

# THE HISTORY OF NATURE CONSERVATION IN SANDTON

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It is almost self-evident that one of the most fundamental historical relationships is that between man and his physical environment. This nexus has been recognised by many historians, archaeologists, and social scientists in studying "traditional" African societies on the sub-continent. However, although local and regional history is becoming increasingly popular in South Africa, the focus has been on social and political relationships in this context. Of the relationship between man and his environment, both built and natural, local and regional historians have had remarkably little to say.

This omission is all the more manifest given the obvious need and importance of such a historical analysis. To a very real degree, man's immediate environment is a product of history: man alone is able to consciously modify his environment, to shape it and to plan it, and to that extent it may be regarded as an image of himself. Nowhere is this more apparent than in an urban setting. Yet it is the sociologists, town planners, and social psychologists who have taken the lead in this field. Many of them have argued that "...the built environment is becoming increasingly inadequate as a context for living",<sup>1</sup> a view which itself may have implications for local and regional historical studies.

Although these themes are important, it is not the purpose of this paper to explore them further. The aim here is more modest: to examine one of the pioneering efforts at urban nature conservation in South Africa. In view of the significance which South Africa's particularly rich fauna and flora assume in art, literature, national symbols, and folk mythology, the modelling of our towns on North American and European cities is surprising. Possibly because this country is still well endowed with open spaces close to towns, the preservation of the natural environment within the confines of our cities has not been a priority. Recently, however, the idea has gained support.

One of the leaders in urban nature conservation was the town of Sandton, founded in 1969 by combining the dormitory suburbs and small-holdings north of Johannesburg to form an independent local authority. During the 1970s ambitious plans were conceived to preserve the rural character of the town and to proclaim significant areas as nature reserves. It was not that Sandton was geographically exceptional, or that rare plants and animals could be found there. It was rather the realisation that the large-scale industrialisation of the Witwatersrand and its remarkable population growth would entail the destruction of what could be regarded as "typical" scenery and animal and plant life.

Less than a decade later the emphasis of local government in the town has changed, and conservation is no longer a priority. Simultaneously with this loss of local initiative has come a statement of concern from the central government in a White Paper that "...existing legislation for the conservation of the cultural and environmental elements is inadequate at the local, provincial and central government levels and co-ordination is not satisfactory". Consequently, the government intends to "...acquire more power to oppose the impact of the

demands of development"<sup>2</sup> and it proposes that direction and policy in environmental conservation should be enforced centrally, thus limiting local and provincial autonomy.

Although not particularly striking, the topography of Sandton is interesting. Three streams, part of the Limpopo basin catchment area, rise to the south of the town and flow generally northwards through it. These are the Braamfontein Spruit, Sandspruit and the Jukskei. The Klein Jukskei forms a small portion of the Western boundary. The confluence of the Braamfontein Spruit and the Sandspruit occurs just within the northern boundary of Sandton. Other rivulets, some annual rather than perennial, flow into these main streams.<sup>3</sup> Between the Braamfontein Spruit, the Sandspruit and the Jukskei, the land undulates gently; under natural conditions it would be grassland. Regular highveld fires in the past destroyed young trees and consequently the grassland dominated. Old indigenous trees are found only along streams or on rocky outcrops. Between the Braamfontein Spruit and the Klein Jukskei there is a high rocky ridge,<sup>4</sup> the location of large trees and the last refuge of some of the animals like hyrax (*Procavia capensis* Pallas), duiker (*Sylvicapra grimmia* Linnaeus) and jackal (*Canis mesomelas* Schreber), which were once common in the area.

There are three other features of note: Lone Hill Koppie (of particular geological interest),<sup>5</sup> Norscot Koppies, and Khyber Rock. The last-named, part of the country estate "Rocklands" which Sir Thomas Cullinan owned from 1906 to 1936,<sup>6</sup> has been obliterated by houses of unusual architecture.

