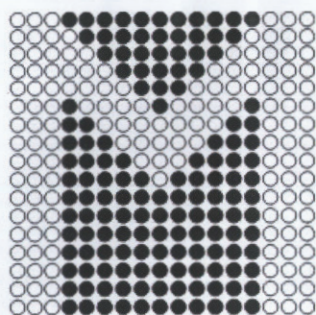


ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION IN SOUTH AFRICA SINCE 1994: 100+ PROJECTS

CONVENED AND EDITED BY ALBRECHT HERHOLDT





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PILGRIM'S REST HIA_PILGRIM'S REST

KAREL BAKKER



Project Address **Ponieskrantz, Clewer and Newtown sites**

Completed **2001**

Architectural Team **K. Bakker (lead), with G. M. van der Waal (Cultmatrix cc) and Graham Young (Newtown Landscape Architects)**

Client **Ehlanzeni District Municipality, Mpumalanaga**

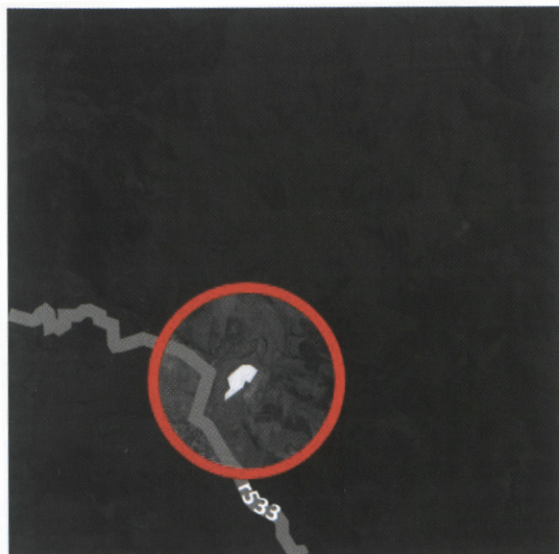
Heritage protection in South Africa underwent a paradigm shift with the enactment of the National Heritage Resources Act (Act 25) in 1999 (NHRA). The preceding National Monuments Act (1969) aimed purely to conserve monuments; objects with overt cultural-historical value, be it by virtue of their appearance, age, rarity or association. This conservationist approach can best be seen as an attempt to counter the negative actions of external (environmental) forces such as the action of time and human endeavour. The NHRA framed a different approach: our patronage is a cultural resource with inherent value of which we are both beneficiaries and, importantly, stewards. These concepts have come to the heritage fraternity from the realm of nature conservation where, when dealing with protecting mortal individual living organisms, longer holistic perspective must be taken. Short term impacts have long term repercussions.

The NHRA set the conditions for assessing impact due to human actions similarly to its slightly older twin act, the 1998 National Environmental Management Act (NEMA). Section 38 of the NHRA calls for Heritage Impact Assessments (HIAs) to be carried out to inform the statutory approvals process of pre-defined categories of development. The first known HIA carried out under the NHRA rightly deserves a place in an overview of conservation practices in South Africa. The authors were pioneers, acting in a vacuum, led only by their own experience and the requirements of the then new NHRA. Since then, a vast number of impact assessments have been undertaken in South Africa, national and international guidelines have been published, and Impact Assessments have become a common tool in the World Heritage arena.

