

Policy Plan - Final Report



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Observatory can be described as a mixed use area where the dynamics and pressures of many different interests and activities operate. The management of such an area is generally of a reactive nature and a policy plan such as this is invaluable in terms of guiding change and assisting in informed decisions being taken for the area.

While the policy plan is not a commitment to implement all the proposals in the short term, it does provide a means for prioritising actions within a local area, which is especially important in times of financial and resource restrictions.

The proposals contained in Section 4 are divided into three different types:

- an overall policy framework to guide future spatial development within the study area;
- more specific policies and guidelines for their achievement; and
- a list of priority actions and guidelines that require attention.

This final document is submitted for Council's approval, after an extensive public participation process.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Observatory is a suburb with special qualities. It is an area that has a high concentration of Victorian architecture comprising terraced housing, villas and small commercial properties, all of which combine to present a suburb of considerable charm. The locality can be described as one of mixed use because it accommodates a variety of land uses within its boundary as well as providing a large quantity of residential accommodation close to the city. The area also provides some 13 000 jobs. The physical fabric is for the most part still being used for the purposes for which it was built, which contributes to the continuity of the area's identity. However, this identity has to some extent been eroded by the inappropriate location of business and institutional uses.

Since cities are constantly changing over time local areas must also come under pressure to change, which can have both advantages and disadvantages for the particular area. Institutional expansion, road widening schemes and business expansion are all viewed as a threat to residential precincts and the environmental quality.

There are a number of different interest groups in the area which influence the forces of change and which have divergent points of view. Some agree on the issues but not the solutions and some set different priority ratings to the differing issues.

Of course compromises have to be made by all concerned, because there is no single solution to the various issues involved in the city building process. Observatory needs a development framework to guide and coordinate private and Council decision making. The purpose of this study is to attempt to reconcile the various conflicts in the area by means of proposing an overall framework within which to guide development. Areas of concern that require

action in the short term have also been highlighted.

Proposals which involve the allocation of vast resources should be viewed in relation to broader metropolitan concerns and priorities. Draft guidelines regarding the planning of the metropolitan area are outlined under section 2.2. of this report. With the running of cities becoming increasingly more expensive and difficult due to the lack of funds, it is necessary to set priorities. Developed suburbs such as Observatory are unlikely to be viewed as priority areas and will have to compete with other less developed areas for resources and expertise. As a result, a lot more responsibility will fall on the local community for its own local management. While the Council encourages 'public dialogue' with the community and will assist with guidance, one way that Observatory will receive the attention and care it demands will be through local management and locally inspired improvements.



View of Observatory from the east

1.1 BACKGROUND

The planning process for the Observatory Policy Plan was first presented to the community in March 1989, in conjunction with a presentation on the issues and opportunities, as viewed by the Town Planning Branch. The public meeting was well attended and was considered to be very successful. Comments from the public and interested groups, as part of the public participation exercise, were received during the course of 1989.

As part of the formulation of objectives, a letter entitled 'Observatory Policy Plan: Interim Statement' expressing the Town Planning Branch's major concerns, was forwarded to the Observatory Civic Association in December 1990. Subsequent meetings were held with representatives from the Civic Association and the Councillors for the area in order to prepare the draft policy plan.

In March 1991, a draft document was sent to the Civic Association and Councillors for their comments.

A further draft was completed and on the 1992-08-05 the Town Planning Committee resolved that authority be given to circulate the draft document to all interested parties for public comment. In addition a public meeting was held by the Town Planning Branch on 1992-10-19. All interested parties were requested to comment by 1992-10-31. Appendix A contains a list of all the public parties contacted, and a summary of the comments of those who responded.

Studies that have been undertaken by consultants include:

- a conservation study undertaken by two consultant firms, Meek and Attwell and Todeschini and Japha. These were completed in 1987;
- a transportation study was undertaken by

the consultants Liebenberg and Stander. Transportation, traffic and parking issues were investigated. Their report was submitted to the Town Planning Branch in 1989; and

- urban design consultants, Urban Design Services, were commissioned by the Council to produce urban design guidelines for future development along Lower Main Road and Station Road. This study was completed in December 1991.

1.2 PUBLIC RESPONSE TO DRAFT DOCUMENT

The comments received were generally positive. In most cases it has been possible to incorporate the comments into the final document. In some cases where there were objections, policies have been amended in accordance with those objections. For example, the proposal to make Station Road a two-way road for traffic purposes between Main Road and Lower Main Road has been removed. However, there were some objections that after evaluation it was decided that it was in the broader community's best interest to retain the original proposal. These have been retained or undergone minor modifications where necessary.

An evaluation of the responses received is included in Appendix A of this report.

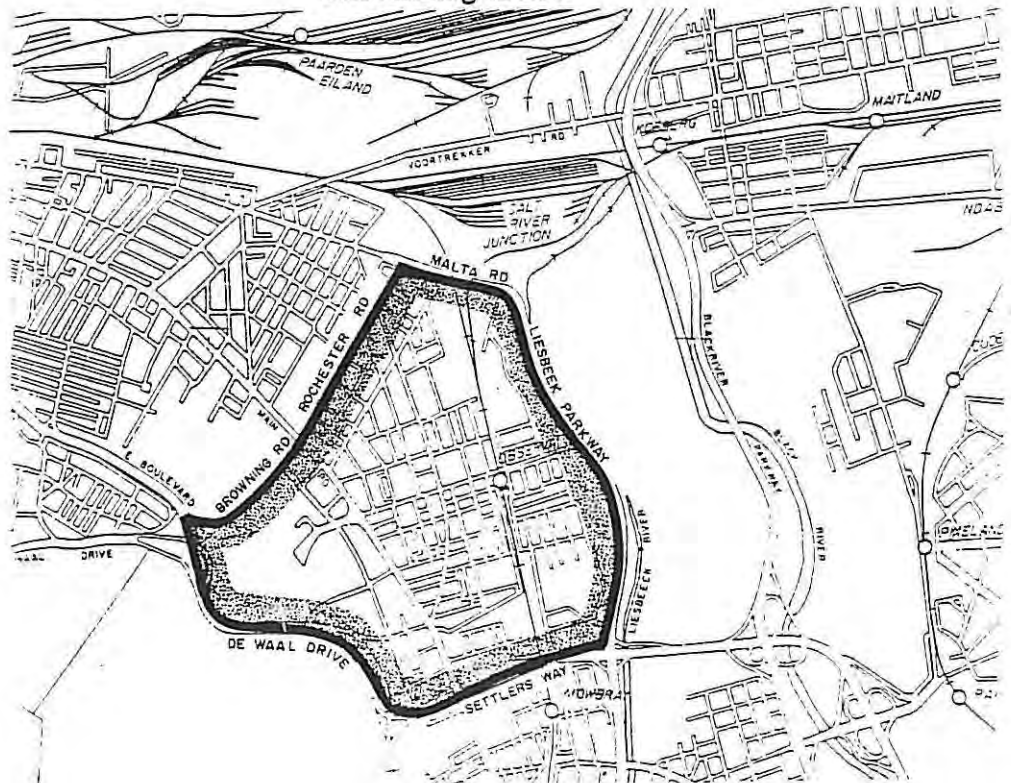
2. THE STUDY AREA

2.1 BOUNDARY OF THE STUDY AREA

Observatory is located approximately five kilometres south east of the Central Business District (CBD) of Cape Town. The study area, as indicated in Figure 1, covers an area of approximately 182 ha and is bounded by four major transportation routes, namely Eastern Boulevard and De Waal Drive to the west, Settlers Way to the south and Liesbeek Parkway to the east. Browning, Rochester and Malta Roads form the northern boundary of the planning area. The suburb is traversed by the southern suburbs railway line and Main Road, which both provide important links to central Cape Town and to the southern suburbs.

The study area is bounded by Salt River on its northern boundary, the Liesbeek/Black River confluence area to the east and Mowbray to the south.

Some of the residents have requested that the Liesbeek/Black River confluence area be included in this study area. It is the subject of another study that is underway and will therefore not be dealt with in this report. However, all studies which impact on Observatory must be complementary and take into account the future proposals for the surrounding areas.



Boundary of the Study Area
Fig. 1

2.2 THE STUDY AREA WITHIN THE METROPOLITAN CONTEXT

In August 1992, a draft document entitled "Proposed Guidelines for Planning and Development in the Cape Metropolitan Area", was produced by the Metropolitan Development Framework Coordinating Working Group. The document, which was circulated for public comment, proposes a set of guidelines for planning and development in the Cape Metropolitan Area prior to the adoption of a broadly agreed Metropolitan Development Framework.

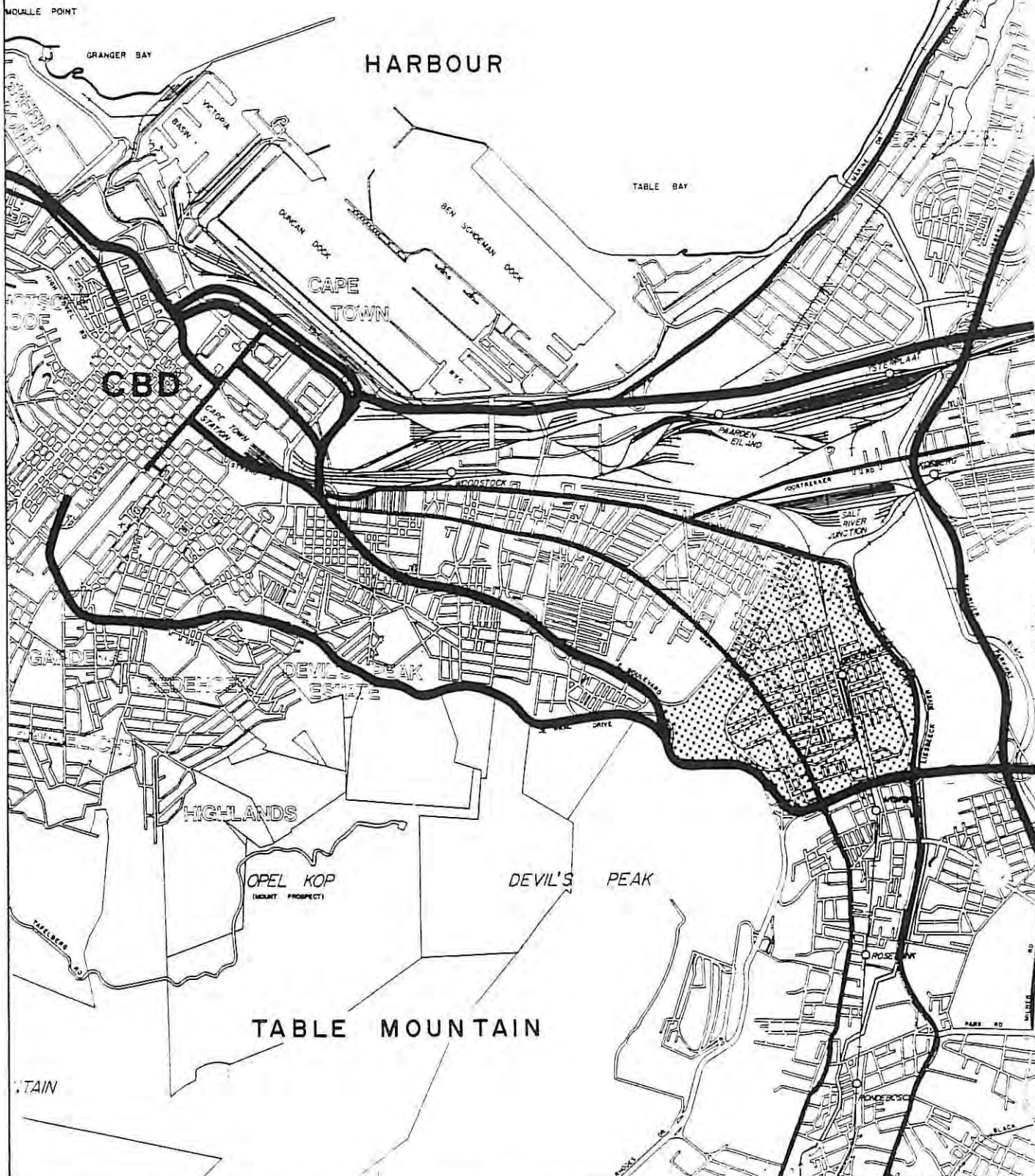
While making proposals at a much broader level than at the local level, the document will also influence planning in local areas such as Observatory. The proposed guidelines are intended to inform current planning and development work.

The proposed guidelines mentioned above note the need to:

- contain further urban sprawl by limiting the expansion of development into useful farm and recreational land;
- intensify activities and development areas, especially at points of access along lines of public transportation;
- integrate the urban area through:
 - * promoting opportunities for low-income housing areas close to existing economic, social and transportation opportunities; and
 - * promoting a mutually supportive mix of residential, recreational, commercial and employment activities;
- redress the unequal distribution of facilities and opportunities; and
- manage environmental resources in a sustainable way through careful, publicly

debated evaluation of the impact which proposed developments would have on the natural and man-made environments.

The guidelines were not available at the time of production of the Draft Observatory Policy Plan and, given that the adoption of the guidelines will impact and in some cases conflict with the planning in local areas, it is important that the study area be understood and viewed in the context of metropolitan proposals.



Study Area



Railway line



Freeways



Major Routes

LOCAL MUNICIPAL CONTEXT

Fig. 2

OBSERVATORY
POLICY
PLAN

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2.3 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STUDY AREA

Observatory, as indicated in Figure 2, is well linked and integrated with the broader municipal context. Due to its character, existing zoning and the high degree of accessibility afforded by major transportation routes, it is perceived as being convenient and desirable for a wide range of development to take place in the suburb, including residential, commercial and business uses.

The area has undergone changes in the past decade. In particular, the approximately 8 000 resident population now includes a high percentage of economically active people in the Professional, Semi-Professional and Technical sectors. Some of the changes have been positive such as increased home ownership and a concomitant interest in the upgrading of the housing stock. Furthermore, changes to the land uses along Lower Main Road to restaurants and entertainment activities have brought both night time activity and business to Observatory.

On the negative side, however, there has been a decline in the number of children of school-going age over the last 15 years which has resulted in the closure of some of the schools. Conservation of the character of the Victorian housing stock has come under pressure with the redevelopment and alteration of the housing stock and there is a certain amount of pressure to convert houses to offices. One of the most noticeable impacts, however, is that with increased car ownership there is more traffic in the suburb as well as an increased demand for on-site and street parking.

Observatory is also experiencing problems in terms of increased volumes of traffic moving through the area due to its close proximity to the CBD and the high degree of accessibility afforded by the transportation routes.

2.4 PRECINCTS WITHIN THE STUDY AREA

For analysis purposes, the study area has been divided into various precincts. Their location is indicated on Figure 3 and a brief description of the precincts follows:-

Precincts 1-7 : Residential Precincts

Some of the residential precincts are larger in area than others. The larger precincts, viz precincts 1, 2, 4, and 6, are well established and generally protected from intrusive non-residential activities. The smaller precincts, viz precincts 3, 5 and 7 are isolated or surrounded by roads, businesses and commercial activities.

Precinct 8: Main Road and the Area to the West of Main Road

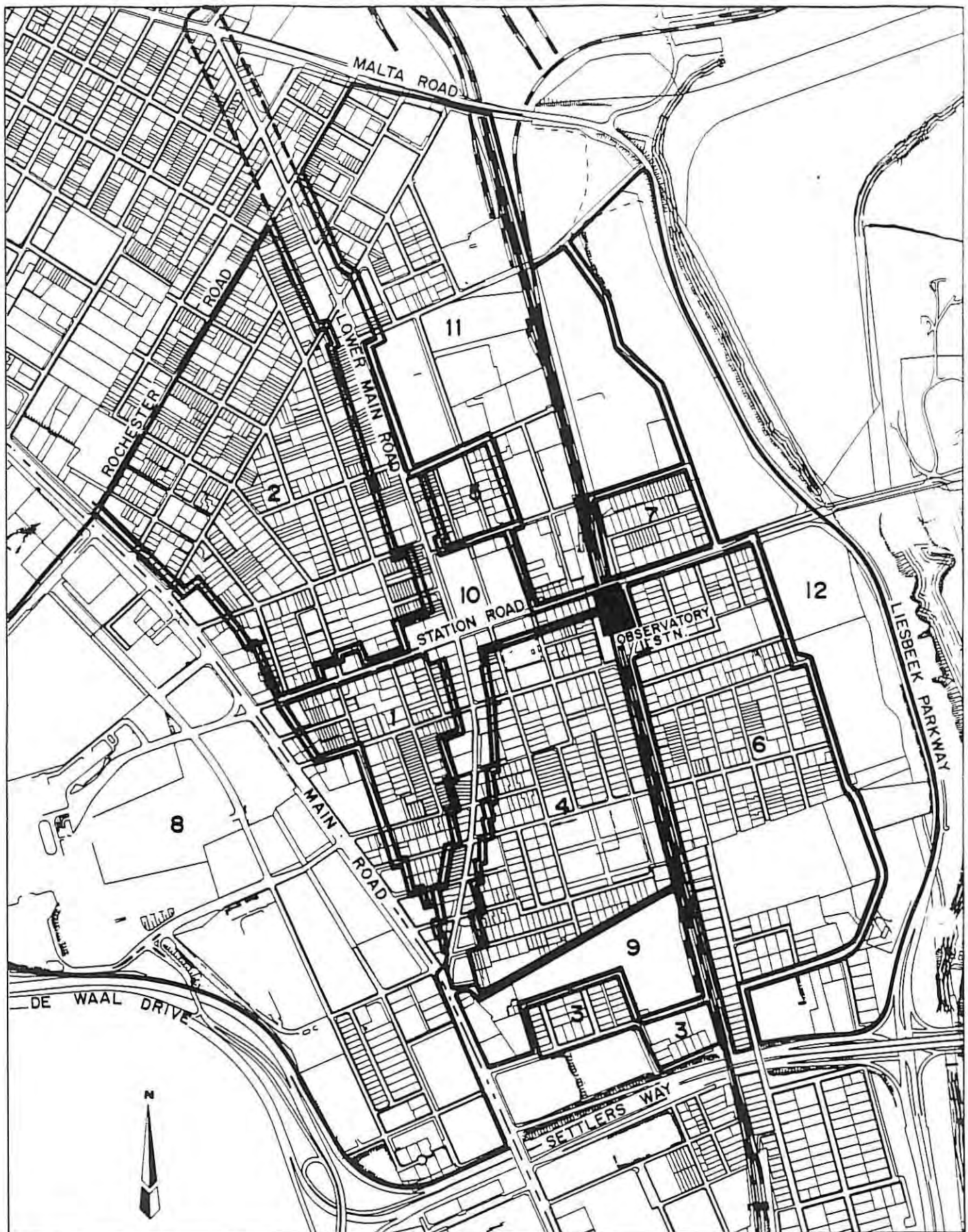
This precinct encompasses the businesses along Main Road as well as the institutional land uses to the west of Main Road, ie Groote Schuur and UCT Medical School. These two institutions own a vast number of properties within this area.

Precinct 9: The Waverley

The Waverley development which separates the residential precincts viz precincts 3 and 4 is located between Dane and Kotzee Roads. This site has always had a General Commercial Zoning and has recently been redeveloped for office purposes.

Precinct 10: Lower Main Road and Station Road

These two roads are important higher order roads running through Observatory and crossing each other at a point which is considered to be the 'heart' of Observatory. The Victorian shopping strip along Lower Main Road south of Station Road comprises



1-7 Residential Precincts

8 Main Road and West of Main Road

9 The Waverley

10 Lower Main Road and Station Road

11 North East Commercial Precinct

12 Open Space Precinct

**OBSERVATORY
POLICY
PLAN**



LOCATION OF PRECINCTS

Fig. 3

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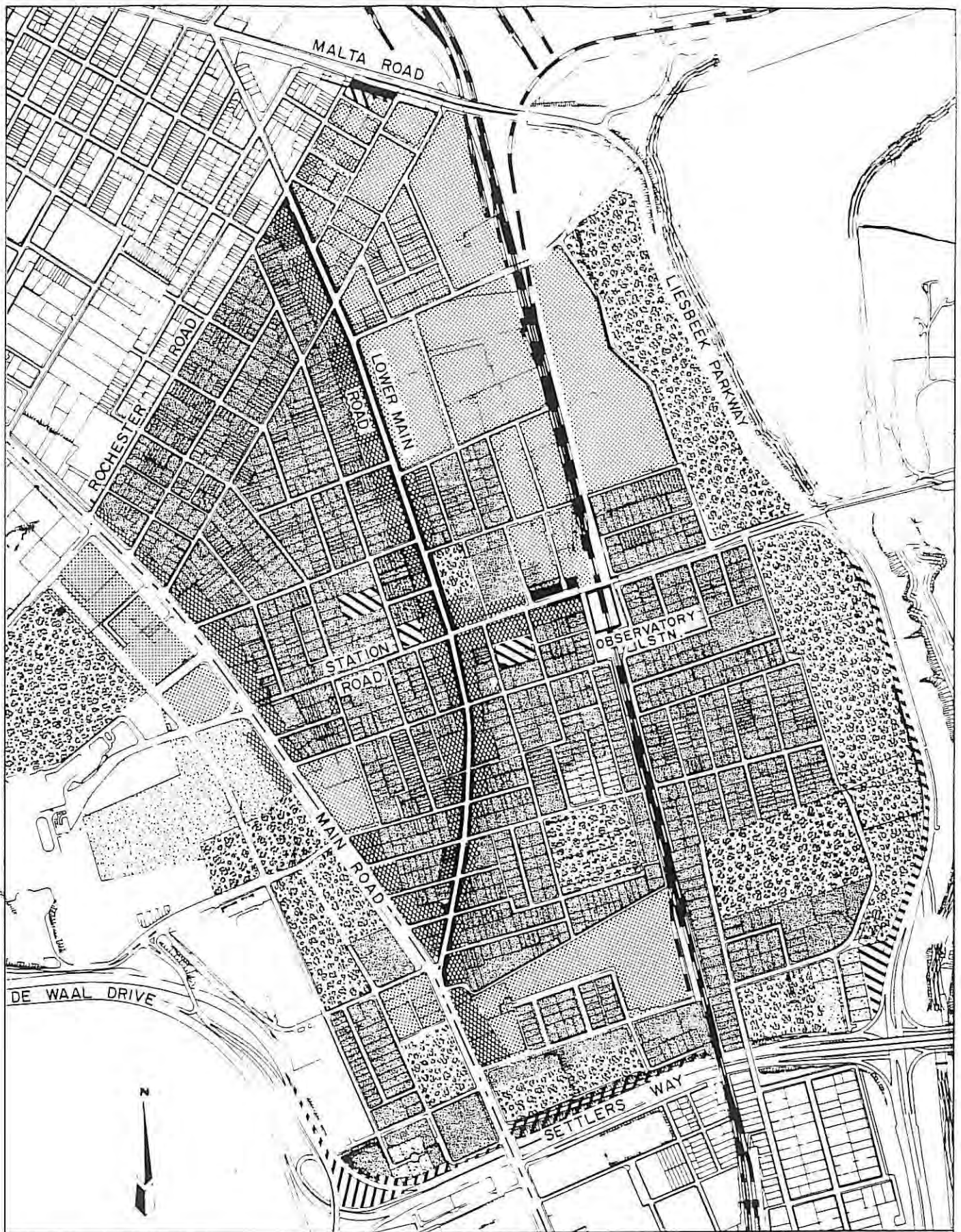
a combination of convenient and speciality shops and restaurants. All the properties along the length of Lower Main Road are zoned for either General Business or General Commercial purposes. Station Road has a limited amount of business land uses along its length. The old Observatory Junior schools and the adjacent open space provide a community focus to Observatory. The open space is colloquially referred to as the 'Village Green'.

Precinct 11: The North East General Commercial Precinct

This area from Lower Main Road, over the railway line to Fir Street and between Malta, Station and Lower Collingwood Roads was historically zoned for General Commercial purposes. Although not all the rights have been exercised and there is a fair amount of residential development within this area, it does have potential for development in excess of its present built form.

Precinct 12: Open Space Precinct

The vast open space and public facilities of Malta Park and Hartleyvale are located along Liesbeek Parkway which forms the eastern edge of the study area.



-  Single Dwelling Use Zone
-  General Residential Use Zone
-  General Business Use Zone
-  General Commercial Use Zone

-  Private Open Space
-  Public Open Space
-  Road Improvements

OBSERVATORY POLICY PLAN



ZONING OF THE STUDY AREA

Fig. 4

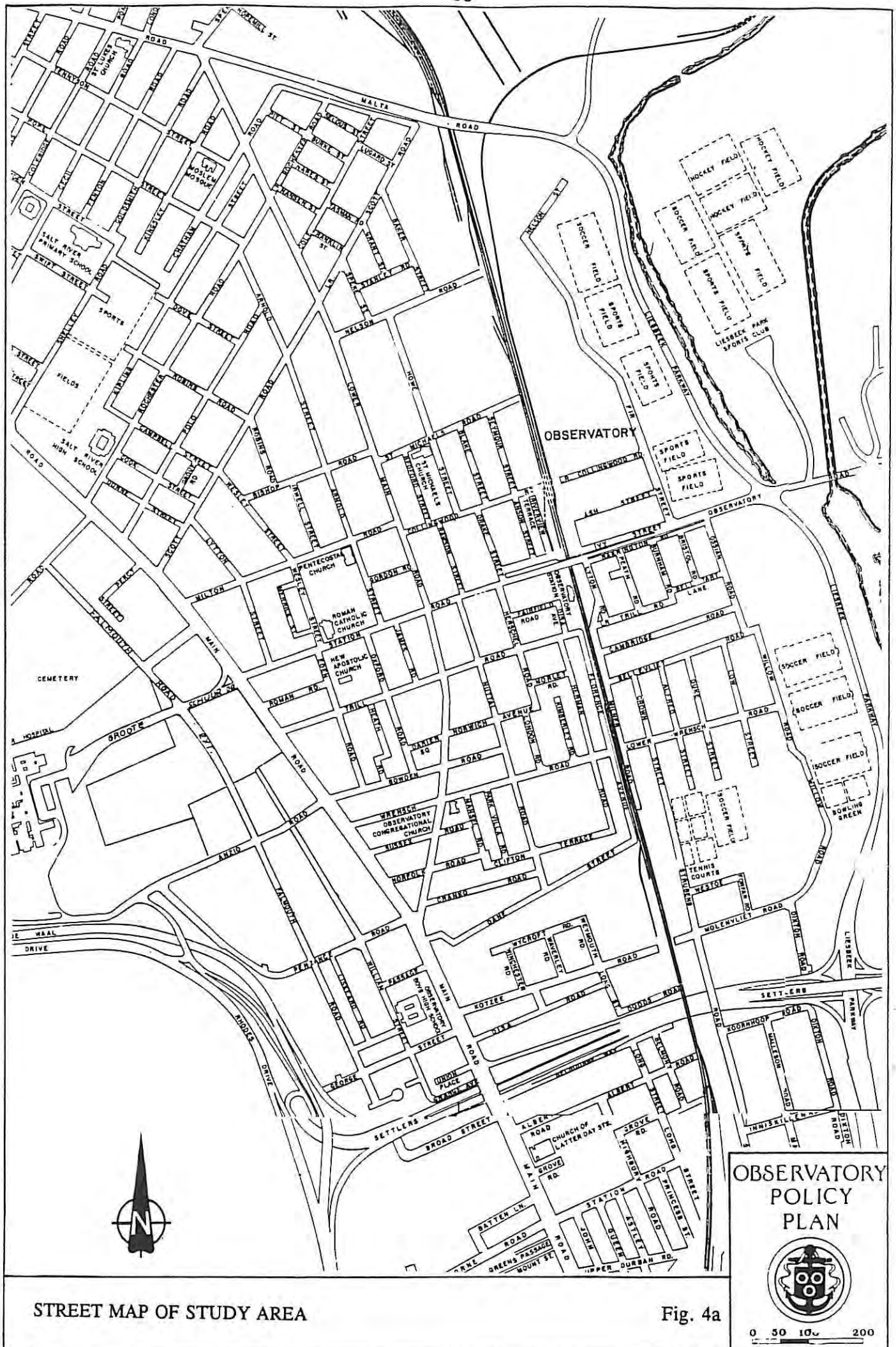
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3. PROBLEMS, ASSETS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this section is to highlight the problems and assets of the area so that objectives can be formulated to resolve the problems and to enhance and strengthen the assets.

