

SOUTH AFRICAN HERITAGE RESOURCES AGENCY

PROVINCIAL OFFICE: GAUTENG

FILE NOTE

REF: 9/2/228/35; 4/4/6/3/2/2

DATE: 11 February 2002

RE: PROPOSED DEMOLITION OF VARIOUS BUILDINGS ON WESTERN PORTION OF
CONSTITUTION HILL PRECINCT, BRAAMFONTEIN

Special Meeting of the Interim Gauteng Heritage Application Committee Regarding the Above

1. Present

Mr P Mashabane
Mr M Maluleke
Mrs E Brink
Ms J Kitto

2. Apologies

Mr F Motsepe
Ms L Mvusi

3. Discussion

It was noted that Ms Mvusi had sent the comment that she is not in favour of changing anything and that the size and pattern of the buildings should remain.

Mr Mashabane briefly explained the existing and proposed layout and that a site visit had been undertaken on Friday.

It was noted that three of the houses on the West side are of typical Public Works department design and were probably warder's houses. Does this example need to stay?

It was suggested that a compromise should be reached.

It was noted that the mortuary history has not been researched in detail. need to know if this was the main Johannesburg mortuary. This is also good example of PWD design.

It was noted that the large curved design house reflects the design of the Hospital and is representative of the domestic architecture of the time. Other large house is good example of PWD architecture of the time.

4. Decision

4.1 After further consideration it was Decided to grant a demolition permit for the following structures:

- the two small staff houses between the Hospital apartments and the police flats;
- the block of police flats to the East of the mortuary;
- the kitchen extension to the Queen Victoria Hospital;
- the apartment block (B) of the Queen Victoria Apartment building;
- and the two outbuilding structures facing Joubert Street.

- 4.2 However, the Committee agreed that there is a need for more information on various of the remaining structures before a decision can be made.

Additional historical information (socio-political and symbolic) is thus required on the following buildings:

- the mortuary (ie was this the main Johannesburg mortuary, any connection with eg 1976, 1922 Strike, 1980s activism, etc), would it be possible to retain the street facade?;
 - the house marked as 'IPA guesthouse', which seems to have been the Chief Warders House;
 - the two large houses, which seem to have a functional connection to the Hospital and are considered important to keep as part of the street-scape);
 - the two structures (houses?) at NW corner of the eastern site (recreation ground), need photographs, were they warder's houses?.
- 4.3 There was also concern about the retention of existing trees on the western portion. The Committee thus requests to have sight of an inventory of what is existing and what is planned in this regard.

Western Portion of Constitution Hill Precinct, Braamfontein (9/2/228/35)

Mr Prins (architect) and Mr B Orlin (Johannesburg Development Agency) met with the Committee to present a conservation policy document for the western portion of Constitution Hill. He raised the issue of where the money will come from to maintain the heritage buildings on the eastern portion of the precinct. It is proposed to use the western side for the development for new buildings to provide income. He highlighted the importance of the Queen Victoria hospital and the mortuary. All the existing buildings except for the hospital and part of the adjacent apartments are planned to be demolished. He requested a demolition permit for the buildings marked in red on Plan No 2. The demolished buildings will be commemorated and memorialised.

Dr Bruwer pointed out that one of the requirements of an application for demolition is the publication in a newspaper of a notice calling for comments and giving a 30 day response period. Mr Orlin stated that it is planned to develop a "super basement" under the western side to provide parking.

The Committee noted the need for a site visit to the property, which might not happen until the New Year. Mr Prins will be informed when people are available.

In committee, it was Noted that the proposed demolitions will change the whole character of the ridge and the area. There is an association of the existing buildings with the Fever Hospital and the Medical Research Institute, etc. Several members voiced their concerns about the proposed demolitions and the assessment of their significance. It was Agreed that a decision will only be possible after reading the document and visiting the site. The site visit will only take place after the 30 day period has elapsed. [Application form also required]