



**B a r t s c h**  
BARTSCH CONSULT (PTY) LTD

**WCS 035864  
UPGRADING OF BERGVILLE PRISON  
INCLUDING ADDITIONAL ACCOMMODATION**

# **Heritage Case Report**

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## A PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Project Title	Upgrading of Bergville Prison including Additional Accommodation
WCS Number	WCS 035864
Client Department	National Department of Public Works KZN
User Department	Department of Correctional Services

This project was set out by Department of Public Works KZN in 2002. Since 2002 to date the brief for this project changed five times to where we are now. The project brief entails the upgrade of Bergville Prison to accommodate 60 inmates based on the new generation prison model as per Department of Correctional Services. This is a routine assignment of the Department of Public Works, falling under the Correctional Buildings category.

## B PROPERTY

Property description	Portion of Erf 233
Location	Bergville, KwaZulu Natal Province, RSA
Address	c/o South Street, Sharp Street and Short Street
Zoning	Administration
Proposed use	Prison accommodation and related uses
Ownership	State property
Title Deed	T15792/1977



Satellite image of the town of Bergville  
Inset: Location of Bergville in RSA

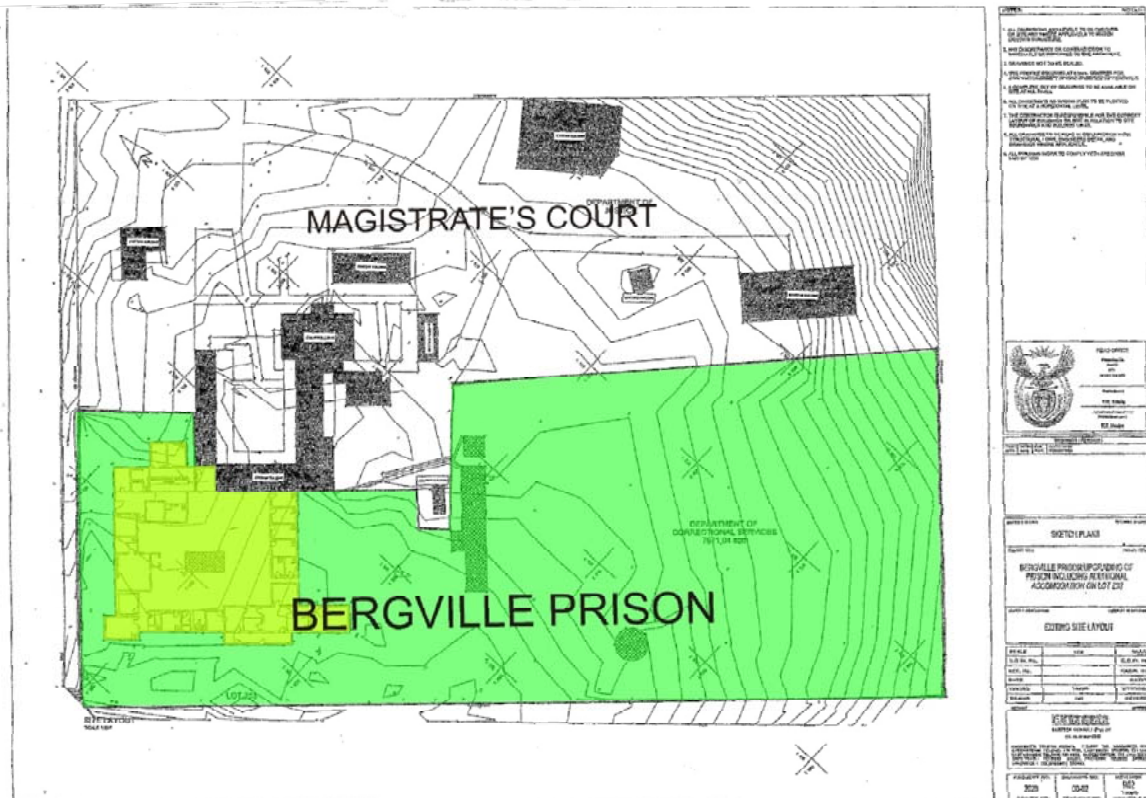


Erf 233, Bergville



Three portions of Erf 233, Bergville

Erf 233 Bergville, is an existing state property in an approved township. Please refer to existing site plan below.



