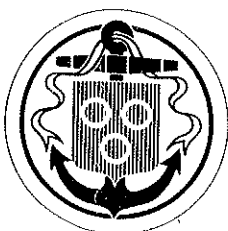
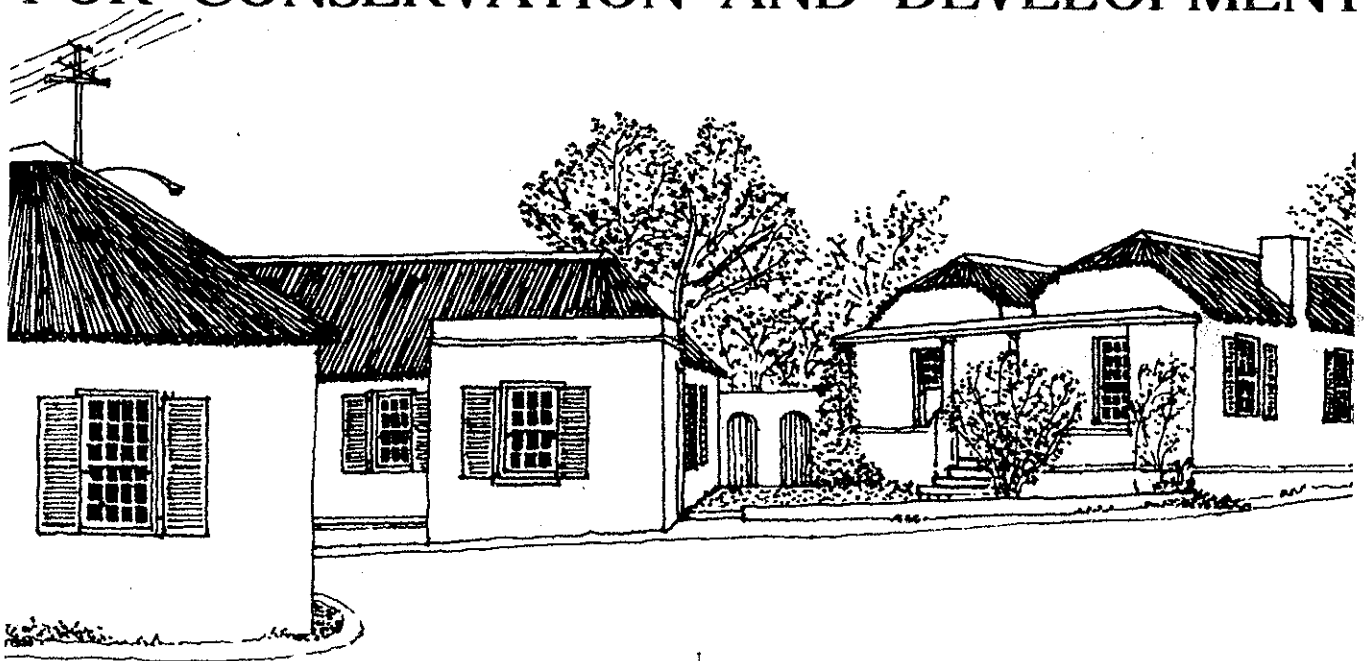




# OLD WYNBERG VILLAGE GUIDELINES FOR CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT



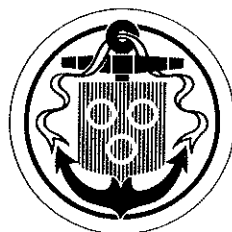
PREPARED FOR THE CITY PLANNER'S DEPARTMENT  
CITY OF CAPE TOWN

by  
JOHN RENNIE & PAT RILEY ARCHITECTS : 1987

# OLD WYNBERG VILLAGE : GUIDELINES FOR CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

This handbook was prepared for the City Planner's Department, Cape Town City Council by the firm of John Rennie & Pat Riley Architects

**Text:** Pat Riley and John Rennie  
**Drawings:** Susan Nathan, assistant architect



CITY OF CAPE TOWN  
CITY PLANNER'S DEPARTMENT

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Mr Dirk Visser

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# OLD WYNBERG VILLAGE : GUIDELINES FOR CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

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Fig. 1 View across Durban Road, Wynberg Village 1986  
 "Oak Cottage", "Laundry Cottage", "Craft Corner", "Prince Alfred Cottage"  
 and "Prince Alfred House"