The most important but time consuming aspect of the overall impact assessment process is defining the values inherent to and represented by a place, a cumbersome process of mining and extraction. The great merit of the Pilgrim's Rest HIA is that the authors dug deeper than the obvious "cute village and curio market", and discovered an unknown richness of values in the uniqueness of the industrial heritage of the site. The area had already been earmarked as a potential candidate for World Heritage listing. A result of the HIA was that the inclusion of the site on the South African Tentative List for World Heritage status in 2004 became more focussed, presenting its industrial past as potentially being of outstanding universal value. This HIA was part of a pro-active process, made possible by bureaucrats who had the foresight to commission the HIA as an informant to the site selection process, and not as a retrospective assessment to ensure minimum statutory compliance as is so often the case. This allowed the authors to bring their full expertise to the table and explore the possibilities that a multi-disciplinary approach could bring to the new impact assessment process. The Pilgrim's Rest HIA includes an impressive visual assessment, an aspect that is often neglected in current HIAs. That the project was cancelled, and its recommendations not enacted, does not detract from the achievement of the study. The Pilgrim's Rest HIA would not only stand up to scrutiny, but can also contribute to standard-setting, an achievement for a pioneering work.

We have become acutely aware of the fragility of the finite natural environment; and that extinction is eternal. Society has not yet come to the same conclusion in thinking about our own environment – our cultural ecology (from GR. oikos 'house' + 'logy' (logic)). In the sustainability debate, often framed along the categories of the "triple bottom line", culture and heritage are often positioned as part of social sustainability. The Pilgrim's Rest HIA, and the intention behind the need for HIA's to be included in our toolkit to curate our physical environment, resonates with recent calls to identify "culture" as a fourth and individual pillar of sustainability. The HIA process has a critical role to play in ensuring that the future we hope to create includes that which we value from our past.

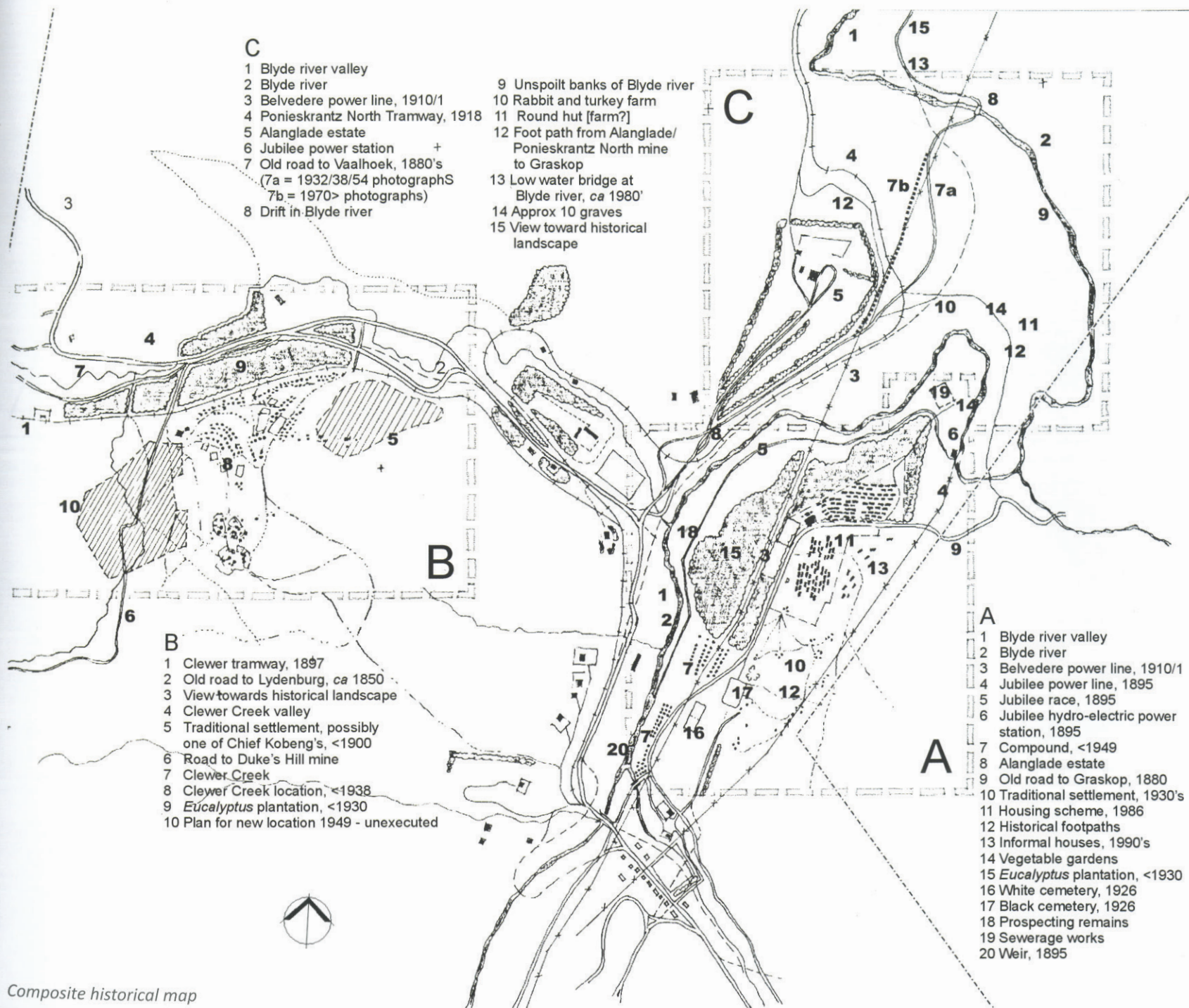
Nicholas Clarke, Technical University of Delft, Netherlands



