

You're listening to New in Town Johannesburg. The podcast that aims to help you find your way as a newcomer in this amazing, vibrant, diverse South African city. I'm Hannah Pirnie and I'm Sarah Passmore, both of us British expats who live here. This episode, we're talking about the most important thing. And that's finding the right place for you to live.

The thing that's always struck me about Parkhurst, which I find quite interesting is, you see, it's very low rise right and you see like the garages it's like walls with garages you don't really see front doors. The plots in Parkhurst are all 500 square meters and they were given as army houses so when all the troops returned - I didn't know that! - I don't know which war it was, whether it was the Boer war or whatever, they were given these plots and so you'll see some of the original there's very few original ones... but that's why everyone has kind of built now on every section of land that they possibly can because they want to stay living in Parkhurst but they have to create more space.

And when I was looking to buy a house we looked at lots of houses in Parkhurst. We didn't end up coming to Parkhurst but I loved Parkhurst and the houses. Some of the older ones have got some beautiful features like you've got the pressed ceilings and the old heritage doors and the wooden floors. They're beautiful.

They are stunning and quite simple. Stunning, small but lovely houses. But then of course you do have the big walls with the electric fences and then the security guys that drive round. Some of the streets will have huts, so a security hut, a street guard, and others will have the security guys on bikes. So they're now kind of cycling around or walking around, which is very typical in what's called the Parks, which is south of Sandton and north of the old city, the old town centre... So the Parks are like Parktown, Parktown North, Parkwood, Parkmoor. Lots of parks. And then there's Saxonwold, Westcliffe, Hyde Park. Is Forest Town one? Forest Town. The Parks are old colonial, established.. so there you'll have older people, retirees living here, you'll have young people living here, you have students living here, so it's a real eclectic mix of people and often built around there's parks?! in the parks and high streets and shops and it's a lot more established. It's a pretty part of the world isn't it. It's a nice area.

Especially come October yeah, and spring I think, and autumn! It's funny yeah actually you're right it's established and it's always pretty full of pretty flowers and beautiful colours and amazing smells. And I have to say I feel pretty safe around here we cycle, I walk my dogs, I don't live in Parkhurst I live in Craighall you live in Craighall Park.. Which are all right next door to each other. And we're about to go and meet two lovely ladies who decided to live in Parkhurst.

I'm Kwizele, I'm from Belgium, 39. I live in Joburg since July 2019 in Parkhurst. Hi, my name is Miriam and I am Dutch and I moved to Johannesburg in 2019 and I've

been living in Parkhurst since April of that year very happily. What is it about Parkhurst that you like so much? I like the vibe. I like that you can just walk around here. You have this fourth avenue with a lot of very nice restaurants and bars. People are just friendly. I think, yeah, it's just, I don't know, it just has a very nice atmosphere. And it's a very mixed crowd, I would say. I'm from Europe and there's a lot of other people from Europe living here, but also South Africans, Americans, you know, it's very nice to, you know, meet different kinds of people. Then you have a lot of people organizing, you know, dinners at their house. Yeah, it's just a very nice vibe. I think of Parkhurst whenever I come here. It's a little bit like a sort of a wild west town. They're old buildings, old shop fronts. It's not modern. No. It's got a really nice... It definitely is like a throwback. You've got the hardware store, you've got the dry cleaners, you've got the liquor store. But yeah, definitely it is like an old high street from 30 years ago. And I like it because, like you said, it has this a bit of a European mixed American feeling, but then with the South African touch. And I wanted to show my kids that they're able to walk around in Joburg just like we did back home.

That for me was the most important thing and not to be living in a boomed area. Maybe it was naive, I don't know, but so far so good. So I'm very, very happy with this vibe. And everyone keeps on telling that there's something about Parkhurst because I think it's authentic. Every night of the week, it's busy, which is nice because Joburg isn't busy every night of the week, but you could always come to Forth. It's not like London or other cities. People do entertain at home and they do go to bed earlier, so there isn't as much of a vibe during the week, but there is on fourth. When we first moved here, we lived in Westcliffe, and I had my children there, and I would walk around every day, and I knew all the security guards, and then we moved to Parkhurst, and I was like, "oh, this is where everyone is!", and I could walk up for a coffee, and I met other mums, and the kids would go to the park, but they would ride their bikes around on the streets and we would walk and I run every morning and there's beautiful parks right next door. So that for me is why we love living in the parks.

