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The Brooklyn Light & Privacy Playbook

How the Pretoria sun crosses these jacaranda avenues through the year, what it does to each elevation of an old veranda house, and what we'd fit where — with the honest catch on each option said out loud.

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[Sun path by season](#)

[Elevation by elevation](#)

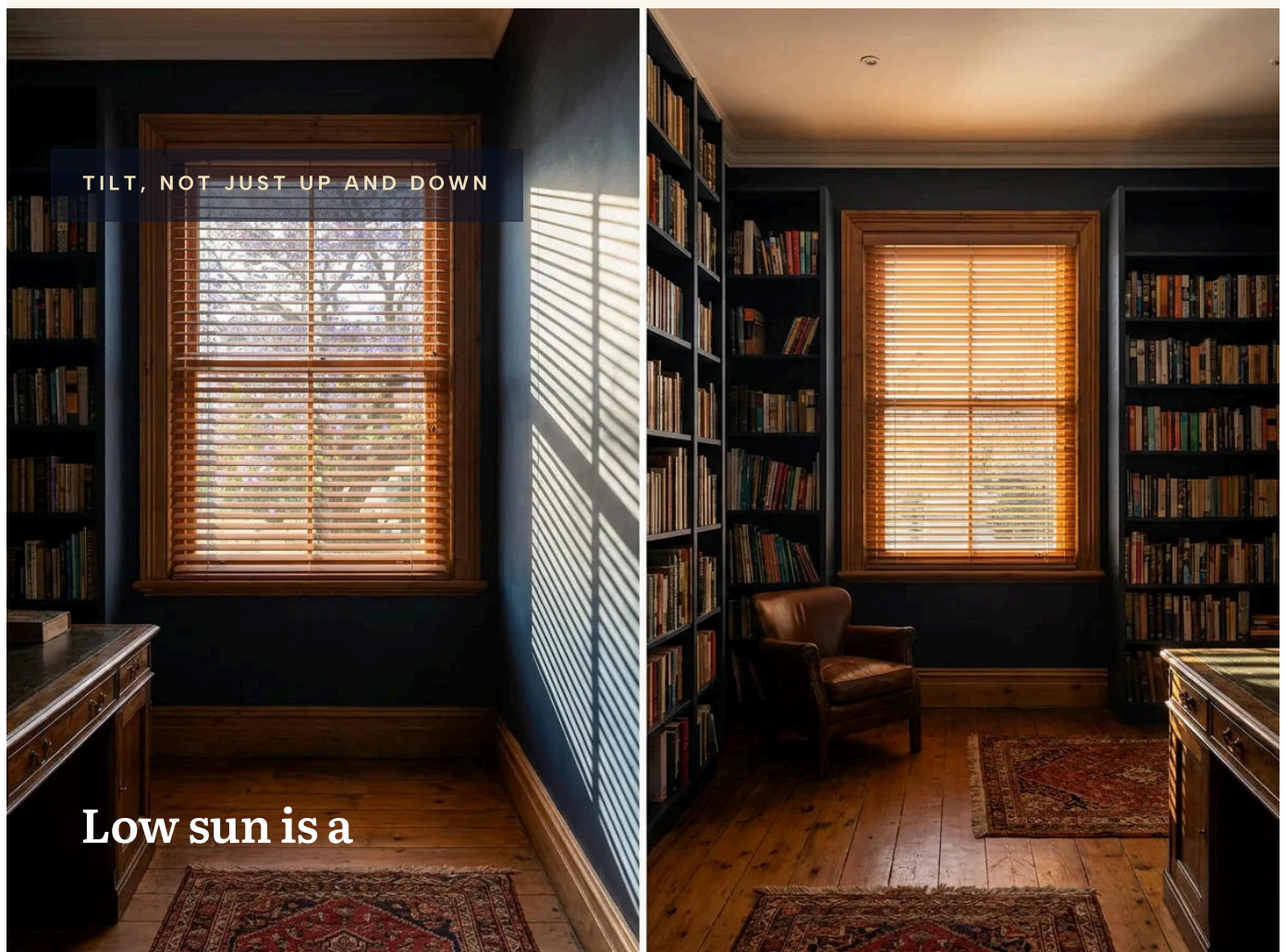
[Honest trade-offs](#)

WHERE TO START

A veranda quarter that was never laid out for the sun.

