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MAMELODI HERITAGE ROUTE

PRETORIA'S LARGEST BLACK COMMUNITY

Mamelodi (the name is associated with whistling) is a dynamic black community set against the majestic backdrop of the Magaliesberg (locally known as *Thabo tsa Mogale*). The urban landscape stretches for 12 km between this mountain in the north, and Tsamaya Road and the railway line in the south. Tsamaya (*go away*) Road was the old trade route to Sekhukhuneland and cuts diagonally across Mamelodi while the railway is a reminder of President Paul Kruger's struggle to gain independence from Britain through access to the Maputo harbour 110 years ago.

The township was established on the farm Vlakfontein 329JR in 1945 (proclaimed in 1953). The aim was to accommodate the black people congregating around Pretoria looking for work shortly after World War II. The township took its name from the farm (elderly people still call it *Vlak*), but it was changed to Mamelodi in 1962 through the personal intervention of Dr Hendrik Verwoerd, the then Prime Minister. The oldest part of Mamelodi runs from the western entrance along Tsamaya Road and the Moretele River to Bavianskloof. The western section along the cemetery and south of the mountain, and the whole of Mamelodi East were developed during the 1960s. In 1968 all building activities in black townships were halted in line with the grand apartheid doctrine. New areas such as Mamelodi Gardens were only added during the late 1980s.

Black people removed from newly proclaimed white areas under the infamous Group Areas Act of 1950 were provided with economic mass housing at Vlakfontein. However, established social bonds were disturbed when the government forced Shangaan, Venda, Nguni and Sotho speakers to live in separate residential areas in Vlakfontein.

Originally perceived as temporary labourers, the people of Mamelodi have played an important part in local and national political, economic, cultural and educational life for 50 years. After the country's first democratic election in 1994, numerous members of local, provincial and national political structures and relevant government departments have hailed from Mamelodi.

TIME LINE

Up to 200 000 years ago	Early, Middle and Late Stone Age communities occasionally inhabited the Pretoria region and manufactured stone tools and weapons from quartzite rocks of the Magaliesberg.
AD 1200	Earliest evidence of settlement by black communities in Pretoria. They grew crops, kept domesticated animals, made pottery items and smelted iron to make tools and weapons.
1825-1826	The Matebele tribe conquered the Bakwena tribe and, led by Mzilikazi, settled along the Magaliesberg.
1861	15 January: Original Vlakfontein farm registered in the name of C. Jansen.
1945	30 October: The Pretoria City Council bought land for a black settlement on the farm Vlakfontein.
1947	An effort to provide houses based on the rondavel type failed when residents rejected the scheme.
1949	Vlakfontein Industrial School opened. Its name changed to Vlakfontein Technical School in 1952. Principal: Mr H Kux. Students were trained to build houses in Vlakfontein a few years later.
1953	Government Notice No. 182 of 1953 proclaimed Vlakfontein as a black township under the Group Areas Act. Norman T Cooper did the layout of the township. Standardised houses (4-roomed types called NE51/6 and NE51/9) were built through a government mass artisan training programme. First families from Lady Selborne settled in Vlakfontein in August. Other residents came from black areas that were declared white areas, such as Bantule, Eastwood and Riverside.
1955	Electricity brought to Mamelodi.
1956	Mamelodi High School founded. 26, 27 October: Women's march led by Mrs Tswai against a ban on fowl-runs in the township and the demolition of 390 fowl-runs.

	by the municipality. Riot in Section T and stoning of beer hall. December: Maternity Home established by the <i>NG Kerke V'roue Sendingbond</i> .
1957	March: Mamelodi Post Office opened. Tsamaya Road tarred. Bus boycott by Mamelodi residents.
1958	Mamelodi West Clinic built. Bridge connecting Mamelodi West and Mamelodi East.
1962	July: Vlakfontein renamed Mamelodi.
1964	Thebu Cinema (run by Mr HM Pitje) opened. First cinema in a black township in South Africa.
1965	First houses built in Mamelodi East.
1966	June: Women's strike against ban on home brewing. Beer hall burnt-down.
1976	Countrywide turmoil at schools also hit Mamelodi. Mamelodi West Library burnt down in 1977.
1980	Mamelodi Day Hospital commenced services, officially opened by Dr HA Grové in October 1983.
1985	21 November: March of residents against high rent. The police kill 13 people in the <i>Mamelodi Massacre</i> . People's parks are created and named by comrades after banned heroes of the Struggle, such as Walter Sisulu. SOS Children's Village opened.
1986	March: Mamelodi Civic Association established. December: Fabian Ribeiro, the <i>people's doctor</i> , and his wife Florence, were assassinated by the special forces. Mamelodi East Library rebuilt and new post office opened.
1987	Development of new areas such as Ikageng, Khutsong, Buffer Zone and Mamelodi Gardens. 29 April: Moretele Park opened.
1990	9 July: Rent boycott rally at HM Pitje Stadium was violently ended by police - more than 200 people were injured.

