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SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL FOR SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH,
NATIONAL BUILDING RESEARCH INSTITUTE,
P.O. BOX 395,
PRETORIA.

25/5/48

TO ALL MEMBERS OF SUB-COMMITTEES 3a
(JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON URBAN AFRICAN HOUSING)
AND 4 (ESTATE PLANNING).

24-10-0

Dear Sir/Madam,

I enclose herewith a copy of Mr. A.J. Cutten's paper, "The Planning of Native Townships and Locations", which will be discussed at the next meetings of the above-named Sub-Committees.

15/1/48

*For Mr. A.J. Cutten
Summ. 1/1/48
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Yours faithfully,

for *H. S. Grew*

ORGANISING SECRETARY,
RESEARCH COMMITTEE ON MINIMUM
STANDARDS OF ACCOMMODATION.

20 MAY 1947
For Attention
Received
Acknowledged
Assented
.....

THE PLANNING OF NATIVE TOWNSHIPS AND
LOCATIONS

BY
A.J. CUTTEN

While it may be conceded that the trend of contemporary town planning technique towards the use of traffic-free residential units centred round an elementary school, and separated from other such units by the major traffic routes, is a realistic and efficient method of planning European townships, it is definitely not a method that can be taken out of its context and employed on African townships and locations. In time this may be so, but at present the low state of civilisation of the African demands a different treatment. In particular the feature of traffic which is so important to the above concept falls entirely away. The second feature, the school, also changes its significance so far as the age of the inmates is concerned and in addition gives way in importance to the health clinic and other related functions, e.g. ablution blocks, childrens creches, open space, etc. Administrative offices also play a much more important part in African townships and probably from the point of view of the location superintendent are the most important feature.

In designing a township for Africans, then, it will be seen that no pre-conceived ideas, however well they have been employed in European townships, should be applied to non-European townships without due thought, and that probably the best results will be obtained by building up the design ab initio, as a result of exploring each step as the design proceeds.

SIZE OF PLOT:

The first question is the size of stand or plot. This will of course vary under different circumstances. The Native Affairs Department recommends 60' x 80', and there is no doubt that this is a general safe size. It is readily deduced, however, that this size presupposes no water-borne sewerage, and in this event its nearly square dimensions arrange that the alternative pit privy or bucket privy is at a maximum average distance from the neighbouring houses. In the event of water-borne sewerage, however, the 60' frontage would mean a cost of sewerage disproportionately high in relation to the cost of the house. The necessity for being so far from the neighbours having disappeared, a frontage of 40 feet is more proportionate and still leaves sufficient side space for a 20' wide house. The plot length could then be increased to 100' or more if desired. Reference is usually made to the inhabitant cultivating a garden, but only in high rainfall areas is this possible, for even when water is laid on it is seldom in such lavish supply that it can be utilised in the garden.

The monotony of the small location house in orderly lines, as well as an aim towards economy has prompted the introduction of semi-detached houses, which besides forming larger units also give the appearance of freeing more ground space. The flatted house (as exemplified in the Lange location) also improves the appearance of the street and general layout. As it has been frequently demonstrated that water-borne sewerage is in the long run the cheapest method of sanitation, even if buckets are to be used immediately, provision should be made in the planning for the ultimate service, i.e. when sewerage is laid the houses should not be further than 40' apart, but before it is laid they

should/.....

should be at least 60' apart. To accomplish this then it is suggested that plots be made 80' x 100' and houses located at alternate sides of each pair of plots. This means that when sewerage is provided another pair of single houses or semi-detached houses can be inserted on the free boundary between the first two houses. (See sketch).

The main vehicular traffic is composed of rubbish removal carts and the night soil carts, which at the most only make one trip per day each. The majority of movement within the location is effected by foot, and except therefore for a back-bone of roads wide enough to accommodate a bus, the absolute minimum of road way width need be provided. The removal carts require only from 15 to 20 feet so that with footpaths these roads need not be wider than 35 feet. A combination of suitable terrain and good planning might even result in some houses having no actual street frontage at all, while the close and cul-de-sac system could be used to great advantage. These minor roads do not require surfacing.

The main roads should be surfaced, and wide enough for four traffic lanes to allow of passing traffic in each direction, and adequate sidewalks. This means an overall width of at least 70 feet. 80' or 90' is recommended in order to allow for avenues of trees, in addition to ample sidewalk space. It must be remembered that the buses will require a turning and assembly area. Provision of at least one acre should be made for this bus station. If a railway station is contemplated, similar embussing facilities will probably be necessary as well as parking space for taxis.

In general the street pattern should be simple and curved streets and frequent bends avoided as far as possible. This type of layout is well enough in European townships but only leads to confusion so far as the African householder is concerned, and adds greatly to the expense of servicing so far as the local authority is concerned. It is possible to employ the herring-bone pattern, or even the modified gridiron so as to avoid monotony and mingle attractiveness with orderliness.

