

Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Section 1: Description of the Sybrand Park neighbourhood	2
Section 2, part 1: Main Themes Emerging from Interviews Conducted in Sybrand Park	4
Economic Issues and Changes	4
<i>Change in economic activity</i>	4
Services and Infrastructure Issues and Changes	5
<i>Drainage</i>	5
<i>Sewerage</i>	5
<i>Road maintenance and traffic congestion</i>	5
<i>Transportation</i>	5
<i>Secondary Services</i>	6
<i>Schools</i>	6
<i>Recreational facilities</i>	6
<i>Policing Services and Crime</i>	7
<i>Environmental matters</i>	7
Housing Issues and Changes	7
<i>Movement in and out of the community</i>	8
<i>Contestation of proposed housing developments</i>	8
Racial Composition and Integration	9
Politics and Presence of Government	9
Conclusion	10
Section 2, part 2: Overview of Literature available about Sybrand Park	10
Description of Sybrand Park	10
The Sybrand Park Civic Association	12
Resident engagement with the city	14
Section 3: Photograph Album of Sybrand Park	17
References	23

Introduction

This project aimed to explore the social, economic and political changes which have occurred over the last fifteen years in several areas in Cape Town, including Sybrand Park. To do this, interviews were conducted over a three week period. The researchers were supplied with some initial contacts in the area by the research coordinator, and from there the snowballing technique was used to acquire more informants. The people interviewed by the researchers represented a diverse spectrum of interests and roles within the community. For Sybrand Park, the following informants provided the information on the area: a former member of the resident's association (1990s); current and former (2000s) members of the civic association; a local historian and civic member; a teacher of a local pre-primary school; a representative of the New Africa Theatre Association (NATA); local shop owners; a representative of the local school; and the ward councillor. This document is organised into three sections: first, a brief description of the area is given, through information from the informants as well as from the researchers' perceptions from their time spent in the area. Second, an analysis of the key issues in Sybrand Park is explored. This is organised into two parts; the first looks at the key themes which emerged in the interviews with the key informants, while the second part looks at the themes covered in the literature regarding the area. The third section is a photograph album of the area which the researchers took during their time spent in Sybrand Park. While this document is by no means supposed to represent all the issues that Sybrand Park faces, nor the many opinions present in the neighbourhood, the key informants show a diverse spectrum of interests and roles within the community, and thus provided useful insight into the key issues in Sybrand Park.

Section 1: Description of the Sybrand Park neighbourhood

Sybrand Park is a low-lying neighbourhood of Cape Town, lying on the banks of the Black River and in the shadow of Table Mountain. The area was originally a farm which was later bought by the Cape Railway company. Settlers were attracted to the area in the post World War Two period, and in the 1950s it was classified as a white area surrounded by Indian, coloured and black suburbs. In 1994 Sybrand Park opened its borders to all persons, across racial classification. Over the course of the last fifteen years Sybrand Park has experienced notable shifts in racial integration, as people from neighbouring areas have moved into the suburb. This study uses qualitative in-depth interviews and literature to delve into the dynamics of this change, and how it has manifested in the lives of the residents of Sybrand Park.

Sybrand Park is often described as a quiet, stable and contained neighbourhood - an image of suburbia in a first impression. In a letter to the Land Development Management of the City of Cape Town (10 August 2004) written by the Civic Association Secretary, Sybrand Park was described as "made up of medium density, predominantly single storey, bungalow-type housing interspersed by mature trees, creating a low-lying leafy neighbourhood of uniform size and scale".

Sybrand Park lies on the slopes of Table Mountain, facing Devil's Peak. It is a centrally located area, often advertised by real estate agents as ten minutes drive from the Cape Town CBD, the International airport and the shopping mall of Canal Walk. The suburb is surrounded by a number of landmarks. To the west it is bordered by the Rondebosch golf course and a canal.

Beyond these landmarks are the areas of Mowbray and Rosebank. To the north-east it is shadowed by the Athlone cooling towers at the base of which runs the Black River. Between the homes and the river there is a large open piece of land, which currently is not used by the community. To the east is the railway line which divides Sybrand Park from Bokmakierie and Hazendal. To the South is the main arterial of Klipfontein Road which turns into Kromboom Parkway, and the areas of Garlendale and Athlone.

As you enter Sybrand Park, you are met by a small business strip on Golfcourse Road. This is made up of both small and large enterprises. On the Northern edge of the road is a Christian bookstore, a hairdresser, a small petrol station with a convenience store, a coffee shop, as well as a mechanic and auto-electrician. On the other side of the road is a local superette, which is one of the oldest of these businesses in the area. Next to the superette are a number of bigger businesses such as a security consultancy. Moving further up Golfcourse Road is the New African Theatre Association, whose premises are also used for church services on Sunday, as well as a business which sells heating equipment and does renovations.

There is an apparent difference in the architecture of the businesses in the industrial complex of Sybrand Park. The superette's one storey store entrance is decorated with Coca Cola and ice cream advertisements, while the larger businesses are two storeys high, and have modern and minimalistic architectural designs. Another marked difference is the existence of Indian, White, Muslim, and Christian-owned stores.

Moving beyond this business strip, the north and south east sides of Golfcourse Road are residential areas. There are a number of institutions running in Sybrand Park. There are three churches, the oldest being Christ Church which is used as a public spaces for Civic Association meetings and as a polling station during elections. There are no Mosques in the area. There are three crèches running in the area, and one school, which is situated in the middle of Sybrand Park.

In the centre of the neighbourhood are six open erfs, which are used as a sports field and park. At the western entrance to the neighbourhood is the also an open piece of land which has a tarmac for children to ride their bikes on. Apart from these public spaces, there are no entertainment activities for the youth in Sybrand Park.

