

HIGHLANDS ESTATE: DESIGN GUIDELINES

1. INTRODUCTION AND AIMS OF GUIDELINES

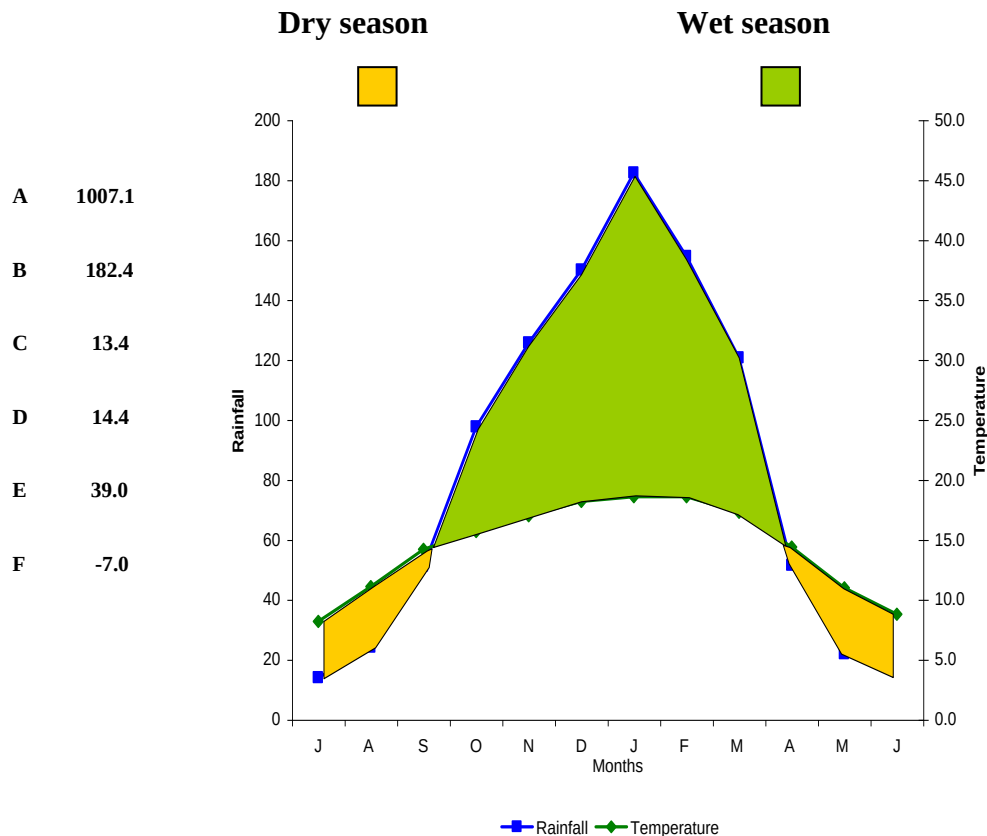
- Create dwellings that recognize the qualities of this special environment.
- Using “clues” from the local building tradition and avoiding stylistic imitations (e.g. Balinese, Tuscan, Empire, Georgian, Edwardian, etc).
- Reducing the carbon footprint of the design by, as far as possible, using materials that are readily available: stone, bricks (red), corrugated iron and light steel sections.
- Foster a sense of community at the village sites by reinforcing the street edge by locating buildings closer to the street.
- Dwellings on the view sites should optimize local conditions, e.g. slope, orientation, existing avenues of oak trees, views, etc. Large cut and fill platforms are not allowed.
- Careful planting to screen and protect views of houses is encouraged. This will also offer privacy to the owners.
- Good design is encouraged.

2. WEATHER PERMITTING

The estate is situated on the escarp and is subject to interesting weather shifts and patterns. Owners should take note of these:

- The climate is semi-arid and warm although temperature in winter could go down to -7°C. Temperatures in January could reach 29°C.
- The wet season stretches from September to April with the highest rainfall normally occurring during December/January (182mm). Precipitation normally is in the form of thundershowers (often with hail). Summer mornings are also often foggy. The fog is wet if driven by an easterly wind and this could make verandas wet and slippery.

- The prevailing wind direction varies from east to northeast on summer mornings and north to northeast on summer afternoons. On winter mornings the wind is southeast to northeast and northwest on winter afternoons.



- A - Mean annual rainfall in mm
- B - Highest monthly rainfall in mm
- C - Lowest monthly rainfall in mm
- D - Mean annual temperature in °C
- E - Highest monthly temperature in °C (January)
- F - Lowest monthly temperature in °C (July)

- Houses should therefore be designed to offer protection against the wind by means of wind breaks and protected spaces. Sun-protection and sunny spaces should be contemplated in the design.

