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# *The Integrated Community Apartheid Could Not Destroy: the Warwick Avenue Triangle in Durban\**

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*In the urban literature in South Africa considerable attention has focused on the forced relocation and destruction of integrated communities under apartheid. The best known examples are the destruction of Sophiatown in Johannesburg, the razing of District Six in Cape Town and the annihilation of Cato Manor in Durban. In contrast, this paper focuses on the Warwick Avenue Triangle (WAT), an inner city community, and attempts to explain how one of the oldest mixed residential areas in Durban defied the apartheid state's strategies to destroy it. The paper traces the history of integrated residential development in the area and examines how slum clearance laws, the Group Areas Act and urban renewal programmes were used to try to destroy the community. Attempts by the residents to resist removal and relocation are assessed. Reconstruction and planning strategies to redevelop the area in the post-apartheid era are evaluated.*

## Introduction

The early 1980s saw the emergence of new geographical studies on South Africa's urban history by local and overseas scholars. This burgeoning literature was profoundly influenced by social historians.<sup>1</sup> One of the main aims of the new historical geography has been to examine the connection between the spatial, social and racial divisions within South African society. A common theme in South African urban literature is the forced relocation and the destruction of integrated communities under apartheid:

A central theme in the history of black urban communities in South Africa was ... their attempts to create and defend illegal space. A central thrust of state urban policy was equally to close down such communities and to quarantine them in localities selected by the state where they could be more effectively regimented and controlled.<sup>2</sup>

The best known examples are the destruction of Sophiatown in Johannesburg,<sup>4</sup> the razing

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\* A version of this paper was presented at the South African Geography Society Conference, 29 June–3 July 1997, Pretoria. I wish to thank David Simon for his comments and encouragement, as well as Debby Potts and the anonymous referees for their helpful suggestions.

1 See J. Crush, 'The New South African Historical Geography', in J. McCarthy and C.M. Rogerson (eds), *South African Human Geography* (Cape Town, 1992), pp. 10–37.

2 P. Bonner and T. Lodge, 'Introduction', in P. Bonner *et al.* (eds), *Holding Their Ground: Class, Locality and Culture in 19th and 20th Century South Africa* (Johannesburg, 1989), p. 1.

3 See A. Proctor, 'Class Struggle, Segregation and the City: a History of Sophiatown 1905–1940', in B. Bozzoli (ed), *Labour, Townships and Protest: Studies in the Social History of the Witwatersrand* (Johannesburg, 1979), pp. 49–89; T. Lodge, 'The Destruction of Sophiatown', in B. Bozzoli (ed), *Town and Countryside in the Transvaal* (Johannesburg, 1983), pp. 337–364; D.M. Hart and G.H. Pirie, 'The Sight and Soul of Sophiatown', *Geographical Review*, 74 (1984), pp. 38–47.

of District Six in Cape Town,<sup>4</sup> and the annihilation of Cato Manor in Durban.<sup>5</sup> However, the goal of complete segregation eluded the apartheid state. In spite of the use of a 'formidable array of coercive measures', relics of earlier integrated areas survived annihilation.<sup>6</sup> This paper focuses on one such area, the Warwick Avenue Triangle (WAT), an inner city community, and attempts to explain how one of the oldest mixed residential areas in Durban defied the apartheid state's strategies to destroy it.

The WAT was suitably located for low income residents, being contiguous to public transport facilities and the Indian market, and was bounded by the Western Freeway, Berea Road and Warwick Avenue (Figure 1). It represented the 'city centre' for the majority of the low income people in the Durban area. The WAT had flourished as a working class residential area between 1900 and 1940, and most of the flats and houses in the area were built during this period. However, the 'resurgence of racially based politics in South Africa since then ... curbed its organic development'.<sup>7</sup> Although by 1988 the WAT was 'no longer reflected on maps', it was still home to people whose families had settled there since the turn of the century.<sup>8</sup> In the late 1980s, the WAT was described as 'no man's land' and one of 'the city's most neglected areas'.<sup>9</sup> By contrast, in the 1990s, there has been a change in perception and the urban landscape in the WAT was described as reflecting a 'vibrant ethnicity sorely lacking in our multi-cultural city'.<sup>10</sup> In many ways this new perception reflects the colloquial term often used when referring to the WAT – the 'Casbah'.<sup>11</sup> Casbah normally refers to the exotic market places of north Africa and the Middle East but, as Farr shows, the term had 'been adopted over recent years both by residents and media when referring to this area [the WAT] in Durban'.<sup>12</sup>

The paper is divided into four sections. The first part traces the history of integrated residential development in the area. The second section examines how slum clearance laws, the Group Areas Act and urban renewal programmes were used to try to destroy the community. Attempts by the residents to resist removal and relocation are assessed in the third section. Finally, reconstruction and planning strategies to redevelop the area in the post-apartheid era are evaluated. The primary sources for this paper were official government reports, records of the Durban City Council (DCC), memoranda prepared by civic organisations and newspaper articles.<sup>13</sup>

4 D.M. Hart, 'Political Manipulation of Urban Space: the Razing of District Six Cape Town', *Urban Geography*, 9 (1988), pp. 603–628; S. Jeppie and C. Soudien (eds), *The Struggle for District Six: Past and Present* (Cape Town, 1990).

5 I: A. Edwards, 'Cato Manor: Cruel Past, Pivotal Future', *Review of African Political Economy*, 61 (1994), pp. 415–427; B. Maharaj, 'The Group Areas Act and Community Destruction in South Africa: the Struggle for Cato Manor in Durban', *Urban Forum*, 5 (1994), pp. 1–25.

6 A.J. Christopher, 'Apartheid and Urban Segregation Levels in South Africa', *Urban Studies*, 27 (1990), pp. 421–440.

7 Durban Central Residents' Association Records [hereafter DCRA], 'Proposals for the redevelopment of the WAT', by Paul Mikula Associates, Architects and Town Planners, n.d.

8 DCRA, 'Warwick Avenue Triangle: the Case for Integrated Zoning', memorandum prepared by the Durban Central Residents' Association, 14 April 1988, para. 5.

9 'Casbah: Mixed and So Happy', *Daily News*, 13 May 1987.

10 'Striking the Right Triangle Note', *Daily News*, 11 February 1997.

11 See G. Farr, 'The Meaning of Place: Casbah' (unpublished Honours Project, Department of Geography, University of Natal, Durban, 1987).

12 *Ibid.*, p. 1.

13 Records of the DCC are available at the Don Africana Library [hereafter DAL] in Durban. Correspondence between the DCC, central government departments and community organisations are available at the Town Clerk's Records in Durban [hereafter TCRD]. Records of the DCRA (now known as the Organisation for Civic Rights) are available at its offices in Durban. Newspaper articles are available at the library of Independent Newspapers in Durban.