Brooklyn's houses were built to face the street and the jacaranda, not the compass. It is one of Pretoria's "Old East" heritage pockets — early-1900s Edwardian and Victorian face-brick homes with deep verandas, a good share of them sympathetically turned into cafés, boutique offices and guesthouses while keeping their original fronts, a short walk from the University of Pretoria. The verandas were meant to shade the front rooms and the long lunch, and they do. What they don't do is answer the north and west glass, or the students and brunch crowds passing at window height along the café strip.

Two facts shape the whole specification here, and both are easy to get wrong. The first: the famous lilac canopy is a six-week event, not a shading strategy — the jacarandas are bare or in leaf the rest of the year, and Brooklyn sits lower and warmer than the Johannesburg parks belt, so the heat lands harder. The second: the same street life that makes Brooklyn worth living in puts eyes at eye level all day. A blind here has to earn its keep on glare, on heat, and on privacy — often on the same window.



sideways problem.

A blind that only goes up and down has one answer to a three-o'clock western sun: cover the whole window and lose the room. A slat that tilts has a second answer — steer the light, keep the view.

ROOM BY ROOM

Four elevations, four different problems.

One walk round the house with your phone's compass open is enough. Which way a window faces changes the answer more than what the room is used for.

01 North — let the veranda do the first job

North glass takes a near-vertical summer sun and a low winter one, so it is the one elevation where a horizontal projection works: a deep veranda roof or eave blocks most of December while still letting the low June sun in to warm the room. That is exactly the geometry SANS 10400-XA applies to new buildings. Where the veranda already shades it, the interior blind is there for glare and UV, not heat — a sunscreen roller is usually enough.

02 West — the elevation that ruins the afternoon

Through the year the sun sets between about 244° and 296°, and by then it is low, arriving *under* the veranda roof and straight onto the glass — so an overhead projection does almost nothing. This is a Brooklyn afternoon-lounge and west-bedroom problem, and it is the elevation worth spending on. Stopping the heat outside the pane beats absorbing it inside.

03 **East — same geometry, half the penalty**

East glass gets the mirror image from about 05:13 in midsummer, but the air and the walls are still cool, so glare and being woken early matter more than heat gain. East bedrooms are a blackout conversation; an east breakfast room usually just wants a sunscreen mesh to take the edge off.

04 **South — not immune, just late to it**

Because midsummer sunrise and sunset both sit south of the east–west line, a south wall catches low sun early and late in December, then almost none in winter. These are the coolest, flattest-lit rooms in the house — best left lightly dressed, with the budget moved to the west side where it earns more.

WHAT WE'D FIT, AND WHY

The reasoning, and the honest catch with each.

Nothing here is right on every window. Each of these beats its obvious alternative on a particular Brooklyn elevation, and each costs you something. Tap **Add to my enquiry** and it carries straight down to the form at the foot of the page — sizes optional.

Roller blinds — sunscreen or blackout

**BEST ON: STREET- AND GARDEN-FACING GLASS (SUNSCREEN)
· BEDROOMS (BLOCKOUT)**

Why here. A single smooth sheet of fabric on a slim tube, no folds, no fuss — the workhorse for most Brooklyn rooms. A 3–5% openness sunscreen keeps the jacaranda-street view while cutting glare and much of the UV that fades floors. Blockout does the opposite job: first light is 05:13 in midsummer, and one flat panel of blockout fabric answers that.

The catch. Sunscreen reverses after dark — lights on inside and passers-by on the café strip see far more in, so it is not a night-privacy fabric. Blockout is only as dark as its edges: inside a not-quite-square heritage reveal there is a light line down each side. A double roller puts both fabrics on one window.

