

AMAFA DEMOLITION APPLICATION

Report – April 2023

Properties –

213 Problem Mkhize (Cowey) Road,
24 11th Avenue (217 Problem Mkhize (Cowey) Road),
221 Problem Mkhize (Cowey) Road,
225 Problem Mkhize (Cowey) Road.

Property Descriptions –

Portion 1 of Erf 1221, Durban,
Rem of Erf 1221, Durban,
Portion 1 of Erf 1220, Durban,
Rem of Erf 1220, Durban.

Combined site area – 3 973 m²

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

No information could be found of any significant historical event happening at these sites other than been residential houses since 1913.

No evidence could be found of any renowned person associated to these sites.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

213 Problem Mkhize (Cowey) Road –

Built – 1913

Architect – Unknown (Drawings have no title block)

Original Drawing – Yes (Submitted)

Listed – Yes, Prof B T Kearney (13.16)

Description –

Single storied Gable-Verandah House with Hipped Corrugated Iron Roof.
Large access stair to front garden, Timber verandah posts and fretwork.
Square Bay window to gable portion, French doors and sliding-sash windows.
Outbuildings of no Architectural significance.

Condition –

Condition of this house is fair. Timber is borer infested. Structural problems with subsidence of foundations in front corners.

Intactness of form and detail is good.

24 11th Avenue [217 Problem Mkhize (Cowey) Road] -

Built - 1913

Architect – Unknown

Original Drawing – No - mirrored plan of 213 Problem Mkhize (Cowey) Road
Listed – Yes, Prof B T Kearney (13.15)

Description –

This building is a mirrored plan of 213 Problem Mkhize (Cowey) Road.
Single storied Gable-Verandah House with Hipped Corrugated Iron Roof.
Large side-access stair to front garden, Timber verandah posts and fretwork removed and replaced with precast Tuscan-Doric columns.
Square Bay window to gable portion, verandah and side elevation.
French doors and sliding-sash windows.
Outbuildings of no Architectural significance.

Condition –

Condition of this house is very poor. Roof structure in structurally unsound.
Intactness of form and detail is poor. Building been altered with few original details remaining.
Windows & doors missing (Vandalized and/or stolen)

221 Problem Mkhize (Cowey) Road -

Built - 1914

Architect – J J H Lübke (see Bio. below)

Original Drawing – Yes (Included)

Listed – Yes, Prof B T Kearney (13.14) – Not included in list of Architects works on “Artefacts”

Description –

Single storied, Front Verandah House with Hipped Corrugated Iron Roof.
Access stair to front garden, Timber verandah posts and fretwork.
Square Bay windows to verandah and side elevation.
French doors and Casement windows.
Outbuildings of no Architectural significance.

Condition –

Condition of this house is very poor. Roof structure in structurally unsound.
Intactness of form and detail is poor. Building been altered with many original details missing.
Additional deck addition to front verandah.
Windows & doors missing (Vandalized and/or stolen)

225 Problem Mkhize (Cowey) Road -

Built - 1914

Architect – J J H Lübke (see Bio. below)

Original Drawing – Yes (Included)

Listed – No – Not included in list of Architects works on “Artefacts”

Description –

Single storied, Gabled-Verandah House with Hipped Corrugated Iron Roof.

Side Access stair to front garden, Timber verandah posts and fretwork removed and replaced with precast Tuscan-Doric columns.

Square Bay windows to Gable-end, verandah (bay to corner) and side gable-elevation.

French doors and Casement windows.

Outbuilding (Repurposed as flatlet) of no Architectural significance.

Condition –

Condition of this house is very poor. Roof structure is structurally unsound.

Intactness of form and detail is poor. Building been altered.

Windows, doors & balustrading missing (Vandalized and/or stolen)

ABOUT THE ARCHITECT

from “Artefacts” website

LÜBKE, Johann Joachim Heinrich

Born: 1857

Died: 1933 03 23

Architect

Lübke was born in Ratzeburg, Germany; it is not yet known when he came to South Africa. He married in Germany and he was practicing in Durban from perhaps the end of the nineteenth century as his son, George Cornelius Lübke, the third of LÜBKE's six children, was born in Durban in 1893 and was educated in Durban (and in the United States), indicating that at a date around 1893 LUBKE was probably in Durban. He designed a few houses in the city and was a committee member of the Natal Institute of Architects from 1905 until 1906. He was also architect to the mosque in West Street. Bennett et al (1987) suggest that LÜBKE was in partnership with one Walter Cornelius (perhaps the Cornelius for whom he designed two houses in Clarke Road in 1911) around 1920, giving the building (138/144 Queen Street) as one executed in partnership, but no record exists of an architect by this name, it is more likely that Cornelius was the builder and contractor W Cornelius. LÜBKE retired in 1931 and died two years later at his house at 40 Russell St, Durban.