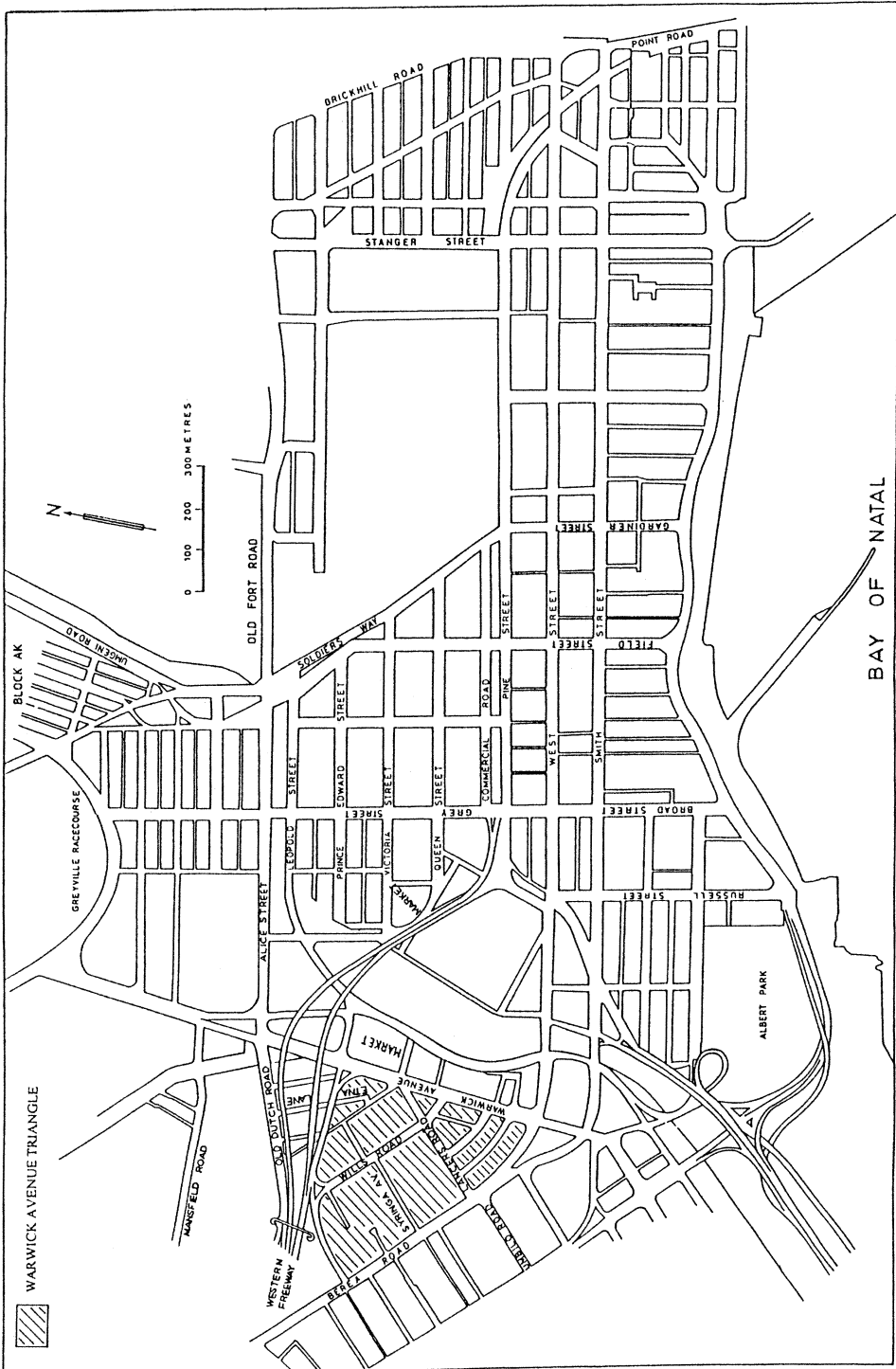


Figure 1. Location of the Warwick Avenue Triangle in Durban.

## History of Integrated Development

There is no published information on the history of the WAT, and its role in the development of the city has been neglected. In fact 'most publications and official reports on the history of Durban make no reference to the history and background of the Casbah area'.<sup>14</sup> In most of the city's historical documents and maps the WAT was simply seen as an extension of the Grey Street area which comprised the Indian central business district of the apartheid city (Figure 1). However, an unpublished study by Farr has attempted to reconstruct residential patterns in the area between 1900 and 1970 and the following section on the history of the Triangle's development draws on that study.<sup>15</sup>

The WAT became an established residential and business location at the turn of the nineteenth century because of its proximity to Berea Road which was an important route into the interior of the colony. By 1900, the Indian community was well established in Warwick Avenue and accounted for one third of the population in the WAT, while whites dominated in the rest of the area (see Table 1). The WAT 'presented a logical area for the extension of the inner city residential zone of Indian settlement that ran in a concentric zone from Block AK, through Botanic Gardens and Grey Street to the Casbah area'.<sup>16</sup>

By 1911 there was significant Indian penetration into Wills and Lancers Road. The predominantly white residential character of the area was beginning to change. This pattern continued and by 1928 Warwick Avenue was dominated by Indian businesses and residences (Table 1). This trend was influenced by the opening of the Victoria Street market which made 'Warwick Avenue and Berea Road a major access route for market gardeners and shoppers from the outlying areas travelling to the market'.<sup>17</sup>

The establishment of the Warwick Avenue 'squatters' market in 1934 increased the desirability of the WAT for residential and business purposes. Business premises accounted for 25 per cent of the WAT in 1940. By 1950, Indian residences continued to expand in the area while the proportion of whites began to decrease (Table 1). This was related to the development of attractive residential options for whites on the upper Berea.<sup>18</sup> By 1960, Warwick Avenue was mainly occupied by Indians for residential or business purposes, and only 10 per cent of the buildings were still in white occupancy. Although the WAT was declared a white group area in 1963 it still retained its 'mixed residential' character in 1970 (Table 1). Farr concluded that:

the current 'mixed' status of the area is not a recent phenomenon created by people forced into the area by removals from other inner-city residential zones. Casbah has retained a strong mixed character from its inception as a residential area.<sup>19</sup>

However, prior to the attainment of democratic government in 1994 such racially integrated urban communities were an anathema in South Africa. Since the 1930s, slum clearance, race zoning and urban renewal plans were used to try to destroy the integrated community in the WAT.

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14 G. Farr, 'The Meaning of Place', p. 1.

15 G. Farr, 'The Meaning of Place'. The aim of Farr's thesis was 'to explore what meaning was attached to Casbah by its residents as a method for understanding why residents were prepared to put up with an uncertain future, badly maintained buildings and a polluted environment in favour of staying in the area' (p. 91).

16 G. Farr, 'The Meaning of Place', p. 28.

17 *Ibid.*, p. 30.

18 *Ibid.*, p. 32.

19 *Ibid.*, p. 35.

