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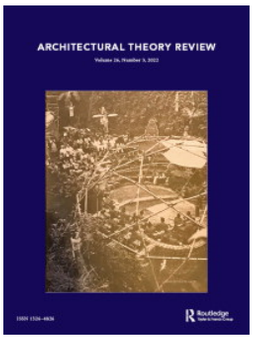

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"Build Your Own House": Betty Spence's Design-Research in 1950s South Africa

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the design-research of the white, South African, left-wing, liberal architect Elizabeth "Betty" Spence (1919–84) during early spatial apartheid. Building on Spence's fragmented archive of publications and interviews, we explore how she worked for and with disenfranchised Black township inhabitants on materializing alternative housing options. Spence's approach included careful observation of how different inhabitants—particularly women—used interior spaces. While her work responded pragmatically to distinct South African social, economic, and racial challenges, this article shows that her design-research was indebted to both European design thinking on the optimization of domestic space and American-South African debates on "race relations." Her concern with incremental housing, self-construction, and the process of building and homemaking in the townships, we argue, should be understood as a form of political action that enabled self-determination within the framework of modern urban life.

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Township housing; domestic spaces; apartheid; self-construction; Johannesburg

Introduction

In 1952, at the start of spatial apartheid, the white, South African, left-leaning, liberal architect Elizabeth "Betty" Spence (1919–84) completed *Build Your Own House: An Owner Builder Guide* (1953), a practical instruction guide intended for Black township inhabitants who could not wait for the state to build them houses.[1] Consisting of a series of simple, yet technically informative black-and-white drawings to support the self-construction of incremental houses, the booklet was one of several design-research projects undertaken by Spence during the 1940s and '50s that share a concern for people's own ability to build and the possibilities to improve their living situation. This article examines several of Spence's written works, including *Build Your Own House*, as well as her articles for the *South African Architectural Record*, and her design for her family's own home in Johannesburg's suburbs to show how

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Figure 1. Betty Spence, ca. 1950. Pinfold family archive.

she worked for and with disenfranchised Black township inhabitants on materialising alternative housing options. Spence's novel and collaborative approach included careful observation of how different inhabitants—particularly women—used interior spaces. As an active member of the Liberal Party, Spence opposed the government's increasingly cruel and stringent enforcement of apartheid policies during the 1950s and was eventually forced to leave for the United Kingdom in 1959. Yet Spence, like other liberals, did not dispute the existence of segregated townships for Johannesburg's Black urban residents, effectively reinforcing their presence. Rather, her projects focused on enabling their access to better housing. She supported incremental changes in the quality and size of township housing and lent technical support to the movements resisting forced removals from rezoned "group areas."

While Spence's work responded pragmatically to the distinct social, economic, and racial challenges of Johannesburg, we show that her design-research should also be understood in relation to European design thinking on the optimisation of domestic space, as well as concurrent American debates on "race relations." In 1948, as recipient of a British Council fellowship, she spent four months studying prefabricated housing in London, a city still recovering from World War Two yet awash with novel architectural ideas to facilitate efficient post-war reconstruction. On her return, she became a part-time researcher for South Africa's National Housing Commission and the National Building Research Institute (NBRI). These were organisations influenced by European modernism as well as by ideas about the improvement of African education and housing promoted by American groups active in South Africa, like the Phelps-Stokes Fund. Combining these transnational influences with observational fieldwork in and around Johannesburg, Spence's work was uniquely rich in its contribution to the intense discussions on housing for urban Black South Africans.

As one of few female South African architects in her time (fig. 1), Spence was a relatively marginalised figure whose work has remained unstudied. Her nuanced ideas about architectural design never received as much attention as her white, male colleagues, such as Norman Hanson (1909–91), another graduate from the University of Witwatersrand (Wits), who had been influential in forming the modernist National Housing and Planning Commission (NHPC).[2] Nor is she seen as a political figure, like the South African architect Rusty Bernstein (1920–2002), who split his time between running a commercial architecture practice and doing underground work for the South African Communist Party, including the drafting of the Freedom Charter in 1955 from a collective set of demands that imagined social rights in a future, non-racial South Africa.[3] Spence's liberal politics and her exposure to a progressive, modernist architectural culture would guide her in her work, much of which took place as a researcher and collaborator. As such, it foresaw the now common role of the "design researcher," and would imbue all her projects with political insight that recognised the agency of others, aside from the professional architect, in the completion of built form.

Like many other women architects, Spence's archive is fragmented.[4] Between 1945 and 1958, she divided her time between a part-time teaching position at Wits and a variety of different, presumably freelance research and design projects.[5] Along with her husband, the architect Carl Pinfold and their children, she fled to the United Kingdom in 1959 as a political exile, losing her personal archives in the process.[6] As a result, what has survived, aside from her publications, are traces and suggestions of her activities in other archives. As a member of an oppositional political milieu, she was kept on the margins of the official discourse of apartheid spatial planning, appearing only sporadically in minutes of meetings, and anonymously contributing to at least one report. Yet her work, supported by various liberal and even communist figures, would play a significant role in developing alternative approaches to Black housing.

Spence, who grew up in one of Johannesburg's wealthiest suburbs in a family of British origins, trained as an architect at Wits in the late 1930s. After graduating in 1941, she worked in the office of the Johannesburg architect Duncan Sinclair, as well as in the Housing Office in Newlands in Cape Town.[7] During the same time, she became known in South Africa's architectural circles for publishing an article titled "Native Architecture"—one of the first essays printed in the *South African Architectural Record* devoted to indigenous South African architecture—as well as other pieces on subjects such as design in the small Afrikaner town of Reddersburg, and European architecture in the Congolese mining town Elizabethville (fig. 2).[8]

All these articles featured her own photographs and some also included her drawings. In the process of observing houses, she came to see homemakers as both spatial agents and users of given spaces. This attitude is visible in her concern with spatial flexibility and incremental growth, in the architecture she documented as well as the design of her own home. The house, from her perspective, was a space to "grow": a space that could be adjusted over time. Spence's work examined the house from an architectural and technical, but also social perspective. She proposed multiple routes to its construction and imagined different ways of living in it over time. Well in

Figure 2. Ndebele homesteads outside of Johannesburg photographed by Betty Spence. Betty Spence, "Native Architecture," *South African Architectural Record* (November 1940): 387–91.

advance of British architect John Turner's famous definition of "housing as a verb," Spence learned from disenfranchised Black homemakers who had no choice but to be self-reliant.[9] Building on Spence's fragmented archive of publications and on interviews, we consider her concern with the process of building and homemaking in the townships as a form of political action, albeit one that was focused on creating small-scale improvements within a fundamentally racist and segregated system.

Like other white liberal South African architects at that time, Spence's work is characterised by a patronising attitude to Black newcomers to the city. For her, "good housing" was instrumental in supporting a transition from rural to urban life for Black South Africans—a process in which many intellectuals, including white academics and Black politicians, took interest.[10] In Spence's view, urban Black South Africans were "in development": on their way to a European, modern lifestyle. In prejudiced terms that associated rural life with simplicity, and the urban with corrupting influences for youth, she proposed the house as a mediating influence that allowed for the consolidation of new identities: "Good housing would go a long way towards counteracting these evil effects. Not only should the housing be good but the inhabitants should be given a sense of 'belonging'."[11] Moreover, Spence's work echoed and reinforced a sense of paternalism, spelled out, for example, in the title of a research article of 1950, "How *Our* Urban Natives Live" (our emphasis).[12] Spence, like other white architects, considered Black South Africans, despite having been capable of building their own homes for centuries, as in need of institutional guidance to do the same in an urban situation.

South African Liberalisms and the Institute for Race Relations

Spence was a liberal, both officially and conceptually.[13] In 1954, she even stood as a local candidate for the South African Liberal Party, a short-lived alliance of left-wing individuals.[14] Liberalism, as an Anglo-American political project with global influence, has been described as ambivalent, yet essential to modernity.[15] South African liberalism was located in various loosely affiliated political circles from the 1920s onwards, but became focused in response to the rise of Afrikaner nationalism during World War Two. Officially established in 1953 as an opposition party to reject the government's apartheid policies, it began as an umbrella group of around five hundred individuals, many with expertise in education, business, law, and medicine. Firmly opposing totalitarian doctrines, liberals attempted to give organisational support to increasingly disenfranchised Black communities. Among its influences were British Fabianism, Christian thought—channelled specifically through Quakers and American mission societies—and African liberation discourses.[16] It developed in parallel, and sometimes antagonistically, in relation to the growth of the anti-apartheid, African Nationalist Congress Alliance, which divided its organisation along racial lines and included communists. South African liberals did not stand together for giving Black South Africans the right to vote until the late 1950s, at which stage several of its members went into exile. Nonetheless, their opposition to apartheid's impact on Black South Africans is reflected in their development of pragmatic proposals for education, housing, and health care, all of which were constrained by the post-1948 state. The fundamental difference was that liberals stood for access to "civilising" structures for urbanising Blacks, while the National Party withheld Black welfare funding to the most basic levels, constructing instead a mythical paradigm of "separate development" in ethnically separate, rural areas that would lead to enormous poverty.

With the rapid growth of the Black population in towns during and after World War Two, the provision of housing would be used by all political groups, including liberals, to define housing rights and typologies. The apartheid state's policies would differentiate between those Black urban-born residents with the right to stay in urban areas due to formal work positions, and those without it: tenants in yards or back rooms, as well as people living in temporary shelters. This led to a number of positions in response. The most radical was the 1944 "Sofasonke squatter" movement of the Black township resident James Mpanza who led thousands of inhabitants to build their homes from jute and wood on the outskirts of the severely overcrowded Orlando townships.[17] The position of the communists, who advised the African National Congress (ANC), was that "the Party demands the abolition of all residential segregation and the provision of adequate housing for all, with special attention to the needs of those living in slums."[18] The liberal approach, however, did not contest the growing segregation of residential areas and was tied to class. As David Everatt has put it, liberals "developed a programme that did not demand an end to segregation but rather its gradual modification, aimed at separating a black urban bourgeoisie from the bulk of the black population."[19] In the two cases where Spence was directly involved in housing policy—the formation of the housing standards document in the late 1940s, and in a scheme opposing the forced removal of Black residents from the Western Areas of Johannesburg to segregated townships—she leaned

towards support for more established Black urban citizens.[20] This position would limit itself to improving people's living circumstances within a segregated system, instead of challenging the apartheid regime's racist policies.

