

TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER UNITS

Parts of the town of Stellenbosch have been the subject of two recent, stand-alone heritage surveys. Both have been approved by Heritage Western Cape. These are for the historic core of the town and for the core of the Stellenbosch University campus. Therefore, these areas were excluded from the heritage inventory undertaken as part of this project insofar as the evaluation and heritage grading of individual properties is concerned.

However, the concepts and methods devised and adopted for this wider inventory of heritage resources have relied on the identification, inventory and grading of areas as well as of individual sites. Fundamental to the method has been the determination of a 'cascade' in scale from the larger valleys and areas to nested smaller ones: the latter termed 'landscape character units'. Clearly, these concepts and methods are not only relevant in wilderness and rural domains; they also apply to the towns and other urban nuclei within the municipality. Thus, we also identify 'urban, or townscape character units' of cultural significance.

The landscape units were identified and evaluated according to four main categories, namely 'natural elements' (such as landform and geology), 'cultural elements' (such as forestry and settlement), 'perceptual elements' (such as view sheds and scenic routes) and 'defining elements'. It is this latter group that dominate in the evaluation of townscape character units.

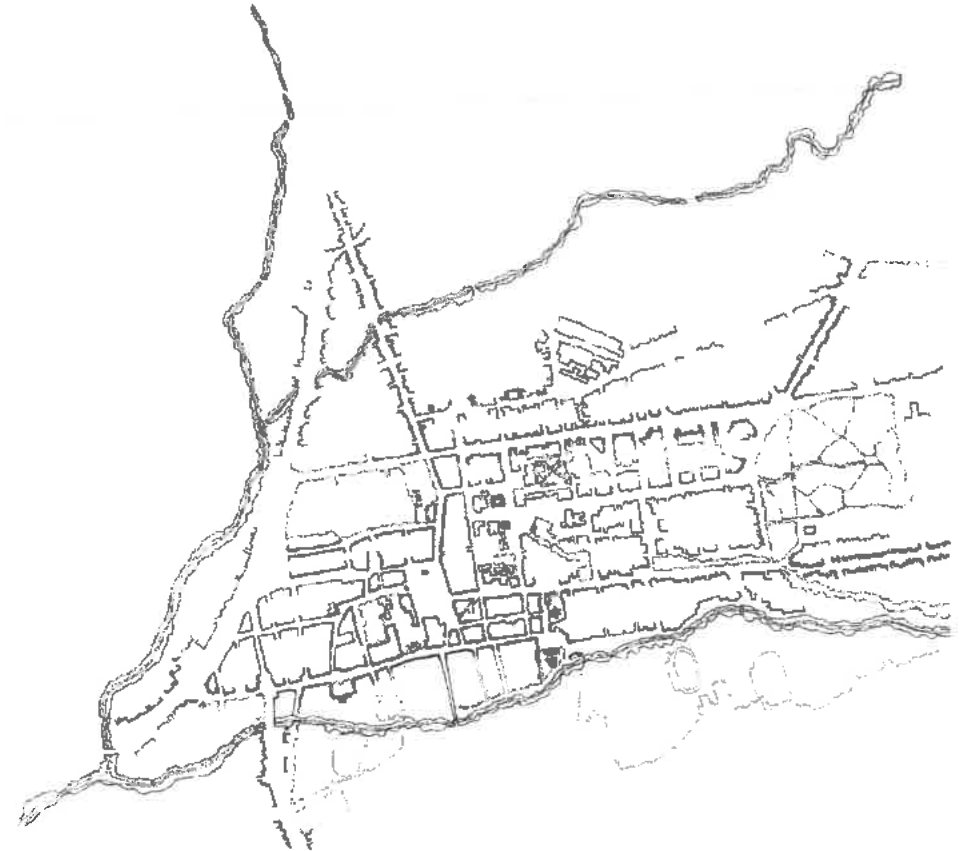
Elements such as structure, pattern, grain (height, mass, size), edge, network, landmarks / view points and nodes are key to the

understanding and day-to-day navigation of any townscape. It is the interplay of these that give particular areas, precincts and neighbourhoods their specific character and identity. Often, these elements combine in public places, spaces and areas within a neighbourhood, and are of higher cultural significance than the specific structures and sites that constitute the 'parts' within the 'whole'. Heritage practice has, for some years, recognised that it is the contribution of these 'parts' to the patterns and character of the 'whole' that is of primary heritage significance.

