

# DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR A HERITAGE CONTEXT

4

City of Cape Town Heritage advice pamphlet 4



CITY OF CAPE TOWN | BOXER OASEKAPA | SUD KANSTAD

June 2005 ISBN 1-874924-84-8

THIS CITY WORKS FOR YOU

## SCALES & MASSING



SCALE OF HOUSES RELATE TO HUMAN BEINGS, TO EACH OTHER AND STREET



BULK AND MASSING OF HOUSE OVERPOWERS NEIGHBOURS



## Roof colour, design, scale and material

Roof colour, design, scale and material contribute significantly to the character of Heritage Areas and buildings. Changing the colour, design shape, scale or materials of any roof must, therefore, be done with care, so as to ensure that the character of individual buildings, as well as the streetscape, is conserved. As a guide:

The dominant roof element of the Heritage Area needs to be identified. For example, the design, position and scale of roof gables and roof windows (such as dormers), in addition to the predominant material and colour of roofs.

Refer to Heritage Advice Pamphlet No. 7: Roofs in Heritage Areas and Historic Buildings for further advice.

## Boundary enclosures

Boundary enclosures such as walls, fences, hedges or the sides of buildings contribute to the character of the streetscape and hence the Heritage Area. The boundary is the threshold between the public world (the street) and the private world (the home). Boundary walls in Heritage Areas and historic buildings are generally low and/or permeable allowing views of the building from the street and vice versa. This allows a relationship between the buildings and the streetscape. Various natural and built elements such as boundary walls, verandahs, pergolas, entrance porches, garages and gardens all contribute to the character of the area and need to be identified in order to be used as a guide.

Refer to Heritage Advice Pamphlet No. 5: Boundary Enclosures in Heritage Areas and Historic Buildings for further advice.

## Verandas and balconies

Many buildings in Heritage Areas have balconies and verandahs. These areas are designed as private, outdoor spaces that are protected from the weather and from which views and fresh air can be enjoyed. They are regarded as important design elements with specific characteristics that make them different to the rest of the building. As a guide: The enclosure of verandahs and balconies is not generally supported as this has a negative impact on the identified character of the building and Heritage Area.

If enclosure is necessary, the following points should be used as a guideline:

- The enclosure should be as lightweight and transparent as possible using, for example timber or steel frames with glass infill panels to reflect that it was an "open" space.
- The new, enclosed spaces should be designed as general living spaces such as living rooms and studies. These spaces are more suited to lightweight, transparent enclosures as opposed to bathrooms and bedrooms that require more privacy.
- The frames and glazing of the enclosure should be designed so that they can be fitted behind the existing structure. Enclosures can be recessed to let the original stoep predominate.
- The frames used for the enclosure should match the materials of the windows of the historic structure.
- Complex designs and structures that enclose a verandah at awkward angles should be avoided.

## Proportion, windows and doors

Proportion is the relationship between the height and width of a building and the height and width of the elements of a building, such as the windows and doors in the facades. As a guide:

- Additions to existing buildings and new buildings in Heritage Areas should take into account the existing and predominant characteristics and proportions of the windows and doors of the original building and in the area.
- Large openings such as double or sliding doors should only be positioned onto covered terraces and verandahs.

## Materials

Heritage Areas consist of a variety of building types using different building materials. Care should be taken in the choice of the appropriate materials to ensure that they blend in with other historic buildings in the street and conform to broad use of materials in the area.

## Building on slopes

Many Heritage Areas in Cape Town are located on steeply sloping sites. The traditional response to this has been to create small terraces by means of cut and fill and the use of stone retaining walls of an average height of about 1,5 m high. As a guide:

- Gardens on sloping sites should be terraced and not filled and raised artificially above natural ground levels. This reduces the need for high retaining walls.
- Cut and fill should be carefully considered to minimise changes to existing land-forms. Low terraces that follow the contours of the land are not only aesthetically pleasing but also prevent erosion and potential structural collapse.
- Existing stone retaining walls and terracing should, wherever possible, be restored and used as a design informant for alterations and new construction.
- Retaining walls made of large, interlocking blocks are uncharacteristic of many Heritage Areas and are therefore not appropriate. The design and materials selected for retaining walls should be in character with the existing structures of the Heritage Area.

Refer to Heritage Advice Pamphlet No. 5: Boundary Enclosures in Heritage Areas and Historic Buildings for further advice.

## Security

The need for improved security has had and continues to have an impact on the character of Heritage Areas. Security measures can be introduced which, if well designed, are sympathetic to older buildings and the overall character of the Heritage Area.

