MEMORY, HERITAGE AND THE SPACES BETWEEN: A District Six Museum biography

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Declaration

I, Bonita Bennett, hereby declare that the work on which this thesis is based is my original work (except where acknowledgements indicate otherwise) and that neither the whole work nor any part of it has been, is being, or is to be submitted for another degree in this or any other university.

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Date: 12 March 2021

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to the memory of my late parents William and Helen Bennett (nee Jansen, later Andrews), who without using the words 'heritage' as far as I can recall, made sure that we grew up with a strong awareness of what life was and could be like in District Six. Also, to the extended family of biological and non-biological aunts, especially aunties Joanie, Mavis, Rose, Fiona and Julie, whose homes in District Six were our weekend and holiday places of refreshment after had we moved to Bonteheuwel,

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Acronyms

D6BRT	District Six Beneficiary and Redevelopment Trust
D6M	District Six Museum
D6MF	District Six Museum Foundation
DRDLR	Department of Rural Development and Land Reform
GAA	Group Areas Act
GNU	Government of National Unity
HIA	Heritage Impact Assessment
HODS	Hands Off District Six
ICOM	International Council of Museums
LMLM	Lwandle Migrant Labour Museum
NHRA	National Heritage Resources Act
PMH	Peninsula Maternity Hospital
PPPC	Prestwich Place Project Committee
PRA	Population Registration Act
RLCC	Regional Land Claims Commission
RLM	Red Location Museum
RLRA	Restitution of Land Rights Act
SAHRA	South African Heritage Resources Agency
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission

Keywords

memory

heritage

restitution

museum

inclusivity

human rights

District Six

District Six Museum

return

apartheid

colonialism

reconciliation

community

consultation

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Time is the metre, memory the only plot

Derek Walcott

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ABSTRACT

This study affirms the value inherent in memory work, demonstrating that it can create empowering pathways through which to activate personal, community and by extension, national healing- the latter being a constant underlying theme of South Africa's journey to deepen its rights-based democracy. It uses the example of District Six Museum (D6M) in Cape Town, South Africa, as a significant example of how a community[1] has been empowered through the activation and valuing of its memory.

The main thrust of my study focuses on the blockages experienced in navigating the regulatory procedures related to the declaration of District Six as a National Heritage Site (NHS). I present an underlying critique of the ways in which government departments generally conduct public engagements, referring specifically to the limited role that it has permitted community members to play in the shaping and protection of its own heritage in the context of District Six. This study raises questions about what recourse citizens have when they find that the implementation of the laws intended to bring redress and restitution, have the opposite effect. D6M's origin in the context of a struggle for land is an important part of its identity and for this reason I have referred to the land claims process in the context of mobilising memory.

District Six was an inner-city neighbourhood in Cape Town which was razed to the ground as part of legally sanctioned forced removals under apartheid. The Museum's formation was prompted by the twin issues of land rights and memory of the land. The focus of its work in the new South Africa has been to support community members as they lodged claims for their loss of their right to land, to reclaim their connection to the land through memory, and to be acknowledged as major partners in the future development of District Six which includes memorialisation. Over time, D6M has ostensibly become the 'face of the District Six story' (Coombes, 2003: 118), and the trajectories of the community and the institution continue to be inextricably intertwined.

In the new South Africa inaugurated in 1994, citizens are able to access land and heritage rights through the provisions of the *Restitution of Land Rights Act No. 22 of 1994,*[2] (RLRA) and the *National Heritage Resources Act No. 25 of 1999*[3] (NHRA). The latter act makes allowance for sites deemed to be of national significance, to be declared NHS's. The application to have District Six graded as a site of national significance ahead of its declaration was approved by the Council of the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) in 2004, affirming its national relevance. It is during this application period that D6M's memory work came to engage more directly with the discourse of formal and authorised heritage.

[1] I address different understandings of 'community' during the course of this study.
[2] Government Gazette, 25 November 1994. No.16106
[3] Government Gazette, 28 April 1999. No.19974

My approach has been interdisciplinary. I have drawn largely on theories and practices of memory work, museology, historiography, literature, discourse analysis, pedagogy and human rights.

My argument for memory is not intended to be pitted against the discourse of heritage, but I do make the case for a richer conversation between these different modes. I also argue for deeper engagements with people as knowledge-bearers and makers – including those who are not formally trained disciplinary experts, but who are experts on their own lives and on the things that make or break communities. I make an argument for building national identity incrementally from the base, not as a predetermined narrative schematised from the top down.

The colonial origins of the 'museum' construct cannot be ignored. It carries with it the burdened connotation of being object-focused spaces that present fixed narratives curated by experts. I demonstrate that despite the colonial residue associated with museums, critical engagement with its contemporary purpose can enable work within its frame in a decolonised way. The sector is under particular pressure during the ravages of the COVID-19 pandemic, and has to demonstrate relevance, at a time when resources from the public and private sectors need to be redirected towards saving lives and livelihoods.

When I started this study, the pandemic was nowhere on the horizon. Having become a factor which affects every facet of life from here onwards, it has forced its way into my thesis. I have had to give it due consideration in terms of what the future might hold and how this study might contribute towards that future.

FOREWORD

Turning and turning in the widening gyre

The falcon cannot hear the falconer;

Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;

Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world.

WB Yeats: *The Second Coming*

These words of foreboding have frequently been summoned to mind during 2020: the year when the COVID-19 pandemic[4] held us all in its hostile and unrelenting grip. Despite several warning signs that the world's ecosystem was under duress as a result of human over-consumption of non-renewable resources, the poisoning of the biosphere by unbridled pollution and a range of other unsustainable behaviours, extent and timing of this virus could not have been predicted.

At the time of concluding this study, the world as we knew it even as recently as one year ago, has changed dramatically. We have been at the mercy of the virulent COVID-19 pandemic, which has been able to traverse land, air and sea, stealthily creeping up on us. By the time its spread was detected, we were already in its hostile grip, and all the rules of engagement with the world and with each other had to be adapted. For the first time on a global scale, we have felt the impact of living in the age of the anthropocene.[5]

Long before the start of the pandemic, social commentators had been critiquing our growing dependence on virtual reality accessed through electronic devices. This behaviour was believed to be a major contributing factor to the growing alienation experienced by many in our progressively fragmenting social world. An increasing number of people seemed to have become less adept at engaging with other people face-to-face, and showed signs of possessing diminished social skills and emotional intelligence. The technical skills developed to engage efficiently with social media, online gaming and the general domain of the virtual world had been gradually replacing the 'soft' skills

[4] On 31 December 2019, the World Health Organisation (WHO) China country office reported a cluster of pneumonia cases in Wuhan, Hubei Province of China. On 7 January 2020, the causative pathogen was identified as a novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2). By 11 March 2020, 114 countries had reported nearly 120,000 cases and WHO declared COVID-19 the first pandemic caused by a coronavirus. Source: *Guidelines for case-finding, diagnosis, management and public health response (August 2020)* prepared by the National Institute for Communicable Diseases, available at https://www.nicd.ac.za/ [Accessed: 28 October 2020].

[5] This refers to the geological epoch which dates back to the start of significant human impact on the earth's geology and ecosystems. In an article – 'COVID-19: The disease of the anthropocene' – Cristina O'Callaghan-Gordo and Joseph M. Anto 'suggest that COVID-19 is a paradigmatic example of an Anthropocene disease. It follows a complex sequence involving disruption of the natural, social, economic and governance systems'. Available at https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/ [accessed 30 October 2020]. Even as I reference this generally used term I am aware that it is not the only one being utilised. The term 'capitalocene' for example is also a term in circulation, drawing attention to the large-scale destructive impact of capitalism on the world's resources, emphasising that we do not all carry equal responsibility, neither for the creation of the virus nor for mitigating its impact.

needed to engage with other humans in the real world of relationships, in-person conversations and debates. The pre-COVID call was for the value of actual human physical contact to be reasserted as the healthiest and most beneficial way of engaging in the world. Professor David Elli, course director in the department of Communication Studies at York University in Toronto, Canada, describes how he had announced to his fourth year students that he would be confiscating all phones for the duration of the classes that he taught. He explains that he did so because, despite the assumption that there was a perfect match between a course on telecom and internet technologies, and the 'hyperconnected digital natives'[6] attending his classes, he found that the 'sad truth is that they suffer from a serious behavioural addiction that makes it pretty much impossible for them to pay attention to their instructors or classmates.'[7]

An ironic and disconcerting consequence of the pandemic is that the very physical contact that had been hailed as a way to strengthen human development, has become one of the deadliest weapons of the virus. The way to save ourselves in the face of COVID's deadly threat is to minimise contact with each other, increase virtual engagements, and create barriers by wearing face masks, communicating through screens and by observing social distancing when being in the presence of others.[8] We have had to take a step in the opposite direction and change the earlier narrative by extolling the virtues of minimising personal contact and of increasing virtual communications.

On 21 September 2020, South Africa's lockdown[9] was eased to alert level 1, where a reasonable amount of movement and personal interaction was permitted subject to specified hygiene protocols being observed. However, just as it seemed as if infection levels and the death rate were dropping, a variant of the virus[10] was identified in South Africa and this was found to be more contagious than the original strain. As of 28 December 2020, the country moved to an adjusted level 3 with some limited movement being permitted. The future of the world still feels uncertain with many lives and livelihoods having been lost.

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[6] The term **digital native** describes a person who has grown up in the digital age, (rather than having acquired familiarity with digital systems as an adult, as a **digital immigrant**). The terms are often used to describe the digital gap in terms of the ability of technological use among people born from 1980 onward and those born before. Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digital_native/ (Accessed: 28 October 2020)

[7] https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2018/07/03/the-negatives-of-digital-life/

[8] The wearing of masks to cover the mouth and nose were mandatory even in the less stringent level 1. Masks were deemed to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 by stopping the spread of respiratory droplets when people talk, sneeze or cough. In public places, people were required to keep a distance of 1.5 metres between each other. Source: COVID-19 / Novel Coronavirus. Available at https://www.gov.za/Coronavirus/ (Accessed: 28 October 2020)

[9] Level 5 was the most extreme level with a complete shutdown of all contact operations except for essential services. A strict curfew was applied as from 26 March 2020. Level 1 is the most relaxed level with most services returning back to normal subject to the observation of industry- and sector-specific restrictions. Available at www.coronavirus.co.za [accessed 28 October 2020]

[10] '... South African genomic scientists recently identified a variant of the SARS-COV-2 virus, currently termed 501.V2 variant, which appears to be more contagious than the virus that drove the first wave of infections.' **SA moves to level 3 of lockdown.** Available at https://www.sanews.gov.za [accessed 15 January 2021]

How is one to build community under these circumstances? Why should people care about museums when they are struggling to house, clothe and feed their families while keeping them healthy? Why should anyone be concerned that the District Six Museum (D6M) might have to close its doors because it was cut off from its income which, as an independent entity with no guaranteed funding, is derived from revenue earned from entrance fees, product sales and venue hire?

In a webinar organised by the International Council of Museums (ICOM) in which I recently participated, one of my fellow panellists posed the question: 'Can people live without museums?' The answer of course is, 'yes, they can'. This is an accurate reality check but not at all encouraging for those who are struggling at this difficult time to keep museums viable, realising that they need the help of people to do so – many of whom have lost their own sources of income and are struggling to make ends meet.

I was compelled to pay careful attention to D6M's ability to weather this particular storm which has been like no other in its lifetime, aware of the sad reality that its life and that of many other cultural institutions across the world were under threat. Its survival or otherwise would impact both on the timbre and tense of this study: would I end up writing an account of its past, or could it still be a testimony of its contribution to a hopeful future of which it could continue to be a part?

It is with a strong awareness of people's fragile economic realities that D6M guardedly launched its fundraising appeal[11], calling on the public to help save it from closing its doors as a consequence of COVID restrictions. The response has been nothing short of phenomenal. Despite their own financial challenges, members of the public pulled together and made donations. They called upon their friends and families to do likewise; they asked questions of local and national government departments about their lack of support, and the print, radio and television media, of their own accord, amplified the campaign. Donations came from both international and South African sources together with messages of encouragement. In addition, a wonderful initiative by a collective of socially-engaged youth[12], put together, at their own cost, an online music festival. They assembled a line-up of popular artists all performing for free so that the proceeds from ticket sales could go towards sustaining D6M. An additional benefit of their contribution is that they have increased D6M's reach into a youthful audience in ways that would not have been otherwise possible. A number of other people have come forward with income-generation suggestions of their own which include a stand-up comedy show by

[11] The fundraising appeal was called 'Send a Love Letter to the District Six Museum'. The use of the word 'love letter' harks back to the time when District Sixers received eviction notices when the area was declared 'whites only', and they ironically called it a 'love letter'.

[12] *Vannie Kaap* (translated as 'From the Cape') is a brand that was started by a mysterious founder who is described as a self-taught graphic designer from the Cape Flats. The brand's co-owner is Marc Jacobs, and after doing an interview with him (City Press, 4 May 2019), Rhodé Marshall writes:"There's a movement brewing in Cape Town and its mission is to take ownership and spread the political and social importance of a language and culture that many have tried to undermine and disrespect. ... 'Vannie Kaap' ... exists to celebrate Cape coloured culture and educate everyone about it."

three well-known local comedians[13], streamed from D6M to an international ticket-buying online audience, and an online auction of donated artworks being amongst the initiatives.

I mention this financial support given to D6M as a way to demonstrate the value with which it is regarded in terms of its contribution to the story of South Africa, and to memory work globally. Over the years, D6M has invested time and energy into building networks of people and relationships that extend beyond the confines of the community of District Six former and current residents. I believe that the support it received is a testimony to its relational strength. It is also a demonstration that community philanthropy is an undervalued resource. Arguably, this has been a crisis response, but at the same time it has been a valuable litmus test of D6M's perceived value. In contemplating life after the pandemic, it will be able to do so with the awareness of being buoyed by a supportive public.

One of D6M's early funders, the CS Mott Foundation, combined with the Aga Khan Foundation in the USA to investigate the value and possibilities of community philanthropy. In their report circulated in February 2012[14] they describe the state of the field: "There appears to be a new force in philanthropy driven by ordinary people working from the bottom up of our societies, rather than by wealthy people working from the top down" (Knight, 2012: 2). They note that, if promoted successfully, it has the potential to lead to "more lasting, entrenched outcomes by increasing local ownership and local accountability" (Knight, 2012: 1).

Although not called 'community philanthropy', raising funds for causes they believe in is not an unfamiliar practice in working class communities across the Cape and elsewhere. Schools, sports clubs, cultural organisations, churches and mosques have all benefitted at different times from community philanthropy, where their work and integrity is supported and promoted by the community. In some communities there is a practice known as *woeker*[15] which is a term used to describe the act of increasing income through a range of activities such as cash donations, raffles, cake sales and market days. It is an Afrikaans word but it is used in English speech as well, as an exhortation to members to keep going until a target is reached. In Xhosa-speaking communities, groups - particularly women's church groups - generate substantial funds by convening people to what is known as *imijikelo.* A target is set and people come prepared with cash to make their contributions. One way of conducting *imjikelo* is by singing and dancing towards the collection container provided and dropping cash into it. After the first round during which everyone has had a chance to throw something into the box, a few people will do a count and announce how far from the

[13] The show was called 'Night at the District Six Museum' featuring Marc Lottering, Riaad Moosa and Nik Rabinowitz.
[14] 'The Value of Community Philanthropy: Results of a Consultation' by Barry Knight.
[15] Translated loosely into English, *woeker* means to 'grow' or 'multiply rapidly'.

target they are. The ritual is repeated until the target is reached at which point there is much celebration.[16]

If not for the pandemic, my foreword to this thesis would have been substantially different. I would have started with an overview of how I came to this study and why it is important to me. I would have declared my own subjectivity as a child of District Six parents, having spent many happy childhood years there. In addition, I have been employed at D6M for the past 18 years in different capacities. I have been a researcher in its sound archive, the head of its Collections, Research and Documentation Department and for the past 12 years I was its director (until January 2020). I found strong synergies within the organisation in terms of its commitment to a pedagogical philosophy which has shaped my own approach to teaching, inspired by the work of Paulo Freire[17]. That, together with the concept of being a 'learning organisation'[18] was a powerful combination. Education combined with my commitment to building a culture of human rights in the non-profit sector while mobilizing memory, meant that I had found a professional home.

I have been inspired by how personal, shared and collective memory have been a part of people's healing journeys and their desires to return to District Six. The hope of restitution was palpable, though disappointingly complicated from the start. Dreams were dashed as the reality of return became more remote: a seemingly impenetrable bureaucracy, cynicism, incompetence and the understandable 'teething pains' associated with implementing new legislation, littered the way to restitution. As inspired as I have been, I have also been down-heartened by seeing the loss of hope, and the downward spiralling of the restitution dream of so many who feel that they were made to believe that 'memory matters', only to discover that in the practical application of government processes, it didn't. The application to have District Six declared a NHS was intended to save the memory of displacement from being obliterated, with 'memory' and 'return' working in synchronicity, but it has not yet come to be.

While contemplating these issues, it occurred to me to ask questions about what it would mean for our country's nation-building process if government was able to engage with the country's citizens differently? If it were to inspire its citizens to rally behind and practically support that work of nation-building, in the ways that people throw their energy and resources behind projects that they believe

[16] Information obtained from an interview with Nwabisa Moshenyane, 28 October 2020.
[17] Paulo Freire (1921- 1997) was a Brazilian educator involved with a popular education movement to eliminate large-scale illiteracy in Brazil. The words 'conscientization', 'dialogue', praxis (action/reflection) and debunking the 'banking concept of knowledge' are concepts that have been closely associated with his work. Source: https://www.freire.org/paulo-freire/ (accessed: 30 October 2020).
[18] The concept of the 'learning organisation' forms the basis of 'The Fifth Discipline' written by American systems scientist, Peter Senge. A 'learning organisation' is one in which people constantly strive to expand their capacity to create the results they desire, develop a shared vision and work towards transforming the organisation itself in the process so that it can 'learn' to problem-solve in future scenarios if and as needed. Source: https://www.convergencetraining.com/ (accessed: 28 October 2020).

in? What if government were to develop a programme drawing on the wisdom from the hopeful period of 1994[19], and the hindsight gained from the many things that have gone awry? Radical intervention and imagination is needed to rebuild belief in personal and national futures.

Government entities leading public engagements, could benefit from thinking of themselves as 'learning organisations' or entities. There should be an openness to discarding elements that are found to be disempowering , and to discovering new ways of engagement. Working with different points of view can be enriching and need not be antagonistic. Charlotte Mouffe (1992) argues strongly for promoting agonism as a positive trait, as opposed to antagonism which can be destructive and disempowering. I will flesh out some processes within the District Six experience that demonstrate engagements that have left people feeling silenced and frustrated especially with regard to the declaration of District Six as a NHS, and the land restitution processes. What possibilities are there for people to engage with state actors as knowledgeable equals and what other channels can be created for people to challenge government processes other than expensive and drawn-out litigations? The latter often reduces the possibilities of enriching future collaborations and saps confidence, goodwill and financial resources.

I am by no means suggesting that the challenges and possibilities faced by a small community museum such as D6M are equivalent to what is faced by a national government, but there are transferable ethical principles which are applicable. There are lessons which can be gleaned from it and other non-governmental structures about engaging with the past in grounded ways. There are also tried and trusted ways of structuring interactions which are premised on an acknowledgement that people are entitled to respectful engagements and do not arrive to processes as empty vessels to be filled with expert knowledge in the 'banking concept'[20] of education as described by Freire. That people come with their own expertise and experiences is often not valued.

Memory work has been at the heart of D6M's mission. Evoking the power of their own memories, has inspired community members to take action to protect the vacant site in ways which honour its past and which look towards its future. They have explored the dynamic relationship possible between memorialisation and the housing development which forms part of the restitution process. As the community makes sense of the way in which it will become a new and different District Six defined within the rights-based new South African context, its path has now been further complicated by the aftermath of the pandemic. Together with other communities, they have felt vulnerable and open to

[19] This is the year which marks the birth of the 'new' South Africa. I provide more information in Chapter 2 of this thesis.

[20] In the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* Paulo Freire refers to the 'banking concept' of education which is a method of teaching that sees students as recipients of knowledge which is provided by teachers who see themselves as the bearers of that knowledge. Active engagement is discouraged and the role of students is to absorb and store the knowledge. I have applied this model of engagement to public processes which are frequently designed as opportunities for experts (such as urban planners or heritage authorities) to educate members of the public about the regulatory frameworks and regulations.

abuse during this time.[21] Many continue to feel unsupported by government processes and the structures which have been put in place to sustain their claims both to memory and to land.

The participatory and inclusive memorial practice which has been central to D6M's work and which has been a core strength will have to be reconfigured in the post-pandemic world. Simultaneous to resolving its long-term financial challenges, it will have to find ways to reconnect with its core constituency who are elderly and most vulnerable to infection and who are least able to access virtual engagements because of their limited access to the required technology. It is hard to imagine how to continue to develop site-specific memorialisation without *in situ* engagements, with others.

Memory has been a significant mainstay and has strengthened the aging community's resilience. D6M has been part of sustaining and evoking that memory of place and time, and in this study I will examine its journey in which it has discovered and developed methods of working with memory.

D6M has always engaged with the displaced people of District Six with the awareness that it was but one of a number of sites of displacement. 'Remember Dimbaza[22]...' are the words that greet visitors at its entrance.

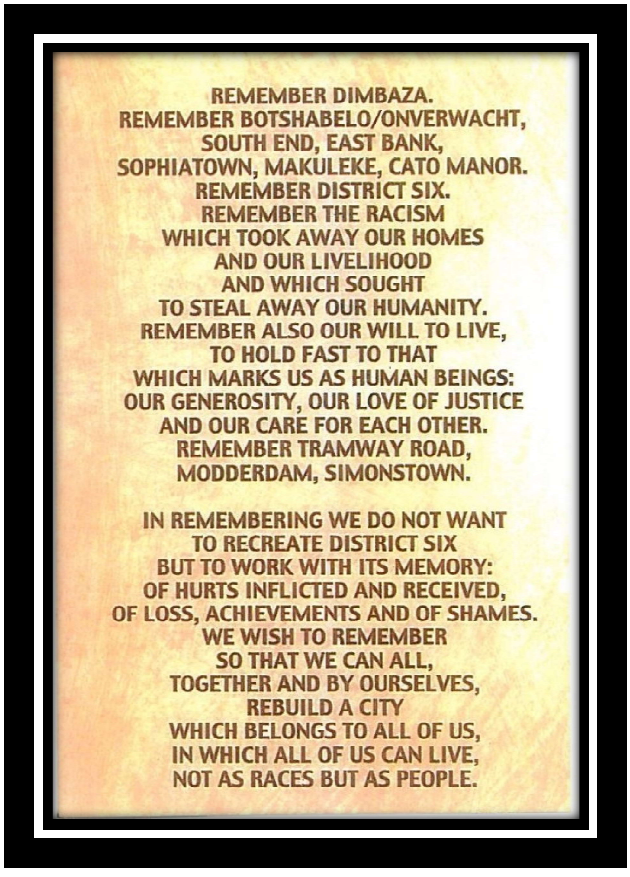


FIGURE 1

[21] During the pandemic many women and children were stuck in abusive households, at the mercy of intimate partner or parental violence, unable to seek shelter elsewhere. Livelihoods were lost and many were unable to feed themselves and their families adequately. Poor nutrition resulted in low immunity and greater vulnerability to the virus.

[22] Dimbaza was an apartheid-era rural 'dumping ground' in the Eastern Cape, established to house black people who were forced out of the urban areas

The layering over and silencing of the past often follows the physical transformation of landscapes, and this has happened in many areas across the country. The community associated with D6M saw the opportunity to keep alive this story of displacement by protecting the site, bearing in mind that it is also the locale of a protracted and contested land claim. It would be a wonderful challenge to work creatively with the changing landscape, with absence and intangible heritage being central to its remembering, so as to ensure that its destruction and the destruction of so many other communities, would never be forgotten. The application to have District Six declared a NHS was indeed an opportunity to test the potential of the rights-based NHRA to protect a site that had become a strong symbol to so many.

The experience of those involved in the campaign has been frustrating, disappointing and disempowering. Attempts to engage with the process in creative and rational ways have yielded limited results and have left many feeling disillusioned at the possibility of ever being heard in the city. The cumulative effect of the non-declaration of District Six as a NHS combined with that of the disappointing land claims process, have left many feeling that the promise of the new South Africa has died with Mandela[23].

Despite frustrations at so many aspects of current life in South Africa, most people have been reasonable and open to listening to explanations when offered. A large part of the frustration about the District Six NHS process has been people's experience of not being heard, and the lack of communication from SAHRA. The nature of the consultations has been a matter of great concern, especially because it has been framed within the promise of equality under the country's new Constitution. There has been scant consideration for the place of non-expert knowledge. This approach has not only been evident in the D6 processes but also in others relating to zoning, other heritage applications and land restitution in general.

Whatever life in post-pandemic times hold for us all, resilience needs to be a feature. This is not to trivialise the struggles of the many people who have succumbed either to the virus, or to its lingering impact on mental health brought about by isolation, fear and anxiety. Living through the pandemic will be part of the District Six community's archive in the years to come. It is part of the story of our world.

In the words of Yeats, the "mere anarchy (is) loosed upon the world" has been through the medium of this pandemic. We need to hold onto the belief that our centre will indeed hold and that the lessons that we have not learned from our past, will become more apparent and visible to us all in the ways

[23] Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela (1918 – 2013) was the first president of democratic South Africa, from 1994 to 1999.

that we relate to every part of the human as well as the non-human world. We need to ensure that its lessons will enhance the wisdoms that we need at this time in order to move forward, and that the story of the anthropocene period will not only be about disease.

I believe that the future of our country lies in government's ability to win back the confidence of the country's people and build belief that it can be a capable, caring and ethical state. Many have lost confidence that the country is being led with competence and care.

Despite the many obstacles in its path, I believe that memory still holds the potential to heal, educate, restore and create. I believe that memory work can contribute substantially to the restoration of our country. However, it is most likely to achieve those ideals if there is a place for independent memory work that is not scripted to fit the officially-sanctioned grand national narrative which excises contestations, challenges and inconsistencies. 'Memory of the Nation' needs to defer to 'memories of the nation'.

FIGURE 2

Prelude to the 'Hands Off District Six' motif [pre-1988]

Apartheid laws		Group Areas declarations
Start of apartheid	1948	
Group Areas Act	1950	
Population Registration Act		
Pass Laws Act	1952	
Separate Amenities Act	1953	

Coloured Labour Preference Act	1955	Sophiatown
Immorality Act	1957	Bokaap
	1958	Windermere, Cato Manor
	1961	Constantia, Protea Village
	1962	Fietas
	1965	South End, Simonstown
11 February Nelson Mandela released	1990	

District Six

1966 11 February declaration


The Cape Argus

DISTRICT SIX: BIG SHAKE-UP IN PLANS FOR CITY

Proclamation a shock

U.P. TENT HIT BY PETROL BOMBS

WATERS RECEDE IN KLERKSDORP

Families fled from flooded homes


Distrik 6/1628

KENNISGEWING OM OKKUPASIE IN GROEPSGEBIED TE BEËINDIG
NOTICE TO TERMINATE OCCUPATION IN GROUP AREA

AAN/TO Joggie Samson, Chapelstraat 24 / 24 Chapel Street, Kaapstad/Cape Town

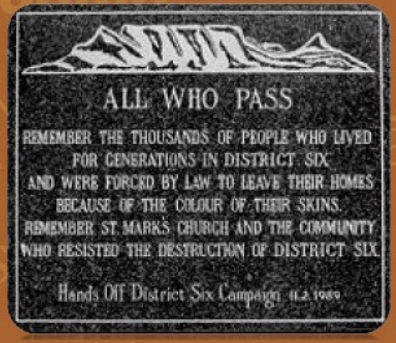
11 Februarie / 11th February, 19 66

Blanke / White

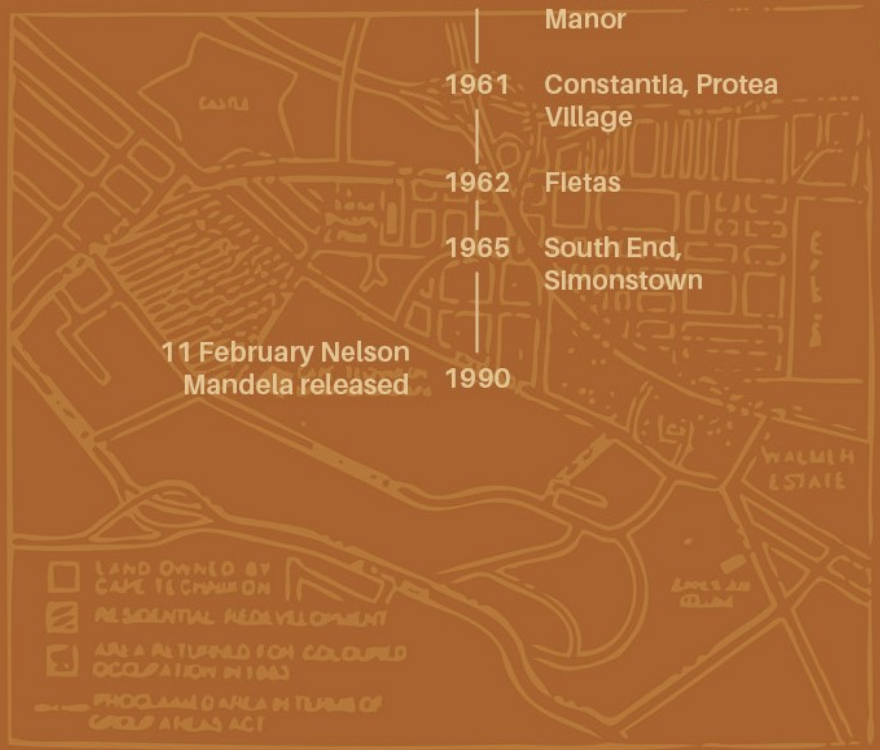
erf 6902, Kaapstad te Kaapstad. erf 6902, Cape Town at Cape Town

Blanke / White

1970	D6 renamed 'Zonnebloem'
1966	Formation of D6 Defence Comm, Friends of D6, Silvertree
1984	Defence Comm
1985	Announcement of BP housing scheme
1987	HODS Committee formed
1988	HODS Conference



1989 D6M Foundation formed



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For when people no longer have the space to construct homeplace, we cannot build a meaningful community of resistance. (hooks, 2015)

The term 'forced removals' is (also) an elastic one. In its most general sense it can cover the whole process of dispossession which lies at the heart of the history of South Africa. Indentured labourers, slaves and migrant workers were forced, through the poverty which resulted from their loss of access to land, to leave their homes and work under the harsh conditions dictated by the development of capitalism in South Africa.

(Unterhalter, 1987: 4)

A. Introduction to Chapter 1

Scores of black people who lived to see the advent of the new South Africa, have died before receiving restitution for their homes that were lost under apartheid; others died never having known the basic comfort of a home as a place of rest and refreshment. Obtaining dignified housing has continued to be an elusive dream for thousands of families, with approximately 13,6%[24] of households in the country still residing in informal dwellings.

The *Bill of Rights* forms Chapter 2 of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*. In paragraph 26 it promises that:

> *(1) Everyone has the right to have access to equal housing.*
>
> *(2) The state must take reasonable legislative and other measures, within its available resources, to achieve the progressive realisation of this right.*
>
> *(3) No one may be evicted from their home, or have their home demolished, without an order of court made after considering all of the relevant circumstances. No legislation may permit arbitrary evictions.*[25]

The *Restitution of Land Rights Act* has as its aim:

> *To provide for the restitution of rights in land in respect of which persons or communities were dispossessed under or for the purpose of furthering the objects of any racially based discriminatory law; to establish a Commission on Restitution of Land Rights and a Land Claims Court; and to provide for matters connected therewith.*[26]

These two pieces of legislation provide the necessary guidance for the creation of the road map leading towards housing justice and land restitution.

In the struggle to receive restitution for homes lost in the area known as District Six, and to have this localised struggle to be recognised as one of the sites identified as being of national significance, two conferences have been significant. They are the *Hands Off District Six* (HODS) Conference of 1988, and the *Hands On District Six* Conference of 2005. Both marked pivotal moments for the Museum as well as for the District Six community.

Memory of life before forced removals and the lingering impact of such removals have been essential to both the restitution process and the making of D6M. The destruction of the neighbourhood has been

[24] This is according to Statistics South Africa (https://www.statssa.gov.za/) in the section 'The latest household statistics and more' posted on June 21, 2018 [accessed 10 September 2020).
[25] Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996, page 11.
[26] *Restitution of Land Rights Act No. 22 of 1994*, page 3. Available at www.justice.gov.za [Accessed 30 September 2019]

embraced as part of its heritage, and momentum has been created to recognise it as an integral part of the nation's heritage.

In this first chapter I will provide an overview of the historical context in which the 1988 conference took place and at which the D6M movement was brought into being. I will locate it within the context of apartheid in South Africa, linked to colonial dispossession and its legacies. Recognising that that there was a broad spectrum of oppressive laws which reinforced the system, I will only focus on those which had a direct impact on forced removals in this specific urban context.

There is no telling this history without referring to the resistance and protests in response to the implementation of apartheid's oppressive laws, with D6M's own genesis story being located within the formation of a protest movement.

B. Lingering legacies

Traces of SA's colonial, slave and apartheid history are evident in Cape Town everywhere, every day. It exists in the visible spatial injustice in our city, in the open tracts of land in places such as District Six where people had been forcibly removed, and in the colonial- and apartheid-era statues (Frieslaar, 2020). It exists in our daily experiences of who serves us at petrol stations, supermarkets and restaurants, and who sits in the corporate boardrooms. It will take a long time and much effort for South Africa to call itself truly 'post-apartheid', and a "vast majority of South Africans agree that South Africa still needs reconciliation" (Potgieter, 2019: 7).

"(T)he 1980s (were) marked by a growing mobilisation of resistance" (Unterhalter 1987: 122). Thus, at the time that the HODS Conference took place in 1988, mass gatherings to mobilise actions against apartheid, were not unfamiliar.[27] It was a time when meetings, rallies and workshops were common ways of galvanizing support for workers' strikes, product boycotts, service delivery protests and student stay-aways. It was a time when non-racialism was being promoted as another way to view the world rather than through an apartheid lens, and officially-sanctioned versions of history were being challenged. Scholarship and activism were found to be moving in closer alignment and several movements were engaging with different knowledge-making modes: the arts, oral histories and memory-work being some of the examples.

Across the globe there has been growing evidence that memory work can play a humanising role particularly in countries emerging from state-led violence (Till, 2015, 2018; Whigham, 2017, Grunebaum, 2006; Casey, 2000). In South Africa, several memory initiatives emerged in the period following apartheid's demise, having grown out of the recognition that opportunities for people to

[27] South Africa has a longer history of resistance through popular movements and political organisation upon which the 1980s resistance movements were built.

acknowledge their own traumatic memories are crucial in our national journey of healing and restitution. These extend beyond what the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)[28] was able to achieve. Some examples of these include organisations such as the Institute for the Healing of Memories[29], the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation[30] and Khulumani[31]. D6M falls into this broad category of memory and healing projects although its formation predates these post-1994 initiatives.

There is no single moment or pathway of national healing and recovery. "... governments need to recognize that while individual healing is a precondition to good national health, the converse is not necessarily true: national reconciliation may have no effect at all on the health of individuals" (Daly and Sarkin, 2007: 59,60). The ways in which the idea of national heritage has been instrumentalised by the government of the new South Africa to support the work of nation-building have often had the opposite effect by being divisive and alienating (Frieslaar and Zulu, 2020; Marschall, 2010; Coombes, 2003). Decentred moments and localised initiatives of healing and restitution seem better placed to make an impact and achieve longevity, than blockbuster nationalising events[32]. This will be considered in more detail in subsequent chapters.

"Legacies of dispossession persist: loss of land is not a onetime event, but an ongoing process that continues to shape the life chances of those affected and their descendants" (Fay and James, 2010: 32). The District Six story is one community's story among many. It is a story of how its former residents together with a broader community of purpose continue to work with memory to restore their fractured selves and their obliterated neighbourhood, in partnership with D6M. Although by the time it was set to be destroyed, most of its residents were tenants not landowners, the impact of the loss of home and the relationship to the land was no less significant because of that. Its value was derived over several generations by connections to significant others and by the *genius loci*[33] of the area, not by title deed or its real estate value. The RLRA takes into account that black people under apartheid were prohibited either by law or restricted by economics from owning property. It therefore

[28] The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in South Africa was established by the *Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act No.4 of 1995*. Available at https://www.justice.gov.za (Accessed 30 January 2020).
[29] The Institute for Healing of Memories 'seeks to contribute to the healing journeys of individuals, communities and nations.' Source: http://www.healing-memories.org [Accessed: 30 June 2020]
[30] The Institute for Justice and Reconciliation aims to 'ensure that lessons learnt from South Africa's transition from apartheid to democracy were taken into account as the nation moved ahead. Source: http://www.ijr.org.za/about-us/ [Accessed: 30 June 2020].
[31] Khulumani is a 'membership-based, civil society organisation in South Africa, which campaigns for truth, healing, and redress for those damaged through our apartheid history, and for the advance of the ongoing struggle to create a democratic, non-racial and just society.' Source: https://khulumai.net/ [Accessed 30 June 2020].
[32] Government-initiated events such as Heritage Day and Human Rights events are usually mass events with cultural performances and government speakers who inevitably focus on the nation's achievements and the need for unity.
[33] In current usage it refers to the 'spirit of place', said to have its origins in Roman mythology in which it referred to the protective spirit of a place.

makes allowance for claims to be made not only for property lost, but for loss to a right to land. Even under the new regime which has in its restitution arsenal an array of tools which include the RLRA, Regional Land Claims Commissioners and Land Courts, matters relating to land reform, land development and ownership, remain unresolved and fraught.

Loss of home is akin to a death. Such is the perspective of Marc Fried, who in his seminal work *Grieving for a Lost Home: Psychological Costs of Relocation,* describes how families displaced from the West End of Boston in the 1950s struggled with the impact of urban renewal on their lives. In his work with former residents, he observed that the ways in which they spoke about their displacement could be described as expressions of grief (Fried, 1966: 361). Mindy Fullilove (2004) speaks of 'root shock' in her work which is geared towards understanding the impact of rupture from place. She likens this to the body's "traumatic stress reaction to the destruction of all or part of one's emotional ecosystem" (2004: 11). The provisions of South Africa's RLRA makes it possible for people to claim their right to return to an area of displacement, or where that is not possible, they may be allocated land elsewhere.[34] A number of people have opted not to return, saddened by the realisation that they will never regain what they lost.[35] It seems as if they prefer to nurture the remembered past rather than deal with the banal and often difficult logistics of relocating to a completely reconfigured environment. 'An impossible return' is the way that O'Connell describe the experiences of displaced people, referring in this instance to families who were displaced from Harfield Village[36]. She writes: "In thinking about the evictees' inability to find their place in the new nation and to articulate the moment of eviction, it dawned on me that what apartheid did was to shatter their cognitive assumptions about their lives in the world" (O'Connell, 2019: 18).

C. Colonial past

Although the forced removals being referred to in this thesis resulted from apartheid legislation, it takes into account that South Africa has a longer history of dispossession, division and inequality which pre-dates apartheid. Achieving broad-based restitution and building a new South Africa - politically, socially, economically, psychically – demands that an extended view of history be taken, beyond apartheid's 1948 beginnings.

[34] Claimants have the following options within the restitution process: financial compensation; land restoration; obtaining alternative land or a combination.
[35] This is one of a number of reasons cited by claimants for not returning.
[36] Harfield Village is a residential area in the Southern Suburbs of Cape Town from which people were forcibly removed. It was declared 'whites only' in November 1969.

A significant milestone in the establishment of the European presence at the Cape was the arrival of the Dutch in the seventeenth century. A version of South Africa's foundational narrative credits Jan van Riebeek as being the country's originator. He arrived at the Cape in the name of the Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie (VOC)[37] on 6 April 1652. He was an employee of this "marauding company not known for fair trade outside of Europe."[38] His brief was to set up a refreshment station to service sea traffic engaged in the Indian Ocean spice trade, and he oversaw the creation of a permanent settlement.

The fresh water streams of Camissa[39] running from Table Mountain was part of the Cape's desirability as a stopover location within the African, European and Asian triangular route, balanced between the Atlantic to the west and the Indian Ocean to the east (Worden 2012; Dudley 1990; Davies *et al* 1984). "Within the global operations of the VOC, the Cape held a crucial position. It provided a safe haven for ships to the East Indies, where fresh food and water were provided, repairs on ships were made, and sick sailors, soldiers and others could be offloaded" (Ross and Schrikker, 2012: 27). In the process, the San and Khoi, the indigenous inhabitants of the region, were dispossessed of land and annihilated on a large scale.[40] The knowledge of the land derived from living in close proximity with the rhythms of nature was interrupted, and the natural environment was ravaged to serve the needs of the colonizing forces. Indigenous people "hold an informational structure that makes space for geological and cosmic time – and creates ways of knowing and seeing the world at multiple scales" (Chatterjee, 2020)[41], but this indigenous epistemology was replaced with a Eurocentric one which engaged with the non-human world as 'the Other'.

In apartheid South Africa, van Riebeek was celebrated as the country's founder with a public holiday on 6 April being dedicated to remember the day of his arrival in 1652. No recognition was given to the founding contributions of the indigenous inhabitants who had developed a sustainable way of life based on their understanding of their environment and the land to which they belonged.[42] The concept of collectively shared land stood in stark contrast to the way that the colonizers understood the land, as the property of the victor of battle. Commenting on the assumptions about the rights of humans to

[37] Also known as the Dutch East Indian Company.
[38] https://www.thejournalist.org.za/spotlight/the-eight-years-of-jan-van-riebeeck/
[39] 'Camissa', meaning 'place of sweet waters' has been identified as the name used by the indigenous Khoi people for 'Cape Town'. Recently, this name has been revived by some history / heritage / memory activists.
[40] https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/forced-removals-south-africa [accessed 3 December 2019]
[41] *The Arts, Environmental Justice, and the Ecological Crisis: A Provocation* by Sria Chatterjee. Available at https://www.britishartstudies.ac.uk/ [Accessed: 26 February 2021]
[42] 'We belong to the land' refers to an understanding by indigenous people of the relationship between land and humans. '... many indigenous people, land relates to all aspects of existence – culture, spirituality, language, law, family and identity. Rather than owning land, each person belongs to a piece of land which they're related to through the kinship system.' Source: https://australianstogether.org.za/ [accessed 16 September 2020]

dominate the earth emerging from the various European Enlightenments, Anthony Bogues (2020)[43] comments that we need to "map this kind of understanding of mastery over the Earth to the ways in which colonial practices created ideas of property and a crude utilitarian (and quite frankly unscientific) view of science."[44]

This anthropocentric view of the world escalated during the British iteration of the colonial period in South Africa, particularly under the firm hand of Cecil John Rhodes who was Prime Minister of the Cape from 1890 – 1896. "The object of which I intend to devote my life is the defence and extension of the British Empire … I contend that we are the first race in the world, and the more of the world we inhabit, the better it is for the human race" (Moon, 2016: 13). He had a desire to "embed the colonial order into the colonial landscape" (Moon, 2016: 11). He is reputed to have imported trees native to England, as well as various English birds. "The first 18 common starlings were released by Cecil John Rhodes at Groote Schuur."[45] Among other problem alien species for which he is believed to be responsible are the American gray squirrel, the Himalayan tahr, the ring-necked pheasant, the European goldfinch and the European starling.[46]

The colonizing worldview which was premised on the 'mastery of the Earth' as an inert and infinite resource, has contributed to the current imbalance in the world's ecology. Described in the mainstream as the age of the Anthropocene, some have criticised the implied shared human responsibility embedded in the term, and have proposed a number of others including the 'Capitalocene'[47], reminding us that "it is not humanity as a homogenous acting unit that can be held responsible for the Anthropocene but an accumulation and investment of capital in the fossil economy in certain parts of the Western world that triggered an epochal change" (Chatterjee 2020: 4).

School history books under apartheid inculcated the mythology of the founding narrative, of South Africa's 1652 beginning (Adikhari, 2005). It perpetuated the myth that no one was here, or at least, no-one who mattered. A part of the myth included the encounter with 'Harry the Strandloper'[48], portrayed in text books as being duplicitous and stupid, because he had traded the land for a handful

[43] *The Human: An Alternative Ground for 'Development': Anthony Bogues' reflection on rethinking human development.* Available on https://council.science/current/blog/ [Accessed 10 August 2020].
[44] https://council.science/human-development/latest-contributions/the-human-an-alternative-ground-for-development/

[45] John Yeld, IOL November 2, 2011. 'The aliens among us'.
[46] 'Vertebrate pest animals in the Province of the Cape of Good Hope, Republic of South Africa.' Available on https://escholarship.org/uc [Accessed 30 November 2020]
[47] Coined by Jason Moore, associate professor of Sociology at Binghamton University.
[48] 'Harry the Strandloper' was chief and interpreter of the Goringhaiqua, with his actual name being 'Autshomao. He was imprisoned on Robben Island by Jan van Riebeeck after waging a battle with the Dutch settlers in 1659, and he and fellow prisoner are known to be the only two people ever to have successfully escaped from the island.

of shiny trinkets. Rote, uncritical learning being the dominant pedagogical style under apartheid, meant that facts were often imbibed with few questions being asked especially in the formative primary school years.

So began the years of gradual land encroachment, with the main colonial protagonists being the Dutch and the British (Davies *et al,* 1984).[49] Resistance by the indigenous people to the land grabbing of the colonizers has often been depicted in history texts as being a case of savage natives attacking the benign and civilized Europeans. A view still persists in some quarters that if it were not for the civilizing mission of the colonists, Africa would still be stuck in a world defined by ignorance and backwardness. Sometimes it is expressed as 'colonisation was not all bad'.[50]

"Of those many legacies one of the most powerful was the effort by colonial power to reform the so-called native mind. I considered this feature of colonial power to be the ideological weight of colonial domination" (Bogues, 2010: 2). In *I write what like*, the late Steve Biko[51] contends that: "the most powerful weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed. Once the latter has been so effectively manipulated and controlled by the oppressor as to make the oppressed believe that he is a liability to the white man." Although he (Biko) is referring to apartheid in this context, it foregrounds the relationship between the oppressor and oppressed which is more than just a matter of economics and political domination. The very essence of being is affected, resulting in a deeply engrained sense of internalised inferiority. "It is the racist who creates the inferiorized" (Fanon, 2008: 73). Decolonising the mind is an endeavour which will persist for several generations.

The Cape colony was built using the back-breaking labour of people who were brought here, enslaved, from a number of countries on the African[52] continent and the East Indies[53]. It was during van Riebeeck's eight years at the Cape that slavery was introduced. The first 'shipment'[54] of people who had been enslaved arrived at the Cape in 1658 on the Dutch ship, the 'Amersfoort'[55].

[49] The Dutch occupied the Cape in 1652, 'losing' it to the British after the Battle of Muizenberg in 1795. According to the Treaty of Amiens in 1802 the British relinquished the colony to the Dutch but re-annexed it in 1806 when the Napoleonic Wars started. South Africa became an independent republic in 1961.
[50] In 2017, the then premier of Cape Town Helen Zille tweeted: 'For those claiming legacy of colonialism was only negative, think of our independent judiciary, transport infrastructure, piped water, etc. Would we have had a transition into specialised health care and medication without colonial influence? Just be honest please.'
[51] Steve Biko was the founder of a black student organisation in 1969 and initiated a national 'black consciousness' movement. The movement aimed to combat racism and defeat apartheid. He was arrested and died in detention in September 1977. Biko, S., 2017. Picador Africa.
[52] These include countries such as Benin, Angola and Mozambique.
[53] The East Indies (formerly known as Dutch East Indies) include countries such as Java, Sumatra and Borneo.
[54] Enslaved people were treated by colonists as cargoed goods.
[55] https://slavery.iziko.org.za/slaveroutestothecape

'Slavery broke the world in half'[56]

My personal memory of learning about slavery in primary school comes down to one sentence: "the slaves at the Cape were freed in 1834." That is all that I retained: the benign masters deciding to free the suffering slaves. There was no awareness of the agents who had enslaved them, and no awareness that the enslaved people were anything but occasionally aggressive but mostly passive accepters of their fate, until they were gifted with their personal freedom by their emancipators – their captors.

As recently as the 1990s (in the new South Africa), my youngest daughter who was then at primary school reported that according to her class teacher, the correct answer to the question of "what were the benefits of slavery" was that people received "free food and lodging". So deep has been the denial and misconceptions about the horror of chattel[57] slavery in Cape Town. It is only in the past two decades or so that the issue of slavery has been brought more squarely into the public realm[58], contributing to the gradual eroding of the veil that kept it hidden

Most of those who were enslaved at the Cape were bought in the slave markets of Batavia, Chinsura, Cochin, Boina and Delagoa Bays or Mozambique Island, having originally been snatched from five main areas by slave traders: the Indonesian archipelago, Bengal, South India and Sri Lanka, Madagascar and countries along the coast of East Africa (Ross, 1983). By 1717, slavery was officially accepted as the main source of labour for the colony. They worked mainly in the VOC garden, as domestic workers in the homes of settlers and VOC officials, as labourers in the docks, or as skilled artisans. They were also employed on the farms of the Cape, and "by the nineteenth century, the agrarian economy of the Western Cape was firmly slave-based" (Weeder, 2000: 10).

While there are accounts of humane owners especially in private homes, this is a moot point: they remained enslaved. They were owned, catalogued and abusively treated. Women were particularly vulnerable, subjected to rape in addition to being exploited for their labour. In a paper presented at UCT[59], Robert Shell and Linda Mbeki use the term "perpetual uterine servitude" to describe the horror of being used to give birth to future 'labour sources' who would remain enslaved for the rest of their lives.

[56] Paul Gilroy. *Small.* 1978. The quote continues: 'it broke it in every way. It broke Europe. It made them into something else. It made them slave masters. It made them crazy.'
[57] Chattel slavery refers to a condition of slavery in which an enslaved person is permanently enslaved and whose children, and children's children, would be automatically enslaved.
[58] Some of these include the renaming of the former SA Cultural History Museum to the Slave Lodge; the formation of the December 1st movement by slave-descendant activists in 1996; the emergence of the story of the freed enslaved woman Lydia Williams who lived in District Six after emancipation; the uncovering of the Prestwich Burial Grounds in Sea Point and the annual Emancipation Day Walk in the Night in Cape Town.
[59] 'The missing mothers of the Slave Lodge: slave families in the Company Lodge, 1658 to 1828', paper presented by Robert Shell and Linda Mbeki at the David and Elaine Potter Foundation Seminar at UCT, 16 May 2014.

Those who were owned by the VOC lived at the Slave Lodge and were generally in poorer health than those employed in private homes. They had a mortality rate that was between 20% - 30% higher. Living conditions were unhygienic, the food provided was inadequate, their conditions of work were inhumane and it included harsh physical punishment. The violence of their capture and the threat of violent punishment for transgressions remained as an ever-present daily reality (Mason, 2003). "Violence is inherent in slavery. … it is crucial to the survival of master-slave relationships from moment to moment"(Mason, 2003: 174).

The official emancipation of slaves at the Cape took effect as from 1 December 1834 under British rule, with slave-owners being permitted to keep their enslaved persons for an additional until 1838, with the 4-year period being dubbed an 'apprenticeship period'.

Slavery's significance for District Six

Before it was named 'District Six', the area was referred to as 'Behind the Castle' in the early records of the Cape (Hislop, 2019). It consisted of a scattering of vineyards, homesteads and grazing grounds. Bloemhof[60], Zonnebloem[61] and slightly further east – Roodebloem – were all names of slaveholding estates located on the lower slopes of Table Mountain (Hislop, 2019), sections of which became incorporated into the area eventually known as District Six.

In the Draft Development Framework of 2012[62] prepared for District Six ahead of the return of claimants to the area, D6M was asked to identify four sites of significance that needed to be considered for preservation and / or memorialisation in the context of the rebuild of the area. The Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) prepared in 2003, had identified the whole of District Six as an archaeological site, but recognised that the site in its entirety could not be preserved and kept vacant given the restitution needs of the land for restitution housing. One site identified was the location of the home of Lydia Williams- an enslaved woman living on Zonnebloem Estate. She had worked with the Cowley Fathers[63] who set up a monastery in Chapel Street and helped to start St Phillips Church in the same street. Both buildings still stand to this day and Lydia's name appears in the parish's baptism register as a sponsor for several new converts.

Lydia's story is significant for a number of reasons. The first services of St Philip's Church took place in her home in Cauvin Street in the Dry Dock area of District Six and she is noted as a founder of the

[60] A well-known block of flats in District Six was named 'Bloemhof'. The flats remained after people were forcibly removed and were renovated and renamed as 'Skyways'.
[61] After people were forcibly removed, the name 'District Six' was officially erased and the area became known as 'Zonnebloem' on the official map. In 2018, the D6M together with a broad community of Capetonians campaigned to have the name 'District Six' restored, and this was successfully achieved in December 2019.
[62] The Draft Development Framework was prepared by Nisa Mammon and Associates.
[63] The Cowley Fathers was the colloquial name for the Society of St John the Evangelist who are based in Cowley in Oxfordshire.

church. She was also known for her celebration of Emancipation Day on 2 December[64] each year which the Fathers referred to as 'Lydia's Day'. She invited friends and neighbours to a thanksgiving prayer meeting followed by a feast which she prepared. A primary school, the Lydia Williams English Church Memorial School, was named in her honour - the only school known to be named after an enslaved woman. Over time, knowledge about her life receded from living memory, and it was not until the 1990s that her memory was revived.[65] Since then, D6M has worked with District Sixers to organize several community tributes to the life of Lydia Williams. The St Phillips School building has been renamed 'The Lydia Williams Centre of Memory' to memorialise her life and connectivity to the area.

FIGURE 3

[64] The actual day of emancipation was 1 December 1834, but Lydia celebrated it on 2 December.
[65] This was largely due to the research by Michael Weeder. See his Honours in History Thesis: *A Fervent Simplicity* (University of the Western Cape, 2000)

The end of the colony

For the purposes of this study, I will jump ahead to the period of apartheid, noting that the British remained as a colonial power for decades after the abolition of slavery[66]. With the discovery of diamonds in 1867 and gold in 1884, "South Africa was transformed from a colonial backwater into a central prop of British imperialism – itself now scrambling for colonies all over Africa"(Davies, 1984: 7). The descendants of the Dutch-speaking inhabitants – variously identified as Boers / Trekboers – established two independent Boer Republics which were recognised by the British in the 1850s and which were in constant conflict with the British colonists. The Anglo-Boer War of 1899 – 1902 heightened animosities, as the Boers suffered several losses and thousands died in concentration camps set up by the British. Following the war, four British controlled provinces were established which eventually became the white-controlled self-governed Union of South Africa (Davies *et al,* 1984).

D. The apartheid context

The Union of South Africa was formed in 1910, with the fully fledged republic free of British rule being finally achieved in 1961. By that time the National Party had been in power since 1948 and it had implemented a comprehensive and finely-tuned system of national governance that enabled racial segregation in an intricate and detailed way.[67]

FIGURE 4

[66] Slavery at the Cape was abolished on 1 December 1834 but it was followed by a four year apprenticeship which ended on 1 December 1838 when the enslaved people were eventually legally free.
[67] https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/forced-removals-south-africa [accessed 3 December 2019]

Afrikanerdom

Apartheid was imposed and policed through a myriad of laws. It was reinforced by a particular brand of Afrikaner Protestantism premised on a perversion of Calvinism which racialised the divine as being created in the image of white men. Its theology undergirded the system of Christian National Education which was rigid, hierarchical and focused on a "civilising mission" (Kamies, 2018). Its colonial forerunners were "stiffnecked Calvinists, who cited scripture to justify slavery and colour-class discrimination"and "claimed for the white race an exclusive right to education, positions of public responsibility, and the ownership of land and wealth" (Simons, 1983: 11).

Being white and Afrikaner were two strong defining features of the apartheid hegemonic nation-state. Benedict Anderson (1991) proposes a definition of a nation as an imagined political community which is both inherently limited and sovereign. "It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (Anderson, 1991: 6,7). Significant in the apartheid formulation of nationhood is that the imagined boundaries excluded all categories of black people from citizenship. It managed to create solidarity around a sense of Afrikaner belonging and generated rigid rules about who belonged and who did not. In addition to legislative control, social life was stratified along racial lines. Allegiance to its flag, national anthem, and a particular way of life were some of the ways in which its identity was defined and unified.

The determination to build and defend an Afrikaner identity to the violent exclusion of many who fell outside of this tightly bounded category, gave rise to much suffering and hardship for millions of people for nearly five decades.

The lynchpin and the cornerstone: the Population Registration and Group Areas Acts

These two acts are most directly relevant to District Six and other urban forced removals but they cannot be viewed apart from the broader system which regulated the movements of people. The system included the Bantustan Policies[68], the Pass Laws[69], the various Native Urban Areas Acts[70], as well as the pre-apartheid Glen Grey Act of 1894[71], the 1913 Native Land Act and several others which laid the basis for the exclusion of black people from land tenure. It is estimated that well over 3.5 million people were displaced in South Africa between 1960 and 1982[72], a cumulative consequence

[68] The Bantustan policies were designed to maintain white supremacy and strengthen apartheid. 'Bantustans' were areas set aside for African self-government and eventual 'independence' under apartheid.
[69] The Pass Laws were in place until 1986. They were designed manage urban labour under apartheid.
[70] The Native Urban Areas Amendment Act of 1952 stipulated that all black people over the age of 16 were required by law to carry passes.
[71] The Glen Grey Act, instigated by the government of Prime Minister Cecil John Rhodes, established a system of land tenure and a labour tax to force Xhosa men into employment on commercial farms or in industry.
[72] Surplus People's Project, 1983. Volume 1, page 6

of these and other laws. The estimates are conservative, and Elaine Unterhalter (1987) suggests that they "the SPP[73] total did not include, and there is virtually no way of knowing this, the number of people living in informal settlements around the large towns of the country, forced to move not once, but many times, as their homes are destroyed by officials and police" (Unterhalter 1987: 3).

Under apartheid "… boundaries were to be reasserted and spaces reorganised, the movements of people systematised and contained, races rescued from 'impurity', the notion of family rehabilitated and 'the savage discipline of tribal life' restored. At the core of this aspiration to order lay a vigorous and thoroughgoing reassertion of racial difference" (Posel, 2001: 52). The desire to ensure racial 'purity', and to ensure that everyone was able to understand and adhere to their place in the economic, political and social pecking order and abide by it, was central to the apartheid philosophy. It aimed to secure and protect white hegemony and ensure that their political and economic interests were always protected.

The Population Registration Act No. 30 of 1950 (PRA)

This act is described as the "the legislative lynchpin of racial categorization under apartheid" (Posel, 2001: 53). It was intended:

> *To make provision for the compilation of a Register of the Population of the Union; for the issue of Identity Cards to persons whose names are included in the Register; and for matters incidental thereto*.[74]

The Act detailed how the population register was to be maintained. It contained recommendations for implementation and monitoring as well as sanctions that might apply for any transgressions. A process of appeal was described for those who felt aggrieved at being incorrectly classified. It also made allowance for third parties to alert the Director of Census if they suspected that someone's racial classification was incorrect. Steps would be taken to correct such errors if they had occurred.

- 'Being branded with the hot iron of humiliation and scorn'[75]

In his memoir *Memory is the weapon,* South African poet and writer Don Mattera who hails from Sophiatown[76], tells of the experience of standing with other men in a queue outside a race classification office so that their race could be determined. In his characteristically satirical style, he describes the waiting period which was filled with anxious speculations about the implications of classification outcomes, and recounts how one of his friends, Lovely Boy, emerges from the office:

[73] Surplus People's Project (SPP) was established in the 1980s to publicise and support communities in the struggles against apartheid and especially forced removals.
[74] Extract from the Population Registration Act No. 30 of 1950
[75] Mattera, D (2007). *Memory is the weapon.* African Perspectives Publishing.
[76] An area of forced removals in Gauteng. it was renamed as 'Triomf' (Triumph) under apartheid.

> Lovely Boy emerged a 'pure' Coloured. He had passed all the tests without a single hitch: he could recite both the Lord's Prayer and Psalm 23 in Afrikaans; exclaimed *'eina'* (ouch) and not *'aychoo'* as a native would when inflicted with sudden pain. Lovely Boy was a few inches taller as he walked through the heavy gates. (Mattera, 2007: 25).

There were instances where members of the same family were assigned different racial classifications. As a result they would have to locate to different areas, specified for their assigned racial group. Some people opted to be classified in a 'higher' racial category – usually because of the attendant benefits and accompanying social status, and as a result of such choice, had to break ties with their families. If they maintained contact, they put themselves in danger of being caught out.

