1. No 24 Bath Str. - the Montagu Tourism Information, was originally built as two semi-detached houses and the one part used to serve as the Magistrates Court. It was nearly demolished in 1982, when Mrs. Esther Hofmeyer went into action and obtained legal authorization to prevent the demolition. One can see lovely fanlights above the front as well as interior double-doors.

2. No 20 Bath Street dates back to 1854 and is the only T-plan Cape Dutch house in the town, with four lovely holbol (Florid) gables - one of two central gabled homesteads in Bath Street. The house has an exceptionally pretty front door and was restored with much care. The modern ceilings were replaced with the original type of reed loft.

3. The small Anglican Church, St. Mildred's, is one of many across the country designed by Lady Sophia Grey, wife of the Governor of the Cape Colony 1854 – 1861. She was never trained as an architect, but she had boundless enthusiasm and a thorough knowledge of the English rural church architectural style.

4. No 9 Rose Street houses the imposing Dutch Reformed Church parsonage. It was built in 1911 for Dr. DF Malan, the then Parson and later South African Prime Minister. The house is in a late-Victorian style with a central passage 30 metres long. A lovely workers' cottage is on the premises close to the river.

5. No 17 Long Street Street is a rectangular, Cape style house with simple fishtail style end gables and a central gable bearing the date 1859. One can see a beautiful double door and three pretty fan lights. The house next door was previously this house's cellar.

6. No 26 Long Street is a good example of a Cape Georgian double storey dwelling of 1865. Uncommonly, the doors and windows are not symmetrically placed on the façade.

7. No 32 Long Street is a typical thatched roof house with straight end gables and an adjoining cellar. An outside staircase in front leads over the cellar's doors to the loft. The flat roofed annex is typical of the many rural houses that were enlarged at the time.

8. No 25 Long Street, Joubert House, is the oldest existing home in Montagu. The outbuilding was supposedly the first prison in Montagu. By 1970 the building was so run down that the Municipality declared it to be uninhabitable. During 1981 the Montagu Museum bought, restored and transformed it into a house museum. The kitchen floor is laid out with genuine peach pips and there is a large assortment of herbs in the back garden.

As you proceed down Long Street and get to the Long- and Kohler Street crossing, you will observe four architectural styles of our historical buildings in Montagu:

9. No 33 Long Street is a lovely Victorian town house with a high-pitched roof and cast iron embellishments (“broekielace”) over the veranda. Connoisseurs estimate that the front door is more than fifty years older than the house.

10. No 40 Long Street was built in Cape-Georgian style with the date, 1892, on the richly decorated parapet. Alexander Floris Kriel who used it as a “tuishuis” (town house) built this stately residence.

11. Although 42 Long Street may not be one of our proclaimed buildings, it is of historical significance as it is a typical example of a town house in British colonial style that is prevalent throughout the Karoo region.

12. No 44 Long Street is one of the smallholdings that provides Long Street with much of its historic agricultural character. The property reaches down to Kingna River. In 1984 the owner discovered a photograph in the Cape Town archives indicating that the house initially had a half-hipped roof gable. He had the house restored, including the new gable, unique to Montagu.

13. No 46 Long Street is now the Four Oaks B&B and Templeton’s Restaurant. Built in 1860, the house is still thatched and has some beautiful chimneys and end gables. Only one of the four oaks that used to be in front of this building remains of the once oak-lined Long Street.

14. The Mission Church in Long Street on the right was erected in 1907 and today hosts the Montagu Museum, where the history of the town is depicted by way of photographs, documents, furniture and consumer articles. The organ, pulpit and copper baptismal font are all original from the turn of century.

15. No 35 Long Street, in rural Cape Dutch style, was built with several fishtail gables and has the date of 1860 on its central gable. Tradition has it that John Montagu, Colonial Secretary of the Cape Colony after 1834, was received on this property when he visited Montagu at its proclamation as a village. This house used to be the home of the well-known South African painter Francois Krige. The artist’s studio next door was rebuilt by his widow, Sylvia Krige. It is an example of a sensitive, modern design by architect (and Krige’s nephew) Revel Fox.

