

**“HOUSING AN ILLEGITIMATE
ARISTOCRACY”-**

an urban profile of a coloured community in

Greenwood Park

from the 1950's to the 1970's

by

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To my husband, Brendan and children, Luke and Elize, thank you for your tolerance and patience whilst I went through the roller- coaster period of anguish and excitement.

There is no historiography on Durban coloureds . This work is an attempt to change that . This dissertation is an urban study of a small coloured community in Greenwood Park (GWP) during the apartheid era - a study in which housing is used as a vehicle to examine this community's response to their changing economic and socio-political status from the 1950's to the 1970's . Because of the absence of historical data , this study relies heavily on the contributions of other social sciences . It also uses oral data to fill the many gaps in the story of this marginal group . Chapter 4 and 5 explores housing as a complex physical and social phenomenon . Chapter 6 explores the GWP community's response to their housing environment . In this chapter, the association between housing and socio-economic status is explored . From 1950 to the 1970's, housing became the single most defining entity which kept coloureds trapped in the vortex of privilege and oppression .

This topic is defined by the following 10 key terms:

coloureds (of Durban)
housing
urban studies
Duikerfontein
Greenwood Park (GWP)
apartheid (1950's to 1970's)
aristocracy
Durban LAC
GWP Ratepayer's Association
Durban City Council

“I declare that : “HOUSING AN ILLEGITIMATE ARISTOCRACY” - an urban profile of a coloured community in Greenwood park from the 1950's to the 1970's - is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a final downward stroke.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

GWP - Greenwood Park

Durban LAC - Durban Local Affairs Council

fig. - figure

Note:

The term 'coloured' has been used in the lower case. Much debate has occurred in academic circles, about the use of this term. Whilst I do not wish to become embroiled in this debate, I would like to iterate that my decision to use the term in this form is based on my argument that it is a created category - one designed to uphold the cultural arrogance and economic superiority of the white ruling class. Coloureds do not constitute a nation. A community perhaps, but not a nation; not in the sense of cultural distinctness and nationalism.

This brings me to the next logical consideration - the issue of classification.

Once again, this issue has proved very controversial. I will therefore remain brief. Disciplines such as sociology and psychology have researched the issue of identity and classification as a focal point. From the historical point of view, the classification of coloureds has proved problematic. Coloureds of Natal have been identified as Euro-Africans, Mauritians and St Helenans.. However, prior to 1910, the classification of coloureds was even more obscure. Those in the

southern parts of Natal were classified as Griqua or Kaffir. This problem also dates back to the arrival of early settlers who brought 'coloured' slaves into the colony. During the apartheid era the classification of coloureds became even more complex. Coloureds were classified as either 'coloured', 'other coloured', 'Cape coloured', 'Griqua', 'Mauritian' or 'St Helenan'. The methods and consequences of this classification brought untold hardship, pain and resentment to many families in Natal.

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INTRODUCTION

Durban coloureds are not merely descendants of toothless flower sellers or offspring of the Dunn, Fynn, Champion or Ogle families. Many have their roots in Durban. Their history is complex. It is mirrored in their daily experiences and in their response to their immediate urban environment. As a marginal community, they have contributed (albeit less obtrusively) to the city's unique socio-economic development. Yet, the story of the coloureds of Durban only exists in the margins of academia. Their contribution to Durban's rich and diverse heritage surfaces, but only on the parameters of intellectual thought and analysis. This study is an attempt to change that.

Housing was one of the most profound grievances of Durban coloureds throughout the apartheid era. Yet community based studies such as those of R. Jones,¹ L. Fynn,² S. Rankin³ and L. Schlemmer⁴, pay little attention to

¹R. Jones, The Myth of Coloured Identity (?) : An Examination of the Coloured Community of Wentworth , (M.Soc. thesis, UND , 1998).

²L. Fynn, The Coloured Community of Durban: A Study of Changing Perceptions of Identity , (M.Soc.Sc. thesis, UND , 1991).

³S. Rankin, A Pilot Study Assessing the Problems facing the 'Coloureds' in the Metropolitan Area , Occasional paper No. 4, (Unpublished paper, Institute for Social and Economic Research , UDW , 1982).

⁴L. Schlemmer , An assessment of Some Prominent Issues Relating to Community Development in the Sparks Estate/ Sydenham Community , (unpublished paper, UND , 1978).

this issue. It is difficult to totally capture the urban experience of coloureds without recognizing that housing played a central role. It shaped their social experience. It influenced their response to the environment, politics and society. Housing was often subtly used by local and central government to mould a people's sense of self - worth and actualisation. As a system, it was used to shape entire communities. It was used to define their social and economic status. This study of housing in Greenwood Park (GWP) illustrates this. Private sector housing and property ownership gave GWP residents a sense of privilege and power. In the words of R. Crocker, it made them feel "a cut above the rest."⁵ Yet, from 1950 to the 1970's, housing in GWP was far from the ideal.

This aspiring middle class coloured community faced daily challenges because of inadequacies in their housing environment. The geography, as well as flaws in the design, planning and infrastructure made the housing experience a precarious one. The attitude of local government towards their plight reminded them that they had lost the one tool necessary to effect changes; the vote. As a result, from 1950 to 1980, this community shifted down the political and economic spectrum to join the voiceless (voteless) masses.

Why have I chosen GWP as a case study? Why not Wentworth or Sydenham

⁵A comment made by the former Secretary of the Greenwood Park (GWP) Ratepayer's Association, R.Crocker, - see transcript, p182

where data gathered by researchers such as S. Rankin, L. Schlemmer and R.P Jones, exists? I *have* eluded to the reason in the previous paragraph. Nevertheless, some elaboration is necessary.

A study of GWP offers some variation to urban literature. It invites a shift in focus from a concern with housing of the masses to consideration of a more advantaged minority group. Whilst one could argue that Wentworth and Sydenham in particular, would hardly qualify as mass housing projects given that private sector housing existed within these communities, GWP still stands apart because *no* public sector houses existed here. GWP was exclusively a coloured residential area with private sector housing. This had a major effect on the community's collective consciousness. It influenced their response to the urban environment, to politics and to local government. Whilst Sydenham and Wentworth communities responded in a more definite, more militant manner to *their* housing experience, the GWP community was more circumspect; more ambivalent; more moderate.

In this study, housing is defined by two components - vertical and horizontal. The vertical aspects deal with the physical environment such as topography, location, architecture, design and planning. The horizontal aspect includes schools, churches, retail outlets, municipal infrastructure, welfare and recreational facilities. This model is useful because it separates the various

aspects of housing so that the impact of each aspect on this community's identity can be examined. However, this model is purely academic because these two components do not exist in isolation from each other, but work interdependently. For example, the development of schools, shops, recreational facilities and municipal infrastructure were determined by vertical issues such as topography, location, design and planning. Therefore, the separation of these two components into chapters 4 and 5 should not lead to the conclusion that they (vertical and horizontal aspects) impacted separately or independently on the GWP community. In fact, the vertical and horizontal components of housing are so closely intertwined that it is often difficult to effectively separate the two.

Regarding the structure and format of this thesis: there are three parts. Apart from chapter 1 (which examines how sources were used) and chapter 2 (which examines urban literature and its relevance to this study), there is part 1 which serves as a background. This section places coloureds within a socio-political context by briefly tracing their history from 1850 to 1950. This chapter also establishes a regional context by tracing the early history of Greenwood Park from about 1890 to 1960. Even though records on the early history of GWP are virtually non-existent, this background helps to create a platform for understanding the transformation and continuity in the historical experience of this coloured community.

The second part of this project (chapters 4 and 5) deals with the vertical and horizontal dimension of housing and its impact on the community from 1950 to the 1970's. This part illustrates how the shortage of houses in the private sector combined with structural inadequacies and poor infrastructure to make the housing experience of coloureds a precarious one.

The third part (chapter 6) briefly explores the response of this community to their housing problems. This chapter illustrates that coloureds were not necessarily passive recipients of local policy but were actively engaged in attempts to redefine their housing environment. Chapter 6 also illustrates that the policies of central or local governments are not always translated neatly into practice. The GWP community not only responded to their inferior housing environment, but they responded in a manner which would secure their gains and protect their status as an elite community- the kind of response which would serve their best interests.

The response of the GWP community to their housing environment did not meet the approval of some of the more radical, more militant groups in Wentworth and Sydenham. In fact, the GWP community was perceived by many Durban coloureds as complacent or apathetic. They thought they were white! They

thought they were a “cut above the rest.”⁶ These were some of the perceptions held about the GWP coloured community - perceptions partly formed by this community’s alleged lack of response to oppression.

This thesis argues that they *did* respond. Yes, it was a more moderate response. Yes, it was not the kind of response which would fundamentally challenge the root of their oppression. Why would it be? This was not their intention. Their intention was to restore the glorious days of privilege and power- to hang on to the one object which allowed them to do so; private property. The result was an ambivalent or at the very least, a circumspect response to a less than ideal housing environment. Their response was typical of a community that tried to extract favours from a system which increasingly sought to place them further down the political and socio-economic spectrum yet ambiguously suspend them above the Black masses.

The cries of the GWP coloured community were muffled. They were muffled because this community was trapped - trapped between the vortex of privilege and oppression. Housing was their privilege but it was also their oppression.

⁶Sentiments expressed by R. Crocker. (A sentiment which was in keeping with the attitude of Durban coloureds towards the GWP community)- see transcript, p182

Chapter 1

Use of Sources

The sources used in this study range from more orthodox documentary evidence to oral testimony and photographs. Sources from other social disciplines such as geography, sociology and townplanning are also used. Much of the past of Durban coloureds is undocumented. The coloured community of Greenwood Park (GWP) is the least documented of the three older coloured communities in Durban ie. Wentworth, Sydenham and Greenwood Park (refer to fig.5 , p73). As a result, archival material and inventories were not sufficient to capture the housing experience of this small minority group.

Records of title deeds in the Natal and Durban Archives were scant. The letters by local residents in the late 1800's and early 1900's to the District (GWP) Committee and to the Town Clerk, revealed little about the social composition of GWP. Although some records were found on the planning of GWP school, this did not reveal too much about general planning and development in the area. Information on housing in the period 1950 to the 1970's, was largely gathered from the 1971 report on Duikerfontein by the City Engineer. This source provided the illustrations, photographs and diagrams in chapter 4 and 5.

Records from the City Engineer's office on the objections of GWP residents to their housing environment provided much of the material for chapter 6. The

minutes of the Durban Coloured LAC provided limited evidence for this study on GWP because the focus was primarily on the larger communities of Wentworth, Sydenham and later, Newlands East. The use of oral testimony therefore, became essential to this study, not only to capture the spirit and consciousness of the community but to fill the many gaps and omissions created by the lack of written data.

My preliminary investigation began with an interview with Professor I. Edwards. In fact, it was more an oral discussion than an interview. I needed practical guidance on collecting oral data. At this stage, I only had a vague idea of my topic of enquiry. However, there was some discussion on the coloureds of Durban, the lack of historiographical data and the effect this was going to have on my topic of interest. It was a comment made by Prof. Edwards on the lack of historiographical information on the housing of the elite, which sharpened my interest in the issue of housing- an issue which defined the urban experience of coloureds throughout the country.

Much of the discussion with Prof. Edwards hinged around the techniques and pitfalls of gathering oral data. Even though I accessed R. Warren's practical guide to Studying your Community⁷, the discussion with Prof. Edwards was useful. Edwards spoke of the merits of using electronic equipment but cautioned

⁷R. Warren, Studying your Community, (N. Y., 1955).

that even this technique was not without drawbacks. I encountered some of these disadvantages in my interview. For example, initially the interviewee was very aware of being recorded, despite my deliberate arrangement of the questions so that the more familiar, less challenging questions would be dealt with first. Even though Edwards spoke of the inappropriateness of reaching for a pen and paper as a back-up for when the tape is 'switched off and the tea is brought out', I used both systems in the interview. So as not to interrupt the flow of conversation, I resorted to jotting down points when the cassette was complete. I waited for a more appropriate point in the conversation to replace the cassette.

The difficulty of managing these two systems during the interview was the least challenging aspect of gathering oral data. Securing an interview was by far the most challenging aspect. It was not easy to win the co-operation of key community figures. Because the respondents were purposely rather than randomly chosen, I had to give careful consideration to my 'targets'. My familiarity with the community and families was often an obstacle. Some felt threatened by my continued presence in the community after accessing 'personal' information.

Respondents were also apprehensive about sharing some information about their early socio-economic status and political allegiances. A case in point, was

negotiations with the chairperson of the Durban Coloured Local Affairs Council (LAC) in the 1970's, Mr A Stowman. I was not able to secure an interview with him despite months of pursuit and persuasion. Not only was he a prominent political figure in the community from the early 1970's, but he was involved in many civic issues as teacher and resident from the 1960's. He was reputedly one of the most knowledgeable residents in living memory. However, his political allegiances earned him notoriety in the 1980's when participation in government orchestrated political bodies became unpopular. As a result, he was initially suspicious and unco-operative. Whenever I encountered him, I would engage in discussion about my research and each time, would gather bits of information about early developments in the community, but this demanded patience and relentless persuasion. After months of conversations in supermarkets, over telephones and working through relatives, I was finally able to get him enthusiastic about the project.

Even though I had engaged in several discussions with other members of the community, I was reminded of the value of securing an interview with Mr. Stowman by the constant references to him. There were times that I began to panic. I feared that I might have to shift my interest lest the whole effort failed because I could not get results quickly. Interim visits to Killie Campbell Library and the University of Natal (UND) were not very fruitful. Data on Wentworth and Sydenham communities were found but not on GWP. It became

increasingly apparent that I would *have* to conduct an oral interview to gather evidence on this ‘forgotten’ community. After months of anguish and frustration, preliminary questions were forwarded to Mr Stowman and the interview was secured - or so I thought. A week before the scheduled date I learnt of the interviewees diagnosis of cancer. The interview fell through. I quickly learnt that these were the perils of historical research using oral evidence. Perhaps the former secretary of the Greenwood Park Ratepayer’s Association captured it best when he somewhat callously but aptly stated that it was unfortunate that most of the prominent figures in the community who had a wealth of information were either dead or in the throes of death.

I continued my search for written material in Killie Campbell and the UND libraries, but not without learning that securing an interview can be elusive; demanding skills of its own and that secondly, the construction and analysis of the history of Greenwood Park was going to be made all the more difficult by the absence of written data.

The viability of this topic was under threat. On the other hand, my inability to easily win the co-operation of one or two key members of the community suggested something about the very issue under scrutiny in chapter 6 - the response of the community. Was this reluctance indicative of this community’s ambivalence and caution when dealing with issues considered as ‘political’ or

controversial (which in the context of this study, included housing)? Was I gaining first hand experience in dealing with a community reputedly considered as apathetic and complacent, or was this a misguided perception?

Nevertheless, I finally secured an interview with the former secretary of the Greenwood Park Ratepayer's Association. This materialised with much less persuasion, the help of a colleague and only a few preliminary telephone conversations. The fact that he was my teacher in primary school arguably, played a significant part in winning his support. After briefly perusing just some of the questions, I was able to gain his confidence.

The interview was semi-structured in that I did not fastidiously adhere to the order reflected in the interview schedule (refer to Appendix G) . This would have inhibited the natural flow of conversation. Much more valuable information can be gained by allowing respondents some liberty with the direction of the discussion. Although this results in an interview which is much longer than intended, the gains outweigh the setbacks. The questions on the interview schedule were used as a guide to ensure that the more important issues were not overlooked. I began with an area of discussion familiar to both of us- Briardene School. I began with these questions so that we could ease into discussion. Conducting an interview was unfamiliar ground for both of us.

Despite the difficulties of securing interviews with residents in one's own community, there were several advantages. This became increasingly apparent in the course of the interview. My position as a participant observer rather than a researcher might at times, obscure the objective reality of life in Greenwood Park, but I have been able to bring a level of empathy, understanding and relevance that only an 'insider' can. L. Fynn refers to this type of enquiry as objective subjective research - where the study is intuitive and alive⁸. The fact that I have lived in the community for more than thirty years facilitated the interpretation and evaluation of data. I was able to easily relate to references to families, community figures and housing patterns. More importantly, familiarity with the community helped in the detection of errors, distortions and inaccuracies which so often plague oral testimony. In short, I can concur with G. J. Gallagher that the "more we know of the environment and conditions... the better we understand the content".⁹

Despite the advantages of being a participant researcher, I still made several enquiries from various sources in the community. Their reluctant responses largely filled the gaps and omissions in the literature. Their answers served as checks and balances. It became necessary to cross-reference information because of the emotive responses of some of the residents. The myriad of mini-

⁸Fynn, The Coloured Community of Durban, p52

⁹Study Guide for MTFGOO-Q,(Pretoria, UNISA, 1986), p111

biographies and personal victories shed some light on the housing plight of this community in the 1960's and 1970's. Much of the discussions with the various respondents were interactive and conversational. This did not necessitate structured questions. Through cross-referencing, I was also able to minimize irregularities and distortions.

Even though the conversations with the various respondents were casual and unstructured, I still used a few tried and tested methods of the conventional interview. Both free recall and focussed recall were used. These approaches were valuable in conversations with the various respondents as well as in the interview with the former secretary of the GWP Ratepayer's Association. Much of the richness and vibrancy of the early community was captured in free recall whilst focussed recall was used to draw attention to specific issues. Together with the written objections to the City Council, oral testimony provided a welcome counterbalance to the cold and structural analysis of the housing environment in chapters 4 and 5.

However, as stated earlier, studying one's own community also has disadvantages. There is the temptation to overemphasize the uniqueness of the community - to find meaning and significance in the obscure and mundane. At times I may over-generalise or under-conceptualise. At times the line between empathy and sentimentality might blur. Nevertheless, I hope that my proximity

to the community does not detract from the value of the study as an historical piece.

The use of documentary evidence helped me to maintain balance and academic sobriety. Valuable reports on the planning of GWP as part of Duikerfontein was located in the City Engineer's Department of Urban Development and Planning. After much effort, this material was located by officials within the department. The reconstruction of bureaucracies and institutions in post- apartheid South Africa has had a destabilising effect on record-keeping. Some valuable information has either been displaced, misplaced or destroyed. References from some of my sources were often irretrievable yet, obviously available to earlier researchers and scholars. I was not always able to wait for obliging officials to trace these. Nevertheless, the City Engineer's Department produced information which was pivotal in my analysis of housing in Greenwood Park, providing evidence that this community was not so unlike the other more vocal coloured communities in Durban - that housing was also an issue of major interest.

Newspapers were not extensively used in my enquiry. Firstly, most of the reports in the Daily News and Natal Mercury dealt with the critical shortage in coloured housing. The housing policy of local and central authorities was only occasionally considered. Any coverage on the response of coloureds to their

housing plight was largely based on public sector housing. The complexities of the housing question was neglected. Secondly, the newspaper only tends to cover 'newsworthy' stories. As a result, greater coverage was given to the larger, more volatile community of Wentworth or the more socially active community of Sydenham. The latter community had resorted to some bold activities in the 1970's in order to highlight the plight of some of the residents and in so doing, won the attention of the local press. Once again, the issue of housing in the private sector remained peripheral to public interest. Nevertheless, the press did pay some attention to the provision of services in the various communities in the 1960's and 1970's and in so doing, provided a backdrop to developments in GWP.

The Natal Archives in Pietermaritzburg was also explored with some limited success. Even though not much material was located on the period under study, information was found on the early history of the area from abstracts of title deeds and letters to the Town Clerk. These sources helped to shed light on the planning, growth, occupancy and service facilities in the area in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Whilst this falls outside of the period of interest, it helps to establish a sense of history - a sense of continuity and change which most of the sociological material used in this study neglects.

The Durban depot of the Natal archives contained the minutes of the meetings

of the Durban Coloured Local Affairs Council (LAC). Examination of these minutes required selection, deduction and synthesis because information on GWP was often hidden behind issues of general interest to the coloureds in Durban. For example, the minutes of the LAC highlighted the socio-political plight of the coloureds of Durban - a plight which largely centred around housing. Even when the specific grievances of GWP coloureds was tabled, it was not discussed in any great length or in much detail. The GWP community was considered to be advantaged. As R. Crocker implied in the interview, GWP was marginalised because they were not a community in need ¹⁰ This perception of GWP perhaps accounts for the failure of community leaders to highlight the housing plight of this community which in turn, led other coloured communities to perceive GWP as complacent or apathetic. Yet, the scenario created in the minutes of the Durban LAC and the comment of R. Crocker (above) is not in keeping with the record of objections held in the offices of the City Engineer. The GWP community was far from complacent. They responded to a housing environment that was less than ideal - that was below their expectations as an aspiring middle class community.

Nevertheless, the minutes of the Durban LAC gave me access to primary written material. As an orthodox method of enquiry it enabled this study on the Greenwood Park community, to maintain some balance. It allowed for

¹⁰A comment of R. Crocker -see transcript , p179

qualitative analysis. This provided variation from the quantitative analysis of H. Dickie-Clark ¹¹ and S. Rankin ¹² which informed much of this study. As a primary source, the minutes of the Durban LAC directly reflected the concerns of Durban coloureds in the 1970's beyond statistical analysis. It reflected the attitude of contemporary coloured communities and their leaders towards housing in general. As already suggested, as a primary source, the minutes of the Durban LAC served as a reliable barometer of the concerns of coloureds in Durban and the status of GWP in the context of the greater Durban coloured population.

Statistical data has been used rather circumspectly in this study. It does not form the basis of analysis. There were too many inconsistencies. In both primary and secondary sources, the data for the 1950-1960 period was very poorly represented. There were either gaps in the information, or categories were inconsistent. This made comparisons difficult and growth patterns hard to detect. The second problem was that even though the statistical information on the 1970's was more detailed, it often overlapped and some of the socio-economic categories were conflicting. Even the categories used by the Bureau of Statistics were unreliable. Categories and criteria often differed from one census year to the next. As a result, statistical information was used rather

¹¹H. Dickie-Clark, The Marginal Situation - A Sociological Study of a Coloured Group, (London, 1966)

¹²Rankin, A Pilot Study Assessing the Problems Facing the 'Coloureds'

sparingly in this study. This is not to suggest that statistical data was of little or no value. However, it was more valuable for what it suggested about the socio-economic development of coloureds than for what it concluded.

In short, the sources that have been used and the way that they have been used are a result of numerous factors; time constraints, the interdisciplinary nature of the topic and the lack of historical evidence. Even though secondary material from the other social disciplines such as geography, sociology, psychology, economics and townplanning was consulted, gaps in the story of the coloureds of Durban remained. Limited primary evidence in the archives and the absence of oral data in the Killie Campbell Collections and Centre for Oral Studies, exacerbated the many gaps and omissions in the story of the coloureds. Compounded by the absence of a comprehensive analysis of Durban's housing policy, an examination of the housing experience of coloureds was going to be difficult without oral testimony. Consequently, my research had to include both conventional documented sources as well as the more controversial oral testimony. Photographs and diagrams provided the visual evidence of housing in GWP.

Chapter 2 Historiography

This thesis is fundamentally influenced by urban historiography. Issues such as race, class, segregation, housing policy, central-local state relations and international developments, which have dominated urban historiography since the 1980's, informs much of this postmodernist interpretation of a community's housing experience. However, a dearth of historical material on the coloureds of Durban and the lack of comprehensive studies on South Africa's housing policy has led to an almost total reliance on the contributions of other social disciplines such as geography, sociology, economics, psychology and townplanning.

Housing is a complex issue which straddles the boundaries of various disciplines which are concerned with urban problems.¹³ However, this account of the housing experience of the coloureds of Greenwood Park (GWP) from 1950 to the 1970's is far from holistic. It is race-centred, microcosmic, metropole- based and inadequate in its consideration of global influences and the role of women. It is difficult for this limited work to capture all the dimensions of housing in the urban context. This is a dissertation of limited scope which by definition, is bound to be narrow with many gaps and omissions. Yet, even within these limitations, this work contributes to the diversity of urban literature. It challenges scholars on the question of Durban

¹³R. Pritchard, Housing and the Spatial Structure of the City, (Britain, 1976), p 1

coloureds. Secondly, it challenges urban historiography's preoccupation with the masses and thirdly, it contributes to a more holistic account of Durban's past.

It is very difficult to present a case for a history of coloureds without downplaying those of Africans. However, South African urban historiography has become polarised into Eurocentric and Afrocentric accounts of the city's past. It is understandable that in an attempt to alter the imbalances of the past, South African urban historiography has become Afrocentric. One cannot deny the need to include Africans as central roleplayers and not merely as functionaries. However, the swing of the pendulum has impoverished the understanding of the city's development. It has left gaps in the history of Durban as it perpetuates the tendency to view South Africa's past as a dichotomy of victims and villains.

South African urban historiography has given marginal consideration to smaller roleplayers. As a result, the depth and complexity of human relations has been partially captured. This study on a small minority group highlights the need to include smaller roleplayers in accounts of the past. This community cannot be easily categorised as victims or villains. They were sometimes the oppressor and sometimes the oppressed. For example, access to private property allowed many coloureds in GWP to play out the role of an elite minority, but closer inspection

reveals a community that had also fallen victim to oppressive local and central state policies. Consequently the organisation of our past into the story of the colonised as opposed to the colonizer, the underclasses as opposed to the ruling classes, the disadvantaged as opposed to the elite, is not necessarily an accurate reflection of relations in urban societies. It is rather, a simplification of a much more complex, much more nuanced network of socio-political relations.

The complexity of human relations is explored rather extensively in the sociological works of Boulanger¹⁴ and Russell.¹⁵ Boulanger's study on the political economy of Durban extends beyond a stand off of whites and Africans, as Indians and coloureds are portrayed within an ambivalent and complex socio-economic network. Both communities are described as playing the role of the colonized as well as secondary colonizers. Similarly, the housing experience of GWP coloureds allowed them to play out this ambivalent role.

Russell's sociological analysis of the interracial neighbourhood of Botanic Gardens in the 1950's, also extends urban studies beyond the confines of a purely African or white experience. Interracial relations is examined from a more complex social viewpoint and not merely as a consequence of state

¹⁴N. Boulanger, Race and Employment: a Sample Study of Durban in the Context of the Political Economy of South Africa , (M.Soc.Sc.UND, 1974)

¹⁵M. Russell, A Study of a South African Interracial Neighbourhood , (M.Soc.Sc.UND, 1961)

legislation such as the Group Areas Act or the Population Registration Act. Relations between Indians, coloureds and whites are explored in all its ambivalence, complexity and irony, thereby illustrating that urban areas were not merely centres of conflict and resistance between white and Black groups but often a place of shared experience. Chapter 3 and 6 eludes to this point as coloured families co-existed with pockets of Indian families in GWP not only before the rigid implementation of the Group Areas Act in the 1960's, but right into the early '70's.

