**CONVENTION FOR THE SAFEGUARDING OF THE  
INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE**

**Training of trainers on living heritage and sustainable urban development**

**Strengthening capacities for resilient communities through sustainable Tourism and Heritage Safeguarding in Latin America and the Caribbean**

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**Unit 3 – Practical approach to safeguarding living heritage in urban contexts**

**Case study 3**

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unit 3

**CASE STUDY 3. cape town, south africa. bo-kaap local spatial development framework**

1. **INTRODUCTION**

The Bo-Kaap neighborhood in the city of Cape Town, South Africa, dates from the establishment of a Dutch colony in the 17th century. It has been a multi-ethnic and multi-lingual community since the area was populated by people, especially from India, Sri Lanka, and Malaysia. Furthermore, it has been recognized for its “distinctive vernacular architecture and its enduring Muslim culture” as it “preserves the largest collection of pre-1850 architecture in South Africa, as well as the nation’s oldest mosques”. As of January 2018, the population of Bo-Kaap was estimated at 3,218.

The significance of Bo-Kaap’s cultural heritage derives not only from the age and uniqueness of its architecture, but from its social and cultural traditions and practices. Four distinctive characteristics, as described in the Bo-Kaap Local Spatial Development Framework, are worth highlighting:

First, Bo-Kaap possesses the largest collection of early/mid 19th century residential architecture in Cape Town, and a historical built landscape “characterized by cobbled streets, narrow lanes and terrace houses”. Second, it is strongly associated with Muslim communities as “it is the earliest established Muslim community in South Africa”. In fact, historical quarry sites in the area were used for gathering and prayer during the Dutch colony when a ban to building mosques was enforced. Moreover, Bo-Kaap contains the “oldest officially granted Muslim burial ground (Tana Baru) in South Africa”, which was one of the first registered burial ground for first generation of slaves and their direct descendants. Signal Hill is located in Bo-Kapp. It has been used for moon sighting to verify the start of the Muslim lunar months and the start of the Ramadan month, during which Muslims throughout Bo-Kaap sit down “with their families waiting for the prayer call so that they can breakfast at exactly the same time”, and “tables are set with sweet and savory delicacies prepared by neighbors”[[1]](#footnote-1). Third, the neighborhood has “a strong association with the life or work of Tuan Guru”, one of the religious leaders buried at Tana Baru, who is “attributed with the translation of the Quran into a version of Afrikaans” Fourth, Bo-Kaap is recognized as an area where “freed slaves of Cape Town settled after emancipation in 1838”. It is evident, therefore, that its heritage results both from its historical built environment, its history and from multiple intangible cultural practices that contribute to the significance of the place.

Mass street iftars in Bo-Kaap. Source: IOL

Nowadays, however, Bo-Kaap faces threats that could affect the continuity of its identity, memory, and character. The area faces inappropriate additions, alterations, maintenance, and repairs of historical buildings, as well as increased real estate pressure. Gentrification is also threatening its heritage as the area has become an attractive suburb for newcomers[[2]](#footnote-2). The latter has already led to land use changes relating to commercial development, while parking and traffic congestion increase demand for road infrastructure which may affect its walkable character that enables socialization in the public realm.

In that context, the Bo-Kaap Local Spatial Development Framework (LSDF) demonstrates how spatial planning can relate and contribute to the safeguarding of built and living heritage in an urban neighborhood. The LSDF is a planning instrument that “formulates a vision for the desired end state of an area” and inform urban development by setting context-based policies and guidelines. In that regard, the present analysis is intended to convey how the LSDF addresses cultural heritage from a spatial planning perspective.

1. **ANALYSIS OF THE BO-KAAP LOCAL SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK (LSDF)**

The Bo-Kaap LSDF is intended to set a vision for the area “based on evidence, community derived objectives and the unique characteristics of the area”. Furthermore, it has the purpose of outlining the objectives for the development, enhancement, and preservation of the neighborhood, as well as of identifying interventions needed to realize the vision. Ultimately, it is meant to guide future planning decisions and development proposals in Bo-Kaap.