Human habitation of the Witwatersrand dates back into pre-history.<sup>7</sup> There is archaeological evidence that Stone Age hunter-gatherers used Lone Hill on at least three separate occasions from 75 000 to 50 000 B.C. Potsherds, iron slag, and stone walls found on the koppie indicate that Iron Age man, probably about three to four hundred years ago, found shelter among the boulders

\*I would like to thank the Sandton Town Council for allowing me research facilities; Mrs H. Senger, Miss B. Price and Clr N.D. Panton-Jones for providing additional material; and my colleagues, Messrs P.J. Colenbrander, G.C. Cuthbertson, and A. Grundlingh reviewing the manuscript.

W.H. ITTELSON *et al.*, *An introduction to environmental psychology* (New York, 1974), p.3.

2. DEPARTMENT OF WATER AFFAIRS, FORESTRY AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION, *White paper on a national policy regarding environmental conservation 1980*, paragraphs 4.3.1. and 4.3.2.
3. W. BODMAN, *The northflowing rivers of the central Witwatersrand* (Johannesburg, 1981), p.10.
4. The altitude of this ridge is 1 588 m a.s.l., 188 m above the level of the confluence of the Braamfontein Spruit and the Sandspruit. *Topographical Survey 1:50 000 2628 Johannesburg*, 5th edition, 1978.
5. Professor R.J. Mason (personal communication).
6. N. HELME, *Thomas Major Cullinan: a biography* (Johannesburg, 1974), pp.174-175.
7. R.J. MASON, *Prehistory of the Transvaal* (Johannesburg, 1969), p.27.



*Khyber Rock — now a prestige suburb which boasts houses of interesting and unusual architecture, but once a beautiful, extensive outcrop of rocks and boulders, with large trees which provided shelter for animals and birds. It once formed part of the country estate of Sir Thomas Cullinan.*

PHOTOGRAPH: V.C. CARRUTHERS

and possibly food on the plains below. More recently, during the 19th century, African pastoralists grazed their cattle in the vicinity in the summer months.<sup>8</sup> All these people, even those with herds, did little to disturb the ecological balance, being almost a part of it themselves.

The first white farms in this area were allocated in the 1850s: Zandfontein to P. Nel; Driefontein to L.P. van Vuuren; Rietfontein to J.P. Badenhorst and Witkoppen to P.E. Labuscagne.<sup>9</sup> Although small portions of other old farms are included in the Sandton municipal area, these four comprise most of the town. Each of these farms was about 4 000 morgen in extent, and because the highveld is not suitable for intensive farming without the use of sophisticated machinery, the major portion of the land was left unspoilt. At the turn of the century, partition and sub-division began on an ever-increasing scale,



*The only known graves of Sandton's Voortrekker pioneers, Jan and Maria Esterhuysen settled on Zandfontein after trekking to the Transvaal with the Retief party. The headstone was erected by Esterhuysen descendants on the occasion of the Trek centenary in 1938.*

PHOTOGRAPH: V.C. CARRUTHERS

and even at this time townships like Edenburg (later known as Rivonia), Parkmore, and Marlboro were proclaimed.

The growth of Sandton was influenced primarily by Johannesburg, which, as it expanded, required more produce from the land. So the Sandton area developed into smallholdings which fed the burgeoning city community to the south. Until well into the 1960s, market gardens and dairy farms were a common sight. These smallholders were the first people to alter the environment substantially, with their crops and flower fields, wattle, pine, and poplar trees.

But the district remained predominantly rural, if not natural, and it was in pursuit of this atmosphere that townfolk flocked to country tea gardens, such as Pilkyvale and Sandown, over weekends to escape the confines of the city. It was not long before city dwellers began to settle north of the Johannesburg limits in order to enjoy the countryside on a more permanent basis.<sup>10</sup> In the establishment of early townships, no provision was made



*Pilkyvale, one of the country tea gardens in Sandton was frequented during the 1920s, 30s and 40s by city dwellers. The building was demolished during 1981 to make way for a major road and the well-established garden and large trees which surrounded it have been bulldozed.*

PHOTOGRAPH: V.C. CARRUTHERS

for public open space of any kind. Indeed, it was some time before the threat to the open spaces was realised. It took longer to define the difference between public open parkland (with planted trees, lawns and flowers) and natural areas or untouched witness areas, where conservation rather than development was the aim.