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

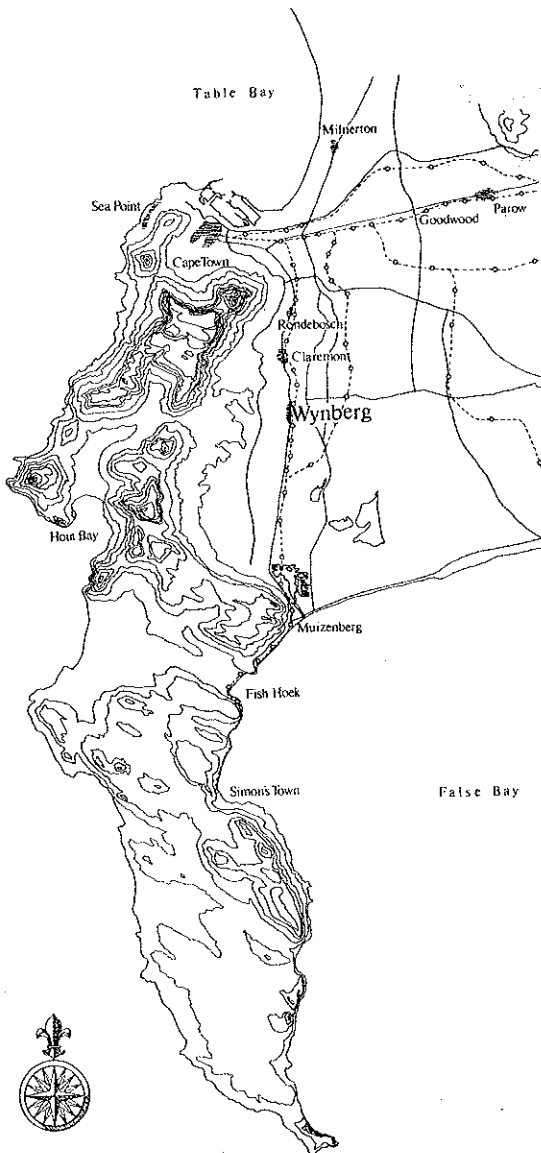
Wynberg lies some 13 km south of Cape Town about half way on the road to False Bay (Map 1). The village centre "**Klein Oude Wynberg**" consists of a fairly closely packed group of about 100 dwellings clustered around the intersection of Wolfe Street and Durban Road. Many of these buildings are between 100 and 150 years old.

The village is contained on the west by the military camp and on the east by the estate of Maynardville separating it from the developments around the main road and the railway line.

In 1981 Wynberg Village was designated an "**Area of Special Architectural, Aesthetic or Historical Significance**" by the Cape Town City Council. Approximately 80% of the buildings within this area are also proclaimed National Monuments. In addition, in terms of the 1986 Amendment to the National Monuments Act, most of the remainder are "historical sites" being over 50 years old.

As a result of the designation of Wynberg Village as a conservation area (and complementary to the requirements of the National Monuments Council) the special permission of the Cape Town City Council is required for:

1. Erection or demolition of any building or structure.
2. Any alteration to the external appearance of any building
3. Any sign to be painted on or affixed to a building



