

PLANNING FOR TRANSFORMATION

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A Case Study of Urban Upgrade and the Effects on Backyard Shack Dwellers in Alexandra Township.

Planning, within the present social, political and economic transformation in South Africa, may adopt broadly two diverse positions. On the one hand planning may be seen to limit the process of transforming the nature of society and space. On the other hand,

planning may be advanced as a discipline encouraging emancipation. Present urban upgrading strategies within a context of the emerging 'new' South Africa have essentially continued to adopt the former approach. The approach was one which serves hegemonic interests. In shifting this approach toward a concern for and the promotion of user needs, the planning

process adopted needs to be fundamentally different from the past. Moreover, the nature of the social processes which have led to the particular physical landscape requires clarification. A study of the backyard shacks of Alexandra Township, north east of Johannesburg raises some of these concerns, and points to some policies for the future.

INTRODUCTION

Planning has for some time now been under scrutiny among critical theorists. The accusation levelled is that planners limit the potential for any real transformation of society and space to take place, and indeed, that planning perpetuates the status quo (Harvey, 1985; King, 1988).

As we move into the 'deracialised future' there is a need to investigate the possibilities, or not, of what King (1988: 445) refers to as a "counteractive urban design practice".

If physical planning does indeed limit the potential for the transformation of society, there exists the need to understand (1) why this should be the case and (2) how this 'accusation' manifests itself in the built environment in the present conjuncture. Moreover, as South African planning practice is at an ideological crossroads there is an urgent need to "make sense of the post-Fordist economy and the postmodern city" (Beauregard, 1989:391). Furthermore as Beauregard (1988:393) suggests, "practitioners and theorists must rededicate themselves to the built environment as the object of action and inquiry. At present, the physical city exists within planning as a series of unconnected fragments rather than as a practical and theoretical synthesis of planning action and thought. The built environment is a source of capital accumulation, a place of consumption and reproduction, and a terrain of profound struggle."

The argument that "problems of space . . . must be served from a concern with specific social processes" (Saunders, 1981:278), is presently gaining favour in planning theory, and is one which requires assertion within a local praxis. Beauregard (1988:389) suggests that it is an approach which "includes a turn to historical allusion and spatial understanding".

Indeed to begin to locate planning within the historic role it has played in the shaping of the physical landscape, and moreover, to begin to assert planning as an emancipatory discipline, the nature of the urban crisis and its manifestations needs to be understood. The spatial organisation of the South African cities is (in the framework of Harvey's (1989) analysis of the urban process under capitalism), understood in terms of certain specific phenomena: including production and reproduction, the need for capital accumulation, the inherent contradiction within this accumulation and the crisis of overaccumulation of capital. Furthermore, the historic underpinnings of the specific form of capitalism applied in South Africa has helped to derive a particular 'physical landscape', which supports production and the reproduction of labour, capital accumulation and control. It may be argued, that to develop this physical landscape supportive of both Capital and (or) the State, urban planners perform a particular role in the development of a

physical milieu which supports dominant interests rather than promoting community interests, of actively attempting to shift the dominant interests.

Given the social theory, the community needs and the physical/spatial conditions, some clues for planners in promoting planning as an "emancipatory" sphere in the urban crisis are examined.

Whilst focussing on housing as a separate entity, or urban component, this separation from the broader urban and rural realm is somewhat artificial and in the end must be related to the totality of the whole. Housing, in the words of Harvey (1989:6) is "one of several spatial scales at which the production of spatial configurations, social organisation and political consciousness might be examined", and is, therefore, inextricably linked to other urban and rural components.

Because housing is one of the most obvious manifestations of the present urban crisis, and because planners concern themselves with housing much of the time, the phenomenon of backyard shacks warrants special attention.

By way of illustration some preliminary results of a pilot study undertaken in Alexandra township north of Johannesburg and east of Sandton are examined.

In order to begin to ascertain user

needs and to put forward alternatives to the present framework, some form of input is necessary from the users themselves. The choice of Alexandra Township as a case study is threefold:

1. The township reflects historically and concurrently, the physical responses of shifting State and Capital strategies to the urban crisis.
2. The community has a long history of resistance to the measures introduced by Capital and State. The mass action and level of organisation have assisted in defining community interests.
3. Alexandra manifests the physical expression of the more recent privatisation strategies. Deracialised urbanisation, for the benefit of the middle class (Bond, 1990(a)) and the physical expression of "the free market . . . taking over from the State in the shaping of our cities" is well expressed in Alexandra.

In response to the crisis of 1980s, a number of broad strategies emerged in terms of state policy and Capital's role in the urban crisis. While these strategies have been well documented, two main features offer some clues to the present physical manifestations. These clues are:

1. The State's response to the fiscal crisis, where "The South African economy has experienced both debilitating stagnation and inordinate financial speculation since the mid 1970s, and this broad economic crisis has profoundly affected urbanization. . . . (H)ousing finance . . . is possibly the single most important force in the transformation of townships from apartheid constructs to free market investment arenas, a transformation that the State and Capital have high hopes for as a means of sustaining spatial development and credit growth, and stabilising sites of potential political unrest (Bond, 1990(b):1). He goes on to suggest that the shift from production towards financial speculation (which is true of advanced industrialised countries as in South Africa) affects cities more than any other space. But this "privatisation" strategy, which has developed a far closer alliance between the State and Capital has merely exacerbated the crisis (1990(b):4).

According to Bond (1990(b):8), "Supplying a young black revolutionary a housing bond through the disciplinarian private market (perhaps with some form of mortgage insurance programme to spread the risk) is one way of tying her or him down to stable labour and community behaviour. (This was certainly proven by the creators of the US Federal Housing Administration loan guarantee programme in the 1930s.)" Furthermore "the decline of central State involvement in housing provision in favour of the private market must be considered one of the main factors exacerbating the South African housing crisis (as is the case elsewhere across the globe)".

The sheer numbers of the urban poor allows for a low cost housing to be a particularly lucrative industry in which large profits can be made. Nowhere is this more evident, according to Drakakis-Smith (1986), than in South Africa where, due to the political and economic conditions, white capitalist firms have, in the past, made and presently make profits from township construction.

2. The introduction of the strategy of "WINNING - HEARTS AND MINDS'.

The commodification of housing, as an attempt by the State to extricate itself from the fiscal crisis is not the only reason for privatisation and deregulation within the housing market. As alluded to in the above quotes, one finds that central to this strategy is a desire to maintain political control.

