

M'THE POWER OF POWER': THE USES OF INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE, AND POWER STATIONS IN PARTICULAR, IN CONTEMPORARY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS AND IN THE HISTORY CURRICULUM.

Sue Krige

Senior Tutor, School of Education, University of the Witwatersrand.

NOT TO BE QUOTED WITHOUT PERMISSION OF THE AUTHOR

Mahatma Gandhi on his feelings about leaving Johannesburg in 1914

I learnt during all those years to love Johannesburg even though it was a mining camp. It was in Johannesburg that I found my most precious friends. It was in Johannesburg that the foundation of passive resistance was laid in September 1906. Johannesburg therefore had the holiest of all the holy associations that Mrs. Gandhi and I will carry back to India.

Introduction: The Power of Place and the Meaning of Cultural Significance¹

A physical place or a space of heritage significance provides an immediate story or stories that build on our appreciation of our common and diverse histories and cultures. It can also provide a unique window onto local, national and international facets of South African history. Nothing can replace actually 'being there' and encountering the textures of place.

However, there has been a consistent undervaluing of Johannesburg's *industrial architecture and heritage*, to the point of malicious neglect. Indeed, in general, the rapidly diminishing markers of our mining and industrial heritage have been regarded as ugly, intruding on refurbished urban landscapes which aim to be

¹ Adapted from H Prins and S Krige, Heritage Impact Assessment for Newtown Electrical Precinct, (Unpublished, February 2005).

aesthetically pleasing to visitors. Industrial heritage should be seen as having cultural value and significance, particularly for a city like Johannesburg. According to the National Heritage Resources Act (NHRA) of 1999 the measures of cultural significance are: aesthetic, architectural, historical, scientific, social, spiritual, linguistic or technological value or significance. At least five of these measures relate to industrial buildings depending on how beautiful you think the buildings are! (APPENDIX A: IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS FROM THE NATIONAL HERITAGE RESOURCES ACT OF 1999)

The conservation of industrial heritage is certainly not only about buildings. Oral histories (which often reclaim invisible/neglected voices) provide an incredibly important dimension to such work. According to the Act, the *association of a person or particular community or communities with a place* is a measure of cultural significance. It is also not only about individual buildings. The Act recognises heritage significance resides *in the whole (the precinct), its landscape*, as well as the parts (the buildings). The idea of a heritage precinct or area adds to how we understand and work with heritage. (See Part Two)

This paper is a case study of one historical and cultural precinct in the greater Johannesburg area – Newtown. Newtown contains substantial physical remains of industrial buildings connected with the supply of electricity and other services to Johannesburg. It is subject to major urban renewal initiatives which have required substantial historical investigation in preparation for statements of cultural significance, and conservation management plans.

My research into this precinct has made me reconsider standard historical narratives and approaches. I found that I was involved in a process of *revisiting histories of the city of Johannesburg and its people in a local, national and international context*. Thus heritage can make us reconsider our historical research perspectives too.

This paper:

- outlines the history of the Newtown precinct and its power stations, and the people who worked and lived there
- explores the 'first' and 'second lives' of historic industrial precincts in the context of urban renewal
- considers the role of industrial heritage in heritage studies, particularly in the Primary and FET History curriculum. I will draw on my own experience with learners in this regard.

Part One: The Bodies Electric²

A Brief History of Early Newtown

After the discovery of gold in 1886, thousands of people of all races came to look for work in Johannesburg. Many found work outside the labour-hungry mines. Unemployed Afrikaners were given permission to manufacture bricks from clay along the Fordsburg Spruit. So began the Brickfields – home to thousands of unskilled workers of all races who could find no other work. A number of independent transport riders and cab drivers also settled in the area. So too did the Amawasha, groups of Zulu men, who had captured the market for washing the laundry of the city. By early 1896, Brickfields was home to about 7000 people.

In 1896, despite many protests and petitions, a major portion of the Brickfields was handed over to the Netherlands South African Railway Company (NZASM) to use as a marshalling yard – the Kazerne railway yards. The government established Burghersdorp as a residential area for poor whites. It lay between the Brickfields, and Fordsburg, 'Kafir Location' and 'Coolie Location'. The latter 'location' had been established in 1887 by Paul Kruger for people of Indian origin. As more and more people moved to Johannesburg, Burghersdorp and Location residents began renting out backyard shacks and the area soon became multicultural and multiracial.