Location near Cape Town's CBD and easy access to regional routes makes Observatory desirable for a range of competing land uses. There is an order to the area which lends a distinct character to its different parts. An outer 'ring' of regional uses surrounds a wedge of manufacturing in the north east, strips of business along Main Road and Lower Main Road and an 'infill' of dwellings which make up the residential precincts. The underlying physical structure comprises two broad elements: the major directional routes which dominate the area and the gridiron structure which has developed within and in response to the dominant routes. This mixed-use character, which evolved over time and is in part derived from the land use zoning, is considered to be the factor that adds charm and character to the suburb. It is also, by its very nature, the factor that fuels conflicting interests. The zoning of the area is indicated in Figure 4. The success of a mixed use area, while being a subjective issue, would depend largely on the compatibility of land uses and the scale of the activity, relative to the residential quota which should constitute the greater component.

From the public participation process, it has been noted that there are divergent interests within the local community. In addition to conflicts of interest on a local level, conflicting interests on a metropolitan level must also exist. An effort must be made to ensure that local issues are resolved in Observatory's favour. However, given that this is not an ideal world, compromises have to be made in order to gain certain benefits. This is not to say that the residents must merely accept problems in a local area, but it is necessary to bear in mind that suburbs like Observatory do not function in isolation and are part of a broader municipal context.



STREET MAP OF STUDY AREA

Fig. 4a

OBSERVATORY
POLICY
PLAN

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3.1 THE RESIDENTIAL AREAS

It is in the city's wider interests to maintain residential accommodation in accessible parts of the city such as Observatory. Moreover, the residential population in Observatory has both declined and changed composition dramatically over the last 15 years, placing pressure on local services to close down (eg shops, churches and schools).

Many of the residents in Observatory have indicated that they are opposed to any business intrusion, with the exception of home industries, into the residential precincts. They are concerned that businesses will negatively affect the character and residential nature of the area. It is therefore necessary that appropriate policies and controls be introduced which will assist in the management of the area. This will entail exploring and identifying appropriate locations for non-residential growth as well as exploring alternatives for increased residential uses.

Built Form

Observatory has a special built character which can be attributed to its heritage of both individual and groups of Victorian, Edwardian and thirties infill buildings, which are in a remarkable state of preservation. The residential areas have a high degree of homogeneity with small scale individual housing developments, buildings built close to the street, narrow streets, verandahs and low garden walls. Adding to the fine grain of the built form, there is a wide range of housing types from detached single houses through to row houses. The result is a complex and rich environment in which different housing types complement each other and together enhance the quality of the whole.

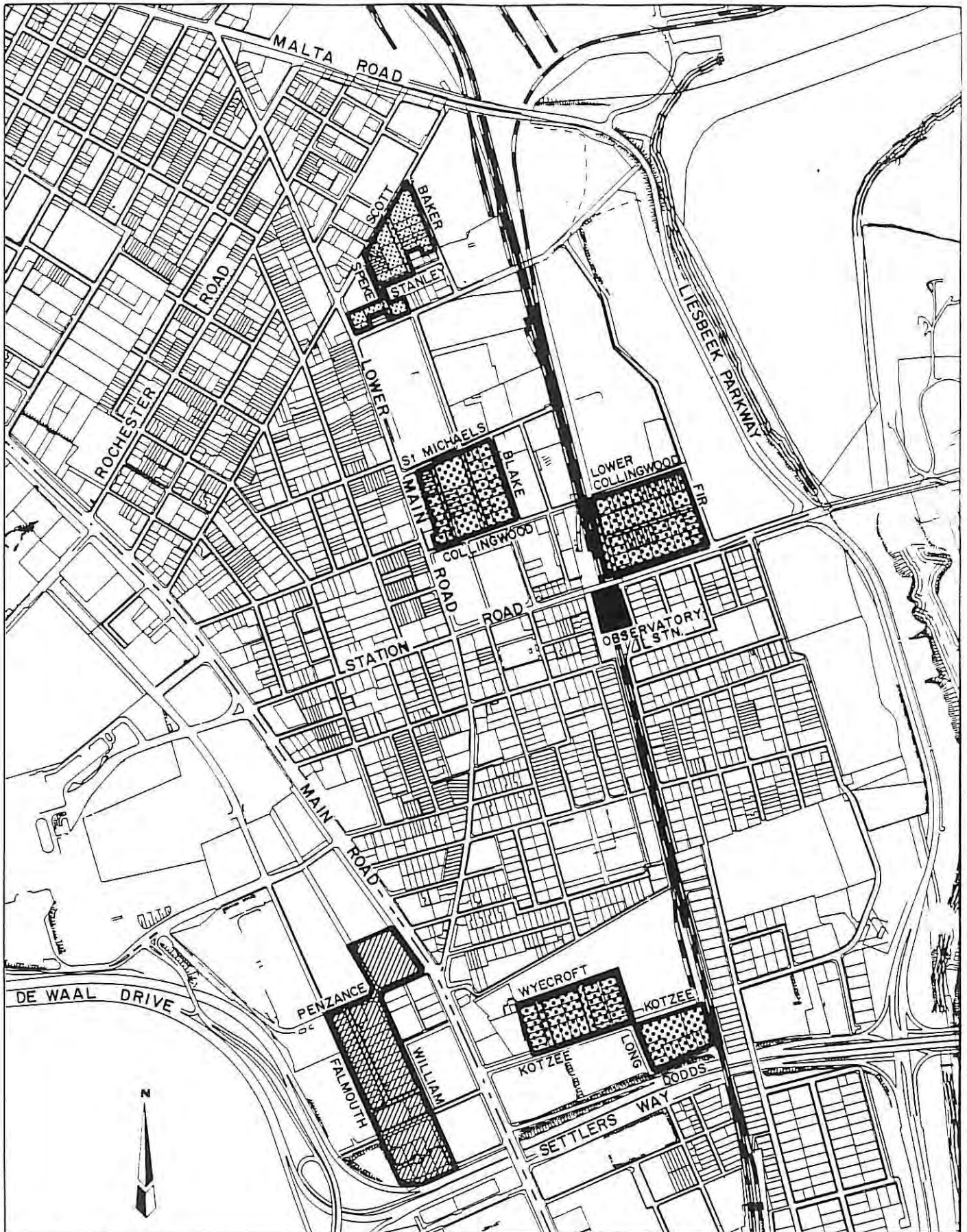
A factor that is critically important to the quality of the area as a whole is the relationship between the public and private space. The interdependence of these spaces

plays a positive role in affecting the quality of the environment. Evidence of this can be seen from the existence of low front walls and the continuity of facades which create a sense of social space as well as providing security and surveillance. The current emphasis on security is, however, motivating residents to erect high front walls which are destroying the streetscape.

Conservation consultants, Todeschini and Japha, and Meek and Attwell, were appointed by Council to undertake a conservation study for the area. The consultants identified buildings which could be considered 'noteworthy' due to their age, because they are fine examples of the period; or because they are architecturally significant. Having assessed the area, they made recommendations that an Urban Conservation Area be declared.

The declaration of a Conservation Area would promote a form of development that is sympathetic to the architectural elements in the area and to the area's character.

It is considered that the proposed Conservation Area be declared as speedily as possible as significant buildings in the area are currently under threat. The declaration of the Conservation Area will mean that Council approval of alterations with regard to appearance or redevelopment is required. Similarly it will promote factors such as streetscape continuity of rhythm and the relationship of buildings to the street, all of which contribute to and enhance the quality of the street. The Urban Conservation Unit which has been set up in the City Planner's Department is well equipped to assess these applications. This process would not preclude additions or redevelopment, but would ensure that such redevelopment was carefully considered and negotiated.



-  Area Zoned for General Commercial Purposes
-  Area Forms Part of Groote Schuur Precinct
-  Viable Residential Precincts

LOCATION OF SMALLER RESIDENTIAL PRECINCTS

Fig. 5

OBSERVATORY
POLICY
PLAN



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Residential Environment

The residential environment is generally attractive as the area, apart from its historical heritage, is in the process of being upgraded. One of the advantages of this process is that the residents who move into the suburb generally own their properties and have the desire and the income to improve them. However, there are some disadvantages, such as unsympathetic renovations which present a threat to the suburb's heritage; and a high car ownership ratio, resulting in congestion on the narrow residential streets. There is a concomitant increase in demand for street parking especially since most of the properties cannot accommodate on-site parking without destroying significant fabric.

Most of the residential properties are zoned for General Residential Use Sub-zone R4. This zoning permits higher densities than those that have been developed to date. However, since the properties are relatively small, are generally individually owned and there are no large vacant sites, it is unlikely that the suburb will be threatened by the development of high rise buildings.

There have been some changes from residential to non-residential uses in the area. However, it is a fairly scattered distribution with no clear trend. There appears to be a slightly higher concentration of these changes in the area bounded by Main Road, the railway line, Station Road and Dane Street.

It should be noted that there may be five small residential pockets that are perceived, by people looking for non-residential property, to be areas where changes to land use might be viewed favourably. Figure 5 indicates the location of these pockets. Two of the five residential areas may change over time, as discussed below.

The pocket bounded by Lower Scott Road, Balar Street, Nelson Road and Speke Street is zoned for General Commercial purposes and is surrounded by Commercial and

Industrial land uses. This zoning permits a broad range of uses including business and industrial uses. It is likely that in time the land use may change in this area.

The residential pocket of land on the Groote Schuur side of Main Road functions as a residential precinct. However, a lot of the land is owned by the CPA and the UCT and may in time be viewed as an appropriate area for institutional expansion.

The other three pockets all function as viable residential areas even if they are surrounded by conditions which make them vulnerable to business encroachment. These residential areas must be protected from encroachment. Any changes will undermine the viability of residential use in these areas.

Summary and Conclusion

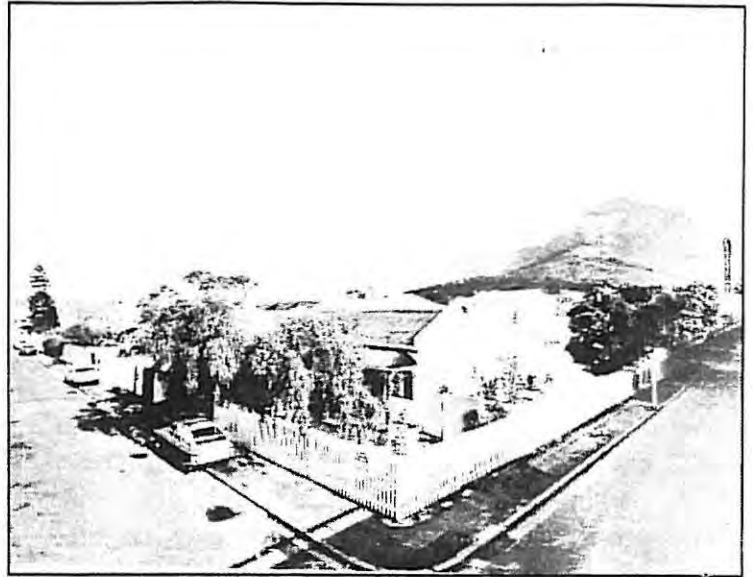
Problems

- The residential population has declined over the last decade.
- New residents to the area tend to have a higher car ownership than previously. This has resulted in more traffic moving through the areas and a greater demand for street parking.
- Unsympathetic renovations are taking place due to the lack of appropriate controls.
- There is a certain amount of pressure for business encroachment into residential areas. This process could undermine the residential areas and cause them to become fragmented.

Assets

- Observatory is located close to the CBD

*View of the residential area,
from Station Road*



Lower Main Road

*View of the Victorian shopping
precinct on the corner of Lower
Main and Main Roads*



Station Road

*Looking up Station Road towards
Groote Schuur Hospital*



and has easy access to regional routes. The area also provides residential accommodation in accessible parts of the city.

- Architecturally and historically significant buildings give character and identity to the area.
- The area has a mixed use character, with many metropolitan and local facilities which provide convenience.
- The fabric of the suburb is being upgraded by means of increased owner occupiers.

Objectives

- To retain and where possible increase the integrity and viability of the residential areas.
- To conserve the rich architectural heritage of the area.
- To retain the mixed use quality of the suburb without compromising the residential integrity of the area.

3.2 BUSINESS, INDUSTRIAL AND INSTITUTIONAL AREAS

In addition to the existing residential precincts dealt with in the previous section, Observatory also has a number of business, industrial, commercial and institutional uses located within its boundaries.

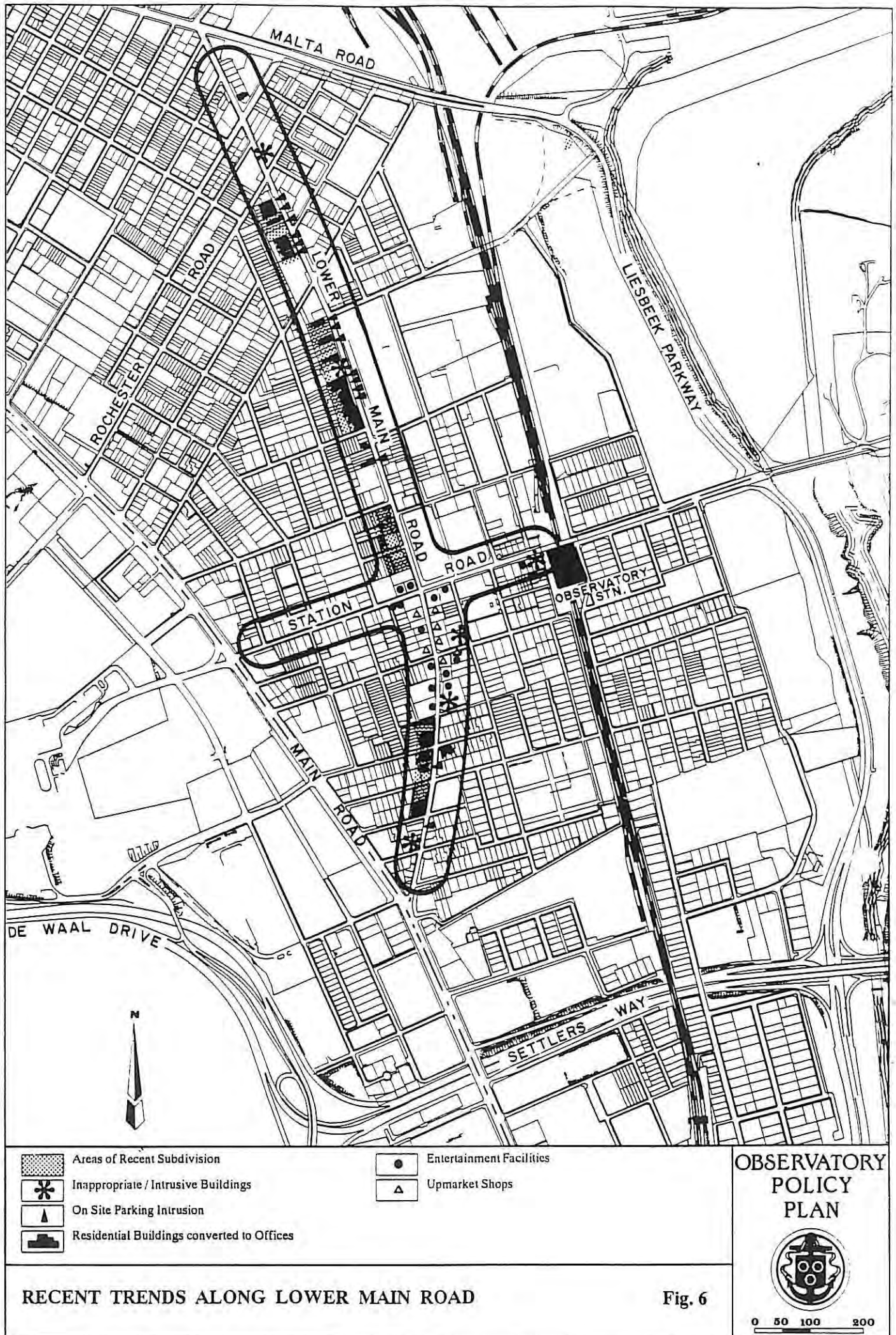
The majority of shops and businesses are located in a linear form along Main Road and Lower Main Road. The pattern of business development, with shops locating along the major thoroughfares, has changed little over the past years. Furthermore, the Zoning Scheme has entrenched this pattern by granting business rights along the full extent of these roads.

As mentioned previously there have been some changes from residential uses to non residential in the area. Although there is no clear identifiable trend, there appears to be a slightly higher concentration of these changes in the area bounded by Main Road, the railway line, Station Road and Dane Street.

Main Road and Lower Main Road

Main Road and Lower Main Road provide a clear structure to the suburb. This structure makes provision for activities to locate along higher order roads, whilst protecting the adjacent residential areas. Activities that locate along these roads are generally of a higher order than could be supported by the local population alone. Since these activities exist within easy reach of local inhabitants, convenience of living is enhanced. These activities also attract people from other areas into the local areas thus exposing inhabitants to a wide range of people and influences.

The large scale uses which cater for passing trade along Main Road are in sharp contrast to the small scale business strip in Lower Main Road, particularly south of Station Road, which orientates towards the pedestrian and local market.



This part of the strip is developing into a speciality street with small convenience and secondhand shops as well as a number of restaurants which encourage visitors to the area, especially at night. More recently, a number of up-market shops selling antiques, bric-à-brac and crafts have moved into the area (refer to Figure 6). While these trends are bringing new life to the area, there are other trends which are symptomatic of the ongoing deterioration in environmental quality.

These include the following:

- inappropriate and intrusive buildings which are out of context with the existing and adjoining fabric;
- the scale and character of the existing fabric is destroyed when new buildings are required to be set back in terms of the road improvement line along Lower Main Road;
- the road improvement line also discourages serious upgrading of the fronts of existing buildings within the improvement line;
- the desire to provide on-site parking in front of buildings results in destruction of the streetscape; and
- the emphasis on individual security and privacy, which results in the use of large expanses of burglar proofing and opaque or reflective glass which is out of character with the existing fabric.

Most of these negative trends are taking place on the western side of Lower Main Road to the north of Station Road. A recent study of Lower Main Road was undertaken for the Town Planning Branch by consultants. Their recommendations include the following:

- the road improvement line needs to be

amended;

- Lower Main Road should be declared a Conservation Area; and
- there is a need for regulations or guidelines that would promote compatible and appropriate development along Lower Main Road.

The above recommendations would go a long way to establishing a desirable speciality street in the area.

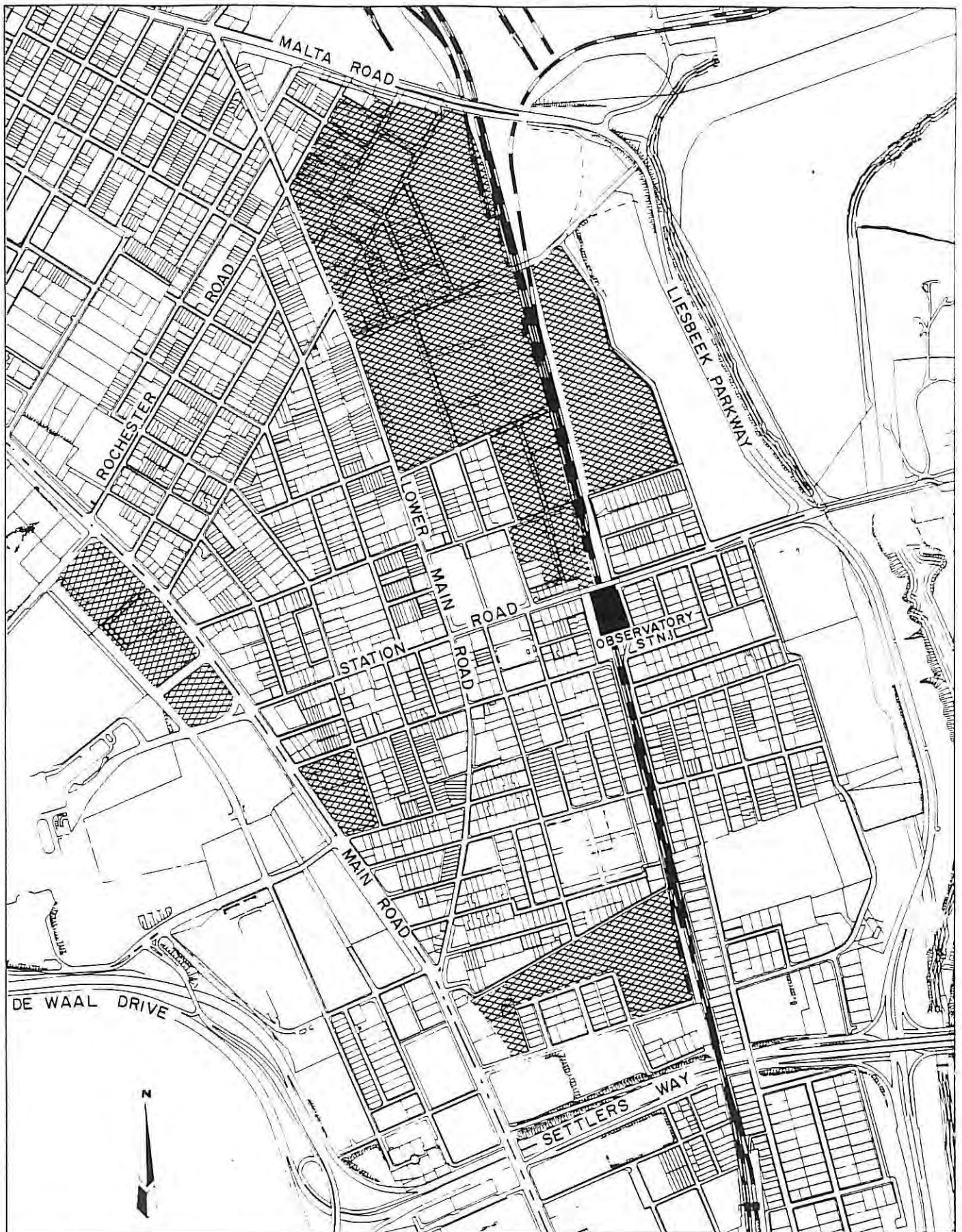
North East Commercial Precinct

A large area in the north east quadrant of Observatory is zoned for General Commercial Purposes which permits a wide variety of uses including shops, offices and light industries. This area is bounded by Malta Road, Lower Main Road, St Michaels Road, Blake and Drake Streets, and Station Road. It extends over the railway to include the area bounded by Lower Collingwood Road and Fir Street, as indicated in Figure 7.

This commercially zoned area impacts on the residential precincts and has the potential of having an even greater impact if it were developed to its maximum rights. Every attempt needs to be made to ensure that new development within this area, along the interface of the residential areas, should be in keeping with the scale and character of the surrounding environment. Furthermore, traffic associated with this area must be channelled onto the higher order roads and onto Malta Road or Liesbeek Parkway where possible. This can be achieved by improving the intersection of Lower Main Road and Malta Road to facilitate the turning movement of heavy duty vehicles. Parking should also not be allowed to impact on the residential area.

Institutional Uses

The institutional uses, eg medical facilities, have tended to locate to the west of Main



General Commercial Use Zone

AREAS ZONED FOR GENERAL COMMERCIAL PURPOSES

Fig. 7

OBSERVATORY
POLICY
PLAN



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Road. These uses have expanded over the past decade at the expense of vast areas of residential land. Furthermore, the expansion has been out of scale with, and has had a negative and intrusive impact on the surrounding area, especially from a traffic point of view. Although Council has no jurisdiction over the question of future expansion it would not be desirable across Main Road and would be detrimental to the suburb.

Business Invasion

Within the residential precincts, there is, as with most suburbs, a certain demand for businesses to locate within or on the edges of the residential precincts. The residents perceive this to be a considerable threat to the viability of these precincts.

From 1989, of the eight rezoning applications submitted to the Council, only two were supported and in terms of land use temporary departures, only seven have been supported since 1989. It would also appear that there are less than a dozen business uses operating from residential properties of which these probably include some home industries and non-conforming uses. From the above it is considered that the suburb is not unduly threatened by business uses and illegal uses.

Summary and Conclusion

Problems

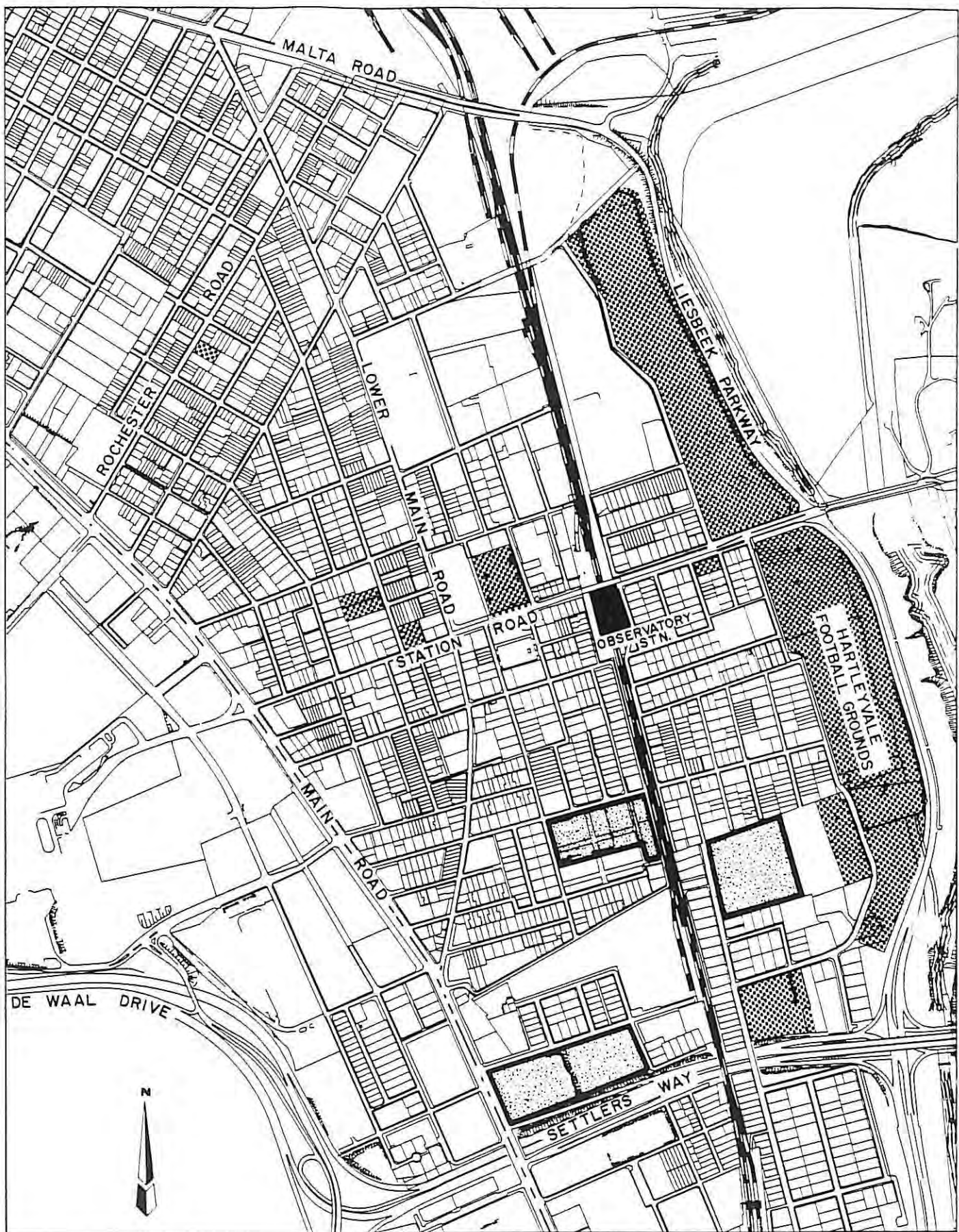
- There is a certain amount of pressure to convert residential properties for business purposes which is a consequence of the perceived desirability of the area. The problem is thus how to accommodate business pressures and retain housing stock.
- The north east quadrant has commercial rights which are in excess of the existing development.
- Changes in land use usually imply a loss of residential stock.
- The proposed road widening along Lower Main Road requires that new buildings must be set back and this destroys the scale and character of the street.

Assets

- The desire to locate speciality businesses and offices in Observatory is increasing. This is improving, upgrading and rejuvenating the declining business strip. It also provides employment opportunities for the area and brings revenue to the suburb.
- Lower Main Road is developing into a speciality street with shops and restaurants. The restaurants bring night time activity to the street.
- The desire to locate non-residential uses in Observatory reinforces the mixed use nature of the area.

Objectives

- To retain and promote the linear pattern of business and commercial development along high order roads.
- To maintain and enhance the architectural, aesthetic and historical character of Lower Main Road.
- To discourage home industries from impacting negatively on residential areas.
- To ensure that Observatory retains its mixed use character and small scale businesses.



-  Recreational Open Space
-  School Sportsfields

RECREATIONAL OPEN SPACE

Fig. 8

OBSERVATORY
POLICY
PLAN



0 50 100 200

3.3 ENVIRONMENTAL AND OPEN SPACE ISSUES

The tightly knit built fabric and narrow internal roads within Observatory do not allow for much public open space beyond the school sports fields and a handful of parks.

