



AN AGENCY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SPORTS, ARTS AND CULTURE

SOUTH AFRICAN HERITAGE RESOURCES AGENCY

DECLARATION OF THE FIRST PHASE OF SITES IN DISTRICT SIX, CAPE TOWN, WESTERN CAPE AS NATIONAL HERITAGE SITES

By virtue of the powers vested in the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA), in terms of section 27 (5) of the National Heritage Resources Act (No. 25 of 1999), SAHRA hereby declares the first phase of sites listed in the Schedule below as part of District Six as National Heritage Sites.

Statement of Significance

District Six, the once vibrant multi-cultural residential heart of Cape Town, was ripped out by forcing more than 60 000 people from the economic centre and relocating a whole community to the Cape Flats, an area devoid of opportunity located at the periphery of the city. In the same fashion, many communities across South Africa were disenfranchised, disempowered and dehumanised. Urban dwellers of colour were relegated to the least favourable areas and their economic ability, social opportunities and lifestyle were considerably reduced through the dramatic erosion of a cosmopolitan and lively community.

District Six is considered to possess the national heritage value of 'telling a national history of forced removals.' District Six constitutes a previously neglected memory of the history of South Africa that is to be used as part of the reconstruction and healing of the nation, a memory closely guarded and kept alive by the former residents and celebrated and passed on through various means, such as the arts, schools and religious centres that remained.

The significance, of District Six, is threefold as it tells the story of how people became the victims of their circumstances, but through years of non-violent resistance and a fervent struggle became victorious, evidenced by the pride of many former residents and descendants of these residents.

- 1. Firstly, "land was stolen from people who were defenceless, voiceless and disenfranchised in the land of their birth"*
- 2. Secondly the resistance and struggle of the people prevented the area of District Six from being redeveloped into a middle-class white area as was envisioned and planned by the apartheid planners. The pen and the word were used as armour in the struggle and resistance of this community to return and get back their 'stolen goods'.*
- 3. Restoration, redevelopment and reconstitution are the final steps in the reconciliation of a community. Currently, this is taking the form of recalling the community of District Six to transplant the cultural heart back into the city.*

This legacy of history must be remembered for having the potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of South Africa's cultural heritage. It must be celebrated for its importance in the community and pattern of South Africa's history.

Seven Steps

The Seven Steps remains one of the main symbols to represent the community of District Six. The very mention of the 'Seven Steps' immortalized in Taliep Petersen's musical 'District Six', stirs up deep emotions. The Seven Steps of stone, worn by the thousands who used these over the years, to work, to home, to school, to play, to 'bok', to church, to mosque, to shop, to celebrate and to mourn, were part of the great big soul of the district. Today, so many years after its destruction, the Seven Steps stands out as the premier symbol of District Six that still lives in the hearts of all who lived, loved, played and worked in the 'District'. It is a powerful symbol of diversity and inclusivity and what that is currently located in the new CPUT residence.

Holy Cross

The Holy Cross Congregation is a religious congregation under the Catholic Church founded in Switzerland in 1849. Their mission is the provision of education wherever the need persists. The Sisters arrived in South Africa as a missionary order in 1883, with their first school being established in Umtata. Holy Cross School was known as Holy Cross Mission in the early days and was the first Coloured School in the Cape. The school opened on the 24th January 1910 after four sisters set out from the Transkei to start a coloured mission here in Cape Town.

The Sisters charged fees of one penny per week in the lower classes and 4 pence from standard four upwards until 1920, when free education was introduced. The number of learners increased progressively to the extent that a new building had to be erected in 1933. Even through hardships such as the displacement and destruction of the District Six community, the school produced priests, religious brothers and sisters such as the Rector of the University of the Western Cape, Mr Brian O Connell and ex-Mayor of Cape Town, Ms Theresa Solomons.

Moravian Church

The Moravian Church has a deep history in South Africa as it was the first church to have a mission station in South Africa when Georg Schmidt arrived in 1737 to begin his work in Baviaanskloof, now Genadendal. The Moravian Chapel previously located in Russell Road, known as Moravian Hill, was built in 1886 and consecrated 25 September 1886 became the first urban Moravian congregation.

