



Western Cape  
Government  
FOR YOU



Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport

## Mitchells Plain

Western Cape Archives and Records Service

## DEVELOPMENT OF MITCHELLS PLAIN

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Mitchells Plain was officially opened in April 1976 but planning began at least two decades before.

In 1971, the government granted the Cape City Council permission to develop a new township on roughly 30 square kilometers of sand dunes on the Cape Flats. In November 1974 the first phase was approved, construction began in Westridge in 1975, and by April 1976 the first residents moved in.

Source: Inventory Of The Secretary, Cape Institute For Architecture, 1899 – 2004. Accession 1659, Volume 3/1/84 , Mitchells Plain Architectural Competition, Reference 418. Source: Western Cape Archives and Records Service

## MAP OF MITCHELLS PLAIN

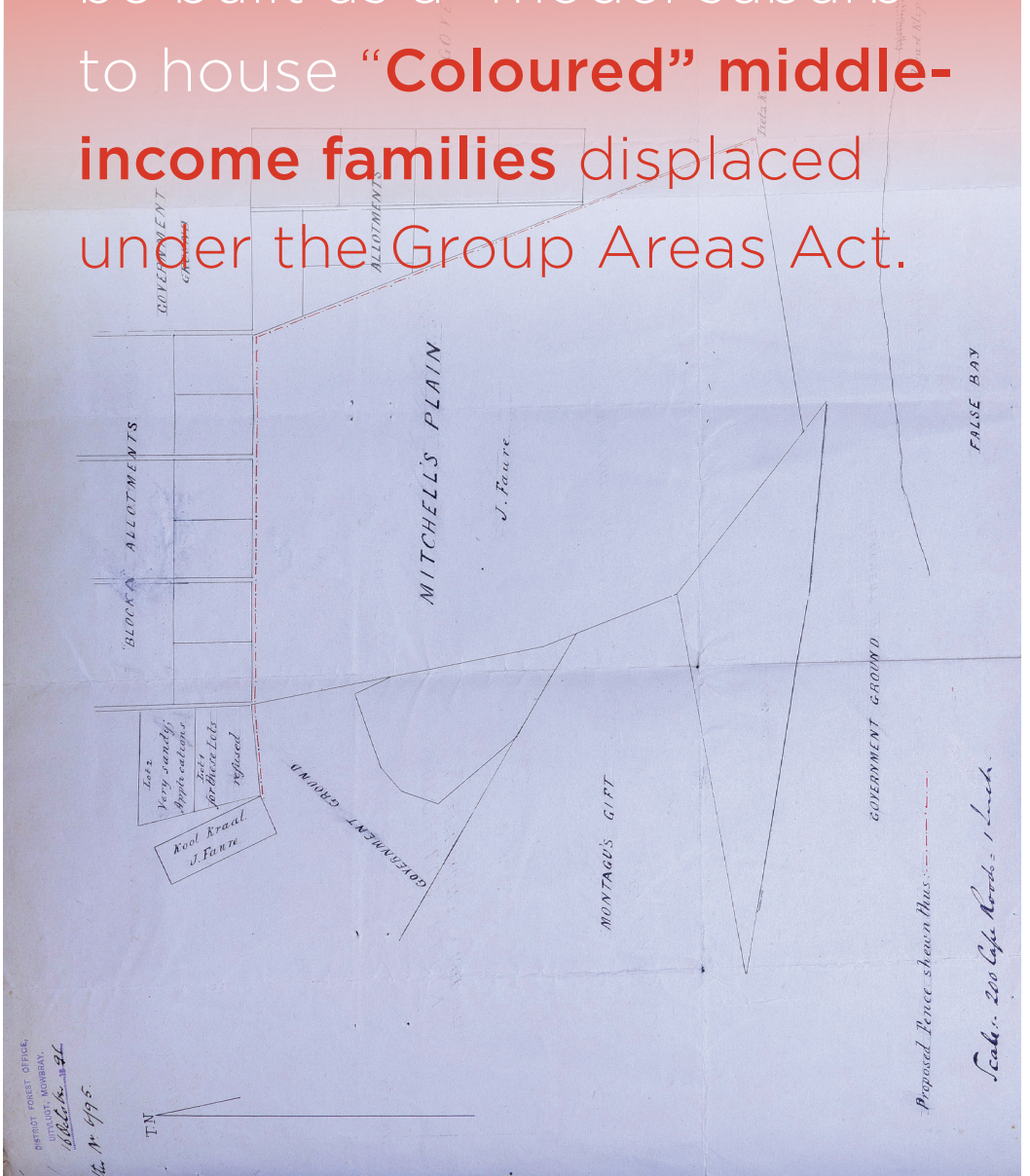
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The Western Cape Archives has over 17 000 maps, plans and architectural drawings in the Cartographic Collection, including a few maps related to Mitchells Plain and the Cape Flats.