Refer to Heritage Advice Pamphlet No. 8: Security in Heritage Areas and Historic Buildings for further advice.

## Lighting

Lighting improves safety and security at night. However, the choice of external light fittings is important in Heritage Areas and should be in keeping with the identified character of the area.

Refer to lighting as described in Heritage Advice Pamphlet No. 5: Boundary Enclosures in Heritage Areas and Historic Buildings and No. 6: Garages and Carports in Heritage Areas and Historic Buildings.

## PROPORTION



CAREFUL CONSIDERATION OF PROPORTION EVIDENT ELEMENTS OF HOUSE RELATE WELL TO ONE ANOTHER



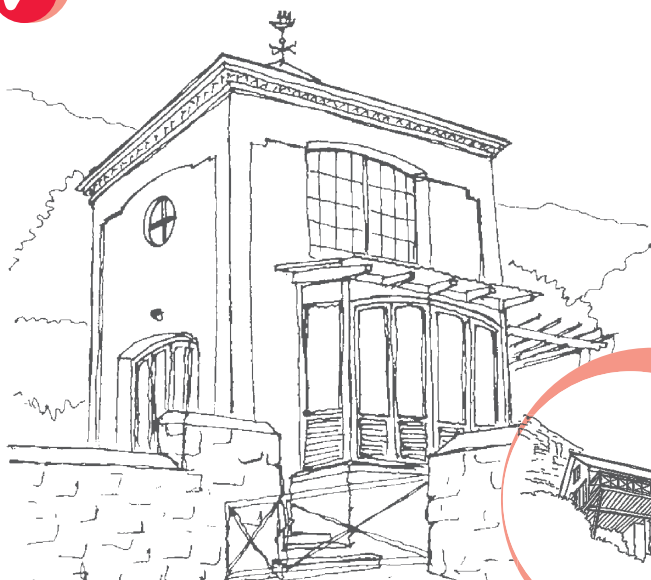
ELEMENTS OF HOUSE (WINDOWS, DOORS, ROOF) DO NOT RELATE TO EACH OTHER



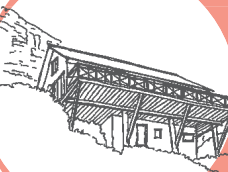
## MATERIALS & COLOUR



TRADITIONAL MATERIAL (STONE, BRICKS & TIMBER) USED IN A NEW WAY BUT FOLLOWING PRECEDENT IN AREA



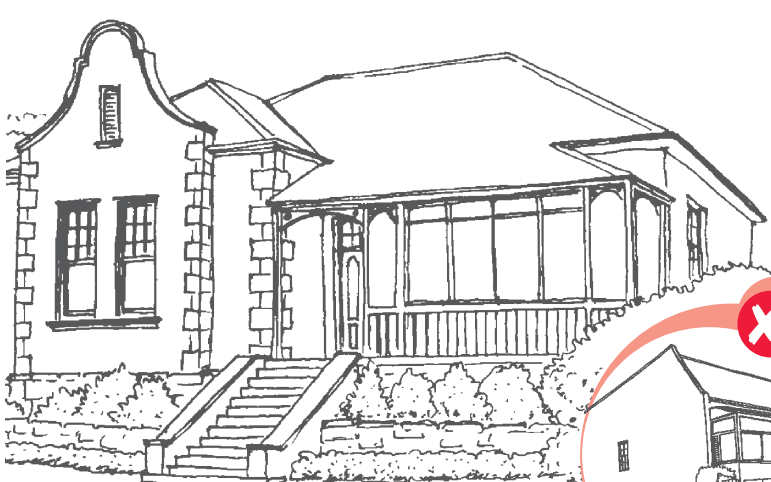
STILTS CONSTRUCTION DISTURBS EXISTING PATTERNS AND IS VISUALLY DISRUPTIVE



## ENCLOSURE BALCONIES



ENCLOSING OF STOEP WITH GLAZING, RETAINING OLD POSTS AND BALUSTRADE AND ORIGINAL ENTRANCE DOOR



VERANDA LOST WITH INAPPROPRIATE GLAZING MULLIONS AND SLIDING WINDOWS



## REQUIREMENTS FOR PROPERTY OWNERS

If your property is situated in a Heritage Area, your building is older than 60 years or you believe it may have heritage value, it is advisable to discuss your proposals in sketch form with your Local Planning and Environment Office and particularly with the Heritage Resources Section, who will advise you about any regulations that might impact on your proposed building work.

