Landscape as guiding element in the design and planning of dutch colonial settlements (1600-1800)

The case of Cape Town (South Africa)

*Le rôle du paysage dans la planification des villes coloniales hollandaises
(1600-1800) – Le cas de Cape Town (Afrique du Sud)*

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Le rôle du paysage dans la planification des villes coloniales hollandaises (1600-1800) – Le cas de Cape Town (Afrique du Sud)

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

This article is directly based on a doctorate thesis published in Zutphen in 2000.

Introduction to the Reprinted Article

- 1 The article “Landscape as Guiding Element in the Design and Planning of Dutch Colonial Settlements (1600-1800)—The Case of Cape Town, South Africa”, which has been reprinted here, originated from a PhD-thesis by the author (Van Oers, 2000). It expounded the rationale for taking a wide-angled approach in the analysis of historic settlements and cities, instead of the identification and description of monuments and architectural structures only, when elaborating strategies of conservation. This approach promoted the inclusion of a broad range of other aspects, such as geomorphology, natural environment and immaterial considerations, to name but a few, as this could lead to a more comprehensive and inclusive reading and understanding of the diversity of values that exist in historic settlements and which need to be preserved and, where possible, enhanced.
- 2 In 2003 the World Heritage Committee was alarmed by the increasing number of conflicts arising from urban development projects being executed in historic cities that

were inscribed onto the World Heritage List of Unesco (Van Oers, 2007). In practically all parts of the world, both developed and developing, local governments were struggling to adhere to the principles of urban conservation as put down in international Charters and Conventions, while securing the necessary funding for restoration, regeneration and further development. Recognizing that this dilemma involved *all* historic cities, not only World Heritage cities, the World Heritage Committee relegated this issue to Unesco so that the broadest possible support could be mustered towards a solution fitting for all cities of heritage-value.

Developing a New Instrument for the Conservation of Urban Settlements

- 3 In October 2005 Unesco's General Assembly of States Parties to the World Heritage Convention adopted a Resolution that called for the elaboration of a new international standard-setting instrument that would be based on the recognition and guidance of investment in and development of historic cities, while at the same time honouring the inherited values embedded in their spatial and social structures. Following the 2005 Resolution, the World Heritage Centre set up an international framework—the Historic Urban Landscape initiative—for the development of a new Unesco Recommendation, a non-binding 'soft-law', under the coordination of the author.
- 4 An extensive discussion on the issue of the conservation of the Historic Urban Landscape began in 2006, in cooperation with the Advisory Bodies to the 1972 World Heritage Convention (Icomos, IUCN and Iccrom) and other partner organizations, such as UIA (International Union of Architects), IFLA (International Federation of Landscape Architects), IFHP (International Federation for Housing and Planning), OWHC (Organization of World Heritage Cities), the Aga Khan Trust for Culture and IAIA (International Association of Impact Assessment), as well as individual experts from different geo-cultural regions and professional backgrounds. This working group was gradually extended to include also the World Bank, UN-Habitat, OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development), IDB (Inter-American Development Bank), ISOcARP (International Society of City and Regional Planners), GCI (Getty Conservation Institute) and WMF (World Monuments Fund).
- 5 In the 5 years that followed, eight international expert workshops were organized in Jerusalem (June 2006), Unesco Headquarters in Paris (September 2006), Saint Petersburg, Russian Federation (January 2007), Olinda, Brazil (November 2007), Chandigarh, India (December 2007), Unesco Headquarters in Paris (November 2008), Stone Town, Zanzibar (December 2009) and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (December 2009). The meetings took stock of different geo-cultural views and traditions in urban conservation, discussed issues and challenges related to the various socio-economic contexts, and agreed on the opportunity to consider a new a standard-setting instrument in the form of a Recommendation, to reflect new approaches to urban conservation and provide principles and norms for the international regulation of the protection of the historic urban landscape.¹ Based on a progress report of all these expert meetings, in October 2009 the General Conference of UNESCO requested the preparation of a draft text of this proposed new Recommendation for its consideration at the next session in 2011.

- 6 A first draft text of the Recommendation was submitted to the UNESCO Member States on 23 August 2010 with the request for comments and observations, which were discussed at an Inter-Governmental Meeting of Experts at UNESCO Headquarters from 25 to 27 May 2011. This meeting refined the first draft into a final draft text that was submitted to the 36th session of UNESCO's General Conference, which adopted the *Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape* by acclamation on 10 November 2011, the culmination of an international process that started 6 years ago (Van Oers and Haraguchi, 2010).

