Thomas Chapman

Researcher, Department of Historical Studies, University of Johannesburg

Postal Address: 157 Fulham Road, Brixton,Johannesburg, 2092
South Africa

Email Address: tc@localstudio.co.za

Spatial Justice and the Western Areas of Johannesburg
Tom Chapman

Key theorists of spatial justice, such as Ed Soja, make explicit reference to South Africa as a country of 'unjust geography'. Johannesburg in many ways represents a quintessential example of the apartheid city planning model, some of which is present in the region historically referred to as the Western Areas of Johannesburg. While current urban development strategies are proving to be somewhat effective at creating a unified city at a macro level, local areas like Sophiatown and Westbury, which are part of the Western Areas, continue to fulfil apartheid intentions, even after the implementation of new urban design frameworks. This leads to a series of questions: What were the key moments in the city's urban growth relating to spatial in/justice and what catalysed them? And how do Sophiatown and Westbury speak to these moments? In this article I examine the development of these two areas, and map how the relationship between these two communities has changed over time through the imposition of apartheid plans. Ultimately, my focus is on the notion of shared space and, in part, on the question of what lessons can be learnt from the pre-Apartheid situation.

The historical Western Areas neighbourhoods underwent a number of restructuring efforts throughout the apartheid era. In this article I frame the more than 100-year history of the Western Areas into five key states of growth and change. Changes to the landscape are presented as urban design 'actions' and are analysed in terms of spatial justice theory, both regarding guiding policies (e.g. the Native Urban Areas Act No. 21 of 1923) and resultant urban forms (such as dividing buffer strips).[1]

The area's five distinct morphological stages and major changes to the landscape are presented as follows: the origins of Johannesburg, the 1904-1919 period characterised by the creation of a transport grid for the town, 1918-1948, the period of high apartheid from 1948-1985, and the dismantling of apartheid spatial policies in the post-1985 period. This final section will also include an account of the most recent spatial policy and development in the Western Areas, branded in 2012 as the 'Corridors of Freedom'.

Although Sophiatown is one of the most written and talked about places in South Africa's history, very little has been documented as to the area's urban functionality. It is doubtful that a plan was ever drawn of Sophiatown at its peak, but a basic understanding of the overall settlement can be gained from aerial photographs taken in 1937 and 1952. The research for this article thus began with overlaying the original site layout of Sophiatown over the aerial photograph of 1952. The aerial photograph was then taken to Meadowlands where a group of four friends and ex-Sophiatown residents used the maps to trigger their memories of Sophiatown's spatial layout. Their memories ranged from large scale mappings of transport routes to detailed sketch descriptions of important nodes in the suburb. These memories were extended by the recollections of current Sophiatown residents in order to reconstruct the suburb's functioning.

The theoretical spatial reconstruction of the region was then analysed through the lens of justice-based principles of urban design. The principles centre on theories of spatial justice, identifying one era as marked by the purposeful creation of an unjust geography and another by the more modern and prevalent 'Rights to the City' debate. The latter is an important leg of spatial justice theory, with David Harvey and Henri Lefebvre as two of its most important proponents. Harvey (2008, 2009) shows how inequality is a key component of postcolonial and aspiring industrialist capitalist cities like Johannesburg, while Lefebvre (1991) looks more at the social production of space.

Both of these theorists impact on the work of Ed Soja. In building a theory of spatial justice, Ed Soja showcases a number of instances of purposefully produced 'unjust geographies' in history. He argues that apartheid planning shares the stage with the *banlieues* or 'badlands' of Paris, political gerrymandering of voting districts in the

USA and the Israeli occupation of Palestine (Soja 2010, 31-37). In analysing apartheid, Soja refers to the production of 'beneficial geographies of the hegemonic few while creating spatial structures of disadvantage for the rest' and to 'the development of underdevelopment' (2010: 40).

As South Africa (and Johannesburg) enters into its 3rd decade of democracy, the majority of government-funded urban design work centres around 're-stitching the city' and in a sense attempting to bring spatial justice to formerly 'unjust' parts of the city. While much planning and policy work has taken place since the end of Apartheid in 1994, the actual implementation thereof is something far more recent and therefore has not been discussed at length in academic circles. In this paper, I will reflect on my own experiences as an urban designer working for the Johannesburg Development Agency on the 2013/14 urban design plan for Westbury, as a part of the City of Johannesburg's broader 'Corridors of Freedom' campaign.

Johannesburg's Layout

The cluster of farms that became known as the Witwatersrand (a rand is a ridge) all fed off the ridge's east-west spine which, before gold was discovered, clearly represented the most direct route by which to traverse the landscape while prospecting for gold. Shorten (1970: 16) explains that, in the first half of 1886, the gold reef was officially discovered at Langlaagte, one of these farms. The later areas of Westbury and Sophiatown were originally part of the farm Waterval, adjacent to Langlaagte's western border. The mining camp that developed into the Johannesburg Central Business District (CBD) was laid out just east of Langlaagte on a piece of state-owned land (Beavon 2001: 2).