The most significant of Spence's working relationships was with John D. Rheinallt Jones (1884–1953), a Welsh liberal who had immigrated to South Africa in 1905 and worked as a senator, and in education and social welfare organisations. In 1929, he became the founding director of the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR), eventually located at the Wits campus.[21] The white, mostly English-speaking liberals and Jewish émigrés who led the Institute believed that through gathering and disseminating knowledge, "race relations" could be improved. The SAIRR was established by the liberal Edgar Brookes, former headmaster of Adams College which was run by the American Mission Board. The SAIRR was funded in part through the Carnegie Corporation as well as the Phelps-Stokes Fund, an American philanthropic effort which promoted African American educational initiatives, mostly revolving around vocational training such as at the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama.[22] The institute's overall aim was to "work for the establishment of goodwill and practical co-operation between the various racial groups in the population."[23] To do so, the SAIRR was involved in several social welfare, educational initiatives, such as the development of libraries in townships and "Joint Councils" with mixed-race membership, directly modelled after interracial councils established in the American South in the early twentieth century.[24] For example, Alfred Bitini Xuma, a Tuskegee alumnus, medical doctor and anti-apartheid leader of the ANC during the 1940s, was a member of the Johannesburg Joint Council.[25] The SAIRR saw the promotion of dialogue as a way to prevent civil unrest, racial tensions and the spread of communist ideologies.[26]

World War Two had led to mass industrialisation and the inclusion of some Black workers in blue-collar jobs, albeit at lower wage levels than their white counterparts. Yet there were insufficient houses in proximity to industry, many dilapidated urban "yards" with rented rooms, and only nominal shelters or unserviced stands provided for the unhoused in Black locations. According to an official waiting list for Black housing after the war there was a deficit of 15,546 units, but estimates were much higher, at 57,000.[27] The state, industry, and municipalities were commissioning researchers to find solutions to this exponential demand for living space, spurred by urban unrest and the Sofasonke squatter movement.[28] Moreover, up until the mid-1950s this growth was seen as necessary for the economic growth of the country, in contrast to the later apartheid practices of influx control and "homelands" to stem rural–urban migration. As Grace Davie reminds us, township housing "needed to be rationalised so as to produce the cheapest possible homes for the largest number of black Africans already living in the city."[29]

By the late 1940s, the state formed the National Housing and Planning Commission (NHPC) to codify a standardised approach to Black housing through the development of a Minimum Standards of Accommodation Research Committee.[30] The Commission had technical support from the newly formed National Building Research Institute (NBRI) where Spence was employed as a part-time researcher.[31] The Research Committee was initially convened by two liberal architects, Norman

Hanson and Paul Connell, who had been a few years ahead of her at Wits. The committee was operating in the shadow of the apartheid state in formation.[32] Although it was undertaking an ostensibly technical survey related to housing minima, one of the eight sub-committees, on "Survey of Attitudes of Occupants to Housing," included other liberal figures such as Ellen Hellman, a sociologist employed by the SAIRR. To expand the number of Black figures involved, the SAIRR also convened confidential meetings—in parallel to the survey sub-committee—at their offices: the so-called "Joint Committee of European and African Opinion to Discuss Urban Native Housing."[33] This group also included Ray Phillips, an American missionary who, along with his wife Dora, had founded the Jan Hofmeyr School for Social Work in 1941: the first South African institution to train Black social workers.[34]

Together, these figures brought a specific set of liberal values to Spence's housing research, particularly in relation to gender. Her work extended the notion of self-help that had been taught at Tuskegee, where African American labour—normally male—was deployed to build durable housing. By pooling labour and using soil-cement blocks, these descendants of freedmen and emancipated enslaved persons could become self-reliant and avoid the need to earn wages in the white-dominated economy.[35] In Spence's work, we also see the notion of Black women—trained within single-sex missionary schools such as Inanda Seminary and social clubs like the Wayfarers, and monitored in their homes by social workers—being expected to perform as modern homemakers, supportive wives and mothers of "civilised" Black South Africans (to use the patronising language of the time).[36] The township homes built in the early 1950s would reinforce these gendered roles by using training projects to develop a cohort of male builders for the pilot housing projects in Dube in Soweto and KwaThema. Once complete, female homemakers would manage order in the house with the support of internal furniture and fittings such as coal-fired stoves that facilitated heat, cooking, and ironing.

Homemaking in the Townships

In 1950, Spence published an extensive report in the *South African Architectural Record* entitled, "How Our Urban Natives Live," conveying the results of her research for the National Building Research Institute on minimum standards for township housing.[37] The report documented the dwelling conditions of Black South Africans living in the township of Orlando East, located on the flat, windy plains southwest of Johannesburg. The motivation for the research was to get "a clearer picture of urban Native life," as a prelude to the design of more appropriate housing models.[38] Prior to 1948, urban housing for Black South Africans in so-called "locations" (segregated, fenced plots outside of towns) was designed and constructed by local authorities, and funded by central government loans that were repaid by tenants through rents, or from proceeds from the sale of beer. The Research Committee addressed the diversity in housing standards over its two-year existence, redrawing several existing schemes as it worked towards the formulation of minimum housing standards and the design of standardised, minimal units.

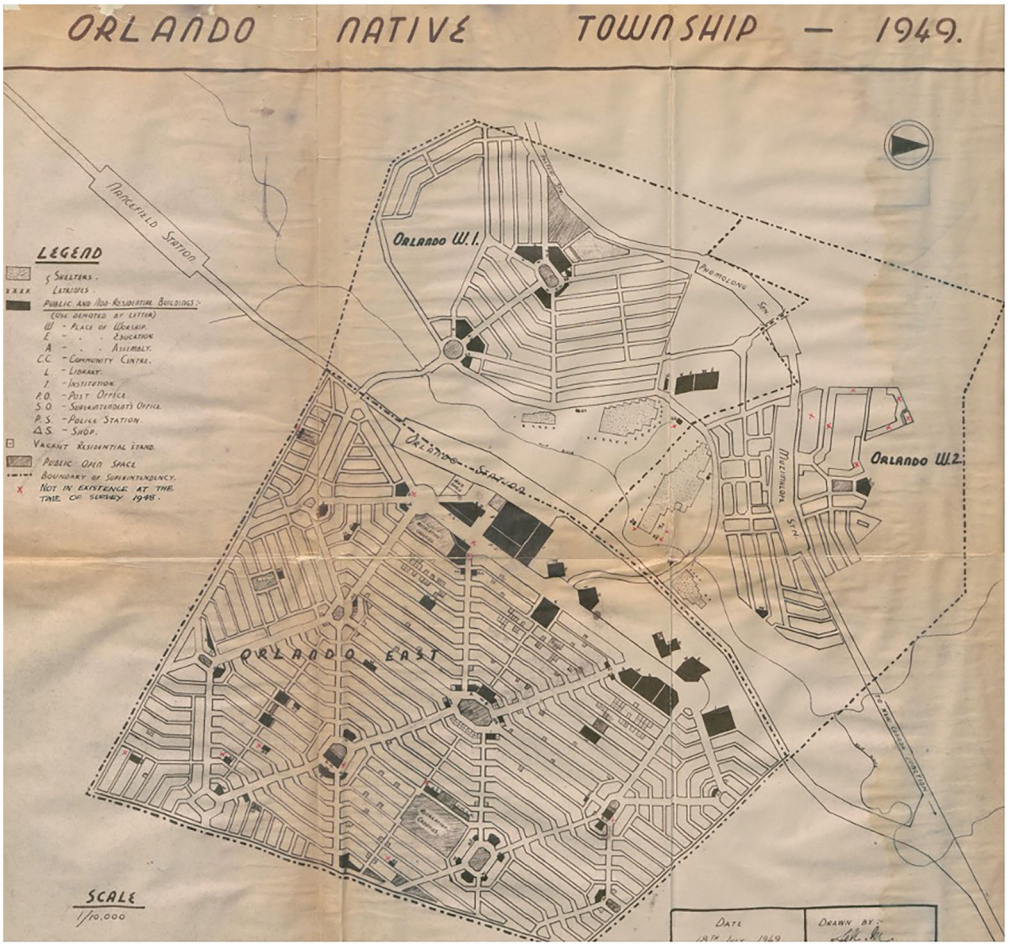


Figure 3. The Orlando East Township in 1949, planned by Kallenbach, Kennedy & Furner in 1931 and subsequently further developed. Jacqueline Eberhardt, "Survey of Housing and Family Conditions: Orlando Township (with Special Reference to Housing Needs)" (MA diss., University of the Witwatersrand, 1949).

Spence justified the township of Orlando East—located approximately fifteen kilometres from Johannesburg's centre, an area that today is part of Soweto, short for South Western Townships—as the location of her survey because it represented a "fairly well established community of poorer urbanised Native families."[39] Orlando East, a township planned using garden city geometries by the architecture firm Kallenbach, Kennedy & Furner, was conceived as a low-density, orderly neighbourhood, connected to Johannesburg by train and by bus (fig. 3).[40] Most residents were factory workers and domestic servants. The project was situated, as Jeremy Foster has written, behind the city's "unsightly mine dumps" and in the "veld," the open and uncultivated grasslands surrounding Johannesburg.[41] While presented as a garden city surrounded by a green belt—firmly separating the township from Johannesburg's white and wealthy suburban areas—the reality was a reservoir of cheap, Black labour

for work in Johannesburg's gold mines and factories, and in the city's service industry.

Orlando East also had the advantage of the data from an existing survey conducted a year earlier by the anthropologist Jacqueline Eberhardt under the supervision of Haskel Sonnabend, a Wits professor of statistics who sat on the Research Committee on Minimum Standards.[42] Eberhardt had visited two per cent of the area's houses, including emergency shelters, as an assignment for the Non-European Affairs Department of the City Council of Johannesburg. Working with a Black fieldworker, Miss U. Dzivane, she surveyed residents' family composition, histories, and views on their homes. Underlying Eberhardt's work was the question of how residents adapted to township housing.

Typologically, the housing built in 1937, 1942, and 1945 consisted of relentless rows of single-story red brick houses (fig. 4). These nearly six thousand bungalow-type rentals—dwellings that were, like most township houses, leased but not owned by their Black tenants—were simple and plain, located on individual lots.[43] The houses with one or two bedrooms and a small *stoep* (verandah), did not have internal bathrooms (fig. 5). To keep costs down, they were left un-plastered on the inside, lacking interior doors, floors, or ceilings, as well as storage spaces. There was also no electricity, no streetlights, and only a few communal water taps. Roads were left unpaved, which made them dusty in the summer and muddy during the rains. The anti-apartheid activist Lilian Ngoyi, who lived in a township house not far from Orlando East, described them as "match-boxes." "In winter these houses are a fridge, in summer an oven. No white in this country can ever be accommodated in them."[44]

While Eberhardt's survey offered clear value to the Research Committee, the National Building Research Institute delegated Spence to conduct a further "furniture survey" with the help of Anna Mokhetle, a Black woman trained at the Jan Hofmeyr School of Social Work. Mokhetle, instructed by Spence, interviewed Orlando East's inhabitants to find out what types of furniture residents owned and to what extent the cramped and overcrowded two- and three-room houses were furnished, but also how and at what time of day the furniture was used. Spence's drawings represented the kind of adaptations that homeowners had made to deal with their given spaces—already captured in Eberhardt's questionnaires—three dimensionally. Alongside the numbers and tables in "How Our Urban Natives Live" were several drawings of some of the houses' interiors, giving insight into how tenants had positioned the different pieces of furniture. While the *South African Architectural Record* had previously published articles on designs for the townships to promote the work of architects affiliated with the National Housing Commission, in the face of the government's imminent defunding of Black housing, information of this kind—detailing how people in townships made these austere brick houses their homes—had never appeared on its pages.[45]

Like many of Spence's design-research projects, the Orlando survey was a collaborative project. Mokhetle was not named co-author of the article, although Spence did acknowledge her contribution in the text. The article also included a short appendix written by Mokhetle herself, which captured the harsh living circumstances in Orlando East—the only time the magazine printed a piece by a Black author during

Figure 4. Red brick housing in Orlando East, 1949. Jacqueline Eberhardt, "Survey of Housing and Family Conditions: Orlando Township (with Special Reference to Housing Needs)" (MA diss., University of the Witwatersrand, 1949).

the 1950s. Compared to Spence's slightly dry, straightforward analysis, Mokhetle's section provided a more intimate account of daily life in the township. She portrayed Orlando East as a community defined by scarcity, a neighbourhood where people

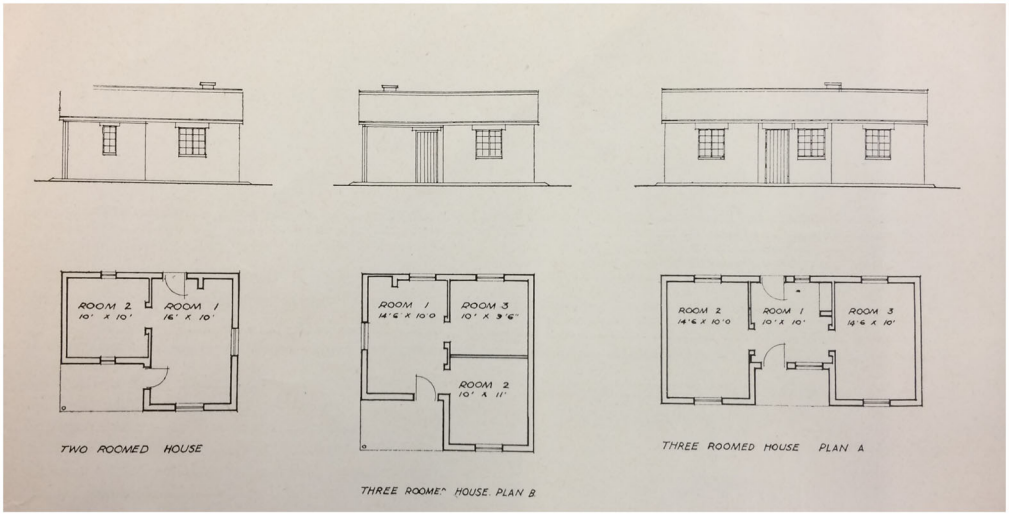


Figure 5. Different housing plans in Orlando East, drawn by Betty Spence. Betty Spence, "How Our Urban Natives Live," *South African Architectural Record* 35, no. 10 (October 1950): 221–36.

struggled to provide for their families, despite long hours of work, and where children grew up without much supervision.[46]

The third part of the report, with a focus on furniture and interior organisation of township housing, was entirely novel. In this respect, it was more detailed than the groundbreaking work of the social anthropologist and SAIRR-member Ellen Hellmann who had been party to discussions on the nature of the survey.[47] In the 1930s, Hellmann had completed a detailed sociological survey of Rooiyard, an inner-city slum in New Doornfontein, Johannesburg, which offered insight into the physical and social conditions of recently migrated Black families attempting to make a living in the city.[48] Like Spence, Hellmann used photographic material to substantiate her arguments. Moreover, Hellmann also paid specific attention to the activities of Rooiyard's female inhabitants, who also proved to be her main informants. Yet despite visiting Rooiyard for nearly a year, Hellmann wrote that, as a white, middle-class woman, residents never accepted her and regarderd her with suspicion.[49] This was possibly the reason why Spence sought Mokhetle's help in Orlando East, perhaps on Hellmann's recommendation.