**Table 1.** Racial residential patterns in the WAT: 1900–1970

Year	Street name	Business	Indian residents	White residents	Other	Vacant
1900	Warwick Avenue	–	100	–	–	–
	Wills Road	–	2	98	–	–
	Syringa Avenue	–	–	–	–	–
	Lancers Road	–	–	100	–	–
	Total % for the area	–	34%	66%	–	–
1911	Warwick Avenue	16.1	22.6	45.2	6.5	9.7
	Wills Road	–	7.3	90.2	–	2.4
	Syringa Avenue	–	–	100	–	–
	Lancers Road	5.9	5.9	88.2	–	–
	Total % for the area	5.5%	8.9%	80.9%	1.6%	3.0
1928	Warwick Avenue	15.6	50.0	31.3	–	3.1
	Wills Road	6.4	8.5	85.1	–	–
	Syringa Avenue	–	–	100	–	–
	Lancers Road	33.3	7.4	59.3	–	–
	Total % for the area	13.8%	16.5%	68.9%	–	0.8
1940	Warwick Avenue	51.7	20.7	10.3	10.3	6.9
	Wills Road	5.6	37.0	55.6	1.9	–
	Syringa Avenue	–	–	100	–	–
	Lancers Road	44.5	14.8	33.3	–	7.4
	Total % for the area	25.4%	18.1%	49.8%	3.1%	3.6
1950	Warwick Avenue	60.9	8.7	23.9	4.4	2.2
	Wills Road	9.8	31.4	56.9	2.0	–
	Syringa Avenue	–	100	–	–	–
	Lancers Road	48.0	32.0	16.0	–	4.0
	Total % for the area	29.7%	43.0%	24.2%	1.5%	1.5
1960	Warwick Avenue	88.7	–	9.7	–	1.6
	Wills Road	18.5	37.0	44.5	–	–
	Syringa Avenue	10.0	90.0	–	–	–
	Lancers Road	54.6	9.1	24.2	3.0	9.1
	Total % for the area	42.9%	34.0%	19.6%	0.8%	2.7
1970	Warwick Avenue	91.8	1.6	6.6	–	–
	Wills Road	18.3	31.7	50.0	–	–
	Syringa Avenue	–	100	–	–	–
	Lancers Road	64.5	6.5	29.0	–	–
	Total % for the area	43.7	34.9	21.5	–	–

Note: The building units in Table 1 were classified by Farr on the basis of occupation and residence. The numbers across the table refer to the percent of the total of specific types of buildings occupied by different race groups in each road.

Source: Adapted from Farr (1987, pp. 28–34)

## Slum Clearance and Racial Zoning

Between 1937 and the early 1940s, the Durban City Council (DCC) attempted to use the Slums Act (1934) to expropriate Indian property in the WAT. Parnell has drawn attention to the importance of this Act in securing residential and commercial segregation, removing any health menace, and imposing residential segregation by controlling the location of African, Coloured and Indian housing.<sup>20</sup> In December 1937, the Medical Officer of Health identified 47 Indian-owned properties in the WAT which could be declared slums in terms of the 1934 Act.<sup>21</sup> The property owners complained that the decline of the area was related

20 S. Parnell, 'Racial Segregation in Johannesburg: the Slums Act 1934–1939', *South African Geographical Journal*, 70 (1988), pp. 112–126.

21 DAL, DCC Minutes, 21 December 1937.



to the reluctance of the DCC to provide services and amenities in the area.<sup>22</sup> In discussions with the DCC, the owners and their legal representatives agreed to make improvements to their properties if the Council also upgraded the Triangle's services and amenities.<sup>23</sup> As a result of these negotiations, the DCC subsequently extended the time period within which the owners were expected to make the necessary repairs and renovations.

In 1940, whites complained about the increased Indian encroachment in the WAT and adjacent areas, and this led to commissions of enquiry into Indian 'penetration' in 1941 and 1943.<sup>24</sup> As a result of pressure from white residents, the DCC played a significant role in the initiation, development and promulgation of segregation laws, for example, the Pegging Act (1943), the Indian Land Tenure and Representation Act (1946), and the Group Areas Act (1950), which contributed significantly to the decline of the WAT area.<sup>25</sup> In terms of the 1946 Land Tenure Act the WAT was an 'uncontrolled'<sup>26</sup> area where Indians could buy land freely without a permit.<sup>27</sup>

Following the passing of the Group Areas Act (1950) the DCC recommended to the Group Areas Board (GAB) in 1953 that the WAT remain an unzoned area. However, early in 1958, the City Engineer's Department proposed that the area be zoned for whites. The main reason for this recommendation was that if it was zoned Indian it would 'have the effect of closing to white commercial interests the land in close proximity to the market area'.<sup>28</sup> However, the South African Institute of Race Relations pointed out that white commercial interests had not attempted to establish themselves in the WAT when there were no racial restrictions on the ownership and occupation of property. The Institute expressed concern that there was no detailed analysis of the racial composition of the area. It drew attention to the fact that a 'large and clearly defined section of this area is predominantly Indian owned and occupied' and emphasised that:

it is essential that Indians retain trading amenities in close proximity to the squatters market which is indispensable to their way of life and living, as well as to the lives and living of the other sections of the community.<sup>29</sup>

As the financial implications of implementing the Group Areas Act for local authorities became evident, the DCC was forced to review its race zoning plans for the city.<sup>30</sup> On 5 June 1958, the DCC resolved that a 'more realistic approach' be adopted for racial zoning, 'paying more regard to the present pattern of distribution of races in the city and the

22 Indians continuously made this allegation against the Durban City Council in the 1930s and 1940s. See Memorandum by Indian Representatives on Lawrence Committee in regard to provision of choice residential sites, 29 May 1940; A Refutation of the European Agitation against Indian Penetration by the Natal Indian Association, Supplement to *Indian Opinion*, 29 May 1940; University of Durban-Westville's Documentation Centre [hereafter UDWDC], Natal Indian Congress Memorandum presented to the Second Penetration Commission, 15 March 1943.

23 DAL, DCC Minutes, 10 June 1938.

24 UDWDC, U.G. No. 39-1941, Report of the Indian Penetration Commission; and U.G. No. 21-1943, Report of the Second Penetration (Durban) Commission.

25 See B. Maharaj, 'The Local State and Residential Segregation: Durban and the Prelude to the Group Areas Act', *South African Geographical Journal*, 77 (1995), pp. 33-41; B. Maharaj, 'Apartheid, Urban Segregation and the Local State: Durban and the Group Areas Act in South Africa', *Urban Geography*, 18 (1997), pp. 135-154.

26 The 1946 Act created two kinds of areas - controlled and uncontrolled. The controlled areas were reserved for white ownership and occupation. In the uncontrolled areas there were no racial restrictions on the ownership and occupation of property.

27 Group Areas Papers of the South African Institute of Race Relations, William Cullen Library, University of Witwatersrand [hereafter SAIRR/WCL], Letter from the South African Institute of Race Relations to the Secretary, Group Areas Board, Pietermaritzburg, 3 November 1959.

28 SAIRR/WCL, Letter from the South African Institute of Race Relations to the Town Clerk, Durban, 14 March 1958.

29 *Ibid.*

30 See B. Maharaj, 'Apartheid, Urban Segregation and the Local State'.

desirability of the minimum disturbance of the existing population'.<sup>31</sup> The DCC therefore resolved that the WAT should not be zoned for the white group, but rather be 'regarded as a portion of the central city area to be proclaimed for future ownership and occupation by members of the Indian group'.<sup>32</sup>

However, in 1961, the DCC resolved that the WAT should remain an unzoned area – that is it would not have any rigid racial classification. This was in line with a request which had been made at the 1953 Group Areas Board hearings in Durban on the grounds that this would best serve the economic interests of the city.<sup>33</sup> The Durban Chamber of Commerce similarly argued that 'any attempt to create hard and fast boundaries between the various race groups with regard to industry and trade must result in the serious retardation of economic progress'.<sup>34</sup> 'Unzoned' status was not necessarily an advantage, however, because it meant that 'no changes in ownership or occupation may take place without special permits, and these were most difficult to obtain'.<sup>35</sup> Consequently, development and investment in the area were stifled, leading to urban blight and decay.

