

**Transnational planning systems, local
practices and spatial inequalities: housing
the working classes in Cape Town
1900–1970**

Melanie Jane Attwell

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for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in
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Supervisor: Emeritus Professor Vivian Bickford-Smith

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University of Cape Town
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Date July 2023

Transnational planning systems, international precedents and local practices: housing the working classes in Cape Town 1900–1970

Abstract

This thesis examines residential planning in Cape Town in the first 70 years of the 20th century, a pivotal period in the creation of residential space for the working classes. It is a contribution to the under-researched history of urban planning in South Africa. This approach means writing history ‘from above’ of the spatial and material development of the city rather than a social history ‘from below’ of the urban experience *in* the city, although the two will be intimately connected. Hence, in Henri Lefebvre’s conception of the social construction of space, there is a focus on what he referred to as its ‘generative process’. The focus of this thesis is therefore on the ‘generative processes of knowledge, the results of a complex matrix of international influences and local modifications within an ideological context.

Little by way of South African urban historiography has explored this unfolding process. It is one that, by using the case study of Cape Town, has attempted to explain both transnational and local influences in a detailed analysis of its material development over more than two-thirds of the 20th century. To this end, I have drawn on a wide range of original sources, including many that have been little drawn on until now, including photographic collections, aerial photographs, historical maps and town plans. I also consulted professional journals and the relevant laws and ordinances.

The thesis sheds light on a ‘generative process’ in three key areas. The first is to demonstrate the role played by a corps of professional experts in Cape Town in applying international ‘solutions’ to the problems confronting the old city. Their working ideas were based on the intellectual public health and planning frameworks in general currency in Britain, Europe and the United States. The ideas had a profound impact on the character, society and form of Cape Town. The second is to show the genealogy of a progression of housing types and residential forms. Their production (with some exceptions) arose from housing forms influenced by transnational and local planning influences and housing models. The third is to highlight the ways in which the planning of working-class housing, even before the apartheid era, contributed towards the growth of residential racial segregation. The trend towards residential segregation was enforced through policy, practice and law and differed from one South African city to another. The growth of residential segregation was accompanied by the centralisation of administrative control, to the extent that racial criteria eventually played the central role in all aspects of residential development and town planning, resulting in the unequal development of physical space along racial lines. The

legacy of this 'generative process' is still clearly apparent in contemporary Cape Town more than three decades after the repeal of apartheid legislation.

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Notes on terminology

Racial terminology

References to racial categories populate the historical record in the period of study. Census returns, housing surveys and the statistical analyses of the Medical Officer of Health for the City of Cape Town are expressed in racial terms. Racial categorisations were embedded into the warp and weave of official documents and urban management records long before its spatial expression in the locations and housing estates which followed. 'African' residential areas were managed separately according to specialised and discriminatory policy and terminology. For this thesis, the use of the terms 'European', 'coloured' and 'native' reflect the social and administrative constructions of racial categories embedded in administrative frameworks in the period under review. I do, however, use the term African as a synonym for 'Native', 'Bantu' or any other term that is offensive today. My use of such terms does not imply any condonation of racial categories, nor do I wish to imply that they are anything other than historically and socially constructed racialised categories. Throughout the study, I have reflected the terminology of the official record. In general, I have used the term 'white' or 'European' as common forms of self-expression for those who considered themselves or were categorised as 'white' or 'European' and have used the term 'black' for those categorised as not white or other than white. Where nomenclature is particularly offensive, that is for the widely used term at the time, 'native' or other equally offensive terms, I use inverted commas.

Working classes

For the purposes of this study the term 'the working classes' is considered in broad terms, referring to those either in unskilled or semi-skilled employment, or white collar clerical workers on low incomes. In early twentieth century Cape Town, 'working class' was defined less by race than by social class and the visible impacts of poverty and deprivation. Some of the working classes were white although the majority were 'coloured' or African. Many lived in poor quality and crowded city accommodation and were the recipients (in due course) of segregated council housing.

Municipality of Cape Town

The Municipality of Cape Town refers to the area within the municipal boundaries of Cape Town and within which municipal by laws and policies had effect. Municipal boundaries expanded over time, reflecting the expansion of municipal authority, and by the 1970's, the municipal boundaries

extended from the City towards Mitchells Plain to the south east. The Cape Town City Council (CTCC) refers to the office of the Municipality of Cape Town.¹ The Divisional Council of Cape Town refers to an area beyond the Cape Town municipal boundaries. Political decisions at the municipal level were made by committees composed of elected city councillors who were advised by senior officials. Decisions were ratified by the executive committee which assumed ultimate responsibility for council policy and actions. Implementation of policy decisions was undertaken by the professionals and officials working in the various municipal departments.

Town Planning Scheme

I make a distinction between ‘planning’ as a general process of ordering space and the application of planning principles, and the development of a Town Planning Scheme (TPS) as a legal requirement of the Townships Ordinance 33 of 1934. The Township Ordinance set out the requirements and the process to be followed for the preparation of a TPS. Once approved by the City of Cape Town² and the Provincial Administrator, it provided the parameters within which use zoning, development parameters and future planning could be laid down. The full TPS for the Cape Town municipal area consisted of five sections undertaken separately. The first, prepared in 1941, was for the area from Bakoven to Trafalgar Park, Woodstock. A combined proposed TPS was submitted to the Provincial Administrator in 1964 but was never officially approved. Instead, the TPS was managed in terms of section 53 of the Townships Ordinance of 1934. The Land Use Planning Ordinance (LUPO) which replaced the draft TPS was approved by the Provincial Administrator in 1985.

Location, barrack and compound

Clarification is necessary on the use of terminology used for the controlled accommodation of African migrant workers. I use the term ‘compound’ as a semi-planned and controlled area for African workers within which barracks could be situated.

A *barrack* was a long, narrow, single or (double) storied structure constructed of corrugated iron and housing from six to 40 workers per room in bunks. It was simply constructed, grouped around a communal central space with a long veranda connecting separate rooms. It might also contain roof ventilation and windows facing the central space. Its origins can be traced back to military accommodation. Nineteenth-century colonial adaptation to accommodate indentured and migrant

¹ This thesis refers throughout to Mitchells Plain rather Mitchell’s Plain, in line with current CTCC practice.

² Section 53 of the Town Planning Ordinance 33 of 1934.

labourers followed. In South Africa, it was first used at scale in Natal in the 1870s to house indentured Indian labour and it was followed by the system of labour compounds at the Kimberley mines and the gold mines on the Witwatersrand.

A labour *compound* had a stronger design element of control. It comprised a number of barracks or buildings of other uses grouped around a central communal space. Control was achieved at a gate from which access and egress could be supervised. A labour compound could be an open or a closed type. A compound would consist of a number of buildings and the assemblage gradually became more complex, with additions such as stores, bathroom facilities, dining halls, beer areas and, in the case of AECl, sports facilities and churches.

I have also, where possible, used the term ‘contract worker’ instead of ‘migrant worker’.

Township

The term ‘township’ as defined in the Townships Ordinance refers to a formally planned and subdivided area with infrastructure. It could equally refer to African, coloured or white subdivided and developable estates such as Langa, Pinelands, Bergvliet, Bonteheuvcl and Kewtown. I, however, use the term more loosely, referring to ‘township’ in relation to any formally planned area for black residents and contract workers.

Law, ordinance and by-law

This is the terminology used for the defined statutory powers duties and functions at the three levels of government. Legal parameters were not absolute, and as the reach of provincial and national powers increased so the autonomy of the local authority declined.

The Municipality of Cape Town was empowered through Ordinance 10 of 1912 to issue by-laws affecting its areas of jurisdiction. By-laws covered a wide variety of functions, including building and health regulations. The provincial authority was empowered to issue ordinances. Town planning was a provincial function, with the TPSs prepared by the local authority requiring the consent of the Provincial Administrator.

The national government issued laws to which provincial ordinances and local authority by-laws were subservient in terms of the devolution of their powers, duties and functions. As a result, national government could control local spatial engineering through a variety of funding and legislative mechanisms.

Abbreviations

AECI	African Explosives and Chemical Industries Ltd
ANA	African News Agency (Pty) Ltd
ARCE	Annual Report City Engineer
BAAB	Bantu Affairs Administration Branch
BAD	Bantu Administration Department
CBD	Central Business District
CDC	Cape Divisional Council
CE	City Engineer
CIAM	Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne (International Congress of Modern Architecture)
CHB	Central Housing Board
CoCT	City of Cape Town
CTCC	Cape Town City Council
GAA	Group Areas Act
GAB	Group Areas Board
GADB	Group Areas Development Board
HRS	Heritage Resources Section
JTPS	Joint Town Planning Scheme
KAB	Cape Archives
LTAB	Land Tenure Advisory Board
LUPO	Land Use Planning Ordinance
MM	Mayors Minutes
MoH	Medical Officer of Health
NAD	Native Affairs Department
NBRI	National Building Research Institute
NE 51	Non-European 1951
NH&PC	National Housing and Planning Commissions
NP	National Party
SAL	South African Library
SANAC	South African Native Affairs Commission
SATPI	South African Town Planning Institute
SC	Select Committee
S&EPC	Social and Economic Planning Council
TPB	Town Planning Branch
TPS	Town Planning Scheme
UG	Union Government
WW2	Second World War, 1939–1945
VOC	Dutch East India Company

Introduction

Metropolitan Cape Town today extends southwards along the Peninsula and False Bay towards Gordons Bay, eastwards across the Cape Flats towards Kuils River and northwards towards Atlantis (see Figure 1). The residential areas of the Cape Flats, which are a key focus of this study, extend in a wide band to the south-east for some 27 kilometres from the Cape Flats railway line to Mitchells Plain and Khayelitsha (see Figure 3). They are a tangible result of local and central state segregated housing programmes developed over many decades for the mostly African and coloured working classes.¹ The housing estates of Maitland Garden Village, Pinelands, Bridgetown, Kewtown, Bonteheuvel, Heideveld and Langa, to name a few, were developed as fully planned and racially segregated environments for the expanding urban populations of Cape Town's poor. The housing forms and residential areas show evidence of its long-term planning intentions to remake and re-order the city to achieve spatial and social order. Questions arise as to how planned urban 'improvements' could create a system so fraught with social difficulties and racial inequalities. Indeed, this thesis argues that the existing structure and form of Cape Town and the racial segregation that accompanied it bear witness to the contested legacy of successive official planning regimes that can be traced to the beginning of the 20th century.

¹ By 'working classes' I am referring to working people of all races (but mainly 'coloured' and African) comprising manual labourers and low-skilled and semi-skilled workers, who lived on low incomes. They generally rented their accommodation which was either state-subsidised housing, privately owned rental housing or migrant labour accommodation. Most (but not all) of the lower working classes in Cape Town lived in poor quality environments and under conditions of deprivation. Vivian Bickford-Smith, Elizabeth van Heyningen and Nigel Worden, *Cape Town in the twentieth century* (Cape Town: David Philip Publishers, 1999), 103. See also 'Notes on terminology'.



Figure 1: The Cape Town Metropolitan area 2023.
(Base: *Municipalities of South Africa, municipalities.co.za*)

Rationale

This thesis provides an overview of the contested history of residential planning and the ways in which it affected the spaces the working classes inhabited in Cape Town from 1900 to 1970. The thesis explores the politics of residential form and location and the role played by imported planning ideas in the modification and development of residential space. My argument proposes that in the search for mechanisms of social control, efficiency and spatial order, local planning authorities embarked upon a process of developing a modern city that had a highly negative long-term impact on the majority of working-class residents of Cape Town – and indeed on the city as a whole – in embedding a correlation between racialisation and social space. The first process was the replanning of the inner city areas along modern town-planning lines and the displacement of those who lived there, a process that was closely but not exclusively associated with racial segregation. The second process was the planning of the housing estates located in racially defined bands at the edges of the expanding municipal boundary. The processes and policies which directed settlement were fragmented from the start, with African settlement enforced through

separate administration and laws from as early as 1902 until the gradual weakening and finally the abolition of racially based legislation in 1994.

This work, which is largely empirical in approach, follows a broad trajectory of town-planning and housing initiatives in Cape Town. It explores the links between that trajectory and a period in Europe and Britain of reassessment of urban conditions, together with a search for solutions to the growing problems of urbanisation. In that process, housing and urban design problems received radical reassessment by urban innovators from Ebenezer Howard to Raymond Unwin and from Clarence Perry to Charles Edouard Jeanneret (Le Corbusier) as new planning models were conceptualised and implemented. The local urban forms that resulted ranged from the Garden City initiatives at Maitland Garden Village and Pinelands to the vast Neighbour Unit plans of the Cape Flats, and to the modernist ideas that dominated the town planning of the central city and the Foreshore. However, while they may have been guiding planning principles, they differed very much in their implementation from place to place and country to country.

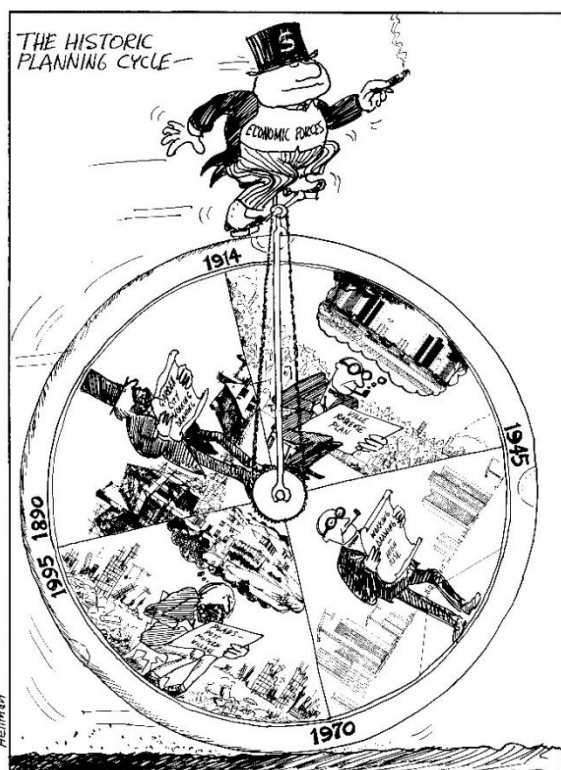


Figure 2: A tongue-in-cheek look at the influence of changing planning cycles in Europe and Britain. Cartoon by Hellman entitled 'The historic planning cycle' shows the Victorian planning idea of the Garden City followed by a Corbusierian reaction to the disorder of the city and plans for an ordered and regulated environment along monumental scales. The cycle is 'overseen' by the economic forces of capitalism. (Anthony Sutcliffe (ed), Built environment: The importance of planning history 7, no 2 (1981)).

The same planning cycles that dominated 20th-century interventions worldwide found forms of spatial and social expression in Cape Town. My research reveals that local urban professionals attempted to follow the theoretical planning models that were emerging throughout the study period and apply them to the local context. While it is true that such models were influential, the social and political context within which they were applied markedly affected the outcomes. This

is particularly true in South African cities, where housing and planning interventions eventually came to define the nature and character of the apartheid city.

The historical development of townships and housing design in Cape Town and their complex and contested links to international planning influences is not a field that has been examined in any detail. Most housing studies explore the creation of housing and township design as part of a study of the development of the apartheid city.² Certainly, as Japha and Hühchermeyer note, *the* defining feature of urban Cape Town was (and still is) its racial and spatial segregation which had previously been enforced by policy and law.³

However, this does not fully explain where the spatial planning ideas came from and why they were used.⁴ The intellectual and moral rationale for urban reform in the minds of contemporary state officials and planners involved a complex set of intellectual transnational policy transfers about the management of urban space, which have not been sufficiently explored or explained. Aspects of design solutions were ‘borrowed’ from international networks and intellectual sources as part of what can be seen as an understandable search for solutions to complicated urban problems. Racial residential segregation remained a pervasive local South African ‘modification’ to metropolitan urban-reform traditions. The combination of borrowed transnational intellectual traditions and local racial segregatory impulses found expression in the urban morphology of Cape Town. Urban planners and officials left their mark on Cape Town, both in its urban form and in its housing estates.

The production of the townships drew on two significant ‘borrowed’ models of township design – the Garden City model and the Neighbourhood Unit model. Both are explored in this thesis. Both were significantly altered in the course of production on the Cape Flats, effectively becoming little more than dormitory townships linked by transportation to the work opportunities of the commercial and industrial centres. Nevertheless, stating that international planning models affected urban responses, which were in turn modified by local contexts, does not fully explain how the power of modernist influences was so completely harnessed to racist ideology. I suggest that intergovernmental power relationships assisted in this process as the National Party

² Anthony Lemon, *Homes apart: South Africa's segregated cities* (London: Paul Chapman, 1991); Paul Maylam, ‘The rise and decline of urban apartheid in South Africa,’ *African Affairs* 89 (January 1990): 57–84.

³ Derek Japha and Marie Hühchermeyer, ‘The history of the development of townships in Cape Town 1920–1992,’ Working Paper No 2, ODA, University of Newcastle, University of Cape Town (1995): 1.

⁴ Susan Parnell and Alan Mabin, ‘Rethinking urban South Africa,’ *Journal of Southern African Studies* 21, no 1 (March 1995): 39–61.

government manipulated both the power structures and the meaning of town-planning concepts to achieve their ideological aims of complete territorial apartheid.

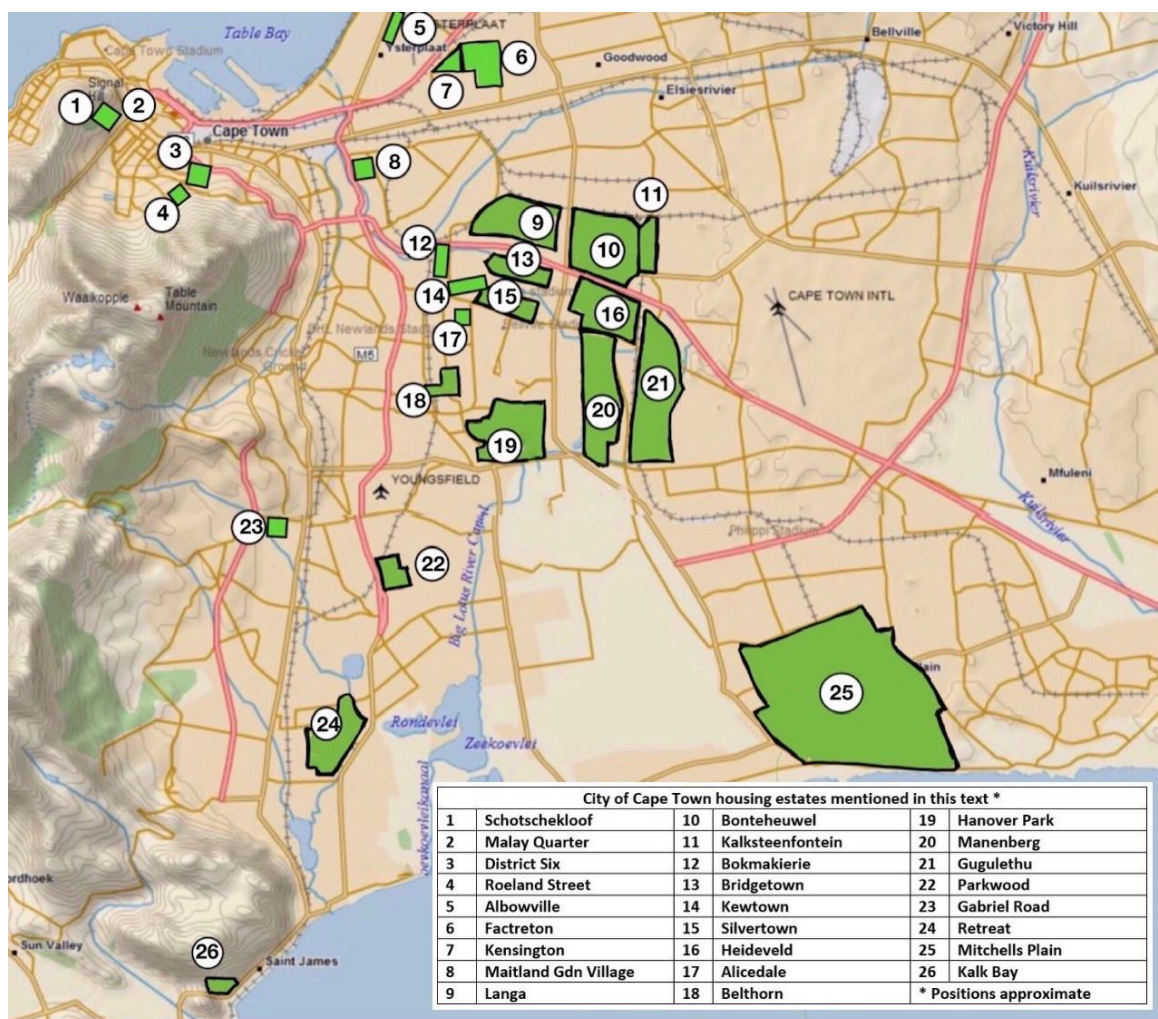


Figure 3: Map of City of Cape Town townships (housing estates) mentioned in the thesis
 Basemap: Esri Delorme, Cape Farm Mapper, <https://gis.elsenburg.com/apps/cfm/>

The relationship between design, form and ideology, whether professional or political, is complex and whereas important studies exist in the context of Cape Town – and are discussed in the literature review below – the field requires further detailed research.⁵ This thesis explores the impact of residential planning ideas on the urban form of Cape Town and its people and the role played by professional ideas in achieving solutions to the complex problems of the modernising

⁵ See Nicolas Coetzer, *Building apartheid: On architecture and order in imperial Cape Town* (Abingdon, Oxford: Routledge, 2013); Alan Mabin and Dan Smit, 'Reconstructing South Africa's cities? The making of urban planning 1900–2000,' *Planning perspectives*, 12, no 2 (1997): 193–223; Vivian Bickford-Smith, *The emergence of the South African metropolis: Cities and identities in the twentieth century* (Cambridge University Press, 2016); Vivian Bickford-Smith, Elizabeth van Heyningen and Nigel Worden, *Cape Town in the twentieth century: An illustrated social history* (David Philip Publishers, 1999); Derek Japha and Marie Hühzermeyer, 'The history of the development of townships in Cape Town 1920–1992,' Working Paper No 2, ODA, University of Newcastle, University of Cape Town 1995.

city. The problems of a modern Cape Town were rooted in its past and in its old form of a colonial city. For solutions, the planning professional and officials turned to those in common currency throughout the world. They applied these to the complex case of Cape Town with very mixed results for the inhabitants affected. The results for the residents of Cape Town ranged from mixed to tragic.

This thesis is a spatial study rather than a social one, using Bickford-Smith and Maylam's useful distinction between the history-*of*-the city rather than the history-*in*-the-city.⁶ My focus is on place and the relationships and processes involved in the production of space rather than the social history of spatial segregation, which has formed the focus of much excellent scholarship.⁷ It does not mean, however, that the impact on the lives of the working poor who were affected by mass clearances and rehousing is dismissed – it is not the core focus. Since the field explored is broad, the focus is largely limited to the residential areas for African and coloured working classes and the work of the Cape Town City Council (CTCC) as the largest provider of state-funded housing on the Cape Peninsula.⁸ It focuses, although not exclusively, on municipal housing initiatives rather than those of employers and public utility companies because most of the working-class housing was provided by the municipality, thus giving Cape Town its distinctive spatial form. Furthermore, it is not possible to be geographically comprehensive, and I have focused on certain areas which best illustrate the initiatives undertaken by city officials or that best illustrate certain residential typologies.

Parnell and Mabin question the implicit acceptance of race as the 'primary category' of research in South African urban studies. In their view, it has provided an inadequate and incomplete theoretical framework from which to examine the complexities of the development and growth of South Africa cities. They suggest that a supplementary approach would be to explore the 'forces of urban development and the principles and ideas which shaped that process'.⁹ They recommend that a study of the roles and influences of urban professionals at local, provincial and national

⁶ Vivian Bickford-Smith, 'South African urban history: Racial segregation and the unique case of Cape Town?' *Journal of Southern African Studies* 21, no 1 (March 1995): 63.

⁷ Barry H Kinkead-Weekes, 'Africans in Cape Town: The origins and development of state policy and popular resistance to 1936,' MSocSc thesis, University of Cape Town, 1985; Barry H Kinkead-Weekes, 'Africans in Cape Town: State policy and popular resistance, 1936–1973,' PhD thesis, University of Cape Town, 1985; Sean Field (ed), *Lost communities, living memories: Remembering forced removals in Cape Town* (Cape Town: New Africa Books, 2001).

⁸ The Citizen Housing League obtained funding via the CTCC and undertook housing projects largely for poor whites in Cape Town. The Cape Flats Distress Association (CAFDA) was also active, and the Cape Divisional Council provided black housing at Nyanga.

⁹ Susan Parnell and Alan Mabin, 'Rethinking urban South Africa,' *Journal of Southern African Studies* 21, no 1 (1995): 39–40.

levels would be a useful place to start, an argument also exploring the need for ‘history from above’ as espoused in this thesis. As the literature for Cape Town suggests, a growing number of public professionals were imbued with the values of urban reform and the ‘new approaches to urban planning needed to solve complex urban problems’.¹⁰ This analysis, with its challenge to urban historians, has been particularly helpful in shaping an approach to the complexities of residential development and urban management in this thesis. Following their observation that urban history could be usefully explored by examining the roles of the urban professionals, I examine housing provision and planning as a ‘history from above’ exercise by professionals who considered themselves experts in their fields.¹¹

The focus of the study is on the ideas that influenced the professionals and the contexts in which the transforming ideas were expressed and implemented. The sources, as a result, have focused on the official documentary records and local commentaries. Most primary sources are official documents, policies, laws and newspaper sources. I have also made extensive use of the analysis of images. This is not primarily a comparative study as the focus is on residential planning generally within Cape Town’s municipal boundaries. However, reference is made to theoretical concepts, laws and policy from Britain, Europe and elsewhere in Anglophone Africa because they are central to the process of the diffusion of transnational ideas to the local context. The study is concerned with *urban* environments. There is, however, a strong link between the urban–rural relationship and the types of accommodation provided. This is particularly the case with African migrant workers where urban–rural mobility provided the rationale for hostel accommodation.

Because the research focus was on ‘history from above’ most of the archival and reference material I consulted reflected official and professional views of urban problems and solutions. I explored official sources from local and national government departments in the form of annual reports, mayor’s minutes, committee reports and policy documents in order to access the ideas and political dynamics behind the urban transformations that followed. Where possible, I consulted the writings of the planners themselves in professional journals to explore their motives and I viewed newspaper articles and editorials on urban topics to access public responses and opinions. As the parameters of urban powers and functions were strongly defined by law, I examined the relevant legal frameworks for their governance implications in terms of health, segregation and residential settlement. And because the thesis is largely a spatial study, I consulted and interpreted an extensive visual archive in the form of maps, town plans and photographs.

¹⁰ Susan Parnell and Alan Mabin, ‘Rethinking urban South Africa’.

¹¹ Parnell and Mabin, ‘Rethinking urban South Africa’.

Finally, this thesis is not and cannot be an exhaustive examination of the subject of worker housing, housing typologies, changes to the urban spaces of Cape Town and the processes involved in their production.

Literature review

The research draws upon a variety of disciplines – including history, planning and architecture – to establish the links between the production of space and the factors leading to that production. There are a broad range of published sources, both national and transnational, to draw on. In Cape Town, transnational influences were largely British in the pre-Second World War (1939–1945) period and expanded to European and transatlantic influences subsequently. These influences need to be read in the context of existing ad hoc residential segregation in Cape Town, despite the existence of a partial propertied (non-racial) franchise and the presence of racially mixed inner and suburban neighbourhoods. As a result, it was necessary to explore sources which situate planning and residential segregation within the context of law and policy at various levels of government. In particular, the role of provincial government in housing and planning has been neglected in existing literature. The literature review is structured into international, national and local sources, although many, of course, involve a network of power relationships across all the spheres of government.

International planning paradigms

The history of planning, housing and city remodelling in Britain, Europe and the United States has attracted extensive scholarly work. Some studies have been particularly important for the purposes of this thesis. Michael Hebbert explored the origins of the British town-planning movement, tracing its origins to its public sanitary origins, and also explored the close link between public health and urban planning, commenting that in a ‘professional family tree, public health and town planning are blood cousins’.¹² Given the close networks that developed between planning in South Africa and Britain, this analysis is very useful, particularly where he explores examples of where public sanitation and the physical imperatives of Garden City ideas coalesce in the concept of wide streets and in the creation of planned residential spaces, and where residential spaces are planned according to Neighbourhood Unit planning principles.

¹² Michael Hebbert, ‘A city in good shape: Town planning and public health,’ *The Town Planning Review* 70, no 4 (October 1999): 433.

The Garden City Movement had an important influence on the inter-war planning of housing developments in Cape Town, that is, during the period 1920–1940. The healthy living concepts of the Garden City idea had a particular resonance for Cape Town, emerging as it was from the Spanish Flu epidemic of 1918, and the continuing presence of unhealthy domestic environments on its doorstep. Ebenezer Howard’s pioneering work, *Garden cities of tomorrow*, and Raymond Unwin’s influential pamphlet on low-density housing entitled ‘Nothing gained by overcrowding’, acted as guides to local planners applying Garden City ideas in the Cape Town context.¹³ The British Garden City ideas were well represented by the Garden Cities Trust, which planned and developed Pinelands in 1919, followed by Meadowridge in 1950 as a white Garden Suburb. Studies on the British Garden City movement are well represented in the literature but less so in South African studies.¹⁴

Gordon E Cherry’s study of urban Britain during the past two centuries traces planning responses from a reaction to the emergence of the British industrial city to its decline and remodelling in the 20th century. He argues that town planning has been the main activity through which the state has sought to exercise a control function over urban development and management. He says little on the subject of British Modernism, arguing that it was not a major factor in British planning, considering as he did the British as reluctant modernists.¹⁵ Alison Ravetz is more forthright. She considers that both Modern Movement architecture and the devastating damage on British cities wrought by the Second World War contributed to a climate in which a ‘clean sweep’ approach to planning was welcomed by planners.¹⁶ Le Corbusier, the influential modernist architect and urban planner, encouraged this approach, claiming:

A city should be treated by its planner as a blank piece of paper, a clean tablecloth, upon which a single, integrated composition is imposed.¹⁷

¹³ Ebenezer Howard and Frederic James Osborn, *Garden cities of tomorrow* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd, 1946); Raymond Unwin, *Nothing gained by overcrowding* (London and New York: Routledge, 2014).

¹⁴ Robert Fishman, *Urban utopias in the twentieth century: Ebenezer Howard, Frank Lloyd Wright, and Le Corbusier* (Cambridge, MA and London: MIT Press, 1982).

¹⁵ Gordon E Cherry, *Cities and plans: The shaping of urban Britain in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries* (London: E. Arnold, 1988); Gordon E Cherry, ‘Planning history: Recent developments in Britain,’ *Planning Perspectives* 6, no 1 (1991): 33–45.

¹⁶ Alison Ravetz, *Remaking cities: Contradictions of the recent urban environment* (London: Croom Helm, 1980), 21.

¹⁷ Amit Tangare, *Le Corbusier’s principles of city planning and their application in virtual environments*, MA thesis, School of Architecture, Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada, 2001, 16.

Whatever the origins and mechanisms of transference, there is no doubt that the notion of a ‘clean sweep’ for the inner city presented an attractive option for Cape Town planners from the 1940s onwards.

Peter Hall, Stephen Ward and other planning historians link the planning movements in Europe, the United States and Britain, identifying key ideas, moments and professional agents. Planning history is notoriously hard to link into a linear or chronological framework because planning influences may overlap and take a long time to come to fruition, even changing direction halfway. Hall addresses this difficulty by providing an overlapping series of planning themes, from slum clearances, freeway development and ‘the city in the garden’ to the Corbusian ‘city of towers’. Ward follows the important theme in planning history of the diffusion of planning ideas, exploring how planning knowledge circulated between countries, an issue which has relevance to the way certain planning ideas emerged in Cape Town and indeed South Africa and other African countries.¹⁸ Ward’s analysis of the planning impacts of the *Barlow Report* (1940) is particularly useful. The *Barlow Report* had a particular influence on post-Second World War urbanisation and housing policies worldwide and certainly on those in Cape Town. Also useful is his distinction between ‘softer’ aspects of transnational policy transfers such as planning ideas and the influences of professional networks, on the one hand, and, on the other, the ‘harder’ instruments of policy implementation such as national laws and policies which ultimately defined the way the ‘softer’ aspects would be applied.¹⁹ This has relevance to Cape Town because the transfer of international ideas was gradually dominated by restrictive ‘harder’ aspects of policy implementation through increasingly discriminatory apartheid laws and policies.

Ted Sheldon’s examination of the relationship between international Modernism and transportation planning as ‘automobile utopians’ helps to provide a backdrop to local planners’ commitment to boulevard development in Cape Town from the 1940s and the growing influence of new City Modernism. Sheldon explores the way the large-scale geometries of modernist forms, together with the requirements of high-speed road networks, challenged the traditional urban form

¹⁸ Peter Hall, *Cities of tomorrow: An intellectual history of urban planning and design in the twentieth century* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996); Stephen V Ward, ‘Cities as planning models,’ *Planning Perspectives* 28, no. 2 (2013): 295–313; Stephen V Ward, ‘The Garden City tradition re-examined,’ *Planning Perspectives* 5, no. 3 (1990): 249–256; Stephen V Ward, *The Garden City: Past, present and future* (London, New York: E&FN Spon, 1992); Barry Cullingworth, Gordon E Cherry, John Sheail, Urlan Wannop, Alison Ravetz, Peter Hall, Lionel Brett, Michael Brett and Yvonne Rydin, ‘Fifty years of post-war planning,’ *The Town Planning Review* 65, no. 3 (1994): 277; Matthew Hollow, ‘Utopian urges: Visions for reconstruction in Britain, 1940–1950,’ *Planning Perspectives* 27, no. 4 (2012): 569–585. Stephen V Ward, ‘Cities as planning models,’ *Planning Perspectives* 28, no. 2 (2013): 295–313.

¹⁹ Stephen V Ward. ‘Cross-national learning in the formation of British planning policies 1940–1999,’ *The Town Planning Review* 78, no. 3 (2007).

and facilitated the modernists' predisposition for site clearing for large-scale developments, including boulevards, for all of which there is strong evidence in local modernist planning.²⁰

Historical literature regarding slums and slum clearance highlights social perceptions of slums in Britain, which were replicated albeit often in racialised fashion in Cape Town. Both Yelling's and Dyos's analyses of London's Victorian slums and subsequent slum clearances provide comparative points of reference, although social and historical contexts might differ.²¹ Dyos begins by tracing the historical origins of the concept of a 'slum' to descriptions that were increasingly condemnatory of the housing conditions of the poor. Social and official condemnation applied to both the physical environment and their inhabitants; indeed, some considered the physical decay symbolic of moral decadence. Dyos concludes that the notion of a slum is a relative term which carries a multiplicity of social and physical meanings. It could be an urban condition, a generally feckless population, a general sense of physical and social decay, a house or an entire area that was congested and badly planned. The notion of a slum therefore evolved in relation to social (and official) perceptions. In Cape Town, Bickford-Smith explores the close local correlation between public perceptions of slums and racial segregation. He notes that language played a significant role in the marginalisation of both the slums and their inhabitants. He quotes Mayne as saying that:

the destruction of buildings or communities (or both) was justified as slum clearance, as progress, the places themselves demonized by the deployment of negative, pathologising language.²²

In examining the attitudes of planning officials to the slums in Cape Town, it is clear that they had an expectation that slum properties could be targeted for clearance, not only because they were of less worth because they were slums, but also because they were on valuable land, blocking the path, as Bickford-Smith says, to 'progress'.²³

Yelling examines the processes of slum clearance, illustrating potential consistencies between London and Cape Town. He explores the notion of a 'slum' in terms of the discourse of politics, carrying with it a selective form of condemnation of existing conditions and with an implied call for action. He concludes that the process of seeing a slum is selective and it emphasises some aspects rather than others, with the process of selection 'built up from a combination of ideological

²⁰ Ted Shelton, 'Automobile utopias and traditional infrastructure: Visions of the coming conflict 1925–1940,' *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review* 22, no 2 (2011): 63–76.

²¹ James Alfred Yelling, *Slums and slum clearance in Victorian London* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1986); JA Yelling, *Slums and redevelopment: Policy and practice in England, 1918–45, with particular reference to London* (London: UCL Press, 1992); Harold James Dyos, 'The slums of Victorian London,' *Victorian Studies* 11, no 1 (1967): 5–40.

²² Vivian Bickford-Smith, 'The slum and racial segregation in South African history: An intimate relationship,' in Alan Mayne (ed), *The Oxford handbook of the modern slum* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming, 2023).

²³ Vivian Bickford-Smith, 'The slum and racial segregation.'

and empirical referents'.²⁴ Slum clearance is a clear case of government intervention, marking a clear change from any previous laissez faire attitudes to property ownership and development. This analysis may equally apply to Cape Town. Slum clearance and related actions signified a clear change to the sanctity of property ownership, thus explaining its hostile reception by property owners. Condemnation of slum conditions in Cape Town carried a clear empirical message about material improvements while symbolising a deeper ideological message about middle-class fears affecting social cohesion, contamination, class and race. However, the notion of slum clearance as a genuine attempt to improve social conditions should not be overlooked. In Cape Town, as in other cities, slum clearance was genuinely considered a mechanism for social improvement.²⁵ It was based on the deceptively simple idea that improvement in environmental conditions would lead to an improvement of social pathologies publicly associated with poverty. Applying Yelling's analysis to Cape Town, it is apparent that official slum-clearance policies and law were neither a well-meaning attempt to improve the living conditions of the urban poor nor an action to stem the class fears of racial mixing and proximity to social pathologies and contagion. Instead, the policies and law were a complex admixture of all. Actions were clearly coloured by the perceptions of professional and political classes and the political framework within which they worked.

Transnational planning frameworks: policy mobilities

The early British planning and housing histories are valuable tools to all involved in explaining the genesis of planning concepts and their impact on the Anglophone cities of Empire. However, the research material referred to has a common thread – the histories are insular in nature and do not explore the wider context of the transnational circulation of planning models to the colonial world. The exploration of transnational planning influences in the colonial context is a relatively new form of planning history and it explores the international transference of planning ideas, especially from the metropole to the periphery. Anthony King's pioneering scholarship of the 1970s explored the transference of planning concepts by identifying interlinked phases affecting colonial city development related to local colonial circumstances. King noted the pervasiveness of the Garden City concept in new theories of materials and land-use planning in the 20th century. He considered that a distinctive characteristic of the colonial city was the perception of racial difference and that borrowed intellectual frameworks were modified accordingly. Drawing on his own studies of the bungalow typology in India, King identified building form as a valid field of urban enquiry because

²⁴ JA Yelling, *Slums and redevelopment*, 2.

²⁵ T Shadick Higgins, 'Housing conditions,' *SA Medical Journal* (August 1935) and 'The housing problem with special reference to the Slums Act,' *SA Medical Journal* (October 1935); Vivian Bickford-Smith, *The slum and racial segregation*.

it provides a physical manifestation of the power relationships within the colonial city and the ways in which they are expressed.²⁶

Robert Home follows King's methods to analyse a 'genealogy' of housing types evident throughout the Anglophone colonial world and explores the relationship between architecture and imported town-planning models. His focus is the historical transition of the migrant labour compound to family housing units in Natal and Zambia and other worker housing typologies. He argues that the transition illustrates an expression of two alternative strategies for labour control: either the exclusion and separation of migrant workers or their inclusion in living and working as others did in the city. Referring to the development of worker housing collectively as the 'commonest' built element of the colonial landscape, he explores the major role it plays in the shaping of urban space. He also expands upon the twin themes of development and planning in the Anglophone colonial world – the impact of imported planning concepts on the urban built form and urban modifications to achieve racial segregation, or what he calls 'the central aspect of colonial urbanism'.²⁷

New planning ideas were an emerging response to the growing scale and urgency of urban problems which manifested themselves internationally after the industrial revolution. Potential urban solutions circulated from north to south through colonial and power networks of governance, and by the growing corps of urban professions in public health, planning and architecture. While transatlantic urban policy mobilities between Europe and the United States have been extensively studied, Robert Home is one of the few planning historians to examine in detail the transference of planning ideas and settlement patterns from the metropole to the Anglophone colonies. He is therefore an important secondary source for a study such as this. His analysis covers the impact of British planning models on urban form in the colonies and the development of new professions, particularly the town-planning profession, which emerged in South Africa after Herbert Baker's lecture on town planning in 1911 and the worldwide influence of the Inter-Allied Housing and Town Planning Congress held in Britain in 1920.²⁸ Home explores a number of broad themes in urban planning. They include the influence of planning on housing for the working classes in the colonial environment and the evolution of legislative frameworks in relation to urban planning. Finally, he includes what he considers a central aspect of colonial urban

²⁶ Anthony D King, 'Exporting planning: The colonial and neo-colonial experience,' *Urbanism Past & Present* 5 (1977): 12–22.

²⁷ Robert K Home, 'From barrack compounds to the single-family house: Planning worker housing in colonial Natal and Northern Rhodesia,' *Planning Perspectives* 15, no 4 (2000): 327–347.

²⁸ Herbert Baker Lecture, Pretoria, 11 July 1911, *South African Architectural Record* 24 (March 1939): 92–105.

settlement: the adoption of racial segregation as the intrinsic component of the planning of working-class housing.²⁹ In a subsequent analysis, Home expands his notion of a genealogy of housing types to those of law and policy, examining a ‘genealogy of the rules of colonial urban management’ as being intrinsic to the urban colonial experiment.³⁰ In so doing, he explores urban administration within the legal histories of planning and the role played by a network of professionals responsible for their implementation.³¹ While recognising the tensions between imported town-planning concepts and the realities of colonial rule, particularly in relation to segregatory practices, he nevertheless considers the role played by international planning consultants as very significant in the development of spatial form. He examines, for example, the impact of the work of AJ Thompson in South Africa and Nigeria and of Charles Reade in Zambia.³² In such a broad field of enquiry encompassing the entire Anglophone colonial world, Home could not give a great deal of attention to Cape Town with its rare, perhaps unique, palimpsest of planning influences and complex admixtures of class and race. Despite this, concepts proposed by Home towards successive typologies of housing and urban design as defined by a ‘genealogy’ of law and policy provide a useful guideline for examining the dynamics affecting urban form.

Like Home, Liora Bigon explores notions of transnationality in relation to the spread of Garden City ideas in Africa.³³ She demonstrates the crucial role such models played in the development of racially polarised urban environments. Garden City mechanisms could be adapted in colonial circumstances to achieve racial and spatial separation. Carlos Nunes Silva provides an overview of urban planning in sub-Saharan Africa, exploring the ways in which urban design has been aligned to power.³⁴ He rejects the notion of planning being a purely technical activity. Instead, he considers it as being deeply rooted in the local cultural institutional and political context. He finds that the diffusion of urban-reform concepts and planning solutions are modified through local contexts

²⁹ Robert Home, *Of planting and planning: The making of British colonial cities* (New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2013); Liora Bigon, ‘Garden cities in colonial Africa: A note on historiography,’ *Planning Perspectives* 28, no 3 (2013): 477–485.

³⁰ Robert Home, ‘Shaping cities of the Global South: Legal histories of planning and colonialism,’ in Susan Parnell and Sophie Oldfield (eds), *The Routledge handbook on cities of the Global South* (London and New York: Routledge, 2014). <<http://perlogo.com/book/1618632/the-routledge-handbook-on-cities-of-the-global-south>>.

³¹ Robert Home, ‘Shaping cities of the Global South’.

³² Robert K Home, ‘Town planning and garden cities in the British colonial empire 1910–1940,’ (1990) *Planning Perspectives* 5, no 1: 23–37.

³³ Liora Bigon and Yossi Katz, *Garden cities and colonial planning: Transnationality and urban ideas in Africa and Palestine*, (Manchester University Press, 2014).

³⁴ Carlos Nunes Silva (ed), *Urban planning in sub-Saharan Africa: Colonial and post-colonial planning cultures* (Routledge, 2015): 8–40. Bigon’s major research focus is on Lusophone African countries, which are not referred to in this literature review.

and by national and local parameters.³⁵ Luce Beeckmans picks up on this theme, referring to the ‘editing’ process in the adaptation of planning concepts to African colonial cities. Beeckmans explores the possibility that while urban reform and planning theories might be imported through international networks of knowledge and power, they are also deeply modified by local perceptions and statutory parameters. The colonial obsession with racial segregation, for instance, is a case in point. He argues for two levels of analysis in ways that have informed this thesis: the first is the need for an understanding of the diffusion of the planning models to the colonies; the second is the need to explain the actual implementation of the models in the colonial context.

South African urban history: planning segregation and apartheid

South African urban history illustrates a preoccupation with segregation and apartheid – a search for origins, an exploration of the progression of legal frameworks, the territorial implications and in particular its devastating social and political legacy.³⁶ Included in this broad body of historical work are significant studies concerning the relationship between sanitation and segregation and between planning and apartheid. Maynard Swanson provided a pioneering and still seminal study of what he referred to as the ‘sanitation syndrome’.³⁷ He explored the imagery of infectious disease as a ‘societal metaphor’ that strongly influenced racial attitudes and practices that promoted racial segregation as the answer for white colonial officials or settlers desiring urban social control. The ‘sanitation syndrome’ explains a great deal, particularly in relation to the singling out of African residents of Cape Town for residential segregation during the Bubonic Plague in 1901.

Davies’ analysis of the spatial formation of the South African city examined the long history of the development of an apartheid urban structure. He stated that in South Africa, as elsewhere in the Anglophone world, urban spatial relationships were ‘rooted in colonial history’ and argued, like Home, that racial segregation is *the* defining characteristic of the colonial city. He asserted that spatial organisation within South African cities was profoundly linked to racialised social

³⁵ Carlos Nunes Silva, ‘Urban planning in sub-Saharan Africa: An overview,’ in Carlos Nunes Silva (ed), *Urban planning in sub-Saharan Africa: Colonial and post-colonial planning cultures* (Routledge, 2015).

³⁶ See, for example, Maynard W Swanson, ‘Urban origins of separate development,’ *Race* 10, no 1 (1968): 31–40; Paul Maylam, ‘Explaining the apartheid city: 20 years of South African urban historiography,’ *Journal of Southern African Studies* 21, no 1 (1995): 19–38. Paul Maylam, *South Africa’s racial past: The history and historiography of racism, segregation, and apartheid* (Routledge, 2017); Paul Maylam, ‘The rise and decline of urban apartheid in South Africa,’ *African Affairs* 89, no 354 (1990): 57–84. M Swilling, R Humphries and K Shubane (eds), *Apartheid city in transition* (Oxford University Press, 1991); David M Smith (ed), *The apartheid city and beyond: Urbanization and social change in South Africa* (Routledge, 2003); Anthony John Christopher, ‘Apartheid and urban segregation levels in South Africa,’ *Urban Studies* 27, no 3 (1990): 421–440; Anthony John Christopher, *Atlas of changing South Africa* (Routledge, 2001).

³⁷ Maynard W Swanson, ‘The sanitation syndrome: Bubonic plague and urban native policy in the Cape Colony, 1900–1901,’ *The Journal of African History* 18, no 3 (1977): 387–410.

formation. Echoing the analysis of AD King, he explained why spatial organisation, particularly racially defined residential developments, differed so fundamentally from that of Western cities in the Global North.³⁸ Davies' primary research focus was Durban. His comment that class and race in urban centres 'were not entirely congruent' is explored in detail by Bickford-Smith in his study of Victorian Cape Town.³⁹ Both analyses are relevant to the study of urban form and development in Cape Town. Davies' link between socio-spatial formation and control is explored in greater detail by Jennifer Robinson, whose work examined 'the stark spatiality of the South African city'.⁴⁰ Her monograph on Port Elizabeth explored in stark clarity notions of power and space in a South African city.⁴¹

Planning and urban reform movements began in Cape Town, as they did in Britain, with concerns about sanitation and residential conditions. In an important study, Susan Parnell explores the relationship between health, planning and housing, and also the racial implications arising from their legislative frameworks. Her focus is on the implementation of the Health Act and the Housing Act of 1919 and 1920 respectively, both of which she considers as being beneficial to poor-white housing.⁴² She explores the role of the town-planning clauses in the Health Act 35 of 1920 as reflecting early international planning principles and concludes that the promulgation of both Acts resulted in the creation of a pattern of racial privilege 'aimed at entrenching privileges for whites'.⁴³ While the studies reflect the general direction of segregationist policies nationally, this thesis will show that their applicability to housing provision for Cape Town is questionable. The bulk of housing provision was largely for coloured residents and partially tied to slum clearance and urban-reform measures; the provision of poor-white housing was left to market forces or public utility companies. Provision for town-planning schemes which contained segregatory overtones occurred only later with the Town Planning Ordinance of 1934.⁴⁴ Parnell's studies therefore raise questions about provincial differences in policy implementation and at what point a uniform national housing and planning policy could be said to have arrived. Picking up on

³⁸ Ron J Davies, 'The spatial formation of the South African city,' *Geojournal Supplementary Issue* (1981): 59–72.

³⁹ Vivian Bickford-Smith, *Ethnic pride and racial prejudice in Victorian Cape Town* (Witwatersrand University Press, 1995).

⁴⁰ Jennifer Robinson, 'The geopolitics of South African cities: States, citizens, territory,' *Political Geography* 16, no 5 (1997): 365–386.

⁴¹ Jennifer Robinson, *The power of apartheid: State power and space in South African cities* (Butterworth Heinemann, 1996).

⁴² Susan Parnell, 'Shaping a racially divided society: State housing policy in South Africa, 1920–1950,' *Environment and Planning* 7 (1989): 261–272; 'Creating racial privilege: The origins of South African public health and town planning legislation,' *Journal of Southern African Studies* 19, no 3 (September 1993).

⁴³ Parnell, 'Creating racial privilege,' 471.

⁴⁴ The town-planning clauses of the 1919 Health Act were never implemented because planning was identified as a provincial rather than a national function.

Parnell's theme of housing provision as a mechanism for the upliftment of 'poor whites' and the creation of racial privilege, Annika Teppo explores the creation of Epping Garden Village as a poor white rehabilitation project by the Citizens Housing League.⁴⁵ While she explores notions of the 'white body' and the restorative nature of suburban space within a context of racial segregation, she does not examine wider urban problems and their proposed planning solutions, and makes no reference to other significant housing initiatives for those identified as not white. However, Alan Mabin draws together the wider interlinked themes of segregation, social control, health and planning, exploring the complexities of state finance, law and housing policy throughout the century. He concludes that housing provision failed to live up to expectations and that the subsidy system first introduced by the Housing Act in 1920, while failing to solve the housing crisis, largely funded the residential segregation of the urban population through the provision of state-sponsored segregated housing.⁴⁶

Planning history in South Africa

There are only a few published volumes on planning history in South Africa, apart from an early twin-volume publication on town planning by TB Floyd which subscribes to the 'technicist' view of the planners themselves. It provides a useful factual outline of town-planning mechanisms in South Africa and a summary of the trajectory of planning activities despite a lack of historical reflection and context. Floyd explores the British influence of the Provincial Township Ordinances but suggests that leadership in the design of the Town Planning Ordinance was provided by the Transvaal in 1931. He provides a description of the overlapping nature of the Township Ordinances with other legislation, making physical planning deeply conflictual. An example would be the overlap of CTCC Town Planning Scheme (TPS) with the decisions of the Land Tenure Advisory Board (LTAB), which is explored in chapter 4 of this thesis. Floyd differs from Gordon Pirie in providing an explanation of the *nature* of the Group Areas Act (GAA).⁴⁷ He considers it as a form of racial land reservation, whereas Pirie explores the nature of racial segregation in terms of a racial zoning. Pirie's conclusion is perhaps the more compelling, bearing in mind the persistent notion of the separation of uses existing at the time. However, 'use' zonings of the Town Planning Schemes and race zoning or reservation, were separate administrative actions and that were

⁴⁵ Annika Teppo, *The Making of a Good White* (Helsinki University Press, 2004).

⁴⁶ Alan Mabin, 'A century of South African Housing Acts 1920–2020,' *Urban Forum* 31 (2020): 453–472.

⁴⁷ Gordon Pirie, 'Race zoning in South Africa: Board, court, parliament, public,' *Political Geography Quarterly* 3, no 3 (1984): 207–221.

undertaken at different levels of government. This explains the tensions that begin to emerge between the planning authorities in Cape Town and the LTAB which are explored in this thesis.

Important contributions to the history of South African urban planning and segregation have also been made through studies by Alan Mabin and Dan Smit.⁴⁸ Mabin and Smit examine how the practice of town planning generally shaped South African cities while pointing out that planning frameworks were progressively overtaken and amended by subsequent power regimes, leading to either the co-option of concepts or the disruption of an existing plan. They explore a progression of planning models from the construction of Ndabeni in Cape Town in 1901 through to the urban reconstruction programmes of the 1930s and 1940s, and to the apartheid planning era. Like Parnell, they identify the public-health origins of the South African town-planning regime. What they add is an exploration of the narrowing through compartmentalising of South African town planning as social concerns became separated from the activity of land-use planning. A significant factor in the compartmentalised nature of urban planning was the fact that African areas were managed separately from the start, first in Cape Town (and Port Elizabeth) in terms of the Cape Colonial 'Native' Locations Act of 1902 and subsequently via the South Africa-wide Native Urban Areas Act of 1923.⁴⁹ In a further study, Mabin explores the origins of the Group Areas Act and its relationship to planning.⁵⁰ He points out that the notion of 'Group Areas' as the bedrock of the apartheid-planning apparatus has not been the subject of much serious academic research. Mabin's description of the 'seduction' of planners by Group Areas is an apt description for what occurred when urban administrators abandoned any residual objections to the GAA when they were provided with a tempting glimpse of a white, modernist and high-rise District Six. We might also consider the notion that planners were seduced by Modernism itself.

Housing studies in South Africa and Cape Town

Any study of residential planning in South Africa needs to critically review increasing state intervention in issues of norms and standards resulting from the plans of the National Building Research Institute (NBRI) and the Housing Codes of 1951 and 1969 with which local authorities had to comply to receive funding. Arising out of the work of the NBRI between 1949 and 1951, codes and programmes for mass housing design and construction were established around the principle of minimum standards – the cheapest and most basic housing which could be reproduced

⁴⁸ Alan Mabin and Dan Smit, 'Reconstructing South Africa's cities? The making of urban planning 1900–2000,' *Planning Perspectives* 12, no 2 (1997): 193–223.

⁴⁹ Alan Mabin, 'Comprehensive segregation: The origins of the Group Areas Act and its planning apparatuses,' *Journal of Southern African Studies* 18, no 2 (1992): 405–429.

⁵⁰ Alan Mabin, 'Comprehensive segregation,' 405–429.

on a mass scale. In a nuanced and considered examination of the modernist housing programme, Derek Japha links the programme to the (short-lived) social concerns raised by the Transvaal modernists at the congress and exhibition at the University of the Witwatersrand in 1938. Japha uses the Kwa Thema development scheme of 1952 as an example of the way a social doctrine might provide an ideological justification for township development.⁵¹ The influence of the KwaThema model was pervasive, particularly as a result of the Native Affairs Department's determination that all African townships adhere strongly to the rules and policies set within the code and their own requirements of racial isolation.

The results of the CTCC housing policy and the problems presented by housing conditions, a lack of housing and residential design are explored most fully by the planners and urban designers of the Urban Problems Research Unit (UPRU) at the University of Cape Town. The unit undertook a series of research projects which explored the housing conditions and housing shortages in Cape Town and the Western Cape and provided proposed alternatives for improved housing opportunities.⁵² Other studies explore the development of housing and urban form in Cape Town with a focus on visual impacts and architectural history. Nic Coetzer, in particular, explored the making of Cape Town and the imposition of racial segregation as a search for visual order. He explores the roles of the experts – the Medical Officers of Health (MoHs), the city engineers and planners – in the creation of urban spaces and investigates their motivations for urban reform. However, he views urban reform less as the result of any social and health concerns and more as a reaction to the unsightliness of the unhealthy areas. Equally, he interprets the drive towards town planning as a pursuit for both order and visual amenity.⁵³ While this may have formed part of the initial drive towards town planning, it certainly emerged as a more complex reaction to issues about social and spatial order. It certainly did not reflect the views of the MoHs. They were charged with matters of urban public health and sanitation and emerged as some of the earliest of the town planners pursuing these aims. Other architectural studies explore the impact of Modernism on housing and urban form after the implementation of the Slums Act in Cape Town, further extending the relationship between architecture, Modernism and slum clearance.⁵⁴ Further research in this thesis suggests that the relationship between the implementation of the Slums Act and the

⁵¹ Derek Japha, *The social programme of the South African Modern Movement in architecture* (Centre for African Studies University of Cape Town, 1986).

⁵² Paul Andrew and Derek Japha, *Low income housing alternatives for the Western Cape* (Urban Problems Research Unit, University of Cape Town, 1978); Roger Granelli and Ronald Levitan, *Urban black housing: A review of existing conditions for the Cape Peninsula with some guidelines for change* (Urban Problems Research Unit, University of Cape Town, 1977).

⁵³ Nicolas Coetzer, *Building apartheid: On architecture and order in imperial Cape Town* (Routledge, 2013).

⁵⁴ Andre van Graan, 'Contested Modernism: Post Slums Act public housing in Cape Town,' *South African Journal of Art History* 24, no 2 (2009): 31–40.

provision of housing was a complex one, one not necessarily entirely about race, but also about the expendability of the areas designated as slums for town-planning purposes and, as Bickford-Smith remarks, supposedly about ‘progress’.⁵⁵

Any study of the housing literature would not be complete without a reference to an examination of housing typologies – or what Robert Home referred to a ‘genealogy’ of housing types. It is examined more fully throughout this thesis in the chapters that follow. A major exception to a dearth of analysis on housing genealogies is the growing body of research into the architecture and function of the labour compound as a mechanism for controlling migrant labour. Particular attention has been paid to the ‘closed’ labour compounds in Kimberley and on the Witwatersrand and others intended for indentured labour in Natal. Rob Turrell’s pioneering study explores the conditions in the closed compounds and the use of the compound itself as an instrument of labour control.⁵⁶

Cape Town urban history is an ever-expanding field of research. There are detailed studies of the historical development of Cape Town in the 19th and 20th centuries, most notably Bickford-Smith’s study of Victorian Cape Town.⁵⁷ It was followed by his study of the emergence of the three major metropolitan urban centres in the 20th century, including Metropolitan Cape Town.⁵⁸ In addition, the two-volume overview and illustrated social history of Cape Town provides valuable context for more tightly focused studies, and many of the themes explored in the books provide reference material for this study.⁵⁹

There are studies in the field of health, disease and contagion that usefully inform this work. Early planning was sanitation planning, with the local urban-reform movement emerging from reactions to epidemics and the living conditions of the old city. This led in 1901 not only to the forced removal of Africans to Ndabeni, but also to the spatial form of Ndabeni itself which was designed

⁵⁵ Bickford-Smith, ‘*The slum and racial segregation*’ (forthcoming, 2023).

⁵⁶ See, for example, Rob Turrell, ‘Kimberley’s model compounds,’ *The Journal of African History* 25, no 1 (January 1984): 59–75; Paul Maylam, ‘The rise and decline of urban apartheid,’ *African Affairs* 89, no 354 (1990): 57–84, GJ Pirie and M da Silva, ‘Hostels for African migrants in Greater Johannesburg,’ *GeoJournal* 12, no 2 (March 1986): 173–180; R Home, ‘Barracks and hostels: A heritage conservation case for worker housing in Natal,’ *Natalia* 28 (1998): 45–52; Fassil Demissie, ‘In the shadow of the gold mines: Migrancy and mine housing in South Africa,’ *Housing Studies* 13, no 4 (1996): 445–469.

⁵⁷ Vivian Bickford-Smith, *Ethnic pride and racial prejudice*.

⁵⁸ Vivian Bickford-Smith, *The emergence of the South African metropolis: Cities and identities in the twentieth century* (Cambridge University Press, 2016).

⁵⁹ Nigel Worden, Elizabeth van Heyningen and Vivian Bickford-Smith, *Cape Town: The making of a city: An illustrated social history* (David Philip Publishers, 1998); Vivian Bickford-Smith, Elizabeth van Heyningen and Nigel Worden, *Cape Town in the twentieth century: An illustrated social history* (David Philip Publishers, 1999).

as something between a location and a contact camp.⁶⁰ The 1918 Spanish Flu epidemic once again focused public attention on environmental health and housing, resulting in the promulgation of the Housing Act of 1920. Myron Echenberg explores the peculiar vulnerabilities of Cape Town and other global ports to contagion and places the outbreak of the Bubonic Plague in a global context, illustrating that the Cape Town case, while reactions were extreme, was not particularly unique.⁶¹ Detailed studies of the Bubonic Plague and the Spanish Flu epidemic explore, among other factors, public perceptions of the role of insanitary housing and crowded living environments.⁶²

The nuanced and complex relationship between town planning and slum clearance emerging in the 1930s is vividly explored in the work of Naomi Barnett. For this period, Barnett examined the convenient relationship between the development of town-planning schemes and the potential 'slum clearance' of District Six.⁶³ Her research clearly reveals the relationship between the professionals concerned with these issues. It is unfortunate that her study ends in 1940 when the Town Planning Scheme was in its infancy, when only the first of the schemes (from Bakoven to Trafalgar Park) had been prepared. While she demonstrated that the foundations for the replanning of District Six were conceptually present in 1940, District Six's true demise was sealed only in the mid-1960s. Hart provided a comparative perspective of the planned destruction of Sophiatown, Cato Manor and District Six which extended the planning framework of all three sites beyond 1940 and into the development of reconstructed and replanned areas. Hart deals less with the conceptualised space of District Six as an artefact of Modernism and apartheid and focuses more on viewing apartheid itself as a single design intention.⁶⁴

Both Van Graan and Japha explore the role of Modernism in the remaking of South African cities, with Van Graan exploring the impact of Modernism on the architecture of Cape Town and Japha examining the social and architectural origins of the Modern Movement programme in South

⁶⁰ A contact camp is a controlled and monitored environment for those who have been in contact with plague victims. The controlled conditions at Ndabeni resembled those of a contact camp.

⁶¹ Myron Echenberg, *Plague ports: The global impact of Bubonic Plague 1894–1901* (New York University Press, 2007).

⁶² Howard Phillips, *The Spanish Influenza pandemic of 1918–1919: New perspectives* (Routledge, 2003); Howard Phillips, *Plague, pox and pandemics* (Jacana Media, 2012); Elizabeth van Heyningen, 'Public health and society in Cape Town, 1880–1910,' PhD thesis, University of Cape Town, 1989.

⁶³ Naomi Barnett, 'Race, housing and town planning in Cape Town c 1920–1940: With special reference to District Six,' MA thesis, Department of Historical Studies, University of Cape Town, 1993; Naomi Barnett, 'The planned destruction of District Six in 1940,' *Studies in the history of Cape Town* (Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town, 1994), 7.

⁶⁴ Deborah Mary Hart, 'Master plans: The South African government's razing of Sophiatown, Cato Manor and District Six,' PhD thesis, Syracuse University, 1990, 226.

Africa.⁶⁵ Van Graan usefully explores the influences of Modernism on the design of the early CoCT housing estates and the related programme of racial segregation, noting that, ‘it was adopted by the city council for the design of housing for the city’s poor’ and that it became ‘a tool for the implementation of racially based housing policy’.⁶⁶ Of particular relevance to Cape Town Modernism is the Foreshore Plan, which Nicholas Botha explores as a modernist and ‘City Beautiful’ planning vision with impacts on the city as a whole. While a focus on this thesis is on the impact of Modernism on residential planning and not the high profile Foreshore development itself, there is no doubt that they were linked. The influence of the Foreshore Plan Modernism set clear parameters within which local planners conceptualised large projects and planning schemes. Roadworks and boulevards were constructed in the pursuit of Modernism and a streamlined city, and it is possible that these ‘by-products’, as they were considered at the time, are the real legacy of the Foreshore Plan.⁶⁷

Yet the concerns raised by Parnell and Mabin in 1995 remain: that a singular focus on race might serve to impoverish the study of often complex urban processes, including that of segregation.⁶⁸ Recent studies have responded to these concerns.⁶⁹ However most urban studies still remain site- and race-specific.⁷⁰ This thesis therefore explores the challenge presented by Parnell and Mabin and the lead set by others in examining the urban history of Cape Town in terms of the ‘complex processes’ of urban management and the roles of the urban reformers who worked within social and official constraints.

Notes on sources

⁶⁵ Andre Van Graan, ‘Negotiating Modernism in Cape Town 1918-1948’, PhD thesis, School of Architecture, Planning and Geomatics, University of Cape Town, 2011. Japha, *The social programme of the South African Modern Movement in architecture*, 1986.

⁶⁶ Van Graan, ‘Negotiating Modernism.’ 2011, iii-iv.

⁶⁷ Nicholas Michiel Botha, ‘The Gateway of tomorrow: Modernist town planning on Cape Town’s Foreshore 1930–70,’ MA thesis, University of Cape Town, 2013.

⁶⁸ Parnell and Mabin, ‘Rethinking urban South Africa,’ 39–61.

⁶⁹ Vivian Bickford-Smith, ‘Representing Cape Town on the eve of apartheid,’ *Urban History* 25, no 1 (1998): 36–59. This study provides a complex and relatively rare social portrait of Cape Town, exploring as it does the cross-racial character of the city.

⁷⁰ Christopher Saunders, ‘The creation of Ndabeni: Urban segregation and African resistance in Cape Town,’ *Studies in the history of Cape Town* (Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town, 1979), 165–193; Denis Mabin, ‘Patterns of low cost housing: A study of attitudes and values of coloured residents in the Heideveld public housing estate Cape Town,’ MURP thesis, University of Cape Town, 1968; N Coetzer, ‘Langa township in the 1920s – an (extra)ordinary Garden Suburb,’ *South African Journal of Art History* 24, no 1 (2009): 1–19; Muchaparara Musemwa, ‘Aspects of the social and political history of Langa township, Cape Town, 1927–1948,’ MA thesis, University of Cape Town, 1993; Hildegard Helene Fast, ‘Pondoks, houses, and hostels: A history of Nyanga 1946–1970, with a special focus on housing,’ PhD thesis, University of Cape Town, 1996.

To understand the complex urban processes of ‘history from above’ and the sometimes opaque motivations of council officials, it was necessary to explore municipal records in detail. A general guide to municipal departments and their work is provided by John Shorten; it refers to the work of the CTCC department by department.⁷¹ A promotional film or video entitled *A new horizon*, which shows the process of township design and development, proved useful.⁷² The video explores the professional role in building the townships in 1960. I was fortunate, having worked within the Town Planning Branch and the Environmental Management Branch of the CTCC for decades, to have an idea of the records available for my research. In order to piece together the negotiations, financing, failures, ideas and influences that comprised the complex process of urban planning, or ‘space generation’, in Cape Town it was necessary to examine a large array of primary archival sources, including many city council records and archives housed in the municipal reference library and private sources belonging to the AE&CI/Heartland (Pty) Ltd archive in Somerset West. In a study of this kind which has a strong spatial component visual sources are important. I consulted visual material such as surveys, maps, town plans and photographs, using them less as a form of illustrative material and more as an interpretive tool to explore the ideas permeating the creation of residential form in Cape Town.

The surveys, formal layouts and building plans prepared by officials illustrate both the intentions behind the residential developments and the roots of the planning concepts which gave them physical form. A gap, however, emerges in the official record as to what was planned and what was eventually implemented. The plans for Kewtown, for instance, were never fully realised, as were the grand plans for the Foreshore and for the apartheid modernist District Six. The proposals, whether fully realised or not, provide insights into the professional intentions of the planners and city officials.

The CTCC photographic collection, while a unique city record, had to be used with caution. Photographs were undated and unlabelled. Because of the absence of landmarks and the similarity of the residential architecture on the Cape Flats, it was difficult to identify the townships involved, although I gradually came to recognise distinguishing street formations. While maps and surveys were available at the CTCC, the plans of the TPSs, disappointingly, were uncatalogued and difficult to access. Press clippings available at the city archive from the years 1918 until 1971 provided a comprehensive understanding not only of city developments, but also of the way they were

⁷¹ John Shorten, *The golden jubilee of Greater Cape Town* (John R Shorten, 1963).

⁷² Stafford Smith Films, *A new horizon*, for the Cape Provincial Library Service, Cape Town, 1960.

reported in the press. They proved useful in reviewing urban controversies because official municipal records were studiously neutral.

A major focus of my study is the influence of the urban professional in the development of residential form and the role played by the influence of transnational planning concepts. To this end, I have explored official records for evidence of the ways in which concepts were applied and adapted. Minutes of Evidence and Select Committee Reports, particularly those relating to locations, health and the investigations into the Cape Flats conditions, provided valuable insights into the official approaches and analysis.⁷³ The reports of the Central Housing Board (CHB) and the National Housing and Planning Commission provided the national context, particularly in relation to the extent to which national funding and building models influenced local development.⁷⁴ The official reports of the Native Affairs Department (NAD) were oddly uninformative, providing fewer insights than could have been expected from such an active department. Revealing, though, were the reports of the Department of Community Development, which laid out in detail how apartheid territorial planning was to be achieved for ‘qualified groups’. The Reports of the Institute of Race Relations were useful in providing a summary of the statutory progression of residential segregation, the loss of land rights and the loss of political rights for black residents. I also examined the laws themselves, particularly those affecting property, health segregation and settlement.

The Mayor’s Minutes of the CoCT for the period 1899–1971 provided an annual summary of the activities of the council, including those in housing, sanitation and town planning – all major responsibilities of the city. The minutes were supplemented by the detailed reports of the City Engineer and the MoHs for the same period. Official records of this sort, however, conceal more than they reveal. There are occasional references to personal opinions and interdepartmental conflicts, but generally the plans presented to the council tended to emerge anonymously, with little indication who the author was or where the ideas came from. There is a significant exception to this rule: City Engineer Solomon Morris cultivated a public profile assiduously. He personally presented papers, gave talks, toured overseas extensively, and his department prepared many

⁷³ See, for example, The South African Native Affairs Committee (1903–1905), Minutes of evidence for the accounts of the Docks Location and the De Beers labour compound; The report of the Tuberculosis Commission (UG 34–14) for a description of insanitary housing conditions; the influential City submissions to the Select Committee of the Slums Bill (SC 17–1934); Cape Town housing conditions on the Cape Flats with reference to the coloured population (UG 54–1937); the findings of the Fagan Report of the Native Laws Commissions (UG 28–1948); and the Britten Report (UG 18–1943) providing a detailed description of conditions on the Cape Flats.

⁷⁴ In particular, Report Number 5 of the Planning and Economic Planning Council: Regional Town Planning (GG 34 of 1944) introduced the concepts of centralisation of planning control and decentralisation of settlement through Neighbourhood Units.

reports in his name. The subsequent publications provide an insight into his professional approach to housing and town planning. Unfortunately, access to certain unique research material was lost as a result of the fire at the University of Cape Town in April 2021. However, I was able to access most necessary material from other research institutions.

Two professional publications for architects consulted explored differing approaches to Modernism. The Transvaal-based *South African Architectural Record (SAAR)* represented the Transvaal architects who adopted a Corbusierian approach to architecture and planning. The editorials reflect enthusiastic support for Modernism, although cracks began to appear over the lack of social content in Modernism itself.⁷⁵ The Cape Town-based *Architect Builder and Engineer (AB&E)* represented the views of Cape Town architects who were initially suspicious of Modernism. The introduction and assimilation of Modernism in Cape Town thus followed a different trajectory to that of Gauteng and its progress is reflected in the pages of the *AB&E*. The ‘introduction and assimilation’ of Modernism in Cape Town was one in which both the pioneering Modernism of the ‘Transvaal Group’ and the City Beautiful movement as reflected in the early Foreshore Plan played a significant role.⁷⁶

Theoretical and methodological framework

In this thesis I explore construction of Cape Town’s urban residential form within the Lefebvrian understanding of the production of space. More specifically, I refer to the spaces conceptualised and produced by a powerful corps of urban professionals and bureaucrats, be they public sanitation experts, MoHs, road engineers, civil engineers, planners or architects. Collectively, their work expressed Henri Lefebvre’s notion of the construction of space as a historical process, ‘shot through’ with professional knowledge, which he describes as a mixture of ‘understanding’ and ‘ideology’.⁷⁷ The working ideas of Cape Town’s urban professionals were based on intellectual sanitation and planning frameworks that were in general currency in Britain and Europe at the time. Such knowledge and ideological frameworks extended from the sanitary city to Howard’s low-density Garden City principles, to the re-ordering of urban space along modernist lines. All frameworks affected housing, particularly for the poor and working classes. Professional motives were powerfully linked to the production of order in space in society. The state power structures within which they worked were complex – sometimes enabling and sometimes restricting and

⁷⁵ Gilbert Herbert, *Martienssen and the International Style: The Modern Movement in South African architecture* (Cape Town, Rotterdam: AA Balkema, 1975): 177, 179.

⁷⁶ Andre Van Graan, ‘Negotiating Modernism’ 2011: ii-iv.

⁷⁷ Henri Lefebvre, (translated Nicolson-Smith, D). *The production of space*. (Blackwell, 1991), 41.

controlling. Their work was based on a seemingly ‘rational’ approach, using scientific methods: they surveyed, objectified, measured, enumerated, planned and conceived and, finally, implemented.

According to Lefebvre, to explore the meaning of space, it is necessary to examine its production as a generative process, because the act of producing space is inseparable from the conceptualised idea.⁷⁸ Lefebvre firstly considers space production in terms of social spatial practice, arguing that the spatial practice of a society is revealed through the deciphering of its spaces. Secondly, he identifies ‘representations of space’ as the spaces conceptualised and constructed by professionals according to their ideas and knowledge systems. Finally, he examines the lived spaces or ‘representational spaces,’ of affected inhabitants.⁷⁹ He argues that representations of space play a significant role in the production of space, noting that ‘intervention occurs by way of spatial construction.’⁸⁰ It follows that the interplay and implementation of both sets of visions – the conceptualised space and the lived space – play out within the parameters of existing power relationships and the ideologies of the powerful.⁸¹

In Cape Town as throughout South African cities, the parameters of power were based on the legislative and policy frameworks representing the values of the powerful. They were influenced by the increasing centralisation of state power and the desire to create segregated spaces. Popular resistance to housing decisions in Cape Town might have included rent boycotts, strikes, judicial appeals or widespread public protests. Ultimately, however, the increasing loss of political rights of the marginalised and powerful notions about the need for the control of space resulted in the conceptualised spaces representing the views of the powerful elite. In applying Lefebvre’s theoretical parameters for the production of space one could argue that in Cape Town, the impact of urban change as dictated by professional knowledge systems within an increasingly authoritarian ideological framework had severe consequences for the lived experiences of many working class residents.

Although Lefebvre does not articulate the dialectic between conceptualised, lived and perceived spaces, he suggests that conceived space may be explored in a context in which repression and spatial injustice are ever-present.⁸² A dissonance emerges between the conceptualised space and

⁷⁸ Lefebvre, *The production of space*. 37.

⁷⁹ Lefebvre, *The production of space*. 38-39

⁸⁰ Lefebvre, *The production of space*. 42.

⁸¹ Andrew Merrifield, ‘Place and space: A Lefebvrian reconciliation,’ *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 18, no 4 (1993): 523.

⁸² Merrifield, ‘Place and space,’ 524.

the representational space, with spatial injustices that prevail in extreme form as a result.⁸³ It is clear, for instance, that as soon as the central government began to fund housing after 1920, the production of residential space gradually became enmeshed in state political agendas and ideologies. The location of segregated residential environments at greater and greater distances from the metropole and widely differing standards of housing – both key notions of the ‘conceptualised space’ – became characteristics of an ‘apartheid city’.⁸⁴

Structure and chapter outline

The thesis is structured around the historical emergence of the housing and urban design typologies in Cape Town and the ideas that gave them form. It refers, too, to the influence that housing and urban design had on the lives of their residents. It consists of five chapters and a conclusion. Each chapter explores a period in local planning history. It documents ideas, changes to plans, dead ends, new policies and political interferences.

Chapter 1 ‘The shaping of residential space, 1900–1918’ explores emerging ideas about urban residential space in a period defined by serious health epidemics and two devastating wars. It explores the evolution of housing typologies from the earliest working-class housing in Cape Town to the race-specific African male labour compounds which began to emerge in Cape Town and environs, close to industrial areas. The spatial arrangements of two labour compounds are explored: the accommodation provided at the Cape Town Docks Location and the private labour compound at De Beers Dynamite Factory, later the African Chemical and Explosives Industries Ltd (AE&CI). At the time of its construction, the factory was in an isolated location but subsequently became part of the Cape Town municipal area. The well-established historical events leading to the forced removal of migrant workers to Ndabeni are briefly revisited, with attention being paid to the housing layout and spatial evolution of the location itself.

With poor living conditions exposed in the inner cities, groups of urban professionals began to draw on international planning models for solutions. While little progress was made in these fields, clear planning trends were emerging which had an impact on the lives of working-class people –

⁸³ Edward Soja, ‘Spatial justice and the right to the city: An interview with Edward Soja’, <http://www.jssj.org/article/la-justice-spatiale-et-le-droit-la-ville-un-entretien-avec-edward-soja/ffhalshs-01722418f>>.

⁸⁴ See D Japha and M Hühchermeyer, ‘The history of the development of townships in Cape Town: 1920–1992,’ Working Paper No 2, Newcastle upon Tyne, United Kingdom: Centre for Architectural Research and Development Overseas, University of Newcastle (1995): 1.

from African residential segregation to the influence of health standards on urban design based on the British Garden City planning model.

Chapter 2 ‘Garden City planning: from Maitland Garden Village to Langa, 1919–1930’ explores the growth and application of the Garden City planning principles on the early residential designs and the contexts in which they occurred. The resilience of the Garden City planning principles allowed for infinite adaptability, multiple interpretations and a capacity for local modification, leading to the questions: What was the dominant intention of the generative nature of each space, and what were the mechanisms through which it was achieved? Maitland Garden Village, Pinelands Garden City and Langa were widely differing examples of the production of residential space. The chapter also considers the slow beginnings of state funding for housing following the passage of the Housing Act of 1920.

Chapter 3 ‘Slum clearance and council housing: the emergence of formal planning activities in Cape Town, 1930–1948’ examines the practices of residential segregation, particularly for African residents, that were already well established in Cape Town by this period. The chapter explores the relationship between emerging international planning models applied locally and the design and location of new housing for the working classes. It examines the relationship between town-planning objectives, public and official conceptions regarding slums and a drive for their elimination, together with plans to move working-class residents into satellite housing estates, mostly on the Cape Flats.

The chapter introduces the professional impact of city officials who shaped the form and the future of city housing and examines the development of the townships (or housing estates) which followed the Slums Act of 1934, with special reference to the showpiece ‘modernist’ housing estate at Kewtown on the Cape Flats. The Foreshore Plan of 1947, too, strengthened and supported a more interventionist approach to city planning that gradually began to be applied to the residential areas of Cape Town.

Chapter 4 ‘Modernism and apartheid, 1948–1960’ explores a pivotal period in the history of Cape Town with the introduction of urban apartheid. The National Party government, newly installed in 1948, initiated a series of racially based laws and policies which had a profound and long-term impact on local space, urban management systems and the working classes of Cape Town. The chapter explores the ways in which power relationships between local and national authorities realigned during this period as the national government sought to impose its apartheid ideology on the urban residential environments and the country as a whole. Cape Town, with its mixed

population and non-racial voter base, became a particular target. Residential planning and development, expanding across the Cape Flats, came to be defined by imported Neighbourhood Unit planning principles which co-existed in a broader context of spatial apartheid.

New housing built during this period followed formulaic responses based on national ‘minimum standards’ housing criteria. Nevertheless, the large-scale township developments which characterised new government interventions in the cities to the North were slow to take root in Cape Town. Still, modernist planning influences in the central city were beginning to make their mark, particularly in roadworks and a desire to replan the inner-city areas within a vision of Modernism.

Chapter 5 ‘Urban professionals and residential planning in Cape Town, 1960–1970’ examines the implementation of the urban management and residential planning trends which had emerged during the 1950s. The chapter examines the implementation of mass housing together with the use of systematic controls exerted by the central state. Complex power relationships between the central state and local government emerged and were most apparent in the City’s resistance to and subsequent acquiescence in the apartheid plans for District Six.

An already severe housing shortage was exacerbated by growing Group Areas evictions, which accelerated in the 1960s, as local housing authorities were forced to speed up residential planning programmes to accommodate the growing numbers of ‘disqualified’ residents. The chapter explores the dominance of the central government’s apartheid system over local space, the change in intergovernmental power relationships, and how local planning professionals responded to these changes. This was because by the end of the study period all TPSs and township developments were required to conform to a centralised body of apartheid law.

Chapter 6 Conclusions. The thesis concludes that the professionally constructed space changed the face of Cape Town and had an impact on the life experiences of many of its working-class residents. International public health and town-planning models played a significant role in these impacts. Throughout the study period, Cape Town was subject to a series of laws, urban-planning experiments and modernist interventions that completely changed the face of the city and the lives of many Cape Town residents. Despite the influence of international planning models, the most distinctive characteristic of urban morphology remained that of race and racial segregation.

