

## GRAHAMSTOWN AND GROUP AREAS.

The Group Areas Act was passed by Parliament in 1950. Since then the Act has been modified in three ways. 1. Four Amendment Acts have been passed. 2. Numerous proclamations have been made in terms of section 36 of the Group Areas Act. 3. The Group Areas Development, 1955. The legal position is then complex. Much has been improvised as difficulty after difficulty has been revealed. No statement of the financial burden to be met out of taxes has yet been forthcoming. Quite apart from administrative re-organisation, the Group Areas Development Act of 1955, added a new principle, viz. that of the buffer strip or zone. Speaking on the 2nd reading of this Bill, the Minister of Lands stated, "This Bill is somewhat complicated in execution but it is nevertheless quite simple in the objects which it desires to achieve." 1. It is indeed simple to state the objects. Taken together with other legislation, it is designed to convert a rough and ready apartheid built up by custom and convention into an inflexible and legal framework at almost any cost.<sup>2</sup> It touches purse, property and people. Until the conscience of the Europeans is touched, and until the climate of opinion changes, there is a legal strait-jacket in which we must move. The first thing to face is that the Group Areas legislation is at the moment, part of the law of the land and can only be changed by Parliamentary action. This fact lies at the back of any action to be taken locally, where there is hope that reasonable and prompt objection may be met.

Opportunity for local action lies in three fields; need for action in the third is immediate and urgent.

1. Every citizen, whatsoever his party allegiance, has a duty to keep himself informed as to how legislation affects the lives of those who are the pawns which it is proposed to move on the checker-board. It is an appalling responsibility that has been assumed chiefly by the Europeans in this country.
2. Now that Government plans for the zoning of Grahamstown have been advanced, every ratepayer should support the Municipality in every effort which it makes to avert or to modify zoning plans which have no particular relevance to the practical needs of Grahamstown, and which are unnecessary and repugnant to the interests and sentiments of so many. A plan of the City stands at the front of this brief statement in the hope that after the conclusion of this evening's meeting, people will continue to make themselves familiar with anything it is proposed to do, and will follow subsequent developments.
3. THE GROUP AREAS BOARD (for address, see below) was created in order to establish a body before whom information, petition, criticism, dissent, protest can be laid by interested groups and individuals.
  - (a) The Board is legally bound to consider evidence put before it and to report in writing to the Minister "as to the DESIRABILITY or OTHERWISE of proclaiming any area."
  - (b) The Minister has discretionary power; he may or may not act on the advice of the Board.

RESPONSIBILITY for PROVIDING EVIDENCE to be considered RESTS with the INDIVIDUAL or the GROUP.

YOU must ACT NOW.

- 
1. Mansard.
  2. A brief list of inexpensive and reliable books is appended on the last page.

The address of the Board for this area is:-

Eastern Cape Committee,  
Group Areas Board,  
Normandie House,  
Victoria Quay,  
PORT ELIZABETH.

Documents must be sent in quadruplicate: four copies must go forward to the Board. If possible, two other copies should be made and sent  
(a) to Cr. Reg. Griffiths, c/o Hepburn and Jeanes;  
(b) to the Town Clerk or the Mayor of Grahamstown.

Documents or Memoranda for the BOARD MUST BE POSTED on or before 28th MAY (next Tuesday) preferably by registered post.

The Municipality needs your advice and support.

The Municipality, after very careful consideration of all the facts, opposed the application of Group Areas to this City. This policy was rejected by the Board; in accordance with the advertisement of the Board, the Council put forward simple plans for the three largest racial groups.\* This seems to have been in April 1955 before the Group Areas Development Act further complicated government requirements. In the main the Council's central policy, confirmed by ever more careful investigation has been that zoning was NOT DESIRABLE in Grahamstown, but that future expansion should be along the broad lines of government policy. It has taken its responsibilities seriously and so far as civic resources allow has fostered development along lines congenial to government policy.

