

4. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

District Six is a grade 1 heritage area considered to possess national heritage significance telling a national history of forced removals. Heritage resources are primarily the local townscape precinct with the remains of District Six located to the north of Nelson Mandela Boulevard, the altered landscape of District Six south of the boulevard, and key sites such as school, churches and mosques. The site is located within the grade 1 heritage area in an immediate context of low heritage significance, with the exception of the proposed Grade 1 Muir Street Masjid to the south of the site and the Good Hope Centre to the north of the site.



Figure 54: Extract City of Cape Town Inventory of Heritage Resources

Site significance

While District Six is highly significant in terms of public memory and the history of forced removals, the site does not hold such social significance. The site is considered to possess low heritage significance in the context of the remaining built form of District Six. This report assesses the site with a lack of cultural value and suggests that the site does not possess Grade 3B grading. The site should not be precluded from proposed intervention taking cognizance of the social memory of its context.

The site does however possess associational value in the history and growth of District Six and in particular, links to established commercial uses.

Conservation efforts

The South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) has been working towards the protection of sites in District Six since the promulgation of the National Heritage Resources Act (Act 25 of 1999). In 2004, Ms Beverley Crouts prepared a motivation and nomination of District Six as a national heritage site. The matter was presented to SAHRA Council in November 2004. At the time, the District Six Museum assisted in developing statement of significance. In 2004, the area referred to as District Six (see figure 55) was nominated as a national heritage site. The site was graded as Grade 1, identified to possess national significance. The site was provisionally protected in 2006, however, such provisional protection has since lapsed. In trying to resolve the declaration of District Six, and given that the proposed boundary would include approximately 800 owners and the management implications assisted thereto, SAHRA have considered the identification and declaration of sites as national heritage resources. Thus, consideration of a core area and / or sites to be declared as national heritage sites has been undertaken. 40idamemoria compiled a list of sites so as to initiate serial declaration of sites in District Six as national heritage sites. Sites will be identified for declaration in phases and further to engagement with owners and users of such sites. To date, eight (8) sites have been nominated for declaration and the process is currently underway. District 6 possesses intangible heritage significance, and thus, simultaneously with identification of sites for declaration as national heritage sites, 40idamemoria submitted application for name change from Zonnebloem to District Six.



Figure 55: Proposed District Six national heritage site

Name change

District Six has been known by many names including Buhid the Castle, Kanaladorp, District Six and Zonnebloem. The naming of District Six as Zonnebloem was an attempt by the apartheid government to leave no trace of the area. In June 2018 vidamemoria submitted application for the renaming of Zonnebloem to the Western Cape Provincial Geographical Names Committee. The initiative was undertaken with the District Six Museum, who submitted letter of motivation and was party to submission of application. The name change aims to support symbolic restitution and healing. The boundary submitted for the name change application is the same as the Grade 1 boundary identified by SAHRA.

5. HERITAGE INDICATORS

For purposes of this assessment, the key heritage indicator is an assessment of potential heritage impact on the immediate townscape and identified heritage resources. Assessment takes into consideration macro and micro scale urban principles. Heritage indicators aim to ensure that heritage significance would not be adversely impacted by proposed intervention. Heritage indicators relate to influence of aspects of the built environment on the quality of life. Identified positive urban qualities include sense of community, varied street grid and block patterns, the role of the street and sidewalks to function as linear urban spaces for places of interaction, educational religious and cultural landmarks of importance to larger urban spatial framework assuming significance for social value rather than architectural reasons.

5.1 Urban principles: macro-scale

Macro-scale elements that have defined District Six include topography, edges of Devils Peak, proximity to the city centre, view of the sea and the Trafalgar Park green belt. At a macro-scale these elements have determined urban morphology. Major elements that have historically provided sense of place while facilitating integration into the urban and natural context are:

- Land form: morphology that has allowed for views and linkages – on the broader scale the areas 'sense of place' is defined by Devil's Peak and Table Mountain to the south and Table Bay to the north. The slope of the terrain as it forms part of the city-bowl arena is a place making characteristic
- Primary movement routes: providing order and character, the primary routes of vehicular and pedestrian movement of Hanover Street and Sir Lowry Road act as movement spines. These primary routes not only ordered the areas itself but also corridors integrating into surrounding environments with typically concentration and intensity of mixed use activity – providing easy access, choice and variety – and legibility to urban order
- Secondary street grid: pedestrian scaled rectangular street grid defining various urban blocks. Smaller sized urban blocks allowed for fine grained urban fabric permeable and easily accessible for pedestrians
- Mixed land-use and density: mix of land uses permitted perpetual use of areas and diversity of daily life. Medium to high density of the population and buildings guaranteed that the area could support a range of economic services and activity

Proposed intervention should not result in a negative visual impact on the relationship between the mountain and the bay, should reinforce Sir Lowry Road as an activity spine and promote a mix of land uses