These two factors – professional devotion to British and American planning models and the realities of local and national racial politics – existed in tension throughout. The historical evolution

of housing within the ambit of urban administration in Cape Town involved complex interactions between international influences and local circumstances. Local applications were gradually supplanted by a national government trend towards the centralisation of power which had a significant impact on city planning.

Finally, the study concludes that town planning, township development and housing design occurred within an intricate legislative mix that dictated policy at all three levels of government while defining the power relationships between them. A 'genealogy' of laws about housing typologies, urban planning, and about racial administration and land rights, affected both residents and property owners. The official processes might have been contradictory and disputed, but the end result was state dominance over the creation of residential space to achieve territorial and racial dominance.

Appendices. This thesis has three appendices.

Appendix I provides a timeline of landmark legislation and relevant events from 1875 to 1974. The timeline includes 1875 because this was the year that Britain promulgated the Housing Act (Cross Act), introducing the concept of 'unhealthy areas' into legislative practice. British legislation subsequently played a key role in influencing urban planning in Cape Town in the early 20th century. The year 1974 marks the introduction of the New Town concept in Cape Town with the establishment of Mitchells Plain.

Appendix II provides profiles of key officials in the history of urban planning in Cape Town. MoHs were the first town planners in the late 19th century. Their professional focus on the urban landscape was on improving health conditions, notably ventilation, water provision and sewerage disposal, though changes in urban layout and housing design. City engineers were playing the dominant role in urban planning by the mid-20th century, strongly influenced by Modernism, as they cleared space for a 'modern city' and applied strict national segregation policies as they developed new working-class housing estates. While the early MoHs and engineering officials were influenced mainly by British policy and law, city officials later had a broader international view, one influenced by approaches to urban planning in the United States and elsewhere, in addition to the United Kingdom.

Appendix III provides tables of data on housing provision in three sections. The first two cover housing developed by the CTCC by area for low-income groups, excluding labour compounds, for the periods 1930–1949 and 1950–1970. The racial designations used are those of the

Population Registration Act 30 of 1950. The third section provides data on the number of people accommodated by the city and divisional councils, and on the housing estates completed, by 1974. The section includes statistics on the number of houses completed for home ownership for coloured and white occupation. The data points to the scale of housing construction undertaken as well as the extent of the racial segregation which followed.

Chapter 1

Shaping residential space in Cape Town, 1900–1918

Introduction

Halfway between Europe and the East Indies, Cape Town was established as a refreshment station in 1652 by the Dutch East India Company (VOC). Its strategic location was important. With mountains on two sides and sea on another, it had an easily defensible position. While well placed as a small settlement, it was positioned in an amphitheatre with little space for future expansion. The only exception was to the south-east (site of the future District Six) and towards the Cape Flats. District Six's strategic importance in relation to the growth of the Cape Town, in addition to its poverty, social mix and street design, created the conditions for future contestations.

There was an ordered and contained plan for Cape Town from its inception, similar to that of many colonial and military settlements, whether Dutch, Spanish or English.¹ The plan followed a general pattern of military to administrative, civic and residential use, also typical of other colonial and military settlements. The Cape Town plan, prepared in the late 17th century by the Dutch East India Company (VOC), took the form a formal grid layout with an initial military focus on sea defence. The town edges were defined by two streets – Buitenkant and Buitengracht Streets, within which a uniform grid pattern of residential blocks slowly developed. In between the blocks were the narrow lanes or *steegs*, sometimes with small industries, but more often than not crowded with the very poor, living in extreme conditions, sometimes in cellars, stables or dense back-to-back housing or *huurbuise*.²

The notion of the geographical space of what constituted 'Cape Town' did not remain static. In 1913, the municipality expanded to include the several smaller municipalities that ringed the mountain edges – Sea Point, Woodstock, Maitland, Mowbray, Claremont and Muizenberg.³ In all cases, the Cape Town City Council's (CTCC) public works expanded through linked connections to include drainage storm water and water.

¹ Ron van Oers. *Dutch town planning overseas during VOC and WIC rule (1600–1800)* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2000), 129.

² *Huurhuis* is a Dutch term in common use in early Cape Town meaning a rented house, usually small and situated in a narrow lane. Some *huurbuise* were built especially to be rented out, others were makeshift spaces. The lanes themselves became areas of filth because of a lack of water and detritus removal. A feature of many *huurbuise* was their lack of through ventilation, something it had in common with early speculative housing development called 'back-to-back housing'.

³ Elizabeth van Heyningen, 'The "small Greek cities" of the Cape Peninsula,' *Contree* July 1981): 5–8.

This chapter explores the reorganisation of residential space within a period of Cape Town's history, characterised by the impact of wars and epidemics.⁴ The African population suffered deeply as a result of a forced move to Ndabeni in 1901, where the Colonial Government laid out, for the first time in Cape Town, a planned location on the outskirts of the city. With industrial and commercial expansion came a need for African migrant labour, resulting in the creation of African labour compounds which allowed for maximum measures of control of the labour force.

Important existing scholarship explores the nature of the growth and social formation of Cape Town from the 17th to the 20th century.⁵ There are also detailed studies on Cape Town in the early to mid-20th century.⁶ This analysis builds on those foundations, exploring the relationship between the spatial forms and the kind of 20th-century city that was the result. Cape Town's urban form has been shaped by successive regulatory and planning regimes from the early military plan of the VOC to the complete spatial and social engineering of the apartheid government. The plans and policies of the 20th century – of modernisation, slum clearance and spatial segregation – have deeply altered both the city's social and spatial form and their impacts are felt both as a terrain of social and spatial engineering and of contestation.⁷

The existing literature reveals a larger debate about urban management and public sanitation, class, racial segregation and the persistent presence of slums in Cape Town. An examination of the social and residential make-up of the poorer areas of Cape Town around 1900 suggests that, while the social division was not primarily race- but class-based, the anti-poor, anti-African sentiments of the middle classes were exacerbated by fears of contagion imbued with racial ideology – the 'sanitation syndrome'. Overcrowding, slums, public health and safety, often seen in the light of class and ethnic differences in industrial societies, were perceived largely in terms of colour and 'race' differences. The residential proximity of poor 'whites' amid poor 'blacks' became of critical

⁴ Nigel Worden, Elizabeth van Heyningen & Vivian Bickford-Smith, *Cape Town: The making of a city: An illustrated social history* (Cape Town: David Phillip Publishers, 1998).

⁵ Robert Ross, 'Cape Town (1750–1850): Synthesis in the dialectic of continents,' in *Colonial cities* (Springer, Dordrecht 1985), 105–121; Worden et al, *Cape Town: The making of a city*; Shirley Ann Judges, 'Poverty, living conditions and social relations: Aspects of life in Cape Town in the 1830s,' MA thesis, University of Cape Town, 1977; Vivian Bickford-Smith, *Ethnic pride and racial prejudice in Victorian Cape Town* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1995); Vivian Bickford-Smith, 'South African urban history, racial segregation and the unique case of Cape Town?' *Journal of Southern African Studies* 21, no 1 (1995): 63–78; Vivian Bickford-Smith, Elizabeth van Heyningen, and Nigel Worden, *Cape Town in the twentieth century: An illustrated social history* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1999).

⁶ Sarah-Jane Walton, 'Cape Town at war: The city, lived experiences and loyalties 1914–1919,' PhD thesis, Department of Historical Studies, University of Cape Town, 2020; Wayne Dooling, "'Cape Town knows but she forgets": Segregation and the making of a housing crisis during the first half of the 20th century,' *JSAS* 44, no 6 (2018): 1057–1076.

⁷ Gordon Cherry, *Cities and plans: The shaping of urban Britain in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries* (London: Edward Arnold, 1988).

concern to middle-class, self-perceived ‘whites’ with economic and political power.⁸ While there is considerable scholarship on this topic, we need to revisit these findings and add our own observations to understand the background to the urban morphology woven into Cape Town’s palimpsest of residential development into the 20th century.

Housing and living conditions before 1900

Reference to housing typologies before 1900 is necessary because the impetus for 20th-century planning from Garden City ideas to forms of Modernism arose out of a reaction to the dense, frequently unhealthy pre-1900 residential areas in the city. To local officials, they represented social and structural unfitness.⁹ The reactions to urban conditions and the solutions which followed, mirrored international trends, certainly in part. Social reformers, planners and public sanitation specialists became imbued with new scientific knowledge and a desire for urban change. But unlike Britain, in the colonial cities, the matter of race loomed large, resulting in racial and spatial segregations enforced by policy and law.¹⁰ The evolution of residential spaces in Cape Town suggests an uneven historical progression of urban form and planning – from speculative housing to entrenched segregatory measures, and to the imposition of formal planning regimes.



Figure 4: Huurhuise in Coffee Lane, Cape Town, since demolished. This early housing type was constructed in the mid- to late-18th century within the narrow lanes of Cape Town which interspersed the historic city blocks. An early huurhuis would have had no water provision or waterborne sewerage. There were waste traps that were filled with detritus which would be cleared occasionally with sea water. Conditions were made worse by overcrowding (Elliot Collection KAB.E7979)

⁸ Maynard W Swanson, ‘The Sanitation Syndrome: Bubonic Plague and urban native policy in the Cape Colony 1900–1909,’ *Journal of African History* 18, no 3 (1977): 387.

⁹ Vivian Bickford-Smith, ‘The slum and racial segregation in South African history: an intimate relationship,’ in A Mayne (ed), *The Oxford handbook of the modern slum*. Oxford: Oxford University Press (forthcoming, 2023).

¹⁰ Robert K Home, *Of planting and planning*, 124.

Public horror at existing slum conditions of the industrial cities of Britain and elsewhere grew in the 1880s, assisted by sensational press reports and pamphlets. Andrew Mearns' *Bitter cry of outcast London* described horrors of slum conditions in London in vivid detail.¹¹ Similar sentiments were picked up by local newspapers in Cape Town.¹² Public officials began to seek regulatory mechanisms to improve living conditions, although they, anxious not to interfere with property rights, focused extensively on external and public spheres of improvement. Worden et al refer to the growth of control through early regulatory frameworks in governance and health in Cape Town 'to make urban life manageable'.¹³ The search for urban order and improved living conditions was led by the medical professionals, many of whom were educated in Scotland and England and who found the urban conditions shocking. They sought to apply regulatory measures to local environments based on British precedent and emerging scientific knowledge about public sanitation. In so doing, they became the first 'planners' in Cape Town.

By 1891, the improvement in sanitation and investment in public infrastructure became a local political issue with the tensions between the 'clean' and 'dirty' parties which shook local opinion out of its traditional apathy.¹⁴ The 'clean party', supported by the English press, sought to appeal to a shared English culture which was encapsulated into a process of urban reform and a search for 'English' respectability.¹⁵ It favoured local investment in the improvement of infrastructure in Cape Town, in drainage, cleansing and large civic works to improve urban conditions. The 'dirty party', on the other hand, was composed of local landlords, many of them owning large numbers of slum properties. They resisted any major increase in rates to fund infrastructural projects such as providing improved water and drainage.¹⁶

¹¹ Peter Hall, *Cities of tomorrow: An intellectual history of urban planning and design in the twentieth century* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996): 16.

¹² Bickford-Smith, 'The slum and racial segregation' 3.

¹³ Worden, Nigel, Elizabeth van Heyningen and Vivian Bickford-Smith, *Cape Town: The making of a city* (Cape Town: David Philip Publishers, 1998): 220.

¹⁴ Worden et al, *Cape Town: The making of a city*, 225; Bickford-Smith, *Ethnic pride and racial prejudice*, 38.

¹⁵ Bickford-Smith, *Ethnic pride and racial prejudice*, 56.

¹⁶ Bickford-Smith, *Ethnic pride and racial prejudice*, 58.

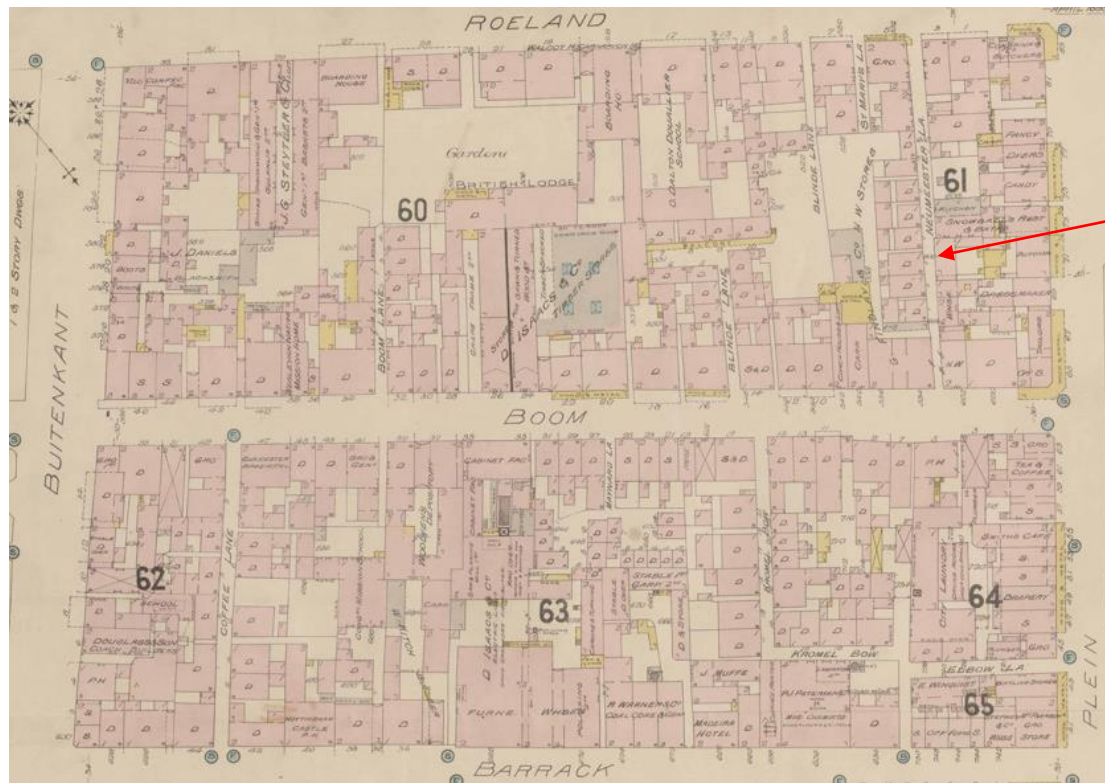


Figure 5: Lanes and back-to-back houses. The map is of an old area between Barrack and Roeland streets, Cape Town, in the east of the central city in 1895, where many poorer working-class people lived. The houses (indicated with a 'D' for dwelling) off the lanes are small, back-to-back dwellings consisting of one room with no through ventilation. Nieuwmeester Lane, which contained 18th-century back-to-back dwellings, is arrowed as an illustration. (Goold's fire insurance map 1895 SAL)

From back-to-back to by-law housing: 19th-century housing legacy

Speculative building accompanied Cape Town's economic and demographic growth in the British colonial period; it accelerated rapidly during the last three decades of the 19th century on the back of the mineral revolution, which introduced increased wealth into the local economy.

A by-product of the unregulated speculative property boom in the mid-19th century was the proliferation of cheap, unserviced and unplanned back-to-back housing. From 1840 onwards, these dwellings existed together with the earlier Dutch housing in the old lanes of Cape Town. Back-to-back housing was based on the British industrial model of tightly packed dwelling units fronting a newly created street edge. Living conditions were poor and were made worse by subletting and overcrowding. Action clearly was needed to regulate new housing, street layouts and health standards.



*Figure 6: A view of early 'backyards' of the back-to-back mid-19th housing in Cape Town in the Waterkant area. The photograph, c1870, shows the extent to which housing was tightly packed.
(Copy, Electrical Engineer's Department, City of Cape Town)*



*Figure 7: Mid-19th century back-to-back housing in District Six. The photograph shows dense urban residential development fronting onto the street and few opportunities for air and ventilation. Conditions were exacerbated by overcrowding. There is evidence of a small lane to the left of the photograph. The area is in the process of demolition.
(City of Cape Town CCb134_56_s4-i16)*

In 1889, the CTCC published *Rules and regulations of the Cape Town municipality*, laying out in detail the health and building requirements for new housing. The regulations came into effect with the Municipal Regulations Act 26 of 1893, which clarified the powers, duties and functions of the municipal body and its role in housing, public sanitation and overcrowding.¹⁷ For the first time, building plans had to be submitted and regulations no longer permitted any form of 'back-to-back' housing. There was a strong focus on sanitation-related requirements for new housing, including side spaces, back spaces, sanitation, sewerage and ventilation.¹⁸ The buildings which followed – the

¹⁷ Cape Town Municipality, *Rules and regulations of the Cape Town Municipality* (WA Richards and Sons, Castle Street, Cape Town 1889), Regulation 281.

¹⁸ Cape Town Municipality, *Rules and Regulations*.

‘by-law’ houses – were an improvement on the existing housing legacy. The major issue of overcrowding remained, however, to which the crowded lanes and sublet back-to-back buildings made a significant contribution.¹⁹

By 1900, public spaces and streets were undergoing gradual improvements as the CTCC focused on improving conditions in the public realm. City projects in water provision, drainage, and the separation of storm water and sewerage systems were ongoing. Initially at least, the focus was on the wealthier areas and eventually extended to the enlarged municipality that followed after 1913. Housing and the problems of slums and ‘slumlords’ lagged behind, though. A legacy of working-class poverty, poor housing and crowded living conditions remained despite persistent newspaper references to the problem, often of a sensationalist and racist nature.²⁰



Figure 8: Survey illustrating early dense, back-to-back housing development (c 1860) between Loader Street and Somerset Road, Cape Town. (Thom's Municipal Survey 1894, City of Cape Town)

Cape Town in 1900

At the beginning of the 20th century, Cape Town's population was still separated less by race than by class, although there was a considerable correlation between the two. The demographics of the

¹⁹ Early municipal surveys of Cape Town suggest that even before the building regulations were promulgated in 1893, new terraced housing prototypes were starting to improve on layouts – with yards for better ventilation and back alleys for the removal of night soil.

²⁰ Vivian Bickford-Smith, *The slum and racial segregation* (forthcoming, 2023).

inner-city areas were changing, however, through in migration from rural areas and from abroad.²¹ Much of the inner city and adjoining urban development to the east had come to be populated by poor, cosmopolitan working-class people living in crowded rental accommodation. The middle classes had already largely removed themselves from the city centre to villas, either up the slopes of Signal Hill or Table Mountain or in the small strip between Signal Hill and the Atlantic Ocean to the west; or, in the largest numbers, to the southern suburbs. They were 'buying' a degree of separation from inner-city poverty, overcrowding and its perceived sanitary dangers.

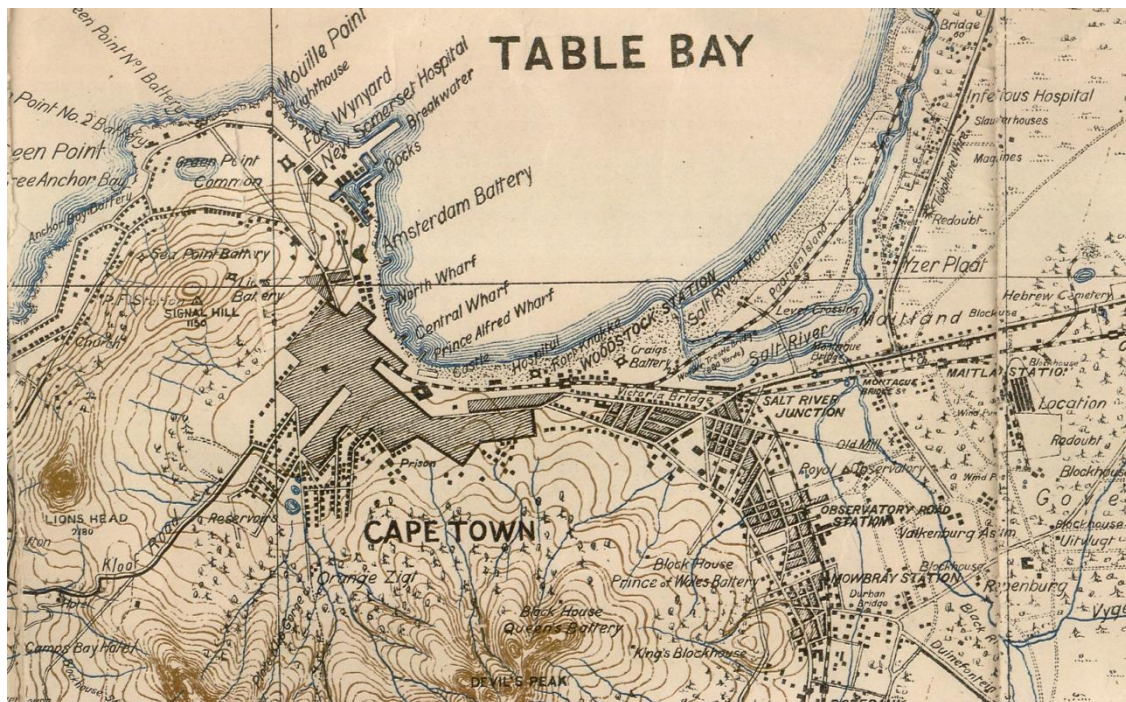


Figure 9: Map of Cape Town showing city growth by 1901. The CBD, District Six, Woodstock and Salt River show dense development, and a section of the Waterkant area to the east. There is suburban development from Green and Sea Point to the suburbs of Cape Town at Oranjezicht and Vredehoek. In addition to District Six, Salt River and Observatory, many of the smaller residential areas were racially mixed, including Green Point, Newlands Village, Monbray and Claremont. Ndabeni is indicated east (to the left) as a 'location'. (Map: Cpt FW Bellamy, Mapping Section RE, Cape Town, printed February 1902. [Courtesy of Heritage Section, Cape Town City Council])

A census in 1904 revealed the extent of post-Boer War/South African War overcrowding in Cape Town, particularly in the dense residential areas on the outskirts of the city in District Six and near the Cape Town Docks. The census made a distinction between formal and informal housing, possibly making a distinction between formal and the informal dwellings of people who were by then living in huts above District Six. The population of central Cape Town at the time was 77 668, of whom 74 935 lived in dwellings. Of these, 97.34% lived in brick-and-stone houses; 0.96% in dwellings of wood, iron or lathe and plaster; 1.53% in wattle-and-daub or mud-sod huts (informal

²¹ Vivian Bickford-Smith, *Ethnic pride and racial prejudice*.

housing); and 0.16% in ‘tents, wagons, etc’. Overcrowding was severe: while brick buildings accommodated 7.52 people on average, and wood-and-iron buildings an average of 6.26 people, every wattle-and-daub hut accommodated as many as 28.97 people on average – a startling statistic. An average of 3.69 persons lived in tents, although this temporary form of accommodation was not explained.²² The total population of District Six numbered 28 631, including 13 814 identified as ‘mixed and other’, 11 717 as ‘European or white’, 2 612 as Malay and 421 as African. This meant that about half of the District Six population was ‘European’. It also enumerated the African population in the Cape Town municipal area, with the largest number (1 332) living in the dockside area.²³

Sanitation officials as early planners

By the late 19th century, public health authorities, both in Britain and Cape Town, began to make a direct causal connection between poor living conditions and public health. High infant mortality rates, a measure of poor health conditions, were of particular concern, and were described in 1892 by the Chief Sanitary Inspector as, ‘as great blot on the escutcheon of public health’.²⁴ References to poor and dirty conditions in the lanes of Cape Town, with its mix of old housing stock and overcrowding, occur frequently in the annual reports of the Medical Officers of Health (MoH). Cape Town’s MoH, Dr GHB Fisk, reported that he had viewed many houses and condemned 13 as ‘unfit for human habitation’. He was aware that his actions solved nothing for the poor because they had nowhere else to go, and it was a case of ‘hunting them from one quarter to congregate as before in another’. He called for public-spirited individuals to intervene in the crisis, saying ‘A George Peabody is sadly wanted in Cape Town’.²⁵

Dr Fisk’s Chief Sanitary Inspector Mr Corben, made the correlation between back-to-back housing and ill health, writing:

Many of the houses are so constructed that they must be prejudicial to the health of the inmates, for we find that there are no fewer than 162 where there is no through ventilation. The air becoming polluted by the occupants and in closely confined situations, must be injurious. In these houses 22 deaths have occurred during the year.²⁶

²² Report of the Medical Officer of Health, Mayor’s Minutes, year ending 1904, Appendix 10, vii (17 April 1904).

²³ Report of the Medical Officer of Health, Mayors Minutes, year ending 1904; Appendix 10, iii (17 April 1904) for the full table, which includes other smaller population groups.

²⁴ Report of the Chief Sanitary Inspector, Mayors Minutes, year ending 1892, 36.

²⁵ Report of the Medical Officer of Health (G H Fisk 18 July 1893), 44.

²⁶ Report of the Sanitary Department, Department of the MOH (1894), 35.

There was therefore early recognition of the link between design, through ventilation, separate services, city management, overcrowding and the health of the occupants. The significant issue of the nature of poverty and low wages received less attention.

Conditions in Cape Town were condemned by visiting experts. Professor WJ Simpson, an influential international plague expert, co-founder of the London School of Tropical Medicine and advisor to the Colonial Government, declared at a public lecture on the plague in 1901: ‘Next to Bombay, Cape Town is one of the most suitable towns I know for a plague epidemic’, noting ‘an extraordinary portion of ancient and filthy slums’. To Simpson, poverty and the physical condition of the slums may have been a factor, but so, in his opinion, was race and culture. An avowed racial segregationist, he expressed concern at the racial and cultural integration in the poorer residential areas, noting:

living in the same insanitary areas, often in the same houses, the different races and nationalities are inextricably mixed up, so that whatever disease affects the one is sure to affect the other.²⁷

His comment about plague proved prophetic because it was not long before a worker at the docks fell ill, followed by others. In all, some 766 fell ill and 371 died, with coloured people the worst affected.²⁸

As health fears grew poverty became more visible. Outbreaks of epidemics – measles in 1839, smallpox in 1882 and finally the Bubonic Plague in 1901 – alerted officials to the relationship to the possibilities of contagion in a port city such as Cape Town. The Cape Town Harbour fell outside the municipal area and could not be policed by the municipal health authorities, leaving the city itself vulnerable to contagion. Despite its new housing regulations, Cape Town, as a port city, was open to sources of infection, not least through its trade and military links, come 1900. The dangers were exacerbated by the conditions in the old slums, worsened by rapid in-migration to Cape Town after the discovery of gold on the Rand in 1886 and subsequent waves of immigration.

The provision of housing, despite the urging of the MoH in Cape Town, was conspicuous by its failures. In 1894, the council offered leasehold sites to developers to build artisan dwellings, but after no offers were received the plan was cancelled. A scheme for housing male artisans in Cape Town, called the Workmen’s Metropole, built in 1897, was taken over by the Salvation Army for

²⁷ Bickford-Smith et al, *Cape Town in twentieth century*, 18–19.

²⁸ Bickford-Smith et al, *Cape Town in twentieth century*, 19.

white occupants. Urging that something should be done about the need for better housing for the working classes, the City Engineer's Department drew up plans in 1904 for model housing types – the first model plans designed by the council. The plans consisted of two classes of building – a three-storey tenement with units of two rooms each and a bathroom, and a single-storey house consisting of two bedrooms, a bathroom and a pantry.²⁹ The plans (see figure 10), with their generously sylvan surrounds and low-density, picturesque character, show complete incomprehension on the part of the Council drafting office of what it meant to be poor, the kinds of accommodation available to them, and the overcrowded conditions they endured as a result of their poverty. Clearly, no working class family could afford such housing and equally, the Municipality could not afford to provide them in sufficient numbers. The proposal was unsustainable and over-ambitious from the start. It was never built because the ratepayers refused to fund the project.

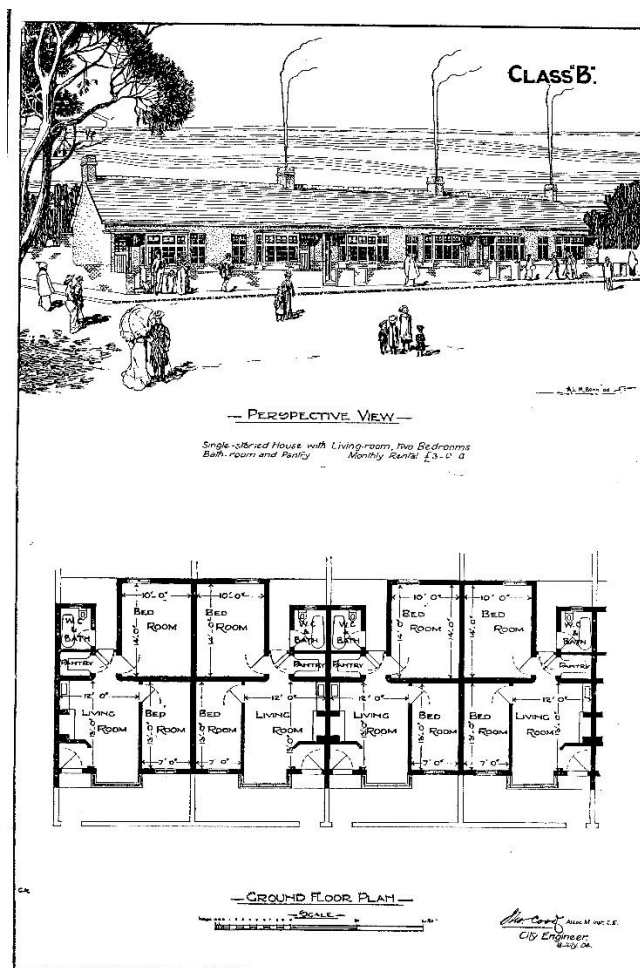


Figure 10: Class B housing type proposed by the City Engineer's Department in 1904 to address a severe post-war housing crisis for the working classes. The housing was clearly not intended for people of colour, nor the working classes, despite any claims to the contrary. There was no possibility that the municipality could afford to build houses of this kind in the numbers necessary to solve the housing crisis (Mayor's Minutes, year ending 1904)

²⁹ Report of the Medical Officer of Health, Mayor's Minutes, year ending 1895, 108.

African segregation and creation of locations and labour compounds in Cape Town

Africans had been living and working in Cape Town for decades. Many worked at the harbour for the labour broker, AR McKenzie, finding accommodation throughout the city, or at the docks in make-shift accommodation near the South Arm near the Victoria Basin, and eventually moving to the Docks Location south of the Sea Point railway line. There were large employers of African labour – notably the railways and the De Beers Explosive Works at Somerset West. Still others worked in construction, agriculture and dairy farming. Some lived with their families in District Six and in Woodstock.

As the African population increased in Cape Town in the 1890s, so did white fears about social contagion and demands for segregation. However, as Christopher Saunders points out, with so many Africans living throughout the city, creating an African location for Cape Town would involve a ‘partial unscrambling of what, by 1900 was a complex pattern of residential was mixing’.³⁰ Plans for an African location proceeded at a leisurely pace until the outbreak of the Bubonic Plague in the city. The reaction to the plague reflected both the racial fractures that were emerging in Cape Town at the time and the scientific and medical approaches to matters of grave public concern.

The first organised local demand for African segregation came in 1898 and 1899 from the working-class ratepayers of District Six and Woodstock, with demands for the CTCC to take action to ‘prevent the districts referred to being rendered unfit for the habitation of the respectable working classes by reason of the herding of the “k -- -s” therein’, and that a separate location be established for Africans.³¹ In 1899, Dr E Barnard Fuller, Cape Town’s MoH, produced a *Special report on an investigation into the housing of k - - s in Cape Town*, in which he addressed the issue of housing conditions for Africans. He claimed to have visited many of the ‘haunts’ himself and estimated that about 1 600 Africans were living in the poorer area of Cape Town. Combining deeply racial opinions and sanitation concerns in the traditions of the ‘sanitation syndrome’, he concluded that the African presence in Cape Town:

as it is currently housed and regulated in the city constitutes a dangerous feature in the sanitary condition and creates a very undesirable social condition by bringing uncleanly half civilised *units* (sic) into intimate contact with the more cleanly and civilised portions of the community.³²

³⁰ Christopher Saunders, ‘The creation of Ndabeni: Urban segregation and African resistance in Cape Town,’ *Studies in the History of Cape Town* 1 (Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town, 1979), 169.

³¹ Mayor’s Minutes, year ending 1898, 48; Mayor’s Minutes, year ending 1899, 27.

³² Report of the Medical Officer of Health 1899, cii–ciii.

The Superintendent of Native Affairs, Walter Stanford, recommended a site near the old outspan at Maitland for a location, but the Colonial Government demurred, considering the site essential for the construction of a sewerage works. Instead, it set up the Stanford Commission to investigate the setting up a location in Cape Town.³³ Submissions were called for, including for plans for the proposed location. The CTCC submitted plans for the Salt River Outspan site in Koeberg Road, together with building proposals by others, including architects Tully and Waters. The CTCC plan, divided into accommodation for ‘married men’ and ‘locations’, consisted of a series of housing typologies together with the superintendent’s residence and a police station.³⁴ While austere, it would have been a significant improvement on what subsequently was built at Ndabeni in 1901. The findings of the Stanford Report Commission were delayed, and by the time the report was completed, there had been the first signs of a severe outbreak in 1901 of the Bubonic Plague in Cape Town.

Docks Location and De Beers labour compound Somerset West

Because of the nature of Cape Town’s service-driven and mercantile economy and its distance from sources of African labour, the labour barracks and hostels were not as numerous as they were elsewhere in South Africa, nor were they particularly visible to the public – people seemed to go to great lengths to separate and hide them from public view. The Docks Location was hidden behind a harbour wall and the De Beers Explosive Works labour compound was hidden within a secretive industrial area, surrounded by buffers of walls, railway lines and tall trees.³⁵

Discussions concerning the establishment and nature of the Docks Location, the De Beers compound and Ndabeni clearly raise questions about the relationship between the production of residential space and the requirements of the powerful – the administrators and managers of industry – who create its built form, revealing controlling societal attitudes by ‘deciphering’ the generative nature of space.³⁶ Cape Town’s locations and labour compounds reflect a close correlation between spatial form, control and regulatory mechanisms. While the Docks Location and the De Beers compound were ‘open’ as opposed to the confined Kimberley system, the question of control was, as we will see, one of degree.

³³ NA 547, Stanford Commission Report KAB.

³⁴ NA 457, Appendix E. Report by Mr RO Wynne Roberts, City Engineer and Surveyor to the Corporation of the City of Cape Town, on the proposed native location for Cape Town, 23 October 1900.

³⁵ See Figures 1, 11 and 12.

³⁶ Merrifield, ‘Place and space: A Lefebvrian reconciliation,’ 533.

There were key differences between the Docks Location, the De Beer's labour compound and Ndabeni. Ndabeni accommodated women and children evicted from the central city, although under extremely Spartan conditions. Yet Ndabeni itself was regarded as expendable and, despite housing an increasingly settled community, it was rezoned for industrial use. Drawing on slave and indentured labour traditions of housing male workers, Robert Home calls the barracks and labour compounds of the British Empire places for 'housing the invisible man', as an exploitative tradition of labour that recognised only a work relationship.³⁷ The rudimentary nature of barracks in labour compounds meant they were cheaply built, expendable, even temporary, and could be moved if necessary. The Docks Location was moved twice before eventually using the old Breakwater Prison in Cape Town. The De Beers labour compound, which was well hidden by thick tree belts and blast circles, remained on the same site near the industrial area throughout its history, but was subject to constant changes within the compound itself, particularly after the rise of union activity in 1946.

The history of black labour at the Docks Location has been explored elsewhere.³⁸ The 'model' De Beers labour system at Kimberley, and its closed compound system, has been the subject of detailed analyses, as have the mine compound systems of Johannesburg.³⁹ The Cape Town labour compound system was not, as we have seen, like that of Kimberley, a closed system. For the De Beers Explosive Works in Somerset West and the Docks Location in Cape Town, access was slightly more fluid, as workers could come and go subject to monitoring. Contract workers needed to pass through a manned security gate, where their registration papers were checked. Even then, the general manager of De Beers, WR Quinan, expressed a decided preference for a closed compound system and expressed relief at the hearings at the South African Native Affairs Commission in 1903 that the proclamation of martial law of 1899 restricted movement and allowed greater control over the contract workers.⁴⁰

Jonathan Crush has described labour compounds and hostels as 'bleak functional barracks to which access is tightly controlled'.⁴¹ Their bleakness and functionality should not allow them to be

³⁷ Home, *Of planting and planning*, 95–99.

³⁸ Vivian Bickford-Smith, 'Black labour at the docks at the beginning of the twentieth century,' *Studies in the History of Cape Town*, 2 (Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town, 1984), 88.

³⁹ Rob Turrell, 'Kimberley's model compounds,' *Journal of African History* 25, no 1 (1984): 59–75; Shaun Moroney, 'The development of the compound as a mechanism of worker control 1900–1912,' History Workshop, University of the Witwatersrand (3–7 February 1978); Jonathan Crush, 'Scripting the compound: Power and space in the South African mining industry,' *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 12, no 3 (1994): 301–324.

⁴⁰ SANAC Minutes of evidence, WR Quinan, De Beers Explosive Works, 217.

⁴¹ Crush, 'Scripting the compound,' 302.

easily dismissed as an ad hoc assemblage of structures. The functions of the spaces and barriers were clearly visible in the layout: an assemblage of spaces providing clear clues about the ‘spatial exercise of power’.⁴² Apart from the assemblage of their spaces, compound construction was based on minimal costs while ensuring that workers were sufficiently healthy to remain productive. A standard layout of rectangular dormitories around a central space was designed for surveillance, with a single manned access point controlling movement. The bleak functional aspects of compounds obscure the involvement of scientists and medical professionals who, in 1905, measured systems of ventilation and permissible cubic air space, recommending minimum standards for air space.⁴³ The results were two widely used mechanisms for ventilation management – a minimum standard for airspace as decided by medical experts and the use of the ‘rand hut’ ventilation system that allowed air to circulate through an upper ventilator along the roof space. The former permitted the Docks Superintendent to announce proudly that they ‘allowed 240 cubic feet’ of air space, ‘some 40 cubic feet more than the general minimum standard.’⁴⁴

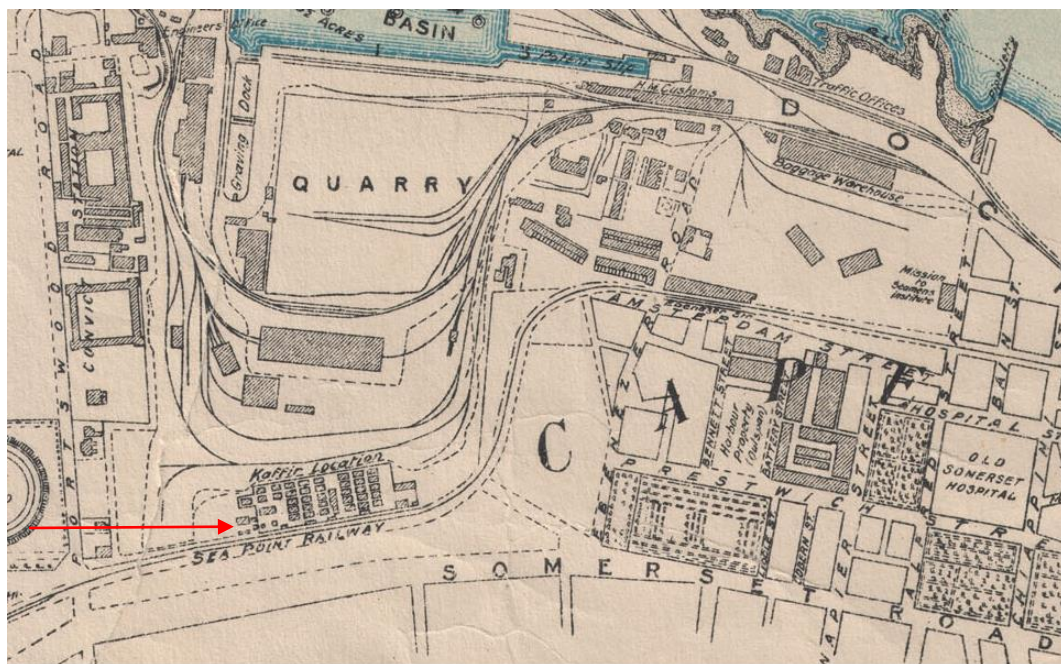


Figure 11: The position of the Docks Location (arrowed), Table Bay Harbour, 1911. The site is positioned north of the Sea Point railway line and the dock wall. Access was controlled through the dockyard gates. Barracks were arranged military style in rows. To leave the location, workers had to pass the Dock Road cottages situated to the right, causing residents to complain. (SAR, UCT)

⁴² Crush, ‘Scripting the compound,’ 307.

⁴³ Commission to enquire into the cubic amount of air-space in the compounds of the mines of the Witwatersrand, Government Printers, Pretoria, 1905.

⁴⁴ The South African Native Affairs Commission 1903–1905 (SANAC), Vol 2, Minutes of evidence, 102 para 1167.



Figure 12: View of the Cape Town docks with the Docks Location, left (KAB AG951). The Docks Location (arrowed) is shown as a series of barracks arranged in rows with little space between them. The hospital is situated to the right of the site. It was considered an advantage because it made it easier to attract workers to the location.

With the expansion of commerce and industry and the wartime demands of the Anglo-Boer/South Africa War, it was becoming very clear that ‘blacks were an indispensable part of Dock labour’.⁴⁵ By 1897, labour broker AR McKenzie housed a large contingent of black labour at a location at the docks. His contract workers were initially housed in tents while the location was being built. McKenzie thought his dock site was a good one. It achieved the multiple aims of any location: segregation, invisibility and control. It was, he wrote:

secluded from passengers and others visiting that part of the Docks, and being inside the dock gates, and being continually under direct supervision of the Police, which is a preventative of many evils otherwise would undoubtedly be practiced by the natives.⁴⁶

When the Cape Harbour Board took over the Dock Location in 1901, it comprised potential accommodation for 1 500 migrant workers. The location itself was located within a narrow piece of land near Somerset Road, between the Sea Point railway line, a high wall and the harbour quarry. It was, as McKenzie pointed out, close to the harbour yet largely hidden from view. The site itself comprised a medical facility in one corner and urinals and ablution facilities in another. The separate barracks were built of corrugated iron and closely packed together in a confined space. Despite this, when interviewed by the Natives Affairs Commission in 1903, Location

⁴⁵ Bickford-Smith, ‘Black labour at the docks,’ 88.

⁴⁶ TB 286KAB Letter, AR McKenzie to Mr Robb, Secretary, Table Bay Harbour Board, 5 April 1897.

Superintendent Neason Adams Lowe provided a decidedly upbeat description of the location. Adams Lowe said:

it consists of dormitories as we call them. They are built of iron and each native is allowed 240 cubic feet of air space. They are very roomy and are always kept in good order. There is a hospital attached to it and a very good water supply. The arrangements are in every respect very good. Everything is clean and tidy and the whole location is fitted with the electric light. The floors are of wood every dormitory is scrubbed once a week.⁴⁷

As we have seen, unlike the Kimberley compound system, the Docks Location was open, allowing workers to move in and out, although through a controlled gate system. Adams Lowe considered that the location was an inducement to labourers to work at the docks. However, even before the location was completed, it was unpopular with the authorities, whose Victorian sensibilities were offended by the presence of Africans in their midst. The police complained in 1901 about the behaviour of the workers ‘going in and out without clothes’ and ‘starting an open fire within 50 yards of an explosive magazine’. They also complained about the availability of alcohol, a familiar refrain, stating that they saw workers ‘every evening going into this location carrying bottles of liquor’.⁴⁸ The War Department also complained to the Table Bay Harbour Board about unspecified ‘nuisances’ and asked that the workers be moved to Ndabeni. All the complaints reflect the persistent tension at the heart of middle-class Cape Town’s attitudes towards African labour – a desire for their labour, but an objection to their presence.

Regulations imposed on the location residents were in keeping with constricted material circumstances, drawing attention to the stark difference between professional and managerial notions of space and the lived reality of the workers.⁴⁹ Whereas, previously, non-dockworkers could pay for a bed in the location, the regulations now proposed that access be given only to ‘natives’ employed by the Harbour Board and the railways. The board could refuse admission to anyone. Admission was granted only when the worker’s name was registered. There were to be no visitors, no alcohol, no women, no dogs, no cattle, no assegais and sticks, and no cooking was allowed other than in buildings allotted for such purposes.

The life of a dock worker inside the barracks was austere and hard. Despite the Spartan living environment or maybe because of the living conditions, the workers developed a strong sense of

⁴⁷ SAAC, Vol 2 Minutes of evidence, 102.

⁴⁸ CHB 268, Report, Office of Chief of Police, 20 March 1901.

⁴⁹ Andrew Merrifield, ‘Place and space: a Lefebvrian reconciliation,’ *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 18 (1993): 516–531.

social cohesion and identity, which assisted them in pay negotiations with the dock authorities. After a long discussion about pay – clearly an issue which interested him most – Dock Superintendent Adams Lowe explained the facilities available to a dock worker which unintentionally reveal their paucity. A dockworker got paid eight shillings a month for a small part of a dormitory: ‘He gets a share of a dormitory sufficient for him to lie down and he can sling his clothes up on an improvised shelf, he provides his own blanket, mattress etc.’ The contract workers entered the dockyard by train:

we have a system by which we entrain our boys twice a month. They get a special train from the dock gates, covered trucks being supplied by the railway department. These trains are run on the first and third weeks of the month.⁵⁰

The De Beers Company established a dynamite factory near Cape Town to manufacture explosives for the mining industry, replacing the stranglehold that Alfred Nobel held over the international explosives industry. In setting up the industry, the company employed similar mechanisms of labour procurement and accommodation for their contract or migrant workers. By 1899 they had begun to employ African labour from the Eastern Cape to set up the physical infrastructure necessary for explosives production. By July 1903 production lines were operative.⁵¹ The dynamite-manufacturing enterprise was set up under the conditions of an Operating Licence granted by the magistrate of Stellenbosch in 1902 to which the company remained bound. It restricted the number of Africans employed to 2 000 and required that the labour compound was ‘open’, unlike the Kimberley compounds. The motives were not necessarily altruistic but were intended to benefit local traders.⁵² Unlike the Cape Harbour Board, which initially used a labour agent for dock labour, assuming control later, the De Beers Explosive Works labour compound was a private location from the start, although it was not managed in terms of the Private Location Act of 1899.⁵³ The De Beers labour compound (now called the Zwelihle) is the only remaining large private labour compound in the Cape Town area and although unused, its presence as an assemblage of buildings allows the spatial historian an opportunity to study the relationship between physical space and labour management in the context of Cape Town’s labour history.

⁵⁰ Report of the South African Native Affairs Commission 1903–1905, Minutes of evidence, 109.

⁵¹ JS Coehlo, *AECI Limited Somerset West Factory: A short history of the De Beers/Cape Explosive Works 1898–1924*, unpublished report, Heartland Private Archives, Somerset West, 1972; Melanie Attwell, *Zwelihle (KDW) Hostel Site (AECI labour compound) Heartland (Pty) Ltd Portion Farm 795 Somerset West*, Socio-historical study, 2014.

⁵² South African Native Affairs Committee (SANAC), Minutes of evidence Vol 2, 271 para 3367.

⁵³ SANAC Minutes of evidence Vol 2, 276 para 3434. The Natives Labour Locations Act of 1899 was not applied as the company did not think it was necessary, having been granted labour permission in terms of their licensing agreement.

The mining industry, to which the De Beers factory had close ties, influenced the form, dimensions and the design of its compound. Three years after 1899, when site clearance began, the De Beers compound showed signs of a very rudimentary design. In 1902, it housed some 690 Africans, although the number would grow as industrial manufacturing expanded. African, coloured and white workers were segregated both spatially and in terms of a labour hierarchy. White workers were of the professional and skilled class, coloured workers semi-skilled and African contract workers made up the unskilled labour contingent. The compound consisted of three long, galvanised, corrugated iron huts of the mining standard, 10 foot by eight foot measurements, divided further by partitions six foot high (ie not reaching roof level). Each 'room' accommodated six men, who slept on latticed beds attached to the wall. At the start, some slept on the ground which was particularly unhealthy as the area was a seasonal wetland. The only ventilation at the time was in the eaves, that is, there were only fitted windows. While there was waterborne sewerage disposal for the white workers, the African contract workers were supplied with stercus pails. Water for domestic use was boiled.⁵⁴ The accommodation changed remarkably little until after 1938, when there were improvements, starting with a visitors' centre and a shop. What remained unchanged were the spatial arrangement of barriers, buffers and entrance controls.



Figure 13: View of a central yard in a migrant labour hostel in Kimberley c 1905. There are corrugated iron dormitories with doors and eaves ventilation similar to that described by the MoH in 1902. The use of a central space at De Beers would have been similar to the mine compounds at Kimberley, which were inevitably much larger and more heavily controlled. (Album 113 Ph 12203 SAL)

⁵⁴ MoH 27/204. Report of the Medical Officer of Health, 22 February 1902: Plague cases at De Beers KAB.

The centre of all communal activity took place within the central space which the barracks looked out over.⁵⁵ In 1903, a year after a visit by Dr JA Mitchell, Assistant MoH for the Cape Colony, to view the plague cases, the general manager of the De Beers Explosive Company, WH Quinan, described the labour barracks in the following way:

We have built a number of galvanized iron huts forming a rectangular enclosure and our natives are in this as a location.⁵⁶

Barracks and hostels were overcrowded, badly ventilated and characterised by a system of persistent lack of privacy and comfort. The compound itself was a self-contained, composite space surrounded by spatial buffers such as walls, fences and railway lines. The De Beers compound was surrounded by cordons of trees which acted as blast circles, thus increasing invisibility. All African migrant labour compounds were for male workers only, and at the Docks Location and De Beers the presence of women was expressly forbidden, as was the presence of alcohol.

Quinan denied that the assemblage was a compound because it was not ‘closed’, saying, ‘we are not allowed under the conditions of our licence to compound the men. We have a location’, although adding that, if he could, he would prefer to close the compound and restrict movement.⁵⁷ The design and the location showed that while technically ‘open’, the issue of control, movement and behaviour was a major focus. The area inside the compound was a contained world within a world, making it easy for the men to remain in the compound. There was an entrance manned by a security guard at a gate which closed at 9 pm each night, an administration building and a trading store. It functioned at various times as an office, the indunas’ rooms and a shop.

There was a night time (9 pm) curfew. Workers who missed the curfew were not admitted to the compound but spent the night in a holding cell. There was also a double mechanism of administrative control for the contract workers, with control both by management and through the use of traditional ties in their home towns. The compound manager undertook the day-to-day management of the compound and reported to the general manager. The headmen in the Eastern Cape acted both as suppliers of local labour and as an additional system of social control through tribal links, and there were indunas within the labour force as intermediaries between the men and management.

⁵⁵ I have distinguished between barracks as dormitories within a compound and a compound as an agglomeration of buildings and functions set within a contained space.

⁵⁶ SANAC, Minutes of evidence, 271.

⁵⁷ SANAC, Vol 2, Interview with WH Quinan, De Beers Explosive Works, 1 October 1903, 271 para 3355.

Whereas the focus is the labour compound, it is in fact part of a larger area, including a cemetery for the 67 victims of the Spanish Flu epidemic. The entire industrial site was surrounded by a cordon sanitaire required in terms of the licence agreement to manufacture explosives. Outside the compound were visitors' quarters which later became temporary quarters when women (with permission) visited their husbands.



Figure 14: Map of Cape Explosives Works factory, Somerset West, 1940. De Beers Explosives Works became Cape Explosives Works (Capex) in 1905. This map shows the compound identified as 'Lokasie' (arrowed). (<<https://adrian.frith.dev/historical-maps-of-ct/>>)

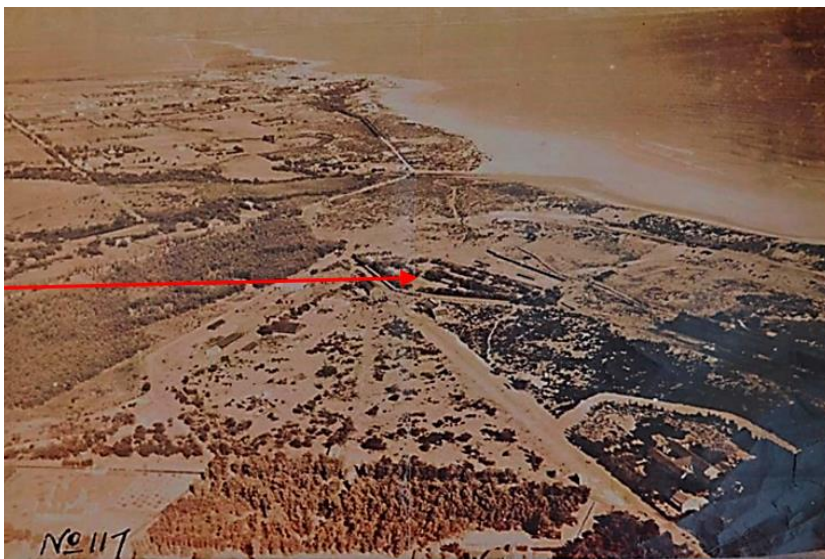


Figure 15: The labour compound at Cape Explosive Works, 1914. This photograph shows the labour compound in the industrial area of the company, surrounded by a buffer of trees, roads and a railway line. The compound (arrowed) is situated within the buffer. In 1914, it consisted of the same rectangular blocks of corrugated iron buildings placed around a central communal space. The False Bay coast is to the right of the photograph. (Attwell, *Zwelible hostel site*, AECI, Socio-historical study, 2014)

Emergency planning: Cape Government's response to Bubonic Plague and beginning of planned residential segregation at Ndabeni

The Colonial Health Department acted swiftly after the Bubonic Plague outbreak in Cape Town in 1901, setting up a plague hospital and a contact camp (for those who had come into contact with plague victims) at the Uitvlugt forest reserve outside the Cape Town Municipal area. It did so using the emergency powers granted to it in terms of section 15 of the Public Health Amendment Act of 1897. Subsequently, the African population living in Cape Town was moved by force to a location at Uitvlugt that was established in terms of a Government Notice of 11 March 1901. Subsequently, Ndabeni was constituted as a Native Reserve Location in terms of the Native Reserve Location Act 40 of 1901, which was amended in 1904. The 1904 Act overrode the temporary nature of the emergency powers once the threat of the plague had passed; it made it illegal for Africans in Cape Town to live anywhere other than at Ndabeni. There were exemptions, though, including servants living on 'their master's property' and Africans who were the legal owners of property in Cape Town and registered voters. From 1904, Africans in Cape Town were required by law to live at Ndabeni and to be subjected to the Native Reserve Location Regulations.

The Native Reserve Location Act marked the beginning of legislated racial segregation in Cape Town.⁵⁸ From 1902 onwards, African residence and administration would be subject to separate laws and policies. The responsibility for housing African residents of Cape Town lay with the Colonial Government until the promulgation of the Natives (Urban Areas) Act of 1923.

Ndabeni has been described as Cape Town's 'first planned township'.⁵⁹ The statement raises important questions about what constitutes a 'planned township' and how the conditions under which Ndabeni was planned affected its layout form and the comfort or the lack of comfort of its residents. While looking something like a military camp, Ndabeni contained no services, no running water, no sewerage disposal and no collection of detritus. The Colonial Government neglected it for more than two decades. It was designated first as a temporary measure and constructed in a hurry, providing very rudimentary accommodation. Only once it was built and the people had moved there was the decision made by the Colonial Government to make it permanent.

The onset of Bubonic Plague was the decisive factor in forcing the government to take hurried action, leading to a location with accommodation far inferior to that contemplated by the Stanford

⁵⁸ Report to the Commission on Restitution of Land Rights: Ndabeni case WC 6/3/A/13/1/42 (March 1997), 1.

⁵⁹ Bickford-Smith et al, *Cape Town in the twentieth century*, 45.

Commission, although it raises the question whether the built reality of a more carefully planned location might still have fallen short for other reasons, such as financing. But, as Saunders has pointed out, had there been no plague there would probably still have been a location.⁶⁰ The issue was whether it would have been planned, built and managed the way it was if there had been no plague. There is no doubt that the accommodation was rudimentary and the services non-existent, making it more of a camp than a location. The plan that emerged for Ndabeni suggests that a multiplicity of circumstances were involved in its formation: the desire of the public for a segregated location for Africans, the idea of isolation borrowed from the contact camp principle, the fear of racial contagion or the 'sanitation syndrome', the ideas of control and the perimeter barriers borrowed from the labour compounds. The barrier conditions that applied to a contained type of camp also applied to Ndabeni: high, unclimbable fences and the surrounding empty space constituting a cordon sanitaire. It all contributed to the segregated planning and the racial stigma attached to segregation, for, as Bickford Smith et al have remarked, Ndabeni was tainted from the outset with the stigma of being a plague contact camp.⁶¹ The formation of Ndabeni also carried a heavy imprint of hurried construction, similar to the lines of the contact camp or a military camp with barrack-style accommodation. The poor-quality materials and construction of the huts compromised living conditions almost immediately: Ndabeni became a dust bowl in the summer and waterlogged in the winter. With an absence of any drainage mechanisms, the huts started to settle into the sand plinths and sand drifted into the streets.

The layout of Ndabeni was divided up into sections and blocks. The blocks contained houses and there were spaces for churches and public offices. There were also tents for new arrivals. It was further divided according to married and single (contract labour) quarters. There were the lean-to huts, a better class of hut, specimen cottages which were highly sought after, blocks of buildings of six units per block and the barracks. Houses were built five feet apart, although over time the spaces were filled up for storage. The structures provided by the Colonial Government at Ndabeni consisted of five barrack-like dormitories and 615 corrugated iron lean-tos which could house eight people. All the houses were numbered and, upon admission, each worker family would be allocated a house number. Two families might share a single hut, which was divided into two with a wall-height partition. The Type 'A' lean-to huts were constructed of wood and corrugated iron and were divided into two, although there was no internal door.

⁶⁰ Saunders, 'The creation of Ndabeni,' 173.

⁶¹ Bickford-Smith et al, *Cape Town in the twentieth century*, 45.

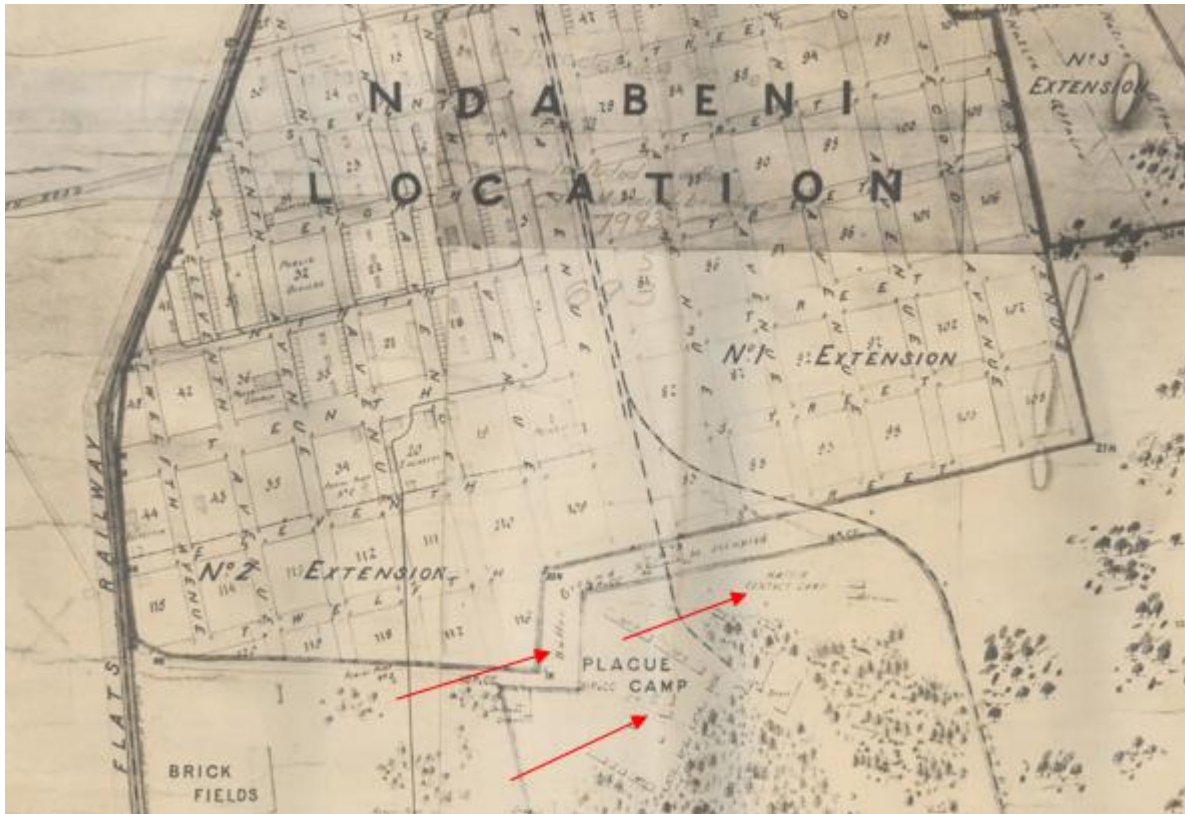


Figure 16: Extract from the Registration plan, Ndabeni Native reserve location, plague and contact camp, June 1903–September 1904'. The Ndabeni Location included the contact camp and plague hospital (arrowed), situated near to each other. The plague camp (arrowed) is at the rail entrance to Ndabeni and consists of a series of numbered corrugated iron buildings situated around an open space. Staff quarters are situated away from the camp (also similar to Somerset West). The buffer zone (arrowed) is clearly marked and identified as 'buffer ground not to be occupied'. Housing is starting to fill the grid blocks, and places are marked for churches and public offices. A railway line runs through the middle. (Charles Pritchard, Surveyor. KAB, Copy City of Cape Town)

The houses were built directly onto sand plinths, some with railway sleepers for floors. The Type 'B' or better type of hut was larger than the 'A' Type and portioned into rooms. During the rainy seasons, the plinths subsided. The unlined corrugated iron buildings were baking hot in summer and leaked in winter. Residents attempted to relieve the extremes by hanging sacking on the corrugated iron walls.⁶² Finally, there were 42 houses of wood and iron lined with brick. They were the better type of accommodation, although there were pitifully few of them.

⁶² 3/CT/N171/5 Report on Conditions at Ndabeni, City Health Department to the Native Affairs Committee, 25 July 1929; 3/CT N53/5; Report of the MoH General Conditions N57/5.



Figure 17: Early photograph of Type 'A' buildings at Ndabeni and some of the tents that first greeted new arrivals in 1901. Ndabeni here looks like a military camp. (Forgotten Cape Town, nd, 98)

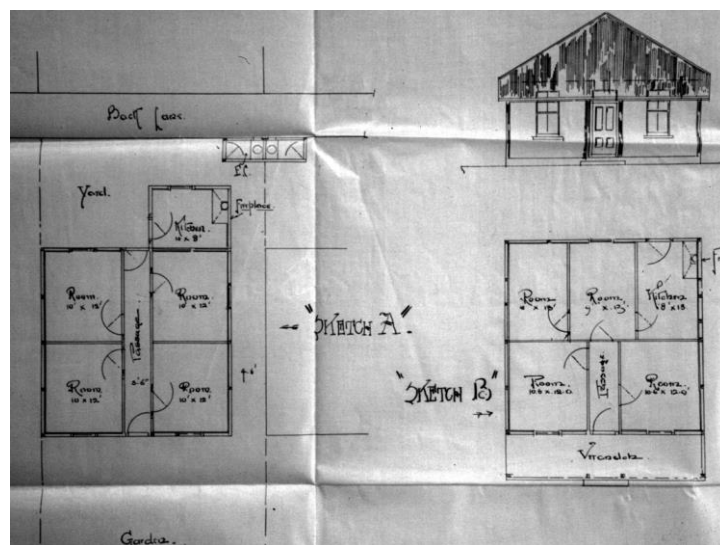


Figure 18: A 1902 plan for the 'better-class' house at Ndabeni. It was constructed of corrugated iron and lined with brick. It consisted of four rooms, a kitchen, a fireplace, a veranda and a yard. There were 24 of them. (1902-09-30 PWD 2-1-27)

The dormitories eventually comprised 12 rectangular huts similar to those at the Docks Location. They had roof ventilators through which smoke could escape. Yet the walls were so lined with soot as to resemble a 'smoking chamber'. All dormitory huts and the roofs were unlined. The huts were divided by transverse partitions into five rooms. Kitchens and latrines were placed between two rows of dormitory huts. There were no baths. All these buildings, apart from the 24 'better-class' of houses, were completely inadequate. At no time were gutters and downpipes provided and standing water was a perennial winter problem.

There were churches – a Presbyterian church, an African Methodist Episcopal church and a Salvation Army depot. There were also civic offices and the ubiquitous police station. Many residents made an effort to improve their surroundings. The Acting Secretary for Native Affairs reported:

a large percentage of the inhabitants have shown decided improvement in their homes, their persons and general methods. Their houses in many cases are well kept, nicely furnished, have proper bedsteads, and are run very much on European lines.⁶³

However, the residents and the location itself were deeply neglected. Some 254 people died at Ndabeni during the Spanish Flu epidemic.⁶⁴ Residents did not accept the treatment meted out to them by the Colonial Government. On hearing of a plan to move them yet again, a deputation of Ndabeni residents went to the Minister of Native Affairs in 1919 to object to the ‘incessant shiftings’ of where they would live and their status as permanent residents of Cape Town. They stated:

It would appear that the people were wanted, that only their hands were needed at work, and that if some mysterious arrangement could be devised whereby only their hands could be daily brought to town for purposes of labour, and their persons and faces not seen at all, that would perhaps suit their white masters better.⁶⁵

The plan of Ndabeni looked more like a plan for a contact or military camp and less like a township planned for the good of its residents. It was surrounded by barriers – a railway line, a high fence, a buffer strip and a vast cordon sanitaire at the Uitvlugt Forest Reserve. The location did not look anything like a kind of model African village envisaged in the Stanford Commission’s submissions. Yet, despite this, many elderly residents testified in the Ndabeni Land Rights Application to a sense of community that had been built up slowly and painfully over the years and their hopes it could be somehow be rebuilt.⁶⁶



Figure 19: New residents waiting to be allocated spaces at Ndabeni. Upon arrival, residents would be registered and issued with a token and allocated a numbered house. These in the photograph are the Type A huts, which were smaller than the Type B show in the image below. (South African National Library)

⁶³ Report to the Commission on the Restitution of Land Rights: Ndabeni case WC 6/3/A/13/1/42 (March 1997): 3, quoting *Cape Times*, 20 June 1919.

⁶⁴ Report Restitution of Land Rights 1997, 9.

⁶⁵ Report Restitution of Land Rights 1997, 9, quoting *Cape Times*, 9 November 1919.

⁶⁶ Report Restitution of Land Rights 1997, 31.



Figure 20: The Ndabeni Main Street, showing Type B buts laid out with military precision, five feet apart. The 'Rand buts', right, are fitted with ventilation ducts along the apex of the roofs. Each but had a window at one end and a door at the other. A dormitory is visible in the distance to the left. (SA National Library)

Living conditions and plans for new housing in Cape Town

At the same time as Ndabeni was established, the Cape Town Municipality appointed its first full-time MoH, Dr A Jasper Anderson.⁶⁷ He was MoH in Blackpool, England, where he remained for 11 years before his Cape Town appointment. Throughout his time as MoH, Anderson's approach to public health was influenced by British health policy and legislation. He retained strong ties with the British Medical Association, was president of its Cape Branch in 1909 and was a member of the Sanitary Institute of London. Dr Anderson's battles were not only with epidemics but with the city's vulnerability to infection as a port city. Equally, he was faced with public apathy towards poor housing conditions and a reluctance on the part of private developers to ameliorate the housing shortage. He lobbied for improved public sanitation and better housing, using the regulations of the Public Health Amendment Act of 189 to do so. He continued throughout his tenure with inspections and, where necessary, the condemnation of buildings as 'unfit for human habitation'. But progress was slow, the intervention of a magistrate was necessary, and there was resistance on the part of the landlords. Besides these obstacles, there was always the problem of when people, once displaced, were to live.

The Report of the Tuberculosis Commission in 1914 highlighted once again the dire living conditions that many working-class people were faced with. It singled out Cape Town because it had the widest distribution of tuberculosis.⁶⁸ It was all the more powerful for being written in the

⁶⁷ Dr Jasper Anderson (1858–1924), MoH 1901–1923. Appendix II, 2–4.

⁶⁸ UG 34–1914. Report of the Tuberculosis Commission, Cape Times Ltd, Government Printers.

dispassionate language of medical science. It was unequivocal about its findings about the link between poor housing and poor health, invoking once again the fears of contagion to the broader population. It stated '[t]here is no doubt that overcrowding in insanitary dwellings plays a leading part in the spread of the disease'.⁶⁹ Dwellings themselves, both within the city and in the urban locations, drew the most scathing criticism: 'With few exceptions they are a disgrace.'⁷⁰

The CTCC could report some progress – an infectious diseases hospital, a lady health inspector and, in 1909, a privately run free dispensary. But there was little progress in either new housing or assistance to the urban poor. As Christiane Elias points out, not a single house was built by the CTCC between 1902 and 1916.⁷¹ Nevertheless, the Mayor of Cape Town in 1915, the architect John Parker, took an interest in housing and the new concept of town planning. He undertook to investigate the latter as a means of achieving some urban order and as a response to the city's critics about the lack of housing progress. In 1916, the City of Cape Town submitted a report on town planning, proposing that the council be allowed to frame planning regulations in terms of the Cape Municipal Ordinance of 1912. The council based its request for authorisation on the British Housing Town Planning Etc Act of 1909, which proposed local authority planning powers. The authorisations the CTCC wanted suggested that they had a limited idea of what constituted town planning. Most ideas were defined by health requirements, inspired by the new Garden City, ideas linking health to density and street widths. There was no detailed use zoning other than the limitation of noxious trades.⁷² Moreover, the Provincial Administration delayed a response and it was only in September 1927 that the Townships Ordinance was promulgated.⁷³

In 1917 the CTCC called for a Housing Survey, which was conducted by Dr Anderson. The criteria he used – that is, focusing as he did on the worst and most crowded-looking houses – was hardly scientific and ultimately must have affected the findings. In all, his department viewed 1 001 houses which he segregated racially into 'coloured' and 'European'. No Africans were mentioned in the study, although not all Africans were living at Ndabeni at the time. A number of inferences can be drawn from the survey: first, that overcrowding (more than two adults per room) was greatest among the 'coloured' population living in the smaller houses of two to three rooms. Secondly,

⁶⁹ UG 34–1914, 17.

⁷⁰ UG 34–1914, 128.

⁷¹ Christiane Elias, 'A comparative analysis of government housing policy and Cape Town City Council housing policy, 1890–1935,' MA thesis, Stellenbosch University, 1980, 30.

⁷² Mayor's Minutes, year ending 1916, 16–17.

⁷³ Township Ordinance 13 of 1927 'To regulate the establishment of Townships and to provide for the approval of the Town Planning Scheme'.

there were wealthy coloured people living in large houses. Thirdly, the greatest number of overcrowding existed in the smallest, one-roomed houses.⁷⁴

The Cape Town public and the local press continued to agitate about the slum conditions of Cape Town. Wells Square in District Six excited much public interest in particular, partly because it was a congested area and partly because the residents were clearly mixed. In 1919, the Robinson Commission on Housing Accommodation drew attention to the mixed races of the inhabitants of Wells Square and objected to the nature of the ‘densely packed’ buildings and their state of disrepair. These concerns summarised the persistent white anxieties of places in Cape Town identified as slums. The white middle class conflated physical decay with moral decay. Areas such as Wells Square were racially mixed, difficult to police, some buildings were congested and hidden from view and there was a general state of disrepair.⁷⁵

Following public recognition that the housing crisis had become acute, housing activists in Cape Town formed a public housing interest group called the Citizen Housing Council to agitate for and assist in housing reform for Cape Town’s poorer citizens.⁷⁶ Following the housing survey of 1917, the CTCC decided to make a start with a housing project for their own workers – a model Garden Village based on the Garden City principles of Ebenezer Howard and Raymond Unwin, and an approach to housing which had been championed by professional architects, including the City Engineer, Lloyd Davies. To this end, the CTCC formed a Housing and Estates Committee in 1917, which included Dr Abdullah Abdurahman, who retained an interest in health and housing for most of his working life.⁷⁷ The committee approached the ratepayers to borrow a sum of £50 000 pounds, which they were granted in 1918. This funding formed the basis for the Maitland Garden Village Scheme.⁷⁸

In such close living quarters, and close to the docks as a potential source of infection, it was inevitable that when the Spanish Flu epidemic broke out in Cape Town in October 1918, it would hit the Docks Location particularly hard. The docks were excluded from any relief work provided

⁷⁴ City Housing Survey of 1917, showing occupancy and house sizes (per room): Report of the Medical Officer of Health 1917, xiii; Christiane Elias, ‘A comparative analysis,’ 31.

⁷⁵ UG 4–1920 Report of the Housing Committee ‘To Enquire into Matters Concerning Housing Accommodation in the Urban Areas and the Amendment of the Unhealthy Areas Bill,’ 11. This Committee Report preceded the Housing Act of 1920, which is discussed in chapter 2.

⁷⁶ The Citizens Housing League was later led by housing reformers such as Canon (later Bishop) Sidney Lavis and Ms Zerilda Steyn.

⁷⁷ Dr Abdullah Abdurahman served as a Cape Town City Councillor for most of his working life. He was a founder member of the African People’s Organisation (APO) and worked hard for the improvement of living conditions for the poor in Cape Town, particularly in District Six, which was his constituency.

⁷⁸ See chapter 2.

by the CTCC, as was Ndabeni, because they both fell outside the municipal boundaries. Of the 1 400 workers in the Docks Location, 74 died by October 1918 before harbour officials appealed to the military authorities for assistance. Those living in the barracks were moved to tents at Green Point while the location was disinfected. Another 22 more workers died at the tent hospital.⁷⁹ A military doctor who visited the location was horrified by the living conditions he saw. He would ‘not keep his dogs in such a place and it deserved a pestilence’.⁸⁰ As the Bubonic Plague had done in 1901, so too the Spanish Flu epidemic in October 1918 served to focus attention on Cape Town’s housing for the labouring classes. For the middle classes, fears of contagion emanating from the slums of Cape Town became a public issue once again. After a site visit to a poor area, the *Cape Argus* wrote in sensational terms, combining the pathos of extreme suffering and the horror of the housing they found. The editorial described a sick family living in a single room:

In a room in some tenement buildings, sick people were lying about anywhere. The beds were full, and others lay on the floor – under the table for preference. They had no bed-clothes, so they lay in their clothes and kept their hats on for warmth’s sake.⁸¹

In reacting to the public demands for more and better housing for the poor, CTCC officials and architects in private practice began to explore Garden City designs as presenting an attractive alternative to the unhealthy and crowded areas of Cape Town. Garden City planning principles placed an emphasis on low-density open spaces, good ventilation and healthier living conditions, all an antithesis to what was worrying officials at the time. The first CTCC Garden Village at Maitland got underway with the funds granted by the registered voters of Cape Town. In 1918, the council was given permission by the Provincial Administration to proceed with the project. That Maitland Garden Village was a reaction to the congestion of Cape Town slums can be seen in its planning – a garden for everyone, a large open square for children’s play and a road system that excluded any passing traffic.

Conclusions

The establishment of Ndabeni set up racially segregatory principles for urban residence for Africans, making its residents ‘outcasts from the town’.⁸² The Native Location Act of 1905 made the notion of African exclusion from an urban district explicit by proclaiming that it ‘shall not be

⁷⁹ Howard Phillips, “‘Black October’: The impact of the Spanish Influenza epidemic of 1918 on South Africa,” PhD thesis, University of Cape Town, 1984, 42.

⁸⁰ Howard Phillips, ‘Black October: Cape Town and the Spanish Flu epidemic,’ *Studies in the History of Cape Town* 1 (Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town, 1984), 91.

⁸¹ Editorial, *Cape Argus*, 19 October 1918.

⁸² Bickford-Smith et al, *Cape Town in the twentieth century*, 44.

lawful for any Native to reside' less than five miles away from the urban district.⁸³ The principle of exclusion was not fully applied because many African residents either chose to live in informal settlements or returned to central Cape Town. The conditions highlighted by the sanitation, housing and mortality investigations during both the Bubonic Plague in 1901 and the Spanish Flu epidemic in 1918 left a deep impression on public officials and the public alike. By the time the First World War ended and peace was declared in 1919, the national government began to explore national administrative mechanisms for health and public sanitation and the provision of housing. The Health Act of 1919 made provision for sanitation and housing by providing advice and assistance to local authorities.⁸⁴ The Department of Public Works set up a commission to review amendments to an Unhealthy Areas Bill, similar to the 1890 British Housing for the Working Classes Act, which addressed the issue of unfit housing for the working classes. While the Bill was dropped, the first part of the investigation formed the basis of the Housing Act of 1920, namely,

to consider whether it is advisable for the Government to give financial or other assistance to local authorities and others in providing housing accommodation in urban areas for persons of limited means including coloured persons and natives.⁸⁵

For the first time, the Act introduced mechanisms for state funding for local authority housing, moving the issue of housing from the private to the public sphere.⁸⁶ How this was achieved, what impact borrowed planning ideas had on the solutions proposed and what impact it had on the working classes of Cape Town are explored more fully in the following chapters.

⁸³ Native Reserves Locations Act 8 of 1905.

⁸⁴ Public Health Act 36 of 1919, Chapter VIII, Sanitation and Housing. The planning provisions could not be applied as the authority for planning matters rested with provincial rather than national departments.

⁸⁵ UG 4–1920. Report of the Housing Committee appointed by the Minister of Public Works to inquire into matters concerning housing accommodation in Urban Areas and the Amendment of the Unhealthy Areas Bill.

⁸⁶ Alan Mabin, 'A century of South African Housing Acts 1920–2020,' *Urban Forum* 31, no 4 (September 2020), 453–472.

Chapter 2

Garden City planning in Cape Town: from Maitland Garden Village to Langa, 1919–1930

Garden Cities: international influences

The production of residential space was the result of both the historical context in which the development took place and the transfer of place-making ideas which characterised its generative process. This chapter explores the generative nature of the Garden City planning principles on the early residential design of Maitland Garden Village in 1917 and Langa in 1926. Reference is also made to Pinelands, which, despite being outside the municipal area and managed by a private trust, planners considered to be the ‘gold standard’ of Garden City planning in Cape Town. It was a model, like Letchworth in Britain, to which the planners could aspire if all the planning conditions were in their favour.¹ The resilience of Garden City planning principles allowed for infinite adaptability, multiple interpretations and the capacity to introduce modifications. It leads to the questions: What was the dominant intention of the generative nature of each space and what were the mechanisms through which it was achieved? Maitland Garden Village, Pinelands Garden City and Langa were widely differing examples of the production of residential space.

Cape Town in 1920

By the end of the First World War in 1918, Cape Town was a growing and modernising city.² Vehicles were beginning to appear on the streets and the war boosted manufacturing and industry. The size of Cape Town was expanded by the inclusion of the smaller municipalities of Woodstock, Mowbray, Sea Point, Rondebosch, Claremont and Muizenberg in 1913, followed by Wynberg Municipality in 1927. Each municipality required links to municipal services and infrastructure as they merged into one local authority. The Port of Cape Town was busy, the war having increased trade and transnational links between Britain and South Africa. The impact of the war on Cape Town has been explored in depth by Sarah-Jane Walton. She found that, in addition to the war, the Spanish Flu epidemic of 1918 introduced a fundamental crisis of confidence in the city.³ The natural population increase, an existing housing shortage for the working classes and migration,

¹ The Cape Town Joint Town Planning Scheme considered it a model to which all local and regional planning should aspire. See chapter 4.

² Vivian Bickford Smith, Elizabeth van Heyningen and Nigel Worden, *Cape Town in the twentieth century* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1999), 68. ‘Modernising’ refers to adaptations for a modern lifestyle, bringing urban initiatives up to date to meet the demands of changing times. Modernism was a philosophy that abandoned traditional form and techniques to meet the new requirements of a machine age.

³ Sarah-Jane Walton, ‘Cape Town at war: The city, lived experiences and loyalties 1914–1919,’ PhD thesis, Department of Historical Studies, University of Cape Town, 2020, 4.

together with the physical decay of the inner city, contributed to a housing and sanitation crisis for public officials to resolve. It was during the Spanish Flu epidemic that a light was glaringly shone on these conditions. At the same time, the war was a reminder of cultural and political links contributing, in least in part, to a sense of ‘Britishness’.⁴ Strong cultural links facilitated the strengthening of professional links as local professionals and officials drew on the British intellectual traditions in science, public sanitation and urban design. They did so in a search for solutions to the problems facing the growing city. As a result, links were forged through knowledge and policy transfers.

During the crisis of flu epidemic, existing urban morphologies continued to change as white residents left the crowded inner-city areas for greener pastures in the suburbs. The dense inner-city residential areas continued to be centres of poverty for all races as these areas were segregated less by race than by class, although a majority of the poorer residents were black. Living conditions were made worse by overcrowding and poor maintenance, as many landlords considered such properties as being purely for rent-wracking purposes.

