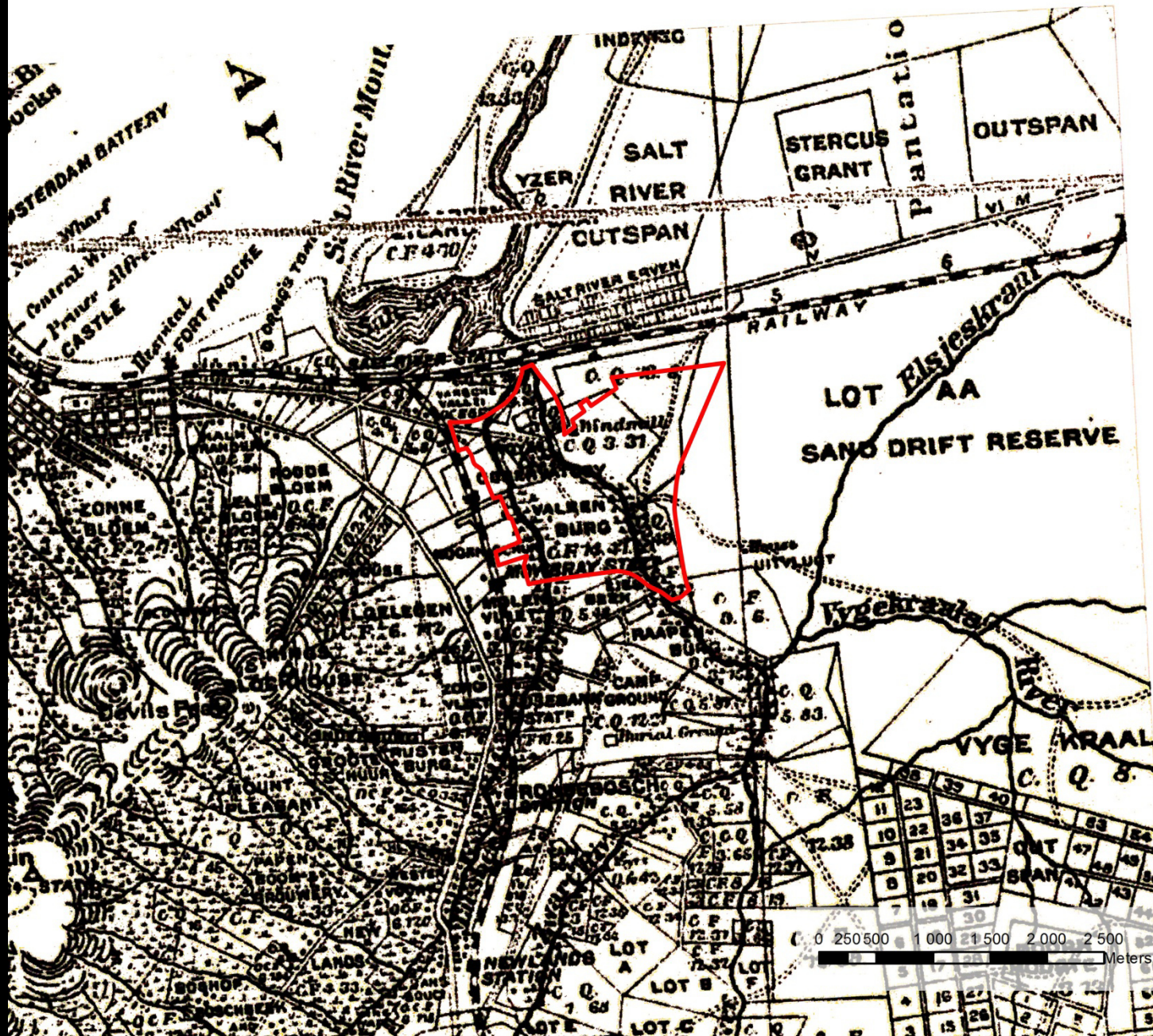


Listen to the River

“The river has
taught me to listen, from it you will
learn it as well.
It knows everything,
everything can be learned from it.”

Siddhartha: Hermann Hesse

Figure 1. Excerpt from 1880 - 1900 map series (Chief Directorate: Surveys and Mapping) which depicts most of the early farms before major subdivision, but also the Liesbeek and Black Rivers before canalisation. The Salt River estuary is clearly visible. It was reclaimed in the early 20th century for railway yards.





0 250 500 1 000 1 500 2 000 2 500
Meters



The River needs help

There are very few sites in the world like this. It's not a Central Park nor a Table Mountain National Park nor a Waterfront nor...

It is special. Embrace that. However leaving it as it is, is not an option.

- Destroyed and undeveloped, it faces a barrage of threats of neglect, pollution, mismanagement, unplanned development, uncontrolled construction, illegal occupation, flooding, crime, barricades and fences and the sterilisation brought about by institutional and industrial buildings. In the end there will be no space for people there.
- We have to create space for everyone to contribute to participate and to live their dreams here. Everyone has his or her dreams and own idea of wealth and what value he or she wishes to extract from life and in this case from the river. Some wants to be rich, others want to be safe or content or be left alone, or not to pay more, or be with family, or to be powerful and important, or to have self-esteem, or to leave a legacy. The list is endless.
- We have to save the river. To do that, we have to design for, and with the people, make it so that we can enjoy the river, celebrate its spaces, treasure its treasures and make special places and buildings. But it needs lots and lots of people. Let that be our legacy.

