



The map above shows that the erosion of UH's amenity generally occurs on the fringe of the region and along mobility routes, although isolated incidents seem to have recently penetrated the central UH area. Even though any development of conflicting character should be of concern, the inner fragmentation of UH constitutes a most disturbing trend and particularly, if the architectural integrity as a whole, in the central region, is to be regarded an important factor in the determination of a UH heritage site. The result of which impacts directly on regional significance (the HPF value). Unsuitable development proposals were found to pursue diverse intentions, but typically involve some form of densification. Addressing the exact nature of such development falls beyond the scope of this survey. However, with the exception of one extreme case, which we believe (in the interests of conservation) is most relevant and hence deserves brief mention.

We here refer to a large housing development proposed for the eastern gateway to UH, incorporating part of the ridge area which abuts the St Patrick Heritage Corridor cul-de-sac. The implementation of which resulted in the illegal demolition of no less than 3 residential structures known to have been of substantial architectural merit. Most notably, is the fact that these structures were razed to the ground without the submission of a single demolition application and despite the intervention of the UHA, the City Council of Johannesburg and the Provincial Heritage Resources Agency of Gauteng. The houses in question were designed by J S Donaldson (1916 single storey Colonial style), Stucke and Harrison (1920 double storey early Arts and Crafts) and James C Cook (1926 double storey Manor in the Classic style).\*

New development in UH, as in all other established areas, is essential for the regions socio-economic regeneration and survival. Spearheaded by market forces, this evolutionary process, as in the past, will continue. There is nevertheless no justification for development at the expense of Johannesburg's architectural heritage. The relentless substitution of



EVIDENCE OF VANDALISM, RECENTLY RECORDED IN THE ST JOHN ROAD ENCLAVE.

\*styles as defined in this survey

of culturally significant heritage resources by a contextually inferior urban environment (in the interests of densification), is not only inappropriate but (in terms of land use management) an irresponsibly shortsighted notion which should be discontinued. Merely the apparent failure of authorities (with legislative structures at their disposal) to circumvent the prevailing erosion of UH's historic amenity alone, should constitute reason enough for the motivation of a heritage site in the UH region.

UH unquestionably possesses a rich architectural heritage, but probably the most remarkable disclosure emerging from this survey is the fact that the central region remains relatively intact and it is this feature that constitutes its most valued asset. The survival of which, can not be taken for granted. Even though many UH structures may not be visually accessible to the casual passer-by, densely tree lined avenues (*heritage planting*, public address: Ronnie Kasrils, Arbor Week 2003) and stone walls allow occasional glimpses of architecture which had witnessed Johannesburg emerging shortly after the gold rush period and the South African War (Anglo-Boer; 1899-1902). Indeed a unique environment created by a combination of two essential components: historic architecture in a established green setting. Admittedly, the densification of UH is an inevitable reality and it is clearly this aspect which will demand a most tailored planning approach. The conservation of the UH region presents itself as a compelling and challenging conservation opportunity which, in the interest of future generations, can not be dismissed.



THE ST PATRICK HERITAGE CORRIDOR:  
HOUSE BLANE (GATEHOUSE AND GARDEN WALL ENTRANCE) AT 65 ST PATRICK ROAD  
CRAWFORD STUART 1911

### PART 3: THE NOMINATION

#### REVIEW OF SALIENT FINDINGS

##### History:

Farming settlement pre 1888.

Gold prospecting 1888-94.

Residential (township established by JCI, 1903).

The name Houghton Estate is derived from Houghton Estate Gold Mining Company (estate owner), purchased 1988.

The institutional history enjoys a strong relationship with JCI, founded by the Bernato brothers.

House Porter is the oldest dwelling in UH, erected in 1902.

70% of surviving structures are located on properties which were developed between 1900-30, constituting the principal feature of the regions built cultural heritage.

##### Geography:

The study area covers a relatively small area of 220 hectares. The study area consists of 316 properties (which include The Munro and the Louis Botha bus shelter road reserves).

The 4 properties comprising The Wilds, Roedean School, King Edward VII School and St Johns College occupy

27% of the total study area.

UH includes the Houghton ridge areas and abuts the historic region of Parktown with Roedean School bridging the common boundary. It further links to the eastern most corner of Hillbrow where present restoration projects, administered by the City of Johannesburg, are in progress.

#### Architecture:

Architectural styles most prevalent in the study area were found to be typical of the period 1900-30, representing the transition from Classicism to Modernism. This sets the precedent for a generic architectural vernacular.

The conspicuous prevalence of natural kopje stone structures (including retaining- and boundary walls) dating back to the post-war (South African War) period was identified to be a significant distinguishing regional feature. Material condition: The investigation found that most properties of merit contain substantial evidence of original fabric, with a minor degree of lost or obliterated architecture.

75 Of the 181 properties of merit had been poorly altered, but are potentially restorable.

#### Statement of cultural significance:

30 Properties were excluded due to insufficient data.

104 Properties were found to possess no or meagre heritage value.

181 Properties (of merit) were found to possess heritage value, which include 97 culturally significant properties.

Regional significance HPF factor of 0.57 applies to the total study area (the site).

The investigation revealed that built structures, sited on properties of merit;

- typically feature architecture worthy of conservation, representing the work of 24 most prominent architects responsible for shaping the architectural character of emerging Johannesburg
- and occasionally represent historic significance in respect of cultural, sport, science, academic and corporate achievement.

Properties of significance include metropolitan landmarks The Munro, The Wilds, King Edward VII School and St Johns College as well as the homes of Phillip Edward Treeby, Frank Leonard Hodgson Fleming, George Esselmont Gordon Leith and Saul Lewis Margo.

9 Properties in the study area currently possess heritage status (as defined).

The central subregion (surrounding the Munro-Elm Street and St Patrick Road heritage corridors) was found to contain a high density of heritage resources, referred to as the area of cultural significance. Regional significance HPF factor of 0.65 applies to the central subregion of cultural significance.

#### Natural heritage:

The survey recorded extensive heritage planting (notably Oak tree and Jacaranda hedgerows established mid to late 1920s and indigenous planting in The Wilds established 1937) to be an important and distinguishing feature of the study area.

Exposed natural rock formations typical of the ridge area were found to be of geological significance.

The survey noted that The Wilds and surrounding central area of cultural significance is considered to be a bird habitat resource.

#### Development:

The survey found the study area to be subject to an acceleration of development activity, substantially exceeding past development spikes. Future projections indicate current development trends to intensify.

The survey further recorded numerous developments which have impacted adversely on heritage resources.

The survey shows that the UHNDP, without supporting conservation legislation, has failed to effectively prevent the erosion of heritage resources.

#### Conclusion:

The investigation concludes that the study area represents a significant, yet vulnerable cultural heritage resource. The resource embodies a combination of built and natural environmental features.

The survey establishes that structures of merit provide evidence of South African social origin and are valuable, finite, non-renewable and irreplaceable.

The investigation shows resources to contain special qualities which make them significant within the context of a provincial region, and falls within the category of grading which represents Grade 2 heritage resources.

The study area further holds the economic capacity to support sustainable conservation initiatives.

Sustainable revitalization of the UH region depends on the introduction of appropriate development controls formulated to conserve and enhance the cultural amenity of the region as a whole.

The survey identifies the central area of cultural significance to contain a high frequency of surviving resources, typical of the period 1900-1930, with a HPF value of 0.65.

The survey generally indicates that any mobility corridor or surrounding area (subject to specific findings) with a HPF value greater than 0.5 could be regarded potentially conservation worthy in terms of a formal heritage site declaration.