After the Anglo-Boer war, in 1902, the new British administration under Lord Milner set about creating order, formal racial segregation and infrastructure to support the

² S Krige, A History of the Jeppe Street Power Station (Unpublished, January 2005)

mines and industrial growth in Johannesburg. The valuable land in what was to be called Newtown, next to the railway marshalling yard, was earmarked for industrial development. The Burghersdorp land was expropriated at a cost of £1 million.

In 1904, as part of clearing the mixed area around Newtown and creating an orderly and space around the new Market on the north side of a market square, the Transvaal Government declared that there was bubonic plague in 'Coolie Location'. The Coolie location was burned to the ground, after which the government ordered the removal of some 3, 552 Indian, Cape Malay and African men, women and children. They were moved to a camp on Klipspruit farm, portion No. 318, close to the newly constructed railway line and the Johannesburg Potchefstroom Road. This forced removal marked the beginning of Soweto.

The Electrical Precinct

With the 'slums' out of the way, the City Council set about developing a new industrial area and wholesale/retail area, called Newtown.

For 90 years, Newtown was an industrial area, home to the first three major power stations supplying the city of Johannesburg with electricity. From 1886, the city was voracious in its demand for power, but gas was the main source for the city. After the Anglo-Boer War, Lord Milner and the city fathers made the supply of electricity a priority. Their target was not the mines, which obtained power from Sammy Marks' Victoria Falls and Transvaal Power Company. The city itself had to become a reliable supplier of goods and services to the mining industry. In order to support mechanized transport in the form of trams, in 1906, the city commissioned a power station on the President Street boundary fitted with gas driven turbines. Today this building houses the Sci-Bono Discovery Centre, or 'Electric Workshop'. The gas turbines functioned intermittently. Explosions and gas leaks forced the closure in 1907, while the corrupt contractors fled. The building became a substation and then workshop – hence the name the 'Electric Workshop'. Between 1906 and 1907, tram sheds were built on the south east corner of the Electrical Precinct for the housing

and servicing of the new electric trams. They were designed to house 115 tram cars. The Reserve Bank stands on this site today.

A second power station was hastily built in 1907. It was on the site where the SAB World of Beer Museum is now situated. This Second President Street Power Station, powered by less menacing steam turbines, supplied the adolescent city until 1927. Industrialisation and mechanisation after the First World War meant that the station could hardly keep up with demand. In March 1922 angry white strikers, including those working in the power station, added to an often chaotic situation when they attacked the station and shut it down. Johannesburg was without electricity for nearly a week. The Annual Report of the General Manager of the Gas and Electricity Supply Department commented on the effect of the strike on the power station:

Power Station employees drew the fires, shut down the station and declared a strike. Power could not be generated that night and the whole Municipal area was plunged in darkness.

Thus, in the hope of stabilizing the power supply, the City built the Jeppe Street Power Station, which emerged haphazardly between 1927 and 1934. However, it was soon eclipsed by Orlando Power Station, begun in 1939. After functioning in tandem with Orlando and Kelvin Power Stations, the JPS was closed in 1961. But that was not the end of the saga. Today, lights in the south section of the Turbine Hall indicate the presence of benign gas aero-jet turbines, driven by two Rolls Royce engines, installed in 1967. They still function in emergencies as standby and for peak loading periods.

What about the Workers (and the Bosses?)

On the north boundary of the Electrical Precinct, there is A fully preserved Municipal Workers' Compound and a set shiftmen's and managers' cottages and domestic workers' quarters. These were grouped together, refurbished and declared a National Monument in 1995. As was noted by the National Monuments Council³ at the time,

³ This was replaced by the South African Heritage Resource Authority in 1999.

The buildings on the Newtown Power Station [sic] are a compact illustration of the distinctive nature of the South African Working class as a whole. The workers' houses fronting on Jeppe Street, occupied by white craftsmen and their families, serve as a foil to the domestic workers' shacks (which housed single servants in the backyards of the houses) as well as the compound provided by the Johannesburg Electricity Department, for their black male labourers.

The title 'craftsmen' is somewhat misleading in the context of the Electrical Precinct. These were 'shiftsmen' ranging from artisans to highly skilled men, in the intense demands of the crucible of the coal hoppers, boiler houses, turbine halls. They worked both day and night shifts. As we shall see, the so-called workers' houses did not house workers only.