Source: Western Cape Archives and Records Service, Map M4/1607: Map of Cape Town and environs: Ottery, Lotus River Estate, Highlands Estate and Mitchells Plain, 1951



The apartheid government planned for Mitchells Plain to be built as a “model suburb” to house **“Coloured” middle-income families** displaced under the Group Areas Act.



DISTRICT FOREST OFFICE,  
 UTTARAKHAND, SHIMLA,  
 INDIA  
 12.11.1995



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 Scale: 200 feet = 1 inch.

## MITCHELLS PLAIN

The apartheid government planned for Mitchells Plain to be built as a “model suburb” to house “Coloured” middle-income families displaced under the Group Areas Act. It was laid out

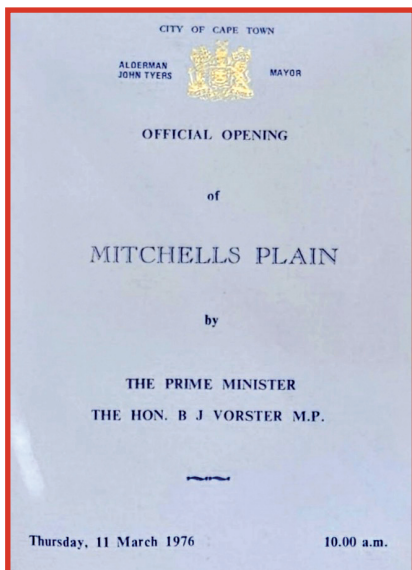


according to the neighbourhood-unit concept, featuring large open spaces, local public facilities, wide arterial roads, and a mix of freestanding, semi-detached, and duplex housing. This aspiring project was one of the largest new-town developments ever undertaken by the City Council.

Source: Award of Merit held at the City Hall Museum, Darling Street, Cape Town Photo Image captured by M Khan, 11 July 2025

Source: Inventory Of The Secretary, Cape Institute For Architecture, 1899 – 2004. Accession 1659, Volume 3/1/84 , Mitchells Plain Architectural Competition, Reference 418. Source: Western Cape Archives and Records Service.

## OFFICIAL OPENING OF MITCHELLS PLAIN



According to the 1985 City Engineers Department (from 1950 to 1960) surveys on income in the Cape Town City Council's Housing Estates began.

In the decade thereafter - 1960 to 1970 - the need for homeownership was established.

The next six years, one of the most ambitious new town developments in the world started to take shape.

Mitchells Plain was a housing project like nothing the City Council has ever undertaken before.

Source: Inventory Of The Secretary, Cape Institute For Architecture, 1899 - 2004 Source: Accession 1659 Volume 3/1/77 Reference 371 Mitchells Plain Town Centre 1981. Source: Western Cape Archives and Records Service



▲ Aerial view of Mitchell's Plain - Plots (Film still used by permission of GCIS)

## WESTERN CAPE ARCHIVES AND RECORDS SERVICE

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The Western Cape Archives holds the memory of our province with more than 45kms of records.

The following information identifies some of the main sources of historical information available to researchers in the Western Cape Archives, specifically on Mitchells Plain. It is not a complete list but a good starting point.

### **1. Mitchells Plain Magistrates Court (1989-2012) (1/MTP, Inventory in process)**

This group is still being processed but will be accessible in the Archives soon. Records include:

- Record Books of cases heard by the Court
- Traffic offenses

### **2. Provincial Administration, Local Authorities (1913-1981) (PAA, listed on National Archives database – see QR code below for access)**

The records on Mitchells Plain are planning applications for buildings in the area.

### **3. City of Cape Town Municipality (1840-1992) (3/CT, listed on National Archives database – see QR code below for access)**

Correspondence files around leases and purchases of land in the area (mid 1980s).

