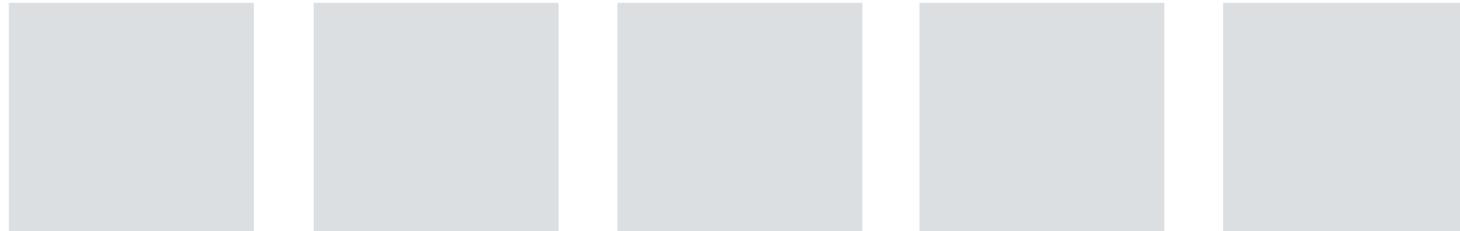
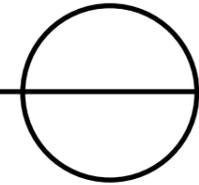


03

**Design Informants and Concept**



## 3.0 Design Informants and Concept

### 3.1 Informants

The urban planning context for District Six is based on the following key principles which have been derived from an understanding of the site and an interpretation of the brief. They have been arrived at after many years of study, and are the result of an iterative program of work, including a process of community participation. Together they constitute the broad informants of the Urban Design Framework.

#### 3.1.1 Community and Restitution

Central to the District Six project is the fact of land restitution - to return the land to those who were forcibly removed with the implementation of the Group Areas Act from the late 1960's onwards. It is the return and re-housing of this community that focuses the brief/program of the overall project at its various scales. In interpreting this brief, consideration was given to:

- the issue of restitution and inner-city reconstruction;
- an understanding of the social dynamics between people and place; and
- the needs and aspirations of claimants.

#### 3.1.2 The Idea of Place and the District Six Site

The District Six site is of significance not only because of the social history associated with it, but also because of its important physical qualities and the way these define the character of the place. With this understanding of the site, consideration has been given to:

- the “genius loci” of the site – its setting in a place between mountain and sea;
- the physical geography and morphology of the site – its various gradients along the slopes of Devil's Peak;
- the identification of landscape assets worthy of preservation;
- the natural features - springs, tree avenues, ridges and valleys; and
- the linkages to surroundings – visual and access systems.



Community Meeting 1998



Signing of the agreement with Land Affairs 2000

#### 3.1.3 Heritage Issues

While District Six has been blighted with the destruction that followed in the wake of the forced removals, there are many remaining buildings as well as 'latent' heritage elements that have informed the urban design framework, the interpretation of which includes:

- the District Six site as a palimpsest - a layering of different histories, memories and realities;
- the conservation and celebration of remaining community buildings;
- the recovery and reconstruction of historic street grid; and
- the preservation of archaeological sites.

#### 3.1.4 The role of the site within the context of the City of Cape Town

Given its strategic location and proximity to the CBD, the District Six site must fulfil a number of broader objectives in terms of the way the city works and will work in the future. This includes amongst other things:

- the repair and re-use of “brown-field” land;
- District Six as mixed use but primarily residential district providing well located urban housing for returning claimants and a range of other income groups;
- District Six as an important destination within the City as a place for learning, education, skills acquisition and is home to a number of important inner city schools and institutions including CPUT; and
- with the view to provide a vibrant and sustainable environment a deliberate strategy of mixed land use development is also of crucial importance.

The Development Framework has been further informed through an understanding of the spatial opportunities and constraints which are inherent in the site. These are summarised as follows:

### 3.2 Spatial Opportunities

- ① Reestablish New Hanover Street / Keizersgracht as the central spine and activity focus of District Six
- ② Create a heart or centre along New Hanover Street with a distinct character that people can identify with
- ③ Reinforce and celebrate the gateways into District Six
- ④ Integrate District Six and the East City with the CBD
- ⑤ Make visible the built heritage of the site by acknowledging and celebrating important sites and reinstating the historic street pattern
- ⑥ Investigate the opportunity to narrow the width of Keizersgracht which is over scaled given its envisaged role within the wider movement network
- ⑦ Reinforce the MOSS Green open space mountain to sea link through Trafalgar Park and the Zonnebloem Estate
- ⑧ Bring the existing hidden and buried water courses to the surface and use the water in a positive and productive way where possible
- ⑨ Consolidate under utilised green open space and create a clear and legible open space network
- ⑩ Improve connectivity within the site and to the surrounding urban areas of Chapel Street, Woodstock and Vredehoek
- ⑪ Capitalise on strategic transport improvements, particularly the IRT along Sir Lowry Road and use the footfall generated by these facilities to structure the urban fabric and create vibrant public spaces
- ⑫ Develop Government owned land and vacant sites not part of the restitution project
- ⑬ Celebrate the entry into the city on De Waal Drive
- ⑭ Visually connect to the mountain and sea
- ⑮ Retain and enhance existing public facilities and improve spatial and institutional linkages
- ⑯ Reinforce the educational cluster around the Zonnebloem Estate.