## C SIGNIFICANCE

### 1. ORIGINAL DATE OF CONSTRUCTION

According to Okhahlamba Municipality the Erf 233 has been proclaimed in 1947 (SG no. 4996/47), with building activities after this period and the earliest recorded additions made was in 1962.

The Government acquired the Erf 233, Bergville as state property in 1977 in accordance with Title Deed T15792/1977. The original construction date of the existing buildings housing Bergville Prison is unknown.

However, taking the above mentioned time line into account the original date of construction may reasonably be expected to be estimated at approximately 1950. This makes the original structure older than sixty years and the application for demolition relevant for this project.

### 2. HISTORICAL REPORT

Various additions and alterations were executed on these buildings over the years in order to facilitate the growing demand of the prison and to comply with the changing norms and standards for prisons as per Department of Correctional Services. This in effect make large portions of the building not older than 60 years, however the original structure might have been. Accordingly this makes this application for demolition significant.

However, due to a variety of addition and alterations executed on these building over the past years the historical significance of the facility was badly affected. In our opinion these building in their

current state carry very little historical significance except for the turret vents along the ridge line of the roof. This was presumably used for warm air extraction through grilles in the ceilings from the internal spaces of the buildings. Obviously all these ceiling grilles have been removed as it pose a security risk at a facility such as a prison.



### 3. ARCHITECTURAL REPORT

#### GENERAL CONDITION OF BUILDINGS

The existing prison buildings are in a poor condition due to neglect in terms of maintenance, water damage in walls and poor adaption of space usage. Please see photographs below.

#### a) Examples of neglect in terms of maintenance



Gutters falling down



Broken ceilings



Poor condition of front door

b) Examples of water damage in walls throughout the complex







c) Examples of poor adaption of space usage



An old unused nook now standing in as storage space which is presumably insufficient in this facility



All surface mounted electrical installation



External tap and gutter downpipe together with manhole present within the interior of the Administration Section



Non-assignable room with mixed usages such as ironing, redundant storage etc. Note the painted windows and the open space within the room which is symptomatic of poor space planning.



Existing building layout unable to cater for a dining hall, therefore prisoners need to eat outside and Bergville becomes extremely cold in winter times. This is unacceptable in the new generation prison norms and standards.

## STYLE AND PHASES OF CONSTRUCTION

As previously mentioned, several alterations and additions were required in order to facilitate the prison function in compliance with the changing norms and standards for prison as per Department of Correctional Services and the growing need of prison facilities.

Herewith a list of the additions and alterations as per the drawings in archive at the Department of Public Works:

DATE	DESCRIPTION
1962	Water drainage alterations
1971	Additional Quarters
1973	Kitchen Alteration
1975	Section Store and new Cell for Non-White Females
1978	Improvements to waterborne sewerage system
1978	Connection to municipal sewer
1980	New security fence
1995	Proposed waiting room, store room and toilet facilities for disabled persons
1995	Proposed repairs and renovations including electrical repairs

From an architectural point of view these changes were not executed with the most sensitivity towards the existing buildings and effectively influenced the esthetical value of the buildings negatively. Good examples thereof is the alterations to the kitchen which does not even has the same roof colour than the existing buildings and the offices on South Street of which the external wall is done in a brick not matching any other material in the complex. Please see photographs below.



