



# USAID | SOUTH AFRICA

FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

GENERAL MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE CONTRACT (GMAC)

**Contract No: 674-C-00-01-00051-00**

**Urban greening and the development of a conservation ethos in  
selected sites within Soweto**

Contract or Grantee number: 0044-0402-G-GA12

**Soweto Development Foundation**

This report was produced for review by the USAID. It was prepared as a performance milestone under Mega-Tech, Inc.'s prime contract. The contents of this report address activities performed under USAID/South Africa's Strategic Objective No. 6: Increased Access to Shelter and Environmentally Sound Municipal Services

Please direct all queries regarding this report to:

Mega-Tech/South Africa  
Bank Forum Building  
Lobby 1, Second Floor  
337 Veale Street  
New Muckleneuk  
0181 Pretoria RSA  
Tel. 012 452 0060  
Fax 012 452 0070  
Email [megatech@intekom.co.za](mailto:megatech@intekom.co.za)

Or

Mega-Tech, Inc.  
1749 Old Meadow Road  
McLean  
Virginia 22012  
Tel. (703) 534-1629  
Fax (703) 534-7208  
Email [info@mgtech-world.com](mailto:info@mgtech-world.com)

### **Activity Summary and achievements:**

There were two main grant objectives:

- To develop and implement an urban greening plan at the Avalon Cemetery and to implement a sustainable master plan for the development. This plan will include the mechanism to sustain the project but will also make provisions to roll out the project to other areas.
- To develop and implement an urban greening plan at the Morris Isaacson High School and to implement a sustainable master plan for the development. This plan will include the mechanism to sustain the project but will also make provisions to roll out the project to other areas.

### **Objectives Achieved**

Both these main objectives have been achieved. An additional objective, not directly stated in the original terms of reference but nevertheless a key component of the success of the project has been the establishment of the SDF Nursery at Nancefield, and the development of public/private partnership between the SDF and City Parks.

Refer to the Final Report for a summary of the activities, achievements and the lessons learnt under this grant.

**Contents of this report:**

- 1) Final Report (Apr. 2003);
- 2) Magazine Article on the Soweto Development Foundation project; and
- 3) Narrative Progress Report (FY2002).

**DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS & TOURISM / USAID PROJECT**

**GRANT NUMBER: 0044-0402-G-GA12**

**Project Final Report- April 2003**

**PROJECT TITLE**

Urban greening and the development of a conservation ethos in selected sites within Soweto.

**Statement of objectives:**

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**Implementation**

The implementation process proceeded on schedule for most activities, and ahead of schedule for others. Before the project got underway, a consultative process, which ultimately became one of the main reasons for the project success, took place. This process included discussions with school management, the school governing body, learner representatives and parents. Through this process, the needs of all stakeholders involved were ascertained and agreed upon, which contributed to the total project ownership later displayed by those involved.

Morris Isaacson High School: The Conservation Walk Comprising 7 Different Eco-Zones Along A 500m Pathway Has Been Completed. The Zones Include Medicinal Plant Zone; Ecosystem Zone, SA Pride Zone, SA Culture Zone, Butterfly Zone, Water-Wise Zone and Alien Invader Zones. The school Culture Club has been re-focused into a Cultural Conservation Club (CCC) whose job it will be to maintain the eco-zones into the future. The CCC is actively encouraging students to use the walk as an outdoor classroom.

Avalon Cemetery: 4000 trees of 46 different species have been planted, in cooperation with Johannesburg's City Parks.

Nancefield Nursery: The SDF Landscaping and Nursery business has been established. There are 6 full-time employees (including the qualified horticulturist) and 2 part-time employees. A Public Private Partnership is being negotiated with Johannesburg's City Parks that will form the basis of a long term business relationship. The nursery infrastructure has been erected. 1200 m<sup>2</sup> of shade house and propagation units have been constructed

### **Lesson Learned**

One of the main lessons learnt is that community structures need to be brought on board at the outset. They need to but into the process. Once this happens, the rest of the project can progress smoothly as they project team is given wider responsibility for implementation decisions.

Where possible, community structures should apply pressure to local authorities for decisions to be taken. The project team is always seen as a group trying to get what they want out of the project and therefore do not have the community interests at heart. This can only be addressed by the community themselves.

### **The key learning points:**

Let the community act politically with its political leaders. Let the project team act technically and financially to complete the project. The key hindrance to implementation has been the interaction with local authorities. To date our one main stumbling block has been the tourism site opposite the Morris Isaacson High School. It has taken 7 months to get approval to utilise 16 m<sup>2</sup> of park.

### **Public Dissemination**

During this project a number of meetings presentations and report were produced considering public consultation. A document has been prepared and submitted to USAID detailing the public consultation process. Media reports consist of 2 articles in Planning Magazine concerning the two projects. (Refer to the attached document)

# planning

architectural & planning review for Southern Africa

INTO AFRICA  
The Gaborone International  
Convention Centre

**DIMENSION DATA**  
**CAMPUS**

Setting new corporate  
standards

**SOCIAL ARCHITECTURE**  
Honouring heroes -  
The Hector Pieterse Museum

The newly constructed path at the Morris Isaacson School, Soweto, which will lead visitors through the school.



TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHS: Cara Reilly

# GROWING THE FUTURE

## The Morris Isaacson School, Soweto

Apart from its reputation as one of the biggest townships in South Africa, Soweto is also a widely popular tourist destination and a major part of South Africa's history.

**S**chools in Soweto play a major role not only in the attraction of tourists to the area but in its history, and no more so than the Morris Isaacson High School. By developing a school-based maintenance project, the key players have used the Morris Isaacson School, to pioneer a cultural conservation and sustainability plan.

The Morris Isaacson High School has played a major part in the history of Soweto.

