

DIE

Slamse Buurt

WAAROM DIT BEHOU MOET WORD

KAAPSTAD, 1944

Br nob-123

Hierdie brosjure ...

word uitgereik as 'n beroep op die burgers van Kaapstad en op alle Suid-Afrikaners om te help om die slooping van die ou Slamse Buurt van ons Moederstad te verhoed. Die betrokke gebied is die skilderagtige, kleurryke deel van Ou Kaapstad teen die helling van Seinhewel. Dit omvat Chiappinistraat en Roosstraat met hul tussenlaantjies en die dwarsstrate wat van Waalstraat aan die een kant tot Strandstraat aan die ander kant strek.



Die Maleiers is aan die Kaapse lewe verbonde sedert die eerste blankes hulle hier gevestig het. Die Slamse Buurt is hul tradisionele tuiste. Maar dit is tot agterbuurt verklaar, en meer as 150 huise is deur die owerheid van die eienaars oorgeneem. Ons het geen beswaar teen dié besluit nie. Maar daar is sekere oorwegings wat in gedagte gehou moet word by die toekomstige aanlê en herstelling van dié deel van die stad, en dít is die oorwegings wat ons nou onder u aandag wil bring.

Niemand wat die belange van die stad op die hart dra, betwis die noodsaaklikheid daarvan dat die Buurt skoongemaak word nie.

Die Maleiers self praat met spyt en afkeuring van die maatskaplike toestande—nie deur hulle geskep nie—wat tans daar heers.

Die agteruitgang van dié gebied is in die eerste plaas te wyte aan die instroming van natuurle en ander wat nie Maleiers is nie. Huise het ander bewoners gekry, en kamers is onderverhuur, met gevolglike oorbewoning en ongesonde toestande. Maar dié dinge kan verhelp word sonder om die argitektoniese aard van die hele Buurt ingrypend te verander. Soos in 'n onlangse hoofartikel van die *Cape Times* verklaar is: „As 'n waardevolle ou prent met die jare verskimmel, word die kolle verwyder sonder om die hele prent te vernietig. Die Slamse Buurt is 'n waardevolle oorblyfsel van Kaapstad se geskiedkundige verlede, en daar is tog seker geen rede om die geheel te verwoes as die dele wat vervalte geraak het, gesloop en herbou word nie.”

Waarin lê die waarde van die Slamse Buurt? Die waarde is sowel geskiedkundig as esteties. Laat ons dit uit albei gesigspunte betrag en laat ons ook nagaan wat ander mense gedoen het in verband met probleme soortgelyk aan dié wat die gebied tans oplewer.

Die Buurt het sy atmosfeer en individualiteit nie alleen aan die huise self te danke nie, maar ook aan hul groepering en terrasse en die wisselende wydtes van die strate—'n faktor wat tans by goeie stadsaanleg 'n aanvaarde beginsel is.

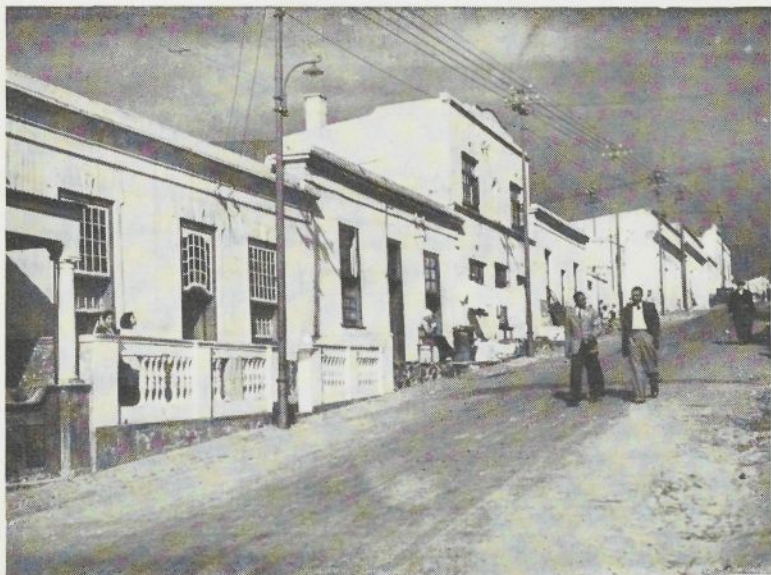
Veral die klein straatjies tussen Roosstraat en Chiappinistraat is aantreklik. Die helling van die grond met die gevolglike trap-vorm van huise en stoepe en die uitsig oor die stad daaronder, lok skilders reeds eeuelank na hierdie gebied.