# Vision and objectives of the Bo-Kaap Local Spatial Development Framework (LSDF)

The vision set by the LFSD is the following: “Bo-Kaap is a vibrant area with a strong history which makes it a treasured place in the city. The residents and the varying components which frame this living heritage site are connected to one another and its surrounding areas in a safe and efficient manner. Bo-Kaap is a space whereby positive interactions between inhabitants, economic markets and the natural environment co-exist in order to ensure a healthy and inclusive place”. Accordingly, the LFSD defines the following 13 broad objectives for the neighborhood which relate to the spatial structure and functioning of the area.

The above vision and objectives make an explicit connection between Bo-Kaap’s built environment and its Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) and makes evident how this planning instrument is intended to help preserve an area of high cultural significance. Similarly, the vision for the area promotes a sustainable relationship between the neighborhood and economic dynamics and its immediate natural environment, both of which are key structures of the proposed methodology to incorporate ICH in urban planning.



# Broad spatial planning principles

The LSDF defines four key planning principles which will inform future development in Bo-Kaap. Accordingly, the different interventions proposed for the area are based on and must align with the following principles:

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| **Principle** | **Description** |
| **Walkability** | Enhance the experiences of pedestrians by promote functional linkages to connect amenities and transit interchanges and encouraging the strategic location of local businesses along desired pedestrian paths. |
| **Integrated, inclusive and robust spaces** | Ensure adequate access to amenities and transport modes by integrating a local movement network with surrounding systems, allowing for a greater mix of land uses and the clustering of social activities. Promote the transformation of underutilized spaces into multi-functional spaces and increase the supply of affordable housing. |
| **Maximize economic opportunities** | Leverage the local economy through interventions that empower local businesses and the community. Optimize existing resources and promote supporting land uses to facilitate economic empowerment. |
| **Place making and livability** | Revitalize living environments in a way that preserves and builds on local culture and living heritage. Improve the quality of space through appropriate landscaping features and designated routes and active edges to stimulate an attractive public space. |

Source: Adapted from Bo-Kaap Local Spatial Development Framework

# Process of elaboration and key stakeholders involved

The process of developing the LSDF comprised a public engagement and consultation process with a variety of stakeholders and interested and affected parties, as well as coordination among government agencies to ensure its alignment with other legislation and policies that guide the development of Bo-Kaap.

# Multisectoral coordination

The elaboration of the LSDF was led by the City of Cape Town government. However, multiple provisions contained in the LSDF are aligned with the National Heritage Resources Act of 1999 which is led by the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) at the national level, in coordination with the Heritage Western Cape (HWC) at the provincial level. Additionally, the Cape Town Council is responsible for the approval of spatial development frameworks and Heritage Protection Overlay Zones (HPOZ), a key planning instrument described later. The nature and role of these agencies are summarized in the following table.

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| **Stakeholder** | **Description** |
| **City of Cape Town Government** | It is headed by a mayor who is elected by the Cape Town Council every 5 years. Its main role is to implement policies, plans, and programs to realize the vision and objectives of the Integrated Development Plan. It is the leading authority in terms of the preparation of the Bo-Kaap LSDF. The City of Cape Town Government is also responsible for the identification and management of Grade 3 heritage resources in Bo-Kaap. |
| **Cape Town Council** | It is the executive body of the city government and is responsible for top-level decisions about how Cape Town is governed. It is also the legislative body of the city and makes and implements by-laws, which are local laws specifically created for Cape Town. It is responsible for the ultimate approval of spatial development frameworks and Heritage Protection Overlay Zones (HPOZ). |
| **South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA)** | It is the statutory organization established under the National Heritage Resources Act. It is the national administrative body responsible for the protection of South Africa’s cultural heritage. It has been tasked with the mandate to identify, assess, manage, protect, and promote heritage resources in South Africa. The SAHRA is responsible for the identification and management of Grade 1 heritage resources in Bo-Kaap. |
| **Heritage Western Cape (HWC)** | It is a provincial heritage resources authority established in January 2003 to identify, protect, and conserve the heritage resources of the Western Cape, including landscapes, sites, artefacts, buildings, and structures of significance. It is also mandated to promote collaboration between national, provincial, and local authorities. It is responsible for the identification and management of Grade 2 heritage resources in Bo-Kaap. |

# Public engagement and consultation

The public engagement and consultation process included a two-day workshop to collectively define the future of Bo-Kaap as “a vibrant and culturally rich area supporting sustainable tourism”. The workshops included local stakeholders which were identified by the city as “interested and affected parties” comprising residents, local business and entrepreneurs operating in the area, along with city officials involved in the LSDF process. This process further led to the establishment of a Tourism Development Framework to define a strategy to enhance such economic activity in the area.

