

Four houses on *one acre.*

The Bryanston window field guide

What the highveld sun does to a house in this suburb, elevation by elevation — and why the subdivision of the old Bryanston acre quietly changed what your windows need. The trade-offs are written down rather than glossed over.

- About 8 minutes to read
- Written August 2026
- Free — no email needed
- Sources at the foot

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START WITH THE SUN



01 — THE STARTING POINT

The acre got divided. The brief changed with it.

Bryanston was first named as an area in 1949 and established as a suburb of Sandton in 1969.^[1] The original stands were the famous **Bryanston acres** — 4,000 m² apiece. Subdivision down to 1,000 m² is permitted, which puts four homes where one used to stand, and that is exactly what has happened.^[2] Of more than 10,000 homes in the suburb today, only about a fifth are still the large homestead-style properties from decades ago.^[3]

That one planning fact is why a Bryanston house needs its own shading brief. Split an acre four ways and three things change on the same piece of glass, all at once.

- **The canopy comes off the facade.** The streets are lined with jacarandas and the old stands carried deep, treed gardens^[1] — but those trees are mostly on the verge or the original portion. Glass that used to be shaded by a big tree at four o'clock is now shaded by nothing.

- **The neighbour arrives at the window.** The record is the same: larger properties converted into gated communities of multiple houses with small gardens.^[1] Privacy and light control stop being two decisions and become one.
- **The subdivision chooses the orientation, not the sun.** Four houses on one old stand cannot all face the same way, so nearly every cluster ends up with one wing of good glass pointing somewhere nobody would have picked. Usually west.

Then there is the other Bryanston: the fifth still on the full acre, with deeper eaves, deeper reveals and mature trees doing genuine work. Two different briefs inside one postal code — which is why we would rather look than assume.

02 — THE LIGHT HERE

What the sun actually does over Bryanston

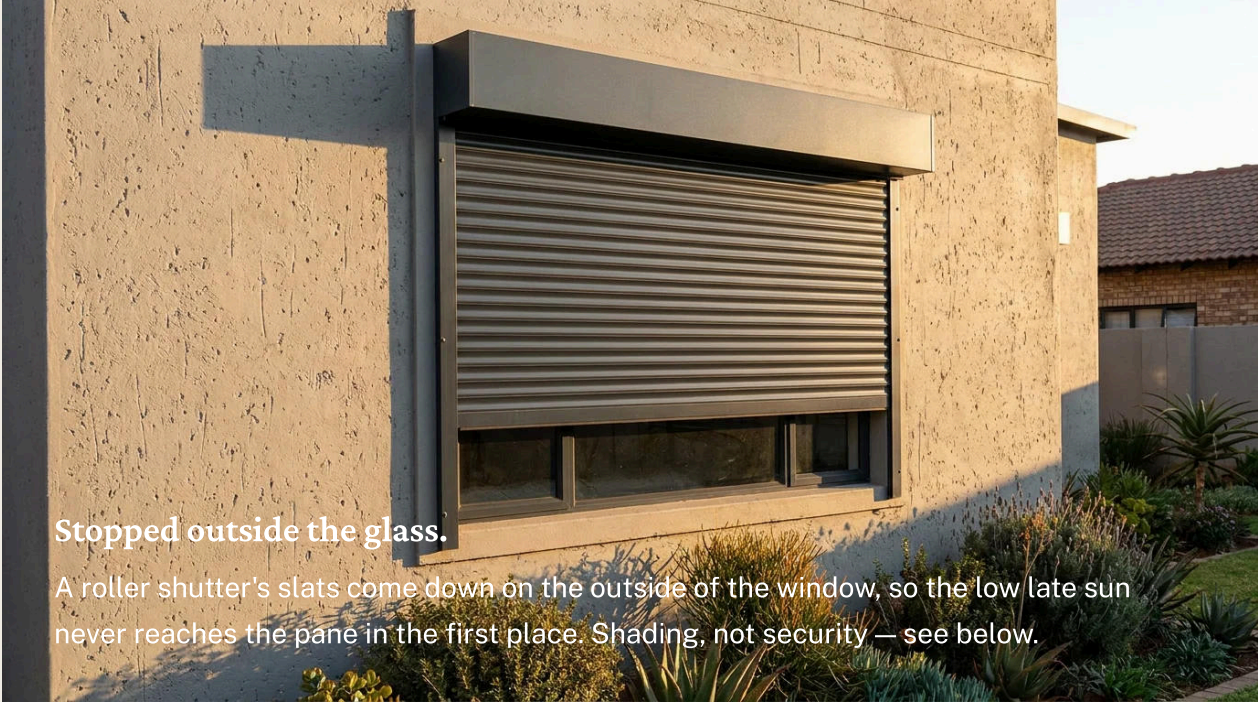
Johannesburg sits at roughly 26° south, 1,753 m above sea level.^[4] The published solar geometry for Gauteng, calculated for Pretoria fifty kilometres north, puts the sun **87.7° above the horizon at noon on 21 December** and only **40.84° at noon on 20 June.**^[5] That 47-degree swing splits the year cleanly in two.