There are other ways in which the contributions of Boulanger and Russell enrich this thesis. Russell's exploration of the evolutionary nature of urban policy has informed my understanding of the process of change and continuity in the housing experience of this small minority group. Urban policy is not static but often falls victim to the agendas of public officials. It is also often influenced by the response of the community. Russell's marrying of human agency with urban policy is explored through a similar examination of housing but within the context of inter-racialism in Botanic Gardens. However, because housing is not the focus of this project, the significance of housing in identity formation or group consciousness is not pursued. Yet, as already stated, Russell's work is valuable in that it considers interaction between larger and smaller roleplayers.

However, it is going to take more than a few sociological works to shift the pendulum so that the story of smaller roleplayers can be included in South African urban historiography. In Natal, burgeoning Indian historiography offers diversity to the Eurocentric and Afrocentric accounts of the past, but not sufficiently to alter the course of the pendulum. The writings of B. Freund has provided valuable insight to the study of Indians as he traces their role as labourers in the economic fabric of the city.¹⁶ S. Bhana and B. Pachai¹⁷ have also made valuable contributions to one's understanding of early Indian history. However, these works do little to rescue the history of coloureds as it continues to fade into oblivion. In fact, coloureds are either completely excluded from Indian historiography or given incidental consideration. This only accentuates the need to examine the role of coloureds in Durban's past.

Whilst continued marginalisation of Durban coloureds underscores the need for research, the contributions of scholars such as B. Freund cannot be dismissed as totally irrelevant to the history of coloureds. His focus on the economic status of Indians could provide a platform for studies on the economic relationship between coloureds and Indians in Durban. For example, because of an acute shortage of houses in the 1960's and 1970's, many coloureds in GWP

¹⁶B. Freund, Insiders and Outsiders: the Indian Working Class of Durban, 1910-1990 , (Dbn, 1991)

¹⁷S. Bhana and B. Pachai (ed), A Documentary History of Indian South Africans, 1860-1982 , (C. T, 1984)

rented outbuildings or basements of Indians in the neighbouring Indian community of Kenville- a situation not unique to Durban coloureds. Many landlords exploited the situation by charging exorbitant rents. This facilitated the upward mobility of many Indian homeowners. R. Crocker referred to the coloureds as a people who were content to rent from Indians¹⁸ - a widely held perception of coloureds in Durban in the 1970's and 1980's. Indian historiography gives little or no account of this economic relationship. Yet, Indians and coloureds continue to share a past which remains unexplored, particularly in urban historiography.

The diversity of Indian historiography, the racially inclusive contributions of Boulanger and Russell and even the challenging debates and insights of revisionists and radicals do not consider the 'coloured story'. Coloureds continue to be poorly represented in urban studies and urban historiography in particular. Yet several comprehensive histories have been written on Natal. At first glance, it would seem that there is not much more that can be written on Natal. Numerous dissertations exist on white settlements, the Boer Republic of Natal, Natal's constitutional development, the role of missionaries, education policies and practice, the Indian question, Natal's economic development and Black-white conflict. However, as stated earlier, the story of the coloureds has not been part of this thematic diversity.

¹⁸ A comment made by R. Crocker - see transcript , p172

Monographs such as that of E. Brookes and C. Webb¹⁹ and A. Duminy and B. Guest²⁰ have only made marginal reference to coloureds. Their work is largely Eurocentric. Even though A. Duminy and B. Guest changed their emphasis to the interaction of population groups in the setting of industrial capitalism, still only fleeting references are made to coloureds. The failure to include coloureds in this investigation suggests that A. Duminy and B. Guest have not totally captured the workings of industrial capitalism in South Africa where coloureds were often used to close off economic space for the African urban masses. In Durban, this was most profoundly illustrated in the building industry. GWP serves as a case in point. In this community, many skilled artisans particularly in the building industry, were able to play out their role as a privileged minority which contributed towards the diversity of Durban's economy.

I suspect that the failure to examine the role of coloureds in industrial capitalism is less a case of deliberate neglect than a result of a paucity of quantitative and qualitative data. Nevertheless, the fact that the works of E. Brookes and C. Webb, A. Duminy and B. Guest continue to be standard references for studies on Durban or Natal, means that some of their deficiencies, omissions and inadequacies have been perpetuated. On the other hand, the Afrocentric

¹⁹E. Brookes and C. Webb A History of Natal, (Pmb, 1987)

²⁰A. Duminy and B. Guest, Natal and Zululand from Earliest times to 1910- A New History, (Pmb, 1989)

literature which has come to characterise urban historiography has been a result of a reaction to these standard works.

I am not suggesting that Afrocentric writings are merely reactionary material which lacks critical analysis. I am however, suggesting that reactionary works often contribute towards a lopsided view of the past - a view in which the complex network of human relations is often neglected. Admittedly, work still needs to be done to challenge the mass consciousness effected from decades of eurocentricism. However, if social scientists are going to tell the story of the silent misrepresented majority then there also needs to be greater sensitivity to the muffled sounds of other misrepresented people.

A considerable amount of data exists on the coloureds of the Cape and Johannesburg. However, this material is limited compared to that on whites, Africans and more recently, Indians. It is not just the volume of material that is limited, but the quality and depth of analysis. Firstly, the material has a particular bias towards the metropolises of Johannesburg or Cape Town. Secondly the material does not reflect the same level of sophistication, critical analysis and historiographical awareness as studies on Africans or whites. Much of the material is largely descriptive, anecdotal accounts of the past. It hardly portrays coloureds as complex communities that sometimes designed their own circumstances. Coloureds were not always victims of the tot system. They were

not all housed in whitewashed clay rondawels.

Although not quite as exaggerated as suggested above, many of the sources on coloureds portray coloureds simplistically. The work of R. du Pre is not a definitive social or political history of the coloured people.²¹ It is largely an attempt to address the imbalance in historiography. As a result, it lacks the depth and analysis of contemporary historiographical material. The work of S. Jeppie and C. Soudien on District Six is unconventional in its use of sources, but lacks analytical direction.²² The comprehensive work of A. Venter is more a contemporary journalistic report than an historical work.²³ However, no history on the coloureds can be written without referencing this source. Its perspective on the impact of politics is timely. Its consideration of the role of capital and the social travails of urban communities makes it relevant to any urban study that wishes to include the coloured story.

However, A. Venter's marginal reference to the coloureds of Durban suggests a partiality to numerics in defining a communities contribution to urban society.

Despite its comprehensive coverage of the 'two million Coloureds of South

²¹ R. Du Pre, Separate but Unequal: "The 'Coloured' People of South Africa: A Political History of South Africa , (Jhb,1994) preface, xii

²²S. Jeppie and C. Soudien, The Struggle for District Six: Past and Present (C.T, 1990).

²³A. Venter, Coloureds, a Profile of 2 Million South Africans , (C.T. 1974) prologue.

Africa', only one chapter of 8 pages deals with the coloureds of Natal. The other 49 chapters are largely based on the coloureds of the Cape and Johannesburg. There is also a deviation in the level of analysis and thematic diversity in these 8 pages. After providing a comprehensive account of coloureds in the Cape and Johannesburg, the account of the coloureds of Natal is reduced to a story of the Dunn family. The complexities and ambiguities of Durban coloureds is not and cannot be explored in 8 pages. Admittedly, A. Venter accredits his marginal reference to the coloureds of Natal to scant records, but his work is indicative of developments in South African historiography as a whole. Coloureds of Natal (Durban in particular) are either excluded or given patchy, marginal consideration.

Had it not been for the interdisciplinary approach, there would have been a greater shortage of material on Durban coloureds. This approach, which was embraced by urban historians in the 1980's, has facilitated the use of the sociological and psychological contributions of J. Mann,²⁴ H. Dickie- Clark,²⁵

²⁴ J. Mann, The Problem of the Marginal Personality: A Psychological Study of a Coloured Group, (Ph.D. thesis UND, 1957)

²⁵ Dickie-Clark, , The Marginal Situation

L. Schlemmer²⁶, G. Andipatin,²⁷ L. Fynn²⁸ and R. Jones.²⁹ Even the investigations of the Urban Foundation and the Bureau of Market Research have been used.

Because of the interdisciplinary approach, South African historiography has grown thematically. It has attained social relevance. Had it not been for the contributions of other disciplines, a multifaceted topic such as housing would be inadequately explored. Consequently, this study on the housing of a coloured community has been enriched by this approach. It has been elevated beyond the sentimentality of earlier historians such as F. Van Jaarsveld and J. Fourie.

However, this project perpetuates the racially ordered studies which characterises urban historiography. According to S. Parnell, A. Mabin,³⁰ H. Sapire and J. Beall³¹ this is a legacy of the liberal school and as a result, does very little to fundamentally reconstruct our understanding of South Africa's

²⁶Schlemmer, An Assessment of Some Prominent Issues

²⁷G. Andipatin, An Investigation into the Need for Adequate Psychiatric After-Care for Coloured Schizophrenic Out-Patients in Durban, (Soc.Sc.Hons, UND, 1978)

²⁸Fynn, The Coloured Community of Durban

²⁹Jones, The Myth of Coloured Identity (?)

³⁰S. Parnell, and A. Mabin, "Rethinking Urban South Africa", Journal of Southern African Studies, vol.21 no.1, 1995

³¹H. Sapire and J. Beall, "Urban Change and Urban Studies in Southern Africa", Journal of Southern African Studies, vol.21 no.1, 1995

past. This is understandable. History does not occur in a vacuum. The context in which history is written often permeates the literature. The thinking, interests and the trends of the time is reflected in the themes, topics and ordering of information. At the same time, the ordering in society also influences the way in which the literature is ordered. It is difficult to analyse the 1950, 1960 and 1970 periods without being influenced by the racial ordering of South Africa in that time. Admittedly, this could lead to a very insular view of the past where the subtle, more complex forces are neglected, but the situation is not all doom and gloom. There can and there has been some positive growth in urban historiography because of this focus on race.

Race-based studies have provided corrective analysis to many scholars still trapped in academic tradition. The stereotyping of South Africa as a society with homogeneous racial communities has been challenged largely because of the close scrutiny provided by race-based studies. This study on the coloureds of Durban challenges many assumptions made about coloureds in South Africa - that their roots are in the Cape; that as a group they were socio-economically more advantaged than all Indians or all Africans or that they were fundamentally occupants of public sector houses which brought untold burdens on the white taxpayer. G. Carboni's study on public sector housing for

coloureds³² is just one example of how close scrutiny of a particular race group can challenge the notion that some groups are privileged with easier access to the portals of power. In short, race-based studies have added depth and diversification to some well-worn issues.

Yet, urban scholars such as P. Maylam³³ argue that race-based studies have stifled the growth and development of South African urban historiography. They suggest that a more ‘outward’ approach is needed in order to capture the complexities of the past. V. Bickford-Smith,³⁴ H. Sapire and J. Beall³⁵ see the solution as adopting a more comparative approach. Both suggestions lean heavily on a more global view of the world than that which characterises South African urban historiography. It is not surprising that globalisation became the focus in academics. The emergence of the African renaissance and the Euro-dollar were certainly manifestations of globalisation in politics and economics in the 1990's. The views of P. Maylam, A. Mabin, H. Sapire and J. Beall are therefore, not without relevance.

³²G. Carboni, The Planning of Local Authority, Public Sector Housing for the Coloured Community in Durban, (M. Soc. Sc thesis, UND, 1976)

³³P. Maylam, “Explaining the Apartheid City: 20 Years of South African Urban Historiography”, Journal of South African Studies, vol. 21 no. 1 1995.

³⁴V. Bickford-Smith, “South African Urban History, Racial Segregation and the Unique Case of Cape Town?”, Journal of Southern African Studies, vol. 21, no. 1, 1995

³⁵Sapire and Beall, “Urban Change and Urban Studies in Southern Africa”.

Not all topics or themes are easily suited to global analysis or interpretation. However, housing is a universal phenomenon. As a central organising theme, it can be used to explore the social, economic and political aspects of urban living. It can be used as a platform for an 'outward' interpretation of a city's history.

This study is not an outward interpretation of housing. It does not have a completely global perspective. In fact, it is rather insular in that it is based on a community's experience of housing. Yet, its approach is more holistic than liberal or marxist interpretations. There is consideration of international developments and theories on housing and townplanning. The insights and considerations of the various schools of thought contribute towards a greater understanding of the effects of housing and urban form. However, the race based interpretation of the liberal school, the class-based analysis of the marxists and the economic focus of the radical school fail to account for the many complexities and ambiguities in the housing experience of this middle class minority-based community. Housing in GWP was not only defined by racially oppressive urban policies. Neither was housing a "means of collective consumption ... regulated by state apparatus."³⁶ This interpretation is too mechanistic, too reductionist. Even the more inclusive interpretation of radical scholars does not account for the myriad of personal biographies and individual

³⁶ P. Bloch and P. Wilkinson, "Urban Control and Popular Struggle: A Survey of State Urban Policy," Africa Perspective, 1982, p 3

decisions which interacted with the larger processes of structural change³⁷ in this coloured community. Radical scholars miss some of the finer forces and processes which underpin spatial formation and differentiation.³⁸

As suggested above, structuralism, racial ideology and economics only partially define the housing experience in GWP. This coloured community is not just viewed as a race group but as residents within a zone shared with Indians in Duikerfontein. They are not just viewed as residents within a racially demarcated zone but as a class. They are not just viewed as a class but as taxpayers who had their own capacity “to think, associate and organise.”³⁹ It is within this capacity that many settled north of the Umgeni before the rigid implementation of the Group Areas Act. It is because of this capacity that they emerged as a middle class community, with middle class aspirations. It is because of the capacity to think, associate and organise that they challenged a local policy which undermined their sense of achievement, security and self-actualisation.

It has already been stated that no single study on the topic of housing can hope to do justice to this complex issue. There are so many facets to housing. It plays

³⁷ H. Sapire and J. Beall, “Urban Change and Urban Studies in Southern Africa”, p10

³⁸ S. Parnell and A. Mabin, “Rethinking Urban South Africa”, p 46

³⁹ H. Swilling, Apartheid City in Transition, (C.T. 1991) introduction ix

a central role in the history of any city. Yet, South African urban historiography has not yet synthesised the numerous insights on housing. The literature remains patchy and diluted by the various interpretations in the various social disciplines. The fact that no comprehensive historical work has been produced on South Africa's housing policy, has made research and integration in this microcosmic, community-based project very difficult.

However, there are several works which have provided valuable insight into the housing plight of the coloured community of Durban. Rodney Jones views the issue of housing within the context of space, place and identity.⁴⁰ Although it is not an historical work, it exposes the limitations of the structuralist analysis. In his postmodernist interpretation, he attempts to capture the totality, differential and relational dimensions of the urban experience.

Some of the issues in Jones's thesis ties in with considerations in this study on GWP. An awareness of the role of housing in forming group consciousness is similar to Jones's concern with the role of space and place in defining a community's identity. However, his geographical consideration of the identity of coloureds is static. It gives no consideration to the rural origins of the community. It does not evoke a sense of change or continuity in the community's developments. In Jones's study, the formation of identity is

⁴⁰Jones, The Myth of Coloured Identity (?)

contained within Group Areas legislation whereas in this study on GWP coloureds, group consciousness is not merely defined as a product of racist legislation, but also a result of their historical experience, access to private property, location north of the Umgeni river and the daily realities of their housing environment.

Jones's interpretation of space is too limited to a residential area. The concept of space could be used to also explore structural dynamics such as housing (ie. shelter). The effect of the immediate physical environment such as the design of the houses, on the formation of identity could be particularly illuminating in a community such as Wentworth/Austerville where many of the coloureds have been densely housed in 'characterless' economic and sub-economic structures. In all fairness, Jones's study also suffers the constraints of a mini-thesis. However, his inability to adopt a broader perspective is also a result of a too rigid commitment to theory.

However, one cannot examine the issue of housing without some consideration of the various geographical and social theories. These theories influenced the policies of urban authorities which in turn, influenced physical and social developments in societies. Geographical studies on housing in the city has evolved from the morphological approach which dominated Western countries after the second World War, to the economic approach of the 1960's and 1970's.

The morphological approach studied spatial form without paying attention to social processes. This approach did not account for the impact of urban growth and industrialisation. It consequently proved inadequate. The economic approach which was adopted later, also did not pay sufficient attention to social processes because its function was largely to assess the economic viability of rebuilding or renovating older houses. The hegemony of the morphological and economic approach was largely a result of a failure to translate theory into social reality. In Britain, as in South Africa, it was the actions of various communities which challenged urban policy. The rent strikes in Glasgow during World War I not only challenged the conventions of local governance, but also caused social theorists to revisit the issue of housing. Similarly, in South Africa rent boycotts and squatter movements in the 1940's and 1950's helped scholars and authorities to give greater consideration to the issue of housing and to bring into consideration human agency. It was no longer appropriate to construct theories or policies on housing without giving some consideration to the social reality of occupants.

The USA, on the other hand, adopted a different approach to spatial forms. Housing was examined within the geographical framework of human ecology. This approach was largely influenced by mass urbanisation which occurred in the USA at the turn of the nineteenth century. As a result, theorists gave greater consideration to social processes. Because academic developments in South

Africa generally lagged behind that of first world countries, theories on housing in South Africa reflected the influence of British and American theories.

However, because of the advantage of hindsight, South African social theorists have been able to learn quicker than their western counterparts that “spatial form and social processes are different ways of thinking about the same thing.”⁴¹

How has this diversity of geographical theories influenced historiography and this study, in particular? For South African urban historians, whose branch of study is rooted in social history, the morphological approach to understanding urban form proved inadequate. It exaggerated the physical dimension of housing. Its emphasis on structure failed to account for the human element - so important to a discipline which defines housing as a social phenomenon. The morphological approach is also inadequate for this study on housing in a middle class coloured community. For this community, “housing vexation [was] deep and protracted .”⁴² It permeated their collective consciousness. To merely interpret housing as spatial form with no consideration of its related social implications would reduce this study to a sterile account of coloured urban existence.

⁴¹Pritchard, Housing and the Spatial Structure of the City, p 3

⁴²C. Pugh, Housing in Capitalist Societies, (England, 1980), p 286

Yet, one need not choose one approach and totally exclude another.

Environmental determinism such as exists in townplanning and urban policy is not necessarily diametrically opposed to social dynamics. These are just different ways of looking at the same issue. Both approaches have been used in this study on housing in GWP in the 1950's, 1960's and 1970's. Chapters 4 and 5 focusses on spatial form and chapter 6 on social response to this urban form.

The economic approach to housing was without a doubt, an influential factor in the policies of municipal governance when it came to the issue of upgrading areas with a 'small' tax-base such as GWP. Yet, efforts by local authorities to implement townplanning principles based largely on a morphological approach was rejected by the residents. This brings social dynamics into the equation.

As stated earlier, South African historiography still needs to provide a comprehensive account of housing policy so that these divergent, yet complimentary theories on urban form can be integrated into a more holistic understanding of urban growth and development. Arguably, this effort would go a long way in compiling comprehensive works on South Africa's cities - another shortcoming in South African urban historiography. Whilst international historiography can boast publications on the cities of Sydney, Chicago and London, none exist on one of the fastest growing cities in the world. As long as major gaps occur in South African historiography on the issue of housing and more importantly, the history of some of its numerically disadvantaged peoples,

a good overview on the city of Durban will remain an unattainable ideal.

Much work still needs to be done to bring the story of coloureds out of the margins and into the heart of analysis in urban historiography. The Urban Foundation, the Bureau of Market Research and the Institute of Social Research has provided limited empirical data on this community, but historians need to rise to the challenge. In the 1970's Rankin commented on the "paucity of historical writings" on the coloured community of Natal.⁴³ Twenty years later, the situation has only marginally improved by family histories or incidental inclusions of this community into the history of the Indian community.

S. Bramdeow's⁴⁴ thesis on the Fynn family and N. Hurwitz's work on the Dunn family⁴⁵ are valuable contributions to the story of coloureds in Natal. However, these are primarily rural, family-based historical accounts of this small community. Durban coloureds evolved beyond the status of rural off-springs. In fact, chapter 3 illustrates that many Durban coloureds had no rural roots, but were descendants of the Mauritians and St. Helenans who entered into the colonial economy of Durban. Many coloured residents in GWP were offshoots of these early settlers, with no links to Dunn, Fynn, Ogle, Champion or any other white settler who was given land in the rural parts of Natal.

⁴³Rankin, "A Pilot Study assessing the problems facing the 'Coloureds', "p3

⁴⁴S. Bramdeow, Henry Francis Fynn and the Fynn Community in Natal, 1824 -1988 , (M.A thesis, Dbn, 1988)

⁴⁵N. Hurwitz, The Dunn Community: a Rural Story , (M.A.thesis, Pretoria, 1946)

South African urban historiography fails to explore the link between coloureds, Africans and whites, beyond accounts of miscegenation. The competition between emergent coloured bourgeoisie and the white middle class should provide a fascinating topic of interest for radical scholars whose interpretation remains primarily economic. For example, the white ruling classes often used housing to close off economic space for the rising coloured bourgeoisie. At the same time housing for coloureds was also used to protect the white ruling classes against the tide of urban masses. This point is eluded to in chapters 4 and 5 where the structural aspects of housing and the housing environment is contextualised by references to the neighbouring white middle class community of Durban North. In short, there are many challenges awaiting historians who are open to alternative renditions of Durban's past.

This study on the housing experience of the GWP coloured community from 1950 to the 1970's, is a development on the initiatives of S. Bramdeow and N.Hurwitz. It is also an invitation for a more inclusive history of Durban. Yes, this study is guilty of errors of omission. It does not include the voice of women. By virtue of their social position, surely women were more profoundly affected by housing than their male counterparts? Why, then, have women been relegated to a fleeting reference in chapter 6? This, once again, goes back to the shortage of data on coloureds. Rankin's data reflects a high percentage of female-headed households in the coloured communities of Wentworth, and to a

lesser degree, Sydenham.⁴⁶ No similar data exists on the community of GWP.

Nevertheless, Rankin's data brings to surface many considerations about housing, local urban policy and its impact on women. These considerations in turn, lead to questions about the appropriateness and relevance of male representation in local affairs councils (LAC's), civic organisations and community-based organisations. However, without sufficient data one cannot take these questions to any logical conclusion beyond acknowledging that, like any other community, coloured communities were not homogeneous. They were stratified along the lines of class as well as gender and that urban form such as housing, impacted differently on different sectors of the community. A study on the housing experience of a community should not only display sensitivity to racial, class or international influences, but also gender issues. The past of Durban coloureds is more complex than urban historiography suggests, but how would we know if their history remains unrecorded.

⁴⁶Rankin, "A Pilot Study Assessing the Problems Facing the 'Coloureds' ",

Chapter 3

Background: Early Greenwood Park and the Socio-Political History of Coloureds

The early history of Greenwood Park (GWP), like any other area, is inextricably tied to the socio-political and economic developments in Natal. In turn, developments in Natal reflect developments in the rest of the country. From its colonial past to its unfounded claims of being the stepchild of apartheid, Natal persistently reflected South Africa's complex flirtation with colonial sentiment and industrial capitalism. GWP's history reflected this dichotomy. From its early colonial roots in the sugar industry in the 1890's; its evolution into a peri-urban predominantly white settlement in the 1930's and eventually to its emergence in the 1950's and 1960's as a predominantly 'non-white labour reserve' within Duikerfontein ⁴⁷ (refer to fig. 1, p69), GWP evolved into an increasingly racially oriented middle class community. The official proclamation of GWP as a coloured area, which offered private sector housing, in 1960 was the result of a long and complex process of change and continuity.

Coloureds did not arrive in the colony in large numbers. Neither were they here by special and urgent invitation.⁴⁸ By the time that a significant number arrived

⁴⁷C.Hands, City Engineer's Report on the Planning of Durban North, (Dbn, 1975), p37

⁴⁸Brookes and Webb , A History of Natal , p 85

in 1850, there were already mixed people in Natal but these were very small in number. Those that arrived in significant number in 1850 were largely Mauritians and St Helenans.

Even though some entered into domestic service in white homes and a few were brought into the Colony by the early settlers, their status was largely that of free citizens accorded full citizenship rights through the franchise. There were few restrictions on where they lived. Even when the franchise was taken from Indians in 1893, coloureds in Natal maintained their status of political aristocracy. They served in white regiments during the Anglo-Boer War. Their children went to white government schools right up until 1904. They rode in white busses and trams. In fact, prior to 1902 coloureds were included as part of the European population in census figures.⁴⁹ In short, the early coloureds had an urban life that was characteristically closer to whites than their Black counterparts (Indians and Africans).

Then why is it that a people who once shared in the aristocracy of white urban society had become so tenuously linked by 1960, that the closest some came to buying back into this aristocracy was through private property? The answer lies

⁴⁹L. Kuiper, H. Watts and R. Davis, Durban, A Study in Racial Ecology, (London, 1958), p 51

partly in changes in legislation, the translation of national policy by local government, the rise of industrial capitalism, the resultant mass urbanisation and the in-migration of Euro-Africans and Cape coloureds. Even though this thesis deals with each factor separately, it is important to understand that these factors are interdependent and as a result, impacted simultaneously on Durban coloureds. However, only a close and separate examination of each factor will reveal why, by the 1960's, the GWP coloured community found themselves alienated from the white urban classes yet simultaneously distanced from the black lumpenproletariat.

Arguably, the most significant transformation in the political history of Durban coloureds was the loss of the franchise. This not only altered the social and economic status of this minority group, it shifted their collective consciousness, sense of identity and self-worth. They had to collectively internalise the fact that their cultural similarity with whites had lost its utility value in the new industrial context and that racial diversity now served a greater purpose. For the small coloured community in GWP, this translated into a complete shift in their housing experience as they would no longer share housing with Indians and whites. They were now left to shape their own immediate urban environment within the confines of racial boundaries and economic fortitude.