Moreover, public discussions were held through open days at multiple locations, during which a draft document of the LSDF was displayed to the community, and numerous site visits were conducted in several parts of the neighborhood to enable “a clearer understanding of the study area on ground level”. Lastly, an online survey about the LSDF was created for residents and interested and affected parties to participate in the development of the framework. These forms of public engagement “allowed for a substantial consensus on the LSDF” and for an “in-depth understanding of the issues, challenges and opportunities of the area”. Likewise, they allowed to identify interventions “to support and stimulate Bo-Kaap, while retaining the areas heritage and cultural significances”.

# Other tools or mechanisms for implementation

The LSDF is accompanied by other sectoral (e.g., legal) and cross-cutting (e.g., institutional) tools or mechanisms which can support its implementation and contribute to achieve the development objectives for the Bo-Kaap neighborhood. Two of these tools or mechanisms, which relate directly to the incorporation of ICH in urban planning, are described below.

**Heritage Protection Overlay Zone** *(sectoral):* The Heritage Protection Overlay Zone (HPOZ) is the zoning mechanism for the protection of heritage places that the city considers to be worth of conservation. Thus, the Bo-Kaap HPOZ was promulgated in the Provincial Government Gazette, as provided for in the city’s Development Management Scheme (DMS), “to manage and enhance the unique cultural heritage character and attributes of Bo-Kaap” and to protect the area from “inappropriate changes and developments which could negatively affect” its significance.

In Cape Town, the DMS defines a base zoning that determines permitted land uses and establishes a set of development regulations at a city-wide scale. In turn, the HPOZ provides a mechanism to designate special land uses and development rules for the Bo-Kaap area, exclusively, to deal with specific challenges at the neighborhood scale. In that sense, the HPOZ defines certain rules over the provisions of the base zoning of the DMS. That way, the HPOZ is meant to provide clarity to property owners regarding the type of developments permitted in the area to avoid negative impacts on the heritage of Bo-Kaap.

The specific provisions of the Bo-Kaap HPOZ have the following objectives:

* Recognition and conservation of Bo-Kaap as a unique historical urban landscape with a vibrant, living culture and way of life.
* Promotion of Bo-Kaap, not only as a significant place or heritage tourist destination for the enjoyment and enrichment of visitors, but also as a significant place and embodiment of a way of life for the residents of the Bo-Kaap and Cape Town.
* Promotion of heritage tourism in Bo-Kaap to stimulate economic opportunities for the benefit of residents.
* Protection of Bo-Kaap as an inner-city residential area through careful and considered management of development to avoid decay of the social fabric of the neighborhood.

Accordingly, the Bo-Kaap HPOZ establishes several planning principles which can contribute to the safeguarding of built and living heritage:

* Conservation of the historical character of the area: retain and rehabilitate original and historical fabric in existing residential, commercial, and light industrial buildings; protect streetscapes and historical development patterns; rehabilitate vulnerable buildings; and protect public open space and pedestrian use of roads and lanes.
* Enhancement of the area: rehabilitate heritage buildings which have been inappropriately altered; promote interface with the streetscape; implement signage guidelines; enhance the pedestrian qualities of Bo-Kaap; and ensure pedestrian safety by improving public space.
* Public awareness, appreciation, and involvement: engage with residents on heritage management issues in the neighborhood; provide support and guidelines to residents wanting to improve their properties; encourage appreciation for the unique cultural heritage of Bo-Kaap; support heritage tourism opportunities for local or resident entrepreneurs; and encourage the development of living heritage projects.

**Grading and formal protections** *(sectoral):* The National Heritage Resources Act (NHRA) establishes a three-tier system for grading heritage resources managed at national, provincial, and local levels. Accordingly, the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) is responsible for the identification and management of Grade 1 heritage resources of national significance. The Heritage Western Cape (HWC), which is the provincial heritage resources authority, is responsible for Grade 2 heritage resources of provincial or regional significance, and the Cape Town city government is responsible for Grade 3 resources of local significance.