In 1961, there were 380 whites living in the area, 5,930 Indians and 1,290 Coloureds. The property owned by whites in the area was worth R378,100, Indians R3,213,580 and coloureds R14,120.<sup>36</sup> However, on 4 October 1963, the WAT was proclaimed a white group area.<sup>37</sup> An exception was the area bounded by Warwick Avenue, Etna Lane and Mansfield Road which would be controlled,<sup>38</sup> but in which only Indian trade and business would be permitted.<sup>39</sup>

According to the Department of Community Development (DOCD)<sup>40</sup> 'redevelopment and urban renewal' of the WAT and the other areas zoned for whites in Durban 'would go hand in hand with clearance, renovation (where possible) and demolition of affected properties belonging to disqualified persons'.<sup>41</sup> The DCC was also considering urban renewal strategies for the WAT.

In 1964, the City Engineer of Durban described the WAT as a 'twilight' zone which had 'stagnated over the years through the lack of development brought about by municipal and other controls'.<sup>42</sup> The City Engineer recommended that the DCC should use Town Planning Ordinance No. 27 of 1949 in terms of which it could expropriate land in the WAT for redevelopment:

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31 DAL, DCC Minutes, 5 June 1958.

32 DAL, DCC Minutes, 5 November 1959.

33 DAL, DCC Minutes, 6 March 1961.

34 Undated Memorandum submitted by the Durban Chamber of Commerce to the DCC, para. 1 (in author's possession).

35 'The Department of Community Development – A Call for Action', memorandum on the Group Areas Act prepared by Eric Winchester, MP, and submitted to the central government, p. 75 (1970), (in author's possession).

36 TCRD, Letter from the City Engineer's Department to the Town Clerk's Office, 8 November 1961.

37 Republic of South Africa, *Government Gazette*, 4 October 1964.

38 The immediate implication of the Group Areas Act was to make those parts of the country to which it applied 'controlled areas'. In these areas changes in the racial character of ownership and occupation of land and premises was controlled.

39 Memorandum from the Central Durban Indian Area Protection Committee to the Minister of Planning, 10 March 1969 (in author's possession).

40 The implementation of the Group Areas Act resulted in the displacement and resettlement of hundreds of thousands of people. Consequently, there was a need for community development in both the areas evacuated, as well as the resettled area. The Department of Community Development was entrusted with this task in terms of the Community Development Act No.3 of 1966. However, the name was a misnomer as the Department was actually involved in the destruction of communities.

41 DAL, Report on the activities of the Department of Community Development for the year ended 31 December 1963, p. 6.

42 Memorandum submitted by the South African Indian Council to the Group Areas Board, 9 June 1969 (in author's possession).



This area is a conglomeration of mixed uses which has been very badly planned in the past and it seems essential that at some stage the whole area should be acquired and redeveloped to satisfactory standards.<sup>43</sup>

Hence, the use of town planning regulations 'provided an alternative discourse through which an efficient and racially zoned city' could emerge.<sup>44</sup>

In the early 1970s, the DOCD expressed concern about the problems of 'physical decay in towns and cities'. One of the causes of this decay was alleged to be that 'areas [were] being inhabited by various race groups on an integrated basis'.<sup>45</sup> The Department ominously called for the 'stricter implementation of existing powers'.<sup>46</sup>

Indians and Coloureds living in the WAT were warned by inspectors from the DOCD that they would be forced to move out of the area. By September 1970, 1,700 families had been given notices to move out. People who had lived in the area for more than 50 years were to be uprooted.<sup>47</sup> However, the Minister of Community Development, Blaar Coetzee, stated that no one would be forced to move unless alternative accommodation was available.<sup>48</sup>

The central state was evidently determined that this, the last multi-racial area in Durban, would be annihilated. As accommodation became available in Chatsworth, Phoenix and Newlands East,<sup>49</sup> residents were forced to move out of the area by the DOCD. The relocation process contributed to the rapid decline of the WAT in the 1970s. Not everyone moved, however, and it still retained its integrated racial character:

The uncertainty surrounding the future of the area has led to a considerable degree of urban blight, with privately owned buildings suffering from lack of maintenance and large tracts of vacant land on sites where buildings were acquired and demolished by the government being used as car lots or as rubbish dumps ... However, the mixed-race character of the area has been preserved despite the determined efforts of the authorities.<sup>50</sup>

In the 1960s and 1970s, there was little opportunity for mobilising and opposing relocation because of the repressive apparatus of the apartheid state. Credible leaders with strong community support were harassed, detained and imprisoned. Billy Nair,<sup>51</sup> a well known resident of the WAT, was imprisoned for many years on Robben Island. However, the post-1976 period and the political reforms associated with the introduction of the tricameral parliament in the 1980s provided the remaining residents with an opportunity to mobilise and resist relocation.

## Resistance to Relocation in the 1980s

In May 1984, more than 400 Indian and coloured families (about 2,000 residents) were threatened with eviction from the WAT. Mr Martin Friedrich, deputy regional representative of the DOCD, stated that the area had been identified as a white zone earmarked for

43 DAL, City of Durban, 'Outline Plan for the City, Report by the City Engineer, Durban, October 1946, p. 76.

44 D. Scott, 'Communal Space Construction: the Rise and Fall of Clairwood and District' (PhD thesis, University of Natal, Durban, 1994), p. 75.

45 DAL, Circular No. 6 of 1971 to all Local Authorities from the Department of Community Development, 14 September 1971, p. 3.

46 *Ibid.*

47 'Indians Must Quit Houses – Warwick Area hit by Group Areas Act', *Daily News*, 31 August 1970.

48 'Warwick Avenue Businesses Will Stay', *Daily News*, 1 September 1970.

49 Public housing schemes for Indians and Coloureds located at the periphery of the city.

50 DCRA, 'Proposals for the redevelopment of the WAT', by Paul Mikula Associates, Architects and Town Planners, (n.d.), p. 1.

51 Billy Nair was a trade union leader and political activist, and is presently a Member of Parliament in the Government of National Unity.

urban renewal, and development would take place in collaboration with the DCC. He emphasised that the people had to leave, and that alternative accommodation would be provided.<sup>52</sup>

The residents of the Warwick area held a mass protest meeting on 24 May 1984 to discuss their problems, and formed the Warwick Avenue Interim Committee, which later became known as the Durban Central Residents' Association (DCRA)<sup>53</sup>. The 300 residents who attended the meeting were opposed to moving out of the homes they had occupied for more than 50 years. They refused to accept alternative accommodation either in Phoenix or Newlands East, and suggested that houses in these townships should be allocated to the more than 20,000 people on the DCC's waiting list.<sup>54</sup> In his address to the meeting Mr Iqbal Mohamed, who was elected chairperson of the DCRA, stated:

For years we lived here as a community of people in total harmony without labelling ourselves as 'whites, coloureds or Indians'. These residents are now under direct pressure to move out as part of the rehousing and replanning programmes of the DOCD.<sup>55</sup>

The DOCD argued that conditions in the WAT area were poor, and that the community had been aware for some time that they would have to move.<sup>56</sup> Mr Mohamed contended that uncertainty about the future zoning of the area, threats of removals and past evictions had all contributed towards the degeneration of the area. Furthermore, this had been accompanied by an increase in vandalism and crime. Vacant plots owned by the DOCD and the DCC had become a haven for hooligans and criminals and since the area had been 'frozen' in terms of the GAA, no improvements could be effected. This was argued to be a strategy to facilitate the rapid deterioration of the area, thereby giving the state a justification to then apply the provisions of the Slums Act. Property owners in the area were prepared to renovate only if the 'sword of Damocles' hanging over the area was removed.<sup>57</sup>

Slum clearance and urban renewal programmes were disguises under which the GAA was being implemented, uprooting and displacing settled communities, and developing white areas at the material expense of other residents. Mr Mohamed questioned whether this was the government's version of reform, and whether future redevelopment programmes would be implemented through the 'respective ethnic' channels.<sup>58</sup> He emphasised that the different race groups had been living in the area for decades without any friction, and suggested that the intention of the government was to create divisions in the community and promote racial conflict:

Indians, coloureds and whites have lived side by side in this area for many years without any friction. We have spoken to most of the white tenants living in Wills Road and other adjoining roads and all of them said they did not mind staying next to Indians and coloureds. The Government in terms of its Group Areas Policy, is promoting racial friction here and soon there will be a race war if the matter is not resolved quickly.<sup>59</sup>

52 'Residents Get Boot', *Sunday Times*, 6 May 1984.

