing the character of the area and threatening heritage resources. The purpose of the interviewing process was to engage with heritage-claimants and stakeholders, those individuals and representatives from groups with a relevant interest in or concern with Vredehoek whose views and arguments about the values and qualities embedded within the suburb would assist in determining the cultural significance of the place. Those with counter-claims about the conservation-worthiness of the area were also engaged with.

Interviewees who could represent the number of stakeholder groups and heritage-claimants identified as having an interest in or concern with Vredehoek for varying reasons were selected. Heritage-claimants engaged with include: certain CIBRA members, a representative from DOCOMOMO South Africa, certain City of Cape Town heritage-management officials, and certain residents, stakeholders include architects and property developers, and those contesting the conservation-worthiness of Vredehoek include certain heritage professionals.

I first approached interviewees by telephone or email and the purpose of the study was introduced as well as the reason why they were being asked to participate in a discussion about Vredehoek. In order to identify and approach residents of Vredehoek who may have been able to contribute towards the study, referrals from social groups identified a group of tenants renting in Vredehoek and owners of properties living in Vredehoek who were willing to be interviewed about their home suburb. Social-networking platforms such as the Vredehoek/ Devil's Peak Community Facebook Group identified leaders of special interest groups such as the Devil's Peak/ Vredehoek Neighbourhood Watch. Interviews took place with one person at a time and in person, many residents were engaged with at coffee shops within the area of study. Interviews lasted between forty-five minutes and one hour, within this time, each interviewee was asked the same list of prepared questions. Questions were structured to find out how each person experiences Vredehoek, what each person values about the area under study and why, what qualities and characteristics about the area interviewees find special, or not special, and whether they have noticed elements of

change occurring within the area and whether this is a concern or not. A list of those interviewed within this study, as well as the interview questions are included as Annexures 10 and 11 at the end of Chapter 4. Engagement with one of the CIBRA members and the E&HM representative took the form of an informal discussion where certain interview questions were used as discussion points to talk about broader issues of heritage area designation.

Five Vredehoek residents were interviewed: one who rents a flat and four who own a property and live within the suburb – two who own a flat and two who own houses. Two representatives from CIBRA, the conservation body who has registered an interest in the conservation-worthiness of the City Bowl area with HWC, of which Vredehoek is included, whose responsibility it is for assessing development applications within Vredehoek, were approached; as well as one representative from DOCOMOMO South Africa - an architect with expert knowledge about Modern Architecture including Art Deco. Two property developers were interviewed who have identified Vredehoek as an area with development potential and who are currently developing new blocks of flats within the area, as well as those who are critical of Vredehoek's proposed designation as a heritage area including an experienced heritage practitioner.

Whilst there were several common elements identified as special across the groups, the results of the interviews clearly reflected different value sets for most stakeholder groups with differing characteristics identified as special. All parties recognised that Vredehoek's natural landscape, setting and location is special. The value identified as most special by the residents of Vredehoek is the sense of community created by the people living in the area and, secondly, the village-like scale of the built environment. For certain heritage-management officials at the City of Cape Town, as well as one of the CIBRA representatives, the architectural and townscape value of the dense clusters of Art Deco buildings that exist within Vredehoek, as well as the homogenous period-character created by the Art Deco buildings and the 1920s/1930s houses were identified as most significant, opinions raised within the interview and discussions with the CIBRA representatives reflected that views about the conservation-worthiness of Vredehoek as a special area are not unanimous. The tour guide/ architecture enthusiast felt that the whole area should not be interfered with at all, that the Art Deco and Arts and Crafts buildings within Vredehoek reflect a period-character that should not be disturbed, that the architectural merit of each individual building is less relevant. The urban planner/ heritage professional representing CIBRA was more discerning, however, arguing that there are elements of special character and elements of ordinariness within Vredehoek and that each demolition and development application needs to be carefully assessed within its own right. The property developers engaged with identified the current land value and erf sizes that exist within Vredehoek as conducive to viable residential development schemes, Vredehoek's location in relation

to the Central Business District, setting and orientation was also identified as valuable, enhancing the attractiveness of proposed developments. Some heritage professionals critical of Vredehoek's designation as a heritage area who were engaged with acknowledged the presence of a certain degree of architectural value within the area, but none identified heritage resources embodying architectural excellence.

The results of these interviews provided a fundamental portion of evidence required in assessing the conservation-worthiness of the area of study, they also demonstrate the existence of multiple sets of values attributed to urban environments by different groups of experts and laypeople and how these value sets need to be thoroughly articulated and assessed when considering the designation of heritage areas.

Applications made to HWC by owners and developers for the demolition of buildings within Vredehoek and the decision-making processes that ensued have been assessed, further isolating the values, or lack thereof, as articulated by heritage practitioners, the local heritage authority, CIBRA and Vredehoek residents. Conservation studies and surveys that have been carried out within the area over the past thirty years have also been assessed in order to understand what values were identified by heritage experts at the time.

The protection that will be afforded Vredehoek should the area be designated as an HPOZ has been outlined in Chapter 3, as well as the implications of that protection on development and factors of change within the area. Should Vredehoek not be deemed worthy of heritage area protection but elements of the area's fabric are, individual buildings in other words, the protection afforded to these buildings has also been outlined in Chapter 3.

The cultural values and special qualities that have been identified in Vredehoek through the search for evidence of conservation-worthiness as outlined above are assessed and evaluated within this chapter. As introduced earlier, the townscape that has been researched within this case study is the main portion of Vredehoek that developed between the 1920s and 1950s, the portion indicated as conservation-worthy by heritage claimants and which is currently experiencing large amounts of new infill development. Peripheral elements included within the local authority's proposed HPOZ delineation including public open spaces, the Disa Towers complex and the more recent residential development to the east of the towers, and the Table Mountain edge have been excluded from this study.



Figure 4: Aerial view of Vredehoek with area relevant to this study delineated in yellow.

## **VREDEHOEK – FROM UPPER TABLE VALLEY FARM TO RESIDENTIAL SUBURB: A BRIEF HISTORY**

The suburb of Vredehoek is part of an area called the Upper Table Valley, an inner suburb of the City of Cape Town just above and adjoining the Central City, within the valley below Table Mountain. The Upper Table Valley was analysed in detail by city planner and planning historian Dennis Verschoyle in the 1970s and split into Inner and Outer Districts, the Inner being those directly connected to the Central City and the Outer making up the remainder. Vredehoek is one of eight outer districts of the Upper Table Valley analysed and subdivided according to general characteristics of physiography, geology, main period of development and predominant dwelling types. Vredehoek was characterised as embodying gentle to steep slopes, with houses and flats making up main building types (Verschoyle, 1979: 13).

Amongst the earliest settlements in Vredehoek were the two market gardens, Vredehoek Farm and Elba Farm, established at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century respectively (see figures 8 and 9: Snow and Thom surveys of 1862 and 1900 respectively illustrating the existence of Vredehoek Farm in 1862, and both farms in 1900). Besides these two farms, the survey by Walter Thom shows that by 1900 this area was still mostly open land. The extents of the land under discussion within this study as delineated earlier were previously part of two farms, Vredehoek Farm and Elba Farm. Vredehoek Farm was initially owned by the Jurgens family in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, much of the farm, including the double storey Vredehoek homestead which was built c1800, was then sold in 1893 to Edward H. F. Mellish “a man of means, energy, ability and high standards” (Hart, 2011: 51) who turned Vredehoek Farm into a successful dairy farm, the first in Cape Town.

Other remaining extents of the Jurgens family land were transferred to Marthinus Jacobus and John Philip Kerchhoff in 1897 who subdivided the land into plots measuring 40 x 100 Cape feet (15,74 x 31,8 metres), as illustrated in SG diagram 4123/1897 (see Annexure 1 at the end of Chapter 4). This portion, also forming part of the extents of this study, is bounded today by Lambert Road, St. James Street, Wexford Avenue and Derry Street – intersected by the eastern ends of Exner Avenue (originally Slaney) and Bellair Road (originally Daisy) where they terminate at Derry Street.

Edward Mellish died in 1905, and the farm ran into disarray under the mismanagement of Edward’s son, with all farming operations coming to an end in 1916. In 1923 Vredehoek Farm was transferred to the Estate of the Late E.H.F Mellish and over the next decade portions of the land were subdivided into lots to accommodate residential housing and roads were established. The Vredehoek homestead, located on the land where today the Herzlia Sarah Bloch playschool and

daycare centre and Rugley Road Park is situated, and part of the farmland was sold to the University of Cape Town in 1924 with the homestead being used by SACS Junior School as a hostel. In 1939 the Cape Town Municipality bought the property, demolished the homestead and turned the land into public recreational fields. Four remaining portions of the Mellish land were transferred to The Congregation of the Poor Sisters of Nazareth in 1926 and 1929 and became part of the Nazareth House grounds (Hart, 2011: 51-53). The extents of Vredehoek Farm, erf 1213, and the portions of the land's first subdivisions transferred to The Vredehoek Estates Pty (Ltd) can be seen on Surveyor General diagram 290/1922 (see Annexure 2 at the end of Chapter 4).

The extents of the second farm that existed in Vredehoek in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century/ early 20<sup>th</sup> century originally called Elba is also visible on Surveyor General diagram 290/1922. Much of the land that was once Prospect Hill Farm was developed in 1930 by the City Council as a sub-economic housing estate for Europeans called Devil's Peak Estate. Twelve new streets were constructed and over 300 small houses (Hart, 2011: 54); (Verschoyle, 2000: 42).



Figure 5: Vredehoek Farm Homestead. (Published on Flickr by John Kramer, original picture found within photo album in Kramer's collection called *Sunny Memories*, circa 1908)

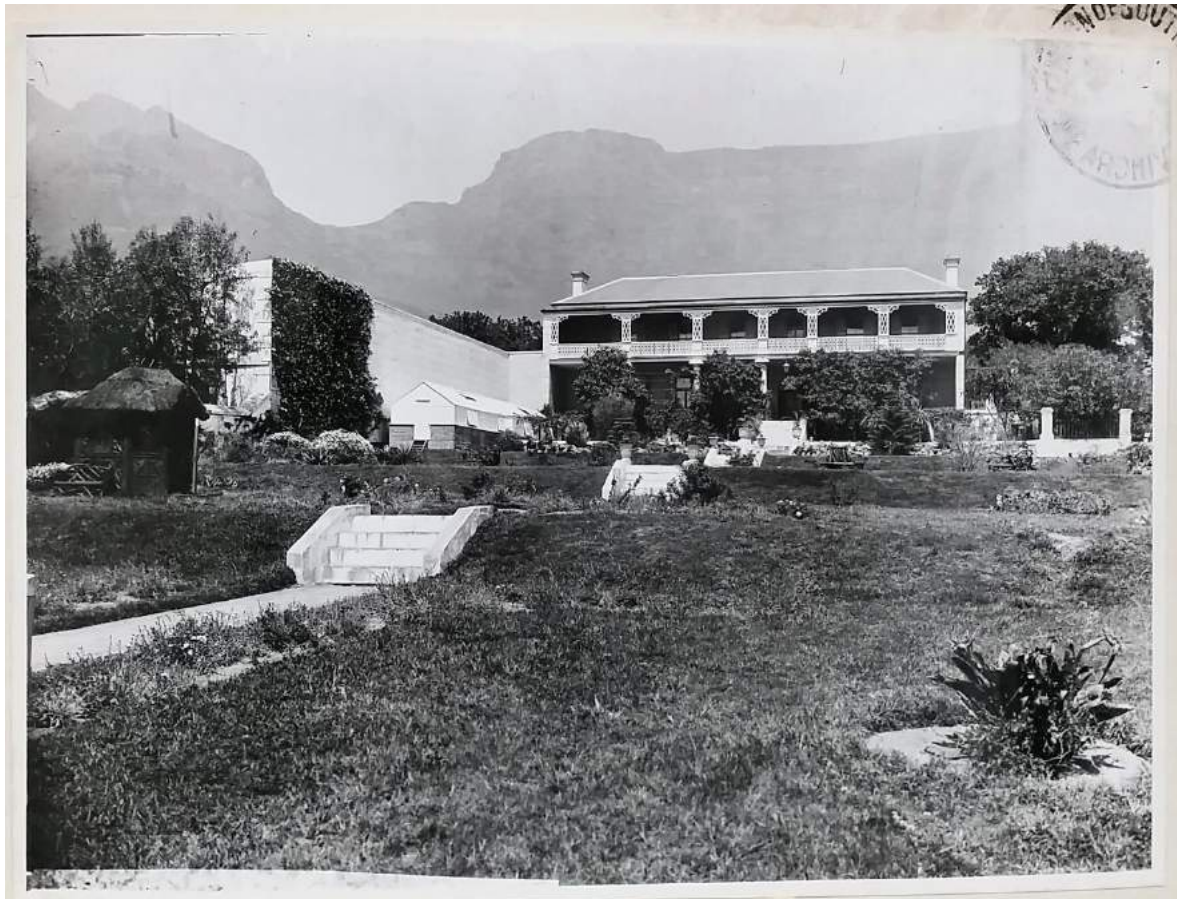


Figure 6: Vredehoek Farm Homestead. (Elliot Collection, E8247, Cape Archives)

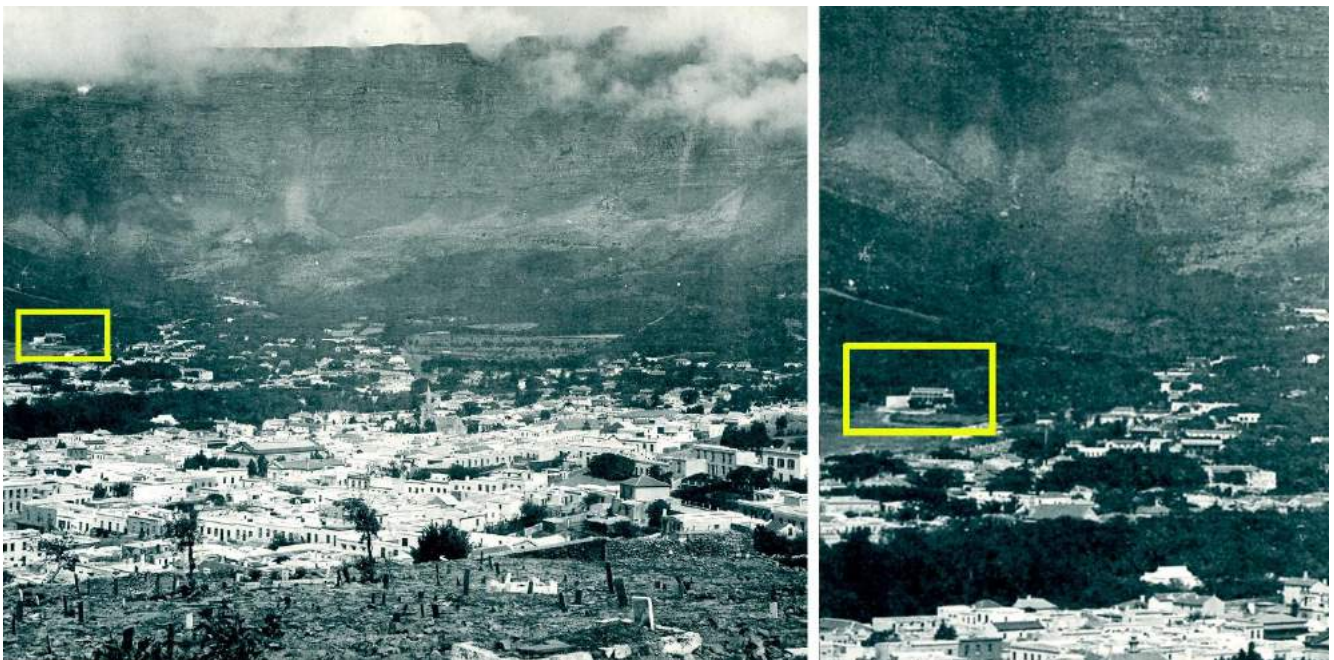


Figure 7: Picture taken from Signal Hill in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century with Vredehoek Farm homestead isolated in yellow. This image illustrates that at this time, apart from the Vredehoek Homestead, no further development existed within the area where the suburb of Vredehoek exists today. (Published on Flickr by John Kramer. Original source unknown)



Figure 8: Extract from William Snow's Survey of Cape Town c1862 illustrating the existence of the Vredehoek Farm and homestead at this time, located at the bottom of this extract. Kanaladorp, another name for District Six meaning 'help one another' in the Malay language (Vivian Bickford-Smith cited within South African History Online, 2017), is illustrated at the top of this image.



Figure 9: Extract from Walter Thom's Survey of Cape Town c1897 illustrating the area of Oranjezicht already developing to the west, Upper Buitenkant Street extending up from Upper Mill Street and the open expanse of land where the suburb of Vredehoek is located today. Also illustrated are Vredehoek and Elba Farm homesteads neither of which exist today. (City of Cape Town, Environmental and Heritage Management Branch: Historic Map Room. Individual maps stitched together and annotations by author, 2016)



Figure 10: Photographic extract from a map drawn by the Cape Town City Council's Surveyor General's office in 1910 illustrating Vredehoek Farm, Elba Farm, annotated extents of land ownership within the area, Upper Buitenkant Street and Platteklip Road which became Highlands Avenue, and the newly developed Upper Maynard Road running parallel to Upper Buitenkant Street. (M4/11, Cape Archives, photographed and stitched by author, 2016)

Building activity within Cape Town stagnated for the first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century due to the depression and the First World War and when it resumed again in the early 1920s, there was a large shortage of housing. To help deal with this shortage, the City Council advanced building loans to prospective owner-occupiers resulting in the shift towards property ownership and small detached dwellings with gardens. Single dwelling development gained momentum between 1918 and 1938, home ownership and the shift to smaller, detached dwellings reflected the change in architectural trends occurring at the time. Sliding sash windows were no longer used, mass-produced steel and timber windows, typically with horizontal proportions became popular, available at affordable prices in the 1920s (Rennie & Riley, 1986: 8). Teak windows were still available in abundance and were preferred due to their status value. Corrugated iron lost popularity as a roofing material with clay roof tiles becoming commonplace. Cast-iron verandahs and balconies were no longer popular, stoeps and porches with clay tile roofs supported by pre-cast Tuscan columns became common place (Verschoyle, 2000: 42). A new dwelling type to develop at this time, ubiquitous within the Upper Table Valley and further afield was described by Rennie and Riley as “the debased ‘Herbert Baker style’ (dwelling) with forward facing ‘Cape Dutch’ gable and flanking concrete-column-supported stoep and red tiled roof” (Rennie & Riley, 1986: 9), illustrated in figures 38-41. According to Coetzer, “Cape Dutch homesteads were considered to be iconic of the ‘Home Beautiful’ and thus were considered models to be emulated in terms of ‘proper’ housing for middle-class families, whilst simultaneously suggesting a lineage for the middle-class extending back to the original settlement of the Cape” (Coetzer, 2003: 108).

The single dwelling, single storey houses that appeared in Vredehoek from the 1920s embodied these changes in style. Due to the fact that Vredehoek was the last of the Upper Table Valley areas to be developed during this time of changing architectural character, besides the small area around Upper Mill Street below Nazareth House (formally designated as a conservation area in 1992), it is the only area in the Upper Table Valley that does not contain any terraced houses or buildings of a Victorian nature. This is one of the reasons why Vredehoek has a very different character to that of the rest of the Upper Table Valley, much of which has been designated as an HPOZ.

Also in the 1920s and 1930s speculative flat development became popular as an investment source. Many of these speculative flats were built in an Art Deco style and variations of the style. Flats with two or four units were typically built within the years after 1925, and later from 1933, larger blocks appeared. By 1938 Verschoyle noted that there were 124 blocks of flat in the area above Mill Street, including Vredehoek (Verschoyle, 1979: 41). The earlier blocks of flats built by speculative developers without the employment of architects embodied elements of the American Spanish Colonial Revival style, also known as the Californian style, such as loggias with archways supported

on prefabricated concrete Tuscan style columns. The arch was then replaced by a concrete lintel and soffit decorated with applied zigzag 'jazz' motifs. These building elements were typically mass produced, 'off-the-shelf' components. From 1938 onwards the construction of flats improved due to a better understanding of flat construction methods (Verschoyle, 1979: 42).

It was during this period, from the late 1920s and late 1930s that the majority of the new Vredehoek Township was approved by the Townships Board, physically laid out and developed between the late 1920s and 1940s, including a network of new roads between 40 and 50 Cape feet in width (12,6 and 15,74 metres respectively), the dimensions of which were possibly informed by a Council by-law laid down in 1896 that all new streets used for vehicular traffic have a minimum width of 40 Cape feet (Verschoyle, 1979: 37). By the end of World War II in 1945, besides the plots extending along Chelmsford Road, the suburb of Vredehoek was fully developed. Due to the rapid rate at which it had developed, the townscape acquired a relatively consistent period-character of small to medium sized 2-4 storey blocks of flats in an Art Deco style, larger flats in a Streamlined Moderne style, and single-storey, single family dwellings with clay-tiled hipped roofs, many of which still exist today in various degrees of intactness.

In the early 1930s Cape Town experienced an influx of immigrants, some fleeing from droughts in the northern parts of South Africa and Jewish immigrants escaping from Europe including many arriving from Lithuania. A great number of Jewish immigrants settled within District Six and over time moved towards the Jewish congregations within Vredehoek where two synagogues were located, the Vredehoek Avenue and Schoonder Street synagogues built in 1939 and the early 1950s respectively. "With time, Jewish families moved further up the slopes of Table Mountain and lived around these shuls in roads such as Mill Street and Maynard Street" (Kosowitz, The Tale of Two Shuls in Cape Town, The Ospovat-Ichlov-Beck Family Website, 2007). Many of the Jewish immigrants that arrived in Cape Town were entrepreneurial, some buying flats and shops within District Six and then moving up the slopes and buying property within Vredehoek with the money that they earned as landlords and shopkeepers.

"Very few of the properties in District Six belonged to the coloured people, it was mostly the Indians and Europeans that owned property there. Some of these flats in Vredehoek (a white suburb) were built from money made in District Six by landlords and shopkeepers" (Recollections by a policeman who worked in District Six. Pinnock, 1989: 164).

Within the virgin territory of the newly laid out suburb of Vredehoek, not having to fit into any existing framework, new land owners who developed flats did so within the new style of the time. The Jewish land owners in particular, who were looking to the future with no desire to recreate past

architectural styles or live in Colonial homes, embraced this new architectural style. Many of the flats within Vredehoek were first owned and designed by Jewish immigrants as can be seen by the names on old building plans such as Rubenstein, Ravdin, Levin, Goldin, and Varkel, and the names of some of the flats such as Mont Sholem, Tel Hai Court and Herzlia.

Two noteworthy Jewish men, Meyer Hirsch Goldschmidt and Rabbi Moses Chaim Mirvish, contributed further Jewish links to the suburb of Vredehoek. Goldschmidt was a successful businessman concerned with the welfare of Jews displaced from Europe. He assisted in the founding of the United Hebrew Schools which first opened in Hope Street, Gardens in 1940 and subsequently moved up to its present location in Vredehoek when the buildings could no longer accommodate enrolment. M.H. Goldschmidt Avenue which leads up to the Herzlia Schools was named in his memory (Hart, 2011: 58-59). Rabbi Mirvish, Lithuanian born, emigrated to Cape Town in 1908 to minister the expanding congregation of Lithuanian Jews at the Orthodox Hebrew Congregation in District Six. The community moved to its new purpose-built synagogue in Vredehoek in 1939 and when the congregation moved out of Vredehoek in 1992, the synagogue closed its doors (Hart, 2011: 59). Today, this noteworthy Art Deco building is well preserved being used as a shared office space called The Bancroft Studios. The short street running off Rugley Road past the old synagogue is named Rabbi Mirvish Avenue.

In terms of the political context that existed at the time of Vredehoek's development, Coetzer discusses how architecture and things architectural were "used to promote specific political agendas and ideological values" in Cape Town (Coetzer, 2003: 14). Investigating this argument in the context of Cape Town between 1892 and 1936, Coetzer noted that the city and its architects were especially English during this period, that English clients, architects, officials and bureaucrats, were central to political and cultural activities, and that architectural ideas were borrowed directly from England (Coetzer, 2003: 14). Englishness and associated picturesque values informed concerns that arose regarding the aesthetics of the physical and material qualities of Cape Town's old city centre. Influenced by the City Beautiful movement, and concerned that the existing old Dutch town did not embody the picturesque qualities of an English village, these officials began taking steps to rectify this aesthetic problem, including attempts to eliminate the slums and tenements that were housing mixed races, replacing them with 'model dwellings' (Coetzer, 2003: 122 – emphasis in original).

In 1867 Cape Town became an established municipality "gaining legal and institutional credibility" (Coetzer, 2003: 182) through the appointment of a City Engineer and the development of building and health regulations by 1889. These events contributed towards enabling the restructuring of the City and the restriction of development. A Public Health and Building Regulations Committee was established in 1899 who assessed proposals for additions and alterations to the city's structure and

existing fabric of buildings. In 1913 the Improvements and Parks Committee was formed, who, amongst other things, focused on supervising the physical appearance and facilities of the city (Coetzer, 2003: 182). Cape Municipal Ordinances were passed which, amongst other things, ensured that the Council had the power to control the 'character' of new developments through the requirement of certain building typologies and the structuring of class through density regulations. "In essence, terrace houses with their association with the poorer working classes, were unceremoniously lumped together with other potential 'nuisances' of the city such as pubs and factories" (Coetzer, 2003: 188 – emphasis in original). The Townships Board required that any proposed subdivision of estates be approved by themselves, this ensured that plot sizes would be of the 'correct' density. "Restrictions on density were not only intended to structure class through the environment, or secure public health but also to socialise families into a more specifically middle class set of values" (Coetzer, 2003: 189 – emphasis in original). 12 plots per acre was considered the maximum appropriate density for a subdivided township estate, with minimum building line setbacks of between 10 and 25 Cape feet (3,14 and 7,87 metres respectively) from the road depending on main or secondary road widths. This allowed for sufficient garden space in front and addressed 'aesthetic' concerns for the visibility of streetscapes not being overshadowed or roads appearing narrower by buildings near the building line (Coetzer, 2003: 190 – emphasis in original). "The single-family detached dwelling was considered fundamental to the development of what was called 'home life' and this 'home life' being the necessary part of what it was to live a complete and legitimate life" (Coetzer, 2003: 161 – emphasis in original). These detached homes were to have 'good' ground around them, ensuring privacy and spatial isolation – unlike the 'inappropriate' conditions of semi-detached or terraced dwellings. The Central Housing Board proposed that a 'correct' life required a minimum of three rooms, a kitchen, and garden fence with a gate. Domestic life within this housing model was encouraged through the granting of housing loans – building plans, and thus loans, were only approved if these 'correct' criteria were met. Blocks of flats were viewed with concern due to social rather than aesthetic implications, flats were not considered correct housing models able to promote homemaking activities appropriate to family life, thus threatening the fundamental values of Englishness (Coetzer, 2003: 161-162 – emphasis in original). Emphasis on the 'model home' was so significant that competitions were arranged in order to develop the perfect model. These single family dwellings were estimated to cost 1100 Pounds, thus essentially ensuring that they were too expensive for poorer demographics. "The 'model house' was to have 3 rooms, excluding kitchen... and was to be located on a plot of 50 x 100 Cape feet (15,74 x 31,48 metres). The results were typical of what would have been considered a cottage in Arts and Crafts parlance..." (Coetzer, 2003: 175 – emphasis in original).

Through the minimum street widths and building line setbacks stipulated within these building regulations, it would appear that these regulations were engineering environments in direct contrast to the dense 'slum' environments such as District Six for example. Coetzer cites an article within a 1929 *Architect, Engineer and Builder* magazine, warning that "...developers are motivating for the building regulations to allow 17 (plots) to the acre and thereby disallowing the 'humanising influence which a small garden provides' and forcing children to 'adopt the streets as their playgrounds'" (Coetzer, 2003: 189-190, citing AB&E v.13, n.5, December, 1929). Regulations also affected existing structures within the old City in places such as District Six and what is now Bo-Kaap where stoeps and any structures projecting over the building line were required to be removed.