There is fairly little reference made in the literature to the growth on the western side of the city before the early 1900s apart from unsuccessful mine prospecting operations (Shorten 1970: 56). Main Road emerged as the major connector between Waterval and the city, and its position on fairly high, level ground meant that it eventually became the major east-west route for Johannesburg's electric tram system (Beavon 2001:3). Parallel to this, about one kilometre south, ran the extension of the light railway system which was established in 1890 (Beavon 2001: 4).

Before the Anglo Boer war, farms west of the city remained undeveloped as residential areas, but were used as service areas for the city. Between 1893 and 1896, water for the Doornfontein mine, for example, was pumped from the farm Weltevreden, situated almost 20km west of the CBD (Shorten 1970: 167). In 1897 a portion of the farm Waterval, situated between Main Road and the railway, was used to establish the main sewerage plant for Johannesburg (Grant and Flinn 1992: 16). In the same year the remaining portions of Waterval were sold to a speculator, Hermann Tobiansky, who resolved to build a whites-only suburb there, not taking into consideration the negative effect the sewerage plant might have on his sales (Hart and Pirie 1984: 39) (see also Knevel this issue).

From its beginnings, Johannesburg can be viewed as a city shaped both by topography and policy. While initial maps of the city show organic growth, a map of Johannesburg from the early 1890s already shows the beginnings of racial segregation, although so-called locations for Africans were still well-located in terms of job opportunities and amenities. The spatial structure of the city up to the imposition of the Native Urban Areas Act of 1923 can be compared to other colonial cities internationally. In cities like Nairobi, for example, similar laws restricted 'natives' from purchasing land in white designated areas (Akuma et al. 2007: 88). Soja (2010: 40) also refers extensively to colonialism as a major originator of spatial injustice internationally.

1904 to 1919: The Transport Oriented Grid

Beavon (2001: 4) explains that some 44 new suburbs were established towards the east and west of the city after the South African War. This can be attributed to the British-colonial establishment of a city constitution, as well as new municipal boundaries which increased confidence amongst speculators. Sophiatown, established by Hermann Tobiansky, and adjacent Newclare, by George Goch, were two such suburbs. In 1905 Sophiatown was laid out in a regular grid of 15m x 30m stands, forming 1694 elongated blocks running in a north-south direction (Hart and Pirie 1984:38). Had Tobiansky known that the suburb so lovingly named after his spouse would end up housing the enormous black population that it did, he perhaps might have reconsidered the plot

sizes which were comparable to middle-class white suburbs of the time such as Melville and Westdene.[2]

Main Road was also the primary east-west route of the electric tram until 1948 which stopped at Sophiatown and terminated at Newlands, further to the south-west (Beavon 2014: 12). Sophiatown was divided from Main Road by an area called Martindale, a 200m wide strip running along the entire south-west border of the suburb and cutting further into the suburb at a point. Aerial photographs and the town plan suggest that Martindale was incorporated into the initial layout of Sophiatown, with all streets running south-west, intersecting Martindale and connecting with Main Road. Sites in Martindale also continued with precisely the same size and rhythm as in Sophiatown, a characteristic which was to change drastically following the demolition and rebuilding of the area after 1955 when Martindale became an industrial district.

MAP 1: Caption: Reconstructed Layout of the Western Areas 1905-1918. Credit: Thomas Chapman

Sophiatown grew slowly in its initial years as a whites-only township and by 1910 there were an estimated 88 white families living there (Hart and Pirie 1984: 39). The slow growth was due in part to its siting alongside the sewerage farm to the south and the Waterval Municipal Compound to the west, a refuse dump which has been retained to this day. After 1910 an act was passed by government which lifted restrictions on black landowners in Sophiatown and by 1913 there were 700 mostly black families living there (Hart and Pirie 1984: 39). Although the sewerage works had been removed to Klipspruit in 1907 (Grant and Flinn 1992), whites, however, remained reluctant to purchase in Sophiatown. Those living in neighbouring areas such as Westdene and Newlands opposed the presence of Africans in Sophiatown, and made efforts via city councillors to have the area re-instated as a whites-only suburb (Lodge 1981: 110).

In contemporary times, Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) is often discussed alongside spatial justice theory, in that it involves opening up employment, housing and recreation opportunities to a wide range of socio-economic groups. This is achieved through the strategic planning of land parcels adjacent to public transport nodes. Prior

to 1918, the suburbs of Sophiatown and Newclare can be viewed as early examples of TOD, beginning with the imposition of a street grid: the elongated blocks were oriented so that the short ends faced the tram route which permitted easy pedestrian accessibility to the tram route from most parts of the suburb. The grid also allowed the emergence of retail and other commercial land uses on the short ends of these blocks. This 'high street' condition was not limited to Main Road but was repeated on streets in the suburb that ran parallel to Main Road, such as Edward and Victoria Streets on which Putco bus routes were later located (Chapman 2008: 25). Today, much of this built structure remains unchanged in Newclare which, unlike Sophiatown, was not demolished during apartheid. What can be observed here is an identical structure to what had existed in Sophiatown up to 1955, with two rows of east-west 'high streets' running parallel to the railway line.

The second characteristic of transport-oriented development in the Western Areas relates to density: the major housing typology in both Sophiatown and Newclare allowed for extremely high densities. The 'stoep and yard' houses, attached row housing with frontage directly onto the street via a stoep, anda yard at the back, although single storey, allowed for multiple family occupation on a single stand, while retaining natural light and ventilation to dwellings.