3. DESIGN ELEMENTS: GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

These elements serve to assist the designer and they are not prescriptive, but are rather reference points or design triggers:

- On a macro scale the development should conspire to ultimately be a special place that focuses various experiences in different ways: from the public to the private realm.
- In the village opportunities for communal interaction are “anticipated”. These include small-scale commercial activities (market or small shops), hospitality concerns, a public commons, tree-lined sidewalks, and the opportunity to have a sidewalk chat with someone sitting on a stoep or veranda close to the street.
- When fully developed, the estate could have between 250 – 500 people if all owners are there simultaneously.
- No formal developments in the farm valleys are contemplated.
- Special elements are to be protected, e.g. cemetery, oak trees, packed stone-wall on the escarp, views, indigenous trees in valleys, water courses.
- A health centre is proposed.
- Where possible, streets are “green”. The planting of hedges and trees at view sites are encouraged.
- Pedestrian walkways and routes will be indicated. Equestrian routes are part of the overall vision of the development.
- Pools and streams will be enhanced for passive leisure activities.
- The presence of animals in the environment will enhance the “living” presence of the landscape. Pets will be accommodated in the estate kennels.
- Houses should be modest, but interesting and although size is not everything, village houses should not be smaller than 80m² and not larger than 250m². View plot houses should not be smaller than 100m² or bigger than 500m².

- Parking should be shielded and off-street.
- Houses should not exceed 9m in height (ground floor and first floor).
- Some of the village plots and most of the view plots have a south view, but will need a north orientation to access direct sunlight during winter. Rather have covered verandas on the southern side where the view could be enjoyed and sunny spaces inside the house facing north / east / west.

4. MORE SPECIFIC DESIGN GUIDELINES

THE HOUSES:

- Consider a long, thin house for better natural (sun) light or a courtyard house if you have a view plot. Village plot houses could have smaller courtyards.
- Design a graceful transition from the street, to entrance to inside. This could include planting, stairs, pergola or archway to a courtyard.
- Design courtyards that could sustain life (planting and people).
- Avoid large monolithic roofs. Rather have smaller separate or discontinuous roofs, either double or mono pitched. Consider a “green” (living) roof that is excellent for insulation and camouflage. Use dormer windows for additional light.
- Flat roofs should have access to a roof garden. The roof garden may also be used as a solarium where owners could sunbathe or just enjoy the view.
- Consider the use of a veranda as seating area or “arcaded” walkway.
- Village plots are envisaged to be developed in such a way that the street will also be a social place. On the other hand, houses should respect the privacy and tranquility of neighbours. No verandas on erf boundaries (except street). Windows on long sides of erven to be at least 2m in from the boundary, or

designed to offer a (zen) view of the landscape, rather than the wall of your neighbour's house.

- Boundary walls may not be higher than 1.8m on the long sides of the erven and should have a 10% transparency, i.e. some openings here and there. On the short (street and view) sides, boundary walls shall not be higher than 1 – 1.2m in either packed stone, plastered brickwork or an approved steel railing. No precast boundary walls are permitted. Gates are to be transparent.
- Entrances should be sheltered. Provide a shelf or a ledge in the entrance hall where keys or packages could be placed. Allow a place just outside or just inside the house where coats, hats and muddy boots could be found.
- This type of development suggests a flow from one room to another rather than long passages. If unavoidable, use the passage as a gallery for art work produced in the mountain air, or makes the passage as short as possible.
- Make the staircase part of the room so that children can sit and watch their parents laugh and talk.
- Consider having a large kitchen with a fireplace as this is ideal in winter. This could double as dining room. See Cas and Pannie's kitchen.
- Position the bathroom so that it has a view or at least faces north. The pleasure of bathing in sunlight is a luxury that ignorance and forgetting deny us.
- Try to give rooms light from both sides. At Highland Estate at least one wall side will also have a fantastic view. This is easy if the house is long and narrow.
- An outdoor room will be a haven in summer. It could be south-facing if not partially or fully shaded. This is where one would have a braai or just sit and read or think.