There were occasions when some had to endure the indignities of petitioning a Race Classification Appeal Board or the Supreme Court if they wanted to appeal for different classification (Erasmus and Ellison, 2008: 450). So even as the government needed to promote the idea of the certainly of race as an absolute and immobile set of categories, there was a tacit acknowledgement that mobility was possible and that racial classification could be fluid. Officials of the Race Classification Board had discretionary powers to make the necessary judgments as to whether race re-classification was warranted.

Zoë Wicomb (2006), in her novel *Playing in the light*, relates an incident where the main character's mother Helen – biologically coloured in the sense of being of 'mixed race', but having been able to pass for white – has to produce evidence of her and her husband's whiteness so that they could obtain identity documents. In exchange for a sexual encounter with a respectable white councillor, she obtains a testimonial from him which confirms that she is white, having been known to partake of white social and religious life The reality at the time was that the internalized shame of being seen to be of 'impure' lineage was so deep that people went to shocking lengths to protect the public image of their racial identities as being 'pure'.

- Racial purity

Nazism was an extreme articulation of an obsession with racially pure bloodlines, expressed most intensely during the World War II period (the 1940s) when apartheid was in its early stages of being formulated. Apartheid's pseudo-scientific proposition of what constituted a race was not consistent though, and had to be bolstered by the creation of racial mythologies. There were beliefs that tied behaviours and physical attributes to racial categories. These ranged from hair textures, facial and bodily features, to sports preferences and ways of greeting (Posel, 2001: 59).

Erasmus and Ellison refer to three classificatory criteria which had been specified in the Act, namely appearance, descent, and acceptance. This supports the view that the assessment was not purely biological even though it was presented as such. General acceptance within the group was also regarded as important. People who 'crossed over' had to 'perform' an identity with sufficient proficiency so that they were able to "get away with it" (Erasmus and Ellison, 2008: 452).

People engaged in a number of mental coping strategies to either avoid thinking about the humiliation of racial classification processes. Often it was never spoken about. In its haste to move on to the next celebratory step in the new South Africa, many untold realities remain – unhealed and festering, blockages to the process of engaging with the full dignity of self-belief, agency and hope. Some of this was started in the milieu created by the TRC as well as by memory and storytelling forums but the work is incomplete and ongoing.

- Colouredness

'Colouredness' has often been reduced to being a product of miscegenation – a word for which I can find no synonym. With apartheid's focus on racial purity, coloured people were regarded as being of 'mixed race' and impure – premised on the belief in 'race' as a clearly defined unit of humanity. 'Coloured' as defined under apartheid is its most recent and most dominant iteration, and overshadows the longer history of its usage under colonial rule.

Mohamed Adikhari writes that the "process of social amalgamation within the colonial black population at the Cape that gave rise to a Coloured group consciousness that dates back to the period of colonial Dutch rule" (2005: 2). Under the later British rule, a proclamation passed in 1809 "applied a strict law to the Coloured (and) made the registration of labour contracts compulsory if covering one month or more" (Simons 1983: 16). The distinct treatment of the group so identified was reinforced on a number of levels during this period, including through proclamations passed in 1812 and 1819 which made it possible for settlers to "apprentice and employ without remuneration a free Coloured child, from the age of eight to eighteen years, if it was an orphan, or destitute, or had grown up on the employer's property" (Simons 1983: 16).

Adikhari believes that the 1828 rights afforded to the Khoisan[77] and the 1838 emancipation of the enslaved population[78] resulted in greater movement of people, and interaction between the heterogeneous black laboring class. They "started integrating more rapidly and developing an

[77] In 1828 Ordinance 50 was passed which ensured Khoisan mobility on the labour market.
[78] The apprenticeship was intended to prepare the enslaved people for freedom but in actual fact provided slave-owners with an additional 4 years to exploit un-waged workers.

incipient shared identity. … based on a common socioeconomic status and a shared culture derived from their incorporation into the lower ranks of Cape colonial society" (Adhikari, 2005: 2).

These are reminders that 'mixing' does not only consist of shame-filled or illicit trysts: there are also socio-economic factors which played a role in organic integration and developing what he calls an 'incipient shared identity' based amongst other things on class solidarity. Recent scholarship has used the term 'creolization' more frequently – a more positively loaded term closely associated with the Francophone negritude movement of Afro-Caribbean poet, author and politician Aimé Cesaire.

However, understanding historical contexts does not deal with the awkwardness associated with having been classified as 'coloured' or self-identifying as such. I myself have had an ambivalent relationship with the term. In some senses I am part of that group that identifies as coloured because of the common trajectories that our lives have followed. Our social circles were regulated by law and we were included or excluded from the same places. On another level I identify as black and definitely African. My political awakening as a high school student in the mid-1970s exposed me to the thinking of the black consciousness (BC) movement led by Steve Bantu Biko, the visionary South African leader who I referred to earlier in this chapter. BC presented me with a new way of thinking both about my identity and also my actual black skin. I was fortunate that my political and social consciousness developed both within the BC and non-racial movements simultaneously and I found no contradiction at the time between the two. A current reference can be found in the debate that is currently taking place, between those who respond to the 'black lives matter' campaigns with the retort 'all lives matter'.[79] Context-specific, both statements can hold true.

In her 2018 doctoral thesis titled *Shame and respectability: a narrative enquiry into Cape Town's 'coloured' families through photographs, cultural practices and oral histories (c. 1950 – 2016)*, Nadia Kamies writes about the shame accompanying thinking of oneself as being a product of miscegenation "without a distinctive culture or full ethnic integrity" (Kamies, 2018: 59). This discomfort reflected by people who were classified as coloured is not always on a verbal or conscious level. There has been some research indicating that trauma (and I include the issue of shame and alienation from identity as a trauma) can be transferred from generation to generation on a level of

[79] The 'Black Lives Matter' movement was founded in the US in 2013. It was a response to the killing of a young black man Trayvon Martin in Florida and the acquittal of his killer. The intention of the movement is to 'eradicate white supremacy and build local power to intervene in violence inflicted on Black communities by the state and vigilantes' (https://blacklivesmatter.com/about/ . The response from some people, mostly white, has been to say 'all lives matter', somewhat missing the contextual nuances of the campaign.

epigenetics.[80] There is growing experiential consensus that trauma can be passed down inter-generationally even if all the ways in which this happens are not yet fully understood.

In thinking about the transmission of legacies of trauma, O'Connell writes that they "need to be understood as events of a duration in excess of their chronologies and historical time stamps. The experience therefore of historic trauma is deeply inter-generational, and at best, the residues of grief, melancholia and mourning are passed from parents to their children, and then on to their children's children" (O'Connell, 2012: 196).

The PRA legislated that 'coloured' was a fixed identity, and when viewed together with other laws such as the Immorality Act and the Mixed Marriages Act which made the offspring of racial 'mixing' undesirable and even unlawful, the implied shame was hard to ignore.

The Group Areas Act No. 41 of 1950

The GAA is regarded as a cornerstone of residential segregation in South Africa. It formalised the racial separation that had started many years previously and created the mechanisms for the development of separate group areas based on racial classification.

The GAA and its subsequent amendments formed the legal basis for tearing apart the lives of an estimated 834 000 people (Unterhalter 1987: 142) of whom at least 60 000 were from District Six.

- Manipulating the map

Apartheid mechanisms defined who qualified to be a citizen and who were 'other' to citizenship, where they could be found and how many they numbered. It sought to shape the map based on economic interests and whatever else was needed to protect white hegemony. It carved out the Bantustans and the Coloured Labour Preference areas in the Cape, allocated residential areas based on race, and manipulated the movement of people based on data derived from a census. In an inconsistent logic it changed the names of some destroyed neighbourhoods, erasing their memory and place on the map; in other cases it retained the area names, with these serving as mocking reminders to those who had been forced out of these still extant addresses. For example, District Six became Zonnebloem; Fietas became Pageview; Sophiatown became Triomf[81]; Protea Village became Kirstenbosch. On the other hand, Newlands, Claremont, Harfield Village and Constantia retained the names that they had had before displacement.

[80] The results of studies have been described as 'inconclusive at best' but there are some indications that 'trauma can leave a chemical mark on a person's genes which is then passed down to subsequent generations. The mark does not directly affect the gene; there's no mutation.' (*New York Times*, 10 December 2018. 'Can we really inherit trauma?' by Benedict Carey.

[81] Sophiatown (later Triomf) was an area of forced removal in Gauteng.

A strategy for reinforcing divisions in the Cape was through further manipulation of the map by the introduction of a Coloured Labour Preference Policy (CLPP) in 1955 by Dr W Eiselen, Secretary of Native Affairs at the time. It involved drawing an imaginary line known as the 'Eiselen Line' on a map of the Cape Province, dividing it into a western and eastern section. The latter section was where those who were classified as 'African' were permitted to reside while coloured people were allocated to the west. The CLPP limited the number of African people who could work, live and access social services in the Cape (Cole, 2012). The lingering legacy of the CLPP exacerbated racial tensions in Cape Town which continue to exist, even today.

- Reimagining the map

In working with the recovery of memory, D6M has explored ways of engaging creatively with symbols which have referents in the apartheid past, and reframing them. Asserting connections to spaces and mapping ways back into the site have been among the tools that it has employed to engage former residents. Like the bulldozer of destruction has been reframed as an instrument of reconstruction in this time of the restitution rebuild, so the mapping associated with apartheid manipulation of space has been reconfigured as a means to regain control of space as opposed to the loss of and exclusion from spaces in the past. The apartheid government had erased District Six from official maps after people were removed, and the area was renamed 'Zonnebloem'. D6M worked with the community to reclaim the name 'District Six'[82] ensuring that it was reinserted onto the official map as part of its NHS site work.

The map covering D6M's main floor has served as an instrument to draw former residents into the space. Artist and founder trustee Peggy Delport who was the main curator of D6M's first exhibitions describes it as a "receptive surface as well as a means for viewers to identify the position of streets" (Delport, 2001: 36). The floor map stands as the area's substitute and continues to function as a memory trigger. It has given rise to several projects which all have themes linked to place. For example, there has been an intergenerational youth-led project called *Routes of Memory* where young people have teamed up with former residents to understand their connection to sites in District Six which no longer exist. Through oral history interviews, site walks and site-specific storytelling, they have designed landscape markers based on the stories, adding to the meaning of the site as well as building on their own knowledge.

[82] The name 'District Six' was officially returned to the area in January 2020. This is described in more detail in Chapter 5.

FIGURE 5

The laws referred to earlier in this chapter were reinforced by a range of others including the *Reservation of Separate Amenities Act of 1953* [83], the *Mixed Marriages Act of 1949* [84]and the *Immorality Act of 1927.* [85]

E. Dignity takings[86]: displacement through forced removals

> Permanently tattooed on many memories were the gun, the bulldozer and the lorry – three symbols of state power that appeared consistently in respondents' narratives about the forced removals. (Atuahene, 2014: 38)

[83] https://omalley.nelsonmandela.org/omalley/index.php/site/q/03lv01538/04lv01828/05lv01829/06lv01857.htm
[84] https://omalley.nelsonmandela.org/omalley/index.php/site/q/03lv01538/04lv01828/05lv01829/06lv01833.htm
[85] https://omalley.nelsonmandela.org/omalley/index.php/site/q/03lv01538/04lv01646/05lv01766.htm
[86] The term 'Dignity takings' is used by Bernadette Athuahene (2014) when speaking about apartheid forced removals. Her use of the term emphasises that it was more than houses that were taken: 'the dispossessions in South Africa were part of a larger strategy that dehumanized and infantilized blacks – they were dignity takings (2014: viii).

District Six forced removals

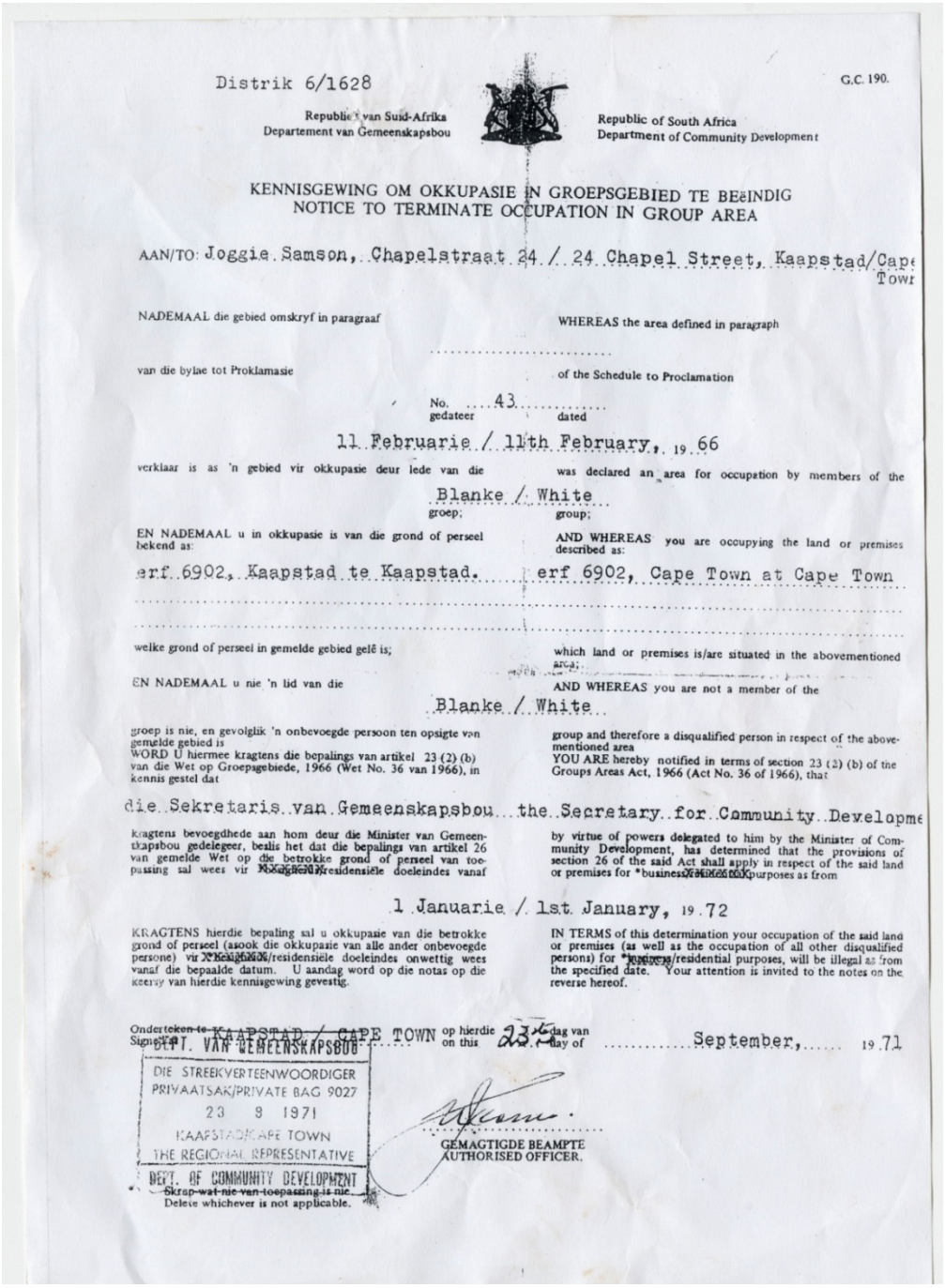
The District Six map was set to change. Nestled below the slopes of the iconic Hoerikwagga[87] it had existed as a formal municipal district since 1867, just over thirty years after the abolition of slavery at the Cape. It became a vibrant and diversely inhabited port city: home to Jewish families fleeing the pogroms in Eastern Europe, to the formerly enslaved and their descendants, and to those coming into the city to seek work from other parts of the country. On 11 February 1966 it was declared an area designated for 'whites only', and over a period of approximately 15 years, homes were bulldozed to make way for the new white neighbourhood to be built on its ruins.

According to Bickford-Smith *et al*, apartheid's segregationist thinking aligned very well with modernist town planning as both systems focused on "zoning, with placing people in appropriate space, moving them from inappropriate localities. In Cape Town they combined to reach a mutual zenith between 1948 and 1976. After all, the National Party's apartheid project – with its aim of complete 'separate development' – was an attempt to produce a racist but coherent, masterpiece of urban planning" (1999: 144). Mindy Fullilove (2004: 5) considers displacement to be a major problem that the twenty first century has to solve, globally. Referring to current as well as historic displacements, she writes:

> Africans and aborigines, rural peasants and city dwellers have been shunted from one place to another, as progress has demanded, "Land here!" or "People there!" In cutting the roots of so many people, we have destroyed language, culture, dietary traditions and social bonds. We have lined the oceans with bones, and filled the garbage trucks with bricks. (2005: 5)

The existence of pre-destruction District Six in Cape Town, and other places like it across the country, demonstrated that coherent neighbourhoods were not dependent on racial 'sameness' and that apartheid divisions were engineered. These communities demonstrated that diversity was a strengthening characteristic, not an undesirable feature or weakness within a community. It is this characteristic that features strongly in the post-apartheid re-imagining of a restored District Six neighbourhood, of which D6M is a crucial component.

[87] 'Hoerikwagga' ('sea mountain') is the Khoi Khoi named for Table Mountain.



Distrik 6/1628

G.C. 190.

Republiek van Suid-Afrika
Departement van Gemeenskapsbou

Republic of South Africa
Department of Community Development

KENNISGEWING OM OKKUPASIE IN GROEPSGEBIED TE BEëINDIG
NOTICE TO TERMINATE OCCUPATION IN GROUP AREA

AAN/TO: Joggie Samson, Chapelstraat 24 / 24 Chapel Street, Kaapstad/Cape Town

NADEMAAL die gebied omskryf in paragraaf ..... van die bylae tot Proklamasie No. 43 gedateer 11 Februarie / 11th February, 19 66 verklaar is as 'n gebied vir okkupasie deur lede van die Blanke / White groep;

WHEREAS the area defined in paragraph ..... of the Schedule to Proclamation No. 43 dated 11 Februarie / 11th February, 19 66 was declared an area for occupation by members of the Blanke / White group;

EN NADEMAAL u in okkupasie is van die grond of perseel bekend as: erf 6902, Kaapstad te Kaapstad.

AND WHEREAS you are occupying the land or premises described as: erf 6902, Cape Town at Cape Town

welke grond of perseel in gemelde gebied gelê is;

which land or premises is/are situated in the abovementioned area;

EN NADEMAAL u nie 'n lid van die Blanke / White groep is nie, en gevolglik 'n onbevoegde persoon ten opsigte van gemelde gebied is

AND WHEREAS you are not a member of the Blanke / White group and therefore a disqualified person in respect of the abovementioned area

WORD U hiermee kragtens die bepalings van artikel 23 (2) (b) van die Wet op Groepsgebiede, 1966 (Wet No. 36 van 1966), in kennis gestel dat die Sekretaris van Gemeenskapsbou

YOU ARE hereby notified in terms of section 23 (2) (b) of the Groups Areas Act, 1966 (Act No. 36 of 1966), that the Secretary for Community Developme

kragtens bevoegdhede aan hom deur die Minister van Gemeenskapsbou gedelegeer, beslis het dat die bepalings van artikel 26 van gemelde Wet op die betrokke grond of perseel van toepassing sal wees vir ~~Xxxxxxxxx~~/residensiële doeleindes vanaf

by virtue of powers delegated to him by the Minister of Community Development, has determined that the provisions of section 26 of the said Act shall apply in respect of the said land or premises for ~~Xxxxxxxxx~~/purposes as from

1 Januarie / 1st January, 19 72

KRAGTENS hierdie bepaling sal u okkupasie van die betrokke grond of perseel (asook die okkupasie van alle ander onbevoegde persone) vir ~~Xxxxxxxxx~~/residensiële doeleindes onwettig wees vanaf die bepaalde datum. U aandag word op die notas op die keersy van hierdie kennisgewing gevestig.

IN TERMS of this determination your occupation of the said land or premises (as well as the occupation of all other disqualified persons) for ~~Xxxxxxxxx~~/residential purposes, will be illegal as from the specified date. Your attention is invited to the notes on the reverse hereof.

Onderteken te KAAPSTAD / CAPE TOWN op hierdie 23ste dag van ..... September, ... 19 71
Signed at ..... this ..... day of .....

DEPT. VAN GEMEENSKAPSBOU

DIE STREEKVERTEENWOORDIGER
PRIVAATSAK/PRIVATE BAG 9027
23 9 1971
KAAPSTAD/CAPE TOWN
THE REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE
DEPT. OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

GEMAGTIGDE BEAMPTE
AUTHORISED OFFICER.

~~Skrap wat nie van toepassing is nie.~~
Delete whichever is not applicable.

FIGURE 6

Although other areas were also known for their diversity before and during apartheid, there is general agreement that District Six had some special if not unique characterising features. It is best described by Richard Rive[88] as having had a "mind and soul of its own." He elaborates that it was both "urban and urbane. It developed a verbal dexterity of its own. It cultivated a macabre and biting sense of humour to laugh to keep from crying. The graffito at the entrance to this slum proclaimed: 'You are now entering fairyland'" (1990: 112).

[88] The late Richard Rive was a writer, academic and former resident of District Six. 'Buckingham Palace', 'Emergency' and 'Writing Black' are among his best known works.

An estimated 60 000 people lost not only the bricks and mortar of their residences but also their community coherence, their sense of identity and belonging, and what many refer to as 'the spirit of District Six'. It was a strong spirit which sustained people as they battled life on the Cape Flats,[89] and it was not possible to replicate it in the new places where people went to live, built on the back of resentment as these areas were, complicated by increased economic hardships and a desire to be elsewhere.

Presented as an enclave of diversity in a racially defined apartheid city, District Six was not immune to being affected by its divisive laws and norms. Access to jobs, schooling and social life in particular, would have been daily reminders that lives were being regimented by the country's laws. Exclusion from civic and political life would be a reminder of discrimination, and identity cards would have specified racial classification. But in the face of all this, these residents would have had a home-base where acceptance and community were foregrounded- what bell hooks (2015) referred to as a 'homeplace': a place of repose, acceptance, solidarity and affirmation.

Slum clearance or ethnic cleansing?

By the 1960s, District Six had become a neglected ward of the city. By-laws were poorly policed which made it possible for landlords to neglect property maintenance obligations with little or no consequences. Absentee landlords justified their lack of attention to tenants' properties by keeping rentals low. The efforts by many to live in the city undetected by the authorities reduced their (ie tenants') bargaining power in terms of property maintenance. In cases where families were unable to afford their rentals, subletting was permitted. With the result, there were some sections of the District that were neglected, overcrowded and poorly serviced. But this was not the full story of District Six residences. There were buildings which were in relatively good condition, where home-owners lived in their own properties and maintained them as best they could; there were tenanted spaces – overcrowded and sparse – where tenants mitigated the impact of neglected maintenance, with immaculate housekeeping and a detailed hygiene regimen.

When criticised for the inhumane removal of people from District, the apartheid government presented 'slum clearance' as a response. A reminder that the removal was clearly a racialised act came through strongly from Helen Suzman[90] in Parliament on 23 February 1961: "You do not need a

[89] The Cape Flats is the collective name to several townships created by the apartheid government to house people who had been forcibly removed from their homes. The name is derived from it being a low-lying flatland area starting from about 15km to the southeast at the central city.

[90] The late Helen Suzman was the sole parliamentary member of the Progressive Party as from 1959 (later it became the Progressive Federal Party in 1971) and was known for her opposition to the National Party's apartheid policies. She retired from parliament in 1989 but remained politically active. https://www.sahistory.org.za/people/helen-suzman

Group Areas Act to clear slums", she offered. "There is a Slum Clearance Act[91] under which one can readily clear slums" (Western and Coles, 1997: 73).

Vivian Bickford-Smith (1990) writes about the diversity of the District Six community demographic going back to the turn of the century. He describes it as a place where poverty was certainly prevalent, but at the same time it was "undoubtedly a vibrant place" (1990: 43). He goes so far as to say that it was "arguably, one of the most cosmopolitan areas in the Cape, if not the whole of sub-Saharan Africa" (1990: 43).

A harmonious neighbourhood?

Often idealized by those who lived there as an area built on peace and harmony before its destruction, there was undoubtedly much more to District Six than being an area of perpetual, even infantile, happiness and harmony. In several oral histories kept in the sound archive of D6M, former residents tell of how Christians attended Islamic gatherings at mosques and Muslims went to Christian church services; of how no-one went hungry because food was shared and poverty was not stigmatised; of how diversity was upheld and racism and prejudice had no place. Several similar stories paint a picture of a harmonious neighbourhood, foregrounding acts of hospitality while underplaying community conflicts and tensions. The word *kanala*[92] is often used to describe this generous spirit of District Six.

Another side of the coin

In addition to these generous features which were unquestionably part of the District Six experience, there are also some lesser-circulated stories of community conflicts and incidents which reveal prejudicial behaviour, domestic violence and other crimes. This is not unexpected in an overcrowded inner-city neighbourhood where many people lived from hand-to-mouth and cheek-by-jowl. However, conflict and discord did not constitute the dominant characteristics of the area. "Despite its poverty", writes Bickford-Smith, "District Six was a relatively peaceful place to live compared to the creatures spawned by segregation and its scion, Apartheid" (1990: 43).

The point about the destruction of District Six is not that it was wrong because it was a paradisiacal place, but rather, it was wrong because of its racial motivation which resulted in the callous and inhumane displacement of families.

Bill Nasson (1990) calls for a more comprehensive and complex reading of District Six history. He refers to the familiar tropes of District Six stories, of the "quaint, folksy area, rich in novelty, snoek

[91] Slum Clearance Act of 1934

[92] 'Kanala' is a word derived from the Indonesian word for 'please'. It is common in Cape vernacular usage and is closely associated with District Six.

and slang" (Nasson, 1990: 49). These powerful often singular narratives which have persisted about the area, derived, he posits, from "their capacity to simplify realities for us, to provide meanings and stereotypes which we can grasp easily and comfortably" (1990: 49).

Personal accounts of District Six forced removals

Some people resisted the forced removals while others felt powerless, even allowing their belongings to be packed by government officials. There are those who described how, in the rough-and-tumble of moving, some of their personal belongings broke, got lost, stolen or simply left behind.

Mrs Jawayer Floris moved back to District Six in 2004 as one of the first group of returnees. I have had the opportunity to interview her several times before her return and again after she had lived there for a few months. She was a contributor to D6M's publication, *District Six Huiskombuis Food and Memory Project*.[93] In all of my conversations with her she speaks with pride about her late husband's excellent craftmanship as a cabinet-maker. He had kitted out their District Six home with built-in cupboards and with what she describes as an 'American kitchen'. She says:

> The Group Areas Act forced us to leave our home when my husband was 84. We left everything behind - all the built-in wall cupboards with the sliding doors that my husband had made. Even my front door with its ledges,windows and brass fittings. There were two green windows on each side of my front door. It was beautiful … when they demolished, people probably took quite a bit of our house. … All that I have left are a little round table and an old wardrobe that my husband made (Smith, 2016: 130).

Mrs Sheila Rolls, a participant in the *Huis Kombuis* project, reflects on their move:

> It traumatised us when the government forced us to leave our home. It was not because we had to leave in a hurry. It was just such a terrible thing to leave our home, to leave District Six. We left certain things like our iron bed behind… it is sad that we left our things there. I often wonder why we left our kitchen dresser and the hallstand behind. The hallstand was a beautiful antique and I would have liked it in my home. Our new house in Hanover Park was not that small. We could've had the hall stand or the dresser. I wish we had taken our Dover stove, too (Smith, 2016: 78).

Mrs Rolls and Mrs Floris are not alone in recounting how, in addition to things that got lost or stolen, evictees often left things behind, with regrets only coming much later. This I found to be intriguing. Many District Sixers had limited disposable income. It would have been practical for them to have

[93] '*Huis Kombuis'* literally translated into English means 'home kitchen'. It is a colloquial used to reference the comfort and familiarity of home kitchens. It is the name selected by the participants of a D6M food and memory project that they were involved in. Storytelling, crafting, design and cooking have combined to produce a book which was launched in 2016.

secured their furniture for re-use, or even for sentimental reasons. One possible explanation is that in the confusion, things might have gotten left behind. However, listening to Mrs Floris, it seems that there was a conscious decision to leave certain things. Mrs Rolls, too, indicates that they were aware of what they left behind but only more recently did she wonder as to their reasoning at the time, and the wisdom of that decision. It might be that they did not want to be reminded of a cherished way of life that was about to be lost. Also, many people had not seen the homes to which they had been scheduled to move and might have believed the rumours which described the township houses as being too small for large furniture pieces. Some even recount how government officials helped themselves to furniture, claiming the limited space in the new homes as a reason.

The removals did not take place in the same way for everyone: some people claim to have had very little time between receiving their eviction notices – ironically named by the community as 'love letters'[94] – and being forced to move. Others claim that they received the notices and then endured a long period of uncertainty before they eventually got the final date for moving. Some thought that it might not happen to them an d hoped to be spared the loss of home, while others moved ahead of being notified, keen to buffer themselves and their families from the indignity of being physically marched out of their homes. All of this took place over a protracted period of approximately 15 years during which time some families continued to live between the rubble of the homes that had been bulldozed all around them.

The late Ruth Jeftha[95], another *Huis Kombuis* project participant and storyteller at the Museum, shared her mother's story:

> My mother got her eviction orders to leave District Six in 1966 but she was one of those people who didn't want to leave the Bloemhof Flats. My father died there in 1969 and I got married to Desmond Jeftha from there in 1971.
>
> Gradually the government put pressure on people to move out of District Six. Officials brought lorries, workers packed up people's things and they moved. My mother stayed. The flats in the various blocks emptied out. The Bloemhof Flats complex slowly became vacant.
>
> …
>
> The saddest thing was that by that time everybody had moved out … They cut the electricity. Then they cut the water. She was still sitting there. (Smith, 2016: 54)

[94] The Department of Community Development delivered eviction notices to homes at various times, and the written notice came to be referred to by the community as 'love letters'.
[95] Ruth Jeftha died of COVID-19 complications at the beginning of 2021 while I was in the process of completing this thesis.

Jeftha's mother is reputed to have been the last person to have moved from that block of flats. She was eventually convinced by her family to move to Mitchells Plain and two days later she passed away. According to the family, 'heart failure' was listed as the official cause of death but they are adamant that she died of a broken heart brought on by being forced to move.

'...myth is strangely impervious to facts'[96]*: District Six mythologies*

A casual or distant reader of the District Six story could be excused for concluding that
District Six was (i) the only Cape Town forced removal; (ii) only people who were only classified as 'coloured' under apartheid were forcibly removed from the District. The volume of information that is available about District Six forced removals might have created the impression, and this is probably further exacerbated by the existence of D6M as the only museum in Cape Town dedicated to the commemoration of forced removals in apartheid South Africa. Issues of race and representation have been part of D6M's agenda for all of its 26-year life and it has been dealt with in different ways over the years. Institutional responses have ranged from 'this is not a museum of colouredness' to, in more recent years, 'let's talk about colouredness, race and ongoing prejudice.'[97]

Myth: District Six was the only area in Cape Town which was affected by forced removals

District Six life and the impact of its destruction have loomed large in the memory of numerous Capetonians. My family moved from District Six to Bonteheuwel when I was an infant so I have no memory of my own nuclear family life there. But I know it as our holiday and weekend destination of choice. Extended family members lived there until the last wave of removals in the 1980s. We visited them every weekend during which time we also attended the family church, St Philip's Anglican Church in Chapel Street. My cousins who schooled in the area recall homes being bulldozed while they were in class. They remember being particularly concerned when the destroyed homes belonged to families known to them. The sadness was more acute when a school mate was not in class the next day because their family home had been destroyed and they had had to move without an opportunity to bid farewell. They remember their own anxiety as they wondered whether their families would suffer the same fate, or whether they would be afforded the dignity of packing their belongings and saying goodbye to friends and neighbours.

[96] Ignatieff, M. (1996). *Articles of Faith* in Index on Censorship 25(5), 110-122.
[97] D6M programmes such as 'Tell your story to a born-free'; 'Reimagining the City' and opportunities for the honorary club of former residents, the Seven Steps Club, to cross boundaries by visiting sites in Langa and Lwandle are some examples of how these discussions are taken forward.

On the weekdays while at home in Bonteheuwel, District Six stories would fill our evenings. As my mother cooked a meal she would remember the time in District Six when she learned to make it; or she might remember that the stew that she was cooking was done the way an old aunt had taught her. She might think of the neighbour whose favourite treat that was. The dishes featured in D6M's *Huis Kombuis* publication were part of our daily fare, and cooking these would be accompanied by stories about street bands, games and clubs. And we were told that we did not need to make friends in the township where we lived and schooled because it was not really our home.

Several year later, I gathered that many parents schooled their children in the same way, telling them that their actual homes were somewhere other than where they lived**.** The impact was an impermanent sense of place for a generation growing up with the memory of a former home, intangible but ever-present in their lives. This stemmed from a semi-conscious decision by parents to withhold personal commitment to, and investment in, the places where they were forced to live. We were reminded to not get too attached to the place. A former beloved place (ie District Six) had been snatched away, and who was to say that it might not happen again? Loss of agency[98] had a lasting and damaging impact.

For as long as some of their friends and family still lived there, many retained the cultural connections with clubs and community traditions in the District. They enacted similar rituals of return as my own family did. At special times like the 'big days'[99] when street processions were the highlight of the holidays, carloads would park in the last few remaining ghost-like streets of District Six to be part of the music processions. For that moment, the harsh realities of township life were suspended and the displaced community was re-membered into life as the ritual of the street bands was enacted. It was therapeutic despite the fact that the accoutrement of community life such as the 'tafels[100] of hospitality were visibly absent. Over time the physical connections with our lost homes dwindled and were replaced by memories of 'those times'.

[98] Agency is a term used in social science to refer to the decision-making power or control that individuals have over their own lives and over actions affecting their lives. The political dimension of personal agency under apartheid was limited by the restrictive and unequal laws and regulations.
[99] This is a colloquial way of referring to the Christmas and New Year holiday periods.
[100] 'Tafel' is the Afrikaans word for table. Colloquially used especially in the phrase 'gooi 'n tafel' (literally 'throw a table') it refers to the practice of setting out food-laden tables on the streets outside homes along which the street bands would march. The 'tafel' was a symbol of appreciation and hospitality expressed towards the musical custodians of the community's heritage.

Across the country during the same general period, several areas were facing the same fate as District Sixers. These include Sophiatown in 1955[101]; Fietas in 1956[102]; South End in 1963 (Hendricks: 2010); and Harfield Village in 1959 (O'Connell, 2019: 37) amongst others. People from these areas were also dispersed to different racially-defined areas, and many resisted and moved with great resentment. The memories that they shared with their children were likely as wistful and filled with longing as the District Sixers' stories were. But for some reason, they did not reflect the same intensity of the vibrant memorial practices that the displaced people of District Six retained and enacted.

This has been the subject of several research speculations: what made the memory of District Six so much stronger than other areas? Whatever the reasons, it is interesting that people who did not live in District Six or who had no direct family connection to the area, also shared their own longing for a return to their leisure-time haunt. It had been the hub of music, culture, dancing and sports for non-residents. They remembered the street music, the opera and choral music, jazz and *ghoem*a music; the sports and cultural clubs, the bioscopes and the dance halls; the *koesisters* and *samoosas;* the acceptance. They helped to build the powerful iconic status of its memory.

Its location at the edge of the city has also increased its visibility. Destroyed areas which are tucked away and further from the central city are lesser known. It is hard not to notice this raw wound of undeveloped land so close to the city centre, which by its very presence serves to entrench and enhance the power of the story. Flanked on its south side by another well-known Cape Town symbol, Table Mountain, it could not go unnoticed.

Myth: The forced removal in District Six only affected coloured people

A " 'coloured person' means a person who is not a white person or a native"[103]. This is the way that the PRA of apartheid South Africa defines this racial category. Referring to people of 'mixed origin', this classificatory term continues to fuel heated and sometimes acrimonious debates depending on who is using it and to what end. It is the only group in the Act that is defined by what they are not, and it has left a residual sense of un-belonging and in-between-ness even in this post-apartheid period which is largely defined by non-racialism. The late Stan Abrahams, a former District Sixer and founder trustee of D6M shares in a life history interview which is kept in the Museum's archive, that with the onset of apartheid, "suddenly you're a non-something" (Abrahams, 1999).

[101] http://www.trevorhuddleston.org/
[102] 'Fietas, site of forced removal in Johannesburg is renamed Pageview' available on https://www.sahistory.org.za/
[103] https://omalley.nelsonmandela.org/omalley/index.php/site/q/03lv01538/04lv01828/05lv01829/06lv01838.htm (accessed 20 January 2020)

In a deeply entrenched way apartheid legislation successfully regulated all aspects of life based on race classification. For some, the constructed category gradually gained close equivalence with identity. This was not only true of coloured people. "Brief as apartheid was – relative to the much longer experience of the country's shared history – it burnt into the popular memory the 'facts' of superiority and subordination" (Soudien, 2008: 21, 22).

In the late 1800s just after District Six had become a municipal district, the jostle for housing was already evident with newly built labourers' cottages being in high demand. During this period "thousands of Xhosas were driven off their land, and the Transkei and Ciskei[104] reserves were within one generation transformed into mere labour-reservoirs" (Kinkead-Weekes, 1985: 56). This was part of a clear strategy during the tenure of Prime Minister at the time, Cecil John Rhodes.[105] He made it very clear that "every black man cannot have three acres and a cow. We have to face the question and it must be brought home to them that in the future nine-tenths of them will have to spend their lives in daily labour, in physical work, in manual labour" (Kinkead-Weekes, 1985: 56). Africans were desperate to find work in the city even though policies were hostile towards them and were geared towards excluding them from the formal labour market. Merriman, treasurer of the Colony and Commissioner for Lands, Mines and Public Works expressed his " 'doubt whether the Western Province will ever be satisfied with the Kaffir. He is a savage and is just about as inferior to the Cape boys as we are superior to the Cape boys' " (Kinkead-Weekes, 1985: 55).

Africans conceded to work for very low wages and were not able to afford decent rental stock. Many found themselves in overcrowded cheap rooms or squatting in areas in and around the city including the docks area where some had found jobs. "Perhaps the most dramatic case was a smallish house in Horstley Street which had only one toilet and one hundred occupants!" (Bickford-Smith, 1990: 40). Horstley Street in District Six became a site where many of the dock-workers moved to when they were forced out of the neighbouring suburb of Woodstock and from squatter camps in the city.

The 1901 bubonic plague breakout at the Cape Town docks became a convenient opportunity for the African residents of Horstley Street to be forcibly removed to a temporary transit camp which later became a more permanent location known as Uitvlugt. Africans were stigmatized as being the carriers of the infection and under Section 15 of the *Public Health Amendment Act No. 23of 1897*, were

[104] The Transkei and the Ciskei were Bantustans...

[105] Statements such as these and several others reflect the racist mindset of Cecil John Rhodes, operating within the colonising mindset that has been the cause of untold suffering on the African continent. The ongoing presence of the statues of Rhodes in Cape Town represented an uncritical celebration of the 'civilising' work carried out under his leadership. This was challenged in 2015 by UCT students. Led by Chumani Maxwele, the statue of Rhodes was pelted with human excrement which catapulted the campaign for its removal. This set in motion a global campaign calling for the removal of all remnants of colonial symbols.

moved. This racialised removal from District Six is often omitted from public record. The fact that it is no longer in living memory has contributed to its omission particularly because it is part of a pre-apartheid history.

The Native Urban Areas Act of 1923 was an example of pre-apartheid legislation which specified that all African men living in urban areas were required to report their arrival, register their job contracts and report job losses. Any Africans who could not find work in an urban area could be compelled to leave by police and native commissioners" (Unterhalter 1987: 7). This was an early version of apartheid's homeland[106] or Bantustan policy which was aimed at stripping all Africans of any political rights as well as citizenship of South Africa.

As a result of such non-GAA displacements combined with the impact of the Pass Laws, the remaining residents who still lived there by 11 February 1966, were mostly those people who had been classified as coloured.

African experiences of District Six living

Nomvuyo Ngcelwane, classified as African under apartheid, has curated a room in the D6M.[107] In addition to providing a visual reference of typical District Six living quarters, it is also an opportunity to reaffirm the presence of African families who lived in District Six before it was declared 'whites only.' It is an evidence-based story of photographs, documents and artefacts that challenge the limitations of viewing District Six exclusively through a lens of colouredness. As an appendix to her autobiography, *Sala Kahle District Six*, Ngcelwane provides a list of approximately 200 African families who lived in District Six.[108] She also provides the names of the streets where they lived making it a valuable reference. Supporting Ngcelwane in the telling of her story is one of the ways that D6M has approached issues of racism and prejudice through the activation and 'evidence' of living memory. In keeping with the methodology embedded in the current permanent exhibition *Digging Deeper*, it is an excavation below the surface of the oft-told District Six stories and has added new dimensions of knowledge and awareness. It has enabled many discussions about racial identity and assumptions made by both young and old.

[106] 'Homelands' was the word that came to be used for the initial 'bantustans' created by the apartheid government. Homelands was felt to be a 'less offensive but inaccurate term'. These were areas set aside for African people to prevent them from residing permanently in urban areas. Permits to be in urban areas were temporary and based on the labour needs of white capital and could be withdrawn at any time. Essentially the homeland system was geared towards permanently excluding African people from the South African political system with the ultimate intention for all these areas to become separate and self-governing. https://omalley.nelsonmandela.org/omalley/index.php/site/q/03lv03445/04lv03446/05lv03473.htm (accessed 25 February 2020)

[107] 'Nomvuyo's Room' forms part of the 'Digging Deeper' exhibition which was opened in 2000.

[108] Interestingly, in personal communication with the Western Cape Regional Land Claims Commissioner in October 2020, I learned that there were only 32 verified African claims for District Six. The low number might be because some of the claims will be verified in the next round.

FIGURE 7

FIGURE 8

District Six and non-racialism

Despite D6M's constant framing of its work through the lens of non-racialism, the residue of colouredness still lingers with it. The double-bind that D6M finds itself in is as follows: while wanting to contribute to the constitutional cause of non-racial nation-building and equality, at the same time it does not want to deprive people who still feel excluded and marginalized, from engaging in a space within which they find meaning and acceptance (ie largely coloured former residents).

Occasionally local visitors would comment that this is the museum for 'us coloureds'; or comments would be made by former residents such as 'they' – referring to African people – did not live there, or 'they' must not be allowed to take away the little bit of heritage that is 'ours'. Occasionally these utterances are countered by others who have had different experiences and hold different viewpoints but many times this view is held as an absolute. It is an ongoing dilemma.

In trying to understand the narratives of people who insist that District Six was a community where everyone was welcomed, but at the same time are very clear about who is entitled to claim a District Six connection, D6M draws on the approaches to orality as put forward by Italian oral historian, Alessandro Portelli. He holds the view that discrepancies about the forensic details in testimonies are clues to people's current concerns and the meanings that they want their messages to convey. In his article about the a steelworker named Luigi Trastulli who died during a protest in the Italian industrial town of Terni, he details how the different versions of the event has helped him to understand the implicit messages that narrators were attempting to communicate based on their current concerns. He claims that these intentions operate on a subconscious level, not from a desire to mislead by presenting falsehoods (Portelli, 1991).

It helps one to understand how people can simultaneously hold contradictory views. On the one hand someone might regale an audience with a story about District Six in the past where 'no one saw colour' and where they were able to live in racial harmony. In a next moment the same person might comment that District Six was a place for 'us coloureds', contradicting the notion of diversity and racial harmony. Using Portelli's frame allows one to get behind the messages. Current feelings of being marginalized by government and in the national narrative have exacerbated a kind of 'coloured nationalism' – a return to a ring-fenced ethnic identity in order to assert the group's right to be recognised.

In terms of the land restitution process, the delay in the rebuilding of their homes has resulted in high levels of anxiety about being denied restitution. These feelings of ongoing exclusion seem to have crept into their stories of the past, resulting in some people expressing their rights to return as a desire to exclude whoever they can in an attempt to secure their own claims.

Residential life after forced removals was shaped by race. Negative experience of township life, of violence, substance abuse and unemployment had the overall impact of creating extreme pessimism. When all taken together, the overall message that District Sixers needed to emphasise was of positivity and coherence that existed before their lives were disrupted. In their narratives it translated into the opposite of everything that township life represented. It spoke to their looking back at a time of peace, harmony and not caring about racial categories.

The way in which I make sense of this is to regard the assertions that people did not see colour as not to be taken literally. It is a statement about harmonious living more than about race. I have listened to narratives which indicate that people did indeed see colour and they commented on it, but it was not the basis for exclusion. Sometimes skin colour and other physical features were mocked and became the material for jovial jibing in the spirit of what has come to be known as the acerbic humour typical of District Six. For example, in his novel *Buckingham Palace*, Richard Rive speaks of his dark-skinned neighbours, whose surname was Knight. One brother was nicknamed 'Last night' because of his dark skin and the darker-skinned brother was nicknamed 'The night before last'. This is just one example.

Studies in the workings of memory posit it as being a present formulation of the past influenced by present concerns. "… memory is, by definition, a term that directs our attention not to the past, but to the past-present relation. It is because 'the past' has this living active existence in the present that it matters politically" (Field, 2002: 7).

In other parts of South Africa

In many communities across the country, people organised themselves to resist being forcibly removed. Leading up to the forced removals in Sophiatown, Gauteng, for example, there were several community-led demonstrations and petitions to try to stop the evictions and the destruction of homes which took place from February 1955.[109] South End in Port Elizabeth was declared 'whites only' in 1963, with removals starting in 1965. There were several resistance initiatives: protest meetings, marches and letters to newspapers. [110] In Duncan Village in the Eastern Cape, the resistance to forced removals was strong. In the 1960s the government managed to move nearly 100 000 people to a newly-created township in the Bantustan of Ciskei- Mdantsane. It tried unsuccessfully to move the rest of the community but the ongoing resistance rendered it very difficult and from 1985 onwards no further attempts were made.[111]

[109] https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2016/apr/11/story-cities-19-johannesburg-south-africa-apartheid-purge-sophiatown

[110] http://thecasualobserver.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/South-End-A-Biography-of-a-Vanished-Community.pdf https://www.southendmuseum.co.za/

[111] https://www.newframe.com/shack-dwellers-resist-possible-de-densification-plans/

While all of the resistance attempts did not have the desired impact of stopping displacement in its entirety, they contributed towards whittling away at apartheid's oppressive laws and towards building a culture of resistance, keeping alive the possibilities of strengthening agency, action and solidarity.

F. Resistance

The HODS Conference came about in a milieu in which resistance and repression were familiar features. The 1980s were "marked by a growing mobilization of resistance and was a time of crisis and realignment of the regime" (Unterhalter 1987: 122). It had imposed a prolonged national state of emergency[112] to clamp down on organised militant actions. This came after a period of renewed mass mobilisation which had been initiated by the student led uprising of 1976 (Seekings 2000). Issues of land and displacement were always at the core of the struggles of the country's oppressed people and these were taken up on several platforms across the country.

Pre-apartheid

Dating back to the early days of the Union of South Africa and even before, there had been ongoing dissatisfaction about the exclusion of black people from political and economic rights. Resistance led to the formation of a number of organisations. These include the African Peoples' Organisation (APO) formed in 1902, the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union in 1915 the National Liberation League (NLL) in 1935, the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM) in 1943, the African National Congress (ANC) formed in 1912, and the South African Communist Party (SACP) formed in 1921. The Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) was formed later, in 1959[113].

In the late 1930s the National Liberation League which had its offices in the Hanover Building in District Six, led protests against the proposed introduction of segregation proposed by the United Party of the coalition government. 'This was the 'Class Areas Bill' in 1939 and it would have enforced urban residential segregation across the country' (Bickford-Smith *et al*, 1999: 148). On 27 March 1939 the NEUF and the NLL organised a protest meeting at the Grand Parade which was attended by an estimated 20 000 people. The legislation was not implemented, making this a significant victory for the liberation movements at the Cape during this period. The start of World War Two was also considered to be a factor which impacted on the Bill not being actioned, according to Bickford Smith *et al* (1999 148). This Bill foreshadowed apartheid's Group Areas Act.

In the face of several local and international campaigns and growing opposition, the state continued to silence people through banning orders, detentions and other forms of repression. Some of the most significant national mass mobilisation campaigns were the Congress of the People in 1955 where the

[112] A national state of emergency was in place from 1986 to 1990.
[113] www.sahistory.org.za

Freedom Charter was adopted, the Women's March against the Pass Laws in 1956, and the Sharpeville protests and resultant massacre in 1961.

Several sectors were involved in resistance: labour, religious, academic, youth, student and civic amongst others. Within the broad movement there were occasionally strong ideological differences which led to conflict and tensions in the leadership structures. One of the more impactful disputes took place in 1959 when a breakaway group from the ANC formed the PAC, having strong differences about the issue of African nationalism as opposed to non-racialism. Despite their differences the groupings usually managed to find campaign-based grounds for solidarity against the common enemy, ie the apartheid state.

Ideological leanings

By the 1980s when HODS was formed, the ideological tendency represented by the NEUM which had its base in District Six, was strongly represented in organisations and individuals who were based in and around the area. The NEUM was renowned for its emphasis on formal education as a major pathway to the liberation of black people. It also had an unwavering stance on non-collaboration with those seen to have any association with apartheid structures. Trafalgar High School, one of the oldest schools in the area, was known for its academic excellence and political education with some of its teachers being associated with the NEUM. The emphasis on education was both a source of its strength and of critique leveled against it, as it led to an exclusivity that was unintended. Many students and activists who did not display a strong academic bent did not find a place in the movement, as well as many who had limited levels of literacy, which was most of the oppressed masses of people.

The other main ideological strand at the time was represented by organisations and individuals who aligned themselves with the United Democratic Front (UDF)- led mass democratic movement which was formed in 1983 (Seekings 2000). Guiding tenets for the UDF were contained in the Freedom Charter of the ANC while the NEUM followed a ten-point plan. The UDF also emphasized education, but it included non-formal learning, formal education and popular education in its approach. It managed to appeal to a broader base of people including factory and farm workers, and the unemployed.

D6M education manager Mandy Sanger writes about D6M's early close association with the NEUM, with the HODS Committee being made up largely from organisations "outside of the popular mass movement. They were kept outside of this movement by the sectarianism of the United Democratic Front (UDF) and ANC activists, as well as their own aloofness – an unwillingness to be tainted by what they perceived as the collaborationist or populist tendencies within the UDF and ANC aligned structures" (Sanger 2008: 103).

Over time D6M has come to be recognised as embracing a broader 'non-aligned' stance. In different periods there have been leanings towards one direction or the other but none of them have been of the gravity that have led to a split. In reality there was more collaboration than might be apparent from this brief description which presents the two 'sides' as being dichotomies.

The HODS campaign came to life in this context.

District Six resistance: individual

Some people refused to move and stayed on in their homes even when other members of their family had moved out. They stayed on even after all services such as water and sanitation were discontinued. They only moved when almost literally being carried from the building, after everything around them had been bulldozed, much like the story of Ruth Jeftha's mother recounted earlier.

Others moved out, nurturing their District Six memories in different ways. Wherever they lived, they created or participated in rituals of remembrance as part of the diaspora. In their frequently repeated narrations they imagined a time when the community would be able to reconstitute itself and reinstate some features of the lost spirit of place. Through their memories they were able to share with their children that a different quality of life other than that afforded by apartheid was possible, because they had lived it. This was important for a generation who had not known any other life except the racially divided township lives into which they had been born. They represented a generation that had no real lived connection to the time and place that were so central to the lives of their parents, older relatives and neighbours.

Responses from this younger generation to what seemed to some as an obsessive preoccupation with the 'golden days' of District Six were varied. Some distanced themselves from a past to which they struggled to relate; others absorbed the intensity of the idyllic life and its traumatic ending through the memories which surrounded their elders. They were usually the ones who attended the land restitution meetings on behalf of their parents, who filled out the forms and collated the required supporting documents. They were the ones who would most likely experience a displacement of their own memories by having grown up with what Marianne Hirsch describes as "overwhelming inherited memories, to be dominated by narratives that preceded one's birth or one's own consciousness, is to risk having one's own life stories displaced" (Hirsch, 2012: 5). Speaking about growing up as a child of parents who had survived the Holocaust, Marianne Hirsch uses the word 'postmemory' to refer to the specific association that children of survivors of trauma have with their parents' memories. This tenacious refusal to let the memory of District Six dissipate was an important part of resistance on a family level.

The organised resistance to the forced removals in District Six was intense for a brief period only. It was surprisingly fragmented and not sustained by a mass of residents themselves. Crain Soudien, a

founder of the HODS campaign, notes that much of the resistance was offered by people who were not themselves residents. He comments that the struggles "appear to have been conducted on behalf of the community instead of by the community itself" (1990: 143). Several oral narrations by former residents indicate that they felt broken and powerless in the face of the mighty force of the apartheid government, and many felt that they had no choice but to move.

In the film *Last Supper in Horstley Street,* Amin and Latiefa Hendricks express unhappiness that they had no choice in the matter when they were forced to move to an area on the Cape Flats, Belhar. Latiefa laments: "It's a shame to be a coloured today. You are forced into things that you don't want to do, don't want to go."[114]

Former resident Noor Ebrahim in his memoir *Noor's story: My Life in District Six*, reflects: "The day I left my house in District Six, never to return, I knew that my life had changed forever. In bitterness and anger, I accepted what was inevitable"(2011: 83).

Nomvuyo Ngcelwane (2018: 151) describes her father's reaction when he comes to tell the family about their pending move, after he had attended a meeting at the Cape Town Drill Hall to hear what their fate would be. When quizzed about whether he had asked the authorities any questions, his response was simply: "Do you think that the Boere[115] will ever give a black person a chance to argue about what they had already decided?" (2018: 151).

Naz Gool-Ebrahim remembers the day that the District was officially proclaimed 'whites only' in 1966. In her memoir – *The Truth is on the Walls* – she recalls the radio announcement that the 60 000 residents were to be removed being done with "with the same nonchalance as the weather forecast. The hush that fell over the District following the news lasted for two hours. But by late afternoon it was business as usual. The sounds of Hanover Street – the neighbourhood's pulse – had returned to normal. It seemed to me that some people didn't comprehend the reality of the situation, telling themselves it wasn't going to happen to them"(2011: 106).

My intention is not to depict District Sixers as having been indifferent to their own future when their neighbourhood was crumbling around them, nor do I want to suggest that they were apolitical. While there were objections, expressions of indignation, and attempts to appeal to the humanity of the government officials, there seem to have been very few attempts by District Sixers themselves to organise collectively and strategically. It might have been the absence of outspoken and visible leadership of the ilk of Cissie Gool[116] or her father Dr Abdurahman[117] who had the community's

[114] Wilson, L (1983). 'Last Supper in Horstley Street'.

[115] The term 'boere' is used colloquially here and refers to the Afrikaners associated with the apartheid state power.

[116] Cissie (Zainunnisa) Gool was an anti-apartheid activist and civil-rights leader in South Africa. She was the daughter of Dr Abdurahman who was a medical doctor and at some stage a City councillor representing District

confidence and support in fighting for their rights. Whatever the reasons, people expressed their dissatisfaction on individual levels more than on a collective level by the time that the removal had become a reality. It is also possible that people were demoralised and exhausted. Many were overwhelmed by the thought of their already dire economic circumstances being worsened by the removal and were possibly immobilised by this impending reality.

FIGURE 9

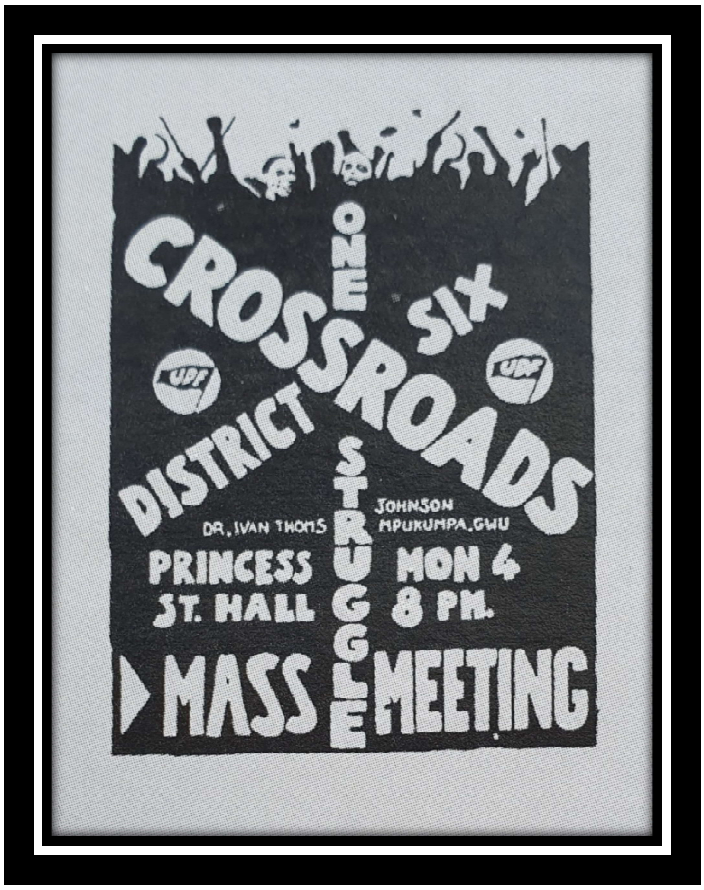


FIGURE 10

Six. She was a founder member of the National Liberation league together with James La Guma and Johnny Gomas. She was well-respected by District Sixers as representing their interests and spoke out frequently against segregation.

[117] Dr Abdullah Abdurahman was the president of the APO from 1905 until his death in 1940.

District Six resistance: collective

Attempts to organize protests in the 1960s were fragmented and short-lived there were several attempts as summarised below.

The District Six Defence Committee (DSDC) and the Disrict Six Association (DSA)

The DSDC was formed in 1966 and became the DSA in 1967. With Lofty Adams[118] as the chair of its steering committee its goal was to raise awareness of the human impact of the destruction of District Six and to share facts and figures. It had not developed a concrete campaign of resistance and protest. Despite some well-supported interventions, the committee was unable to sustain the momentum garnered in its early days, and its support dwindled. There also appears to have been issues of credibility with its leadership and a loss of confidence in their ability to lead the community (Soudien 1990).

The DSDC re-emerged with a reconfigured leadership and an amended focus, as the DSA. With 'Babs' Essop[119] as its leader, there seems to have been an acceptance of the inevitability of the removals, and a preoccupation with the interests of business and property owners (Soudien,1990) more than the rights and interests of the tenants of District Six who constituted the majority of the affected parties. The DSA also had a short lifespan and began to disintegrate during 1968.

Although the above two organisations were formed at a time when removals had not yet been implemented, their inability to inspire the community to unite in action, led to their quick demise. It might have left District Sixers disillusioned about the potential of organisational leadership to make a difference.

The Friends of District Six (FODS) and the Rent, Residents and Rates Association (RRR)

There was a hiatus in organised resistance between 1966 and 1979 when the FODS and the RRR were formed. It seemed that by this time the community had largely come to accept the inevitability of their fate and many had already moved. Individual protests, campaigns by religious leaders from the area and protests organised mainly by white liberal groups such as the Black Sash[120] continued and these served to keep District Six and forced removals more generally, in the public eye. However, this was not enough. The gradual disintegration of the community together with the power of apartheid legal

[118] Lofty Adams was a member of the Labour Party which was regarded as being in at the behest of the apartheid National Party.
[119] 'Babs' Essop was also a member of the Labour Party.
[120] The full name of the Black Sash was originally 'The Women's Defence of the Constitution League' which was started in 1955. At the time they consisted mainly of white middle-class English-speaking women who opposed apartheid policies by means of marches, demonstrations, vigils etc. They were identifiable by the black sashes that were draped over one shoulder.

and repressive state apparatus, combined to ensure that the bulldozers arrived as planned and flattened the homes and landmarks of this once vibrant residential community.

Naz Gool-Ebrahim's home was in the Dry Dock[121] area, and in conversation with Father Basil van Rensburg from the Holy Cross Catholic Church in District Six, she set out to build support for the new organisation which would work towards saving Dry Dock as well as the remaining homes in District Six. This led to the creation of the RRR, a 'next phase' of the Ministers' Fraternal which had been active in the area and had presented a prayerful presence, calling for a stop to the removals.

The RRR saw itself as the mouthpiece for the remnant of the community (Soudien 1990) and continued the call started by Father van Rensburg, for the 1966 proclamation to be reversed. He advocated for the area to resume its former identity as a home for all.

The RRR conducted a number of campaigns, some of which managed to rally large numbers of people to support it. They collected signatures for a petition calling for residents to be permitted to remain, and also campaigned against the Cape Technikon[122] being allowed to build a campus for white students on the ground where family homes once stood. While the RRR had some successes in these campaigns, the time in which it was active placed it in a disadvantageous position to effect dramatic and lasting change in terms of the forced removals which were already in full swing. The energy required to sustain the RRR waned, many people had already been forcibly removed, and it eventually existed only nominally.