However, Observatory does possess a wide variety of regional outdoor recreation facilities including the opportunities along the Liesbeek River which are still to be exploited. Figure 8 indicates the existing open spaces and amenities.

Facilities in the local area

The major sporting facilities are located on the periphery of the suburb. These facilities, ie Hartleyvale and Malta Park, are well located in terms of transportation routes and public transport. However, Hartleyvale's role within the metropolitan recreational requirement context is not clear and requires City Council policy formulation. Furthermore, these facilities do negatively impact on the surrounding residents when they are being used. These include inadequate parking, noise and security fears.

The residents are to a large degree tolerant of these problems because they only take place occasionally. The residents, however, are not tolerant of the lack of access to Hartleyvale and to the Liesbeek River beyond Hartleyvale. They also object to the unsightly vibracrete walls that surround Hartleyvale. This facility has the potential to provide some visual relief from the built fabric of Observatory and should therefore be fenced in by more aesthetically acceptable material or plants that do not obstruct the views of the playgrounds and sports fields.

The Liesbeek/Black River confluence area indicated on Figure 9 is outside of the study area. However, it has the potential to become a major recreational area that links up with the Rondebosch/Mowbray river trail. As mentioned previously, it is the subject of another investigation which is still in its preliminary stages. At this stage, all that can be said is that the area has been identified as a regional recreational space which is in dire need of a framework to direct future planning for the area. It is furthermore recognised that it has the potential to become an important recreational facility for Observatory, and other surrounding suburbs, especially if easier access could be provided



Liesbeek/Black River Confluence Study Area
Fig. 9

through Hartleyvale to the river. The study will of course take cognisance of this potential and any proposals must be complementary and take into account the immediate contiguous uses and future proposals for the surrounding areas. Liesbeek Parkway, which is the boundary of the study area and the eastern gateway to Observatory, is very bleak and poorly landscaped on its verges.

Local Open Space

The open space in general and parks in particular, play virtually no role in improving the residential environment of Observatory. Furthermore, the existing public open space is generally poorly located and designed. The Scott Road play area in particular has poor access and lacks surveillance. The park on Arnold Street extends far back from the street and consequently also lacks surveillance; and the park on the corner of Station Road and Arnold Street is locked after hours and therefore has limited access.

The Village Green

The open space on Station Road behind the old Junior Schools, locally referred to as the "Village Green", is viewed as a very important site by the community. The general desire by the community is that the Village Green will be expanded to include the dog training field in front of the headquarters of the Rapid Deployment Unit, and the whole area turned into a park with tree planting and landscaping.

The site is located at the intersection of Lower Main and Station Roads which is considered to be the 'heart' of Observatory. (refer to Figure 10). Consequently, it has the potential to play an important role in structuring the area as well as providing a community facility. The Rapid Deployment Unit's occupation of the old school building is a highly controversial issue. The community is of the opinion that its presence is totally inappropriate to its location in the heart of the suburb and out of character with the surrounding use and development. A clear policy therefore needs to be formulated

for the future purpose and use of the site.

Residential Streets

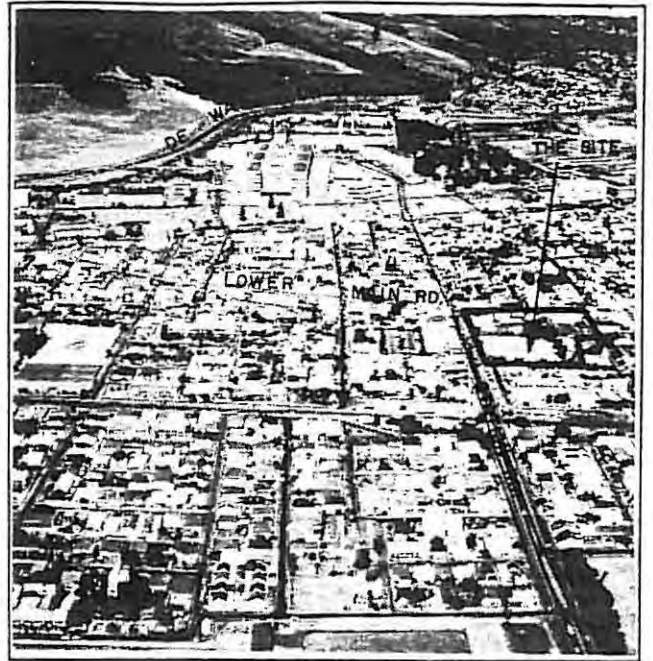
In an area such as Observatory where private outdoor space is usually limited, the street becomes an important component of open space. Thus street space within residential precincts is considered to be more than just a channel for movement. It is also a focus for community life and can be used as space for children to play in. Each street has the potential - given the enthusiastic involvement of residents - to have its own particular 'sense of place'.

Consequently, streets in the residential areas need to be upgraded by removing unnecessary through traffic where possible. There are two alternatives to remove extraneous traffic from the residential streets. The one alternative is to close the streets to create 'woon erven'. However, this would be an expensive exercise which is unlikely to be undertaken in the current financial climate. The second alternative is to create a hierarchy of roads so that extraneous traffic would be encouraged to use these, in preference to the local access streets, in residential areas. Therefore, a Traffic Management Scheme to rationalise and manage traffic flow on the higher order roads should be investigated and implemented. A third alternative has been suggested by the Civic Association and that is the provision of speed humps. This solution, not withstanding its success in terms of reducing vehicle speed does not necessarily reduce volumes of daily traffic and therefore is not a suitable means for prohibiting traffic on residential streets. Further discussion on speed humps can be found in Section 3.4.

The streets within the study area are generally bleak and lack greenery. Tree planting is visually and functionally very important in a tightly built area such as Observatory. The opportunity exists for the Council to establish a tree planting programme for Observatory. However,



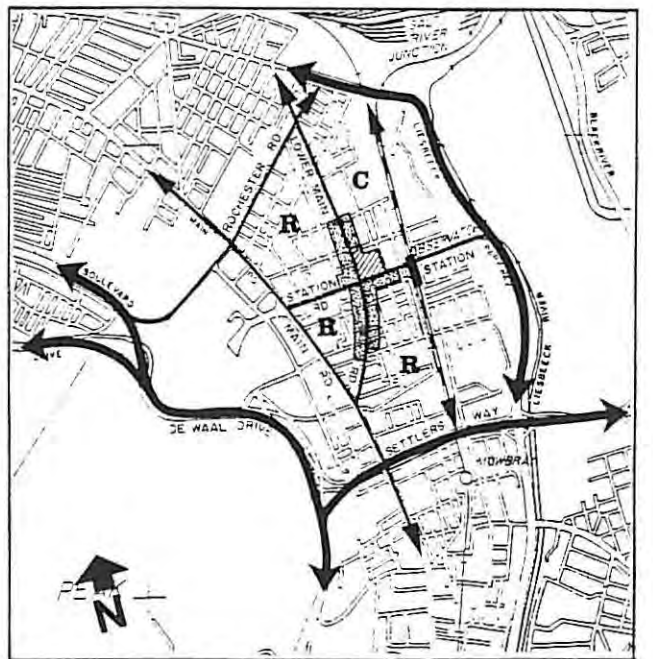
Aerial View of the Site



Aerial View of Site in Relation to the Suburb



Central Locality of the Site



Locality of Site in Relation to Surrounding Land Uses and Major Roads

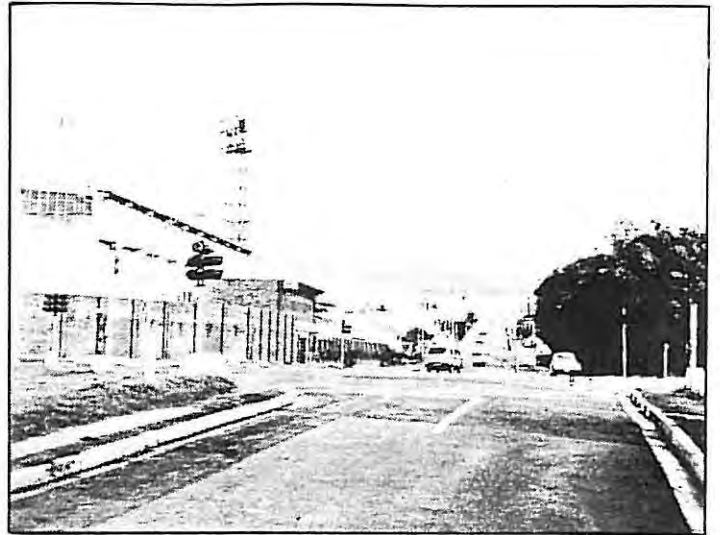
-  Railway Line
-  Regional Routes Surrounding Suburb
-  Commercial Uses Surrounding Village Centre

-  Inner Ring of Residences Surrounding Village Centre
-  Village Centre
-  The Site

OBSERVATORY
POLICY
PLAN



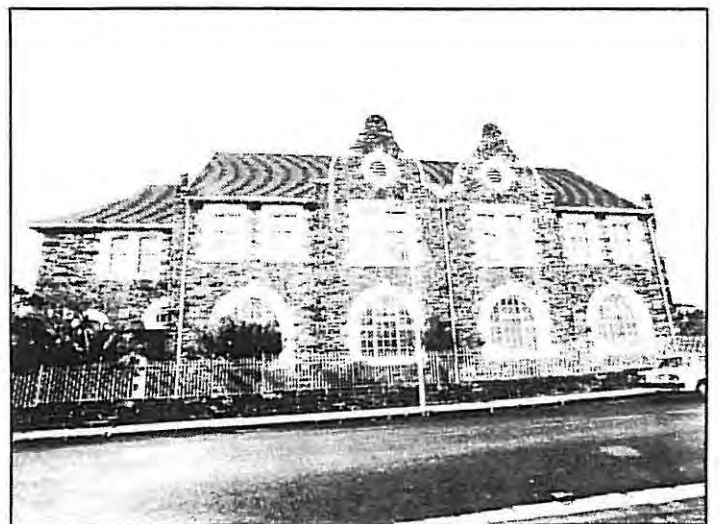
View of the intersection
of Station Road and Liesbeek
Parkway. Hartleyvale
on the left hand side



The Observatory Community
Recreation Centre on Lower
Main Road



The former boys school,
now the headquarters of the
Rapid Deployment Unit



View of a lane in Observatory



because there are demands throughout the city for tree planting it will be necessary to limit the programme to the higher order roads only, which will be phased over a five-year period. While the programme will be limited to certain streets, tree planting on private property should also be encouraged in order to upgrade the residential precincts and streets, particularly in areas where narrow footways and underground services make street planting problematic.

Service Lanes

The lanes in Observatory present both sanitary and security problems for the residents and in most cases it would be expedient to close off all the lanes and for the surrounding owners to come to consensus as to the best subdivision and allocation of the land. There are however, a number of problems associated with the closure of the lanes in terms of ownership (a high percentage are privately owned), time costs, legal procedures and opposition from surrounding owners. Consequently a drive for the closure of all lanes will not be undertaken by the Council. A pamphlet, based on guidelines produced by the Town Planning Branch, has been drawn up by the Councillors for the area which outlines the procedures for closing a lane, should a resident wish to do so. A copy of this is attached as Appendix B.

Summary and Conclusion

Problems

- The sporting facilities on the periphery, in particular Hartleyvale, act as a barrier and cut off the residential area from the Liesbeek River.
- The local community has no access through or to Hartleyvale and consider the fence around the facility to be aesthetically unacceptable. The stadium is in a bad state of disrepair and urgently needs upgrading.
- The role of Hartleyvale within the

metropolitan sporting requirement context lacks clarity.

- The verges of Liesbeek Parkway are poorly landscaped. More planting is required.
- The poorly developed and paucity of local public open space detracts from the environmental quality.
- No clear policy exists for the development of the Village Green.
- The residential streets are bleak, lack planting and carry extraneous traffic.
- The lanes present sanitary and security problems.

Assets

- Observatory has a variety of regional outdoor recreational facilities.
- The opportunity exists to create access from the residential areas to the Liesbeek River.
- The opportunity exists for the multiple use of schools and their sports facilities.
- The Village Green provides an opportunity for additional open space and community facilities.

Objectives

- To improve the environmental quality of the public spaces in Observatory, in order to aid function and security.
- To ensure the optimum use of open spaces to meet local and metropolitan needs.
- To formulate a policy for the development of the Village Green.
- To enhance public space in an effort to support the revitalisation of the suburb.

3.4 T R A F F I C A N D TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

Observatory is well connected within the metropolitan transport network. It has good access to the freeway and arterial road network and is well served by rail, bus and kombi-taxi. Observatory is on the Southern Suburbs railway line linking Simonstown and the Central Business District of Cape Town. Buses and kombi-taxis mainly operate along Main Road, Lower Main Road and Liesbeek Parkway.

Existing Road Network

To understand movement and access patterns within Observatory, it is important to describe the functional hierarchy of roads serving the area. A road hierarchy generally has five levels. These are: regional distributors; primary distributors; district distributors; local distributors; and access roads. Definitions of these different roads are given in Appendix C. The following main components of the road distribution hierarchy for the study area are shown on Figure 11.

The regional distributors include Settlers Way (N2) on the southern boundary and Rhodes Drive (M3) to the west. Their main function is to accommodate high speed regional traffic.

Liesbeek Parkway is a primary distributor canalising traffic off and on to these regional distributor routes and linking the main industrial and residential districts in the city.

Connecting precincts within Observatory and distributing traffic between residential and employment areas in Observatory are district distributors. Although a case can be made for including Main Road as a district distributor, the role and function of Main Road is unclear because of the conflicting demands. It has to accommodate long distance traffic, access-seeking traffic, parking-seeking traffic, buses, kombi-taxis, parking and loading as well as pedestrian traffic. It can therefore be seen to be functioning as a district distributor, but it also serves as a

commercial / activity route.

Local distributors carry traffic to access roads within precincts from adjacent district distributors. These include Station Road and Lower Main Road. Once again, however, both these roads also carry a significant share of through traffic. For example, a survey estimated that about 43 per cent of the traffic on the Lower Main Road - Station Road route is through traffic destined for Settlers Way. Station Road is also identified as a Road of Metropolitan Significance. This means that it is recognised as being a link in the metropolitan road network and must provide for through traffic.

A fine grid of access roads is provided within the residential precincts. However, these precincts are poorly protected from business and through traffic.

Protection of residential streets from traffic

Because of the poorly defined local road hierarchy serving Observatory, some of the lower order residential streets have been converted, by the traffic using it, to function as local distributors instead of access roads. These streets carry traffic generated by and attracted to Observatory, as well as other traffic destined for the surrounding areas. Roschester Road, Scott Road, Milton Road and Trill Road have been identified as residential streets functioning as local distributors. The fact that Station Road is a one-way in a west/east direction, between Main Road and Lower Main Road, also contributes to these roads functioning as local distributors in the local road hierarchy. If the flow of traffic on Station Road was converted to accommodate two-way traffic flow along its entire length, it would have taken over the local distributor function from the other adjacent residential streets.

Speed humps

The rationale behind the construction of speed humps on residential streets seems somewhat fallacious.

It has been speculated that well designed speed humps reduce travel speed and discourage extraneous traffic. However, before/after studies on humps constructed in Palmboom Road, Newlands and Wolfe Street, Wynberg, confirmed that whilst speed humps significantly reduce traffic speed, they result in only a MARGINAL reduction in the volume of daily traffic.

To determine which low order residential streets should be selected for speed humps the following guidelines have been formulated:

- # the role of the street in the local road hierarchy;
- # vehicular speeds (notwithstanding the legal limit, are speeds excessive for the prevailing circumstances?);
- # volume and nature of pedestrian/cyclist traffic;
- # presence and width of any sidewalks;
- # roadway geometry eg width, curvature, sight distance;
- # accident data;
- # percentage of residential frontages/access onto street;
- # whether the street is on a desirable pedestrian/cyclist route to a school;
- # presence of playgrounds, creches, aftercare centres etc;
- # availability and standard of immediate alternative routes;
- # roadway side friction eg parked cars;
- # distance from edge of roadway to building line.

Traffic calming in Observatory

It is apparent that speed humps are a cheap and extremely successful self-enforcing means of reducing vehicle speeds. They are very popular with residents and appear to cause little concern to the motorist. Generally they do not appear to divert traffic and should thus probably not be used as a means to prevent extraneous "rat-runners" in Observatory.

Due to the problem with the poorly defined road hierarchy it is very difficult to identify

which of the residential roads, currently operating as local distributors, should be protected by traffic calming measures. The existing one-way road system, linking Main Road to Lower Main Road, which will hopefully be sustained, operates as three couplets i.e. Roschester Road / Scott Road, Milton Road / Station Road and Trill Road / Bowden Road. Should any of these streets be protected against traffic it would just transfer the traffic to the other streets and place more pressure on them. It would thus be logical if one of these roads is converted to perform the function of the local distributor to take the pressure off the rest of the streets in the residential precinct. During the investigation Station Road was identified as the most suitable road to function as a local distributor. Station Road is already operating as a two-way street between Lower Main Road and Liesbeek Parkway. This way Milton Road and Trill Road could be treated with traffic calming measures to redefine the residential precincts on either side of Station Road.

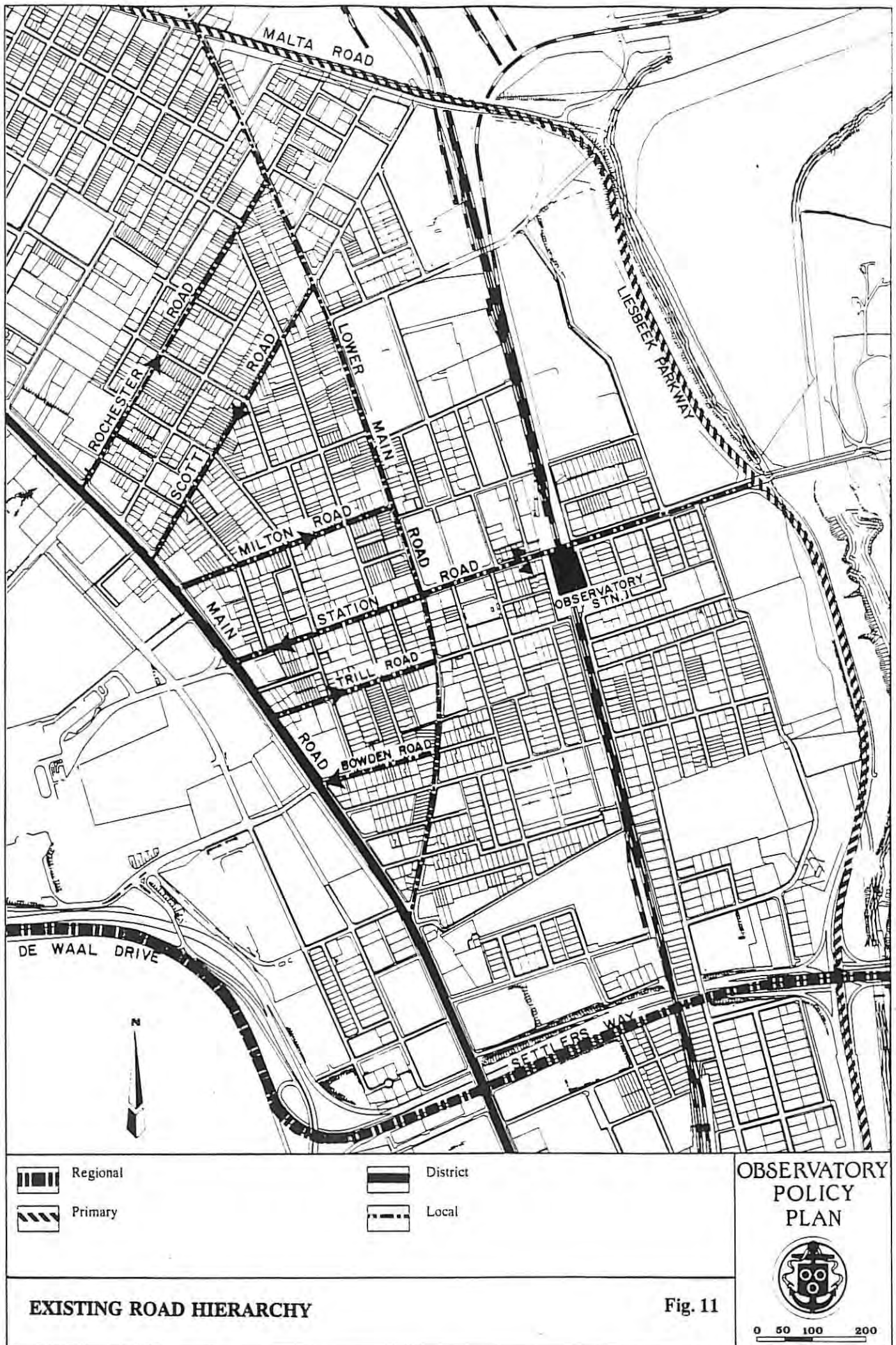
Consultants' Study

A detailed transportation study and analysis was undertaken by the consultants Liebenberg and Stander during 1989 as an integral part of the overall planning exercise for Observatory. The results are summarised in a technical document entitled Observatory -Transportation Investigation.

The aim of the study was to identify the functions of existing roads, the capacity of the roads and junctions, the nature of the traffic and the adequacy of parking.

Causes of major transportation problems in the study area were identified by the consultants as follows:

- There is a poorly defined internal road system with inadequate distinction between residential access streets, internal distribution and higher order roads. The character of the existing road system is described as an 'open grid' system which allows through traffic to penetrate the



area, especially residential precincts. It is likely that this situation will continue should the status quo of the open grid system be maintained.

- There is no formally defined parking policy for the area to address problems such as limited provision for off-street parking due to the general age of housing and narrow frontages. This results in high concentrations of on-street parking. Large volumes of traffic are attracted by non-residential developments such as Groote Schuur Hospital and commercial activities along Main Road; and large volumes are attracted during off-peak hours to restaurants and Hartleyvale.
- Congestion on regional roads results in delays to commuter journeys by private car and public transport, and "rat-running" along residential streets to avoid congested main routes.

A detailed study of the regional road network has also been undertaken by the Provincial Roads authorities (CMT Highway Capacity Study (1989/90 CTMCA Highway Capacity Study Area Report, Metropolitan Transport Planning Branch, City Planner's Department, 1991). Important findings of this study are:

- Easing only the major existing bottlenecks in the morning peak hour would not significantly reduce delays because the downstream sections of the freeway system are congested.
- Little opportunity for reassignment of road traffic exists owing to the average peak hour travel times on the available parallel arterial routes being either similar or worse than travel times on the freeways.
- Many opportunities exist to improve travel times along arterial roads by reducing delays at signalised intersections.

Existing Road Improvement Proposals

There are a number of road widening schemes affecting the area. Most schemes

were developed a considerable time ago and were based on the belief that the route capacity should be increased to provide for further growth in traffic. These schemes are shown in Figure 12, and further details are given in Appendix D.

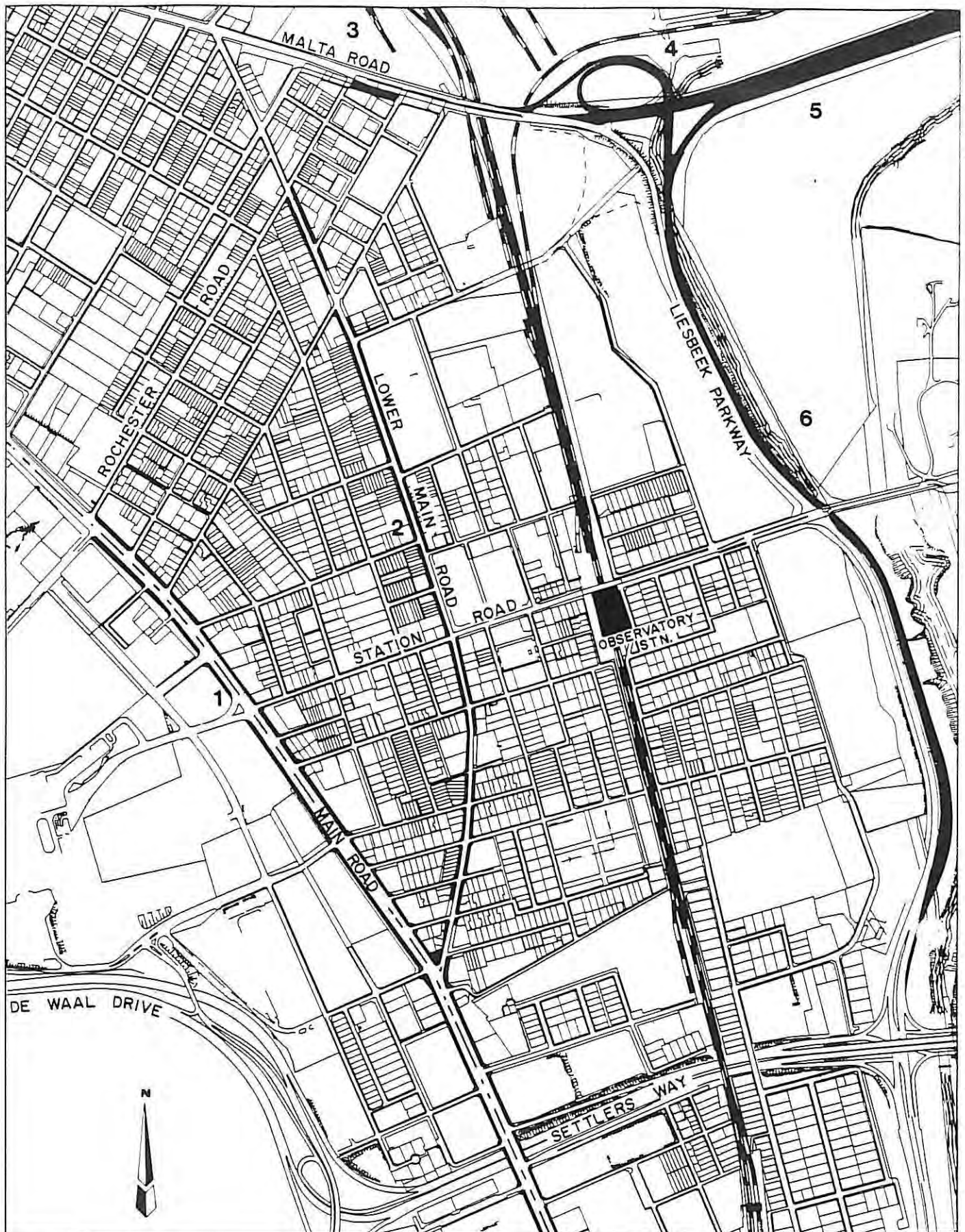
Widening of Lower Main Road from Albert Road, Salt River to Main Road, Observatory

The scheme requires that the reserve width be increased from an average of 12 metres (at the narrowest point the width is 6,7 metres) to 19 metres. If the scheme were ever to be implemented, it would require the acquisition of all properties on both sides of the road.

An urban design study has indicated that if properties on both sides of Lower Main Road north of Station Road are set back in accordance with the improvement line, there would be an unacceptable deterioration in environmental quality. Similarly, if properties are set back on the western side of Lower Main Road south of Station Road the environmental consequences would be unacceptable.

Widening of Main Road from Salt River to Rhodes Drive

This scheme requires the widening of this PMR along the full extent of the study area. However, the consultants' investigation has shown that the widening of Main Road will not alleviate current poor performance unless exit capacities from this section of Main Road are increased. For example, the southbound queue of traffic in the evening peak period is due almost entirely to the capacity limitations of the left turn from Main Road to Settlers Way eastbound. Unless this capacity is increased significantly, widening the southbound carriageway of Main Road will purely provide additional storage for this turn and will not materially affect journey times over this section.



- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | PMR Along Main Road |
| 2 | Lower Main Road Widening |
| 3 | Service Connection to Malta Road Bridge |

- | | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| 4 | Overhead Road Bridge; Malta Road |
| 5 | Berkley - Malta Road Extension |
| 6 | Liesbeek Parkway Widening |

PROPOSED ROAD SCHEMES AFFECTING OBSERVATORY

Fig. 12

OBSERVATORY
POLICY
PLAN



0 50 100 200

However, for the northbound carriageway of Main Road, the situation is somewhat different. Because of the amount of traffic which it is anticipated will be attracted by the hospital, there is justification for widening the northbound carriageway of Main Road between Penzance Road and Groote Schuur Drive.

Widening of Liesbeek Parkway from Malta Road to Settlers Way.

This approved proposal provides for a four-lane carriageway. As shown on Figure 12 this scheme is designed to accommodate any additional traffic that may be attracted to Liesbeek Parkway as a result of the extension of Berkley Road from Malta Road.