Lodge (1982: 111) explains that once Johannesburg was proclaimed a white-s only area, after the Natives Urban Act of 1923, with the exception of the Western Areas, municipal authorities turned a blind eye to zoning and density restrictions in its suburbs. This allowed Sophiatown and adjacent suburbs to grow and morph organically. Using Soja's criteria around spatial justice, the status of these areas as a municipal blindspot allowed inhabitants to decide how to organize their own space. Despite this, Sophiatown remained at this stage a fairly well-planned and built settlement in comparison to its whites-only neighbours and only saw the emergence of overcrowding through shanty-type development in later years.

1918-1948
In 1918, after an outbreak of influenza in one of the inner-city African ghettoes, the City Council established its first municipal black township, Western Native Township (WNT),

on the former sewerage works and dumping site between Sophiatown and Newclare. WNT, together with Sophiatown and Newclare, became known as the 'Western Areas of Johannesburg' (Beinart 1975: 162). Western Native Township shared from its inception a close connection with Sophiatown. In the WNT which was built under the Native (Urban) Areas Act of 1923 (Shorten 1970: 390) one can see a township form that was later evidenced in Soweto, Johannesburg's distinctive 'second city' built specifically for African occupation (Carr 1990: 10). Physical characteristics included far smaller plot sizes than in neighbouring areas, as well as the regulation of communal and commercial activity to specific zones in the township, as opposed to allowing their emergence organically.

Map 2: Caption: Reconstructed Layout of the Western Areas 1914- 1948, credit: Thomas Chapman.

Between 1918 and 1948, the black population of the Western Areas increased tremendously. One of the primary reasons for this was the proclamation of Johannesburg as a white-only area in 1933 under the Native (Urban) Areas Act of 1923. Black South Africans living in white areas were restricted to company premises or municipal barracks. Black landlords in Sophiatown, however, were granted exemption from the Act, resulting in an influx of people into Sophiatown. This indelibly shaped the next two decades of the suburb, helping to create a distinctive character which Trevor Huddleston described as follows:

> By a historical accident it started life as a suburb, changed its colour at an early moment in its career, and then decided to go all out for variety. A £3000 building jostles a row of single rooms: an "American" barber's shop stands next door to an African herbalist's store with its dried roots and dust-laden animal hides hanging in the window. You can go into a store to buy a packet of cigarettes and be served by a Chinaman, an Indian, or a Pakistani. You can have your choice of doctors and clinics even, for they also are not municipally controlled. There are churches of every denomination and of almost every imaginable sect. (Huddleston quoted in Lodge, 1982:111).

Sophiatown's population in the late 1920s is estimated at around 27 000 people. As demand for labour increased in Johannesburg, it created an influx of black migrant

workers into the city, who were then housed as tenants in Sophiatown (Hart and Pirie 1984: 39).. Property owners quickly saw the immense economic opportunity in being one of the only areas close to the CBD that could house black people By the late 1930s, the population of Sophiatown was estimated at 42 000 people (Lodge 1982: 110), while WNT was home to over 12 000 (Beinart: 1975: 166). Some estimates place the population of the Western Areas by the late 1940s at 70 000 (Hart and Pirie 1984: 39).

To cope with the growing population of migrant workers, Sophiatown landlords built rows of backyard shacks on their properties and some existing tenants took on subtenants (Lodge 1982: 110). To compound this, the Second World War in 1939 brought about a restriction of imports as well as a shortage of building resources, which, while increasing manufacturing in the city, prevented the building of much-needed worker housing. Sophiatown landlords, defying municipal by-laws of the time, even further densified their properties and by 1943 the township's population was estimated at 42 000 people (Hart and Pirie 1984: 39).

This growth was accompanied by protest from Johannesburg's white population, who were resistant to black urbanisation on their doorstep, associating it with crime and degradation. However where these areas had previously been seen as serving the original purpose of housing black workers, they now came to be regarded as 'hotbeds of African resistance'(Lodge 1982: 116). with anti-apartheid groups meeting in the area on a regular basis By 1953 the population of Sophiatown was estimated as being as high as 70 000 people. The suburb was now seen by white residents in neighbouring suburbs and by the city government as a 'black enclave in an otherwise white region', as suburban growth in Johannesburg brought the neighbouring white suburbs to Sophiatown's doorstep (Hart and Pirie 1984: 39). A joint City Council/ Government committee was established in 1952 to manage the removal of this population, along with other 'Black Spots' in the Western Areas (Lodge 1982: 123).