Fr Basil van Rensburg remained crucially involved and was instrumental in drawing attention to District Six from industry leaders in the international community. An idea that he championed was an appeal to a consortium of companies to purchase the District Six land for the community rather than for their own commercial interests. The idea managed to generate some interest but never came to fruition. The organisation all but fizzled out by 1986, having contributed substantially to raising awareness across the world about the plight of District Sixers. A later intervention by British Petroleum South Africa (BPSA) in 1985 was a version of Fr Basil's proposal, but by then it had evolved into a model that was not acceptable to the community (this is referred to in more detail in the next paragraphs).

[121] The Dry Dock section of District Six was the area where many of the dock workers lived.
[122] The Cape Technikon was built over a large part of the District Six land that had once been people's homes. It was intended as an institution for white students going back to the late 1980s. It is currently known as the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT).

Save our Silvertree campaign and Hands off District Six (HODS) campaign

The 'Save our Silvertree' campaign of 1984 and other smaller initiatives culminated in the HODS movement of 1987 (Soudien, 1990: 144). It was an alliance of organisations and individuals committed to ensuring that the apartheid plan of rebuilding District Six as a White Group Area was never fulfilled. Its existence was spurred by the threat of the BPSA development. HODS was formed in 1987 and the work of memory in District Six, and the protection of the land, was already present in its deliberations. This was the beginnings of what was to become the District Six Museum.

F. 'Hands off District Six' Conference

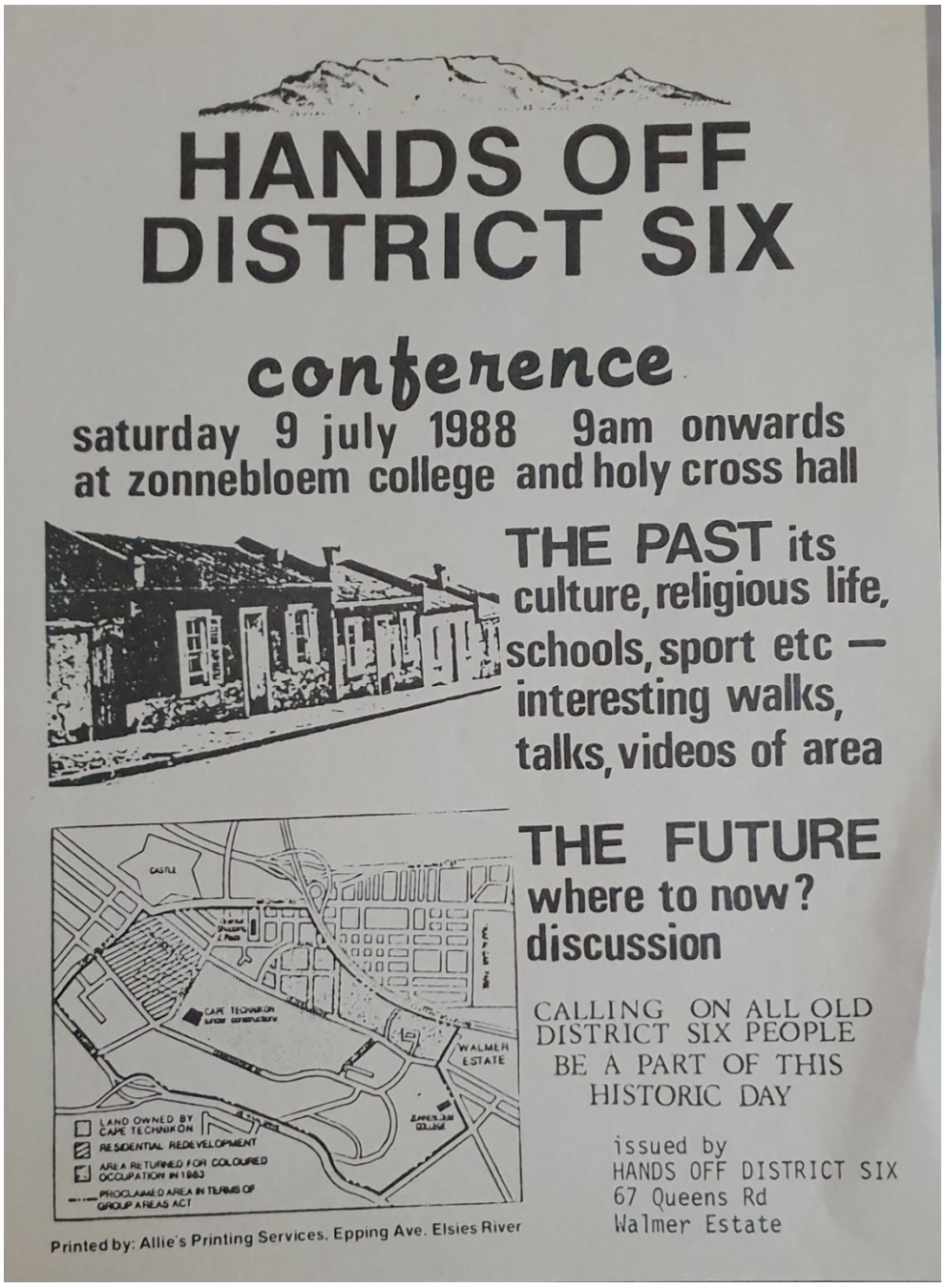


FIGURE 11

"Nearly 1 000 people attended an all-day conference on District Six held on the site on Saturday morning under the auspices of the 'Hands off District Six' Committee", reported the Cape Times of Monday 11 July 1988. Talks, videos, slide shows, panel discussions, a photographic exhibition and site walks formed part of this day-long conference on Saturday 8 July 1988. By this time the destruction of District Six was all but complete and there was almost no community left to save. However, the conference started thinking about the preservation of the vacant site and about the power of memorialisation. The possibility of District Sixers returning to the place from which they had been displaced, was also discussed.

BPSA had presented a plan which was being marketed as a generous project which would benefit 'the community', and was positioned by BPSA as its attempt to mitigate the damage done by apartheid's forced removals. The value of the proposed investment was R 100 million (SAIRR Survey: 1986, part 1). A condition which it presented to government was that District Six be declared an 'open area'. It was mooted as an opportunity to develop a model that could be replicated in other areas which had endured racially-based forced removals as a sign to those affected by removals, and to the world, that change was afoot. BPSA was reminded by Mr Chris Heunis, Minister of Constitutional Development and Planning at the time, that the country's laws made no provision for 'open areas', but permits could be applied for by people who wanted to live in an area which had been designated for a different race group.

The reluctance by the government to concede to an 'open area' in District Six was but one of the challenges encountered by BPSA. The challenge of getting the broad community to support its plan was another. Their additional commitment to funding 'open education' in District Six as well as other areas was definitely enticing, but the broader context of apartheid was brought into the picture.

Realising that they needed large-scale community buy-in, BPSA approached WOSAWA in 1987 to engage in consultation but WOSAWA called for broader representation and indicated that they whould not negotiate with BP without a larger community presence. An open meeting to discuss the BPSA proposal was convened in October 1987, and the banner coalition – HODS – was formed, aimed at strengthening the protest campaign. The HODS initiative presented the community position most coherently:

In a report with spokesperson Anwah Nagia, the Weekend Argus reports him as saying:

> *How can we, by some magic wand, wipe away the past and enjoy an Alice-in-Wonderland patch when not even two metres out of District Six you are back in apartheid South Africa? … The entire Group Areas Act has to go before legitimate community talks about District Six's future can be engineered.* (Weekend Argus, 18 June 1988)

This was a non-negotiable from the HODS perspective and it was a major sticking point between members of the community and BPSA. HODS believed that the initiative would create a false sense of the state of racial discrimination in the country, while BPSA believed that it could be a good start. HODS believed that presenting the community with a plan and asking for their input did not constitute authentic consultation, while BPSA believed that the model of consultation that they had planned,was adequate. It was during this period that thinking about site-specific memorialisation began to emerge from HODS – although it is unlikely that those involved would have used the term at that time.

This indicates that as far back as the 1980s, this thinking preceded a 'sites of conscience' perspective that was to find formal expression in 1999 when the Museum became one of the 9 founding members of the *International Coalition of Historic Site Museums of Conscience*.[123]

"HODS, which represents political, religious and sporting organisations, believes the area is 'salted earth' and should be left untouched until the Group Areas Act is repealed in its entirety" (The Argus, 3 October 1988). HODS called the BPSA plan 'window dressing' and was adamant that it could not give its support to a programme that was based on 'piecemeal change.' Richard Rive, quoted in Soudien (1990: 172) refers to some basic demands which needed to be met, in order to pave the way for discussions about real change. These included the lifting of the state of emergency and the release of all political detainees.

> *... the Hands Off District Six (HODS) campaign has called for a complete freeze on all development in the area until such time that the Group Areas Act is scrapped in its entirety.*
>
> *They argue development of the land should take only then take place through negotiations involving those people who had been forcibly removed from District Six.*
>
> *Mr Anwar Nagia, spokesperson for the HODS committee, said: 'We are not interested in compromise, in open or non-racial areas – small pockets scattered around the city.*
>
> *'The only way in which the wrongs of the Group Areas Act can be redressed is by total abolition of the Act and for the future of the District to be decided by its former inhabitants,' he said.* (The Star, 10 October 1988)

[123] This Coalition is now known as the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience (ICSOC). It was initiated by the Tenement Museum in New York in 1999 and D6M was one of the nine founding member sites. Further reference to this is made in Chapter 3.

Two major resolutions were passed at the HODS conference. The first was that all future plans for District Six's future development should take place in the context of full democracy in South Africa and in consultation with those who were forcibly removed. The second was that a place of memory should be established (Layne, 2001: 57).

In this way D6M had its beginnings in the HODS campaign and is firmly linked to it, historically. The link to activism in order to effect change was implicit in its founding, Those engaged in the formative discussions self-identified in multiple ways. They were former residents eager to return to the area, members of faith communities, educators, leaders of sports and cultural organisations, activists, artists, and academics. The founding group identified the need for healing, for correcting the historical record, which had been silent on the injustices been meted out to oppressed communities in South Africa, and to be part of reclaiming agency in different ways. D6M continues to reap the benefits of this steadfast beginning.

H. Conclusion

Viewed within its historical context, the creation of a museum as a vehicle to advocate for social justice and as a site of transformation might have seemed counter-intuitive. It was at a time when museums in South Africa were closely associated with the country's colonial past and the maintenance of the status quo and there was no local precedent of a museum that was in the forefront of social change. At that juncture, South African museums had been largely untouched by the global 'new museology' movement that had started in the 1970s, when museums across the world were called upon to respond to critiques of being a waste of public money, being exclusive and disconnected from people. Museums as experienced by black South Africans at the time were places of exclusion where representation provided the rationale for inequality. Museums were neither friendly nor empowering spaces, nor were they obvious sites of struggle and for reclamation.

Despite this, D6M was catapulted into its journey, finding its formal launch in 1994, the year which birthed the new South Africa. It was to continue its struggle for the land in a new and different way: in a new time, with new laws and new tools at its disposal.

Clearly the past is still with us. The legacies of displacement and the violence of oppression – whether under colonial or apartheid rule – rear their troubled heads even in this time that South Africa is trying to remake itself. The repeal of oppressive laws and the introduction of new rights-based laws are important steps in this remaking, but in the interests of wanting to 'move on' swiftly and become something different from what we were in the past, denial and 'un-remembering' still saturate our present.

As a nation we need the protection of the law. At the same time, we know that invoking legal frameworks are not sufficient for us to a forge rights-based future which is secure in its dignified and respectful base.

The "sobering cognizance that there are limits to the South African 'miracle'" (Frieslaar and Zulu, 2020: 18) begs the question: what else do we need to do in order to bring about deep and lasting change – particularly achieving housing justice and restitution for all who are entitled to it? In the days of apartheid we spoke with easy abandon about 'revolution', 'radical change' and 'overthrow'; they become an awkward vocabulary when speaking into a new South African context. However, it is clear that 'transition', 'transformation' and 'renewal' are not providing the drastic discursive shifts that we need.

At the end of the period just discussed, D6M exists as a notional construct within the 'Hands Off District Six' movement only and has no institutional form as yet. It is in the process of being incubated, preparing for a robust first phase of life. Its mission was being shaped as it positioned itself as being an agent of change in the years to come. Just as human beings participate in history as both actors and narrators (Trouillot, 2015), so did D6M become both actor and narrator of histories that colonialism and apartheid had silenced.

CHAPTER TWO

Transitions

Circa 1990 - 1999

National

District Six

1990

Abolition of Racially Based Land Measures Act

1991

1992

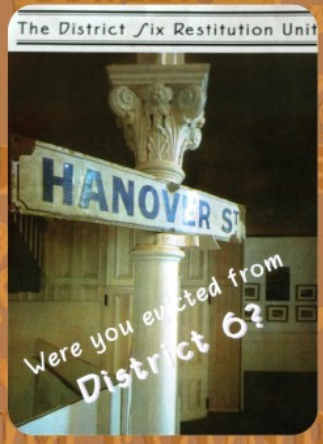
Exhibition and D6M project launch

1994

Opening of 'Streets' exhibition

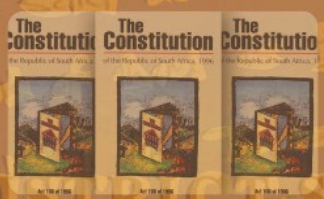
TRC

1995



Constitution ratified

1996



Closing of land claims process

1998

The time for the healing of wounds has come.
The moment to bridge the chasms that divide us has come.
The time to build is upon us.
We have, at last, achieved our political emancipation. We pledge ourselves to liberate all our people from the continuing bondage of poverty, deprivation, suffering, gender and other discrimination.
…
Never, never and never again shall it be that this beautiful land will again experience the oppression of one by another and suffer the indignity of being the skunk of the world.
Let freedom reign
The sun shall never set on so glorious a human achievement!
God bless Africa!

Extract from the late Nelson Mandela's inauguration speech as President of South Africa
10 May 1994

Do you know what young people want for South Africa? Have you asked? Do you know what we envision for the future? I mean a lot of people are speaking here as if the system can be fixed or if it can be mended or, if we have enough dialogue, we can somehow rebuild. But for us, we see the system as broken and needing to be completely overhauled. We aren't at the same point of reference. We already didn't see this government as a feasible pathway to a better South Africa.

Comment by Jordan Pieters in *The South Africa we want to live in* (2020)

A. Introduction to Chapter 2

Soon after the birth of the new South Africa[124], the ANC-led Government of National Unity (GNU) placed issues of heritage, culture and national identity on the agenda in discussions about building the 'rainbow nation' (Marschall, 2010; Frieslaar and Zulu, 2020). It was a time of national exhilaration and a celebratory sense of achievement, tempered very soon after by the troubled logistics of implementing the steps to build a lasting, rights-based democracy.

D6M shares a birth year with the new South Africa, with the timing and the milieu into which it was born, enabling it to creatively occupy the form of a 'museum' – with all the limitations of its colonial association – in an emancipatory way. It was able to enter the fray "relatively untainted and unburdened by an inheritance of old collections and outdated museums classificatory systems" (Rassool, 2006: 294). Existing museums were called upon to embark on a process of transformation, reinforced by then President Mandela at the opening of Robben Island as the first major new institution of the democratic South Africa: "When our museums and monuments preserve the whole of our diverse heritage, when they are inviting of the public and interact with the changes all around them, then they will strengthen our attachment to human rights, mutual respect and democracy, and help prevent these ever again being violated" (Mandela: 1997).

The trauma of land dispossession, economic exclusion, job reservation, imprisonment, torture and politically-motivated killings were part of the colonial and apartheid legacy. The time had come for the language of nation-building centred around narratives of freedom, democracy, equality and all that it implied, to dominate.

In this chapter I will reflect on selected moments in South Africa's recent past, which includes the transition from apartheid to democracy. It was a time when discriminatory laws needed to be abolished and new laws had to be promulgated. It was time for a new nation to be built.

I will draw attention to other transformative processes which include transitions in the global museum sector, South Africa's heritage and museum sector and significantly, D6M's transition from a movement to an institution. In terms of legislation I will refer to the *Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act 3, of 1995* which led to the formation of the TRC, the *Abolition of Racially Based Land Measures Act No. 108 of 1991*,[125] and more especially the *Restitution of Land Rights Act No. 22 of 1994 (RLRA)*, the *National Heritage Resources Act No. 25 of 1999 (NHRA)*. Truth-telling, symbolic reparations, transitional justice mechanisms, memorialisation and heritage emerge as nation-building tools and the TRC hearings occupy centre stage both nationally and globally.

[124] South Africans regard the date of the first democratic elections, 27 April 1994, as the start of the new South Africa.
[125] Government Gazette, 28 June 1991. Volume 312, Number 13341.

It is against this backdrop that D6M starts its life. *Streets: Retracing District Six* is its first exhibition as a museum in a building, which opens on 10 December[126] 1994, two years after it launched the museum as a concept. It soon gains recognition for its public programming and for its ability to build and strengthen connections with its natural and extended community.[127] A sister organisation is formed in 1997, namely the District Six Beneficiary and Redevelopment Trust (D6BRT) which works very closely with D6M in terms of practical advocacy for the rights of land claimants. The building which is to become D6M's home emerged as a 'safe space' for claimant conversations, a space to be taken seriously in the work of recovery, memory and restorative justice. I will reflect on matters pertaining to land restitution as it finds practical implementation in District Six and also more broadly. This period of transition is significant in negotiating the meaning and terms of restitution and despite several setbacks, claimants remained generally positive about its imminent outcome which was very different from the current low morale and loss of belief in the process which currently prevails.

Despite the gains of our democracy, the country remains troubled by poverty, unemployment and ongoing violations of human rights. The majority of people feel excluded from the benefits of being part of a new, rights-based nation, and from government processes where their voices can be heard. In this section I will reflect on some of these challenges which, vast though they are, should not be insurmountable.

[126] 10 December is International Human Rights Day, marking the anniversary of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, one of the reasons that the day was selected to emphasise D6M's human rights focus.
[127] I will spend some time in the next chapter focusing on the various concepts of 'community' as used by D6M.

B. South Africa's political transition

We the people of South Africa,

Recognise the injustice of our past;

Honour those who suffered for justice and freedom in our land;

Respect those who have worked to build and develop our country; and

Believe that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity.

We therefore, through our freely elected representatives, adopt this

Constitution as the supreme law of the Republic...

(Preamble to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996)

"There is a distinct beauty shaped by the images that flow from the commitments made in, and especially in the Preamble of, our Constitution. The words give purpose to our nationhood. We must grow into a single nation from the divisions of the past" (Manuel, 2020: 167).

People from all walks of life were invited to engage with the making of the new constitution – the mainstay of our newly formed democracy. More than 2 million responses were received from members of the public and the sense of promise at being involved in this way was inspiring. The intense joy and elation of South Africa's transitional period stands unrivalled in its intensity and scale in the country's recent history. Two occasions stand out in particular: the first is the release of the late Nelson Mandela on 11 February 1990 after 27 years of incarceration; the other is the country's first democratic elections on 27 April 1994. It gave pause to all and sundry, not only in South Africa, but across the world. Dignity, respect and human rights became governmental watchwords, these previously having been associated in South Africa, with the anti- and non-governmental sector.

The late Kader Asmal[128] opens his autobiography by describing the day that the first democratically elected, non-racial Parliament was convened in South Africa. He refers to this as one of the most important days in his life. As he sat there, he noticed that the parliamentary order paper was titled 'First Session, First Parliament'. "It was as if the previous three hundred years of illegitimate state oppression had melted away at the hand of an astute parliamentary officer with a keen sense of history"(Asmal, 2011: 1). This was significant because orthodox parliamentary protocol would have required that it be dated back to the start of the Republic in 1961. He goes on to say, "Instead, this was the first day of the first Parliament. And, in many ways, that was exactly right" (2011: 1). Such was the sense of newness that was represented by 1994 to South Africans.

[128] The late Kader Asmal was a lawyer, teacher and the energy behind the Irish Anti-Apartheid Movement during his years of exile in that country. He was a member of South Africa's first democratically elected Parliament.

If at that time of heightened expectations, anyone had suggested that before South Africa reached the 30th anniversary of its democracy, high-ranking state officials including a former president[129] would stand accused of corruption and fraud, and that an expensive and lengthy commission of enquiry[130] into state capture, corruption and fraud would send the nation in shock at the extent and scale of the wrongs being uncovered, their views would have been vigorously shouted down. It would have been a misplaced narrative at a time when hopes were high and the national spirit was soaring: any hint that things would take an unexpected turn for the worse would have been received as a prophecy of doom from naysayers..

Sadly, 2021 finds the South African government in a weak position with very low levels of public confidence in its ability to function as a capable and caring state. This is in vivid contrast to the heady days of political and social transition. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has in a stark way exposed the extreme discrepancies in citizens' access to dignified living. The country feels fragile and on the edge of imploding. The unfortunate criminalization of regular life activities particularly as carried out in poor communities took precedence over public education about the pandemic. "In fighting contagion, we waged a war on our people. In the face of anguishing human needs, instead of doctors and nurses, we deployed the police and military. Instead of improving social security, we created newly polished criminal laws. … Instead of guiding our people through respectful example and instruction to safe and self-protective public health steps, we beat and brutalised them" (Cameron, 2021). Judge Edwin Cameron, writing as a guest columnist for News24, is referring to the shocking occurrences that we as the locked-down public observed from behind our locked doors. People were beaten up for walking the streets during curfew; a man was battered to death for drinking beer in his yard; people stepping outside of their overcrowded homes for a breath of fresh air being hounded back inside – all of these actions by police and soldiers are a few among the thousands of violations of human rights and dignity that have been endured by many over the past year of the pandemic.

Heavy-handed policing in the name of heath during the pandemic is not a uniquely South African phenomenon. In a lecture on COVID-19, non-violence and necropolitics, [131] Judith Butler shares: "If Foucault thought that there was a difference between taking another's life and letting another die, we

[129] Former President Jacob Zuma has been implicated by a number of witnesses testifying at the Zondo Commission. He stands accused of receiving financial support from business entities wishing to enter into business contracts with government, both personally and through his Foundation. Also, for using state resources and channels to further the business interests of a particular family, the Guptas. It is alleged that he permitted the Guptas to have a hand in the appointment of cabinet ministers based on who would best serve their interests. In effect, he stands accused of enabling a 'captured state'.

[130] The Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Allegations of State Capture, Corruption and Fraud in the Public Sector including Organs of State was established in August 2018 by President Cyril Ramaphosa, after being signed into existence by President Zuma in February 2018. It is set to complete its work in the first quarter of 2021. The Commission is chaired by Deputy Chief Justice Raymond Zondo and is commonly referred to as the Zondo Commission.

[131] The full title of the lecture was 'COVID-19, the politics of non-violence, necropolitics and social inequality' held on 24 July 2020, hosted by Whitechapel Gallery and Verso Books.

see that police violence works in tandem with health systems that let people die. It is systemic racism that links the two forms of power."

Bleak as this all sounds, I believe that there are still glimmers of hope that point to a better future even though the glowing rhetoric that surrounded South Africa's groundbreaking Constitution has faded. It is not only the NHRA and the RLRA that are falling short on the promises of the new democracy: there are several other areas of failed delivery.

Setting political transition in motion

It was in September 1989 that President FW de Klerk took up office as South Africa's president. He was the last in a succession of National Party heads of state since 1948. By that time, the proverbial writing was already on the wall with a number of factors having created an increasing sense of crisis and economic pressure on apartheid's ongoing existence. The global liberal capitalist economy needed more fluid conditions for free trade and movement, and apartheid South Africa was not able to provide that. Restrictions on the movement of its labour force, ongoing job reservation, workplace discrimination and low wages contributed to an unstable labour environment.

Described as his 'quantum leap'[132] speech in parliament on 2 February 1990, de Klerk announced drastic measures that would change the face of South Africa. To some it seemed to have come as a bolt from the blue, but in reality there had been behind the scenes negotiations and pressure for a few years before which formed part of South Africa's 'soft revolution' (Marschall, 2010: 2). Between the 'quantum leap' in 1990 and the birth of the new South Africa in 1994, there had been several tense moments of disagreement and conflict between the outgoing ruling party and the liberation movements, led for the most part by the ANC. There were attempts to secure the existing rights of white people and some hesitation about accepting the Bill of Rights applicable to all, with some making an argument for the provision of group rights. It took astute negotiations and several compromises for agreement to be reached about the draft constitution in 1993 ahead of the first elections in 1994 which would inaugurate the government of National Unity (Asmal, 2011).

[132] https://www.sabcnews.com/sabcnews/de-klerks-historic-february-2-1990-speech-changed-sa/ [accessed 13 May 2020]

Main provisions of the 2 February 1990 announcement

- Repeal of the provisions of the 1913 Land Act;
- Prohibition on banned organisations such as the ANC, PAC and SACP and subsidiary organisations to be rescinded;
- Media and education emergency regulations would be lifted;
- The terms of imprisonment of members of these organisations would be reviewed; and
- Based on the above, Nelson Mandela would be released unconditionally.[133]

FIGURE 12

Nelson Rolihlahlala Mandela was released 9 days later, on 11 February 1990.[134] It was an occasion for world-wide celebrations. Capetonians were particularly ecstatic that Madiba took take his first steps of freedom here in this city.

[133] The Harare Declaration formulated by the ANC and adopted by the Organisation for African Unity in 1989, contained five further-reaching minimum requirements which needed to be met before negotiations could begin. They were: (i) release of all political prisoners; (ii) lifting of all bans and restrictions on people and organisations; (iii)removal of all troops from the townships; (iv) ending of the State of Emergency and repeal of repressive legislation; and (v) cessation of all political executions. Source: Asmal, K. (2011) **Politics in My Blood**. Jacana, South Africa. pg 118. 'President de Klerk felt he had granted enough for the moment by unbanning the ANC, SACP, PAC and other bodies in February 1990', comments Kader Asmal , reflecting on the difficulties involved in getting the then ruling party to concede to these basic conditions. (2011: 118)

[134] Coincidentally, this is a date of special significance to District Sixers. It was on 11 February 1966 that District Six was proclaimed a white area.

However, the road ahead was not smooth. 1990 was described in a Human Rights Watch World Report as being a year "of both celebration and tragedy in South Africa." There were several conflicts instigated by detractors who were not keen to surrender power without a struggle. During the course of the year there were several reported attempts by security forces to destabilise negotiations. This was amplified by political parties opposing the changes to come as they were keen to maintain the status quo. Scores of people died in the violent protests and there was reference to a 'third force' being set up to fuel what was described as 'black-on-black' violence. It was a difficult road to negotiate and compromises needed to be made. There were times when it seemed that plans for peaceful, free and fair elections were but a pipe dream.

Under the watchful eye of the world, the elections took place on 27 April 1994 (the day has since been designated as Freedom Day in South Africa). Incidents on the day were deemed to have had minimal impact on people's ability to cast their ballots and the elections were declared free and fair.

On 10 May 1994 President Mandela was sworn into office as the first president of a democratic South Africa following on from the ANC's national electoral victory at the polls.

Undoing apartheid's laws

> *This Bill of Rights is a cornerstone of democracy in South Africa. It enshrines the rights of all people in our country and affirms the democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom*[135].

An important part of undoing the legacies of apartheid was through repealing the old laws and promulgating new ones. The rights-based laws were a hopeful start to reshaping the country which was embarking on its long road of transformation. Radical transformation was needed on the levels of the economy, the land, health, education, culture, the arts, amongst other things, and would involve all spheres of society on both governmental and non-governmental levels.

While the Constitution and the new laws are important components of securing the rights of all citizens, an understanding of human rights which is located within a legal and policy framework only has its limitations. Chantal Mouffe (1992), refers to liberalism as contributing substantially to the formulation of the idea of universal citizenship, based on the assertion that all individuals are born free and equal, but at the same time it reduces citizenship to a mere legal status as it sets out the rights that individuals hold against the state. There needed to be a close alignment with rights as legislated and rights as experienced.

The process of repealing laws started before the new constitution was in place. The *Abolition of Racially Based Land Measures Act* was promulgated in 1991:

[135] The Bill of Rights constitutes Chapter 2 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996.

> *To repeal or amend certain laws so as to abolish certain restrictions based on race or membership of a specific population group on the acquisition and utilization of rights to land; to provide for the rationalization or fading out of certain racially based institutions and statutory and regulatory systems; for the regulation of norms and standards in residential environments; and for the establishment of a commission under the name of the Advisory Commission on Land Allocation and to provide for matters connected therewith.*[136]

The Act consists of five chapters each with several laws and amendments, starting with the repeal of the *1913 Land Act* as Chapter 1. This is the Act with which Sol Plaatje opens his book, *Native Life in South Africa*'- a much quoted sentence which has anchored much writing and discussions about land in South Africa: "Awaking on Friday morning, June 20, 1913, the South African native found himself, not actually a slave, but a pariah in the land of his birth" (Plaatje, 1987: 6).

Subsequent chapters refer to the repeal of laws on Group Areas and free settlement areas; repeal of laws applicable to Asiatics and Coloureds; repeal of laws on development, townships and township planning; and the establishment of an Advisory Committee on non-racial area measures.[137]

C. Promulgating new laws

The Restitution of Land Rights Act 22 of 1994

This was the first law passed by the GNU to address the legacies of land dispossession.

> *To provide for the restitution of rights in land to persons or communities dispossessed of such rights after 19 June 1913 as a result of past racially discriminatory laws or practices; to establish a Commission on Land Restitution of Land Rights and a Land Claims Court; and to provide for matters connected therewith.*

It made provision for a Commission for the Restitution of Land Rights (CRLR) which was established in 1995, and the creation of a Land Claims Court (LCC) which was established in 1996, as the two mechanisms to drive the development.

The 1913 Land Act, significant as it was in accelerating legal dispossession, has been challenged as the cut-off date for restitution claims. "When was the discovery of gold and diamonds? Long before 1913! In other words, the real wealth of the country will stay in the hands of the few forever" (Nagia, 2001: 174). Nagia is of course referring to South Africa's mineral revolution in the late 19th century which resulted in the increased displacement of black people. Further challenges to the 1913 date

[136] Government Gazette. Republic of South Africa, Volume 312, Cape Town. 28 June 1991. Number 13341, Act number 108 of 1991.
[137] Ibid.

have been presented because of the original dispossession of indigenous people. "(M)ost Khoisan communities felt the Bill did not provide for a redress of the pre-1913 land dispossessions. Restitution for the indigenous communities dispossessed before 1913 was not catered for under restitution. They felt that government has betrayed them because the promise for policy provision has not been met."[138]

Various discussions have taken place but no change to the date has yet been implemented. It will require an amended to the Constitution because clause 25(7) in the Bill of Rights specifies 19 June 1913 as the date from which to measure the start of dispossession for restitution purposes.

A statement released by the Ministers of Justice and Correctional Services and Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development on 1 March 2021[139] announced that a new Land Court Bill had been passed by Cabinet. This was intended to streamline the process of land claims for all who qualified, and to provide stronger judicial oversight over claims. The bill was also intended to "lead to better settlements, reduce the scope for corruption and avert the bundling of claims into dysfunctional mega-claims that lead to conflict" (Lamola: 2021)[140]. This court thus seems to have a broader scope than the existing Land Claims Court, and with its intention to improve the process for claimants, will be much welcomed.

For District Six, the advent of the RLRA meant that the struggle over the years to keep the land undeveloped was about to bear fruit. In the 1980s the D6M Foundation and the HODS Committee had been labeled as obstructionist by some as they insisted that no development should take place on the site. At the beginning of their call for 'hands off', they had advocated for it to be left undeveloped as a memorial site. They had always simultaneously advocated that peoples' right to return and to be consulted about the redevelopment should be part of any future plans. It had become clear that the work of return and the work of memorialisation need not be mutually exclusive, and a dynamic synergy could be created. It was the only urban site in the country where return to the actual site of displacement was possible, as for the most part other areas of racially-based removals had been built over by newer housing,[141] or other families now lived in the homes from which people had been forcibly removed.[142]

The attainment of housing justice for all South Africans was a key area of state concern, and the process of claiming restitution forms part of an array of government interventions to achieve this.

[138] *Restitution of Land Rights Amendments Bill: Content Advisor briefing and motion of desirability.* 20 August 2018. Available at https://pmg.org.za/committee-meeting/26898/ [Accessed 30 November 2019]

[139] 'Land Court Bill to improve claims process' available on https://www.sanews.gov.za/ [Accessed 2 March 2021)

[140] Justice and Correctional Services Minister Ronald Lamola as quoted in an article published on 1 March 2021 on SAnews website. Available on https://www.sanews.gov.za/ [Accessed: 30 March 2021].

[141] For example, Sophiatown in Gauteng; Protea Village and Constantia in the Western Cape.

[142] For example, Simonstown, Newlands and Harfield Village, all in the Western Cape.

Given the availability of land in District Six, and the fact that some claimants opted for financial compensation rather than resettlement in the district, it has been reported that there was more land available than was needed to house the verified claimants. Apathy, cynicism that anything would come of the process, the experience of an uncaring bureaucracy that caused frustrations, and the difficulties that some tenants had in proving that they had lived in District Six in the absence of verifiable documentation, all contributed to the relatively low number of claims presented.

"What is to be restored?" asks Cheryl Walker in *Land Memory , Reconstruction and Justice* (2010). According to the Act, claimants could either (1) receive financial compensation; (2) restoration to the land from which they were moved; and (3) obtain alternative land. Restitution could also take "a 'developmental' form where compensatory funds are earmarked for investment in infrastructure or income-generating scheme for claimant communities" (Walker *et al,* 2010: 7). This is the provision for what can be legally restored, but the deeper level of loss has to be addressed in different ways.

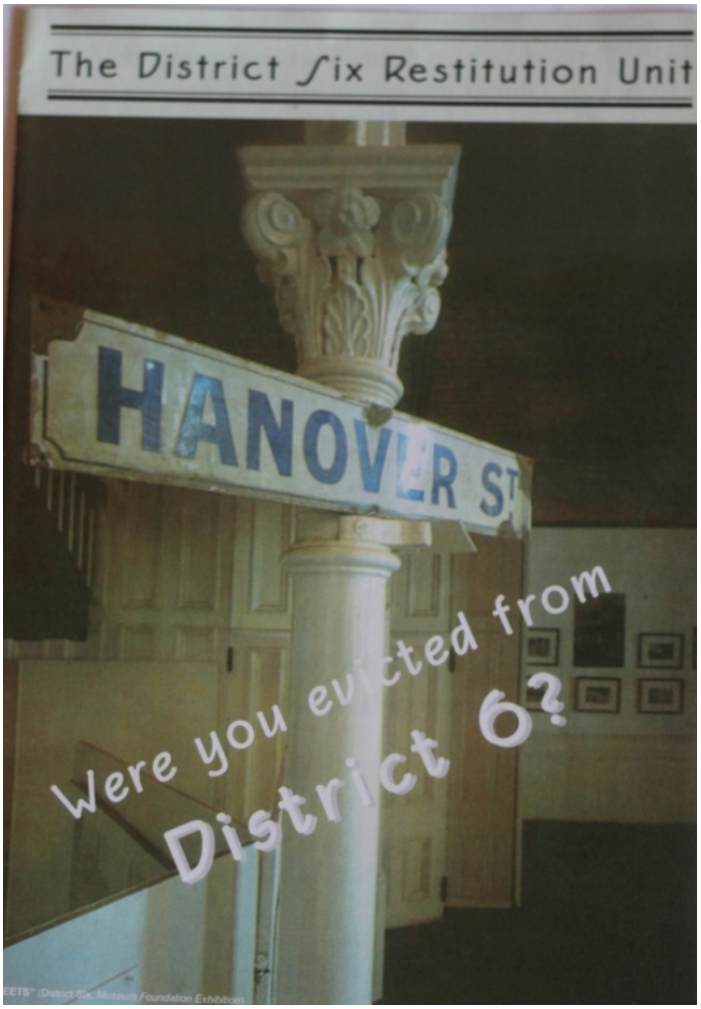


FIGURE 13

Restitution in District Six

According to the initial call for those who had lost their right in land to make application for restitution, a cut-off date was set for 31 December 1998. The Commission on the Restitution of Land Rights has presented the following numbers of people who have submitted District Six claims:[143]

No. of lodged, verified and valid claims	**Claimants opting for financial compensation**	**Claimants opting for redevelopment**	**Claimants awaiting housing allocation**	**Dismissed claims**
2760	1449	1201	1062	110

The numbers of families who have actually moved back to District Six, to date, are:

Year	**Number of houses**	**Phase**
2004	9	Pilot phase 1A
2005	15	Pilot phase 1B
2012	115	Phase 2

Building 163 homes in the 12 years between the initial lodgment of claims in 1998, and 2012 when the last group of families moved, is a dismal performance. For the past 8 years no new homes have been completed. A further 108 houses are awaiting completion as part of phase 3, earmarked for completion in the first quarter of 2021.

Challenges and setbacks

In the process of achieving this relatively low level of delivery there have been a number of setbacks. Several committees have been formed with power struggles amongst the leadership; elderly claimants have passed away while still on the waiting list; one of the claimant groups has taken the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform to court for non-delivery of an holistic plan; families have fallen apart because of disagreements about claims, and there have been problems with the building contractor. In addition, people do not trust the system by which houses are allocated, alleging that there has been favouritism and that the agreed-upon criteria for allocating houses have not been consistently applied. All of these have exacerbated an already tense restitution process. The celebratory moment of 11 February 2004 when the two oldest returnees received the keys to their new homes from then President Nelson Mandela has faded: hopes had been high and it seemed as if the process would move swiftly from there.

[143] Report to the standing committee on Human Settlements (Western Cape Provincial Parliament) on the current status of the District Six Redevelopment Project in the Western Cape, 18 June 2019.

Not everything about the restitution process is tainted with negativity, though. For some, collating supporting documents for their family claim led to uncovering family photos, birth certificates and other documents that they had not previously known about. The experience of compiling the family tree in order to substantiate their claims was also of value to some people. Most of the families who have returned are positive about living back in the district despite the changed environment and circumstances, but they are affected by the uncertainty surrounding the future of friends and family who are still waiting to return. Emotions are particularly high around the issue of elderly claimants who pass away while still on the list,

The desire to return to District Six aside, the logistics involved in relocating can be complex. This becomes particularly so for families where the original dispossessed person has passed away and the claim reverts to become part of the estate. Agreement needs to be reached as to who will be given power of attorney to sign on behalf of the family, who will occupy the house when it becomes available, or whether financial compensation will be requested. The amount paid out for the latter option is so small that when divided between the descendants is not enough to make any impact on the quality of life of any of them.[144] Writing about her work with the claimants of Black River[145] and their experiences of the restitution process, Uma Mesthrie concludes that 'the Black River examples show that with the division of money into such small amounts, money will carry but a temporary and relatively insignificant meaning' (Mesthrie, 2010: 11).

In making an argument for why the cut-off date submitting claims should not be reopened, the Chief Land Claims Commissioner Tozi Gwanya offers the following: "financial compensation has led to a lot of family disputes, fraudulent claims by wrongful claimants, abuse of the Restitution award on unproductive expenditures which do not prioritize sustainable livelihoods" (CLRL 2007). I would agree with the problems that he lists as having arisen, but it is interesting that he lays the blame for this squarely within the ambit of the claimants. As indicated above, the amounts eventually received were symbolic and paltry, possibly enough to do nothing more than minor repairs, settle small debts or feed a family for a week or two. "Although the government intended it to promote the healing of the nation, in fact restitution has had all the potential for a negative and disruptive impact on families" (Mesthrie, 2010: 11).

The date for the submission of land claims was eventually reopened. Under President Zuma's tenure, the 1998 cut-off date as specified in the RLRA of 1994 was amended with effect from 1 July 2014. Claimants were given an additional 5 years to submit their claims until 30 June 2019. While there was great support for this move from many quarters, there were practical concerns about the already large

[144] The Standard Settlement Offer as formulated by the Regional Land Claims Commission was set at 17 500ZAR for tenants (the bulk of the claims) and 40 000ZAR for home owners.
[145] Black River..

backlog of claims to be processed, and what the new applications would mean for delivery. A Constitutional Court ruling in 2016 instructed that the existing claims (ie those that were submitted before 1998) first be processed before new claims were dealt with. The situation at the moment is that new claims may be submitted but processing has been put on hold until the backlog has been dealt with.

Who can live in District Six?

The D6BRT has proposed that families affected by forced removals from other areas, be accommodated on District Six restitution land. This was intended to serve as an acknowledgement that the concentration of resources allocated to the District Six redevelopment should not be to the exclusion of other similarly affected communities for whom return to their original land of dispossession is not an option.

Even though there is sufficient land based on the number of District Six claimants who have opted for either financial compensation or redevelopment elsewhere, there are a surprising number of District Sixers who are resentful of this proposal. It continues to be a divisive bone of contention among claimants. It is surprising as the expected empathy towards people who have known similar suffering and the humiliation of being thrown out of their homes is not apparent. It seems that at times the restitution discourse among claimants was dominated by narrow self-interest. There has been anxiety expressed by claimants that their own families should first be settled before other 'outside' claims could be contemplated. In conversation with claimants, the concerns which they have expressed are valid, but a more inclusive way of resolving it would be more helpful. This matter is likely to become more contentious when the next date for the submission of new claims is announced as a number of claimants have alleged that their documents had been misplaced in the earlier rounds. They have expectations that their cases be prioritised. It might even happen that eventually the number of District Six claims increases to the extent that there would be no available land after they have been allocated their restituted homes.

There are number of other factors that have contributed to the growing cynicism about restitution. Among these are concerns about crime and the personal safety of returnees, many of whom are elderly and vulnerable. Returnees tend to associate the growing crime in the area with 'others', believing that families known to them would not commit crimes against people they know.

Contributing to the negativity was that by the time that the practical issues of return and restitution were being discussed, the initial euphoria had dissipated. People were frustrated at the process: the alleged lost original documents of claimants; the several committees that had come and gone; the missed deadlines for the completion of homes, and the mistrust in the system by which houses were allocated to claimants in the different phases, being among the contributing factors. The process was

not transparent which deepened the suspicions. In this scenario, claimants who had not yet moved back were anxious that government resources might run out before their turn came. The current focus on government corruption[146] has heightened suspicions and anxiety.

D6M's role in the restitution process has changed over time especially as a number of new entities have come to the fore to provide claimant support. It has taken more of a backseat in terms of the 'bricks-and-mortar' component of restitution, focusing more on rebuilding the spirit and ethos of District Six in tandem with the physical reconstruction. It has convened several discussion forums around issues such as who has the right to claim restitution and who might be entitled to live in the reconstituted District Six, and what it might look and feel like. In some of these discussions, racist and xenophobic attitudes have been displayed by claimants signaling that much more work is needed on this level. Sessions which activate the memories of a more inclusive time of their lives before being separated into apartheid enclaves, has been a pathway for D6M to enter into these conversations. Involving young people in intergenerational dialogues has enriched the quality of the discussions as the youth have been able to share their current experiences of feeling excluded and marginalized even in this new South Africa.

District Six Beneficiary and Redevelopment Trust

In the early stage of its life, D6M welcomed the formation of the D6BRT, referred to by former residents as the 'Ben Trust', or simply 'the Trust'. It was formed in 1997 and registered in 2001. They were tasked with driving, coordinating and monitoring the land restitution process and the redevelopment of District Six. The D6BRT oversaw the redevelopment of the first and second phases of restitution housing, working with different spheres of government in order to do so. It has been responsible for keeping alive the restitution battle on behalf of claimants over the years and was able to lead the negotiations with local, provincial and national government entities. It worked very closely with D6M, with the two organisations referring to each other as 'sister' organisations. Some trustees served on both D6M and D6BRT boards in the early days of both organisations.

Risks to District Six Museum

There have been several factors relating to the land claim process that has impacted negatively on D6M. This is ironic as its formative journey took place in the context of the land struggle - the same struggle which has at time become a millstone around its institutional neck.

Occasionally it was because of claimants' frustrations at the lack of restitution delivery. Anxiety about delays in the processing of their claims made some people intolerant of matters relating to memory

[146] Especially as being exposed through the Zondo Commission referred to earlier in this chapter.

and its preservation. They would visit D6M for information on how to submit their land claims and to connect with neighbours who could verify that they had lived in the district if they had no documentary evidence to prove that they had. At the time, they saw no other purpose for memory other than the instrumentalist role that it could play in assisting them to finalise their claims. Building a museum archive did not feature within that frame of reference.

The occasional blurring of institutional boundaries impacted negatively on D6M. The emergence of the D6BRT which could deal with the logistics relating to restitution took some pressure off D6M, although shared space and shared members on the two boards of trustees most likely contributed to the confusion. The conflation of identities was further complicated when in 2000 the office of the RLCC requested the use of D6M premises in order to conduct verification interviews with claimants. Their stated reason was the location was more accessible to commuters using public transport, than their offices were. Another likely reason is that the intimate and familiar setting of the D6M space provided a 'soft' backdrop for the sometimes difficult discussions that needed to be had with claimants.

When D6M conducted an internal risk assessment in 2008, one of the factors that it identified as a risk to its success was the impact of a failed land claims process. In addition to the impact felt by D6M, the more significant effect on claimants has been frustrating, even devastating. For many, "(R)estitution characterized by delays and limited financial settlements has left an aching gap" (Mesthrie, 2010: 12).

In the short time between the passing of the RLRA in 1994 and the formation of the D6BRT in 1997, there had been several committees and forums who had claimed to represent the interests of claimants in varying degrees. By 1997, claimant confidence that the process would be open, fair and geared towards achieving restorative justice, was faltering. There had been high expectations that they would be consulted in the planning for the redevelopment of District Six and that their input would be regarded as non-negotiable. This has not been the case particularly not in this current phase.

<u>In the gap: between 1991 repeal and 1994 promulgation</u>

As the terms of South Africa's democracy were being negotiated, interim measures were put in place nationally while the constitution was being finalised and the various new acts of government were being formulated. After the 1991 repeal, the outgoing National Party government put in place an Advisory Commission on Land Allocation (later formalised as the Commission on Land Allocation) in 1992 to "oversee a limited process of restitution restricted to unimproved state land" (Hall, 2010). Of course most dispossessed land by that time was either privately owned or already developed by government, resulting in very few claims qualifying according to this criteria. The ANC prepared a Land Manifesto in 1992 in which it conceived of restitution much more broadly. Concerns were

raised about the protection of private property rights and the possibility of land expropriation in order to make restitution a reality. Several debates and compromises later resulted in the terms of the RLRA. Ruth Hall notes: "Restitution was, then, by definition a limited process, not a radical restructuring of property relations"(2010).

A District Six Steering Committee was put in place by the City government in 1990 (before the RLRA was in place) but they were perceived as having a low commitment to consultation with potential claimants and community organisations. They were replaced by the Cape Town Community Land Trust, under the broad oversight of the City and Provincial government. There was an outcry when this body lodged an application to invoke Section 34(1) of the RLRA which allowed for the following:

> Any national, provincial or local government body may, in respect of land which is owned by it or falls within its area of jurisdiction, make application to the Court for an order that the land in question or any rights in it shall not be restored to any claimant or prospective claimants.

In essence, the application requested that individual claimant rights be subsumed into an integrated development framework which would include low cost housing to solve the city's housing crisis as well as make room for commercial development. (Beyers, 2005: 108). District Sixers, who were in the process of familiarizing themselves with the newly promulgated RLRA and who had started to submit their claims for restitution, were incensed and a Land Claims Court hearing took place at D6M in 1997. The application was eventually withdrawn signalling a great victory for the claimant community.[147]

In the face of several challenges, the Trust managed to oversee the construction of the first 24 homes for the returning families.

[147] Interview with D6M / D6BRT trustee Terence Fredericks, 8 May 2000.

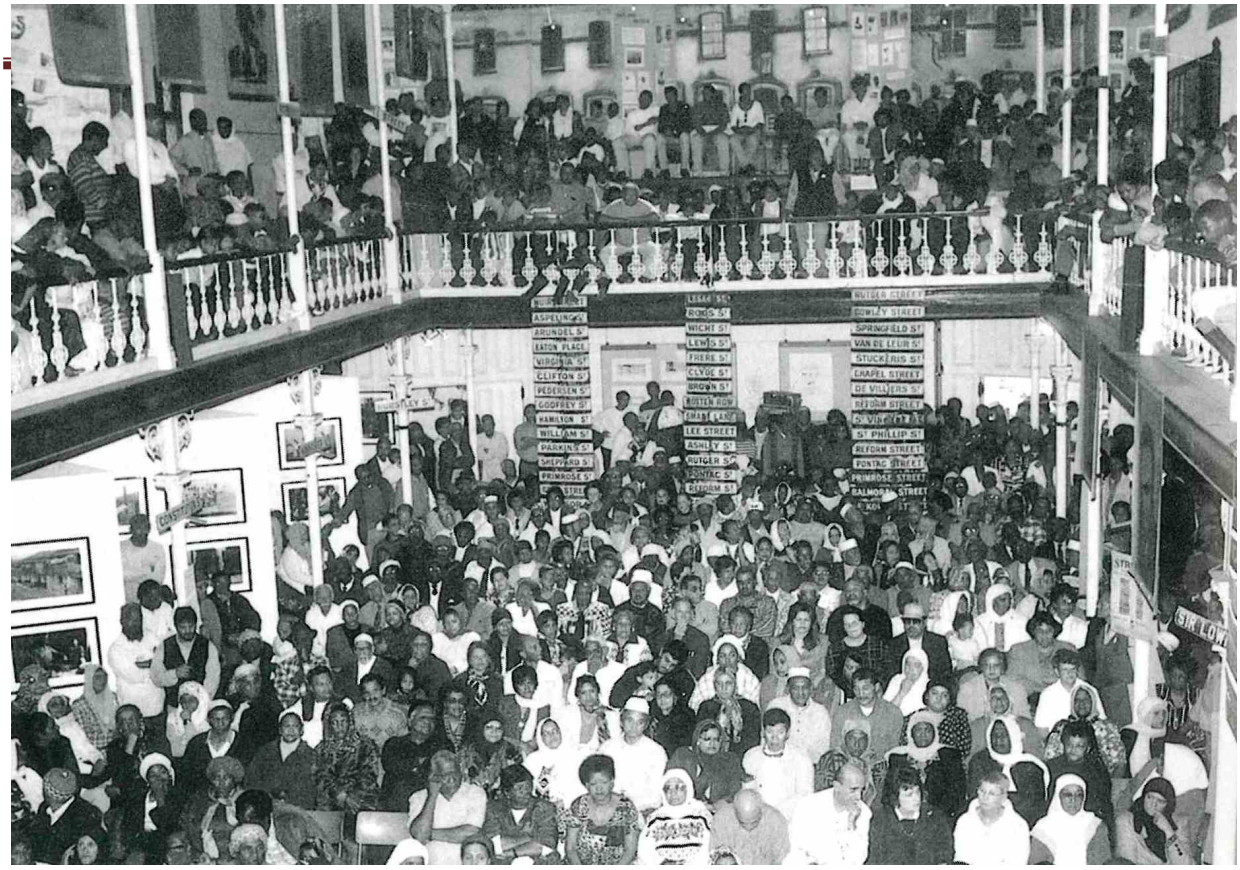


FIGURE 14

This is but a brief summary of a much longer series of interventions which is still ongoing and which indicates that the District Six claim was a troubled one from the start. The lack of effective communication from the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform[148] and the RLCC reflects a similar level of resistance to ongoing community consultations as has been displayed by SAHRA in the context of the declaration of District Six as a NHS (discussed later). Consultations seem to be hastily planned, and regarded more as stumbling blocks to be navigated as swiftly as possible, rather than as an empowering benefit that can strengthen government processes. There is no overt awareness of the knowledge assets that communities can contribute nor of the benefit that can be derived from communities exercising ownership of restorative processes.

Tensions within current public processes have continued into the current stage of implementation, and D6M continues to advocate for the rights of people to be consulted and to bring their knowledge to bear in a range of different situations. Much of its work with the community of returned and former residents is focused on building the capacity of people to navigate complex regulatory processes and to affirm the value of their own voices and their ability to make a difference. This is not easy when their experiences of these frameworks and legal provisions, demonstrate otherwise, but translating the legalese of acts and regulations into more accessible language has been an enlightening process.

[148] This was previously the Department of Land Affairs and was changed in 2019 to the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development and Land Reform.

In observing the work of D6M in terms of its role in land restitution, Rustom Bharucha reflects: "It is rare, indeed, in the history of museology to encounter a museum that can be transformed into a political ground, where real debates and issues can be thrashed out in relation to the actual mechanisms and legalities of land restitution" (Bharucha, 2007: 89).

In the complex work of ensuring that restitution progresses, it is not easy to ensure that the awareness of District Six as a site of pain and trauma is remembered by the implementing authority, ie the RLCC of the DRDL. The apparent lack of integration between the RLCC in terms of delivering restitution, the City government in terms of providing spatial planning support and SAHRA in terms of the heritage protection is of great concern.

The National Heritage Resources Act (NHRA)25 of 1999

This was promulgated on 28 April 1999.

> *This legislation aims to promote good management of the national estate, and to enable and encourage communities to nurture and conserve their legacy so that it may be bequeathed to future generations. Our heritage is unique and precious and it cannot be renewed. It helps us to define our cultural identity and therefore lies at the heart of our spiritual well-being and has the power to build our nation. It has the potential to affirm our diverse cultures, and in so doing shape our national character.*[149]

Under apartheid, national heritage was governed by the National Monuments Council Act of 1969, led by the National Monuments Council (NMC). Its focus on "buildings and sites associated with European colonists has been criticised and needs redressing through the evaluation of existing national monuments and the identification of sites deserving of national monument status"[150] was noted by the 1995 Arts and Culture Task Group (ACTAG) in its report. Jaques Stoltz (2018) of the Heritage Monitoring Project writes that by 1994 South Africa had "an estimated 4 000 national monuments of which 98% represented colonial and settler history"(Stoltz, 2018).[151]

[149] Extract from Preamble to the NHRA of 1999.
[150] ACTAG Report
[151] 'A nation in 66 places: the national heritage sites of South Africa'. Available at http://www.theheritageportal.co.za/ (Accessed: 19 December 2019).

Processes preceding the NHRA

Several processes preceded the finalisation of the NHRA, a hopeful nod to a detailed course of action being committed to. On a policy level, the ANC had established a Commission on Museums, Monuments and Heraldry (CMMH) as far back as 1991 which started exploring ways of democratizing existing cultural institutions. This Commission was critical of the exclusive and conservative nature of the existing institutions, calling for urgent transformation. In the meantime, the existing South African Museums Association (SAMA), founded in 1936 - and for that reason largely associated with a conservative museum practice during and preceding apartheid - requested that the government form a body of museum professionals to advise on policy formation. This was done in 1992, with the establishment of Museums for South Africa (MUSA). This move was regarded by the ANC as a bid to maintain the status quo within the field. Debates and contestations took place at several forums, and while they were important in creating momentum on the issues, the creation of an Arts and Culture Task Group (ACTAG) became the officially recognised forum which would lead towards the creation of policy as from 1994 onwards (Corsane, 2004; Frieslaar, 2020).

ACTAG was set up within the first year of the new democracy,[152] headed by Dr Ben Ngubane who was Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology at the time (Corsane, 2004; Frieslaar, 2020; SAMA, 2016; Rodéhn, 2008). All things considered, the ACTAG report was concluded within a reasonable time and was ready for scrutiny by the end of 1995. In general, it was well received as a step towards meeting the goals of the new constitution. It placed an emphasis on redress in terms of representation of voices, and made a strong argument for inclusivity and for intangible heritage to be taken seriously (Corsane, 2004). It was to lay the basis for new heritage-related policies which would provide a roadmap to becoming the rainbow nation.[153]

ACTAG's brief was to take stock of the arts and culture landscape in South Africa, and grapple with what was needed in order to ensure that issues of transformation and the promises of the constitution – still in draft form at that stage[154] – found its way into the sector. Several consultations in the form of sub-groups, conferences and meetings formed part of its process, and its work informed the formulation of the *White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage: All Our Legacies, Our Common Future* of 1996. This eventually led to the promulgation of the NHRA and the creation of SAHRA to replace the NMC[155] (Corsane, 2004; Marschall, 2010; Frieslaar, 2020).

[152] Arts and Culture White Paper, 1996. Available at https://www.gov.za/documents/arts-and-culture-white-paper. [accessed 10 February 2018]
[153] The 'rainbow nation' is a term closely associated with Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu.
[154] The draft Constitution was finalised and adopted in 1996.
[155] The 1998 Bill was felt to be too opaque and was eventually redrafted into two Bills: the *National Heritage Council Bill* of 1999 and the *National Heritage Resources Bill* also of 1999. The two Bills were passed by Parliament as Acts: the *National Heritage Council Act* and the *National Heritage Resources Act* both of 1999.

In his message appended to the first draft of the White Paper, Dr Ngubane writes: "The vision outlined in this draft White Paper has been distilled from numerous sources, voices and submissions. The most significant of these is the Arts and Culture Task Group (ACTAG) Report which represents the views of a major part of the arts and culture community, including practitioners, educators and administrators."[156]

In general, consultation and levels of participation are always tricky processes, often contested, with questions being asked about who is not 'in the room'. There were some misgivings especially from those who had been involved in the sector before transformation was even on the agenda. Concerned about the integrity of the museum field in particular, issues were raised about the fact that people who participated in the ACTAG process had no prior museum experience (SAMA, 2016). Dr Udo, SAMA President from 1995 – 1997, laments the fact that '(T)he wheel was being reinvented by people with no real knowledge of museums or their management'(SAMA, 2016: 44). While he might be correct in that direct sectoral experience was limited, other levels of expertise in the formal and non-formal arts and culture sector as well as education and history more broadly, were represented by the team. Those who had been involved in the museum sector pre-transformation would have represented a very limited demographic, ie white and conservative, and might have skewed the discussions towards replicating the existing untransformed model if only museum professionals were to be consulted. The ACTAG team was able to engage in discussions about what museums might be able to achieve in the context of a rights-based framework.

The role of arts, culture and heritage

Thinking about the transformative role of the arts, cultural and heritage sectors predated South Africa's 1994 beginnings. As part of the struggle against apartheid, the arts had been mobilized as an important site of struggle, for awareness-raising and education as well as being platforms for creative self-expression and skills development. There were several community initiatives which were arts and culture-based, and the ANC in exile also used cultural performance to raise awareness about apartheid. Commenting on the performance by the *Amandla* Cultural Ensemble performing in London, ANC President Oliver Reginald Tambo said that "it took him 20 years to do what *Amandla* had done in two hours – to promote South Africa and the struggle for freedom."[157] Accepting that this is a rhetoric over-statement, their acclaimed performances and the impact that they made, resulted in *Amandla* being established as a permanent cultural group within the ANC.[158]

[156] Arts and Culture White Paper, 1996. Available at https://www.gov.za/documents/arts-and-culture-white-paper. [accessed 10 February 2018]

[157] http://www.thepresidency.gov.za/national-orders/recipient/amandla-cultural-ensemble-1978 [accessed 20 September 2020]

[158] 'The show of *Amandla* was a chronology of important events starting with a peaceful era before the colonisers came to our county. It continued with colonisation and subsequent industrialisation of our country

Recognising national significance

The NHRA and the creation of SAHRA helped to create a context in which communities like District Six could imagine long-awaited opportunities for affirming the importance of local histories and for being supported in their journeys towards achieving a measure of memorial and cultural restitution. It provided for places of significance to be declared as National Heritage Sites (NHS) and it is through these provisions that D6M made the application in 2004. In Chapter 5 I will explore how the work with the NHS project shifted the relationship between D6M and SAHRA from being collaborative to conflictual.

Symbols of the past

The challenge of working with the old, obsolete and often offending monuments to the past while attempting to introduce the excluded parts of the country's history onto the memorial landscape is no easy task. The NMC had presented a report to ACTAG discouraging attempts at sweeping deproclamation of existing monuments, suggesting rather that "controversial monuments should be re-interpreted by stressing an inclusive reading of the historical facts" (Marschall, 2010: 28). Whether this was an attempt to protect the estimated 4 000 monuments which were scattered across the country, or whether it was a genuine attempt to guard against obliteration of the past, is uncertain. These monuments have continued to occupy an ambiguous space: neither removed, nor reinterpreted; cast in stone yet as invisible to the eye as monuments tend to become. In Cape Town, there have been some creative attempts to artistically engage with some of the city's many statues, but these have been ephemeral interventions often with niche audiences[159] and have not been on a scale large enough to make a substantial impact.