Black Worker Accommodation

This municipal compound is one of the last remaining fully preserved examples of compounds which were in use all over the Witwatersrand, and is symbolic of the migrant labour system in general. Thus, its importance as both a physical and representative heritage resource cannot be overstated. It has local, regional and national significance, and broader African significance.

The migrant labour system played a pivotal role in South Africa's industrial revolution. Most sectors of the economy benefited from migrant labour, but the chief beneficiaries were mining, state corporations and, significantly, municipal authorities. Migrants were drawn from all over the Southern African region. It affected women and children in the Reserves, and contributed to their underdevelopment. The system disrupted family life, taking men in their prime and separating them from their loved ones for much of their adult lives.

This compound was built on the model known as the 'Rand Mines' prototype. During the 1870's De Beers in Kimberley first introduced compound housing adjacent to its diamond mines, ensuring worker control and exploitation. The word compound is derived from the Malay term 'Kampong' or settlement. This system of

accommodation was adopted by the gold mines and later by municipalities on the Rand, which employed large numbers of black unskilled workers. This was particularly the case after the 1923 Urban Areas Act and related municipal regulations compelled employers with more than 50 Black workers to provide separate accommodation in compounds.

The Newtown compound is a U-shaped single storey building with a south-facing courtyard providing accommodation for 312 workers. In later years, the numbers fell to about 160 workers. During the 1950s, there were about 240 workers in the Newtown compound, out of a total 'Non European' workforce of just under 1,500. By the mid 1960s, the average number in the Newtown compound was 150. This parallels the declining use of the Jeppe Street Power Station, though the Electric Workshop and the JPS (after it was closed in 1961) were both used extensively for maintenance and repair of machinery.

Compound accommodation consisted of seven dormitories of about 652 square foot each. There was one on each wing and the rest occupied the length of the building. Workers in the Newtown compound slept side by side in concrete bunks with toilets and urinals at each end. The bunks were double story with nine workers per level. The upper storey bunks consisted of wooden boards supported on an iron framework. It is likely that a single ladder per row was provided for workers to climb on to the upper level. Each room had one small coal stove. All faced on to a wide verandah with cooking/washing facilities at the ends. There was no privacy and no hot water.

This was adjacent to the punishment cell which sits between this dormitory and the one on the east wing of the building. On the south east corner was room accommodating a single man, the 'induna' or 'boss boy', who was in charge of the workers in the compound. This was another important 'borrowing' from the mining hostel system.

White Accommodation

North of the compound, abutting Jeppe Street is a row of houses. There are three 'Shiftmen's cottages – all semi-detached and single storey. Next door is a Manager's house. In 1928 the City signalled its plan to buy these structures, which had belonged to the 'Sanitary Department', to demolish stables next to these three existing cottages and to build two double storey houses for the 'Power Station Superintendent and the 'Assistant Superintendent'. The construction of the Jeppe Street Power Station meant that new accommodation was needed urgently. It was essential to have skilled staff living on the premises to attend to the problems arising as a result of the Jeppe station running day and night, with attendant faults and breakdowns.

The Decline of Newtown 1980-2000

From the early 1980s, Newtown was crumbling, mostly because of the City Council's indecision about the area and its inability to come up with a viable plan for its future. In the adjacent Central Business District the flight of businesses to Sandton had begun and the degradation the inner-city was becoming a reality. The relaxing of the Group Areas Act and pass laws during the 1980s meant that residential areas close to the CBD like Hillbrow, became 'multiracial' 'grey' areas. The City maliciously neglected Hillbrow, as it represented something at odds with broader apartheid policy, thus encouraging the decline of a vibrant residential precinct with fine buildings and services.

During this period, the Electrical Precinct became a storage depot. The workers' compound and by now iconic cooling towers were both used as storage facilities. By the mid 1980s, it became apparent that the city had some vague intentions for the reinvention of Newtown. These was symbolised by the demolition of these cooling towers in 1985. The city had proclaimed them structurally unsound. However, a number of initiatives came to nothing.

By the 1990s, the Electric Workshop and JPS had fallen into decay. A large number of homeless people moved into the Station. The compound stood neglected. Only the

Market Theatre, Museum Africa and Kippies Jazz Bar held the line against the complete degradation of the area.