The chaos and inefficiency of the old city was anathema to modernist planners. To them, Modernism was an appropriate and timely response to the scale and urgency of the problems presented by uncontrolled urban growth. Modernist planning solutions presented compelling new arguments to meet the challenges of the new machine age. For modernists, the best way forward was to reorganise urban spaces, replan at a large scale and rebuild blighted areas. There were new materials too, and new technological advances that could contribute toward a drive for efficiency and urban order.⁵ Added to the drive for efficiency was the ‘seductive glamour of soaring skyscrapers, electric light, fast cars, smooth surfaces and straight lines’, which helped define aspirational urban modernity.⁶ Modernity brought new demands on the old city fabric: the emergence of the automobile as a form of transport resulted in more cars on the roads, followed by demands for speedier and more efficient road systems. Private transport had the effect of wealthier private property owners moving further from the city towards the greener areas of the South Peninsula and the coast. Very little new housing for the working classes followed the war. As a result, the demand for housing grew, particularly for the poor and working classes, but so did building costs and the costs of labour. The flu epidemic had raised the spectre of what could happen to an unhealthy port city and shone a spotlight on the often-desperate housing and living

⁴ Walton, ‘Cape Town at war,’ (2020) 6.

⁵ Alan Mabin. ‘The varied legacies of modernism in urban planning’, G Bridge and S Watson (eds), *A companion to the City* (Oxford: John Wiley and Sons, 2002), 556.

⁶ Shahid Vawda and E Denison, ‘Prologue: Locating the Modern,’ *The Museum Journal*, 65 no 3 (2022), 480.

conditions more generally of the urban poor but particularly of coloured and African residents. Africans living in the city centre, whether newcomers or those who had returned unchecked from Ndabeni, became a contentious issue for members of the middle classes again. The need to remedy the triple demands of modernisation, urban order and urbanisation had never been more acute. As a result, after the war, urban managers looked to the ideas circulating within the British Empire for guidance.

Cape Town, by international standards, was a small city. The census of 1921 revealed a combined population of just 182 802 people (see Table 1). This was most certainly an underestimation as it excluded the black population living at Ndabeni and the Cape Town docks, which were both outside the municipal area. It also did not include a growing population living beyond the fringes of the municipal areas in informal housing on private land. Changes in the racial demographics of the city were accelerating: racial integration remained a characteristic of the inner-city areas, populated as they were by poor whites, European immigrants and black residents. As the city expanded outwards, housing growth for coloured residents occurred on the ‘cheap land’ situated at increasing distances southeast from the city, where such housing could most readily expand over the Cape Flats. However, the Cape Flats suffered from severe environmental constraints which adversely affected future housing. It had (and still has) a high seasonal water table, which increased the risks of standing water and damp, and the area was bleak, sandy and exposed to wind.

A population census of areas of the city and environs in 1921 shows just how racially mixed some of Cape Town’s older suburbs were in 1921. However, the racial composition of settlement in Cape Town was a complex one. While there may have been racial mixing, it was only partial because Africans remained set apart and confined to Ndabeni, which was still under the control of national government. The records reveal the extent of partial integration in Cape Town at the time, for example, when about 55% of Rondebosch residents and 53% of Claremont residents were listed as ‘coloured’. The east central city (District Six) had coloured, African, Asian (Indian) and white residents, although the largest percentage were coloured.

Ward	Total	White	African	Asian	Coloured
Harbour	9 113	5 038	1 049	80	2 946
West Central	5 279	1 755	165	90	3 269
Kloof	15 116	9 264	284	134	5 434
Park	11 393	9 176	183	43	1 991
East Central	20 427	5 892	544	299	13 692
Castle	14 304	4 076	325	459	9 444
Woodstock	16 354	11 279	89	185	4 801
Salt River	17 253	11 530	121	175	5 427
Harbour & shipping	1 225	881	1	199	144

<i>(Total inner city)</i>	<i>(110 464)</i>	<i>(58 891)</i>	<i>(2 761)</i>	<i>(1 664)</i>	<i>(47 148)</i>
Sea Point	13 512	11 159	271	23	2 059
Mowbray	12 890	9 269	179	118	3 324
Maitland	8 025	3 750	167	81	4 027
Rondebosch	14 852	6 334	481	89	7 948
Claremont	14 313	6 627	131	110	7 445
Kalk Bay	8 746	4 953	285	57	3 451
Total	182 802	100 983	4 275	2 142	75 402

Table 1: Showing the population of the City of Cape Town and the demographic mix in each ward, according to the census of 3 May 1921. These were the racial categories used in the official census and replicated the MoH's Report. About 60% of the population lived in Cape Town's inner-city wards (see totals in brackets). (Report, Medical Officer of Health, 1921)

The numbers also suggest densities of population, with the highest in the inner city being in the District Six, Salt River, Woodstock and Castle areas. Ndabeni, which remained the only 'Native Location', was excluded from the survey.

Property ownership in Cape Town was historically open to all and linked to the right to vote. The Cape qualified franchise was entrenched by the South Africa Act of 1909. The Cape Municipal Ordinance which followed in 1912 laid out the qualifications for the non-racial franchise, which had been a traditional feature of the political life of Cape Town.⁷ There was a small but significant base of coloured politicians. Political representation in Cape Town according to both national and local rights was male, non-racial and based on a propertied franchise. Black ratepayers were well represented in local political life, with a small but influential group of local councillors. Since 1905 when he was elected, Dr Abdullah Abdurahman, the Cape Muslim leader, a medical doctor and leading member of the African Political Organisation (APO), played a leading role in local politics.⁸ He was particularly active in the areas of health, public sanitation and housing. The non-racial municipal franchise lasted until 1 October 1971. After that, only voters who were on the national voters' roll could vote in municipal elections. Those who voted for 'coloured' management committees in racially segregated coloured areas were excluded. The right of 'qualified' Africans to vote in government and local elections was removed in 1936, followed by the loss of the right to own urban property in 1937.⁹

The situation with regard to the settlement of African residents was complex and sometimes contradictory. African property owners were discriminated against from the start, although in the 1920s Africans still retained the right to property ownership and the right to vote as a result of the

⁷ Cape Municipal Ordinance 10 of 1912 s 34(1). The municipal voter needed to own property with a rateable value of £100 or rent a property with a rateable value of £200 pounds. White women acquired the national franchise in 1930.

⁸ Dr Abdullah Abdurahman (1872–1940) won a seat on the municipal council in 1905 which he retained until his death in 1940.

⁹ The Representation of Natives Act 12 of 1936; the Natives laws Amendment Act 46 of 1937.

Cape's non-racial franchise. African residents and Cape Town migrant workers were confined to Ndabeni in terms of the Native Reserve Location Act 40 of 1902. This did not affect their rights to property, however, which resulted in the anomalous situation where African property owners could rent out their properties but not live in them. The laws were part of a series of complex and ongoing series of oppressive national government amendments and new laws enacted after the Natives (Urban Areas) Act 21 of 1923 to regulate against the rights of African settlement in urban areas. The Act placed responsibility for housing and migrant labour accommodation on the local authority.

Influence of Garden City planning on Cape Town housing

Garden City planning ideas were the most influential to emerge from the transnational professional networks. They were absorbed into local planning initiatives in Cape Town in the 1920s and were modified in accordance with local and national circumstances. Precisely how these circumstances differed within South Africa's perceived racial categorisations can be seen by comparing the results at Maitland Garden Village, Pinelands and Langa.

In 1902, in *Garden Cities of tomorrow*, Ebenezer Howard posed the questions: What if we were to provide the best of city life with the best of country life? What would it look like?¹⁰ He summarised his thoughts in an influential diagram (see below) of 'three magnets'. His third magnet, the town-country, would combine the best of the city and the best of the country. He called this concept the Garden City and aimed at combining healthy elements of the countryside with urban employment opportunities. In Howard's ideal, a Garden City would not exceed a population of 30 000 people.¹¹

¹⁰ Ebenezer Howard, Frederic Osborn and Lewis Mumford, *Garden Cities of Tomorrow* (London: Faber, 1946).

¹¹ See Appendix I: Timeline of relevant events and landmark legislation.

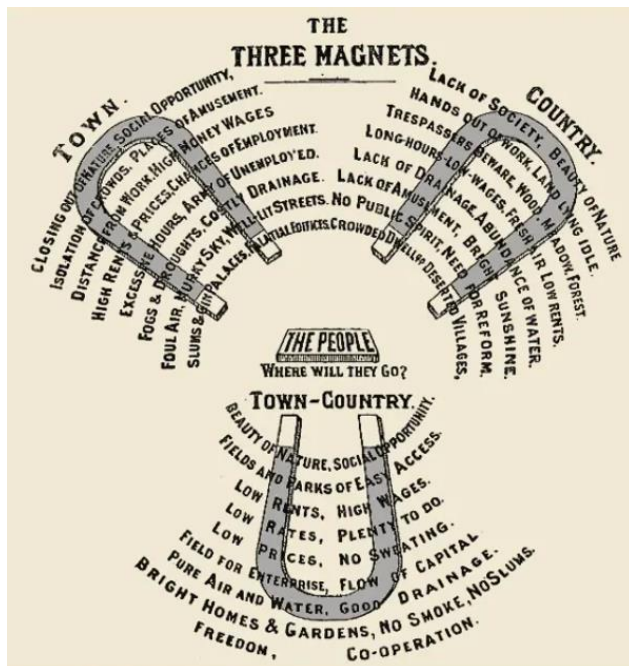


Figure 21: Ebenezer Howard's 'three magnets' diagram from *Garden Cities of tomorrow*, in which he explores the advantages and disadvantages of living in the city and the advantages and disadvantages of living in the country. The town–country magnet should combine low land prices and space for housing, unpolluted air and healthier environments. (Peter Hall. *Cities of tomorrow*, 92)

Architects Barry Parker and Raymond Unwin put many of Howard's ideas into practice in the master plan for Letchworth Garden City. Unwin was, in particular, a strong advocate of planning towards lower residential densities to improve health and access to light and air.¹² Unwin set limits to housing density at 12 residential units per acre – a standard that was subsequently followed in Cape Town. He proposed that Garden Cities be linked by transportation networks and contained within a green belt. The combination of Howard's and Unwin's ideals resulted in 'a brilliant meshing of different ideas' of green belts and low-density cottage housing.¹³ Howard's concept of a social city with communal and shared dividends was a radical one in a property system based on private ownership and consequently it never gained worldwide traction. However, the trend throughout the world was that the Garden City followed the physical form that Howard presented but not his social experiments.

Howard's ideas proved immediately popular in Britain and later throughout the Empire. Within a year after the first publication of *Garden Cities of tomorrow* in 1902, the Garden City Association was formed to put Howard's ideas into practice at Letchworth in Hertfordshire, England. The architects Barry Parker and Raymond Unwin prepared the master plan and Unwin set clear building standards for the housing.

¹² Mervyn Miller, 'Commemorating and celebrating Raymond Unwin (1863–1940),' *Planning Perspectives* 30, no 1 (2015): 129–140. See also Raymond Unwin, *Nothing gained by overcrowding*, pamphlet, Westminster: PS King & Son, 1912.

¹³ Eleanor Smith Morris, *British town planning and urban design* (Harlow, Essex, England: Longman, 1997), 49.



Figure 22: Letchworth Garden City, England. Particular attention was paid to the layout of Letchworth, with roads and housing radiating from the central space, which contained the civic and recreational spaces. Attention was paid to greening and the provision of a green belt. There are strong similarities between the layouts of Letchworth Garden City and Pinelands. (<<https://heritagecalling.com/2016/02/18/a-brief-introduction-to-garden-cities>>)

The settlement pattern and housing design drew not only on Howard's principles of low-density housing within green spaces, but also on British architectural notions of the picturesque and the vernacular.

Largely ignoring Howard's ideas about socialist aspects of Garden City planning, the physical forms of the Garden City (or Garden Village) proved popular with planners worldwide. Its popularity was both a shared reaction to slum conditions and a promise of some concrete planning solutions. Garden Cities, or interpretations of Garden Cities, came into being throughout the world – in countries, including, but beyond South Africa: as disparate as New Zealand, Japan, Zambia and Palestine – all created in vastly different institutional, cultural and economic circumstances and with very different results. In the colonial context, cities separated by green belts proved particularly attractive because this combined racial segregation with the notion of creating healthy settlements.¹⁴ Garden City principles also dovetailed neatly with a nascent concept of town planning contained in the British Town Planning Etc Act of 1909.¹⁵ The legislation 'set the wheels of town and country planning legislation in motion' and an incipient methodological model developed that found expression in plans for places such as Letchworth.¹⁶ This was

¹⁴ Stephen V Ward, *The Garden City: Past, present and future* (London: E & FN Spon, 1992), 2.

¹⁵ The Housing Town Planning Etc Act of 1909 prevented the building of back-to-back housing and introduced the principles of residential planning for the first time. See Appendix I for a timeline of British and South African legislative measures.

¹⁶ John Muller, 'Parallel paths: The origins of planning education and the planning profession in South Africa,' *Planning History* 15, no 2 (1993): 5.

pioneering legislation that offered a tantalising blueprint for improved residential and site planning. It consolidated 40 years of British housing laws and regulations rooted in sanitation principles. However, despite its title, it did not develop the concept of town planning beyond the idea of residential improvement of living conditions into broader issues of overall urban land-use management. However, the intentions of the Act alone were inspirational. John Burns' ringing remarks, when he introduced the Bill in the British Parliament in 1908, called for 'the home healthy, the house beautiful, the town pleasant, the city beautiful and the suburb salubrious'.¹⁷

British planning consultants played an important role in spreading Garden City planning ideas throughout the world. Patrick Geddes, who pioneered the survey methodology of planning (survey, plan, implement), worked as a consultant in Madras and Delhi in India. In consulting on the improvements of Indian cities, he developed his own concept of conservative surgery, a form of ongoing maintenance, which would re-emerge years later in planning history as urban rehabilitation.¹⁸ Charles Reade, one of the busiest planners, promoted town planning along Garden City lines in New Zealand, Malaysia and Zambia. Most important from Cape Town's perspective was Albert W Thompson from the office of Raymond Unwin and Barry Parker in London. He had the distinction of having worked at Letchworth and Hampstead Garden Suburb and was invited to South Africa to work on the Pinelands Garden City plan, which is referred to later in the chapter.

Before the First World War, housing in Britain, as in Cape Town, had largely been operating within the ambit of private speculative development. And, as in Cape Town before 1920, there had been negligible state involvement in working-class housing. In 1918, the British prime minister gave a powerful speech a day after the Armistice in November 1918 in which he promised that there would be 'Homes fit for heroes'.¹⁹ It was followed by a campaign for improved housing for returning soldiers called 'The home I want'. The campaign tied post-war sentiment to improving housing conditions.²⁰ With British post-war housing standards in the spotlight, the Tudor Walters Report which followed became an important point of reference for local housing standards in Cape Town.²¹ It introduced the notion of optimum standards in housing estates according to housing size, interior sanitation, garden frontage and street edges. It devised sound design

¹⁷ Philip Booth and Margo Huxley, '1909 and all that: Reflections on the Housing Town Planning etc Act,' *Planning Perspectives* 27, no 2 (April 2012): 267–283.

¹⁸ Hall, *Cities of tomorrow*, 244.

¹⁹ <<http://www.socialhousinghistory.uk/wp/homes-fit-for-heroes>>.

²⁰ Hall, *Cities of tomorrow*, 68.

²¹ The Tudor Walters Report of 1918 provided standards and guidelines for working-class housing estates. Appendix I, 3.

standards for new housing, adopting Unwin's low-density housing model of 12 houses per acre. It tied council housing provision in post-war Britain to design standards. Both Unwin's density model and Tudor Walters report standards are noticeable in features of Garden City planning in Cape Town, more so in the creation of Pinelands than Maitland Garden Village, and certainly less so than in the design and development of hostels and houses in Langa.

Garden City ideas in Cape Town



Figure 23: British planner and architect AJ Thompson. He was valued by local professionals as a major expert in town planning. He lectured widely in South Africa on town planning and Garden City planning and his views were influential. (AB&E, May–September 1921, cover page)

Trade and military ties as well as professional communications between Britain and South Africa strengthened during the post-war period. In Cape Town new ideas about housing, planning and solutions to the intractable problems of slums permeated the professional discourse and were reflected in professional journals such as the *Architect Builder and Engineer (AB&E)*.²² Talks and lectures were given by international experts in Garden City planning. Planning consultant AJ Thompson first visited South Africa in 1920 at the invitation of parliamentarian Richard Stuttaford to adjudicate then supervise the planning and design of Pinelands Garden City in Cape Town. He brought with him impeccable Garden City credentials, having worked on the successful Garden Suburbs of Letchworth and Hampstead for Raymond Unwin. Although Home describes Thompson as a 'lesser figure' in the field of British Garden City consultancy, his impact on Cape Town professional intellectual thought about planning was far-reaching.²³ During his time in Cape Town, Thompson promoted Garden City planning to the professional architects and local officials. He gave a lecture in Cape Town in April 1921 in which he stressed housing provision as a social responsibility. He stated:

²² *Architect Builder and Engineer* (1917–1941) was an independent Cape Town subscription publication for the structural professions.

²³ Robert Home, *Of planting and planning: The making of British colonial cities* (London: Routledge, 2013), 170–171.

The problems of town planning and the Garden City movement should engage the close attention not only of Municipal and other authorities but of all our social reformers.²⁴

He was at the time, continuing in his role as supervising architect for Pinelands and had already embarked on the planning work for Langa. His opinions were taken seriously because they carried the weight of the knowledge and experience of an ‘international expert’. Cape Town disappointed him because he believed that planning opportunities had been missed.²⁵ Thompson was even more forthright in the following year, when he read a paper at the Municipal Congress in East London. Commenting on plans he had viewed throughout his lecture tour of South Africa, he said:

All of these plans, without exception, showed an entire lack of the application of the economics of modern town planning principles and I was surprised to find out that so little appeared to be known in South Africa of modern town planning which is now being so successfully carried out in all parts of the civilized world.²⁶

The Inter-Allied Conference on Housing and Town Planning at Westminster London in April 1920 was notable for the impact it had on local professional discourse and its influence on planners and architects worldwide. It was attended by 600 delegates from 30 countries, including two Cape Town City Councillors, AB Reid and CW Stewart Neave. Upon their return they presented an agenda for future Garden City solutions in Cape Town. Their first recommendation was the direction that post-war housing should take and also the need for sound housing norms and standards supported by legislation. Specific mention was made of a standard density of housing units per hectare, an issue raised by Raymond Unwin in 1912 in, *Nothing gained by overcrowding*.²⁷ The second recommendation was to reinforce the importance of town planning at a regional and a national level. This recommendation tied town-planning principles to housing requirements and a need for light and air within and around the home.²⁸

Garden City principles, strongly presented at the conference, proved to be of international significance as delegates, including those from Cape Town, returned to their home cities convinced of the necessity of Garden Cities as a solution to post-war urban problems. The deliberations and recommendations presented by Reid and Neave resonated with Cape Town officials and

²⁴ AB&E April 1921, 11.

²⁵ ‘Town planning: An English expert on Cape Town,’ *Architect Builder and Engineer* (April 1923): 11.

²⁶ ‘Town planning in South Africa,’ *Architect Builder and Engineer* (1922): 10.

²⁷ Miller, ‘Commemorating Raymond Unwin,’ 120–140. Well known for his work at Letchworth (see above), Unwin was involved in the Garden City Association in England. His publication, *Nothing gained by overcrowding* (1912), explored the ways in which space could effectively be repurposed for improved urban designs according to Garden City principles.

²⁸ Mayor’s Minutes, year ending 1921, 103.

politicians because the housing situation in Cape Town showed some similarities to those of Britain. Both had old and crowded housing stock and both struggled with managing a congested urban form in a new, modernising society. The appeal of Garden City planning lay in offering solutions to managing city growth, while at the same time creating healthy living environments.

In short, the Garden City Movement became an intellectual force worldwide. Changes to city form and housing came to be based extensively on modified Garden City principles. Recent studies explore the impact of Garden City ideas on the colonial world, and how the planning principles were adapted to suit racial segregation in the design of residential areas.²⁹ As we have seen, Garden City ideas were popular in Cape Town because they offered potential solutions to the problems that had beset local professionals for years. Two ideas were particularly attractive to the Cape Town City Council (CTCC). The first, which arose out of the public and official reactions to the crowded living conditions of Cape Town, was the concept of low-density growth and decentralisation. The second was the notion of ‘green belts’ between housing estates or townships which allowed for spatial and racial segregation. The green buffer zone or cordon sanitaire was not an entirely new concept in Cape Town and had already been applied at Ndabeni, although the motivations differed. As we will consider, the application of potential Garden City principles masked less benign intentions, with the design of a township clearly applying the requirements of the Natives (Urban Areas) Act 21 of 1923 and the Stallardist principles of African impermanence within the city, which was clearly regarded as a ‘white space’.³⁰

²⁹ Robert K Home, ‘Town planning and garden cities in the British colonial empire 1910–1940,’ *Planning Perspectives* 5, no 1 (1990): 23–37; Liora Bigon, ‘Garden cities in colonial Africa: A note on historiography,’ *Planning Perspectives* 28, no 3 (2013): 477–485.

³⁰ Nic Coetzer, ‘Langa township in the 1920s – an (extra)ordinary Garden Suburb,’ *South African Journal of Art History* 24, no 1 (2009): 4; Davenport, TR, ‘The triumph of Colonel Stallard: The transformation of the Natives (Urban Areas) Act between 1923 and 1937,’ *South African Historical Journal* 2, no 1: 77–96.

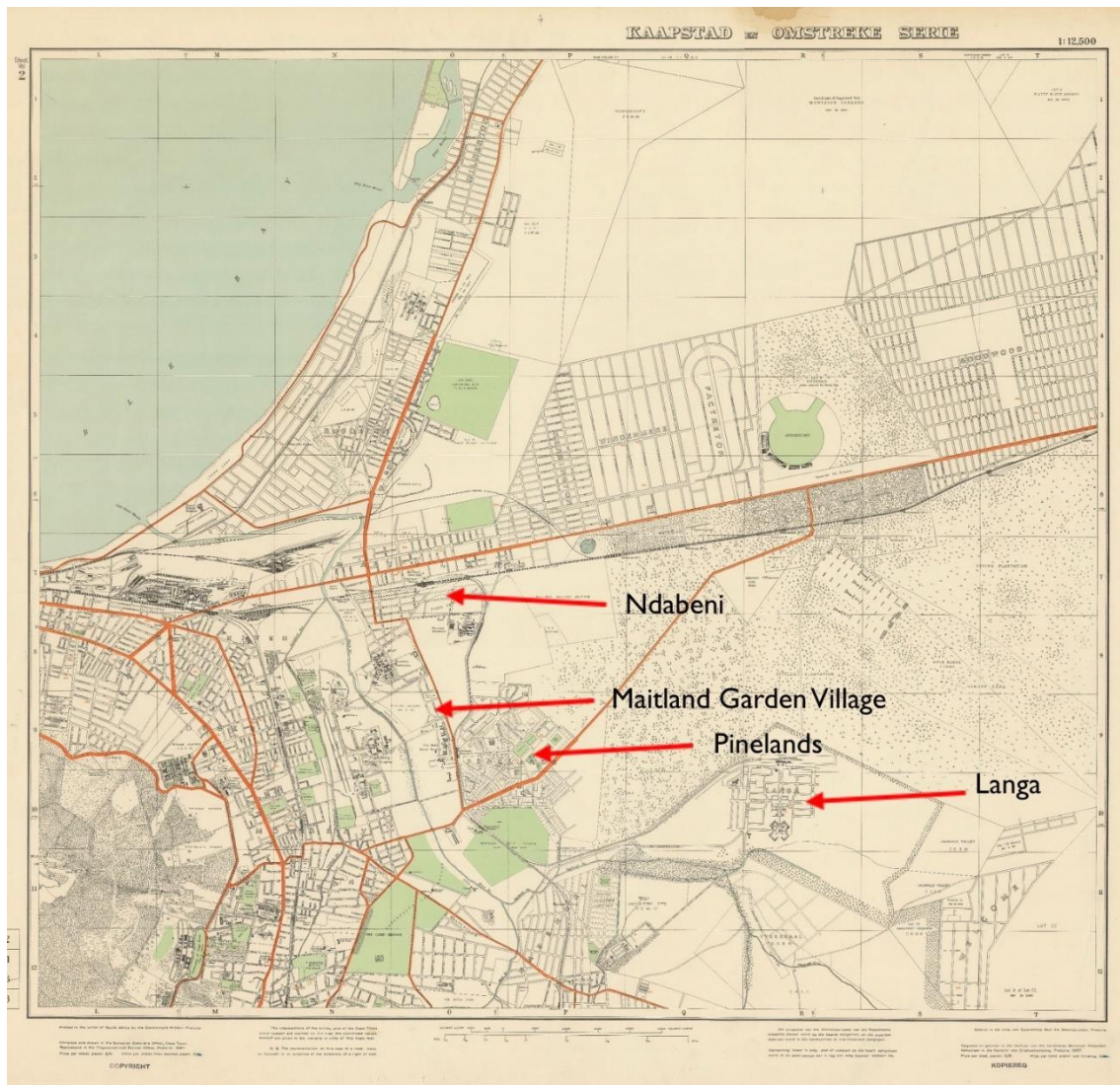


Figure 24: The positions of Ndabeni, Maitland Garden Village, Pinelands and Langa. Ndabeni, Maitland Garden Village and Pinelands were seen to be in uncomfortable proximity to each other, particularly for residents of Pinelands. The plan to extend Maitland Garden Village to a site over Alexandra Road closer to Pinelands was turned down as a result. (Surveyor General Map of the Cape Town Division 1937, Surveyor General's Office)

Government funding and segregated housing for the working classes: Housing Act 35 of 1920

There are detailed studies of the Housing Act of 1920 and the complexities and contradictions of the housing provisions which followed in South Africa.³¹ This account focuses on the application

³¹ Susan Parnell, 'Shaping a racially divided society: State housing policy in South Africa 1920–1950,' *Environment and Planning: Government and Policy* (1989): 261–272; Susan Parnell, 'Creating racial privilege: The origins of South African public health and town planning legislation,' *Journal of Southern African Studies* 19, no 3 (1993): 471–488; Derek Japha and Marie Hühzermeyer, *The history of the development of townships in Cape Town, 1920–1992*, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Centre for Architectural Research and Development Overseas, University of Newcastle, 1995; Alan Mabin, 'A century of South African Housing Acts 1920–2020,' *Urban Forum* 31, no 4 (September 2020): 453–472; Peter Wilkinson, 'Housing policy in South Africa,' *Habitat International* 22, no 3 (1998): 215–229.

of the provisions of the Act in Cape Town in the period after 1920; how the housing provisions which followed were the result of borrowed Garden City planning paradigms and the ways in which the prevailing racialised political context in Cape Town modified and even perverted those influences.

By 1920, the CTCC had been proactive in developing its own mechanisms for accessing housing funds. Councillor J Honikman presented the possibility of a local fund raised with the permission of registered voters for the provision of housing. The idea was based on a similar programme in Queensland, Australia. The proposal was forwarded to the Provincial Administrator for promulgation but, hearing nothing, the CTCC went ahead and, after a public meeting, secured support from the ratepayers to raise a loan of £250 000 for the provision of housing for the working classes. With the horrors of the epidemic fresh in their minds and a rising tide of poverty and deprivation on their doorsteps, the 'sanitation syndrome' was once again emerging as a powerful local issue forcefully raised in Cape Town. The ratepayers agreed. By the time the Provincial Government promulgated the Provision of Homes Ordinance 23 of 1919, 122 houses at Maitland had already been completed. The Ordinance of 1919 allowed private individuals to obtain loans from the CoCT to build houses if they earned less than £360 per year and could afford a deposit of 20% of the value of the dwellings to be constructed. This was the origin of the 'assisted housing in brick' scheme at Sunnyside, Athlone, and the 'assisted housing in wood and iron' scheme at Gleemore, which continued throughout the 1920s. The concept of a person of 'limited means', however, was a narrow one that set the bar too high for funding. It in no way accommodated the working classes of Cape Town, who could barely afford rents. The implementation of the assisted housing schemes underestimated the persistence of extreme poverty in Cape Town and thus residents' ability to pay for economic or unsubsidised housing. Both Maitland Garden Village and Langa (see map) were eventually built with funds raised through the Municipal Provision of Homes Ordinance of 1919 with the consent of the local ratepayers. They were not centrally state funded and this explains why the Housing and Estates Committee of the Cape Town Municipality presumably could build to the designs and costs that they did.

The Housing Act was a direct consequence of the Spanish Flu epidemic, which increased official awareness of housing conditions; and for the middle-class public, it dealt to some extent with the dangers of general contagion. The high death rate and house-to-house inspections revealed the terrible conditions under which many working-class people were living.³² Large public crises had

³² See chapter 1.

a way of further widening existing social fractures, and the epidemic was no different. Media attention turned again to the slum areas of Cape Town and the racist content of the ‘sanitation syndrome’ returned again to public discourse with increased venom. A newspaper editorial published immediately after the epidemic in October 1918 painted a word picture of the worst kind of conditions existing in the tenements of Cape Town. Reflecting echoes of the sanitation syndrome after the Bubonic Plague in 1901, the editorial called for better housing, reminding readers that neglecting to do so in the past had taken a ‘dire revenge’.³³

The Department of Public Works appointed a committee in 1919 (the Robinson Committee) to review matters concerning housing accommodation to make recommendations.³⁴ The committee visited several urban centres, including those in Cape Town. It visited the new Maitland Garden Village, reviewed the plans for Pinelands and undertook a visit to Wells Square in District Six, which had been a focus of public outrage for many years.³⁵ The committee was sceptical of the Maitland scheme, commenting: ‘Laudable as it may be as an attempt to deal with the housing of the poor classes on modern lines, it is an example of a misconception of the garden suburb idea.’³⁶ Their criticism was based on the concern that while a great deal of attention had gone into the design of the open spaces and the designs of the housing, it was all rather small. On the other hand, there was nothing but praise for the whites-only Pinelands scheme. The committee concluded that any improvements in slum conditions could be achieved only by providing replacement housing. The committee devoted attention to the matter of town planning, drawing extensively on international precedents and examples, and called for town-planning principles and practice to be applied, which Alan Mabin considered as meaning housing that followed sound layout and good housing designs.³⁷ In the end, their interpretation of ‘town planning’ was defined by Garden City principles relating to residential planning for healthy environments. No doubt the Pinelands Garden City example impressed the committee because they called for similar planning principles to those at Pinelands – a hierarchy of roads, provision for open space and the application of aesthetic principles to architecture.

The committee recommended establishing a Central Housing Board (CHB) within the Department of Health with provisions to provide national funding through provincial housing

³³ Maynard Swanson, ‘The sanitation syndrome: Bubonic Plague and urban native policy in the Cape colony, 1900–19091,’ *Journal of African History* 18, no 3 (1977): 387–410. The study uses the notion of contagion as a racial metaphor. Editorial, *Cape Argus*, 19 October 1918.

³⁴ UG 4–1920. Report of the Housing Committee appointed by the Minister of Public Works to inquire into matters concerning housing accommodation in urban areas and the amendment of the Unhealthy Areas Bill.

³⁵ ‘A hotbed of horrors,’ *Architect and Builder* October 1917.

³⁶ UG 4–1920 Housing Committee, 13.

³⁷ Mabin, ‘A century of South African Housing Acts,’ 460.

funds to local authorities. The funds (which were not subsidised) were to be used for housing for ‘persons of limited means’, including ‘coloured persons and natives’.³⁸ In making this recommendation, the committee underestimated the persistence of extreme poverty in the cities, with those most affected by the housing crisis unable to pay non-subsidised rents. However, the decision was a momentous one, because with the establishment of a housing fund, the central government established the principle of state-funded housing.

Despite its modest beginning, the principles in the 1920 Housing Act eventually changed the face of working-class housing. It granted funds to local government to build houses, although they were not sub-economic loans until 1930. The funding criteria referred to racially segregated sites and a hierarchical system of building costs according to race marking the beginning of segregated new residential estates in Cape Town.³⁹ While the CoCT grappled with their requirements for housing, the funding provided by the CHB almost immediately dried up and planned housing schemes had to be put on hold. By July 1921, the *Cape Times* was reporting that the planned Roeland Street development for white council employees had been stopped due to the high costs of building materials.⁴⁰



Figure 25: 'The Good Seed: They are coming up nicely.' Cartoon about the Municipal Provision of Homes: the CoCT was congratulated for the assistance given to homeowners to build their own homes. The homeowners in the cartoon are clearly white and middle class. The problem that this form of housing did not touch the real need of housing for the very poor was acknowledged only in the 1930s. (Cape Argus, 10 May 1921)

³⁸ UG 4–1920 Housing Committee, 8.

³⁹ UG 25–1921 *Report of the Central Housing Board 1920*, 7.

⁴⁰ 'High costs of building means curtailment of housing scheme,' *Cape Times*, 21 July 1920.

Applying Garden City planning in Cape Town: early calls for town planning

Despite pressure from those representing the nascent planning profession, attempts at setting up a town-planning scheme within the CTCC were unsuccessful and any planning needed was undertaken by consultants. An earlier Cape Town City Engineer's investigation into town planning in 1916 had come to nothing. The problem was that that powers to control local urban planning matters through regulation rested with the Provincial Administrator in terms of Cape Municipal Ordinance 10 of 1912 and the Financial Relations Act 10 of 1913, not the central government.⁴¹

The first residential planning investigations at a national level were set out by the Department of Health in terms of the Public Health Act 36 of 1919, which set up statutory mechanisms to advise local and provincial authorities on matters affecting public health and the treatment of nuisances. The Act contained a chapter solely devoted to sanitation and housing, which set up the conditions under which unfit housing could be demolished in order to eliminate the presence of 'nuisances'.⁴² Drawing on the example of the British Housing Town Planning Etc Act of 1909, it specifically forbade the building of back-to-back dwellings. The provisions of the Public Health Act of 1919 and the Housing Act of 1920 in defining urban planning principles have been explored elsewhere, with Susan Parnell concluding that the legislation established evidence of links between sanitation, public health, slum clearance and the causes of intra-urban racial separation.⁴³ Certainly, the Health Act committed local authorities to maintaining public health and preventing 'nuisances' by providing mechanisms for ameliorating urban conditions injurious to public health.⁴⁴ Both sets of legislation proved valuable in laying out in detail the problems and remedies for planned environments and establishing a clear link between the necessity of planning and the improvement of urban environments. The role of town planning and how it was to be achieved, however, remained unclear.

There was also discussion at professional levels in Cape Town and South Africa about planning itself, including what skills were necessary and which existing profession should undertake this important new task. The decision as to who was to dominate the new planning activity was not achieved without a professional war of words. With the influential British Tudor Walters Housing

⁴¹ The Cape Municipal Ordinance 10 of 1912 regulated powers between the local and provincial authorities as previously defined in the South Africa Act of 1909. The Financial Relations Act 10 of 1913 conferred on the Provincial Administrator certain powers in terms of s 12 of the Act, including the authority to establish and administer Townships (Second Schedule, s 10).

⁴² Public Health Act 36 of 1919, ss 128, 129.

⁴³ Susan Parnell, 'Creating racial privilege: The origins of South African public health and town planning legislation,' *Journal of Southern African Studies* 19, no 3 (1993): 471–488.

⁴⁴ Public Health Act 36 of 1919, ss 121–122.

Report of 1918 focusing primarily on housing typologies and architectural quality, the Cape Town architects considered themselves the best suited to be the new town planners. Architects thought that land surveyors had dominated early township development for long enough. ‘The Land Surveyor’s relation to town planning and the housing problem begins and ends with the accurate delineation of the areas to be surveyed,’ proclaimed one local architectural journal.⁴⁵

The first Townships Ordinance in Cape Town was promulgated in 1927. The CoCT was reluctant to apply the Ordinance because it made no reference to compensation.⁴⁶ One of the outcomes of the Ordinance, however, was the appointment a Townships Board which adjudicated township and funding applications. The Townships Board used its supervisory role to dictate where new housing development was to be located. One result was that it then established a racial segregation criterion for development, ensuring that new coloured housing would be situated out on the Cape Flats in the Athlone area.

Threats of impermanence and segregation: Natives (Urban Areas) Act 21 of 1923

The increasing number of Africans moving to the city after the First World War was perceived as a growing threat by the middle classes. The result was a greater drive to achieve spatial and social segregation by controlling where and under what conditions Africans might live in the urban areas.⁴⁷ The process leading up to the promulgation of the Natives (Urban Areas) Act and the growing dominance of the Stallardist principles in African administration has been subject of detailed analysis by urban historians.⁴⁸ The Stallardist principle related to the notion that the African presence in urban areas was impermanent and tied to labour value. The idea of impermanence is summarised in Colonel Stallard’s oft-quoted phrase of 1922

that the ‘native’ was permitted to enter the ‘white cities and towns only to administer to the needs of the white man and should depart therefrom when he ceases so to minister’.⁴⁹

The principle meant that rights to permanence and therefore rights to housing could be tied to influx control and the control of labour.

⁴⁵ ‘Architects, town planning and the housing problem,’ *Architect, Builder and Engineer* (December 1918): 11.

⁴⁶ The Township Ordinance 13 of 1927.

⁴⁷ Bickford-Smith, *The emergence of the South African metropolis*, 129.

⁴⁸ Rodney Davenport, ‘African townsmen? South African natives (urban areas) legislation through the years,’ *African Affairs* 68, no 271 (1969): 95–109; Rodney Davenport, ‘The triumph of Colonel Stallard: The transformation of the Natives (Urban Areas) Act between 1923 and 1937,’ *South African Historical Journal* 2, no 1 (1970): 77–96.

⁴⁹ Report of the Transvaal Local Government Commission, TP 1–1922, para 42, quoted in Davenport, ‘African townsmen?’ 95.

In addition to influx control for migrant workers and the threats under which urban Africans lived, the types of accommodation and the layout of the townships could also be used as mechanisms of control and surveillance. The Act provided for land to be ‘set apart and laid out for the occupation, residence and other reasonable requirements of natives, either as extensions of any area already set apart for that purposed or as separate areas’.⁵⁰ As Wilkinson states:

The fundamental purpose underlying the protracted and often fiercely contested efforts to segregate African urban population into discrete residential areas, ‘townships’ excised administratively as well as geographically from the social and spatial fabric of the ‘white’ cities and towns, was to regulated the degree of permanence.⁵¹

The vulnerability of impermanence or the threat of being moved affected not only workers but also the ‘locations’ or townships themselves. Residents and contract workers were moved to other areas as soon as the land on which they settled became valuable for another purpose. The consultant planner for Langa considered that it could be considered impermanent: writing in the *Architect Builder & Engineer* in 1924, he noted:

The estate has been laid out as far as possible on town planning lines, and with the idea that in the future the natives may possibly be cleared away and this become an extension of the suburbs of Cape Town. It is a very beautiful site and it is a great pity that it has to be used for such a purpose.⁵²

Garden City planning in Cape Town, 1918–1930: ‘a ring of Garden Villages’

Between 1918 and 1932, the CoCT designed and built two very different ‘Garden Village’ housing estates: one for their own employees at Maitland and the other, built under the supervision of the municipality’s ‘Native’ Affairs Branch, was at Langa for Cape Town residents who were African. The City Engineer in Cape Town at the time was W Lloyd Davies.⁵³ He was a strong advocate of town planning and had attempted to set up the first of the abortive local town-planning schemes in 1916. When he gave an address to the Town and County Municipal Engineers Conference in Johannesburg in June 1921, he presented a vision of Cape Town which was influenced by Garden City planning principles and the British Town Planning and Etc Act of 1909. Dismissing the housing situation as unsolvable, he turned his attention to Garden City planning. He thought the time was ripe for averting the ‘worst’ by controlling the lines of future development. Referring to

⁵⁰ Natives (Urban Areas) Act 21 of 1923, s 1(a).

⁵¹ Wilkinson, ‘Housing policy,’ 217.

⁵² ‘Langa native village,’ *Architect Builder and Engineer* (November 1924): 29.

⁵³ W Lloyd Davies City Engineer 1914–1931. Originally a British planner working in Alexandria, Egypt, he was responsible for some of Cape Town’s major civic works. Appendix Two, 7.

the importance of British precedent, he said he wanted to see a ‘ring of Garden Villages’ for all classes in Cape Town. He considered Garden Villages could be for all classes irrespective of race, stating that ‘even housing for natives’ could comply with Garden Village principles.⁵⁴

Lloyd Davies saw Garden Villages developing with certain commonalities from the principle of low-density housing development for reasons of health to the use of housing typologies based on a series of cottage and semi-detached examples.⁵⁵ The CoCT’s consultants followed the housing typology principles in Maitland Garden Village, as did the consultants for Pinelands in 1919, although the houses in Pinelands were considerably larger villa developments. Japha and Hühzermeyer suggest that, except for the implications of the Coloured Labour Preference Area in the 1950s, the housing development patterns of Cape Town very much followed national trends.⁵⁶ While this may be true after the National Party took power in 1948, the trends in housing and urban design in the 1920s in Cape Town were more local in origin and drew heavily on local interpretations of Garden City principles. The CoCT was able to design and build Maitland Garden Village and the early sections of Langa according to criteria decided on by local officials and their consultant architects. This was because the funds used were raised with the permission of local ratepayers. The delivery systems were local, the designs were the result of design competitions, and the standards and costs (in the case of Maitland Garden Village) were higher than any national average. Maitland Garden Village was not based on an economic or a non-subsidised model. Its intentions had been to serve as a ‘model village’ with the hope that property developers might choose to follow this example.

Maitland Garden Village

Maitland Garden Village is a small housing settlement along Alexandra Road, Maitland, some 4.5 km southeast of Cape Town.⁵⁷ Despite decades of talk, the CoCT had built very little housing for workers either during or after the First World War. Maitland Garden Village, which was built for its own employees, was the exception and can be regarded as the first, albeit modest Garden Village in Cape Town. As with many Garden Villages in Africa, it combined the design of physical space with principles associated with improved sanitation, low housing densities with racial

⁵⁴ ‘Housing and town planning,’ *Cape Times*, 7 June 1921.

⁵⁵ *Architect Builder and Engineer* (March 1919): 5.

⁵⁶ Japha and Hühzermeyer, *The history of the development of townships in Cape Town*, 2.

⁵⁷ I make a distinction between a Garden City which would contain its own commercial sites and be close to industrial sites and a Garden Suburb as a dormitory suburb designed following Garden City Planning principles of low-density and sound housing design in mind; and a Garden Village such as Maitland Garden Village, which is a small Garden Suburb developed somewhat along the lines of a model village.

segregation.⁵⁸ Its building was the result of protracted negotiations. The Housing and Estates Committee of the CTCC obtained the necessary funding from the enrolled voters who had been shocked into action by a CTCC housing survey conducted between 1915 and 1916.⁵⁹ The concept of a model village for workers along Garden City lines, long discussed in the council, reached fruition when the CTCC adopted a resolution on 21 December 1916 to proceed with the development of workers' cottages at Maitland. The planning, layout and design of the cottages met the textbook requirements for a Model Garden Village with nuclear families in mind. The design of the layout was the result of a design competition, awarded in 1917 to Starke and Company. Their design was for a simple grid facing Alexandra Road with a large central recreational space forming a communal focal point.

The plan was similar to Herbert Baker's early mine villages on the East Rand, particularly that of the 1908 Modderfontein Mine Village at Benoni. It, too, although a more complex urban design, extended from a central rectangular recreational area.⁶⁰ Maitland Garden Village had a wide road system (sanitarians believed wide roads were essential for good ventilation), drying yards to the north and south, and two communal bathhouses. Space was allocated for two churches, which were subsequently built, the first one being a Methodist Church in 1926. A zone of trees separated the village from the Valkenburg Mental Hospital and the Alexandra Institute to the north and south. The plan was modest at first – there would be 122 dwellings, all with garden areas, and there was, of course, the open space around which the dwellings would be arranged. The plans represented Garden City planning principles for healthy living – low densities, good ventilation and design for nuclear families only.

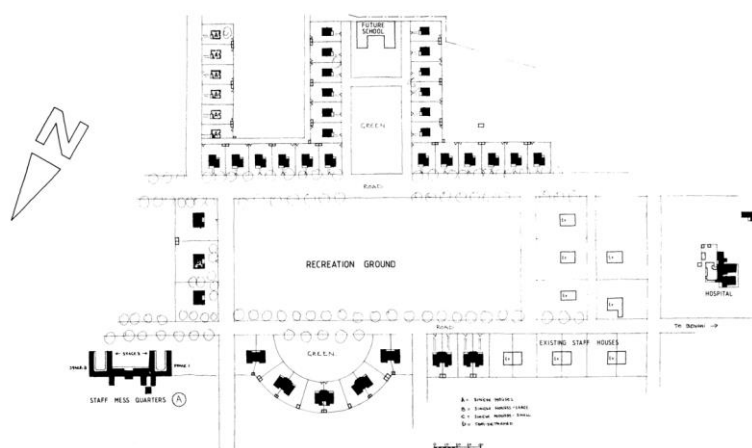


Figure 26: 'Garden village' layout at Modderfontein by Herbert Baker. Apart from the houses arranged in a semi-circle, the layout of Maitland Garden Village was similar. A road extended in a linear fashion from a central recreational space. Densities were low, although in the case of Modderfontein the housing consisted of detached dwellings and were for white personnel. (Radford, 'Mining villages of Herbert Baker', 55)

⁵⁸ Liora Bigon, 'Garden Cities in colonial Africa,' 477–485.

⁵⁹ Report of the Medical Officer of Health, Mayor's Minutes, year ending 1916. See chapter 1.

⁶⁰ Dennis Radford, 'Mining villages of Herbert Baker: An investigation of their form and layout,' *South African Journal of Art and Architectural History* 1, no 2 (1990): 55.

Housing typologies varied but were similar in the way they were arranged in relation to the street layout. They were either semi-detached or row houses, some decorated with Cape gables, others in a mock Tudor style. All had front gardens and backyards. The number of bedroom units varied, dependent on the rents the residents could afford. The houses were divided into three typologies according to the number of rooms they possessed: Type B and Type C1 houses were semi-detached with two bedrooms, a living room, a stoep, a toilet and a shed; the third typology comprised a row of housing units in blocks of four, each containing a single bedroom and living room, but also with a toilet and a shed. All three types had a fireplace and a chimney. A strong design emphasis was placed on good ventilation, with a window for each room. The CTCC was pleased with the building designs. The gabled units were considered ‘particularly attractive’. The City Engineer hoped that the provision of garden space would encourage occupiers to cultivate flowers and ‘thereby add to the general attractiveness’.⁶¹

When Maitland Garden Village was first planned in 1917, the Housing and Estates Committee had not considered racial segregation. In 1919, the City Engineer, TB Lloyd Davies, took a Native Housing Delegation on a visit to the village. When asked about the lack of clear racial criteria, he replied that he did not think it ‘feasible to separate whites and coloureds in the current scheme’.⁶² Yet, within a year, Maitland Village was referred to as a ‘coloured housing development’. While there is no recorded change of policy, there are three potential explanations for this. The first is that there were no ‘whites’ who applied for the accommodation, although this is unlikely, as the mixed-race, overcrowded conditions of District Six would have indicated. The second is related to the complex racial gradations of working-class Cape Town, making it difficult to work out which race a family was. The third and most likely explanation is that the loan model provided by the Central Housing Board had a racial funding allocation.⁶³

⁶¹ Mayor’s Minutes, year ending 1918, 15.

⁶² ‘Question of native housing: Delegation from the north opens its enquiry,’ *Cape Times*, 19 August 1919.

⁶³ Act 35 of 1920, Form 213. The Act does not mention race, but under ‘Documents to be included’ is a requirement to submit a layout plan, including ‘the general disposition of the proposed dwellings and whether for occupation by Europeans, Coloureds, Natives or Asiatics’ ([c-A (d)]).



Figure 27: Maitland Garden Village in 2018. Small, semi-detached houses and row houses with pitched roofs and small front gardens situated in a Garden Village setting. (Photograph: Attwell 2018)



Figure 28: Maitland Garden Village layout. This diagram shows that the plan is centred on an open recreation space. It has a simple grid road pattern and low-density dwellings, all with street frontage and gardens. The Village turned its back on the Black River and faced towards Alexandra Road. It was flanked by medical institutions on either side, with the segregated black wards of the Valkenberg Hospital to the south (right) and the Alexandra Institute to the north (left). The plan to extend Maitland Garden Village over Alexandra Road was abandoned due to provincial opposition and the opposition of local Pinelands residents. Refer to Figure 24 showing the proximity of Pinelands to Maitland Garden Village and Ndabeni. (Diagram courtesy GAP Architects, 2020)



Figure 29: House Type B with three rooms. This is the unit with the 'Cape' gable. Plans were designed with strict sanitation principles in mind. Windows were carefully placed to maximise ventilation opportunities. The houses had running water and (later) electricity. The toilet was separated from the house by a shed. Oddly, although there were fireplaces, there was no separate kitchen, which was designed to be part of the living room. (Mayor's Minutes, 1918, 13)

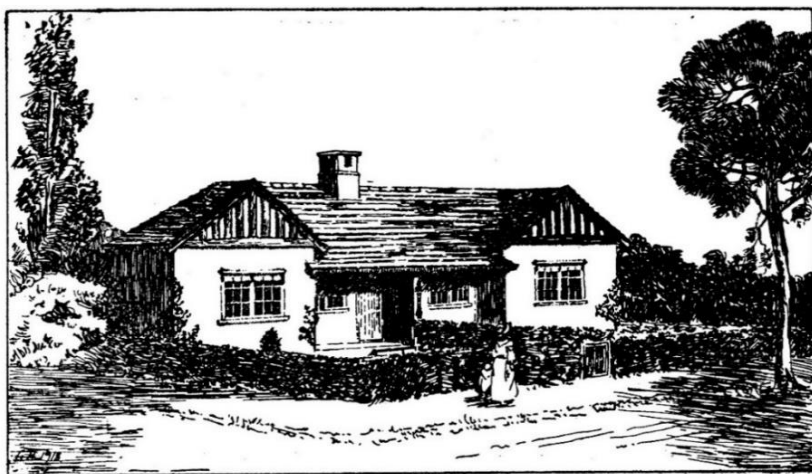
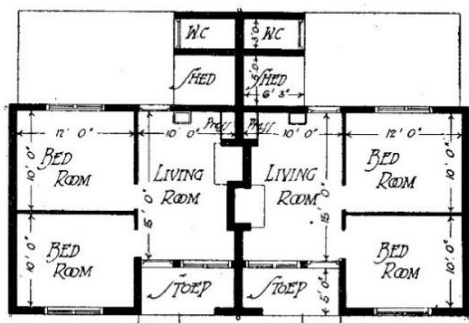


Figure 30: House type C1. This was one of the larger semi-detached houses, with mock Tudor, half-timbered gables and neat front garden. (Mayor's Minutes 1918, 14)

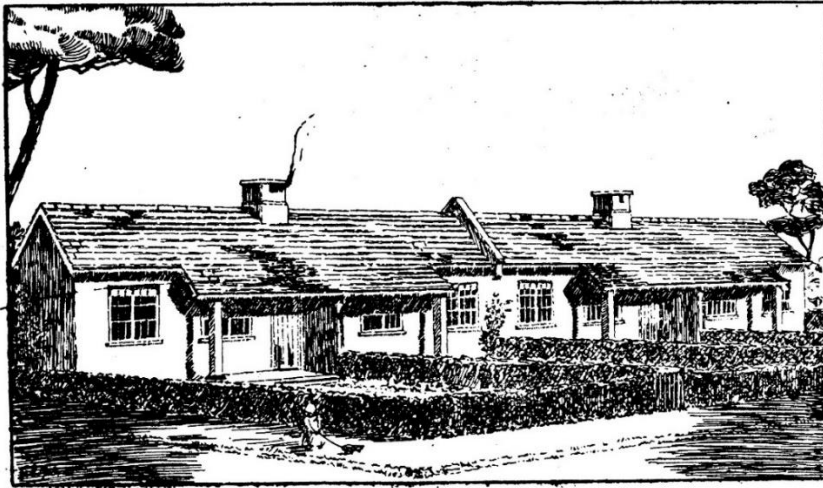
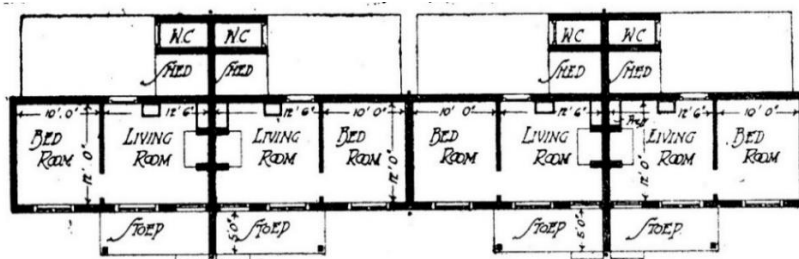


Figure 31: House Type C2: A row with two rooms. These were the least popular because families were large and the house was the smallest. They were grouped in rows of four. At the time of building in 1918, they had not yet been connected to waterborne sewerage, which occurred at the completion of the Southern Suburbs drainage scheme. (Mayor's Minutes 1918, 15)



What was new was the attention given to 'healthy' building designs rather than tight speculative developments, with special attention being paid to sanitation and fresh air. They included waterborne sewerage with a water closet (toilet) per house and individual washing facilities (although bathhouses, rather oddly, were situated separately), careful attention to ventilation and healthy through-drafts of air and a wide road network, because roads were considered essential to the free movement of air as well as to pedestrian traffic. Provision was made for public amenities, particularly in the second phase of the development. Residents paid a weekly rental dependent on the size and type of house they were allocated, independently of family size. Allocations were based on wages earned rather than family size and thus a degree of overcrowding was still possible.



Figure 32: Maitland Garden Village c 1970. The photograph shows two-roomed row houses, the plan of which is illustrated in the previous image. They would have been small units with a single bedroom and a living room. (va_independent_S16A_023)

The images which accompany the sketches of the dwellings suggest that the desired effect was a village idyll of neatly fenced and cultivated gardens and verdant natural surroundings, the key ingredients of the Garden Village concept.

Housing for council employees at Roeland Street and extensions to Maitland Garden Village

Despite an initial reluctance on the part of the council workers to pay the rentals which they considered excessive, all the Maitland Garden Village houses were eventually occupied and the scheme was considered a success on its completion in 1918. The CTCC was, as a result, sufficiently confident to propose further housing schemes. To this end, it approached the local ratepayers for an additional sum for an extension at Maitland east of Alexandra Road towards Pinelands, and for a large site in Vredehoek off Roeland and Upper Mill streets for the council's white workers. The urban designs of both schemes were prepared and submitted to council in 1919.⁶⁴ The ratepayers agreed to both at a meeting held on 12 August 1919 and the schemes were submitted to the Provincial Administrator for endorsement.

⁶⁴ Mayor's Minutes, year ending 1918–1919, 24.

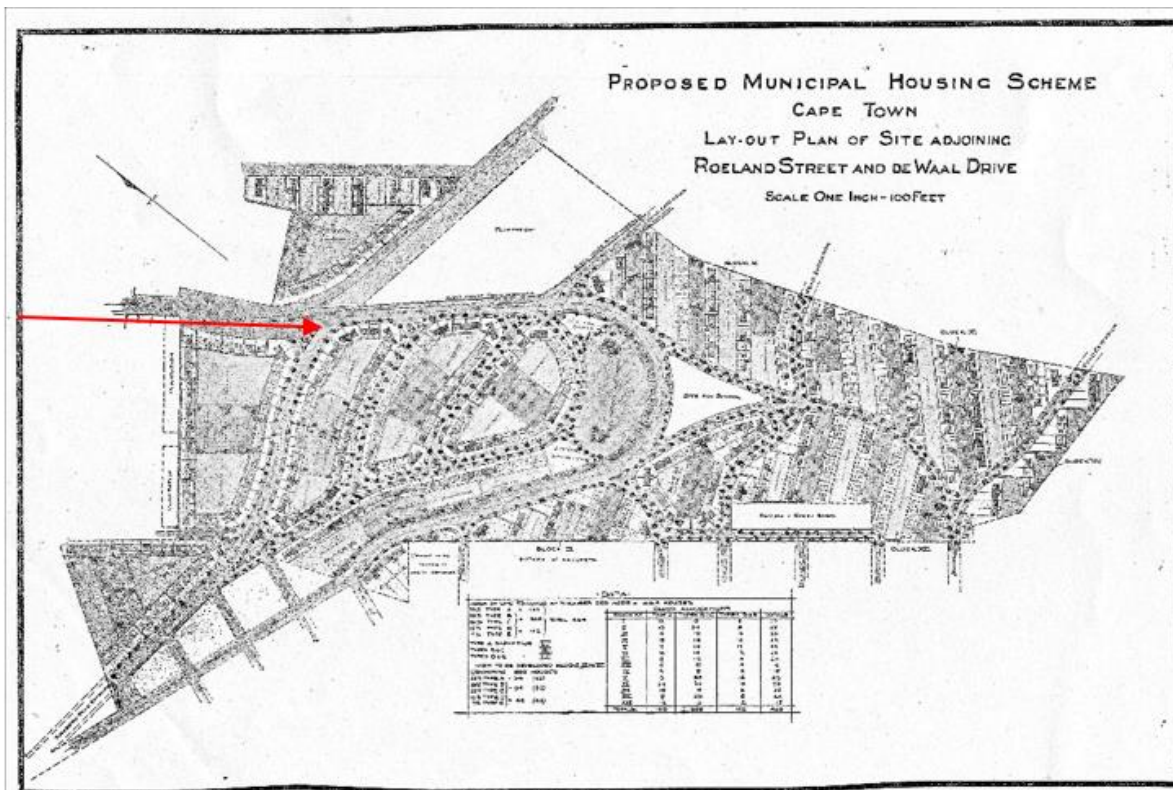


Figure 33: This was the ambitious design layout for the Roeland Street housing estate by architects Lyon and Fallon as part of the CTCC's design competition. The Townships Board and the Provincial Administration objected to the layout as extravagant. It contained schools, churches and a sports field and retained part of the pine plantation. Little of the plan was constructed, except for two blocks of houses (the approximate positions are arrowed). (Mayor's Minutes, 1919)

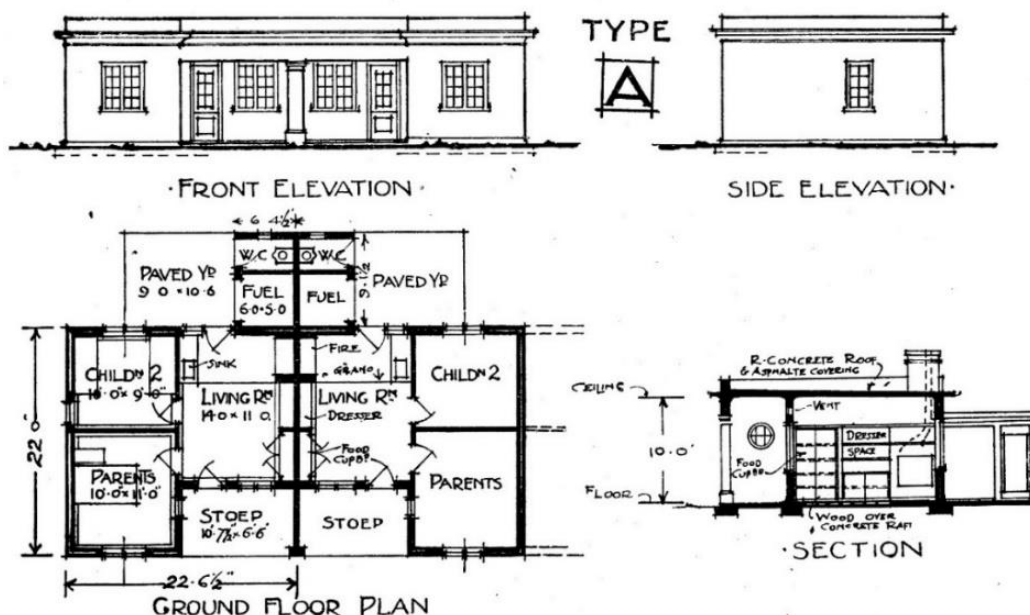


Figure 34: The Roeland Street houses designed by Fred Glennie. This is Type A with three rooms. (Mayor's Minutes, 1919, 28)



Figure 35: Houses in Jutland Avenue, Vredehoek, are the remaining examples of the Roeland Street Housing Scheme for council workers. Most of the verandas in the plan above have been filled in for extra space. (Photograph, 2023)

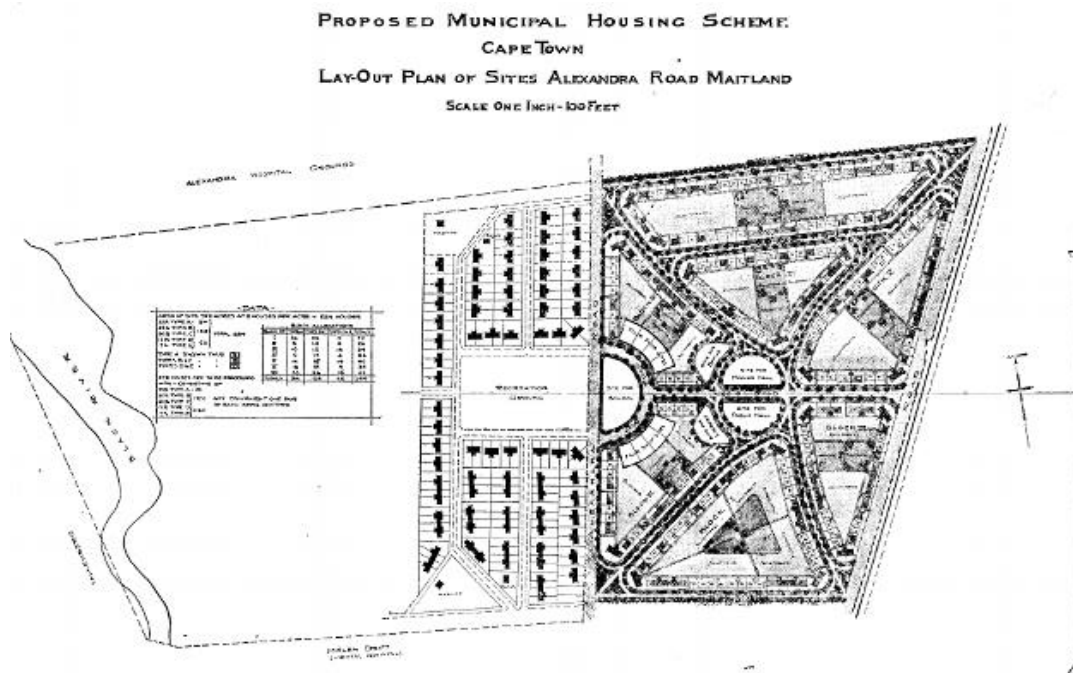


Figure 36: Plan for the proposed extension of Maitland Garden Village east of Alexandra Road (not built). The approved scheme is indicated west of the road. The proposal shows a range of densities from single dwelling units to small apartment blocks. Had the extension been built, Maitland Garden Village would have been a full Garden Village with substantial amenities, open spaces, social amenities and garden allotments. (Mayor's Minutes, year ending 1918, 12)

The Maitland extension project of 1919 was a further elaboration of the Garden City concept. The axis from the central space or playing ground was extended across Alexandra Road to a school site, surrounded by shops. The central axis extended east across the site to a public hall and a 'mission' (church) hall and other public facilities, including another central space and a public library. From this new central space flowed a series of roads and open areas. Housing typologies contained a full range of dwellings, unlike with earlier limited range in the village. There are the same low-density cottages, while at the same time the planners have embarked on denser residential development with apartment blocks surrounded by allotments to the south of the site. This model was no doubt influenced more strongly by Garden City ideals than the earlier, less ambitious plan. The mixture of allotments, retail, educational and other public facilities indicates a

strong commitment to the original Ebenezer Howard Garden City model, no doubt influenced by the planning for adjacent Pinelands, which was underway. Yet, sadly, this Maitland extension was never built.

The Roeland Street Scheme was intended for white city council workers as the Maitland Scheme had been for its coloured workers. Its urban design consisted of wide treed and curving roads that followed the mountain contours. Housing was arranged with generous access to open spaces. There were sites for schools and sports fields. Care was taken to integrate the development visually into the landscape of the area, including the pine plantations against the mountain slopes. The sites were divided into blocks and contained varying degrees of density, from eight to 12 houses per acre, with 12 being the standard Garden City density. The proposal was to release the blocks for development as funding became available.

Both the Roeland Street and the Maitland extension schemes showed strong adherence to Garden City principles with low-density dwellings designed according to model typologies, supplied with waterborne sewerage and sufficient space between them to allow the maximum passage of air. They were intended to be set within green belts and with space for amenities and facilities. The road network was related strongly to the ventilation issue as it was never considered that council workers would own their own vehicles. The full size for the Roeland Street urban plan was extensive, comprising 55 acres, while the new Maitland Village extension site measured 33 acres in extent (see Figure 36). Both the ambitious winning urban designs were undertaken by the firm Ritchie and Fallon and Fred Glennie designed the Roeland Street buildings, but only a number were built. Housing models for Roeland Street were arranged according to the number of people they were able to accommodate. The houses ranged from Type A, which could accommodate a husband, wife and three children, to Type E, designed for a husband, wife and six children. The most common house was for a family of four, comprising 33% of the total number.⁶⁵ A 'luxury' feature was the presence of a stoep which could be used as temporary sleeping quarters.

⁶⁵ Mayor's Minutes, City of Cape Town, year ending 1918, 13.



Figure 37: The Vredeboek (Roeland Street) township built by the CTCC in 1935. It is all that was built of a much larger plan, which was shelved because of funding constraints and provincial accusations of an extravagant layout. The area is indicated by the (darker) flat roofs. It amounted at the time to not more than two streets of housing development. The northern edge of the township is now adjacent to De Waal Drive. See Figure 33 for original layout. (Aerial photograph, City of Cape Town, 1935)

The Maitland Village Extension Scheme and the Roeland Street Scheme ran into difficulties almost immediately. The Administrator of the Cape commissioned a report by the Local Government Inspector, which he submitted to the CTCC in 1919. He was critical of the Garden Village concept in its entirety. He thought it too expensive, particularly because proposals were ‘too luxurious for the class of occupant envisaged’. He wrote:

I am of the opinion that the Garden Village system of planning is unduly expensive, the type of house proposed is unsuitable for the class of occupants that is anticipated, and that a simpler plan could be adopted providing houses in rows or certainly in blocks of four.⁶⁶

In his mind, Garden City planning principles were an expensive waste of public money on working-class occupants. The Roeland Street plan started to unravel almost immediately as Glennie’s designs for housing types A and C and Lyon and Fallon’s Roeland Street layout came in for severe criticism from the local government inspector. He thought the design uneconomical and the proposed stoeps for the houses unnecessary and urban design extravagant.

Only a part of the Roeland Street housing proposal consisting of 39 houses was built, and the ambitious layout plan was soon abandoned through a lack of funding and provincial support.⁶⁷ While the site was developed later, that was undertaken on the basis of individuals building their own modest homes according to the CTCC’s ‘assisted housing in brick’ schemes. The decision regarding the Maitland Village extension was the subject of delays and objections on the part of the Provincial Administration and eventually it was turned down largely on the basis of its proximity to the whites-only Pinelands. The Provincial Administration compromised by allowing

⁶⁶ Mayor’s Minutes, year ending 1920.

⁶⁷ Appendix III for the number of houses built, 5.

the infill of the existing village with a further 40 cottages ‘in view of the demand’.⁶⁸ By 1924, the Housing and Estates Committee of the CTCC could announce that 30 cottages at Maitland had been completed at a cost of £9 600.⁶⁹ The total number of houses completed at Maitland to July 1924 was 244 at a cost of £61 000.⁷⁰ Apart from ongoing maintenance, no further town-planning experiments were undertaken at Maitland.

By 1922, with the additional housing, the development of Maitland Garden Village was largely complete, although it was never extended across Alexandra Road. Further council improvements followed, including electrification and the surfacing of hard roads. In reviewing the success or otherwise of Maitland Garden Village as a housing estate, one can argue that its current relative stability, and the attachment to it by its residents, may be attributed in part to a sense of cohesion as a result of a successful Garden Village design and the admittedly idealised notion of community at the heart of the Garden Village concept. It represented city housing at its more benign before strictures of economy and scale and oppressive government regulations had a major impact.

Two Garden City principles introduced in the Maitland Garden Village scheme became standard practice in residential planning in Cape Town: the first was the notion of typologies attached to income; the second was the enthusiastic use of the notion of a ‘model dwelling’ or a model home which the city council had attempted to popularise at Maitland Garden Village. This gained increasing prominence in public debates, competitions and exhibitions. The first Model House design competition was run by the *Cape Argus* in 1922 soon after the completion of the first phase of Maitland Village.⁷¹ In Cape Town in 1929 there was a ‘Housing Week’ exhibition when the horror of slum dwellings was contrasted with ‘the model cottage’. The Central Housing Board, established in 1920, also provided ‘model’ plans for housing to the municipalities of South Africa.

Maitland Garden Village had a strong sense of social cohesion and was characterised by a high level of person-to-person interaction.⁷² Families lived there for generations. As a recent study noted:

Maitland Garden Village is renown [sic] for having a cohesive sense of community among residents and many households are related and have lived in the area for generations.⁷³

⁶⁸ Mayor’s Minutes, year ending 1921.

⁶⁹ Mayor’s Minutes, year ending 1924.

⁷⁰ Mayor’s Minutes, year ending 1926.

⁷¹ Coetzer, *Building apartheid*, 150.

⁷² Development Action Group (DAG), *Neighbourhood profile: Maitland Garden Village Report* (2020): 12.

⁷³ DAG, *Maitland Garden Village Report*, 12.

The community found itself under threat from Group Areas, however. In 1969, Maitland Garden Village was declared a white group area with plans afoot for the village to be used for a white retirement village. Long-standing residents were ordered to leave, prompting an angry response. However, by 1982 the Group Areas Board (GAB) backtracked, reversing the decision, and Maitland Garden Village was declared a Coloured Group Area.⁷⁴ In the 1990s, long-term council tenants were offered the opportunity to purchase their properties at nominal rates and many who could afford to do so took advantage of the offer. Property ownership had the advantage of providing further stability to the community.⁷⁵

Planning a white Garden City: Pinelands Garden City, 1919–1930

For much of its existence, Pinelands fell outside the Cape Town Municipal area, first administered by a trust and, subsequently, forming its own municipality.⁷⁶ Its development was not about working-class housing but about planning for middle-class white housing. A small section had been planned in the Pinelands layout on the Ndabeni edge for coloured housing, but it fell away almost immediately, showing just how quickly Garden City principles could be affected by local residential segregation. But no analysis of Cape Town's Garden City planning in the 1920s would be complete without a brief review of Pinelands, according to Garden City principles. The creation of Pinelands was the direct result of the progressive planning ideas circulating throughout the British Empire in the post-war period and transferred through personal and professional connections. Intended for middle-class and lower middle-class whites, the Pinelands Garden Village was the result of local initiative and a unique and privileged set of circumstances. Its establishment and design were facilitated by Empire connections and local parliamentary assistance from the start. Pinelands was the brainchild of Richard Stuttaford, a local businessman and Member of Parliament. He was interested in housing and town planning and gave evidence at the Robinson Committee in 1920. Stuttaford pointed to the post-war housing conditions existing in Cape Town, high rentals and the costs of building. He expressed antipathy for the current building styles and called for a new housing policy, of which Pinelands was to be the shining model. Having visited Letchworth, Stuttaford was clear about the Garden City planning principles that would underpin the proposed new town. He provided £10 000 and persuaded parliament for a free grant of land at Uitvlugt. The newly formed Garden Cities Trust had a competition for the best plan, with the prize being awarded in October 1919 to John Perry, a Cape Town architect. Perry was a

⁷⁴ *Die Burger*, 26 May 1982.

⁷⁵ DAG, *Maitland Garden Village Report*, 12.

⁷⁶ Greg Cuthbertson, 'A new town at Uitvlugt: The founding and development of Pinelands 1919–1948,' *Contree: Journal for African and Regional History* 6 (1979): 5–11.

vocal supporter of international planning models and the provision of cheaper housing typologies. His plan called for a main thoroughfare, one of three, extending from one civic open space to another. Off this route (the current Forest Drive), led a series of road intersections of road loops and circles, leading to green spaces and amenities. Perry also paid particular attention to wide, tree-lined avenues and pavements, lined with the pine trees after which the suburb was named. Houses were single villas, centrally placed in their own gardens and set well back from the roads. There was provision for schools, churches, sports fields, shopping centres and a civic centre.⁷⁷

Although the plan was Perry's, to execute it the Trust chose a British expert, the consultant architect and planner AJ Thompson, who had worked with Raymond Unwin at Letchworth. His plan, not very dissimilar, was to build 3 000 houses, all with their own wide street frontages and set in bucolic gardens. From the start, there was a focus on architectural qualities representing a form of British vernacular. The high thatched roofs, small casement windows and cottage-like scale presented a certain kind of vernacular 'Britishness'. The Britishness was also evident in the mock Tudor half-timbering 'and general air of homely comfort'.⁷⁸ Decorative styles included anything that was picturesque. Cape gables were a feature of the churches and some of the residential buildings. The social emphasis on class and white identity was reinforced by title deed conditions which restricted ownership to whites. 'Homely comfort' required a degree of isolation from the surrounding environment. This is where Howard's 'green belt' – an essential planning principle for garden cities – proved useful. It happened to surround Pinelands on three sides in the form of the forest reserve. A railway line, another Garden City planning requirement, surrounded Pinelands on three sides, providing a further opportunity for self-containment. Road access to Pinelands was also limited. Indeed, there is much in Pinelands that resembles the Letchworth plan or even the Hampstead Garden Village.⁷⁹ After Stuttaford's initial grant, funding support came from the Central Housing Board once the Garden Cities Trust had been constituted as a local authority.

The advantage of Pinelands for the planners and residents was that it was planned as a Garden City from the start. Within its 60 acres, roads, drainage, churches, schools, public offices and a commercial centre were all built into the design from the start. Particular attention was paid to landscaping and green belts. Cuthbertson's assertion of the 'uniqueness' of Pinelands is probably true – it was the closest in terms of planning and intentions to the Garden City model anywhere

⁷⁷ 'Cape Town Garden City Plans: First prize: Design by Mr John Perry, Cape Town,' *Architect Builder and Engineer* (May 1920): 14.

⁷⁸ 'Pinelands. The first South African Garden City,' *Architect Builder and Engineer*, Special Edition (April 1922): 3.

⁷⁹ 'Pinelands,' *Architect Builder and Engineer* (April 1922).

in South Africa, and served as an example of what could be achieved with adequate funding, a clear Garden City mandate and good government connections.⁸⁰



Figure 38: Plan of Pinelands Garden City, 1933 (Copy courtesy City of Cape Town). Unlike Maitland Garden Village (MGV) and the Roeland Street Scheme, both of which were truncated before they could be completed, Pinelands Garden Village represents a rare South African realisation of the Garden City concept. There is a wide main thoroughfare from which lead lesser roads. Unlike MGV and Roeland Street, the houses are detached and set within large grounds. It bears a remarkable resemblance to the Letchworth Garden City layout (see Figure 22).

⁸⁰ GC Cuthbertson, 'A new town at Uitvlugt: The founding and development of Pinelands, 1919–1948,' *Studies in the History of Cape Town* 1 (1979): 107–124.

Pinelands was white and occupancy was middle class, despite Stuttaford's references to providing housing for the poor. As a result, it was difficult to see how such a model could usefully be replicated to poorer members of the population. It has remained a white enclave surrounded by a ring road and a green belt for much of its history. Residents of Pinelands objected to the planned expansion of Maitland Garden Village on racial grounds. Pinelands acted as a brake on future expansion of coloured and African housing in the vicinity. It provided a salutary example of how Garden City planning was defined not only by Garden City principles but by racial segregation in the Cape Town context.

The development of Pinelands, particularly the care given to its boundaries, illustrates the synergy between Garden City planning and the opportunities presented for spatial and racial segregation. Pinelands retained a local board and resisted inclusion in the Municipality of Cape Town. It achieved its own municipal status in 1948. While Pinelands was praised in professional circles as a model for future housing development, it was also true that the level of planning and the funds made available could not be replicated on a large scale in Cape Town. AJ Thompson lived for a time in Pinelands while he supervised the work at Pinelands and nearby Langa. He was in demand as an expert in planning at a time when town planning was at the forefront of professional attempts at arresting the decay of the inner city and planning a modern one. Like those of most planners at the time, Thompson's vision was restricted to sound residential planning, good order and wide roads. Nevertheless, he provided simple blueprints for planners to tackle the problems of their cities – identifying healthy sites and building well-planned housing types, a hierarchy of roads, improved traffic facilities and providing open spaces. This is what was achieved at Pinelands. Planning for the rest of a city creaking at the seams was a little more difficult.



Figure 39: Early view of Forest Drive, left, and a thatched house in Pinelands. The use of the vernacular in housing design has been replicated from British schemes such as that at Letchworth. (ABE, April 1922)



Figure 40: Pinelands Garden City in the early stages of construction, possibly 1935. The presence of low-density houses, tree belts and an encircling green belt is evident. (Photograph Courtesy ANA S19F_001)

Introducing Langa: plans for ‘setting apart’

In exploring the ‘stark spatiality’ of the South African city, Jennifer Robinson argued that the spatial arrangements in African residential areas were crucial to the ‘exercise of state power and to the domination of subjects excluded from democratic citizenship rights’.⁸¹ This ‘stark spatiality’ is evident in Cape Town when we explore how the new township at Langa was designed, developed and administered. The CTCC hoped to achieve two objectives when it took over the provision of

⁸¹ Jennifer Robinson, ‘the geopolitics of South African cities: States, citizens, territory,’ *Political geography* 16, no 5 (1997): 365.

accommodation for Africans living in Cape Town in terms of the Natives (Urban Areas) Act of 1923. The first was to remove Africans living at Ndabeni to clear space for industrial development, and the second was to build a new ‘model’ township in which the controls considered necessary could be ‘built into’ the design itself. The planning for Langa was contemporaneous with the Natives (Urban Areas) Act and allowed the opportunity to design a township at Langa which facilitated the requirements of the Act. It was a project on which the British planner AJ Thompson and the CTCC’s Native Administration Department collaborated.⁸²

The depopulation and destruction of Ndabeni and the movement of Ndabeni residents to Langa are closely linked and have been studied in depth elsewhere.⁸³ The social and political history of Langa, too, has been the subject of detailed studies, including studies affecting both the labour compounds and housing developments within Langa itself.⁸⁴ A further study of the planning of Langa has explored its origins in relation to the modified planning elements of a Garden Suburb in the Garden City planning traditions.⁸⁵ In the context of these studies, a strong case can be made to view the planning of Langa as perhaps being only nominally within the Garden Suburb tradition and mostly part of an exercise in dominant state control. The plan for Langa was developed to provide easier surveillance and policing, becoming, as Robinson has noted, a ‘perfect system of control’.⁸⁶

The parameters of residential control were laid out in the Natives (Urban Areas) Act 21 of 1923. The Act clarified the national government’s intentions to restrict the numbers of Africans residing in the urban areas, to set apart Africans within urban areas and to use the mechanisms of township management to do so.⁸⁷ The CTCC Natives Township Committee which was formed in 1922 to investigate the establishment of a new township clearly wished to tie the development of the new township to stronger forms of control. Their standpoint was endorsed by the prime minister in moving the second reading of the Natives (Urban Areas) Bill. He recommended that ‘power be

⁸² Mayor’s Minutes year ending 1923, 20.

⁸³ Christopher Saunders, ‘From Ndabeni to Langa 1919–1935,’ *Studies in the History of Cape Town 1* (Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town, 1979), 194–230.

⁸⁴ Muchaparara Musemwa, ‘Aspects of the social and political history of Langa township, Cape Town, 1927–1948,’ MA thesis, University of Cape Town, 1993; Christiane Elias, ‘A housing study: Legislation and the control of the supply of urban African accommodation, Carnegie Paper 157, Second Carnegie Inquiry into Poverty and Development in Southern Africa, 1984; Nicolas Coetzer, ‘Langa township in the 1920s – an (extra)ordinary Garden Suburb,’ *South African Journal of Art History* 24, no 1 (2009): 1–19.

⁸⁵ Coetzer, ‘Langa township in the 1920s,’ 1–19.

⁸⁶ Jennifer Robinson, ‘“A perfect system of control”? State power and “native locations” in South Africa,’ *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 8, no 2 (1990): 135–162.

⁸⁷ The Natives (Urban Areas) Act 21 of 1923, s 1(1) required an urban authority to ‘define, set apart and layout one or more areas of land for the occupation, residence and other reasonable requirements of natives. Any land so defined and set apart is hereafter called a location.’

given to municipalities to remove from locations idle, dissolute or disorderly natives', pointing out that 'what Municipalities wanted was control of the native population in locations – to control the ingress and egress of natives'.⁸⁸

Building Langa and requirements of the Natives (Urban Areas) Act

The question was this: Was Langa a Garden Suburb, or did it create the controlled spatial conditions within which the requirements of the Natives (Urban Areas) Act could be met? The 'Garden City' consultant, AJ Thompson, did not call Langa a Garden Suburb, merely saying that it was 'laid out as far as possible on town planning lines'. Coetzer calls Langa an 'extraordinary Garden Suburb', basing his opinion on an internal road layout, the position of the school and the presence of open areas behind the cottages for play opportunities.⁸⁹ Perhaps it was both, but certainly there is a pervasive element of control written into the design and statutory management of Langa that Garden Suburbs elsewhere did not have, let alone have specifically drawn into the spatial plan. The following section explores Langa as a spatial expression of the conditions of the Natives (Urban Areas) Act, which it followed.