Conclusion before the Reprinted Article

- 7 The Recommendation promotes the Historic Urban Landscape approach as a new way to include various aspects of conservation in an integrated framework, such as how cultural diversity affects values and approaches to conservation; the awareness of the link between natural and cultural factors in the conservation of the built environment; the new challenges brought about by rapid social and economic changes; the need to ensure a sustainable future to heritage conservation. The Historic Urban Landscape approach is not designed to replace existing doctrines or conservation approaches, but rather is envisaged as a tool to integrate policies and practices of conservation of the built environment by defining operational principles able to ensure urban conservation models that respect the values, traditions and environments of different cultural contexts.
- 8 The Recommendation defines the historic urban landscape as the urban area understood as the result of a historic layering of cultural and natural values and attributes, extending beyond the notion of "historic centre" or "ensemble" to include the broader urban context and its geographical setting. This wider context includes notably the site's topography, geomorphology, hydrology and natural features, its built environment—both historic and contemporary—, its open spaces and gardens, its land use patterns and spatial organization, as well as all other elements of the urban structure, next to social and cultural practices and values, economic processes and the intangible dimensions of heritage.
- 9 When looking at the original article on Cape Town, it can be appreciated that many of these aspects were featured already in the analysis and elaboration of a conservation strategy, and that Cape Town was positioned as a Historic Urban Landscape *avant la lettre*.

Introduction

- 10 During the period of Dutch overseas expansion (1600-1800), the Dutch East India Company (VOC) and the Dutch West India Company (WIC) founded a large number of trading settlements in a vast area ranging from the north of America to the south of Africa, and from the west of the Caribbean Sea to the east of Indonesia. In the international field of conservation this cultural historie heritage from the colonial period is often referred to as mutual heritage or dual parentage, *i.e.* it forms part of two

or more cultures or cultural traditions, for which both or several countries or regions bear a responsibility with respect to valuation, preservation and protection. Nowadays and all over the world, there is a heightened awareness of the value and potential of this heritage and governmental as well as nongovernmental organisations and institutions are drawing up many plans to secure this heritage for the future.

- 11 Within a time span of 200 years, the Dutch established more than 150 trading posts overseas, often a fort or a set of warehouses, fortified or not. In 36 cases, the Dutch attempted seriously to found a trade settlement or city. Some of these became important centres of commerce and government, like Batavia (now Jakarta, Indonesia), New-Amsterdam (now New-York, North America), Cape Town (South Africa) and Recife (Brazil). Two-thirds of the Dutch trading posts and settlements were situated in the east and belonged to the Dutch East India Company (VOC), as this organization having been set up primarily to combine Dutch trading ventures in the east. In the west, however, founding practices were fewer, since the original activity of the Dutch West India Company (WIC) was based on organized privateering in Spanish waters.
- 12 Dutch settlements overseas were without exception established in estuaries, on coastlines or along rivers and since the Netherlands itself can be considered one big estuary it becomes clear that such a terrain was familiar building ground for the Dutch. Next to trade as a principal means of income, their extensive knowledge of civil engineering and water management was used to make areas as liveable and productive. Swampy terrains were drained, while drier soils were irrigated and managed utilising civil engineering works like canals, dykes and locks. The same occurred in South Africa, when they decided in 1652 to found a refreshment station at the Cape and eventually during the next 150 years develop it as the new centre of an agricultural colony.
- 13 Since apparently the intention for the foundation of Cape Town was clear—it was to become a refreshment station to victual Company ships halfway to East India—, what was the importance of the landscape herein? What natural elements were taken into account, given the fact that vegetables and agricultural products had to be grown? How much was the design of the city influenced by this particular function and location chosen for Cape Town?
- 14 To answer these questions, it is important first to establish the nature of Dutch colonial building practices. What was the general planning process employed by the Dutch overseas? And what are the typical elements related to the landscape to be found in this method? After a description and analysis of these aspects, the focus is shifted to modern Cape Town. Which of the elements of Dutch colonial planning and landscape design have survived? And what are the future aspects concerning conservation and development that could be taken into account? The following paper aims to provide answers or at least deeper insights into these matters by first giving an overview of Dutch overseas planning practices in relation to the natural and man-made landscape. Then, as a special case, Cape Town in South Africa is described and discussed, to reveal the importance of the natural features of the terrain in guiding the planning and design of the city for many decades after its foundation. Finally, the surviving elements of this particular planning process in relation to the natural setting are elaborated on to define future research and conservation issues.