It was here that Tsitsi Mashini planned the "untrest" or "students' rebellion" that resulted in the 1976 student uprising, where many students, among them the famed Hector Pieterse, were shot dead.

Since the advent of democracy in 1994,

the school has become a key location for the tourist industry. While up until now, visitors have not been allowed access to the school itself, they have stooped across the road from this significant location, which some view as the cradle of the new South Africa.

In recognition of this, the school has been placed on the Tourism Trail and its much required developmental needs highlighted.

### PATH TO SUCCESS

In late January 2002, the Soweto Development Fund (SDF) submitted a project plan to the Department of Environment Affairs and Tourism / USAID for funding to develop an environmental and cultural plan for the Morris Isaacson High School.

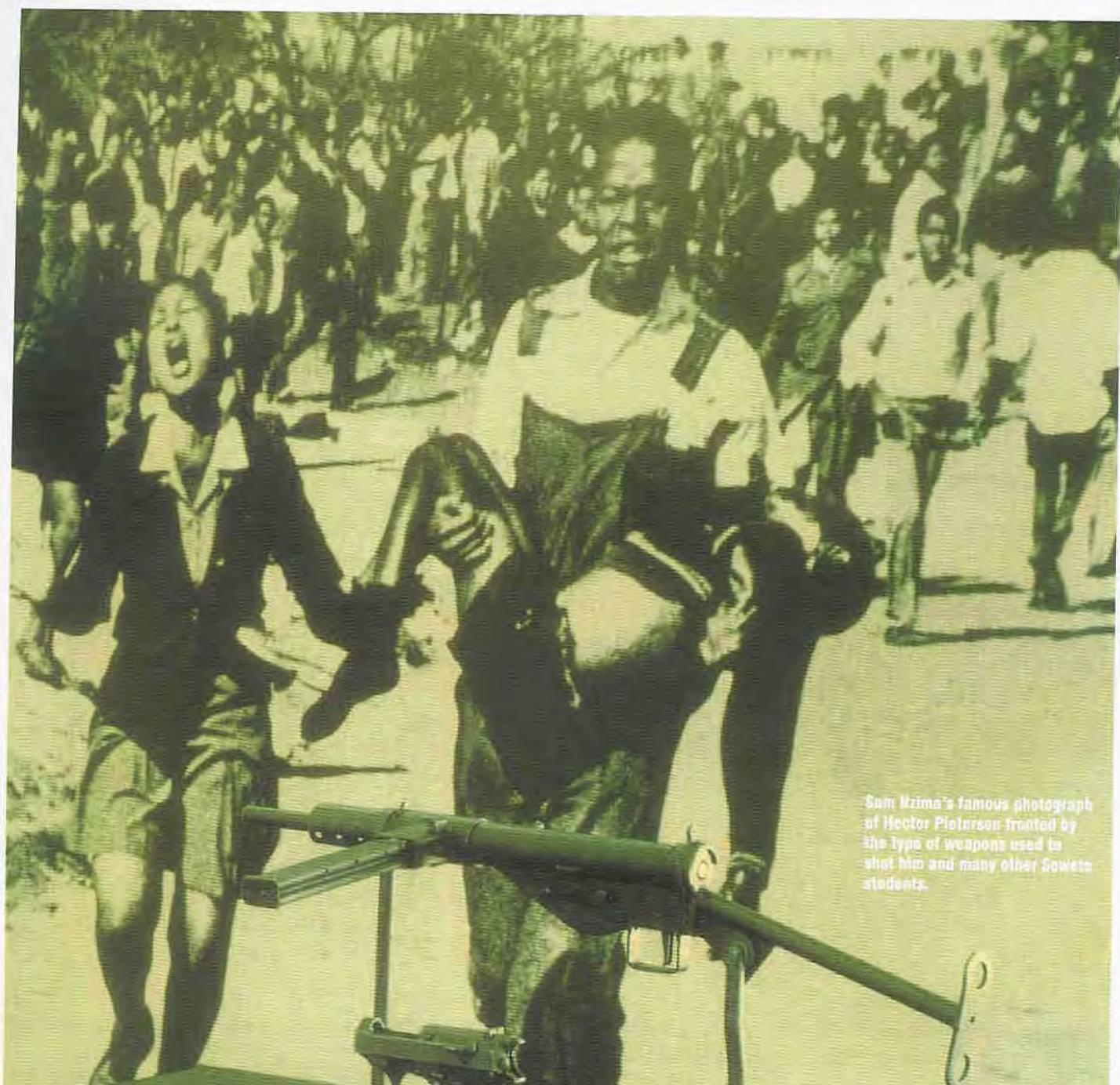
The project plan focused on using the already existing attraction of the school and creating a dedicated walk. This walk would communicate the local history of the school in the form of a small informal museum and would be set in indigenously planted gardens. Visitors would pay a nominal fee for this attraction, which would be fed back into the school for the up-keep of the gardens.

In April 2002, the project was approved and after an in-depth consultative process, the development of the gardens began.

### PRACTICAL PLANTING

The gardens are split into seven zones, each planted with vegetation and each showcasing the ways in which systems can be integrated.

While these gardens will add to the at-



Sam Nzima's famous photograph of Hector Pieterson fronted by the type of weapons used to shot him and many other Soweto students.

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHS: Cara Reilly TITLE QUOTE: Jeremy Rose, Mashabane Rose Architect

# "A POWERFUL PIECE OF INTERPRETIVE SPACE"

## Hector Pieterson Memorial Museum, Soweto

A peaceful resistance, a bloody clash, a young death, a powerful effect. The Hector Pieterson Memorial Museum marks the memory and struggle of an event and surrounding political climate that undeniably altered the course of South Africa's history.