While Sophiatown and Newclare remained fairly unmanaged by the city council in terms of town planning regulations during this period, officials kept a close watch on WNT. It is interesting to observe what this entailed. Beinart (1975: 166) maps, for example, how temporary porch enclosures of the small houses were prohibited in 1940

for being a health hazard. The city council made provisions for WNT in its planning at a community-scale. By 1940, for example, the township had sports fields, schools, crèches, a library and a hospital, all provided by the City Council (Beinart 1975: 166). This was unlike Sophiatown, where Tobiansky's original layout only really stipulated plot sizes and street layouts which meant that uses like corner shops and churches emerged where the community needed them most, but larger, secondary facilities like sports fields were not catered for. Similarly, there were no government healthcare and education facilities in Sophiatown,

Graphic 1: Caption: Western Native Township (now Westbury) Era Housing (Porch and Yard Style) Credit: Thomas Chapman

While WNT and Sophiatown existed as separate suburbs at this stage, the areas were closely connected. Sophiatown and Newclare consisted of a mixed population of Black, Coloured, Indian and Chinese residents, all either owning or renting accommodation in the suburbs, while WNT remained a township reserved for black people only (Hannerz 1994: 185). Until the late 1940s, the two areas co-existed, sharing certain amenities. This relationship is best described in a quote by a former resident, 'WNT was the place to go home to, Sophiatown was the place to have a ball' (cited in Beinart 1975: 163). Don Mattera remembered the difference as follows:

> What Sophiatown lacked in recreation halls and sportsfields Western Native Township had in abundance: an up to date library with lots of reading and study space and neat desks and chairs; a community hall and a well equipped youth centre. There were three football fields, two tennis courts, a cloakroom fitted with toilets and showers and a huge centrally situated public washroom with baths and showers. (Mattera 1987: 235)

Despite the clear need and potential for Sophiatown and WNT to exist symbiotically, physical connections between the two were strained. While Main Road was the municipal boundary between Sophiatown and WNT, it served as the public space that connected the two, with shops on the Sophiatown side catering to WNT residents. The tramline running down Main served both communities. Division was enforced, however, by means of a fence running along the southern (WNT) side of the

road. According to former resident Victor Mokhine,[3] the fence had three gates, which suitably connected up with the major roads that ran north-south through Sophiatown. By comparison, the connection between WNT and Newclare, which lay on the same side of the road, was almost seamless and took the form of another 'high street' called Steytler Street, half of which is still visible today. One aspect of Sophiatown, aiding pedestrian flow southwards, was the fact that all north-south roads in Sophiatown connected to Main Road, which divided Sophiatown from Newclare. Footnote 3. The importance of the road was illustrated in 1947 during the visit of the British royal family. Victor Mokhine, who was a child at the time, reflects on the importance of Main Road in remembering the occasion:

> …school teachers assembled every schoolchild in Sophiatown along Main Road to greet the King as he passed in an open-top vehicle en route to Newlands. The children filled the roads, pavements and roofs of buildings from 7 a.m., all displaying a blue ribbon on their clothing. The King only came past at 2 in the afternoon (Mokhine, 2008).

An unbiased view of the Western Areas in 1948 might concede that the area, particularly Sophiatown, was reaching breaking point in terms of population density. While the area had comfortably and humanely housed a multi-racial population for several decades, by this time new accommodation was no longer built with bricks and mortar but rather took the form of corrugated tin shacks, crowding the back yards of stands (Hart and Pirie 1984: 40). The overcrowding of the Western Areas was due to the City Council's failure to provide adequately located housing for the 'non-white' population. Despite this, the Western Areas in the late 1940s represented an example of how neighbouring areas of different social character can exhibit strong urban connections yet remain autonomous to a degree. Soja explains,

> Not all examples of residential segregation are entirely unjust. To some degree, residential segregation can be voluntary and beneficial, with people of similar background choosing to live together for many different purposes, from creating identity and community to eating preferred food and obtaining other forms of nourishment and cultural sustenance to helping new arrivals to find jobs and

housing. Segregation becomes a problem, however, when it is rigidly imposed from above as a form of subjugation and control (2010:55-6).

1948-1985

Plans to move black residents from the Western Areas date back to 1933, though in each case the city council failed to justify the large cost that would have been involved in rehousing the population. Coupled with this was fact that Sophiatown actually benefitted local industry in terms of the provision of cheap labour. It was not until 1948, when the National Party took power, that it was decided that places like the Western Areas no longer served a useful function in the city (Lodge, 1982: 116). In 1950, the Group Areas Act was passed, and it devolved money to the Johannesburg City Council for the removal of black South Africans from what were considered white areas to new townships. In 1955 the City Council began moving families from Sophiatown to the new township of Meadowlands, some 30km away.

MAP 3: Caption: Reconstructed Layout of the Western Areas 1948-1985, Credit Thomas Chapman

The removals themselves have been discussed at length elsewhere. The focus here is on the restructuring of the landscape that took place once Sophiatown had been completely razed to the ground. What is important to note is that while the entire settlement was demolished (apart from three standalone structures), the street grid was left predominantly the same. Martindale was recreated as a virtually impermeable strip of factories lining the southern edge of the suburb, and Sophiatown was replaced by Triomf, a brand new suburb of bungalow-style single-family houses (Beningfield, 2006: 245). Triomf was planned in much the same way as 'native' townships of the time, with all 1209 houses designed and built according to a Department of Housing masterplan as opposed to a site-and–service scheme. Where townships such as Western Native had only provided one housing type, however, Triomf offered over five basic typologies with multiple variations. The bulk of the suburb saw the implementation of a standard system which saw the positioning of a small single-storey three-bedroomed house in the centre of a site to create a back yard and a front yard. Each house was provided with a single garage either built in the back yard and accessed from a driveway running along

the edge of the property or built as an appendage onto the house. The houses were built using modest materials such as brickwork for walls, corrugated iron roofs and asphalt tiles internally. Beningfield (2006: 245) suggests that even though the houses were not built by their owners, they nevertheless reflected the economic restrictions of the so-called 'low-income Afrikaners' that were to live in them. Harry Dahms, a former Triomf resident and council worker explains that the more recent houses built by the government were built cheaply, 'At the time they started, it was a standard brick house…the next contract used asbestos wallswith bricks on the outside- they just pulled apart'.

