



Observatory Charter (Draft 2017)

UNIQUE SOCIAL CHARACTER

In Observatory we value:

- the funky, bohemian, African style for which Observatory is known,
- that we have always been a diverse, inclusive, tolerant community that is friendly and bustling, and
- the charm offered by the historical heritage of the human-sized built environment.

We seek to promote these through:

- proactive, collective - and sometimes co-ordinated - activities and projects which contribute to this character, sensitive to existing diverse social and cultural patterns;
- promoting enterprises and public events that enhance this character;
- providing a welcoming context for creative initiatives like theatre, music



and visual arts;

- supporting socially-positive public art; and
- nurturing a diverse variety of eateries and recreational venues that enhance Observatory as a safe enjoyable recreational destination.

By the end of 2017, we will work towards the following:

- having “Open Streets” on a more regular basis e.g. every Sunday;
- promoting more public ownership of open spaces in Observatory;
- linking ObsLife more directly into the social character;
- researching the social character and mapping project thereof; naming what is held dear in the community as well as finding new forms of life in Obs.

In the longer term we would like to:

- link with other ‘village’ areas such as Muizenberg, Harfield, Wynberg in order to strengthen the village identity.

Members of the Group: Edwin Angless (*facilitator*), Tauriq Jenkins, Trevor Hughes, Belisa Rodrigues, William Frater, Hazel Bowen, John Greene

SAFETY

We will make Observatory the safest suburb in South Africa!

In Observatory we value:

- streets in which it is safe to walk,
- parks and open spaces in which it is safe to play and walk,



- safe public spaces that are used for a range of community events,

We pursue these through:

- personal habits that promote safety;
- active good neighbourliness;
- communicating with one another, including through social media;
- more active use of public spaces, like the village green and the Liesbeek river area; and
- co-operating with local organised and state initiatives that promote safety

with a view to

- making Observatory the safest suburb in South Africa!

By the end of 2017, we will work towards the following:

- lobbying the authorities to impose restrictions on liquor outlets to close at midnight during the weeks and 2am over the weekends;
- developing a community complaints database of noisy, errant establishments so we have firm evidence when approaching the authorities for sanctions against such establishments;
- developing some sound proofing tips;
- requesting businesses along Lower Main Rd to improve the lighting outside their establishments;
- developing the concept of a Buddy Bus that could take students (and residents) from Lower Main Rd to their places of residence - and vice versa;
- engaging with students via social media regarding their safety on our streets;



- continuing to promote and organise the WhatsApp groups.

In the longer term we would like to:

- lobby the City Council to improve lighting throughout the suburb;
- extend the CCTV and LPR cameras within the neighbourhood;
- have a satellite SAPS station in Obs;
- develop Buddy Bus stops throughout the neighbourhood;
- explore the idea of creating cul-de-sacs in some roads which would hinder criminal access and create safe, quality spaces for residents.

Members of the group: *Howard Richman (facilitator), Frank Schuitermaker, Tom Everett, Jenni Dodd, Natasha Mlunjwa*

CLEANER, SMARTER

In Observatory we value:

- an area that is 'smart' in the broadest sense, characterised by public infrastructure which is in good repair and an aesthetic environment that is stylish and clean.

We pursue this through:

- ensuring the authorities attend to damaged infrastructure;
- participating in the upkeep of green and street spaces, especially in our local environments where we each live;
- mindful management of our own domestic waste - like judicious use of black bins and recycling; and



- supporting community initiatives like greening projects and cleaning the Liesbeek river.

By the end of 2017, we will work towards the following:

- identifying and mobilising selected organisations/institutions to participate in environmental clean-ups - which could provide them with positive PR/profile and potential financial or other support in exchange;
- auditing all public litter bins and adding more in high traffic areas;
- facilitating the installation of recycling igloos at schools, in Lower Observatory, at the Community Centre and in other identified areas;
- liaising with sculpture artists who would like to display their works in the parks and facilitate the implementation of this .

In the longer term we would like to:

- facilitate the installation of more public litter bins in areas such as the Waverley area;
- have more public recycling igloos that are appropriately located;
- have two daily litter bin cleaning shifts along high traffic areas – like between the station and Groote Schuur;
- develop an eco-trike for speedy litter clean-ups;
- have regular bi-monthly photographic submissions of the most unkempt or unsightly properties who would receive a “Best Sloth of the Month”;
- include in the bi-monthly expose cleaner, safer, smarter ideas as well as a list of local maintenance contractors, for property owners who require additional assistance to undertake the upkeep of their property and pavement areas;



- invite sculptors to display their works in the gated parks – this adds to the appeal of the park and gives the artist exposure.