The *Rhodes Must Fall* (RMF) movement brought the issue of the colonized landscape firmly back onto the agenda, not only on the academic and heritage platforms but also back into the clear sight of all citizens. Having started at the University of Cape Town in 2015, the movement grew both nationally and internationally. "While the protest movement was ostensibly about the removal of Cecil John Rhodes's statue from the grounds of the university, the campaign galvanized other sectors of the Black community on campus to demand transformation of the curriculum and the hiring of Black professors" (Mangcu, 2017: 243). As the impact of the movement extended beyond the campus, RMF became a symbolic way to speak about the troubling legacies of colonialism and apartheid.

down to the formation of the working-class population'. (Source: http://www.thepresidency.gov.za/national-orders/recipient/amandla-cultural-ensemble-1978 [accessed 20 September 2020]

[159] Some examples have been 'Infecting the City' which is a public art initiative in Cape Town.

New narratives, new monuments

> Countries preserve their heritage through permanent collections of various kinds, and through restoration and care of sites having religious, political, cultural, scientific, archaeological or environmental significance. In so doing, they declare what has value for them, what they seek to preserve as evidence of their own as well as others' development and achievement.
>
> (Draft Arts and Culture White Paper, 1996. Chapter 5)

Even though there was a strong stated awareness in all of the policy deliberations of the significance of intangible heritage, the addition of new tangible markers onto the physical landscape was felt to be an immediate and urgent need in constituting the new nation. In 1997 DACST (later to become DAC) proposed a National Legacy Project under the leadership of historian Luli Callinicos. This was in response to requests from the public to officially honour those who had made sacrifices to bring about apartheid's demise, as well as to acknowledge the struggles and experiences of previously marginalised communities (Marschall, 2010). These requests were in keeping with the GNU's commitment to transformation and to tell the broader story of South Africa's past. A proposal was prepared with motivations for 20 different legacy projects that covered a range of areas, but an amended list was finally ratified. Despite all the emphasis on intangible heritage and the contribution made by masses of 'ordinary' people in overcoming apartheid and also in building the country's economy through working in the mines, the factories and farms, the predominant approach of the Legacy Project was monumental 'rendered in highly conventional, Eurocentric style or fashioned along the lines of international trends in memorial design' (Marschall, 2010: 205).

D6M has struggled with finding the correct balance between valorizing the ordinary lives and struggles of people, while also recognizing those who are regarded as community or even national icons. Its approach needed to be respectfully anti-iconic and has had to balance different narratives that sometimes come up against each other, but which eventually are able to co-exist. In trying to fast-track the building of a unifying national identity, the DAC – being the national custodian of 'social cohesion'[160]- seems to have concentrated much of its resources on end-products rather than investing into the processes of building grounded support from the nation. Frequently people have understood the purpose of memorialisation to be linked to a narrow understanding of ethnic identity leading to feelings of marginalization if they felt that 'their' group was not adequately represented.

Karen Till (2014), writing about the ethics of place-based remembering states that "instead of focusing on the coherence of narratives and the use of places, locations and material landscapes as 'proof' of authenticity, heritage sites should utilise embodied experiences and learn to tell contradictory, rather than coherent, stories" (Till, 2014: 302).

[160] https://www.gov.za/speeches/social-compact-convention-4-feb-2020/

National flagship museums

Following up on the recommendations of the 1996 White Paper, a feasibility study was commissioned by DACST to " investigate the possibility of clustering specific institutions to achieve 'economies of scale'. The resultant report (Simeka, 1998) asserted that 'flagships' (that is, amalgamated institutions) would assist in building a progressive, representative heritage service which reflects the interests of/serves all members of SA public."[161]

The Cultural Institutions Act of 1998 recommended the establishment of the Northern flagship which became known as Ditsong Museums of South Africa, and the Southern Flagship Institution, now known as Iziko Museums of South Africa.[162] Classified as national museums, these became the focus for the GNU's transformation agenda as well as for the investment of a substantial portion of the state's financial resources for museums.

It was an opportune time for a new museum to be born. With the national commitment on transformation and inclusivity, D6M felt well-placed to position itself as a state museum in support of nation-building. "Disappointingly at the time, but in retrospect fortuitously, demands to be included in the flagship scenarios came to naught. It might have been that the independent origins of the District Six Museum were regarded as inimical to the cultural agenda of the new state" (Rassool, 2006: 293). Internal discussion documents indicate ambivalence about whether to pursue the option of becoming a state museum or not. The benefits of independence were weighed up against the benefits of secure operational funding, with the former holding the strongest sway.

It is also possible that the competence of a new museum with a very limited track record as an institution was of some concern to DACST. Whatever the reasons, the impact of forging ahead as an independent project has given D6M the arm's length distance from state governance that it has needed in order to present a critical voice on the delivery of restitution as well as heritage which I will return to in Chapter 5 of this study. D6M's independent status has however not stood in the way of appropriate government collaborations. In the past it has received project funding from the City and Provincial governments, and occasional discretionary grants as well as project funding from National government. Its most recent support has come from the DRDLR, in the form of a three-year grant to support its archival and project work with the returning District Six community.

[161] Draft National Museum Policy (undated), page 29.
[162] Ibid.

Heritage policy: empowering or blockage?

The policy and legislative environment which I have outlined can be overwhelming. It was crucial to ensure that all the necessary legal and regulatory frameworks were in place, and that they embodied the spirit of the constitution, especially the bill of rights. This having been done, the experience of attempting to navigate through the practicalities of implementation have fallen far short of expectations.

Heritage management practitioner Ndukuyakhe Ndlovu, writes about the dependence on legislation by heritage managers: "In contrast to my viewpoint that people need to be actively involved in heritage management, most heritage managers who consider themselves experts still see legislation as the most effective tool to manage cultural resources" (2011: 33). Although his focus is more on the failure of heritage laws to protect indigenous heritage, the District Six experience has been of a similar nature. Heritage managers tended to have as their starting point, the view that people do not understand the required laws. They have tended to position community members as not-knowing individuals, presenting public engagements as information sessions at which they speak down to people rather than engaging in conversations structured around mutual learning and respect. Although one of the main differences between the NHRA and previous heritage legislation is the incorporation of the public in matters relating to their heritage (Ndlovu, 2011), unfortunately the implementation of this had fallen far short of the ideal.

Writing about the politics of participation, Cornwall and Coelho pose the question: "What does it take for marginalised and otherwise excluded actors to participate meaningfully in institutionalised participatory fora and for their participation to result in actual shifts in policy and practice?" (2007)

The Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act 34 of 1995

This Act commenced on 1 December 1995. Its purpose:

> *To provide for the investigation and the establishment of as complete a picture as possible of the nature, causes and extent of gross violations of human rights committed during the period from 1 March 1960 to the cut-off date contemplated in the Constitution, within or outside the Republic, emanating from the conflicts of the past...*[163]

This Act made allowance for the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) which featured prominently on South Africa's transitional landscape. It started in 1995 and concluded its work on 28 October 1998 at the handing over of its final report. The Commission was headed by

[163] Available at: https://www.gov.za/documents/promotion-national-unity-and-reconciliation-act/

Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who was assisted by 16 commissioners. Public hearings of the Human Rights Violations Committee and the Amnesty Committee were held at different venues across the country. The Commissioners presided at the hearings which were intended to "authenticate the stories of selected individual victims of gross human rights violations and confront the perpetrators who came to confess their deeds publicly. It was intended to be a bridge-building process to enable South Africans to move away from a divided past into a future based on equal human rights.

Truth-telling

South Africa's TRC has won much acclaim across the world. "Other countries have had truth commissions, and many more are following our example, but ours is regarded as the most ambitious, a kind of benchmark against which the rest are measured" (Tutu, 2003: 1).[164]

At the same time it has also come under fire for a number of reasons. These include criticism that the commission was more perpetrator-centric rather then victim-centred. Piers Pigou (2002) describes how the mother of a young activist Sicelo Dlomo,who had been killed, refused to speak to her son's killers because she believed that they had not disclosed the full truth. She believed that they provided just enough information to fulfil the conditions that they needed to qualify for amnesty. She was not alone in her perception, and Pigou describes how at times more enmity was fomented than reconciliation (2002: 39). There was also the critique that those who testified on behalf of family members who had been killed often felt unfulfilled after having being re-traumatised by the retelling of their painful stories. For them, the process frequently had outcomes that fell short of that they had expected. Another criticism was that the definition of 'gross human rights' was too limited in the interpretation of the Commission and did not take into account the insidious nature of apartheid and its impact on the everyday lives of people. Many have lived with violations of their rights on a daily basis to the extent that these violations had become invisible and normative but with a lasting impact. Living in abject poverty with no access to basic resources and no access to an administration of care, is an example of this. Charles Villa-Vicencio, then director of the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, comments: "Reconciliation is not easy. Some regard reconciliation or restoration as meaningless for the simple reason that they simply have no tangible memory of peace- nothing to restore or return"(Villa-Vicencio and Doxtader, 2004: 3).

[164] Foreword by Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, TRC Report Volume 6 (2003).

Facts, truth and full disclosure

Of the approximately 22 000 victims of gross human rights violations identified by the TRC, only ten percent were aired in public hearings while the remaining 90% provided written statements. In addition, a large number of amnesty applications were held away from the public eye, in closed hearings (Posel and Simpson, 2002). While the TRC aimed at providing as many opportunities for personal testimonies to be shared in public as possible, it was inevitably bogged down by budgetary constraints. Hearings were open to the public but were of course limited by issues such as venue capacity and the ability of people to travel. Choices had to be made about which segments to broadcast, and which victims to invite to testify from the many written statements submitted. Decisions also needed to be made about which would be designated as 'window' cases, representative of others falling into the same or similar categories. The TRC team had the difficult task of making these decisions and recommendations and tried valiantly to create definitions, parameters and criteria for selection. Posel and Simpson (2002) go into some detail about the shortcomings of the Commission's methodological and epistemological basis, critiquing its formulation of concepts such as 'objective facts', 'truth', 'full disclosure' and 'memory'. Their critique was not unsympathetic to the magnitude and multi-dimensionality of the Commission's task and was offered in the spirit of critical reflection.

Selections and exclusions

One of the consequence of the selection of cases for live testimony was that those not selected felt as if the pain and trauma of others mattered more than what they themselves had experienced. The pragmatics involved in managing a process that had to be framed as efficient, fair to testifiers, while providing digestible sound-bites for those who were still sceptical about the extent of the violence of apartheid, were complex. At the same time the Commission had to lead a process of healing, recovery and equality. These multiple and varied aims seemed to be at odds with each other. It was an unenviable position to be in.

The most that a truth commission can achieve "is to reduce the number of lies that can be circulated unchallenged in public discourse" (Ignattieff 1996). While this is understandable given the complexity of factors that needed to be considered, I find this to be a disappointingly low bar to settle for compared to the high hopes that were touted for the TRC's role in the country's healing and nation-building process. But it is a stark reminder that while the TRC was an important starting point, truth and reconciliation cannot be achieved by a Commission. It is but one piece of a complex process of achieving reconciliation ,which should be ongoing.

The TRC was a substantial contextual component to the milieu into which D6M was beginning its institutional work, and did much to affirm the value of personal narrative and storytelling both as a modality for healing and as a valid research tool.

Transitional Justice (TJ)

The TJ frame has been an important component of our emerging post-apartheid, post-TRC context. Understood as a largely legal mechanism - but not exclusively so - for working through our violent past, it is a useful structure within which to understand processes of truth-telling. Described by the UN as "an approach to systematic or massive violations of human rights that both provides redress to victims and creates or enhances opportunities for the transformation of the political systems, conflicts, and other conditions that may have been at the root of the abuses".

It is a commonly used point of reference, and has been useful in different contexts since it emerged as a field in the late 1980s, mainly as a response to political transitions taking place in Latin America and Eastern Europe at the time.

TJ was not a category within which D6M chose to actively classify its work even though it had several organisational partners who were involved more directly in the TJ field. This is not a critique on the TJ mechanism *per se* but rather a comment that it was not a useful frame within which to place D6M's day-to-day work. However, I include this brief reference to TJ as a recognition of the relevance it has had in building the context of post-conflict work which includes memory, truth-telling, justice and restitution mechanisms.

Deputy-chair of the TRC, Dr Alex Boraine emphasises that "transitional justice is not a contradiction of criminal justice, but rather a deeper, richer and broader vision of justice which seeks to confront perpetrators, address the needs of victims, and start a process of reconciliation and transformation towards a more just and humane society" (Boraine, 2004: 67).

D. D6M: transitioning from a movement to a museum

The publication *The Struggle for District Six* (1990), was produced as an outflow of the HODS Conference of 1988. Amongst other things, it records the commitment made by the participants to ensure that all discussions about District Six took place in the context of creating a new democratic and non-racial South Africa, with former residents always being integrally involved in such discussions.

Issues of land restitution and of supporting the work of building a rights-based democracy were integral features of the 1988 resolution. They were carried through as key principles for working on the project that eventually became D6M. The climate in the country in 1994 seemed right for this as a project of democracy. I use the word 'democracy' in the broader sense than just being a political system of governance: D6M was not a product of South Africa's democratic government but it considers itself to be a democratic project.

Many features of D6M evolved outside of the formal field and do not conform to standard definitions of museums both past and present. However, it has been useful to locate its work – temporally as well as conceptually – in relation to the local and global museum sector. D6M chose to locate itself within the sector and despite challenges and differences, has not distanced itself from it.

Museums: sites of transformation or sites to be transformed?

> I often wonder in what spirit and with what intention the term 'museum' was first used in the context of District Six. Thinking back on this problematic notion of a 'museum', with all the connotations of collections and displays, the term seems at odds with the intense six-year life of the museum project as a living space and a place for working with memory. Recalling that time, I believe that the term 'museum' may have been evoked as something that suggested solidity, a continuity and permanence that could withstand even the force of the bulldozer and the power of a regime committed to the erasure of place and community. (Delport, 2001: 10)

The founding members are unanimous in their accounts of what this museum was meant to achieve. Amplifying Delport's statement above, Dr Irwin Combrinck writes: "We enthusiastically allied ourselves to the idea of a District Six Museum or a centre for community and history. This would not be the type of museum that exhibited the historic accomplishments of a privileged section. It would be a living peoples' place, where the peoples' history could be recorded" (Combrinck, 2001: 10).

In some ways, the D6M became a substitute space of engagement for evictees who felt that they had not fought hard enough when threatened with forced removals. Some of that energy derived from guilt and a sense of failure at not being able to spare their families the trauma and humiliation of being kicked out of their homes, was channeled into building the D6M space and ensuring that their memories were protected.

D6M and healing

D6M has been an important part of rebuilding agency and starting people on their journeys of healing. However, it would be incorrect to situate D6M as a healing space in a singular and final way. Speaking about the 'healing of memories' sessions for which he is well-known, Fr Michael Lapsley shares with the workshop participants: "This not magic and we don't give you a certificate that says 'healed' when this is over. What we do offer you is the opportunity to take one step. But it can be a giant step, and in some cases it may even be life-changing" (Lapsley, 2012: 193).

Healing is a complex and many-layered process and in some ways may never be complete. However, the D6M space has been a significant component within the range of ways that people find their healing. Telling their stories in a safe, non-judgemental space, is but one of many healing tools.

"But of course, I needed more than talking to feel whole again", said Thandi Shezi as she testifies at the TRC about her experience of being arrested, tortured and gang-raped by apartheid police. It was the first time that she had told of this ordeal, ten years after it had happened. She acknowledged that "appearing before the Commission helpe" but it was not enough (Dube 2002: 129). A sense of justice and fairness, being treated with dignity and experiencing restitution of some kind is also crucial.

Since its inception D6M has been a place of sense-making for the displaced community. It has been a place of storytelling, of building the case for claiming back their right to land, of exercising their right to give expression to memories, and to memorialise in ways which were meaningful to them. The community's resilience and determination together with D6M's ability to amplify their resolve to claim their rights, fed off each other and created a strong force.

The next phases of translating the idea of a place of memory into a reality which became the D6M, were engaging, empowering and transformative. A new way of being a museum in South Africa was embarked upon.

History from below

The strategies and tactics engaged in community political life during the days of the struggle against apartheid were varied and multi-pronged. I am reminded of my days as a youth and community activist in the 1980s. In the study groups and community campaigns of the time, I was schooled in the ways of 'history from below'. I learned how to listen to people in a new way, and to translate peoples' stories into campaigns that honoured their lives and struggles. They were shaped around their immediate material needs but were also transcendent. Our role as young people was to provide the scaffolding that supported the wishes and dreams of people for a better life. I don't remember the words 'archives' and 'archiving' ever being used, but it was engrained in us that we were engaging in the very important activity of making and learning from history and learning from working people who were at the coalface of daily struggles. Significant during this period were a number of organised initiatives that were both resources for 'alternative' education and learning, and also contributors to collaborative projects and community building processes. It was through these initiatives that I learned to love history. I had had a passionate dislike of the subject in high school with a typical teenager's response to history: 'why do we have to learn about dead people'. I have since learnt to appreciate the power of history and understand how it is so crucial to life in the present.

The History Workshop based at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg was formed in 1977 by academics from the humanities and social sciences who were involved in critiquing the histories of the 'great men of history'. This movement helped to create a country-wide milieu of affirming people's rights to and expertise in telling their own histories, helping to shift the hegemonic centre from the academy as the sole authoritative source of history-writing.[165]

Several other resource centres and educational projects were active in the same period, with great collaborations between arts and culture organisations, and educational projects. The Community Arts Project, Educational and Resources Information Project, International Labour Research and Information Group, South African Committee for Higher Education and Community Video Education Trust, the Western Cape Oral History Project which later became the Centre for Popular Memory based at UCT, and the People's History Project based at UWC were among the Cape Town entities which were active especially in the 1980s. Education, culture and history engaging people with dignity and respect at the core, all contributed towards the environment into which D6M was born.

Why a museum?

Many have asked this question. In the early days some suggested that D6M consider calling itself a community centre for memory, or a resource and educational centre, or even a visitors' centre. I was involved with some of these discussions soon after I became involved with the museum in 2001, and at first I was persuaded that the community centre option was a more appropriate one. The critique that the name 'museum' would bog the organisation down and that it would dissuade 'the community' from visiting was what had me convinced. However, I was otherwise convinced by the experience of receiving members of the District Six and extended communities into the Museum space. They engaged with it in an attitude of certainty that even as their homes were gone, the fixedness of the museum succored their loss. The 'museum' name was a confident assertion by D6M that it could demonstrate a different way of occupying the museum label, from its traditional usage. District Sixers needed the solidity of a space that could stand in for their loss.

The nature of museums

Traditional museums can be places of alienation and exclusion – as they were under apartheid in South Africa. However, they can be places of belonging and discovery as well, but at the time that the D6M movement was formed in the 1980s, they were not empowering sites of engagement. Community outreach was not an overt part of their strategic focus and they were definitely not sites for exploring issues of social justice.

[165] See https://www.wits.ac.za/history-workshop/ [Accessed 12 March 2020].

During the time of South Africa's transition, all spheres had to take up the transformational cudgel. Despite policy changes, museums were notably slow at leading transformation. It was a sector associated with maintaining order and stability rather than change. "In accordance with the principles of justice, democracy, non-racism and non-sexism, every sector of our society is facing change. While this may be unsettling for some, for many, it brings hope that their needs, views and aspirations will now also become part of the mainstream."[166] Before 1994 the sector had already displayed lethargy in joining the conversations about social purpose that was taking place in different parts of the world. It continued to function largely within the traditional paradigm of being the final authority on what was worthy of being preserved.

Such authority was largely derived from the grand narratives of apartheid, colonialism and slavery. Sandell (2012: 195) refers to museums as "typically risk-averse institutions that prefer to avoid controversy", and this characterisation was true of South African museums at the time. D6M had the benefit of being able to enter the museum space with no past baggage from a previous era which needed to be discarded in order to enter transformative processes critically and openly. It is a strong example of how theory has followed practice – how strategy and programmes were developed in the process of engaging the community, not separate from it. Community voices were not an afterthought to strategies developed and refined by experts (Bennett, 2017: 84, 85). Museums today are called to be inclusive, engaging and empowering, yet many struggle to reformulate a new way of being, having been formed and created as monolithic structures carrying the intransigent weight and authority of the past.

Gerard Corsane writes about SAMA's past attempt to engage in critical discussions with its membership base of museum professionals. At their conference in 1987, heated debates after the presentation of some papers resulted in a number of members walking out. Despite this, they emerged with a declaration that committed the body to work towards being more inclusive and to consider how museums could best serve the interests of all South Africans (Corsane, 2004: 7,8).

[166] Dr Ben Ngubane, in his message on the completion of the White Paper on Arts and Culture, 1986.

E. The struggle to define museums and their purpose

Arriving at a single definition which is universally applicable is not easy. The current struggle within the International Council on Museums (ICOM) to arrive at a workable definition that can be used to some degree by all or some museums globally, has recently resulted in substantial disagreements within the structure[167]. The South African museum sector has attempted to be responsive to the context of ongoing transformation and has been grappling with defining its purpose. D6M being an independent museum functioning in both the non-profit and the museum sectors, is not officially bound to any of the definitions but notes them as being part of its own operating context.

South African Museums Association (SAMA) definition

The current South African Museums Association (SAMA) definition for instance reflects the effects of the major political and social changes experienced in South Africa in the 1990s and the more inclusive democratic values of the museum sector. The SAMA definition reads:

> *Museums are dynamic and accountable public institutions which both shape and manifest the consciousness, identities and understanding of communities and individuals in relation to their natural, historical and cultural environments through collection, documentation, conservation, research and education programmes that are responsive to the needs of society.*[168]

National museum policy draft definition

> *A South African museum is a formally constituted institution that promotes the development of society through research, collection, conservation, communication and exhibition of natural and cultural heritage in ways that reflect the diversity and values of a democratic society.*[169]

The above definitions represent a broadening out from the traditional museum definitions, and accommodate a wider range of activities that do not depend on the conservation of material culture only.

[167] Since ICOM's creation in 1946, its definition has played a central role for museums and museum professionals and has became the main reference in the international museum community. In 2016 a Committee *of Museum Definition, Prospects and Potentials* (MDPP) was set up, and its work was expected to be concluded by the time of the ICOM General Conference in Kyoto during 2019. There had been rumblings for a long time that the definition, adopted in the 1970s was wholly inadequate for the demands placed on museums in the 21st century. The MDPP engaged in a participatory museum definition project, but by the time the definition was to be ratified in 2019, no agreement could be reached and the decision was deferred. Some members felt that that the bias had shifted too strongly towards non-traditional museums. Another reason for the rejection was that some believed that the definition was too broad and might result in 'government funding being given to organisations that fall outside of the intended scope of ICOM's membership'(Nelson, 2019).

[168] Available at https://www.samuseums.co.za/ [accessed 13 September 2019]
[169] Available at https://www.dac.gov.za/ [accessed 13 September 2019]

Defining District Six Museum

In its early years, D6M encountered some critique because of the absence of a collection which could define its museum-ness, but it nonetheless persisted in asserting its right to use that designation. Honouring the people of District Six and other areas of displacement was always central to its mission and the drive to collect was defined by how best to retain that centering intention. It accepted the role of custodian of the quotidian objects received from the object-poor community who through their donations remain connected to it (ie D6M). Objects donated by families were for the most part household items, sometimes chipped, rusted or even broken. These bits and pieces of their pasts form the core of the Museum's collection and symbollically speak to the broken chapter of forced removals in their lives.

Writing about some of the challenges which memorial museums face, Paul Williams (2007: 25) refers to a basic difficulty: "orchestrated violence aims to destroy and does so efficiently. The injured, dispossessed and expelled are left object-poor."

Although it is unusual, the creation of a museum without a collection is not unique to D6M. There are a number of other examples and I will refer to two here.

The *FHXB Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg* Museum in Berlin has a similar story to tell in this regard. "According to the museum director Martin Düspohl, the Kreuzberg Museum did not possess its own collection upon establishment, and was therefore 'compelled' from the beginning to collect in a participatory manner, that is, by involving the local population, whose stories were to be told. Today, the collection comprises not just photos, documents and files, but also everyday objects from people from Friedrichschain and Kreuzberg, and an evolving archive with voices from the neighbourhood" (Kamel 2017: 120). Like D6M, the FHXB Museum has been able to sustain public involvement in programmes, as a consequence of people being invested in the actual making and shaping of the museum itself.

In a lecture given at the University of California on 19 April 2018, Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett describes the creation of the *POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews* as having been started with no collection. The Museum is literally built on the ruins of the Warsaw ghetto. This is another example of a museum without a traditional collection at its formation which could shape its interpretive work. In 2016, the POLIN Museum won the European Museum of the Year Award (EMYA). The jury statement reads as follows:

> POLIN Museum rose up to the challenge of creating an engaging and persuasive core exhibition without a substantial collections of artefacts. The programme of temporary exhibitions, educational activities, conferences, academic and artistic residences make the Museum a vibrant platform for dialogue and spreading the knowledge of Jewish history and heritage.[170]

Modern museums across the world take on different shapes and forms, including virtual museums existing in the digital realm. The sector could benefit from a broader definition which encapsulates these new and varied dimensions.

F. Museum transitions

Global

In the late 1980s, museums across the world were increasingly becoming aware of their social purpose and Peter Vergo (1989) had just produced a publication *The New Museology*. It brought together many of the challenges that had been circulating in the sector for more than a decade. Sharon Macdonald, in her Introduction to *A Companion to Museum Studies* (2011) refers to a "shift to seeing the museum and the meaning of its contents not as fixed and bounded, but as contextual and contingent" (Macdonald 2011: 2), as one of the ways of thinking about the transition from the old to the new, in the world museum context.

Judging from documents produced in its formative years, an awareness of these global debates does not seem to have been an explicit feature in the early days of planning D6M. However, the underlying issues of social purpose and about building democracy and citizenship emerging in these discussions, certainly resonate.

Tony Bennett (2013) discusses the practices of collecting and displaying objects over the ages. His study is largely focused on practices in Europe and North America, but these centres have been significant in the development of museums as we know them today. The first museums established in South Africa were "largely based on the European museum model as were all museums in South Africa, prior to 1994."[171]

In the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, the 'cabinets of curiosities' (*kunstkabinett / kunstkammer / wunderkammer*) were a common style of display. These contained exhibits of spectacles from a different world, and a display of the wealth and possessions of the owners (Bennett, 1995). They were

[170] Available at: https://www.polin.pl/en/about-museum/ [accessed 13 September 2019]
[171] Draft National Museum Policy, pg 21

typically a mish-mash of objects and specimens, with the focus being more on the volume of the treasure than on the manner in which their meanings and contexts could be revealed.

Alberto Eco (2009), sees these cabinets as the forerunners to the modern natural history museums "where some tried to systematically collect all the things that ought to be known, while others collected things that seemed extraordinary or unheard of, including bizarre objects or amazing items such as a stuffed crocodile, which usually hung from a keystone dominating the entire room" (Eco, 2009: 203). He points out that from the Renaissance onwards, the marvels that were being collected for these 'cabinets of curiosities' – at least from the end of the 15th century onwards – became less about wonders from distant lands and more about "the wonders of the human body and its recesses that had been secret until then" (2009: 202).

In the early 19th century, this obsession with what was regarded as aberrant and exotic human forms, fed an ongoing practice of subjugating the colonized body. It was during this period that the public humiliation of the South African woman, Sarah Baartman, started. Through a series of degrading exchanges, she ended up being on display at the Palais-Royal in Paris. She had been brought there by an animal trainer who used her as an amusement to entertain visitors to the Palace. Previously she had been displayed on stages and country fairs in different parts of England, with her buttocks in particular being the source of curiosity, mocking and amusement. She was subjected to much abuse: prodding, touching her genitalia and even rape. After her death in Paris, her body was dissected and her human remains placed in the *Musee de'l home* (Museum of Man) in Paris. South African poet and performer Diana Ferrus, who was part of the delegation accompanying the remains of Sarah Baartman when repatriated to South Africa, wrote a poem – 'I've come to take you home' – while on a fellowship in Utrecht in the Netherlands in 2008. A senator of the French Parliament found the poem to be extremely moving and with Diana's permission, had it translated into French and read in the senate in 2002 as part of his motivation for the return of Sarah's remains to South Africa.[172]

South African museums

> I argue that museums are conduits for colonial discourse and suggest that, like institutions of higher learning, museums should be aware of the current call for decolonisation. (Rall, 2018: 14)

Research done by the South African Cultural Observatory on the supply side of museums suggests that South African cultural history is divided into three stages: *colonial,* characterized by British Imperialism, and the promotions of English heritage; *apartheid,* characterized by Afrikaner

[172] Interview with Diana Ferrus, 23 July 2020.

nationalism; and *democratic*, where the focus is on a multicultural society and inclusive cultural representation.[173] (my emphasis)

Like the temporal markers that I have used to demarcate the sections of this thesis, the above three categories are useful even if inadequate. They are inadequate because singular labels for entities as complex as museums tend to mask the multifaceted nature of the entity However, they are useful because they provide a basis for comparison and for tracking development, and the three periods indicated above have very clear and distinct features. However, they are not discrete time periods and it must be assumed that there are several overlaps between them. For example, a museum could be existing in the period of democracy but still retain elements of the colonial or apartheid eras.

European colonial expansion flourished in the 19th century. The British in particular were extremely expansionist with South Africa being one of its lucrative territorial gains particularly with the discovery of gold and diamonds. It was not unusual at the time for wealthy travelers to the colonies, to collect specimens of unusual 'things' to take back home as evidence of their travels, and to illustrate the unusual wonders of the world beyond the borders of the known European society. The ongoing call for the repatriation of objects that had been stolen during the colonial era and which ended up in the archives and museums of colonizing countries around the world, stems from these activities of conquest.

The South African Museum (SAM) – located in Cape Town – was opened in 1825 at the time when the country was under British rule. In 1897 it moved to the Company Gardens where it is still located to this day. The part of the collection categorized as 'cultural history' moved into a separate building and became the South African Cultural History Museum (SACHM) while the natural history collection remained (Mazel, 2013). The opening took place on 6 April 1966- the tercentary of Van Riebeeck's arrival at the Cape (coincidentally, this was in the same year that District Sixers were reeling with the announcement that their homes would be destroyed).

Having excavated the records of the SAM, Aron Mazel (2019), provides extensive details of the deliberations that accompanied the decision to separate the SACHM from the SAM. The building that the SACHM moved into had been the slave quarters of the VOC during the period of Dutch colonial rule and had subsequently been used as the Supreme Court. It was vacant at the time when these deliberations started. Interestingly, the history of the actual building (ie its usage during the period of slavery at the Cape), was excluded from the narrative. Clearly there was a discomfort about acknowledging the practice of enslaving people, or possibly it was because it was considered to be a story not worthy of being told.

[173] South African Cultural Observatory.

Mazel (2013) posits that the separation of the SAM into natural and cultural history components was not a uniquely South African move as it "characterized many colonial museums globally". However, he goes on to say that "its manner and timing in the South African context made it a deeply political act intimately associated with the implementation of Apartheid"(2013: 188).

The much-studied 'Bushman diorama' which was installed in the SAM was a replica of a hunter-gatherer encampment populated by life-size human casts which were in place from 1959 to 2001. Racist attitudes with regards to indigenous black people was behind the decision to exclude the diorama from the move made into the SACHM space: it remained behind with the natural history collection.

> Our cultural institutions cannot stand apart from our Constitution and our Bill of Rights. Within the context of our fight for a democratic South Arica and the entrenchment of Human Rights, can we afford exhibitions in our museums depicting any of our people as lesser human beings, sometimes in natural history museums usually reserved for the depiction of animals? Can we continue to tolerate our ancestors being shown as people locked in time?
>
> Such degrading forms of representation inhibit our children's appreciation of the value and strength of our democracy, of tolerance and of human rights. They demean the victims and warp the minds of the perpetrators.
>
> (Mandela, 1997)

President Mandela never named the SAM diorama explicity, but it fit into the category of the type of museum he was critiquing.

The diorama was eventually archived in 2001 after the SAM was challenged by its continued existence in the new South Africa. This was preceded by a series of interventions by IZIKO curators in which feedback from the public was sought. This was a long overdue but important step in the process of state museums' processes of transformation which spoke to the importance of addressing issues of representation during this time of transition.

G. A museum in a building with exhibitions

Two main events mark D6M's transition from an itinerant museum to one which 'settled' into a building. The one took place in 1992 as a week of commemoration to mark the launch of the museum concept, while the second took place in 1994, regarded as the formal start of D6M.

<u>District Six Commemoration Week: 31 October – 7 November 1992</u>

Since the Foundation was formed in 1989, it held several travelling exhibitions in various areas, in church and community halls and even some shopping centres. It called upon former residents to visit

FIGURE 2

and also to bring photographs and memorabilia to these places. People were invited to reconnect with each other and to share their stories. From the response it became clear to the Foundation members that there was definitely an interest to be harnessed into working towards a more permanent structure. Two of the Foundation members – Stan Abrahams and Ruth Cookson – belonged to the Methodist Church congregation at 25A Buitenkant Street, and they knew that the building was vacant because their congregation had amalgamated with the one based at Greenmarket Square. On behalf of the Foundation, approaches were made to the minister and church leaders who were very keen to explore collaborative ways to memorialise and honour the District Six community.

The Methodist Church congregation had been involved in anti-apartheid activities for many years. Reverend Peter Storey (later Bishop) was the minister at the time when District Six was being destroyed. He had preached a particularly poignant sermon in November 1971 when a 'plaque of conscience' referencing the injustice of forced removals, was dedicated and installed on the exterior of the church building. There were several other acts of protest but this one is of relevance here. They agreed to co-host a District Six week of commemoration with the Foundation from 31 October to 7 November 1992 in the then-vacant building. Rededication of the plaque would form part of the programme.

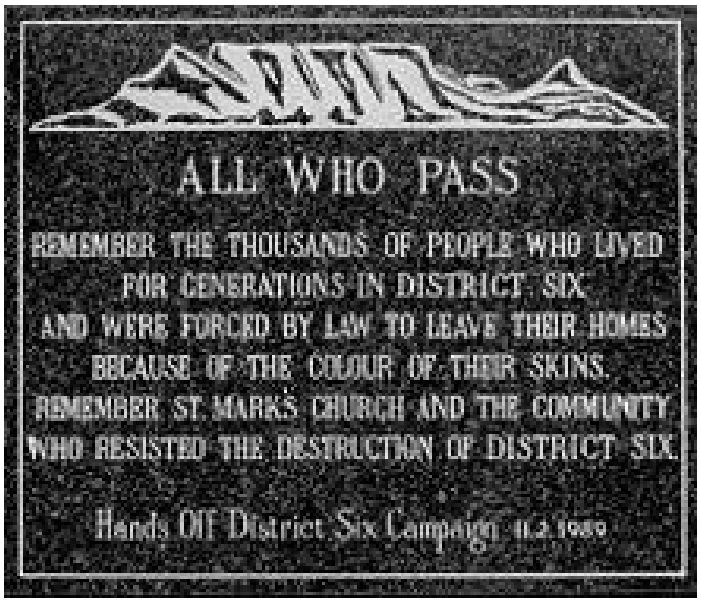


FIGURE 15

The museum as a work-in-progress project was launched at this occasion. Photographs from the personal albums of District Sixers were exhibited alongside known photographers such as Jimi Matthews, Rashid Lombard and the late George Hallett. Several artists took part in the programme of talks, readings and film screenings.

The well-known visual artist Peter Clarke designed the poster which was used to advertise the occasion and the graphic was also used on the programme cover. The image has become iconic and served as the inspiration for the design of an iron gate that was installed at the entrance to a second building which D6M has expanded into, the D6M Homecoming Centre.

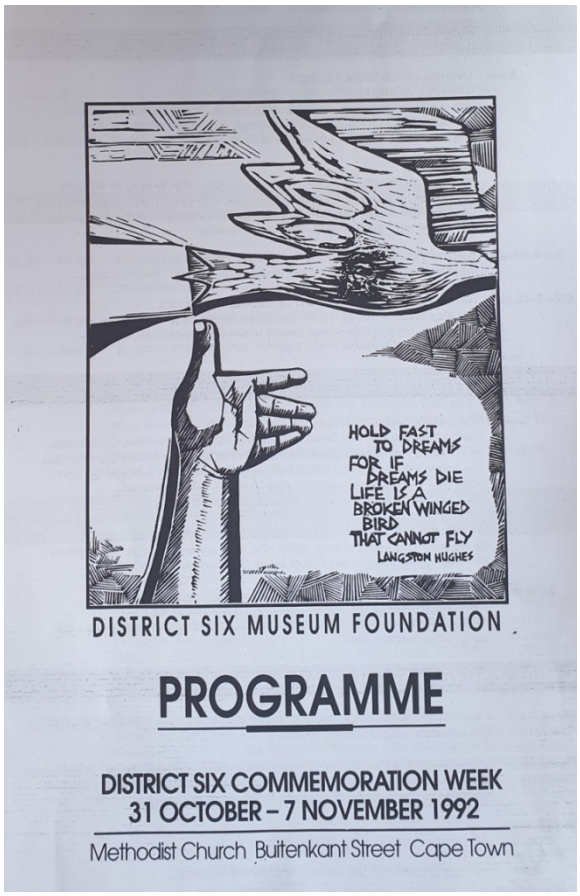


FIGURE 16

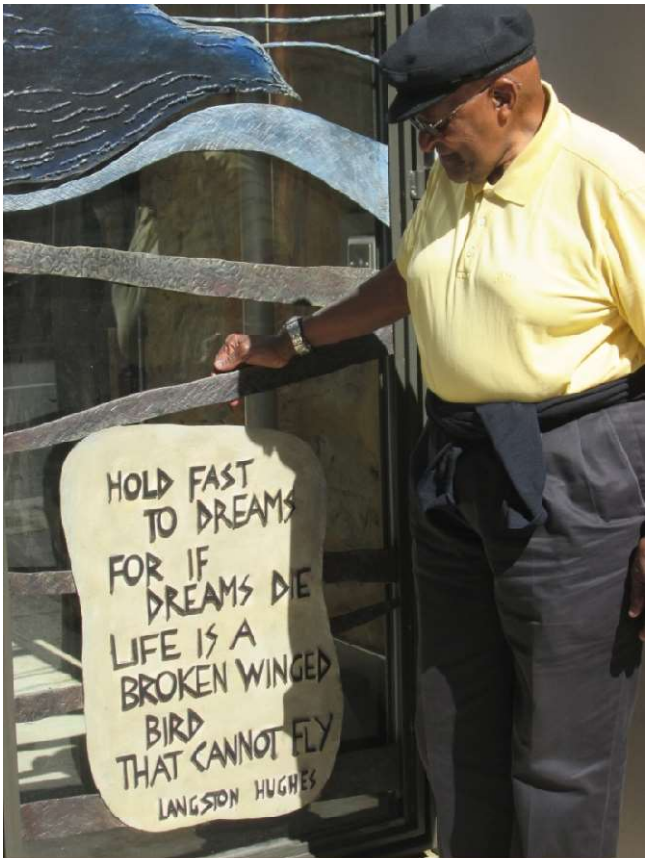


FIGURE 17

Streets: Retracing District Six : 10 December 1994

> **Streets** was scheduled to open for only two weeks. However since its launch in December 1994, it has remained open due to public interest. While this installation became the primary exhibition of the Museum, a number of other exhibitions were curated alongside it, expressing the Museum's desire to tell multiple and more complex stories which go beyond the story of District Six. In essence, **Streets** was the cornerstone of and precursor to the Museum's current permanent exhibition – **Digging Deeper –** which opened in 2000.[174]

The black and white photographs from family albums displayed at the opening were closely scrutinized by District Sixers. Sometimes the images were blurred, cracked or out of focus, but people examined them up close, determined to identify the places where the pictures were taken or the people depicted in them. If they recognised anyone, most likely they would return with that person in tow on a next day to show them the photograph. They might also return with their own photographs either in an album or safely stowed in a biscuit tin or shoebox. There was a sense that something great was happening and they wanted to be a part of it. It was the start of healing journeys for many people of District Six, this exhibition called *Streets*.

'Name and number?' was the way that the late Menisha Collins greeted former residents of District Six as they sat down in the coffee shop after having had a walk through the exhibition. Menisha and her family had lived in Bloemhof Flats in District Six before they were forcibly removed and she was responsible for running the coffee shop for a number of years. Her 'name and number' query was a request for visitors to identify themselves by surname, street name and number, and it became her trademark greeting by which she is fondly remembered. As to many other District Sixers, placing a person on the topography of the District's map was as important to her as knowing your name. Street identity enabled many connections: where you worshipped, schooled, who your neighbours were, and which routes you walked. Most District Sixers engaged with their streets as an extension of their homes which were often small and cramped. The conversations and even family squabbles that might have taken place in the front lounges of suburbia, were done on the streets of District Six.

In developing and presenting the *Streets* exhibition, D6M had translated into exhibitionary form, the significant role that street identity played in the sense of belonging to a place, as expressed by former residents. In several oral histories in the D6M archive, people speak of the proximity of District Six to so many things that were part of their everyday lives: it was within walking distance of the shops, places of work, schools, places of worship as well as places for leisure. Often this act of walking is

[174] www.districtsix.co.za/project/streets-retracing-district-six/

expressed as a matter of convenience and safety. Convenience in contrast to the complicated challenges and expense associated with travelling from the townships where people lived after displacement; and safety, also compared to the dangerous township streets. For the most part, getting off the streets as soon as possible became the way that many people engaged with the township streets. They did not relate to the streets in the same leisured, tactical way as they had done in District Six where their usage of the streets served their many purposes which included but was not confined to walking from point A to Point B.

I use 'tactical' here in the sense that Michel de Certeau (1984) in his *The Practice of Everyday Life* refers to the ways that people use routine practices that are useful to them, but not always as was intended or planned by 'strategists'(city planners, corporations and producers being among these). For example, roads are built according to a planned route to lead from one place to another. People are known to take short-cuts, create alternative paths through fields and lanes to navigate their way between the same points. Some would think they had found a more convenient and shorter route; others might be expressing creativity or resisting being regimented and controlled. It seems to me that this is the way that many District Sixers used their exterior space especially the streets outside their homes in the same way. The streets meant for vehicular traffic were often turned into public space, with a soccer match or a skipping game taking precedence over traffic wanting to pass through. Chairs might be placed on pavements and even streets to relax and converse with neighbours, and passersby would have to negotiate their way through narrow spaces, or walk around the re-utilised space. Bill Nasson (1999) describes how the queue of cinema-goers outside the Avalon bioscope snaked out into the street with patrons unwilling to move in case they lost their place. Buses had to reroute around the queues as pedestrians stood their ground.

These expressions of proximity (to school, work-places, etc) are simultaneously linked to issues of connectivity and ownership. de Certeau refers to the ability of citizens to walk the streets of their neighbourhood as 'pedestrian speech acts' which are within themselves "a process of appropriation of the topographical system on the part of the pedestrian" (de Certeau, 1984: 94). When this was no longer possible because (1) the streets had been destroyed, and (2) the township streets were unsafe, the inability to engage with the topography added another layer of disconnection and alienation from space to those who had lost their homes.

The 75 original street signs which were central to the *Streets* exhibition and which remain essential to the current permanent exhibition are among D6M's most precious and powerful original pieces. It is ironic that these much-loved street signs, the substitutes for the beloved streets of home, were acquired from the person who headed the apartheid demolition squad had been responsible for destroying the streets of District Six. Contrary to the instructions that he had received to dump the

signs, he had kept them for the nearly 30 years that had lapsed between the time of the destruction and the time of handing them over to the Museum.

In a process which at best could be described as thoughtless and at worst as cynically cruel, the government used certain District Six street names for some streets, areas and tenement blocks in the township. One positive spin-off, however, has been that the old street names became familiar to young people who had not known District Six in their own lives. The late Anwah Nagia shares his observations of local families visiting D6M: "Every time they come [to the Museum], their kids, all of a sudden realise that their parents' or their grandparents' roots were not in a ghetto. [Personal] photos could not be the only form of evidence to tell these youngsters, 'listen, we stayed in the City man. We didn't always stay in No 9, Hangklip Hof in Manenberg'. …and the kids are saying, *'Jo, ons het mos van die Kaap gekom, man. Ons was nie altyd in die verdoemenis nie*[175]*.* '" (Nagia, 2001: 172).

The launch of *Streets* in December 1994 is regarded as the launch of D6M.

FIGURE 18

FIGURE 19

[175] *'Wow, we actually come from the city, man. We were not always in the wilderness.'*

H. Conclusion to Chapter 2

D6M started its institutional journey during a time when South Africa was basked in hope. In terms of legislation, I have largely focused on the Restitution of Land Rights and the National Heritage Resources Acts in this chapter, as important signposts to that hope.

While the formulation of these new Acts strive to meet the standards set by the new Constitution, the responsible government entities (DRDLR and DAC) have revealed several fault-lines between Acts as legislated and Acts as interpreted and implemented. This has created severe stress and frustration to the affected communities, with the hopes and aspirations for a very different South Africa gradually being dashed. The impact of the pandemic has worsened this. Recent revelations about government poverty relief funds having been stolen have added to the general sense of disillusionment and despair.

It is clear that there is no short-cut to nation-building. Skipping crucial steps in order to arrive at an outcome in haste, has consequences in terms of national confidence in the dispensing of restorative justice. Wounds need to heal; healing can be facilitated but not plastered over.

The inexact science of what it means to 'consult with the public' produces very superficial processes when not read in tandem with the Bill of Rights section 9 which speaks of 'Equality'. Consultations where they happen, are not well-conceived by several government departments.

Coelho and Cornwall (2007) use the term the 'participatory sphere' to think of a distinct interface between state and society. They propose that institutions which have a semi-autonomous existence outside of the realm of formal policy and bureaucracy occupy the participatory sphere as "they are often threaded through with preoccupations and positions formed in them" (2007: 1,2). I see D6M and other entities as occupying that space – not defined by the policies that it chooses to be engaged with, but understanding their value in terms of the effect that it could have on people's lives. However, it needs the commitment from government actors who also see the potential of such mutually beneficial spaces. It needs agreement about how to manage potential disagreements and tensions so that they do not drown out dissent. It requires belief that differences can co-exist and be enriching as there are likely to be contestation within these collaborations. They are potentially "crucibles for a new politics of public policy" (Coelho and Cornwall, 2007: 2).

The struggle for land restitution and engagement with place-based memory and heritage remain intertwined, and better synergies between the two processes are essential as people experience it singly: either as justice denied or received.

What will it take for government entities to take a step back and stop implementing strategies that do not work, and which do not dignify people? What might it take to get back to the promise heralded by the 1996 constitution-making process which announced: "**You've** made **your** mark. You've had **your say.** Now we're making sure **it counts**.[176]" It further details: "Right now we, the members of the Constitutional Assembly, are analyzing and discussing the nearly two million submissions and petitions that you, the citizens of our country, have been sending us since the beginning of the year."[177] This inaugural commitment to creating platforms for people's voices offered hope for a future with a government dedicated to listening to the voices of its citizens.

District Six Museum ends this period on a high note, confident in the knowledge that it had stayed true to its founding mission. It continued to bask in the reflected positivity of the 1994 beginning of the new South Africa which gave buoyancy to its own birth in the same year. Its memory work had developed distinct features which spoke to the need felt by marginalised communities for platforms which amplify their voices. In D6M they found the beginnings of a home.

In the next chapter I will explore some of the methodological underpinnings of D6M's memory work as it unfolds within its different programmes and activities.

FIGURE 20

[176] Words from a poster from the Constitutional Assembly media campaign, 1996.
[177] Constitutional Assembly media campaign poster available on https://ourconstitution.constitutionhill.org.za/

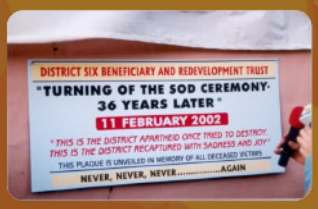
From 'Hands off' to 'Hands on'

circa 2000 - 2005

2000

Launch of 'Digging Deeper

2002



2003

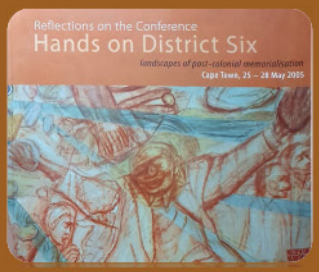
Prestwich Burial Ground

Memory Methodology

2004

The Return of the Elders

'Hands on District Six' Conference



2005

The District Six Museum has surpassed the Greeks in making a new kind of museum. For the Greeks, on the one side was the temple, but on the other side of course was the forum. The museum we've come to brings these two powerfully together. Being a temple it has objects which we respect and we're bound to venerate in what they reveal to us about the mystery of human existence. But being a forum it engages us not merely in the preservation of the past, remembering what we've forgotten, but it engages us in argument and debate. In this way when we think of memory we don't think of the past only. We think of how the past is full of prophecies, prophecies which may become self-fulfilling.

Richard Werbner. *Hands on District Six* Conference presentation, 2005

This museum is totally chaotic. It gives enough reading for 5 days, I guess, but practical info is hard to find. Of course, the reason for this museum is very sad, but a more structured approach would give a better understanding about the background. Now (sic) an endless row of personal notes, a kind of KLAGMUUR. Again, Apartheid was very wrong in my opinion, but it deserves more and better explanation.

Feedback from visitor on TripAdvisor online platform, 11 March 2019

A. Introduction to chapter 3

In the context of D6M, the 'hands on' exhortation was symbolically evoked as a counterpoint to the *Hands Off District Six* movement of the 1980s. It confirmed that new ways of engaging with District Six was needed and that the museum had reached a new phase.

The call was made public at an international conference in 2005 called *Hands On District Six: Landscapes of Postcolonial Memorialisation*, which took place a few months after D6M had celebrated the first decade of its life. The 'hands on' motif had evolved over a number of years before that and was embedded in all its outward-looking work.

During this period D6M makes a mobilising call to a broad-based community[178]to become involved in the District Six project which includes restitution of land, cultural and human rights. It is a call directed at government to amplify its programme geared towards delivering on the rights of District Sixers to receive the restitution that they are entitled to; it is a call to all those who support the cause of restitution and restorative justice, to get involved; it is an institutional reminder that D6M hands should be extended to other communities and causes while at the same time revitalising the existing site-based focus on District Six. Valmont Layne and Karen Till in their presentation at the 2005 Conference, "suggest how activist engagements with wounded landscapes provide the possibility to rethink the category of the nation by keeping the project of memory as an open and ongoing contemporary process" (District Six Museum, 2007: 39).

Acting on its own injunction, D6M extended its hand to become involved in a campaign to stop displacement of another kind at the west end of the city. I am referring here to the struggle centred around the protection of an unmarked burial ground dating back to the 1800s where the poor of the city were buried. This became known as the Prestwich campaign.

The period encompasses the time when the first returnees to District Six move into their new homes, with the actual start of physical return being heralded at an event called 'The Return of the Elders'. It is also during this time that D6M takes the first steps to explore with the SAHRA, the possibility of calling for the declaration of District Six as a NHS. The central focus of the declaration would be based on the legacy of displacement on the country.

D6M's permanent exhibition *Digging Deeper,* launched in 2000, suggests that there is 'the need to look beyond appearances, beyond the iconic rigidity of familiar image and symbols'(Delport, 2001: 157). Philosophically, it mirrors the incomplete and layered nature of memory. It is a curatorial exhortation to continue the work of digging beneath the surface of what at first seems easy and apparent.

[178] Later in this chapter I will present the different ways in which D6M works with the concept of 'community'.

I have used this same layered approach in presenting the biography of D6M through my exploration of its methodological development rather than its strictly linear history. I have delved into the evolution of its approaches to exhibitions, curatorship, community, orality and voice among other concepts as part of its biography.

2000 – 2005 represents a period of intense institutional growth and a time when methodological strategies are refined and strengthened. In looking back over the first 10 years of its life, the institution found that at times it needed to return to its founding principles in order to strengthen its work, and at other times it has had to progressively move on and leave behind what was no longer relevant or useful.

I have used two sets of temporal frameworks as organising devices to illuminate meaning in this chapter. The one is EVOLUTIONS, the other is MOMENTS. The former refers to methodological developments which follow a continuum but are not datable events on a linear plane; MOMENTS refers to specific calendric events which were significant to the deepening of the D6M methodology.

B. Evolutions

The methodologies of 'Digging Deeper'[179]: 2000

Whichever way D6M chose to describe itself as being different from traditional museums which usually 'exhibited the historic accomplishment of a privileged section' (Combrinck, 2001), it had selected to place its identity alongside others in a largely conservative field which had deeply entrenched colonial roots. However, it had 'appropriated an elite cultural institution for its own cultural purposes' (Rassool, 2006: 294). Between 1988 and 1994 it had evolved from being a movement to becoming a museum in a building, with an exhibition, a growing collection and visitors. These are some of the features that it had in common with museums as traditionally constituted.

'Streets' as a learning lab for 'Digging Deeper'

The enthusiastic ways in which District Sixers responded to *Streets* (see Chapter 2) helped D6M to overcome its initial discomfort with the categories of 'museum' and 'exhibition' (Rassool, 2001: viii). A strong need expressed by former residents particularly in the early days of D6M was to find a spatial point of reference upon entering. The map was the strong cohering feature: combined with the street signs it provided the reference points from which to navigate: a symbolic place of arrival on a Cartesian plane after having been shunted about on the map of displacement.

[179] This is the title of D6M's permanent exhibition. When people visit D6M, 'Digging Deeper' shapes their experience of the Museum.

The exhibitionary complex[180]

Conventionally, museums tend to be places where certain behaviours are reinforced and rehearsed through rules of etiquette and civility (Bennett, 2008). Rules of visitor engagement require a looking and learning from a distance. As an inverse of Foucault's exposition of the 'panopticon[181]' which posits surveillance as an exercise of power and control, Tony Bennett presents the concept of the 'exhibitionary complex' in which the trajectory of sight is reversed, and power is exercised through the display of objects. Looking at, not being seen, is operative. The power is vested in the one who decides what is to be seen and guides the gaze..

This style of museums and exhibitions was particularly apparent in the late 19th and early 20th century when nationalism and colonialism were at the forefront of political development in Western Europe.[182] In Cape Town in the 1900s, this was discernible in the displays at the South African Cultural History Museum which foregrounded the great advancements made by white South Africans with a bias towards their European origins. This was in contrast to the display of indigenous people in a primitive setting captured in the South African Museum which housed its natural history collection and exhibition (Mazel, 2013; Hendricks, 2010: Rall, 2018).

FIGURE 21

[180] The 'exhibitionary complex' is a concept coined by Tony Bennett (2008), referring to the context for displaying power / knowledge in museums as places representing control and order.
[181] The structure of the panopticon (designed by Bentham) has been the subject of Foucault's *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison* (1997) in which he presents this as a powerful tool of surveillance and control.
[182] https://thekeystonejournal.wordpress.com/2013/04/15/why-museums-are-important/

An advantage that D6M had was that its natural constituency of visitors were former residents of District Six, largely black working class people who had very limited or no habits of museum-going and therefore no fixed style of museum engagement. Some had been involved with the making of D6M and their introduction to the sector was as part of a strategy for reclamation of memory and land rights, not as a place for viewing objects. From the start they engaged with the space robustly. Many were loudly vocal, and they wrote on the map and on the memory cloth as invited. They sometimes stuck photographs that they had brought, onto the walls using Prestik, having seen photographs of other families displayed and wanting to be part of it. In the early days there was even a table in the main exhibition hall where visitors could make tea. In an interview, Tina Smith who is current head of exhibitions at D6M and who was involved from the museum's beginnings, speaks of some of the practices that had become common for the duration of *Streets*. She describes how all the rules of standard museum engagements were broken. For example, tour guides used the maps of District Six that were displayed on the walls, as visual aids for their tours:

> And they just used to pull it off the wall and then stand with it on the bench, you know, showing their visitors and so on. And then politely got onto the pew, stuck it back up and then waltzed off like it was perfectly normal (Smith, 2011).

These were not standard museum behaviours but in the context they were not discouraged.

Shifting the curatorial centre

The vocabulary of established museums such as the usage of the term 'permanent exhibition' was becoming part of the D6M lexicon. The curatorial team, however, was aware of the limitations of a static exhibitionary practice, which would not be appropriate in the context. The D6M space was designed to be one which invited people to insert their voices with all their complexities and dissonant points of view, not only to view things. It was important that the voices of the community be fore-grounded more than the voices of the curators, not added on as an afterthought. Deep listening added depth of understanding to concerns as expressed through oral narrative which became part of the necessary organisational culture. It was a valuable skills set which was essential for all those involved in working face-to-face with people and engaging with their stories. Deep listening is empathetic, supportive and trusting. 'Trust here does not imply agreement, but the trust that whatever others say, regardless of how well or how poorly it is said, comes from something true in their experience' (Rome, 2010).[183]

[183]'Deep Listening' by David Rome. Available on https://www.mindful.org/deep-listening/ [accessed 10 November 2020]

D6M was not alone in thinking through these issues of transformative curation. Many established museums across the globe which usually engage scholar-curators, had also been thinking about this differently. Not only are they now required to collect and research collections and devise programmes, they also need to "diagnose need in their communities, seek out new and unusual settings for their work, forge partnerships with a wide array of disparate stakeholders and, in some cases, cede a certain amount of artistic control in order to gain broader impact"(Brown and Tepper, 2013).

The ceding of curatorial control is not an easy transition to make for those trained in traditional curatorship. It requires thoughtful facilitation so that 'community voices' do not become mere add-ons based on a deficit model of inclusivity which is premised on including people just because they were previously excluded or marginalized in the past and not also because they are knowledge-carriers. Bernadette Lynch, writing about museums keen on creating the space for the telling of migrant stories, cautions against them displaying 'soft bigotry'- a term used by Australian Aboriginal activist Noel Pearson to describe "efforts by institutions in which their expectations for the people they want to help fall short of their expectations for themselves" (2017: 237).

D6M's own internal reflexivity provided sufficient scaffolding for the team to guard against the potential fixedness connoted with exhibition narratives which, despite D6M's intentions, might yield a different kind of power than that put forward by Bennett (2008), but power nonetheless. The fixedness of the authorized version of the 'whole story' of District Six, could close off the possibility of new or conflicting narratives. Token consultations can have the impact of disempowering and controlling people's contributions, "particularly those that challenge a museum's carefully managed 'storyline'" (Lynch, 2017: 226).

D6M has had to conscientiously guard against the potential of controlling narratives and has had to ensure that it did not present a singular centre of discourse. It needed to ensure that there was the space for a multiplicity of meanings which could enrich the space of engagement. Its concern was to make certain that the placement of objects, photographs and voices could 'speak to each other' in the exhibition. The dialogue evoked between the pieces which serve as data carriers were also familiar signifiers to community members who enter the space This approach "stresses the dialogic virtues of speaking and hearing in relations of discursive reciprocity over the more fixed organisation of attention associated with the museum's traditional form of directed ocular-centrism" (Bennett, 2006: 26).

D6M cannot claim innocence in this regard and cannot claim that it exercises no narrative power. The direction of sight when entering the exhibition is not unconscious. However, the focus of the vision is not a feature art-piece, but powerful quotidian objects. It was not unusual for former residents to enter the space with their eyes immediately directed towards the street signs which are positioned in a

vertical column directly ahead of the entrance. They would walk as if drawn in that direction. On walking to get to the street signs they might realise that they were walking over a map of their destroyed home town. They might pause to find the street of their family home or another significant landmark and continue the journey to either find their street sign or express disappointment if it was not there (not all street signs were retrieved).

"The District Six Museum's most popular exhibit is a display of street signs", writes Martin Hall (2000: 172). "Suspended as long banners from the high ceiling on the one-time church, these evoke rich memories of the District's complex physical and social geography. Former residents are immediately drawn to them."

Representing the nation

A benefit of being an independent museum is that the imperative to 'glorify' the nation (Bennett, 2006; Anderson, 1991; Lowenthal, 1998) is not a given. The museums being described by these theorists are mostly state-sponsored museums where there is a measure of influence on the narrative by state actors. D6M was fortunately spared this pressure by having been created as an alternate, public space for people to share their stories, engage in trips down memory land, and take part in discussions about different interpretations of and exclusions from the city's history (Abrahams, 2001; Combrinck, 2001; Forbes, 2001).

In its origins D6M was pitted against erasure of a community's traces by the apartheid state. In the post-apartheid period its non-governmental postitionality is confirmed by its preferred independent status which excludes it from receiving confirmed state funding with possible accompanying curatorial directives. It continues to be a place where members of the community were "encouraged to participate in giving voice to the city's biography"(Heijnen, 2010: 13). Bharucha refers to a crossover space "between a museum, a church, a political meeting place, and a landmark of one of the many painful atrocities in the history of apartheid"(2007: 2).

Inner and outer lives

Julius (2008) refers to the ways in which the interplay between orality and visuality evolved between the making of *Streets* and the making of *Digging Deeper*. She refers to a move away from the "'graphic minimalism' of *Streets* to the intense graphic layering of *'Digging Deeper',* (and) the emergence of a sound archive alongside this process further cemented its institutional identity and voice" (Julius, 2008: 113). *Streets* inaugurated not only the formal museum but a focused flow of oral narratives. While it was grounded in the exterior life of the District Six community as experienced through its streets, homes and buildings, *Digging Deeper* represented an exploration of interior spaces: of homes, of lives, of narratives, of relationships.