Therefore, an evaluation and the identification of the urban or townscape character units of cultural significance, and worthy of protection, was seen to be critical to the heritage survey and inventory as a whole.

STELLENBOSCH

Townscape Character Defining Process



METHOD OF PROTECTION

The method of protection most commonly used for townscape character areas in the South African context is the 'Heritage Area' – a geographical space where a specific character is recognised as being of cultural significance and is protected. Furthermore, guidelines are often produced to inform residents and others of the degree of change that could be contemplated within these spaces, and which 'patterns' should be respected and strengthened over time.

While the National Heritage Resources Act (Act 25 of 1999) has within it the means of identifying and protecting Heritage Areas (Section 31), at the local level they can also be identified in the relevant Zoning Schemes as Heritage Protection Overlay Zones (HPOZ). Historically, these spaces are primarily administered at the local authority sphere of government. This 'doubled up' nature of protection means that a Grade I National Heritage Site, such as Ida's Valley, could also be identified as a HPOZ in the Stellenbosch Zoning Scheme.

As the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE: a UK-based organisation that advised on architecture, urban design and public spaces) identifies, historic areas have always undergone changes, and the expectation should be that they will continue to change and evolve, to accommodate new uses and meet new priorities. Change should not be taken as automatically undermining the integrity of an historic place. Instead, the special and valued characteristics of an historic place should influence the way it is managed. The type of special historic character the area possesses, be it visual, functional, or social, should be evaluated and identified. Any new

development can then be assessed in terms of its contribution, or otherwise, to the particular character of the neighbourhood.¹

EXISTING TOWNSCAPES WITH RECOGNISED HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE WITHIN THE MUNICIPALITY

Aside from the historic core of Stellenbosch and the historic core of Stellenbosch University, the Municipal area has several recognised HPOZ / Heritage Areas already protected in law.

Chief among these is the Franschhoek Heritage Area, which stems from Todeschini and Japha's 1988 Conservation Study and Survey of the town. In addition to this space, a 2011 proposal saw the establishment of HPOZ areas in the Jonkershoek, Ida's Valley and Dwars River precincts. 'Special Areas' were identified at Raithby and Jamestown.²

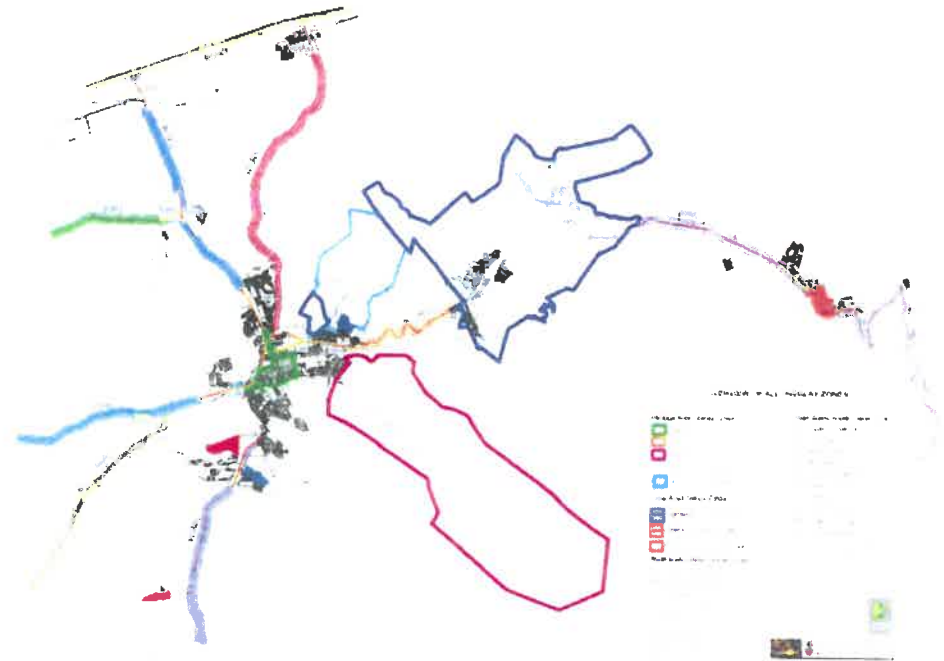
We have duly mapped these identified (although proposed) heritage areas and evaluated them in the field. They have all been incorporated into the proposed new townscape character units, albeit with some modifications and sometimes with slightly more inclusive boundaries. In no instance was an HPOZ or Special Area found to have insufficient heritage significance to warrant its exclusion from a proposed townscape character unit.