In 2000, the City Council and Gauteng Province moved to rescue Newtown by investing millions of rands re-inventing it as a 'Cultural Precinct', building on the achievements of the Market Theatre, Museum Africa and other small cultural groups. This initiative meant new lives for the buildings in the Precinct. But there was a long road ahead.

Part Two: The First and Second Lives of Objects, Places and Spaces

The museum authority Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett argues that heritage resources have two lives: a 'first life' where they performed particular set functions; and a 'second life' where they no longer perform their original function, but, as heritage resources, perform a different set of functions. Heritage practitioners straddle the divide between these lives. They are in the business of giving a 'second life', to buildings for example, which both recalls their first life as sensitively as possible, and adapts it to the demands of the second life. These demands may enhance, adapt or perhaps compromise the buildings. The accepted term for giving heritage structures and precinct second lives is '*adaptive re-use*'. The National Heritage Resources Act has guidelines for how this should take place. (See Appendix A)

The Second (and rather fragile) Life of the Workers' Library and Museum

The black workers compound and the cottages were given a second life when the structures were beautifully adapted to housing a 'Workers' Library' and Museum, which honoured the thousands of migrant workers as well as providing library resources to the trade unions. At the time the WLM was opened in 1995, Labour Minister Tito Mboweni declared that the project was 'an important act of historical recovery', and pointed to the neglect of the history of manual workers in South Africa's history.

The Workers' Library and Museum and White housing complex [WLM] constitute the only declared National Monuments in Newtown. The Newtown precinct was declared a protected heritage area by SAHRA only in June 2005, in response to major plans for urban renewal under the auspices of the JDA. These included the construction of a multi-storey luxury hotel *immediately south of the WLM*, in the centre of the Electrical Precinct. This would not only dwarfed the compound and cottages, but would have threatened the integrity of the heritage precinct as a whole.

The integration of heritage places and spaces with urban renewal is an uneven process. There is much debate about how an area in which heritage significance resides in the whole (the precinct) as well as the parts (the buildings), may be conserved and re-used sensitively by a set of separate developers. The Heritage Resources Act of 1999 and SAHRA itself in recent rulings favour a conservation approach that works *with heritage precincts*, but the Act requires that *individual owners* submit applications for alterations or demolition. Such owners might number 10 or more. The stakes are very high with multi-million rand deals involved.

What is preserved in a precinct relates to what is seen as immediately 'sexy' ie politically current in terms of heritage spaces. In Newtown, the Electric Workshop was converted into an interactive Science Centre, the Sci-Bono Centre. While the building is almost perfectly preserved, almost no reference is made to its historic function (in spite of its obvious relevance) or to the rest of the precinct. A bi-plane hangs oddly in mid-air from one of the cranes which lifted giant turbines for repair, its original fabric and function ignored. At the time of this conversion, the Jeppe Street Power Station continued to stand empty, except for the homeless people. All its machinery was stripped.

Mary Fitzgerald Square was paved and set up as an entertainment area at huge expense, with much of the money coming from European funders. While millions were pumped into Constitution Hill and Kliptown, Museum Africa, part of the original Newtown Market Building, continues to languish with minimal funding for

maintenance and exhibitions. Adjacent to the Square, the Workers Library and White Housing complex, in spite of its National Monument status credentials and legacy has also languished until recently, bedevilled by neglect and vandalism. In the last 10 years, the WLM complex has had a very chequered second life, as its champions have battled to both preserve the past and meet the educational and political needs of workers into the millennium and beyond.⁴ In spite of its proximity to the expensively revamped Mary Fitzgerald Square and Sci Bono Discovery Centre, it was, until recently, seriously at risk as a structure. But there is some good news.

A Third Life for the WLM

The WLM complex has [again] 'been restored and reopened as a museum focusing on the lives of the migrant labourers who flocked to the city of gold.'⁵ However, the City has not acknowledged the neglect of a City treasure over so many years. A recent article reports on the second refurbishment as if little had happened in 1995.

According to Eric Itzkin, the Deputy Director of Immovable Heritage in the City, the Newtown Workers' Compound was declared a national monument in 1996 (sic). That same year, it was restored by conservation architects Alan Lipman and Henry Paine. In 2008, Paine returned to the site, and once again set about restoring the compound.