"The traditional urban policies of Stallard and Verwoerd regarded African urbanisation as a 'temporary phenomenon', and had sought to maintain this position through rigid economic and political controls. This resulted in urban Africans of all classes being confined to overcrowded townships, and subjected to inadequate housing, inferior education, limited social services and amenities, high transport costs, and a system of local administration that governed without consent (Boraine, 1989(a): 49). Boraine goes on to argue that it was these

strategies which ultimately led to the politicisation of local government, education, housing, the distribution of goods and services in the African Townships, and which resulted in both spontaneous and organised forms of resistance.

The response to this was eventually the National Security Management System (NSM) (later the National Management System NMS) strategy of 'low-intensity warfare' which saw the "need for direct or grass roots interventions in the form of upgrading to 'cut the ground' from under the feet of the 'revolutionaries' who are perceived as exploiting black grievances" (Boraine, 1989(b):111).

Minister Chris Heunis said early in 1989 that "housing is a major instrument in fighting revolution" (The Star 12.01.89). Central to this is the strategy of urban upgrade. Not only is this strategy one which heightens or creates "divisions within or between black communities as a form of control" (Boraine, 1989(b):115), but one which may selectively 'thin out' townships.

In summary, a number of broad strategies emerged in the 1980s in terms of State policy and Capital's role in the urban crisis.

These may be summarised as:

1. Privatisation and deregulation.
2. A shift from production to finance capital.
3. Political control through urban upgrade and recommodification of existing housing stock.
4. The creation of a home owning middle class.
5. Depoliticising the State's role in the sphere of housing (through privatisation).

Together, these strategies produced the characteristics of the physical landscape. Moreover it may be argued, the planner has been instrumental in implementing these proposals.

SOCIAL THEORY AND THE PHYSICAL LANDSCAPE OF ALEXANDRA

Alexandra Township stands out as an example of the effects of these changes in strategies, particularly in the way these are reflected in the spatial form of the Township.

Alexandra Township is flanked by two of the wealthiest local authorities in the country. Johannesburg to the south and Sandton to the west (Diagram 1). As with most, if not all, African townships, Alexandra has no, or at most an insignificant, tax base. The absence of revenue has resulted in a lack of sewage, water and refuse facilities. In places, due to an ineffectual and financially restricted Local Council, one may find rubbish up to three meters high. The sheer number of people (unofficial estimates are between 180 000 to 250 000 people), concentrated within an area of 350ha inadequately serviced land, in terms of physical infrastructure, has resulted in the prevailing highly negative environmental conditions.

Compared to the spacious well vegetated suburbs of Sandton, Alexandra stands out in sharp contrast. In Alexandra cleared land earmarked for urban upgrade has been invaded by squatters. In these areas one finds around minute detached houses, each standing on an individual erf with neat surrounding fences, a clutter of free standing shacks. The irony of the juxtaposition of large developers' signs like "Alexandra Gardens", and exhorting people to "Buy Now", is an area where an estimated 27 new shacks are erected daily, is startling.

What gave rise to these conditions of poorly surfaced roads; houses in a state of disrepair; inadequate sewage, storm water and refuse disposal and the proliferation of backyard shacks? The township which was originally intended for white residential development was proclaimed in 1905. However, in 1912 it was offered for sale to black and Coloured buyers. The 2 500 freehold stands of 1 145m² each, laid out in a grid-iron street pattern on an eastern slope, were developed with no infrastructure (Diagram 2).

It should be noted that in 1913 the Land Act which restricted black ownership of land outside the reserves was introduced. As access to land elsewhere became restricted there was a sharp growth of the population in Alexandra. At the same time, industrialisation and urbanisation exacerbated the pressure placed on land. During this period the township was characterised by a relatively low den-

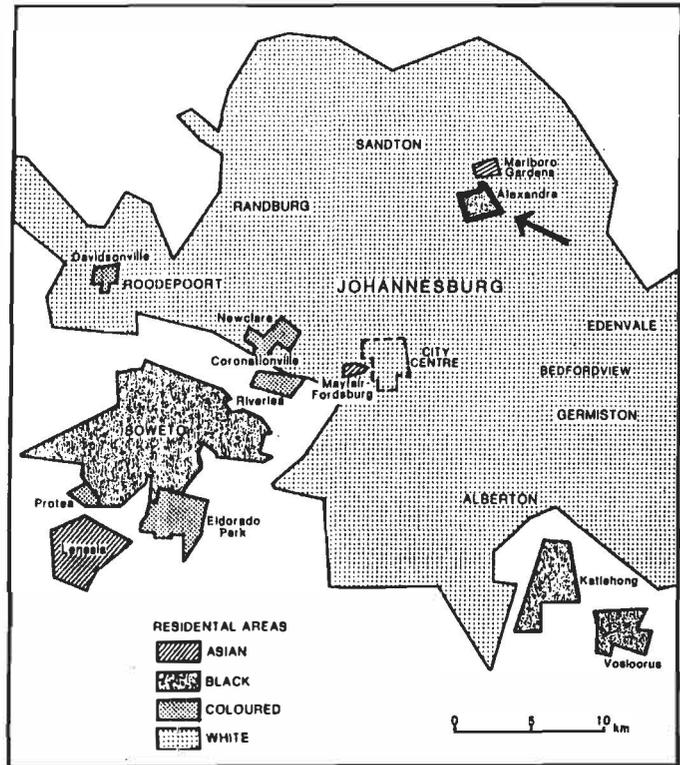


DIAGRAM 1:

Locality Map of Alexandra Township

The township was first proclaimed in 1905 and offered for sale to African and Coloured buyers in 1912. Today the Township is surrounded by the Johannesburg and Sandton Local Authorities. (Source: Parnell, S and Pirie, GH, 1991)