And if I can add a little bit to the atmosphere for me, I think what sets Parkhurst apart from areas around it, like for instance Parktown North, is that people live a little bit closer next to each other. But for me, for instance, I don't have kids. I think the houses are big enough if you compare them to Europe. It's cosy to live, you know. So we have, for example, with our neighbours every Friday we do gin tonic in the streets or after work. Kids go ride their bicycle. Mums and dads go outside, have a drink. Other people, like other mums, my kids go to Sandton to school and they're like, no, in Joburg it's impossible to go outside, to have your kids play, to know your neighbours. And for me, it's just like, well, you're wrong! Yes. Welcome to Parkhurst. And that for me is something so important that you can show people, no, it does exist. It's here. It's here. You just have to come and look for yourself. Like you say, the plots are small, but we really prefer to have all of this in a smaller house than to

move closer to the school, for example, to have a bigger house, and then not to have this.

Kwizela I love the fact that you cycled here today. This is my Baki. We call it a Bakfitz in Belgium. So, yeah, I cycle. I put my kids in there. I put my groceries in there. And then I go from here to, the furthest I've been is Melville. That was your deal breaker. Yes. Yes. So, the thing was, my first reaction was the same as everyone else when my husband said, "OK, we have a place in South Africa". So I was like yeah we're going to Cape Town "No honey it's Joburg"... I'm like "Well, you can just ask for a divorce, you know? It's fine." And then he came here, he stayed with his colleagues, and he was like, "No, it's safe there." And then I told him, "OK, if you tell me it's safe, then I really want to take Baki with and to be able to cycle", because that's very important to me, you know? And so we did. And yeah, we managed to do it. There are some areas that you can't go because.. it's not because it's dangerous, or people are trying to steal anything. It's just too hilly. Yeah. And people, you know, the roads aren't really prepared for bikes. But that's the only thing. But in general, people are so positive and, you know, they cheer you up and it's wonderful. Yeah.

So, it's so funny. It's parked right next door to the Jeep convertible, which is how my daughter, we did lift club with our kids. So, and this is how my daughter got to school every day. And I remember just thinking, gosh, how far I've come from when I first arrived in Joburg and I was so petrified of driving around, to sending my daughter off with no roof. So I think I always say when you're thinking about moving to Joburg, just come and see and make up your own mind. So you will get told so many different stories, but come and look at how other people live.

For me as well, I don't want to live in fear. Something can happen anywhere, right? You know, everywhere you are in the world. My husband and I, before moving here, we had the same kind of concerns. How dangerous is it? And we just said, OK, if you're sitting outside, you should not just put all your valuables on the table because then it can get smashed. You know, if you drive home at night, just quickly look if you are being followed. And it never happened. You have some kind of set of these kind of things that we just determined for ourselves. And you don't have to worry about it anymore. And then I just live my life. I walk everywhere. So I walk to the Rosebank Mall and back. And it's always fine. We don't even have an alarm, for example. Well, we do have it, but we don't know how to put it on. I live in 20<sup>th</sup>.

We're about to head up north now to go to Dainfern, which is the oldest most established estate, but then there's newer ones such as Steyn City and Waterfall, alongside Fourways Gardens, I think those are the main ones, so we'll go and hear a little bit, what life is like up there. I've never been to Dainfern. Oh, you're in for a treat! In fact, I've only ever been to Waterfall and that was very recently, so it's all very new to me, the estate living. Let's go.