1. It has opened up a new Native Location beyond the older Location and Fingo Village.
2. It has begun Coloured re-housing N.E. of the Hottentot Village.
3. It has twice met the needs of S.A.S./S.A.R.
  - (a) It has permitted the alienation of a few erven in the Fingo Village, S. of Victoria Road for a bus depot.
  - (b) It has permitted the alienation of a considerable block of Coloured freeholds in the angle between Wylde and Johnstone Streets.

BUT by resolution dated 19th December, 1956 it re-iterated the compromise<sup>x</sup> which the insistence of the Board forced it to adopt, but of which the Board did not approve, and the Municipality clarified its position:

"THAT, while as a policy of future development, this Council adheres to its resolution of 25th January, 1956, to zone only for the three main population groups, it nevertheless wishes to make clear that this resolution does NOT imply approval of any curtailment of, or alteration to, the existing rights of tenure, trade or occupation at present enjoyed by the established Asiatic and Chinese citizens of this community."

This was communicated to the Board. The sequel has been the arrival of a hodge-podge of plans this month. These ignore the policy pursued by the Council, and are not related to the structure of the City.

#### GRAHAMSTOWN AS IT WAS AND IS.

##### I. The Europeans:

Grahamstown is one of the oldest settlements in the Eastern Province and Municipal Government dates back to 1837. Grahamstown was the first town in the Eastern Cape to draw up regulations for the African population and from that day to this social and civic development has been characterised by harmony, common sense, convention and humanity. Given limited resources, it has used them wisely. This is much more important than the proportion of non-Europeans to Europeans.

---

x NOT ACCEPTED by the BOARD.

The old centres of the town were Market Street, Beaufort Street, Bathurst Street, High Street, Hill Street, New Street, African Street, Somerset Street. Here particularly the erven are large and often undivided. Residential districts have spread mainly to the ~~East~~ of the Kowie river and streams that feed it. The European population, slightly less than 9,000, is composed mainly of professional families and those engaged in the distributive trades, building and small crafts. More than 40% of property is non-rateable, and the development of educational institutions in particular, with their residences and fields has again tended to disperse the private houses. Facts like these give the European residential part of the town its characteristic structure.

1. The European residential area is scattered, but there is no public transport.
2. The existence of hospitals (3) and numerous educational institutions has created the need for a multiplicity of shops and services greater and more varied than the permanent population would otherwise require.
3. Grahamstown is not a wealthy municipality.
4. Grahamstown is NON- INDUSTRIAL. There are only two embryo factories that should be mentioned.
  - (a) In Cloncore Street, near the gas-works, there is an Electric Light Bulb Factory.
  - (b) Well beyond the built up area to the East, there is the Grahamstown Potteries.

There is a paper scheme for industrial development towards Goodwin's Kloof.

5. In some of the older parts of the City, chiefly ~~West~~<sup>East</sup> of Bathurst Street there is population congestion, many houses are old and small, but rents are lower and more within the income range of lower income groups of Europeans: in some cases, not income but sentiment, convenience etc. have led to particular concentrations of Europeans. There is little rented property in Grahamstown. With a rapidly rising cost of living, in a City where the average cost of houses lies between £2,000 - £3,000 many EUROPEANS with families cannot afford to move to the fringes whence they would have to hike to work. It is a delusion that Grahamstown is a cheap place in which to live.

It stands to reason that legislation designed primarily for industrial areas which are for the most part wealthier, newer and more highly developed is not applicable here. The future can be provided for. The past ought not to be undone. The tradition is one of social harmony, mutual respect and tolerance. Grahamstown has reason to be proud of institutions such as the Sole Memorial Church (High Street), the Bethlehem Home (New Street), the Good Shepherd School (Huntley Street). These have grown up over the years. Though provided for the service in this instance of the Coloured people, their aim is the service of God, their conduct an example to all. We all want to see the City improve. It cannot do this if we have to destroy what has been painfully built by faith and service through the years. At present there is neither friction with other racial groups nor between Afrikaans speaking and English speaking Europeans between whom there is a lively and living tradition of friendly co-operation.