FIGURE 3.1 OPPORTUNITIES PLAN

### 3.3 Spatial Constraints

- ① Existing buildings and private ownership need to be respected
- ② Challenging geotechnical conditions; including steep gradients, infill and level changes will present serious challenges to access and will require particular structural solutions.
- ③ Underground infrastructure and buried water courses are constraints for development unless relocated or reinforced can not be built over
- ④ Historically important environments such as the Castle, Grand Parade and existing institutions to be retained and their settings enhanced.
- ⑤ Nelson Mandela Boulevard and De Waal Drive are divisive elements and physical barriers to movement and access
- ⑥ Proposed road widening schemes in the East City, particularly the Tennant Street / McKenzie Street Scheme
- ⑦ The Cape Peninsula University of Technology is a large single land use and currently a physical, impenetrable barrier to movement
- ⑧ Other larger sites, such as schools and walled public facilities, form barriers to movement and access
- ⑨ Public green open space to be safeguarded and improved.
- ⑩ Pedestrian access over the highways is limited to a number of pedestrian foot bridges.
- ⑪ A potential vehicular underpass linking District Six to Vredehoek is proposed by the CoCT and needs to be safeguarded
- ⑫ De Waal Drive is designated as a Scenic Route and views from this national road are protected
- ⑬ Archeologically sensitive sites requiring additional explorations to be safeguarded and integrated into the urban fabric



FIGURE 3.2 CONSTRAINTS PLAN

### 3.4 Spatial Design Informants

Spatial design informants are closely connected to the opportunities and constraints. They do not constrain development nor are they explicit opportunities but rather become a frame of reference within which future design decisions can be made during later precinct design stages. These include:

1. Reintroducing the historic street grid as a means of reconnecting the proposed new development with the memory of District Six.
2. Historically significant sites can provide a number of anchor points within the urban fabric which are directly linked to the creation of space and the memorialisation of the past
3. Slope, topography and level changes can be used creatively to give character to individual areas and public spaces. Slope and level change can also be used to inform the response to aspects of building height, built form and residential density.
4. Historic and existing institutions should be used to generate the structure of the urban form and their settings enhanced.
5. Buried water courses could be brought back to the surface and integrated positively within the wider open space network.
6. Noise and air pollution from highways have a negative effect on the quality of residential environments and need to be mitigated.
7. Views and visual connections are another particular attribute to the site. There are a number of local and more strategic views that have been respected and safeguarded in the design process.
8. The particular micro climate of the site, with its northerly aspect, dominant southerly winds and rain bearing north westerly winds require a particular design response in terms of the orientation of units and the creation of public spaces
9. The scale and massing of the existing built fabric forms the first point of reference for establishing building heights and massing of the new development. Taller buildings could be located in the East City subject to more detailed assessment of impacts.