¹ <http://web.archive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/201104174717/http://www.cabe.org.uk/files/cabe-and-the-historic-environment.pdf>

² See the New Stellenbosch Zoning Scheme: Appendix to the Zoning Scheme: Appendix to the Zoning Scheme: Appendix to the Zoning Scheme: Draft for Public Participation, prepared by @Planning, 30th May 2012.

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Townscape Character Defining Process



Stellenbosch: Existing HPOZ Areas (source: New Stellenbosch Zoning Scheme: Appendix to the Zoning Scheme: Appendix to the Zoning Scheme: Appendix to the Zoning Scheme: Draft for Public Participation, prepared by @Planning, 30th May 2012.

JAMESTOWN

Identifying the Key Urban Elements and Primary Townscape Character Unit

Jamestown would once have strongly resembled an archetypal Cape Mission Settlement: a primary street running parallel to a river course; a church occupying a prominent position; cottages lining the road; long, narrow farming allotments running between each cottage and the river course; and an agricultural and wilderness backdrop to the whole.

c1938 aerial photography attests to the strong pattern that would once have existed, with the narrow allotments also extending from the cottages up the hillside, to the south. In essence, Webersvallei Road would have formed the central spine to the settlement, with the church located at the top of the hill.

Unfortunately in Jamestown, gentrification has meant that only the long farming allotments are still clearly legible in the townscape. The area south of Webersvallei Road has been entirely developed, with a mid 20th century suburban pattern of street compromising any village character that remains. The interface with the R44 has also been developed in an insensitive manner, with "strip mall" and car outlets creating a buffer between the main road and the historic village. More worryingly, development has begun to encroach to the north of Webersvallei road, threatening the narrow farming allotments that run down towards the Blaauwklippen River – these being the last townscape element/settlement pattern that visually and symbolically connects Jamestown to the other 19th and early 20th century Mission Settlements at the Cape.