The bell of the Church provides another history as bells have come to form part of our cultural history and it was initially, 'brought to South Africa for church and civic purposes from the earliest days of the Dutch settlement at the Cape.' Bells served numerous purposes within the Moravian Church such as, announcing worship services, earlier years, at the mission stations the ringing of the bell called up the residents for community work, and the tolling of the church bell announces that someone in the congregation has passed away. The bell at Moravian Hill hangs in a bell-cote above the apex on the west end of the church with a backdrop against Table Mountain with the date of 1936 engraved on it. 1936 represents the 50th anniversary of the Church and it may be the bell coincided with that commemoration.

Zeenatul-Islam Masjid

Zeenatul-Islam Masjid, also known as Muir Street Masjid, celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2020. The pioneers of this Mosque arrived as immigrants from the State of Gujarat, India in the late 19th and early 20th century. Collectively these immigrants came to be referred to as Kanamias. They settled in District Six with the hope of seeking opportunities and providing for their families back home in India.

3 Muir Street became the jamaat khaana (a group prayer space) due to there not being a masjid and it served as a place of solace for new immigrants. Members of the community on January 2, 1919, made an announcement of their plans to construct a masjid to replace jamaat khaana. Two adjacent properties were bought on the corner of Muir Street and Chapel Streets in September 1919 and converted into a masjid with a minaret. By 1923 all alterations were completed, and the Kanamia Moslem League was founded to oversee the affairs of the masjid.

Al-Azhar Mosque

Al Azhar Mosque represents the oldest mosque in District Six, in Aspeling Street, founded in 1887. Imam Kassiem Gamielien served as the first Imam of the Masjid. The Mosque is still in use today and serves as a memorial to the community of District Six.

Trafalgar High School

Trafalgar High School was opened in 1912 as the first state high school for people of colour. The school was established due to the efforts of Dr Abdurahman, President of the African People's Organisation and Harold Cressy, the first person of colour to obtain a BA degree from the University of Cape Town. Harold Cressy was the school's first principal. The school and building is synonymous with the fight against apartheid. The teaching staff were politically aware activists who formed part of organisations such as the Teachers' League of South Africa, the New Era Fellowship, the Non-European Unity Movement. Alumni of the school include Dullah Omar; Abdullah Ebrahim (Dollar Brand); James La Guma; Judge Siraaj Desai; Helen Kies; Ben Kies; Rahima Moosa; Cissie Gool; among others.

Harold Cressy School

The school represents resistance to apartheid laws and association to the public memory of forced removals, segregation, and academic excellence. In 1941 the buildings that previously housed Hope Lodge Primary School, which catered for the Jewish Community were occupied by Hewat Training College. Hewat College was the first coloured tertiary institution and provided a focus of intellectual resistance to white segregation. The college remained in Roeland Street until 1961. The demand for a high school grew and Cape Town Secondary School was founded in January 1951. The school consisted of three teachers: Mr F Hendricks (the Principal), Miss D Fuchs and Mr F Hilario. In 1953, the school was renamed Harold Cressy High School in honour of Mr Harold Cressy who had to overcome formidable disadvantages and overwhelming odds in his pursuit of academic excellence and in his dedication to community service.

The 1960s were challenging years for Harold Cressy. The school took a blow with the destruction of District Six, the community from which the school drew the majority of its students. Cressy was further politicised with the student uprisings of 1976 and 1980 that reached a peak in 1985. For four months the school abstained from the prescribed curriculum and instead educated students in the struggle for liberation. The school applied a radical approach, demanding not only an improved

education system but a full democracy. The conflict with the government resulted in the imprisonment of two of their teachers

Jewish Cemetery

The Jewish Cemetery displays high historical and social significance and is a testament to the role, history and legacy of the Jewish community in District Six. Many communities lived in District Six but one thing that is noted in *The Jews of District Six* is: "As the history of the Jews of District Six has receded or has been subsumed into the iconic status District Six has rightly achieved as a symbol of man's inhumanity to man... it is a salutary reminder of a time when a multi-ethnic and multi-religious community could live together in peaceful coexistence".