The Bo-Kaap neighborhood is considered a heritage resource which comprises the above three levels. The neighborhood has been identified by SAHRA as a Grade 1 heritage place. Likewise, 88 properties, including mosques (e.g., Auwal Mosque), burial grounds (e.g., Tanu Baru), and museums (e.g., Bo-Kaap Museum), are considered Provincial Heritage Sites (Grade 2) managed by HWC. And other local heritage resources (e.g., streetscapes) within Bo-Kaap have been classified as Grade 3 and are thus managed by the city government –Grade 3 heritage resources account for 82% of the graded buildings of Bo-Kaap–.

The three-tier grading systems includes a set of special development rules to protect significance of the heritage resources. These rules define three types of interventions: i) conservation, ii) minimal intervention and iii) enhancement of the historical streetscape. Hence, these rules regulate what can be done in the Bo-Kaap area as it relates, for example, to construction, alteration, addition, demolition, removal or change of use of a heritage structure in the area.

# Strategies and proposals for the incorporation of intangible cultural heritage in urban planning

This section summarizes key ICH elements and strategies and proposals of the LSDF as it relates to the safeguarding of cultural heritage. For this analysis, these strategies are organized as per each of the four urban structures of the proposed methodology to incorporate ICH in urban planning, namely, the ecological, functional, socioeconomic, and historical and built heritage structures.

**Ecological structure:** Bo-Kaap is located on the edge of Table Mountain National Park, a World Heritage Site of natural and cultural significance. It also borders the Cape Floral Region World Heritage Site which is one of South Africa’s eight World Heritage Sites. The ecological structure is a key element of Bo-Kaap’s living heritage as it has a religious and spiritual significance for residents. For example, the Prayer Quarry is an open area where Tuan Guru conducted one of the first open air congregational prayers after being denied establishing a mosque[[3]](#footnote-3). Therefore, for instance, the LSDF proposes to revitalize “the three quarries with environmentally sensitive land uses that take into account the historic and religious significance of the site as a means of preserving the identity and culture”.

**Functional structure:** The LSDF includes strategies on functional areas such as transportation, public spaces, and urban facilities. The below proposals exemplify how these elements can contribute to the safeguarding of the neighborhood’s heritage.

Transportation and mobility: Bo-Kaap has several cobbled roads dating back to the 18th century. There are also many stairways, alleys, and pathways which are “experienced by the community as important public interaction spaces”, and many streets depict the diversity of people and cultures associated with Bo-Kaap. The use of streets is another element of particular significance, as many accommodate cultural activities such as processions and festivals. For example, the Kaapse Klopse, also known as Cape Town Minstrel Carnival, is a minstrel festival that dates from the end of the 19th century and takes place every year to rememorate the slave past of the colonial era. Similarly, the Muharram March, a historic activity to celebrate the coming of the new year, is held annually during the first month of the lunar Islamic calendar on the streets of Bo-Kaap.

The LSDF thus plans to “reduce motor dependency and promote non-motorized transport through upgrading of pedestrian network, creation of park and ride facilities to reduce traffic impact on the area”. It also encourages the implementation of traffic calming measures to preserve the walkable character and seeks to ensure “greater integration between desired pedestrian paths and places of attraction” by consolidating pedestrian areas with raised and paved intersections.

Public spaces: Living heritage practices are visible in the public realm of the Bo-Kaap, “where social connections are developed and traditions and practices continue”, including weddings, funerals, processions festival, choirs, calls to prayer, and others. Moreover, stoeps and verandahs contribute to “the social sphere of Bo-Kaap” and allow for interaction between neighbors. The LSDF thus includes strategies to “promote collaborative efforts to maintain and upgrade public open spaces” such as courtyards, parks, and gardens.

Urban facilities: The area has several public facilities such as the Bo Kaap Museum which was established in 1978 to showcase the lifestyle of a typical Cape Malay family of the 19th century. In addition to community and civic centers, there are also four schools which “are significant to the historical development of Bo-Kaap” as they “played an important part during the apartheid era”, and thus contribute to the memory of the place. The mosques in Bo-Kaap also provides the Muslim community with a place of worship and have a strong spiritual significance. In fact, the “Mosques of the Bo-Kaap Committee” has been established to oversee the management of the ten mosques in the area. And as mentioned, the Tana Baru burial ground is a site of social and spiritual significance which has strong links to the legacy of slavery in the area, and is recognized as “a symbol and reminder of the establishment, advancement and consolidation of Islam in the Western Cape”[[4]](#footnote-4). The LSDF thus encourages upgrading key heritage sites such as Tana Baru with tourist related activities “to promote the area as a destination place and tourist attractor”.

