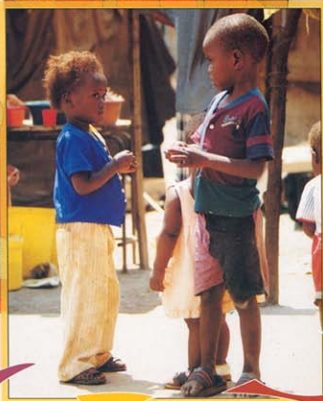
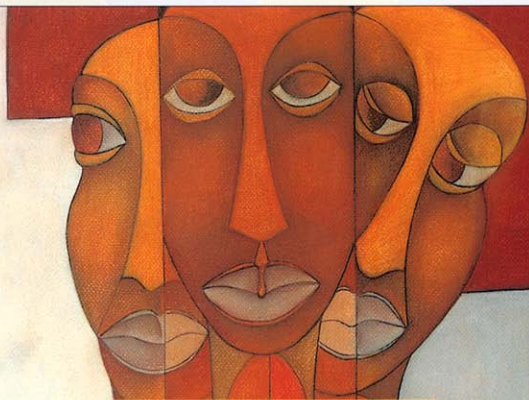


PRETORIA

# ATTERIDGEVILLE SOUL CITY



16 November 1999

Below: Welcome to Atteridgeville.




**N**estling in the hills west of central Pretoria lies Atteridgeville, the city's erstwhile 'model township' that projected itself into one of South Africa's foremost cultural centres. Building on the vibrant heritage brought along from Marabastad, residents of Atteridgeville developed their own cultural identity in what came to be known as Jazz City.

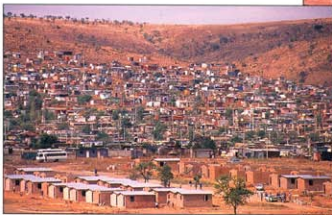
Like other townships of Pretoria, Atteridgeville is a product of a period of crisis in our history. It was a time when various pieces of legislation increasingly restricted the rights of blacks and when housing conditions for blacks became particularly adverse. Families were uprooted when the Slums Act of 1934 allowed the City Council to clean up Marabastad, Bantule and numerous informal settlements all around the city. The residents had to be removed *en masse* to new townships. In addition, the Natives Trust and Land Act of 1936 caused blacks to be evicted from rural land, putting even more pressure on urban housing for blacks. Furthermore, when ISCOR began production in 1934, it needed labourers and residential space for these labourers nearby. No wonder, that shortly thereafter, in 1936, plans for a township west of central Pretoria were finalised.



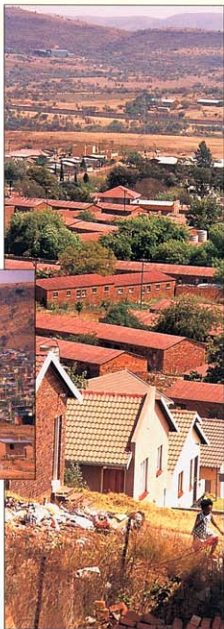
Left: Sculptural forms of the Saulsville Arena.



**A**tteridgeville was laid out in 1939, shortly before the outbreak of the Second World War, and on 26 May 1940 the first residents moved into houses built by the City Council of Pretoria. From the start the idea was to create a 'model town', albeit on early apartheid lines, 12 kilometres away from central Pretoria and shielded by an industrial buffer zone.



*Top:* Competing for space: formal and informal structures.  
*Right:* The Saulsville hostels.



The original name proposed for the township, 'Motse Mogolo' ('Large Town'), was replaced by 'Atteridgeville', honouring Mrs W.H. Atteridge, chairlady of the Non-European and Asiatic Affairs of the City Council during the 1930s and staunch fighter for better living conditions for blacks.

Although Atteridgeville was provided with water, electricity and sewerage in the 1940s, the town was laid out with a view to temporary residence rather than the development of a balanced permanent community, and with a view to easy policing. In addition, the township's powerful radial plan failed to make a statement. This was due to the monotony of the standardised economic public housing and absence of large buildings. However, in time the ingenuity of residents would convert a bleak urban landscape into a landscape with a strong visual identity that would attract many visitors.