53 Since its formation in the WAT, the DCRA had broadened its activities and had taken up issues pertaining to housing, rents and living conditions in the greater Durban region. In addition, the DCRA also attempted to address the problems of residents living in burgeoning informal settlements in Durban. See B. Maharaj, 'Civic Organisations in the Apartheid Inner City: a Case Study of the Durban Central Residents Association', paper commissioned for the Project for Civil Society, The Albert Einstein Institution South African Program, University of Witwatersrand (1994).

54 'Residents Unite to Fight Mass Eviction Threat', *Sunday Tribune*, 3 June 1984.

55 *Ibid.*

56 *Natal Mercury*, 28 May 1984.

57 DCRA, Letter from the DCRA to the DCC, n.d.

58 Letter from Iqbal Mohamed, DCRA, to the *Rand Daily Mail*, 8 June 1984. 'Ethnic channels' referred to the House of Delegates, House of Representatives and House of Assembly in the Tricameral Parliament.

59 '400 Braced To Fight Eviction Move', *Post*, 6-9 June 1984.

The DCRA vowed to fight the evictions in the highest court in the land. Mr Mohamed stated that ‘once again the blindness and obstinacy of the apartheid system has raised its ruthless axe to uproot people’ from the WAT and emphasised that the community would stand united in its opposition to relocation. Furthermore, the authorities were warned to recognise that the WAT area was a *de facto* open area which was on the ‘verge of being radically restructured into a racial area’.<sup>60</sup>

In June 1984, the DCRA conducted a survey in the WAT in order to assess the attitudes of residents in the area to the threatened removal. The survey concluded that if they were forced to move, the majority of the residents would be relocated in distant townships like Phoenix and Newlands East. This would lead to increased costs for the journey-to-work and housing for the majority of families. A significant proportion of the community would be severely affected by any such increase in living expenses. More than half of the households received an income of less than R800 a month. Significantly, the average period of residence in the area was 20 years.<sup>61</sup> The survey concluded that:

the community is well located at present, with respect to the workplace and central city services and facilities ... the community does not wish to move but would rather see an upgrading of the environment ... this is a logical and rational demand ... it is the most appropriate option. Relocation is likely to have highly negative consequences for the vast majority of the families.<sup>62</sup>

The DCRA was concerned to learn at a meeting with the DOCD that the DCC was still putting pressure on the Department to evict residents in the WAT so that its urban renewal programme could be implemented. In a letter to the DCC, the DCRA stated that it was shocked to learn that the Council was responsible for the ‘unpardonable pressure and discomfort caused to the residents’<sup>63</sup> and urged the Council to clarify its position and state immediately its plans for the WAT area. The Association viewed the Council’s urban renewal plans with contempt ‘for it is nothing else but the removal of a settled community in terms of the Group Areas Act’.<sup>64</sup>

The DCC responded by agreeing to recommend to the DOCD that the area be rezoned for *Indian* residential and open trading purposes.<sup>65</sup> The DCRA objected to this proposal as it would lead to the eviction of all residents who were not classified ‘Indian’, and emphasised that the integrated character of the triangle must be retained in any redevelopment plans.<sup>66</sup> Furthermore, implementation of the Group Areas Act or acceptance of the DCC’s proposals would be ‘tantamount to disruption, uprooting and dividing a community which has struggled towards integration over decades’.<sup>67</sup> The DCRA once again emphasised the historically non-racial character of the area:

The Warwick Avenue has a history of an integrated community life. It is an area representative of people from different walks of life, from different religious, socio-cultural and political background. People who consider their neighbours as people without ‘racial’ tags or ‘racial’ incidents. It is an area where people have asserted their individualities despite the odds against them in terms of group area evictions.<sup>68</sup>

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60 Letter from the Warwick Avenue Interim Committee to the *Natal Mercury*, June 1984.

61 DCRA, DCRA Survey, June 1984, p. 10.

62 *Ibid.*, pp. 10–11.

63 DCRA, Letter from the DCRA to the DCC, n.d.

64 ‘Warwick Avenue evictions: Council asked to clarify role’, *The Leader*, 10 August 1984.

65 TCRD, Memorandum from the Associate Town Clerk’s Office to the Management Committee of the DCC, 21 December 1987.

66 DCRA, ‘Warwick Avenue Triangle: the Case for Integrated Zoning’, DCRA Memorandum submitted to the DCC and central government, 14 April 1988, p. 3.

67 *Ibid.*, p. 4.

68 *Ibid.*, p. 2.

The level of racial integration in the WAT in the 1980s was described as follows:

While some streets are dominated by Indian families, some by whites and others by coloureds, a lot of them mix freely socially. There are also some streets which are integrated, home to families of various racial groups. In one block of flats whites, coloured, Indian and black families live next door to each other. There has been no friction among them and their children mix freely.<sup>69</sup>

The DCRA emphasised the ‘meaning of place’ for the residents of the WAT, especially convenience in terms of access to workplace, shopping and religious services; community spirit, where ‘residents have contributed to a collective consciousness’, regardless of race, language or cultural differences; and sentimental and historical attachment to the area.<sup>70</sup> The DCRA urged the Council to:

take a bold stand and declare the triangle area the first open area in the city. The struggle by our Association has been a joint venture and we would hate to see any of our members being forced to leave just because they belong to the wrong group ... we would like the present composition of whites, coloureds and Indians who are here to be allowed to stay on ... We are a happy community in the triangle and no one has the right to interfere.<sup>71</sup>

Nevertheless, despite these demands for the recognition of the Triangle’s unique character, the DOCD did accept the DCC’s recommendation that the area be rezoned for Indian residential and open trading purposes. This did at least mean that, in August 1984, the DOCD withdrew the eviction notices served on the WAT residents. Commenting on this reprieve, the *Daily News* suggested that it was, perhaps, a concession for the tricameral elections which were to be held in September 1984, and speculated whether this could be part of a more flexible approach towards the implementation of the Group Areas Act.<sup>72</sup>

The DCRA expressed concern that by January 1985 no specific plans had been announced for the redevelopment of the WAT area<sup>73</sup> although a joint DCC–DOCD committee was developing a plan for the whole area. There was speculation that the area would be zoned for commercial and business purposes<sup>74</sup> which, the DCRA maintained, would mean that rents in the area would be expected to rise. The Association was also perturbed that the authorities had not consulted it in planning for the area.<sup>75</sup>

## The People’s Open Area

As indicated, in the 1980s the DCRA had requested that the WAT be declared an open residential area in numerous submissions to the DCC and the central government on the grounds that the residents in the area had lived together for decades as a non-racial community.<sup>76</sup> More specifically, the DCRA demanded that:

- (i) the WAT must be recognised and proclaimed as an integrated residential area;
- (ii) slum improvement and re-development plans must be immediately introduced in consultation with the Association and local residents, taking cognisance of the socio-economic background of the community; and
- (iii) there should be a clear understanding and consensus between the residents, the state and the DCC about the redevelopment of the area.<sup>77</sup>

69 ‘Casbah: Mixed and Happy’, *Daily News*, 13 May 1987.