The township of Vredehoek was laid out during the period discussed above and echoes the characteristics of what the Townships Board was trying to achieve within the setting out of a new white, middle class suburb. It can be argued that this stripping away of stoeps and street elements contributed by individual buildings to existing streets ensured the depletion of streetscape character in the case of existing City environments. The separating actions of new wide roads and building line setbacks imposed by the new building regulations stunted the creation of streetscape and townscape character within new residential environments. In the case of Vredehoek, whether the decision to create wide roads was to discourage dense environments or to accommodate the needs of motorised transport, the resultant distance created between dwelling thresholds on opposite sides of the streets informed by the separating conditions of the township ordinances has discouraged the possibility for a pleasant streetscape to exist. This lack of streetscape character has been further exaggerated by the physical and visual barricading effect of more recent security additions in the form of high boundary walls and nearly impermeable fences to a majority of the dwellings within the area.

It is during this time in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century that the suburb of Vredehoek as it exists today developed, influenced by the housing and development conditions at the time as discussed above and by the political and ideological framework contrived by the City Council's Townships Board. The area developed in stages, from the lower northern regions on the border of Gardens in the 1920s and early 1930s, up towards the mountain from the 1930s to the 1950s. The earliest subdivisions of the Estate of the Late E.H.F. Mellish took place in 1923 when 28 lots were delineated and new roads were planned, see General Plan No. V.32, (see Annexure 3 at the end of Chapter 4). Maynard Road would extend parallel to Upper Buitenkant Street, and new road Virginia Avenue would run parallel to Upper Maynard Avenue. The 28 new lots measuring approximately 50 x 120 Cape feet (15,74 x 37,78 metres) would sit perpendicular to Upper Maynard Street and Virginia Avenue. What was

Justice Road according to Thom's survey of 1897 became Vredehoek Avenue and was extended into the newly subdivided area running at ninety degrees to Virginia Avenue.

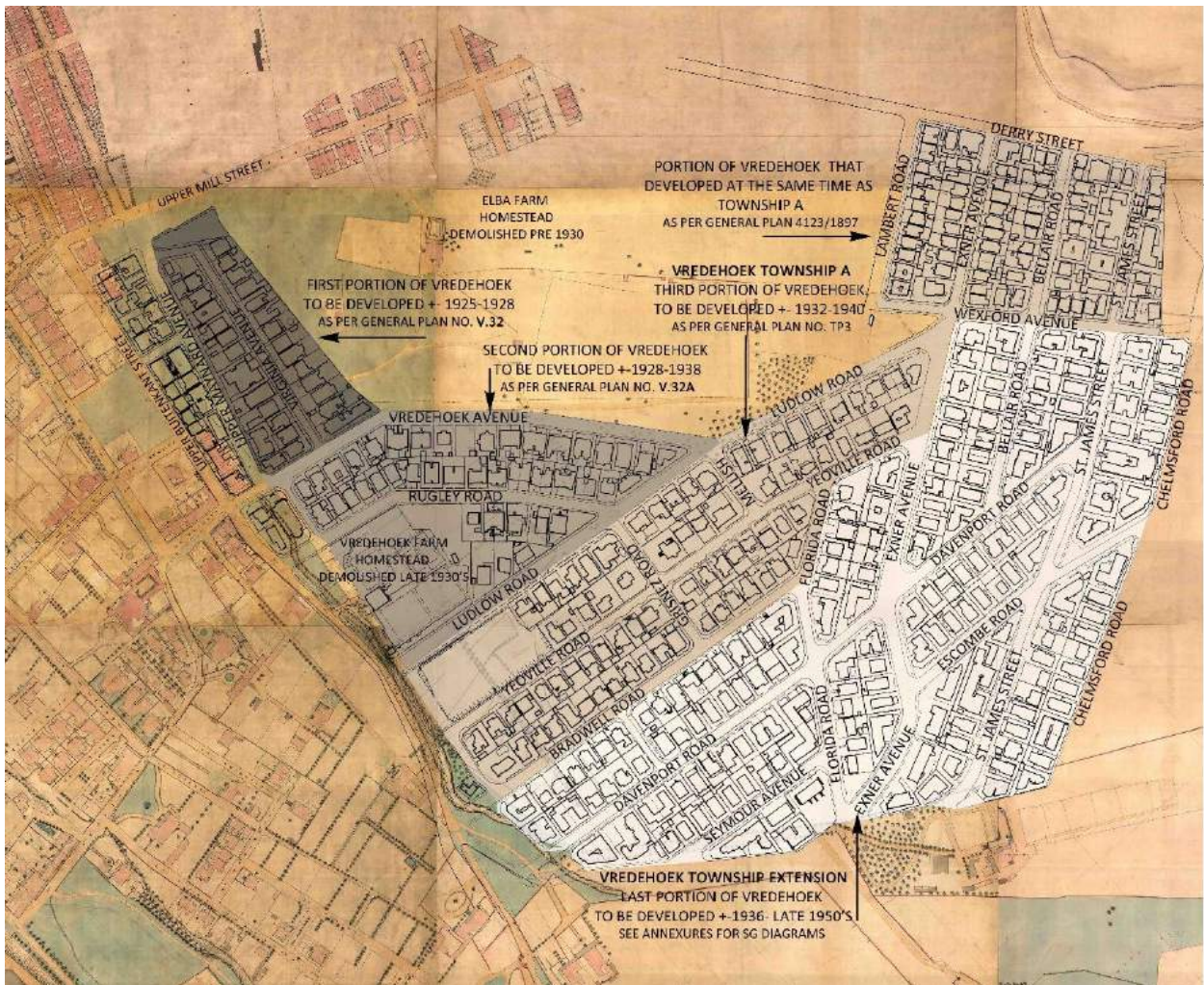


Figure 11: A map overlaid on an extract from Walter Thom's Survey of Cape Town c1897 illustrating how Vredehoek developed in phases in a southerly direction up the slope of Table Mountain. The four different colour overlays reflect the systematic development of the area. The portion overlaid in dark grey illustrates the earliest portion of the area to develop. (City of Cape Town, Environmental and Heritage Management Branch: Historic Map Room. Overlays and annotations by author, 2016)

These 28 lots were sold between 1924 and 1925 to private buyers, many of whom were Jewish, including: A. Levin, A. Levy, R. Copelowitz, M. Jobowitz and I. Ospovat. In 1924 further roads were drawn up and lots delineated between Upper Buitenkant Street and what are now Ludlow and Rugley Roads and Wexford, Vredehoek and Chelsea Avenues as can be seen in General Plan No. V.32A (see Annexure 4 at the end of Chapter 4). Portions of the Estate of the late E.H.F. Mellish were sold to a company called The Vredehoek Estates Pty (Ltd), directed by William Jacob Baumann, Ernest Edwin Beecroft and John Thomas Henry William Burmester in 1929, including the land subdivided in 1924 as reflected in General Plan No. V.32A.

Conditions imposed on the development of these lots by the Townships Board of the Council of the City of Cape Town included that a space of not less than 15 Cape feet (4,7 metres) be left in front of all lots fronting or abutting Denholm Road, Vredehoek Avenue and Ludlow Avenue, 10 Cape feet (3,14 metres) in the case of Rugley Road and that such spaces were to be used as gardens or forecourts, that not more than one building be erected on any one lot and that not more than half the area of any one lot be built upon, that the purchaser of any lot shall provide a proper slope to the embankment whenever a plot is below the level of the adjoining road, and when a plot is above the level of any adjoining road. Conditions imposed by the seller estate for its benefit included:

“1. That though they may buy and own land and houses and let and sell them, no Negroes, Aboriginal Natives, Asiatics, Indians, Malays or other persons generally comprehended in the term “coloured people” shall have the right or be permitted to occupy or reside on the land sold or any building erected thereon, save only in the course of their bona fide employment as Servants of the lawful Owner or Lessee thereof.

2. Neither the Purchaser nor any successor in title of his or hers shall be permitted to erect buildings upon the land sold of a value below or less than the following sums: - (a) In the case of a detached building One Thousand Pounds Sterling...” (CCC, AF20/1/627, 4).

These conditions imposed on the earlier townships established in Vredehoek not only informed the morphological development of the environment, but also reflect the social and political phenomena occurring during the 1920s and 1930s in Cape Town as discussed above. Although preceding the time of the Group Areas Act, city officials including the Townships Board were already organising themselves according to segregationist methods informed by class and race, quite blatantly illustrated by the separation according to colour groups within Deeds of Title and Conditions of Township development. By imposing conditions that buildings of a minimum value be erected within the township ensured that the ‘appropriate’ class of home would be erected within the suburb.

The next portion of Vredehoek to be subdivided was the region between Denholm, Ludlow, Bradwell and Florida Roads and Exner Avenue called Vredehoek Township A reflected in General Plan TP3 (see Annexure 5 at the end of Chapter 4). Here, township development conditions were imposed in December 1930, allowing not more than one *dwelling* together with the necessary out-buildings and accessories to be erected on each lot, and that not more than half the area of any one lot be built upon. This was a significant change from the conditions stipulated for the development of the earlier portion of Vredehoek where one *building* was permitted, one *dwelling* eradicated the possibility of building flats, and semi-detached dwellings. Other stipulated conditions included that all erven be used for residential purposes; that erven be not subdivided; that all corners at the junction of roads

be splayed with a minimum splay length of 6,6 metres; that no building be erected within 10 Cape feet (3,14 metres) of the street boundary of any 40 Cape foot (12,6 metre) street, road or avenue, or 15 Cape feet (4,7 metres) from Denholm and Ludlow Roads, and Exner Avenue of 50 Cape feet (15,74 metres) in width; that the surface of all roadways be cleared, graded and roughly formed to the extent necessary to give practicable vehicular access; and that lots 29 – 40, the land that is currently Yeoville Sports field, be reserved for a school site (CCC, AF20/1/627, 58-59).

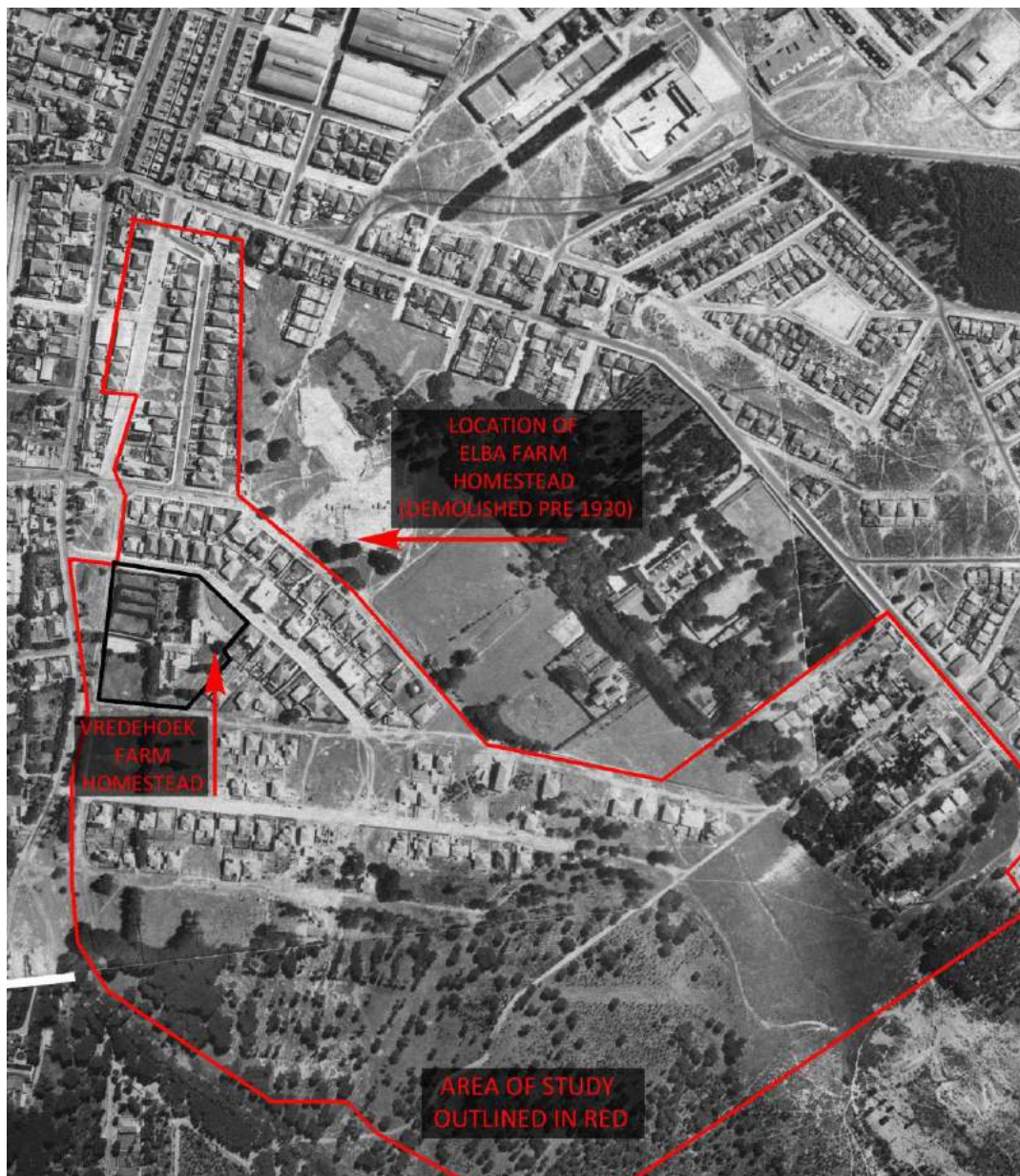


Figure 12: Aerial photograph c1935 illustrating the first portions of Vredehoek almost fully developed and Vredehoek Township A in the process of developing. The Vredehoek Farm homestead, outlined in black above, still existed at the time that this photo was taken. (Courtesy of National Geo-spatial Information. Overlay by author 2017)

Later, in the early 1940s after multiple requests for the waiving of the single dwelling condition from land owners looking to develop their sites into flats, the Townships Board recognised that Vredehoek had developed as an area conducive to blocks of flats, and advised that Vredehoek Township A, the only section of Vredehoek reserved for single dwelling development, be included into the Township Special Residential Zone which allowed for the development of flats by special consent (CCC, AF20/1/627, 96).

The Townships Board required that natural streams flowing off the mountain be deviated into the roadway so as not to interfere with the new township layout, thus missing an early opportunity for expressing and maximising the natural features of the landscape (CCC, AF20/1/627, 30). The erven placed within the path of this natural stream have subsequently experienced flooding.

The remaining and largest portion of the Estate of the Late E.H.F. Mellish, first called Vredehoek Township B and later Vredehoek Extension Township, bounded by Wexford Avenue, St. James Street, Chelmsford, Davenport, Bradwell, Florida, Yeoville and Highlands Roads and Exner Avenue (see Annexures 6a-e at the end of Chapter 4), was approved by the Townships Board in favour of The Vredehoek Estates company in 1932 with the same conditions as stipulated for Vredehoek Township A excepting that, as with the first subdivided portion, one *building* may be erected on half of the property.

This summary of how Vredehoek developed informed by the conditions stipulated by the Townships Board explains how the morphology of the area in terms of use, plot size and pattern, building type, and positioning of dwellings and flats upon their plots came into being.

Within the later decades of the 1900s, blocks of flats within the Upper Table Valley, including Vredehoek, were falling into various levels of dilapidation and neglect. Many of the original older blocks were being rented by owners at low rates to their tenants. These low levels of income did not economically support the upkeep of the blocks and thus they were falling into disrepair, negatively impacting the aesthetics of the surrounding environment. The Sectional Title Act No. 66 of 1971 had a positive effect on many of these blocks of flats, revitalised through refurbishment before individual units were sold (Rennie & Riley, 1986: 9). It is possible that these run down flats within Vredehoek created a poor impression of the neighbourhood at a time when the Upper Table Valley was being considered as an environment worth protecting.

#### **THE ARCHITECTURAL STYLES PREVALENT IN VREDEHOEK:**

Buildings within Vredehoek, particularly the houses, have been described as Arts and Crafts houses. It is more accurate to describe these houses as stylistically eclectic exhibiting a mix of Arts and Crafts features, Cape Dutch Revival elements and more ordinary mass-produced elements.

The Arts and Crafts movement came about towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Britain as a reaction to industrialisation, mass-production and the resultant monotony of factory produced standard forms, deskilling of workmen and the extinguishing of natural creativity. The aim of those leading the movement was to revive individuality in artistic creation as opposed to reviving historic styles, encourage social reform through better workshop conditions and to “re-establish a harmony between architect, designer and craftsman and to bring handcraftsmanship to the production of well-designed, affordable, everyday objects” (Cumming & Kaplan, 1991: 6).

The leading principles of the Arts and Crafts endeavour were individualism, design unity, joy in labour and regionalism (Cumming & Kaplan, 1991: 7). Characteristics of Arts and Crafts architecture include traditional construction, craftsmanship, asymmetry, use of local materials left in their natural state, use of an assortment of materials and a reflection of vernacular traditions. It was recognised that greater accessibility to Arts and Crafts products required commercial co-operation, the machine was accepted by many craft-designers as a craft-tool. “For manufacturers and retailers, however, Arts and Crafts was often simply one more marketable style” (Cumming & Kaplan, 1991: 6-7). Ironically, the resultant well-crafted homes and objects attracted wealthier patrons, William Morris, one of the leaders of the movement, became perturbed “by the obvious contradiction between his ideal of democratic art and the ‘idle privileged classes’ who formed his patrons. His pursuit of good design translated into carefully executed, cheap products remained a dream” (Cumming & Kaplan, 1991: 6-7).

Also ironic in the case of this study is the fact that the single-storey dwellings in Vredehoek are perceived by certain heritage-claimants as being heritage-worthy due to their embodiment of Arts and Crafts architectural characteristics. Whilst this is partly correct in terms of some of the dwellings, particularly on Ludlow and Yeoville Roads which exhibit Arts and Crafts characteristics such as bay windows, the material combinations of plastered brickwork, exposed brickwork, and exposed natural stone - the latter particularly in plinth walls, boundary walls and portico columns, generally however, the nature of the typical Vredehoek dwelling, and others of its type throughout Cape Town, is that they are not particularly well built or crafted but rather stamped out in a very ordinary manner with prefabricated elements added such as concrete columns and ornamentation, thus contradictory to the intentions of the Arts and Crafts movement focused on craftsmanship and opposed to the industrialised standardisation of products.

Due to the significance of the Art Deco buildings that exist within Vredehoek, as articulated by heritage professionals, a group of Vredehoek residents, representatives of CIBRA and certain local planning authority officials, it is necessary to briefly explain the concept of Art Deco, what the

significant characteristics of this style are and whether these characteristics are exhibited in any strength in the buildings that exist within the area of study.

Art Deco architecture, also known as Style Moderne has its roots in a decorative and applied arts style which started evolving before World War I and reached the highest point of its development in the 1925 Paris Exposition, officially entitled the Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes from where the named Art Deco was derived. Art Deco shares characteristics with architectural styles that preceded it and coincided with it, such as the geometry and linearity of the Modern Movement, Bauhaus and De Stijl, as well as the decorative styles of the British Arts and Crafts movement and the Chicago School (Bayer, 1992: 7-12).



Figure 13: The Pomone Pavilion at the 1925 Paris Exposition for the French department store Bon Marché designed by architect Louis-Hippolyte Boileau displays repetition of linear elements, vertical emphasis, angular edges and ornate detailing - all characteristics that would become common to Art Deco buildings.

([www.worldfairs.info](http://www.worldfairs.info))

Style Moderne is categorised in two phases, both using a common set of machine-made building materials (Curtis, 1982: 57). The earlier phase of the 1920s is called Art Deco, or Zig Zag Moderne which is typified by sharp-edges, an emphasis on vertical lines and extensive decoration. Art Deco or Zig Zag Moderne architecture is characterised by geometry and surface focused decoration, ornament, texture and colour – often on the front elevation only. Decorative elements and forms were influenced by a wide range of sources, some ancient and exotic inspired by Egyptian and Mayan temples for example, others more recent and unique to place such as the seaside and tropical inspired patterns of Miami, Florida. Typical decorative elements include sunburst shapes,

chevron, zigzag and stepped patterns. Art Deco buildings in the eyes of purists need to include outstanding ornament, polychromy, distinctive lettering or ornamental metalwork (Bayer, 1992: 8).



Figure 14



Figure 15



Figure 16



Figure 17

Figures 14 - 17: Mc Alpin, Leslie, Crescent and Webster Hotels in South Beach, Miami are all intact, excellent examples of Zig Zag Moderne Art Deco, displaying typical features including angular edges, windows with horizontal ribbon panes, bold use of colour, distinctive lettering, cantilevered canopies above openings, ornamental metalwork within the entrance door in the case of Mc Alpin and Leslie and strong vertical emphasis at the building's centre. (Figure 14 by Virginia Duran, [www.duranvirginia.wordpress.com](http://www.duranvirginia.wordpress.com), 2014; figure 15 by Cristen Olsen, [www.hueamour.com](http://www.hueamour.com), 2015; figure 16 by Keren Veisblatt Toledano, [www.thewalkupblog.com](http://www.thewalkupblog.com), 2012; and figure 17 [www.oregonstate.edu](http://www.oregonstate.edu))

The later 1930s phase of Style Moderne was called Streamlined or Streamlined Moderne, taking the focus on machine-made products one step further by designing buildings to look like machines (Curtis, 1982: 57). Industrial design influences, including the design of large ocean liners, a central part of travel in the 1920s and 1930s, informed the design of Streamlined Moderne (Bayer, 1992: 17). Buildings in this style were characterised by curves and horizontality stressing forward machine-like movement, smooth surfaces were emphasised and decoration used in moderation in the form of repeated geometric patterns such as circles and/or stripes in groups of three or four – windows were often round to echo ship portholes (Curtis, 1982: 58). Horizontal bands of windows are also characteristic with ribbon-like horizontal panes, as well as cantilevered canopies above doors and windows (Curtis, 1982: 58).



Figure 18



Figure 19

Figures 18 & 19: The Marlin Hotel in South Beach Miami, an excellent example of Streamlined Moderne Art Deco embodying the characteristic curves, as well as typical central vertical emphasis at the entrance to the building, horizontal windows with ribbon-like panes, cantilevered canopies above windows, polychromy, distinctive lettering and excellent applied decoration. (Figure 18 by Ollie Neglerio, 2011; Figure 19 by Butch Osborne, 2011)



Figure 20



Figure 21



Figure 22



Figure 23

Figures 20-23: Further excellent examples of Streamlined Moderne buildings. Figure 20: Cardozo Hotel at 1300 Ocean View Drive, South Beach, Miami designed by architect Henry Hohausser (Steve Minor, 2007); figure 21: apartment block South Beach, Miami (Dan Collins, gomadnomad.com, 2016); figures 22 & 23: Barbizon Hotel, Ocean View Drive, South Beach, Miami (Google Streetview, 2016; miamihabitat.com, 2017)



Figure 24



Figure 25

Figure 24: Art Deco house in Napier, New Zealand (insidehook.com, 2016); figure 25: Streamlined Moderne house in Albury, New South Wales, Australia (T. Ryan, modernnaus.blogspot.com.au, 2012)

Art Deco architecture manifested in vertically soaring, ornately decorated public buildings such as the Chrysler building in New York City and the Colosseum Building on Riebeek Street, Cape Town; smaller private residential dwellings and apartment buildings such as the acclaimed collections in South Beach, Miami, and Napier. In some cases whole towns and cities whose main periods of development occurred in very short periods during the 1920s to 1940s contain rich collections of Style Moderne inspired architecture such as Napier, New Zealand which needed to be rebuilt after a devastating earth quake in 1931 and Asmara, Eritrea colonised by the Italians in 1935 in preparation for Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia and envisioned Italian empire on the Horn of Africa (Denison et al, 2003: 52-54).



Figure 26



Figure 27

Figures 26 & 27: Jubilee Court, a good example of an Art Deco block of flats in Bulwer, Durban, South Africa (kznpr.co.za, 2017)



Figure 28: A cluster of smaller Art Deco flats embodying the symmetrical, square-edged characteristics of the earlier phase of Art Deco blocks of flats. Ellan Vannin, Deo Volente and Alder Court, Bulwer, Durban. (M. Mulholland, durbandeco.org.za, 2011)

Vredehoek developed in the main between 1926 and 1945 and thus has a collection of both Art Deco/ Zig Zag Moderne blocks of flats and Streamlined Moderne blocks, as well as larger flat complexes with Art Deco features. The Art Deco and Streamlined blocks in Vredehoek are typical in

size, scale and form as those found through-out the world. However, fine detail and architectural excellence as illustrated above are mostly lacking in the Vredehoek collection when compared to its contemporaries in Durban, Miami and Napier due to the speculative nature of their development - many designed by the owner/developer without an architect.

Also problematic to the existing collection in Vredehoek is the extent to which the authenticity and character of some of the original buildings have been watered down through insensitive additions and alterations, such as the loss of original teak or steel framed windows and their horizontal proportions, the insensitive enclosure of balconies – often installed in varying materials and pane proportions due to apartments being owned by different tenants, and the removal of original boundary walls, gate posts and gates often replaced by non-permeable boundary walls or nothing at all to maximise space for parking.

#### **ASSESSMENT OF VREDEHOEK'S BUILT FABRIC AND TOWNSCAPE QUALITY:**

In order to understand what special character, qualities and heritage resources exist within the townscape of Vredehoek it is necessary to assess the natural landscape and built fabric of the area to identify conservation-worthy elements. Conzen's methods of articulating the character of a townscape through an assessment of its town plan, building fabric or pattern of building forms, pattern of urban land use and how these elements sit within the natural topography of the environment has been adopted to articulate what character exists within Vredehoek.

As discussed in Chapter 2, the accumulation of form-producing periods, each with their own form style, can become a distinctive and recognisable morphological period on the urban landscape. The building fabric and town plan of these form-producing periods can be made up by architectural building styles, building coverage, plot patterns and the elevational plot-series of buildings along a street line. The combination of these elements "...derives uniqueness from its site circumstances and establishes a measure of morphological homogeneity or unity in some or all respects over its area" (Conzen, 1960: 4-5). The built manifestations within Vredehoek are not an accumulation of form-producing periods due to the fact that this residential suburb only began to develop eighty to ninety years ago. It does however, still retain much of its original built fabric, original plot extents and massing pattern reflecting the housing and development conditions of the time when the suburb was established. Whilst this morphological expression of Vredehoek's original swift urban development did manifest into a homogenous built environment of single dwellings with hipped, red-tiled roofs located at the centre of their plots and small to medium flat complexes built in an Art Deco style together generating a pattern of massing and period-character, this homogeneity has dissipated incrementally over time through additions and alterations to the original fabric.

Whilst additions and alterations are to be expected due to the changing nature of user's requirements, these additions and alterations have happened in a very hap-hazard manner, often with no consideration to existing architectural style, scale and massing, and materiality; and in the case of many dwellings, the additions of garages and carports over the street setback line have ruptured the elevational plot-series that existed previously. The result is a townscape still reflecting core elements of its morphological development, however, portions are no longer distinctive but watered down.

In terms of the built environment, the main elements within Vredehoek that heritage-claimants deem to be valuable are the clusters of Art Deco buildings and the village-like scale of the townscape made up by the homogenous single dwellings and flats. The following section investigates these building types and how they sit within the morphological framework of Vredehoek's town plan.



Figure 29: An aerial view of Vredehoek looking towards the west, with Exner Avenue running towards the mountain on the left hand side of the image and the buildings fronting onto Ludlow Road in the foreground of the image. This image illustrates a portion of the earliest part of Vredehoek to develop. The street blocks within this earlier portion are bounded by Exner and Highlands Avenue; Ludlow Road in the foreground which becomes Vredehoek Avenue, off which Upper Maynard and Virginia Avenues are located. This image illustrates the predominance of hipped roofed dwellings within this earlier portion of Vredehoek, with flats becoming more prevalent as development moved up the slopes. (Image courtesy of Think3DLab and Mason Properties, 2016. Overlays and annotations by author.)

The building typologies that exist in Vredehoek today reflect the stylistic, social and political influences as discussed in the history of Vredehoek's development earlier within Chapter 4. There are two main types of buildings in Vredehoek originating from the first-phase development of the suburb: hipped roofed dwellings typically single storey with red roof tiles situated towards the front and middle of their plot, and small to medium sized blocks of flats – either with flat or hipped roofs mostly built in the Art Deco and Streamlined Moderne style. Contemporary blocks of flats reflecting second generation infill development within the area have, in many areas, been in keeping with the first-phase morphology of building siting and massing, however new developments approved within the past few years currently in the process of being constructed will add buildings with a new morphological type to the existing dwellings and flats due to new zoning restrictions.



Figure 30: This image follows on from figure 29 illustrating a majority of the Vredehoek Extension Township - the largest portion of Vredehoek to develop between the late 1930s and late 1950s. Here we can clearly see the shift towards the development of blocks of flats with flat and hipped roofs as discussed earlier. (Image courtesy of Think3DLab and Mason Properties, 2016.)