Berkley Road - Malta Road Extension

This proposal calls for the western extension of Berkley Road providing a link with Malta Road. As discussed above, an investigation by the transportation consultants revealed that about 43 per cent of the traffic in Observatory along the Lower Main Road-Station Road route is through traffic destined for Settlers Way (eastbound). The Berkley Road extension would divert this traffic via Malta Road easing congestion on Lower Main Road, Station Road and Liesbeek Parkway. Similar conclusions were reached by the Metropolitan Transport Planning Branch.

However, given the drastically reduced availability of funds for metropolitan road construction, it is unlikely that this link will be constructed in the short term unless most of the funds are raised from other sources such as private developers.

Public Transport

Figure 13 shows the results of a recent survey of the journey to work for people living in the Observatory area. This area is slightly larger than the Observatory Study area, but does include it. Important observations are:

- the average travel distance is 7,4 kilometres. This is half that for the

metropolitan area as a whole (15 kilometres), indicating that Observatory is in an accessible location within the metropolitan area.

- Approximately 70 per cent of residents travel to work by car.

In 1991 about 3000 people alighted from trains stopping at Observatory station during the morning peak period, and about 700 people boarded trains.

There are approximately 70 off-street commuter parking bays at the rail station. However, the occupancy has been measured at only 20 vehicles on average per day. It is clear that a problem exists because of the motorists' perception of poor security for parked vehicles at the station parking area. As a result of this perception, the parking lots between Herschell and Nuttall Roads and Drake and Anson Roads are extensively used by train commuters who drive to these areas and leave their cars there during the day. This significantly reduces the availability of short term parking for adjacent commercial activities.

Clearly, public transport is an important concern. However, a major problem with the provision and management of public transport is that the Cape Town City Council, even as the core city responsible for planning transport in the metropolitan region, can do little to coordinate and manage public transport under the present system of metropolitan government.

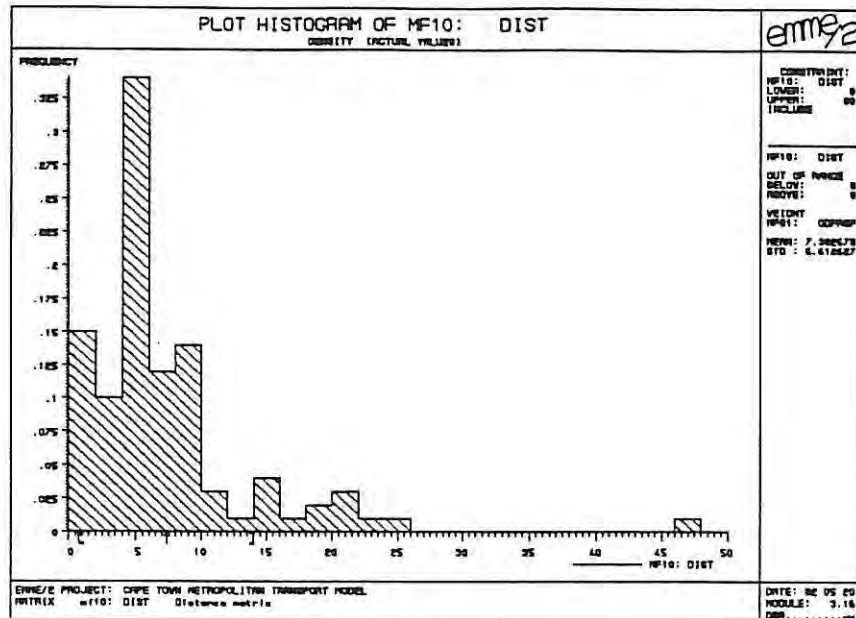
As a result, the City can at present only influence public transport provision through traffic enforcement and its control of infrastructure such as road space, park and ride facilities at rail stations and pedestrian access to public transport interchanges. However, a Public Transport Study has been commissioned by Cape Town Municipality, acting as a core city of the Cape Town Metropolitan Transport Area. The study is aimed at generating proposals to improve the public transport system in the metropolitan area.

SURVEY OF JOURNEY TO WORK FOR PEOPLE LIVING IN OBSERVATORY

Source: Metropolitan Transport Planning Branch, 1992

Survey size	= 90 residential units
Average household size	= 3.22 persons
Average number of workers / household	= 0.38 persons
Average number of trips / person	= 0.12 trips
Mode split	= 71 per cent private transport
Average vehicle occupancy	= 1.03 persons / car

TRIP LENGTH FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION



Average trip length to work = 7.4 kilometres

TRIP DESTINATIONS

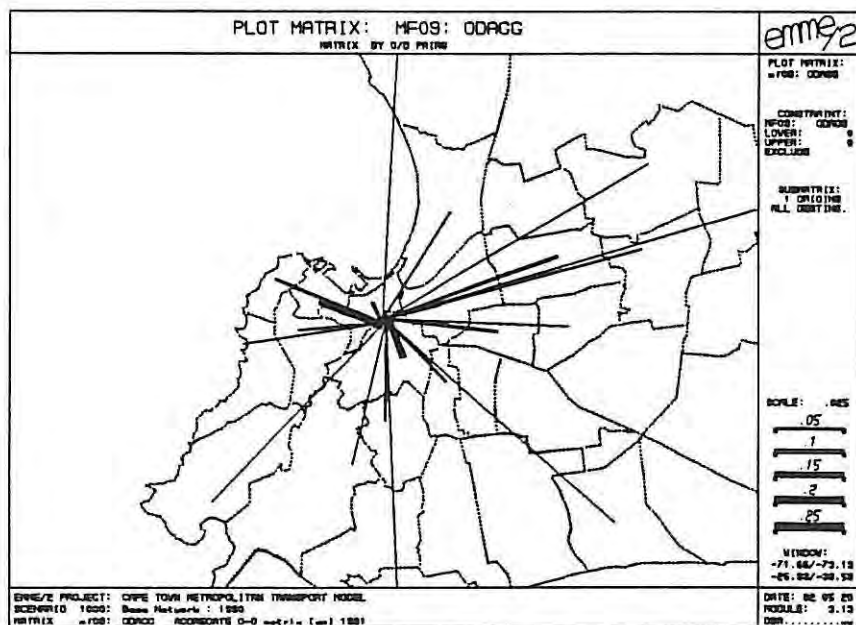
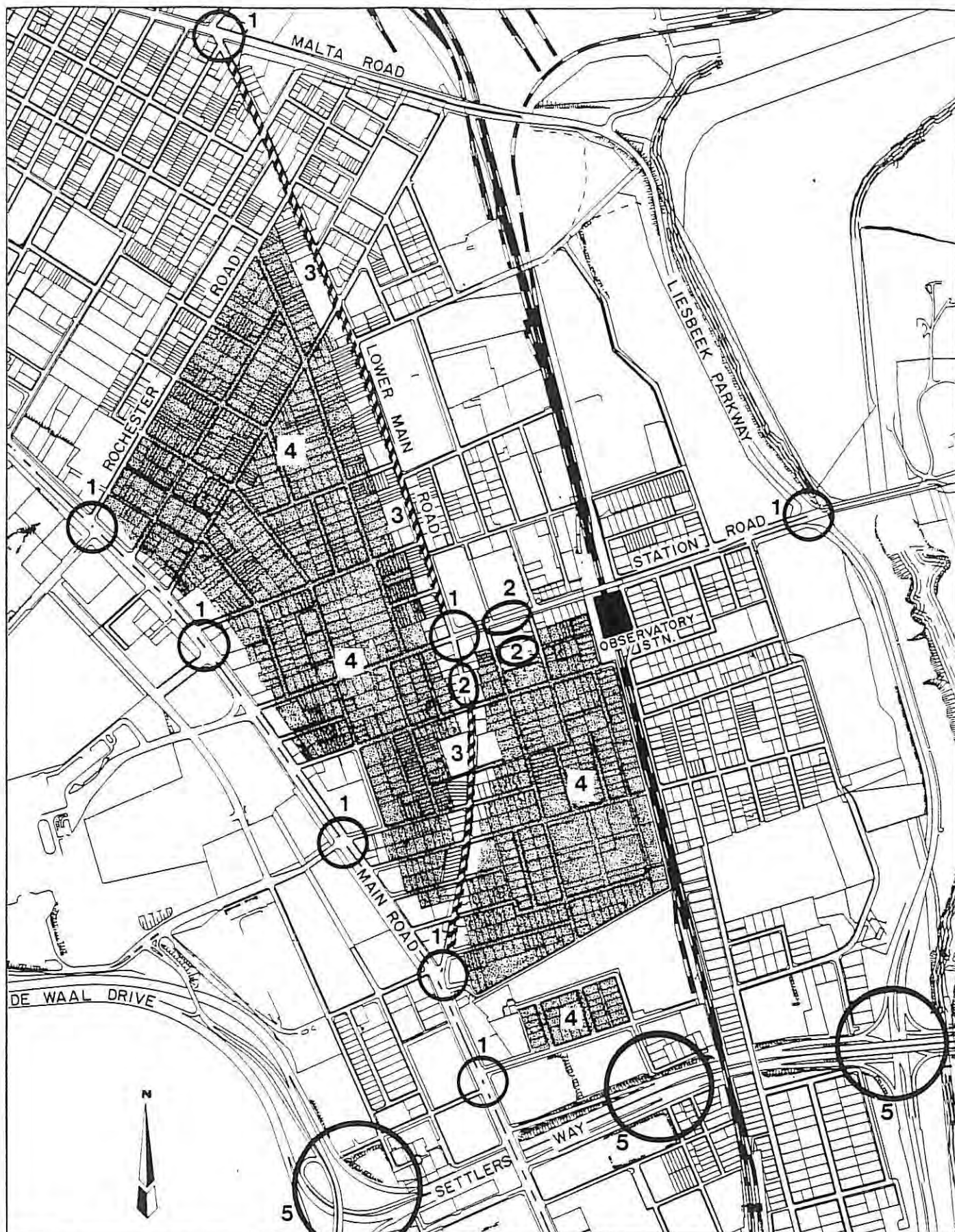


Fig. 13



- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| 1 | Problems at Intersections |
| 2 | Inefficient Use of Parking Facilities |
| 3 | Excessive Road Widening Schemes |

- | | |
|---|---|
| 4 | Intrusion of Traffic on Residential Streets |
| 5 | Congestion on the Regional Road Network |

TRANSPORTATION PROBLEM AREAS

OBSERVATORY POLICY PLAN



Fig. 14

0 50 100 200

Summary and Conclusion

Problems

- Areas where transportation problems occur are shown in Figure 14.
- The following transportation problems need to be addressed as a matter of urgency:
 - * congestion and delays at major intersections due to capacity constraints;
 - * infiltration of residential roads by through and business traffic; and
 - * developing an appropriate parking policy.

Assets

- Observatory is an accessible place in the metropolitan area and is well served by public and private modes of transport.
- The area contains the elements of a well developed hierarchy of roads which, through better management, can provide adequate capacity for the through traffic, local traffic and public transport.

Objectives

- The Lower Main Road and Main Road widening scheme should be re-evaluated with reference to the findings of the MTP Highway Capacity Study.
- The role of residential streets should be reinforced by discouraging through and business traffic.
- Access to public transport facilities should be improved.

3.5 CONCLUSION

Observatory has an important role to play as a mixed use area that successfully accommodates a wide range of uses in close proximity to the CBD. The success is due to the balance of the distribution of uses as well as the scale and character of the area. It is therefore considered desirable to retain aspects such as the mixed use character, the residential function, the significant built heritage and the overall scale of the area.

It is acknowledged that Observatory suffers from a number of internal and external pressures that influence the functioning of the area. In particular, the regional recreation and institutional facilities have had a disruptive impact on the suburb. In addition, the local trend of revitalising the residential areas and shopping strip also has both advantages and disadvantages which influence the day to day functioning of the suburb. It cannot be denied that the area has undergone change over the past decade and is still undergoing change. Therefore the need exists for a framework within which development can take place. The framework must, however, take both metropolitan and local issues into account. Perceptions of the problems by different interest groups may differ, and solutions to the problems may conflict. The role of the framework is to ensure that a balance to conflicting interests is maintained.

4. POLICY PROPOSALS

The following section containing the policy framework and policies focuses on ways to guide spatial aspects of development within the study area. Subsection 5.1 outlines six general policies which constitute the policy framework and form the basis for more detailed policies contained in subsection 5.2. Although this is a comprehensive view of what should be done in the area, it must be remembered that the Council has limited resources for the entire municipal area and cannot simply focus on one suburb such as Observatory.

Thus subsection 4.3 concentrates on areas that require immediate guidance and attention, key Council-owned sites and key traffic problem areas. Given the above, the conclusion to this section highlights key actions that should be undertaken within the short term. It should also be acknowledged that it is not only the City Council that is responsible for the area but all the occupants who have a role to play in ensuring that the suburb develops in a way that is desirable to the overall majority.



View down Station Road, with the Village Green on the left hand side

4.1 POLICY FRAMEWORK

The following general policies constitute the policy framework and form the basis for the more detailed policies in subsection 4.2:

4.1.1 To declare an Urban Conservation Area.

- this would conserve Observatory's architectural, aesthetic and historical character, taking into account both the natural and built environment.

4.1.2 To encourage and support the revitalisation of Lower Main Road.

- this should give dignity to the Victorian shopping strip;
- provide after-hour activity within the suburb; and
- promote development along Lower Main Road that is in keeping with the existing architectural character of the street.

4.1.3 To protect viable residential areas from intrusion by non-residential activities.

- this gives the residential areas confidence and enhances their viability; and
- ensures the survival of facilities which depend on local population thresholds.

4.1.4 To encourage non-residential uses to locate along the higher order roads.

- this reinforces the road hierarchy;
- provides a clear understanding as to where non-residential activities should locate; and
- discourages non-residential traffic from

moving into residential areas.

4.1.5 To reinforce the hierarchy of roads.

- this caters for and encourages varying degrees of intensity and activity;
- provides structure and legibility to the area; and
- provides a choice of alternative routes.

4.1.6 To preserve the existing open spaces and to review their use in the context of agreed policies.

- the open spaces provide a structuring element for the area; and
- provide a range of recreational needs for the residents.

4.2 POLICIES

Residential and Business Development Proposals

Observatory is a mixed use area within which there are a number of residential precincts. For the most part the residential precincts function well and are not unduly threatened by intrusive uses. However, there are three smaller pockets of residential properties which may in time be threatened by non-residential expansion. Should temporary departures or rezonings be granted on any of the properties within these pockets, the viability of that particular residential area would be undermined.

Council should therefore adopt a "hard line" policy to protect and enhance all the residential areas. This, as with all policies, should be reviewed from time to time.

Policy 1:

Protect the residential areas from the establishment of incompatible non-residential activities (Figure 15 refers).

This can be achieved by:

- refusing inappropriate rezoning, consent and land use temporary departure applications;
- combating the establishment or the presence of illegal business uses;
- monitoring non-conforming uses; and
- ensuring that home industries comply with the provisions of section 22 of the Zoning Scheme.

Actors:

Council (Town Planning Branch, Building

Survey Branch)

Policy 2:

Permit and facilitate the establishment of non-residential activities along the high order roads that permit direct access to abutting land uses (refer to Figure 16).

This can be achieved by:

- Adopting policy

Actors:

Council (Town Planning Branch, Building Survey Branch)

Lower Main Road Proposals

Policy 3:

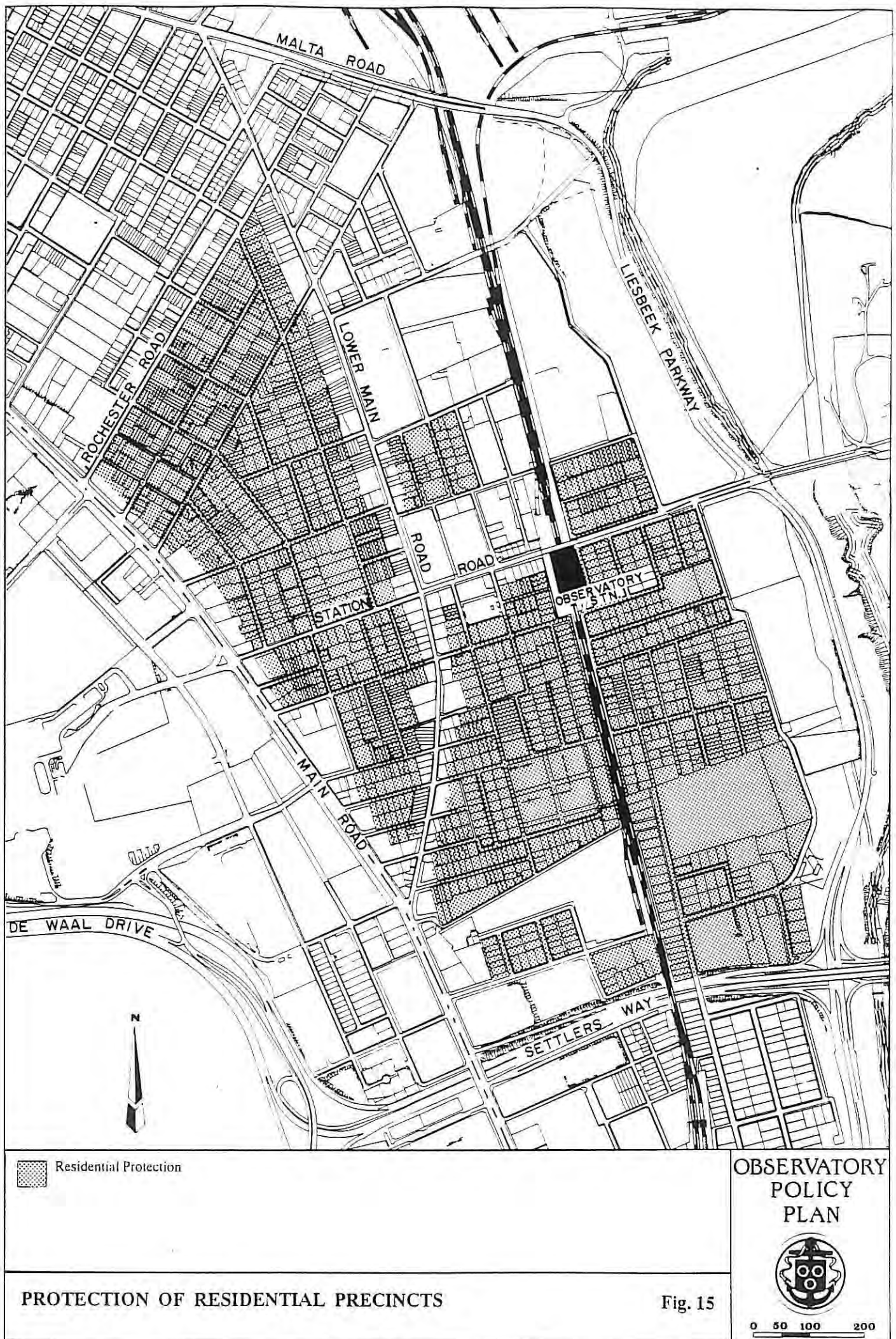
Promote development along Lower Main Road that is in keeping with the architectural character of the street.

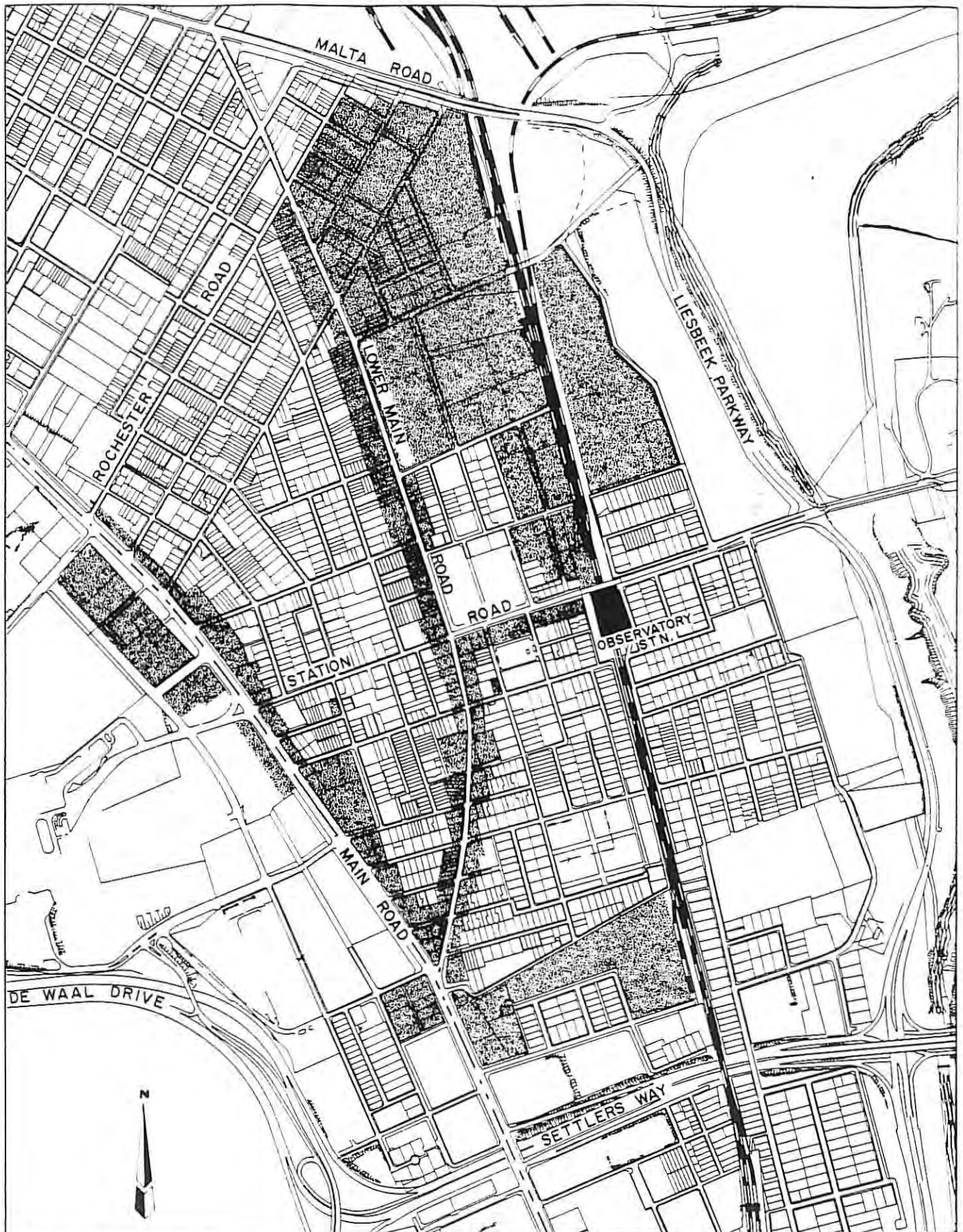
This can be achieved by:

- amending the road improvement line;
- incorporating the strip into an Urban Conservation Area; and
- introducing controls and guidelines that will promote appropriate development along the strip.

Actors:

Council (Town Planning Branch, Building Survey Branch)





 Land Zoned for Non-Residential Purposes

OBSERVATORY
POLICY
PLAN



LOCATION OF NON-RESIDENTIAL USES

Fig. 16

0 50 100 200

Conservation Proposals

Policy 4:

Protect historically and aesthetically significant buildings and elements in the area and ensure that any further development is sympathetic in scale and character to the area.

This can be achieved by:

- the declaration of an Urban Conservation Area (refer to Figure 17); and
- by producing guidelines on how to maintain and renovate Victorian buildings.

Actors:

Council (Town Planning Branch, Building Survey Branch), local community

Proposals Promoting Environmental Quality

Policy 5:

Integrate the regional recreational facilities with the rest of the suburb.

This can be achieved by:

- permitting access through the fields to the recreation opportunities of the Liesbeek River area.
- facilitate pedestrian movement across Liesbeek Parkway.
- connect Hartleyvale to the suburb visually by removing the vibracrete fences and utilising a more appropriate material or planting.
- upgrade Hartleyvale Stadium which is in a bad state of disrepair.

Actors:

Council (Town Planning Branch, Parks and Forests Branch, Civic Amenities)

Policy 6:

Tree planting and landscaping should be undertaken at the main entrances to the suburb to create gateways at these points (refer to Figure 18).

This can be achieved by creating landscape opportunities, subject to the location of services, space and sight lines, at the following intersections:

- Main and Station Roads;
- Station Road and Liesbeek Parkway;
- Lower Main and Main Roads; and
- Lower Main and Malta Roads.

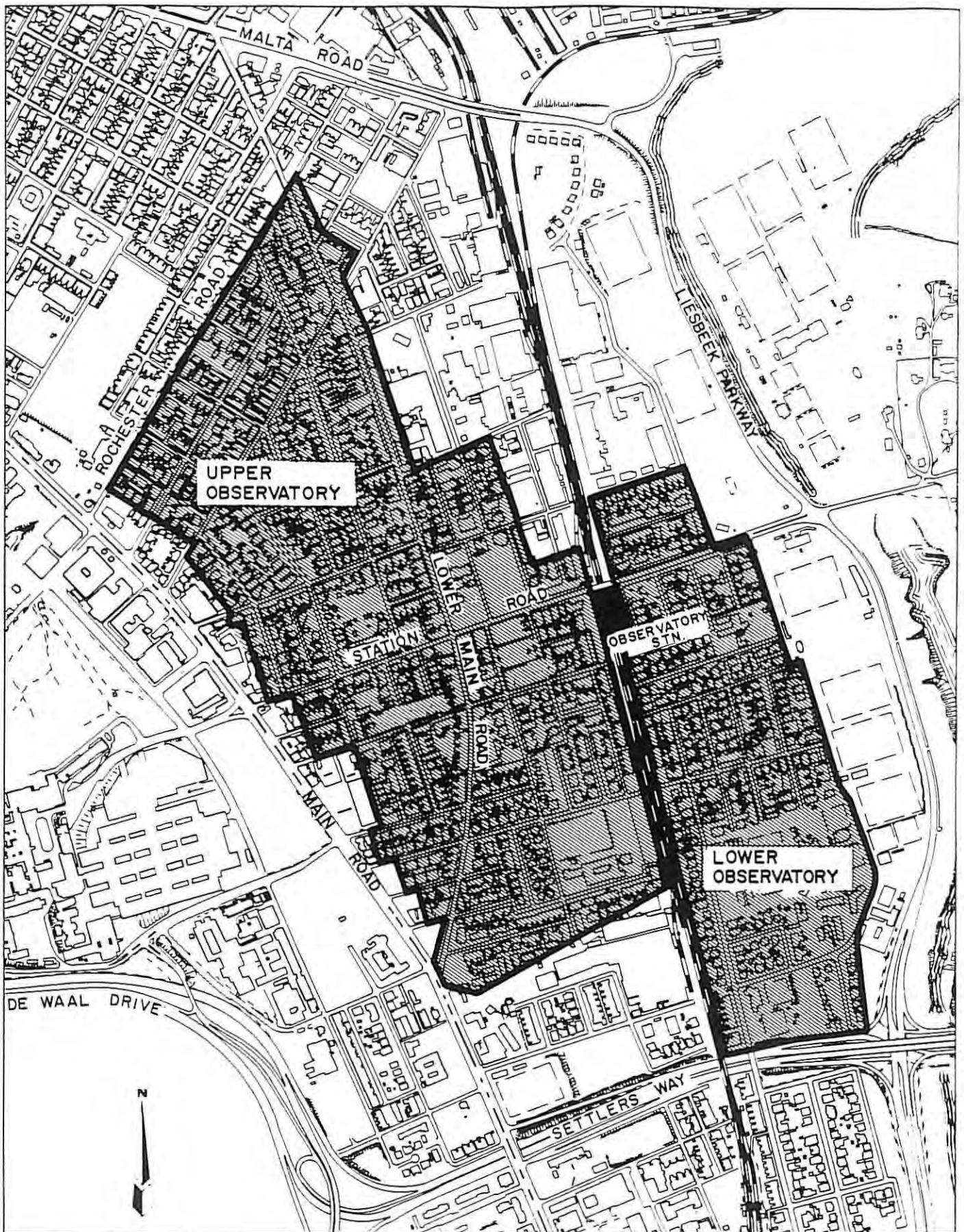
Actors:

Council (Parks and Forests Branch)

Policy 7:

Establish a tree planting programme for high order roads, the station and along the railway line, subject to the location of services, (refer to Figure 18) viz:

- Liesbeek Parkway;
- Station Road (where possible) to the



 Proposed Conservation Areas

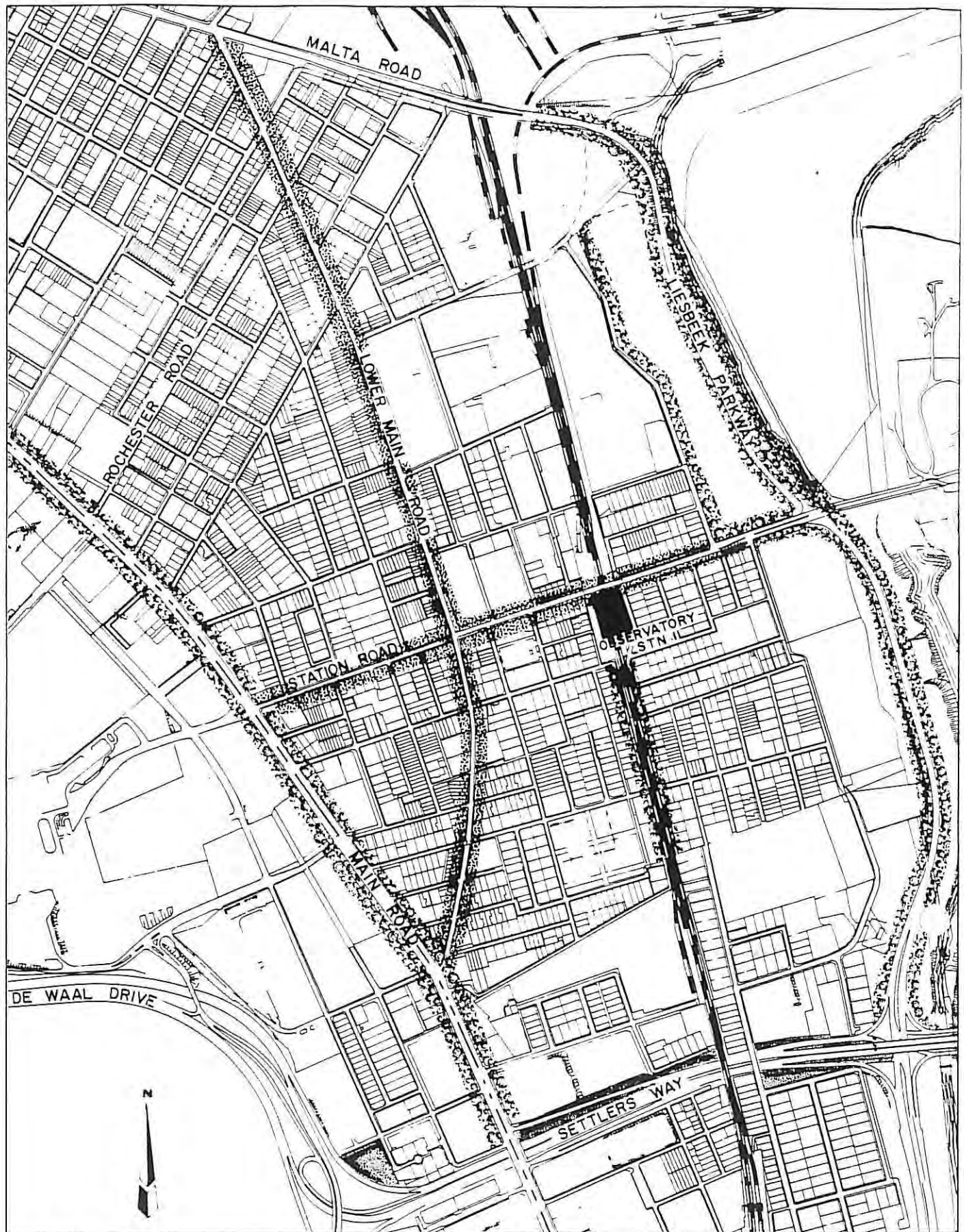
OBSERVATORY
POLICY
PLAN



PROPOSED CONSERVATION AREAS

Fig. 17

0 50 100 200



 Tree Planting Subject to Location of Services

 Landscaping

 Streetscaping / Urban Design

**OBSERVATORY
POLICY
PLAN**



TREE PLANTING AND LANDSCAPING PROPOSALS

Fig. 18

0 50 100 200

Village Green;

- Lower Main Road (where possible);
- Florence Avenue (along the railway line); and
- Milner Road (along the railway line).