The Natural Landscape and the Foundation of Dutch Colonial Cities

- 15 First, for the purposes of the seminar, the term «landscape» in this paper refers to the definition stated during the European Landscape Convention, held in Florence (Italy) this year: «Landscape means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors».²
- 16 The relationship between urban planning and landscape in the Netherlands is a solid one, given the uns table terrain, poor soils and lack of resources. Planning to convert the landscape into a liveable and productive area is second nature to the Dutch, since half of the Netherlands as a territory and everything built on it, has evolved out of this process.
- 17 Before any agriculture or building could be undertaken the land had to be drained, consolidated and raised above the level of the surrounding swampy countryside. Deep piles had to be driven into the ground to support large buildings, and since all this was a labour and capital-intensive effort it had to be a communal effort, minutely planned, designed and regulated. The development of agricultural areas and towns in the se circumstances could not be casual or fortuitous, as was often the case elsewhere in Europe. It had to proceed as a conscious, regulated expansion in accordance with a detailed plan. As a consequence, the Dutch have always planned their settlements and communities.³
- 18 The suitability of a location, from a landscape point of view, to establish a settlement was fairly flexible and almost solely related to the possibility to conduct trade. Large-scale conversions of the natural landscape into production are as, including urban settlements, were not viewed upon as inconceivable or difficult. Since the costs of these operations were taken into account, indeed an utilisation instead of a modification of the natural terrain was preferred. In overseas foundation practices, the Dutch have always incorporated the existing terrain in the planning and design of the settlement and adapted it partially or, when necessary, totally in accordance with the intended function.
- 19 For example, in contrast to the case of Cape Town—to be described later—, where the landscape was neatly incorporated in the design, Recife in Brazil showed an extensive modification of the surrounding landscape, with rivers dammed or diverted, dykes built, lakes and canals created and areas reclaimed. Matters of military defence were the reason behind this exercise. When the Dutch set out to conquer Pernambuco in Brazil, it was found too difficult for them to defend the capital of Olinda against the Portuguese guerrilla attacks from the surrounding countryside. The Dutch felt they were much better able to defend the tiny town of Recife—some kilometres away from Olinda—against the enemy by making maximum use of the natural elements. Recife was strategically located and surrounded by a swampy delta with rivers, sandbars and reefs. The terrain itself posed little difficulties to the Dutch engineers as they were used to build under similar conditions in the home country. Immediately after the capture of Recife in 1630 a massive building programme started with the construction of fortification works, dykes, canals, redoubts and land reclamation. Chosen for its safety offered by the natural terrain and with the use of largescale civil engineering

techniques, this location became the site of an impressive city built by the Dutch within fifteen years: Recife/Mauritsstad.

- 20 Strategie positions on shores or land tips with natural harbours in the vicinity were chosen for Dutch trade settlements in general. Natural rivers, diverted or canalised, were often the backbones of the settlements and used for fresh water provision and defence. On faraway and hostile shores the self-sufficiency of the settlements, and the function of the landscape herein, was an important aspect. Just like the proximity to fresh water rivers, vegetable gardens were a vital element to maximise the self-sufficiency and almost all settlements of the VOC and WIC had their own vegetable gardens. However, the Company garden of Cape Town was the most famous. It formed the centrepiece of the settlement in design and functional organisation and was the focal point for the city's planning and development for almost 150 years.

Cape Town's Foundation and Development

- 21 In search for a sea link to Asia Portuguese seafarers discovered the extreme southwest point of Africa in 1486 and in the following centuries many ships would round the Cape and stop on its shores for the intake of fresh water and meat. Particularly Table Bay, in front of a valley below Table Mountain, was a favourite anchorage. In 1647, when a Dutch East India ship ran aground in Table Bay due to a severe storm, the advantages of a permanent station on this location became more apparent. The crew was forced to put up camp in the valley for twelve months. Close to a stream with fresh water huts were built and a small fort was constructed.⁴ As the rainy season had just started, various seeds aboard the ship were planted and the sailors were soon provided with fresh vegetables. By exchanging iron and copper with local tribes, who visited the valley every once in a while, they could provide themselves with meat. After a year they were picked up and brought back to Europe by a homeward bound fleet from Batavia. This event, and in particular the fertility of the valley, was explained to the directors of the VOC and they decided in 1650 to establish a permanent refreshment station at the Cape⁵. In April 1652 Commander Jan van Riebeeck in service of the Dutch East India Company arrived with three ships in Table Bay to claim it for Holland.⁶ (See illustration n° 1.)

Illustration 1. Map of the Fort of Good Hope and the surrounding lands, between Table Bay and Fals Bay

Made in ? and arrived in the Dutch Republic in 1656.