Anyway, the new museum is worth an extended visit, and is ideal for learners from Grade 4 onwards. Here are some of the highlights:

Walls in the first room in the exhibition are lined with photographs of former residents, giving a brief history of their lives. Video clips are shown throughout the room, of the recollections and experiences of these people about their time at the compound. Items on display include brooms, blankets, bottles and passes - that hated symbol of apartheid oppression that had

⁴ . See A Coombes, *History After Apartheid*, (Wits University Press, 2004), pages 200-1

⁵ <http://www.joburg.org.za/content/view/4912/266/>

to be carried by each worker. The exhibition, focusing on the years from the early 1900s to the 1970s, reveals the hardships faced by migrant workers as well as their cultures.

Sections of the compound are now used as meeting rooms and there is a small library with books related to labour history and socialist theory. The museum is housed in the restored west wing, while the east wing is a temporary space for exhibitions and community gatherings.

Besides the museum, a new addition to the compound was also unveiled at the launch - a Visitors' Centre, built in front of the courtyard linking the museum with Newtown Park. *This new building is flat-roofed, so as not to compete with the historic buildings of the old compound.* At the same time, it provides a modern entry point to the museum. (my emphasis)

Going for Gold: The Second Life of Jeppe Power Station

In 2008 Anglo-Gold Ashanti completed its conversion of the Jeppe Power Station into its international Head Office in 2008. The company worked carefully with the historical and heritage report, changing significant aspects of its design to accommodate public concerns about conservation of industrial and electrical heritage. The result demonstrates how the beauty of industrial buildings may be enhanced in giving a building a second life. After researching the history of the power station and the Electrical Precinct, I was commissioned to write a book on the conversion. Bobby Godsell, the CEO of Anglo-Gold Ashanti, spearheaded the conversion of the JPS, told me how his previous offices had looked over Newtown and how he became inspired:

Located in Diagonal Street, I became a fan of Newtown. I liked the vibe, I liked Diagonal Street, I liked the retail, I liked the cultural district. *But a cultural district cannot survive alone, it needs a commercial anchors. And the building (the JPS) was the best and obvious place to be.* (My emphasis)

Brought to Life: Other Examples

A less high profile but delightful development is the recent conversion of the ragged Newtown Hotel into the Moses Mayekiso Conference Centre by the National Union of Metal Workers of South Africa (NUMSA) which occupies the beautifully restored Standard Bank Building opposite the hotel. NUMSA has bought and delicately refurbished further heritage buildings in Becker Street This street intersects with Anglo-Gold Ashanti's converted Power Station on the south end and the jaunty and extensive Brickfields affordable housing complex on the north end.⁶

Moving beyond Newtown, the Orlando Power Station precinct in Orlando West, has been part of a proposed massive development, Orlando Ekhaya, which involves mixed income housing, and recreational and retail developments. All, as far as possible, intend to utilize the existing fabric of the power station, the compound and hostel, the white housing, dam and wetlands. The complex includes a well preserved compound that housed 800 workers at the power station's peak. The project team has attempted to learn from the issues raised in Newtown, incorporating and highlighting heritage at an early stage of conceptualization.

However, the whole process seems to have come to a halt. It sits quite literally on the edge of major social and economic changes in Soweto itself, where preparations for 2010 have focused on the rebuilding of Orlando stadium, and infrastructural upgrades in the surrounding areas. Indeed the transformation of a dormitory township into a relatively well off city with malls and parks is evident. Ironically, such changes might obscure its historic significance and present attractiveness to so many visitors. There's one exciting facet of the sad OPS saga to be reported – adaptive re-use of the cooling towers.

Cool Towers

⁶ For the Brickfields Housing Development see www.jhc.co.za

An extraordinary mural wrapped around one of the two cooling towers that served Orlando Power Station dominates the Soweto landscape. Since its inception in 2002 it has become iconic, representing Soweto, Gauteng and ultimately South Africa.

In October 2002, First National Bank rented the decidedly grimy white cooling towers as advertising space, and commissioned a local advertising company to paint the FNB logo and slogans on one and a free-hand colour mural on the other.