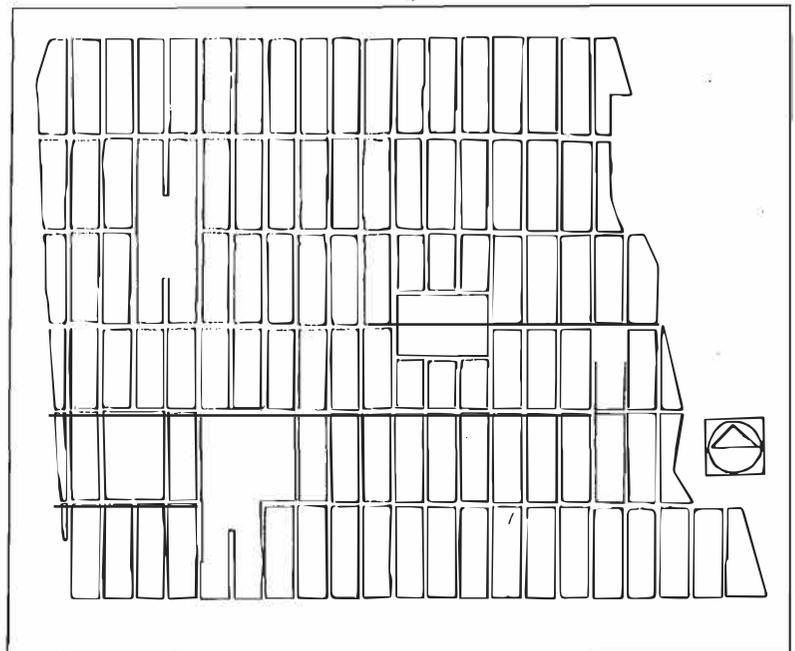


DIAGRAM 2:

Original Grid Layout of Alexandra Township

sity of development with one dwelling per stand. In 1920 the following measures of densities¹ obtained: (Diagram 3)

FAR 0,17; FSR 40; PPH 42,5.

With the passage of time the illegal extensions to buildings and backyard shacks had increased the densities substantially. By the 1940s densities were:

FAR 0,39; FSR 30; PPH 130.

The 1934 Land Act was instrumental in increasing densities even further: no land was being made available for further development, yet the population was growing, not only in respect of natural birth increases but also in terms of urbanisation. The devastating effects of the 1913 Land Act were still being felt. Productivity in the reserves was falling. The ecological balance was detrimentally affected, limiting peasant production in the rural areas culminating in a more rapid rate of urbanisation.

State plans in 1943 for Alexandra's demolition failed to materialize. However, rumors about demolition made the township's future uncertain. Potential standholders found it difficult to obtain financing from large building societies and it was only small companies and white money lenders who would give loans at higher than average interest rates (Marks, 1989:27).

Bond (1990(b):12) makes the following interesting comparison: "Throughout its history, Alexandra had been a site of various processes of capital accumulation, most bound up with the metropolitan labour market, petty local racial domination and formal apartheid legislation. What is most striking, though is how during the two periods of greatest economic dynamism . . . the 1940s and 1950s, and the late 1980s . . . the rhythm of accumulation in Alexandra was timed according to the local practices of financial capital, especially in the housing market". Bond, goes on to argue, that given certain differences between the two periods, the similarities between the two are striking, both producing a particular urban physical environment. "The historical evidence is revealing, because although the political-economic context is different now, the processes set in motion by low-quality housing finance in the 1940s had much to do with the genesis of the housing squalor which exists in

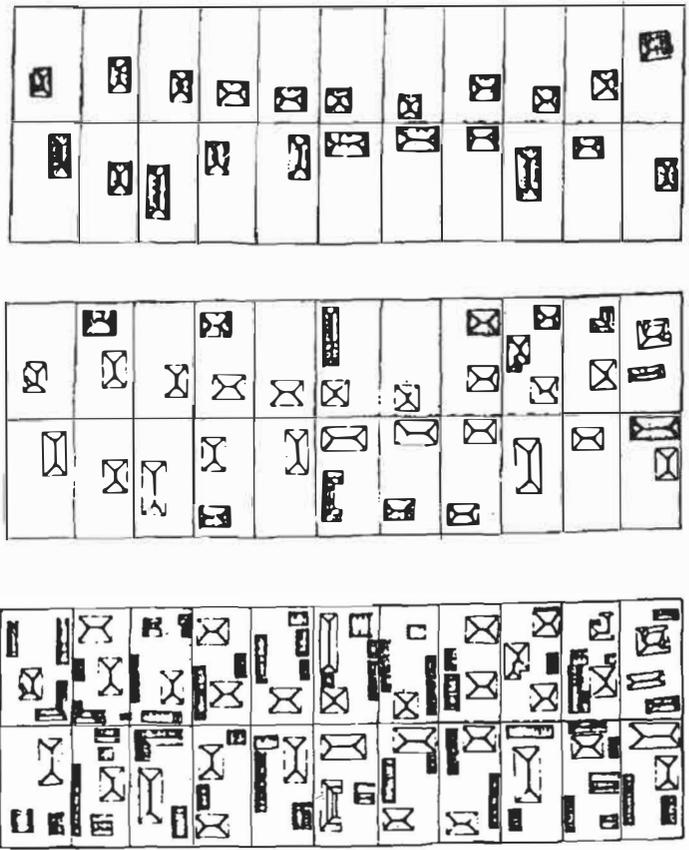


DIAGRAM 3:

Infill of Shacks through Time

The housing shortages and financial hardship, together with the traditional extended family social structure all played a part in the increasing density through time. The top diagram shows the early 1920s, the middle diagram the early 1930s and the bottom diagram the 1940s.

(Source: Ratcliffe, ST, 1981)



DIAGRAM 4:

The Urban Grain of Alexandra

The diagram shows the grain of Alexandra. The larger buildings are the hostels, while the thinned out areas are those areas subjected to urban upgrading.

(Source: Ratcliffe, ST, 1981)

Alexandra still to this day. Added to this legacy, there were also some striking similarities between the two periods.”

The 1940s were characterised by ‘unscrupulous lenders’ and a high incidence of foreclosing. Bond highlights these problems. He quotes from Professor Hoernle, (Administrator of Alexandra), who criticised these unscrupulous lenders “who get individual standholders into their clutches. A typical method, not to say trick, is, when a standholder finds difficulty in maintaining his payments, to suggest to him an additional loan *for the purpose of building additional rooms* on his property, from the rent of which, so it is represented to him, he will find it easier to pay the interest and redemption charges on the higher loan” (Bond, 1990(b):12). The result of practices such as this was an obvious increase in residential densities and a concomitant in fill of the urban grain (Diagram 4).

The year 1963 marks the next watershed in the history of the township and in the shaping of its physical form. New controls had been imposed in the 1950s by the Nationalist Government. The State’s response to the 1950s/60s mass resistance, shifted, so too “the efforts of the established building societies to change the underlying legal and environmental conditions in Alexandra” failed (Bond, 1990(b):13). The State decided to “transform Alexandra into a hostel city for 20 000 male and 5 000 female workers – the concomitant mass expropriation of homes brought about a change from ownership to rental status, thus deeply affecting the politics of subsequent township protest. Although thousands of Alexandra residents were displaced between the 1960s and 1979 (the official population dipped to 40 000 in 1973), urbanisation pressures continued to increase in the Transvaal. The illegal squatter sector of the population grew steadily from the mid-1970s, and shack dwellings sprouted in most backyards. In 1974, just 950 freehold properties (remained) in black hands (down from a peak of 2 500)” (Bond, 1990(b):13).