Figure 56: Primary movement routes



Figure 57: Secondary movement routes

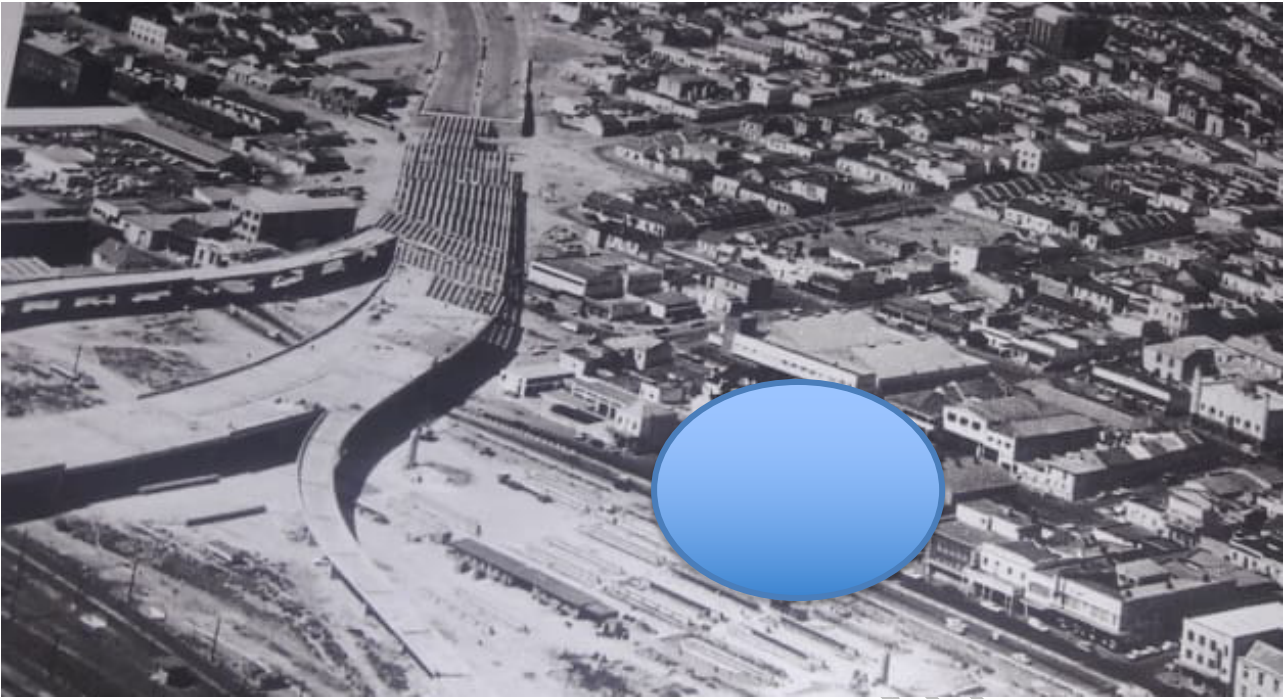


Figure 58: Sir Lowry Road forming the border of District Six, undated image indicating site not long before demolition of District Six (in Hislop, 2018)

5.2. Urban principles: micro-scale

Design elements and principles informing character and quality of urbanity helped to accommodate particular social and economic interaction as well as sense of community providing character to sub-areas within District Six. With regard to micro-scale urban principles, LeGrange (2003: 15 – 22) notes:

- Definition of streets / public spaces: streets were considered as special public spaces due to scale and intensity of use. Typically, bound and defined by 'walls' of surrounding urban blocks. Character was defined by treatment and differing edges of steps, stoeps, colonnades and balconies – as well as affording views to the sea, mountain and city
- Landmarks and public buildings: typically churches, mosques and schools made special by their scale and architectural elaboration, in certain cases forming points of visual focus, providing points of reference, identity and orientation
- Background buildings: much of the fabric of District Six was made up of ordinary buildings, which through devices such as common building lines, uniform heights, similar massing and human scale served as backdrop to streets
- Elaboration of corners: crossroads of streets and associated corners function as important spaces affording accessibility and visibility not only in terms of use but also in terms of architectural elaboration
- Building edges and transitional spaces: transitions between public street and private interiors of buildings helping to define the street, provide shelter and also provide a space for social interaction
- Entrances: through the use of steps, arches and canopies, intermediate spaces as places for social interaction
- Steps: a critical site characteristic of District Six is its location on a slope. In order to negotiate sloping terrain, steps were employed in a variety of ways – steps into buildings, lanes and courtyards as well as steps at the end of streets
- Historical housing: housing constituted a major part of fabric, varying in terms of typology including row-houses, terraces, semi-detached, apartment buildings or council flats and free standing villas

Site scale informants relate to promoting positive edge treatment, providing linkages in encouraging active edge space and encouraging pedestrian movement and flow. Consideration should be given to interface and edge treatment along Sir Lowry Road.

The proposed intervention should not detract from points of reference and orientation afforded by heritage landmark buildings. Emphasis should be placed on street interface and encouraging spaces for social interaction.

5.3 Remaining fabric and landscape

Very little original fabric remains. In relation to historical urban fabric, pattern and buildings, the following remains:

- traces of the old street grid
- churches and mosques
- schools
- terrace / row housing and apartment blocks



Figure 59: View across District Six (updated)

Proposed intervention should respond to heritage significance, acknowledge historical layering, ensure the place as a cultural destination where heritage is regarded as a priority for planning and economic regeneration and have a positive spatial response in bringing together various elements of the landscape and sites of memory.

5.4 Visual impact

Proposed intervention should be designed in a manner that results in a low visual impact on the immediate townscape and identified heritage resources.

Draft for Comment

5.5 The urban fabric: commercial and retail

Shops and other commercial activities were central to the area's economy. The two main commercial strips were Sir Lowry Road and Hanover Street. Sir Lowry Road was a link between the city centre and had regional as well as local importance. A recurring thread within consideration of relevant documents is the opportunity for potential commercial uses that could be integrated into the fabric through mixed-use development. A key principle is the focus of commercial activities along main arterials and to reinforce New Hanover Street as a linear spine of commercial and retail in line with its historic role.