In midsummer the noon sun is almost straight overhead, so a north window with any eave above it largely shades itself in the middle of the day. **In winter it is at 40° and due north**, pushing light and warmth deep into the room — which, with June and July minimums around 4.1 °C and occasional frost, you actively want.^[4]

The trouble is the afternoon. On 21 December the sun sets on a bearing of 243.35° , about 27 degrees *south* of due west.^[5] From roughly three o'clock it is low and almost horizontal. An overhang cannot block a horizontal ray, and the same study says it plainly: afternoons on a western exposure run far hotter than mornings.^[5] West glass here needs something *at* the pane or *outside* it — not above it.

Three more highveld facts that change the specification

- **The storm arrives at the same hour as the glare.** Summers run October to April, hot days followed by afternoon thundershowers,^[4] and Gauteng's supercell thunderstorms are most common in October and November, peaking between 15:00 and 16:00.^[6] That is precisely when a patio awning is out — which makes a wind sensor a specification item, not an upsell.
- **Hail belongs to the season, not to bad luck.** Satellite analysis of South African convective storms finds a clear maximum of events in December and January, peaking at 16:00–17:00 local time.^[7] Anything living outside the glass has to be able to get out of the way.
- **Altitude makes the UV harder.** The World Health Organization puts the increase at roughly 10% per 1,000 m.^[8] At 1,753 m that is something like 17% more ultraviolet than at the coast, so fabrics, slats and paint on a sun-facing elevation age faster here. Choose a west-window fabric on performance first and colour second.



Stopped outside the glass.

A roller shutter's slats come down on the outside of the window, so the low late sun never reaches the pane in the first place. Shading, not security — see below.

03 — ROOM BY ROOM

Elevation by elevation, and which rooms suffer

One house, four different problems. Work out which wall the room sits on before you choose anything.



North — guard it in summer, open it in winter

North is where the sun lives all winter: high enough at midsummer that an eave does most of the work, then at 40° and pouring straight in by June.^[5] Living rooms and studies here do best with something adjustable — a venetian bounces high summer light off the ceiling and opens flat in winter. A blackout roller is a blunt instrument on this wall: up or down, and you lose the winter warmth you were entitled to.

Verdict: adjustable beats absolute.



West — the elevation that costs you the room

Low, near-horizontal sun from about three o'clock, arriving from 27° south of west at midsummer.^[5] In a newer cluster with a shallow overhang there is nothing between it and the glass.

If a west room is unbearable at four, the glass itself is heating and radiating inwards. An interior blind fixes the glare at once and the heat only partly — once the sun is through the pane the energy is already inside, and a closed blind absorbs it and gives it back.

Verdict: shade outside the glass if you can; a proper sunscreen if you can't.



East — glare first, heat second

The same geometry mirrored, but into a house that cooled off overnight. Bedrooms get woken early from October; a kitchen takes an hour of hard glare and then it is over for the day. So the answers differ within one wall: proper darkness where people sleep, something you can still see through where you cook.