A new site for a township to replace Ndabeni had been the subject of ongoing negotiations between the CTCC and the Acting Prime Minister, FS Malan, since 1919. Finally, in 1922, an agreement was reached to transfer 400 morgen of land at Uitvlugt to the CTCC for the purposes of the new township.⁹⁰ With approved funding of £50 000 from the ratepayers of Cape Town, work began on the planning of the township at Uitvlugt. At the same time, the newly formed Natives Township Committee reviewed and commented on the Natives (Urban Areas) Bill.⁹¹ The committee's response was instructive. They wished to tie the building of the township to influx control, a matter supported by the prime minister, who pointed out in 1923 that what municipalities wanted was 'control of the native population in locations'.⁹² The Native Township Committee considered that if the local authorities were expected to make an urban location 'attractive', they should also be entitled to limit the number of Africans entering the urban centres. These opinions were picked up in the second reading of the Natives (Urban Areas) Bill in which

⁸⁸ Mayor's Minutes year ending 1923, 13.

⁸⁹ Coetzer, 'Langa township in the 1920s,' 1–19.

⁹⁰ Mayor's Minutes, year ending 1922, 9–12.

⁹¹ The members of the Natives Township Committee were Dr A Abdurahman, W Caldicott Gardner, W M Martin, W J Thorne, W B Shaw and J Z Drake, and the committee was chaired by the Mayor, Mr Verster.

⁹² Mayor's Minutes, year ending 1923, 13.

the prime minister made it clear that what municipalities wanted was ‘control of the native population’.⁹³

The CoCT, in assuming responsibility for African settlement, funded its establishment through a grant first sanctioned by city ratepayers. Once the protracted negotiations for the 400 ha site were complete, the city began the process of planning. There was an initial grant of £50 000 for construction, planning and infrastructure costs, part of a much larger grant of £250 000 voted by the ratepayers of Cape Town.⁹⁴ Unfortunately, that amount was based on an estimate of a population of 5 000.⁹⁵ The fact that the actual population was around 7 000 meant that cost cutting mechanisms were sought from the start. With the planning of Uitvlugt (Langa) shortly to commence, the City Engineer, Lloyd Davies, the Mayor and the Chairman of the Special Native Location Committee undertook a tour of inspection of townships in South Africa in 1922, visiting sites in Kimberley, Bloemfontein, Johannesburg and Durban, so that ‘the location of Cape Town may be enabled to inaugurate its township with a full knowledge of the experiences gained by other local authorities’.⁹⁶ Lloyd Davies examined their layouts, the housing provided and related mechanisms for administration.⁹⁷ He was impressed with the Waaihoek Township, built in 1918 in Bloemfontein.⁹⁸ It was also he who decided that the design of the model township at Langa should be according to the modified ideals of the Garden Village. His concept, however, was redolent with racist sentiment and very far from the bucolic white Garden City environment of Pinelands. He saw the model township as

an Ndabeni laid out in simple unpretentious garden village lines, as a place where town bred natives might eventually take a pride in living, and would be a real contribution to one of the greatest questions of our African civilization.⁹⁹

Subsequent to the visit of the deputation to the urban centres to view African locations, the City Engineer recommended on 23 April 1923 that AJ Thompson, the consulting architect for Pinelands Garden City should be contracted to ‘collaborate’ with his department in designing the township layout. This notion of collaboration suggests that this was a joint venture between the City Engineer’s Department and Messrs Thompson and Forsyth. Lloyd Davies, the Special

⁹³ Mayor’s Minutes, year ending 1923, 13.

⁹⁴ ‘Natives Township Scheme,’ *Cape Argus*, 30 December 1922.

⁹⁵ Mayor’s Minutes, year ending 1923, 12.

⁹⁶ *Cape Times*, 22 November 1922.

⁹⁷ Mayor’s Minutes, year ending 1923, 12.

⁹⁸ Waaihoek (now called Batho) was built in 1918 and was Bloemfontein’s oldest ‘model location’. It was subsequently demolished because of its closeness to Bloemfontein itself. Care had been taken with the layout, size of plots and housing.

⁹⁹ ‘Housing and town planning,’ *Cape Times*, 7 June 1921.

Location Committee and Mr Cook of the Native Affairs Committee all had strong ideas about social control and the plan that followed was unlikely to have been based on Thompson's ideas alone.¹⁰⁰ It is possible that the layout which followed was as much a product of the City Engineer's Department and the Native Affairs Committee, as it was the result of any form of Garden Suburb planning by Thompson and Forsyth.

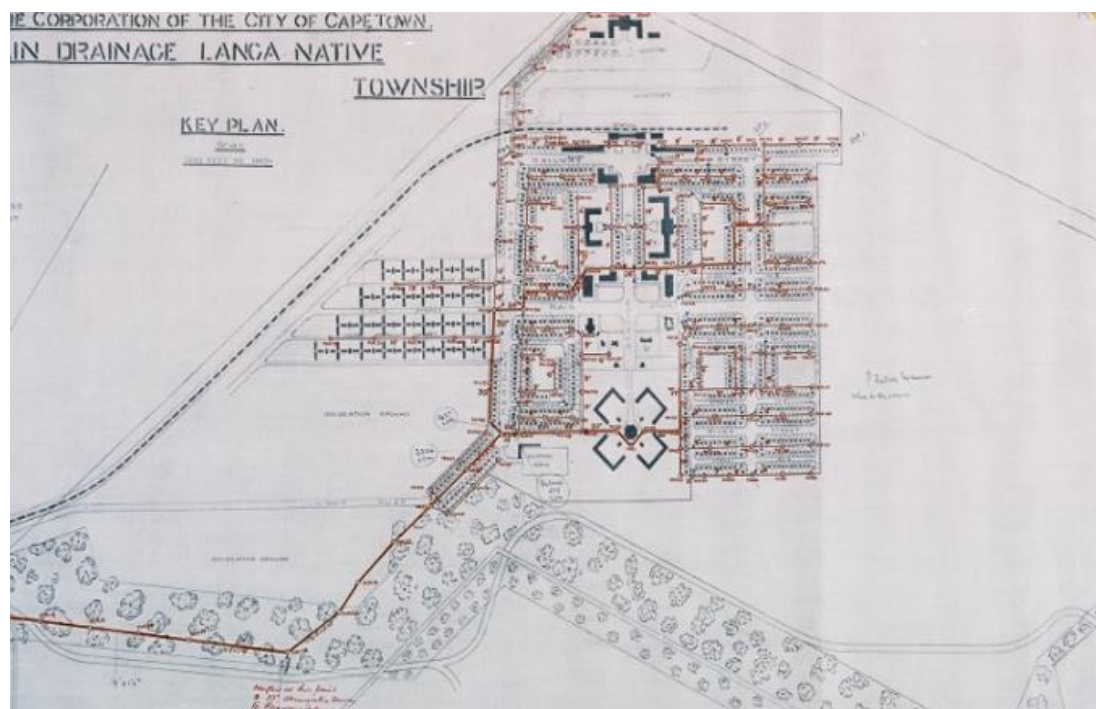


Figure 41: Plan of Langa. This is a drainage plan of 1923 and the only one that survives of the early planning stages of Langa. It shows a clear band of trees which in a Garden City context could be interpreted as a 'green belt' or in a more restrictive environment a 'cordon sanitaire' similar to those at the De Beers compound and at Ndabeni. The railway line leads to the edge of the township. New migrant labourers left the station and were led to a reception depot, which took their particulars. The main hostel towards the south consists of four separate sections, each separated by a high fence to ensure that the residents in the barracks remain separate. (KAB M3 4008)

The CTCC looked to the Natives (Urban Areas) Act 21 of 1923 to dictate the design parameters of the new township. The Act passed the responsibility of housing Africans to the local authorities, but 'Native' policy and law remained within the remit of the central government. The Act permitted three kinds of accommodation for Africans within a location: barracks and hostels for migrant workers, housing for families, and native villages or leasehold site and service schemes.¹⁰¹ The latter was not permitted in Cape Town as the future chapters will show. It also required that the new township site be defined and 'set apart' and within which the municipality may provide

¹⁰⁰ Mayor's Minutes, year ending 1924, 40–41.

¹⁰¹ The Natives (Urban Areas) Act 21 of 1923, s 1(1) required an urban authority to 'define, set apart and layout one or more areas of land for the occupation, residence and other reasonable requirements of natives. Any land so defined and set apart is hereafter called a location'.

the necessary ‘native’ hostels or family accommodation. The law required that Africans living in the urban areas could only live in such a township unless specifically exempted either by being a property owner or registered parliamentary voter.¹⁰² The law made it clear that the design for Langa would need to accommodate controlled access followed by constant surveillance and monitoring by the township superintendent and staff. It was no accident that one of the first buildings constructed was a police station with holding cells.



Figure 42: Aerial photograph of Langa showing the early core of Langa with later expansion of migrant labour housing to the east. The main barracks (arrowed) are visible to the left of the image. They consisted of four U-shaped blocks facing one another. This would have had the effect of being able to control access and also the activities within the central space.
(CCb122_f19_i01)

A month after Thompson’s appointment, the council received the proposed layout for Langa. It was met with general approval by the officials. The Natives Township Committee considered it to be ‘one of the best examples of modern town planning’.¹⁰³ It was clear from the layout itself that the intention was to restrict movement and set apart the township from the surrounding urban areas in much the same way that Ndabeni had been set apart. The mechanisms for isolation and segregation are clear. The railway line which provided a link to Langa was not crossed by any road, enabling the line to be fenced off completely, cutting off all access to the nearby forest and the areas beyond that. There was also a 100 foot ‘reservation belt’ or buffer strip on the western edge to contain and segregate the township space. The layout itself was devised with police supervision in mind, with the police station occupying a central space. The plan accommodated a system of

¹⁰² Section 5(1–2) of Act 21 of 1923.

¹⁰³ Mayor’s Minutes, year ending 1923, 21.

surveillance based on a series of 'line-of-sight' controls with a tower similar to those within labour compounds of Kimberley.¹⁰⁴

Building plans followed the layout design and were announced in December 1923. They provided an indication of the CoCT's most urgent priorities, which was to provide accommodation for migrant workers rather than families.¹⁰⁵ The first plan was for the construction of four barrack blocks for 2 000 single men forming a labour compound. There were other 'huts' for another 1 500 men and a police station. The interiors of the barracks were divided into dormitories, each containing 24 men with cement bunks stacked one above the other. The focus, therefore, was to accommodate as many migrant workers as possible in as controlled an environment as possible. Planning principles were present only in relation to the consideration of planning for light and ventilation. However, even those were subject to control with the steel-framed windows being fixed at the back of the barracks. The early plan contained no family accommodation, although certainly by 1923, the need for married quarters had become acute.

A year later, in November 1924, Thompson explained his thoughts about the planning of Langa to fellow architects.¹⁰⁶ He thought it a pity that the site needed to be used for such a purpose and hoped that in the future 'the natives may possibly be cleared away and this (Langa) may become an extension of the suburbs of Cape Town'. From the planning perspective, his main problem was to create barriers to establish spatial control and to shield the township from view. He explained:

The main problem was to so lay out the estate that there was only one access road, and the railway was to be so placed that, as far as possible, the station was central. The railway as now constructed acts as a practical screen to the adjoining land which may become residential property and has been placed in the centre of 100-foot belt of trees, with the wire fence on either side, and there is no road from which the location crosses the railway line except the 20-foot road leading to the hospital.

He added that the central square was designed to ensure police surveillance.¹⁰⁷ In 1925, plans were put in place to start building accommodation in the second development phase at Langa. First built were the main barracks consisting of four blocks of 21 dormitories for 2 032 men facing inwards into a central space. The dormitories had concrete bunks built into the walls. They were followed by the special quarters built in 1925 consisting of 128 single rooms with six men per

¹⁰⁴ The tower was not built but the system of line of site and controlled access routes was evident in the final design.

¹⁰⁵ *Cape Times*, 21 December 1923.

¹⁰⁶ 'Langa Native Village,' *Architect Builder and Engineer* (November 1924): 29.

¹⁰⁷ *Architect Builder and Engineer* (1924): 29.

room. It was only then, between 1927 and 1928, that the first two-roomed family accommodation was built.¹⁰⁸ The 300 two-roomed houses were quickly filled, there being a severe shortage of family accommodation.

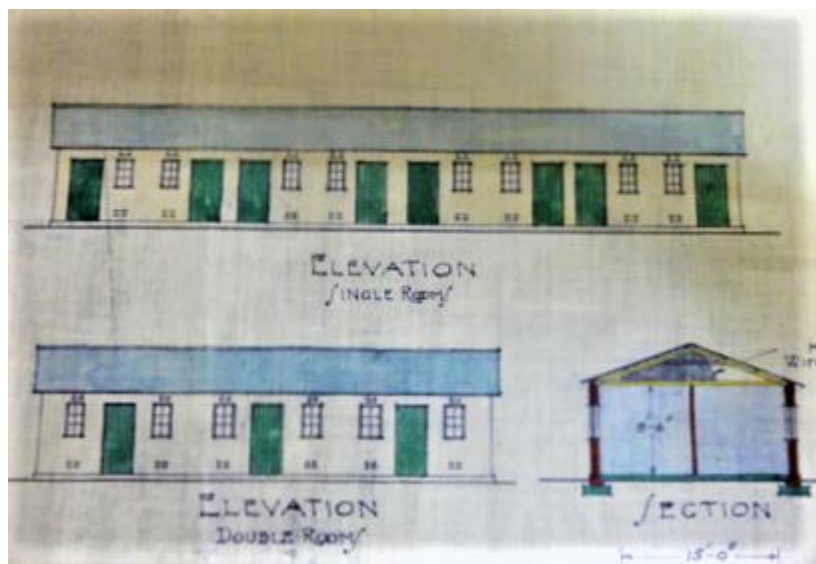


Figure 43: These plans show single and double rooms for migrant workers and were among the first buildings to be constructed together with the main barracks. (KAB Portion of plan M1/3375)



Figure 44: Portion of the plan showing the three-roomed house type built in 1928. They were larger than the earlier houses and more popular. (KAB M1/228)

People at Ndabeni and those living within the urban areas initially resisted a move to Langa.¹⁰⁹ At a meeting called by the Superintendent Cook at Langa, residents listed their objections about the accommodation, among other concerns. Contract workers recorded that they found the barracks draughty, cold and crowded. Acutely observed objections about the coercive concepts

¹⁰⁸ Mayor's Minutes, year ending 1928, 13.

¹⁰⁹ Saunders, 'Ndabeni to Langa,' 210.

underpinning the design of Langa included: ‘Township is not a fit name for the place. It is a compound ...’¹¹⁰



Figure 45: Docks Location at the old Breakwater Prison, now the UCT Graduate School of Business. The Docks Location moved to this facility after the original corrugated iron barracks were dismantled by 1930. The central courtyard is the controlled area within which all communal activities would take place. There was a single entrance where access could be monitored. (No date, va_independent-S8F_025)

The Natives Urban Areas Act was promulgated in Cape Town on 1 April 1926. After that date, all Africans in Cape Town, except those given explicit exemption, were required to live in a location.¹¹¹ By 1930, the Docks Location, whose workers were permitted to remain, had moved to the Breakwater (Portsworld Road) Prison. The prison contained all the elements that made up a controlled labour compound, emphasising the links between places of confinement and labour compounds.

By 1927, Langa had barracks for 2 200 men and nearly 300 two-roomed cottages nearing completion.¹¹² The 300 two-roomed houses were built in rows of three with a stoep and ablution and toilet facilities situated in blocks beyond the houses. By 1932, a further 48 two-roomed houses and 16 larger three-roomed houses were constructed.¹¹³ The accommodation for both migrant labourers in the barracks and the family houses were bleak and functional and services were minimal. It was as far away from any Garden City comfort than could be imagined.

Conclusions

The Housing Act of 1920 ushered in a change in housing policy in South Africa as the National Government began to involve itself in the development of townships and the provision of housing

¹¹⁰ Saunders, ‘Ndabeni to Langa,’ 210.

¹¹¹ Saunders, ‘Ndabeni to Langa,’ 205. An exempted person was an African who met the requirements for the qualified franchise.

¹¹² Mayor’s Minutes, year ending 1927, 55–56.

¹¹³ See chapter 3.

for the poor, for the first time. Some of the earliest residential planning in Cape Town was according to Garden City principles. However, the results of Cape Town's experiments with Garden City planning illustrated the potential for hybridity and modification adapted to local conditions and the requirements of race and class. They were not unique to South Africa as Garden City planning modification occurred throughout the world. 'Whites only' Pinelands was the closest to a Garden City, both in terms of urban design and the degree of a social compact with its residents. It never achieved any form class integration, however, which Howard had advocated. In fact, it acted as a brake on any other racially mixed residential areas nearby, despite their Garden City planning credentials, as in the case of the Maitland Garden Village Extension. Pinelands was a unique case, pioneered with the assistance and vision of Richard Stuttaford. It was not the first experiment applying Garden City planning principles, however. Maitland Garden Village was conceptualised by the Municipality of Cape Town as a model village for its employees. But it did not expand and was too small to be considered anything more than a social and planning experiment which produced a cohesive and stable community.

Langa was certainly a dormitory suburb, in that any small-scale commercial activities for indigenous beer and food production, for instance, were expressly forbidden. But whether it was a 'Garden' suburb can be questioned, given the principles embodied in such a description. Was Langa planned according to Garden City principles? While it was true that it was separated from its neighbours by a green belt, is also a clear example of the established principles of the Act to 'define and set apart' an African township.

Chapter 3

Slum clearance and council housing: emergence of formal planning activities in Cape Town, 1930–1948

Introduction

By early 1930 the impacts of the Great Depression were beginning to be felt in Cape Town. The population of Cape Town rose during the Depression as the rural destitute flocked to the cities in search of work. The population of Cape Town increased from 209 727 in 1921 to 301 448 in 1936. Unemployment increased and the Cape Town General Board of Aid, which administered the Poor Relief Fund, noted a rise in cases requiring assistance. In 1933, the Cape Town City Council (CTCC) provided further assistance to the destitute with unemployment relief schemes.¹ Overcrowded living conditions continued to deteriorate. The census of 1926 revealed severe overcrowding among those identified as coloured, with some 32.7% of them living with more than four persons per room. It also revealed startling class and race inequalities attached to living conditions.² But by 1931, race and class differences among the poor in infant mortality rates (always an indicator of poor public health) showed just how stark the inequalities were.³ By the mid-1930s there was a significant movement of Africans arriving in Cape Town, attracted by the employment opportunities offered by industrialisation and the war effort. The African population more than doubled between 1936 and 1946, rising from 13 583 to 31 258.⁴

This chapter explores the relationship between international planning models locally applied and the location of new housing for the working classes. I suggest that the new housing estates built after 1930 bear only notional resemblance to the international Garden City and modernist planning models. I examine the development of the townships which followed the Slums Act with special reference to the work of the Housing Branch of the City of Cape Town (CoCT) and the ‘showpiece’ modernist housing estate at Kewtown on the Cape Flats. The chapter also examines the relationship between slum clearance as facilitated in terms of the Slums Act 53 of 1934, the town-planning objectives of what became known as the Foreshore Plan and the first Town

¹ Mayor’s Minutes, year ending 1933, 23.

² The 1926 census revealed that of the people identified as not ‘European’, including those living in Wynberg, 78.3% lived more than two persons to a room and 32.7% lived more than four persons per room. Europeans fared better with only 0.6% living in one-roomed accommodation.

³ Report of the Medical Officer of Health, Appendix 5, 8.

⁴ Lucien le Grange, ‘Working class housing in Cape Town 1890–1947. Segregation and township formation’ (Africa Seminar, University of Cape Town, 1985), 5.

Planning Scheme (TPS) for Cape Town of 1941 in fulfilment of section 17 of the Town Planning Ordinance 33 of 1934.⁵ All in some way had an impact on the city form which followed.

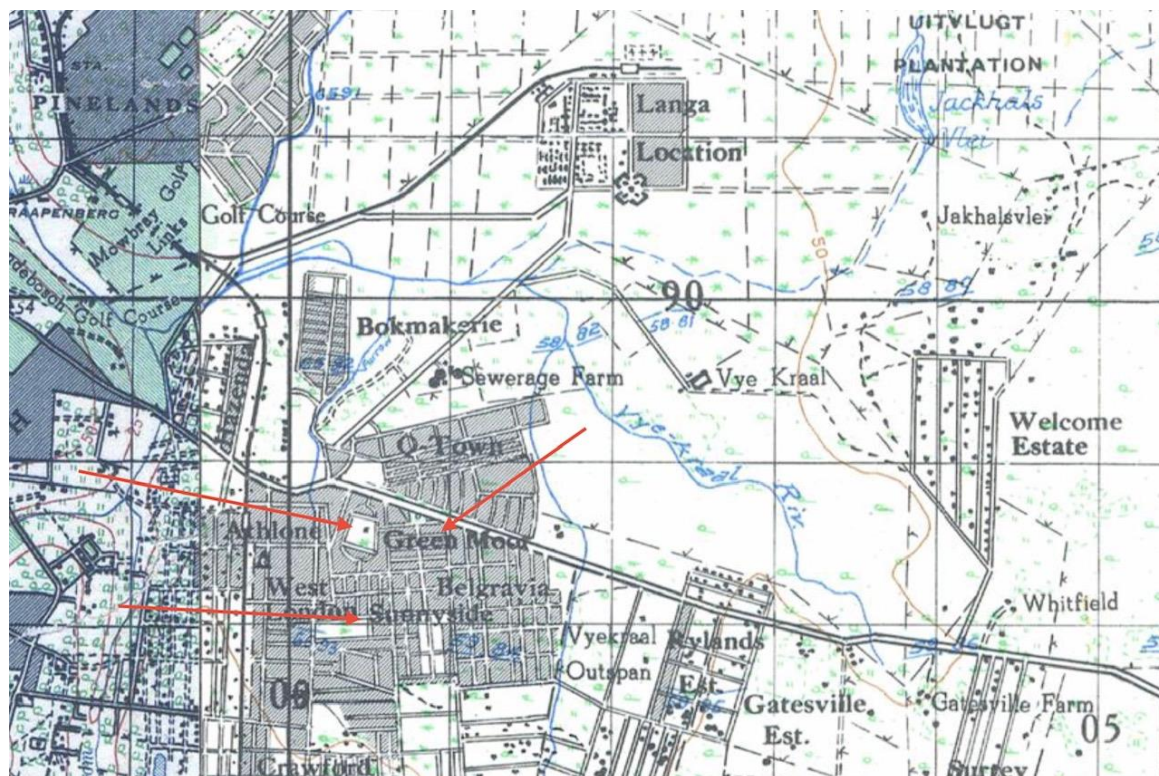


Figure 46: Showing township housing on the Cape Flats, 1940. Bokmakierie has been developed together with parts of Kentown. The map also shows Alicedale, Gleemoor (incorrectly called Green Moor) and Sunnyside (arrowed). Langa to the north is expanding. (Map: <<https://adrian.frith.dev/historical-maps-of-ct/>>)

Peri-urban informal settlements, themselves a response to housing shortages, urbanisation and poverty, were expanding outside Cape Town during this period. Central government anxiety about the growth of urbanisation and the expansion of informal slums resulted in a number of detailed studies on the subject of ‘irregular urbanisation’. The Thornton Report of 1940 recommended the inclusion of the Windermere area in the municipality so that slum-clearance measures could be initiated.⁶ In a wide-ranging study, the 1942 Britten Report into conditions existing on the Cape Flats recommended that improved urban order be established through regional- and town-planning mechanisms, that there be greater centralisation of planning and that urban disorder could be controlled by the production of larger quantities of formal sub-economic housing.⁷

⁵ For a fuller account, see Naomi Barnett, ‘Race, housing and town planning in Cape Town c 1920–1940 with special reference to District Six,’ MA thesis in Historical Studies, University of Cape Town, 1993.

⁶ UG 8–1940. Report of a committee to consider the administration of areas which are becoming urbanised but which are not under local government control (Thornton Report) (1938–1939), 22.

⁷ UG 18–1943. Report of a committee of enquiry to enquire into conditions existing on the Cape Flats and similarly affected areas in the Cape Division. Department of Social Welfare, Union of South Africa, 1942, 52.

The growing population contributed to overcrowding within the poor, mixed residential areas of Cape Town as families were forced to share housing stock by renting out rooms. As we have seen in the previous chapter, little had been done to alleviate the housing shortages for the poor. Apart from rent limitations imposed by the Rents Act of 1920 and municipal by-laws requiring compliance with the Building Regulations, private property rights remained well entrenched. In addition, the CTCC and the Citizens Housing League, which built most of the working class housing in Cape Town, were dependent on the Central Housing Board (CHB) for funding. The CTCC's first application for £30 000 made in 1920 was turned down by the CHB. Subsequent applications for funding were subject to the availability of funds and how the CHB chose to allocate it nationally. By the early 1930s the CTCC housing provision showed a modest improvement. The CTCC assisted housing in wood-and-iron scheme at Gleemoor resulted in some 379 houses and the Sunnyside assisted housing in brick scheme yielded some 270 houses by 1933.⁸ The Devils Peak (Roeland Street) assisted housing scheme was implemented between 1928 and 1931, resulting in a total of 240 houses. By 1930 the CHB had allocated funds for 454 semi-detached houses at Bokmakierie, Athlone and 104 new houses at Maitland Garden Village. Work was also underway in District Six with 60 flats in Constitution Street and a further 54 in Vincent and Stirling Streets.⁹ The Citizen Housing League received funding for a white housing estate at Koeberg Road and a coloured housing estate at Crawford.¹⁰

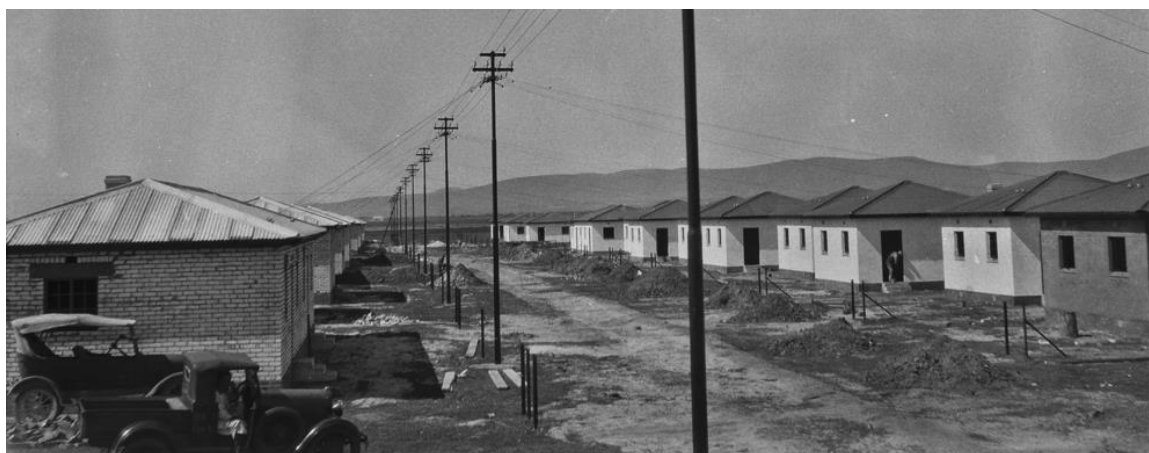


Figure 47: Housing for whites undertaken by the Citizens Housing League (CHL) c 1930, site unidentified but probably at Koeberg Road Maitland. The houses were detached rather than the row houses built by the council at Bokmakierie for coloured residents. The funding model of the CHB permitted greater costs per house for European housing. (City of Cape Town CCb119_93_i01)

⁸ Christiane Elias, 'A comparative analysis of government housing policy and Cape Town City Council housing policy, 1890–1935,' MA thesis, Stellenbosch University, 1980, 157.

⁹ Report of the Central Housing Board, UG 21–1935, 7, 17.

¹⁰ Report of the Central Housing Board, 7.

Cape Town Housing Survey, 1931–1933, and origins of Slums Act 53 of 1934

The slow pace of housing reform was partly as a result of the reluctance of local authorities and ratepayers to involve themselves in additional costs and partly of resistance to getting involved in matters associated with private property and development rights. Sub-economic allocations were excluded from developing African urban areas, which remained funded on an economic rate. This meant that lessees were expected to fund housing development through rents and fines. The outcome was to increase the burden on the very poor and to discourage municipalities from building more black housing, despite a frantic need. As public pressure about slum conditions rose, the CHB in 1930 reviewed its funding model for housing for the poor. It decided to provide improved funding rates to local municipalities to build sub-economic housing.

As a condition for the granting of the improved rates, the CHB required a detailed survey of housing conditions in the affected municipal areas to be undertaken to reveal the housing measures necessary. A second condition was that the schemes thus funded were for letting purposes only and for those unable to pay economic rentals. A further condition was added in 1934: that sub-economic housing was to be allocated as a priority to those persons evicted from unhealthy and unfit dwellings in terms of the Slums Act.¹¹ As a result, housing and slum clearance activities became linked through the CHB funding model. The CHB made the cost and value of dwellings thus constructed racially hierarchical, with between £250 and £450 allowed for European houses and £50 to £250 for non-European houses.¹² The local authority was also required to bear a loss equal to the loss of the government advance at 2%.¹³ With improved funding available and, as we will see, a damning housing report presented by the CoCT's Medical Officer of Health (MoH) in 1933, the CTCC was forced to accelerate its housing programme which, until then, had been proceeding at a leisurely rate.

¹¹ UG 21–1935. Report of Central Housing Board, year ending 31 December 1934, 4.

¹² Report of Central Housing Board 1934, 4. It suggests that even at this early stage minimum standards and racial discrimination were linked to the quality of houses provided.

¹³ This was amended to 3% after the Slums Act in 1934 to encourage municipalities to evict people living in inner-city areas and move them to the outer suburbs.

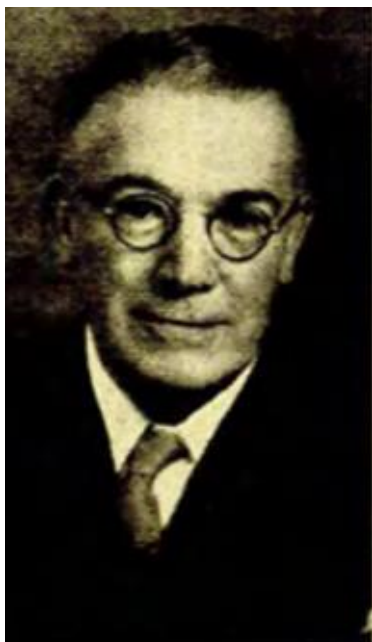


Figure 48. Dr Thomas Shadick Higgins was a British-trained public health specialist and he remained in public health during his entire career. He travelled extensively and was well connected professionally, both in Britain and in South Africa. His first post was as assistant MoH for Birmingham, a large industrial city with a slum problem. He moved to St Pancras London in 1913, where he focused on the amelioration of housing conditions and child welfare. His views on public health, slums and housing, supported by scientific and public medical data, were highly influential in Cape Town. (SA Medical Journal 28 [November 1959])

Cape Town's MoH, Dr Thomas Shadick Higgins, began the housing survey in 1931.¹⁴ He had a particular professional interest in housing conditions and slum clearance and like his predecessor, Dr A Jasper Anderson, his approach to public health was strongly influenced by British health policy and legislation. As the health and housing crisis intensified in Cape Town, it was inevitable that an official such as Shadick Higgins would turn his attention to physical interventions and planning to improve living conditions in the city.¹⁵ The result was that he was the first MoH to be actively involved in town planning in Cape Town. He was a founder member of the local Town Planning Association, promoting planning as a mechanism to improve public health through slum clearance and 'orderly' development.¹⁶

Shadick Higgins' housing survey comprised a statistical analysis of housing conditions in the poorer parts of Cape Town for Wards 2–7. It was detailed with more than 30 tables of statistical evidence and was something of a milestone in the assessment of living conditions in Cape Town. It soon became apparent that most houses were occupied by more than one family in 'lettings with one family per room'.¹⁷ His criteria for assessing overcrowding were based on notions of cubic airspace per person in the 'letting' and the number of persons per room where the minimum

¹⁴ Mayor's Minutes, year ending 1931, 50.

¹⁵ Melanie Attwell, *Planning for worker housing in Cape Town 1900–1960: Local adaptations of transnational planning paradigms*. Paper presented at the International History Conference, Rome, 2018.

¹⁶ See Appendix II for Dr T Shadick Higgins' career as MoH.

¹⁷ A letting was a rented room or rooms in a house containing two or more families and with shared facilities. There were 16 357 rooms surveyed in 3 440 houses, with 8 103 lettings in the Interim Report (City of Cape Town Housing Survey, Interim Report, 1). The second report in 1933 identified 5 231 houses and flats occupied by 45 855 persons in 4 568 lettings.

number was two adults.¹⁸ He found that more than 46% of the houses he surveyed were overcrowded. His report found a close correlation between density of use and unfitness of habitation, with areas unfit because they ‘they are occupied by more households than they can properly accommodate’.¹⁹ There was also a correlation between overcrowding and race, with 90% of the 8 103 lettings (with 16 357 rooms) identified by officials as ‘coloured’.

In preparing his conclusions, Shadick Higgins drew on his experience as a public sanitation official in Birmingham and St Pancras, London. He concluded that while not many houses were in themselves unfit for human occupation, the *extent* of congestion made them so. He did not propose demolitions as a general rule, arguing that much of the defective housing could be made good with repairs and the reduction of overcrowding. His approach to ‘congested areas’ which the British Greenwood Act called ‘clearance areas’ was more radical.²⁰ He concluded that areas as a whole should be subject to improvement schemes ‘involving clearance and reconstruction in greater or less degree’.²¹ In addition to the opportunities presented by demolitions and residential reconstruction, he pointed to the health advantages of the Garden City model and new housing estates which could be built on the Cape Flats. He proposed new legislation which made it easier to demolish whole inner-city areas.

The report was finalised in 1933 and presented to council. After a flurry of media activity and committee meetings, the CTCC was left with two courses of action: the first was to expand their housing programme, especially for the very poor. An ambitious eight-year plan for housing was announced, requiring extensive funding from the National Housing Commission at reduced (sub-economic) rates. Building work on Constitution Street Flats and planning for the sites the former Wells Square (later Bloemhof Flats) was announced. There were further proposals for the building of more flats (called ‘tenements’ by the council) to relieve housing congestion in the area around Lion and Bloem Streets.²² These schemes used Shadick Higgins’ idea that new flats should accommodate the people removed from slum conditions in the same area.

The second course of action was an official response to an item raised by Shadick Higgins’ report: the legislative difficulties and time-consuming nature involved in securing easy slum clearance (ie demolition) for the rebuilding of congested areas. The CTCC set up a combined Health and

¹⁸ The measurement of cubic air space per person was a standard scientific mechanism and it had been used in the mines of the Rand in 1904 in the Transvaal Report of the Coloured Labour Compound Commission in 1905.

¹⁹ Naomi Barnett, ‘Race, housing and town planning’.

²⁰ Annexure I: Timeline of relevant events and landmark legislation.

²¹ Mayor’s Minutes, year ending 1931, 5–7.

²² The Lion Street flats were never built.

Building Regulations and Housing and Estates committee to take the matter further. The committee was aided in its work by council officials and ‘outside advisors’, including members of the recently formed Town Planning Association. The committee (with the assistance of the MoH) prepared a draft Bill intended to become a private motion to parliament. Instead, exceeding expectations, with minor adjustments, it formed the basis of the Slums Act of 1934. As a result, there was a clear connection between Shadick Higgins’ Housing Survey and the Slums Act of 1934.

His conclusions show correlations between British innovations in slum clearance and new housing provision. British influence on Cape Town’s housing and urban policy was at its strongest by the 1930s.²³ Local officials, determined to address the slum conditions and congested urban morphologies through mass demolition, found inspiration in British law and policy. In Britain, as elsewhere in Europe, the establishment of improvement areas implied the demolition of old housing stock and the relocation of significant numbers of people to new housing developments. The influential British Greenwood Act of 1930 and the Unwin Report of 1931 paved the way for the mass clearance of slums, followed by the creation of improvement areas with housing built according to sound standards of construction. The Greenwood Act permitted the acquisition of land surrounding slum areas for clearance on the grounds that whole areas were unhealthy and the urban form was too congested to be manageable. It set out local authority obligations as well as standards for new working-class housing. The British Housing Act of 1936 which followed consolidated previous legislation and laid out a blueprint for linked slum clearance and housing provision for the working classes by permitting the expropriation of land for the purposes of rebuilding. It was a particularly valuable precedent for Cape Town officials because it outlined the local authority’s role in identifying and reviewing housing conditions. Critically, it allowed for the declaration of whole slum areas, the redevelopment of surrounding land and the establishment of improvement areas which included mechanisms for reducing overcrowding – a solution which the CTCC was to emulate.

²³ Annexure I: Timeline of relevant events and landmark legislation.



Figure 49: An abandoned row of houses in District Six ready for demolition c 1970. Although no longer inhabited, it shows the structural issues of tight inner-city living that modern town planners objected to – the narrow lanes, the housing and balconies spilling onto the street and the central stormwater drainage system which used to collect detritus. (CCb132_f40_s5_i127)

Setting parameters for urban order: Town Planning Ordinance 33 of 1934 and implementation of the Slums Act 53 of 1934

This section expands on the opportunities for radical city remodelling following the passing of the Slums Act by relating it to the additional possibilities afforded by the preparation of the Town Planning Scheme (TPS). The Slums Act ushered in a period of fundamental city change by enabling officials to clear congested areas for future planning purposes.²⁴ The facilitation of clearance mechanisms was supported by the City Engineer at the time, TP Francis. He had experience of slum clearance and rehousing in the industrial cities of Britain, having been City Engineer for the Dagenham Council at the time of the construction of Becontree, one of the largest housing projects in the world at the time. He was also part of the ‘Homes fit for heroes’ campaign in Britain.²⁵ Together he and the MoH Dr Shadick Higgins provided substantial input to the City of Cape Town Private Slums Bill (which eventually formed the basis for the Slums Act) and in the Select Committee which preceded the passing of the Act.²⁶

²⁴ Naomi Barnett, ‘Race, housing and town planning’.

²⁵ See Appendix II: Influential city officials as shapers of urban change.

²⁶ For biographical details of Dr Thomas Shaddick Higgins and his role in slum clearance and town planning in Cape Town, see Appendix II.

The argument for a TPS had been made by both professionals working in the urban environment and city officials since 1915 as a way to establish order within the urban environment and to avoid the ‘repetitions of past mistakes’.²⁷ Their demand reflected a contemporary anxiety that the city was ill-equipped to meet the challenges of the future, regulate city growth or plan for efficiency and socio-spatial control. New regulatory and spatial challenges were emerging – from the demands of industrialisation and the challenges presented by uncontrolled population growth and peri-urban settlements and the impact of the motor car. The officials in the City Engineer’s Department realised the need for a concerted planning response and looked to Britain for planning solutions.²⁸ They found that before and during the First World War town planning in Britain was largely about residential planning.²⁹

The Cape Provincial Town Planning Ordinance 33 of 1934 (TPO) repealed an earlier Ordinance of 1927. The new ordinance was based on the Transvaal Town Planning Ordinance of 1931, which Cape Town planners admired as an efficient town-planning model. It required every scheduled municipality to prepare a TPS within three years.³⁰ The Ordinance permitted the preparation of a Joint Town Planning Scheme to be prepared by contiguous municipal areas.³¹ The TPO specified the matters to be considered in the development of TPSs which the planners should consider. A key focus appeared to be on road systems. It particularly specified the implementation of ‘ring roads’ to ease the traffic flow in the Central Business District (CBD). These requirements suggest that the replanned road system was considered the backbone of modern planning frameworks. The ordinance also enabled ‘the provision of sites for occupation as native locations, and the adequate provision of land for use or occupation by persons other than Europeans’.³² As a result, fast-speed traffic networks and racially segregated townships for persons ‘other than European’ were written into the requirements for the TPS. Planned urban order was therefore interpreted in the TPS as both a structural and a racial order. A Town Planning Office was established in the City Engineer’s Department in 1935 with a staff of seven and with JC Collings as Town Planning Officer. He was joined by A Penso in 1945.³³ While the CTCC created a Town Planning Office,

²⁷ Mayor’s Minutes, year ending 1916, 16.

²⁸ See Appendix II for background to the planning influences of Walter Stanley Lunn.

²⁹ Philip Booth and Margo Huxley, ‘1909 and all that: Reflections on the Housing, Town Planning, Etc Act 1909,’ *Planning Perspectives* 27, no 2 (2012): 267–283.

³⁰ Ordinance 33 of 1934, s 29.

³¹ Ordinance 33 of 1934, s 33.

³² TPO Second Schedule (7).

³³ Verschoye Papers BC 1205.A2.19 System of town planning in Cape Town. JC Collings was the first Town Planning Officer appointed in 1935 and the only qualified member of a staff of seven. AV Penso, who followed, initiated the accurate town-planning surveys for the City Engineer’s Department. He was a founder member with Roy Kantorowich of the Cape provincial branch of the South African Institute of Town Planners in 1958.

the preparation of a TPS was hamstrung by the lack of base plans and property information necessary for the completion of both the survey and the plan.

As we have seen, the wording and formulation of the Slums Act of 1934 reflected much of Shadick Higgins' thinking on housing and slum clearance, which in turn was informed by British law and policy. The Act gave MoHs significant powers to declare buildings and areas as slums. Dr Shadick Higgins' Housing Administration Branch took on the role of slum identification and condemnation. They also took on the role of managing new housing. In this way, officials made far-reaching decisions about who received new housing, based on interviews where issues such as employment records, race, age and ability to pay the rents were covered. The allocation of council housing according to racial and economic circumstances contributed to segregated housing environments.

Shadick Higgins was initially delighted with the passing of the Act. He considered it an opening of 'a new chapter in slum clearance in South Africa',³⁴ enabling demolitions and remediating slum conditions. However, he miscalculated badly and soon withdrew from further slum declarations. The major stumbling block was the inability of the CoCT to build new houses fast enough. The middle-class media also viewed the Slums Act in a positive light, particularly for its potential role of enabling Garden City segregation. An editorial in the *Cape Argus* in June 1934 thought it necessary to remind readers of the old fears of epidemics, poor public sanitation and slum clearance, by claiming, 'Nothing stands in the way of the City Council getting on with the task of removing the plague spots of the City', and reminding readers of the extent of the housing problem. The article placed a local 'spin' on the Garden City concept, writing that what was needed was to give the slum-dwellers a 'decent home' on the 'open veld' where there was 'plenty of air and space'.³⁵ This, of course, unlike the well-connected suburban areas of Britain, referred to the sandy and windy Cape Flats. The central government strongly supported the concept of slum clearance, passing an amendment to the Housing Act in 1936 to facilitate the funding of slum clearance.³⁶

Soon after the passage of the Slums Act, the MoH began targeting slum properties. Tables were drawn up, addresses noted, along with the number of lettings and sub-lettings, and numbers of people per property. The very crowded nature of the slum properties provided additional concerns,

³⁴ Verschoyle Papers BC 1205.A2.19 System of town planning in Cape Town, 530.

³⁵ 'Government Gazette: Slums Act comes into force,' *Cape Argus* Editorial, 25 June 1934.

³⁶ Housing Amendment Act, 1936 s 11(2).

not only about congestion, but where displaced residents were to be rehoused.³⁷ With supply failing to meet demand, the MoH refused to declare any further slums after 1938. By the end of that period, the CoCT, with the financial support of the CHB, expropriated 601 dwellings in slum areas. This affected a total of 7 005 people, some of whom remained as council tenants with the city ironically becoming something of a slumlord itself. Provision for new housing for those displaced only affected tenants. Sub-tenants were not registered, rendering many homeless.

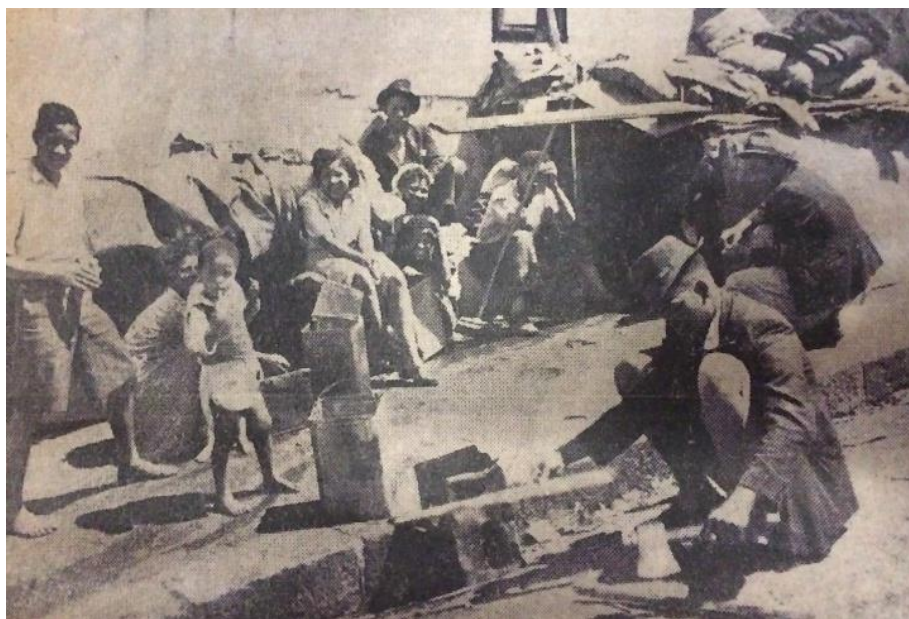


Figure 50: Cape Times, 4 June 1934. 'Squatters build shack in City Street.' Oddly, the date of this image is before slum clearance began in earnest. It is possible that the residents shown here were ejected by their landlords in anticipation of the official slum clearances. While the CTCC claimed that persons displaced through slum clearance mechanisms were rehoused, it did not protect sub-tenants. In this case the reasons for this heartless ejection, however, are not made clear as they are not recorded in the newspaper. (City Council Archives newspaper collection)

A backlash on the part of property owners ensued who considered they were being unfairly targeted and that their property rights were being adversely affected. Even before the passing of the Act, some 'coloured' Capetonians complained rather presciently, as it turned out, that slum clearance would be segregation in disguise. This was hotly denied by the Minister of Health, who claimed:

³⁷ Report of the MoH, May 1936, 78–79. For example, in 1934, 9–11 and 2 Grey Street in Woodstock were identified as having 72 occupants, 117–119 Castle Street in Cape Town had 44 and 170–174 Newmarket Street had 61. In 1935, 30 Constitution Street was found to house 10 people and 19–21 Bloemhof Street had 28. Most of the problem areas were either in the old lanes of Cape Town in the BoKaap or in District Six. Some, like Wells Square, were declared slums and some were either acquired by the City or the use as a dwelling was discontinued.

The Bill has nothing whatsoever to with anything of that nature (ie segregation). Its purpose is to wipe out slum conditions irrespective of the race or colour of slum owners or their tenants and it has no ulterior motive.³⁸

The minister was being deliberately obtuse. While there is no reference to race in the Slums Act, most people affected by potential expulsions were working class and coloured or African.

If Modernism (which we will explore shortly) provided the guiding philosophy for wholesale slum clearance, then section 17 of the Slums Act provided its statutory basis.³⁹ It permitted a local authority to acquire any land forming an area of ‘convenient shape and dimensions or for the satisfactory development or use of land’.⁴⁰ Moreover, a later decision specified that the sites targeted did not need to be slums. This clause, when reinterpreted by a legal advisor in 1936, effectively permitted the MoH of a local municipality to facilitate the expropriation of land when the site was not a slum and to use it for effectively any purpose it deemed fit.⁴¹ The involvement of Cape Town officials at such an early stage and the fact that City officials guided the requirements of the Act from the start suggest that Cape Town’s City Engineer viewed slum clearance from a ‘wider perspective’⁴² and intended it to be a useful tool for future city planning. It was in line with slum-clearance directives and replanning in cities elsewhere in Britain, where historic urban form was viewed as a mistake that needed to be corrected through ambitious new planning projects.

Cape Town 1938–1944: influence of Modernism

International Modernism began to have an impact on Cape Town planning between 1938 and 1940. South African Modernism drew its inspiration from Modern Movement architecture and the ideas of Le Corbusier. His concepts dominated new ideas of city form, from a network of traffic arteries to separate zonings and large open spaces.⁴³ Early modernist ideas about a future of Cape Town began to emerge in the first TPS of 1940 and Beaudouin’s Foreshore Plans of 1940 and

³⁸ *Cape Times*, 4 June 1934.

³⁹ Peter Hall, *Cities of tomorrow*, 207–209. Modernism in the urban context is variously defined. It generally refers to the rejection of the existing and traditional urban forms of settlement towards a comprehensive and interconnected approach to the city, using rationale and scientific models. The modernist model required the paradox of decongesting the old city through whole-scale demolition but increasing densities through high-rise development. Modernism required a clearly differentiated spatial structure, the separation of uses and subservience to the needs of traffic.

⁴⁰ The Slums Act 53 of 1934, s 17 refers to (a) any land in a slum and (b) any land which adjoins or is near to land acquired if the local authority considers the land to be useful or necessary.

⁴¹ Naomi Barnett, ‘Race, housing and town planning,’ 4.

⁴² Naomi Barnett, ‘Race, housing and town planning,’ 2.

⁴³ Eleanor Smith Morris, *British town planning and urban design: Principles and policies* (Harlow, Essex, England: Longman, 1997), 60–63.

1945.⁴⁴ The planning of the Cape Town Foreshore has been explored elsewhere.⁴⁵ The question here is what influence early modernist intention had on future residential planning and slum clearance in Cape Town. Modernism involved a break with the past, a return to fundamental principles of space and light, and a drive towards progress, industrialisation and social and spatial order. It found expression in functional and sometimes monumental architecture and a complete change to the old city urban morphologies, requiring major city destruction.⁴⁶ Planning experts regarded it as a technical exercise and could be considered as a major force in ensuring a ‘top-down’ or a ‘history from above’ approach to urban redesign and planning.

Le Corbusier, the Swiss architect and urban planner, was the predominant protagonist of Modernism in urban planning the 1920s and 1930s, notably through his writings *La ville contemporaine* (1922) and *La ville radiense* (1933). The key was a paradox, that one must decongest the centre of our cities by increasing their density. In addition, planners had to improve circulation and provide more open spaces.⁴⁷ To achieve this, he said ‘we must build on a clear site’. He was highly critical of the congestion of old cities, noting that, ‘To save itself, every great city must rebuild its centre.’⁴⁸ This required the total demolition of the old fabric. According to Le Corbusier: ‘A city should be treated by its planner as a blank piece of paper, a clean tablecloth, upon which a single, integrated composition is imposed.’⁴⁹

Given the impact of Modernism on city design, notably Cape Town’s Foreshore, and on apartheid planning, it is useful to examine how Modernism was understood and used in the local context to justify inner-city destruction and to provide an intellectual basis for the design of new urban models. The modernist approach to architecture and urban planning gathered pace at the Congrès Internationale d’Architecture Moderne (CIAM) in Switzerland in 1928. The approach combined new building technologies with large-scale planning interventions, combining the International Style of the Modern Movement with Walter Gropius and Mies Van der Rohe’s approach to ‘comprehensive urban redevelopment’.⁵⁰ Encouraged by Le Corbusier, the Athens Charter began

⁴⁴ MM Beaudouin, *Outline of scheme (Foreshore) for Cape Town (South Africa)* (Cape Town City Council, 1940); Report on Amended Provisional Town Planning Scheme of the portion of the Municipality of the City of Cape Town extending from Bakoven to Trafalgar Park (Cape Town City Council, 1940).

⁴⁵ Nicolas Botha, ‘The gateway of tomorrow: Modernist town planning on Cape Town’s Foreshore 1930–70,’ MA thesis, University of Cape Town, 2013.

⁴⁶ Amit Tangare, ‘Le Corbusier’s principles of city planning and their application in virtual environments,’ MA thesis, School of Architecture, Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada, 2001, 15–29.

⁴⁷ Peter Hall, *Cities of tomorrow: An intellectual history of urban planning and design in the twentieth century* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 207.

⁴⁸ Peter Hall, *Cities of tomorrow*, 208–209.

⁴⁹ Amit Tangare, ‘Le Corbusier’s principles of city planning,’ 16.

⁵⁰ Eleanor Smith Morris, *British town planning and urban design*, 63, 67.

to develop planning systems at new scale and extensive interventions within the urban environment. The idea reached South Africa with the Transvaal Modernist Congress and Exhibition in 1938. The congress is generally regarded by urban professionals and architectural historians as the start of the influence of Modernism in South Africa and it represented a strong transnational planning influence on future architecture and planning for South African cities.⁵¹ A modernist vision for Cape Town was presented by the architect Norman Hanson at the Transvaal Congress in 1938. Echoing Le Corbusier's ideas, he slammed Cape Town as an outmoded and inefficient city.⁵² He listed his objections: the streets were too narrow, they lacked order and the internal traffic system was inefficient, the peripheral living areas were too dense and lacked a rational sense of organisation. The situation could be saved by a modernist development on the Foreshore which afforded an opportunity for town planning which was, he considered, 'commensurate with the technical and scientific achievements of the 20th century.'⁵³

His Cape Town scheme planned to sweep away:

a great section of Cape Town's city centre and inserting the ideal Corbusian cityscape of regular, towering blades, nestled in the green park space and connected via elegant, elevated motorways.⁵⁴

Coming at the time when a TPS was being developed and negotiations were underway for the new Cape Town Foreshore development, the critique could not have found more fertile ground with local planners. New freeways, slum and site clearance and vast, mass-built housing followed. Roy Kantorowich, one of the leading professional figures of the congress, moved to Cape Town to take up the position of planner for the Joint Foreshore Scheme. As a result, the modernist influence was considerable, and the Foreshore Plan and Beaudouin's City scheme were deeply modernist in character. Traces can also be seen the abortive plan for Kewtown.

⁵¹ The *South African Architectural Record* published the proceedings of the congress, no 9 (22 September 1938); Alan Mabin and Mark Oranje, 'The 1938 Johannesburg town planning exhibition and congress. Testament, monument and indictment,' in Robert Freestone and Mario Amati (eds), *Exhibitions and the development of modern planning culture* (Routledge, Surrey: 2014), 97–110.

⁵² Norman Hanson, Congress proceedings, *South African Architectural Record* no 9 (22 September 1938); Mabin and Oranje, 'The 1938 Johannesburg town planning exhibition'.

⁵³ Norman Hanson, Congress proceedings, *South African Architectural Record* no 9 (22 September 1938).

⁵⁴ Nicholas Botha, 'The gateway of tomorrow,' 42.

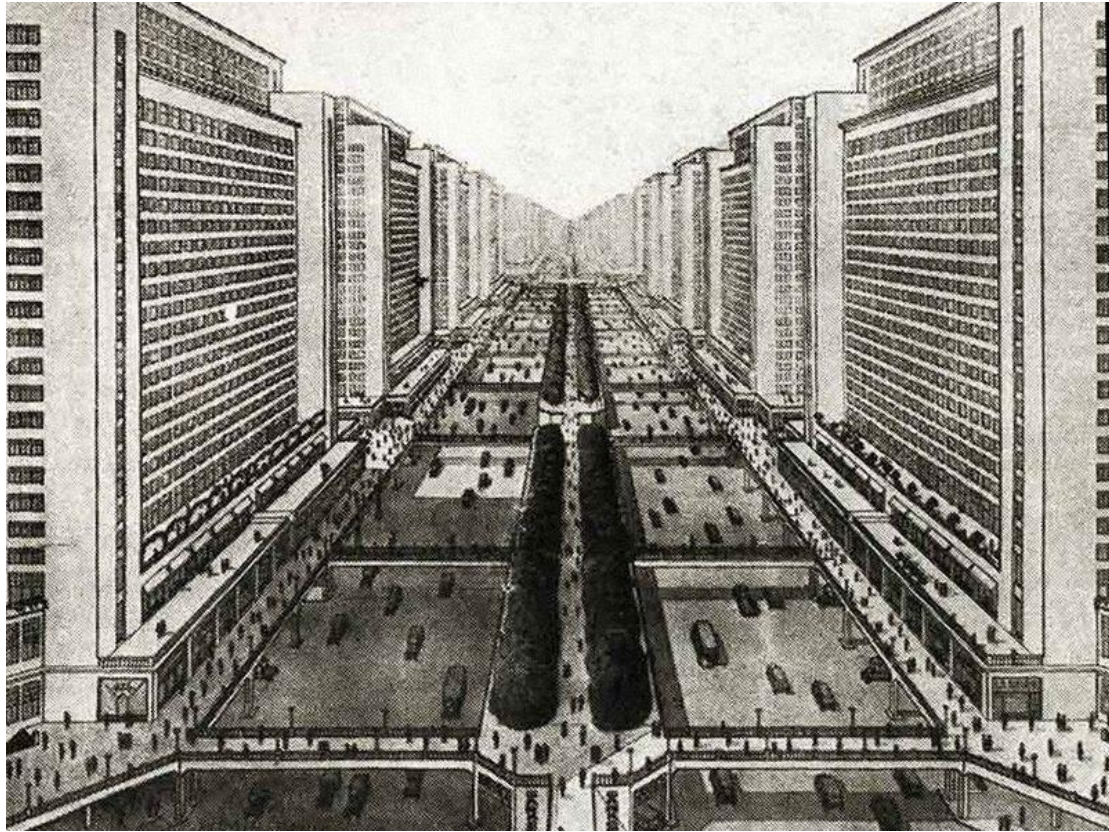


Figure 51: Le Corbusier's vision for La ville radieuse (Radiant city), featuring tower blocks surrounded by open space and wide boulevards. (Researchgate <https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Le-Corbusiers-La-Ville-Radieuse-1930_fig2_333579015>)

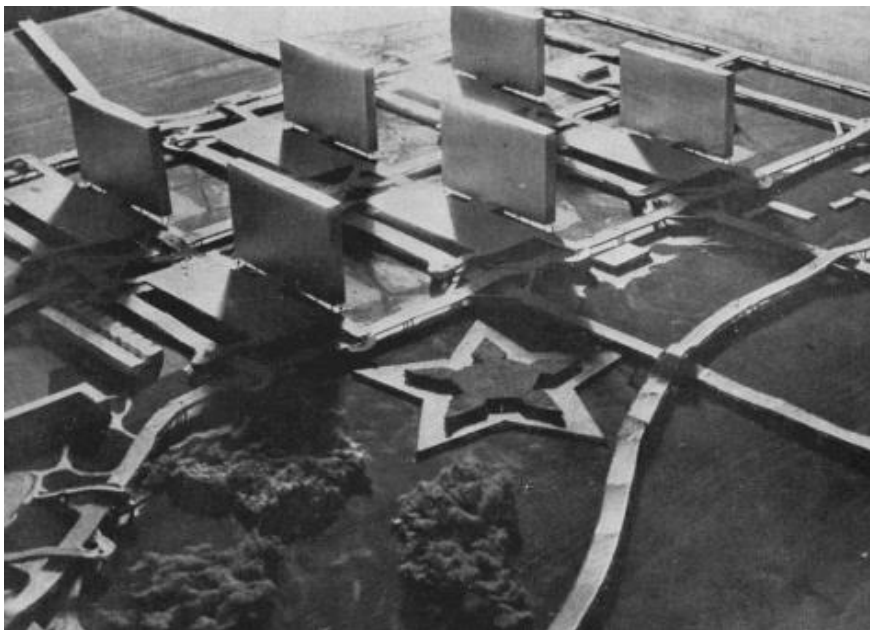


Figure 52: Norman Hanson's notional modernist proposal for the City of Cape Town in 1938. It includes tall slabs of buildings linked by freeways built on an entirely cleared site. Only the Castle of the Cape of Good Hope remains. (SAAR 1938, N Botha 2013, 4)

Walter Stanley Lunn, early housing and town planning: first Town Planning Scheme, 1941



Figure 53: WS Lunn City Engineer 1938–1950. (Cape Argus, 13 February 1950).

Walter Stanley Lunn was born in Moscow, where his family properties were confiscated during the Bolshevik Revolution, leaving Lunn convinced that the urban poor were a threat to social order who needed to be managed, partly through improved housing projects.

After leaving Russia, he trained as an engineer in Manchester, England. In South Africa he was employed as an engineer in water supply and sewerage projects.

He joined the CTCC in 1913 as the Chief Engineer responsible for the drainage scheme in the southern suburbs of Cape Town. Upon his return from war duty, he was made Chief Engineer of the Steenbras Water Scheme.

By 1938, the CoCT had a new City Engineer, Walter Stanley Lunn.⁵⁵ Lunn had the most varied and international career of all Cape Town's engineers. Unlike previous incumbents, he was not closely tied to British planning systems and drew his ideas from a wider range of sources, particularly American and European. He saw war service in France and it is likely that it was his idea to employ MM Beaudouin as city consultant on the Foreshore project. He was acutely aware that the role of the City Engineer was closely tied to the processes of cultural and economic change of the 1930s, particularly in regard to the treatment of fast-speed transportation networks and what he called 'the gigantic task' of 'housing and rehousing of the masses'.⁵⁶

In 1940 he decided on widespread slum demolition as part of the TPS and proposals for the cleared land. City assistant planner JG Collings provided the first indication of what was planned for Cape Town and the residents of the old city. He made it clear that it was not houses per se that were targeted but the tight residential form of old Cape Town and the urban pattern that Norman Hanson had so objected to two years before. In a statement about the future of planning in Cape Town, which he presented to a conference of engineers in Cape Town, he announced that it had already been decided that the slums would be demolished to free up land for industrial and commercial use.⁵⁷ Although he had to back-track from these ideas subsequently, it was clear from

⁵⁵ For the biographical details of W S Lunn, see Appendix II.

⁵⁶ W S Lunn, 'Presidential address,' *The Transactions of the South African Institute of Civil Engineers* 2, no 3 (March 1952): 67.

⁵⁷ JG Collings, 'Some problems of town planning slum clearance and housing in Cape Town,' *Journal of the Institution of Municipal and County Engineers* 63 (1936): 405–423; 'Rapid slum clearance: Plan for congested city areas,' *Cape Times*, 9 April 1936; Naomi Barnett, 'Race, housing and town planning,' 121.

this early stage that city planners considered the inner-city areas something of a blank slate onto which their planning intentions could be imposed.

Lunn established a Housing Branch in Newlands in 1939, which had a good housing output throughout the war years. The branch produced housing of a higher standard than the mass production which followed after 1950. This work included that at Alicedale in 1939, the fishermen's flats at Kalk Bay, the Schotschekloof Flats in the BoKaap, the Bloemhof Flats in District Six, and a continuation of the housing programme at Kewtown. Lunn's approach to mass housing was business-like and his proposed TPS of 1940 revealed him to be devoid of any sensitivity for those affected by slum clearance or the effects of replanning and dislocation.⁵⁸ In the area of town planning, he was an avowed modernist. He wanted to clear the slums away and create in their place modern structures, fast road networks and open spaces. This thinking strongly informed his plans for District Six in 1941 in the first draft TPS.⁵⁹ The basis for the scheme was the identification of open spaces, a road system and the development of broad use zones. For Lunn to achieve this, housing would have to be demolished and about 50% of the people living in District Six would have to be rehoused.⁶⁰

There was immediate protest on the part of the residents of District Six and members of the public. The plan was withdrawn, to be amended, but Lunn's proposed road system and the plan for the demolition of large parts of District Six was upheld by council until consensus could be achieved on how the road system of Cape Town could be connected to the boulevards of the Foreshore. Lunn's impact on the reconstruction of Cape Town from the replanning of the peripheral areas to the plans for the Foreshore, and for the high-speed road network that eventually dominated the city, has yet to be acknowledged in the city's historiography. The City's concept plans of flyovers and ring roads which followed the acceptance of the Foreshore Scheme in 1947 owed more to Lunn than they did to his successor, Solomon Morris, who really only tinkered with an existing concept.

⁵⁸ For an account of the draft provisional TPS, Bakoven to Trafalgar Park, and the controversy which followed, see Naomi Barnett, 'Race, housing and town planning'.

⁵⁹ The 1941 scheme was the first of four sections together with a fifth final statement. The first, from Bakoven to Woodstock, was submitted to council in 1941, the second from Woodstock to Wynberg submitted in 1952, the third from Wynberg to Heathfield submitted in 1957 and the fourth scheme submitted in 1962 from Heathfield to Clovelly: Cape Town Municipality, *Town planning scheme: Revised final statement*, 1 December 1964. During the period 1941–1974, the TPS was subject to continuous review and amendment: see TPS review, 1974, first report. It was never approved by the Provincial Administrator and was replaced by the Land Use Planning Ordinance (LUPO) in 1985. The 1941 scheme was controversial because it involved vast slum clearances and removals for roadworks and public open spaces (see Figure 54).

⁶⁰ For a full description, see Naomi Barnett, 'Race, housing and town planning'.

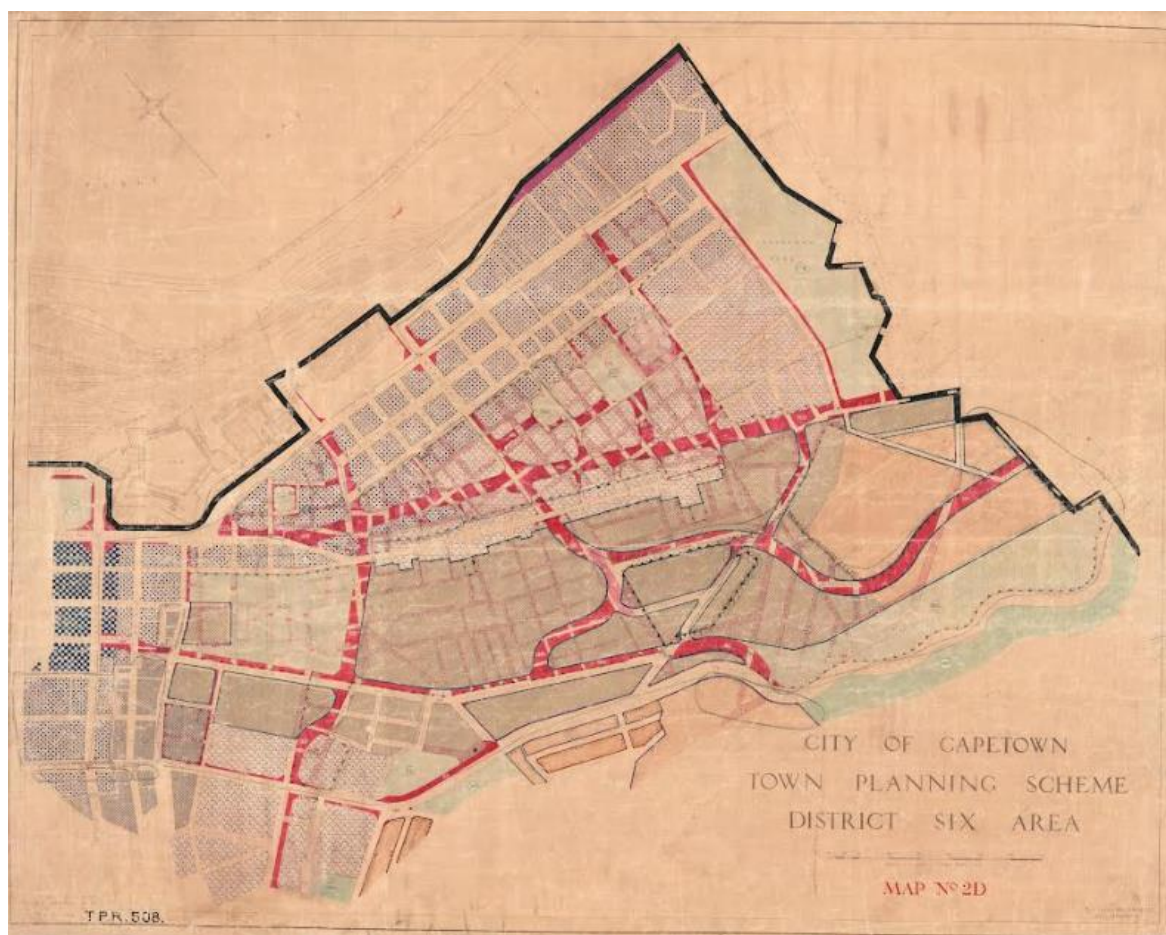


Figure 54: WS Lunn's plan for District Six prepared by JC Collings. The plan shows a complete reorganisation of space, with a new road system forming the 'bones' of an urban structure. A widened Constitution Street links District Six with a new freeway system. The plan involves the demolition of large areas of existing housing and the displacement of some 50% of the residents. (City of Cape Town TPR 508 Map 2D. Undated, but c 1941)

Housing provision and town planning: international influence and local practice

In the 1930s and 1940s, the design and provision of new housing presented an opportunity for fashioning a modern city in line with the international planning ideas circulating at the time. Professional planners, city engineers, architects and even medical officers of health looked to best-practice examples on offer in other cities, and particularly in Britain, which appeared particularly accessible and compelling, given the extensive professional and cultural links.⁶¹ The impulse to plan, modernise and attempt to achieve urban order was therefore both a reaction to public health and housing conditions, on the one hand, and a desire to keep pace with international trends, on the other. As indicated earlier, it was part of the broader movement of Modernism which held that bold and sweeping changes were required to meet the challenges facing urban centres as they changed and adapted to meet new technological challenges. As a result, in the period 1930 to 1948,

⁶¹ See chapter 2.

urban planners, housing specialists and public health specialists were actively engaged on housing and town-planning projects that interacted, as we shall see, on several complex and interrelated fronts. They ranged from planning the Foreshore and the first TPS to the provision of roads and housing. One of the most important projects was the provision of housing for the poor and the working classes of Cape Town.

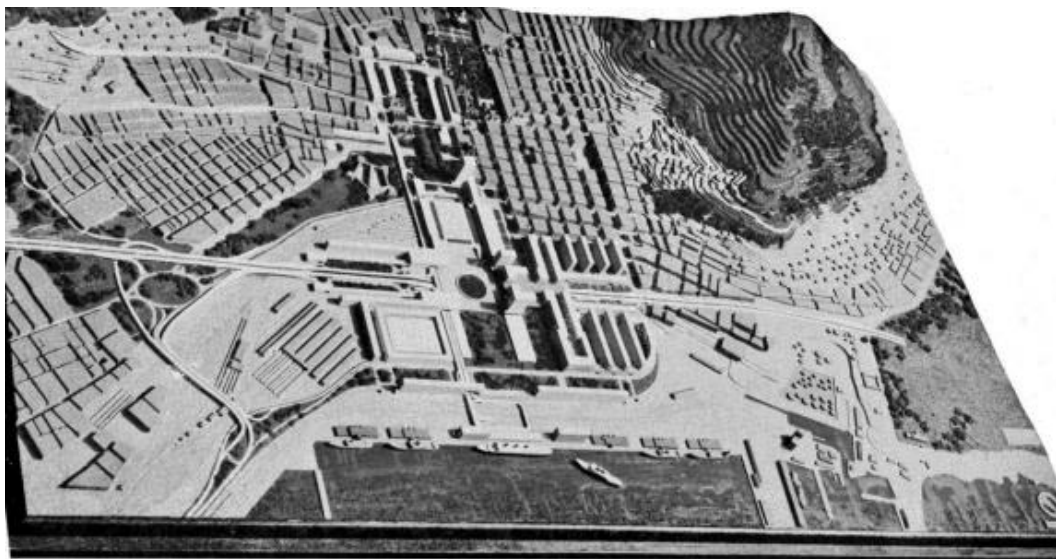


Figure 55: This is MM Beaudouin's amended 1945 plan showing the impact of a green space and road network cutting east-west across the city. Beaudouin proposed that the roadworks be undertaken at grade (or on the level). The plan was amended by Lunn in 1949, with a proposal for a ring road around the city and a more extensive system of freeways. (Botha, 2013, 66)

The provision of housing became a complex issue tied to town-planning intentions and a modernist vision for the city, and a desire to achieve socio-spatial control over population and city growth. It became clear that it was not only the removal of slum properties that interested city officials, but also the possibilities presented by the release of valuable city land for replanning and modernisation purposes. The counter-intuitive nature of demolishing houses when there was a housing shortage was lost in the general euphoria of replanning of the old city.

Modernism twinned with the City Beautiful movement in the Foreshore Scheme, producing a symbolic vision of 'The Gateway to Africa' with grand boulevards and the fast road networks.⁶² The mix of City Beautiful, which stressed the monumentality and grandeur of cities; and modernist principles which promoted large scale interventions to achieve progress and urban efficiency is

⁶² The City Beautiful movement had its origins on the 19th-century boulevards and promenades of major European capitals, with 20th-century examples in American cities and designated capitals of the Empire. The City Beautiful movement placed emphasis on the symbolic nature of urban space and the value of spatial vistas often terminating in monumental focal points. Peter Hall, *Cities of tomorrow*, 174; Vivian Bickford-Smith, *Cape Town in the twentieth century*, 150–153.

clear in Beaudouin's plan for the Foreshore. He combines the symbolic qualities and monumentality of the City Beautiful principles with a new road system which defined the 'scale of the new proposals'. The proposals reflect both modernist intentions as well as the trend towards the City Beautiful. He proposed four principal spatial zones. Of relevance to this study is a recommendation for commercial zones to the east and west of Cape Town, on sites to be cleared as slums. His report states that:

the replanning of District Six will present an opportune occasion for the extension of a freeway towards the Cape Flats which will no way interfere with the activity of Sir Lowry Road. On the west ... it will be possible, at the right time, to undertake the planning of the slums of the Malay Quarter and the Docks.⁶³

It is significant that Beaudouin's reports of 1940 and 1945 showed remarkable similarities to Lunn's town-planning proposals. They both involved road networks linking the east and the west of the city. It is highly likely that Beaudouin (who did not know Cape Town and spoke little English) was fully briefed and assisted in the production of his report, thus reflecting Lunn's existing plans for the Cape Town.

The wartime Royal Barlow Commission of 1941 in Britain influenced post-war planning, not only in South Africa but throughout the world, becoming a successful example of transnational policy transfer.⁶⁴ The Barlow Commission's brief was to examine the preponderance of population development in city centres and the effects of the concentration of the industrial classes in the cities of Britain and ad hoc industrial development, and to make appropriate recommendations.⁶⁵ The commission proposed the decentralisation of industry followed by decentralised residential areas for the industrial classes, arguing that displacement of the population was necessary to achieve the required settlement densities and control of urban growth patterns. The report proposed suburban expansion through the provision of additional housing on the outskirts of built-up areas. The notion of populations following and being resettled close to new industrial nodes was later deployed by apartheid planners when removing Africans from cities and in legislated resettlement in new industrial border areas. But it was also central to much relocation and housing development within what became the Cape Town Metropolitan area.

The report proved to be a milestone in planning thought. It had a clear influence on Cape Town and South African post-war planning. It was part of what Stephen Ward described as the 'softer'

⁶³ MM Beaudouin, *Outline of scheme (Foreshore)*, 5–8, 12, 25.

⁶⁴ Appendix I, 7.

⁶⁵ Hall, *Cities of tomorrow*, 111–112.

process of cross-national learning and policy transfer, or the influence of new ideas.⁶⁶ One of the report's findings was the need for greater centralisation of planning powers to achieve post-war planning intentions. While in Britain the Barlow Report was a response to the war-time destruction of the vulnerable and highly centralised cities, it still had a resonance with local planners because it provided a clear analysis of some of the problems facing the modernising city. The ideas of the Barlow Report and similar adopted ideas in the South African Social and Economic Planning Council (S&EPC) No 5 were used and adapted by local planners in new city and housing frameworks. The S&EPC Report on Planning reflected a specifically 'modernist' perspective of spatial planning in South Africa with a strong commitment to 'reconstruction' and centralisation of the existing planning system as well as housing development within Neighbourhood Units.⁶⁷ It was no accident that the Joint Town Planning Scheme of 1950 drew extensively on the Barlow Report and the recommendations of the S&EPC Report on Town Planning. But, unlike the Barlow Report, the systems of residential design and the decentralised system of satellite Neighbourhood Units were racialised, becoming an important structuring element in the segregated city.⁶⁸

The removal of urban populations from inner city suburbs to new housing in Britain was not without its trauma. But, generally, the new residential environments in Britain were carefully planned with better housing stock. While the trauma of relocation in the British metropole should not be underestimated, in the Cape Town context, removal from traditional old neighbourhoods and relocation to the outer edges of the city also carried with it the trauma of racial segregation and the potential loss of voting and property rights. Occupants of council housing did not qualify for voting rights because the properties were not rateable and voting rights were tied to rateable properties. In other words, moving to council housing meant the loss of the municipal franchise. Le Grange notes that the people most affected thought differently, considering the Slums Act and the housing initiatives which followed a smokescreen for urban expulsion and segregation in disguise.⁶⁹

Sub-economic housing: to build up or build on the Cape Flats?

With very few exceptions, the CTCC focused on building rental housing stock for coloured workers rather than poor European workers. It took the Citizens Housing League to generate a

⁶⁶ Stephen V Ward, 'Cross national learning in the formation of British planning policies 1940–99,' *Town Planning Review* 78, no 3 (2007): 371.

⁶⁷ UG 34–1944. Social and Economic Planning Council Report Number 5. Regional and Town Planning; Peter Wilkinson, 'A discourse of modernity: The social and economic planning council's fifth report on regional and town planning, 1944,' *African Studies* 55, no 2 (1996): 141–181.

⁶⁸ The planning and design of the Neighbourhood Units are explored further in chapters 4 and 5.

⁶⁹ Lucien le Grange, *Working class housing Cape Town 1890–1947*, 15.

housing development for working class ‘Europeans’ at Koeberg Road, Maitland in 1938.⁷⁰ These houses were generally single detached buildings rather than row houses and built according to the CHB’s higher criteria for European housing.

The implementation of a housing policy for Cape Town’s working classes and the implementation of a TPS in the period 1930–1950 followed international housing and planning trends. Yet, as we have seen repeatedly, it resulted in forms modified for a segregated society, in line with perceived requirements (perceived by those devising them). As ever, cost remained a key factor. In Cape Town, the Garden City concepts of residential planning were only partially understood and implemented. Shorn of any social benefit content, they became self-contained dormitory suburbs dropped onto the outskirts of a complex city and a mechanism for achieving residential racial segregation. The imperatives of finding cheap, large tracts of land for worker housing estates and the requirements for racial segregation had made a contained residential layout an attractive option for planners. In Cape Town’s circumstances, it meant that there emerged a growing band of mass-produced low-quality housing estates far from the city centre. The building of townships based on Neighbourhood Unit planning principles is examined in more detail in chapter 5.

Building up: inner-city, Kalk Bay flats development

With slum clearance closely tied to the provision of replacement housing following the passing of the Slums Act, public pressure on city officials to provide more housing increased. There was an ongoing debate both within in council’s combined Housing and Health Committee and within the CHB itself whether flats or the suburban Garden City ideal was more appropriate to house the poorer working classes. Shadick Higgins approved of the idea of workers being close to work, although he also adhered to the Garden City ideas of healthy living and plenty of light and ventilation. In general, the CHB did not favour flats, citing what they viewed as a general trend in Britain towards Garden Cities. They quoted examples such as Letchworth, Port Sunlight and Bourneville as good examples of low-density housing development.

With already serious demand for additional housing exacerbated by the application of the Slums Act, the CTCC had two options: the first was to demolish and redevelop inner-city slum areas and build flats for inner-city residents. The idea of building flats as worker accommodation was controversial in Cape Town. Some professionals who were clearly impervious to the crisis objected to the idea. The *Architect, Builder and Engineer* opposed the idea of flats, writing in an editorial that

⁷⁰ With some exceptions, the pattern of the Citizens Housing League building for poor whites and the City of Cape Town providing housing for coloured workers remained.

flats gave rise to crowded or ‘unsatisfactory social conditions’. However, by 1934 most were prepared to change their minds and adapt a housing concept which they called the Amsterdam and London County Council Scheme.⁷¹ This was for the provision of flats for the poor in the inner city, close to their original communities and places of work.

‘Building-up’ by building flats as an *in situ* solution for addressing slum conditions in the inner-city was a short-lived planning practice. It ended in 1941 with the submission of the draft TPS and the recognition that the areas contained valuable land of strategic importance for planning purposes. Flat development close to the inner city subsequently occurred mainly in the wealthier white areas of Sea Point. The CTCC’s second option was to use cheap land far from the city centre to develop housing. This land was available in large portions, eliminating the costs of piecemeal purchases and consolidations. It also followed the provincial government’s intention of building ‘Coloured Housing’ east of the Cape Flats railway line towards Athlone.

The first new flats built in Cape Town were the Constitution Street flats.⁷² The plans for the first flat letting scheme on land laboriously acquired by the council through slum clearance sale and negotiation was announced in 1929. The site was bounded by Constitution, De Villiers, Sackville and St Vincent Streets. The development consisted of 60 flats: 36 of these with a kitchen, living room and two bedrooms, while 24 were smaller with a combined living room-kitchen and a single bedroom. Each flat had a balcony and an outside stairway and space was made available for a playground.⁷³ It was completed in 1930 and units were allocated via a list of applicants who went through an interview process. These units were extremely popular and were quickly let.