The exhibition title also represents a methodological framework. It called for a literal deepening of processes by looking beyond the familiar tropes of District Six stories. What meanings were people intending to convey as they repeated the refrains of a District where people were poor but never hungry, where neighbours always got on with each other, and where gangsters were gentlemen who helped the elderly carry their heavy parcels and never harmed anyone except rival gang members?

'Digging' also refers to D6M's own internal spaces as sites for digging, such as its sound archive and its collections have grown. In the years between the opening in 1994 and 2000, it had acquired substantial collections. The ongoing interrogation into its purpose and strategies for collecting were also in question now. How was it to retain the dynamism resulting from spontaneous performances of memory which was often not documented, while being true to archival practices which in essence is about collecting and documenting based on a set international standard? At the same time, the archive needed to protect itself from being buried beneath the necessary bureaucracy associated with archives.

There are two named rooms in D6M: 'Rods Room' and 'Nomvuyo's Room' which explore interior home spaces using two different methodologies. In reflecting on the act of retaining the names of the two people who have curated the rooms, Peggy Delport writes: "This is a reminder that the museum project came into existence in the emptiness and dust of a process of erasure: of place, structure, history and name. Within this space then, if names and places are continually inscribed, and identities, faces, features and moments, minutely recalled and reconstructed, it reflects the roots of this project in the legislated obliteration that later precipitated the museum into being."[184]

Digging Deeper opened in September 2000, approximately 18 months after D6M had moved back into its building after extensive renovations.[185]

[184] 'Curator's note' in a 'Guide to the District Six Museum and the *Digging Deeper* Exhibition'.

[185] A few years after the opening of D6M in 1994, the Methodist Church building which dates back to 1883, was showing signs of extreme fatigue as large groups of visitors had crossed its threshold for approximately five years. The 116 year old building needed some urgent renovation and repairs, and the funds for this were provided by the Western Cape Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport. A partnership was established between DCAS, D6M and the Methodist Church who are the owners of the building to plan for the work that needed to be done. Early in 1999 D6M packed up the exhibition and moved into the Moravian Church in District Six which was to be its temporary home for 18 months until the renovations were completed. The opening of *Digging Deeper* in September 2000 represented in some ways a 'homecoming' for D6M and District Sixers.

'Digging Deeper'20 years later: 2020

The 'digging deeper' approach has had measurable successes[186] in linking back to its intentions. It has enabled D6M to continue playing a significant role in the lives of people who have been displaced under apartheid, and who continue to struggle to find their place in the city and in the national narrative. It has been an enabling tool in the arsenal that people have built up to bolster their own resilience. 'Successful' has also been the label attached to D6M programmes by museum studies scholars who have observed and studied its works from various angles. It is in the context of such success that I raise the following challenges with *Digging Deeper,* 20 years later.

Rethinking inscription

Providing inscriptive surfaces for the marking of homes on the map and messages on the memory cloth were an important part of the D6M visitor experience. It is 26 years later[187], and as with practices that become normative, the poignancy has faded and a casualness has slipped in with respect to this important ritual. The number of District Sixers coming to D6M to sign the cloth or mark the map for the first time has reduced substantially over the years, as former residents become less mobile because of advanced age. From time to time someone still comes in though, to make their mark having heard about this appealing ritual from others.

FIGURE 22

Many years ago when the museum floor was dominated by District Sixers, there would have been great excitement and accompaniment when someone came to mark the map or sign the cloth.

[186] Consistent visitor numbers; ratings on platforms such as Tripadvisor and 'The Lonely Planet'; increased local participation in programmes; increased request for customised programmes.
[187] The inscriptive practices started in 1994 (26 years ago). It was retained in the permanent exhibition.

Recently it has been more difficult for District Sixers to negotiate their way into the space. They are likely to struggle to find enough room to locate their street on the map between the scores of visitors' feet, or to find a spot close enough to the memory cloth to sign it. There is now a second cloth for non-District Sixers to leave messages, and often the cloth-signing area is crowded. An elderly resident might have to elbow their way through to get to the front. Increased visitor numbers are an inevitable and welcome sign of growth, but the privileging of access for the community members who still need to own the story and the space as part of exercising their belonging, has not been adapted for this new scenario. The signing is likely to be a diminished experience after negotiating the logistics of getting to the right spot.

Another challenge to the memory cloth inscription is that in recent years, some sections read like graffitoed wall tags. The messages are often illegible scribbles or signatures on top of other signatures. While it continues to be meaningful for the visitor to have had the experience of marking a space that they had visited, what is left behind is rendered meaningless by its illegibility. Inscription continues to be important in the space, but this 26-year-old method of doing so could benefit from rethinking the design of the experience. They no longer only serve the original purpose of being 'inscribed daily with names, old addresses and fragments of information about ex-residents of District Six and their descendants' (Delport, 2001: 36).

Nina Simon (2012), executive director of the Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History (MAH) in the US, addressed the issue of trite feedback and comments from members of the public in a talk called 'Opening up the museum'.[188] She speaks of the importance of designing experiences for people in ways that make them feel that you care about their responses, suggesting that it will possibly transform both their experience and the quality of the feedback that they will provide. She refers to some examples and I have selected one of them to illustrate the point. At the LA County Museum of Art, visitors were asked what they thought about art. Some people were given plain paper and pencils, while others were given better pens and good-quality coloured cards. The latter group gave more considered responses while the first group had seemed to have provided hastily written responses. This is a single example but the point is that it might be time for D6M to design its inscription processes differently, to suit its new reality of a more varied pool of visitors. It might be time for new surfaces and new tools that encourage more thoughtful inscriptions.

In listening to the talk, I was reminded of the stacks of visitors' comment books that have been collected over the years. Intended to provide feedback that was useful, the book actually does not have much space for visitors to give meaningful feedback. There is only enough space for visitor details a one or two-word comment. This has limited value in terms of understanding the visitor experience and using the feedback as a planning tool.

[188] TEDxSantaCruz, 6 November 2012.

Getting lost on the map

As has been frequently indicated, the exhibition was designed in such a way so as to provide the best vehicle for District Sixers to engage with the past in the space. They were the imagined users. The familiar visual, tactile and aural references speak to their own memories, evoking a past which is known and important to them.

Visitors with no prior knowledge of District Six sometimes find the exhibition challenging. Especially those who have limited time, find that the storyline is too fragmented and the pieces on display are too esoteric to make sense to them. They also experience the intentional subversion of a formal tour route to be unsettling and confusing. As regular museum-goers from different parts of the world, they might be accustomed to the "encoded floor plan of older public museums" (Bennett, 2006: 37). The curatorial intention is that a District Six 'slice of life' can be experienced by starting to follow the story from any point in the exhibition, with visitors piecing together the fragments to build up a complete picture.

This approach does not work as well as it did in 2000. The visitor demographic has changed substantially, and fee-paying museum visitors in 2020 have different expectations given the many variations in museum technologies that they might have experienced in other places. Although D6M chooses not to pander to conservative visitor expectations, it needs to find a new balance between a museum that still speaks to the District Six community but also to visitors from elsewhere. The comment from a visitor which is quoted on the first page of this chapter is not a common experience but neither is it the only one of its kind.

A future for *Digging Deeper*

D6M has developed a number of self-reflexive internal tools which has enabled it to look back at its own biographical journey, aiming to amplify elements that have worked, and to discard components that have not been useful.

Digging Deeper is now 20 years old. While not denying its continued relevance, D6M has struggled to find ways of avoiding a 'stuckness' in its own past or in the narratives about its success. In addition, there is a deeply layered programme of engagements that happen behind the scenes which involve young people, the elderly, artists, scholars and activists in a variety of structured programmes that have become the main locale for its memory work. It has not sufficiently resolved the issues of how this can be evidenced more visibly in the public space. One-time visitors are thus not exposed to the range of memory modalities and unless they have detailed conversations with storytellers or staff, or attend a public programme, will leave with a reduced understanding of the scope of D6M's work. Over time, more resources have been allocated to the memory programmes as an outflow of *Digging*

Deeper – a necessary development that has strengthened D6M's relationship with the community but it has left minimal resources available for enhancing the public exhibition.

There have been several albeit delayed developments in terms of land restitution over the past few years in District Six. D6M is still exploring the best way to dynamically represent such developments as they happen in addition to the personal storytelling that happens in the space. The information also need to be accessible to visitors opting for the self-guided experience. In addition, the living memory component has a limited lifespan and cannot be relied upon as the only way of speaking into the present.

Evolving concepts of community

"The term 'community' has seemed not only value laden but also incapable of definition" (Western and Coles, 1997: 163). "Although searching for a definition does not seem fruitful, *some* construct must be adopted" (Western and Coles,1997: 164).

D6M's understanding of its community continues to be simultaneously contested and embraced. There have been several discussions about constructs of community as opposed to the existence of a 'real' community. Although difficult to define in absolute terms, I agree with Western that some construct is needed. Various contexts have required D6M to think about its community in multiple ways.

Elizabeth Crooke (2006: 170) comments that 'community' has become a buzzword in the arts and museum sectors. She refers to the literature on the topic, in which the word seems to be a substitute to refer to 'audience', 'public' and 'visitor'. This is not the way that D6M understands its community although this is a useful caution that she points to. Quoting Delanty (2003) she concurs that community is not only about people who have shared a past or a common residential area. It can also be 'geographically spread but linked by an agreed interest.'[189]

Over the years, D6M has worked with different configurations of community: constructed (Rassool, 2006; Bhabha, 1996), or geographic and historic (Camerena and Morales, 2006; Sauls, 2004) and in all of those had to ensure that it was not exclusionary. It was not always easy and occasionally there were issues about who qualified to be part of that community.

[189] Delanty, G. (2003). 'Community'. London: Routledge

Community and place

In the vocabulary of 1980s activist, 'community' was a site of struggle and a way to reference the grassroots opposition to apartheid. Organisations forming part of the non-racial movement led activities which enabled crossing over the boundaries set by the GAA to build a broader and unbounded community base. The apartheid understanding of community referred to a group of people inhabiting the same geographically bounded area which of course was defined by race.

In the period when HODS was formed, the community that was being mobilised to claim its rights was an absent one. It was the community associated with the geographic locale of District Six and many had literally to be found and invited back into the space. The campaign required a reimagining on one level, but also an engagement with a real community of named individuals who could identify the actual streets where they lived and the places that they frequented.

Community recalled in absence

Even after forced removals, District Sixers kept referring to themselves as a community even though they lived miles away from each other. Scholars and other observers started referring to them as a diasporic community, but a community nonetheless. The members themselves had organically reconfigured what a post-displacement community looked like and used the word very consciously to express a relationship to place and people. They might say 'I live in Langa / Bonteheuwel but this is not really my community'. In this way they expressed an understanding of what 'community' was to them: it was where they felt connected to a place and to each other and where their lives had had shared characteristics. The sense of community continued to exist even when its geography disappeared. To the people of District Six, their community was literally the people who had lived there, wherever they now found themselves

It is fascinating to observe how former residents re-enact community connections when they enter the Museum space. I have observed, for example, how two people, strangers to each other but both purporting to be from District Six, might meet and strike up a conversation. One of them would ask: 'In which street did you live?' When the answer does not bring up any connections for them, they would continue: 'Who were your neighbours?' If this brought up a satisfactory answer, the connection would have been made and the conversation would take off.

District Sixers literally believe that they knew (and still know) everyone who lived there. This is for the most part true but is not always the case.

Arguments have ensued if the conclusion to the above scenario ended with: 'I don't know you, so you did not live in District Six.' Some of this way of thinking was carried over into the land claims process. People who had no documentary proof of residence had to rely on others to vouch for the

veracity of their claims as the RLCC permitted oral verification in the form of sworn statements. There were accusations directed at some that they had falsely claimed to have lived in District Six, based on the fact that the accuser did not recognise the person.

Community presence in D6M

In the early days of D6M, former residents displayed an overt sense of territorialism in the space. Many were deeply invested in its making, and it was to them a place of pride and belonging. Their sustained engagement and ongoing commitment was central to the identity of D6M, but at times their interpretation of who was part of the community differed from what D6M as an institution intended. While the institution spoke of constructing a broad-based community around the cause of memory and restitution, District Sixers often had a different view. To them the community of District Six were those who without a doubt, lived there and some seemed to interpret D6M's broadening its concept of community as being a diminishing of their right to claim it for themselves. Distinguishing between the neighbourhood community of District Sixers, and D6M's broader community united by its mission, provided satisfactory clarification but needed frequent reiteration.

Former residents who engaged with visitors on the map set in motion a very vibrant practice of storytelling through first-person testimony. In the early days, this was spontaneous and helped to shape D6M as a place of living memory. While this is still a valuable part of the D6M experience, the institution has had to take a number of unforeseen issues into account. For example, the assumption that D6M made in the beginning that everyone who lived in District Six and had the confidence to engage with visitors, knew its history and could locate it within the broader context of apartheid displacement, was incorrect. All the storytellers were experts on their own lives but not all of them could succinctly narrate its political context. This in itself is not a problem but became problematic when difficult questions were raised by visitors.

Occasionally, storytellers expressed their personal political views which were received as institutional views. This was problematic when the views reflected prejudice and narrow perspectives. It remains as an ongoing challenge as D6M had taken the decision not to script storytellers but some mitigating strategies have been put in place.

There were times when District Sixers confronted tour guides mid-tour, chastising them in the presence of their guests for not telling the real story of District Six. Some former residents hold the view that the 'real' District Six story could only be known by those who had lived there. In their formulation, there were some staff members and trustees who were not qualified to be involved on the level that they were, because they had not lived in District Six.

In principle, confident ownership of the narrative and space where people feel empowered to use their voices, is a wonderful relationship to have with a community. However, a narrow formulation of how that community is constituted can be problematic. District Sixers who had lost their homes and community because of the destruction, often claim D6M as a substitute space for the places that they had lost. It was a community reconstituting itself through what Charmaine McEachern has termed 'map-walking' (1998: 16) as she observed residents symbolically walking their streets on the D6M map. This was one of the ways for them to claim identity and space (McEachern, 1998; Crooke, 2006) and how District Sixers understood the community. Their understanding is not incorrect but it is limiting and limited.

D6M's relationship with the displaced community of District Six has not always been an easy one, but it is one largely based on mutual respect. D6M has nurtured these relationships carefully over the years, fully aware that it can never be taken for granted or assumed to be permanent. It continues to build community as part of its strategy for driving the work of memory beyond District Six. A range of people are a part of its programmes, exhibitions and other activities, and many of them are not from District Six. They howvwever see themselves as part of its community.

District Sixers as a community within a community

Whichever understanding the institution has about its concept of community, there is no denying that there is a group of District Sixers who claim privileged ownership of the D6M space. In reality, different 'communities' exist within the institutional space simultaneously and comfortably for the most part, with occasional objections from a District Sixer who believes that someone who is not entitled to 'membership benefits' has easy access to the space. This has formed part of the D6M discussion programmes on diversity, inclusivity, and the need to apply the 'hands on' call to itself as well in relation to other communities. D6M acknowledges its responsibility towards District Sixers, being the custodian of their stories and of the objects forming part of their material culture.

The community of displaced residents which D6M works with and reaches out to include (i) those who have submitted their claims for land restitution and are waiting for their claims to be actualized; (ii) the returned community whose claims have been successfully finalised and who have returned to the area; and (iii) those who have chosen not to claim for restitution and who have no intention of returning but they retain a connection to the site; and (iv) former residents from other sites of forced removals.[190] The boundaries of these groups are more fluid than they are static.

[190]What adds to the complexity is that all of these categories of individuals have next generation descendants as part of the community, even though some of them were themselves not actually resident in District Six at the time.

A museum of the community

In its early days, there was some mild pressure from colleagues in the field to consider naming D6M as a community or memory centre rather than a museum. These suggestions were not rejected out of hand, as there was a great sensitivity to the conservative connotations accompanying the word 'museum'. Some of these have been referred to in the previous chapter. In addition, 'community' and 'memory' are terms which are fundamental to D6M's methods of working so the suggestions seemed plausible. The trustees at the time were aware that a community museum might be regarded as a deficit form of museum particularly when placed alongside museums regarded as representing high culture and national heritage (Rassool, 2006). However, if that had been the perception at the start, D6M has managed to dispel it over time as it embraced the category of 'community museum' with confidence.

Having started its journey based on the story of one community, it has moved to explore the fuller scope of its connections. Its significance particularly as it relates to the memory of displacement which persists as a lingering legacy in our national trauma, was apparent very early in its life. Records of discussions held by the D6M Foundation even before the Museum started, reveal this. In this context, D6M thinks of its community-ness as an expression of its methodology, rather than as an expression of its relationship to a singular geographic space. At times it builds community around causes and at other times it allows its programme to emerge from its engagements with specific communities.

> Often community museums conjure up images of small, modest-budget museums within townships or disadvantaged communities. However, this is misguided since the definition has little to do with geography and much to do with methodology of archiving materials and hosting exhibitions, which, for community museums, involve close collaboration with a community.
>
> … A community museum should not be racialised and does not have to solely focus on the area in which it has been established.[191]

The active participation of members of the destroyed community, with all the complexity that they represent – their frustrations about their land claims, their hopes for the future of District Six and the country, their excitement at the valuing of their memories, their occasional sense of entitlement to restitution ahead of other areas of forced removals – continues to drive the work of D6M. The performance of memory enabled by D6M is "at the same time a critique of apartheid itself" (McEachern, 1998: 500).

[191] *Museums in Dialogue: sustainability in contemporary South Africa (July 28th 2011, Cape Town).* Prepared by the Technical Support and Dialogue Platform of the CS Mott Foundation.

The importance of good community relations: two South African examples

I now refer to two South African community museums to demonstrate how crucial strong relations are if a museum is to exist in synchronicity with its immediate community with whom it shares space. This is particularly significant in situations where conflicts emerge. This discussion is brief, and will only focus on each of the two museums' approaches to interacting with their immediate geographic communities in the management of a specific conflict at each site. It does not set out to be a commentary on or assessment of their overall programming and impact.

The two museums I am referring to are Red Location and Lwandle Migrant Labour Museums.

Red Location Museum

The Red Location Museum (RLM)is situated in a township by the same name, in New Brighton in Port Elizabeth. Government spent millions of rands on the construction and subsequent running costs, and the architectural firm who purpose-built the structure has won several international awards for its innovative design.[192]

The railway station at New Brighton was where the 1952 nation-wide Defiance Campaign started, led by Raymond Mhlaba.[193] It is one of the reasons that the site was selected for the creation of this museum.

There were grand plans for the Museum precinct which was to be a cultural hub consisting of an auditorium, library, art gallery and restaurant in addition to its exhibition, education and archival spaces. The intention was to attract international tourists to the precinct so that in addition to telling a significant part of the South African story, local economic benefit would flow from the cash-spend of visitors.

Permanently closed

In startling contrast to its grand intentions, the message 'Permanently Closed' pops up when doing an online search for information about RLM online. Launched in 2006, it had been dogged by conflict and controversy almost since its start until it finally closed its doors in 2013.

[192] The building was designed by Noero Wolff Architects who won the following accolades for its design: Awards International 2018 Archmarathon Award, Educational Buildings Category, Milan, Italy;
St Cyprian's School 2015 International Fellow; American Institute of Architects 2012; Icon Building of the Year Award, Icon Magazine, London 2012.

[193]The Defiance Campaign of 1952was organised by the ANC, calling on volunteers to willingly defy apartheid laws en masse and allow themselves to be arrested. Raymond Mhlaba was a member of both the ANC and the South African Communist Party.

The reasons why this happened are in all probability much more complex than can be encapsulated in a single cause-and-effect formula. However, the lack of comprehensive and authentic community engagement is certainly one of the main reasons. Engagement of the kind that would make people feel heard and treated with dignity seems to have been missing from negotiations.

The majestically constructed building stands out of scale and in stark contrast to the defective, poorly serviced homes in Red Location. The struggle to feed, clothe and educate their families was part of the everyday grind of residents as they tried to make ends meet in the face of growing unemployment.

FIGURE 23

The struggles were often overwhelming and anger-inducing. Whatever future benefit that this multi-million rand construction might yield, it provided no immediate relief.

Symbol of a silenced community

The infrastructural intervention represented by the Museum made no sense to community members, particularly in the light of several unsuccessful appeals made to local government to improve the quality of the houses, many of which had been declared structurally unsound.[194] The community felt unheard and invisible. They felt that the needs of the visiting tourist sector were foremost, not those of the people residing there. The building was perceived as absorbing resources that the community believed should be invested in providing them with a dignified living environment. RLM had all the facilities that tourists might expect as members of a ticket-buying public: running water, sanitation,

[194] www.sahistory.org.za/place/red-location-museum

electricity - basic services to which the residents did not have easy access. Unfulfilled commitments from government resulted in low levels of trust from the Red Location community, and several protests against RLM were organised. It had become a larger than life, visible reminder of inequality. Protests were ongoing and increasingly violent, and after several rounds of unsuccessful negotiations, RLM was closed in 2013.

Whichever other reasons had an impact on the closure of the RLM, the poorly forged relationship between the implementing authority and the community where it was constructed was certainly a strong factor. Public consultations as planned by government departments are often designed as singular events and not long-term processes of building community. The way that the Red Location negotiations turned out seems to have had all the hallmarks of a superficial process. Plans made 'outside of community' which are then brought to people to be rubber-stamped and approved, run the risk of weak buy-in. The business of public consultation as process is laborious, often conflictual, but worth the investment of human and financial resources. Solid relationships do not remove conflict, but they provide a firm foundation to bolster the process of working through issues.

Writing about the closure of RLM, Bysell *et al* conclude that this is an "example of how the input of the community and the ideals of the museum as an institution were not in line" (2017: 41). They describe community perceptions of the government officials involved in the negotiations as being an 'uncaring authority'. They conclude that 'In some cases, an award winning architectural intervention is not the best vehicle to deal with an already vulnerable community's past' (Bysell *et al,* 2017: 58).

Lwandle Migrant Labour Museum

"Visit the first township-based museum in the Western Cape. Find out about the migrant labour system in South Africa", reads the Lwandle Migrant Labour Museum (LMLM) brochure.

This community museum is situated in a township which is approximately 40km outside of central Cape Town. Lwandle township was established in 1958 as a location for migrant workers who were needed to service the labour requirements of the nearby fruit and canning industry. The township was made up of single-sex hostels for men.[195] The migrant labour system was abolished in the new South Africa which meant that the cramped quarters were no longer needed for that purpose. The municipality embarked on a 'Hostels-to-Homes' project which involved converting the single-sex dormitories into family homes. A desperate housing shortage meant that the completion of the homes was eagerly awaited by members of the community.

[195] www.lwandle.com

In 1998, a Lwandle resident[196] who had been registered on the African Programme in Museum and Heritage Studies at the University of the Western Cape, was keen to work with his community to establish a museum. He had identified one hostel – Hostel 33 – that had not been converted into a home, as a possible location for this museum. As a member of the community he was able to negotiate adeptly with community members about their concerns and managed to garner enough support for the idea. As could be expected, there were differing points of view and there were some residents who were not keen to give up a space for a museum when it could house a family instead. In addition, there were people living in the hostel at the time and they were not prepared to move out to make space for the museum opening. After discussions they agreed that they would vacate the hostel premises at a later date.

In the meantime there was sufficient interest and support for the museum to open in an alternative space and it did so in a nearby venue, the Old Community Hall in the township on Workers' Day, 1 May 2000. The intention was to eventually work towards incorporating Hostel 33 into the Museum project.

Hostel 33: museum or home?

It was with some surprise that a sign on the door of the hostel greeted attendees on the day of the opening. The sign indicated that those living in the hostel did not consent to a museum to be established there, and demanded to be given accommodation first before they would vacate the premises (Witz, 2012).

Through a careful process of negotiation which was by no means simple or devoid of conflict, LMLM engaged with community members, in a way that acknowledged people's concerns as legitimate and found ways to collaborate and compromise. The result was that it was agreed that the rehabilitation of Hostel 33 could commence in 2010, and it was ready for an opening in December 2011. Those members who had raised the objections had felt heard.

The curatorial decision by LMLM to include the story of the controversy around Hostel 33 as part of the tour narrative is commendable. It chose not to erase the story of the objections, and the poster objecting to the museum that had been stuck on the door of the hostel has been mounted at its entrance. It is an interesting and honest introduction to the tour narrative and an acknowledgement that there had been conflict in the making of LMLM.

The result in Lwandle was very different from the way that things turned out in Red Location. It helped that the building which the Lwandle Museum occupied was not a purpose-built structure which might have been seen by the residents in the area as using up resources that should have gone

[196] Bongani Mgijima was the main driver behind the creation of the Museum.

towards building homes and servicing the poor township infrastructure. Also, the Community Hall is not out of scale with the general architecture in the area and does not present itself as overshadowing the community.

I mention these examples by way of indicating that while D6M has some unique features in its makeup, and has pioneered a model of a museum working in community in a very particular way in South Africa at the time, it is not alone in the field. Instead, it managed to be responsive to its context and to customise a model that worked in the interest of the community to which it was most closely connected. It led the way and joined up with other communities who found resonance with its methods and approaches.

Building a close community network is no guarantee against conflict and D6M has had its fair share. It does however provide a good basis for respectful negotiations. There are many conflicting interests relating to the site: personal, commercial, business, organisational, political.

FIGURE 24

Lost homes

> It struck me that our history is contained in the homes we live in, that we are shaped by the ability of these simple structures to resist being defiled.
>
> (Dangor, 1997: 35).

The previous chapter contains some reflections on the potency of the street identity. An additional significance of streets, of course, is that they contain our homes.

The above quote from a work by the recently deceased Achmat Dangor is prominently placed in the main exhibition space of the Museum, ensuring that the human story of loss of home undergirds the visitor experience and is never out of sight. It is a reminder that houses are made of bricks and mortar; homes are something more. District Sixers never hesitate to describe their homes as having been modest and humble. Most of the rented houses were poorly maintained and in need of repair, but it was home: cohering, nurturing, safe spaces which had been wrenched away from them as a result of the GAA. It had contained their histories.

Loss of home

In chapter 1 I referred to the writing of Marc Fried in which he describes loss of home as grieving. I also referred to Mindy Fullilove's work which describes the rupture from place as 'root shock'.

This describes very closely what many District Sixers felt about the loss of their homes. Fried refers to the potential for idealising the lost place which mirrors the nostalgia that District Sixers often express in their storytelling. From time to time D6M has been criticised for promoting nostalgia more than restitution, and it has had to think seriously about whether this was in fact the case and what the implications of being stuck in a nostalgic time-warp are. It has had to think of whether nostalgia is as dysfunctional an occupation as it is made out to be. (I will reflect on nostalgia in more detail in the next chapter).

Tender intimacies of home

In an article in which he reflects on the curatorial strategies of D6M, Rustom Bharucha describes the decision by the first curators to not display the violence of destruction as the key focus of the exhibition as "nothing short of a curatorial coup" (2007: 88). He endorses the fact that it chose to "embrace and exhibit the tender intimacies of home, a home away from home, everyone's home."

While the description of the 'tender intimacies of home' is presented as a sensitive and supportive environment for victims of displacement to enter as they confront their own sense of loss, it lacks the dimension of struggle which has been a constant in D6M's work if regarded as the singular and

overarching framing of the D6M space. The above feedback was written in 2007, and in the 13 years since then and now, I believe that D6M has reviewed and layered upon this backdrop of intimacy and has deepened its understanding of home as also being a place of history and resistance as well.

Later in the same article, Bharucha gives critical feedback on the pitfalls involved in a long-term immersion in the throes of nostalgia which in many ways reflects D6M's own self-critique. While on the one hand he applauds the 'home away from home' approach, on the other he cautions against the risk of being "stuck in a time-warp, resembling an Old Curiosity Shop, whereby its particular construction of the past appears to be frozen in a seemingly eternal contemplation of an imminent future" (Bharucha, 2007: 91).

Women and homes

With reference to the issue of 'home', I have had a niggling discomfort about the ongoing association of women with homes in the D6M space. I wondered whether D6M might unintentionally be entrenching the traditional association of women with the home which was in contrast to the focus on issues of women's liberation in the 1980s when D6M was formed. The reality is that women have been the primary caregivers within families, but despite their entry into the workplace either by choice or by economic necessity, the association with the home has persisted. I have listened to hours upon hours of oral history recordings of people talking about the roles that their mothers and grandmothers, aunties and female neighbours, have played in ensuring that they were cared for, fed, educated and grew up as decent human beings. Women were the ones who made ends meet, they 'stretched the pot',[197] they made a *lang sous*[198] to feed the family. They were the ones who swallowed their pride when times were tough and 'borrowed' cups of sugar or stale bread for *frikkadels*[199] always with the understanding that they would reciprocate when they were in a position to do so.

[197] 'Stretching the pot' is a metonymic reference which is colloquially used when referring to the cooking tricks people used to stretch the meal so that it could feed as many people as needed to be fed.
[198] *Langsous* literally translated from Afrikaans means 'long sauce'. In order to make meals go further, people often made extra sauce when meat and potatoes were scarce.
[199] *Frikkadels* or meat balls / mince rissoles were a common dish. Stale bread was commonly used as a binding ingredient to bind the mixture. Stale bread is a better binder than fresh bread and it was common for people to ask neighbours for a slice or two if they did not have. For some really poor families, though, asking for stale bread a couple of nights in a row was a coded, face-saving way of indicating that the family had no food. If the neighbor provided the stale bread, the family would share it. If the neighbor understood the code, something more substantial would be shared.

I was drawn to hooks's use of the word 'homeplace'[200] as I found it to be more nuanced and embodied with agency and action. It spoke to the active work of placemaking. This way of speaking about childhood homes and experiences is not unique to District Sixers, neither is it uniquely South African. hooks (2015) recalls her walks to her grandmother's house as a child. She comments that even though her grandfather lived there as well, she always referred to it as her grandmother's house.

> In our young minds houses belonged to women, were their special domain, not as property, but as places where all that truly mattered in life took place- the warmth and comfort of shelter, the feeding of our bodies, the nurturing of our souls. There we learned dignity, integrity of being; there we learned to have faith (hooks, 2015: 383).

The silences about men in District Six oral histories speak to the absence of men in the domestic space. There are many historic reasons for this and they mostly reflect the configuration of the average household. There were aspects in D6M's exhibitions and programmes that seemed to perpetuate a limiting association. For example, the 'soft surfaces' associated with feminine spaces: the embroidered name cloths, the appliquéd banners, the family albums (women being the main but not exclusive family archivists), a project such as *Huis Kombuis*[201] – powerful, yet reinforcing the domestication.

In reality, women's roles both inside and outside the home are much more diverse than they are generally presented. If not engaged with carefully, the singular framing of women's roles could strip the of their power and represent them without agency, as being subject to their natural roles.

hooks questions the basis of assumptions made about the 'natural' nurturing roles played by women in domestic spaces. She critiques what she calls the 'mother worship' sometimes apparent in African-American culture and refers to black writings which

> … praise the virtues of the self-sacrificing black mother. Unfortunately, although positively motivated, black mother worship extols the virtues of self-sacrifice while simultaneously implying that such gesture is not reflective of choice and will, rather the perfect embodiment of a woman's 'natural' role (hooks, 2015)

[200] I first encountered the term 'homeplace' when reading a chapter by bell hooks in *Yearning, Race, Gender and Cultural Politics,* 41-49. Boston: South End Press, 1990. I found it to be a stronger terms than 'home'.
[201] Literally translated, '*Huis Kombuis'* means home kitchen. It is used colloquially to refer to the intimacy and centrality of the kitchen in the home. It is the name given to a D6M food and memory project that comprises oral histories, design thinking and product development including the production of a bespoke book.

However tenuous and fragile the home structures might be, hooks refers to them as 'the small private reality where black women and men can renew their spirits and recover themselves (Hooks, 2015). She comments on the apartheid government's persistence in destroying people's homes, both formal and informal dwellings, and understands it in the context of their wanting to break solidarity in the process.

I believe that this has helped to put into perspective, the ways in which D6M regards issues of women's roles in communities and their struggles, often through the intimate domestic spaces of the home. I realised that it corresponds closely to the ways in which D6M has thought of the roles of women. It has been useful to place women and homes into a context which involves women making choices and exercising their agency. It speaks to the quote at the opening to this section from Achmat Dangor about our homes as places which contain our history, and which are the places where resistance to defilement can occur. Homes are not only shelters; they are places which are shaped by those who live in them. Since returning to District Six became a reality for members of the District Six community, many insisted that the District was not just bricks and mortar. They insisted on finding ways to re-member its spirit and to tap into its essence as part of restitution. They are thus supportive of a process to develop it as a NHS and are committed to seeing that being actualized.

Oral histories, storytelling and voice

The late Vincent Kolbe was one of the earliest advocates for collecting District Six oral histories. He was a former resident of District Six, a founder trustee of D6M and a librarian who had started his career at the Hyman Liberman Library[202] in District Six. In a video produced by D6M called *We remember: the story of an archive*, he describes how he collected stories from elderly people in the areas where he worked as a librarian. He was determined for people to know the histories of the areas on the Cape Flats where they lived.

He brought this energy and perspective into the work of D6M and encouraged many to share their stories so as to contribute towards its making. An accomplished performance pianist and scholar of music, he was also keen that the particular musical traditions of the Cape and especially the music of District Six, be researched and documented. He himself was an engaging storyteller, and the D6M archive holds several life history recordings of Kolbe as well as recordings of interviews with him about different topics relating to apartheid, land restitution, music, culture, human rights and of course the sounds of District Six.

[202] The Hyman Liberman Institute of culture included a library. It was situated in Muir Street in District Six.

It would be incorrect to attribute the creation of D6M's oral history work to a single person, but Kolbe played a pivotal role in ensuring that people's stories and experiences of the past always remained centre stage in the work of the institution. He contributed substantially to the creation of the sound archive as the first of its kind in the country and remained active in its workings until ill health rendered it impossible for him to continue.

Oral history and 'history from below'

Across the country at the time there was a strong focus on telling 'history from below' which included recording stories of people whose voices and perspectives were not usually part of official historiography. The History Workshop which started in 1977 and is now based at Wits University, promoted "research into the lives, experiences and social worlds of people and communities in South Africa that have by and large been neglected by scholarly investigation to address the erasures of colonialism and apartheid"[203] since it started in 1977. In Cape Town in the late 1980s, oral history interviews done by historians Shamil Jeppie, Bill Nasson and others in the aftermath of the HODS Conference, contributed to the Western Cape Oral History Project (WCOHP) which later became the Centre for Popular Memory (CPM) in 2001, based at UCT. The University of the Western Cape ran the People's History Project, and in addition, there were several community initiatives dealing with similar content. Some of them consisted of informal storytelling sessions which were not recorded but where life histories were shared. While strictly speaking they would not be considered to be oral histories, they nonetheless formed part of the general movement towards valuing orality and voice. Irrespective of whether or not they fit the formal category these were legitimate learning encounters and knowledge was built at these fora.

Reflecting on the value of the oral history work that he has engaged with, Nasson writes that "the literary sources upon which historians customarily rely so heavily do not exist for working class experience as they do for the elite culture of the dominant classes. It is easier to research capital accumulation by Adderley Street stores than the penny capitalism of corner shops on Selkirk or Springfield Streets" (Nasson, 1990: 47). In this he expresses one of the purposes for which oral histories are usually conducted: to fill the gaps in history for which there are no other sources. D6M's oral history strategy also takes into account the other reasons that people might want to tell and share their stories. Amongst these reasons include un-silencing their voices and asserting a place in the story of the city, which will be considered below.

[203] https://www.wits.ac.za/history-workshop/

Ciraj Rassool (2006) points out that the collaboration with WCOHP and CPM started out as part of UCT's attempt to ensure that its expertise could be of benefit to the public beyond the university's walls. Rassool suggests that the as the relationship continued, the flow of expertise was in both directions and possibly eventually more from D6M to UCT as the Museum's practice and expertise grew in leaps and bounds (Rassool, 2006: 305).

The transition from organic, unrecorded storytelling in the D6M space, to situations where the conditions required to develop a sound archive needed to be considered, brought the Museum into an interesting space. Initially the storytelling happened semi-spontaneously as part of the invitation to District Sixers to engage in a safe space with their stories which previously had only been told in their homes. It was a way for people to connect with each other in what Bharucha has described as their 'home away from home.'

Oral evidence for land claims

A substantial part of the early District Six storytelling activities came about as a result of the need to assert the fact of having lived in District Six in the absence of any documentary evidence. The RLCC made allowance for people who had no written proof of residence to obtain sworn affidavits from neighbours confirming that they had indeed lived in the District. This could be used as evidentiary proof. Verification interviews with claimants formed part of the process and for a while this took place in the D6M space on request from the RLCC. The association between D6M and the RLCC at the time when land claims were being lodged was strong and sometimes created confusion about institutional boundaries.

There were times when the focus of stories told by people would consist of a person repeating a litany of things they knew about everyday life in District Six. It would involve naming people and places told with the expectation that it would prove that they had intimate knowledge of the area, hoping that it would substantiate their claim for restitution. The D6M staff receiving the story would only realise late into the encounter that it was not a life history that was being shared for the archive even though that had been the stated intention.

The sound archive

The creation of the sound archive was an important step. D6M needed to explore how to introduce aspects of preservation and access as part of its institutional development.

The positive experience of starting a journey of reclamation through telling their stories, inspired people. After realizing that their stories mattered, many started using the language of legacy. They expressed concerns about wanting to preserve their histories for the generations to follow. As carriers

of the nation's historical stories they had recognised the power of their own roles and wanted to pass on the baton.

In order to do this with any level of professionalism, D6M had to undertake research and invest in capacity-building. As it had entered the space of museums and archives with the 'community' prefix attached to its name, it was determined not to fulfill expectations that it would under-perform. "In a typological system of museums, where there is a ranked hierarchy, community museums are sometimes understood as one of the simplest units of museum structures, with national museums being seen as more complex" (Rassool, 2006: 311). It was one of several moments when it needed to decide when to act within the boundaries of museological practice which included archiving, and when it would act outside of the frame. In this instance it had created a storytelling momentum and needed to resource it.

Ensuring the longevity of archives is a costly and specialized venture. Providing access was another cost. D6M had to start thinking about how to accommodate the range of new users who and those who might require remote access. A sound archivist had been employed in 1996 as part of D6M's commitment to exploring, amongst other things, the afterlife of the 'spoken word' stories in its space. It was an immense task. Stories were being recorded and people were donating material before mechanisms for receiving and preservation had been put in place. Some of the material donated was not original as archives are wont to prefer, but they were audio mementos of bygone days which were reminiscent of people's lives in District Six. A 'best practice' for D6M had to take into account the pride with which District Sixers had safeguarded the second- and third-generation non-archival quality recordings, often of poor quality. Building relationships and understanding what mattered to people was as much a part of the evolving practice as was ensuring that the proper ISO[204] standards were being followed. Understanding what it means to be an archive of memory and restitution in practical as well as philosophical terms, continues to be a focus of the archive.

The sound archivist undertook a study tour of sound archives in the US in 1997 to observe the workings of a few selected sound repositories. He was interested to learn about best practice in archiving and to get a sense of how access was managed. A plan was developed based on his research and in December 1998, the first South African sound archive was opened at the District Six Museum.

[204] International Organisation for Standardisation

Recording stories

The changed dynamic of how storytelling happened was at times difficult to negotiate. Routines had to be modified to accommodate the transition from spontaneous conversations to ones which needed to be scheduled; from storytelling on the floor to moving into a space where the sound quality could be controlled. There were the release forms to be signed and permissions to be negotiated. But this was a necessary part of institutional growth based on the conscious decision to enter the world of sound archiving.

The sensitivities needed in dealing with people's stories that the D6M team had acquired over time mitigated the altered circumstances brought about by the technical attention required by the work of recording. An awareness of the narrators' rights was always foregrounded: it was never to become background to institutional needs. As donors to the collection, those who had offered their stories were invited to remain involved with D6M.

Giving voice

Does D6M 'give voice' to the community who had been rendered voiceless under apartheid? The institution has often been applauded for that attribute, but it is a characterization which D6M has always resisted. It does so because it portrays District Sixers as being in a permanent state of voiceless passivity, further denying them their agency. D6M believes that people have voices and choose to use it with or without the backing of an institution. They use their voices to support their land claim; they choose to verbalise their memories, or they choose to be silent. The challenge is for them to be heard: to speak their voices in the appropriate places. Often those in power are not able to hear what people say because the answers they expect are narrowly pre-framed by what they need to know. Or they might simply be absent from the forums where people exercise their voices. This is particularly pertinent with regards to the issues of land restitution as well as the declaration of District Six as a NHS. Sometimes people answer questions that they have not been asked believing that they might not have another opportunity to express what they need to. If it is not a direct answer to the question posed, it most likely will be regarded as irrelevant.

After visiting D6M with her study group and listening to the story of a former resident, one of the group members Tanya Charles wrote a brief reflection with a title which caught my eye: "When truth speaks does power listen?"[205] I found this to be an apt question for what D6M wants to emphasise about community voices that are constantly speaking but not always being afforded the dignity of being listened to. Arundhati Roy's words ring true when she says: "There's really no such thing as the 'voiceless'. There are only the deliberately silenced, or the preferably unheard" (2004: 1).

[205] https://afsee.atlanticfellows.org/blog/2018/tanya-charles-district-six

Safe, enabling spaces

Rather than thinking of its work as 'giving' voice to people, D6M describes itself as creating an enabling space for people to exercise their voices. Often this is referred to as a safe space but 'enabling' is preferred as it signals a more conscious way of shaping a space so that it provides the milieu for speaking truthfully and comfortably. By inserting their voices in a particular way people are part of creating that space.

This issue that has brought D6M practitioners in conflict with a number of people who have wanted to observe former residents in their 'natural environment' speaking about things that mattered to them. Mostly these have been researchers who are keen on observing authentic voices. They have not easily understood how the very presence of someone focused on research and documentation, changes the power relations and the group dynamic, presenting as a different forum from what been negotiated with people upfront as part of the condition for their involvement.

The D6M voice

In addition to creating the space for people to express themselves, D6M has a voice of its own. It does not only serve as a ventriloquist for the voices of others and can definitely not claim to be the sole representative voice of District Sixers. The voice of D6M and that of District Sixers are not equivalent and they hold different value in different contexts, but the institution is cautious to not let its voice overpower the voice of the community.

D6M has to exercise its voice in the museum sector, in the social justice arena, as an archive, as a place of knowledge-making and -sharing, and as a place where tourism happens. Its institutional voice speaks into the compliance and funding contexts as well as being a voice that has a roles in restitution and healing.

Curatorial approach to oral histories

'When we have made an experience or a chaos into a story we have transformed it, made sense of it, transmuted experience, domesticated the chaos',[206] writes Ben Okri.

It seems that this is true for people who have experienced an event as traumatic and humiliating as the loss of their homes. Some people came to D6M to tell their story because it seemed to ease some deep inner need within themselves to make sense of what had happened to them. The value was in finding a supportive space where they could be heard and where they could find acknowledgement that their stories mattered. In such instances, storytelling fulfilled no instrumental purpose such as verifying a

[206] *Birds of Heaven* by Ben Okri.

land claim but was engaged with for its own value and purpose. Crafting the experience into a story was an outflow of their inner work, their own sense-making, done by them, not for them. Having experienced its value in the present, thoughts turned to the future.

Oral history archival practice can be overly acquisitive. Some archives seem to be engaged in a race to capture people's stories, particularly the stories of the elderly before they pass on. This in itself is not a bad thing. However, sometimes the preoccupation with the accumulative intent of the process and the desire to build the archive dulls the senses of archivists to the extent that the person behind the story becomes a mere carrier of information, not a human being with agency. While the practice of oral history is meant to be a democratizing endeavour, the power relations inherent in the interviewer / interviewee relationship does not go away because of democratic intent. It requires active attention and an engagement with the narrator that goes beyond the signing of a release form.

In engaging with oral histories, D6M is interested in the subjectivities of history and how different perspectives of the same events can be enriching, and not necessarily disturbing. As such, it has drawn substantially on the work of Italian oral history historian Alessandro Portelli.[207] He is critical of the positivist view of oral history which advances it as just another source to be consulted in order to confirm details of how things really happened. In that, D6M has been firm in its position that it does not regard District Six voices just as 'sources' 'The act of collecting is not only about gathering or historical fact, but to work with the senses of memory, restoring and stimulating conversations about the past that have been absent, silenced or ignored.'[208]

On a technical level, the ways in which D6M conducts its oral histories is standard. It accepts the specifications proposed for best practice archiving. The difference lies in the relationships forged with the people involved in the making of the oral histories before, during and after the encounter. Ideally, the sharing of life stories within the D6M context represents either the start of a lasting relationship between the person and D6M, or the consolidation of a pre-existing one.

Thinking about transcriptions

It was during this time that D6M started thinking about the interpretive role played by transcribers, realizing that transcription was not just a neutral process of converting spoken word to written text. It involves the transcriber's own interpretive position and 'constitutes an important step in the process of constructing a particular kind of voice out of an auditory performance. To transcribe speech is to turn it into a voice with features indexing the social situatedness of the speaker' (Blommaert and Slembrouck, 2000: 13,14).

[207] *The story of Luigi Trastulli* is referred to in Chapter 1.
[208] D6M Collections, Research and Documentation Curatorial Policy 2012 (internal document).

It was in the early 2000s when D6M experimented with the use of ethnopoetic transcriptions. It seemed to be a better way of foregrounding meaning. It is still the preferred way of transcribing when done internally, but given the volumes of interviews that need transcribing a substantial portion of the work is outsourced. Traditional transcribers are not familiar or comfortable with the method. It is a form of transcription that does not rely on the rules of grammar to organize the utterances, but instead works with the grammar of the human voice as the organizing principle. It focuses on pauses and cadences to convert text into utterances rather than sentences and does not foreground the non-standard language users. It is a method popularised by linguists and discourse analysts Hymes and Gee.

Representing voices in text

It is often assumed that when stories are captured and then represented in exhibition texts, publications and other products, they are done so in people's 'own words'. While careful attention is paid to retain the essence of what people say, there is a substantial amount of editing of transcripts before spoken words are displayed as texts.

One of the reasons is that regular speech contains many ellipses. In natural speech we generally do not use full sentences with perfectly formed sentences, but written speech is expected to be grammatically correct. In addition, natural speech has several non-verbal gestures in conversation which are contextually understood but when played back after having been recorded, often become unintelligible when heard out of its context. The process of editing involves attempts to understand the non-verbal cues and to ensure that they are 'made verbal' as accurately as possible. This would involve the interviewer and the narrator. Another reason for doing this is not to foreground the speech errors of non-native speakers of English who often code-switch between their first, second and / or other languages spoken. Standardisation of the text is implemented with the consent of the narrator who gets to review his / her own text if it is to be used in public texts.

Julius (2008) refers to the editorial process that took place during the preparation of oral narratives in the making of *Digging Deeper*, comparing them to the original transcripts. She highlights the ways in which they have been edited and tries to get behind some of the reasons. In essence, the readability of the texts are improved by the editorial process.

FIGURE 25

C. Moments

Methodologies need projects and activities through which to find expression. Although there were several temporary exhibitions and other projects that took place during this time, I have selected four significant 'hands on' moments through which to ground the evolution of the D6M methodology as they are significant to the subject of my study. The four interventions are (1) Remembering the dead of Prestwich; (2) the return of the elders; and (3) the nomination of District Six as a National Heritage Site (NHS), and (4) the 2005 conference: *Hands on District Six: Landscapes of post-colonial memorialisation.*

2003: Remembering the dead of Prestwich

As positioning itself as a museum in and of the city, particularly as it relates to silenced or erased stories, D6M applied its 'hands on' approach in becoming involved with this project which was unfolding at the west end of the city. This was an important project for D6M during this period, challenging it to stretch its focus as it made the philosophical point about the connectedness of Cape Town's histories which were not restricted by geography.

Location and brief history of the Prestwich Place area

Prestwich Place was the name of a building in Greenpoint at the west end of the city. In 2003 a private developer who had purchased the site, started the preparations needed for the luxury apartments that he planned to construct, and proceeded with demolishing the old building and excavating the site. In the process of excavation, human remains were uncovered, and as required by the NHRA, SAHRA was notified. The Archaeology Contracts Office (ACO) of the University of Cape Town (UCT) was engaged by the developer to fulfil the legal requirement of archaeological testing. At the end of the process it was discovered that the burial ground which had 'fallen off' the city maps, had been the final resting place for more than 2 500 individuals (Malan, Halkett, Hart and Schietecatte, 2017).

Like District Six was renamed 'Zonnebloem' after destruction, like Sophiatown became 'Triomf', like Fietas became 'Pageview' and Protea Village disappeared beneath Kirstenbosch, District One has been rebranded as a stylish area known as 'de Waterkant[209]'. Its current topographical arrangements show no evidence that it had ever been anything other than what it is now. District One had been declared as a white area in 1966 under the GAA[210], the same year that District Six suffered the same fate.

[209] Translates as 'the Waterside'.
[210] https://www.property360.co.za/news/de-waterkant-wonderful-waterside

Similarly to District Six, it was home to early immigrants who populated the dockland area. It was also home to the Khoi, slaves and the colonial underclass of the early Cape Town settlement (Weeder, 2005). The burial ground which was uncovered was most likely used by these communities of people over the years, particularly those who could not afford the burial fees required for usage of the officially-marked cemeteries. Traces of the 'forgotten' former communities of Prestwich – of which the burial ground forms part – remind us that there are other buried histories of our city to be uncovered.

Who are the dead of Prestwich?

The burial ground is identified in Gordon's panorama as a '*slaaven begraafplaats'*.[211] The colonial archives of June 1755 indicate that '*the land adjacent to the old military cemetery'* be designated for the victims of the small pox epidemic.[212] There were several burial grounds located in this part of the city and a report on the Prestwich Place burial ground concludes that the people who were buried at Prestwich Place may have been slaves, paupers, people who were not members of the only established church (the Dutch Reformed Church), and victims of an outbreak of smallpox.[213]

Apparently the burial ground had over time 'fallen off' the city maps and therefore did not trigger any attention when the building permission was applied for. This 'falling off' is a deep metaphor for the forgotten presences of the invisible pasts of so many people in our city: layered over, erased and forgotten, forgotten lives and voices rendered invisible on the city's maps. This re-surfacing of the Prestwich remains was a haunting example of the past emerging literally and symbolically in the present (Shepherd, 2013; Till, 2012).

FIGURE 26

FIGURE 27

[211] Antonia Malan, 'Prestwich Place: Exhumation of accidentally Discovered Burial Ground', p 5.
[212] SAHRA APMHO Permit Committee, 16-17 August 2003, p 4; James Kilcullen, *Salesian Institute, Cape Town: The Beginnings* (Cape Town: Salesian Press), p 33.
[213] SAHRA APMHO Permit Comm., 16-17 Aug. 2003, p 6.

Claiming the memory of an invisible past

Public meetings, workshops, weekly community vigils at the site, newspaper articles and other forums of debate continued for approximately two years with many competing voices and interests pitted against each other: archaeologists and physical anthropologists demanding access to the exhumed remains in order to investigate the forensic details of their lives. D6M together with other memory activists believed that such information would have very little value except to the scientists who felt entitled to treat black bodies as sources to enrich their learning. The NHRA required that requests about the treatment of discovered human remains could be made by descendants. Members of the Prestwich Place Project Committee (PPPC) which was formed in 2004 (D6M was an institutional member) positioned themselves as proxies for the imagined community of the unnamed and the undocumented deceased. They emphasized that requiring people who had been systematically disconnected from their pasts, to prove connection in the present, to be an unjust requirement. In addition, PPPC put forward the argument that biology was only one strand of connectivity, and claimed connection through the lineage of indigenous and enslaved ancestry.

D6M played a prominent role in establishing the PPPC, calling for an extended, more inclusive and creative public process be allowed which took into account the need for awareness-raising and education about an erased past, committing itself to assist with the shaping of such programmes. It also called for negotiations with the site owner about leaving the burials undisturbed and declaring it a 'site of conscience', to be initiated by government. The group viewed this as an opportunity to honour the unacknowledged working and enslaved poor of the city and a wonderful learning moment for the city to engage with its buried past.

A tribunal upheld the developer's rights to go ahead and the appeal from the campaign leaders was lost. One of the main arguments was that the developer had followed due process and had full rights to develop the property. The decision represented the ruthless face of urban renewal which batters landscapes in the name of progress, obliterating valuable collective memories and closes off the possibility of recovering lost ones.

The unfinished business of compromise

Like the story of District Six restitution remains unfinished, the story of Prestwich has a long way to go and needs a more dignified ending. Having lost the appeal, PPPC were invited to be part of a compromise solution, collaborating with SAHRA and the City's Heritage Department. Part of the compromise included building an ossuary at a nearby site for the interment of the remains. It was a difficult decision: whether to decline the invitation to be part of presenting the narrative in a location

that PPPC found to be unsuitable; or participate and ensure that a fuller story be told even in a compromised space.

The decision was made to participate in what turned out to be an unsatisfactory partnership in which D6M and PPPC felt constantly undermined up until the time when the ossuary was completed and the remains were transferred in 2008. There were several examples of such undermining but the following are the most stark.

Given its expertise in exhibition-making and representation, D6M had been tasked with preparing a draft exhibition and narrative concept. A draft was circulated for comment to the partners but in the time that responses were awaited, the City proceeded with installing an exhibition with a completely different, sanitised narrative without any regard for the partnership. Traditional exhibition boards narrate a history of the area but exclude the story of how the human remains ended up in the ossuary,. Their story is located in the distant past with no reference to their present displacement. The version prepared by D6M had an account of that process and the controversies involved. Arjun Appadurai reminds us that journeys are integral not peripheral to stories[214]. The journey that these human remains have travelled, from their place of exhumation to the ossuary is crucial to understanding their life stories. What led them to cross the road from one place to another almost three centuries after their burial? The text in the ossuary makes no mention of the struggle to keep them interred where they had been buried, or what brought about their dislocation.

The City's Heritage Department no longer played a role once the transfer had been achieved. Oversight of the ossuary was handed over to the Facilities Management Department, and a coffee vendor was installed so that the rental from the shop could contribute to the running costs of the ossuary. The poor and enslaved people who contributed to building this city with their sweat and blood continue to 'pay' for their final resting place, being further undignified by these improper surroundings. This was also arranged outside of the partnership.

The coffee shop operating in the space is ironically, named 'Truth'. It operates at the end of the ossuary which leads in from what was intended as a memorial garden but which in effect has become the coffee shop's outdoor space. The brand of the shop has overtaken the memorial function of the ossuary which has become largely invisible in the face of the coffee shop's marketing of itself – another falling off of the city map. On an average day, the coffee shop patrons enjoying the premium coffee from what has become a celebrated roastery in the city, seemingly oblivious to the intended nature of the space and what lies beyond the brick wall that separates them from the boxed human remains and grave collateral objects (Malan *et al,* 2017; Shepherd, 2013). Nick Shepherd refers to some of the coffee promotions taking place at 'Truth'. "In a more direct set of references, coffee

[214] Talk by Arjun Appadurai on panel: 'Thing'. Conference at Ethnologisches Museum Berlin, 10 October 2016.

grinders at the Truth Café bear the image of a human skull crossed by the letter 'T', and stacked cardboard boxes of coffee reference the stacked boxes of human remains in the vault next door" (Shepherd, 2013: 237).

When critique was raised by D6M that the NHRA had failed to live up to what was intended, reasons put forward included the relative newness of the legislation and the uniqueness of this case. While the rhetoric of the Act speaks to the celebration of public voices, heritage and, inclusivity, the processes as designed seemed determined to keep people out.

This was a significant moment for D6M as it stepped out of its role as a museum at the other end of the city to add its 'hands on' to a neglected story of the city which remains unresolved.

FIGURE 28

2004: The return of the elders

11 February[215] took on a new meaning for District Sixers in 2004, when the first two returnees received the keys to their new homes from then president, the late Nelson Mandela. The commemorated day had an added dimension: in addition to marking the day that the District was declared white in 1966 and Mandela walked free in 1990, it now also stood as a marker for the success of the restitution process. The event was called 'The Return of the Elders', with Mr Dan Dali Ndzabela and Mr Ebrahim Murat[216] being the two oldest of the claimants. There was great celebration with hundreds of people gathered in the streets which had been transformed into an events venue complete with stage and seating. While everyone was happy at the signs of progress, there was a hushed undertone of critique that in the six years since the closing date for the lodgment of claims in 1998, and this 2004 event, only 24 houses had been built, with only two being ready handover.

FIGURE 29

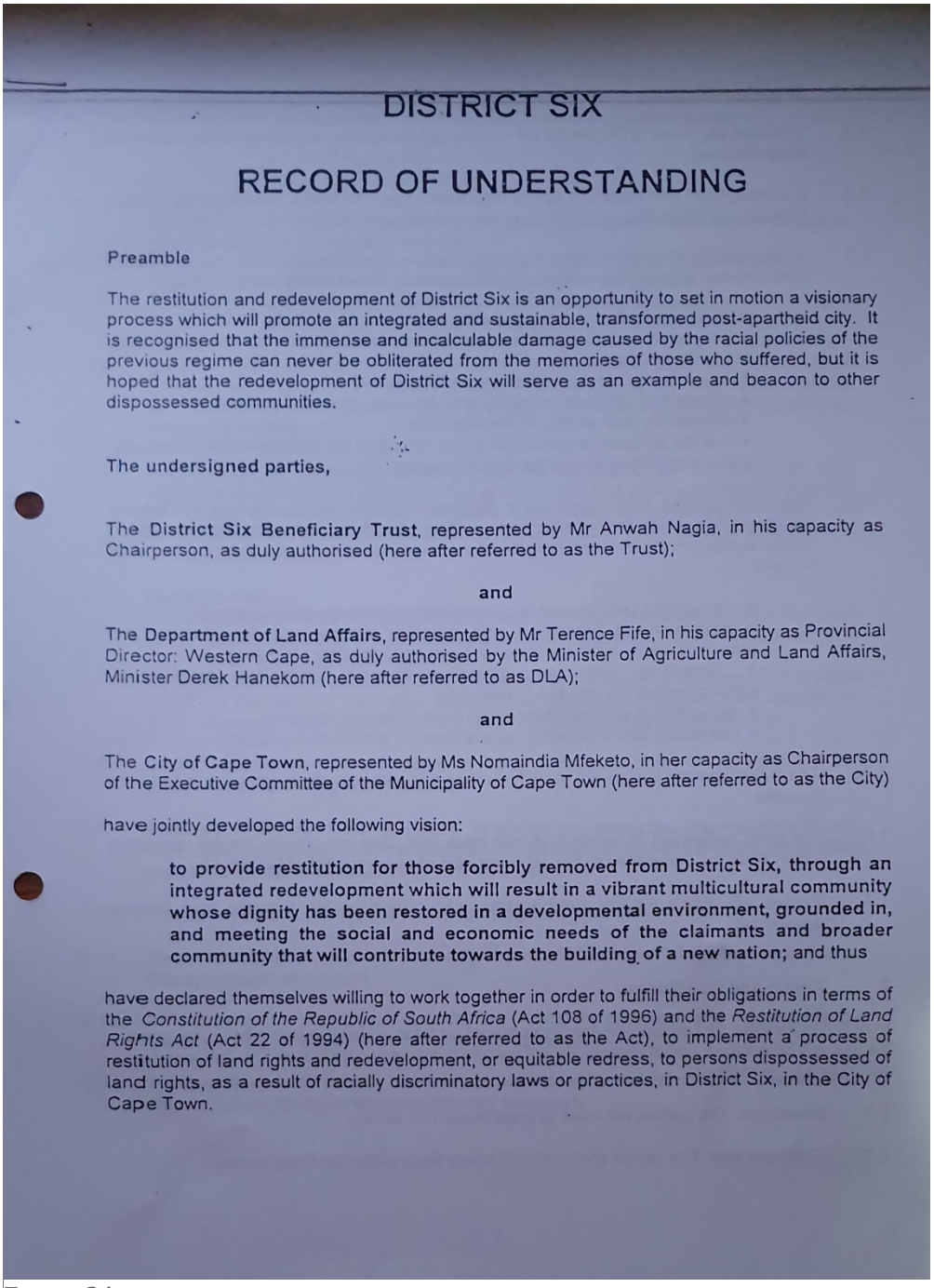
[215] 11 February 1966 was the day that District Six was declared 'whites only' under the Group Areas Act.
[216] They have both since passed away.