One of the first things Jews do, long before they develop a congregation or even a synagogue, is to get land for a cemetery (Gwynne Robins). The CT Hebrew Congregation was formed in 1841 – in 1842 they bought two plots of land in Woodstock – what became the Arthurs Road cemetery. One of the 1841 founders was the first person buried there – his posthumous child was the first Jewish child born here. Solly Berger has written about the establishment of the cemetery in the *Great Synagogue's 2005 Centenary History* publication and Prof Howard Philips has researched the cemetery and its graves.

Schedule

The demarcation of the sites is as follows:

Site No.	Name of the District Six Site	Erf No	Town	Municipality	Province
1.	Seven Steps	9929; Cape Town	Cape Town	City of Cape Town	Western Cape
2.	Holy Cross Roman Catholic Church, Parish Centre and Convent	8846; 8859; 8858, 8869	Cape Town	City of Cape Town	Western Cape
3.	Moravian Church	176411	Cape Town	City of Cape Town	Western Cape
4.	Zeenatul- Islam Masjid	161478	Cape Town	City of Cape Town	Western Cape
5.	Al Azhar Mosque	115728	Cape Town	City of Cape Town	Western Cape
6.	Trafalgar High School	168162	Cape Town	City of Cape Town	Western Cape
7.	Harold Cressy High School	5854-RE	Cape Town	City of Cape Town	Western Cape
8.	Jewish Cemetery	10772; 10773	Cape Town	City of Cape Town	Western Cape

Coordinates:

Site No	Name of the District Six Site	Points	Latitude	Longitude
1.	Site of the Seven Step	A	-33.930214	18.430442
		B	-33.930199	18.430453
		C	-33.930219	18.430493
		D	-33.930238	18.430481

Site No	Name of the District Six Site	Points	Latitude	Longitude
2.	Holy Cross Catholic Church	A	-33.933018	18.439531
		B	-33.933061	18.43968
		C	-33.932755	18.439853
		D	-33.932708	18.439614
	Holy Cross Parish Centre	A	-33.93316	18.439393
		B	-33.933069	18.438929
		C	-33.932798	18.439001
		D	-33.932885	18.439466
	Holy Cross Convent	A	-33.933262	18.43983
		B	-33.933272	18.439796
		C	-33.933201	18.439604
		D	-33.933176	18.439489
		E	-33.933018	18.439531
		F	-33.933061	18.43968
		G	-33.933032	18.439695
		H	-33.933112	18.439914
		I	-33.933248	18.439838
3.	Moravian Church	A	-33,931823	18,431998
		B	-33,931814	18,43203
		C	-33,931997	18,432534
		D	-33,932359	18,432347
		E	-33,932173	18,43182
4.	Zeenatul- Islam Masjid	A	-33.928814	18.432637
		B	-33.928833	18.432586
		C	-33.928983	18.432247
		D	-33.929088	18.432051
		E	-33.929063	18.431973
		F	-33.929026	18.431947
		G	-33.928777	18.431968
5.	Al Azhar Mosque	A	-33,930148	18,432932
		B	-33,930292	18,432922
		C	-33,930448	18,432805
		D	-33,930352	18,432561
		E	-33,93013	18,432576
6.	Trafalgar High School	A	-33,932489	18,42831
		B	-33,932598	18,428255
		C	-33,932735	18,428553
		D	-33,932895	18,42871
		E	-33,933884	18,428728
		F	-33,933907	18,428695
		G	-33,93389	18,428577
		H	-33,933841	18,428587
		I	-33,933779	18,428535
		J	-33,933764	18,428442
		K	-33,933808	18,428366
		L	-33,933857	18,428356

Site No	Name of the District Six Site	Points	Latitude	Longitude
		M	-33,933654	18,426994
		N	-33,93358	18,426858
7.	Harold Cressy High School	A	-33,931386	18,425476
		B	-33,931874	18,424722
		C	-33,931866	18,424653
		D	-33,930692	18,423693
		E	-33,930632	18,423706
		F	-33,930192	18,424356
8.	Jewish Cemetery	A	-33,926656	18,449232
		B	-33,926375	18,449281
		C	-33,926606	18,448825
		D	-33,926325	18,448876

END