This is my dream or TRUP:

Design for People

1. Embrace the concept of water-sensitive urban design, and nature-sensitive urban design and people-sensitive urban design.
2. Develop the valley and the people in it – not only the streets and buildings, but also the people.
3. Provide for many people to come and live and work and play here – many more than you could ever have dreamed possible. Without people, there will not be the critical mass to do anything, and all the dreams will come to nothing.
4. For this to happen, the neighbourhoods around it has to be dense, in some places high-rise. It has to be mixed-use, mixed-income, mixed-tenure – all mixed up!
5. Understand sub-cultures and “neighbourhoods within neighbourhoods”. Allow for very many identities and character themes and cultures. Above all, design, build and manage in such a way that you avoid stigmatising anyone.

Enjoy the Rivier

6. Provide a place and space for a monument to the first nation – the most beautiful place. Allow for a huge structure, a theatre, temple or cathedral that can be an international destination. Make this a place of celebration and of joy.
7. Make a big detention pond or a dam (or even a few of them). Make it suitable for recreation, fish breeding and more. Make it part of the flood management strategy, the water purification system, and water sustainability. This will change the edge of the river.
8. Make it possible for a canoe or a paddle ski to go up or down the river from here. This will require a massive effort with regards to the stability of water levels and water quality.
9. Elsewhere, maybe next to the dam, provide places for the cappuchino and wifi people and allow commercial and retail activity,
10. Make it possible for people to get to the water along the river's edge at least every 500 m or so, and provide each of these places with a different identity (a variety of places and character).

Celebrate the Space

11. Add buildings to the open edges of neighbourhoods where space is leaking out – make it as dense as possible so that families can stay there and not have to move away. Use these buildings to redefine open spaces and make these spaces and the buildings around them beautiful so that their value will spill over for everyone to capture.
12. Use the wasted spaces next to roads productively, especially at the freeways where no one can get to, maybe for wind and solar farms.
13. Plant a forest somewhere and many trees wherever you can. This will help to manage the wind and the noise and may even bring unexpected benefits - like mushrooms growing in autumn. Link all the sites with trees.
14. In the north make a link to the cemetery. Embrace that part of the city and take steps to join it up with this park. Death is, after all, a part of life.
15. Connect the site to the sea, and to the river, and to other beautiful places. Make sure that these connections are generous and safe. Create points of interest at every possible opportunity.
16. Protect the views and, where possible, frame them.

Treasure the Treasures

17. The Oude Molen Eco Village is precious. Protect the core and the very idea of it, expand it, build on it as a business opportunity and as a destination.
18. Make Maitland Garden Village an example of sustainable development. Retrofit the buildings to be as green and sustainable as possible. Introduce solar power and a zero waste environment. Treasure the memories.
19. There are treasures everywhere – most of them hidden in secret places behind barricades and fences. Find ways to get to those and exploit their tourism potential.
20. Design the park and each and every element in it in such a way that people can invent their own games there, have their own memories and - Make the place romantic!
21. Identify the beautiful and precious places in the valley and protect them. However, be brave and bold enough to agree that when these places happen to be in the wrong spots, they should be moved to the best possible locations. Equally, identify the ugly places, the scars on the landscape, and take every possible step to hide or camouflage them.

A special Place

22. Make the streets as narrow as possible, and when they are as narrow as they can be, make them narrower! Make the streets alive and active.
23. Provide for shops at ground floor and encourage people to work from there and to live in the space above. Create balconies, stoeps and lookouts for people to sit on and watch life goes by.
24. Make it into a 24-hour city and, above all, make it safe.
25. Identify specific shopping streets. Scattered in-between allow for open places and small squares that will give the place opportunity to breathe. Somewhere make a larger square with a town hall and the institutional buildings lumped together so that they can serve the people well.
26. Ensure that the buildings stand side by side. Depart radically from the single buildings on single even idiom. The campus style of planning is not an option.
27. At the street edges, do not make the buildings higher than five storeys. Towards the back, allow them to go up high and, if possible, high enough so that people can see the water.

Special Buildings

28. As you do not add labels to people, do not add labels to buildings. Make buildings so that they can be used for anything, to do different things at the same time. Make even buildings so that people can work and live and play in them, and allow that to change without too much fuss.
29. Avoid at all costs buildings with blank facades, high fences and parking garages in front. Better than that, do not allow such buildings. If you can, do not allow cars!
30. Provide for urban agriculture, vertical gardens and roof gardens to contribute to food security and job opportunities.
31. Aim for a 50% reduction in the use of available utility services to make this a truly green eco-village.
32. Make rules for people to live by and rules to manage the valley by. Add to this community support and community development programmes. Make all this part of a new integrated management system.

This place is special. Because it is special, we should not fight with one another about it. Rather, we should fight together *for* it.