Source : VEL 803 – Collection Leupe, Dutch General State Archives (ARA) in The Hague, Netherlands).

- 22 Although basic in drawing and not to scale, map VEL 803 of Table Bay and Table Valley (probably made in 1656, four years after the foundation of the station) shows clearly the position and specific characteristics of the landscape that were important for the establishment of the refreshment station. It was protected on almost three sides by the surrounding mountains: Lion's Head with Signal Hill, Table Mountain and Devil's Peak form an enclosed arena around Table Valley.
- 23 Within this bowl the first permanent settlement at the Cape started. Although Table Bay was not entirely safe,⁷ the curve of the bay offered a relatively good anchorage and thus a harbour was established here. The valley had several fresh water streams running down from Table Mountain and this continual water supply was used to create a wet ditch around the fort and to water the beds of vegetables and other plants. Table Mountain towering over the small settlement was a landmark for all sailors en route to Asia and it still is Cape Town's trademark today.
- 24 On his departure Jan van Riebeeck had received instructions from the directors of the VOC concerning the procedures to follow and actions to undertake upon arrival at the Cape and the se instructions, quoted in Pearse,⁸ included specifications concerning the location and utilisation of the natural features of the terrain.

« ... you shall inspect the locality of the FreshRiver and decide on what spot the fort is to be erected in accordance with the accompanying plan—with this understanding, that in order always to have fresh water, the said river shall be led through or around the fort... »

«As soon as you are in a proper state of defence, you shall search for the best place for gardens, the best and fattest ground in which everything planted or sown will thrive well, which gardens shall be properly enclosed ... »

«You shall also look for the best pastures around the fort for depasturing and breeding cattle.»

- 25 The fort had to be situated in the direct vicinity of the river and the course of the river diverted in such a way that it would lead «through or around the fort». This phenomenon can be found in almost all of the settlements of the VOC: the utilisation of local rivers in the defence of the forts and settlements. The last instruction contained elementary directions for the establishment of the garden, for which the type of soil and a protective enclosure were important aspects, and suitable breeding grounds.
- 26 These instructions made that the Fort of Good Hope was erected near the mouth of the stream on the beach of Table Bay perpendicular to the shoreline. The defensibility of the fort was not ideal, owing to its proximity to the ridge of Lions Rump, from which attackers could easily fire upon the fort. This military aspect almost certainly prevailed during the construction of the Castle of Good Hope a decade later, which was situated approximately 220 meters to the east of the former fort⁹ to make it less vulnerable from attacks from above. Next to the fort the first gardens were laid out, shown on a map (VEL 816) which dates from 1654.
- 27 Note the contrast between the clear, geometrical plan of the fort and the non-geometrical, somewhat untidy layout of the gardens. This organisation of the initial gardens is rather puzzling, since the ground plan of the fort is so precise while the drawing does not show any natural features of the terrain that could have influenced the ground plan of the gardens. An analysis into possible underlying schemes or directions of the plan of the initial garden did not yield any results. It is hard to imagine that the all-important garden of the newly established refreshment station was treated as indifferently as it seems to be on the drawing.
- 28 Two years later a more structural and refined phase in the layout of the garden took place (see illustration n° 2) : a rectangular, geometrical ground plan forms the foundation of the soon to become world-famous Company garden at the Cape of Good Hope. The exact size cannot be established (no scale is shown), but this garden is over twice as large as the first rudimentary garden. It is properly divided into almost uniform compartments, surrounded by young trees and thorny bushes for protection against the wind and wild animals and has channels for irrigation as well as drainage. During the summer months the water running down from the mountains would irrigate the garden, but during winter the rains could be so heavy that they flushed away the topsoil including the valuable seeds—an important lesson learnt by Van Riebeeck during his first year of stay.¹⁰ To both sides of the large Company garden much smaller gardens of Company servants for individual use are located. The house of the VOC gardener Hendrik Boom is located at the entrance to the Company garden.

Illustration 2. Plan of the Fort of Good Hope, the Company gardens and adjoining buildings, stables, etc.

Made in 1656.

Source : VEL 820—Collection Leupe, Dutch General State Archives (ARA) in The Hague).