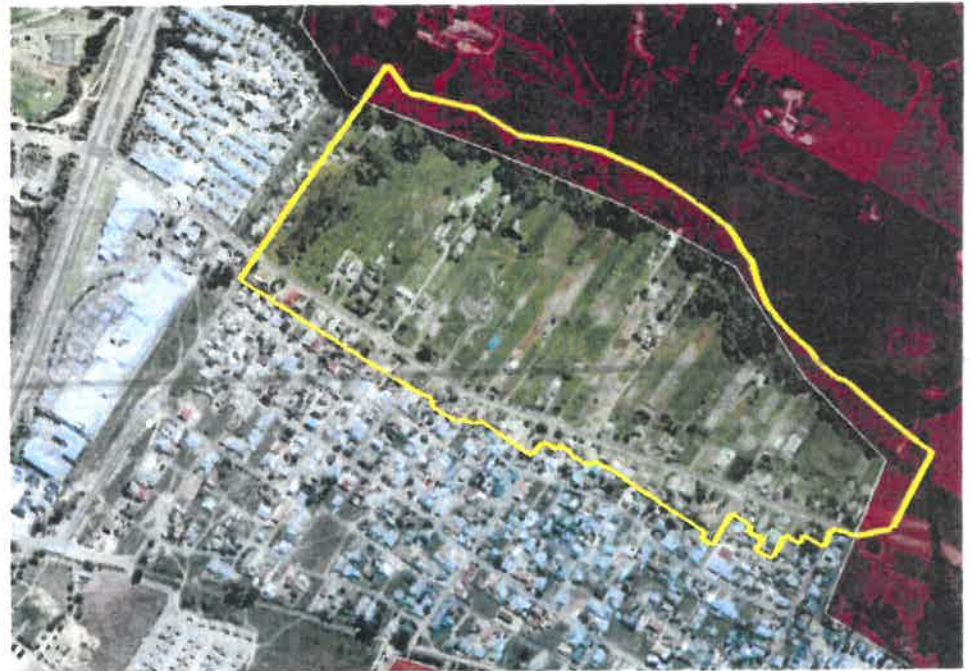
Special Streets, Places and Buildings within the Townscape Character Unit

The farming allotments are seen to be the most significant element within Jamestown, spatially and symbolically connecting it to the grouping of Mission Settlements, which are of significance in the history of the Cape and the Province.

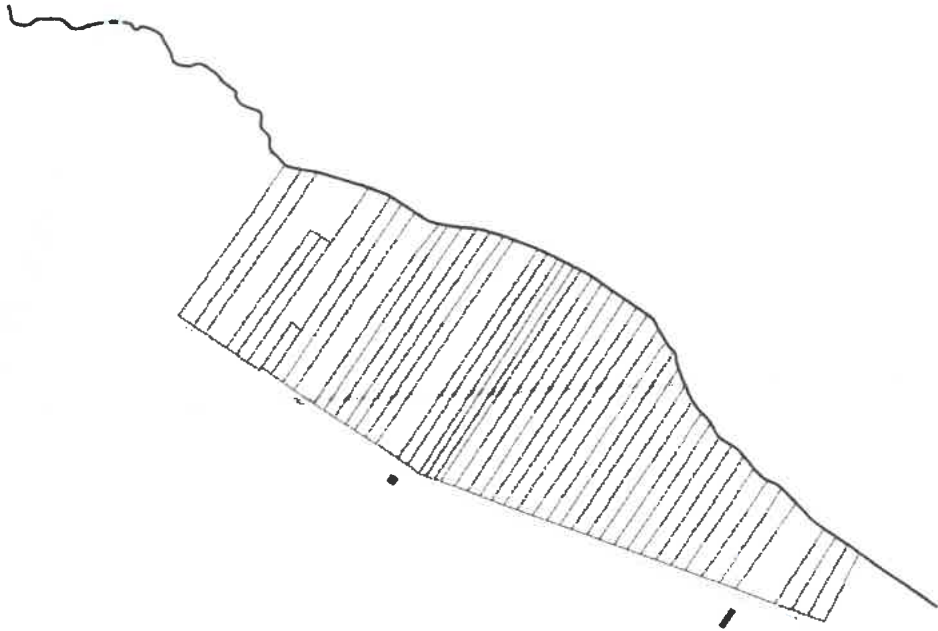
Additionally, Webersvallei Road and the first row of plots facing northwards onto it is included in the townscape character area: it is here that the key community and institutional sites are located (the churches and the general store), but it is also where the historic scale of the cottages, and their relationship to the agricultural allotments, can still be discerned.

These elements are collectively seen to embody the core remaining townscape character of Jamestown, and should duly be protected, and development controlled to ensure this historic pattern is retained and strengthened.