Sybrand Park is a green neighbourhood with many trees lining the roads. Many homes have low walls with gardens in the front of their homes which make up a third of the property. These homes have a range of trees, large euphorbias and other succulents, with flowers, gnomes and water features. The community embarks on campaigns to further beautify the suburb through planting and having a gardening competition. There is little open space in the area. I noticed three plots of land which are not developed, apart from the land on the northern border of the suburb which is earmarked for a social housing scheme. Homes typically are one storey high. The area closest to the Rondebosch Golf Course is considered to be the more up-market end of the neighbourhood. The homes on the southern side of Golfcourse Road were originally built as council homes in the 1950s, many of which have been amended over the course of the last fifty years.

There are also a number of renovations happening in the area. Some newer homes, which are built to the edge of the properties, often have little or no room for gardens. They are also larger than the older homes and may have modern designs on gates and walls, with terraces.

Section 2, part 1: Main Themes Emerging from Interviews Conducted in Sybrand Park

Economic Issues and Changes

Residents of Sybrand Park fall into the middle income bracket, earning between R76 801 and R307 200 per annum. One informant stated “Sybrand Park is not and has never been a particularly affluent community.” Many of the employed come from trained trades such as school, music and art teachers, academics, hairdressers, auto-electricians, musicians, caterers, estate agents clerks, school owners, a director of a non-governmental organization (NGO) and an African National Congress (ANC) politician. There are also a number of retired people living in Sybrand Park. Most of the residents leave the neighbourhood to work, which may be in the Cape Town central business district.

Most informants held the opinion that Sybrand Park cannot be marked as an economic hub. A current member of the civic association (8 September 2009) stated “the area is not self-sustaining. Most of the capital is sourced from outside of Sybrand Park.” Sybrand Park has a small industrial area on the southern border of the area in Golfcourse Road. This small business complex includes a superette, a coffee shop, a petrol station and convenience store, a panel beater, an auto-electrician, a Christian bookshop and promotion store, a security company, a performing arts academy, as well as a hairdressing salon. Other businesses located in the residential section of Sybrand Park include three preschools, one school and a number of home-based businesses.

Change in economic activity

A few businesses have changed over the course of the last fifteen years, and a number of businesses have expanded during this timeframe. A local preschool, expanded the school over three properties, though initially the school received some resistance from the neighbours. One local shop has been running in the area over the last 25 years and is a significant marker of racial transition in the area. The owner of this shop was one of the first Indian people to work in Sybrand Park, and described how people have been more comfortable with racial integration over the years. The presence of the New African Theatre Association (NATA), which opened in 1987, has brought economic opportunity into the area. NATA employs catering and building contractor services from within Sybrand Park. Students use the coffee shops and buy goods from the superette.

Home businesses have emerged in the neighbourhood over the past 15 years. These include a hairdressing salon, a beauty and massage therapist, a few guest houses, a catering business, a landscaping business, a publisher, music teachers, a building contractor, a panel beater and a courier business. These businesses are required to have permits, yet sometimes these are not obtained by the business owners. This has resulted in the civic association having to approach businesses on one or two occasions when their presence has been problematic for surrounding

neighbours. Nonetheless, it appears that the number and impact of these home-based businesses have not been a significant challenge for most of the residents of Sybrand Park.

Services and Infrastructure Issues and Changes

The ward councillor (8 September 2009) and residents of Sybrand Park that in this area “most of the infrastructure is intact, and issues which arise are routine problems”. However, major challenges which face the residents regard flooding, sewerage backups and traffic congestion. People have mobilized around these issues over the last fifteen years, through writing letters to the City Council, presenting presentations regarding the environmental impacts of the proposed developments and through contracting private companies to assess matters.

Drainage

Insufficient drainage is a concern for the residents of Sybrand Park. The area sits in a low-lying area which is located below the fifty year flood plain. Therefore parts of the area floods when the bordering Black River water levels rise. What is now the sports’ field used to be a lake, which was filled in with builder’s rubble. Water levels rise in the winter months and ponds surface on the field. Residents described events where water from the canal and the Black River has overflowed and the pump house failed. There is also a black flow from the drains which causes water to gush into the streets. This flooding has been dealt with in various ways. The City council has rearranged the golf course by creating retention ponds. Sybrand Road was relocated, coming closer to the homes on the eastern border of the suburb. The City also clears drains.

Sewerage

According to the 2001 Census, 100% of the dwellings in Sybrand Park have flush toilets. However, connected to the matter of flooding, residents who live on the outskirts of the suburb next to the Black River periodically experience a back flow of the sewerage system. The residents have written letters to the City regarding the matter and according to the ward councillor (27 August 2009) the city plans to amend the problem by replacing the current system with a flap system and pumping the sewerage waste directly to the Athlone Waste Water Transfer station.

Road maintenance and traffic congestion

Traffic congestion is an issue for residents, particularly in the mornings when people leave for work, as well as when parents drop off their children at school. Informants stated that various requests have been made to the City of Cape Town to construct speed bumps in the neighbourhood, however to date the City has not addressed the matter of road calming. Golfcourse Road is used as an alternative route to the busy Klipfontein during peak traffic hours. This poses a serious threat to many residents who walk to Klipfontein or the railway line on the western border of the suburb in order to access public transport.

Transportation

Sybrand Park is centrally located in terms of access to the main transportation arterials. The railway line borders the suburb. Taxi and bus stations are also close by. Many people walk through the neighbourhood to access the taxi ranks. Due to an increase in crime in Sybrand Park in the last fifteen years, public transport does not seem to be an option for many residents of

the area, some of whom noted that they no longer used the public transport because of safety worries.