**Socioeconomic structure:** Bo-Kaap has many traditional cultural practices that result from the multi-ethnic composition of its population, often referred as Cape Malay, many of which continue to be practiced today. For instance, "adaptations of traditional foods such as *bredie*, *bobotie*, *sosaties* and *koesisters* are *staples”* are a distinctive characteristic of the area, as well as Muslim traditions such as reciting the Bismillah, which means "in the name of Allah", before every meal. The Cape Malay also developed traditional music that reflects the history of slavery in South Africa and is practiced with a traditional barrel-shaped drum called the “ghoema”.[[5]](#footnote-5)

In that context, the LSDF recognizes that gentrification is an existing threat to the cultural heritage of Bo-Kaap, but also that there is a need to enhance the economic vitality of the area. To that end, it seeks to create “conducive economic environments” that preserve cultural heritage by “reinforcing mixed land uses to cluster businesses in key areas and accommodating home-businesses such as house shops, salons, and cafes, along pedestrian routes. It also intends to consolidate tourism routes and “avoid non-conforming land uses that intrude into residential fabric and undermine the heritage significance of the area”.

**Historical and built heritage structure:** As mentioned earlier, Bo-Kaap possesses the largest collection of early/mid 19th century residential architecture in Cape Town and a historical built streetscape. In that sense, the LSDF is accompanied by a three-tier system for grading heritage resources to which special building development regulations apply to preserve the historical heritage of the neighborhood. This three-tier system is explained in further detail in the next section.

1. **KEY LESSONS FROM THE PLAN**

Key lessons from the Bo-Kaap Local Spatial Development Framework are summarized below:

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| **Component** | **Key lesson** |
| **Urban structures** | The Bo-Kaap LSDF reflects how ecological elements such as Signal Hill can have a strong association with ICH, in this case, with religious practices. Functional urban elements such as streetscapes and the walkable character of the neighborhood also contribute to continuity of social and cultural practices, including processions, festivals, and daily interaction. The LSDF recognizes the relationship between the built and intangible heritage and informs how this type of instruments can incorporate ICH into planning. |
| **Multisector coordination** | The Bo-Kaap LSDF was elaborated by the Cape Town City government, however, several provisions are aligned with the regulations established by institutions at the national and provincial levels of government. This instrument reflects the need to align urban plans with broader or larger-scale policy and frameworks to ensure proper implementation. |
| **Social participation** | The process of elaboration of the LSDF comprised participatory activities, such as design workshops, site visits, online surveys, among others. This type of public engagement processes is considered highly relevant for the incorporation of ICH in planning as they enable a clearer understanding of the significance of an area and encourage appropriation of a plan by relevant stakeholders such as residents. |
| **Tools or mechanism for implementation** | The Bo-Kaap LSDF is accompanied by sectoral and cross-cutting tools which can help ensure its implementation. Two instruments, the Heritage Protection Overlay Zone and a three-tier grading and formal protection system, are worth highlighting as they define special land use and building regulations intended to preserve the historical and cultural of the neighborhood. The LSDF reflects how multiple planning instruments can complement each other to ensure the safeguarding of cultural heritage. |

1. **CONCLUSION**

The Bo-Kaap Local Spatial Development Framework (LSDF) is a planning instrument which will guide the development of the neighborhood in the following years. It recognizes the important of the area’s significance that results not only from its historical built landscape but also from intangible cultural practices that take place in the neighborhood since its origins when it was established in the 17th century. In that regard, the LSDF exemplifies how spatial planning can contribute to the safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) and how urban planning interventions related to the ecological, functional, socioeconomic and bult heritage structures, can help preserve the cultural heritage of an urban area. Lastly, the Bo-Kaap case demonstrates how ICH can be effectively incorporated into urban plans of multiple scales, in this case the neighborhood scale, and can therefore inform the application of the proposed methodology to incorporate ICH in urban planning.

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