The officials of the Heritage Resources Section also advise architects and designers on appropriate designs for Heritage Areas and historic buildings. Other Heritage Advice pamphlets in this series include:

- Heritage Advice Pamphlet No. 1 Heritage Resources
- Heritage Advice Pamphlet No. 2 Heritage Areas
- Heritage Advice Pamphlet No. 3 Cultural Landscapes and Historic Vegetation
- Heritage Advice Pamphlet No. 4 Design Guidelines for a Heritage Context
- Heritage Advice Pamphlet No. 5 Boundary Enclosures in Heritage Areas and to Historic Buildings
- Heritage Advice Pamphlet No. 6 Garages and Carports in Heritage Areas and for Historic Buildings
- Heritage Advice Pamphlet No. 7 Roofs in Heritage Areas and of Historic Buildings
- Heritage Advice Pamphlet No. 8 Security in Heritage Areas and for Historic Buildings
- Heritage Advice Pamphlet No. 9 Langa Heritage
- Heritage Advice Pamphlet No.10 Company's Gardens

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STONE RETAINING WALLS CREATE TERRACES FOR HOUSES & GARDENS WITH A CLOSE LINK TO THE SITE TOPOGRAPHY



HOUSE ON STILTS UNRELATED TO STONE WALLS AND OVERPOWER STREET



STONE TERRACES MODIFY LANDSCAPE FOR GARDEN AND OUTDOOR SPACES



INTERLOCKING BLOCKS MUST BE VIGOROUSLY PLANTED, OR THEY BECOME AN EYESORE



HOUSE EXPLOITS VIEW AND ALSO HAS NORTH-FACING TERRACE FOR SUN & WARMTH



HOUSE ONLY USES VIEWS AS DESIGN GENERATOR-IGNORES NORTH SUN & STREET RELATIONSHIP



HOUSES SET IN DENSE PLANTED GARDENS WITH LARGE LANDMARK TREES



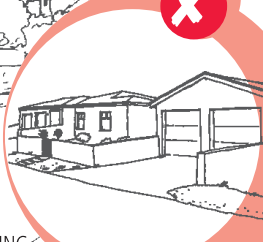
PLANTING BETWEEN OLD & NEW BOUNDARY WALL NOT SUBSTANTIAL ENOUGH TO REINFORCE GARDEN



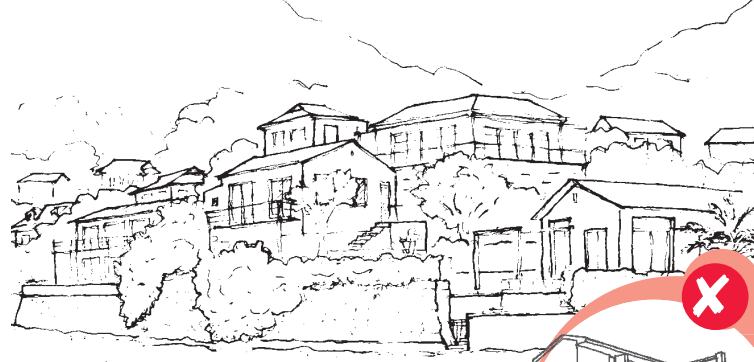
DENSELY PLANTED BOUNDARIES HELP TO CREATE A MEMORABLE PUBLIC PLACE



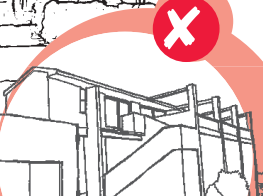
BARREN ENVIRONMENT CAN BE IMPROVED WITH PLANTING



ORIENTATION AND SITING OF BUILDINGS RESPONDING TO SLOPING SITE



HIGH RETAINING WALL INDICATES DESIGN IGNORES SITE CONDITIONS



## INTRODUCTION

The aim of this brochure is twofold, firstly to outline a process for assessing and identifying design requirements for new developments within declared heritage areas and buildings, and secondly to provide specific design-related guidelines for new developments in proposed and declared heritage areas.

A Heritage Area, as defined in the National Heritage Resources Act, (No 25 of 1999), is a designated place of environmental or cultural interest. A Heritage Area is defined by a combination of architectural, historic, aesthetic, scientific and social characteristics. Many parts of Cape Town are worthy of conservation and are declared Heritage Areas (Urban Conservation Areas).

If your property is situated in a declared Heritage Area, your building is older than 60 years or you believe it may have heritage value, it is advisable that you discuss your proposals in sketch form with your Local Planning and Environmental Office, and in particular with the Heritage Resources Section. They will advise you about any regulations that might impact on your proposed building work.