Secondary Services

There are no clinics, doctors' rooms, dentists' rooms nor a library in the area. Residents go to Claremont to access private medical treatment. The Athlone library is used, particularly by the students of NATA who offer puppet shows in return for the use of the internet. There is no shopping mall or entertainment centre located in Sybrand Park. People leave the area to use the supermarkets of Pick 'n Pay in Pinelands, or Shoprite in Athlone.

Religious facilities

There are three churches in the area. One of these churches is used for Civic Association annual general meetings and as a voting poll station during national elections. There are no mosques, however people attend mosques located close by in the neighbouring area of Athlone.

Schools

There are three crèches in Sybrand Park as well as one primary and high school is located in the centre of the neighbourhood. Changes have occurred particularly with regard to the ownership and use of the school property. In 1982/3 the school was a local government primary school, however it was closed down due to lack of support from the local community. In 1985, the school was taken over as an orthodox Jewish school. Seven years later the school moved to Sea Point. In 2002 the school became an Islamic school, and two years ago the current Turkish-owned school took its place. The current school moved from another premises to Sybrand Park. Grade one to seven caters for both girls and boys, and the high school caters only for males. Relations between the school and residents have improved in recent years. Efforts have been made to create ties with the community, and the school hall is also used as a public space.

Recreational facilities

A group of six plots of land is positioned in the centre of the neighbourhood which is referred to as the sport field and park. Over the course of many years the site has been used for multiple purposes. It used to be a lake, on top of which residents would sail their boats. Later it was filled in with builder's rubble and zoned for residential use. The land has also been used as a place where the community walks their dogs, and thus the space has become a site for socialising and building up a sense of community", as noted by a former member of the civic association (2000s) (28 August 2009). In the past residents also played softball on Saturdays, had a women's soccer club, and organized picnics in the park. It is used extensively by the youth and the school as a park. At the same time, it is also a place where vagrants loiter, as some residents noted. The City and the Civic Association have taken various approaches to deal with the matter including fencing the land and putting up a flood light. Currently the area is in the process of being rezoned as a recreational site.

The relationship between the residents of Sybrand Park and the Rondebosch golf course, situated on the eastern border of the area, has changed in recent years. In the past the course was used extensively by the residents to walk their dogs. However in recent years with the sharp increase in crime, and assaults on the sportsmen on the field, the golf course was fenced in. Residents were supplied with a key to the course, on the condition that certain rules and regulations are adhered to. This has changed significantly the residents' understanding that the golf course benefits the community, in the sense that fewer residents use it's facilities.

Policing Services and Crime

Crime has increased dramatically in recent years. The nature of criminal activity is restricted mostly to petty crime, people breaking into homes and car thefts. Other incidents noted include muggings and a hi-jacking. It was noted by residents that the physical makeup of the suburb allows for an easy get-away for criminals. The western side of Sybrand Park is bordered by the railway – through which holes in the fences have been made so that criminals from the poorer areas can get access to Sybrand Park. To the south is a main transport arterial of Klipfontein, and the east is the canal.

Sybrand Park does not have its own police station, but falls under the jurisdiction of the Mowbray Police station. Residents seem to perceive the police to be helpful. Despite these comments, the community has taken initiatives to deal with the issues of crime, indicative that the resources of the police force are not sufficient. Initiatives include the Neighbourhood Watch, hiring a private security company, and through community outreach projects. Some residents felt that the Neighbourhood Watch was successful, in that through patrols the crime rate of the area decreased. However, a few years ago the Neighbourhood Watch merged into a sub-committee with the Civic Association because “they were two bodies with similar objectives”. One informant also stated that the leadership of the Neighbourhood Watch maintained the approach that the area was “mono-cultural” and as a result, people felt alienated by the approach of the leadership and gradually stopped being involved in the Neighbourhood Watch. The residents have employed a private security company to patrol the area twelve hours per day. It is a continued challenge to get all the residents interested in contributing to the payment of the bicycle patrol and as a result the Civic Association is unable to get the bicycle to patrol 24 per day, as they would like. Another initiative to tackle crime is through community outreach, which is organised by the civic association and is linked to the school.

Environmental matters

Tree felling is a service which the council delivers to the residents, when branches interfere with electricity lines, though there is some concern on the residents’ part about the ways in which the trees are felled, sometimes by inexperienced fellers. One informant commented on the poor environmental management on behalf of the golf course. Pesticides are used which harm the water system and ecosystem - in particular the frog population and the birds who nest in the reeds and the broader wetland.

The Civic had also initiated a gardening competition, which the members hoped would “improve the aesthetics of the area. A member of the civic association noted that “the gardening competition is important because it creates pride in the environment. It is also a social occasion to bring the community together when it comes to prize giving” (27 August 2009)

Housing Issues and Changes

Sybrand Park was described by many respondents as a quiet, stable, contained neighbourhood with a village-like atmosphere. In recent years the area has become better known, where previously it was more isolated or ‘insular’ due to the minimal economic opportunities, schools and other facilities located in the neighbourhood. Retaining the character of the neighbourhood is important to many informants. This character is marked as low density, mostly single storey

houses situated in a green neighbourhood. This is challenging in light of the many changes which are taking place in the neighbourhood as people move into the community, as property development expands, and with the pressing need for the delivery of social housing in the Cape Town context. The increase in crime in the last fifteen years has changed the nature of houses. Many of the homes in the neighbourhood adopted the approach of putting up burglar bars, electric fences, alarm systems and high walls. Residents have a sense of loss in the character of the suburb which had a village-like atmosphere which it has lost.

