

JOHANNESBURG



HERITAGE FOUNDATION

INTRODUCING THE FOUNDATION

The *Johannesburg Heritage Foundation (formerly known as the Parktown & Westcliff Heritage Trust)* was initially established in 1985 to conserve the heritage of these old suburbs, which had been under threat from the wrecking ball for many years. In 2012, it changed its name and expanded its field of interest to the heritage of the greater Johannesburg area. As such, the Johannesburg Heritage Foundation is now a Non-Profit Organisation registered with the Department of Social Development.

As many of us know, Johannesburg was established in 1886 in the Randjeslaagte triangle following the discovery of gold. Thousands of hopeful miners and migrants soon flocked to the makeshift mining camps and the core of the new town became established in the square mile around the original Market Square (today the site of the Gauteng Legislature). The Witwatersrand gold mines powered the Johannesburg economy and burgeoning settlements expanded rapidly from the inner city to outlying suburbs. By 1903, the town embraced 53 320 acres. Today, just over 135 years later, the city of Johannesburg covers 1645 square kilometers.

The task of caring for the heritage of a such a large, modern metropolis is massive, but our focus falls on heritage buildings, roughly defined as properties over 60 years in age. The Johannesburg Heritage Foundation therefore concentrates on the preservation of heritage properties and sites with architectural merit or that epitomize the social, economic or political history of the city, its people and their stories.

AIMS & OBJECTIVES

To ensure that the valuable cultural heritage of Johannesburg is retained for future generations by:

- Increasing public awareness of that heritage by creating opportunities for people to become familiar with this heritage and its special significance.
- Identifying significant sites and areas and motivating the protection of such heritage through the application of the National Heritage Resources Act and measures in the Town Planning legislation.
- Restoring buildings, gardens and sites and marking them appropriately with heritage plaques.
- Offering tours and other activities for schools to ensure that learners get to know their city and take pride in their heritage.
- Researching and publishing in print and on the internet information on the many aspects of Johannesburg's heritage.

INCORPORATING PARKTOWN AND WESTCLIFF HERITAGE TRUST

'NORTHWARDS' 21 ROCKRIDGE ROAD | PARKTOWN | JOHANNESBURG | 2193
www.joburgheritage.org.za | mail@joburgheritage.org.za | Tel: +27 (0)60 813 3239
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ACTIVITIES

The JHF and its committed team of volunteers engages in many activities including tours, outreach programmes, heritage activism, the issuing of Blue Plaques, etc.

- We maintain an **administrative office at Northwards** and a Research Centre at the Holy Family College in Parktown.
- Our well-attended **Tour Programme** raises funds and increases awareness of our city's heritage with a regular schedule of walking and bus tours for its members and the general public. Our season of online Virtual Tours has also proven very popular.
- The JHF's annual **Heritage Weekend** showcases the homes, gardens and wonderful views of our city. The packed programme of walking and bus tours covers the entire spectrum of Johannesburg and is made accessible to the general public at a lower cost thanks to sponsor subsidies. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, Heritage Weekends were not held in 2020 and 2021 but will be resumed as soon as possible.
- **School Tours** are conducted throughout the year and are customised to be both grade-appropriate and suitable for the school's specific interests. These guided tours try to inculcate a passion for Johannesburg heritage amongst learners.
- Regular **Tour Guide Training** is conducted once or twice a year to upskill our volunteers and recruit fresh voices into our schedule of tours. Additional guide training is also facilitated for those who wish to become registered Joburg Tour Guides.
- We support three **Joint Plans Committees** that respond to community issues and work with architects and developers to ensure that heritage legislation is followed. These JPCs work together with local community groups to ensure adherence to town planning procedures, moderation of new development in the interests of protecting the character of the area, and limiting the environmental impact of new development.
- The **JHF Research Centre** maintains an important collection of books, documents and files about Johannesburg, including property descriptions and plans, city council minutes, maps and other reference material. This fragile collection is currently being digitized (thanks to a generous donor grant) and is available to researchers at a nominal fee.
- Important places, people and events are commemorated through our coveted **Blue Plaques**, which have been installed across the city. Each year, additional sites are nominated for Blue Plaque status and our list keeps growing.
- The **Heritage Grading Programme** systematically grades heritage buildings in Central Johannesburg and the surrounding suburbs (e.g. Parkview and Melville).
- **Book Sales** generate much needed funds for the JHF, with both new book sales and regular second-hand book sales. A recent silent auction of rare book titles was also a great success.
- The **Friends of Johannesburg Cemeteries** is a dedicated volunteer group that works tirelessly to improve the gardens and headstones of our oldest cemeteries. FOJC also conducts genealogical research and helps in gravesite location on request.
- We run an active **Restoration and Conservation Programme** that invests in worthy heritage conservation projects, including such as the Orange Grove Waterfall, Stewart Drive, James Mpanza's house in Orlando East, St Albans, St Marys the Less, St John the Divine, the Friedenskirche Lutheran church and the Holy Trinity Catholic Church.