70 *Ibid.*, p. 4.

71 ‘Council Condemned for Decision on Warwick Avenue’, undated *Sunday Times* article.

72 ‘Warwick Reprieve’, *Daily News*, 13 August 1984. Elections for the tricameral parliament took place in September 1984.

73 DCRA, Minutes of a DCRA Meeting, 31 January 1985.

74 TCRD, Memorandum from the Associate Town Clerk’s Office to the Durban City Council, 21 December 1987.

75 DCRA, Minutes of a DCRA Meeting, 31 January 1985.

76 DCRA, Letter from the DCRA to the DCC, n.d.

77 DCRA, Warwick Avenue Discussion Document, (n.d.), p. 4.

Significantly, a spot survey conducted by the *Daily News* revealed that whites also supported the WAT retaining its integrated status. Some whites commented as follows: 'My wife and I lived here for years and had no problems at all'; 'I have lived here for sixteen years and there's never been any friction between the whites here and the coloured and Indian residents'; 'People of all races work together anyway'; 'On the whole everyone gets on well with each other'.<sup>78</sup> Farr had similarly concluded that the integrated status of the area had:

served to promote strong bonds between individuals and the location and between individuals themselves ... many individuals had a symbolic and sentimental attachment to the area in the sense that this location had become a focal point of resistance and symbolised the point at which they refused to be moved around by government authorities.<sup>79</sup>

While the residents in the WAT were involved in a struggle to retain the historically integrated character of the area, in other major urban centres of South Africa '*de jure* white residential exclusivity' was being challenged from the mid-1980s as large numbers of blacks began to blur rigid race-space divisions by moving into white group areas. This was leading to the formation of 'grey areas' in many South African cities.<sup>80</sup> The state response to 'grey areas' was to introduce the Free Settlement Areas Act (1989) in terms of which a few areas would be open to all races while the Group Areas Act would be implemented more rigidly in others. The WAT was evidently already a 'grey area', housing in 1987 about 160 Indian, 100 Coloured, 80 white and ten Black families and in November 1989 it was officially declared a Free Settlement Area.<sup>81</sup>

The DCRA's response was mixed. On the one hand it stated that it rejected the Free Settlement Act and believed that the Group Areas Act should be scrapped,<sup>82</sup> but on the other hand it felt that the proclamation of the WAT as a Free Settlement Area would 'bring an element of security to residents'.<sup>83</sup> The Association expressed concern that "'big money" speculators who are poised to make a financial killing by developing the WAT' should be kept out of the area.<sup>84</sup> While the open area zoning of the WAT provided an opportunity to develop and upgrade the historically integrated area, such redevelopment had to be approached with caution:

The locality of the area is such that higher income households would displace the predominantly poorer people. Development to maximise profits, for example high rise flats, may be contrary to the desires of the people there and the area's development as an attractive neighbourhood.<sup>85</sup>

The DCRA argued that there was a need for constituencies to be mobilised to support demands for low income non-racial housing near city centres. Also, local authorities like the DCC should spend their resources to provide social services and facilities for those that work in the city.<sup>86</sup> The WAT, 'with a history of resistance to the implementation of racial zoning, presents a unique opportunity to create an attractive residential area for a non-racial South African society', and was ideally located to initiate campaigns in order to achieve the above goals.<sup>87</sup>

78 'Survey Reveals White Support For Declaring Warwick Triangle Open', *Daily News*, 13 July 1989.

79 G. Farr, 'The Meaning of Place', pp. 83–86.

80 For an analysis of the development of 'grey areas', see B. Maharaj and J. Mpungose, 'The Erosion of Residential Segregation in South Africa: the 'Greying' of Albert Park in Durban', *Geoforum*, 25 (1994), p. 30.

81 'Casbah: Mixed and Happy', *Daily News*, 13 May 1987.

82 DCRA, Minutes of a DCRA Warwick Avenue Triangle Meeting, 28 November 1989.

83 'Four Areas Open To All Races', *Natal Witness*, 25 November 1989.

84 'Four Suburbs Open To All', *Daily News*, 25 November 1989.

85 DCRA, Memorandum prepared by Paul Mikula and Associates for the DCRA, n.d., p. 2.

86 DCRA, Warwick Avenue Discussion Document, prepared by the DCRA, n.d.

87 DCRA, Memorandum drawn by Paul Mikula and Associates for the DCRA, n.d., p. 3.



The DCRA therefore resolved that the redevelopment of the WAT should ensure that:

- (i) a non-racial, low income residential area would develop in the area, which would be of a 'high quality';
- (ii) present and future low income residents were not displaced by an encroachment of wealthy groups;
- (iii) the environment was developed in such a manner so that the needs of commuters receive attention;
- (iv) the development of commercial and service industrial opportunities would support the small traders and facilitate the informal sector.<sup>88</sup>

The DCRA submitted the following proposals to the DCC for the redevelopment of the area, emphasising that residents were keen to participate in the programme:

- (i) Construction of low-rise buildings, not exceeding three storeys.
- (ii) The establishment of a crime prevention centre.
- (iii) The provision of recreational facilities.
- (iv) The erection of a community hall, and the provision of religious sites.
- (v) The establishment of a branch of the Keep Durban Beautiful Association in the area.
- (vi) The reconstruction of all roads and streets in the WAT, as well as the renovation of all existing dwellings.<sup>89</sup>

The DCRA was keen to encourage the built environment professions (town planners, architects, etc.) to develop ideas and debate the restructuring of city centres. There was also a need to increase public awareness of the impact of decades of apartheid on urban areas, and debate 'questions on how a post apartheid society would go about restructuring our cities'.<sup>90</sup> In this regard a private planning firm proposed that the goal of urban renewal in the WAT should be:

to provide a balanced mix of residential, retail and community service accommodation fully integrated with existing buildings of historic and architectural significance and new public open spaces. This will undoubtedly revive the neighbourhood itself and result in upgrading the surrounding areas.<sup>91</sup>

In spite of these progressive proposals initiated by the DCRA, there is no evidence of any attempt at practical implementation by the DCC. By June 1990 it appears that a stalemate had been reached over the redevelopment of the area as illustrated by a letter to the City Engineer from Councillor Margaret Ambler in which she commented as follows:

I have received a complaint that the roads in the WAT are in a shocking condition, and in fact the general area is fast becoming a slum. Are there any plans to upgrade the roads? What plans are there in fact for the whole WAT? I know this has been a hot political potato for many years but I think it has now been resolved politically and I wonder what the Council's plans are for the future.<sup>92</sup>

An analysis of the DCRA's correspondence files in the early 1990s reveals that not much was achieved in terms of implementing redevelopment proposals for the WAT.<sup>93</sup> This could be partly related to the inertia associated with the political transition to democracy. In terms of the CODESA agreements, there were specific stages to be followed in transforming

88 DCRA, Minutes of DCRA Warwick Avenue Triangle Meeting, 28 November 1989; Warwick Avenue Discussion Document, n.d..

89 DCRA, Letter from the DCRA to the DCC, n.d..

90 DCRA, Warwick Avenue Discussion Document, prepared by the DCRA, n.d..

91 DCRA, Maurice Dibbs Associates, Proposed Urban Renewal – Warwick Avenue Triangle, September 1988, p. 2. According to the report, the WAT comprised of '1940's three storey blocks of flats and single and double storey Victorian houses and shops' (p. 2).