Proposed intervention should support mutually supportive and compatible land uses, complement and support growth of economic activities and integration of the central business district that would support and provide thresholds required to support increased commercial uses, and support creation of a high intensity mixed use public transport orientated activity street along Sir Lowry Road edge. The site should support nodal development and public space making in creating legible urban structure and consider its role as an interface between residential and commercial areas.

Heritage management should seek to guide development and to protect heritage resources while supporting economic growth. Proposed intervention should provide quality urban environments to encourage economic development, create positive well-defined people friendly environments, convenience and mixed-use development. The nature, grain and distribution of development along Main Street is of a higher order nature, where gateway opportunities exist to stimulate and enable investment and growth.



Figure 60: Land uses in District Six 1964(Cape Technikon, 2002: 783

5.6 Architectural heritage indicators by Kathy Dumbrell

5.6.1 Site inspection findings

The consultant team inspected the site on 9 April 2021 and 23 April 2021, conducting a thorough internal and external inspection of the various buildings that comprise the site and compiling a photographic record of the inspections. Despite being one erf, the site is comprised of a collection of six buildings. Shared walls between these buildings are visible on a diagram (which appears to date to 1956) attached to approved plan 258036 dated 1982.

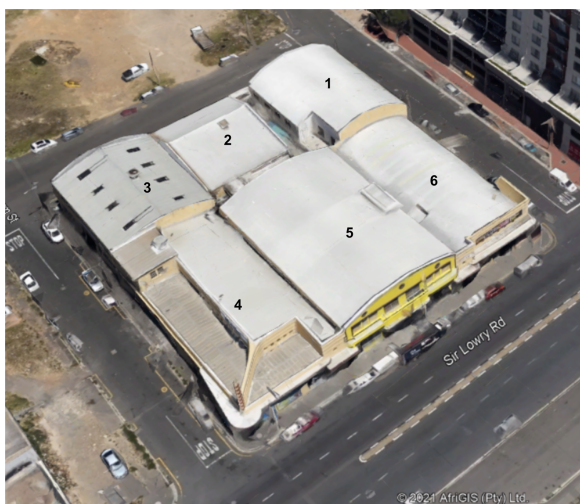


Figure 61 alongside shows the roofs of the buildings that comprise the site. Four of the roofs (numbered 1, 3, 5 and 6) are curved, with roof 2 a double-pitched roof and roof 1 a combination roof, comprising a monopitched roof behind the ground floor parapet wall, a flat roof on the Sir Lowry and Reform Road edges and a monopitched roof on the second storey portion. There is a shared service yard, accessed off Selkirk Street between buildings 1 and 2.

Figure 61: oblique aerial view of the site showing roof forms (courtesy GoogleEarth Streetview)

The component buildings on the site are all originally of a warehouse typology and, even though there has been internal subdivision of space, this character is still legible. Because they are all of the same late Art Deco/ Inter-war /Modernist architectural style, they form a cohesive collection of buildings, but vary in level of conservation-worthiness. The building on the corner of Reform and Sir Lowry Roads is in a late Art Deco architectural style, with a landmark corner detail, and displays the most conservation-worthy elements in the complex. The area under flat roof along Reform Rd has been enclosed at some stage and was originally a service centre or filling station. Original porthole windows were evident on the site visit.

The facades of the buildings still include the names of some of the original business premises on the site at the time of its development into its current form in low-relief plasterwork. These are: The Union Furnishing Co, Furman's Produce Co (Pty) Ltd and Readings. The shopfronts on the Sir Lowry Road elevation are not all original and detract from the overall cohesion of the elevation. Given the clear central symmetry evident in the design of the silhouette of the building, it was conceived of as a single composition, even with the asymmetrical treatment of the service centre corner. Redesign of the shopfronts to be more sympathetic with the original facade is required to reverse the negative impact of the current shopfronts on the conservation-worthiness of the whole facade.



Figure 62: The Sir Lowry Road elevation (Hislop 2021: 18)

The site is opposite the C19th New Market site, now the site of the Good Hope Centre. To its west is the redeveloped Oriental Plaza site, now a mixed-use, multi-storeyed building. To its immediate east is a Caltex filling station, with vacant ground behind, which once was part of the housing fabric of District Six. Further east is the Nelson Mandela Boulevard fly-over, which is a tall and intrusive element in the streetscape. To the south, the site bounds District Six. All that remains of the nearby District Six context is a mosque and a mid-C20th public (council) building in a similar Modernist style to the buildings on the Selkirk Street edge of the subject site. The area bounded by Sir Lowry, Muir, Stuckeris, Chapel and Matveld Streets – four city blocks including erf 7134 – are all zoned Mixed Use 3, which includes a height right of 35m.

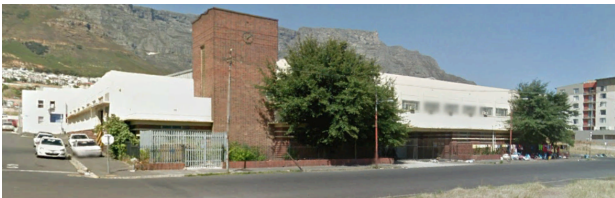


Figure 63: City property, Selkirk Street (GoogleEarth Streetview) Figure 64: Zeenatul Islam Mosque, Chapel Street (GoogleEarth Streetview)

5.6.2 History of the current buildings on the site

While erf 7134 had originally comprised 6 portions of land, by 1904 it was owned by one person – Arthur Charles Mathew (Hislop 2021: 10).