In Orlando East, over a period of two months, Mokhetle questioned families in sixty-three randomly selected houses—a little over one per cent of the total number of dwellings. Mokhetle inquired where people slept, where and when they ate, and where children did their homework. But Mokhetle also gathered information about how the separate rooms were furnished, how many pieces of furniture people owned, and what type of furniture it was: "European-style" or based on local styles and manufactured in the township. In some of the houses, Mokhetle observed complete dining sets, including large wooden tables and chairs, and sometimes even Chesterfield couches.[50] Tenants in Orlando East bought their furniture in shopping centres closer to Johannesburg's centre, but also in small workshops in the townships, which were illegal yet whose existence was condoned by the authorities.[51] Based on the data,

Spence, adopting a patronising tone, described the two- or three-roomed houses in Orlando as crowded:

> The general impression given by an average Native house is crowded and dark, rather like a poor imitation of a Victorian interior … The walls are covered with pictures, mostly family portraits … Windows are curtained, floors are often covered with linoleum and bits of carpet, and sundry flower vases and other ornaments stand on table tops which are protected by cloths and doilies.[52]

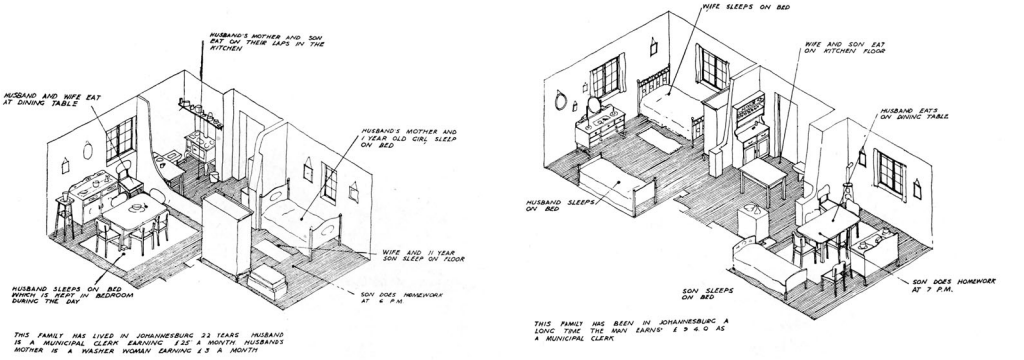


Figure 6. Interior of two furnished three-room houses in Orlando East, drawn by Betty Spence. Betty Spence, "How Our Urban Natives Live," *South African Architectural Record* 35, no. 10 (October 1950): 221–36.

Most rooms were used for sleeping, including the living room, and sometimes even the small verandah. Spaces were used in a flexible way, and tenants folded out mattresses at night. On average, the survey pointed out, three people slept in each room, and in many cases, even four or six. Spence illustrated this point through several detailed drawings of furnished interiors, in the same clear-cut yet distinguishable style that marked most of her work, combining images with concise text. Spence's drawing of one of the three-roomed houses, belonging to the family of a municipal clerk who worked in Johannesburg, demonstrated how crowded the dwellings were (fig. 6). The drawing indicated, for example, that the tiny living room simultaneously functioned as a bedroom.

Spence's and Mokhetle's project drew attention to what the British sociologist Dennis Chapman had termed "homemaking" in the 1940s and '50s.[53] Chapman, whose work Spence relied on and referred to, considered "homemaking," or the process through which inhabitants created a home, as an unofficial yet distinct form of design.[54] In Orlando East, homemaking involved furnishing the houses and also small alterations, like covering the *stoep* or building interior partitions. Homemaking altered the harsh, austere spaces intentionally designed based on a cruelly reductive understanding of people's spatial needs. As Rebecca Ginsburg and Rebekah Lee have pointed out in their studies of home renovations in the townships of Soweto and Gugulethu in the Western Cape in the 1960s and '70s, this work was mostly conducted by women.[55] Spence's and Mokhetle's survey, although not specifically noting gendered roles in the layouts, pointed to domestic design agency as a counter to the constructed fabric of the provided homes.

Spence's data also helped make a case for small-scale change within the interior domain at an institutional level. Spence and Mokhetle used the gathered data to show

the obvious incongruities between designers' visions and tenants needs, pointing to residents' frustrations with the layout of the standardised houses in the township, and suggesting improvements in the future houses carried into the Minimum Standards of Accommodation. The survey underlined the overall lack of space, the absence of proper flooring and interior ceilings, and the absence of any storage spaces. Moreover, many women had indicated their frustration with the layout of the houses, specifically the location of the kitchen in the front near the entrance, allowing for less privacy. One tangible outcome of Spence's and Mokhetle's work was the adjustment of the floorplan to incorporate a separate kitchen and living room in the "Non-European 1951" (NE/51) series of plans that emerged from the NBRI offices in 1951.[56]

In addition, borrowing from European pre-war and war-time ideas regarding the optimisation and rationalisation of space and female labour, Spence concluded with a variety of space-saving solutions, including built-in fittings such as bunk beds, foldable furniture, storage spaces, and fitted kitchens. Spence considered the heavy, bulky, wooden furniture as inefficient and too expensive. Two years before, Spence had spent four months studying prefabricated housing through a scholarship from the British Council in London—a city still devastated by war, but full of new ideas about the optimisation of housing construction and design. In *Prefabricated Houses for Africans* (1948), the unpublished report based on her research, she paid close attention to the layout of these small houses and their built-in furniture, constructed to remedy England's housing crisis after World War Two.[57] These influences also extended to her visual representations in the Orlando East survey: her isometric illustrations of interiors closely resemble the axonometric drawings of small, optimised interior spaces with fitted kitchens in the United Kingdom's *Housing Manual* (1944), published as a blueprint for post-war housing reconstruction, or the architect Ernő Goldfinger's depictions of efficiently organised kitchens made for the "Planning Your Kitchen Exhibition" in the same year (fig. 7).[58]

Spence's work also reveals the impact of circulation studies. She stated that European research into residents' circulation in the house "revolutionized the shape of rooms and has had a consequent effect on house planning."[59] Here, she most likely referred to work by the British housing expert Elizabeth Denby, or the architect Jane Drew, who had published a well-received analysis of kitchen design based on circulation studies—work that, in turn, was rooted in the radical studies of the Austrian architect Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky in the 1920s.[60] Drew's manual for West African town planning also included proposals for the improvement of kitchens.[61] Like these women architects, Spence believed that furniture was directly related to housing design: well-designed mass-produced housing started with an assessment of how people used and furnished interior spaces.[62]

Yet these ideas also show that, ultimately, Spence did not just aim to optimise and improve the small indoor spaces of township houses but also seized the project as an opportunity to impose a modern, European way of life. Like Chapman, Spence understood the way houses were furnished as a reflection of people's social and cultural status. Inhabitants expressed themselves through the material culture of the home. In Orlando East, she interpreted the mixture of European furniture and locally made craft objects as an indication of tenants' gradual transition towards a European,

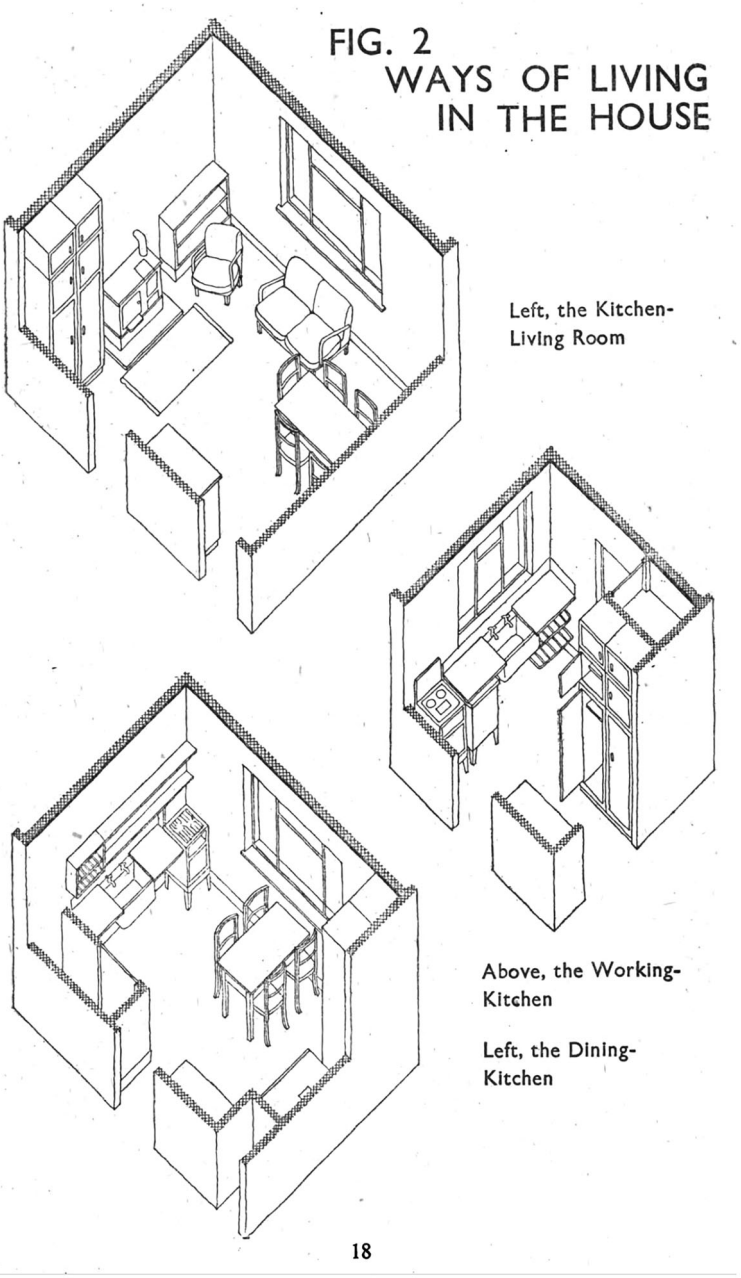


Figure 7. Axonometric depictions of interiors. Great Britain, Ministry of Public Works and Buildings, Ministry of Health, *Housing Manual* (London: H.M. Stationary Office, 1944).

urbanised lifestyle. Despite the persistence of what she understood as certain "tribal" customs—eating on the floor, or women and children eating separately from men—inhabitants were "well on the way to adopting a European mode of living in their houses."[63] In Spence's view, built-in fittings, even if not necessarily wanted by residents, would further modernise the township house.