Movement in and out of the community

It was noted that there is a turnover of people in the area. Reasons for this include pull and push factors, as well as a lack of alternatives for the elderly. One such pull factor regards the real estate value of property in Sybrand Park. Sybrand Park is an attractive area to live as it is centrally located, close to the V & A Waterfront, the CBD, the International Airport and to the southern suburbs. Property prices are also more affordable than homes in the neighbouring suburbs. Due to these factors, the profile of people living in Sybrand Park has changed significantly. Black, Hindu, Indian and coloured people have up-scaled into Sybrand Park from other areas. Push factors were described by two community members who have been members of the Civic Association, who explained that young people leave the area when they become adults. This is because they may wish to upscale their homes. Some people also leave because homes become too big for their needs. A partner may die, and the home becomes a burden. People are also attracted to selling because of the high profit margins.

Contestation of proposed housing developments

The Civic Association has been instrumental in halting proposed housing developments, both by the City of Cape Town and by private businessmen. Proposals were presented to the Civic Association to use two plots to build a seven storey development of flats. The Civic challenged this in stating the infrastructure of the neighbourhood would not be able to cope in terms of sewerage and traffic congestion. The Civic also felt that it was important to maintain the character of having one or two storey homes in the neighbourhood. Currently the Civic Association is contesting another proposed high-rise development in Sybrand Park which emerged during the weeks that the study was conducted.

A more contentious issue was the proposed development by the City of Cape Town of a gap housing project in 2007. The identified location was the six plots of land that are used for the sports field in the middle of Sybrand Park. The ground had been allocated to the Absa bank in a public-private partnership, which was the first of its kind in South Africa. The community first became aware of this development through the local newspaper. The Civic contested this development on various grounds - including the pressure it would put on the sewerage system; the traffic congestion it would cause; and the increased pressure the development would put on the drainage system which already led to the area flooding periodically. There was also the concern that the development would devalue the properties of homeowners in Sybrand Park. A local government representative (27 August 2009) stated that residents were not happy with the proposal partially because "Sybrand Park is a middle-class neighbourhood and the gap housing project would change the profile and character of the neighbourhood." Eventually the proposals were dismissed on the grounds that the land was located below the 50 year flood plain, which to go ahead would promote unwise urban planning practices. Furthermore, the soccer field is used by people from the surrounding areas of Garlendale, Bokmakerie and Hazendal. "Building the development there would deprive them of the much needed facility. It

has taken so long for the community to break out of the insular thinking to get Hazendal, and Bokmarie to be part of the community. Neighbours never felt welcome and now they feel free to use this place. The development would break this apart.” (Member of civic association, 8 September 2009). The Civic Association met with the ward councillor and the City of Cape Town to negotiate the matter. The Civic agreed to the development on the grounds that it would be located on the land on the northern edge of Sybrand Park next to the Black River, using an alternative low-density design for the development, rather than high storey buildings.

Racial Composition and Integration

At a first glance the racial transition in Sybrand Park has been smooth - fifteen years into democracy residents describe there to be a balance and mix of race, nationality and religion in the profile of people living in Sybrand Park. There are white, black, coloured, Indian, a number of foreigners from Germany, Zimbabwe and France and people speak English, Afrikaans and Xhosa. Informants identified two interracial spouses. Respondents noted that the white residents tend to be older, while people of colour tend to be younger, between 30 and 50 years of age. There are few black people living in the neighbourhood. There are quite a few black children who attend the local school, however they live in areas such as Gugulethu and Khayelitsha. Several respondents noted that this racial variety is what attracted them to the area, as it gives a more accurate representation of South African society than other surrounding neighbourhoods do. Many respondents noted, however, that while there is understanding and acceptance in the area now, there were some incidents which indicated otherwise over the years, including comments painted on walls, and some white residents leaving the area in fear of what might happen to it. However, these incidents have been overcome. Along with racial integration, there seems to be a sentiment that there has been a loss of the same community feeling which used to exist in Sybrand Park prior to 1994. This has come with increase in diversity of people, while different cultures have resulted into the development of smaller, separate groups.

Politics and Presence of Government

Residents of Sybrand Park and the City of Cape Town have an ongoing active and engaging relationship. The Civic Association is very active and has both worked in conjunction and challenged actions of the City of Cape Town.

Political Affiliation, Changes and Engagement

Sybrand Park falls under ward 60 of the City of Cape Town which includes the other areas of Rondebosch East, Athlone, Crawford, Kenwyn, Lansdowne. Ward 60 is run by the Democratic Alliance. When describing the local political branch of the ward, a local government official said it is “a complete mixture of race and religions” (27 August 2009). Political affiliation over the years has changed. Sybrand Park supported the National Party prior to 1994. Political affiliations then moved to what was the Democratic Party, and is now known as the Democratic Alliance (DA). In previous years there was some support for the African National Congress (ANC), though this was a minority. The respondents all seemed satisfied with the ward councillor, and felt that they could easily access him. The councillor notes that the residents of Sybrand Park had an active civic organisation, and knew how to contact him when necessary. He also noted that the association was aware of his mandate, and utilised him accordingly (27 August 2009).

Engagement with the City of Cape Town usually is channelled through the Civic Association. Correspondence has taken form through presentations, petitions and letters – indicating the conversation and responsive relationship which the residents of Sybrand Park and the City of Cape Town maintain. The respondents felt that the City has been helpful in most respects, but there are some aspects where communication has not led to action.

Conclusion

The community of Sybrand Park has experienced many changes in the last fifteen years, as people of varied classification have moved and in out of the area. Changes have materialized in the physical makeup of the neighbourhood, in the character of homes, and in people's sense of community. Stories of change describe an awareness of both gain and loss. The community of Sybrand Park is evolving in these tensions, and is constantly changing with the input of the residents, businessmen, school teachers, Civic Association members, city councillors, teachers and store owners.