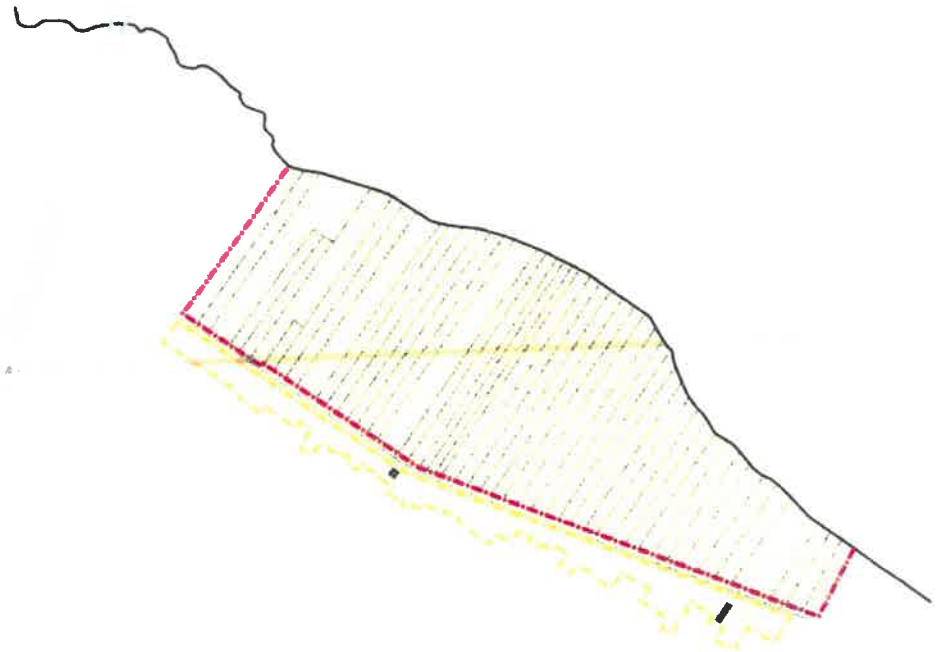
it must be noted that, during the course of this survey, many sites in Jamestown have been significantly altered. Most notably, the old General Store has been demolished. The heritage of this area is palpably under threat.






Jamestown, Aerial Photography c1938.



Jamestown: Civic Structure



Jamestown: Special Streets, Places & Buildings

-  Water Erven
-  Street and Buildings Fronting Webervallei Rd
-  Core Townscape Character Area

JAMESTOWN TOWNSCAPE UNIT

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Unfortunately in Jamesstown, gentrification has meant that only the long farming allotments are still clearly legible in the townscape. The area south of Webersvallei Road has been entirely developed, with a mid 20th century suburban pattern of streets compromising any village character that remains. The interface with the R44 has also been developed in an insensitive manner, with a "strip mall" and car outlets creating a buffer between the R44 and the historic village. More worryingly, development has begun to encroach to the north of Webersvallei Road, threatening the narrow farming allotments that run down towards the Blaauwklippen River – these being the last townscape element/settlement pattern that visually and symbolically connects Jamesstown to the other 19th and early 20th century Mission Settlements of the Cape.

The farming allotments are seen to be the most significant element within Jamesstown, spatially and symbolically connecting it to the grouping of Mission Settlements, which are of significance in the history of the Cape and the Province. Webersvallei Road and the first row of plots facing it is included in the townscape character area: it is here that the key community and institutional sites are located (the church – sadly the general store was demolished during the course of this fieldwork), and where the historic scale of the cottages, and their relationship to the agricultural allotments, can still be discerned.

MAIN AIM: ENHANCE (MANAGE) - The main aim of the proposed Special Area for Jamesstown is not to protect each and every structure (aside from those that have been identified as having intrinsic heritage significance) but rather to preserve those character-giving elements that extend beyond each individual property, and are common to the village as a whole. Special characteristic elements and features include the allotment gardens, the church, and the modest scale of the historic dwellings along Webersvallei Road.