**PROFESSIONAL TEAM****Financiers**

The Department of Environment and Tourism  
Standard Bank of South Africa  
City of Johannesburg

**Principal agent and architect**

Mashabane Rose Architects

**Quantity surveyor**

Francis Williams – Jones Kgole

**Electrical engineer**

Gama Gamedze Associates

**Mechanical engineer**

Ubunye Engineering Services

**Structural engineer**

HBS Makheta

**Civil engineer**

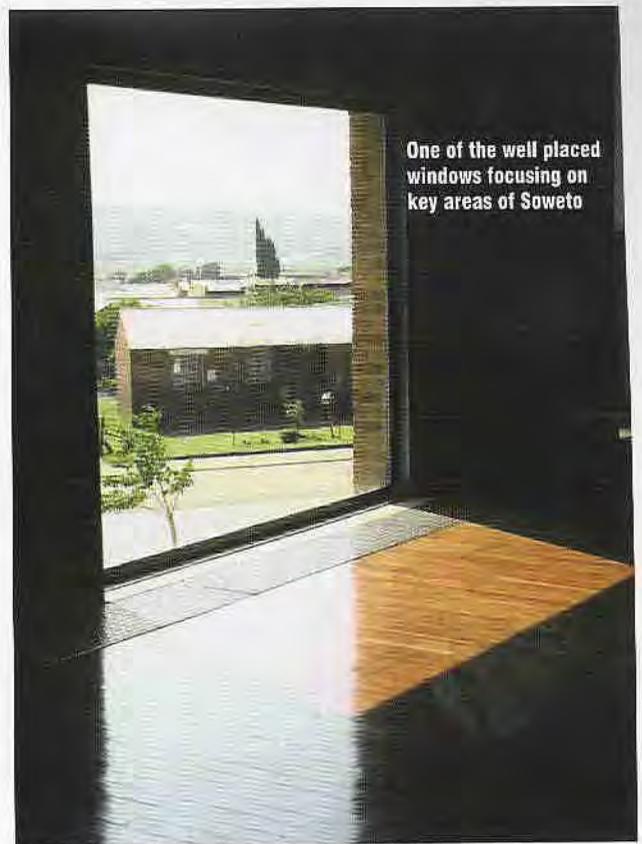
Civil Projects Engineers

**Landscape architect**

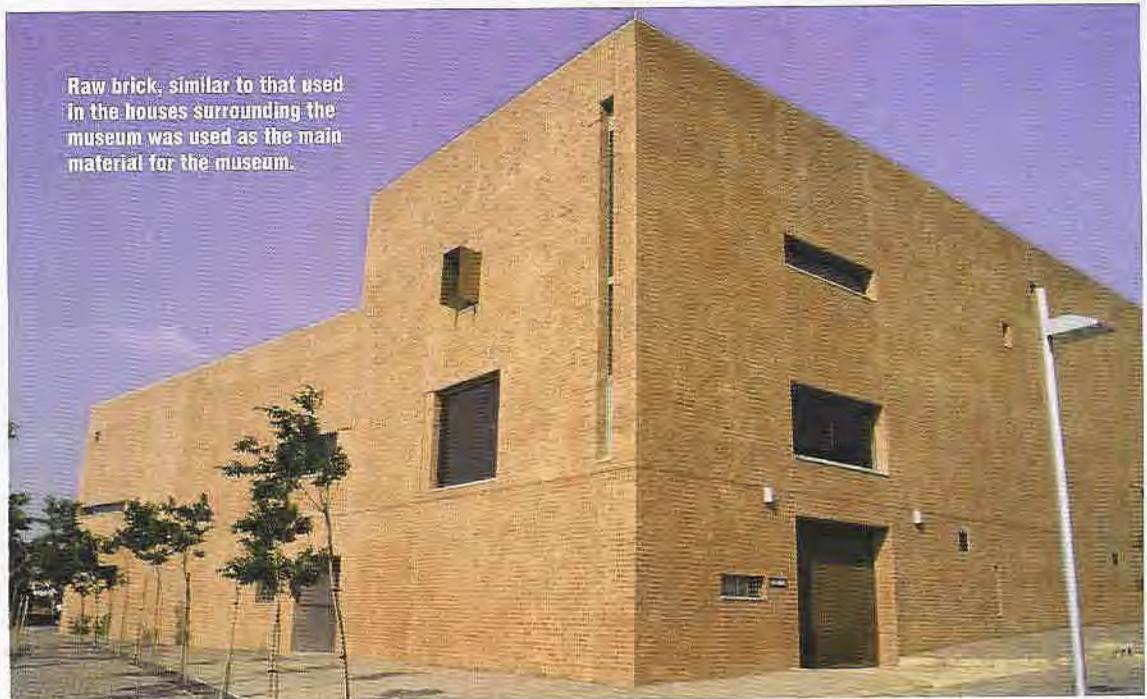
Patrick Landscape Architect

**Fire consultant**

Specialised Fire Technologies



One of the well placed windows focusing on key areas of Soweto



Raw brick, similar to that used in the houses surrounding the museum was used as the main material for the museum.

**I** saw a child fall down. Under a shower of bullets I rushed forward and went for the picture. It had been a peaceful march, the children were told to disperse and they started singing Nkosi Sikelela. The police were ordered to shoot."

This is an account by Sam Nzima, the photographer who took the now famous photograph of Hector Pieterse in the arms of Mbuyisa Makhubu, who alongside Antoinette, Hector's sister, rushed the dead boy to a nearby press car.

**WHERE IT STARTED**

On June 16 1976, approximately 10 000 Soweto students organised a peaceful march against "Bantu Education" and the use of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction. The police forces monitored the marchers from Orlando police station across the valley where they mobilised their forces to stop the marchers from progressing any further.

In the clash, the police shot and killed among others, Hector Pieterse, a 13-year-old school-boy. Mayhem ensued and the initially peaceful march, turned into an all out

war, which raged for several days, spreading across the country in acts of solidarity with Soweto students.

