

CPUT brings District Six to life

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As a higher education institution in South Africa, three of the main functions of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) are teaching, research and community involvement. The Department of Civil Engineering and Surveying has embarked on a new project in collaboration with the District Six museum that will play a role in all three of the abovementioned functions.

The Cape Town campus of CPUT is located entirely within the boundaries of what used to be a vibrant and culturally diverse suburb called District Six. In 1966, District Six was declared a "White Group Area" under the Group Areas Act and in 1968 the first demolitions and forced removals began. This process took 15 years and approximately 55 000 people were removed. Apart from the campus, churches, mosques and a few apartment complexes, the area is for the most part undeveloped and few traces of the original District Six remain.

The CPUT team, consisting of staff and students, has started working on physically marking out important sites and landmarks that used to exist in District Six. This will benefit Capetonians and tourists alike, enabling them to visualise parts of the original suburb, and will also assist with the cultural heritage research work currently being done at the District Six museum. The first sites that have been identified are Hanover Street and Horstley Street, two of the most important streets on the original network of roads through District Six.

Old source documents such as maps, aerial photographs and council plans were obtained from the Surveyor General's office, Surveys and Mapping, Cape Town municipality and the District Six museum. Students have enthusiastically embraced the project and are being given hands-on experience in the areas of site reconnaissance, archival investigation,



District Six, 1968: A dense, run-down inner city neighbourhood. The newly constructed Eastern Boulevard cuts through District Six.



District Six, 1996: Most of the original area has been demolished and remains empty. 22% of the land is taken up by the CPUT campus. (source: Dept. Land Affairs: CDSM)



The remains of Horstley Street

coordinate transformations, GPS control surveying and setting out. The CPUT team appreciates this unique opportunity to be involved in a community endeavour which is providing them with an insight into South Africa's history.

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