The first township owner to preserve natural features was S.A. Townships, the developer of Bryanston, which in 1940 set aside areas within the township for parkland and, in addition, conserved the rivers and watercourses. In fact, Bryanston was laid out on modern

8. Sandton Town Council (S.T.C.), R.J. Mason, *Brief report on archaeology of Lone Hill or Leeukop for Sandton Town Council* (1977).
9. Deeds Office, Pretoria, farm files Rietfontein 21R, Witkoppen 1941Q, Zandfontein 421R, Driefontein 411R. It would appear that land grants were formalised rather than made at this time. It is recorded, for instance, that Rietfontein was granted by the government to J.P. Badenhorst, then to P.R. Botha and then partitioned on 14.7.1859; Witkoppen was granted to P.R. Labuscagne and then transferred to P.P. Roos and C.J. Roos on 26.7.1859; Zandfontein to P. Nel and J.C. Esterhuysen on 15.8.1859; and Driefontein to L.P. van Vuuren, then J.J.C. Erasmus and then J.L. Pretorius on 5.7.1859.
10. E.J. CARRUTHERS, *The growth of local self-government in the peri-urban areas north of Johannesburg, 1939 to 1969, Contree* 10, July 1981, p.16.

town-planning lines, with a central core of large properties, surrounded by smaller ones, which took account of the varying needs of the people wishing to live there.<sup>11</sup>

Until 1943, Sandton was administered by the provincial authorities as a rural (farmland) area. At that time, the Peri-Urban Areas Health Board was created to assume overall responsibility for local government in areas with significant populations but not forming part of any local authority. Therefore, for the first time, residents were subjected to building regulations, by-laws of all kinds, rates, and urban planning.<sup>12</sup> One of the first tasks assumed by the Board was the preparation of the town-planning scheme. This was published in 1950 and thereafter the provision of minimal parkland became a legal requirement.<sup>13</sup> But this town-planning scheme caused a huge uproar because provision had been made for commercial development, smaller plots and major roads, and residents objected strongly to the increased development. There were newspaper headlines such as "Residents to form body to fight Peri-Urban plan" and there was even talk of breaking away from the Board because of it.<sup>14</sup>

The publication of the first town-planning scheme made residents, all of whom had been attracted to the area to enjoy the benefits of rural life, aware that land was becoming scarcer and more expensive. This was especially true in the Sandown, Sandhurst, Rivonia, Bryanston and Morningside areas, for to the north-east, in Linbro Park and Buccleuch, the pattern of smallholdings had not then been disturbed.

The Inanda Club was begun in 1934<sup>15</sup> and by the 1950s Sandton had become the haunt of the "horsey set" who enjoyed riding in the congenial country atmosphere not far from Johannesburg. It is when resources become scarce that their values rise and the equestrians were one of the first groups to realise the threat which urban development would pose to riding and to the open spaces required for it. In 1952 Col. Faunce Tainton of the Rand Hunt asked the Northern Johannesburg Local Area Committee (one of the local arms of the Peri-Urban Board) to secure continuous bridle-paths before development took place. The meetings necessary to conclude the proposals proved impossible to arrange and nothing came of the idea. A fresh application for bridle-paths came in 1963. Again nothing came of it, although it spurred an investigation into parkland generally. This report took note of the growing population and the necessity to acquire ground for parkland, especially because the first applications for flat rights were being made.<sup>16</sup>

The economic buoyancy of the mid-1960s, resulting in a building boom and more township proclamations, made the problem of preserving or declaring parkland more acute, but little action was taken to rectify the position. In July 1969 the entire problem was dumped, unresolved, into the lap of the fledgling municipality of Sandton. The establishment of a separate town council for Sandton was initiated by residents wanting to control their own affairs without reference to the Peri-Urban Areas Health Board in Pretoria. After an intensive investigation, the Transvaal provincial authorities agreed.<sup>17</sup> Now the opportunity presented itself for the new town council, representing the wishes of the residents, to shape their urban environment. Their philosophy of rural living was entrenched in the town's coat-of-arms, the supporters of which are horses indicating the interest in riding activities in the area. The shield is divided into three by a broad chevron, upon which the rivers and springs are

depicted. Each of the three divisions represents an important facet of Sandton. One is a gold ingot — the tie with Johannesburg — while the other two signify Sandton's natural heritage with a hoopoe bird (*Upupa epops* Linn.) and a common sugarbush (*Protea caffra* Meisn.). The base is green for "the rural character of green fields of the area...."<sup>18</sup>