Map No. 1 The Cape Peninsula

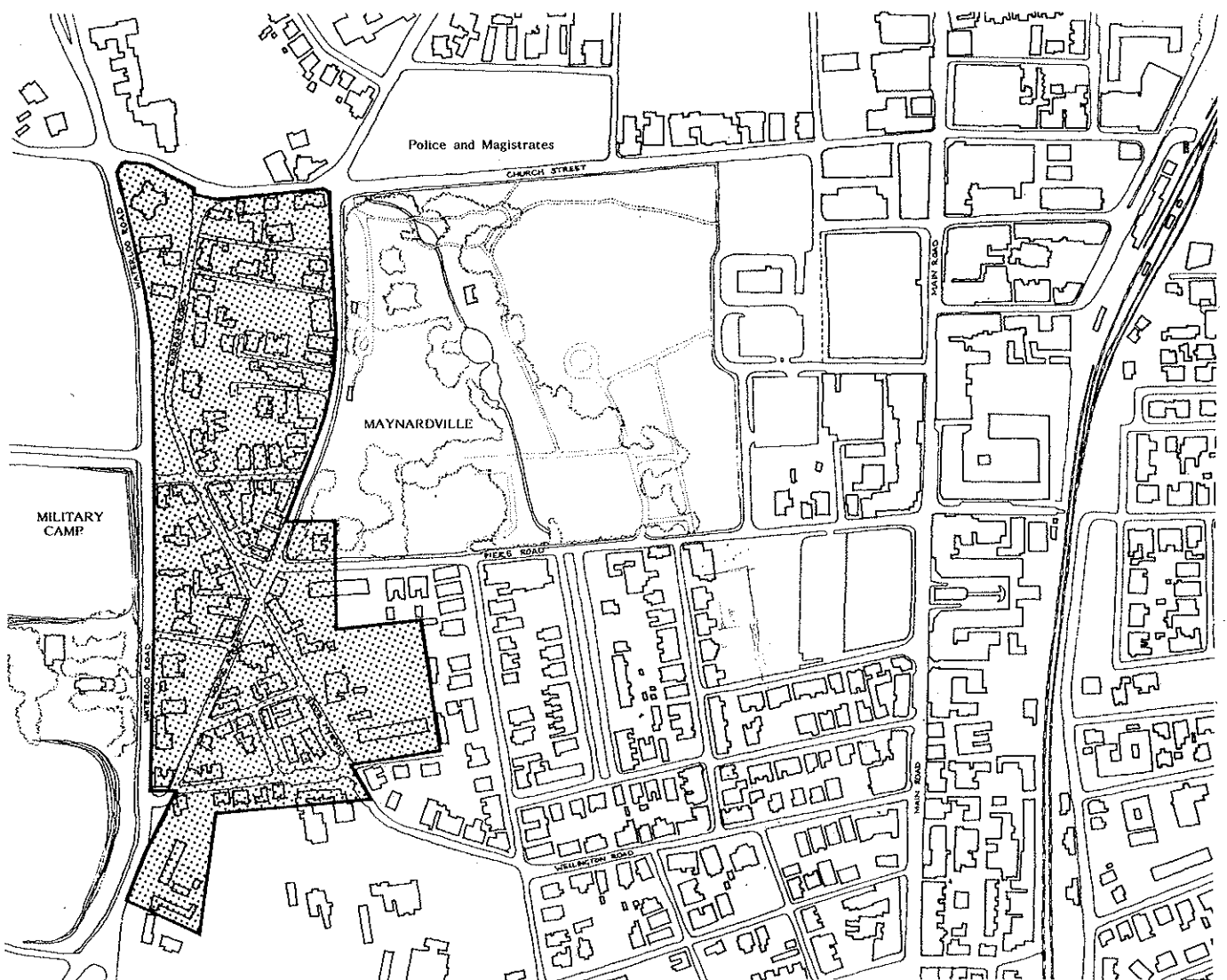
In order to provide **design guidelines** for property owners and their architects with reference to these regulations, this handbook has been prepared for the City Council in consultation with the City Engineer's Department, the National Monuments Council and the Wynberg Residents Advisory Committee.

Included are: a short pre-amble on the **historical development** of the area, an analysis of **typical building types** and **architectural styles**; a section discussing

**general conservation issues**; also some technical advice on **maintenance and repairs** to typical elements and materials.

The guidelines will be used as a standard by the City Council when scrutinising building proposals in this area.

A full list of **affected properties** with their reference numbers, erf numbers, addresses, and monument status is given in **Appendix 1**.



Map No. 2 The position of Wynberg Village relative to the military camp, the Main Road and the railway line

..... Boundary of conservation area



## 2.0 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The first land grant in the area was the farm 'Oude Wynberg' in 1683. This early name could lend support to the tradition that the site was part of outlying and experimental vineyards on Van Riebeeck's farm Boscheuwel (now Bishopscourt). In 1685 'Oude Wynberg' was added by devious means to the holdings of the Van der Stel family in whose hands it remained until 1719. The Cape Dutch homestead on the property which had a date of 1775 on its gable is now incorporated in 'Hawthornden' nearby.

Wynberg village itself developed mainly on the farm 'Klein Oude Wynberg' which was a subdivision sold off from 'Oude Wynberg' in 1803. The present 'Osborne House' is probably the much altered farm house and the cottages on Carr's Hill could relate to early out-buildings. The first development between 1820 and 1840 (now to a great extent replaced) was below the present Waterloo Green at the ford over the river to the north of the present centre. Further subdivisions of the farms 'Vredenhof' and 'Pietersklip' extended the village southwards between 1830 and 1850.

To the east the farm 'Roosendaal' was to become Maynardville.

The military presence in Wynberg has had a profound effect on the growth of the area, the direction and names of roads and the form of houses.

The exact date from which there were soldiers on Wynberg Hill is not known, but a deduction from Oude Wynberg was a Dutch military post from 1780. In 1795 the British forces took over the camp and two years later decided to make it permanent. Land exchange with local farmers in 1809 probably extended the area owned by the Government into what is now the village.

The present roads are already recognisable on Thibault's manuscript notes to his survey of 1811.

Visiting the military camp at this time Burchell reported that the huts were of reeds and mud but those of the officers were "not wanting in comfort and neatness within". Information from contemporary drawings and descriptions suggests that these houses were from 3 to 4,5 metres wide with walls and roofs of reed on witteboom poles with cane ceilings. The outside walls were plastered over the reeds (Fig. 2).