Enlarged kitchen addition from Sharp Street



Enlarged kitchen addition from internal courtyard

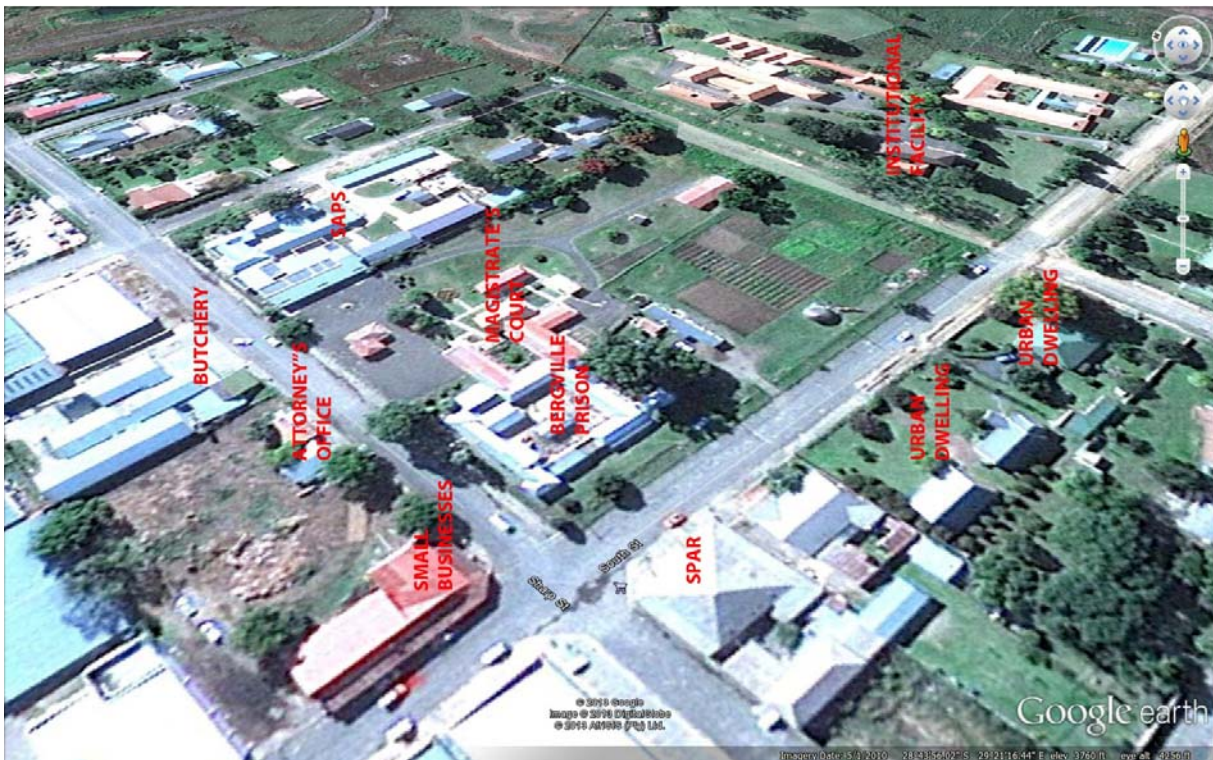


Offices on South Street with non-matching brick wall

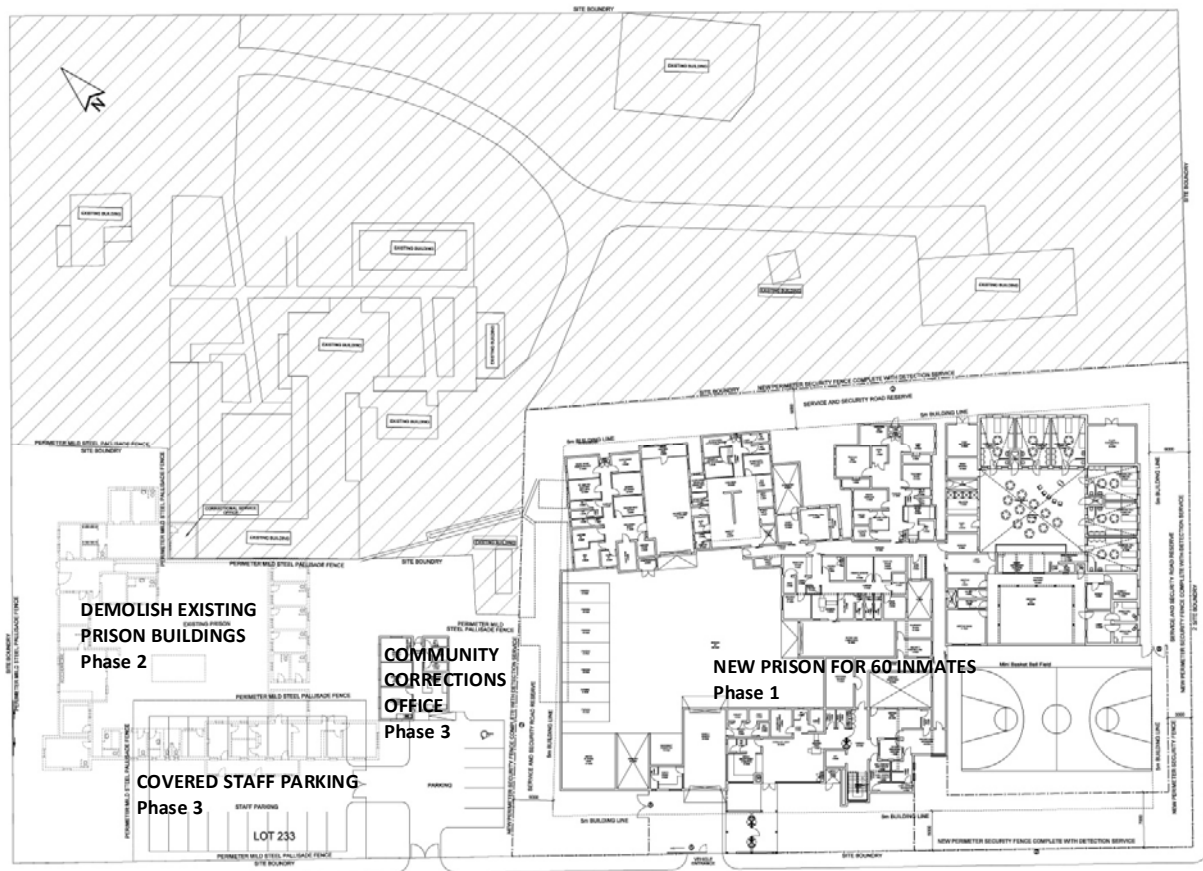
In terms of the original style of the buildings it is evidently clear very little still remains of the original architectural language after the buildings have been upgraded. The changes required and effected to house the prison were obviously done in such a manner than to comply with the norms and standards for prisons at the time. This is evident when studying the window placements. Prison type windows had to be installed on a higher level at the time for improved security measures. Unfortunately this doesn't line up with any of the original windows in the buildings and cause an aesthetical precariousness as can be seen in photographs above.