So right now we're driving along Winnie Mandela Drive. We've just driven past Sandton so there's one, two, three, four, lanes both ways and if you come in from the north from six o'clock till eight o'clock you're going to be sat there for a very very long time and that's where all the traffic is and so after Sandton we are now in Bryanston and Morningside, which are full of smaller, littler estates and cluster houses. And then we are driving up... We're going to come to Monte Casino and we're going to hit the highway. Monte Casino? Have you ever been? I've never been. I've had the delight. So Monte Casino is a very special place. Quite a few expats go there when they first arrive and also when they're just about to leave because there's a bird park there, there's a theatre, there's a playground, and there's a couple of hotels, and a casino? and it's all built around the casino. And so you have to check your gun in when you arrive, which threw me a little bit. But it is quite fun at Christmas time and they do events and yeah.

Joburg, the areas that expats tend to live, I suppose there's four areas. Starting up north you'll have the biggest estates that are built around usually a golf course that have a clubhouse and it's estate living. So that you'll have Dainfern, Steyn City, Waterfall, and again depending on where you're working you can go and check those ones out. Then you'll have Bryanston, Morningside, Sandton, which, Sandton is the Canary Wharf, I suppose, of Joburg, where a lot of the big businesses are based and you'll have more smaller estates around there, clusters, the French school is there, so a lot of the French guys all live there. And then further south between Sandton and town is an area called the Parks, so you have where we've just been, Parkhurst, Hyde Park, Parktown North, Parkview and Saxonwold, Parkwood, all of those little suburbs and then you get into Maboneng and downtown which is where all the cool kids live. Where I would love to live but I have children so maybe one day. So I'm in alien territory here. Yeah it's definitely newer, there's not the kind of European cafes. This feels like way out of town for me.

Dainfern has its own school, has a preschool, has a nursery and has Dainfern College all on site so your kids can just get in golf carts to go to school or cycle to school which is obviously a bit of a bonus. So we're now in a queue, it's half past ten and this is a pretty average queue to get in. One, two, so it's two lanes of about five, six cars each in the queue. Yeah, yeah. So residents, if you live here, you wouldn't ever have to wait. You can just go straight through and you'd have a, they take your fingerprints and so you just scan yourself in and out.

We're still waiting. And this is what people are paying for, right? What they're signed up for. I mean, there's more than one entrance into this estate. It's like a mini city. It's huge. It's a huge plot of land, but it's like a city that you have security to go into. And it's high security. There's a code. They're going to take our... Fingerprints. They're going to take my fingerprints? They're going to take your fingerprints. What? Yeah. How do I feel about that? I'm not sure. Yeah. So if something gets stolen or a crime is committed... All estates. Well, I don't, again, I don't know if all estates, but

certainly... But you can't just rock up, right? You have to... You have to be invited. You invited. Yeah. So you have to know somebody that's living here in order to get in. It's quite weird. But...That's what people want. That's the security. And if you live here, you just drive in and you know, whatever.

Hello sir, how are you? I'm well, thank you. Have I got a code? Yes, sorry. So he's taken my registration number. He's taken my phone number. We needed a code to get in. He's checked my trunk or boot to make sure there's nothing in there. Now we're going through a security gate. Thank you very much. So that took about 15 minutes. But he took us through the residence barrier rather than the visitor barrier so usually you also have to then put your fingerprint. Oh right so he did his own thing. He led us through, he trusted us. I'm free to commit crime another day. White privilege. White privilege exactly. Right do we know where we're going? Let's look at where we're going now.

They're really hot on speed in the estates. So you often get done for speeding. And then to the right here is the clubhouse. Beautiful, isn't it? All this, all the greenery. And there's a lovely kids' playground. And I mean, compared to Parkhurst where it was high walls and garages, you can now actually see people's front doors. There's a beautiful park. And gardens. And I can see a couple of golf buggies. And that is a stream. Is that a golf course down there? Yeah. Yeah. That's the golf course. We're going past lots of villages, roads off to villages. And lots of speed bumps. I don't know what speed I'm meant to be doing, I'm going to just go really slow. Here, 20. Oh 20, crikey. Will I get a ticket? I know in Fourways Gardens they zap you all the time. And in Steyn City they track you from when you come in to when you leave and so they can tell how fast you've done. And so then there's no need to flash you because they're tracking you all the time. I'm going to go really slowly. You know, I lived in Hong Kong for 11 years. And if people know Hong Kong, there's a place called Discovery Bay, which is very expat, like a little bubble, which I lived in, so I'm not down on that. But it's quite a strange place. This reminds me of Discovery Bay a little bit. It's very Discovery Bayish although you don't have the security to get into Discovery Bay.