Hipped roof forms, as opposed to gables, are characteristic of this type of vernacular construction. It was derived from medieval practice in northern Europe and was used by both the English and the early Dutch colonists.

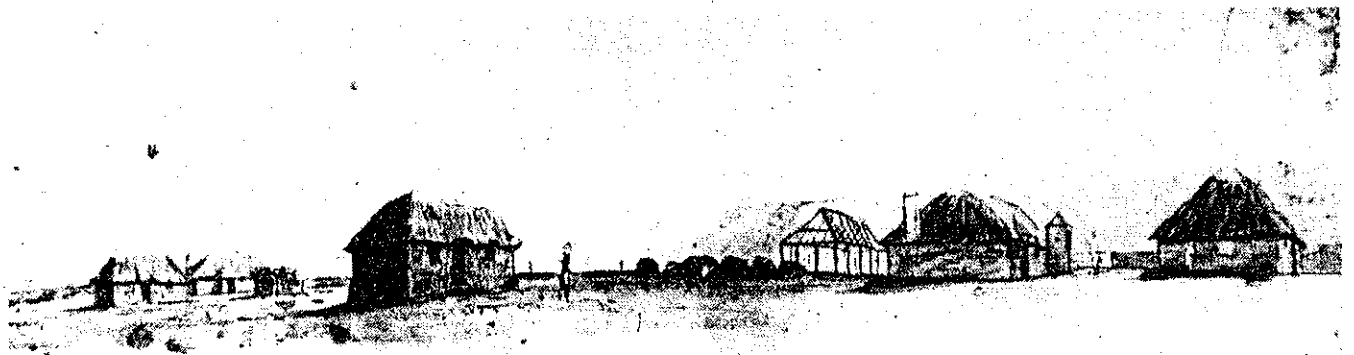


Fig. 2 William Burchell's drawing of Wynberg military camp dated 1811 (from Lewcock, p21)

None of these very early temporary dwellings has survived. In 1826, however, the camp was contracted and parts sold off as building plots to officers who, not surprisingly, tended to build houses with the same familiar form but in more permanent materials.

On account of its beauty and climate, the area also became popular with officers of the British East India Company as a place to spend their leave. Over the years quite large and comfortable houses and inns were built. Many of the later large Wynberg stores such as Withinshaw's and Duncan Taylor's had their first shops in the village and service industries grew up such as laundries, bakeries and a butcher. A horse-drawn tram service to Cape Town was set up in 1836.

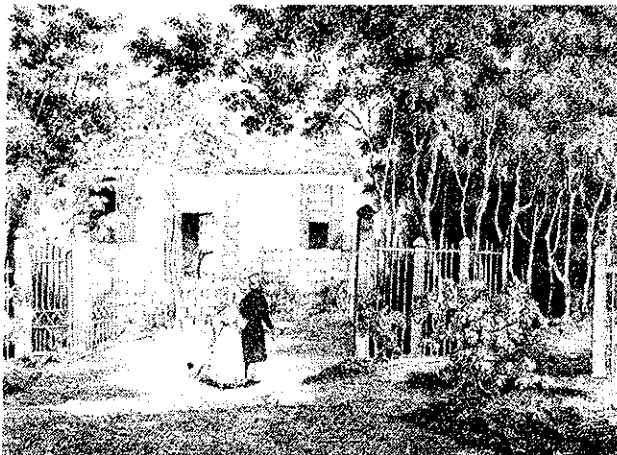


Fig. 3 Sir Charles D'Oyly's view of Sir Robert Colquhoun's cottage at Wynberg 1832 (Cape Archives)



Fig. 4 Dorothy Cloete's drawing of Carrs Hill c1850 showing the old D R Church (S A Library)

The **Dutch Reformed Church** was built in 1831 (extended in 1842 and practically rebuilt in 1897) and **St John's Anglican Church** close by followed in 1839 (rebuilt about 1875 and further extended in 1901).

In 1838 Wynberg became the centre of a **magisterial district** embracing a large portion of the Peninsula so that by 1840 it was an important social, religious and judicial centre. Improvements to roads and public conveyances encouraged development as a dormitory suburb and men of wealth and influence such as James Maynard who bought 'Roosendaal' in 1844, were attracted to the area.

Paintings attributed to Bowler and drawings by Dorothy Cloete show a flourishing thatched-roofed village during the 1850's and by 1860 the substantial German community had built the **Lutheran Church** with its parsonage on Waterloo Road.

In the twenty years following 1864 when the railway reached Wynberg a great growth in population occurred and the resulting increase in the number of dwellings required the establishment of a local authority to ensure orderly growth. Parts of the village centre had been carefully surveyed when first developed but the rest of Wynberg had maintained its rural and haphazard character. Now, however, there was an urgent requirement for streets to be laid out and named, building plots to be accurately surveyed and for improvements to sanitation to be made.