ISAA 1927. (Bennett et al 1987:44; Hillebrand 1975; NAD MSCE 19410/1933; SAWW 1931-2; UNSAL)

Durban: Hotel Victoria, 23 Seaview St, not carried out (OD 202a) 1912

LIST of PROJECTS

138-144 Queen St (now the Gandhi Library): 1920. Durban, KwaZulu-Natal - Architect

His Majesty's Skating Rink: 1909. Durban, KwaZulu-Natal - Architect

House: 329 Clarke Road, 1912. Durban, KwaZulu-Natal - Architect

House & photographic studios for Mr Gabriel: 122 First Ave, 1915. Durban, KwaZulu-Natal - Architect

House ER Robinson: 666 Currie Road, 1913. Durban, KwaZulu-Natal - Architect

House for W Cornelius: 321 Clarke Road, 1911. Durban, KwaZulu-Natal - Architect

House for W Cornelius: 313 Clarke Road, 1911. Durban, KwaZulu-Natal - Architect

House Fred Crookes: Elingham: 1917. Renishaw, KwaZulu-Natal - Architect

House JJH Lübke: 600 Essenwood Road, 1915. Durban, KwaZulu-Natal - Architect

House Miss OM Royal: 32 Chelmsford Road, 1909. Durban, KwaZulu-Natal - Architect

House Mrs SML Wood: 38 Chelmsford Road, 1909. Durban, KwaZulu-Natal - Architect

Houses: 434-438 Clarke Road, 1912. Durban, KwaZulu-Natal - Architect

Houses, shops: 251-261 Beatrice Street, 1922. Durban, KwaZulu-Natal - Architect

Mosque, proposed alt: 1919. Durban, KwaZulu-Natal - Architect

Palm Court Villa Hotel: 1916. Durban, KwaZulu-Natal - Architect

Shop: 1922. Durban, KwaZulu-Natal - Architect

Shop 494 West St: 1926. Durban, KwaZulu-Natal - Architect

Shops for Mr JB Menta: 1916. Durban, KwaZulu-Natal - Architect

Smiths Shop: 1914. Durban, KwaZulu-Natal – Architect

None of the building been applied for in this report appear on this list of his most important works.

The Architecture of these buildings are by no means special and/or worthy of careful, very expensive restoration.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE

These properties are of no Archaeological Significance.

PALAEONTOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE

These properties are of no Paleontological Significance.

WORK CARRIES OUT WITHOUT PRIOR APPROVAL

No new work has been carried out.

The buildings have been vacant for several years and through this time have undergone severe deterioration through non-use and vandalism.

Kwa-Zulu Natal Amafa & Research Institute's letter of 21 November 2019 to the owners, asks for the application of a "Rectification of Unlawful Work Application - Form 1" to be submitted.

This is that application.

FUTURE WORK

ZONING

These properties are zoned for Medium Density Housing. The City Planners have recently changed the development potentials for the Durban Berea Area, inviting higher density housing.

Within the current zoning, these sites, can potentially have 39 residential units built on a future consolidated site. The City would invite this type of development. These sites have the Hans Hallen designed Apartment block "Riebeeck" across the road. This is a large block of apartments that reflects the Cities ambition for the future development of this area.

DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Development Table

	Heritage Value			DEVELOPMENT TABLE for zoning MEDIUM DENSIRY HOUSING										
	Built	Architect	Listed	Site Area	Coverage Potential (50%)	PAR Coverage x 2 floors	Development Plate	No. of Units (1 Unit per 100m/sq)	Parking Bays (1.5 per Unit)	Unit size if max no. of units developed	No. of 3 bed Units @ 150m/sq per unit	Existing Buildings Floor Area	Additional PAR if buildings retained	No. of 150 m/sq units if Buildings retained
213 Problem Mkhize (Cowey) Road	1913	unknown	Yes	993	496,5	993	538,2	9	12	110	6	209,9	783,1	5 + 1
24 11th Avenue	1913	unknown	Yes	993	496,5	993	538,2	9	12	110	6	247,3	745,7	4 + 1
221 Problem Mkhize (Cowey) Road	1914	JJH Lübke	Yes	950	425	950	502,3	9	12	105	6	184,3	765,7	5 + 1
225 Problem Mkhize (Cowey) Road	1914	JJH Lübke	No	1037	518,5	1037	573,2	10	15	100	6	243,2	793,8	5 + 1
Totals as individual sites				3973	1936,5	3973	2151,9	37	56		24	884,7	3088,3	23
Totals if sites Consolidated				Same	Same	Same	2991,7	39	59	100	26	Same	Same	24

Various development scenarios have been looked at and illustrated as 3d models (herewith attached).