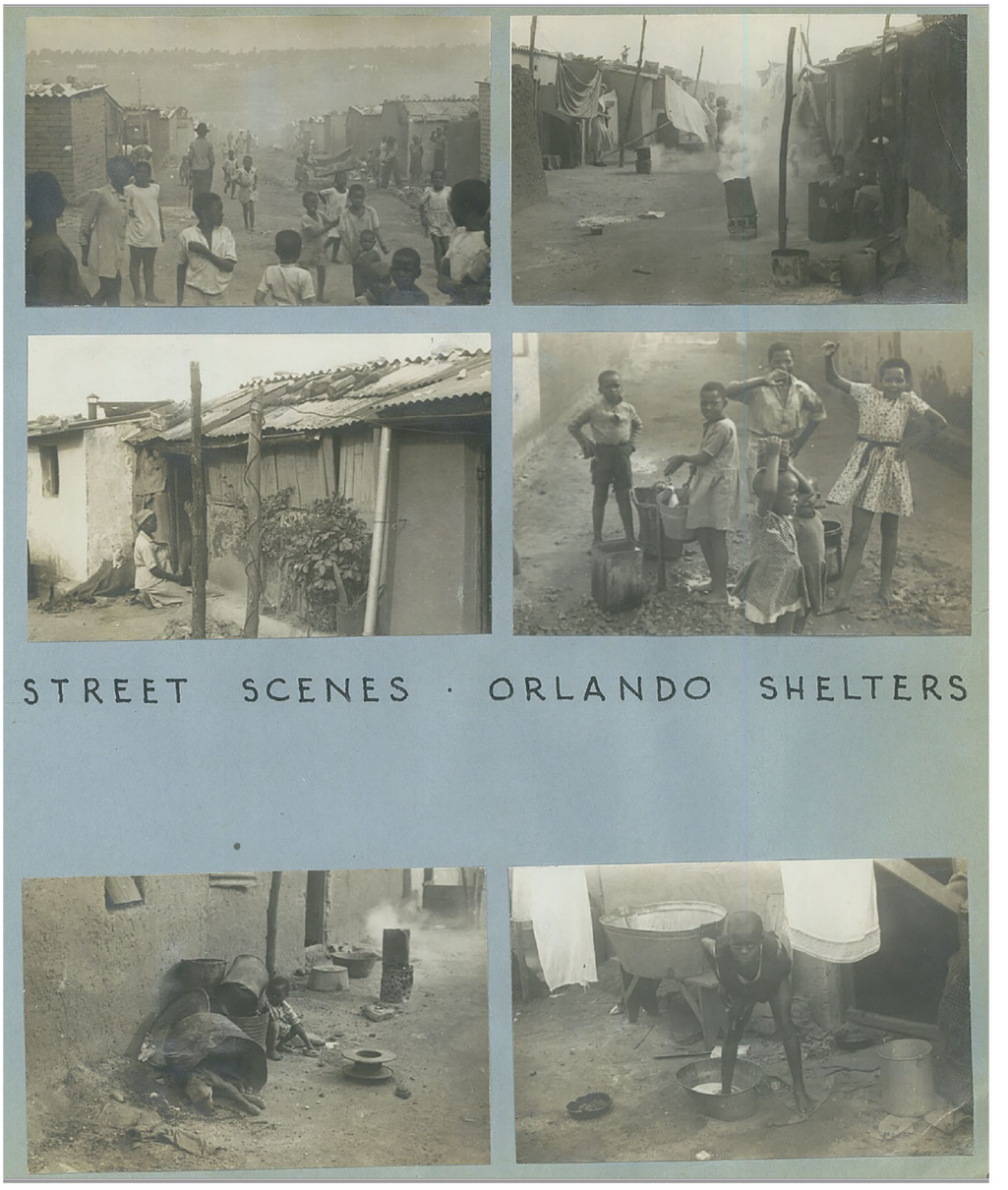


Figure 8. Overcrowded living conditions in Orlando. Jacqueline Eberhardt, "Survey of Housing and Family Conditions: Orlando Township (with Special Reference to Housing Needs)" (MA diss., University of the Witwatersrand, 1949).

Build Your Own House and the "Spence Scheme"

Although the National Housing and Planning Commission had worked at a relatively rapid pace between 1948 and 1949 to develop new standards, the overcrowding and squatting in and around Black locations had reached such a level that the Johannesburg City Council was compelled to address them (fig. 8).[64] As a short-term solution, the Moroka Emergency Camp, a site and service scheme to the west of

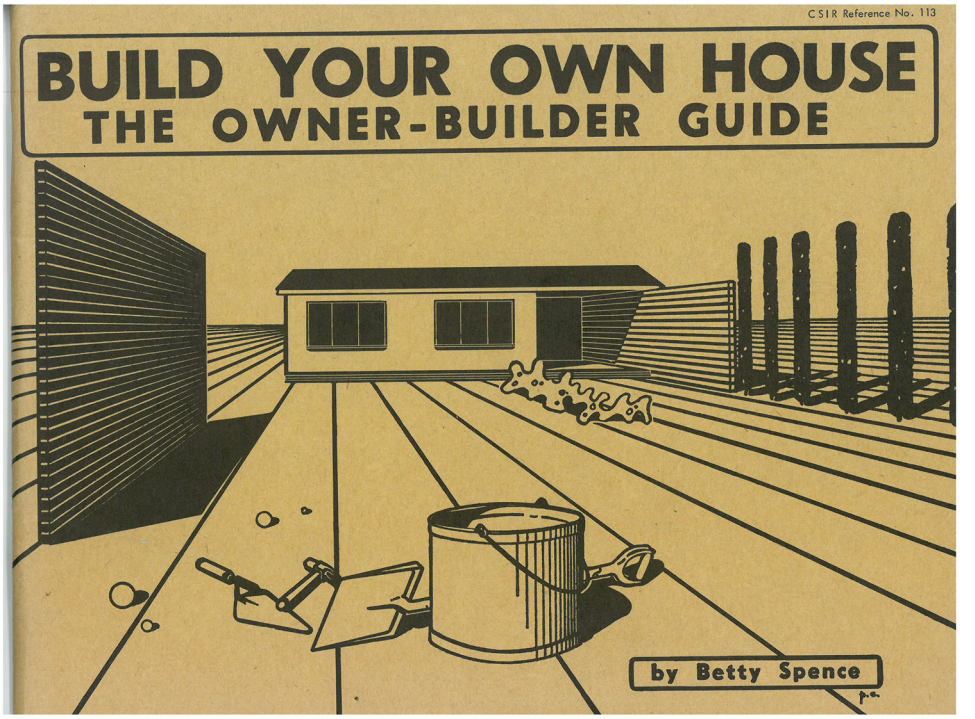


Figure 9. The cover of *Build Your Own House*. Betty Spence, *Build Your Own House: The Owner-Builder Guide* (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1952).

Orlando, was laid out in 1947. The settlement had ten thousand twenty-by-twenty feet (six-by-six metre) plots and communal pit latrines and standpipes. By August, it accommodated over sixty thousand people, many removed from other urban areas designated as slums. With shortages of building materials, including cement and steel, and no tenure on their stands, housing in the Emergency Camp did not materially improve their lives, and its location meant inhabitants were much further away from employment opportunities.

The decision to extend the idea of owner-built housing to construct permanent homes emerged around 1949 as a largely consensual one, including inputs from Black representatives, as well as the Johannesburg Chamber of Commerce. The Johannesburg City Council then undertook the design of a new site and service scheme called Vukuzenzele ("stand up and help yourself") with 2,500 square feet (232 square metre) sites on twenty-year leaseholds, that would take several years to materialise.[65] In another South Western township, Dube, more substantial plots were made available on thirty-year leaseholds.[66]

Although published by the CSIR, Spence's guidebook on self-help housing, *Build Your Own House*, seems to have begun as a personal project that she proposed to Rheinallt Jones in 1949 (fig. 9).[67] On his recommendation, it was translated into "easy English" by her communist acquaintance, the biologist Dr Eddie Roux, who had pioneered a method to simplify the English vocabularies of African American and left-

wing books for the adult education of Blacks.[68] The book assumed a similar role as support for "people who want to build their own houses … in sizes to suit different families and people earning different wages."[69]

The idea of self-built incremental housing was a solution Spence had originally proposed in an article in 1943, as part of a study of housing in ten small-town locations in the Transvaal, one of South Africa's provinces.[70] Most of the sites she visited, some near farms, others near mines or other industry, consisted of self-built housing. But Spence—who based her opinions in a variety of informal interviews with inhabitants and white South Africans who controlled the locations—also observed that because of limited financial means and a lack of experience, the houses were built using a "primitive method of construction."[71] Made of locally burnt bricks, thatch, and corrugated iron, they lacked appropriate ventilation, were hard to keep clean, and quickly fell into disrepair. Instead, she proposed plans for houses that consisted of a core—a kitchen and a bedroom—which tenants could expand over time. Contrary to the rectangular, monotonous layouts of state- or municipal-sponsored housing, Spence's 1943 designs consisted of a variety of irregularly ordered spaces bordering a courtyard (fig. 10).[72]

For *Build Your Own House*, Spence devised five different house types that residents could expand over time, reproduced in plans folded into a pocket in the back of the booklet. House One began as a single room that could be expanded over four stages to a six-room house of 781 square feet (fig. 11).[73] The document was firmly designed to offer technical support to novice builders, including detailed tables for purchasing materials, and an explanation of basic building tools (fig. 12). Using the booklet to guide their own labour or local builders, aspiring Black homemakers could be liberated from dependence on white or commercial contractors, or the waiting lists for council-built rental homes. Nonetheless, the book begins with a "Note to Local Authorities" that stipulates that "Owner-Builder schemes must be approved by the appropriate government departments and must be operated by efficient and sympathetic supervisors," suggesting a collaborative relationship in the solution of housing needs.[74] One clear reason for this continued dependence on local authorities lay in the lack of bathrooms in any of the houses, requiring them to be augmented with outhouses serviced by the municipality.

The turn to self-help housing during the post-war period presents an ambivalent attitude to Black agency on the part of the state, and Spence's scheme seemed to fit into that thinking. At a small scale, *Build Your Own House* gave future households tools to select, price, and even construct nominally solid dwellings. At an urban scale, however, it further enfolded these homebuilders into an oppressive system. In effect, self-building unburdened the new National Party-led government of the need to extend subsidised loans for Black housing while allowing them to dictate the location of land for development far from white group areas. It also took away the obligation for white capitalists to pay their Black workers living wages that would allow them to rent or buy decent accommodation. For this reason, while it has been framed as a practical, cheap, and also less controlling alternative to the limited township rental stock, even this form of housing delivery should be seen as a state-led "instrument of social engineering," as Susan Parnell and Deborah Hart have argued.[75]