In the village some irregularly shaped and sized erven do reflect the earlier presence of houses and cottages which had taken their form and orientation from the old major roads Wolfe Street and Durban Road.

After a short-lived period of association with other suburbs Wynberg became a Municipality in its own right in 1886. The Town Offices were situated at No 35 Durban Road until the construction of the new Town Hall near the station in 1899 marked the shift of the centre away from the village to the area nearer the main road and railway.

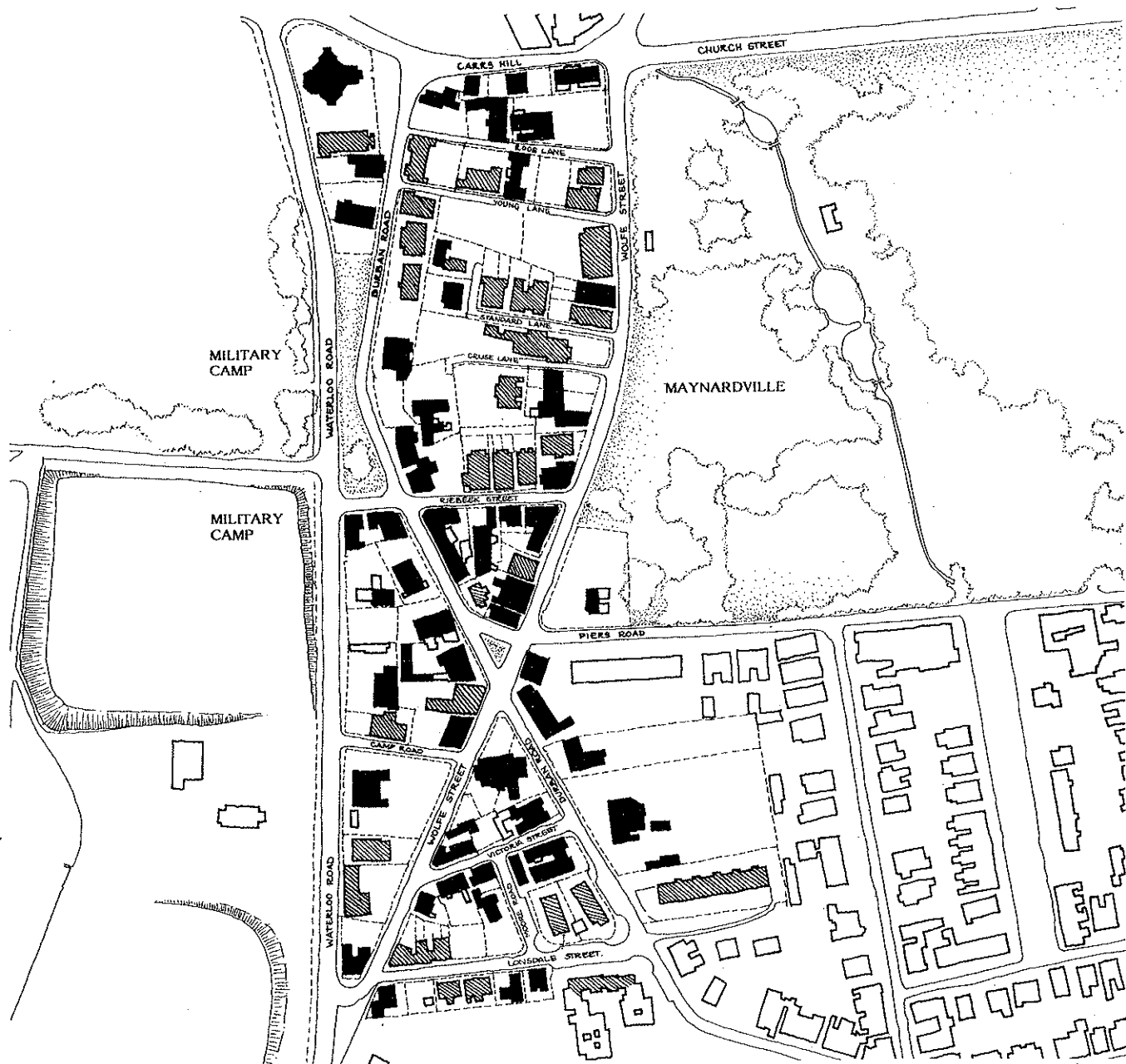


Increasingly neglected from the early years of the 20th Century, by the beginning of the 1950's Old Wynberg had deteriorated into a run-down, overcrowded backwater. For more than a generation the properties had been mostly in the hands of poor tenants who had neither the inclination nor the means to maintain them.