How did coloureds lose the one weapon which was so instrumental in defining

their socio-economic status? The South African Amendment Act passed in February 1956, removed coloureds from the common voter's roll; a position they enjoyed for over a century. When Dr. Malan assumed power in 1948, his stance towards coloureds changed from that of the 1920's when he stated that

“a dividing line must be drawn between the Natives and Coloured peoples, and that the political rights of the White man shall be given to the Coloured people.”⁵⁰

From 1950, Malan's National Party(NP) government began its political manoeuvring to alter the status of coloureds. Over a period of 5 years, bills were introduced (eg. the South African Amendment Bill and the Senate Bill), judges in the Appellate Division were replaced and the Senate was enlarged with NP supporters, all in an effort to obtain a two thirds majority in support of the disenfranchisement of coloureds. By 1956, coloureds were represented separately and by white officials. By such measures, coloureds did not just lose the vote, they lost the one tool necessary to secure social and economic gains in a rapidly industrialising society.

However, the loss of the vote does not completely explain the shift in the status of Durban coloureds. A shift down the social and economic spectrum had

⁵⁰L. Wood, The United Party and Coloured People, Wood's Manuscripts, (Killie Campbell Africana Library, Dbn, 1966), p2

already begun by 1948 . Earlier political and economic developments such as Milner's reconstruction programme, started this shift. Milner's social and economic reconstruction of the Transvaal and Orange Free State influenced the direction in which South African cities evolved. Underlying Milner's programme was the principle of separation, social planning and intervention. The focus was on people's diversity rather than similarity. In 1905, the Lagden Commission Report clearly reflected a move towards social planning and intervention with an emphasis on the separation of peoples. This introduced new rigidities in the way in which people began to think about their environment and race relations ⁵¹ It was merely a matter of time before this thinking reached Natal.

By 1910 the Natal government showed signs of being influenced by separatism, inherent in Milner's policy. It began to shift its policy towards coloureds. Since 1856, coloureds in Natal were given equal political status to whites. However, in 1909 the Natal delegates to the National Convention failed to support a colour-blind franchise. Firstly, this was an indication of increased insecurity amongst the white ruling classes - an insecurity caused by the influx of Blacks in the urban areas. Secondly, this indicated that coloureds were no longer perceived as culturally similar, but racially separate. The failure to support a colour- blind franchise at the National Convention, effectively undermined the

⁵¹T. Davenport, South Africa: A Modern History ,(London, 1991), p204

social and economic gains that coloureds had secured over the century. The commitment of the Natal delegates to the original charter of 1856 proved fragile. It soon became apparent that the privileges of coloureds were merely acts of goodwill- rewards to a people who had obediently played out their ascribed role in society. ⁵²

Under Union , the position of the coloureds in Durban became more precarious. Because of increased centralisation, Natal lost much of her autonomy. Issues such as race relations, housing and job allocation were increasingly determined from central government. The Apprenticeship Act of 1922, the civilised labour policy, the Industrial Conciliation Act of 1924 and the Wage Act of 1925, controlled and inhibited coloured socio-economic advancement. As the effects of legislation translated into reality, the white image of coloureds began to change. Coloureds began to occupy lower unskilled jobs. Coloured girls were increasingly channelled into an education system which aimed at domestication, not only to entrench their role in a male dominated society, but also to facilitate entry into the domestic service of the ruling white society. ⁵³

Did a shift in demographics also contribute towards a shift in the status of coloureds? Yes, but a shift in demographics merely accelerated a process which

⁵²V. February, Mind Your Colour. The 'Coloured' Stereotype in South African Literature ,(Leiden, 1981), p8

⁵³Y. Miller and B. Stone, Dear Old Durban , (Pmb,1985),p 39

had already started. Firstly, there are problems with the basic assumptions in the theory on demographics. It suggests that the influx of Cape and Euro-African coloureds from the rural areas, led to cultural divergence which in turn, threatened the culturally dominant white minority. This argument assumes that the early coloureds were culturally homogeneous and compatible with an equally homogeneous white society. It assumes that the sharing of a common urban context produces a single culture. It also assumes that culture and socio-economic status are mutually inclusive. Yet, this is not true. Early coloureds such as the St. Helenans and Mauritians were no more similar than the Afrikaners and the English. Secondly, urbanisation does not necessarily have an homogenizing effect on communities. In fact, many communities continue to play out their diverse cultural roles even within the context of a shared urban environment.

On the other hand, the early coloureds may have been more culturally similar to whites, but they were not necessarily socio-economically similar. As indicated earlier, many early coloureds entered the domestic service of the whites in the colony. Yet, given these inconsistencies, it would be difficult to completely reject the theory on demographics. The first coloureds of Durban arguably, had a much closer urban experience with the whites in the colony than those of the 1950's to 1970's and the influx of Blacks (including Euro-Africans and Cape coloureds) had much to do with the shift in their status and urban experience.

However, one cannot ignore evidence which suggests that the social and economic transformation of coloureds began *before* the First World War. By 1914, schools in Natal had already become segregated. Instead of being enrolled in white regiments, coloured soldiers were sent to join the Cape Corps in Kimberley. Coloureds became increasingly alienated from whites long before their influx in the 1920's and 1930's.

Close examination of census statistics brings into question the plausibility of the demographics theory. Even though statistics were often merely estimates, they do give some indication of demographics in the region. By 1911, there were only 9000 coloureds in Natal. These figures suggest that coloureds were still comparatively insignificant in numbers in that there were 98114 whites in Natal in that same year.⁵⁴ One cannot, therefore attribute the shift in the status of coloureds in Natal to their overwhelming numbers in the urban areas. As illustrated in the paragraph above, the status of coloureds had already begun its downward slide by 1911.

By the 1940's the social and economic status of coloureds had shifted to the point where those in Durban were only marginally linked to whites but sufficiently alienated from other Blacks. This equilibrium was maintained to prevent coloureds from aligning themselves with the rising African masses.

⁵⁴Brookes and Webb A History of Natal , p 248

Racial zoning was one of the strategies employed to maintain the status quo. In the 1940's the Durban City Valuator and Estates manager submitted a plan on race zoning to the Durban Post- War Development Committee which provided for the housing of the four races in separate areas.⁵⁵ The allocation of property and land became a defining aspect of urban life for the various races. This provided the coloureds of Durban with an opportunity to maintain 'respectability'. Coloureds in GWP bought into the segregation policies of local authority. They saw it as an opportunity to access property which would redeem them from the faceless existence of the urban masses.

However, land acquisition and property ownership was not enough to save this community's downward slide into political obsolence. The loss of the vote, the inability of local government to challenge the racist policies of central government, the ambiguous approach of the Natal Provincial Council to the political status of coloureds and the increasingly ambivalent response of the coloured community to their changing status in the province, drew this community into a more common political experience with the other Blacks in Natal.

The stance of the United Party dominated Provincial Council towards the

⁵⁵Natal Regional Survey, The Durban Housing Survey, Additional Report No. 2, (UND, 1952), p 405

removal of coloureds from the voter's role should have sent warning signs to many coloureds who had found comfort in their place as aristocracy. In 1952, the Natal Provincial Council showed a lack of commitment or concern for the plight of coloureds when it took a resolution which swung its focus away from the original impetus about the constitutional rights of coloureds. The resolution was changed to the constitutional rights of whites in Natal. Admittedly, the swing to a less revolutionary stance in challenging national authority had much to do with material considerations- (from 1912 to the 1960's Natal received more than half of its revenue from central government). It would have been economic suicide for a region as industrially and commercially tied to the Transvaal as Natal was, to pursue an autonomous course of action. However, the quick turnabout in the stance of provincial authorities was an indication of how tenuous the position of coloureds had been, not just in the country at large but in Natal in particular. The social and economic status of Durban coloureds was not based on fundamental human rights, but merely a means of co-optation.

In the 1950's, white patriarchal organisations such as the Defenders of the Constitution and the Torch Commando were formed with the initial intention of protecting the franchise rights of coloureds in Natal. However, their initiative soon shifted to opposing Nationalist policies and, in the case of the Torch Commando, the protection of the English speaking minority. As a result, the position of coloureds continued to shift down the continuum towards political

illegitimacy. In 1956 only about 500 coloured males in Durban still had parliamentary and municipal franchise.⁵⁶ After the referendum of 1960, these coloureds lost the vote. In that same year, GWP was officially declared a coloured group area.

The shift in the political status of coloureds had far-reaching consequences. It may not have led to the mass radicalisation of Durban coloureds, but it heightened their awareness of their economic and social deprivation. For a community whose political empowerment was historically tied to property ownership, the translation of social and economic deprivation into home ownership was a logical step. Even coloureds outside of Durban made this translation. In 1959, riots by coloureds in the Boland served as an indication of the extent to which coloureds had connected the question of housing shortage and inadequacy to social and economic deprivation. By the time that the issue of housing was addressed by the coloured community at Gelvendale, Port Elizabeth in 1971, the housing grievance had moved beyond economic and social discontent to a political struggle.

Although the housing question did not radicalise the coloureds in Durban to the same extent as those in the Cape, it still featured as a major grievance. It permeated their mass consciousness. They began to see home ownership as their

⁵⁶Dickie - Clark, "The Marginal Situation", p 152

one redeeming factor. Those who occupied private sector homes felt empowered. They felt they occupied a higher social status than their counterparts in the public sector.

Consequently, the emergence of GWP from the 1950's to the 1970's as an 'elite' coloured area was not only because of its housing structure, design and layout, but also because of the political journey that coloureds had undergone from 1850 to 1960 (the point at which GWP was officially declared a coloured group area) - a journey which was as much defined by provincial and local government as central authority.

The early history of GWP dates back to the late nineteenth century when Natal's colonial economy was largely based on agriculture and dependent on indentured labour. Duikerfontein (GWP's zone) was a sugar farm then, with Indians as indentured labour. By the early twentieth century, GWP emerged as a white settlement or village with its own village council called the GWP District Committee. It did not fall under the control of the Durban Town Council . By 1897, GWP had its own railway station, a school and a community hall.

When the boundaries of Durban metropolitan area was extended in the 1930's, GWP was included under the control of the Durban Town Council as a peri-urban settlement. By 1951, GWP was demarcated as a coloured residential area.

At this point, GWP emerged as a suburb within the Durban metropolitan area.

Whilst Indian occupation of GWP dates back to the 1880's, no records are available for coloureds. A statistical breakdown of rail traffic to and from GWP for the year 1897 as provided by the Minister of Lands and Works does not provide much information about coloured occupancy (refer to annexure F).

Although the table suggests that a significant number of Blacks entered the area through rail (ie. 3rd class passengers), racial distribution is not reflected in these figures and secondly, there is no way of knowing whether these were residents or commuters. It is difficult to deduce from early records of title deeds, letters or inventory whether occupants were coloureds or whites because they share the same names and surnames.

Whilst records on early coloured occupancy in GWP prove illusive, reports from members of the community, including R. Crocker and A. Stowman , suggest that in the 1940's and 1950's, there were sufficient coloureds in GWP for it to be known as a coloured area. By the 1950's there were two schools which accommodated them, one a primary (Briardene) and the other a high school(Parkhill).

As stated earlier, the history of GWP is tied to the history of Durban and greater Natal, but Duikerfontein had a particular combination of physical, social and

economic circumstances dating back to the nineteenth century, that created unique local conditions in GWP in the 1950's to 1970's. As Gugler states , each urban community is unique in that it “ has developed under a particular combination of historical, geographical, demographic, economic, cultural and political circumstances.” ⁵⁷

The coloureds in GWP shared their space with Indians and whites. By the 1950's, they were part of an interracial community in which they interacted beyond the rigid class confines that existed under colonial rule. Under colonial rule, Indian presence in the area was rigidly defined by their position as indentured labour, not only on the sugar farms in Duikerfontein , but also in the fibre factory in the 1890's and the GWP brick company in 1901/1902. A new set of economic and social relations emerged with the rise of industrial capitalism. Indians were freed into industrialism and whites became part of a new urban elite. The coloureds of GWP were left trying to find a niche in this new system of class relations. They found it in property ownership.

What was the social and economic character of the coloured community prior to 1950? Once again the shortage of data leaves this profile wanting. However, by the 1950's, GWP coloureds had earned the reputation of being economically progressive, socially aloof and politically conservative. By the 1960's, GWP

⁵⁷ J. Gugler, (ed), The Urbanisation of the Third World, (N.Y. 1994), p 334

had a few doctors(3 were named by a respondent), several teachers and numerous building contractors. It was generally felt that coloureds in GWP earned more than the average earnings of their counterparts in Sydenham or Wentworth. This opinion was obviously formed by the fact that the price of property in the area exceeded that of the other major coloured areas.⁵⁸ For example, by the early 1960's land in GWP was sold for about R4000⁵⁹ whilst complete houses were sold for this amount in Sydenham. If one considers that by 1966, the average monthly per capita income of Durban coloureds was R22,50⁶⁰ and that the interest rate was from 7,5 %⁶¹ to 8,5%⁶² (ie. from 1965 -1966), with bond payments restricted by law, to 25% of one's earnings, then coloureds who bought in GWP had to have been from the higher income group. The cost of maintenance of large properties also contributed to the idea that GWP coloureds were affluent. For example, rates were directly proportional to the size of the property, so for the residents of GWP whose properties were very big, this (among other things) translated to high maintenance costs.

However, there were also a considerable number of residents who earned sub-

⁵⁸Comment of R.Crocker on the price of property in GWP- see transcript, p177

⁵⁹This price was quoted by a respondent who built his own house in the area.

⁶⁰The Daily News , 26/10/ 1966, featuring a report by G.G. Maasdorp of the Department of Economics, UND

⁶¹The Daily News , 8/10/1965

⁶²The Natal Mercury, 24/11/ 1966

economic wages, renting on council property. (These were gradually relocated after the construction of public housing schemes in Austerville which was part of Wentworth, and Newlands East). However, the prevalence of these 'less than affluent' families did not detract from the fact that GWP was perceived as a community with progressive coloureds who were socially 'respectable' and economically prosperous. More importantly, this community owned the most sought-after resource at this time; private property.

From the 1960's, the demands of industrial capitalism, the implementation of the Group Areas Act and the acute shortage of houses entrenched the status of GWP coloureds. However, there were also more subtle reasons behind the evolution of GWP coloureds as an elite community. Racially orientated townplanning principles designed to manage the underclasses was the one reason and the sanitation syndrome,⁶³ the other. Racially oriented townplanning principles were already in operation in Durban by the turn of the century. As early as 1871, the Durban Town Council created separate locations for Indians. Because GWP fell into the Victoria County (a rural borough with its own administrative structures), the implementation of this policy was delayed. Nevertheless, GWP did not escape the insecurities of the white ruling class for very long. The zoning of Durban began in earnest, guided by the need to protect the white merchant classes. Eventually, Indians were relegated to

⁶³Maylam, "Explaining the Apartheid City: ", 1995

zones such as Duikerfontein, which were on the margins of Durban. A small area within Duikerfontein was demarcated for coloureds. At the same time concerns about sanitation in the city provided a pretext for the removal of Blacks from the city centre. In 1902 - 1906 there was an outbreak of plague in Durban. This gave impetus to the racial cleansing of the city. Consequently, the declaration of Duikerfontein as an Indian occupied zone with a small area in which the social and economic aspirations of a small coloured community could be realised, was part of a greater management strategy based on the control of the underclasses which were racially defined.

The whites in GWP were not unaffected by this management strategy. They were relocated. However, their relocation was not only because of attempts to more effectively manage the underclasses, it was also because of the topography and the physical characteristics of the area. The Durban Housing Survey considered these factors when it implied that an area was either retained as European or Black by its character and location.⁶⁴ On both accounts, GWP was not suitable for European occupation. It was inland facing, had inhospitable terrain and was poorly planned.

As stated earlier, GWP was influenced by early developments. The demographics, the economic activities of earlier occupants, the architecture, the

⁶⁴ Natal Regional Survey, The Durban Housing Survey, p 430

design and layout of the area and the physical environment all contributed to the character of the area.

By 1950, GWP was dominated by distinguished, spaciouly designed houses. Some were brick houses with tin roofs surrounded by a verandah (refer to fig.2 , p70). Some were wood and iron houses (refer to fig.3, p71). Others were brick and tile houses commonly built from the 1930's (refer to fig.4, p72). Although these were less distinguished, less spacious than the tin roof variety, it still reflected the social standing of earlier inhabitants. Coloured occupation of these homes in the 1950's and 1960's allowed them to live out their aspirations of a distinguished lifestyle.

However, the prevalence of solidly constructed, spacious but somewhat outmoded houses profoundly influenced the character and design of the area in the 1950's and 1960's, particularly at a time when modern town planning principles were being applied in residential areas. The fact that GWP developed around pre-existing plots posed problems in the planning of City Engineers. When the boundary of Durban was extended in 1932, it included many new areas like GWP; which had been awkwardly sub-divided and designed by the Surveyor - General who showed very little concern for more controlled development.

Because up until 1910, GWP fell into the Victoria County, it did not have the same levels of control and development as other areas that fell under the control of the Durban Town Council. Issues such as road structure and drainage, which commonly concerned the City Engineer or townplanner, was under the control of the GWP Districts Committee. The needs and potential of the area was not identified because the City Council neglected to conduct periodic surveys prior to the Second World war. As a result, areas such as GWP were left to develop in a rather haphazard, piecemeal way, unlike the other coloured areas such as Wentworth and Newlands East which were more purposely designed (refer to fig.5, p73).

The lack of planning and delayed reconstruction by local authority affected the quality of housing in this small community. On the other hand, it could be argued that the lack of planning created space or open land which many coloureds bought so that they could construct their own, more modern, relatively spacious homes. In short, the lack of planning created opportunity for economic growth and social elevation.

However, delays in planning caused much frustration for this progressive community. These delays were caused by cumbersome and ineffective bureaucracy as well as restrictive legislation. The administration of housing schemes in Natal in the late 1930's and 1940's was under the authority of the

city council as well as the Natal Housing Board whose efforts were often separate and unco-ordinated. This made it difficult to effectively address the complex housing issues in Durban. At the same time, restrictive policies such as the Natal Housing Board Circular No. 6 of 1947 minimised the chances of houses getting demolished because of inappropriate design or the need for modernisation. This circular laid down stringent clauses for the demolition of property. Authorities were only urged to demolish dwellings which were in extreme condition of disrepair.

In any case, given the acute shortage of houses, the rapidly decreasing economic status of coloureds in general and their acquaintance with bureaucratic inconsistencies, it was hardly likely that coloureds in GWP were going to demolish their homes just for the sake of modernisation. As suggested by the interviewee, keeping homes within the family was important.⁶⁵ Homes were seen as a kind of heirloom. As stated earlier, history had taught coloureds the value of property. (The 1856 Charter of Natal awarded the franchise only to males who had immovable property to the value of fifty pounds or who rented property to the yearly value of ten pounds). Property had not only come to symbolise wealth, but also power.

Coloureds in GWP, as in the rest of Natal, had lost their political power. They

⁶⁵Comment made by R. Crocker - see transcript, p178

lost the municipal vote and representation in the City Council. By 1971, they were represented in a toothless racially based Local Affairs Council(LAC) which was established in accordance with Ordinance 23 of 1963. This body did not have executive status but only functioned in an advisory capacity. The grievances and petitions of this community were channelled through civic organisations such as the GWP Ratepayer's Association. Ironically, the loss of political power led to economic empowerment for this community. This was not generally the case for other coloured communities. From a nondescript smattering of people who had acquired a reputation of being social snobs, the GWP community emerged, in the 1970's, as a recognisable bourgeois community. They turned political deprivation into economic opportunity. The loss of the vote gave this community the opportunity to turn inward and to redefine their status in a new and changing urban context. Under the new apartheid order, status could no longer be defined by cultural similarity to whites or the right to vote. They had to find a new reference point. Access to private property in a lush green suburb north of the Umgeni became that reference. To the coloureds of GWP, it mattered that this suburb was once the domain of the white colonial elite and not military barracks(Wentworth) or a convenient dumping ground for illegitimate offspring(Sydenham). It mattered that in spite of the rapidly changing urban context and their slow drift towards proletarianization, they could find redemption in their immovable property.

On the other hand, there were certain realities that this community had to face. One reality was high maintenance costs. Because GWP had been poorly planned, the area did not possess aesthetic appeal. This was compounded by the fact that the homes were old, easily fell into disrepair and became blighted within a generation. By the 1970's many homes were in need of repair. The "inherited socio-spatial structure"⁶⁶ of this community was to have a significant impact on their economic resources.

However, this did not detract from the general perception that the residential area offered upmarket private sector housing. With all its inherent inadequacies, the size of the homes, the gardens, the proximity of the houses and the lush green environment offered inhabitants a suburban lifestyle that the other more purposely designed coloured group areas failed to do.

By 1960, coloureds in GWP learnt that their options were limited, so they accepted their homes with all its inherent problems. Given the circumstances in the 1940's and 1950's, it was improbable that coloureds could afford to build homes of equal magnitude or distinction. The building shortages after the Second World War, the escalating building costs and the drag in South Africa's

⁶⁶ A. Bernstein, CDE Research Policy in the Making of Durban- South Africa's Global competitor, (Jhb, 1996), p 13

economy in the 1940's made the replication of houses of equal magnitude inaccessible to most people, least of all a people that had become increasingly marginalised. The price of land had escalated to the point where by the 1970's the cost of private development in coloured group areas had grown beyond that of white areas.⁶⁷ This meant that those who already owned privately developed houses had access to an asset difficult to replicate.

It was not only the origin of the dwellings and geographical history of the area that defined the housing experience for GWP coloureds. Schools also played an important role . The GWP and Briardene primary schools were also inherited structures. Both schools belonged to the early white community with GWP Primary dating back to 1906 . This school was considered to be inadequate for the needs of the early, colonial community (refer to extract 1, p74) yet it was expected, with a few minor alterations, to meet the needs of a bigger more industrialised, more progressive coloured community (refer to fig.6, p75 for plan with proposed alteration of GWP School).

Although Parkhill High School was built later than the primary schools, it was transferred to the coloured residents sooner. By the 1950's Parkhill was completely a coloured school whereas GWP Primary still had white scholars.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Urban Foundation , African, Indian and Coloured Housing in Metropolitan Durban, Fact Sheet No. 2, (Ntl, 1977), p 12

⁶⁸ Comment of Mr R. Crocker - see transcript, p162

The fact that public facilities such as schools were simply transferred to a community without consideration of its diversity or needs was an indication of the rapid decline in the status of coloureds. Small communities such as GWP were only of marginal interest to local and central authorities such as the Department of Community Development. It is impractical to suggest that these schools should have been demolished and replaced by more modern, more appropriate structures. However, the total transference of a residential area with all or little of its amenities, without considering the needs of the community, was an indication of the management and control strategies of local and central authority - to produce labour at minimum cost and to inhibit the aspirations of a rising coloured petty bourgeoisie.

Criticism about the structural deficiencies of housing, particularly the schools, might seem rather pedantic given the broader context. Compared to the 'gutter education' offered to the African communities, the schools and the education offered to the residents of GWP was a luxury. However, the sub-standard, deteriorated, overcrowded buildings ensured that a rising coloured petty bourgeoisie would never be able to compete with their white counterparts. Even through education, coloureds were reminded of their lost place amongst the urban elite.

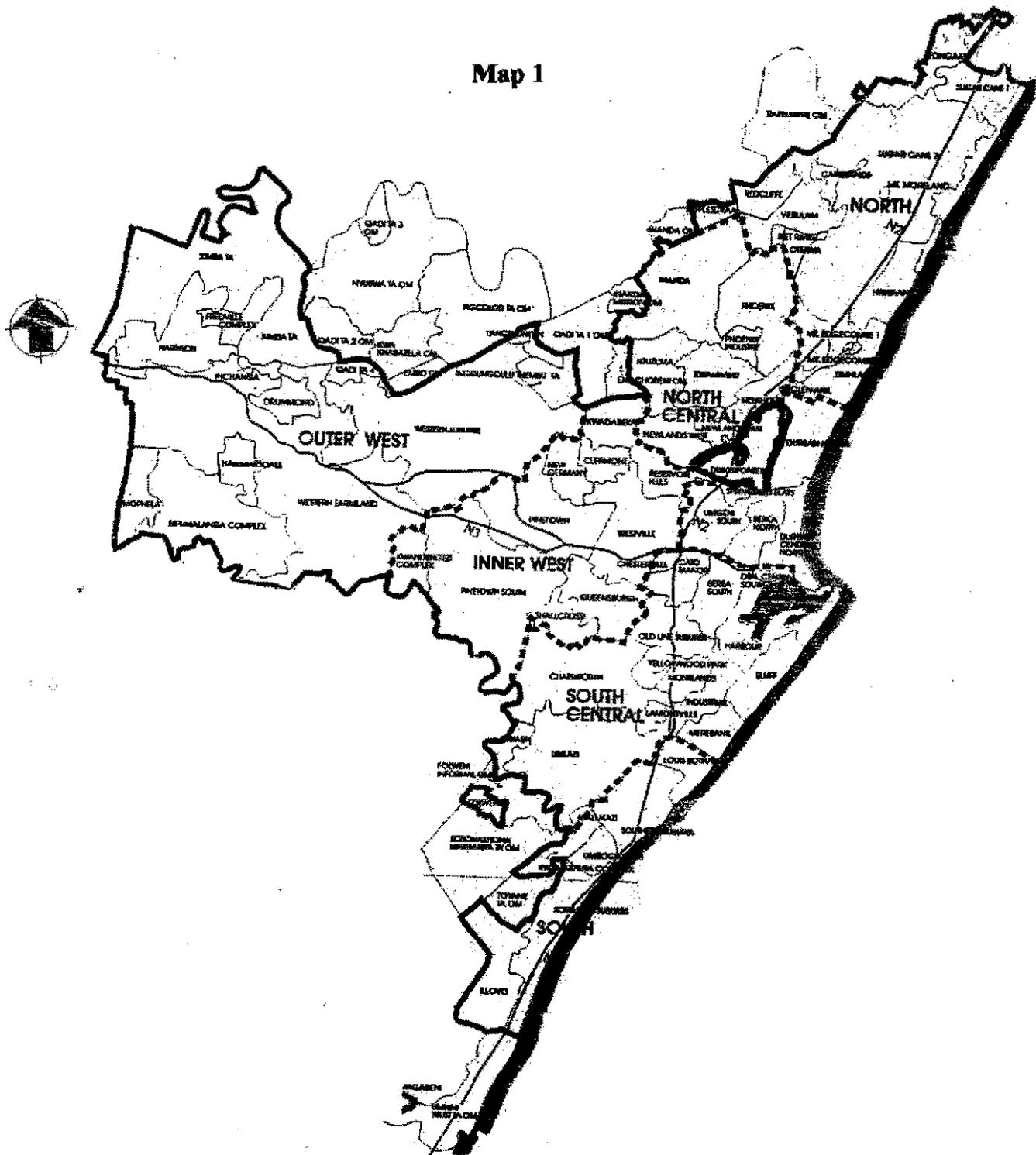
The history of the coloureds of GWP varied from that of the more densely

populated communities of Austerville/Wentworth and Sparks Estate/Sydenham. Unlike Wentworth, GWP did not originate from a Second World War military camp. It was not the product of an elaborate plan of the Durban Municipality in the 1930's. It was not characterised by municipal housing schemes. In some respects it was similar to Sparks Estate/ Sydenham. Some of its homes were of similar design. However, GWP did not have public sector housing. The social and economic history of the area was different. The identity of the community was different. The collective consciousness of this community was different, no doubt created by local conditions and a shared concept of housing.