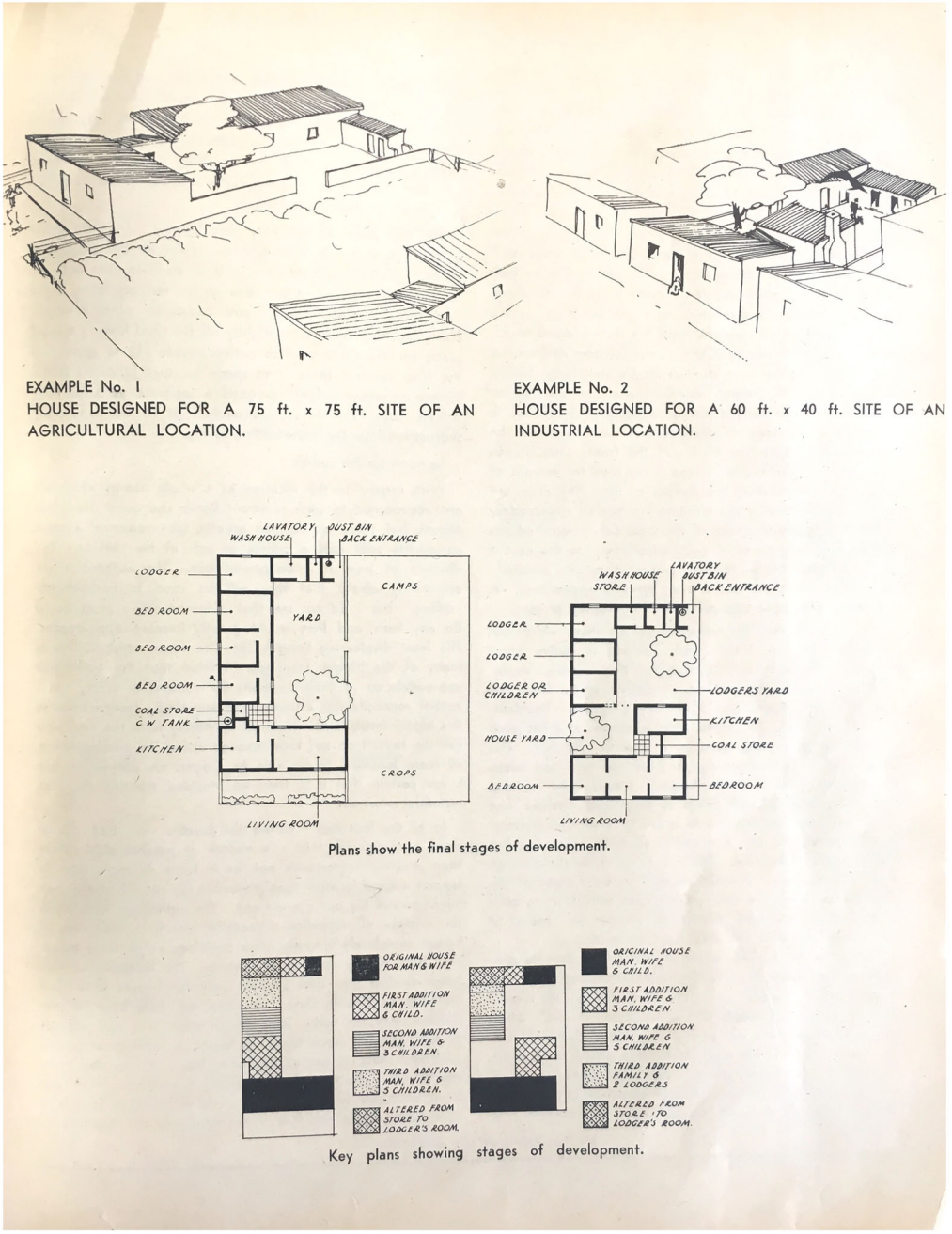


Figure 10. Two proposals for incremental housing in an agricultural and industrial location. Betty Spence, "The Problem of the Location: A Report on Housing Conditions in Ten Transvaal Locations," *South African Architectural Record* 28, no. 2 (February 1943): 25–38.

The shortage of housing in Soweto was eventually resolved, albeit temporarily, by a significant loan from the Anglo-American Corporation's chairman to the Johannesburg City Council.[76] The new capacity of the Council to provide rental

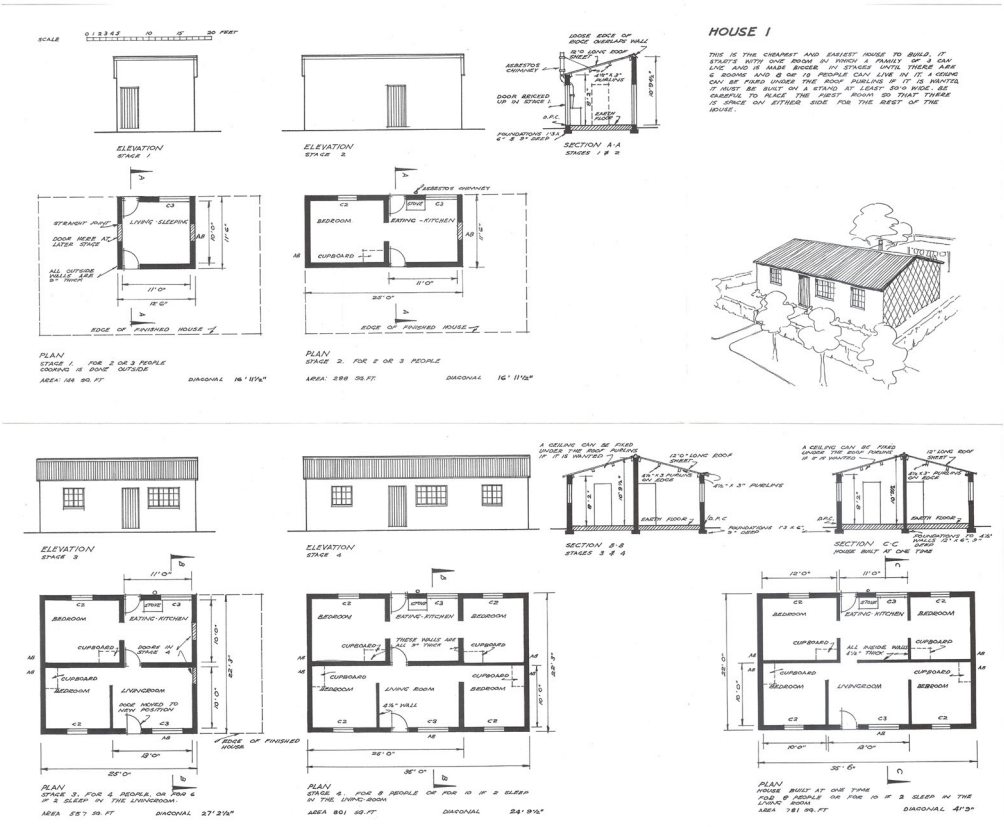


Figure 11. Plans, sections, and elevations for House I, the "cheapest and easiest house to build." Betty Spence, *Build Your Own House: The Owner-Builder Guide* (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1952).

houses would in turn neutralise the fundamental demand for land tenure for Blacks who already owned or built their own houses. Without access to new serviced lands, and with an expanded supply of houses based on the NE51/6 and NE51/9 plans, the site and service approach came to an end in the late 1950s. *Build Your Own House* went out of print until the mid-1970s, when the National Building Research Institute, with a renewed interest in supporting owner-building, reissued it as a metric edition.[77]

In the interim, a new crisis had been precipitated by the application of the Group Areas Act to segregate mixed-race areas, often through the expropriation and demolition of housing under the pretext of slum clearance. Residents of the so-called Western Areas, low-income freehold suburbs on the edge of the city of Johannesburg, were targeted for removal to Black, coloured, or Indian group areas. The Liberal Party became one of the opponents against the removals, which met strong resistance from residents such as Dr Alfred Bitini Xuma, who petitioned the Council on behalf of ratepayers, the journalists Can Themba and Bloke Modisane, as well as the parish priest, Trevor Huddlestone.[78]

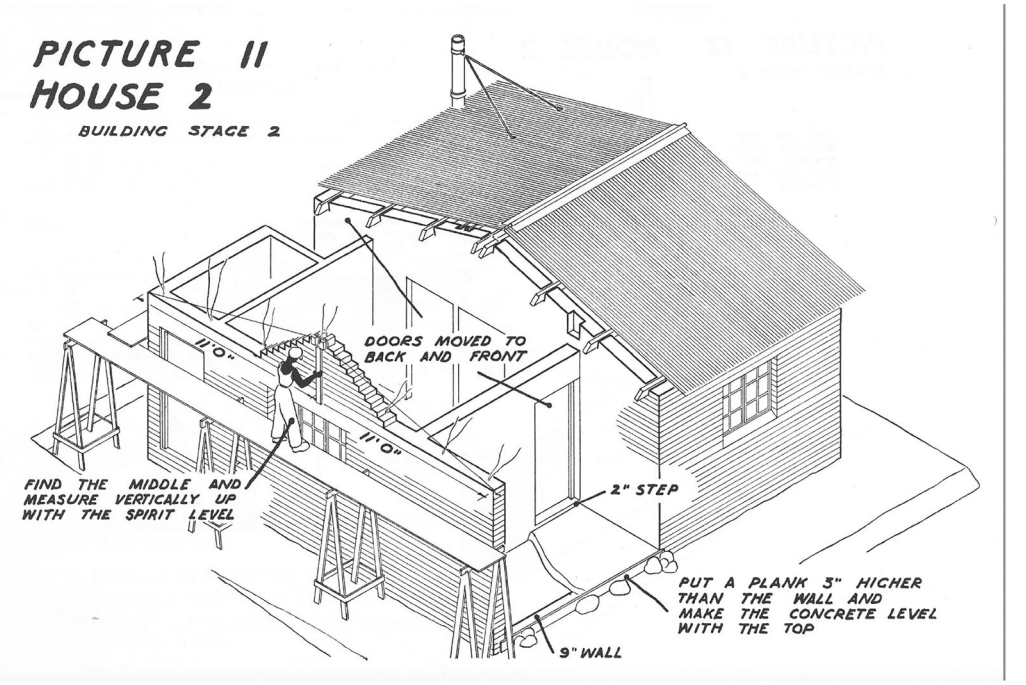


Figure 12. Building instructions for House II. Betty Spence, *Build Your Own House: The Owner-Builder Guide* (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1952).

In a pamphlet named *The "Western Areas"—Mass Removal?* that was published by the SAIRR in 1953 without Spence's or the Liberal Party's name, Spence put forward an alternative to the removals and the political alternative of total resistance to removals.[79] The so-called "Spence Scheme" had three elements: a map of the Western Areas in relation to the municipal locations at least four miles away from the city, a photographic classification of housing types in the Western Areas in relation to their material qualities and ownership, and a plan for the renewal of the area and its isolation from adjacent white neighbourhoods with light industrial workshops (fig. 13).[80]

The planner A. J. Cutten explained this alternative plan in a short text that outlined its economic rationale. Set against the cost of rehousing individuals in single-sex hostels—the new status quo for workers in the lowest income bracket—and rental houses, it proposed only partial demolition of the structures. In captions to the photos, which showed people making use of outdoor space, the project differentiated between four classes of dwellings as "Major Slums" (either to be demolished, or to be rebuilt), "Minor Slums," and "In Order." The scheme determined that the yard-facing shacks should be demolished, while retaining the main houses, as should the old wood and iron houses that were uneconomical to restore. Additionally, it noted that brick housing should be restored and well maintained, and owner-occupied houses should be retained. The scheme would respect the existing title deeds of Black owners, while removing half of the low-income tenants to the new locations. There was no mention made of the rent earnings of the homeowners that their scheme would