Die huise het baie goeie argitektoniese eienskappe soos die uitstekende verhoudings van die deure en vensters, eenvoudige, aantreklike bo-lygte en die mooi lyswerk van die pleistering. Binnekant baie wonings is daar 'n outydse waardigheid en ruimheid. Die huise is by uitstek vir die gebruiklike Maleise leefwyse geskik.

Sommige van die Maleiers wat in die ou dae hierheen gebring is, was vakmanne wat as slawe uit Oos-Indië gekom het. Ander was politieke gevangenes van hoë stand. Tot vandag toe het die Maleiers—met weinige uitsonderings—hul wesenlike eerlikheid, hoflikheid en ontsag vir die owerheid behou. Hul vernuf as vakmanne en die huislike deugde is ook deur die groot meerderheid behou.

Hul moskees—daar is nege in die Slamse Buurt en sy omgewing—en hul feeste verleen kleur en romantiek aan ons stad. Hul huwelike en die skoonheid van die Maleiese jonkvroue in hul brokaat-tabberds en goudkleurige hoofversierings by die Profeet se verjaarsdagfees, was nog altyd net so 'n unieke kenmerk van die lewe in ons gemeenskap as hul begrafnisstoete deur ons strate.

Tans woon slegs sowat 900 Maleiers in die betrokke gebied; maar daar woon nog 1,000 in die onmiddellike omgewing. Vir al die Kaapse Maleiers is die Slamse Buurt die brandpunt van hul gods-



dienstige seremonies en hul huislike belange. Dit was hul tuiste toe hulle die vertroude bediendes van die ou nedersetters was, en hul harte is nog daar.

Ons het 'n merkwaardige presedent vir die herstel van so 'n oorblyfsel uit die verlede in Engeland en Holland, waar die pragtige dorpie Bidbury en West Wycombe, die Begijnenhofje in Amsterdam en die Binnenhof in Den Haag—om maar net 'n paar te noem—as nasionale erfstukke bewaar is.

Die gesag vir die finansiering van so 'n herstellingskema in Kaapstad is vervat in die Behuisingswette (No. 35 van 1920, soos gemendeer deur Wet 41 van 1937) waardeur 'n plaaslike owerheid ge-

magtig word om enige groep woonhuise wat onder 'n bouskema onder sy jurisdiksie ressorteer te vergroot, te wysig of aan te pas as dit deur die Administrateur goedgekeur word.

Van belang in hierdie verband is die vyfde artikel van die „Restoration Decalogue”, opgestel deur 'n groep argitekte wat die planne vir die herstelling van Williamsburg in Virginië opgestel het : „Geen oorblywende ou gebou behoort om redes van struktuur herbou te word as addisionele moeite en uitgawe dit behoue kan laat bly nie”.

Deskundiges wie se raad gevra is deur die groep burgers wat hulle vir die behoud van die Slamse Buurt beywer, verklaar dat daar geen tegniese moeilikhede is wat nie te bowe gekom kan word nie, en hul raming van die herstellingskoste is nie onredelik nie.

Dit is kortliks die redes vir die behoud en die herstelling van die Slamse Buurt. Afgesien van die groot geskiedkundige en estetiese waarde daarvan vir 'n stad wat vinnig ander oorblyfsels uit sy verlede verloor, sal die Buurt na herstelling 'n aantreklikheid vir besoekers uit alle dele van die Unie en vir oorsese toeriste wees.

Dit verheug ons om te kan verklaar dat ons pogings om die Slamse Buurt vir die nageslag te bewaar die steun van die Historiese Monumente-kommissie geniet. Ten slotte wil ons melding maak van die vriendelikheid en samewerking wat ons van die Stadsraad ontvang het, van sy amptenare en van lede van die onderkomitee wat deur die Stadsraad benoem is om die uitvoerbaarheid van die plan te bespreek.

UITGEREIK DEUR DIE GROEP WAT HULSELF BEYWER VIR DIE BEHOUD VAN DIE SLAMSE BUURT.

Voorsitster : Mev. H. J. van Zyl.