Verdict: solve for sleep and glare, not for heat.



South — cool, even, and the one people forget

Almost no direct sun for most of the year, so these rooms hold the steadiest light in the house — and are the coldest on a highveld winter night.^[4] Shading is rarely the problem on this wall. Heat loss through the glass usually is, and on a subdivided stand so is a neighbour's window six metres away.

Verdict: think warmth and privacy, not sun.

OPTIONAL

Shall we mark this up for your house?

Tell us which rooms are giving you trouble and we'll send this same guide back with your elevations noted against it — which windows we'd treat first, and what we'd be weighing up on each one.

It is an email, not a visit. Nobody phones you about it.

04 — THE SPECIFICATION

What we'd fit here, and the catch with each

Every one of these is right somewhere in Bryanston and wrong somewhere else. Tap "add to my list" as you read and it carries straight into the form below — nothing to retype.

Sunscreen roller blinds WEST · GARDEN-FACING GLASS

One flat sheet of open-weave fabric on a tube — no folds, no pleats. It kills the glare and a useful share of the solar gain while leaving the lawn, the pool and the braai in view, which on a Bryanston entertainment wing is the whole point.

THE TRADE-OFF

It reverses after dark: lights on inside and you are the one on display — a real issue on a subdivided stand. There we'd pair it with a blackout on the same opening rather than pretend one fabric does both jobs.

Blockout roller blinds BEDROOMS · EAST

A single smooth flat sheet, no folds at all, sitting neatly inside a reveal. Against an early summer sunrise on an east bedroom window it is the most effective thing there is.

THE TRADE-OFF

Binary — down is dark, up is everything — so the wrong tool for a north living room where you want the June sun. And without side channels, light always finds the edge of the reveal.

Day-night blinds CLUSTER STANDS · STREET SIDE

Sheer bands and solid bands sliding past each other, so you hold privacy from a neighbour a few metres away and still keep usable daylight. On the subdivided stands that is often the honest answer.

THE TRADE-OFF

More mechanism than a plain roller, so more to go wrong across ten years, and never truly blackout. Not the blind for a bedroom you want properly dark.

Timber venetian blinds NORTH · THE OLDER HOMESTEADS

50 mm slats that steer light instead of blocking it: tilted, high summer sun goes onto the ceiling; flat, June comes all the way in. In the fifth of Bryanston still on the original acre, timber sits against a deep brick reveal in a way aluminium doesn't.

THE TRADE-OFF

Heavier and dearer than aluminium, and a very wide opening has to be split across more than one headrail. Above a bath or a sink choose aluminium — timber and steam age badly together.

Aluminium venetian blinds KITCHENS · SCULLERIES · BATHROOMS

The same tilt-and-steer control in 25 mm or 50 mm metal slats, which shrug off steam, splashes and being wiped down. The practical pick for the working end of the house.

THE TRADE-OFF

Cooler and more utilitarian than timber, and a long slat stack can rattle in a through-draught. In a formal north living room, timber looks right where aluminium looks borrowed from the office.

Cellular honeycomb blinds SOUTH · COLD ROOMS

Air trapped inside a honeycomb weave, held against the glass. Facing a 4 °C highveld night,^[4] it is the cheapest thermal improvement you can make to a window without touching the window itself.

THE TRADE-OFF

A soft product, so not for a busy kitchen — and not a heat-rejection answer on a hot west window. The gain sits on the winter side of the ledger.

Roller shutters (shading) HARD WEST GLASS

Rigid aluminium slats rolling down the outside of the window from a headbox above it. On a hard west elevation we'd put these ahead of an interior blackout roller: stopping the heat outside the glass keeps a room cooler than absorbing it inside, where the pane still warms and radiates at you all evening.

Shading, not security. These are made for sun, heat, glare and light control. They are not security-rated shutters — a different product, which we can quote on request.

THE TRADE-OFF

The most visible change you can make to a facade, and the headbox has to live somewhere — in a cluster or estate a permission question before it is a measurement. Living outdoors in a hail belt^[7] matters on an exposed wall too.