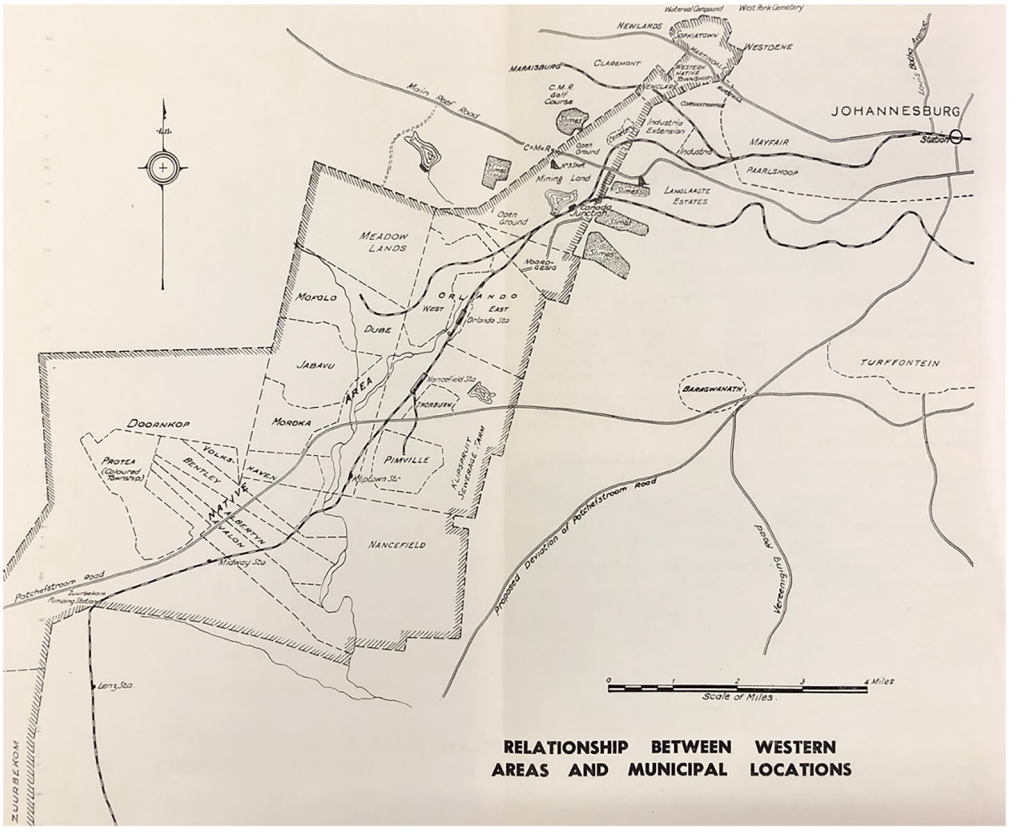


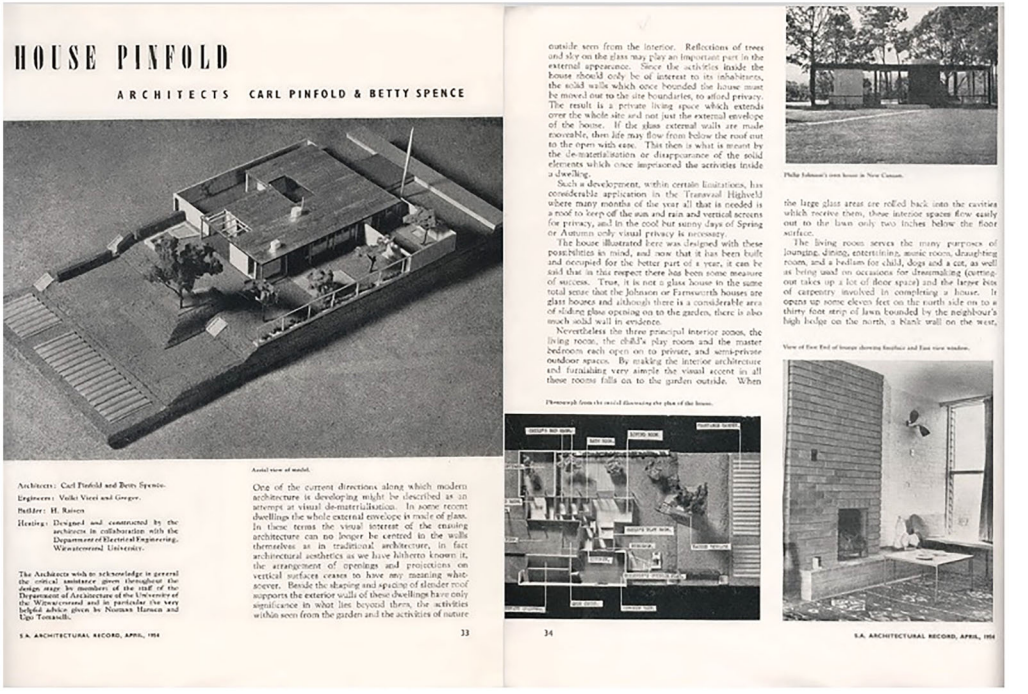
Figure 13. Map explaining the relationship between Johannesburg, the Western Areas like Sophiatown and the municipal locations. *The "Western Areas"—Mass Removal?* (Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations, 1953).

undermine. Rather, it argued for the value of the existing institutions, which would include buildings of Reverend Huddlestone's parish.

The approach in *The "Western Areas"* was typical of the SAIRR's differential treatment of Black South Africans along class lines, and their maintenance of parochial institutions. These were reasons for friction with the Congress Alliance that stressed solidarity and would belatedly campaign, without success, against removals.[81] By aligning herself with the SAIRR's thinking, Spence was revealing her liberal position as one that was grounded in economic and material rationality, supportive of the development of landed, self-sufficient Blacks, while blind to the lives and collective rights of a subaltern class that lived alongside them.

Building a Home in Pine Park

In 1953, in parallel to the Western Areas removals project, Spence was working on the design of her family house with her husband, the British-born architect Carl Pinfold, located in Pine Park, a new leafy northern suburb of Johannesburg. Like


HOUSE PINFOLD

ARCHITECTS CARL PINFOLD & BETTY SPENCE

Architects: Carl Pinfold and Betty Spence.
Engineers: Vulki Vicei and Gregor.
Builder: H. Raisen
Heating: Designed and constructed by the architects in collaboration with the Department of Electrical Engineering, Witwatersrand University.

The Architects wish to acknowledge in general the critical assistance given throughout the design stage by members of the staff of the Department of Architecture of the University of the Witwatersrand and in particular the very helpful advice given by Norman Hanson and Ugo Tonazzi.

S.A. ARCHITECTURAL RECORD, APRIL, 1954

Axial view of model.

One of the current directions along which modern architecture is developing might be described as an attempt at visual de-materialisation. In some recent dwellings the whole external envelope is made of glass. In these terms the visual interest of the ensuing architecture can no longer be centred in the walls themselves as in traditional architecture, in fact architectural aesthetics as we have hitherto known it, the arrangement of openings and projections on vertical surfaces ceases to have any meaning whatsoever. Beside the shaping and spacing of slender roof supports the exterior walls of these dwellings have only significance in what lies beyond them, the activities within seen from the garden and the activities of nature outside seen from the interior. Reflections of trees and sky on the glass may play an important part in the external appearance. Since the activities inside the house should only be of interest to its inhabitants, the solid walls which once bounded the house must be moved out to the site boundaries, to afford privacy. The result is a private living space which extends over the whole site and not just the external envelope of the house. If the glass external walls are made moveable, then life may flow from below the roof out to the open with ease. This then is what is meant by the de-materialisation or disappearance of the solid elements which once imprisoned the activities inside a dwelling.

Such a development, within certain limitations, has considerable application in the Transvaal Highveld where many months of the year all that is needed is a roof to keep off the sun and rain and vertical screens for privacy, and in the cool but sunny days of Spring or Autumn only visual privacy is necessary.

The house illustrated here was designed with these possibilities in mind, and now that it has been built and occupied for the better part of a year, it can be said that in this respect there has been some measure of success. True, it is not a glass house in the same total sense that the Johnson or Farnsworth houses are glass houses and although there is a considerable area of sliding glass opening on to the garden, there is also much solid wall in evidence.

Nevertheless the three principal interior zones, the living room, the child's play room and the master bedroom each open on to private, and semi-private outdoor spaces. By making the interior architecture and furnishing very simple the visual accent in all these rooms falls on to the garden outside. When

Photograph from the model illustrating the plan of the house.

33

34

Philip Johnson's own house in New Canaan.

the large glass areas are rolled back into the cavities which receive them, those interior spaces flow easily out to the lawn only two inches below the floor surface.

The living room serves the many purposes of lounging, dining, entertaining, music room, draughting room, and a bedlam for child, dogs and a cat, as well as being used on occasions for dressmaking (cutting out takes up a lot of floor space) and the larger bits of carpentry involved in completing a house. It opens up some eleven feet on the north side on to a thirty foot strip of lawn bounded by the neighbour's high hedge on the north, a Natal wall on the west,

View of East End of lounge showing fireplace and East view window.

S.A. ARCHITECTURAL RECORD, APRIL, 1954

Figure 14. "House Pinfold," *South African Architectural Record* 39, no. 4 (April 1954): 33–38.

Spence, he also taught at the University of Witwatersrand on a part-time basis while maintaining a solo practice. The one-storey brick house with its slightly overhanging flat roof was, most likely, the first design project they undertook together. Named "House Pinfold" in a feature in the *South African Architectural Record*, the H-shaped house plan combined open plan living areas flanked by bedrooms, opening to closed or semi-enclosed courtyards, surrounded by a garden (fig. 14).[82]

The article positioned the house within an international, cosmopolitan lineage, comparing it to Philip Johnson's Glass House, completed in 1949, noting that both designs attempted to "dematerialise" solid architectural elements, such as the walls, unifying the house and its surrounding space. Despite this, the modernism that Spence's and Pinfold's project espoused was also firmly rooted in local, South African, conceptions of architecture. It revisited Spence's exposure as a student of Ndebele architecture, coinciding with a more extensive article co-written with the architect Barrie Biermann published in *The Architectural Review* in 1954. In this romanticised reading, Ndebele architecture was seen as minimal, flexible, and economical in the use of outdoor seating in yards between single room structures.[83] Although modernised, this influence was fused with international design ideas in the Pine Park house.

Spence's and Pinfold's limited budget impacted the design and choice of materials in different ways. The structure used the same limewashed clay bricks as the NBRI test scheme in KwaThema. Floors were granolithic screed, cork, or brick.[84]

Figure 15. Carport and entrance to the Pine Park house, designed by Betty Spence and Carl Pinfold in 1954. Pinfold family archive.

Cheap plywood was used for the doors. They reduced the involvement of external contractors to a minimum and completed the finishes themselves over an extended period.[85] This prolonged contracting process was arguably similar to what Spence had proposed in *Build Your Own House*. Spence and Pinfold were also assisted by several architecture students from Wits.[86] The Pine Park house's economy extended into the design of several outside spaces that would usually be enclosed. The carport, for example, located at the entrance of the house, replaced garages and provided a rain cover for guests (fig. 15). Beyond it, a courtyard opened, quite radically, to the view from the kitchen and allowed two entrances, a direct one for a domestic worker and the front door to the main house.[87] Further semi-enclosed yards, inspired by Ndebele homesteads, were laid out beyond the kitchen, playroom, and main bedroom respectively. The house, which further optimised the use of interior spaces through sliding doors, opened up towards the garden. In the layout of the house, Spence firmly positioned herself at a visual core (fig. 16). She worked from a counter that separated the playroom (that would become a dining room at night), and the living room, which alternately worked as drawing and sewing surfaces. From this position, she overlooked the children at play and her husband's desk in the room beyond. Turning to her right, she commanded the view down the passage to the bedrooms, or out the front door to the carport and street.

Moving from Johannesburg to Liverpool

In the late 1950s, not long after completing the house in Pine Park, Spence and her family decided to leave South Africa. They were likely to have been targeted for

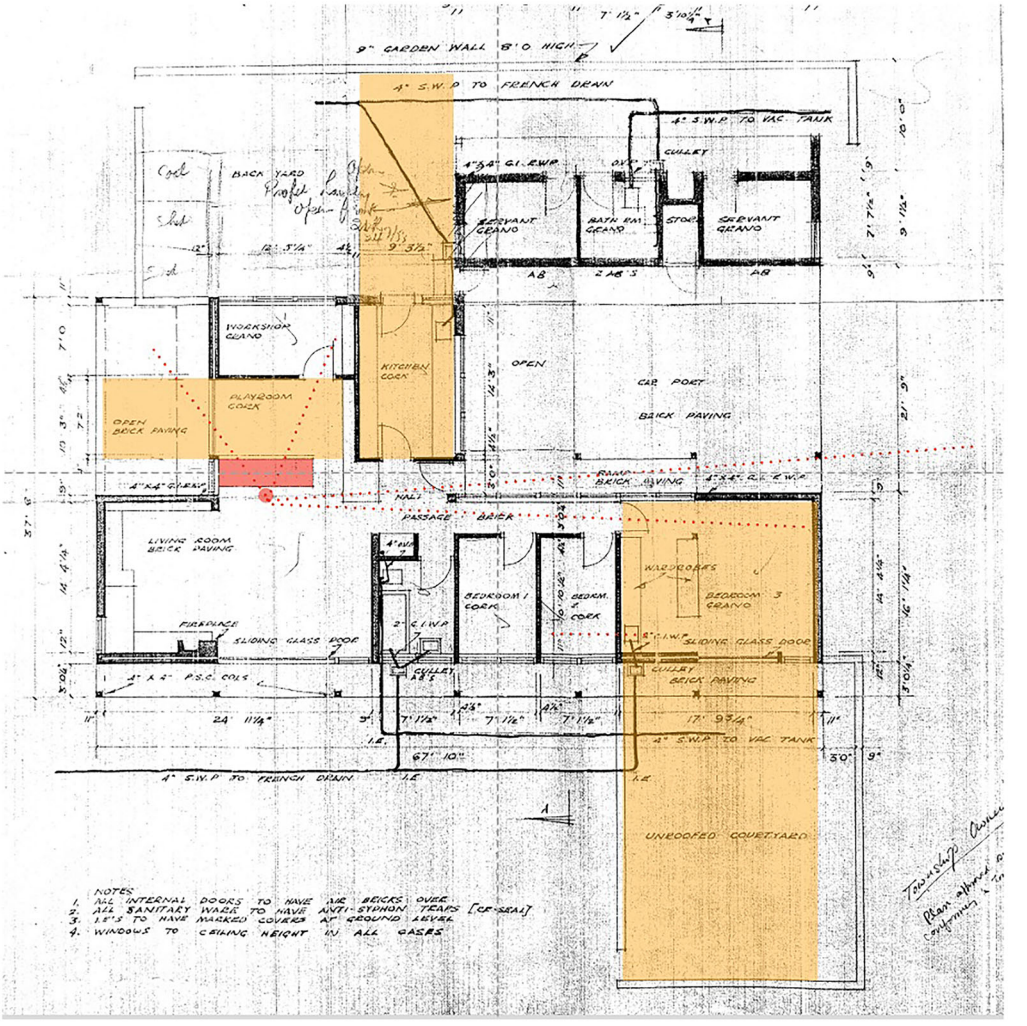


Figure 16. Plan of Betty Spence and Carl Pinfold's House in Pine Park, 1954. Pinfold, Carl and Betty. 1953. "Proposed new residence for Mrs B Pinfold on Stand No 27 Windeena Ave Pine Park JHB. Johannesburg." Municipal submission drawings, City of Johannesburg development planning department. Colour annotations by authors.