The survival and rehabilitation of the village through the generally destructive period of growth in the fifteen years which followed the end of the Second World War was due firstly to its situation, secondly to increasing public awareness of the importance of historic environments and thirdly to the foresight and enthusiasm of the late Mr Sonny Heseltine.

Mr Heseltine's restoration, firstly of the little laundry on Durban Road, now 'Laundry Cottage' and then the four thatched cottages in Victoria Road 'Victoria', 'Albert', 'Kent' and 'Albany' began the process of rescue from decay.

His example was quickly followed with varying degrees of skill depending on resources and experience so that within a surprisingly short time after the first renovations, the village emerged from its eclipse. Much building material was recycled from demolished buildings sometimes from as far afield as Paarl and Wellington.



Map No. 3 Wynberg Village 1986  
 Properties hatched: later than 1888  
 Properties coloured black: earlier than 1888



### 3.0 CONTEXT

A fair number of the buildings in the area are the vernacular 'cottage' dwellings built for and by British ex-army officers from 1830 onwards (see HISTORICAL BACKGROUND). Many retain their thatched roofs (with original or added dormers) or at least their characteristic hipped or half-hipped form although the materials may have been changed (Fig. 5).

These older structures are interspersed with some which were either built later in the 19th Century or which underwent "modernisation" at that time.

Several corner buildings are larger and double storeyed. These more clearly reflect mid-19th Century British influence with ordered proportions, restrained detail and fine joinery work. Roofs appear to have originally been of imported Welsh slate (Fig. 6).

The contrastingly more exuberant detailing of the late 19th Century (or early 20th) is seen on a handful of buildings or decorative additions (Fig. 7).

Some of the houses are semi-detached or terraced and many either open directly onto the road or are very close to it and separated from the street only by low walls or fences. The plots, however, vary greatly in size and shape and there are many established gardens with mature trees, shrubs and hedges. There is much evidence of care and pride of ownership.

A small cluster of shops at and near the junction of Durban Road and Wolfe Street and several craft and art shops elsewhere all contribute to the prevailing atmosphere of liveliness and activity.

The impression of a charming country village is completed by the trees and lawns of the public areas separating Waterloo Road and Durban Road and at the corner of Wolfe Street.



Fig. 5 "Idoville", Durban Road



Fig. 6 "Craft Corner", 35 Durban Road  
(probably the old Municipal Buildings)



Fig. 7 View down Wolfe Street

## 4.0 BUILDING TYPES AND ARCHITECTURAL STYLES

### 4.1 SINGLE STOREY VERNACULAR COTTAGES (c 1830 onwards)

(Please note that all line drawings are diagrammatic and do not represent actual buildings).

There are **three main types** identifiable but the characteristics of one type are often to be found in another and it is perhaps impossible to give exact definitions.

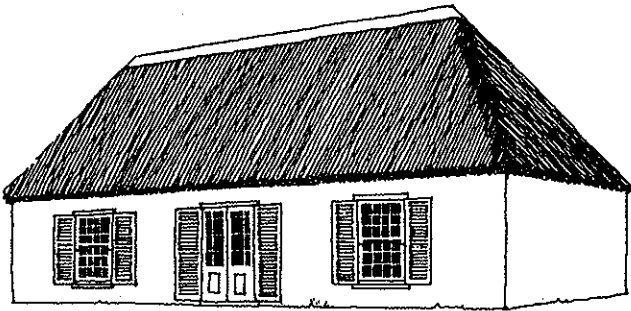


Fig. 8 c1830 - 1840

1. Probably the earliest c1830-1840: low ceiling (about 2,4m) - originally round poles with reeds over; fully hipped roof; window and door heads at approximately 2m; with or without fanlights. Examples of this type are 'Laundry Cottage' Durban Road (Fig.1) and 'Pink Cottage' Young Lane.

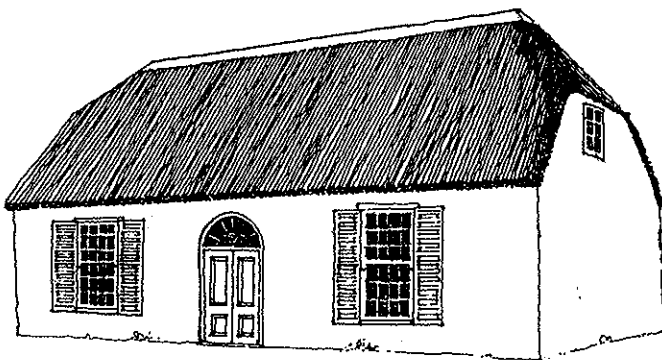


Fig. 9 c1840 - 1860

2. Probably slightly later c1840-1860: higher, rectangular beamed ceiling (about 3m), fully hipped or half-hipped roof, window and door (with or without fanlight over) head heights approximately 2,4m. Examples are Long Cottage' (Fig. 11), 'Idoville' (Fig. 5).