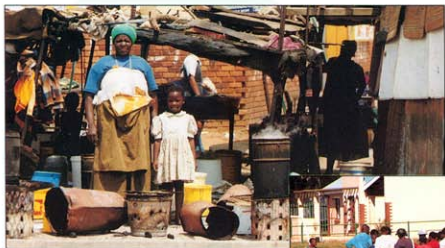


The various housing experiments in Atteridgeville over the past 60 years created a lively streetscape, especially with the numerous house improvements of the past ten years. In addition, the dolomitic hills and Bankenveld vegetation surrounding the township provided it with a unique landscape in comparison to Pretoria's other townships. Moreover, the 'koppies' inside Atteridgeville offered views across the township and acted as orientation points.

Saulsville, forming the western part of the township, was established as a whites-only area in 1931. However, it was deproclaimed and incorporated into Atteridgeville in the 1950s to accommodate residents from so-called 'black spots' such as Mooiplaas and Lady Selborne who were evicted under the Group Areas Act of 1950. From the 1960s to the early 1990s no additional land was made available to Atteridgeville. This increased the housing backlog to about 30 000 units. No wonder that shack villages sprang up around Atteridgeville, especially in the west.

*Below:* Dramatic expression in brick: The Methodist Church of the same year.  
*Bottom:* "A city on a hill..." The United Reformed Church of 1946.





**D**uring apartheid times townships were regarded as temporary labour reservoirs and little was spent on providing facilities there: a polyclinic was built in Atteridgeville only in 1951, a post office in 1952 and the railway connection in 1958. Despite the inadequate facilities, the people created a strong sense of community, with numerous interest groups and self-help schemes. Sport and culture created new bonds and alleviated the poverty suffered by many residents. However, its isolation from Pretoria in terms of economic activity, its lack of access to employment opportunities and its inadequate community facilities call for creative action from its residents and the local authority.

In this regard, Atteridgeville can capitalise upon its almost tangible vibrancy, fostered against all odds and after decades of disadvantage and neglect. This vibrancy should also be nurtured in order for the community to reinforce its identity as a historic place where people can live, work and recreate. Indeed, this is the kind of community that can lead the African Renaissance at local level.



*Top Left:* Making a living at Saulsville Station.

*Top Right:* Sport plays a key part in the lives of the residents.

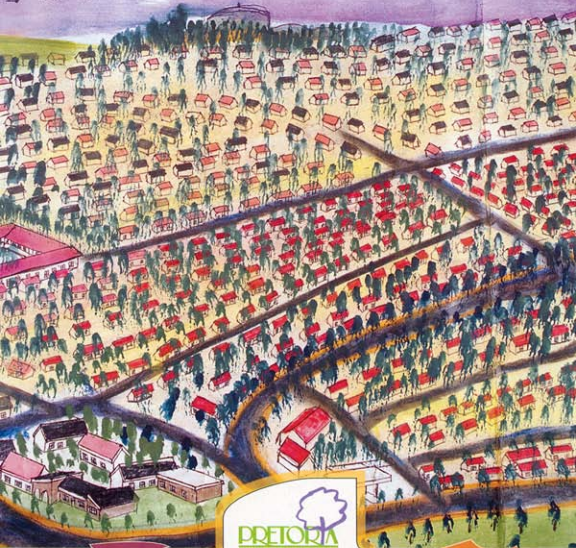
*Above:* Jazz made Atteridgeville famous: A picture of the 1960's.

# A COMMUNITY THAT CAN LEAD THE AFRICAN RENAISSANCE

*Front Cover: Faces of Life. (Detail). By Solly Malope, an Atteridgeville artist, 1989.*  
(Collection: South African Reserve Bank)

*Below: Atteridgeville Panorama. (Detail). By Titus Matiyane, also an Atteridgeville artist, 1999.*

# ATTERIDGEVILLE



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