The event was of the kind referred to by Ruth Hall: *"*Public ceremonies around the settlement of land claims have acquired iconic status in the democratic South Africa. They have brought into the public eye images of … dispersed urban communities returning from the periphery to the site of their demolished homes—handshakes, speeches, singing, and dancing. This is part of a healing process. It is generally a happy but transitory moment that marks the culmination of the claiming process and the start of the work of reconstructing communities and livelihoods—and possibly signals reconciliation" (2010). Unfortunately for these and other returnees, moving in to their homes seemed to signal an end to the process in terms of official support – not a "start of the work of reconstructing communities and livelihoods".

FIGURE 30

In September of 1998, a Record of Understanding had been signed between the D6BRT, the DLA and the COCT which committed the three entities to work together towards a shared vision: "to provide

restitution for those forcibly removed from District Six, through an integrated redevelopment which will result in a multicultural community whose dignity has been restored in a developmental environment grounded in and meeting the social and economic needs of the claimants and broader community that will contribute towards the building of the new nation." [217]



DISTRICT SIX

RECORD OF UNDERSTANDING

Preamble

The restitution and redevelopment of District Six is an opportunity to set in motion a visionary process which will promote an integrated and sustainable, transformed post-apartheid city. It is recognised that the immense and incalculable damage caused by the racial policies of the previous regime can never be obliterated from the memories of those who suffered, but it is hoped that the redevelopment of District Six will serve as an example and beacon to other dispossessed communities.

The undersigned parties,

The District Six Beneficiary Trust, represented by Mr Anwah Nagia, in his capacity as Chairperson, as duly authorised (here after referred to as the Trust);

and

The Department of Land Affairs, represented by Mr Terence Fife, in his capacity as Provincial Director: Western Cape, as duly authorised by the Minister of Agriculture and Land Affairs, Minister Derek Hanekom (here after referred to as DLA);

and

The City of Cape Town, represented by Ms Nomaindia Mfeketo, in her capacity as Chairperson of the Executive Committee of the Municipality of Cape Town (here after referred to as the City)

have jointly developed the following vision:

> **to provide restitution for those forcibly removed from District Six, through an integrated redevelopment which will result in a vibrant multicultural community whose dignity has been restored in a developmental environment, grounded in, and meeting the social and economic needs of the claimants and broader community that will contribute towards the building of a new nation;** and thus

have declared themselves willing to work together in order to fulfill their obligations in terms of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* (Act 108 of 1996) and the *Restitution of Land Rights Act* (Act 22 of 1994) (here after referred to as the Act), to implement a process of restitution of land rights and redevelopment, or equitable redress, to persons dispossessed of land rights, as a result of racially discriminatory laws or practices, in District Six, in the City of Cape Town.

FIGURE 31

[217] District Six Record of Understanding signed on 13 September 1994.

Following the agreement, a next milestone was a homecoming event hosted by D6M in 2000 to anticipate the road ahead. In 2002 a sod-turning ceremony had taken place, in the same year that the plans for the new houses had been approved. The meagre achievement being celebrated in 2004 was masked by the large-scale event, but it also exposed the limited achievement. Although government had imagined the process of restitution of land rights as a process which contributed to the healing of the nation, claimants experiences have been frustrating and disheartening (Hall, 2010; Mesthrie, 2010). It was particularly hard for families whose elders had passed on while waiting to return to District Six. Sustaining claimants' hopefulness while not being blinded by the reality of slow performance continues to be a challenge.

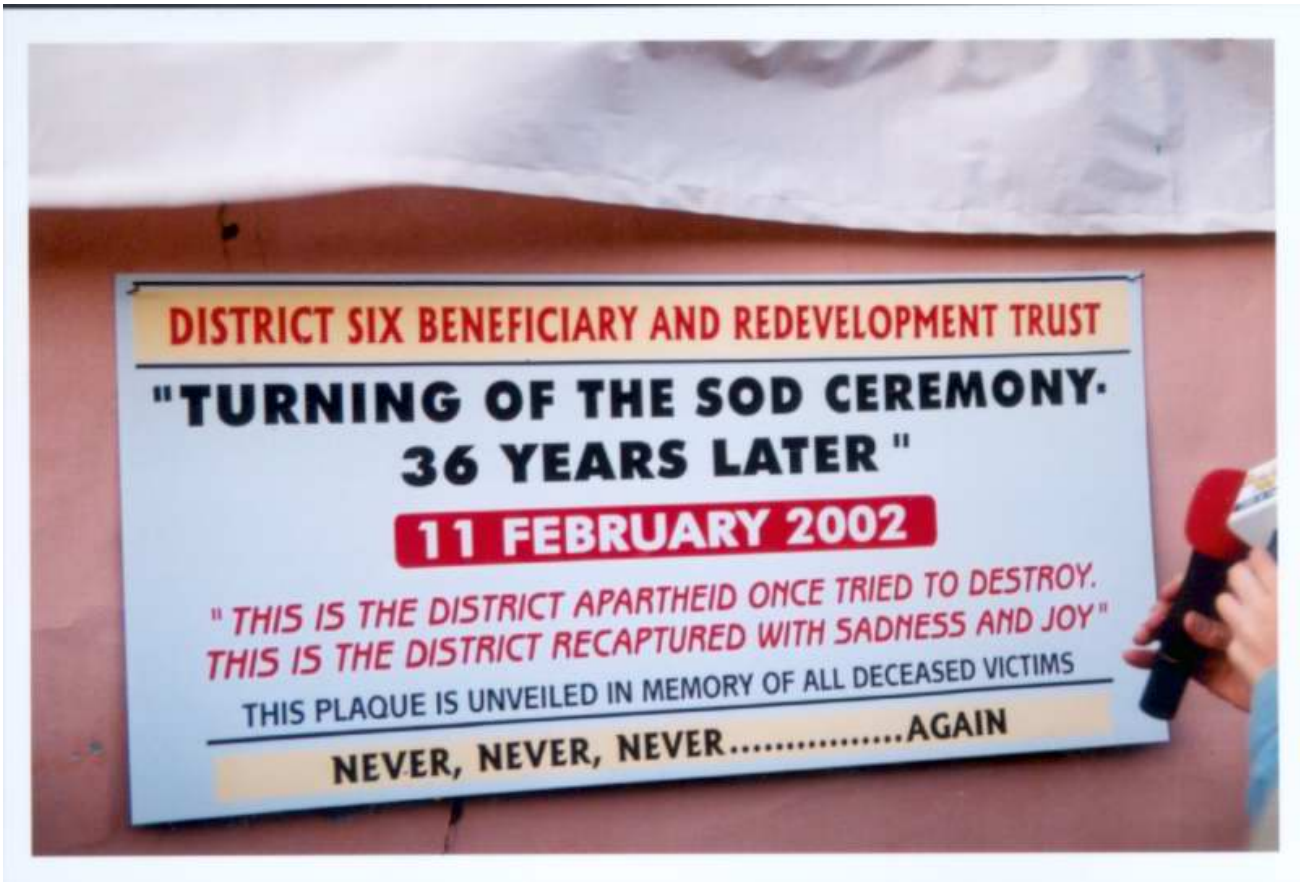


FIGURE 32

The leaflet produced by D6M to mark the occasion contains the following text:

> The Ndzabela and Murat families are the first of 24 families identified to return to the area in the pilot phase of the restitution process. Seniority was the main selection criterion for the first 24 returnees, but already three of them, Robert Plaatjie, Ayesha Shabodien and Amiena Arendse have passed away.[218]

That was in 2004. The numbers have increased substantially since then.

Moving house

In the weeks following this fanfare of an event, the Murat and Ndzabela families were preparing for their actual move into their new homes (at the event on 11 February the homes were not actually ready for moving in although the building had been completed. The keys that were handed over were symbolic). They were inundated with requests from the media for permission to video their actual move on the day. In the months leading up to their move D6M had been recording oral history interviews conducted with the families and had obtained their consent to record their move on the day. The interviews focused on their expectation as they anticipated this radical change to their lives and follow up sessions would be conducted after they had lived back in District Six for a few months, to do a reality check on their expectations.

It was an overcast day in June 2004 when one of the D6M teams arrived at the home of the Ndzabela family in Guguletu, ready to document their long-awaited move back to District Six. This was a historic moment that everyone wanted to capture.

The sight that met the team was unsettling. The house was filled with people moving in and out of the house. The couple seemed bewildered and there was no sign that anything had been properly packed. Their meagre belongings were all exposed in piles around the house. It seems that in the excitement about moving back to District Six and looking forward to a homecoming, not much attention had gone into preparing the couple for leave-taking. They exuded bewilderment, anxiety, confusion, paralysis. They gave no coherent answers to questions about how they were feeling. The frayed bits of their carpets, their shabby bedroom furniture, and a room strewn with personal items unpacked from their cupboards, was what the world would see on camera. The dignity of this wonderful moment seemed diminished.

The jury is still out about whether the D6M documentation team did the right thing, but the action seemed appropriate at the time. The decision was made to switch off the cameras, and to help with packing and moving the furniture. What the couple needed was help with moving, not another camera getting in the way of what turned out to be a difficult moment of leave-taking of friends, neighbours

[218] Ibid.

and a support ecosystem built up over the years. In conversation with them later in the day they admitted to having thought so much about what it would be like to move back to the District that they had not even thought about what it would mean for them to move out of Guguletu.

There is a gap in the D6M archive where the footage about this family's return story should have been. It is a loss to the archive but the action provided relief to the family at the time when they needed practical help. D6M has footage of the family unpacking in their new home. They appear calm, in control and relaxed as they enjoy their first cup of tea.

This experience seems symbolic of all the contradictions inherent in embarking on a return to a lost neighbourhood. The longing for home had been most desirable in the imagining of it, and extolling the virtues of a past life in District Six had been part of the individual's motivation for restitution. The practical logistics of the day interrupted the narrative of return and brought home the realities of loss and return, of leaving behind and moving towards, of recognizing that a leap of faith into the unknown future pitted against the familiarity of the present.

Over time, cynicism replaced the feelings of hope that had been the dominant feeling in the early days of restitution. Claimants started to lament that they felt like pawns in a political game, with promises being made when their votes were needed. Correlating announcements about restitution with dates set for elections gives some weight to this view:

2000	
November: settlement agreement signed with the D6BRT	5 December: municipal elections
2004	
11 February: Return of the elders	14 April: General elections
2011	
April: President by Jacob Zuma announced that 2760 claimants would be returned by 2014	18 May: Municipal elections
2014	
March: Minister of Rural Development and Land Reform Gugile Nkwinti announces that the building of phase 3 houses would commence within the next 3 weeks 16 May: turning of the sod for phase 3	7 May: General elections
2016	
March: Minister of RDLR calls meeting to discuss phase 3	Municipal elections

2018 / 19	
25 July: District Six Community Day Centre officially opened by Helen Zille	8 May: General elections

2004: District Six as a National Heritage Site: statement of significance.

When the Statement of Significance motivating for the declaration of District Six as a NHS was submitted to SAHRA Council in 2004, the NHRA was but five years old. It was relatively fresh in its mission to counter the ethos of the apartheid-era NMC with its focus on national monuments which mostly represented 'British colonial and Cape Dutch architecture and sites associated with the Afrikaner struggle for self-determination' (Marschall, 2010). In taking up the cudgel of the heritage as empowerment, democratization and citizenship discourse (Marschall, 2010; Frieslaar, 2020), SAHRA was keen to drive the declaration of new heritage sites which aligned to the 'democratic government's commitment to reconciliation, redress and nation-building' (Frieslaar, 2020: 44). District Six as site of national significance was identified, amongst others.

The D6M board of trustees and its curatorial committee were at first concerned about the implications of this formal entry into the discourse of national heritage. While they were unified about the significance of the site as one which had national resonance, they were mindful that it had not emerged from the grand narrative of the country's struggle against apartheid. It was not a memory site created by 'the nation'. Hanging on to the processional, fluid site-specific memory practices were embedded in the methodologies of District Six memorialisation and it would have been a loss to lose that approach as a result of becoming part of the 'national estate'. 'The site has to be declared and graded in an exercise which turns memory into a technology, into a thing that is named, mapped and listed in order to be conserved. Unfortunately this sets up a fairly limited paradigm, governed by logics of documentation and taxonomy, which unfortunately we cannot ignore' (Rassool, 2007: 35)

At this stage, SAHRA worked closely worked closely with D6M to craft the Statement of Significance in 2004, which was to be presented by the Provincial Manager for SAHRA, the late Beverley Crouts, who was as concerned that the focus on intangible heritage and performative memorialisation favoured by D6M should be safeguarded in the way that the declaration was to eventually happen. At that stage both entities felt committed to model a way that could help the NHRA to give expression to its commitment to intangible heritage.

D6M's active engagement in the NHS processes started more intensely from 2005 onwards and will form the bulk of Chapter 5.

The site was graded in 2004 and provisionally protected for a period of two years to enable the completion of the process. To date the site has not yet been declared, although SAHRA still expresses

its commitment to do this. The provisional protection has lapsed, and talk of reinstating it has not had any fruitful outcome. In the hiatus between grading and its declaration at an as yet unknown date, parcels have land have been developed outside of the heritage and restitution frame that was meant to guide all future developments, and relations with SAHRA have become very strained. The community that have been mobilized around the declaration has been occasionally demoralized but have revived their commitment to ensuring that this happens.

Hands on District Six: Landscape of post-colonial memorialisation

> Through the 'Hands On District Six' Conference the museum will provide a critical space for reflecting on emerging practices of the District Six Museum, as well as on challenges for building a humane and democratic public culture in South Africa, ten years into its democracy.
>
> To indicate the temporal and spatial resonance of the process of reconstruction, we call explicit attention to **Landscapes of Postcolonial Memorialisation,** particularly of displaced histories and places.[219] (D6M: 2005)

This proposal was formulated in partnership with the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience (referred to in Chapter 1 of this thesis), one of D6M's main conference partners. This network enabled a number of site representatives from Bangladesh, Argentina, Ghana, Senegal and the USA amongst other places, to participate . They brought with them the experience of working at their sites where "landscapes of public memory have been activated for ongoing struggles for democracy and human rights".[220]

FIGURE 33

[219] D6M's 'Hands On' proposal sent to the Ford Foundation, January 2005.
[220] Ibid.

The conference has as its main objectives:

- To develop dialogues about the modes of engaging with the landscape of District Six;
- To engage with multiple publics about heritage, heritage sites and sites of conscience;
- To use the occasion to reflect on memorialisation in South Africa over the last decade; and
- To invite an international audience to engage with the legacies of memorialisation in the global south.[221]

This multi-site international conference took place over a period of four days in May 2005, just months after District Six had been graded as a Grade 1 site of national significance. D6M thus wanted to explore models of creative relationships between state and civil society actors. It was in part a reflection of ten years of practice of D6M and it was also an opportunity to enrich its practice. Collaborations with memory sites and projects across the world yielded dynamic conversations which were both critical and affirmative of the place and power of memory.

An alternative 'township tour' formed part of the programme, with three routes of displacement being followed. Participants journeyed to two townships where people had been forcibly removed to (Langa and Manenberg) with a third journey ending at a different site of forced removals (Protea Village, now Kirstenbosch). Keynote addresses, workshops and plenaries occupied two days, with the final day consisting of a series of art workshops in which participants engaged in different forms of expressing and displaying personal and collective memories. An open-air performance at the site which had been identified as a future Memorial Park ended the conference.

The four days demonstrated refreshing ways in which memory work could be grown and expressed while simultaneously being therapeutic and pedagogical. It took place at a time when D6M as an institution was becoming conscious of the need to assert its own scholarly voice as opposed to being the subjects of the research of others. The conference helped it to achieve this. In the time of preparing for the conference, it grappled with finding the most appropriate ways to codify and describe its own practice which for a long time existed outside of documents. This challenge was a definite moment of institutional growth.

[221] Ibid.

FIGURE 34

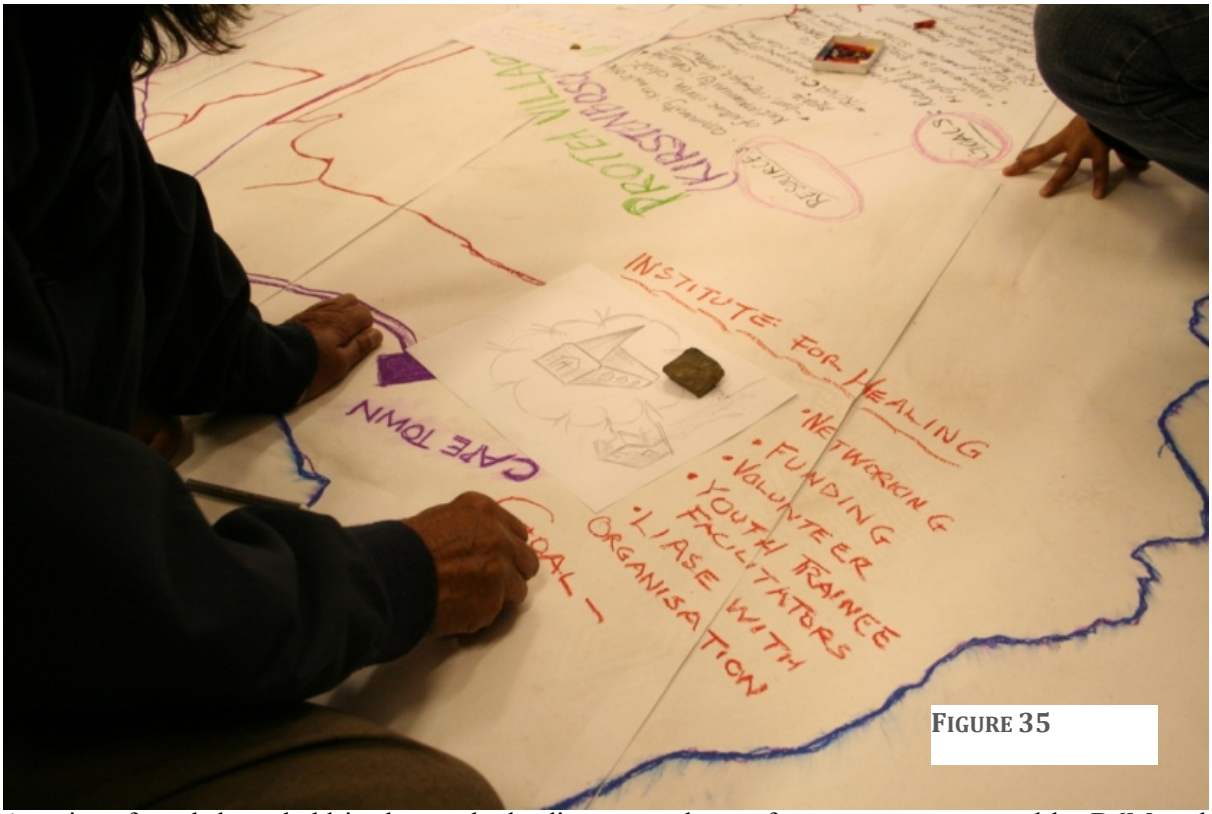


FIGURE 35

A series of workshops held in the weeks leading up to the conference were convened by D6M and helped it to clarify its practice. Participants were from various projects that worked with memory in and around Cape Town. People reflected critically on their work which empowered them with the vocabulary to speak confidently about this work in the context of the conference.

An important aim of the conference was to provide a platform for different voices to engage. Conferences attended by scholars only, while producing rich conversations, are often limited because of the absence of practice-based individuals. At the same time, practitioners did not often find opportunities to engage with memory and heritage scholarship which could enrich their practice, and the intended dialogue between people from diverse levels of engagement and varied perspectives could be productive but also daunting.

Setting up an inclusive platform of engagement does not guarantee meaningful exchanges between voices which occupy unequal spaces in society: these spaces have to be shaped and facilitated in a particular way. Placing academics who are constantly engaged in a world of words and concepts, on the same public platform with practitioners who are less familiar with verbal discourse can serve to silence and disempower people rather than the opposite. Bernard Lynch, referring to attempts by museums focusing on migrants to be inclusive, cautions that "what many museums remain unaware (of is) that there can run throughout these relations a form of triumphant neoliberalism- an assumption that simply by 'being inclusive', all other subtle and not-so-subtle vestiges of discrimination are eliminated" (2017: 226). The preparatory workshops were intended to mitigate some of this inequality, as was the de-centred structure of the facilitated sessions within the conference.

In reminding D6M that it had also invited participants to critique its practice, Tony Morphet, a discussant at one of the sessions, commented that "… what I heard for the first fifteen or twenty minutes was the Museum telling everyone about what the Museum was and did. They weren't listening, they weren't asking questions. It took a long time for people to gather enough energy and courage to stop the speakers and to say 'now I want to ask this' or 'I want to make this point'. And it was only then that the really rich material began to emerge…" (D6M, 2007: 26). The institution has had to concede that at times it was guilty of the very practices that it had accused others of.

The conference did much to energise the next phase of D6M. In addition to the critique of some aspects of its practice, it encountered much support for its tentative foray into the narrative of national heritage and felt encouraged by the supportive cautions that were offered. The cautions were about holding firm onto a fluid and dynamic memory practice that should continue to be grounded and creative even as the District moved towards being part of national heritage. Other cautions were about the often rigid divide between tangible and intangible heritage. Karen Till presents a concern: 'Thinking about tangible / intangible as material / immaterial is the real problem, because those stones don't mean anything without the practice, without the stories … once you put them into a category of material versus immaterial you're doing serious damage to a project of living memory' (D6M, 2007: 63).

As indicated earlier in this study, the 'hands on' focus did not start at this Conference but pre-dates it. However, it provided an important consolidation of its focus and enabled it to gain practical impetus beyond being symbolic slogan.

Gradual institutionalisation

I have not spent any time in reflecting on the process of D6M's institutionalisation except in the context of referring to the impact on its memory work and community relations. I will only make a few comments in this regard.

The District Six Museum Foundation (D6MF) was formed in 1989 and registered as a trust in 1994. Up until that time, Foundation members and trustees were responsible for planning and implementing the initial programmes with the support of a number of volunteers. In 1994, the trustees appointed the first director who was responsible for fundraising amongst other things, to enable the employment of more staff. Gradually the team was built up, moving from a largely volunteer and short-term contract work base, to that of employing fulltime staff. The move from an informal institution to that of being a formal employer was not without its challenges and took place over a number of years. As the areas of work became more distinct and specialised, various departments emerged. Their shape and form have changed over time but the basic structure has remained consistent: Administration, Education, Exhibition, and Collections, Research and Documentation (CRD). This is a fairly standard structure for a museum of its size, but the departmental divisions are less rigid than they appear on the organogram. The curatorial areas of Education, Exhibitions and CRD plan their work collaboratively so that all projects represent all of the three areas in their implementation. The operational structure is flat and the style of management is collegial.

In the early days of its life particularly during the period of South Africa's transformation, D6M was well-supported by international funders who were keen to invest in the country's change process. After the first decade (in the early 2000s) several changed funding priorities resulted in D6M being financially adversely affected. It was at that time that it started looking at diversifying its income streams so that it was not wholly reliant on funding. In 2003 it started charging entrance fees (there was no charge for entry up to that point), with families of those affected by forced removals from any area in South Africa being exempt from being charged. This has helped D6M to remain sustainable especially when it started charging additional fees for guided tours which had previously been provided free of charge. This income stream has of course been lost for the past year as a result of the pandemic with very few people venturing out to visit public institutions at this time.

I previously referred to D6M's independent status in relation to government institutions. This is a recurring discussion, with D6M's preferred position being an arm's length one. This has been very difficult to resource. There have been some overtures from Provincial government for D6M to

consider being a declared institution under its wing which will bring some operational support, but this is inconclusive at this stage. In 2013 D6M went through a severe financial crisis as two major sources of funding came to an end at the same time, with a large gap in timing between the ending of one set of funding and the start of the next. It resulted in the retrenchment of 20% of its staff and a gradual recovery process over a few years during which time these positions were reinstated.

As D6M expanded its work, it required more space to do so effectively. A building one block away was purchased for it by a funder, and after renovations it could move some of its operations into this second venue aptly named the 'Homecoming Centre'. It is in this space that many of the issues relating to restitution and return are workshopped. It has enabled staff to occupy more conducive working spaces, provided new space for D6M as well as partnership exhibitions, space for events as well as for public programming. Venue hire of these spaces became an additional and welcomed income stream. This, however, has also been interrupted by the pandemic.

It was during the move to the Homecoming Centre that tensions emerged between D6M and the D6BRT. As the latter entity prepared to set up office in a more permanent way in the building, different styles of work and approaches to collaborations brought pressure into the relationship. The two entities decided to part ways and D6BRT opted to set up office elsewhere. The parting of ways was only in terms of the shared space, and the two organisations have remained connected. Although it was created stress between the two organisations at the time, in retrospect it was a good decision as it has enabled a better working relationship between the two.

Organisational change often causes anxiety, and in 2004 D6M put in place a change management process which included a forum for staff and trustees to express concerns and problem-solve them. Weekly staff development sessions were integrated as an important part of organisational life, as well as whole-staff planning and evaluation. Succession planning for staff and trustees has been a difficult area. It is not unusual for founder trustees to struggle with transitioning and handing over the baton to a next cohort. This was particularly hard for D6M founder trustees who had held their positions for almost fifteen years. It was exacerbated by the historical involvement of trustees as the implementers of the programmes, and stepping back from the operational roles was not easy.

In terms of compliance, D6M is registered as a trust which is governed by a trust deed. As such, it is not compelled to have Annual General Meetings (AGMs) but in 2007 it held its first closed AGM in which succession planning featured largely on its agenda. In 2008 it held its first AGM public as a means to increase its own accountability and this has become part of its annual routine since then.

D6M is also registered as a Non-Profit Organisation with the Non-Profit Directorate and as a Public Benefit Organisation with the South African Revenue Services. This has been a requirement for purposes of receiving funds

So, while the front-end of D6M seems to be fluid and flexible, there is a back-end that functions in a more structured and compliant way.

D. Conclusion to Chapter 3

The period from 2000 represents an intense time of institutional growth and capacity-building. It starts with the launch of *Digging Deeper* as D6M's permanent exhibition and as a methodological approach. During this time D6M was compelled to formalize components of its work, adjusting the spontaneity of its early days. It managed to do so in ways that retained the fluidity of its approach to memory work despite the need to do so within a more structured environment.

In this chapter I have discussed the possibilities for self-crafted narrative to make claims for land and heritage, with D6M playing a not insignificant role in strengthening the case for orality and intangible heritage to be central to these claims. D6M offered a platform for people to shout out against silencing. Some may never find the words to speak of the unspeakable loss of home, or they may never 'tame the chaos within them'[222] sufficiently to craft a coherent narrative. "There may be no words to make sense of the moments and fragments that surface in dreams and nightmares which are experienced not only in the dark recesses of the night, but also in flashes of light in the day"(O'Connell 2019: 31, 32). D6M has been able to provide the support that people need to find their own voices when they are ready to do so.

While museums do the necessary worrying about archival longevity and capturing of stories, how might we capture the legitimate silences that surround the pain of loss? Karen Till speaks of a 'place-based ethics of care' (2018: 4) which is needed in wounded cities and I wonder how this can be deepened at the District Six site which continues to accumulate additional layers of pain and loss even in the present as the process of restitution drags on slowly. My reflections on the 'digging deeper' methodological evolution of D6M has been an attempt to expose some of its methodologies of care. I have also pointed to some of its internal and external challenges, and the institution's attempt to address these.

The four 'moments' which I selected as important parts of this phase of its biography were generative and intense, raising several challenges as well as opportunities which need attention not only between the covers of this thesis but in the real life of D6M. These moments have called upon D6M to speak into spaces outside of its regular reach, stretching its methodological and institutional growth and inspiration. These moments have strengthened its commitment to offer and receive solidarity in issues of social justice which confront it on a daily basis through the lives of the members of its community.

[222] Ben Okri

It will continue to argue for its fluid notion of 'community' which has made it possible for a number of non-District Sixers to put their hands to the cause, even as it remains an issue for those who insist that D6M belongs to them.

The next chapter of this biography will explore the depths of D6M's memory work strategies, particularly its site-specific work as it explores new ways of embedding significant aspects within the built and ephemeral environment of the new national heritage site-in waiting.

Memory is the Weapon

Memory heals, it regenerates. It is an affirming god, a transcendent guide in the ritual of continuity. But when spurned, when repressed, memory mutates into a trickster imp and seduces the wayfarer to the precipice and beyond.

Biyi Bandili, 2001 (In introduction to *Things Fall Apart)*

In Manenberg, Bonteheuwel, Lavender Hill or Parkwood – or any of the other townships – residents could not cope without the support structures to which they were accustomed. In the townships, the number of families beset with marital problems soared. Divorce rates shot up. Husbands deserted their families in worrying numbers. And parents found difficulty in controlling their children. For many families, the past became lost in a mist of memories, and into its place lurked a future too terrible to contemplate.

O'Connell, 2018: 40

For many of those people who were removed to the alien and wind blown townships on the Cape Flats, the stability of community life, the familiarity and identity of District Six is an ongoing association. It is an association that has allowed them to survive the traumatic conditions of residing in the townships. These remembered and perceived virtues of a former urban life that are recalled in the District Six Museum exhibitions and in other cultural work (plays, novels, poems and songs) are however celebrated to underline a sense of history, a shared system of beliefs and to inspire hope.

Lucien le Grange, 2003: 31

A. Introduction to chapter four

"High dwellings are the peace and harmony of our descendants. Remember the calamity of the great tsunamis. Do not build any homes below this point", are the words carved into a 10-foot high stone tablet along the coast of Aneyoshi, a village in Japan (Lewis, 2015).[223]

'Tsunami stones' are ancient stone markers which have been placed along the Japanese coastline as trans-generational warnings by ancients wanting to convey their collective remembrances of disaster to their descendants. Writing about the potential for a collective memory of the COVID-19 pandemic to help this and future generations to prepare for a next one, Sean Donahue (2020) references the Aneyoshi stone and asks the question: 'When the last wave of the coronavirus recedes, what kind of guide stone will exist for future generations?'[224] He sees this not only as recording history for the sake of the archive, but mainly to answer the question about how societies remain stable over time.

How can we ensure that we learn from the past, to mitigate the impact of disasters, both natural and human-instigated? How does the commitment to non-recurrence of violent atrocities become guaranteed and how does the call of 'never, never again' become more than a slogan in situations involving state-sponsored atrocities such as ethnic cleansing, genocide and apartheid?

In this chapter I will attempt to answer some of these questions by exploring the role of memory as a tool for raising awareness of the past and its impact on our present, particularly in the aftermath of national trauma. In chapter two of this study I started exploring how South Africa's land restitution forms part of the restorative justice regime of which memory is an important component. It is particularly significant for those people who were excluded by law from land ownership and therefore have no title deed to support their claim for their loss of right to land under apartheid and colonialism. Memory has also been an important part of the TRC's truth-telling process, creating a supportive public platform for people's stories to be known and to become part of public memory, and for them to reconstruct parts of the unknown stories of their lost loved ones and their own suffering, to complement the gaps in their own memories.

In addition to its collective and public memory components, memory also has an intensely personal dimension. I will reflect on its affective features which can be either destructive or life-giving (Lapsley, 2006). I will show some examples of empowering memory strategies and suggest ways in which these might contribute towards building – from a personal or individual level – the 'memory of the nation' which is still very much a work-in-progress. Referring to Hall (2006), Nick Shepherd

[223] "These century old stone 'Tsunami stones' dot Japan's coastline' written by Danny Lewis for *Smithsonianmag.com*, 31 August 2015. Available at https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/ [Accessed: 15 October 2020]

[224] 'As collective memory fades, so will our ability to prepare for the next pandemic' written by Sean Donahue for *The Conversation',* 20 May 2020. Available at https://theconversation.com/ [Accessed: 15 October 2020]

writes that "the politics of memory is not an addendum to another set of struggles for social and economic rights, but is itself a key arena of struggle, (and) becomes one of the terms around which a broader set of struggles coalesce and organize themselves" (Shepherd, 2013: 240, 241).

In the previous chapters I have established the context in which D6M was formed and sketched an overview of South Africa's transition to democracy. In those formative years, memorialisation featured prominently on the national agenda as one of the urgent areas where redress was needed. D6M has made a substantial contribution to the establishment of a memory practice in the country, and in this section I will delve into the substance of its contribution.

Reflecting on the first ten years of its life (1994 – 2004) led D6M to a realisation that, among other things, it needed to refocus and adapt its site-specific work into new forms. The 2005 Conference – *Hands on District Six: landscapes of postcolonial memorialisation* [225]– was the forum where it made its new focus public and called upon members of its broad community gathered at this learning encounter, to critique and help strengthen its practice. *City Site Museum* was the name of the post-conference publication, and these three reference points have become important locales for an extended and sustained focus of D6M, with several threats to its 'city' and 'site' focus during this time. The period ends with D6M and its community being involved in fraught discussions with both CPUT and SAHRA about the integrity of the site.

At the same time a reality check is needed: the impact of the pandemic is all-pervasive and cannot be overlooked. How will we remember a past during which time all aspects of everyday life have been suspended?

B. City, Site, Museum

The publication as one of the outflows of the 2005 Conference, emerged from discussions about D6M's renewal, and an awareness that it had to reassert the locales as well its methods of memorialisation. 'City', 'site' and 'museum' served as the referential frames for this. At the conference, acknowledgement was given to D6M for being able to make the legitimate claim that it had expanded its original rationale for existence from "the production of memory and the commemoration of the 'salted earth' of District Six, to memory work closely associated with land restitution and recovery" (Bennett, Julius and Soudien, 2008: 14). It was affirmed for its practice of working respectfully with marginalised groups as being more than 'source communities' from which to collect data for interpretive work. It recognised the knowledge and expertise of community members in their own right, "tied to a place and community through mappings, photographs, stories,

[225] See Chapter 3 of this study.

street signs, landscape markers and oral histories' drawing on 'citizen activism, public exchange, artistic practice, story-telling and research to question the power relations inherent in colonial and postcolonial productions of knowledge" (D6M, 2006: 14).

City

This self-exhortation was to continue the outward-looking work of D6M, affirming its place as a museum in (not ***of***) the city. Just as the 'map-walkers'[226] symbolically inscribed themselves back into the city's history by walking and marking their place on the map, so D6M had to ensure that the memory of the District was inscribed back into the city. This included reaching out to relevant entities within all three tiers of government when needed. It meant engaging with the people who come into the city everyday: former residents, those who come to work in the city, learners and students, cultural workers, social justice activist and tourists among others.

Cape Town is frequently described as a 'world-class city'. It was voted "best city in the world for 7th year running"[227]. What does this means for the 'non-tourists' in the city, ie the citizens of Cape Town? It has also been described as one of the most unequal cities in the world. Writing for the Daily Maverick, David Reiersgord (2017)[228] refers to an annual survey – 'Mapping the World's Prices'– conducted by Deutsche Bank which in 2017 included a 'Quality of Life' (QOL) index. According to the QOL results, Cape Town has the 17th best QOL index in the world.[229] From the viewpoint of a global tourist, this index reflects that the city has "the kind of world-class offerings that most globe-trotters are used to. What it doesn't reflect is that these offerings are out of reach for the majority that live in Cape Town"(Reiersgord, 2017). The moniker of 'world class' glosses over the many inequalities of the city, with the infrastructural investment from the COCT going towards maintaining the mask. Of all the indices listed in the survey[230], none of them make any reference to the impact of displacement on the quality of life of Capetonians. The past of racial exclusion and displacement has given way to a present of economic segregation – still shaped by historically-linked racist practices.

[226] See chapter 3 of this study.
[227] https://www.capetowntravel/ [Accessed 2 November 2020]
[228] '*World Class'- Cape Town's contradictory Quality of Life,* 29 May 2017. Available on www.dailymaverick.co.za/ [Accessed 2 November 2020]
[229] This was out of 47 cities surveyed. In the 2019 survey, Cape Town ranked 28 out of 56 countries surveyed. Source: https://www.dbresearch.com/ [Accessed 10 November 2020]
[230] The eight categories are: purchasing power, safety, healthcare, cost of living, property price, traffic commute, pollution and climate. Available on https://www.dbresearch.com/ [Accessed 2 November 2020]

World Design Capital 2014

In 2014 Cape Town was designated as the World Design Capital (WDC) by the International Council of Societies of Industrial Design (World Design Organisation since 2017). The COCT and the Cape Town Partnership (CTP) had started the bid process in 2011. The idea was to showcase the design potential of the city and to promote ways in which good design could be key to solving some of the city's challenges. A bid book had been prepared and programmes pitched in the run-up to the final decision, with an international delegation coming to Cape Town on a site-visit to experience some of its design potential.

One of the projects that they identified was the rejuvenation of the east end of the city, where D6M is located. The area was sometimes described as 'shabby chic' in relation to the slicker part of the city, and the intention was to present it as more chic and less shabby so as to attract capital injection into the area. They proposed to rebrand it as 'the Fringe' and to transform it into a design hub which would encourage collaborations especially between young designers. In addition, work spaces would be created for them which would have a sustainable life after the WDC year was over. While there was no objection to the concept, its premise was problematic. It presented the area as a *tabula rasa* – a blank slate upon which design thinking could be layered.

In its written submission when public comment was called for, D6M acknowledged that while the proposal referenced the role of colonialism and apartheid in shaping the modern Cape Town, its content did very little to pay attention to that past. It purported to bring design to the east city with no reference to the history of art and design that had been part of District Six's life. It showed no awareness of the Zonnebloem Arts Centre, the Lydia Williams Centre of Memory (which had previously been home to the Community Arts Project) the site-specific paintings of Sandra McGregor, Gregoire Boonzaaier, Lionel Davis and others. It did not acknowledge the design presence and experience of D6M and had no knowledge of the pending NHS status of the area. It failed to realise the offence in renaming a place that people who had been marginalised and 'fringed' from it were trying to move from the periphery into a space of inclusion where their memories and issues could be seen both on the topography of the city and with regard to policy considerations. D6M was not the only entity submitting objections and eventually the 'Fringe' project was not implemented at that time.[231]

[231] The report on the process indicates a complete misunderstanding of the basis for objections and the final report by the COCT and WDC Cape Town describe the issues of contention being that 'Concerns were raised that the initiative overlooked some of the existing communities in the area and needed to engage more broadly and inclusively.' The report missed the fact that the main objection was to the conversion of the precinct depended on the obliteration of its current identity, and that it did not attend to the power of its past. It was a poorly designed intervention which would result in yet another displacement. See *The Role of Cultural and Creative Industries in Regenerating Urban and Rural Space and Economies in South Africa,* September 2016. Available on https://www.southafricanculturalobservatory.rg.za/ [Accessed 2 November 2020]

A concern was expressed by the District Six community: if the precincts of District Six which were closest to the city were to be branded as the Fringe, what assurance would they have that in the long-term that the municipal ward boundaries would not separate it from District Six? Would it be excluded from the NHS declaration when it happened? People were also concerned that it there was a division, the municipal revenue for the area would be substantially reduced and the new District Six could potentially become a neglected ward of the city, as it had become under apartheid.

Site

'Site' has always been significant in the work of D6M, but at times it took a back seat as the work of building the Museum as a sustainable institution received more focused attention. Returning its gaze to the vacant site which was starting to be slowly repopulated with returning families, D6M has had to think about the new ways that this 'site of conscience' would continue to speak into a new scenario. How could the raw wound beneath the slopes of Table Mountain which stood as a memorial to its own destruction, retain its ability to communicate its history now that most of its surface would be converted into foundations for the new homes to be built.

The global awareness of site-based memory work has increased exponentially over the past number of years. Its potential for connecting people and creating transformative experiences had been frequently affirmed. Rituals and performances at places which have been affected by traumatic pasts can play particularly powerful roles in processes of healing as well as of education. Karen Till (2011) writes about 'wounded cities' as being "locales that have been harmed and structured by particular histories of physical destruction, displacement, and individual and social trauma resulting from state-perpetrated violence" (Till, 2012: 6). This was a wounded site: a wound inflicted in the past but still with present reverberations. Essential to an inclusive memorialisation process is the sensitivity to the rights of various narrators to connect and interpret at sites based on their own experiences, even when it goes against the grain of the established narrative. Till writes about the multiple meanings of places of memory which have meanings that go beyond the authored representations because of the way that "individuals and social groups experience them affectively" (2012: 7).

There have been occasions when former residents have come to mark their place on the map on the museum floor (as a substitute for the site that they are not able to mark), and have felt extremely aggrieved if they found that someone else had marked what they regarded as 'their' spot where their family home was located. After discussion they might realise that their address was not actually usurped, but that a different family might have lived there either before they did or after they moved to another place. One realises that the overarching narrative of District Six forced removals resulting from the GAA, obscures the fact that families occasionally moved out of their own volition before the area was declared 'whites only' in the way that families do. Sometimes people moved to different places within the District and sometimes they moved out of the area. There is an assumption that their

claim to space was also bound to a particular time as well, with the temporal-spatial continuum sometimes being blurred.

Site narratives

Memory studies have shown that the "past as we know it is partly a product of the present; we continually reshape memory, rewrite history, refashion relics. ... The most compelling motive for altering the past is to change the present – to ward off global catastrophe, to secure national hegemony, to make one's own fame and fortune" (Lowenthal, 1985: 26, 27).

The archetypal District Six story describes the gangs of the area as friendly and helpful, only being occasionally and mildly violent amongst themselves in their territorial skirmishes. Being aware that current preoccupations often influence how past recollections are recounted, helps to make sense of this persistent statement which is repeated sometimes even when facts to the contrary are presented. Township life on the gang-ridden Cape Flats is beset by a high level of violence. Comparatively speaking, the gang violence of the remembered past could be considered to have been milder than that of current gangs. Creating a mental reference point that indicates that gangs can be different – as modelled in the past – is an expression of desire for a different, more secure way of living in the present. That is the way in which I understand the reluctance that some people have about accepting narratives of violent gang fights in District Six.

In his biography *There & Back : Robben Island 1964 – 1979,* Eddie Daniels describes his early life in District Six where according to him there were a large number of gangs. He writes, "There would be regular battles between the Globe, Jesters and Killer gangs. If any member of one gang was found in the territory of another and caught, he would be badly beaten or killed" (Daniels, 1998: 21). He goes on to describe a violent altercation when he and some friends were attacked by gang members. Many District Sixers would have difficulty accepting this version as it unsetttles the accepted narrative of the gentleman gangster.

Another example. The Seven Steps in District Six was an iconic landmark. It was a popular gathering place and has had songs written about it, paintings produced about it and it was well photographed before being destroyed. The District Six honorary club for former residents is named the 'Seven Steps Club', referencing the landmark as a place of joyful gathering. One person expressed that he had difficulty in sharing the positivity of the metaphoric space because every time he heard the words 'seven steps' it conjured up the reminder of a painful experience of having been attacked at the steps. Some members were unsympathetic and accused him of lying because to them the steps had a singular identity of being a safe place where people socialised. "Groups and individuals often struggle with one another for authority to represent their version of the past in the built environment,

the media and in legal arenas. When social groups inscribe their particular perspectives and stories about the past onto and through public space, the results are contentious" (Till, 2012: 7).

Being a site of trauma is but one, if overarching, aspect of District Six's identity. Lucien le Grange also refers to its *genus loci* as being one of its most endearing qualities. Located "between mountain and sea, continue to permit different views and vistas to and from various points in the area" (Le Grange, 2008: 15). In rebuilding homes for returnees, he believes that it is important to "retain historic views . sightlines down and up the streets of Devil's Peak, towards Table Mountain, the sea, the harbour and the city centre" (Le Grange, 2008: 15). Its breathtaking locale should not detract from its identity as a site of pain and violence.

In the CMP prepared ahead of the declaration of the NHS declaration, D6M writes, "As the museum's capacity to move onto the land continues to increase incrementally, it is well-placed to play a lead role in the engagements linked to the declaration and ongoing development of the National Heritage Site as a living growing, project" (D6M, 2006: 9).

Museum

"If museums are agents of official memory, individuals and groups continually intervene to contest and reshape orthodox views"(Davison, 1998: 158).

Within this definition, D6M falls closer to the 'intervening group' end of the equation than towards the museum end. There is space for narratives to be challenged, added to, deepened and even changed within the D6M sphace. The idea of changing narrative can cause discomfort as it implies an approach that permits texts to be changed at the whim of whoever has an interest to promote or even an axe to grind. However, D6M's approach is never to change narratives without engaging in some process of comprehending of what needs to change and why.

While the focus on 'museum' is in some ways a reference to the work in the actual museum buildings in another sense these three site references (ie city, site and museum) are not equivalent. The category of 'museum' has an overall conceptual focus which incorporates 'city' and 'site' as well. In that sense, all of D6M's work is 'museum work', but at the same time it is also a statement of commitment to make an impact in the sector as a sphere to be influenced as well.

The following sections outline the evolution of several of D6M's philosophical underpinnings as they find expression in its museum work.

C. D6M's approach to memory

Memory has played multiple roles in the life of D6M and its associated community of displaced former residents. Telling their personal stories or reminiscing with former neighbours in the Museum space is often the way that they first encounter D6M. "Making frequent trips to the past" in order to assert that "I was a strong, competent, beloved person once – and therefore I am still a worthwhile

person" (Lowenthal, 1985: 43) is the way that David Lowenthal describes the need of the elderly to revisit their personal pasts. Add to this the layers of complexity brought about by people who have been removed from a cherished place which has been rendered unrecognisable by the bulldozer of destruction, and which no longer holds any physical traces of their having been there: the felt need to assert the reality of 'having been' is magnified several times.

Forced removals as part of the larger apartheid project has contributed towards a diminished sense of self. Stimulating personal memory as assertions of agency in such a context holds the potential for healing (Delport, 2001; Viljoen, 2016; Abrahams, 2001). Memory of the land and engagement with its topography feature prominently in narrating about the past. Activating memory to support people's right to return, residentially, was always present even before the promulgation of the RLRA in 1994 and the NHRA of 1999 as was apparent at the HODS Conference of 1988. In its founding document, the D6MF clarified that it saw its role as being to "trace, record, preserve and commemorate the rich history and the unique culture" of District Six. Tapping into excised and suppressed memories was an important way of building this record of which the creation of D6M was a crucial component to enable it to fulfil its custodial mandate.

Over time, the necessity of memory became more apparent, not only as a means to fill in the gaps of history, but as a valid source of knowledge and information within its own right. The subjectivity of memory as a source should not detract from its value (Field, 1993; Linde, 1993; Portelli, 1991; Lowenthal, 2002). D6M has made strong arguments for the validity of multiple perspectives from which to view the same historical occurrences as experienced by different people. It continues to emphasise that there is no singular story of District Six.

Thinking of memory as a fluid and malleable process rather than as a finished product helps to illuminate its true nature. Halbwachs (1980) refers to all thoughts, events and experiences as leaving some form of residual trace within the mind as they merge into the realm of memory. Sometimes these are very clear and detailed while at other times they might be vague recollections made clearer by 'sparks' to memory which could be in the form of meeting people, visiting places, being exposed to particular smells, looking at photographs and reading documents, for example.

Sean Field (1993) describes memory as being "by definition, a term that directs our attention not to the past, but to the past-present relation. It is because 'the past' has this living existence in the present that it matters politically."[232] It is also useful to note that memory of the past involves "… unravelling fragments of the past as it really happened, fragments of a past desired, and fragments of a past which meets current (and expected) future demands"(Field 1993: 10).

[232] Field, 1993: 7

In its approach to memory and in working with the people who are its carriers, D6M is sensitive to the different and often simultaneous roles that memory recall plays in the lives of people. It understands that the purpose of memory sharing is not solely for the purpose of relaying historical occurrences on a linear temporal plane, but that there are several inner processes of sense-making and recovery that take place in the individual as well. It supports peoples' need to recall memories that matter: whether what matters at the time relates to details to facilitate a land claim; or whether it is to narrate as full a family story as possible in order to preserve the family's history and legacy; or to vent and give expression to narratives that were not previously encouraged. In the wake of the truth-telling context provided by the TRC, acts of remembering and telling gained prevalence and validity.

Memory and trauma

In the troubled memories created by traumatic events such as the loss of home, the threat of systemic violence was ever present. It made the world seem an uncertain place with no guarantees of safety and protection from ongoing acts of inhumanity. In coping with such memories, people often focus on the humane acts of others in order to mitigate the impact of the trauma. Langer (1991), refers to this as one of the important functions that shared memory plays. He notes that people will go to great lengths to describe how members of their community supported each other and provided comfort to those in need. In the context of District Six when the community was gradually ripped apart, the support might have come in the form of a comforting meal or a shared cup of tea; or it might have come in the form of offering lodging for a child whose family had to move in the middle of a school year, or for a breadwinner who had no means to travel back to work from the far-flung township to which their family might have been banished. These acts of human kindness buoyed the community's inter-dependence as well as their resilience.

"The traumatised mind sometimes holds on to a particularly shocking moment, involuntarily plays it over and over and does not allow it to return to its chronological place in the past. ... Unresolved events only seem to lose their hold on memory and slip into a vague past once the conflict is resolved" (Bennett, 2015: 22). In focusing on the nurturing and care expressed by neighbours and friends, attention lingers on acts of kindness and solidarity as 'normalising' activities. In order to survive its own shock, the mind settles on familiar aspects that fit into the general order of life as it was known before anything dramatic occurred: the routines of the everyday and the humane actions of others.

I am reminded about how in the early days of the 2020 lockdown, the media, especially social media, churned out daily affirmations of the great solidarity being expressed in poor communities where there was no food security. It described long queues of people waiting for food from soup kitchens, often sourced from and prepared by members of that same community, or for their social grants from government offices, or food parcels from community centres. They showed pictures of selfless people stirring huge pots of food to feed neighbourhoods. In the time of crisis, acts of kindness and selfless

support overpowered, if only in the short-term, the negativity that was constantly in danger of engulfing us all. These 'communities of care' seem to have been a world-wide phenomenon and will form part of the remembrances of the pandemic.

Nostalgia

> *He was still too young to know that the heart's memory eliminates the bad and magnifies the good, and that thanks to this artifice we manage to endure the burden of the past*.
>
> Gabriel García Márquez: 1985

Nostalgia is the recipient of much bad press. I suggest that nostalgia is not all bad and that it has its place in the broad spectrum of ways and reasons that people seek to remember the past. Being stuck in a perpetual state of nostalgia can be debilitating but at the same time I believe that it has a necessary role to play in the need to assuage the deep pain of loss in the past, especially when the present and future seem uncertain.

"Nostalgia is not always about the past; it can be retrospective but also prospective. Fantasies of the past determined by needs of the present have a direct impact on realities of the future. Consideration of the future makes us take responsibility for our nostalgic tales. The future of nostalgic longing and progressive thinking is at the center of this inquiry. Unlike melancholia, which confines itself to the planes of individual biography and the biography of groups or nations, between personal and collective memory."(Boym, 2001: xvi).

"Memory with the pain removed" is the way that David Lowenthal (1985: 8) describes nostalgia. He goes on to say, "The pain is today. We shed tears for the landscape we find no longer what it was, what we thought it was, or what we hoped it would be"(1985: 8). I suggest that nostalgia is a valuable tool through which to process traumatic pasts. The intensity of a forensic recall of the raw painful data of extreme loss might be too much to bear and nostalgia helps to soften the impact and enables a next step. "Nostalgia itself has a utopian dimension, only it is no longer directed toward the future. Sometimes nostalgia is not directed toward the past either, but rather sideways"(Boym, 2001: xiv).

Svetlana Boym (2001) references the semantic roots of the word 'nostalgia' in order to better understand its meaning. She refers to its 'pseudo-Greek' roots which when broken down into its linguistic components translate as being derived from *nostos* meaning 'return home' and *algia* which means longing. She defines it as "longing for a home that no longer exists or has never existed." (2007: 9). She describes nostalgia as seeming to be a longing for a different place but in actual fact is

a longing for a time that is different from now – "the time of our childhood, the slower rhythms of our dreams"(2001: 8).

I have observed District Six storytellers as they comment on why the District is so important to them,. They would speak of the simplicity of their lives at the time; they would refer to the politeness of children, the fact that children could entertain themselves with makeshift games and not rely on technology, and the affordability of food. These were always mentioned. Many of the things they mention related to life at specific periods of time, in many places across the country. On this level, these were some of the features of a particular time period in working class South African life, not only in District Six.

When engaging with people about this, it is very difficult for them to make sense of this distinction between a time and space / place continuum. The loss of space happened at a time in history when life was comprehensible and coherent, and the two dimensions have become blended into a single experience. Does it matter that people do not make the distinction in this context? In some ways the separation is a moot point. Nostalgia serves a valuable purpose for them as a "strategy for survival, a way of making sense of the impossibility of homecoming"(Boym, 2001: 10). It has buoyed the community in their pain and enabled them to get through days, weeks, months and years which have been filled with challenges. It has enabled them to muster up the inner resources needed to engage with a land restitution process which has been down-heartening.

Many of the gatherings of the elderly former residents are peppered with a good dose of nostalgic reminiscences. This is understandable in a space that is premised on stories and which continues to be generated by stories. By inviting people into that space, D6M realises that it has to do so with an openness for people to do so on their own terms. It also needed to develop methodological tools to enable a moving beyond nostalgia for those who want and need it.

Boym (2001) makes the distinction between two nostalgic tendencies: reflective and restorative. She describes reflective nostalgia as thriving on the *algia*- the longing while the *nostos* attempts a "trans historical construction of the lost home" (2001: 4). It is true that some District Sixers tend to fixate on the reflective aspect of nostalgia. Possibly it had become a comfortable and familiar mental space of lamenting loss. Given the dwindling confidence in the restitution process – this being for most their only hope of return – many have resigned themselves to a lifelong narrative of loss. Others are completely committed to the process of return and their narratives could be considered to be more hopeful and action-oriented. This is not a judgement on those who choose to remain embedded in narratives of loss but it is an attempt to understand the reasons why some people respond so differently to the same situation. Boym posits that restorative nostalgia addresses both the ache of

temporal distance and displacement. "Distance is compensated by intimate experiences and the availability of the desired objects. Displacement is cured by a return, preferably a collective one" (Boym, 2001: 44).

Duane Jethro, writing about nostalgic recollections of District Sixers, posits that the "idyllic, utopian account of life" could also be viewed as counter memory, in that it challenged the 'official transcript' which "claimed that District Six was a crime infested slum – developed and broadcast by state officials to justify its clearance"(2009: 25).

On an institutional and collective level, nostalgia could result in people remaining stuck in a time long past. Memory programmes need to be cognizant of this and provide the space and support for people to engage with their pasts in hopeful ways, moving towards a place of restorative nostalgia in the sense that Svetlana Boym describes.

Forgetfulness and amnesia

"I truly don't understand – I'm not being disingenuous or rhetorical – I don't understand how people got it into their heads [knowing about] the crimes of the past provides some kind of prophylactic against crimes committed in the present," says David Rieff in an interview[233] about his book *In Praise of Forgetting.* The views presented in his book caused a major outcry when it first came out in 2016, particularly from advocates of 'memory for the prevention of atrocities.'

While I do not entirely agree with his views, he seems to be reacting to an overzealous application of the 'if we don't remember we are doomed to repeat' philosophy which underpins several memory projects. A simplistic understanding of this approach reduces it to a formula of 'remembering prevents atrocities' and 'forgetting will lead to atrocities'. I view this in the same way that the formulaic application of the 'tell your story and you will be healed' narrative that circulated during the TRC years and which linked narrative truth-telling to healing and reconciliation in a cause-and-effect dialectic. There is now widespread agreement that people need more than being able to tell their stories: they need financial compensation, health care, educational opportunities, land restitution and symbolic reparations. The latter includes opportunities for mourning and memorialisation. In the same way, simply remembering will not prevent catastrophic events but I do believe that the pedagogical remembering of atrocities in context-specific ways which involve testimony, ritual, analysis and reparations has a role in atrocity-prevention work. It has the capacity to raise awareness and provide

[233] 'Some things are worth forgetting'. An interview with David Grieff conducted by Rebecca Onion, 13 May 2016. Available on https://slate.com/news-and-politics/ [Accessed 29 October 2020]

information to build a more rights-conscious generation of people who are able to build their resilience through such interventions, rather than seek revenge and punitive processes.

Kerry Whigham (2017a), takes issue with some of the premises of Rieff's arguments in which he (ie Rieff) lists genocides and atrocities around the world that have occurred despite the existence of memory initiatives of previous occurrences. In the book he lists post-World War 2 examples to show that the plethora of Holocaust memory and education programmes especially emanating from Germany, have had no impact. He refers to Cambodian genocide of the Khmer Rouge of the 1970s, the Rwandan genocide of 1995 and the ethnic violence of the Balkans in the 1990s. In the interview he says, "As far as I can see, we don't learn much or anything from the past. And if people say that we do, I have frankly one answer for them: Syria"[234].

Whigham responds to this: 'In reality, it is easy to cite such horrific examples to prove that memory is not preventive, but that is only because it is much more difficult to cite the counterexamples, where active remembrance of the past has succeeded at preventing atrocities. It is impossible to prove a non-event, and Rieff takes full advantage of that impossibility' (Whigham, 2017a: 53, 54).

Of course there is no guarantee that atrocities will not happen even with active remembrance practices. However, there are many examples of memory practices which have contributed towards building resilient, robust societies through supporting resilience and robustness in individuals. I will refer to examples later in this chapter.

If it seems that I am sympathetic to Grieff's view, it is because I believe that challenges such as these stir us out of our complacence about the assumptions that we make about our practices and their effectiveness. Methods and approaches are not eternal and unmalleable: they are context specific and need to be held up to scrutiny from time to time so that we 'claim no easy victories'.[235]

The most recent occasions of conscious forgetting are those currently playing out at the Zondo Commission. It is reminiscent of some of the perpetrator hearings at the TRC, where the ones who remembered the most intensely were victims while forgetfulness was more likely to have played out in the domain of the perpetrators. At the Zondo Commission hearings, those who stand accused of corruption or fraud have vague recollections of events, while those who have testified as witnesses to corrupt acts, have much clearer memories. There is the possibility that the passage of time between occurrences and the recounting of them has been a factor, or possibly a post-traumatic stress response resulting in selective amnesia, but the pattern of who remembers and who forgets is fairly consistent.

[234] Ibid.
[235] The title of a book of essays written by African thinkers to commemorate the assassination of Amilcar Cabral is *Claim No Easy Victories: the Legacy of Amilcar Cabral.* Amilcar Cabral was one of Africa's most foremost anti-colonial leaders, from Guinea Bissau.

Convenient forgetting has given us insights into the commitment of narrators to either honour or undermine the intrinsic relationship between truth and reconciliation.

Memory loss sometimes occurs as a trauma response; failure of memory is also associated with the process of aging. It occurs to me that it is unfortunate that the word 'failure' is associated with memory loss because forgetting is not always negative. Given the number of experiences the average person encounters each day, a healthy mind cannot commit every aspect of life to memory and in order to protect its own health, allows some memories to recede. Mostly this is a subconscious process. In order to remember what matters efficiently, and to live coherently, a selective memory is needed so that we can let go of what is no longer important (Lowenthal. 1985). In reality, even when events appear vivid in our minds, we remember much less detail than we think that we do.

Memory and affect

One of the ways in which D6M engages with the physical site of District Six, largely vacant though it is, is through narrated site walks. Nothing pleases former residents more than being the most knowledgeable persons about the absent places that are passed along the way as a walk proceeds. The post-destruction re-contouring of the roads has an impact on the sense of direction and the orientation of the body especially in relation to Table Mountain, and sometimes a re-orientation is needed. Different site walk leaders have different end-points: either the site of their destroyed home if it is still accessible by foot; the place where the Seven Steps were located; a school, church, mosque or some other meaningful reference point from the past. Frequently the storytelling is tinged with emotion which seems fresh, revealing the longing and sense of loss that still lingers even though the walk and experience might have been done numerous times before.

In broadening our understanding of the senses of memory beyond the recall of places and events, Nadia Seremetakis (2004) reminds us that memory "has social and sensory coordinates that are part of the living membrane of the city … found embedded and miniaturized in objects that trigger deep emotions and narratives … linked to sounds, aromas and sights. We take this enmeshed memory for granted until the material supports that stitch memory to person and place are torn out from under us, when these spaces suddenly vanish under debris…" (Seremetakis, 2000: 4). Something as simple as finding a pottery shard; or hearing the *athaan*[236] while standing in the long-ago familiar path of the south-easter; or the fishy-salty smell of the sea and the sound of the foghorn can trigger a range of memories expressed either in words or in an outpouring of emotion or even silence.

"I still miss the smells of District Six. I used to walk up Hanover Street on my way home and could identify what different people were cooking" says Linda Fortune, a former District Sixer as she shares

[236] The *athaan* is the Islamic call to prayer recited by a muezzin at prescribed times of the day.

her story for her chapter in the *District Six Huis Kombuis food and memory cookbook* (Smith, 2016: 45). The smell most commonly associated with Hanover Street in District Six would be that of the fish market which was located there. In the same publication, Tina Smith refers to the stories she had heard from the participants' oral narratives, of "visiting Wellington Fruit Growers in Darling Street, assaulted by the pungent smells of cheese mixed with cold meats, polony and dried fruit" (2016: 15). She speaks of how the recall of tastes and smells has infused the book and has "illuminated new pathways of collecting and has given us a deep sense of connectedness" (2016: 17).