According to the brief, the design had to capture the spirit of the people of Soweto in the past and present, and so earn their affection and pride. What emerged 260 litres of paint later is the largest example of outdoor art in Africa. The mural is a vigorous mix of familiar icons- Mandela and Yvonne Chaka Chaka; religious symbols – Regina Mundi’s compelling ‘Black Madonna’; and everyday images – women selling tomatoes, mielies roasting on braziers, hairdressers, matchbox houses, and the winding yellow and grey train.

The process behind the creation of the mural was in itself intriguing. The scaffolding to hold the artists and a rope grid to guide the sketching and painting were lowered from a helicopter. The 100m high mural took shape over six months, and the two artists began with hand painted black outlines that merely suggested what was to come. Over time, the colours finally revealed identifiable images. The shared anticipation in this gradual ‘unwrapping’ seems to have contributed to a sense of pride and ownership in Soweto.

The towers now host an extreme sports company that provides a unique environment for bungee jumping. However, very few visitors to Soweto associate the mural with the rest of the power station, which stands bleakly to the left of the towers. Indeed, its vast turbine hall and giant smoke stacks seem invisible to all but the locals.

Part Three: Industrial Heritage in the History Curriculum.

Over the past seven years I have been fortunate to run a historical and cultural tourism company with a colleague, Elizabeth Van Vuuren. *Cultural Encounters* focused on urban tours in Johannesburg and Pretoria. We had many local and international clients, including US and UK study groups, and local schools. The only difference between school groups and other groups was that the school groups were not there of their own free will – a dynamic I will refer to in this section. Much of my research, including wonderful visual sources, became part of our tour handouts and itineraries, and a rewarding synergy emerged. Unfortunately, contrary to popular perception, tourism companies do not make money unless they offer the Big Five (perhaps with Robben Island thrown in) and we had to close down our company in late 2008. But we had a lot of fun – our biggest group was a 300 strong international cadre of young (16-24) debaters. We managed to get them fed and around Soweto in one afternoon, with help of six buses and 12 cell phones!

The Jozi Jive

From early on we developed a basic template for a day-long tour of Johannesburg, called the Jozi Jive. It consisted of stopping a point of interest from the Johannesburg CBD to Soweto. These included Main Street Mining Mall in the CBD, Newtown and Fordsburg, Sophiatown Orlando East and West in Soweto, including the Hector Peterson Museum and the Mandela house Museum. The price included the hire of a bus, drinks and snacks, lunch and museum entrance fees. This did not leave much to pay ourselves! A major premise on which we worked and which appeared on all our handouts, was:

We do not take tours of SOWETO as if it exists separately from Johannesburg. It is part of Johannesburg and Johannesburg is part of it. SOWETO is much older than the policy of Apartheid, which the National Party put in place in 1948

We prepared a comprehensive handout concerning each place that we visited, which we updated on a regular basis. We provided laminated photographs and maps to supplement the handouts. We kept these and used them on many different

occasions. We also compiled a CD of tracks of South African music related to the tour. A commentary on each track appeared at the back of each handout as well as further recommendations and where to purchase the music. Music is an international language, which often bridges more barriers than any language difficulties. It is also a great icebreaker and a way of winding down after an exhausting day. We insisted on buses that had basic audiovisual facilities like a CD player and a microphone, though we had our own microphones as well. We trained young tour guides to accompany us, and ensured that they were certificated. We sub contracted transport to an ex Wits Sociology student who ran a fleet of small to medium buses. This was part of our equity and capacity building.

The tours could be adapted to whatever length suited the client. Thus one of our most popular tours was a half day walking tour – the City Beat Tour - which covered Main Street Mining Mall in the CBD, and the Electrical and Market Precincts in Newtown. In terms of schools, we adapted the Jozi Jive to a theme which we called the Apartheid City Tour. This took learners and teachers on an extended walk around Fordsburg and Sophiatown, and on to Soweto, where we visited the Mandela House Museum and Hector Peterson Museum, Kliptown and Regina Mundi church, with lunch at a Soweto restaurant (NOT a shebeen). We worked with educators before the tour to develop appropriate materials for the particular Grade or Grades. All our tours were adapted to meet the needs of Grades 9-12. (Our largest group was 120 learners)

We made extensive use of maps and aerial photographs (dating from the 1930s) in orientating the learners and educators to what historic places looked like over time. As I stated in my introduction, visiting the actual place or space which has historic and Heritage significance, and interacting with the physical remains is profoundly educative. It is important that educators and learners are aware of the layered nature of a Heritage place, which, as a result, could mean different things to different people. In terms of oral histories, the museums offer a wide variety of recordings, audio and visual, but sound spillage is a problem. We were also privileged to have people on our tours who had actually been involved in the events

ranging from the forced removals in Sophiatown and Fordsburg to the 1976 student uprising. According to both visitors (a more appropriate term than tourist) and learners this aspect was far more engaging than the plethora of sounds which plague many museums. Favourite places? The Mandela House Museum and hot chocolate at Nabitha restaurant also in Vilakazi Street.