Section 2, part 2: Overview of Literature available about Sybrand Park

Description of Sybrand Park

Sybrand Park is often described as a “small, enclosed suburb, with a friendly, village-like atmosphere” (Anonymous, 1990). It is a contained neighbourhood, surrounded by a number of landmarks. To the south is Rondebosch East and the main arterial of Klipfontein borders the area. To the east is Athlone, and the railway line divides the two areas. To the north east is Bokmakierie. On the northern border lies the Black River which is part of the main tributary that runs through the Cape district. On the north western perimeter is the Rondebosch golf course, which sits between Sybrand Park and Mowbray. To the east is the suburb of Rosebank and Kromboom Parkway divides the two areas (City of Cape Town, 2006).

A newspaper article titled “Sybrand Park looks back” published 26 April 1990 briefly describes the content of a historical exhibition on Sybrand Park. A special focus was put on the ‘Homestead’ in the neighbourhood, one of the oldest homes in the area. The Homestead was originally the house of the last farmer in the area, Sybrand Mostert Kotze, who sold the farm in 1927. According to the Group Areas Zoning Plans of 1953 – 1956 under the apartheid regime, Sybrand Park area was categorized as a white area.

Sybrand Park falls under ward 60 of the City of Cape Town, which also includes Athlone, Crawford, Kenwyn, Landsdowne and Rondebosch East¹. The entire ward has a population of 28 547 according a socio-economic profile of 2005/6 (Economic and Human Development Department, 2006). According to Census data of 2001 (Statistics South Africa, 2001) Sybrand Park has a population of 896 people.²

¹ In recent years since this research was published the boundaries of the ward have changed, and today Kenwyn no longer falls under ward 60 and Belthorn Estate has replaced this area (City of Cape Town, 2006). In 2003, Sybrand Park fell under Ward 59, along with Mowbray, Rosebank, Rondebosch and Garlandale). It is therefore evident that the jurisdiction under which the area has fallen has changed and number of times and this has impacted upon the relationship which the community has developed with local authorities.

²Note that through comparing the information of ward 60 and Sybrand Park itself, the two sources from Statistics South Africa Census 2001 and the Economic and Human Development Department of the City of Cape Town socio-

The socio-economic profile states that racially, the majority of people living in the ward are 35.90 % coloured, and 7.63 % white. Census data indicates that area's racial constitution is made up of roughly the same number of coloured and white people living in the community, with a few Indian/ Asian people and less black African. The exact proportions are 42.97 % coloured, 39.62 % white, 11.05 % Indian/Asian and 6.26% black African. If we compare these two data sets, Sybrand Park has a higher population of white people living in the neighbourhood, compared to surrounding areas. This is coherent with the views of informants, in that Sybrand Park in the apartheid era was a white area surrounded by non-white neighbourhoods. As is the case with many urban environments, both the Census data and the socio-economic profile indicate the majority of the population of Sybrand Park and ward 60 falls between the ages of 18- 54 years. An overwhelming majority of population speaks English (92.97%), which was evident in my discussions with residents (Statistics South Africa, 2001). The ratio of men and women is approximately the same – 50.22 % men and 49.78 % women (ibid).

The housing profile of the Census states that in 2001 there were 252 dwellings in Sybrand Park (Statistics South Africa, 2001). Civic Association newsletters (Read 2007) and information provided in interviews estimated today there are between 350 and 400 dwelling places in the area. The average erf size in the area is 550 square metres, with a density of 18du/ha (Pulse, 2004). The Census data states that 91.67 % of the types of dwellings are "houses or brick structures on a separate stand or yard". Just under half of the community owns dwellings which are not yet fully paid off (48.02%), while 37.70% of the residents own their homes which are fully paid off. Other types of dwellings from the data were 3 flats in a block of flats, 3 informal dwellings in back yards, and 6 informal dwellings not in back yards. These additional dwellings, apart from houses on separate stands, were not represented in my discussions with community members (Statistics South Africa, 2001).

Property advertised on the internet indicated that a home with three bedrooms and secure parking has market selling price of around R1.1 million. Those advertised on the internet usually have three to five rooms, a lounge and a dining room. All advertised secure garages, remote gates, burglar bars and some had surveillance cameras. This indicates that security is an important consideration when buying property in the area. Homes located on Sybrand Road which overlook the golf course have higher market values (Gumtree, 2009).

Homes in Sybrand Park are attractive for buyers not only because of the reasonable market price, but also because the area is centrally located – "it is very close to all amenities, shops, restaurants, (...) and near major highways such as the M5 and the N2." Another advertisement described the area as "very centrally located to Woolworths (a supermarket), Red Cross Children's Hospital, Rondebosch Golf course, M5 highway to Simons Town, N2 highway to Cape Town International Airport (10minutes), walking distance to public transport to the University of Cape Town, Central Business District, Northern and Southern Suburbs" (Gumtree, 2009). The central location of Sybrand Park also makes the area an attraction for guest homes. Homes have a view of Table Mountain and some of the golf course. An advertisement stated "All Cape Town's popular and major attractions are easily accessible, including Table Mountain and the

economic profile were conducted five years apart and so the information sourced in comparing information from these resources needs to be understood taking into account the five year disparity in data and the impact factors such as urbanization and population growth.

Cable Way, V & A Waterfront, Kirstenbosch Gardens, Hout Bay, Simon's town and the Constantia Wine Farms. For sports fans, Newlands Rugby and Cricket field are only 10 minutes away and the Mowbray golf course is on the doorstep (...). The Grandwest Casino is also less than 10 km from the flat, as well as the Baxter Theatre and cinemas" (ibid).