investigation due to their involvement in the Liberal Party, which was becoming associated with communism in the minds of the apartheid security establishment. Although little is known about their activities, the inclusion of a tall radio mast in the model for their house in Pine Park and the use from 1956 by John Lang of the former Spence family home, Kopjes End, for clandestine Liberal Party radio broadcasts may have caused concern.[88] Their departure was hasty, leaving the house and most of their belongings behind.[89] Various of their acquaintances—both Black and white South Africans—had already been rounded up because of their involvement in the anti-apartheid movement. In 1956, 156 people were arrested, including Nelson Mandela, Lilian Ngoyi, as well as the architect Rusty Bernstein, and put on trial for

treason. Others, including Eddie Roux, would receive banning orders that prohibited them from meeting others, teaching, or publishing.[90] The Liberal Party of South Africa was disbanded in 1968 in response to the *Prohibition of Political Interference Act* that made it illegal to join a mixed-race party, or to assist a person of another race.[91]

In England, Spence and Pinfold were amongst a growing group of left-leaning South African expatriate architects including Theo Crosby and Alan Lipman, as well as Roy Kantorowich and Norman Hanson, who both taught at the University of Manchester in the 1960s and '70s. Following a brief period in London, the family resettled in Liverpool. While Pinfold pursued a doctorate in architectural acoustics at the university, Spence continued to write about architecture and spatial planning, though only sporadically and mostly avoiding subjects related to South Africa.[92] Meanwhile, she worked for the Liverpool Council as an architect.[93] During the 1970s, Spence contributed several reviews to British magazines such as the *Town Planning Review*, often using her husband's last name, Pinfold.[94] One of her final projects, sponsored by a RIBA award, was a comparative exploration of contemporary urban parks and leisure facilities for adolescents across Europe.[95] While different in terms of subject compared to her earlier publications, the article shows a similar attentiveness to the needs of a particular group of people, whose social development and sense of belonging could be improved through relatively minor design interventions in the public space. Although they never returned to South Africa, Spence and Pinfold spent one year at the University of Nairobi in the mid-1970s.[96]

Uncovering the transnational dimensions in Spence's work in this essay has revealed different levels of sophistication in her design-research that borrowed from transatlantic discourses on race relations, and European thinking about the optimisation and rationalisation of interior spaces. She combined and contested these influences with observational fieldwork in locations, townships, and settlements such as Sophiatown. Spence's mobility, enabled by her privileged background, allowed her to shift between roles—from designer to researcher, from practitioner to teacher, from observer to participant, and from mother to worker—as well as to move, with relative ease, between different parts of Johannesburg, and between South Africa and the UK. In examining the complex negotiations for urban Black housing construction that formed the context of Spence's design-research, it has become clear that her role was to present a liberal, and by definition, cosmopolitan perspective on the conditions she documented. Moreover, the focus on domestic space in her work gave material for critique based on these liberal ideas, including education and emancipation from drudge labour for women.

Yet, beyond her contributions to urban Black housing—such as basic standards, self-built options, and the retention of Black-owned housing in the Western Areas—her projects reflect a capacity to read and articulate the "phenomenal" quality of space that she first observed in the Ndebele homestead she visited as a student.[97] This plays out in her reading of spaces as mutable, lived-in, sometimes ephemeral, and supported by minimal surfaces and objects. In this respect, Spence's work suggests the transcendental potential of architecture across national and racial borders.

Disclosure Statement

The authors report there are no competing interests to declare.

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Hannah le Roux is an architect and historian of modern architecture in Southern Africa. Her current research projects are the toxic legacies of asbestos-cement products and mining residues, in and beyond the Witwatersrand township; the materialisation of Black low-cost housing by white architects during apartheid; and the Africa volume of *Bloomsbury Global Encyclopaedia of Women in Architecture*. She is an Associate Professor at the University of the Witwatersrand and a Guest Professor at gta, ETH Zürich (2022–23 academic year).

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Notes

1. The *Group Areas Act* of 1950, and subsequent amendments would bring spatial segregation to the centre of the policy of apartheid that the National Party, voted into power by White South Africans in 1948, would pursue until the 1990s. See Alan Mabin, "Comprehensive Segregation: The Origins of the Group Areas Act and Its Planning Apparatuses," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 18, no. 2 (1992): 405–29; Betty Spence,

Build Your Own House: The Owner-Builder Guide (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1952). Sections of this article are based on Rixt Woudstra, "Planning the 'Multiracial City': Architecture, Decolonization and the Design of Stability in British Africa (1945–1957)" (PhD diss., Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2020); as well as background research in Hannah le Roux, "Designing Kwathema: Cultural Inscriptions in the Model Township," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 45, no. 2 (2019): 273–301.

2. Derek Japha, "The Social Programme of the South African Modern Movement," in *Blank Architecture, Apartheid and After*, ed. Hilton Judin and Ian Vladislavic (Rotterdam: NAi Publishers, 1998), 423–37.
3. See Rusty Bernstein, *Memory Against Forgetting: Memoir of a Time in South African Politics 1938–1964*, 2nd ed. (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2017); The Congress of the People, *The Freedom Charter* (Johannesburg: Pacific Press, 1955); Tom Lodge, *Red Road to Freedom: A History of the South African Communist Party 1921–2021* (Johannesburg: Jacana Media, 2021).
4. See, for example, Anooradha Iyer Siddiqi, "Crafting the Archive: Minnette De Silva, Architecture, and History," *Journal of Architecture* 22, no. 8 (2017): 1299–1336; Karen Burns and Lori Brown "Telling Transnational Histories of Women in Architecture, 1960–2015," *Architectural Histories* 8, no. 1 (2020): 1–11.
5. Clive Chipkin, pers. corr. with Hannah le Roux, August 2019.
6. Zara Muren (Betty Spence's daughter), pers. corr. with authors, October 2020.
7. "Betty Spence," H/29, Clive Chipkin papers, Architecture & Built Environment Library, University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. In her work at the Housing Office she would have been aware of the new Black housing in Langa (1920–40), or the slum clearances under the 1927 *Slums Act* that effectively segregated the inner city.
8. Betty Spence, "Native Architecture," *South African Architectural Record* (November 1940): 387–91; Betty Spence, "Reddersburg," *South African Architectural Record* 27, no. 1 (1942): 3–5; Betty Spence, "Impressions of Elizabethville," *South African Architectural Record* (September 1945): 192–97; see also Elisa Dainese, "Histories of Exchange: Indigenous South Africa in the South African Architectural Record and the Architectural Review," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 74, no. 4 (December 2015): 443–63.
9. John Turner, "Housing as a Verb," in *Freedom to Build: Dweller Control of the Housing Process*, ed. John Turner and Robert Fichter (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1972), 148–75.
10. Monica Wilson and Archie Mafeje, *Langa: A Study of Social Groups in an African Township* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1963); Philip Mayer and Iona Mayer, *Townsmen or Tribesmen: Conservatism and the Process of Urbanization in a South African City* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press on behalf of the Institute of Social and Economic Research, 1961).
11. Betty Spence, *Prefabricated Houses for Africans* (report, 1948), 18. CO927/36/1, British National Archives, Kew.
12. Betty Spence, "How Our Urban Natives Live," *South African Architectural Record* 35, no. 10 (1950): 221–36.
13. Clive Chipkin, pers. corr. with Hannah le Roux, 2019.
14. Brown, "Party News," *Contact* (January 1954): 4. We believe that Spence's older half-brother, Robin, was the Treasurer for the Liberal Party when it was founded in 1953.
15. Duncan Bell, "What Is Liberalism?" *Political Theory* 42, no. 6 (2014): 682–715.
16. David Everatt, *The Origins of Non-Racialism: White Opposition to Apartheid in the 1950s* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2009).
17. Kevin French, "James Mpanza and the Sofasonke Party in the Development of Local Politics in Soweto" (MA diss., University of the Witwatersrand, 1983); see also Alfred William Stadler "Birds in the Cornfield: Squatter Movements in Johannesburg, 1944–1947," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 6, no. 1 (1979): 93–123; Baruch Hirson, *Yours*

for the Union: Class and Community Struggles in South Africa (London: Zed Books, 1990).

18. The South African Communist Party, *Programme of the South African Communist Party* (London: Inkululeko Publications, 1962).
19. Everatt, *The Origins of Non-Racialism*, 25. In its early years, the Party would, problematically, agree on a qualified franchise that gave voting rights to South Africans who would be classified as "civilised" through some tests. The Transvaal Party, where Spence was based, stood for a universal franchise.
20. Research Committee on Minimum Standards of Accommodation, "Sub-Committee to Survey the Attitudes of Occupants to Housing" (Pretoria: Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, 1949); South African Institute of Race Relations, *The "Western Areas"—Mass Removal?* (Johannesburg, South African Institute of Race Relations, 1953).
21. "John David Rheinallt Jones," in *South African History Online* (2019), https://www.sahistory.org.za/people/john-david-rheinallt-jones.
22. Anjulie Webster, "Transatlantic Knowledge: Race Relations, Social Science, and Native Education in Early Twentieth Century South Africa," *South African Historical Journal* 72, no. 3 (2020): 366–67; R. Hunt Davis, "Charles T. Loram and an American Model for African Education in South Africa," *African Studies Review* 19, no. 2 (September 1976): 87–99.
23. C. M. Hore-Ruthven, "The South African Institute of Race Relations," *Journal of the Royal African Society* 36, no. 144 (July 1937): 311.
24. Webster, "Transatlantic Knowledge," 367.
25. "Dr Alfred Bitini Xuma" in *South African History Online* (2022), https://www.sahistory.org.za/people/dr-alfred-bitini-xuma.
26. With its American funding sources and proximity to the Anglo-American Corporation (the major gold mining company), the SAIRR was perceived as a capitalist think tank invested in institutional mechanisms to promote interracial relations. During the late 1940s and 1950s, the institute came under increasing attack by organisations such as the ANC for failing to firmly distance itself from the apartheid government.
27. Susan Parnell and Deborah Hart, "Self-Help Housing as a Flexible Instrument of State Control in 20th-Century South Africa," *Housing Studies* 14, no. 3 (1999): 375.
28. Parnell and Hart, "Self-Help Housing," 375.
29. Grace Davie, *Poverty Knowledge in South Africa: A Social History of Human Science, 1855–2005* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 147.
30. Japha, "The Social Programme of the South African Modern Movement," 423–37. On the use of surveys and the growth of bureaucracy around housing, see Davie, *Poverty Knowledge in South Africa*, 103–41; Ivan Evans, *Bureaucracy and Race: Native Administration in South Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press 1997), 135–36.
31. Spence was noted as present at at least two meetings of these committees, including a concluding one where the research process was wound up. See Research Committee on Minimum Standards of Accommodation, "Sub-Committee to Survey the Attitudes of Occupants to Housing" (Pretoria: Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, 1949); Minutes of the Fourth Meeting of the Research Committee (Pretoria: Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, 1949).
32. The new government's first focus was the definition of "Bantu Education," a differentiated and practically-oriented system that pushed back against the role that the mission schools had played in the formation of African intellectuals. See Cynthia Kros, *The Seeds of Separate Development: Origins of Bantu Education* (Pretoria: UNISA Press, 2010).
33. Research Committee on Minimum Standards of Accommodation, Minutes of the First Meeting of the Joint Committee of European and African Opinion to Discuss Urban Native Housing Held at the Institute of Race Relations on Wednesday, 24th [March], 1948, at 5pm, South African Institute of Race Relations papers. Wits Historical Papers, Wits University, Johannesburg.