- 29 The decision by the directors of the VOC to allow free citizens¹¹ to obtain Company land and work it for own profit marks the beginning of a real colony at the Cape and the emergence of a settlement diversified in functions and services. Ever since he arrived at the Cape Van Riebeeck had struggled to provide for a proper food supply for his garrison and for the ships that anchored in Table Bay.
- 30 Upon his recommendation, in 1656 the directors decided to establish some families on pieces of land so they could take up farming.¹² They were granted the privilege of selling their products to the Company and to passing ships anchoring in the harbour. To further encourage the trading spirit, milk cows belonging to the Company were leased to the wife of Hendrik Boom, the gardener of the VOC, in return for the provision of dairy products to the Fort. In the following year the women and children residing at the station were removed from the ration list of the Company and instead a sum in cash money was given to each head of a family. In this manner a small market for produce such as vegetables, fruit, dairy products and chicken, was created.¹³ (See illustration n° 3.)

Illustration 3. Plan of the Company's Fort of Good Hope, gardens and buildings, as well as the confined area for the beginning of a City for Free Citizens

Made in 1660 (?) and arrived in the Republic in 1661.

Source : VEL 824 – Collection Leupe, ARA.

- 31 In 1657 Van Riebeeck decided to occupy the rich grounds at the eastern side of Table Mountain, where the indigenous Khoi people used to herd their cattle. After several border wars the Khoi had to capitulate in 1660 and the VOC obtained a large tract of fertile ground. This ground was irrigated year round by the Liesbeeck River and received sufficient rain and almost no wind—perfect for agricultural production.¹⁴ The first free citizens founded their farms along the Liesbeeck River.
- 32 As the growing number of free citizen farmers were supplying the market with vegetables and fruit, the function of the Company garden in the settlement changed: it slowly turned into a botanical garden for pleasure. From 1700 onwards the emphasis of the Company garden was increasingly shifting towards the collection and growth of exotic and rare species of plants or trees from Africa, as well as the entire VOC territory.¹⁵ In particular Governor Simon van der Stel, after arriving at the Cape in October 1679, set out to make the Company garden into a famous site for all to see. In 1680 he laid the garden out afresh and «he planted hedges, both to break the force of the wind and to divide up the space. Into some of the divisions he formed, he introduced ornamental gardening, which he then developed with such energy that within twenty years travellers to the Cape could describe the gardens as unrivalled for the variety of their contents. As more produce became available from the free burghers, portions of the Gardens, once 70 acres in extent, were sold off to private individuals.»¹⁶
- 33 Around 1700, visitors who had been to the most famous gardens in Europe and Dutch India (Indonesia) agreed that nowhere else was such a diversity of trees, bushes and

flowers to be seen as in the Company garden at the Cape. This diversity is described by German traveller Johan Daniel Buttner in his *Accounts of the Cape/Natal! East Indies from 1716-1721*: « ... the company has [a] beautiful garden at the Cabo de Bona Esperance [...] and it contains all kinds of European trees and plants which the company had planted there ;fir trees, pine trees, Keurboom, juniper, willows , medlar, various kinds of cherries, apples and pears, Just as in Europe. Of the Asiatic trees there are firstly oranges, lemons, citron, grapefruit, 'bigarade', pomegranate, banana, custard apple, laurel, camphor wood, chestnut, fig, apricot, peach, cinnamon, quince and almonds, Spanish pepper etc. [...] The garden is 976 feet long and 262 feet wide. Of vegetables and plants for the kitchen there are firstly cauliflower, sa voy cabbage, another kind of red cabbage, sorrel, celery, endive, cress, chervil, parsley, various types of lettuce, asparagus, artichokes, strawberries, raspberries, Turkish beans, peas, pumpkins, melons, various kinds of sweet melons, all sorts of grapes -red, yellow and blue-large and small radish, majoram, sage, rhue. Rosemary is plentiful and even grows wild in some places. Offlowers there are beautiful white lillies, single and double carnations as well as red and white roses from Provence (?), and standard roses (?).»¹⁷

- 34 During the mid-phase of the development of Cape Town, between 1679 and 1753, the town experienced slow growth and very little change. After 1707 no more immigration took place from the Netherlands and the population increase consisted of natural growth only.¹⁸ A smallpox epidemic in the winter of 1713 wiped out nearly one quarter of the European population of the city and smallpox would strike the city again in 1755 and 1767.¹⁹ Hereafter, an explosive growth took place, documented on some beautiful maps among which is VEL 838 (see illustration n°4). It shows the fully-grown city in 1767, which was established in roughly one hundred years, when compared to map VEL825 (showing the embryonic city in 1665). In spite of the different initial intention (a huge Company garden with a small station housing only Company officials and soldiers) and the harsh conditions for the population to maintain itself in the bare valley below Table Mountain, we see a relatively large city properly and orderly laid out next to the Company garden. The garden has diminished in size but maintained its overall grandeur and importance. The city's development at the base of the garden is structured on a grid and directed towards the sides: partly on the slopes of Signal Hill, where the Muslim quarter Bo-kaap will be laid out, and partly to the sides of the Castle of Good Hope. The direction and position of elements within the urban ensemble are dominated by the Garden and still take place along the guiding principles established at the start of the settlement 100 years ago. Today, around one-third of the original garden laid out by Van Riebeeck has been preserved as a national monument and serves as a central park for the citizens and visitors of Cape Town.