The Sandton coat-of-arms in which the philosophy of rural life is entrenched. Horses are used as supporters; the roundels Barry wavy in the chevron represent the springs and rivers; and the hoopoe bird and common sugarbush together with a green (grassy) base signify the natural beauty of the town. The gold ingot depicts the link with Johannesburg.

One of the first concerns of the Council was the acquisition of land for recreational and parkland purposes and in April 1970 a report was prepared.<sup>19</sup> At about the same time some residents, like Mrs H. Senger and Mrs B. Hutchinson, aware that economic pressures might tempt the Council to increase population densities, suggested suitable areas for conservation, ways of acquiring them, and proposals for their use. Not only was the purchase of land mooted, but some of the other ideas included corridors of indigenous vegetation on adjoining private properties to attract birds and provide a green belt.<sup>20</sup> The Wildlife Protection and Conservation Society of South

11. W.R. HEDDING, *The story of Bryanston* (Sandton, 1978), *passim*.
12. TRANSVAAL PROVINCIAL COUNCIL, Ordinance 20 of 1943.
13. TRANSVAAL BOARD FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF PERI-URBAN AREAS (T.B.D.P.U.A.), formerly known as the Peri-Urban Areas Health Board (P.U.A.H.B.), *Annual report of the chief engineer July 1950 — June 1951*, p.13.
14. *Rand Daily Mail*, 23.5.1950 and 27.5.1950.
15. *The Star*, 20.8.1981.
16. T.B.D.P.U.A., P.U.A.H.B. minutes, 372nd meeting, 6.12.1963.
17. E.J. CARRUTHERS, *The growth of local self government ...*, *Contree* 10, July 1981.
18. S.T.C., *History and explanation of the coat of arms*, n.d.
19. S.T.C., 20th ordinary council meeting, 22.3.1971.
20. S.T.C., file 1/301/1, Vol. I, correspondence July 1970 — February 1971.

Africa was also involved in an attempt to conserve the Sandton environment.<sup>21</sup>

These steps mark the first real interest shown in conservation rather than the acquisition of parkland and its development for recreational pursuits. So great was the Council's enthusiasm for these ideas that its town-planning consultant took a bold step and asked the Transvaal Nature Conservation Division (the Provincial authority) for its involvement, co-operation, and advice. The Division accepted the invitation enthusiastically and in January 1971 a comprehensive report on the possibilities of nature conservation in Sandton was submitted.<sup>22</sup> This unique report represented a timely opportunity to marry the urban and the natural environment, and put "the rustle back into the local countryside and the sparkle back into its rivers".<sup>23</sup> One notable feature of the report was its recognition that the large residential stands provided family recreational areas and that the need for wilderness rather than formal parks was paramount. It was recommended that all the rivers, Lone Hill, Norscot Koppies, "Suikerbossie" and Rietfontein Koppies (the last two being unspoilt areas along the major ridge) be preserved; that a small stocked game reserve representing grassveld fire sub-climax vegetation and fauna be set up in Gallo Manor; that an arboretum be created in Rivonia; that eight bird sanctuaries be secured (including a fairly large area at Lombardy suitable for waterfowl), and a number of small, but environmentally significant, erven. The report gave detailed advice on management, administration, fencing etc.<sup>24</sup> As the report coincided with a period of economic recession, the necessary land would not have been very expensive to acquire. Sandton's vision was hailed in the press and encouragement was given by conservation bodies. One, the Johannesburg Council for Natural History, wrote: "Your council has gained the reputation of having adopted from the outset a progressive attitude towards ensuring that a proper balance between built-up areas and parkland is maintained". The Johannesburg City Council also welcomed Sandton's intentions to set aside conservation areas.<sup>25</sup>