This can be achieved by:

- investigating where trees can be located without interfering with services; drawing up a programme, budgeting and undertaking improvements.
- encouraging participation by; the community, the institutions and the business sector in the provision of additional localised environmental improvements.

Actors:

Council (Parks and Forests Branch), local community, private developers and C.P.A.

Policy 8:

Formulate a policy for the use and development of the Village Green at the intersection of Station Road and Lower Main Road (refer to Figure 19).

- The future use and possible development of this valuable site must be decided on by means of a consultative process in conjunction with the community.

Actors:

Council (Town Planning Branch, City Administrator, Parks and Forests Branch), local community

Policy 9:

Support should be given to the closure of pedestrian and service lanes (which are generally considered to be negative spaces) especially where they are no longer needed, where there are security problems and where residents wish to incorporate the space into their properties.

This can be achieved by:

- following the procedures for closing a public passage or service land, as set out in the document in Appendix B.

Actors:

Council (Survey and Land Information Branch, City Administrator), local community

Policy 10:

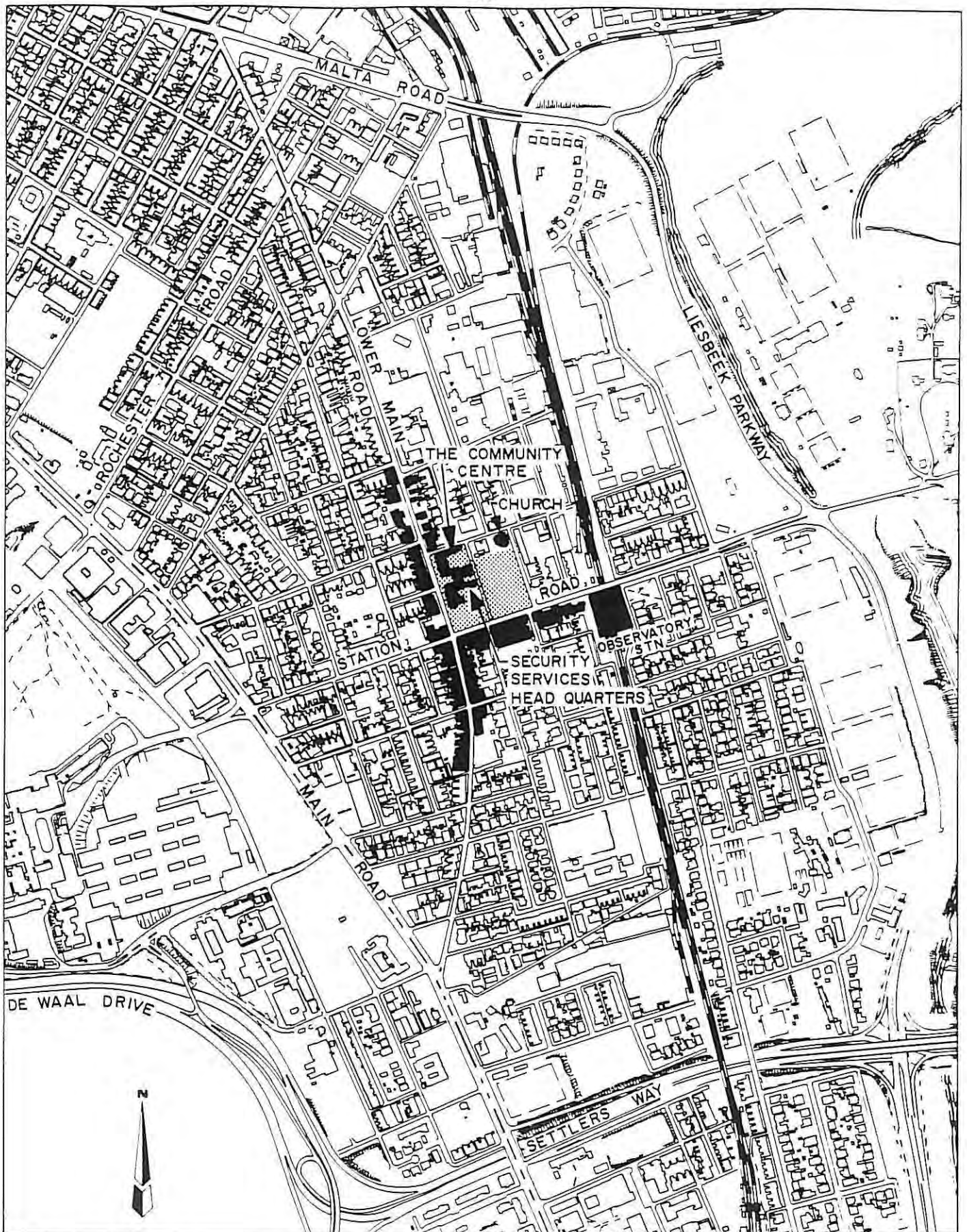
Rationalise the use of parks in the area and dispose of those parks that are unsuitable for such purposes.

This can be achieved by:

- disposing of Scott Road Park, which is already closed.

Actors:

Council (Town Planning Branch, Parks and Forests Branch, Estates Branch), local Community



 Village Green Site in Relation to Village Centre

THE VILLAGE GREEN

OBSERVATORY
POLICY
PLAN



Fig. 19

0 50 100 200

Policy 11:

Facilitate the multiple use of facilities and schools.

This can be achieved by negotiation with the Provincial Administration, to achieve the sharing of the following facilities:

- the kickabout area on the Observatory Junior School ground;
- the Observatory Junior School tennis courts; and
- the Mary Kihn School tennis courts.

Actors:

Council (Town Planning Branch, Parks and Forests Branch), local community, Provincial Administration

Regional Transportation Proposals

Policy 12:

Attention to be given to the upgrading of the regional traffic circulation with a view to reducing through traffic in Observatory and to facilitate the traffic flow around the suburb (refer to figure 20).

This can be achieved by:

- pursuing the findings of the investigation into the implementation of a bus lane along Main Road from Mowbray to the CBD.
- investigating the feasibility of extending Berkley Road to Malta Road.

- investigating the demarcation and management of priority lanes for buses and taxis on roads of metropolitan significance.

Actors:

Council (Town Planning Branch, Roads Branch), Provincial Roads Department and Metropolitan Transport Planning

Policy 13:

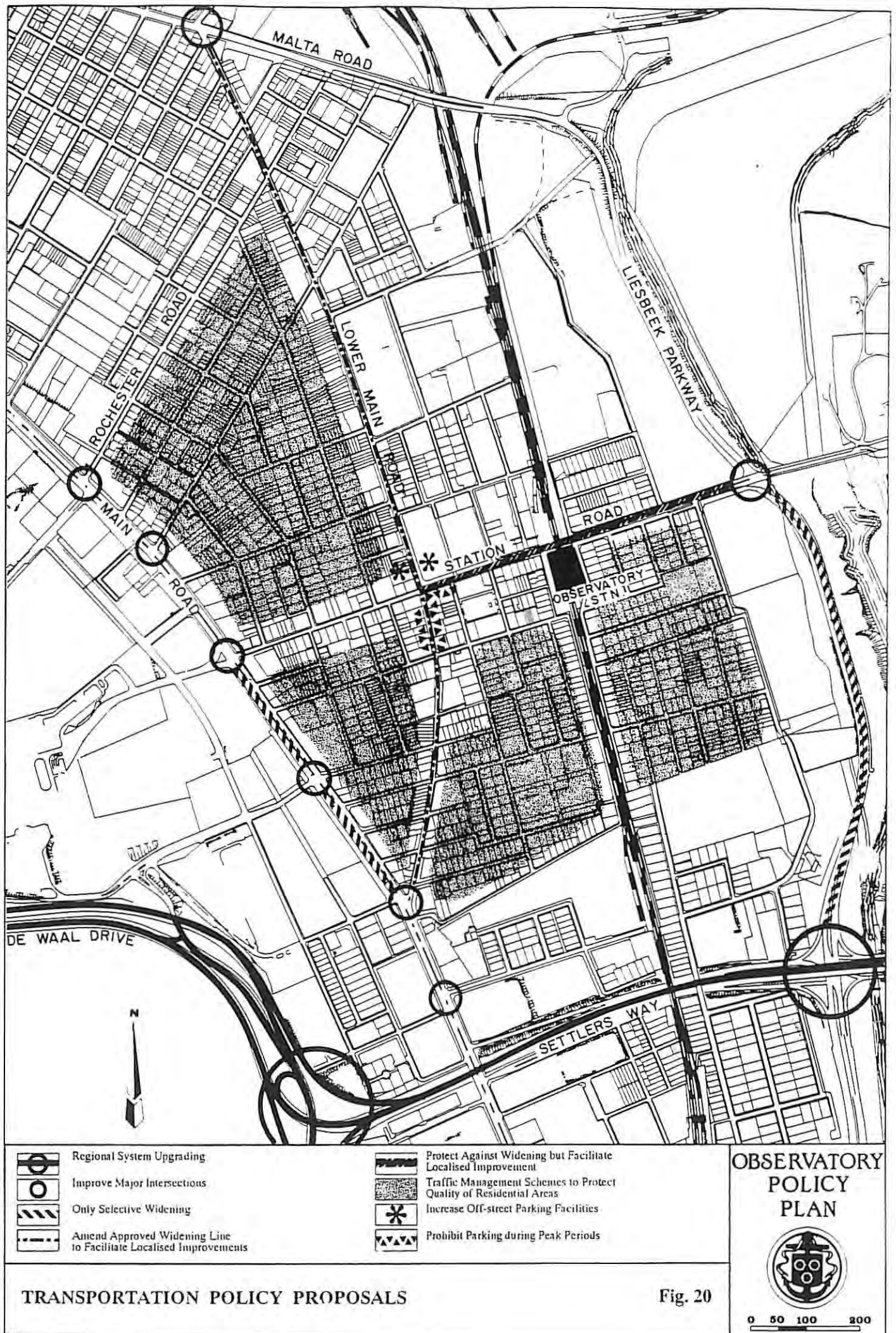
Improvements to the intersections along Main Road to improve traffic flow and safety (refer to Figure 20).

This can be achieved by:

- reviewing and improving geometric layouts.
- rationalising lane markings.
- linking traffic signals.
- coordinating pedestrian and vehicular movement.

Actors:

Council (Town Planning Branch, Roads Branch, Traffic Manager) Metropolitan Transportation Planning Branch.



Local Transportation Proposals

Policy 14:

Selectively improve the capacity of Liesbeek Parkway.

This can be achieved by:

- Providing an additional lane to the southbound carriageway on Liesbeek Parkway between Station Road and Settlers Way (refer to Figure 20).

Actors:

Council (Town Planning Branch, Roads Branch), Provincial Roads Department, Metropolitan Transport Planning Branch.

Policy 15:

Improve the management of on-street parking facilities.

This can be achieved by:

- marking out on-street parking and loading bays; and
- introducing appropriate pricing and regulatory policies to reserve on-street parking for short term parking.

Actors:

Council (Town Planning Branch, Roads Branch, Traffic Manager)

Policy 16:

Widening of Main Road should only take place if it promotes the use of public transport and/or improves the operation of important intersections.

This can be achieved by:

- investigating the feasibility of introducing designated public transport facilities.

Actors:

Council (Town Planning Branch, Roads Branch, Traffic Manager), Metropolitan Transport Planning Branch, Provincial Roads Department

Policy 17:

Promote the use of public transport generally in the area.

This can be achieved by:

- improving security at the station parking areas.
- investigating any need to improve pedestrian access to rail and bus facilities.

Actors:

Council (Town Planning Branch, Roads Branch, Traffic Manager), Provincial Roads Department, Metropolitan Transport Planning.

Policy 18:

Review the approved road widening scheme for Lower Main Road to facilitate localised improvements and parking embayments (refer to Figure 20).

Actors:

Council (Town Planning Branch, Roads Branch).

Policy 19:

Reserve on-street parking in Station and Lower Main Roads for short stay parkers, to serve commercial areas.

This can be achieved by:

- meter the parking in Station Road and Lower Main Road with appropriate tariffs.
- prohibit parking in both Herschel and Nuttall Roads between Station and Trill Roads.

Actors:

Council (Town Planning Branch, Roads Branch, Traffic Manager).

Policy 20:

Increase the availability of short to medium parking in off-street facilities.

This can be achieved by:

- introducing pay-and-display areas to the parking facility in the north east quadrant of the intersection of Station and Lower Main Roads, and the parking area between Herschel and Nuttall Roads.
- metering the off-street parking area between Drake and Anson Streets; and
- investigating the additional provision of off-street parking facilities (see Figure 20).

Actors:

Council (Town Planning Branch, Roads Branch, Traffic Manager).

Policy 21:

Discourage the intrusion of business and other non-residential related parking in residential streets.

This can be achieved by:

- investigating the introduction of residential preferential parking.
- investigating and reviewing the parking ratios for future business development.

Actors:

Council (Town Planning Branch, Traffic Manager).

4.3 ACTION AREAS AND KEY SITES

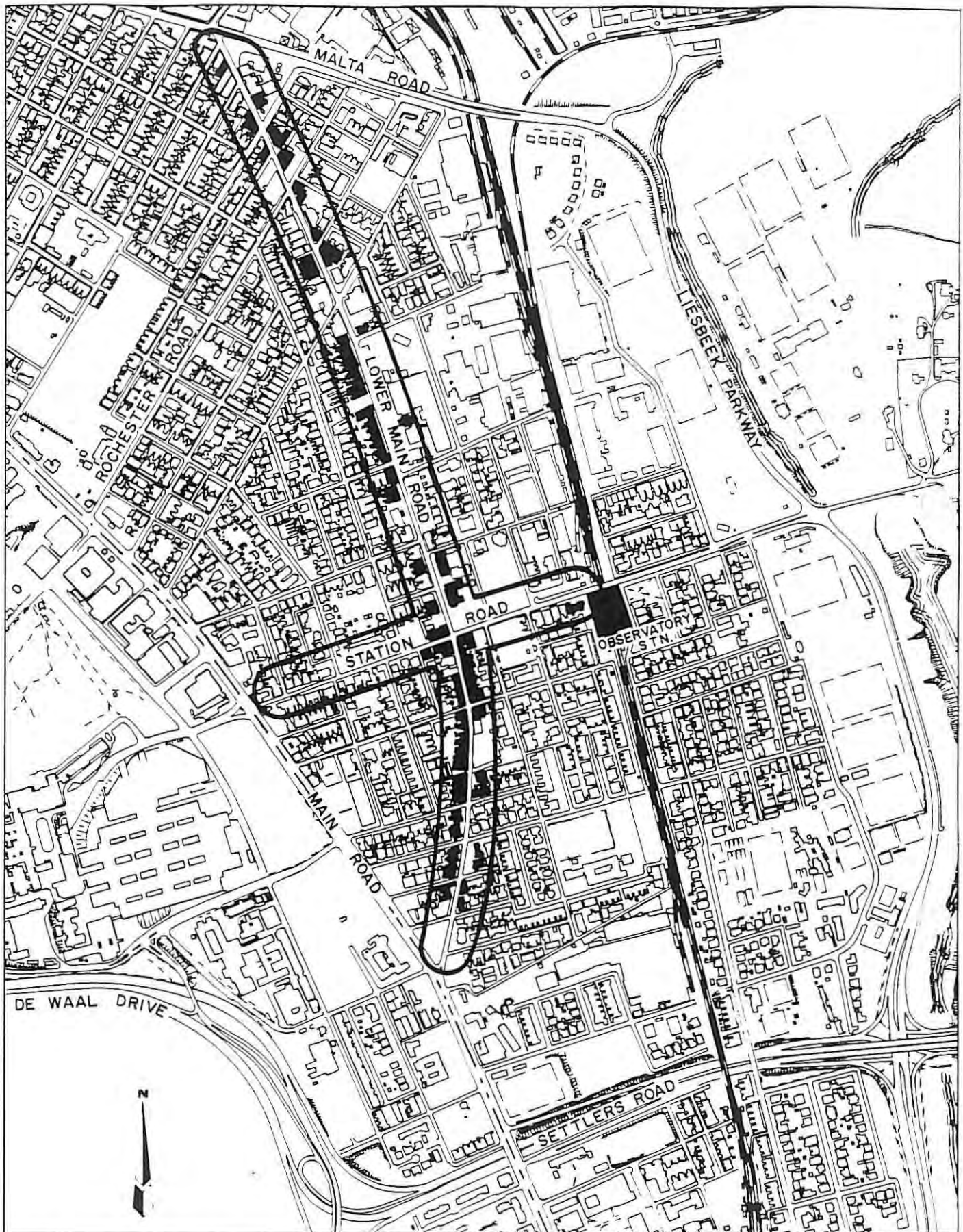
Planning in Observatory occurs within the context of acute pressure on Council resources. Observatory cannot expect vast public spending at the expense of less well off areas. Therefore, it is important that planning is focused on identifying local opportunities and resources. Public space and public land are valuable resources because they have the potential to be available to the whole community and because they represent areas where Council can intervene.

This subsection highlights a number of such areas. The first is Lower Main Road which serves not only as a historical spine running through Observatory, but also as a major route that focuses on many activities that are important to the suburbs. The second is the Council-owned site on the corner of Lower Main Road and Station Road which is known to the community as the Village Green. The third is the identification of key traffic intersections and routes that, if upgraded, would rationalise traffic movement along the high order roads within the suburb.

4.3.1 Lower Main Road

Lower Main Road is considered to be one of the higher order roads running through Observatory. It extends from its intersection with Malta Road, at its most northern point, to the intersection with Main Road at its most southern point. Lower Main Road intersects with Station Road at what is considered to be the Village Centre.

The strip has a number of buildings along its length that are considered to be 'noteworthy' and/or which 'contribute' to the character of the street. These categories are derived from the conservation studies undertaken for Council by consultants Meek and Atwell in 1987 and Todeschini and Japha in 1986. The area which has the highest concentration of



Noteworthy Buildings and Buildings
which Contribute

CONSERVATION WORTHY BUILDINGS ALONG LOWER MAIN
AND STATION ROADS

Fig. 21

OBSERVATORY
POLICY
PLAN



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noteworthy buildings and buildings which contribute, is the area immediately to the south of the intersection of Lower Main Road and Station Road (refer to Figure 21).

The character and function of Lower Main Road varies along its length. The southern section of the road was historically a Victorian shopping precinct and a fine group of buildings have remained. More recently, this area has had an influx of upmarket shops and restaurants which have brought new life to the village centre and Observatory is becoming a popular night-time entertainment centre, attracting visitors to the area.

The northern section of the strip has traditionally had a mixture of housing and commercial buildings locating along its length. The trend in this area, which is contributing to the deteriorating environmental quality, is one of houses being converted for office purposes or houses being demolished for office buildings. A further threat to the scale and character of the existing fabric is the road improvement line which imposes a setback requirement for all new buildings.

Due to the need to guide appropriate development along this strip, urban design consultants were employed in 1991 to investigate Lower Main Road in detail. Their brief was to:

- formulate planning and urban design arguments for the removal and amendment of the road improvement line;
- formulate design guidelines for the future development along Lower Main Road; and
- formulate guidelines for the existing development along Lower Main Road.

The consultants have made recommendations regarding an overall strategy as indicated in Figure 22. They have also made proposals regarding guidelines to promote and achieve

appropriate development along Lower Main Road.

While the overall strategy is acceptable, there is some criticism of the application of the proposed guidelines for development. Since the function of Lower Main Road varies quite considerably along its length, it would be undesirable to simply attempt to apply similar guidelines for development along its entire length. Consequently more work needs to be done regarding the appropriate areas of the strip, where suitable guidelines should be applied. The proposals are, however, suitable for the strip from its intersection with Main Road through to its intersection with Station Road.

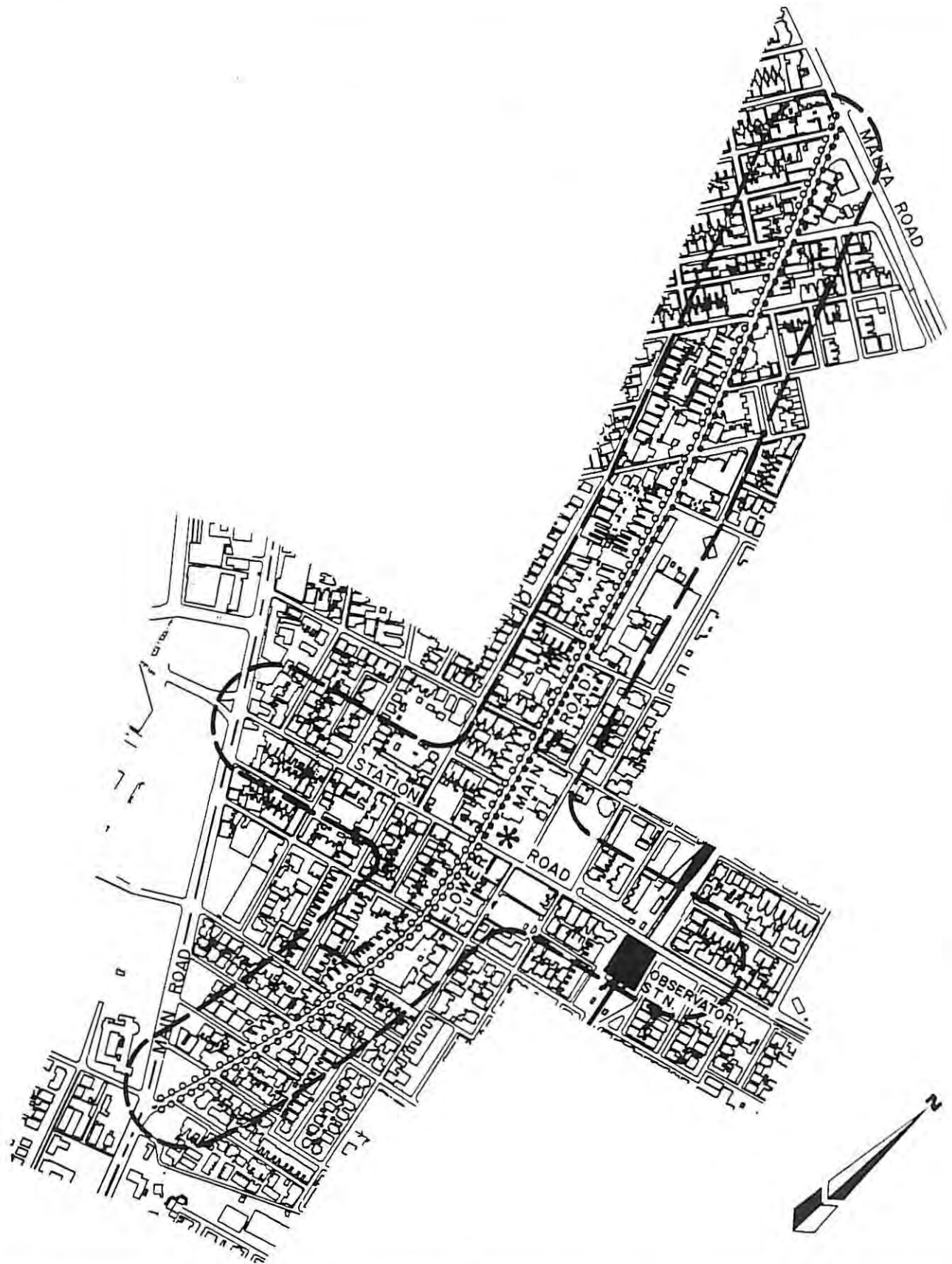
The Proposal

The overall strategy should be adopted as a framework for guiding development. The improvement line should be amended. The proposed guidelines, included in Appendix E, should be used to guide appropriate development along Lower Main Road for the area between Main and Station Roads.

4.3.2 The Village Green Site

The Observatory community has consistently expressed concern over the lack of open space in the area. Analysis of the area has indicated that although theoretically there is sufficient open space in the area, the community concerns are justified due to limited recreational opportunities and access being restricted. The community does however hold one particular site in high regard - this site is the Council-owned land in the centre of the suburb. The site holds a prominent position and if suitably utilised would go a long way to improving the public realm in the area.

The site located at the intersection of Station and Lower Main Roads is considered to be a key site (refer to Figure 23). Because of its central and prominent position it is a valuable site with obvious development potential or it



-  Incorporate Study Area into Urban Conservation Area
-  Investigate Area for Alternative Development

-  Delete Improvement Line along Road and Control New Development
-  Investigate Implications for Retaining Road Improvement Line and Control New Development

OBSERVATORY POLICY PLAN



CONSULTANT'S PROPOSED OVERALL STRATEGY

Fig. 22

0 50 100 200

could play an important role in terms of providing community and other facilities which would contribute to the character of the area. The Council Security Services Headquarters occupy the former Observatory Boys School building as well as the dog training area. The former Observatory Girls School building is used as the Community and Recreation Centre. The rest of the site is used for a park and a parking area. The present use, with the exception of the Community Centre, does not do justice to the prominence and importance of the site.