HERITAGE SITES

1. **ENTRY:** Welcome to your Mamelodi Heritage Tour, starting at the Information Office at Solomon Mahlangu Freedom Square where an amphitheatre for cultural events was opened in 1999.
 - ② A sculpture commemorating Solomon Mahlangu, an Umkhonto we Sizwe memorial, was unveiled by Chris Hani in 1991 - the first Freedom Monument in the country.
 - ③ From here you will see rows of hostels (built ca 1965) provided for single men working in the Waltloo Industrial Area to the south.
2. **SHEBEEN:** At Club Galaxy in Magnolia Street, 6923 Section U, you may experience Oscar's hospitality in the ambience of real township culture. Come back for an evening full of excitement! (Tel: 082 724 8997.)
3. **HEROES:** During the 1980s Dr Nico Smith demonstrated his commitment to non-racialism by living in this house in Shabangu Road, based on the design principles of the American Buckminster Fuller. Dr Fabian and Florence Ribeiro served the community since the 1950s and were assassinated in their house in December 1986 for their role in the Struggle. Note that the street was renamed after the couple.
4. **OLD TOWN CENTRE:** Mxolisi Crèche in Shabangu Street, built 1957, is the oldest crèche; the name means *forgive us*, recalling the quest between parents for placement of their children. The Mamelodi Clinic, Police Station, Post Office, Old Magistrate's Court, Old Beer Hall and first shops

were all built in Section T around 1954-1958. The original library was burnt down in 1977 and rebuilt ten years later.

People are still exchanging the latest social news under the *Skinnerboom* (gossip tree), in Tsweu Street, in front of the Community Hall.

During the Struggle the Mamelodi Civic Association mobilised the community from its office in Balebogeng Centre, next to the Old Lulu Bar and Thebu Cinema, also in Tsweu Street. The cinema, built in 1964, was the first cinema in a black community in South Africa. The owner, HM Pitje, obtained special permission for its erection from Dr HF Verwoerd.

5. HOME TURF: The HM Pitje Stadium is named after Heseekiah Mothibe Pitje (1914-1997), the first Mayor of Mamelodi and ardent fighter for human rights. The stadium gave rise to the founding of Mamelodi Sundowns Soccer Club, ca 1979.
6. MEMORIALS: The two major parties of the Struggle both have their monuments in the cemetery: The Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) Memorial (1992) commemorates 53 fallen cadres, while the African National Congress (ANC) Monument honours Solomon Kalushi Mahlangu, a famous cadre slain in 1979.
7. HERO OF THE STRUGGLE: At this house (Jwaga Street, 2445 Section H) Solomon Kalushi Mahlangu, the leader of local cadres, planned resistance against the apartheid regime.
8. NATURAL ASSETS: Few black communities have such magnificent scenery as that found at the Magaliesberg. Moretele Park is today for blacks what Baviaanskloof was a century ago for whites: the place for a picnic. The Park is famous for the annual SA Music Heroes Concerts. Stories about a huge snake (the *Mmamogashwa*) that lives in the Moretele River still frighten children of the township.
9. EDUCATIONAL CORE: Black teachers such as Archbishop Desmond Tutu were trained at the *Kollege ya Bana ba Afrika* that was established in the Old Rondavels in 1950. The college, which moved to Pietersburg in 1959, was the forerunner of the University of the North. Old Mamelodi was built by 1 100 artisans and workers trained at the Mamelodi Industrial School (established 1948 and headed by Mr H Cux). Later called the Technical School, it housed the Swiss Watchmaker School (established 1969), one of only two in Africa. The Old Vista Campus served as an intellectual centre during the Struggle. Established in 1956, the Mamelodi High School in Tsomo Street is regarded as the prestige school of the township.
10. INSTITUTIONAL LANDMARKS: The new mosque of 1998 illustrates the growing diversity of religions among black people. SOS Children's Village, also in Sibande Street, was started in 1985 for orphans of the township. The hall of the YMCA Centre (built 1982) served as a community venue for many years. At Makhulo Hopaan's shop in Tsamaya Road generations of local residents have fetched their daily groceries since the 1930s. Plans for a greener Mamelodi are heralded by a new park, Nelson Mandela Park (*Madiba Park*), established in 1996. Beyond the park are the Teachers' Training Centre and the Day Hospital (opened 1980).
11. INFORMAL HOUSING. Housing shortages reached critical proportions during the late 1980s when thousands of shacks sprang up in Mandela Village and Stanza Bopape Village. The erection of new houses towards the east still continues. Visit the Stanza Bopape Memorial, in Shilovhane Street, commemorating another hero of the Struggle, who died on 12 June 1988 at the hands of the security forces.
12. LAST STOP: The sweeping complex of the Vista Mamelodi Campus (built 1980), where black academics are trained, is a prominent landmark in Mamelodi East. Proceed with Hans Strijdom Drive past the DRP Housing Scheme to the N4 freeway, which will take you back to Pretoria.

GĒREFORMEERDE SKOOL DIRK POSTMA ORGANOGRAM

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