The single dwellings within the area embody a collection of elements typical of those built within Cape Town between the 1920s and 1930s reflecting the change in architectural style: prefabricated building components such as pre-cast concrete columns supporting porticos with red terracotta Marseilles tiled roofs, forward facing Cape Dutch Revival gables, mass-produced windows and doors with horizontal panes, and elements broadly influenced by the Arts and Crafts architectural style such as hipped roofs with tiles, exposed brick chimneys, mixed use of materials such as exposed

brick and natural stone, teak doors and windows with lead panes and decorative stained glass patterns, and bay windows.

Two types can be distinguished within these single dwellings: standard square houses with minimal detailing, often with a stoep cut out of the centre or corners still covered by the hipped roof, with teak Arts and Crafts joinery within the house; and Cape Dutch Revival houses, similar to the standard square house but slightly larger often with a higher degree of finish. These Cape Dutch Revival houses typically exhibit porticos and stoeps supported by columns, a forward facing gable, a grand staircase and detailed boundary wall. The majority of these single dwellings – particularly the standard square type, although creating a repetitive pattern of similar scale and massing within the townscape, are very ordinary, stamped out in a mass-produced fashion with no particular architectural flair or special qualities. A small number of houses do exist within the area that has been studied which are good, intact examples of this 1920s/30s housing type where more thoughtful design has pulled the eclectic mix of elements together into a coherent, noteworthy example of its type.

Influenced by the topography of the area, the single storey dwellings on the upper, southern side of the street in Vredehoek typically sit upon a raised plinth level to accommodate for the steep slopes in the region. These plinth levels are typically less than the full height of a storey at their highest level, but in some cases are high enough to accommodate a garage.



Figure 31



Figure 32



Figure 33

Figures 31-32: 15 Virginia Avenue designed by architect L. Corman for Mrs. R. Copelowitz is a good, intact example of a typical 1920s hipped roof dwelling with stoep contained within the main roof supported by pre-cast columns. This example is slightly more embellished than the standard square type with a small forward facing gable and semi-circle balconies pushed out of the stoep balustrading with pre-cast column details.

Figure 33: 8-10 Bellair Road embodying typical characteristics of a standard square 1920s/1930s dwelling.

(Figures 31 & 32: Google Streetview, 2009; figure 33: by author, 2016)



Figure 34



Figure 35

Figures 34 & 35: 12 Ludlow Road designed by M.G. Damstra in 1935 for S. Varkel, one of the main owners and developers of land within Vredehoek at the time, displays the elements typical to 1920s/1930s houses as discussed above including the Arts and Crafts characteristics of natural, exposed stone. In this example the stoep is covered only by a portico pushed forward outside of the main hipped roof. Also visible are Art Deco details within the stepped edges of the main portico, and side portico with supported canopy slab. The original plan by Damstra is included as Annexure 7 at the end of Chapter 4 which illustrates the full elevation currently obstructed by new boundary wall and gate. (Figure 34: by Google Streetview, 2009; figure 35: by author)



Figure 36



Figure 37

Figures 36 & 37: 31 Virginia Road, designed by A. Paul in 1925 for E. Zieper, is a good, intact example of a grander 1920s/30s square dwelling raised onto a plinth level accommodating a garage. Figure 37, c2009, illustrates the original entrance path, gates and decorative boundary wall. A carport has subsequently been

added to this property which detracts from the overall character but is separate from the original structure, unlike many examples where new garages have been added to the existing structure breaking the original building morphology. (Figure 36: by author, 2016; figure 37: by Google Streetview, 2009)



Figure 38



Figure 39



Figure 40



Figure 41

Figures 38-41: 21, 25 & 33 Virginia Avenue (figures 38, 40 & 39 respectively), and 16 Rugley Road (figure 41) illustrate good, relatively intact examples of Cape Dutch Revival houses in Vredehoek. The original plan for 21 Virginia Avenue is attached as Annexure 8 at the end of Chapter 4. (All images by author, 2016; except 25 Virginia Road, Google Streetview, 2009)

The blocks of flats built between the 1930s and 1950s within the first phase of Vredehoek’s development can be divided into four types: square-edged symmetrical Art Deco blocks, longer Streamlined Moderne horizontally emphasised ‘ocean-liner’ blocks, larger flat complexes arranged around a central garden or courtyard exhibiting a mix of streamlined curves and angular edges, and later Art Deco blocks rectangular in plan with hipped red tiled roofs with eaves, horizontally emphasised balconies and windows, and with much less embellishment.

The earlier square-edged Art Deco style blocks of flats in Vredehoek are petite in size and symmetrically proportioned, typically three storeys high with two or four dwelling units. These blocks have mono-pitched roofs concealed by parapets which typically step downwards on the side walls away from the front façade. These symmetrical flats, rectangular in plan with shorter side always facing the street, are arranged around a main central vertical element. This central element of the Vredehoek examples is typically much plainer than those found in the Miami examples, simply decorated with applied vertical plaster motifs and embedded lines or vertical window arrangements. This central column accommodates the entrance and circulation stair off which a flat unit on either side of the first and second storey is situated. Garages, originally designed with double leafed timber doors including a horizontally paned or decoratively paned window, are situated on either side of the entrance at ground level. Very few of these original garage doors exist today.

Decorative elements are typically focused on the front façade only, the front parapet sometimes steps up towards the central feature column which usually breaks through and rises slightly above the front parapet wall emphasising the verticality of this central element. Entrance ways are typically square edged with a concrete lintel overhead sometimes with the flat complexes name included, or arched, often with brick detailing and a sunburst window or decorative feature. Each street facing flat unit has a street facing balcony either included within the main envelope of the structure or cantilevered off the front façade, sometimes wrapping around the corner, with cantilevered canopies covering the top balcony. These balconies typically have 90 degree edges to match the square building, or are curved, and are often decorated with horizontal bands within the plasterwork. Porthole windows are typically included within the central column or side walls of the terraces, these windows are round or rectangular with clipped corners.

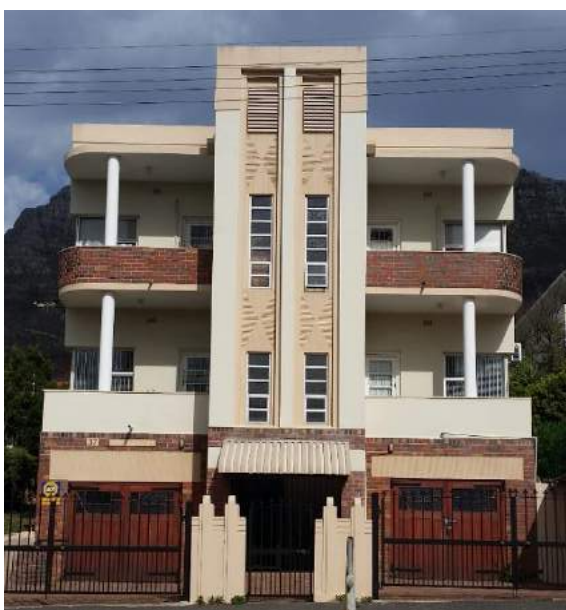


Figure 42



Figure 43

Figure 42: Fleetwood, 37 Exner Road is a good example of the small square-edged Art Deco blocks within Vredehoek illustrating an emphasised central column rising above the top parapet with some original windows with horizontal panes and plaster detailing, original garage doors with top windows, and detailed entrance gate posts. Typical to these buildings in Vredehoek, most original windows have been replaced by aluminium windows. Figure 43: Lenmar Court, a very ordinary block designed for H. Talberg, another main developer in Vredehoek, is a typical example of Vredehoek type Art Deco. (Images by author, 2016)



Figure 44



Figure 45



Figure 46



Figure 47

Figures 44 - 47: Kynance, 33 Bellair Road (figure 44), designed by architect F. Nieuwenhuizen for developers Varkel and Talberg is a fairly intact example of square-edged Art Deco displaying bricked entrance archway, typical proportions, some original windows, original entrance posts with prefabricated concrete ornaments. 25 (figure 46) and 29 (figure 45) Bellair Road are a matching pair of Art Deco flats also designed by F. Nieuwenhuizen for developers Unique Homes in 1935. A slightly unusual, asymmetrical pair with applied decoration to the centre of the facade pushing through the parapet. Most original windows and garage doors have been lost. Original plan attached as Annexure 9 at the end of Chapter 4. (All images by author, 2016)

Within Vredehoek, these square-edged flats are always found on the 595 square metre plots located towards the front of the plot 3,15 or 4,7 metres away from the street boundary, the street of which is either 12,6 or 15,7 metres in width respectively. As stipulated within the conditions of development, no more than 50 percent of the plot is built upon, the flats are balanced by 3-4 metres of open space on either side of the building and 3-4 metres of space towards the back of the plot. Most often, these blocks have no boundary walls, fences, trees or planting to express the street boundary. In some cases original entrance paths with Art Deco detailed gate posts still exist emphasising the central axis of the building, unfortunately most of these have been removed over time and the transition between the street boundary and the building façade is a harsh and barren zone with hard tar or concrete ground materials encouraging parking.

The next type of flat complexes present in Vredehoek are in the Streamlined Moderne style - longer, larger buildings with horizontal emphasis. These flats are located predominately on the larger but awkwardly shaped left-over pieces of land at the corner ends of street blocks where a further repetition of a contiguous 595 square metre plot could no longer fit. In several instances, two plots have been consolidated to accommodate larger flats in the Streamlined style. These flats exploit the larger surface area by wrapping into a U-shape with a central courtyard, as illustrated in figures 48 and 49 of Victory Court. The main characteristics of the Streamlined Moderne flats within Vredehoek are generously curved corners. These blocks are characterised by smooth plastered walls, sometimes with bands of plaster as a subtle decoration, they too have mono-pitched roofs concealing parapets which either step in bands towards the top of the parapet, or are clad in stacks of smooth plaster bands. Entrances are typically vertically emphasised with decorated vertical bands piercing and terminating above the horizontal parapet. Windows are horizontally emphasised with bands of ribbon windows. Balconies typically sit within the main external curves of the buildings with the top line of the balustrade walls in line with the bands of windows, again placing emphasis on horizontal lines. Use of pastel paint colours typical to those found in South Beach Miami have been used on Bradwell Mansions.

Talsen Mansions (figures 51 and 52) on the corner of Davenport and St. James Roads, Dominion Mansions (figures 55 and 56) on the corner of Bradwell and Florida Roads, as well as Bradwell Mansions (figures 53 and 54) on the corner of Bradwell Road and the public open space on Highlands Avenue are some of the few buildings attempting to address street corners within Vredehoek, and exploiting the awkward constraints of the site.



Figure 48



Figure 49

Figure 48 & 49: Victory Court, 48 Davenport Road designed by architect J. Bylsma for Talberg in 1941 illustrates in elevation and plan the streamlined curves of Streamlined Moderne. Also illustrated are the changes to original windows and a filled in balcony. (Figure 48 by author, 2017; figure 49: City Map Viewer, 2017)

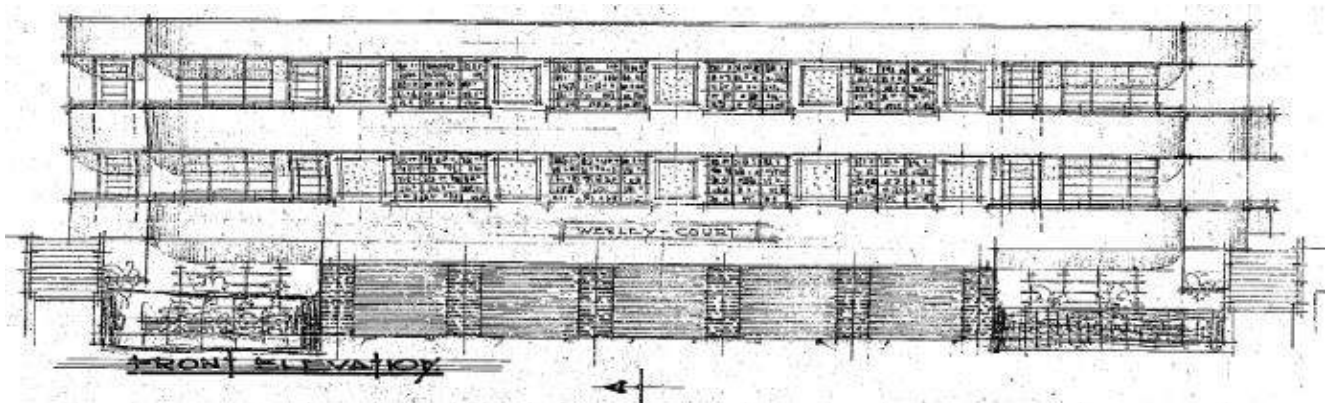


Figure 50: Extract from original drawings by Bylsma of Victory Court, initially called Wesley Court, illustrating the intended façade decoration that was not executed and fenestration types which have subsequently been changed. (City of Cape Town, Planning and Development Management)



Figure 51



Figure 52

Figures 51 & 52: Talsen Mansions, 54 Davenport Road another Streamlined Moderne example illustrating Streamlined curves and the exploitation of the awkward corner site. (Figure 51: City Map Viewer, 2017; figure 52 by author, 2017)



Figure 53



Figure 54



Figure 55



Figure 56

Figures 53 – 56: Bradwell Mansions, 2 Bradwell Road (figures 53 & 54) is a good example of Streamlined Moderne with one corner curved displaying the characteristic features as described above. Dominion Mansions, 34 Bradwell Road also has one rounded corner; two well-articulated entrances and ornate metalwork, unusual to Vredehoek Art Deco examples, to some balconies and balustrades. (Figures 53-55 by author, 2016; figure 56: extract from aerial photograph by Think3DLab for Mason Properties, 2016)

The third type of first-phase flats within Vredehoek are the larger flat complexes typically in a U-shape formation, arranged around a central garden or courtyard exhibiting a mix of streamlined curves and angular edges and an assortment of all the typical characteristics discussed above. These

blocks typically contribute greenery towards the streetscape due to the gardens at their centre and street edge, particularly in the case of Glen Alpine (illustrated in figure 62 overleaf), Petra Court at the bottom end of Davenport Road, and Geriva Mansions on St. James Street. These complexes are the most irregular within the morphology of plot patterns, some complexes made up of four consolidated plots.



Figure 57

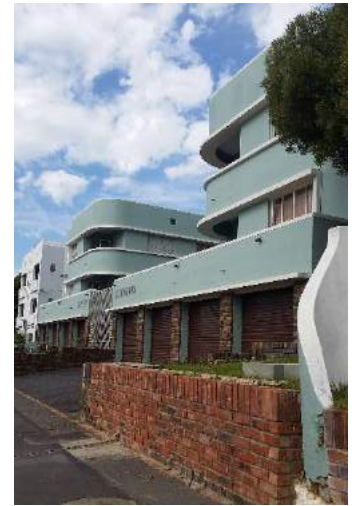


Figure 58

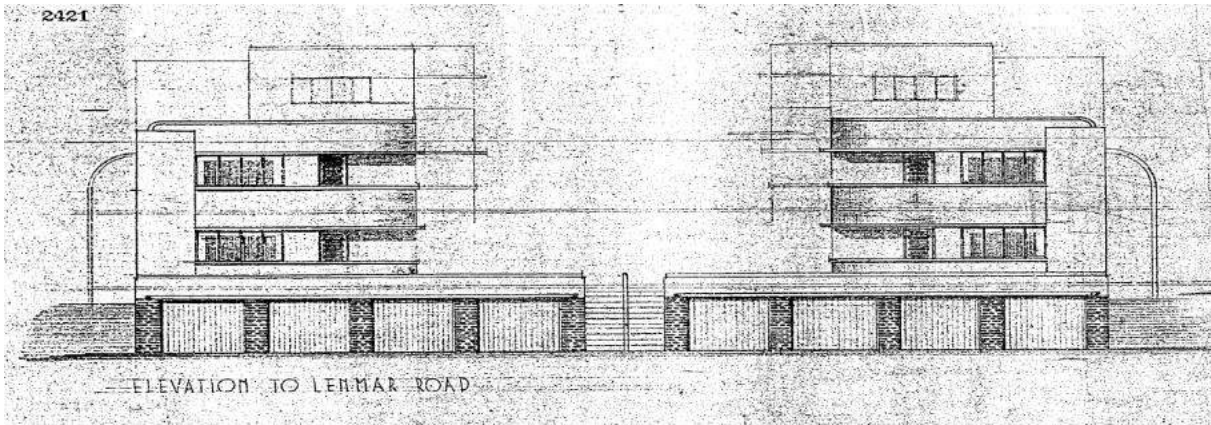


Figure 59

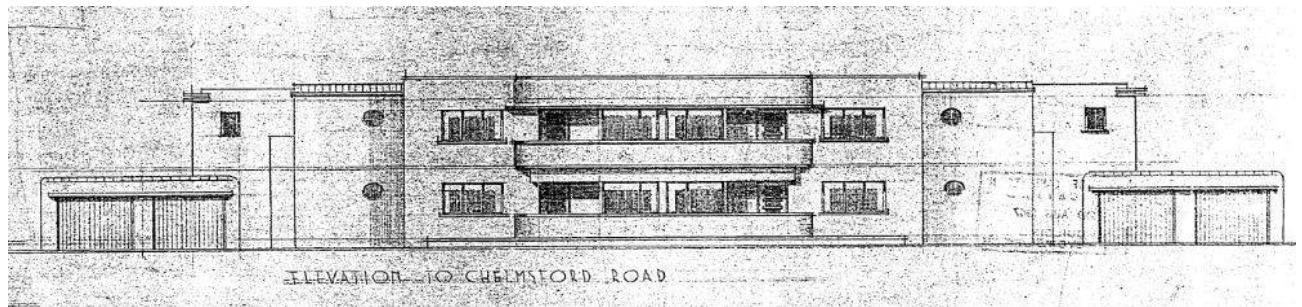


Figure 60

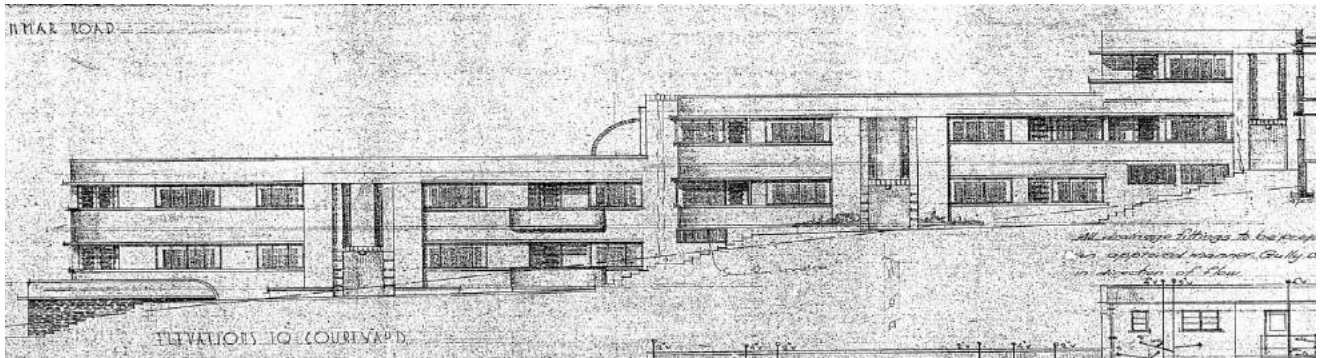


Figure 61

Figures 57-61: Geriva Mansions, 27 St. James Street designed by Bylsma for Koeberg Land (Pty) Ltd in 1947 is the largest building within Vredehoek and a very good example of Streamlined Moderne Art Deco. (Figures 57 & 58 by author, 2017; figures 59-61: original plans City of Cape Town, Planning and Development Management)

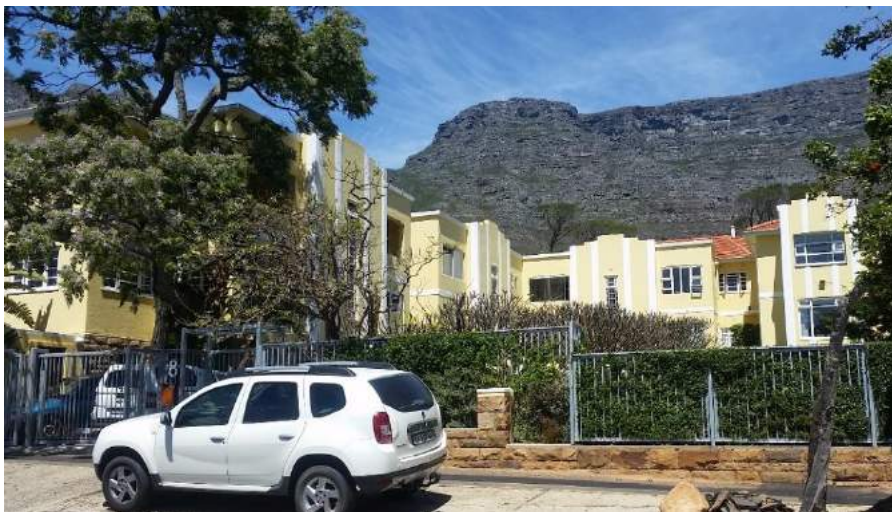


Figure 62: Glen Alpine, 8 Davenport Road designed by Dawood Jacobs for developer George Kuhnert in 1939. (Figure by author, 2016)

The fourth type of first phase flat within Vredehoek is the later Art Deco rectangular shaped block with a large hipped, tiled roof with small eaves. These blocks are also situated on the 595 square metre plots with their short side facing the street, sited within the middle of the plot with 3-4 metres of open side space between the block and the common and street boundaries, but are typically slightly longer than the earlier Art Deco block mentioned previously. Typically these blocks have balconies with rectangular emphasis projecting forward in line with the roof eaves on one side of the street façade. These blocks are far more ordinary than those discussed above. Besides the contributory role that they play within the streetscape through the rhythm of their repeated massing, and being of the same hipped roofed type – these flats are significantly less noteworthy than their peers.



Figure 63



Figure 64

Figures 63 & 64: Escombe Court, 9 Escombe Road and Guildford Court, 15 Escombe Road. Typical examples of non-descript late Art Deco blocks within Vredehoek displaying characteristics as described above. (Figures by author, 2016)

In most cases, the strength of the Art Deco and Streamlined Moderne character within these blocks in Vredehoek has been significantly watered down over time through the insensitive closing in of balconies and replacement of horizontally emphasised windows and doors with non-descript and out of character aluminium or timber components. In a few cases significant alterations and additions to the main structure of the building have been permitted which detract from the authenticity of the original (see Morningside, figure 97 and Sherwood Court, figures 124 and 125 within Annexure 12 at the end of Chapter 4).

New infill apartment blocks have been developed within Vredehoek over the past few decades, the common boundary setbacks required by the zoning scheme at the time until March 2013 still required side space between the common boundary and the building, thus the morphology of how these newer buildings are sited and massed on their plots retained the pattern of the first-phase flats. In 2013 however, zoning regulations changed with the promulgation of a revised zoning scheme. Properties previously zoned for flats in Vredehoek changed from General Residential sub-zone R4 to General Residential 4 (GR4) with amendments to certain development conditions including an increased bulk factor, an increase to 60% site coverage and buildings are now permitted on the common boundary up to 15 metres in height.

These new provisions will result in a new building morphology within the suburb, the most noticeable characteristic of this new morphology will be the stretching of the built form at the front

half of the site from one common boundary end of the plot to the other (see figures 66 and 66b). The introduction of this new building morphology will break the existing rhythm of solid and void massing of the built environment, introducing a denser composite of buildings. In some cases the side spaces between existing blocks of flats has become unkempt dead space behind fences and gates, this new morphology will reduce such side spaces. New developments are required to provide sufficient parking for all residential units and some visitors bays, these new blocks of flats will typically house this parking on the ground storey.



Figures 65 & 66: 3D visualisation of proposed alterations to The Adelphi, 21 Bellair Road (figure 65) which retains the original Art Deco façade of the building on the property with new bulk added to the back of the property extending to the common boundary. 3D visualisation of The Elm, 22 Davenport Road (figure 66), a new block of flats currently under construction which will be one of the first buildings in the area to be built on the common boundaries thus introducing a new building morphology. (Bespoke Residences, greeff.co.za, 2017 (left); Horizon Capital, greeff.co.za, 2017 (right))

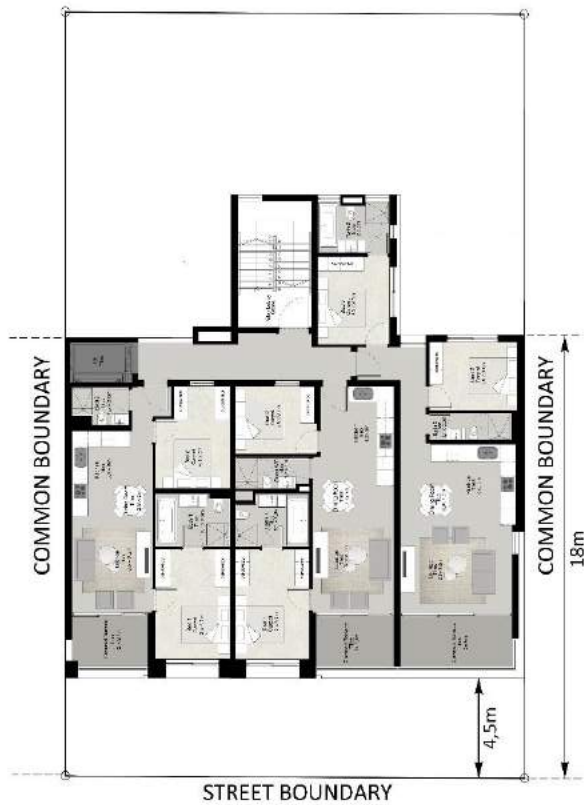


Figure 66b: Typical plan of a new development illustrating the resultant building morphology informed by 0m building setbacks on the common boundaries for 15 metres in height for 18 metres running perpendicular to the street boundary. (Courtesy of BBB Architects, 2016)



Figure 67: Aerial view of Bradwell Road with 3D visualisation of The Bradwell, a new block of flats located at 24 Bradwell Road, currently under construction. This image illustrates how the new building morphology will sit amongst the existing built environment of the townscape. (Image courtesy of Think3DLab and Mason Properties, 2016)

The purpose of this study is to understand what qualities, characteristics and cultural significance need to be embodied within an urban environment that make the area worthy of conservation-oriented protection through laws and policies. The criteria developed with which to interrogate and evaluate such environments requires determining whether the urban environment in question embodies cultural significance and characteristics informed by an urban history reflected in its authentic manifestations developed over time through continuity of use, and whether the urban environment embodies high townscape quality established primarily through the aesthetic unity of its component parts.

To answer the research question through this case study, the townscape of Vredehoek has been interrogated and evaluated according to this set of developed criteria. Through the investigation above into Art Deco architecture and the domestic architecture of Cape Town within the 1920s and 1930s, the criteria that need to be met in order to achieve architectural authenticity and merit in the context of these architectural styles has been articulated, the buildings of Vredehoek will be assessed further according to these criteria within the section that follows.

In order to evaluate whether the urban environment of Vredehoek embodies high townscape quality through the aesthetic unity of its component parts, the analysis that follows attempts to further interrogate the content, characteristics and quality of the townscape being considered for heritage area conservation by assessing and evaluating the urban morphology and natural landscape of the environment. This environment and how the buildings discussed above sit within the greater context of their street, street-block and groups of street blocks will be summarised, separated according to the four areas delineated within the map below (figure 68) which illustrates the four micro-periods of Vredehoek's development. Annexure 13 at the end of Chapter 4 illustrates each portion further with additional imagery and description. The elements of character that should be analysed when assessing a townscape according to Baumann have been evaluated here, including setting, topography, landscape features such as open spaces and vegetation, historical evolution and urban morphology, physical building patterns, densities, building typologies and styles, building materials and techniques and disfiguring features (Baumann, 1997: 141).

The description and assessment of the environment that follows also assists in locating the opinions and arguments of heritage-claimants, stakeholders and those with counter claims about the conservation-worthiness of the area that will be discussed shortly.