Members of the group: Hudson McComb (facilitator), Trish Sanderson-Smith, Werner Steyn

ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY

In Observatory we value:

- the natural environment in which we are located - like the Liesbeek river and wetlands on one side and the mountain on the other,
- the urban greening which continues to enhance the built environment where we live, work and play, and
- a consciousness that natural resources need to be managed and protected.

We pursue these through:

- active greening of urban spaces;
- managing park spaces for recreational use;
- participating in promoting the sustainability of the environment, like cleaning the river;
- engaging with property developments that may negatively infringe on the natural environment;
- having organised recycling; and
- educating residents and businesses.



By the end of 2017, we will work towards the following:

- having a recycling drive through educating businesses, backpackers, student houses;
- expanding the current glass recycling igloos to include paper and plastic;
- encouraging community members to get involved in the river clean-ups;
- having bird/nature walks in the TRUP area to encourage use and awareness of these outdoor spaces;
- educating the community on water saving and recycling tips (like multiflush systems, harvesting grey water);
- encouraging community members to weed the areas outside their properties to avoid the use of chemical weed killers;
- planting trees in public spaces; and
- guerilla gardening in public spaces - planting cuttings and seeds especially of edible plants and creating planter boxes/containers in the neighbourhood.

In the longer term we would like to:

- encourage the community to walk and cycle more by pedestrianising Lower Main Road between Trill and Station roads and Trill and Bowden roads;
- install a zebra crossing at the Kwikspar to ensure pedestrian safety on Station Road;
- discuss building developments with developers to encourage them to have less paved surfaces and more green areas;
- encourage households to install solar/PV water heating initiatives;
- green the area by planting trees;
- promote soil building and establish a soil composting area for organic



waste.

Members of the Group: *Steve Killick (facilitator), Jesse Breytenbach, Gerry Walden, Joy Robinson, Angus Joseph*

INTEGRATED SOCIAL ISSUES

In Observatory we value:

- that socially marginalised people are part of our community and are engaged with constructively,
- that a number of civil society organisations (NGOs, NPOs) including arts/culture/sport initiatives are based here, some of whom also engage with our community ,
- that we recognise a variety of social norms, and accept that people can express themselves in a variety of ways that respect others rights and wellbeing,
- that, while recognising individual choice, are alarmed by the proliferation of liquor outlets and the sale of drugs on our streets, and
- that students, interns, immigrant communities and transient groups bring business opportunities and diversity to our neighbourhood.

We pursue these through:

- developing relationships with marginalised people and offering suitable services;
- monitoring law enforcement bodies regarding their relationships with marginalised people;
- engaging with civil society organisations (NGOs, NPOs), faith-based



organisations and arts/culture/sports initiatives regarding local issues;

- engaging with the proprietors of frequently noisy venues;
- monitoring the granting of liquor licences and working with initiatives to curb the drug trade; and
- liaising with law enforcement bodies regarding their actions relating to noise, liquor and drugs.

By the end of 2017, we will work towards the following:

- communicating and coordinating more effectively with surrounding neighbourhoods and the CID's and civic organisations in these areas to develop a more effective and area-specific strategy with regards to common social issues;
- creating a database of civil society groups (NGOs, NPOs) and arts/culture/sports initiatives that are working in the neighbourhood;
- creating signage in the neighbourhood welcoming people to Obs but saying that the community has zero tolerance to anti-social behaviour related to excessive alcohol consumption and drug dealing;
- encouraging more people to get involved in the assessment of liquor licence applications in the neighbourhood.

In the longer term we would like to:

- create a facility (toilet, washing clothes, shower, lockers) for marginalised people and to promote this concept for duplication in surrounding neighbourhoods throughout the city.

Members of the Group: *Carolyn Neville (facilitator), Gavin Reid, Rudi Mitchell,*



Tauriq Jenkins, Donald Parenzee, Gareth Leyman, Natasha Mlunjwa, Andrea Couvert, Carol Cragg

COMMERCIAL ENTERPRISES

In Observatory we value:

- a diverse range of retail outlets and services, both those suitable to the needs of the local community as well as those that bring day (and night) visitors into the area,
- a streetscape of human-sized enterprises (rather than larger chains and malls),
- a wide range of eateries and recreational venues,
- the light industrial area and other office blocks on our perimeters that bring trade into the area, as well as providing employment for some residents,
- that a proportion of Obs residents work from home, which mean that their homes are commercial as well as living spaces, and
- the accommodation suitable for visitors to the area - be they short-term tourists or longer-term (international) students.