The principle behind the government’s strategy was to maintain control over the working class and to ensure its

reproduction at a minimum cost, while capital flow shifted to the Bantustan “borders”. Coen Kotze, a member of the Peri-Urban Board, stated that “the non-productive families are of no use on the labour market and can live just as well, in fact better, in the homelands, as they do in the white areas” (from Marks, 1989:29).

At the same time, and as an integral part of this strategy, the development of industrial townships surrounding Alexandra (Marlboro, Kew and Wynberg) was taking place². These industrial areas act as buffers between Alexandra and “white” neighbourhoods and as workplace for the proposed hostel town, (of “productive people”). Thus the State and Capital’s needs are fulfilled in terms of production, reproduction and control.

“Within the township, the standholders and tenants resisted, organising into various pressure groups. Yet still the government pressed ahead with the plans. It was claimed that the conversion of the township would have benefits for the surrounding areas of Wynberg, Kew and Marlboro which could develop into white residential areas. It was also claimed that only those who could be found alternative accommodation would be moved. Yet in Soweto alone in 1961, the housing waiting list was given as 18 000” (Marks, 1990:30). The urban morphology assumed a new form with hostel development. The quality of life and the quality of the environment, (of which the recent violence in townships is a manifestation) changed, moreover, in the substitution of family homes with hostels, the antithesis of *user needs* was promoted.

“In 1979 after considerable local pressure, the resettlement decision of 1963 was finally reversed and it was decided that Alexandra should be redeveloped into a high density Black urban area and that all Alexandrian families not already relocated elsewhere could remain in the township” (de Jager, 1990:16). Plans for a “model-township” were put forward in July 1980.

A number of reasons precipitated the ‘change’ in policy. The urban crisis of 1976, a downward swing in the economy, and political resistance all played a part in this change. The 1980 masterplan called for the total redevelopment

of Alexandra, retaining only 5% of the existing formal housing stock. Infrastructure was to be developed and, most importantly in terms of the new control strategies of the State, class differentiation was to be promoted through *physical design*.

The plan stated that: “Social stratification is a universal phenomenon. This social stratification is necessary to maintain order and stability within each community. Disregarding it leads to disinterested irresponsible behaviour, frustration and unrest” (Marks, 1990:31).

This new approach opened up, once again, the ability for Capital to move from production into (housing) finance. As occurred in the 1940s, the promotion of private funding represented a shift in State policy (following the Good Hope Conference of 1977) to a closer alliance with capital. In the meantime, the State was ostensibly able to distance itself from housing, attempting to depoliticise it, whilst playing an even greater control role. The Masterplan was beset with problems: community resistance, limited funds, time and the sheer number of people affected, meant that the plan was eventually scrapped. Rent increases were a major factor in the resistance, as people could simply not afford the additional financial outlay. When the Masterplan was withdrawn, it had few results to show. The residential density of Alexandra based on de Jager’s (1990) figures, were at this time:

FAR 0,41; FSR 9; PPH 455

(See Table 1 for a summary of the density changes through time.)

However, the level and sophistication of control, the commodification and recommodification of housing, and the exacerbation of housing shortages which were to follow were on a far grander scale than at any time in Alexandra’s past 74 years.

“The National Management System (NMS) began exerting its power and influence during the nationwide urban revolt of 1984-86, initially as a way of trying to restore ‘law and order’, and then as a longer-term mechanism for implementing new policies and controls to restabilise urban areas” (Boraine, 1989(b):110). Alexandra was identified as one of 34 Black townships constituting ‘high-risk’ security areas.

TABLE 1:

Comparisons of Densities

Using the three different measures of density as proposed by Senior, B (1984), the increase in population density against a relatively low increase in building density has resulted in an extremely high occupancy density.

These are compared with other random samples of densities around the City of Johannesburg.

	1920	1940	1980	1990	SETSWETLA
FAR (Building density)	0,17	0,39	0,41	0,43	0,51
FSR (Occupancy density)	40	30	9	8	5
PPH (Population density)	42,5	130	455	538	1020

	HOUGHTON*	MEADOWLANDS* HOSTEL	YEOVILLE*	HILLBROW**
FAR (Building density)	0,10	0,24	0,61	3,97
FSR (Occupancy density)	157	3,5	49	12
PPH (Population density)	6	690	124	3308

- * Based on Senior 1984
- ** Adjusted to more recent data

Joint Management Centres (JMCs) were established in townships as a means through which the process of restabilisation could take place. Part of the task of the JMC was to identify and coordinate different forms of revenue for upgrading while, at the same time, ensuring law and order, thereby creating a milieu in which upgrading and the entry of capital into the market, could take place.

An article in a weekly news magazine captures the spirit of the new approach: "Alexandra is just "Alex" to its friends, and Pretoria is trying very hard to be a friend. Since the end of May, when a massive army sweep ended most of the fighting in the area, South African officials have used every opportunity to show the country's most politicised and, potentially, volatile township how rewarding good relations with government can be.

There are new public phones, a new clinic, the township's first post office. The big prize came last week: a three year renewal program that could double Alexandra's size and thoroughly renovate some of South Africa's most wretched urban real estate. Privately, Pretoria's officials explained the real motivation to win over public support and minimize Alexandra's role as an epicentre for revolution" (Newsweek, 30 March 1987). General Magnus Malan, elucidated the strategy quite clearly when in 1987 he said, "I want to see to what extent I can better living conditions of the people, to what extent I can get the people to accept the government so that they don't break with the authorities and drift into the hands of terrorists" (Cape Times, 30 March 1987).

The NMS urban renewal plan was implemented in 1987. The idea behind

the NMS was to quell township revolt through physical responses in the urban environment. While the proposal was clearly committed to improving the extreme conditions, it was a purely technical plan, based on the needs of Capital and State, and not on the current exigencies. Nor did the plan see Alexandra as part of the larger Metropolitan concentration. The plan reinforced the separation of areas according to race. The five main objectives of the plan were:

- To preserve the social networks developed by a long established community.
- To create the minimum of disruption and removals.
- To encourage home ownership on a leasehold and freehold basis.
- To maintain existing communal spaces.
- To establish a self-sufficient and fully functioning township and to improve the community's faith in the authorities.