Day-night blinds

**BEST ON: GROUND-FLOOR ROOMS OVER THE CAFÉ-STRIP
PAVEMENT**

Why here. Alternating sheer and solid bands slide past each other, so one blind moves from open view to eye-level privacy without ever being raised. On a Brooklyn front room with brunch traffic at the window all day, that is a gentler daylight-and-privacy answer than a vertical blind or a dropped blackout.

The catch. Never a true blackout, and the banding is a strong horizontal pattern against plain heritage joinery. Worth holding a sample against your own frame before you commit a whole street-facing wall to it.

Timber & aluminium venetians

**BEST ON: STUDIES AND LIVING ROOMS (TIMBER) · KITCHENS
AND BATHROOMS (ALUMINIUM)**

Why here. A low western sun is a sideways problem and a tilting slat answers it sideways — close the angle and the direct beam stops while the room stays

bright and the view survives. Timber suits Brooklyn's original sash proportions and a book-lined study; aluminium handles the wet rooms where fabric struggles.

The catch. Timber stacks deeper than a roller, so it eats more glass when fully raised, and it dislikes steam — which is the whole reason wet rooms get aluminium instead.

Motorisation & automation

BEST ON: TALL SASHES, GABLE GLASS, AND ANYTHING LIVING OUTDOORS

Why here. With Brooklyn's high veranda ceilings a blind nobody can reach is a blind nobody adjusts. A sun sensor drops the west-facing blinds at three in the afternoon on its own; outdoors, a wind sensor retracts an awning before a storm arrives — including while the house is empty.

The catch. Motors need power, and finding a cable route that doesn't chase an original wall is a real question in a hundred-year-old house. Battery motors trade that wiring for a charging routine every few months.



Cellular / honeycomb blinds

BEST ON: SINGLE-GLAZED HERITAGE WINDOWS YOU CANNOT REPLACE

Why here. The fabric folds into hexagonal cells that hold a layer of still air against the glass. In a single-glazed Brooklyn room with high ceilings — hot by mid-morning in summer, near-freezing by a July dawn — that trapped-air layer is the least invasive comfort upgrade going: no new frames, no altered sashes, nothing about the original window touched.

The catch. It sits on the inside of the glass, so against a hard west sun it is only slowing heat that has already come through the pane — an external product beats it there. On a bad west window the honest answer is often both: cellular for the winter comfort, something exterior for the summer heat.



External venetians & roller shutters

BEST ON: HARD WEST AND NORTH-WEST GLASS WITH NO USEFUL OVERHANG

Why here. Both stop the sun outside the glass, which keeps a room genuinely cooler than absorbing it inside: an interior blackout kills the glare instantly, but the pane still heats and radiates into the room all evening. External venetians tilt, so you keep a view while stopping the beam; roller shutters close fully into a slim head box for heat and blackout in one.

The catch. In relative terms these are the dearest answers in the guide. Both want a wind strategy through the storm season, usually want a motor, and count as changes to the outside of the house — which is where the heritage note below bites hardest.

Shading, not security: ours hang on the outside of the glass and are there to take sun, heat and glare off the window. A security-rated shutter is another product altogether, and we can quote one on request.



Folding-arm awnings & zip screens

BEST ON: THE VERANDA, THE STOEP AND THE TERRACE TABLE

Why here. A folding-arm awning shades a Brooklyn terrace with no posts in the way and folds back when you want the winter sun on the table again — which is why it beats a fixed pergola on a veranda you actually use. A zip screen does a different job: mesh under tension in sealed side channels, holding shape in wind while still showing you the garden and keeping the evening midges out.

The catch. This is the Highveld from about November to March. Wind and hail ratings are engineering limits, not marketing, and an awning caught open in a sudden storm gust does not survive it — so we would specify a motor and a wind sensor rather than a manual awning on any exposed Brooklyn stoep.

OPTIONAL

Want this guide marked up for your own house?

Tell us which rooms are the problem and we'll send this back to you with notes against your actual elevations — which of the answers above we'd start with, and which we'd leave alone. No visit involved, and no obligation to book one.

HERITAGE

The sixty-year rule, and where it bites.