Using the Census data (Statistics South Africa, 2001) one can extrapolate that the community falls into the middle-income earning bracket (however further research into the classification of income brackets is needed). Of those economically active, 40.91 % earn between R1601 – R6400 per month, while 40.15% earn between R6401 – R 25 600. More than half of the population of Sybrand Park has an annual household income which falls between R76 801 and R307 200. A similar percentage of people fall into this income bracket in the entire ward (Economic and Human Development Department, 2006) Furthermore, the unemployment rate is a mere 2.22% - a sign of an economically stable community (Statistics South Africa). This information supports the view of all the informants of the research. The Census (Statistics South Africa, 2002) indicates that the occupations of those economically active include professionals, technicians and associate professionals, clerks, and legislators, senior officials and managers. In terms of education, more than half of the residents of Sybrand Park have received a school leaving certificate. The majority of those economically inactive are students and scholars (39. 42%), homemakers (25.96%) or pensioners (17.31 %).

The area is well provided for in terms of service provision, in that 98. 84 % use electricity as the type of fuel for lighting, 96.53 % of residents have their refuse removed by local authorities at least once a week, and all the residents of Sybrand Park have flush toilets (Statistics South Africa 2001). Two points are interesting to note which show the tension between the Census Data and the views of informants. Sewerage blockages were identified as a challenge within the community when the water levels in the adjacent river rose. This is not illustrated in Census Data. Secondly, the Census shows that 79.92 % of the population has access to piped water inside dwellings, while 17.37 % of residents (45 people) have access to piped water on the a community stand more than 200m from their dwellings. This was not indicated through the qualitative research. However, ward 60 has 1 library, 1 taxi terminal, 1 bus terminal, 2 railway stations, 1 clinic and 5 schools (Economic and Human Development Department, 2006). The ward also has 12 demarcated informal trading bays. Sybrand Park holds few of these facilities, in having one school and one railway station. Therefore residents leave the neighbourhood to access these services. Nevertheless despite being beyond the boundaries of Sybrand Park, it is not far to travel to these facilities (ibid). During election time, the ward has 8 polling stations, one which is situated in a local church of Sybrand Park (City of Cape Town, 2006).

The Sybrand Park Civic Association

The Civic Association of Sybrand Park is very active and has assumed multiple concurrent roles over the course of the last fifteen years. The Civic Association through which efforts are channelled to develop community, voice and address residential, crime-related or service concerns and interact with local authorities. For this reason, looking at the dimensions of the Civic is useful in understanding what initiatives and issues have arisen in the neighbourhood since 1994. Information sourced from the literature supports many of the descriptions held with current and past civic chairpersons as well as members of the association.

A number of endeavours have been initiated by the members of the Sybrand Park community in the aim to encourage community building and “neighbourliness”. In a 2002 Civic Association newsletter a walking/ running group was advertised. The same year the Civic Association organized a picnic in the park, with food, crafts and games. Since 2003 a soccer club has met weekly in the park. Civic Newsletters³ also describes the need to promote unity and responsibility in the context of diversity. In the December 2008 edition, the current chair of the association says: “We are like keys on a piano. Some are black, some are white. Some keys are positioned on the far left and some on the far right. Then there are those to the centre. Sometimes, the very key that is a ‘flat’ key can, when used in another composition be a ‘sharp’ key. There are certain keys that are very seldom used but when used, produce a very unique melody. It matters not where we are positioned, or what colour we may be (...).And when the music has been played and the song has been sung, nobody embraces the keys but all praise, glory and honoured is showered onto the Pianist. Again, let me emphasize, it is not the keys but the Pianist who brings Unity, Harmony and Usefulness” (2008: 1).

The Civic Association has a portfolio of Community Outreach, which tries to tackle the issue of poverty and high crime rates in Sybrand Park. Last year, the Community Outreach portfolio worked with the local school to donate meat to needy families in Hazendal and Bokmakierie for Christmas. This portfolio also collects and distributes clothes and blankets through the schools in Hazendal and Bokmakierie. The Civic Association Newsletter Winter 2009 edition highlighted the need for people to volunteer for various initiatives in the community.

The Neighbourhood Watch, which in the past was an independent body, merged with the Civic Association in recent years. Crime is a major challenge for the residents of Sybrand Park. The theme of the Neighbourhood Watch newsletter in January 2007, written by the then chairperson dealt solely with this issue, discussing the frequency and varied forms of criminal activity. In the opening discussion the below statement summates people’s feelings of and reactions to increased crime in the neighbourhood. The community has found multiple channels to tackle crime, including the Neighbourhood Watch, which used to meet monthly, as well as consulting the local police station in Mowbray and attending the Mowbray Community Police Forum. According to the then chair (2007), this forum allowed residents the chance to raise local issues and “influence policing policy”. Appeals are also made to residents to inform Civic members when they would be going on holiday with emergency contact information (Abrahams, 2008). Since 2002, residents also pay a private security company to patrol the area on bicycle. This was linked to the perception that the SAPS in Mowbray had insufficient resources to tackle the crime in the area. However, as was evident in discussions with respondents, the limited financial support for this service on behalf of residents was a challenge which the Neighbourhood Watch attempted to tackle through newsletters.

Correspondence letters of the Civic Association illustrate how the body has been used as a channel to resolve conflict and discontentment within the community. Many of the matters of concern relate to the visual quality, character as well as security of the neighbourhood - all which appear to be priorities to the residents.

³ The newsletters which are published by the Civic Association are important means of communication between the residents of Sybrand Park. They are also useful in identifying the concerns of the community and how these may have changed over the years. These newsletters also act as useful tools in identifying the ways in which local authority relates with the residents of the suburb, and visa versa.