MAIN VALUE: HISTORICAL – The appropriate use and renewal of heritage features is critical for their preservation. Any development that will result in the loss of the remaining agricultural plots or remnant historic buildings, will completely undermine the heritage value of this townscape unit.

DEVIATED LAND USE/USES THAT WILL LIKELY ERODE TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER: Over-scaled private dwellings (including multi-storey residential structures), change in land use to non-residential uses, construction on the farming/gardening allotments, cluttered properties, gated residential estates, high and solid boundary treatments, large parking lots, isolated shopping centres or petrol stations.

A ECOLOGICAL

Significance: *The layout of Jamesstown is orientated towards the Blaauwklippen River, that edges the allotment-style "water erf" properties.*

COMPONENTS: Stream course.

Development Criteria:

- Maintain ecological support areas (here associated with Blaauwklippen River).

B AESTHETIC

Significance: *The remaining place-making elements present in the village are the long, narrow agricultural plots, the church and the scale of the historic houses facing Webersvallei Road. Importantly, it includes the visually clear to the mountains beyond the church and the cultivated slope leading down to the river, which provide visual containment and an agricultural context to the village as a whole.*

COMPONENTS: Social Foci, Grain (Consolidation, Subdivision, Density and Coverage), Streets, Planting Patterns, Stream Course, Interface between Streets and Buildings: Boundary Treatments, Parking, Setbacks, Heights, Materials, Colour and Architectural Detail, Security and Modern Fixes, Street Elements.

Public Spaces and Social Foci:

- The character of the Rhenish Mission Church and its siting within an open area at the top of Webersvallei Road must be respected. Negative impacts on its visual-spatial relationship (including to the broader setting) must be avoided.
- The agricultural allotments and church structure, as well as the pattern of the historic cottages (established by street and building interface, building setback, scale and form) have heightened heritage significance as the remnant elements of the historic settlement. Rezoning of the agricultural strip, and over-scaled

new development between historic cottages should not be allowed.

Grain (Consolidation, Subdivision, Density and Coverage):

- The pattern of subdivision of narrow strips of agricultural land are associated with village houses, and are part of an increasingly rare typology still evident in Jamesstown. The consolidation or subdivision of land units will impact the "grain" of the neighbourhood. Therefore, the potential impact on the character of the neighbourhood must be carefully considered before consolidation or subdivision is approved.
- Densification should only be contemplated where it respects the historical patterns of subdivision. The prevailing pattern of subdivision consists of a rhythm of long, thin, rectangular plots with their shorter sides facing the street edge (residential lots) and the stream course (agricultural lots).

Streets and Infrastructure:

- While the streets in Jamesstown have been "engineered", they remain fairly simple, and adhere to a rectilinear grid. This should be retained and reinforced: the use of traffic circles, signalled interchanges and so on is inappropriate in this environment.
- The scale of roads (especially those that align with historic routes) should be the minimum possible. Insensitive, over-engineered, hard elements can compromise the character of a townscape as a whole.
- Prevent over-engineered and insensitive infrastructural upgrades within historical settlements.
- Existing footpaths and routes for walking, hiking, running and cycling should be reinforced and extended where possible.

Planting Patterns:

- The narrow strips of agricultural land associated with the original village are part of an increasingly rare typology. No new development should be permitted on these productive land units, especially in the form of permanent built structures that are unrelated to the agricultural use.
- The felling of mature exotic or indigenous trees within residential areas should be avoided. Instead continuous tree canopies and longer-term replacement planting with suitable species should be encouraged. While "gardens" are not a characteristic feature of the historic cottages in Jamestown, most historic buildings are surrounded by mature trees.
- Many of the strongest planting patterns that contribute to the historic character of landscape and townscape units, are within road reserves and on public land. A maintenance and (re)planting plan should be developed. Trees must be regularly maintained.

