

REMOVALS AND GROUP AREAS

Higher crime

The nature of the district has not changed for 130 years and to alter it now, apart from the human implications, will mean destroying the inter-dependence established over the course of time between the area, the city centre, and the light industrial belt. For example, 90 per cent of the workers in District Six are employed within a radius of three miles, and a high proportion of clothing and food industries are located in the area because they depend upon female labour.

Forcible clearance of a slum will not prevent its re-creation elsewhere. The deterioration of an area is only a physical manifestation of the social problems which, if left unsolved, will remain with the inhabitants wherever they live. Precedent has shown that relocation, in destroying established social relationships, can create maladjustment. This is expressed in the abuse of the physical environment and higher crime rates.

In each city at any given time a section of the population has always existed who could not afford to live in anything but slum conditions. Only through the social and economic advancement of the population can slums be eliminated.

Little development

The condition of the area is lamentable, but this does not prove that the use is wrong. Had the land been too valuable for occupation by a sub-economic group, pressure to replace this use would have been felt. The lack of renewal dur-

ing the past 40 years indicates that land values have not risen sufficiently to necessitate a more lucrative usage.

High density alone does not indicate that an area is a slum. The density of District Six at 113 persons an acre is lower than Sea Point or Hillbrow, Johannesburg. Successful environments have been established with densities of 400 persons per acre. What makes District Six a slum is the fact that high density is achieved within structures designed to accommodate less than one quarter of the population.

It must be emphasised that the deficiencies of the environment can be attributed almost exclusively to local factors, such as minimum ownership of property by Coloured people who comprise 94 per cent of the population but own only 25 per cent of the land. Very little development has occurred since the '20s, and there is no incentive for tenants to improve rented property. Moreover, development has been frozen for many years.

There is nothing wrong with District Six that comprehensive urban renewal cannot remedy. The reasons for its existence have not lost their validity; if anything, they have been strengthened by the expansion of light industry and central activities. Urban renewal, through good design, can raise the density to correspond to rising land values and can thereby provide an expanding economy with the labour it requires.

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DISTRICT SIX "PLANNED SOCIAL SABOTAGE"

From BARBARA WILKS

X THE decision of the Ministers of Community Development and of Planning to proclaim a large part of District Six a group area for Whites has been described as "quite a bombshell".

By those who care for the dignity and happiness of their fellow citizens, it could still better be described as "planned social sabotage". In whatever official terms and under whatever official initials the Ministers try to cloak their intentions the effect is plain: under the cynical disguise of slum clearance further to disrupt and dismember the community of Cape Town.

No one denies that the area has been in need of slum clearance, but it was the City Council's intention to rehabilitate the people in the area in which they lived — a far sounder plan than that of the Departments of Community Development and Planning of forcible removal. It has been found, not only in South Africa, but elsewhere,

that even *voluntary* break-up and removal of communities is often attended by worse evils than those it was intended to remove, and in this instance a settled community is to be transferred to a rootless, soulless environment.

Dreary tale

It is the belief of the Black Sash that from this ill-considered decision evils will flow which will not only affect approximately 30,000 people of District Six who are to be moved, but all the citizens of Cape Town — the evils of suspicion, dissension, hopelessness and hatred.

The dreary tale of sins committed in the name of *apartheid* or separate development is growing longer until even a lifetime of penance could not earn forgiveness for all of us who share in the blame of either actively helping or passively acquiescing in acts which are the real sabotage of peace and harmony in South Africa today.

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