Graphic 2: A Triomf-Era House (credit Thomas Chapman)

While forced removals are almost universally associated with the implementation of apartheid policies after 1948, the demolition of Sophiatown and rebuilding as Triomf also coincided with an international shift in housing trends after the Second World War, from higher density urban settlements to low density suburbs. Levittown in New York, also developed in 1948, became the international symbol for post-war suburbs and represented the haven strategy of building homes as 'retreats for male workers and as workplaces for their wives' (Hayden 2002: 24). In many ways, Triomf can be viewed as Johannesburg's very own Levittown, as it represented a new beginning for Afrikaans whites (and others) previously disadvantaged by the English-speaking South African state. This population were given housing and reserved jobs in the railway, postal service and the police under the National Party rule.

The development of low density suburbs like Triomf and Levittown was also clearly made possible by the increase of private vehicle ownership, as apparent in South Africa as it was internationally. Initial drawings of the layout of Triomf suggest that the majority of planning was focused on private vehicles. According to Beavon (2001: 10), between 1933 and 1954 the number of registered motor vehicles in Johannesburg increased from 27 500 to 110 000. 1948 also saw the elimination of trams in Johannesburg, partly replaced by buses. The removal of the tram lines created an extra two lanes for vehicular traffic, allowing Main Road quickly to become the six lane vehicular road that we see today (Beavon 2001: 10).

The establishment of the industrial strip of Martindale can be directly attributed to the planning guidelines set out by the Group Areas Act of 1950, which stipulated that areas of differing race be divided by a buffer strip of at least 30m (Christopher 1994: 106). The establishment of this buffer strip meant that not all of the roads running in the north-south direction could be connected through to Main Road and the majority were stopped short and connected to form culs-de-sac, which came 'to symbolise all the problems of suburbia – separated from the larger world, dependant on the automobile' (Southworth 2004: 229).

Looking at the resultant urban form of the southern boundary of Triomf, one cannot help but observe that segregationist strategies put in place might have had a somewhat transverse effect on the very population they were meant to benefit. As Soja explains,

> Whether imposed from above or generated by spatial decision making from below, segregation or the confinement of specific populations to specific areas seems clearly to be connected to the production of spatial injustice … the issue is complicated (however) by the interplay of endogenous and exogenous influences and by the complex relations between geographies of choice and geographies of privilege. (2010: 55)

Apart from the fact that the altered grid layout hardly represented a 'geography of choice' for Triomf residents, houses on the southern boundary of the suburb were positioned back-to-back with five-storey factories. Mervin Naidoo, a current resident of Link Str. South- one of the streets that backs on to the factories on Main Road explains that this layout has brought problems to him and his neighbours such as rodent infestations and exposure to noxious gases. This layout has made life unpleasant for some residents of the suburb today, who claim that the close proximity to the factories has caused rodent problems and led to the presence of noxious gases.[4]

1985– 1994

In 1985, the South African Government declared a 'state of emergency', giving more power to the police, the military and the president in light of increasing popular resistance (Beavon 1992: 231). In the same year, the Johannesburg City Council

announced plans of an urban renewal project which would involve the complete redevelopment of WNT, Footnote 5, into the new township of Westbury (Lupton 1992: 68). One might assume that the project was timely arranged by the National Party government in an attempt to earn coloured support in the face of a rapidly democratising South Africa.

Monica Albonico, an urban designer who was working for the NGO Planact at the time, explains that the community of WNT rallied together to oppose this plan (to be implemented by the construction company LTA Grinaker) and hired Planact to develop an alternative plan.[5] When the City Council caught wind of this, it sued Planact. While the WNT community paid for Planact's legal fees, the courtcase was eventually won by the City Council and LTA Grinaker was able to proceed.

Lupton (1992: 69) explains how the design proposed for Westbury looked to reduce stand sizes by removing the backyards previously factored into the WNT stand layouts. The design consolidated pedestrian and vehicular space and implemented organic street layouts to economise on road infrastructure expenditure. A new curvilinear road layout completely deviated from the original grid pattern and the defined mental map of residents of WNT (Lupton 1992: 69). According to WNT and Westbury resident, Bobby Jansen,[6] gangs in the township had specific territories, counted out as blocks in the original layout. The reconfiguration of the blocks forced a re-establishment of gang territories, causing an outbreak of gang violence in the township.