A development Architect is yet to be employed but these are the options they would explore: -

Development scenarios

- 1) Restore existing houses as houses.
- 2) Restore existing houses as offices.
- 3) Restore existing houses for commercial use.
- 4) Restore existing houses as residential units with additional units developed Infront and behind as per zoning.
- 5) Restore existing houses as residential units with additional units developed behind.
- 6) Restore existing houses as offices with additional modern office space built Infront and behind with same PAR as Zoning.
- 7) Restore existing houses as offices with additional modern office space built behind to same PAR as Zoning.
 - Special Consent needed.
- 8) Restore existing houses as offices with Residential units built behind with access off 11th Avenue.....Mixed use.
 - Special Consent needed.
- 9) Restore existing house as offices or commercial use with Residential units behind, a New single storied commercial buildings and parking area accessed from Problem Mkhize.
 - Special Consent needed
- 10) Demolish existing buildings and develop new residential blocks as per zoning.
 - NO Special Consent or Rezoning needed.
- 11) Demolish existing buildings and develop new Mixed use development.
 - Rezoning needed

The correct restoration of these buildings will be a huge burden on the feasibility of any development projects. The development of the garden area around the existing buildings will have to be saturated with new buildings to make the development retaining the old buildings feasible. This will pay no respect to the buildings and this compromised retention would make no conservation sense.

The scenario 10 above is the most likely development potential. "Riebeeck" across the road, sets the design precedent and shows the potential for this type of development.

STREETSCAPE & NEIGHBOURS

Relationship to Road - The application buildings are set back toward the 11th Avenue end of the site, behind high boundary wall and big trees, thereby the visual relationship to Problem Mkhize (Cowey) Road is not a very strong (both of the sites and from the sites).

Group Quality & Streetscape – The existing relationship between these buildings (between themselves & between their neighbours) has a suburban rhythm. This is because of the Erf sizes This Rhythm has been altered across the road with now heralded architecture of the large “Riebeeck” apartment block. As mentioned in the paragraph above, the relationship to the road is not strong. This weakens the impact of this rhythm, if the buildings were closer to the road that would be different.

The application buildings are similar in scale but very different in detail. The Architectural strength of this group is poor.

Relationship to the direct Neighbours – The directly adjacent buildings are a repurposed house now a pre-school to the North and a repurposed listed building to the South.

The listed building to the south has been very beautifully restored by Emmett:Emmett Architects ... any new development has to pay special attention to how their development relates to this building. A two to three storied new development will not have an Architectural infill problem in the hands of a skilled Architect.

The neighbours across the roads (both Problem Mkhize (Cowey) Road & 11th Avenue) are less sensitive to a negative scale & mass impact by any new development.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Posted on SARHIS website are 15 signatories (on the standard sheets) from people who reside in the area, to the agreement of the demolition of these buildings.

The neighborhood is very concerned with the vagrancy on these sites and the devaluation of their property values. They are all wanting the development of these site to commence and thereby improve both the value of their properties and the quality of their lives.

MOTIVATION

The owners of these properties are hoping to develop these sites. They have not embarked on a purposeful campaign of "Demolition by neglect", it was more a matter of circumstance, naivety and frustration to the lack of development freedom.

The Khan family have bought these properties over time when they became available. Nadim Khan living on one of the properties for a time. Their frustration and confusion with the correct planning procedure caused their non-committal to the large investment into this project. The Khan family are honorable people that haven't, as other developers in Durban, gone ahead with illegal work then apply later. They would now like to follow the correct procedure.

The deterioration of the buildings over the past years has not been invited by the owners but the properties have been broken into by vagrants and vandalized (See Police avadavat submitted with this application). The deterioration of the land values of these properties themselves plus the consequent deterioration of the value of the neighbouring properties have been of grave concern to the owners. A vast sum of monies has been lost on these properties.

The City Authorities must be complicit in this affair. The rezoning and increase of bulk potentials of the Durban Berea has put huge pressure on property owners to seriously look at developing their properties or selling their properties to developers.

The City Authorities view these four buildings as "Bad Buildings" and are putting pressure on the owners to demolish the buildings or they will demolish at the owner's cost (as per the NBR).

In this report it has been stated that three of the four buildings were Listed by Prof Brian Kearney in 1983. 40 year have passed since his assessment and the building have been vastly altered (before the current owners ownership). The Architectural significance of these buildings has never been of the highest quality but more "C" category buildings.

The Architectural merit of this group of buildings was mainly due to their grouping. A grouping is important if a single building is compromised within that group but if the whole group is demolished the urban group quality no longer exists.

The buildings have now reached a point that due to the condition and to inflated building costs, restoration of these building have become imposable. A proper restoration of the buildings will never happen.

New development can be restricted to pay due care to the neighbours and neighbourhood and hopefully a building of the quality of "Riebeeck" can be built.