The officials of the Heritage Resources Section also advise architects and designers on appropriate designs for heritage areas and historic buildings.

## REGULATIONS

Heritage resources and Heritage Areas are protected by law at local, provincial and national levels.

At local level, the Zoning Schemes applicable to particular parts of the City define property rights and areas of special character. In certain areas the Zoning Scheme provides for the management of new development work, alterations and additions to the built fabric as well as the protection of mature trees and hedges.

At local, provincial and national level, the National Heritage Resources Act provides for the conservation and management of heritage resources and empowers society to assist in this management. This Act is administered by the South African Heritage Resource Agency (SAHRA) at national level and Heritage Western Cape (HWC) at provincial level. Local Heritage Areas and related aspects of heritage resources are administered by the City of Cape Town.

## PROCESS FOR ASSESSING AND IDENTIFYING DESIGN REQUIREMENTS

New developments in Heritage Areas should, wherever possible, take into account and be compatible with, the identified character of the Heritage Area within which it is located. In order to ensure that new developments are compatible, the elements that define the character of the Heritage Area need to be identified and assessed at the outset of the design process. These elements should inform the design and detail for new buildings, renovations and additions to existing buildings.

The elements and combination thereof, that contribute to the character of a heritage area include:

- the dominant architectural style;
- the scale of buildings and structures;
- the pitch and design of roofs;
- the orientation and siting of buildings on even;
- the proportions of windows and doors;
- the dominant building materials used;
- the dominant colour of buildings;
- the interface between buildings and the street, including setback distances, the scale and design of boundary walls, verandahs and balconies; and
- the interface between the natural and built environment, including topography, geology, vegetation and open spaces.

The identified elements need to be evaluated against the land use, setback, bulk and height parameters attached to the zoning rights of a particular property to establish whether any departures from the Zoning Scheme would be desirable in order to achieve an appropriate design which responds to the heritage elements.

## SPECIFIC DESIGN-RELATED GUIDELINES

### Streetscape

In many Heritage Areas, the relationship between the buildings and the street is an important defining characteristic. For many buildings the street facade is defined by a set of different architectural elements that provide the property with varying layers of privacy. For example, a house may be screened from the street by the verandah, stoep or entrance porch, this may lead onto a garden or forecourt, which in turn may lead on to a boundary wall/fence and the street. This layering of architectural elements contributes to the character of many of Cape Town's declared Heritage Areas and is often referred to as a streetscape. This characteristic is considered worthy of conservation. In addition, as public spaces, the streets in Heritage Areas are, in turn, enhanced by the views from the street and the relationship between the street and adjacent properties. As a guide:

- The interface between buildings and the street, including, setback distances, scale and design of boundary walls, verandahs and balconies needs to be maintained in new developments.
- High boundary walls, carports and garages proposed between the main building facade and the street in addition to the removal of low boundary walls/fences and hedges often create streetscapes that are uncharacteristic and change the character of many Heritage Areas.

### Trees and vegetation

Trees and vegetation often are important components that contribute to the character of a Heritage Area and form an integral part of the cultural landscape of Cape Town.

Refer to Heritage Advice Pamphlet No. 3: Cultural Landscapes and Historic Vegetation for further advice.

### Orientation and siting of buildings

Prior to the design process, the placement of new buildings in a Heritage Area in relation to the streets, contours and boundaries should be assessed as part of the design process. As a guide:

- The traditional response to sloping sites in many declared Heritage Areas is cutting, filling and retaining walls. This results in buildings that "step" down the slope. As a result the ground level of many buildings located in Heritage Areas reflects and is close to the natural ground level. This assists with breaking up the mass and visual impact of the building. This approach is generally appropriate.
- The use of stilts or open columns on the underside of buildings is generally uncharacteristic of many Heritage Areas and is therefore inappropriate. The use of masonry or stone plinths at the base of buildings "grounds" the building visually and architecturally and is the correct approach.
- The orientation and siting of new buildings should reflect those in the immediate vicinity of the property and the streetscape. In many Heritage Areas the building is orientated parallel to property boundaries.

### Scale

Scale refers to the size of a building in relationship to the surrounding buildings and space, including the streetscape. The buildings in Heritage Areas need to be assessed in terms of their scale and the space between buildings and the street. As a guide:

- New buildings should be of a similar scale to the surrounding buildings that are characteristic of the Heritage Area. Additions to existing buildings should be of a similar scale or less dominant than the main building.