Map 4: Caption: Layout of the Western Areas 1985-2013 (Credit: Thomas Chapman)

This new low-rise residential development was only to form one portion of the new plan for Westbury, however. The plan also included Corbusier-type clusters of three and four storey walk-ups set in large grassy blocks at the centre of the township. According to Westbury resident Charles Sass, construction on these apartment blocks began as early as 1987 and were built to house residents of WNT while their houses were being rebuilt in the new plan.[7]

The plan of Westbury has remained much the same since the 1980s and reads like a collage of disjointed urban experiments. The plan lacks the basic logic and

legibility of its predecessor which exhibited a simple, regular grid clustered on either side of a long strip of communal and governmental land uses. What was left relatively unchanged in the new plan was the location of the community sports fields at the northern edge of the township. Although laid out some 50 years earlier, during apartheid these sports fields fulfilled the requirement of the Group Areas Act for buffer zones to divide areas allocated to different races. The new plan of Westbury looked to extend this idea across the entire northern edge of the township by placing the new high school and primary school on either side of the communal sports fields. The resultant effect is one whereby the industrial buffer strip on the northern edge of Main Road is mirrored by the open space buffer on the southern edge. In some cases, the resultant distance between actual zones of residential use is almost 200m.

The buffer zone between Westbury and its surroundings is not limited to the township's northern boundary and can be traced on the remaining boundaries as follows: on the southern edge, the raised railway track serves to divide the township from Bosmont and Soweto beyond; in the east, a bowling green separates the township from the suburb of Coronationville; and in the west a wetland and industrial strip mark the divide of the township from the suburb of Newlands. In the last two decades, the western buffer strip has been developed in the Waterval housing project, completed in the early 1990s, and the unfinished Kathrada Park RDP housing development begun in the early 2000s.

For the most part, the current landscape of Westbury would fit comfortably into what Trancik (1986: 4) terms 'lost space', that is, 'undesirable urban areas … antispaces, making no positive contribution to the surroundings or users … they are ill-defined, without measurable boundaries and fail to connect elements in a coherent way.' A large percentage of the current ground surface of Westbury could be categorised in this way as there is little distinction between vehicular roads, pedestrian paths, recreational spaces and dumping grounds. Bentley et al. (1985) describe the quality of permeability as 'the number of alternative ways to go through an environment' and one which is 'central to making responsive places'. A basic pedestrian movement map of Westbury illustrates how impermeability is carried through the township almost as a theme, with the majority of logical movement paths stopped short by conscious

planning mechanisms. Judy Bennet describes the walk between her house in Sophiatown and the school in Westbury where she works as convoluted: 'there is no direct route across Main Road and a simple journey takes me twice as long because of the street layout'.[8] Soja (2010: 47) describes distributional inequality as 'the most basic and obvious expression of spatial injustice … ranging from such vital public services as education, mass transit, police and crime prevention, to more privatized provisioning of adequate food, housing, and employment'. A discussion of spatial justice in Westbury could follow a number of threads: clearly the township has been designed according to apartheid guidelines which served to benefit the white population of the city. A survey conducted amongst residents illustrates, however, that life in Westbury after apartheid has worsened. Of the respondents interviewed, 72% claimed that service delivery in the township had completely disappeared after 1994. Charles Sass is one such resident, and describes that in the 1980s, the township had regular health inspections to make sure that overcrowding was not taking place. Williams describes Westbury of the time as a social housing development where residents paid subsidized rent to the council. Williams continues that After 1994, all rent collection systems were abolished and with that the provision of basic services like electricity and refuse collection. These days, Williams explains, ' the majority of electrical connections in Westbury are illegal and most residents dump their garbage on the edge of the township. Shawn Constant, another Westbury resident feels that the lack of basic services like garbage collection has contributed to other social problems in the township like drug abuse.

[Insert photo: Charles Sass here: Caption: Charles Sass at work in Westbury. Credit: Thomas Chapman.

Insert photo: Shawn Constant describing Westbury to visitors, Credit: Thomas Chapman]

The first decade and a half after 1994 witnessed a fundamental shift in city planning in Johannesburg (as across the country), with planning decisions incorporated through local development frameworks, and theoretically geared towards the concerns of the municipal wards they target. As part of this, in 2008, the COJ employed two of the most socially-conscious urban design firms in Johannesburg to provide a significant

urban design framework for the historical western areas, including a major restructuring of Westbury, but little of this has been realised. In their planning, the design firms proposed a superficial Haussmanian plan of boulevards and perimeter blocks with little regard for existing communal nodes and pedestrian networks. The process invited community participation only at the end of a design process, rather than at the beginning, begging the question of how seriously community opinions were really going to be taken. The fault for this process may have lied not with the designers themselves, but with their commissioning agent. In fact, more recent COJ urban development tenders have allocated a significant percentage of the tender budget to exercises calling for community members to imagine how they want their community to develop, moving away from professionals dictating the manner in which development was to happen. Edgar Pieterse, one of the facilitators of the recent JDA- led 'South African City Futures Project' still feels that South Africa still has a long way to go as far as community participation is concerned, and explains that in Brazil, 25% of development budgets go to community consultation compared to a far lesser percentage here at home.