In March 1971 the Council discussed an overall development plan for Sandton which included parkland proposals. The statement was made that "Mr Milstein's comprehensive and detailed report and his interesting discussions with officials and public-spirited residents has had a considerable influence on the development of the proposed parks system".<sup>26</sup>

The Council agreed enthusiastically to many of the Milstein proposals — strips of land would be secured to protect river trails; Rietfontein Koppie, Lone Hill, and Norscot Koppies would be acquired; an arboretum would be developed; the waterfowl sanctuary and other bird sanctuaries were approved and a number of the other proposals were welcomed. Only the game reserve in Gallo Manor was rejected outright on the grounds that it was too ambitious a scheme.<sup>27</sup>

The Milstein report sparked off considerable public and council involvement in environmental concerns. In June 1971, the Sandton Nature Conservation Society was founded after a meeting between officials, councillors, and residents at the Balalaika Hotel. The Society was formed to assist with carrying out the Milstein proposals and to advise the Council on matters of environmental conservation. The Society helped the Council in fencing bird sanctuaries, establishing Norscot as a reserve, and appointing honorary wardens.<sup>28</sup> The Town Council set

up a Section 59 Parkland and River Trails Investigation Sub-committee in August 1971, upon which councillors, officials, and members of the public were to serve.<sup>29</sup>

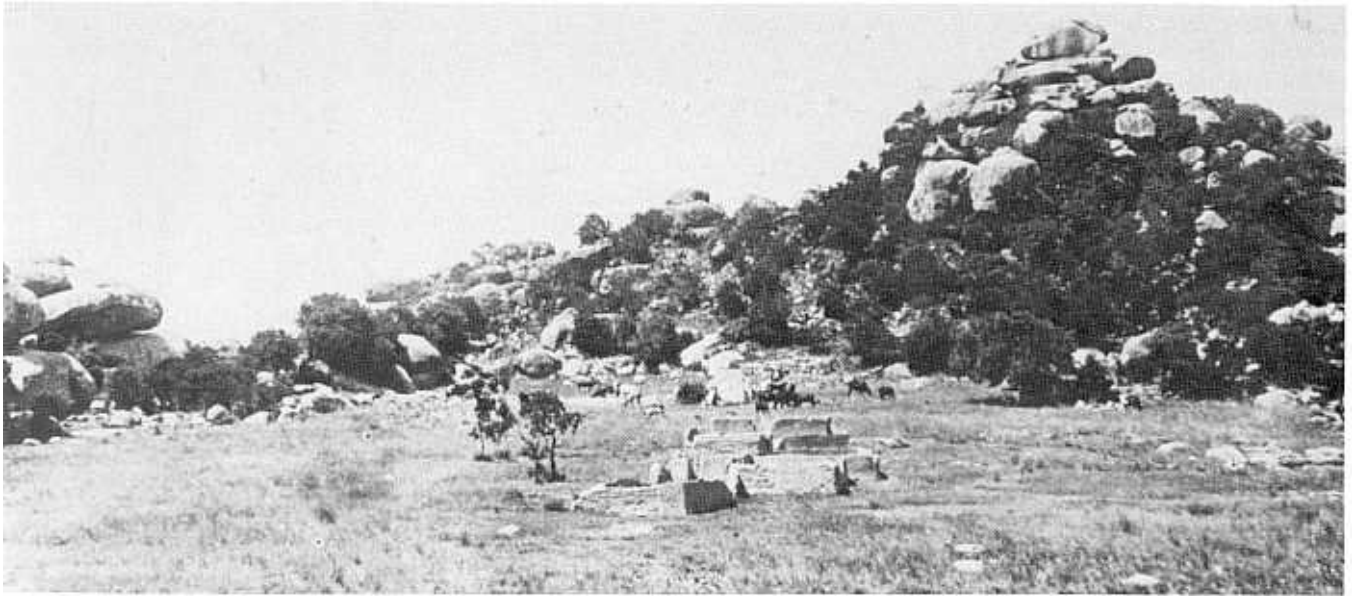
Sandton's most important civic organisation, the Sandton Civic Foundation, was also created in response to the Milstein report. The genesis of the Foundation is directly attributable to Mr Eric Gallo, who, together with men such as Mr "Punch" Barlow, established the Foundation on 10 December 1973 to "...preserve and restore indigenous trees and shrubs along the river trails"; "save hundreds of areas ... for the preservation of the natural beauty of the area"; and to ensure that "...the town should not attempt to compete with other towns and cities for industries and commercial enterprises...". The Sandton Foundation aimed to keep the area "...in the same way in which we found it". Another objective was to provide social, cultural, and artistic amenities.<sup>30</sup>