We pursue these through:

- supporting local retail outlets and service providers, and encouraging others to do so;
- recommending local retailers, restaurants, cafes, suppliers and accommodation to others, both local and visitors; and
- contributing to a safe, clean, smart environment that attracts a range of enterprises and encourages customers, especially from outside of the suburb.



By the end of 2017, we will work towards the following:

- creating an on-line directory of local businesses to be marketed to residents and others - with provision for customer comments regarding the standards of the services/goods provided;
- establishing a functioning Business Forum that focusses on the future (not on complaints);
- marketing Observatory for investment: packaging what the area has to offer and identifying what is missing to attract investment by a wider range of enterprises;
- engaging with absent commercial property owners regarding the types of businesses the community wants (more independent speciality retailers, art/craft shops, arts/music venues (with sound-proofing!), etc and does not want in the area i.e. fewer bars and superettes;
- having a 'buy local' campaign (maybe "support Obs business" stickers?); and
- marketing Obs more effectively e.g. by encouraging and supporting what is happening with regards to art/creative enterprises (e.g. Ahem and Bijou) and by promoting events such as "Art Thursdays".

In the longer term we would like to see:

- a vision shared by business owners, commercial property owners and local residents for the commercial future of Observatory;
- the development of an investment/growth policy for Obs - i.e. a "Wesgro for Obs" - that could promote Observatory as a brand;
- a wider range of enterprises for residents, visitors and for those who work



in Obs;

- a “shopping experience” that is resident-friendly;
- fewer liquor licences (for establishments that involve drinking primarily or only) and earlier closing times (midnight from Sundays to Thursdays, and 2pm at the latest on Fridays and Saturdays);
- a “shopping experience” promoted by better access to parking and public transport such as *MyCiTi* and trains;
- no parking in the Lower Main Rd strip (i.e. between Norwich & Station roads) to make this a more pedestrian-friendly space;

Members of the Group: Mark Neville (*facilitator*), Lousie Jones, Marc Turok, DeVos Rabie, Tamsen de Beer

BUILT ENVIRONMENT

In Observatory we value :

- the history of the area, actively recognising the range of diverse heritages,
- the preservation of the built environment – especially the Victorian architecture – within the context of inevitable densification,
- the repurposing of old buildings – and the sensitive design and co-existence of the new and the old,
- housing for people from a wide range of economic means, continuing the history of housing in this area,
- streets where cars and people can co-exist,



- our central location and easy access to main arterial roads, and
- better development that comes from constructive engagement with authorities and stronger participation by community members.

We pursue these through:

- researching and enlivening our diverse material heritages;
- balancing concerns for the preservation of the built environment with the development of high density buildings – and lobbying for a sensitive fit;
- positively engaging with City of Cape Town and Heritage Western Cape authorities to negotiate appropriate development;
- educating homeowners and businesses in Observatory regarding heritage and development;
- preserving our own properties in ways that are sensitive to the heritage fabric of the area;
- advocating for housing for people from a wide range of economic means;
- promoting socially positive public art;
- finding solutions to the increased vehicular congestion, including parking.

By the end of 2017, we will work towards the following:

- adding to the current Observatory Welcome Packs a best practice kit for homeowners with regards building and renovations;
- extending the distribution of the Welcome Pack to all homeowners and new residents in Obs (not just new homeowners);
- developing a proposal for Observatory to be declared a heritage area in



law - linked to a campaign of community education around heritage and appropriate development;

- identifying a pool of people to be enskilled (i.e. understand the regulations and the way in which the City of Cape Town and Heritage Western Cape operate) to engage with the authorities e.g. at sub-council meetings; and
- engaging with officials at the City of Cape Town (and drawing on the expertise of other parties who work in the field of development) regarding the appropriate application of the Heritage Protection Overlay Zone in development decisions, and challenging them to follow good practice.

In the longer term we would like to:

- collaborate with other civics around issues of development; and
- ensure good practices are applied to Zoning Scheme applications.

Members of the Group: Leslie London (*facilitator*), Haiko Alfeld, Henk Stutterheim, David Aitchison, Bidy Greene, Carol Cragg, Andrea Couvert.

- *Haiko Alfeld volunteered to assist with Welcome Packs*