### **4. Director of Publications (1975-1996) (IDP; listed on National Archives database – see QR code below for access)**

These are reports by the censorship board on 'objectionable literature'. They contain just the report on whether it should be censored or not but not the publication itself. There are reports on, for example, Mitchell's Plain Student Congress, the Counter Propaganda Campaign and on the UDF.

### **5. Secretary for Agriculture (1881-1912) (AGR, Inventory 1/66)**

There are few references to Mitchells Plain, the original farm, in volume 44 and 148. The former is about fencing and the latter about drift sands on a farm. Both are dated from the early 1890s.

### **6. Department of Coloured Affairs (KUS, listed on National Archives database – see QR code below for access)**

These records from the 1970s and 1980s and deal mainly with Education. They include correspondence around the administration of 'Coloured' schools in the area, staffing, plans and maintenance of schools etc.

### **7. Department of Community Development (CDC, listed on National Archives database – see QR code below for access)**

These Apartheid-era records are mainly application for permits under the Group Areas Act.

## BIRTH RECORDS

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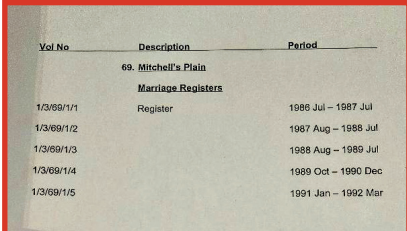
During the era of racial division after 1948, segregation were also implemented in hospitals. In the geographical area surrounding Cape Town, various Midwife Obstetric Units (MOU) were created, especially in Mitchells Plain, Gugulethu and Khayelitsha. As a regulation, pregnant women were referred to Groote Schuur and New Somerset Hospitals, as the mainstay hospitals at the Cape, whenever the MOU, or maternity hospitals, were full.

Mitchells Plain birth entry records for Mowbray Maternity Hospital, are kept at the Western Cape Archives and Records Service from 1986 – 2003

Source: MMH birth records, Western Cape Archives and Records Service from 1986 – 2003

## MARRIAGE RECORDS

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Vol No	Description	Period
69.	Mitchell's Plain	
	Marriage Registers	
1/3/69/1/1	Register	1986 Jul – 1987 Jul
1/3/69/1/2		1987 Aug – 1988 Jul
1/3/69/1/3		1988 Aug – 1989 Jul
1/3/69/1/4		1989 Oct – 1990 Dec
1/3/69/1/5		1991 Jan – 1992 Mar

Civil marriage records for Mitchells Plain for the dates of July 1986 to March 1992 are archived at the Western Cape Archives and Records Service. These records are available to the public in the Reading Room.

Source: HAWC 1/3/69/1/1 - 1/3/69/1/5, Western Cape Archives and Records Service.

## POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT AND PARTICIPATION, **AGAINST APARTHEID:**

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Mitchells Plain showed how marginalized communities can transform spatial marginalization into a platform for social change.

It demonstrates that even smaller and local areas can lead important social movements.

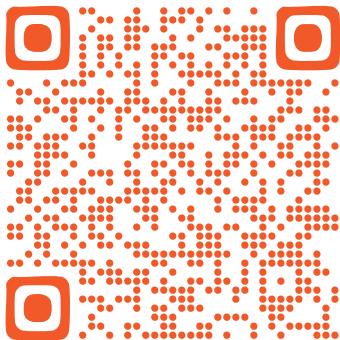
Archival collections such as a banned publications may include historically significant materials that were previously restricted or banned, which are now preserved for research purposes.

An example of a previously banned publication, titled, "*WHY WE SHOULD NOT SUPPORT THE METRO CINEMAS IN MITCHELLS PLAIN*", year 1981, can be found at the Western Cape Archives Service.

Source: IDP, volume 1/70. Page 81/9/77: Titled Objectionable Memorandum. Why We Should Not Support The Metro Cinemas In Mitchells Plain, year 1981. Source: Western Cape Archives and Records Service.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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For further information, you are welcome to explore the National Archives database (NAAIRS). By scanning the QR code, you will be directed to the NAAIRS link.

