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Kwa-Zulu Natal Amafa & Research Institute
Heritage Identification, Management & Protection
195 Langalibalele Street
Pietermaritzberg
Att – Ros Devereux

Re – APPEAL AGAIST DISCISSION ON BOUNDARY WALL RETENTION AT THE BENJAMIN HOTEL, 141 FLORIDA ROAD (Case ID: 18906 - Proposed Additions and Alterations to existing Hotel being Erf 913, Durban to 141 Florida Road, Windemere, Durban.)

Dear Ros

Hereby, we, the owners of the property (Urban Lime Properties), the Design Architects (Designworkshop SA) and myself (Frank Reitz), would like to appeal the discission of your "Heritage Offices' Committee" of 05 July 2023.

The Committee have asked for the boundary wall to be retained.

The description of the existing boundary wall is as follows: -

The wall can be divided as having five sections,

1. A low post and low boundary wall section to the lower half of the site, fronting onto Florida Road.
2. A low post and low boundary wall section with hedge row, for the first 5m fronting onto 8th Avenue.
3. 1,8 m high posts (at very wide centers) with 0,6 m high boundary wall and metal paling
4. 1,8 m high posts (at very wide centers) with 0,6 m high boundary wall and metal paling above (With Hedge).
5. 2 m high posts (at very wide centers) with 0,6 m high boundary wall and metal paling above (With Hedge) to the upper half of the site, fronting onto Florida Road.



Part 1



Part 2



Part 3



Part 4



Part 5

All parts of this boundary wall were built in 1998 when the building was converted to the Benjamin Hotel. The age of the boundary wall is 25 years. These are not original garden walls.

The centers of the post do not follow the original Victorian/Edwardian Garden walls of the early history of Florida Road. The centers of the original Florida Road walls would have been far narrower (closer together).

The detail (Moldings, etc.) of the existing boundary wall is a historicist interpretation and of poor design quality.

The alignment of these post does not respect the Architectural lines of the buildings beyond. The Architects proposal in this application rectifies this by using a new medium of planted grow pots at centers that respect the architecture of the building. This is an honest design response to a new intervention. See the Architect's (Designworkshop) report herewith submitted (230711_BENJ_AMAFA rev 04 boundary [94]).

The recent "Florida Road Workshop" hosted by SAIA:KZN and the specific survey done by Prof Rodney Harbor and Kirk White, highlighted the isolated occurrence of the "Florida Road Garden wall". This cannot be seen as a strong identifying element in Florida Road anymore (Maybe 100 years ago but not anymore). Parts of Florida Road retain the historic Garden wall character and these need to be identified and retained. The area of the application site does not have this character. The adjacent neighbours on Florida Road do not have historic garden walls.

The quality of the boundary wall design must be considered too. Demolishing parts of the "Hollis House" Boundary wall as per a recent application should never be granted because of the superior quality of the design but a poorly designed wall as build on the applicant site cannot be held to the same restriction.

The repurposing & change of use of most properties in Florida has changed the purpose & usefulness of a garden wall and front garden to properties. This must be recognized. The activation of the street edge is the new Florida Road norm.

We hope that this appeal will meet with favorable consideration.

We feel that Florida Road needs to be a new, dynamic, fresh approach to the commercial changes to this popular Activity Corridor. Conservation will benefit from a positive outlook, as opposed to a negative conservative approach.

Your Sincerely
Frank Reitz