ADMINISTRATIVE AND COMMUNITY CENTRES.

On the framework of main roads and connected thereby, should be sited at some distance apart, the Administrative centre and the Community centre. The former must be near the natural entrance to the township and will include sites for the local authority's offices for supervision and administration. Provision should be made for a reception block, a disinfectant house, and local police station. For supervisory purposes the Native Affairs Department prefer the Beer Hall also in this area, but with proper supervision this could well be placed amongst the social buildings where it rightly belongs.

The Community Centre will contain only sites for the functioning and satisfying of the health, social and communal needs of the residents. Strictly should this centre be divorced from any offices which are used for the exercise of control, by Europeans. Here will be found the Post Office and Health clinic (both run by Natives), the Hall for the local Bunga or social functions (and here let me say that the weekly parade of babies for medical examination, is quite a social function in itself), and an open space for gatherings.

So far as shops are concerned, it is advocated that these be scattered about the township, as they usually take the form of

general/.....

general stores. In the larger locations, however, it may be found convenient to group three or four shops at intervals of half a mile. If a market is instituted, this usually forms a good nucleus for a shopping centre.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS.

Regarding the detailed composition of the residential area, it is considered that, failing the proximity of an open space, one erf per 20 to 30 houses should be set aside for an ablution block at which hot water is provided by the local authority.

The mass of residential plots should be divided into groups of from 150 to 250 houses, each group being centred on some open space on which, or near which, provision is made for some social, medical or educational feature, such as a church, a creche, a school, a hall or park, or a site for an open air cinema. In Atteridgeville the system of placing certain groups of houses under the charge of one senior resident has been proved extremely successful, and it is this sociological aspect that is behind the Vlaktefontein experiment. This system will be found to work easier if each little section has some feature as above suggested to centre itself on. For example a well placed church is an extremely good rallying point, and it is soon found that "birds of the same religious feather flock together".

In the African Township then the parallel of the European residential unit is found in a much smaller "precinct" centred on an open space not necessarily large, and possibly housing some social or clinical feature. An organised clothes wash house and drying area, or a mother and child clinic or inspection room, an equipped children's playground, or even an open piece of undeveloped veld will all serve the same purpose, viz. of giving relief to the usual dreary monotony of similar Lilliputian houses and providing some local interest for the inhabitants.

HOSTELS.

The township should serve every kind of resident, and so suitable provision must be made as well for single persons and childless couples. These should be housed in hostels and apartment houses. In the former, communal feeding should be provided for, and the apartments could be built of both types, one designed with communal dining halls and the other with kitchenettes. This type of building should be sited either in or opposite a park, of area at least 6 times the floor area of the building.

Rather obviously the hostel for single women should be removed from that for single men, which in fact is best placed near the local police station, and also in close proximity to the Beer Hall.

Milk bars are increasing in popularity and provision should be made for these firstly next to the Beer Hall to prompt competition, and secondly near the Hostels and the Schools.

SCHOOLS.

Schools are today mostly constructed and run by religious institutions, but nevertheless provision should be made for the time when the state will assume responsibility for this most important function. For children, one three acre site, at least, is required per 250 houses, and one 5 acre high or technical site per 1000 houses. These schools would also be used for adult education in the evening.

Creches/.....

Creches are becoming more popular and more useful, and one erf should be provided for this use per 100 houses.

As soup kitchens are generally run by the local authority or some philanthropic body, an erf per school is required for depot purposes. The milk bar in this case could use the same site.

OPEN AIR CINEMAS.

The bioscope is an instrument which will undoubtedly play a greater and greater part in native education of the future and besides allocating sites for halls for these purposes, areas should be set aside at intervals for open air cinemas.

RECREATION GROUNDS.

Organised sport such as football and cricket is not as generally popular amongst the Africans as is commonly imagined, nevertheless provision should be made for at least one 5 acre recreation ground per 1000 erven. The African does, however, enjoy natural beauty and in addition to the recreation ground any feature such as a dam, a wooded area, a koppie, should be reserved as public parks. In the closely packed residential areas these breathing spaces or "lungs" are essential, even if nothing more is done to them than the planting of a few trees.

DENSITY.

The size of plot stated above will give a nett density of 10 to the acre, and with the provision for open space mentioned a gross density of 5 to the acre will eventuate. This figure should not on any account be reduced, even if for economy of services the nett density is reduced.

CATTLE KRAALS.

In country districts, the location inhabitants sometimes desire to keep cows, or pigs. In this case an area must be set aside for these paddocks where the cattle can be enclosed each night under safe custody.

Poultry and goats will inevitably be kept in the back yard, and the maintenance of sanitary conditions in this event is rather a matter of supervision than planning.

NATIVE VILLAGES.

All the foregoing applies equally well to Native Villages, except that in this case as the residents are more permanent the plots may be made considerably larger, as both vegetable and flower gardens will be constructed. In fact if water is in easy supply separate allotments should be considered.

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