As Marks aptly states in his critique of the proposals, the emphasis is on privatisation and class differentiation within the framework of control and capital accumulation. Marks states that the plan was "drawn up in a period of intense repression and fear. The community's leaders had been detained, the Alexandra Action Committee (AAC) and Alexandra Youth Congress (AYCO) had been forced underground and the residents had no legitimate legal organisation. They had lost their representatives, which precluded any possibility of genuine consultation. Thus the upgrading became a 'top down' imposition with little, if any, democratic participation by the residents, despite the state objectives of community involvement" (Marks, 1989:56). Interview with Civic Members and workshops on urban issues have revealed a strong community concern for debating the urban crisis.

The Alexandra Civic Organisation (ACO) identified the critical shortcomings of the urban renewal plan. These are that:

- The five objectives identified in the urban renewal plan have not been successful.
- The Process
 - is top down;
 - is based on inadequate information;

- is gathered in a short time;
- is not based on consultation;
- utilises no participation by the community;
- is premised on government urban policy;
- has no regional context;
- is linked to the security strategy of the State and JMCs whose purpose is to control, disempower, divide and co-opt.

As with many other upgrading projects, the criticism is that home ownership often results in the removal of backyard structures, evictions and a disruption of the community. The upgrading is most often undertaken by construction companies bringing in their own workers, limiting the potential for upgrading to stimulate a local economy with the spin-off of easing unemployment. Residents moreover complain that the upgrading makes use of sub-standard services which takes a particularly long time to instal. It is furthermore a complaint that, due to the lack of finances and an inadequate administrative capacity, the services are not maintained by the Council.

In resolving these issues, negotiation is a particularly important part of the process. Such negotiation revolves around the restructuring of Local Authorities on a National level, releasing land (nearby) to ease the restricted area and high densities and to end the removal of people by incorporating them into the process.

It can be deduced from the above that the approach of planners in South Africa has not necessarily shifted significantly over the years. It has serviced the needs and concerns of Capital and the State by providing the physical landscape in which these may take place. Alexandra is thus an example of planning which is, as King (1988:455) describes "an instrumental component of the production of urban meaning (which) has been crucial to system reproduction or transformation, in directions beneficial to hegemonic interests.

It is important to gain some insight into user needs: whilst these may in part be deduced from the above critique a pilot survey undertaken in Alexandra Township itself gives greater clarity.

PILOT STUDY OF ALEXANDRA

At present four housing options exist for the African working class in South Africa:

- (i) Rental of existing stock
- (ii) Purchase of existing and new stock.
- (iii) Self-help; including site and service schemes.
- (iv) Squatting – either free standing or backyard shacks.

While all four options are evident, it is the fourth which is focussed on in the pilot study. Certainly the physical expression and especially that of backyard shacks and the squatter camps are typical of most black Townships. Alexandra, however, is in one respect a typical of the majority of black Townships, having had freehold tenure until 1963. Despite this, the nature of its history and present strategies of upgrading are no different from that of Katlehong, Soweto, Daveyton, New Brighton or Mangaung.

Certain characteristics of backyard shacks are apparent. Firstly, backyard shacks have appeared in the yards of existing properties due to the particular phenomenon of one house or one dwelling unit per stand. This has allowed for the use of the remaining area of the erf to adapt to prevailing economic, political and/or space shortage problems.

Secondly, extensions to the main dwelling unit and the building of extra units, are and have historically been, a typical way in which rentals and more recently bond repayments, have been paid for.

Thirdly, the restriction of land available for development for the black population has placed a premium on urban land. This has resulted in the use of any open area of land being used for the erection of shelters.

Backyard shacks lead to higher densities: as shown in the comparison of densities in Table 1. The phenomenon of backyard shacks has resulted in population densities increasing to unacceptable levels. Considering the paucity of internal private space, external private and public space should compensate. Unfortunately the space around and between shacks is poorly defined, resulting in a lack of definition of boundaries and an absence of com-

munity control over that space. While Table 1 shows that an area such as Setswetla, a legal freestanding shack development to the north of Alexandra, has higher FAR and PPH measures than the typical erf in Alexandra, private and public space is far better defined – possibly the result of control over space by the user. In the Setswetla circumstance, there is a far greater organic layout.

Finally, tensions very often develop between the backyard shack dwellers, who have, in terms of the redevelopment programmes few legal rights, and the homeowners who may through increasing rentals to meet increases in their bond repayments financially exploit their backyard tenants.

According to de Jager (1990:20) . . . "due to the complexity of the situation in Alexandra, the difficulties encountered and the sheer size of the existing township" . . . the urban renewal plan of 1987 divided Alexandra into three phases: A, B and C. Two yards were chosen from each 'phase' for the survey. For comparative purposes, the freestanding squatter area of Setswetla was included in the pilot survey.

A profile of the population is presented in Figures 1 – 9 from which the following observations are noted:

Firstly, the average number of people per yard is 53,2 (per ± 1 100 m² yard). Although section A is upgraded, certain stands have experienced far greater disruption as a result of shack removal which implies that there is an inconsistency in removal/clearance. The majority of people live in backyard shacks with their extended families, and are women. Most of the population is of working age. Yet of those, some 44% are unemployed and are underskilled. Twelve per cent see themselves as skilled. A lack of education is a further problem (34% of those who have completed school have reached a level beyond Standard 8, while merely 2% have a post matriculation education).

Significantly, 66% of the population were born in Alexandra and only 6% have lived in Alexandra for less than 10 years (indicating a very limited recent migration). Moreover, the majority of shack dwellers have lived in the same place for most of their lives (60% for more than 30 years). This

implies that shacks may have been rebuilt over time, with the materials being used not always of a durable quality.

In respect of open ended questions in the survey the following information was obtained. The respondents' major problem is the lack of privacy. This correlates with the high density shown in Table 1, and the lack of private outdoor space. The lack of privacy is related not only to the configuration of the stands and shacks (which follows the 'one-dwelling one-erf' phenomenon and is perpetuated in the upgraded scheme), but also the lack of public open space for such a high population density. Crime is a problem in the yards themselves and is manifest mostly in the occurrence of rape and theft. This is partially a consequence of the lack of a territorial hierarchy between spaces. Strangers walk through the yards and are not questioned as to their intentions (this is not the case in Setswetla).

Problems of defensibility (Newman's Theory of Defensible Space 1972) which stem from a lack of hierarchy between clearly articulated private, secondary and public spaces, are evident.