Flooding has been a long standing issue with the area. Newspaper articles, engineering reports and correspondence with the City of Cape over the course of the last 16 years indicate reasons for the reoccurrence of flooding and the consequences thereof. In 1993 the Civic Association commissioned an independent investigation of flooding in Sybrand Park by Engineering Analysis Services CC. Findings addressed the reasons for flooding, with particular reference made to erf 171 (Engineering Analysis Services CC, 1993). This report was also used to support the Civic Association's efforts to hold the City of Cape Town responsible to remedy the problem, ensure adequate service of the sewer line in the Mountclare area, and implement modifications for the storm water pump station, in a letter to the City Engineer of Cape Town (dated 18 October 1993). In addition to offering insight into the dimensions of the problem, this correspondence is also a useful example to show how the Civic engages with the City Council in order to deal with matters arising in Sybrand Park.

Resident engagement with the city

Evidence in the literature highlights sites where the City of Cape Town has engaged with the Civic Association and residents, and where the Civic Association and residents were engaged with the City. Examples are given where local authorities engaged with residents and undertook initiatives which were considered as successful. Conversely, five examples are discussed in order to show how the residents of Sybrand Park have challenged City proposals and actions.

The councillor of Ward 60 published a newsletter to inform the residents of the ward forum and meeting dates, the role of the ward councillor, as well as the requests for information regarding the prioritized matters of the year (undated) including fencing of parks, putting up 'no dumping signs' and new signage in parks and repainting road signs (unknown date). References to successful service delivery on behalf of the City were made in three Civic Association newsletters. For example, in 2003 the Civic Association worked with the then City Councillor in getting the park lights repaired and with another City representative in planning and building a track for pushbikes in the Park (Civic Newsletter, 2003). In the December 2008 Civic Newsletter titled "Sybrand Snippets", the current chairman of the Association, commended the current ward councillor on the good work on behalf of the City Council. Specifically, lighting was improved by installing new street lights, and the clearance of storm water drains (Civic Newsletter, 2008). In the winter 2009 edition of the Civic Newsletter, the current chair of the civic association also describes that the ward councillor arranged fencing around the sports field/ park, and the repainting of the road signage.

While the residents of Sybrand Park have experiences of successful cooperation with local government, there have also been incidents where Council plans and methods of implementation have been challenged. One of the most heated issues raised in the community relates to the proposal of a social housing scheme. In 2007 the City Council approved the building of seven gap housing projects (of 60m²) including the areas of Sybrand Park, Hanover Park and Silvertown (People's Post, 20 November 2007). The housing developments were aimed at the middle-income earning group of between R3500-R7000 per month (People's Post 2007, CityNews 2007). Social housing tenure is generally rental with some units having an option to purchase. Rentals range from R500-R1050 per month. Housing units would be high density '3 storey walk-up style' similar to those found in the (much contested) N2 Gateway Project (Proposed Social Housing Project in Sybrand Park). The social housing scheme proposed fell

under the Breaking New Ground (BNG) initiative which commenced in 2004, replacing the earlier Reconstruction and Development Programme housing delivery model (ibid). The strategy involves “building integrated, sustainable human settlements in which citizens will have access to social amenities, greater proximity to city centres and the option of a greater range of housing products”(ibid). Furthermore, the project is the first of its kind in South Africa, where the state is entering cooperation with three of the country’s major banks of Absa, Nedbank and Standard Bank. The City handed over the sites to the banks in November 2007, who would be responsible to the appointing of the contractors and ensuring quality control.

In Sybrand Park two sites were proposed for the development. Site 1 was situated on the northern border of the area next to the Black River. Units would be small (30m²), allowing for 328 units to be built covering 60 % of the site. Site 2 was proposed to be located in Geluks Road, where the soccer field is in the middle of Sybrand Park next to the school. Units would be three times the size as those proposed on site 1 (90.5m²), covering 30 % of the site (Proposed Social Housing Project). The bank responsible for the development in Sybrand Park would be Absa (CityNews 2007).

The Sybrand Park Civic Association had “mixed feelings about the developments” and met with the City to provide them with detailed plans for the area. The current chairperson stated to the press “We understand that there is a chronic shortage of housing, but certain areas should not be blocked up. (...) Although we welcome the initiative, we can’t just accept any type of housing. It must be to a proper standard and not detract from the general appearance of other houses. It should definitely keep up with the area” (People’s Post, 2007). The Civic Association engaged with the City of Cape Town around this matter. References to result of this consultation was made in the December 2008 Civic Association newsletter, where the current civic association chairperson mentions the Civic’s success in getting the City to “shelv(e) efforts to put up a block of flats on the soccer field, and efforts are being made to rezone the area into recreational land to “obviate future aspirations to choke out recreation areas intended for the wider community by piling bricks on scarce bits of land.”(Civic Association, 2008: 1).

Another development contested and stopped was the proposal for a block of flats in Lyndale Road to be built. The Civic Association wrote a letter of objection to the City of Cape Town Land Development Management regarding the development of four attached double storey units in Lyndale Road. The grounds of the objection were that the development would be contrary to the current single residential character of the neighbourhood, as well as a problem of flooding, high density, infringement on privacy and traffic congestion (unknown date).

In 2003 a site where residents contested proposals on the City Council was when a suggestion was put forward to convert part of the open land at the entrance to Sybrand Park to a garden refuse recycling depot, as the land where it was situated was being converted into a shopping centre. This was challenged on the grounds that the land is part of the Metropolitan coast-to-coast greenbelt. Alternative sites were sourced for the location of the depot (Civic Association Newsletter, 2003).

Residents also approached the Land Use Management Manager of the City of Cape Town (16 October 2006) requesting assistance with the eviction of a woman squatting in a vacant house, which was in the process of being demolished. Residents had grievances about the woman who expressed violent and aggressive outbursts and had multiple confrontations with the police. This

request was delivered in contestation to the lack of past action on behalf of local authorities on the matter.