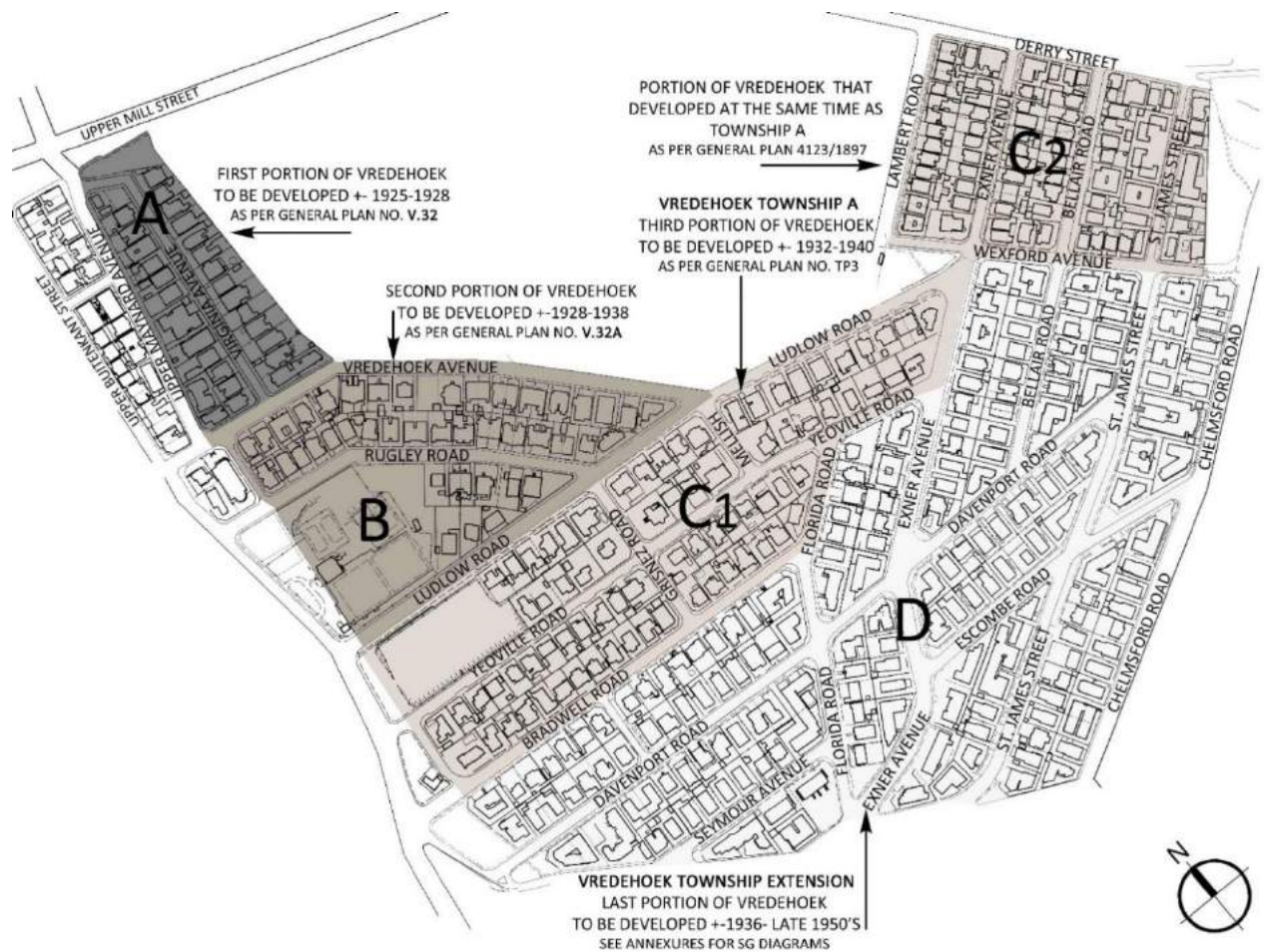


Figure 68: Map of the portion of Vredehoek analysed within this study illustrating the four phases of development between 1925 and the late 1950s. These phases have been differentiated through the use of different colour overlays and labelled from A to D. (Image by author with base maps by the Cape Town City Council. Larger version of image included within Annexure 13 at the end of Chapter 4.)

The first part of Vredehoek to be developed were the regions to the north of Upper Mill Street and along Virginia and Upper Maynard Avenues, as per portion A within figure 68. This area is made up mostly of 1920s and 1930s type housing. The dimensions with which lots were laid out between Upper Maynard and Virginia Avenues measure 15,74 metres in width (50 Cape feet), and between 31,5 and 56,6 metres in length (100 and 180 Cape feet), allowing just enough space to site a single dwelling, a garage - typically towards the back of the site along one plot boundary and a slender corridor along the site's other boundary.



Figure 69: Aerial photograph illustrating the morphological features of Virginia Avenue. (City Map Viewer, City of Cape Town, 2017. Annotated by author)

All of the original 1920s/1930s dwellings along both sides of Virginia Avenue still exist today with their original morphological features - block-plan, plot units and original building - in a relatively unaltered state with new additions typically to the back of the properties. As a result, the intactness of the original line of building elevations with relatively few new additions onto the street and common boundaries of these plots, provides a consistent pattern stepping up along the avenue with the topography of the slope.

On the eastern side of Virginia Avenue in particular, the plinth levels onto which the dwellings sit, as discussed above, have been exaggerated, most likely for functional reasons in most cases, but also to create a more impressive looking house raised well above street level with a grand staircase up to the entrance of the home. These grander homes on the upper eastern side of Virginia Avenue embody the Cape Dutch Revival house typology with forward facing gable, flanked by a concrete-column-supported stoep and red tiled roof, as illustrated in figures 38 – 41, thus the plot-series on the eastern side of Virginia Road in particular adds character to the street, as well as the presence of some mature trees.



Figure 70: Aerial 3D streetview illustrating the line of 1920s/1930s Cape Dutch Revival houses on the eastern side of Virginia Avenue and how they contribute character to the streetscape. (Google Streetview, 2017)

Rennie and Riley described the buildings within Virginia Avenue as “interesting 1930s villas with well-kept gardens” (Rennie & Riley, 1986) within their survey of Vredehoek, noting them as typical housing of their period with pleasant facades. Only number 25 Virginia Avenue was identified as good of its period. The Jacobs and Duckham survey identified a number of the Cape Dutch Revival houses along Virginia Avenue as contributory to a fine urban setting.

The avenue has a mix of lower boundary walls with pockets of greenery which contribute toward streetscape character, as well as a mix of stark solid 1,8 metre high boundary walls, or other shielding devices blocking these dwellings from connecting and contributing towards the streetscape. Trees line the sidewalk on the eastern side of the Virginia Avenue, whilst no trees exist on the western sidewalk. Whilst no cohesive streetscape character exists along Virginia Avenue in its entirety, the mix of 1920s/ 1930s houses, many in relatively good condition makes this street one of the better streetscapes within Vredehoek.



Figure 71: Aerial photograph illustrating the morphological features of the townscape bounded by Vredehoek Avenue, Ludlow Road and Upper Buitenkant Street. (City Map Viewer, City of Cape Town, 2017. Annotated by author)

The built fabric within the area bounded by Vredehoek Avenue, Ludlow Road and Upper Buitenkant Street, with Rugley Road running parallel to Vredehoek Avenue, delineated as portion B within figure 68, unlike Virginia Avenue, does not exhibit consistent morphological elements in terms of plot-pattern, building type, street setback line, or elevational massing. This portion is made up of single and semi-detached hipped roof dwellings, Art Deco and Arts and Crafts blocks of flats and large contemporary flat complexes. Single dwellings in particular, as well as some of the flat complexes within these street blocks have been significantly altered and added to.



Figure 72: Street panoramic of Vredehoek Avenue's southern side illustrating the mix of building types that exist within this portion. (Image by author, 2017)



Figure 73: Single dwellings on Vredehoek Avenue, many with out of character additions and hidden by solid boundary walls. (Image by author, 2017)

A handful of good quality buildings exist within this portion which contribute positively towards the streetscape designed by well-known architects of the time including Claradave Mansions by Damstra and Lilken Court by H.Davidge-Pitts on Rugley Road. Here, the more considered architectural design as opposed to standard solutions is apparent through careful brickwork detailing and a richer layering of decorative elements.



Figure 74



Figure 75

Figures 74 & 75: Lilken Court (figure 74) - 23 Rugley Road by H. Davidge-Pitts, and Claradave Mansions (figure 75) - 33 Rugley Road, by M.G. Damstra. (Images by author, 2016)

The recreational green node of Rugley Road Park within this portion is set against an excellent view of Table Mountain and, although lined by a practical palisade fence, contributes towards the streetscape character within this section of Vredehoek.



Figure 76

Figure 76: Rugley Road Park, although no tangible evidence exists today, Vredehoek Farm Homestead once existed where this park is now situated. (Image by author, 2017)

The combination of mismatched morphological features within these street blocks, the inconsistent building massing, obstructive street boundary treatment and out of character building alterations and additions inhibits the creation of coherent streetscapes within this portion of Vredehoek, with only isolated elements and pockets of elements imparting character to the townscape.

The Rennie and Riley survey noted the green parks within this area, describing the houses as non-descript and typical of the period. The only house to be identified as noteworthy and a good example of its period was number 16 Rugley Road. The flats within this area were noted only as Art Deco, typical of the period, some with interesting facades. Although just outside of the study area, the old Jewish Synagogue at number 16 Vredehoek Avenue was identified as being a good example of its period with Art Deco volumes, decorations and details, and a good façade (Rennie & Riley, 1986). The Jacobs and Duckham survey identified Abmor Flats - 30 Vredehoek Avenue, Claradave Mansions, Lilken Court and Mountain Views Mansion on Rugley Road as contributory to the urban setting (see illustrations within Annexure 13, figures 129 and 130 at the end of Chapter 4).



Figure 77



Figure 78

Figures 77 & 78: 16 Rugley Road (figure 77) designed by S. Chapman for M. Mordukhovitz in 1929 illustrates a noteworthy example of the grander 1920s/1930s Cape Dutch Revival houses with forward facing gable. Two large palm trees framing the central entrance path have recently been cut down. The Bancroft (figure 78), the old Vredehoek Shul is a noteworthy, well-preserved example of Art Deco architecture. (Images by author, 2016)

The next portion of Vredehoek to be developed, Vredehoek Township A, after plots were laid out in 1930 is bounded by Denholm, Ludlow, Bradwell and Florida Roads and Exner Avenue, with Yeoville Road in the middle of this portion running parallel to Ludlow and Bradwell Roads.

Due to the one *dwelling* per plot restriction placed on this portion of Vredehoek, all but 5 plots in this area are inhabited by a single dwelling. Morphologically, 595 square metre contiguous plots of 18,9 x 31,48 metres (60 x 100 Cape feet) and slightly larger corner plots as laid out in 1930 remain, creating a more consistent pattern of street plots than the portion of Vredehoek described above. Buildings, their placement on the street and common boundary setback lines and elevational massing are inconsistent however. Although many of the original dwellings still exist, additions to their original plan have altered the typical single dwelling massing and placement towards the front centre of the plot. In some instances, garages typically pushed to the back of one common boundary now sit in line with the front elevation of the building cutting off the side space typically open on the common boundary. In other cases, the original morphological pattern of building placement on the plot has been changed through the addition of a garage or solid carport onto one side of the street boundary.

Many dwellings within this portion of Vredehoek have been unrecognisably changed through alterations and additions, mostly executed in a manner totally insensitive to the original style of the dwelling. Boundary walls are an inconsistent mix of heights and materials, the majority of which are solid and semi-permeable and some of which are in a neglected state of repair.



Figure 79



Figure 80

Figures 79 & 80: Aerial photograph illustrating the morphological features of the townscape bounded by Ludlow, Bradwell and Florida Roads and Exner Avenue. (City Map Viewer, City of Cape Town, 2017. Annotated by author)

A couple of more noteworthy Arts and Crafts houses exist within this portion (see Annexure 13, images 132 and 133 at the end of Chapter 4), as well a handful of relatively intact examples of 1920s/1930s type housing more carefully designed by architects with richer material composition exhibiting plinths, low boundary walls and portico columns of exposed natural stone. These dwellings have retained much of their original form and morphology, and contribute towards the streetscape. On the whole however, this portion of Vredehoek is a disjointed collection of typical single storey dwellings, very large double storey dwellings and a handful of flats.

Although the flats and the single dwellings with richer character do contribute towards the streetscape, the large amount of insensitively altered houses combined with the predominantly high, solid and mismatched boundary walls detracts significantly from the creation of a coherent, unified streetscape. The lack of consistent or mature planting and trees on the pavements further detracts from streetscape quality, as well as the long, concrete embankment wall on the western half of Ludlow Street retaining the playing field above.

Rennie and Riley described the houses in this portion as non-descript and typical of the period. Already in 1986 many of the houses were noted as being altered. Jacobs and Duckham described the dwellings within the area as typical of their period and identified several as contributory to a good urban setting, including 12, 30, 32, 34 and 46 Ludlow Road and 14 Yeoville Road (see figures 81 and 82, and figures 134 and 135 within Annexure 13 at the end of Chapter 4) also identified as contributory towards the townscape by the author.



Figure 81



Figure 82

Figures 81 & 82: Two good examples of 1920s/1930s dwellings embodying Arts and Crafts characteristics designed by well-known architects at the time. 12 Ludlow Road (figure 81) designed by Damstra for developer Solly Varkel; and 14 Yeoville Road (figure 82) designed by architect W.H. Grant in 1931 for M. Falck - copy of original plan attached as Annexure 15 at the end of Chapter 4. (Figure 81 by Google Streetview, 2009; figure 82 by author, 2016)



Figure 83



Figure 84

Figures 83 - 86: Dwellings within Vredehoek Township A that have been significantly altered from their original morphology. (All images by author, 2016)



Figure 85



Figure 86

The portion of Vredehoek not developed by The Vredehoek Estates company bounded by Wexford Avenue, Derry and St. James Streets and Lambert Road was developed in the mid-1930s at the same time as Vredehoek Township A as discussed above. Plots of a different morphology measuring 12,6 x 31,5 metres (40 x 100 Cape feet) were laid out in three almost identical street blocks, with a slender remainder block on the St. James Street edge (see Annexure 1 at the end of Chapter 4). Single dwellings of the type discussed above were constructed as well as flats higher up on Bellair Road and St. James Street built over two plots. Due to the narrower nature of the plots, a slighter denser arrangement of dwellings developed.

This portion of Vredehoek contains a particularly dense, incoherent mix of noticeably run down, significantly and insensitively altered dwellings and several newer buildings, some of inappropriate scale and design. One or two houses are relatively intact, typical examples of 1920s/1930s type dwellings (see Annexure 13, figures 140 to 141 at the end of Chapter 4). The concrete embankments on the upper side of each street are in particularly poor condition within this section of Vredehoek. Many street boundaries are closed off by solid boundary walls and others are blocked by overgrown shrubbery. The only plots accommodating non-residential uses within the portion of Vredehoek under study are found within these blocks on the Derry Street edge zoned for local business use, however none, besides the Red Sofa Café to a small degree (see Annexure 13, figure 151 at the end of Chapter 4), impart character to the street.



Figure 87: Aerial photograph illustrating the morphological features and dense composition of buildings within the townscape bounded by Lambert Road, Derry and St. James Street and Wexford Avenue. (City Map Viewer, City of Cape Town, 2017. Annotated by author)



Figure 88: The view down Bellair Road illustrating an incoherent set of dwellings, closed off boundary interfaces and steep embankment. (Image by author, 2016)



Figure 89



Figure 90

Figures 89 & 90: Examples of altered dwellings on Lambert Road illustrating the mismatch of additions attached to the dwellings over time (figure 89); example of a very neglected Art Deco block on Derry Street with all original windows replaced by non-descript, out of character aluminium components (figure 90). (Images by author, 2016)

On the corner of Wexford and Exner Avenues, surrounded by single dwellings, 3 Wexford Avenue is an example of second-generation infill development in conflict with the scale and character of the built fabric created by first-phase development. In this instance, three plots measuring 12,6 x 31,5 metres (40x100 Cape feet) from the original township layout plan of 1897 were consolidated in 1939 resulting in a plot size much larger than those surrounding it. A single dwelling was built on the property in the 1940s which was recently demolished and a new seven storey flat complex

constructed. Due to the fact that this plot has GR4 zoning rights, the resultant building is very large. This building triggered major concern within the community. When the same developers applied for the demolition of two further dwellings on Exner Avenue the community objected and a lengthy application process ensued. This application will be discussed shortly to assess the arguments made for and against the conservation-worthiness of the structures proposed for demolition.



Figure 91



Figure 92

Figures 91 & 92: 3 Wexford Avenue. (Images by author, 2016)

The largest portion of Vredehoek, Vredehoek Extension Township, was subdivided in phases between 1934 and 1937. 595 square metre plots measuring 18,9 x 31,48 metres (60 x 100 Cape feet) were laid out throughout this portion. Corner plots created where street blocks terminate are larger, typically with three straight sides and one angular side.



Figure 93

Figure 93: Aerial photograph illustrating the morphological features of Vredehoek Extension Township. (City Map Viewer, City of Cape Town, 2017. Annotated by author)

This largest area of Vredehoek is bounded by Highlands Avenue in the West; Bradwell, Florida, Yeoville Roads and Exner Avenues in the North, Wexford Avenue in the East and Chelmsford Road in the South. Morphologically, contiguous plots of 595 square metres were laid out throughout this portion of Vredehoek. The manner in which the street network was laid out between Highlands Avenue in the West and Derry Street in the East follows no obvious pattern resulting in many very wide intersections due to the wide nature of these street components - each made up of a road, a concrete embankment and two pavements. The street network layout also created irregular street blocks resulting in large triangular corner plots.

This portion of Vredehoek is predominately inhabited by blocks of flats. Earlier and later Art Deco blocks are situated on the 595 square metre plots, and Streamlined Moderne or larger more complex Art Deco flats are situated on the triangular corner plots or over two or more 595 square metre plots. Dwellings exist within the lower streets of this portion, mainly the single storey 1920s/1930s type. Here again, one or two good intact examples of these dwellings exist, whilst most are very ordinary and altered. In general, this portion of Vredehoek retains the morphological plot and building pattern of Vredehoek's first form-producing period giving it a consistent period-character, certain street blocks have not been altered at all.

Unlike most original dwellings, the original flats within this section have undergone less dramatic changes in terms of structural alterations or additions to their original footprint, however all of the flats within the area, some more than others, have experienced incremental changes to original building components such as doors, windows, garage doors and balconies as discussed above, which have compromised the authenticity and integrity of the whole. Examples of these compromised buildings are illustrated within Annexure 12 at the end of Chapter 4.

The nature of the steep slope within this higher section of Vredehoek required the construction of large, concrete embankments. These embankments, combined with the road and pavement on each side accumulates to create a street-network of very wide, harshly textured streets which detract from streetscape quality. Compared to the lower sections of Vredehoek, besides Exner Avenue, very few trees exist on the pavement edges in this higher section. The combination of more concrete embankments and less trees makes this a very harsh part of the suburb.

Consistent with the descriptions of the previous sections of Vredehoek, this largest section is also made up of pockets of good buildings alongside ordinary buildings and those that have been

significantly compromised. Rare in Vredehoek, one or two streetscape vistas exist within this portion (see Annexure 13, figures 150 to 152 at the end of Chapter 4).



Figure 94: Typical street within Vredehoek made up of pavements, road, and concrete embankment on the southern side of the street. Also typical is the harsh materiality of these street networks with road and pavements covered in tar and embankments of rough concrete. (Image by author, 2017)

Other than Virginia Avenue described above, Exner Avenue, Davenport and Bellair Roads are the only streets within Vredehoek that contain pockets of cohesive architectural character.

Davenport Road is lined by contiguous 595 square metre plots, these plots are populated by a mix of Art Deco and Streamlined Moderne flats of varying architectural and aesthetic merit, the southern side of the upper portion of this street displays the most cohesive group of good Art Deco examples within Davenport Road.



Figure 95: Image illustrating the cohesive group of Art Deco flats at the top of Davenport Road with Talsen Mansions on the far left; Devon and Vrede - a pair of square-edged flats; Victory Court and Morningside and Highbury, another pair, on the far right. (Extract from image courtesy of Think3DLab and Mason Properties, 2016)



Figure 96: Image looking up towards the end of Davenport Road at the collection of Art Deco flats. Victory Court in the foreground; Vrede, Devon and Talsen Mansions in the distance. With Lenmar Court and Geriva Mansions at the far end of the image. (Image by author, 2017)

Two pairs of Art Deco blocks, Devon and Vrede and Highbury and Morningside sit on either side of Victory Court, a Streamlined Moderne flat positioned across two plots. These four buildings were not individually designed, one building was designed by the owner/developer George Kuhnert from which these two pairs were built thus they share identical structural characteristics but differ in decorative appliques.



Figure 97

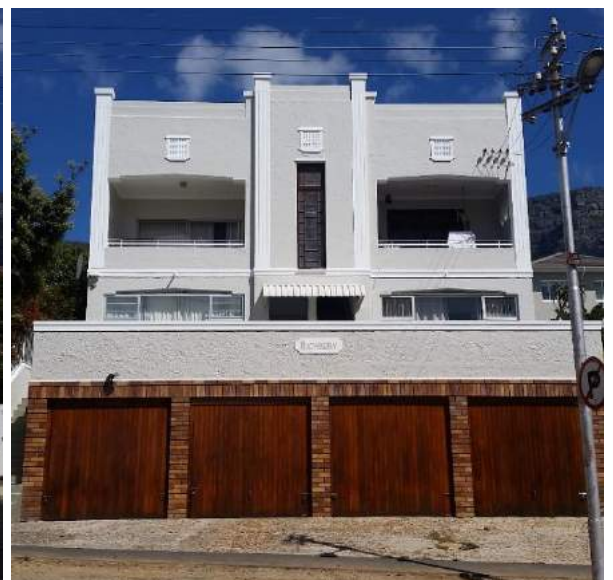


Figure 98

Figures 97 & 98: Images illustrate Morningside (figure 97) compromised by infilling of balconies, raising of front parapet, additional storey added to the block set back from the front façade, and original garage doors replaced. First floor balconies at Highbury (figure 98) have also been filled in. (Images by author, 2016)

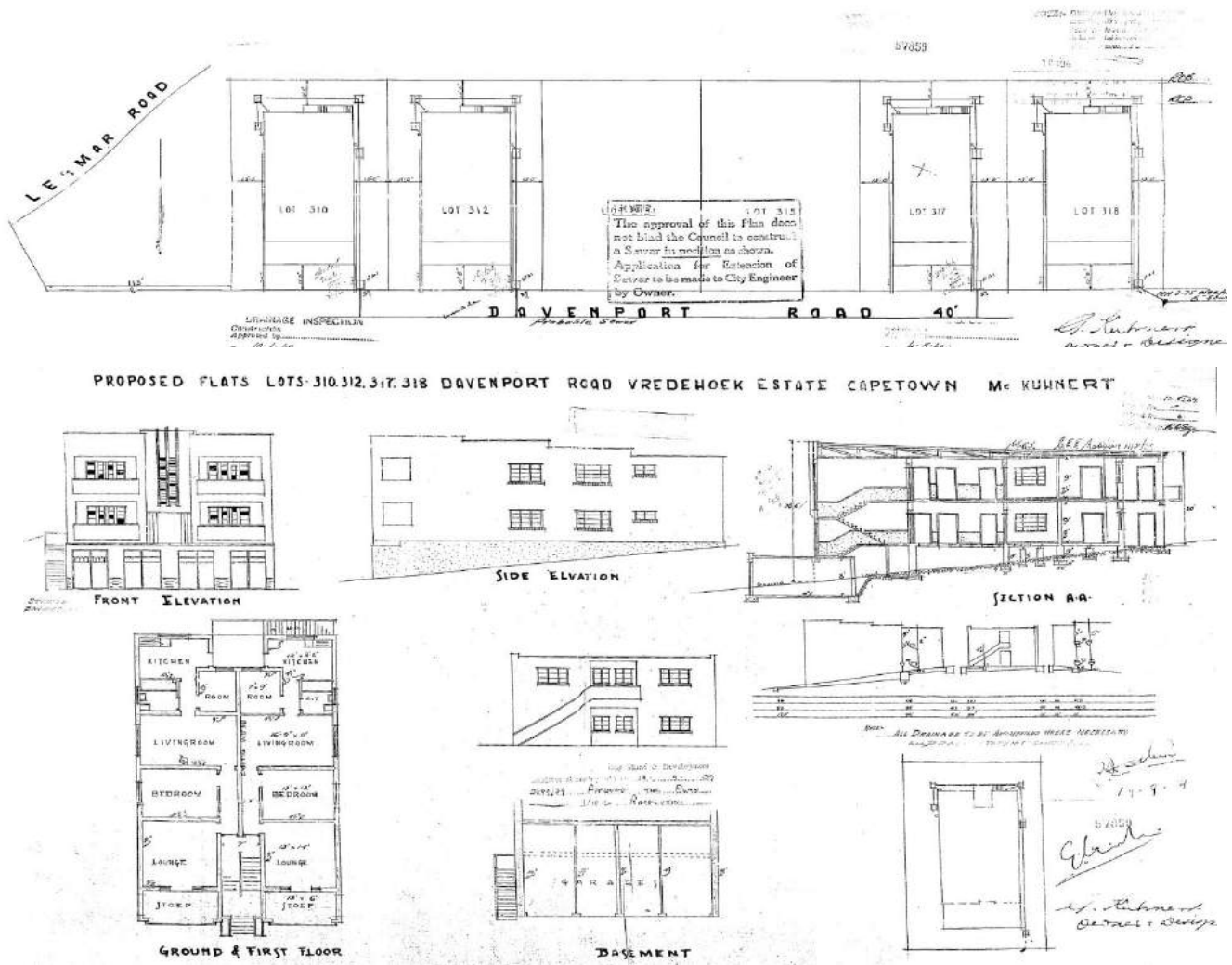


Figure 99: Extracts from original plan by owner/developer G. Kuhnert c1940 used to build the two Art Deco pairs Vrede, Devon, Morningside and Highbury. (City of Cape Town, Planning & Development Management)

Victory Court was designed by architect J. Bylsma, whilst the block is not a noteworthy example of its type and the façade detailing designed by Bylsma was not executed (as discussed earlier), it does display good symmetry and characterful features. Talsen Mansions, also designed by Bylsma, again is not an exemplary example of Streamlined Moderne but does display typical characteristics of the style, good proportions and it addresses the street corner of the site with a large, neat curve into which curved balconies clip (see figures 48-52).

Although they do not embody exemplary Art Deco features, and their authenticity has been compromised in part through the replacement of original building components, these six buildings, all firmly located against the 4,7 metre street setback line, form a coherent architectural group which imparts character to the streetscape through their period-character and morphological consistency generating a rhythm of solid massing and void in-between spaces. Once again, however, this characterful group which contributes toward the streetscape stands alone within the stark

landscape, not enhanced further by any contributory plants, trees or street boundary interface detailing.

Located on the southern side of Bellair Road is a characterful cluster of square-edged Art Deco blocks complete with original low boundary walls, gates, boundary wall piers with pre-cast decorations atop and pathways leading up to the entrance. This cluster includes a matching pair designed by the owner/developer, Unique Homes. Again, although these Art Deco examples are not exemplary in architectural quality or detailing, this cluster of flats and their street boundary interfaces impart character towards the streetscape.

Next door, a typical square-edged Art Deco flat, The Adelphi, has been bought by a developer and added to. As illustrated in figure 65, the architect retained the distinctive front portion of the existing flat and designed new bulk around it set back from the existing façade and corner balconies, thus not breaking the consistent building line of flats along this side of the street. Designing within the parameters of the new planning by-law which allows development onto the common boundary, this developer has attempted a negotiation between retaining a conservation-worthy Art Deco building and exploiting his property rights. The resultant building is a pleasant balance between old and new, enhanced through the choice of dark colours for the new infill which complements and contrasts with the old façade.



Figure 100: The characterful cluster of Art Deco buildings located at 25-33 Bellair Road, some of the only flats within Vredehoek where the street boundary interface details are still intact. (Image by author, 2016)

Exner Avenue, between Wexford Avenue and Davenport Roads, exhibits a slightly stronger streetscape character with several good quality square-edged Art Deco blocks and its middle portion lined with trees.