**GROUND WORK**

The final development of the Hector Pieterse Museum has been a long time coming. Involved with the Soweto Heritage Trust for over two and a half years, the architect and the trust battled to find funds for the project. Eventually, R4 million was put up by the Standard Bank of South Africa. Still showing little progress in terms of getting off the ground,

# SOCIAL ARCHITECTURE

the Department of Environment and Tourism injected R16 million into the project, with the final R8 million coming from the Johannesburg City Council.

Apart from the funding battle, the land earmarked for the museum had to be defended from local Soweto developers. Their aim was to build a 'hotel, retail' centre and shebeen on the site, but the heritage of the area was deemed by the local community organisation as too important to lose and the museum went ahead.

## PLACE OF MEMORY

The Hector Pieterse Museum is located in Kumale Street, Orlando West.

Two blocks away from the intersection of Moema and Vilakazi Streets, the place where Hector was shot and fell, the placing of the museum had to take into account the houses on all four corners of the intersection. Two roads and a traffic circle were closed and several sites consolidated to form a public gathering space and site for the museum.

Despite the distance between the museum and the shooting site, the two sites have been visually linked by an 800m long line.

This line is made of two steel plates planted with rooigras, which runs from the entrance to the museum out across the public space and past the original memorial. While this line does not run all the way to the shooting site, it visually connects the two and allows visitors to follow this link, connect with a line of trees just before the shooting site and out these events of history into context.

## ONE IN THE SAME

The museum is designed to recall the physical and emotional context of the '76 uprising. In this regard the materials used for the public spaces, as well as for the external and internal elements of the museum, are as closely matched to the surrounds as possible.

On a road island at the intersection of Moema and Vilakazi Streets, the original Hector Pieterse memorial was laid in 1992 by the ANC Youth League. With the design of the museum and the closing of the roads, the original space is now surrounded by a square using road kerbs, cobbles and grass block paving. The original cenotaph has been lowered slightly and is set against the backdrop of a water feature. This water feature trickles under the concrete road kerbs that form a bridge over the rocky water bed and steps down in levels to the bottom of the site.

At the base of the cenotaph the message is clear, "To honour the students who gave their lives in the struggle for freedom

and democracy"

Framing the courtyard but not fully separating it from the adjacent school, church and shops, are several dry stack black slate walls of varying heights. These walls form part of the public space which leads off the main intersection and this creates a sense of build-up to the front entrance of the museum.

## OPEN EXPRESSION

The museum communicates a sense of solid mass expressed through a double-storey red-brick building. This material was carefully chosen to tie in with the red bricked, iron roofed semi-detached homes in the immediate vicinity of the museum.

The irregular shaped windows placed in a haphazard pattern around the building are made of galvanised steel with glass gued into them. Concrete sills break the red brick, enhancing the untreated qualities of the materials. "We did not want to cover anything up. We wanted the raw materials to remain as such. The museum is about being truthful and accurate," says Jeremy Rose of Mashabane Rose Architects.

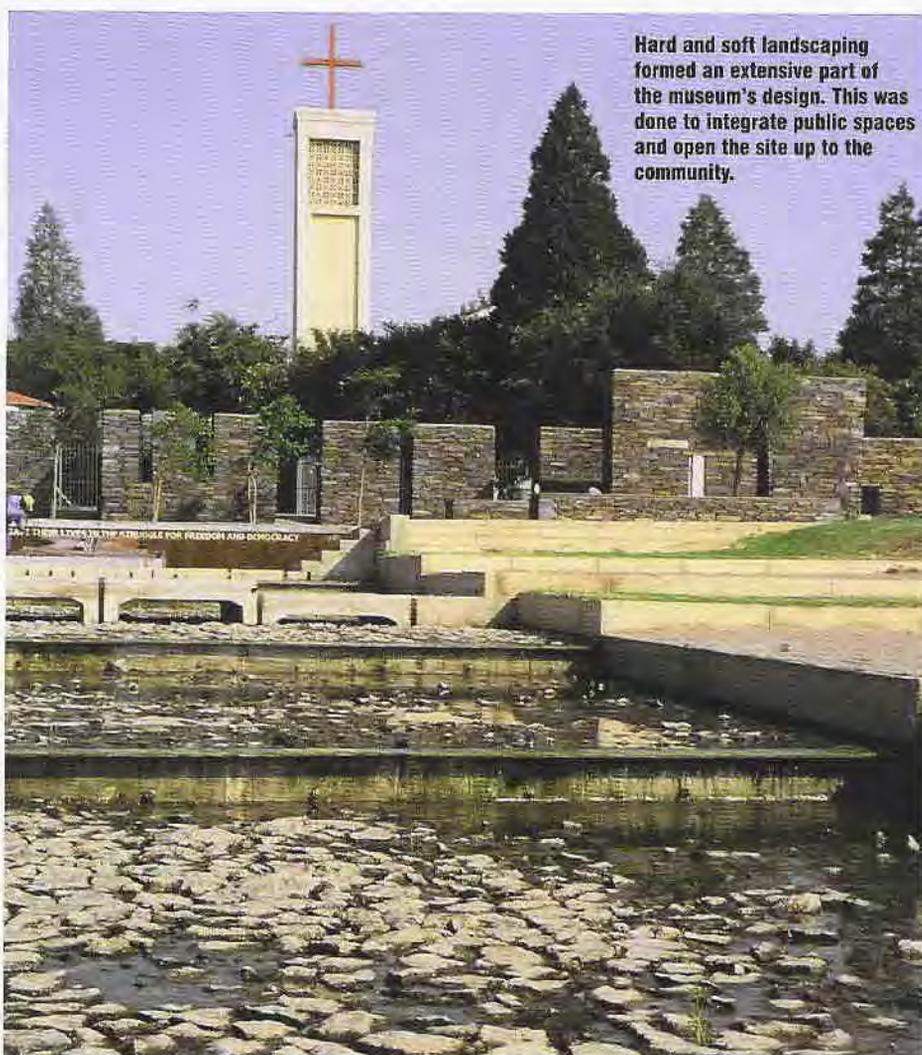
Upon entering the museum the immediate impression is of space and height, with light flowing in from the external courtyard and the strip windows in the corners of the building.