While maladministration has played its role since 1994 in preventing the development of spatial justice in the city, municipal boundaries have also played a part. The Integrated Development Plan that was published in 2011 suggests municipal spending on infrastructure on a ward-by-ward basis. This was also the basis for the 2008 framework for the Western Areas, in which Sophiatown fell outside of the 'priority wards' addressed in the project. According to census data, Wards 82 and 69 exhibit lower household incomes than Ward 86, which includes Sophiatown but also wealthier suburbs like Westdene. This can be equated to the practice of spatial injustice suggested by Ed Soja, known as political gerrymandering, where politicians manipulate ward boundaries to gain higher representative percentages. In this instance, most of Soweto was designated as priority wards, focussing infra-structural development on these areas.

2014 Corridors of Freedom.

In 2013, the COJ, in partnership with the Johannesburg Development Agency (JDA) displayed a distinctive change in tactic with regards to post-apartheid spatial

restructuring, from high-level planning towards a more implementation-based approach. Public environment upgrades and social infrastructure projects are being fast-tracked from planning to construction in under a year. This means that residents in affected areas will more than likely be introduced to a project in their area via bulldozers and construction teams than via architects and plans on paper.

This has largely been due to an improved national and municipal fiscal policy. The 'Corridors of Freedom', (with subtext 'Re-stitching our city to create a new future'), is generally considered to be a rebranded follow-through of existing planning documents such as the Strategic Development Framework (SDF) and Integrated Development Plan (IDP) for Johannesburg, with a few key differences. The most significant update to these plans, which were begun pre-2008, was the decision by the city to invest in a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system called Rea Vaya. The Corridors of Freedom emerged as the development strategy for land adjacent to these BRT links, following routes from Soweto into the centre of Johannesburg, and from there into Alexandra to the north-east of the city.

Westbury is located at an important street intersection on the Empire-Perth 'Corridor of Freedom', and was earmarked by the JDA for redevelopment in 2014. Apart from its strategic location, the reason behind this was that Westbury, which has remained a mostly-coloured township since 1994, is still by far the poorest residential area in the region and continues to be plagued by crime and social problems.

In late 2013 the COJ put out a tender for a new urban design framework for Westbury. The brief from the Johannesburg Development Agency (JDA) emphasised connecting important walking and cycling routes in Westbury to public transit nodes on the periphery. While it called for engineers, architects and quantity surveyors to participate in the project it made very little reference to community participation and limited interventions to within the boundary of Westbury Local Studio, the architectural team that successfully bid for the project proposed two distinct departures from the brief: the first was anemphasis on a well-structured community participation process and the second was the need to re-establish historical links between Westbury and Sophiatown. The rationale for the latter related largely to theories of spatial justice: as

this article discusses, both areas have different and unique resources, and there are close connections between residents of Westbury and Sophiatown Until now, Ontdekkers Road and its busy traffic has made it difficult for people physically to connect between the two suburbs. While community input in the design process was not formally allowed for, Local Studio employed a resident and community leader from Westbury, Shawn Constant, who assisted largely in the design process. Constant feels that his involvement in this process has been useful in providing an insider's view to what can often be perceived as a complex and inaccessible community. Oral history and civic enagement work in Sophiatown and Westbury, some of referenced in this special issue, also fed into how the project team was able to assess and respond to community needs.

Construction of the project began in mid-2014 and Kingsway Civils, the construction team appointed to the project, established a site camp on an open field adjacent to the Union Stadium on Downling Street. Their work would begin with the excavation of large tracts of pavement and the replacement of damaged storm water pipes. This was to be the first layer in a comprehensive public space upgrade that included wider pavements and cycle paths. At this point, the JDA had not yet appointed a professional community participation consultant. Traditionally, this team would be responsible for the appointment of a Community Liaison Officer (CLO)- a member of the community appointed to communicate all aspects of the project to the broader community as well as assist in the appointment of local casual labour and construction SMME's.

In the first week, a group of Westbury residents, led by Shaeem Ismail, a former NP councillor and Westbury resident held a protest outside the Kingsway Civils site camp. The group burnt tires and picketed, demanding that the JDA inform the community about the project and threatening further protests should local labour not be appointed on the construction site immediately.

Insert photo here: Residents of Westbury protesting outside Kingsway Construction's site camp on Dowling Str., 17 July 2014: Credit Emil Williams.

In emergency-mode, the JDA hurriedly appointed community participation consultants, who held an election for a CLO with criteria restricting candidates to residents living in Westbury. Manny Sandows, a local resident and community leader was appointed to the position. As CLO, Sandows has had to mediate several heated community meetings regarding the project and recently had to have five stitches in his eyebrow after being hit with a chair by an angry Westbury resident.

Although the large-scale aspects of the design for Westbury i.e. priority routes and nodes were decided upon, now that a community participation consultant was permanently on the team, we saw opportunity for community input on detailed aspects of the design. We developed a toolkit whereby residents good give input as to trees, benches, paving and bollards adjacent to their properties. The rationale behind this process has been to engender a sense of ownership of the plan, and sustainability of the project.

The late appointment of a community participation consultant to the project has meant that residents have not been consulted on certain large-scale aspects of the project such as where stormwater pipe upgrades should occur and where roads and pavements need to be resurfaced. In many ways, this may have been a successful step in the project, as the implementation of this infrastructure, which is inarguably necessary for the safety of the community has not been delayed by lengthy community processes. Residents, however, have been allowed input on the more detailed aspects of the project, such as the introduction of new tree and plant species to the area and whether or not they would like a bench outside their houses.