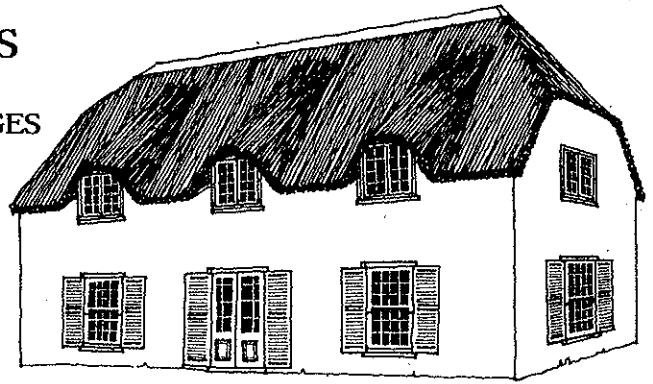


Fig. 10 c1840 - 1860

3. Probably also c1840-1860: nearly double storey with dormers cut into eaves line and attic room up a precipitous stair; usually a development of type 1.; once common, now rare. Example 'Hodie mihi', Carr's Hill.

**Windows** in the earliest cottages are shown on old drawings as being of casement type with plank shutters but all those existing have double-hung vertical sliding sashes of varying sizes with 6 or 12 panes per sash. Occasional casement windows survive in dormers.

**Doors** are usually panelled and double with decorative fanlight; sometimes glazed.

**External shutters** are typically louvred (shown on D'Oyly's 1832 drawing Fig. 3) and match the opening in height; nearly always present on windows and sometimes on French doors. **Internal shutters** are typically panelled; if absent the window reveals were often panelled.



Fig. 11 Long Cottage, Durban Road

Verandahs of varying degrees of complexity were added from about 1840 (Fig. 14).



Fig. 12 Timber verandah

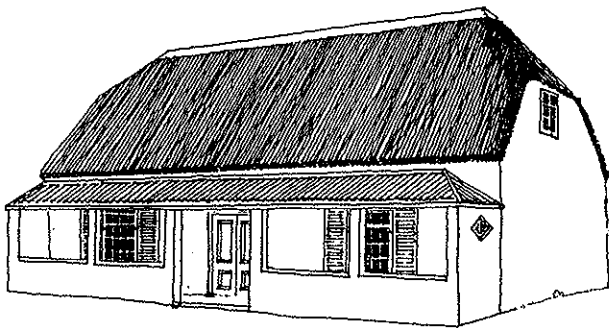


Fig. 13 Plastered brickwork verandah



Fig. 14 Drawing of Durban Road opposite D R Church c1840 showing verandahs. Houses on left destroyed by fire in 1925. (Mc Millan Collection, UCT)

Alterations were made to many of these cottages which were modified, extended and even rebuilt until c1890. Thatch was often replaced with corrugated iron and simultaneous change of roof shape from hipped forms to gables often occurred. Between 1890 and the First World War many of the older type of sash window were replaced with the "Victorian" type with 1 or 2 large panes per sash. The buildings altered at this time are now historical in their own right and attempts to return them to their presumed original appearance would be counter-productive from a conservation point of view.



Fig. 15 Osborne House. Victorian alterations to front

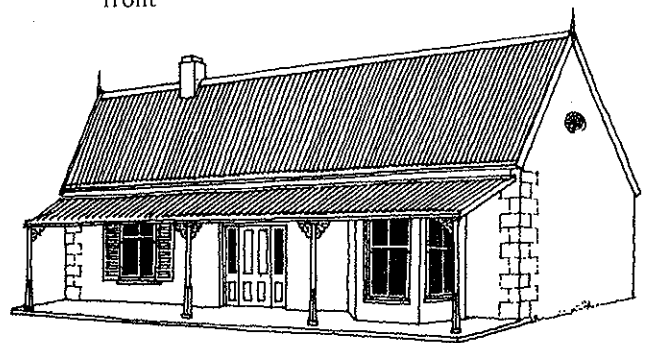


Fig. 16 Victorian alteration: change from thatch to iron was often accompanied by loss of half-hip to roof

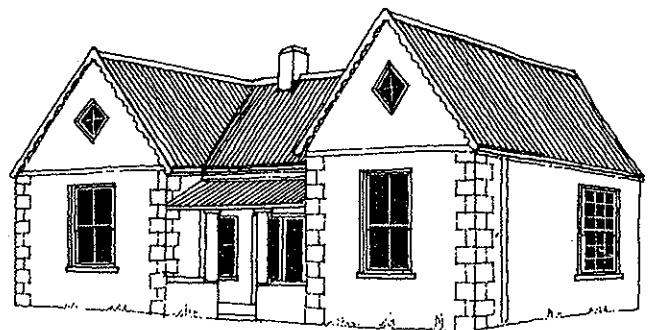


Fig. 17 Victorian alteration: addition of forward facing wings, older windows may often remain at back of building

## 4.2 DOUBLE STOREY VERNACULAR BUILDINGS (From c1850)

(Please note that all line drawings are diagrammatic and do not represent actual buildings).

