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BACKGROUND
South Africa

South Africa is today classified as an upper middle income country, with a highly developed infrastructure and great natural assets. The high standard is though only available to a small minority of the people. This makes South Africa one of the most unequal countries in the world. Almost half of the South African population lives in poverty according to the Swedish international development cooperation agency (Sida), and the gulf between the rich and the poor is huge. South Africa can therefore be described both as a developed and a developing country.¹

The gulf between the rich and the poor is the result of apartheid politics which was conducted by the white minority between 1948 and 1994. The apartheid system divided the population into different groups after the colour of their skin. The different groups were given different rights and were physically separated from each other. The apartheid politics meant an inconceivable oppression of the black, coloured and Indian groups, and was condemned by most nations as well as the United Nations.²

Since ANC (African National Congress) and Nelson Mandela won the first democratic election in 1994, work has been focused on a more equal South Africa. Great progress has been made in the right direction, as many of the poor people have got an increased standard of living with proper housing, access to clean water and sanitation.³

In spite of the achievements there are still lots left to do. Poverty, high unemployment, corruption, crime and violence are urgent problems that have to be dealt with. The legacy of apartheid has left deep marks on the entire South African society.⁴ The structures created are both physical and social and will take a long time to change.

The physical structure left by the apartheid era can be seen in almost all South African cities. A long and hard work to bridge these structures are now taking place and the work with our proposal for the Big Hole precinct is one small part of this work.

Planning during the apartheid era

Already before the apartheid era the foundations for residential segregation in South Africa were laid. In 1913 legislation was passed that limited the black population’s right to own or lease land. The white minority gained control over the best rural land and almost all urban areas, making the cities almost exclusively white.

In hope for a better life the black population started to settle at the
fringes of the white-only areas. The poverty in the rural areas and the hope for work opportunities in the cities drove the development forward, even though the white minority tried to stop it.

Several of the laws implemented by the apartheid system increased the physical separation between blacks, coloured, Indians and whites, and the different groups were referred to different residential areas. The apartheid city was created when former mixed areas were demolished and areas identified for the white’s exclusive use were evacuated and cleared. Separate townships for blacks, coloured people and Indians were created as labour reservoirs to support the economies of the white cities. The townships were established away from the white city, where large areas for new housing estates were laid out.

The township was often placed far from the city centre and in between these areas so called buffer zones of undeveloped land was left. The buffer zones increased the separation and made it possible for the white minority to control the movement of the black population. To further control the movement only one or a few access routes connected the township to the city centre.

A reasonable standard of living and the dignity of people were not considered when designing townships and the provision of infrastructure, such as water, sanitation and electricity, was neglected. The townships soon became overpopulated and as a result informal settlements appeared in the outskirts of the townships.

Even though the apartheid laws of separation do not longer exist, the townships are still a part of the city structure. Planning is now focused on the hard work of increasing integration of the segregated cities. It will take many years to change the structures of the South African cities and cost a lot of money. To unify the cities of South Africa, the compact city is advocated.

Kimberley

Kimberley is the capital of the Northern Cape Province which is the largest but also the most sparsely populated province in South Africa. The city is situated in the centre of the country close to the border to the Free State Province.

The findings of diamonds was the reason why Kimberley emerged and mining has since then always been an important part of the city’s development, just as De Beers Consolidated Ltd the leading mining company. The mining industry has declined but is still important for the city, with three of the five original mines in Kimberley still operating.

Kimberley is today the commercial and local government centre in
Sol Plaatje Municipality and the city also acts as a commercial provider to some parts of the province. The national route N12 between Johannesburg and Cape Town runs through the city which gives Kimberley good access to communications.

The climate in Kimberley is very hot and dry since it is located in a semi-desert area. Therefore it is exceptionally hot in the summer with temperatures reaching over 40°C, with occasional raging thunderstorms. The winters are warm but can sometimes get temperatures down below zero during nights. The nature scenery that surrounds Kimberley is flat and dry with sparse vegetation due to the climate.

The city of Kimberley stretches seven kilometres across and houses 212 000 inhabitants within this area. More than half of the city’s population lives in the former black township of Galeshewe. Of the total population in the city around 55% are black and the majority of them live in Galeshewe. The white part of the population is only about 15% and the main part of them live in the southern suburbs of Kimberley. The remaining 30% are so called coloured and most of them live in the former townships of Greenpoint and Rodepaan. Like in many other South African cities many people are underprivileged and live in poor conditions in Kimberley, these are mainly people from the black and coloured groups.

History

The first South African diamond was discovered in 1866, by children playing on an Orange River bank near Hopetown not far from where Kimberley is located today. It was a 21 carat diamond which became known as Eureka. In 1871 the first diamond in the Kimberley area was found on a small hill or kopje. The hill called Colesberg Kopje was located on the Vooruitzicht farm owned by two brothers named Diedrick Arnoldus and Johannes Nicholas de Beer. The discovery of the diamond led to a rush of fortune seekers and the kopje soon turned in to a hole. This was the beginning of the Kimberley Mine today known as the Big Hole.