Again accolades were heaped on Sandton by residents and politicians alike for its far-sightedness and for the willingness of its citizens to become involved in civic matters. The Council allied itself to the aims of the Sandton Nature Conservation Society and the Sandton Foundation by declaring "Our objective is to provide the sophisticated services and facilities associated with a modern town, while retaining the open space, fresh air, and greenery characteristic of country living". The motto "Where the country meets the town" was adopted.<sup>31</sup>

In 1974, at the instance of the Parkland and River Trails Investigation Sub-committee, a brochure with this title was published by the Council, explaining the parks and river trails plans and asking residents for their support and assistance — particularly those who lived along the rivers.<sup>32</sup> The question of a stabling area for the riding fraternity was raised by this Sub-committee and negotiations on this issue took place between 1972 and 1974. While the provision of a stabling area is not nature conservation, the fact that bridle-paths would be established throughout the town would ensure that continuous open areas would survive. The Sub-committee also looked at the problems of urban pollution and ways of solving them.<sup>33</sup>

Despite this good record, in March 1974 the Council reversed its decision to create an arboretum;<sup>34</sup> the question of the waterfowl sanctuary became increasingly complicated in negotiations with the City Council of Johannesburg (the owners of the ground) and the Department of Planning and the Environment;<sup>35</sup> there was talk

21. Mrs H. Senger (personal communication).
22. Transvaal Division of Nature Conservation, P. le S. Milstein, *The possibilities of nature conservation integration in the municipal area of Sandton* (n.d.).
23. *The Star*, 24.11.1971.
24. Transvaal Division of Nature Conservation, P. le S. Milstein, *The possibilities ...*
25. S.T.C., file 1/301/1, Vol. I, *passim*.
26. S.T.C., 20th ordinary council meeting, 22.3.1971, annexure "Overall development plan for Sandton", p.7.
27. S.T.C., file 1/301/1, Vol. I: Town Clerk — J.D. Carr, 10.5.1971.
28. S.T.C., file 1/301/1, Vol. I; and 90th management committee meeting, 26.8.1971.
29. S.T.C., Section 59 Parkland and River Trails Investigation Sub-committee: Acting Town Clerk — N. Panton-Jones, 15.9.1971.
30. *Rand Daily Mail*, 11.12.1973; *Redhill Reporter*, Nov. 1974.
31. Sandton Civic Foundation, Press Cuttings file, *passim*.
32. S.T.C., *Where the country meets the town*, 1974.
33. S.T.C., Section 59 sub-committee, minutes.
34. S.T.C., File 1/203/1, Vol. I.
35. S.T.C., File 1/301/1, 209th management committee meeting, 5.10.1976.