Section 3: Photograph Album of Sybrand Park

WELCOME TO SYBRAND PARK



(1) The western entrance of Sybrand Park. The area is an attractive location due to the central location and the view of Table Mountain. [The first image faces towards the suburb, while the second faces away.]



(2) The Rondebosch golf course is located on the north western border of Sybrand Park. In recent years the golf course has been fenced in as a deterrent for criminal activity. Retention ponds have been made on the course to deal with the flooding in Sybrand Park.



(3) To the south, the area is bordered by the main arterial of Klipfontein which separates Sybrand Park from Garlendale and Athlone. The right hand picture in the southern entrance into the neighbourhood into the industrial section of Golfcourse Road.



(4) The railway line makes up the border of the western side of Sybrand Park. Although offering accessible public transportation, the railway line also allows easy access into the area from criminals from the poorer surrounding areas.



(5) Open land located next to the Black River and the N2 on the northern border Sybrand Park has been identified as the alternative location for the social housing development scheme of the City of Cape Town. [The four photos show a panoramic view of the land (from left to right)].

LANDMARKS



(6) Sybrand Park is a green suburb with many trees and lawns.



(7) The Athlone Cooling Towers shadow over the Sybrand Park to the north east of the neighbourhood, on the opposite side of the Black River. These towers were used when the coal plant was running, which closed down over fifteen years ago.



(8) The river running next to the residential area was canalled by the City of Cape Town in an effort to control flooding many years ago. However this has caused damage to the natural habitats of many endemic species living in the area, and has also created an easy getaway for criminals to escape. Thus homes next to the canal are a target for crime.

FACILITIES



- (9) The six erven located in the centre of the suburb are used as a park and sports field. The social housing development scheme was proposed for this land, which was moved to the area on the northern edge of Sybrand Park.



- (10) At the eastern entrance to Sybrand Park there is an open piece of land which has been tarred for children to ride bikes on. The Civic Association stopped a City of Cape Town proposal to use the land for a gardening refuse dump.

ECONOMIC ACTIVITY



(11) Businesses in the industrial complex of Sybrand Park on Golfcourse Road include the a petrol station, a coffee shop, a car mechanic's workshop, an auto-electrician, a Christian bookshop and a business dealing with heating and renovations.



(12) The New Africa Theatre Academy (NATA) is a performing arts school for economic disadvantaged youth.

References

Citynews (2007) *City in Partnership with banks to develop affordable housing*. November 2007. City of Cape Town: Cape Town.

City of Cape Town (2003) *Sybrand Park Neighbourhood Watch* [Online: http://www.capegateway.gov.za/eng/your_gov/4184/facilities/9363/...] [Accessed: 15 April 2009][Updated: 3 December 2003] City of Cape Town.

City of Cape Town (2006) *Map of Ward 60 for the local elections 2005/2006*. City of Cape Town. Economic and Human Development Department, City of Cape Town (2006) *A Socio-Economic Profile of Ward 60 (Athlone, Crawford, Kenwyn, Lansdowne, Rondebosch East, Sybrand Park) looking at the Economic and Human Development Department's programmes and projects in 2005/6*: City of Cape Town.

Engineering Analysis Services CC (1993) *Investigation for Sybrand Park Civic Association: Flooding of Sybrand Park*. Engineering Analysis Services: Cape Town. Report compiled by Mr E. D. Kelly 15 September 1993.

Gumtree (2009) *Houses for sale in Sybrand Park* [Online: <http://capetown.gumtree.co.za/c-Flat-House-Real-Estate-houses-flat...>] [Accessed: 15 April 2009] Statistics South Africa (2001) *Census 2001- City of Cape Town - Sybrand Park*. Statistics South Africa: South Africa.

Hill, P (unknown date). *Councillor Pat Hill Ward 60 Newsletter*. City of Cape Town.

Letter to City Land Use Management Manager. Dated: 16 October 2006.

People's Post (Tammy Peterson) (2007) *Housing development may kick off soon*. Tuesday 20 November 2007.

South Africa's Yellow Pages Directory (2009) *Nursery School Rondebosch*. [Online: <http://www.yellowpages.co.za/search.jsp?query=Nursery+School...>] [Accessed: 15 April 2009]

Star International Primary and High School (2008) *Community Outreach- Sybrand Park to Bokmakierie* [Online: http://www.starinternational.co.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=106]. [Accessed: Unknown date].

Sybrand Park Civic Association (Monique Nauve – Chairperson) (2003) *Sybrand Park Newsletter – Spring 2003*.

Sybrand Park Civic Association (Tommy Abrahams – Chairman) (2008) *Sybrand Snippets Newsletter Issue 06 – December 2008*.

Sybrand Park Civic Association (Tommy Abrahams – Chairman) (2009) *Sybrand Snippets – Winter 2009*.

Sybrand Park Neighbourhood Watch (Graham Read- Chairman) (2007) *Sybrand Park Neighbourhood Watch Newsletter - January 2007*.

Sybrand Park Civic Association (2002) *Sybrand Park Newsletter – Winter 2002*.

The Southern Suburbs Tatler (1990) “*Sybrand Park looks back*” 26 April 1990.

Unger, A. (Chairman of the Sybrand Park Civic Association)(1993) *Letter to Mr A Clayton, City Engineer of Cape Town Regarding Sybrand Park Flooding*. 18 October 1993.

Unspecified Author (Unknown date) *Proposed Social Housing Project in Sybrand Park*. Sourced from Monique Nauve’s archives.

Unspecified author (Unknown date) “*Sybrand Park flooded*” Untitled and undated newspaper article.