

ABSTRACT

The housing crisis is a global problem, however, the issues faced in South African settlements largely stem from the colonial system which enforced separation by violating specific groups of people's rights to adequate housing: *"The right of every woman, man, youth and child to gain and sustain a safe and secure home and community in which to live in peace and dignity"*. This system contributed to the low densities found in South African cities today, and although we are more than two decades out of the colonial regime and its laws, our urban landscape is still characterised by a limited range of housing types, unequal accessibility to urban opportunities, and a lack of social integration. The urban quality of our cities today makes housing in well-located areas unaffordable for the urban poor, thereby displacing them to the urban peripheries, far from employment opportunities and important social amenities.

Tembisa (established in 1957 for black South Africans who were forcefully removed from areas in Edenvale, Germiston, Midrand and others) is an example of such townships. The housing projects in these areas have continued to perpetuate the colonial urban form by creating large settlements of low quality mass housing. Unfortunately, this pattern has strengthened the income and racial lines that solidify the segregation still experienced today, consequently, the disadvantaged remain confined in poverty situations and long term social costs. The daily commute to economic and social urban opportunities comes at a great cost to the residents as access to transport systems is limited and often expensive, even private car ownership has become expensive as these commutes often need to be taken every day of the week.

Analysis of the study area revealed that beyond the provision for families, there is an emerging class of singles and childless, young couples who are seeking well-constructed, smaller homes in pleasant walkable

communities. However, they don't want to relocate due to the affordability of lifestyle and existing social networks. Currently, Tembisa is missing the housing types, amenities and urban opportunities necessary to meet these people's housing needs.

In this report, an innovative approach in the processes of planning our human settlements in such peripheral townships was explored. Principles were mainly derived from international and local precedents, and the preceding sustainable design guidelines such as the Comprehensive Housing Plan (CHP) for the development of Integrated Sustainable Human Settlements Breaking New Ground (BNG). These policies emphasise the re-integration of cities through the densification of existing infill, well-located areas for mixed-income classes in an aim to develop integrated human settlements. Internationally, vital guidelines were adopted from Bioregional's One Planet Living concept: *"A vision of a world in which people enjoy happy, healthy lives within their fair share of the earth's resources."* This concept developed from their experiences at BedZed ecovillage in London, a project which ultimately influenced their national building regulations.

A combination of the different policies, design principles and guidelines was linked to the end-user preferences expressed during the analysis, in an aim to meet the needs of the people more efficiently. The link revealed that integrating a variety of tenure options and housing types (rental, bonded, and subsidized); various densities; a higher level of services and commercial opportunities will meet larger groups of people's needs, and encourage social interaction in housing developments. Furthermore, implementing the principles expressed in these policies emphasises community participation, social and economic development throughout the project. This research report bridged the gaps between policy, principles and implementation by adapting global sustainable principles to a specific context, thereby creating a new and improved neighbourhood character to be proud of.