Through the initial public participation exercise, many suggestions were made regarding the future of the site. These included developing the site for business purposes, for parking purposes or keeping the site as a park. Although suggestions were varied, there appears to be general consensus that the Security Services should vacate the former boys school site and that some open space component should be retained.

The City Administrator has indicated that they are reluctant to move the Security Services for the reason that they are seen as serving as a deterrent to potential criminal activities in the area. Furthermore, they are of the opinion that the community looks to this resource for active assistance in times of need. Finally it would be a costly exercise to relocate the use.

Two preliminary studies have been undertaken regarding this site. The one is a working document undertaken by the Town Planning Branch in 1990 and the second was undertaken by consultants as part of their study on Lower Main Road. A more detailed explanation on the proposals contained in the two studies, is attached as Appendix G. The recommendations of the two studies regarding the proposed use of the site are quite different. The one proposes development of the site for commercial and residential purposes, with a public square at the intersection of Lower Main and Station Road. The second study looked at a number of options and finally proposed that the former boys school be used for community

and entertainment facilities with a parking lot on the corner of Station and Lower Main Roads, as well as retaining the park in its present position.

The two studies were in agreement on the issue that the existing use of the former boys school is not appropriate and that the site should be utilised and developed for the good of the community.

The issue of this site cannot be resolved from these two studies alone. Guidelines need to be formulated for the site that inter alia:

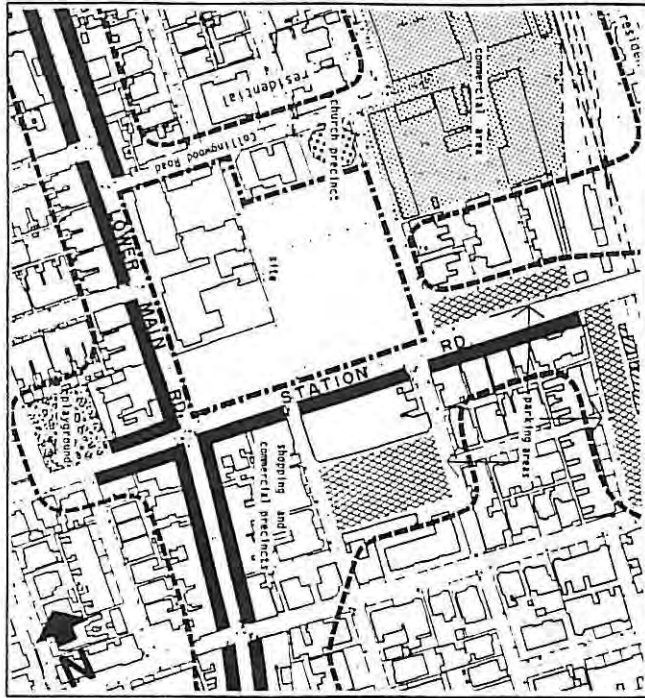
- promote a sense of place;
- promote community orientated facilities;
- promote a desirable use for the site; and
- promote landscaping and tree planting.

Furthermore, any proposals for the site will need to go through a consultative process with the community.

The proposal

Being such an important and sensitive site, a policy needs to be formulated for its future. Although there are many conflicting ideas regarding its role, it is clear that the Council Security Services Headquarters is not seen as an appropriate use for the former boys school building and a policy needs to be formulated that:

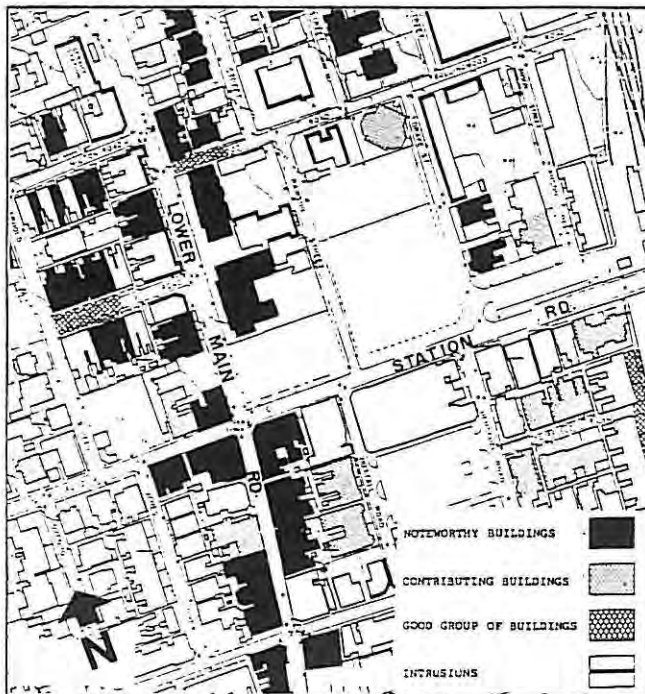
- explores the cost and feasibility of relocating the Council Security Headquarters;
- makes recommendations regarding the use of the former boys school;
- explores the most appropriate way in which the land can be developed; and
- provides detailed spatial and non spatial development guidelines for the site.



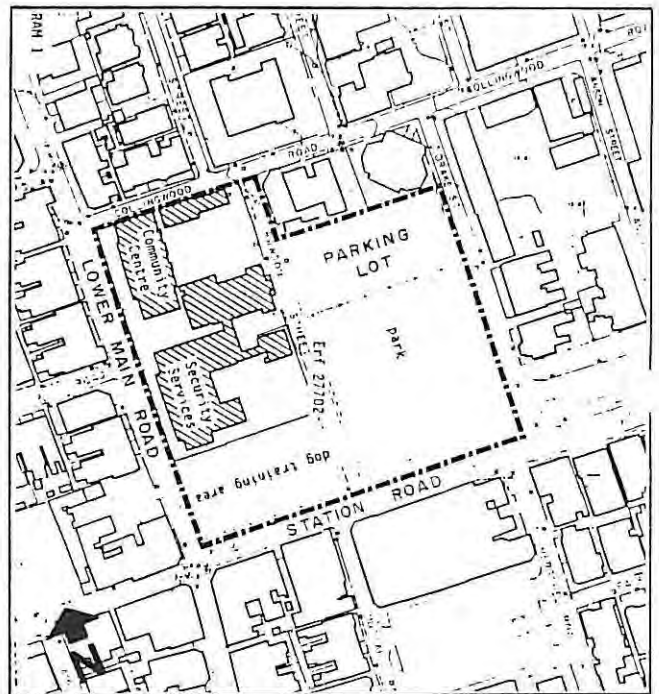
Surrounding Land Uses



Aerial View of Site



Noteworthy Buildings and Intrusions



Land Use of Site



4.3.3 Key Traffic Problem Areas

A comprehensive list of the consultants' traffic and transportation proposals and the Council's preferred options is contained in Appendix E. This subsection highlights certain key intersections and routes along the higher order roads that should be upgraded. Proposals are also put forward for resolving some of the traffic problems along these routes. The areas of concern and the relevant proposals are listed below and are indicated on Figure 24.

Lower Main Road

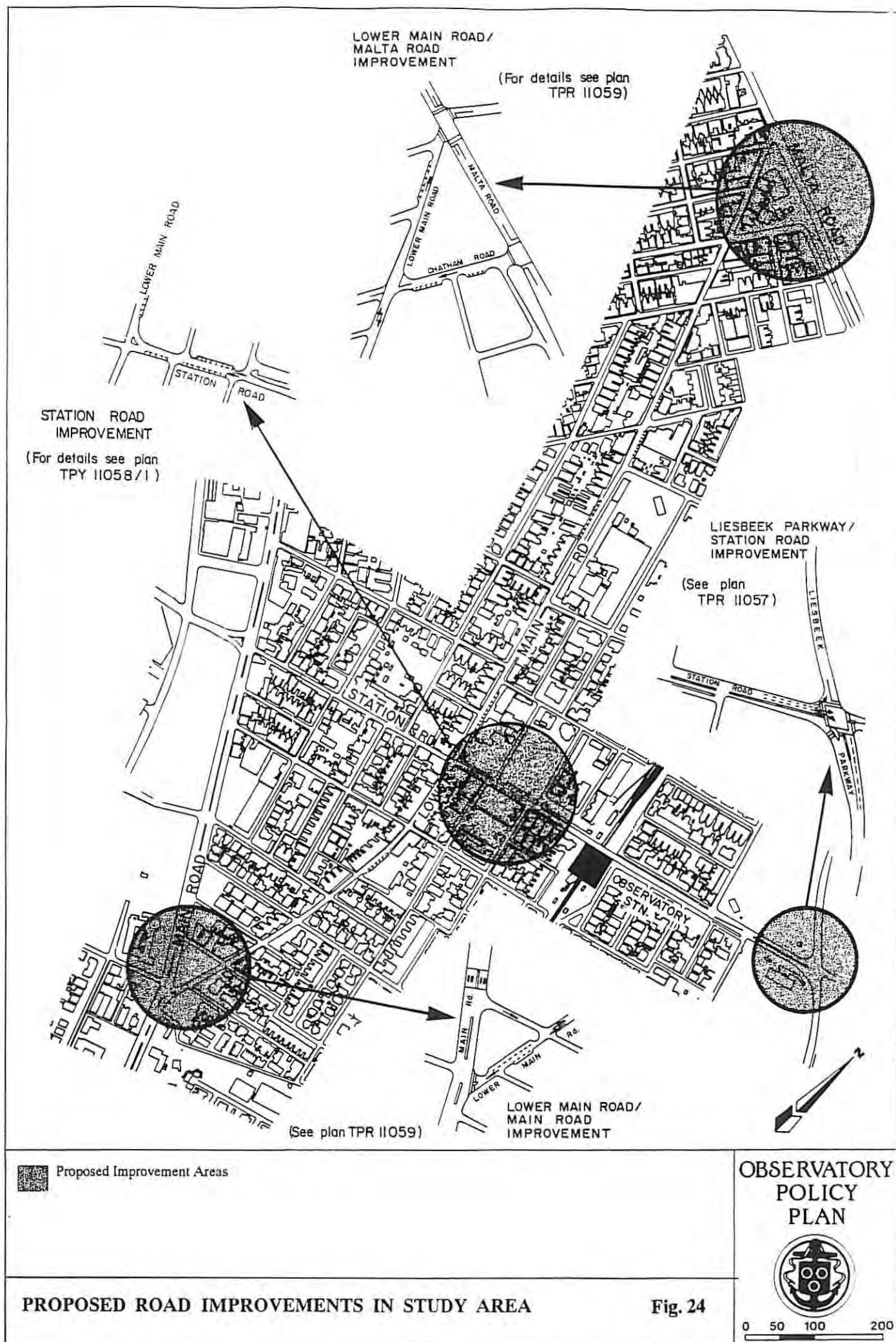
- Presently heavy vehicles destined for the north east commercial quadrant all use Lower Main Road, causing considerable congestion because the turning radius at its intersection with Malta Road is inadequate. It is therefore proposed that a triangular one-way traffic system be implemented by opening up the intersection of Malta and Chatham Roads. This proposal will facilitate the movement of heavy vehicles into the commercial area, reduce conflicting movements and reduce the number of heavy vehicles using Lower Main Road.
- The intersection of Main Road and Lower Main Road has many conflicting turning movements which reduce the safety level at this intersection. In order to rationalise the intersection a triangular one-way traffic system is proposed. This proposal will reduce conflicting traffic movements, increase safety and provide increased parking.

Station Road

- The implementation of an additional right-turning lane on Station Road at the Liesbeek Parkway intersection will improve both the storing capacity and the discharge rate of the intersection. This will dramatically reduce the congestion on

Station Road. This proposal is dependent on selective road widening to facilitate two lanes in the southbound direction, along Liesbeek Parkway between Station Road and Settlers Way. The back up of traffic on Station Road will be greatly reduced when the discharge of traffic onto Liesbeek Parkway can be improved.

The cross section of Station Road between Lower Main Road and Herschel Road is insufficient to provide on street parking. However, a great demand for short term parking exists in this section, which is resulting in illegal parking. The potential to formalise the illegal parking along this stretch on Station Road exists. The northern kerbline of Station Road can be moved slightly to facilitate demarcated bays on the southern side of Station Road in front of the line of shops.



4.4 CONCLUSIONS AND PROPOSED ACTION LIST

The proposals contained in Section 4.2 make up a comprehensive list of all the actions that could be undertaken within the study area. The focus of the policy plan is of a spatial nature and consequently sets up a framework within which future development can be guided and managed.

Because different areas must compete for resources, it is considered prudent to identify actions that would improve the environmental quality that can be achieved in the short term.

This does not negate the potential for proactive action by Council, the local community or even a partnership of the two groups. However, the amount of proactive action that can be achieved will depend on the amount of financial and staff resources that can be allocated to a particular area. The decision to implement the actions listed below will of course depend on Council's normal budgeting and expenditure procedures.

The following is a list of selective actions that should be undertaken:

4.4.1 Council should proceed with the following:

- the declaration of identified Urban Conservation Areas;
- the amendment of the road widening scheme along Lower Main Road;
- the improvement of certain intersections along Lower Main Road and Station Road;
- the provision of parking in Station Road between Lower Main Road and Herschel Road as indicated on Figure 24;
- the formulation of a comprehensive policy

for the future of Lower Main Road using the principles in Appendix F as a basis for future desirable development; and

- the establishment of a tree planting programme for higher order roads and along the railway line.

4.4.2 The Council, together with the community, should formulate a policy for the development and utilisation of the Village Green.

4.4.3 The Council should continue to facilitate local community involvement with:-

- the identification of illegal and intrusive non-residential uses;
- tree planting in residential streets; and
- the identification and resolution of parking problems.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Council:

- adopt the overall framework and policies to guide development in the area as set out under sections 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3; and
- adopt the priority actions listed under section 4.4.

APPENDIX A: INTERESTED PARTIES AND SUMMARY OF RESPONSES RECEIVED

Copies of the draft Observatory Policy Plan were sent to the following individuals and associations. The comments that were received are summarised below together with a Departmental position on the responses. Written responses are retained in file number TP 3315/1 (Town Planning Branch).

RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

1. Observatory Civic Association (OCA)

RESPONSE

The OCA disagrees with the value given to Observatory's 'important role' as a mixed use area. It is believed that appropriate uses for the area must be defined more closely.

It is not desirable to retain mixed uses that encourage increased through traffic and heavy duty traffic. These need to be designed out of the plan. Mixed uses that encourage a trend towards greater business and institutional encroachment are opposed.

Although it is agreed that a framework needs to be developed that will guide change there is concern that prominence is given to the need to take metropolitan needs into account. The Policy Plan is not at all clear on the implications of this assertion and it must therefore be concluded that this implies a threat to Observatory. The plan must state clearly what is meant

DEPARTMENTAL RESPONSE

While this plan is aimed at the local area, Observatory does not function in isolation. Consequently, just as its functioning is dependent on the entire municipal framework so is the municipal framework dependent on it, to play its role. The concept of mixed use has been more closely defined in the document. The thinking is that there must be a balance in the provision of the various land uses and if any use were to dominate it should be residential, as exists at present. Furthermore, the perception that mixed use areas encourage through traffic is incorrect. Mixed use might generate traffic but it does not encourage through traffic.

An outline of the "Draft Guidelines for the Cape Metropolitan Area", currently under discussion, have been included under Section 2.2 of the report in order to provide some indication as to what the metropolitan concerns are.

by wider metropolitan issues.

It is recommended that because this is a local area plan, prominence should be given to the needs of the local area. Metropolitan planning must take Observatory into account and acknowledge the damage already done in favour of metropolitan and provincial interests.

The majority of the policies are agreed to either unconditionally or with minor word changes. The following policies are where the major objections occur:

Policy 1: Although this is agreed to, it should be amended to refuse any further rezonings, consents or departures for non-residential uses.

The proposed rewording of this policy is not acceptable. The spirit of the policy is to discourage inappropriate non-residential land uses. However, in terms of LUPO every application must be considered on its merits and cannot simply be denied prior to its being assessed.

Policy 10 (previously Policy 12): The approach is disagreed with. No parks should be closed without consulting the local community.

This is agreed to and has been changed accordingly.

Policy 12 (previously Policy 13): This should be rephrased to read: "Attention should be given to upgrading regional traffic circulation with a view to reducing through traffic in Observatory and to facilitate the traffic flow around the suburb."

This is supported and has been changed accordingly.

Policy 21 (no longer applicable in this form): The OCA is totally opposed to this policy. It would encourage the use of Station Road as a major connecting route between Main Road and Liesbeeck Parkway and increase the extraneous traffic through Observatory.

The actions identified on the action list under Section 4.4 (previously 5.4) are agreed to with the exception of any actions that suggest that improvements be made to the road system to facilitate the flow of extraneous traffic through Observatory.

The OCA requests that the Council ensure that the Councillors for the area and representatives of the OCA sit on any committee responsible for taking decisions affecting Observatory, especially those relating to road and transport planning.

Due to the negative public response to this proposed policy, it has been removed.

The traffic and transportation actions that are proposed are of a management nature. The intention is to reduce congestion, improve safety and reduce heavy vehicle movement through residential precincts.

Since Councillors are elected to represent the community that elected them, it is the Councillors' responsibility to ensure that they are aware of the contents of all reports sent to committees, especially those affecting their wards. Furthermore, since the Councillors represent wards which include the OCA (who represent a smaller area of the same ward) it would be pointless and impractical to have OCA representatives attending committee meetings as well.

INTERESTED PARTY**RESPONSE****DEPARTMENTAL RESPONSE**Ward Councillors

2.& 3. Councillor's A v d Heever
and I Iverson

No response received

Business Community

4. Mofax Properties

No response received

Professional Bodies

5. South African Institute of Town
and Regional Planners

No response received

6. Cape Town Chamber of Commerce

No response received

7. Cape Town Sports Commission

The Sports Commission acknowledged that Hartleyvale Stadium is in need of attention, but resolved to await the feasibility study on sports facilities currently being finalised, prior to commenting on the policy regarding the stadium. It was also felt that upgrading of the stadium should not be undertaken if it meant that other soccer stadia would be neglected.

Since the Sports Commission commented on the policy plan, they have requested that Council make R250 000 available for the upgrading of the condemned stands.

8. National Monuments Council

The NMC endorses the policy proposals regarding the Conservation Areas. In addition they suggest that suitable guidelines regarding the conservation of Victorian and Edwardian buildings would assist in the success of the implementation of the policy.

9. Director of the Planning Unit
University of Cape Town

No response received

10. SAPOA

No response received

11. Senior Medical Superintendent
Groote Schuur Hospital

No response received

State Departments

12. Chief Directorate Land
Development Coordination, Cape
Provincial Administration

The approach, policy framework, detailed policy and strategic actions are generally in accordance with those applied by the Provincial Administration. It is evident that emphasis has been placed on a high degree of public participation, and urban design and conservation issues have been emphasised.

13. Provincial Roads Engineer, Roads
& Traffic Administration Branch

The focus of the study appears to be mainly on local matters.

The bus route study presently being undertaken by the Director of Metropolitan Transport Planning should receive more attention in the policy plan.

This has been included under Section 4.4 and in the policies.

The location of non-residential activities along higher order roads should occur in nodes and ribbon development must be avoided.

This comment is out of context as the proposed higher order roads (with the exception of parts of Station Road) already have business zoning along their length ie Lower Main Road and Main Road.

The road improvement proposals mentioned in section 4.3.3 (previously 5.3.3) must be investigated further as there are objections to several of the proposals shown on figure 24.

Some of the proposals have already been agreed to by the Roads and Traffic Team, who do have a representative from the Provincial Roads Engineer.

Letters from residents

14. Dr A Kirkland

Objects to:

- the conversion of upper Station Road into a two way road;
- the conversion of Station Road/Arnold Street park into a parking lot; and
- the conversion of the southern end of Lower Main Road into a one-way road.

The objections regarding Station Road and the park have already been addressed and will be excluded from the policy plan. The conversion of the southern end of Lower Main Road into a one-way will reduce conflicting road movements at this intersection and thus improve it from a safety point of view. It would also discourage extraneous traffic from using Lower Main Road to a degree.

15. Ms J Ride

Opposed to the two-way traffic proposal for upper Station Road. Suggests upgrading the park on Arnold Street/Station Road by removing the vibracrete wall and planting vegetation rather than using it for parking purposes. All the parks in Observatory need fixing up. The main stadium at Hartleyvale should be condemned and parking provided in its place.

The suggestion to turn the main stadium at Hartleyvale into a parking lot is neither practical nor desirable. Hartleyvale stadium serves a purpose as a sporting facility and in time the stands will be renovated.

16. Public Meeting Opinion Survey Summary

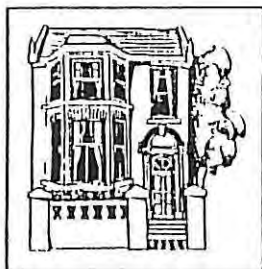
At a public meeting held at the Observatory Community Centre on 1992-10-19 chaired by Councillor Muir, Councillor Iversen conducted an opinion survey. The following comments were received from 44 respondents:

1. Those in favour of the declaration of a Conservation Area: 100%
2. Those in favour of the Village Green:
 - a) remaining as it is, 87%
 - b) being developed for housing purposes, 2%
 - c) being developed for business purposes, or 2%
 - d) being used for alternative uses eg. fleamarket, 2%
 - e) undecided about future use. 7%
3. Those in favour of Station Road:
 - a) as a two-way street between Main Road and Lower Main 18%
 - b) remaining as a one-way street between Main Road and Lower Main Road, and 77%
 - c) undecided. 5%

Pedestrian & Service Lanes

Procedures and Criteria for Closure

Issued by Ian Iversen and
Annamia van den Heever,
City Councillors for Ward 10



APPENDIX B: PEDESTRIAN AND SERVICE LANE PROCEDURES AND CRITERIA FOR CLOSURE

THE safety and cleanliness of public lanes and passages have become issues of concern. In some cases these thoroughfares are the property of the Cape Town City Council. When this is the case, residents can motivate for its closure. When the lane is not Council property it is beyond Council's authority to determine its closure.

This document provides an explanation of the procedure to be followed if a member of the public wishes to motivate for the closure of a public lane or passage.

1. Application to council for closure of a public lane or passage

An individual or a group (eg. surrounding residents) can approach the City Council to have public passages/service lanes closed. Those wishing to apply for such closure should write a letter addressed to the City Administrator (with a copy to the Director of Survey and Land Information, 14th Floor, Civic Centre) including the following material:

- * a covering letter giving reasons why the passage or lane should be closed;
- * a list containing names and signatures of affected property occupants who support closure of the lane, including an indication of which of these are property owners and which are tenants;
- * a diagram or hand drawn map indicating the location of the lane in relation to surrounding streets, the

applicant(s)' property and location of all consenting neighbouring residents.

2. Procedures within Council

These procedures involve many parties and could take up to six months.

3. Factors for consideration in evaluation of applications for the closure of public passages/service lanes

The following factors guide evaluation of applications and may influence the nature of appropriate alternative use and ownership patterns. They are not exhaustive, nor are they considered on its own merits.

The overall concerns informing Council's evaluation of applications relate to maximizing public benefit, protecting public safety and ensuring access for essential public services.

Factors for consideration

- 3.1 Does the physical design of the passage/lane contribute to an unsafe or unhygienic situation?
- 3.2 Is there evidence of anti-social behaviour?
- 3.3 Have there been any previous complaints from the community and neighbours?
- 3.4 What do the police records indicate about problems in the identified lane?
- 3.5 Is the lane/passage well used? If so, by whom? For what purpose?
- 3.6 Is the lane being used by cars?

3.7 Are there alternative routes or sites for these uses/activities?

3.8 Do any of the adjoining property owners or occupiers take access off the lane?

3.9 Are there services running through the lane (eg stormwater, electricity, sewerage, etc.) (Note: Existing services and access rights-of-way may provide obstacles to closure).

3.10 Any other points raised by the applicants or the community either in support or opposition to the proposed closure.

4. Factors mitigating against closure of lanes/passages

The main factors that would mitigate against closure of a Council-owned lane or passage would include:

4.1 Heavy usage, especially in the absence of an alternative.

4.2 No previously reported problems associated with the lane.

4.3 The presence of underground services to which the City Council needs access.

5. Alternative options for lane use and management

Each of the following options for lane use and management entails particular costs and benefits for the adjacent property owners and the community as a whole. The most appropriate arrangement for any particular lane/passage needs to be identified through discussion.

5.1 Close passage/lane for public access and subdivide for incorporation with surrounding private properties.

5.2 Close passage/lane for public access through installation of a lockable gate with keys held by those households/property owners taking access off the lane. Responsibility for cleanliness and maintenance negotiated with Council. (Because of its questionable effectiveness in improving cleanliness of the lane's or resident's security, council does not view this as a desirable alternative.)

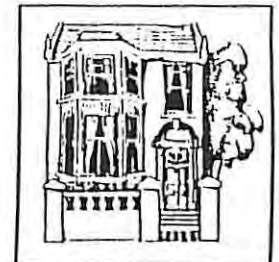
5.3 Retain as open public passage/service lane, but improve safety factors through lighting, change of fencing material in order to increase visibility from surrounding properties, improve cleanliness through Council/community cooperative effort.

6. Conclusion

The City Council supports public initiatives to close public passages and lanes when these are proving to be a hazard to community safety or health. The process is, however, complicated and entails certain expenses for the Council and the members of the public. Council's Survey and Land Information, Estates, Cleansing and Town Planning Branches and the Medical Officer of Health's Department are currently investigating possible ways of resolving these difficulties.

*For further information, please contact Council's Survey and Land Information Branch.
Telephone 210-2054.*

To contact your local councillors, write to them at PO Box 13057, Mowbray 7705.



APPENDIX C: DESCRIPTION OF THE LEVELS OF A ROAD HIERARCHY**Regional distributor (Class 1):**

The primary function of regional distributors is to accommodate all long distance traffic between regions at high operating speeds. There is full restriction on access to properties fronting on to these roads (frontage access) and grade separation is provided at all intersections. General consistency of layout is required for efficient and safe operations.

Primary distributor (Class 2):

This is the network upon which the greater proportion of long distance inter-district traffic movements are canalised. It links up the main business, industrial and residential districts of the town or city via district distributors and "enables traffic to enter or leave the town rapidly and safely and circulate freely within it". Full restriction on frontage access is encouraged.

District distributor (Class 3):

These roads connect residential precincts and form the links between the primary distributors and the local distributors. They distribute traffic between residential and employment areas in the same general vicinity. In general, these routes should have moderate route capacity, high intersection capacity and moderately high operating speeds. The road layout should discourage traffic which does not originate from the precinct, from moving through the area. Direct frontage access is discouraged.

Local distributor (Class 4):

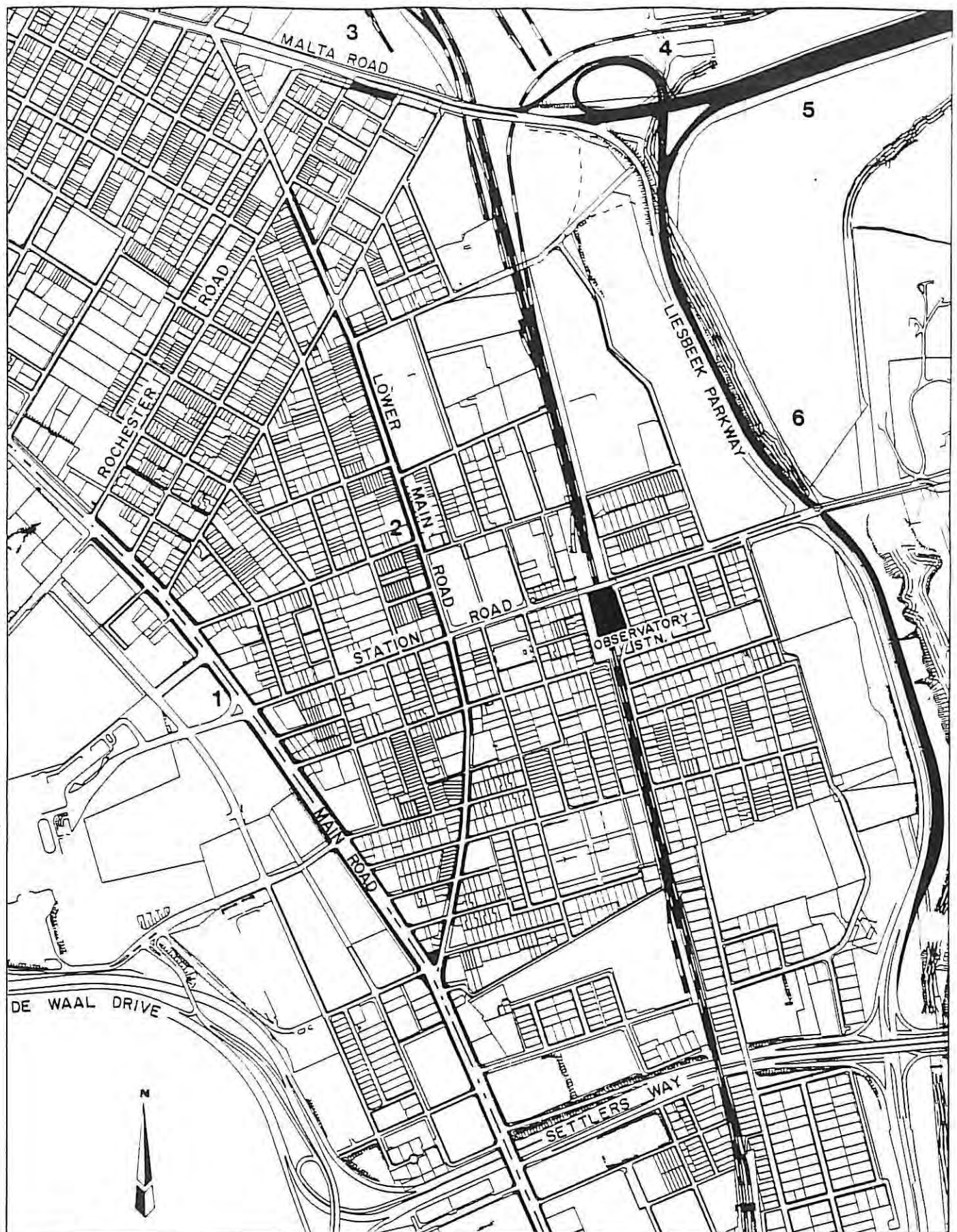
The primary function of a local distributor is to distribute traffic to a number of access roads within a residential precinct from an adjacent district distributor(s). Direct access to frontage development is discouraged except for high density attractors or generators. The road layout should also discourage through traffic.