And I think it's great for people that are here for two years and their kids are already in say the American system or the British system. It's really easy, you just come, there's other expats, it's really easy to integrate, your kids go off to school, there's the American bus and then you're kind of out of here and on to the next country. So I totally get it. I can get it but I can also see you wouldn't.. never really leave would you if you didn't have to go off to work, if you're stay at home mum? Yeah you're not ever gonna really go much further than this.. but you might want not to anyway so.... or stay at home dad! Or stay at home dad.

Okay so we've gone past the clubhouse for the third time! We're a bit lost! We need an old -fashioned map! Yes! I guess once you live here, you get to know you totally

know. Yeah. And then.. It's pretty here, isn't it? And quiet. And quiet. You can hear the birds. It's beautifully landscaped. Down here or down there? Are we on the pin? One minute, Google Maps. This is where the pin is, here, where she just sent me a pin. So we're here. Oh, there you are. Oh, she is here! We're here!

Hi, I'm Hannah. Hi, I'm Sarah. Hi Sarah, nice to meet you. I'm also Sarah. Nice to meet you. Thank you for meeting us. You're welcome. It's a beautiful place. Thank you. Let's come in. Wow, look at this. So nice and light.

I'm Sarah Thörnsson. I'm from Sweden. I live here in Joburg with my family. Why did you choose to live in Dainfern estate? Mostly because it's, I mean, it's secure. It's a big estate so we love to be walking with the kids to the parks. When you're from Europe you're used to the walking and not have to have a car all the time. That was one of the main reasons we moved here. Did you get advice? Did you have a relocations person say... Yes we did, yeah. And they advised us to stay here. A lot of other expats are here and if I were going to be home with the kids, it's easier to meet other mums and kids. And so far, so good? I mean, you haven't been here that long. What's your impression? We really like Dainfern. It's beautiful. Show us around. I would actually say it's not that typical because we only have one staircase. A lot of the houses have different levels, but with small kids, you can't have security gates like everywhere. And some of the gardens are pretty small here, but we actually have a very big garden. Yeah, let's just look at your garden. I'm just looking out the window. You've got a swimming pool. Yeah. Let's just say it's quite common for the houses, the big houses to have pools in South Africa. Often we get asked is, I want a house, three to four bedroom house with a beautiful garden with a swimming pool in a cluster home next to Sandton. That doesn't happen. So the estate living is great for that, that you can have a nice big garden, there's no electric fences that you can see. Kids can run and we've got beautiful trees. And they're just really quiet, isn't it? Lovely. It's really quiet. Yeah. How does this house compare to where you were living in Sweden? Pretty similar, except from the pool, of course. No, we don't have a pool there. The patio has a barbecue or a braai with a little worktop and some lovely...beautiful, actually, outdoor furniture. Very Scandinavian. This is a very South African thing. The stoep, the stoep lifestyle, the indoor-outdoor lifestyle. Everywhere has a stoep. Everyone is outside barbecuing or braaiing, as they would say here, right? Because the weather's always hot and sunny.

What about security? So a lot of places, a lot of homes in Joburg, if they're not in... I don't know much about estate living, but people will have security gates, they'll have alarms, they have electric fences around their own garden and house. Do you have any of that? We do have an alarm, we do. Do you use it? We do use it when we go out, but not during the night or anything. We do have a security gate upstairs that we lock during the night. And do you always use it? Yeah, but it's also good for the kids so they don't fall down through the stairs. So, I mean, there's two reasons for it. And do you feel safe?

Yeah, I would say I feel safe. The security team is great here. Yeah, we have a very good feeling with how they handle things and keep everyone very informed if there's anything happened in the estate So, yeah.