In summary, from the 1950's to the 1970's, GWP was occupied by a people who had lost their status as part of the political elite of Durban yet, emerged as Durban's coloured middle class community. What caused this elevation? Property. GWP offered coloureds access to private property. This had important implications for this small community. Firstly, it meant accepting the colonial heritage of an area which was once a sugar plantation with indentured Indian labour- a significant feature of Natal's colonial past. It meant occupying houses that were once owned by white and Indian residents. Secondly, it meant accepting a physically hostile, poorly planned, poorly laid out environment because of its history as a peri-urban settlement outside of the control and management of the Durban Town Council. Thirdly, it meant accepting the racially based townplanning principles of local authority which demarcated

Duikerfontein as an Indian zone with a small area for coloured occupation. It meant falling victim to the plans of the local authority, not only to cleanse Durban but, to protect the white merchant class. In buying property in GWP, coloureds were accepting apartheid legislation which, through the Population Registration Act and the Group Areas Act sought to order society on a race basis so that the demands of industrial capitalism could be met. In short, accessing property in GWP meant accepting the long social, economic and political history of Durban. However, accessing property in GWP also meant maintaining 'respectability' and power at a time when coloureds were threatened by proletarianisation.

**Figure 1
Durban metro and substructure boundaries**



Settlement areas in metropolitan Durban with Duikerfontein highlighted

source:

Bernstein, CDE Research - Policy in Making, Durban - South Africa's Global Competitor, n/a

Architectural patterns in Greenwood Park

FIGURE 2

Single storey house with iron roof and large verandah - design dating back to 1880/1914



Contemporary photograph of a home in Greenwood Park with an iron roof and large verandah



FIGURE 3

Wood and iron houses - design dating back to 1898/1900



Contemporary photograph of a wood and iron house in Greenwood Park



FIGURE 4

A more modern compact single storey house with iron roofs dating back to 1915/1930



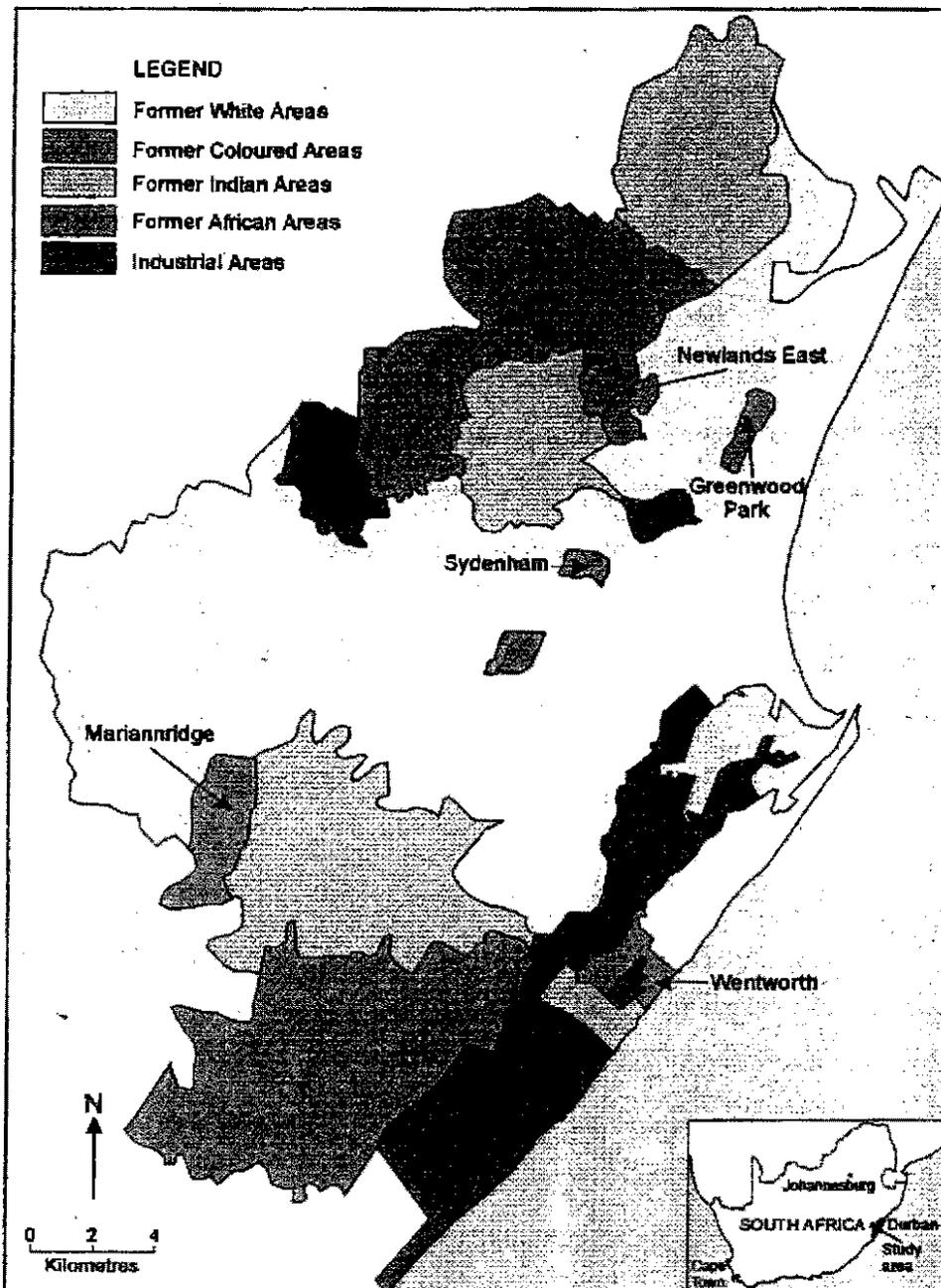
Contemporary photograph of a house in Greenwood Park illustrating a variation of the compact single storey, iron roof house.



source (for figures 1, 2 and 3) :Russell, *A Study of South African Interracial Neighbourhood*

Figure 5
Map 2

The Five Group Areas of Durban



source : Jones ,

The Myth of Coloured Identity (I): An Examination of the Coloured Community of Wentworth, (figure 2)

EXTRACT 1

A letter dated 1908 from the Principal under Secretary regarding insufficient accommodation at Greenwood Park Primary School.

W. Clayton Collee Wednesday

Is the Govt aware that in regard to the new school at Greenwood Park the accotn has already proved to be insufficient and that a marquee has had to be repositioned which will be most inconvenient for children during the wet weather.
Will the Govt take steps to remedy this state of affairs.

Prin

Supt. Ed:

What reply should the Minister make?

22. 6. 08

(Print)
P.L.S.

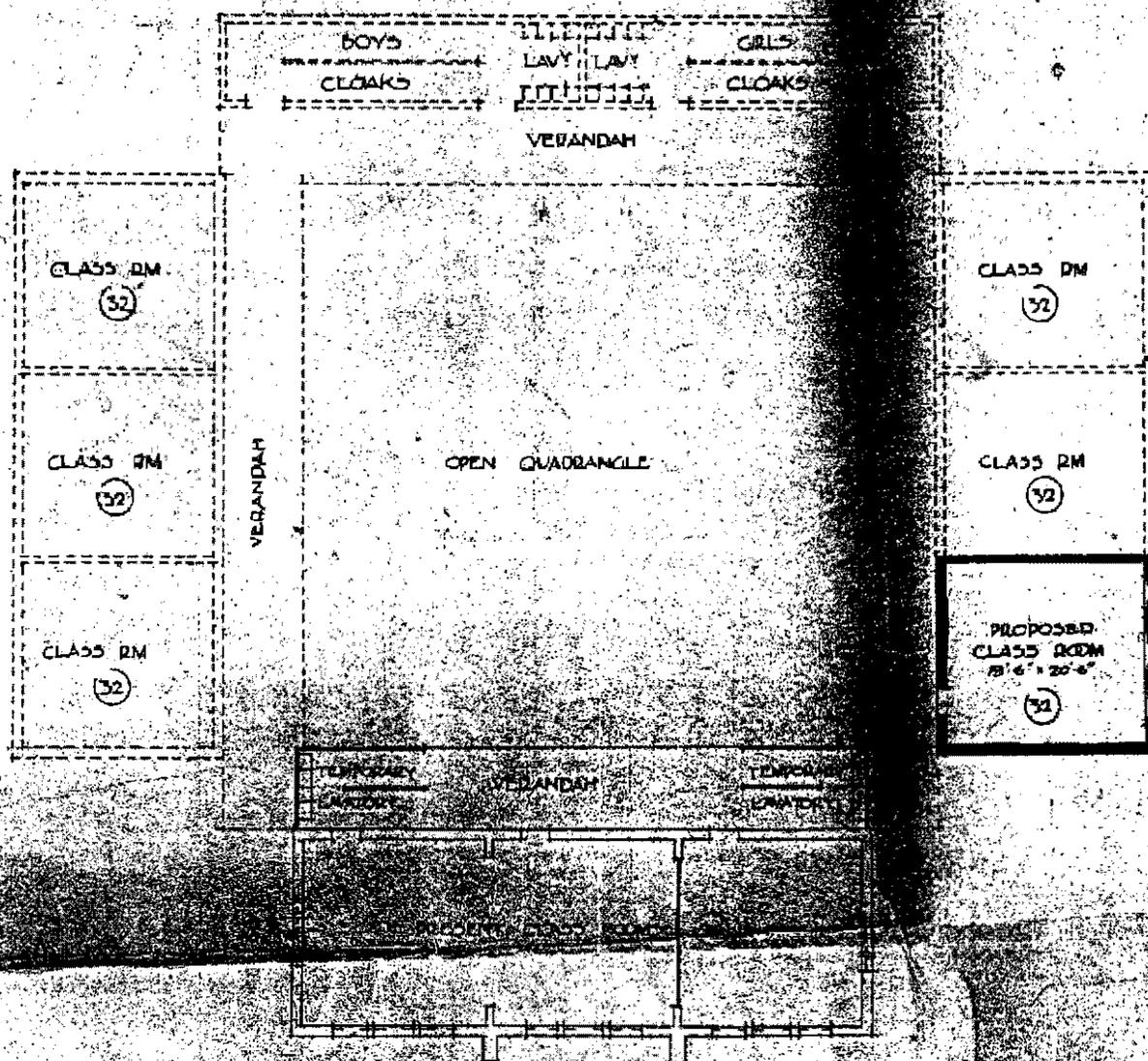
Figure 6
Plan of Greenwood Park Primary School dated 1907

DRAWING NO 29
/02

GREENWOOD PARK SCHOOL

ADDITIONAL ROOM

SCALE 16 FEET TO AN INCH.



W. J. DEALL
ARCHT. DRAUGHTSMAN
P.O. MADITZBURG, SEPT. 08.

**An Aerial view of Greenwood Park primary School taken in the early
1970's**



Primary School – Greenwood Park

Chapter 4

Vertical aspects of Housing

4.1. Geographical and Geological Considerations

The physical environment plays a significant role in defining one's housing experience. Topography, geology, location and architecture are fundamental to housing. This study refers to these physical features as vertical aspects of housing. This reference is purely academic in that it serves as a model which defines the relationship that exists between housing and the physical environment. It is a vertical relationship because each factor is associated in a hierarchy to produce a particular housing experience. For example, topography and geology was used to determine the location of coloured houses. In turn, location influenced the architecture and design of the houses. GWP is a case in point. Because of its location outside the boundaries of the Durban Town Council up to the 1930's, there was less rigid control over the building activities in GWP, resulting in more varied architectural patterns and a less rigidly designed environment. Urban development and planning is also included as a vertical dimension to housing because it helped to create the physical environment in GWP but not without it also being influenced by location, topography and geology.

GWP is located north of the Umgeni river. Apart from extractive industry in

Briardene and Effingham, this northern area mainly had light industry by the 1970's. However, it was not only location within a light industrial region north of the Umgeni that defined the housing experience of the GWP community. Location within the Indian zone of Duikerfontein and proximity to the middle class white suburb of Durban North also impacted on their housing experience. It allowed for certain shared experiences, but it also reminded this community of their real status in a racially segregated society. Location in an area which was rooted in Durban's colonial past also helped to define this community's housing experience.

Why were coloureds housed in this small area which was part of Duikerfontein, north of the Umgeni river and bounded by white and Indian residential areas? Numerous theories exist. Urban historiography lacks a comprehensive analysis of housing in Durban so it is difficult to clearly trace the development and planning of houses in this city in the 1960's and 1970's. However, some theories lean more towards materialist considerations whilst others, racial and cultural considerations. Nevertheless, it is clear that the plan of the city was based on the plan of a model apartheid city (refer to fig.8, p94), which in turn, was influenced by the western model of Burgess in which residential areas were designed in concentric circles(refer to fig.9, p94). Even though historically, Blacks were made to occupy areas furthest from the city centre, by the 1960's South Africa began to follow the modern American trend of developing affluent

suburbs further from the central business district. This strategy was also implemented because of urban decay which accompanied mass urbanisation and industrialisation. South African cities such as Durban, therefore developed beyond the earlier concerns with sanitation and the protection of the merchant class. Because of the industrial revolution, economics still influenced developments, but not without racial considerations. By the 1970's, South African cities began to exhibit the "blight and flight" scenario of the American cities. Housing further from the city gradually became associated with affluence, which in the South African context became racially defined.

Durban was divided into socio-graphic zones. These zones were generally used to racially and socio-economically divide the city. (This was still in keeping with the model of the apartheid city - fig.8, p94). Although zones north of the Umgeni river generally became associated with middle class housing, height was also considered in defining racial ecology ⁶⁹ and socio-economic distribution. Duikerfontein falls into the Seaward Transitional and Inland Transitional Zones with GWP in the Seaward Transitional Zone (refer to fig.10, p95). From a socio-economic point of view, the Seaward Transitional Zone was considered to be the third most desirable zone whilst the Indian community in Duikerfontein occupied the fourth most desirable Inland Transitional Zone. The neighbouring white community of Durban North occupied the more desirable

⁶⁹Russell , A Study of an Interracial Neighbourhood, p 52

Seafront Zone. In effect, movement down the slope became a movement towards poverty and cultural diversity.⁷⁰

There were many advantages to living in the Seafront and Central Ridge Zones. These advantages went beyond elevation and attractive seaviews. The cool sea breeze in a hot and humid city, escape from the less aesthetically appealing residential areas in the inland zones and from a purely economic point of view, the escalating value of the property were just some factors which made the Seafront and Central Ridge Zones more appealing. Occupants of these more desirable zones had a psychological and financial edge over those on the downward slope. They could command high prices for their property. This in turn, meant that they could spend more on improvements, modernisation and general repair because returns were virtually guaranteed. The white housing market had a greater earning capacity and were therefore in a better financial position to improve as well as buy these homes. On the other hand, houses in the less desirable Seaward Transitional Zone such as GWP, had a limited market value. Even though the shortage of private sector homes created an exaggerated demand which inflated housing prices in GWP in the 1960's and 1970's,⁷¹ the extent to which the price of the houses could escalate was limited by the earning capacity of coloureds.

⁷⁰Kuiper, Durban, A Study in Racial Ecology , p 106

⁷¹ Comment of Mr. R. Crocker - see transcript, p177

Zoning also became a manifestation of the economic relationship between the various racially defined classes. The fact that Indians were generally placed further down the slope than coloureds was indicative of the historical relationship between the various race groups. Whilst the relationship between coloureds and the white ruling classes in Durban was one of co-optation and assimilation, that of Indians and the white ruling classes was one of competition and conflict. Historically, whites were less threatened by the numerically inferior and culturally similar coloureds. Yet, the rising economic status of Indians was a threat to the ruling classes. Zoning thus became an effective means of limiting the economic growth potential of the various race groups.

As a residential site, GWP had limited growth potential. It was bounded by the Indian community in the west and the white community in the east. Although the area was already earmarked for coloured occupation by the Durban Technical Sub-Committee of the City Council as early as 1951,⁷² its potential for geographical growth was already limited. In 1944, recommendations were already made by the Provincial Post- War Works and Reconstruction Commission for whites to occupy the area between North Coast Road and the seashore⁷³. This meant that Greenwood Park could not really expand in any

⁷²Kuiper, Durban, A Study in Racial Ecology, p 190

⁷³ Natal Regional Survey, Durban Housing Survey, p 407

direction. Given that this group area was one of only three established coloured group areas and the only one to offer exclusively private sector housing, the inability to grow had important implications for coloureds - economic space was closed off.

In proportion to the population of Durban, coloureds had the smallest land allocation. By the 1970's land occupancy levels were 43 coloureds per gross hectare compared to Indians which had 28 per gross hectare and whites with 19 per gross hectare.⁷⁴ Given this situation, there was a need for coloured areas to have the potential to grow and develop. Growth and development beyond public sector housing and municipal schemes was necessary to create the opportunity for socio-economic advancement. However, limited access to private sector housing worked to the advantage of the GWP community in the 1960's and 1970's. They were able to maintain exclusivity in the face of the rising demand for property ownership.

Location within the Seaward Transitional Zone and proximity to Indian communities in Duikerfontein were not the only geographical factors which influenced the housing experience of coloureds in GWP. Topography and geology also played a role . Generally soil type and landscape are not given

⁷⁴Carboni , The Planning of Local Authority, Public Sector Housing , p 31

much consideration when the urban environment is examined. Yet, as in the rural context, these factors often translate into economics. Maintenance costs, construction, lifespan of the homes, the provision of public facilities and amenities are influenced by geological and topographical features. As a result one cannot underestimate the impact of geological factors and topography on the daily reality of housing.

Natal, in general is influenced by a hilly terrain with steep valleys. As result, there is pressure to use land more appropriately and rationally. Authorities tend to avoid using land which requires excessive excavation. GWP is a case in point. Development of recreational facilities was often hindered by swamplands and severe topography.(refer to extract 2, p96). Drainage and filling of swampy ground was too expensive so, much of these lands lay fallow. (Instead GWP was allocated more plots for passive recreation such as playlots - refer to fig. 11, p97 - which did not require levelling). Of the 13 acres of council property in GWP, 9,3 acres which was intended for passive recreation was left undeveloped because of steep crossfall and swampy conditions.⁷⁵ Whilst the provision of recreational facilities would not constitute the vertical dimension of housing as defined at the beginning of this chapter and in the introduction, this aspect of housing is considered in this context merely to describe the

⁷⁵C.Hands, City Engineer's Report on the Planning of Duikerfontein.
File no.2/5/3/16 (Dbn, 1972) , p 4

topography and soil conditions and its impact on this community.

Swampy land inhibited growth and development as many private developers could not afford drainage or excavation costs. As a result, many parts of GWP were left as open spaces. This was to become a major concern in this community in the 1970's.

Nevertheless, the undulating territory translated into exorbitant financial costs and practical difficulties for this aspiring middle class community. Many of the houses were without vehicular access points so residents had to construct driveways and build garages in very hostile conditions. This not only translated into numerous practical difficulties but also into great financial expenditure at a time when Durban had stringent by-laws and the coloured community were slowly shifting down the economic spectrum.

Undulating terrain also influences the pattern of settlement. In general, Duikerfontein is characterised by ridge settlement (refer to fig.12, p97). GWP which falls within Duikerfontein, is therefore hilly with some "magnificent inland views".⁷⁶ According to City Engineer C. Hands, this scenic interest would attract development in Duikerfontein. However, he neglected to include

⁷⁶Hands , City Engineer's Report on the Planning of Duikerfontein , p 5

that development would be costly. For private developers, housing construction was difficult and expensive. Because of strict building codes and regulations, special consideration had to be given to the terrain and soil type, especially when setting foundations. Because the area was characterised by “fine grained thin bedded shales of lower ecca series”⁷⁷ with some deposits of Berea Red Sands, Middle Ecca Shale and Buryka Tillites, weathering often led to the formation of a clay which expanded and contracted considerably. This often led to poor drainage which adversely affected foundations and the disposal of stormwater and waste water through the soakpits which were still used in GWP right up to the mid-1970's. The slipping of geological formations one upon the other often led to structural cracks to which the less solid, more modern homes of the 1960's and 1970's, became vulnerable. Even some of the solidly built, double-walled older houses did not escape structural shifts caused by vulnerabilities in geological formation.

What were the implications of these geological ‘imperfections’ on homeowners? What was its affect on the housing experience of GWP residents in the 1950's, 1960's and 1970's? Geological features accompanied by strict building codes, regulations and limited access to high salaries made property ownership in the private sector precarious. Over and above mortgage payments and general maintenance, homeowners had to bear the costs of structural repairs

⁷⁷Hands, City Engineer's Report on the Planning of Duikerfontein , p5

and renovation which at the time of rising inflation, such as in the 1970's, was difficult to meet. Geographical and geological factors challenged this small coloured community. In efforts to establish themselves as a middle class community, GWP coloureds had to grapple with daily difficulties caused by location in a seaward transitional zone north of the Umgeni. Efforts to construct their own homes were made difficult by a hostile physical environment in the form of steep gradients, geological shifts and swampy land. Yet, in the face of a declining economic status, rising building costs and an acute shortage of houses, some coloureds in Durban were able to purchase private property, build their own modern, spacious middle class homes north of the Umgeni and thus secure their place as a rising bourgeois community.

4.2 Infrastructure

Infrastructure would generally be considered to be a horizontal aspect of housing in that it is more a product of the policies of local, provincial or central government than of the natural environment. However, as stated in the introduction, it is difficult to examine horizontal and vertical aspects of housing separately because in many respects horizontal and vertical aspects exist interdependently. However, in this chapter, road structure and network is examined as part of the physical environment because in the context of GWP, the condition of the roads was precisely because of the harsh physical and

geological conditions which, with appropriate planning and construction, could have had less of an impact on the community.

The condition, structure and layout of the roads played an important role in defining the housing experience of the coloured community of GWP. Generally, the pattern and quality of the roads were substandard. From the 1950's to the 1970's, roads were narrow and irregular. Most streets had no pavements and those that had, were poorly made. Many were still not surfaced by 1970 (refer to fig.13, p98).

Were these just signs of a general lack of planning and poor management? To a degree, yes. When the roads were laid, no account was taken of the topography of the area. The roads were merely laid by drawing lines on planes and the contours of the land were ignored. As a result, "most of the roads have very severe gradients and sharp radii..."⁷⁸ For the greater part of the period under discussion, roads remained sub-standard. It was only in 1978 that extensive plans were made for the improvement of the roads. Some of the streets were given sidewalks and other roads widened.⁷⁹ However, general road conditions were also a result of natural conditions. Unless appropriately constructed and regularly surfaced, roads constructed on shifting ecca shale is susceptible to

⁷⁸Hands, City Engineer's Report on the Planning of Duikerfontein, p33

⁷⁹ Minutes of the Durban Coloured Local Affairs Council (LAC), 6/4/1978

easy wear and potholes, particularly in Durban's extreme summer conditions when there is heavy rainfall and extreme heat.

Some might argue that economic factors delayed the improvement of roads in GWP in the late 1960's and early 1970's. Reports by the City Engineer on townplanning in Duikerfontein shows a constant awareness of the cost of construction in the area because of the hostile physical environment. In many parts of GWP the widening and surfacing of the roads was delayed because of construction costs caused by the steep and hilly terrain. However, it is difficult to be entirely convinced by economic considerations because within the same period (1970's), proposals for the planning of the neighbouring white community of Durban North showed plans for a road network and structure that was far more superior than that of Duikerfontein.⁸⁰ There is little to suggest that this plan would have been less costly to implement.

What was the effect of this inferior infrastructure on the daily lives of GWP coloureds? Firstly, from a visual and aesthetic point of view, GWP was less appealing than the white areas north of the Umgeni. Secondly, it brought untold hardship and daily challenges. Residents had to deal with the effects of dusty streets. In order to control the dust in the dry winter season a resident would

⁸⁰Hands, City Engineer's Report on the Planning of Durban North,

hose the section of the road which was adjacent to his house; sometimes twice a day. The unsurfaced roads were hazardous. In the dry season they became prone to potholes whilst in the rainy season they became impassable. Public transport was not provided partly because of hostile gradients, poor infrastructure and street layouts. Even private bus operators delayed servicing the area because of the sub-standard roads. In the early '70's a private bus operator was reluctant to bring his "brand new R30 000 bus into the area"⁸¹ until the roads were tarred. This meant that residents had to walk to the main arterial road, North Coast Road, to obtain public transport. For many, this entailed a ten to fifteen minute walk on narrow, undulating, dusty streets. This was the reality of owning private property in GWP.

It was not only the road structure and condition that was sub-standard for a middle class suburb. The entire internal and arterial communications network of GWP was inadequate (refer to fig. 14,p99). GWP was virtually cut off from the central business district by the Umgeni river and the Umhlangane river. Bridges which connected GWP to the city centre were still inadequate. It was only in the 1970's that proposals were made to develop the outer ring road to connect GWP to the national road (refer to fig. 14,p99) yet, 85% of jobs were still south of the Umgeni river. This situation was only marginally rectified by plans for the

⁸¹ Comment of R. Crocker on the delayed entry of an Indian bus operator, in GWP (earlier telephone conversation)

construction of Connaught bridge in the late 1970's and by the Durban Regional Guide Plan of 1973. This plan looked to redirect industrialisation away from the city centre and into industrial estates.⁸² However, these plans for the city only marginally altered the daily urban life of GWP residents. From the 1950's to 1970's , living north of the Umgeni translated into daily frustrations such as walking in dusty streets to the nearest bus stop, waiting in peak hour traffic which bottlenecked across the Umgeni river and following long and often disconnected routes back to their homes in the evenings - all as a consequence of a physical environment which required more co-ordinated land layouts, more practical sub-divisional patterns and adequate planning.