Hoofregter die Edelagbare E. F. Watermeyer, Professor M. R. Drennan (*verteenwoordigende die Historiese Monumente-kommissie*), Dr. E. G. Jansen, Mev. G. B. van Zyl, Mev. R. Burton, Mej. R. Prowse, Mnr. Charles te Water, Dr. I. D. du Plessis, Mnr. J. G. van der Horst, Mnr. J. Ramsay, Mnr. F. Glennie, F.R.I.B.A., M.I.A. (*verteenwoordigende die S.A. Nasionale Vereniging*), Mnr. R. Stubbs, M.I.Struct. E., A.M.(S.A.)Socy.C.E., Dr. W. Purcell. *Raadgewende Argitekte* : Reg. de Smidt, A.R.I.B.A., M.I.A., Mej. Magda Sauer, M.I.A.

THE
Malay Quarter

THE CASE FOR PRESERVATION

CAPE TOWN, 1944

This brochure...

is issued as an appeal to the citizens of Cape Town and to all South Africans, to assist in preventing the threatened demolition of the old Malay Quarter of our Mother City. The area which concerns us is that picturesque and colourful part of Old Cape Town which lies on the slopes of Signal Hill. It includes Chiappini Street and Rose Street with their connecting lanes and the cross-streets extending from Wale Street at one end to Strand Street at the other.



The Malays, who have given their name to this part of the city have been identified with life at the Cape since the first European, settled here. The Malay Quarter is their traditional home. But it has been declared a slum area and over 150 houses have been expropriated. We have no quarrel with that decision. But there are certain considerations which must be kept in mind in the future, planning and regeneration of this part of the city and it is these considerations which we now set before you.

No one who has the interests of the city at heart, disputes the necessity for cleaning up the Quarter. The Malays themselves speak with regret and reprobation of the social conditions—not of their own making—which prevail there now.

The deterioration of this area is due mainly to the influx of natives and others who are not Malays. Houses had changed hands and rooms had been sub-let with the resultant factors of over-crowding and insanitary conditions. But these things are remediable without radically changing the architectural character of the whole Malay Quarter. As a recent leading article in the *Cape Times* remarked, "When a fine old print becomes spotted with age, the spots are eradicated without destroying the whole print. The Malay Quarter is a valuable relic of Cape Town's historic past, and there is surely no need to destroy the whole in pulling down and re-building the parts that have become rotten in fabric."

What is the value of the Malay Quarter? Its values are both historical and aesthetic. Let us look at it from both these angles and let us see, too, what other people have done when confronted by problems similar to those which this area now presents.

The Quarter owes its atmosphere and its individuality not only to the houses themselves but also to their grouping in terraces and the varying widths of the streets—a factor which is now an accepted principle in good town-planning.

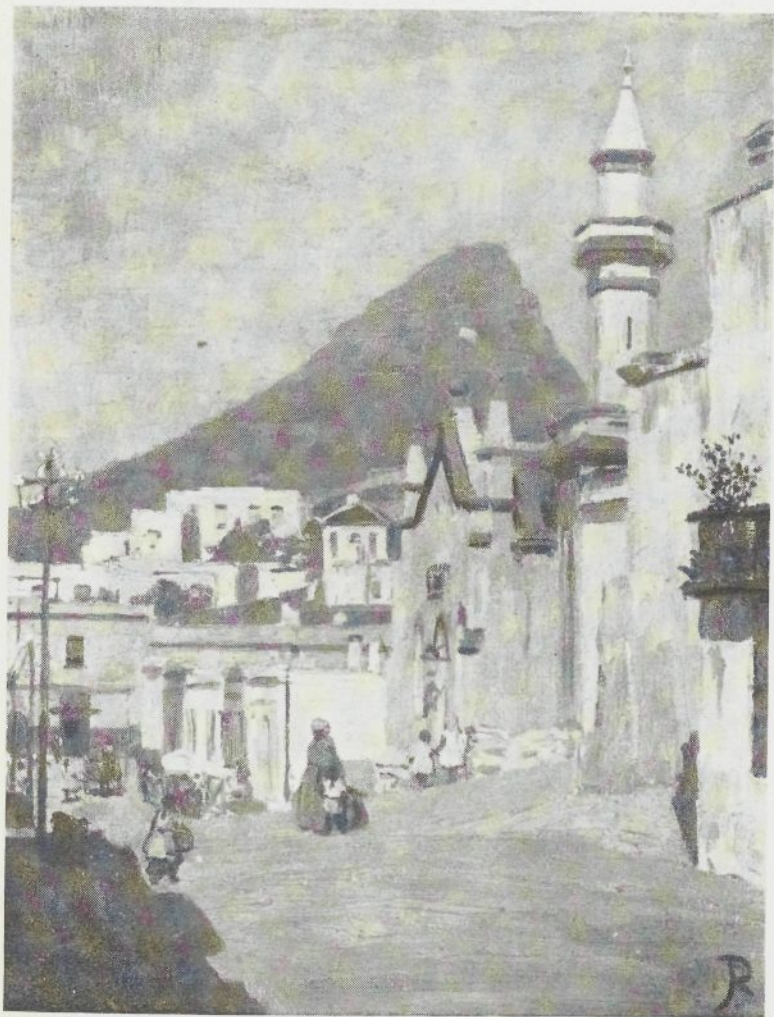
The small streets between Chiappini and Rose Streets are especially attractive. The rapid fall of the ground, with the stepping of roofs and stoeps and the view of the city below, have drawn artists to this area for generations.