Stream Course:

- The role of water as a structuring system within the settlement must be respected. The Blaauwkippen River is a significant element in the historic agricultural and gardening activities. Water often serves as a place-making and social element within the settlement fabric, and this role should be preserved and strengthened where possible.

Interface between Streets and Buildings:

- The interface between streets and buildings is a key character-giving component of the Special Area, abutting Webersvallei Road. Pattern of interface should be followed/interpreted in new infill buildings, and reinforced when re-developing existing properties.
- Where historical fabric and elements make up a street interface, they must be conserved.
- Ensure that new buildings within the

Special Area are generally in sympathy with the scale, massing, layout and idiom of the surrounding buildings.

- **Boundary Treatments:** While a range of boundary treatments are evident within Jamestown (some houses have no boundary enclosure), high and solid walls that obscure views to buildings should not be permitted, as well as pre-cast concrete fencing, exposed blockwork, and facebrick walling. Historic boundary elements must be preserved as far as possible.
- **Parking:** Off-street parking should not be located in front of historical structures, but should rather be located alongside or behind the structure. Parking areas and structures should preferably be screened with planting. The Municipality should not unreasonably withhold relief for on-site parking departures where existing requirements will likely result in a degradation of the character of the Special Area.
- **Setbacks:** While there is no prevailing setback of buildings from street edge within Jamestown, the historic cottages typically abut the street edge quite directly, with only a small setback. New buildings should be set back the same distance as the existing historical buildings to either side (and within the streetscape as a whole), and the Municipality should not unreasonably withhold relief for setback departures, or may impose measures more restrictive than those that may typically apply within the applicable zoning category, where existing requirements will likely result in a degradation of the pattern and character of the Special Area. An extension to the side of an historic building should be

set back slightly from the original façade.

- **Heights:** Buildings within Jamestown are seldom higher than one storey. New buildings should look to adhere to the same heights as the existing historical buildings to either side (and within the streetscape as a whole). Greater height may be acceptable towards the rear of the site, when not visible from the street edge. The Municipality should not unreasonably withhold relief for height departures, or may impose measures more restrictive than those that may typically apply within the applicable zoning category, where existing requirements will likely result in a degradation of the pattern and character of the Special Area.
- **Materials, Colour and Architectural Detail:** Building materials should be compatible with traditional materials in terms of scale, colour and texture. Historical architectural features should be repaired rather than replaced wherever possible, and alterations that seek to copy an earlier style should be avoided. Rather, the underpinning principle should be that new additions and new buildings must be sympathetic to the architectural character of the Special Area, but should also be of their own time.
- **Security and Modern Fixes:** The use of unobtrusive security systems on historic buildings is encouraged: beams and shutters are preferable to burglar bars, trellidoors and security gates. If gates and bars are unavoidable, they should be painted the same colour as the element they enclose. Satellite dishes, airconditioning condensers, roof windows and solar panels should preferably be installed where they are not visible from the street. Solar panels should be mounted flush with the roof, rather than having their own framing element. Where electric fencing is unavoidable, a recessive colour for the fittings must be selected. Barbed wire, spikes (except where part of the fencing) and similar should not be permitted along the street frontage within the Special Area.
- **Street Elements:** Street lighting and street furniture (benches, bins, bollards and so on) should be understated, modern (they should not be pseudo-historical) and neutral in colour and form. Street kerbs, raised zebra-crossings, speed bumps, street signs and so on should be the minimum possible to meet safety requirements, and should again be neutral.

C HISTORIC/ARCHITECTURAL

Significance: *The churches and several cottages have heritage significance.*

Development opportunities in Jamestown fall into 4 categories: (1) Opportunities for conservation of historic buildings and elements of heritage significance; (2) Opportunities for alterations and additions to historical buildings and elements of heritage significance; (3) Opportunities for new structures within environments of historical significance; and (4) Opportunities to redevelop intrusive buildings, elements and sites in order to better reflect the character-giving elements of Jamestown.