While construction of the first phase of a new plan for Westbury is only 30% complete, evidence of its effectiveness is already emerging. School children and elderly residents can be seen using the new wider sidewalks, protected from vehicular traffic with higher kerbstones than were previously there. Westbury residents can identify with these types of interventions as accidents involving pedestrians and motorcars happen often. A recent accident saw the death of a 5 year old girl on Dowling Street when she was hit by a speeding car.

Once complete the project will be an important case study in evaluating the effectiveness of improved pedestrian connectivity in engendering spatial justice in areas like Westbury. By the same token, areas like Sophiatown, which house a higher-income demographic but which still have run-down infrastructure and public space will not see redevelopment for some time, perpetuating the current culture of difference. This might be seen as a missed opportunity by city and JDA to use public space as a tool to undo barriers and encourage communication between areas formerly separated by Group Areas Act planning.

The notion of spatial justice can be seen to take quite a different turn in South African cities before and after apartheid. Clearly the effects of racial segregation are still felt in cities like Johannesburg, but the core policies driving this segregation are no longer in place. Instead we now see South African cities joining the ranks of others in the capitalist world, where polarized conditions of wealth are created simply through the regular functioning of the economy. Harvey (2008: 23) explains that we live in a world in which the rights of private property and profit trump all other notions of rights, including human rights and, more specifically, the right to the city. In Johannesburg, though, rights to the city are fragmented and the city might better be seen to fit Engels' description of the industrialist capitalist city with radial wedges of wealth and poverty designed to maintain advantage for some and disadvantage for others (cited in Soja 2010: 48).Bremner (2004:24) describes the post-1994 Johannesburg as a city that 'has replaced race-based seclusions with new boundaries, identities and enclosures'. Murray (2008: 16) takes this point further, describing modern Johannesburg as a city that is increasingly unwelcoming to the jobless poor, who are forced to live in areas with 'deteriorating infrastructure, inadequate services and limited opportunities for income generation'.

Clearly, many of the current conditions of inequality and spatial injustice evident in Westbury/ Sophiatown are shared internationally, and can be found wherever situations of urbanization under capitalism exist (Harvey 2008: 24). Johannesburg, as South Africa's economic hub will possibly be a hotbed of gentrification should effective measures to protect the poor not be implemented.

Conclusion

How did spatial injustice originate in Johannesburg? What were the key moments in the city's urban growth and what catalysed them? While these questions may seem obvious to even the most casual observer of South African political history, an important aspect of the decline of its cities into spatial injustice uncovered through this study is that it was very gradual. There is a misconception, particularly amongst spatial thinkers of a younger generation this country, that the population woke up one morning in 1948 and every buffer zone and 'slegs blankes' sign was in place. Contrary to this view, spatial apartheid only really gained significant momentum sometime after the National Party won its first election in 1948; in addition, settlements like the Western Areas may have begun to exhibit aspects of racial separation while they still retained a significant level of spatial justice (equal access to transport, education, housing etc.). Critically, it may take as long to deconstruct spatial apartheid as it took to develop it.

There is no singular design approach that will ensure a blanket spatial justice in a city. For example, some approaches may catalyse broader spatial justice, but at the immediate scale achieve the exact opposite. Community participation is a significant contributor to spatial justice, but as the implementation of the recent urban design framework in Westbury has shown, is often lengthy, and can stall the rollout of basic infrastructure to communities.

Note on Contributor

Tom Chapman is a practising architect in Johannesburg, South Africa.

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[1] key text in understanding the development of the Johannesburg is Keith Beavon's *Johannesburg: The Making and Shaping of the City* (2004). Beavon provides a good illustrative base from which to map and understand later developments in the city. Together with A.J. Christopher's *The Atlas of Apartheid* (1994), Beavon's work helps to unravel the policies apartheid imposed on the city at a range of scales, from single plot configurations to national scale planning. In addition, a number of authors have written more specifically about the Western Areas in its various stages of existence. Looking at the area from its inception at the turn of the century, Tom Lodge (1981) and D.M. Hart and Gordon Pirie (1984) give a basic understanding of the urban functioning of Sophiatown. Extensive ethnographic research conducted by Julian Beinart (1975) maps the development of Western Native Township (WNT). Looking at the demolition of WNT and the development of Westbury, Malcolm Lupton (1992) gives a detailed account of the controversial 1985 plan for the area.

[2] Newclare, established in 1908, can be seen as a small extension of Sophiatown, south of the municipal sewerage works. Like Sophiatown, it was situated directly on a public transit route, although in this case on Johannesburg's light rail system which, previously terminated at Langlaagte, now extended further westwards (Beavon 2004: 4). The rocky Waterval ridge formed the northern boundary of Sophiatown and Main Road, the southern.

[3] Interview with Victor Mokhine, 12 August 2008.

[4] Bakels Site Engineer, interview with author, 20 August 2012, Martindale.

[5] Monica Albonico, interview with author, 25 September 2012.

[6] Bobby Jansen, interview with author, 2012.

[7] Charles Sass, interview with author, 2012.

[8] Judi Bennett, interview with author, 2007.