Figure 101: Image illustrating a group of Art Deco flats along the southern side of Exner Avenue with trees lining both sides of this portion of the avenue. (Extract from image courtesy of Think3DLab and Mason Properties, 2016)



Figure 102



Figure 103



Figure 104

Figures 102 – 104: Good examples of square-edged Art Deco blocks on Exner Avenue. Fleetwood (figure 102) designed by H. Davidge-Pitts for developer S. Varkel in 1938 is a good, relatively unaltered block complete with gate posts, original garage doors with no balconies closed in, original plans attached as Annexure 14 at the end of Chapter 4 illustrate the finer detailing of the façade by Davidge-Pitts. Pine Court (figure 103) designed by

owner/developer Talberg in 1937 also retains most original characteristics, as does Mount Lynne designed by owner/ developer M. Leven in 1937. (Images by author, 2017)



Figure 105: Louisville designed by owner/ developer E. L. van der Merwe in 1938, a characterful pair of Art Deco blocks on Exner Avenue although compromised by changes to window types and opening sizes, especially on the front façade. Juliet balconies have been added to the right hand building. (Google Streetview, 2009)

The Rennie and Riley survey summarises the predominant style of this upper region of Vredehoek as being Art Deco in design and detail – typical of the period, the houses described as non-descript. At the time of the survey in the late 1980s the buildings were described as being in relatively good condition, with balconies already enclosed and fenestration sometimes changed (Rennie & Riley, 1986). Only two buildings were identified by Rennie and Riley as being noteworthy within this area that is now considered by some as the most significant part of Vredehoek. Fleetwood - 37 Exner Avenue and Geriva Mansions - 27 St. James were identified as being Art Deco and good examples of its period with interesting façades. No Art deco buildings on Davenport or Bellair Roads were identified as noteworthy, simply classified as Art Deco – typical of type.

This illustrates very clearly the shift in attitude towards the value of these Art Deco buildings within the past three decades. In contrast, the twenty-five buildings identified by the Cape Art Deco Society in the early 2000s are mostly situated within this area including twelve on Davenport Road and seven on Bellair Road. The author has also identified some of these Art Deco flats as significant, however some have been identified as more noteworthy than others in terms of architectural

quality and authenticity, others have been noted as valuable in terms of the contributory role that they play imparting character to the streetscape in terms of massing, scale and period-character.

The section above has taken an in-depth look at the characteristics and quality of the built and natural environment within Vredehoek to understand what exists, this assessment has revealed that Vredehoek is not an environment of high townscape quality embodying aesthetic unity of its components. It has been demonstrated that through-out the street blocks there are clusters of buildings and individual buildings that are noteworthy and contribute towards the micro area character of the street-block and streetscape, but no street or street-block in its entirety has a collection of buildings, street boundary interfaces or tree and planting elements that consistently and coherently contribute towards the streetscape and townscape character. Thus in terms of Baumann's assertion that a conservation-worthy townscape of high quality should exhibit a *sense of unity* – a place experienced not as a lot of disconnected pieces but as a coherent whole, the townscape of Vredehoek falls short of this criteria.

In terms of conservation-worthy heritage resources, the chapter so far reveals that there are buildings of good architectural and aesthetic value within Vredehoek which embody characteristics that satisfy criteria (e) of section 3(3) of South Africa's National Heritage Resources Act which states that an object or place is considered to be part of the national estate if it has cultural significance or other special value because it embodies "importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by a community or cultural group" (NHRA). It has also been demonstrated, however, that apart from one or two exceptions, these buildings do not satisfy criteria (f): "demonstration of a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period. As the section above has illustrated, the buildings exhibiting cultural significance occur in isolation or in small groups throughout the townscape of Vredehoek, thus they are conservation-worthy in their own right as an individual building. The conservation-worthiness of the built-environment of Vredehoek as a whole, however, is not made up of sufficient culturally significant elements worthy of heritage area conservation.

As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, Vredehoek specific criteria for isolating conservation-worthy heritage resources and special elements of area, streetscape and townscape character within the environment were developed. The outcome of the assessment of Vredehoek's townscape attributes as well as the identification of conservation-worthy buildings as described above have been compiled into a map to illustrate the findings, see figure 106 and Annexures 16-19 at the end of Chapter 4 which zoom in on portions of the map.

Heritage resources and elements that contribute towards streetscape and townscape character have been isolated in colour, each criteria has been assigned a colour, hatch or overlay as illustrated within the criteria key below. Areas that have been left with no colour indicate elements that are nondescript and do not contribute towards townscape quality. Street boundaries of plots that have been overlaid with a black line indicate elements that detract from streetscape and townscape character, including solid boundary walls.

### VREDEHOEK SPECIFIC CRITERIA KEY:













- Noteworthy building of fine architectural quality:	 (DEEP RED HATCH OVERLAY)
- Good, intact example of Art Deco building:	
- Good, intact example of 1920s/1930s housing type:	
- Less intact buildings with sufficient architectural and aesthetic qualities which by their presence impart character to the streetscape and urban setting:	
- Intact original morphological pattern of plot and building that lends character to the streetscape and urban setting:	 (BUILDING OUTLINE HIGHLIGHTED IN RED)
- Property boundary elements that contribute character towards the streetscape:	
- Buildings which form a noteworthy group:	
- Poor street interface (negative criterion):	
- Important trees:	 STONE PINE  PALM TREE
- Streets that contribute towards a fine townscape:	NONE IDENTIFIED
- Areas of fine greenery/ or trees that contribute towards the townscape:	
- Recreational nodes:	



Figure 106: Mapping of heritage resources and elements of townscape quality within Vredehoek.  
 (Image by author, 2017) Annexures 16-19 at the end of Chapter 4 zoom in on portions of this map.

## ARTICULATION OF VALUES:

As discussed in Chapter 2, de la Torre and Mason define value as “a set of positive characteristics perceived in cultural objects or sites by certain individuals or groups.” They define cultural significance as “the importance of a site as determined by the aggregate of values attributed to it” (de la Torre & Mason, 2002: 3). The process of determining the significance of a place is dependent on the identification and evaluation of values specific to the site in question. “...it is necessary to examine *why* and *how* heritage is valued, and by *whom*” (Avrami, de la Torre & Mason, 2000: 7 – emphasis in original).

The presence of cultural significance within an urban environment being proposed for conservation area protection has also been identified as one of the criteria necessary when assessing and evaluating such an environment. Now that the character of Vredehoek’s townscape, the component parts that make up this townscape and the existing heritage resources have been researched, mapped and assessed, the values that have been identified can be articulated and evaluated along with the values and special qualities identified by those interviewed to determine the aggregate of these values.

The aims of the interview process, the interview methodology and the interviewees have been introduced at the beginning of this chapter. This section discusses the values and qualities that were articulated by heritage-claimants and stakeholders through the interviewing process, as well as the views of those against the area’s designation as an HPOZ. The contribution of the views articulated during the interviews provided further evidence for the evaluation of whether Vredehoek meets the criteria for urban conservation area designation due to the presence of cultural values and special qualities. Those interviewed, and the interview questions are attached as Annexures 10 and 11 at the end of Chapter 4.

The principal value that exists within Vredehoek as identified by certain officials within E&HM - the local heritage authority responsible for proposing the suburb as an HPOZ, and recognised by most of those engaged with during this study, are the architectural and aesthetic values embodied within the Art Deco flats within the area. The various types of Art Deco and Streamlined Moderne flats have been identified as significant in their own right by these claimants, as well as the contextual contribution that each make as a group of buildings embodying a cohesive set of architectural qualities and consistent period-character creating a special townscape.

Most heritage-claimants acknowledged that these flats do not exhibit architectural excellence, but argue that they are good, relatively intact examples representing a type of building embodying an important 20<sup>th</sup> century architectural style - a style that enjoyed a short lifespan in Cape Town (and

worldwide), thus examples of its type are more rare in comparison to the Victorian and Edwardian styles that enjoyed longer lifespans, examples of which are thus more common. The dense number of flats that exist within Vredehoek built in the Art Deco style have been compared by the professional heritage management official and Art Deco enthusiast at E&HM to areas such as South Beach, Miami and Napier, New Zealand – areas where the main period of development was also between 1930 and 1940 and where the built environment is rich with Art Deco manifestations. This density of Art Deco buildings in Vredehoek, particularly those on Davenport Road, have been identified by this E&HM official as significant enough to warrant formal protection, as well as significant enough to encourage the establishment of an Art Deco tour for tourists and enthusiasts. Whilst many of the Art Deco highlights that exist within Vredehoek are situated on Davenport Road, aside from the cluster identified above located where Davenport Road meets St. James Street, these good Art Deco buildings sit amongst very ordinary and altered Art Deco examples, and contemporary buildings, thus even Davenport Road in its entirety does not embody an Art Deco collection cohesive enough to warrant its protection nor selection as a tourist destination.

In the early 2000s Art Deco buildings within Cape Town were identified by The Cape Art Deco Society in anticipation for the 7<sup>th</sup> World Congress on Art Deco which took place in Cape Town in 2003. This team was led by the E&HM official discussed above in his capacity as Art Deco enthusiast. In 2002 a draft Catalogue of Art Deco Period Buildings in Central Cape Town was compiled by the Cape Art Deco Society in which Art Deco buildings within Cape Town were listed, including those that exist within the Central City, Vredehoek and Sea Point. Twenty-two buildings in Cape Town’s Central City, twenty-one in Sea Point and twenty-five in Vredehoek were selected for inclusion within a map for the event. Some of the selected buildings within the City Centre and Sea Point are of a finer quality than those that exist in Vredehoek, as illustrated in figures 107 – 112.



Figure 107



Figure 108

Figures 107 & 108: The Savoy, 222B High Level Road, Sea Point - a very good example of an intact Art Deco block with original windows, typical vertical plaster decoration on three sides of the building and all balconies open as originally designed. (Images by author, 2017)



Figure 109

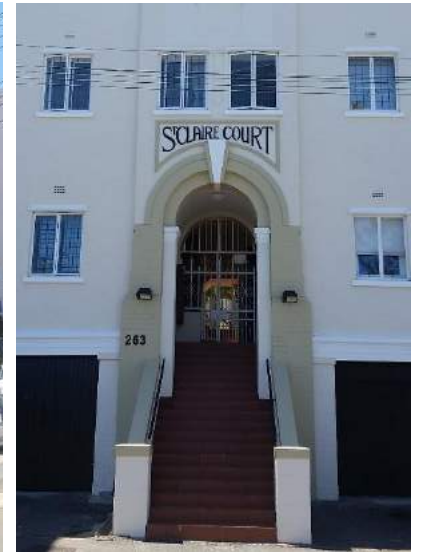


Figure 110

Figures 109 & 110: St. Claire's Court, 263 High Level Road, Sea Point - a good example of a block of flats with Art Deco and Arts and Crafts characteristics. (Images by author, 2017)



Figure 111



Figure 112

Figures 111 & 112: Herschel Court, 15 Gorleston Road, Fresnaye. Another very good, intact example of an Art Deco flat with Streamlined Moderne balconies, all open as originally designed. Typical Art Deco characteristics present within this block include vertical plaster decoration above ornately decorated entrance ways, original windows including porthole windows and cantilevered canopies over the top level windows. (Images by author, 2017)



Figure 113: Park Lane, 24 Hof Street, Gardens. An excellent example of a Streamlined Moderne block of flats featuring an elegantly decorated central vertical column and ornate entrance lobby. (Google Streetview, 2015)

In 2012, the South African arm of DOCOMOMO (The International Committee for Documentation and Conservation of Buildings, Sites and Neighbourhoods of the Modern Movement – who seek to identify and protect buildings, objects and sites exceptionally representative of the Modern Movement legacy) prepared a listing of conservation-worthy buildings within greater Cape Town. Exemplary Art Deco buildings were also included within this listing such as the Old Mutual Building, Scott’s Building, Geneva House and Holyrood (buildings also identified by the Cape Art Deco Society) however, no Art Deco buildings within Vredehoek were identified by DOCOMOMO, only the Modernist Disa Towers. This demonstrates that the perception about the architectural values embodied within the Vredehoek collection of Art Deco buildings is not unanimous by these two sets of Art Deco enthusiasts and experts.

One of the main arguments being made for the protection of Vredehoek as a heritage area by the E&HM official discussed above, as well as the tour guide and architectural enthusiast representing CIBRA is informed by the dense clustering of these Art Deco buildings within the environment. Whilst the collection of these Art Deco flats in Vredehoek is unique, partly due to the dense clustering of these building types within the area, most of the Vredehoek examples however, are not exemplary when compared to examples of the same type within South Africa and globally as illustrated in figures 14-28 and 107-112. As discussed, this is, in part due to the speculative nature of their development, many designed by the owner-developer not an architect, using standard solutions and off the shelf elements.

Although most are very ordinary examples of Art Deco, these buildings do embody cultural significance in terms of architectural and aesthetic value, meeting criteria (e) of Section 3(3) of the NHRA: “its importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by a community or cultural group”, but not 3(3)(f): “its importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period” (NHRA, 1999). Thus, in terms of meeting the criteria of heritage area conservation-worthiness set out at the beginning of this chapter, basing the heritage significance of the whole area on an assortment of disconnected pockets of Art Deco, many of average architectural merit, especially when the authenticity and intactness of the fabric has been compromised by insensitive additions and replaced original elements, is insufficient.

The stylistic characteristics of these buildings, as well as the morphological features of their plot siting and massing do contribute towards the character of the area, and whilst many of these buildings should be protected in their own right, and can be through Section 30 of the NHRA as discussed in Chapter 3, there need to be other resources embodying heritage significance within the proposed area of designation as well as special townscape qualities to make such an environment worthy of conservation area designation. As has been shown through the evaluation of Vredehoek’s townscape thus far, this is not the case.

The period-character of the built fabric within the area has been identified as significant by certain E&HM officials, the tour guide/ architecture enthusiast at CIBRA and certain members of HWC’s Built Environment and Landscape Committee (BELCom). Although predominantly concerned for the protection of the Art Deco flats within Vredehoek, E&HM and certain BELCom members deem the houses that exist within Vredehoek, some built slightly earlier than the flats in the 1920s and others developed simultaneously with the flats, as significant due to the contributory role that they play in enhancing this period-character. Also identified as significant by E&HM is the associational value of well-known architects responsible for some of the architectural work within Vredehoek such as Mello Damstra, W.H. Grant, Brian Mansergh, H. Davidge-Pitts and L.A. Lubinski. Whilst some of the buildings designed by these architects, as identified above, are of higher architectural value due to finer detailing and more interesting materiality, some examples are also very ordinary and some have been compromised over time through additions and alterations.

In addition to the period-character that has been identified as valuable within the townscape of Vredehoek, so too has the homogenous scale and contextual experience of the built environment. The specialness of this contextual experience is created by the massing, rhythm and scale of the built form, not necessarily the buildings’ architectural quality. The period-character in particular informed the many IIC graded properties within the local authority’s heritage survey of 2015 where almost

half were deemed significant due to the contributory role that they play in imparting character to the streetscape and townscape, as illustrated in figure 114.

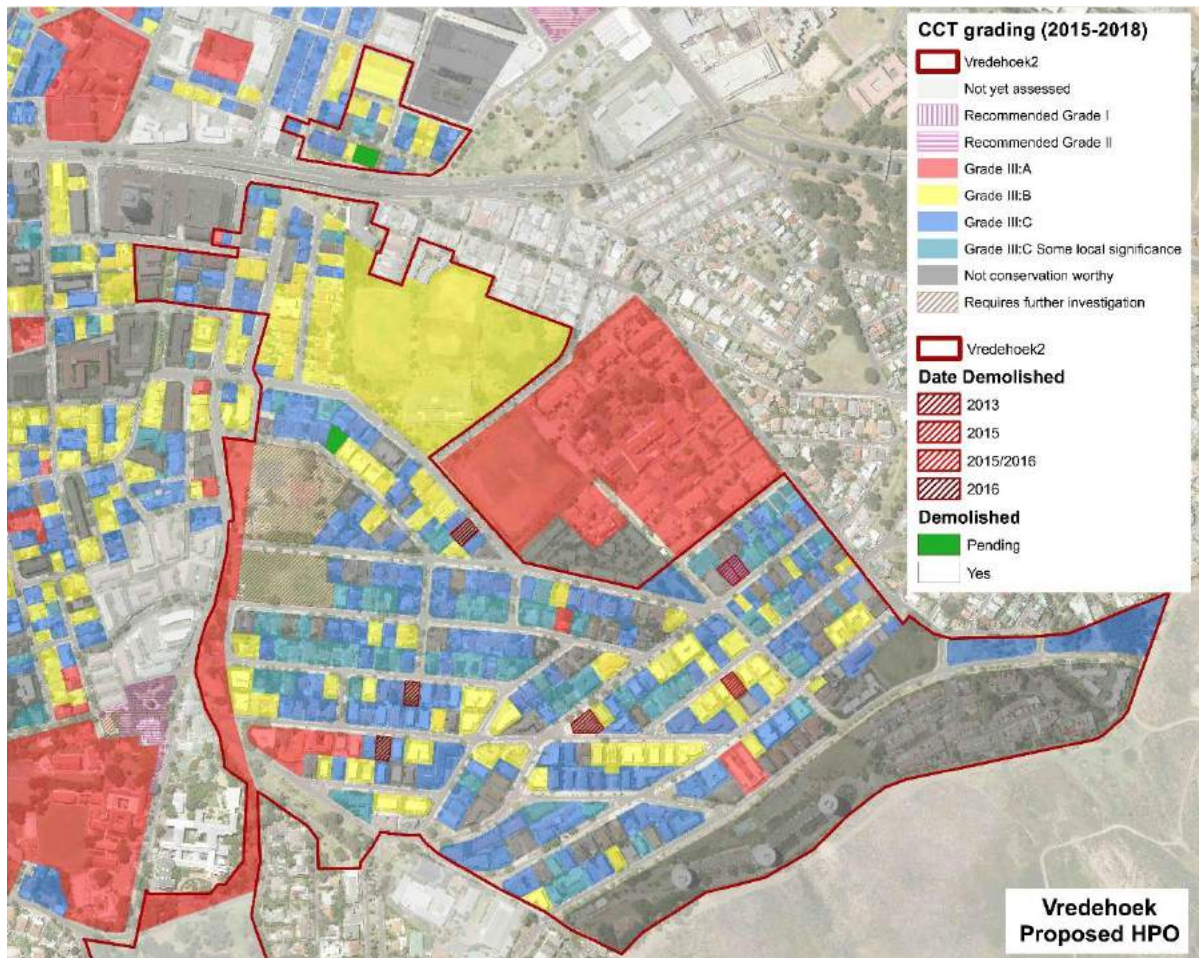


Figure 114: Grading of buildings within Vredehoek as identified by certain E&HM local authority officials. (E&HM, 2016)

The image above illustrates the degree to which those local heritage authority officials who carried out this survey regard the existing fabric within Vredehoek as conservation-worthy on a contextual streetscape level as indicated by the blue and green overlays on the individual properties within the suburb. Plots highlighted in deep red hatched blocks indicate those that have been demolished between 2013 and the present. Indicative are the small number of IIIA graded sites overlaid in red. Based on the findings of this current study, the collection of buildings identified as conservation-worthy and graded as IIIA and IIIB heritage-resources by the local authority officials is similar to the collection identified as conservation-worthy in this study as illustrated within figure 106. Those indicated as conservation-worthy and graded IIIC by the local authority due to their contextual significance, however, are less convincing. Whilst embodying original morphological features, many of the buildings indicated as contextually significant are very ordinary and very altered. Most have

not been identified as conservation-worthy in this current study due to their lack of cultural significance and low contributory value towards aesthetic townscape quality.

Apart from the cultural values identified during the interview process, so too were economic values. Based on the interview with one of the companies currently developing in Vredehoek, in terms of opportunity value and development potential, Vredehoek has been identified as an attractive and viable environment for prospective residential property developers to invest. The extents of the 595 square metre plots with GR4 zoning rights affords enough space to satisfy parking requirements on the ground level, and sufficient bulk and height within which a viable number of residential units can be proposed. Property values were relatively low at the time when the suburb was being investigated for development, they have subsequently increased due to recent development investment. Vredehoek's topography offers excellent vistas to Table Mountain and Table Bay, its northern orientation and its location on the periphery of the Central City enhances its appeal to developers who are able to offer an attractive residential product. The social and green nodes of the restaurants and coffee shops, parks and access to Table Mountain, proximity to good schools, a library and general amenities adds to the type of lifestyle on offer within Vredehoek. The company interviewed has recognised that the demographic interested in purchasing property within Vredehoek are stepping-stone buyers – Cape Town locals, young professionals and well-off parents of students attending the University of Cape Town looking for a reasonably affordable first property within a residential suburb. Learning from their first development that went to market in 2016, this company has identified that smaller, two bedroom-two bathroom, more affordable units are a better fit for Vredehoek, not larger penthouse units more appropriate to Sea Point buyers (Interview with development company, 2017).

The appeal of developing within Vredehoek has been diminished by the proposed HPO zoning. As discussed within Chapter 3, property developers are not willing to take the risk of purchasing property and proposing a development within the area due to the assortment of unknown factors. Should Vredehoek be designated as a conservation area, the development company engaged with above are not entirely opposed to considering developing within the area again, however, they would need to know the specific provisions up front in order to plan accordingly. However, given that HPOZ areas are currently only guided by general provisions, this again makes investment within the area too risky.

The residents of Vredehoek have mixed feelings about the built fabric within the environment, of the five interviewed, most residents identified that there are a mix of old flats and houses within the area, the scale of which was identified by half of those interviewed as being non-intrusive and creating a village-feel. The existence of Art Deco buildings was identified positively by most residents

as being the most noteworthy aspect of Vredehoek's built fabric. Some referred to them as being "special", creating a positive visual character. Another complained that the Art-Deco-ness of the flats is not being amplified. Resident E living within Ray Mansions on St. James Street likes the small scale, character, shape and details of the Art Decos, Resident C observed that the flats do not have high walls around them yet, whilst Resident D and B were not especially familiar with the style. Another noted that the Art Deco buildings are getting lost in the new development and some are not aging well – "many looking tatty". The buildings on Davenport Road were identified as being "nice" and of a period, especially noteworthy in terms of their non-intrusive scale.

Most residents like the old collections of flats because they are "different" and have lots of space, but, other than understanding that the flats are in a style called Art Deco, few are familiar with the characteristics of Art Deco and what makes it special. Two residents identified The Bancroft on the corner of Rabbi Marvish and Vredehoek Avenue as being beautiful. Most residents do not find the existing single dwellings particularly special in their own right, apart from some of the cottages identified on Lambert and Yeoville Roads as being "beautiful and of a pleasant scale". Tremendous change between small buildings being replaced by big blocks was identified, as well as the presence of many buildings becoming run down: "the hipped roofed dwellings are falling apart and look terrible". Resident A identified that there are some interesting old stone houses with Arts and Crafts elements that have a grand old appeal but that most of the houses, some with nice views from the inside, are nondescript and not noteworthy in their own right. Certain residents were not complimentary about the built fabric of the area referring to Vredehoek as "an extremely ugly neighbourhood", "a hodgepodge of disconnected areas" and "an extremely confusing neighbourhood". Another referred to the environment as "not containing particularly attractive streetscapes besides the Art Deco".

Residents were engaged with to identify the values that they feel Vredehoek embodies, and to understand the place as it is experienced by those who live in it. The greatest value identified by all residents is an intangible one - a strong sense of community. All residents expressed the value that they feel for the active, participative community and dynamic neighbourhood watch. Residents appreciate that the area is full of families, especially young families, one resident described how her community experience is felt most within the parks, and that she knows all the shop and restaurant owners by name. Resident A plays a game with her daughter when they go to Garden's Centre, points are accrued when fellow residents are seen within the shopping mall and can be identified by name. This resident described how when she moved to the neighbourhood twenty-two years ago there were no families or dogs, now the area is full of them. She likens her experience of Vredehoek

to that of a village where you recognise your neighbours and where everything that you need is nearby – the doctor, the physiotherapist, restaurants, the library and the Spar.

Another value that stood out as expressed by all residents is the direct physical connection to the mountain. All residents described how they can walk, some with their dogs, from their home straight onto the mountain, one describing how it feels like her back garden. The green nodes of the parks were identified as valuable – Resident A describing them as “the meeting place across the generations”. The restaurants on Derry Street, Highlands Avenue and Lazari on Vredehoek Avenue were identified positively as social zones. Views to the mountain and the city were identified as special, as well as the proximity of Vredehoek to the City Centre. The neighbourhood was described as being a very quiet place – in terms of sound levels - even though it is so close to the City. One of the reasons why Resident E chose to live in Vredehoek is because it is always in the sun.

Economically, all residents indicated that Vredehoek was an affordable place to purchase property when they first arrived in the area. All but one of the residents engaged with during this study own property – either a single dwelling or a flat. All emphasised the jump in property prices from when they bought, the last to buy was five years ago. This change in property price was noted in a positive and negative light, positive due to the increase in their property value, but concern for those like-minded people who are looking for a launch-pad/ stepping-stone area to purchase property in close proximity to the City as they had done. Resident D described Vredehoek as now being prohibitively expensive and that the flats within new apartment blocks are only catering for the middle to upper class demographic.

All residents criticised the new developments within the area, some feel the replacements are nondescript and all feel that the scale of the new blocks of flats and building onto the boundary of plots erodes the existing character of Vredehoek. 3 Wexford Road was singled out as being out of character, “sticking out on top of a slope”. Resident A described it as a “faceless” block referring to the lack of permanent residents within the complex. 58 Vredehoek Avenue was also identified as being a “rude and brutal development”. Resident A described the whole – referring to the whole area of Vredehoek – and the way the bits fit together as being more important than the individual parts, “if you chip away at the little bits meaning will be lost”. This comment echoes what Baumann discusses regarding factors of change that “erode the unique qualities of place” (Baumann, 1997, 3). She expressed concern that some streets are at risk of losing their character completely through new development, that some streets as they exist today are just going to disappear and that Vredehoek will “end up with an Atlantic Seaboard vibe which does not fit with the area.”

In terms of townscape value and how the user's experience of an area enhances or detracts from this value we need to look at those elements identified by Lynch as discussed in Chapter 2. A key visual quality that Lynch emphasises as critical to the city user's mental image of a cityscape is the cityscape's legibility – the clarity and ease with which the parts of an environment – its districts, pathways, nodes, landmarks and edges can be recognised and organised into a coherent pattern (Lynch, 1960: 2-3). A strong, clear mental image of the parts that make up an environment gives one an important sense of emotional security, not only assisting in way-finding and preventing getting lost but also “heightens the potential depth and intensity of human experience” (Lynch, 1960: 5) of an environment. Where the mental image of a place is made up of weak boundaries, breaks in continuity of elements, floating points and lack of character, this leaves the person possessing this unclear mental image vulnerable to getting lost, and unable to form a strong connection to the environment (Lynch, 1960: 5).

Resident D expressed that her mental image of the area is not a unified one, and that it has no obvious character like Tamboerskloof or Oranjezicht. Resident B described her image of the suburb as confusing and nondescript with many ugly areas. This resident admitted that she is constantly lost, the one-way roads add confusion and when driving through the suburb she is constantly surprised to find a road that she has never taken. Strong pathways within the suburb could not be identified by this resident, stating that “nothing is the same on any street, every block is different, even different trees and vegetation.” This resident's summarising statement of Vredehoek was that it is a “quagmire of crap that doesn't follow any pattern.” The most distinctive element for this resident was the mountain which acts as a strong landmark and a permeable edge allowing access to the mountain for walking with the dog. Table Bay stood out as another defining landmark and visual highlight. For this resident “the views to the mountain and the sea, as well as the Art Deco's save Vredehoek”.

Most Vredehoek residents engaged with during interviews could strongly identify two boundary pathways in and out of the suburb, Highlands Avenue which becomes Buitenkant Street, and De Waal Drive accessed via Burnham Street. Residents confessed that how they got to those boundary pathways was often a surprise as negotiating from one side of Vredehoek to the other was described as confusing, with some residents ending up in a road that they had never been to before. One resident living on St. James Street at the top of Vredehoek described the suburb as “the most confusing neighbourhood ever! There are no straight roads and property numbers get muddled with the curves. One needs to know your main routes.” She identified the Garden's Centre as a locating device, highlighting that there are a few roads that are quite confusing towards the bottom of Vredehoek, requiring the use of her satellite navigation device to get to the vet. She does however

feel safe knowing that the neighbourhood is small enough “that you will pop out on the other side, and see nice surprise things for the first time”. Resident A described Vredehoek as very “higgledy piggledy, without a logical grid”, after twenty-two years she knows her way around but may need to look on the map if going somewhere new within the suburb.

This description of the how residents experience their urban environment as one of disconnected spaces is consistent with the built fabric itself, an incoherent mix of buildings and elements.