S 24°53'55.17" E 30°45'02.03"

C

- 1 Blyde river valley
- 2 Blyde river
- 3 Belvedere power line, 1910/1
- 4 Ponieskrantz North Tramway, 1918
- 5 Alanglade estate
- 6 Jubilee power station +
- 7 Old road to Vaalhoek, 1880's
(7a = 1932/38/54 photographs
7b = 1970> photographs)
- 8 Drift in Blyde river
- 9 Unspoilt banks of Blyde river
- 10 Rabbit and turkey farm
- 11 Round hut [farm?]
- 12 Foot path from Alanglade/
Ponieskrantz North mine
to Graskop
- 13 Low water bridge at
Blyde river, ca 1980'
- 14 Approx 10 graves
- 15 View toward historical
landscape

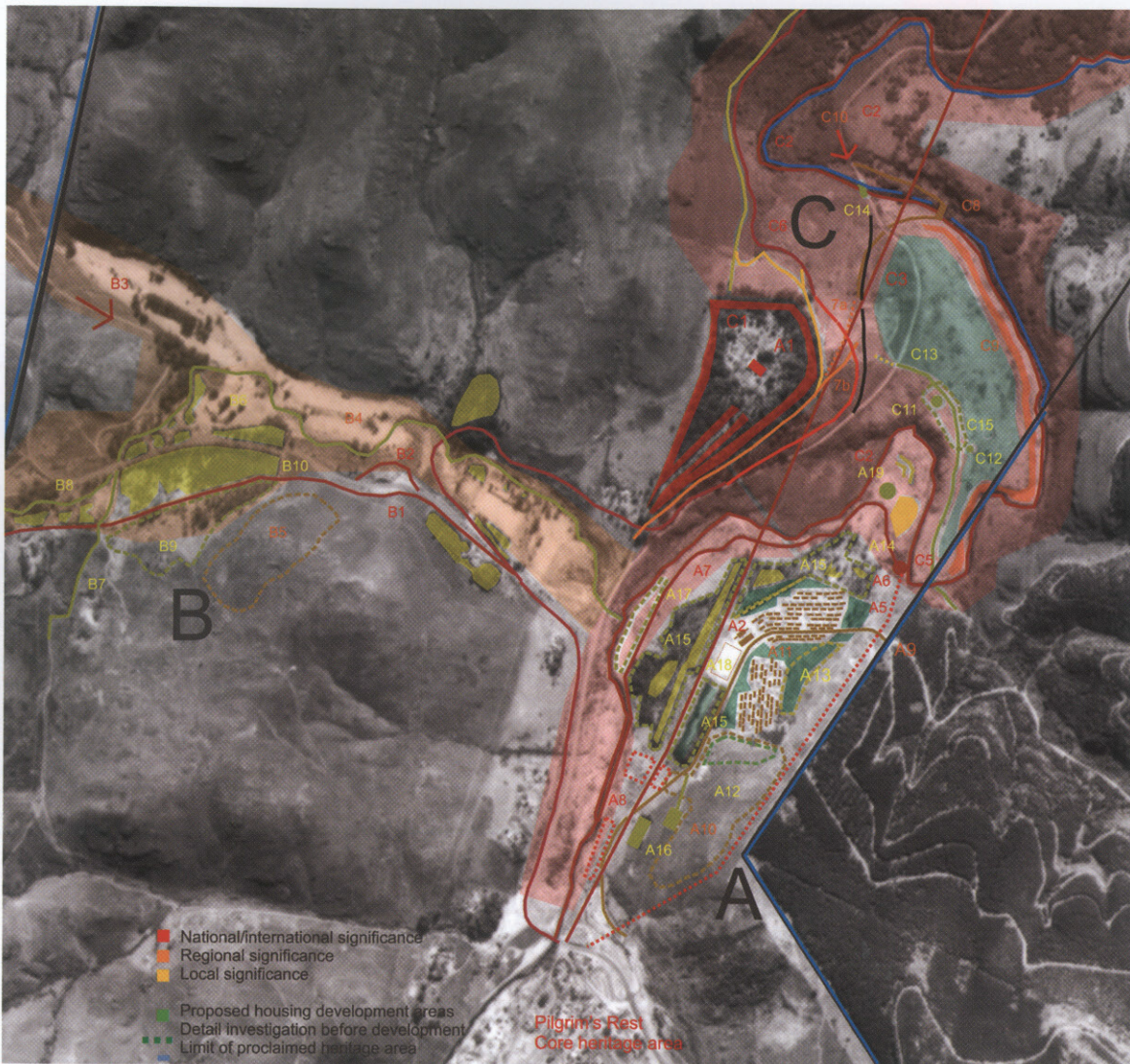
**B**

- 1 Clewer tramway, 1897
- 2 Old road to Lydenburg, ca 1850
- 3 View towards historical landscape
- 4 Clewer Creek valley
- 5 Traditional settlement, possibly
