ADDENDUM 1

IN BETWEEN 09

HISTORY OF HILLBROW AND BEREA

The history, rise and fall of Hillbrow and Berea can be divided into four distinct phase

PHASE 1: Late 1800-WW II

What began as a pioneer town, dusty, and with minimal services and makeshift shops and hotels, in the late 1800's spurred by the growing demand for middle-high income housing. Residential suburbs sprang up on the outskirts of the town, offering greener and more peaceful living environments to the town's elite.

1887   Joubert Park established; residential suburbs began to form around it.

1890   Berea laid out.

1894   Because of the overwhelming success of Berea, the land adjacent to Berea was bought from Transvaal Mortgage and Loan Company for development. Hillbrow residential estate was proclaimed in 1894 and marketed as "the wealthiest and most fashionable part of Johannesburg" (Clay 1982:18) The suburb was initially zoned as residential only, and developed as detached houses with gardens. For twenty years Hillbrow remained a "clean air suburb where the children had room to play" (Ibid: 20)

1920   Technological developments in the building industry allowed, for the first time, the erections of multi-storey buildings. Hillbrow, located between the inner-city and the booming northern suburbs, proved to be the ideal location for the development of flats. The five to six storey blocks of flats provided reasonably priced one-room or modest flats. Hillbrow's proximity to Johannesburg station made it the ideal point of entry to the city. By the 1940s Hillbrow was already a place of transit; a stepping-stone to better housing elsewhere in the city. Prior to the Second World War the majority of accommodation in Hillbrow remained detached houses.

1946   Johannesburg City Council passes a revised town-planning scheme for Hillbrow, which removed building height restrictions, paving the way for high-rise development. (Morris 1999: 6)

PHASE 2: POST WWII – MID 1970s

1950-1960

In the 1950s and early 1960s, a surge of development took place in Hillbrow and surrounding suburbs, driven by both the economic boom and political stability which resulted from the strict enforcement of apartheid and the repression of opposition.

Residents were "…predominantly young, upwardly mobile people who are either single or living alone or with friends and relatives, and young married couples, few with kids" (Ibid.)

A number of immigrants (from England, Germany, France, Italy, Holland, and a large Jewish community) used Hillbrow as a transitory home before moving elsewhere in the city. (Morris 1999: 6)

1970   Morris (Ibid: 7) remarks that most blacks were housed in rooftop flats, or "locations in the sky"

In accordance to the 1923 Urban (Native Affairs) Act domestic workers could only reside on the employers' property if the employer provided accommodation. In the 1930s and 1940s an increase in the urban African population created a demand for housing. Roof top flats provided easy access to work opportunities, entertainment, shopping and transport, but the NP began to regulate the number of Africans living on rooftops in 1048. In 1955 a law was passed which restricted the number of Africans living on rooftops to five per building. 1956 saw the removal of these residents from rooftops and by 1962 an estimated 8000-10000 people had been removed. (Morris 1999:7)

By the early 1970s most detached houses in the area had been replaced with high-rise blocks of flats, but by 1973 the supply of fats in Hillbrow exceeded the demand.

PHASE 3: Mid 1970s to mid 1980s

1976   The exodus of foreigners due to the uprisings leaves a high vacancy rate. This is heightened by a drop in suburban house prices.

The high vacancy rate in Hillbrow set the stage for the multi-racialisation of the area

The exodus of whites from the area coincided with a shortage in housing for people classified as 'coloured', 'Indian', and 'black' under the apartheid laws. Landlords were able to exploit this situation by charging high rentals to 'illegal' tenants. These 'illegal' tenants were able to avoid the provisions of the Group Areas Act through the ruse of white people signing lease agreements, while the actual tenants were 'Indian' or 'Coloured'.

The process of deracialisation was spurred by the changes to rent control regulations in 1978, and the introduction of sectional title. Many residents could not afford to buy their homes, or pay rapidly increasing rent, were forced out of the area, while landlords were able to charge higher rents to 'illegal tenants'.

1979   Morris (1999:9) relates that these tenants were vulnerable to police raids and lived in constant fear of discovery and evictions. 'Illegal' tenants organised themselves into Actstop, a legal body which provided representation to tenants charged with contravening the Groups Areas Act.

1982   The ruling of a landmark court case, declares that tenants could not be evicted without the provision of suitable alternative accommodation. This hastened the segregation of Hillbrow since the Apartheid government lacked the fiscal capacity to provide alternative housing. They also faced political dilemma, as it would be difficult to conduct mass evictions in a neighbourhood prominent in the media, while trying to woo 'Indian' and 'Coloured' representation into the tri-cameral parliament (Morris 1999:9). Hillbrow came to represent government's unwillingness or inability to enforce strict racial segregation.

PHASE 4: mid 1980s to present

Demographic change

Until the mid 1980s there were relatively few Africans in Hillbrow, as they faced potential prosecution under influx control laws, which required they carry a pass. Violence in Johannesburg's African townships, an acute housing shortage, and scrapping of pass laws in 1986, resulted in a dramatic shift in the neighbourhood's population.

1985   Approximately 10% of Hillbrow's residents are African.

1993   The figure has risen to 62%

1996   over 80% of the Hillbrow's population is African.

According to inspector Naidoo (personal communication: 2005), public relations officer of the Hillbrow Police Service, Hillbrow remains to this day a doorway to the city and is still perceived as an transitional space, the only factor which changed is that it is currently the doorway to South Africa for illegal immigrants from Africa and not Europe.

The 84% of the areas population live in rented flats, others live in hotels or rooftops (initially built as domestic quarters), and a few live in the remaining detached houses, or on the streets. The population is relatively young, the majority of the 30 000 residents are aged between 18 and 39 years.

Approximately two thirds of the population are male.

Due to the prominence of illegal immigrants in the area it is difficult to estimate number of foreigners.

IsiZulu is the most common language (39%), followed by English (15%), but a wide variety of other South African and African languages are spoken by Hillbrow residents (Stats SA: 1996)

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IN BETWEEN

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FIGURES
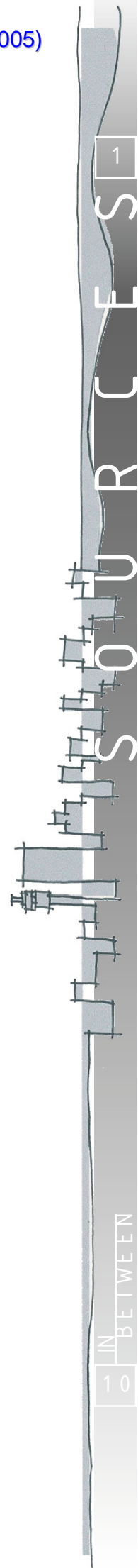
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