The majority of buildings within the area of study are more than 60 years old, thus generally protected by Section 34 of the NHRA. Therefore applications for the demolition of property within the area need to be assessed by HWC as well as the local heritage authority. Sites which have been identified as significant through grading by the local heritage authority will be assessed by heritage professionals on HWC’s BELCom. In recent years a number of Section 34 demolition applications have been submitted to HWC by developers looking to build new blocks of flats within the area. Due to the fact that the properties where demolition was proposed were graded IIC, heritage statements were requested by HWC to assess the significance of the heritage resource on the property. The demolition applications of 24 Davenport Road and 16 and 20 Exner Avenue will be described below in order to illustrate the highly contentious nature of demolition applications within Vredehoek due to opposing opinions about the value and conservation-worthiness of the buildings and environment.

A demolition permit was issued for the existing dwelling on 3 Wexford Road in 2010, and a new four storey apartment building was approved. In terms of height and scale this four storey building would not have been in keeping with the neighbouring properties but would have been of a similar scale to other blocks of flats within the area. However in 2013 the same owner who was building the new block of flats on 3 Wexford Road bought the two neighbouring plots on 16 and 20 Exner Avenue each containing a semi-detached house. The owner intended to keep the ownership of each plot separate but notarially tied the three plots together in order to use some of the newly acquired bulk to extend the building on 3 Wexford Road to six storeys. The owner proposed to renovate the existing dwellings on 16 and 20 Exner Avenue. Due to the notarial tie of three erven, Section 38(1)(c)(ii) of the NHRA was triggered: “any development or other activity which will change the character of a site involving three or more existing erven or subdivisions thereof..” (NHRA).

The Section 38 application was approved in 2013 due to HWC finding no heritage significance within the existing buildings nor the environment. (3 Wexford Road, and 16 and 20 Exner Avenue were not situated within a proposed Heritage Overlay Zone at the time, only after these applications were the street blocks bounded by Lambert, Derry, St. James and Wexford Roads included in the Vredehoek

proposed HPOZ of 2013). Later, when new zoning regulations were passed and it became apparent that the properties would have more development rights, the new property owners decided to apply for the demolition of the two properties on 16 and 20 Exner Avenue and propose a new block of flats. Demolition permits were applied for in terms of Section 34 and were approved (Letter to HWC from heritage consultant on behalf of property owner, 2014). The demolition application was supported by CIBRA and the local heritage authority, neither considering the existing dwellings significant.

However, concerned neighbours appealed the demolition permits due to concern for the impact on the character of the area. Neighbours claimed that the dwellings on 16 and 20 Exner Avenue were valuable for the following reasons:

“The semi-detached houses are unique like their historically significant counterparts in Oranjezicht, Bo-Kaap and elsewhere and deserve preservation; they complement the many examples in Vredehoek of low-level Art Deco blocks of flats; the buildings are structurally sound, well preserved and in keeping with the aesthetics of the area, these buildings and others like them are part of Cape Town’s legacy, these buildings will tangibilise what life was like at a certain stage of the City’s development for future generations, as much as the Victorian era houses do; buildings that define the character of Vredehoek will be lost; these buildings will be replaced by structures that are totally unsuited to the area; the buildings on Erven 869 & 870 are well maintained, perfectly liveable and importantly, affordable; if these buildings are demolished a mixture of social strata of inhabitants, which is currently one of the appeals of the suburb, will be lost; the houses represent the very few remaining examples of Art Deco buildings in Vredehoek; Table Mountain and its environs are internationally recognised and valued, it will irrevocably change the architecture of the street; the houses are part of our heritage built over 75 years ago and are evidence of how people constructed their houses in those days” (Document submitted to the HWC Appeals Committee by Exner Avenue residents, March 2014).

Furthermore, neighbours claimed that the houses represent the history of the area because immigrants from Europe had lived in them. Concerns about the area being targeted for gentrification and densification were raised, as well as the impact on traffic and parking (Letter of appeal from concerned resident to HWC, 2014).

This appeal was considered by HWC’s Appeals Committee and upheld in May 2014 due to agreement that the existing buildings contribute towards a heritage context in terms of consistency

of scale, height, mass and form – reflecting the historical nature of the area’s first development. It was agreed that these dwellings represent meaningful and intact examples of domestic architecture of the area. Consensus was not reached by the committee regarding the value of the buildings in their own right, but did agree that each were worthy of IIIC grading due to their contextual significance and typicality of the typology characteristic of Vredehoek (Letter to applicant with feedback from Appeals Committee, HWC, 2014).



Figure 115: 16 and 20 Exner Avenue, two semi-detached dwellings claimed by Exner Avenue residents and certain heritage professionals on HWC’s Appeals Committee as being significant due to their contribution to the context of Vredehoek in terms of scale, height, mass and form, and that they reflect the historical nature of the area’s first development. (Google Streetview, 2009)

The applicant’s heritage practitioner contested the arguments made by the Appeals Committee and the neighbours on the grounds that the buildings had already been assessed by CIBRA as not being conservation-worthy and the local heritage authority had not yet graded the buildings but approximated that they would probably warrant a grading of IIIC, but not be worthy of inclusion on the heritage register. In the view of this heritage practitioner the buildings, designed by the owner and probably assisted by a draftsman, are very average examples of their type and devoid of architectural finesse. The claim that the character of the area is special was disputed due by the fact that this part of Vredehoek is not included within a declared HPOZ, nor is it included within the draft HPOZ, and no evidence illustrating the specialness of the area character was substantiated by the claimants. This practitioner further described the townscape of the area in question as uninteresting in any formal way due to wide streets and sidewalks and the incoherent mix of building sizes, scales and architectural character. Whilst other dwellings in Exner Avenue do share similar hipped and tiled roofs – none of these dwellings are distinguished in any type of detail unlike other areas within

Vredehoek. Concern about the inappropriate scale of new developments was deemed irrelevant due to the fact that planning law enables and encourages new buildings within the area to densify to a certain degree. Objections to increased traffic, loss of light, privacy and the increase of parking within the area was deemed irrelevant as a heritage issue. This practitioner emphasised that “heritage legislation does have the ability to interfere with and to limit the development rights that the planning law establishes; but it can do this *only to protect heritage resources*” (Townsend, Appeal letter against decision by Heritage Western Cape’s Appeals Committee, June 2014 – emphasis in original).

Ultimately another Section 38 application was required due to the changes to the development proposal of the three erven, and demolition of the two semi-detached dwellings was approved.

This case illustrates the contested views between heritage professionals regarding the heritage significance of the dwellings within Vredehoek. It also illustrates how elements claimed to be heritage-worthy, such as the historical significance of past European immigrant inhabitants and that the buildings define the character of Vredehoek, need to be articulated fully in order to understand the values in question and determine their significance. In terms of heritage law, social issues of gentrification cannot be legislated against (Jacobs, interview, 2016). Whilst these dwellings were examples of housing typical to Cape Town within the 1920s and 1930s, and typical to the type of architecture and scale within Vredehoek, these particular houses were not good examples. These dwellings had one or two stepped plaster details but were not examples of Art Deco houses as claimed by the neighbours. The plot sizes as they exist within Vredehoek are conducive to appropriately scaled blocks of flats of four or five storeys, scale becomes a problem when plots are consolidated or one building is built over two plots and the combined bulk permitted as a result becomes out of character with the surroundings.

The demolition application for 24 Davenport Road brought about a similar conflict regarding the heritage significance of a building type within Vredehoek, in this case a block of flats in the square-edged Art Deco style. Opinions about the heritage significance of this building were conflicted within the City’s E&HM, between heritage professionals on HWC’s BELCom and representatives of DOCMOMO SA. Ambivalence was experienced due to fact that the building itself is not an exemplary or even good example of Art Deco architecture, but that it contributes toward the greater Art Deco environment through the typicality of its general stylistic features, massing, grain, scale and proportions. The social-historical significance of how the environment of Vredehoek, of which the buildings play a part, links to the Jewish community and District Six was raised, however this was not articulated adequately.

The extents and outcome of this case has been presented within Chapter 3. Ultimately, and ironically, the building on 24 Davenport Road could be ‘protected’ through the Section 34 demolition permit issued by HWC due to the restrictive conditions imposed, thus very possibly deterring any investment into the building by the owner at all. This could lead the building to decay further and possibly need to be demolished anyway.



Figure 115A: 24 Davenport Road. (Image by author, 2016)

No further heritage values that contribute meaningfully towards the cultural significance of Vredehoek have been identified during the course of this study. The history of Vredehoek’s first life as a dairy farm within the gardens of the Upper Table Valley, whilst interesting and relevant within the story of Cape Town’s historical development, does not add a layer of heritage significance to the place due to the lack of any tangible or associational remains. The memory of the Vredehoek Estate homestead has been encapsulated by the extents of the Rugley Road Park and Herzlia Sarah Bloch School, as have the extents of Elba Farm, but these historical connections have not been made available to the public through an information board within the park for example. Mellish Road is the only tangible associational element within Vredehoek that makes reference to the history of Vredehoek as a farm.

The link between the Jewish European immigrants and the development history of Vredehoek is interesting due to the role that these entrepreneurial developers played building many of the flats and houses that still exist within the area today. Many of these Jewish immigrant individuals and families first settled in District Six and then ‘moved up the slope’ and settled within Vredehoek in

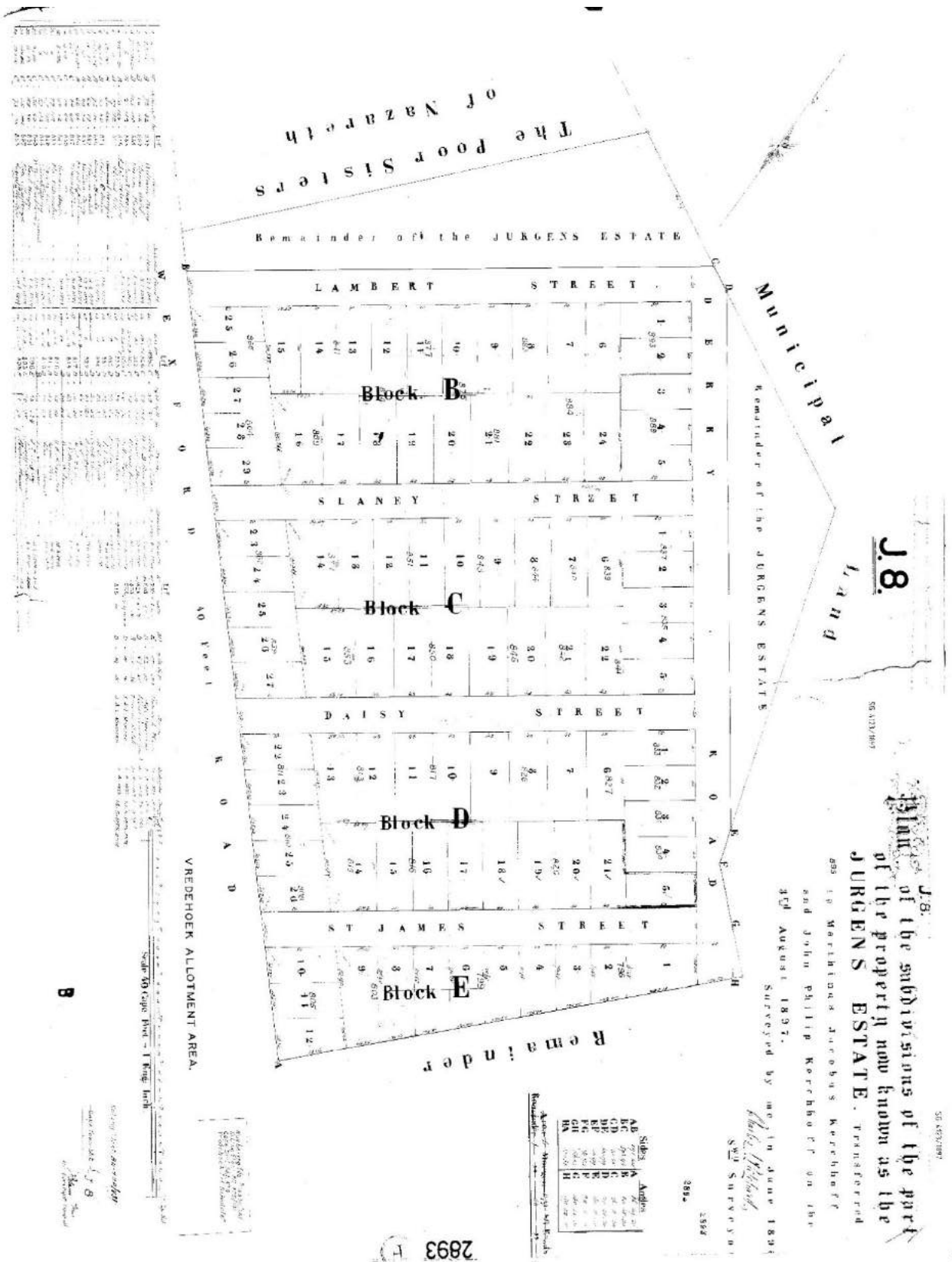
close proximity to the two synagogues within the area on Vredehoek Avenue and Schoonder Street. A large number of the Jewish community left South Africa, however, in the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this had an effect on the Vredehoek Jewish community with the Vredehoek synagogue closing its doors 1992. The Schoonder Street synagogue, also known as the 'Round Shul', was demolished early in the 2000s.

Whilst being interesting within the Jewish social history of Vredehoek and Cape Town, as far as the research extents of this study have found, no social significance regarding the environment has been claimed or articulated by the Jewish community, society or by existing Vredehoek residents. Thus in terms of cultural significance, Section 3(3)g of the NHRA: "its strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons" cannot apply in this instance.

It can thus be said that the heritage values that exist within Vredehoek are predominantly architectural and aesthetic embodied within individual buildings of an Art Deco nature and those representing a housing type unique to Cape Town and South Africa within the 1920s and 1930s. Contextual architectural and aesthetic values exist where the buildings mentioned above sit within a meaningful group that impart character to the environment, as identified within the mapping exercise.

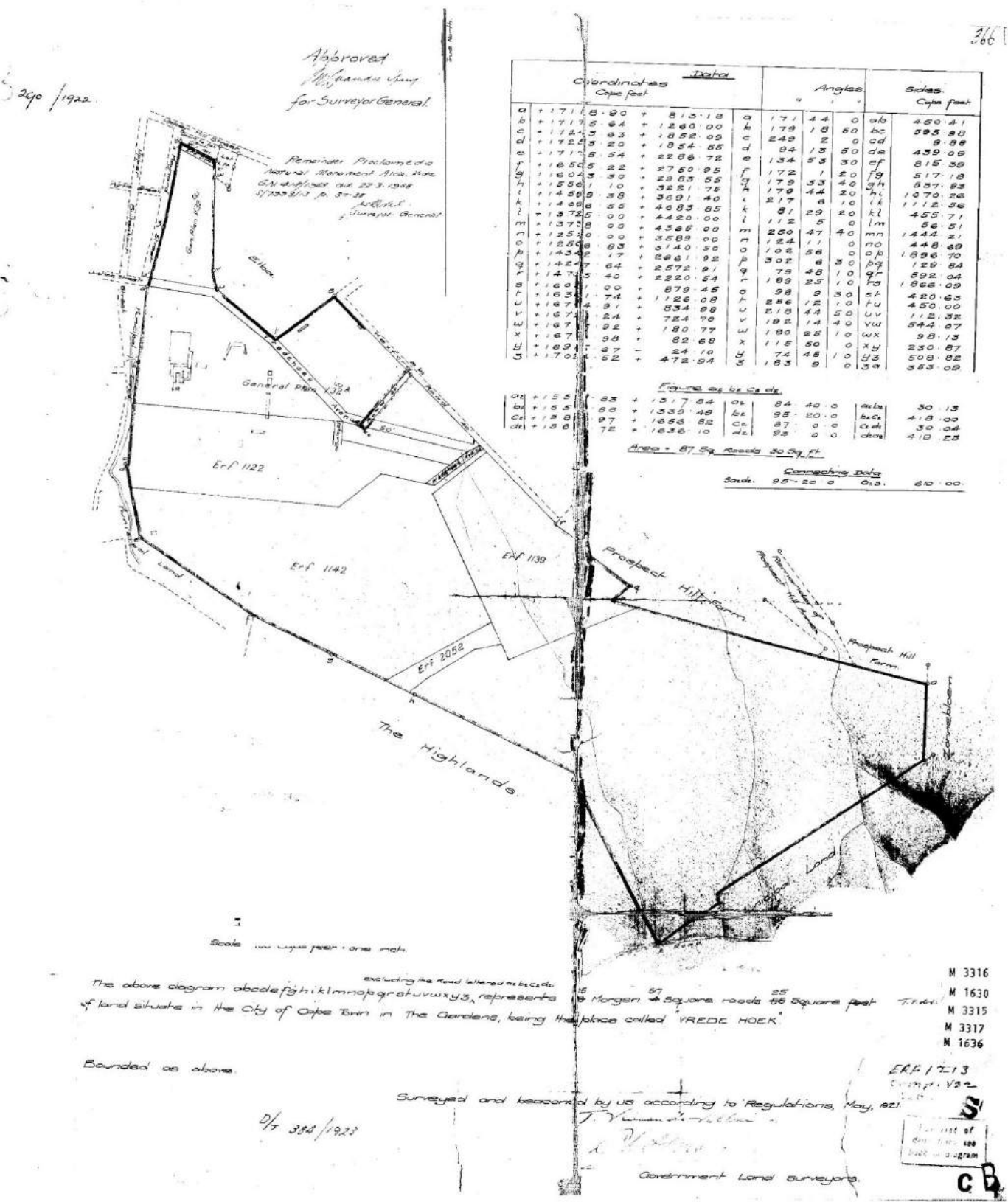
**ANNEXURES:**

**ANNEXURE 1:**



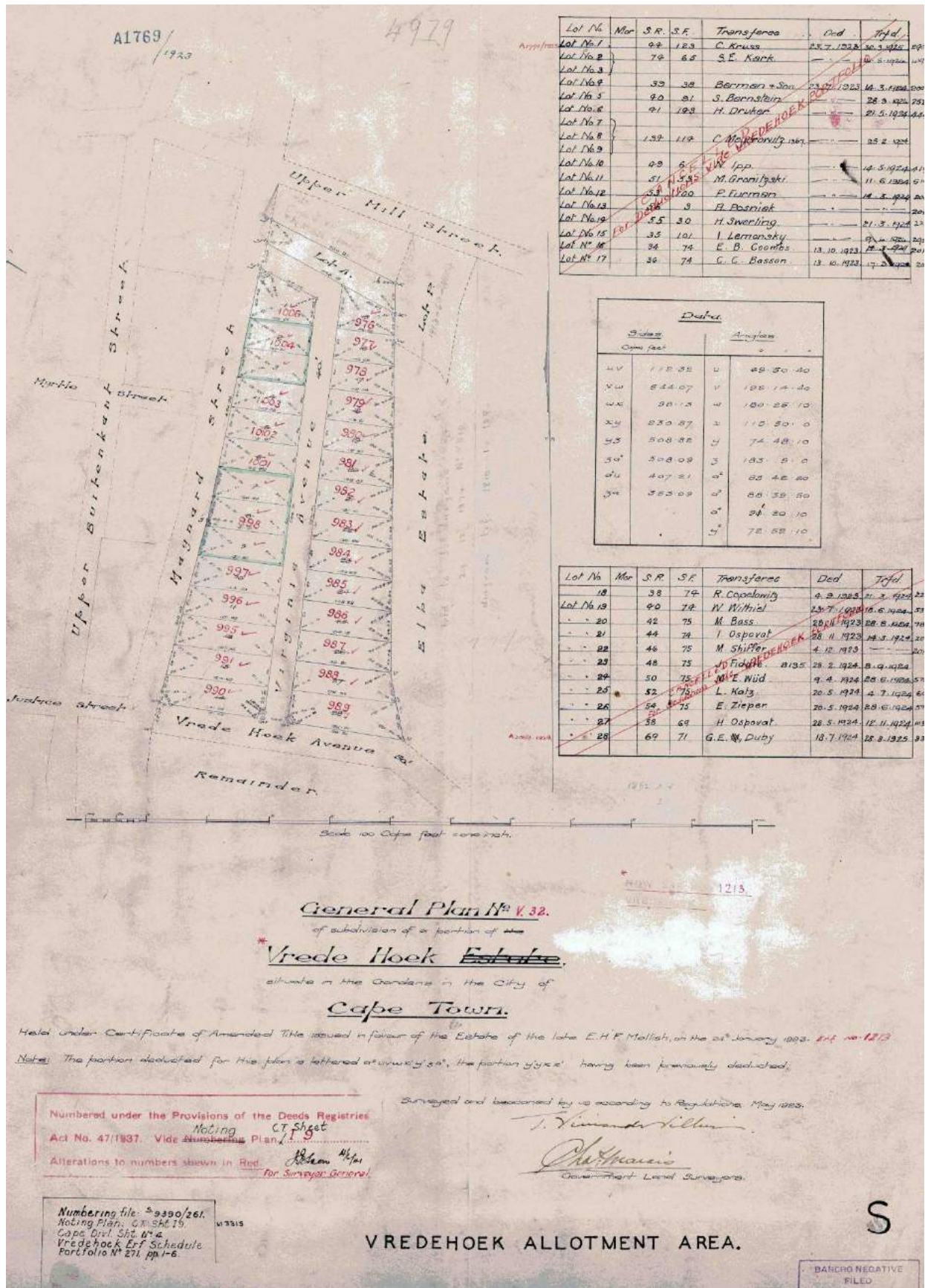
Annexure 1: Surveyor General diagram 4123/1897 (Surveyor General's Office).

ANNEXURE 2:



Annexure 2: Surveyor General diagram 290/1922 (Surveyor General's Office).

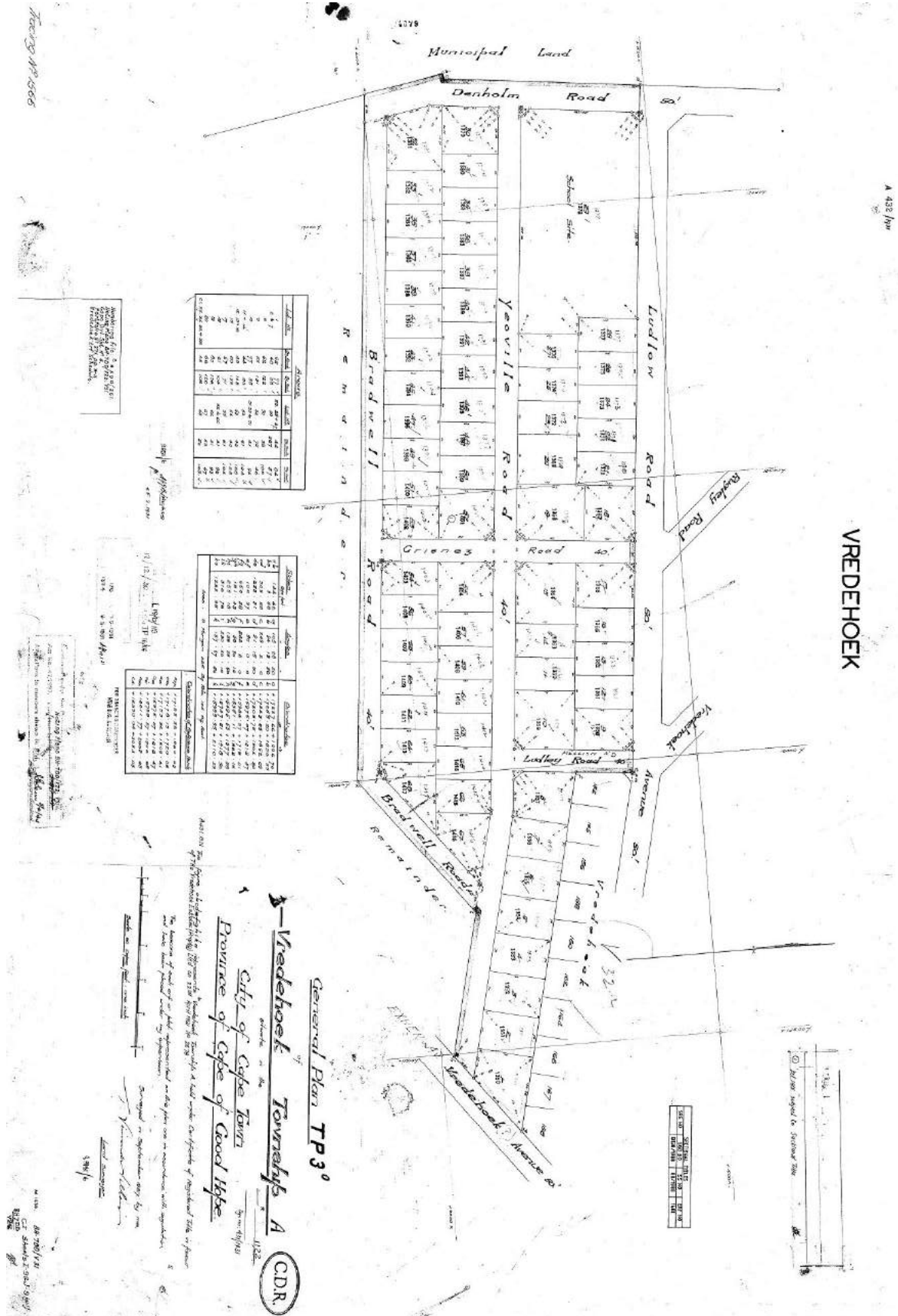
ANNEXURE 3:



Annexure 3: Surveyor General diagram A1769/1923 (Surveyor General's Office).

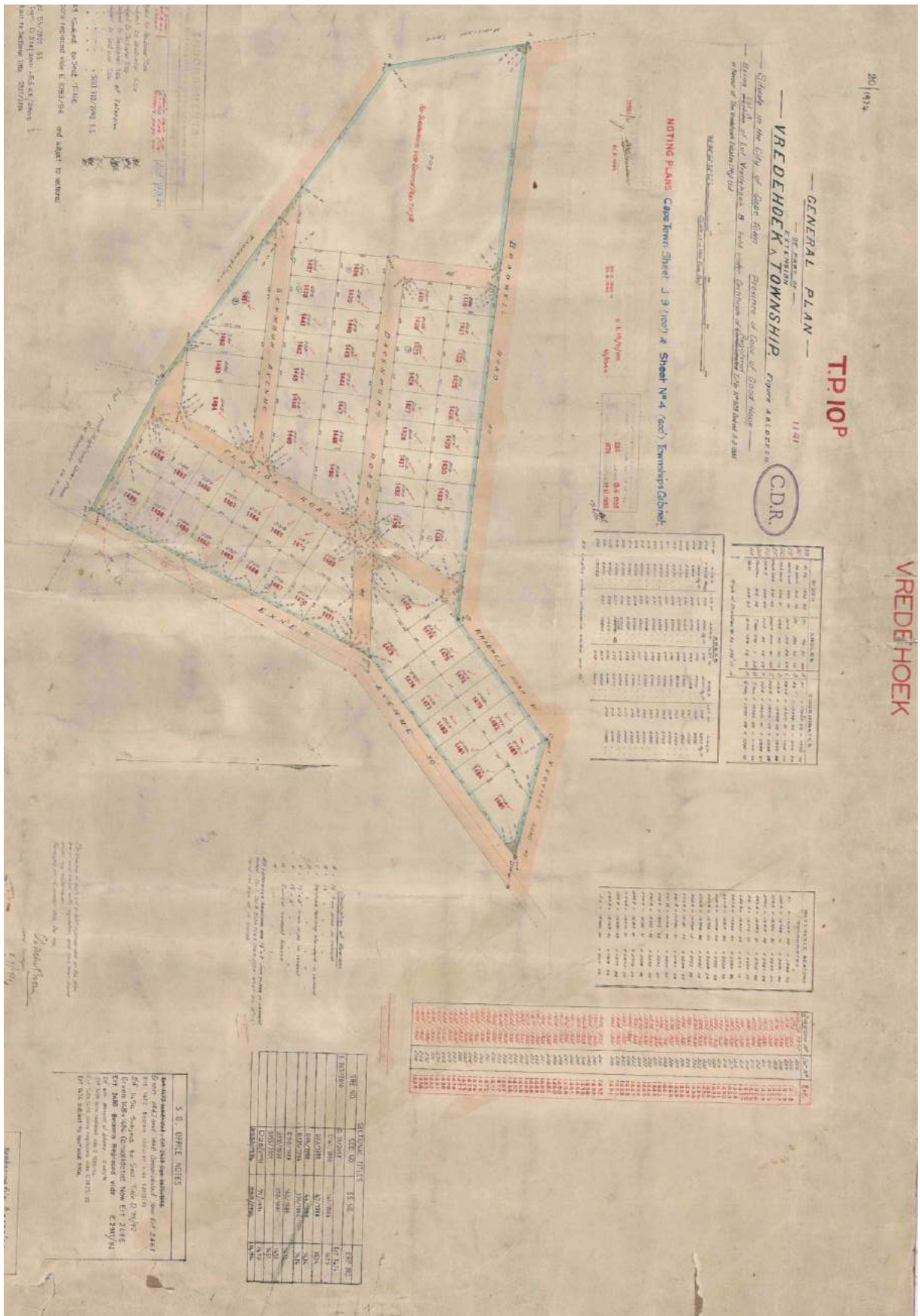


ANNEXURE 5:



Annexure 5: Surveyor General diagram A432/1931 (Surveyor General's Office).