Turn right into Church Street. While only 2 of the buildings in the street are proclaimed, just about each of the homes – from Long Street up to Bath Street - are our best preserved buildings in a stretch and worthy of being register buildings in their own right.
16. Mimosa Lodge started as a simple, single storey farmhouse with a thatched roof and was later converted into a double storey house, which provided the only other lodgings apart from the hotel. During its history, it served as school boarding house, old age home, brothel – all summarised in “lodging”. After extensive renovations and stripping the floors of carpeting, today even the wooden staircase creaks as it did in the olden days.

18. Opposite, is “Eerste Pos” (literally translated “First Mail”), Esther Hofmeyer’s house. She came to Montagu in 1941 as a young teacher and stayed at Mimosa Lodge. Much of the appearance of Montagu and mainly Long Street can largely be attributed to her efforts and dedication. Over the years, she persuaded, in her enthusiastic manner, the owners of many houses to restore and not to demolish nor to modernise their homes.

17. On the left corner, 30 Bath Street (“Church Corner”), one sees one of two central gables in Bath Street. The roof construction of this building is unique in that the thatched roof spans 2 rooms deep (without any central support) from street to the back of the house instead of the single-room span as in the case of the others. The small building next door (No 28 Bath Street), used to be the outbuilding to No 30 and served many purposes: police station with trap door, library, post office, accountants’ offices, restaurant and art gallery.

19. The Dutch Reformed Church in neo-Gothic style was completed in 1862 for an amount of £4,300. It used to be painted in the traditional white colour, but after complaints by residents that the reflection of the bright sunlight off the white walls virtually blinded one, it was decided rather to use the colour presently seen here, i.e. a creamy yellow.

Many visitors ask the question: “We notice that most of your Dutch style buildings are all painted white and the woodwork a dark green. Why is that?” … Traditionally, whitewash (a watery limewash) was applied to the walls. This allowed the walls to ‘breathe’ and dry out properly after rains. The white also helped to reflect the harsh sunlight off the walls during the heat of the summer months, helping to keep the interiors cool. Legend has it that the simple reason why everything (from oxwagon wheels, furniture, to the woodwork on the old homesteads) were painted green - what we now refer to as ‘Monument Green’ - was that it literally was the very first, and only, paint available at the time! Whatever the reason, it resulted in the now trademark characteristic of what we popularly refer to as the “Cape Dutch Style”.

20. The green gabled house directly next to the Bank, used to house Standard Bank in the early years. The original owner of the building, Mr. Danie van der Merwe, was adamant that he would sell his property to the bank only on condition that he be appointed as bank manager, despite a total lack of experience in banking. He was indeed appointed and local residents supported and trusted him completely because he was a wealthy man of high reputation. His nickname became “Danie Bank”. Unfortunately, the venture ended badly and the bank went bankrupt.

21. The Montagu Country Hotel, a fine example of the Art Deco Style, was built in 1875 and was the first hotel in town. In 1880, it became the centre of controversy: The President of the Transvaal, Paul Kruger, visited Montagu with a large entourage, including General Piet Joubert. The Montagu inhabitants awaited the event with keen anticipation. At the last moment the owner of the hotel, who did not agree with Kruger’s politics, decided not to go ahead with the planned grand and sumptuous reception in his hotel. The local womenfolk jointly went ahead and held the reception in the Joubert House in Long Street.

22. 21 Piet Retief Street is an elegant and beautiful example of a late Victorian house. Typical of the style, are the many decorative gables and “broekielace” (metal tracery) around the stoep.

23. Library and Municipal Building. In 1893, the Church Council decided to apportion a part of the church square to the trustees of the school governing council. In 1910 the school was enlarged, hence this date on the central gable. The town council bought the building in 1975 and renovated it to become municipal offices. During the work on this building, a flask was uncovered containing the following: A document under the heading, ‘Deo Gloria’ and the names of the VIPs attending the laying of the cornerstone in 1883, 5 coins, a ‘Ons Land’ newspaper of Tuesday, 9th May 1892 (price: 2 pence), and a ‘Cape Times’ dated 10th May 1892. The council still has these items in safe keeping.

We trust you have enjoyed this walk with us! If you still have time to spare, you may want to continue down Mill Street to Montagu West, which is known for it’s typical “Karoo Cottages".