The dominant red brick used externally is carried through to the interior and is complemented by the raw materials of the design and exhibitions. Stripped wood floors, concrete columns, exposed service ducts and galvanised steel make a strong bold statement. There is no softening of edges in the design or exhibitions.

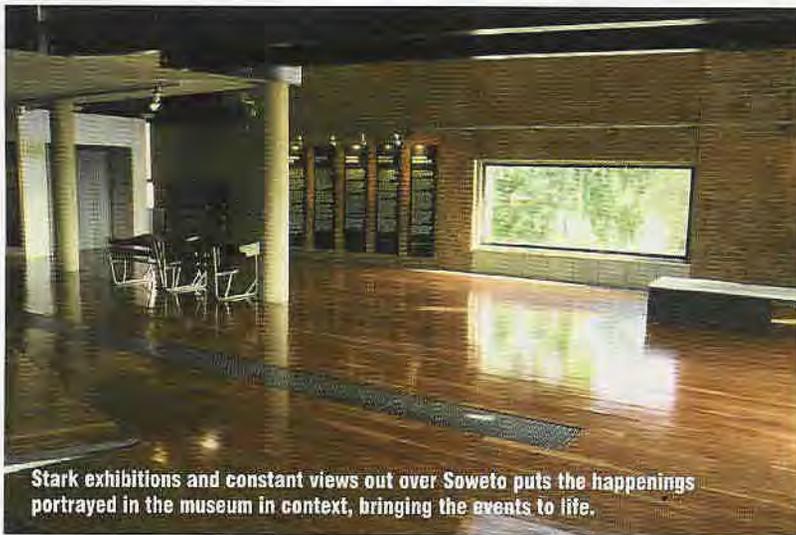
## TELLING THE STORY

The museum is arranged in a series of inter-leaving spaces joined by ramps. Each space represents a part of a story. This story is not only that of the 1976 riots, but of Apartheid in general and the discrepancies between the people living in South Africa at the time. The ramps form a route round the museum, progressively unfolding the chronology of the build-up to 16 June story in visual displays, video footage, audio accounts, text panels and real-life views towards significant places in the story. This combination of mediums helps put the happenings into context and brings the journey to life.

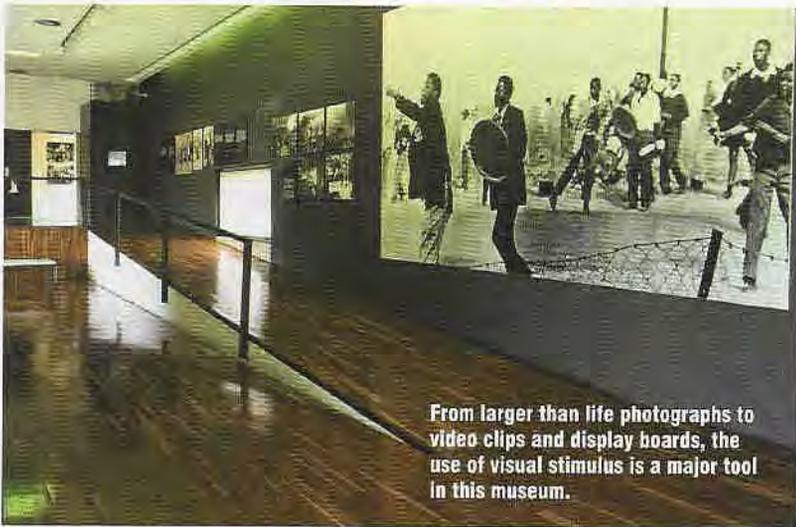
Large photographs cover many of the walls, all making striking statements. These include a picture of smiling children carrying a "To hell with Afrikaans" banner, an image of children sitting crammed, four to a desk in a classroom reading Afrikaans, a picture



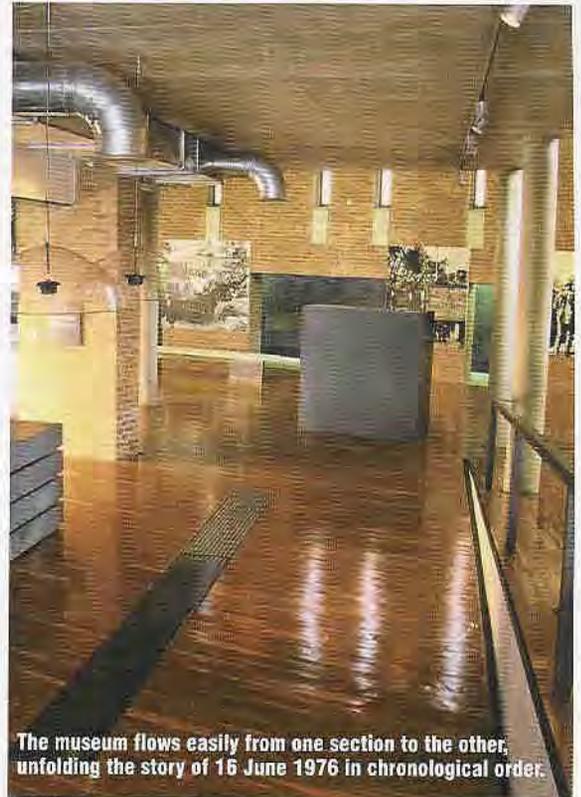
Hard and soft landscaping formed an extensive part of the museum's design. This was done to integrate public spaces and open the site up to the community.



