

2011-01-10 RIM-VR L01.doc

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**The Manager - HERITAGE  
ROBBEN ISLAND MUSEUM  
ROBBEN ISLAND**

**BY EMAIL  
richardw@robben-island.org.za**

**Attention: Mr Richard Whiting**

Dear Richard

**ROBBEN ISLAND MUSEUM – VILLAGE REGENERATION PROJECT - GPA Ref No 10/546  
COMMENT ON PROPOSED RENOVATION WORK CONTRACT**

In terms of our appointment to act in an overseeing capacity on this project, there are a number of issues related to the heritage aspects of the project and also with regard to the specifications for the Works as contained in the documentation you forwarded to us on Thursday 06 Jan 2011, which we have to bring to your attention.

**1. HERITAGE ASPECTS**

- 1.1 Further to your assertion that you have a verbal agreement with Mrs Beverley Crouts-Knipe (BC-K), the Director, SAHRA, Western Cape, that RIM may proceed with the renovation work subject to our and a heritage specialist's appointment to oversee the project, we have to express our concern regarding the legality of the present situation on this project.
- 1.2 Since neither Ron Viney nor I could get any response from the SAHRA WCape office on last Thursday & Friday, I had contacted BC-K by sms and she confirmed to me that permits are required for renovation works to heritage structures.
- 1.3 Ron Viney had confirmed the following with regard to the Heritage Act:
  - a) Section 27 [18] is quite clear that a permit must be issued if any person wants to 'alter' the site.
  - b) The definition of 'alter' in section 1 of the act is quite clear in its stipulation that 'alter' includes a coat of paint or plaster or decoration or any other means.
  - c) Section 48[3] of the act allows SAHRA the discretion to exempt any alterations by **notice in the Government Gazette**.
- 1.4 If there is some other overriding agreement between SAHRA and Robben Island Museum (RIM) which allows renovations to take place without permits, please provide us with a copy. (If such document existed, we would question why we had to apply for permits for the renovations to the recreation facilities? Please note that for the Recreation Facilities we had to obtain a separate permit for each building)
- 1.5 We contend that, unless you have written confirmation from SAHRA that this process can proceed as per your understanding with BC-K, and it is published in a Government Gazette, both SAHRA as the implementor of the Act, and Robben Island Museum, as custodian of a World Heritage site, will be seen to be circumventing the law if actual work starts on site before the permits have been obtained from SAHRA.

- 1.6 RIM may also be negating the MOU it signed with SAHRA.
- 1.7 Ron Viney has started his work on the heritage statements and expect it to take approx 10 workdays. We attach his interim Heritage Report for your attention.

## **2. GENERAL TENDER DOCUMENTS**

- 2.1 The RIM Guidelines to Contractors, Notes to Tenderers and MSP Environmental Management Plan, and the Occupational Health & Safety items in the RIM Invitations to Tender, all together seem to adequately allow for control over the contractor's general on-site activities.
- 2.2 We must note that we had advised RIM some years ago to have an asbestos inventory for the whole of the island drawn up by an accredited asbestos inspector.
- 2.3 RIM's OHS inspector will have to do monthly audit reports.

## **3. RIM SPECIFICATIONS AND IDAWO QUOTATIONS**

### **3.1 SCOPE OF WORK**

Due to lack of a chance to assess the proposed work before going to site today, we base our comments on the documents themselves, our knowledge of the island, and Ron Viney's Report. Please refer to the latter in detail.

- a) No provision has been made for sealing of asbestos cement elements, ie roofs and rainwater goods & possible eaves closer panels, before repainting. As most of the asbestos cement elements on the island are pre "safe" fibre cement and contains blue asbestos fibres, it is best to use a penetrating sealer to lock the fibres together before painting. Paint can flake off again at a future date and then the problem re-occurs.
- b) All missing rainwater goods must be replaced with appropriate units. We note no mention of downpipes particularly related to the Garrison Church. We will assess this on site.
- c) The renovation is described as external only. We recommend that all external doors and windows must be fully renovated, ie inside and outside, and complete frames.
- d) Particularly in the case of the Garrison Church and the Rectory we need to assess the remedial work required to the plaster / walls. Work on this building must not start until we had a chance to assess it on site.
- e) There are different types of roof on the various buildings. This is not taken into account in the documents. In addition, there are roof leaks reported or evident in most of the structures. The specifications make no mention of particular essential roof repairs.
- f) The specifications make no mention at all of any landscaping / graves etc. Will this be dealt with by another section of RIM ?

### **3.2 METHODOLOGY**

- a) Cleaning with high pressure waterjets must be **prohibited**.
  - In the case of asbestos-cement elements, the high pressure waterjets will scatter asbestos fibres all over the place. The old asbestos cement may also shatter under such treatment.
  - The plaster to the older structures, ie the Garrison Church and the old cottages, will be damaged with the use of high pressure waterjets.
- b) Spalling concrete, plaster and crack repairs - We have to assess the proposed methodology with the contractor on site for each case.

### 3.3 SPECIFICATIONS

- a) The proposed plaster repair specifications are of particular concern to us. Hard (1:3 cement:sand) plaster is inappropriate for repairwork to structures built of soft clay bricks, eg the old cottages and church. We understand the Garrison Church had already been damaged by the replacement of its lime plaster in the previous renovation. We will assess this on site with the input of the heritage specialist and provide a specification.
- b) We request that the contractor provide the trade name and product references of the paints he proposes to use, for our approval. The somewhat confusing generic descriptions are not clear enough. The paint quality and appropriateness for each application is of crucial importance. In the instance of the Garrison Church we have to assess whether paint was applied over limewash in the previous renovation.
- c) We wish to assess the advisability of using Plascon Wall-n-All on the external walls, to allow easier washability and dirt removal, without using an impermeable paint.
- d) Eaves closer nail heads must be treated with a rust inhibitor, eg NS4 White.
- e) The heritage specialist has also raised concerns regarding a number of other issues, eg finishes to wood elements, treatment of stone finishes, etc.

## 4. COMMUNICATIONS

4.1 We wish to set up a system whereby we can communicate with the contractor without confusing the line of instruction under your contract with them.

There are two options:

- a) We can provide you or Rivaaj Mahabeer with instructions / specifications we wish to have issued to the contractor. We will require confirmation that the instructions had been issued.
- b) You officially give us delegated powers to issue instructions to the contractor.

4.2 Changes to the scope of works or the specifications may well have cost implications. How do you wish to deal with these ?

We will do everything in our power to assist you on this project, but must note that the preparation time has been extremely short.

In the first instance we recommend that you resolve the situation *vís a vís* SAHRA, as the implication of this may be that the work on site will not be able to start until the necessary permits / exemption is in place.

Yours faithfully

**TRUDI GROENEWALD**  
**for GROENEWALD PRELLER ARCHITECTS CC**