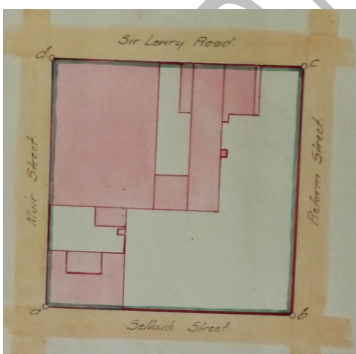


Figure 65: Detail from the 1903 SG Diagram - (SG Diag. No. 1419/1903 in Hislop 2021: 22).

The Deed Diagram (dated 1903) attached to the transaction shows development of the same extent and footprint as that shown on the Thom Survey map of c1897 (Hislop 2021: 21). On the Thom Survey, the building is referred to as a “produce store”. By 1926, the site had been further developed, incorporating the previous buildings.

On the 1945 aerial photograph (Hislop 2021: 23) and the 1944-1966 City Survey, the building footprint and roofscape look as they do today. Thus, the current configuration dates to between 1926 and 1945.

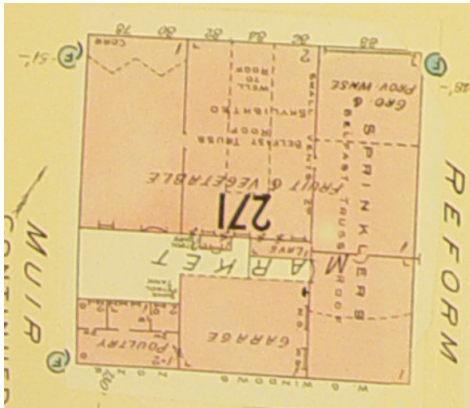


Figure 66: (left): Detail from the 1926 Goad Insurance Map (Hislop 2021: 22)

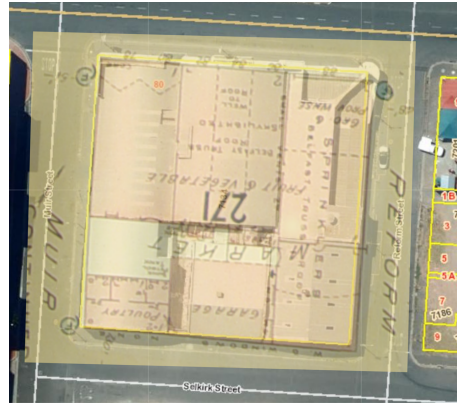


Figure 67: (right) The 1926 Goad map overlaid onto 2018 CoCT aerial imagery by K Dumbrell

While the current built fabric does not at first inspection appear to include older fabric, overlaying the 1926 Goad map of the site over 2018 aerial imagery shows that the redevelopment of the site into the current building form (between 1926 and 1945) largely followed the existing warehouse layout on the site. Part of the garage on Selkirk Street was, however, removed to create the existing service yard. It is not evident how much earlier fabric was retained, or if the new warehouses were just built on the sites of their predecessors.

5.6.3 Existing professional studies

A number of professional studies have been conducted to understand and frame a redevelopment approach and framework for District Six. The studies have included erf 7134 within the study area, partly because the site (while not targeted by the Group Areas Act for demolition) still formed part of District Six and partly because including Sir Lowry Road in thinking about a redeveloped District Six makes urban place-making sense. The District Six Development Framework (Mammon and Le Grange 2012) identifies proximity to the city centre as an opportunity for the integration of commercial into the built fabric within mixed use developments. It recommends that commercial activities be focused along the main arterials of District Six, including Sir Lowry Road. It also identifies the Sir Lowry Road and Reform Street edges of erf 7134 as significant frontages within the overall development plan for the area and the area between the site and the Good Hope Centre as a potential activity node. This is in an urban design rather than heritage sense, but should be viewed as design opportunities. The study identifies erf 7134 for medium-to- high density development, with opportunities for commercial and mixed-use development. The District Six Heritage Impact Assessment (Le Grange 2003) recommends lesser controls over height along Sir Lowry Road and the retention of its mixed-use character.

The District Six Draft Conceptual Framework (City of Cape Town: Planning and Environment 2003) proposes land uses for District Six, but does not include erf 7134. However, the vacant block upslope from the site on the other side of Selkirk Street is proposed as residential use. This serves as an informant for the site, especially when the mixed-use (including residential) development of Six-76 on the former Oriental Plaza and the Mixed Use 3 zoning of the blocks between Six-76, the freeway and Chapel Street is considered in conjunction with this direction-setting study. The District Six Development Framework (Le Grange and Mammon 2005) again recommended higher-density, mixed-use development along Sir Lowry Road, including erf 7134.

5.6.4 Building significance analysis

Building on the base information gathered at the site inspection on 9 April 2021, a heritage inventory sheet for each of the component buildings on the site has been compiled. The buildings are numbered as indicated on the key map below. The inventory sheets include a preliminary significance assessment table, which is used to propose a grade for each resource and as a starting point in formulating a Statement of Significance for the site as a whole.



The site as a whole has been graded 3B by the City of Cape Town. This would have been in a windscreen survey, which relies on assessment from the exterior only. The building, when viewed in its context, appears quite cohesive, relatively unaltered and has significant landmark and rarity value. This would have informed the City grading.

Figure 68: Keymap to inventory sheets (courtesy GoogleEarth Streetview).

The heritage inventory sheets presented in Annexure A are based on the site inspection, the background history research and an assessment of the available historic building plans for site. Thus, the assessment is informed by a broader base of available information than that available to the assessor doing the grading for the City. Our grades are lower than 3B.