Illustration 4. Plan and Map of the fort and Town at the Cape of Good Hope, as it was fortified and constructed in the year 1767

Made in 1767.

Source : VEL 838 – Collection Leupe, ARA.

Analysis of the Design for Cape Town

- 35 Cape Town was established as a refreshment station halfway between the Dutch Republic and the Far East. In function and design the backbone of the city was the Company garden. This element guided the position and configuration of the settlement: in the valley below Table Mountain, on the lowest gradient, in between the mountain streams for irrigation and water supply. A central axis can be established that runs over the centre of the Company garden, through the settlement towards the Fort area and the jetty on the beach. This primary axis represents the initial production and distribution of the vegetables from the Company garden, later supplemented by the dairy products of the farms around Table Mountain, via the city markets, to the ships waiting in the harbour. Important social and public buildings, like the Dutch Reformed Church and the hospital, were situated at the entrance of the Company garden on either side of this central axis. It was further emphasised by the construction of the Heerengracht, the central canallined with oak trees in a spacious setting. This street became the favourite residential area of Cape Town' s most respectable citizens and the promenade for the leading elite (see illustrations n° 5 and n° 6).

Illustration 5. The Compangy garden in Cape Town : entrance

Source : Ron Van Oers, 1996.

Illustration 6. The Compangy garden in Cape Town : main axis

Source : Ron Van Oers, 1996.

- 36 In principle, the city had open, permeable boundaries at the top of the garden and below at the beach. Cape Town's formal, closed boundaries were marked by canals and canalised streams parallel to the primary axis, marked by the Company fortress on one side and the Buitengracht on the other side. The mountain streams, the garden, the fort with water-filled moat and storage tank and the harbour with the jetty are all positioned along the primary axis. The fortress is the starting point of the secondary

axis, linking important public and social spaces and functions. Optimal use was made of the sloping terrain for irrigation and water supplies and engineering works facilitated the further development of the settlement (see illustration n° 7).

Illustration 7. Overview of Cape Town with the Company garden in the centre of the metropolis

Source : Ron Van Oers, 1996.

- 37 In spatial terms we can consider Cape Town's urban configuration as dichotomous: a juxtaposition of the Company Castle, with the dwellings of military and Company personnel and storage rooms inside, surrounded by an open field of fire, and the town of the free citizens with their dwellings and houses, organised into an orthogonal ground plan. Perpendicular to this urban ensemble and as an intermediate between the military and government functions of the Company Castle and the trade and residential functions of the burgher town, is the large Company garden. Laid out in the valley on the most fertile terrain with the least gradient, it dominated the layout of the settlement. New buildings and urban spaces for public use positioned according to axes of order emphasise the importance of this dominant element between Company and free citizens.

Planning Issues for Contemporary Cape Town

- 38 The above analysis draws some important conclusions useful for contemporary planning and conservation. The conservation of historic Cape Town is professionally organised and the buildings and public spaces are in a good technical condition and properly maintained, including the Company garden. A broad range of information on historic objects is documented and available. However, conservation efforts are concentrated around objects and individual buildings. Interesting proposals for

further planning and conservation can be worked out, particularly when it comes to integrating cultural and natural landscapes in and around the city. An important step in the conservation of historic Cape Town should involve the safeguarding of the historic urban pattern. The initial design and development of the town along two hierarchical axes and on an orthogonal street pattern at the entrance of the Company garden is an essential element of historic Cape Town, next to individual buildings and objects.