Because of a lack of facilities for children the yards and streets are used for play. Adults inevitably meet, entertain, relax, cook and eat indoors. In most cases all of these activities take place in the same room in which people sleep. There is a very limited public place where people can relax. There is little doubt as to why the respondents uniformly stated that accommodation was insufficient. Despite these hardships the relationship between neighbours was generally good. All respondents were willing to share, in a cooperative manner, the outdoor space with their neighbours, although there was a preference for a small private outdoor space for young children to play, to hang up washing and for storage.

Problems pertaining to the provision of an adequate physical infrastructure were foremost in people's minds. It is of interest that the majority of the residents interviewed were prepared to share facilities. However, they made it very clear, that sharing of facilities

FIGURES 1 - 8 SHOWING THE RESULTS OF THE PILOT SURVEY

Household Size



FIGURE 1 ■ Household 1 ▨ Household 2

Household Composition

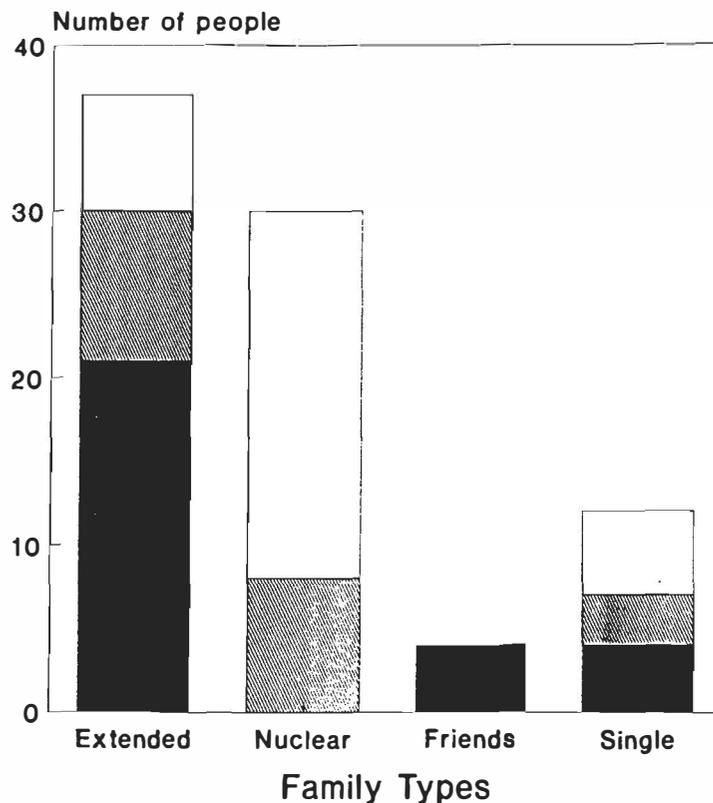


FIGURE 2 ■ Area A ▨ Area B □ Area C

should not be left to chance. Toilets, for example should not be open facilities (encouraging people from outside that yard to use it) but rather for the use of a limited number of residents on the stand.

Finally, although the majority of people living in the backyard shacks would prefer to stay in Alexandra they would be prepared to move to adjacent areas, if land were to be made available.

Male-Female Ratio

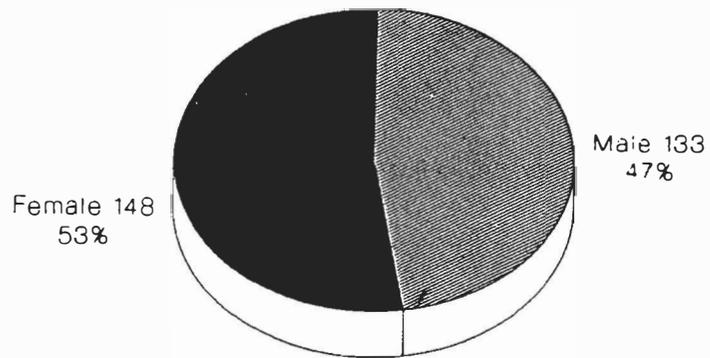


FIGURE 3

Age

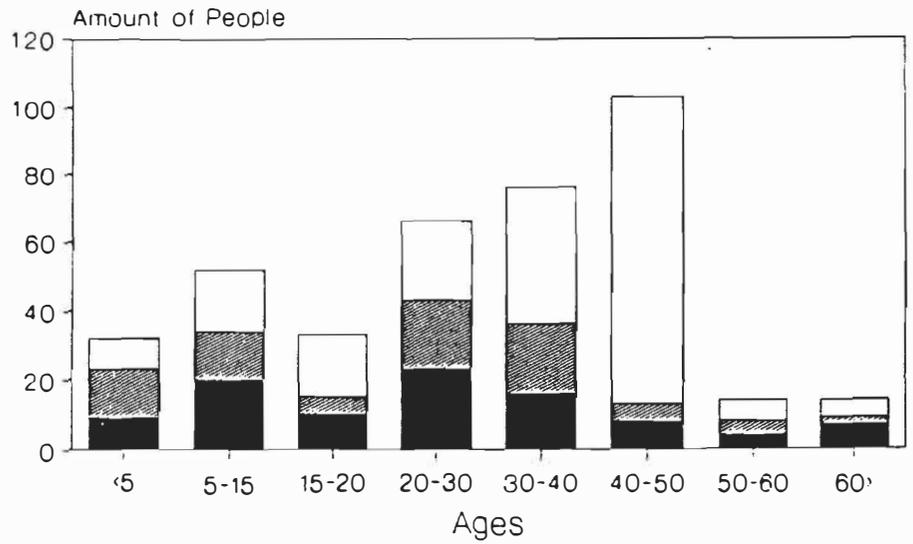


FIGURE 4 Area A Area B Area C

Levels of Employment (over the age of 16 years)