34. Chérif Keita, "The Twin Legacies of Ray and Dora Philips," *Africa Is a Country* (blog) (July 14, 2019), https://africasacountry.com/2019/07/the-legacy-of-ray-and-dora-philips. The school was funded through the Department of Native Affairs, the mining industry, and foreign donations by institutions such as the American Phelps-Stokes Foundation. Many of the professors who taught at Hofmeyr were white English-speaking liberals. Some of the school's students, such as Winnie Mandela, became outspoken anti-apartheid activists. See Davie, *Poverty Knowledge in South Africa*, 150–52.
35. Booker T. Washington, *Booker T. Washington at Tuskegee Institute [a Passage Extracted from "up from Slavery"* (Washington, D.C.: National Education Association, 1947).
36. Agnes Wood, *"Shine Where You Are": A Centenary History of Inanda Seminary 1869–1969* (Inanda: Inanda Seminary, 1969).
37. Spence, "How Our Urban Natives Live," 221–36.
38. Spence, "How Our Urban Natives Live," 221.
39. Spence, "How Our Urban Natives Live," 221.
40. "The Klipspruit Town Planning Competition," *South African Architectural Record* 16, no. 63 (September 1931): 86–91.
41. Jeremy Foster, "The Wilds and the Township: Articulating Modernity, Capital, and Socio-nature in the Cityscape of Pre-apartheid Johannesburg," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 71, no. 1 (March 2012): 50.
42. Jacqueline Eberhardt, "Survey of Housing and Family Conditions: Orlando Township (with Special Reference to Housing Needs)" (MA diss., University of the Witwatersrand, 1949).
43. Spence, "How Our Urban Natives Live," 221.
44. Lilian Ngoyi cited in Barbara Caine, "The Trials and Tribulations of a Black Women Leader: Lilian Ngoyi and the South African Liberation Struggle," in *Women's Activism: Global Perspectives from the 1890s to the Present*, ed. Francisca de Haan, Margaret Allen, June Purvis and Krassimira Daskalova (London: Routledge, 2013), 97.
45. The *South African Architectural Record* replaced *Building* in 1925, the official journal of the Association of Transvaal Architects. The magazine, edited in the 1930s by Rex Martienssen, published articles on new architectural developments in South Africa as well as town planning projects and occasionally reported on major buildings abroad.
46. Anna Mokhetle, "A Description of Life in Orlando East," quoted in Spence, "How Our Urban Natives Live," 232.
47. On Hellman, see Andrew Bank, *Pioneers of the Field: South Africa's Women Anthropologists* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 104–150.
48. While she conducted the work in the 1930s, the report was not published until 1948. Ellen Hellman, *A Sociological Study of an Urban Native Slum Yard* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press and the Rhodes-Livingston Institute, 1948).
49. Barbara Celarent, "Rooiyard: A Sociological Survey of an Urban Native Slum Yard. By Ellen Hellmann," *American Journal of Sociology* 118, no. 1 (July 2012): 280.
50. Spence, "How Our Urban Natives Live," 233.
51. Spence, "How Our Urban Natives Live," 234–35. These shops were run by men who were either self-taught furniture makers or had received training in a trade school.
52. Spence, "How Our Urban Natives Live," 226.
53. On Chapman, see Trevor Keeble, "An Unknown Radical: Dennis Chapman and The Home and Social Status," *Design and Culture* 1, no. 3 (2009): 329–44.
54. Keeble, "Dennis Chapman and The Home and Social Status," 331; Betty Spence, "Furnishing the Home of the South African Bantu" in *Proceedings—Technical Papers Regional Conference on Housing Research in Africa South of the Sahara* (Pretoria: Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, 1952), 11. Although Spence would be familiar with Chapman's earlier work for the British Wartime Social Survey, he further developed these ideas in his 1955 book *The Home and Social Status* (London: Routledge and Paul, 1955). Like Chapman, Spence saw the house as a reflection of social, but also

psychological status. For Spence, the use of "European-style" furniture in Orlando East was an indication of gradual adaptation to European, urban and "civilised" life.

55. Rebecca Ginsburg, "'Now I Stay in a House': Renovating the Matchbox in Apartheid-era Soweto," *African Studies* 55, no. 2 (1996): 127–39; Rebekah Lee, "Reconstructing 'Home' in Apartheid Cape Town: African Women and the Process of Settlement," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 31, no. 3 (2005): 611–30.
56. See Douglas Calderwood, *Native Housing in South Africa* (Cape Town: Cape Times, 1955; le Roux, "Designing Kwa-Thema," 288–89.
57. Betty Spence, *Prefabricated Houses for Africans*, (report, 1948), CO927/36/1, British National Archives, Kew; Nick Hayes, "Making Homes by Machines: Images, Ideas and Myths in the Diffusion of Non-Traditional Housing in Britain 1942–54," *Twentieth Century British History* 10, no. 3 (1999): 282–309; Christine Wall, *An Architecture of Parts: Architects, Building Workers and Industrialisation in Britain 1940–1970* (London: Routledge, 2013).
58. UK Ministry of Public Works and Buildings, Ministry of Health, *Housing Manual* (London: H.M. Stationary Office, 1944); Nick Bullock, "Plans for Postwar Housing in the UK: The Case for Mixed Development and the Flat," *Planning Perspectives* 2 (1987): 71–98; Erin McKellar, "Living, Working, Playing: Ernö Goldfinger's Planning Exhibitions 1943–1946," in *The Housing Project*, ed. Gaia Caramellino, Stéphanie Dadour (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2020): 82–109.
59. Spence, "Furnishing the Home," 14.
60. See Mark Llewellyn, "Designed by women and designing women: gender, planning and the geographies of the kitchen in Britain, 1917–1946," *Cultural Geographies*, no. 10 (2004): 42–60.
61. Jane B. Drew, E. Maxwell Fry, and Harry L. Ford, *Village Housing in the Tropics, with Special Reference to West Africa* (London: Lund Humphries, 1947).
62. Her reliance on European research and design ideas is further emphasised through her suggestion to launch a specific "Utility Furniture" line for township housing, consisting of simple and practical designs created by Black residents—a proposal based on Britain's "Utility Furniture Scheme" created to ensure affordable, simple wooden furniture during World War Two. Spence, "How Our Urban Natives Live," 236.
63. Spence, "How Our Urban Natives Live," 235.
64. Parnell and Hart, "Self-Help Housing," 367–86.
65. Parnell and Hart, "Self-Help Housing," 378–79.
66. Susan Parnell, "The Ideology of African Home-Ownership: The Establishment of Dube, Soweto, 1946–1955," *South African Geographical Journal* 73, no. 2 (1991): 69–76.
67. Pers. corr. between Spence and Rheinallt Jones, February 15, 1951. Rheinallt Jones papers, Wits Historical Papers, Johannesburg.
68. Edward Roux, *Easy English Handbook,* 2nd ed. (Cape Town: The African Bookman, 1944).
69. Spence, *Build Your Own House*, 5.
70. Betty Spence, "The Problem of the Location: A Report on Housing Conditions in Ten Transvaal Locations," *South African Architectural Record* 28, no. 2 (February 1943): 25–38.
71. Spence, "The Problem of the Location," 25.
72. Spence, "The Problem of the Location," 37.
73. Spence, *Build Your Own House*, fold out plans, House One.
74. Spence, *Build Your Own House*, 3.
75. Parnell and Hart, "Self-Help Housing," 385.
76. Parnell and Hart, "Self-Help Housing," 379; William J. P. Carr, *Soweto: Its Creation, Life and Decline* (Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations, 1990).
77. Hannah le Roux, "CINVA to Siyabuswa: The Unruly Path of Global Self-Help Housing," in *Rethinking Global Modernism: Architectural Historiography and the Postcolonial*, ed.

Vikramaditya Prakash, Maristella Casciata and Daniel E. Coslett (London: Routledge, 2021), 233–250.

78. See South African Institute of Race Relations archives, C2.9, Wits Historical Papers, Wits University, Johannesburg. A.B. Xuma, "Western Areas Removal Scheme," 1953; Memorandum to the City Council of Johannesburg on the Non-European Western Area Removal Scheme by the African Anti-Expropriation Ratepayers Association and proper Housing Movement, 1952.
79. South African Institute of Race Relations archives, C2.9, Wits Historical Papers, Wits University, Johannesburg. A.B. Xuma, "Western Areas Removal Scheme," 1953; Memorandum to the City Council of Johannesburg on the Non-European Western Area Removal Scheme by the African Anti-Expropriation Ratepayers Association and proper Housing Movement, 1952. The so-called Spence Scheme was referenced as her work in Peter M. Brown, "Party News," *Contact* (January 1954): 4. The scheme appears to have been developed for her Diploma in Town Planning. See "Removal of 80 000 Natives Opposed by Father Huddleston," *Rand Daily Mail*, May 30, 1952, 9.
80. South African Institute of Race Relations, *The "Western Areas"—Mass Removal?*
81. William Bloke Modisane, *Blame Me on History* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1963); "The Destruction of Sophiatown," in *South African History Online* (2019), https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/destruction-sophiatown.
82. "House Pinfold," *South African Architectural Record* 39, no. 4 (April 1954): 33–38.
83. Barry Bierman and Betty Spence, "M'Pogga," *Architectural Review* 116, no. 691 (July 1954): 34–40.
84. Carl Pinfold and Betty Pinfold, "Proposed new residence for Mrs B Pinfold on Stand No 27 Windeena Ave Pine Park JHB. Johannesburg" (1953), Municipal submission drawings, City of Johannesburg Development Planning Department.
85. "House Pinfold," 36–38.
86. Chipkin, pers. corr. with Hannah le Roux, 2019.
87. Typically, domestic quarters in white suburbs were located at the rear of the property, and necessitated access past the side windows of the employer's house, allowing for the policing of workers and the visitors at all hours. See Rebecca Ginsburg, *At Home with Apartheid: The Hidden Landscapes of Domestic Service in Johannesburg* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011), 112–37.
88. "House Pinfold," 38; E.M. Macphail, *The Story of Westcliff: A Chronicle of a Kind* (Johannesburg: Palala Press, 1986), 57.
89. Zara Muren, pers. corr. with authors, December 13, 2019.
90. Tom Lodge, *Red Road to Freedom: A History of the South African Communist Party 1921–2021* (Johannesburg: Jacana, 2021).
91. Randolph Vigne, *Liberals against Apartheid: A History of the Liberal Party of South Africa*, 1953–68 (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 1997, 212–24.
92. Carl Pinfold's papers are held by the University of Liverpool's Special Collections.
93. Zara Muren, pers. corr. with authors, February 2021.
94. Betty Pinfold, "Living Space by R.G. Booth," *The Town Planning Review* 41, no. 4 (1970): 390–91.
95. Betty Pinfold, "Urban Parks for Youngsters," *RIBA Journal* 80 (1973): 146–53. In 1979, she submitted a master's dissertation to Liverpool University on the topic.
96. Zara Muren, pers. corr. with authors, October 2020.
97. Spence, "Native Architecture," 390.