Overall, the component buildings are warehouse buildings, by their nature open spaces inside, with little conservation-worthy interior detailing. Vaulted roofs on Belfast trusses characterise the site (Goad maps 1926 and 1956). The Sir Lowry Road elevation is comprised of a set of cohesive and conservation-worthy late Art Deco warehouse facades. The Alexander Tyres building is a conservation-worthy example of an Art Deco motor showroom and service station. Both its facades are conservation-worthy. Removing unsympathetic alterations (such as on Reform St and the shopfronts along Sir Lowry Road) is recommended.

5.6.5 Heritage indicators: Historical

Sir Lowry Road: the New Market, the route south and the boundary to District Six

From the early C19th, Sir Lowry Road was a significant route out of the central city, heading eastwards from the Buitekant. It accommodated a range of houses – from homes for the well-to-do to more ordinary homes. As District six developed, it formed the northern boundary to development. With the demolition of District Six, much of the vibrancy of Sir Lowry Road was lost when it no longer was one of the routes home for District Six residents by foot or by tram and later bus. Later, the development of the New Market (now Good Hope Centre site) brought trade, particularly in produce, into the area. The earliest known use of erf 7134 is as Manuel's Wool Stores in 1848. This site has thus been a site of warehousing for much of its history. What has been stored and sold has, however, been quite varied.

Alexander Tyres and the Art Deco fascination with the motor car

This part of the building is bold in its design and includes some typical, yet also well- handled, Art Deco details. The enclosure of the service station portion was unfortunate and should be reconsidered. The unsympathetic shopfronts on Sir Lowry Road should be replaced with more sympathetic contemporary ones.

Modernist warehouses

The redevelopment of the cluster of warehouses on the site (somewhere between 1926 and 1945), brought the site to a state of almost total building coverage, with the facades running on the cadastral boundaries. While the Sir Lowry Road facade remained the main facade and “address” of the site, a symmetrical pair of vaulted warehouses faced Selkirk Street. Muir Street was the least articulated. Reform Street had the Alexander Tyres building wrap around into it and access to the furniture workshop off of it.

The warehouse typology is characterised by a clear-span interior for storage. As in many warehouses, there is little to no surviving original interior fabric within the examples on this site, contributing to their low conservation-worthiness expressed in the inventory.

5.6.6 Heritage indicators: Contextual

The redevelopment plans for District Six

These emphasise the role of Sir Lowry Road as an arterial route for District Six and the need for medium-to-high density, mixed-use development along it in order to achieve through urban design a vibrant urban environment in a redeveloped District Six. An activity node between the site and the Good Hope Centre is proposed, which has the potential in the future to bring vibrancy back to this part of the City and remember the New Market site and its role in the City. How this can be accommodated in the current, degraded, public realm of the area is a complicated issue and perhaps rather than be attempted now, should rather be allowed for in how the area might evolve around the current proposed development.

Residential use is proposed for the vacant block between erf 7134 and the mosque, and community use for the mid-C20th building currently on the block east of that. It must be noted there are land claims over portions of the block between erf 7134 and the mosque. The four blocks (including erf 7134) bounded by Sir Lowry, Chapel, Matveld, Muir and Stuckeris Streets are zoned Mixed Use 3 with a 35m height restriction on development. These rights will have an impact on the approach to development in this part of a redeveloped District Six, which need not be negative.

The Nelson Mandela Boulevard overpass

This urban element has had a huge negative impact on Sir Lowry Road and District Six, cutting portions of District Six off from the rest of the area and similarly creating a spatial disjuncture along Sir Lowry Road. It is taller than the surrounding historic fabric and overpowers the space, but must be considered within the streetscape when designing new interventions in its proximity. It is only one block east of erf 7134 and thus is an indicator for that site.

Streetscape, urban context and topography

The streetscape silhouette along Sir Lowry Road, from the overpass to the intersection with Constitution Street, is currently dominated by large, new buildings on the southern edge and the Good Hope Centre on the northern edge. The zoning rights in this area permit these multi-storey buildings as of right. The Constitution Street intersection is a major one, linking District Six with

both the Foreshore and the CBD. In addition, the topography of the area, with District Six on the uphill slopes on the southern side of Sir Lowry Road, should be considered in designing in this area.

5.6.7 Heritage indicators: Architectural

Appropriate responses to the Alexander Tyres Building

The Alexander Tyres building is of sufficient significance to warrant informing the design of the proposed interventions on erf 7134. Elements to consider are: the street edge setback, the vertical corner element, the re-activation of the street edge by re-instating original shopfronts in Reform and Sir Lowry Roads and covered open areas (the former service station).

The Sir Lowry Road elevation

The Sir Lowry Road facade is of sufficient heritage significance to warrant preservation within a new development. Given the open-span and unarticulated nature of warehouses as a building typology, an argument could be made in this case for a facading approach to the retention of the facade. However, other architectural responses to the historic fabric and indicators would need to be incorporated into the design for this approach to work. The facade cannot be allowed to be stripped of all context and relevance in the new scheme or the existing environment, but should rather be incorporated meaningfully into the new building.

The Selkirk street elevation

The symmetrical placement of the two warehouses, one on each corner of the block, is a heritage and spatial indicator for this site. The warehouses themselves are not of sufficient intrinsic heritage significance to warrant preservation. Creative conservation strategies should be developed for these buildings, including interpretation within the new building form.