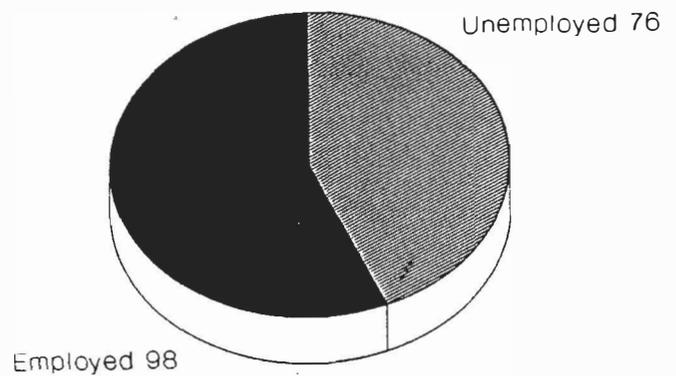
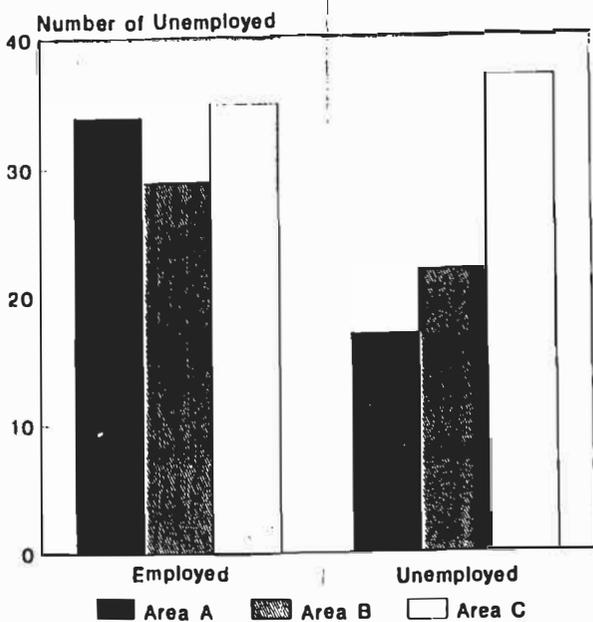


FIGURE 5(a) 5(b) Numbers included for Areas A, B and C

Skills

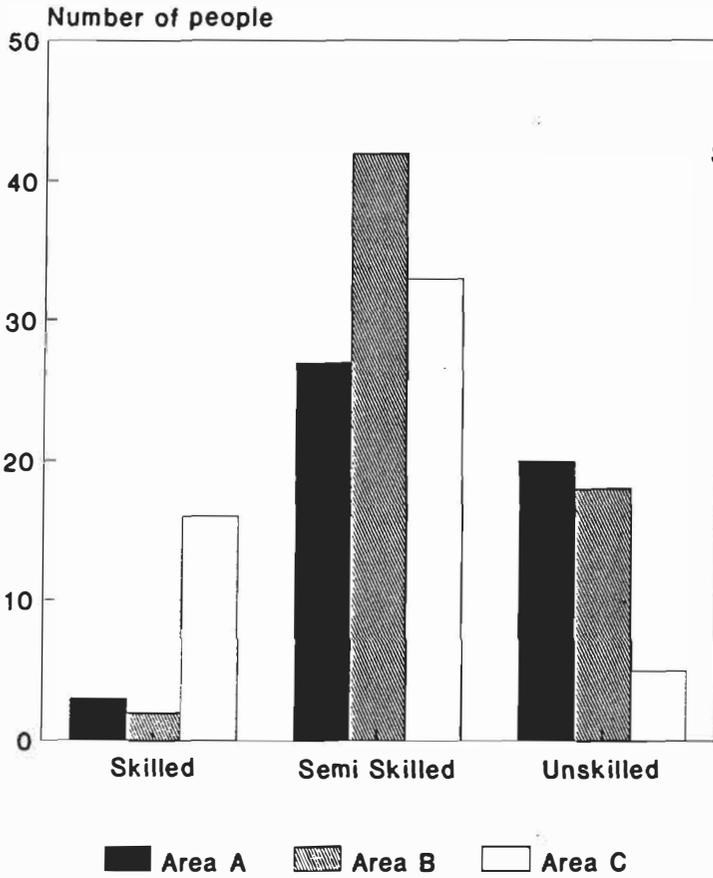


FIGURE 6(a)

Total Skills per Area

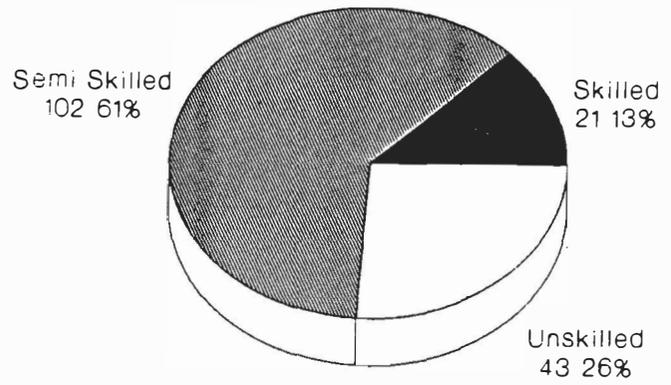


FIGURE 6(b)