On the other hand, given this disharmony and dysfunction, housing in GWP still offered Durban coloureds a chance to escape public sector housing where one became victim to “ long dismal rows of houses [which formed] an unbroken track of gardenless habitation”⁸³ Even with its poor road layout, hostile physical environment, irregular plot sizes and inadequate vehicular access, private home ownership enabled the community of GWP to escape being branded a landless nation of flatdwellers.⁸⁴ In the face of the disharmony,

⁸²Bernstein, CDE Research- Policy in the Making, p17

⁸³ Natal Regional Survey, The Durban Housing Survey , p5

⁸⁴ Minutes of the LAC , 7/6/1977 - comment of secretary, Mr.C. Tiffin.

increasing economic deprivation and acute shortages, the coloureds who had accessed private home ownership were able to attain the status of a middle class minority.

However, let it not be incorrectly assumed that GWP was the only coloured group area to offer land for private development. Eight hundred privately owned sites were set aside in Merebank/Wentworth in the 1940's, but the transference of these sites to coloureds was delayed when it was leased to the British Admiralty during the war. Even when these sites were finally transferred, they were not sufficient to meet the demand. By the 1970's the unavailability of land became the overriding grievance of the coloured population of Durban.⁸⁵ Only 995 hectares of land was available for coloured occupation compared to 10 015 hectares for whites and 10 357 for Indians by the late 1970's. Consequently, the demand created by this acute shortage allowed land ownership to take on deeper significance for coloureds . Undulating land, hilly terrain, shifting eccla shale or poor road structure were not going to matter too much to a people with limited options. With all its inherent difficulties, GWP offered coloureds in Durban an opportunity to experience middle class suburban living.

However, not all coloureds responded positively to GWP. Some found its

⁸⁵Rankin, A Pilot Study Assessing the Problems facing the 'Coloureds', p 30

location undesirable- too far from the city centre, the lush green environment too undeveloped and irregular plots on hilly terrain with large spaces in between, too alienating.

Yet, ironically the very factors which made GWP undesirable to coloureds in Wentworth and Sydenham made it attractive to the wealthier Transkei immigrants and the rising petty bourgeoisie. Location on the hilly Transitional Zone may have caused practical difficulties , but GWP attracted aspirant coloured bourgeoisie who came to appreciate the significance of being located north of the central business district.

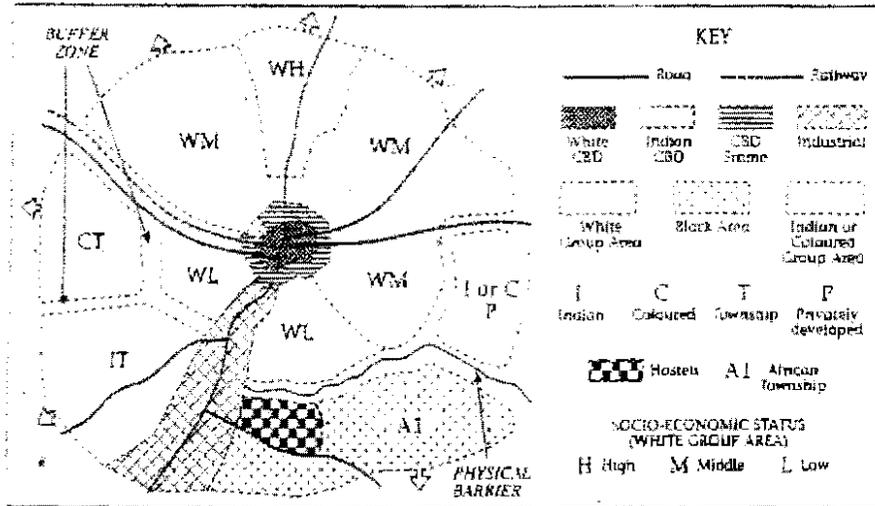
The lack of public transport in an area located approximately 10km out of the city centre may have deterred the lumpenproletariat in the 1960's and 1970's, but became a minor consideration for a people whose aspirations soon included car ownership. Location, topography, architecture, road structure and geological features may have contributed towards a rather hostile physical environment. Physical conditions may have created many practical daily challengers for this small coloured community but, ironically, it helped to sustain their bourgeois status. If you lived in GWP, then it had to be because you could afford to. There were costs that went with managing the physical environment. From maintaining or upgrading the double-walled, high-ceiling houses to building your own on the hilly terrain , living in GWP was not without daily challengers.

Yet, to many coloureds in Durban in the 1960's and 1970's, living in GWP was all about affordability and status. To the coloureds of GWP, living in this part of Duikerfontein was about all this and more. It allowed them to recapture their glorious days of aristocracy where property ownership allowed them to share in the political experience of the white ruling class. Living in GWP enabled them to attain self-fulfilment and self-realisation in an increasingly alienating urban environment and at a time when, as a result of industrialisation and the policies of central and local government, coloureds were increasingly identified as part of the faceless, voiceless urban masses. Perhaps R. Crocker captures it best when he states that coloureds in GWP were happy. They lived like whites and this made them feel a “cut above the rest.”⁸⁶

⁸⁶Comment made by R. Crocker - see transcript, p182

FIGURE 8

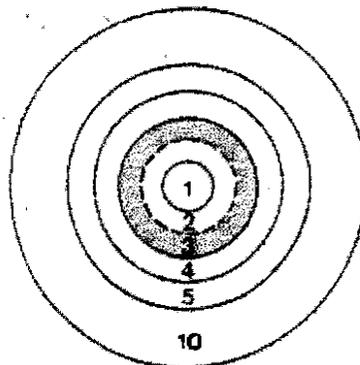
The model apartheid city adapted from R.J. Davies (1981). The Spatial Formation of the South African City, p59



Adapted from Seleti, Looking into the Past, 1999

FIGURE 9

A Classic Model of Urban Structure according to American sociologist, Burgess.

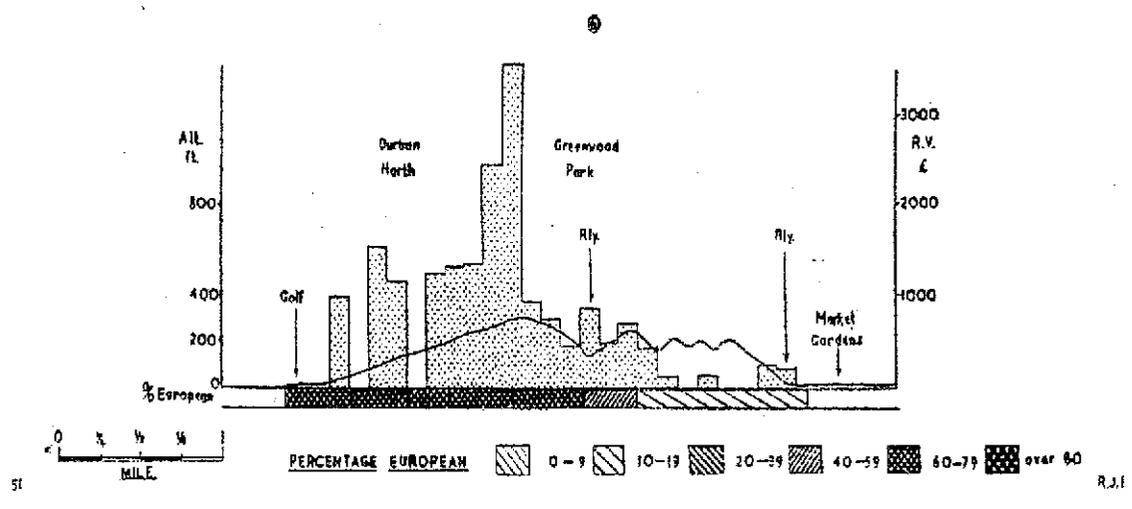


(a) Concentric zones

1. CBD
2. Wholesale and light manufacturing
3. Working class residential
4. Middle class residential
5. Upper class residential

FIGURE 10

Vertical profiles across Durban relating relief, municipal valuations of residential properties and racial composition



Source : Kuiper, Watts & Davis, Durban, A Study in racial Ecology, P105

EXTRACT 2

An extract of typically swampy conditions in Greenwood Park dating back to 1911. By the late 1970's, many of these grounds may have been cleared but traces of these persisted in parts



Report of swampy land near Greenwood Park declared by a petition to the D.R.C., Inanda, to be a danger to health.

The land in question is a narrow strip of ground ranging from 50 to 100 yards wide, and about a 1000 yards long running along parallel to and below the level of the main road to Verulam. A sketch map is put up showing the ownership of the plots. In effect it is the natural valley and watercourse between two lines of low hills. In places the small stream which at the time of my visit was flowing at about the rate of 100 gallons an hour opens out and is lost in a mass of reeds and vegetation and small pools, making an ideal breeding place for anopholes mosquitoes. There are many habitations along the main road and the total population which might be affected in the event of a malarial wave would be about 1000.

When at the time of my visit I made fairly careful search for evidence of breeding mosquitoes, but found none. Dr Hill, who informed me he also had made a careful search in places which a few years ago were alive with larvae, also found a negative result. He was however informed by reliable inhabitants of the locality that mosquitoes did exist and were a source of considerable annoyance.

In 1907, a local sanitation cover was made as to the proper drainage of the vlei. The actual work was undertaken by Government and the various owners of the land were charged with their respective proportion of the cost. Some of these plots, however, did not.

There is little doubt that should the obscure conditions re-occur which led to a great increase in the breeding of anopholes in 1907, that this locality would be badly infected, unless great trouble were taken in the way of filling or preventing the swampy spots.

With regard to the points brought up at the last meeting of the Board as to the scope of the action of Government in draining the road and road reserve into private property, and then compelling the owners to carry on the channels, I have consulted the Attorney General, who has given a verbal opinion that this action is in order as being the powers now available under two different laws.

Lines of action are suggested as follows :-

- (1) To allow matters to stand, seeing that malaria is not particularly prevalent, nor mosquito breeding very active and that the cold weather is approaching.
- (2) To make use of the powers under Government Notice 150, 1907, requiring owners to drain their land, and do all things required for putting an end to the condition of things referred to. In this case a special official would be required to supervise the work.
- (3) The ideal way to remedy the condition would be to have the strip of land surveyed, and a proper channel with branch channels made by the Public Works Department. I was informed by Mr Read, the late District Engineer for the District, that the rough approximate cost of the work would be £250. If this line of action were followed, the question arises as to whether Government would be prepared to bear the expense, or whether Government would undertake the work and take the chance of collecting the expenditure proportionately from the various owners.

FIGURE 11
A Playlot in Greenwood Park



Playlot Greenwood Park

Source : Hand's, City Engineer's Report on the planning of Duikerfontein , P31

Figure 12
Typical ridge settlement in Duikerfontein..



North Coast Road

Source: Hand's, City Engineers 's report on the planning of Duikerfontein , P5

Figure 13

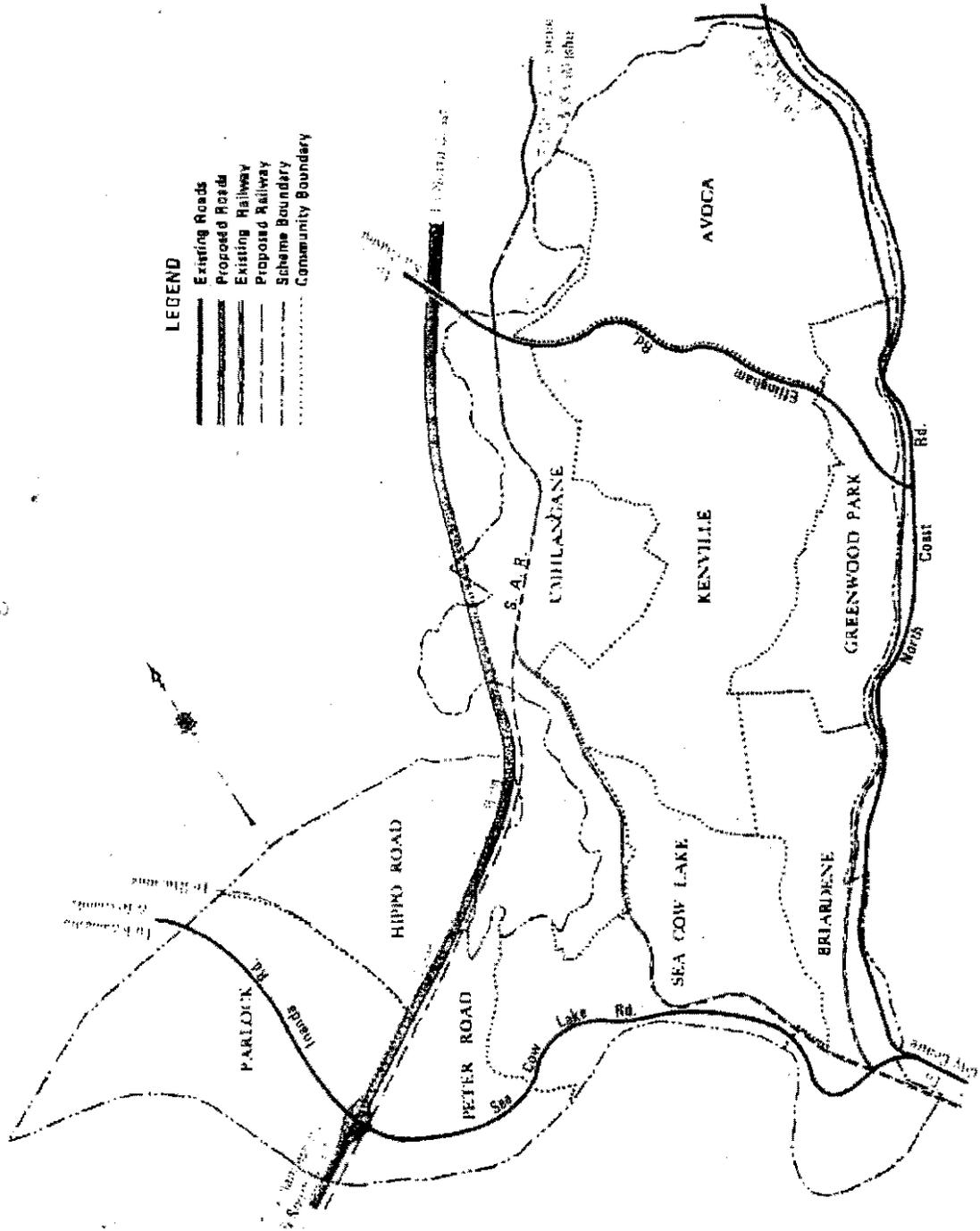
A picture of a narrow unsurfaced road in Greenwood Park.



Source: Hand's, City Engineer's Report on the Panning of Duikerfontein, P 23

FIGURE 14
MAP 3

Communication network of Duikerfontein - arterial and internal routes to Greenwood Park .



Source : Hand's, city Engineer's Report on the Planning of Duikerfontein

Chapter 5 Horizontal Aspects of Housing

“Housing is not just the responsibility of the builder. It is the end of a long chain of financial and administrative controls... [ranging] from the implication of national economic policy as set by the government... down to the institutions who provide the direct capital for new buildings - banks, insurance companies, building societies and the national and local authorities who provide much of the infra-structure for development...”

PRITCHARD, R. M, HOUSING AND THE SPATIAL

STRUCTURE OF THE CITY, P 4

Housing a community extends beyond the vertical aspects such as location, topography, architecture and road conditions. Public services and recreational facilities such as schools, sports facilities, libraries, swimming pools, community halls and clinics, commercial and industrial outlets, water, lights, and sewerage all constitute horizontal aspects. These factors are mutually constitutive and therefore do not exist in a hierarchy. As municipal infrastructure, they equally affect the standard of housing in a community.

From the 1950's to the 1970's, GWP was known as an elite coloured suburb but this status was not supported by its recreational and public facilities. Public and

social services in GWP lagged behind those of Wentworth and Sydenham which offered coloureds economic and sub-economic housing. Culturally and socially, GWP trailed behind neighbouring Indian communities in Duikerfontein. Compared to neighbouring white communities, GWP totally lacked facilities. By the 1970's, general maintenance was low. Compared to the attention given to other coloured areas, GWP was marginalised.

In 1974 the Durban LAC challenged the Durban City Council's budget in which a figure of R713 9820 was set aside for maintenance and services in the 1973/74 financial year. The issue of spending on the services, roads and maintenance in coloured areas was brought into question when members of the LAC challenged the city councillor about overgrowth and the neglect of railway property in GWP.⁸⁷ Despite its bourgeois status, GWP was treated as a cinderella coloured area.

By the 1970's, there was a widely held assumption that GWP was poorly maintained and that the council was more concerned with policing rather than providing a service. Why had the council earned this reputation? In the 1950's, 1960's and early 1970's, local building and health inspectors would regularly visit the area. Their primary concern was to ensure that the houses and general structure in coloured areas conformed to structural and public health standards.

⁸⁷Minutes of the Durban LAC, 4/12/1974,

The constant issuing of fines impacted heavily on the collective consciousness of this community. Whilst policing was in keeping with their portfolio, one has to question whether this was an appropriate approach given the broader housing situation for coloureds in Durban. As already stated, there was an acute shortage of houses for coloureds in the 1960's and 1970's. This was bound to lead to certain problems such as overcrowding which threatened public health standards. Secondly, with very little avenues for self expression and actualisation, progressive coloureds were bound to focus on their immediate housing environment. The building of one's own home became a viable means of expression. Yet, constant inspection was seen as an obstacle to progress and development.

As stated earlier, one has to question whether this was an appropriate approach by the council. Although necessary, this approach could have been accompanied by other measures as a counterbalance. For example, community based empowerment programmes such as advisory bodies on building codes, standards and regulations could have been established. Seeing that there was such a backlog in building houses for coloureds, then perhaps subsidies should have been made more easily available in order to cut building costs so that building standards could be more easily met. This would have been an opportunity for capital to work with either the city council or the Department of Community Development-the national body responsible for the housing of

coloureds. Efforts by capital to improve the housing plight of coloureds in Durban in the 1970's was largely confined to economic and sub-economic communities. It was not in capital's interest to concern itself with the aspirations or needs of a rising coloured bourgeois community. Given the scenario in GWP in the 1960's and 1970's, the punitive approach of inspectors did very little to alter the community's perception that local authority was indifferent and self-serving, with no true commitment to development or improvement of local conditions. In reality, GWP remained a community with poor municipal infrastructure - a problem compounded by overcrowding.

As illustrated above, even though GWP was considered to be a middle class area, it did not escape problems such as overcrowding, which is more typically associated with sub-economic and economic areas. Beyond the spacious homes, endless plots of land and lush green vegetation, were pockets of poverty and squalor. These spacious homes offered refuge to many first generation immigrants who sought comfort from the harsh realities of urban living by living with relatives and friends. Others provided shelter for tenants, boarders and family members who could not find alternative accommodation. Closer scrutiny reveals a community in as much need of recreation and public services as any other.

Living conditions in GWP were in reality below acceptable middle class

standards. In some cases, living conditions fell below the acceptable standards of the Union Slums Act which was adopted by the Durban municipality from 1937. According to this law, each dwelling was to provide cooking facilities outside of the sleeping quarters. Sleeping quarters were to be segregated for all persons over 10 years of age. The standard for sleeping space was to be 400 cubic feet and 20 square feet per person.⁸⁸ These regulations were violated in many of the overcrowded homes in GWP. Some had no electricity and only a communal standpipe. Some had outside ablution facilities. It was only in the late 1970's, that local authority began to seriously address the blight that had crept into this community. Until then, GWP remained this middle class community that was overcrowded with many underlying social problems. Very few social workers would underestimate the importance of recreational facilities in socially dysfunctional communities and yet, GWP virtually had none.

Why did this progressive community not take initiatives to improve living conditions? Why did they not engage in community projects to provide recreational facilities? Was overcrowding an indication of their rebellious indifference to the rule of law? Was it an act of civil disobedience? These questions will be addressed in chapter 6 . For now, it is important to note that overcrowding and its inherent social problems was not enough to earn this community greater consideration when it came to the question of improving

⁸⁸Natal Regional Survey, Durban Housing Survey , p89

housing standards through improved infrastructure and municipal services.

From the 1950's to the 1970's, GWP residents were continually denied access to social and economic upliftment programmes. Such programmes which were conducted by local authority and capital in the 1970's were withheld from GWP because it was perceived as a very small, privileged community. It was not likely that GWP would have accessed any intervention programmes in the 1950's and 1960's, even if it was a larger sub-economic area because at this point, the various levels of government were more intent on repressing Blacks into a labour class. Small, petty bourgeois coloured communities such as GWP found that they had to grapple with the issue of sustainability in the face of the rising urban masses and proletarianisation. However, the reformist approach of both state and capital in the 1970's, brought an injection of capital and resources in Black communities. Yet, GWP did not benefit from this change in policy because it was considered to be numerically and politically non-threatening.

Private sector home ownership caused this community to be seen as privileged. As a result, capital investment was closed off. Upgrading and improvement was left to individual initiative. Instead, capital such as the Urban Foundation, became more interested in the more disadvantaged urban masses. Coloureds living in the economic and sub-economic areas of Wentworth and Newlands East became recipients of capital investment. As a result, very little growth and

development occurred in the area beyond that established through individual or private initiative.

Failure to deliver necessary services and to improve municipal infrastructure can be traced to various factors. Some of these include bureaucratic and administrative inefficiencies. For example, the duties of the Standing Housing Committee within the City Council was too extensive. This body was not only responsible for property acquisition and housing allocation but also surveys, welfare services and slum clearance. To cope with such extensive duties, sub-committees had to be formed. These sub-committees needed good co-ordination with specialised manpower, none of which the committee possessed in any significant degree. Housing is far too complex and specialised. For effective distribution and management, an expert head with the support of executive and clerical bodies operating within specifically operated areas was required.⁸⁹ Periodic scientific surveys were required in order to identify the needs of various communities. This was not carried out. Had these been conducted, then the needs of GWP would have been more apparent- then local city councillors would not have assumed the population figure of GWP in the early 1970's to have been 3000 when according to members of the Durban LAC, there were 6000 to 7000 residents.⁹⁰ Had the sub-committee on slum clearance worked

⁸⁹Natal Regional Survey, Durban Housing Survey, pp129-130

⁹⁰Minutes of the LAC, 12/3/1976.

more closely with the city engineers and townplanners than the reality of housing conditions in the middle class community of GWP would have been recognised.

In the meantime, poor infrastructure and the lack of services continued to plague the bourgeois aspirations of this middle class coloured community. In the late 1960's and early 1970's, numerous complaints were made to the GWP Ratepayer's Association about the poor servicing of soakpits and septic tanks.⁹¹ Some of the tanks fell into disrepair whilst others overflowed. This created an unwelcome stench which became a health hazard. The use of septic tanks in a hostile soil environment posed many practical difficulties. It needed constant drainage. It demanded prompt and efficient management, neither of which the Council displayed in the 1960's and 1970's. Even though the construction of water-borne sewerage works became a priority of the Council in the 1970's, until then, the GWP community still had to contend with a water disposal and sewerage system which needed constant drainage in order to maintain acceptable health standards.

The delay in the general maintenance of soakpits, roads, verges and vacant land could not have been purely a result of budget constraints. Monies set aside for general maintenance and services were sometimes carried over from one

⁹¹Comment of R. Crocker -see transcript, p169

financial year to the next.⁹² Secondly, the neighbouring white community of Durban North showed signs of higher levels of maintenance and services. It would appear that budget constraints were very selective, which leads one to conclude that the lack of maintenance and the poor infrastructure in GWP had less to do with finances and more to do with the management strategy of local authority. The failure to deliver social services and infrastructure in GWP was just one way of keeping in check a rising coloured bourgeois community.

Of greater concern was the inconsistency in the policies of local government. The prompt issuing of fines on activities which violated acceptable building or health standards was not consistent with the general slowness to drain soakpits or provide infrastructure which would lift the general standard of living for the many poor families who lived in squalor and poverty. This inconsistency leads one to believe that the upholding of by-laws and health standards was just a means of securing revenue from this small community.

The claim that fines were merely a way of bringing in revenue for local government is not entirely unfounded given that Black communities were generally perceived as a burden to the white taxpayer. Coloureds were seen as a community that paid lower rates than whites. This is illustrated by the directly proportional relationship between rateable value of land and sociographic

⁹²Minutes of the Durban LAC, 17/2/1977,

zoning. According to fig. 9 on page 95, communities such as GWP which is located in the seaward transitional zone paid less rates than that of Durban North which is located in the seafacing transitional zone.(refer to fig.9, p95). This suggests that white occupants paid for the privilege of occupying the more desirable zones. However, the former secretary of the GWP Ratepayer's Association, R. Crocker and a member of the Durban LAC, A. Stowman independently refute this claim. R.Crocker concedes that if there was a difference, then it was very marginal. However, both agree that there may have been a difference in revenue because of the size of GWP's population but not as a result of a varied rateable value of property.⁹³

Comparisons are difficult to make because in the 1960's the weighting on rates was shifted from 3:1 land to building distribution, to 6:1⁹⁴ This had to have translated into considerable increases for the GWP property owners who had large plots of land, which could have left them with the impression that their rates were the equivalent of neighbouring Durban North. In fact, some residents in GWP had larger properties than many white residents in neighbouring Durban North. With a largely land based rating system which was not defined by group areas but by regions, some GWP residents had to have paid more rates

⁹³Comments of R.Crocker-see transcript, p174 and chairperson of the Durban LAC in the 1970's, A.Stowman.

⁹⁴Natal Mercury, 26/8/1966

than their white counterparts. Yet, local authority continued to drag its feet about upgrading or maintaining the area because of the assumption that coloureds were not 'deserving' of general maintenance and social services because of their poor rate-paying capacity. According to R. Crocker, this was the response of councillors to requests by the Ratepayer's association to develop recreational facilities or improve public amenities in GWP.⁹⁵ This was also the view of central government as reflected in the comments of B.J. Vorster when he opened the Coloured Persons Representative Council in 1974. Vorster saw the socio-economic development of coloureds as directly related to their contribution to the revenue of the country.⁹⁶

In reality, coloureds were shifting down the economic spectrum as a result of their steadily decreasing earning capacity. This meant that the coloureds of GWP were really carrying more of the tax burden than their white counterparts and yet were receiving less returns from local government. This situation arose partly because much of the policies of local authority was not based on scientific appraisals but upon what relevant officials considered to be appropriate under a set of prevailing circumstances.⁹⁷ As stated earlier, it was not in the best interest of local officials to ascertain the contributions of Black

⁹⁵Comment of R. Crocker, see transcript, p 174

⁹⁶P. Hugo, Quislings or Realists? A Documentary Study of Politics in South Africa, (Jhb, 1978), p75

⁹⁷Rankin, "A Pilot Study assessing the Problems facing the 'Coloureds'," p 39

communities to the city's growth and development.