- Balconies, in order to be of use, need to be at least 3m deep to take a table and chairs. Else make it wide enough for standing room only (say 1m).
- Terracing of the slope around houses on the view plots should be carefully planned. Use stone for terrace walls, concrete Löffelstein is not permitted.
- Consider planting fruit trees or make a vegetable garden.
- Do not make any formal gardens as you would in a suburb. Let the natural vegetation grow back. Plant trees for wind protection and shade.
- Where appropriate, create thick walls or make alcoves with window seats where one could sit and read and gaze over the landscape.
- Fire places with open fires are permitted. Care must be taken with open fires outside as this poses a risk for the landscape, animals and the other houses and owners.
- Planning seating areas that circulation routes do not past through them but next to them. Arrange the seating so that a rough circle is formed. Consider the use of a small dining room table in the centre, rather than a low coffee table.
- Use a strong colour on the front door or just heavy weathered wood.
- Save space by dividing a large open space with heavy curtains or design alcoves with beds for the children off the living area. They will probably want to talk until late into the night or watch DVDs of scary things.
- Avoid having flat ceilings or at least vary the ceiling heights and slopes.
- Make room dividers transparent, i.e. use glass in folding doors or in side panels. Use cupboards between rooms as “walls”.
- Locate the kitchen on a sunny side of the house depending on if you are a morning or evening person (east or west). To save money and space use open shelves, even across a window.

- Partially built-in seats are always popular. You can sit and lie on them and even store the outside cushions underneath.

5. SUBMISSION PROCEDURE

The following procedures should be followed when submitting design drawings to the Aesthetics Committee:

- 5.1 Complete the application form available from Cas Human, or The Roodt Partnership (attention: Christoff Steyn).
- 5.2 The following drawings should at least accompany the application form:
 - Site plan, showing the location of the house on the specific plot or stand.
 - Floor plans preferably on a scale of 1:100.
 - Four elevations or model views produced in *Sketch-up* or similar.
 - A typical section to indicate the height of the structure.
 - Total area of residence.
- 5.3 A cheque made out to Highlands Estate, in the amount of R1 500. The cheque is non-refundable.
- 5.4 Two sets of drawings are to be submitted, after which the approved set may be submitted to the Local Authority for approval. The other set of drawings will be kept by the Aesthetics Committee for monitoring purposes.

6. CONSTRUCTION:

- Use natural materials as far as possible. The following materials are preferred:
- Corrugated iron (material with historical connections to the area)
- Red facebrick with flush joints or raked (but not too deeply).
- At the view plots the use of stone and painted plaster may harmonize better with the winter and summer palette of the

landscape. Partial use of red facebrick is, however, not excluded.

- Cut sandstone is permissible, but in limited quantities.
- The use of wooden windows and anodized aluminium in combinations is preferred. Steel windows may also be used, preferably purpose-made or industrial.
- Walls may be partially clad in corrugated iron.
- Floor finishes is to the choice of the owner, but natural materials such as stone flags, natural fibre carpets or wood is recommended.
- Outside terraces shall not be tiled with artificial stone look-alike tiles. Artificial stone cladding to walls will not be permitted.
- Light fittings should be of a simple, appropriate modern design. Fake brass or patinated coach lantern wall fittings are not permitted outside. External lighting may not impact on neighbours and shall in all cases shine down and not outwards. Exterior lights shall be reduced to 2 or 3 lights after 21:00. Energy saving fittings shall be used as a collective strategy to save electricity.
- External elements such as antennae or solar panels are to be integral with roofing elements or completely shielded from view.
- Fake ornamentation such as cut-out fascia boards, artificial cast-iron “boekielace”, paint effects, garden fountains or ornaments shall not be used.
- Warm colours are preferred to painted plaster areas. Roofs shall be light grey, red oxide or charcoal. No green coloured roofs.
- Existing trees are to be retained and may not be removed, pruned or interfered with in any way without permission.
- Structures such as verandas, pergolas or covered parking areas, should preferably be constructed with light steel sections and covered with corrugated iron. No shade cloth on gum poles will be allowed.

- No separate outbuildings will be allowed, unless the design is of such a nature that a logical and pleasing grouping of the buildings occurs.

7. CONCLUSIONS

Despite any of the above, and despite demonstrating that the design is made up of the elements described above, the building committee reserves the right to request changes or amendments to the design. It might even approve a design (within limits) that deviates from these guidelines if the design is considered exceptional.

With these guidelines in mind, the individual owners can contribute to the establishment of a special environment not only for themselves, but also for the rest of the community. Ultimately the reconnection with, and enjoyment of nature in a humble and respectful way, should be our first aim.

ANTON ROODT
CAS HUMAN
(BUILDING COMMITTEE: HIGHLAND ESTATE)

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