Stark exhibitions and constant views out over Soweto puts the happenings portrayed in the museum in context, bringing the events to life.



From larger than life photographs to video clips and display boards, the use of visual stimulus is a major tool in this museum.



The museum flows easily from one section to the other, unfolding the story of 16 June 1976 in chronological order.

crudely displaying the body of one of the victims and of course, an enlarged replica of Nzima's photograph.

## TWO NATIONS

A major part of the museum's presentation of the story is done through TV monitors, recording the world-wide footage of the events.

The video footage covers eye-witness accounts of the Pieterse shooting as well as that of the riot itself. Prominent figures in South African politics speak of the riots and South Africa during the apartheid years. There are clips showing the white middle-class way of life, parties, tennis and dancing capturing the country's strong colonial heritage. Juxtaposed on this is the labour-class life of the majority. From the "geen swarte, net blanke" signs on buses, train stations, benches and toilets to the outright brutality levelled during "pass checks" and street sweeps, no matter what political affiliation one has, the injustices cannot be ignored.

In fact this is often one of the questions raised when museums and memorials of this type are developed. Why keep harping on the past? Why keep showing up brutality? Why not get on with making positive

changes and developing the country into a real democracy? Says Rose, "The stronger the negativities of the past are reflected, the more positive the changes we are experiencing now seem to be." The truth of our apartheid history cannot be taken away or hidden. In the same vein, neither can our colonial roots be abolished. History has to be told and events have to make their mark.

## SOLID REALITY

Somehow more effective and telling than the visuals on the walls and on the monitors, is the use of the Soweto context to maximise the exhibition.

Placed strategically throughout the museum, are large windows over-looking significant sites. The typical red-brick house is framed by a large square window. A rectangular opening looks onto the public space and shooting site beyond. A significant part of this contextual display is the window that looks towards the Orlando Police Station, where the police force mobilised to stop the students. More than just a window, this display begins at a grated "bridge" which leads towards the window. Above and around this window are pictures of the police force at the time, images capturing some of their actions

as well as pictures of Casspirs and other police vehicles. Welded on either side of the window outside the building are steel plates, directing the view towards the police station and giving the feeling of a gun-sight, aiming back at the station.

In the centre of the building is a void or courtyard, open to the sky. This space is filled with gravel spread over two levels. Arranged in the gravel within this void are individually inscribed granite blocks with the names of 350 previously unrecognised students who also lost their lives in the uprising. Included in this display is the name of Hastings Ndlovu, the first student to lose his life in the uprising and the son of a school principal.

## FULL STORY

The Hector Pieterse Museum gave the architects a chance to expand on the ideas used at the Apartheid Museum. "The integration of the narrative, museum space and the physical landscape outside is the most potent and memorable aspect of the museum," says Rose. The local context of Soweto coupled with the number of subtle design elements included in the museum becomes an effective medium to appreciate the full impact of the story of June 1976. □

**KEY PLAYERS**

**Client**

Soweto Development Foundation (SDF)

**Project manager**

Environmental Management Services (EMS)

**Financier**

Department of Environment and Tourism / USAID

South African co-ordinated consultant  
Megatech

**Financial managers / public facilitation**

WSP Wainsley

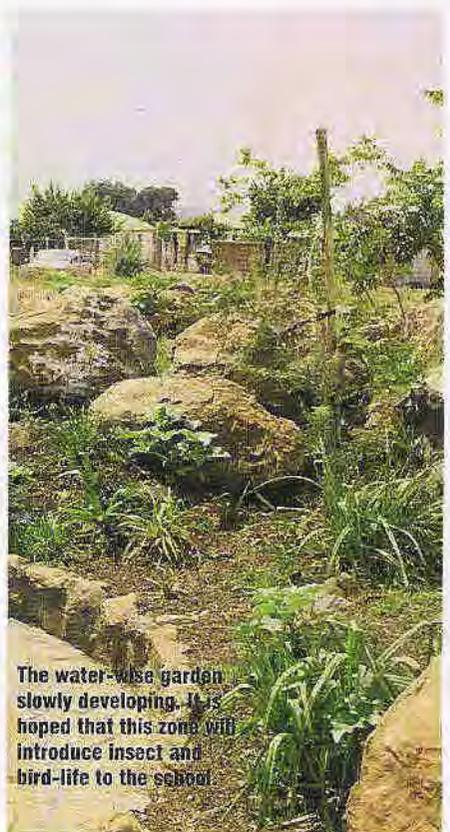
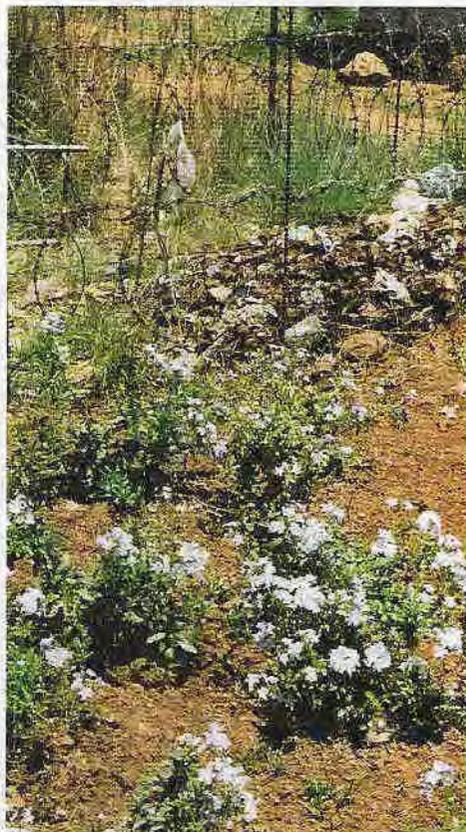
**Landscape management**