From 1950 to the 1970's, infrastructure and amenities in GWP was poor. As illustrated above, this situation was not merely the result of the "callous indifference"⁹⁸ of local councillors. Neither was it purely a result of the political agenda of the liberals which dominated the council. It was also a result of personal agendas of some of the white officials. Many of these officials had acquired the "enviable reputation as property entrepreneurs and developers in their own right"⁹⁹ It was therefore, not in their best interest to support the concerns of a rising coloured property- owning bourgeoisie.

The poor facilities in GWP were also a manifestation of the complex relationship between local and central government. Whilst the Administration of Coloured Affairs felt that municipalities were responsible for the provision of recreational facilities, the latter believed that the rand- for- rand funding from central government and the revenue from the coloured communities was not enough to meet the demand. The low income of coloureds, the small percentage of homeowners and their lack of commercial and industrial activity in the city centre were seen by the council as sufficient reason for low returns. Perhaps the mayor of Durban, Dr Vernon Shearer captured the attitude of the local council

⁹⁸Sunday Tribune, 24/7/1966. A comment made by E. G. Rooks of the Housing Federation for Coloureds in the 1970's.

⁹⁹Bernstein, CDE Research- Policy in the Making, p11

when in 1965 he referred to the large sub-economic areas as a burden on the council's budget.¹⁰⁰ Whilst he may not have had GWP in mind when he spoke of sub-economic areas, his view is an indication of the inability of local authority to value the labour input of Black communities.

As a result, between the 1950's and 1970's the coloureds of GWP had inadequate schools, a library which was shared with neighbouring Indian communities in Duikerfontein, no swimming pool until the 1980's, several open spaces intended for passive recreation, several playlots, no community hall, a single but incomplete sportsfield (refer to fig.15, p120), no industrial zones except in other parts of Duikerfontein (refer to fig.16, p121) one coloured-owned retail outlet and newly connected water- borne sewerage in the 1970's.

As suggested earlier, local authority was generally reluctant to spend on the coloured community. In the 1970/71 financial year, R 7 377,51 was spent on coloureds in Durban as a whole whilst R 22 09670 was spent on Indians in the northern districts alone.¹⁰¹ A lack of expenditure on the housing environment of Black communities in general was not just the failing of local government but that of central government departments as well. In 1965 the Ministers of Planning, Community Development, Coloured and Indian Affairs all stated in

¹⁰⁰Natal Mercury, 17/8/1965

¹⁰¹L. Wood, Coloureds- Housing and Recreation, Wood's Manuscripts, file no.21, a letter from the City Treasurer dated 1/11/1972

the Assembly that since 1963 their respective departments had not advanced any money to local authorities for the provision of amenities.¹⁰² Yet, these Black communities continued to experience rate increases which were regionally and not racially implemented.¹⁰³ The implications for this lack of funding by central government was far-reaching. Coloureds of Durban were reduced to a sterile and functional community in which homeownership became the only route to self-actualisation.

As illustrated earlier, the situation was exacerbated by the fact that even those funds which were set aside for coloured recreational development and general maintenance were often not used. In 1977, the financial statement of the City Treasurer reflected a disparity between actual and estimated expenditure for coloured areas.¹⁰⁴ At the same time the budget for Indian and coloured communities was cut in the 1975 to 1979 period. From 1975 to 1978 the budget for the maintenance and provision of services to coloured areas was reduced from R 320 773 to R 248 470.¹⁰⁵ This had significant implications for a people whose growth rate was climbing above 2,5%. Coloureds were on the path to proletarianisation and their housing environment played a significant role in

¹⁰²M. Whisson, "The Coloured People," South Africa's Minorities, (Jhb, 1971), p 26

¹⁰³Minutes of the LAC, 17/2/1977

¹⁰⁴Minutes of the LAC, 23/4/1978

¹⁰⁵Minutes of the LAC, 5/9/1978

facilitating this shift.

To what extent were GWP residents caught in this shift.? Was their housing environment a sufficient contributing factor in this downward slide? It is true that public facilities and amenities in GWP lagged behind that of other coloured communities. The first creche was only established in 1979 when the Natal Provincial Administration agreed to lease its garden maintenance depot to private members of the community.¹⁰⁶ Up until then, working mothers had to leave their children with day mothers or relatives nearby.

As stated in chapter 3, two of the primary schools were built earlier in the century and inherited from the previous white occupants. As a result, the schools were inadequate, outdated and inferior. Apart from the addition of a few prefabricated classrooms in GWP primary school , no extensive renovations, upgrading or improvements were made to the primary schools in the period 1950 to 1970's. The high school in the area only expanded in 1976/1977 as a result of an increased demand. During this period, junior high school pupils had to be temporarily housed in the primary schools. This was an alternative to the double shifts opted for in the other more densely occupied coloured areas. This situation , once again, reflected how ill-informed authorities were regarding the needs of coloureds. A report by the City Engineer in 1972 spoke of the schools

¹⁰⁶ Minutes of the LAC, 26/4/1979

in GWP as adequately meeting the needs of the community. However, just 5 years later, this was to prove an entirely inaccurate assessment.

Recreational facilities in GWP were limited. There were more playlots than any other form of recreation because preparation for this form of activity did not entail grading, whereas active recreation such as sportsfields, required extensive excavation and construction in undulating territory. The lack of active recreational facilities was particularly grievous for a people who had no access to recreational facilities in the city centre because of restrictive legislation such as the Group areas Act and the Separate Amenities Act.¹⁰⁷ Many families visited Sydenham which is approximately 6km from GWP, in order to access a public swimming pool.

Provision for industry and commerce was equally inadequate. Retail outlets were mainly in the form of small shops and tearooms. These sites were often not along busy traffic routes so they were not very lucrative. Many of these sites did not offer suitable off-street parking thereby causing traffic congestion (refer to fig.17, p122). Nevertheless tearooms such as 'ZAM-ZAM' and 'TOP OF THE ROCK' became local landmarks of coloured entrepreneurial skills in the 1960's and 1970's.

¹⁰⁷Wood's Manuscripts, Coloureds- Housing and Recreation , a letter dated 31/10/1972 from the City Engineer's Dept to the Town Clerk.

However, most of the shops were owned by Indians. TOP OF THE ROCK was known to be the only coloured- owned building site used for retail. Access to capital was not easy for most aspirant coloured entrepreneurs. Institutions such as Spes Bona Savings & Finance Bank which was affiliated to the Coloured Development Corporation (established in the Cape in 1962 to encourage and promote the advancement of coloureds in industry, trade and commerce) had too much red tape.¹⁰⁸ Qualification was high and the procedure, tedious. Apart from a few residents who managed to obtain shares in a major hotel in Wentworth, involvement in trade and industry was limited due to bureaucratic inefficiencies, but also as a result of limited access to capital. Small entrepreneurs such as builders and contractors would generally establish companies from personal capital or private loans rather than from major institutions.

Zoning also denied coloureds access to trading along high traffic routes.

Although it was declared a free trade area, North Coast Road was declared part of the Durban North zone in 1975.¹⁰⁹ The only industrial zone linked to GWP was Briardene which by the end of the 1970's, had extractive industry (refer to

¹⁰⁸Comment made by R. Crocker - see transcript, p176

¹⁰⁹Hands, City Engineer's Report on the Zoning of Durban North

fig.18, p123) with plans for more diversified industrial development still in its conceptual stage. As long as GWP was denied viable trading and industrial areas for local residents, the opportunity for economic advancement was closed off. As long as thriving industrial belts were constantly attached to white group areas, revenue from Black communities would always lag behind their white counterparts. This would continue to give local authorities an excuse not to spend on the upgrading and improvement of infrastructure and facilities in the Black communities.

Local authority justified their neglect of coloured communities. As already stated, poor revenue was used as a reason. Nevertheless, GWP coloureds continued to pay rates for roads, water mains, electricity, telephones, drains, sewers, streetlighting, firemains, refuse disposal and for general maintenance even though this was below the standards of middle class white communities. In essence, the external housing environment became an effective management and control strategy where the housing of middle class coloureds was kept subordinate to that of the white ruling class. In this way the relations of domination and subordination, which became necessary in an increasingly industrialised society, were sustained.

An examination of the horizontal dimension of housing reveals the shift in the status of the coloureds of Durban. It shows a people that had lost their position of privilege and aristocracy to become a nation on the downward journey to proletarianisation. Even property and homeownership could not protect these people indefinitely, from the harsh realities of marginalisation and political obliteration. As the protection of the white ruling class became increasingly important during heightened industrialisation, the standard of housing in small coloured communities such as GWP, declined. Whilst international conferences were held by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) in the 1960's in order to address the housing needs of special groups such as the aged, disabled, single- parents and ethnic minorities such as the Lapps and Gypsies, local government in South Africa was still grappling with the viability of providing basic services and infrastructure for some of its citizens- citizens who had made a small but significant contribution to the diversification of the economy.

A microcosmic view of one of South Africa's fastest growing cities, shows signs of substandard service delivery and poor infrastructure. Inadequate housing conditions ensured that even communities with middle class aspirations would be forced into proletarianisation - a process which, for the coloured community, had already begun with the loss of the vote in the 1950's. By the

end of the 1970's, housing conditions in GWP clearly reflected that the coloureds of Durban were quickly fading into economic and social oblivion.

FIGURE 15

Proposed recreation area in Greenwood Park in 1972- a proposal which, except for the soccer pitch and playlot, did not fully materialise.

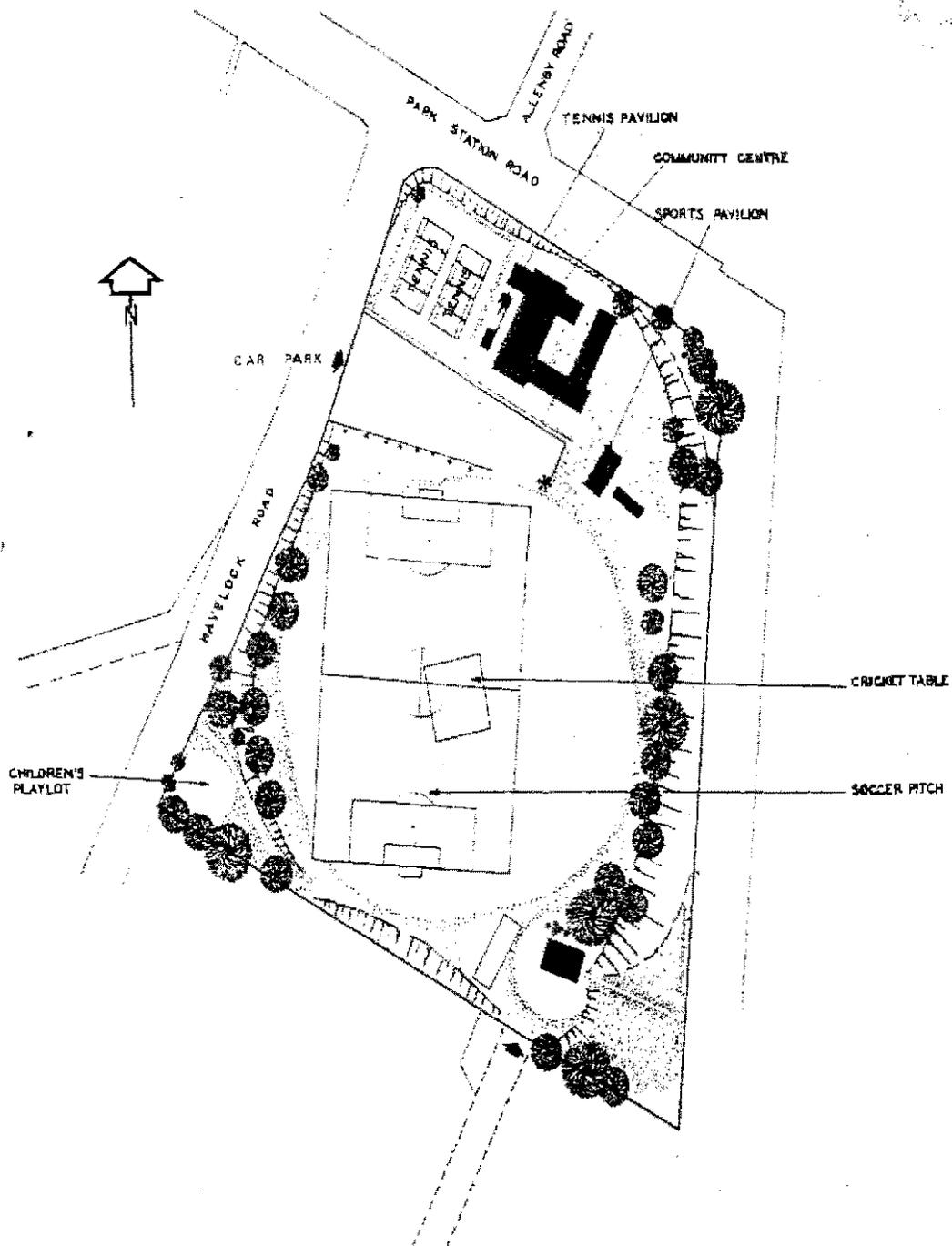
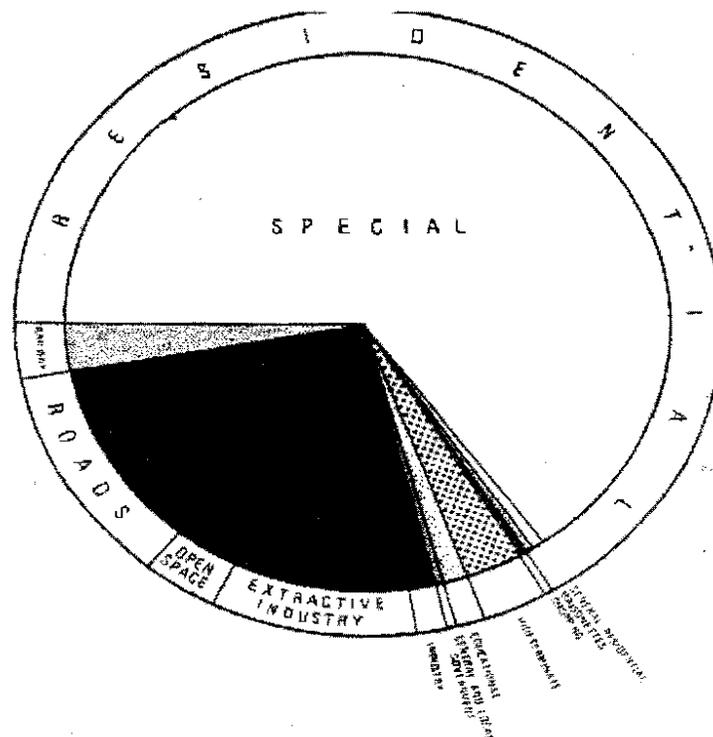


FIGURE 16

Summary of the total allocated land uses in Duikerfontein as a whole.



EXISTING ALLOCATION OF LAND USES DUIKERFONTEIN DISTRICT		
USES	HECTARES	PERCENTAGE
Special Residential	917.20	65.61
Maisonettes	4.38	0.31
General Residential	9.02	0.65
Shopping	3.39	0.25
Indeterminate	44.46	1.18
Educational	18.70	1.34
Industry	21.04	1.50
Extractive Industry	133.24	9.67
Open Space	50.37	1.60
Central and Local Government	0.41	0.03
Roads	161.09	11.52
Railways	32.76	2.34
TOTAL:	1 398.06	100.00

FIGURE 17

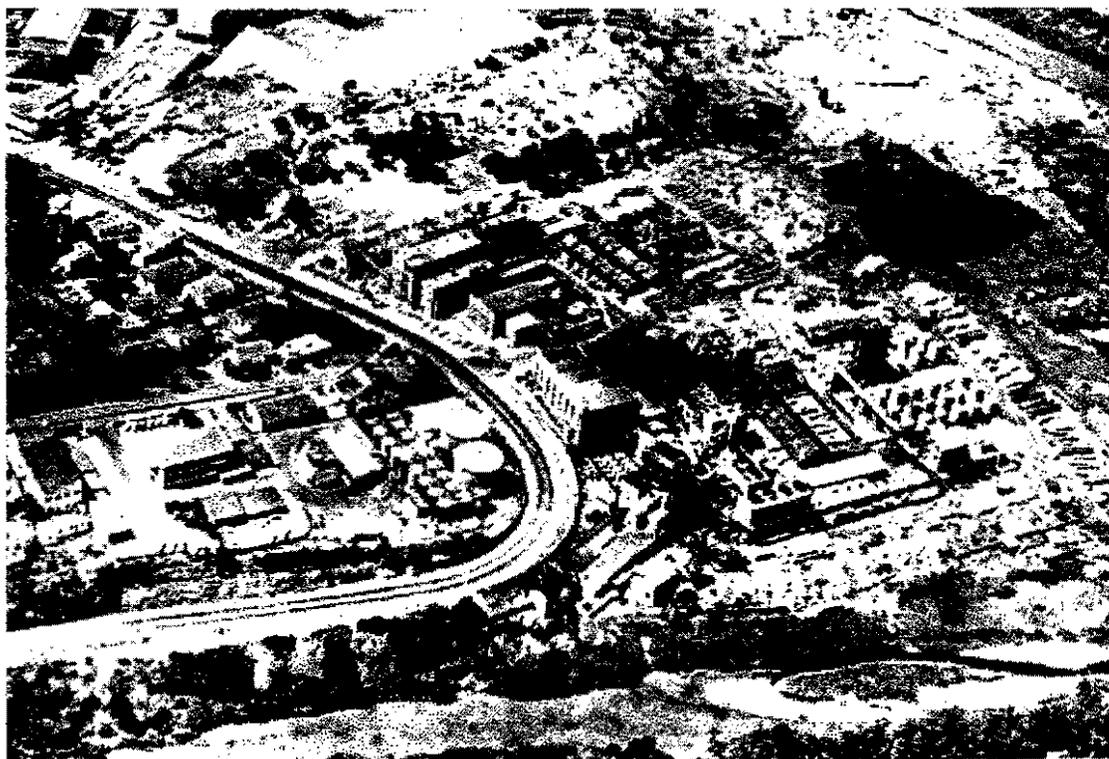
Small outdated shops in Greenwood Park. The lack of off-street parking is illustrated by the cars which are parked on the pavement and forecourts.



Source: Hands, City Engineer's report on the Planning of Duikerfontein, 1972

Figure 18

Extractive industry in Briardene - Corobrik



Source: Hands, City Engineer's Report on the Planning of Duikerfontein,
1972

Chapter 6

A Community's Response

How did the Greenwood Park(GWP) community interpret their housing situation? Did they react to the acute shortage of houses in Durban? Did they relate to the Indian families which lived in this coloured group area in the 1950's, 1960's and early 1970's? Did this small coloured community try to change their inferior housing environment? What did they feel about the local white city councillors? Did they believe that these councillors had their interests at heart when their housing plight was tabled at LAC meetings? What was this bourgeois community's response to civic organisations such as the GWP Ratepayer's Association and the Durban Coloured LAC? These questions will be considered in this chapter. However, the effectiveness of their response will not be measured against the broader struggle for liberation but against this community's desired outcome. Except for a very small minority, it was not the desire of GWP residents to fundamentally challenge the root of their oppression. Their intention was merely to protect their position of privilege and this was most effectively done by protecting their status as private property owners.

It was the general perception amongst the coloureds of Durban that the GWP community was apathetic - that they failed to translate their housing experience into political terms because their aspirations were too similar to whites. The consensus was that GWP coloureds were pretentious , socially aloof,

economically progressive and politically indifferent. Admittedly, compared to the more volatile Wentworth and Sydenham communities, the coloureds of GWP were more conservative. Homeownership tends to have a moderating effect on communities. However, the failure to translate their housing experience to the broader political issues, is not necessarily a reflection of apathy, but rather a symptom of a trapped people - a people trapped between their euro-centric western values and their steadily declining status in an industrialised, racially defined society.

When it came to the issue of housing, GWP residents reacted. They responded to the acute shortage of houses in the 1960's and early 1970's by constructing their own modern, middle class homes(refer to appendix E). Rather than rent public sector houses , some coloureds preferred to purchase land in GWP.(A respondent specifically spoke about the significance of being able to build your own home in GWP when there was such a shortage of land for coloureds in the 1960's. This respondent built an upmarket split-level house in GWP after he was given land as a wedding gift from parents). There were not many choices for coloureds in Durban at the time. Coloureds could either live in Wentworth or Sydenham or, buy the older, wood and iron or brick and tile dwellings in GWP. However, there were not too many of these for sale in the 1960's and 1970's. Buying land in GWP(which was also very limited) and building one's own home was therefore, one of the ways in which more affluent coloureds responded to the acute housing shortage.

On the whole, the shortage of houses reduced Durban coloureds to “landless flatdwellers.”¹¹⁰ Yet, the coloureds of GWP were able to escape this stigma. They were property owners. This resource formed an essential part of their psyche. It formed their collective consciousness. Whilst building one’s own home enabled some coloureds to address the housing shortage, its significance extended beyond this. It allowed this community to escape the harsh realities of proletarianisation.

However, one cannot fully appreciate the significance of owning property in GWP unless one understands why there was such a shortage of houses for coloureds in Durban in the 1960’s and 1970’s. A cumbersome housing system and tight bureaucratic controls created an unprecedented demand for houses. These factors were in turn, a product of broader economic and political developments.

In the 1950’s and 1960’s, there was a delay in the provision of houses in the public sector. High building costs, inadequate funding, conflicting interests of central and local government departments, increased centralisation in administrative and bureaucratic processes and the management and control strategy of both local and central government accounted for the delay in the provision of public sector housing for coloureds. At the same time, the private

¹¹⁰Minutes of the LAC, 7/6/1977. A comment made by the secretary, Mr C. Tiffin.

sector failed to make a positive contribution to the housing stock. Between 1936 and 1961, 3580 new houses or flats were needed in Durban in order to remedy overcrowding in coloured areas.¹¹¹ This situation was compounded by forced removals. Even though houses were being demolished and coloureds were being forced to vacate areas zoned for white occupation, alternative accommodation was not provided. (According to records in the City Engineer's Department, 188 houses occupied by coloureds, were demolished in the private sector between May 1970 and December 1973, but only 145 houses were constructed).¹¹² This means that the private sector had made a negative contribution to the housing shortage of coloureds. In the meantime, the coloured population was increasing at a rate of 2,5% a year.¹¹³ As a result, coloureds were becoming increasingly dependent on the public sector to provide housing.

On the other hand, interest rates, institutional finance and inflationary concerns hindered private development. Despite the fact that the 1957 Housing Act made possible a middle income loan scheme where government funds of R3 million were made available to building societies so that those who earned between R180 and R250 per month could obtain housing loans more easily,¹¹⁴ most coloureds were not able to capitalise on this. Many could not qualify, whilst

¹¹¹Natal Regional Survey, Durban Housing Survey, p85

¹¹²Carboni, The Planning of Local Authority, Public Sector Housing, P31

¹¹³Urban Foundation, Fact Sheet No. 2, p11

¹¹⁴Sunday Chronicle, 8/8/1965

others took exception to the scrutiny of building societies. There were also those who felt that it was the responsibility of the government to provide houses. Even though the interest rate in 1965 was 7,5% ¹¹⁵ and 8,5% in 1966, ¹¹⁶ coloureds were still not able to take advantage of housing finance. Central government had restricted access to housing loans by limiting the financing of property to 25% of one's earnings. If one considers that homeownership is one way of broadly distributing wealth, then the inability to access finance had far-reaching implications for the coloured community. Slowly, coloureds were being relegated to the underclasses. However, the coloureds of GWP were able to escape this relegation.- they owned property.

Choosing to respond to the shortage of houses by building their own modern upmarket homes paid off for coloureds living in GWP. Property prices escalated. GWP was transformed from a small outdated peri-urban area with middle class occupants, to a modern middle class suburb. According to R. Crocker, property prices in the 1970's exceeded those of neighbouring Durban North. ¹¹⁷ This view is consistent with the findings of the housing survey conducted by the Durban Economic Research Committee which claims that in the 1970's the cost of private sector housing for coloureds exceeded that

¹¹⁵Daily News, 8/10/1965

¹¹⁶Mercury, 24/11/1966

¹¹⁷Comment of R. Crocker- see transcript, p177

of whites .¹¹⁸ Even owners of the older wood and iron or brick and tile houses were able to command high prices for their property. This should not have been the case given the theories of Cairncross, James and Clark. These international researchers assert that the market value of property depreciates at a rate of 1,25% per annum after 20 years or 1,33% after 30 years.¹¹⁹ Instead of filtering (the process whereby property slowly drifts down the market scale), property prices in GWP escalated. No doubt, the acute shortage of houses contributed towards this scenario but, one cannot underestimate the positive effect of modern, privately built upmarket houses on property prices in the area. Whilst most coloureds were housed in dismal rows of economic and sub-economic units, those in GWP were protected from the urban masses in their double-walled, high-ceilinged dwellings surrounded by spacious gardens. Whilst their privileged counterparts in Sydenham were sandwiched in restricted garden space, GWP residents were requesting duplex rights for their seemingly endless plots of land.

As explained, some coloureds responded to the acute shortage of housing by buying property in GWP, others chose to sublet to immigrants or accommodate family and friends as boarders and lodgers. On the one hand, this alleviated the demand for accommodation but on the other hand, it also helped the lower-income property owner to meet the rising cost of property ownership. By living

¹¹⁸Natal Regional Survey, Durban Housing Survey .

¹¹⁹Pritchard, Housing and the Spatial Structure of the City , pp14 -15

in GWP, rural immigrants were not only offered protection from the harsh realities of urbanisation, they were also given the security of a safe and progressive community.

However, as illustrated in chapter 5, subletting, boarding and lodging led to overcrowding which violated general health standards. Contrary to the stereotypical view of Black communities, overcrowding was not rebellious indifference to the rule of law (in this case, the Union Slums Act). It was not an indication of social ignorance and irresponsibility. It was more than an act of civil disobedience. It was a response to the acute housing shortage of the 1960's and 1970's. It was a response to broader and deeper problems which beset coloureds in Durban at this time.