Most of Brooklyn's original stock is past sixty years old, and Brooklyn Circle itself is a long-protected heritage garden — that age alone matters. Section 34(1) of the National Heritage Resources Act says no one may alter or demolish a structure, or part of a structure, older than sixty years without a permit from the provincial heritage authority. The Act's definition of "alter" is deliberately broad: any action affecting the structure, appearance or physical properties of a place — down to painting and decoration. Age is the trigger, not whether the house appears on a register, and unauthorised work can end with an instruction to put things back as they were.

That draws a clean line through this guide. Blinds fitted *inside* the room — rollers, venetians, cellular, day-night — touch neither the structure nor how the house reads from the pavement, so they sit well clear of it. Anything mounted *outside* the glass — external venetians, roller shutters, a fixed awning — changes the street face and can trip Section 34. We fit blinds; we are not heritage practitioners, so we won't tell you what the ruling will be for your address. We will raise it at the measure and design the interior specification so you have a strong option either way.

TWO WAYS FORWARD

We can come and measure, or you can start with a range.

One short form below starts either of them. We take five or six measure appointments a week across Brooklyn and the Old East, so the diary tends to fill early.

RECOMMENDED

The free expert measure & written quote

A consultant comes with fabric and slat samples, measures every opening properly, walks the elevations with you at the hour that actually matters, and leaves an itemised written quote per window. Free, and no obligation to go ahead.

[Book my free measure →](#)

OPTIONAL

Want a ballpark first?

A budget range follows on the next working day, off nothing more than approximate sizes. Not sure how to measure? Leave it — the consultant measures for free and you'll get exact per-window pricing either way.

[Open the window list](#)

THE CLOSE

Get the measure into the diary.

One short form. Add rough window sizes underneath it if you'd like a budget range as well — that part is entirely optional, and never a substitute for the free measure.

SOURCES

Where the numbers on this page come from.

Every climate, sun-path, heritage and jacaranda figure above is taken from the following. Where a figure was disputed or unverifiable we left it out rather than round it into a sentence.

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- 01 Pretoria latitude, elevation, and December/June solstice sun altitude, sunrise and sunset — [**Gaisma, Pretoria**](#)
 - 02 Sunrise, sunset, solar noon and day length for Pretoria — [**geotimedate, Pretoria sun**](#)
 - 03 Solar altitude and azimuth by date (used to check the winter and equinox figures and the sunrise/sunset bearings) — [**SunEarthTools sun-position calculator**](#)
 - 04 Köppen classification, annual mean temperature and rainfall for Pretoria — [**Climate-Data.org, Pretoria**](#)
 - 05 Summer-weighted rainfall, single-day falls, ~75 thunderstorm days and hail — [**Pretoria.com, geography & climate**](#), and [**Climates to Travel, Pretoria**](#)
 - 06 High-altitude, clear-sky ultraviolet in southern Africa — [**Wright, Photochemistry & Photobiology \(2023\)**](#), and UV intensity by elevation — [**Koolasun, South African UV index**](#)
 - 07 Pretoria as the "Jacaranda City", ~70,000 trees and the brief late-Sept–mid-Nov bloom — [**University of Pretoria Botanical Garden, Jacaranda**](#), and [**Rove.me, jacarandas in Pretoria**](#)
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- 08 Orientation and shading guidance for new buildings (the north-eave geometry) — [**Summary of the revised SANS 10400-XA \(2021 edition\)**](#)

- 09 The sixty-year rule — [**National Heritage Resources Act 25 of 1999, section 34**](#), and [**The Heritage Portal's heritage-process FAQ**](#)

- 10 Brooklyn's Old-East character, Edwardian face-brick veranda stock and café-strip conversions — [**Private Property, Brooklyn neighbourhood focus**](#), and [**Seeff, Brooklyn area profile**](#)

Reading this on another suburb's window? The same sun-path reasoning applies across [**Waterkloof**](#), [**Menlo Park**](#), [**Hazelwood**](#) and [**Groenkloof**](#) — the housing stock and the exposure are what change.