Development Criteria:

Opportunities for conservation of historic buildings and elements of heritage significance:

- Work on historic buildings and elements of historic significance should only

be undertaken by professionals and builders/tradesmen who are sufficiently trained and experienced. Heritage expertise should be sought; it is in the interest of the property owners to have their plans prepared by advisors who have recognised experience and standing in their field of heritage conservation.

- Where the historic function or use of a building is still intact, the function has heritage value and should be protected. Where a new use is sought, every effort should be made to find a use that is compatible with the heritage significance of the element/site, and will require the minimum extent of alteration to historic fabric.
- Distinguishing original features, examples of craftsmanship and so on should not be falsified, destroyed or removed. These elements should be repaired rather than replaced as far as is possible.
- Where repair necessitates replacement, the replacement should be the minimum necessary, and the new material should match that being replaced in composition, design, colour, texture and other visual qualities, but its newness should be apparent on close inspection (its age should not be faked). Traditional materials should be used in repair work.

Opportunities for alterations and additions to historical buildings and elements of heritage significance:

- The basic plan of the historic core of the building should always be retained. Where internal walls are removed, the extent of removal should be the minimum necessary and nibs should be retained to reflect the historic layout of spaces.
- Any intervention should be the minimum necessary to meet the new requirements, reversible when possible, and designed not to prejudice future interventions and/or restoration. For instance, if the addition or alteration

were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic structure would remain intact.

- Alterations and additions to conservation-worthy structures and elements should be sympathetic to their architectural character and period detailing. Distinguish old from new but ensure visual harmony between historical fabric and new interventions in terms of appropriate scale, massing, form and architectural treatment, without directly copying these details.

Opportunities for new structures within environments of historical significance:

- New structures should respect and respond to traditional settlement patterns and siting by considering the entire Special Area as the component of significance. This includes its spatial structure, layout, scale, massing, hierarchy, alignments, access, and landscaping setting. Any development that departs from the inherent character of the Special Area should be discouraged.
- Designers of new structures must have an understanding of the context, traditional patterns of place-making and historical elements that are characteristic of the Special Area. New elements must respond to and interpret these character-giving aspects of the neighbourhood.
- Contemporary designs for infill buildings should not be discouraged, provided they do not destroy significant fabric and are compatible with the size, scale, material, layout and architectural character of the property and Special Area.

Opportunities to redevelop intrusive buildings, elements and sites in order to better reflect the character-giving elements of Jamestown:

- Wherever possible, existing buildings that are intrusive because their scale, style, materials or siting departs from the strong character-giving patterns of the Special Area should

be redeveloped in order to minimize their disruptive effect. This can be done gradually as part of general maintenance – for instance repainting in more sympathetic colours, or replacing mid-20th Century roof tiles with corrugated sheeting or “finer” roof tiles.

- Encourage mitigation measures (for instance use of vegetation) to “embed” existing intrusive elements and structures within the townscape. This includes the modern houses that have been developed within the agricultural “zone”, to the north of Webersvallei Road.

D SOCIAL

Significance: Established community, with deep roots within the village.

Development Criteria:

- Encourage and support the establishment of local heritage conservation bodies, particularly within Special Areas, as is envisioned in the National Heritage Resources Act. Such bodies can assist with heritage resource identification, assessment and decision-making.
- Proposed development should recognise the relationship of communities to their land and communal facilities. Any development proposal should show a clear understanding of the ‘intangible’ features and values of these sites.

E ECONOMIC

Significance: Jamestown comprises a desirable residential area within close proximity to the Historic Core of Stellenbosch.

Development Criteria:

- Prevent gentrification from threatening the distinctiveness of this unique settlement within the Stellenbosch winelands.



Remaining allotments.



Encroaching suburban development.

² This study is limited to the completion of a tangible heritage inventory. A formally commissioned intangible heritage study is encouraged, and therefore we only have limited capacity to operate within this principle and merely point to these associations encountered whilst out in the field and during public engagement. Please refer to the online map for a reference to these sites.