ANNEXURES 6a-e:



Annexure 6a: Surveyor General diagram 20/1934 (Surveyor General's Office).

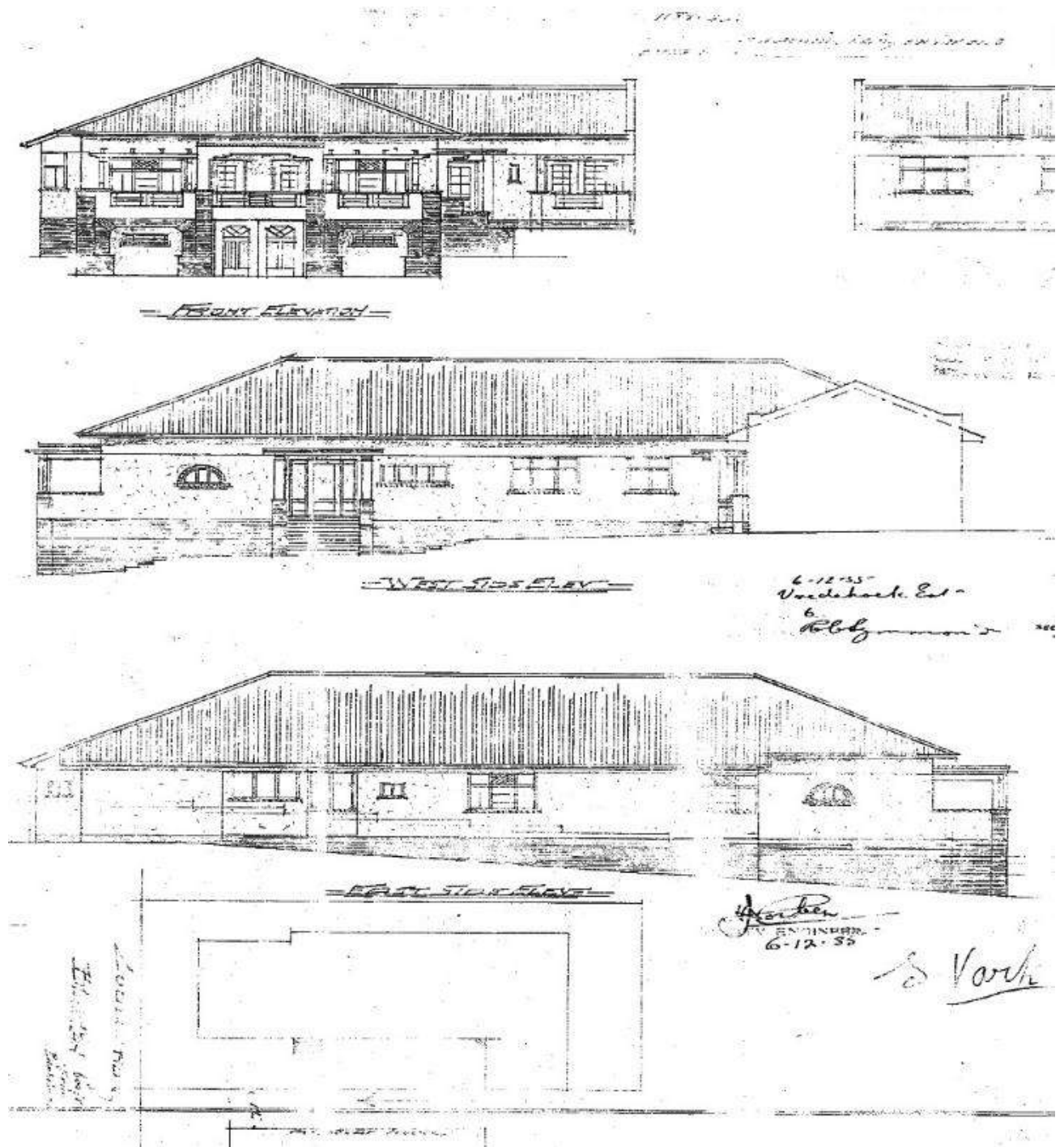






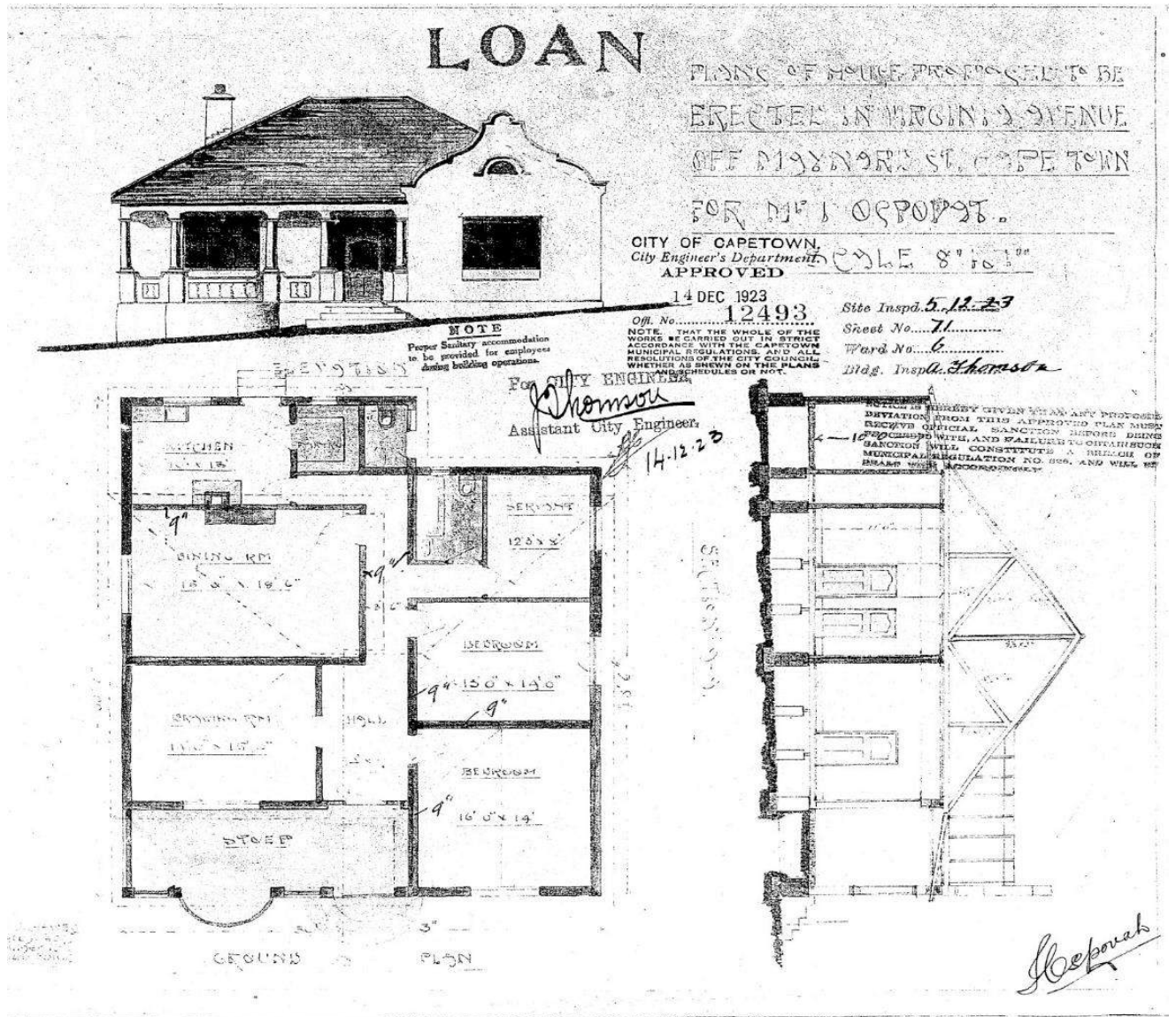


ANNEXURE 7:



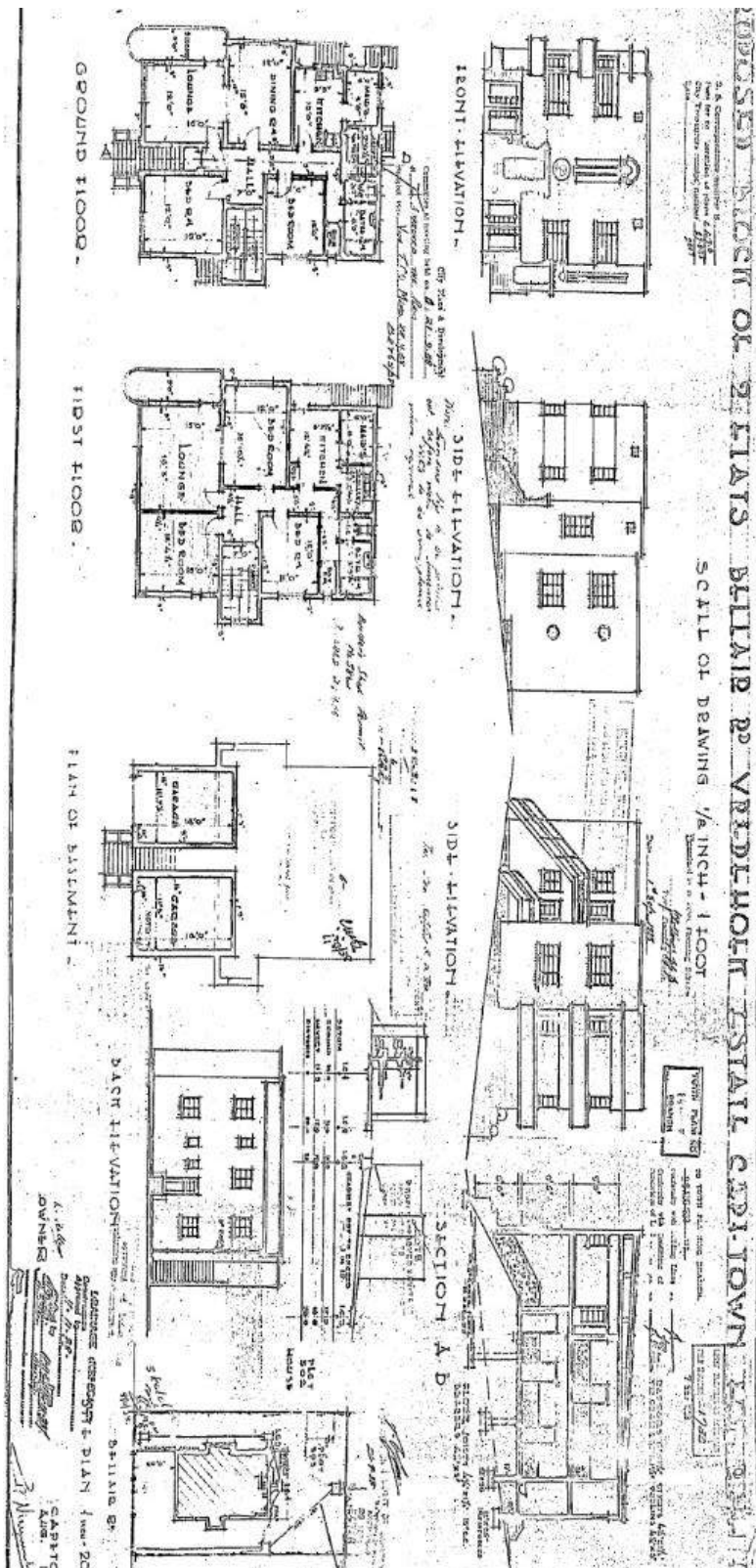
Annexure 7: Extract from original plan of 12 Ludlow Road designed in 1935 by Mello Damstra, a very well-known architect, for S. Varkel, one of the main developers of property within Vredehoek at the time. (City of Cape Town, Planning and Development Management)

ANNEXURE 8:



Annexure 8: Extract from the original plan of 21 Virginia Avenue designed in 1923 for Isaac Ospovat, a prominent member of the Vredehoek Shul congregation. (City of Cape Town, Planning and Development Management)

ANNEXURE 9:



Annexure 9: Design by F. Nieuwenhuizen for developers Varkel and Talberg for the flat complexes at 25 and 29 Bellair Road. The drawings differ from what was actually built, but illustrate the typical Art Deco characteristics as discussed through-out this study. (City of Cape Town, Planning and Development Management)

## ANNEXURE 10: LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

### Vredehoek Residents:

- Resident A – Middle aged mother and wife, owns a house on Exner Avenue, lived there for 22 years.
- Resident B – Single woman and outdoor running enthusiast, renting a flat on Chelmsford Road, lived there for 6 years.
- Resident C – Married woman with children, owns a house in Kreupelhout Lane, lived there for 11 years. Was the Chairperson of the Cape Town Community Police Forum for 8 years, now leading the Devil's Peak/ Vredehoek Neighbourhood Watch.
- Resident D – Single woman, lawyer, owns a flat on Davenport Avenue, lived there for 8 years.
- Resident E – Married woman with a young child, owns a flat on St. James Avenue, lived there for 5 years having previously lived in Davenport Road.

### Representatives from City Bowl Ratepayers and Residents Association:

- City and Urban Planner and Urban Conservation Professional (informal discussion).
- Tour Guide and architectural enthusiast.

### City of Cape Town Environment and Heritage Management Branch:

- Professional Heritage Management Official at E&HM and an Art Deco enthusiast (informal discussion).

### Heritage Professionals:

- Experienced heritage practitioner with a background as a historian. Previously a bureaucrat for many years in the local authority at the City of Cape Town.
- Experienced architect and heritage practitioner, previously with the local authority's heritage section.

### Representative from DOCOMOMO: International Committee for Documentation and Conservation of buildings, sites and neighbourhoods of the Modern Movement.

- Architect and partner of an architectural company, also trained in heritage and public culture.

### Property Developers:

- Representatives from a Cape Town based development company specialising in small scale residential development within Cape Town (discussion).

## ANNEXURE 11: LIST OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- Do you think that there is anything special about the neighbourhood of Vredehoek? If so, what is it and why is it special?
- Do you think that any value lies within the built environment of Vredehoek? If so, what do you think is valuable and why?
- Have you noticed factors of change occurring within Vredehoek? If so, what are these change factors and what are your areas of concern, if any?
- What are your thoughts regarding the demolition of existing older houses and flat complexes within Vredehoek?
- What do you think should replace the buildings that have been demolished?
- What are your thoughts about the development of new residential blocks of flats in Vredehoek? Do you think it is a good thing or a bad thing and why?
- Do you think that the neighbourhood of Vredehoek has a special character? If so, what defines this character?
- Do you think that the demolition of the existing buildings will change the character of the neighbourhood? If so how, and will this change be for the better/worse/not at all and why?
- Do you think that the addition of new blocks of flats will change the character of the area? If so how, and will this change be for the better/worse/not at all and why?
- Do you think that any buildings or collections of buildings in Vredehoek are special? If so, why are they special and do you think that they should be protected?
- Do you think that the collection of Art Deco buildings within Vredehoek are architecturally significant and worthy of protection?
- In your opinion, does Vredehoek embody special townscape quality? If not, why? If so, what are the elements that you feel contribute toward the townscape quality?
- Do you think that the collection of Art Deco buildings, and/or the 1920s/1930s single storey houses with clay tile roofs and Arts and Crafts architectural characteristics contribute towards the townscape character? If so, do you think that this townscape should be protected? Explain your answer.
- Should Vredehoek, or parts of Vredehoek, be designated as a conservation area, what conservation-oriented development control measures afforded through this designation do you think are appropriate/necessary for this area? (Question for heritage professionals only)
- When you think of the suburb of Vredehoek in a physical sense, describe the mental image that comes into your mind.

- If the components that make up the suburb of Vredehoek are divided into the following elements: roads are pathways; familiar/noteworthy structures or landscape features are landmarks; areas of recreational/business/day-day activities are nodes; and area boundary/dividing elements are edges – in your mental image of Vredehoek, what elements immediately stand out within this image for you and why?
- What features and characteristics about Vredehoek do you think are most distinctive?
- When travelling around Vredehoek do you ever feel lost, or do you know exactly where you are going? Are there any particular roads, structures, trees, or vistas that help you orientate yourself in the neighbourhood?
- Do you like the experience of walking/driving around Vredehoek? What qualities do you like most and least?

ANNEXURE 12:

Examples of Art Deco flats within Vredehoek that have been compromised by insensitive additions and loss of original features. These typically include the closing in of balconies; windows with horizontal panes replaced by varieties of window types without horizontal proportions; original entrance and garage doors replaced with contemporary varieties.



Figure 116



Figure 117



Figure 118



Figure 119

Figures 116 - 119: Castle Mansions - 13 Florida Road (figure 116); Daventry Court – 25 Davenport Road (figure 117); Eldorado Court – 19 Florida Road (figure 118); Hollandia – 27 Davenport Road (figure 119) (All pictures by author, 2016)



Figure 120



Figure 121

Figures 120 – 121: Huguenot – 28 Bellair Road c1990 (figure 120), Huguenot in 2013 illustrating compromised windows and balconies (figure 121). (Figure 120: Jacobs/Duckham survey, E&HM; figure 121: E&HM, 2013)



Figure 122



Figure 123

Figures 122 - 123: Beverley Court – 26 Davenport Road (figure 122); Exeter Court – 49 Exner Avenue (figure 123). (Images by author, 2016)



Figure 124

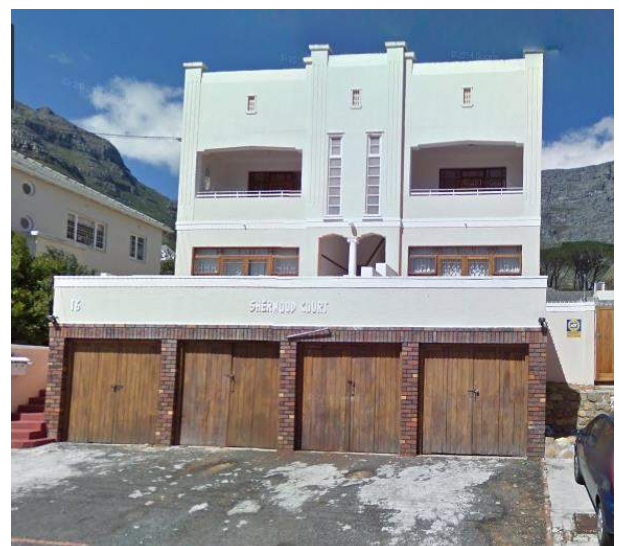


Figure 125

Figures 124 – 125: Sherwood Court – 16 Davenport Road displaying new alterations to the garages and entrance of the block of flats (figure 124); Sherwood Court in 2009 with bottom storey balconies filled in but without alterations (figure 125). (Figure 124 by author, 2016; figure 125 by Google Streetview, 2009)

ANNEXURE 13:

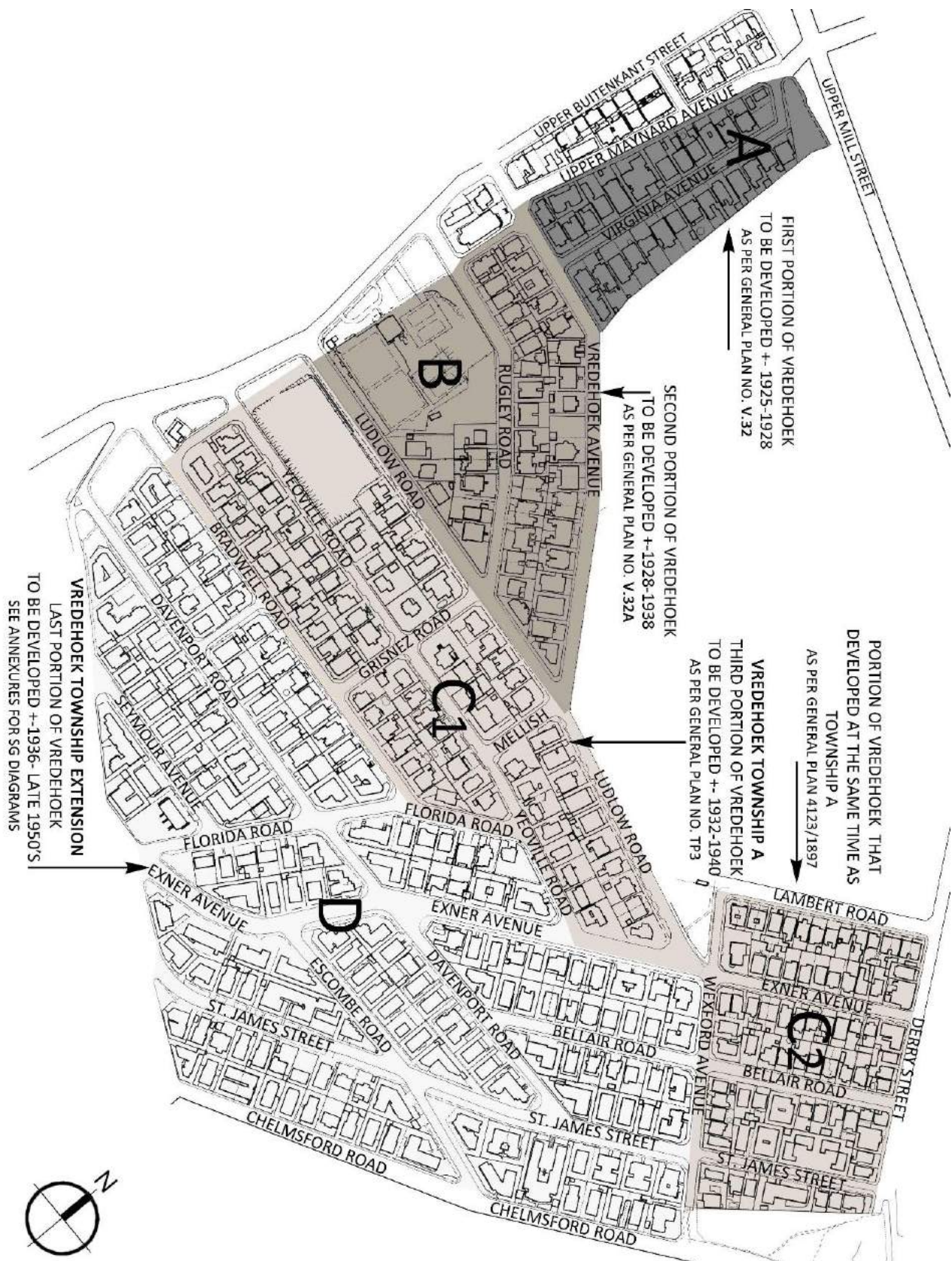


Figure 68 enlarged.

Annexure 13 supplements the description of the areas of Vredehoek analysed according to the micro-period of their development in Chapter 4 according to the four phases of development illustrated within figure 68. This annexure further illustrates the collection of isolated buildings of good architectural merit as well as positive townscape elements that have been identified within this study, as well as those buildings and streetscapes that detract from townscape quality and unity.

#### Phase A:

Detracting from the streetscape of Virginia Avenue is Trinity Gardens, a seven-storey apartment block on Upper Maynard Avenue. In the early 2000s, four plots extending between Virginia and Upper Maynard Avenues were consolidated by a developer wanting to develop the full site. Demolition permits were not, however, approved for the four existing single dwellings on each of the four plots deemed to have enough contextual heritage value to be retained. The land owner still went ahead with developing what they could of the land. The resultant block of flats, squeezed in between Upper Maynard Avenue and the four remaining dwellings on the Virginia Avenue edge of the plots is one entirely out of scale with the rest of Virginia Avenue, as well as Upper Maynard Avenue detracting from the streetscape quality of this avenue.



Figure 126: Street panoramic of Virginia Avenue's western side with Trinity Gardens flat complex in the background and original hipped roof dwellings in the foreground. (Image by author, 2017)

#### Phase B:

The street plan of Vredehoek Avenue and Rugley Road contains a curve, a small portion of Vredehoek Avenue runs along the historic boundary between the Mellish and Elba Farms. On the northern side of Vredehoek Avenue where Elba Farm once stood is where Good Hope Seminary Junior School is located today. No tangible remains of either farm or homestead exist today. To the south of Vredehoek Avenue plots were laid out around the curved street, 18, 9 metres and 22 metres in width (60 and 70 Cape feet respectively) and 31,48 metres in length (100 Cape feet). Where plots sit at the junctions where Vredehoek Avenue and Rugley Roads bend, these plots embody a slightly awkward, triangular shape, as well as those plots situated where Vredehoek Avenue and Rugley Roads meet Ludlow Road – resulting in their longer hypotenuse sides along the

street boundaries being as long as 50 metres in places disrupting any coherent relationship between building elevations on the northern side of Ludlow Road.

Originally this portion of Vredehoek was laid out with 10 feet servitudes between most plots, later, these servitudes were deemed unnecessary by the Townships Board and absorbed into neighbouring plots of 18, 9 metres in width (60 Cape feet). This portion of Vredehoek, 32A, was not restricted by a single dwelling development condition, hence the buildings on these blocks are a mix of small flat complexes, semi-detached houses and the typical 1920s/30s single dwellings as described above.



Figure 127: 'Abmor' - 30 Vredehoek Avenue reflects the U-shaped building plan utilising the wider street frontage of the 22 metre (70 Cape foot) site, Art Deco characteristics such as stepped arches over the terraces, windows with starburst patterns and porthole windows can be seen. (Image by author, 2016)



Figure 128: 50 & 52 Vredehoek Avenue, an example of a semi-detached larger building utilising the wider street frontage of the 22 metre (70 Cape foot) site, embodying characteristics typical of the area including a hipped roof with red clay tile, Cape Dutch Revival gables, pre-cast Tuscan-style columns, teak windows with lead lined panes and arched doorways. (Image by author, 2016)

The plots with a width of 22 metres (70 Cape feet) are populated by larger semi-detached hipped roof houses and blocks of flats with a U-shaped plan maximising the longer street frontage. These flats were designed in the Art Deco style, some also exhibiting Arts and Crafts characteristics, several designed by well-known architects at the time such as H. Davidge-Pitts and M.G. Damstra.



Figure 129

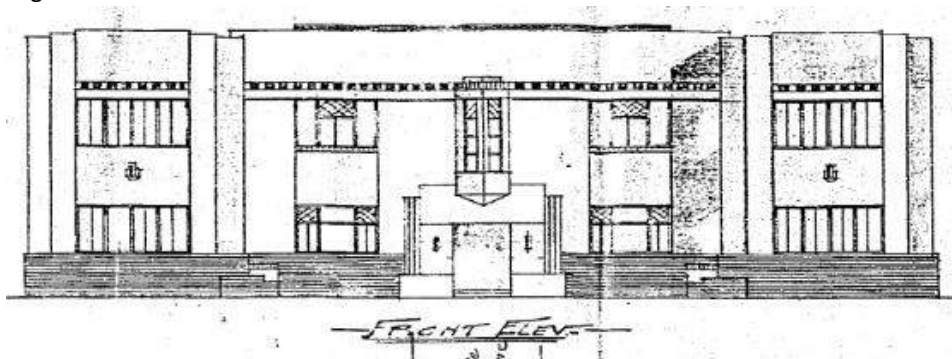


Figure 130

Figures 129 & 130: 19 Rugley Road, designed by Damstra in 1935 for Mr. Manoim. Figure 129 illustrates how the removal of authentic windows substituted by aluminium replacements, the addition of an out-of-character porte-cochere and the raising of the boundary wall have significantly altered the character and heritage-significance of this building. (Figure 129 by author, 2016; figure 130: an extract from original building plan - City of Cape Town-Planning and Development Management)

Older blocks of flats are consistent in scale to those within the area whilst two newer blocks are out of character. Danbury Place, a large flat complex built over two plots each 22 metres (70 Cape foot) in width situated at 38 and 40 Vredehoek Avenue, results in a long four storey block with very wide spaces to the common boundaries on either side. 58 Vredehoek Avenue is a five storey block sitting at the highest point of Vredehoek Avenue thus looming over the rest of the street. The property exploits full use of the GR4 zoning rights assigned to it, departures permitting a further addition of

terraces within the street boundary line ensures that the building is even more out of character with the rest of the block.