Overcrowding was not the only factor which affected living conditions in GWP. Disrepair and a lack of maintenance also adversely affected living conditions. Some residents were not able to maintain their houses, particularly the older houses which fell into disrepair by the 1970's. Some residents were not able to keep abreast of the rising cost of living. They were not able to adjust to the demands of increased industrialisation, particularly without any job protection. For example, one family in particular, entered the area in the 1960's as building contractors, built their own house but, in the process of economic and political transformation, lost many of their contracts, tried to run a local tearoom until they finally sold their home and moved out of the area in the 1970's. Although

respondents did not relate too many incidents of economic 'misfortune', the lack of maintenance, the lack of modernisation and general levels of disrepair in the older houses, were indications of financial constraints. This middle class community was gradually sliding down the economic spectrum.

Apartheid legislation accelerated this shift. It altered the political and economic status of coloureds in Durban. Even the more affluent coloured communities were not able to escape the economic effects of apartheid. The Population Registration Act relegated the GWP community to second class citizens. Obscure classifications like 'other coloured', 'Cape coloured' and just 'coloured' denied them access to the highest paying jobs. The Group Areas Act which was officially implemented in GWP in 1960, restricted the movement of this small coloured community. Movement to a community of higher socio-economic status would have meant 'passing for white', whilst movement to another coloured group area would have meant sliding down the socio-economic spectrum. GWP residents fully understood these implications. However, they chose not to react to these laws by adopting a militant approach. Instead, they sought alternative forms of affirmation and self-worth. They found this in property ownership.

The neglect of their housing environment was, in a rather convoluted way, also a response to their precarious social and economic predicament. It was an attempt to protect the one resource that sustained them in a rapidly changing

socio-political context. Losing the vote had created numerous fears and insecurities amongst coloureds. The fears and insecurity of GWP residents were compounded by the zoning activities of local officials in the 1960's and 1970's. Coloureds generally feared that excessive improvements to their homes might generate white interest and lead to reclassification under the Group Areas Act. These fears were not unfounded considering that in the 1970's many properties in GWP were zoned as open space, "bought for a song",¹²⁰ rezoned as private residential, then sold at a high price in order to increase revenue from the area. In an effort to protect their scarce resource, some coloured property owners refrained from drawing too much attention to the area by excessive upgrading or modernisation. Whilst this may not totally account for the many cases of disrepair and neglect, it does partly explain why the aspirations of many of the residents did not correlate with the condition of some of their homes. Put simply, even though their property was valuable, it was not always in their best interest to radically improve it.

Ironically, by choosing to respond in this manner, GWP residents were not just protecting a resource which ensured that socio-economically they remained above the Black urban masses, they were also ensuring that socio-economically they lagged behind their white counterparts. As more houses deteriorated and the environment became less aesthetically pleasing, GWP fell further and

¹²⁰Comment of R. Crocker - see transcript, p168

further behind the neighbouring white community in Durban North.

There were other ways in which the GWP community responded to the housing plight. Some residents chose to immigrate to Australia or Canada. One cannot specifically cite unacceptable housing conditions as the motivation for immigration. It was more complex than that. Some found the lack of opportunity sufficient reason to immigrate, whilst others were concerned about political and economic transformation brought about by apartheid policies. However, there is little to suggest that the more progressive, more ambitious residents would not recognise that the acute shortage of houses, the poor infrastructure and the substandard housing environment were manifestations of a shift in their status as a privileged minority.

Many of the residents who immigrated were high achievers. They were role models- individuals who were more likely to become frustrated by the lack of opportunity for individual growth and development. As high achievers, they were concerned about the closing off of economic space for coloureds. The 1960's and early 1970's was also a repressive period in South Africa's political history. The fact that this was also the time that coloureds experienced their greatest social and economic shift, was no coincidence. GWP residents who failed to see any chance of improvement in the country, chose to immigrate. In the mid-1970's, three coloured families living within a 600 metre radius immigrated to Australia. One was a doctor, the other a karate instructor and the

third, a manager in a private company- people of diverse occupations but all high achievers in their own right.

The response of the GWP community to their housing environment was varied and ambivalent. This ambivalence is detected in this community's response to the Indian families which still lived in GWP in the 1960's and early '70's. It can also be detected in their response to neighbouring Indian communities in Duikerfontein. The coloureds in GWP shared a common housing experience with neighbouring Indian communities. Socio-economically they were on an equal footing. Both communities were middle class. Their houses were of similar design and they faced similar challenges from the physical environment. However, cultural diversity and economic competition stood in the way of mutual co-existence or co-operation. Coloured residents were prepared to share certain facilities such as a library, but refused to share a swimming pool and playlots.¹²¹

The relationship with neighbouring Indian communities was suspicious and ambivalent. However, the relationship between the GWP coloureds and the pockets of Indian families in the area was different. Some residents, particularly the immediate neighbours, sometimes shared in the cultural life of these Indian families. These Indian residents also proved useful to their coloured neighbours.

¹²¹Hands, Duikerfontein Townplanning Proposals- Objections Received, vol.no..1
(City Engineer's Dept. Dbn, , 1972)

For example, 'the shoemaker' would repair shoes at very cheap rates to neighbouring coloureds, whilst 'the shoemaker's wife' relayed most of the 'news' on residents in the area- both providing an essential service to the needs of a comparatively isolated community.

Why was the response of GWP coloureds to their Indian neighbours in Duikerfontein different to their response towards Indian families in their area? Why was the one suspicious and ambivalent, whilst the other was neutral and accommodating? The reason has more to do with property ownership and its economic significance than racial attitude. In the 1960's and 1970's, Indian residents in GWP mainly occupied impermanent and semi-permanent structures. Most of these Indian families were tenants on council land rather than owners of property. As a result, they were not perceived as an economic threat. Unlike neighbouring Indian communities in Duikerfontein, the poor displaced Indian families in GWP were not perceived as equals. They were not competing for the one scarce resource; property. As a result, these Indian families were accommodated until they were relocated to Newlands and Phoenix in the 1970's. Property ownership did not only influence the way in which this community responded to their physical environment but also their social environment. It even shaped their response to other race groups.

It could be argued that the ambivalence that GWP coloureds expressed towards other Black communities hindered their ability to adopt a single, effective

approach to their housing plight. This is partly true. This community found it difficult to totally identify with the Black underclasses. Property ownership set them apart. They had the same economic and social aspirations as their oppressor. They were historically and culturally tied to the white ruling classes, but possessed no true representation. Local bodies such as the Durban Coloured Federation Council which was established in 1959, and the Coloured People's Council of Action were seen as too radical when they spread their concern for bread and butter issues to include the broader ideological struggle. The national struggle for liberation was considered to be too revolutionary. The thinking behind this struggle conflicted with their eurocentric western values and bourgeois interests. This community found it difficult to follow their protest against inferior housing "to [its] logical conclusion of united action with neighbouring Indian and African communities."¹²²

Fundamentally, the GWP community still believed in a system in which one pressed for favours. Most preferred to preserve the privileges that the system offered. Whilst resistance in South Africa was characterised by defiance campaigns, boycotts and strikes in the 1950's, GWP residents still embraced the tutelage of white liberals. Whilst coloured communities in the Cape such as Paarl, exploded into confrontation in the 1970's because of the shortage of housing and inadequate facilities, coloureds in GWP still hung ambivalently

¹²²Dickie-Clark, The Marginal Situation , p168

onto their “dismal lot in life as [if it was] a God- given due...”¹²³

Within the context of broader political developments and resistance, the coloured community of GWP could be described as conservative. Yet, behind this conservatism was a complex interplay of contradictory sentiments of collaboration and resistance, of co-optation and exclusion.¹²⁴ This cannot be better reflected than in the poor percentage poll in the local elections. Whether this lack of participation was a manifestation of general apathy or blatant disregard for apartheid structures is debatable. However, the low percentage poll reflected a lack of confidence in the LAC. Yet, residents would consult the LAC on housing related issues in the hope that the LAC would table these at meetings with city councillors- which members of the LAC often did.¹²⁵

What choice did this community have? They were cautious about the LAC because it was part of a system which undermined their economic and social status. On the other hand, they could not support organisations which nullified their gains as an elite, privileged community. Strictly speaking, neither served their interest. As a result, this community became embroiled in contradictory sentiments of collaboration and resistance.

¹²³Venter, A Profile of 2 Million South Africans , p16

¹²⁴G. Lewis, Between the Wire and the Wall: A History of South African ‘Coloured’ Politics , (C.T.. 1987), p5

¹²⁵Minutes of the LAC, File nos. 1/2/38/1/1 and 1/2/38/1/2

It was only once their self-image was adjusted by the rise of Black consciousness in the 1970's, the advent of television and the political radicalisation of religion that coloureds generally began to articulate their housing problems as oppression. It was only with the formation of the non-racial United Democratic Front in the 1980's, that some coloured residents began to identify their housing as rooted in oppression. Until then, coloureds in GWP remained ambivalently suspended between total rejection of apartheid structures and total support of racist ideology.

Working with the Durban LAC yielded very little benefits. This body had no executive powers. It merely acted in an advisory capacity to white political structures such as the City Council. As a result, the grievances of coloureds were merely entertained, not addressed. Often, their grievances were dismissed, particularly if they were perceived as challenging the socio-political order. Housing is one of those topics which cannot be treated as a purely civic issue. It transcends political, social and economic boundaries. As a result, the concerns of the GWP community was often sidestepped - they were considered to be too political. Admittedly, involvement in the housing grievances of this small coloured community would have brought white councillors dangerously close to violating the Improper Interference Act of 1968, which restricted white involvement in the political affairs of Black communities, but the lack of support by city councillors such as L. Wood caused GWP residents (and members of the LAC) to perceive the Council as frustratingly unsympathetic

and self-serving, with councillors that had conflicting personal agendas.¹²⁶ Yet, throughout the '70's, GWP community leaders continued to work within the system. They continued to appeal to the goodwill of white liberal councillors who were under no obligation to address the housing needs of this small community. After all, GWP was not their constituency. White councilors were merely patriarchs to a disenfranchised people- a people whose experience of elections did not extend beyond voting for representation in the Durban LAC, Ratepayer's Association and at a national level, the Coloured Person's Representative Council.

It was difficult for any coloured community at the time to engage in self-help projects to improve their immediate housing environment. These required capital. Raising capital in the 1960's and 1970's was difficult. Their earning capacity was restricted by limitations in employment and education. In the 1960's the per capita income of coloureds in Durban was 64,34 pounds whilst that of whites was 282,74.¹²⁷ Whilst no data exists on the per capita income of the GWP community in particular, the earning capacity of this community could not have been excessively above that of the greater coloured population. Coloureds in GWP may have been more affluent, more prosperous but they faced the same economic restrictions as their counterparts in Sydenham or

¹²⁶Sentiments which were independently expressed by A. Stowman of the LAC and R. Crocker- see transcript, p182

¹²⁷F. Meer, Suicide in Durban: A Study of Suicide Patterns among Indians, Europeans, Africans and Coloureds, (M.Soc. thesis, UND, 1961), p36

Wentworth.

As stated earlier, private capital was more concerned about working class communities. It was not in capital's interest to assist a small bourgeois community like GWP. Its labour base was too small and the aspirations of many of the residents was in conflict with capital's interests. In the 1970's, capital became involved in the zoning activities in the area, but motives were not altruistic. The Durban Chamber of Commerce, Hulett's Property Holdings Ltd and Tongaat Investments Ltd aligned themselves with GWP residents when they challenged the Council on its zoning activities.¹²⁸ This was only because land which was used for industrial purposes were zoned as open spaces (refer to extract 3, p145) and not because of a concern for the economic well-being of residents. Whilst the GWP Ratepayer's Association were in favour of sustaining industrial activity in the area in order to boost revenue (refer to extract 4, p146), many residents individually opposed open spaces in the area. Residents worked with capital on this issue of zoning only because their interests happened to coincide. Residents were generally, not able to tap capital for self- help projects.

This does not mean that the GWP community lacked initiative. Neither does it mean that they were complacent. Through petitions and recommendations, this community sought to alter their housing environment. Through written

¹²⁸Hands, Duikerfontein Townplanning Proposals - Objections Received , Files DF and D55,

objections and appeals, they were able to rescind zoning activities of the City Council (refer to extract 5, p147). For example, the decision of the Council to zone a local tearoom site to a residential area because of inadequate off-street parking, was rescinded when coloured and Indian residents protested.

Objections to the zoning of private property as open spaces led to numerous property owners earning duplex rights. This significantly altered the housing environment but more importantly, it provided enormous opportunity for economic growth and development for coloured property owners.

Admittedly, the coloureds of GWP personalized their conflict with the Council. They handled councillors as characters and focussed on their personal agendas, causing them to lose sight at times, of the fundamental issues. Yes, there are traces of sentimentality rather than objective analysis in their approach towards their housing plight. For example, R. Crocker claimed that the liberal councillors were less trustworthy than the 'Nats' because the latter were more transparent.¹²⁹ A. Stowman found L. Wood(a city councillor from the United Party) to be unapproachable and more verkramp than his liberal alignment suggested. These sentiments show that GWP coloureds failed to critically examine the entire political and administrative process. This community also lacked the action groups such as that formed by women in Sydenham in the 1970's and the numerous civic groups of Wentworth. However, I would not

¹²⁹Comment of R. Crocker- see transcript, p166

conclude that the GWP community was “hygienically ‘non-political’ to the point of virtual ineffectiveness”.¹³⁰

Yes, they may have failed to address the underlying causes of their inferior housing, but they were not complacent. Neither were they apathetic. Their opposition may have been misguided and not entirely appropriate for effective and fundamental change, but was fundamental change the desired outcome? Most coloureds in GWP had undergone an entire process of socialisation and acculturation where they were co-opted into a system in which they served as a buffer against the urban masses but at the same time, their rising economic status was contained within racially defined boundaries. Fundamental change would not only challenge their acquired status but demand a new form of acculturation which many preferred to conceal in the closet of denial.

Petitions, written objections and attempts to co-opt city councillors were just some of the strategies employed by the GWP community to change their environment (refer to extract 6, p148). Squatter movements, rent boycotts and trade unions were not all that radically different in that they were also attempts to extract concessions from the political system. Petitions, written objections, liaising with City Councillors, rent boycotts, trade unionism and squatter movements were all attempts at transformation. None of these approaches were

¹³⁰Warren , Studying Your Community , Intro. xiii

intent on challenging the entire class structure of South Africa. In a sense, none of these strategies were totally revolutionary. However, the petitions, objections and elections boycott of the GWP community was not taken as seriously as the squatter movements and rent boycotts of the 1950's. The reasons: - this coloured community was not numerically threatening. They did not embrace the broader nationalist struggle in its challenge of local authority and thirdly, they were not considered to be essential to relations of production. They were not the backbone of labour in Durban. As a result, their cries were not heard. They were muffled.

Nevertheless, it would be wrong to assume that because GWP residents did not adopt the nationalist ideal in their resistance, they passively accepted the housing policy implemented by local authorities. They challenged the actions and policies which they considered unjust. Sometimes they were successful in changing the course of developments, often they were not. Their course of action may not have been as militant as that of the urban masses in the 1950's, 1960's and 1970's. It could not be. Their history, aspirations and circumstances were different. As a community they were ethnically heterogeneous (Mauritians, St. Helenans and Euro-Africans), economically diversified (by pockets of poverty) and structurally fractured (with houses that ranged from low status wood and iron bungalows to modern double-storey units). Yet, in the context of the acute housing shortage and demand for private development, they were sufficiently privileged not to perceive themselves as part of the

lumpenproletariat. Their earnings rendered them sufficiently bourgeois to negotiate a more moderate form of protest.

From 1950 to the 1970's, the coloured community of GWP responded to their housing experience by adopting a moderate stance. Their approach varied. It ranged from immigration to co-operation in apartheid structures; from subletting to signing petitions and objections; from collaborating with capital to rejection of the Durban LAC; from racial tolerance to refusing to share amenities with neighbouring Indians. Clearly, GWP coloureds were not consistent in their approach. This did not do their cause any good. It made them appear directionless and confused. More importantly, it made them appear content; without an understanding of their declining status in the socio-political order. Close scrutiny reveals that this was not the case. The coloured community of GWP was not content. By the 1970's, this community began to fully understand the shift that coloureds were undergoing. Their moderate approach was simply an attempt to preserve their status as a privileged bourgeois community. Property ownership gave them the best chance at preserving this status and so, property became their means of self-actualisation and source of affirmation. It is only by understanding this, that one will appreciate the response of this coloured community. It is only by understanding the significance of property, that one will appreciate that this community responded in a manner that served their best interest.

EXTRACT 3

Record by City Engineer of the Objection of The Durban Chamber of Commerce to the Zoning of industrial sites to Open Space

OBJ. NO.	CATE-GORY	OBJECTOR	ADDRESS AND DESCRIPTION OF OBJECTION'S PROPERTY	RESERVATION ZONING OF AREA OBJECTED TO	HEARING REQUESTED	NATURE OF OBJECTION	REMARKS
	E/C & E/S	The Durban Chamber of Commerce, P.O.Box 1506, Durban	Public Open Space and Educational Reservation.	EXISTING PROPOSED	No	Object to successive Public Open Space and Educational Reservation.	Noted - Investigations and research are at present being undertaken with respect to open space provision. However, the Dukerfontein Scheme was planned to standards considered necessary

Source : Hands,

City Engineer's Comment on Objection's Received - Dukerfontein
Town Planning Proposals, 1972

EXTRACT 4

Record by City Engineers of the Objection of the Greenwood Park Ratepayer's Association to zoning of residential areas to open space and recommendations to increase the number of industrial/business sites in the area.

OBJ. NO.	CATE-GORY	OBJECTOR	ADDRESS & DESCRIPTION OF OBJECTOR'S PROPERTY	RESERVATION/ ZONING OF AREA OBJECTED TO		HEARING REQUESTED	NATURE OF OBJECTION	REMARKS
				EXISTING	PROPOSED			
1/D	G	Ward XIV Coloured Ratepayers Association (53 Ardrossan Road, Red Hill, Durban) On behalf of Community.	All affected areas.			Yes		<p>(d) <u>Residential</u> (i), (ii) & (iv) To rezone all these sites from open space to residential would result in a very serious shortage of open space deemed necessary to cater for the future needs of the community.</p> <p>(ii) To construct a proper road along the line of the existing Sentinel Avenue would be less economically feasible than to construct the proposed road as shown in the scheme.</p> <p>(e) <u>Educational</u> - See b(ii) above.</p> <p>(f) <u>Business</u> (i) Rem and A of 24 & 25 were reserved for a playlot to serve the high density area. See objection D.83. (ii) (a) & (b). Rem of B, C, D, E, F of 10 are required for a playlot. Shopping provision is adequate to serve the community need.</p>

EXTRACT 5

Recommendation made by the Greenwood Park Ratepayer's Association for rescinding of zoning activities of the Council

Page 3.

ALL CORPORATION LAND.

Another recommendation is that all Corporation owned houses other than those in open spaces endorsed by the Greenwood Park Ratepayers Association be made available for sale to proven members of the Coloured group and that priority be given the existing occupiers.

COLOURED OWNED LAND PURCHASED BY CORPORATION FOR OPEN SPACES BUT ZONED OTHERWISE.

A final recommendation is that all land purchased cheaply from Coloured owners for open spaces (prior to publication of the Redevelopment Scheme for Duikerfontein) and subsequently proclaimed for another purpose be returned to the last registered owner at the same price at which it was purchased.

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. ... <i>A. G. Lalane</i> | 2. ... <i>B. Staman</i> |
| 3. ... <i>R. K. Matches</i> | 4. ... <i>W. Samuels</i> |
| 5. ... <i>M. S. Samuels</i> | 6. ... <i>M. Benjamin</i> |
| 7. ... <i>R. J. Crocker</i> | 8. ... <i>J. Stanley</i> |
| 9. ... <i>W. J. ...</i> | 10. ... <i>M. van Rooyen</i> |

for GREENWOOD PARK RATEPAYERS ASSOCIATION (Ward 14)

Source : Hands ,

City Engineer's Comments on Objections Received - Duikerfontein
Town Planning Proposals, 1972

EXTRACT 6

A written objection by one of the more prominent members of the Greenwood
Park Community

40 134-136 JACOBS RD
CLARWOOD
DURBAN

OWN CLERK,
CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF DURBAN.
P. O. BOX, 1014,
DURBAN.

RE - DUIKERFONTEIN PLANNING SCHEME.

Name of Objector: DR. J. R. Domingo

Postal Address of Property: ALLENBY RD
GREENWOOD PARK

Subdivisional Description:

Sub B of 105 of A of C of Duikerfontein 785

Nature of Objection: Zoning of above as open space -

-) Plots in the above area are of sufficient size to allow large gardens. Therefore additional open space is unnecessary and wasteful. There is an urgent and great need for land for housing particularly in the upper income Coloured group who are able to build homes without Council or Government assistance.

Additional suitable land is not being made available (The proposed Quality street area does not bear comparison with Greenwood Park)

- (a) ~~RECOMMENDATION~~ There are two schools immediately adjacent to above land, each with a large playing field. Too many open spaces are being created

(b) My personal inability to find an alternative property

Recommendation: Reconsider the zoning for open space of available land urgently required for housing. The availability of land Coloured in the upper income group is an urgent problem not receiving wide attention. It seems illogical therefore to magnify the problem further reduction in available land

Let the proposed plan may be read as regards open space events, housing priorities to be best to the fore.

J. R. Domingo, M.B. F.R.C.S.
(J. R. Domingo)

Conclusion

Housing profoundly affected the self-worth and self-actualisation of coloureds, particularly at a time when they were stripped of the vote. The coloured community of Greenwood park (GWP) was no exception. From the minutes of the meetings of the LAC to the data collected by researches such as R.R Rankin, it is obvious that the issue of housing remained the most common grievance of Durban coloureds right into the 1980's. In the face of an acute shortage of houses, communities such as GWP held prestige above communities with public sector housing. GWP offered private sector housing . However, close scrutiny of the physical environment (vertical aspects) and municipal infrastructure (horizontal aspects) in GWP from the 1950's to the 1970's reflects a very different reality.

Geographical factors such as location, topography, design, layout and the architectural features provided daily challenges. Steep gradients, poorly laid out plots and steadily aging houses increased the costs of homeownership and general maintenance. Even though the architecture points to an era of distinguished colonial lifestyle, it illustrates the lack of co-ordination and planning which characterised the area. Attempts by the council to address the haphazard, piecemeal development in the area met with much opposition. This community viewed suspiciously, a government which had disregarded their housing plight. Recreational facilities, public amenities and services such as

road maintenance, sewerage and lights (horizontal aspects) were generally below the expectations of a middle class community. According to the reports of R. Crocker ¹³¹ and A Stowman , local officials took long to respond to their grievances and often blamed central government for the lack of delivery in services and provisions. This did not exonerate local officials in the eyes of the community, neither did it do much to allay the fear that their status as a privileged minority was slowly changing.

The inferior housing environment, the response of local officials and changes in the broader political scenario made coloureds realise that they had become “poor relations in the community life” ¹³² of the white urban middle class. A realisation which did not at first include recognition of the root of their oppression. It took this community a little longer than other coloured communities in Durban to interpret the housing environment as a product of oppressive racial policies. It was only in the 1970's, that a significant number of residents began to make this connection. By the 1980's several residents joined organisations or movements, such as the United Democratic Front (UDF) which fought against racial oppression. However, only a few residents recognised their oppression as fundamentally rooted in relations of production. The ownership of a scarce resource such as private property, stood in the way of internalizing

¹³¹Comment of R. Crocker - see transcript, p169

¹³²S. Van Der Horst , “The Effect of Industrialisation and Race Relations in South Africa”, Industrialisation and Race Relations , 1965 , p 125

their steadily declining status as a shift down the continuum towards proletarianisation.

The coloureds of GWP were trapped. Proximity to the Durban North community served as a reminder that they lived “marginally in the white man’s valhalla [but were not] co-sharers in the administrative process”¹³³. Unlike the white community of Durban North, they were not able to use their location to effect greater socio-economic advancement and material progress. They had lost the most telling weapon; the vote. Instead, they had to grapple with the daily reality of having no meaningful representation. They were forced to rely on the goodwill of grudging councillors.¹³⁴ Yet, they refused to identify with the neighbouring Indian communities. Objections by local residents to the sharing of certain recreational facilities such as a swimming pool, bears testimony to this.¹³⁵ According to R. Crocker, this community was too “content to be ‘friendly’ with whites”.¹³⁶ They were too desperate to hang on to the glorious days of privilege and aristocracy.

¹³³V. February, Mind Your Colour, The Coloured Stereotype in South African Literature, (Leiden, 1981) p 167

¹³⁴Comment of R. Crocker - see transcript, p166

¹³⁵Hands, Duikerfontein Town Planning Proposals - Objections Received,

¹³⁶Comments of R. Crocker, -see transcript, p172

However, their daily reality was that of deprivation. The illusion of privilege that owning private property evoked, was not enough to sustain them indefinitely. This community soon reacted. However, their cries; their objections were muffled by their ambivalence. The GWP community was not as militant as the Wentworth or Sydenham communities. By comparison, the response of GWP residents to their inferior housing, was more circumspect. How could it not be? They felt they had more to lose. Their response was typically that of a small minority who had once enjoyed political power - lost it - but still accessed the symbol of that power; private property.

In short, the GWP community was trapped- trapped in the vortex of privilege and oppression. Yet, this coloured community of GWP was not complacent. Neither were they apathetic. They reacted to their housing plight. They challenged local policies which sought to marginalize them. They objected to the council's attempt to relegate them to a level below their aspirations. Perhaps their response was inappropriate for a people on route to proletarianisation. Perhaps their form of protest paled in the face of the tide of boycotts, strikes and squatter settlements that characterised Black urban life in the 1950's ,1960's and 1970's , but their response was sufficient to redirect the ambitions and agendas of local officials. For the coloureds of GWP , housing was important enough to defend and redefine because housing had fundamentally shaped their collective consciousness.

APPENDIX - A

Table 2

A comprehensive analysis of vital statistics of the coloured areas of Durban in 1982. The table illustrates:

- i) the absence of economic and sub-economic houses in GWP
- ii) a comparatively higher income per dwelling in GWP yet a lower per capita income for the area
- iii) less recreational facilities than the other two coloured areas. Even though the smaller population accounts for the shortfall, there is a marked difference in the amount of undeveloped areas in GWP suggesting an availability of space for increased recreation.