How have you found community here? The Clubhouse is a great place to meet people and also all the people working there are very friendly. You feel like you belong to a community. And the kids meet other kids and everyone is just playing. Especially during the weekends, it's quite hectic, but everyone loves it. We're walking into the clubhouse now.. through the electric doors. Hi! Table for three? Do you hang out here a lot? Yeah we do, we eat here like once a week, or every other week but I take the kids to the playground quite often so yeah we spend a lot of time here. And do you feel like it fulfills all your needs or do you feel like this is a nice place to live, but you need to, you know, you want to go shopping in town or you want to eat out in town? With kids it's a great location. There are a lot of kid-friendly restaurants around this area. Also a lot of activities like small little parks, like with different type of animals, or only like play parks. There's great shopping around here. If you don't feel the need there you can get everything around here and it's also very easy to go if you go further up north to the bush area that's quite close. We do quite a lot of hiking with the kids and then it's a great location. Just five minutes and you're out of town at Cradlemoon or yeah some other really great hiking spots where you're literally in the African bush. Yeah, exactly yeah.

Is there anything that frustrates you or any of the downsides or are you still very much in the honeymoon period? I mean it is a great location but it is still a country where everything is very car driven, so even if you have a lot of neighbours you might not talk to them because everyone leaves with a car. Kids don't play in your front yard, and I guess that's more of like a European way - in Sweden where you meet your neighbours on the street.

So now we are leaving and they are checking the boot. Thank you! Bye!  
I've never been to an estate like that since I've been in Joburg. I'm slightly weirded out right now. It's beautiful, I can really understand why people might want to live here. But it's so far removed from the rest of Joburg which I guess is why some people choose to live here they don't want that, they want to feel secure in their own little bubble. I totally understand it. I totally get it and I think the South Africans that do tend to live here though sadly have had some sort of trauma that's happened to them, but I also it's freedom and your kids can just go and play tennis and run around and meet other kids and particularly if you have small toddlers again you can walk around.

Do you know what I find really interesting though? Sarah who lives in this free open community just said the kids don't play out in the front gardens. Whereas this morning, people living in Parkhurst were like all the kids are on the street. Which I don't actually, do you know, in Parkhurst, in the afternoons we would walk down from

our house to the park but it's not the same as it is in Europe, it just isn't. Don't expect to see lots of kids playing in the streets anywhere, I think really. But I think this, this kind of living, this estate living is on the increase. People are investing in this. Well, and also a lot of the companies, so the other thing that was interesting, she said her relocation agent told her this is where she should live. My relocation agent also told me the same and it scared the living daylights out of me. And that's when I started to do relocation because I was like, there must be a different way to live! And so now I try and provide both situations and both scenarios. So I think it's easier for a relocation agent to do their job in an estate because you're near the American school, you're near Dainfern College, you're going to get your kids into those schools. The South African schools in the Parks are much harder to get into and finding the housing stock is also much harder and companies often will just say you have to live in a security estate. Interestingly though, the AI and the security has become so advanced that now you can live in a freestanding house but have the same type of security as you would within an estate.

So I know you have that. We have that. Sarah. So in Craighall, that's really big. The AI cameras are basically monitoring movement and sensitivity and anything that is slightly untoward, it will flag it up and then you get the armed guards that basically drive to your house within two minutes or something. So it also tracks every gate opening and closing and every car registration plate. So we sat there and they were doing it all manually at the estate, but now you can do that just at your house, which does give you then the freedom to have access to different areas to live and they would argue, the security company, which we will speak to, would argue it's more secure because in an estate you're reliant on everyone else's staff and everyone else's guests and everyone else coming and going, whereas if you have your own security then you are 100% reliant on yourself and you know exactly who's coming through your gate and who isn't. So lots of pros and cons and I think as we said earlier it really just comes to what you are comfortable with and your own personal preference and you will find whatever works best for you and your own situation.

That was New in Town Johannesburg. With me Hannah Pirnie and me Sarah Passmore. Follow us on Instagram at [newintown.podcast](https://www.instagram.com/newintown.podcast). And for more information on what we've been talking about go to [movingtosouthafrica.org](https://movingtosouthafrica.org) Next time we're talking about your safety and security.

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