Soon two mines were developed close to each other in the Kimberley area, called the Big Hole and the De Beers Mine. Around them camps with tents and corrugated iron shacks were established and this settlement was referred to as “New Rush”. At this time one of South Africa’s first black townships, Galeshewe, started to emerge. Greater No.2 was the first part of Galeshewe to be built, and it was developed as a reservoir for workers in the mines.

In 1873 New Rush was renamed Kimberley after the British Colonial Secretary. The temporary tents were now being replaced with corru-
gated iron houses and brick buildings, and naturally emerged paths turned in to irregular streets. In the late 1870s the situation at the Kimberly Mine was chaotic with a large number of individual claims. When Cecil John Rhodes and his partner Charles Dunell Rudd arrived in Kimberley 1880, they founded De Beers Mining Company and started to bring order to the chaotic situation within the mine by buying up all the claims. By the turn of the century the diamonds had made Rhodes and Dunell very wealthy and Kimberley was now a prosperous town.

When World War I broke out in 1914 the price of diamonds went down and the Big Hole mine had to close. At this time the hole was the largest hand-dug excavation in the world and had produced 2,722 kg of diamonds from 22.5 millions tons of earth.

Like in almost all South African cities Kimberley was affected by apartheid planning as black and coloured people were forced out of the white city centre to townships in the outskirts. After World War I spontaneously grown locations like parts of Galeshewe, were extended by new planned areas mainly for blacks. The largest extensions were made after World War II in foremost Galeshewe. The two municipalities of Galeshewe and Kimberley were amalgamated into one municipality, the Municipality of Kimberley, in 1992. The Municipality of Kimberley was recently renamed Sol Plaatje Municipality after a famous author and politician.

Kimberley today

The city of Kimberley

The character of Kimberley still is descended from the mining days but the old small buildings are today mixed with modern complexes and the irregular street pattern is adjusted to the car traffic. The city structure shows traces from apartheid planning with three separated distinguished areas; the CBD, the southern prosperous suburbs, and the former township of Galeshewe. In the central and western part of the city undeveloped areas separates Galeshewe from the rest of the city and in the outskirts of the city are the two townships of Roodepan and Greenpoint located as well as industrial areas.

The southern suburbs

The prosperous southern suburbs are mainly residential areas consisting of single family houses in one-storey. The plots are surrounded by high fences and walls, and within them there are green gardens with trees and flowers.

The car is the main mode of transportation which is reflected by wide
roadways and narrow sidewalks. The sidewalks are also difficult to use since pavement often is missing and lighting, planting and trees are blocking the possibility to move. Almost no public spaces have been arranged in these areas except for a few parks.

Smaller shopping centres are located in the southern suburbs to provide the inhabitants with daily services.

**Townships**

Galeshewe is the largest of Kimberley’s former townships and has been identified as an underprivileged area after the apartheid years. Galeshewe is mainly a residential area but the housing standard is lower than in the southern suburbs. The area mainly consists of low-cost housing but also some middle-cost houses. In several areas shacks is the dominant housing type, and a great number of them are informal. The improvement of the housing stock is today supported through a governmental housing programme, which provides poor people with new and adequate housing.

As a result of the apartheid planning there are just a few routes leading in and out of the former township. The main mode of transportation in Galeshewe is walking, bicycling or going by taxi and the streets are in general narrow.

Arranged public spaces and green areas are lacking in this part of the city, and the access to daily services and shops are limited. However new developments are taking place to increase the range of these services.

**Central Business District**

The main business area, CBD, is located centrally in Kimberley, just east of the Big Hole, and is one of the largest working areas in the city. The CBD is a mixed use area which contains daily services, shops, offices and some apartment buildings. In some areas in the city centre informal trading takes place.

In the CBD the car is the main mode of transportation, with wide carriageways, narrow pavements and large parking areas. This and the fact that blank walls are often facing activity streets make it difficult and unpleasant for pedestrians to move in the CBD. Public spaces like squares, parks and places for social encounters are missing also in the CBD.

**Undeveloped areas**

*Buffer zone,* the former township of Galeshewe is situated rather close to the rest of the city, in comparison to other townships in South Africa. The buffer zone that separates Galeshewe from the rest of city is therefore relatively small. Developments in the buffer zone started early, already before 1994 when apartheid was abolished, which have
only left open areas in the western part. Parts of the western buffer zone are now however being developed with low-cost governmental housing, new roads, and a new Legislation Building for the Provincial Government. This will only leave a few vacant areas in the buffer zone.

Mine-dumps; mine-dumps from the Big Hole are occupying several central areas in Kimberley. The mine-dump areas create, just as the buffer zone, a barrier between Galeshewe and the rest of the city. Some of the mine-dumps are now being removed, leaving undeveloped areas at strategic locations centrally in the city.