Boym speaks of the remembered sensations of a lost paradise that are so intensely remembered in a way that those who did not move or leave, would not have noticed in the same way. On the level of gastronomic nostalgia, she refers to observations by Swiss scientists who found that "rustic mother's soups, thick village milk and the folk melodies of Alpine valleys were particularly conducive to triggering a nostalgic reaction in Swiss soldiers" (2001: 4).

FIGURE 36

District Six had its own sounds, both ambient and musical. The inclusion of music on commemorative walks is particularly evocative. "Reconstructing senses of place through sound and music-making may not produce measurables, indicators, and quantifiable results ... but they do contribute towards a deeper understanding of the meaning of places, and of the symbolic and relational conditions that support or drive economic practices and their outcomes. In this regard, music and memory are framed as a form of agency, providing one means of raising the level of local voices…"[237]

Collective, shared, individual and public memory

In order for memory practices to effect change, a coming together of some kind in a public space to participate in an activity is required. It might be a ritual, performance, commemoration or education (Whigham, 2017). In addition to D6M's closed memory sessions (closed because of the personal and emotive nature of the sharing which needs a safe space as a 'container'), a large part of its practice takes place in public space. In this section, I will refer to examples of its site-specific processional work (commemoration of 11 February declaration); an example of a public art project (*Peninsula Maternity Hospital Memory* project); a food and memory project (*Huis Kombuis)* and a youth role play activity (*Reimagining the City).*

Of course, for public memory initiatives to work, it needs the building blocks of individual memory, strengthened and sustained by collective memory. Collective memory captures the common features of everyday living. "They are folds in the fan of memory, not prescriptions for a model tale" (Boym, 2001: 53).

Maurice Halbwachs (1980) is most closely associated with the concept of collective memory. He emphasised the collective component of memories, advocating that all personal memories were derived from social interactions and thus always had a component that was not entirely personal and individual (Halbwachs, 1980; Lowenthal, 1985; Erikson, 1995). We are part of the stories of others as much as they are part of our own. "In fact, we need other people's memories both to confirm our own and to give them endurance" (Lowenthal 1985: 196).

The more recent work by Edward Casey (2004) has identified four different categories of memory which I have found to be useful in deepening my understanding especially of collective memory. He designates the term individual memory to the things that people have experienced themselves. Others might have been part of the experience, but it is still individually experienced. He describes social memory as the memories that we share with the various groups that form part of our circles of friends, family and acquaintances. Collective memory is the sum total of accumulated memories from

[237] Extract from the transcript of a recording made of a presentation made by Angela Impey at the 2005 conference.

different people, different perspectives but about the same occurrence. In his understanding, the people in this collective memory designation do not even have to know each other and might not even have been present at the same time and place. For example, apartheid was experienced by different people over a long period while in different parts of the country. The cumulative contributions from many different persons will form part of the collective memory of apartheid which by its very nature of construction will not be singular. The fourth dimension which he refers to is the public dimension which I have referred to above.

Post-memory

In an interview conducted with Marianne Hirsch[238] about the concept of post-memory which she observed and named, she describes how she was intrigued by Art Spiegel's[239] comic book *Maus* in which he writes about the Holocaust experience using animal characters. She could identify with being the child of Holocaust survivors having grown up in that same reality herself. She notes that a first thought was that his use of animal characters was somewhat irreverent to the topic, and the comic was written in a way, she concluded, that a survivor would not have done. She coined the term 'post-memory' to describe the "relationship that the 'generation after' bears to the personal, collective, and cultural trauma of those who came before – to experiences they 'remember' only by means of the stories, images, and behaviours among which they grew up' (Hirsch, 2012:1). She describes the intensity of growing up immersed in the experiences of her parents and their generation as frequently repeated in the home and notes that at times their memories seemed more vivid in her own recollection of them than her own childhood memories were.

There is a generation of District Sixers who, according to the definition of who was legally defined as 'the dispossessed' – the household head / adult who experienced displacement and who could claim for restitution - are themselves not regarded as such. But they were young adults at the time, and have their own recollections of life before removals and they have their own experience of being forcibly removed. Because the removal took place over a long period of approximately 12 years, they would likely have been among the families who were moved towards the latter end, in 1982 or thereabouts. Within the same generation there would be those whose families might have moved at the early end of this period, in or around 1970, and they might have been too young to have their own memories. According to Hirsch's use of the term, I would regard the latter group as having grown up with the experience of District Six 'post-memory'. They are the ones who would have grown up either with the intensity of the narrated pain of loss, or the voluble silence about that painful period of their parents' lives. Those who grew up with the silence always knew that something was being withheld from

[238] *Memories at stake / Memoires en jeu Review Revue,* 2 October 2016.
[239] Art Spiegel was, like Marianne Hirsch, the child of Holocaust survivors.

them, and have expressed either resentment or sadness when learning from others' stories what their parents' lives might have been like only after their parents had passed on.

The 'children of' generation have a very particular relationship District Six. It is nostalgic memory layered with trauma; "pleasure and affection layered with bitterness, anger and aversion" (Hirsch, 2012 : 85). Memory which is "at once the salve and the salt in the wound" (Hodgin and Radstone, 2003: 237). In practical terms, they are the ones most likely to actively pursue the land claims on behalf of their elderly parents who might not have the stamina to see a drawn-out process through to the end which I have referred to in Chapter 1.

Hirsch refers to the experience of returning with her parents to the place where they (ie her mother and father) had both lived as children, and their speaking about it while walking in the area leads her to reflect that "(C)hildren of refugees inherit their parents' knowledge of the fragility of place, their suspicions of the notion of home" (Hirsch, 2012 : 93). I am reminded of my own childhood in Bonteheuwel where we were frequently reminded our parents: this is not really our home.

D. Memory projects

Memory projects or initiatives are the manifestations of personal and collective memory work. In the D6M context, they have both public and closed components, and over time have come to be increasingly site-based, involving people moving through the physical topography in a combination of site walks, site-specific installations, *in situ* oral histories, performances and processions. They serve a pedagogical function by illuminating pasts through site, as well as confirming the knowledge assets of community members as carriers of different ways of knowing about the sites and their significance. In this way it functions to make space for self-narration and self-representation accompanied by what could be called healing benefits. They are about the self as well as the other. "When we are victims we are passive. As we heal we become active and take back agency" (Lapsley, 2012: 201).

<u>The Seven Steps membership club</u>

Earlier in this study I have referred to the significance of the 'Seven Steps' as a spatial marker of significance in District Six. Drawing on its symbolism as a place of social gathering as well as the instant recognition by District Sixers, D6M created an honorary membership club for former residents in 2008 called the *Seven Steps Club*. The initiative emerged from an expressed need by the aging group of former residents that they needed to practically ground their sense of belonging in structured ways. The request came at a time when the concept of 'seniors' clubs had become popular on the Cape Flats and District Sixers wanted one that had a specific focus and which would enable them to connect with former neighbours.

Another reason for the creation of the club was that at the time, in the mid- to late 2000s, an increase in international visitors to D6M seemed to result in a drop in local visitor numbers especially in the number of District Sixers visiting. The latter group expressed feelings of being displaced, a factor that contributed to the creation of the club as a bridge to rebuild the connectivity.

Launched on Heritage Day, 24 September 2008, the club started off as a reunion space called 'coffee mornings' which fulfilled the need for people to reconnect and reminisce. Meeting on a monthly basis, it also became a way in which District Sixers cemented their relationship with D6M and where they pushed the boundaries of what it meant to be a sustained part of its community. Although the role of nostalgic recollections may never be complete, it was clear that most people had for the moment 'outgrown' whatever purpose nostalgia had played in their lives and wanted a deepened level of involvement. The club evolved into a platform through which D6M could grow as a hybrid space of knowledge making, research, awareness-raising and creativity. It became a place of personal and collective solidarity.

The monthly meetings "vary from being storytelling and reminiscence sessions, opportunities for oral history interviews, fact-checking and information-gathering, ideas generation, memorialisation discussions and debates about contemporary issues" (D6M, 2013/2014: 19). They continue to contribute towards the "emergence of an active civic culture that asserts that public education is not solely confined to dialogue or 'teaching' between institutions and communities, but is inherent in the formal and informal methods of reminiscence - performance, music, reunions and exhibitions - that the District Six community members use at their discretion. Through the exchange of stories, experiences, photographs and other expressions of memory, an exchange of knowledge is effected and public ownership of the spaces of District Six is reasserted" (D6M, 2006: 19).

I have started this section on memory initiatives with an introduction to the Seven Steps Club because it has become a significant recruitment hub for all of D6M's work. It has evolved into a space into which former residents from other areas of displacement have been invited into, as an acknowledgement that the geographic divisions of their displacement experiences were superficial. They wanted to create solidarity based on their belief that their pasts mattered, that they had some shared experiences and that they could make a difference to themselves and others through the telling of their stories.

To date the club membership total stands at just under 1 000 members, with a decreasing number of active members because of age-related mobility issues. Sadly, as members become older and more frail, deaths are on the increase.

Walking as commemorative practice: 11 February commemoration[240]

A growing cairn of stones has been the destination of a District Six commemorative walk each year. This ritual of remembrance predates the establishment of D6M and is a practice which has grown organically. D6M has taken responsibility for designing the commemoration for at least the past twenty years.

The stones consist of rubble that remained on site after people's homes were bulldozed, mixed with stones brought from the areas to which people were forcibly removed. Laying a stone to connect various locales of 'home' has become an established annual act for many former residents although it is not confined to them. Everyone is invited to symbolically mark their connectivity as participants, not spectators, to participate in "collective witnessing rather than spectatorship" (Till, 2012: 12).

The practice of using stones as markers of those who have gone before and to those who will come after, has several points of origin. In KhoiSan culture they were used to mark burials or other places of spiritual significance. "Travellers would also add a stone to the cairn as a mark of respect".[241] A word in isiZulu and in isiXhosa- *isivivane* means 'throw your stone upon the pile' and references an ancient practice of using stones to mark places of spirit'.[242] *Isivivane* as a concept has also been used in the design of one of the contemplative spaces in the national heritage project Freedom Park in Pretoria, which aimed to work sensitively with the environment and draw on indigenous knowledge systems. Across the world there are a number of similar practices which use stones as symbols.

The significance of the location of the District Six cairn is that it has been created on the fragment of the last piece of the street that was the main artery of the District – Hanover Street. This scrap remained while most of the street grid was destroyed when homes were bulldozed. In the following chapter I will explore Hanover Street as a site of contestation involving its renaming and reframing, and the barriers to continuing the practice

In developing its remembrance practice over the years, D6M explored ways to explore continuity combined with renewal, particularly when the ritual seemed to be in danger of becoming a static and repetitive expression of victimhood and loss. It has evolved into a creative and collaborative space, rather than an event.

[240] Previously referred to as the day that District Six was declared a white area in 1966.
[241] *Bring a stone for the Princess.* Available on http://www.princessvlei.org/ [Accessed 30 October 2020]
[242] Source: https://storytelling.co.za/isivivane-for-change/ [Accessed 30 October 2020]

The processional component: moving bodies through space[243]

The ritual of stone-laying is typically preceded by a walk of remembrance which has its own significance. It is more than a stroll from a point of departure (D6M) to a point of destination (the cairn). Elissa Rosenberg describes three distinct modes of walking which she refers to as a new approach to "commemorative practice used to evoke the memorial's fundamental quality of absence, its open-ended quality, and its engagement with loss" (Rosenberg, 2012: 134). In this she is referring to memorials that have been designed so that they centre around the experience of walking through which is different from a gallery walk-through.

The first mode she refers to is walking as journey. She uses the *Vietnam Veterans' Memorial* located on the National Mall in Washington DC as an example. The memorial is one which is designed to draw visitors through to a contemplative space. The second mode she describes as a transformative encounter, designed to engage more directly with the world, and in the process evoking memory through the body's visceral engagement with place. She refers to a work by Dani Karavan who designed a walking memorial to Walter Benjamin in Spain. The third mode of walking she refers to as an everyday urban practice, and she uses the *Places of Remembrance* memorial in the Bavarian Quarter in Germany to illustrate the mode.

In the distinctions that she makes, Rosenberg is of course referring to memorials which have been designed in particular ways to induce movement in a set direction, to evoke responses. One of the main messages that walking as commemorative practice is intended to communicate is that remembering should be an active participatory practice, shifting the "burden of memory onto the individual on the ground" (Rosenberg, 2012: 134).

The commemorative walks as led by D6M on occasions such as 11 February do not have a designed memorial as their destination. But the informal cairn performs a similar role being the end point of the walk. The third mode of walking, that of the 'everyday urban practice', most closely describes the District Six walks of remembrance. As the group walks through the east end of the city inevitably led by a marching band, they encounter curious shoppers and students moving between the campuses of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology and occasionally some tourists. Most of the walkers are likely to be District Sixers. The route that the group meanders along will have several stops at vacant spots where stories will be shared about what structure might previously have been there. Often comments such as 'when I stood in my doorway I could see this part of Table Mountain' would be made and a repositioning the body in the space to get a particular view, is extremely poignant to observe. There were other reference points as well, but Table Mountain was the stabilising signifier

[243] D6M walks of remembrance take place at other times of the year as well, particularly on Heritage Day. Occasionally as part of site-specific projects as well. For the purposes of this study I will confine myself to 11 February walks, as in its components it can be viewed as a 'prototype' for other walks.

on the unstable landscape. The everyday space of daily transaction is for that moment transformed into a route of memory (de Certeau, 1984) harking back to their pedestrian activities in the District Six of their past, and passersby often join the walk.

FIGURE 37

FIGURE 38

Memorial walks have been embraced by District Sixers with commitment and enthusiasm. As such they have become a central feature of D6M's memory practice. Seven Steps members participate in planning and shaping the content and share the leadership along the route. Given the advanced ages of some of the people who participate and who have walking difficulties, D6M always ensures that there is a vehicle to follow the walkers for the benefit of those who cannot keep up. Most times the vehicle is only occupied by the driver as everyone usually chooses to walk even if they do so slowly. Community is built along the route, and the experience of walking a familiar route, even with the absent streets, provides a sense of reconnection with place and reaffirms its value as 'having been'. It often takes on the timbre of a pilgrimage.

Los Angeles historian and architect Dolores Hayden (1995) reflects on the ways that the urban landscape can trigger visual memory, and she suggests that its power is not adequately realised as a resource for public history. She writes: "Body memory is (also) difficult to convey as part of books and exhibits. It connects into places because the shared experience of dwellings, public spaces and workplaces, and the paths travelled between home and work, give body memory its social component, modified by the postures of gender, race and class" (Hayden, 1995: 48).

However, she is referencing a built environment landscape, not an erased one. The experience of walking with District Sixers, however, seems familiar in her description, and being part of encounters involving activation of memory on an absent landscape has been an education in itself. A young person who was part of the group walking with District Sixers and listening to them referring to buildings that had been on the now empty street corners and in the alleyways, describing experiences that they had had there, she commented that she would never walk past an empty piece of land again just thinking it was just empty, because she had learnt about how full of memories and history it could be.

FIGURE 39

The design of the 11 February commemoration does not depend on public speaking and narration. It acknowledges that many carriers of traumatic memory are not comfortable with sharing their stories on a public platform yet have the right and expectation to participate in a fully engaged way. Art, inscription and performance are generally woven into the commemoration so as to address that concern. It may take the form of non-permanent site markers, recreated street signs, temporary murals,or a curated performance along the walk in addition to the stone-laying ritual. "... places and landscapes may provide an important non-linguistic presence (in memory, imagination, emotionally and/or materially) that will exist beyond the lifespan of the survivor" (Till, 2015: 301).

FIGURE 40

The Peninsula Maternity Hospital Memory Project

D6M's archive is filled with oral histories that start with 'I was born at Peninsula Maternity Hospital' (PMH). It is also a common response from District Sixers when visiting the Museum as they view the PMH exhibition in the upper gallery of the building.

Located in Caledon Street in District Six, PMH served the greater Cape Town area for 71 years, finally closing its doors in 1992 by which time most of District Six was destroyed. The building was repurposed for several years until 2015, when it was demolished to make way for a new community day hospital to serve the returning District Six community and the surrounding areas. D6M had been requested by the contracted developer to ensure that memorial traces of PMH's past was embedded into the new hospital space (D6M, 2016/17: 16).

Chrischené Julius, the Museum's head of Collections, Research and Documentation and PMH project leader devised a concept plan and convened a team of artists and facilitators to implement the memorial project. A group of approximately 35 participants volunteered to be part of the team and for a period of nearly two years engaged with the archive of PMH material held in the D6M archive, collected new material from their networks, shared their memories, and engaged with art, performance and design as research tools to develop a concept. The installation was done ahead of the hospital's opening in 2018.

The pride of the team was infectious – participants and facilitators alike – as their aesthetically pleasing work was installed for all to see. The skilled facilitation and pedagogical approach of the lead artist Ayesha Price, ensured a deep level of engagement from all participants. The group was made up of former residents, retired hospital staff, returned residents, teachers from a children's centre in the area, and some young people. In an interview about her practice and specifically the PMH project, Ayesha speaks about the significance to her of maintaining an open-ended, multi-authored vision. She expresses her desire to explore the ways in which art can a be a "tool for learning and living, rather than a commodity to be bought and sold"[244] She speaks of the experience of working with this diverse group as having been an exciting opportunity to "use visual art methodology to assist them in the construct of their own memories as permanent, public artworks."[245]

Dolores Hayden speaks of the power of using public art as it "may hold the key to making new forms in the city that interpret the past in resonant ways. Artists can work with missing pieces, or erasures of important aspects of history, so as to re-establish missing parts in the story" (Hayden, 1995: 234). The PMH art project has been a powerful example in this mould, providing a replicable inclusive model which could become one of the ways of working on the NHS.

[244] Interview with Ayesha Price by Greer Valley. Available at https://asai.co.za/ [Accessed: 13 September 2020]
[245] Ibid.

The group spent the first 16 months conceptualising the project as a learning community through story-telling, play and research until they "reached that 'AHA' moment!"[246] Price describes how they drew on first nations method of storytelling through palimpsests "which reveal layers of voices over time that share the same place".[247] The result was a metal sculpture on the building exterior, modelled on the 'flower of Maryam'[248] – a flowering shrub used by midwives to assist with the birthing process. The sculpture depicts the flower in both open and closed states, with each participant having drawn a branch connected to a single stem, and a seed and pod to depict each of their families. "Closed, the flower holds the potential for life. Open, and once the seeds are dispersed, birth and rebirth is made possible. It is a powerful maternal image that speaks to shared indigenous knowledge and a sense of belonging to a community even through migration and displacement."[249]

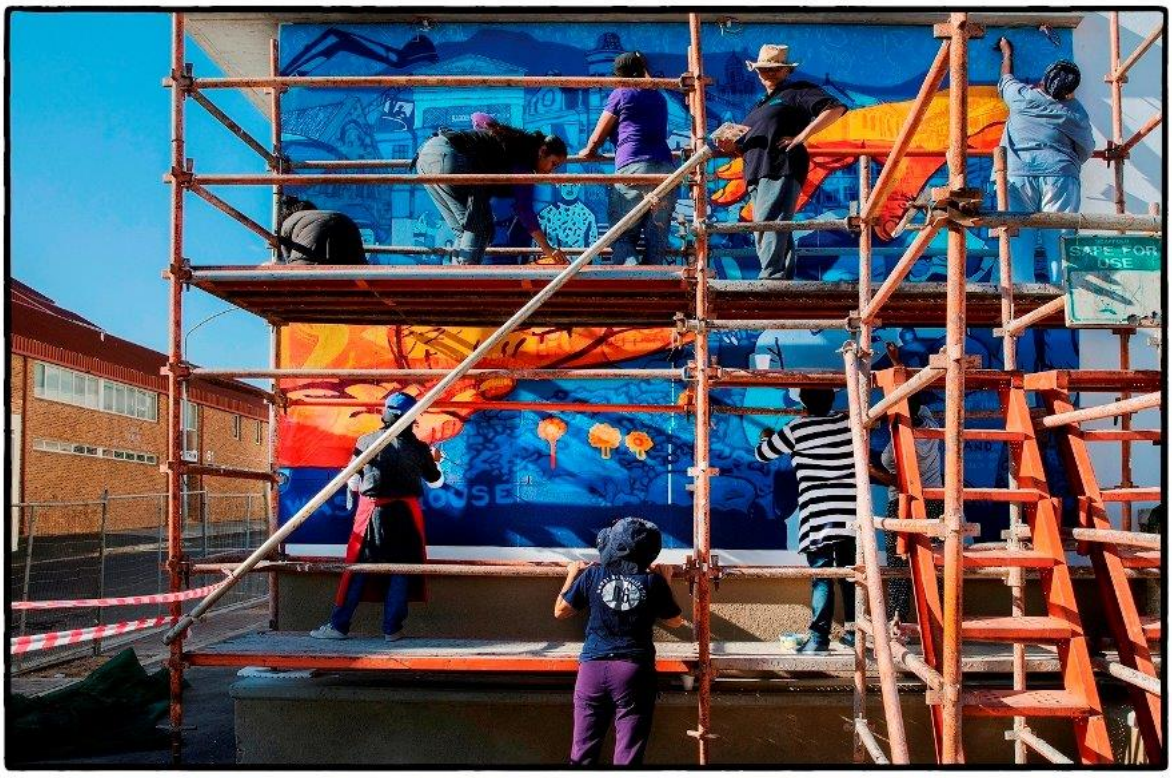
FIGURE 41

FIGURE 42

[246] Ibid
[247] Ibid
[248] The 'flower of Maryam' is also called the 'rose of Jericho', 'flower of Fatima' or the 'resurrection flower'. The flower remains desiccated and dormant until when immersed in water, it slowly opens and is believed to assist with difficult labour experiences, either through visual suggestion or through some other way. Its botanical name is *Selaginella lepidophylla.* The gynaecologist-obstetrician who had been the consultant in charge of PMH was a workshop participant and he brought along the dried plant that he had kept.
[249] Ibid

A large mural painted by the participants themselves graces another portion of the wall, titled *District Six in PMH, PMH in District Six.* Hands reaching out and with archival references symbolise a connection between the past and the present, "reaching out to acknowledge the pain of loss, but also to receive the returning community."[250]

FIGURE 43



There are other components spread throughout the building such as a video installation, body maps of all participants and an art activity area for children, but the above are the main exterior features that face towards the inner city. South African public day hospitals are generally under-staffed and involve long queues and several hours of waiting. Usually they are drab spaces with blank walls except for messages about chronic diseases and health warnings. The insertion of the art pieces into the space is a brightening intervention and it includes opportunities for learning about the building and its story. Not only does this project make a large visual impact but it has modelled a process of inclusive art-making using public space, and it has been an empowering learning journey for all concerned. The process is much slower than if it were to be done by a single artist, but the sense of ownership and the personal investment experienced is priceless. The participants often give spontaneous talks and tours

[250] Ibid

to anyone who is interested to learn about the project, and visit the building several times to show it off to their friends and family.

These are the fruits of a patient participatory process.

FIGURE 44

Reimagining the city

"In an effort to serve as a pedagogic tool and *aide-mémoire* of the past, collective remembrance draws on elements from the past to speak to the present and an imagined future" (Frieslaar, 2020: 44).

The pedagogical focus of *Reimagining the city (RTC),* a project of D6M's Education department, is youth learning. It is designed so as to be aligned with the institution's approach to be a "space for exploration and investigation where the exhibition and ex-residents who are present in the space become the resources for learners to engage with." (Sanger, 2008: 105). D6M seeks to expose young people to critical thinking and creative problem-solving, focusing on thinking skills rather than adding to the content learning emphasised in most school curricula.

While inter-generational storytelling sessions with former residents remain at the core of D6M's education programme, the offering has expanded and grown. There are several other educational programmes that use interactive workshop and role-play formats. RTC is one of these. It aims to raise awareness about humanity's ability to resist injustice using apartheid forced removals as a case study.

It stimulates young people to imagine a more caring and equitable world, one community at a time (D6M, 2020).

Whigham suggests using a performance studies lens to think about memory spaces and practices. He refers to memorial museums as "sites that act at once as a site of memory and an educational space" (2017: 115). He contends that they should not only be concerned with listing facts and figures about historical violence, but should engage visitors about potential futures for society. He believes that the focus should be not so much on 'what the memorials *are,* but what they *do* or *enact*" (2017: 105)

Although geared towards a very particular audience, RTC has at its core, an intention to think about the future, referencing the past and extracting learnings from it – both positive and negative. It uses some underlying principles of gaming, drawing on games such as *Settlers of Catan*[251], *Cities: Skylines*[252] *and Sim City*[253]. It emphasises ideologies, values, good governance, protection of human rights and structures and the processes that are designed to achieve that.

The following components contribute to the learning exploration:

- A simulated experience of what it might have been like to live on the Cape Flats while the GAA was still in place;
- A reflection on Cape Flats stereotypes with regards to language and cultural practices and the ways in which it is occasionally conflated with race, religion and other fixed ways of identifying people;
- Exploring how the past helps citizens to understand the present, illuminating possibilities for living together across racial divides; *and*
- An introduction to District Six as it was before forced removals. Principles of *kanala / ubuntu* will be emphasised (D6M, 2020: 2).

Participants are taken on a tour of the Museum followed by a site walk, both of which experiences are guided by former resident storytellers. They are exposed to the archive to conduct some research and through a facilitated workshop experience develop the elements of their re-imagined cities which they present in the form of an exhibition, performance, or event.

[251] *Settlers of Catan* is a multiplayer board-game which requires strategic thinking and negotiation skills,
[252] *Cities: Skylines* is a city-building video game.
[253] *SimCity* is also a city-building video game.

Figure 45

Huis Kombuis food and memory project

> We all have our food memories, some good and some bad. The taste, smell, and texture of food can be extraordinarily evocative, bringing back memories not just of eating food itself but also of place and setting. Food is an effective trigger of deeper memories of feelings and emotions, internal states of the mind and body.[254]

Drawing on rituals of food-making and of serving that form part of all communities' stories, D6M developed a project called *Huis Kombuis* which has previously been referred to in this study. It emerged from close readings of the archive especially oral history interviews, in which it was apparent that food had a very special place in the District Six community before destruction.

Being a largely working class community, there were often families who needed assistance with meals. They might have been affected by retrenchment or other job loss; or casual work contracts might have come to an end leaving the family with no secure income. The community networks operated in such a way that nobody went hungry and food was shared through an unspoken code of communication which left no one feeling ashamed that their cupboards were bare.

[254] *Food and Memory*- article on Harvard University Press Blog, 18 May 2012. Available on https://harvardpress.typepad.com/ [Accessed 30 October 2020]

Working with a few basic ingredients, cheap meat cuts or offal, and bruised fruits, District Sixers prided themselves at being able to create feasts and extend hospitality to others as well. In addition to producing bespoke fabrics and textile products, recipe cards and eventually a book, participants spent several weeks each year since 2006, in workshops where skills, stories and lessons were shared. Their reminiscences about a lost way of life, their current living situations and their expectations for the new District Six, featured prominently in their discussions.

"These food rituals did not die or disappear when people were forced to move to far-flung areas but instead took root in these new locations on the Cape Flats", writes Shaun Viljoen in his introduction to the book. "The foods and associated social practices were nurtured as part of recreating a sense of self, family and community, of rhythm and pattern that gives life meaning" (Viljoen, 2016: 9).

It became common practice for participants to bring-and-share snacks and treats to the workshops, enacting the hospitality that had been evoked in the process of reminiscing and which they had missed. As they sat around the table preparing either for the discussion or crafting session scheduled for the day, they would share food and stories in an unstructured space which they had created for themselves. They became aware of each other's dietary needs and preferences and would exercise the culinary care needed for those who were diabetic, or had to monitor their cholesterol or their blood pressure levels. They cajoled and scolded each other about their indulgences and held each other in check.

In writing about the role that the senses play in historical memory, Nadia Seremetakis (1993) uses the term commensality, which refers to "the practice of eating together."[255] She writes: "Commensality is not just the social organisation of food and drink consumption and the rules that enforce social institutions at the level of consumption. Nor can it be reduced to the food-related senses of taste and odor. Commensality can be defined as the exchange of sensory memories and emotions, and of substances and objects incarnating remembrance and feeling" (1993: 14). She further refers to historical consciousness and other forms of social knowledge as being transmitted through time and space, so that each sense records the commensal history of the others, and in this way history, knowledge, feelings and senses "become embedded in the material culture and its components: specific artifacts, places and performances" (Seremetakis, 1993: 14).

[255] https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ [Accessed 30 October 2020]

FIGURE 46

Tina Smith is the exhibitions manager at D6M, as well as project leader and developer of the *Huis Kombuis* project. She writes about the genesis of the project as having started as reminiscent craft and design workshops which were designed as interdisciplinary creative platforms for reflection, learning, remembrance and innovation (Smith, 2016). It recognised "nostalgia as an entry point into a more complex and layered narrative about cultural and culinary histories" (Smith, 2016: 14).

Evoking all of the senses in its memory work has been a focus of D6M in the 'hands on' period. Visuality, orality, aurality and tactility were more pronounced in the early part of its life. *Huis Kombuis* has provided the scaffolding for exploring the other senses – taste and smell – as part of a deeper excavation into the many layers of historical memory and has created a supportive environment for those who prefer to communicate their stories in non-verbal ways.

FIGURE 47

In chapter two I referred to the place of communal *tafels* in District Six which in some ways were the ultimate expression in that temporal-spatial context, of commensality. Flowing from the focus on the connective power of food, D6M launched a series in 2014 called the 'Supper Club dialogues' which recalled the metaphor of the District Six community tables as an entry point to engage with a range of issues including contentious issues such as race and place in a safe and supported way.

"Through remembering and reviving these traditional these traditional cuisines we celebrate the lessons of solidarity and share a part of humanity that gave District Six its unique spirit of place" (Smith, 2016: 17).

As I conclude this chapter, my mind wonders back to thinking about the levels of trauma as well as resilience that have arisen from the pandemic. What will our memory of this time be, and what will constitute our Aneyoshi stone equivalent which will speak to the next generations when we are no longer able to?

I am concerned about what we as a country have not learned from our recent past in terms of planetary care and the impact of such neglect on the creation of virulent diseases on the scale of the current pandemic. Several conferences over at least the past two decades have warned about over-consumption of the earth's finite resources, as well as the impact of rampant consumerism, capitalist extraction and lifestyles of exaggerated luxury. We know that the oceans are choking on single-use convenience plastics and that our land-fills are clogging up. International climate change conferences have brought people together to discuss the impact and to develop strategies to mitigate the anticipated changes. In doing so they have contributed to an increased carbon footprint through the gas emissions from the aircraft being used to bring people together. Attempts to solve the problem have in the process of doing so, added to it. Although the consolidated percentage of carbon emissions from planes is said to be substantially lower than the cumulative impact from road transport, it is not negligible.[256] Conferencing continued until being brought to a literal virtual standstill by the COVID 19 pandemic.

Neither has our government agencies learned about the impact of forced removals on the fabric of individuals, families and communities. The reasons are very different but the impact on human dignity as a result of the loss of home is the same. Many families were displaced even during the time of the pandemic when people were meant to shelter in place. The layers of trauma have piled up. People have been physically brutalized, some even killed.

Karen Till (2012; 2015; 2018) has written about a 'place-based ethics of care' which draws on eco-feminism and feminist political theory. It calls for the language of 'care' to be introduced into the discourse of planning and policy makers so that they can "consider more ethical and sustainable forms of urban change than those that continue to legitimate disciplinary forms of governmentality" (Till, 2012: 3). What better place than the new South Africa with its focus on rights-based processes and its much lauded constitution, to start thinking in new ways about the gap between the way wonderful policies are formulated, and the ways in which they are interpreted and implemented. Could we think more deeply about how to grow a culture of care and solidarity within all levels of society to counter the rampant culture of impunity and corruption which seems to be on the rise? Government actors should be able to find and see the non-government partners who could collaborate with it, to strengthen its path. It should be open to transforming the ethos and moral compass of its implementing arms. It has neither the easy access to communities nor the moral power at this point to implement new ways of working. It should itself be a site of renewal.

[256] 'Smart Guide to Climate Change' by Jocelyn Timperley, 19 February 2020. Available on https://www.bbc.com/future/article/ [Accessed 30 October 2020]

Despite its contribution to a vibrant memory practice in the country, D6M continues to struggle to find the governmental support it needs in order to amplify its impact. Its two main levels of interaction with government in recent years (besides the funding support referred to earlier) has been around land restitution and the declaration of District Six as a NHS. Both of these are flailing and have created substantial animosity and lack of confidence in the political will of the implementing agencies to make good on its transformative goals of justice and redress. Both processes need a turnaround strategy, but I will focus on the NHS declaration.

The annual 11 February walk of remembrance which is discussed in this chapter has been one of the community's most valued engagements for many years. Relative to large-scale official events, it is small in terms of numbers of people attending. Since 2014 the community no longer has access to the cairn in the same way. This period ends with D6M engaged in a dispute with CPUT about their silent encroachment onto restitution-related land when they build student residences in the vicinity of the cairn which is all but destroyed in the process. I will take up the detail of this in the final chapter.

Interestingly, D6M's last public event in 2020 was the 11 February 2020 walk of remembrance. The national state of disaster was declared on 15 March and by the following week, the country was in a national lockdown.

E. Conclusion to chapter 4

I have used Don's 'Memory is the weapon'[257] to name this chapter, and need to answer the question: a weapon for what? The last paragraph of his biography returns to the title: "I knew deep down inside of me, in that place where laws and guns cannot reach nor jackboots trample, that there had been no defeat. In another day, another time, we would emerge to reclaim our dignity and our land."

D6M's work with memory is in part an attempt to bring closer the time when 'our dignity and our land' can be claimed in all its fullness. In this chapter I have examined some of its memory strategies, demonstrating the ways in which it has contributed towards self-affirmation, building self-esteem, claiming personal dignity, building solidarity and embedding a tangible site with its own history. This includes its new and recent history of frustration and joy, amongst other things. I have highlighted the processional and performance approach to memory and showed how absence can evoke engagements which are both personal and communal. Most importantly, I have attempted to show how the memory work of D6M is not a practice immersed in the lamentations of the permanently aggrieved, but rather, is embedded in journeys of hope and affirmation of agency. And in its implementation it has both

[257] The title of his 2007 autobiography.

nothing and everything to do with District Six, as it feeds a deep longing within our common humanity.

Our tsunami stone will have to take on many forms. Finding ways to entrench it in the national heritage site that District Six is set to become is an unfinished exploration, but learn from the past – we must.

In reclaiming dignity and land, memory is indeed a powerful weapon. Eventually we will need tools but for now the extent of the loss of dignity and land is so deep that tools alone will not suffice: memory is the only weapon that many displaced people have – a reminder that its nonviolent if conflictual power must be constantly mobilized. The site-specific memory work described in this chapter forms part of the exploration into what a NHS practice might look like. In the next and final chapter I examing the legislative framework which is meant to guide the process which has challenged D6M to move out of its familiar space of engagement.

FIGURE 48

CHAPTER FIVE

From memory to national heritage
leading up to 2020

NHS regulatory process		D6M public process
SAHRA prepares Statement of Significance for D6 declaration	2004	
D6M prepares Conservation Management Plan	2005	 
Grade 1 (national) status granted	2006	
Provisional protection lapses	2008	 
Various meetings, updates and presentations	2013	Haroon Gunn-Salie art intervention replaces 'Zonnebloem' with 'District Six' signage 
	2014	District Sixers protest against CPUT construction which interrupts stone laying ritual 
	2016	 
District Sixers march to hand over NHS Petition to SAHRA	2019	 
	2020	

50 YEARS AGO THE BULLDOZERS WERE HERE FOR A DIFFERENT REASON.

District Six MUSEUM
DISTRICTSIX.CO.

A. Introduction to Chapter 5

Over the years since its establishment, D6M has earned the reputation for being an accomplished site of memory work and for engaging with memory in the pursuit of human rights. It has particularly been able to mobilise memory in support of land and cultural restitution. In this chapter I will explore how and why the Museum entered the fray of national heritage and what the benefits of that trajectory were imagined to be.

In 2004, D6M worked in partnership with SAHRA to advocate for the vacant site of District Six to be declared a National Heritage Site according to section 27 of the NHRA of 1999. At their Council meeting in Limpopo on 27 November 2004, SAHRA approved the grading of the site as being of national significance, awarding it Grade 1 status[258]. The process of declaration was to follow, with a two-year provisional protection being put in place. This was a significant achievement as the complexity of this declaration would potentially stretch the parameters of the Act as most of the site had been destroyed. So in terms of materiality, there was very little left of its fabric to declare. In addition, the declaration had to be aligned with the challenges of the restitution rebuild. The latter is premised on change and development while the declaration, framed within a heritage discourse which was largely preservationist, was premised on stability, not change.

The pending declaration became an underlying motif for all of D6M's programming and planning from the time the Grade 1 status was confirmed. Aware of some of the unique features of this declaration, D6M piloted programmes to demonstrate ways to model innovative ways of memorialisation within a frame of national heritage. It also aimed to build the logic of what it might look and feel like to live on a NHS for those who lived there as well as for those who were expecting to return. I will provide some insights into the conceptualisation and implementation of these programmes.

Unfortunately the relationship with SAHRA has deteriorated since its collaborative beginnings. The provisional protection has lapsed; the declaration remains uncertain; there have been several losses through encroachment onto restitution land by developers and there has been substantial loss of community confidence and morale in the process. There has been pressure on D6M to subject the dynamism of living memory to the restrictions of a static heritage practice largely couched within a framework of heritage legislation and regulatory protocols. It has been just over 17 years since the decision was made which at the time resulted in a surge of positivity. This has since waned.

After laying the basis for the application for District Six to be graded and declared, in this chapter I will examine the impact of a lack of the limited regard for different knowledge systems, limited

[258] Section 7 (1) (a) of the NHRA of 1999, reads: "Grade 1: Heritage resources with qualities so exceptional that they of special national significance."

emphasis on public process and the lack clarity about the finalisation of the declaration from the part of SAHRA. I will identify some of the blockage points from the perspective of D6M and its community and share some thoughts on how these might be addressed.

B. A People's Declaration

11 February 2020 was D6M's last public engagement before it had to close its doors in compliance with COVID-19 level 5 lockdown restrictions. How appropriate that it was a 'People's declaration of District Six as a National Heritage Site', declared on the steps of SAHRA's offices. It formed part of the annual 11 February commemoration (referred to in Chapter 4). A document with the following text had been prepared by Seven Steps members in a workshop in the preceding weeks:

> *We, the people of the District Six community, declare our commitment to the aims of the National Heritage Resources Act as captured in its Preamble. We believe that it is in keeping with the Constitution of South Africa which seeks to protect and promote the rights of people.*
>
> *However, we the people of the District Six community, express our disappointment that these wonderful aims have not translated well into actions, despite our efforts over more than 13 years when the national status of the District Six site was confirmed by SAHRA Council in 2004.*
>
> *We are frustrated that the declaration has not been finalised, and that we have not been provided for clear reasons for this. Our reasonable demands for clarity and information have fallen on deaf ears.*
>
> *We, the people of the District Six community believe that our rights have been disrespected and our experience has led us to feel unsupported in our efforts.*
>
> *On 11 February 2020, on thus 30th year since the release of our late and great President Nelson Mandela from prison, and on this day when District Six was declared a White Group area on 11 February 1966, we announce:* ***The People's Declaration of District Six as a National Heritage Site.*** (D6M, 2020).

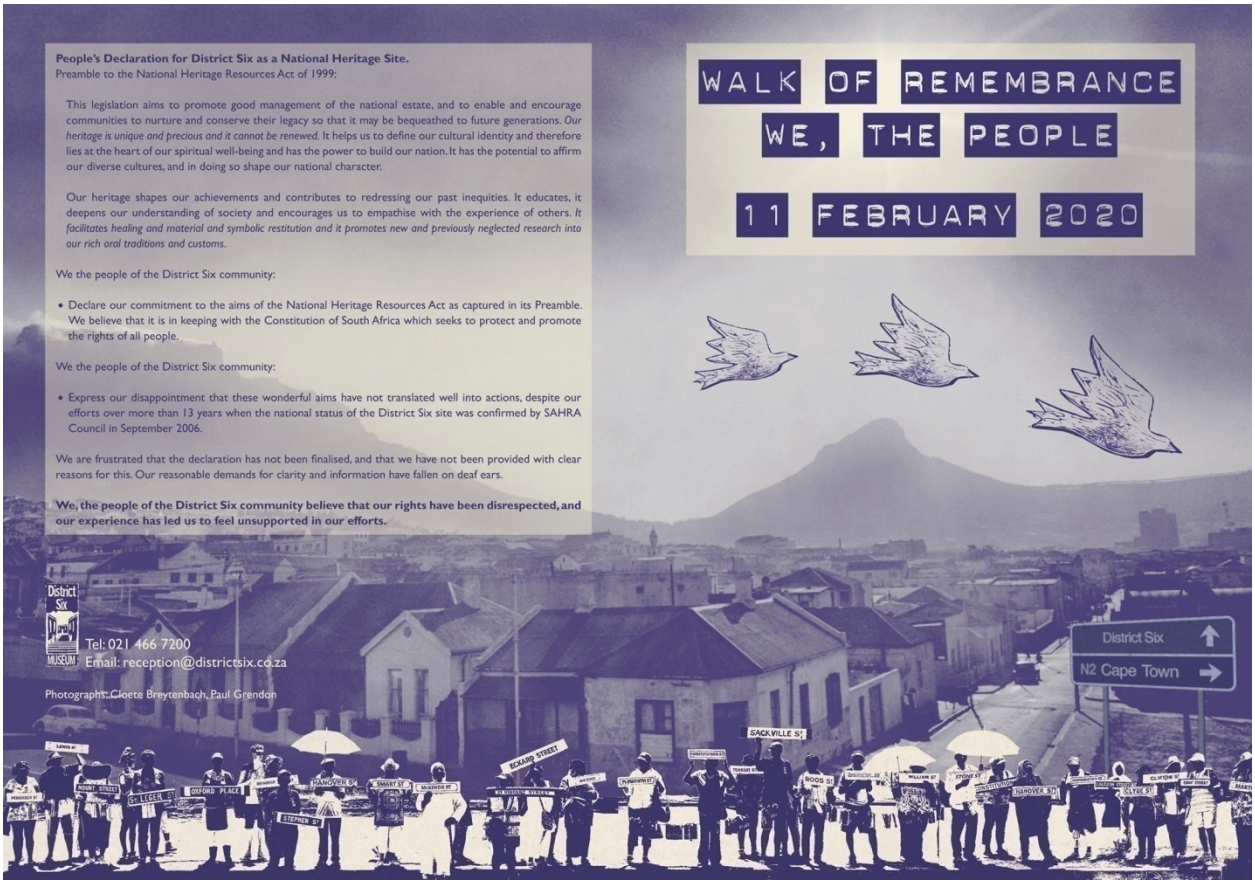
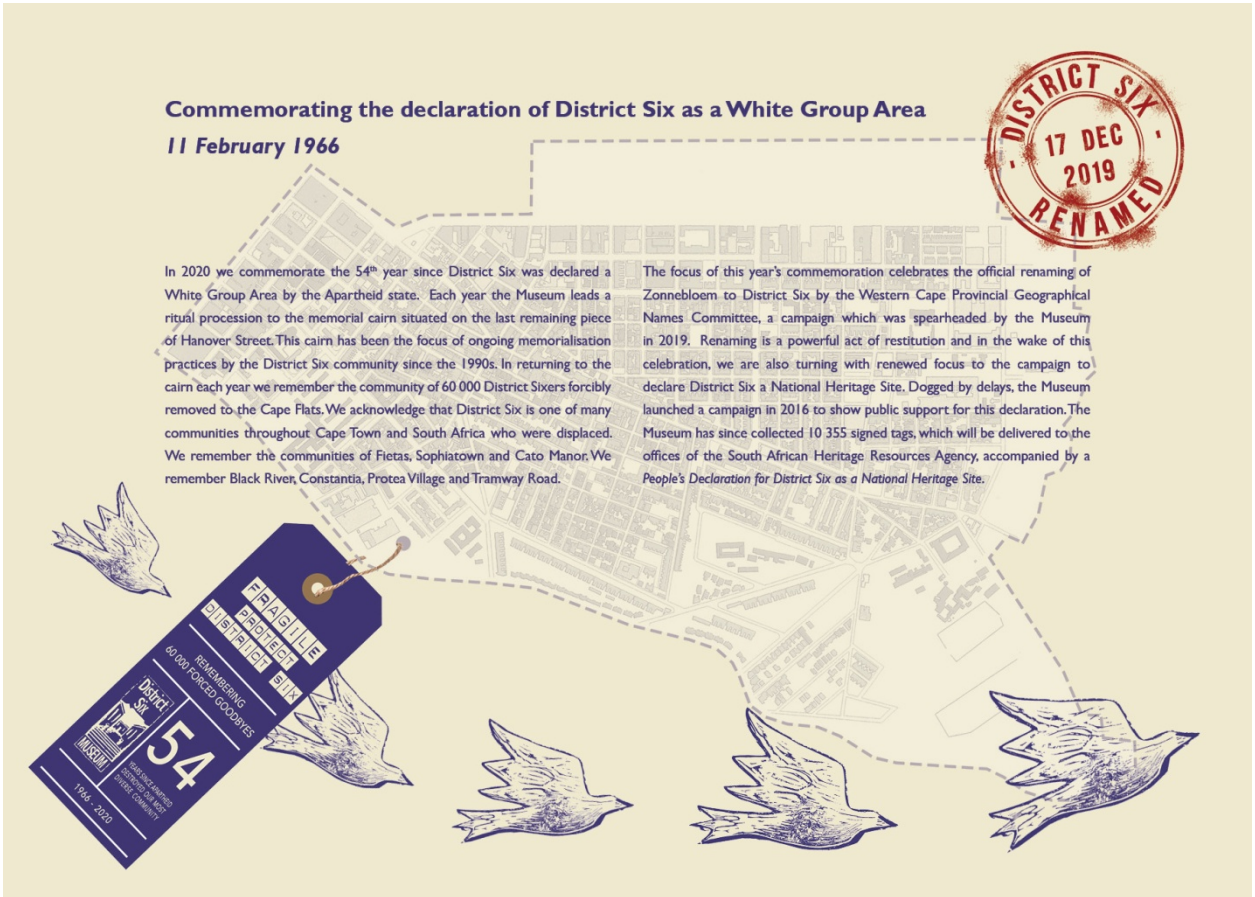

People's Declaration for District Six as a National Heritage Site.
Preamble to the National Heritage Resources Act of 1999:
This legislation aims to promote good management of the national estate, and to enable and encourage communities to nurture and conserve their legacy so that it may be bequeathed to future generations. Our heritage is unique and precious and it cannot be renewed. It helps us to define our cultural identity and therefore lies at the heart of our spiritual well-being and has the power to build our nation. It has the potential to affirm our diverse cultures, and in doing so shape our national character.
Our heritage shapes our achievements and contributes to redressing our past inequities. It educates, it deepens our understanding of society and encourages us to empathise with the experience of others. It facilitates healing and material and symbolic restitution and it promotes new and previously neglected research into our rich oral traditions and customs.
We the people of the District Six community:
• Declare our commitment to the aims of the National Heritage Resources Act as captured in its Preamble. We believe that it is in keeping with the Constitution of South Africa which seeks to protect and promote the rights of all people.
We the people of the District Six community:
• Express our disappointment that these wonderful aims have not translated well into actions, despite our efforts over more than 13 years when the national status of the District Six site was confirmed by SAHRA Council in September 2006.
We are frustrated that the declaration has not been finalised, and that we have not been provided with clear reasons for this. Our reasonable demands for clarity and information have fallen on deaf ears.
We, the people of the District Six community believe that our rights have been disrespected, and our experience has led us to feel unsupported in our efforts.
WALK OF REMEMBRANCE
WE, THE PEOPLE
11 FEBRUARY 2020
District Six
MUSEUM
Tel: 021 466 7200
Email: reception@districtsix.co.za
Photographs: Cloete Breytenbach, Paul Grendon
District Six
N2 Cape Town
SACKVILLE ST
ECKARD STREET

FIGURE 49 (A) & (B)


Commemorating the declaration of District Six as a White Group Area
11 February 1966
DISTRICT SIX
17 DEC
2019
RENAMED
In 2020 we commemorate the 54th year since District Six was declared a White Group Area by the Apartheid state. Each year the Museum leads a ritual procession to the memorial cairn situated on the last remaining piece of Hanover Street. This cairn has been the focus of ongoing memorialisation practices by the District Six community since the 1990s. In returning to the cairn each year we remember the community of 60 000 District Sixers forcibly removed to the Cape Flats. We acknowledge that District Six is one of many communities throughout Cape Town and South Africa who were displaced. We remember the communities of Fietas, Sophiatown and Cato Manor. We remember Black River, Constantia, Protea Village and Tramway Road.
The focus of this year's commemoration celebrates the official renaming of Zonnebloem to District Six by the Western Cape Provincial Geographical Names Committee, a campaign which was spearheaded by the Museum in 2019. Renaming is a powerful act of restitution and in the wake of this celebration, we are also turning with renewed focus to the campaign to declare District Six a National Heritage Site. Dogged by delays, the Museum launched a campaign in 2016 to show public support for this declaration. The Museum has since collected 10 355 signed tags, which will be delivered to the offices of the South African Heritage Resources Agency, accompanied by a People's Declaration for District Six as a National Heritage Site.
FRAGILE
PROPERTY OF
BUITENKANT STR
REMEMBERING
60 000 FORCED GOODBYES
District Six
MUSEUM
54
1966 - 2020

The document was accompanied by a list of comments by individual members in addition to the above shared statement. Not surprisingly, their comments were interspersed with expressions of dissatisfaction about the delayed restitution process in addition to the declaration. The two processes are intricately linked but in terms of the government vehicles responsible for delivery, they fall under the ambit of two different departments, ie the Department of Arts and Culture and the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development and Land Reform.

Together with the document, boxes with approximately 10 000 signed pledges were handed over to SAHRA's acting CEO. The pledges, designed as luggage tags, had been collected from D6M visitors who were invited to sign them after they had completed their visit. They were asked to pledge their support for the declaration if they agreed with it once they had made sense of the District Six story.

The People's Declaration was symbolic, and was intended to both express the frustrations of former residents and put pressure on SAHRA right on their doorstep, to respond directly to people. In the past, SAHRA had neglected to respond to requests for information, with people concluding that it was because they had nothing to report.

I referred to this as a procession to SAHRA, not a protest march. As part of exploring different ways of expressing dissent and dissatisfaction as citizens, D6M has provided leadership which encouraged people to use dialogue and artistic interventions rather than protest marches only. While protest marches have a definite place as a tool of civic engagement, Cape Town has had a large number of protest marches in the past few years and D6M wanted to prevent the declaration issue from getting lost in the general noise of other protests. It has tried to find different ways of engaging with government entities than through confrontation only so as to leave room for longer-term sustained collaborations once issues were resolved. Some community members have wanted to follow a legal route to compel SAHRA to act to correct the non-delivery on their statutory obligations. This might still be an action to be considered in the near future.

The delegation was graciously received and commitments were made to follow up. Everything was interrupted less than a week later by President Cyril Ramaphosa's declaration on 15 March 2020 that the country was in a state of disaster, followed by an announcement that the country would be in lockdown as from 27 March. Everything of a public nature changed drastically as from then. It has been an unusual year and people have had to temper their expectations accordingly.

FIGURE 50

FIGURE 51

C. Memory and heritage: continuum or at opposite ends?

Heritage is a deceptively simple idea.[259]

"Heritage is not lost and found, stolen and reclaimed", reads Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's now well-cited quotation. She contends that the discourse associated with heritage – that of conservation, preservation, restoration, reclamation, recovery, recreation, recuperation, revitalization, and regeneration – implies that there is a heritage product that exists prior to its identification, evaluation and celebration. "By production, I do not mean that the result is not lost and found, stolen and reclaimed. It is a mode of cultural production in the present that has recourse to the past" (1995: 370).

In the previous chapters I have highlighted the memory work of D6M, calling attention to the ways in which it has managed to build a movement around its approach. Occasionally the term 'heritage' had been loosely used prior to its formal entry into the discourse of national heritage which essentially started with the decision to make the application to have the site declared a NHS. In channelling its memory work in the direction of 'heritage', D6M has been part of the cultural production of this particular heritage of District Six. "The current phase of work places emphasis on District Six as symbolic of other communities affected by forced removals, [thus] requiring that its deep and complex history be foregrounded. It needs to sustain the vitality of a dynamic heritage practice which fragments and challenges understandings of living and national heritage, and it needs to continue to explore the relationship between landscapes and memorialisation in support of human rights and social justice" (Bennett and Julius, 2008: 59).

There are many features of the site that are worthy of celebration and that could qualify to be the focus of its heritage evaluation and celebration: its music, literature, political life, visual art or its unique geography, amongst other things. I suspect that the declaration would more easily be finalised if it were positioned within one of these frames. Instead, D6M worked collaboratively with SAHRA to 'produce' its significance centred around the forced removals and the destruction of the neighbourhood. This was its national relevance: as a metonymic symbol of an uncomfortable past that dare not be forgotten. It dare not be forgotten because its impact still prevails in the spatial and psychic lives of so many which needs to always be considered when trying to make sense of South Africa's complex and troubled present. "... the legacy of apartheid cannot be discarded altogether, as it remains inscribed materially in the urban geography of South Africa and figuratively in the collective trauma of its population" (Ignatieff, 1996: 4). In the light of the country's need to reconcile and move on, the glorious stories of resistance and reconciliation are often valorised. Those who still today feel no reconciliation feel excluded and tacitly judged by their inability to move on.

[259] www.southafricahistoryonline.co.za/

While there has been no question that the significance of District Six is deeply embedded in its destruction, the heritage regulations as derived from the NHRA of 1999, have led to an impasse in terms of how to achieve this in real terms. Declaration of District Six as a NHS cannot be done outside of the provisions of the Act, but the definitions provided by the Act and the criteria for declaration, rigidly applied, seem to be in contradiction with the reality of District Six. This case requires a creative interpretation of the Act in order to memorialise destruction and absence rather than materiality, and needs to argue that the "qualities so exceptional that they of special national significance"[260] are embedded in their absence. D6M sees this legislative dilemma as a wonderful challenge to its creativity and undertook to work closely with SAHRA to develop a unique and dynamic set of solutions.

The nature of heritage

Heritage continues to be a useful catch-all phrase for some, and a deeply emotive one for others. In the new South Africa it has been one of the main avenues for negotiating issues of identity, ownership of cultural assets, citizenship and nation-building (Marschall, 2010; Shepherd, 2008). Using the term 'our heritage' does not carry the same connotation for all, equally. For some people the 'our' refers to a new non-racial South African identity, while for others it signifies a narrow, bounded ethnic or tribal identity. Before the restrictions on travel brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, an emphasis on cultural heritage as a commodity was on the increase in South Africa, with museums being urged by the Department of Arts and Culture to "see their primary task as developing products for the international tourist market" (Witz, 2006: 115). "Heritage is difficult to define not least because it is all-encompassing, containing tangible artefacts and structures of the past, as well as landscapes and intangible aspects of culture, such as traditions, customs and oral memory" (Marschall, 2010: 1). Add to this complex heritage landscape represented in the devastated site of District Six and the definition is further challenged.

While there is a strong relation between 'memory' and 'heritage', they are not equivalent. Heritage, like memory, can be experienced through the senses, but it is only through social interaction that it comes into its own. However, heritage is more than a materialisation of memory, and involves issues of culture, identity, politics and political will. What is to be officially recognised as national heritage is closely tied to understandings of national identity and nationhood and is simply not neutral (Viejo-Rose, 2015).

[260] Extract of section 7 (1) (a) of the NHRA of 1999.

Commenting on world heritage in a somewhat cynical vein, David Lowenthal writes: "All at once heritage is everywhere – in the news, in the movies, in the marketplace – in everything from galaxies to genes. It is the chief focus of patriotism and a prime lure of tourism. One can barely move without bumping into a heritage site. Each legacy is cherished. From ethnic roots to history theme parks, Hollywood to Holocaust, the whole world if busy lauding – or lamenting – some past, be it fact or faction" (1996: xiii).

Of the many challenges inherent in the field of heritage, Lowenthal captures one of them: how to balance the drive to present heritage as deriving its value from being non-exclusive and from being a tool for building democracy and valuing marginalised histories; while at the same deriving its value from being unique and special – hinting at undemocratic exclusivity. Otherwise, everything could indeed be heritage thereby rendering the category meaningless. Many definitions and sets of parameters exist, all attempting to pin down this ever-present but elusive concept.

Heritage lists

On the international arena, UNESCO's approach to heritage has influenced the discourse substantially. Its production of heritage lists has contributed to the creation of a hierarchy of what is considered to be valuable and noteworthy. The production of lists has also foregrounded an understanding of heritage as 'things'.

The largely preservationist discourse as foregrounded by UNESCO processes, has contributed to the 'freezing' of aspects of cultural forms that are regarded as heritage, as if they should remain unchanged over time (Macdonald, 2018). In addition, "national heritage – including through the making of national museums – has helped make nations imaginable as 'communities' by endowing them with long and glorious histories and generating senses of national belonging among citizen" (Macdonald, 2018: 9).

The NHRA of 1999 affirms the place of intangible heritage, but its overall framing is still within the traditional definition of heritage as 'things' and places. The definition of the Act and its preamble, makes reference to intangible heritage but while attempting to be inclusive, it still continues to perpetuate a perception of intangible heritage as the step-child of 'real' heritage. The understanding of heritage as physical things that need protection still lingers and dominates.

National heritage

In its work with mobilising the past to illuminate the way to a just, rights-based future, D6M found strong affinity with the aims of the NHRA as expressed in its Preamble:

> *This legislation aims to promote good management of the national estate, and to enable and encourage communities to nurture and conserve their legacy so that it may be bequeathed to future generations. Our heritage is unique and precious and it cannot be renewed. It helps us to define our cultural identity and therefore lies at the heart of our spiritual well-being and has the power to build our nation. It has the potential to affirm our diverse cultures, and in so doing shape our national character.*
>
> *Our heritage celebrates our achievements and contributes to redressing past inequities. It educates, it deepens our understanding of society and encourages us to empathise with the experience of others. It facilitates healing and material and symbolic restitution and it promotes new and previously neglected research into our rich oral traditions and customs*.[261]

Intangible heritage features explicitly in the Preamble, but most of the provisions relate to tangible, physical sites and their protection. Preservationist discourse relating to heritage sites as referenced in the Act refers to sites as needing to be conserved and improved; demarcated by fences, gates or walls; marked with a badge or sign. Emphasis is placed on ownership of sites, based on the assumptions that 'sites' are all properties in which title deed and ownership trump heritage value.

"Coming out of a recent history when much of our understanding of memorialisation and memorials has been about greatness … great buildings and … people and about memorialising and monumentalising those… it's very exciting just being part of that discussion and that discovery, that intangible heritage is no longer the consolation prize for are constantly dispossessed from tangibles, from their homes, their buildings [and] from places. What you do have then is the intangibles and your memory and asserting that is in itself important and not secondary to the tangible" (D6M, 2007: 64).

The NHRA very clearly attempts to go beyond the definition of 'heritage' as was described in the National Monuments Act previously referred to in the previous chapter, but is limited by the vocabulary in which it is couched. Some of these limitations have come to bear in the struggle to have District Six declared a NHS. What started as a partnership with SAHRA who was fulfilling its mandate to identify new sites for national status so as to correct the imbalances of the past, has

[261] National Heritage Resources Act No. 1999

become a tense relationship. One of the issues for SAHRA is the absence of precedent in dealing with a site such as District Six which had some unique characteristics. The main challenge was the unmistakable absence of physical traces – an outcome of the apartheid state's determination not to leave any material evidence of the residential community that had once lived there. Traditional approaches to heritage protection require substantial materiality.

Preceding SAHRA and even the NHRA, the ANC's CMMH (see Chapter 2) made proposals for the transformation of the heritage sector so that it reflected the democratic and egalitarian intent of a future new South Africa, and that it was representative of all of the country's people (Frieslaar, 2020). The ACTAG report of 1995 noted that new legislation was needed to replace the National Monuments Council Act because of its 'antiquated, colonial-style legislation' (ACTAG, 1995: 80) and that the conservation authorities had a bias towards 'buildings and sites associated with European colonists' (ACTAG, 1995: 80). They recommended that all existing national monuments be evaluated, new sites identified which could be considered for such status, and that communities be empowered to participate meaningfully in this process (ACTAG, 1995). The White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage (1996) also had a set of recommendations including broadening the use of the term 'monuments' to 'heritage resources'. The Draft Heritage Bill (1998) led to the promulgation of the NHRA (1999) and the creation of SAHRA in 2000. Through all of these stages, transformation was an underlying theme and great concern was expressed about the static and conservative leanings of the existing system. Heritage was also upheld as one of the crucial tools for nation-building, needing to attend especially to the involvement of people who had previously been excluded, ignored and silenced.