## II. The Chinese:

There are three Chinese family groups and five separate Chinese households, a total of 32 persons. They are old and respected residents born in Grahamstown. Mr. W. Chan Henry's family immigrated from Mauritius, for instance, before the Anglo-Boer War. W. Chan Henry inherited 12, 13, 14, 15, Fitchat Street from his father. This is the point from which, like his father before him, he conducts a General Dealer's Store, used mainly by Africans and Coloureds and also by some Europeans. Mrs. E. Chan Henry, his brother's widow, has brought up 7 sons; one is the proprietor of the Non-European bus service. Another

has a branch store at 11, Albany Road. Mr. James Chan Junkin, whose family are all minors, has a General Dealer's business at 1a, Eyre Street and is the proprietor of the "Popular Bio" for non-Europeans in the Bolton Hall. His brother Mr. Ten Lee Chan Junkin, trades as a General Dealer at 13, "E" Street (Godlonton Street). He also has a family of minor children Mr. Francis Chan Sam trades as a General Dealer at 25, Wylde Street. His business has already begun to suffer from the allocation of Wylde Street as a railway zone.

Here is a small group. What have they achieved?

1. A reputation for hard work and square dealing.
2. They provide the only general-store facilities in the Fingo Village.
3. They run the only entertainment hall for natives.
4. They meet the needs of the Coloureds, especially those in the smaller income groups.
5. They run the only bus service there is for non-Europeans, and when the municipality opened its new location over the hill, they met the new demand by extending the service at heavy capital cost. For this service, not only the natives, but most householders, business and other institutions have cause to be grateful.

What lies ahead?

- In the proposed zoning
1. They will all be uprooted regardless alike of business and sentiment.
  2. They will be uprooted regardless of the needs of those who have used their services.
  3. They may be located in the block H (see Map) or it may go to the Coloureds.
  4. They may be located in block J (see Map) which may be either a mixed zone, or European or Indian or Coloured.

They will be cut off from their livelihood, segregated, distressed. They have no other trades or skills. How can five families develop separately along their own lines? How are they to exist?

An examination of this one small group brings out vividly HOW COMPLETELY UNREALISTIC THE PROPOSALS ARE.

Can we see in Grahamstown the slow misery which has hit even the larger Chinese communities on the Rand?

### III. The Indians:

There are 27 Indian families: counting women and children there are 171 persons of whom 150 can establish South African descent. There are 23 businesses conducted by Indians<sup>1</sup> who have been in trade or business for an average period of 50 or more years. Of the present stands 12 have been in occupation for periods of 30 - 50 years, and within the last decade only two stands have been taken over, in each case by old established traders. 17 stands are owned by the proprietors of the business there conducted. The family of Mr. F. J. Naidoo, for instance, came to Grahamstown in 1882. He is, it is believed, the sole surviving member of that family.

There is absolutely NO EVIDENCE of encroachment. To the contrary. It may be said that for two generations, without one unpleasant incident, Grahamstown has accepted the Indian business man at what have become customary sites.

European householders depend entirely for laundry services on the five laundries run by Indians. There are no laundries apart from these. European householders, particularly those with small families, or with limited income, or with no cars, find that the retail fruit, vegetable and general stores perform an essential service in a city where, during term-times bulk buying by institutions produces local shortages. Property is well maintained. Recent photographs specially taken show that business premises are well up to local standards.

1. Four families belong to the employee class.

In brief, the Indian traders are old-established reputable business men, who perform essential services to the satisfaction of all who rely on those services. There has been no significant encroachment upon residential districts; there has been no penetration either into new areas or new trades. In more than one case, repairs and renovations to trading premises (F. J. Naidoo at the corner of New Street) has rehabilitated the whole site.

The Indians have no sports facilities. Their community Hall is in Queen Street.

What would happen under the proposed zoning?

1. They would lose their only community centre.
2. Like the Chinese, they would be uprooted from home and livelihood, deprived of the dignity of a useful daily life, serviceable to the community.
3. The zone at present proposed is marked J. for European and/or Coloured, Indian, Chinese.
4. Leaving aside the basic fact that J is slap in the middle of the freehold Hottentot Village, it must be admitted that if the and is intended, they will not be segregated, so that it is doubly futile to move them. Or if the or be intended, they will be segregated in a site where nobody, least of themselves, wants them to be.