- 39 In general, it can be established that the Dutch colonial city had a flexible layout and filling-in of its pattern—a quality assuring the survival of many of these patterns well into the 20th century, as exemplified by Jakarta, New York and Cape Town. These cities have been capable of absorbing the truly massive inner city changes in functions and building scales that occurred in the last century. This is the value of the Dutch urban heritage: the organisational pattern or structure at ground level. Although many of the standing architectural objects have disappeared over time, almost without exception the pattern has been preserved. Undoubtedly, the ability of the pattern to incorporate new city forms and functions can take the credit for that. We can safely assume that demolition hammers would have destroyed the pattern if better, contemporary solutions had been necessary and available. Apparently, there was no need for this. The recognition and preservation of urban patterns is only of recent date and almost solely exists in Western countries.
- 40 Besides the existing stock of architectural monuments, the safeguarding of the historic urban pattern of the inner city connected to the garden would be an important further step in conserving Cape Town's historic legacy. Taking this notion a stage further, this should also involve the natural setting—the dramatic scenery of Table Mountain towering over the city. Over the last century more and more construction has taken place on the slopes, often to such an extent that the traditional image of 'the city in the valley' is almost spoiled. Limits should be set and the connection of the city with its natural setting should be protected. The mountain has always been an important landmark for sailors and still today it is Cape Town's most famous trademark. Devils Peak, Table Mountain and Lions Rump incorporate the city in the natural landscape on three sides and they had a profound impact on its planning, design and layout. Table Mountain is already a protected natural site, important for its stands of fynbos, a habitat composed of plants and trees indigenous to South Africa.
- 41 The meeting of the World Heritage Committee in Morocco in 1999 resulted in the inclusion of Robben Island, in front of Cape Town, on Unesco's World Heritage List. At various times in the history of South Africa, starting under Dutch rule in the seventeenth century, Robben Island has been used as a prison and penal base. An interesting connection between socio-political, cultural and natural history and heritage could be made if Robben Island, historic Cape Town—buildings, garden, pattern and setting—and Table Mountain were to form one large Mixed Property (natural and cultural) for Unesco's World Heritage List.
- 42 Another step further, on the regional scale, would involve the famous South African vineyards in the district surrounding Cape Town. In places like Paarl, Stellenbosch en Fransch Hoek (French Corner), where French Huguenots settled during the 18th century, many important wine estates are located. The setting of these estates within the dramatic South African landscape is of an unparalleled beauty. On various levels of scale the design, and their interaction, is sublime: the famous Cape Dutch architecture of the farmhouses (considered by specialists to be among the finest residential archi

texture in the world), their location in the cultural landscape (the wine estate), and finally this cultural ensemble in the wild, rugged nature of South Africa. The specific characteristics on all three levels of scale and their integration into regional and town planning policies, as stated in the European Landscape Convention,²⁰ offer opportunities for a variety of studies and integrated research on architecture, planning—urban and strategie—and landscape—cultural and natural.

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NOTES

1. The main outcomes and full reports of these meetings are available at the following web address: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/cities>.
2. European Landscape Convention, Florence, 2000, chapter 1, article 1, definitions, item a.

3. Brockett, L., *The Transfer of Layout Principles from 17th Century Dutch Towns to Early Colonial South African Settlements*, South Africa, paper University of the Witwatersrand, 1993, p. 3.
4. Böeseke, A.J., *Jan van Riebeeck en sy Gesin (Jan van Riebeeck and his Family)*, Tafelberg-Uitgewers Beperk, Kaapstad, 1974, p. 38.
5. Pearse, G.E., *The Cape of Good Hope 1652-1833: an account of its buildings and the life of its people*, Van Schaik Ltd, Pretoria, 1956, p. 18 ; Böeseke, *ibid.*, 1974, p. 45.
6. Theal, G.M., *Korte geschiedenis van Zuid-Afrika van 1486 tot 1835 (Short history of South Africa from 1486 to 1835)*, Martinus Nijhoff, 's Gravenhage, 1891, p. 16; Böeseke, *ibid.*, p. 50.
7. Buttner, J. D., *Accounts of the Cape/Natal/East Indies 1716-1721*, edited by G.S. Nienaber & R. Raven-Hart, Cape Town, A.A. Balkema, 1970, p. 63: « ... except for the months of May, June & July, the first three months of the rainy season and of the local winter... »
8. Pearse G.E., *The Cape of Good Hope 1652-1833: an account of its buildings and the life of its people*, *op. cit.*, p. 19. See also: Worden, N., Van Heyningen, E., Bickford-Smith, V., *Cape Town: The Making of a City*, Hilversum, Verloren Publishers, 1998, p. 17.
9. Pearse, *ibid.*, p. 36.
10. Böeseke, A.J., *Jan van Riebeeck en sy Gesin (Jan van Riebeeck and his Family)*, *op. cit.*, p. 70.
11. As opposed to Company servants, who were not free, but restricted by their contracts.
12. Böeseke, A.J., *Jan van Riebeeck en sy Gesin (Jan van Riebeeck and his Family)*, *op. cit.*, p. 115-116.
13. Theal, G.M., *Korte geschiedenis van Zuid-Afrika van 1486 tot 1835 (Short history of South Africa from 1486 to 1835)*, *op. cit.*, p. 28-29.
14. Sleight, D., *Die Buiteposte of VOC-buiteposte onder Kaapse bestuur 1652-1795*, HAUM Uitgewers, Pretoria, 1993, p. II
15. On the collection of rare species in particular, see: 'Ornamental Plants in 16th and 17th Century Gardens', C.S. Oldenburger Ebbers & J. Heniger in *Jardins et Sites Historiques, Journal scientifique*, Comité international des jardins et des sites, ICOMOS IFLA, 1993, p. 107-122.
16. Bosdari, C. de, *Cape Dutch Houses and Farms*, Cape Town, A.A. Balkema, 1964, p. 49.
17. Buttner, J. D., *Accounts of the Cape/Natal/East Indies 1716-1721*, *op. cit.*, p. 65.
18. Pearse G.E., *The Cape of Good Hope 1652-1833: an account of its buildings and the life of its people*, *op. cit.*, p. 56.
19. Theal, G.M., *Korte geschiedenis van Zuid-Afrika van 1486 tot 1835 (Short history of South Africa from 1486 to 1835)*, *op. cit.*, p. 136-138.
20. *European Landscape Convention*, Florence, 2000, chapter 2, article 5, general measures, item d.