Figure 56: This is the kind of domestic environment in Wells Square that the Bloembof Flats replaced. (Architect and Builder (October 1917): 60)

⁷¹ *Architect, Builder and Engineer* (June 1929): 27.

⁷² They were subsequently demolished during Group Areas clearances.

⁷³ Mayor’s Minutes, year ending 1930, 51.

The flats were followed by others, including the Stirling and Vincent Street flats in 1932. By 1938, work began on the Bloemhof Canterbury Square flats in District Six. The Bloemhof flats were conceived of as a modernist social project from the start, with plans for community facilities such as clinics, courtyards and open spaces for children's play areas. When the project was completed in 1940 there were 324 flats.

There were other schemes for flats outside of District Six. Work began in 1938 on fishermen's flats in Kalk Bay and the Schotschekloof flats above the BoKaap. The Schotschekloof flats were clearly a modernist architectural expression. There were some 460 flats situated in a shallow curve, following the mountain slopes, with dramatic views of Cape Town.⁷⁴ The Kalk Bay flats, on the other hand, were designed as a series of traditional rough-plastered fishermen's cottages possibly resembling British fishermen's cottages.

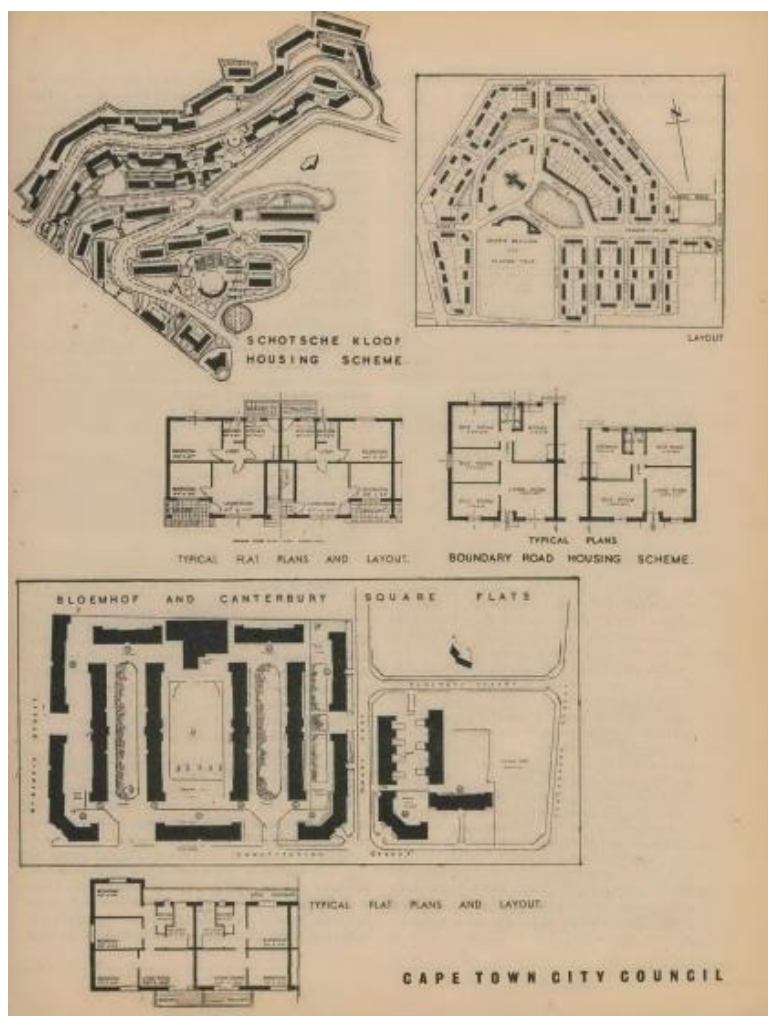


Figure 57: The floor plans and layouts for the Schotschekloof, Boundary Road and Bloemhof Street flats. The lower section of the Schotschekloof flats was never built and remains a greenfield site. The Boundary Road development consists of both housing and flats arranged around open spaces. The Bloemhof plan, by far the most urban of the sites, allows for courtyard spaces. The units are four-roomed with balconies. (SAAR, June 1943, 129)

⁷⁴ Andre van Graan, *Contested Modernism*, 184–185.



Figure 58: The Bloembof Street flats, built following clearance of declared slums in Wells Square. The complex was built between 1938 and 1940. The stark modernist architecture could be construed as a reaction to the building fabric that it replaced at Wells Square (see image above). (CoCT CCB190_f32_i2)

The period following the building of the Constitution Street flats in 1930 to the planning of Kewtown in 1940, while not providing housing in bulk, produced an array of flat designs and not all the buildings were modernist in their architecture.

The designs overlapped with the establishment of the CTCC Housing Branch, which was formed in 1939. The branch's first architect was Edinburgh-trained modernist P J McManus. It is likely that he produced the design for Kewtown at the request of the City Engineer and the Housing Committee of the CTCC. The reasons why the CTCC stopped building inner-city flats and began to focus on mass housing production on the Cape Flats was never officially articulated, but it is clear that there were a number of contributing factors. The first was the value of the land in the inner city and its strategic value for planning purposes, matters raised by the TPS of 1941 and the Foreshore Plan of 1947. The second was that inner-city housing was theoretically intended to replace inner-city slums. However, it became difficult to provide sufficient flat units to replace the overcrowded living conditions in the inner city, and the pace of inner-city housing provision could not keep up with slum clearance. The Garden City mantra of light and air could be used as a motivation for suburban developments on the Cape Flats. And, finally, and most importantly,

there was a clear trend towards spatial segregation and controlled environments supported by both the CTCC and the Provincial Administrator.⁷⁵

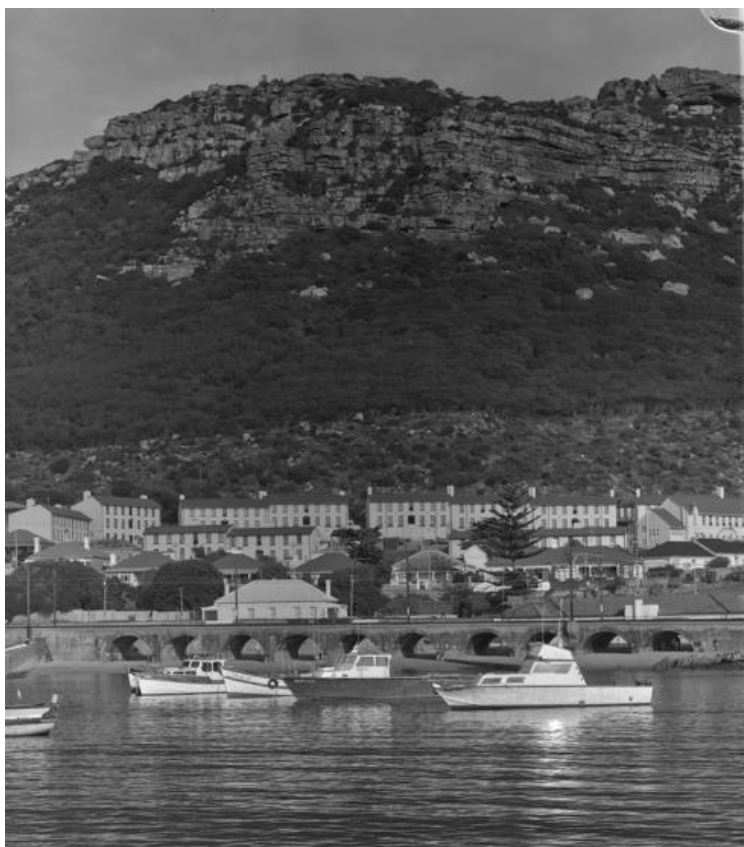


Figure 59: CTCC photograph of the fishermen's flats at Kalk Bay, 1950. In reality the flats were small and cramped, particularly for those with large families. (CoCT CCB159-f31_i4)

Creating spatial segregation: building on the Cape Flats

The CTCC's second option was to build on cheaper and larger parcels of land on the Cape Flats. This option facilitated full residential segregation with coloured residents moved from the central city as a result of slum clearance and rehoused in the new Cape Flats townships that were beginning to emerge. At the same, the CTCC could claim that they were applying good models for health and sanitation in line with health design standards. However, space, mass production and good infrastructure did not translate into socially convenient residential models. The loss of vibrant community life and support groups, and proximity to the amenities of the city and to work, were all negatively affected by the suburban working-class housing models, particularly as they were built at greater and greater distances from the city.

⁷⁵ Lucien le Grange, *Working class housing*, 1.



Figure 60: The first suburban sub-economic rental houses on the Cape Flats were those at Bokmakierie in 1930. The houses at Bokmakierie were conceived more as a dormitory suburb than a township, hence the regular grid pattern of streets. However, the space standards were generous, reflecting Garden City principles of plenty of light and air. There were wide side spaces between buildings and generous front gardens. (CCb222_f44_i3)

As we have seen, the first low-density housing model applied by the CTCC was that of the Garden City. It had been introduced as a planning concept in the Maitland Garden Village Scheme and Pinelands.⁷⁶ The Garden City model proved difficult to fund (particularly for rental purposes) and was expensive to build. It required considerable space, relying on a single dwelling per plot and low density (12 units per acre), gardens, a well-connected road system, parks and substantial investment in public services. Certain government functions, such as the provision of schools and transportation links were administered elsewhere, and there was a lag before any schools were provided. The allocation of new housing became a logistical matter, with residents rushed into moving as soon as new accommodation became available, rather than any realisation of good housing as a social ideal and as an instrument of social benefit.

⁷⁶ Dennis Radford, 'Mining villages of Herbert Baker: An investigation of their form and layout,' *South African Journal of Art and Architectural History* 1, no 2 (1990): 53–62.



Figure 61: Early suburban houses on the Cape Flats, Kewtown, c1940. These houses were developed according to a standard CTCC typology and were generally semi-detached. Houses were placed at angles to one another for variety and improved ventilation, a reaction to the tight inner-city housing they replaced, and some were arranged around a 'woonerf' concept which excluded cars and favoured pedestrian use. These houses were generally more spacious than those that followed. (ANA va_independent_S5C_029)

During the inter-war period, the influence of new international planning trends for housing was marked. A discernible international influence in the layout of housing estates in Cape Town was the Neighbourhood Unit, initially pioneered by Clarence Perry in the United States, in what was known as the 'Radburn' layout.⁷⁷ Arising out of Ebenezer Howard's concept of self-contained satellite areas, it was used for a limited time in British residential planning systems. The concept was based on the need for social facilities within walking distance of residents and of a size to encourage social interaction. Its basic measurement unit was the catchment area of a primary school which could be reached on foot.⁷⁸ A separation of vehicular and pedestrian traffic and a systematic hierarchy of roads from arterial and neighbourhood were intended to support the safety of children. Alicedale in Athlone provided the first small experiment in the Neighbourhood Unit concept, followed by later townships such as Bonteheuwel and Heideveld. The building of 258 better-quality houses at Alicedale in Athlone in 1939 marked a new approach to residential planning. Although a small project, it combined urban design and potential community facilities around a large public open space and, in the best of the Neighbourhood Unit traditions, a primary school. Le Grange notes that the application of Neighbourhood Unit principles, for example,

⁷⁷ The Radburn layout was an illustration of a Neighbourhood Unit planning system for housing estates providing facilities for residents within walking distance of their homes. It separated vehicular activity from pedestrian use and used as a basic measurement of extent the size of a catchment area sufficient to meet the requirements of a neighbourhood school.

⁷⁸ Eleanor Smith Morris, *British town planning and urban design*, 139.

separation, self-containment and separate facilities, permitted the social and racial stratification necessary for settlements on the Cape Flats and was thus usefully applied by planners.⁷⁹



Figure 62: Alicedale, Athlone. This design concept for suburban Cape Flats housing allowed units to be placed around a central space while being isolated from passing traffic with limited access routes. A primary school served as a community focus. (Van Graan, 'Contested Modernism' SA Architect (August 1939): 34)

The official drive was not only to build new houses and clear the slums but to modernise Cape Town in order to meet the challenges of the future and to present the city as a model of progress. Slum clearance, town planning and new housing developments were linked together as city administrators set about reimagining and planning a modern city. The CTCC's Housing Branch, which was set up in 1938, had a motto – 'The good ship *Rehousing*.' It was clear that the City Engineer's Department saw housing in terms of dual objectives: the removal of residents from the slums in the name of broad-new planning objectives and their 'rehousing' in the formally planned dormitory suburbs of the future. Despite its disruptive nature, slum clearance was actively supported by housing activists such as Bishop Sidney Lavis and the local press on the ground that it would improve existing harsh living conditions.

The major obstacle to slum clearance was that the provision of housing never kept pace with plans for clearance. This was usually for operational reasons: costs of services and lack of state funding for housing production when it was needed. The costs of new housing development, including the acquisition of sites and the building of infrastructure, resulted in ongoing searches for cheaper land at greater distances from the central city and mass-produced housing alternatives. For reasons of economy and a growing need for new housing, new plans were for housing to be built on an

⁷⁹ Lucien le Grange, *Working class housing*, 16–19.

industrial scale in order to achieve what Robert Home referred to as the ‘warehousing of the working classes’.⁸⁰

Langa: accommodation for contract workers and families – ‘Although the Municipality wants us to get as much air as possible, there is too much of it ...’⁸¹

The CTCC saw the potential for implementing the Garden City model when planning Langa between 1925 and 1926, as discussed earlier. By the early 1930s, the African housing policy in Langa had proved to be a failure. With planning for Ndabeni as an industrial area at an advanced stage, the City Health Department and the Native Affairs Committee attempted to force residents to leave through a variety of legal mechanisms and rent manipulation. But the residents resisted.⁸² They had built up a community at Ndabeni against the odds, with church schools, churches and local sports facilities, despite the continuing neglect of the national government. The CTCC having spent ratepayers’ money on a ‘Garden suburb’ at Langa, the resistance of the residents to a forced relocation at Langa came as a shock.⁸³ After all, City officials considered Langa something of a showpiece for ‘native housing’. But for those forced to move to Langa in the 1930s it was a tragedy.

In an effort to hasten the forced removal of residents at Ndabeni, the MoH in Cape Town visited the area in 1930 to assess the living conditions. The CTCC’s Superintendent of ‘Natives’ provided data on Africans living in Cape Town at the time, including Langa and Ndabeni. While the data suggested that Langa provided an excess of accommodation for contract workers, families could not be moved there because there was no new family accommodation in the township. The figures revealed two areas, both involving the process of a forced transition (see Table 2 below).

While the MoH visited Ndabeni to assess the living conditions there, his report-back should be read in the context of his intention to have the area evacuated. Nevertheless, the report makes for concerning reading. The conditions, after years of central government neglect, were appalling. Ndabeni was described as a ‘level tract of loose sand’ where the houses were arranged in a series of straight streets intersecting each other. No attempt had been made in the past 30 years to make any roads there. The sand was soft in the dry weather and there was standing water in the winters.

⁸⁰ Robert Home, *Of planting and planning: The making of British colonial cities* (New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2013), 92.

⁸¹ Mr Fuku, Meeting Native Affairs Committee and Native Advisory Board, Ndabeni City Hall, 21 October 1927.3/CT/N171/5. He was referring to the fact that the accommodation was draughty and cold, and also perhaps to the CTCC’s Garden City obsession with plenty of fresh air.

⁸² See Christopher Saunders, ‘From Ndabeni to Langa 1919–1935,’ *Studies in the History of Cape Town* 1 (Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town, 1979), 194–230.

⁸³ Christopher Saunders, ‘From Ndabeni to Langa’.

Most of the huts were of corrugated iron, many of them rusty. The site was fully exposed to harsh weather conditions.⁸⁴

Area	Families	Contract workers (single men)
Ndabeni	450 (one family per house)	1 964
Langa	248 (one family per house)	663
Exempted (on voters' roll)		1 585
Unexempted within proclaimed area		250
Living outside proclaimed area		2 340

Table 2: Showing the reported number of Africans living in Cape Town in 1930. The data suggest that while there was sufficient accommodation for contract workers in Langa, the township had only 248 family houses. A further statistic of interest is the large number of Africans exempt from the conditions of the Natives (Urban Areas) Act of 1923, as a result of the qualified non-racial franchise. This list included 500 registered parliamentary voters.⁸⁵

Residents found the family housing at Langa to be expensive, far from work opportunities and too small for family life. The early houses contained only one or two rooms. The migrant labour compounds were bleak, excessively controlled and the rents were higher than those at Ndabeni, despite the longer journeys to work.

With family housing units proving the most popular at Langa, the CICC's Native Affairs Committee embarked upon a second large housing expansion between 1932 and 1934. The first scheme, known as *Bongweni* (place of pride), consisted of 48 two-roomed houses and 16 larger houses, with three rooms and separate toilets. Unlike the previous houses, they all had stoeps. The second, *Thembeni* (place of hope), was built in 1934 and consisted of some 160 married quarters, also with either two or three rooms, and separate toilets and fuel sheds. Similar additional housing was built in 1935, consisting of 60 married units, followed by a further 36 units in 1936, and 204 housing units in 1940–1941. These houses had electricity, for which the residents paid extra. War-time accommodation for contract workers resulted in the Greater Langa Scheme – the Old and New Flats, and cottage-style hostels called 'the Zones'. The Old Flats, consisting of eight four-storey blocks, were completed by 1948.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Letter from the City Health Department to the Native Affairs Committee, 25 July 1929. Report on the conditions at Ndabeni 3CT/N/194/5.

⁸⁵ 3/CT/N171/5. Figures of Africans living in Cape Town in 1930. The table reflects data selected for the purposes of this study, namely, housing provision in Ndabeni and Langa.

⁸⁶ City of Cape Town, *Langa heritage study* (February 2003), 50–51.

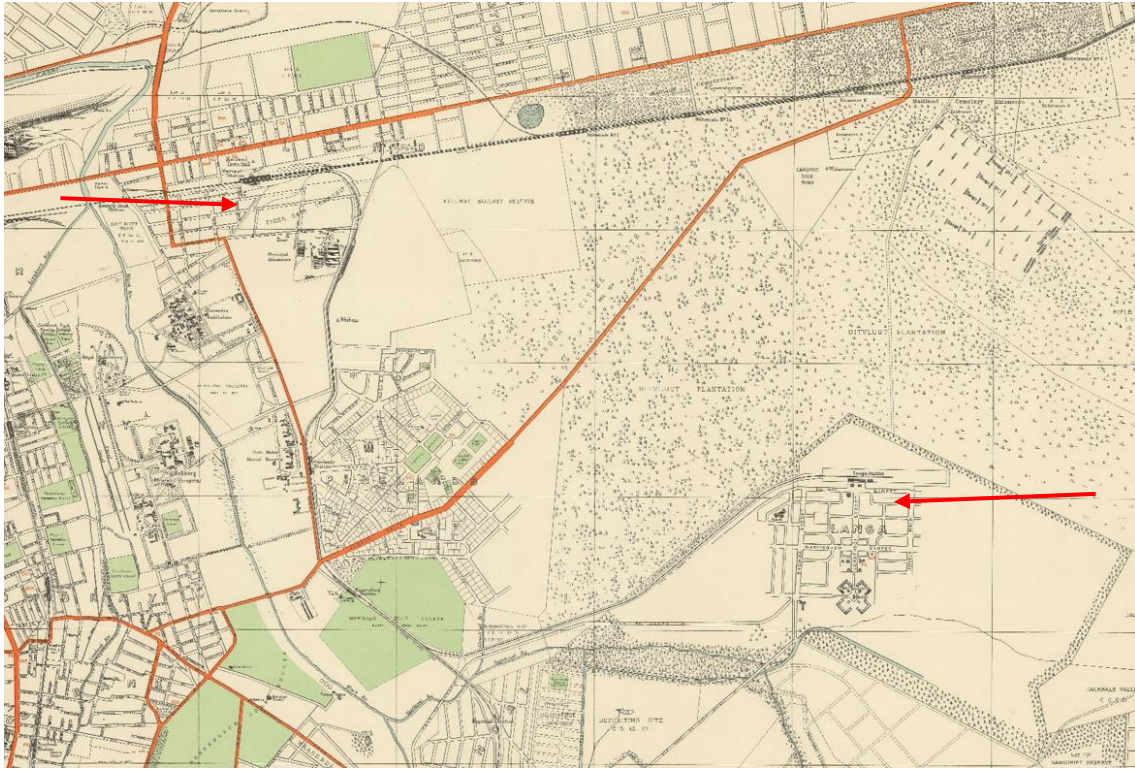


Figure 63: Map of Cape Town 1937, showing the replanning of Ndabeni as an industrial area and the layout of Langa (arrowed). The map shows the old 'location' between Bhunga and Mendi avenues, the Langa Station with the reception depot and the road leading down to the main barracks. There is a full set of barriers or buffers from the railway line to tree belts, and the controlled access which was described in the previous chapter is strongly evident. (Surveyor General's Office, 1937)

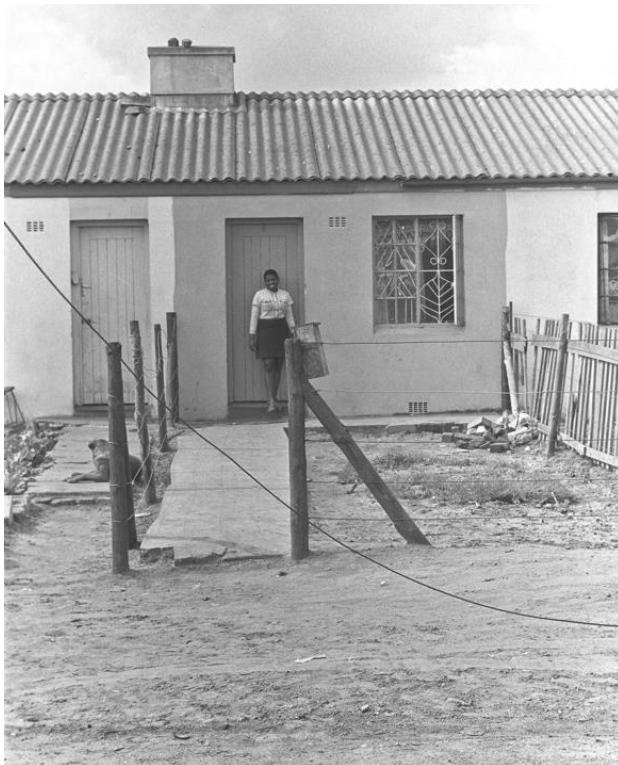


Figure 64: Undated photograph of an early two-roomed house in Langa. Most family accommodation was inadequate, particularly these two-roomed houses. There was a front room with a cooking alcove and a bedroom. Toilet and bathroom facilities were outside, except in some later units. (City of Cape Town CCb136_f37_s4_i27)

But the shortage of family accommodation persisted. Funding for family accommodation proved difficult, though, and the application processes more complex after the control of housing grants required the compliance of the Native Affairs Department. A definite preference for migrant labour accommodation became apparent: the accommodation of African migrant workers was closely tied to industrial needs and because of the austerity and density of occupation, they were less expensive to build. With a war-time influx of workers to Cape Town and a dire shortage of accommodation, attention refocused one again on single quarters with the building of the Old and New Flats and the Zones.⁸⁷ By 1945, the building of family housing at Langa came to a standstill, with the newly formed Housing and Planning Commission objecting to the building costs of the Native Affairs Committee's proposed new developments.⁸⁸

By the end of 1947, building in Langa had ground to a complete halt. The last constructions were for the eight hostel blocks built in the township to the east. The National Housing and Planning Commission (NH&PC) subsequently refused all loans for housing construction on the grounds of costs; it subsequently put forward a suggestion for new accommodation to be on a temporary basis and that all permanent schemes be temporarily stopped.



Figure 65: The Old Flats at Langa built after 1944. They comprised eight four-storey blocks with rooms housing two men per room. The cottage-style hostel blocks were called 'the Zones'. (CoCT CCb122_f17_i04)

The CTCC's Native Affairs Committee turned down the suggestion because the accommodation huts really were of a low standard. The reception depot near the station was subsequently

⁸⁷ City of Cape Town, *Langa heritage study* (2003), 49–51.

⁸⁸ The National Housing and Planning Commission was formed in 1944, replacing the CHB. It worked closely with the Native Affairs Department to control the provision of African housing.

converted into workers accommodation. Meanwhile, the approval of plans for the Retreat 'Native' Township provided a promise of housing for African workers and families in the South Peninsula. Unfortunately, negotiations about costs slowed down any potential progress and by the time the Nationalist Party assumed control of government in 1948 it was too late. Housing expansion to the east of Langa was shelved, as was the Retreat Location.

	White	Coloured	African	'Asiatic'	Total
Langa	26		7 849		7 875
Windermere	557	7 138	6 436	104	14 235
Municipality	161 173	165 358	26 155	4 254	356 940

Table 3: Showing the estimated population figures of Langa, Windermere and Cape Town in 1946 based on an extrapolation of figures from 1941. The data possibly underestimate the populations of Windermere and Langa as residents avoided official census takers for their own security. The results show that, even at a rough estimate, Windermere was racially integrated, with a similar number of Africans living in Windermere as in Langa.⁸⁹

Forced removals at the Cape Explosive Works, Somerset West

Patterns of urban settlement and the desire for family life resulted in the wives and children of men working in single-sex hostels joining them, where possible, which resulted in an expansion of the African population close to labour compounds. While section 6 of the Native Laws Amendment Act 46 of 1937 proposed the tightening up of control on entrance to 'proclaimed areas' and threatened to severely restrict movement and urban settlement, the demands of the war-time economy meant that the restrictive conditions were not enforced at the time. Indeed, urbanisation grew as the demand for labour increased. However, that did not stop the labyrinthine and uniquely discriminatory characteristics of the laws being applied to African workers and their families elsewhere in the Cape Town areas. A proclamation of 1939 made in terms of the Natives (Urban Areas) Act did not allow entry to such areas and it became an offence to 'harbour or otherwise provide accommodation' for an 'unexempted native' outside the limits of a location.⁹⁰ Cape Explosives Works had a custom of accommodating men in the compound who were not currently employed. The company applied for and was granted exemption from the conditions of the Native Laws Amendment Act to permit the men awaiting employment to remain. But elsewhere, the Native Affairs Department continued to tighten up on access to 'prohibited areas'.⁹¹

⁸⁹ Figures taken from the Report of the Medical Officer of Health, year ending 1946.

⁹⁰ 'Natives barred from town: Unless of legitimate business,' *Cape Argus*, 21 October 1939. The 'town' referred to in the article were those in the Cape District and included Parow, Durbanville and the Strand, but not Cape Town itself.

⁹¹ Native Laws Amendment Act 46 of 1937 s 5(3).

The Cape Explosives Works labour compound in Somerset West was situated in such a 'prohibited area'.

Less fortunate than the 60 men who were permitted to remain were the women who had followed their husbands to the Somerset West factory, living in the nearby Strand area. The company's conditions of employment did not permit African workers either to live at the Strand with their families or for their families to live with them in the labour compound. This restriction applied uniquely to African employees, all of whom were contract workers. On the basis of an amendment to the Natives (Urban Areas) Act, women and children were expelled on the ground that they were surplus to labour needs. In 1940, the magistrate of Somerset West demanded the repatriation of the women and their families to their rural homes on the ground that they were 'redundant' and because the Strand was proclaimed a prohibited area in terms of Government Proclamation 245 of 1939.⁹² Cape Explosives Works requested that the women and children be allowed to remain, but the request was denied, the Strand Municipality explaining that they would be

moved to the native Territories as they are not considered necessary or ordinary requirements within the Municipal area and if the permits applied for (ie by Cape Explosives Works to allow the families to stay) are granted, the Municipality would not allow it to happen.⁹³

At the same time, the company was upgrading the labour compound after 40 years of neglect. The original rectangular courtyard surrounded by three long corrugated-iron barracks began to be replaced by brick structures situated around the original structure. They were built of brick over a period of years and designed to form an elliptical fan shape. This form of hostel would also have improved surveillance from the office and the gate. Each room within this system accommodated six to eight men, their concrete bunks arranged around the perimeter of the room.

⁹² Natives Urban Areas Act 21 of 1923, as amended, s 16*ter*.

⁹³ Letter, Strand Municipality Town Clerk to Assistant Factory Manager, Cape Explosive Works, 18 November 1939. File 485, Natives and Urban Areas Act, private archive, A&ECI.



Figure 66: Labour compound building at AECl, Somerset West, formerly and Cape Explosives Works. The company began building new labour barracks around the perimeter of the old compound after 1938. Labour compound construction continued throughout the Second World War. These were built according to the 'Rand hut' design, copied from the mine compounds. The roof structure also permitted the rooms to be warmed using steam driven through the pipes situated in the roof structure. (Attwell, 2021)

Modernism comes to the Cape Flats (and fails): building Kewtown, 1939–1948

During the Second World War the housing crisis deteriorated further. It was particularly problematic for the black working classes. In addition to natural population increases, war-time industrial development attracted workers to the city centres, where they were unable to find accommodation in formal structures. They then occupied informal homes beyond the municipal boundaries. Informal settlements in Windermere and Blouville towards the south saw growth. Between 1939 and 1944, planning was underway for two large housing estates at Kewtown and Retreat respectively. For the council, the most ambitious residential planning project in mass housing during these years was at Kewtown in Athlone. It was a direct result of the continuing housing crisis.

Planning for the Kewtown project began in 1939 but ground to a halt by 1944 as funds from the central government dried up and war-time building costs made further progress too expensive. However, building in Kewtown, Silvertown and Bridgetown continued intermittently over the next 20 years as funds became available. The initial plan for Kewtown was ambitious. It was to build 8 000 houses in stages, creating separate but linked residential areas, and eventually developing a town the size of Bloemfontein with 30 000 residents.

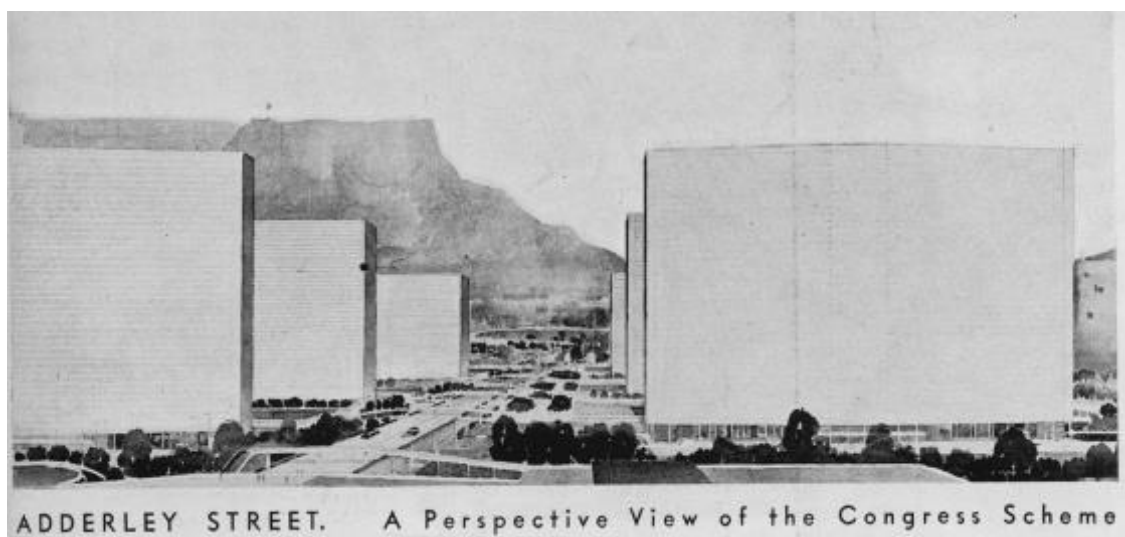


Figure 67: Defining a boulevard. A modernist proposal for Cape Town's business district: Wits Conference 1938. This image of a proposal for Adderley Street shows a boulevard defined by a series of building blocks. The plan for Kentown follows a similar pattern (see below). (SAAR 1938)

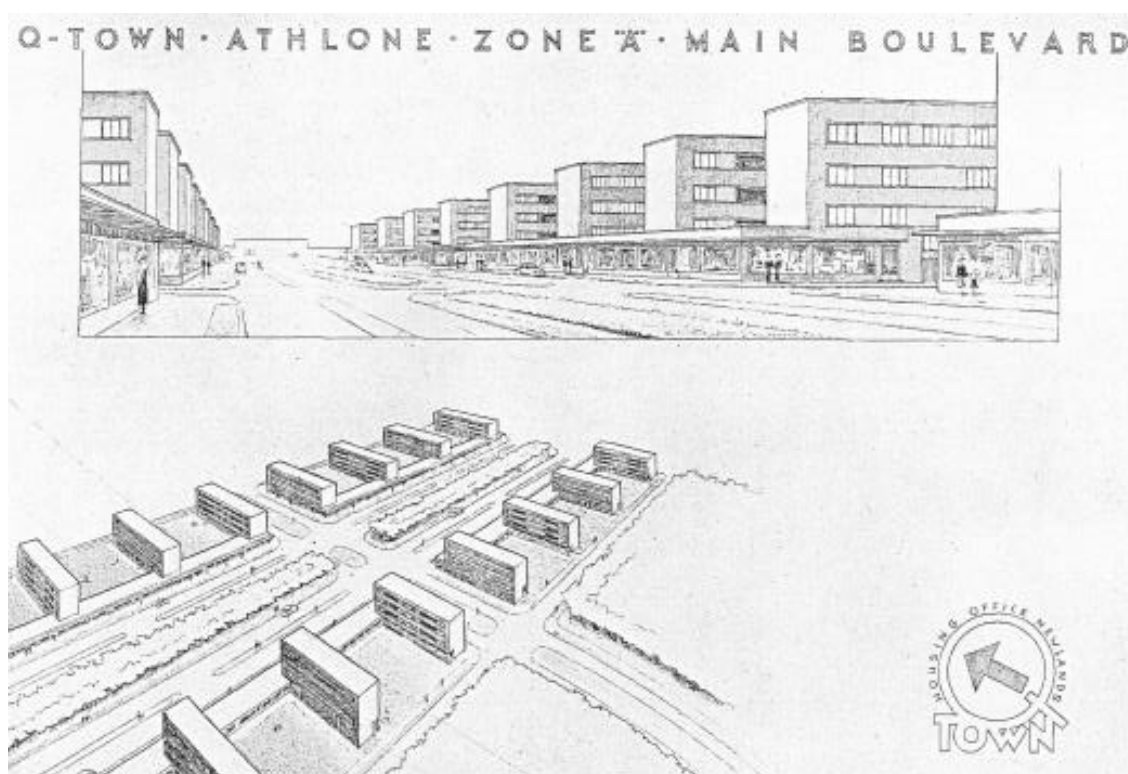


Figure 68: The Grand Boulevard, Q-Town (Kewtown), running east to west. The proposal bears a resemblance to the modernist plan for Cape Town's business district. (Mayor's Minutes 1941)

There were plans for wide boulevards, open play areas, schools and even a golf course. The intention was to build a complete town and accordingly work on planning for a satellite town with commercial and civic amenities was set in motion. The layout of the roads and the planning of the

open spaces was studied with an eye to the future development, and the 'best principles of modern civic design were employed'.⁹⁴ Kewtown was not based on Garden City principles nor was it planned at a time when Neighbourhood Unit planning principles were in general currency.

The plan for Kewtown marked a change from previous council housing developments, not only because of its proposed size and the fact that it was to be built in stages, but because of the principles that lay behind the plan. It was unusually modernist in its layout and character, at least in the grand boulevard that defined its linear pattern as well as wide cross-axis at the head of the boulevard. The newly constructed flats defined the central boulevard. They were the first of the three-storey walk-ups to be designed and built on the Cape Flats. Even though the plans for Kewtown changed over the years due to government funding policies, Avenue Abdurahman remains impressive. The stages were broken down into Zones, with Zone A the first to be developed.

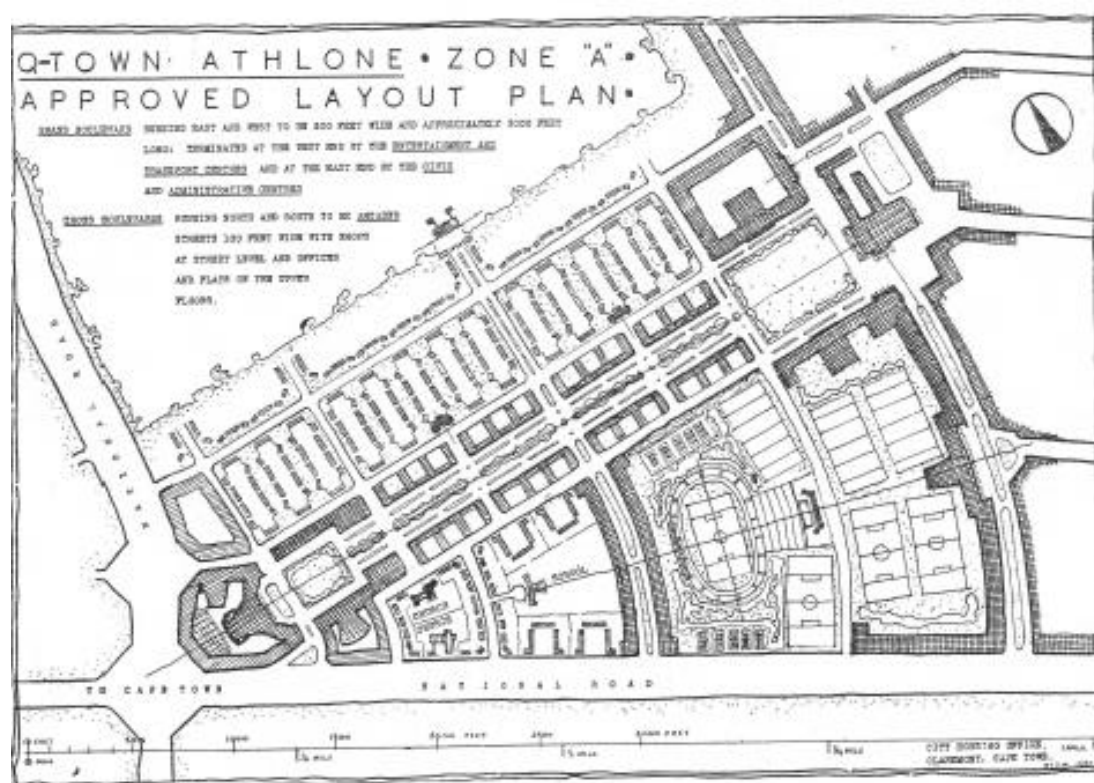


Figure 69: Q-Town (Kewtown), Zone A, approved plan. This plan shows the series of linear spaces comprising the main boulevard leading to a focal point at the intersection at the cross-axis. Housing in Zone A was situated to the north in a series of houses grouped around an interior space. Amenities such as churches and sports facilities as well as a sports stadium were situated to the south of the main boulevard. (Report of the City Engineer and Surveyor, Chief Housing Architect's Branch, Mayor's Minutes, year ending 1940, 28)

⁹⁴ Mayor's Minutes, September 1940, 28.

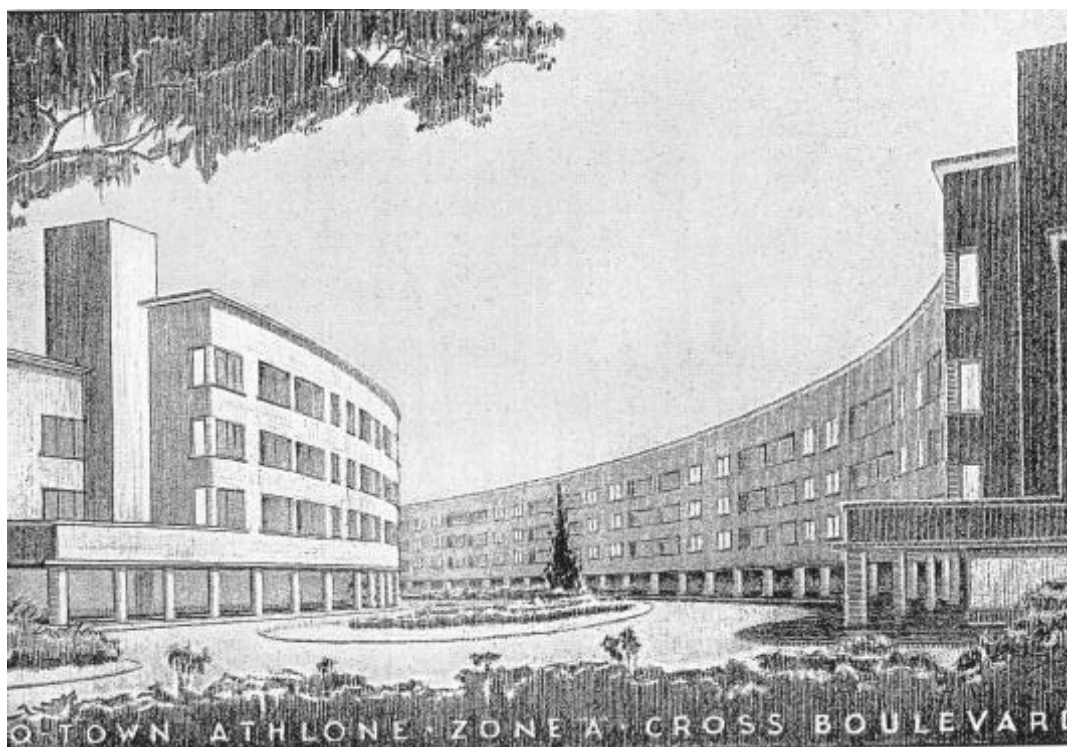


Figure 70: The impressive planned but not built grand cross-axis, Q-Town (Kewtown). (Mayor's Minutes, 1941)



Figure 71: Kewtown in 1952, looking east–west. This shows the formal layout of Kewtown and the beginnings of the sports centre, left. (Mayor's Minutes, 1952)

The grand boulevard was defined by a series of apartment blocks running east–west and ending in the focal point of a civic centre and administrative offices. The cross-boulevards would contain

commercial uses and smaller residential blocks. While Lunn described the proposals as being in the grand Garden City design tradition, they owed more to expressions of Modernism, with tall flats lining wide boulevards. The plan was designed with modernist architecture and strong vistas in mind. There were none of the small-scale, picturesque qualities of the Garden City tradition. In fact, the concept bears more than a passing resemblance to the slabs of proposed apartments that defined the Adderley Street Boulevard in the early modernist proposals for the Foreshore.

Many of the original modernist ideas for Kewtown were never implemented, including the grand cross-axis and the focal point at the head of Dr Abdurahman Avenue. In the 20 years which followed, funding models and housing typologies changed. Of the 8 000 units planned, only 1 299 units were built according to the original plan. Like another modernist project in Cape Town – the Foreshore Development – the Kewtown plan was never completed, and the Grand Boulevard is an odd remnant in a sea of small houses, similar to others nearby.



Figure 72: Two kinds of accommodation in Kewtown: Flats lining the outer edge of the Grand Boulevard with the standard typologies of semi-detached dwellings to the left. (CoCT CCB144_f29_s5_i24)

Racial segregation for new housing

Racial segregation in new residential areas was not defined in law, except in terms of the Native Laws Amendment Act of 1937 and the Native (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act of 1945, which applied to Africans. The lack of clear legal sanction for other race groups lasted until the

declaration of the Group Areas Act of 1950 and the Group Areas Development Act of 1955. Despite this, a pervasive system of racial segregation in new townships was in place and implemented by the CTCC, the Divisional Council and public utility companies. There were three reasons for this. The first was that the TPO (Schedule Two) specified that separate areas be set aside in TPSs for racial groups not identified as 'European'. The second was that racial segregation was tied to the funding models for housing and had done so since the Housing Act of 1920. And, finally, there was the pervasive practice throughout official bureaucracies of enumerating all people – whether in health figures, population numbers and census returns – in terms of racial categories. In Cape Town, these practices existed in parallel (for a time) with a qualified non-racial franchise. As a result, racial segregation was integrated into the very warp and weave of council housing.

Coloured families who applied to be put on the housing list or who were allocated rental accommodation were screened by the CTCC's Housing Administration Branch. Tenants who applied for housing would be selected in a series of face-to-face interviews with officials of the Housing Branch, which formed part of the Health Department. There were often more applications than the branch had places for, especially places close to the city centre. The flats in Constitution Street, for example, proved very popular. Tenants for the flats in Sackville, St Vincent and Stirling Streets, and for Bokmakierie, were selected in this way. The housing administrators considered a set of factors such as occupation, employment and ability to pay the rent. Proximity to old housing and social networks did not form part of the criteria, neither, oddly, did the family size. Since new council housing was racially and locationally distinct, bureaucratic assumptions about race were a significant factor. They determined whether an applicant was eligible for accommodation or not, although how they achieved racial categorisations remained opaque but was probably related to appearance. In this way the Council Housing Branch achieved a form residential segregation according to a mixture of funding requirements, Township Board requirements and assumed racial categories. This housing-allocation process meant that even though the system might have been considered ad hoc, spatial segregation was determined through central and provincial government, both of which required residential segregation.⁹⁵

⁹⁵ Report of the Central Housing Board 1920 UG 25–1921. Annexure B attached to the Housing Act 35 of 1920: Form to be attached to an application for funding. It includes requirements for 'the general disposition of the proposed dwellings and whether for occupation by Europeans, Coloured, Natives or Asiatics'; Item C (*d*) Form 213, Ordinance 53 of 1934. Ordinance to Regulate the Establishment of Townships and the Sub-division of Estates and to provide for the Preparation and Approval of Town Planning Schemes. Second Schedule, (7): Matters to be considered in the preparation of the Scheme. 'The providing of sites for occupation as native locations, and the adequate provision for land to use or occupation by persons other than Europeans.'

The 'rehousing' of people from racially integrated slum housing environments such as those in District Six and their rehousing in segregated developments involved an ad hoc process of racial sifting, despite the fact that at times the municipality was unclear about how to racially categorise those they moved. Making ad hoc racial classifications for housing presented significant difficulties in a city such as Cape Town with its mixed-race inner-city traditions, and thus almost infinite gradations of colour, where spatial segregation had been as much or more a matter of class rather than race. Even the Central Housing Board, which administered the race-based funding requirements of the State Housing Act up until 1943, acknowledged that some local authorities might have great difficulties 'in determining whether a family in a slum should be classified as European or Coloured and that the rehousing of the family may require special care and tact'.⁹⁶ Residential racial segregation in the municipality in the study period (other than for those set aside for African residential occupation, about which the law was deeply discriminatory and restrictive) consisted of meeting a complex admixture of official requirements, funding restrictions and local housing policy.

While borrowed housing solutions have been identified largely as spatial expressions initiated by an elite, male-only corps of urban professionals, there were exceptions. Some of the housing administrators who interviewed prospective tenants were female. In 1934, Cape Town initiated a system of female housing managers which challenged the entrenched gendered roles.⁹⁷ This was the application of the Octavia Hill System. It was based on the pioneering work of Octavia Hill in Victorian Britain, working on the assumption that women housing managers could establish greater empathy with tenants, and that rent collection could be combined with social work and advice. After years of debating the issue, the CoCT appointed Ms Margaret Hurst in 1934. Jennifer Robinson notes the recognition in Cape Town that additional interpersonal and social skills would be needed as the city expanded its housing programme after the passing of the Slums Act in 1934. The idea was based on the concept that female housing managers would be in a better position to establish rapport with women residents in particular and teach them home management skills. The work of Ms Hurst and others stimulated interest in other parts of South Africa as, with the building of large housing estates nationally – 'the locations and townships' – the need for managers and administrators grew.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ Report of the Central Housing Board, 1939, UG 29–1940, 7.

⁹⁷ Jennifer Robinson, 'Octavia Hill women housing managers in South Africa: Femininity and urban government,' *Journal of Historical Geography* 24, no 4 (1998): 459–482.

⁹⁸ Jennifer Robinson, 'Octavia Hill women housing managers,' 464.

Writing on the social and economic conditions in his annual report in 1954, Cape Town's MoH, Dr FO Fehrsen, still referred to the city's complex racial mix, although it was clear that there were strong class constraints present. . He wrote:

There are parts of the city where the inhabitant are mainly non-European, and other parts are exclusively occupied by Europeans and their non-European servants. The various sections of the community are however to a great extent intermingled, and there is nothing approaching complete segregation of the races.⁹⁹

African residents, on the other hand, were clearly segregated and with many of them living in extreme poverty:

They live in the Council's 'native' location or as ordinary non-European residents in the city (where they are mostly slum dwellers) or in insanitary shacks on the Cape Flats, or on their employers' premises.¹⁰⁰

He concluded that new housing estates and township developments as a result of the Housing Act would contribute to 'progressive' racial segregation. This suggests that officially the ad hoc segregated housing policy through township development was considered a 'progressive' move towards spatial and racial segregation.

Town planning revisited, 1947–1948

When the first TPS from Bakoven to Woodstock was reanimated and amended to reflect the changed road networks required by the Foreshore plans, the City of Cape Town was in a position to undertake further detailed survey work.¹⁰¹ The planning team wished to make 'certain desirable amendments' to the existing scheme with an 'interim zoning scheme', while at the same time continuing similar planning work on the second part of the TPS from Woodstock to Wynberg.

⁹⁹ Report MoH 10. Mayors Minutes 1954

¹⁰⁰ Report of the Medical Officer of Health, year ending 1947.

¹⁰¹ The CoCT could amend the TPS in terms of s 57 of the Ordinance of 1934.

designated racial occupation. Secondly, it combines an industrial use category as part of the racial survey. The reasons for this are unclear, but is possibly to determine the presence of black workers close to industrial areas. Finally, there is the casual way in which racial categories are included in the survey. It appears that racial ‘occupation’ was a necessary tool to pursue a planning end, as indeed, after the work of the LTAB in Cape Town some six years later, it was.

The most-high profile of the city-planning proposals during this period was the Foreshore Plan as a joint venture between the CoCT and the central government, both with their own consulting teams.¹⁰⁴ Negotiations between the two parties dragged on for years. However, there was general unanimity about the opportunities presented by the destruction of the old residential areas of Cape Town for remodelling Cape Town. Professional parties agreed that the Foreshore Plan presented an outstanding opportunity establish a ‘TPS ‘worthy’ of Cape Town and that enormous opportunities for replanning the city now presented themselves.¹⁰⁵

No doubt inspired by the work of the Joint Town Planning Scheme Committee, the City Engineer chose to revisit his plan for Cape Town in 1949. The city freeway plan was revised and renamed with some irony ‘The heart of Cape Town’. The changing face of the city appeared irreversible. It was at this point that Lunn, inspired by the London ring road, proposed one for Cape Town. The ring road would also require the demolition of what Lunn called ‘many small properties’ and a road through the historic Company Gardens.¹⁰⁶ It was an attitude that Morris would emulate in his Eastern Boulevard plans, requiring the first large demolition process in District Six.

In its housing policy, the CTCC, departing from its earlier site-by-site township and housing design, initiated the first of an abbreviated series of specifications that would result in much cheaper housing. Calling it a ‘big step forward’, plans were drawn up, beginning with 234 cheaper housing units at Zone B in Kewtown. Houses were to be constructed to minimum standards and as a result the charges per dwelling would be lower. More of the minimum standard dwellings were contemplated for Retreat, Kewtown and Windermere. This decision formed the basis of standardised housing according to minimum standards that were to dominate future housing policy in Cape Town.

¹⁰⁴ For an analysis of the joint Foreshore proposals, see Nicolas Botha, 2013, ‘The gateway of tomorrow: modernist town planning on Cape Town’s Foreshore 1930-1970. MA thesis University of Cape Town’.

¹⁰⁵ *Cape Town Foreshore Plan: Final Report*, Cape Town Foreshore Joint Technical Committee (June 1947), 19.

¹⁰⁶ ‘Foreshore plans amendments: New routes across city,’ *Cape Times*, 18 November 1949.

Conclusions

The Great Depression of the 1930s and the Second World War provided the broader context for the period under review in this chapter. Urban professionals and officials had to contend with the complexities of urban growth and industrialisation in an ageing city and looked to international models for solutions. The solutions encompassed town planning and slum clearance and they turned to an ordered pattern of development through zoning and density controls. As a result, township development and new housing, town-planning and slum-clearance mechanisms existed together as part of a complex official professional response to matters of spatial and social control.

Appearing towards the end of the study period is a sense of the tragedy of the delay in providing sound adequate housing for African families. When the National Party government assumed power in 1948, it did so on the basis of a clear anti-African urbanisation and influx control policy which would find its way into housing policy and the rights of settlement and family life for urban Africans, particularly contract workers and their families. In the same way, the CTCC's ad hoc housing segregation policies were a clear link with apartheid's radical plan for complete racial and territorial segregation which were later constructed with or without the consent of local authorities.

The period introduced hybrid forms of Modernism, as can be seen in the ambitious township design of Kewtown and the continuing influences of the Foreshore Plan. The theoretical components Modernism in the City's Foreshore Plan were closely aligned with the TPS and the plans for slum clearance supported by city officials. The combination of factors – the drive towards inner city slum clearance, a TPS for a modern city and remaining Garden City and modernist planning solutions, resulted in a change in the face of urban Cape Town. While urban professionals might have turned to broad international planning ideas, the results in a racialised social context meant that housing provision became a mechanism for racial and spatial segregation.

Chapter 4

Modernism and apartheid: Cape Town and the housing crisis, 1948–1960

Introduction

A fundamental shift in housing policy occurred during the 1950s, following the Nationalist Party election victory in 1948. The shift involved the curtailment of the powers, duties and functions of local authorities to plan their housing developments towards increasingly legislated curtailment and centralisation of such functions by the national government. Power relationships between local and national authorities were realigned as the central government sought to impose its apartheid ideology on urban environments and the country as a whole. Cape Town, with its mixed population and non-racial municipal voter base, became a particular target. Nevertheless, the large-scale township developments which characterised new government interventions in the cities to the north were slow to start in Cape Town. The national government initiated a series of racially based laws and policies which had a profound impact on local space and urban management systems.

In exploring the origins and progression of residential planning in the emerging apartheid policies of the 1950s, it becomes clear that forms of residential segregation, particularly for African residents, were already well established in Cape Town and had been since the start of the century. The CTCC had been building segregated townships since the 1920s – first at Langa in 1925, then the coloured housing estates at Bokmakierie, Alicedale, Bloemhof and Kewtown since the 1940s. This was inevitable after the Housing Act of 1920 tied funding applications to certain racial criteria.¹ Local authorities were, after all, dependent on national funding bodies to be able to discharge their housing responsibilities.

Residential segregation was strongly supported by the Cape Provincial Administration, which was the authority charged with planning matters. This meant that at both the planning and the housing provision level there was a general trend towards segregation before 1950. However, the new legal apparatus codified issues of race and settlement through a coercive set of laws, resulting in a ‘unique dovetailing between racial and spatial ideology’.² A rush of racially discriminatory laws followed after 1950, dividing residents into races, curbing African urbanisation and dividing urban

¹ Housing Act 35 of 1920 Proposals for a Scheme. In line with national policy, applicants for funding were obliged to indicate the ‘general disposition of the proposed dwellings and whether for occupation by Europeans, Coloured, Native or Asiatics’: UG 25–1920 Annexure C, 7. See chapter 3.

² Vivian Bickford-Smith, Elizabeth van Heyningen and Nigel Worden, *Cape Town in the twentieth century* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1999), 156.

land according to race groups.³ A Coloured Labour Preference Policy, announced in 1954, also had a profound influence on the provision of housing for Africans. For Cape Town, with its mixed population of working-class people living in the inner-city areas and the informal settlements around the city, this radical package of urban control and social engineering presented it with something of a conundrum, apart from the outrage and distress it caused to sections of the population, some of whom were municipal voters. Local planners were required by law to take provincial ordinances and national laws into account. Yet the local politicians still held fast to the character and ‘uniqueness’ of Cape Town, with its historically mixed residential communities and non-racial property franchise.⁴

The contradictions inherent in a resistance to the Group Areas Act (GAA), while the CTCC had its own segregated housing policy, was best expressed by CTCC chairman of the Housing and Finance Committees, Major AZ Berman, when he complained that the imposition of the GAA in Cape Town would cause ‘untold hardship to a vast section of Cape Town’s multi-racial population’. He considered the GAA unnecessary in Cape Town because the process of residential segregation was already underway through the CTCC housing policy. He claimed the policy had the effect of ‘accelerating the existing tendency of voluntary segregation of the racial groups’.⁵ There were further contradictions, though. As the CTCC was locked in early confrontations with the Land Tenure Advisory Board about Group Areas, it was pursuing a modernist programme of reimagining city spaces, making fundamental planning changes to its social and spatial structure. It appeared that Modernism facilitated apartheid planning and segregated housing production by providing a seemingly supportive intellectual rationale for mass urban development and new segregated townships.⁶

Modernist influences are clearly present in the provision of townships formally planned in the 1950s and built in the 1960s. Continuing modernist interventions ‘freed up’ the inner-city spaces

³ They included, inter alia, the Population Registration Act 30 of 1950, which divided the population to four races – White, Coloured, African and ‘Other’; the Group Areas Act 41 of 1950, which divided urban territory into ‘controlled’ and scheduled ‘native’ areas and disqualified persons not of the specified race group from living in areas not proclaimed according to their race group; the prevention of Illegal Squatting Act 52 of 1951, which authorised the forced removal of those living in informal settlements; the Native Laws Amendment Act 54 of 1952, which extended influx control to a national system and narrowed the categories of Africans permitted permanent residence in urban areas.

⁴ Vivian Bickford-Smith, ‘South African urban history, racial segregation and the “unique” case of Cape Town,’ *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 21, no 1 (1995): 63–78.

⁵ ‘City opposes Group Areas,’ *Cape Times*, 18 March 1953. Berman did not explain how the process of segregation was a voluntary one.

⁶ The Group Areas Act 41 of 1950 as effected at the Cape by Proclamation 71 of 30 March 1951. Amendments included the Group Areas Development Act 69 of 1955, the Group Areas Amendment Act 57 of 1957 and the Group Areas Amendment Act 49 of 1962, which established the Department of Community Development to assume co-ordinated powers of Group Areas removals, planning and the development of affected areas.

through slum clearance and rezoning. International influences had the effect of encouraging radical planning interventions through the application of a ‘surgical method’, based on the premise that a clear site allowed greater freedom of design intervention.⁷ Modernist influences are therefore apparent in the rationale to demolish a portion of working-class housing in District Six to facilitate the development of the Eastern Boulevard (now Nelson Mandela Boulevard) in the interests of ‘progress’, even before the apartheid-era planning assault on District Six.

Forms of Modernism and their physical manifestation within Cape Town as an emerging apartheid city reveal the complexity of the diffusion of international planning ideas and how they were ‘edited’ through local conditions, perceptions and regulatory mechanisms.⁸ In Cape Town and in South Africa, the ‘editing’ of borrowed planning ideas took place in the context of expanding central and provincial government control over local authority functions. The Provincial Administration extended its planning powers into areas of local authority responsibility, including greater control over the Town Planning Schemes.⁹ Equally, the 1950s were marked by the subordination of accepted planning concepts such as use zoning to the racial zonings and Group Areas plans. As national and provincial governments asserted their powers, tensions began to emerge, as all three levels of government clearly had differing views on what constituted an ordered urban environment.¹⁰ In fact, the LTAB insisted at a meeting on 6 March 1953 that any town plan must give way to race zoning. TH van Reenen of the LTAB stated: ‘Where there was a Town Planning Scheme in operation already, the scheme must either fit in with the Group Areas, or be changed.’ It was an issue that ‘[a]ppplied particularly to the Town Planning Scheme of the City of Cape Town’.¹¹

⁷ Alta Steenkamp, ‘Corbusian Cape Town – urban surgery and the 1938 Congress Scheme,’ *South African Journal of Art History* 30, no 4 (2015): 90–102. Modernist influences at the time of the Foreshore Plan are more fully developed in chapter 3.

⁸ Luce Beeckmans, ‘Editing the African city: Reading colonial planning in Africa from a comparative perspective,’ *Planning Perspectives* 28, no 4 (2013), 615–627.

⁹ Ordinance 16 of 1953 and Ordinance 17 of 1955 instructed local authorities to expropriate land for township development and build townships: TB Floyd, *Town planning in South Africa* (Pietermaritzburg: Shuter and Shooter, 1960), 51.

¹⁰ See also chapter 5.

¹¹ ‘Peninsula race zones,’ *Cape Argus*, 7 March 1953.

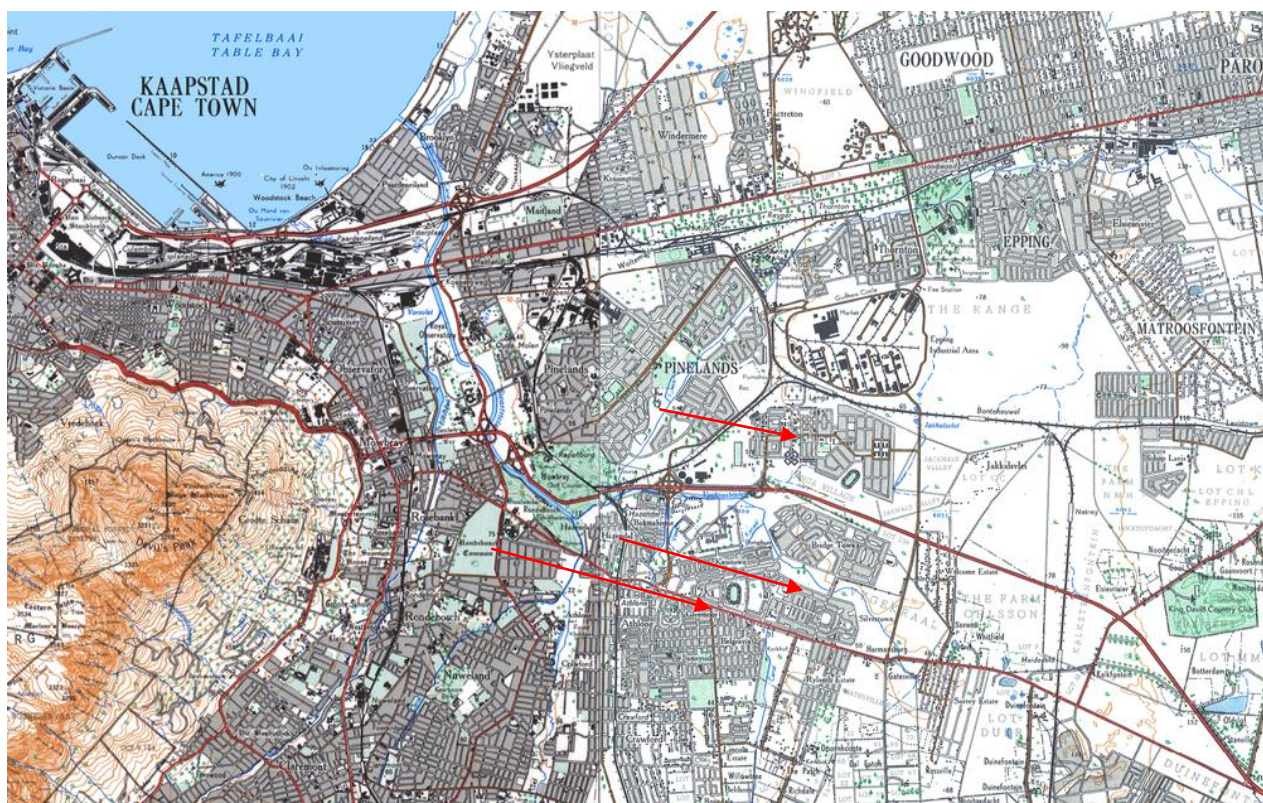


Figure 74: Map of Cape Town in 1960. The map shows dense residential development close to the CBD and hugging the eastern slopes of Table Mountain from District Six towards Claremont. It also shows expanded industrial and residential development across the Cape Flats to the east. Epping Industria had been developed in close proximity to Langa (arrowed), separated by buffer strips of road, rail and open spaces. Bridgetown, Kenttown and Silvertown (arrowed) have been completed, although building at Bonteheuwel is not yet underway. Situated off Klipfontein Road, Athlone, are the housing estates of Gleemoor, Belgravia and Sunnyside, and the Indian housing estate at Rylands (arrowed). Bishop Lavis, east of Epping Industria, is under construction. (Historic Map of Cape Town, 1960 <<https://adrian.friith.dev/historical-maps-of-ct/>>)

Apartheid and administrative centralisation, 1950s

Urban historians of South Africa have suggested a synergy between Modernism, town planning and apartheid planning, although the explanation about how this was achieved is yet to be explored in any detail.¹² In 1944, the United Party's Social and Economic Planning Commission prepared a report on 'Regional and Town Planning' which called for a central planning body at national level.¹³ A step towards centralisation occurred in the same year with the replacement of the Central Housing Board (CHB) with a National Housing and Planning Commission (NH&PC).¹⁴ The NH&PC took a more interventionist role in housing and funding allocations, requiring strict

¹² Paul Maylam, 'Explaining the apartheid city: 20 years of South Africa urban historiography,' *Journal of Southern African Studies* 21, no 1 (1995): 19–38; A Mabin, 'Comprehensive segregation: The origins of the Group Areas Act and its planning apparatuses,' *Journal of Southern African Studies* (1992): 405–429.

¹³ Union of South Africa, Report 5, Social and Economic Planning Commission, 1944. See chapter 3.

¹⁴ Constituted in terms of the Housing Amendment Act 49 of 1944.

compliance with an expanding set of rules and policies. It embarked upon a drive to save costs and by 1952 it suspended the national housing formula and ended the funding of sub-economic housing. The decision had the effect of creating a standstill in the provision of housing. Together with policy confusions, it explains why so little housing was constructed in the 1950s.

The marriage between the tightening administrative procedures and the implementation of spatial apartheid was evident in the provision of new forms of segregated housing. A growing body of centralised policy determined at a national level where African housing could be located, what form it should take, what the minimum standards of design and construction were, and how housing could be used in the pursuance of territorial segregation. The National Building Research Institute (NBRI) of the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) was commissioned in 1949 to prepare a series of studies intended to develop a set of minimum standards that could be applied to housing production nationally. The studies closely examined all aspects of design and construction methods with a view to achieving as much savings as possible. The result was a series of designs known as the NE 51 houses.¹⁵ In 1952 the CTCC decided to use the NE 51 designs for reasons of economy and speed of production. Importantly, because they were typologies developed and supported by the NH&PC, it was easier to get funding approval for them. This decision and the housing prototypes that followed mark a break from their previous, more autonomous housing policy. In future, worker-housing typologies in Cape Town would be characterised by the dreary uniformity of similar township designs and the dropping into those layouts of the NE 51 housing typologies.

Local planning schemes: transfer and modification of modernist planning principles

In 1935, the CTCC had established a Town Planning Branch in the City Engineer's Department. It was tasked with the development of a TPS in line with the requirements of the Townships Ordinance of 1934. It began work in 1937 and by 1940 it had produced the first (and controversial) draft for public comment.¹⁶ Towards the end of 1957, three of the four sections of the TPS had been completed, approved by the CTCC and submitted to the Provincial Administration.¹⁷ A few years after the formation of the Town Planning Branch, the Provincial Administrator also

¹⁵ NE stands for 'Non-European' and 51 refers to the date the designs were concluded and disseminated. The NBRI developed housing designs specifically for low-cost mass-produced housing that could be applied nationally. Cape Town specifically used the NE 51/10 and NE 51/9 housing designs. The application of the NE 51 housing forms is described further in subsequent sections of this chapter.

¹⁶ Chapter 3.

¹⁷ They were Bakoven to Trafalgar Park, 1941, Woodstock to Wynberg, 1952 and Wynberg to Clovelly, 1957. In addition, the first scheme had been subject to a significant number of amendments, including the amended Foreshore links contained in the *Metropolis of tomorrow of 1951–1959*.

approved the establishment of a Joint Town Planning Committee (JTTC) in 1940. The committee comprised the CTCC, the Goodwood and Parow Municipalities, and the Divisional Council.¹⁸ The Joint Town Planning Scheme (JTTS) was one of the first regional planning schemes in South Africa. It was considered necessary to prepare co-ordinated responses to issues of common planning concern for adjoining municipal areas. The JTTS Preliminary Statement was completed in March 1949 and finalised in 1950.¹⁹ The majority of the work was undertaken by the planner Denis Verschoyle, who uniquely provided a written overview of the influences which affected the planning process, and in so doing provided a window into how international planning influences affected a local planning scheme. Verschoyle was an Irish architectural draughtsman who joined the CTCC Town Planning Branch in 1938, becoming a member of the British Town Planning Institute in 1940. He admired Pinelands as the first genuine attempt at township design in Cape Town and proposed that all townships be planned in a similar way. Like most modernists, he objected to ad hoc growth and urbanisation.

New planning approaches drawn from the British Barlow Report emerge in the JTTS. The first approach was the development of a structuring road hierarchy. The second approach used concepts of land-use zoning borrowed from United States and British planning models, including defined areas for residential zones. In adopting these ideas, the JTTS sought to establish a pattern of arterial, sub-arterial and local roads similar to a British system devised by Alker Tripp.²⁰ The third approach was the application of the planning principles embodied in Neighbourhood Units for township design.²¹ The preparation of the JTTS illustrates the fact that, like the diffusion of British Garden City planning concepts into the colonial world in the early 20th century, the transfer and modification of planning ideas provided new inspiration to local planning regimes. In this way, South African Modernism provided an intellectual rationale for a future city that was to be modern, efficient, ordered and with a clear differentiation of functions.

¹⁸ Verschoyle Papers BC 1205.A2.2. *Town planning at the Cape*. The scope of the scheme was subsequently enlarged to include further municipal areas.

¹⁹ Report of the Joint Town Planning Scheme: Final Statement, 1950 (unpublished).

²⁰ Sir Herbert Alker Tripp (1883–1954) was a British police official who devised a hierarchical road system that controlled traffic volumes and separated local and arterial roads. His ideas were widely applied in planning internationally.

²¹ The building of the townships according to Neighbourhood Unit principles is described in chapter 5.



*Figure 75: The JTPS plan for a differentiated road network consisted of a hierarchy of roads from arterial (purple) to sub-arterial (red) and local (orange). In addition, the region is divided into broad use zones, with the industrial areas hatched. The plan provided for a theoretical skeleton to which further residential developments could be attached.
(JTPS Report 1949, updated 1950)*

Planning schemes were affected in the 1940s and 1950s by overlapping restrictions imposed at a national level by the GAA and other town-planning amendments.²² The restrictions were made more conflictual because they were imposed halfway through the development of the town-planning schemes, requiring a degree of retro-fitting. Neither the first scheme of 1941 nor the second scheme of 1952, both of which were prepared before 1950, had taken Group Areas into account. However, by the time the third scheme from Wynberg to Clovelly was submitted to the CTCC in 1957, the preliminary studies and subsequent plan conformed to Group Areas requirements. This process – the development of a TPS in terms of provincial requirements and the need to operate within the requirements of the GAA – meant that planners operated within separate but overlapping legal mechanisms that were sometimes synchronised and sometimes in conflict. In the relationship between physical planning and apartheid planning, the destruction and

²² Alan Mabin, 'Comprehensive segregation: The origins of the Group Areas Act and its planning apparatuses,' *Journal of African Studies* 8, no 2 (1992): 405–429.

construction of housing and the relocation of residents became a focal point around which local and central government authorities interacted, sometimes conflictually and sometimes not.. Government-appointed boards had extensive powers to remove groups in the racially mixed working-class areas of Cape Town using the legal mechanisms available to them.²³ The Group Areas Development Board, formed in 1955 interfered with both occupation and property transactions in Group Areas. It was followed later by the establishment of the Community Development Board in 1966 which became involved in the physical destruction of the housing stock in the 1970s.



Figure 76: Proposed road plan from The metropolis of tomorrow. An aerial 3D view of the elevated freeway proposal and its impact on the tight urban morphology of District Six. This plan modified the 1947 Foreshore Plan in line with Morris's ideas of Modernism which he attached to an efficient east–west freeway network. It is possible to read in this proposal the escalation of a transportation-dominated approach to planning. Morris's plan shows not only an elevated Eastern Boulevard, but also the proposed ring road, a concept first introduced by his predecessor, Walter Lunn, in 1949. It also shows the impact of an elevated freeway over the residential area of District Six. For this stretch of freeway, more than 240 houses were demolished. Family numbers were likely more, because in many cases housing was shared or rooms were rented. (Morris, Metropolis of tomorrow, 1951)

²³ The Group Areas Development Board and the Community Development Board.



Figure 77: The Cape Town Development Plan of 1957 based on the Metropolis of tomorrow report. The report recommended substantial changes to the freeway network, which in turn were endorsed by the CTCC in 1952 and the Shand Committee in 1959. This is the amendment to the Scheme first proposed by the Joint Foreshore Technical Committee in 1952. It shows Morris's plan for the new high-speed freeway system and the ring road around the CBD which would link the central city to the Foreshore and other parts of the metropolitan area. The green areas show the extent of inner-city land zoned as Public Open Space. The proposed road network cuts through the Company Gardens via an underpass. Both the eastern and western peri-urban areas are intensively affected by the road system and the proposed open spaces. This plan, and others both before and after it, required dramatic changes to the tight morphology of the old city and illustrated how the boulevards would cut into the old city communities. (Plan: TPR 1953, CoCT)

Residential planning in Cape Town

The destruction of inner-city housing in the name of slum clearance and urban renewal was seen as an important component in the creation of the modern city. Zones were segregated by race and land-use and connected by an efficient road network. The process involved an assault on existing inner-city housing and the removal of working-class residents to formally planned and segregated residential areas. The process was by no means an uncontested one, nor was it the work of a single municipal department. Clearance required the involvement of the local authority through the offices of the MoH. The City Engineer assessed the degree of material decay of a building. It was an expensive process – identification of slums, expropriation or purchase, the purchase of land for new housing, planning costs for the development of services and roads, and finally the building of the replacement houses themselves. As we have seen, municipal attempts in the 1950s to demolish and rebuild were thwarted by lack of government funding for replacement housing estates. Nevertheless, the council's properties acquired through slum clearance mechanisms were sometimes used as a resource for other developments.

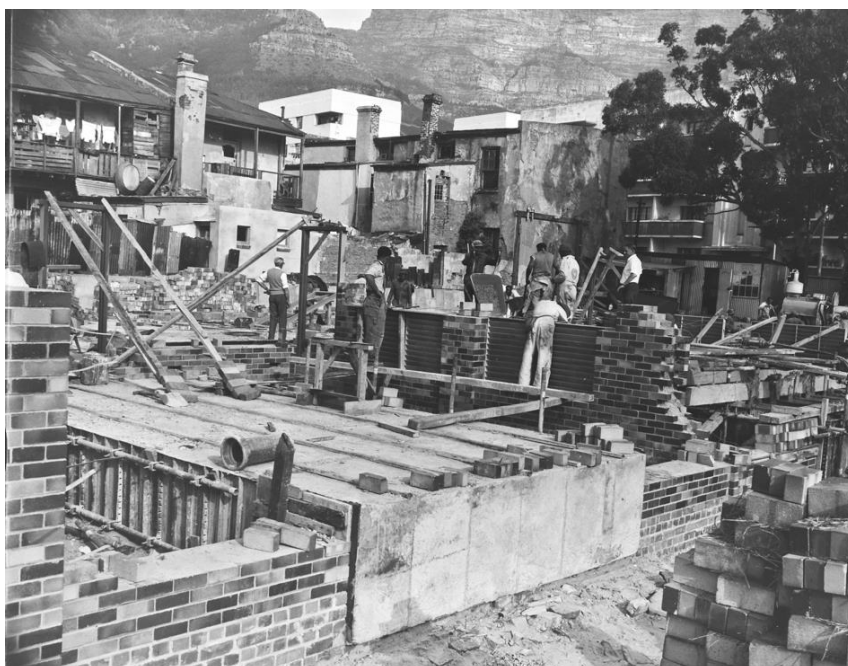


Figure 78: Photograph of a site in the heart of District Six, date unknown. It shows the demolition of properties and rebuilding occurring at the same time. The site is not identified but it illustrates how the CTCC used sites in District Six as 'raw material' for new developments, whether roads or infrastructure, by demolishing the old structures. (CoCT Ccb127-f50_i04)

Slum clearance was periodically held up because the provision of new housing failed to meet the demand of municipal housing programmes. City policy required that those affected by slum clearance be rehoused elsewhere, otherwise residents could not be moved from designated slums. When this was not possible because of a shortage of new housing, expropriated slum properties were often not demolished. Indeed, the CoCT had become the owner of many expropriated slum properties and the owner of properties which it itself had condemned. By 1951, the City Council

owned some 1 000 properties in District Six and many sites in Windermere acquired through expropriation or other slum-clearance mechanisms.²⁴ There were two dominant residential planning paradigms of the post-war period in Cape Town: one related to a newly envisaged city form and function and the related clearance of sites identified as slums, and the other related to new mass housing production.



Figure 79: Re-ordering city spaces in action: Windermere in the process of demolition, giving way to the planned township of Factreton. Windermere was an ongoing target of slum clearance, from its inclusion in the municipal area in 1946 until the completion of Factreton and Kensington, in addition to raids and forced removals throughout the 1950s. (City Engineer's Report 1960, CoCT)

In the face of this, local town planners remained committed to international visions of Modernism and slum clearance. In these complex negotiations between apartheid and Modernism, the 'house' and 'housing' became contested terrain, with tensions playing out between successive ideological and planning regimes as well as between local and national government administrations. A key focus on the dual planning paradigms was District Six. Ever since Lunn's first TPS for Cape Town, District Six had been identified as a key area of modernist planning intervention. In short, both District Six and the BoKaap to the west, with their crowded streets and houses, were viewed as expendable. The persistent reference to slums and slum conditions gave weight to their expendability for modernist planning purposes. Slum clearance began soon after the Slums Clearance Act of 1934 but the Housing Branch's inability to keep pace with providing housing for

²⁴ Mayor's Minutes 1951, 13.

those displaced meant that by 1937 slum clearance occurred in a piecemeal manner. It was only in the 1960s that the CTCC returned in earnest to the idea of slum clearance and a complete modernist remodelling of District Six. Because of the magnitude of the task, the CTCC determined that the complete replanning and rebuilding of District Six should be undertaken in stages. As a result, the City Engineer began with a pilot project.

The contradictions and coherences between modernist town planning and apartheid planning are evident in two major inner-city schemes. In the first one – the building of a high-speed roadwork through an old part of District Six – Morris, the City Engineer, was influenced by Corbusierian Modernism with its pervasive strong references to the *Plan voisin* and the *Cite radieuse*, together with the American models of high-speed road freeways.²⁵ Building the Eastern Boulevard, a project to which he was professionally committed, involved the displacement of some 3 000 people in the first of the inner-city's mass removals.²⁶ The second was the city's response to the GAA and a short-lived programme for a modernist intervention in District Six as an area of unspecified racial composition or a planned area which remained racially unzoned. As Parnell and Mabin have stated, the literature on local, provincial and central government relationships in urban development, including housing, is currently minimal. One consequence is that precise roles in the implementation of mechanisms for spatial racial segregation have remained unclear.²⁷ Any analysis needs to consider the fact that these relationships were defined increasingly by centralised laws and policies.

The relationships between these three tiers of government were complex, particularly because Cape Town had a mixed population and an attachment to a self-proclaimed 'uniqueness'.²⁸ The CTCC was torn between the rights of a group of voters racialised as coloured, the concerns and prejudices of conservative 'white' ratepayers, and the need to comply with race-based central government policy and law. In addition, there was a pervasive antipathy towards the National Party government overlaid by ethnic, linguistic and political differences. The Cape Town Municipality, despite being an enthusiastic exponent of urban order and Modernism, balked (initially at least) at the implications of the GAA. The CTCC's hesitation was arguably not so much because of any moral or political conscience, though some councillors may have possessed this, but because the City's planners believed it did not make good planning sense to fragment the city primarily, or

²⁵ See Appendix II for biographical details of Lunn and Morris.

²⁶ 'City boulevard plan opposed,' *Cape Argus*, 14 June 1958.

²⁷ Susan Parnell and Alan Mabin, 'Rethinking urban South Africa,' *Journal of Southern African Studies* 21, no 1 (March 1995): 51.

²⁸ Vivian Bickford Smith, 'South African urban history, racial segregation, and the "unique" case of Cape Town?' *Journal of Southern African Studies* 21, no 1 (March 1995): 63–78.

only, for reasons of race zoning. Their objections were doomed, as ultimately the central government reduced local government autonomy and dominated residential planning and race-based area removals to the point that it actively got involved in local planning. The culmination of this political battle in the 1960s is discussed and analysed in detail in chapter 5. But the initial skirmishes form part of this chapter's history of Cape Town's housing crisis of the 1950s, and how planning its solution was affected by modernist and apartheid ideas, related in the paragraphs that follow.

South Africa's post-war housing crisis

An immediate concern towards the end of the Second World War was a severe housing shortage, exacerbated by urban population growth, and an impasse between local and the NH&PC over housing costs. By 1949, attention had turned again to irregular urbanisation and a focus on overcrowding in the slums and poor living conditions in the informal settlements.²⁹ However, the real focus by 1949 was on the lack of control over such areas. The Nationalist Party government intended to expand control over residential areas by tying the provision of new housing to tighter influx control measures and building formal townships designed to permit access control.