Warehouses and Belfast trusses

While Belfast trusses are an interesting historic building technology, they are neither very rare nor of high heritage significance as a building element. Retaining the warehouses and their roofing systems in situ is not a priority heritage indicator for this site.

Roofscape

The varied heights and types of roof currently on the site serve to break it up in scale so that it reads as a collection of warehouses rather than one building. The curved roof is also characteristic of the site. However, like the Belfast trusses, retaining these is not a priority heritage indicator for this site.

5.6.8 Design informants

Design informants: Historical

Sir Lowry Road: the New Market, the route south and the boundary to District Six

Sir Lowry Road remains a significant route within the city. New development on Sir Lowry Road should use density and mixed use to bring vibrancy and the critical mass of residents and commuters to the area, making public transport viable along Sir Lowry Road. The architecture of a new development on erf 7134 should acknowledge the significance of Sir Lowry Road, creating an activated street interface along its Sir Lowry Road edge. This can be achieved by improving the shopfronts along the existing Sir Lowry Road facades.

Alexander Tyres and the Art Deco fascination with the motor car

The parapet detailing and the setback, with cantilevered verandah wrapping from Sir Lowry Road to Reform St, of the Alexander Tyres portion of the site should inform the new design. The articulation of the Reform/ Sir Lowry Road corner should respect the Art Deco forms of the historic facade, stepping back appropriately to accord the existing enough space to continue to have landmark qualities. Shopfronts sympathetic in style with the retained facade would allow for positive street activation and integration of inside and out; public and private realms conducive to retail, restaurant or showroom uses to draw a range of users to the new building. The former Alexander Tyres service station under a cantilevered roof on Reform Street was unsympathetically enclosed at some point. This should be reversed, either to a covered outdoor activity area (such as an open-air coffee shop) or enclosed by glazing and used as part of a re-instated retail or showroom use to the old Alexander Tyres space. It must be borne in mind that the current uses and character of the area, which was assessed as quite degraded on the site inspection, might not make an open-air coffee shop viable, desirable or sustainable.

Modernist warehouses

The clear-span nature of a warehouse, with its interiors devoid of much architectural detail, is conducive to a number of approaches: it can be subdivided in a clearly contemporary way and re-used or its openness used in an adaptive re-use that requires similar types of spaces, such as motor or other showrooms. However, in this case, where the rights include 35m height restriction, and the Sir Lowry Road facade is of primary significance, these warehouses may need to be sacrificed in order to balance the development needs and rights with the need to respect and retain the Sir Lowry Road facade. This can be considered within the context of a design and conservation strategy for the whole site, including some interpretive strategies to retain the memory of the warehouses that originally comprised the site, such as elevation treatment within the new building or other markers of the site and extent of the warehouses within the new fabric.

The Belfast trusses are not conservation-worthy and therefore should not restrict the development envelope to the current envelope/ mass. Overall, the warehouses are not considered conservation-worthy (see the heritage inventory in Report 2) and their demolition can be considered.

The way the existing cluster of warehouses addresses each street elevation is an informant to the design of the new building. The lack of attention paid to Muir Street by the current building could be improved upon, to link the new building better to the new development on the Oriental Plaza site than in the current situation.

Design informants: Contextual

The redevelopment plans for District Six

The land use and density recommendations for buildings along Sir Lowry Road means that a redevelopment proposal would not be in conflict with current approaches to professional studies to development in the area. A mixed-use development on erf 7134 would be more in sympathy with the proposed residential and community uses for the two blocks behind the site than a purely retail or commercial development. The height restriction for the current Mixed Use 3 zoning and the principle of allowing greater latitude in height along Sir Lowry Road, together with the fact that sites behind erf 7134 are also zoned Mixed Use 3, with the same height restriction, should have a significant impact on the possible height of the redevelopment. Given the number of vacant lots around the site, as well as the underdeveloped block to the east of the site, it will be important to consider the potential scale and height of possible development on adjacent sites that are currently vacant in developing a design strategy for this site. It cannot be presumed that any proposals for any of these sites will choose not to exercise their existing rights. This area will in all probability be characterised by more of the same, tall buildings as currently line the southern side of Sir Lowry Road from the former Oriental Plaza site to the Constitution Street intersection.

The extent to which the potential activity node between the Good Hope Centre identified in urban design studies could positively impact design approaches for the redevelopment of erf 7134 should be explored, despite the current degraded urban realm. The activation of the Sir Lowry Road edge and the response of the site to the Good Hope Centre are possible means through which this indicator could be given space to develop over time as the urban context evolves in response to development within it.

The Nelson Mandela Boulevard overpass

The overpass is a tall and dominant element in the urban environment. It is on the east of the site, while the Six-76 development is on the west. Together, they create high “bookends” on either side of the site and the Caltex filling station block. The height of any proposal on erf 7134 will need to consider both these tall and overpowering elements and finer-grained residential fabric proposed for the blocks upslope from erf 7134 when District Six is redeveloped. It is probable that the Mixed Use 3 site directly behind erf 7134, while earmarked residential, will eventually exercise its greater rights. A balance will need to be struck and it is suggested in this work that the site behind erf 7134 is the more appropriate site for a transition building, with the Sir Lowry Road building responding to the Sir Lowry Road silhouette and height rights.

Height and massing in response to streetscape, urban context and topography

Height and massing are the architectural elements that have great impact on streetscape and urban context. How the whole building addresses the two dominant elements in the street silhouette will be important, as will be where height is reduced or the mass of the building pulled back in order to give emphasis to an existing architectural element, or create a new, more positive relationship with the street or local urban elements of significance, such as the Good Hope Centre and the Constitution Street intersection.