Those who wish to develop new museums in South Africa need to consider museums which do not cost millions of rands, but make use of appropriate material which can be equally moving and impressive; and to make use of the physical space in all its aspects. Many museums are text heavy, not taking into account that most visitors spend an average of two and a half minutes on each portion of an exhibition! Learners spend even less time unless they have a meaningful task in relation to the exhibition and its parts.

Working with captive visitors- the learners -- is twice as much work as working with visitors who are present voluntarily. We found that it was important to take educators on a tour in beforehand, in order that they were able to make connections and consider the most appropriate kind of tour and material. We believed that our tours covered significant portions of the learning areas in a fashion which brought them to life, and actually saved time in terms of an overloaded curriculum. Most educators spend their time on tours dealing with delinquent children, and finding they have very little time to pay attention to what might interest them.

However, as we did not want to deal with delinquent children, we insisted that educators take responsibility for their learners. A number of them did not. I remember an incident at the Hector from Peterson Museum where a group of Grade 11 boys decided to go and buy kota from the local spaza shop. I kept an eye on them, while the teacher did not. She noticed they were gone only when everyone else was in the bus and we ready to depart. Part of me was glad that the boys left the rather sterile museum precinct in order to go and shop in an ordinary and typical Soweto retail structure and to buy its staple food. They crossed an invisible boundary by doing so. But that is another issue.

Put on your thinking CAPS: Heritage in the History Curriculum (See Appendix B)

In the Department of Basic Education's Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) of September 2010, Heritage as a concept for study appears explicitly in Point 8 of the specific aims of the Intermediate, Senior and Further Education and Training History Curriculum. *However Heritage site or object (resource) can provide educators and learners with material which meets the aims of Points 1-7.* History and heritage are natural bedfellows.

A major opportunity to demonstrate this is in the Grade 10 Heritage assignment, which is extremely open-ended. This means there is no excuse not to include industrial heritage under the general rubric of Heritage! I gather this project has been moved from the Grade 12 portfolio, and I'm not sure what impact this will have on how seriously educators and learners take the process. I have helped a number of youngsters develop their Heritage projects in various urban areas and with great success. I think the guidelines for the project are too vague, especially at Grade 10 level and need to be more clearly scaffolded so that youngsters can make the most of opportunity given to them. I hope that the Heritage definitions from the Heritage Act in Appendix A helpful to educators. They need to be recast in much simpler language to be of help to both and learners. These things should never be left to lawyers!

Conclusion

I wish to conclude with a quote from the architect and social commentator Italo Calvino:

'The city ... does not tell its past, but contains it like the lines of a hand, written in the corners of the streets, the gratings of the windows, the banisters of the steps ... every segment marked in turn with scratches, indentations, scrolls.'

Cities are invisible stories and stories are invisible cities.'

APPENDIX A

IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS FROM THE NATIONAL HERITAGE RESOURCES ACT of 1999

- i) **“Cultural Significance”** means aesthetic, architectural, historical, scientific, social, spiritual, linguistic or technological value or significance.
- ii) **“Heritage resource”** means any place or object of cultural significance.
- iii) **“National Estate”** means the national estate as defined in **Section 3**.
 - **Section 3.1** states *“For the purposes of this Act, those heritage resources of South Africa which are of cultural significance or other special value for the present community and for future generations must be considered part of the national estate and fall within the sphere of operations of heritage resources authorities.*

The National Estate may inter alia include: **(See Section 3.2)**

- Places, buildings, structures and equipment of cultural significance;
 - Places which oral traditions are attached or which are associated with living heritage’
 - Historical settlements and townscapes;
 - Landscapes and natural features of cultural significance;
 - Objects of scientific or technological interest
- **Section 3(3)** states: Without limiting the generality of subsections (1) and (2), a place or object is to be considered part of the estate if it has either cultural significance or other special value because of:
- Its importance in the community, or pattern of South Africa’s history;
 - Its possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of South Africa’s natural or cultural heritage;
 - Its potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of South Africa’s natural or cultural heritage;
 - Its importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class of South Africa’s natural or cultural places or objects
 - Its importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by a community or cultural group;
 - Its importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period;
 - Its strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons;
 - Its strong or special association with the life or work of a person, group or organisation of importance in the history of South Africa; and
 - Sites of significance relating to the history of slavery in South Africa.