The timbre of the Act is consistent with the post-apartheid period in South Africa during which time it was written. There was a great emphasis on nation-building, healing and restitution as made explicit in the last paragraph of the Preamble. While the Act strives to be inclusive in its understanding of heritage as being more than physical things which need conservation, protection and maintenance, it does not go far enough in detailing what this means in terms of intangible heritage. Its attitude towards a destroyed place is unclear and one that D6M has not been able to clarify in all its conversations with SAHRA.

The sad current reality, is that poor delivery and casual treatment of people in the processes of implementation have obscured the philosophical underpinnings and any revolutionary intent that have driven the writings of these acts. As with the South African Constitution and the Restitution of Land Rights Acts, for example, shoddy delivery has overshadowed the actual provisions of these Acts.

These ideals of the post-1994 legislation are still in place but have not had widespread impact. The propensity to favour 'the great men of South African history' as national symbols of the country's heritage together with limited guidance for implementers as to what constitutes broad and meaningful public engagement has done reputational damage to the sector.

"So, while heritage projects continue to serve up new discourses of the heroic leader, who delivered the new nation from apartheid's evil, of the 'rainbow nation', where culture is framed largely in primordial terms, and of reconciliation, South Africa's 'special offering' to the world, almost every sphere of heritage production has seen complexity, controversy and contestation" (Rassool, 2000: 2). Sabine Marschall refers to the "teleological narrative of struggle" (2010: 14) which was regarded as the overarching frame to cohere the national narrative. Its implied unity left little room for different narratives and ways of representation, and the felt urgency in embarking on the process of delivery left little time and space for comprehensive consultation.

The changing heritage and memorial landscape

In 1997, Cabinet adopted the National Legacy Project[262], which gave rise to nine high priority heritage developments throughout the country, these having been decided in a largely top-down decision-making process (Marschall, 2010). Ciraj Rassool (2000: 21) comments that although many of the heritage interventions in the new South Africa have been conceptualised 'from above' as projects of nation-building, many independent projects and individuals continue to chip away at the dominant constructions: a reminder that South Africa still has open spaces for civil society to interact in fora not created by government, although these spaces are shrinking.

The categories under which sites could be declared gives a hint of the epistemological dilemma with which the District Six declaration has presented SAHRA. All of the other declared sites have substantial materiality attached to them, and in some way feed into the 'great names and struggles of history' frame of the grand narrative of the nation. While it is correct that the country's iconic figures should be acknowledged for their role, the often excessive promotion of the stories of a small group of individuals is the dominant mode of cultural production emanating from government processes. In a country where many people already feel economically and politically marginalised, this approach entrenches marginality. It presents a skewed view of significance and perpetuates the silencing of the little-known yet important names and places of our history.

[262] The nine projects are 1. Ncome Museum, KZN; 2. the Monument for the Women of South Africa at the Union Buildings in Pretoria; 3. the inclusive commemoration of the Centenary of the South African Anglo-Boer War; 4. Constitution Hill; 5. Nelson Mandela's Museum, Qunu in the Eastern Cape; 6. Samora Machel Monument, in Mpumulanga; 7. Albert Luthuli project - the restoration of his home in KZN; 8. a Khoe/San heritage route situated mostly in Western Cape; 9. Freedom Park outside Pretoria.

The categories for declaration are:

- *Cradle of Humanity*
- *Ancient Kingdoms*
- *Sacred Waters*
- *Great Pilgrimages*
- *Stately Buildings*
- *Revolutionary Leaders*
- *D-Day Leaders*
- *Incarceration*
- *Declared Cultural Landscapes*[263]

The first National Site to be declared post-1994 was Robben Island.

The most recent declared site that is listed as having been awarded Grade 1 (national) status is the Bokaap in the Western Cape, where 19 sites within the broad area were declared as National Heritage Sites in 2019. In December 2020, declaration notices were issued for five other sites,[264] with their final declaration pending.

D. A NHS memorialising destruction: a misfit in the country's pantheon of great places?

On the one hand it seems contradictory that an entity which has built its practice on asserting the malleability and fluidity of memory as its strength has decided to place its weight and limited resources in the direction of formal heritage. This holds the potential for diluting its work with its strong focus on the protection of the tangible fabric of places. On the other, it could also be seen as a natural progression following from its 'hands on' exhortation, as a way to build a visible platform from which to create additional avenues for people to respond to support the call.

One of the reasons that it chose to take up the invitation made possible through the NHRA was to demonstrate to community stakeholders that the rights-based legislative frameworks in the new South Africa could indeed serve the desires and needs of communities, if engaged procedurally. In addition, D6M felt that it was well-placed to strengthen the case for intangible heritage nationally, and to widen its scope from the way in which it (ie intangible heritage) was cast in the NHRA.

[263] https://www.sahra.org.za [Accessed: 14 August 2018]
[264] The five sites which have national heritage status pending are: Sibhudu Cave in KZN; the gravesite of Magrieta 'Ihabi' Jantjies; the gravesites of Harry Gwala, Elda Gwala and Lulu Gwala in the Gwala family cemetery; Rocklands community hall in Mitchell's Plain, and Phoenix settlement in Inanda.

> *In acknowledging the significance of District Six through the status of becoming a National Heritage Site, the Museum is challenged to reflect on a range of memorial practices which extend its focus beyond the tragic story of one community. The declaration process provides a moment to focus on the significance, relevance and impact of forced removals on the city and across the country. It challenges us to look at some of the broader issues relating to removals and dispossession for the city and the many ways of returning and reconnecting.* (D6M, 2007: 64)

Ciraj Rassool reflects on the positive move within the new legislative environment with regards to the declaration of sites that makes possible interpretation by intangible heritage methods. "The previous domain of the old National Monuments Council had been governed by a preoccupation with buildings and architectural significance, an era characterised by what literary scholar, Wandile Kuse, described as an 'edifice complex'" (D6M, 2007: 35).

The direct benefit for District Six would be that it might add weight to the community's desire to have heritage traces embedded in their rebuilt restitution area. The desire was definitely not for a replica of the erased neighbourhood. "This kind of 'scenographic' approach would create the semblance of a theme park of a Disney World quality that would ridicule the process of restitution. Given the national symbolic significance of District Six, the process of restitution associated with it, and the scale of the development, a different approach to memorialisation is needed" (Le Grange, 2008: 9).

There was also the hope that the resources and reach of national status would have some economic benefit for returnees and their families in the form of heritage tourism or other services which could be offered by community members.

The Museum has had to ask itself: what was the possible fate of its vibrant and living memory practice when faced with the opportunity (and possible limitation) of being subjected to official sanction? What would it lose by forming part of the collective of authorised heritage? Would its methodologies of privileging living memory be compromised? Would it be able to impact the heritage sector by its "willingness to engage with the criteria and politics of heritage policy and implementation that has governed the South African 'heritage landscape'" (Bennett and Julius, 2008: 58), or would it be overwhelmed by the scale of its attempt?

Figure 52

Figure 53

What are the implications for D6M as it enters the terrain of national heritage, which has as one of its purposes, the building of a national identity, imagined as unifying? In the sense of Benedict Anderson's 'imagined communities' (1991), is there the potential for national heritage in this context, to provide a mechanism which could unify people as a 'community' which is able to share something common and which extends beyond immediate geographies?

The *Statement of Significance* prepared by SAHRA contains the following by way of introduction:

> *Today, the physically scarred landscape of District Six serves as a legacy of apartheid's system of mass destruction. The vacant blot remains as a result of the phenomenal resistance that demonstrated the tenacity of the forced removal. District Six, a disfigurement which holds a living heritage in the form of: an inherited culture that survived in the townships of Cape Town; an extraordinary memory that was jealously guarded, kept alive and passed on through the arts; and a history of injustices, forced removals, dislocations and a destructive regime.*
>
> ...
>
> *It is motivated that the history of forced removal and dislocation in South Africa marks a profound period in the memory and the history of our country.*

D6M imagined that, just as it had been able to challenge traditional museology with its new approaches, that it could also "test conventional practices of inner-city development and memorialisation. In doing so, the remembrance of the traumatic removal of people from the former District Six could be embodied in the redevelopment of the area and in memorial sites that are active parts of public life within this new reconstituted urban fabric" (Le Grange, 2008: 17).

Challenges, blockages and contestations

Few people have expressed their disagreement with the grading and declaration of District Six as a site which has national significance. Some property owners (not District Sixers) have been concerned about the impact on their property values and the implications for any exterior renovations that they might want to do in the future. Those who have the ability to actively work towards its implementation have done so in a visibly lack-lustre way. Heritage officials have not had a collaborative problem-solving approach, constantly referring to the many obstacles that make this declaration the most complex one that they have had to implement. Some former and returned residents, not surprisingly, have become disillusioned by the fact that it has taken so long. They are concerned about its impact on the restitution process as they will not be able to cope with any further delays. Some have reverted into the 'us-and-them' lager: 'us' being the group being denied restitution through untenable delays; 'them' being those – mainly officials – who seem to be conspiring to delay or deny restitution.

Svetlana Boym refers to the literal meaning of 'conspire' as being "breathing together" (2001: 43). At this time of the COVID-19 pandemic with its main site of attack being the human respiratory system, 'breath' and the ability to breathe alone – without the help of a ventilator or other oxygen support – has become a precious gift. Breathing in the air of others, conspiring, in what until recently was the most natural of engagements such as a face-to-face conversation, has in 2020/21 become a potential source of death. A conspiracy, an imagined community based on exclusion could be the cause of social, not literal death, of those excluded from restorative justice who "lead lives of quiet desperation and die with their song still inside them" (David Thoreau, 1849).

Complexity

The proposed declaration of District Six is complex on a number of levels. Firstly, what is referred to as the 'site' of District Six in reality consists of a number of sites. There are also different levels of ownership. Plots of vacant land as well as existing buildings, are owned by government, CPUT, religious bodies and private owners – both business and residential. Some of the privately owned land was acquired under apartheid after District Sixers were displaced. If an intention of the NHRA is to 'facilitate healing and material and symbolic restitution', its processes do not address this aspect with regards to the rights of former residents. One of the main blockages to finalising the declaration is the outstanding engagement with current owners, (the issues will be dealt with in some detail later in this section) leaving formerly displaced community members feeling excluded from any consideration once more. Having been inspired by the power of agency regained during the NHS campaign, they have been left feeling frustrated at the thwarting of such agency. The process has signalled to them that, even as an adversely affected community, their wishes and desires are still subject to the ongoing privileges of others.

A second issue relates to the difficulties inherent in conserving absence. While several creative ways have been explored and proposed by D6M, some of these fall outside of the formulaic framework of SAHRA, even in this post-apartheid period of a reframed heritage practice. Some proposals are contained in the CMP produced by D6M but these are still to be engaged with in detail by SAHRA.

A third challenge is presented by the boundaries of the area to be declared which remains unresolved. The map which was included with the approved *Statement of Significance* of 2004, formed part of the motivation for declaration. It was also part of the CMP which D6M presented to SAHRA in 2006 and which was provisionally approved (provisionally because it was draft and needed to be finalised). The issue of the to-be-declared site boundary was raised several years later, and it has been done in relation to the large number of property owners who would be affected. SAHRA has expressed caution in engaging with this group of stakeholders, cautious of impinging on their property rights.

There is an assumption that as a group they would be resistant to the declaration, particularly with its framing within the discourse of South Africa's displacement narrative by which they might feel judged (a number of property owners are white and have no historic ties to District Six and were beneficiaries of the apartheid system including being able to purchase the properties that they now occupy.).

Imaginative geographies and municipal boundaries

At the time of preparing the CMP, the D6M public process included a series of mapping activities. It used the memory map[265] which was contained in the Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) of 2003. It evoked stories of their pasts from those who attended the sessions. People mapped out routes and markers of their lives and created site narratives through lively conversation. The outer boundaries of the proposed declared areas were mapped out. There were ongoing reminders that all narratives and places that formed part of people's lives were important, but all could not be represented or memorialised in equal measure. Some which could serve as representative of others, would have to be agreed upon. Negotiations and compromises were needed.

At the risk of stating the obvious: people do not live their lives within municipal boundaries (except of course where there were strict racialised boundaries which were well policed and could not easily be crossed). They do their shopping at places inside and outside of their areas, their friendships cross boundaries, their preferred school or church might be on the outside of what had officially been District Six, but there was a shared understanding of what the area's declaration needed to include. The group more or less followed the contours of the District Six map, finding creative ways to reference important life-events that fell outside of that line. The ritual of visiting the iconic Van Kalker Photographic Studio for example, the treats that they enjoyed at the La Fiesta Restaurant, the street photography of Movie Snaps, the milkshakes on the Grand Parade and the *langarm* dances in the Woodstock Town Hall: all of these form part of District Six memories but in terms of map coordinates, they fell outside of its boundaries. In terms of the narrative interpretation of the area, this was enriching and not a problem for the group.

While not underplaying the difficulties presented to SAHRA, the map dilemma seems to reflect a fundamental discursive dissonance between the two 'sides': the need for forensic certainty and absolutely defined boundaries as required by SAHRA, as opposed to the discourse of the D6M and community side, grounded in the poetics of imagination (not fiction). 'Spirit of place' or *genus loci* is an accepted feature of places; our nation-building is described as having a spirit; the spirit of the place that was District Six is much celebrated. In a country where its Department of Arts and Culture is the authorised custodian of 'social cohesion' there should be place for a richer conversation between

[265] The memory map is a reconstruction of destroyed places in District Six: streets, schools, places of worship, community centres, etc.

different modes of thinking and ways of knowing, which take into account the spirit and the letter of the map.

In thinking about the poetics of space, Edward Said's 'imaginative geographies' come to mind. He references the interplay between the emotive sense of space in relation to the actual space: the memory map versus the cartographic map. "The objective space of a house, its corners, corridors, cellar, rooms, is far less important than what poetically it is endowed with, which is usually a quality with an imaginative or figurative value we can name and feel: thus a house may be haunted, homelike, prisonlike, magical, and so forth. So space acquires emotional and even rational sense by a kind of poetic process, whereby the vacant or anonymous reaches of distance are converted into meaning for us here" (Said, 1977: 169). So, could a conversation between the bounded map of District Six, with its nodes of development, property rights, restitution rights and other regulatory obligations engage in dialogue with the valid emotive components of trauma, displacement, resilience and healing? The remnants, the skeletal street grid, the cracked foundations, the erased alleyways, pathways and hauntings? A landscape of loss demands a poetics of space.

FIGURE 54

E. The application

Having outlined some of the major issues of contention, I would like to return now to the timeline of the application.

The original champion within SAHRA of the District Six declaration was the late Beverley Crouts, the SAHRA Western Cape Provincial manager. She is the one who made the presentation to the SAHRA Council in 2004, and was present when a community celebratory event took place to mark the approval of the CMP. In addition to being saddened at her sudden passing in 2011, the District Six NHS campaign lost a tireless advocate for the cause. Although this is not a personal issue and should not be tied to a singular personality, the loss of her energy and passion has been severely felt. SAHRA has also indicated on a number of occasions that the lack of staff capacity has hampered their ability to deliver on their commitments.

The process required working closely with SAHRA to produce a CMP and manage a public process after the grading had been approved. D6M held onto the centrality of memory and asserted the role of intangible heritage – the hallmarks of its methodology – bringing its experiences and strengths to bear to this process.

In addition to protecting the site, D6M's involvement aimed to demonstrate how citizen engagement could be built, and to test ways in which policy can come alive in community. It planned to model a process whereby different locales of expertise can be brought together (such as local community knowledge, designers, urban planners, architects, educators and artists among others) in a coeval relationship to shape the neighbourhood. It aimed to explore how the built and absent environment could play a role in building a new spirit of District Six. Sensitively executed, it held the possibility for people who will not be returning to live in District Six to find a different way to be engaged on the site and to discover new ways of returning which are not only linked to residential rights.

A letter addressed to D6M by SAHRA's Provincial Manager on 2 December 2004 informed the Museum of the outcome of the Council meeting:

> *It was decided at the meeting that District Six be graded as a Grade 1 heritage site and that the site be further investigated for its declaration as a National Heritage Site.*
>
> *It should therefore be noted that as a result of the abovementioned decision and approval, the heritage management resources of this site, in terms of Section 8 (2)*[266] *of the National Heritage Resources Act, Act 25 of 1999, now falls under the jurisdiction of SAHRA.*[267]

The following four next steps were outlined in the approved document:[268]

1. *District Six is given Grade 1 status and a conservation management plan be compiled to facilitate the national declaration of the site.*
2. *That SAHRA works in close collaboration with the District Six Museum to have the site declared as soon as possible.*
3. *That SAHRA provincial offices in other provinces become actively involved in identifying other sites of forced removal in their individual provinces, with the aim of establishing an internal Forced Removal Working Committee to spearhead the declarations of all nationally significant sites of forced removal.*
4. *SAHRA to consult with museums and other similar institutions with similar projects, such as the South End Museum in Port Elizabeth.*[269]

At the time SAHRA believed that D6M was best placed to develop the CMP, given its experience of working with living memory, intangible heritage and the fragmented / destroyed landscape as well as its standing within the community. It commissioned D6M to prepare the CMP, committing to complement the development of the document and process with its own technical expertise. D6M undertook to build a community of interest around the declaration and work closely with that community in developing the document. As part of its work to have the site declared as quickly as possible, SAHRA undertook to liaise with property owners as required by the Section 27 (8)[270] of the Act.

[266] Section 8 (2) of the Act reads: "SAHRA is responsible for the identification and management of Grade 1 heritage resources and heritage resources in accordance with the applicable provisions of this Act, and shall co-ordinate and monitor the management of the national estate in the Republic."
[267] SAHRA document reference 9/2/018/0154. *Letter from SAHRA to D6M Director, 2 December 2004.*
[268] SAHRA document reference 9/2/018/0154. *Nomination for Grade 1 status to the SAHRA Council, 26 October 2004.*
[269] Ibid.
[270] In summary, this section of the Act requires SAHRA to notify all property owners, mortgage holders, conservation bodies with an interest in the area, about the intention to declare. All of these entities should be given adequate time to respond.

[The above sets of actions account for points (1) and (2) above. There is no record of actions on points (3) and (4)].

Development of the CMP

From the time that Grade 1 status was awarded to the District Six site, D6M engaged with it as if it had already been declared so as to start testing and learning what the implications might be. Workshops and site walks undertaken in preparation for producing the CMP were done with the necessary sensitivity and all participants were invited to join in the same imagining of the site's special features and ethos.

D6M developed the CMP within its established methodological framework using the following as both research strategies and avenues for public engagement: mapping exercises, memory walks, life history interviews, storytelling sessions, reunions, a postal campaign, door-to-door awareness-raising in the District Six area and displays of site-related material.[271] These inspired participants to embrace the possibility of the declaration with enthusiasm. Those who would not be returning to live in District Six for whatever reason saw within this work, possibilities for a sustained engagement with the site even if they were not moving back. Discussions and cautions which had formed part of the 2005 'Hands On District Six' Conference were taken into account in developing the programme of action which was geared towards strengthening the logic of the declaration and anticipating its possible impact.

The communications component included newsletters, newspaper articles, website updates and a site-based workbook for high school learners. When the CMP was presented to SAHRA in July 2006, D6M did so with the confidence that a broad community was squarely behind the initiative and considered themselves to be an active part of the process. It was ratified in its draft form by SAHRA who noted it as being a unique CMP because of the centrality of living memory. Those who had participated in the activities gathered at the Museum to celebrate this as a hopeful milestone.

D6M emphasised that in the making of the CMP, it sought to engage with "an active community of Capetonians who memorialise District Six in their own forms, practices and customs outside of the physical museum structure, and the conservation of the site is framed directly in relation to their input, participation and engagement with the site. There is therefore no uniform or singular perspective on the significance of specific places in District Six. Contestations and debate are often part of the process of remembering and will inform the management and conservation principles for the District Six cultural landscape" (CMP, 2006: 46). It sought to uncover ways of memorialising both the tangible traces still existing on the site as well as the erased structures, always held in tension with the restitution process unfolding simultaneously. "That there are many points of view is both a fact of life

[271] Summarised from the *Conservation Management Plan* produced by District Six Museum, July 2006.

and a political blessing, since multiple perspectives protect against monological thinking and totalitarian government" (Harris, 1997: 144).

Conservation principles

In capturing its approach to site conservation, D6M developed eight basic principles that should inform any work on the site. This was derived from engagement with several research sources, of which the Burra Charter, the Martin Luther King Jnr Site in Atlanta and *Memoria Abierta* in Buenos Aires were among the main ones, in combination with the spirit of the NHRA and D6M methodologies for working with community and site.

1. An awareness of *living memory* and *intangible heritage* forms the core of the District Six conservation management plan.
2. *An actively engaged community* is central to all stages of the development of conservation strategies. 'Ownership' is to be fostered.
3. *Contestations and debates* should not be suppressed in the interests of presenting a uniform or singular perspective. The CMP acknowledges the multi-layered history and significance of District Six and attempts to acknowledge all of these.
4. While the interests and advancement of tourism is acknowledged, the CMP is premised on sensitive engagement with the site as a *site of conscience.*
5. The CMP is premised on supporting the *non-displacement of people.*
6. The processes relating to the development and management of the CMP occurs adjacent to, but not separate from, the *redevelopment* of District Six. (Due regard should be given to the current needs of a regenerating community).
7. The need to conserve should be balanced against *usage* needs and encourage *celebration.*
8. Conservation through interpretation and education, not only through fabric. *Minimal intervention* in existing fabric is to be sought.

Listening to stakeholders and learning from community

D6M's approach to engaging with community goes beyond inviting representation as a remedial strategy only, to compensate for a past where people were excluded from decisions that affected their lives. While supporting people's sense of their own agency is crucial, D6M also values the knowledge brought by individuals and communities. In the course of developing its own work, it has learnt much from the information that people have contributed to the archive in the form of photographs, documents and artefacts but also through their stories crafted from memory. This information is not only of a forensic or factual nature, but significantly about how people 'made' community, how they overcame challenges, about how the spirit was kept alive and how they exercised an ethics of care.

In *Standing with the Public,* Noëlle McAfee (1997) refers to the inherent value of community knowledge. He emphasises that situatedness provides a strong context for knowing, and that values commonly held by a group gives rise to active solidarity and involvement. In this way communities can be rich repositories of lessons which can serve as an impetus for community development, growth and learning.

In Chapter 2 I referred to the 'participatory sphere' as described by Coelho and Cornwall (2007), as democratising spaces for interactions between state and civil society actors. The meetings between SAHRA and D6M have some of the characteristics of being a participatory sphere in terms of the identities of the actors involved, but the democratic intent is not necessarily shared. If not shared, they are potentially spaces of power in which overt or unconscious domination can silence some, or prevent others from entering even though an invitation might have been extended (Cornwall and Coelho, 2007). But they also speak of these as "spaces of possibility in which power takes a more productive and positive form" (2007: 11) by playing an enabling leadership role. This participatory space should be extended to District Sixers to engage with SAHRA directly, not only to D6M in its representative capacity. It should be shaped so that it becomes an engaging forum holding the possibility for problem-solving.

Having completed the public process associated with the development of the CMP, D6M continued to develop site-specific programmes and activities to keep the awareness of the declaration in the public mind even though the timeline for its completion continued to recede. SAHRA explained their limitations as being linked to insufficient staff and budgets to deal with a growing backlog of heritage-related work including but not limited to declarations. It was only in 2010 when they managed to proceed with the next step which was the consultation with property owners.

Engaging property owners

On 1 October 2010, SAHRA's Provincial Manager wrote to all property owners within the proposed NHS boundary area to inform them of the proposed declaration. They were given 60 days to respond with comments or objections. The letter was issued in terms of Section 27(8)[272] (a)(d) of the NHRA.

Great consternation from some property owners resulted from the issuing of this letter, as the SAHRA Manager had mistakenly cited sections (a) and (d) of Section 27(8) whereas it should have just been

[272] Section 27(8) of the NHRA reads: "Before declaration of a place as a heritage site, or amendment or withdrawal of a notice under subsection (7), the heritage resources authority – (a) must notify the owner; ... (d) before notifying the owner as provided in paragraph (a) must give to the owner reasonable opportunity for representations or submissions to be made in regard to the proposed notification."

section (d). This section provided owners with an opportunity for representations or submissions ahead of the proposed notification (section (a)). SAHRA convened a meeting in November to address people directly, and some questions were raised and responded to. However, a vocal few insisted that the incorrect addition of (a) rendered the notice invalid and that the process had to be restarted.

A subsequent letter was issued by SAHRA on 2 December 2010, apologising for the error and inviting people to respond with comments within a 60 day period from the date of issue of the letter, according to the provision of Section 27(8) (d) of the Act. This was not a good start to the conversation with a constituency who also hold rights to comment and engage with the process, but who are located in a very different position in relation to the site as one of displacement. This process seems to be in an impasse together with the rest of the declaration initiative, and if there have been strong objections, SAHRA has not made these public.

Section 25 of the Constitution of the Republic protects property rights. That right is not in question in this process. However, when deliberating about the future of a site of displacement, historical ownership or tenancy rights should also carry weight. People also have the right to restorative justice and in this scenario it requires an acknowledgement of the injustices of the past. In the way that the process is set up, it draws a line of distinction and tension between current property owners and claimants. Many former residents felt aggrieved that the rights of current property owners were sacrosanct compared to theirs.

Blockages

After the initial energetic start from SAHRA between 2004 and 2006, and the lengthy lapse until 2010 when it notified the property owners as described above, there was a long hiatus in engagements between D6M and SAHRA. A few meetings took place but they were few and far between and did not yield any progress on a way forward. The draft gazetting document was prepared but was never submitted which meant that the declaration could not take place. The provisional protection lapsed, unnoticed unfortunately by both D6M and SAHRA, with some consequences for the integrity of the remaining restitution land. A significant consequence was CPUT's building expansion interfering with the community ritual involving the cairn of stones, and this will be referred to in more detail later in this section. SAHRA committed to providing feedback as to the gaps in the CMP but nothing other than 'it needs to be updated' has been forthcoming despite several requests. One of the issues raised was that the NHS boundary needed to be adjusted because it was too vast, but this has not been actioned.

In addition to the calls for progress from D6M and community members, the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Arts and Culture called SAHRA to account for the lack of progress on the matter on 22 October 2013 and 26 February 2014. At both of these meetings SAHRA was exhorted to finalise the

declaration, and to resolve the issue of the NHS boundaries. Meetings resumed in 2017, but these were irregular and repetitive and no progress could be reported.

Gradually the issue of the map became clearer. SAHRA was concerned that the holistic declaration as per the initial plan would have too many challenges with current property owners and they were cautious of being sued for infringing on their rights. A reduced map, or a staged declaration of the remaining fabric of District Six as individual national heritage sites, was proposed. D6M was strongly opposed to this. The rationale for its commitment to the NHS process in the main was to explore how to memorialise the absent site of District Six. Declaring the bits and pieces of the remaining fabric would be reverting to the traditional model of heritage conservation, geared towards tangibility which would once again overshadow the intangible. Where D6M saw a unique opportunity, SAHRA seemed paralysed by the fact that there was no precedent. The above seems to be the route followed with the Bokaap declaration with 19 sites being declared in the area. It was model that was negotiated with the community and has worked well in that context which did not include a site of destruction as its central rationale for declaration such as District Six is.

At a subsequent meeting in the first half of 2018, SAHRA made another proposal in order to simplify its challenges. They proposed proceeding with the declaration under Section 28 of the Act rather than Section 27. The main difference, it seems, is that private property can be excluded from such declaration but "such area of land surrounding a national heritage site as is reasonably necessary to ensure the protection and reasonable enjoyment of such site, or to protect the view of and from such site"[273]. This is a variation on the above phased declaration and while D6M has not ruled it out completely, it has requested that SAHRA put the interpretation of this section of the Act in writing so as to ensure that there is a shared understanding. Record-keeping has been extremely poor and for that reason it has been difficult to hold anyone to account. The proposal to amend the scope of the declaration has not yet been received in writing.

In essence, D6M would be loathe to agree to any version of the declaration which would compromise on its commitment to work closely with what people desire and need for the traumatic memory and legacy of the destroyed site to have longevity, and for intangibility to be privileged. While D6M is not averse to being flexible and would not insist on a rigid adherence to a 17-year old plan that might not be practical at this stage, and that would not serve the purpose it was intended. However, it needs to be assured that its core values will be retained in any of the compromises to be considered. The conservation principles as laid out in the CMP still stand until amended. Deep consultation is required.

[273] Section 28(1) (a) of the NHRA of 1999.

F. Shared knowledge assets

What has become abundantly clear is that SAHRA and D6M do not share the same approach to knowledge, expertise and consultation. D6M's approach involves accompanying a community on the slow route required of a patient public process involving deep listening in a mutual exchange. SAHRA's approach has been to assume that people (including D6M) do not understand the complexity of heritage management and at all of the meetings have been at pains to explain how difficult the legislation is to implement because people do not understand its limitations and have unreasonable expectations. D6M's experience of SAHRA is that those involved had not taken the time to understand what the range of intangible heritage practices might be, beyond storytelling and oral traditions. They displayed no desire to learn from the knowledge that the community had to offer. It is possible that such engagement might have provided them with another paradigm through which to problem-solve, not only the heritage legislation one.

Although the NHRA is clear on the matter of redress and justice, and refers to the national estate as being important for cultural identity, spiritual well-being and the shaping of the national character, the section on SAHRA's website which explains why sites need to be protected displays none of that language. It is couched completely in terms of SAHRA's monitoring and policing role. While security is an important consideration in all matters public in our country, the timbre of the explanation creates the impression that people need to be kept away from heritage sites. It refers to the need to safeguard sites from destruction and damage; the need to regulate the use of the site and admission to members of the public; to provide information to stakeholders about the law, and to ensure compliance with the NHRA and to conduct inspections.[274] None of these are incorrect, but the language of identity, spiritual well-being and national character remains stuck in the legislation and not translated into ways of operating on the ground.

It is important for communities to be involved with monitoring the integrity and usage of heritage sites but they should have a broader role, engaging with heritage authorities on a range of other matters relating to meanings and education. In speaking largely about preventing vandalism at sites and making an argument for the involvement of people in cultural heritage consultations more broadly, Ndukuyakhe Ndlovu comments: "In contrast to my viewpoint that people need to be actively involved in heritage management, most heritage managers who consider themselves experts still see legislation as the most effective tool to manage cultural resources" (2011: 33).

[274] 'Why protecting national heritage sites'. Available on https://www.sahra.org.za/ [Accessed 25 February 2021]

Sabine Marschall (2010) had the occasion to interview the then CEO of SAHRA, Andrew Hall about the entity's approach to transformation. "... many individuals with visionary approaches left the organisation and their newly-appointed replacements were inducted by remaining staff members into entrenched value systems and established conservation practice. To some extent, he concludes, the vision that had guided the development of the NHRA was corrupted by the process of its implementation" (Marschall, 2010: 39).

This coincides with the District Six experience of SAHRA, at least with regards to interactions with the grading and declaration process.

Reporting to its management meeting of 30 May 2018, the D6M NHS team summarised the process in the following way:

> *The empowering potential of this campaign has been overshadowed by the opaqueness of the portions of the process which are in the domain of SAHRA. The Museum's reputation has been adversely affected as a result of its confident leading of a public campaign that went nowhere, in the period leading up to the 2004 provisional declaration. Lack of communication and written records together with non-responses to enquiries have characterised this process. The verbal support expressed has not translated well into the action required for declaration. Recent meetings have been convened in attempts to move things forward, but they have been inconclusive. There has been a reiteration from SAHRA of the proposed piecemeal process but a written proposal has not been put on the table so that a comprehensive understanding of the process could lead to an assessment of the relative merits of this. In the meantime, other sites across the country have had their declarations finalised, leaving the impression that there is no or little commitment to the District Six process.*[275]

Keeping the site vibrant

As indicated earlier, D6M has shaped most of its site work as if it was engaging with an already declared NHS. It has managed to demonstrate how walks and storytelling can happen in the midst of everyday life, in and around existing homes and public spaces, and in the gaps where nothing exists. Every intervention is meant to be an example of how memorialisation need not be apart from daily living but can be part of it. Of course this is relatively simple at the moment as the number of households resident on the site is small. This will multiply rapidly in the next few years if the restitution schedule is honoured. It is a perfect time to test the waters now.

[275] D6M internal update, 30 May 2018.

Encroaching on the cairn of stones

Earlier in this chapter I mentioned that there had been consequences when the provisional protection on the site lapsed in 2006. One that has been extremely hard for District Sixers to accept was the virtual destruction of the memorial cairn of stones (described in Chapter 4) which had become central to the memorial practice of District Sixers. This was because CPUT, the owners of that portion of

undeveloped land, had started to build student residences on the section surrounding the cairn. Legally, CPUT as the owners had the right to build there. Context, however, is important. It is not insignificant that the then white Cape Technikon (now CPUT) obtained ownership of the land from which people were forcibly removed, under apartheid. Many family homes lie beneath its foundations. Given that reality, one would have expected the management of the institution to have greater sensitivity to their land usage plans. Given that D6M is an interested party in the area, no notice was given and no invitation to comment was issued. Apparently the correct formal permissions had been requested and granted, and because the pending heritage status had not been finalised and the provisional protection had lapsed, the community had limited legal grounds to which to appeal.

FIGURE 55

FIGURE 56

FIGURE 57

The commemoration centred around the cairn was not unfamiliar to CPUT. On several occasions they had been invited to participate and were always informed ahead of it taking place. By the time it became known what the building works were for (it was adjacent to the site which had been announced as being ready for the next phase of restitution houses, and many assumed that the earth-moving work that was taking place was in preparation for that phase), foundations had already been laid and building had started. Protests by community members and appeals to CPUT management led to a compromise being sought as too much money had already gone into the building operation by then for it to be reversed. CPUT offered to enclose the cairn and affix a plaque to it. The monumentalist approach appealed to some people particularly as no alternatives were presented, but the nature and purpose of the cairn in relation to the ritual procession was not understood or valued by CPUT at the time. The offer was not taken up but further discussion is expected so as to explore creative ways of mitigating the loss. Some District Sixers are still disturbed that the cairn is now enclosed within the courtyard of the student residence and cannot be accessed for private rituals as had been possible in the past. Fencing, security guards and student activity all need to be negotiated in this new scenario. Some felt that they wanted to dismember the cairn stone by stone in a 'reverse-ritual', believing that its existence within a CPUT built environment had tainted its special nature. After discussion, most people felt that it should remain and that it should be treated with much more vigilance. They wanted its location within CPUT's grounds to be a constant reminder to the institution of former residents' rights to the site. In addition, it could serve as a point of entry to raise awareness with the students living in the residence to learn about the site's significance. There was also a perception that CPUT was attempting to usurp the community narrative by presenting themselves as the custodians of the cairn. The cairn had specifically developed at that spot because it represented the last remaining portion of District Six's main road, Hanover Street and people did not want to lose its location. It was a significant piece of road fabric but to the casual viewer it might look like a nondescript scrap of tar. The cairn on its edge thus serves to protect its existence from accidental or deliberate destruction.

G. CPUT and Hanover Street

> *From Castle Bridge to Shephard Street, Hanover Street runs through the heart of District Six, and along it one can feel the pulse-beats of society. It is the main artery of the local world of haves and have nots, the prosperous and the poor, the struggling and the idle, the weak and the strong. Its colour is in the bright enamel signs, the neon lights, the shop-fronts, the littered gutters and draped washing. Pepsi Cola, Commando Cigarettes. Sale Now On. Its life blood is the hawkers bawling their wares above the jazz of the music shops.*
>
> (Alex la Guma New Age 1956)

It is not the first time that CPUT has destroyed the cairn of stones. The SAHRA archive contains records that go as far back as 1995 (before the existence of SAHRA) which speak to the significance of Hanover Street. On 6 December 1995 the then Western Cape Regional Manager of the NMC had made an application to its Urgent Affairs Committee for the provisional protection of Hanover Street for a period of 6 months. This followed on from an appeal from D6M after earth-moving equipment being used by CPUT to build their sports centre, was seen to put the street remnant under threat. NMC officials conducted a site inspection on 15 November 1995 and supported D6M's appeal to the rector to cease further earthworks. However, a second inspection on 22 November revealed that the street had been covered with rubble and the cairn destroyed.[276] This was after CPUT had been informed about the significance of the cairn. After a meeting between CPUT, NMC and D6M, CPUT wrote to NMC on 13 December to express their agreement with the protection. A plaque and memorial design competition were to be planned for during the time of the provisional protection.[277]

A former NMC staff member interviewed on 1 March of this year, reveals that the 1995 interaction with CPUT (then Cape Technikon) was as fraught as the 2014 iteration. Despite proposals and in-principle agreement that the portion of Hanover Street should be declared a national monument, CPUT invoked their property rights and the process was interrupted. The cairn that they had destroyed was rebuilt so that the memorialisation ritual could continue. To this day the spot remains vulnerable. While there are good relations with some CPUT faculty in terms of educational collaborations, the official institution-to-institution relationship between CPUT and D6M remains fragile with a number of incidents over the years adding to the tension. This is particularly evident at moments when CPUT takes on the character of an uncaring developer rather than a site of pedagogy located on a site of trauma.

[276] SAHRA record # 9/2/018/0154
[277] Ibid.

Hanover Street in 2019

In the 2016/17 period when Phase 3 of the restitution development was in progress, the architectural firm working on the build approached D6M to assist with archival references and design input for their project. They were keen to use the old street grid as a reference to the layout and of course Hanover Street was identified as a key design feature. There were plans to create a 'Hanover Square' public open space which would reference the actual axis of Hanover Street, and 'new Hanover Street' would be built which would follow the same contour but would not be the actual street. The prospect of having 'Hanover Street' as their home address appealed to people.

This synchronised well with the CMP which recommended that as far as possible, the former street grid be considered in the new design as part of the memorialisation features which could be embedded in the new development. Keeping the awareness of the NHS front of mind, D6M continued the discussions with District Sixers focused on remembering Hanover Street. It worked on building support to present CPUT and the RLCC with considered suggestions about how the remaining street scrap could be incorporated and connected with the new street that would be built. The Hanover Street archive continued to grow, referencing bioscopes, Christmas and Malay choirs, the new year carnival, shopping, the fish market and the Seven Steps.

A new road was built after the area was destroyed under apartheid. It roughly follows the contours of Hanover Street and was named Keisersgracht, functioning as a major road running through the District. One of the claimant organisations, the D6WC, announced that they had made the application to the City to have Keisersgracht renamed as Hanover Street (the announcement was made just after D6M had launched its campaign to reclaim the name of District Six. I will refer to this in the next section). Many people conflated D6M's 'Remember Hanover Street' project with naming of Keisersgracht and supported the project thinking it was a D6M one. The street naming event was supported by the Mayor who was keen on being seen to be positive about a District Six initiative. It took place on Heritage Day 2019. Some Seven Steps members wanted to stage a protest march on the event, and while D6M did not dissuade them from doing so, it did not offer its support. Even though what feels like the usurping of a name creates a difficulty for the longer-term project of renaming and memorialising with authentic traces, D6M was cautious about fomenting any more tension than there already was between the different stakeholder groups. Instead, it continued with its memory mapping and Hanover Street storytelling in the context of a series of art workshops and the members produced beautiful banners which they launched in the Museum space also on Heritage Day 2019. Participants commented that they had found the process to be both therapeutic and rewarding from a creative point of view, and much more fulfilling than a march might have been.

When asked about its view on the new name given to Keisersgracht, D6M was careful not to make the matter of authenticity in memorialisation the central issue. Imagination and reconstruction is

frequently a feature of memorial practices which are not necessarily about recreating authentic past experiences from memory. Questions of authenticity dominate preservationist heritage discourse and assumes a constancy over time (Macdonald 2018). The fragment of Hanover Street has been battered over time. It no longer bears any resemblance to its original form as a street. D6M's attitude was that because the landscape was so fragmented, any material traces which have some resemblance to a remembered past become particularly significant as the Hanover Street sliver of road had become. In addition, Hanover Street has special meaning to most District Sixers, and the thought of that special name being given to a street which was built over the ruins of their homes, has been offensive to those so affected. Lastly, the shared significance of Hanover Street meant that it could have been a unifying occasion for common celebration involving all the stakeholder groups but instead it has served as yet another tool of division.

DISTRICT SIX MEMORY MAP

The floor map shows Keizersgracht Street as it runs along the contour of the old Hanover Street. Despite the Apartheid state's attempt to create a new street grid in District Six the remnants of old streets, including Hanover Street, can still be found.

FIGURE 58

Reclaiming the name District Six

As indicated in Chapter 1, District Six was renamed 'Zonnebloem' by the apartheid government as part of the process of destroying the area. Until December 2019, 'Zonnebloem'was its official name on the map even though it was hardly used by anyone except possibly new residents in the area (not returning former residents). 'District Six' was still the name in common use. For that reason, many District Sixers were not concerned at its official name because to them it was and always had been District Six.

In reviving the discussions about the NHS process in 2018, it occurred to the group that when the declaration of the area was finalised, it needed to be District Six on the map, not Zonnebloem. That set in motion an application to the Provincial Government's Geographic Place and Place Names Committee to have the historic name reinstated. Claiming the right to return residentially, reclaiming social spaces and naming these reclaimed spaces are all components of the process of holistic restitution and restorative justice.

The Government Gazette of 17 December 2019 announced that the Minister of Arts and Culture Nathi Mthethwa, had approved the official name change from Zonnebloem to District Six. It was another step to undoing the invisibility of District Six brought about by apartheid. By their actions people declared that names do matter.

NHS project: District Six Memorial Park

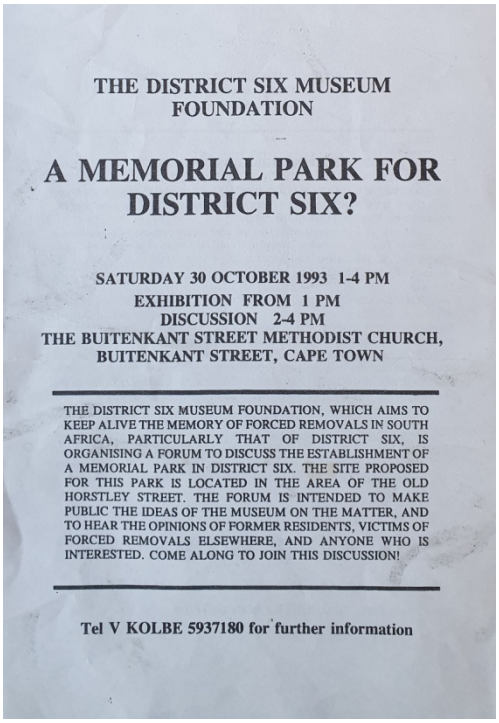
As far back as 1993, the District Six Museum Foundation (before D6M itself was launched) called for discussions about the creation of a Memorial Park for District Six. The idea emerged after archaeological digging by the University of Cape Town in Horstley Street, when several fragments and old foundations were uncovered.

This discussion has continued more recently in the context of the NHS declaration. With the awareness that the whole of the site would be materially changed and populated when restitution was in full swing, there was a felt need to preserve some of the barrenness of the vacant land. The Memorial Park was to stand in for the wounded site. It would retain some of its current state of desolation which tells its own story.

Horstley Street was proposed as a site for such an intervention. Materially, it is one of the few streets that has its cobbled road intact, exposed by the diggings. Symbolically, it tells the powerful story of both the first and last documented forced removals in the District. The first removal was the one referred to in Chapter 1, that of African dock workers who lived in Horstley Street and who were moved after the 1901 breakout of the bubonic plague. The last removal was that of the Hendricks

family who featured in a documentary made in 1983 by filmmaker Lindy Wilson called *Last Supper in Horstley Street* (also previously referred to).

An additional reason for its choice was that "its visibility, the views it commanded of the sea as well as Table Mountain and its historical associational significance (i.e. a place of water, laundry/clothes washing activity, a site of documented forced removals). The central design concept of the Memorial Park is based on the idea of providing some place of memory that would capture the quality of the expansive mound-filled,wind-swept desolation of the area, as it existed (and still exists) after the forced removals" (Le Grange, 2012). A design concept has been developed in partnership with District Sixers and other stakeholders, and this will be reviewed as much time has passed since that was done.



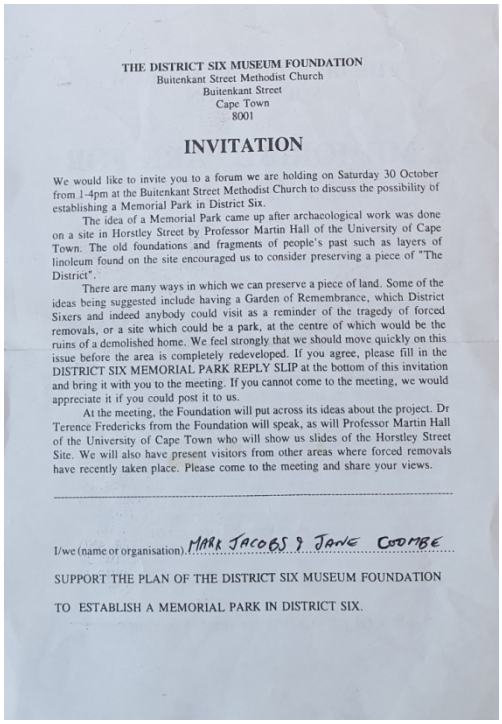
THE DISTRICT SIX MUSEUM FOUNDATION

A MEMORIAL PARK FOR DISTRICT SIX?

SATURDAY 30 OCTOBER 1993 1-4 PM
EXHIBITION FROM 1 PM
DISCUSSION 2-4 PM
THE BUITENKANT STREET METHODIST CHURCH,
BUITENKANT STREET, CAPE TOWN

THE DISTRICT SIX MUSEUM FOUNDATION, WHICH AIMS TO KEEP ALIVE THE MEMORY OF FORCED REMOVALS IN SOUTH AFRICA, PARTICULARLY THAT OF DISTRICT SIX, IS ORGANISING A FORUM TO DISCUSS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A MEMORIAL PARK IN DISTRICT SIX. THE SITE PROPOSED FOR THIS PARK IS LOCATED IN THE AREA OF THE OLD HORSTLEY STREET. THE FORUM IS INTENDED TO MAKE PUBLIC THE IDEAS OF THE MUSEUM ON THE MATTER, AND TO HEAR THE OPINIONS OF FORMER RESIDENTS, VICTIMS OF FORCED REMOVALS ELSEWHERE, AND ANYONE WHO IS INTERESTED. COME ALONG TO JOIN THIS DISCUSSION!

Tel V KOLBE 5937180 for further information



THE DISTRICT SIX MUSEUM FOUNDATION
Buitenkant Street Methodist Church
Buitenkant Street
Cape Town
8001

INVITATION

We would like to invite you to a forum we are holding on Saturday 30 October from 1-4pm at the Buitenkant Street Methodist Church to discuss the possibility of establishing a Memorial Park in District Six.

The idea of a Memorial Park came up after archaeological work was done on a site in Horstley Street by Professor Martin Hall of the University of Cape Town. The old foundations and fragments of people's past such as layers of linoleum found on the site encouraged us to consider preserving a piece of "The District".

There are many ways in which we can preserve a piece of land. Some of the ideas being suggested include having a Garden of Remembrance, which District Sixers and indeed anybody could visit as a reminder of the tragedy of forced removals, or a site which could be a park, at the centre of which would be the ruins of a demolished home. We feel strongly that we should move quickly on this issue before the area is completely redeveloped. If you agree, please fill in the DISTRICT SIX MEMORIAL PARK REPLY SLIP at the bottom of this invitation and bring it with you to the meeting. If you cannot come to the meeting, we would appreciate it if you could post it to us.

At the meeting, the Foundation will put across its ideas about the project. Dr Terence Fredericks from the Foundation will speak, as will Professor Martin Hall of the University of Cape Town who will show us slides of the Horstley Street Site. We will also have present visitors from other areas where forced removals have recently taken place. Please come to the meeting and share your views.

I/we (name or organisation) MARK JACOBS & JANE COOMBE

SUPPORT THE PLAN OF THE DISTRICT SIX MUSEUM FOUNDATION

TO ESTABLISH A MEMORIAL PARK IN DISTRICT SIX.

FIGURE 59 (A) & (B)

H. Conclusion to Chapter 5

While D6M still believes that the declaration of District Six as a NHS would be a positive move both for District Sixers and also for other communities, engaging in the process has continually felt like trying to push a square peg into the proverbial round hole. Having started as working collaboratively with SAHRA, the relationship has deteriorated to the extent that it has often felt like different languages were being spoken by D6M and SAHRA, and that each had a different idea of what the declared site could be. That common language is yet to be forged but can only be done in the context of deep dialogue.

In this chapter I have identified some of the challenges. I have referred to D6M's strength in the field of memory work and its limited experience in terms of formal heritage legislation. Seventeen years ago it felt like an empowering challenge to take on, particularly under the guidance of the entity that was responsible for implementing the legislation, ie SAHRA. D6M has tried to navigate that space between memory and heritage, causing a drain on its limited resources in doing so. Allocating human and financial resources to keeping site work fresh and dynamic has come at a cost.

Some of the major issues have been about the lack of shared vision of what the NHS might be and what it could achieve on the ground; the lack of transparency from SAHRA about what the actual blockages were and suggestions for how to resolve them; an over-investment in legislation as a management tool and an under-investment in the people closely tied to the heritage; differences in understanding about the role and nature of intangible heritage, as well as about the different locales of expertise and knowledge.

This has been the pitting against each other of memory and heritage in a way that could not have been anticipated in 2004.

There are a number of people who have given up on the process and do not believe that it will happen. They continue to participate in D6M site programmes for the direct value that they derive from it, not needing it to be connected to a project of national significance. However, there are a number of others who remain committed to the process with all its flaws, and are keen to assist in helping to bring it to fruition.

D6M remains committed to seeing this through. It remains open to reasonable changes to the original plan provided that it still fulfils its intended purpose in the lives of the community. A site of sterile declaration just to tick a box on a performance plan will have limited meaning and longevity.

It has become clear that D6M's strategy in working with SAHRA has not been effective. A new plan of action is needed.

Conclusion


District Six Heritage Status Now!!!
HAMILTON ST
STOP
SAHRA
ROCHESTER RD
MUIR STREET
District Six
54

Conclusion

"Nothing can be worse than a return to normality", writes Arundhati Roy.[278]

This is not a statement we want to hear at a time when all the world wants is a return to a semblance of normality. Collectively, we long for the day when there is no need to wear masks, dream of vaccines or count the death tolls. We long for a time when reading that 'only 100 deaths occurred today' does not constitute good news. We long for a return to normal working hours, for a time when we can visit our museums and galleries, do site walks and continue the engagements to activate the National Heritage Site in District Six.

Roy reminds us that what we had we had accepted as normal is what created the vulnerability for the virus to take root in the first place, and it requires us all – some more than others[279] – to not return to the life of resource extraction and unbridled consumption that has become the regular way in which we engage with our world.

The pandemic has forced us to think twice about many things; to evaluate what things matter more than other things, and even bargaining with life, promising to be better people if we 'make it through to the other side.' Roy speaks of the pandemic as a portal – "a gateway between one world and the next". She reminds us that historically pandemics have forced a break with the past to imagine a new world. Some passage of time is needed before the story of the pandemic can be written when all of its implications have become more apparent. We are still too close to fully process its impact in its totality

There are several ways in which a biography of District Six Museum could have been approached. I have resisted the urge to focus on the great names that have emerged from its midst : the writers, thought leaders, politicians, artists, sportsmen, musicians and educators. In a traditional sense that might have made District Six's claim to fame easier, but it would be following in the mould of what I have just critiqued. Instead, I have used its journey through the different phases of its own memory work in order to write its partial biography. It is not written as a linear account of D6M's 'first this, then that' series of calendric events, but rather in the mode of what Plutarch calls a 'word portrait' of a life.

[278] 'The pandemic is a portal' by Arundhati Roy. 3 April 2020. Available at https://www.ft.com/content/ [Accessed 7 December 2020]
[279] See reference to the capitalocene in the Foreword.

> It being my purpose to write the lives of Alexander the king, and of Caesar, by whom Pompey was destroyed, the multitude of their great actions affords so large a field that I were to blame if I should not by way of apology forewarn my reader that I have chosen rather to epitomize the most celebrated parts of their story, than to insist at large on every particular circumstance of it. It must be borne in mind that my design is not to write histories but lives.[280]

My design, like Plutarch, was not to write a history but a life story of D6M, not necessarily calling on the most celebrated parts of its life, but those that have reference to its life of memory and heritage, and its discovery that at times it occupies a space of liminality between the two.

The declaration of District Six as a NHS is definitely not a matter of life and death. It cannot be compared to the things that need to change in order to secure (if secure we can) the future life of the planet. But it can be placed in the category of all the things in life that need to be re-evaluated and done differently in this moment. It can be one of the things that we can all do better.

'The People's Declaration of District Six' was an important moment of citizen action. It signalled an organic return even if momentarily, to the counter memory aspect of D6M. At the same time it was also a statement to SAHRA that even if they did not take up the invitation to support the community, it would not alter people's relationship to the land that had propelled their lives into unexpected trajectories and which was the essence of its national significance

D6M had underestimated the gap between memory and heritage, and needs new ways to work at bridging it. An admission that a strategy is not working is also an acknowledgement that something needs to change. Maybe it is time for D6M to review its commitment to a path of 'polite politics' – a term that has been used in relation to Hong Kong protests. In that context, 'polite politics' is described as "peaceful and rational and followed existing rules and regulations set up by police. The protesters did not disrupt social life or resort to violence..."(Ho Kwok-leung, 2000). I am not proposing violent protest, but suggesting rather that D6M releases itself from its usual approach and strategises with a new-found openness. Having always depended on its ability to facilitate difficult dialogues and to find non-conflictual methods of problem-solving, its approach has not worked in its interactions with SAHRA. It needs a renewed arsenal of tools; maybe weapons. It needs to lead a more robust process.

One of the things that might need to change is SAHRA's dependence on D6M as a proxy for the community. Several attempts have been made to get SAHRA to engage with District Sixers and other NHS supporters directly. Community members have been keen; SAHRA not so much.

[280] Plutarch paraphrased in'What's the difference between a history and a biography?' by Tim Windowfield. Available at https://vridar.org/2017/06/07/ [Accessed 30 January 2019]

Did SAHRA err when it proposed nomination under Section 27 of the NHRA? Whether it was because of the newness of the Act which had not yet been tested in a wide range of cases, or because of other reasons, it needs to be verbalised and stated before a next phase can be broached. If a new route is to be followed the reasons need to be explicitly stated. D6M has always been cautious about labelling people or entities as incompetent, but in its new robust approach, maybe it is time to express incompetence as a possibility.

Possibly it is time to appeal to the Chapter 9 *Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural , Religious and Linguistic Communities*[281] for intervention. It might also be time to convert some of its processions into marches.

A memorial practice has been destroyed; a name has been usurped[282]; a street has been incorrectly named; restitution homes remain incomplete and the site continues to be vulnerable. D6M's reputation has been adversely affected by having enthused people about a process which seems to be going nowhere. That is for D6M to deal with, and it is able to do so with the confidence of being surrounded by a community which understands problem-solving through dialogue, and who continue for the most part to trust its integrity. More effort needs to be put into bringing the processes of restitution and declaration closer together under the banner of restorative justice.

Roy ends off her piece with these words: "We can choose to walk through it, dragging the carcasses of our prejudice and hatred, our avarice, our data banks and dead ideas, our dead rivers and smoky skies behind us. Or we can walk through lightly, with little luggage, ready to imagine another world. And ready to fight for it."[283]

This might be a portal of another kind that we need to walk through. We can emerge with a model which demonstrates that heritage can be empowering, that carefully designed processes are key, and that people matter more than they are made to feel. Or we can continue to drag the dead weight of leaden monuments and plaques along with us

I understand that the NHRA is largely geared towards systematic management of heritage tool and for that reason is a very technical document and process. But its technical nature should not overshadow the fact that heritage is being protected for people. It can "facilitate healing and material restitution

[281] Chapter 9 of The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, page 96. 'State institutions supporting constitutional democracy'.
[282] In 2018 CPUT renamed its Cape Town campus, the 'District Six campus'. Geographically correct though it is, D6M was not wholly supportive of this move as it came at a time when there were tensions between CPUT and community members, and the renaming was offered as one of the solutions without dealing with the real issues. D6M believed that CPUT, despite its lack of acknowledgement of its complicity in the destruction of the District Six environs and practices which were dear to people, was capitalising on the investment made by D6M and several other individuals and organisations to elevate the story of the community without any real investment from themselves.
[283] The pandemic is a portal' by Arundhati Roy. 3 April 2020. Available at https://www.ft.com/content/ [Accessed 7 December 2020]

and it promotes new and previously neglected research into our rich oral traditions and customs"[284] – but it needs good processes to help it fulfil its mandate on all levels.

So while this thesis has been about memory and heritage, and the struggles with a dense bureaucracy that seems to be disconnected in its day-to-day practice from the broad vision of strengthening our rights–based world, it is ultimately about understanding the impact of dignifying people's experiences. Memory is a powerful tool to achieve this; spanning the chasm between it and heritage can render it even more powerful.

District Six Museum's future is in some ways more uncertain than many other museums at this time. While there is a version of it can exist alongside others in a virtual world of webinars, tours and other activities, most of its natural constituency will be excluded from that level of interaction by the lack of available technology. So far it has weathered the storm well but it will be tested to the limits of its creativity and innovation in the months to come.

We have no choice other than to imagine a new world on all levels.

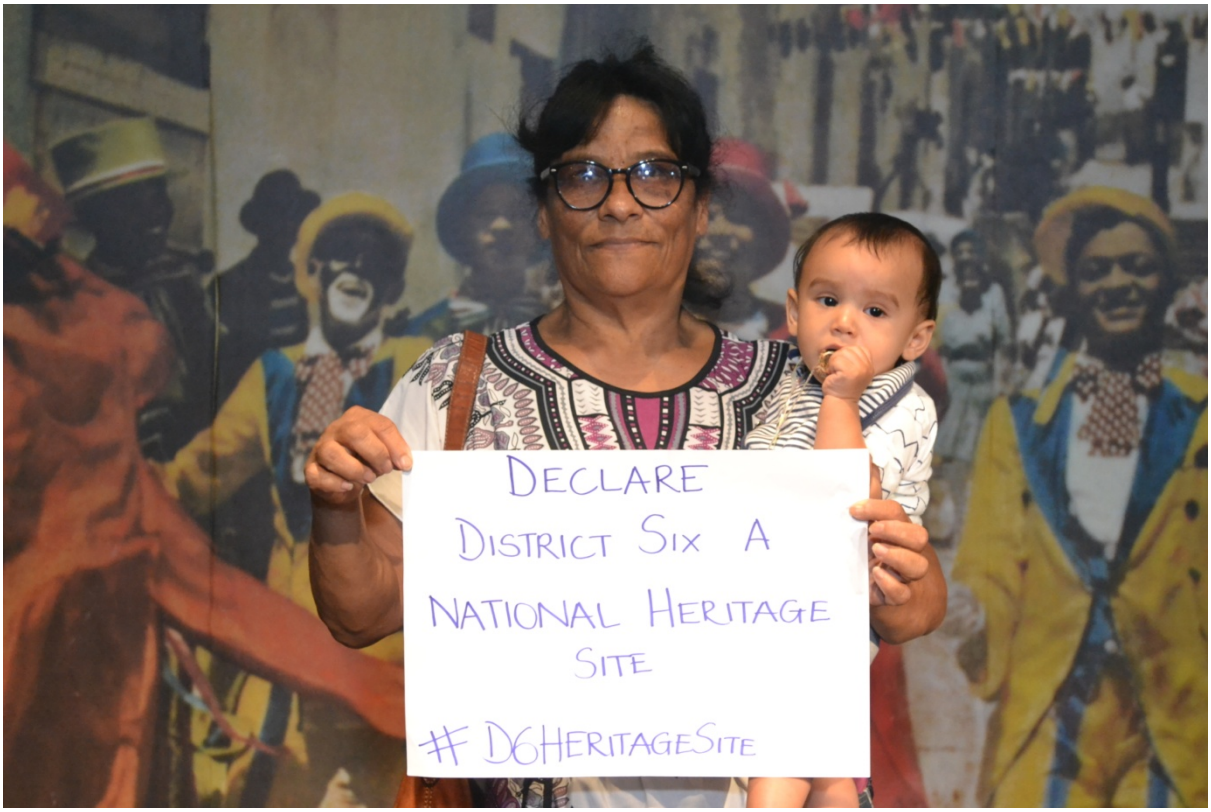


FIGURE 60

[284] Preamble to the NHRA of 1999.

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