Folding-arm awnings PATIOS · THE BRAAI

Post-free retractable shade over the paving, so the patio is usable in February and the low June sun still reaches it in winter. Where the garden is the extra room — which in Bryanston it usually is — that often buys more comfort than anything you could do to a window.

THE TRADE-OFF

An awning is a shade structure, not a roof, and Gauteng storms peak in exactly the hours it is out.^[6] We'd specify a wind sensor and a cassette that closes over the fabric.

Zip screens & outdoor blinds THE WEST CORNER OF THE PATIO

Mesh tensioned inside side channels so wind cannot lift it, dropping vertically. This is the answer to the glare no canopy can stop — the low sun arriving sideways under the awning after three.

THE TRADE-OFF

It encloses the view on that side while it is down. Mesh openness is a genuine decision: more openness keeps more view and stops less glare, and no setting does both.

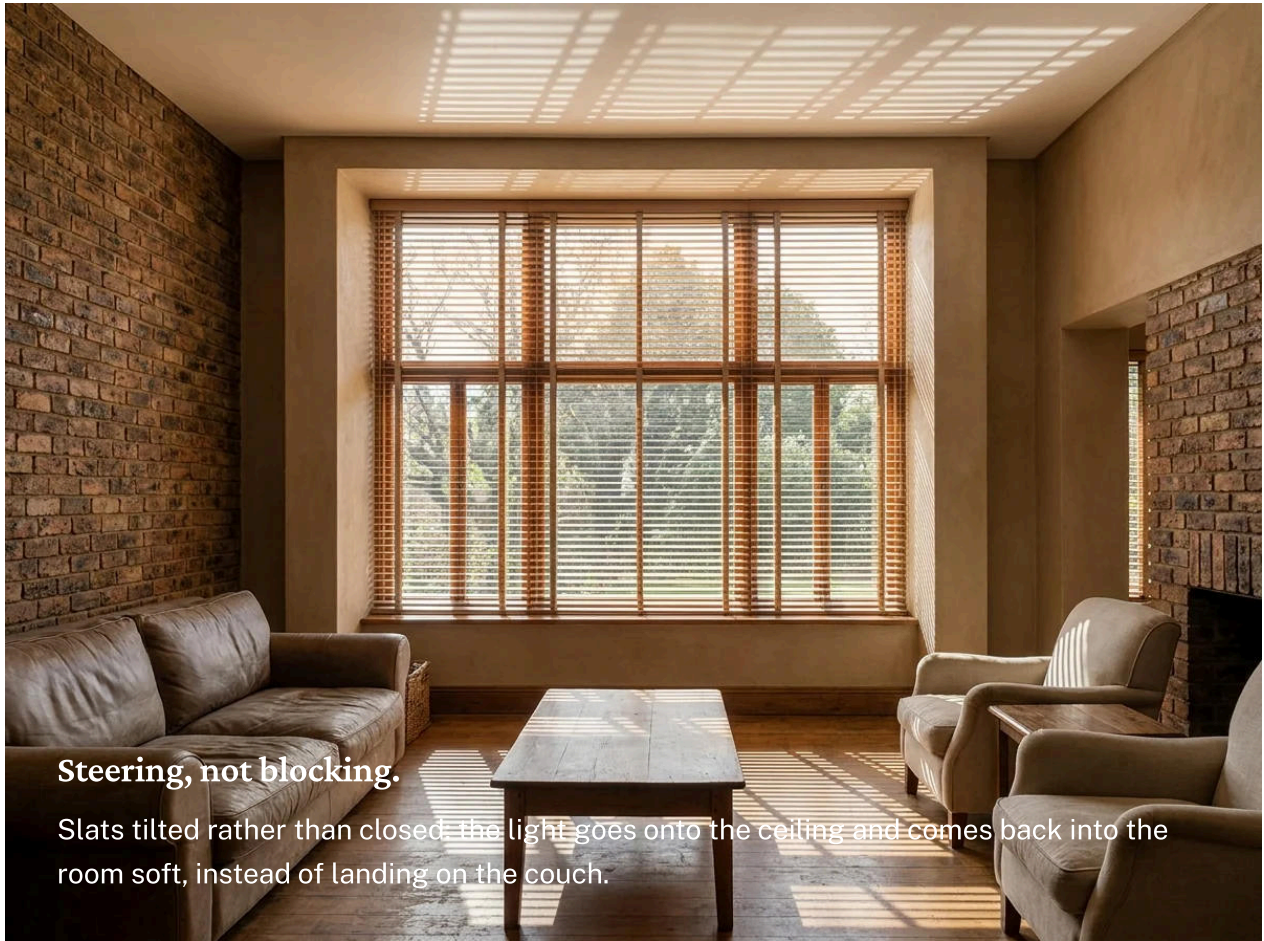
Motorisation & automation EXTERIOR PRODUCTS · HIGH GLASS