Geko-Enviroscapes

**Plant supplier**

The SDF Nursery

**Right: Unfortunately, litter is a big problem within the school and in Soweto in general.**



**The water-wise garden slowly developing. It is hoped that this zone will introduce insect and bird-life to the school.**

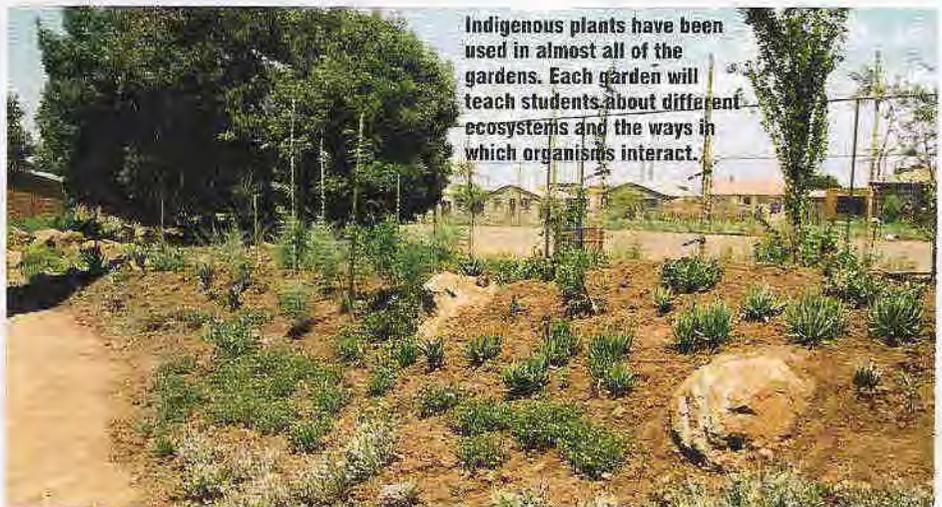
fraction of the school, it is also hoped that they will serve as living classrooms.

Too often teaching methods look at subjects in isolation, never showing the connection between the different spheres of what is learned. By providing a practical teaching forum, through zones, like the butterfly garden, water wise zone, ecosystem zone, the SA pride zone, ecosystem zone and the medicinal zone the gardens will not only teach children about ecosystems but will show them the interactions between the ways in which aspects of the world work.

On a school educational level, this practical forum will link subjects like science, geography and biology. Ultimately, it will show the children that no organism functions in isolation.

Added to the practicality of the gardens, it is hoped that a level of social responsibility and community education will take place. "Urbanisation has led to a lack of respect for the environment and has developed a 'throw-away culture'" says Mike Howard of Environmental Management Services. "We see this not only in the school where thus far there are no dustbins, but in also the streets and out of Soweto".

Howard believes this project will start to raise environmental awareness in children and lead them back to the environmentally-sensitive cultures he believes existed in older generations.



**Indigenous plants have been used in almost all of the gardens. Each garden will teach students about different ecosystems and the ways in which organisms interact.**

**BUYING IN**

Before the project got under way, a consultative process, which would ultimately become one of the main reasons for the project's success, took place.

From public consultations to discussions with the school management, the governing body, the learners' representative council and the parents, agreement and consensus had to be obtained. The reason for this very open forum was not only to obtain information about what the needs of the students and community at large were, and what they felt the project could bring to the school, but was also a way of developing a sense of ownership.

"It is important for people to buy into a project and develop a sense of pride. This is how it will be looked after in the future,"

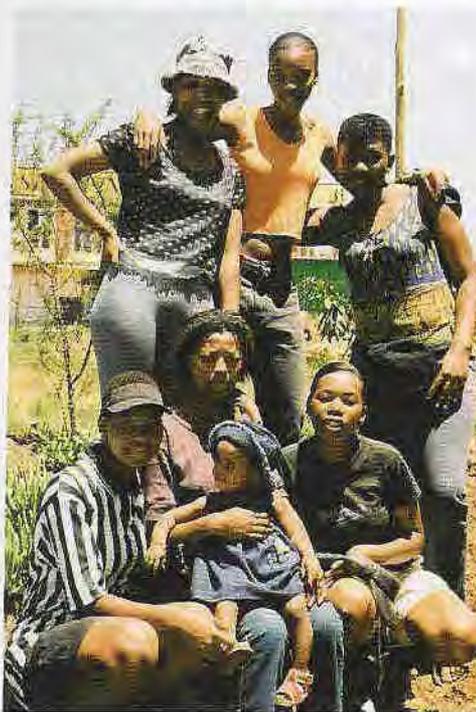
says Howard.

Proposals already identified by the school tied in very closely with the project's aims and objectives but it was clear that the project's present funding would not be enough to meet all expectations.

While the environmental, educational and maintenance considerations were key in the discussions and were carried through in the project, an important component identified was cultural conservation.

"Urbanisation as a process tends to dull an individual's culture to conform to the wider community says Jacob Noe, chairman of the SDF. "In township areas, the mass integration of many cultures has led to a loss of identity".

In light of this, the aim of the project is to rekindle the cultural flame of students at



**FAR LEFT:** Six of the girls who form part of the Grade 11 conservation club.



**LEFT:** The colour introduced into the school has made a huge difference to the previously stark environment.

the school. Practically this is achieved by bringing back some of the cultural meaning of specific types of trees, their importance in folklore and their role in today's world.

"The formal expression of this is in the development of a cultural conservation plan for the school" says Noe.

## TAKING OWNERSHIP

One of the essential components of ensuring the project is more than just a matter of giving hand-outs is making the school accept responsibility for it. Thus, school-based maintenance is the preferred route. In order to co-ordinate this maintenance effort, the school nominated 12 Grade 11 students to form a conservation club. They are fully responsible not only for maintaining the gardens and growing the plants, but for championing the cause of conservation and litter control.