While the gradient southwards from the site is not very steep, it does result in a rise in elevation that may mitigate some of the impact of a taller building on erf 7134. This should be investigated using long sections as part of the design development process. Using the setback lines of the existing Sir Lowry Road facade and the Reform Street edge of the Alexander Tyres building in those parts of the building brings the opportunity to step the footprint line of the new building, creating a podium base upon which

additional bulk and mass can be set back and stepped in height in response to the other indicators identified. On the Muir, Selkirk and rest of Reform St facades, a 0m setback could be argued for, evoking the line of the current warehouses.

Design informants: Architectural

Appropriate responses to the Alexander Tyres Building

Its parapet wall provides a setback line that should be respected both on Reform Street and Sir Lowry Road. The re-opening of the enclosed service centre area and the sympathetic treatment of shopfronts will activate the street edge and provide other positive design opportunities for a public, retail use for the ground floor along Sir Lowry Road that is in sympathy with the historic use of the site for warehousing and showroom spaces.

The Sir Lowry Road elevation

The retention of the whole Sir Lowry Road facade should inform the design. An argument for how this is done, both in building method and design approach, will need to be formulated and tested against the basket of heritage indicators and informants identified for the site, as facading is not generally a first-option practice in Cape heritage resource management and urban conservation practice. However, the lack of intrinsic preservation-worthy elements in the warehouses behind the facades makes this a case where a facading argument can be developed, if other heritage principles are respected in the design to create an architecture respectful of the preserved facade.

The Selkirk street elevation

This indicator could inform design either directly, by retaining the two warehouses and inserting new fabric between and above them, or indirectly by including symmetrical corner elements within the new elevation to achieve the same effect – of containing and bounding the site. This part of the site may be where greater bulk is concentrated in order to set back from Sir Lowry Road and could accommodate a 0m setback. The impact of a potential Mixed Use 3 building on the block behind this on the building currently being designed should be considered in the design.

Warehouses and Belfast trusses

As this indicator is not identified as one of primary significance for this site, it is not necessary that it inform design. The Belfast trusses and warehouses need not be retained.

Roofscape

The articulation of the roofscape by breaking it into smaller sections, stepping the building and therefore the roofs and using vaulted roofs such as those in the existing building are means by which this indicator could inform design. Overall, this indicator is about the consideration of the roofscape as a three-dimensional composition and how that might inform design, assist in responding to the other identified indicators and create an overall design response in sympathy with both the receiving environment and the historic fabric on the site. It is acknowledged that the current rights mean the new building will be significantly taller than the existing, but some use of the current roof character as a design element in the new building may be appropriate and possible. This, however, is not a primary heritage indicator or informant and should be secondary to other, architectural approaches that appropriately emphasise the overall “basket” of heritage indicators and informants identified in the heritage process.

6. PROPOSED INTERVENTION

The proposal is for a predominantly residential development, with a showroom space on grade with Sir Lowry Road behind the retained original facades. Shopfronts are to be replaced with ones more in keeping with the style and period of the building and allowing better visual links with the interior than the current, non-original shopfronts. The portion of the building facing onto Selkirk Street is approximately 2m below street level. The rear portion of the ground storey is utilized as underground services for the apartment block and foyer for the apartment block which is linked by stairs to pavement level. Parking is proposed above the showroom and not visible from the street. Parking will be accessed from Reform Street in much the same position as the current vehicular entrance. Entry to the residential units is proposed from Selkirk Street, providing an opportunity for this housing to relate to the possible, future housing on the erf between 7134 and the Mosque. Through such a reciprocal response, the opportunity for the creation of a precinct of housing, rather than isolated blocks of apartments, could be achieved once the redevelopment of District Six reaches this area of the former District Six.

The Muir Street elevation is not as active as the others, but it is articulated in a way that is intended to provide a backdrop to the space between this building and Six-76. Unfortunately, Six-76 does not provide an opportunity for its neighbour to engage with it to create a new, better urban space and so the design strategy was to rather provide such opportunities on the Selkirk and Reform street elevations. As a result, the wrapping around into Muir from Sir Lowry of the new showroom space was the main architectural opportunity that the design team could bring into Muir Street. The blankness of the remainder of this street elevation is intended to be mitigated by detailing and facade articulation.

The development includes more than one residential unit size, with smaller units lower in the building and larger units higher up. The resolution of the interior layout was considered of less heritage significance than the assessment of the scale, form and massing in response to the identified heritage indicators and design informants and so this assessment has focused on those issues as expressed in elevations.

Sketch elevations illustrate the scale, form and massing intentions of the design. They are details from the drawings prepared by Gordon Hart, architect. Also see Annexure C for floor plans and drawings.