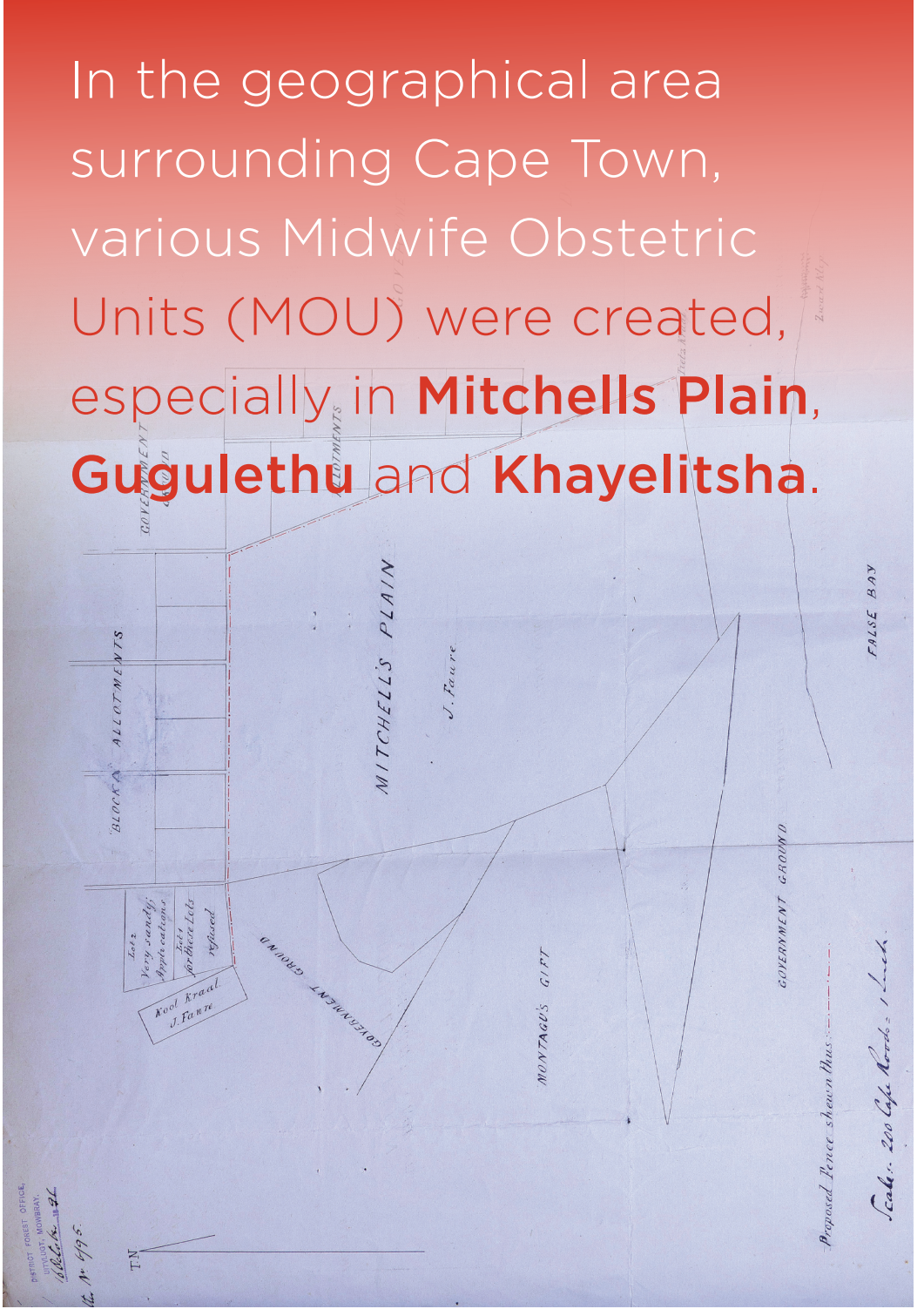
Should you wish to view the original records in the Reading Room, kindly provide the source volume and reference numbers as listed in the database.

NAAIRS URL Link: [National Archives of South Africa \(NASA\) Results Summary](#)

*Source: Maxine Khan, image captured October 2025*



In the geographical area surrounding Cape Town, various Midwife Obstetric Units (MOU) were created, especially in **Mitchells Plain, Gugulethu and Khayelitsha.**



DISTRICT FOREST OFFICE,  
 UPTOWN, SOWBAY,  
 12.11.1995

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Proposed Fence shown thus

Scale: 200 Gp. Roads = 1 Inch.





**Contact us for visits or more information**

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