The United Party government had also proposed to clear the mixed informal settlements and rehouse those evicted in formal housing. A particular problem from the government's perspective had been the massive increase in African urbanisation, which was the result of the push factor of severe poverty in the rural 'reserves' and the pull of increased urban economic opportunities provided by the import-substitution industrialisation provided by the war. The need for such labour had also been acknowledged by the government, and urbanisation increased, by the temporary suspension of the pass laws that controlled African urbanisation during the war. An unwanted consequence was the further overcrowding of the existing locations and the burgeoning of shanty towns around major cities.³⁰

The Van Eyck Commission was duly set up to investigate housing needs by the Smuts government in 1943. Strongly influenced by the British Barlow Report referred to earlier, it advocated a centralised approach to planning, the setting up of a national planning authority – in the form of the NH&PC of 1944 – and the need for regional planning. The Van Eyck Commission also

²⁹ 'City's homeless natives,' *Cape Times*, 7 September 1949.

³⁰ Vivian Bickford-Smith, *Emergence of the South African metropolis: Cities and identities in the twentieth century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 198–201.

proposed that residential planning be undertaken using the Neighbourhood Unit concept, pointing out the need to fragment large residential areas by stating:

Both in planning new cities and redeveloping existing ones, there is today a wide recognition of the necessity to break up sprawling urban masses in compact and protected neighbourhood units.³¹

During the post-war housing crisis period, the United Party government also established the Fagan Commission to make policy recommendations on the future of Africans in cities. The commission took two years to complete its deliberations, but its report in 1948 concluded that African urbanisation was irreversible and that a stable African family presence in the city was preferable to migrant labour. However, in May 1948 the United Party lost the general election to the National Party and the recommendations of the report were shelved.

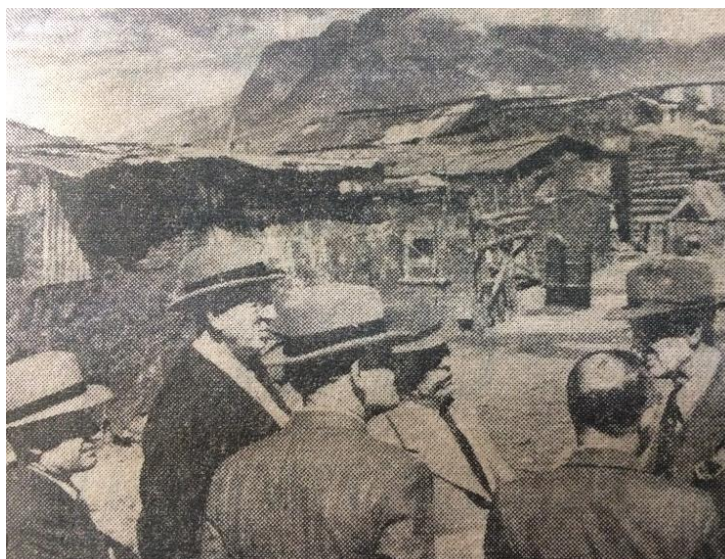


Figure 80: The post-war housing crisis. In March 1948, the United Party MoH, Dr H Gluckman, visited Windermere at the invitation of Mayor of Cape Town. Soon after this visit, Dr Gluckman announced that the Department of Native Affairs would be entering the African housing market, a plan the CTCC, as described by Mr A Balsillie, Chairman of the CTCC Native Affairs Committee, as 'vague'. However, soon after this the United Party lost the general election to the National Party. (Picture: 'Dr Gluckman visits Windermere,' Cape Times, 16 March 1948: Photo courtesy ANA)

Now controlled by the National Party after its election victory, the central government's NH&PC approached the National Building Research Institute (NBRI), a government research unit set up by the Human Sciences Research Council in Pretoria in 1949. It proposed a research project using scientific methods of experiment and analysis to develop plans for houses and building productions based on the application of minimum standards.³² Buildings were to be constructed

³¹ UG 34-1944, Social and Economic Council Report No 5 Regional and Town Planning, 10. It is discussed more fully in chapter 3.

³² Douglas M Calderwood, *Principles of mass housing: Based on a series of lectures on housing delivered to post-graduate students in town and regional planning, 1962* (Pretoria: South African Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, 1964).

to a standard set of typologies based on an application of studies to produce minimum standards for housing production. Building production for what were called NE 51 houses was to be based on mass construction and the use, wherever possible, of mass-produced building materials and assembly-line building techniques.³³ NE 51 houses became the blueprint for the mass production of African and coloured housing after this period, which resulted in the dreary urban forms that characterise such environments today. The recommendations of the NBRI received the approval of both the NH&PC and the Native Affairs Department (NAD). Initially presented as ‘guidelines’, they quickly became requirements for all future government-funded housing schemes.

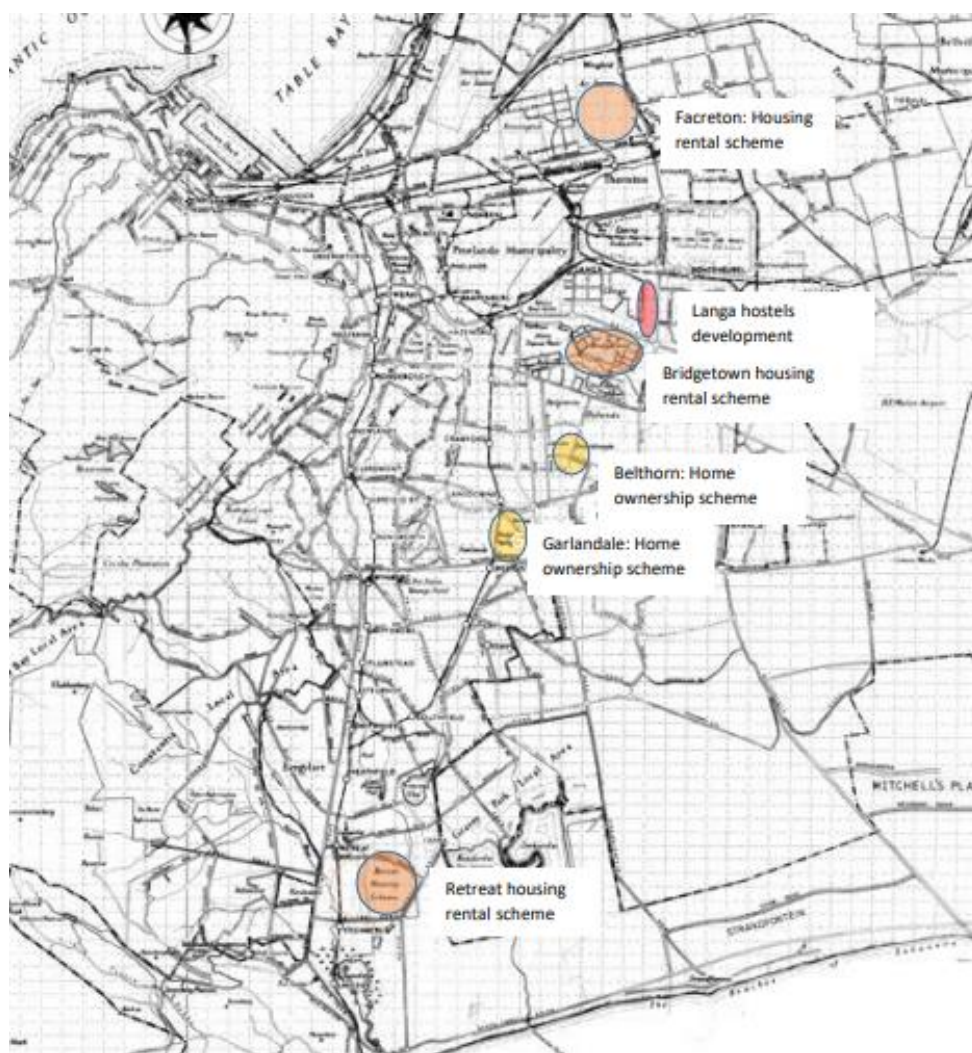


Figure 81: Annotated map showing housing estates constructed during the 1950s. The sites are divided into rental schemes (orange) and home-ownership schemes (yellow) for coloured residents. Residents were drawn from the existing housing list. They were allocated rental accommodation either as sub-economic (subsidised) tenants or economic (unsubsidised) tenants. Only men (seen as heads of nuclear families) were permitted to sign a housing contract. No further housing was permitted in Langa other than hostels. The hostel sites to the east of Langa (the Zones) are indicated in red. Information superimposed upon Survey Branch index of the property reference maps CoCT [SS Morris] 1977)

³³ NE refers to ‘Non-European’; ‘51’ refers to the year of the design (1951).

Consequently, most of Bonteheuvel and Gugulethu comprised such house types and layout. The national plan for the minimum standards was austere in the extreme, even with standards having been calibrated downwards to cut costs further. For instance, it made no provision for floors or ceilings; the CTCC therefore drew on its own funds from time to time to provide them. By 1950 a looming deadlock between the commission and the CTCC relating to the costs of sub-economic housing resulted in the CTCC's setting up its own Housing Construction Unit to reduce production costs yet further.



Figure 82: Aerial view of the Cape Flats, 1950s, looking west towards Cape Town c 1955. This area of Athlone lies to the south of the N2 (with the Athlone cooling towers visible). Bridgetown is in the process of completion, with Silvertown to the south and Alicedale further south. Kentown is to the west. (CoCT CCB_122_50 i01)

The CTCC and the post-war housing crisis in Cape Town

In 1950, existing inner-city housing in Cape Town was still mostly 19th-century housing stock. The exception was the relatively small proportion of council housing stock built in the 1930s and 1940s, particularly at the start of the Second World War, and private suburban developments. Soon after the end of the war, the CTCC made use of the national government's Housing Emergency Powers Act (1945) to assist returning South African servicemen and their families amid the housing crisis. This resulted in the CTCC building 138 flats and cottages for rental for (white) ex-servicemen in Gabriel Road, Plumstead. It remained occupied by white ex-servicemen, with another housing development close by, off Boundary Road Diep River for coloured families. Yet this type of housing initiative was not pursued further: the costs were considered too high by the

NH&PC and the CTCC had difficulty in obtaining a consistent supply of housing funds to continue the housing programme. By the beginning of 1950, the CTCC had a total of some 12 870 houses.³⁴ Of those, 4 755 were for rental in specially designated coloured housing estates.³⁵ Kewtown, first planned in 1936, received particularly favourable reviews in local newspapers. It was described as ‘the city’s most ambitious scheme for the rehousing of Coloured people’ who had been moved from slum conditions to ‘neat roomy houses standing in garden plots’. By 1950, some 1 700 families had been resettled in Kewtown. ‘Zone A’ alone contained 1 100 housing units and there were plans for a sports stadium and schools.³⁶ But progress in the ambitious Kewtown plan became entangled with problems to do with the availability of funds and little progress was made until the building of Silvertown, followed by Bridgetown between 1953 and 1956.³⁷

Between 1950 and 1960, new municipal housing developments were overwhelmingly for Capetonians racialised as coloured and located close to the area chosen by the Provincial Administrator as the ‘heart’ of coloured housing, namely Athlone on the Cape Flats. Housing stock was for both ‘economic’ and ‘sub-economic’ (ie subsidised) rental accommodation and there were limited possibilities for homeownership for those who could afford it. Most white housing was privately funded on a home-ownership basis, although there were large housing projects for ex-servicemen following the war, such as the Divisional Council project at Bergvliet followed by the Meadowridge Garden Suburb. The early municipal system of loans for owner-building in terms of the Assisted Housing Scheme was, in theory, open for all (except Africans), but in practice very few coloured Capetonians were able to afford their own properties. By the beginning of the 1950s, housing provision for any among the working classes in Cape Town had come to a halt despite the growing need for housing. In fact, housing figures show that in 1949 only 115 housing units had been completed as part of the slum clearance and replanning programmes for Windermere, with work beginning on Bridgetown and Factreton in 1953.

In contrast, the provision of family housing for African residents was actively resisted by central government in the 1950s as an expression of a growing policy of temporary status. An ever-increasing number of African migrants in the Cape Town area led to a proliferation of informal settlements on the edges of the municipal areas. The Manager of Native Affairs for the CTCC estimated that in 1950 there were approximately 3 500 ‘*pondoks*’ in the municipal area, 1 800 at

³⁴ This included privately constructed houses.

³⁵ City Engineer’s Department, CTCC, ‘City housing for its poorer citizens’ (unpublished report, 1993).

³⁶ ‘From slums to neat houses,’ *Cape Argus*, 1 September 1950.

³⁷ Paul Andrew and Derek Japha, *Low income housing alternatives for the Western Cape* (Urban Problems Research Unit, University of Cape Town, 1978), 21.

Windermere and 1 200 at Blouville in Retreat. He also estimated that two out of three Africans were homeless or living in non-formal housing.³⁸ Two years later, the CTCC estimated that there were 60 000 African men women and children in need of housing in the Cape area, 30 000 of them in the municipality alone.³⁹ The need for sub-economic (or subsidised) family accommodation was particularly desperate. The NH&PC originally set a maximum amount for sub-economic housing costs depending on the race of the occupant:

- £360 for a house for an African family;
- £480 for a house for a coloured family; and
- £720 for a house for a white family.⁴⁰

However, by 1952, in order to save its own costs, it imposed a moratorium on sub-economic housing funds. The result was a housing deadlock across all the sub-economic housing developments in Cape Town.

Before the construction of Gugulethu and the extension of Nyanga, family housing for Africans was confined to Langa. By 1952, rights to formal state-funded housing were also tied to restrictive and discriminatory conditions. They applied in particular to meeting the requirements of section 10 of the Natives Laws Amendment Act of 1952, which restricted rights of permanent residence to Africans who had been born in Cape Town or who had lived there for 15 years and had worked for the same employer. The law also made more rigid provisions for the expulsion of Africans who were surplus to labour requirements.⁴¹ African residents in the informal settlements found themselves subject to night raids, followed by forced removals into screening camps both by City officials and the NAD. While accommodation was available for single contract workers, the process of forced resettlement for families was held up by a lack of housing until the 1960s.⁴² Henceforth, the NAD decided that only accommodation for migrant workers could be provided in Cape Town. Langa was now declared fully developed to Vanguard Drive (now Jakes Gerwel Drive) and no further family housing would be built. With extreme pressure on housing, the NAD briefly considered a potential new category for African housing in Cape Town: a leasehold site-and-service scheme east of Langa.⁴³ However, soon the attitude of the Minister of Native Affairs (and future Prime Minister) Hendrik Verwoerd hardened. In 1955, he announced that there would

³⁸ 'Plight of homeless natives in city,' *Cape Argus*, 25 July 1950.

³⁹ '60 000 squatters need homes,' *Cape Times*, 11 March 1953.

⁴⁰ 'Bid to end the housing deadlock,' *Cape Times*, 9 September 1952.

⁴¹ Paul Maylam, 'The rise and decline of urban apartheid in South Africa,' *African Affairs* 89, no 354 (1990): 69.

⁴² 'Langa housing comes to a halt,' *Cape Times*, 11 December 1953.

⁴³ 'Verwoerd: New native location to be extension of Nyanga, Langa,' *Cape Argus*, 25 November 1954.

be no site-and-service schemes at Langa, stating that he was ‘opposed to the development of a Native Township astride an important road’ and objected to what he considered was a form of home ownership.⁴⁴ The NAD withheld funding for the proposed new township at Langa, until the CTCC abandoned any ideas of leasehold planning on the land east of Jakes Gerwel Drive. The massive housing deficit was relieved only partly by the building of Nyanga by the Divisional Council, as has been well documented by Hildegard Fast.⁴⁵ The crisis of a lack of accommodation in the 1950s, particularly for African families, remained acute.

Solly Morris and solutions to the housing problem

Any meaningful intervention to meet housing demands in Cape Town, either as a result of slum clearance or for people on the council’s housing list, required a significant increase in the growth of new housing stock. With a moratorium on sub-economic housing taking effect and housing costs still rising, the CTCC sought ways to build houses cheaply, using their own construction force and building to the cheapest possible specifications. When in 1950 the Municipality of Cape Town appointed Morris as the new City Engineer, he not only brought with him a vision of Cape Town as a modern, ordered city, but a powerful personality with exceptional organisational skills.⁴⁶ While his major interests were large civil projects and freeway development, he applied his mind to the housing crisis, which he interpreted as an organisational and logistical issue rather than a social one. He wished to find a way to build as many units as quickly and as cheaply as possible to relieve housing pressure on the inner-city areas and clear the way for his modernist projects. Henceforth, the City Engineer’s reports are replete with details on the costs of construction, services, the number of houses completed, and numbers still to be built.⁴⁷

As a first step, municipal councillors and officials went on a national ‘housing mission’ in October 1950. The group consisted of the City Engineer, an accountant and the chief housing architect. They toured the country, visiting township developments in Germiston, Boksburg and the mining towns of the Witwatersrand and the Orange Free State. The group concluded that the housing which the CTCC was building in Cape Town, even the austerity housing at Retreat, was too expensive. The report which followed outlined future housing policy for the City. Morris’s report entitled ‘Future housing policy for non-Europeans and natives’ called for a new approach to

⁴⁴ ‘Pleas for married natives living at Langa,’ *Cape Argus*, 27 January 1955.

⁴⁵ Hildegard Fast, ‘Pondoks, houses and hostels: A history of Nyanga, 1946–1970, with a special focus on housing,’ PhD thesis, University of Cape Town, 1995.

⁴⁶ BC 672 SS Morris Papers UCT. Solomon ‘Solly’ Morris MICE and MITP, City Engineer 1950–1972. See Appendix II for biographical details.

⁴⁷ City of Cape Town, Reports of the City Engineer, 1950–1959.

housing, admitting that the standards of the old schemes with their planning for ‘optimum standards of living and amenity, design and construction’ would have to be abandoned. He recommended a closer alignment with national housing production, although the municipality recommended that the minimum requirements should also meet the ‘special conditions’ at Cape Town – the ‘driving and continuous rain’ and the damp conditions that resulted in condensation on ceilings.

The most important decision of ‘the new approach’ was that in order to build as many houses as possible, the CTCC would lower its building standards. In this, Morris was partly influenced by the townships he had viewed during the housing mission. The first part of the ‘new approach’ was to design and build ‘dual-occupancy units’ – a house with shared outside bathroom facilities that could be used by two families (see Figures 83 and 84). The attraction of the units was that they accommodated twice as many families. By choosing this approach, there was a deep irony in replicating the shared facilities of the sub-let inner-city houses which had so horrified city officials. The CTCC accepted the principle of dual-occupancy units and began work on planning. Even then, the first proposal for 492 units with a double letting of 984 lettings was considered too expensive by the NH&PC. Finally, first dual-occupancy houses were built at Kewtown in 1952, with others following later in the larger housing estates of Bonteheuwel and Heideveld (see Figure 81). The CTCC chose two typologies from the list of NE 51 houses that could be built at speed and at lower costs, namely, types NE 51/9 and NE 51/10.



Figure 83: A family of 14 in a dual-occupancy house, Kewtown, 1961. Dual-occupancy houses were divided into two units sharing bathroom facilities (see Figure 82). One unit might only have a single bedroom, the other unit two. The plans were justified on the grounds that it was a temporary arrangement and that in due course a dual-occupancy unit would be consolidated into a single house. This was unlikely to happen. Matters for tenants were made worse by the fact that if their financial situation improved and they were in a position to pay a higher rent for larger accommodation, the name went to the bottom of the Housing List. In practice, it meant that obtaining improved accommodation would take years. (Digital Archives, Islandora 16726, University of Cape Town. Photograph courtesy ANA)



Figure 84. Example of a dual-occupancy house built in Kentown. It would have been a single building unit with two entrances, usually comprising one three-roomed unit and one two-roomed unit. (City of Cape Town CCb222_f44_i4)

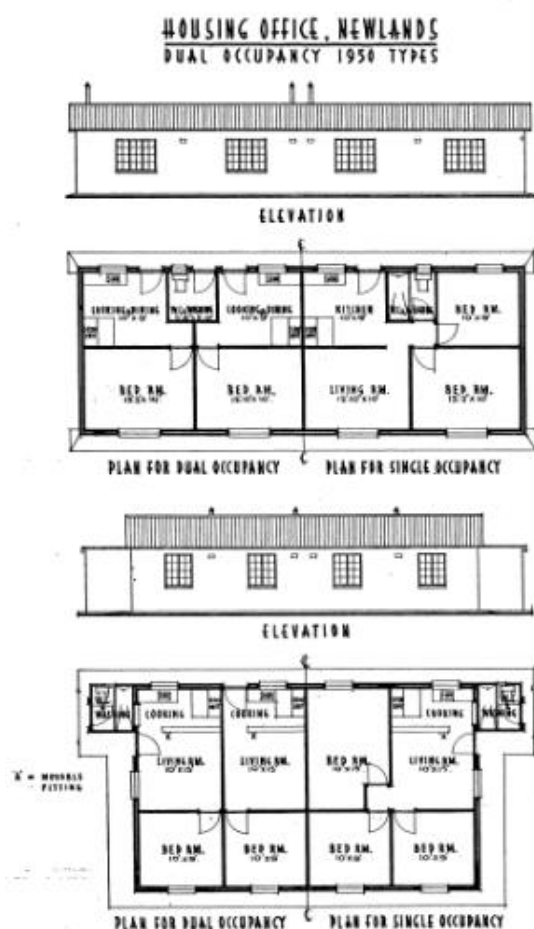


Figure 85: The first of the CTCC's minimum standard housing designs. The dual-occupancy housing units were developed by the Housing Office. They were designed to house two families per unit and thus halve building costs. They had shared bathroom facilities. The plan shows how it can be used for dual occupancy consisting of a living room/kitchen and a bedroom each (left) or combined into a single unit with three bedrooms. There is no record of any such conversions occurring during the study period. (MM 1952)

Morris's City Engineer's Department began work in 1953 on a planned 10-year master plan for housing. It estimated that at least 20 000 houses would be required to meet the demand, rising to 30 000 in the following 10-year period. The second decision affecting housing typologies made by

the CTCC was to follow the housing and layout prototypes developed by the NBRI.⁴⁸ KwaThema near Springs, designed and planned according to NBRI principles, served as a model for the use of NE 51 housing types and the type of layout favoured by the NAD for African townships.⁴⁹ KwaThema drew extensively from NBRI guidelines for township development.⁵⁰ The fact that this township model was replicated throughout South Africa, including at Gugulethu and Nyanga, goes a long way towards explaining how such residential designs came to dominate the ‘form and character’ of the apartheid cities.⁵¹

The first NE 51 houses in Cape Town were a group of 160 units built at Kewtown in 1952. They were something of an experiment to see whether they could be built within the Housing Commission’s limit of £410 per unit. To keep costs down they had no floors, ceilings and electricity.⁵² But they were not well received by members of the community they were intended for. When the Municipal Housing Committee inspected the new houses, a local councillor remarked that ‘it would be better to die in the *pondokkies* than live in these sorts of houses’.⁵³ The houses, bleak as they were, were by no means the most basic, as the municipality continued to experiment with cheap forms of prefabricated housing, including a series of asbestos huts in Retreat in 1952. Housing activist Father W Gregorowski condemned new asbestos hutments built in Retreat as no more than a ‘prefabricated slum’.⁵⁴

⁴⁸ Douglas M Calderwood, *Principles of mass housing*, 208.

⁴⁹ Hannah le Roux, ‘Designing KwaThema: Cultural inscriptions in the model township,’ *Journal of Southern African Studies* 45, no 2 (2019): 273–301.

⁵⁰ National Housing Office, ‘Minimum standards of housing accommodation for non-Europeans,’ in Le Roux, ‘Designing KwaThema,’ 296.

⁵¹ Derek Japha, *The social programme of the South African Modern Movement in architecture* (Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town, 1986).

⁵² Mayor’s Minutes, year ending 1954, 7.

⁵³ ‘Huis paleis pondok,’ *Die Burger*, 7 September 1952.

⁵⁴ *Cape Argus*, 7 November 1952.



Figure 86: Aerial view of the model township at KwaThema Springs, under construction in 1952. Similar layout and housing typologies were replicated throughout South African cities. Most involved a mix of hostel development and family houses set within a defined area that was set apart by buffer strips, but sufficiently close to industrial areas. Adherence to the same forms and housing typologies was a requirement of the NAD. (Le Roux, 2019: 275)

The early experimental houses at Kewtown were eventually provided with flooring, ceilings and electricity after the council applied for and was granted additional funds for the purpose. This NE 51 project at 'Zone A' in Kewtown was followed by a second project for 'Zone C' at Bridgetown, with plans being drawn up for some 909 units between 1953 and 1954.⁵⁵ They were submitted for approval as economic, although the finishes were identified as 'austerity'. It meant, unfortunately, that tenants would be paying economic rentals for an austerity building. The Bridgetown houses therefore proved unpopular with tenants.

In short, Morris's housing plans did little in the short term to solve the crisis. In a speech in 1953 calling for better housing for the poor, social worker Zerilda Steyn, a housing activist and co-founder of the Urban Housing Association, pointed out that many of Cape Town's residents 'were living close to hell'.⁵⁶ Others, such as Bishop Sidney Lavis and Councillor Zainunnisa 'Cissie' Gool

⁵⁵ Mayor's Minutes, year ending 1954, 9.

⁵⁶ 'Call for housing for poor,' *Cape Argus*, 27 August 1953. Zerilda Steyn was a founder member with Canon (later Bishop) Sidney Lavis of the Urban Housing Association, later called the Citizens Housing League (CHL). This organisation worked closely with the CTCC to provide housing mostly for members of the poor-white community. It built 'model villages' at Crawford, Brooklyn and Ruyterwacht (Epping Garden Village) in 1938. Its first 'coloured' township was Bishop Lavis, built in 1951.

(the fiery daughter of Dr Abdurahman), repeatedly drew attention to the rights of working-class Capetonians to acceptable and affordable housing.⁵⁷ Yet almost no public housing had been built in Cape Town over the previous eight years. Finally in 1954, the CTCC announced that they planned to prepare a master plan for coloured housing on account of the magnitude of the problem. The master plan was intended as a guide rather than imposing rigid requirements for future housing developments. The shortage of housing identified by the CTCC was about 20 000 houses, with the number rising to 30 000 in the next 20 years.⁵⁸ Based on existing analysis, the major housing requirement was for the three-roomed housing type designed to serve the sub-economic group.

To assess the extent of the housing problem in mid-decade, the CTCC commissioned a housing survey by Edward Batson of the University of Cape Town in 1955.⁵⁹ The study, which was presented to the CTCC in 1957, was a detailed investigation of a sample of households in Cape Town to examine residential conditions and to check whether they fulfilled the requirements of NE 51 house typologies. The survey had two glaring omissions: it excluded city-owned slum properties and African residential areas. The exclusion of the city-owned slum properties was odd, considering their acquisition in preparation for putative slum clearance. The exclusion was due the fact that the occupants were not living in accommodation identified as overcrowded in terms of the NBRI criteria. As the city continued with its slum-clearance programme through the acquisition of properties identified as ‘slums’ this constituted a sizeable but unknown number.

⁵⁷ Zainunnisa ‘Cissie’ Gool (1897–1963) was a prominent anti-apartheid activist, founder of the National Liberation League and a leading member of the Non-European Front. She was member of the CTCC, representing Ward 7 (Woodstock), and used the platform to challenge many of the City’s decisions. She played a leading role in the struggle to prevent residents from being evicted from their homes for the building of the Eastern Boulevard.

⁵⁸ Mayor’s Minutes, year ending 1954, 11. These estimates turned out to be significant underestimates.

⁵⁹ Edward Batson, Housing survey (1955), Mayor’s Minutes, 1958. Professor Batson was the author of an earlier social study assessing the poverty of households in Cape Town. The study applied the poverty datum line system of measurement, subsequently much emulated: Vivian Bickford-Smith et al, *Cape Town in the twentieth century*, 103.

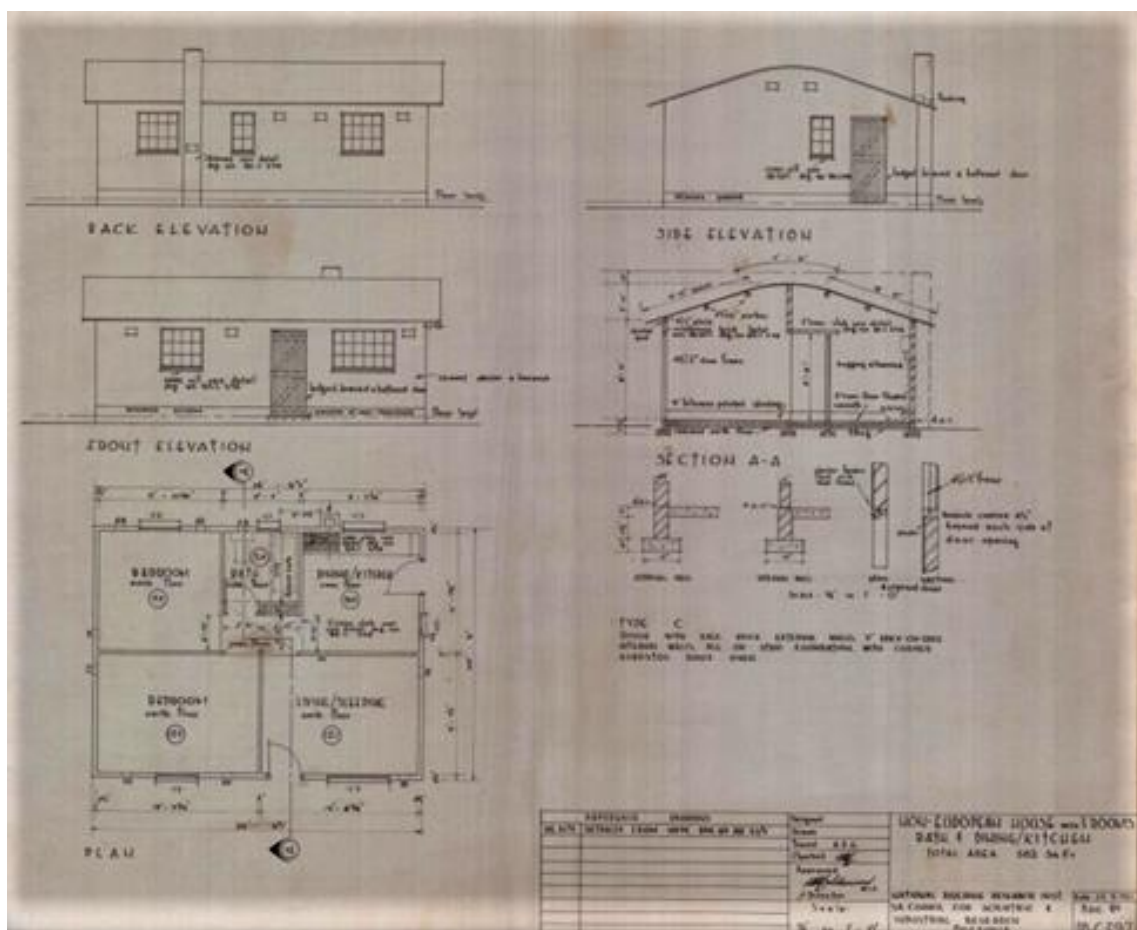


Figure 87: The NE 51/9 housing type first used by the CoCT in Kenntown in 1952. Together with the NE 51/10 and NE 51/6 types, it came to be widely used in the mass housing schemes in Cape Town in the 1960s. Minimum specifications include an earth floor and no cavity walls, neither of which would meet any form of municipal building regulation, nor would be suitable in Cape Town, given the damp winters. Further ideas for cutting costs included no ceilings, no interior doors (other than the bathroom) and a single roofing sheet. Exterior windows and doors are mass produced to uniform specification. See also chapter 5. (Plan: Non-European houses with three rooms, bath and dining/kitchen 24/9/1951; Wiser, University of Witwatersrand)

A significant issue in the calculations of the Batson Report was that 31% of coloured households were living in conditions that fell well below the NBRI's already low 'minimum standards'. This translated to about 12 000 coloured families living in one-room dwellings. In the words of Batson, this constituted the 'core problem of overcrowding in Cape Town'.⁶⁰ Batson projected that in order to meet existing housing requirements, the CTCC would need to supply at least 11 900 dwellings of one, two, three and four rooms *immediately*.⁶¹ A 'fatal flaw' in the city housing policy was that the allocation of types of housing according to ability to pay had little to do with household sizes.

⁶⁰ Summary, Batson survey, Mayor's Minutes, year ending 1958, 18.

⁶¹ Batson's housing survey, Mayor's Minutes, year ending 1958, 18.

Sample		European	Coloured
Household	Nuclear	42%	45%
	Additional non-nuclear	20%	33%
	Size	3.2 persons	4.8 persons
	Pooled income	£80	£32
Houses			
	Rooms per household	3.7	2.3
	Persons per room	.87	2.2
	Size	600–700 sq feet	100–200 sq feet
	Ownership	35%	16%
	Tenancy	65%	84%
	Rentals economic (unsubsidised)	88%	81%
	Sub-economic (subsidised)		19%
	Shared bathrooms toilets	16%	64%
	Shared kitchens	11%	34%
	No cooking facilities	2%	20%
Rent		£8–£9	£1–£2
	Pooled household income	5–10%	5–10%
NBRI housing standards	Existing housing standards falling short of NBRI requirements	1%	31%
	In excess of NBRI standards	96%	36%

Table 4: Summary of the findings of the 1955 Batson report on housing. The findings of the report indicated a marked disparity in household incomes, density of accommodation and services available between European and coloured households. Of interest is the number of European tenants (65%), although still lower than coloured tenancy (84%). Also of interest is the fact that European households showed signs of poverty in the sharing of facilities such as kitchens, bathrooms and toilets.

The results of Batson's survey were predictable. They showed a marked disparity in household incomes according to race (because of the close correlation between race and class), density of accommodation and services available to white and coloured households. Despite the findings, the pace of housing delivery remained relatively slow until 1958. The CTCC, in accordance with NH&PC instructions, began work on NE 51/10 housing on an economic rental basis at Bridgetown, with additional housing at Kewtown, Silvertown and Factreton, and a new home-ownership scheme at Garlandale. While the focus at Langa was on the construction of 'cottage' hostel units, the last of the 148 NE 51 houses built at Langa were fitted with ceilings and floors.⁶² By 1957, some 909 housing units had been constructed at Bridgetown and at Factreton some 1 578 housing units, of which 488 were similar to the Bridgetown NE 51 houses.⁶³ However, by 1960 with greater funding support from central government (which wished to implement an expanded

⁶² Mayor's Minutes, year ending 1955, 7–9.

⁶³ Mayor's Minutes, year ending 1957, 6.

Group Areas forced removal programme, the Housing Department was constructing as many as 1 000 houses per year.⁶⁴

Slum clearance and Group Areas implementation: intergovernmental relationships

By 1953, the City Engineer's Department, with the assistance of the MoH, was once again actively engaged in slum clearance in the inner city, although the ostensible reasons for slum clearance had shifted somewhat. It became less about instances of public health as the urban environment had improved through better services and infrastructure and more about larger planning ideas for the city. What complicated the whole question of slum clearance and rehousing in this period was the strained relationship between the CTCC and the apartheid government over Group Areas and how it related to town planning. The deliberations of the Land Tenure Advisory Board (LTAB) in Cape Town began officially on 30 March 1951. However, the CTCC remained aloof of any involvement. Finally, after operating behind closed doors for some years, the LTAB, which was tasked with its implementation, held a public meeting in Cape Town on 6 March 1953. T van Reenen, who represented the board, began by explaining the racial categories identified in terms of the Act and proposed dividing Cape Town into controlled areas according to race, claiming that the GAA was intended to protect 'the weaker groups'. He singled out the TPS for Cape Town (which had not taken race into account), explaining that the TPS had either to fit into the racial zoning decisions of the board or the city would have to be replanned.⁶⁵ Race zoning was to be the paramount planning idea rather than physical and land-use planning. It sowed the seeds of conflict between the CTCC and the national government, as work on the draft TPS had been ongoing since 1938 and approved by the CTCC in 1941 and 1952.

Van Reenen explained that Athlone would be the centre of coloured occupation and ownership in Cape Town, and the future town centre of a coloured group area.⁶⁶ African land occupation was not discussed. Van Reenen admitted a lack of clarity on the question of Indian Group Areas but thought that this would become clearer in due course. In response, F Molteno QC, appearing on behalf of the Indian community, pointed out the arbitrariness and unworkability of the Group Areas in relation to the existing town plans and the ignorance of the Board itself. In this respect, Molteno pointed out that the Group Areas identified for the Indian community as residential areas were in fact zoned for completely different uses. Upon closer questioning about how they defined

⁶⁴ The expansion in the housing programme 1960–1970 is described in chapter 5.

⁶⁵ 'Town Planning Scheme must give way to race zoning,' *Cape Times*, 7 March 1953.

⁶⁶ Athlone was designated a Coloured Group Area relatively early in 1957 and proclaimed in 1959.

an area, and a racial group, the board's response was, 'we go by general knowledge, the appearance of the premises and the appearance of the occupants.'⁶⁷

At this crucial period of housing shortages, Group Areas tensions and the financial requirements for Morris's road-building ambitions, the CTCC's relationship with the provincial and national governments began to go badly awry. The CTCC's resistance to the imposition of the GAA was the key catalyst. In March 1953, after a three-and-a-half-hour debate, the CTCC officially opposed the GAA. It considered that the application of the Act was unnecessary (and implicitly unwelcome) in the city as Cape Town had a unique urban mix of class and race. As a result, any statutory Group Areas could be implemented only with serious hardship and suffering being caused. The council also denied the accusation by the board that there was 'infiltration' of one group by another and pointed out that the city already had a *de facto* segregatory housing policy. As veteran councillor AZ Berman explained in 1953, the GAA was unnecessary in Cape Town as the municipality already had a policy of segregation. City housing policy had the effect of 'accelerating the existing tendency for the voluntary residential separation of racial groups'.⁶⁸

On this basis, the municipality turned down the board's demand to undertake a racial survey or provide any information that would enable Group Areas to proceed. The fact that the decision emerged after a three-and-a-half-hour debate suggests that there was no unanimity among council members. But the CTCC was the only municipality in South Africa to refuse full co-operation. The early comments of the LTAB were chilling enough, giving an indication of decisions they had probably already made. 'It is not such a big task,' complained Board representative EA Wollaston about Cape Town,

we don't want them to indicate places like Sea Point, Camps Bay, and a large part of Rondebosch, which are obviously European areas. But we do want surveys of Woodstock, Salt River and the Cape Flats, the bottom part of Wynberg and similar areas.⁶⁹

City politicians and officials faced a conundrum: how to maintain their autonomy and access to government funding while retaining a 'hands-off' approach to reprehensible state actions. The CTCC, according to Councillor Honikman, did not want to 'soil its hands' by any sort of involvement. But the passive resistance approach was not without its critics. In an editorial in June 1953, the *Cape Times* passed a damning indictment on the city, accusing it of a lack of urgency and

⁶⁷ *Cape Times*, 7 March 1953.

⁶⁸ 'Cape Town application of Group Areas totally unnecessary: AZ Berman,' *Cape Times*, 18 March 1953.

⁶⁹ *Cape Argus*, 21 July 1951.

failing the people of Cape Town at this critical period when it was under threat of government interference. Interestingly, it did not condemn the GAA outright, but only stated that a TPS would be a better way of achieving government objectives.⁷⁰ The Town Planning Branch immediately pointed out the conflicting visions between Group Areas and town planning. Morris pointed out that no cognisance had been taken by the LTAB, as town planners routinely did, of physical boundaries and infrastructure. He pointed out that the race zones were unfeasible, claiming: ‘The communities to be established under the Group Areas are too small to be self-sustaining.’⁷¹ The disconnect between town-planning and Group Areas planning concepts was further revealed when, frustrated by not being able to access relevant information for Group Areas plans, the LTAB subpoenaed two City planning officials, HPL Smit of the Joint Town Planning Scheme and planner VL Penso of the City Engineer’s Department, to attend a hearing in Cape Town. It was clear by then that both planning processes – the CTCC’s land-use plan and apartheid GAA plans – were at odds with each other. The planners pointed out that international modern planning did not include race zoning and, anyway, they did not think it relevant and had not taken race exclusivity into account in drawing up any of the social surveys which had preceded the TPS.⁷² However, about the ethics of Group Areas and whether they opposed it in principle, the planners remained silent.

There were other difficulties, too, which were essentially technical in nature. Penso passed no judgement in principle on the concept of Group Areas. He had been instructed to be non-committal by council, but it is unlikely that he, as a land-use planner and technical expert, would have ventured into the field of racial politics. He only raised the issue of the feasibility of the Group Areas decisions at the present time, that is, after spatial-planning decisions had been made, stating that, ‘if Group Areas proposals had been in existence before, they would have been factors to consider in Town Planning.’ This first meeting between the city planners and the LTAB ended in a stalemate. The board reiterated its position that, if the existing TPS and the Group Areas planning were not coherent, then the city must be replanned.⁷³ From this point, the government would ensure that a local boycott even on purely technical planning terms would not be tolerated.

Conflicts of method and approach suggest that far from a unified application, physical and land-use planning conflicted with race zoning. Several factors militated against the city planners’ holding their ground. The first was the legal requirement of town planning schemes to conform to national

⁷⁰ Editorial, *Cape Times*, 29 June 1953.

⁷¹ ‘Conflicts with town plan,’ *Cape Argus*, 2 February 1953.

⁷² ‘Battle over town planning information,’ *Cape Argus*, 27 June 1953.

⁷³ *Cape Argus*, 27 June 1953.

laws, including the GAA. The second was that authority for the Townships Ordinance lay with the Provincial Administration that supported the central government. Both the Provincial Administration and the central government were governed by the National Party. The central government was increasingly assuming town-planning powers and reducing the authority of the local authorities to make planning decisions. The third was the need to access funding for housing, which might become impossible if the ideological stalemate between the CTCC and the LTAB continued. A final factor was that the CTCC, with its non-racial franchise, had a coloured electorate and coloured councillors and therefore needed to represent the interests of its ratepayers.

Eventually, in April 1955, the municipality decided to send a CTCC delegation to discuss Group Areas with the board. There were strong objections by some of the coloured councillors, including Councillor Gool. She stated her 'total opposition' to any negotiations and walked out of the council chamber.⁷⁴ With the first Group Areas proposals for Brooklyn, Woodstock, Maitland and Maitland Garden Village came the news in July 1956 that some 22 000 'non-European' residents would have to be forcibly moved. The most badly affected at that stage were the residents and small farmers of the Constantia Valley, where 18 278 coloured residents would be forced to leave.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ *Cape Argus*, 28 April 1955.

⁷⁵ *Cape Times*, 12 July 1956.

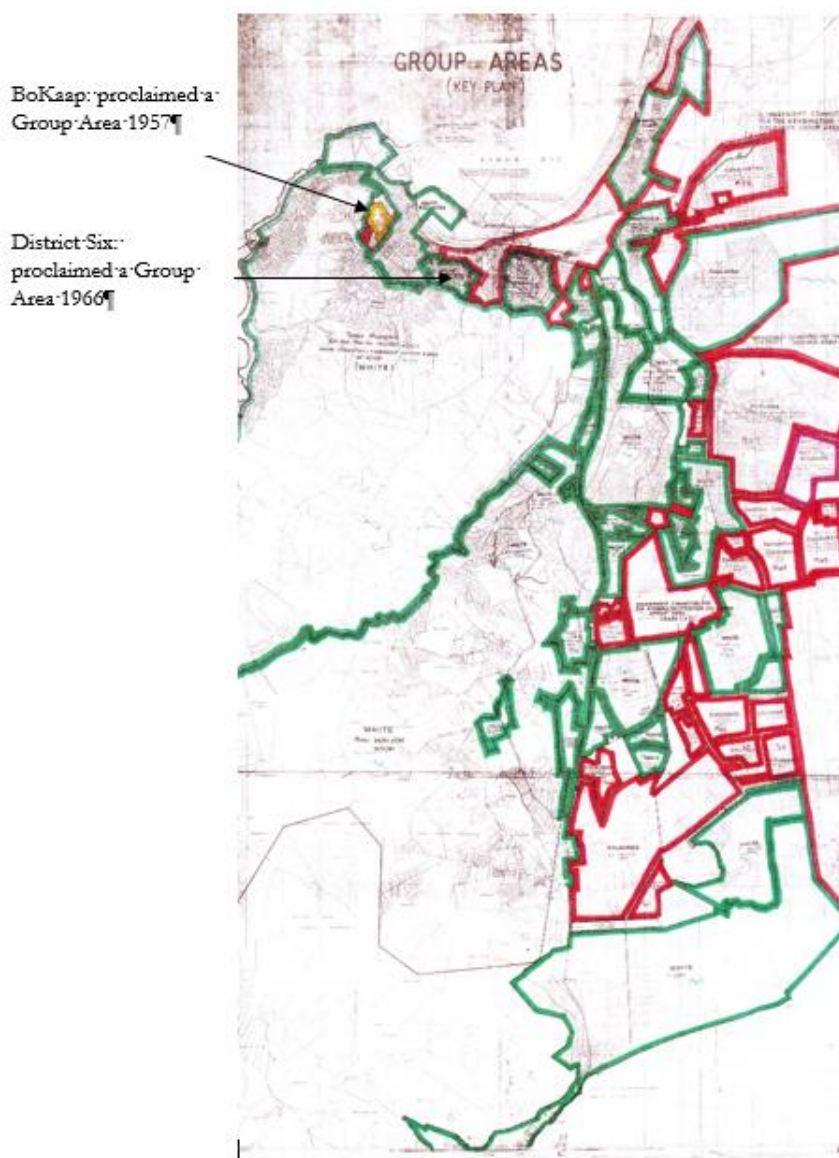


Figure 88: Map showing Group Areas proclamations in Cape Town from 1957 (Pinelands, Schotschekloof, Rylands and Athlone) to 1981 (Ottery). Green borders indicate White Group Areas; Red indicates Coloured Group Areas; and pink indicates the Indian Group Area in Rylands. A small group area containing the CTCC-built Schotschekloof flats was proclaimed a Coloured Group Area in 1961. While Group Areas were proclaimed intermittently, the map clearly indicates the intention of the apartheid government to keep the bulk of the existing city, and the valuable commercial and residential areas, and the symbolically important Table Mountain, for the white group, while relegating other races to the east of the city. (Source: Heritage Resources Section, CoCT)

Finally, in September 1956, a delegation agreed to make the city's 'social data', including property ownership, occupancy by race and residential numbers, available to the Group Areas Investigating Committee. The data were public property anyway, rationalised AH Honikman, Chairman of the General Purposes Committee.⁷⁶ With the data now made available to the LTAB, it was able to make decisions about race, ownership, land value and tenancy. In District Six the data revealed the majority of the properties were owned by whites but tenanted by coloureds. All of these factors influenced the decision of the Group Areas Development Board to declare District Six a White Group Area in February 1966.⁷⁷ The implementation of the GAA (see Figure 88) resulted in all the desirable land and land close to the city (with the exception of the BoKaap) being reserved for

⁷⁶ *Cape Times*, 9 September 1956.

⁷⁷ The Group Areas Development Board replaced the Land Tenure Advisory Board in 1955.

white occupation while coloured and Indian occupation extended east of the Cape Flats railway line at increasing distances from the city centre.

New City housing and the Group Areas Act

Group Areas affected all aspects of the city's housing policy, from the production of housing for designated racial groups in declared Group Areas to its inability to sell or develop expropriated property without a clear indication from the LTAB about what race zoning an area was likely to receive. This meant that the CTCC could not build houses until they knew how the proposed site would be racially designated. Equally, the CTCC could not dispose of property until it was clear which 'racial group' it could sell to. The same was true for the private property market as homeowners anxiously waited to find out if they were 'qualified' or 'disqualified' to continue to live in their own homes or be able to purchase in an area not yet racially designated. Furthermore, the national government was unclear where all the displaced people were to go. Moreover, there was growing unease among the propertied classes because restrictions on buying and selling were depressing the property market.⁷⁸

With attention turning to the 'dehousing' effects of the GAA by 1955, new housing for coloured tenants or Africans in Langa was at a stalemate, with central government treating white housing as a greater priority. It turned down all new funding requests, except for the white housing estate at Thornton. It was clear that by 1955 municipal decision-making about housing and town planning was becoming 'boxed' in, with no decisions about roads, housing estates, town plans, land acquisition and disposal being permitted without the permission from the Provincial Administrator.

The Group Areas Development Board then began to expand its powers into local government functions. At a national municipal conference in 1957, the Minister of the Interior, Dr E Donges, warned that local authorities would be by-passed if they did not fall into line and implement central government policy. New amendments to the GAA gave the Group Areas Development Board even wider powers than it already had: it could function in place of a local authority and could manage areas which lay within municipal boundaries. Crucially, the minister could make provision for new housing and housing estates without reference to building by-laws and local town-planning

⁷⁸ 'Group Act depressing property market court valuations told,' *Cape Times*, July 1957.

requirements, giving the board similar planning powers to the Native Resettlement Boards, and bypassing local authorities.⁷⁹

But differences between the CTCC and other tiers of government continued to surface, not least in relation to the Provincial Administrator's increasing involvement in the substance of the TPS. In 1942, the TPS identified parts of the BoKaap for future commercial and industrial use. By 1952, it had acquired the properties in the Rose and Chiappini streets area through slum-clearance expropriations to be used for this purpose. At the same time, the LTAB gave notice that the BoKaap was to be a 'defined' area in terms of the GAA, pending proclamation of a Group Area. It meant at the time that while the CTCC would sell an industrial site in the area, the LTAB would have a say in which racial group could occupy it. At the time, the CTCC decided to focus its efforts on developing a commercial precinct outside the 'defined area' while awaiting the Group Areas decision as to which race would have access to the industrial and commercial opportunities presented by the zoning scheme. However, in 1955 and contrary to the CTCC plans, the Provincial Administrator proclaimed the area to be a residential area in terms of the council's own TPS.⁸⁰ The national and provincial decisions meant that both the land-use zoning and the race zoning for the area were decided against the intentions of the local authority. In future, the defined area could be used only for 'Malay' residential use. These events suggest that the provincial and central government would work in tandem to achieve the race zoning that they required and that the scope and function of municipal responsibilities could be changed to meet their ends. It is also a reminder of how committed the CTCC was to its slum clearance and modernisation programmes, both in the BoKaap and in District Six, having experienced difficulty in adapting to changes in the balance of planning power.

The CoCT had severe reservations, but it was the only municipality to express any concerns. In the end, and contrary to the City's wishes, the United Municipal Executive gave its support to the Group Areas Amendments in 1957 at its annual conference.⁸¹ It also reiterated its in-principle support for Group Areas as national policy. Faced with increasing provincial and central government powers and dissension within its own ranks, the CTCC made a confusing and contradictory set of decisions between 1955 and 1956 in relation to looming apartheid measures in the city. When the CTCC decided in 1955 to send a delegation to the LTAB in April 1955, six

⁷⁹ Group Areas Amendment Act 69 of 1955. The amendments were announced at the United Municipal Conference on 21 November 1957.

⁸⁰ Mayor's Minutes, year ending 1955, 13.

⁸¹ The United Municipal Executive was a consultative body composed of senior municipal managers. It met each year to deliberate on matters of mutual concern.

coloured councillors walked out of the council chamber. One councillor, Mrs Z Gool, declared herself totally opposed to racial groupings of populations, which she described as ‘manifestly unfair’.⁸² City autonomy seemed under threat not only from central government but from provincial government too. In 1955 the Cape Provincial Administration issued two draft ordinances, taking control of the establishment of townships and reserving amenities in line with the national government’s Reservation of Separate Amenities Act 49 of 1953. The Provincial Ordinance for separate amenities affected halls, community centres, parks and areas of recreation, followed by bus apartheid in the city in 1956.⁸³

While not strictly related to residential apartheid, the CTCC’s acceptance of the Reservation of Separate Amenities Ordinance of 1955 marked the city’s first capitulation to national apartheid measures in Cape Town. Its acceptance revealed the complex and contradictory nature of the CTCC’s attitude to apartheid and the legislative tightrope it walked in both resisting apartheid directives and fulfilling provincial and national requirements. It was a case, as Councillor HJ Holmes remarked, of ‘hanging us by the feet instead of the neck’.⁸⁴ In 1955 the CTCC prevailed upon the provincial administration to promulgate the Separate Amenities Ordinance as ‘permissive,’ thus enabling it to implement as little of the Ordinance as they saw fit. No sooner had the Ordinance been promulgated however than the City found itself under immense pressure to implement apartheid through separate amenities. The provincial administration threatened to amend the Ordinance, forcing municipalities to implement apartheid on beaches, public gardens and any amenities under their control. Faced with the threat, City Treasurer Mr Rex Walker, with the consent of chairman of the finance committee, Major A Z Berman, chose to enforce a token apartheid gesture without putting the matter to a Council vote.⁸⁵ They put up racially segregated notices in the municipal payment hall at Electricity House. This decision was ratified by Council on 29th March 1956 together with a policy of providing separate facilities in all the amenities and offices under its control. The decision to formally approve the CTCC’s separate amenities policy was reinforced in 1957 when Councillor Holmes, despite the support of other ‘coloured’ councillors, failed to get the earlier decision rescinded. Holmes challenged the council ‘to stand by what was left of the democratic structures of local authority or surrender’.⁸⁶ Other councillors’ opinions were more ambivalent and sometimes contradictory. Major AZ Berman claimed that the Ordinance was not ‘as severe’ as it could have been and Councillor Sonnenberg, equally

⁸² *Cape Argus*, 28 April 1955.

⁸³ ‘Bus apartheid ordered in city,’ *Cape Argus*, 11 April 1956.

⁸⁴’City Council trying to ‘soften’ apartheid policy says Berman,’ *Cape Argus* 28 February 1956.

⁸⁵ ‘City Council trying to ‘soften’ apartheid policy says Berman,’ *Cape Argus* 28 February 1956.

⁸⁶ ‘City Council decided to abide by apartheid,’ *Cape Times* 2 October 1957.

controversially, claimed that apartheid had been traditional since racial exclusion clauses in title deeds.⁸⁷ These comments were made despite the CTCC's continuing objections to the GAA being applied to Cape Town.

A variety of discriminatory legislative mechanisms also characterised the continuing onslaught against District Six. Housing shortages were exacerbated by the forced removals of 'disqualified persons'. The Group Areas Development Board (GADB) first approached the Municipality in 1957 to act as its agent for evictions and rehousing which they referred to accepting delegated authority in terms of the Group Areas Development Act. The CTCC turned them down, not expressing moral repugnance, but pointing to the devolution of powers. The Town Clerk responded, saying,

is it not a task to impose on municipal officials and even if such a delegation was accepted it should only be after the Group Areas Development Board itself determined where the areas should be.⁸⁸

In 1959, the GADB again tried to co-opt the CTCC when requesting that the CTCC give preference to providing housing for those coloured persons displaced by the GAA. But this request was also turned down by the City Treasurer, who pointed out the arbitrariness of rehousing 'disqualified' persons currently living in satisfactory conditions when there were at least 12 000 people living in conditions of distress who needed housing. The City Treasurer took the opportunity of pointing out that the municipality would have been building 1 000 houses per year if it were not for the central government's refusal to provide adequate funding.⁸⁹ A spat ensued when the outspoken Councillor AZ Berman stated publicly that the municipality wanted to have 'no truck' with the GADB.⁹⁰ As an incentive for compliance, the GADB offered the CTCC fast-tracked expropriations of land if it accepted delegated authority for applying the GAA. The CTCC still refused. But as the numbers of those displaced by the GAA steadily rose, and after threats and further negotiations, the municipality decided to provide 'some' housing to those displaced, ranging from 40% to 60% of all houses built.

Dewar remarks on the synergy between Modernism, town planning and apartheid planning, as modernist concerns for the separation of uses and the creation of mono-functional areas extended

⁸⁷ City Council decided to abide by apartheid,' *Cape Times* 2 October 1957.

⁸⁸ 'Group Areas Board asks city to take over Group Areas planning under delegated authority. Refuses,' *Cape Times*, 18 October 1957.

⁸⁹ '3 770 families will move to new Group Area,' *Cape Times*, 27 January 1959.

⁹⁰ 'Assembly not to assist council in obtaining housing funds,' *Cape Argus*, 15 September 1959.

into apartheid with separation by race.⁹¹ He argues that in Cape Town both Modernism and apartheid were the dominant ideologies underpinning city development, arguing further that the social precepts of apartheid, ‘accorded fairly neatly with those of Modernism: apartheid embraced, then grossly distorted these’ (ie spatial separations).⁹² Both Modernism and apartheid planning ideology required separation, uniformity and centralisation. The Social and Economic Planning Commission’s report on ‘Regional and Town Planning’ proposed the centralisation of planning authority as a key component of its report.⁹³ Patrick Geddes’ injunction to ‘survey’ before planning allowed for social and physical data to be collected for TPSs and later proved valuable information for apartheid planning. Certainly, the amended Provisional Town Planning Scheme for Cape Town had already prepared a rough racial and social survey in 1947, despite the City’s later refusal to undertake a race survey for the LTAB.

Formally planned and controlled segregated residential areas were not new to Cape Town, despite the presence of its mixed older living areas, marked more by class than race. Residential racial segregation had been tied to the provision of segregated housing since the regulations of the Housing Act 35 passed by the central government in 1920.⁹⁴ After that, racial segregation was maintained by a complex bureaucratic process defined by national and provincial administrative and funding models in addition to a crystallising municipal policy towards housing segregation.⁹⁵

‘Not necessary and not wanted’?: Eastern Boulevard as a modernist project and its impact on District Six

The first major housing demolition programme in District Six occurred not because of racial zoning or implementation of the GAA by central government, but because of modernist-inspired transport planning by the CTCC. It took the form of building an ‘Eastern Boulevard’ freeway to allow easier access to and from the Foreshore and city centre that cut through a dense, racially mixed working-class area in the district (see figures 90 and 91). However, by the time the land expropriations for the project began, the Group Areas Act had come into force. Displaced

⁹¹ David Dewar, ‘The relationship between spatial planning and transportation planning in southern Africa and its consequences for human settlement,’ *International Journal of Civil, Environmental Structural and Architectural Engineering* 5, no 5 (2011): 241; David Dewar, ‘Normative planning and urban restructuring in South Africa: The case of Cape Town,’ Proceedings of the 11th Conference of the International Planning History Society: Planning Models and the Culture of Cities, Barcelona, 2004 <www-etsav.upc.es>, 3.

⁹² David Dewar, ‘Normative planning and urban restructuring?’

⁹³ Report Number 5, Regional and Town Planning, Social and Economic Planning Council, Union of South Africa, UG–34 of 1944. See also Appendix I: Timeline of relevant events and landmark legislation, page 7, for legislative context.

⁹⁴ See chapter 2.

⁹⁵ Housing Act 35 of 1920; Townships Ordinance 33 of 1934.

coloured residents lost their rights of proximity to the City and were allocated Council rental housing in racially segregated housing estates.

The Eastern Boulevard development had a long and complex genesis as one successive transportation plan to link the Foreshore to the City followed another. City planners began tinkering with the Foreshore Scheme almost as soon as the ink was dry on the 1947 agreement. In 1949, just before his retirement, City Engineer WS Lunn announced ambitious changes to the Foreshore Plan at the request of the central government.⁹⁶ Influenced by Abercrombie's Greater London Plan of 1944, which had at its heart a system of ring roads and green belts, Lunn proposed a ring road around Cape Town with repositioned boulevards to the west and the east for fast-moving traffic.⁹⁷

After an American and European tour in 1951, Solomon Morris, the recently installed City Engineer, returned enthused by the American system of high-speed roadways. He applied his mind to creating a similar freeway infrastructure for Cape Town. Retaining his favourite metaphor of the city as 'a body', he claimed that an arterial road system would be the city's 'whole backbone' through which traffic (which he likened to the life blood) could flow freely.

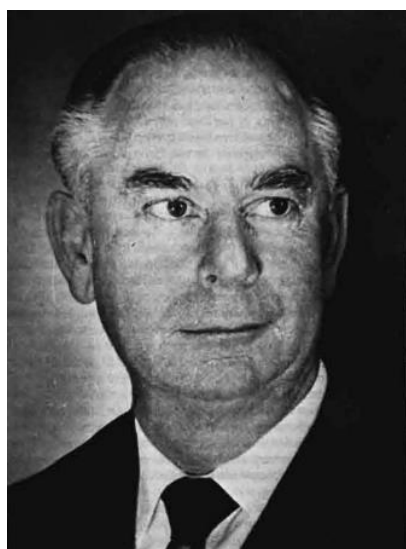


Figure 89: SS Morris, City Engineer, Cape Town, 1950–1975. Solomon 'Solly' Morris was the first locally born and educated City Engineer. His vision was for Cape Town to become a modern, ordered city connected by high-speed freeways and modern infrastructure. His role in Cape Town's disputed freeway construction is well known. He built his professional career and international reputation as a creator of world-class freeways. Morris ran a large, centralised and well-oiled department responsible inter alia for architecture, building control, civil engineering, storm water, roads, housing production and town planning. He signed all reports and his views were clearly dominant. It is clear from those reports that his major interests were large civil projects and freeway development. (The Civil Engineer in South Africa (July 1984): 349)

Solomon Morris's views of freeways and of housing production in the context of a modern Cape Town were to dominate planning and development for 25 years after his appointment. He was relentlessly positive about the benefits of modernisation and industrialisation for Cape Town. He considered that his approach to city planning and road building, in particular, was not uniquely

⁹⁶ 'Foreshore plan modified: New scheme involved big changes,' *Cape Argus*, 17 November 1949.

⁹⁷ 'Foreshore plan modified,' *Cape Argus*, 17 November 1949.

influenced by Britain or the United States, but by a combination of both. He clearly admired the work of the American transport and New York City planner, Robert Moses, who, like him, had ambitious views on city building. In the matter of housing, he was ruthlessly efficient, striving to construct as many houses as quickly and as cheaply as possible. He thought mass housing should be undertaken in terms of cost-benefit analysis and expert technical expertise rather than as part of a social and consultative programme. Morris's involvement in 1965 with the Department of Community Development's Committee for the Rehabilitation of Distressed Areas (CORDA) was oddly uncontroversial at the time, considering the CTCC's long-term objections to Group Areas. In his capacity as a member of CORDA he instructed his staff to assist the DCD by undertaking racial and housing surveys in support of their 'rehabilitation' work, thus directly contributing to the Group Areas decisions which followed in District Six.⁹⁸

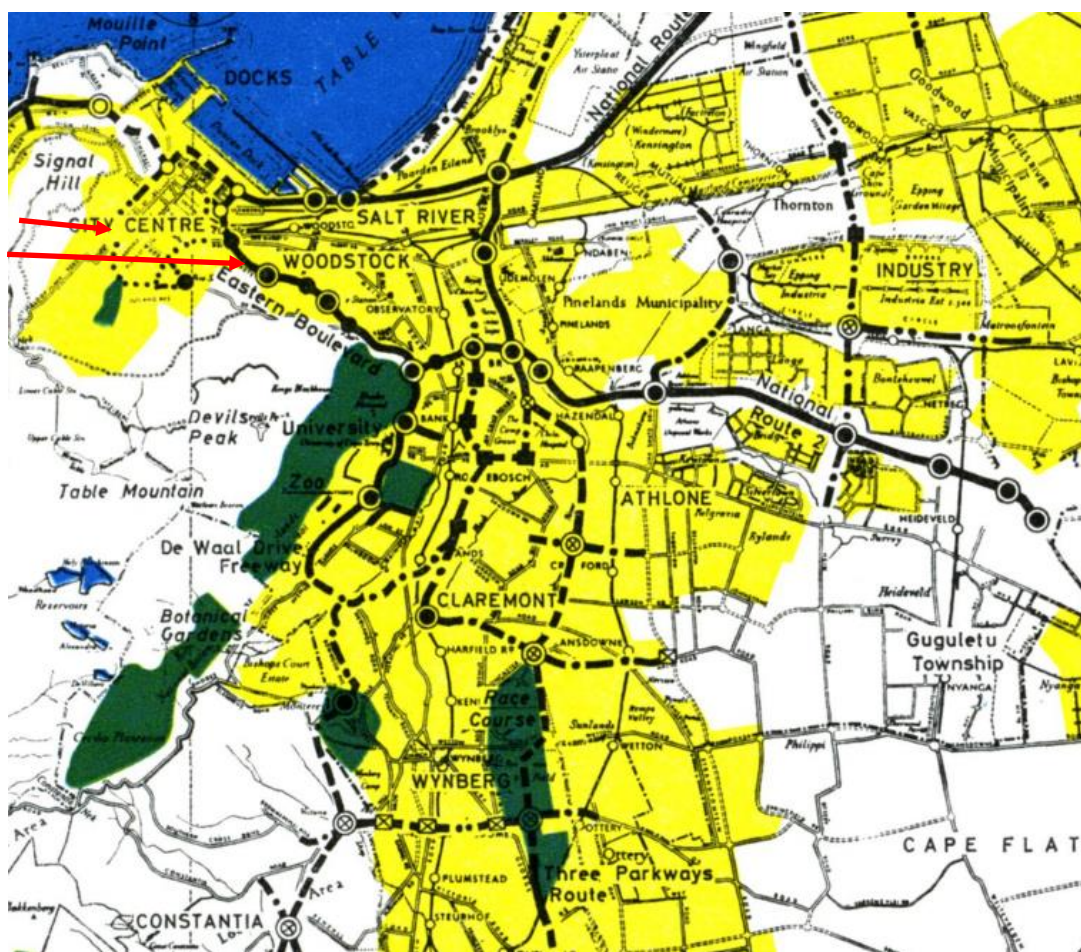


Figure 90: The CoCT's freeway system – a key local planning intervention, and a joint Cape Provincial Administration and National Transport Commission endeavour. This map shows the Eastern Boulevard and the proposed ring road around the city centre (arrowed). (SS Morris, 'Cape Town: Metropolis in the making: A decade of development,' (The Town Planning Review 40, no 2 (1969): 105)

⁹⁸ See Appendix II: Influential city officials as shapers of urban change.

In his report entitled *Metropolis of tomorrow*, Morris believed he had achieved an ideal solution.⁹⁹ His aim was to integrate the Foreshore and the city centre and improve traffic flow to the rest of the city. But Morris's vision also reinforced Lunn's plan of running the boulevard east through District Six by pointing out that in terms of the Planning Ordinance 33 of 1934, the CTCC could make any changes it thought fit 'in respect of planning and the development of the area under its jurisdiction'. Morris was so pleased with the amendment plan that he boasted in his annual report that it was 'near perfect'.¹⁰⁰ With a smooth transition through the political approval process, the road amendments were included in the TPS, effectively consolidating the proposals.¹⁰¹



Figure 91: This aerial photograph dated 1968 shows the Eastern Boulevard, now completed, cutting through District Six. Some 240 houses were demolished to make way for it. (Photograph: CoCT)

While undertaken in the spirit of a modernist freeway solution, it had profound implications for the communities of Woodstock and lower District Six which stood in its path. Some 286 houses were involved, many of them housing sub-tenants. The proposal involved the relocation of potentially 3 000 people. By the time the new freeway proposal was presented in 1957 as part of the amended TPS, the LTAB had been active in Cape Town for four years and it was clear that

⁹⁹ SS Morris, *The metropolis of tomorrow* (City of Cape Town, 1951).

¹⁰⁰ City Engineer's Report 1951, 23

¹⁰¹ TPR 1653, 'Plan to provide for the integration with the city and the Foreshore,' *Metropolis of tomorrow*.

the mixed working-class areas identified in Cape Town were under threat of racial zoning. In Lower District Six and parts of Woodstock – the area affected by the Boulevard East proposal – there were some residents who owned their homes and others who rented. Most residents were racialised as coloured, but a minority were deemed white or African. Not all the properties could by any means be considered slums that might merit demolition. While not a large area compared to some subject to GAA removals, the Boulevard’s destructive progress through working-class housing in inner-city Cape Town was a harbinger of worse to come, not least for the residents of District Six.



Figure 92: De Waal Drive at hospital bend, linking the southern and eastern suburbs to the CBD via the Eastern Boulevard (in the distance). To Morris, the freeways planned and developed after 1958 were always presented publicly as interventions of streamlined Modernism and evidence of progress. (SS Morris, Cape Town: 'Metropolis in the making: A decade of development,' (1969) TPR Figure 4)

In undertaking the planned destruction of a swathe of housing in an old city quarter, Morris remained true to the ‘clean sweep’ approach of Modernism and the notion that the traditional city should give way to the automobile. Implementation took some time as the Provisional Town Planning Scheme had to be amended to allow for the revised roadworks. In 1955, during what continued to be a major housing crisis, the City Engineer’s Department received the go-ahead to proceed. Morris treated matters of costing and expropriation as purely logistical issues, devoid of human consequences for residents. In 1957, Cissie Gool, who was councillor for District Six, spoke out against the severe hardship for at least a thousand people who would lose their homes.

She called the situation ‘deeply unfair’ and called for the proposals to be rescinded.¹⁰² Coloured councillors strongly supported Ms Gool. Councillor Deane later challenged the council, saying that the people would not leave their homes: ‘You will have to bulldoze them out.’¹⁰³ The councillors were concerned about issues of eviction and inadequate compensation, and the insensitivity of shifting people from one place to another, perhaps aware of the looming threat to District Six. Sub-tenants were in a particularly invidious position as city policy did not acknowledge rights to alternative accommodation. Resistance to the freeway grew.¹⁰⁴ Gool submitted a motion to council to have the original approval of the boulevard proposal overturned. She won, but with an insufficient majority to change the decision.

Troubles for Morris’s plan grew, though, when at a meeting of ratepayers at the City Hall on 2 July 1958, the City Treasurer’s application to the ratepayers for funding permission for the city’s portion of the loan was turned down.¹⁰⁵ At the meeting, Gool condemned the boulevard proposal, calling it ‘expensive, dangerous and destructive, not necessary and not wanted’.¹⁰⁶ She organised a petition with 1 490 handwritten objections which were submitted to the Administrator, pleading that the Eastern Boulevard scheme be cancelled, citing undue hardship and the disruption of a settled community. In response, the CTCC itself rejected the boulevard proposal and made a request to the Administrator to delete the proposal from the TPS. Incensed by community resistance, CTCC indecision and the projected costs of the road works, the Administrator, JHO du Plessis, threatened to withdraw roadworks funding. He also upheld the Administrator’s right not to approve amendments to the TPS. As a final threat, the Administrator claimed that the provincial government was within its rights to construct the Eastern Boulevard itself and bill the city for the costs.

Despite the setback, the CTCC rejected the boulevard proposal a second time but internal divisions began to appear within the municipality. The CTCC’s own Foreshore Committee rejected the decision to rescind the Eastern Boulevard and, for good measure, also rejected a municipality offer to provide priority rehousing for those affected.¹⁰⁷ The CTCC decided for a third time to abandon the boulevard proposal and requested that the Administrator delete the £4m from the road budget.

¹⁰² ‘Boulevard estimate going to Administrator,’ *Cape Times*, 12 July 1957. The city showed remarkable reticence to include any of the conflicts which followed in its annual reports. Only the local newspapers followed the conflicts which emerged.

¹⁰³ ‘City’s second “No” to Boulevard East: “You will have to bulldoze us out,” council told,’ *Cape Times*, 1 October 1958.

¹⁰⁴ *Cape Argus*, 14 June 1958.

¹⁰⁵ At that time large capital works projects needed to be approved by the ratepayers.

¹⁰⁶ ‘Boulevard East rejected by ratepayers,’ *Cape Times*, 3 July 1958.

¹⁰⁷ *Cape Times*, 1 October 1958.

In the end, the debate became one about capital budgets. Finally, the Administrator decided that it was not in the public interest to create more traffic bottlenecks and that he would release the funding for the remainder of the roadworks if the CTCC agreed to place the £4m for Boulevard East application back on the budget.¹⁰⁸

Councillor Gool recognised an ideological power agenda when she saw one: ‘There is a bigger question behind it, and we know it.’¹⁰⁹ What Gool was alluding to was that finding accommodation in a time of Group Areas would be difficult in a housing crisis, and certainly finding housing close to the city would be even harder. Most affected families had been living in the affected area for years and their homes were close to work, shops, mosques and churches. While the Administrator had not mentioned Group Areas, there was a consensus among councillors about Gool’s ‘bigger question’. Councillor Sonnenberg pointed out that the Group Areas changed everything because ‘the Coloured people are now severely restricted as to where they can live or carry out business’.¹¹⁰ There were other implications, too. In moving from monthly rental to weekly rental accommodation (the city charged only weekly rentals) certain coloured ratepayers were deprived of representation on the qualified voters’ roll.

In the interim, Morris began work on his freeway master plan. In August 1958, he announced a 10-year, £12.75 million road plan, beginning with the development of De Waal Drive. Also in October 1958, the council agreed to rescind its previous two reversals and approve the building of the Eastern Boulevard.¹¹¹ It was in many ways a capitulation to the demands of the provincial government, but there was also a strong lobby in council who wanted it built, especially the Foreshore Committee (who backed influential Solly Morris). Morris prepared a report on the acquisition and demolition of the 258 dwellings and gave an undertaking that other housing would be found for those affected. Because of overcrowding, more than the number of replacement dwellings would need to be provided. Eventually, the scheme would need about 300 replacement dwellings. Significantly, white property owners were to be treated differently to coloured ones, with cash buy-outs, which would enable them to purchase another home in a white area, plentifully present close to the city centre. In true good planning fashion, other residents were approached as part of a survey and a census taken of residents affected. However, Gool noticed that it was not a census at all but an application for rehousing. She and other councillors advised the residents not to fill it in. But by 1962, the demolition of houses and the construction of the Eastern Boulevard

¹⁰⁸ ‘Boulevard East is to be built,’ *Cape Argus*, 15 October 1958.

¹⁰⁹ *Cape Argus*, 15 October 1958.

¹¹⁰ *Cape Times*, 4 October 1958.

¹¹¹ *Cape Argus*, 15 October 1958.

was well underway. Many of those whose homes had been in the path of the freeway were some of the first tenants at the council housing estate at Bonteheuwel in 1960 and 1961. When it was completed in 1968, the Boulevard East project was presented by Morris as a triumph of technological achievement, of transportation management and modernist city design. If there was any sense of social trauma and loss, Morris was unrepentant, claiming that property owners would give up land for freeways in the interests of Modernism. ‘Most citizens,’ he wrote, ‘once having tasted the benefits of modern freeways will not, if given a square deal, be unreasonable in terms of their demands.’¹¹²

Standardisation and mass housing: planning Bonteheuwel, 1959–1960

The decision to build a large coloured township of some 5 200 houses permitted the CTCC finally to put a coherent township design and mass standardised housing into effect. As we have seen, the CTCC had acquired the land east of Vanguard Drive. However, because of the central government policy towards the permanent settlement of African residents, the council could no longer use it for its original purpose of extending Langa.¹¹³ With the dire housing need, particularly for sub-economic housing, it was inevitable that the land would be considered for the development of a coloured housing estate.¹¹⁴



Figure 93: Fixing the roof of a typical mass-produced NE 51/10 house. Site not identified. Roofs were corrugated asbestos, although most houses eventually had ceilings. Plan for the row house type (CoCT). The NE 51 typologies facilitated mass housing for the working classes. However, the results altered the shape and form of Cape Town as a city, creating the large-scale segregation of residential spaces which formed the basis of an apartheid city. (Photo c 1955: CCB176_f74_s2_i6)

¹¹² SS Morris, ‘The city and the motor car’ 1966. BC 672 SS Morris Papers, C2.1.

¹¹³ Now Jakes Gerwel Drive.

¹¹⁴ ‘Sub-economic group: position is intolerable,’ *Cape Argus* 1 May 1957.



Figure 94: Aerial photograph of Langa (lower left) and Bontebeuvel (upper left) looking east, showing the required buffer strip between Langa and the national road. It also shows a buffer strip between Langa and Bontebeuvel (arrowed). The houses of Bontebeuvel are set in monotonous rows within a flat landscape. (CoCT CCB122_f17_i01)¹¹⁵

The planning of Bontebeuvel marked a notable change from the way that the CTCC approached the question of housing provision. Modernist housing policies agreed on in the 1950s now applied. They were based on the mass production of component parts, assembled at speed in a building production line, standard layouts and housing prototypes, loosely based on the Neighbourhood Units planning concepts and the scientifically achieved minimum standards of the NBRI. Gone were the modest but solid suburban units at Bokmakierie or the flats at Constitution Street and Bloemhof, small but conveniently close to the Central Business District (CBD). Instead, there were vast schemes using the dual-occupancy concept or the cheap NE 51 houses as semi-detached units or row houses (see Figure 87). By 1959, the central government itself was under pressure to provide funds for housing in support of its Group Areas policies. Early forced removals in Claremont and Green Point were contributing to the number of residents for whom at least 3 000 houses had to be found.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ See chapter 5 for township development after 1960.

¹¹⁶ '3 770 Peninsula families will move to New Group Areas,' *Cape Times*, 27 October 1959.

With funding of R1 824 758 granted almost immediately from the National Housing Office, the municipality was in a position to begin work on the first 1 942 dwellings in 1960.¹¹⁷ After individual interviews with prospective tenants, the houses were filled with occupants each week as they were completed. While the focus was on speed and efficiency of construction, it was left to the Provincial Administration to point out the shortcomings of the development itself.¹¹⁸ They drew attention to the 'bare and windswept nature of the terrain', suggesting that the low densities of 12 units per acre were not a positive feature at all, and that a tighter development might have provided greater protection from the elements. The mass building programme on the Cape Flats, discussed throughout the 1950s, was only fully implemented in the 1960s. This is discussed in chapter 5.

Conclusions

While relatively little housing was constructed in the period reviewed in this chapter, in comparison to the mass housing that followed in the 1960s, it was important in the history of worker housing. Race-based policies were set and a complex set of government restrictions affecting settlement and housing according to race were beginning to emerge. The application of Group Areas and the restrictive laws and policies affecting the presence of Africans in Cape Town had a fundamental impact on settlement patterns and housing provision – where housing was located, who was permitted to live in it, and how it was located, designed and produced. At the same time, while there was a focus on housing policy, the CTCC turned its gaze to the inner city, inspired by modern ideas in transport planning, with modernist proposals for a high-speed system of boulevards and a ring road around Cape Town. The planning of the Eastern Boulevard resulted in residents living within its path being evicted and the houses demolished, the first case of mass evictions in District Six. Others would follow in the next decade as a result of Group Areas removals. The Eastern Boulevard example shows how modernist planning proposals and mass-produced housing were closely linked – the former could not be achieved without the latter. Thus began a complex, two-way planning process that involved initiating modernist plans and making space for them through expropriations or slum-clearance mechanisms. Affected residents were forced out to the newly built, formal and racially segregated housing estates which were beginning to emerge on the Cape Flats.

The start of the town-planning and mass housing programmes in Cape Town demonstrated the strengths and weaknesses of adhering to a national policy. A strength was that the use of housing

¹¹⁷ 3/CT1/4/9/3/1/21 Annexure 23/17/1961.

¹¹⁸ 3/CT1/4/9/3/21.AF.20/1/823 attached to Minutes dated 17 March 1961.

prototypes developed by the NBRI, a body supported by the government and endorsed by the National Housing Fund, made it simpler to obtain housing funds. For the first time, accelerated housing provision could make inroads into housing shortages. The key weakness was the character of the segregated and fragmented residential spaces it created, trapping residents within a self-contained, poverty-stricken and generally isolated environment. More significant is the way that these mass-produced housing estates became the 'building blocks' of the apartheid city, encapsulating a drive towards race-based territorial control on the part of the apartheid government.

Two parallel planning frameworks emerged in Cape Town during this period, one by the CTCC in pursuit of modernist planning objectives, the other a complete reorganisation of space to fulfil the ideological requirements of racial planning. It became apparent to city planners at this time that they would be unable to pursue their modernist planning objectives unhindered. The programme for the Eastern Boulevard, the plans for the BoKaap and the TPS were influenced by government involvement at either the national or the provincial level. Ultimately, the government-funded provision of housing at this time emerged as a mechanism to control the way the apartheid city was to develop, who was to live in it, who was not, and what form the emerging residential planning would take.

Chapter 5

Urban professionals and residential planning in Cape Town, 1960–1970: centralisation and lingering influences of Modernism

Introduction: continuities and shifts in residential planning

The 1960s were a time of surging economic growth in South Africa.¹ Greater prosperity in Cape Town resulted in industrial, urban and suburban expansion. Suburban expansion for the white middle classes was made possible by increased private wealth, growing private vehicle ownership and an expanded urban infrastructure, including a web of high-speed road networks.² These factors had an intensive impact not only on city growth but also on the pattern of expansion. Low-density suburbs spread into former agricultural land to the south and the north along the expanding road network. Another area of growth was the proliferation of large state-funded rental housing units across the Cape Flats. They were situated in areas identified for coloured housing east of Athlone and the Cape Flats railway line and strung along the new arterial road system (see Figure 91).