Figure 69: Sir Lowry Road elevation

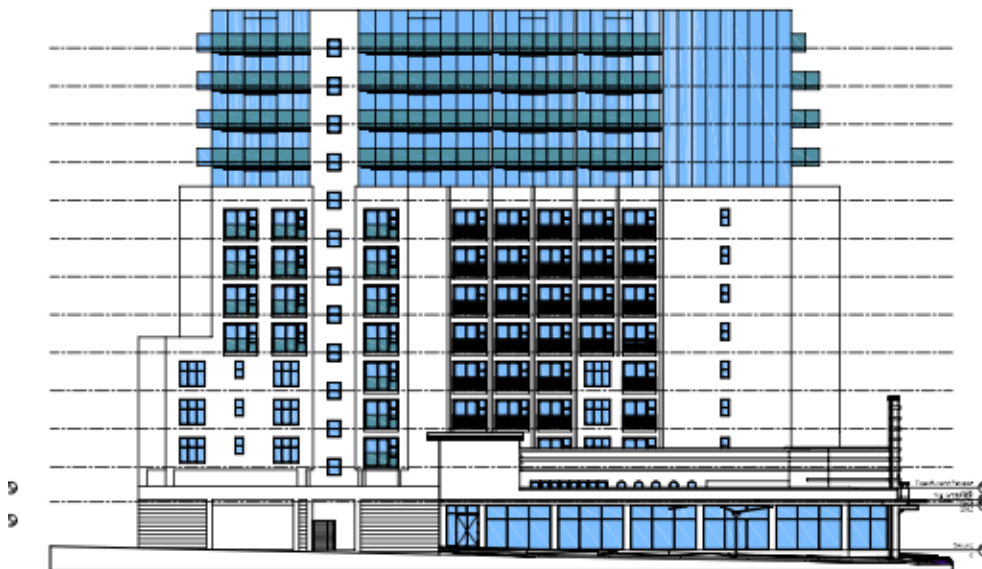


Figure 70: Reform Street elevation

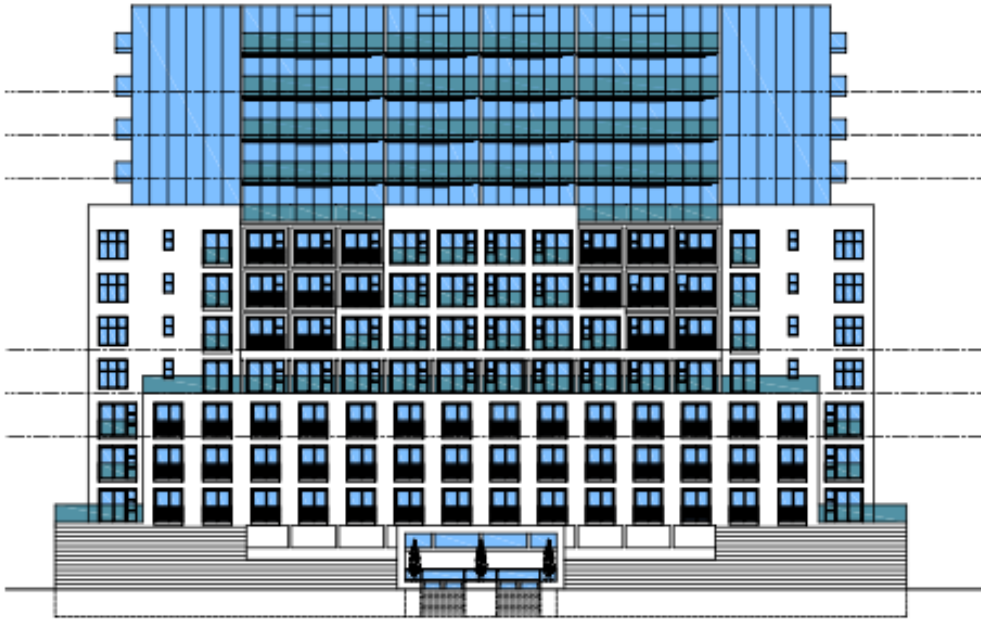


Figure 71: Selkirk Street elevation

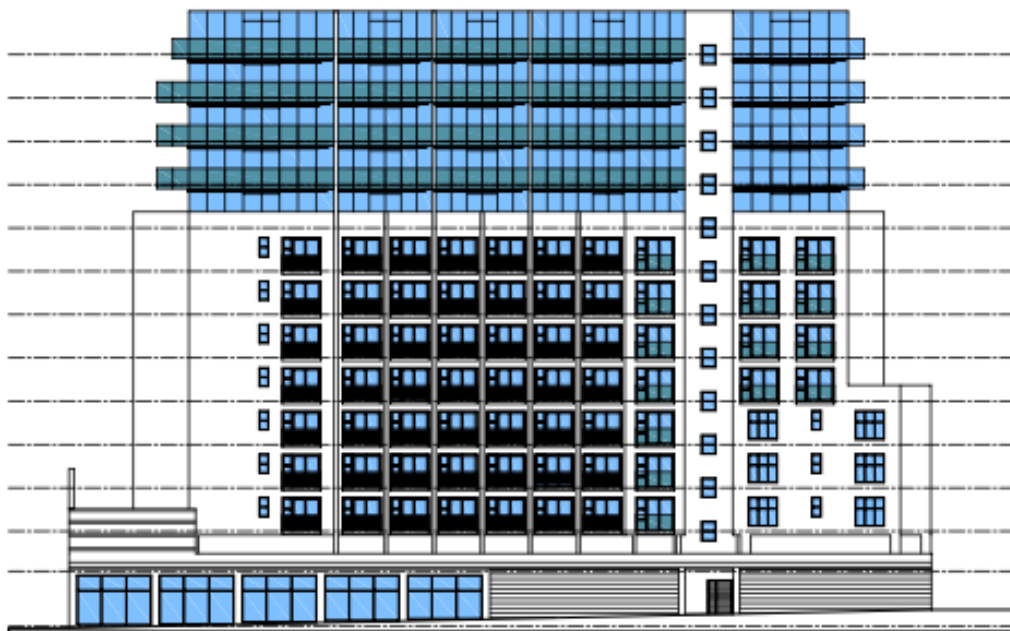


Figure 71: Muir Street elevation