Quiet tube motors on remote, switch or timer — and, on anything outside, a wind sensor that retracts it whether you're home or away. With the storms and the worst glare landing in the same afternoon hour,^[6] that is protection rather than luxury.

THE TRADE-OFF

It adds cost per blind and needs power at the head of the opening — in an existing house, a cable route somebody has to find. Battery motors avoid the chasing but need charging now and again.

Also on the list in the form below: **vertical blinds** for very wide sliders, **panel blinds** as an architectural way to dress a four-metre stack door, and **concealed blind boxes**, where the fabric drops from a slot in the ceiling and every bracket disappears — that last one is best planned at build stage, so raise it while you still have plans.



Steering, not blocking.

Slats tilted rather than closed: the light goes onto the ceiling and comes back into the room soft, instead of landing on the couch.

05 — THE LOCAL CONSTRAINT

Walls, booms and trustees

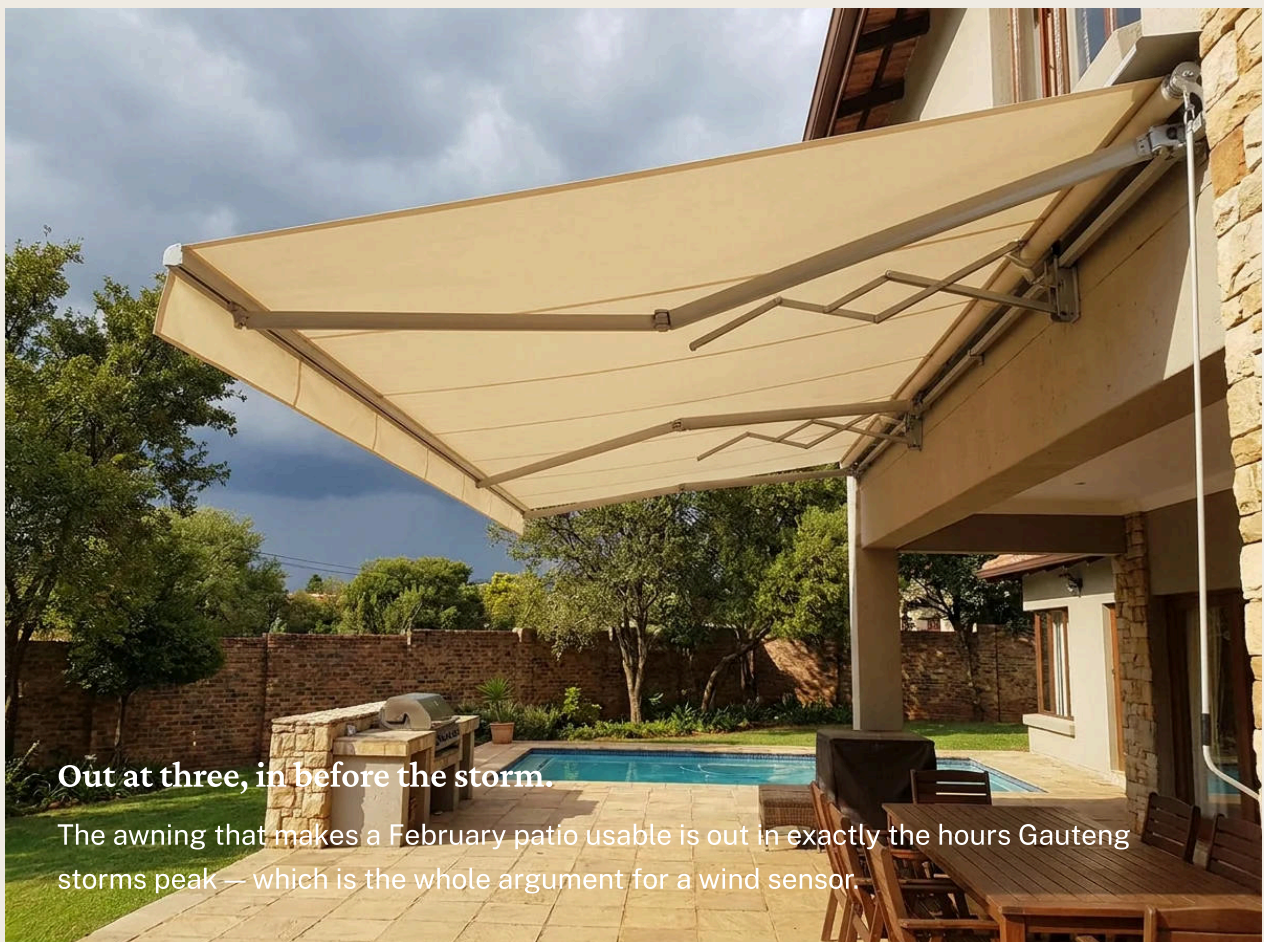
Because so much of Bryanston is now clusters and gated developments behind booms,^[1] plenty of these decisions are not only yours to make. In a sectional-title scheme the outside of the building is common property, and minor changes need written trustee approval — a list that explicitly includes awnings, enclosures and changes to exterior colour schemes.^[9] In a full estate, an architectural review committee typically controls building styles, materials and colours, with pre-approval required before you change anything.^[10]