ITEM	Greenwood park	Sydenham/sparks Est	Wentworth
POPULATION	4 065	10 523	25 803
<u>INCOME (Rands)</u>			
<u>Sub-economic</u>			
Ave. per capita	-	24.73	20.40
Ave. per dwelling	-	160.00	132.00
<u>Economic</u>			
Ave. per capita	-	61.51	60.28
Ave. per dwelling	-	398.00	390.00
<u>Private Development</u>			
Ave. per capita	72.30	100.74	76.97
Ave. per dwelling	743.00	498.00	498.00
<u>Open Space (ha)</u>			
active	2.49	7.16	7.73
passive	-	2.12	2.41
playlot	0.05	2.11	2.41
undeveloped	8.2	13.44	6.88
<u>Businesses</u>			
No. of outlets	8	14	33

Source: adapted from Rankin, A Pilot Study assessing the Problems facing the 'Coloureds' 1982

Appendix B (cont)

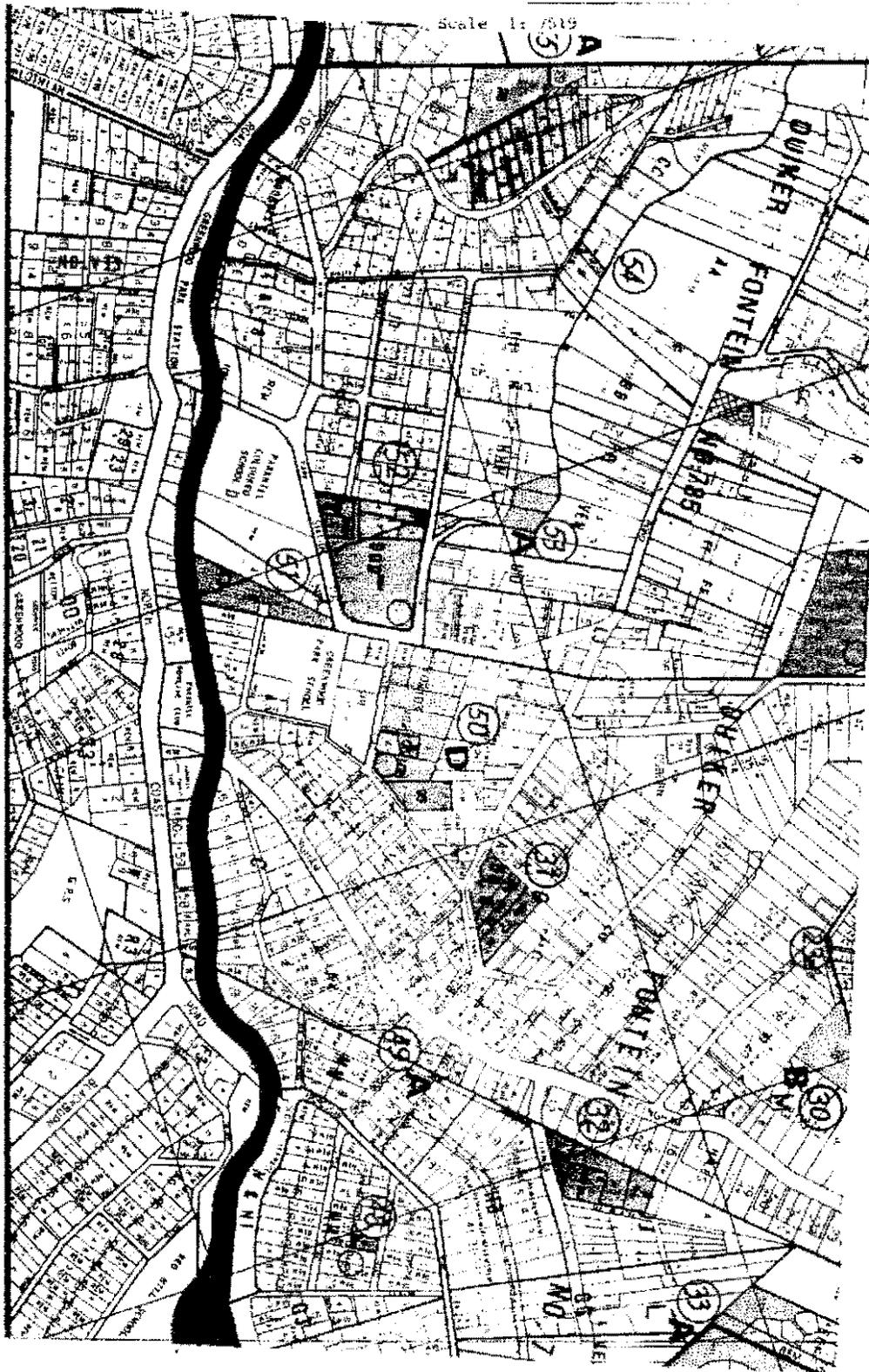
Key to Numbers on Map of Greenwood Park

- 48. Glenrose Road - a developed playlot
- 49. Effingham / Tweed Road - sloping grasslands/ houses
- 50. Allenby Road - playlot/ houses
- 51. Park Station Road - trees/ part level
- 52. Park Station/ Havelock - partly developed for sports
- 53. Havelock Road - sloping grasslands
- 54. Sentinel Avenue - bush/ access difficult
- 55. Rosary Road/ Tenby Place - houses
- 56. Isom/ Montrose Road - fairly level and wooded

APPENDIX - B

Map indicating development in Greenwood Park by 1982

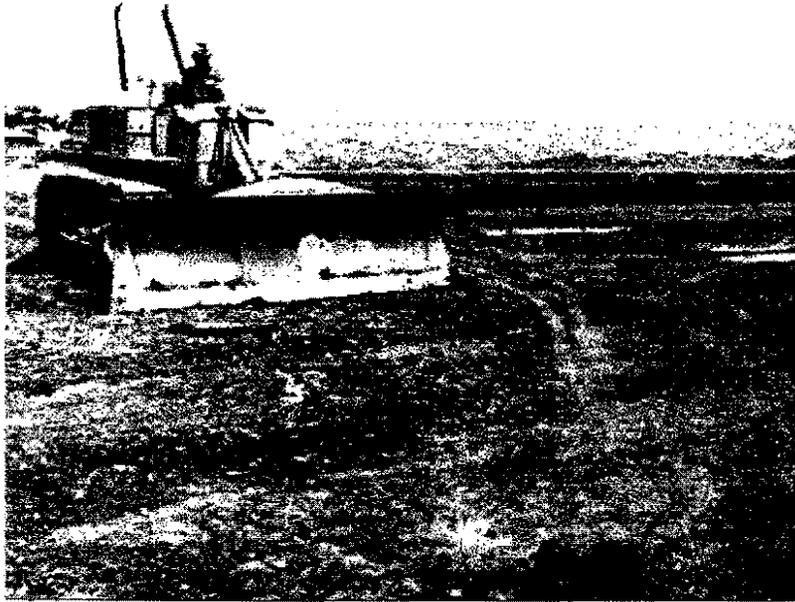
SCALE: 1: 7519



Source: Rankin, *A Pilot Study Assessing the Problems facing the 'Coloureds', 1982*

APPENDIX - C

An indication of the extensive excavation and construction necessary for levelling grounds for recreation purposes in Greenwood Park



Source : Hand's, City Engineer's Report on the Planning of Diukerfontein,
P 31

APPENDIX - D

The Relative Importance of Different Problems in the Coloured Community of Metropolitan Durban .

29

TABLE 5 : THE RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF DIFFERENT PROBLEMS IN THE
'COLOURED' COMMUNITY OF METROPOLITAN DURBAN

	Proportion of sample mentioning problem as a Problem	Proportion of sample mentioning problem as the main problem
<u>Housing</u>	72,73%	54,55%
lack of land for building more houses	27,27%	6,06%
lack of consultation in the provision of housing	15,15%	-
Total		<u>60,61%</u>
<u>Recreation</u>	63,64%	15,15%
lack of community facilities	7,27%	3,03%
lack of day-care facilities	24,24%	-
Total		<u>18,18%</u>

A Sample illustrating the Two most prominent grievances of Coloureds in Durban by 1982

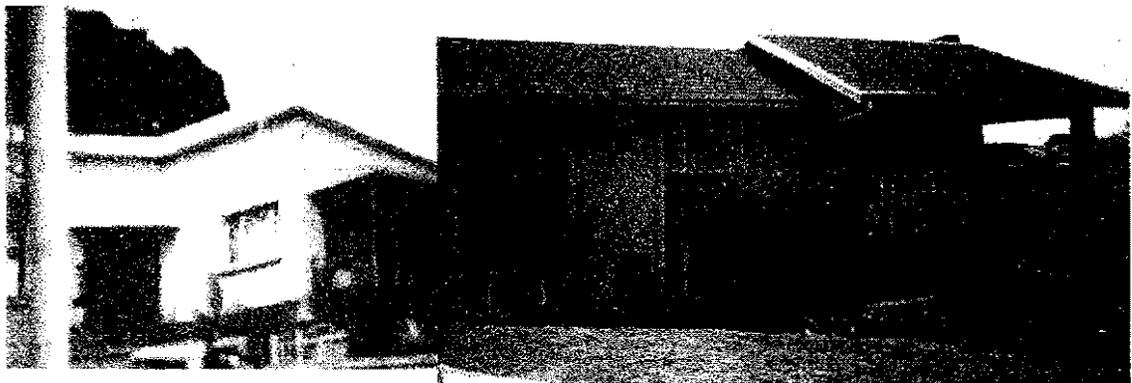
Source : Rankin , A Pilot Study assessing the Problems facing the "Coloureds in the Metropolitan Area, 1982

APPENDIX - E

Photographs of some less solid but more modern homes which helped to sustain the middle class status of Greenwood Park



Source: Hand's, City Engineer's Report on the Planning of Duikerfontein, P7



Contemporary photographs of modern homes built more or less in the 1960's and 1970's

APPENDIX F

PASSENGER TRAFFIC to and from GREENWOOD PARK.

MONTH	CLASS				AMOUNT		
	1st	2nd	3rd	Total	L	S	D
January	183	200	445	918	36	3	4
February	217	385	493	1095	37	17	0
March	317	248	550	1115	43	13	6
April	237	184	476	897	34	14	5
May	171	302	554	1027	35	12	1
June	203	190	500	993	36	15	11
July	408	206	569	1283	52	8	11
August	183	123	506	812	28	15	5
September	156	183	511	850	31	1	3
October	192	105	511	808	29	12	4
November	187	234	484	905	32	11	3
December	188	137	508	823	30	15	9
Ordinary Tickets	2642	2577	6307	11526	430	1	2
Excursion do				390	1	11	8
Season do				27	125	14	9
			Total		587	7	7

CSO 1897, vol.no.1540, Natal Archives Pmb, 1897
(CSO is abbreviation for Colonial Secretary's Office)

APPENDIX G**INTERVIEW SCHEDULE****Housing related issues in Greenwood Park from the 1950's to the 1970's**

1. Tell me about Briardene School - when was it established?
- When did coloureds start attending this school?
2. When did you move to Greenwood Park?
3. Do you know of any in-migrants?
4. Were they ever fully integrated into the community or was there division?
5. Did these in-migrants buy from the pre-existing housing stock or did they tend to build their own homes?
6. In 1975 the Greenwood Park Rate Payer's Association recommended industrial zones in Duikerfontein. Why?
7. Did the LAC adequately address the problems of Greenwood Park?
8. Why did Greenwood Park residents prefer to have two separate swimming pools built for the Indian and Coloureds of Duikerfontein yet agreed to a common library?
9. Did you ever, in your capacity as Secretary of the Ratepayer's Association, help to resolve a housing related problem in the area?
10. Was there ever a particular housing issue that featured prominently as a concern of Greenwood Park?
11. Why were Coloureds attracted to Greenwood Park?
12. Why did Greenwood Park have more open space zones than Sydenham or Wentworth?

13. How did the Department of Community Development manage their land in the area?
14. Do you know of any property that was declared historical landmarks?
15. Why were there so few coloured- owned retail outlets in Greenwood Park?
16. Have you ever heard of the Coloured Development Corporation and the Spes Bona Savings and Finance Bank?
17. How did the rates of Greenwood Park compare to that of Durban North?
18. How did the market value of houses in Greenwood Park compare to other coloured and white middle class areas?
19. How often did the Greenwood Park Ratepayer's Association meet?
20. Did the association have any relationship with its Indian counterpart?
21. Have you ever heard of the Greenwood Park Development League?
22. Were the Lions International and Rotary Clubs ever involved in the community?
23. Do you know of any families that bought at Kupugani?
24. Was gangsterism a problem of Greenwood Park?
25. Did Greenwood Park's early residents consider themselves as Black?
26. Why is home ownership so important to coloureds?
27. Who owned "ZAM-ZAM" tearoom and the flats above?
28. Who owned the Rosary- Leven Place flats?
29. What was the attitude of the councillors towards representative bodies such as the Ratepayer's Association?

TRANSCRIPT

Interviewer: Lynette Francis

Interviewee: Mr Raymond Crocker - Secretary of the Greenwood Park (GWP) Ratepayer's Association from 1971 to 1976

Place of Interview: Interviewer's residence in Greenwood Park

Date of Interview: 04 September 2000

Time of Interview: 15.30 hrs

Duration of Interview: approximately 2 hours.

Could you tell me about Briardene School?

Briardene was a white school. It became coloured before Greenwood Park School. Whites still went to Greenwood Park School whilst Briardene had already become coloured. Eventually Briardene became the junior primary and Greenwood Park, the senior primary.

Was this a quick transition or was it gradual?

It seemed quick at the time but by the time that I first came into Greenwood Park(GWP) in 1959, Greenwood Park School was still white. Parkhill [high school] was really an elite coloured school. When I came to teach as a student in 1959 I was so intimidated.

So would you say that when you came here in 1959 there were a fair amount of coloureds in the area already?

There were a lot of coloureds but there were still whites in the area. Coloureds were also living that side [eastern] of North Coast Road, in Orange Grove. These always thought that they were closer to whites.

Were there any white kids in Parkhill when you arrived there on block?

No, there were no whites in Parkhill. The first Principal thought he was white, though!

Did the Greenwood Park that you came to know from 1959 to 1965 have a lot of coloureds from Durban or were there many from the rural areas and outside of Natal?

We were! Wentworth had a lot of people from the farm.

How were they [GWP community] towards you?

We noticed that we were not invited to certain functions- we were from the farm, you know. You know the Penningtons, they were also from the outside. We came here and bought a massive plot. In fact, two lovely plots.

It seems as if in the 70's the people who settled here from the Transkei seemed to have capital.. They invested in houses and were private builders?

Yes... these did, although the Mauritians also seemed to have capital.

Ok, so they built their own houses- the more modern ones?

No. That came much later. They bought houses that were in the

area already.

Now for the Durban LAC- in 1975 recommendations were made for an industrial zone in Greenwood Park. Why?

To provide employment. There was a problem with the way in which zoning was declared for whites. For instance, the railway line and not North Coast Road was the boundary. That side [eastern] of the railway line had shops. Mainly for whites. For example, the tearooms were white-owned. There was no real industry for coloureds. These blurred boundaries were really a problem, even with the Indian community.

Did the GWP Ratepayer's association WANT clear boundaries?

Yes, we wanted this. We felt that we should have businesses in North Coast Road but for some reason failed to...

There were some white properties on the western side of the Railway line eg where Mrs Salsone lives?

Yes. There was also Margaret Maytom's property in Park Station Road. We questioned her presence, but she was the mayoress of Durban and such a nice person that it was hard to just get her out. She had endeared herself to the residents. You know, she would have Christmas parties for the poorer children in the area. She tried to get her daughter-in-law... no, daughter, I think, as mayor but...

Why did she live here?

I don't know. She lived alone. She was quite eccentric, you know. She had a r-a-m-b-l-i-n-g property.

Ok, the LAC- did they address some important issues in GWP? They seemed to have marginalised GWP. Was this so? Were there many issues to deal with?

I don't think that there were too many issues to deal with in GWP besides transport and business opportunities. The problem was, the LAC was toothless. It was made so by the Liberals and Progressives, not the Nats [NP] themselves. These would put a

spanner in the works. They did not want the whole system to work. They did not want to play into the hands of the Nats so they were the spoke in the wheel for the LAC. We would try to lobby a sympathetic councillor, but these guys were heavy. You couldn't ask very sensitive questions. In fact, one threatened to walk out.

Did the councillors consider the issue of housing as sensitive?

No, they felt that the area was too sparsely populated. It was not worth considering.

If you look closely at GWP, there appeared to be pockets of poverty?

Yes. There were some poor people in GWP [several families named as reference]

You mentioned some interesting issues over the phone, about zoning in GWP in the 1970's?

I know that the council tried to buy off cheaply, areas that

they had zoned for open spaces. They would then have these areas re-zoned as residential areas and sold for a fortune eg the property of Royston Matches. Many people almost lost their homes because of zoning for open spaces. These properties were bought for a song. My mother's property was targeted for re-zoning but we fought and were eventually granted duplex rights. Mr Bruce's property was zoned for open space but as inspector of education he was able to use his position to get it lifted. Many were able to get duplex rights after fighting.

If property was given duplex rights did the owner stand to gain ?

That's right. they could get a better price for their property if they sold it.

There was an issue about building a swimming pool for GWP- why did the LAC contest sharing a pool with the Indian community but agreed to sharing a library?

As far as I am concerned this was racism. The LAC would sometimes refuse to make a commitment on certain issues. I

know, when Africans tried to get into the area, the LAC would simply say that the government must take up the issue because these were the laws of the Nat. government so they can't deal with the matter.

So, are you saying that the LAC would not commit either way?

Yes, they would not.

Did you ever take up a case as Secretary of the GWP Ratepayer's Association?

Not r-e-a-l-l-y - only problems like sewerage. You know the conservancy tanks?

What are conservancy tanks? Oh yes, septic tanks.

The corporation sometimes took too long to drain these so they would really smell. Then the case would be brought to us. But housing wasn't really an issue- no problems. Just the ordinary things were a problem.

The tarring [surfacing] of roads seem to have taken long. For instance, Rosary Road?

Rosary Road took long. I don't know why Rosary Road more than others. It was quite a cinderella street. Most of the other roads were tarred by the 1970's.

Yes, many of the poorer residents seemed to have lived in this section of GWP - remember George Chochlane? He cut hair in the "Rules house".

Yes I remember the "Rules House" and Chochlane. Also "the Youngs".

Who owned the "Rules House"? Was it council property?- because it was demolished in the late 70's.

I think it was council land. Albey Stowman also lived for years on council land. There was another opposite Stowman, I think.

The Appelgrens?

Who maintained these homes? How did it work?

The council. You paid about R15 a month rent. Very cheap. Look at Stowman- he lived on about an acre.

Yes, it was flat land too.

The house was in quite good condition too.

What steps would be taken to have a house demolished?

Tenants would often report on the state of the house.

Somebody would be sent out to investigate. Eventually an inspector would declare if it should be demolished.

Were the building regulations and by-laws strict.

Yes. You had to be very careful to build according to specification. Everyone was scared of building inspectors.

What attracted coloureds to GWP?

The plots. Sydenham had small plots.

But a study conducted in the 1970's showed GWP was not very desirable. A low percentage of coloureds expressed a desire to live here.

Sydenham is closer to town and it had all the amenities. The only amenities GWP had was in North Coast Road- apart from a few tearooms like "ZAM- ZAM" and "Havelock shop". There was another shop in the corner of Adrossan Road that was taken over by the Haffegees but these were mainly tearooms.

Can you remember Farouk's butchery and Ahmed's grocery store?

Yes. Then there was the Hendricks who took over , then of course "the Pandys".

Did coloureds own the building? It had the flats above.

The only coloured- owned retail outlet that I know was the "Top of the Rock". The Smith's owned it. Coloureds JUST DID NOT have the money. We were also too content- content to rent from Indians- content to be 'friendly' with whites. We did not think beyond that.

Who owned 'Zam-Zam' building?

I think someone in town. Not a coloured. My dad was offered backing to open a liquor store. He would be a front but he turned it down.

The block of flats at the corner of Rosary and Leven place were also Indian-owned? what about the Schroeders?

Yes, there were rumours that they were involved but I didn't know them to have enough money for this.

When you say that the Group areas were buying property in the area once it was declared an open space, do you mean the Department of Community development?

Yes. They bought these properties for a song and made a lot of money out of them.

What can you tell me about the rates of GWP? How did it compare to Durban North?

The rates were almost the same yet the area was not as good as Durban North.

Who would evaluate the properties and how was it done?

The council would send an inspector. They would look at the house- how many rooms, the land.

So they considered GWP equal to Durban North. This must of been a bone of contention for the Association?

It was. We questioned this but they mostly said that the area was sparsely populated so the income [revenue] was not enough. Those guys would really confuse you. They would talk about the whites who owned business in West Street and paid rates for their business, so they contributed more. Our argument was that we paid with our labour but they never accepted this. They would use this as a reason for developing white areas.

Let's look at the services. Who would determine when the sewerage would be

connected?

Well the residents could apply. The new homes had sewerage sooner.

Back to the older houses. Do you know anything about when some of these older homes were built, you know- from their architecture?

From the title deeds, our home was built in about 1953, I think. It had 4 bedrooms, lounge, verandah in front and at the back. A tiled roof so it was newer than some other houses.

According to records, in 1951 GWP was put aside for coloureds. It had no public housing. Authorities then shifted interests to Sydenham and public housing there.

In 1960, interest in GWP was renewed. Do you perhaps know why authorities lost interest in GWP for a while?

Not really. Wentworth was declared in 1960-1961. It was a military camp. Lots of farmers came in to live here.

What do you know about the Coloured Development Corporation. Why didn't more use the Spes Bona Savings and Financial Bank?

It was hard to qualify. You had to prove that you had experience in running a shop . Manual...

Who is Manual?

Samuels.

Oh yes. The speculator.

He tried to get funding from this corporation but it was hard. It just wasn't easy and our people just DID NOT qualify. Even to own a bottle store or hotel- they were afraid that coloureds were so inexperienced that money would be wasted on them. You had to have about 20 partners to own a business. This wasn't very practical. What profit would each one make? Only the Twynhams had shares in Palm Springs Hotel in Wentworth.

How often did the GWP Ratepayer's Association meet.

About once a month. We fought a losing battle. If there is no representation in the council then councillors are not really answerable. Only thing we could do maybe was not pay rates, that's all.

Did the GWP Ratepayer's Association have any relationship with neighbouring bodies?

There was talk of joint efforts but this never ever got off the ground. Nothing came of it.

What was the market value of the homes in GWP compared to neighbouring Durban North?

There was an artificial shortage so property was more valuable here than Durban North. In fact, my mother's plot fetched R90 000. That was like gold at that time [1970's]. You never got land for less. Maybe 10 years later it was considerably less.

There were not really many people who could buy in GWP. They

found the homes overpriced. The guys would get their prices. It really was a seller's market. There was a tendency not to sell though. My mother believed in keeping property in the family. Those who sold and went to Australia made a killing. Very few sold except those who were leaving.

There have been some gaps in the literature so I would like to know about some organisations that I came across in my reading. The GWP Development League?

I have some recollection. It was only for those with money. Not even Albey Stowman was involved in that body. They would look for money for development. I think efforts were made to get funding from Oppenheimer..

The Oppenheimer Trust?

But I don't think they were successful.

The Urban Foundation?

They were never really involved in this area. This was a

cinderella area. The feeling was - what more did they want?

They got everything. Not like in Newlands East or Wentworth.

The Lions International?

I don't really know. If they were involved it must have been on a small scale.

Киргачи?

NO. They had a 'means test". Not just anyone could buy.

What about gangsterism and violence in the area?

Not much. There would be a problem if boys from the area visited girls from outside the area then there would sometimes be a reaction. Boys from outside retaliated. There was some of this in the 80's but not really in the 70's. No gangsterism. It was peaceful here.

Was this a figment of my imagination? I vaguely remember cows grazing in the

valley here- right here in the area when I was about six or seven.

Yes I remember that too. Its not your imagination. When I was teaching at Briardene I used to look down the valley and see the cows. There were also some sheep and goats. I think that some of the Indians used to slaughter them. Nobody would report them. It was like a farm here.

The minutes of the Durban LAC mention the taking over of Ben Nevis and Heather grove. What was this all about?

I don't understand what that means.

Why do you think that it was important to own a house?

It was a status symbol. Pride. We were a renting community. It was not easy to own property. In Jacobs, plots were going for thirty pounds. It would take years and years to pay off. For ten shillings a month you could own a property. There was also this 'never-never" system where you could pay ten rand a month over thirty-three years. In Barns Road [Sydenham] property was sold

by the corporation on this system. People were not eager. You would die before you could pay off your house! The homes in Sparks Road [Sydenham] were also sold on this system

Was this system ever employed in GWP?

No. They were not council homes. There was also the corporation scheme where you could buy appliances off the scheme if you were a property owner or payed lights. You could buy furniture from the scheme.

Was this a way of keeping coloureds in poverty?

Yes. It was much more expensive to use this scheme. As far as they were concerned they were helping the people to acquire appliances and furniture at a reasonable rate but payable over a longer period. The corporation was making the money. If you don't pay your lights, your fridge goes! In Newlands East initially, your rent and lights were on the same bill. You had to pay both.

In 1977, a portion of Park Station Road was taken over by the council. What was this all about?

I don't know. The creche below Parkhill School was on council land. Mrs Bonelle ran the creche. She rented from the council. Before that it was a depot for cleaning lawnmowers, tractors and equipment.

Do you think that there were some councillors in your time who actually opposed segregation?

Those did not assist. They had their own agendas. They wanted the association and LAC to fail so that they could gain more credibility. They argued that the LAC split the community and this was evident in the poor percentage polls

Was GWP politicized?

It was not very politicized. The people lived in a comfort zone. They were middle class- lived like whites- were artisans. You know, a cut above the rest. They were comfortable. Not like

Wentworth which was very politicized.

You mentioned something in our telephone conversation about a women's group in Sydenham that opposed zoning activities in the 1970's

Yes, I forget the name now, but in Meadow Road the zoning for open spaces caused a split in the community. Some agreed to sell, others refused. Eventually high rise council flats came up in these 'open spaces' in Villa Road. These open spaces caused lots of problems. You never knew from one year to the next what would happen- if your property would be declared open space or if you would be given flat rights.

Well that's it . I may contact you again just in case I need clarification on certain issues. I hope you don't mind. Thanks . I really appreciate your time.

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4. ORAL DATA

- 4.1 Interview with R. Crocker, secretary of the Greenwood Park Ratepayer's Association from 1971 to 1976 - see transcript in Appendix G.
- 4.2 Unstructured conversations with A. B. Stowman, member of the Durban Coloured Local Affairs Council and member of the Greenwood Park Ratepayer's Association in the 1970's, and former residents of GWP .

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