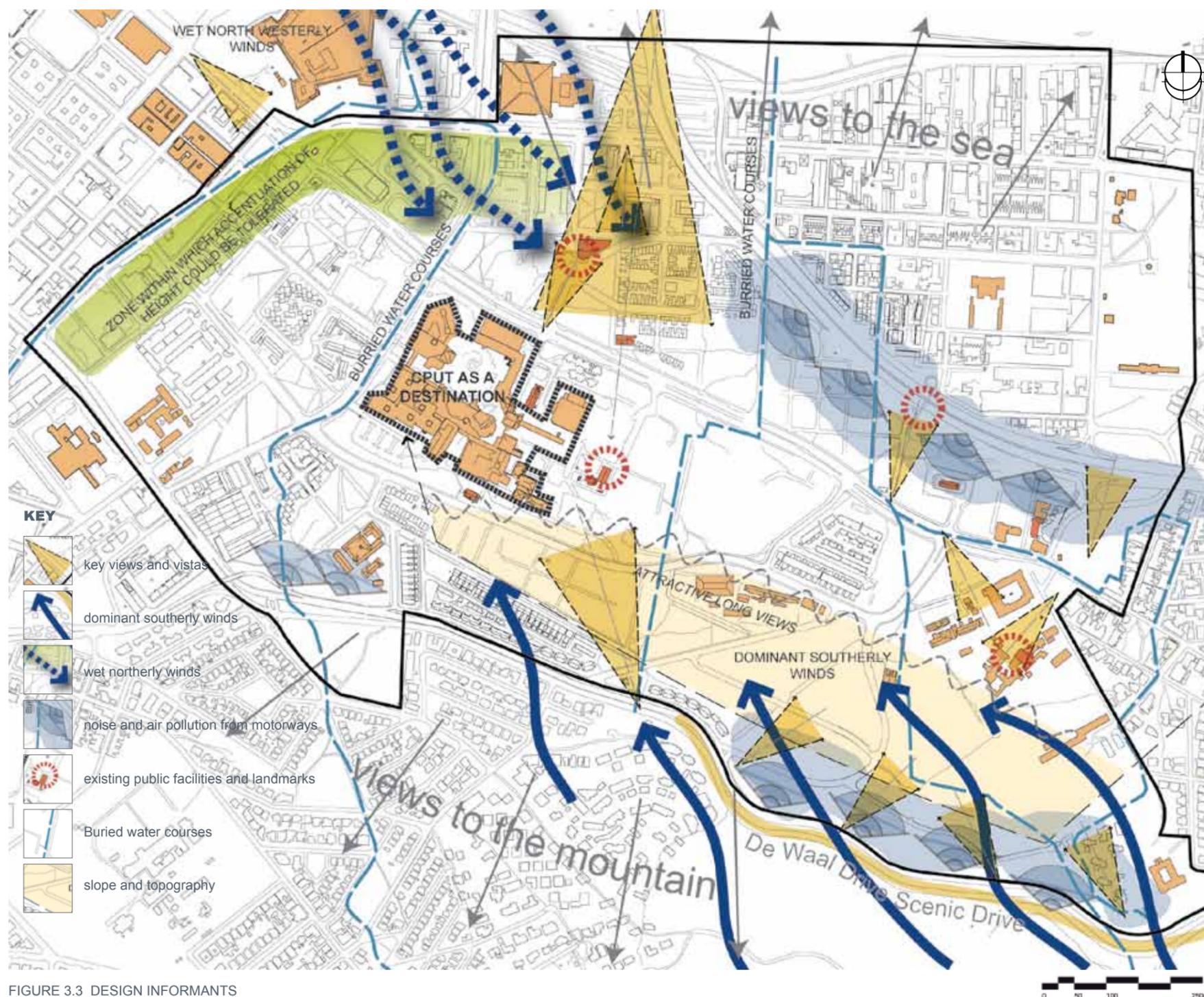


FIGURE 3.3 DESIGN INFORMANTS

### 3.5 The Concept and Structural Diagram

Unlike a spatial concept which may underpin the design of a building the concept for the District Six Development Framework is more abstract and provides a framework which guides further development. The concept is therefore flexible, adaptable and layered and is further unpacked as a series of strategies which are outlined in Section 4.

The adjacent structural diagram seeks to distil the essence of the framework into a single diagram.

- Strategic green mountain to sea linkages
- The underlying historic street grid
- Primary urban gateways
- Key connections and routes
- Key nodes and focal points within the area at the intersection of key pedestrian links
- Institutional landscape connections
- Green open space connections
- Primary and secondary frontages
- The location of the primary open spaces



FIGURE 3.4 STRUCTURAL DIAGRAM

### 3.6 The Indicative Land Use Framework Plan

The principles and informants outlined above, together with the guidance provided in the TBSDP form the basis on which the proposed land use for District Six has been developed. The adjacent plan (Figure 3.5) contextualises the Structural Diagram (Figure 3.4) of the site and considers the site as a whole including all the sites identified for restitution as well as other sites that will be developed in time. It illustrates the key structuring routes, the distribution of uses and densities, the key open space and the location of existing and proposed community facilities.

#### Fundamental Design Principles

The fundamental design principles of the Indicative Land Use Framework are as follows:

- Reinststate the historic street grid and fine grain character of old District Six
- Enhance the setting of the remaining historic buildings as unique and distinctive places within the urban fabric
- Safeguard important vistas and protected views
- New Hanover Street as an activity corridor and the primary element of urban structure, in a reconfigured form
- Protect and improve natural, green linkages through the site, particularly mountain to sea links
- Create a clear and permeable network of routes and opens spaces
- Urban form to be of a human scale and responsive to the micro climate and local topographical conditions
- Improve linkages with the surrounding urban fabric
- Provide a variety of typologies of public spaces and associated activities / buildings
- A clear definition of precincts/ neighbourhoods
- Ensure the adequate provision of public facilities and that these are associated with key elements of the public space structure