92 TCRD, Letter from Councillor Margaret Ambler to the City Engineer, 25 June 1990.

93 For example, see TCRD, Letter from DCRA to the Mayor, 31 July 1990; Letter from the DCRA to the Executive Director, Physical Environment, Durban City Council, 19 June 1992.



apartheid local authorities into non-racial democratic structures. Initially, interim structures were put in place to prepare the path for non-racial democratic elections. In the province of KwaZulu-Natal, where Durban is located, local government elections were however delayed because of high levels of violence associated with political rivalry.<sup>94</sup> While Mayor Mike Lipschitz acknowledged that the DCC was 'in limbo because of the transformation process', he argued that there was 'nothing to prevent action being taken to address the WAT's problems'.<sup>95</sup> In view of the political and socio-economic changes taking place in the country the Deputy Medical Officer of Health urged the Council to:

make a serious commitment to review the Greater Warwick Avenue area ... There is an urgent need to identify the needs of the community in order that the large areas of vacant land and buildings are developed, modified, renovated and properly utilised before the process of urban decay is permitted to entrench itself further.<sup>96</sup>

A more serious attempt to examine redevelopment strategies for the WAT began to emerge after the restructuring of local government in Durban in 1995.<sup>97</sup>

## Reconstruction, Development and Planning

As the democratic initiatives of the early 1990s gained momentum urban planners in South Africa attempted to reconstruct apartheid cities by pursuing initiatives to reverse the effects of racial planning.<sup>98</sup> These initiatives included *inter alia*, increasing residential densities in the core city, promoting infill on pockets of vacant land which served as buffer zones to segregate racial groups and upgrading crowded townships and hostels. Great emphasis has been placed on restructuring the inner city in the post-apartheid era so that there would be desegregation and integration.<sup>99</sup> The opportunities for Durban was aptly summarised by the *Natal Mercury*:

With the artificial constraints of the Group Areas Act now consigned to the trash can ... Durban can set about to build a really efficient urban system. Urban planning has therefore reached an exciting watershed.<sup>100</sup>

In November 1995, the Physical Environment Service unit of the city announced an impressive plan to upgrade the WAT and the Grey Street area in 'terms of safety, security, cleanliness, functionality and the promotion of economic opportunities'.<sup>101</sup> In supporting the

94 See B. Maharaj, 'The Politics of Local Government Restructuring and Apartheid Transformation in South Africa: the Case of Durban', *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 15 (1977), pp. 135–154.

95 'Durban's squalid, forgotten Casbah', *Natal Mercury*, 23 January 1995.

96 TCRD, Memorandum from Dr K. Naidoo, Deputy Medical Officer of Health to the Executive Director, Community Services, Re: Greater Warwick Avenue Area, Annexure 2, p. 2, 26 January 1995.

97 For an analysis of the local government transformation process in Durban, see B. Maharaj, 'The Politics of Local Government Restructuring'.

98 In keeping with the political transformation of the past decade, the 1990s have attracted increased scholarly attention to the challenges facing urban reconstruction and development in the new South Africa. See for example, A. Lemon (ed), *Homes Apart: South Africa's Segregated Cities* (Bloomington, 1991); D.M. Smith (ed), *The Apartheid City and Beyond: Urbanisation and Social Change in South Africa* (London, 1992); M. Swilling *et al.* (eds), *Apartheid City in Transition* (Cape Town, 1991); R. Tomlinson, *Urban Development Planning: Lessons for the Economic Reconstruction of South African Cities* (Johannesburg, 1994).

99 See D. Dewar and R.S. Uytendogaardt, 'South African Cities: a Manifesto for Change' (Urban Problems Research Unit, University of Cape Town, 1991); D. Hindson, A. Mabin and V. Watson, 'Restructuring the Built Environment: Phase One Report' (Report to Working Group 5, National Housing Forum, 1992).

100 'Urban Repair', *Natal Mercury*, 30 May 1997.

101 TCRD, Physical Environment Service Unit Report for Committee, Greater Warwick Avenue and Grey Street Project, November 1995, p. 5.

plan the Durban Metro<sup>102</sup> acknowledged that the WAT had been ‘politically marginalised in the past in terms of physical, social and economic development and investment’.<sup>103</sup>

The plan was preceded by an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) in the WAT, which is illustrated in Table 2. The strengths of the area included large amount of public land owned by the state, vibrant economic activities, and accessibility. The weaknesses and threats in the area were related. Some of the weaknesses were urban blight, crime and congestion. Threats included the spreading of problems throughout the inner city area if these were not addressed timeously. Also, there was a lack of commitment from the central government to solve housing problems of the inner city. The inability of the local authority to stop shack development and unregulated street trading was also disconcerting. Opportunities included access to private sector and RDP funding, development of small business and the informal sector, and the provision of inner city low income housing (Table 2).

The redevelopment of the WAT was to take place in consultation with existing residents and other interest groups.<sup>104</sup> The significance of this aspect of planning has been emphasised by Scott who draws attention to:

the futility of planning without recognition of past communities and the cultural meanings that accumulate in places over time. Furthermore, the cultural resources of communities, by providing a source of identity and solidarity, can serve as resources which can be harnessed in the reconstruction process.<sup>105</sup>

Although the development of residential opportunities in the area was limited, the intention was to provide housing for the urban poor in the inner city in the WAT:

The redevelopment of the Warwick Avenue area, specifically, should be geared towards promoting its primary role and function as a major regional hub for public transportation and trading, with particular focus on the needs of the urban poor. The main objective of the Warwick Avenue Triangle should be to respond to the need for affordable housing opportunities in a manner which is replicable and sustainable, and consistent with existing housing policy.<sup>106</sup>

The success of the project was ‘dependent upon a high level of political commitment’ from government at all levels from local to central.<sup>107</sup> Such commitment was evident in the agreement by the Durban Central Council and the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) of the government to fund the redevelopment of the WAT jointly. Private developers were also to be encouraged to play an active role in the development of the area.<sup>108</sup> The initial facelift was costed at R4,720,000.<sup>109</sup>

The following short term projects for the redevelopment of the WAT have been initiated:

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102 The type of municipal institutions which would best suit post-apartheid South African conditions was the subject of considerable discussion. The metropolitan approach was seen as a form of local government which was appropriate to meet social needs and reduce inequalities; see *Government Gazette*, 13 March 1998, pp. 78–84. The Durban metropolitan area refers to the spatial and functional inclusion of previously disadvantaged areas which had been excluded from benefiting from the tax base of the city.

103 ‘Physical Environment Service Unit’, November 1995, p. 4.

104 Regular consultations were held with representatives from 21 organisations, who formed the Greater Warwick Avenue and Grey Street Forum; ‘City’s Plan for Casbah Facelift’, *The Leader*, 15 December 1996.

105 Scott, ‘Communal Space Construction’, p. 371.

106 ‘Physical Environment Service Unit Report’, November 1995, p. 5.

107 *Ibid.*, p. 13.

108 Statement by RDP spokesperson, Mandy Jean Woods reported in ‘New Gateway for City: Revamp for Durban’s Warwick Avenue Interchange’, *Daily News*, 23 February 1996.