- **Interior blinds** fitted inside an existing reveal change nothing on the outside of the building and are almost never a permission question.

- **Exterior products** — awnings, roller shutters, zip-screen channels — do change it. On a cluster or estate property, establish that first.

We fit blinds; we are not your trustees or your architect. At the measure we'll say plainly which options touch the outside of the building, and hand you the specification sheet to submit where the rules aren't published. It adds a week or two to the timeline. It does not add drama.

Renovating? SANS 10400-XA:2021 requires a fenestration calculation once glazing passes 20% of floor area — it was 15% in the previous edition — and no longer distinguishes between the solar heat gain requirements of west, north and east glazing.^[11] Designing a blind box in costs far less than retrofitting one, so ask early.



Out at three, in before the storm.

The awning that makes a February patio usable is out in exactly the hours Gauteng storms peak — which is the whole argument for a wind sensor.

What we'd still need to check on site

Everything above is what we know about Bryanston. What no guide can know is your house — and five things decide the actual specification.

01

Reveal depth, and whether the opening is square

Depth decides whether a blind can sit inside the opening at all, and which bracket is used. Openings are rarely perfectly square either — a 10 mm difference top to bottom is ordinary and changes how the blind is made.

02

What the wall is actually made of

Plaster over brick, plaster over block, or a drywall bulkhead from a later renovation. The existing fixings decide what can safely hang there — and, for anything exterior, whether the job is possible at all.

03

Which way it really faces, and what stands outside it

We take a compass reading at the window: twenty degrees moves the recommendation between west and south-west. Then we look out of it — the tree doing half your shading differs at every opening, and on a subdivided stand it may be on the neighbour's side of the wall.

04

Where the power is

For anything motorised, the route from a plug point to the head of the opening decides between a wired motor and a battery one. That is a walk-around with a torch, not a guess over the phone.

05

Wind exposure at the patio

Awnings and zip screens live or die on this. A sheltered courtyard between two wings and an open western corner need different products, projections and sensors — obvious in two minutes standing there, impossible from a floor plan.