What will they do?

One can only imagine they are expected to take in one another's laundry, mend one another's shoes, and take it in turn to go to market with non-existent capital. Or should we advise them to conduct a postal business? Like the Chinese, there is for the Indian a prospect of slow and demoralising deterioration.

#### IV. The Coloureds:

The Coloured population is a much larger group; the total number of persons is in the region of 2,000. Most of them work in shops, hotels, trades; a minority are lorry drivers and some are qualified journey-men. Monthly incomes vary among the male bread-winners from £4 - £30: among the females from £2 - £5.<sup>1</sup> A recent survey of a typical cross section of the Coloured community, estimated that the average wage of the male householder was £6: where the wife was working, or a lodger kept, it was £9. The majority of them belong to lower income groups. The large Coloured community, with some European encouragement, and municipal support has developed different sports, educational and cultural activities. It is difficult for them to develop economically, because there is little industrial development in Grahamstown, and though Coloureds are good workmen, there is a limited number of trade openings even for those with full apprenticeship. Hitherto the Coloured population have enjoyed three advantages.

1. Freehold tenures in the Hottentot Village.
2. Active help and encouragement from the European community.
3. They have been well served by small Indian and Chinese traders who sell in small quantities and whose business stands are convenient. In households where the woman is working, this is a social as well as an economic necessity. It is redundant to re-iterate that as proposed zoning stands, it seems designed to prevent this.

The Hottentot Village and zoning:

In Hintza's War and in the War of the Axe, Hottentot levies played a distinguished rôle not merely in saving Grahamstown, then a key frontier point, but time and again in rescuing the laagers formed by groups of farmers. They drove the transport wagons through; they carried dispatches: they were the reliable auxiliaries of the armed forces. In 1847 therefore, with the approval of the Municipality, at the instance too of people in the Eastern Cape, the Hottentots and the Coloureds were then labelled, were given the Hottentot Village in

---

1. Some are employed in Indian laundries.

perpetual freehold by the Crown.<sup>1</sup> This gave the Coloured people the beginning of the dignity which grows from security, the basic need of all human beings.

#### What is the future?

Part of the Hottentot Village became Scott's Farm, and is now associated too with the nature reserve of the Misses Blackbeard. This is the one beauty spot: it is regarded by all Grahamstonians with affection. Many Coloureds regard it as an amenity; they have grown up round it. It is within the Hottentot Village.

Recently, a large block in the Wylde-Johnstone Streets angle was allotted on request to the S.A.S./S.A.R. The municipality did what it could and pushed ahead with a new Coloured housing scheme rather West of Sugarloaf Hill. Because of the contours, it would be fabulously expensive to develop this further to the West. It cannot develop to the South because of European properties on a new European Housing Estate in the Ayliffe-Fitzroy Streets angle. Much thought will have to be given to the provision of further Coloured housing and amenities which must be within striking distance of their work.

The zoning at J and M USURPS the FREEHOLD HOTTENTOT VILLAGE on either side of the Albany Road. M is marked European or Coloured. J is marked European and/or Coloured/Indian/Chinese. The Europeans do not need it. The Indians and Chinese do not want it. Above all the Coloureds do want it and they need it. K in which there are European stands is part of the Hottentot Village and NS of Fitchat Street seems (supra) to be a natural line of Coloured expansion.

#### The Europeans and the Coloureds:

Because of the need for social harmony, public service and good citizenship, for more than a century and with wholly beneficial result, leading Europeans in church and civil life have helped the Coloureds to help themselves. To date (20.5.57) public attention has been drawn to no less than six buildings and institutions, within what is now pronounced a European zone, to which Coloureds would be denied access.

