

JOHANNESBURG HERITAGE FOUNDATION



By Invitation Only

Joburg Heritage Virtual Tours and Talks Presents “Kliptown and the Freedom Charter”

Saturday 27th June 2020 at 2.15 pm

The 26th June is the 65th anniversary of the Congress of the People at which more than 3000 delegates from all over South Africa representing a number of organisations met to consider the Freedom Charter which had been drawn up over many months expressing the goals and needs of the people of South Africa, mainly black people who had no vote

They met in Kliptown on what was known then as Freedom Square – a vast open space fringed with Blue gum trees, close to the railway line.

Our Virtual tour takes you to the site today and will help understand what was going on at the time. But first Merle Ruff whose parents participated in that gathering and who is one of our dedicated researchers will introduce the topic explaining the hopes and aspirations which culminated in formulating this blue print for the country they wanted and the nation for which they were willing to face many years of struggle.

Ronnie Kasrils, (born 1938 in Johannesburg), will discuss what the Freedom Charter meant to those who were involved in the liberation struggle. He became actively involved from the time of the Sharpeville massacre (March 21st, 1960) right to the demise of Apartheid and establishment of the non-racial, democratic South Africa envisaged in the Freedom Charter. He served in government from 1994 to 2008; and remains a social activist to this day. He is the author of a memoir, *Armed and Dangerous*, recounting his life in the struggle.

In 2005 with the square renamed Walter Sisulu Square of Commemoration a new memorial emerged. It is monumental, befitting the impact of that meeting and the charter adopted there. The competition of 2002 for the memorial was won by the architectural practice StudioMAS and much of it is highly symbolic.

The Freedom Charter was a banned document for 40 years so it may not be familiar to members, but it is critical to understanding our history and to understanding why the memorialisation was such a priority. In this time when statues are being pulled down and the meaning and symbolism behind these is of such importance this is certainly the biggest one in the City of Johannesburg and one we need to know and explore. In the present icy weather a virtual tour is definitely a sound idea..

These Tours are for **MEMBERS EYES ONLY**.

To register please notify Eira on mail@joburgheritage.co.za and you will receive notice of the code to use on the day.

If you want to join and still need to pay your membership fee, please e-mail Eira on mail@joburgheritage.co.za

(Note: Please sign in at least 15 minutes before Tour Starts)