Access roads (Class 5):

The primary function of these roads is to give direct access to land and property within residential areas and where vehicular movement is entirely subordinated to environmental considerations. Access routes form part of a closed system (except in specific circumstances) and normally serve no more than 200 dwellings.

APPENDIX D: ROAD WIDENING SCHEMES AFFECTING THE STUDY AREA

Ref No	Scheme Name	PMR No	Plan No's	Status
1	Widening of Main Road	PMR 101	TPR 1842	Proclaimed in terms of Roads and Traffic Ordinance 19/1976 as amended
2	Widening of Lower Main Road from Albert Street, Salt River to Main Road Observatory	-	TPR 2029	Approved by Council 1954-11-30
3	Service connection to Malta Road bridge, Observatory	PMR 137	TPX 2781	Approved by Administrator 1961-06-20
4	Overhead road bridge, Malta Road	PMR 137	TPR 2451	Approved by PRE 1957-12-21 for construction by the railways
5	Berkley - Malta Road extension	PMR 149	TPR 9194	Approved by Council 1949-04-29. Not yet programmed for construction
6	Liesbeek Parkway widening	PMR 137	-	Council-owned road reserve indicated on the zoning map



- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | PMR Along Main Road |
| 2 | Lower Main Road Widening |
| 3 | Service Connection to Malta Road Bridge |

- | | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| 4 | Overhead Road Bridge; Malta Road |
| 5 | Berkley - Malta Road Extension |
| 6 | Liesbeek Parkway Widening |

PROPOSED ROAD SCHEMES AFFECTING OBSERVATORY

Fig. 1

OBSERVATORY POLICY PLAN

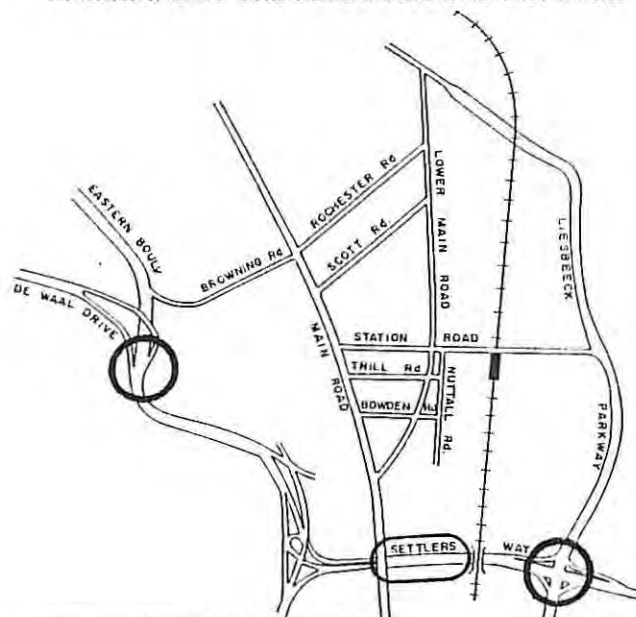


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APPENDIX E: SUMMARY AND EVALUATION OF CONSULTANTS' TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION PROPOSALS

1. OPTIONS AS IDENTIFIED BY THE CONSULTANTS

UPGRADING OF THE REGIONAL ROAD NETWORK



UPGRADING OF MAIN ROAD



OPTION

1.
Improve the regional road system extensively i.e. Settlers Way; Rhodes Drive/Settlers Way interchange; increase capacity of Settlers Way between Rhodes Drive and Liesbeek Parkway; increase capacity of the Liesbeek Parkway/Settlers Way interchange.

EVALUATION

These changes will improve the whole system by encouraging through traffic to use the regional freeway system and allowing the lower order roads to perform the necessary collector/distributor and local access functions, thus reducing congestion on the lower order roads. It is important to understand that although extensive improvement to the regional system will be extremely expensive, regional traffic should be encouraged onto regional routes, leaving local roads for local traffic. If significant improvements are not made to the regional system, the local roads are likely to become even more congested.

- 2.A
Widen the northbound carriageway of Main Road Drive between Penzance Road and Groote Schuur.

The additional anticipated traffic which will be generated by the extensions to Groote Schuur Hospital will cause further delay for the northbound traffic on Main Road, especially for left-turning traffic at both Anzio Road and Groote Schuur Drive. Because of the interruption this would cause to the northbound traffic on Main Road, it is proposed to widen the northbound carriageway of Main Road between Penzance Road and Groote Schuur Drive.

UPGRADING OF MAIN ROAD (CONT.)



2.B

The closure of all minor intersections with Main Road. Over the length of Main Road through Observatory this would involve nine intersections.

The overall operation of Main Road is affected by continuous side road conflict, which causes unnecessary delays. Conflict between the continuous flowing traffic on Main Road and vehicles making use of the minor roads will be minimised if most of the minor intersections are closed off from Main Road.

2.C

Implement an improved signal control strategy along Main Road.

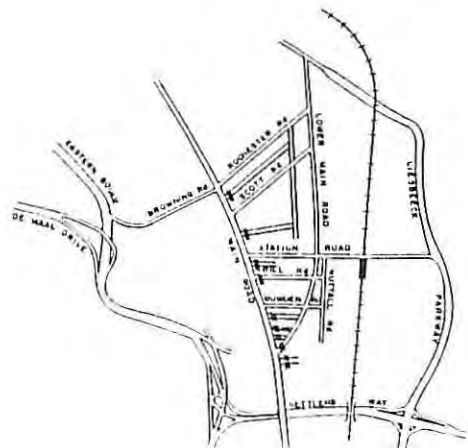
To reduce the congestion on various parts of the Main Road network, all the signals along Main Road should be linked and signal progression implemented.



2.D

The introduction of right-turning lanes at intersections with Main Road:
Rochester Road (north and southbound traffic);
Station Road/Groote Schuur Drive (north and southbound traffic);
Bowden Road/Anzio Road (southbound only).

To reduce congestion and improve traffic flow on Main Road the introduction of right-turning lanes is deemed necessary. The introduction of right-turning lanes will improve the level of service of these junctions.



UPGRADING OF MAIN ROAD (CONT.)



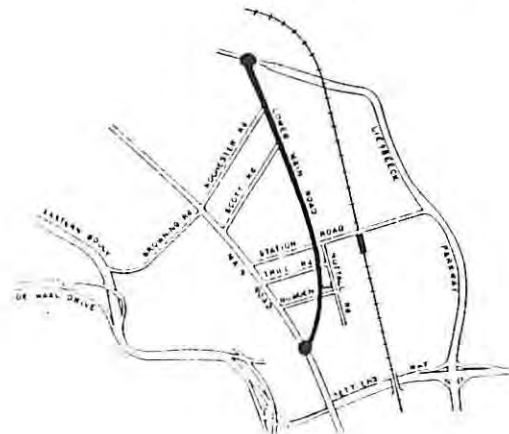
- 2.E
Improve intersections along the full length of Main Road.

Considerable improvements can be made to the level of service at all junctions on Main Road by changing signal phasings as well as making localised improvements to the intersections. These improvements would reduce congestion considerably.



- 2.F
Adopt an "urban-clearway" principle for Main Road.

Because of the high directional split which occurs during both peak periods, the urban clearway would be restricted to the predominant direction of flow for that period. The restriction on stopping during the peak period would improve traffic flow and reduce congestion.



- 3.A
Pedestrianise Lower Main Road over its entire length.

All extraneous traffic would be excluded from Lower Main Road if it were pedestrianised. However, the commercial activity on Lower Main Road is heavily dependent upon adjacent on-street parking and loading. Trading conditions will inevitably suffer if this option is implemented.



3.B
Pedestrianise Lower Main Road between Station Road and Bowden Road.

This option would close Lower Main Road to through traffic and allow only access- and parking seeking traffic into the area. It would also have a negative effect on the current levels of economic activity and could not be implemented without the closure of the Lower Main Road/Main Road intersection.



3.C
One-way operation for Lower Main Road between Station Road and Bowden Road, north to south, and the closure of the Main Road/Lower Main Road intersection.

This option would eliminate the conflicts caused by the two-way traffic operation. It would allow for the retention of existing parking and loading facilities as well as improve the traffic flow along this narrow stretch of Lower Main Road. The closure of the Main Road/Lower Main Road junction would, however, make a large part of Observatory inaccessible.

CONNECTION BETWEEN LOWER MAIN ROAD AND MAIN ROAD



4.A

i) Retention of the status quo.

i) In the absence of a clear road infrastructure, the character of the road network is that of an open grid system which allows through traffic to penetrate the area. This practice will continue should the status quo be maintained.

ii) Closure of nine minor intersections with Main Road.

ii) This option would restrict the opportunities for through-traffic to filter through the residential areas. It would, however, reduce the accessibility of the area.



4.B

Widen Station Road between Main Road and Lower Main Road to facilitate two-way traffic flow along its entire length.

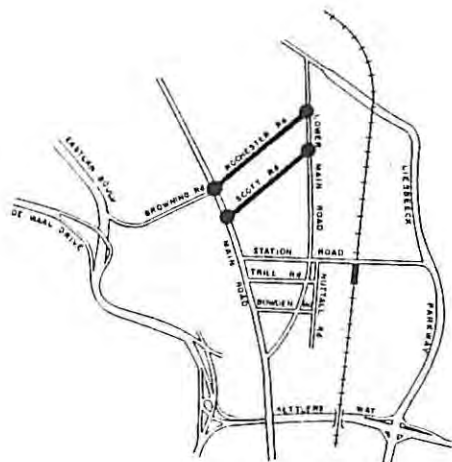
Implementing a widening scheme for Station Road to facilitate two-way traffic would provide the most apparent and appropriate link between Main Road and Lower Main Road. The widening of Station Road would, however, involve the demolition of existing properties.



4.C

Bowden Road and Station Road operating as a one-way pair.

This option would require the direction of flow for Station Road to be changed. The section of Lower Main Road between Station Road and Bowden Road should be made a one-way to facilitate the functioning of the Station/Bowden couplet. It should also only be implemented with the proposed closure of the Main Road/Lower Main Road intersection.



4.D

Scott Road and Rochester Road as a one-way pair and signalise Scott Road.

These two roads already operate as a one-way couplet at the northern boundary of Observatory and would be accentuated when Scott Road/Main Road intersection is signalised and the minor intersections with Main Road closed off.

UPGRADING OF RESIDENTIAL ROADS



5.

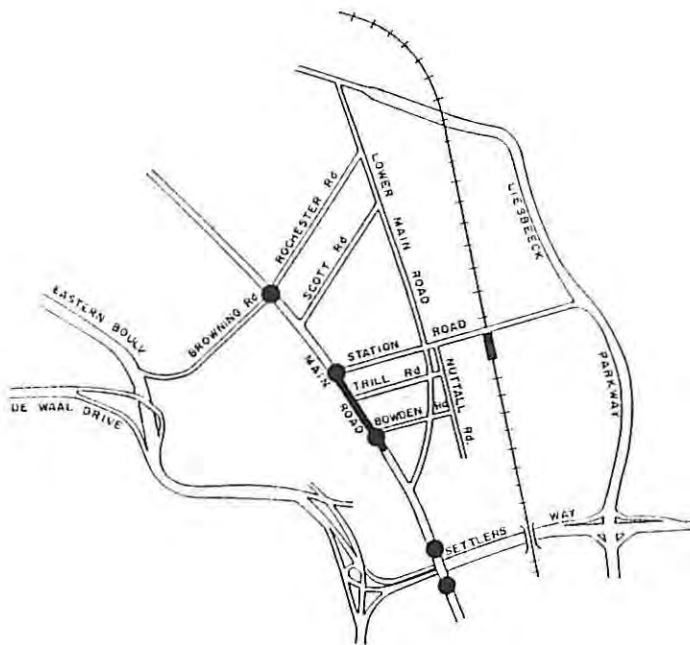
Residential access streets.

With the introduction of an acceptable road infrastructure hierarchy it is possible to change the internal road network from an open to a closed grid system, using strategic road closures. This would reduce the accessibility of the area but would change the nature of the streets from "public" to "semi-private".

2. COUNCIL'S PREFERRED OPTIONS

After the evaluation of the various options as identified by the consultants, a number of preferred options were investigated in more detail and are listed below.

MAIN ROAD



OPTION

EVALUATION

1.A

Implement an improved signal control strategy for Main Road.

The coordination of traffic signals at intersections and at pedestrian crossings will alleviate the congestion, reduce delays at signals and ensure uninterrupted traffic flow.

1.B

Improve intersections along the entire length of Main Road.

Delays appear to occur at intersections and not only as a result of constraints on the link capacity. Considerable improvements can be achieved to the level of service at intersections by the coordination of signals and localised improvements at some junctions along Main Road.

1.C

Widen the northbound carriageway of Main Road between Penzanee Road and Groote Schuur Drive.

The localised widening of Main Road would accommodate the anticipated additional traffic destined for the Groote Schuur Hospital on the northbound carriageway.

1.D

Adopt an "urban-clearway" principle on Main Road.

The restriction on stopping at selected areas along Main Road during the peak periods would improve traffic flow and reduce congestion. The urban clearway principle should, however, only be implemented in the peak directional flow.

LOWER MAIN ROAD



STATION ROAD



OPTION

2.A

Amend approved road widening line to facilitate localised widening/improvement only.

EVALUATION

The economic function of Lower Main Road is not only to provide adequate traffic movement, especially during peak periods, but also to provide access for all activities located along Lower Main Road. Implementing the approved road widening would benefit the vehicular movement along Lower Main Road but it would destroy the character of the area. The introduction of a Traffic Management Scheme and localised widening/improvements would improve the traffic flow, but would not ruin the character of Lower Main Road.

3.A

Prohibit on-street parking on Station Road between Main Road and Lower Main Road to facilitate two-way traffic.

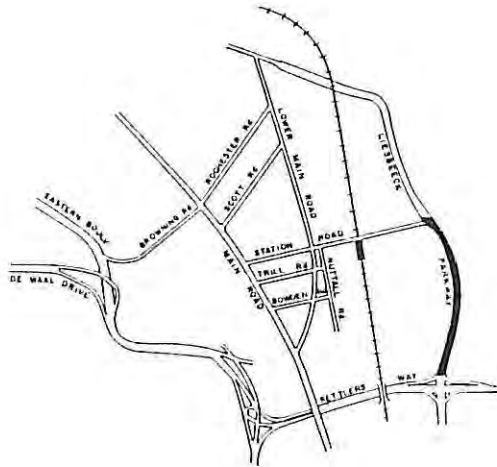
The implementation of two-way traffic flow in Station Road would simultaneously solve the rat runs through the residential areas and it would rationalise and manage the flow of traffic in Observatory on the higher order roads.

3.B

Implement localised intersection improvement at the junction of Station Road and Liesbeek Parkway.

The implementation of an additional right-turning lane on Station Road at the Liesbeek Parkway intersection will improve both the storing capacity and the discharge rate of the intersection. This will dramatically reduce the congestion on Station Road.

LIESBEEK PARKWAY



OPTION

4.A

Selective road widening is to be undertaken between Station Road and Settlers Way.

EVALUATION

The benefit which will be achieved with the up-grading of the Station Road/Liesbeek Parkway intersection is dependent on the widening of Liesbeek Parkway between Station Road and Settlers Way.

The backup of traffic in Station Road will be greatly reduced when the discharge of the traffic onto Liesbeek Parkway can be improved.

APPENDIX F: CONSULTANT'S URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPMENT ALONG LOWER MAIN ROAD

1. DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES

This section describes the recommended overall development principles or guidelines within which all proposals for existing and future development along Lower Main Road in Observatory are to be assessed as part of the City Council's development control process.

a) Maintenance of "High Street" Trading Activities

Development proposals should incorporate or contribute to a diversity of "high street" trading activities. These should provide interaction between the site or building and the street. Such activities include small shops and other facilities which provide local interest and offer services to the community. Activities which do not relate well or contribute to "high street" characteristics should be discouraged. For the purpose of this report, both Lower Main and Station Roads are classified as "high streets". A "high street" trading activity is defined as:

"Any commercial trading or service activity which draws custom from the street, serves both local residents and passers-by, adds visual interest and diversity to the street scene, has a transparent shopfront, and does not exceed 100m² in trading area".



Diagram 1: Station Road - High Street Trading Activities

(b) Colonnaded or Arcaded Street

The most important element contributing to the character and environmental quality of Lower Main Road is the colonnaded or arcaded street/building interface. In its various forms the colonnade is the essential element providing the measure whereby a human-scale street environment is achieved. All existing colonnades on the "high streets" should be retained. In addition, where new development takes place or where there is redevelopment of existing buildings, additional colonnades should be incorporated on the street frontage. Colonnades which encroach on the public owned road reserve should be allowed and the necessary waivers granted. A colonnaded or arcaded street can be defined as:

"A condition whereby any individual building (which may also form part of an existing or potential group of connected buildings) incorporates as part of its street frontage a series of columns spaced not more than 6m apart and resting on the boundary between the road carriageway and the sidewalk. The colonnade must give structural support to a canopy, roof, room, balcony or structure at the first floor level. The colonnade should form an integral part of the architectural design of the building or group of buildings as the case may be and designed to provide inter alia shelter and protection for the pedestrian, a comfortable and attractive shopping environment, and to give diversity and interest to the street scene".



Diagram 2: Lower Main Road Colonnades

The principle of the colonnaded street can embrace many forms and it is therefore useful to distinguish between what is desirable and what is undesirable. These conditions are indicated in Diagram 4. Conditions A₁ to D₁ show the street building interface clearly articulated resulting in acceptable alternatives. By comparison, conditions A₂ to D₂ show undesirable alternatives where the street/building interface is not adequately articulated resulting in a harsh environment with inadequate consideration for the pedestrian.

(c) Continuous Street Frontage

Along the "high street" buildings should form a continuous street frontage to support the street as a physically and socially defined entity. Activities taking place in buildings on the street frontage at ground level should be visible from the street and should give physical support to maintaining and promoting the "high street" condition and edge. Therefore:

"Any building or group of buildings fronting onto a high street and incorporating trading, or business activities should: (a) have a zero setback from the high street boundary (excluding entrances/escapes), and (b) have zero setbacks on both lateral boundaries within 4m of the street boundary, provided that on sites which have a high street frontage of less than 15m, a building setback of not more than 1,5m for access, escape or servicing purposes if required is permissible on only one such lateral boundary. For sites with a high street frontage of 15m or more, the setback on one such lateral boundary may be increased to 3m for the express purpose of vehicle or loading access if required". See Diagram 3 below.

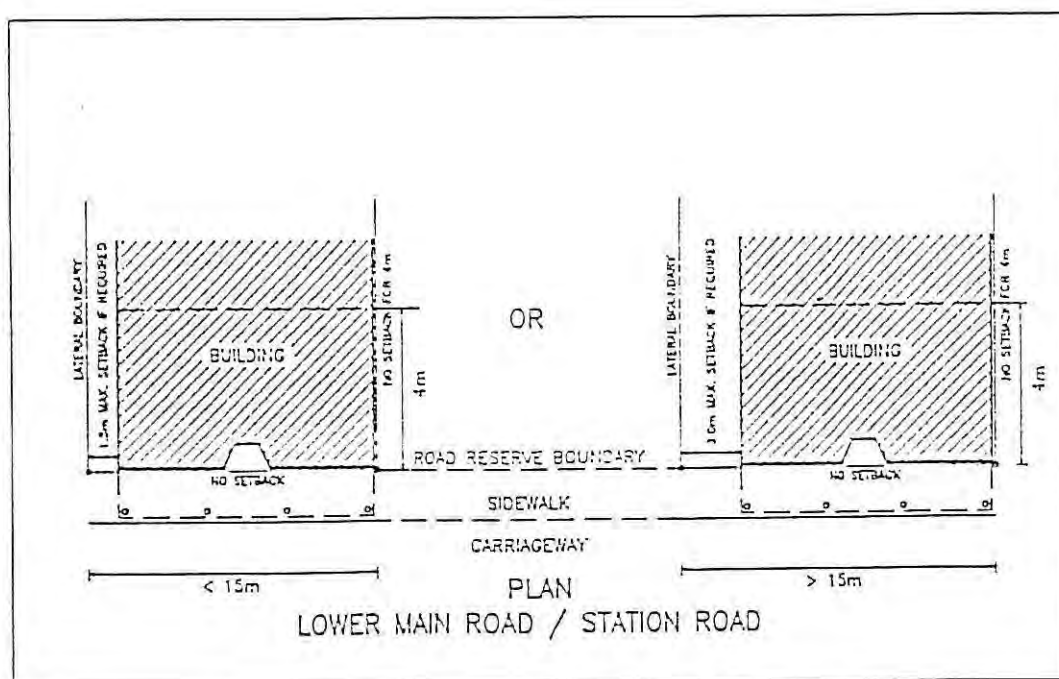
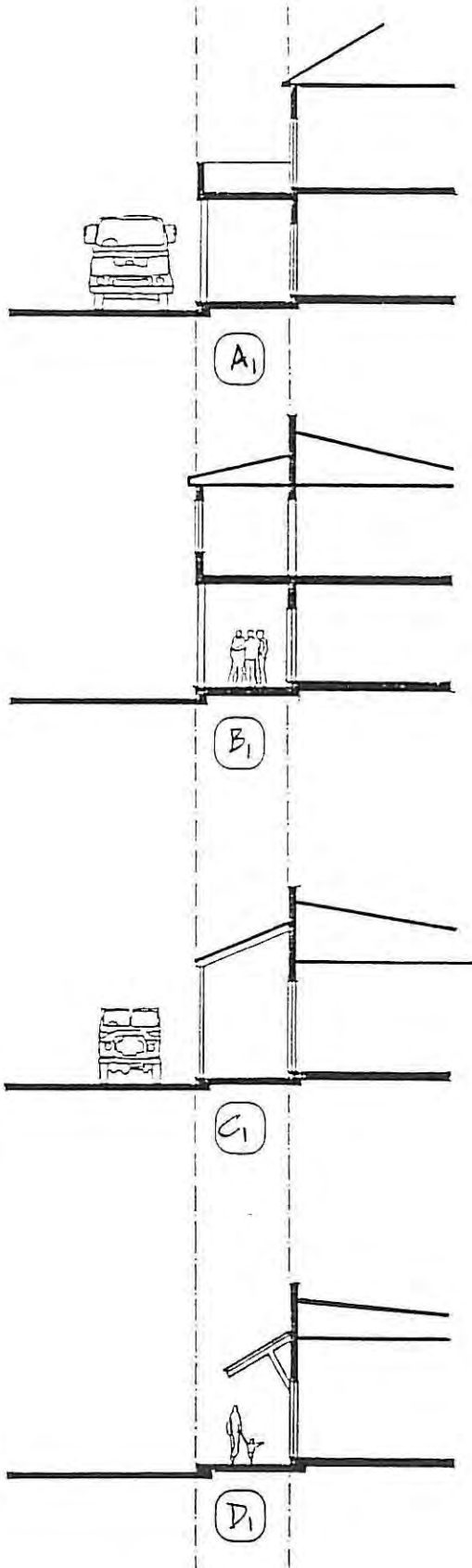


Diagram 3: High Street and Lateral Boundary Setbacks

Desirable



Undesirable

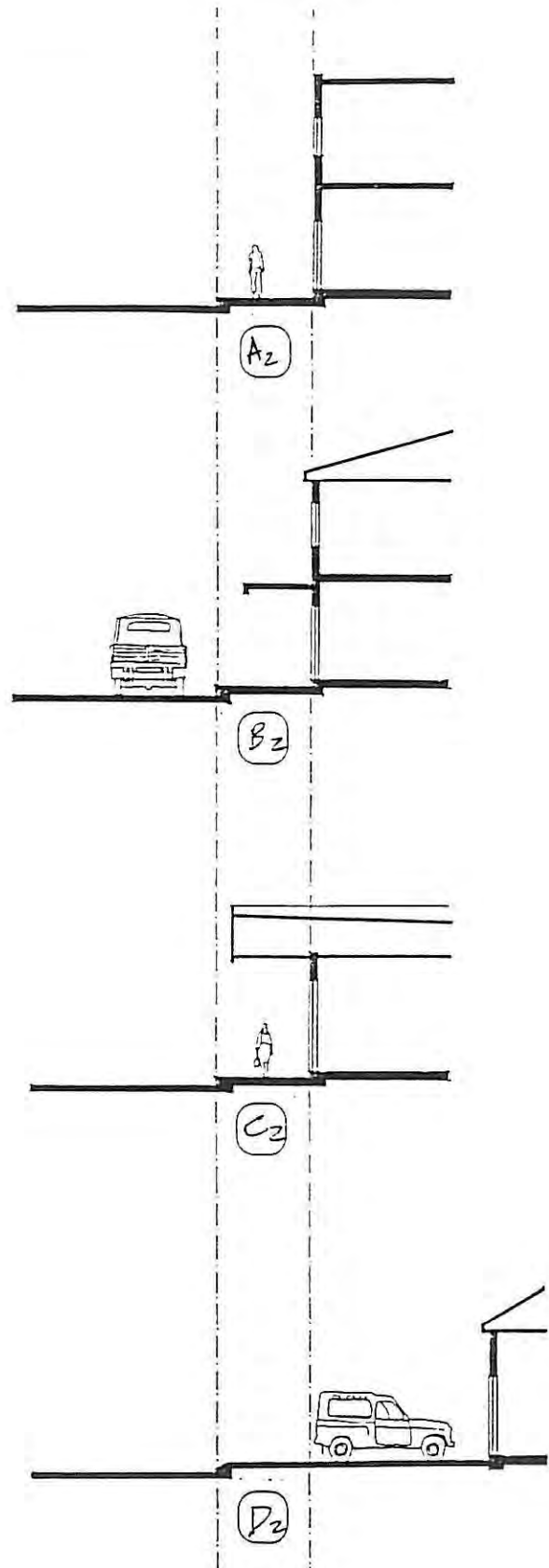


Diagram 4: Development Principles: Street - Building Interface

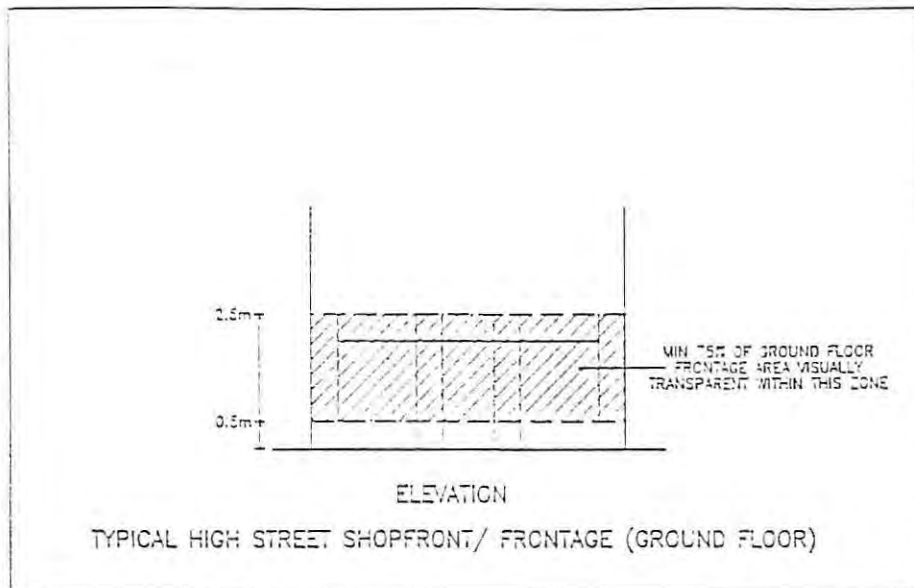


Diagram 5: Visually Transparent Shopfront/Frontages

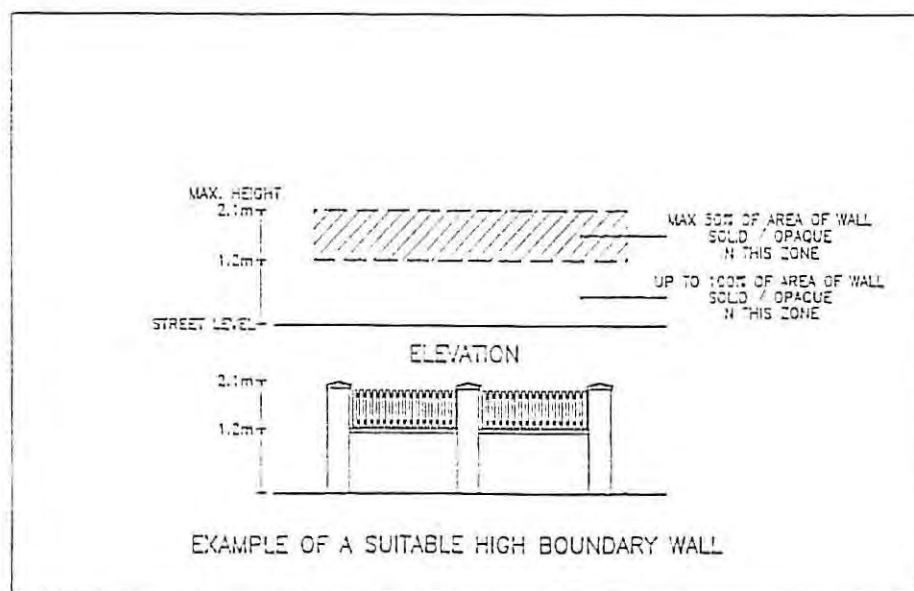


Diagram 6: High Street Boundary Walls

(d) Undesirable Blank Facades/Frontage/Shopfronts

There is an increasing tendency to present a blank facade to the street. This arrangement appears to derive from certain security, privacy and "aesthetic" criteria. It is essential that the street building interface remains transparent and that the closing off of the visual connection between the street and building is discouraged as far as possible. Therefore:

"Any site abutting a high street which incorporates trading activities shall have on the ground floor storey at least 75% of the surface area of the shopfront or street frontage facade visually transparent. In addition at least 90% of this visually transparent surface area shall be provided within a zone between 0,5m to 2,5m above street level. The surface area referred to shall be measured on elevation at the street floor level only. Glazing painted over shall be deemed as opaque. Glazing bars, and window and door frames shall be excluded from such calculations". (Refer to Diagram 5).

e) Undesirable High Garden/Boundary Walls

Another tendency with new development is to provide high boundary walls for security reasons, although these do not necessarily provide the security desired. In addition high boundary walls obscure the street frontages of the building and project an image of a singularly "industrial" area. The removal of existing garden walls for on-site parking and the erection of solid garden and boundary walls higher than 1,2m should be discouraged; these conceal the facade from the street, impact negatively on the scale and character of the area, and provide cover for intruders. Therefore:

"No development or proposals in the study area shall include solid garden/boundary walls higher than 1,2m above street floor level. A higher wall/fence may be erected up to 2,1m high above street level where the top portion of the wall/fence above 1,2m remains semi-transparent with not more than 75% of the surface area of the whole wall/fence measured in elevation to be solid or opaque material". (Refer to Diagram 6).

f) Openings to have Vertical Proportions

Traditional architectural styles are predominant in the area and these generally incorporate square or vertically proportioned openings and elements in the street facade. The inclusion of horizontally proportioned openings in street facades is not in keeping with the architectural character of the study area. Therefore:

"All doors, windows and openings generally on the street facade or frontage of any building in the study area excluding shopfronts on the ground floor level shall have square or vertically accentuated proportions".

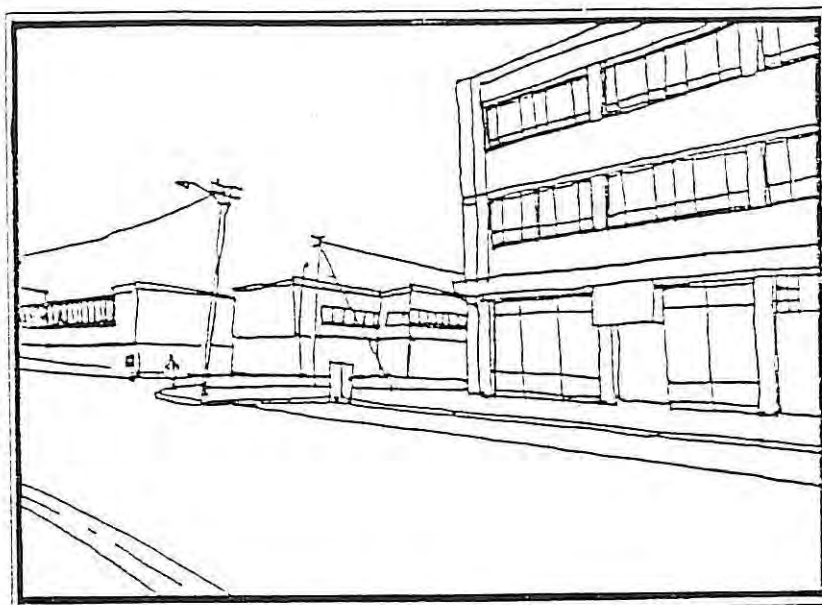


Diagram 7: Undesirable Horizontal Proportions

g) Appropriate Signage

Large and garish signage lowers the tone of the area. There are many examples whereby signage is overdone for the sake of commercial expediency. This should be discouraged. Therefore:

"Any signage of a permanent nature within the study area is to be strictly controlled on the basis that signage is to be designed and utilised primarily for information and identification purposes (as opposed to visually overpowering or billboard type advertising). Signage should be discreet and simple and the total extent of any signage for any single enterprise inclusive of any corporate graphic artwork, logos or backgrounds should not exceed 2m² in surface area with any lettering not more than 300mm in height. No single sign to be greater than 1m² in surface area and no side dimension of any sign is to exceed 2m in length".

h) Four Storey Height Restriction

Any future development exceeding 4 storeys in height is unacceptable in terms of the overall scale of building fabric in the study area. In this regard a maximum height of 4 storeys (possibly more under certain and special circumstances) should be applied throughout the study area. Therefore:

"No building in the study area excluding an attic roof level or tower or structure (which in the opinion of the City Planner is desirable or acceptable) shall exceed 4 storeys in height above street level".

i) Undesirable Parking Intrusion

On-site parking on properties fronting the high street is an intrusive activity generally disruptive to the continuity of high street activities. In the many cases where it has occurred (e.g. where front gardens have been converted to parking areas) it has a negative impact on the urban character and quality of the area. It also depletes the amount of public parking available within the road reserve itself and requires carriageway crossings to be built which impact negatively on the spatial integrity of the street scene and convenience of the pedestrian. Therefore:

"Any on-site parking within 10m of the high street boundary on properties with high street frontages including parking bays and garages (but excluding temporary access for loading and delivery purposes) shall be deemed as undesirable.

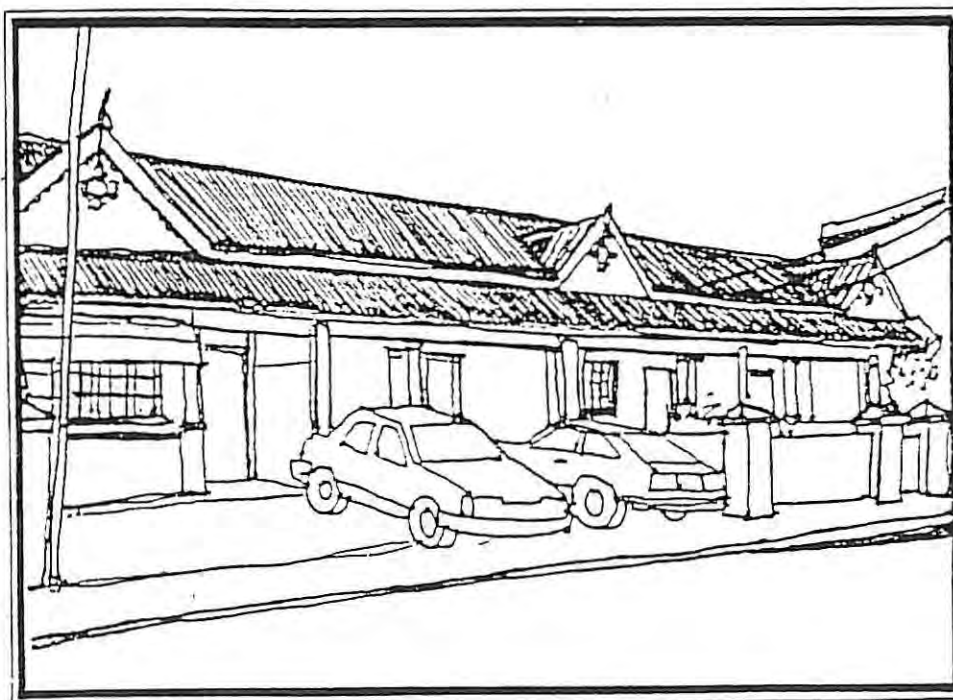


Diagram 8: On-site Parking Intrusion

2. UNDESIRABLE MATERIALS/FINISHES

The final stage in the development control process is to eliminate as far as possible the following materials and finishes which can be considered as being inappropriate in terms of the visual integrity and the aesthetic/environmental qualities of the area as a whole.

a) Excessive Burglar Proofing

Excessive and overdone burglar proofing on street frontages creates a hostile appearance and detracts from the architectural qualities of individual buildings. There are many examples of buildings where the facade has been spoilt by large expanses of security bars. These should be fastened preferably to the inside of the respective openings. It would be preferable to use steel roller shutters for security if electronic systems are not suitable.

b) Reflective and Opaque Glass

Large areas of reflective and opaque glass also give a hostile appearance to the street facade. They hide activities taking place in the building from the street, thereby destroying the visual contact that the pedestrian has with the commercial environment.

c) Unplastered Blockwork/Concrete Surfaces and Exposed Concrete Aggregate Surfaces

All of the above materials lend themselves to an industrial type environment. While it may not be appropriate to bar the use of these materials in the area zoned for factories, use of these within the existing historical precincts is undesirable.

d) Precast Concrete Fencing on Street/Building Interface

The use of precast concrete fencing in various patterns is undesirable. It has an industrial quality which does not correspond with traditional building materials.

f) Aluminium Hoarding and Industrial Siding (in all materials).

This too is another material which should have no place along Lower Main Road. A typical example of this form of development is the building housing the First National Bank on Lower Main Road. This form of architectural treatment should be discouraged.

Source: Lower Main Road: Observatory Study December 1991, Urban Design Services

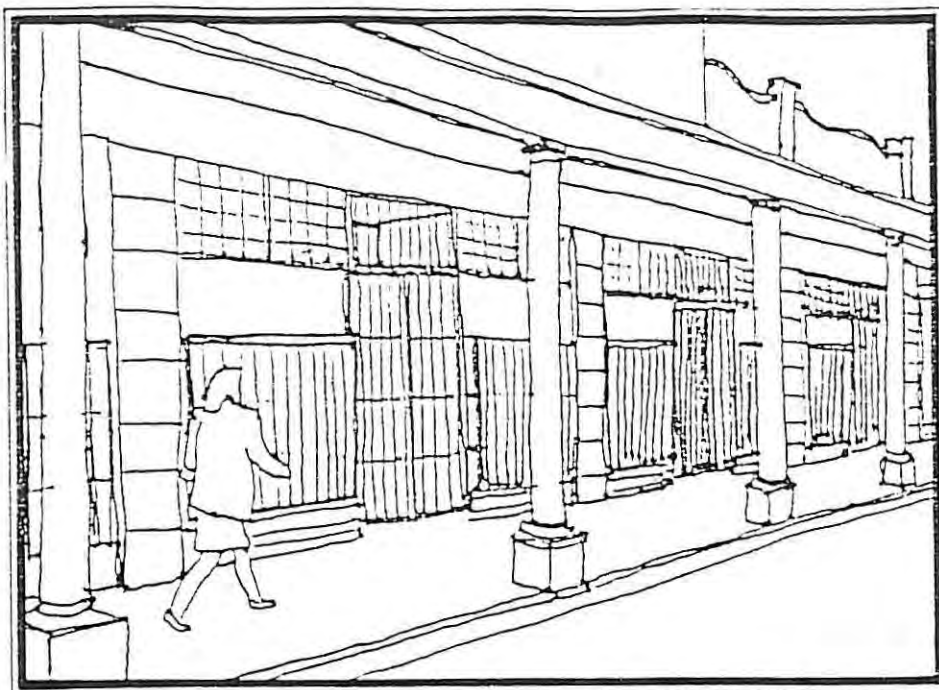


Diagram 9: Excessive Burglar Proofing

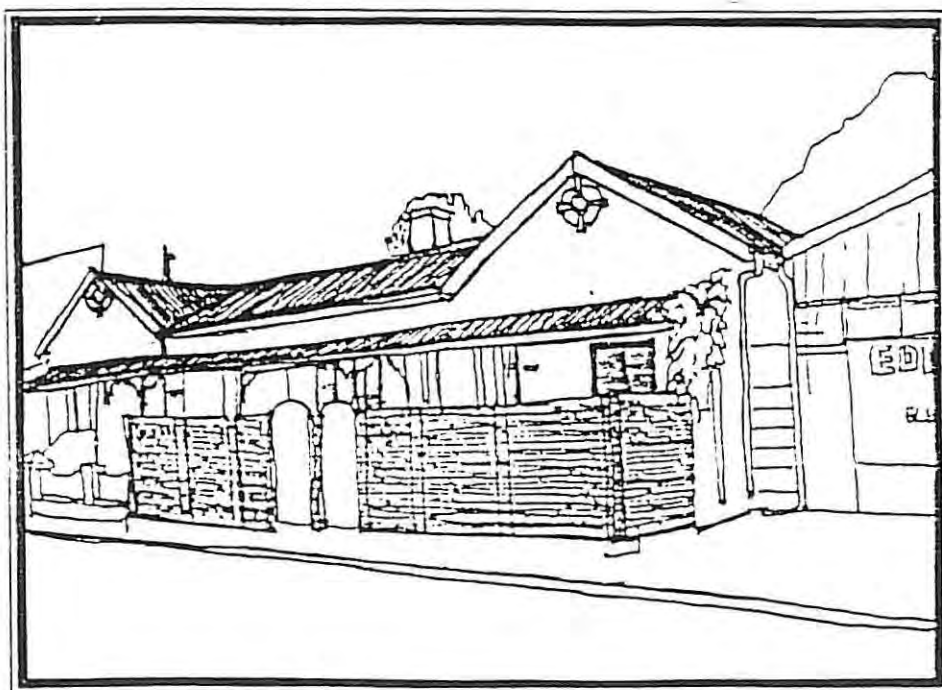


Diagram 10: High Boundary Walls / Precast Fencing

APPENDIX G: THE VILLAGE GREEN SITE

The Council-owned property measuring 13830 m² in extent is located at the intersection of Lower Main and Station Roads as indicated in Figure 24. The site, being centrally located at the intersection of these two main roads, holds a dominant position.

The site is significant for the following reasons:

- it is situated near the geographic centre of Observatory;
- it occupies a midway position between the major routes that surround the suburb;
- it is situated en route between the station and major places of work;
- it is an integral part of the village centre and is situated at the intersection of the major access routes into the suburb;
- it has historic school buildings on the site.

The Council Security Services Headquarters occupy the former Observatory Boys School building as well as the dog training area. The former Observatory Girls School building is used as the Observatory Community and Recreation Centre. The rest of the site is used for a park and a parking area for the Community Centre. Approximately 8100m² (including the dog training area and the parking area) is undeveloped.

The site, although providing visual relief in a relatively built up area, has a feeling of lost space and is in part inappropriately used. The space is underutilised and uncontained apart from the dominant school

buildings along Lower Main Road.

It is arguable whether the present use of the site, with the exception of the Community Centre, does justice to its central position. Being Council owned, the site offers many opportunities for intervention to enhance the central area as well as to become an important community meeting place.

Through the initial public participation exercise, many suggestions were made regarding the future of the site. Suggestions ranged from developing the site for business purposes, for parking purposes through to keeping the site as a park. Although suggestions were varied, there appears to be general consensus that the Security Services should vacate the former boys school site and that some open space component should be retained.

Two studies have been undertaken regarding the site. The first study is a working document undertaken by the Town Planning Branch in 1990. The document is entitled Development Options for City Land in Observatory Village Centre Working Document. This study recommends that if parts of the site were developed, the overall performance of the site would be improved and enhanced. The proposed development should provide a mixed use type of development. This could include inner city housing which would ensure the viability of the existing community facilities in the area. Furthermore, the provision of retail and office accommodation would relieve pressure for the redevelopment of noteworthy buildings in the vicinity of the site (refer to Figure 1).

Spatially, development will provide order and enclose the space thus creating opportunities for adjoining development responses. The essence of the proposal is as follows:

- create a formal square where the dog training area is;

- retain the community centre;
- relocate the Security Services Headquarters and use the building for business or community purposes;
- develop an edge which would include business uses along Station Road; and
- the remaining area could be developed for high density low rise residential purposes.

The second study was undertaken by consultants, Urban Design Services, as part of their study on Lower Main Road. Their report is entitled Lower Main Road: Observatory Study December 1991. This study explores options for this site due to its prime location along Lower Main Road and due to it being a key Council-owned site within the Lower Main Road study area. The consultants explore four options for the site ranging from parking on the entire site; enclosing the Station Road, Lower Main Road corner with buildings; and enclosing the northern edge. The preferred option entails an addition to the former boys school, which would front onto an open square and could also be utilised as a parking lot. The rest of the site is retained as a park. The overall idea is that the buildings could be used for community and entertainment facilities and that the park and the parking lot will be integrated to create a Village Centre (refer to Figure 2).

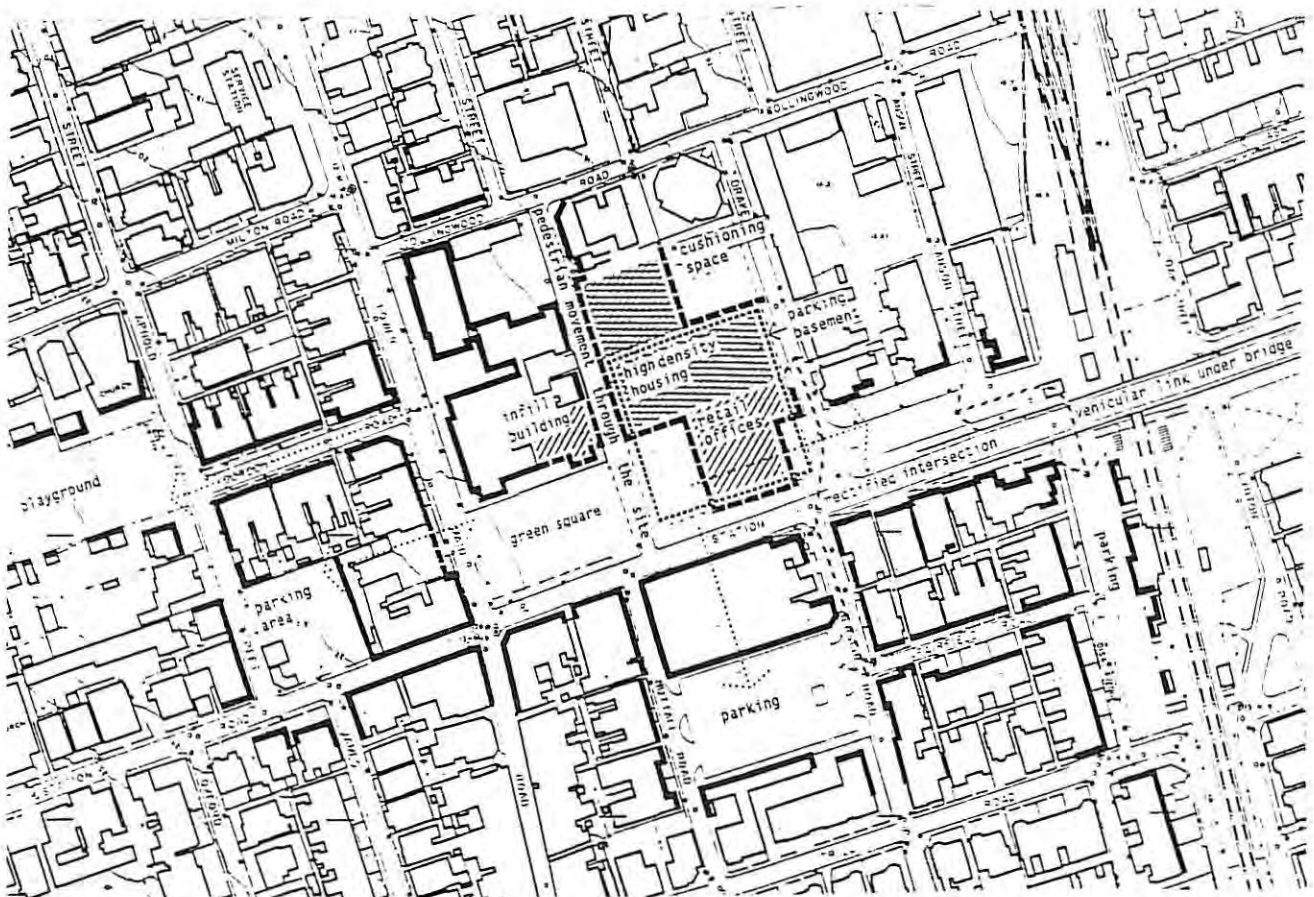
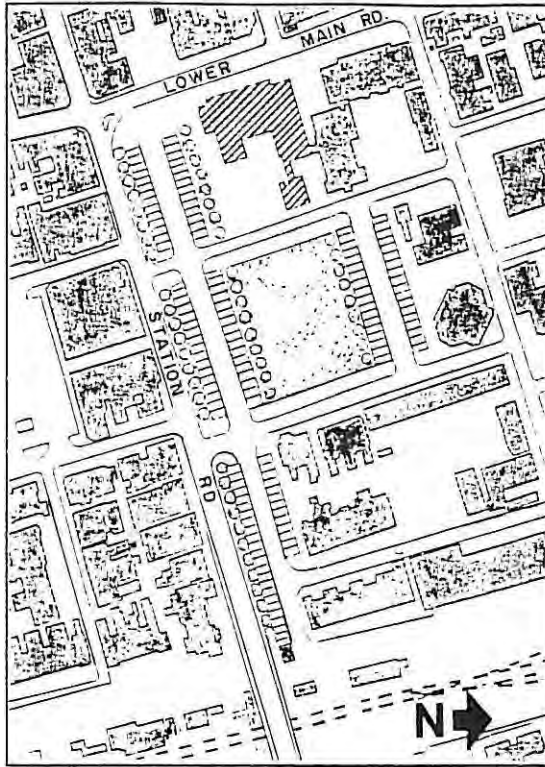


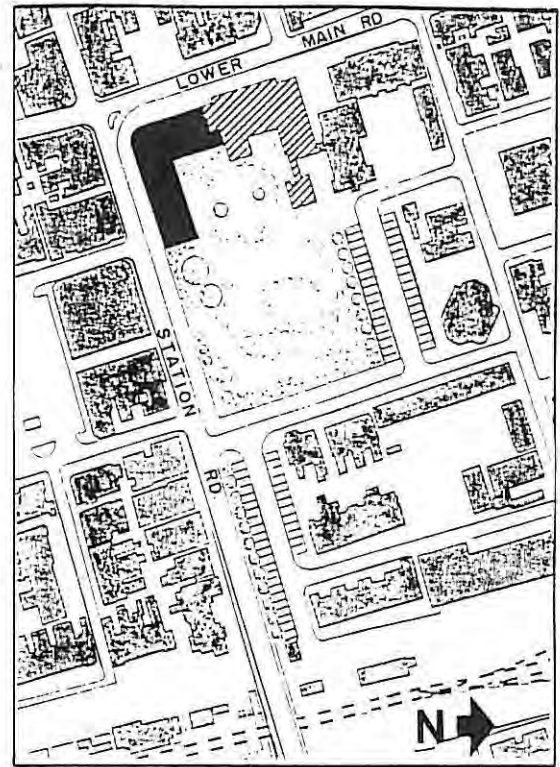
Figure 1: Conceptual Development Framework

Source: Development Options for City Land in Observatory Village Centre. (Working Document). Town Planning Branch, 1990.

OPTION 1



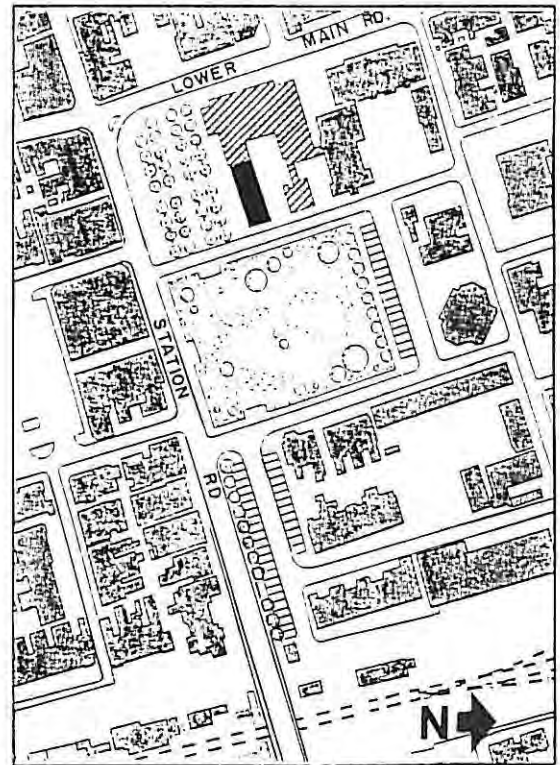
OPTION 2



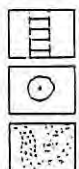
OPTION 3



OPTION 4



Source: *Lower Main Road: Observatory Study December 1991, Urban Design Services*



Parking

Trees

Park



Existing Buildings

Re-use Existing Buildings

New Building / Development

OBSERVATORY
POLICY
PLAN



Evaluation

The proposals contained in the first study attempt to address many of the issues impacting on Observatory. An attempt has been made to provide a mixed inner housing and at the same time contribute to ensuring the viability of the existing community facilities. The concomitant provision of retail and office accommodation is proposed to both relieve pressure for redevelopment of noteworthy buildings in the vicinity of the site as well as making the provision of residential accommodation financially viable. In addition the proposals do recognise the importance of and accommodate the community facilities and communal outdoor space.

Development of the site will:

- assist in ordering the Village Centre;
- integrate the area to the north of the site with the Village Centre;
- enhance the character of the site; and
- create opportunities for the development of adjoining sites.

There are a lot of advantages to the implementation of this proposal. The disadvantage is that there would be a reduced amount of green space which is unlikely to be supported by the residents although it could well be argued that the open space that would be created could be of a much higher quality than that which exists at present.

The consultant's proposals tend to be based on a compromise position. The development that is proposed is minimal and serves to provide a backdrop to the proposed square rather than to provide additional facilities. The square is seen as providing a dual purpose: both a parking facility and a space that could accommodate outdoor activities such as flea markets,

hamburger stands and flower stalls. The proposal recommends that the existing park is upgraded and linked into the proposed development. The proposed parking area is in response to the consultant's findings that there is a need for additional parking along Lower Main Road.

The advantage of the consultant's proposals is that the site is left largely undeveloped and is maintained as an open space; with a certain amount of parking provided. The disadvantage is that it doesn't really attempt to address other issues in Observatory, such as those considered in the first study. It should be noted that the consultants acknowledge that there are numerous options for the site and that the ones that they presented were for the purpose of encouraging public debate and interest in the future of the site.

The site is considered to be valuable and the abovementioned proposals merely represent a few options in the spectrum. One way of developing this site would be to call for proposals for its development which would be subject to specific policies. Any proposal call would obviously also have to go through a consultative process with the community.