ABSTRACTS

During the period of Dutch overseas expansion (1600-1800) two trading companies, the Dutch East India Company (VOC) and the Dutch West India Company (WIC), founded a large number of cities. These overseas settlements show many resemblances in set-up and lay out. In particular, similarities exist in the chosen location and functional organisation of the newly established settlement, which aimed to maximise the possibilities offered by the surrounding landscape. Unlike Spanish colonisers, for instance, who by using a fixed model with a rigid grid structure largely disregarded the existing terrain, the Dutch favoured flexibility to fully utilize the natural features of the landscape in the needs of the newly founded city. This paper discusses the determinant role of landscape in the planning of Dutch settlements overseas from 1600 to 1800. It

first sets out to explain how in general natural elements, traditionally an integral part of the planning process in the Netherlands, were utilised to guide the establishment of colonial cities. In the second part of the article the argument is further developed and illustrated through the case study of Cape Town in South Africa. The settlement's foundation and development from 1652 onwards is described and analysed utilising seventeenth and eighteenth century Dutch maps as primary sources. It underlines the importance of the surrounding landscape and the large vegetable garden of the Dutch East India Company in guiding the planning, design and development of the city for the next 150 years. Finally, the conclusion considers the implications of this particular planning process for contemporary urban conservation, planning and design. Pointers to further research involving the integration of natural and cultural landscapes in and around Cape Town are appended.

Cet exposé porte sur le rôle du paysage dans la planification des villes fondées pendant la période d'expansion coloniale hollandaise (1600-1800) par la Compagnie hollandaise des Indes de l'Est et la Compagnie hollandaise des Indes de l'Ouest. Ces villes présentent beaucoup de similarités en ce qui concerne l'implantation et l'organisation de l'espace. L'aspect particulier que l'on s'attachera à montrer est la volonté d'exploiter au mieux le potentiel de l'environnement naturel dans le choix du site et dans l'organisation fonctionnelle des nouveaux établissements. À la différence des colonisateurs espagnols, par exemple, qui calquaient le même plan rigide à grille rectangulaire sur un site donné en ignorant ses traits spécifiques, les Hollandais ont toujours favorisé une approche plus flexible, en mettant les éléments de l'environnement naturel au profit de la ville nouvellement fondée. La première partie de l'étude montre la manière dont les éléments paysagers, traditionnellement intégrés dans le processus de planification aux Pays-Bas, ont guidé la planification des villes coloniales hollandaises. L'argument est ensuite illustré par une étude de cas : la ville de Cape Town (Le Cap, Afrique du Sud). L'examen des transformations de la forme urbaine, survenues pendant les 150 ans suivant sa fondation (1652), met en évidence l'importance primordiale accordée au paysage – le jardin de la Compagnie hollandaise des Indes de l'Est d'une part, et, d'autre part, les montagnes, le littoral et le fleuve – dans la planification. En conclusion de cet exposé, on considérera les implications que ce processus particulier de planification a dans les politiques de conservation, de planification et de conception urbaines et contemporaines. Des orientations de recherche sur l'intégration des paysages culturels et naturels à Cape Town et ses environs seront également esquissées.

INDEX

Mots-clés: paysage urbain historique, conservation urbaine, patrimoine mondial, recommandation Unesco, Le Cap

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