one of Chief Kobeng's, <1900
- 6 Road to Duke's Hill mine
- 7 Clewer Creek
- 8 Clewer Creek location, <1938
- 9 *Eucalyptus* plantation, <1930
- 10 Plan for new location 1949 - unexecuted

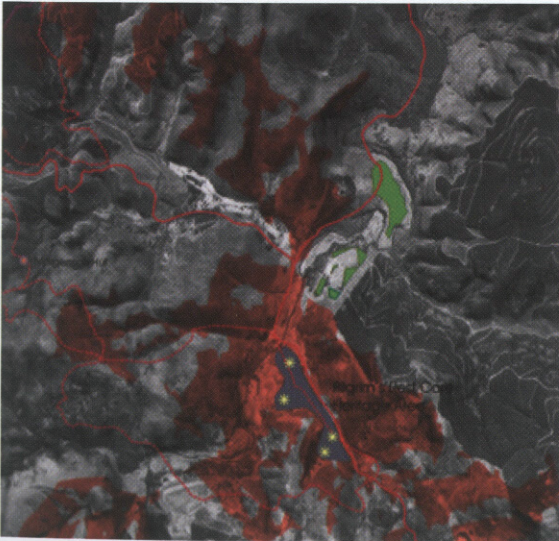
A

- 1 Blyde river valley
- 2 Blyde river
- 3 Belvedere power line, 1910/1
- 4 Jubilee power line, 1895
- 5 Jubilee race, 1895
- 6 Jubilee hydro-electric power
station, 1895
- 7 Compound, <1949
- 8 Alanglade estate
- 9 Old road to Graskop, 1880
- 10 Traditional settlement, 1930's
- 11 Housing scheme, 1986
- 12 Historical footpaths
- 13 Informal houses, 1990's
- 14 Vegetable gardens
- 15 *Eucalyptus* plantation, <1930
- 16 White cemetery, 1926
- 17 Black cemetery, 1926
- 18 Prospecting remains
- 19 Sewerage works
- 20 Weir, 1895