For this group of girls and boys, the project is not just about gardens: they merely serve to educate the community. It is about sustaining the environment.

While this maintenance-based conservation club does exist, the SDF and EMS are still assisting the school in taking over full responsibility for the project and are now having to sort out problems such as poor water-pressure, the theft of plants, the lack of funds to replace plants, setting up the museum and the general upkeep of the grounds.

## HISTORY LESSON

Bearing in mind that the walk is aimed at existing tourists an area of great importance to the project is the development of a tourist stop.

One of the dilemmas facing business in Soweto is that essentially there are only a

few tourist destinations that charge money for access and only a few that have dedicated areas for buses and cars to pull off the road. The rest are free to the tourist who is driven around the area with a tour operator who speaks about Soweto. "To widen tourism in Soweto, we need to look at ways of getting tourists to pay," says Jacob Noe.

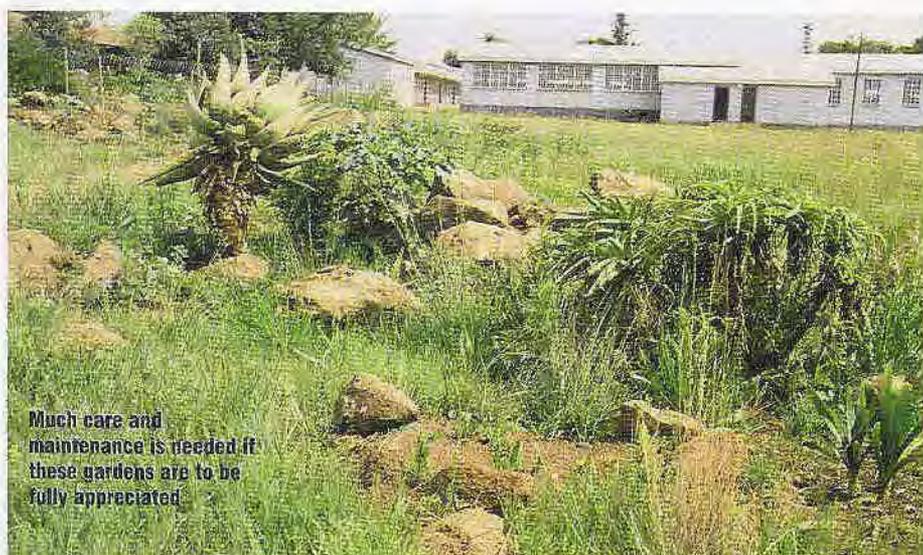
Outside the Morris Isaacson School, there are plans afoot not only to develop a dedicated lay-by for buses and other vehicles, but to have a large poster explaining the significance of the school. "We envisage a permanent display with an information guide to recount the stories from the past," says Noe.

Alongside this information display, the developers would like to see small curio shops being set up. This area will be governed and maintained by the community itself.

One problem with the set-up of this area is wading through the red tape of buying the land. As the required space is on the edge of a council park, rezoning permission has to be obtained and this has proven to be a very difficult process. The SDF and EMS still await approval to lease the land.

## CONTINUAL GROWTH

In social development, projects have to act as catalysts to spark more development or grow the community at large. In the process of developing the Morris Isaacson School, the first and only independent nursery was set up in Soweto. This nursery, run by a local horticulturalist and members of the SDF Executive Committee, has been set up as an independently-run business. Members of the community who were trained in planning, growing and planting at the school, are employed at the nursery and will be used on other projects into the area. It is hoped that as the SDF learns, so the business will branch out into garden servicing, landscape management and propagation. This is an excellent example of skills transfer to a locally-based company. □



Much care and maintenance is needed if these gardens are to be fully appreciated

## **PROGRESS REPORT (FY02)**

URBAN GREENING AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CONSERVATION ETHOS IN SELECTED SITES WITHIN  
SOWETO

**GRANT AGREEMENT: 0040-0402-G-GA12**

**OCTOBER 2002**

### **POSITIVE ASPECTS**

**The project on urban greening and development of a conservation ethos in selected sites in Soweto is currently being finalised. The key achievements of the project are as follows:**

#### **MORRIS ISAACSON HIGH SCHOOL**

The conservation walk comprising 7 different eco-zones along a 500m pathway has been completed. The zones include medicinal plant zone; ecosystem zone, SA Pride zone, SA Culture zone, butterfly zone, water-wise zone and alien invader zones.

The school Culture Club has been re-focused into a Cultural Conservation Club (CCC) whose job it will be to maintain the eco-zones into the future.

The CCC is actively encouraging students to use the walk as an outdoor classroom.

#### **AVALON CEMETERY**

Planting of 4000 trees of 46 different species has begun strongly and will continue over the next 4 months. A total of 48-52 trees per day are being planted in cooperation with Johannesburg's City Parks.

#### **NANCEFIELD NURSERY**

The Soweto Development Foundation Landscaping and Nursery business has been established. There are 6 full-time employees (including the qualified horticulturist) and 2 part-time employees.

A Public Private Partnership is being negotiated with Johannesburg's City Parks that will form the basis of a long term business relationship.

The nursery infrastructure has been erected. 1200 m<sup>2</sup> of shade house and propagation units have been constructed.

All tree stock has been delivered to the nursery while awaiting planting at Avalon Cemetery.

Work has commenced on preparing the propagation units for first cultivation.

#### *NEGATIVE ASPECT*

Currently there is only one negative aspect. The City of Johannesburg is putting an ever increasing number of obstacles in our way for our proposed tourism site. Changing personnel, departmental protocols and lack of responsibility has meant that some estimates are that the process could take another twelve months before the requested 20 m<sup>2</sup> of land is incorporated into the road reserve and a formal lay-by constructed.