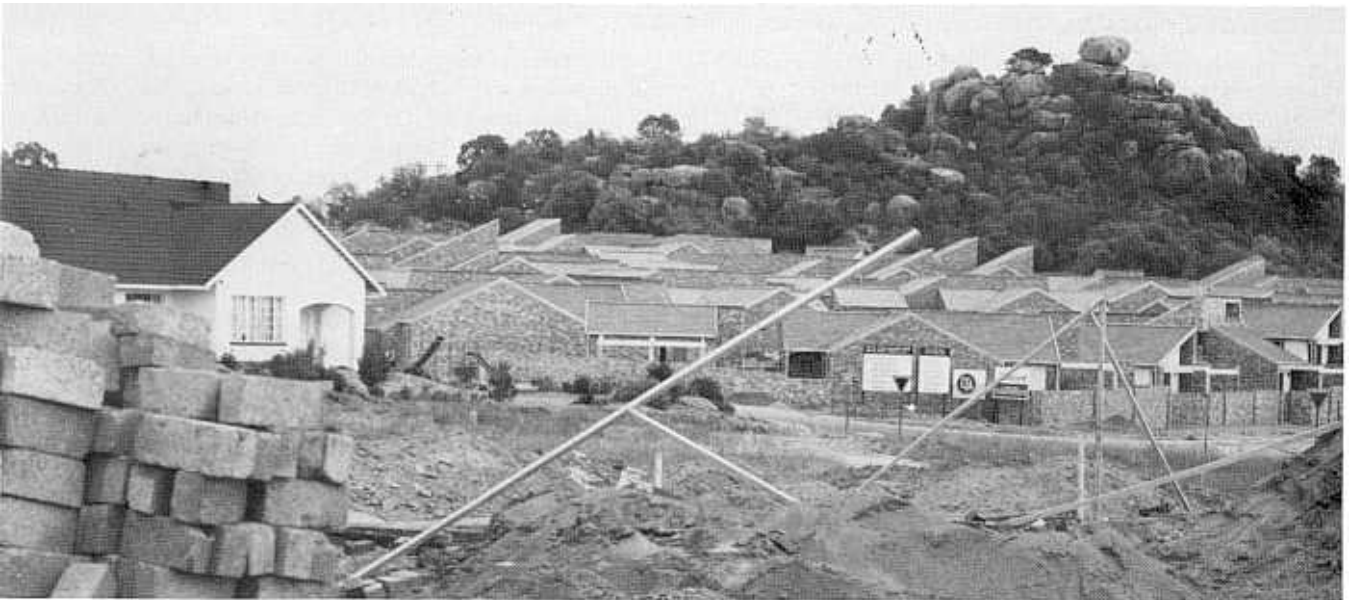


*Lone Hill, a single koppie on which evidence has been found of human habitation from about 75 000 — 50 000 B.C. Stone Age and Iron Age people have utilised this hill over the centuries. For many years it looked like the above photograph.*

PHOTOGRAPH: From: J. MARAIS LOUW,  
Wagon tracks and orchards (Johannesburg 1976).

*In 1971 it was recommended that Lone Hill and a large portion of surrounding ground be declared a nature reserve, but township development has been permitted to the base of the hill. Artefacts have been vandalised and the few remaining animals have disappeared.*

PHOTOGRAPH: V.C. CARRUTHERS



of a housing development on Lone Hill;<sup>36</sup> negotiations for a stabling area collapsed,<sup>37</sup> and Escom decided to erect huge pylons along the Braamfontein Spruit.<sup>38</sup> The objections raised by the Council and Sandton residents forced Escom to scale down their plans, but pylons were erected nevertheless.<sup>39</sup>

However, Norscot Koppies was declared a nature reserve together with some of the surrounding ground, and steps were taken to acquire Rietfontein Koppies. A number of the bird sanctuaries were also declared and fenced.<sup>40</sup> The slow workings of municipal bureaucracy, particularly in the acquisition of land, took its toll, and enthusiasm from both the public and the Council seems to have waned in the years that followed. There was very little response to the brochure *Where the country meets the town*,<sup>41</sup> a Management Committee resolution of 1976 asking the Johannesburg City Council for a lease of the Lombardy ground for the waterfowl sanctuary was only put into effect in 1978, and by that time the Department of Planning and the Environment had permitted

township development close to the site (opposed by the Sandton Town Council), and the idea was rendered impracticable.<sup>42</sup> In 1977 the Rietfontein Koppies proposal was spoilt by plans for a provincial road and by the excision of much ground from the reserve.<sup>43</sup> The emphasis of the Sandton Foundation also altered that year, when the "Tidy Sandton Now" and "Enviro" programmes were eclipsed by the collection of funds for a mobile hospital.<sup>44</sup>

The pylon question had focussed attention on the river trails and in June 1976 the Council discussed plans

36. *The Star*, 25.2.1974 and 26.3.1974.

37. S.T.C., 153rd management committee meeting, 28.3.1974.

38. *Rand Daily Mail*, November 1975: "Fighting the pylons".