SECTION 7.1 (C)

'Heritage resources assessment criteria , consistent with the criteria set out in section 3(3), ... must be used by a heritage resources authority or a local authority to assess the **intrinsic, comparative and contextual** significance of a heritage resource and the **relative benefits and costs** of its protection, so that the appropriate level of **grading of** the resource and the consequent responsibility for **management** may be allocated in terms Section 8'.

Section 5 General Principles for Heritage Resource Management

This Section requires that “All authorities, bodies and persons performing functions...must recognise principles asserting the:

- Lasting value of heritage;
- The moral responsibilities of succeeding generations to manage heritage resources in the interest of all South Africans;
- The capacity of heritage resources to promote reconciliation;
- The need to avoid using heritage for sectarian or political gain;
- The need to develop skills capacity;
- The values of heritage as a means to encourage ongoing education;
- The importance of laws, procedures and administrative practices;
- The value of heritage resources as an important part of the history and beliefs of communities;
- The importance of integrating heritage conservation in urban and rural planning.

This **Section lists** what must be dealt with in the identification, assessment and management of the heritage resources of South Africa. These are listed below

- (i) Take account of all relevant cultural values and indigenous knowledge systems;
- (ii) Take account of material or cultural heritage value and involve the least possible alteration or loss of it;
- (iii) Promote the use and enjoyment of and access to heritage resources, in a way consistent with their cultural significance and conservation needs;
- (iv) Contribute to social and economic development;
- (v) Safeguard the options of present and future generations; and
- (vi) Be fully researched, documented and recorded.

APPENDIX B: CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT POLICY STATEMENT: SEPTEMBER 2010

<http://www.education.gov.za/CAPS/FINAL%20SOCIAL%20SCIENCES%20Sept4.pdf>

<http://www.education.gov.za/CAPS/history/HISTORY.pdf>

Specific aims of History for the Intermediate, Senior and FET Phases

History is a process of historical enquiry. A rigorous process of enquiry enables learners to:

1. understand the *range of sources of information* available to study the past
2. extract and interpret information from different sources
3. evaluate the usefulness of sources, checking for reliability, stereotyping and subjectivity
4. recognise that there is often more than one perspective of historical events
5. explain why there are different interpretations of historical events and how people react to these interpretations
6. participate in constructive and focused debate through the careful evaluation of historical evidence
7. organise evidence to substantiate an argument when creating an original, coherent and balanced piece of historical writing
8. *engage critically with issues of heritage and public representations of the past and with conservation.*

FET HERITAGE ASSIGNMENT GRADE 10

RECOMMENDED TEXTS/RESOURCES

Heritage sites, museums, monuments, oral histories, commemorative events, family and community traditions and rituals, local history, school history, family history

Website:

<http://heritage.thetimes.co.za/>

www.facinghistory.org

What is heritage?

Heritage is a word that has different uses. One use of the word emphasises our heritage as human beings. It concerns human origins in Africa. Another use of the word concerns the ways in which people remember the past: at heritage sites; in museums; through the construction of monuments and memorials; and in families and communities (oral history). Some suggest that heritage is everything that is handed down to us from the past.

The content detail is not specified in order to provide the choice of studying local, regional or national examples of heritage.

This assignment should include a research component in order to teach research skills in Grade 10.

What is meant by heritage and public representations

Memory and oral histories as heritage

The importance of the conservation of heritage sites, monuments and memorials

Debates around heritage issues and the ways in which the past is represented, for example at heritage sites, in museums, monuments and memorials and in families and communities

The ways in which memorials are constructed in different knowledge systems for example monuments, ritual sites including grave sites

African origins of humankind as world heritage

Concepts: heritage, conservation, ideologies, heritage, oral history