The houses have many good architectural features such as the excellent proportions of the doors and windows, simple and pleasing fanlights and the fine moulding of the plasterwork. Many of the interiors have an old-world dignity and spaciousness. These houses are eminently suited to the Malay tradition of living.

Some of the Malays who were brought here in the old days were expert craftsmen who came from the East Indies as slaves. Others were political prisoners of high rank. To this day, the Malays—with rare exceptions—have maintained their essential honesty, courtesy and respect for authority. Their skill in handicrafts and their domestic virtues remain with the vast majority of them.

Their mosques (there are nine of these in the Malay Quarter and its vicinity) and their religious and holiday festivals, lend colour and romance to our work-a-day town. Their weddings—the beauty of the Malay girls in their brocade gowns and golden head-dresses

at the feast of the Prophet's birthday—have always been as unique a feature of life in our community as their funeral processions through the streets.



Only some 900 Malays are at present resident in the actual area under consideration, but 1,000 more live in its immediate vicinity. To all these Cape Malays, the Malay Quarter is the focal point of their religious ceremonies, their domestic interests: it was their home in the days when they were the trusted servants of the old settlers and their hearts are still there.

We have admirable precedent for the restoration of such relics of the past, in England and in Holland, where the beautiful villages of Bibury and West Wycombe, the Begijnenhofje in Amsterdam, the Binnehof in the Hague—to name only a few—have been saved as national heirlooms.

The authority to finance a scheme of restoration of this sort in Cape Town, is contained in the Housing Acts (No. 35 of 1920 as amended by Act 41 of 1937) which empower a Local Authority to enlarge, alter, or adapt any group of dwellings falling under a building scheme within its jurisdiction, if approved by the Administrator.

Of interest in this connection is the fifth article of the "Restoration Decalogue" drawn up by a panel of architects who planned the restoration of Williamsburg in Virginia: "That no surviving old work should be rebuilt for structural reasons if any additional trouble and expense would suffice to preserve it."

Experts, whose advice has been sought by the group of citizens working for the preservation of the Malay Quarter, state that there are no technical difficulties which cannot be overcome and their estimates of the cost of restoration are not unreasonable.

This, briefly, is the case for the preservation and restoration of the Malay Quarter. Apart from its great aesthetic and historic value to a town which is rapidly losing other relics of its past, the Quarter would, when restored, be an attraction to visitors from all over the Union and to tourists from overseas.

We are glad to be able to state that our efforts to save the Malay Quarter for posterity have the endorsement of the Historical Monuments Commission. In conclusion we would like to acknowledge the courtesy and collaboration we have received from the City Council, from its officials and from members of the sub-committee appointed by the Council to discuss the feasibility of the project.

ISSUED BY THE GROUP WORKING FOR THE PRESERVATION OF
THE MALAY QUARTER.

Chairman: Mrs. H. J. van Zyl.

The Right Hon. the Chief Justice E. F. Watermeyer, Professor M. R. Drennan (*representing the Historical Monuments Commission*), Dr. E. G. Jansen, Mrs. G. B. van Zyl, Mrs. R. Burton, Miss R. Prowse, Sir Fraser Russell, Mr. Charles de Water, Dr. I. D. du Plessis, Mr. J. G. van der Horst, Mr. J. Ramsay, Mr. F. Glennie, F.R.I.B.A., M.I.A. (*representing the S.A. National Society*), Mr. R. Stubbs, M.I.Struct.E., A.M.(S.A.)Soc.C.E., Dr. W. Purcell. *Advisory Architects:* Reg. de Smidt, A.R.I.B.A., M.I.A., Miss Magda Sauer, M.I.A.

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