Bonteheuvel, Heideveld, Manenberg and Hanover Park were built in quick succession in the 1960s as self-contained townships divided into sections according to Neighbourhood Unit planning principles. The planning approach was inspired by the Social and Economic Report Number 5 of 1944 and the Joint Town Planning Scheme Report of 1949, which both proposed the introduction of the Neighbourhood Unit as a planning model. Both were based on British planning principles most noticeably reflected in the Barlow Report of 1944.³ The new plans called for contained townships divided into a number of smaller units centred on school and community facilities. It was, theoretically, a logical spatial arrangement for racially segregated townships, inserting them into a broad metropolitan structure of Group Areas while retaining the suburban low densities that had emerged during the international Garden City movement. While on paper it made sense to the planners, the implementation process was more complex and troubling. Rushed rehousing and resettlements meant that the other components of the plan – public transport facilities, schools and commercial development – lagged behind. The environmental conditions on the newly built areas were bleak and communities remained isolated because of the lack of transport links.⁴ Social

¹ Mark Oranje and Andrew Merrifield, 'National spatial development planning in South Africa 1930–2010: An introductory comparative analysis,' *Town and Regional Planning* 56 (2010): 29–45.

² Peter Wilkinson, 'City profile Cape Town,' *Cities* 17, no 3 (2000): 197; Alan Mabin and Dan Smit, 'Reconstructing South African cities? The making of urban planning 1900–2000,' *Planning Perspectives* 12 (1997): 207.

³ See chapter 4.

⁴ 'Coloured city among the sand-dunes,' *Cape Times*, 29 September 1962.

alienation and crime proliferated very quickly, perhaps illustrating how a widely endorsed professional plan might, in the local context, produce such a flawed and tragic outcome.

While CTCC coloured housing projects were unfolding at speed and according to a council housing master plan, housing provision for Africans was delayed until 1960 by the Nationalist government's Native Affairs Department (NAD). Negotiations affecting the provision of African housing proved uniquely complex when after 1944 the National Housing and Planning Commission (NH&PC) had taken on a more interventionist role in housing provision, particularly for African housing. After 1957, the Bantu Housing Board set strict rules for township development: failure by any applicant to meet the requirements would result in funding applications being turned down. Planning for African residential areas in Cape Town had been littered with failures and dead ends because the NAD's policies kept on shifting towards greater degrees of control. Despite detailed planning, for example, the Retreat Township proposal was abandoned in 1944 due to lack of funding from the NH&PC. Two housing schemes in Langa were also turned down between 1953 and 1955 for falling foul of the new buffer strip policy.

Finally, in 1955, the NAD called a complete halt to family housing in Langa; at the same time Werner Eiselen, the Secretary of Native Affairs, articulated the apartheid government's Coloured Labour Preference Policy. The result was a deadlock between local and national governments on the provision of housing for Africans. So, by 1960, there were two administrative processes for the territorial control of the urban African population involving the removal of Africans from identified areas, either in terms of slum clearance and 'black spot' removals or through township planning and development. Both were tied to expanding mechanisms of racial control and restriction. Controls also extended to the local authorities to ensure that all conditions were met. It could be, as Robinson has noted, a 'perfect system of control'.⁵

Urban management and policy trends that emerged in the 1950s intensified in the 1960s. By 1967, the Department of Community Development and the Bantu Affairs Administration Board had a fully articulated planning rationale for their own defined apartheid planning functions.⁶ New laws and statutory amendments followed, further eroding the powers and responsibilities of the

⁵ Jennifer Robinson, "A perfect system of control?" "State power and "native locations" in South Africa," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 8, no 2 (1990): 135–162.

⁶ Housing Act 4 of 1966 Chapter 11; Community Development Act 3 of 1966 s 1(1); Community Development Amendment Act 42 of 1967 ss 1(b), 2(e).

municipality in areas of traditional local authority, from slum clearance to urban administration, and from by-law regulations to township development and industrial planning.⁷

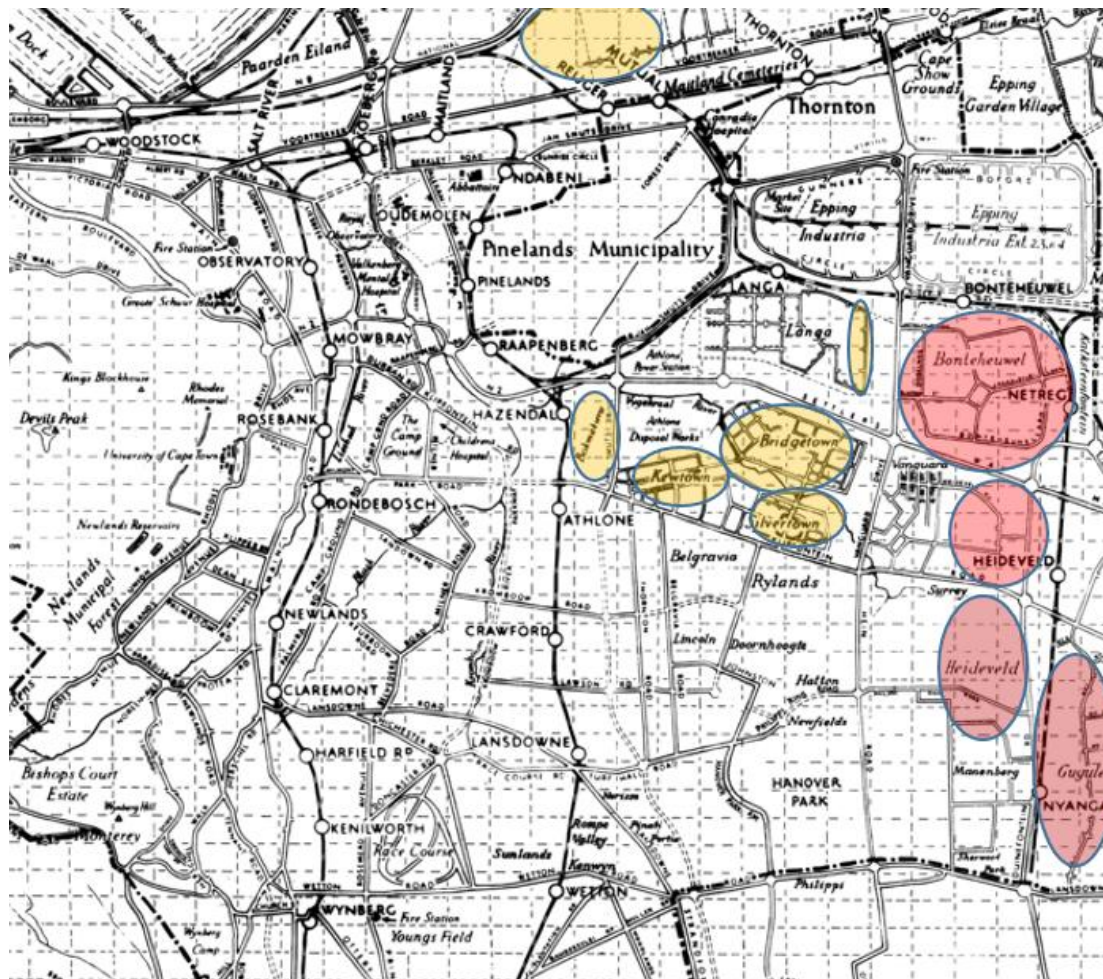


Figure 95: Map extract showing the Cape Flats areas of Cape Town and the municipal boundaries. Municipal housing estates and expansions dating from the 1950s are highlighted in yellow and those from the 1960s in red. The road and rail system provided a structure around which to link the estates. (Survey Branch [index of the property reference maps], CoCT [SS Morris] 1977)

Finally, by the end of the 1960s, both the earlier TPSs and the later planning regimes were required to conform to a centralised body of apartheid law, with the result that ‘the framework of planning created under earlier regimes was adapted to the exigencies of apartheid’.⁸ A complex two-tier system of urban planning, based on race and land-use (and a third system for African settlement managed by the Native [Bantu] Affairs Department) evolved. Within this mix, township planning, city form, city functions and housing became key areas of intergovernmental negotiation.

⁷ Slums Amendment Act 55 of 1963 s 4; Community Development Act 3 of 1966 ss 15, 17, 20; Housing Act 4 of 1966 ss 15(2), 17, 21(1) and 32(1)(a)–(b); Physical Planning Act 88 of 1967 s 2.

⁸ Alan Mabin and Dan Smit, ‘Reconstructing South African cities? The making of urban planning 1900–2000,’ *Planning Perspectives* 12, no 2 (1997): 208.

A consistent trend in local administration was the need for more housing for the poor. Resolving the housing shortages of sub-economic rental housing and housing for Africans was particularly urgent. A housing survey, released in 1957, revealed a shortage of some 12 000 housing units in the municipal area.⁹ By 1957, the National Housing and Planning Commission (later the Housing Board) and the Bantu Housing Board imposed severe limits on sub-economic funding. As a result, municipal housing provision had been slow in the 1950s, sometimes ceasing altogether. The establishment of a Building and Production Unit in 1953 resulted in some progress at Bridgetown and Kewtown in Athlone, at Factreton on the old Windermere site and at Retreat, together with home-ownership schemes at Belthorn and Kensington.¹⁰ Housing development for African families ceased after 1944, first, because of costs and, subsequently, after 1954, because of restrictive policies regarding African settlement and the Coloured Labour Preference Policy.

The housing shortage was exacerbated by Group Areas evictions of the LTAB and the Group Areas Board (GAB), which were accelerated in the 1960s. The housing authorities were forced to speed up residential planning programmes to accommodate growing numbers of ‘disqualified’ residents.¹¹ Still others were rendered homeless by municipal planning interventions. Expropriations, transport plans, slum clearances and ‘black spot’ removal resulted in more homeless and a greater demand for new housing. The mass construction of housing and hostel accommodation in the 1960s was made possible by greater levels of prosperity and the availability of state funding upon which all state housing was dependent. It was also made possible by the intention of the central government to sort out urbanisation problems and achieve socio-spatial segregation. As a result, the provision of housing and the development of townships and housing, their production, location, urban design and control, became key components in the apartheid strategy, which changed the built form and urban character of Cape Town.

Township production according to a set of ‘scientific’ principles was another trend which expanded into mass production in the 1960s. Arising out of notions of Modernism reflected in mass production and urban efficiency and control, it was inspired by the planners’ perception of their professional role as both physical planners and neutral experts, using rational and scientific skills.¹² The early scientific studies of the 1950s resulted in formulaic guides for housing design and

⁹ See chapter 4. The Batson Survey excluded the African population from the study and therefore did not supply a composite study of the real housing conditions at the time.

¹⁰ City of Cape Town, *Cape Town City Council's involvement in providing housing for its poorer citizens* (April 1993), 3.

¹¹ A ‘disqualified person’ was defined in the Group Areas Act (41 of 1950) as ‘a person who is not a member of the group specified in the relevant proclamation under s 3’. The notion of a ‘disqualified person’ also targeted tenants who were not the same race as the property owners (s 1(viii)).

¹² TB Floyd, *Town planning in South Africa* (Pietermaritzburg: Shuter and Shooter, 1960), 43–46.

residential planning, first tried at Kewtown and followed by Silvertown and Bridgetown in the 1950s. The key concepts for ‘scientific’ residential planning for ‘non-Europeans’ merged into a set of uniform planning principles for cheap housing prototypes and fast methods of mass production. It formed the basis for the developments on the Cape Flats in the 1960s that merged into a set of uniform planning principles for cheap housing prototypes and fast methods of mass production.¹³

Physical planners applied favoured Neighbourhood Unit planning principles, based on scientific methods of calculation and planning. Numerical calculations influenced every aspect, from road widths, housing densities, numbers of buildings and inhabitants in relation to open spaces to community facilities. The coloured housing estates planned and built throughout the 1960s – Bonteheuwel, Kalksteentfontein, Heideveld and Manenberg – were the result of uniform spatial characteristics, contributing to a dreary uniformity. The rules for the location and setting up of the African location at Nyanga West were rigid because they were part of the central government’s policy limiting permanent African settlement in Cape Town and to use control of housing as a mechanism with which to do so. In fact, local planners retained a commitment to the intellectual planning traditions of early Modernism. Their ideas were not static but were based on a series of continuing planning adjustments, as they sought to negotiate different political contexts, but still within the tenets of Modernism and within the role of the expert. The ambitious expressions of early Modernism lingered, providing the bedrock of city plans for change.¹⁴ With the Preliminary TPS completed in 1964, standard planning work also began to narrow into regulatory and administrative functions. Wide-ranging and ambitious early Modernism fell away and modernist planning functions fell squarely on transport and residential planning.¹⁵ The later Modernism of the 1960s was most clearly expressed in the ambitious freeway schemes of Solly Morris. His focus on American-style freeway planning also suggests that by then the dominance of the British intellectual planning traditions was waning. His preferences were clearly towards American models, finding the European outlook not bold enough and too attached to their ‘beautiful countryside to be real harbingers of change’.¹⁶ By the 1960s, apartheid plans were fully articulated by the Department of Community Development (DCD) and the Bantu Affairs Administration Board,

¹³ Union of South Africa, National Housing Office, *A guide to the planning of non-European townships* (Pretoria: Government Printer, July 1955).

¹⁴ Provisional Town Planning Scheme of 1941 (Phase One), 1952 (Phase 2) the Foreshore Plan of 1947, the Joint Town Planning Scheme of 1950.

¹⁵ Mark Oranje, ‘Back to where it all began ...? Reflections on injecting the (spiritual) ethos of the early town planning movement into planning planners and plans in post-1994 South Africa,’ *HTS Theological Studies* 70, no 3, art 4 (2014).

¹⁶ SS Morris, ‘South Africa’s approach to urban traffic and freeways,’ *Traffic Quarterly* 18, no 2 (April 1964–1965): 204–205.

crystallising into a rationale for a completely racially separate planning framework. New laws and statutory amendments followed, further eroding the powers and responsibilities of the municipality in traditional local authority activities affecting slum clearance, township administration, by-law regulations, township development and industrial planning.¹⁷



Figure 96: Group Areas superimposed upon an existing physical structure map of the city. (Map of Cape Town and Environs, Sheet 4 CoCT) The Group Areas shown are those for central Cape Town, BoKaap, District Six and Salt River. Cape Town CBD was declared a white Group Area in 1965, with District Six following in 1966. The map illustrates the administrative complexities arising out of the proclamations and the severe implications for the rights of property ownership. Prior to the District Six proclamation, a Government Notice of 1965 forbade the alteration of any buildings in the area. It also shows the fluid nature of the deliberations of the GAB and how some areas proclaimed for one race were de-proclaimed and proclaimed for another. This was the case with lower Salt River in 1982.

A 'properly planned location': building Gugulethu

Emerging after the Nationalist Party victory in 1948 was the further evolution of an anti-urban, anti-settlement 'native policy', and the concept of the properly planned urban location, which in Cape Town reached fruition with the building of Gugulethu in 1960.¹⁸ Together with the centralisation of state administration, it became a tool for the structure and management of urban African settlement. Its origins were based on an election promise made by the National Party in 1948 to the (largely) white electorate to solve the housing crisis for the poor by building more

¹⁷ Slums Amendment Act 55 of 1963 s 4; Community Development Act 3 of 1966 ss 15, 17, 20; Housing Act 4 of 1966 ss 15(2), 17, 21(1) and 32(1)(a)-(b); Physical Planning Act 88 of 1967 s 2.

¹⁸ The conventional terminology is for an African township to be referred to as a 'township' or, as in the case of Evans, a 'location'. Other segregated housing estates are either referred to as a 'housing estate' or occasionally also as a 'township'. I refer to townships rather than to locations.

segregated housing and to restrict growing African urbanisation. The policies that followed resulted in stricter influx-control mechanisms accompanied by cheap mass housing. The settlement policies that emerged were based on modern methods of town planning combined with coercive methods of implementation. The restrictions on Africans were particularly severe in the Western Cape as a result of the Coloured Labour Preference Policy, which was first articulated to the local authorities in 1954. As a result of this policy, and stricter influx mechanisms, government policy for Africans reverted to Stallardist principles of temporary residence rights, except in cases where workers and residents met the specific legal requirements to remain.¹⁹ The modern methods of town planning were codified into instructions to local authorities by the NAD, thus providing a centralised urban design policy.²⁰ This guide (the forerunner of the Housing Code of 1969) laid down specific design and location parameters as well as a detailed set of spatial instructions. Certain Neighbourhood Unit principles translated into plans for large segregated residential areas and mass-produced housing, defined by a road system with buffer zones. It codified racial zonings and the segregatory measures necessary for achieving territorial apartheid. The instructions for African settlement in racially defined areas were clear: compliance with the apartheid laws and spatial separation through the provision of buffer strips. Equally, the location chosen should be large enough to allow for future extensions without having an impact on other racial areas.²¹ This 'guide' became a blueprint for the future development of Nyanga and Gugulethu and illustrates how centralised administrative oversight affected the character of the residential spaces in Cape Town.

Since meeting such requirements was tied to the provision of funding, they were less of a guide and more of a clear set of demands. In the case of African (as opposed to other 'non-European') townships, the instructions were specific and very restrictive: officials of the NAD insisted that townships were to be located away from the city, which was identified as a white enclave, away from other race areas and separated by buffer zones of between 300 to 500 yards.²² Their requirements influenced not only the location of Gugulethu but the urban design form it took. Various departmental requirements were considered at length when a special committee was set up under the chairmanship of the Urban Areas Commissioner for the Western Cape, the Municipality of Cape Town and GAB, the Joint Town Planning Board and the railways administration. The joint decisions taken about the location and design of Gugulethu show just

¹⁹ Rodney Davenport, 'African townsmen? South African natives (urban areas) legislation through the years,' *African Affairs* 68, no 271 (1969): 95–109.

²⁰ Union of South Africa, National Housing Office, *A guide to the planning of non-European townships* (Pretoria: Government Printer, July 1951, reprinted 1955). This was the forerunner of the Housing Code of 1968, to which all township design was required to adhere.

²¹ National Housing Office, *Guide to planning non-European townships*, (vii).

²² Since it could not be used for anything, a buffer zone was effectively wasted space.

how many administrative requirements had to be met and how many government departments were involved in making decisions. In the case of Gugulethu, the Bantu Administration Committee and the Bantu Administration Branch, the GAB, the Bantu Administration Board and the Minister of Bantu Affairs were involved in the choice of the site. After that, authorisation was needed from the Township Board for the township layout and planning and the Bantu Housing Board for authorisation of the housing typologies and associated costs. This process would need to be preceded by land acquisition and a preliminary infrastructure layout with costing.

Restrictions attached to African residential development were more onerous in Cape Town than elsewhere because of the Nationalist government's Coloured Labour Preference Policy, which was a form of race discrimination favouring the employment of workers deemed coloured. The policy was tied to the increasing regulation of and restrictions on housing for Africans.²³ The department previously refused a leasehold home-ownership scheme east of Langa and any permissions for site and service schemes unless they were part of a transit or emergency camp and would be demolished in due course. As a result, Gugulethu was not only planned according to the NAD 'modern' town-planning principles, it was also planned *by* the NAD and other central government departments.

Measured by housing shortages, Cape Town lagged behind in the mass drive towards African housing that characterised other urban centres in the late 1950s. This was the result of funding and location constraints, but chiefly of the central government's intention to restrict African urbanisation in the Western Cape and to use housing provision to do so. A real outcome of the Coloured Labour Preference Policy articulated by Eiselen in 1955 was a reluctance on the part of the national government to permit the building of family homes for Africans in Cape Town until the decisions were taken to clear the informal settlements of Windermere and Blouvillei.²⁴ Even then, it became a mechanism to check who met the statutory requirements to remain.

²³ Ian Goldin, 'The Coloured Labour Preference Policy: Co-option and contradiction' <<https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/8766747.pdf>>, 111–112.

²⁴ Christiane Elias, 'A comparative analysis of government housing policy and Cape Town Council housing policy 1890–1935,' MA thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 1980, 58–59; Sean Field, 'Remembering experience, interpreting memory: Life stories from Windermere,' *African Studies* 60, no 1 (2001) 119–121; Sean Field (ed), *Lost communities, living memories: Remembering forced removals in Cape Town* (Cape Town: David Philip, 2001), 27, 29.

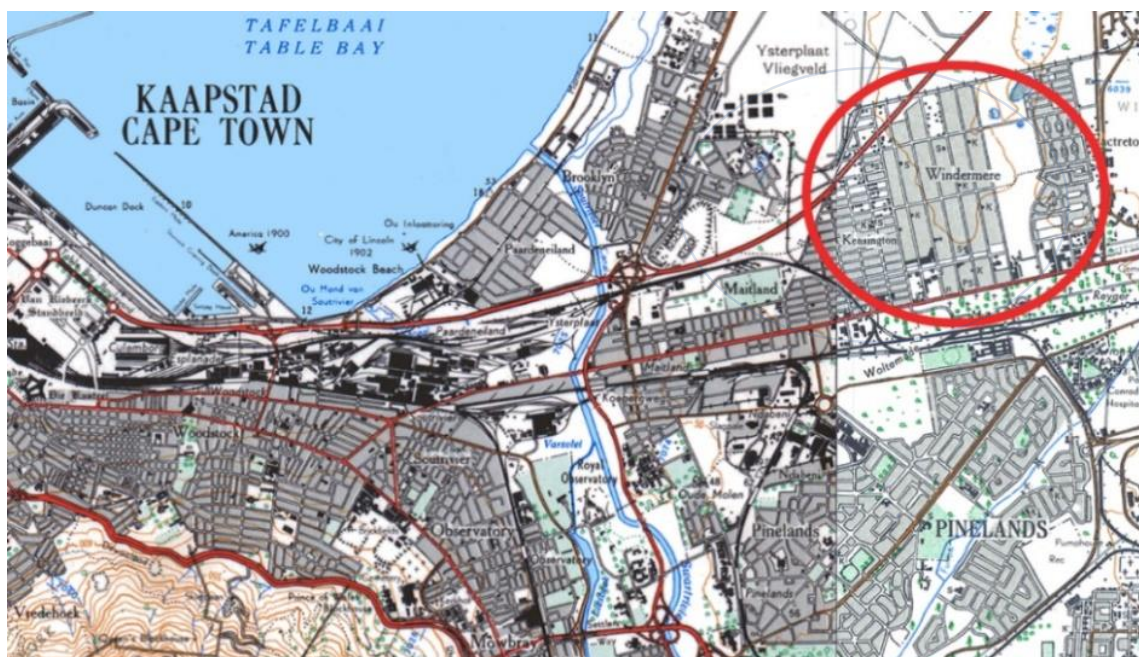


Figure 97: Map showing the location of Windermere in 1960 in relation to Cape Town (circled). By this time, Windermere was included in the municipal boundaries of the CTCC and was being dismantled and replanned to make way for the formal housing of the Kensington home ownership scheme to the west and the rental accommodation of Facreton to the east. Windermere was strategically situated between Maitland and the Ndabeni and Epping industrial areas. As a result, given the direction of planning policy, its redevelopment was inevitable. (<<https://adrian.friith.dev/historical-maps-of-ct/>>)

In 1960 the Municipal Bantu Affairs Administration Branch of the Municipality of Cape Town listed a total of 69 026 Africans in Cape Town, of whom 36 772 were men on service contracts.²⁵ While the number was almost certainly an underestimate, only one-fifth of that official number lived at Langa. Unable to find accommodation, many other migrant workers sought cheap shelter in city rooms or in the informal settlements at Windermere and Blouvllei, Retreat. We have seen how successive schemes for housing at Langa in 1953 and 1956 were turned down because of a growing body of restrictive conditions.²⁶ The only developments permitted by the NAD were for hostels at Langa which were in line with their preference for temporary migrant labour.²⁷ After the Langa unrest and violent events that took place between 21 and 28 March 1960, the Prime Minister, Dr HF Verwoerd, announced in parliament that there would be no deviation from his government's anti-urbanisation policies for Africans. He also saw no reason to depart from his government's policy of 'separate development'. Instead, he blamed the unrest on the local authorities who were opponents of government policy. No doubt he had the Cape Town and Johannesburg municipalities in mind. A new urgency in terms of African settlement meant that

²⁵ John Shorten, *The golden jubilee of Greater Cape Town* (Cape Town: John R Shorten, 1963), 479.

²⁶ Christiane Elias, 'A comparative analysis of government housing policy,' 34, 44, 47–48.

²⁷ See chapter 4.

the desultory progress made by the municipality and the NAD in the building of a new municipal township since the government ban on family housing at Langa in 1955 gathered pace.

‘Huge Nyanga township taking place’²⁸

The Nyanga West plan was for 7 000 houses for ‘married natives in three precincts’.²⁹ Nyanga West adjoined Nyanga, which was managed by the Cape Divisional Council. The Department of Native Affairs considered it an appropriate site because, together with Nyanga, it became a physically contiguous area of African settlement. The municipality lost no time in preparing a master plan in 1957 with roads, services and the placement of the first houses for 1 626 families. In accordance with the 1953 city housing policy, housing took the form of either dual-occupancy dwellings or the standard NE 51/9 or NE 51/6 housing typologies which had been used earlier in Kewtown and Facticeon.

The plans were held up by new government requirements, though. The first demand was that the municipality officially abandon the Langa East site and service proposal otherwise they would not receive any funding for Nyanga West. A second was for a transit camp at Nyanga West to facilitate the screening of families, also as a condition of funding for services.³⁰ A two-year delay resulted, followed by a further delay over negotiations over what *type* of emergency housing was to be set up in the transit camps and also the size of the buffer strip. The council wanted permanent brick starter houses to prevent ‘unsightliness’ in the transit camp. The Minister of Native Affairs objected to any form of housing that was vaguely permanent, fearing that it would be construed as tacit acceptance of residents’ rights to remain.³¹ The minister’s insistence that emergency camps be temporary in nature and composed of either prefabricated housing or temporary shelters won the day.³² By 1958, some 500 portable corrugated iron hutments were moved to Nyanga West, with two families occupying a single unit.

²⁸ ‘Huge Nyanga township taking place,’ *Cape Times*, 26 November 1959.

²⁹ Mayor’s Minutes, Municipality of Cape Town, year ending 1957, 7.

³⁰ The Prevention of Illegal Squatting Act 52 of 1952 s 6 required the local authority to establish an emergency camp to accommodate displaced people. The Native Service Levy Act 27 of 1951 also required a local municipality to have an emergency camp set up before it would qualify for funding for township services.

³¹ Mayor’s Minutes, year ending 1958, 16.

³² ‘State demands Nyanga screening camp,’ *Cape Times*, 23 October 1957. This raised the issue that residents who were moved from shacks in Windermere on account of the housing conditions there were forced to rebuild similar housing in an emergency camp.



Figure 98: Undated photograph of corrugated iron hutments, one unit for two families, similar to those constructed at Gugulethu transit camp. (CCb172_f41_i7)

At the time of the construction of Gugulethu, the Minister of Bantu Affairs was centralising administrative control over all Africans in the urban areas. It appointed Bantu Urban Areas Commissioners, effectively removing local autonomy in African affairs. The Municipal Native Administration manager, S Rogers, objected, saying he found the provision drastic and far reaching, adding, 'I cannot avoid the feeling that this is aimed at those local authorities which, in the Government authorities view, have not shown any enthusiasm to carry out Government policy.'³³ The CTCC was aiming for a permanent African population of about 100 000 people and admitted that it did not yet know the numbers to be moved. But it estimated that at least 5 000 to 10 000 Africans had to leave the Peninsula as a result of the clearing operations conducted by the City's Native Administration Department.³⁴ The CTCC appeared to support government influx control measures, arguing that it 'simply cannot afford to build houses for all the African families that are pouring into Cape Town since the end of the war'.³⁵ It confirmed that all Africans in the Cape Town municipal area were being screened in accordance with government policy, starting at a portion of Windermere near 14th Avenue in late 1957.

African residents living in Athlone, which had recently been proclaimed a Coloured Group Area, were also screened for eligibility to remain.³⁶ A resident of Athlone wrote to the *Cape Argus*

³³ 'Wide new powers over all natives in cities proposed,' *Cape Argus*, 7 November 1958.

³⁴ 'African women protests at breaking up of homes,' *Cape Times* 27 February 1958; 'Thousands of "unqualified" natives must leave Peninsula,' *Cape Times*, 18 December 1957.

³⁵ *Cape Times*, 18 December 1957.

³⁶ See Figure 99 for formal and informal housing juxtaposed at Athlone.

questioning the way municipal officials were running the process. He complained that many African families living in Belgravia and Athlone were visited by municipal inspectors, who handed out forms headed 'Application for Accommodation at Nyanga West'. They were told they had to report to Langa. At Langa they were questioned about how long they had been in Cape Town and if they had any family in reserves and how long husbands had worked for employers. The officials checked the files of the husbands. Then families were then told that only if husband had worked with his present employer for 10 years or more could he stay in Cape Town. Otherwise, the next time the wife came to the office to get an extension to her permit she would not get it and would have to leave Cape Town.³⁷

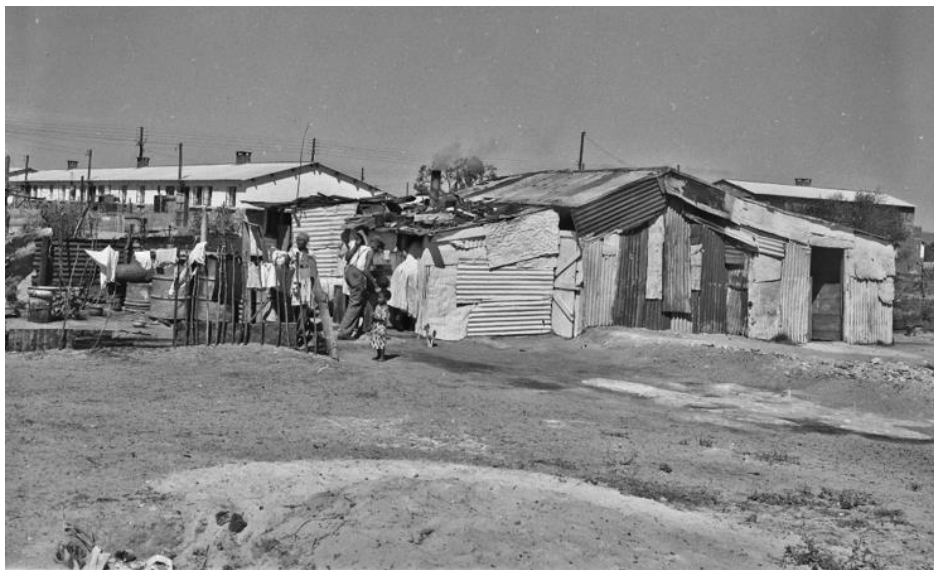


Figure 99: Formal state-funded housing and informal housing juxtaposed, Athlone (CCb122_f35_i02). Informal settlements existed side by side with formal housing developments but were gradually displaced as municipal officials negotiated the acquisition of the parcels of land either by slum clearance or by direct purchase.

The influx control screenings and endorsements out of the Western Cape that accompanied the clearing of Windermere came at a terrible cost. Responses to the forced removals have been documented in a series of studies and interviews by Sean Field.³⁸ There are other personal recollections, such as those of Sindiwe Magona, who recalls growing up in the informal settlement at Blouvillei, then moving with her family to Gugulethu, revealing the nature of the experience of families who lived in the informal settlements of the Cape Flats.³⁹

³⁷ Athlone resident, letter to *Cape Argus*, 17 December 1957.

³⁸ Sean Field, 'Remembering experience,' 119–133; Sean Field, *Lost communities*, 27–43.

³⁹ Vivian Bickford-Smith, Elizabeth van Heyningen and Nigel Worden, *Cape Town in the twentieth century* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1999), 130.

As a result of this clearance process, at least 6 000 African families urgently needed housing. The municipality wished to complete the clearance of Windermere and Retreat for its own town-planning projects at Facreton and Windermere. As a result, the provision of formal housing became extremely urgent. To speed matters up, the Chairman of the Housing Committee, Bakker, and a municipal delegation met government officials in Pretoria to iron out the remaining difficulties. In effect, the municipality acceded to all the national government requirements for Nyanga West, making it a 'model' government township and an example of how the centralisation of government functions completely defined African residential planning.

Plan for Gugulethu

Any township funded by the National Housing Commission and the Bantu Housing Board needed to meet departmental requirements if it was to be considered 'properly planned' and, consequently, eligible for national funding.⁴⁰ The site was carefully considered. It had to be close to an industrial area and close to rail links but away from white areas. Links to surrounding networks also needed to be considered. It had to be designed with limited road access and no access route off a national road, according to the requirements of the Department of Bantu Affairs.⁴¹ A buffer strip was a strong requirement, although its function was unclear, other than signalling clear spatial segregation (see Figures 102 and 103). In many ways, Gugulethu was based on national planning principles but also shared certain patterns and spatial similarities with Langa and even Ndabeni. Emerging spatial patterns such as defined perimeters, buffer strips, austere housing and controlled transportation show that coercive mechanisms to control residents and their movements were an intrinsic part of African township design. Evans describes the external links of a township to the rest of the city as 'carefully sited' and the internal infrastructure and layout of the location being planned with 'explicit detailed attention to the disciplinary potential of space'.⁴²

It is possible that the origins of the 'properly planned location' consisted of an amalgam of planning influences stretching all the way back to the sanitation syndrome. In addition to long-time similarity, certain Neighbourhood Unit principles were also present at Gugulethu – the inward focus and the placement of housing precincts around schools, for instance. There were also key weaknesses in the planning system which could best be ascribed to the fact that plans were undertaken by physical planners without social input. Housing was allocated on the ability to pay

⁴⁰ The term 'native' was replaced by 'Bantu' in 1960. Official government departments were also renamed.

⁴¹ TB Floyd, *Townships layout* (Pietermaritzburg: Shuter and Shooter, 1951); National Housing Office, *A guide to non-european townships* (July 1955).

⁴² Ivan Evans, *Bureaucracy and race: Native administration in South Africa* (University of California Press, 1997), 299.

the rent rather than the size of the family. The resulting problem of overcrowding had been present since the building of Kewtown. It got steadily worse as housing standards deteriorated and more dual-occupancy houses were built sometimes for large families (see Figure 80).

A Peninsula-wide housing shortage by 1960 resulted in increased pressure to complete the planning and service construction at both Nyanga West and Bonteheuvel. The government began to criticise the municipality for its failure to meet the housing demand.⁴³ There were setbacks at Nyanga West because of the municipal building costs per house. Government policy for African housing stated that no house could exceed £250. Cape Town Municipal housing plans comprised permanent brick or concrete housing of one to four rooms and flats. Plans included ceilings, floor coverings and an electric light. The Bantu Housing Board considered the houses too expensive and complained that the Divisional Council was building at Nyanga for less.⁴⁴ It was an old complaint that the city council was not sufficiently frugal in its building costings. However, the CTICC response was that conditions in Cape Town were different from those of other parts of South Africa. The Cape Flats had a high water table and damp winters. The early Garden City concepts of low density, good ventilation and residential health still lingered.

The planning of Nyanga West occurred exactly according to the specifications of the NAD. The first of 834 NE 51 four-roomed and three-roomed brick houses were planned and erected in 1960. Eventually, the municipality managed to reduce housing costs by using African construction teams who were employed at a cheaper rate. This ensured savings in production and allowed faster delivery rates, mass, cheap housing construction and lower building costs. They started with the building of eight sample houses made of corrugated iron which appeared not to have been a success. In line with government requirements, the first step was to build the emergency camp (see Figure 101). It was supplied with rudimentary services and space for 1 776 houses, of which only 500 were prefabricated. The others were self-built, essentially similar to the houses that were destroyed in terms of slum clearance. By the time the township design plan was completed, and the first 834 houses were constructed, Nyanga West had become Gugulethu.

In true modernist tradition, the municipal housing construction department established a production line system of development by using many prefabricated materials and multiple construction teams, where possible. The techniques developed by the NBRI of shaving off small savings from every part of the production costs enabled the municipality to meet production

⁴³ See chapter 4 for preliminary negotiations regarding the development of Bonteheuvel.

⁴⁴ The Municipality of Cape Town never liked the Nyanga houses, which the chairman of the Native Affairs Committee called 'cheap': 'Huge demand for housing,' *Cape Times*, 13 February 1948.

requirements. As housing production increased in speed, so did the modernist assembly-line nature of building. The building production teams made use of prefabricated materials and used teams that performed one task only to speed up production.



Figure 100: Gugulethu, no date but c 1961. The panorama shows the isolated location and many of the 'modern' planning principles required by the central government's NAD. They include the single connecting road through the interior, 340 houses of the first precinct and the expansion of the second. It also shows the site and service transit camp scheme (arrowed) in the foreground and the single connecting road through the township (arrowed). These were both government requirements. (City of Cape Town CCb122_f52_i03)

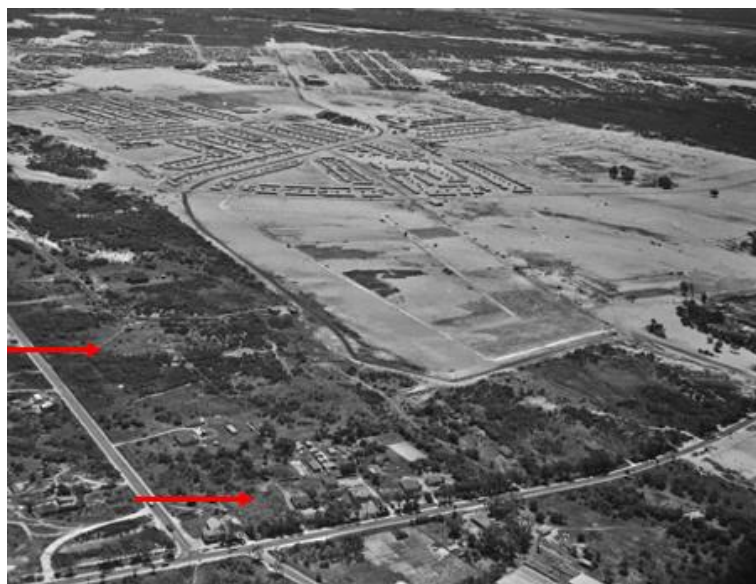


Figure 101: Buffer strips, Gugulethu, no date but probably 1961. Seen from the opposite direction with arrows showing 500-yard and 300-yard buffer strips separating the township from major and arterial road networks. Planners regarded the buffer strip as serving no purpose, a waste of valuable land and functioning purely as an ideological signal. (CoCT Gugulethu CCb122-f53_i01)



Figure 102: View of the first 834 brick NE 51/9 semi-detached houses which were built to a prototype design for housing at Gugulethu. They were semi-detached dwellings. (Mayor's Minutes, year ending 31 December 1961)

Township planning and development was a complex process involving many steps and many departments across all three levels of government. From land acquisition and planning to township development and design, city officials were required to respond to a plethora of requirements, conditions and policies before the first sod was turned. At any point, a policy change or a new law might result in plans that had been years in the making being refused or having conditions imposed upon them that made them unviable. The Bantu Housing Board and the Bantu Affairs Administration Branch exercised very strict control over the planning of African townships, to the extent that the Bantu Affairs Department was actively involved in the choice of the site for Gugulethu and the manner in which settlement and 'black spot' removal needed to be managed. The CTCC sent a deputation to Pretoria in an attempt to speed up development in 1957, but there was still a failure to achieve consensus. The National Housing Board and the Bantu Housing Board had strict rules affecting 'Non-European' township development. Until 1969 they were presented as guidelines, but since compliance to the guidelines was attached to the allocation of funding, with clear specifications for every aspect of township development, they effectively became requirements.

Two themes marked the expansion of African townships by 1960 and in subsequent decades. The first was the increasingly restrictive power of supplementary laws over African urbanisation and housing. The second was the expanding reach of the NAD over housing and township development in pursuit of government policy, with expanding powers being exerted over local authorities' management and development of African townships. Central government attitudes to African urbanisation hardened even further in the 1960s. The Coloured Labour Preference Policy first articulated in 1954 became law in 1964, followed in 1966 by a freeze on the African labour component in Cape Town. In future, funding would be available for settlement and housing in the

'homelands', to which Africans who did not meet the requirements to remain would be 'endorsed out'. No further housing for Africans would be constructed in the Cape Peninsula, although the building of hostel units continued. By this time the national government was so strongly opposed to increased urbanisation that it was prepared use national powers to control industrial expansion in Cape Town areas if that led to increased numbers of African workers.⁴⁵ Because of the policy of deliberate residential exclusion, the national government's plan to build a new town at Khayelitsha from 1983 to 1985 marked a change in official government policy. However, as Cook notes:

Whether Khayelitsha heralded a real change in housing policy or was a pragmatic response to existing gross overcrowding, unsuccessful removals and escalating violence is not clear.⁴⁶

The plan was to resettle residents of the informal settlements at Unibell, Modderdam and Crossroads, which were overcrowded and subject to increasing violence. Like Mitchells Plain, Khayelitsha was planned as a large New Town consisting of sections divided into sites. Unlike Mitchells Plain with its variety of housing typologies and mix of uses, though, Khayelitsha was a large dormitory town consisting of the same type of houses, no industry and no commercial development.



Figure 103: Modern mass-construction methods: site not identified but probably Gugulethu. (CCb130_f46_i03)

⁴⁵ The Physical Planning and Utilization of Resources Act 88 of 1967.

⁴⁶ Gillian P Cook, 'Khayelitsha: New settlement form in the Cape Peninsula,' in D Smith (ed), *The apartheid city and beyond* (London: Routledge 1992), 125–135.

Planning ‘flattest city in the world’: Bonteheuwel, Heideveld and the Neighbourhood Unit townships on the Cape Flats

Throughout the 1960s, the CTCC focused attention on building very large letting schemes for both economic and sub-economic coloured tenants on the Cape Flats. In December 1960, the City Engineer formed a Building and Production Branch which was responsible for all housing matters. The Housing Branch developed their housing and urban design plans in line with post-war planning principles that had been circulating in professional circles for decades. All the large housing estates were based on the planning principles of the Neighbourhood Unit.⁴⁷ Every technical and spatial aspect of the project would be considered and planned for. Despite intensive planning or perhaps *because* of the intensive physical planning, the results were distressing, even after a few years.

The *Cape Times* journalist Brian Barrow provided a frank appraisal of what Bonteheuwel looked like soon after construction. He wrote:

Bonteheuwel must be the flattest city in the world. Looking out from the top of the Vanguard Drive Bridge you get the impression that if the grass grows much higher it will disappear from view altogether.

He reported that, after three years, there was little cultivation of the gardens, still no shops, no entertainment and simply nothing to do.⁴⁸ The uniformity and flatness that Barrow described were the result of a system of planning principles which still attached value to Garden City-like low densities.



Figure 104: City Engineer Solly Morris (right), City planning official VJ Penso and possibly HP Smit of the City Planning Committee examine the Bonteheuwel plan. See Figure 104. (Stafford Smith Films, still: A new horizon, film, 1960)

⁴⁷ See chapter 4.

⁴⁸ Brian Barrow, ‘Courage and resignation at Bonteheuwel,’ *Cape Times Weekend Magazine*, 17 August 1963.



Figure 105: The official plan for Bonteheuvel, as shown in the film, A new horizon, 1960. It shows an interior green space network and a central commercial precinct. Local roads divide the precinct into three. Housing is grouped within the precincts around a series of concentric roads. Schools are situated within the green spaces together with sports fields, sports facilities, balls and old-age homes. The Neighbourhood Unit plan, closely based on Perry's Radburn layout, was a key component of British post-war planning.⁴⁹

His comments about Bonteheuvel were in stark contrast to the CTCC's attitude. Bonteheuvel was their flagship project. They were so proud of the result that they made a film about the planning and development of mass housing in Cape Town and Bonteheuvel in particular.⁵⁰ The film, titled *A new horizon*, might have provided a rosy view of municipal planning, but it also clarified how carefully the city planners followed Neighbourhood Unit physical-planning principles, how carefully each link and each space was planned in advance. The basic plan was repeated at Heideveld in 1964 and followed at Manenberg in 1966.

As the previous chapter has shown, as mass housing production increased, so the quality of housing deteriorated. The NE 51/9 and NE 51/10 houses and the dual-occupancy units of Bonteheuvel gave way to the two- to three-storeyed flats of Heideveld. More two- and three-storey walk-ups were built at Manenberg, Hanover Park, Lavender Hill and Parkwood over the years. All of them, but particularly the three-storey walk-ups, were of a considerably lower standard than the

⁴⁹ Anthony Goss, 'Neighbourhood units in British new towns,' *The Town Planning Review* 32 (1961): 66–82.

⁵⁰ Stafford Smith Films, *A new horizon*, for Cape Provincial Library Service, Cape Town, 1960.

earlier municipal housing at Maitland Garden Village, Bokmakierie, Alicedale and the Constitution Street Flats in central Cape Town. Changes in the quality of dwellings were the result of the municipality needing to house as many people as cheaply and as quickly as possible. It reduced a growing rental housing backlog and freed up valuable strategic land for modern planning projects. As at Gugulethu, housing production at Bonteheuvel and Heideveld came to be based on assembly line and pre-production building principles, thus echoing international trends in mass housing production sometimes referred to as ‘the warehousing of the labouring classes’.⁵¹

The mass housing schemes in Bonteheuvel, Retreat and Heideveld in the 1960s were ambitious from the start. In the first year, 1 657 houses were constructed. In 1961, a further 1 863 buildings were constructed at Retreat and Bonteheuvel and a further 1 427 in 1962.⁵² This was in addition to other construction at Gugulethu and Factreton. During the following years, housing production gathered pace at Bonteheuvel, Kalksteenfontein, Factreton, Kensington and Belthorn Estate. Of the mass housing projects, Bonteheuvel was the last of the old schemes of semi-detached units. But by 1961, the National Housing Commission had decided that in future all new schemes would contain only the two- or three-storey flatted units and detached dwellings. The intention was to build the detached housing for conversion in the future to private ownership.⁵³ The Heideveld Estate which followed reflected the new instructions.



Figure 106: Construction begins in Bonteheuvel in 1961. This image looking north shows the inception of Bonteheuvel and the sand and bush on which it was located. Structuring elements at the time include the railway line and the vast buffer strip along Vanguard Drive (now Jakes Gerwel Drive) separating Langa and Bonteheuvel. (Mayor's Minutes, year ending 31 December 1961)

⁵¹ Robert K Home, *Of planting and planning*, 92–123.

⁵² Robert K Home, *Of planting and planning*, 92–123.

⁵³ City Engineer's Report, year ending 31 December 1961, 33.

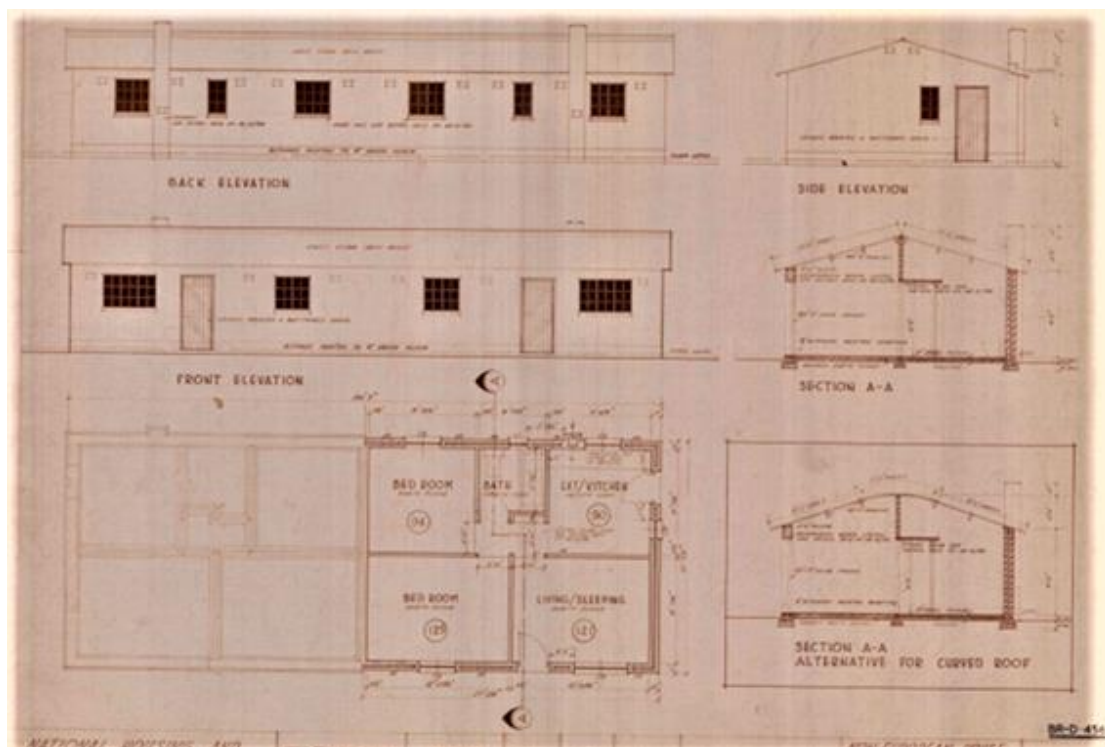


Figure 107: Plan NE 51/10, NH&PC. The NBRI developed a series of housing designs based on a thorough investigation of every aspect of the building, from the roof construction to the flooring. The CTCC had problems with the NE 51 plans because they were not built to allow for the high water tables and damp winters of Cape Town. It resulted in the CTCC's putting in ceilings and floors (which the plans often omitted at their own costs). This design, which was semi-detached, was the most common of the housing typologies used at Bontebeuvel. It was not used after Bontebeuvel and Gugulethu. It comprised two bedrooms and a living/sleeping room, a kitchen and a bathroom (but with an outside toilet). The roof was slightly curved to save on building costs. (NBRI; Wisser, University of the Witwatersrand)

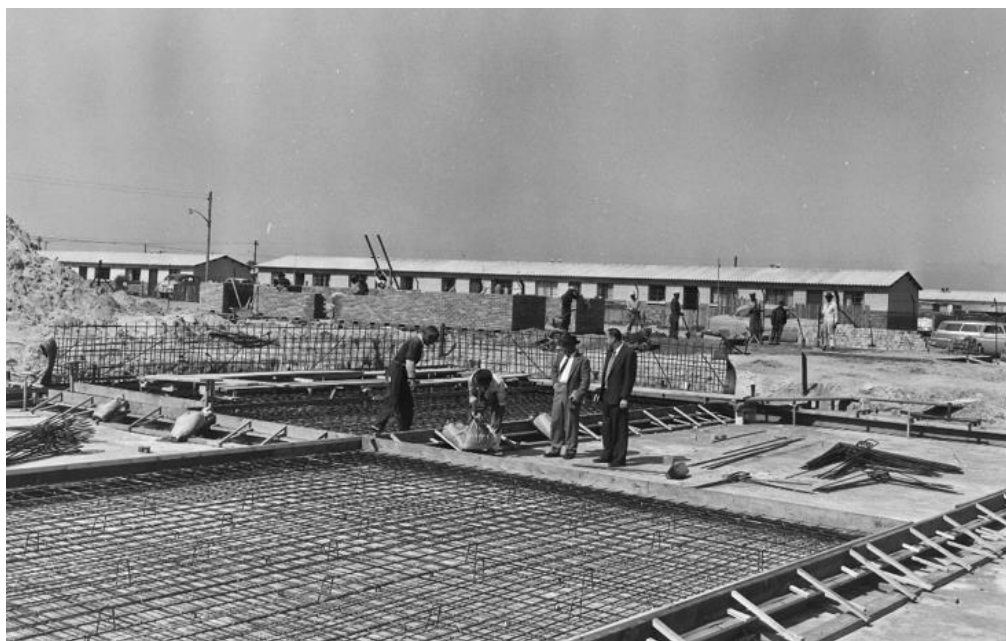


Figure 108: Housing mass production at Bontebeuvel using dedicated teams like the one featured in this photograph. No date but c 1961. (CoCT CCb125_f65_i0)

New housing estates, 1960–1964

Bonteheuvel was planned and implemented as a coherent whole from the start by physical planners' adhering to a clear theoretical concept of Neighbourhood Units. The concept had technical and social components relating to the provision of facilities needed by residents within walking distance from their homes and the technical plans for the separation of vehicular and pedestrian routes. The CTCC adopted the British method of placing commercial facilities on the inside rather than on the outside of the Neighbourhood Unit.⁵⁴

The Bonteheuvel site was planned as a series of three Neighbourhood Units within a self-contained area defined by rail and road. Each Neighbourhood Unit would serve a community of about 1 700 to 10 000 people. The three units would be linked by one major road system that traversed the full site. There would also be a continuous strip of open space, starting from Vanguard Drive towards the west, there was also to be a generous allocation of recreational space, with all churches and schools located close to this open space. A business and 'town centre' were located in the middle of the development. Careful attention was paid to the future provision of schools and open spaces. With funding granted almost immediately from the National Housing Office, the municipality was in a position by 1960 to begin work on the first 1 942 dwellings.⁵⁵ Construction was undertaken on a mass basis, with many houses being constructed at the same time using a number of building teams. By 1963, 840 sub-economic units and 2 100 economic units had been built – a total of close to 3 000 houses being completed within two-and-a-half years.⁵⁶

The Neighbourhood Units envisaged by the planners were those that met the criteria of low-density, order, containment and cleanliness. The contrast between the professional planning aims of the project and the residents' experiences was wide, however. At first, residents at Bonteheuvel were pleased with the relative space provided. For those who had been sub-tenants living as a family in a single room, the notion of their own house, however modest, was cause for satisfaction.⁵⁷ Tenants at Bonteheuvel were drawn from the CTCC Housing List and lists of those affected by slum clearance and town-planning initiatives such as the Eastern Boulevard construction. Individual interviews between a housing supervisor and a prospective tenant were

⁵⁴ Eleanor Smith Morris, *British town planning and urban design principles and policies* (Harlow, Essex, England: Longman, 1997), 138–142.

⁵⁵ 3/CT1/4/9/3/1/21 Annexure 23/17/1961.

⁵⁶ 3/CT1/4/9/3/1/23 Minutes of the Housing Committee.

⁵⁷ Denis Mabin, 'Patterns of low cost housing: A study of attitudes and values of coloured residents in the Heideveld Public Housing Estate Cape Town,' MURP thesis, University of Cape Town, 1968.

undertaken prior to allocating housing. The prospective tenant was questioned closely on his job and ability to pay the rent. The size of the family was not considered, which resulted in large, very poor households living in sub-economic housing of only one or two rooms. A *Cape Times* reporter visited Bonteheuvel some 15 months after construction started and wrote about its 'bright new houses' and the growing population, at 15 000 already more than Pinelands. He commented: 'What the Bonteheuvel residents appreciate most is the spaciousness, the cleanliness of their new surroundings.'⁵⁸ But the reporter could not fail to notice the ever-present sand, the lack of shops and the fact that there was a long commute to Athlone or Mowbray. By 1963, however, the optimism of the residents had turned to resignation. There were still no churches, although 26 sites had been allocated for them. He concluded that he found Bonteheuvel sad and wondered whether the women who stood at their front doors were pioneers or guinea pigs.⁵⁹

By 1965, some three years after most residents had settled into Bonteheuvel, cracks began to appear in the social fabric: the *Cape Argus* reported on a wave of crime sweeping the area, with a gang element active in the area near the shopping centre. Residents no longer felt safe.⁶⁰ With the crime situation continuing to deteriorate, many of the residents looked back to a happier period before they had settled in a 'sandy wasteland'.⁶¹

The same residential planning principles that were evident at Bonteheuvel were also evident in the housing estates which followed. Although there were differences in size, layout and housing densities, Heideveld and Manenberg followed similar Neighbourhood Unit planning principles. Planning consistencies contribute in large part to the dreary sameness of the residential environment on the Cape Flats. With land for cheap housing becoming scarce and the advice of the Townships Board needing to be considered, the Building and Production Branch and the Town Planning Branch began to plan at higher densities. This was first evident at Heideveld, followed by Manenberg, Hanover Park and Lavender Hill in Retreat. It marked an intense period of housing construction. The Building and Production Branch used many construction teams and made greater use of prefabricated building materials. Building contracts were divided up between the local authorities and private construction firms, who, by building on a large scale, found they could return a profit. Building at Heideveld began in 1962 and was completed by 1965, with the CTCC's focus turning to the next project at Manenberg.

⁵⁸ 'Coloured city among the sand-dunes,' *Cape Times*, 29 September 1962.

⁵⁹ 'Courage and resignation at Bonteheuvel,' *Cape Times Weekend Magazine*, 17 August 1963.

⁶⁰ 'Bonteheuvel reign of terror angers residents,' *Cape Argus*, 29 May 1965.

⁶¹ *Cape Times*, 16 November 1984.

While Heideveld was planned according to Neighbourhood Unit planning principles, the unit densities were higher. As a result, according to the planning calculations, there needed to be more open space, provided in this instance by a central half-hexagonal open space that dominated the layout plan (see Figure 113). Because of a new government housing policy that all housing needed to be built in a form that could be sold, the semi-detached housing prototype at Bonteheuvel was dropped. It was replaced by a greater range of housing types, from sub-economic dual-occupancy units (with one bedroom) to larger units and flats built in a series of superblocks. After Heideveld, the three-storey walk-ups dominated housing delivery at the new housing estates at Hanover Park and Lavender Hill. City records show that more than 100 complexes of three-storey walk-ups were completed by 1970, each comprising between 36 and 60 flats.⁶²



Figure 109: The only commercial centre of Bontebeuvel situated in the centre of the estate. (CCb126_f30_i03)

⁶² City of Cape Town, Mayor's Minutes, year ending 1973, 4.



Figure 110: A housing supervisor interviewing a prospective tenant for placement at Bontebeuvel. Only men, as heads of households, were permitted to sign leases. (Stafford Smith Films, still: A new horizon, 1960)

The CTCC changed housing models as a result of the Townships Board requirements for greater densities and the Housing Code of 1964, which required strict adherence. The CTCC undertook the design and building of two- and three-storey walk-ups to increase gross density.⁶³ In addition to the new walk-ups, the CTCC continued to build dual-occupancy units. The range of housing was extended with a dual-occupancy five-roomed dwelling containing two families, one family in two rooms and another in three. By the time the construction of Heideveld was underway, the Group Areas Board (GAB) needed more houses for ‘disqualified persons’ whose homes it was expropriating in terms of the Group Areas Development Act of 1955 (as amended). The CTCC was accordingly bound by a funding requirement to hand over 50% of completed housing to the GAB for their own use.

In his study of Heideveld conducted some three years after the township was completed, Denis Mabin found that 50% of the residents he interviewed deemed the conditions at Heideveld better than their previous accommodation. Of the 105 families he interviewed, the largest proportion (29%) moved voluntarily from other parts of the Cape Flats, sometimes from informal housing. Some had moved from Observatory, Wynberg and Claremont as Group Areas refugees. None he interviewed came from District Six.⁶⁴ Despite this, many of the houses were overcrowded and he found they would not meet the standard regulations attached to the Slums Act of 1934.⁶⁵

⁶³ Denis Mabin, ‘Patterns of low cost housing,’ 9.

⁶⁴ Denis Mabin, ‘Patterns of low cost housing,’ 20.

⁶⁵ See chapter 3.



Figure 111: Three-storey walk-ups under construction in superblocs at Heideveld. (CCb124_f45_i02)



Figure 112: Prefabricated building construction at Heideveld of a three-storey walk-up. These buildings would have been mass produced at speed and used to rehouse those on the housing list or victims of a forced removal. No date but probably from c 1965 (CCb132_f60_s3_i03)

Housing as a scarce resource: emerging conflicts with the Department of Community Development over housing allocations

As housing production gathered pace, a growing area of conflict between the Department of Community Development (DCD) and the CTCC emerged in housing allocations. It concerned the quota of housing allocated to the department for housing persons disqualified in terms of the GAAs. The CTCC agreed, as a condition of funding, to permit the department an allocation of 20% of housing built, 50% in the case of Kalksteentfontein. But the department complained that not only was it too little but the manner in which the housing was allocated was problematic. The difficulty for them was matching up the numbers of people cleared in 'black spots' and the number of housing units provided by the CTCC.

The Secretary of Housing wrote in 1963:

You will realise that the present manner of allotment, one day to an unqualified person in Rondebosch and the next day to an unqualified person in Rugby, does not enable me to clear certain spots. If one house in a Coloured concentration is vacated it is quite possible that another Coloured person from elsewhere will occupy it the same night and nothing is achieved.⁶⁶

The department wanted to know a month in advance what houses would be available to them.

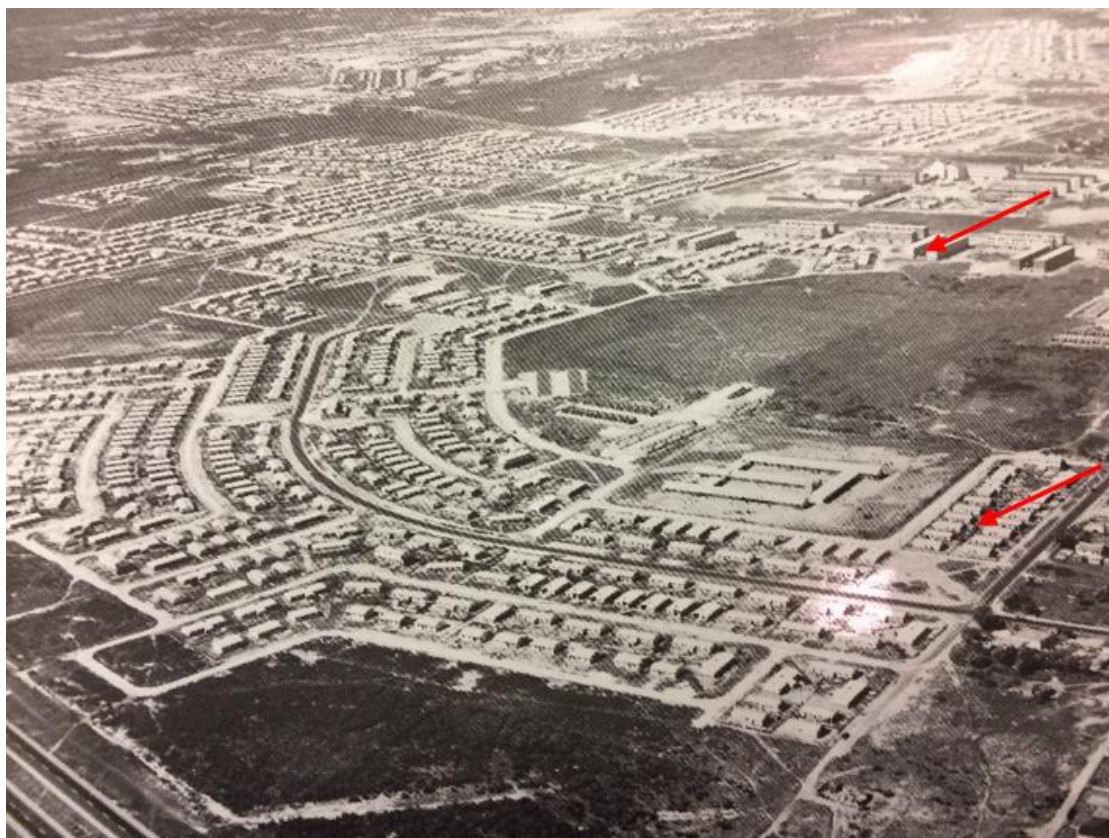


Figure 113: Heideveld in 1964, two years after the start of construction, showing the speed at which it was developed. The plan for Heideveld was dominated by a central open space from which led a series of concentric roads. Otherwise, it shared a similar layout with that of Bontebeuvel and was surrounded by buffer strips. The flat units were a new feature comprising two- and three-storey walk-ups placed in a series of superblocks (arrowed). (Mayor's Minutes, year ending 31 December 1964). Heideveld was situated south of Bontebeuvel. Both were situated west of the Nyanga railway line.

The CTCC MoH, Dr ED Cooper, worked closely with the City Housing Administration Branch. He laid bare the unsatisfactory nature and timing of departmental applications. Conflicts centred on the facts that the departmentally recommended tenants were not properly screened and proved unsatisfactory. The departmental surveys were unsatisfactory and many had to be redone by the CTCC. The Housing Supervisor was also concerned there were applications for Group Areas

⁶⁶ 3/CT 1/4/9/1/23 Minutes of Housing Committee Annexure 38 to Housing Agenda 5/4/63.

people not in the municipal area.⁶⁷ The MoH concluded that the department could lay claim to 20% of the housing only if there were suitable tenants. The CTCC also reserved the right to prioritise housing needed as a result of certain planning projects, such as the Eastern Boulevard and slum clearance at Windermere.

Reconciling hostel development and the Coloured Labour Preference Policy in 1963

By 1964, the CTCC, the Divisional Council and the Department of Bantu Affairs were intensifying plans to evict Africans from Langa and transfer them to Gugulethu or Nyanga, leaving Langa free for coloured occupation. Even stricter enforcement of influx control followed the publication of the Revised Bantu Labour Regulations in 1965, in which the government sought to reduce the numbers of Africans in the Cape Town area in the light of the Coloured Labour Preference Policy. Women, in particular, were targeted because the department viewed the presence of families as a precursor to a more permanent presence with a greater demand for housing and educational facilities. The policies were contradicted by real events, though, because the African population, particularly the migrant worker population, was expanding. By 1965, the population of Gugulethu had grown, with the building of additional sections to house 31 544 people, including 6 788 women and 18 429 children. New hostels were built at Gugulethu and Langa to accommodate an increase in migrant labour. Companies employing and housing migrant workers found the complexities of government control baffling: negotiations centred on numbers of African migrants employed and where they could live.

Negotiations between the African Explosives & Chemical Industries Ltd (AE&CI), formerly the Cape Explosive Works and now part of the Municipality of Cape Town, and the Department of Bantu Affairs illustrates the complexities of managing the Coloured Labour Preference Policy when the company had a clear policy of employing and housing African migrant labour. It also illustrates the curious results when physical planning is dominated by ideological concerns. The company was permitted in terms of its licence to employ 2 000 migrant workers for unskilled work. It was a condition of their contract that they lived in the labour hostel situated within the company's industrial area.⁶⁸ A problem arose in June 1963 when the company applied to the Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner to enlarge the compound to accommodate an additional 300 African workers who were needed for an important government contract. The commissioner turned down the application on the grounds that it would be against government policy and an embarrassment

⁶⁷ 3/CT 1/4/9/1/23/ Memorandum to the Town Clerk Annexure 38B attached to agenda 54/1963.

⁶⁸ See chapter 1.

to the government, particularly as it was its own project to employ African labour in a Coloured Labour Preference area. The company pointed out that coloured labour would require better housing or, if not, would need to be bussed in, and coloured labour was extremely rare anyway. The company also pointed out that, according to government specification, ‘the type of labour to be used on the government plants would determine the standard of change houses, mess rooms and lavatories which would have to be built’. There were also union issues regarding paying some workers more for doing the same jobs. After extensive negotiations, the commissioner conceded to the employment of Africans but as a temporary measure only and that they had to be replaced (as all workers were in the Western Cape in due course) by coloured labour. There remained the issue of what kind of labour accommodation could be built. The department had very clear policy differences in standards between coloured and African housing, so in the end it was agreed that the new accommodation would have better standards. As a result, certain steps were to be taken to drop the living standards while African workers lived there. They were achieved by converting the kitchens and bathrooms of the proposed design to dormitories and permitting only communal latrines and showers.



Figure 114: How to accommodate African workers within a Coloured Labour Preference Area: the buildings have since been demolished (Source: Heartland 2006). The image shows the controlled horseshoe-shaped labour compound (arrowed, north) at De Beers/AECI with auxiliary building inside the central space. The new hostels (arrowed, south) were built as a compromise close to the compound but separated by a high fence on the grounds that in future and in terms of the Coloured Labour Preference Policy they would be used for coloured labour.

In order to achieve the required outcomes, the department provided a very specific set of instructions and specifications about the location and design of the structures. The requirements

also included building a specific house form – the NE 51/9A house type, adjusted to meet hostel requirements. Finally, the department specified that the accommodation was to be on a new site, both in the labour compound and outside of it. It was to be surrounded a six-foot fence close to an existing security fence and with barbed wire four inches apart.⁶⁹ Oddly enough, the company found such a site situated between two cemeteries. It was both outside the hostel and within the security perimeter. The hostels were constructed there (see Figure 114).

Neighbourhood Units in District Six? 1962–1971

By 1960, the national government had begun approaching further housing development with renewed vigour because of the requirements of the Group Areas Development Board, which necessitated new segregated housing to implement its forced removals.⁷⁰ The demands of the post-war period meant the land peripheral to the central city, which was occupied by an ethnically mixed population living in old, terraced houses, had become increasingly valuable for redevelopment purposes. It was also the only area into which central Cape Town could expand.

The arena of inner-city housing and the removal of either poor or unqualified residents became a significant area of contestation between local and national government, not to mention the public itself. To the city planners, the land presented opportunities for growth and modernisation, and was more valuable than the housing stock on it. To the state apartheid planners, a mix of races and nationalities was anathema to their notion of separate development. The GAA of 1950, as amended, together with the Group Areas Development Act of 1955 and the Community Development Acts which followed in the 1960s, fundamentally altered the nature and coercive patterns of removal, in addition to the power relationships between the levels of government.

The CTCC's housing production progress on the Cape Flats emboldened it to return to slum clearance and housing development in the inner-city area of District Six. The municipality owned a large number of properties which they had acquired through slum-clearance expropriations over the years and remained rental accommodation for the poor, which proved a financial loss to the CTCC.⁷¹ Urban rehabilitation was emerging as an international planning trend and as a reaction to the excesses of modernist interventions in the post-war cities. There were objections to the scale of modernist architectural and planning interventions. Planners and architects in Britain began to

⁶⁹ African Explosives and Chemical Industries Limited to Factory Manager, AJ de Beer, Somerset West, 15 August 1963; Melanie Attwell, *Zwelihle (KDW) hostel site (AECI Labour Compound) Heartland (Pty) Ltd Portion Farm 795 Somerset West*, Socio-historical study (2014), 38–39.

⁷⁰ The Group Areas Development Board was established in terms of the Group Areas Act 77 of 1957.

⁷¹ See chapter 3.

be criticised for plans that were *too* orderly and the large parcels they devised too neatly packaged and lifeless. The sweep of modernist interventionists and redevelopment resulted in the loss of a sense of continuity in the old, familiar urban fabric.⁷² Urban rehabilitation, combined with slum clearance, resulted in a respect for the scale and vitality of the old towns and their historic monuments. The concept was popularised by Jane Jacobs in the United States, who worked to conserve the social context and physical fabric of her own neighbourhood in Greenwich, New York.⁷³

The increased production of housing of the 1960s allowed the City Engineer's Department to turn its attention back to slum clearance, the removal of residents and modernist rebuilding in District Six. It now referred to it as 'urban renewal' or urban regeneration. While Cape Town planners referred to urban renewal or rehabilitation, it appears that the concept was only dimly understood. The local planners remained wedded to notions of demolition rather than repair, followed by complete rebuilding to a new modern plan. In 1962, the CTCC accepted an in-principle decision to undertake its *own* urban rehabilitation programme in District Six for coloured residents. It planned to acquire all the properties in District Six, demolish them and build an entirely new town along 'modern town-planning lines'.⁷⁴

The CTCC began with a pilot project for 'urban revitalisation', expanding from this to a master plan for the whole of District Six and all slum areas in the future. There were echoes of Lunn's 1941 plan for District Six in the pilot project. This time, the CTCC proposed full slum clearance followed by a special type of Neighbourhood Unit, tailor-made for the coloured residents of the inner city.⁷⁵ The pilot project was for the block bounded by Caledon, Clifton, Stone and Tennant streets in the heart of District Six. The plan was to demolish everything and plan a Neighbourhood Unit. The plan was for 253 flats and maisonettes, open spaces and place for a school. The cost per dwelling would be R3 557, which was considerably higher than the cost per unit on the Cape Flats. Which racial group the Neighbourhood Unit was for and who could afford it was less clear, although the official response was that it was for the coloured residents of District Six who lived

⁷² Gordon E Cherry, *Cities and plans: The shaping of urban Britain in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries* (London: E Arnold, 1988), 149; Eleanor Smith Morris, *British town planning and urban design: Principles and policies* (Harlow, Essex, England: Longman, 1997), 159–160.

⁷³ Jane Jacobs, *Death and life of the great American cities* (New York: Vintage Books, 1961).

⁷⁴ City Engineer's Department, City of Cape Town, *District Six/Zonnebloem: Historical review* (24 March 1981), 3.

⁷⁵ It seems clear from the documentation that the CTCC did not plan to rebuild District Six as a white residential area, although the plan proposed was unfeasible from the start because very few affected residents would be able to afford the increases in rentals: City Engineer's Department, *District Six/Zonnebloem: Historical review* (24 March 1981), 3.

in the inner city.⁷⁶ The CTCC made an application to the National Housing Commission for an economic loan and immediately hit a snag: the site had no Group Areas zoning, a prerequisite for any development permission. In September 1964 the CTCC received a response from the Secretary of Housing, JH Niemand, advising the municipality to proceed with the technical aspects of the plan, that is, expropriation and demolition. He was clearly playing for time until the Group Areas designation and leaving the CTCC to undertake preliminary work.

Despite the Group Areas delay, the CTCC expressed no trepidation about the government delay. Instead, it expanded its pilot project into an 'all-out effort to destroy the city slums' and develop the 'blighted areas' on modern town-planning lines. A 1964 report jointly prepared by the City Engineer and the MoH (but clearly the work of the City Engineer) reintroduced old tropes about poor planning, slum conditions and 'haphazard growth', stating that:

the narrow lanes that now serve as roads must be replaced by sub-division and road patterns capable of effectively serving not only the buildings particular to any particular area but also all the attendant amenities and recreational facilities necessary.⁷⁷

Despite the looming racial zoning, the report focused on physical planning and made no reference at all to race zoning.

⁷⁶ AH Honikman, 'City's plan for district,' *Cape Argus*, 3 June 1965; City Engineer's Department, *District Six/Zonnebloem: Historical review* (24 March 1981), 3.

⁷⁷ 'All-out effort to destroy city slums,' *Cape Times*, 22 May 1964.

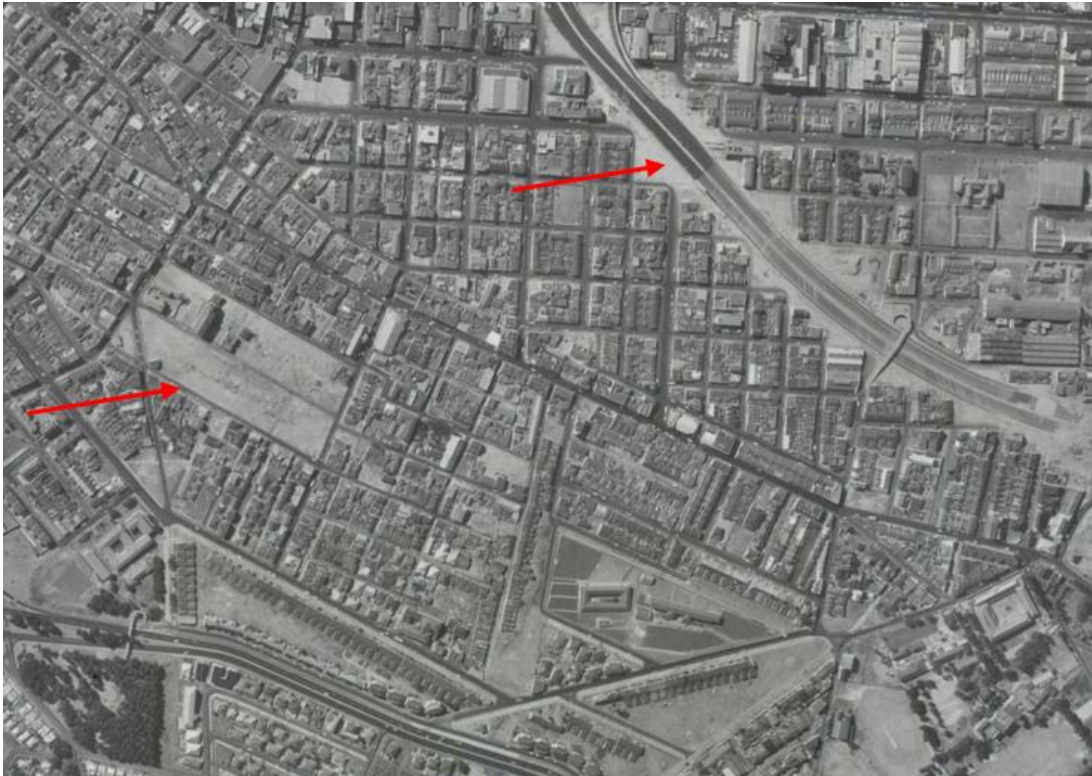


Figure 115: Two city modernist projects in District Six: the Eastern Boulevard demolitions (see chapter 4) and the pilot project demolitions in Caledon Street referred to in this text. (Aerial photograph 1968, CoCT)

The CTCC's full plans for the Neighbourhood Unit pilot project were fleshed out in 1965, just a year before District Six was declared a White Group Area. The aims and the process to date were described by the former Mayor, AH Honikman, in an article in the *Cape Argus* in June 1965.⁷⁸ He explained that the pilot project was never intended solely as a housing project but was planned on the basis of slum clearance followed by urban renewal. His concept of urban renewal appeared to be a repackaged version of the 1941 TPS with its reduced densities and open spaces. He announced that once the first pilot project was in place, the CTCC hoped to fund and develop ambitious projects for two or three Neighbourhood Units every year throughout District Six, Woodstock and Salt River. He claimed that consideration of race or colour 'played no part' which under the circumstances was disingenuous, although he made it clear that it would include white and coloured communities.

By 1964, Group Areas were already proclaimed in Cape Town for Claremont and Tramway Road, Green Point – all declared white. The question on the minds of many living in District Six was this: What will happen to us? The signs for the future were ominous. In 1965, the Minister of Community Development, PW Botha, attacked the city's slum-clearance record, saying it lacked

⁷⁸ AH Honikman, 'City's plan for district,' *Cape Argus*, 3 June 1965.

the courage to change District Six. He accused the city of being a slum owner, pointing out that if it did not get on with the work of slum clearance and rebuilding, his department would do it for it.⁷⁹ Some of the more astute local politicians, such as Finance Committee chairperson AZ Berman, were suspicious of government intentions.

The city's pilot project in District Six coincided with the establishment and expansion of the DCD.⁸⁰ At the time parliament had passed the Community Development Amendment Act, which authorised the department to expand its powers considerably into local affairs. It was empowered to provide housing, undertake slum clearance and prepare and undertake urban renewal projects.⁸¹ It was abundantly clear that the national government was planning to take over slum clearance and urban redevelopment projects at least a year before the proclamation of District Six as a White Group Area on 11 February 1966. In 1965 Botha announced that his department would undertake its own replanning of the 'depressed areas' of District Six, Woodstock and Salt River, with priority being given to District Six. The Niemand Committee was appointed to undertake a series of surveys and interviews with professional groups with the assistance of the City of Cape Town's Town Planning Branch. Certain categories of information were collected about the people in District Six, including race (called socio-economic studies), concentrations of overcrowding, ownership patterns, family structures and places of occupation. The study found that there were 33 446 people living in District Six, the majority of whom, some 31 248, were coloured people. Of the 8 500 workers in District Six, 90% worked in the central business district. Some 58% of property was owned by whites and 26% by coloureds.⁸²

⁷⁹ 'Council lacks the courage to change District Six, says minister,' *Cape Times*, 1 April 1965.

⁸⁰ Report of the Secretary for Community Development year ending 31 December 1964, 9; Proclamation 34, 28 July 1961.

⁸¹ Community Development Amendment Act 44 of 1965.

⁸² Centre for Intergroup Studies, 'District Six – apartheid wins, the nation loses,' *The Black Sash* (February 1980).



Figure 116: The 'Occupation Survey' undertaken by the City Engineer's Department between 1964 and 1965 as part of SS Morris's involvement with CODA. It refers to the occupation of property rather than ownership. It shows District Six and Woodstock according to racial occupation – White, Coloured and Indian (see Notation). This slide shows how, by the 1960s, the population of District Six was mostly Coloured, with an Indian presence along Constitution Street and towards the commercial areas of the CBD. White occupation extends towards Salt River and Observatory and the flats along De Waal Drive. This survey suggests that judged by occupation and residence alone, the proclamation of District Six as a white area was perverse in the extreme. (Slide copy in the possession of the author [the original City Survey has not been found])

Regarding planning, the report restricted itself to zoning recommendations, dividing the replanning area into nine sub-districts which were rezoned in accordance with its findings – for mostly commercial and residential use. Unsurprisingly, District Six was proposed for residential-use zoning. It appears from the Niemand Report that most of the information supplied and which was later used as a rationale for the proclamation of District Six as a White Group Area came from the City Planning Department.