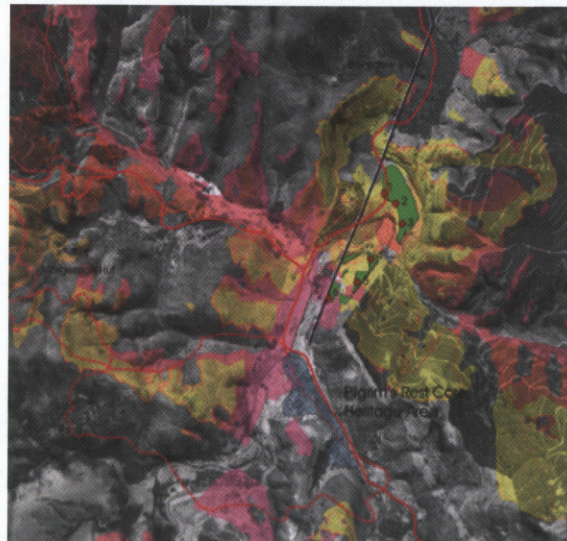
Composite historical map



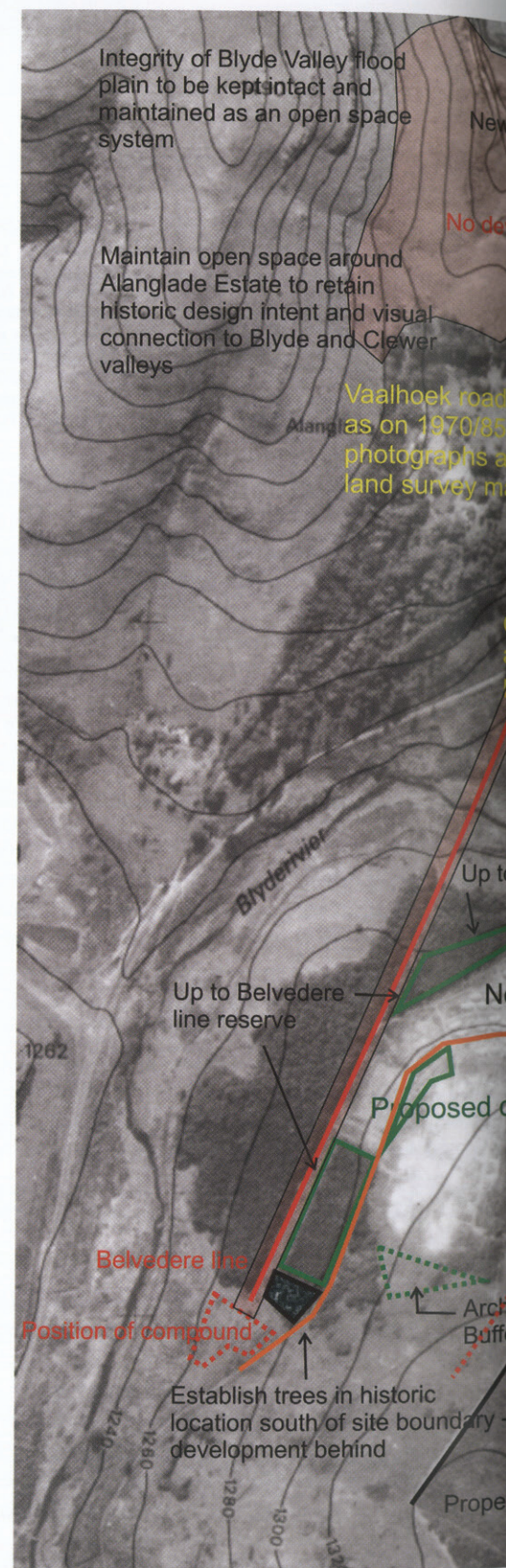
Heritage map with proposed development areas