07 — TWO WAYS FORWARD

Book the free expert measure

A consultant comes to the house with samples, measures every opening properly, reads the light in the actual room and leaves you with a written quote itemised per window. No charge, and no obligation at the end of it. Prefer a rough number before any of that? The ballpark list sits inside the form below and does exactly that.

- ✓ A free in-home measure and a written quote, itemised per window
- ✓ No call centre — a real consultant comes out with samples
- ✓ Nothing is made until you have approved the quote
- ✓ Child-safe controls fitted as standard, never as an extra
- ✓ Still deciding? Say so on the form and we will leave you be

Anything you added while reading is already ticked on the form — you don't have to type it in again.

NEITHER, FOR NOW

Take the guide, marked up for you

Too soon for a visit or a figure? Tell us which rooms are the problem and we'll email this guide back with your own elevations noted against it. Nothing is booked and nobody phones.

WORKING OUT

Sources

Every climate, geography, planning and legal claim above traces to one of these. Where we have reasoned rather than cited, we have said so in the text.

1. Bryanston, Gauteng — named as an area in 1949, established as a Sandton suburb in 1969; jacaranda-lined streets; large treed properties converted into

gated communities of multiple houses with small gardens.

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bryanston,_Gauteng

2. Jawitz Properties — "Bryanston acres (4000m²)" and subdivision down to 1,000 m² per stand, allowing four homes on one original stand. jawitz.co.za — [Bryanston: a lifestyle suburb](#)
3. Seeff Bryanston area profile — over 10,000 homes in the suburb, only about 20% of them the large homestead-style properties from decades ago. seeff.com — [Bryanston area profile](#)
4. Johannesburg — 26°12'S, elevation 1,753 m; October-to-April summers of hot days followed by afternoon thundershowers; June/July minimums around 4.1 °C with occasional frost. en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johannesburg
5. "Sun, shade and natural daylight in South African town planning, with emphasis on Pretoria" — solar noon elevation 87.7° on 21 December and 40.84° on 20 June, December sunset azimuth 243.35°, and the finding that western-exposure afternoons run far hotter than mornings. scielo.org.za — [S2415-04952018000200005](#)
6. University of Pretoria — "Characteristics of warm season left-moving supercells over the Highveld of South Africa": most common in October and November, peaking between 15:00 and 16:00. repository.up.ac.za
7. Punge, H. J., Bedka, K. M., Kunz, M., Bang, S. D. and Itterly, K. F., "Characteristics of hail hazard in South Africa based on satellite detection of convective storms", *Natural Hazards and Earth System Sciences*, 23, 1549–1576, 2023. nhess.copernicus.org/articles/23/1549/2023
8. World Health Organization — "With every 1000 m in altitude, UV levels increase by approximately 10 per cent." who.int — [ultraviolet radiation Q&A](#)
9. Basic Understanding of Sectional Title — the outside of the building is common property; minor changes need written trustee approval, awnings and exterior colour schemes included. complexes.co.za (PDF)
10. Estate Living — architectural and design policies: estates control styles, materials and colours, with pre-approval by a review committee. estate-living.co.za
11. SANS 10400-XA:2021 (Edition 2) — fenestration threshold up from 15% to 20% of floor area, and the west/north/east distinction for solar heat gain removed. roosarchitects.co.za — [summary of the revised SANS 10400-XA](#)

Three honest caveats. Source 5's figures are calculated for Pretoria at 25.7° south; Bryanston sits near 26.05°, so its own angles differ by well under half a degree — we

quote the published numbers rather than invent our own. Sources 2 and 3 are property-market profiles, used only for stand sizes and housing-stock proportions. And we found no published architectural guideline for any specific Bryanston estate or boomed area, so section 05 is a general rule with a "check yours" instruction, never a claim about your scheme.

READY WHEN YOU ARE

Now let's go and look at your actual windows.

Free in-home measure, samples in hand, and a written quote itemised per window. One of our expert consultants will contact you shortly to arrange it — no obligation, no pressure.

BOOK MY FREE MEASURE →