Figure 131: 58 Vredehoek Avenue. (Image by author, 2017)

#### Phases C1 and C2:

A number of the dwellings within portion C1 are very large, double storey buildings, some retaining their original form, others entirely changed through alterations and additions. Two large double storey houses, 46 Ludlow Road designed by architects H. Howell Woolley in 1933, and 25 Yeoville Road, embody a more convincing display of Arts and Crafts character. Three blocks of flats exist on the western side of Ludlow Road, two of these flats, built in the 1930s, exhibit an unusual mix of Streamlined Moderne and Art Deco characteristics as well as the hipped, red tiled roof more typical to the later Art Deco flats of the 1940s.



Figure 132



Figure 133

Figures 132 & 133: 46 Ludlow Road (figure 132) displays a mix of exposed brick and stone, slate roof tiles and bay windows. The Exner Avenue façade embodies a large brick chimney column of exposed detailed brickwork, as well as a triangular gable topped with exposed, stepped brickwork detailing. 25 Yeoville Road (figure 133) displays a mix of Art Deco and Art and Crafts characteristics including an exposed stone boundary wall, exposed brick chimney and an Art Deco stepped window reveal. (Images by author, 2016)



Figure 134



Figure 135

Figures 134 & 135: Blocks of flats at 32 and 34 Ludlow Road displaying a mix of Streamlined Moderne curves and hipped tiled roofs typical of later Art Deco blocks of flats. The garages of both blocks at the back of the properties each have Art Deco stepped parapets. (Images by author, 2016)

A further example of the significantly altered dwellings within this section of Vredehoek is 23 Bradwell Road, originally a good example of 1920s/1930s housing now unrecognisably altered.



Figure 136



Figure 137

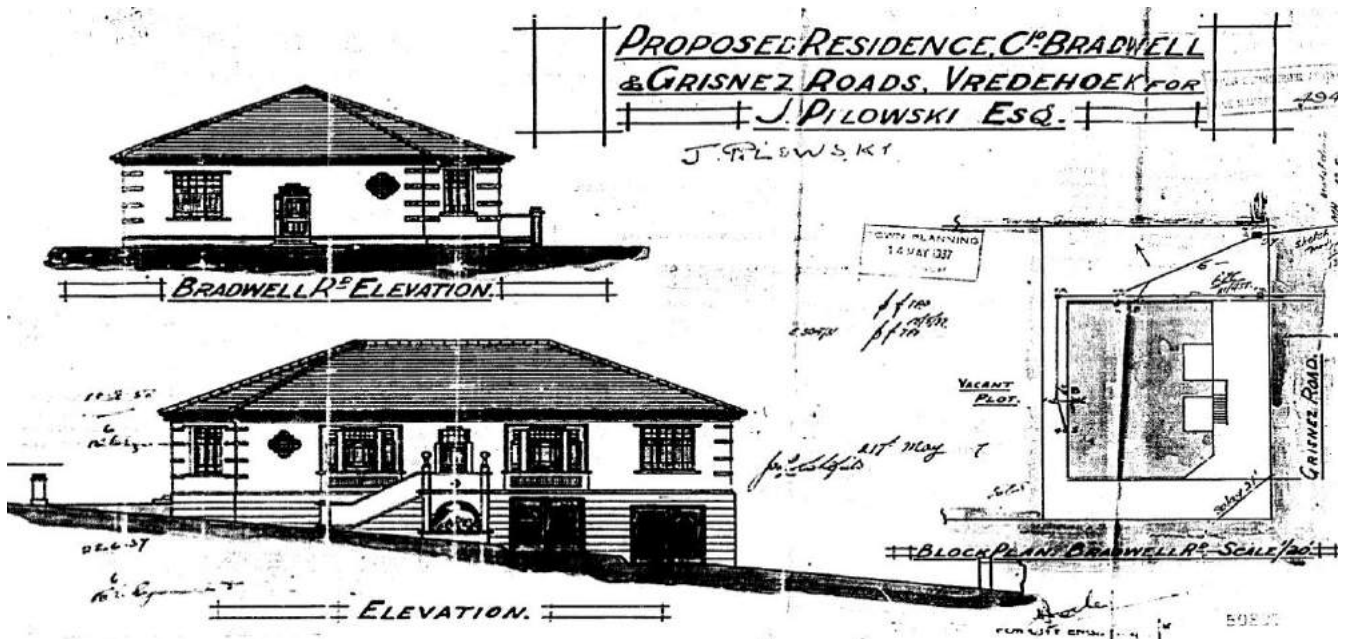


Figure 138

Figures 136 – 138: Images illustrating the significant alterations to 23 Bradwell Road initially designed by architect H. Davidge-Pitts for J. Pilowski in 1937. Apart from the shape of the roof, this house has been changed unrecognisably. (Figure 136 by E&HM; figure 137 by Google Streetview 2009; figure 138 an extract from original building plan - City of Cape Town, Planning and Development Management)

Several run-down old dwellings within phase C2 that retain their original plot siting and building type morphology contribute a picturesque aesthetic toward the streetscape, as do several well preserved original dwellings. The Rennie and Riley survey summarises the predominant style of this area as being non-descript, with a few bits of Art-Deco. Two houses were indicated as being good examples of their period, number 15 Lambert Road and number 6 Exner Road (Rennie & Riley, 1986).

15 Lambert has also been identified within this study as a building contributing towards the streetscape in terms of architectural value as well as contributory street boundary elements. Number 4 Exner Avenue is blocked from the street due to its solid, unsightly boundary wall and large trees, however it's retention of original morphological building and plot pattern has been noted. Earlier snap shots taken from Google Streetview in 2009 illustrates how the dwelling is a good, unaltered example of 1920s/1930s housing embodying many of the characteristics typical to its type.



Figure 139

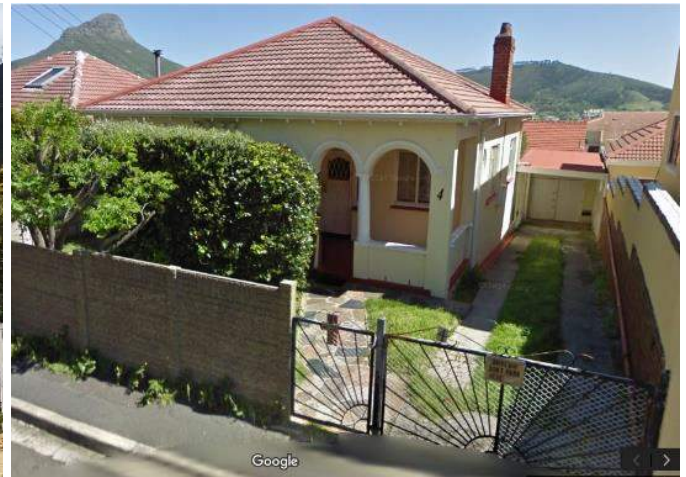


Figure 140



Figure 141

Figures 139 - 141: 15 Lambert Road (figure 139); 4 Exner Avenue (figure 140); 9 Exner Avenue (figure 141). (Figures 139 & 141 by author 2016; figure 140 by Google Streetview, 2009)

#### Phase D:

The description of phase D within Chapter 4 focused on the noteworthy clusters of Art Deco buildings on Davenport and Bellair Roads and Exner Avenue. A number of the more noteworthy buildings within Vredehoek exist in isolation within this section, including the larger more complex blocks of flats built over two plots. Some of these flats embody finer architectural and aesthetic

character such as Lincoln Court on the corner of Wexford Avenue and St. James Street and Wexford Mansions on the corner of Wexford Avenue and Bellair Road displaying good proportions typical Art Deco features including vertical emphasis and decoration at entrances; some original windows with intact ribbon glass panes and interesting use of exposed brick.



Figure 142: Lincoln Court, 12 St. James Street. (Image by author, 2016)



Figure 143: Wexford Mansions, 6 Wexford Avenue. (Image by author, 2016)

Also noteworthy are a number of the larger complexes described in Chapter 4 at the lower end of Davenport Road including Davenport Court, Highlands Park designed and developed by Glatal Investments in 1939, Glen Alphine designed by Dawood Jacobs for G. Augustus in 1939, and Kantana and Petra Court designed by Walgate and Elsworth in 1939.



Figure 144



Figure 145



Figure 146



Figure 147

Figures 144 - 147: Davenport Court - 3 Davenport Road (figures 144 & 145); Highlands Park – 1 Highlands Avenue (figures 146 & 147). (Images by author, 2016)



Figure 148



Figure 149

Figures 148 & 149: Petra Court – 12 Davenport Road. (Figure 148: City Map Viewer, City of Cape Town, 2017; figure 149: Google Streetview, 2009)



Figure 150:



Figure 151



Figure 152

Figures 150 - 152: A few avenue vistas exist within Vredehoek: the middle portion of Exner Avenue (figure 150); the higher portion of Exner Avenue looking down from the Derry Street (figure 151); and the view looking down the lower portion of Davenport Road where Davenport and Florida Roads intersect (figure 152). (Images by author, 2017)

As discussed in Chapter 4, the consistency of the building morphology within this section of Vredehoek generates a coherent rhythm of solid building massing and in-between side space voids as illustrated below on Seymour Avenue and Chelmsford Road. A high concentration of late Art Deco blocks line Chelmsford Road, with rectangular building form, hipped roofs, red roof tiles and square building and balcony edges. When viewed from the street and in aerial pictures, the consistent morphological pattern of these buildings is very clear, forming a coherent group which adds structure and period character to the streetscape. Apart from the consistency of form however, the buildings themselves are once again very ordinary, particularly the rectangular late Art Deco buildings on the 595 square metre plots which exhibit no aesthetically or architecturally noteworthy characteristics.



Figure 153: Seymour Road is lined by contiguous 595 square metre plots on its northern side with typical square-edged, flat roofed Art Deco flats and contemporary flats in keeping with the morphology of the area in terms of the positioning of the building on the plot 3,14 metres from the street with side space on either side. (Image by author, 2017)



Figure 154: The late Art Deco rectangular blocks of flats on Chelmsford Road. (Image by author, 2017)

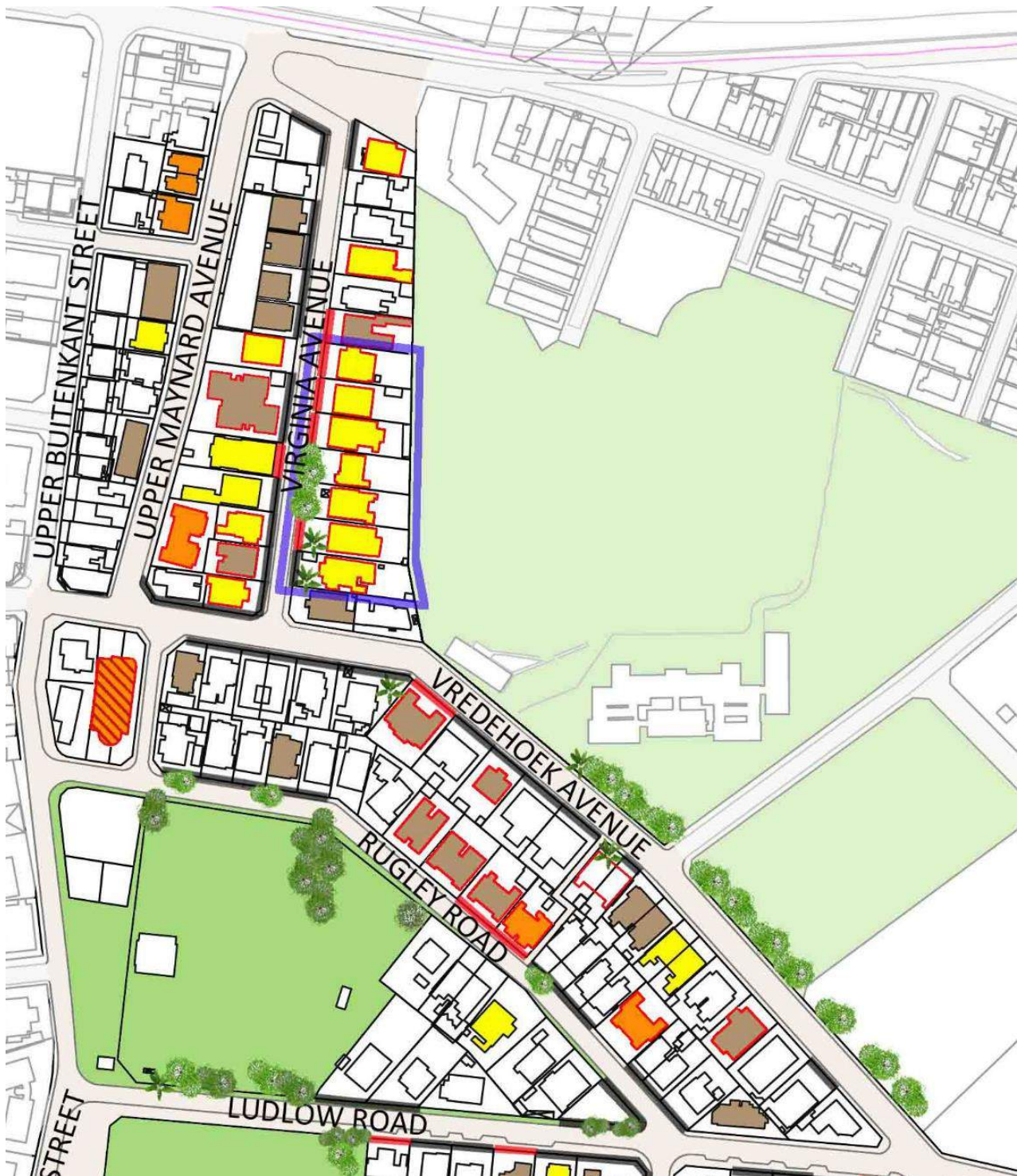


Figure 155: Chelmsford Road. (Image by author, 2017)





ANNEXURE 16:



Annexure 16: Extract from figure 106, mapping of Vredehoek's heritage resources and townscape quality.

ANNEXURE 17:



Annexure 17: Extract from figure 106, mapping of Vredehoek's heritage resources and townscape quality.

ANNEXURE 18:



Annexure 18: Extract from figure 106, mapping of Vredehoek's heritage resources and townscape quality.

ANNEXURE 19:



Annexure 19: Extract from figure 106, mapping of Vredehoek's heritage resources and townscape quality.

## **CHAPTER 5: EVALUATION OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE AND TOWNSCAPE QUALITY WITHIN**

### **VREDEHOEK**

The research question posed within this dissertation asks what qualities, characteristics and cultural significance need to be embodied within an urban environment that make the area worthy of conservation-oriented protection? The criteria that were established with which to answer this question are:

- Does the urban environment embody cultural significance and characteristics informed by an urban history reflected in its authentic manifestations developed over time through continuity of use?
- Does the urban environment embody high townscape quality established primarily through the aesthetic unity of its component parts?

The research question has been interrogated through the case of Vredehoek where the townscape has been assessed according to the established criteria. The townscape has also been assessed using established Vredehoek-specific criteria and a map of the area of study was created illustrating Vredehoek's lack of townscape quality and small pockets of fabric that embody heritage significance (see figure 106).

The eight steps with which to assess heritage significance as set out in Heritage England's Conservation Principles and as discussed by Kalman in Chapter 2, have also been followed in order to evaluate the heritage significance of the area being studied, these steps are:

- 1: Understand the fabric and evolution of the place
- 2: Identify who values the place, and why they do so
- 3: Relate identified heritage values to the fabric of the place
- 4: Consider the relative importance of those identified values
- 5: Consider the contribution of associated objects and collections
- 6: Consider the contribution made by setting and context
- 7: Compare the place with other places sharing similar features
- 8: Articulate the significance of the place.

(English Heritage, 2008: 35-40)

This chapter summarises the assessments that have been made using the criteria and steps described above and evaluates the heritage significance and conservation-worthiness of this townscape.

Chapter 4 described how Vredehoek originated as a dairy farm within the Upper Table Valley of Cape Town in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and was then subdivided and developed in the years between 1920 and 1950 into a white, middle class suburb. Informed by the social, political and architectural conditions and influences at the time, the nature of building that arose within this residential suburb was one of a speculative nature where ‘appropriate’ housing types of the time were first single-dwellings surrounded by gardens and then small to medium scale flats. Shifts in architectural attitudes, new architectural styles and the availability of mass produced, off-the-shelf building materials and components informed the development of the new architectural housing types described within Chapter 4. Because Vredehoek developed during this period, the resultant morphology of plot size – informed by what was appropriate at the time, and building type, embodies a particular character different to that of neighbouring residential environments. In terms of the architectural, aesthetic and townscape value of this new type of built fabric, attitudes towards it have shifted dramatically over the past thirty years as has been illustrated through the various heritage surveys of Vredehoek during this time.

The proposed designation of this place as a heritage conservation area has caused great conflict amongst heritage officials and professionals, developers, architects, amenity bodies and residents and no group has consensus about the heritage and townscape value that exists within Vredehoek.

In evaluating the mapping of what is noteworthy within Vredehoek, it is immediately clear that there are no consistently special elements within the environment. Baumann defined the key elements of a noteworthy townscape as first embodying “the *sense of place* (“I know where I am”) and second the *sense of unity*, the town experienced not as a lot of disconnected pieces but as a whole, with one recognisable area leading into another” (Baumann, 1997: 253 – emphasis in original). As we have heard from residents within Vredehoek, the description of their experience of this place is quite different to that described by Baumann.

Certain individual Art Deco flats and clusters of these flats within Vredehoek have been identified as architecturally and aesthetically significant in their own right, and for the roles that they play in the streetscape and townscape. Whilst there are several relatively ordinary examples within those identified and none exhibit architectural excellence, the special nature and relative rarity of Art Deco buildings within Cape Town supplements the architectural and aesthetic significance of these identified flats and the argument for their protection as components of an area, suggesting rather that these individual buildings should be placed on the heritage register, thus formally protecting them. Likewise, the good, intact examples of 1920s/1930s dwellings that have been identified within this study as embodying architectural and aesthetic value in their own right, and in certain instances

as a group contributing towards the streetscape, should be formally protected and placed on the heritage register.

Whilst there have been many claims that the townscape character of Vredehoek is conservation-worthy, it has been shown that although certain elements of the built-environment are special, holistically, the quality of this townscape is neither refined nor noteworthy. The highlights of this urban environment are the characterful Art Deco and Streamlined Moderne collections of flats. The constant built element tying the area together is the coherent period-character of scale, massing and building typology, as well as the morphological consistency of how buildings (particularly the blocks of flats) are sited on their plots, imparting a consistent rhythm of solid to void massing to the townscape. However, as the mapping exercise illustrates, not one full street within Vredehoek has a continuous set of harmonious characteristics. The noteworthy clusters of buildings that do exist on Virginia and Exner Avenues, and in Bellair and Davenport Roads are in disconnected pockets. Their characterful, contributory presence to the streetscape is then watered down by very ordinary and much altered pockets of average buildings along the same road.

The sense of community valued by those who live within Vredehoek is primarily informed by the relationships, the interactions and familiarity that the residents experience living within their environment. All the residents interviewed expressed the value that they feel for the active, participative community and dynamic neighbourhood watch. Several residents expressed how this community experience is enhanced by the modest, village-scale of the environment where amenities and recreational nodes are nearby. The main quality expressed by all residents engaged with during the course of this study is the presence of and access to Table Mountain, as well as the parks described as “the meeting place across the generations”. Besides the mountain and the parks, very few residents attributed the value that they feel for the place to tangible elements of the environment, most qualities were associated with positive feelings attributed to the *people* within the place, not the place itself. Indeed, the majority of negative characteristics articulated by residents were associated with the built environment of the place – the run-down nature of buildings, harsh pavement experience and disorientation when travelling through the suburb due to the confusing and illogical street network. But, whilst residents attach social value to Vredehoek in terms of social cohesion and community identity - described by Mason as place attachment – this social value attributed to Vredehoek’s community cannot be protected as a heritage-resource.

In terms of Vredehoek’s street-system, this component of the town plan made up of pavements, road and concrete embankment is unable to contribute towards a positive townscape and is a major element that detracts from the character of the area. In certain areas, this street-system creates vast intersections, all pavements are of a harsh, unkempt disposition made worse by large, steep

concrete embankments. Besides a few pockets of trees and the occasional lone palm tree or stone pine, no coherent planting exists along the pavements. Whilst some properties have dense clusters of trees and planting which do contribute toward the streetscape, as well as the green nodes of the parks, these too are in disconnected pockets.

In terms of streetscapes, the interface between plot boundary and pavement within Vredehoek is generally not a harmonious transition from private to public with low boundary walls, permeable fences and coherent planting. Dwellings are typically cut off from the street at their street boundary by solid or semi-permeable 1,8 metre boundary walls and garage doors. No two boundary treatments are alike within Vredehoek, whilst this could create a picturesque street edge, most boundary walls, fences and gates are of harsh, practical materials such as vibracrete and unpainted palisade fencing. Typically the interface between the pavement and the flats are vast expanses of concrete, brick or tar from side boundary to side boundary kept clear for parking. Thus, the plot/pavement interface within Vredehoek, on the whole, is not a streetscape component that contributes to townscape quality. A highlight within the streetscape interface is the cluster of Art Deco blocks with complementary low walls, adorned gate posts and entrance steps on Bellair Road. The typically vast expanses of open space in front of the Art Deco blocks between the buildings and the pavement, although barren and stark in materiality, does afford one an unobstructed view to the Art Deco blocks. These buildings do impart character to the streetscape.

The value of the period-character of the dwellings and the flats that has been indicated as significant needs to be thoroughly articulated. Whilst the homogenous massing, scale, typology and siting of building on plot does create a distinctive pattern and relatively coherent contextual experience, the actual quality of each individual building that makes up this relatively coherent whole needs to be assessed in their own right. These individual buildings in Vredehoek are made up of a mix of very ordinary 1920s/1930s dwellings many of which are too insignificant to be protected in their own right, even those that are intact examples of this form-producing period, but most of these dwellings have been significantly altered. Several good, intact examples exist of 1920s/1930s dwellings which embody Arts and Crafts characteristics as well as several noteworthy Cape Dutch Revival houses typically intact and in good condition. There are also good Art Deco blocks of flats in various degrees of intactness, many non-descript Art Deco blocks in various degrees of intactness, as well as new blocks of flats. Thus, the authenticity and cultural significance of the period-character of Vredehoek as a whole is insufficient due to being made up by an inconsistent collection of parts.

Due to Vredehoek's location within the Upper Table Valley and on the edge of Table Mountain, new development within the area should respond to this context in terms of height. Where the consolidation of general residential property is permitted the risk of new buildings being built higher

that 5 storeys exists. Buildings of this height will have a detrimental impact on the Table Mountain and Upper Table Valley edge and in these circumstances, if Vredehoek is not designated as a conservation area, the local planning authority should ensure that a reasonable height is prescribed if properties are consolidated in terms of protecting Table Mountain as a heritage resource.

It seems to be agreed that the clusters of Art Deco blocks within Vredehoek are special as a group due to their density within one area and the period-character that they exhibit. It has also been established that, whilst there are some good, intact Art Deco and Streamlined examples, many of these blocks are ordinary, lacking architectural merit or falling into a state of disrepair. The best buildings, as identified within this study, should be formally protected by being placed on the heritage register. The less intact Art Deco flats that still embody sufficient architectural and aesthetic qualities that contribute towards the streetscape which have also been identified should be generally protected and carefully assessed in their own right should they be proposed for demolition or alteration. To formally protect the whole area of Vredehoek through conservation area designation including the very ordinary and much altered buildings for the sake of the role that they play within an area of average character will perpetuate a state of ordinariness almost certainly freezing this environment into a mediocre state of disrepair due to new investment into the area being discouraged through restrictive conditions on development.

Given this, the cultural values associated with Vredehoek that have been identified here by heritage-claimants and stakeholders are architectural, aesthetic, townscape, social (neighbourliness) and historical. The conclusion of this evaluation suggests that the only cultural values present are those related to architectural and aesthetic value and neighbourliness. The extent of this significance has also been articulated with consensus reached that no exemplary architectural or aesthetic values are exhibited within this environment, only good and typical examples.

## **CHAPTER 6: - STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE AND CONCLUSION:**

The research question posed in this study asks what qualities, characteristics and cultural significance need to be embodied within an urban environment that make the area worthy of conservation-oriented protection through laws and policies. A set of criteria was developed with which to assess and evaluate proposed urban conservation areas, namely, such environments need to embody cultural significance and characteristics informed by an urban history reflected in its authentic manifestations developed over time through continuity of use with a high townscape quality established primarily through the aesthetic unity of its component parts.

The research question was explored through an assessment of the townscape of Vredehoek, an informally proposed conservation area in Cape Town. The conservation-worthiness of this area was evaluated within the framework of the criteria developed to assess and evaluate proposed conservation areas, as well as a set of Vredehoek-specific criteria developed to identify its townscape quality. This study has shown that Vredehoek does not meet these criteria and thus should not be designated as a conservation area.

Contrary to my initial instincts at the outset of this study that the area of Vredehoek should be conserved due to its unique townscape character made up of Art Deco buildings and individual dwelling houses reflecting a period-character, the study has shown that this urban environment lacks consistent or exemplary cultural significance in terms of aesthetic, architectural and townscape value, and no sufficiently articulated conservation-worthy historical or social value. Indeed, the sense of neighbourliness referred to by many residents is not a significance that can be protected by laws and policies. Due to the relatively recent development of the area and the absence of fabric from Vredehoek's first life as a farming area, authentic layering of townscape manifestations created through a continuity of use is limited to the townscape developed in the early to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Furthermore, the authenticity of this early 20<sup>th</sup> century Art Deco townscape is questionable in certain areas due to the speculative nature of some of the buildings not designed by architects and built using off-the-shelf components, and, furthermore, many of these buildings have been compromised through insensitive alteration. The study has also shown that the environment does not embody sufficient townscape quality nor aesthetic unity of its elements due to the disconnection and average quality of its components.

Pockets of Art Deco buildings in Vredehoek have been shown to be special in their own right and in the role that they play as a group, they can and should be protected as individual buildings through Section 30 of South Africa's National Heritage Resources Act. Had this collection of Art Deco blocks of flats, or even a reasonable percentage of them, embodied architectural excellence it may have

been recommended to designate smaller heritage protection zones around clusters. The architectural merit of the majority of these structures has, however, not been demonstrated to be exemplary.

Whilst the built environment within Vredehoek, to a large extent, still embodies the homogenous morphology of the first generation development that occurred between the 1920s to 1950s during the township's formation, and although this does impart a relatively consistent period-character onto the environment, this period-character is very ordinary. The Art Deco and Streamlined blocks of flats are the highlights within this townscape, with some good, intact examples of Cape Town's 1920s/1930s single dwelling housing playing a supporting role. The best examples of this housing type have been identified, evaluated and should be protected as individual buildings, where necessary gradings should be amended to ensure adequate protection. The very ordinary dwellings within this environment and those that have been significantly altered, though typical to the period within Vredehoek, cannot be protected purely because they are of a homogenous type.

Regardless of whether Vredehoek is designated as a conservation area or not, Section 30 of the NHRA which protects individual buildings will play a big role in determining the future of Vredehoek through the placement of identified conservation-worthy heritage resources on the heritage register. The risk does exist that the heritage authority could constrain development within Vredehoek through the stipulation of restrictive development conditions. Where insignificant single dwellings are approved for demolition on general residential sites, requiring that the new replacement building retain the existing scale, massing and materiality of that which it replaces would be irrational and miss an opportunity to encourage a denser built environment. Should the heritage authority and local planning authority recognise the opportunities that exist for the creation of a healthy balance between conservation and development, a forward moving environment of a fairly rich character could be enabled.

As Zancheti and Jokilehto have argued within the concept of change and continuity, a major characteristic of a city is its inherent diversity, a place which has the potential for continuous innovation between the creation and integration of the new into the existing fabric of the 'old new things' (Jokilehto, Zancheti, 1997: 42). The possibility exists within Vredehoek to create a more vibrant and richer built environment populated by a mix of the best examples of its first-phase development protected through Section 30 of the NHRA and new, second-generation infill development.

As Conzen so aptly put it:

When one period has achieved the manifestation of its own requirements in the urban pattern of land-use, streets, plots and buildings, another supersedes it in turn, and the built-up area, in its functional organisation as well as in its townscape, becomes the accumulated record of the town's development" (Conzen, 1960: 6).

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