**Double storey buildings** were simply developments of the earlier cottages and probably resulted from the greater space requirements of more public types of accommodation such as hotels and inns (Fig. 18).

**Windows and doors** were similar to those of the single storey buildings but the **roofs** were of the more permanent imported **Welsh slate** which had become available. **Roof pitches** for these buildings were therefore about 30° while the single storey thatch required 45°.

**Alterations** to these buildings usually involved the addition of **verandahs** often with French doors replacing windows. In the Victorian period the supports were of timber and later of cast iron (Fig. 20) but in the village all of these seem to have been removed from the double storey buildings. During the 20's they were sometimes replaced with the concrete beam and column type as at 'Hastings Place' (Fig. 21). Recently they have tended to be replaced by various compromises such as canopies and "Juliet" balconies (Fig. 34)

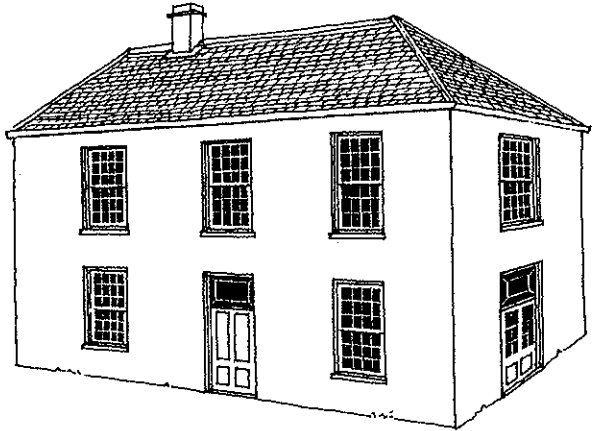


Fig. 18 Typical basic double storey building

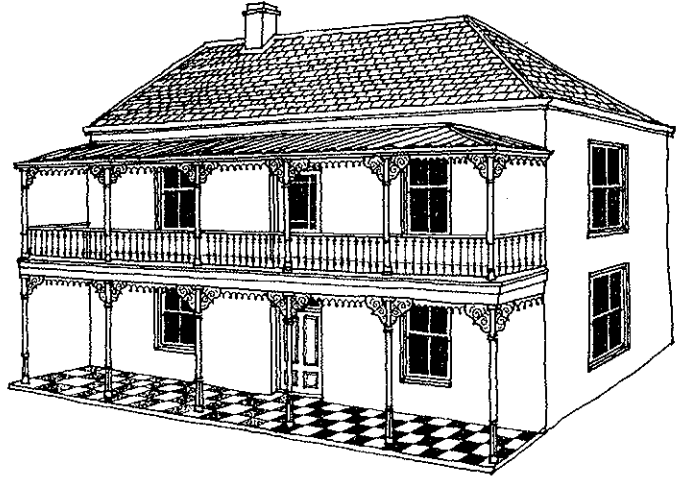


Fig. 20 Victorian cast iron verandah



Fig. 19 Prince Alfred House, Waterloo Road

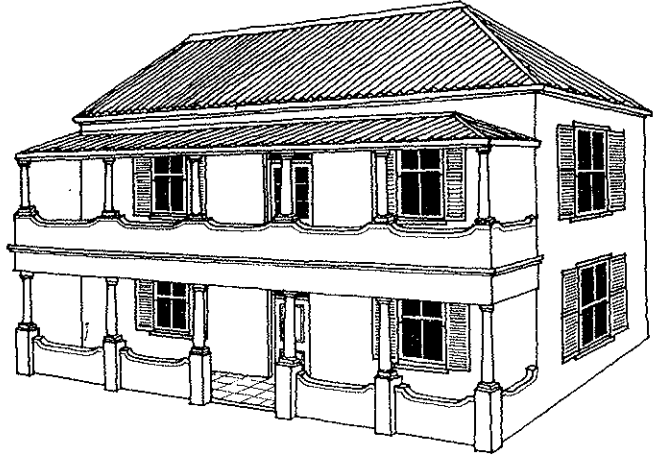


Fig. 21 20's / 30's concrete verandah