Level of Education

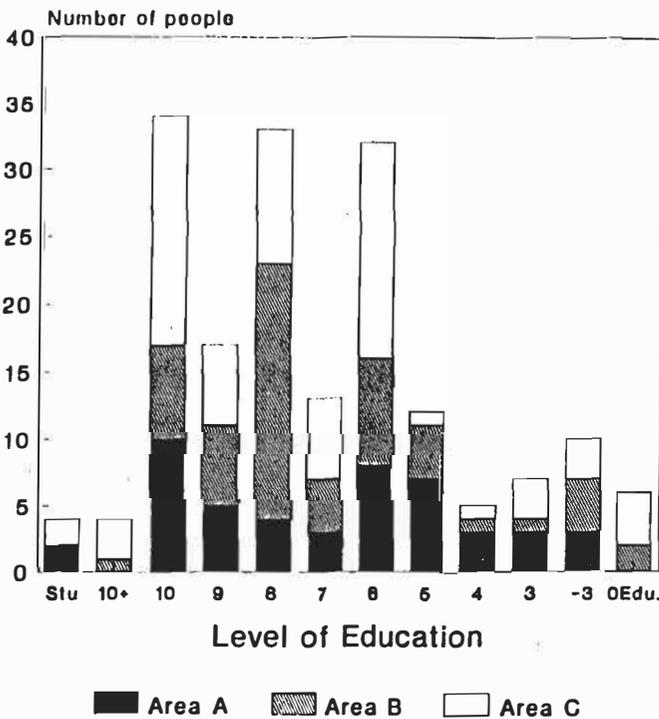


FIGURE 7

Length of Stay in Alexandra

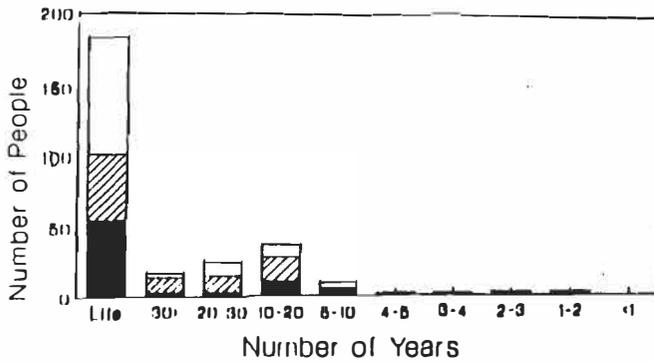


FIGURE 8

Length of Stay in Dwelling

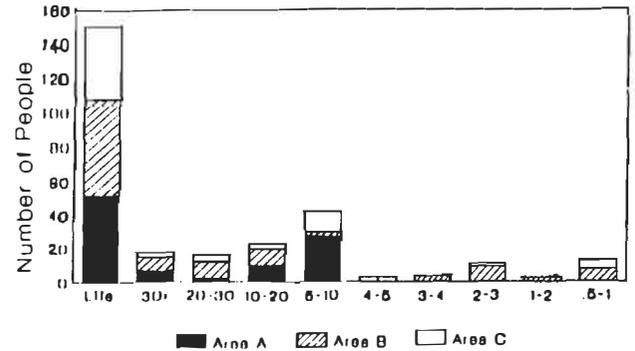


FIGURE 9

PLANNING FOR EMANCIPATION

As planning moves into the deracialised future it is apparent that two broad options exist. Firstly, the discipline can remain within a general framework of reflecting the needs of the dominant interests in society. Alternatively, planning as a discipline, may adopt a position of affirmative action, where over the next decades planning 'levels out the playing field'. This necessitates a critical assessment of the procedures, policies, and substantive concerns of planning within the emerging context. The planning process itself must encourage participation at all levels of decision-making whilst ensuring user control over space. In essence, the concept of promotive planning, encapsulates these principles. Muller (1982:254) states: "it places an obligation on planning; that it assumes a position which, in promoting the advancement of deprived groups, gives no assurance that professional self-interest will be protected. It calls for an attitudinal stance that is consciously promotive, not of planning preconceptions or palliatives, but of the priorities of the disadvantaged as defined by the disadvantaged. It implies acceptance of solutions generated from within the affected community that may be a variance with those rationally deduced through planning method, and it requires of the planner a willingness and indeed humility that enables him to withdraw from involvement when the dictates of the independent advancement of the people

necessitates withdrawal. This form of planning - *promotive planning* - seeks to provide such planning guidance and such planning knowledge as is needed and desired by disadvantaged groups to progressively attain self-sufficiency. While the range of planning may appear to be diminished in this approach, the effectiveness of planning, as a catalyst in the process of human development is surely enhanced."

The proposed framework anticipates that the historical forces which have helped to promote a particular physical landscape are clearly investigated and informs the user needs in future planning interventions. Beauregard (1990:392) suggests that by "understanding the way in which building a city is linked to political, economic, and cultural phenomena, designers can extend their reach (both practically and theoretically) and establish the basis for a critique of capitalist ideology and the politics of growth."

In Alexandra, where we have witnessed the historical processes which led to the nature of the physical landscape, the present strategies to upgrade the environment both socially and physically and the nature of the planning interventions, these have continued to promote dominant interests and to limit the potential for a transformation of society.

Based on the findings of the pilot survey, together with the historical and theoretical analysis a number of key principles emerge.

1. The relatively high population den-

sity of 53 people per stand necessitates a design product which clearly defines public and private space, domestic space and community space. The subdivision following the upgrading strategies has merely helped to exacerbate a lack of clarity with respect to the use of these areas.

2. Strategies need to be followed which allow for the maintenance of high densities without compromising the users' access to public and private space, nor health standards. To this end land needs to be made available and a neutral approach (Kemeny:1986) to land tenure, including collective forms, should be accommodated. The 'nuclear family' tenure system tends to impoverish the community and hence more appropriate tenure systems which allow for collectivity should be encouraged.
3. As the 'thinning out' of densities in the existing urban context encourages urban sprawl it is an environmentally poor solution. Moreover it increases distance for the urban poor to gain access to a range of urban facilities. Densification, whilst not compromising the above principle requires consideration: not only in terms of those areas where the urban poor happen to be but in terms of the city as a whole.
4. The backyard shack household is invariably made up of the extended family and possibly friends. The reasons for sharing space in this way are numerous and include *inter alia*: subsistence and traditional social kinship structures. However,

housing shortages which give rise to such high densities are possibly the primary reason for sharing.

5. As the majority of the population are women, certain assumptions may be made: firstly, the heads of households are likely to be women and secondly, there is likely to be a high proportion of single parent families. This pattern has been noted by *inter alia* Hayden (1986) who refers to planning the "non-sexist city". The principle of promoting a spatial policy which allows for shared facilities (including creches and play space) and financial assistance and extension of

bonds to single women should similarly be adopted.

6. The high unemployment rate and associated high crime rate reinforces the principle of widening employment opportunities and that this should be seen as central to the policy of upgrading Alexandra, and other similar areas. In this regard the development of local skills should be made a priority.
7. Similarly education, in that it forms the nucleus of stability, should be built into spatial policy.

These key principles encapsulate the essence of a range of concerns which

focus on developing an urban policy which recognises on the one hand the failure of separate Black Local Authorities – financially, administratively and in terms of accountability – and on the other, the need to pursue a strategy aimed at achieving full integration, financially, administratively and politically with the surrounding Local Authorities.

The potential of planning as a discipline, which works toward a transformation of society and space may well be achieved if as it has been attempted to illustrate here, it embodies the real needs and aspirations of the society.

NOTES

- 1 Density is calculated on three considerations, as this allows for a far better representation of space. The argument is based on the finding of Senior (1984). The three densities are:

1. Building Density: Floor Area Ratio (FAR) which is a measure of building coverage and height.

2. Occupancy Density: Floor Space Ratio (FSR) which is "the rate at which the floor space within buildings is occupied".

3. Population density: People per hectare (PPH) "The resulting number of people per unit area" (Senior, 1984: 20).

- 2 It is interesting to note that the history of these industrial townships all point to their original establishment as industrial townships between 1946 and 1971, at a period of "grand apartheid", with buffer areas established between different group areas.

As a result of the slow development by white developers Marlboro and Kew were almost developed as African and "coloured" townships. A green buffer, between Alexandra and Lombardy West was established in the 1960s period. (Information from a survey of Industrial Townships – Sandton Town Council).

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