1. The Sole Memorial Church. (High Street, near the Shaw Hall) This is among the oldest churches in Grahamstown, and one where Coloured People have worshipped for over a century, with approval and without complaint.
2. The Hall belonging to it. A Hall is part of the life of a Church community; it is a centre for discussion, for guilds, for functions. At present it is, at the request of the School Board being used for higher education.
3. St. Clement's Church and Hall. (adjacent to the Railway Stn.) This is a well established, well supported church; for many years the Hall served as a Coloured secondary school; it laid the foundations on which the School Board can in future build.
4. The Good Shepherd School in Huntley Street. This is a primary school for Coloureds and Indians; it is the practising school of Grahamstown Training College.
5. Also imperilled is the Union Congregational Church, Frere Street, with its manse in Currie Street.
6. The Bethlehem Home (New Street) This is an orphanage for Coloured children, supported by voluntary organisation and voluntary contribution. It is one of the happiest places in Grahamstown.

It is impossible to estimate the good which has been done by institutions such as these which act like leaven on the whole Coloured community and are perhaps a challenge to Europeans to recall that service freely offered where it is needed is not only one of the privileges of civilisation, but "blesseth him that gives and him that takes."

---

1. In this connection it may be salutary to remember that many large farms and some townships grew either from the purchase or donation and more rarely trespass on Crown Land.

This Buffer Zone (which the Minister of the Interior once tactfully described as a "marginal strip").

The Fingo Village, like the Hottentot village, was granted in 1847 in PERPETUAL FREEHOLD, because the Fingos, like the Hottentots in Hintza's War and the War of the Axe helped to save the Eastern Districts. In 1846, one of the bleakest winters known, although because of the cessation of trade there was not enough money to provide them with blankets or overcoats, they covered the approaches to Grahamstown, their scouting no less than their fighting was superb.

The Fingo Village developed as a freehold village within the Municipal area of Grahamstown. For the convenient development of transport, the railway line was allowed to traverse it from North to South, to the ~~west~~ side of Lady Grey Street. In the same way, the development of the National Road system, saw the National Road constructed along the line of the older Raglan Road. The Fingo Village is much older than either of these developments. Though in 110 years there have been population changes, the Fingo Village has a community tradition and until 1955 it had clearly a privileged position in law.

The Natives (Urban Areas) Act of 1945 in section 9 (2) h recognised four areas in the Union, wherein Africans, if they lived within the jurisdiction of an urban local authority were exempt from the new location regulations. These were Lady Selborne, parts of Claremont, the Fingo Village and Christianenburg. Questions in the house during the 1955 debates led to a ministerial reply that the legal status of the Fingo Village was formally re-proclaimed as late as April 1st, 1938.

It was when the Group Areas Amendment Act (1955) was passed that provision was made for the Group Areas Board to deal with these areas. But during the debates the Minister stated that the Fingo Village and Christianenburg were so situated that their racial nature would be left unchanged. In a subsequent debate on Lady Selborne, the Minister emphasised that it was obligatory upon the Board to report whether there was alternative accommodation; if African owners were displaced from Lady Selborne, they would be given an opportunity to purchase lots elsewhere within reach of Pretoria.<sup>1</sup> It would seem by analogy that the same obligation would apply to erven in the Fingo Village. But whereas Lady Selborne was demanded for racial redistribution, the present plans for Grahamstown require the blocks ~~East~~ <sup>West</sup> of the Railway Line and ~~West~~ <sup>East</sup> of Orsmond Terrace as a Buffer Zone.

There are conflicting reports as to the official opinion of a well finished buffer zone. Ideally it should be a blank screened by trees, except where it conflicts with the gold laws, or can serve a useful industrial purpose, "such as for factories or slime deposits."<sup>2</sup> Certainly, in January 1955, the Minister stated he did not desire "to sterilize valuable urban land ..... but to allow such ownership and use of such land in the buffer strip as will enhance the value of the strip as a buffer strip."<sup>3</sup> When is a buffer strip enhanced? With respect, it looks as if in Grahamstown the answer is, where there is a 'bus depot.

A buffer zone is a concept. The Erven between Orsmond Terrace and Lady Grey Street are a reality. What is this reality?

What is needed is an erf by erf survey. This would take time which the Group Areas Board has not as yet allowed. In Orsmond Terrace and Raglan Road there is a scattering of European and Coloured stands. Figures widely quoted are Six Europeans, one Indian and 12 Coloureds.