#### 4. URBAN SETTING AND ADJOINING PROPERTIES

The Bergville Prison is located on the edge of the CBD of this small rural town. The Prison is adjoining a variety of small business properties on two sides (South Street and Sharp Street) across the street such as a Spar, a butchery, an attorney's office etc. Also you will find two suburb dwellings across South Street. Across Short Street is an institutional facility such as a health centre, but with its entrance from South Street. Due to the falling topography the site of this facility which lies much lower is visually quite divorced from the prison site. The forth side of the site adjoins with the remainder of Erf 233 housing the Magistrate's Court and the SAPS, all government institutions.



## D PROPOSED WORK



Proposed site plan for the new Bergville Prison

With assessment of the site as a whole and in relation to the adjacent buildings the following directives came forth:

- 1) The existing prison buildings are not configured in such a way that it can be reused with the application of the new generation prison model. In the light of the fact that these buildings are old, dilapidated and non-compatible it is being proposed to be demolished.
- 2) The current operational prison is situated on the tighter section of the site and is extremely close to the adjacent building, which in this case is the Magistrate's Court. This section of the site proves to be restrictive in terms of its dimensional proportions to accommodate the new generation prison model and does not allow for a service and supervision road reserve around the complex. Therefore it was decided to place the new proposed prison on the more spacious section on the site. By doing this the following will be achieved:
  - a) The new prison will be slightly more divorced from the adjacent buildings and thus security will be enhanced.
  - b) A service and supervision road reserve can be accommodated which is a requirement in terms of the new generation prison model.
  - c) The project can be phased. During the first phase the existing prison can stay in operation whilst the construction of the new prison takes place. On occupation of the new prison the second phase will commence with the demolition of the existing prison buildings. The third and final phase will be the construction of a Community Corrections Office and covered staff parking in the place of the demolished existing prison.
  - d) Sufficient space will be available to accommodate all functions as per the new generation prison model.

As part of the motivation for demolition of the existing prison buildings we wish to point out that the application of the new generation prison model on the existing buildings is undoubtedly impossible. It can be debated that the existing prison buildings might be considered for re-use instead of demolished. Taking the condition of the existing structure into account, it is patently clear that for re-use of these buildings all walls with water damage will have to be broken down as the severe water presence in these walls cannot be remedied in any other manner than through replacement. Accordingly, if the existing prison buildings will be re-used to house another function at least 80% of the walls will have to be demolished and rebuilt in any case in order to remedy the water damage. The cost thereof makes these buildings in actual fact not viable for re-use.

Taking the all the above into account we are of the opinion that the existing Bergville Prison buildings have become obsolete in terms of future use as a compliant prison and is in need of replacement. Therefore, as a precautionary measure due to the unknown age of the original structure, please receive this application for demolition on behalf of our Client for your approval.