109 TCRD, Central Council Minutes, 14 June 1996, ‘Greater Warwick Avenue and Grey Street Project: Brief Background and Key issues to be addressed’.

**Table 2.** Warwick Avenue Triangle SWOT analysis

<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large amount of land in public ownership</li> <li>• Existing vibrant economic activities</li> <li>• Highly accessible to the entire metro area</li> <li>• Offers survival opportunities to the very poor</li> <li>• Existing public facilities and services (market, health, transport, education)</li> <li>• Huge market in terms of large numbers of commuters</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Security problems (petty crime, vandalism and organised crime)</li> <li>• Environmental blight</li> <li>• Traffic hazards (hot spot for vehicle and pedestrian accidents)</li> <li>• Congestion (pedestrian and traffic)</li> <li>• Railway line and cemetery form major physical barriers to movement between Trade &amp; Transport hub and CBD</li> <li>• Inadequate facilities to meet needs of people using the area (commuters, traders, public transport operators)</li> <li>• Negative image created at entrance to the city</li> <li>• Poor condition of many existing buildings</li> <li>• Various community interests are not all well organised and represented</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investment in the area would be in line with current government objectives (opportunity for RDP funding)</li> <li>• Urban Development Department has an approved capital budget of R3 million for the 1995/96 financial year</li> <li>• Private sector interest in investment in the area (both from outside and from within the area)</li> <li>• Rail Commuter Corporation keen to improve Berea Station and amenable to concept of decking of railway line</li> <li>• Tremendous potential for job creation focusing on small and informal business</li> <li>• Potential of the area to become an area of interest for tourists</li> <li>• Opportunity for vacant land in the Triangle to fill a housing niche at the lower end of the formal housing market</li> <li>• Opportunity to provide major public facilities and services which will be highly accessible to the urban poor</li> <li>• Major opportunity area to demonstrate delivery to the poor in the Inner City.</li> <li>• Opportunity to boost investor confidence in the Inner City and in Durban as a whole by sorting out the problems in the area</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential of problems in the area, if not dealt with timeously, to spread throughout the rest of the Inner City (evidence of this already happening) leading to a deterioration of the Inner City and hastening a flight of capital to the suburbs</li> <li>• Failure of new local authority in taking firm and decisive action to control undesirable activities or developments in the area (eg shack development and uncontrolled informal trading)</li> <li>• Continued lack of commitment to the area by the new local government resulting in a low priority and minimal funding being given to its improvement</li> <li>• Lack of co-operation and effective co-ordination between different Council departments could hinder progress in the area.</li> <li>• Conflict between local interest groups could stymie development process resulting in funds not being spent or reallocated elsewhere</li> <li>• Escalating problems of crime, congestion, environmental blight scare away potential investors in the area</li> <li>• Continued absence of national level policy which enables Council to find sustainable solutions to the housing needs of the poor within the Inner City area (eg rental subsidy)</li> </ul>

*Source:* TCRD, Physical Environment Service Unit Report for Committee, Greater Warwick Avenue and Grey Street Project, November 1995, p. 5, pp. 19–20.

- (i) Upgrading of the entrance to the city at the corner of Warwick Avenue and Old Dutch Road.
- (ii) Provision of a multipurpose community facility which would serve as a hall, creche, library and study centre.
- (iii) Upgrading of taxi ranks.
- (iv) Building of shelters for informal traders.

(v) A general clean-up of the area.<sup>110</sup>

The plans to redevelop the WAT were widely welcomed, especially as it provided an opportunity to implement the RDP:

Making progress as a nation often means starting with small local improvements. Plans to revamp the WAT are a prime example . . . . For RDP planners, putting the plan in action will mean the start of a bold initiative to create nodes of development.<sup>111</sup>

The city's plan to clean up Warwick Triangle is as welcome as it is overdue . . . It should be a showcase entry point into the city instead of a dirty, crime-ridden eyesore. The residents, many of whom are poor, bear the brunt of the dangerous and unhealthy conditions . . . The bold plan should, if properly carried out, be of benefit to all who live and work in the area.<sup>112</sup>

In spite of the optimism, the Government's new macro-economic framework, the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) policy, which emphasises fiscal discipline, debt reduction and cuts in public spending, is viewed by some as a departure from the RDP.<sup>113</sup> In terms of this policy local authorities will be forced to generate a larger proportion of their own revenues, and there is also a strong emphasis on public-private partnerships. This raises questions about whether finances for the reconstruction and development of the WAT will be available.

## Conclusion

It is evident from this paper that the WAT had developed as an integrated neighbourhood since the turn of the century. The rise of racial politics since the 1930s curbed the organic development of a thriving, integrated community. Although whites were initially in the majority, by the end of the 1980s the WAT reflected the ethnic vibrancy of the 'rainbow nation'. However, neither the central nor the local state recognised or supported the non-racial character of the area, and attempts were made to use slum clearance laws, the Group Areas Act and urban redevelopment plans to destroy the area.

It was apparent that the original plans of both the central and local states were that the WAT would be redeveloped for white residential purposes. The WAT could not be cleared immediately because of a shortage of alternative accommodation but as such accommodation became available in townships to the north and south of Durban in the 1970s, eviction notices were served on many WAT residents.

However, in the early 1980s, there was still a large non-racial community living in the WAT. The political reforms of the 1980s meant that relocation could not take place in quite the ruthless manner experienced by Sophiatown, District Six and Cato Manor in the 1960s and 1970s. The opportunities for political mobilisation and organisation during this period led to the formation of the DCRA which played a significant role in opposing the relocation strategies of the DOCD and the DCC's urban renewal plans. Mobilisation was possible because most of the residents had lived in the area for more than 20 years. Residents of all races were keen to maintain and defend the non-racial character of the WAT. As Scott has suggested, 'traditional values based on ties of trust, friendship, sociability, obligation and mutual support served to create a set of place-based communal bonds'.<sup>114</sup>

110 'Big Plans for Warwick Avenue', *Daily News*, 28 February 1996; 'City's Plan for Casbah Facelift', *The Leader*, 15 December 1996.

111 'Reshaping the Triangle', *Daily News*, 26 February 1996.

112 'Renewal Plan', *Natal Mercury*, 27 May 1997.

113 See H. Marais, *South Africa: Limits to Change: the Political Economy of Transformation* (Cape Town, 1998), pp. 160–172.

114 Scott, 'Communal Space Construction', p. 365.

However uncertainties relating to the future zoning of the area led to considerable physical neglect and urban blight in the WAT. The political transformation of the 1990s provided an opportunity for reconstruction, development and planning strategies to be initiated for the WAT in close consultation with local residents.

The plans to reconstruct the WAT are in keeping with the urban development strategy of the Government of National Unity which aims to integrate segregated cities by concentrating on rebuilding the townships, creating employment opportunities, providing housing and urban amenities, reducing commuting distances, 'facilitating better use of under utilized or vacant land', and introducing urban management policies which are environmentally sensitive.<sup>115</sup> The intention was to ensure that the resources of the built environment were used efficiently in targeting the needs of the urban poor so that they would become economically productive and contribute to the growth of the city as a whole. There is a great deal of optimism that these objectives could be achieved in the reconstruction, development and planning of the WAT. This optimism, however, is tempered by the fiscal constraints of the GEAR macro-economic strategy.

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115 'Urban Development Strategy of the Government of National Unity', *Government Gazette*, 3 November 1995, vol. 365, No. 16679, p. 10.