

24 April 2014

**To: Interested and Affected Parties: SAHRA, DHF, Paarl 300, and AKSO**

Heritage Western Cape  
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**NHRI Section 34 Application: BABYLONSTOREN FARM no. 1268/1 PAARL: Additions to Farm Manager's House**

Babylonstoren Farm as a whole is a heritage resource with historic, architectural, contextual and landmark qualities, and has been listed as a proposed National/Provincial site in the Drakenstein Heritage Register. While the property has not officially been graded in the Government Gazette, the various structures on it (being older than 60 years) are protected under Section 34 of the NHRA.

The following buildings older than 60 years are present on the werf:

- Manor House – Restoration completed
- Koornhuis – Restoration completed
- Cellar – Restoration completed
- Fowlhouse
- Stables – renovation completed and used as Deli/Farm shop
- Animal Shed – renovation completed and used as Babel Restaurant
- Workers' Cottages – completed - workers have been housed in a new housing development on another portion of land on the farm. The old cottages were redeveloped as guest accommodation.
- The Farm Manager's House (THIS APPLICATION REFERS)

**Historical Context**

Babylonstoren Farm is one of the pioneer farms of the Drakenstein region. The original land grant (to Pieter van der Byl) was issued in 1692. The Farming practice followed the typical progression documented in the area from mixed use farming (grain and livestock) to vine cultivation, and also formed part of the Rhodes era fruit farming initiatives.

According to the historic research conducted by Steward Harris for Babylonstoren, the earliest buildings on the farm were built of stone sometime after 1692, and is believed to be the stables, fowl house and the manor house (in an earlier form). The frailty of the early building materials meant that decay set in and repair work over the years resulted in a replacement of materials to some extent. It is however possible that materials used from the 1740's onwards are still present today.

The manor house in particular has undergone many changes in its lifetime. A 1762 inventory indicates that it may have been a typical T-plan. A 1780 inventory indicates extensions to the house, possibly to H-plan. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the manor house had been “Victorianized” with an added verandah, insensitive additions, demolition of front gable and replacing of thatch with corrugated iron roof. In 1931 the architect Wynand Louw (known for his Cape Dutch Revival work), was commissioned to restore the house to its “Cape Dutch” origins. The roof was rethatched, insensitive additions and verandah coverings were removed, and a new Neo Classical Gable (typical of that era) was erected.

It was during this same time that the farm manager’s cottage was erected at Babylonstoren. The cottage can be seen on the 1938 aerial photograph. The cottage has the typical Cape Dutch revival characteristics of the era: Wide and short gable proportion, “Arts& Crafts” woodwork (window partitions, frame thickness and mould, shutter type) and plaster mouldings above the openings and around the gable edges.

### **Research and Documentation on Babylonstoren**

The following documents have been consulted:

- Heritage Impact Assessment prepared January 2009 by Andre Pentz
- “Babylonstoren – The Story of a Drakenstein Farm” by Steward Harris, April 2007
- Drakenstein Heritage Resources Register

### **Recent Work**

Since the current ownership the following work has been done on the farm: Restoration and renovation of the Manor House, Historic Cellar, Koornhuis, Stables and Restaurant; redevelopment of guest cottages, development of new working farm werf with modern cellar and support buildings, and cultivation of a produce garden as well as vineyard and fruit farming on a large scale. The farm has been much publicised and the development has been given a CIFA award of excellence.

### **Use of the Farm Manager’s House**

As the name indicates this is the house of the farm manager, a permanent employee of Babylonstoren Farm.

#### Motivation

The proposal is to:

1. Renovate an existing “stoep kamer” in order to accommodate an ensuite bathroom for the main bedroom of the house.
2. Partial demolition and the building of an extension to an existing outbuilding structure with a section of yard wall to enclose the back of house area and tie together the existing outbuildings, pool yard and house.

The proposal does not impose any negative impacts. The positive impacts are as follows:

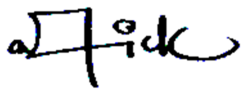
The current “Stoep Kamer” is an insensitive enclosure of a portion of the open stoep. The fenestration on the front (North) façade and door onto the stoep is not appropriate to the period of the house and does not have heritage value, but rather detracts such. The new proposal will replace these inappropriate items with fenestration to match the rest of the house, and the stoep columns will be expressed in relief as per the plaster detailing at the existing column tops, and the curved lintel detail as per the flanges to the gable on the front (North) elevation. The proposal is for a flat roof to replace the existing extended roof sheets.

The existing structures comprise of a house with two outbuildings. The larger one is the existing garage, store room and braai room, which is connected to the house by a yard wall. An existing swimming pool is positioned between these two buildings. The smaller outbuilding is positioned closer to the house (on the West elevation) and has a pitched roof. The result is a series of unrelated built objects.

The proposal is to extend this smaller outbuilding and to use the outbuilding as a 'structure incorporated into a wall' to create privacy for the backyard space of the house. The pitched roof will be removed from the outbuilding and replaced with a parapeted flat roof with lean to veranda on the inside of the yard. The structure will then be tied to the other existing outbuilding with a new section of yard wall. The overall effect one of tidying up the back end of the house and tying together of loose ends. The outbuildings are not older than 60 years. (Evident from the 1955 aerial photograph)

In the light of these benefits we feel that this is a reasonable application, and would appreciate your positive comment.

Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Fick'. The signature is stylized with a large initial 'A' and a cursive 'Fick'.

**Anne-Marie Fick - MALHERBE RUST ARCHITECTS (MIA)**