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- **Partnerships** with city authorities, local communities and community organisers are essential to the future of our city's heritage. For example, our relationship with Johannesburg City Parks and the Friends of the Wilds is helping to restore the Wilds and its modernist green houses.
- The JHF's **Online Presence** has been greatly improved with a new, interactive website, online booking facility and active social media accounts.

PARTNERSHIPS AND AFFILIATIONS

- The Foundation has its office in the beautiful old Herbert Baker home 'Northwards', and supports the Northwards Trust with rental income.
- The Heritage Education Centre and the Heritage Training and Research Centre are accommodated at the Holy Family College, Parktown. We support the College with the provision of two bursaries.
- Our most important partners are the local communities, represented by their Residents Associations. These include Parktown, Westcliff, Upper and Lower Houghton, Melrose, Observatory Estate, Emmarentia, Parkview, Kensington, Orlando East and Dube.
- We are grateful to receive funding from a range of generous donors, trusts and corporates. The Brenthurst Conservation Trust, for example, is a loyal supporter.
- We partner with Museum Africa in the identification, recording and archiving of building plans representing fine draughtsmanship or historical significance.
- We work with the Johannesburg City Heritage Division in areas such as the maintenance and protection of Johannesburg war memorials and cooperation with the installation of blue plaques.
- The JHF (then operating as the Parktown and Westcliff Heritage Trust) cooperated with the Egoli Heritage Trust (now defunct) by erecting blue plaques that commemorate sites connected to the Anglo Boer War as well as Johannesburg's wealth of Art Deco buildings.
- The Foundation keeps in contact with other local and national heritage bodies and platforms such as the Heritage Association of South Africa (HASA) and the Heritage Portal. JHF is also a member of HASA.
- The JHF has actively developed partnerships in Soweto and Noordgesig to promote and commemorate local heritage sites. These include the installation of Honour Boards at Orlando High School and various other blue plaques.

MANAGEMENT

The Management of the Foundation is vested in a Board of Management, which is elected annually at the AGM. The Board is answerable to the Board of Trustees, which is nominated by the relevant residents associations and the Board of Management.

FINANCES

The Johannesburg Heritage Foundation maintains careful financial records. Annual financial statements are prepared and audited accounts are submitted annually to the Department of Social Development as well as SARS.

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CONTACT DETAILS

Office Manager: Barbara Cron

Office Phone: +27 (0)60 813 3239

Email: mail@joburgheritage.org.za

Website: www.joburgheritage.org.za

Donation Link: <https://www.payfast.co.za/donate/go/johannesburgheritagefoundation>

Street / Postal Address: 'Northwards', 21 Rockridge Road, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2193

Bank Details: Johannesburg Heritage Foundation / Nedbank Current Account No.: 1944023011

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