39. *The Star*, 5.6.1976: editorial.

40. S.T.C., 231st management committee meeting, 13.10.1977.

41. S.T.C., Section 59 sub-committee, 17th meeting, 30.4.1975.

42. S.T.C., File 1/301/1, correspondence and resolutions, 5.10.1976 to 15.2.1981.

43. S.T.C., 113th special council meeting, 24.10.1977.

44. *Sandton Chronicle*, end-June 1975 and end-October 1977.



*A portion of the Braamfontein Spruit as it flows through Bryanston. The necessity for conserving this spruit as parkland was recognised many years ago, but it has taken the combined interest of Johannesburg, Randburg, and Sandton to make such parkland a reality.*

PHOTOGRAPH: V.C. CARRUTHERS

to develop them.<sup>45</sup> Action was forestalled in July that year by the interest of Johannesburg in a comprehensive scheme for preserving the total Witwatersrand river system, and a year later by the establishment of the Coordinating Committee for Community Open Space (COCCOS) to liaise between Johannesburg, Randburg and Sandton on the matter.<sup>46</sup> In fact, the Braamfontein Spruit, which flows through all three municipalities, has been the only Sandton river involved in this scheme, and has been secured by the active co-operation of all the municipalities, and not by Sandton alone. It is however possible that, this having been achieved, the other rivers will receive the same attention, thus creating belts of natural beauty through the town rather than concrete canals.<sup>47</sup>

Resulting from the interest of Johannesburg and Randburg in the Braamfontein Spruit, the Council asked for another report on public open space in Sandton in July 1977; but consideration of it was repeatedly deferred until it was finally abandoned in March 1978 in favour of a general development plan which would deal fully with parkland.<sup>48</sup>

In 1979 a new development plan, which conflicted with entrenched Sandton principles, was accepted by the Town Council with only one dissenting voice, that of Clr N.D. Panton-Jones. It encourages increased commercial and residential development (in an effort to reduce individual rates) without providing for additional open space of any kind within proclaimed townships, let alone nature reserves. The statement has been made that when new townships are proclaimed, parkland will be acquired to create continuous strips, and in older townships, lacking adequate parkland, land will be bought when possible, particularly along the rivers.<sup>49</sup> But through the increase in population densities and en-

couragement of commercial development, the opportunity to preserve the country lifestyle is being lost. Obviously wilderness areas within urban environments can only be secured before development takes place, and the monetary cost has to be weighed against the future cost in social, psychological, and ecological terms. Although the existence of natural areas produces no immediate revenue, other land values are enhanced and the quality of life improves.

In October 1979 the *Financial Mail* summed up the situation by observing that Sandton's first decade had been "...marked by a struggle for supremacy between two viewpoints" — one against unbridled development, the other encouraging it.<sup>50</sup> The second point of view, with its serious implications for nature conservation, had become paramount. Sandton may well be on its way to becoming a town of the type it has scorned, "..., another overgrown adolescent Reef town rapidly becoming an amorphous suburban sprawl from one end to the other".<sup>51</sup>

Regional co-operation may be the means for conserving the natural habitat in towns. There is evidence of this in the combined efforts of Johannesburg, Randburg, and Sandton to restore the Braamfontein Spruit; in the establishment of the National Committee for Nature Conservation (NAKOR) by the office of the Prime Minister to regulate the activities of government agencies; and in the proposed compilation of the National Atlas of Critical Environment Components by the Department of Water Affairs, Forestry and Environmental Conservation. ■

45. S.T.C., File 1/203/1, 202nd management committee meeting, 24.6.1976.
46. S.T.C., 232nd management committee meeting, 27.10.1977.
47. *The Star*, 14.10.1981: editorial. The Braamfontein Spruit Trail was officially opened on 17.10.1981.
48. S.T.C., 226th management committee meeting, 21.7.1977; 229th, 8.9.1977; 236th, 26.1.1978; 239th, 9.3.1978.
49. *Rand Daily Mail*, 24.7.1979.
50. *Financial Mail*, 12.10.1979: special report.
51. *The Star*, 25.2.1972.