Views of Pilgrim's Rest core heritage area



Visibility of preferred development site(s)



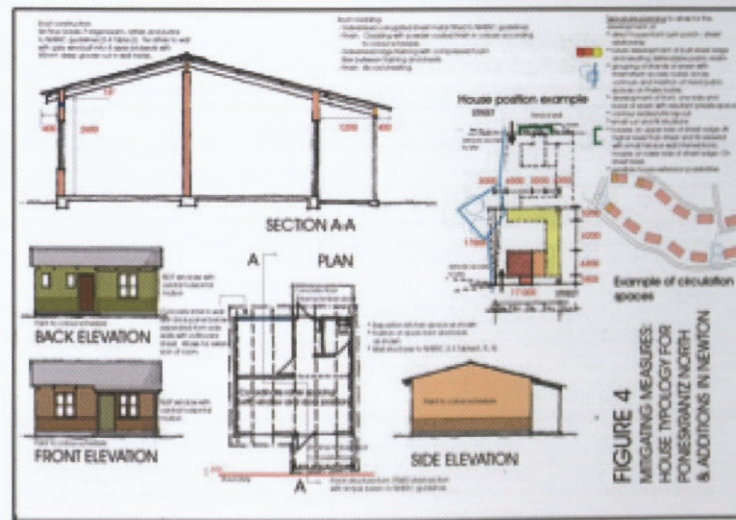
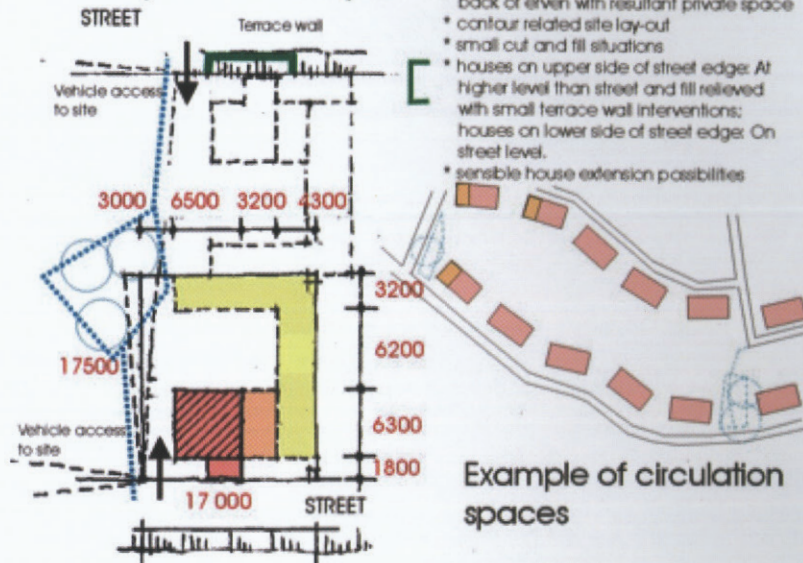
Visual representation: boundaries & mitigation



Typical site planning to allow for the development of:

- direct house-front cum porch : street relationship
- future development of built street edge and resulting defensible public realm
- grouping of strands of even with intermittent access routes across contours and insertion of freed public spaces on these routes.
- development of front, one side and back of even with resultant private space
- contour related site lay-out
- small cut and fill situations
- houses on upper side of street edge: At higher level than street and fill relieved with small terrace wall interventions; houses on lower side of street edge: On street level.
- sensible house extension possibilities

House position example



Integrating the new settlement with the heritage place