The Niemand Report was submitted to the DCD in May 1965 after having been approved by the City. It set up a committee to replan and develop District Six, called the Committee for the Rehabilitation of Depressed Areas (CODA), while closely mimicking the more modest 1964 city

redevelopment plan for the inner city. The City Engineer was one of the specialists invited to join the committee, which he did in his personal capacity, although he made his staff available to conduct the survey interviews. Meanwhile, following the minister's announcement in June 1965, all property transactions were frozen and a 10-year ban was imposed on alterations to any buildings in the area. Then, having set up the preconditions for a planning 'coup' of sorts, the minister ruled on 11 February 1966 that District Six was to be a White Group Area.⁸³ There was an immediate outcry from the public and residents of District Six and Cape Town. There were prayers for the people of District Six and public meetings, as the coloured and Indian residents who were now 'disqualified' absorbed the full, catastrophic implications of the ruling.⁸⁴ The Minister of Planning remained obdurate, refusing to meet with city managers and civic leaders. Despite this, the city clung to the notion of District Six being an undeclared area, citing the long ties of community, pointing out (and changing its previous opinion) that it was not a slum like Cato Manor and Sophiatown, but 'an established area almost as old as Cape Town itself', pointing out that forced removals would cause 'endless bitterness and social upheavals'.⁸⁵

Solly Morris's co-operation with CORDA and the fate of District Six left no discernible impact on his professional standing. He offered to quit, not his role as City Planner but as a member of CORDA. He issued a public statement condemning the proclamation, but still stuck to his professional role as a 'neutral' specialist, condemning the decision in planning terms only, as 'unsound from the planning point of view, unsound from the point of view of urban renewal and unsound from the point of view of the development of the City as a whole'.⁸⁶ After the proclamation, a project for CORDA was to appoint specialist planners to undertake the renewed planning of District Six, this time as a White Group Area. This new plan, like the city plan of 1964, would provide the basis for the stages of slum clearance, demolition, forced removals and, finally, a modernist urban redesign, this time for white residents.

⁸³ This was despite the astounding statistic that about 90% of the population was not white.

⁸⁴ 'Prayers for District Six, Moslems pack mosques – women weep,' *Cape Times*, 28 February 1966.

⁸⁵ 'Why District Six should be left undeclared,' *Cape Times*, 18 March 1966.

⁸⁶ 'Morris offers to quit over White District Six,' *Cape Argus*, 24 March 1966.

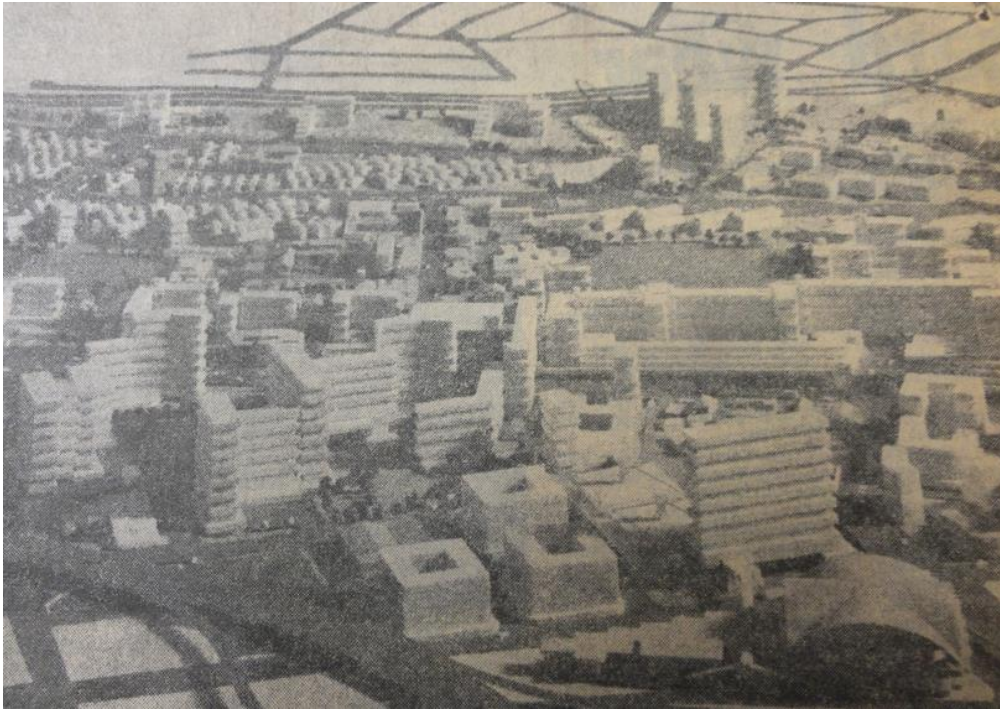


Figure 117: High apartheid Modernism: Model of the plan for District Six, 1971. (Cape Argus Weekend Supplement, 17 February 1973. Image by courtesy ANA)

In 1968, CORDA prepared a brief for the development of a plan for District Six as a White Group Area. A committee of planning consultants was appointed headed by Professor Christian Strauss Brink from the School of Architecture at the University of Cape Town. His team prepared two proposals, both of them submitted to CORDA for adjudication. The first involved the complete destruction and rebuilding of the entire District Six as a high-value commercial and white residential area. The second, possibly a concession to mounting public outrage, allowed for the retention of a few historical churches and community facilities. The former plan was accepted. District Six was to become a luxury white suburb with flats, high rises, duplex living units and luxury facilities.⁸⁷ The consultants' final report for a District Six Development Area was submitted to CORDA and approved. In a final act of disdain, the DCD decided it was not necessary to submit the proposal to the City of Cape Town. It had all the legislative authority it needed and, besides, CORDA, which included Dr Morris, had agreed. The proposal, unveiled in 1971, was considered excessive in its scale and ambitions, even at a time when Modernism still carried strong professional support.⁸⁸ It was, of course, never built. Nevertheless, the area was cleared, with demolitions and evictions beginning as early as 1968.

⁸⁷ 'District Six to be luxury white suburb,' *Cape Argus*, 10 January 1979.

⁸⁸ There is a link to be made between post-1948 apartheid ideology and Modernism. See D Pinnock and EJ Haarhoff, 'Appropriating Modernism: Apartheid and the South African township (1989), <<https://jag.journalagent.com/z4/>>.



Figure 118: The start of Plan B: District Six, showing partial residential demolitions, with schools, churches and City Flats remaining. (City Electrical Engineer's Photographic Department. Undated but c 1973, Ccb_144_f30_s7_i27)

As the tense negotiations with the DCD unfolded, the Housing Branch continued its housing expansion on the Cape Flats. This was no doubt partly due to the added DCD pressure for more housing to rehouse the victims of their forced removals. One outcome was that the DCD made funding available for this purpose. Added housing pressure also meant that the housing densities were increasing. Housing typologies changed to accommodate as many people as possible. After the first three-storey walks-ups were built in Heideveld in 1966, the CTCC constructed another 100 more – in Manenberg, Hanover Park, Lavender Hill and Parkwood. The walk-ups were bleak, the environments that resulted were hostile, and by 1974 this housing typology was abandoned.⁸⁹

⁸⁹ City of Cape Town, City Town City Council's involvement in providing houses for its poorer citizens (1993), 5.



Figure 119: An example of the bleak and crowded living conditions of the three-storey walk-ups. Site not identified but possibly Lavender Hill c 1971. (CoCT CCB158_f25-s6_!!)

Between 1971 when the apartheid government proclaimed a large area towards the south of the Cape Flats for Coloured occupation and 1972, when Morris prepared the first report on Mitchells Plain, entitled ‘Good Hope – a first report on the development of Mitchell’s Plain,’ detailed planning began for an expansive and distant New Town of more than 40 000 housing units to be constructed in phases. These plans marked a change in the CTCC’s housing policy with a move away from the uniformity of the cheap rental housing and rote interpretations of Neighbourhood Unit planning principles.⁹⁰

The subsequent City Engineer, JG Brand, who oversaw the Mitchells Plain’s planning to conclusion, admitted that the earlier plans and the lack of facilities in the townships had caused hardship to the people living there. The focus on rental accommodation also resulted in a rising demand for home ownership going unmet. The City Engineer proposed a vast New Town at Mitchells Plain based on the British New Towns Act of 1946 and to be modelled on Milton Keynes in England. The plan had a greater housing mix, the potential for private ownership, increased densities and expanded commercial opportunities in line with New Town planning in post-war Britain. This time the planning programme was a joint venture between the national government and the CTCC and included plans to build 40 000 houses, many for home ownership and

⁹⁰ City of Cape Town 1993, 5.

eventually to accommodate 250 000 people.⁹¹ The proposal received government support and funding from the start. It reinforced Group Areas planning, constructed housing at an industrial scale and as a result, provided an opportunity to reduce the growing housing backlog that remained as a result of governments policies of forced removals. The Nationalist Party Prime Minister Mr B J Vorster declared triumphantly at its official opening on 11 March 1976, that it constituted ‘a milestone in the history of South Africa.’⁹²

Conclusions

Between 1964 and 1971, urban administrative functions and controls had changed entirely. The CTCC was no longer in control of its slum-clearance programmes, with proposals needing clearance from the DCD and, for African development, from the Department of Bantu Affairs and Development.⁹³ In 1971, the authority to manage African townships was removed in its entirety from municipal affairs. The social and physical composition of Cape Town had altered with the application of the GAA and the increased powers of the DCD affected all aspects of housing and urban development. Mass housing was built at speed on the Cape Flats. By 1970, there more than 29 000 houses had been built by the Citizens Housing League, the Cape Flats Distress Association (CAFDA), the Garden Cities Trust and the CTCC. Most were austere, single-family dwellings, flats or dual units in formally designed segregated townships situated at an increasing distance from Cape Town. Between 1920 and 1969, the municipality itself built 25 637 units, of which 24 253 were for rental accommodation. Despite the strides made in the 1960s, housing simply failed to keep up with demand: some 11 000 coloured residents remained on the housing list, with 221 whites on a separate housing list, with the numbers of displaced tenants growing as further forced removals affected the numbers of people in need of housing.⁹⁴

The trend towards the use of housing prototypes, mass production and scientific methods of construction increased the speed of housing delivery but also led to the creation of monotonous urban landscapes. Planners tended to view their role in terms of physical planning only, leaving political decisions to others. There was also little planning reference to the issues that followed tenants into their new homes – social isolation, deteriorating living conditions and travel costs, to name a few. The creation of residential space by professionals was not the same as the maintenance

⁹¹ JG Brand, Dec 1980. ‘Civil engineering aspects of the Mitchell’s Plain development,’ *Civil Engineer in South Africa* 22, 12, 375.

⁹² ‘Cape Town City Council’s involvement in providing housing for its poorer citizens,’ City of Cape Town, 1993, 6.

⁹³ Housing Act 4 of 1966; Andre van Graan, *Colonial Modernism in Cape Town* <<https://www.aicomos.com/wp-content/uploads/2009>>.

⁹⁴ Mayor’s Minutes 1969, 2.

of sound living conditions, and in the result, professional notions of the production of space were very different from the lived experience of the same space.

There was also a clear trend in residential and land-use planning towards government centralisation, which had an impact on urban policy and urban form. The central government extended its influence into all spheres of urban management. A tipping point for the municipality was the Community Development Amendment Act of 1966, which gave the Minister of Community Development unassailable rights to assume the powers and duties of local government.⁹⁵ The mayor in 1969, Gerry Ferry, was particularly concerned about the minister's near-total ideological and territorial control that stemmed from centralised control. He wrote: 'The Council ultimately has no control over where the citizens of different races who comprise its citizenry should live, enjoy amenities of its halls, beaches and parks.'⁹⁶ The rules-based approach to the creation of townships and the remaking and destruction of inner-city space are clear examples. What is less clear is whether the CTCC was aware of government intentions in urban planning and why it fell so completely into the trap set for it in District Six. Some historians, such as Don Pinnock, think they were complicit, but it is also likely that urban planners considered themselves as operating within rather than creating urban management structures.⁹⁷ Local planners remained seduced by the ideas of Modernism, which they considered offered rational and scientific solutions to complex urban problems. They were committed to the aims of their profession despite the complexity of the statutory and policy environment in which they operated. Any evaluation of their role should take into account the relationship between the planners and the politicians they served. The role of the planner as an 'expert' was to implement official policy and thus professional and political roles were closely intertwined. Nevertheless, it is curious that they adhered to this official position of the neutral 'expert' despite the extensive public debate and protest at the time.⁹⁸ The terrible impact of the loss of District Six on the people who had lived there for decades still reverberates today. It has been the subject of intense debate and analysis about forced removals, memory and identity from the time of its destruction until the present. The destruction in District Six, together with that in Cato Manor and Sophiatown, remains a quintessential example of the

⁹⁵ Community Development Act 3 of 1966; Community Development Act 42 of 1967.

⁹⁶ City of Cape Town, Mayor's Minutes 1969, 21

⁹⁷ Don Pinnock, 'Ideology and urban planning: Blueprints of a garrison city,' in Wilmot James and Mary Simons (eds), *The angry divide* (Cape Town: David Phillip, 1989). Pinnock considers that the CTCC was complicit from the start, but this ignores the complex web of intergovernmental restrictions and the City's public statements before 1965.

⁹⁸ Vivian Bickford-Smith et al, *Cape Town in the twentieth century* (Cape Town: David Philip Publishers, 1999), 183–186; Vivian Bickford-Smith, *The emergence of the South African metropolis: Cities and identities in the twentieth century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 229–230; Deborah M Hart, 'The political manipulation of urban space: The razing of District Six Cape Town,' *Urban Geography* 9, no 6 (1988): 603–628.

cultural and physical destruction wrought by the apartheid era on black and mixed settled communities in South Africa. In addition to social historical studies, the life of District Six is commemorated in photographic collections, music and drama, and also through a concerted drive by the District Six Museum, residents and their descendants to keep the memory alive.

Chapter 6

Conclusions

The study period of this thesis, from 1900 to 1970, was one in which segregation, sanitation and town-planning ideas transformed the city. The urban transformation throws into stark relief the differences between Henri Lefebvre's notions of professionally constructed spaces and the lived experiences of those affected by such actions. Clearly, the historical and spatial processes which unfolded in Cape Town (and indeed in other South African cities) illustrate a powerful dissonance between borrowed professional urban solutions and their social and political consequences, particularly when such ideas are exercised within a uniquely authoritarian and racially-based ideological agenda. The public housing developments that emerged were the result of an intensive housing delivery programme undertaken to ameliorate critical shortages and implement city and central government policies.¹ A shortage, already severe, grew from the 1950s with the acceleration of local planning and slum-clearance initiatives in addition to the national drive towards implementing racial zoning. Despite assembly-line methods for township planning and construction, the local authorities failed to deliver housing in sufficient numbers. By 1970, the municipality had built 30 525 housing units, of which 29 690 were for coloured residents and 835 were for whites.² Building continued at Heideveld, Manenberg, Parkwood and Hanover Park.³ In the period from 1920 to 1970 the Citizens Housing League (CHL) built 1 091 housing units, of which 1 063 were for whites. The Cape Flats Distress Association (CAFDA) constructed 336 housing units for the very poor, all of whom were classified as coloured. By 1970 the Group Areas Board had racially zoned most of the Cape Town area;⁴ by that year the municipality had built 6 814 family units in Gugulethu, with more yet to be built. Langa was closed for further housing development but by 1970 it accommodated 32 577 people, most of whom were single contract workers living in the hostels.⁵ As the housing pressure grew, more were constructed *en masse* to lower national building standards at increasing densities and at greater distances from the city centre.

¹ See Appendix 111 for a list of the number of houses constructed in the study period.

² Report of the Medical Officer of Health 1970 attached to the Mayor's Minutes, year ending 3 September 1971, 87.

³ Mayor's Minutes, City of Cape Town, two-year period ending 7 September 1971, 3. The number should be read with care because some housing units referred to dual occupancy units or a single dwelling with dual occupants.

⁴ Athlone and Pinelands were among the first suburbs to be proclaimed as Group Areas, Pinelands as a White and Athlone as a Coloured Group Area. See chapter 4.

⁵ Mayor's Minutes, two-year period ending 7 September 1971, 6. Separate records were kept for African Housing and numbers of contract workers. The numbers are almost certainly an underestimation as they are based on service contracts.

International planning models and the role of urban professional

This thesis concludes that international public health and planning models played a role particularly in the pre-war period in professional responses to the challenges facing Cape Town's urban structure during a major period of its expansion. International influences were complex, hybrid and sometimes indirect, as we saw in the application of Garden City models. They were strongest at times of great public crisis, the demands of urbanisation and reactions to irregular urban growth patterns. Whatever the origins of the shaping ideas, planning and housing policies were deeply modified through public attitudes, emerging official policies and an expanding body of spatial and racial laws. Before 1950, planning, housing development and urban design took place in the context of ad hoc racial segregation, followed after 1950 by codified laws of apartheid. Both directly influenced township development. This research suggests that housing typologies and township development followed three overlapping periods of change in Cape Town. The first followed the introduction in 1920 of state-funded housing development and, after 1923, an expansion of the responsibilities of local authorities in providing separate areas and housing for Africans. The second period followed the introduction of the Slums Act and the Town Planning Ordinance concomitantly in 1934. Both afforded planning officials new opportunities for intervention and the replanning of city spaces. The Cape Town Foreshore Plan introduced not only the international cachet of modernist ideas but the opportunity to replan the city along modern lines. The final period after 1950 was deeply influenced by the emerging power of the Nationalist government to remake and racially reorder urban space through expanded township development programmes and the application of the Group Areas Acts (GAAs). While officials respected national planning models, their power to influence housing typology and township design had waned in ways which we have demonstrated. Housing typologies and township design became an exercise by rote, with funding dependent on compliance with Nationalist government rules.⁶

Throughout our period, Cape Town was subject to a series of laws, urban-planning experiments and modernist interventions which completely changed the face of the city and the lives of many, mostly working class, Cape Town residents. An emerging group of professionals based their

⁶ Derek Japha and Marie Hühzermeyer, 'The history of the development of townships in Cape Town,' Working Paper 2, Centre for Architectural Research and Development, University of Newcastle, UK, School of Architecture and Planning, University of Cape Town, 1995. Their periodisation differs somewhat, including a period of transformation after 1970.

interventions on the theories and practice of scientific enquiry and the rational reordering of space, throwing into sharp relief professional ideas about space and the impacts on those who inhabited them. In fact, the impact of the planning programmes disproportionately affected the lives of darker-skinned working-class inhabitants of the city and profoundly altered their experiences of space.

The discursively constructed space had its international origins as a reaction to the living conditions of industrial slums. Emerging ideas about public health and place expanded into a larger search for planning solutions. The early public sanitation-inspired planning concepts of the Garden City Movement were followed by an intellectual push towards Modernism. These were worldwide trends, disseminated through policy mobilities and colonial and professional networks and in response to local conditions. But because residential planning was undertaken in the context of racial segregation, at first ad hoc then *de jure*, the planned housing estates and new townships threw the racial divisions of the city into stark relief, cementing an ever-clearer perceivable correlation between place and racial identities.

Distinctive characteristic of the South African city

Indeed, while Cape Town's urban professionals may have implicitly followed the British and American planning solutions circulating at the time, as AD King remarked in relation to the colonial city, the most 'distinctive characteristic' of Cape Town's urban plan 'remained that of race'.⁷ These two factors – professional devotion to British and American planning models and the realities of local and national racial politics – existed in tension throughout our period. The historical evolution of housing within urban administration in Cape Town involved complex interactions between international planning influences and local circumstances. Local applications were gradually supplanted by a national government trend towards the centralisation of power, which had a significant impact on city planning.

Residential segregation mechanisms existed within the warp and weave of municipal management. Before the GAAs, residential segregation existed as an end-result of a complex set of social interactions, public opinion and regulations, even if race was not explicitly referred to. Bickford-Smith refers, for example, to a close link between slum clearance debates and racial segregation.⁸ And yet there is no reference to race in either the Slums Act of 1934 or the attached regulations.

⁷ AD King, 'Urbanism, colonialism and the world economy,' quoted in Robert Home, *Of planting and planning: The making of British colonial cities* (London: Routledge, 2013), 124.

⁸ Vivian Bickford-Smith, 'The slum and racial segregation: in South African history: an intimate relationship,' in A Mayne (ed), *The Oxford handbook of the modern slum* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming, 2023).

Instead, residential segregation of whites from coloureds occurred at the point of housing allocation, raising the intriguing question of how housing administrators before the Population Registration Act and the GAAs made the racially based decisions they did. Equally, slum clearance was not necessarily about slums but, in combination with rezoning, might become a means to achieve another planning end, such as the CTCC's (largely abortive) plans for District Six and the BoKaap. City planners variously used slum clearance, expropriation or purchase with increasing frequency in their plans to modernise Cape Town, and they targeted specific areas to do that.

A 'genealogy' of regulatory frameworks: trending towards centralisation and urban control

Town planning, township development and housing design occurred within an intricate legislative mix that dictated policy at all three levels of government control, from national, provincial and local, while defining the power relationships between them. A 'genealogy' of laws regarding housing typologies, urban planning, race administration and land rights affected residents and property owners alike.⁹ Legislation dictated where housing was to be situated, how it was to be linked to or separated from the urban framework, who could live there and what types of housing could be constructed. The trend in law and policy in South Africa from the 1950s was towards centralised control over urban management structures. Centralisation of control in planning was not unique to South African but part of a growing international recognition that local and regional plans were better implemented through central planning bodies. However, in South Africa the trend towards centralisation was also intended to fulfil the requirements of the central government's apartheid ideology of complete racial separation. This overwhelmingly affected all aspects of urban management as central government's control over local urban matters was steadily imposed. The Cape Town Medical Officer of Health's (MoH's) function to declare slums was first restricted in 1963, then removed completely in 1967. This allowed the central government's Department of Community Development (DCD) to combine slum clearance with its Group Areas clearance actions.¹⁰ The loss of local autonomy caused the Cape Town's mayor at the time, Alderman Gerry Ferry, to issue a rare official rebuke. But he conceded that legally a local authority now had no control 'over where the citizens of different races who comprise its citizenry should live or enjoy the amenities'.¹¹

⁹ Robert Home, 'Shaping cities of the Global South: Legal histories of planning and colonialism,' in Susan Parnell and Sophie Oldfield (eds), *Routledge handbook of cities of the Global South* (London and New York: Routledge, 2014), 75–85.

¹⁰ Slums Amendment Act 530 of 1963.

¹¹ Mayor's Minutes, 4 September 1969, 21.

The management of African townships and the provision of housing had been a local government responsibility from the early 20th century. However, housing powers were gradually removed during the apartheid era through a series of restrictive mechanisms imposed by the Bantu Affairs Administration Board (BAAB) and the Bantu Housing Board. These mechanisms included specific urban design requirements, from buffer zones to housing typologies, tighter influx control mechanisms and an end to African family housing (as opposed to migrant labour hostel) construction. The laws disproportionately affected families and women residents in particular. Finally, the BAAB assumed complete control over African urban areas in Cape Town when in 1973 it took over African local municipal townships, together with the management of labour contracts, and ceased all housing construction.¹² Despite an obvious need, government policy was to no longer fund any housing development at all for Africans in Cape Town.

‘Seduction’ of Modernism

Walter Lunn and Solomon Morris were key figures in the planning of mass housing for the working classes, given that both were city engineers working at the crucial period for urban transformation, namely, between 1938 and 1970. In these capacities, they ran large departments with many specialisations, including town planning, housing production and civic works. In short, their ideas about urban planning and development were highly influential.

Both were committed modernists and intervened extensively in the replanning of Cape Town.¹³ The housing planned and constructed during Lunn’s tenure was of a relatively higher standard than those which followed. Morris used national guidelines for mass production, which resulted in lower standards and the replacement of quality with quantity. Consequently, the far larger developments of Bonteheuwel, Heideveld, Hanover Park and Manenberg followed in quick succession and at increasing distances from the city centre. While acknowledging the need for modern methods of housing delivery, Modernism found true expression for both officials in freeway planning and in conserving a new vision for the city. While the proposed freeway system was Lunn’s inspiration, Morris perfected it. In this vision of Modernism, pedestrians and residents came off second best. In the ‘City for the people’, for example, Morris effectively promoted vehicular dominance in key areas, relegating pedestrians to overpasses or underpasses.¹⁴

¹² Bantu Affairs Administration Act 1971.

¹³ See Appendix II.

¹⁴ SS Morris, *Cape Town: City for the people* (City Engineer’s Department, City of Cape Town, 1975).

A modernist rationale for the destruction of existing housing stock and forced removals was known euphemistically as ‘revitalisation’ or ‘rehabilitation’. In the early 1970s Minister of Community Development Blaar Coetzee employed planning consultants to develop a modernist master plan for District Six. It involved the demolition of the entire area for redevelopment and for white settlement as a ‘clear site’. This planning process was all but complete in 1971 and approved both by the minister and the CTCC, the latter basing their consent on the fact that they were unable to oppose national policy and law. Oddly, the modernist plan, with its whites-only high rises, shopping centres and new road network, came at a time when planners in Britain and the United States were beginning to express doubts about slum clearance and the drive towards Modernism. Jane Jacobs’ influential *Death and life of great American cities* argued that the modernist project was not working. Slum clearance destroyed homes, created social upheaval and undermined distinctive neighbourhood (and neighbourly) characteristics within cities. The great rationale of international planning until then – to focus on reducing urban density and spatial specialisation – was reconsidered, in tandem with Jacobs’ rejection of both Garden City and modernist planning. Completely reversing the decades-long argument about lower densities, Jacobs claimed that the answer was to increase urban densities and retain the old multi-use urban character of the city.¹⁵ None of these international doubts about Modernism made any impact on apartheid planning; indeed, nor could they because they were the antithesis to government plans for complete racial fragmentation. Despite public protest, the demolitions of District Six continued with the continuing forced removals that accompanied them as well as the implementation of the GAAs across greater Cape Town.

There were two major reasons for the failure of officials to acknowledge the problems of Modernism and the rights of city-dwellers to their own multi-use structures and their crowded, socially supportive streets. The first, specifically in relation to District Six, was that the bulk of working-class housing development in our period, and especially from the 1950s, had little to do with planning and Modernism per se but were the fullest expression of the powerful connection between Modernism and apartheid at a national level. The second reason relates to the relentless drive to remake and reorder the city that seemed to be part and parcel of the motivation of city officials and planners in this period. Town planners were ‘seduced’ by the opportunities presented by their profession, particularly by the apparent solutions to urban problems offered by the principles of Modernism. They had the power to apply these principles and new housing typologies

¹⁵ Jane Jacobs, *Death and life of great American cities* (New York: Vintage Books [Division of Random House], 1961).

on a massive scale.¹⁶ The responses of local city officials to the many and varied restrictions imposed on residential planning and city development waxed and waned, but their commitment to modernist planning never wavered.

Their focus was on physical planning, 'progress', efficient land use, fast vehicular movement, and the rational and efficient ordering of space. Dimly understood or appreciated were the more complex socio-spatial dynamics: the trauma of relocation, the impact of abiding poverty and seasonal work, the destruction of cohesive working-class social-support networks, the multi-generational nature of working-class families and the strong presence of female-headed households in addition to a powerful sense of identity with place within the working-class areas. Moreover, city officials and planners may have been experts in their fields, but they were tied into a municipal structure where important decisions were taken at a political level. Crucially, the devolution of powers to the three levels of government defined since Union and the Municipal Act of 1912 meant that local governments were obliged to follow national laws and provincial ordinances. As a result, while local planners and administrations may have had their own local ideas and mechanisms for implementation, they were tied by laws made at a national level into realising national objectives for cities. Town planners were obliged to operate within this legislative framework and did so when designing new townships in Cape Town. This made it easier to evade the moral issues involved in applying Group Areas policy and to focus instead on the vision they perceived in remaking the city in line with modernist principles.

¹⁶ Alan Mabin, 'Comprehensive segregation: The origins of the Group Areas Act and its planning apparatuses,' *Journal of Southern African Studies* 18, no 12 (June 1992): 428. Mabin in fact refers to planners being seduced by 'group areas procedures'.

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Appendix I: Timeline of relevant events and landmark legislation (British, Cape Government, and the Union and Republic of South Africa)

The following timeline lists relevant legislation passed by the governments of the United Kingdom, the Cape before Union in 1910, and the subsequent Union and Republic of South Africa. The timeline includes reference to events that place the legislation in its historical context.

Reference to legislation appears in normal text. Significant events relating to residential and town planning appear in *italics* to distinguish these references from the legislation.

- 1875:** British legislation: Housing Act (Cross Act); concept of ‘unhealthy areas’ is introduced into legislative practice.
- 1875:** British legislation: Artisans Dwellings Improvement Act provide mechanisms for dealing with unfit areas rather than individual buildings as provided for by the Cross Act. It makes the demolition of unhealthy areas possible (an idea picked up by the South Africa Unhealthy Areas Bill of 1919). It ties the demolition of unhealthy areas to urban regeneration but is shackled by compensation clauses.
- 1880:** *Rise of model housing estates. Port Sunlight, New Earswick and Bourneville follow the earlier Saltaire.*
- 1882:** British municipalities publish building by-laws as standard practice. Most contain complete specifications for domestic buildings.
- 1883:** *Publication of ‘The bitter cries of outcast London’, which draws attention to abject housing conditions in London and resulted in a demand for action. Attention to the urban crisis focuses on housing and poverty, but wider issues involve class and wages.*
- 1889:** Publication of Cape Town Building Regulations. In force by 1893, marking a change in residential building standards. Back-to-back housing is replaced by by-law housing.
- 1890:** British Housing of the Working Classes Act facilitates the rebuilding of cleared (demolished) sites.
- 1897:** Public Health Amendment Act 23 of 1897 provides the Cape Government with the right to make and amend laws associated with nuisances, drainage and the building of new dwellings. It permits emergency health measures to be invoked.

- 1899–1902:** *Anglo-Boer/South African War, with an accompanying increase in maritime and military activity in the port of Cape Town. Increase in number of refugees with associated housing demands for poverty stricken (often white) families*
- 1900:** *Garden City Association established in the United Kingdom based on the pioneering work on Ebenezer Howard.*
- 1901:** *Outbreak of Bubonic Plague in Cape Town with its origins in the Cape Town docks: Cape Government invokes the Public Health Amendment Act (Section 13) and forces the removal of 7 000 African city-dwellers to Uitvlugt (Ndabeni).*
- 1902:** Native Reserve Location Act 40 of 1902 provides for the permanent status at Ndabeni, making it unlawful for non-exempted African residents to live outside the location.
- 1903:** *Post-war depression and growth of squatter settlements in the vicinity of Maitland.*
- 1903:** *Garden City Ltd founded, led by Raymond Unwin and Barry Parker. Their project at Letchworth proves influential.*
- 1905:** *Completion of the Lagden (South Africa Native Affairs) Commission 1903–1905. It re-enforces the principle of 'setting aside' land for segregated black occupation.*
- 1909:** British Housing Town Planning and etc Act provides the first legislative references to Town Planning in Britain. It restricts town-planning concepts to improved residential planning.
- 1912:** Cape Town Municipal Ordinance 10 of 1912 sets out the relationship between local and provincial government functions.
- 1912:** *International Town Planning Congress attended by Cape Town municipal representative.*
- 1913:** *Unification of Cape Town with smaller municipalities and extension of municipal services.*
- 1913:** Financial Relations Act 10 of 1913 allocates planning responsibility to Provincial Administration.
- 1914:** *British Garden City planning receives worldwide interest.*
- 1914–1918:** *First World War. Increased port traffic makes Cape Town vulnerable to contagion.*
- 1914:** *A rise in tuberculosis cases in Cape Town. Tuberculosis Commission critical of overcrowding and housing conditions in Cape Town.*

- 1915:** *Raymond Unwin publishes 'Nothing gained by overcrowding', an influential treatise on low-density Garden City development.*
- 1917:** *Citizens Housing League established.*
- 1918:** *Spanish Flu epidemic. It focuses attention on poor housing and health conditions among the urban poor.*
- 1918:** *Protest at Ndabeni against the draft Natives (Urban Areas) Bill.*
- 1918:** *British Tudor Walters Report provides standards and guidelines for working-class housing estates. It proposes densities of 12 units per acre, road systems and housing design informants.*
- 1918:** *British 'Homes fit for heroes' campaign for improved housing conditions.*
- 1919:** *Richard Stuttaford promotes and funds British Garden City model at Pinelands.*
- 1919:** British Housing and Town Planning (Addison) Act imposes statutory duties on local authorities. They are required to conduct surveys for housing needs before implementing schemes. Planning aspects of the Act ensure that future housing development should be according to an approved town-planning scheme.
- 1919:** *Post-war housing crisis. Post-war urbanisation and increase in building costs.*
- 1919:** Promulgation of the Municipal Provision of Homes Ordinance (Ordinance 23 of 1919). It enables the municipality to assist those 'of limited means' to acquire their own homes. Building begins on Maitland Garden Village.
- 1919:** Public Health Act 36 of 1919 creates a National Department of Health with powers to advise and assist local authorities in matters affecting public health. It also contains provisions for the regulation of sanitation, housing and town planning (Chapter VIII) but they are not implemented.
- 1920:** *Influential National Report into Housing and Unhealthy Areas, with Cape Town housing problems described as 'acute', but the 'unhealthy areas' concept falls away.*
- 1920:** *City of Cape Town representatives attend the Inter-Allied Congress on Housing and Town Planning in London.*
- 1920:** Housing Act 35 of 1920 sets up a Central Housing Board with limited funding powers to local authorities. It establishes tentative beginnings of state-funded housing.

- 1920:** Tenants Protection Act introduces the concept of rent control to South Africa, providing a degree of tenure protection for low-income families. The Rents Act is passed in the same year and expands the grounds for tenant eviction on the basis of the creation of nuisances.
- 1920:** *British consultant AJ Thompson appointed to finalise the planning of Pinelands Garden City.*
- 1922:** *Transvaal Local Government Stallard Commission proposes temporary settlement status for black residents in urban areas which are tied to migrant labour contracts. Site chosen for a new African Township at Langa, and work begins on railway.*
- 1922:** *Emerging influence of Le Corbusier (1887–1968) on city form with Le Ville Contemporaine (city for three million people), followed by a plan for Paris, the Plan Voisin (1925), composed of skyscrapers and open spaces built on a clear site. He is ideologically opposed to the Garden City concept.*
- 1923:** Natives (Urban Areas) Act 21 of 1923. Gazetted for Cape Town in 1926. It requires ‘natives’ to reside in a location, village or ‘native’ hostel. The planning of layout and infrastructure for Langa is undertaken by British Garden City planner AJ Thompson with the implementation of the Act in mind.
- 1925:** *Langa building project initiated with infrastructure, rail link and hostel development.*
- 1927:** Town Planning Ordinance 13 of 1927 provides only limited mechanisms for town planning but strengthens the authority of the Provincial Administrator via the Townships Board and the Town Planning Committee.
- 1927:** *Expansion of Maitland Garden Village turned down by the Provincial Administrator.*
- 1927:** Native Administration Act 38 of 1927 empowers the state to make regulations to control and manage ‘native’ villages.
- 1930:** *Impact of the global economic depression in Cape Town and an influx of the poor to the city. The Central Housing Board agrees to subsidise sub-economic housing.*
- 1928:** International Congresses of Modern Architecture (CIAM) and the Athens Charter proposed a system for organising modernist urban planning and architecture.
- 1930:** Natives Urban Amendment Act (s 18) allows the Cape Town MoH to declare condemned structures at Ndabeni and facilitate the eviction of those remaining.

- 1930:** British Greenwood Housing and Slum Clearance Act. Facilitates slum clearance and rebuilding of cleared sites and involves the removal of communities from congested areas to large-scale public housing estates. It encourages flat buildings in inner city areas.
- 1930:** *Building of Bokmakierie in Athlone as first sub-economic 'coloured' township.*
- 1931:** Ordinance 11 of 1931. Influential Transvaal Town Planning Ordinance promulgated along the lines of the 1919 British town-planning legislation. Cape Town Ordinance uses it as a model for the 1934 Ordinance (see below).
- 1933–1934:** *MoH presents his report on housing conditions in inner-city Cape Town. Evidence shows high levels of poverty, ill health and overcrowding.*
- 1934:** Slums Act 53 of 1934. Initiated by the City of Cape Town. It facilitates the demolition of single dwellings and congested areas (s 17). Contemporaneous with the Town Planning Ordinance.
- 1934:** Town Planning Ordinance 33 of 1934. It requires the city to present a Town Planning Scheme (TPS) within three years.
- 1935:** *Ndabeni closed despite resistance and last residents forced to move to Langa.*
- 1935:** *CTCC creates a Town Planning Branch within the City Engineer's Department with the task of preparing the first part of the TPS (Bakoven to Trafalgar Park). The planning parameters are laid down by the Town Planning Ordinance, which also includes reference to planning for 'non-white' residential areas.*
- 1936:** Representation of Natives Act 12 of 1936 removes black voters from the Common Voters' Roll in the Cape, the only province where qualified black voters have the vote after Union in 1910.
- 1937:** Native Laws Amendment Act 46 of 1937 denies Africans the right to buy property in urban areas and ties access to urban areas to availability of work. City to prepare a biennial population audit.
- 1938:** *Exhibition of modernist projects, University of Witwatersrand, showing a proposed business centre for Cape Town along strictly modernist lines.*
- 1939–1945:** *Second World War. Increased urbanisation and influx of black workers.*
- 1939:** *Planning and building initiated at Alicedale and Kewtown.*
- 1939:** *City Housing Branch established with an office in Newlands.*

- 1939:** *Mass housing production begins in British cities such as Leeds.*
- 1939:** *Cape Town declared a 'closed city' for black residents but demand for labour limits its implementation.*
- 1939:** *British housing production underway in British cities with prototypes of production of mass housing.*
- 1940:** *Proposed reconstruction of central Cape Town as part of proposed Foreshore development. International consultants appointed by the central government and the Cape Town Municipality. The CoCT appoints French consultant MM Beaudouin to prepare a plan linking the city and the Foreshore. He proposes a monumental and 'City Beautiful' approach with a symbolic tie to Cape Town as a 'gateway' to South Africa. He also proposes the long-term demolition and redevelopment of the inner-city areas to the west and east. His proposals tie in closely with the existing draft city plans and town-planning proposal.*
- 1940:** *British post-war reconstruction begins.*
- 1940:** *First draft TPS submitted for comment. It proposes the replanning of District Six and the removal of half the resident population. After public outrage, it is withdrawn and resubmitted in 1941 in an amended form. It is approved by the CTCC in 1941 for submission to the office of the Provincial Administrator.*
- 1940:** *Foreshore Plan by Roy Kantorowich proposes a grandiose centralised scheme along City Beautiful and modernist lines.*
- 1940:** *Consultant MM Beaudouin presents his first Foreshore report for the CoCT (with City Engineer's assistance). They propose the areas to the east and west of the city (District Six and the BoKaap) be demolished as part of a modernisation and improvement campaign.*
- 1940:** *Joint Town Planning Committee under the chairmanship of the City Engineer is formed and begins work on a regional plan. The regional plan outlines the road network as arterial and sub-arterial developments.*
- 1941:** *Publication of the Cauldwell Report on squatting in peri-urban areas.*
- 1941:** *Publication of British Barlow Report. It becomes the foundation for a new planning system, proposed centralisation of planning authority and decentralisation of settlement. The report recommends green belts and new towns close to work opportunities.*
- 1943:** *State planning movement is informed by the Social and Economic Planning Council. The 5th Report sets a future planning direction based on the British Barlow Report. Apart from the centralisation of planning authority and decentralisation of industry and settlement, the 5th Report also proposes urban racial segregation.*

- 1943:** *Publication of the Britten Report which synthesises many of the findings of the 1941 Barlow Report.*
- 1943:** *Van Eyck Commission proposes an increasingly interventionist state role in planning. The 5th Report on Town Planning proposes the centralisation of planning powers, linking residential areas to decentralised industrial areas and the use of the Neighbourhood Unit concept for residential areas.*
- 1944:** British Town Planning Acts permit extensive central areas to be redeveloped if they were 'blitzed'. London Central Area Plan developed.
- 1944:** *Publication of the Dudley Report into the Design of Dwellings. It reworks Perry's 1920s Neighbourhood Unit concept with some significant modifications. These are replicated in the Neighbourhood Unit principles behind the township designs of the 1950s and 1960s in Cape Town.*
- 1945:** Distribution of Industry Act. State housing to follow industrial development. Housing and Town Planning components of the post-war government package.
- 1945:** Housing Emergency Powers Act 43 of 1945 gives extended powers to the National Housing and Planning Commission for building new dwellings. White ex-servicemen receive preferential treatment.
- 1946:** *Mineworkers strike.*
- 1946:** British New Towns Act proposes a stand-alone decentralised housing model. It is influenced by the need for post-war reconstruction. New Town design is a reinterpretation of the Neighbourhood Unit principle but allows for greater varieties and densities and larger populations. Neighbourhood Unit principles are applied in Cape Town until the 1970s before the New Town principles are applied to the planning and development of Mitchells Plain.
- 1946:** *Alker Tripp publishes the influential 'Design and layout of roads in built-up areas' stressing the importance of new road planning and providing for a system of distributor roads. The system is used by the Joint Town Planning Scheme in Cape Town, which also serves to spatially separate one township from another.*
- 1946–1949:** Road reservations made in terms of the Joint Town Planning Scheme in anticipation of the road system. The main road system is created by planner Denis Verschoyle.
- 1947:** Town and Country Planning Act becomes the foundation for planning for the next 30 years in Britain. Fundamental parts are slum clearance, post-war planning and public health. The existing urban fabric is regarded as expendable. It permits statutory green belts to contain urban expansion.

- 1947:** *CoCT's post-war focus is on industrial area development at Epping and Ndabeni. City Engineer's Department begins planning the proposed Cape Town freeways to link the Foreshore development to the city centre.*
- 1947:** Physical Planning and Utilisation of Resources Act establishes a national planning body with a regional focus on the mining areas of Gauteng.
- 1948:** *Fagan Report published supporting African settlement in the urban areas.*
- 1948:** *National Party wins national government elections on a manifesto of compulsory racial segregation. Apartheid linked to planning frameworks. It confirms the Stallard doctrine, establishing further controls over African mobility and settlement rights.*
- 1949:** Cape Peninsula Government Notice 1032 of 1949 restricts African worker-seekers from remaining in Cape Town for more than 14 days.
- 1949:** *City Engineer WS Lunn submits the first iteration of the freeway proposals, including a ring road around the city for improved transportation flows, peripheral parking garages and an eastern and western boulevard.*
- 1949:** *Concept of national minimum standards for housing formalised. National Building Research Institute undertakes the research.*
- 1949:** Joint Town Planning Scheme preliminary statement is submitted to the relevant authorities for the area Bellville to Klipfontein Road and north towards the Tygerberg Hills. It is strongly influenced by the Britten Report on the Cape Flats of 1943 and the British Barlow Report. It seeks to impose functional and spatial order on a perceived ad hoc system. It includes a broad social–racial survey and a hierarchical road network with open spaces and residential areas. The first 'regional plan' for the Cape Town area. Planning for the residential areas is based on Perry's Neighbourhood Unit principles.
- 1950:** Population Registration Act 30 of 1950 defines and formalises racial identification of population groups.
- 1950:** Rents Act 43 of 1950 amends landlord–tenant relations, excluding rent-controlled dwellings which were affected by other laws (such as the Group Areas Act).
- 1950:** Group Areas Act 41 of 1950, as amended, provides for consolidation and expansion of territorial racial segregation. The intention is to separate mixed residential areas. International influences on local planning systems weakens with the growth in ideological input.

- 1950:** *Simon Solomon (Solly) Morris succeeds WS Lunn as City Planner. He has an interest in traffic planning and modernisation which subsequently dominates the planning frameworks of the City of Cape Town.*
- 1951:** *Proposals for Boulevard East as part of Morris's master plan for roads.*
- 1951:** *NE51 housing types applied at a national level. Large housing estates mean comprehensive racial segregation.*
- 1951:** *Morris publishes 'Metropolis of tomorrow' with a new plan for Cape Town Foreshore and large housing estates on the periphery.*
- 1951:** Prevention of Illegal Squatting Act 51 of 1951 eliminates 'black spots' and regulates black residents in squatter camps by placing them in emergency camps for vetting and potential expulsion or rehousing.
- 1952:** Native Laws Amendment Act requires compulsory registration of black women. Those without permits are 'endorsed out' of the area.
- 1952:** Second Section of the draft TPS (ie Woodstock to Wynberg) submitted. Focus is on the road infrastructure with a proposed ring road for Wynberg.
- 1953:** Housing plan for Cape Town adopted following national prototypes, including the NE51 housing typologies.
- 1953:** *Slum clearance resumes in CBD after a focus on Windermere. New planned development and housing schemes in Cape Town influenced by Perry's Neighbourhood Unit concept.*
- 1953:** Section 11 of the TPS (establishment of townships) is amended to include township development by the Group Areas Development Board. Section 61 (demolition of buildings), amended in 1953, permits the Provincial Administrator to take over responsibilities of the local authorities and to submit costs to the local authorities.
- 1954:** *Slum clearance resumes in the CBD. Because of the magnitude of the task, plans are initiated to undertake small-scale pilot projects.*
- 1955:** *Dr Werner Eiselen announces the Western Cape as a Coloured Labour Preference Area with a proposal that no further houses be built for urban blacks and a return to the Stallardist notions of blacks as temporary residents.*
- 1955:** *Formation of Group Areas Development Board.*

- 1955:** *Socio-economic housing survey undertaken (Batson Housing Report). Findings released in 1957 showing a housing shortfall of 12 000 houses for those living in crowded conditions. Report gives impetus to greater (and cheaper) housing efforts.*
- 1955:** *Housing clearance (demolitions) and evacuations underway at Windermere.*
- 1956:** South African Amendment Act 9 of 1956 enforces the previous Act of 1951, removing the right of coloured voters to elect Coloured Members of Parliament and establishing a separate Council for Coloured Affairs.
- 1957:** Third Section of the draft TPS (Wynberg to Clovelly) adopted by council.
- 1957:** Housing Act repeals previous housing legislation. Provincial control over loans abolished. Function of the new National Housing Commission restricted to housing for whites, coloureds and Indians. Black housing needs managed by a separate Bantu Housing Board.
- 1960:** *Commencement of Bontebeuvel Housing Scheme.*
- 1960:** *Anti-pass campaign, 31 March, from Langa to Cape Town. HF Verwoerd announces more repressive controls.*
- 1960:** *City growth and housing expansion. Housing construction in Bontebeuvel underway. Removal of peripheral squatting and 'black spots'. Suburban boom in white housing.*
- 1960:** *Establishment of the Building and Production Branch at the CoCT for planning and rolling out mass housing.*
- 1962:** Fourth Section of the draft TPS (Athlone) submitted to Council. Indicates Group Areas and land use.
- 1963:** Group Areas Amendment Act. CoCT objects to the loss of autonomy and the fragmentation of the city on racial lines.
- 1963:** Slums Amendment Act 55 of 1963. Minister of Housing takes over control of slum clearance from the MoH by appointing a Slum Clearance Court.
- 1964:** Final Amended TPS submitted to the Administrator for approval.
- 1965:** *Department of Community Development appointed Niemand Commission to replan District Six. CORDA submitted a report for District Six as an economic 10-year urban renewal and reconstruction scheme.*

- 1965:** *City completes the TPS for the Cape Flats as a coloured residential area. The City submits the Revised Final Statement of the Town Planning Scheme to the Provincial Administrator.*
- 1965:** *Bontebeuwel completed, with 5 200 rental houses (economic and sub-economic).*
- 1966:** *6 February: District Six declared a White Group Area with central government control to acquire, develop or dispose of 'affected properties'. It establishes the Community Development Board and prohibited any future development and alterations.*
- 1966:** Community Development Act 3 of 1966 enforces the apartheid government's role in replanning and developing certain areas.
- 1967:** Community Development Amendment Act 42 of 1967 amended or added to provisions of Act 3 of 1966.
- 1967:** Group Areas proclamation necessitates the expulsion of large numbers of coloured families and their placement in new houses in addition to those on the housing list. Dual system of placement develops, that is, a process run by Department of Community Development and that run by placement in terms of the council housing placement schemes.
- 1967:** Joint Town Planning Committee tasked with setting out the development potential of the Cape Flats. Acknowledges government racial policy as affecting physical planning of the area.
- 1967:** Department of Community Development issues standard requirements for master plans and township layout for coloured and Indian communities to which all local authorities must comply. Stresses the Group Areas requirements.
- 1967:** Physical Planning Act 88 of 1967 for central government control of the zoning and subdivision of land for industrial purposes.
- 1968:** *Appointment of a professional planning team to prepare a Masterplan for District Six.*
- 1969:** Amendments to the Township Ordinance 28 of 1969, giving the Provincial Administrator more powers in town planning.
- 1969:** Amendment to Community Development Act places the rights and duties of local government in the hands of the relevant government minister (ie Minister of Community Development). Local authorities lose the last vestiges of municipal autonomy regarding township development and planning.

- 1969:** Department of Community Development publishes the Building Code with detailed rules affecting all aspects of location and housing production defined by racial categories.
- 1969:** Publication of the Central Government's Housing Code, which outlines the requirements for every aspect of housing and urban design according to race-related hierarchies.
- 1969:** *Publication of a report by the Department of Planning reaffirming that all urban development be in accordance with national (ie apartheid) laws.*
- 1970:** Amendments to the Provisional TPS. Between 1952 and 1970 there had been many amendments to the plan, including those for road systems and new settlements: Windermere, Kensington, Bonteheuwel, Heideveld, Manenberg, Hanover Park and Gugulethu, as well as the 'Malay Quarter' (adopted in 1971).
- 1971:** *Planning Masterplan approved by the Department of Community Development.*
- 1971:** Provisional TPS amended to include the government plans for the 'urban renewal' of District Six, thus endorsing the government plan.
- 1974:** *'New Town' housing begins at Area 'A' at Mitchells Plain. Work continued in 1975.*

Appendix II: Influential city officials as shapers of urban change – Medical Officers of Health (MoH), City of Cape Town 1901–1944

With the impact of the sanitary movement in Britain in 1840s and the reactions to the health and living conditions in the industrial cities, the early medical profession became increasingly involved in the problems of urban form and public health. They were the first town planners in the late 19th century, acquiring a dominance of the urban colonial landscapes through a ‘common culture of medicine’¹ which achieved credibility through scientific methods and medical surveys. Their professional focus on the urban landscape initially was on improvements through better ventilation and sewage disposal – or an improvement of the public sphere. This they hoped to achieve through improved layout and housing design.²

The early MoHs in Cape Town followed the theories of public health and living conditions in Britain very closely, trying to apply them to the local context. To some extent they were successful, with the Cape Town Municipality spending large amounts on public infrastructural improvements through improved water provision, storm water and sewerage improvements and the establishment of building regulations strongly influenced by emerging concepts of the relationship between the environment and public health.

The impact of the public medical profession on town planning and urban management was most strongly felt before the development of a dedicated town-planning profession. This focus followed international precedent. The MoHs contributed scientific and rational mechanisms of assessment to public health. The key local difference in sanitation reform in Anglophone colonies, including Cape Town, was the issue of racial segregation. Nineteenth-century Cape Town’s inner residential areas remained mixed, divided by class rather than race. But expressions of racial segregation were contained in the very core of official health statistics, pointing to complex and multi-faceted expressions of racial segregation. Racialised categories of health statistics served to spotlight the unequal relationship between race, poverty, living conditions and health.³ It illustrated the colonial tradition of undertaking health management in the context of racial segregation. Certain medical professionals had a stronger racial focus than others. The public utterances of Dr E Barnard Fuller, for example, represented the strident prejudices against African poverty and settlement that

¹ R MacLeod and M Lewis (eds), *Disease, medicine, and empire: Perspectives on Western medicine and the experience of European expansion* (London: Routledge 1988), 3, quoted in Robert K Home, *Of planting and planning*, 45.

² Michael Hebbert, ‘A city in good shape: Town planning and public health,’ *Town Planning Review*, 70(4)(October 1999): 435; Bickford Smith, *Ethnic pride and racial prejudice*, 127.

³ Bickford Smith, *Ethnic pride and racial prejudice*, 127.

characterised the early 20th century and the racialised nature of the debate surrounding poverty and living conditions.⁴ Dr Thomas Shadick Higgins was well travelled, well-connected internationally and tended to put medical science first. He, too, worked within the official structures of race differentiation and his housing studies of the 1930s drew attention to the terrible racial disparities that characterised poverty and living conditions in Cape Town. At first an enthusiastic supporter of slum clearance in Cape Town (and indeed one of the architects of the Slums Act), he refused after 1937 to designate further slum areas when it came to his attention that the gung-ho attitude of the City Engineer in relation to slum clearance could exacerbate further homelessness. He was essentially a medical scientist with an interest in town planning and was one of the first to provide a professional bridge between public health, sanitation and town planning in Cape Town.

The city MoHs were influential figures in city management, the first of many who considered direct urban physical intervention as desirable and as a response to growing city problems.⁵

The Town Clerk, the City Engineer and the MoH were the most senior city officials and ran large, highly specialised departments. The MoH played a significant role in public health and as a result began to be involved closely in sanitation and urban planning in order to improve public health. In this they reflected international approaches to slums and slum clearance. Between 1934 and 1937, and after 1945, for instance, the MoH played an important part in slum clearance and ran the Housing Administration Department which allocated new houses. There is also evidence to suggest that Higgins was involved in drafting the City's Slums Bill which formed the basis for the Slums Act. Shadick Higgins was succeeded by Dr FO Fehrsen, who was in turn followed by Dr ED Cooper in 1952.

Dr A Jasper Anderson (1858–1924)

MoH 1901–1923

Dr Alfred Jasper Anderson was schooled in the British medical traditions, public policies and sanitation theories of the Victorian period. He was born in Manchester, England, and studied medicine at St Bartholomew's Hospital, graduating in medicine at Oxford in 1883, and was subsequently awarded a diploma in public sanitation from the University of Cambridge. He was awarded a Travelling Fellowship from Oxford and furthered his studies in Leipzig and Vienna. As

⁴ Vivian Bickford-Smith, 'The slum and racial segregation in South African history: an intimate relationship' in A Mayne (ed), *The Oxford handbook of the modern slum* (Oxford University Press, forthcoming, 2023): 2–5.

⁵ Naomi Barnett, *Race, housing and town planning in Cape Town c 1920–1940 with special reference to District Six*. MA thesis, University of Cape Town, 1993, 172.

a result of his experience, he was well versed in current thinking in public sanitation and health throughout Britain and Europe. On his return from his studies, he was appointed MoH in Blackpool, England, where he remained for 11 years.⁶



Dr Jasper Anderson (centre) on his retirement, posing with staff members in the Medical Department (Cape Times 14 March 1923)

Anderson was appointed as Cape Town's first full-time MoH in October 1901, replacing Dr E Barnard Fuller. He set about reordering the department. One of his most lasting legacies was to set up a full statistical section to measure public health and mortality.⁷ By the time of his appointment, the Bubonic Plague which had ravaged Cape Town was all but over. Anderson also managed the City's responses to the Spanish Flu epidemic some 17 years later. His battles were not only with epidemics but with the city's vulnerability to infection as a port city. Equally, he was faced with public apathy towards poor housing conditions and a reluctance on the part of private developers to ameliorate the housing shortage. Still, he played a significant role in lobbying for improved public sanitation and better housing using the regulations of the Public Health Amendment Act of 1897.⁸ The department identified houses unfit for human habitation through regular inspections. This was a laborious process followed by identifying landlords, forcing them to improve their overcrowded and rundown properties. As a last resort, the CoCT might expropriate a property, but they required a court order to do so. City officials were up against a powerful lobby group of property owners which owned rental and slum properties, many of them with strong CTCC connections. The problem identified by Anderson was that people expelled from overcrowded houses simply moved the overcrowding conditions elsewhere. The solution he proposed, along with subsequent MoHs, was to build more housing for the poor which contained key design considerations for healthy living. His term of office coincided with a substantial

⁶ Obituary, Alfred Jasper Anderson MA MB DPH, *The British Medical Journal* (15 November 1924): 930.

⁷ Infant mortality figures were recognised as one of the most important markers in assessing public health.

⁸ MoH Annual Report 1902, xciv.

investment in city infrastructure, which had an impact on public health. Roads, water and sewerage were improved through public works. Investment did little to assist the poor housing conditions, however, and inner-city areas remained neglected.

Throughout his time as MoH in Cape Town, Anderson's approach to public health was strongly influenced by British health policy and legislation. He retained strong ties with the British Medical Association, was president of its Cape Branch in 1909 and was a member of the Sanitary Institute of London. He campaigned for new housing for workers and was actively involved in measures to counteract the prevalence of tuberculosis, which was particularly evident among those living in poor housing. His annual reports drew attention to the poor sanitary conditions. By the time he retired in 1923, public urban conditions had improved, thanks to improved public sanitation and piped water extended over the expanded municipal area. But the hoped-for funds from the Central Housing Board (CHB) proved disappointing. Apart from the whites-only Pinelands, which was privately planned and funded, and the council's own Maitland Garden Village, there was little by way of progress in the provision of public housing and none for the very poor.

Dr Thomas Shadick Higgins (1884–1976)

MoH 1923–1944

Thomas Shadick Higgins was born in London in 1884. He distinguished himself as a medical scholar, obtaining his degrees with honours. In 1908 he received a Doctorate in Public Health and in 1912 an MD in state medicine. He remained in public health for his entire professional career. He read widely, published extensively and was well connected professionally, in both Britain and South Africa. His first post was as assistant MoH for Birmingham – a large industrial city with a slum problem. He moved to St Pancras London in 1913, where he focused on the amelioration of housing conditions and child welfare.

He was appointed MoH for Cape Town in 1923 in addition to being appointed lecturer in public health at the University of Cape Town. He inherited a well-resourced department set up along scientific lines, including a statistics section to record public health and mortality figures for Cape Town. Extremely well qualified and well connected internationally, he spoke at medical congresses and was president of the British Medical Association in South Africa for 25 years. His views on public health, slums and housing, supported by scientific and public medical data, were therefore highly influential. He promoted improved housing and child welfare in Cape Town, and these were to remain a focus of his work as MoH. Under his management and those of his successors, Dr Fehrsen and Dr Cooper, the City Health Department expanded its reach and field specialisations.

As each urban health crisis hit Cape Town, notions of an ordered, healthy, planned environment re-emerged. It was inevitable that a public medical official such as Shadick Higgins would turn his attention to physical interventions and planning to improve the health conditions of the city.⁹ He was one of the first MoHs to be actively involved in town planning in Cape Town. He was a founder member of the Town Planning Association and promoted planning as a mechanism to improve public-health conditions through slum clearance and orderly development. He travelled as MoH to view slum clearance and housing projects in Britain and Europe and his observations no doubt affected his attitudes towards improved housing standards.

He took a broad view of what constituted a slum but considered the unifying factor to be congestion, over-use and general dilapidation. The types of houses were also of concern to him, particularly the old, unventilated, back-to-back houses and cellars which characterised the old streets and lanes of Cape Town. He was particularly concerned about the practice of ‘subletting’, a direct result of housing shortages for the poor, which increased congestion and limited access to services. In short, housing conditions for the poor in Cape Town horrified Shadick Higgins: he compared parts of Cape Town to the worst of the industrial slums of Britain. In 1955 he wrote: ‘Slums are an evil that no nation can afford to tolerate.’¹⁰ Unlike previous MoHs who had pointed to the fecklessness of the poor, he identified poverty as the primary cause of poor housing conditions.

Higgins undertook an influential survey of the housing conditions in the poorer part of Cape Town between 1931 and 1935. The survey identified circumstances so dire that there was strong public outrage and the CTCC was forced to act. It appointed a task team to prepare a private Bill to be submitted to parliament in which Shadick Higgins played a significant role. In fact, the wording and formulation of the Act reflected much of his thinking on the matter of slums and slum clearance. This in turn followed his knowledge of British law and policy. With minor adjustments, the Bill formed the basis for the Slums Act of 1934. The Act gave MoHs significant powers to declare buildings and areas as slums. Shadick Higgins’ Housing Administration Branch took on the role of managing new rental appointments. In this way, officials made far-reaching decisions based on interviews with prospective tenants about who received new housing. It was the

⁹ Melanie Attwell, *Planning for worker housing in Cape Town 1900–1960: Local adaptations of transnational planning paradigms*. Paper presented at the International History Conference, Rome, 2018.

¹⁰ T Shadick Higgins, ‘The housing problem with special reference to the Slums Act,’ *SA Medical Journal* (August 1935): 527.

allocation of council housing according to racial and economic circumstances that contributed to segregated housing environments.

Shadick Higgins was initially delighted with the passing of the Act. He considered it the opening of ‘a new chapter in slum clearance in South Africa’,¹¹ enabling demolitions and remediating slum conditions. But he miscalculated badly and soon withdrew from further slum declarations. The major stumbling block was the inability of the CoCT to build new houses fast enough. In addition, the planners of the City Engineer’s Department sought to maximise planning opportunities by using the Slums Act to demolish properties required for other purposes such as roads, open spaces and proposed commercial areas. By 1938 his department had stopped identifying slum areas until the provision of housing could be resumed. More ambitious slum clearance resumed in 1945, after he had retired.

City Engineers

The City Engineer was a senior city official responsible for a large number of departments, from civil works to town planning and architecture. The City of Cape Town initially sought international expertise in their City Engineer. The post of City Engineer was advertised in British newspapers and a civil engineer with international (preferably British experience) was usually the preferred candidate. The first locally born and educated City Engineer was Simon Solomon Morris (see below) followed by J.G Brand, who was City Engineer at the time of the phased construction of Mitchells Plain.

The primary focus of the early town engineers however was to provide services – street maintenance and paving, the provision of water and, of particular importance to the health of the inhabitants, separate sewerage and stormwater systems. In 1895, WT Olive was appointed to undertake the important task of introducing waterborne sewerage in the municipality. The provision of waterborne sewerage took 10 years to complete and was followed by similar projects in the smaller municipalities. The next City Engineer was WJ Jefferies, whose main task was to consolidate municipal services after the smaller municipalities amalgamated with Cape Town in 1913.¹² D Lloyd Davies, the City Engineer from 1914 to 1931, focused on large infrastructural works, including the construction of the Steenbras water works and other water augmentation and drainage schemes for Cape Town. He is credited with presenting the first paper on town planning

¹¹ T Shadick Higgins, ‘The Housing Problem,’ 530.

¹² JR Shorten, *The golden jubilee of Greater Cape Town* (Cape Town: John R Shorten, 1963), 150.

in South Africa in 1921.¹³ Two other City Engineers were active and influential in the study period and presided over the major interventions in planning in Cape Town. They are WS Lunn, who set the trend towards Modernism, and Dr Solomon (Solly) Morris, who was responsible for significant engineering and freeway works.

W Lloyd Davies

City Engineer 1914–1931

Lloyd Davies worked as a planner in Alexandria, Egypt, before his appointment as City Engineer in Cape Town. His department saw substantial growth during his tenure, with the expansion of its powers and functions, particularly in the field of infrastructural development. The rationale behind the municipal amalgamation in 1913 was to undertake significant engineering programmes for water provision and sewage disposal. The Steenbras River water scheme was opened in 1921, with subsequent improvements. A sewerage works was constructed at Athlone and was later surrounded by housing estates for ‘coloured’ residents. Lloyd Davies was a strong advocate of town planning and by the time he retired in 1934, the focus of attention had shifted dramatically towards the need for a comprehensive town plan. In 1916, Lloyd Davies responded to the approach of the National Society and the Cape Institute of Architects for a TPS with a proposal to the CTCC to establish a scheme using the powers of the Cape Municipal Ordinance of 1912.¹⁴ His interpretation of town planning was narrow and technical, which reflected the approach at the time. Road widths and basic zonings were considered important.

TP Francis

City Engineer 1934–1936

TP Francis’s tenure as City Engineer was short-lived as he died prematurely in 1936. He was hired to replace the retiring City Engineer J Thompson, and was appointed through the CoCT’s London agents. Previously the City Engineer for the Dagenham Council, he had extensive experience in rehousing and slum clearance. He was City Engineer at the time of the construction at Becontree, England, one of the largest housing projects in the world at the time, and was part of the ‘Homes fit for Heroes’ campaign in Britain. No doubt Francis was appointed to apply his British know-how to Cape Town. His two-year period with the city was one of significant change: the passing

¹³ DE Lloyd-Davies, ‘Housing and town planning problems in South Africa,’ *Journal of Municipal Engineers*, 24 (24 September 1921).

¹⁴ Town Planning City Engineer’s Report Appendix ii (attached to the Mayor’s Minutes, year ending 11 September 1916, 17).

of the Slums Act in 1934, the promulgation of the Town Planning Ordinance and a tentative start on housing for the inner-city poor.

At this time, there was a debate about whether inner city housing or lower density suburban housing was preferable. Francis tended to favour a British model with flats close to the inner city as a mechanism for clearing slums, rather than expansive suburban development. But land was cheaper on the Cape Flats and he ended up doing both. The residential developments at this time included flats in Constitution and Vincent streets, replacing the notorious Wells Square, and developments at Bokmakierie and Langa. Another major change inspired by the British example was to appoint a female health visitor along the lines of the Octavia Hill System to assist at Bokmakierie.

Work on the CTCC's private Slums Clearance Bill was already underway when he took office. There is no doubt that he supported it and worked closely with the MoH on the Bill, providing input based on his Dagenham experiences. The evidence of the Select Committee on the Slums Clearance Bill suggests that he and Dr Shadick Higgins played a significant role in the passing of the Slums Act of 1934. He presented evidence supporting the clearance of slums and congested areas on the basis of British policy and law.¹⁵

Walter Stanley Lunn

City Engineer 1936–1950

Walter Stanley Lunn had the most varied and international career of the City Engineers and his contribution to the modernisation of the city has been little recorded or appreciated. It was no accident that the municipality's consultant for the Foreshore, MM Beaudouin, was appointed during his term.

Lunn was born near Moscow, where his family established and ran cotton mills. He moved to Bloemfontein as assistant City Engineer in 1924 at a time when its housing programmes were receiving national approval. In 1936, he was made City Engineer of Cape Town. Unlike previous incumbents, he was not tied to British planning policy and drew his ideas from a wider range of international sources, particularly the United States of America. He was acutely aware that the role of the City Engineer was closely tied to the dramatic processes of cultural and economic change of the 1930s, particularly with regard to modernist urban planning involving high-speed transportation networks and what he called 'the gigantic task' of 'housing and rehousing of the

¹⁵ SC 17–1934 Minutes of Evidence, 32.

masses'. His approach to mass housing was business-like, technical and devoid of any sensitivity for those affected by slum clearance or replanning, as revealed in his proposed town-planning scheme of 1941. According to Lunn, the 'acid test' of success in housing was the matter of rental and housing costs. He thought that the question of how much rent could be charged determined the kind of building that could be constructed.¹⁶ For him, the success of housing endeavours was determined by how cheaply and at what scale a building could be constructed. He established a Housing Branch in Newlands in 1939 which was prolific throughout the war years, producing housing of a higher standard than the mass production which followed. This work included Alicedale in 1939, the fishermen's flats at Kalk Bay, the Schotschekloof Flats in the BoKaap, the Bloemhof Flats in District Six and a continuation of the housing programme at Kewtown and Silvertown, Athlone. In all projects, the layout, materials and floor space were carefully chosen to achieve maximum use at minimal cost.

Regarding town planning, he was an avowed modernist looking for large scale solutions to persistent urban problems. He was frustrated by the fact that the inner-city slums were situated on valuable land and wanted slums to give way for space to develop the modern city.¹⁷ This thinking strongly informed his town-planning proposals for District Six and the west city in 1941. His proposed solutions were brutal. For example, he considered that the implementation of the Slums Act would be far more efficient if there was no need to rehouse the very poor, which he considered 'unfortunate and expensive'.¹⁸ Lunn continued to argue for housing at the lowest costs for the very poor, including potential consideration floated by the Central Housing Board (CHB) for asbestos hutments at Retreat. Despite his objections to any form of additional housing costs and his disregard for the social implications of slum clearance, his successors never achieved the housing standard and quality that he did during his tenure.

He believed that the city needed a high-speed road network and open spaces, and this formed a key focus of his modernisation plans. He drew his inspiration from the greater London Plan, including a plan for a ring road to improve traffic flow. He also re-planned the Eastern Boulevard and established the foundations for the freeway network, working closely with the Joint Town Planning team, which he chaired. Lunn's impact on the reconstruction of Cape Town from the replanning of the peripheral areas to the plans for the Foreshore, and for the high-speed road network that eventually dominated the city, has generally been unacknowledged.

¹⁶ WS Lunn, 'One shilling a week,' *South African Architectural Record* 28, no 6 (June 1943): 123–133.

¹⁷ W S Lunn, Address to the South African Institute of Civil Engineers, March 1952, 70.

¹⁸ W S Lunn, Address, 70.

Lunn's role in the appointment of Beaudouin as Cape Town's consultant for the Foreshore and the way they collaborated to reflect Lunn's future vision for Cape Town has not yet been acknowledged.¹⁹ The plan contained proposals to achieve Lunn's vision of a new modernised city with the Foreshore as the gateway to Africa, separated use zones and high-speed transportation networks which required the demolition of the old city fabric. The city concept plans which followed the acceptance of the Foreshore scheme owed more to Lunn than they did to his successor Solomon Morris. It was Lunn who proposed the ring road around the city and the flyovers in 1949, and the project was picked up by Morris after Lunn's retirement. Botha called Morris the 'principal agent of the flyovers' and 'the villain of the story'.²⁰ In fact, it was the committed modernist Lunn who conceived the plan. Nevertheless, Morris tinkered with the Foreshore plan, amending it to the point where it was unrecognisable. Lunn's plans were modified by Morris and, if anything, were more ambitious than the final product.

Dr Solomon Simon (Solly) Morris

City Engineer 1950–1975



Dr Solomon (Solly) Morris Cape Town City Engineer 1950. Newspaper article announcing his appointment. Here he is shown at his desk, already hard at work. (Cape Argus, 20 July 1950)

If Walter Lunn had a vision of a modernising Cape Town, it was Solomon Simon (Solly) Morris who put it into practice and expanded upon it. Sweeping modern boulevards of fast-moving traffic were imposed on old city fabric and old residential areas. Fully planned racially segregated townships were built on an industrial scale. Morris prepared a ruthless plan for the 'rehabilitation' of the slum areas which he considered anathema to a modern city. Many projects remained

¹⁹ Nicolas Botha, *The gateway of tomorrow: Modernist town planning on Cape Town's Foreshore 1930–70*, MA thesis, University of Cape Town, 2013.

²⁰ Nicolas Botha, *The gateway of tomorrow*, 3.

incomplete because of public outrage: these included the white re-planned District Six and the city fly-over.

Born and educated in Cape Town, Morris was the first local City Engineer in municipal office. He received a degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Cape Town. His views were always those of a civil engineer at the time – favouring technical and project-management-oriented solutions over any social welfare concern. He joined the CTCC in 1934 and worked his way up through the Building Survey Department to be appointed City Engineer in 1950. His role in Cape Town's disputed freeway construction is well known and he built his professional career and international reputation as a creator of world class and very expensive freeways.²¹ He maintained an international profile, presenting Cape Town as a great success story. He presented papers, was an active conference attendee and maintained correspondence with planners and city officials of international repute. He considered that his approach to city planning, and road building in particular, was not uniquely influenced by Britain or the United States but by a combination of both. He retired as City Engineer in 1975 and went into private consulting.

Morris ran a large, centralised and well-oiled department, responsible inter alia for architecture, building control, civil engineering, storm water, roads, housing production and town planning. He signed all reports and his views were clearly dominant. It is clear from those reports that his major interests were large civil projects and freeway developments. His annual reports are replete with images of freeways and roadworks as works of modernist beauty and technical expertise. He clearly admired the work and vision of Robert Moses who, like him, had ambitious views on city-building.²² His vision was for Cape Town to become a modern, ordered city connected by high-speed freeways and up-to-date infrastructure. He was relentlessly positive about the benefits of modernisation and industrialisation for Cape Town. Its freeways were always high on his list of great achievements.²³ In the matter of housing, he was ruthlessly efficient, striving to construct as many houses as quickly and as cheaply as possible. He thought mass housing should be undertaken in terms of cost–benefit analysis and expert technical expertise rather than as part of a social and consultative programme.²⁴ He acknowledged that housing was an urgent problem but considered

²¹ BC 672. Collection: Morris Papers, Introduction. His papers note that he was the creator of the 'most advanced' urban road system in South Africa; Lisa Kane, 'Building the Foreshore freeways: The politics of a freeway artefact,' paper presented at the 30th Annual Southern African Transport Conference (2011).

²² Robert Moses (1888–1981) was a New York City official who favoured building freeways and large-scale construction projects.

²³ SS Morris, 'Cape Town: Metropolis in the making: A decade of development,' *Town Planning Review* 40, no 2 (July 1969): 102–118.

²⁴ SS Morris, 'The Alfred E Snape Memorial Lecture: Problems of progress,' *The South African Institute of Civil Engineers* (December 1953): 247–248.

that good project management and research into better (and cheaper) methods of mass housing construction would solve the problem. In 1952 he wrote ‘early approaches to mass housing attempted to retain a high standard dwelling with low rents made possible by State subsidy’ but ‘the City Council ... had no alternative but to accept lower standards both in accommodation and construction’. The challenge therefore was to build as many dwellings as possible in the shortest possible time.²⁵ As a result, large-scale racially segregated dormitory suburbs of Cape Town were built according to the National Building Research Institute (NBRI) prototypes. They resulted in large housing projects built on an industrial scale with a focus on quantity rather than quality. Bonteheuvel, Gugulethu, Heideveld and later Hanover Park were many townships built quickly to a set housing formula. Morris tended to agree with Lunn that the real problem was one of money. In short, regarding housing, Morris was relentlessly technician and the results were both brutal and boring. No consultation, protest or popular opinion altered his programme. Social dislocation and the trauma of forced removals did not get in the way of implementing the CTCC’s plans.

In his vision of the modern city, Morris measured progress in terms of the requirements for the motor car and efficiency of movement. In this vision, pedestrians and urban residents came off second best. In the oddly named ‘City for the People’,²⁶ he effectively promoted vehicular dominance in key areas, relegating pedestrians to overpasses or underpasses. His freeway developments through the inner city displaced many residents. He also made extraordinary changes to the Foreshore Plan in his *Metropolis of tomorrow*, effectively obliterating the original intention of a central grand boulevard by placing the new Civic Centre in the middle.²⁷

Morris made an ill-fated decision in 1965 to join the Committee for the Rehabilitation of Distressed Areas (CORDA). Knowing the public’s general opposition to Group Areas it is not clear why, but possibly a result of his narrow technician vision and a desire to input into national planning, thus abandoning the CoCT’s ‘hands off approach’ to Group Areas. CORDA was a planning initiative by the apartheid government to undertake Group Areas Planning in the form of racial Modernism and involving the destruction and racially exclusive rebuilding of inner city areas. It chose District Six as a priority project. Morris appeared impervious to the racial implications of city involvement in the Niemand Commission and CORDA. While he claimed his membership was in a personal capacity, it did not take long before his staff were assisting CORDA and the Department of Community Development (DCD) by undertaking racial and housing

²⁵ Morris, ‘Metropolis in the making,’ 199.

²⁶ SS Morris, *Cape Town: City for the people* (City Engineer’s Department, City of Cape Town, 1975).

²⁷ SS Morris, *Metropolis of tomorrow* (City Engineer’s Department, City of Cape Town, 1951).

surveys in support of their work. He continued on this way despite clear indications of massive public outrage. In 1965, he and the city MoH, Dr ED Cooper, announced yet another concerted effort to destroy the city slums and undertake the planned redevelopment of the blighted areas. When District Six was declared a white group area in July 1966, Morris offered to resign from CORDA, but did not do so. Finally, in 1970, the CTCC agreed in principle to the proposals presented by CORDA's planning consultants, thus entrenching the CTCC's involvement in the replanning of District Six as a white group area.

Morris retired as City Engineer in 1975, having achieved international acclaim as the creator of the urban road system of Cape Town. He continued to consult, write and present papers, largely on the theme of city modernisation and freeway systems. He was succeeded as City Engineer by JG Brand, also a civil engineer who continued with the City's change in housing policy and drift towards extensive even more distant racially segregated residential planning. This policy was to abandon the Neighbourhood Unit rental concept in favour of new housing and settlement concepts based on the New Towns model when developing Mitchells Plain.

Appendix III: Council housing: rental and home-ownership schemes

Appendix IIIA

Housing by area developed by CTCC for low-income groups, 1930–1949 (excluding labour compounds)

Township	RG	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	1946	1947	1948	1949
Bokmakierie	C	449																		76	
District Six Flats	C		484																		
Bo Kaap	M					207															
Kalk Bay	C									55		48									
Alicedale	C										258										
Kewtown	C										1299	294									
Bridgetown	C											1455									
Diep River	W												138								
Silvertown	C												1009								
Factreton	C																				1151
Garlandale*	C																				
Fiona	W																				
Riverside	W																				
Kewtown Zone B Zone C																710 164 1212					
Langa												204				540					
Bloemhof Canterbury											74	324									
Schotschekloof												60				120					
Stirling Street CT																54					
Total		594	484			207				55	1557	1455	1147			2800					1151

Housing units provided per population group by the CTCC for low-income families, 1930–1949

Allocated by race according to CTCC policy, provincial requirements and the funding requirements of the CHB and (after 1944) the NH&PC

	Total	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	1946	1947	1948	1949
Coloured	12 870	509	484	–	–	–	–	–	–	55	1 557	1 455	1 009	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1151
Black	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
White	223	85	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	138	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Mixed	207	–	–	–	–	207	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Total	13 300	594	–	–	–	207	–	–	–	55	1 557	1 455	1 147	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1151

Note: The data appear as presented in Mayor's Minutes. Their accuracy has not been verified.

Appendix IIIB

Housing developed by the CTCC for low-income-families, 1950–1970 (excluding labour compounds, referring to both rental housing and home-ownership schemes)

Population racially designated in terms of the Population Registration Act 30 of 1950

Township location in terms of the Group Areas Act 41 of 1950 (as amended)

Township	R G	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970
Gabriel Road	W	146																				
Retreat	C								1 201			1 050	441		100			21				
Gugulethu (Factreton)	A C											826		1 003	1 657	61	1 913	1014	155	165		
(Belthorn)*	C														76	24	62	96				
Kalksteenftn	C															626	2					
Kensington*	C															110	123	177	75	73		
Heideveld	C																911	1 006	562	514	42	
Vanguard Est	C																75		180	147		
Manenberg	C																		954	1 679	2330	567
Parkwood (Langa)	C B																				769	697
Hanover Park (BoKaap)	C M																					1 381
Jonesville	C																					2
Primrose Prk	C																					10
Allenby*	C																					29
(Riverside)	W																					9
Albowville	W																					17
Bonteheuvel (Kewtown)	C C																					39
Bridgetown					318																	
Total		146			xxx				1 201			1 876	441	1 133	1 917	969	3 096	2 314	1 926	2 578	3 413	2 751

Note:

Brackets refer to townships established before 1950

*Refers to home ownership schemes.

RG Racial Group as officially designated

W White

C Coloured

M 'Malay'/Cape Muslim

A African

Housing units provided per population group (as officially identified) by the CTCC for low-income families, 1950–1970

	Total	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970
Coloured	16 491	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1 201	–	–	1 050	441	130	260	908	1 183	1 300	1 771	2 413	3 141	2 693
African	7 066	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	826	–	1 003	1 657	61	1 913	1014	155	165	272	–
White	202	146	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	56
Mixed	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2
Total	23 761	146	–	–	–	–	–	–	1 201	–	–	1 876	441	1 133	1 917	969	3 096	2 314	1 926	2 578	3413	2 751

Source: CoCT

Appendix IIIC

Numbers of people accommodated: CTC and Divisional Council Housing by area to 1974

City council areas

Athlone Belgravia	51 150
Bonteheuvel	46 500
Hanover Park	37 200
Kensington Facticeon	650
Kewtown Bridgetown Silvertown Hazendal	26 850
Lansdowne	14 100
Maitland	1 600
Malay Quarter	8 500
Manenberg, Sherwood Park	37 500
Parkwood	15 600
Philippi including squatters	10 000 (estimate)
Retreat Lavender Hill	65 950
Valhalla Park	4 500
Walmer Estate Woodstock	6 600
Woodstock	12 100
Wynberg	14 100
Vanguard/Welcome Estate	6 950

Divisional Council areas

Belhar	8 900
Bishop Lavis	38 000
Elsies River	88 100
Grassy Park	23 000
Hangberg Hout Bay	3 500
Rural areas (mixed)	14 100

Housing estates completed up to 1974**Home-ownership schemes: Number of houses***(Coloured)*

Belthorn	258
Garlandale	60
Kensington	558
Vanguard estate	402
Primrose park	374
Allenby	126
Mountview	176

Letting schemes (rental accommodation)

Coloured

	Sub-economic	Economic	Total
Maitland Garden Village	235		235
Claremont	36		36
Constitution Street Flats (units)	60		60
Stirling and Vincent Streets	54		54
Bloemhof and Canterbury Streets	370		370
Schotsche Kloof	60	131	191
Bokmakierie	448	1	449

Alicedale		258	258
Kalk Bay Flats	55		55
Malay restoration		57	57
Kewtown	490	809	1 299
Silvertown	234	775	1 009
Bridgetown	116	1 336	1 452
Factreton	650	891	1 541
Retreat	1 016	2 230	3 246
Bonteheuvel	2 110	3 376	5 486
Kalksteenfontein	637	122	759
Heideveld	1 022	2 243	3 265
Manenberg	2 971	2 795	5 766
Parkwood	930	604	1 534
Hanover Park	1 286	3 986	5 272
Lavender Hill	432	1 447	1 879
Total	13 212	21 061	34 273

White

Diep River	40		40
Roeland Street	39		39
Gabriel Road	145		145
Ottery	19	23	42
Total number of houses built	13 310	21 229	34539

Total number dwellings completed by 31 December 1974: 37 270

Source: *CTCC City Engineers Department: Council Housing in Cape Town* undated but c1974 (BA 306.34).