Most of the Erven are owned by Natives in one of the last places in the Union where freehold title is still honoured. Photographs have been taken, notably in Wood Street. The houses are substantial, well tended and so are the gardens. These are the homes of African teachers, African nurses and other leaders of the African community. It has not yet been possible to ascertain rateable values, but the properties are in many cases substantial. There is no alternative freehold site, and if there were, compensation in a market dislocated

1. Newspaper reports place these 5 miles outside the City!
2. Hansard.
3. Hansard.

by uncertainty would not equal the cost of building, fencing etc. Above all, and it must never be forgotten, a home represents family solidarity, small efforts over many years, sometimes from generation to generation. These efforts have been made in the trust that Europeans practice what they preach, namely honour their bond, respect contract, recognise status. It will be tragic for the morale of the whole Fingo Village, if these even have to be abandoned by the most respectable and noteworthy of the Native community.

That is part of the picture. There is more.

If the buffer zone is carefully examined the general loss is also serious. (See Map provided).

1. Land S. of Victoria Road was recently allocated for a bus depôt. This presumably would stand. Somehow it is easier to recognise the importance of buses.
2. The Tuberculosis Hospital and Extension. The Katherine Webb Hospital was founded on a municipal site, originally the site of the old power station. (This explains a few European-occupied cottages to the East of it.) Subsequently, an addition of 20 beds was made, the capital expense being met partly by the Municipality, partly by the Albany Divisional Council. Throughout, there has necessarily been reliance on voluntary contributions. Undeniably, the hospital is a boon to all sections: valued at the minimal it reduces the incidence of infection. It is ideally placed for European supervision, medical attention and official visitation. To destroy and remove it would be wanton destruction, a waste of public money, an attrition of public confidence.
3. The Bolton Hall. This is the only non-European bioscope in Grahamstown. It is well conducted, and the continuation of the cinema is largely due to the enterprise, organisation and investment of the Chinese, James Chan Junkin.
4. Armstrong Square. This is one of two open squares in the entire Fingo Village (cf. Shaw Square). It is used, inter alia, and necessarily used for sports and play by St. Philip's School.
5. Homes for the African Aged. Some years ago the Municipality took advantage of a cheap loan at  $\frac{1}{2}\%$  to buy even then vacant and build 8 cottages for indigent African aged, stranded without family ties. The homes are always full: more such cottages are needed. This loan is not yet repaid. Would the Municipality be able to-day to raise money at the same rate of interest?
6. Off Turpin Street are even bequeathed by Natives to the church of the Province for service among the Africans.

To what end would all these things be sacrificed? How could security for anyone ever be built again?

The whole situation can only be described as tragic and wanton. This is but one small corner of a great country. The happiness, and in time the security of this community, and the smaller communities within it, turn on our power to persuade and convert the Group Areas Board that zoning is here impractical and redundant, and that the present policy of the Municipality is to move gradually, as resources allow; to maintain the status quo and develop in planned zones. Financial resources are already strained to the uttermost by housing schemes, library schemes and a realistic approach to local needs. The present crisis does more. Fear and uncertainty haunt us. We must face our responsibilities.

Finally this also must be faced. Population in any town is not static. Any plan for social development must face this, must allow for elasticity and for continent development. If for instance,



Goodwin's Kloof developed into a sizeable industrial site, then new locations and housing schemes would probably have to be planned in quite a new arena, which would make a premature scrambling of population on the West of the Kowie stream, very possibly a monumental folly. If Grahamstown adopts zoning now on present plans, the past will be undone. The present will be wrought with misery and any future development, would be jeopardised.

To do this is not only wrong, it is foolish.

#### Some Important Publications.

The Group Areas Act. Its effects on Human Beings.	Muriel Horrell	10/-
Survey of Race Relations in South Africa.	Muriel Horrell	10/-
The Native Laws Amendment Bill.	S.A. Institute Race Relations	2/-
Explanation of the Group Areas Act 1950.	Butterworth Durban	4/-
Kenneth Kirkwood. The Group Areas Act.	S.A. Institute Race Relations	2/6

All these can be ordered in Grahamstown.

Some are already obtainable.

Omission: Mention was not made of the Butter and Ice Factory  
(see Map.)